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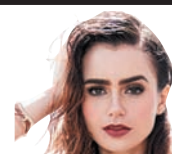
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EL NINO MAY SPUR DEADLY HEAT WAVES IN INDIA

El Nino is associated with a band of warm ocean water that develops in the central and east-central equatorial Pacific, including the area off the Pacific coast of South America. During El Nino, winds blowing west along the equator slow down, and warm water is pushed east, creating warmer surface ocean temperatures.

EL NINO WILL MEAN EXTREME WEATHER AROUND THE GLOBE AND MAKING IT VERY LIKELY THE WORLD WILL EXCEED 1.5 DEGREES CELSIUS OF WARMING. THE HOTTEST YEAR IN RECORDED HISTORY, 2016, WAS DRIVEN BY A MAJOR EL NINO.

ON ONE HAND, THE EL NINO EVENT WILL LEAD TO HEAT WAVES AND DROUGHTS IN INDIA, SOUTH AFRICA, AUSTRALIA, INDONESIA, AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDS. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT WILL MEAN HEAVY RAINFALL AND FLOODING IN REGIONS LIKE CALIFORNIA IN THE US AND COULD ALSO CAUSE BLEACHING AND DEATH OF CORAL REEFS.

HEAT WAVES IN INDIA ARE ALREADY INCREASING IN FREQUENCY, INTENSITY AND LETHALITY, BURDENING PUBLIC HEALTH, AGRICULTURE, AND OTHER SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL SYSTEMS.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Climate models have predicted that El Nino is on the horizon, which can lead to severe heat waves and droughts, in many countries, including India. Last month, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) warned of a likely spike in temperatures globally this year, due to the warming El Nino event. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has also predicted a 70 per cent chance of El Nino in India. While the agency has predicted a normal monsoon, it said El Nino can affect the monsoon. The impact of El Nino may be felt during the second half of monsoon season.

Latest climate models also suggest the phenomenon could develop as early as May 2023. This can possibly weaken the southwest monsoon season, which brings around 70 per cent of the total rainfall India receives and on which most of its farmers still depend.



Heatwaves may burden health, agriculture in India: Cambridge study

New Delhi: Heatwaves in India are increasing in frequency, intensity and lethality, burdening public health, agriculture, and other socio-economic and cultural systems, says a study. The study, "Lethal heat waves are challenging India's sustainable development" published in PLOS Climate by Ramit Debnath of University of Cambridge, Britain, and colleagues, suggests heatwaves made more likely by climate change may impede India's progress toward its sustainable development goals.

In order to analyse India's climate vulnerability, and how climate change may impact SDG progress, researchers conducted an analytical evaluation of India's heat index with its climate vulnerability index, a composite index using various indicators to account for socioeconomic, livelihood, and biophysical factors.

They accessed a publicly available dataset on state-level climate vulnerability indicators from the Indian government's national data and analytics platform to classify severity categories.

The researchers then compared India's progress in SDG over 20 years (2001-2021) with extreme weather-related mortality from 2001-2021.

The researchers found that heatwaves have weakened SDG progress more than previously estimated and that current assessment metrics may not sufficiently capture the nuances of India's vulnerabilities to climate change impacts.

Gujrat court rejects Rahul's plea for suspension of conviction in defamation case

Team Absolute | Surat

The sessions court in Surat on Thursday dismissed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's plea seeking suspension of his conviction in the defamation case that led to his disqualification from Parliament.

The court had convicted Gandhi on March 23 for his remarks made during an election rally in Kolar in April 2019, where he had said that "all people with the Modi surname are thieves".

The court sentenced him to two years in prison and he was disqualified as a member of Lok Sabha the next day.

Rahul Gandhi's lawyers had filed two applications, one for bail till the disposal of his appeal and another for suspension of his conviction until the appeal is decided.

Senior advocate R.S. Cheema, appearing for the Congress leader, argued that only an aggrieved person could file a defamation complaint as per the law, while also pointing out that the



speech was not defamatory until it was taken out of context. The case was filed by BJP MLA Purnesh Modi, who had claimed that Rahul Gandhi's statement had defamed all the people with the Modi surname.

The court had found Rahul Gandhi guilty under IPC Sections 499 (defamation) and 500 (punishment for defamation).

He had claimed that the trial court treated him harshly because of his status as an

MP. Cheema also questioned the Surat court's jurisdiction, pointing out that the speech was made in Kolar.

The court rejected Rahul Gandhi's plea, which means that he cannot be reinstated as an MP.

It also imposed the maximum punishment permissible under the law, and Rahul Gandhi's punishment could not have been even a day less to allow him to retain his seat as an MP.

Centre plans to enable Aadhaar authentication by entities other than govt departments

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Centre plans to allow entities other than a central or state government ministry or department that plan to use Aadhaar for providing various public services to authenticate it.

The Ministry for Electronics and IT proposes to amend the Aadhaar Authentication for Good Governance Rules, 2020 for this purpose, and has posted the amendments on its website, seeking comments on them from stakeholders and the general public by May 5, 2023. "It is proposed that any entity other than a government ministry or department that desires to use Aadhaar authentication for the purpose of enabling better access to services, usage of digital platforms to ensure good governance, preventing dissipation of social welfare benefits, enabling innovation and spread of knowledge, shall prepare a proposal giving justification as to how the authentication sought is for one of the above purposes and in the interest of state and submit the same to the concerned ministry or department of the central or state government," a statement issued by the IT ministry



said. "If the concerned ministry or department is of the opinion that the proposal submitted fulfils such a purpose and is in the interest of the state, it will forward the proposal along with its recommendation to the IT ministry," it added further. At present, the ministries and departments are allowed to undertake Aadhaar authentication under the Aadhaar Authentication for Good Governance (Social Welfare, Innovation, Knowledge) Rules, 2020 in the interest of good governance and to prevent leakage of public funds and enabling innovation and the spread of knowledge.

5 SOLDIERS KILLED AS ARMY VEHICLE CATCHES FIRE IN J&K'S POONCH

Srinagar: Five soldiers died and another was seriously injured in a terrorist attack on a military vehicle in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch today.

The vehicle was fired upon by the terrorists at around 3 pm near the Bhimber Gali area and later caught fire due to a likely grenade attack, the Army said.

The unidentified terrorists fired at the Army vehicle, taking advantage of heavy rain and low visibility in the area, according to an official statement by the Army headquarters, Northern Command. "The vehicle caught fire, due to likely use of grenades by terrorists," it added. Five personnel of the Rashtriya Rifles unit deployed for counter-terrorist operations in the area died in the incident, said the Army. It said another soldier, who was seriously injured in the attack, was evacuated to the hospital and is under treatment. Operations are on to locate the attackers, it added. "Anguished by the tragedy in Poonch District (J&K), where the Indian Army has lost its brave soldiers after a truck caught fire. In this tragic hour, my thoughts are with the bereaved families," said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The terror incident assumes significance in view of a G20 Tourism Working Group meeting scheduled in Srinagar in May. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval had reviewed the security situation in the Union territory last week. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Director General of Police Dilbag Singh, and other senior officials also attended the meeting.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday observed that in heterosexual couples, a child may see domestic violence - a father becoming an alcoholic, thrashing the mother, and asking her for money as it questioned the arguments that two spouses, who belong to a binary gender, are essential for marriage.

Senior advocate K.V. Viswanathan, representing Zainab Patel, submitted before a five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud that it is incorrect to say that gay,

lesbian, and same-sex couple do not provide the children safety, security, and the upbringing they require.

"Long back in our country, the law was all that is required is the welfare of the child... if that is applied then it does not matter whether it is a heterosexual couple and homosexual couple," he said, also cited findings based on evidence that they are as suited as heterosexual couple to bring up children.

The Chief Justice said: "Mr Viswanathan, what happens when there is a heterosexual couple and child sees domestic violence... will that child grow up in normal

atmosphere, of a father becoming an alcoholic and coming back home and thrashing the mother every night and asking for money for alcohol, so much for heterosexual couple, there no absolutes, as I said."

Making a passing reference to the bench being trolled on social media for various oral observations, the Chief Justice added: "Even at risk of getting trolled. Now this has become the name of the game for judges to confront, answers to what we say in the court are in the trolls, not in the court."

Viswanathan submitted that the Centre, in its counter-affidavit, has stressed the importance of procreation, and argued that as people in a same sex marriage cannot procreate, they need not be granted the right to marry. In response, he submitted that even many heterosexual females above the age 45 years may not be able to safely become pregnant, but are still allowed to marry, therefore, procreation cannot be a ground to deny the right to marry.

The bench will continue to hear the matter next week.

HEAVY SNOWFALL IN KEDARNATH OBSTRUCTS WAY TO DHAM



Team Absolute | Kedarnath

Continuous heavy snowfall and rain in Kedarnath for the past few days has hampered the preparations for the upcoming Char Dham Yatra, an official said on Thursday.

Kedarnath Dham is scheduled to be reopened for pilgrims on April 25, for which various departments, under the direction of District Magistrate Mayur Dixit, are making preparations for the travel arrangements.

Due to bad weather, there are problems in the preparations for the yatra and labourers engaged in construction work are also facing difficulties. Disaster Management Authority official Surendra Singh Rawat said: "The trek route to the temple has been blocked for traffic due to rain and heavy snowfall near Bhairav glacier."

Snow clearing operations will be resumed by the labourers as soon as the snowfall stops, he said.

Gold, silver rally to 10% gains this year

Gold's demand seldom disappoints the market, however things are little different on domestic front this time around due to some slowdown in the physical market, primarily amidst recent changes in customs duty to 15 per cent (including cess) for gold last year and for silver this year.

India in 2021 imported 1,050 tonnes gold, in 2022 it imported 705 tonnes of gold, on other hand, silver import number surprised everyone in 2022, which were to the tune of 9,500 tonnes.

Amidst higher prices, there is some resilience in the physical market with respect to gold buying. On the domestic front, gold ETF has witnessed good traction with the Total AUM of major fund houses going above Rs 17,000 crore.

Also giving a boost to the overall demand is the Central Bank gold buying spree which is rising with a consistent pace, since the last 10 years, major central banker have been net buyers.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Safe haven assets, especially gold and silver have seen a fantastic rally since the start of this year, posting 10 per cent year to date (YTD) gains, Motilal Oswal Financial Services said in a report.

It probably is the year of safe havens, as along with global growth slowdown, geo-political uncertainties, there are also expectations regarding slower interest rate hikes which really is a positive scenario for gold prices, the report said. Demand and supply factors historically have not directly made a big impact on gold prices, and especially in a scenario where there are more overpowering uncertainties present in market.

Gold prices have posted a sharp rally over the last couple of months, hence some ease off could be warranted.

According to WGC, current scale of central bank buying is massive -- an annualised rate of 1,724 tonnes vs an average of 512 tonnes over the past



decade, the report said.

The triggers which are supporting the market are geo-political tensions in Russia/Ukraine, China/Taiwan.

Russian-Ukraine concerns set a positive tone for safe haven assets, and to top up, Finland was granted admission in NATO, which doubled their borders and increased threat for Russia increasing uncertainties.

One more uncertainty that "probably" was short lived is the US banking concerns, wherein SVB and Credit Suisse led fiasco created panic in the market and increased gold and silver's safe haven appeal, the report said.

ISRO expected to touch 424 foreign satellite launches on Saturday

Chennai: The Indian space agency on Saturday is likely to successfully launch two Singaporean satellites with its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), taking the total number of foreign satellites put into orbit to 424. On April 22 afternoon, the core alone variant of the PSLV rocket (code named as PSLV-C55) will be carrying two Singaporean earth observation satellites - TeLEOS-2 weighing 741 kg, and the 16 kg Lumilite-4.

These two apart, there will be seven non-separable experimental payloads which would be part of the rocket's final stage (PS4).

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) uses the final stage (PS4) of the PSLV rocket as an orbital platform for in-orbit experiments and has named it as PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM). According to ISRO, the non-separable payloads will be powered by a command, after the two Singaporean satellites are separated.

The platform will have a solar panel mounted around the PS4 tank which will be deployed after confirmation of the stage achieving stabilisation.

The power will be provided to payloads and avionics packages based on their requirements, the ISRO said. The PSLV-C55 rocket is scheduled to blast off at 2.19 pm on Saturday from the Sriharikota rocket port in Andhra Pradesh.

Just over 19 minutes into its flight, the PSLV-C55 will orbit the TeLEOS-2 satellite and it will be followed by Lumilite-4 soon after.



NO MEMBER OF THE BAR CAN GO ON STRIKE OR ABSTAIN FROM COURT WORK: SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday said that no member of the Bar can go on strike or abstain from court work and asked all the high court's to constitute a grievance redressal committee headed by the Chief Justice and other stakeholders to avoid lawyers' frequent strikes.

A bench of Justices M.R. Shah and Ahsanuddin Amanullah said: "We once again reiterate that no member of the Bar can go on strike and/or abstain himself from court working. Time and again, this court has emphasised and criticised the advocates going on strike and abstaining them from work."

The bench said that if the member of the Bar has any genuine grievance or the difficulty being faced because of the procedural changes in filing/listing of the matters and/or any genuine grievance pertaining to misbehavior of any member of the lower judiciary, they can very well make a representation. It said it is



appropriate that their genuine grievances are considered by some forum so that such strikes can be avoided and members of the Bar who might have genuine grievances like above may ventilate their grievances. "Therefore, we request all the High Courts to constitute Grievance Redressal Committee in their respec-

tive High Courts which may be headed by the Chief Justice and such a grievance redressal committee be consisting of two other senior Judges, one each from service and one from the Bar to be nominated by the Chief Justice as well as the Advocate General, Chairman of the Bar Council of the State and President of the High

Court Bar Association," it said.

The bench said the high court may also consider to constitute the similar grievance redressal committee at the district court level.

The top court delivered the judgment on an application filed by the Bar Council of India (BCI). Senior advocate and BCI Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra contended that the council has suggested various measures for controlling the strike/abstention and has suggested the mechanism of redressal of the grievances of advocates/Bar associations at all levels.

"It is submitted that however, in a meeting of Chairmen/Office Bearers of all the State Bar Councils held, the Bar Council of India and all the representatives of the lawyers were of the unanimous opinion that there should be a grievance redressal mechanism available to Advocates at all levels from the Talukas/Muffasils/District Courts, High Courts where the members of the Bar could vent their grievances," noted the top court.

I am not against same sex marriage: Abhishek Banerjee

Kolkata | Agencies

Amid the ongoing hearing on same-sex marriage in the Supreme Court, Trinamool Congress' national General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee said on Thursday that he is personally not against same-sex marriage.

"I personally do not have any reservation about same-sex marriage. India is a democratic country. Everyone here has the liberty to choose his or her life partner. This is my personal opinion," the Trinamool Lok Sabha MP said. His comments came a day after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had said that understanding the public pulse is an important aspect and a deciding factor in the debate on same-sex marriage in the country. "Generally, I love people who love others. But since a case is pending in the Supreme



Court relating to this issue, it would not be right on my part to comment on it at this moment. The matter is sensitive. All I can say is that we have to understand the pulse of the people in this matter," Mamata Banerjee had said on Wednesday. She had also said that any detailed comment on this matter can be made only after the court ruling.

CBI gets nod to send cellphones of arrested Trinamool MLA for forensic test

Kolkata | Agencies

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on it at this moment. The matter is sensitive. All I can say is that we have to understand the pulse of the people in this matter," Mamata Banerjee had said on Wednesday. She had also said that any detailed comment on this matter can be made only after the court ruling.

Amritpal's Britain-origin wife stopped at Amritsar; not allowed to board flight

Chandigarh | Agencies

Fugitive Waris Punjab De chief Amritpal Singh's Britain-origin wife Kirandeep Kaur was stopped on Thursday at the Amritsar airport and not allowed by immigration officials to board a flight to Birmingham, officials said.

After questioning, Kaur has been sent to her home in Jallapur Khara in Amritsar district and asked her not to leave the country without informing the police.

"We have prevented her from leaving the country. She was neither detained nor arrested. She was stopped because she is needed for questioning related to the case," said Senior Superintendent of Police (Amritsar Rural) Satinder Singh told the media.

Officials said that Kaur has a visa for a limited period in India that is about to expire. She has been questioned several times earlier also by police for her role in supporting the organi-



sation that was formed by the late actor-activist, Deep Sidhu. Amritpal Singh, against whom the National Security Act (NSA) has been invoked and a non-bailable warrant issued, is on the run despite the massive manhunt launched to nab him since March 18. The self-styled preacher, who returned from Dubai last year, tied the knot in a simple ceremony in February. Since then, she has been staying in Punjab. Papalpreet Singh, the main associate of Amritpal Singh, was arrested in Amritsar on April 10 under the NSA and that six other cases have also been registered against him. Papalpreet Singh is a Khalistani activist who called himself a journalist before ending up as a media advisor to the radical preacher. A resident of Amritsar, he was earlier arrested for his alleged links to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence in 2015.

ED seizes crypto currencies, assets worth Rs 34.75 cr in illegal forex trading case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday said it has attached crypto currencies, gold coins and vehicles worth Rs 34.75 crore in connection with its investigation into illegal forex trading platform OctaFx, and its related entities.

The attachment is in the form of bank balances, crypto currencies, vehicles, gold coins, and cash. The ED had launched an investigation on the basis of the FIR registered under various sections of the IPC and the MPID Act by the Pune police. The RBI has also issued an alert list of unauthorised entities where the name of OctaFx (www.octafxindia.net, hi.octafx.com & www.octafx.com) is reflecting.

The ED investigation has revealed that the online trading app and website are operating in India in associa-



tion with India based entity OctaFx India Pvt. Ltd. "This forex trading platform is widely promoted on social networking sites and is also following referral-based incentive models for acquiring users to its platforms. It has emerged in the investigation that multiple

accounts of different Indian banks were being shown to investors on OctaFx trading app/www.octafx.com for collecting funds in the guise of facilitating forex trading," said the ED. The official said that the funds, after defrauding these investors, were transferred to multiple e-wallet

accounts or to bank accounts of dummy entities for the purpose of layering.

Further, it was also revealed that a major portion of the defrauded amount on this trading app was used by the agents of OctaFx for amassing personal wealth.

"OctaFx by using its trading platform is manipulating the trade activities which are resulting in ultimately net loss to the traders. These manipulating tactics involve frequent fluctuation in slippage, extending huge leverages and huge fraudulent advertisements in India through internet to attract gullible investors," said the official. OctaFx has also hired several Indian individuals working in Spain and Russia for operating the OctaFx trading platform and inducing Indian citizens to invest in forex trading through OctaFx.

School teacher arrested for demanding nude pics from Delhi woman on Insta

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A school teacher in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi was arrested for stalking, demanding nude pictures, and sexual favours from a Delhi woman, a Delh Police official said on Thursday.

The accused has been identified as Sujit Kumar, 27, a teacher of mathematics.

According to police, a complaint from a woman, who works in a prominent hospital in Delhi, was received at Cyber North police station alleging that some unknown person on Instagram made an obscene and vulgar comment on her Instagram picture. "She ignored it and blocked that account. Again

after a few days, messages were sent to her on Instagram from an unknown ID stating that he had evidences of some extremely personal secrets about her and then demanded her nudes and sexual intimacy," the victim's complaint said. "He threatened and told her that he would involve her parents in this. After a few days, she received a letter at the doorstep of her house with extremely vulgar comments," the complaint added. "A case was registered under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and during investigation, it was revealed that alleged Instagram IDs were created and used in Varanasi," Deputy Commissioner of

Police, North, Sagar Singh Kalsi said. The accused was apprehended in Delhi on Wednesday. On interrogation, it was revealed that the accused, in 2019, had been residing in Delhi's Burari for preparations of competitive exams. "In one social gathering, the accused met the victim through one of his friends. Thereafter one day, he found a medical report of the victim, which was extremely personal, at his friend's residence. "He tried to woo the girl but failed and hence he threatened her to seek sexual favours otherwise a personal report would be sent to her parents," the DCP added.

BJP PLAYS HINDUTVA CARD IN K'TAKA, ATTACKS CONGRESS



Bengaluru: The BJP on Thursday played the Hindutva card in poll-bound Karnataka, accusing the Congress of being "friends" with people who slaughtered a cow in public.

Talking to reporters here, Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shobha Karandlaje, claimed that former Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi and state Congress President D.K. Shivakumar took up the Bharat Jodo Yatra with persons who killed a cow on road.

"In the Mangaluru cooker blast case probe, Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah had claimed that the accused is like their brother. On whose side they are? The leadership of Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah protect the accused who indulge in activities against the country," she alleged.

Karandlaje said: "ISIS claimed responsibility for the blast and put up a post on the internet. But the Congress is protecting the accused." With Karandlaje raking up such issues, high-voltage campaigns by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and other firebrand leaders in the state are likely in the coming days. The anti-cattle slaughter law enacted in Karnataka in 2021 bans transport, sale, trade and slaughter of cattle.

Illegal hospital raided in Gurugram, 4 held



Gurugram | Agencies

A joint team of Haryana Chief Minister's Flying Squad and Health Department on Thursday raided a hospital which was functioning illegally in Gurugram's Bajghera village.

The hospital 'Anand' was being run by four persons, and has 13 beds, an operation theatre, general ward, a private room, a lab, medicines and an emergency room.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Inderjeet Yadav said, the CM Flying Squad received a tip-off that a private hospital was being run illegally in the village. The squad, along with the officials of the Health Department, conducted the raid. "At the hospital, Rambir, a

resident of Bhind in Madhya Pradesh; Vikas Bhardwaj, a resident of Uttar Pradesh; Nandkishor, a resident of Delhi, and Mantu Kumar Pandey a resident of Jharkhand were found treating patients. When demanded, they could not produce any legal documents related to the registration and permission to run the hospital, lab, operation theatre and medical store," said the DSP. Power theft was also found during the raid by the discom department team on the illegal hospital. "Necessary action will be taken against the illegal hospital by the Electricity Department," he said. Following the CM Flying Squad's complaint, an FIR has been registered at the Bajghera police station.

Heroin worth Rs 6 crore seized, four arrested

Guwahati | Agencies

Around 1.2 kg heroin valued at Rs 6 crore was seized in two operations and four people have been arrested in this connection in Assam's Karbi Anglong district.

A senior police officer in the district said on Thursday that based on a secret tip-off, a joint team of police and security forces launched an operation to foil the drug peddling attempt in the Lahorijan area of the district. The joint team intercepted a vehicle that was most probably coming from Manipur. "During the search of the vehicle, we recovered more than 500 grams of heroin kept in 45 soap cases that were concealed in secret

chambers of the vehicle," the police officer added. Two persons were apprehended during the operation. They originally hail from Manipur, police said. Meanwhile, in another operation in Borpathar area of the district, around 700 grams of heroin concealed in 44 soap cases was seized. Two persons were arrested in

chambers of the vehicle," the police officer added. Two persons were apprehended during the operation. They originally hail from Manipur, police said. Meanwhile, in another operation in Borpathar area of the district, around 700 grams of heroin concealed in 44 soap cases was seized. Two persons were arrested in



Jharkhand: 150 fall sick after having food at village fair



Dhanbad | Agencies

Around 150 people fell ill after eating food at a village fair in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district, an official said on Thursday. The incident occurred on Wednesday evening in Huchuktand village of Dhanbad district. The Bhokta fair was organised on the occasion of a religious event and many food stalls were set up. Many people who ate food at the stalls complained of stomach pain, diarrhea, and vomiting after returning from the fair. As their condition deteriorated, the victims were admitted to the Shaheed Nirmal Mahto Medical College and Hospital (SNMMCH) on Wednesday. Doctors and nursing staff

were called on emergency duty to tackle the large numbers of patients coming from the village. On the directive of the Deputy Commissioner, Balaipur block Circle Officer Rampraves had reached the medical college hospital and took the details about the treatment of victims. All the victims belong to Huchuktand village of Karmatand Panchayat. Village residents said that they had eaten chaat at the Bhokta fair in the evening. And as they returned to their houses, they began vomiting and complained of severe pain in their stomachs. "Around 9 p.m., the first victim reached SNMMCH for treatment. Then around 150 patients arrived for treatment. Apart from this, many patients got treated in private hospitals."



REWA GEARING UP TO WELCOME PM NARENDRA MODI ON APRIL 24

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district - the land of white tigers -- is prepping up to welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he is scheduled to address a mega rally in the poll-bound state on April 24. Security arrangements are in place with heavy deployment of police personnel. Besides, a 'no fly' zone alert has been issued in the surrounding of helipad located in outer circle of the city.

Dilapidated roads of the city connecting to SAF ground where the Prime Minister is scheduled to address the gathering on the occasion of 'Panchayati Raj Day' (April 24) are being repaired.

Rewa District Collector Pratibha Pal, who has taken charge recently, is reviewing the preparations.

During his visit, Prime Minister Modi is scheduled to lay the foundation stone of 'Jai Jeevan Mission' project worth Rs 7.573 crore. The project is aimed to provide potable water to Rewa, Sidhi and Satna district. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister is also



expected to provide homes to 4.11 lakh beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY-rural).

He is scheduled to inaugurate the re-development works of Indore and Gwalior railway stations and flag off three new passenger trains -- Rewa-Itwari via Chhindwara passenger

train, Chhindwara-Nainpur passenger train and Nainpur-Chhindwara train, according to the state government. It would be Prime Minister Modi's second visit to the state within a period of one month. Last time, he had arrived in Bhopal in April and flagged off Vande Bharat train for

Bhopal to New Delhi routes.

Reviewing the preparations ahead of arrival of the Prime Minister, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said, "It would be a historic day for the state. He asked people to join the programme virtually."

Mukhya Mantri Ladli Bahna is not just a scheme but a social revolution: CM Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that a grand campaign to change the lives of sisters is going on in Madhya Pradesh. The government has now formed Ladli Bahana Yojana, in which poor and lower middle class women will get Rs. 1000 per month. He said that Ladli Bahana is not just a scheme but a social revolution. My sisters will no longer have to reach out to anyone to fulfill their minor needs. This is a gift from a brother to his sisters, which they will receive throughout the year, not just on Raksha Bandhan.

Chief Minister Chouhan attended Mukhya Mantri Ladli Bahna Mahasammelan at Keolari in Seoni district today. The Chief Minister dedicated and laid the foundation stone of various development works worth Rs. 129 crore. Along with this, the pattas (leases) of the Mukhya Mantri Awasiya Bhu-Adhikar Yojana were distributed to the beneficiaries. Benefits in other schemes were also distributed to the beneficiaries.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that my sisters are giving their immense support to the ongoing campaign for women empowerment in Madhya Pradesh. Even today the tent proved too small to accommodate them. I am deeply grateful to my sisters for their love, affection and support.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that Ladli Laxmi Yojana was first formulated in the state



and at the time of their birth, daughters were given savings certificates worth Rs. 30 thousand. In this, from time to time, they get funds for studies and on completion of 21 years of age, they get one lakh rupees in lump sum. Chief Minister Chouhan said that 50 percent reservation has been given in Panchayat and local elections in Madhya Pradesh to make sisters politically empowered. As a result, today my sisters are running the government from village panchayats to district panchayats. Only one per cent registration fee is charged for the transfer of land and property in the name of sisters.

Union Minister of State for Steel and Rural Development Faggun Singh Kulaste said that for the first time in the history of the country, any government has implemented a scheme like Mukhya Mantri Ladli Bahna for the welfare of women. He said that Ladli Bahna Yojana would definitely prove to be a milestone in the direction of empowering the economic and social status of the women of the state.

Will Scindia dare to hit the streets over BJP's unfulfilled promises, asks Digvijaya

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh on Thursday launched a scathing attack against Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, questioning his silence over the major issues facing Madhya Pradesh.

The two-time former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh asked whether Scindia will dare to hit the streets over the unfulfilled promises of the BJP, like he did when he was in the Congress.

Singh also claimed that Scindia himself had distributed certificates of farm loans in his home district Gwalior.

"You (Scindia) left the Congress saying the promises made before the 2018 Assembly elections were not fulfilled. You had then warned to hit the streets for the people of Madhya Pradesh. I am asking you today, have farmers' loans been waved? Are the issues related to unemployment and recruitment of school teachers resolved? Lakhs of posts are vacant while the backlogs have also not been filled. Will you dare to hit the streets against the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh," Singh asked while addressing a press conference in Shajapur on Thursday. Singh also claimed that the Kamal Nath-led Congress government had begun the process of waving farm loans up to Rs 2 lakh, which the party



had promised in its election manifesto.

"The process of waving farm loans was started and in the first round, loans up to Rs 50,000 were waved and certificates were also distributed. However, a group of 'bikau' MLAs shifted to the BJP and ousted the Congress from power within 15 months of forming the government," he said.

Singh also said that the MLAs who had faith in Kamal Nath and the Congress did not betray, but those who are called 'Raja', 'Maharaja' left the party.

"I have learnt that Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has made over 2,000 promises so far as the elections get near. What happened to the promises he made in the last 18 years? Will Scindia dare to hit the streets over these unfulfilled promises now," Singh asked.

INDORE-BASED INTERSTATE GANG BUSTED BY DELHI POLICE, 3 HELD

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bhopal

With the arrest of three men, the Delhi Police on Thursday claimed to have busted an Indore-based 'Tala Chabi' Sikkigar interstate gang active in the national capital.

The accused have been identified as Joginder Singh (29) from Indore, Madhya Pradesh and Kartar Singh (25) from Maharashtra's Parbhani district. They would frequently travel from Madhya Pradesh to Delhi, and stay in budget hotels near the Old and New Delhi Railway stations before burglarizing homes throughout the city.

The police also arrested Abhinav Soni (41), from Barwani in Madhya Pradesh, who was the receiver of the stolen gold jewellery.

According to police, on February 18, an FIR was registered on the basis of complaint wherein it was alleged that the jewellery and Rs two lakh cash was stolen from the complainant's house while he was in Haryana attending a marriage function.

During the investigation, the police team pursued the culprits using CCTV footage. The footage revealed that the accused changed vehicles twice, stealing them from narrow lanes, and employed a confusing tactic of wandering through different lanes to avoid being traced.

The gang ultimately abandoned the stolen vehicle and used multiple modes of public transport before walking back to their hotel.



"The team mapped out the entry and exit routes of the incident and the accused. Over 500 CCTV footage recordings were analyzed within a 15 km radius. With the help of CCTV footage, the team traced the burglars to a place of stay in Old Delhi, which was over 15 km away from the site of the incident," said Rohit Meena, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara).

Thereafter with help of human and technical intelligence, Joginder and Kartar were identified and apprehended. On interrogation, Joginder revealed that he operates an Indore-based 'Tala Chabi Sikkigar' gang and commits inter-state burglaries.

"While disclosing the modus operandi, Joginder told police that they came from MP to Delhi and stayed in budget hotels near Old and New Delhi Railway station. During daytime they roamed in the streets of various colonies in Delhi as key makers and when anyone called them for lock repair, they committed theft in the said house," said the DCP. "Moreover, they also see whether any house is locked and take a note of the houses which have been locked for two to three days and then commit multiple night burglaries in such houses. To commit these burglaries, they used to steal bikes and then use them in the commission of crime before leaving Delhi," said the official.

Further on the instance of the accused, police also nabbed Abhinav, who was the receiver of the stolen jewellery. "So, for approx. 100gm of gold, equipment to repair, duplicate keys have been recovered," said the official.

"The accused are wanted in case of burglary of other states as well and the identity which they shared in hotels were on addresses which were not used by them. Further investigation is underway to check their involvement in other cases and other receivers of stolen property," the official added.

Financially stressed, man kills himself by jumping in front of train in Satna

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A 55-year-old man allegedly committed suicide by jumping in front of a running train in Madhya Pradesh's Satna. After the incident, the bed-ridden daughter of the deceased held the governance system responsible for her father's death.

His family said that the deceased Pramod Gupta was distressed by a financial crisis for the last several years, especially after one of his daughter's Anushka and son met with an accident. Gupta had a small business in Satna, however, he spent all his money on the treatment of his daughter, whose backbone got fractured and she is still bed-ridden.

He had also sold all his property to pay the hospital bills -- however, his daughter could not stand on her feet.



After spending all his money, Gupta ran from pillar to post to get an 'Ayushman Card', but the government officials did not pay heed to him, Anushka said.

The situation continued to worsen and Gupta could not pay the school fees of his three children. For the last few months, Gupta was finding it

hard to even arrange food for his children.

Anushka (21) had secured 78 per cent marks in the Class 10 exams a couple of years back despite being bed-ridden. That time she was facilitated by the district administration for her courage and for securing good marks in the exam. She was also

assured of financial help.

"My father ran from pillar to post for an Ayushman Card because he had no money left for my treatment and to feed my siblings. But, every time, he returned empty handed. My father would have not ended his life, had the officials paid heed to his grievances," Anushka said.

A senior police official said Gupta, who was living with his family in Transport Nagar in Satna, had left the house early on Tuesday. "The family waited for him till late evening but he did not return. Following which, they informed the police. On the basis of a missing report, a search operation was launched and his body was found crushed by a train. The statements of his family members are being recorded and further investigation is underway," the police official added.

CM Chouhan plants Peepal, Neem and Kachnar saplings

Team

Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Peepal, Neem and Kachnar in the garden located at Shyamla Hills. Along with the Chief Minister Chouhan, the representatives of Bharatiya Sen Samaj and Sai Sarita Smriti Sansthan planted saplings. Bharatiya Sen Samaj National President Sailu Sen, Sai Sarita Smriti Sansthan President Neeta Paspul along with members of the organisation planted saplings.



Thunderstorm, drizzle in parts of state amid intense summer heat

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal and some other parts of the state witnessed thunderstorm along with lightning and drizzle on Thursday morning due to western disturbance and other factors, bringing some respite to residents from the scorching summer heat. On Wednesday, Khajuraho, a popular tourist destination in Chhatarpur district, sizzled at 44.5 degrees Celsius, according to the weather report of the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The drizzle on Thursday is expected to bring the mercury down, bringing respite to people from the summer

heat.

"Such weather is expected to prevail for the next four days according to the forecast," IMD's Bhopal centre director R Balasubramanian said over phone.

Asked about the untimely showers, he said an upper air cyclonic circulation was lying over south-west Rajasthan and the western disturbance over Pakistan and its adjoining Punjab has disturbed the weather pattern in Madhya Pradesh.

Besides, a trough from central Maharashtra to Tamil Nadu was drawing moisture from the Arabian Sea and pumping it into MP, which was mainly causing the untimely drizzles in the state, the official said.

CHEETAHS IN KUNO NATIONAL PARK RENAMED

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Namibian Cheetahs that were released in Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park were renamed following a call by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the people to come up with suggestions.

This comes after PM Modi in his Mann Ki Baat on September 25 2022, had urged the citizens to come up with suggestions for cheetahs reintroduced from Namibia and South Africa, with an intention to popularize and sensitize the general public about Project Cheetah. In this regard, a competition was organized on the Government of India platform mygov.in from September 26 to October 31, 2022. In response, a total of



11,565 entries were received suggesting new names for reintroduced cheetahs, an official statement said on Thursday. Namibian Cheetah's old name was Asha (female) and her new name is Aasha, and of another cheetah, his old name was Oban (Male) and now his new name is Pavan. South Africa Cheetah whose old name was Phinda and the new name is Daksha and of another

Cheetah's name was Mapeso and whose new name is Nirva. The names of the remaining Cheetah have also changed. The entries were scrutinized by a selection committee and based on the significance and relevance of the suggested names for their conservation and cultural value the following new names have been selected for Namibian and South African cheetahs.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change congratulated the winners of the competition who suggested new names for Namibian and South African cheetahs.

The goal of the Cheetah Introduction project in India was to establish viable cheetah metapopulation in India that allows the cheetah to perform its functional role as a top predator and provide space for the expansion of the cheetah within its historic range thereby contributing to its global conservation efforts.

The major objectives of the introduction project were to establish breeding cheetah populations in safe habitats across its historic range and manage them as a metapopulation.

A 5-year-old boy in a cooler found dead...

Team Absolute | Bhind

A seven-year-old boy was found dead inside the cooler on Wednesday night in ward five of Machhand. The child's dead body was discovered with a noose around his neck and his hands and legs tied. According to report, seven-year-old boy Ekansh, on Wednesday had gone for the tuition, along with her younger sister, at neighbour Atal Chaurasia's house. However, when the duo did not return till late, their relatives started searching for him. Neighbours informed that Ekansh was seen going to the house of Atal Chaurasia's nephew Santosh Chaurasia. The relatives rushed to Santosh's residence and start-

ed searching for Ekansh. As they reached terrace, they saw Ekansh's shirt tangled in the cooler. On opening the cooler window, they were shocked to see dead Ekansh with a noose around his neck and his hands and legs tied.

The police have registered a case against Santosh Chaurasia's wife Anita, son Udit alias Gudda, and daughter Khushi in connection with the murder of Ekansh. Santosh and his son Udit are currently out of police custody. Lahar SDO P Avnish Bansal said that, on receiving the information hundreds of people gathered around the Machhand area, in view of the increasing crowd of people and deployed a large number of police forces in the area.



EDITOR'S SPECS

New habitat suitability for Royal Bengal tigers

A joint team comprising officials from the West Bengal Forest Department, National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the Global Tiger Forum (GTF) will soon conduct a study on how suitable is the Buxa Tiger Reserve (BTR) in Alipurduar district for the habitation of Royal Bengal tigers. Since 1998, there was no evidence confirming the presence of tigers in the BTR. But in December 2021, a tiger was spotted in the forest reserve zone. It was however later confirmed that the big cat had migrated to the zone temporarily. Forest Department sources that the survey will be an exploratory exercise to have an idea on how the state government's plan to make BTR an ideal abode for the Royal Bengal tigers in the long run. The sources said that the basic process on this count was started by the Department and an agreement has been reached with the Assam government to bring a couple of tigers from there and release them in BTR to increase the big cat population. "However, despite adopting these preliminary steps, the state government wants to ensure how suitable BTR is as an ideal Royal Bengal Tiger abode before actually getting to big cats from Assam. In all probability, the joint team might start its survey work from next month," a Department official said. He said that at the same time, the assignment to develop BTR as an ideal tiger abode will also continue side-by-side. The first step on this count is to ensure ample availability of staple food for tigers within the reserve zone. Recently, 86 spotted deer were brought to BTR from the Ballavpur sanctuary in Birbhum district. According to the Department official, although BTR has enough sambar deer and barking deer, the spotted deer are the favourite of the Royal Bengal tigers.

BJP TO PAY A HEAVY PRICE FOR REBELLIONS, AMUL-NANDINI CONTROVERSY

M.K. Ashoka

The Karnataka BJP unit is upbeat about its chances in the May 10 assembly elections. The saffron party has gone one step ahead in replicating the Gujarat model in the state by allotting 52 tickets to new candidates in the first list and denying tickets to seven sitting MLAs in the second list.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has stated that the opponents are already shivering after seeing the list of candidates. Sources said that this was much needed in the interest of the party. However, it is posing a serious challenge to the BJP as the dropped MLAs are rebelling, especially the senior leaders who have vowed to prove themselves by joining hands with political rivals of the BJP.

Sources in the party said that the leaders have been told by the high command not to worry about the rebel candidates and they will take care of the situation. The campaign blitzkrieg of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has been planned in such a way that the state would be swamped by a saffron wave.

However, the controversy surrounding the Amul and Nandini brands has dented the image of the party ahead of the polls. First it was an allegation of Hindi imposition on curd packets. The central agency withdrew it after facing a backlash not only in Karnataka, but in other south Indian states also.

When things seemed to be settling down, the BJP delivered another issue on a silver platter to the opposition by beginning to sell Amul milk and curd packets directly in Karnataka.

The Opposition and Kannada activists came out on the streets to protest the move. Soon, the issue was linked to the survival of the farmers who depend on selling milk to the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF). The BJP which initially ignored the agitation against Amul, later tried to control the damage by explaining how steps are being taken to strengthen the KMF and the Nandini brand.

The Opposition Congress and JD (S) used the controversy to reach out to the people of the state and successfully created suspicion about the BJP merging the Nandini brand with Amul.

The party is also dealing with the rebellion of its leaders, following the release of the first



and second list of candidates. Controversial leader K.S. Eshwarappa was asked to retire from electoral politics. The party denied a ticket to former deputy CM Lakshman Savadi while former CM Jagadish Shettar's ticket is yet to be announced. According to sources the high command is not interested in him.

Senior BJP leaders former deputy CM R. Ashoka and Minister V. Somanna have been given challenging tasks. They will take on Karnataka Congress president D.K. Shivakumar and Opposition leader Siddaramaiah respectively.

The party has managed to rein in Eshwarappa. Lakshman Savadi has declared war on the BJP and will most likely join the Congress. Jagadish Shettar is waiting for his ticket in the third list and he is claiming that he will talk after getting some clarity. The high command had summoned him to Delhi and managed to contain him.

The party has taken a major decision to

check the anti-incumbency factor in the coastal Karnataka districts. It is fielding six new faces in place of the sitting MLAs. Six-time MLA and minister S. Angara has resigned from the primary membership of the BJP following the development. Veteran BJP leader Halady Srinivasa Shetty had also announced his retirement.

The BJP is presently facing a rebellion in more than 20 constituencies. BJP sitting MLA from Udupi constituency Raghupathy Bhat who missed the ticket stated that he came to know about the denial of a ticket from the media. This was not the way to treat a senior leader like him, he added.

Former minister Goolihatti Shekar, sitting MLA from Belagavi North Anil Benake, former minister Sogadu Shivanna, MLC R. Shankar who were denied tickets have given clear hints of joining hands with the opposition parties. The party has also not

announced a ticket for former minister and senior BJP leader S. Ramdas from Mysuru district.

Tamil Nadu BJP president Annamalai, who is touring the state, has stated that according to him the BJP would win 150 seats in Karnataka. Tejasvi Surya, Bengaluru South MP and BJP Yuva Morcha national president, has stated that the BJP is the only party to groom party workers into leaders. Stalwarts such as Yediyurappa and Halady Srinivasa Shetty have set standards to accommodate future candidates and it shows how different the BJP is when compared to other parties.

Tejasvi Surya has also stated that the BJP has given prominence to new faces. It is to be seen how the BJP's experiment will work for the party in the assembly elections.

international

BILAWAL BHUTTO TO VISIT INDIA FOR SCO FMS MEETING IN MAY

Hamza Ameer|Islamabad

In a crucial decision that may be the first step towards normalisation of ties between the two nuclear-powered neighbours, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has decided to attend a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting in India next month.

This was announced at the briefing of Foreign Office in Islamabad on Thursday, where the spokesperson of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Mumtaz Zahra Baloch formally announced that Bilawal will be travelling to Goa from May 4-5th to participate in the SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting.

She said Bilawal will be attending the meeting at the invitation of India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

"Our participation in the meeting reflects Pakistan's commitment to the SCO Charter and processes and the importance that Pakistan accords to the region in its foreign policy priorities," Baloch said. "Pakistan continues to participate in SCO meetings in keeping with



our longstanding commitment to SCO."

Thursday's development comes at a time when diplomatic ties between the two nations were halted after the Balakot airstrikes in 2019.

The visit also holds massive importance as Bilawal will be the first Foreign Minister to visit India after a gap of nearly 12 years. The last Foreign Minister to visit India was Hina Rabbani Khar in July 2011. In January, India had extended an invitation to Pakistan's Foreign Minister along with all other member states of the SCO to attend the meeting.

Since the invite by India, Pakistan's Foreign Office has been deliberating on the matter to decide on how it should respond to the invitation.

Diplomatic sources maintained that it was discussed that Bilawal should not refuse the invitation but participate in the meeting through a video link, instead of travelling to India.

However, with the decision to travel to Goa for the meeting, many see it as a hope for positive forward movement towards engagement and normalisation of strained ties between the two crucial members of the SCO and major role players of the region at large.

Moreover, with Pakistan's positive nod on the invitation to attend the meeting in Goa, a subsequent SCO meeting on security is also in the pipeline, an invitation of which has also been extended towards Pakistan by India.

But at the moment, it remains uncertain if Pakistan's Defense Minister Khawaja Asif will be making a trip to India or will be representing Pakistan virtually. "Bilawal Bhutto's visit to India would be seen as an ice-breaking move. It will be symbolically significant. Though it may not bring any dramatic changes in bilateral relationship," stated Kamran Yousaf, a senior political analyst.

Strong cold wave to hit vast parts of China

Beijing: A strong cold front will sweep many parts of China in the coming days, bringing strong winds and low temperatures, the country's national observatory said on Thursday.

Affected by the cold air, many regions in China will experience temperature drops of 6 to 10 degrees Celsius from Thursday to Sunday, according to the National Meteorological Centre.

From 8 a.m. Thursday to 8 a.m. Saturday, temperatures are expected to fall by over 12 degrees Celsius in parts of Jilin, Gansu, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Hebei, Henan and Hubei, accompanied by strong winds, reports Xinhua news agency.

The centre also forecast that rainfall will hit central and eastern parts of the country from Thursday to April 24.

It called for stepping up preparedness for strong winds and temperature declines in the next few days and called for being mindful of secondary disasters that could result from heavy precipitation and severe convective weather.

'Extremely dangerous' tornado kills 2 in US state



Washington|Agencies

At least two people were killed and several others injured after a "large and extremely dangerous tornado" tore through Cole, a town in the US state of Oklahoma, authorities said.

The McClain County Sheriff's Office late Wednesday night confirmed at least two deaths in Cole, located 30 miles south of Oklahoma City, the state capital, reports Xinhua news agency.

The office said on Facebook that it's responding to "reported injuries & per-

sons entrapped within their shelters."

The town has been "hit significantly", said Oklahoma Highway Patrol trooper Eric Foster. Power lines were down and there were outages in the town on Wednesday night, according to an ABC News report. Damage also included the destruction of a building used as a wedding venue. By Thursday, a line of severe storms is forecast to stretch from Austin in the southern state of Texas, to St. Louis in the midwestern state of Missouri, packing damaging winds and large hail, said the report.

US announces additional arms aid worth \$325 mn for Ukraine

Washington: The US has announced an additional package of weapons for Ukraine worth \$325 million.

According to a list from the Department of Defense (DoD), the new tranche of security assistance included additional ammunition for the US-provided HIMARS, artillery rounds, anti-armor systems, over 9 million rounds of small arms ammunition, four logistics support vehicles, among other items, Xinhua news agency reported.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who received a delegation of authority from President Joe Biden to authorize the presidential drawdown of the weapons, said in a statement the assistance is "essential to strengthening Ukraine's defenders on the battlefield."

This is the 36th presidential drawdown of military equipment from the DoD inventories for Ukraine since August 2021.

South Asians in UK with darker skin suffer bullying, insults from kin: Study

London|Agencies

People of colour, including South Asians and Blacks, with darker skin in the UK were sometimes stigmatised by their parents, siblings and other relatives, a new research has found.

The study by King's College London revealed that within families children with lighter skin were often favoured, while those with darker tones were subjected to insults and bullying.

Almost half of the 33 people, aged 19-60, who were interviewed said that they had witnessed the prejudice, or had been the target.

People of colour with light skin spoke about being favoured within their families.



A 33-year-old Black woman said she was given a lot of privileges in her family for having lighter skin.

A 43-year-old South Asian woman said: "Being younger, one of the biggest issues I had was with my mum always going on about how it's better to be fairer, 'you'll only find a boy if you're fairer and you're only beautiful if you're fair'. And I think that really got to me. How do you interpret that when you're a young child?" "Black" and "ugly" were common terms used by the families as insults, the research, which was conducted as part of the UK Skin Shade study, said.

A 31-year-old woman of Pakistani ethnicity told Aisha Phoenix, who led the study, that extended families would ask

questions like, 'How come your sister is so much lighter than you?...Do you not scrub your skin properly in the shower?'

Phoenix said that some families reproduced prejudices common in wider society, so that "darker skin was imbued with negativity". People of Colour with dark skin can be subjected to prejudice and discrimination from both members of their own families and society at large.

"The internalised colourism within some families contributes to the prejudice. However, some families resist colourism and work to instil positive ideas about dark skin or all skin shades," said Phoenix, Lecturer in Social Justice, School of Education, Communication & Society, King's College London.

Stampede in Yemen's capital kills at least 80

Sanaa: A stampede at an aid distribution centre in Yemen's capital of Sanaa has claimed the lives of at least 80 people and left 220 others injured, according to Anis Al-Subaihi, spokesperson for the Houthi-led health ministry.

Abdul Khalik Al-Ajri, spokesperson for the Houthi-controlled interior ministry, told the Houthi-run Saba news that "the stampede accident on Wednesday evening was the result of the random distribution of sums of money by some merchants without coordination with the Ministry of Interior", Xinhua news agency reported.

Many Yemenis, impoverished by years of conflicts, flocked to charity centres for basic needs as Eid al-Fitr, one of the most important festivals for Muslims, is approaching.



GAUTAM ADANI DROPS IN FOR TETE-A-TETE WITH SHARAD PAWAR IN MUMBAI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Embattled industrialist Gautam Adani drove down to meet Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar at the latter's residence in south Mumbai, here on Thursday morning, party sources said here.

The duo was closeted in a private meeting for nearly two hours, though what transpired is not known, sparking huge speculation in political and business circles.

The meeting came in the wake of Pawar's recent statements opposing a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe into the Adani Group affairs after the Hindenburg Research's damaging expose. Later, after a furore in the



national Opposition, Pawar apparently backtracked, diplomatically saying he would not oppose a JPC if other parties wanted it. In its January expose, Hindenburg Research had alleged massive stock

manipulation and accounting frauds indulged in by Adani Group firms which plummeted Adani's global ranking from being the second richest in the world to way below now in barely four months.

MUMBAI MAN KILLS 2-YEAR-OLD SON, THROWS BODY IN RIVER; ARRESTED

Mumbai: A man allegedly killed his two-year-old son and threw his body into a creek in Mumbai in a bid to destroy evidence, but was arrested on Wednesday, hours after he committed the offence, police said.

During the probe conducted so far, the police found that the 22-year-old accused killed his son in order to marry a woman with whom he was having an extra-marital relationship, as she had put a condition before him that he should eliminate his wife as well as child before marrying her, an official said. The officials of Shahu Nagar police station found the child's body on Mahim-Sion creek link road near Kemkar Chowk in the early hours of Wednesday, he said. The body was in a plastic bag and the deceased's head and right wrist were bitten by rats. The victim could not be identified initially. However, the relatives of the child, who were looking for him, approached the police station in the morning to lodge missing person's report where they identified the child," he said.

After that, the police launched a probe. During the enquiry with the boy's relatives, the police learnt that his father resided in Dharavi slum, following which they nabbed him, he added. "The accused, who works as a tailor in a garment factory, had an extra-marital affair with a woman. She had asked him to eliminate his wife and son if he wanted to marry her.

Maha govt sets up one-man panel to probe Navi Mumbai tragedy

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government on Thursday announced a one-member panel to investigate the facts resulting in the tragedy that took place after the 'Maharashtra Bhushan' award 2022 ceremony in Navi Mumbai on April 16.

The panel, headed by Additional Chief Secretary, Revenue, will submit his report in the matter within a month.

It will also make recommendations to the state government regarding precautions to be taken in future in organising similar mega-functions, as the Navi Mumbai event in Kharghar had attracted over 20 lakh



people. The development comes four days after the disaster that left at least 14 persons dead due to sunstroke and allegations of a purported stampede, though the state has not confirmed the latter aspect. The tragedy had kicked up a massive political

row with the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, appointment of a judicial commission headed by a retired judge and enhancing the compensation to Rs 1 crore for each victim.

Parineeti Chopra, Raghav Chadha get engaged; wedding to be held in October

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Parineeti Chopra had earlier sparked dating rumours with AAP leader Raghav Chadha with her outings. However, their wedding already seems to be on the cards as the couple took the first step towards the union.

Recently, Parineeti was seen wearing a silver band on her ring finger. As per media reports, Parineeti and Raghav got engaged in a traditional roka ceremony in the presence of close family members. The two will reportedly get married by the end of October this year.

Parineeti is not in a rush to get married as she is quite occupied with her professional commitments, the reports stated. Interestingly, Parineeti's cousin Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who will be soon seen in the streaming



series 'Citadel', will be in India during the last week of October to attend the 23rd edition of the Jio Mami Film Festival. Meanwhile, on the work front, Parineeti will

be seen sharing the screen with Diljit Dosanjh in the Imtiaz Ali directorial 'Chamkila'. The film is said to be inspired by Punjabi singer Amar Singh Chamkila.

MAHARASHTRA GOVT HIDING DEATH TOLL IN KHARGHAR TRAGEDY: SANJAY RAUT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Even as the death toll due to sunstroke at an award function in Navi Mumbai stood at 14 so far as per the official figures, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Thursday claimed that 50 to 75 people have died in the tragedy, and accused the Maharashtra government of hiding the real number of the deceased.

Talking to reporters, Raut said he interacted with the workers of his party from Uran, Shrivardhan, Roha and Manganj talukas in Raigad district, who told him that the actual number of the people who died at Kharghar is bigger than what the government has announced.

Officials have said that 14 people died after suffering from sunstroke during the Maharashtra Bhushan award ceremony held in Kharghar area of Raigad district neighbouring Mumbai on Sunday. The function was held in an open ground and was attended by several lakh people, most of them followers of social worker Appasaheb Dharmadhikari, who was conferred with the Maharashtra Bhushan award by Union Home Minister Amit Shah at the event.

Accusing the state government of hiding the



real number of fatalities, Raut said, "If you look at the total figure from all the villages (from the talukas in Raigad) then minimum 50 and maximum 75 people have died. 'Khoke sarkar' (a term the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena uses to mock the Eknath Shinde-led gov-

ernment) people have reached their homes and suppressed the voice of family members." "This is a cruel government and it has no right to be in power. The government should immediately resign," the Rajya Sabha member alleged.

Raut also backed Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole's demand for a special two-day session of the state legislature to discuss the tragedy.

Opposition parties have blasted the Shinde government over the deaths, accusing it of mismanagement.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Ajit Pawar had sought an inquiry into how the award event was organised during noon time when the temperature was very high.

On Wednesday, Raut demanded that CM Shinde be booked for culpable homicide.

Many followers of Shree Parivar (Dharmadhikari's organisation) had reached the venue on Friday and stayed there till the function concluded at around 1.30 pm on Sunday. At the sprawling venue, some people complained of dizziness and other health complications. Some also fainted at the ground. They were initially treated at makeshift medical facilities and later rushed to hospitals.

NCP slams rapper's 'vulgar' song filmed on SPPU campus in Pune

Team Absolute | Pune/Mumbai

The Nationalist Congress Party on Thursday condemned an incident when a rapper and his team were allowed to shoot a "vulgar" song inside the Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) campus in Pune.

In a letter to Higher and Technical Education Minister Chandrakant Patil, Leader of Opposition in Assembly Ajit Pawar said that the incident has hurt sentiments of people across the state and is a blot on the varsity named after the icon Savitribai Phule.

He has demanded strict action against all those guilty and measures to avoid similar instances in SPPU and any other university or an educational complex in the state.

His reference was to a rap song shot by singer Shubham Anand Jadhav, alias 'rocksun' in the campus last month, allegedly without permission of the varsity authorities.

After the video was released on social media networks it sparked a major furore in academic and politi-



cal circles, with even the SPPU officials condemning it and later lodging a police complaint.

Pawar said that the shooting showed the singer sitting in the chair of the Vice Chancellor, displaying liquor bottles on a table before him and reeling off abusive and objectionable lyrics - with clips going viral on

social media.

After a complaint by NCP Students Association, on April 15, the Chaturshringi police station booked the rapper and started a probe into the matter. Though the content depicted in the media has no casteist, religious or political overtones, there are certain obscene words in the



song, as per the police probe.

Hailing from Satara, Jadhav released the song on YouTube last month after which the SPPU and the NCP students' association lodged the police complaints.

On his part, Jadhav has claimed that he had taken all relevant permissions in the matter.

Pamela Chopra, Mother of Aditya Chopra passes away

SRK, Aamir, other Bollywood bigwigs pay their last respects to Pam Chopra

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The demise of producer-singer-writer Pamela Chopra, who was also the wife and brains trust of filmmaker Yash Chopra, founder of Yash Raj Films, has left the Hindi film industry mourning.

After she was cremated in the morning hours on Thursday, members of the Hindi film fraternity made a beeline to the Chopra mansion on the Juhu-Tara Road area of Mumbai to pay their respects to the departed soul.

Among the industry notables to visit the Chopra house were Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan, who arrived with son Aryan Khan, Aamir Khan, Shabana Azmi, John Abraham, Boman Irani, Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif. SRK recently delivered the blockbuster 'Pathaan' for YRF just as he had done for 'Darr' and 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge', for which Pamela Chopra sang the number 'Ichak Dana'.

The other members of the film fraternity to visit the Chopra home were Poonam Dhillon, Shradha Kapoor, Nitin Mukesh, composer Salim Merchant of the Salim-Sulaiman duo, who have worked on YRF productions such as



'Fanaa', 'Mardaani', 'Ladies vs Ricky Bahl' and 'Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi'.

Pamela Chopra had been admitted to Mumbai's Lilavati Hospital two weeks ago due to an age-related illness. She was reportedly put on a ventilator by the doctors, but her health deteriorated.

Woman who had fake wedding with foreigner held

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Azad Maidan police have arrested Shanti Surendra Naik, a 32-year-old woman from Goa, in connection with the OCI (overseas citizen of India) scam. Foreigners have been marrying Indian nationals to secure permanent Indian visas, using falsified marriage documents and exploiting poor women. Naik had been on the run since 2021, after an FIR was registered against her and her fake Canadian national husband by the OCI wing of Mumbai police's special branch. Her fake husband is still absconding.

The Azad Maidan police reported that Naik was located in Goa and brought to Mumbai on Tuesday. The court granted the police two days custody to investigate the matter. The FIR against Naik and her fake husband, Daniel Harris Akler, was registered on August 4, 2021, in connection with the scam. The FIR also named another couple, Jyoti Krishna Vishe and her fake husband, UK national David John Lincoln, for engaging in a similar fake marriage. Both Vishe, Lincoln are absconding.

Naik, who is currently in custody, has told the police that she was paid Rs 1 lakh for the fake marriage. Naik also claimed that the



Canadian national promised to take her to Canada, but disappeared after securing the OCI. "We are searching for him, and it appears that he is somewhere in India," an officer from Azaad Maidan police stated.

The scam came to light in June 2021 when the OCI Unit of Mumbai Police's Special Branch (II) booked a Russian national, Yuri Gubano, for obtaining OCI on the basis of false marriage documents with an Indian national. "Senior officials ordered a thorough check of all OCI applications. During this, two more couples were found to have used false documents to obtain OCI, and an FIR was filed," said an officer from the Special Branch.

BMC INSPECTS PRE-MONSOON WORK ACROSS CITY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

On Thursday, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Additional Commissioner (Projects) inspected the pre-monsoon work.

The pre-monsoon works are underway at various places in the Mumbai metropolis by the roads, bridges and rainwater channels.

The work is being done in the western suburbs, especially the work of removing silt from the drains. On Wednesday, Additional Municipal Commissioner (Projects) P. Velrasu along with Deputy Commissioner (Infrastructure) Ulhas Mahale, Chief Engineer (Roads) M. M. Patel, Chief Engineer (Rain Drains) Vibhas Achrekar and other concerned officials inspected the ongoing work.

The BMC Iqbal Singh Chahal, Additional Municipal Commissioner (Projects) P. Velarasu instructed all the concerned departments including

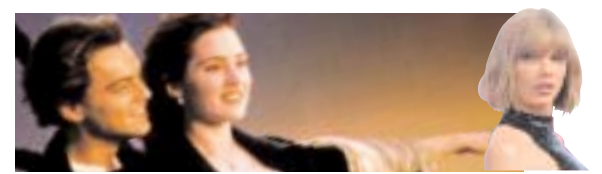


roads, bridges, and rainwater

channels for proper planning and

implementation of pre-monsoon works. In the western suburbs, Dahisar river bridge in R North ward, Rajendra Nagar Bridge in R Central ward, Rajendra Nagar Drain on the Link Road, Link Road in R South Ward and M. G. Road Junction, Lalji Pada Poisar River Bridge, were a few of the areas were inspected. Oshiwara River, Link Road, Mogra Nala, Lallubhai Park Marg were also visited in the K West ward.

As part of pre-monsoon preparedness, the work of removing silt from roads, bridges and drains in Mumbai has been carried out by the BMC across the city. "The pre-monsoon work needs to be completed as per the scheduled schedule, additional manpower and equipment should be deployed where necessary. The workers need to ensure that common citizens do not face any problems while these works are being carried out," informed the Additional Municipal Commissioner. (Project) Shri. P. Velrasu to the contractors.



'DON'T': GIGI HADID SHARES A TELLING STATEMENT ABOUT DATING

Los Angeles | Agencies

Gigi Hadid took to her Instagram Stories with some interesting dating advice on Tuesday.

The model posted a rare glimpse of her thoughts on romance, after her rumored ex-filing Leonardo DiCaprio was seen partying with Irina Shayk at Coachella over the weekend. Gigi reposted an image of an 87-year-old woman named June who is pictured holding up a sign that offers one piece of dating advice, simply: 'Don't.'

The blonde beauty's funny post came after the Titanic star and the Russian supermodel were seen on two separate occasions at Coachella - first at the star-studded Neon Carnival bash on Saturday night, and then again on Sunday.

Gigi and Leo were rumored to be dating after they were first linked last year, and recently it was reported that they are 'still hanging out together' and 'enjoy each other's company' despite earlier reports that their romance 'fizzled out.'

The newly-single actor - who denied rumors about an alleged relationship with television presenter Maya Jama - was most recently in a long-term relationship with model and actress Camila Morrone, from whom he separated last year.

DiCaprio was seen looking directly at Shayk at one point, as the two partied close together at Coachella. The pair were said to be watching Sunday night's performance by r'n'b singer Frank Ocean, which was slammed by fans as 'disastrous.'

One of his longest relationships was with Gisele Bündchen, whom he dated from 2000 until 2005.



FOO FIGHTERS RELEASES FIRST ALBUM SINCE TAYLOR HAWKINS' DEATH



Los Angeles | Agencies

Foo Fighters has announced its first album since the sudden death of its drummer Taylor Hawkins in March 2022, reports 'Variety'. 'But Here We Are' is set to arrive on June 2, with its lead single, 'Rescued', available now. "A brutally honest and emotionally raw response to everything Foo Fighters endured over the last year, 'But Here We Are' is a testament to the healing powers of music, friendship and family," a media release from the Seattle-based rock group said, according to 'Variety'. "Courageous, damaged and unflinchingly authentic, 'But Here We Are' opens with newly released lead single 'Rescued', the first of 10 songs that run the emotional gamut from rage and sorrow to serenity and acceptance, and myriad points in between," the release added. The drummer on the new song is not identified and does not sound like Foo Fighters frontman Dave Grohl, who has concentrated on singing and rhythm guitar since he formed the band in 1995, but occasionally gets behind the kit, continues 'Variety'. In fact, it sounds like Josh Freese, who has been widely tipped as the band's next drummer, although no announcement has been made and reps for the group did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Wednesday morning. The band has scheduled months of tour dates, beginning in New Hampshire (USA) on May 24, and looks likely to spend most of the rest of the year on the road.



Los Angeles | Agencies

She's best known for portraying Lucy Smith in period drama Downton Abbey. But Tuppence Middleton is swapping the maid's quarter for the life of a legend as she prepares to take on the role of Elizabeth

Taylor in production The Motive and the Cue. Despite the role being quite the shoes to fill, the actress has shared that she isn't too nervous ahead of the gig, admitting: 'Bring it on'. Talking in a new interview with Tatler, the star admitted to 'completely relating' to Elizabeth as she noted their similarities of being 'total romantics'.

'Total Romantic'

Tuppence Middleton transforms into Elizabeth Taylor as she prepares to portray her on stage

While Tuppence also took to the magazine's cover with a stunning photoshoot, which saw her transform into the Hollywood legend.

Tuppence will act alongside actor Johnny Flynn as Elizabeth's on-off husband Richard Burton in the production, which is written by playwright Jack Thorne and directed by multiple-Oscar-winner Sam Mendes.

Speaking on the new role, and Elizabeth herself, the star has made some comparisons to the two actors lives.

She told Tatler: 'Liz was a total romantic and I completely relate to that. Most actors are, because we love the idea of dipping our toes into other people's lives: "What if I'd

been born there, or lived in that period?" Continuing: 'I've always found it terrifying appearing in public as myself - doing the red carpet, or presenting an award. But playing Liz? Well, bring it on.'

The play will kick off at London's National Theatre in April, depicting the 1964 scenes which saw police attempting to control the crowds as Elizabeth arrived to Broadway every night to watch her husband perform. But this buzz could be the hardest thing to recreate, according to Tuppence.

She explains: 'Almost the hardest thing about it all is to communicate to a younger audience quite how famous Burton and Taylor were.'

When Chris Evans faced a situation 'worse than ghosting' while dating

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Chris Evans has revealed that he'd experienced "worse" than being ghosted when dating.

The former 'Captain America' star opened up on his past dating struggles and explained that he thinks being "casually pushed aside" is much worse than being ghosted by a potential partner, reports Mirror.co.uk.

The Hollywood hunk has previously dated some of showbiz' hottest actresses including Dianna Agron, Christina Ricci and Jessica Biel and was even rumored to be dating pop star Lizzo.

However, he has since settled down with current girlfriend Alba Baptista. The pair went Insta-official when he shared a clip

of the pair playing pranks on one another, sending the internet into a frenzy. While promoting his recent movie 'Ghosted', where he stars alongside Blonde actress Ana de Armas, Chris told People magazine that being ghosted isn't the worst thing that has happened to him while dating. He said quoted by Mirror.co.uk: "I feel I've experienced something much worse [than ghosting]. I think I'd prefer to be ghosted because you can make up any story you want. I've had the slow decline in text responses and you just know the person is pushing you aside casually." The said he dealt with the situation by "telling yourself a story, whatever you have to do to get by."

Of his recent relationship with Alba, sources told People that Chris has "never been happier" and the pair is "serious." "They are in love and Chris has never been happier. His family and friends all adore her," an insider said.



JASON BLOWS UP THINGS AS CHASE GETS MORE THRILLING IN NEW 'FAST X' TRAILER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The second trailer of the upcoming installment of the action-packed movie franchise 'Fast & Furious' was unveiled recently. The 10th film from the series titled 'Fast X' sees Jason Momoa as the villain who has a penchant to blow things up-literally!

The trailer gives a glimpse of intense action sequences that the movie promises. The threat, fuelled by ruthless vengeance, emerges from the shadows of the past with a terrifying force. These include the team's lone non-driver Ramsey (Nathalie Emmanuel) operating a sizeable truck, Dom's brother and former adversary Jakob (John Cena) playing the role of a jovial uncle, and the eagerly anticipated show-revived, and Shaw, his reformed murderer (Jason Statham).

The film, directed by Louis Leterrier, also stars Helen Mirren, Charlize Theron, Jason Statham, Michelle Rodriguez, Tyrese Gibson, Chris 'Ludacris' Bridges, Nathalie Emmanuel, Jordana Brewster, Sung Kang, John Cena, and Scott Eastwood, Rita Moreno, Alan Richtson, Daniela Melchior, and Brie Larson.

Lily Collins drops major hint over future of hit series 'Emily In Paris'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

British-American actress Lily Collins has teased that there's even more drama to come from the fourth season of rom com series 'Emily In Paris' - and dropped a major hint about the show's future.

The show follows Lily's character Emily as she brings the American perspective to a marketing firm in Paris and has her own romantic adventures along the way, reports Mirror.co.uk.

The third season of the show ended in December last year and left fans yearning for more. "NEED Emily in Paris season 4 asap," one fan tweeted. A second put: "I NEED EMILY IN PARIS SEASON 4 NOOWWWWW (sic)." A third added: "How am I supposed to wait for season 4 of Emily in Paris after that?"

As per Mirror.co.uk, while the fourth season of the show has been renewed by Netflix bosses, nothing more has been said about the next instalment, leaving Lily to share her own predictions for the show. "I just know, obviously, the many cliffhangers, and there's multiple ways in which it could go," Lily told Entertainment Tonight. "I just know that there's gonna be obviously more drama, more laughs and more fashion and more travel."

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Candice Swanepoel



IPL 2023: DELHI CAPITALS BEATS KKR BY 4-WICKET

Team Absolute | New Delhi

An impressive show by bowlers followed by skipper David Warner's vital fifty (57 off 41) guided Delhi Capitals their first win of the season, beating Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) by four wickets in a rain delayed IPL 2023 match at Arun Jaitley Stadium, here on Thursday.

On the back of Axar Patel (2/13), Kuldeep Yadav (2/15) Ishant Sharma (2/19) and Anrich Nortje (2/20) superb show, DC bowled out KKR for paltry 127 in 20 overs. Jason Roy's gritty innings of 43 off 39 and Andre Russell's 38 not out off 31 were the saving grace for KKR, who lost wickets at regular intervals.

In reply, Warner gave DC a brilliant start, then KKR spinners turned the tables in the middle overs but eventually the hosts sealed the win with three balls to spare to open their account.



Chasing 128, Delhi were off to a strong start with skipper David Warner hitting 10 boundaries out of 12 in the powerplay. Varun Chakravarthy drew the first blood for KKR in the fifth over, trapping Prithvi Shaw for 13. Thanks to Warner's hits,

DC posted 61/1 in the powerplay. After a strong start, DC suffered a slump in run-rate as they scored 43 runs for the loss of three wickets in the middle overs. After Anukul Roy's economical over with just one run coming off the seventh over, KKR

captain Nitish Rana removed Mitchell Marsh cheaply for 2 in the next over. Roy then joined the party as he dismissed Philip Salt for 5 in the ninth over.

Meanwhile, Warner brought up his fourth fifty of the season with a boundary off the bowling of Roy in the 11th over. A couple of overs later, Chakravarthy bowled a maiden 14th over with a big wicket of set batter Warner, bringing an end to his 57-run innings.

Brief scores

Delhi Capitals 128-6 in 19.3 overs (David Warner 57, Manish Pandey 21; Varun Chakravarthy 2/16, Anukul Roy 2/19, Nitish Rana 2/17) beat Kolkata Knight Riders 127/10 in 20 overs (Jason Roy 43 off 39, Andre Russell 38 not out off 31; Axar Patel 2/13, Kuldeep Yadav 2/15, Ishant Sharma (2/19) by 4 wickets.

DECISIVE WEEK FOR FA CUP SEMIS, PREMIER LEAGUE TOP-FOUR AND RELEGATION

London | Agencies

The race for the Premier League title and the FA Cup semi-finals continue as the season approaches its climax in England ahead of what could be a decisive week.

Events get under way in the Premier League on Friday night as league leaders Arsenal entertain bottom of the table Southampton.

Consecutive draws have seen Arsenal's lead cut to just four points over Manchester City, who have a game in hand, with everyone looking at the clash between the two teams at City's Etihad Stadium on April 26 as a possible title decider, a Xinhua report said.

Arsenal can't afford to drop any more points and should have few problems against a rival that looks increasingly doomed to relegation after four defeats and a draw in their last five games.

Mikel Arteta needs his side to stamp their authority on this match and to avoid the



loss of concentration that saw them surrender two-goal leads away to Liverpool and West Ham.

Manchester City's attention this weekend is on the FA Cup. Pep Guardiola's side face Championship promotion contenders Sheffield United in the first semi-final at Wembley. Guardiola commented after his side's 1-1 draw away to Bayern Munich on Wednesday that his players were tired and with the Arsenal game next week, he will probably make several changes to his side.

City beat Burnley, who has already won promotion from the Championship, 6-0 in the

quarterfinals, and this looks like a chance for players such as Kyle Walker, Aymeric Laporte and Phil Foden to all get their chances.

The second FA Cup semi-final on Sunday looks to be a far more even affair, with Manchester United against Brighton.

Bournemouth entertain West Ham in another tense relegation battle on Sunday, before Newcastle United face Tottenham in what looks like a decisive game for a top-four finish. Although Newcastle was beaten by Aston Villa last week, a win on Sunday would lift them six clear of Spurs with a game in hand.

U17 Women's Asian Cup qualifiers

India to start campaign against Kyrgyzstan

Bishkek | Agencies

The Indian U-17 Girls' team will start their campaign on April 26 with hosts Kyrgyzstan in a Group F clash in the Qualifiers for AFC U17 Womens Asian Cup tentatively scheduled to be held in Indonesia from April 7-20, 2024.

India is in Group F with Myanmar as the other team in the preliminary group of the qualifiers. India will take on Myanmar in their second match in the group on April 28.

Group F will open at the historic 82-year-old Dolen Omurzakov Stadium in Bishkek with a match between hosts Kyrgyz Republic and Myanmar, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) informed in a release on Thursday. With just under a year to go for the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup, 24 teams across Asia will embark on their qualifying journey this Saturday (April 22). Thailand, Mongolia, Vietnam, Singapore, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Guam and Jordan are some of the



top teams in action in the qualifiers in which 29 teams were allocated to five groups of four teams and three groups of three teams, with teams seeded according to their performance in the 2019 AFC U-16 Women's Championship final tournament and qualification.

To be played in a single round-robin league format at a centralised venue for each of the eight groups, Round 1 of the Qualifiers for the ninth AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup will run until April 30 with the group winners progressing to Round 2, which are scheduled for September 16 to 24. They will be divided into two groups and the top two teams from each will join the three highest-seeded sides from the AFC U-16 Women's Championship 2019 - defending champions Japan, DPR Korea and China PR - and hosts Indonesia in the Finals.

Champions League

BAYERN FACING A PAINFUL PERIOD OF DROUGHT ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

Berlin | Agencies

The road to success for reigning German champion Bayern Munich remains bumpy.

Despite a noisy mid-season change of coaches from Julian Nagelsmann to Thomas Tuchel, the desired impact has yet to materialise. The third consecutive exit in the last-eight stage of the UEFA Champions League over the past three years is a significant setback, as the Bundesliga giant's international ambitions demand better results.

Along with the 4-1 aggregate defeat in the duel against Pep Guardiola's Manchester City comes a disappointing exit in the German Cup against SC Freiburg.

Following a fairly strong performance in the second leg against the Sky Blues, Bayern's new coach faces uncertain times as the squad appears to need rebuilding, reports Xinhua.



Clashing with the Premier League side and inconsistent performances in other competi-

tions revealed Bayern's scoring problem. Failing to sign a top-class striker remains the 2020 treble winner's most glaring issue after goal-machine Robert Lewandowski left for Barcelona without being adequately replaced.

Plans to forgo a spearhead and rely solely on wingers and midfielders like Leroy Sane, Serge Gnabry, Sadio Mane, Kingsley Coman, and Jamal Musiala proved to be a critical mistake. The German league title remains the last goal, with Bayern holding a narrow two-point lead over runner-up and national rival Borussia Dortmund.

The 2021 UEFA Champions League winner Tuchel faces the challenge of keeping the team together until the end of the 2023 campaign while assembling a revamped squad behind the scenes.

To secure a more successful future, changes seem inevitable regarding the playing personnel and the sporting director's role.

DRAW WITH BENFICA HELPS INTER SET UP MILAN DERBY IN SEMIFINAL

Milan | Agencies

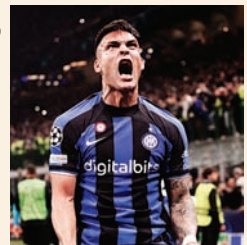
Italian giants Inter set up a Champions League semifinal against city rivals AC Milan as they saw off the challenge of Portuguese club Benfica in an eventful quarter-final second leg at San Siro.

Inter were held to a 3-3 draw by a fighting Benfica but they had done enough in the first leg to advance 5-3 on aggregate.

Inter led 2-0 from the first leg and extended that lead inside a quarter of an hour thanks to a fine strike from Nicol Barella, who drove forward, exchanged passes with Lautaro Martinez and then curled in with his weaker left foot.

The home side got the crucial third goal of the evening when Martinez blasted in Federico Dimarco's low pass across the box.

But the drama was far from over as Antonio Silva headed in to reduce Benfica's arrears before Petar Musa fired in through a crowd of bodies to prevent his side from suffering a fourth successive loss in all competitions.



Spain football friendlies

India U-17 beat Atletico de Madrid 4-1

Alcala de Henares | Agencies

The India U-17 team registered a comfortable 4-1 win over Atletico de Madrid U-17 in a friendly game, here on Wednesday. The game is the first of many, where they will play a series of such games against top Spanish clubs.

Bibiano Fernandez' team are on an exposure tour prior to their assignment at the AFC U-17 Asian Cup in Thailand and the well drilled side were in no mood to let any doubts about their quality and temperament remain.

The goals started coming in as early as the 6th minute, India dominating the scoring having staged off a few Atletico attacks. Picking up a through ball on the right flank, Korou Singh Thingujam took a shot at goal, only to see it go in, giving India an early lead.

Just after the half hour mark, India doubled



their lead, Korou turning provider this time. The winger picked up Danny Meitei's throw-in, before crossing the ball into the box for Lalpekhlua, who slotted it in perfectly. Jolted and shocked, for the hosts worse was to follow.

Atletico pulled one back in the 38th minute, Gabriel scoring from a rebound after Sahil's save off the initial attempt to keep the hosts in the game as they headed to the break. In the 59th minute, Shashwat played Korou through, on goal. The latter's pass was well saved by the goalkeeper though.

India kept Atletico at one arm's length for the better part of the second half, not allowing them to build anything dangerous and controlling the midfield well.

In the 89th minute, Korou notched his second assist of the game, crossing to substitute Gogocha Chungkham, who scored to complete India's memorable win.

WTA Tour

Ons Jabeur, Coco Graf advance into quarters at Stuttgart



Stuttgart | Agencies

Coming off a 2022 season in which she made history for her country and region by making back-to-back Grand Slam finals at Wimbledon and the US Open, Ons Jabeur has struggled in 2023 as she made a return from injury to the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Tour.

The 28-year-old from Tunisia, who finished the 2022 season as World No.2, was snake-bitten in January. A second-round loss at the Australian Open left her in tears and she was forced to skip the Middle East swing to

undergo minor surgery. Also advancing to the next round in Stuttgart, No.2 seed Aryna Sabalenka who defeated Barbora Krejickova of the Czech Republic 6-2, 6-3; sixth seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan, who got the better of Jule Niemeier of Germany 7-5, 6-3 while Maria Sakkari of Greece overcame Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic 6-2, 6-3.

Meanwhile, No.5 seed Coco Gauff scored her first career victory at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix with a 6-2, 4-6, 7-6(3) win over Veronika Kudermetova in 2 hours and 45 minutes.

Inter-Unit table tennis: Sharat Kamal, G Sathiyam reach men's single finals

Team Absolute | New Delhi

April 20 (IANS) Ace paddlers Sharat Kamal and G Sathiyam reached the men's single finals of 41st PSPB Inter Unit table tennis tournament at the Indira Gandhi Stadium Complex, here on Thursday.

The first men's singles semi-finals match saw Sharat Kamal (IOCL) lose his first game against talented youngster Ankur Bhattachajee 11-6. But then he reminded himself to stick to basics and made a few mistakes to win the next 4 games 11-9, 11-9, 11-7 and 11-8 to win his match 4-1 in the best of 7 games format being followed.

In the next men's semi-finals, reigning

National Champion G Sathiyam (ONGC) found his form to beat team mate Saurabh Saha comfortably 4-0. (11-8, 11-8, 11-6, 11-8).

On the other hand, the women's semi-finals saw youth taking on experience. In the first semi-finals, talented Junior Yashaswani Ghorpade (OIL) beat Divya Deshpande (ONGC) 4-2 in an intense encounter. (11-4, 11-8, 3-11, 3-11, 11-6, 11-9). In the other semi-final, T Reeth Rishya (IOCL) took on fellow teammate and junior Jennifer Vergees in a match which went the full distance to win 4-3.

It was a see-saw battle with Jennifer winning the first game comfortably 11-5. She then won the second game as well. Reeth won the third in a close game but

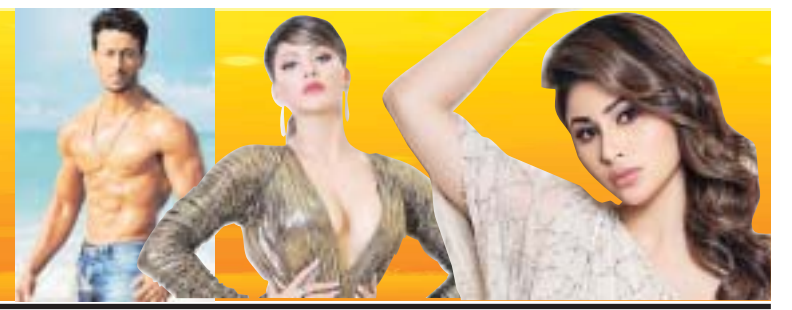
lost the very next game and it looked like Jennifer would win.

Reeth then drew on her experience and with tremendous grit won the last 3 games and the match 4-3 (5-11, 10-12, 11-9, 6-11, 11-8, 11-7, 11-4).

The women's finals scheduled on Friday will thus see Yashaswani taking on Reeth. Meanwhile, Pankaj Gupta (ONGC) will take on fellow team mate LV Thakre in the veterans finals after they both won their semi-final matches comfortably by equal margins 3-1.

Pankaj Gupta beat Soneshwar Deka (OIL) 11-2, 13-11, 11-13, 11-4 in the first semi-finals and then LV Thakre beat Jayanta Dey (IOCL) 5-11, 11-5, 11-9, 11-5 in the other veterans semi-finals.





SONAKSHI AS A FIERCE COP INVESTIGATING SERIAL MURDER IN A SERIES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha will be seen essaying the role of a cop in the upcoming streaming crime drama series 'Dahaad', her look from the series was unveiled on Thursday. The show will mark the digital debut of Sinha and has been created by filmmakers Reema Kagi and Zoya Akhtar. 'Dahaad', which earlier premiered at The Berlinale International Film Festival and was the first Indian series to achieve the feat, is set to drop on May 12, 2023. The series is an 8-part crime drama that follows Sub-inspector Anjali Bhaati (played by Sonakshi) and her colleagues in a small town police station. It all starts when a series of women are mysteriously found dead in public bathrooms. At first, the deaths appear to be clear-cut suicides but as the cases unravel, Anjali begins to suspect that a serial killer is on the loose. 'Dahaad' is directed by Reema Kagi along with Ruchika Oberoi and also stars Vijay Varma, Gulshan Devaiah, and Sohumi Shah in the lead. Produced by Excel Media & Entertainment and Tiger Baby, the series will be available to stream on Prime Video from May 12.

'THE SCRIPT WAS FULL OF SCARES'

Erica Fernandes opens up on what prompted her to be a part of a horror series

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Erica Fernandes needs no introduction; she has been making headlines for her roles in TV shows such as 'Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise Bhi', 'Kasautii Zindagii Kay'. She spoke about being part of short film 'The Haunting', directed by Tanveer Bookwala of 'Ragini MMS 2' fame.

'The Haunting' narrates the story of a demonic spirit that turns the life of a girl upside down. In the trailer, it is seen that a girl tries to convince the police and a psychiatrist that her best friend and roommate was killed by a demon. She describes the paranormal activities that have happened to her in the last one year but the police are not ready to believe her words.

Erica said: "Filming 'The Haunting' was an unforgettable experience. From the moment I stepped on set, I knew for me that this would be a film unlike any other. The script was full of scares, heart and emotion that kept me on my toes throughout the process. Working with such a talented group of people was an incredible experience and I am proud of the final product we created." She added what prompted her to take up the short film: "When I first heard about the project, 'The Haunting', I was intrigued by its storyline. It was an opportunity for me to be part of something extraordinary. I knew that this would be a challenging project and it would require me to bring my A-game every single day."

'It is our way of paying tribute'

SANAM PURI & HIS BAND TO RECREATE AN OLD ROMANTIC SONG

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer Sanam Puri spoke about recreating the romantic track 'Kya Hua Tera Wada' from the 1977 film 'Hum Kisise Kum Naheen' and said that the track will give the perfect vintage feel with a modern touch. Sanam is a pop rock band formed in 2010, known for its renditions of old classic Bollywood songs and original music.

The song is released by the rock band Sanam which consists of Sanam Puri (lead vocalist/composer), Samar Puri (lyricist/lead guitarist/composer), Venky S. (bass guitar) and Keshav Dhanraj.

Opening up about the track, Sanam said: "We are quite

thrilled to bring the sequel to the song 'Aur Iss Dil Mein' to the audiences and it is a token of love from our end to our fans for the nerve ending love they have always showered on us. We are looking forward to getting love and appreciation from the audiences for 'Kya Hua Tera Wada' also."

Venky S. added: "We have tried to bring something very new for the audience. This track is a sequel to 'Aur Iss Dil Mein' and we have conceptualised both the tracks with a lot of love and passion." Samar said that it's a tribute to R.D. Burman and Mohammad Rafi.

"It is our way of paying tribute to the legendary artists R.D. Burman ji and Mohammad Rafi saab. This song encompasses a lot of passion, pain and has some of the most heart touching lyrics. We are looking forward to all the love and support from the audiences," he concluded.



JAY BHANUSHALI TALKS ABOUT HOW HE PREPARED TO PLAY A PRINCE ON SCREEN

'I started speaking in royal andaaz'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

TV actor Jay Bhanushali, who plays the prince Shivendra Barot in the show 'Hum Rahe Na Rahe Hum', spoke about playing a royal character and preparing himself in terms of mannerism and language. The show is about a royal Barot family situated in Ranakgadh, which is headed by Damayanti Barot, played by Kitu Gidwani, her son and prince Shivendra Singh Barot, essayed by Jay Bhanushali, and Tina Datta is seen as Surilii Ahluwalia. Jay said: "When I sat through the character narration, I sensed that Shivendra who is the prince of Barot is an elegant personality who speaks with humility and respect. Instead of 'main', he must say 'Hum' he cannot be flippant, he must have a gravitas which signifies the royals and their distinct way of communicating." The 38-year-old actor is known for his roles in 'Kasautii Zindagii Kay', 'Kayamath', and his last fictional show was 'Kairi-Rishta Khatta Meetha'. Later, he also appeared on reality shows such as 'Nach Baliye 5', 'Khatron Ke Khiladi 7', 'Big Boss 15', and many more. Further talking about how he prepared for his character Shivendra, Jay added: "So, in order to embody those characteristics, I started speaking in this royal andaaz in real life as well with friends and family. I also try to control the pace of talking and try to speak as softly as possible. This regular practice helps me in bringing out the personality of Prince Shivendra."

'DESTINY PLAYED A BIG ROLE'

From contestant to host of a reality show, Divya Agarwal is set for relationship-based reality show

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Big Boss OTT' winner Divya Agarwal has been roped to host a relationship-based reality show 'Kiss Ishq N Konnections' ('K.I.N.K').

The show will test the love of six couples for each other in bold and tough situations and it will be shot in Daman and Diu. There are going to be many twists and turns with unexpected wildcards entries in this show. To make things more interesting, the exes of the couples will also enter to create drama, regrets, heartbreak, fights and loads of entertainment for the viewers. The couples will have to fight it all to become the winner.

Divya was last seen playing a cold-blooded killer Harleen in 'Abhay 3'. She has also bagged 'Cartel 2' and others. She said: "This show got my attention from the concept itself, there are a lot of dating reality shows, but this one seems quite promising and refreshing. Also, being a contestant from a dating reality show 5 years ago to hosting one now, destiny has played a big role." "This show has quite interesting contestants, and I cannot wait for the audience to witness this one of a kind show on TV and OTT," she concluded.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Alaya F