

# absolute india

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# SUPPORT SWELLS FOR MURMU: MAYA FOLLOWS NAVEEN, JAGAN; MORE TO FOLLOW

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The BJP's decision to choose a tribal woman as its Presidential candidate has met with considerable success so far, with many parties extending support to Draupadi Murmu.

All allies of the NDA, including JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar are unitedly supporting the BJP choice.

Besides, leaders of two other political parties, Biju Janata Dal and YSRCP, (the ruling parties in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh respectively) signed on the nomination papers of Draupadi Murmu, further cementing her chance to win.

BSP chief Mayawati on Saturday extended her support to Murmu, saying tribals form an integral part of the party's movement.

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), which is in power in Jharkhand in alliance with the Congress, is also under pressure to support the NDA presidential candidate as Murmu had been the governor of the state.

The JMM is not being able to decide whether to support joint



opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha as per its earlier commitment, or as per party's ideology and identity. It may likely to come round in support of Murmu as tribals comprise a significant part of the Jharkhand population. The pressure on the JMM, which is part of the UPA, can be gauged from the fact that it could not reach a decision in the meeting held on

Saturday to deliberate as to who it should extend support to.

The meeting was chaired by party president Shibu Soren and was attended by the party's elected representatives and senior leaders. Party's working president and Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren was also present in the meeting.

During the meeting, Shibu Soren

was authorised to take decision on behalf of the party with regard to the presidential election, sources said. It is also being said that Hemant Soren will meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi and only after that the JMM will be able to make up its mind whom to extend support in the presidential polls.

Tribal MLAs and MPs in the ranks of the opposition are also under pressure.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has appealed to all MLAs, including that of Congress, to vote for Murmu, 'The daughter of Odisha'.

Former Prime Minister and JD(S) leader H.D. Deve Gowda also praised Murmu, giving more fillip to her chance to win.

BJP's show of strength during the Murmu's filing of nomination proved that she is easily going to sail through.

Murmu is likely to get more support from the opposition rank keeping in view the changing political scenario and the upcoming assembly elections in the country. Some political parties may be forced to support her due to political compulsions.

# SHINDE MOVES SC AGAINST DISQUALIFICATION NOTICES ISSUED TO REBEL MLAS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde has removed the Supreme Court challenging the disqualification notices issued by Maharashtra Deputy Speaker to 16 party MLAs and also the appointment of Ajay Choudhari as Shiv Sena Legislature Party leader.

The matter is likely to be mentioned on Monday for urgent hearing before a vacation bench of the Supreme Court.

Maharashtra has been facing political crisis after Shinde and rebel MLAs left the state, protesting against the alliance with the Congress and Nationalist Congress Party. The rebel MLAs have been camping in a hotel in Assam's Guwahati for the past few days.

The Deputy Speaker has issued notices to the 16

rebel MLAs on the disqualification plea by Thackeray's team.

Shinde's plea said the disqualification notices issued by the Deputy Speaker is completely violative of Article 14 and 19(1)(g) of the Constitution, and also the illegal and unconstitutional action of the Deputy Speaker in recognising Choudhuri as the leader of the Shiv Sena Legislature Party (SSLP) despite the said request being admittedly made by a minority faction.

The plea said the petitioner is aggrieved by the notice/summon dated June 25 which is grossly illegal, unconstitutional and in utter disregard of the judgment of this Court in the matter of Nabam Rebia & Bamang Felix VS Dy. Speaker, Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly in (2016). "That the seat of Speaker

is vacant since Nana Patole resigned from office in February 2021. Thus, there is no authority who can adjudicate upon the disqualification petition under which the impugned notice has been issued to the Petitioner," it added.

"Issue a writ of prohibition/mandamus or any other appropriate writ, direction or order, directing Respondent No. 1 (Deputy Speaker) to not take any action in the disqualification petition under Rule 6 of MLA Defection Rules seeking disqualification of the Petitioners under Para-2(1)(a) of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution of India pending before Hon'ble Speaker of Maharashtra State Legislative Assembly and not take any action on the same until the resolution for removal of Deputy Speaker is decided," said the plea.

# BJP WRESTS RAMPUR, AZAMGARH FROM SP

LUCKNOW | Agencies

The BJP demolished two Samajwadi Party bastions on Sunday by wresting the Rampur and Azamgarh parliamentary seats.

The BJP won both seats in the by-elections.

UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath said that the results were a seal of approval on his working and his government. He said that the results were a vindication of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies. Rampur and Azamgarh have been considered as SP strongholds and this, being the first by-elections after the March assembly elections, is a major blow to the party leadership.

Rampur and Azamgarh are the constituencies of SP's two

tallest leaders -- Akhilesh Yadav and Mohd Azam Khan.

Azamgarh was earlier held by SP president Akhilesh Yadav and he had resigned after winning the assembly polls in March.

However, he did not campaign in Azamgarh and this raised several questions in political circles even though Akhilesh Yadav's cousin Dharmendra Yadav was the SP candidate.

He had also not allowed his estranged uncle Shivpal Singh Yadav to campaign in Azamgarh.

In Azamgarh, the BSP successfully engineered SP's defeat by fielding a Muslim candidate, Guddu Jamali, who walked away with over two lakh votes and allowed BJP's Dinesh Lal Yadav

Nirahua to walk home victorious. BJP's Ghanshyam Lodhi won the Rampur seat with a margin of over 40,000 votes, defeating Asim Raja of Samajwadi Party. The BJP got 52 per cent votes while SP had to remain content with 46 per cent votes.

The SP defeat in Rampur is a personal setback for senior SP MLA Mohd Azam Khan who had worked relentlessly for the by-elections.

"This is a victory that has been converted into defeat. People were not allowed to vote and I repeatedly said this on the polling day," he said.

The twin defeats are now indicative of Akhilesh Yadav's loosening grip on his vote bank since both the constituencies have a sizeable Muslim population.

# AAP wins Delhi's Rajinder Nagar seat by over 11,000 votes

New Delhi: The Aam Aadmi Party swept the Rajinder Nagar bypolls in Delhi with a margin of around 11,555 votes, the AAP said on Sunday.

The bypoll was held after incumbent MLA Raghav Chadha resigned after being elected to the Rajya Sabha.

After multiple rounds of counting, AAP's Durgesh Pathak secured 40,319 votes, BJP leader Rajesh Bhatia was in second place with 28,581 votes. The Congress candidate Prem Lata ranked third with 2,014 votes.

However, the election commission has not declared the result yet. As per the EC website, the party has secured 55.78 per cent votes in the bypoll. The BJP got 39.91 per cent vote share, while the Congress captured 2.79 per cent of the votes. NOTA also got 0.76 per cent votes amounting a total of 545 votes.

Delhi chief minister and AAP's national convener Arvind Kejriwal thanked the people of Rajinder Nagar for his party's victory in the bypoll and said people defeated dirty politics and appreciated our good work.

# BJP bags 3 seats in Tripura by-polls, CM Manik Saha wins from Town Bordowali

AGARTALA | Agencies

The ruling BJP won three seats including that of Chief Minister Manik Saha who has been elected to the state assembly for the first time from Town Bordowali while the opposition Congress won one seat in Tripura, where the bypolls were held on June 23 in the four politically-crucial Assembly constituencies.

According to the Election Commission, Saha, 69, who secured 17,181 votes, won the Town Bordowali seat defeating Congress candidate Ashish Kumar Saha by a margin of 6,104 votes. As per the EC, the BJP candidate Malina Debnath won the Jubarajnagar seat defeating her nearest CPI-M rival Sailendra Chandra Nath by a margin of 4,572 votes. BJP nominee Swapna Das (Paul) bagged the Surma (SC) seat thrashing her independent rival Baburam Satnami by a margin of 4583 votes. In a significant political development, BJP turned Congress leader Sudip Roy Barman retained his Agartala constituency defeating his BJP rival Ashok Sinha by a margin of 3,163 votes. With the victory of Roy Barman, Congress re-entered into the 60-member state assembly after several



years. Over 78.58 per cent of the 1,89,032-strong electorate cast their votes on Thursday in the by-elections to four Assembly constituencies in Tripura. In all 22 candidates including seven women fought the by-elections. The by-election is being termed by the political pundits as a "semi-final" before the 60-member Assembly's general elections, which is just eight months away. The focus of the by-elections was mainly on the Town Bordowali Assembly constituency where Manik Saha contested against five other candidates. Saha, BJP's state president and a Rajya Sabha member who assumed office on May 15, a day after Biplab Kumar Deb's resignation from the post of chief minister, contested the election for the first time.

# Oppn leaders to meet on Monday ahead of Sinha's nomination

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Ahead of nomination of Yashwant Sinha, the opposition presidential candidate, the leaders of the Opposition parties will be meeting on Monday in Parliament. NCP supremo Sharad Pawar who is firefighting the Maharashtra crisis has landed in Delhi for the meet. The opposition has been put to test since the NDA announced its candidate.

The big question is who all from the opposition will be present in Monday's meeting as Congress MLAs and MP are busy signing the nomination papers. Sinha will address a press conference on Monday at 4 p.m. and will then begin his campaign. aSinha on



Wednesday had said that the Constitution is being throttled. "If elected," he said, "I shall not allow the independence and integrity of democratic institutions to be weaponised against political opponents, as is happening now." "The ongoing attacks on the federal structure of the Constitution, whereby the government is attempting

to rob the state governments of their legitimate rights and powers, will be treated as totally unacceptable. I shall also use the authority of my office to check the menacing power of ill-gotten money that is killing the soul of Indian democracy and making a mockery of people's mandate in elections," Sinha told media here. A

dozen-odd opposition parties declared Sinha as their candidate on Tuesday, the same day the BJP declared Draupadi Murmu as its candidate for the post of the President, elections for which are due on July 18. BSP Supremo Mayawati has already announced support to the NDA nominee while YSRCP and the BJD are on board from day one and the crisis in Maharashtra has put the NDA in a comfortable position in the contest while other political parties may come in support of Murmu. She has already spoken to JMM leader Hemant Soren.

The development comes after JDS leader H.D. Deve Gowda praised the NDA candidate and termed her "suitable" and "non-controversial".

# Khalistan ideologue Simranjit Mann wins AAP's stronghold in Punjab

CHANDIGARH | Agencies

In a setback to AAP, which came to power in Punjab three months ago, the two-time MP and former IPS officer, Simranjit Singh Mann, who has been demanding an independent homeland -- called Khalistan -- on Sunday won the bypoll in the Sangrur parliamentary constituency.

This seat, once a stronghold of AAP, will now be represented by Mann after over two decades.

As per poll results, Shiromani Akali Dal-Amritsar (SAD-A) candidate Mann defeated his closest rival Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Gurmial Singh in a neck-and-neck battle by over 6,000 votes, with the former leading in the majority of the rounds, including Muslim-dominated Malerkotla Assembly seat. Mann, 77, who unsuccessfully

contested the Assembly polls in February, won the parliamentary elections from Sangrur in 1999.

Mann, has been demanding the opening of borders with Pakistan for traders, is toeing the ideology of Sikh leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who was killed during Operation Blue Star that was carried out by the Indian Army in June 1984 to flush out militants hiding in the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar.

After winning the election, Mann remembered the contribution of Bhindranwale towards the Sikh cause. He gave the credit of his win to those who sacrificed their lives for the cause of the Sikhs. Mann remembered the contribution of actor-turned-activist Deep Sidhu, accused of being the key conspirator of the Red Fort violence

on the Republic Day last year, and slain singer Sidhu Moosewala, who met his days ahead of his killing on May 29. Just 45.3 per cent voters -- 27.1 per cent less than the 2019 elections -- cast their franchise to decide the fate of 16 candidates on June 23.

The bypoll for Sangrur was necessitated following the resignation of Bhagwant Mann, who won the Assembly election in February from the Dhuri constituency, and became the Chief Minister.

The other key contenders were death row convict Balwant Singh Rajoana's foster sister Kamaldeep Kaur, 44, who was in the fray on the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) ticket, BJP's Kewal Dhillon, 72, and Dalvir Singh Goldy, 40, of the Congress.

# SIT formed to probe conspiracy allegations against Teesta, two others

AHMEDABAD | Agencies

Gujarat Director General of Police Ashish Bhatia has constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under Deputy Inspector General Dipan Bhadran to probe allegations of forgery and conspiracy against former DGP R.B. Sreekumar, former IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt and activist Teesta Setalvad.

After a criminal complaint was filed with the crime branch on Saturday evening, former DGP Sreekumar was arrested from Gandhinagar while Teesta was picked up from Mumbai and arrested on Sunday morning in Ahmedabad. Both were produced before the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate court on Sunday, where the crime branch demanded 14 days of remand for them.

Before producing them before the court, Crime Branch Deputy Commissioner



Chaitanya Mandlik told the media, "Police will investigate conspiracy angle, it will check their bank transactions and other documents. Police will also investigate into who were behind them and instigating them for legal processes." When Teesta was picked up from her residence, no documents or any other things were seized or recovered. If she has any complaint with the police, she will have an opportunity to complain before the magistrate court, when she is produced, said the officer. "Police will investigate financial transactions, whether there is any foreign funding to the NGO run by Teesta Setalvad and it will even investigate whether any politicians were behind instigating Teesta and the two police officers. If any foreign funding issues are revealed during investigation, if required even the Enforcement Directorate (ED) will be informed about such transactions," the officer added.

# YSRCP retains Atmakur Assembly seat by huge majority

AMARAVATI | Agencies

Andhra Pradesh's ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) retained Atmakur Assembly seat by a huge majority of over 82,000 votes.

In the one-sided bypoll, YSRCP's M. Vikram Reddy defeated his nearest rival G. Bharat Kumar of the BJP by 82,742 votes. Bharat Kumar and all other candidates forfeited their deposit.

Vikram Reddy polled 1,02,074 votes while the BJP candidate finished distant second with 19,332 votes. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) candidate secured 4,897 votes. About 65 per cent polling was recorded in the by-election to the Atmakur Assembly seat in Nellore district

on Thursday and the counting was taken up on Sunday. A total of 2,13,327 voters were eligible to exercise franchise in the constituency. Vikram Reddy took the lead from the very first round and increased it with every round. The counting was completed in 20 rounds. The by-election was necessitated by the death of industries minister M. Goutham Reddy in February this year. The ruling party fielded Goutham Reddy's brother M. Vikram Reddy. A total of 14 candidates are in the fray.

Main opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has not fielded the candidate in line with its tradition of not contesting a by-election where a family member of deceased sitting legislator is seeking the public mandate.



# MAHA GUV TO CENTRE: PROVIDE ADEQUATE CENTRAL SECURITY FORCE TO PROTECT REBEL MLAS

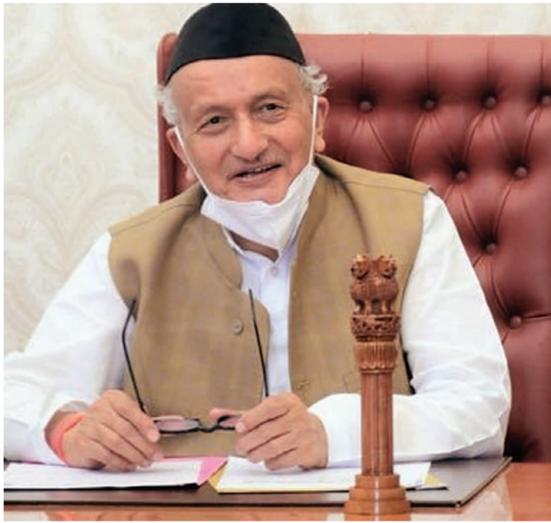
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari on Sunday urged the Centre to make adequate provision for Central Security Forces to be readily deployed in case the situation warrants it to ensure the security of the rebel MLAs and their families.

In a letter to the Union Home Secretary AK Bhalla, Koshyari said that he had received a representation on Saturday (June 25) from 38 Shiv Sena MLAs, 2 of Prahar Janshakti Party and 7 independents, that the police security to their families "has been illegally and unlawfully withdrawn."

He said the legislators currently in Guwahati had raised serious concerns about the safety of their homes and families in context of the 'provocative and threatening statements' being made by certain political leaders.

The Governor added that he has already directed the state police to provide adequate cover to the MLAs, their families and homes on priority.



"Despite this, offices and homes of some of the MLAs have been vandalised with the police being a mute spectator," said Koshyari to

Bhalla.

He also urged the central official to make adequate provision of central security forces, keep them ready in case required to address the situation.

The Governor's letter came amid the backdrop of violent incidents by alleged political activists in Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Nashik, Aurangabad, Kolhapur, Satara, Beed, Parbhani and Nagpur, who carried out demonstrations, stone-pelting, attacking offices, burning of effigies, beating photos or posters of the rebels with 'chappals', etc.

They were protesting against the turnout of legislators in the past couple of days and today there were retaliatory protests by supporters of some of the targeted MLAs in different parts of the state.

Responding to a letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray by the rebel group leader Minister Eknath Shinde on Saturday, state Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil categorically denied that any MLAs' security cover was withdrawn and asked the police to provide security to their families also.

# By-poll wins in Azamgarh & Rampur are historic: PM Modi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that the by-poll wins in Azamgarh and Rampur are historic and indicates wide-scale acceptance and support for the double engine governments at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh.

The results of three Lok Sabha and seven Assembly constituencies spread in different states where by-polls were held on June 23 were declared on Sunday. Lok Sabha by-polls were held in two seats of Uttar Pradesh -- Rampur and Azamgarh and one seat of Punjab. By-polls were held for one assembly seat each in Delhi, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh, and four seats of Tripura.

Referring to by-poll results in a series of tweets, Prime Minister said, "I thank the people of Tripura for reposing faith in @BJP4Tripura's development agenda and blessing our candidates, including CM @DrManikSaha2 Ji with wins in the by-polls. Our Government will continue fulfilling people's aspirations. I laud our Karyakartas for their hard work."

Referring to BJP victory in two Lok Sabha seats of Uttar Pradesh, Modi called it historic. "The by-poll wins in Azamgarh and Rampur are historic. It indicates wide-scale acceptance and support for the double



engine Governments at the Centre and in UP. Grateful to the people for their support. I appreciate the efforts of our Party Karyakartas," he said. Expressing gratitude to voters in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Delhi and Punjab, the Prime Minister said that the BJP will keep working among the people and keep raising issues of public welfare.

Gratitude to all those who voted for @BJP4India in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Delhi and Punjab. We will keep working among the people and keep raising issues of public welfare," Prime Minister Modi added.

# A vote for good governance, says YSRCP on Atmakur win

AMARAVATI | Agencies

Andhra Pradesh's ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) on Sunday said that the massive victory by the party in Atmakur Assembly by-election shows that the people are extending their continuous support to its good governance.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy said that people have voted for the good work being done by his government, and also as a tribute to Mekapati Goutham Reddy, whose death had caused the vacancy.

Industries Minister Goutham Reddy had died of cardiac arrest in February. The YSRCP fielded his brother Vikram Reddy, who won the by-election with a

massive majority of over 83,000 votes.

The chief minister thanked all men and women voters who voted for YSRCP. He tweeted that God's blessings and people's prayers for the government which is doing good works is the biggest protection.

Meanwhile, Minister for Water Resources, Ambati Rambabu said that people have witnessed the good governance and welfare initiatives by Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, which resulted in securing continuous victories, with increasing majority. He said YSRCP is continuing the track record of winning all the elections, including the by-polls for Tirupati Lok Sabha and Badvel Assembly constitu-

cy, and the party has now retained Atmakur with a huge majority.

He said that Vikram Reddy won with a majority of 83,888 votes, surpassing the previous majority of 22,276 votes in 2019.

He said that people always stood by YSRCP irrespective of the evil conspiracies of opposition parties, especially TDP leaders who had even worked as BJP poll agents.

The minister recalled that YSRCP won Tirupati Lok Sabha by-poll with a huge majority of 2.7 lakh votes despite the massive campaigns done by the opposition TDP and Jana Sena. YSRCP had won Badvel Assembly by-election by a whopping majority of 90,228 votes.

# TRIPURA VIOLENCE: CONG TO SEND DELEGATION OF MPS TO STATE

New Delhi: The Congress on Sunday condemned the attack on the party office and decided to send a three-member delegation of MPs, led by its Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, to the state.

The delegation, which also includes Gaurav Gogoi and Naseer Hussain, will visit Tripura on Monday to take stock of the situation and will submit a report. The Congress also demanded an apology from BJP President J.P. Nadda and an investigation by the Home Ministry. In a statement, party General Secretary, Organisation, K.C. Venugopal said that the party "strongly condemns the mindless attack on Congress Bhawan and brutal assault on Tripura PCC President, Birajit Sinha and other Congress workers by BJP goons, after the thumping victory of Congress party candidate Sudip Roy Barman in the Agartala bypoll".

"If the state government is unable to handle law and order then President's Rule will be necessary. We urge the authorities to take strict action against the culprits and ensure safety to Congress Party offices and office bearers," it added.

# Tripura, Jharkhand save Congress blushes in by-polls

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress leader Sudip Roy Barman has saved Congress from embarrassment as he was the lone candidate to win by-polls in Tripura while the other three seats are won by the BJP in the state. The Congress was decimated in Delhi and Punjab while the party did not contest the UP Lok Sabha bypolls.

In Jharkhand, Congress has registered a win in the bypoll increasing the party's tally in the state. Shilpi Neha Tirkey has won but the party lost in Andhra Pradesh with YSRCP sweeping the polls.

The Congress could not win the Sangrur bypoll despite AAP losing the battle with SAD(A)



winning the seat.

In Sangrur, the bypoll was necessitated following the resignation of Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann from Lok Sabha after he was elected as an MLA. Mann had won the Sangrur seat in the last two parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2019.

By-polls were held in four assembly seats in Tripura: Agartala, Jubaraj Nagar, Surma and Town Bordowali. Chief Minister Manik Saha contested from Town Bordowali and has won.

Other three assembly constituencies are Rajinder Nagar in Delhi where AAP defeated BJP, Mandar in Jharkhand which was won by the Congress, and Atmakuru in Andhra Pradesh won by the YSRCP.

# Kerala assembly starts from Monday, likely to be stormy

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM | Agencies

The Kerala assembly season which will commence on Monday is likely to be stormy. The opposition is armed with several issues including the revelation by gold smuggling accused Swapna Suresh against Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his family and the attack on the office of Rahul Gandhi as well as the recent political murders of RSS and SDPI workers.

The drubbing received by the Left Front even after intensive campaigning led by the Kerala Chief Minister will also figure prominently in the discussions. The winning UDP candidate from Thrikkakara bypoll, Uma Thomas, wife of Congress leader, late PT Thomas, will be the second woman presence in the opposition ranks in this session, the other being KK Rema wife of slain RMP leader, TP Chandrashekar. The session is mainly convened to discuss and

pass the demands on grants for the financial year 2022-23.

The one-month-old session will be highly charged up due to the several issues that the opposition will likely raise in the house. The bleeding Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) will be a major subject for discussion in the house. The opposition will charge up the issue of controversial middle man and former journalist meeting the gold smuggling accused Swapna Suresh and boasting of his huge tie-ups including that of the Chief Minister and senior police officers.

The opposition will also take up the issue of police officers indulging in criminal activities including having dealings with the controversial middle man Shaj Kiran. The session that is likely to be concluded on July 27 will also discuss the Silver Line project which is facing stiff resistance from opposition as well as local people.

# PM's mastery at distractions can't hide disasters: Rahul

Rahul Gandhi on Sunday hit out on the Centre after the rupee slid against dollar.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Rahul Gandhi on Sunday hit out on the Centre after the rupee slid against dollar.

In a tweet, he said, "PM's mastery in 'Entire Distraction Science' can't hide these disasters - Rs at 78/\$, \$17 bn LIC value lost, WPI Inflation at 30yr high

Unemployment at all-time high Largest ever bank fraud by DHFL."

"While Indians struggle, the PM is busy planning his next distraction," he added.

Rahul Gandhi has targeted the government over the Agnipath scheme.

"When India faces threats on two fronts, the uncalculated for Agnipath scheme reduces the operational effectiveness of our armed forces. The BJP govt must stop compromising the dignity, traditions, valour & discipline of our forces," he said in his tweet. The Congress leaders are going to protest nationwide on the



Agnipath Scheme on Monday.

Congress' 20 senior leaders and spokespersons will address press meets in 20 cities at 1 p.m. Sunday 'Agnipath ki Baat: Yuwaon se Vishwasghaat'.

"Tmrw @INCIndia will protest in every Assembly constituency against this anti-youth & anti-national security scheme bulldozed thro' without discussion." Jairam tweeted.

# WILL BJP USE BULLDOZERS AGAINST AGNIPATH AGITATORS, ASKS CONG NATIONAL SECY

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In view of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, all the political parties are busy strengthening their strategy.

While the Congress is constantly talking about supporting the youth in light of the Agnipath row, demanding withdrawal of the scheme, the question is how will the party fight the BJP's aggressive Hindutva card?

Talking to IANS, Congress MLA from Bihar and the party's national secretary, Shakeel Ahmed Khan, said: "Rahul Gandhi has said that Hindutva is different from Hinduism. Under this, people have to suffer and there is no such thing as brotherhood. Hinduism is about brotherhood. The Bharatiya Janata Party is presenting an ideology before everyone, the results of which we see every day."

Asked if BJP's use of bulldozers affect the political sphere, Khan said, "It's a strange situation... Will the houses of all those protesting against the Agnipath scheme, damaging national property, be bulldozed?"

Incidents of vandalism and arson came to light from many places. How will they be treated?

"The BJP is indulging in politics of polarisation in India. Bulldozers are being used to harass a section of the society and we all can see it."

Referring to the row over the Gyanvapi mosque, Khan said, "When the issue of Babri Masjid was raised in 1991, the big leaders of BJP had reined it in by saying that the Parliament and the Supreme Court's decisions must be adhered to. But in the matter of Gyanvapi now, they (BJP) see advantage in exploiting the situation."

When asked will the Congress take on the BJP over issues like inflation and unemployment or will Hindutva dominate the discourse, Khan said, "The real issues are unemployment, inflation, farmers' concerns etc. The agenda of the Congress has always been raising the basic issues, such as the progress of the country and brotherhood."

# Guwahati: Rebel Sena MLAs hold meeting; celebrate legislator's b'day

The rebel Shiv Sena MLAs on Sunday held a meeting with their leader Eknath Shinde here at Radisson Blu hotel to take a decision on their next action plan.

GUWAHATI | Agencies

The rebel Shiv Sena MLAs on Sunday held a meeting with their leader Eknath Shinde here at Radisson Blu hotel to take a decision on their next action plan.

The Sena rebels will stay in the Guwahati hotel for a few more days. Sources had earlier said their stay was booked up to June 28 which has now been extended up to June 30. Shine returned from Mumbai to the hotel on Friday

Meanwhile, a video surfaced has where the rebel MLAs are seen celebrating the birthday of Sena legislator Narendra Bhonekar in the Radisson Blu.

Shinde is seen feeding the cake and presenting a bouquet to Bhonekar.

Meanwhile, president of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee Bhupen Borah told the



reporters that he is discussing with the party's legal cell on filing a PIL against Assam government on this matter to the Court.

He had earlier written a letter to Eknath Shinde to vacate the state soon, as their stay in Guwahati diverts the attention of the state government and media from the flood situation in Assam.

He has questioned the state government about "the expenditure that is diverted for MLAs' stay instead of utilising the money for flood victims."

# Bulldozing Muslim-owned property is not Hindutva, says Shankersinh Vaghela

Gandhinagar | Agencies

Former swayam sevak and Jan Sangh activist, and a BJP founder-member, veteran political leader Shankersinh Vaghela said that unleashing violence against Muslims or bulldozing property owned by them cannot be equated with Hindutva because Hinduism doesn't stand for any kind of violence.

Once an associate of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, before they fell out, Vaghela joined RSS when he was a teenager. In 1971, he moved to the Bharatiya Jan Sangh and served as its Gujarat unit general secretary.

He got elected to the sixth Lok Sabha in 1977, when all Jan Sangh members merged with the ruling Janata Party, and was the unified party's state vice-president. After the formation of the Bharatiya Janata Party in 1980, Vaghela served as the party's Gujarat unit general secretary and president.

He is said to have personally visited more than 15,000 villages in his own vehicle, or using public transport, sleeping at temples and village crossings when he used to tour the state, preaching about the RSS philosophy and later, the Jan Sangh.

Vaghela and Modi worked together when Modi was deputed to the state as the party's general secretary (organisation) in 1985, but differences cropped up between them in the run-up to the 1995 elections, after which Modi chose Keshubhai Patel over Vaghela for the chief minister's post. Vaghela, however, did serve as the chief minister for a year in 1996-97, after quitting the BJP.

His revolt in 1995, according to party sources, was not against Keshubhai Patel or his government, but against Modi's style of functioning and interference in the government. Eventually, he joined the Congress, became a Union minister in the first UPA government, served

as Leader of the Opposition in the Gujarat Assembly, and then quit the party in 2017.

Although Vaghela had his ideological roots in RSS shakhas and emerged from the ranks of the Jan Sangh, he's ideologically closer to the more liberal Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who, he says, was so tall that the RSS was not able to impose its thinking on him.

Speaking to IANS, Vaghela said today it could be Hindu-versus-Muslim binary, tomorrow it could be Patel versus Kshatriya, or tribal versus Dalit. "These people are not uniting people, the society, or the nation," he said. "They're here to divide the society and the nation."

In the past, Vaghela would light-heartedly ask, "Will the BJP throw 17 crore Muslims into the sea?" As he put it in his interview with IANS: "Attacking them is not the solution; the solution lies in winning their hearts and bringing them into the mainstream, reconverting them to

Hinduism. If they can't tolerate 17 crore Muslims, how can they dream of 'Akhand Hindustan'." He was quick to add of course that "Akhand Hindustan can never be possible".

Vaghela recalled that when the BJP was formed under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the party had decided to follow the principle of 'Sarva Dharma Sambhava'.

"Vajpayeeji believed in Gandhian socio-economic policies and convinced the party to follow in the Mahatma's footsteps," he added.

He also pointed out that the Jan Sangh was not launched to promote Hindutva or Hinduism. "In 1948, when the then government banned the RSS, its sarsanghchalak M.S. Golwalkar theorised that a political party in power had taken the action, so to protect the RSS and its ideology, a political party needed to be created. That is how under the leadership of Shyamrao Prasad Mukherjee the Bharatiya Jan Sangh was founded in 1951," Vaghela said.



MAHA MINISTER UDAY SAMANT ALSO JOINS REBEL CAMP

In another setback to the besieged Shiv Sena, Maharashtra Higher and Technical Education Minister Uday Samant on Sunday went to join the party rebels in Guwahati.



This makes him the 8th Minister who has shifted allegiance even as Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Minister Aditya Thackeray warned that "traitors" will not be taken back to the party they have backstabbed and left.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In another setback to the besieged Shiv Sena, Maharashtra Higher and Technical Education Minister Uday Samant on Sunday went to join the party rebels in Guwahati.

The development came amid reports emanating from Guwahati that the rebels group now wants to make their leader, Minister Eknath Shinde the new Chief Minister, while Union Minister Raosaheb Danve-Patil claimed that his BJP will form a new government within next 2 to 3 days.

Maha stunner: Thackeray offered CM post to Shinde on May 20, claims Aditya

In a major revelation, Maharashtra Minister Aditya Thackeray on Sunday claimed that Maha Vikas Aghadi's Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had offered the CM's post on a platter to his cabinet colleague Eknath Shinde on May 20.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major revelation, Maharashtra Minister Aditya Thackeray on Sunday claimed that Maha Vikas Aghadi's Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had offered the CM's post on a platter to his cabinet colleague Eknath Shinde on May 20.

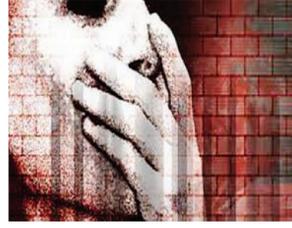
"However, at that time, Shinde had dilly-dallied, was evasive and did not give a proper response... I had heard of some murky goings-on... Exactly a month later on June 20, Shinde and his group started the rebellion in the party," said Thackeray Jr.

He termed as "good riddance" that all the

'muck' has gone out of the party on its own, now leaving it clean, amid a thunderous round of applause.

Thackeray added that the group of MLAs - currently camping in a five-star hotel in Guwahati - are 'traitors' who will not be taken back into the Shiv Sena. He also harked on his father and Chief Minister Thackeray's statement that the party's doors are always open for those who desire to leave or for those wanting to return to the party fold.

Aditya's speech is significant as certain reports emerged from Guwahati that the rebels group now wants Shinde to be made the CM, and the Bharatiya Janata Party's central minister Raosaheb Danve-Patil claiming the will form a new government in the state within next 2-3 days. Issuing a veiled warning to the revolters, Thackeray Jr. also said that the route from Mumbai Airport (Santacruz) to the state Legislature (Nariman Point) goes via



Worli. A traditional Sena bastion in south-central Mumbai, Worli is also the constituency which elected Aditya for the first time in 2019 and thousands had gathered there with tears in their eyes when Thackeray quit the CM's official residence 'Varsha' on June 22 and returned to his private

home. Sena MP and Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut dared the breakaway faction to "quit your legislature seats and face the electorate again" if they had the guts.

"If you are the son of 'one father', then show courage, resign your seats, come face us and fight elections against us. We shall defeat all of you," vowed Raut. He said that just because "the rebels have got Rs 50 crore" doesn't mean that the Shiv Sena is exterminated, vowing the party will fight out and emerge from the mega-crisis threatening to dislodge the MVA. He said that Shinde lost the post of CM

because of the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party's machinations in 2019.

"Shinde would have been made the CM if the BJP had not backtracked on its formula of sharing the top post for two-and-half years with the Sena after the 2019 elections. If BJP had honoured the understanding, Shinde could have become the CM then," said Raut.

Later, the MVA was born with the three-party alliance - Sena - Nationalist Congress Party - Congress and it was at the insistence of NCP President Sharad Pawar and Congress Congress President Sonia Gandhi that Thackeray landed the CM's post.

"Shinde forfeited the post of CM because of the same BJP he is now terming as a 'Maha-Shakti' and trying to destroy the Shiv Sena," said Raut as part of the Sena's mass-contact drive in the past three days in different parts of Mumbai. The Aditya-Raut duo also targeted several other MLAs and ministers -- who pretended to be very close to the Thackeray family and behaved like party loyalists -- but "suddenly backstabbed" to leave the same party now which did a lot for them in their lives and political careers.

Shiv Sena tussle: Shinde, Fadnavis may have met Shah in Vadodara to discuss strategy

▶ EVEN AS THE BJP HAS OFFICIALLY KEPT ITSELF AWAY FROM THE SHIV SENAS INTERNAL TUSSE, IT IS BEING REPORTED THAT REBEL LEADER EKNATH SHINDE, WHO IS CAMPING IN GUWAHATI AND MAHARASHTRA FORMER CHIEF MINISTER DEVENDRA FADNAVIS MAY HAVE MET UNION HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH AT AN UNDISCLOSED LOCATION IN GUJARAT'S VADODARA.

Team Absolute | Vadodara

Even as the BJP has officially kept itself away from the Shiv Sena's internal tussle, it is being reported that rebel leader Eknath Shinde, who is camping in Guwahati and Maharashtra former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis may have met Union Home Minister Amit Shah at an undisclosed location in Gujarat's Vadodara.

The meeting is said to have taken place Thursday or Friday night.

Local party sources were completely in the dark about the development and none of the

office-bearers were in a position to confirm or deny such a meeting. According to sources from the Vadodara airport, two chartered flights and one BSF plane landed on Friday night. One chartered flight had flown from Delhi to Vadodara, which was carrying Eknath Shinde and another chartered flight landed from Mumbai carrying Devendra Fadnavis.

Before these two flights landed, Amit Shah came in a BSF plane and checked in at circuit house. Sources said late night Shah moved out of the circuit house with a minimum security personnel to an undisclosed place, where a meeting took

place among the three.

Sources said the meeting lasted for almost two hours, where every aspect was discussed, like all those camping in Guwahati will stick to their guns and not return to Shiv Sena fold. Even legal aspects were discussed like -- the scenario in case the Deputy Speaker does not recognise the rebel group and acts on Shiv Sena's recommendation of suspending some rebel MLAs.

Sources said two chartered flights took off before 5 p.m. Friday, one headed for Mumbai and another for Delhi. Shah stayed back as he had to attend a sports conclave at Kevadiya Colony on Saturday.

Maha Governor conquers Covid, back home to Raj Bhavan

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari returned to Raj Bhavan after conquering a Covid-19 infection for four days, here on Sunday.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari returned to Raj Bhavan after conquering a Covid-19 infection for four days, here on Sunday. Koshyari, 80, was discharged from the Sir HN

Reliance Foundation Hospital in south Mumbai where he was admitted on June 22. Appearing cheerful as he was welcomed by the Raj Bhavan staff, the Governor said he was feeling "perfectly fine" now - as he prepares to grapple the huge political crisis engulfing the

Maha Vikas Aghadi government.

"I got discharged from the hospital after four days. I am perfectly fine now. However, I have been advised to rest for a couple of days more. I would like to thank all my well-wishers," tweeted Koshyari.

Govt provides 'Y+' security cover to 15 rebel Sena MLAs

The Union government has decided to provide 'Y+' category security cover of armed Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel to 15 rebel Shiv Sena MLAs who have revolted against the Uddhav Thackeray government in Maharashtra.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

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Sources said that 'Y+' category security cover of armed CRPF personnel has been provided to 15 Shiv Sena MLAs which include Prakash Surve, Sadanand Sarvankar, Yogesh Dada Kadam, Pratap

Sarnaik, Ramesh Bornare, Mangesh Kudalkar, Sanjay Shirsat, Latabai Sonawane, Yamini Jadhav, Pradeep Jaiswal, Sanjay Rathod, Dadaji Bhuse, Dilip Lande, Balaji Kalyanar and Sandipan Bhumare.

These leaders have joined Eknath Shinde's camp in the ongoing political crisis in Maharashtra.

The centre's decision came a day after Shinde in a letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray alleged that the security cover provided to the family members of the rebel Shiv Sena MLAs had been

withdrawn.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government had rejected the charges. Shinde claimed to have the support of more than two-thirds of the Shiv Sena MLAs.

Even as the BJP has officially kept itself away from the Shiv Sena's internal tussle, it is being reported that rebel leader Shinde, who is camping in Guwahati and Maharashtra former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis may have met Union Home Minister Amit Shah at an undisclosed location in Gujarat's Vadodara.

MAHA POLITICAL PICKLE: MVA'S 'JOSH' HIGH, REBELS WORRY & BJP WARY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As an unsavoury political 'roganjos' is being vigorously whipped up in Maharashtra for the sixth day, the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi seems high on 'josh', the rebels group holed up in a Guwahati hotel is worried stiff and the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party remains starkly wary.

After the late Monday night scoot by 37 rebels (40, as per claims) to Gujarat and then Assam, with around 17 now left with the Shiv Sena in Mumbai, the MVA tottered on the brink.

It almost appeared that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had decided to hang his boots by vacating his official residence 'Varsha' with family, bags and baggage, returning home to the familiar environs of 'Matoshri' on June 22.

Sensing victory, the rebels camp was upbeat and their leader Minister Eknath Shinde patiently pepped up their cause -- and morale -- with daily meetings/speeches, as the Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress indicated they were resigned to their fate...

It was only by Friday afternoon that the morose MVA suddenly became chirpy and confident, courtesy a heavy dose of 'Vitamin P' -- the NCP President Sharad Pawar -- probably scaring the living daylight of the rebels and the BJP.

The next 48 hours saw the 56-year-old Sena's 'rebirth' -- from a potbellied, slumpy 'tiger' to a



lean and mean cat, more of the latter -- as thousands of its activists, men, women youth, trooped onto the streets to support their besieged leader Thackeray and his three-party alliance. In full form, Thackeray giddy-yapped the new-born 'Tiger', and dared the "traitors group" to come to Mumbai, face him and take his resignation, warned them against 'misusing' the name of the Sena founder, the late Balasaheb Thackeray, and asked the rebels to use their own "baap's (father) name" to solicit votes, etc. Buoyed by the Vitamin 'P', Sena MP and Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut bounced back with vigor and declared how henceforth it would be difficult for the rebels to move around in their constituencies or face the electorate.

While the rebels understood what lay in store for them and extended their Assam stay by a few more days, some over-eager Sainiks in the home-state misunderstood it... and almost like nean-

derthals, pounded the offices of the deserters in Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Nashik, Satara, Beed, Parbhani, Nagpur and other places.

After sacking Shinde as the Shiv Sena Legislature Party leader, the Sena also demanded the disqualification of 16 rebels and Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal served notices to them seeking detailed replies from all by Monday (June 27).

They are: Shinde, Bharat Gogavale, Abdul Sattar, Sandipanrao Bhumre, Prakash Surve, Tanaji Sawant, Mahesh Shinde, Anil Babar, Yamini Jadhav, Sanjay Shirsat, Balaji Kalyanar, Lata Sonawane, Sada Sarvankar, Prakash Abitkar, Sanjay Raimulkar and Ramesh Bornare.

With the breakaway faction's Spokesperson Deepak Kesarkar declaring that they would challenge it in the courts, the next battle is likely to be legal and procedural as both sides prepare for a long-haul. Surprisingly, the BJP -- against whom the need of suspicion points for allegedly masterminding the political upheaval -- looks reluctant to come and grab the centre-stage with the help of the rebels, with no ear-shattering echoes of 'Mee Punha Yaen', audible on the state political horizon, keeping the Shinde group on the edge.

Optimistic of engineering a 'mutiny' among the mutineers group, Raut darkly suggested how "at least 20 MLAs" are in contact with the Sena here from the five-star hotel -- which he compared with the jail-like house of 'Big Boss'!

'Shiv Sena rebellion puzzling, no clarity from either side'

The ranks of dissidents are swelling in Shiv Sena with each passing day and it seems discontent within the party, which was once steadfastly anchored by charismatic Bal Thackeray, is not likely to dissipate soon.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The ranks of dissidents are swelling in Shiv Sena with each passing day and it seems discontent within the party, which was once steadfastly anchored by charismatic Bal Thackeray, is not likely to dissipate soon.

Amid the imbrogio, the anti-defection law - which was enacted not to facilitate defection but to eliminate it - acquires added significance.

Para 4 of the 10th Schedule of the Constitution, the law on defection, says "the merger of the original political party of a member of a House shall be deemed to have taken place if, and only if, not less than two-thirds of the members of the legislature party concerned have agreed to such merger". It stressed that the merger has to be between two political parties.

However, the legal scenario is not simple in the Maharashtra political crisis -- as rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde's faction has not clarified whether it is merging with the BJP, and is rather insisting that it is the

real Shiv Sena, and the Shiv Sena, headed by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, leaving Maha Vikas Aghadi government and joining the BJP does not seem a plausible scenario.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Speaker has issued notices to the 16 rebel MLAs on the disqualification plea by Thackeray's team.

Talking to IANS, senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi said the disqualification of MLAs is a long-drawn process - where notices will be issued to the MLAs, then they will file their responses and present their case before the Speaker. "Then the Speaker will pass an order, which could be challenged in the court... it will be interesting to see what grounds do these MLAs take against their disqualification," he said.

In the Bombay High Court judgment in Girish Chodnaker vs Speaker, Goa Legislative Assembly, it was held that merger of two-third members of a legislative party with another political party would be deemed a merger of the original political parties.

However, senior advocate Aman Lekhi did not agree

with this judgment and added that the rebel Shiv Sena MLAs are not talking clearly on the merger with the BJP.

He said the anti-defection law is not happily worded and the MLAs, while sitting in Guwahati, cannot move a resolution before the Speaker and they have to come to Mumbai. "Neither side (Shiv Sena and the rebel MLAs) is making things clear... they are shadow boxing..." said Lekhi.

In view of para 4 of the 10th Schedule and the high court judgment, it seems that the Shinde faction - with two-third members - cannot become an independent party and to evade disqualification, they would have to merge with the BJP.

Senior advocate Sanjay Hedge said there is no other way - the rebel MLAs will have to merge with the BJP, if they want to avoid disqualification.

He added that the issue of who is the real Shiv Sena or the owner of the party symbol will be decided by the Election Commission. He also contended that it looks the rebel MLAs jumped the ship without checking the legal scenario and after the 2003 amendment to the

anti-defection law, there is no question of split, and only a merger counts.

Senior advocate Dinesh Dwivedi said that, according to clause 2 of the 10th Schedule, it seems that the rebels have voluntarily left the party and they also did not attend the all-party meeting of the Shiv Sena.

Clause 2, which deals with the disqualification on the ground of defection, prescribes disqualification for a member if he has "(a) if he has voluntarily given up his membership of such political party; or (b) if he votes or abstains from voting in such House contrary to any direction issued by the political party to which he belongs or by any person or authority authorised by it in this behalf, without obtaining, in either case, the prior permission of such political party, person or authority and such voting or abstention has not been condoned by such political party, person or authority within fifteen days from the date of such voting or abstention."

Dwivedi said the first question is regarding their disqualification and the issues related to the split and merger will come later.



EDITOR'S SPECS

## AGGRESSION IS THE KEY OF NEO HINDUTVA

The BJP of today is not the BJP of yesterday. The party is now ideologically sharper, more focussed and more aggressive. The BJP nurtured by the trio of former Prime Minister late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi was soft, approachable, amiable and also accepting and forgiving. Even its hardest critics agree that the 'old' BJP was people-friendly and sensitive. The neo-Hindutva being practiced by the new BJP, particularly in Uttar Pradesh which has been its nursery, is not even a shadow of the Hindutva of Vajpayee era that was mild and malleable.

The harsh neo-Hindutva that is now being pursued by the BJP has made its cadres, particularly the youth, unruly, aggressive and even violent at times. Whether it is the Ikhlaq incident where the man was killed because 'fringe elements' suspected he had stored beef in his house, or the Bulandshahr incident where a police officer was killed while trying to control a mob that went berserk on rumours of beef being transported -- it was the saffron cadres who happily indulged in violence. Young leaders in the BJP now use a language that was unheard of two decades ago. "Hum lad ke lenge, chheen ke lenge" is now the most commonly used phrase when it comes to disputes like the Gyanvapi mosque or the Shahi Idgah row. That the bulldozer -- a symbol of destruction and demolition -- has become a mascot for the party. The bulldozer scare is now so magnified that no political leader -- whether from the BJP or the opposition -- is ready to rub the leadership the wrong way. Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav and BSP chief Mayawati have now stopped media interactions and restricted themselves to issuing statements on Twitter. Both are unwilling to take questions or give interviews. Even BJP leaders are wary of giving interviews.

# AMARNATH YATRA: HINDU PILGRIMAGE FACILITATED BY MUSLIMS

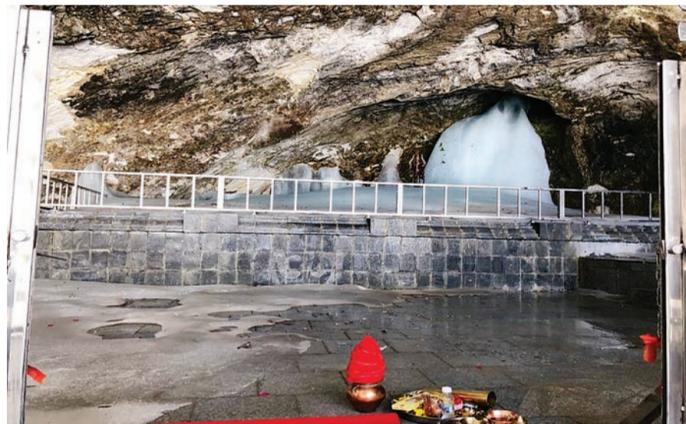
The 43-day-long Amarnath Yatra to the 3,880-metre-high holy cave shrine of Amarnath nestled in Himalayas is set to commence on June 30 from two routes - the traditional 48-km Nunwan route in south Kashmir's Pahalgam and the 14-km shorter Baltal route in central Kashmir's Ganderbal. The Jammu and Kashmir government is expecting nearly eight lakh pilgrims to arrive this year as the pilgrimage remained suspended for two years due to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic.

The annual pilgrimage has been a part of pluralistic ethos of Kashmir for the past hundreds of years. According to folklore, the cave was discovered by a shepherd named Buta Malik, who was a Muslim, in 1850. He had been grazing his cattle in the mountain when a Sufi saint gave him a bag of coal, which turned out to be gold later. He went back to thank the saint but found the cave and the Shiva Linga. Another story states that it was Bhrigu Muni who discovered the Amarnath Shrine.

The length of the Amarnath cave (inward depth) is 19 meters and the width is 16 meters. This cave is spread over an area of approximately 150 feet and is about 11 meters high. The significance of this cave was not only by the creation of natural Shivalinga but also here Lord Shiva told the story of immortality to Goddess Parvathi. Therefore, it is believed that Lord Shiva remains in the Amarnath cave. The holy cave shrine houses a natural lingam made up of snow. The lingam waxes and wanes with the lunar cycle and its considered as a miracle of nature and the power of Lord Shiva. The cave also has two more ice lingams, each one representing Goddess Parvati and Lord Ganesha. The Shivalinga made of ice in the cave is about 10-12 feet high and is the symbol of people's faith and trust.

**'Muslims Part And Parcel'**  
Kashmiri Muslims have been a part and parcel of Amarnath Yatra for the past hundreds of years. They have been facilitating the holy pilgrimage by ferrying pilgrims to the cave shrine on ponies, providing them with tents and other logistic support.

After the Pakistan sponsored insurgency broke out in the Himalayan region in early 1990s terrorists made many attempts to disrupt the yatra by targeting the pilgrims but they were always given a befitting reply by the devotees, who despite facing threats and



intimidations arrived in Kashmir in large numbers to pay obeisance at the holy cave. From 1990 to 2017, Amarnath pilgrims were attacked by the Pakistan sponsored terrorists on 36 occasions. In these terror attacks as many as 53 pilgrims were killed.

Terrorists have not succeeded in keeping locals away from the pilgrimage. Kashmir Muslims have never shied away from providing their services to pilgrims to make yatra successful.

Amarnath Yatra is an auspicious pilgrimage for Hindus but it's managed by Muslims in Kashmir. It's the Muslims who make it possible for Hindus from across the country to reach the holy cave shrine situated in the lap of Himalayas. When the track to holy cave shrine had not been developed locals used to ferry pilgrims to the holy cave shrine in palanquins. Even today the senior citizens and others who cannot travel on ponies are carried by the locals in palanquins.

Kashmiri Muslims are strongly connected with Amarnath Yatra. The pilgrimage is an age old example of Kashmiri's strong composite and inclusive culture. The strong bond of local people with the annual pilgrimage describes the Kashmiri way of life, their ethos and culture. Positive feelings like love and affection. Amarnath Yatra is probably the only pilgrimage in the world which binds Hindus and Muslims so strongly. Devotees are Hindus and organisers are Muslims. The pilgrimage reflects the core

human values of the gentle and peace-loving people of Kashmir and their resolve to accept every religion and culture.

Kashmir's culture is based on love, compassion, common identity, and submission to God regardless of caste and financial position.

Locals associated with yatra every year wait for the pilgrimage to commence as it provides them with a chance to earn their livelihood.

**'Mega Event'**  
This year's Amarnath Yatra is significant in many ways. It's expected to be a mega event.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has chaired three high level meetings in the recent past to ensure that no security breach takes place and the pilgrims don't face any problems. The government has decided to insure every pilgrim for Rs.5 lakh and give all of them unique Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags. Earlier RFIDs were given to vehicles only. The RFID tagging of vehicles will be done at Lakhapur while individual tagging will be done at Jammu.

Incase of heavy rush or stoppage of Yatra due to any reason more than 32 lodgement centres having capacity of 15000 people have been set up. Nearly 20 to 22 langar facilities including 12 at Bhagwati Nagar and other at different locations of Jammu district have been put in place.

Similarly, Kathua has 31 lodgement centres having capacity of more than thousand people, Samba has 22 lodgement centres with 8000 people capacity, Udhampur has 36 lodgement centres with 9000 persons capacity and Ramban has 13 lodgement centres having capacity of 8000 people for accommodation. The Centre has deployed additional 15000 paramilitary men along the pilgrimage route from Lakhapur to holy cave shrine. The entire route will be monitored by drones.

Elaborate arrangements have been put in place. Tented cities have been created and Wi-Fi hotspots have been set up along the yatra route. Eight base hospitals have been set up on the Baltal route while 20 have been put in place on the Pahalgam route. Shri Amarnath Shrine Board has also installed free-of-cost battery car service for pilgrims on the 2.75 km-long Baltal-Domel stretch. The government has also made arrangements for online, live telecasts of the morning and evening Aarti at the holy Amarnath Cave, besides organising religious and cultural programs at the base camp. For the first time in pilgrims can directly fly to Srinagar to Panchtarni, which is the last drop off point, about 6 km from the shrine. As of now, helicopter services were available for the pilgrims from Baltal and Pahalgam to Panchtarni. Pilgrims either walk or ride a pony to the Amarnath shrine from this point. Both Baltal and Pahalgam are about 90 km from Srinagar. This year, a new route is being added - from Budgam (near the Srinagar airport) to Panchtarni. The National Disaster Response Force and the State Disaster Response Force have undergone specialised training to be a part of the Mountain Rescue Teams of J&K Police. The checkpoint functioning has been enhanced and traffic control has been given special impetus so it does not interfere with general public's convenience. With just a few days left for Amarnath Yatra to commence people in Jammu and Kashmir are waiting eagerly for pilgrims to arrive. Their arrival will add to the number of tourists visiting J&K as the pilgrims after performing darshan at the holy cave usually stay back as tourists, which gives boost to the economy.

## international

## 339 kids killed in Ukraine since war began

Since Russia launched its ongoing invasion of Kiev on February 24, at least 339 children have been killed in Ukraine so far, the Prosecutors General Office said.

Kiev | Agencies

Since Russia launched its ongoing invasion of Kiev on February 24, at least 339 children have been killed in Ukraine so far, the Prosecutors General Office said.

In a statement on Saturday, the Office said: "According to official infor-

mation from juvenile prosecutors, 339 children have died 611 have been injured. These numbers are not final as work is underway to establish them in places of active hostilities and in the temporarily occupied and liberated territories."

According to the Prosecutor's General Office, majority of the children were injured in Donetsk (335), followed by Kharkiv (179), Kyiv (116), Chernihiv (68), Luhansk (55), Kherson (52), Mykolaiv (48), Zaporizhzhia (31) and Sumy (17). It also said that bombing and shelling by the Russian armed forces has so far damaged 2,061 educational institutions, 213 of which have been completely destroyed.

## Russia to transfer nuclear-capable missiles to Belarus

St Petersburg | Agencies

Russia will transfer nuclear-capable Iskander-M missile systems to its ally Belarus over the coming months, Russian President Vladimir Putin said.

Putin told Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko at a meeting in St. Petersburg the missile systems "can use both ballistic and cruise missiles, both in conventional and nuclear versions," according to the Kremlin, CNN reported.

Russia launched its February 24 invasion in part from Belarusian territory, which borders Ukraine to the north. Throughout the war, Moscow has used Minsk as a satellite base including for many of Russia's air operations in Ukraine,



according to intelligence collected by NATO surveillance planes.

On Saturday, Ukraine claimed Russian forces had fired multiple missiles on the Kyiv, Chernihiv and Sumy regions from Belarus. In a transcript of the meeting, Lukashenko expressed to Putin his "stress" over what he alleged are

flights by United States and NATO planes "training to carry nuclear warheads" close to Belarus' border, CNN reported.

He asked Putin to consider "a mirrored response" to the flights to convert Russian fighter jets, which are currently deployed to Belarus, to "carry nuclear warheads."

Putin replied that "there is no need" to match the US flights and suggested Belarus could modify its own Su-25 aircraft to be nuclear-capable instead.

"This modernization should be carried out at aircraft factories in Russia, but we will agree with you on how to do this. And accordingly, start training the flight crew," Putin said, CNN reported.

## S Korea, US, Japan finalise plan to hold trilateral summit

Seoul | Agencies

South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol will hold a trilateral meeting with his US counterpart Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Spain this week on the sidelines of a NATO summit, his office said on Sunday.

The trilateral summit, set for Wednesday in Madrid, will be the first such gathering in four years and nine months since the last meeting was held in September 2017 on the margins of a UN General Assembly, reports Yonhap News Agency. No trilateral meeting has since taken place amid badly frayed relations between Seoul and Tokyo. The relations between the two countries have shown signs of a thaw since Yoon took office with a pledge to improve ties with the neighbouring nation, spurring speculation that the President and Kishida

could hold a one-on-one summit in Spain.

But no such meeting, whether it be an official bilateral summit or a pull-aside meeting, is likely to take place, officials said. A four-way summit between South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand is also unlikely to take place, officials said. Yoon plans to depart for Spain on Monday for the NATO summit set for Wednesday and Thursday. The trip will mark his debut on the multilateral diplomatic stage since taking office last month. South Korea is not a member of the military alliance but has been invited as a partner nation, along with other countries that include Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Yoon is expected to hold a series of bilateral meetings with leaders from Canada, Poland, the Netherlands, Denmark and the Czech Republic to discuss ways to expand economic cooperation, according to his office.

## N KOREA HOLDS ANTI-AMERICAN RALLY TO MARK WAR ANNIVERSARY

Seoul: North Korea held an anti-American rally for the third day in a row to mark the 72nd anniversary of the outbreak of the 1950-53 Korean War, with participants vowing to "mercilessly annihilate" the US if it provokes Pyongyang, state media reported on Sunday.

The North has held anti-US rallies since Thursday to mark the war anniversary for the first time in five years, reports Yonhap News Agency. Pyongyang skipped such rallies in 2018 amid a thaw in relations with the US and had not resumed them amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The speakers vehemently denounced the US imperialists for provoking the Korean War to nip in the bud the young DPRK less than two years after its foundation and perpetrating the most hideous massacre and barbaric destruction unprecedented in the world war history," the North's official Korean Central News Agency said in a report.

"They stressed that if the US imperialists dare provoke the DPRK again, oblivious of their bitter defeat in the 1950s, the latter will mercilessly annihilate the imperialists by mobilizing all the invincible physical means it has so far bolstered up," the KCNA said. DPRK stands for the North's official name, Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Saturday's rally was held in front of the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum, which was established to commemorate what Pyongyang calls its victory in the Korean War.

## Turkey's concerns not eased on Finland, Sweden's NATO bid: Erdogan

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that Ankara's concerns over Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO were not responded to with any substantial steps.

Ankara | Agencies

Erdogan told NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in a phone call that Finland and Sweden had to take sincere and tangible steps over the harbouring of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and Syria's Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) within their borders, reports Xinhua news agency.

The President pointed out that the military and industrial sanctions on Turkey should be lifted and not be put back into effect after the accession.

In a separate call, Erdogan told Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson that there was no change of attitude by the country regarding PKK and YPG and it was yet to take solid steps aimed at quelling Turkey's con-



cerns. Erdogan also reiterated Turkey's expectations of lifting all sanctions on the defence and weapons industries. Sweden and Finland formally

applied to join NATO in May following the Russia-Ukraine war that erupted in February.

NATO allies, except for Turkey, have welcomed the two countries' proposals.

Accession of new member states requires consensus among existing NATO members.

Ankara, however, citing the Swedish and Finnish ties with the PKK and other anti-Turkey groups, objected to their entry into the alliance.

The PKK, listed as a terrorist organisation by Turkey, has been rebelling against the Ankara government for more than three decades.

Turkey also accuses the two countries of harbouring members of the Gulen Movement, which Ankara says is behind the failed military coup attempt in 2016.

## Pak faces escalation of power crisis as LNG tenders scrapped

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan is again facing an escalation of power crisis after it failed to agree on a deal for natural gas supply next month.

Tenders for July were scrapped due to high price, and low participation as the nation is already taking action to tackle widespread blackouts, Geo News reported.

State-owned Pakistan LNG Ltd scrapped a purchase tender for July shipments of liquefied natural gas after it received an offer that would've been the most expensive shipment ever delivered to the nation, according to traders with knowledge of the matter.

State Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik has warned of power load-shedding in July and gas shortage in the coming winters in the country.

This is the third time this month that Pakistan has failed to complete an LNG tender for July, and the country's inability to purchase fuel threatens to exacerbate electricity shortages

just as hotter weather boosts air conditioning and power demand, Geo News reported.

"We're adopting an alternate strategy," Zakaria Ali Shah, a spokesman for the Energy Ministry, said in response to questions on the LNG tenders.

He said that Pakistan does not currently have a fuel shortage, adding that the nation can divert supplies to high-priority sectors like power generators in emergency situations.

Pakistan's government is attempting to boost energy conservation, has cut working hours for public servants and ordered shopping malls to factories to shut early in various cities, including Karachi.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif pledged last week to take further steps to end blackouts.

LNG prices have surged as Europe ramps up imports of the super-chilled fuel amid mounting concerns that Russia will cut pipeline gas supply. An outage at a key US export facility has led to further tightening.



# CM CONGRATULATES MP CRICKET TEAM ON BECOMING RANJI CHAMPION

▶ **THIS VICTORY IS NOT ONLY FOR THE TEAM, BUT FOR THE PEOPLE OF MADHYA PRADESH: CHOUHAN**

▶ **RANJI TROPHY CHAMPIONS WILL BE HONOURED IN A DIGNIFIED CEREMONY AT CM HOUSE**

▶ **CM HAD INTERACTED WITH THE TEAM AFTER THEIR WIN AT SEMI-FINALS, HAD BOOSTED THEIR MORALE**

time by defeating Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy 2022 finals. Chouhan said that this is a wonderful, historic and proud moment. He said that this victory is not of the team alone but of eight and a half crore people of Madhya Pradesh. I extend my heartiest congratulations to the entire team including Yash Dubey, Shubham Sharma and Rajat Patidar who scored centuries in this important match and their coach Chandrakant Pandit for their excellent performance. Chief Minister said that by winning the Ranji Trophy Chandrakant Pandit, who has been captain of Madhya Pradesh team earlier has fulfilled his unfulfilled dream of winning Ranji Trophy in 1999, by igniting the strong will power of the players to give such a wonderful performance through his coaching. This dream was not only for them but also for the people of the state. Many congratulations to him and all the team members on behalf of the people of the state.

Chouhan said that the state government is committed not only for the development of cricket but also for the development of all sports and promotion of sportspersons. Last week, I interacted with the players of the Ranji team. They appeared to be quite confident. Captain Aditya Shrivastava, Coach Chandrakant Pandit were absolutely sure that they would be successful. They have given proof of their excellence today. Chief Minister said that no stone will be left unturned for the promotion of sportspersons in Madhya Pradesh. I have already urged the Ranji Cricket team Madhya Pradesh regarding the grand honour ceremony at CM's residence, we will implement it also. The players will be honoured and rewarded in a dignified ceremony. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan watched the live telecast of the ongoing Ranji Trophy final match between Madhya Pradesh and Mumbai in Bengaluru today. He encouraged the players. After planting saplings in Smart Park Chouhan told media representatives that the team of Madhya Pradesh took the lead on the first day also and on the second day the players of Mumbai were out early. The team of Madhya Pradesh is continuously marching on the path of victory. Chouhan said that the children of the state have talent, ability and potential. Madhya Pradesh has a lot of talent. Our players can do wonders if they get the facilities.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan extended best wishes and congratulated all players of Madhya Pradesh team on the historic achievement of winning Ranji Trophy for the first

# 78 percent voting in first phase of three-tier Panchayat elections: RE-POLLING ORDERED AT 7 POLLING STATIONS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the first phase of the three-tier Panchayat General Election-2022, peaceful polling was held in 115 development blocks. Overall voting was 78 percent. Among them, 77 percent are female, 79 percent male and 9.8 percent are other voters. Highest 87.7 percent voting took place in Rajgarh and Agar-Malwa districts. The lowest voter turnout was 65.7 percent in Rewa district. In Shivpuri district, maximum 89.9 percent female voters exercised franchise.

and district panchayat members), polling station no. 52 in Kanya middle school, Pachokhara of Janpad Panchayat Raun of Bhind district for the post of Sarpanch and district panchayat member, polling station no 80 Vinwara of Janpad Panchayat Niwari of District Niwari for all posts, polling station no. 330 and 257 of Sihawal Janpad panchayat in Sidhi district for district panchayat member, re-polling will be held for all the posts in District Panchayat Damoh's polling station number 263 in primary school building Kankar of Damoh district and in Amgaon Bada polling booth number 134 of Janpad

Panchayat Kareli in Narsinghpur district for the post of Panch. Earlier, re-polling has been ordered for all the posts of polling station no. 300 of gram panchayat Hatlai of Janpad panchayat Datia of Datia district, for the post of Panch in polling station number 229 of gram panchayat Punjura of Bagli Janpad panchayat, Dewas district and for the post of Panch in polling booth no. 34 of Harnia Khedi, gram panchayat of Dr. Ambedkar Nagar Mhow Janpad Panchayat of Indore district. In this way, orders for re-polling have been given in a total of 10 polling stations.

Meanwhile, Secretary State Election Commission Rakesh Singh has informed that orders have been given for re-polling in 7 polling stations following complaints of irregularities. The polling held on June 25 at these centers has been declared void. Re-polling will be held on June 27 from 7 am to 3 pm. Re-polling will be held in polling station No. 22 Rampuria of Bawdipura, Gram Panchayat of Rajgarh Janpad Panchayat of Rajgarh district for all the posts (panch, sarpanch, Janpad

# OPINION POLLS WILL NOT BE BROADCAST FROM JULY 4 TO 13

**Bhopal:** In view of the first phase of voting in the urban body elections on July 6 and the second phase on July 13, 2022, there will be a ban on the broadcast of opinion polls in print and electronic media from July 4 to 5 pm of July 13. Secretary SEC Rakesh Singh informed that the results of exit polls can also be published and broadcast only half an hour after the conclusion of the second phase of polling on July 13, 2022 at 5 pm.

# CONGRESS HAS BRITISH GENES, NEEDS TO END: VD SHARMA

■ Sharma, while talking to the media, fiercely attacked the opposition and said, "The genes of British will not end till Congress ends. Even today, the genes of the British are inside the Congress."



Sharma made the claim at the inauguration of the divisional media center of the party in Jabalpur. Taking a dig at the opposition for soft Hindutva, VD Sharma said Congress is not soft Hindutva but soft

When asked about the political crisis of Maharashtra, Sharma said the government which was currently running in Maharashtra was not a natural alliance because if we talk about the people of Maharashtra, the people there voted for the BJP from the very beginning.

"Shiv Sena also got votes in the name of BJP and only in the name of PM Modi. But Shiv Sena, motivated by selfishness, entered into an alliance with other parties only to get the power. Maharashtra politics is taking shape right direction now." Not only this, but Sharma also took a jibe at the arrival of actor Sonu Sood, who was being called by Congress to Indore for campaigning. "Earlier, Prashant Kishor was coming, and now Sonu Sood. Every BJP worker is Sonu Sood in his own right. No matter who comes on the soil of Madhya Pradesh, the trust of the people will remain with the BJP."

Team Absolute | Jabalpur.

BJP state president VD Sharma on Sunday lashed the opposition accusing them of playing a Divide-and-Rule game in the country. Sharma, while talking to the media, fiercely attacked the opposition and said, "The genes of British will not end till Congress ends. Even today, the genes of the British are inside the Congress."

Naxalism and soft terrorism. "The manner in which the opposition has trained and spread lies about the Agniveer plan is an example of the British' Divide-and-rule policy. They will only lie and can cheat," added he.

# SDM Told by MPHC Take Decision On Mosque Construction

■ The construction of the mosque was stayed by the Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of Kevlari on March 23 this year and it was challenged by the local Auliya Ahl-e-Sunnat Committee through its president Firoz Khan.

objections related to the construction of a mosque on private land, which has been stayed, within two months. The construction of the mosque was stayed by the Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of Kevlari on March 23 this year and it was challenged by the local Auliya Ahl-e-Sunnat Committee through its president Firoz Khan. The committee, in its plea, had said the SDM must hear it as it wants to raise objections to the complaints against the construction. "My client is constructing a mosque on private land for which the Bhu Adhikar Patra has been issued by the district collector. Some persons have made complaints on different grounds to stop construction," Amanulla

Usmani, counsel for the petitioner, said. "As per Section 7(2) of Madhya Pradesh Sarvajanic Dharmik Bhawan Tatha Sthan Viniyaman Adhiniyam 1984, only the district collector has the authority to order halting of construction of a mosque if norms are contravened," Usmani added. A single bench of the MP HC of Justice Vivek Agarwal directed the Kevlari SDM to hear the applicant and decide the pending application within two months. The order, which was passed on June 22, also said the court was not expressing any opinion on the merits of the case. It also said the advocate for the state Sudeep Chatarjee was in agreement.

# PM MODI REACHES MUNICH TO ATTEND G-7 SUMMIT

**Bhopal:** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has extended his best wishes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on reaching Munich to attend the G-7 summit. CM Chouhan said that at a time when the whole world is aspiring for peaceful coexistence and development, practical ideas inspired by Prime Minister Modi's "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah" (may everyone be happy) will show the path of prosperity and happiness to the global community. It is noteworthy that Modi reached Munich today to participate in the G-7 Summit, where he was accorded a grand welcome. Modi will also address a community event in Munich.

# AAP issues service promissory note ahead of municipal elections

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Aam Aadmi Party, which is contesting the municipal election for the first time in Madhya Pradesh, released its service promissory note after holding a press conference at the state office in Subhash Nagar. Releasing the note, state in-charge Mukesh Goyal said that the Service Promissory Note is the most important document for the Aam Aadmi Party. "AAP is participating in the urban body elections for the first time with the aim of providing corruption-free administration in Madhya Pradesh. After victory in the urban bodies, the party will pay special attention to the management and maintenance of public properties with the help of local civic committees along with getting rid of corruption and making the cities of Madhya Pradesh clean - healthy - beautiful - accessible - safe; We will make it green," said Mukesh.AAP



state head Pankaj Singh, present on the occasion, accused the ruling BJP of intimidating AAP candidates in MP. To add, party mayoral candidate Rani Vishwakarma had withdrawn nomination at the eleventh hour. Party had complained of threats to the state election commission and police. Pankaj Singh said, "The Aam Aadmi Party does not consider the service-voice letter as just a piece of paper like other manifesto political parties. Taking inspiration from Arvind Kejriwal's Delhi model and consulting local citizens, the

party has prepared this service-voice letter, whose main objective is to provide corruption-free, sensitive, responsible, and transparent urban administration to serve the common man." On this occasion, state in-charge Mukesh Goyal and state president Pankaj Singh welcomed Akshay Hunka and his colleagues to the party. While talking to the media, Hunka said, "It seems the Congress party is committed to destroying itself. You can't stop anyone who is resolved to commit suicide." Notably, he and other volunteers had extended support to Congress ahead of the 2018 assembly polls. State in-charge Mukesh Goyal and State President Pankaj Singh along with Manifesto Committee President Azad Singh Dabas, Shyam Verma Bhagwat Singh Rajput State Spokesperson Faraz Khan Hashim Ali were present at this press conference.

# CM PLANTS NEEM, BANYAN AND KACHNAR SAPLINGS



**Bhopal:** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Neem, Banyan and Kachnar saplings in the Smart City Garden today. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan planted a neem sapling on the 9th anniversary of news channel IBC24 along with Sudhir Dandotia of the news channel and the banyan sapling with senior journalist Pawan Devalia on his marriage anniversary. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, the representative of Team SOS India planted a sapling of Kachnar with Mohit Patel, Amit Shukla, Devraj Tripathi, Adi Vaishnavi and Kumari Ashraya Singh. Purnima Devalia, Archana Upadhyay, Vandana Kaushik, Kumari Palak Devalia, Shantanu Upadhyay and Prabhag Devalia also participated in the plantation. Banyan has religious significance among the saplings planted today, besides according to Ayurveda the treatment of many diseases is possible from the banyan tree. Similarly, neem rich in antibiotic elements is known as the ultimate medicine. Small or medium height trees of Kachnar are found everywhere in India. Nature has made many plants and trees rich in medicinal properties, among them Kachnar is one.

# From singers to SUVs, MP panchayat polls create a cottage industry

With the panchayat and municipal polls in Madhya Pradesh, many small size businesses especially those dealing in products required for the election campaign have witnessed a surge. Also, many unemployed youth have got some work to do with an opportunity to earn money from the candidates contesting the polls.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

With the panchayat and municipal polls in Madhya Pradesh, many small size businesses especially those dealing in products required for the election campaign have witnessed a surge. Also, many unemployed youth have got some work to do with an opportunity to earn money from the candidates contesting the polls. Local businesses that received a boost during the elections include sweet shops, travel agencies, printing (posters, banners) and recordings. Local singers have also got ample opportunity to make money from recording songs and slogans for candidates. Usually, in gram panchayat elections candidates go door-to-door for campaigning, however, with the changing trends and strategies, candidates for the sarpanch post are also using loudspeakers for campaigning like in the assembly and general elections. Sarpanch candidates who are using loudspeakers for campaigning are mostly youth

who believe in new trends and are closely connected with urban areas. Many sarpanch candidates using loudspeakers spoke to IANS. 34-year-old Pradumn Dube, who is a candidate for the sarpanch post from Sar gram panchayat in Rewa district, said, "I am using loudspeakers for campaigning because I want to reach each and every resident of my village. Here in the rural areas, you can easily meet men but it is very difficult to meet women. Most of the women cast their votes on the advice of their men. Women should decide their candidates on their own." People running travel agencies, especially in the remote areas, would normally struggle for customers for their vehicles, but during this election they have many customers. Even a zila (district) panchayat candidate has booked at least 10 four-wheelers for campaigning. Many candidates who delayed booking four-wheelers are now forced to hire them on double charges. "I have 16 four-wheelers, including Safari, Bolero, Marshal and these

days these vehicles are in demand. I have arranged 15 more four-wheelers on contract to earn money during this election," said Rajiv Singh, who runs a travel agency in Rewa. A local singer (Bagheli dialect) Raj Kumar told IANS that he charges between Rs 15,000 to Rs 20,000 for five songs for the candidates. "I have been recording songs for local candidates for the past several years. Now, more and more people are using loudspeakers and songs for campaigning. It has been two weeks, our entire team is working day-night and of course getting money for work," Raj Kumar said. Unemployed youth have also got some work during the elections and an opportunity to earn some money. In both rural and urban areas, youth are associated with candidates of their choice and are campaigning for them. IANS also observed that liquor has become a crucial item to get support during the elections in Madhya Pradesh. The colonies of tribals, ST/SC are the main targets where candidates distribute liquor.

# TWO MINOR BROTHERS DROWN IN VILLAGE POND IN CHHINDWARA

**Chhindwara:** The incident occurred on Saturday evening in Mandai village located around 65 kms from the district headquarters, Damua police station in-charge Kaushal Surya said. Two minor brothers drowned in a pond at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara district when they were playing there, police said on Sunday. The incident occurred on Saturday evening in Mandai village located around 65 kms from the district headquarters, Damua police station in-charge Kaushal Surya said. "Two brothers aged 3 and 4 years, had stepped out of home to play during the rains. When they didn't return for a long time, their family members began looking for them and spotted their bodies floating in a pond in the village," he said. On being informed, the police reached the spot and fished out the bodies. The exact reason behind the death could be known after receiving the post-mortem report, he said. Further investigation is underway, he said, adding that bodies were handed over to the family after post-mortem.



# Hip-hop girl group XG to deliver their first ever live performance

Seoul | Agencies

**H**ipHop/R&B girl group XG have announced they will perform live for the first time. This will take place on YouTube on June 29, the release date of XG's second single, 'Mascara'.

A watch page was added to XG's YouTube channel titled 'XG Mascara Live Stage'.

A teaser video for this live performance has also been released.

Fans from all over the world have been eagerly awaiting XG's live performance since their debut in March, so this is definitely one to watch.

XG's first live performance, 'XG Mascara Live Stage', will be broadcast on June 29 at 17:30 Japan time. The music video will be released on the same day.

A teaser for XG's second single, 'Mascara' drew an excited reaction from fans. We can't wait for the energy and dynamism XG will bring to the world this time round.



## Jungkook, Charlie Puth collaboration tops iTunes charts in 93 countries

Los Angeles | Agencies

**L**eft and Right', a collaboration single by BTS member Jungkook and US singer-songwriter Charlie Puth, has topped iTunes charts in 93 countries, the group's agency said Saturday. Big Hit Music said the uplifting summery song released the previous day ranked No. 1 on iTunes Top Songs charts in 93 countries, including the United States, Canada, Denmark, Sweden and France, Yonhap news agency reported.

The music video for the song has garnered about 15 million views on YouTube as of Saturday morning, the company said.

The tune, produced by Puth, will be included on his third full-length album, 'Charlie,' set for release in the second half of the year, according to Warner Music. Their collaboration came days after the South Korean septet announced a plan to take a break from group activities to focus on solo projects. The two artists performed together on the stage of a South Korean music awards show in 2018.



## Barbara calls Prince William 'perfect candidate' for next James Bond

Los Angeles | Agencies

Producer Barbara Broccoli has quipped that Duke of Cambridge, Prince William is the "perfect candidate" to become the next James Bond.

Broccoli and her sibling Michael Wilson were honored with CBEs from the Duke at the Buckingham Palace this week, reports aceshowbiz.com.

When asked who she'd like to see replace Daniel Craig in the iconic spy role, she said the Duke of Cambridge "ticks all the boxes".

According to The Mirror, she said "Unfortunately, the person we just met isn't available. He's occupied, unfortunately, but he would be the perfect candidate."

"(He) ticks all the boxes. But he's not available, sadly. So we're still on the hunt."

It was recently claimed that Idris Elba is back in the running to play Bond.

The 'Luther' actor was believed to have stepped back from replacing Craig as the suave spy and had instead spoken to producers about potentially appearing as the

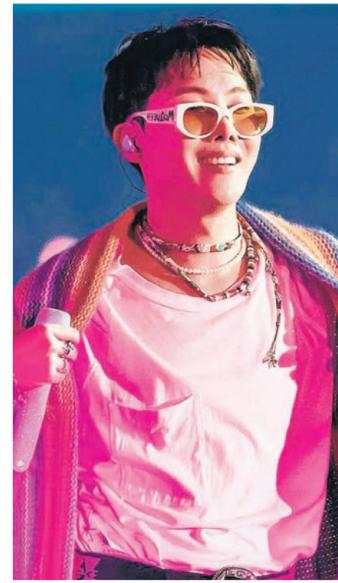
villain in the next movie, but he's once again under consideration for the role of 007 after scoring favourably in market research.

A source told The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column that "Idris has long been in talks to play a role in the next era of James Bond's story and last year was being considered for a role as an antagonist".

"However, talks surrounding him playing the lead have started again as producers realised how popular he would be after carrying out secret market research," she continued.

"He ranked highly among the diverse group of movie buffs invited to participate in it. They didn't want to see him as a nemesis - they want him as the hero."

Earlier this year, Idris had been in the frame for the iconic role. "We know Idris, I'm friends with him. He's a magnificent actor," she said. "You know, he has been part of the conversation, but it's always difficult to have a conversation when you have somebody in the seat."



## BTS' J-Hope to drop solo album 'Jack in the Box' next month

Seoul | Agencies

**K**-Pop superband BTS' member J-Hope is all set to unveil his maiden solo album 'Jack in the Box' on July 15.

The first single will drop on July 1, reports Variety.

According to the official announcement, 'Jack in the Box' lends voice to J-Hope's aspirations to break the mold and grow further.

The album represents J-Hope's own musical personality and vision as an artist

In making the announcement of solo projects earlier this month, J-Hope said he sees it as a healthy step.

"I think we should spend some time apart to learn how to be one again," he said. "I hope you don't see this as a negative thing, and see it as a healthy plan. I think BTS will become stronger that way."

Earlier this week, the group's new compilation album 'Proof' became their sixth album to debut atop the Billboard 200 chart, despite the drama that accompanied its release. Four days before it dropped, the group announced they would be taking a break to focus on their solo careers.

## 'ELVIS' OPENING AND 'TOP GUN: MAVERICK' BATTLING FOR NO. 1

Los Angeles | Agencies

**I**t's a 20th century showdown at the box office this weekend, with 'Elvis' contending against 'Top Gun: Maverick' for the top spot on domestic charts.

Director Baz Luhrmann's biopic about the King of Rock and Roll is projected to draw \$30 million from 3,906 theatres in its opening. It would be the second-strongest North American opening of the Aussie filmmaker's career, coming in behind the \$50 million debut of his 2013 adaptation 'The Great Gatsby', reports Variety.

The film, which stars Austin Butler and Tom Hanks, could also mark the highest non-franchise domestic opening since the onset of COVID-19, potentially topping the \$30.4 million debut of Paramount's 'The Lost City' earlier this spring. It's a solid start for 'Elvis'.

Variety chief film critic Owen Gleiberman wrote that the actor "has bedroom eyes and cherubic lips and nails the king's electrostatic moves," though "his resemblance to 'Elvis' never quite hits you in the solar plexus."

'Elvis' has drawn a favourable 68 per cent approval aggregate from top critics on Rotten Tomatoes; audiences also seem to be receptive, with the film scoring an "A-" grade from research firm CinemaScore.

Those are two strong signs for 'Elvis', which will need to show some staying power in order to recoup its production budget of \$85 million from domestic theatres. The film clocks in with a hefty runtime of 159 minutes -- though that's only 12 minutes longer than last week's box office victor 'Jurassic World Dominion', reports Variety.

As it documents the life of a mid-20th century icon, the biopic is expected to skewer older

than a franchise play; 60 per cent of the film's audience has been reported to be older than 35 years old. Word-of-mouth becomes a key factor in determining the financial success of releases like

'Elvis'. Even with Luhrmann's film drawing in a moderate opening, the biopic faces some steep competition for the No. 1 spot at the domestic box office, as 'Jurassic World Dominion', 'Lightyear' and the summer box office's tour de force, 'Top Gun: Maverick', all continue to draw audiences. 'Top Gun: Maverick' refuses to back down from domestic charts.

Paramount is projecting a \$30 million haul for its follow-up to the 1986 'Top Gun', marking a spectacular 33 percent decline from its previous outing. That would be the second-biggest fifth domestic weekend for a movie that debuted in wide release, coming in behind 'Avatar', which grossed an additional \$42 million at this point in its run.

'Maverick' will push its domestic gross past \$520 million through Sunday as the film sets its sights on surpassing a \$1 billion worldwide gross in the coming days.

Los Angeles | Agencies

**S**inger Olivia Rodrigo used her set at England's Glastonbury Festival to slam the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade on Friday, in the same terms as Phoebe Bridgers did at the festival a day earlier.

"I'm devastated and terrified. So many women and so many girls are going to die because of this," she said, as reported in the Guardian, reports Variety.

"I wanted to dedicate this next song to the five members of the Supreme Court who have showed us that at the end of the day, they truly don't give a shit about freedom."

The song is for the justices: Samuel Alito, Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch, Amy Coney Barrett, Brett Kavanaugh. We hate you! We hate you."

She then brought out British singer Lily Allen and performed the song, "F\*\*k You."

"This is actually my first Glastonbury and I'm sharing this stage with Lily, this is the biggest dream come true ever," Rodrigo said.

"But I'm also equally as heartbroken about what happened in America yesterday," Rodrigo said.

Phoebe Bridgers, who has been outspoken about the battle

over abortion rights since news of Roe v. Wade's impending overturn by the Supreme Court was first leaked earlier this year, made no bones about her feelings during her set at the Glastonbury festival in England on Friday. She concluded: "F\*\*k that shit. F\*\*k America. Like, f\*\*k you. All these irrelevant old motherf\*\*\*\*s trying to tell us what to do with our f\*\*king bodies."



**OLIVIA RODRIGO JOINS CHORUS AGAINST US ABORTION RULING**

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Georgina Rodriguez



## MADHYA PRADESH CLINCH FIRST RANJI TROPHY TITLE; DEFEAT MUMBAI BY SIX WICKETS IN FINAL

It was a historic Sunday at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium for Madhya Pradesh as they defeated Mumbai by six wickets in the final to clinch their maiden Ranji Trophy title.

Bengaluru | Agencies

It was a historic Sunday at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium for Madhya Pradesh as they defeated Mumbai by six wickets in the final to clinch their maiden Ranji Trophy title.

The historic win was fashioned by centuries from Yash Dubey, Shubham Sharma and Rajat Patidar in the first innings and after Mumbai were all out for 269 in their second innings on day five, Sharma and Patidar helped them chase down 108 in 29.5 overs to make Sunday an unforgettable day for Madhya Pradesh.

The victory is also another feather in the cap of Chandrakant Pandit's glittering coaching CV in domestic cricket, after previously guiding Mumbai (thrice) and Vidarbha (twice) to Ranji Trophy titles. Co-incidentally, Pandit had missed winning the Ranji Trophy as the Madhya Pradesh captain in 1998/99 at this very venue and 23 years later, the stars aligned for him to win the trophy as its head coach.

The pursuit of 108 got off to a rocky start for Madhya Pradesh as Dhawal Kulkarni got one to sneak through Yash Dubey's defence and downed the middle stump. Shubham Sharma and Himanshu Mantri ran some quick singles and kept the scoreboard ticking despite no boundaries coming.

The introduction of off-spinner Tanush Kotian opened the floodgates for Madhya Pradesh, with Mantri drilling him down the ground, followed by a fine paddle sweep for two boundaries. When Kotian returned for his third over, Mantri crunched a drive past non-striker for another boundary.

Against Shams Mulani, Mantri had swept



and survived as the top-edge landed wide of square leg. But in the left-arm spinner's next over, Mantri again tried to sweep, but the ball brushed past his foot to hit the stumps. Mulani returned to take out Parth Sahani cheaply.

Sharma and Rajat Patidar, who was greeted with 'RCB, RCB' chants from the crowd, rotated the strike well against Mulani and Kotian apart from a near run-out of the latter. It was the introduction of pacer Mohit Awasthi brought boundaries for Madhya Pradesh, with Patidar driving on the up between extra cover and mid-off, followed by a cracking punch down the ground.

Sharma took the third boundary of the over by bisecting mid-wicket and mid-on with perfection through his pull. In a bid to finish the chase quickly, Sharma reached out to slog-

sweep, only for the ball to be caught by a forward diving point. Patidar dabbed Sarfaraz Khan through backward point before taking a single through the same region to give Madhya Pradesh their first Ranji Trophy title.

Earlier, left-arm spinner Kumar Kartikeya Singh scalped four wickets while conceding 98 runs as Mumbai were bowled out for 269 in 57.3 overs at lunch. Mumbai came out with an intention to get quick runs but barring Sarfaraz and Suved Parkar, they did not get as much runs they had expected on the last day of the final. They were also hurt by the fact that they lost wickets at crucial intervals, including two run-outs.

Resuming from overnight score of 113/2, Parkar swept the first ball of the day for a boundary off Kumar Kartikeya Singh. But Madhya Pradesh, who resorted to bowling

wide lines, got a breakthrough when Gaurav Yadav made a mess of Armaan Jaffer's stumps.

With Madhya Pradesh's game plan quite clear - spinners to bowl on leg stump line and fast bowlers to bowl in the wide outside the off-stump region, they managed to keep Mumbai quiet for six overs. But Sarfaraz had other ideas, sweeping Parth Sahani twice for four and six.

Parkar welcomed Anurag Agarwal by walking down the pitch and driving through extra cover before a misfield at point for four gave him his half-century. But Parkar was out in the very next over, missing the flatter ball from Kartikeya and lost his off-stump. Three balls later, Kartikeya had another wicket when Yashvi Jaiswal, who didn't open due to ankle injury, heaved an expansive slog to short third man.

Sarfaraz and Mulani were providing stability for Mumbai before a huge mix-up caused the run-out of the latter for a non-existent single. In a bid to go big, Sarfaraz slog-swept an outside off-stump ball from Sahani but the top-edge went straight to deep mid-wicket.

Sarfaraz's dismissal at 45 meant he finishes the season with 982 runs from nine innings at an average of 122.75. Kartikeya and Sahani wiped off rest of the tail to give Madhya Pradesh a target of 108 for their first-ever Ranji Trophy triumph, which they achieved with more than a session left.

Brief Scores: Mumbai 374 all out in 127.4 overs and 269 all out in 57.3 overs (Suved Parkar 51, Sarfaraz Khan 45; Kumar Kartikeya Singh 4/98, Parth Sahani 2/43) lost to Madhya Pradesh 536 all out in 177.2 overs and 108/4 in 29.5 overs (Himanshu Mantri 37, Rajat Patidar 30 not out; Shams Mulani 3/41, Dhawal Kulkarni 1/7) by six wickets

### RANJI TROPHY FINAL: IT IS THE MOMENT OF A LIFETIME FOR ME, SAYS MP CAPTAIN SHRIVASTAVA

Being the captain of a Madhya Pradesh team winning the 2021/22 Ranji Trophy is a moment of a lifetime, said a jubilant skipper Aditya Shrivastava.



Bengaluru | Agencies

Being the captain of a Madhya Pradesh team winning the 2021/22 Ranji Trophy is a moment of a lifetime, said a jubilant skipper Aditya Shrivastava.

In his first year as a skipper of the side, Shrivastava has now joined the list of Ranji Trophy winning captains.

"Completely ecstatic (on winning Ranji Trophy). Generation kind of time has gone by since MP has won the Ranji Trophy for the first time. It is the moment of a lifetime for me. The emotions are deep, we are trying to laugh it out but we are extremely emotional from the inside," said Shrivastava after the match. Shrivastava acknowledged the role of veteran head coach Chandrakant Pandit in learning about leadership in cricket and importance of sticking to the processes.

"This has been my first year as captain and whatever I know about leading a side is from Chandrakant Sir. I would like to continue this. The stage is going to get to

our mind but we have to stick to the process, that is what has got us here and will keep us here. That is the mantra we were speaking about in the meetings too."

In a couple of months' time, the domestic season will again begin and Madhya Pradesh will have the task of defending the Ranji Trophy title, of which Shrivastava is fully aware. "It is a good group coming through as we have been playing together from 2013. There is a good mix of youngsters and experienced players. Doing it once was not at all easy but it is going to be tougher to do it again."

Madhya Pradesh batter Shubham Sharma, named Player of the Match for his 116 in the first innings and 30 in the chase of 108 on final day, was happy that his best batting effort came in the title clash.

"The entire team as well as I am emotional, and happy. (Chandrakant Pandit) Sir is crying the most. He asked me to not take things lightly after I got out in the first innings. I took painkillers (after the shoulder injury in a nasty collision), and it was fine.

## Archery World Cup: India women settle for silver in recurve team competition

The Indian women's recurve team of Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat and Simranjeet Kaur settled for a silver medal at Stage 3 of the Archery World Cup 2022 in Paris, France, on Sunday.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian women's recurve team of Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat and Simranjeet Kaur settled for a silver medal at Stage 3 of the Archery World Cup 2022 in Paris, France, on Sunday.

The Indian trio lost 1-5 in the final to Chinese Taipei, comprising Rio 2016 Olympics bronze medallist Lei Chien-Ying, Peng Chia-Mao and Kuo Tzu Ying.

India began the match against Chinese Taipei on even terms with scores tied at 27 each after the first three arrows. However, a 7 in the fourth shot saw India concede the momentum and trail 0-2 after the first set. India made a comeback in the next set by hitting two 10s and four 9s. However, Chinese Taipei, despite an 8 in their second attempt, shot three



10s, including an X, to keep the three-point advantage intact and lead 3-1 at the halfway stage.

With their task cut out, the trio of Deepika, Ankita and Simranjeet could not match the consistency of their rivals and gave away two set points in the third set and lost the match 1-5.

Earlier in the semifinals, the 13th-seeded Indian trio defeated eighth seeds Turkey 5-3 after sweeping Great Britain 6-0 in the last eight. The Indian team beat Ukraine 5-1 in the earlier round. However, Indian recurve archers drew a blank in the individual events in Paris.

This was Tokyo Olympian and former world No. 1 recurve archer Deepika Kumari's first international outdoor tournament since finishing fourth at the World Cup Final last September.

Deepika, currently ranked third in the world, had lost the national trials after a disappointing campaign at Tokyo Olympics. Subsequently, she was sidelined for the previous World Cups this year.

This was India's third medal at the Stage 3 Archery World Cup in Paris. Earlier on Saturday, Asian Games gold medallist Abhishek Verma combined with Jyothi Surekha Vennam to win a gold medal in the mixed compound event. Jyothi, the world No. 3 compound archer, also won silver in the women's individual compound archery event, an olympics.com report said. India are now placed second on the Archery World Cup 2022 medals table with four gold, three silver and three bronze medals. South Korea, with six gold medals, are on top while Great Britain are third with four gold medals, two silver and one bronze. The fourth stage of the Archery World Cup will be held in Medellin, Colombia from July 18 to 24. The Archery World Cup Final will take place in Tlaxcala, Mexico on October 15-16.

## 'This is truly a historic day': Sehwal, Jay Shah, Shivraj Singh Chouhan laud MP for maiden Ranji Trophy title

Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah and former Indian cricketer Virender Sehwal congratulated Madhya Pradesh on winning the maiden Ranji Trophy title on Sunday.

Bengaluru | Agencies

Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah and former Indian cricketer Virender Sehwal congratulated Madhya Pradesh on winning the maiden Ranji Trophy title on Sunday.

Madhya Pradesh on Sunday scripted history and captured their maiden Ranji Trophy title, defeating favourites Mumbai in the finals by six wickets at M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

Jay Shah lauded the "terrific performances" while Sehwal said Madhya Pradesh deserved all the praises for their hard work in the tournament.

"Congratulations Madhya Pradesh on winning the #RanjiTrophy2022! We've witnessed some terrific performances throughout the season. Great efforts by everyone @BCCI for ensur-



ing another successful Ranji season amidst the pandemic," Jay Shah tweeted.

"Many congratulations to Madhya Pradesh on winning the Ranji Trophy. Great focus and determination to beat 41-time champion Mumbai. MP deserves all the laurels and glory, have some bright talent and this is truly a historic day for them," Sehwal tweeted. The win for Madhya Pradesh was so sweet that even MP Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan couldn't stop himself from lauding the exceptional performance of the side.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan penned a congratulatory

note for the Madhya Pradesh team on the Koo app.

"We are the champions," he captioned the post.

Meanwhile, former Indian spinner Prayagn Ojha also congratulated the side on maiden Ranji Trophy title win.

"Congratulations team #MadhyaPradesh for winning the tournament and very well tried team #mumbai #RanjiTrophy2022," Ojha said on Koo app.

The victory on Sunday is more precious as it comes over Mumbai who had won the title 41 times and were the favourites coming into the summit clash.

## PM Modi hails Mithali Raj, calls her an inspiration to many



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday called Mithali Raj an inspiration to many and conveyed his best wishes to the legendary former Indian skipper who announced her retirement earlier this month.

Having made her debut as a 16-year-old in 1999, Mithali's career spanned nearly 23 years across four different decades during which time she became the central cog in the growth of the women's game in India and beyond. In Sunday's episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', Modi described Mithali as "one of the most talented cricketers in India". "Her retirement from cricket has emotionally moved many sports lovers. Mithali has not only been an extraordinary

player but has also been an inspiration to many players. I wish Mithali all the very best for her future," the prime minister said. The legendary cricketer Mithali finished her international career with a staggering 10,868 runs -- the most in women's cricket. She scored 7,805 ODI runs in 232 matches, at an average of just over 50 while as 2,364 runs in 89 T20Is, as well as 699 runs in 12 Tests, including a century and four half-centuries. The 39-year-old Mithali, who captained India to the final of the ICC Women's World Cup 2017, also holds the record for the most matches (28 matches) captained in Women's World Cups, breaking Australian legend Belinda Clark's record during the ICC Women's World Cup 2022 in March.

## Karman Kaur Thandi wins women's ITF 25K title in Gurugram

India's Karman Kaur Thandi lifted the coveted trophy of the ITF women's 25K Tournament here, beating Belgium's Sofia Costoulas 6-4, 2-6, 6-1 in a marathon summit clash that lasted three hours, here on Sunday.

Gurugram | Agencies

India's Karman Kaur Thandi lifted the coveted trophy of the ITF women's 25K Tournament here, beating Belgium's Sofia Costoulas 6-4, 2-6, 6-1 in a marathon summit clash that lasted three hours, here on Sunday.

In the first set, Karman showed great resolve to come back from 2-4 down and reeled off four games in a row to take the set at 6-4. Sofia, who reached the girls' singles final at the Australian Open 2022, fought back and levelled the match as she won the second set 2-6.

Karman was at her dominant best in the third set, breaking her opponent's serve in the fourth game to make it 3-1 and closed out the match by winning three straight games. With this victory, the 24-year-old has won her second career ITF singles title -- the first coming in Hong Kong in 2018.

Sharing her thoughts on the victory, she said, "It's a special feeling to win this tournament, especially this being just my third one after returning from injury. After the final point, my mind immediately flashed back to the roller-coaster ride we have had over the last few months. I would like to thank everyone who supported me -- Adi (Aditya Sachdeva) sir, my physio Diksha, my family, my entire team and especially RoundGlass for putting their trust in me and giving me this opportunity."

Young Indian woman tennis player Karman has recently joined RoundGlass Tennis Academy in Chandigarh where she will be training under Aditya Sachdeva. With a ranking of 497,



Karman is India's third highest-ranked women's singles player behind Ankit Raina (362) and Rutuja Bhosale (452).

Aditya Sachdeva, Technical Director, RoundGlass Tennis Academy, stated, "On behalf of everyone at the RoundGlass Tennis Academy, I would like to congratulate Karman on the fantastic victory. She displayed excellent skill and tenacity over the course of the tournament, and her performance will certainly inspire the youth to take up the sport for their wholistic wellbeing. We are confident that she will continue to build on this success."

## Pakistan confirm participation in the tri-nation series in NZ before T20 World Cup

The Pakistan men's cricket team will participate in a tri-nation series in New Zealand before the start of the T20 World Cup, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Ramiz Raja confirmed on Sunday.

Karachi | Agencies

The Pakistan men's cricket team will participate in a tri-nation series in New Zealand before the start of the T20 World Cup, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Ramiz Raja confirmed on Sunday.

He added that the series will be excellent preparation for the conditions they will encounter in Australia during the T20 World Cup.

A tri-nation series consisting of hosts New Zealand, Pakistan and Bangladesh

was planned before the T20 World Cup scheduled in Australia in October this year. Talking to the media, PCB chairman Raja confirmed the participation of the Babar Azam-led side in the tournament in New Zealand.

"Before the 1992 World Cup, the side had arrived in Australia a month ago and we had ample opportunity to prepare for matches by playing against the local teams," Raja said.

"I was behind PCB's international department to somehow find a way that our team can play six to seven games before the World Cup. The pitches in New Zealand also have bounce and pace, the side will benefit from playing matches there," he added.

It is expected that the tri-nation competition will start in the first week of October where teams will play twice with each other before the final of the competition.

Notably, Pakistan will also host England in September for seven T20Is. The series is expected to start on September 15.



## PRIYANKA CONVEYED HER SORROW AT THE RECENT US COURT RULING

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Everyone was stunned by the US Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision, and public figures like Michelle Obama and others have spoken out against the decision to restrict access to abortion. Celebrities have been protesting the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, the landmark ruling that safeguarded women's reproductive rights. A number of states will outlaw abortion as a result of the decision. Priyanka Chopra didn't respond to the news herself, but she did repost Michelle Obama's Instagram post to her Instagram story.

Priyanka conveyed her sorrow at the recent US Supreme Court ruling in her Instagram stories. Chopra added another piece that included a political cartoon contrasting American gun rights with abortion rights in addition to reposting a tragic statement made by Michelle Obama. The current backstep has gained a boost as a result of Roe v. Wade being overturned after almost 50 years as one of the major victories for women's rights.

A number of celebrities responded to the unexpected decision on social media, including Hailey Bieber, who tweeted a headline about it and commented she was "speechless." She went on to write, "What an extreme loss and disappointment. This is really really scary."

## Adnan Sami's jaw-dropping transformation takes over the internet

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer Adnan Sami's latest pictures from his Maldivian holiday have taken over social media as it seems he has undergone a huge weight loss transformation.

Sami took to Instagram to share a glimpse of his holiday with family, which took the fans and social media users by surprise.

He shared a picture with his daughter while chilling in the pool. He captioned the picture: "There's absolutely no time to waste & so 'Let The FUN Begin PARTY-POOPER-DISCLAIMER- It's NON-ALCOHOLIC Sparkling Grape Juice'."

He also shared a selfie, where he is seen flaunting a big smile at the camera with a picturesque view of the ocean and the sky in the background.

According to reports, when Sami stepped into the industry, he weighed a whopping over 200 kilos. He is popular for his songs such as 'Bhardo jholi', 'Lift Karadey' and 'Sun Zara', among many others.



THEN



NOW

## SRK expressed his admiration for Tiger Shroff

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Tiger Shroff, the newest action star in the business, is known for his action scenes, which have not only sparked a new craze among the populace but also cemented the star's place in the business. Shah Rukh Khan is the latest big name to join Tiger Woods' fan club. He has inspired not only regular people but also some of the most well-known figures in the industry. Tiger recently joined SRK during a live session, and when he did, SRK was seen thanking Tiger and saying how much he inspires him. He spoke, "I also want to say this to a friend who has come online, Tiger Shroff, more than a friend, like my baby, because he is dada's son. Thank you very much for commenting here and when I saw WAR with Siddharth and you in it, I got really inspired to try and do an action film, ofcourse my action is not half as good as yours but I am trying my best. I am trying to get my

muscles tight, not coming as sharp as yours but I will keep trying. You are an inspiration man, inshallah, I will get an opportunity to work with you someday and I am very proud with what you have achieved. Thank you for coming on live".

In response, Tiger posted on social media to express gratitude for the same. He penned this caption:

"Means the world coming from one the greatest entertainers in the world made my day sir thank you so much!"



"cant be spoken about with you in the same breathe sir but thank you so much for the kind words????? and i dont think any action hero cant 'react' in action like you"

Tiger's next film appearances include Ganapath, Bade Miyan Chote Miyan, and Rambo.

## Shilpa Shetty on fame: It's a double- edged sword

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Shilpa Shetty Kundra, who made her big screen comeback with the latest release 'Nikamma', said fame is a double-edged sword.

Shilpa said: "Fame is a double-edged sword but you have to appreciate it and the cons are something that you need to take in your stride... It would be the end of your career or stint in the industry if people allow you to eat 'pani puri' without bothering you, I would say that would be something that would be worrisome."

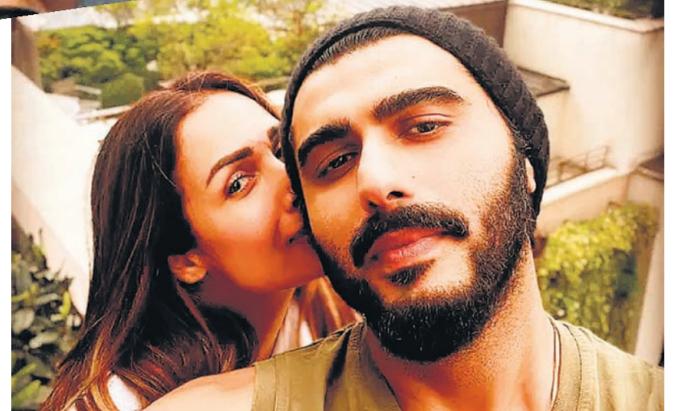
Shilpa said she is "grateful for all the love and appreciation".

She added: "It does get a little daunting where people don't know when to draw the line because we are not monkey's in a zoo, we are here to entertain and I have a heartfelt gratitude for all the love that comes my way."

"But sometimes when you have worked very hard and you try to take a break with your family and sometimes when you are at the airport and you are holding your two-year-old's hand and somebody just comes in and wants a selfie.. It is scary sometimes but otherwise it is all the part and parcel of the fame game."

Shilpa will next be seen in Rohit Shetty's 'Indian Police Force', a cop action drama web series streaming on Amazon Prime Video.

## Arjun Kapoor celebrates birthday with lady love, Malaika Arora



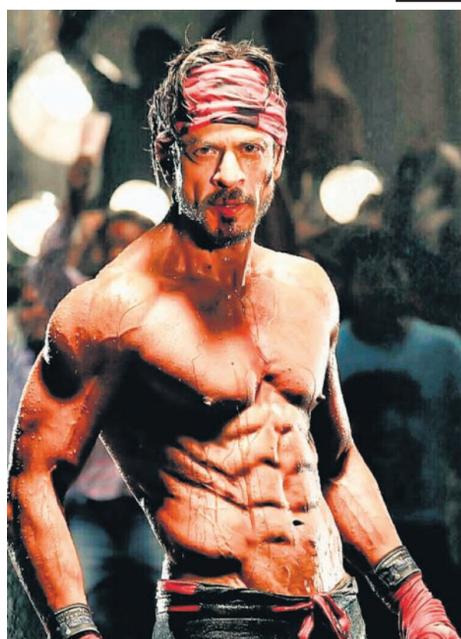
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Arjun Kapoor turned a year older. The actor is currently in Paris with his soul mate, Malaika Arora, to commemorate his special day. In the City of Light, the two are having a wonderful time. Arjun gave us glimpses of his 37th birthday on Instagram.

Arjun Kapoor and Malaika left for a private birthday celebration in Paris on June 24. The actor shared a

few cuddly photos of himself and his ladylove on Instagram on Sunday to show how he is celebrating his special day. Arjun and Malaika posed for the pictures with the Eiffel Tower in the background. Arjun captioned his photo, "Eiffel good I knew I would@malaikaaroraofficial #parisvibes (sic)".

A number of celebrities also responded on Arjun's tweet with heart emojis, including Rakul Preet Singh, Tara Sutaria, and Patralekhaa.



## PANKAJ TRIPATHI CREDITS HIS SUCCESS TO DIGITAL SPACE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

From playing Kaleen Bhaiya in 'Mirzapur' to the power hungry Godman Guruji in 'Sacred Games' and the cheeky lawyer Madhav Mishra in 'Criminal Justice', acclaimed actor Pankaj Tripathi credits his growth and popularity to the digital space.

What if there was no OTT? Pankaj said: "If there was no OTT, then there would have been a fight still going on with me. I wouldn't have got any reach. OTT only gave me space because there is importance of content and stories and not actors that much." He credits his popularity to the web space. "Whatever I am, it is because of

my stories and the characters that I have played. I am a very small person but my characters and stories are very big... The growth that I have had is all because of OTT," he added. Pankaj's latest release is 'Sherdil: The Pilibhit Saga', which hit the big screen on June 24. He will next be seen in 'Fukrey 3'.

### INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY

Palak Tiwari