

absolute india

VOL. 8, ISSUE 168 BHOPAL | FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2023 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

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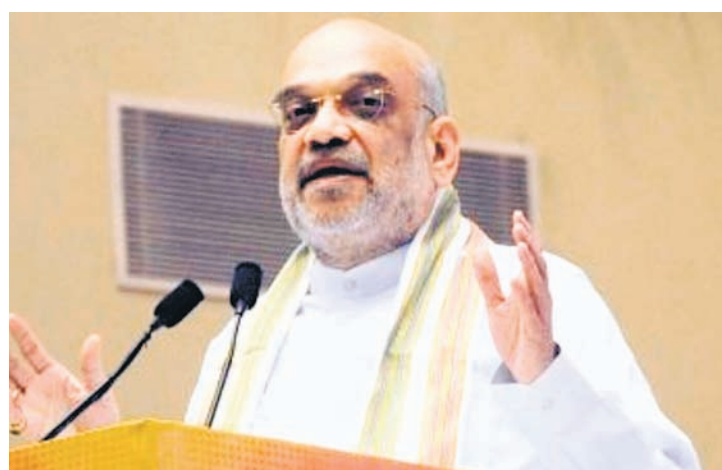


Ban Amit Shah: Cong to EC

Congress' Karnataka unit on Thursday demanded the Election Commission to ban Union Home Minister Amit Shah from campaigning in the state for the Assembly polls. The Congress has lodged a complaint with the police against Union Home Minister Shah, BJP leaders and organisers of the saffron party rally accusing them of making provocative statements, promoting enmity and hatred between different communities.

“Amit Shah has made baseless allegations that if Congress comes to power, there will be communal strife and violence in the state. There has been an attempt to threaten voters that they should not vote for the Congress party.”

D.K. Shivakumar, Karnataka Congress President



Do we have to bring Bin Laden? K'taka BJP questions Cong

Bengaluru: The Karnataka BJP has rebutted the claim of the Congress party on the alleged provocative speech by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and filing a police complaint against him in the state. National general secretary C.T. Ravi stated on Thursday that the Election Commission will look into the demand of the Congress to boycott Amit Shah's programmes in the state. "Are we supposed to bring Bin Laden instead of Amit Shah?" Ravi quipped. These people (Congress party leaders) want Madani (Abdul Nassar Madani), Laden and Dawood Ibrahim. Don't they want patriot Amit Shah? Ravi questioned.



Team Absolute | Bengaluru

Talking to media persons after lodging an FIR against the Union Home Minister, State Congress President D.K. Shivakumar said: "Is it tenable for Amit Shah, who is holding the one of the highest position in the country to threaten the people of the state? What kind of democracy is this? We have lodged a complaint against him under various Sections of IPC."

Shivakumar said: "This is a big conspiracy and legal action should be taken against him. The common people were arrested for posting small things. The cases were lodged against leaders for pasting PayCM posters."

'What's your contribution to the country', Kharge tears into BJP

Gadag (Karnataka): Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge attacked Prime Minister Narendra on Thursday, as he asked him what is the contribution that the BJP has made to the country.

Addressing a public rally in Gadag district in poll-bound Karnataka, Kharge said, "What is BJP's contribution to the country? Not even your pet dog has given its life for the country."

"Sonia Gandhi started giving free rice to the people. The NREGA scheme was introduced by us. The BJP's only achievement in Karnataka is taking 40 per cent commission. And PM Modi backs these people. It's no wonder that despite being the Prime Minister, Modi is going to villages and talukas to campaign for BJP leaders," Kharge added. "If we win in Karnataka, we will win throughout the country," the Congress leader claimed.



THREE MAHA MINISTERS MEET MARCHING FARMERS MID-WAY, ACCEPT ALL DEMANDS

Ahmednagar | Agencies

Three Maharashtra ministers rushed to meet the farmers -- on a long march in the district since Wednesday -- midway at Sangamner, and after discussions, agreed to accept all their demands, a top All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) leader said here on Thursday.

AIKS president Ashok Dhavale said that the ministers have consented to all the demands of the marching farmers and now the issue of implementation will be finalised. The AIKS leaders met Revenue Minister Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, Tribal Minister Vijaykumar Gavit and Labour Minister



Khade this afternoon at Sangamner and hammered out all the issues raised by the farmers. These include: vesting of forest lands in the names of the peasants and agricultural workers, remunerative prices for cotton, milk, soyabean, tur, gram and other agro-products. On Wednesday morning, around 15,000 farmers, braving the intense 40 degrees

Celsius temperatures and a police ban notice, embarked on a 52-km long march from Akole to Loni - with plans for an indefinite sit-in protest outside Vikhe-Patil's office in Loni. Taking serious cognisance of the march, the state government bowed to the farmers' issues, after which the AIKS procession was called off on Thursday evening.

A resilient bank must be financially and organisationally strong: RBI Guv

Mumbai: The Governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Shaktikanta Das, said on Thursday that a resilient future-ready bank needs to be financially, operationally and organisationally strong. Addressing the global conference on financial resilience organised by the College of Supervisors here, Das said that in order to be resilient, a bank should have adequate capital buffers and should be able to generate earnings even in times of severe macroeconomic shocks. "It should also have adequate liquidity to meet its obligations in various situations. Therefore, financial resilience is closely linked to a bank's business model and strategy. The Reserve Bank has, therefore, started looking at the business models of banks more closely," Das said. Hinting at cyber risks, the RBI Governor said that it has been identified as the foremost in top 10 operational risks for 2023 based on a global survey of financial institutions.

Man who sent death threat letter to Rahul Gandhi, Kamal Nath arrested

Team Absolute | Indore

A 60-year-old man accused of sending a letter with death threats to Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Kamal Nath amid the Bharat Jodo Yatra in November last year was arrested on Thursday under the stringent National Security Act from Indore in Madhya Pradesh, a police official said. Police had zeroed in on Dayasingh alias Aishilal Jham for the letter, which was received at a sweetmeat shop in June Indore area, and had death threats for Rahul Gandhi and Kamal Nath in the background of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

The letter was received when the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra, which began in Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu in September last year, entered



Indore on November 27 and moved into neighbouring Ujjain district the next day.

Jham was held on a tip off from the railway station here just as he was about to flee by train, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) Nimish Agrawal told news agency. "The district administration had issued an order that Jham be jailed under the NSA. It

is not clear why he sent this letter. A detailed probe is underway," Agrawal said. Another police official said Jham seems to have "eccentric tendencies".

Jham's alleged letter had said Gandhi and Nath would be killed and massive bomb blasts would take place in Indore while the Bharat Jodo Yatra was passing through MP's commercial capital.

ONE OF WORLD'S OLDEST NEWSPAPERS TO END DAILY PRINT RUN, TO MOVE ONLINE

Vienna: One of the world's oldest newspapers still in print, Austria's Wiener Zeitung, will primarily move online, after a decision Thursday by the country's parliament.

The development marks the final step in a years-long dispute between the Austrian government and the newspaper about the future of the state-owned daily.

Founded in 1703 under the name Wienerisches Diarium, and later renamed Wiener Zeitung in 1780, the formerly private bi-weekly paper was nationalised by Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria in 1857, becoming the country's official gazette.

"It is adopted with a majority," Norbert Hofer, the third president of the parliament, said of a new law to primarily move the publication online from July 1.

The paper will maintain a minimum of ten print publications per year, depending on the funds available.

The Wiener Zeitung was in 2004 ranked as one of the oldest newspapers still in circulation, the World Association of News Publishers told AFP.

WhatsApp rolling out 'reply with message' feature within call notifications

SAN FRANCISCO | Agencies

Meta-owned WhatsApp is reportedly rolling out a new "reply with a message" feature within call notifications to some beta testers on Android.

The company said that it will be rolling out the feature to even more people over the coming days.

According to WABetaInfo, this feature will allow users to easily decline an incoming call and send a message to the caller at the same time. WhatsApp users will now notice a new "reply" button on incoming call notifications, which will appear alongside the existing "decline" and "answer" buttons.



If a user chooses to tap on the "reply" button, the incoming call will be rejected, and a message box will open automatically, allowing the user to send a quick message to the caller, the report said. This feature can come in handy in situations where the user cannot answer a call, such as during a meeting, but still wishes to acknowledge the caller and convey that they will respond as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, WhatsApp has announced that users will now be able to use the same WhatsApp account on more than one phone via its multi-device login feature.

Users can now link their phone as one of up to four additional devices.

ISSUES AT LAC NEED TO BE RESOLVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING AGREEMENTS: INDIA TO CHINA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday told his Chinese counterpart, General Li Shangfu that all issues at the LAC need to be resolved in accordance with existing bilateral agreements, officials said.

In their meet, which came a day before the SCO Defence Ministers meet - which India, as the Chair of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2023, is hosting, the two ministers had frank discussions about developments in the India-China border areas as well as bilateral relations.

During the meet, Rajnath Singh categorically conveyed that development of relations between India and China is premised on prevalence of peace and tranquillity at the borders.

According to the Defence



Ministry, he added that all issues at the LAC need to be resolved in accordance with existing bilateral agreements and commitments. He reiterated that violation of existing agreements has eroded the entire basis of bilateral relations and disengagement at the border will logically be followed with de-escalation.

The repeated attempts by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) to violate the

Line of Actual Control (LAC), leading to tension in Ladakh, had spurred the institution of the Corps Commander-level meetings.

The 18th round of the Corps Commander-level talks was held on Sunday, but was inconclusive as there was no headway on the contentious issue of the Depsang Plains and de-escalation along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.



RELEASE OF ANAND MOHAN IS AS PER THE LAW, SAYS BIHAR CHIEF SECRETARY

Patna | Agencies

Amid controversy over release of Anand Mohan Singh, Bihar Chief Secretary Aamir Subhani on Thursday contended that the measure was in accordance with law and the state government has not done anything wrong in amending the Jail Manual 2012.

"The Bihar State Sentence Remission Council has taken the decision on the prisoners who are serving life imprisonment. We have followed all guidelines before passing the release order. Anand Mohan is a politician and there are so many talks going on pertaining to his case. He has served more than 15 years of sen-



tence and also 7 years in jail. So, he has already been more than 22 years in jail. Hence, the decision taken in his case is as per the law," he said.

"In the case where the accused have been given life imprisonment, the state government has considered 14 years jail term and 20 years for remission. We have done 22 meetings of the Remission Council in the last 6 years and discussed the release of 1,161 prisoners, of which the state government has taken a decision to release 698 prisoners," Subhani said.

The Patna high court had convicted Anand Mohan, in the murder of Gopalganj DM G. Krishnaiah which took place on December 5, 1994 in Muzaffarpur.

SLAIN IAS OFFICER'S FAMILY SHOCKED OVER ANAND MOHAN'S RELEASE

Hyderabad: The family of slain Dalit IAS officer G. Krishnaiah is shocked over the release of former RJD MP Anand Mohan Singh, a Bahubali leader who spent 15 years in a Bihar prison for instigating the bureaucrat's lynching in 1994.

Following the release of the gangster-turned-politician on Thursday after the Bihar government tweaked the rules, Krishnaiah's family members said it was disheartening for them to see Anand Mohan walk out of jail. After Krishnaiah's wife Uma, his daughter Padma has now appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene in the matter to ensure that people like Anand Mohan do not come back into the society. Padma, the youngest of the two daughters of Krishnaiah, requested the Prime Minister to bring a law to check gangsters and mafias, so that government officers can discharge their duties honestly and without any fear. "It's very disheartening for us. We were hoping life imprisonment will continue," said Padma, who was just five when her father was lynched to death.

BJP SLAMS NITISH KUMAR GOVT FOR RELEASING ANAND MOHAN



Patna: Following the release of gangster-turned-politician Anand Mohan Singh, Leader of Opposition in the Bihar assembly and BJP senior leader Vijay Kumar Sinha slammed the Nitish Kumar government for releasing criminals.

"If Anand Mohan Singh has completed the prison term, why is the Nitish Kumar government in a hurry to release him? It is a matter for the court to release convicted persons as per the law. Why did the Nitish Kumar government amend the law to benefit him and other criminals," Sinha said.

"The Nitish Kumar government released Anand Mohan in the morning hours at 3 a.m. on Thursday. Why were they so desperate to release him?" Sinha asked. "We have no objection to the release of any person but we are concerned about how criminals are being released. The Nitish Kumar gov-

ernment has released 26 more inmates apart from Anand Mohan and the majority of them are hard core criminals belonging to particular castes and communities. The BJP believes in crime control at any cost and a campaign is currently underway in our neighbouring BJP ruled state of Uttar Pradesh. The Yogi Adityanath government is cracking down hard on criminals and Nitish Kumar is having a soft corner for criminals. Nitish Kumar and Lalu Prasad Yadav want to win the election on the basis of goondaism. The people of Bihar are watching everything and they will answer appropriately at the right time," Sinha added.

Badal, towering leader of Punjab politics, cremated with state honours



mer Chief Minister before his mortal remains are consigned to flames.

A stoic Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) President Sukhbir Singh Badal along with his wife Harsimrat Kaur and his three children acknowledged the tributes of hundreds of people, some tearful, who came to pay respect to the elderly Badal, whose mortal remains were brought from Chandigarh on late Wednesday evening.

Badal, the country's oldest politician -- next only to BJP veteran L.K. Advani -- died on Tuesday at the age of 95 after a brief illness at a private hospital near here.

Under the helm of senior Badal, SAD made history in 1997 by becoming the first non-Congress party to complete its first full term in office since Independence.

Badal (Punjab) | Agencies

Scores of political dignitaries and party supporters on Thursday flooded Parkash Singh Badal's native village in Muktsar district where the late Akali patriarch and five-time Punjab Chief Minister's body was kept from morning till around 1 p.m. for

people to catch a last glimpse of the late leader.

Amid 'Shabad Kiran', his body will be taken in a procession to his nearby agricultural field owned by the Badal family where he will be accorded a state funeral.

Political leaders, public figures and party activists paid their last respects to the for-

GURUGRAM POLICE RAID 17 BARS/CLUBS; 2 ARRESTED

Gurugram: A joint team of the Gurugram Police and the Drugs Control Department

raided around 17 bars and clubs in Sector-29 on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday, and nabbed two persons for allegedly serving hookah and illegal narcotic substances to the customers without appropriate licence, the police said on Thursday.

The raids were conducted after the police received information that illegal narcotic substances were being serving in some pubs/bars/restaurants.

The suspects were booked under the relevant sections of law at the DLF police station in Sector 29. "Few other suspects have been identified. Further action in the case will be taken after a detailed investigation," said Subhash Boken, PRO for Gurugram Police.



Inter-state narco cartel busted, over 300 kg cannabis worth Rs 1 cr seized

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With the arrest of three men, the Delhi Police have busted an inter-state narco traffickers' cartel with possible links with Naxals, an official said on Thursday.

The police have also recovered over 300 kilograms of cannabis worth more than Rs 1 crore from them.

The accused were identified as Pratap (45), a resident of Rampura in Delhi; Lakan (23) and Pooran (22) - both residents of Okhla Mod.

According to police, specific inputs were received on Wednesday that three persons, who are involved in the drug peddling, will assemble near Naraina Flyover to supply drugs. "Acting on the inputs, a police team immediately laid a trap near Naraina



Flyover, Ring Road and all three were apprehended," said Akshat Kaushal, additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (West). A total of 20 bundles were recovered from them. "On checking the bundles, the packets of cannabis were found concealed in it. A total of

301.15 kg of cannabis was recovered," said Kaushal.

During interrogation, it was revealed that the contraband substance was sourced from Muniguda in Odisha. "Initial interrogation has revealed that the contraband substance was to be sold in Delhi and adjoining areas. The arrested individuals have revealed the names of their handlers, names of whom are being withheld at this stage," said the official. "So far, we have not found any direct Naxal link. The material is sourced from Muniguda, the place which has traditionally been part of the red-corridor but we are probing the case with all angles," said the official.

"Further investigation is in progress and efforts are being made to nab the complete chain of suppliers," the official added.

Encroachment drive: Pak Hindu immigrants' houses razed in Jodhpur

Jaipur | Agencies

The Rajasthan government's bulldozer reportedly ran on the kutcha-pucca houses of Pakistan Hindu immigrants.

More than 70 houses of Pakistan Hindu immigrants were bulldozed by Jodhpur Development Authority (JDA). Displaced people said, "We were evicted from Pakistan as well and now our houses were demolished here too."

The Jodhpur Development Authority said that action has been taken to remove the encroachment here. A public notice had already been issued regarding the work.

It needs to be mentioned here that the Jodhpur Development Authority removed the encroachment in Chaukha village of the city. The authority freed about 400 bighas of



land from encroachment in B and C sector of Rajiv Nagar Colony.

During the drive, the pain of Pakistan Hindus was writ large. Seeing their homes being destroyed, women and children started crying.

The place where these houses were built is Rajiv Gandhi Awasiya Yojna Khasra No. 61, and action has been taken not on Hindus but on encroachment, the JDA asserted.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Hindu immigrants have submitted a memorandum to the Jodhpur District Collector regarding this action. It has been said in the memorandum that the land on which JDA has taken action belongs to the Gram Panchayat.

"We have given from Rs 70,000 to Rs 2 lakh for the land, however, it seems the land mafia has befooled us," said one of the immigrants.

Reshuffle in Goa cabinet is so far just a rumour: BJP

Panaji | Agencies

Goa BJP President

Sadanand Tanavade on Thursday said that no discussion about reshuffle of cabinet has taken place with Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, and hence it is just a rumour spread in political circles.

Addressing a press conference, Tanavade said that they are also coming to know about it on news and social media. "Chief Minister has a right to reshuffle. After taking such a decision, he tells the party. So far he has not told us anything of such, hence I consider this as rumour," Tanavade, said rejecting the speculations. "Everyone is deciding their own dates... (while spreading the rumour). As there is election in



Karnataka, maximum leaders from Centre visit Belagavi or other border areas of Karnataka via Goa. When they land at Dabolim airport or at Mopa airport, people feel that reshuffle is there," Tanavade said. Speculations were there in the political circle of Goa that reshuffle in the cabinet will take place to accommodate three MLAs among eight, who had joined the BJP.

On September 14, former Chief Minister Digambar Kamat, Michael Lobo, Delilah

Lobo, Kedar Naik, Sankalp Amonkar, Rajesh Faldesai, Aleixo Sequeira and Rudolf Fernandes joined BJP, reducing Congress to 3 MLAs in 40-member assembly. Since then, there were speculations that along with Kamat other two MLAs will be inducted in the cabinet. The opposition in the state has alleged that these Congress rebel MLAs are quiet without demanding for positions as they have been paid. Besides this, they are also facing disqualification petitions filed against them. Amit Patkar, Goa Pradesh Congress Committee President had earlier said that these MLAs were paid huge money by BJP to switch party and some were assured to give place in the cabinet, but there is some confusion between them.

IIT-Kanpur launches cyber security skilling programme

Kanpur (UP) | Agencies

C3iHub, a cyber security Technology Innovation Hub at the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT Kanpur), supported by the Department of Science and Technology, under NM-ICPS Mission, along with its incubated start-ups Threat Guardians Pvt Ltd and Worker Union Support, has launched its Cyber security Skilling Programme.

The programme aims to provide learners with a deeper understanding of the technical basics of cyberspace

and cyber issues, introduce real-time cyber security techniques and methods, and focus on the models, tools, and techniques for enforcing security. Prof Manindra Agrawal, Project Director, C3iHub said, "The Program will help students learn from a basic to an advanced level of cyber security, which will make them future-ready."

The Cyber security Skilling Program will be conducted online, making it accessible to learners from anywhere in the country. The duration of the program is eight weeks (six hours per week) and will include live sessions, online

assignments, and hands-on exercises. Upon completion of the program, learners will receive a certificate from C3iHub, which will add value to their professional profile. The top 100 students will also get a chance to do internship.

The C3iHub Cyber security Skilling Program has several key objectives, including providing a deeper understanding of the technical basics of cyberspace and cyber issues. It also aims to introduce real-time cyber security techniques and methods in the context of the protocol suites to introduce the need for network security solutions.

Cong-led UDF in Kerala demands judicial probe into AI camera 'scam'

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

The Congress-led UDF on Thursday demanded a judicial probe into the alleged corruption in the Rs 232 crore 'Safe Kerala' project launched for installation of AI cameras across the state to check traffic rules.

"Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his office are behind this scam and till date not a word has been spoken by Vijayan on this scam, which can be now called as the Second Lavalin. We demand a judicial probe into this scam," said UDF convenor M.M. Hassan and Leader of Opposition V.D. Satheesan.

The decision was taken at a high level meeting of the Congress-led UDF here.

"Even though the project is being implemented by the state public sector Keltron, sub-contract was given to companies which have no experience or



expertise in this area. All these can be examined by anyone on the companies which was given the sub-contract, and it includes a construction company building bridges and such projects. This in itself is enough to show that things were all decided with the blessings of Vijayan," said Satheesan.

Incidentally this project was commissioned by

Vijayan last week and Satheesan said it's surprising to note that State Industries Minister P. Rajeev made a weak defence of the entire project.

"Rajeev said the state Vigilance is probing this, but we wish to inform that they are not probing this particular case, but a different one. However, if the Vigilance is probing, then how come Vijayan inaugurated this project. He also pointed out that the Industries Secretary will also conduct a probe, which is hilarious, as will any official be able to do such a probe," asked Satheesan.

Meanwhile, CPI-M state secretary M.V. Govindan dismissed all the allegations levelled by the opposition, saying that it has no credence.

"Satheesan should explain what happened to the First Lavalin. Also why only a judicial probe, a CBI or an ED probe also should be asked for. We are not a party which will indulge in corrupt practices," said Govindan.



"CAUSED MORE DAMAGE THAN COVID": SHIVRAJ CHOUHAN JABS CONGRESS LEADERS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday took a swipe at senior Congress leaders Digvijaya Singh and Kamal Nath, alleging that they have caused more damage to the state than coronavirus.

His remark comes a day after Digvijaya Singh said he is the coronavirus for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its ideological mentor Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

Both Digvijaya Singh and Kamal Nath, who hail from Madhya Pradesh, are former chief ministers of the state. While Nath is currently the grand old party's state unit chief, Singh is a Rajya Sabha member.

"He (Singh) has done a perfect comparison. Both Singh and Nath have caused much more damage to the state than the coronavirus. I am surprised that he did not find any other virus for the comparison and found only coronavirus for it," Chouhan told reporters.

He was speaking at the state Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) office where former finance minister Jayant



Malaiya's son, Siddharth Malaiya, was inducted back into the party fold.

Siddharth Malaiya had quit the saffron outfit following differences with the party leadership over denial of ticket in the Damoh Assembly bypolls.

"The coronavirus that created havoc in the lives of the people and ruined the country's economy...But it

was because of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that not one, but two vaccines were developed against the virus. Otherwise, Nath had left the people of the state at the mercy of corona. Today, COVID-19 is completely under control," Chouhan said. "But more than COVID-19, both Singh and Nath have caused damage to the state and its people. The state

was totally ruined. There were no roads, no electricity and no water. Even the state's growth rate was negative. Unemployment and corruption were prevalent. During more than a year of his government, Nath destroyed and damaged the state," he added.

But it was good that the BJP came back to power and tried to develop the state in a historic manner, the chief minister said.

Talking to reporters in Indore on Wednesday, Singh said he is the coronavirus for the BJP and the RSS. He made the remark while reacting to a recent statement by state Water Resources Minister and BJP leader Tulsiram Silawat. Silawat recently described Singh as the "coronavirus of the Congress" and said he prayed to Lord Mahakal (one of 12 jyotirlingas in Ujjain) that the next birth of the 76-year-old Congress leader should be in China, where the infectious viral disease was first detected in 2019.

Hitting back at the state cabinet minister (Silawat), Singh said, "Yes, I am the coronavirus for the BJP and the Sangh."

Pregnancy tests for mass marriage ceremony: Kamal Nath seeks NCW probe

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Amid controversy over to be brides allegedly made to undergo pregnancy test in Madhya Pradesh's Dindori district, Congress leader Kamal Nath on Thursday shot off a letter to National Commission for Women seeking a high-level probe into the matter.

Condemning the alleged incident, state Congress unit chief Nath, termed it as an "insult" to the women and questioned the legality of "testing" procedures.

Former Chief Minister Nath in his letter to NCW chairman Rekha Sharma alleged that on April 22, over 100 women had to undergo "pregnancy test", which is against the "privacy of the women".

He mentioned that the administration did not only conduct "pregnancy tests" but also made it public, and therefore, this "issue need a high-level inquiry from the NCW."

Further, Nath mentioned



as they were found to be pregnant.

The controversy erupted a day later when a local Congress MLA Omkar Singh Markam claimed that he has received information that five women were "disqualified" for marriage after they tested positive for "pregnancy tests".

However, Dindori district administration maintained that "no order was issued for pregnancy tests", and a test for sickle cell anemia (a genetic disorder reported among tribals) was carried out on all.

During those tests, it was found that five women had missed their menstrual cycles.

Subsequently, the doctors carried out the urine tests of the five women, during which it was established that they were pregnant.

Officials have also said that "pregnancy tests" were conducted at the behest of higher authorities on some girls whose cases were "suspected".

that despite "growing atrocities" against women in the state, the Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led BJP government is tightlipped and "insulting" the women with such unethical "pregnancy tests". "You are requested to conduct a high-level inquiry on Dindori's issue and punish the officials who insulted the women by conducting their pregnancy tests," Nath wrote in his letter to NCW Chairman Rekha Gupta.

A mass marriage of 220-odd women under the Mukhyamantri Kanya Vivah Yojana was scheduled in the Gadsarai area on April 22. But of them, the marriages of five girls could not solemnise

House of man accused of killing woman bulldozed

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Police on Wednesday demolished the house of a man who allegedly shot dead a 22-year-old woman in broad daylight in Dhar district. The accused, who has been identified as Deepak Kumar (22), is yet to be arrested.

As per the police, the accused had fired twice at the victim from a very close range, one on her head and the other on her chest. The police said the accused was a jilted lover of the victim, who was following her for the last two years.

"Deepak was following the woman for the last two years. On Wednesday, he found her alone on the road and opened fire on her. He is still on the run and police teams have been formed to nab him. An award of Rs 10,000 has also been announced for any information that might lead the police to Deepak," Dhar district Superintendent of Police, Manoj Kumar Singh, said.

The incident occurred at around 11 a.m. when the victim, who was a resident of Basant Vihar, had gone to a temple along with her friend. Later on Wednesday evening, the police carried out a bulldozer operation and



demolished the house of the accused.

Meanwhile, the opposition Congress has questioned the law and order situation in Madhya Pradesh, besides demanding a compensation for the victim's family.

"The woman had earlier lodged a case of molestation against the accused. It is a matter of great concern that the government could not save the woman's life," Madhya Pradesh Congress President Kamal Nath said.

SECOND PHASE OF CHIEF MINISTER'S PUBLIC SERVICE CAMPAIGN FROM 10 TO 25 MAY

Bhopal: The second phase of the Mukhyamantri Jan-Seva Abhiyan will be launched in the state from May 10 to 25 for the services provided to the common citizens by the government departments and 100 percent redressal of their problems. The first phase of the campaign was launched to achieve 100 percent saturation in the schemes of the Central and State Governments. More than 83 lakh eligible beneficiaries were benefited in this.

First component:- The first is to resolve 100% applications pending in the field offices of Revenue, Urban Development and Housing, Panchayat and Rural Development and Energy Department etc., which are related to civil services. Second CM Redressal of pending complaints in helpline. For this, a campaign will be launched to resolve all pending applications related to the delivery of civil services in all government offices of all districts. It will be ensured that no application is pending in the office without valid reason.

Second Component:- CM It will be ensured that 100% redressal of currently pending complaints lodged in the helpline till 15th April, 2023 will be ensured.

It is worth mentioning that the applications received in the public hearings to be held at the districts and development block level will also be sent to the CM. Helpline is registered on the portal. The complaints received through public hearing will also be resolved during this campaign period.

Expelled BJP leader Siddharth Malaiya re-inducted into

Team Absolute | Bhopal

BJP's Madhya Pradesh unit on Thursday re-inducted expelled party leader Siddharth Malaiya into party fold in view of the upcoming Assembly polls in the state.

Anticipating "potential rebellion" and to avoid upheavals like in Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka recently, where many party bigwigs switched to other parties, the ruling BJP is leaving no stone unturned to bring back the "rebels" into the party fold.

Siddharth Malaiya, who is the son of ex-minister Jayant Malaiya, was expelled from the BJP for his alleged anti-party activities in 2022.

Speculation was rife that Siddharth Malaiya may switch to the Congress to "secure" his political future as at that time, he was openly criticising the state BJP leadership. However, Siddharth Malaiya reached BJP



headquarters along with state Home Minister Narottam Mishra and joined the party in the presence of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and state BJP president V. D. Sharma. It came one month after Preetam Lodhi, who was also expelled for alleged anti-party activities, joined the BJP last month. Gwalior based OBC leader Lodhi is close associate of former Chief Minister Uma Bharti, and she too had expressed her disappointment over Lodhi's expulsion from the party. "I am happy that the party gave me another chance to work, and for this, I would thank

the state BJP leadership," Siddharth Malaiya said while interacting with mediapersons after joining the BJP.

Political experts said the re-induction of Siddharth Malaiya into the party came amid possible "fear" of the "poaching" by the Congress. The BJP got a jolt last month when Yadvendra Singh Yadav, the son of three-time BJP MLA Deshraj Singh Yadav, quit the party and joined the Congress. In another blow to the saffron party, former Khargone MP Makhan Singh Solanki also joined the Congress, recently.

Recently, a delegation of 14 state and Central BJP leaders was tasked to reach out to every "possible rebel" including party veterans to convince them to remain intact with the BJP. As per the sources, the reports of the delegation wasn't good for the BJP, after which Siddharth Malaiya was re-inducted.

After Dantewada attack, Narottam Mishra compares anti-Maoist action in two neighbouring states

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A day after a major Maoist attack in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada, leaving 10 security personnel and a civilian dead, Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra on Thursday hit at Bhupesh Baghel-led Congress government of the state.

Mishra said that the situation in two neighbouring states are quite contrary in terms of action against Maoists.

In Chhattisgarh, Maoists are killing police personnel, while in Madhya Pradesh, the situation is just opposite, and the police are attacking Maoists, he said, adding that one state is ruled by the

Congress and the other by his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

"The situation is very different in both these states. Take example of few days back in Madhya Pradesh and Wednesday's Maoist attack in Chhattisgarh," Mishra said. His reference was the gunning down of two Maoists, carrying a reward of Rs 14 lakh each, by Madhya Pradesh Police's 'Hawk Force' in Balaghat on Saturday.

"In the past one and a half year, Madhya Pradesh Police have killed Maoists carrying awards of Rs 1.5 crore. Maoists' shelter and their route of hawala money have been destroyed in Madhya Pradesh. This is difference between the BJP and the Congress governments," he claimed.

However, Chhattisgarh, which was separated from Madhya Pradesh in 2001 and was governed by the BJP from 2003 to 2018, had a majority of Maoist-affected areas from the undivided state. According to the Union Home Ministry's reports, Chhattisgarh has 14 districts which are highly affected by Maoist activities, while Madhya Pradesh has only three such districts - Balaghat, Dindori, and Mandla.

Wednesday's attack was the biggest by Maoists on the security forces in Chhattisgarh since 2021, when 22 security personnel were killed in an ambush along the borders of Sukma and Bijapur districts.

PANDIT KUMAR GANDHARVA CEREMONY IN DEWAS ON 28 AND 29 APRIL

Bhopal: Pandit Kumar Gandharva Sangeet Samaroh will be celebrated at Malhar Smriti Mandir Dewas on April 28 and 29 in the birth centenary year of eminent musician Pandit Kumar Gandharva. The function will begin at 7.30 pm on April 28. Renowned music artists of the country will participate in it. Admission to the program has been kept free.

On the first day of the festival, on April 28, Kalapini Komkali, Dewas Gayan and Pandit Arun Bhattacharya, Kolkata and Praveen Gorkhindi, Bengaluru will present Santoor-Flute Duet. On the second day on 29th April Bhuvanesh Komkali, Dewas and Sawani Shende will present singing. The meeting will end with the sitar playing of Pandit Kushal Das Kolkata. Ramendra Singh Solanki, Abhijit Banerjee, Hitend Dixit, Pawan Sem and Abhinav Ravande will accompany on harmonium as assistant artists in both the days' music meetings.

CHIEF MINISTER PLANTED SAPLINGS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Gulmohar, Maulshri and Saptaparni in the garden located at Shyamala Hills. Balbir Rajput, Dr. Narendra Dodiya, Amit Pale and Partha Mittal planted saplings along with the Chief Minister, Ashok Shrimal, President of Kala Vyom Foundation. Poet Chitransh Khare planted a sapling along with the Chief Minister and presented his collection of poems "Aawaz Ki Taseer". Anshul Khare of Tikamgarh along with Chief Minister Chouhan planted saplings on his birthday. Yash Parashar, Kapil Raghuvanshi and Munni Devi also participated in plantation.



Fire in high lamp pillar in Harsiddhi Temple in Ujjain

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A sudden fire broke out on Thursday in the 51 feet high lamp pillar located in the Mata Harsiddhi temple of Ujjain, one of the 51 Shaktipeeths. Due to this, more than a dozen lamps of the lamp pillar were broken. For some time there was chaos in the temple. The fire brigade team brought the fire under control in half an hour.

Pandit Rajesh Goswami of the temple told that at 1 pm some women devotees who came from South lit 108 lamps and kept them near the lamp pillar. Because of these lamps, one of the two lamp pillars caught fire. The fire kept increasing in no time. The temple staff extinguished the fire in the lower part of the 51 feet high lamp



pillar, but could not control the fire in the upper part. Pandit Goswami told reporter that more than a dozen lamps have been broken, for which artisans have been called from Rajasthan. Symbolically the lamps at the bottom of the pillar will be lit until the lamp pillar is rebuilt. There are two lamp pillars of 1011 lamps 51 feet high installed in the temple. One of these pillars caught

fire. Both the pillars present in the Harsiddhi temple are very ancient. It is believed that they were built by King Vikramaditya. Since that time lamps have been burning in them. Even today there is a waiting period of three months to light these lamp pillars. Earlier they were burnt only during the festival, Navratri. Now they remain lit throughout the year.

Bhopal court frames defamation charges against Digvijaya Singh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bhopal district court on Thursday framed "defamation" charges against Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh. The special court dealing with MPs, MLAs cases framed the charges against the two-time ex-chief minister of Madhya Pradesh under IPC Section 500 in a defamation case filed against him by BJP leader V. D. Sharma seven years ago.

In July 2014, V. D. Sharma, who was then general secretary of the BJP's students wing, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), had told the court that Congress leader Digvijaya Singh had accused him of involvement in the multi-layered Vyapam case that came to light in 2013.

As per reports, Sharma had then submitted before the court that Singh had accused him of being a "middleman" in the Vyapam case, which was an attempt to tarnish his image among the people.



or both. The court has posted the case for trial on July 1.

Sharma is now the state BJP president, who took over from ex-BJP (MP) president Rakesh Singh in February 2020 after the BJP lost the assembly elections in 2018. His two-year tenure is over now, however, he is likely to remain in the post as the central leadership is yet to make any announcement in this regard.

The Vyapam scam is related to the alleged manipulation in the selection process for government colleges and jobs conducted by the then Madhya Pradesh Vyavsayik Pariksha Mandal (Vyapam), a professional exam board.

Last month, a court in Gujarat's Surat district sentenced Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to two years in jail after convicting him under IPC Sections 499 and 500 (dealing with criminal defamation) in a case filed by BJP MLA Purnesh Modi over Gandhi's "Modi surname" remark.

Following the verdict, Gandhi, elected to the Lok Sabha from Wayanad in Kerala in 2019, was disqualified as a Member of Parliament under provisions of the Representation of the People Act.



EDITOR'S SPECS

THE DEFAMATION POLITICS

The Samajwadi Party (SP) announced that it will file a defamation suit against the BJP for a campaign song that is not only a "targeted attack on the SP chief but an attempt to vitiate peace and tranquillity, and trigger unrest in the state". On April 24, the verified Twitter handle of the Uttar Pradesh BJP uploaded a 4.27-minute video which was a spin on an SP's election anthem released ahead of the 2022 assembly polls -- 'Janta pukarti hai Akhilesh aaiye' (People are ready to welcome Akhilesh). Besides pointing fingers at the SP chief, the video includes a grab of the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots, holding the then Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav responsible for it. In an apparent response to the BJP's song, the SP has also released a 3-minute song on Twitter, 'Jo janata ko sataye hain, hum unko hatayenge', to highlight the BJP's failures. While the BJP maintained a studied silence on the issue after releasing the video, the SP took exception to it and announced that it would file a defamation case against the twitter handle that first uploaded the video. SP national general secretary Shiupal Singh Yadav, took to Twitter to post an agitated response. "BJP has become a symbol of language that roadside goons use and has turned into a centre that trains on how to indulge in character assassination. Despite conspiracies and injustice, we will come out strong. People want Akhilesh to lead the state to prosperity," he said in a tweet in Hindi. "BJP is diverting people's attention from the state of affairs of municipal corporations which have a BJP mayor. They know people will not believe them if they talk of waste management and promise to cut house tax. They will talk about everything except civic poll issues," said senior SP leader Rajendra Chaudhary.

Man ki Baat : Pulse of the nation

Acharya Pawan Tripathi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always innovated and gave new dimension to his governance style and communication strategy to connect with the masses. Today, he is one of most popular leaders of the world because of his ability to connect and communicate with the people.

What makes him the king of hearts of the people is the way he connects socially, emotionally and culturally. This is his natural ability to connect, correlate and communicate with the various sections of society across all age groups.

In Year 2014, after taking over as the Prime Minister, he adopted all formats of communication in modern era, but the one which surprised the world at large was his initiative to hold a monthly radio talk titled- 'Man Ki Baat' on all India Radio.

All apprehensions, reservations and inhibitions have now been proven wrong. Now the millions of listeners are looking forward to the 100th episode of the monthly radio talk scheduled on 30th April. The popularity and outreach of this innovative communication exercise has surpassed all expectations during last few years.

I vividly recall the early 1980s days when people used to get together and wait for serials like 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharat' on Sunday morning on Doordarshan. Today, one can see the similar fascination for Mann Ki Baat. Every Sunday morning, it has become a ritual for millions of people to assemble to listen to the inspiring and interesting talk of their beloved leader.

This is a great case study that needs to be examined and lessons need to be learned by all. The most important feature of this initiative is that it is not a monologue. This is a communication exercise, wherein unsung, unheard and unseen heroes of the society and their contribution at the grassroots level get recognized and space in their own language.

It makes the communication organic and productive thereby making the message clear and impactful. There is always adequate space for all sections of society, age, group, language and culture for inclusion in these talks.

Another interesting aspect that makes 'Mann Ki Baat' spectacular is that it is a direct Dil-Se talk - straight from the heart.

There is no script that honourable Prime Minister has to follow except the voice of the



people and voice of his soul. This is Mann Ki Baat in true sense. If I add one more word to make it simpler and comprehensive, this is actually 'Desh Ke Man Ki Baat'.

The Prime Minister and common man can relate with each other with equal intensity and understanding. This extraordinary skill of

reading the aspirations of the people of the country makes him a great communicator, strategist, beloved and mass leader.

Over a period of time, there has been a mass movement, social movement around this initiative. Honourable Prime

Minister has used this free-of-cost media to outreach the masses and take up social, cultural and developmental issues to sensitize and inspire people for Jan Bhagidaari (public participation). He has touched wide ranging issues like Swatch Bharat, dowry, drug addiction, women empowerment, social works, music, art, culture, craft, entrepreneurship, water conservation and argon donation etc.

He has tried to correlate every possible dimension to educate, empower and enhance the citizens' participation. He has also made the public aware about their rights. There is always a class and mass in all his words of outreach.

Another significant aspect of this program is the non-political nature of his communication strategy. PM Modi has always kept politics aside and kept people at the center of all attention. He has always ensured a fine balance of inspiration, aspiration and perspiration in all his stories. In all endorsed stories during the show, real hero is not a celebrity but the common man from the unseen and unknown territories of country and global diaspora.

One can draw huge motivation and positive lessons from the straight talks. His explicit understanding that nation building is a collective exercise and responsibility that all citizens must learn and undertake is the key takeaway. He never fails to recognize the ordinary citizens of the country with extraordinary contribution in all walks of life.

Today on the eve of the 100th episode, we must learn two things from the success of his communication outreach through man ki baat. Firstly, one must know the pulse of the nation if one wants to rule over the heart of the people.

Secondly, the medium of communication is not so important. Content is the key.

PM Modi has become Desh Ki Dhadkan through the age-old medium of radio which was in oblivion and has a huge challenge of existence in an era of social media, internet and AI outreach. People from all age group of five year to century old have unparalleled excitement and curiosity to get glued to the radio set, expecting that honourable Prime Minister will touch their mind, body and soul on the designated weekend.

(The author is Vice president of Mumbai BJP)

international

PAKISTAN CAN TAKE BATTLE INTO ENEMY TERRITORY: DG ISPR



London | Agencies

Ukrainian secret service agents tried to assassinate Vladimir Putin with a kamikaze drone laden with explosives, but their top secret mission failed after the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) crashed a few miles short of its target, it has been claimed, according to a media report. The Ukrainian forces reportedly

launched the UJ-22 drone, laden with 17 kg of C4 plastic explosives, from Ukraine on Sunday with the aim of reaching a newly-built industrial estate near Moscow where Putin was due to visit, German newspaper Bild claimed, Daily Mail reported.

But before the deadly drone reached the Rudnevo industrial park on its apparent mission to assassinate the Russian leader, it crashed mere miles

away from the site, Bild claimed while citing a tweet by Ukrainian activist Yuriy Romanenko. Romanenko, who claims to have close ties to Kiev's intelligence services, alleged that Ukrainian secret service agents had received "information" about Putin's apparent trip to the industrial site and had decided to launch the deadly drone in an attempt to assassinate the Russian President, Daily Mail reported. He claimed that the kamikaze drone that had crashed in Voroskogo village, 12 miles east of the Rudnevo industrial park, was the one that Ukrainian forces had launched as part of the assassination plot.

In a tweet cited by Bild, Romanenko said: "Putin we are getting closer. Everyone saw the news about the drone that flew to Moscow, but did not explode? So, this drone flew for a reason."

Last week, our intelligence officers received information about Putin's trip to the industrial park in Rudnevo. Accordingly, our kamikaze drone took off, which flew through all the air defenses of the Russian Federation and crashed not far from the industrial park."

More than 10K people enter Egypt in 5 days as violence in Sudan continues

Cairo: More than 10,000 people of different nationalities have fled conflict-stricken Sudan and reached neighbouring Egypt via the land border crossings of Qastal and Arqeen in five days, Egypt's General Authority for Land and Dry Ports (GALDP) announced in a statement.

"Between April 21 and 25, 1,297 people came (to Egypt) through Qastal and 8,897 others crossed (into Egypt) through Arqeen," the statement said on Wednesday.

The GALDP has been coordinating with all relevant organisations to ensure that Egyptians and eligible foreigners who fled Sudan have access to all facilities, it added as quoted by Xinhua news agency report.

Deadly clashes broke out between the Sudanese Army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces on April 15 in the capital city of Khartoum and other Sudanese regions. More than 400 people have been killed, while more than 4,000 injured in Sudan so far, according to data from the Sudanese Health Ministry.

The warring parties have agreed to a three-day ceasefire starting midnight Monday, as many countries are racing to evacuate their diplomats and citizens from Sudan.

N.KOREA SAYS SPACE PROGRAM 'INDISPENSABLE' FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Seoul | Agencies

North Korea on Thursday said the pursuit of space development projects is "indispensable" for national development in what appears to be efforts to justify its potential launch of a military spy satellite.

Mentioning North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's recent visit to the state-run space development agency, state media carried an interview with the country's environment and telecommunications vice ministers and a ranking weather agency official to highlight the need to build "application satellites", reports Yonhap News Agency.

"Building the space industry is an indispensable project for national development and the improvement of the people's lives," they said in the interview carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

Jon Chol-su, vice minister of the environment protection ministry, said the country's land management



and anti-disaster efforts will likely gain traction if more application satellites are launched into space and transmit real-time data.

Kim had instructed officials to prepare for launching its first military spy satellite as planned, during his visit to the National Aerospace Development Administration last week.

The North has vowed to complete preparations for the launch by the end of this month.

He also emphasized the need to "set it as a main thrust to possess weather and earth observation and communication satellites".

The reclusive nation has not staged provocative acts since its April 13 launch of a solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile.

US state Republicans bans trans lawmaker for rest of legislative session

Washington | Agencies

The Republican-majority House of Representatives in Montana has barred Zoey Zephyr, the first openly transgender woman elected to the US state's legislature, from attending the remainder of this year's legislative session over her remarks that lawmakers who backed a ban on gender-affirming healthcare for minors would have "blood on your hands". Under the disciplinary measure approved on a 68-32 vote on Wednesday, the 34-year-old Democrat will be allowed to retain her seat and cast votes remotely, but will not be able to participate in debates, reports CNN. The session is scheduled to end next week. "We have a week and a half left of the session, and we'll be covering important topics -- housing bills, the state's budget -- and every bill that goes forward for the remainder of this session, there will be 11,000 Montanans whose repre-



sentative is missing, whose voices cannot be heard on those bills," Zephyr told CNN on Wednesday evening. The development came after Republicans accused her of stoking violence and violating the chamber's decorum with her comment. On April 18, Zephyr registered her opposition to a proposed bill that would ban gender-affirming care for transgender youth in Montana, reports the BBC.

Missing Texas child's Indian-origin stepdad stole \$10K before fleeing to India

Washington | Agencies

The Indian-origin stepfather of a six-year-old boy, who is feared dead, stole \$10,000 from a convenience store company in Texas where he worked, before fleeing to India with his wife and six other children, police said.

The FBI and other US federal agencies are seeking to extradite and arrest Arshdeep Singh and his wife Cindy Rodriguez-Singh for abandoning/endangering their child with special needs, Everman Police Chief Craig Spencer said this week.

Arshdeep now also faces a felony theft charge for fraudulently altering cash deposit records to steal cash, and depositing \$8,000 into his account hours before leaving the country, Spencer said.

Noel Rodriguez-Alvarez was one of the 10 children born to Cindy



Rodriguez-Singh. Three siblings lived with their grandparents, while Noel and the others lived with their mother in a shed in Everman, a suburb of Fort Worth. Spencer said that Arshdeep Singh, Cindy, and six other children



got on a plane and travelled to India just before a welfare check conducted on March 20 at the family's home found Noel missing. At the time Cindy told police that Noel was in Mexico with his biological father, which investigators later found out to be

false. "We want these fugitives arrested and extradited to the US so that we can seek answers for the disappearance of Noel," Spencer had said in a previous news conference.

Police investigations found that Cindy neglected and abused Noel, which included depriving that child with food and water.

She had reportedly told relatives that the child was "evil" or "possessed".

According to multiple media reports, Noel was born prematurely and suffered from several physical disabilities and developmental disorders. At the time the couple flew to India, there were reportedly no warrants against them, thus helping them board the flight.

Police said that the body of the child is yet to be found, adding that extensive search operations involving sniffer dogs have already begun.



UDDHAV WARNS OF TAKING 'REVENGE' FOR SHINDE'S BACKSTABBING

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former Maharashtra Chief Minister and Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday warned that his party would take revenge on the backstabbing perpetrated by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his group 11 months ago.

Speaking at the 55th anniversary celebrations of the Bharatiya Kamgar Sena (BKS), Thackeray said that "everyone has their days but our days are not gone".

"They have stabbed us in the back. I will certainly pay them back. Whatever 'prasad' we give them, they will remember it for the rest of their lives," said Thackeray amid a thunderous round of applause, flanked by BKS General Secretary Raghunath Kuchik and other top union leaders.



bothered about the industrialists and not concerned for the workers or the farmers.

Hitting back at the ruling Shiv Sena minister Uday Samant who accused him of opposing mega-projects, Thackeray said that on the contrary,

when he was the CM in the Maha Vikas Aghadi government, the state secured investments worth Rs 2.5 lakh crore, and its industrial policies attracted 25 big industries here.

Questioning the government's claims that the projects are in the

public interest, Thackeray said that if this is so, "then why are you forcing them on the people", and cited the opposition to the Bullet Train, Aarey car shed, the Ratnagiri petrochemicals projects etc.

"If I had been in power, I would first take the consent of the locals before proceeding with these projects. They must first try to understand the problems of the agitating (Ratnagiri) villagers and why they are opposing the projects," said Thackeray.

Thackeray said he had personally gone to meet those opposing the Mumbai-Nagpur Super Expressway, and after they were convinced, the government went ahead with the land acquisition in a transparent manner.

"International Labour Day is coming (May 1). Shiv Sena founder (Bal Thackeray) had added 'Jai Kamgar' to the slogan 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan' because you are also doing the work of nation-building," said Thackeray.

Shirdi town to strike against CISF deployment at Saibaba Temple from May 1

Ahmednagar | Agencies

The small town of Shirdi, which hosts one of India's top religious tourism spots, the Saibaba Temple, will go on an indefinite strike from May 1 to protest the proposed CISF deployment at the famed temple, officials said here on Thursday.

The shutdown call by all the markets, transporters, commercial and hospitality industry here has been issued by different organisations who are jointly opposing the planned CISF security for the temple.

However, a temple official told reporter that the Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust (SSST) has nothing to do with the strike of the townsfolk.

"The Saibaba Temple and all its other facilities shall function as usual... We have no knowledge when the CISF security will be deployed, and presently the Maharashtra Police is providing the security cover here, and we have other security arrangements like metal detectors, CCTVs, etc.," said the officer, requesting anonymity. The main Saibaba Temple is spread across 4.5 acres and the other SSST's activities are dotted on around 350 acres, though the CISF cover will be restricted only to the temple areas.

The officer pointed out that following an intel report to the Centre, there are moves to



beef up the security in and around the temple premises from potential threats or possible attacks. The Shirdi town has a population of around 25,000 and the Saibaba Temple is visited by over 50,000 devotees daily, cutting across faith lines, which adds to over two crore followers from India around the world annually. The town people have argued that the CISF is a specialised force equipped to handle the security of major public installations and has no expertise for the unique security challenges of a religious shrine like Shirdi. The proposed shutdown would deal a major blow to the local economy which entirely depends on religious tourism for its survival. The townies also apprehend that if the CISF takes over the SSST temple security, it would result in huge restrictions for the locals, tourists and others, thus affecting their employment avenues.

A leopard shows up when a tiger was to appear during the shoot in Film city

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The upcoming show 'Baghin', which stars actress Aneri Vajani of 'Anupamaa' fame and Zeeshan Khan of 'Kumkum Bhagya' fame, saw a leopard visiting its sets in the city.

The show follows the story of its female lead possessed by the spirit of a tigress and shows the man and the beast.

While shooting a crucial scene at Mumbai's Film City, actor Ansh Bagri along with his other cast and crew were paid a visit to a leopard. The leopard strolled in, gave a look around and peacefully walked out, leaving everybody surprised.

Sharing his experience, Ansh Bagri said: "We were



shooting in Film City in Mumbai for our show and we were shooting a scene where Gauri (Aneri Vajani) was supposed to turn into a Baghin (tigress) for the first time. In the scene we were showing how a tiger comes in front of Gauri and then she transforms herself. Exactly at that moment, a

leopard suddenly appeared in front of us, looked around and just passed by."

The Film City, which was built in 1977 by the state government of Maharashtra, borders the eco-sensitive zone of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, which is the world's only National Park within the city limits.

TRUCK'S BRAKES FAILED ON MUMBAI-PUNE EXPRESSWAY, HIT 12 CARS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai: At least four people were injured in a multi-vehicle pile up on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway on Thursday, officials said. The accident started when a truck hit a vehicle after its brake failed on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway. The truck eventually hit at least 12 vehicles.

The accident, which took place near Maharashtra's Khopoli, saw around seven to eight cars crash into each other. Videos from the spot show the mangled and wrecked cars on the road with the injured people seated inside an ambulance.

No casualty has been reported yet. None of the injured have sustained any major injuries.

Earlier this, month four people were killed after their car hit a stationary truck on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway.

Mohan Bhagwat calls for supporting cancer treatment of poor

Team Absolute | Nagpur

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday called for extending public support to the healthcare system particularly the cancer treatment for marginally poor sections of the society.

Inaugurating the National Cancer Institute (NCI) here, Bhagwat said though the Institute has come up with latest of equipments and modern treatment facility, he hoped the NCI will live up to the expectations of the cancer patients and their family members.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah was likely to attend the event in Nagpur, but he could not make it due to pressing engagements in Delhi.

The RSS chief said, though cancer is a big problem and a major health issue but needs to be tackled by moral support and effectively through medicine with dedicated treatment by a world-class facility like the NCI.

Bhagwat said the NCI was a dream come true for Fadnavis and his colleague Shailesh Joglekar who lost one family member respectively and were persuaded to set up a facility like Tata Cancer Hospital in Mumbai.

Expressing his happiness, he said it has the best of the



facility for treatment and hopes more people will join hands with open hearted contributions and assistance in maintaining and expanding facilities.

"The onus of sustainability lies with the people to keep the hope alive for a better treatment. The task is difficult to minimise the cost of treatment for a major section of society who are poor," he added. He described the entire project as a dedicated work of Sangh swayamsevak.

UAE releases Mumbai actress nabbed in 'planted' drugs case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai actress Chrisann Pereira, who was jailed in Sharjah (UAE) in a 'drugs plant' case, has been released, her family announced via social media late on Wednesday.

Her family posted a video showing them dancing, crying with disbelief, with a relieved but weeping Chrisann on the other side, all urging her to come back as early as possible.

Chrisann, 27, was trapped last month in the 'drugs plant' case by a couple of Mumbai men, who have been arrested and have confessed to their crime.

The accused duo had hidden the drugs in an award trophy which was detected in Sharjah following which the local police had arrested Chrisann. She had been in jail since April 1.

Her distraught family in Mumbai had told IANS on Tuesday that Chrisann is innocent and they have planned to appeal to the PM and MEA for help to secure her early release.

The Mumbai Police Crime Branch, which is



probing the case, has nabbed the prime accused Anthony Paul (35), a baker in Borivali, and his associate Rajesh Bubhate (34) alias Ravi, a banker.

They have confessed to handing three persons the award trophies with drugs concealed in them and two others with drugs-laced cakes before they flew to Dubai, ostensibly as vendetta against the Pereira family.

While two, including Chrisann, unwittingly walked into the trap, three others managed to evade the authorities in Sharjah.

Paul, said to be the brain behind the revenge con, apparently nursed an old grudge against the Pereira family, especially Premila (Chrisann's mother), and even got into fisticuffs with her son Kevin.

The police have found that Paul had used the same modus operandi with some other wannabe actors, assuring them of plum roles in global webseries, though one person declined to carry the trophy, which Chrisann later agreed to take with her.

246 Indians evacuated from Sudan reach Mumbai safely

Team Absolute | Mumbai

An Indian Air Force flight brought 246 Indians - who were evacuated from the strife-torn Sudan - to Mumbai via Jeddah, under 'Operation Kaveri', an official said here on Thursday.

The flight by an IAF C-17 Globemaster aircraft took off from Jeddah this morning and landed here after 3 p.m., and the passengers included at least two on wheelchairs.

Simultaneously, the Indian Navy has got into the act in a big way for the evacuation of Indians stranded in Sudan.

The INS Teg, an anti-piracy patrol vessel was diverted to Port Sudan and retrieved 297 Indians and dropped them to Jeddah.

Earlier, the first ship INS



Sumedha had brought 278 Indians to Jeddah on Wednesday (April 26).

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said: "Another #OperationKaveri flight comes to Mumbai. 246 more Indians come back to the

motherland." Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muralidharan, who saw them off in Jeddah, said that "our efforts to swiftly send Indians back home from Jeddah is paying".

MAHA FAVOURITE 'MISAL PAV' ENTERS TASTEATLAS' GLOBAL 100 TOP SNACKS LIST

STANDING AT NO. 95, 'MISAL PAV' IS A TRADITIONAL DISH OF THE STATE, QUICK TO PREPARE, EASY TO DIGEST AND CAN BE EATEN PRACTICALLY 24X7, AND SAVOURED BY ONE AND ALL.

IT COMPRISES A SPICY CURRY OF SPROUTED MOTH BEANS, TOPPED WITH ONIONS, RAW GREEN CHILLIES, POTATOES AND CHIVDA, DIPPED AND EATEN WITH THE BAKER'S PAV (SMALL BREAD LOAF).

TASTEATLAS DESCRIBES 'MISAL' - LITERALLY TRANSLATED AS A MIXTURE OF EVERYTHING, SO THE INGREDIENTS VARY AS PER THE COOK, AND APART FROM THE INGREDIENTS, IT MUST BE SPICY WHILE THE BASE MUST BE CRUNCHY AND THE OVERALL LOOK SHOULD BE LIKE A COLOURFUL WORK OF ART, AND ESSENTIALLY NOT HARD ON THE DOMESTIC BUDGETS.

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

The all-time favourite snack of Maharashtra, 'Misal Pav', has entered the TasteAtlas' 100 Best Rated Snacks in the World, as per the rankings for 2023 released recently.

It rubs shoulders with another Maharashtra light food, the yummy 'Vada Pav', 'Pav Bhaji' and other Indian favourites like 'Pani Puri' and 'Chaat'.

"Its available in practically every eatery across the state, as a breakfast, mid-morning filler, lunch, afternoon bite, dinner or even a midnight snack," said a Mumbai Marathi housewife Priyanka K. G., who makes it for her family at least twice a week, or on lazy Sundays.

Another featuring at No. 74 is 'Vada Pav' on which Mumbai and other parts of the state virtually survive, even while on the go, and is a common feature at every street corner stalls, eaters and even topnotch eateries in recent years.

Featuring in the category of 'sandwiches', the dish comprises 'Vada' made of mashed potatoes garnished with spices and deep-fried in chickpea batter, and stuffed with red, green and dry chilli powder-garlic chutney in a sliced loaf of bread.

TasteAtlas attributes its origins to a Dadar street-vendor Ashok Vaidya who used to whip up piping hot vada-pavs that started a rage in



the 1960s and is now a household staple, especially favourite during monsoons.

Later, the Shiv Sena founded by the late Balasaheb Thackeray promoted and patronised the traditional Mumbai working-class snack through portable stalls and as a means of easy, low-investment self-employment mode for youth. Another Maharashtra dish, the 'Pav Bhaji' figures at No. 83, and its fame has now transcended the boundaries with availability in several other states or major cities in India.

Said to be around 175 years old, the dish is a mixed vegetable curry with its special spicy flavours, served hot, topped with some grated cheese and butter, along with dry or butter-fried 'pav'. Its originals are believed to be the brainwave of some vendors left with several unsold vegetables of the day who mixed and mashed them with spices and butter, and consumed it with bread rolls.

Later, it became a favourite with Mumbai's hordes of office-goers commuting long distances and the mill-workers in the 1950-1980s, even as the dish acquired several 'avatars' in its long culinary journey to satisfy changing tastes and discerning palates.

The mouth-watering 'Pani Puri' is listed at No. 73, and is extremely popular not only in India but the neighbourhood of Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan.

The snack is a hollow crisp fried puri, stuffed with some 'ragda' or potatoes, onions, chillies and chickpeas and dunked into a spicy water, becoming the anytime snack 'Pani Puri'.

Though its origins are said to be in Uttar Pradesh, it quickly gained in popularity all over the country and the nearby South Asian nations. One more UP-origin speciality, the lip-smacking 'Chaat' is on No. 71, signifying a huge variety of Indian street foods, snacks, quick light meals with a perfect combination of salty, spicy, sweet and sour flavours.

'Chaat' is consumed as an independent meal or combined with other dishes and is available in every street and even at specialised outlets, in all seasons.

TasteAtlas said that till April 2023, it recorded nearly 10,000 global ratings of which a little over 7,000 were recognised as legitimate for the world 100 list. Several other popular Indian dishes or snacks are ranked in other sections of the TasteAtlas 2023 list.

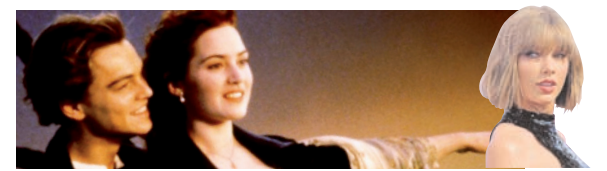
9 WOMEN DISTRACT MUMBAI AIRPORT OFFICIALS TO SMUGGLE GOLD WORTH

Mumbai: In a scene that appeared to have leapt out of a film, a group of women attempted to smuggle gold worth over Rs 9 crore into Mumbai airport on Thursday by creating a ruckus to distract authorities. Nine Kenyan women have been arrested in the case.

The plan was to sneak 18.28 kg of gold past Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport authorities by setting up a chaotic diversion in the busy airport. However, the Air Intelligence Unit saw through the plan and arrested the women.

Further investigation is ongoing, the airport authorities said.

On Wednesday, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) busted a gold smuggling racket and arrested 18 Sudanese women as well as an Indian woman with 16.36 kg of the yellow metal in paste form at the same airport.



'EGO suits me better'

ADELE REVEALS WHY SHE WILL NEVER BECOME EGOT WINNER

Los Angeles | Agencies

Despite scooping an Emmy, 16 Grammys and an Oscar, Adele said that there's no chance she will become an EGOT winner by adding a Tony award to her haul of trophies as she "hates musicals."

The 'Chasing Pavements' singer was handed an Emmy for her 'Adele: One Night Only' special, as well as 16 Grammys and a best original song Oscar for James Bond film theme 'Skyfall', reports femalefirst.co.uk.

But she said on James Corden's final 'Carpool Karaoke' segment about the reason she won't add a Tony to the collection which would make her one of the world's few artists to be an 'EGOT' (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony) winner: "(I've) always had the 'EGO' (but) I would never write a musical or anything like that because I f***** hate musicals."

"I f***** hate musicals. I don't think I've ever said how much I f***** hate musicals."

Tony's are handed out for "excellence in live Broadway theatre" and have been given to the likes of 'Hamilton' and 'The Producers', and Adele added she "absolutely" respects the art of musicals. But she said: "I just don't need to hear everything in f***** song all the time. I also think the EGO suits me better." Adele also tearfully told during the 'Carpool' segment how outgoing 'The Late Late Show' host James helped her through the fallout from her divorce.

She finalised her split from charity boss Simon Konecki in March 2021, and said James' most impactful help came when she went on a family holiday with him. She said about how a verse in her song 'I Drink Wine' was inspired by the presenter's help: "(It) was inspired by a conversation that you and I had, and it was the 4th of January, 2020 or something, and we'd been on vacation together with the kids... and we were on our way home and my mood had changed and it was like the first year that I felt like I had to hold myself accountable, for just being an adult, whereas the year before that I left Simon, you and Jules and the kids were so integral in looking after me and Angelo."



EMMA WATSON ADMITS BEING INTRODUCED TO ALCOHOL AT A YOUNG AGE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Emma Watson has admitted that she used to get 'confused' over other teen's excitement over alcohol as she's been used to drinking wine mixed with water 'since I was a kid'.

The actress told how her father used to give her the alcoholic tittle as part of her lunch and so didn't get the fascination other kids her age had with trying booze which was deemed 'forbidden fruit'. Emma's words come as she's set to take her career in a different direction and launch a new premium gin brand, Renais, with her younger brother Alex.

Having stepped back from the limelight following her last film in 2019, Emma has returned with a foray into wine and spirits, which has been her family's business for several years.

And during an interview with luxury magazine, Financial Times' How To Spend It - of which she appears on the front cover with Alex - Emma details how the taste of alcohol is nothing new to her.

She said: 'I was quite surprised when other kids got really excited about the idea of getting their hands on alcohol. My dad would give me wine and water for lunch since I was a kid. So I was pretty confused as a teenager and everyone thought alcohol was a forbidden fruit.'

'SEXY'

Joy Corrigan showcases her jaw-dropping figure in a tiny bra top and matching thong



Los Angeles | Agencies

Joy Corrigan showcases her jaw-dropping figure in a TINY bra top and matching thong as she fills up her car. She never shies away from flaunting her jaw-dropping figure. And Joy Corrigan made no exception as she filled up her car at a gas station on Wednesday wearing a tiny bra top and matching thong, reports dailymail.co.uk.

The Sports Illustrated swimsuit model flashed her taut abs in the bright pink two-piece as she seductively leaned against her SUV. She teamed the swimwear with a cropped jacket that featured sporty side stripes, and a pair of matching joggers.

Joy boosted her height with some glitzy, silver heeled boots and pulled down her bottoms to make sure her midriff was on full display. The model accessorised with a pink handbag and shielded her eyes with some sunglasses.

Kumail Nanjiani, Elizabeth Banks to lead voice cast in upcoming 'Migration'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood stars Kumail Nanjiani and Elizabeth Banks will lead the voice cast of the upcoming film 'Migration', an animated adventure about a family of ducks on the go. "I find ducks so irresistible," Illumination founder Chris Meledandri told the crowd at CinemaCon on Wednesday as he unveiled the complete voice cast for the original cartoon comedy, reports Variety. "In our movie, ducks worked beautifully to convey the relatable quirks and truths of a modern-day family."

Attendees of the annual Las Vegas-based exhibition industry trade show were also treated to an extended first-look at 'Migration', which opens in theatres on December 22.

The road-trip story follows a family of ducks, who try to convince their overprotective father to embark on the vacation of a lifetime. Mike White, the Emmy-winning creator of 'The White Lotus', screenwriter of 'School of Rock' and runner up on 'Survivor', wrote the screenplay for 'Migration'. The film was directed by Benjamin Renner and co-directed by Guylo Homsy.

In 'Migration', Nanjiani voices an anxious Mallard dad name Mack, while Banks plays his wife, Pam, the Mallards' darling, quick-witted matriarch. Caspar Jennings and Tresli Gazal voice their children. Meanwhile, Awkwafina voices the scrappy leader of a New York City pigeon gang and Carol Kane plays a heron named Erin. The voice cast also includes Keegan-Michael Key, David Mitchell and Danny DeVito.



Meanwhile, Awkwafina voices the scrappy leader of a New York City pigeon gang and Carol Kane plays a heron named Erin. The voice cast also includes Keegan-Michael Key, David Mitchell and Danny DeVito.

CITADEL: AN OCTANE SPY THRILLER

FILM REVIEW
BY SHACHI CHATURVEDI

Director: Newton Thomas Sigel, Jessica Yu, Anthony Russo, and Joe Russo
Cast: Priyanka Chopra and Richard Madden.
Episodes: 1 and 2
Runtime: 30 minutes
Ratings: 3.5/5



Synopsis

Citadel, the global intelligence agency, has collapsed, and its agents' memories have been erased. Manticore, a strong syndicate, is growing in the void. Can the Citadel agents remember their history and get the courage to fight back? That is what the series is all about.

The first episode of the series begins with the introduction of the two main characters, Nadia and Mason, and takes you on a trip to discover how the two elite agents, Mason Kane and Nadia Singh, had their memories erased while almost escaping with their lives. Since then, they've stayed underground, forging new lives under new names, unaware of their pasts.

One night, Bernard Orlick, a former coworker of Mason's in the Citadel, finds them and seeks their help in stopping Manticore from creating a new world order. Mason seeks his former partner, Nadia, and the two spies start on a mission that takes them throughout the world to defeat Manticore, all while dealing with a relationship founded on secrets, deceit, and a dangerous-yet-undying love.

The series is full of action, suspense,

thrills, and even falsehoods that keep you captivated throughout. The number of episodes and their duration are the finest aspects of the series. The short episodes make you want to watch the full show in one sitting.

In terms of star performances, Priyanka Chopra is one of the most versatile actresses we have. Her body language, style, and demeanor make her an excellent choice for the role.

Richard Madden, portrays Mason, a charming spy who assists Nadia in her attempt to learn the truth behind the Citadel. The actor excels in the role with his amazing style of portraying a character.

The series' international reach is one of its most intriguing features. From the busy streets of London to the mountainous landscape of the Himalayas, the franchise plans to take viewers on an exhilarating journey across several nations, in its coming parts. The cinematography is amazing, with

picturesque images of some of the most famous places in the world. With thrilling battle sequences and high-stakes chases that keep viewers on the edge of their seats, the series is also jam-packed with action and suspense. Fans of spy thrillers like James Bond and Jason Bourne will undoubtedly enjoy the show.

Even if the first two episodes don't feature any songs, the use of music to heighten the tension in the scenario is skillfully done, and it enables you to enter the world of Citadel and comprehend it from a more in-depth perspective.

Conclusion
Citadel appears to be a must-watch TV series for all fans of action, suspense, and global intrigue based on the first two episodes with a strong cast, picturesque photography, and a captivating plot that will capture audiences.

(The review is based on the first two episodes of the series.)



MICHELLE YEOH TO LEAD STAR CAST OF 'A HAUNTING IN VENICE'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oscar winner Michelle Yeoh leads the star-studded cast in the new trailer for Kenneth Branagh's third Agatha Christie movie, 'A Haunting in Venice', reports Variety.

The murder mystery, which will be released on September 15, is based on Agatha Christie's 1969 novel 'Hallowe'en Party', 'Variety' adds.

The film's star cast also includes Tina Fey, Jude Hill, Kelly Reilly and Jamie Dornan, with Branagh reprising his role as Hercule Poirot from 'Death on the Nile' and 'Murder on the Orient Express'. "It's a supernatural world where the normal rules do not apply," Branagh told Variety. "Murders and ghosts are irresistible to a man with that moustache and that nose for sniffing other culprits."

Yeoh plays the medium running the evening. Branagh, according to Variety, said her character "has to have a sense of showmanship and gravity. She has to convince our audience that she's capable of speaking to people on the other side, or at least is very convincing about that."

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Lottie Moss



Indian Premier League 2023

RR BEAT CSK BY 32 RUNS

Jaipur | Agencies

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal's attacking fifty (77 off 43) followed by clinical bowling performance by Adam Zampa (3-22) and Ravichandran Ashwin (2-35) led Rajasthan Royals to a convincing 32-run win over Chennai Super Kings in Match No. 37 of IPL 2023 at Saiwari Mansingh Stadium, here on Thursday.

With this win, Rajasthan went to the top of the table with five wins while CSK, who also have five victories, dropped down to the third spot after the loss. Jaiswal's fifty (77 off 43) propelled Rajasthan Royals to 202/5 in 20 overs. Apart from Jaiswal, the likes of Dhruv Jurel (34 off 15), Jos Buttler (27 off 21), and Devdutt Padikkal (24 off 12) contributed to the Royals' big score on a batting-friendly pitch. In reply, Shivam Dube (52 off 33) and Ruturaj Gaikwad (47 off 29) tried hard with the bat for CSK but it was not enough against a disciplined Royals bowling attack. Chasing a huge total, CSK were off to a sedate start, scoring just 13 runs in the first



three overs as both Devon Conway and Ruturaj Gaikwad were too cautious in their approach. With 58 runs required off 18 balls, Sandeep Sharma executed his plans well and gave just 12 runs, bringing the equation to 46 off 12. And then Holder bowled an excellent over to concede just 9 runs.

Eventually, CSK required 37 off the last over and they were able to get just four runs off Kuldeep Yadav, getting restricted to 170/6 in 20 overs.

Brief scores

Rajasthan Royals 202/5 in 20 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 77, Dhruv Jurel 34; Tushar Deshpande 2-42) beat Chennai Super Kings 170/6 in 20 overs (Shivam Dube 52, Ruturaj Gaikwad 47; Adam Zampa 3-22) by 32 runs.

Badminton Asia Championships

Sindhu, Prannoy, Satwik-Chirag in quarters; Srikanth ousted

Dubai | Agencies

Two-time Olympic PV Sindhu and top men's singles player H.S. Prannoy kept the Indian flag flying in the singles section even as former World No.1 Kidambi Srikanth crashed out of the Badminton Asia Championships 2023 at the pre-quarterfinals stage on Thursday.

Sindhu, who won silver at the Rio Olympic Games in 2016 and bronze in Tokyo 2020, defeated China's Han Yue 21-12, 21-15 to storm into the quarterfinals. Prannoy, the highest-ranked Indian in men's singles ranking, defeated Chico Aura DWI Wardoyo of Indonesia 21-16, 5-21, 21-18 in a Round of 16 clash. Srikanth on the other hand, lost to fourth seed Kodai Naraoka of Japan 21-14, 20-22, 21-9 in another second-round encounter in the 32-player draw. Meanwhile, the



top men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty advanced to the men's doubles quarterfinals with a straight game win against Jin Yong and Na Sung Seung of South Korea in a pre-quarterfinal encounter. The Indian duo defeated the Korean combine 21-13, 21-11.

It was a mixed day for India as qualifiers Rohan Kapoor and Sikki Reddy advanced to the next round in the mixed doubles with a walkover from four-seeded Korean pair, Seo Seung Jae and Chae Yu Jung

in a pre-quarterfinal match. Also in a mixed doubles draw, India's B. Sumeeth Reddy and Ashwini Ashwini Ponnappa lost to the Chinese Taipei pair of Chang Ko-Chi and Lee Chih Chen 21-15, 21-17. The young women's doubles pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand are also out as they gave a walkover to sixth seeds Jeong Na Eun and Kim Hye Jeong of South Korea in a Round of 16 clash at Court 4 in Sheikh Rashid Bin Hamdan Indoor Hall, Al Nasr Club.

SL vs IRE 2nd Test, Day 4

Madushka, Mendis double tons, Mathews' ton put SL in commanding position

Galle | Agencies

Double centuries from Nishan Madushka and Kusal Mendis followed by a 15th Test hundred for Angelo Mathews saw Sri Lanka post 704/3 declared in 151 overs against Ireland on day four of the second Test at the Galle International Stadium on Thursday.

After taking a 212-run lead in the match, Prabath Jayasuriya and Ramesh Mendis took a wicket each to leave Ireland at 54/2 in 22 overs, trailing Sri Lanka by 158 runs, with just one day left in the match. Resuming from 357/1 after rain forced early stumps on day three, Madushka and Mendis piled on Ireland's misery, putting on a 268-run partnership. In hot conditions, the Ireland



bowlers searched in vain for a breakthrough in the morning session, with mistakes from the Sri Lanka batters few and far between. Madushka converted his maiden Test ton to a double shortly before lunch while Mendis made his first double hundred too later in the day. That maximum, the ninth of his innings, broke Kumar Sangakkara's record for most sixes in an innings for Sri Lanka. By the time Graham Hume removed Kusal, the batter had hit 11 sixes, the joint-second most by a batter in Test innings. A good catch on

the long-on boundary by Matthew Humphreys completed the dismissal, which was Hume's maiden Test wicket as Kusal departed with 245 runs off 291 balls. Sri Lanka finally declared their innings immediately after Mathews reached his century, with the score reading 704/3, and a first-innings lead of 212. Mathews' unbeaten 100 came from 114 balls with six fours and four sixes.

Brief scores

Rajasthan Royals 202/5 in 20 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 77, Dhruv Jurel 34; Tushar Deshpande 2-42) beat Chennai Super Kings 170/6 in 20 overs (Shivam Dube 52, Ruturaj Gaikwad 47; Adam Zampa 3-22) by 32 runs.

Premier League

MANCHESTER CITY BEAT ARSENAL TO TAKE BIG STEP TOWARDS TITLE

London | Agencies

Manchester City took a massive step toward the Premier League title with a convincing 4-1 win at home against league leaders Arsenal.

The game had been touted as a title decider for weeks and lived up to expectations as Pep Guardiola's team demonstrated they are the in-form side, closing to within two points of their rivals, with two games in hand, reports Xinhua.

Kevin De Bruyne put Manchester City on track in the seventh minute, with a superb finish following a brilliant assist from Erling Haaland.

John Stones headed the second goal on the brink of halftime after a VAR review for a possible offside, and De Bruyne's second of the match, after more exceptional work from Haaland in the 54th minute, secured the win. Rob Holding scored a consolation goal for Arsenal in the 86th minute, but Haaland netted in front of an ecstatic Etihad Stadium deep into injury time, making City clear title favorites. Goals from Cody Gakpo and Joel



Matip overturned Lucas Paqueta's 12th-minute opener for West Ham United, giving Liverpool a 2-1 win at the London Stadium to continue their late push for a place in Europe.

Chelsea's misery continues as they lost a southwest London derby 2-0 at home to Brentford, who took the points with an own goal from Cesar Azpilicueta and a deflected shot from Bryan Mbeumo with 12 minutes remaining.

The defeat leaves Frank Lampard with five losses in five games since his return to the club, while this is Chelsea's worst run since 1993.

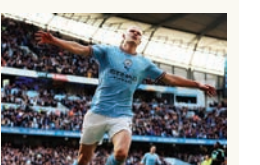
HAALAND BREAKS SALAH'S 38-GAME GOALS RECORD

Manchester (England) | Erling Haaland's late goal in Manchester City's 4-1 victory over Arsenal took him to 33 goals in the Premier League and extended his lead in the race for the Golden Boot.

With a goal in Thursday game the Norwegian surpassed Mohammad Salah's 38-game record, the Egyptian hit 32 in 2017/18. Andrew Cole and Alan Shearer currently share the record across the entire Premier League era, scoring 34 in 1993/94 and 1994/95 respectively when the season comprised 42 matches. With seven league games remaining, Haaland requires just two more goals to have the record outright.

Haaland's form throughout his first campaign has been pivotal to the fortunes of Pep Guardiola's side during the hunt for a fifth Premier League title in six seasons and third in a row. He began the season with 18 goals in his first 13 Premier League appearances, including hat-tricks against Crystal Palace, Nottingham Forest and Manchester United.

He is currently on a run of eight goals in his last eight league appearances.



Madrid Open

THIEM BEATS EDMUND, SETS UP SECOND-ROUND CLASH WITH TSITSIPAS

Madrid (Spain) | Agencies

Continuing with his impressive record at the Madrid Open, Dominic Thiem moved past Briton Kyle Edmund 6-4, 6-1 to set up a second-round clash against Stefanos Tsitsipas on Thursday.

The former World No. 3 has reached at least the semifinals in four of his past five appearances in the Spanish capital and he looked in control throughout his first-round clash against Edmund.

The Austrian won 86 per cent (24/28) of his first-serve points and remained strong under pressure, saving all four break points he faced to advance after 84 minutes and



improve to 2-0 in his ATP head-to-head series against the 28-year-old Edmund. "It was not easy in the beginning. The first match on the centre court and I was

mainly practising outside, so it is a different feeling." Thiem was quoted as saying by ATP Tour.

"I have known Kyle since we were juniors. He has been a tough opponent since my young days, so I went in with a lot of respect. I had some crucial moments in the first set when I saved the break points and then I released a little bit and it got better and better," he added.

With his victory, Thiem improved to 17-7 at the clay-court tournament, while he has climbed two spots to No. 91 in the ATP Live Rankings.

Thiem will next play fourth-seed Tsitsipas. The Austrian leads the Greek 5-3 in their ATP head-to-head series.

JULE NIEMEIER UPSETS KVIUTOVA IN SECOND ROUND

Madrid |

Jule Niemeier of Germany notched the second Top 10 win of her career after beating three-time champion Czech Republic's Petra Kvitova in the second round of the Madrid Open on Thursday.

Niemeier saved two set points in the first set en route to scoring a 7-6(9), 6-1 upset of No.10 seed Kvitova. She will go on to face either No.24 seed Belgian Elise Mertens or Rebecca Marino of Canada. Niemeier sprang out to an early lead again in the tiebreak; only for Kvitova to come up with her biggest shots to save a further four set points. But Niemeier responded well, fending off two break points against her before taking advantage at 9-9 and converting her seventh opportunity.



La Liga

Rayo stun Barca, Atletico Madrid beat Mallorca by 3-1

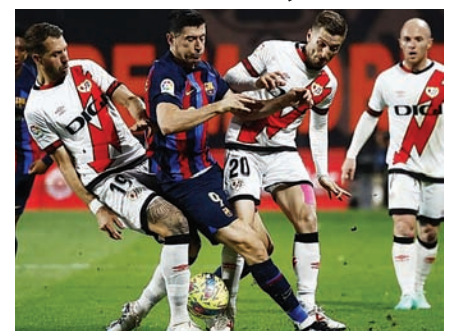
Madrid | Agencies

La Liga leaders FC Barcelona suffered a 2-1 defeat away to Rayo Vallecano after another lackluster display from Xavi Hernandez's team.

Although Real Madrid's loss in Girona on Tuesday ensured that Barca would end the round of matches with a lead of at least 11 points at the top of the table, Barca failed to capitalize on the opportunity to move within touching distance of the title, reports Xinhua.

With Pedri and Frenkie de Jong back in the starting lineup for Barca, Rayo's aggressive football gave them the advantage, and Alvaro Garcia scored with an angled shot from the left.

Left back Fran Garcia scored in the 53rd minute with a low shot after the Barca defense failed to pick up his deep run. Robert Lewandowski pulled a goal back for Barca



with seven minutes remaining, but Rayo held on for a well-deserved win.

Atletico Madrid came back from a goal down to beat Mallorca 3-1, moving within two points of Real Madrid. Celta defeated bottom side Elche 1-0 thanks to a 90th-minute goal from defender Joseph Aidoo.

Archer has overcome bigger things, sure he will be ready for the Ashes: Wood

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Tearaway England pacer Mark Wood has backed fellow fast-bowler Jofra Archer to be fit and ready to feature in the highly-anticipated Ashes starting from June 16, citing the battles he's overcome in the last few years.

Archer has not played Test cricket since February 2021, picking 42 wickets in 13 matches since his debut in 2019 and had undergone multiple operations for back and elbow injuries in the last two years.

He finally made a comeback to international cricket in 2023 through impressive performances in England's white-ball tours to South Africa and Bangladesh. Archer is currently playing for Mumbai Indians in IPL 2023; though he missed four matches due to an elbow niggle. "I feel for Jofra actually



and I can sympathise with him quite a bit there. You feel like you're just getting back and then you have a little setback and things happen. The curve's never in a straight line is it, you know that on the way back you're going to have bumps along the way." "He's a champion player

and I'm sure he'll come back and be a champion again. I think, reading between the lines, it sounds like it's not a massive setback that he's going to have. He has overcome bigger things and I'm sure that he will be ready for the Ashes," Wood was quoted as saying by Sky Sports News.

Harmanpreet, Smriti, Deepti in top grade of BCCI central contracts

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Board of Control for Cricket in India on Thursday announced the annual player contracts of senior India women's team for the 2022/23 season, under which captain Harmanpreet Kaur, vice-captain Smriti Mandhana and all-rounder Deepti Sharma are in Grade A, the highest bracket of the contracts.

Pacer Renuka Singh and wicket-keeper-batter Richa Ghosh are the new entrants in the Grade B division alongside batters Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma and left-arm spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad. Meanwhile, Grade C has new additions in fast bowlers Meghna Singh and Anjali Sarvani.

The right-left arm fast-bowling duo are alongside all-rounders Pooja Vastrakar, Sneha Rana, Harleen Deol and Devika Vaidya, wicketkeeper-



batter Yastika Bhatia and right-handed batter Sabbhineni Meghana in Grade C. The retirements of legendary cricketers Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami means they have expectedly been left out from the

contracts list. BCCI Central Contracts List Grade A: Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana, Deepti Sharma Grade B: Renuka Singh Thakur, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma,

Richa Ghosh, Rajeshwari Gayakwad Grade C: Meghna Singh, Devika Vaidya, Sabbhineni Meghana, Anjali Sarvani, Pooja Vastrakar, Sneha Rana, Radha Yadav, Harleen Deol, Yastika Bhatia.



It's important to break monotony to enjoy work equally, says Kunal

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Kunal Kemmu, who was recently seen in the comedy-drama streaming series 'Pop Kaun?' and the streaming film 'Kanjoos Makkichoos', feels that maintaining versatility is the way to break out of monotony and make work fun. Ever since his debut film 'Kalyug' and with projects like 'Dhol', 'Golmaal Series', 'Go Goa Gone', 'Abhay', the actor has been dabbling in different genres, may it be a thriller, drama, murder mystery, or comedy.

In comedy as well, he has experimented with subgenres like situational comedy, dark comedy, family and slapstick comedy. The actor shared how he broke the stereotypes as he said, "When I started I was offered only serious parts, and then I was offered 'Dhol', 'I did '99', 'Golmaal', and even 'Go Goa Gone', and then 90 per cent of the roles that came were all comedy, interestingly, in the same year, I was offered 'Kalank', 'Malang', and 'Abhay'."

Speaking about the aforementioned films, Kunal said, "These were all a welcome change from the comedies I was doing. One should be willing to dabble in different genres as it helps you to be a better artist".

The actor will be next seen in 'Gulkanda Tales' helmed by Raj - DK of 'The Family Man' fame and he's currently working on the post-production of his directorial debut 'Madgaon Express'.

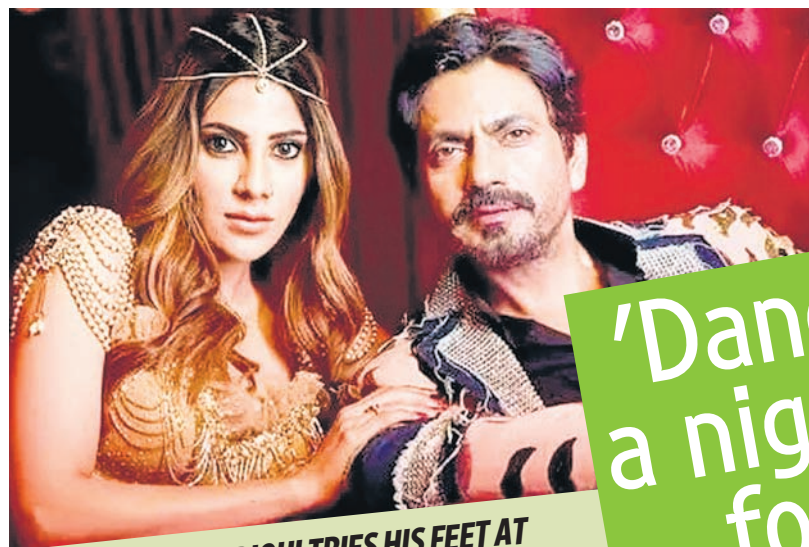


GUL PANAG IS INVESTIGATING A 'MURDER MYSTERY' IN HER UPCOMING FILM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Gul Panag, who started her career in Bollywood in 2003 with the movie 'Dhooop', will be sharing screen with Erica Fernandes in the short film 'The Haunting' where she is investigating a murder mystery. Gul said: "So, my character is an investigator. She works with the police, she is a psychoanalyst and she's profiling this character, who allegedly has committed this murder and she believes that this girl is making up stories." The actress has been part of a number of TV shows and films. She acted in movies like 'Dor', 'Hello', 'Summer 2007', 'Straight', 'Ab Tak Chappan 2', 'Ambarsariya', 'Student of the Year 2', among others. Gul was also seen in web series like 'The Family Man', 'Paatal Lok', and many more.

The story is surrounded by supernatural incidents that took place after the murder of a woman whose sister tries to explain that she was killed by a demon but no one believes her. Later, she is also shown to be possessed by the demons. The lead character played by Erica and her story about the evil forces or demons.



NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI TRIES HIS FEET AT DANCING IN HIS UPCOMING MOVIE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui, who has two films on the horizon for the release, 'Jogira Sara Ra Ra' and 'Afwaah', will be seen shaking his leg in the 'Cocktail' song from 'Jogira Sara Ra Ra'.

While the actor will be seen performing out-and-out commercial dance for the first time, he spoke about his experience of shooting for Cocktail.

Sharing the experience of trying his hands on dancing in the song, Nawazuddin said: "Cocktail" was really a surprise for me. For me, acting is much easier compared to dancing. When it comes to dancing, it's a nightmare for me. But I had a blast shooting for 'Cocktail'."

The actor further mentioned that it's his first "out and out commercial song" and that he was quite nervous before the shoot of the track. He said: "I remember being so nervous on the day we were supposed to start shooting, but gradually I started enjoying it. I am really glad the song came out well and I hope audiences will love it as much as we loved working on it. Now, I am more confident in doing dance numbers."

Nawaz also has an interesting lineup of films which includes films like 'Haddi', 'Tiku Weds Sheru', and 'Adbhut'.

I HAVE A VERY DIFFERENT & GLAMOROUS LOOK IN THE SONG: SIMARAN KAUR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Aaggar Tum Na Hote' actress Simaran Kaur, whose music video 'Current Maare' is finally out, has said that the project means a lot to her. The actress also said that the track 'Current Maare' is a perfect party number.

Talking about her glamorous look in the song, Simaran said: "I have a very different and glamorous look in the song, something which I haven't done before. It's a dance number, the music is very catchy and upbeat. I had a great time shooting for this video."

She added: "This is something I haven't done before. It's different because whenever you do a TV serial, it's more traditional but this is a very new avatar, and glamorous. It's more about the look which is different. Also, I love dancing. So a lot of people are appreciating my dance moves and my expressions in the song." "My experience was fantastic. This is one of the best music videos I've ever shot. It was great working with professionals from Bollywood, including Feroz Khan Sir, who directed the song, and Manoj Lobo Sir, who was the Director of Photography. Working with such professionals benefited me. It's like taking one step forward. And when they like your work and appreciate you, you gain confidence and push yourself to the next level. Everyone was very enthusiastic about their work."

The minor details were kept in mind while shooting."

Talking about her future projects, Simaran said, "There's another music video in the pipeline, which is shot in Dubai and it will be released soon."

'Dancing is a nightmare for me'



'TIME PE NAHI, MARZI SE HONI CHAHIYE'

Samantha addresses social pressure of girls marrying at 'right age' in new ad

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Star Samantha Ruth Prabhu has spoken about various taboos faces by women today in a new advertisement she features in.

From women marrying at their own will, to returning from work as per their timings or doing action in films - the advertisement talks about all of that.

Samantha captioned it: "Duniya kheechegi neeche, but you got to rise up baby!"

The video begins with Samantha sitting at a mandap as a bride. However, a wedding guest comments on how girls should

marry at the right age.

Samantha is then heard saying: "Time pe nahi, marzi se honi chahiye."

The video then shifts to Samantha coming late from work and the watchman ask: "Kaunsa kaam raat ke 12 baje khatam hota hai." To which, Samantha says it doesn't even end at midnight.

The last segment is about doing an action film, where the co-actor is heard saying that he is the "hero" and will do "action" in the movie.

Giving a befitting reply, Samantha says: "Par is film ki hero to main hu."

The ad ends with Samantha saying: "Sab ki sunoge to khud ki kab karoge."



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Avneet Kaur