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AFTER 36 DAYS OF CHASE IN SEVERAL STATES, PRO-KHALISTAN PROPAGATOR AMRITPAL ARRESTED

After 36 days of the cat-and-mouse chase spread over several states between the Punjab Police and the pro-Khalistan propagator, Amritpal Singh was arrested on Sunday from the native village of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who was killed in the Indian Army's Operation Blue Star in 1984.

Team Absolute | Chandigarh

As per police, Amritpal Singh was arrested from Rode village in Moga district. He was shifted to Dibrugarh jail in Assam as the National Security Act (NSA) has been invoked against him.

Law enforcement agencies can keep him in detention for over 12 months. Taking to Twitter, Punjab Police said: "Amritpal Singh arrested in Moga, Punjab. Further details will be shared by Punjab Police... Urge citizens to maintain peace and harmony. Don't share any fake news, always verify and share." "The 30-year-old Waris Punjab De chief had been on the run after evading arrest on March 18. The police was also looking at a possibility if he was planning to escape to Canada via Nepal.

He shot to prominence in February after an armed mob led by him clashed with police and laid siege to a police station near Amritsar, demanding the release of one of their colleagues who had been taken into custody in an alleged kidnapping case.

Six policemen were injured in the bloody clash. Intelligence officials, familiar with "dark days" in Punjab from September 1981 to August 1992 in which 1,792 police officers sacrificed their lives while fighting the militants, fear the Khalistan sentiments trying to generate by Amritpal Singh might create another 1984-like situation.

Regarding his arrest, some media reports claimed that the fugitive reached the native village of Bhindranwale on Saturday night and surrendered before the police in the morning.

A video, viral on the social media,



AMRITPAL SHIFTED TO DIBRUGARH JAIL AMID TIGHT SECURITY

Dibrugarh: Amid tight security, Khalistani separatist Amritpal Singh was shifted to the Dibrugarh central jail in Assam on Sunday following his arrest in Punjab earlier in the day. He was flown from Punjab's Bathinda air base to Dibrugarh's Mohanbari airport under tight security. A team of Punjab Police and National Security Agency (NSA) officials arrived in Dibrugarh with the Waris Punjab De chief. A huge team of Assam Police personnel was present at the Mohanbari airport. The Assam Police have

purportedly shown Amritpal Singh addressing from a Sikh shrine and saying last one month "exposed" the real face of the Bhagwant Mann-led AAP government. "I may be an accused in the court but not an accused in the court of Almighty," he said. We don't however, authenticate the video's origin and timing.

Bhindranwale's nephew Jasvir Rode told the media Amritpal Singh had informed police last night itself that he will surrender Sunday

however, refused to issue any official statement on Amritpal's arrival in Dibrugarh. Meanwhile, the security cover outside the central jail was beefed up. Already, a multi-tier security arrangement was in place, but more security personnel were deployed on Sunday. The general public were not allowed to go near the jail. Nine other aides of Amritpal Singh, including his close aide Papalpreet and uncle Harjit Singh, have been lodged in the Dibrugarh central jail since last month.

morning after paying obeisance at the Gurdwara Janam Asthan Sant Khalsa. He surrendered around 7 a.m.

In September last year, Amritpal Singh's dastar bandi (turban tying) ceremony was held at Rode village, marking his official installation as the head of Waris Punjab De.

Before his arrest, his close aide Papalpreet Singh was arrested in Amritsar on April 10 under the NSA and that six other cases have also been registered against him.

Proceed against Amritpal only as per law: Akali Dal

Chandigarh: The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Sunday said following the peaceful manner in which Waris Punjab De chief Amritpal Singh had handed himself over to the law, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government should proceed against him only as per law and put an immediate end to the prosecution and harassment of innocent Sikhs.

In a statement here, SAD spokesman Daljit Singh Cheema welcomed the decision of Amritpal Singh to hand himself over to the law as per the advice given by the Sri Akal Takht jathedar at the 'panthic ekath' held to discuss the entire issue recently.

He said "now that Amritpal Singh has submitted to the majesty of the law, it was incumbent on the AAP government to explain why it had created a fear psychosis on this issue".

"The action of the AAP government till now have only served to defame the Sikh community worldwide, besides resulting a sense of insecurity amongst Punjabis. Communal tensions have also been deliberately inflamed."

The SAD leader said the manner in which Punjabis had maintained communal harmony and rejected divisive forces who wanted to divide them proved that they stood for peace and brotherhood among all communities.

"The AAP government was trying to create a deliberate hype on the issue by repositioning paramilitary forces and imposing Emergency like curbs on the media and intelligentsia. This must end immediately," he added.



Police maintains restraint in arrest of Khalistani separatist Amritpal: Punjab CM
Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Sunday said that the state will take action against "those who try to disrupt the country's peace and law", government did not indulge in vendetta politics and maintained restraint in the arrest of Khalistani separatist Amritpal Singh. The Chief Minister lauded the action of Punjab Police for cracking down on Amritpal Singh. He said he monitored the operation throughout the night.

Global consensus essential for crypto assets regulation: Sitharaman



tax regime with lower tax rates and less exemptions. Changes have been brought to encourage people to pay taxes," she

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday emphasised on the need for global consensus for regulating crypto assets.

Addressing a series of events in Bengaluru, she said that any kind of regulation on crypto assets would require every nation's consent, otherwise it would not be effective.

Sitharaman added that India under its G20 presidency has kept crypto assets regulation as an agenda item for this year. The IMF has given a paper on crypto-currency and the way it can affect the macro-economic stability.

"The Financial Stability Board (FSB), which was set up by G20, has agreed to give a report that will also focus on financial stability," Sitharaman said.

Reports of both FSB and IMF will be discussed in July when Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors will meet under the G20 umbrella, the Finance Minister said.

Sitharaman further said that the government is taking several measures to widen the tax base.

"We have brought in a parallel, simplified income

said. "Salaried class sometimes feels why they are only burdened and not others are questioned. They should remember that the government is approaching others as well, big expenditures are now being taxed, and they are paying TDS. So, widening of tax net is happening," she said.

Speaking on the global economic scenario, the Finance Minister said: "Covid was not even completely over when the war in Europe began and it had global repercussions. Fuel prices went up and food insecurity was seen in many countries."

During Covid, many developed economies printed and distributed money. This formula resulted in double-digit inflation in their economies, something which was not seen there in 30-40 years, Sitharaman added.

On inflation, she said that initially interest rates were "low for a long" and now inflation rates are "high for long" in countries which printed money and distributed it during Covid.

"Their economy is in a state of flux and in a recessionary phase which will have spillovers worldwide," Sitharaman said.

'WE ARE GETTING THREATS': BAJRANG, SAKSHI, OTHER GRAPPLERS REACH JANTAR MANTAR TO BEGIN PROTEST AGAIN

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The country's top wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik, Vinesh Phogat along with other grapplers have reached Jantar Mantar to protest against the WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh yet again.

A protesting wrestler said that as many as seven women grapplers including a minor have tried to lodge a complaint at Parliament street thana but "the police officers refused to file an FIR".

"We are getting threats from several quarters and after waiting for more than two months, we tried to file a complaint at thana but police officers shooed us away. We don't know what is happening here. We will start our



protest again and sit on dharna at Jantar mantar till our demands are met," wrestler said.

We had last month stated that the protesting wrestlers, can re-start their agitation against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

Sources close to the wrestlers said, that the grapplers felt "cheated" and could resume their protest till Brij Bhushan is sacked.

Notably, an Oversight Committee under the chairmanship of legendary boxer MC Mary Kom is still looking allegations levelled by the wrestlers against WFI, its president and coaching staff of mental and sexual harassment, earlier this year.

The Committee is also looking after day-to-day functioning of the federation as Brij Bhushan was asked by the Sports Ministry to not interfere.

BSF HANDS OVER AGED PAKISTANI NATIONAL BACK TO RANGERS

Chandigarh: The Border Security Force (BSF) has handed over an aged Pakistani national, who crossed the international border into Indian Territory inadvertently in Punjab's Ferozepur district, to the Pakistan Rangers, a statement said on Sunday.

"Forward deployed BSF troops apprehended one Pakistan national ahead of the border fence, when he crossed the International Border and entered into the Indian Territory in Bhakhara village under Ferozepur district on Saturday," the BSF said in a statement.

During questioning, it said, it came to notice that the apprehended Pakistan national, Hakim Ali, 75, resident of Kasur had crossed over to the Indian Territory inadvertently.

"Nothing objectionable was found with the individual. The BSF approached Pakistan Rangers and lodged its protest. Thereafter, on April 22 itself at 8.33 p.m., the apprehended Pakistan national was handed over to Pakistan Rangers as a goodwill gesture and on humanitarian grounds.

"The BSF always takes a humane approach, while dealing with inadvertent border crossers," the statement said.

IAF's C-130J, INS Sumedha on standby to evacuate Indians from war-torn Sudan

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the situation in war-torn Sudan continues to deteriorate after almost 10 days of fighting between the country's army and paramilitary forces, two Indian Air Force C-130J aircraft are currently positioned on standby in Jeddah while INS Sumedha has also reached Port Sudan, to evacuate Indians from there. The government is making all-out efforts to ensure the safety and security of Indians stranded in Sudan, official sources said, adding that as part of preparations, and in order to move swiftly, the government is pursuing multiple options.

"We are closely monitoring the complex and evolving security situation in Sudan. We are also coordinating closely with various partners for the safe movement of those Indians who are stranded



in Sudan and would like to be evacuated," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement on Sunday.

It added that contingency plans are in place but any movement on the ground would depend on the security situation, which continues to be volatile with reports of fierce fighting at various locations in Khartoum.

Sudanese airspace currently remains closed to all foreign aircraft, it said further, adding that

"overland movement also has risks and logistical challenges".

Official sources said that the Indian embassy is in regular touch with the stranded Indians in Sudan and is advising them on the viability of safe movement and the need to avoid unnecessary risk. "It is also coordinating all possible assistance including possible exit from Khartoum city as and when the security situation permits safe movement," a source said.

TTD IDENTIFIES ANOTHER FAKE WEBSITE, CASE REGISTERED

Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh) Agencies

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD), which manages the affairs of Sri Venkateswara temple, has identified one more fake website and lodged a complaint with the police.

On a complaint by the TTD's IT wing, a case has been registered in Tirumala 1 Town Police Station under sections 420, 468, and 471 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Based on the complaint, the AP Forensic Cyber Cell has also plunged into action to investigate the fake website. So far cases have been registered against 40 fake

websites and the new one is enlisted as 41st under the Cyber Crime, the TTD said.

The fake website was developed by the miscreants almost similar to TTD official website with negligible modifications. The address of the Fake Website URL is <https://tirupatibalaji-ap.gov.org/> while the official website URL is <https://tirupatibalaji.ap.gov.in/>

The TTD has cautioned the devotees not to fall prey to such fake websites. The devotees are requested to make note of the URL address of TTD Official website and be cautious verifying the credentials of the correct website before booking the online tickets.

ChatGPT fails when it comes to accounting finds major study

Team Absolute | New Delhi

AI chatbot ChatGPT is still no match for humans when it comes to accounting and while it is a game changer in several fields, the researchers say the AI still has work to do in the realm of accounting.

Microsoft-backed OpenAI has launched its newest AI chatbot product, GPT-4 which uses machine learning to generate natural language text, passed the bar exam with a score in the 90th percentile, passed 13 of 15 advanced placement (AP) exams and got a nearly perfect score on the GRE Verbal test.

"It's not perfect; you're not going to be using it for everything," said Jessica Wood, currently a freshman at Brigham Young University (BYU) in the US. "Trying to learn solely by



using ChatGPT is a fool's errand."

Researchers at BYU and 186 other universities wanted to know how OpenAI's tech would fare on accounting exams. They put the original version, ChatGPT, to the test.

"We're trying to focus on what we

can do with this technology now that we couldn't do before to improve the teaching process for faculty and the learning process for students. Testing it out was eye-opening," said lead study author David Wood, a BYU professor of accounting.

Although ChatGPT's performance was impressive, the students performed better.

Students scored an overall average of 76.7 per cent, compared to ChatGPT's score of 47.4 per cent.

On a 11.3 per cent of questions, ChatGPT scored higher than the student average, doing particularly well on AIS and auditing.

But the AI bot did worse on tax, financial, and managerial assessments, possibly because ChatGPT struggled with the mathematical processes required for the latter type, said the study published in the journal Issues in Accounting Education.

When it came to question type, ChatGPT did better on true/false questions and multiple-choice questions, but struggled with short-answer questions. In general, higher-order questions were harder for

ChatGPT to answer.

"ChatGPT doesn't always recognise when it is doing math and makes nonsensical errors such as adding two numbers in a subtraction problem, or dividing numbers incorrectly," the study found.

ChatGPT often provides explanations for its answers, even if they are incorrect. Other times, ChatGPT's descriptions are accurate, but it will then proceed to select the wrong multiple-choice answer.

"ChatGPT sometimes makes up facts. For example, when providing a reference, it generates a real-looking reference that is completely fabricated. The work and sometimes the authors do not even exist," the findings showed.

That said, authors fully expect GPT-4 to improve exponentially on the accounting questions posed in their study.



BJP'S VICTORY IS CERTAIN: K'TAKA CM

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

With just over two weeks left for the May 10 Karnataka Assembly elections, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has expressed confidence of BJP's return to power in the state. "This time, the people will bless truth, justice, and equality, and the BJP has been treading this path. So, the victory of the BJP is certain," Bommai told reporters on Sunday after paying obeisance to the statue of medieval social reformer Basavanna here on the occasion of Basava Jayanti. He said the BJP's commitment is to build a new Karnataka. "The people will



give their verdict during the Assembly polls and it must be accepted by everyone. The BJP is trying by keeping its principles and ideology before the people," Bommai stated. The chief minister recalled that the 12th-century reformer Basavanna has been the symbol of equality and was a revolutionary person who ushered in the concept of equality. "Our government is functioning on the ideology and principles of Basavanna and it will continue to work on the Basava Patha for the uplift of the oppressed classes by ensuring them all respect and for their social and economic progress. We are confident the people of Karnataka will extend full cooperation," he claimed.

K'taka polls: CPI to back Congress candidates on 215 seats

Bengaluru | Agencies

The Congress and Communist Party of India (CPI) on Sunday announced their alliance for the Karnataka assembly polls scheduled for May 10. As per the understanding arrived between the two parties, the CPI cadre will support the Congress candidates in 215 of the 224 constituencies of the state. While the last date for submitting nomination papers was April 20, the papers were scrutinised on April 21, and the last day for withdrawal of nominations is April 24. According to Congress' Karnataka in-charge,



Randeep Surjewala, seven constituencies will witness 'friendly contests' between the two allies as the CPI has already fielded its candidates in those constituencies. "CPI has fielded 7 candi-

dates and they were going to field more candidates. But I and the party reached out to the CPI state leadership and national leadership, and they have agreed that there will be a friendly contest on the 7 seats but on

all remaining 215 seats, the entire CPI cadre will wholeheartedly support the Congress candidates in this fight against the BJP," Surjewala said. Meanwhile, backing the Congress in the fight against the ruling BJP in Karnataka assembly polls, the CPI stated that apart from contesting the seven seats, it is extending its support to the CPI(M) candidate contesting from Bagepalli constituency, and the Sarvodaya Karnataka Party candidate from Melkote constituency. Karnataka assembly polls are scheduled to be held on May 10, and the results will be announced on May 13.

Crucial Nitish Kumar-Mamata Banerjee meeting likely on April 25



Kolkata | Agencies

A crucial meeting between West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her Bihar counterpart Nitish Kumar will likely take place on April 25. Trinamool Congress insiders said that Nitish Kumar is supposed to come to Kolkata on Tuesday morning and there is a high possibility of his meeting with Mamata Banerjee at the latter's Kalighat residence in South Kolkata on the same evening. A member of the West Bengal cabinet said that the meeting will harp on the unity of opposition forces against BJP in the

2024 Lok Sabha polls. In the last couple of months, Mamata Banerjee has had an array of meetings with a number of non-BJP and non-Congress leaders on the issue of opposition unity against the BJP in the 2024 polls. Last month, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav met her in Kalighat. In the meeting, the two leaders agreed to maintain a distance with Congress and rather focus on the unity of the regional forces against BJP in the 2024 polls. Soon after meeting Akhilesh, Mamata Banerjee went to Odisha and had a meeting with her counterpart Naveen Patnaik. This was followed by a visit to Kolkata by Janata Dal (Secular) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy during which he met Banerjee. In all her public meetings, stressed that if the opposition gets united before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, then it is possible to bring an end to the BJP-led regime. However, she has always avoided the tricky issue of whether Congress is a part of her blueprint of united opposition against BJP.

Odisha CM inaugurates new BJD office

Team Absolute | Bhubaneswar

On the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Sunday inaugurated a grand Biju Janata Dal (BJD) office named 'Sankha Bhawan' here. Addressing on this occasion, Patnaik said that Sankha Bhawan will be a meeting place for all those who love Odisha, who are interested in working for the development of the state, for the protection and to build a new and strong Odisha. The Bhawan will work for Odisha's development and pride, and it will also work for promotion of the state's rich cultural heritage. All the works of the new BJD office will be dedicated for the people of Odisha, he said. "A new era had begun in Odisha in the year 1997 with the birth of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), which was formed as per the principles and guidance of legendary leader late Biju Patnaik. The BJD, which was formed



as the regional party to serve people of Odisha, has now been transformed into a social movement," Patnaik said. The Bhawan will connect the

future with the past of Odisha. It will bring together the four and a half crore people of Odisha and will be dedicated to the development of Odisha to protect the Odias, he

added. The Chief Minister further said that the Sankha Bhawan will be devoted to the development of art, literature, and culture of Odisha. It will not only be a center of inspiration for physical, social, economic, cultural, and political development, but it will also be a centre of spiritual enlightenment based on the fundamental principles of Jagannath culture. The office will also continue to work for spreading the great culture of Lord Jagannath and will continue to spread the message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. He appealed to all his party leaders and workers to dedicate themselves to carrying forward the culture of service, advancing development, and shining the glory of mother Odisha. The BJD's new headquarters is a 3-storey building, having 30 rooms, located at Unit-6 area in Bhubaneswar. It has a large parking space in the basement.

Court asks UP Police to explain how missing gun lands in possession of don's son

Team Absolute | Saharanpur (UP)

A court in Saharanpur has sought an explanation from the police about how a licensed revolver belonging to a man, was found missing from 'malkhana', and was later found in possession of a dreaded gangster's son. Eight years ago, Lalit Kumar, owner of a licensed fire arm in Dehra village of Saharanpur, won a court case pertaining to a property dispute. He then got the district magistrate's permission to get his seized licensed revolver released from the 'malkhana' of Deoband police station in 2015. He was told that his weapon had gone missing and was in the possession of a gangster's son. Though an FIR was filed against the cops assigned with the weapon's custody, police closed the case. The matter came to light again when the same weapon was seized by police from Vivek Singh, son of jailed don Sushil Mochi in Ratanpuri region of



Muzaffarnagar, during a raid in January this year. Lalit Kumar filed a revision petition in a court in Muzaffarnagar seeking custody of his weapon. He told the court, "My revolver had gone missing in 2015 and was recovered

in 2023. I am the rightful owner of the weapon and that is why it is my appeal to get it released and get it in my custody." The court has now asked police to explain how a confiscated gun in police custody reached a gangster. Assistant district government counsel, Parminder Singh, said, "The court has expressed deep concern on the landing of a weapon in government custody in the hands of the person whose father is one of the top dons in UP." Singh further said, "SHO of Deoband police station has been summoned through SSP Saharanpur to apprise the court of the current status of the case pertaining to the 2015 FIR filed against cops over the stolen weapon. It has also directed the district administration to serve a show-cause notice to Vivek Singh who must explain his position in the matter." SHO (Deoband) has been asked to be present in the court on the next hearing on April 29.

Lung transported after creating 12-km green corridor

Gurugram: The Gurugram traffic police on Sunday created a 12-km green corridor for an ambulance to help transport a lung from Nagpur by air from IGI Airport to Medanta Hospital in Gurugram. DCP (traffic), Virender Vij said, "Due to the green corridor, the ambulance covered a distance of 12 km from the Gurugram-Delhi border to Medanta hospital, Sector-38 in 6 minutes, from 9:09 a.m. to 9:15 a.m., while it can take 15-20 mins during peak hours." As the time frame for transplanting organs is often limited to seven to eight hours, owing to heavy traffic congestion, the ambulances often lose critical time. "Gurugram traffic police coordinated with Delhi Police to ensure signal-free green corridor be established on the route to allow saving of critical time and timely delivery of organ to the patient," he said.



Man urinates inside a temple in Bihar, arrested

Patna | Agencies

A man, who urinated inside Maa Durga temple located at Kalyani Chowk in Bihar's Muzaffarpur city, has been arrested, police said on Sunday. The accused is identified as Moinuddin, a resident of Diwan road of the city. He went inside the temple premises without removing his sleepers and headed towards the idol of Maa Durga. The temple priest spotted him and raised an alarm. However, by that time, he went to another side of the temple and urinated there on Saturday evening. Agitated over the incident, the devotees present inside the temple assaulted the accused. The news of the incident spread like a wildfire across the city and soon SHO of the Town police station and a large number of policemen



reached the spot and arrested the accused. "We have arrested the accused under relevant sections of IPC. He is facing the charge of hurting the sentiments of a large community. The accused is injured and we have admitted him to Sadar hospital for treatment," said an official spokesperson of Muzaffarpur police. "We have deployed additional police forces around temple premises and also asked the reserve battalions to be on standby. Intelligence officers are asked to stay alert at their respective zones and inform us at the earliest to take preventive measures," he said. Meanwhile, the accused's parents reached the police station and claimed that he is mentally-challenged. They were also carrying some documents to substantiate their claim.



9 CUSTOMS OFFICIALS DISMISSED IN KERALA OVER GOLD SMUGGLING LINKS

Chennai: Nine Customs officials, including a senior superintendent, were dismissed from service for alleged links with gold smuggling gangs operating out of the Kariapur airport in Kerala's Kozhikode. The action was taken by the Customs Department after the airport turned out into a smuggling hub and the failure of these officials to curb the criminal activities. An internal investigation by the Department found that the officers were hand in glove with the smuggling gangs. Several smuggling gangs have been operating out of the airport turning the Malabar area into a major smuggling hub of Kerala. The dismissed officials are Senior Superintendent of Customs Asha, Superintendent Ganapathi Potti, Inspectors Yassir Arafat, Yogesh, Sudhir Kumar, Naresh Gulia and Minimol, havildars Asokan and Francis. The increment of another Superintendent Satyendra Singh was put on hold.

Bihar ruling alliance leaders back Rahul's call for lifting 50% quota cap

Team Absolute | Patna

After Congress leader Rahul Gandhi advocated removing the 50 per cent reservation cap, the leaders of the Mahagathbandhan seem to be united with the grand old party. Neeraj Kumar, JD(U) MLC and chief spokesperson, said that Rahul Gandhi has rightly pointed at the reservation cap as it is not benefiting the people. "We do not know about the actual number of OBC, EBC or minority communities in the country. So, who are coming under 50% reservations? The Narendra Modi government has not published the census of 2011. It did not conduct a census in 2021. So how would we know the actual number of the population and the financial status of the public. Hence, it is better to remove the 50% reservation cap," Kumar said. "The Narendra Modi government is claiming 50 per cent reservation for SC, ST and Economically Weaker Section (EWS) people on the one hand and cancelling the scholarship of classes 1 to 8. You cannot cheat people with your double standard policies," Kumar said. "The Bihar government is conducting the caste based census having a special category to learn the actual financial status of the family. It will give an idea about who is deprived with the current policies of the state and Central governments. The Bihar government will make policies according to the deprived section and benefit them to improve their living standard," Kumar stated. "The Narendra



Modi government claims 50 per cent reservation but fails to categorise it. It has brought 10 per cent reservation to EWS category people but who are those 10 per cent no one knows. As per the Indian Constitution, the SC and ST people are covered by reservations. "After 75 years of Independence, does the Central government have any data about how many SC-ST people have become financially strong. How many of them have availed government policies and their standard of living has improved. I don't think the Narendra Modi government has data on it. Hence, Rahul Gandhi's demand for removal of the 50 per cent reservation cap is absolutely right," said Shivanand Tiwari, vice president of the

RJD," he added. "First, we have to count the numbers caste wise followed by their financial status and then provide the welfare programmes according to the needs of a particular caste and community. If required, we have to give reservation in jobs and other welfare schemes in the country," Tiwari said. Arvind Kumar Singh, senior leader and BJP spokesperson said: "The actual intention of Rahul Gandhi and Nitish Kumar is to divide the people on the basis of caste and community. On the other hand, the Narendra Modi government is trying to unite the society. Hence, it is a conflict of interest between them."

Man beaten to death in Delhi's Shadipur; 2 held

New Delhi: A 39-year-old man has been beaten to death by two persons in Delhi's Shadipur area in an incident of road rage, the police said on Sunday. The accused individuals -- identified as Manish Kumar, 19, and Lalchand a.k.a. Pramod, 20, have been arrested.



The incident took place on Saturday. The police received a call about the incident at around 11.30 p.m. The caller said that a man with injuries was lying on the street. "Manish and Lalchand were moving in a cab. The deceased, who was moving on his scooter, was on the road. All three had first argument over giving a passage, which led to a scuffle between them. Thereafter, the accused pushed him off his scooter and then thrashed him," a police officer said. A police team that later reached the spot learnt that the injured individual was taken to a nearby government hospital by the local residents. The deceased, who was later identified as Pankaj Thakur, was declared dead on arrival by the doctors. "On the basis of inspection of the scene of crime, local intelligence and scanning of CCTV footage, two alleged persons were identified," said the police. An initial probe into the matter revealed that the deceased was kicked and punched by the accused.



GOVERNMENT IS DEVOTED ROUND THE CLOCK IN PUBLIC SERVICE WITH PASSION AND ZEAL: CM CHOUHAN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was called on at the CM's residence office by the members of the youth delegation, who had come from across the country to visit the state. CM Chouhan said that various works and activities for public welfare and development are going on at a rapid pace in the state. The government is engaged day and night in the service of the public with yearning, perseverance, passion and zeal. State Government's Mukhya Mantri Ladli Bahna Yojana is an innovative effort for women empowerment. Many experiments are also being done from the point of view of good governance. For redressal of complaints in the state, arrangements have been made for Samadhan Online, CM Helpline and public hearing.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that there has been a radical change in the fields of roads, electricity, water, agriculture, education, cleanliness and good governance in the state. Today the budget of Madhya Pradesh has risen to Rs. 3 lakh 14 thousand crore. The per capita income in the state has increased from Rs. 11 thousand to Rs. one lakh 40 thousand now. Using technology, the benefits of



various schemes are being extended to the people. Chief Minister Chouhan said that the contribution of Madhya Pradesh in the country's GDP is 4.6 percent. Works of irrigation projects worth Rs. 68 thousand crore are going on in the state. CM Rise schools are being made better than private schools. Realising the concept of Waste-to-Wealth, the work of making electricity from waste is being done. CM Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh is leading in the country in the field of cleanliness. Madhya Pradesh is number one in organic farming. For the

all-round development of the youths, a youth policy has been made in the state. Chief Minister Chouhan said that Shri Mahakal Mahalok has been made in Ujjain. A statue of Jagat Guru Adi Shankaracharya and an amazing Lok will be established in Omkareshwar.

The youth delegation appreciated various schemes, development works and other specialties of the state. The delegation included Sarvshri Rohit Chahal, Abhinav Prakash Singh, Vaibhav Pawar, Ranjit Singh Chauhan and others.

CONTROVERSY BREAKS OUT OVER CONDUCTING 'PREGNANCY TEST' ON BENEFICIARIES OF MUKHYAMANTRI KANYADAN YOJANA

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Opposition Congress Sunday alleged that the BJP-led Madhya Pradesh government put over 200 women through 'pregnancy tests' while checking their eligibility for a scheme that provides a Rs 51,000 marriage grant. While the ruling BJP has not yet issued any official statement on the matter, a local BJP leader stated that the women were put through a 'fitness test'.

The said test was conducted before the beneficiaries were to take part in a mass marriage ceremony in a town in the Dindori district Saturday. Local MLA Omkar Singh Markam said he received information that the women were put through a pregnancy test. Markam said, "I have information that four women who could not pass this test were not given Rs 51,000 as a benefit under the scheme. This is a violation of their basic rights and an invasion of their privacy. I will raise this issue before the chief minister as well as the prime minister." Markam added, "The government must clarify if there are any laws for such pregnancy tests." Meanwhile, BJP district chief Avadh Raj Bilaiya said in a video: "Under the Mukhyamantri Kanyadan Yojana, a medical test is done to check girls' fitness. In our district, there are many problems like sickle cell anemia... So, generally, all kinds of tests are done. Last time, we found that many women were already married... Unfortunately, this time



when the test was done, a few women were found pregnant and, in such a situation, we assumed they were married and we did not allow them to marry."

Bilaiya further said: "There is no question of hurting the asmita (pride) of women. The doctors are conducting the tests and based on past experiences, where couples were found already married, such preventive steps were taken. Politics is being played. This scheme is for poor women and such types of politics must not be done. Our mission is very clear; we want to help poor women. About 230 women got married and we all took part in the ceremony."

Defending the administration, Dindori collector Vikas Mishra said that directives were issued during the mass marriage event for the detection of sickle cell ailment.

"During the medical examination, some brides spoke of period issues after which doctors at the site took a decision to conduct pregnancy tests on those with such complaints," Mishra said.

"There was no directive from the administration to conduct pregnancy tests. The

four women who were found to be pregnant were not allowed to take part in the mass marriage," he added.

Senior Congress leader and former chief minister Kamal Nath took to social media to raise the issue. He tweeted, "In Dindori, the news of getting pregnancy tests done for more than 200 daughters has come to the fore in mass marriages to be conducted under Mukhyamantri Kanyadan Yojana. I want to know from the Chief Minister whether this news is true? If this news is true, then on whose orders was this gross insult done to the daughters of Madhya Pradesh? Do the daughters of the poor and tribal communities have no dignity in the eyes of the Chief Minister?"

"In the Shivraj government, Madhya Pradesh is already on top in the country in terms of misbehaviour with women. I demand from the Chief Minister that a fair and high-level inquiry should be conducted into the entire matter and the guilty should be punished severely. This is not only a matter of pregnancy test, but also of a malicious attitude towards the entire female race."

PM Modi will participate in the National Panchayati Raj Day programme in Rewa

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address all the Gram Sabhas and Panchayati Raj Institutions of the country on April 24 at 11.30 am by participating in the National Panchayati Raj Day celebrations at the SAF ground in Rewa. Prime Minister Modi will perform virtual Griha Pravesh for 4 lakh 11 thousand beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana at the function. Along with this, he will also dedicate, lay foundation and inaugurate four large groups of water supply schemes costing Rs 7853 crores of Jal Jeevan Mission and rail projects worth more than Rs 2300 crores. Prime Minister Modi will also visit the development exhibition of various departments at the main venue in the morning.

Prime Minister Modi will inaugurate the integrated e-Gram Swaraj and GeM portal for public procurement at the Panchayat level during the National Panchayati Raj Day celebrations. E-Gram Swaraj - Government e-Marketplace Integration aims at enabling Panchayats to market their goods and services through GeM through e-Gram Swaraj platform.

The Prime Minister will also launch the campaign "Joint Steps towards Development" with the aim of increasing people's participation in ensuring full benefits of the government's schemes. Focused on inclusive development, the campaign will focus on extend-

ing benefits of schemes to the last mile.

The Prime Minister will hand over around 35 lakh Swamitva property cards to the beneficiaries. With the handing over of these cards, about 1 crore 25 lakh property cards would have been distributed in the Swamitva Yojana in the country.

Prime Minister Modi will lay the foundation stone and dedicate to the nation various railway projects worth about Rs. 2300 crore. The projects that will be dedicated include doubling of railway tracks, gauge conversion and electrification projects along with cent percent electrification of the rail network in Madhya Pradesh. The Prime Minister will lay the foundation of the redevelopment of Gwalior station and flag off the three trains.

In the programme, the Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone of 5 projects of Jal Jeevan Mission worth about Rs. 7,853 crore. Among them are Rewa Bansagar project costing Rs. 2319 crore 45 lakh to provide water to 1411 villages of Rewa district, Satna Bansagar-2 water supply project costing Rs. 2153 crore 12 lakh to benefit 295 villages of Rewa and Satna district, Sidhi Bansagar group Nal Jal Yojana costing Rs. 1641 crore 52 lakh supplying water to 677 villages, Tumas group Nal Jal Yojana costing Rs. 951 crore 18 lakh to benefit 630 villages of Rewa district and Rs. 788 crore 63 lakh Gulab Sagar Group Nal Jal Yojana to benefit 323 villages. These projects will benefit 9 lakh 48 thousand families of 4 thousand 36 villages.

CM CHOUHAN PLANTS BANYAN, MANGO, JAMUN AND PEEPAL SAPLINGS IN SMART CITY GARDEN



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Banyan, Mango, Jamun and Peepal in the Smart City Garden at Shyamla Hills. Along with the Chief Minister, members of the martyr's family, members of Akhil Bharatiya Vishnoi Mahasabha and Dhakad Kirar Samaj also planted saplings. Sunita Nagele planted a sapling on her birthday. Chief Minister Chouhan also presented cheque to the family of the martyr. Wife of Chief Minister Chouhan and National President of All India Kirar Kshatriya Mahasabha Sadhna Singh Chouhan, MLA Narsinghpur Jalam Singh Patel, members of All India Vishnoi Mahasabha Sarvshri Devendra Budhiya, Patrat Lom, Arvind Saran, Vicky Vishnoi, Vikas, Vaibhav Vishnoi and Poonam Pawar, members of martyrs families Sangeeta Bhargava, Leela Bhargava, Vansh Bhargava, Vikas, Varsha Bhargava, Sonaram, Akash, Suraj, RK Jatav, Premchand and Ruby along with journalists Sarman Nagele and Trisha Nagele were present. Chief Minister Chouhan planted saplings on completion of 20 years of MP Post. Digital media has an important role in the field of environmental protection. Digital media not only preserves the environment but also contributes to its expansion. Keeping this in mind, the news portal MP Post was started in Madhya Pradesh 20 years ago. Chief Minister Chouhan congratulated the Chief Managing Editor and staff of MP Post and wished them a bright future.

Private bus catches fire at petrol pump; driver & helper injured

Team Absolute | Indore

Passengers had a narrow escape after a private bus caught fire following a blast during diesel refilling at a petrol pump in Navlakha on Sunday afternoon. However, the bus's driver and helper were caught in the flames and have been admitted to a private hospital. The whole incident was recorded on CCTV installed at the petrol pump.



In the video, the bus driver Kapil can be seen coming out of the bus at the petrol pump. After a few seconds, there was a blast during refilling diesel which caused the bus to catch fire. Kapil can also be seen running while caught up in flames. The petrol pump employees managed to get the bus out of the petrol pump in time to avoid any major tragedy. Local police are investigating the matter.

2 COACHES OF RATLAM-AMBEDKAR NAGAR TRAIN CATCH FIRE; NO CASUALTY

Team Absolute | Ratlam

Two coaches of Ratlam-Dr Ambedkar Nagar DEMU train caught fire in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam district on Sunday morning, an official said. No casualty was reported in the incident which took place at around 7 am at Pritam Nagar railway station, located nearly 30 km from Ratlam, Western Railway's Ratlam division public relations officer Khemraj Meena said. After leaving from Ratlam station, the driving motor coach (placed in the middle of the train) of the DEMU (diesel-electric multiple unit) train caught fire at Pritam Nagar railway station, he said. Later, an adjoining coach also caught the blaze, he said, adding that fire tenders were rushed to the spot. The fire has been almost brought under control, the official said. All passengers were safe, he said. The divisional railway manager (DRM) has left for the spot, he said. The incident did not affect traffic on the route, the official said.



CHEETAH THAT STRAYED OUT OF KUNO RESCUED

Team Absolute | Sheopur

A male cheetah that strayed out of the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh last week has been rescued while it was about to cross over to a forest in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh and brought back to the park, an official said on Sunday.

This is the second time this month that cheetah Oban has been tranquilised and brought back to the KNP after the feline wandered a long distance from the park.

After being tranquilised at Karera forest in Shivpuri district, cheetah Oban, now renamed as Pavan, was released in Palpur forest of the Kuno National Park at around 9.30 pm on Saturday, KNP's Divisional Forest Officer Prakash Kumar Verma said. The cheetah was moving towards Jhansi in Uttar



Pradesh when it was rescued. The spotted cat was around 150 km away from the KNP at that time, the official said.

On April 7, the feline, which has strayed out of the KNP multiple times, was rescued from Bairad area in Shivpuri after being tranquilised and brought back to the park, officials said. Eight Namibian cheetahs, comprising five females and three males, were brought to the KNP as part of an ambitious reintroduction programme of the species and were released into special enclosures on September 17, 2022 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

One of them, Sasha, died of a kidney ailment on March 27. Another cheetah, named Siyaya, recently gave birth to four cubs. On February 18 this year, 12 cheetahs, comprising seven males and five females, were brought to the KNP from South Africa.

3 TEENAGE BOYS DROWN IN RIVER WHILE TAKING BATH IN HARDA

Team Absolute | Harda

Three teenage boys drowned in a river while taking a bath in Harda district of Madhya Pradesh on Sunday, a police official said.

The incident occurred in Bichhola village under Handia police station limits this afternoon, he said.

"These three boys, aged 16 to 17 years and studying in class 12, drowned in Ajnal river, where they went to take a bath," Handia police station in-charge C S Sariyam said.

After being alerted about the incident, a police team reached the spot and fished out the victims' bodies, he said. A case was registered in this connection and investigation is underway, he added.

MP GOVT JOINS CENTRE IN OPPOSING PLEA TO LEGITIMISE SAME-SEX MARRIAGES

PRAVEEN DWIVEDI | Bhopal

Amid the ongoing debate over whether 'same-sex' marriages should be legitimised or not in a multi-cultural country like India, the Madhya Pradesh government has submitted its views before the Centre.

The Union Law Ministry, on April 18, sought response from state governments over the issue, to which BJP-led Madhya Pradesh government has submitted its response. Madhya Pradesh Advocate General Prashant Singh said, "We have filed our interventions with the Centre."

In its letter to the states, the Union Law Ministry said: "It may be noted that the subject of marriage pertains to Entry 5 in the concurrent list of the Constitution of India. Moreover, any decision on this matter requires an assessment of the ramifications on existing social customs, practices, values, norms, mores, State Rules and such like that may be prevalent in different sections of the society. It is important that a composite and cohesive view is presented before the Court incorporating the views of all state governments for effective adjudication."

The Advocate General, however, did not say much about state's views on this heated subject maintaining the secrecy, but it is most likely that the Madhya Pradesh government led by the BJP will stand with its central leadership, which is vehemently against the idea of same-sex marriage.

"There is no question about going against the Centre's decision. Madhya Pradesh



would maintain what the Centre has already submitted before the Supreme Court," said Rajneesh Agrawal, a senior functionary in the state BJP unit.

Meanwhile, as the Supreme Court hearing a series of petitions in the landmark case filed by 18 LGBTQ+ couples including three who are raising children together, seeking marriage equality in the country and even refused to accept Centre's appeal on some ground, a perception is taking shape within the state BJP unit that Chief Justice (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud has been "deliberately interfering in legislative jurisdiction". Around half a dozen of leaders in Madhya Pradesh BJP shared their views; they all believe that the CJI has "widely differing views" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "He (CJI) is trying to change the law of nature about male and female," a senior BJP leader said on condition of anonymity.

Senior advocate and Rajya Sabha MP Vivek Tankha said that conceptually it won't be easy to accept it as different people have their different opinion on this subject, but, "I would be happy if it (same-sex marriage) would be legitimized... As a human being we can't object it. Because it's their life."

The Supreme Court on Thursday said it could follow the example of a landmark verdict of the UK top court and constructively interpret the Special Marriage Act to give same-sex couples the rights enjoyed by heterosexual couples as members of the LGBTQIA+ community were already living in stable, marriage-like relationships since 2018 after the decriminalisation of homosexuality.

If the Supreme Court rules in favour of same-sex marriage, this could be the first significant step towards the protection of LGBTQ+ rights since the court's landmark decision in 2018 to read down Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Digvijay-Scindia battle takes nasty turn

With Madhya Pradesh elections just six months away, political temperature has started rising slowly in the state. Now the words like 'traitors', 'Khuddar', 'divisive' are being used to attack each other. After a decade and a half, the Congress came to power in the state, but it slipped out of hand within 15 months. The Congress government under Kamal Nath, which came to power in December 2018, collapsed after MLAs loyal to Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia joined the saffron party following his rebellion in the grand old party. This is the reason why Scindia is always on the target of Congress. Madhya Pradesh politics has heated up again as senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh and Scindia indulged in an ugly war of words. The former chief minister has repeatedly attacked Scindia by calling him a 'traitor'. Singh recently visited Ujjain city in Madhya Pradesh, where the Mahakaleswar temple is located and said, "Hey Mahakal, a second Jyotiraditya Scindia should not be born in the Congress." After this statement, Scindia said: "Lord Mahakal please ensures an 'anti-national' like Singh, who also greatly harmed Madhya Pradesh, is not born in India." Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan openly defended Scindia and said, "Scindia is not a traitor, he is self-righteous. After all, how much insult he tolerates from the Congress party." Political experts said that elections are just six months away, this is just the beginning of the attacks. It will not be surprising if there is a turn of personal attacks in the coming days. Both the leaders come from the same region, both of them have a special eye on the Gwalior-Chambal region and they know that victory and defeat here will decide their future.

DESPITE CONG CLAMOUR FOR CASTE CENSUS, IT WAS UPA GOVT THAT BURIED IT

KAVYA DUBEY

In a democracy where caste is intrinsic and indispensable in the electoral theatre, its impact was perceived to be a significant factor in nation building back when the Constitution was being framed after Independence.

The caste census is a caste-wise breakup of the population that enlists all scheduled and unscheduled castes in terms of both numbers and percentage.

After India's first caste census was conducted in 1881, the 2011 caste census collected data on all castes, not just OBCs, as was the predominant demand. The intent behind this was to expand the socio-economic mapping.

Back in 2011, in the UPA-2 regime, Congress joined the chorus with regional parties and raised the matter of having a caste census.

As a result, the Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011 (SECC) was carried out along with the 2011 Census, which the Manmohan Singh government had approved to be conducted after due discussion in both Houses of Parliament in 2010.

The SECC 2011 began on June 29, 2011, from the Sankhola village of Hazemara block in West Tripura district. However, it was not done under the 1948 Census of India Act.

SECC 2011 was primarily designed to identify households living below the poverty line and to provide data on various socio-economic indicators.

It was conducted in all states and union territories across India and then Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley released its first findings on July 3, 2015.

But the brakes had already been applied under UPA-2's watch when the then Union Home Minister, P. Chidambaram, and senior officials in the Ministry who are tasked to oversee the Census operations car-



ried out by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (RGI), had made it clear that there was no scope for including the enumeration of castes and sections other than the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in 2011 Census.

Then, just before Manmohan Singh's intervention in the Lok Sabha, Chidambaram pointed out the logistic difficulties in carrying out the task, adding that even for the 2001 Census, there was a proposal to include caste as a parameter in the enumeration exercise, which the then BJP-led NDA government did not favour. The Census exercise therefore went by the practice prevailing since 1951.

The UPA partners of the Congress were volatile on the issue of OBC mobilisation. SP and RJD helped the government by defeat-

ing the cut motions moved by BJP. Left parties were also perceived as a reason that led to the change of stance.

SP President late Mulayam Singh Yadav had stated: "It is a demand that has been raised systematically for over two decades by parties from all parts of the country, including the SP and the RJD as well as South Indian parties like the DMK and the PMK. However, the Congress and the BJP had not been able to understand the importance and relevance of the demand. Now, they too have realised its relevance and the government has decided to take appropriate measures. As stated often, nobody can stop an idea whose time has come and caste-based census is certainly an idea whose time has come."

Despite the Prime Minister's assurance in Parliament, the gov-

ernment did not take formal steps to go ahead with caste-based census. The RGI's office did not receive any notification regarding the government's intent even a week after the Prime Minister's announcement.

Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee held that it was not difficult to incorporate caste enumeration in the present census, but it is to be seen how that would be executed.

Chidambaram had pointed out during the debate in Lok Sabha that the census enumerator is not an investigator or verifier, and that the person has no training or expertise to classify a citizen as a member of the OBC or otherwise.

Yet another contentious aspect that was highlighted was the

lack of uniformity in caste specifications across the country. There is a Central list of OBCs and then there are state-specific lists for it.

However, while some states do not have a list of OBCs at all, some have, in addition to the OBC list, a subset of Most Backward Castes. Further, a certain caste in the OBC category in one state may not be an OBC at all in another state.

Additionally, converts to Islam and Christianity are treated differently within the larger community, depending on the caste they converted from. The classification of those born of inter-caste marriages remains problematic too.

Interestingly, both BJP and Congress demanded a caste census when they were in opposition, but once they came to power, they did not conduct it conclusively, raising doubts about the intent behind the exercise, which is believed to be upliftment of people by means of conducting a caste-based census.

While the SECC did collect data on caste, its methodology was criticised for being inadequate and incomplete, resulting in data that was not accurate or comprehensive. But more interestingly, SECC, which went on from 2011 till 2015, data was never revealed.

A figure close to Rs 5,000 crore was expended by the Manmohan Singh government and subsequently, Narendra Modi government just for the caste data to never be released.

This expenditure was made where just a column included in the decadal census would give the desired data.

It is no secret that the caste census could significantly alter the existing power dynamics with regard to political representation, and the leading national parties appear unwilling to dabble with this proposition.

international

PAKISTAN CRISIS DEEP ENOUGH FOR MILITARY TAKEOVER, WARNS FORMER PM

Islamabad | Agencies

Former Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has warned that the country's current economic and political crisis has all the makings of attracting a military takeover, noting that the army intervened in the past in much less severe circumstances as he urged the top stakeholders to initiate a dialogue, media reports said.

The PML-N leader made it clear that martial law always remained a possibility if the system failed or when there was a conflict between institutions and the political leadership was unable to chart a way forward, the Dawn reported.

"Pakistan has had many long periods of martial law in very similar situations," he said. "In fact, I would say Pakistan has never witnessed a (more) severe economic and political situation before. In much less severe circumstances the military has taken over," he said.

Abbasi warned of anarchy if friction within the society and institu-



tions became too deep, adding that such a situation could also see the army step in. "It has happened in many countries," he said. "When the political and constitutional system fails, extra-constitutional (measures) take place."

The PML-N leader, however, hoped that the military was not considering the option of imposing

martial law. "I don't think they are considering that but when they are left with no choice, the old famous speeches of 'mere aziz hamwatanon' (a phrase synonymous with military takeovers) are heard."

He clarified that if the army were to take over, it would make things worse instead of doing any good, Dawn reported.

Philippine lawmaker calls for foreign language studies in basic education

Manila: A member of the Philippine House of Representatives has filed a resolution urging the Department of Education (DepEd) to include foreign language studies other than English in school curriculum.

House of Representatives Minority Leader Marcelino Libanan filed the resolution as the DepEd reviews the K-12 program, reports Xinhua news agency.

He said Filipino students must draw inspiration from national hero Jose P. Rizal, who was said to be conversant in 22 languages.

In his resolution, Libanan said that "the whole world has become a global village with multilingual labour markets, thus creating a strong demand for workers with foreign language skills".

He added that global corporations based in large economies such as the US and China have been known to prefer hiring staff who can speak a second foreign language besides English.

Vice President and Education Secretary Sara Duterte, in her 2023 Basic Education Report, also declared that DepEd intends to revise and improve the K-12 program to develop competent and job-ready lifelong learners.

Bodies of two missing Indian students recovered from US lake

New York | Agencies

Bodies of two Indiana University students from India who went missing at a lake last week, have been recovered after a massive search that was hampered by severe weather conditions, officials said.

Siddhant Shah, 19, and Aryan Vaidya, 20, went swimming at Monroe Lake, roughly 64 miles southwest of downtown Indianapolis, with a group of friends on April 15 but didn't resurface, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources said in a news release.

The bodies were located and recovered by search crews on April 18 east of the Paynetown Marina in 18 feet of water.

The two were boating on a pontoon when their group anchored to swim in the lake, which is 10,750 acres and 35-40 feet deep.

"When both men did not



resurface, friends tried to help but were unsuccessful," the release said.

One of the men had been struggling in the water when others jumped in to help, said Lt. Angela Goldman, a Department of Natural Resources representative, told USA Today.

Rescuers started searching the lake using sonar and scuba divers, but were

forced to pause operations on the first day due to windy weather conditions.

"With 15-to-20-mph sustained winds, we're struggling with that," Goldmsaid told USA Today.

Indiana University student services transported the rest of the group back to campus where they were provided counseling services.

S.KOREAN AIRLINES SEE SPIKE IN INT'L PASSENGER NUMBERS AMID BORDER REOPENINGS

Seoul | Agencies

South Korean air carriers saw the number of international passengers spike 16-fold in the first quarter from a year earlier, driven by a surge in demand amid border reopenings, government data showed Sunday. The number of passengers that used international flights operated by Korean Air Lines Co., Asiana Airlines Inc. and low-cost carriers came to 9.87 million in the January-March period, according to the data by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. That marks a massive increase from the 619,204 logged in the first quarter of 2022, reports Yonhap News Agency.

The number of international passengers that used full-service airlines, like Korean Air and Asiana, grew 7.8 times on-year to 4.47 million in the first three months of the year, accounting for 45 per cent of total international passengers.

The number of those that flew on budget carriers, representing 5.41 million, skyrocketed from 52,000 a year ago, outturning the number for full-service airlines.

Recovery in international travel demand



boosted the sharp increase in the passenger numbers, as countries began to ease Covid-19-related border restrictions, market watchers said. In particular, Japan, Taiwan and Macao resumed no-visa entry programs for South Korean tourists in the fourth quarter of last year, bolstering the demand for Asia-bound flights, the majority of which are dominated by low-cost carriers.

Analysts forecast the strong demand will lead to record high profits for budget carriers, including T'way Air Co. and Jin Air Co., in the first quarter. Korean Air and Asiana, on the other hand, are expected to post weaker profits in the first quarter, as cargo demand has been sharply shrinking amid the recovery in demand for passenger flights, according to analysts.

US MILITARY EVACUATES DIPLOMATS FROM SUDAN: BIDEN

Washington | Agencies

US President Joe Biden announced that the American military conducted an operation to extract the country's government personnel from Khartoum as the violence in Sudan continues to rage. In his announcement on Saturday, the President said the operation was conducted on his orders and said that "I am proud of the extraordinary commitment of our Embassy staff, who performed their duties with courage and professionalism and embodied America's friendship and connection with the people of Sudan."

"I am grateful for the unmatched skill of our service members who successfully brought them to safety. And I thank Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Saudi Arabia, which were critical to the success of our operation," Biden said in a statement released by the White House.

The President also announced that Washington is temporarily suspend-



ing operations at the US Embassy in Sudan, adding that he "continues to monitor receiving regular reports from my team on their ongoing work to assist Americans in Sudan, to the extent possible".

"This tragic violence in Sudan has

already cost the lives of hundreds of innocent civilians. It's unconscionable and it must stop. The belligerent parties must implement an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, allow unhindered humanitarian access, and respect the will of the

people of Sudan," Biden added.

Also on Saturday, more than 150 citizens, diplomats and international officials were evacuated by sea to the Saudi Arabian port of Jeddah.

They were mostly citizens of Gulf countries, as well as Egypt, Pakistan and Canada, reports the BBC. While the UK has said that it is considering ways to evacuate its staff, the Canadian government has told its citizens in Sudan to "shelter in a safe place". The developments come as the violent clashes between Sudan's Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Action Forces (RAF), which first erupted on April 15, still continue as of Sunday.

Several ceasefires that had seemingly been agreed by both sides were ignored, including a three-day pause to mark the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr, which started on Friday.

The World Health Organization says more than 400 people have been killed. But the death toll is believed to be much higher as people struggle to reach hospitals.



"SHINDE GOVERNMENT WILL COLLAPSE IN 15-20 DAYS": SANJAY RAUT

Team Absolute | Jalgaon

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday claimed the "death warrant" of the Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government has been issued and it will collapse in the next 15-20 days.

Talking to reporters, Raut, a key leader of former CM Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT), said his party was waiting for court's order and expecting that justice will be done.

The Rajya Sabha member was referring to the Supreme Court's judgement pending on a batch of pleas including one seeking disqualification of 16 Shiv Sena MLAs (of Shinde's party) who revolted against the Thackeray leadership. "The government of the existing chief minister and his 40 MLAs will collapse in 15-20 days. The death warrant of this government has been issued. It is now to be decided who will sign it," Raut claimed.



The Shiv Sena (UBT) leader had earlier claimed the E Shinde government will collapse in February.

In June last year, Shinde and 39 MLAs rebelled against the Sena leadership resulting in the party's split and collapse of the Maha Vikas Aghadi government (which also comprises the NCP and Congress) led by Thackeray. E Shinde later tied-up with

the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to form government in Maharashtra. On June 30, 2022, Shinde was sworn in as the CM along with BJP's Devendra Fadnis as his deputy. The top court last month reserved its verdict on a batch of cross-petitions of Uddhav Thackeray and CM Eknath Shinde factions pertaining to last year's political crisis in the state.

CM SHINDE ORDERS TO COMPLETE ALL THE DEVELOPMENT WORK BEFORE JUNE 1

Team Absolute | Maharashtra

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde held an urgent meeting with the police, transport and public works department officials and instructed them to take measures in view of the increasing traffic congestion in Thane city. CM Shinde, while giving instructions to complete the ongoing development works in Thane city before June 1, also ordered to make roads free of potholes and traffic jams.

The meeting was held at Shinde's residence in Thane where collector Ashok Shingare, police commissioner Jai Jeet Singh, Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) commissioner Abhijit Bangar, Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) joint managing director Anil Kumar Gaikwad, additional police commissioner Dattatray Karale, Dr. Punjabrao Ugle, deputy commissioner of traffic department Vinay Rathore and other senior officials were present. 'Fill all potholes immediately'

Before the onset of monsoon, the CM gave instructions to the concerned agencies to fill the potholes on all the roads in the city. Shinde told officials "Fill the potholes on the road immediately without considering who owns it. Development works are currently going on in many places in the MMR area and it has put a lot of pressure on the city of Thane, as a result of which there is a traffic jam in



places. Also measures should be taken to avoid any trouble to the citizens during the rainy season. Shinde said, "60 percent of the ongoing work on Bhiwandi-Kasheli road through MMRDA has been completed and this work should be completed before monsoon. The roads in Bhiwandi city which are bad should be repaired immediately through MMRDA. Also the ongoing road work on the Mumbai-Nashik highway through MSRDC should be completed before the monsoon to break the deadlock on the Saket-Kharegaon bridge.

Other instructions given by Shinde The public works department has taken up the work of side strips on Gaimukh-Waghbeel road on Ghodbunder road under the jurisdiction of TMC and he instructed that it should be completed in time and both service roads and highways on Ghodbunder road and East Expressway should be put into use. The CM also directed to stop the use of service road for parking and take action against the vehicles and also to use the vacant spaces of Kharegaon toll plaza and zakat nakas along East

Expressway for parking of buses, trucks and school buses. Eknath Shinde while warning the officials said, "The poor quality work will not be tolerated under any circumstances while completing the works, even a small pothole falling on the road during the rainy season is fatal, so it will be the responsibility of the officials of that department to ensure that there are no potholes on the roads under their jurisdiction. Strict action will be taken against the concerned officials and contractors if laxity or neglect is found."

Maharashtra reports two deaths, 545 new Covid-19 cases

Team Absolute | Maharashtra

On Sunday reported 545 new Covid-19 cases and two deaths related to the virus, the state health department bulletin said. The fresh cases took the overall infection tally to 81,61,894, as per the bulletin.

Maharashtra now has a case fatality rate in the state at 1.81 per cent, the bulletin said.

The state currently has 6,055 active cases, the state health department said in the bulletin.

655 patients discharged today 80,07,335 Covid-19 patients discharged after full recovery until April 23.

Recovery rate in the state is 98.11 per cent, the bulletin said. Maharashtra had on Saturday recorded 850 fresh coronavirus cases and four fatalities, the health department said.

With new additions, the state's COVID-19 tally



rose to 81,61,349 and the death toll to 1,48,502, as per a health department bulletin. The state had recorded 993 cases and five fatalities on Friday.

At present, the dominant variant of COVID is Omicron XBB.1.16. A total of 681 cases were found to be infected with this variant in the state so far. There were five deaths reported among the cases of this variant, the bulletin said.

Since January 1, a total of 84 COVID-19 deaths have been recorded in Maharashtra. While 72.62 per cent of these deaths have occurred in individuals above 60 years of age, 81 per cent of the deceased had comorbidities and 12 per cent did not have any comorbidity, it said.

State Health Minister Tanaji Sawant has said the XBB.1.16 variant is prevalent but there is no cause for concern and people should not panic due to the rise in cases.

He said the present wave will come down to the endemic stage by May 15 and a downward trend will be seen next month.

4 Dead, 22 Injured In Truck-Bus Collision In Maharashtra's Pune

Team Absolute | Pune

Four people died while 22 others sustained injuries in a road accident on the Pune-Bengaluru Highway near the Narhe area of Pune city on Sunday, police said. The collision took place between a truck and a private bus on the Highway early Sunday morning.

"Four dead, 22 others injured in a collision between a truck and a private bus on Pune-Bengaluru Highway near Narhe area of Pune city around 3 am today," a police official informed.

Meanwhile, the injured



people have been shifted to a hospital where they are undergoing treatment, the police added. Earlier on April 15, 12 people were killed and over 25 persons were injured after a bus fell into a ditch in the Khopoli area of Maharashtra's Raigad. According to Raigad Superintendent of Police (SP) "There were 40 to 45 people

in the bus, out of which, seven people have died while more than 25 people are injured, the rescue is still underway, a crane has been called to pull out the bus." Passengers of the bus belonged to an organization from the Goregaon area that had gone to Pune for an event and was on a return trip.

Five arrested for extorting Rs 30 lakh from doctor after kidnapping him

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Police have arrested five persons for allegedly kidnapping a 38-year-old doctor and extorting Rs 30 lakh from him last year in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official said.

The doctor was on his scooter on October 22, 2022 when a man took lift from him. After they travelled some distance, the man and his associates, who also arrived there, allegedly took the doctor forcibly in a car to a forest at Saralgaon in Murbad area, covered his eyes and beat him up.

The accused also called up the doctor's wife and allegedly extorted Rs 30 lakh before releasing him, Murbad police station's senior inspector Prasad Pandhare said.

The doctor lodged a police complaint 25 days after the incident, he said.

A police probe team worked on various angles of the crime as they did not have any



clue about the culprits.

The police analysed 2.50 lakh data dumps of various mobile phones and managed to get the tower locations of the accused, the official said.

The probe team zeroed-in on the accused a couple of days back and arrested them on Saturday, he said. The motive behind the crime was yet to be ascertained, the official said. A local court has remanded the accused to police custody till April 26, he added.

THREE HELD FOR BRUTALLY KILLING 69-YEAR-OLD WOMAN IN MALAD

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Malad police arrested a 42-year-old housemaid, her lover and his son for allegedly murdering the maid's employer - a 69-year-old woman - in her Malad residence earlier this week. The trio brutally killed the elderly woman by forcing her head inside a bucket full of water, and fled after stealing valuables from the house. According to the Malad police, the accused have been identified as Shabnam Shaikh, Umar Shaikh, and Shehzad Shaikh. Shabnam used to work as domestic help for Marie D'Costa, 69, who stayed with her grandson Neel Raybole, 26, in the New Life Cooperative Housing Society in Malad. The police said that D'Costa had taken Shabnam in 15 years ago after finding her on the streets. She



was a trusted servant, to the extent that Raybole would pick her up and drop her every day, as she had a deformity in one leg. "Raybole works with a private firm in the Bandra Kurla Complex and was at work when the murder was committed on Thursday evening. He had applied for a driver's learning license and the agent he had hired called him to ask for a One Time Password, which was

part of the process. However, Raybole's Aadhar card is linked to D'Costa's mobile number and Raybole called her to ask her the OTP. When several calls went unanswered, he called his neighbour and asked her to check on D'Costa," said an officer with the Malad police station.

The neighbour, who was the only one to have a key apart from D'Costa and Raybole, entered the house and

was shocked to find D'Costa lifeless in the bathroom, beside a bucket of water. She called Raybole who rushed home and took D'Costa to the Shatabdi Hospital in Kandivali, where she was declared dead before admission.

The police were subsequently informed and during an inventory of the house, they found that a gold chain, a mobile phone and two smart watches, collectively worth Rs 50,000, were missing from the house. "CCTV footage showed Shabnam and two men entering and leaving the building, and one of them was wearing a mask. We worked further on this lead and identified the two men as Umar and Shehzad. We found that Umar, who has three wives, was currently living with Shabnam in her Malwani residence, and that Shehzad is his son from his third wife," said the officer.

Caste Census demon haunts Maha BJP ahead of 2024 Lok Sabha polls

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The clamour for a caste-based Census has once again come to haunt the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government at the Centre, which is treating the sensitive issue with kid-gloves, with the general elections barely a year away. The Imperial Census, first conducted by the British Government in 1871-72 for the entire population, and later periodically undertaken, has always included general questions based on caste-religions.

However, the first loose Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) was taken up by the British in 1881 -- over 140 years ago, followed by a similar one in 1931.

In 2011, India had conducted a SECC but mostly to ascertain the number of people living below poverty line (BPL) and design targeted welfare measures or schemes for that group.

Maharashtra Congress President Nana Patole raised the issue of a Caste-based Census in Dec. 2021, and soon the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Shiv Sena (UBT) also joined the chorus. "The decision for a Caste Census was taken unanimously (by Maha Vikas Aghadi), but after that the new government is reluctant to take it up," said Patole recently.

Congress Chief Spokesperson Atul Londhe said that the state government has brought the proposal to a standstill "with nothing moving ahead now", and demanded that it should be immediately revived. NCP President Sharad Pawar has made a strong plea for Caste Census owing to "strong sentiments linking it with social justice", to create targeted development plans for various caste groups and help achieve an all-inclusive overall national growth.

Party's Chief Spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said that the government's reluctance is confusing as with passing time,



increasing population and aspirations, even welfare measures and policies need to be modified to suit the current situation.

According to Shiv Sena (UBT) National Spokesperson Kishore Tiwari, the BJP government is worried about a Caste Census ahead of the 2024 elections as it would "reveal a lot and expose them".

"There are a lot of caste imbalances, those who are less in number are enjoying the maximum fruits of developments, while the huge majority of the deprived at the lower levels of society in all castes-communities, continue to be ignored and

their economic status keeps degrading," said Tiwari.

Tapase feels that a Caste Census will throw up exhaustive, scientific data that can enable policy-makers to formulate special policies, reservations and implementation for each equitable representation to each caste or community, depending on their actual needs.

Presently India is largely relying on the data thrown up in the 1931 Caste Census, but the socio-economic situation has undergone a sea-change in the past 90 years compelling the need to 'refresh' the figures and caste components in the 21st

century. Replying to the demands, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis last month stated that the government will send a team to study the Bihar pattern where a caste-census is being carried out.

Admitting that there is a near-consensus on a Caste-based Census in the state, Fadnis also cautioned for care as such an exercise could potentially create caste conflicts, and hence the need to analyse the Bihar experience on this count before taking a final decision here.

Urging for a well-researched scientific approach, Fadnis referred to the 2011 SECC and claimed that the data was not made public owing to several issues, errors and discrepancies, and adopting such wrong statistics could lead to a fresh social crisis as all communities would object.

Stressing the need for a proper Caste Census, Janata Dal (U) MLC Kapil Patil said it would help determine not only the OBC population in the state but also provide data of all communities in Maharashtra.

Tapase said that when the latest authentic data is available, the government can ensure that welfare schemes reach the intended sections and remove the existing glaring socio-economic disparities.

Incidentally, Maharashtra announced in the Budget 2023-2024 that it will set up caste-wise development corporations for Lingayat, Gurav, Vadar and Ramoshi communities in the state, further spurring the demand for a Caste Census.

A couple of years ago the Maharashtra State Commission for Backward Classes (MSCBC) had given the finishing touches to the empirical data collection format and norms for a proposed SECC, estimated to cost around Rs 435-crore, but as state Opposition leaders rue, nothing has moved ahead.



'Chapter is over'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Scarlett Johansson, who was introduced as Black Widow in 'Iron Man 2' before going on to star in 'The Avengers' movies along with 2021's 'Black Widow', said that she has no plans to return to the Marvel Cinematic Universe in the future.

"Yeah, it was awesome. It was like the best time ever. I mean, doing 'Avengers' was so much fun. I was 26 years old, I was single, and it was fun! You know, I didn't have any responsibility to anybody but to just enjoy yourself," Scarlett said to Gwyneth Paltrow - who starred as Pepper Potts in the 'Iron Man' movies - on 'The Goop Podcast', reports aceshowbiz.com.

"And then every couple of years, we would go back, and do it again, and all is in different places in our lives. Like, somebody would have a kid, or was getting married, or divorced, or remarried, or whatever. And it was like, I don't know, an adult summer camp thing. And it was cool. It was really, really some of the best experiences."

"I'm done. Yes, I'm done. Chapter is over. I did all that I had to do. Also, coming back and playing a character again and again like that, over a decade of time, is such a unique experience."

Scarlett also had kind words for Marvel boss Kevin Feige: "He's such a lover of cinema, storytelling. He really is a fan."



SCARLETT JOHANSSON CONFIRMS SHE HAS NO PLAN TO RETURN TO MARVEL

'BREAST MILK IS THE BEST SKINCARE INGREDIENT', SAYS HALSEY

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Halsey is revealing her surprising must-have skincare item: her breast milk. The singer, who gave birth to son Ender in July 2021, revealed her skincare routine and her go-to makeup looks in a new interview with Nylon, reports people.com.

Since having her son, whom she shares with partner Alev Aydin, Halsey said that her skincare routine has changed.

"I've always been really conscious about what goes on my skin, but when your baby is kissing you or snuggled up against you, you become hyper-cognizant of what's on your face," they told Nylon.

"I love the Biologique Repechage's colostrum VG serum, which I got into when I first had my son."

The singer then revealed that she discovered the best skincare item ever after having a baby.

"I started breastfeeding, and I figured out that breast milk is the best skincare ingredient ever because it's so full of antioxidants and good fats and stuff that speed up the healing process," they said.



'I would love to make it three'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Jennifer Aniston would love to make a third 'Murder Mystery' film. The actress teamed up with close pal Adam Sandler in the mystery comedy Netflix movies, starting with the 2019 original and this year's sequel, and she hopes Nick and Audrey Spitz will be back for more antics, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I hope so. I would love to make it three and I know Adam would too. But it really all depends on if people love this one like they did the first, and of course, if Netflix want us," she said with regard to another installment when speaking to Best UK.

The former 'Friends' star, who, along with Adam, serves as a producer on the movie, was recently asked whether she and Adam stick to the script entirely or whether they ad-lib and admitted that it can be a mix of both depending on the take, as the pair both noted how much they make each other laugh on set.

She told Collider: "We do a little bit of everything. Yeah. Usually, there's always something a little different from take to take, wouldn't you say?" Adam replied: "Yeah, yeah, and yeah. We like to make each other laugh." Jennifer added: "Which is fun, and he does all the time. And it usually makes it in the movie, not the break, but the line."

'I didn't know how sex could be pleasurable'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Emily Ratajkowski needed time to realise that sex was "pleasurable." The 'Gone Girl' actress and super-model has been rumoured to date a string of men including former One Direction singer Harry Styles since she split from her estranged ex-husband Sebastian Bear-McClard and said that she only started to enjoy herself when she was getting intimate with partners when she realised she wasn't doing it for them, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I think knowing that you don't owe anyone anything is very important. In my case, I didn't know how sex could be pleasurable... I didn't understand my own body, my own anatomy," she told Spanish Vogue in a cover interview to mark 35 years of the magazine.

The mum-of-one, who had son Sylvester, two, with Sebastian, also advised children starting to have sex: "The truth is that, whoever opposes, kids are going to have sex, so the best we can do is give them the protection for it and teach them the tools of active consent. If there's something you don't feel right about, it's not right."

Emily Ratajkowski didn't enjoy sex until she realised she's doing it for herself



Zendaya, Sia, Maddie Ziegler surprise Coachella crowd as they join Labrinth

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Zendaya joined Labrinth tonight at Coachella for the second weekend of the arts and music festival to perform their Emmy-nominated hit 'I'm Tired' as well as the song 'All of Us'. The 'Euphoria' star, wearing a pink corset top and frilly skirt, emerged shortly after the start of 'I'm Tired' and delivered her vocals softly before cranking up the energy for 'All of Us', where she proceeded to dance enthusiastically around the stage, reports Variety. 'I'm Tired' is featured in a 'Euphoria' episode titled 'You Who Cannot See, Think Of Those Who Can', from the second season of the mega-popular HBO teen drama series. Last year, the track received an Emmy nomination in the outstanding original music and lyrics category, along with Zendaya and Dominic Fike's 'Elliot's Song', also from 'Euphoria'. She co-wrote both of the nominated songs. Variety further states that 'All of Us' closed out season one of the HBO series. Also surprising the crowd was Sia for the LSD song 'Thunderclouds' from her collaboration with Labrinth and Diplo. Wearing her signature wig and featuring dancer Maddie Ziegler in a similar costume, the two added infectious groove to a set which proved to be a crowd favourite on both weekends. Labrinth heaped praise on Sia, telling the crowd: "I wanna say I fuckin love this girl. When I first came to L.A., I was depressed and fucked up. When someone picks you up and supports you as a friend, you gotta hold them close."

NICOLAS CAGE CAN BE 'SO INTIMIDATING' ON SET OF 'RENFIELD', SAYS BEN SCHWARTZ

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Ben Schwartz found it "awesome" working with Nicolas Cage on 'Renfield'. The ex 'Parks and Recreation' star enjoyed working with the "incredible" star, who plays Count Dracula in the Chris McKay-helmed movie, alongside Awkwafina and Nicholas Hoult who plays the titular character, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"He's so into it. Before the scene, he would go up to the side and get he real pumped up, and then he'd walk on and it'd be so intimidating. He was amazing," the actor told HeyUGuys.com.

"So, he's crazy that guy that I saw, you know, do 'Raising Arizona' when I was a kid is still so committed to doing these movies. He's incredible. He gives it everything he has. It's awesome."

Ben Schwartz, who plays mobster Teddy Lobo, said that his role was tough as he needed to be both the villain and funny.

He said: "It was so fun. I think it was all on the page and all what I had to do like, they had the drum part there and all I had to do is kind of push into the comedy a little bit more." "It's a fine thread to needle where it's like, let's not get too waka waka and let's not get too serious. When you have those moments of pathos and you had those moments of this is a really bad dude, you feel it. And then on the inverse, when you have the moments of comedy, it's just you know, it breaks. It gives you some levity in terms of what's going on in the movie."



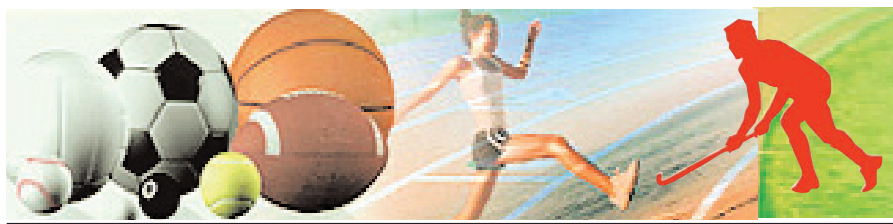
ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Becky G

JENNIFER ANISTON IS OPEN FOR MORE 'MURDER MYSTERY' FILMS AFTER SEQUEL





IPL 2023: Chennai go atop points table with emphatic 49-run win over Kolkata

Kolkata | Agencies

Maheesh Theekshana and Tushar Deshpande took two wickets each Chennai Super Kings restricted Kolkata Knight Riders to 186/8 in defence of a mammoth 235 and win by 49 runs at Eden Gardens to move to the top of the points table.

After Devon Conway, Ajinkya Rahane and Shivam Dube struck half-centuries and carted Kolkata's bowlers all over the park in posting the highest IPL total at this venue, where they were greeted by a sea of yellow in the stands, Jason Roy and Rinku Singh struck valiant half-centuries for KKR.

But they were not enough to chase down a massive total



as Kolkata slumped to their fourth straight defeat in the competition. With Roy not coming out to bat after seemingly injuring his ankle while trying to save a boundary, Sunil Narine was sent to open. But Akash Singh took him out on the fourth ball by uprooting his off-stump. In

the next over, N. Jagadeesan sliced off Deshpande and Ravindra Jadeja dived low to take a stunning catch at third man. Nitish Rana and Venkatesh Iyer hit two sixes and five fours in their 45-run stand-off 35 balls before Moeen Ali struck on his first ball by trapping the latter

plumb lbw. Roy came out to bat at five and began with a bang with a hat-trick of sixes through sweeping twice and reverse-sweeping once. Rana went for a slog-sweep off Ravindra Jadeja but was caught at deep mid-wicket. Chennai attempted to run out Roy and Rinku from both ends, but the batters reached in time. Roy powerfully swept and sliced Jadeja for six and four respectively, while Rinku slammed another six as 19 runs came off the 11th over.

Roy then pulled and swung Maheesh Theekshana for four and six respectively, before Rinku heaved Jadeja over deep mid-wicket for six. Roy reached his fifty in 19 balls with a slice past third man for four. But after hitting Theekshana for back-to-back fours in the 15th over, he was

castled by a beautiful carrom ball which had some dip from the off-spinner.

Despite Andre Russell and Umesh Yadav being caught in the deep while David Wiese was trapped lbw, Rinku continued to smash boundaries and get his fifty in 30 balls while managing to keep the losing margin for Kolkata below 50 runs.

Brief scores

Chennai Super Kings 235/4 in 20 overs (Ajinkya Rahane 71 not out, Devon Conway 56, Shivam Dube 50; Kulwant Khejroliya 2-44, Suyash Sharma 1-29) beat Kolkata Knight Riders 186/8 in 20 overs (Jason Roy 61, Rinku Singh 53 not out; Maheesh Theekshana 2-32, Tushar Deshpande 2-43) by 49 runs

CSK VS KKR

Faf, Maxwell, and Harshal star in RCB's 7-run win over RR

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

Faf du Plessis and Glenn Maxwell excelled with half-centuries while Harshal Patel starred with the ball as Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) beat table-toppers Rajasthan Royals (RR) by seven runs in an IPL 2023 match here at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on Sunday.

This was RCB's fourth win of the season and they are placed fifth in the table with eight points in seven games. On the other hand, it was RR's third loss in seven games and they continued to be on top with eight points and with a healthy run rate.

Faf du Plessis' authoritative 62 off 39 and Glenn Maxwell's blockbuster 77 off 44 helped RCB post 189/9 in 20 overs. Harshal Patel then roared back into form with a crucial spell of 3-32 as he held his nerve in the last over and defended 20 to win the match.

Chasing 190, Rajasthan Royals didn't get off to the best of starts as Mohammed Siraj cleaned up Jos Buttler for a duck. Then, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Devdutt Padikkal together collected eight boundaries in three overs. The duo kept the runs flowing and accumulated 51 runs off the next four overs to take the Royals to 92/1 after 10 overs.

Padikkal completed his fifty in 31 deliveries but he departed soon. RCB managed to put pressure on the Royals with their tight bowling as the visitors didn't get a single boundary between 11-15 overs.

With 20 needed off the final over, Ashwin played a bizarre shot and got boundary, and went for a double on the next ball. He followed that up with another four and tried to go big on the next delivery but didn't get much elevation and handed a simple catch to the fielder sta-



Brief scores

Royal Challengers Bangalore 189/9 in 20 overs (Faf du Plessis 62, Glenn Maxwell 77; Trent Boult 2-41, Sandeep Sharma 2-49) beat Rajasthan Royals 182/6 in 20 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 47, Devdutt Padikkal 52; Harshal Patel 3-32) by 7 runs.

tioned in the deep mid-wicket. With 10 needed off 2, two singles came off the last two balls and RCB sealed the win by 7 runs.

We'll definitely try to play a near-perfect game: Axar Patel

Hyderabad: Axar stated that Delhi would try to play near-perfect matches in the coming time, starting from Monday's clash against IPL 2016 winners Sunrisers Hyderabad at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium.

"The wicket was a bit tricky and they bowled quite well. Therefore, I wanted to take the game as deep as possible. There's always room for improvement and we'll definitely try to play a near-perfect game in our upcoming matches. If we can do that then that'll be a big confidence booster as well," he was quoted as saying by a release from the franchise.



Good week for Man City with Cup FA Cup final spot, Arsenal slip in Premier League

London | Agencies

Riyad Mahrez scored a hat-trick as Manchester City sailed past Sheffield United 3-0 in the FA Cup semi-finals, making their quality count to end a good week where they also booked their place in the semi-finals of the UEFA Champions League. Manchester City had 79 percent of the ball against the Championship promotion hopefuls, but Sheffield dug in and defended bravely until Mahrez's 43rd-minute penalty.

The Algerian doubled City's lead 16 minutes into the second half after running clean through unchallenged, and completed his hat-trick five minutes later to assure the win, a Xinhua report said. City will play the winner of Sunday's semifinal between Brighton and Manchester United. Pep Guardiola's side went into their Cup game after good news in the Premier League, as league leaders Arsenal drew 3-3 at home to bottom side Southampton on Friday night. Arsenal fought back from 3-1 down to snatch a point with two goals in the last three minutes on Friday, but despite the drama, the result is still two mote points



dropped by Mikel Arteta's side. The result leaves Arsenal five points ahead of Manchester City, but they have played two more matches and now need to win in their vital visit to City's Etihad Stadium in the middle of next week. Rapid goals from Carlos Alcaraz and Theo Walcott put Southampton 2-0 up. Gabriel Martinelli pulled a goal back before halftime, but Duje Caleta-Car made it 3-1 in the 66th minute. Martin Odegaard provided drama in the 88th minute and Bukayo Saka saved a point in the last minute of normal time, but Arsenal will see it as two more points dropped after draws against Liverpool and West Ham.

SAM CURRAN IS SHOWING SOME REALLY GOOD LEADERSHIP SKILLS, SAYS TOM MOODY

New Delhi |

Former Australian cricketer Tom Moody has lauded Sam Curran for his outstanding captaincy skills as Punjab Kings' (PBKS) skipper, saying that the English all-rounder has exhibited excellent leadership skills despite being new to the captaincy role.

"Sam Curran is showing some really good leadership skills, particularly for someone who has not experienced leadership before. He's captaining a team in the IPL - the biggest T20 tournament on the planet - and is doing it very very well," Moody told ESPNcricinfo.

"Sam Curran felt that he was not quite on song tonight. That shows good leadership to look at the broader picture of what's available. Sam was going nearly 14 an over, so he had an expensive night with the ball, which is unusual for him, and recognised that maybe that was not his night, so he shared that responsibility, and he had the resources to do it," the former Australian all-rounder said.



La Liga



REAL MADRID PUT PRESSURE ON BARCELONA, REAL SOCIEDAD & ATHLETIC CLUB BOTH WIN

Madrid | Agencies

Real Madrid beat Celta Vigo 2-0 in the Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday night to put some pressure on FC Barcelona at the top of La Liga. Marco Asensio swept home a cross from Vinicius Jr after 42 minutes to put Madrid ahead, and Eder Militao powered home a header two minutes after the break to secure the points for a Madrid side in which coach Carlo Ancelotti again made changes to his starting 11. Real Madrid is now eight

points behind FC Barcelona who have a tough home game against Atletico Madrid on Sunday afternoon, a Xinhua report said.

Real Sociedad came back from a goal down to win 2-1 at home to Rayo Vallecano.

Although Isi Palazon put Rayo in front in the 57th minute, Alexander Sorloth leveled with a powerful header and Carlos Fernandez scored the winner, with the help of a deflection from visiting defender Florian Lejeune nine minutes from time.

Betis' hopes of a top-four finish suffered a setback when

they lost 3-2 away to Osasuna. Ante Budimir scored twice for the home side after six and 11 minutes, and although Juan Miranda made it 2-1 with just 16 minutes on the clock, Jon Moncayola added a third for Osasuna before the break. Guido Rodriguez pulled a goal back for Betis with 20 minutes left, but Osasuna hung on for a hard-fought win.

Athletic Club Bilbao made it three wins and a draw from their last four games to close in on a place in Europe after a comfortable 2-1 win away to struggling Almeria.

Lens beat Monaco to boost Champions League hope



Champions League, as the top two finishers of Ligue 1 will secure berths in the group stage and the third-placed team will play the qualifiers, a Xinhua report said.

The pressure has fallen on nine-time French champion Marseille as Igor Tudor's side will try to reclaim the second place against Lyon on Sunday.

Earlier on Saturday, Jonathan David scored his 21st goal of the season, but Lille was held to a 1-1 draw with Auxerre. M'Baye Niang converted a penalty in the 62nd minute to clinch one point for the hosts.

Lille remains in fifth place with five points off Monaco.

Paris | Agencies

Lens took a big step towards next season's UEFA Champions League after a convincing 3-0 home victory over Monaco, moving to second place, two points ahead of Marseille.

Belgian international striker Lois Openda, 23, scored a brace in the first half, before turning to be the provider after the break to set up Adrien Thomasson's goal.

The win lifted the northern team to a favourable place in the race for a spot in the

Mainz shock Bayern, Dortmund go top in Bundesliga

Berlin | Agencies

Mainz came from behind through second-half goals from Ludovic Ajorque, Leandro Barreiro and Aaron Martin within 14 minutes to upset leaders Bayern Munich 3-1, while Borussia Dortmund took the lead in the Bundesliga table following a 4-0 win over Eintracht Frankfurt.

The Bavarians took the reins from the get-go and thought they had broken the deadlock, but Sadio Mane's goal was ruled offside with 15 minutes gone.

Bayern dominated possession and eventually opened the scoring at the half-hour mark when Joao Cancelo's whipped cross into the box allowed Mane to head home from close range.

The German giants should have extended their lead, but



neither Jamal Musiala nor Cancelo was able to finish off presentable opportunities.

Mainz turned up after the restart and pressed Bayern onto the back foot. Bayern ceased its offensive actions whereas Mainz took over and restored parity in the 65th minute when Bayern goalkeeper Yann Sommer blocked Lee Jae-sung's shot into the path of Ajorque, who nodded home from close

range. Mainz gained momentum and turned the tides after Barreiro tapped home Karim Onisw'o's cutback pass in the 73rd minute, a Xinhua report said.

Things went from bad to worse for the German record champions as Mainz weren't done with the scoring and made it three through Martin, who latched onto Andreas Hanche-Olsen's assist.

ALCARAZ OVERCOMES EVANS, SETS UP FINAL WITH TSITSIPAS

Barcelona | Agencies

The top-seeded Spain's Carlos Alcaraz eased past Daniel Evans 6-2, 6-2 to reach the final of Barcelona Open, where he is bidding to become the first repeat champion since Rafael Nadal lifted the trophy three years in a row from 2016-18.

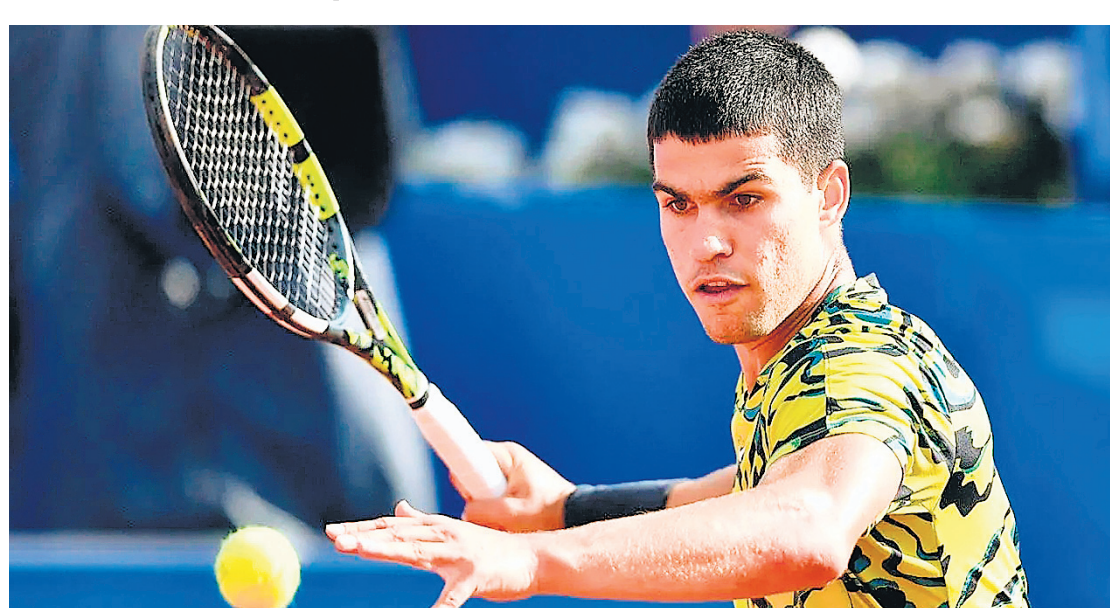
Now 22-2 for the year, Alcaraz will take on Stefanos Tsitsipas as he chases his third tour-level title of 2023.

The Buenos Aires and Indian Wells champion enters that clash holding a 3-0 ATP Head to Head series lead against Tsitsipas, a tally that includes a three-set quarter-final win in Barcelona last year.

Alcaraz was clinical with his chances to down Evans in 81 minutes on Pista Rafa Nadal, where he converted five of his seven break points.

Evans deployed typical variety in his shots, but his tactics were expertly countered by Alcaraz, who has now won all eight sets he has played this week at the Real Club de Tennis Barcelona-1899.

Alcaraz broke twice in the opening



set to take command of his second tour-level meeting with Evans before opening a 4-0 lead in the second. Although the World No. 26 Evans battled valiantly to the end and was

rewarded for persistently moving to the net with his only break of the match in the fifth game, Alcaraz's all-court game repeatedly proved too good. The Spaniard's ability to attack

Evans' serve was the defining feature of the match. Alcaraz won 57 per cent (28/49) of points on return to back up his win against the Briton in Vienna in 2021.



SAMANTHA CRYPTICALLY TAKES A DIG AT TELUGU PRODUCER WHO SAID HER CAREER IS 'OVER'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu has cryptically clapped back at Telugu producer Chitti Babu who claimed that her career "as the heroine is finished and she cannot get back to stardom" and should accept whatever roles are to her and not be "selective." The actress had shared a post on her Instagram Stories, which got her fans scratch-

ing their heads believing that it was a jibe at Chitti Babu.

In a now-deleted Instagram Story, Samantha shared a post revealing that she was searching "How do people have hair growing from ears" on Google.

The answer was because of "increased testosterone."

She shared the screenshot of her search along with the hashtag, "IYKYK (If you know, you know)".

Social media users believe that it was a jibe at Chitti Babu.

Chitti Babu had claimed that her career as a "heroine is finished and she cannot get back to stardom. She should continue her journey doing the offers she gets."

The producer also accused Samantha of trying to "gain sympathy."

He said: "Every time sentiment will not work. If the role and film are good, people will watch."

All these are cheap and insane acts. I wonder how Samantha who lost her heroine status suited for the role of Shakuntala.

I do not have any interest in Shaakuntalam."

Long format content is a blessing for the actors: Priyanka Chopra

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress-producer Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who recently flew down to India for professional commitments, is all set to be seen in the upcoming streaming series 'Citadel', in which she plays an elite spy along with Richard Madden.

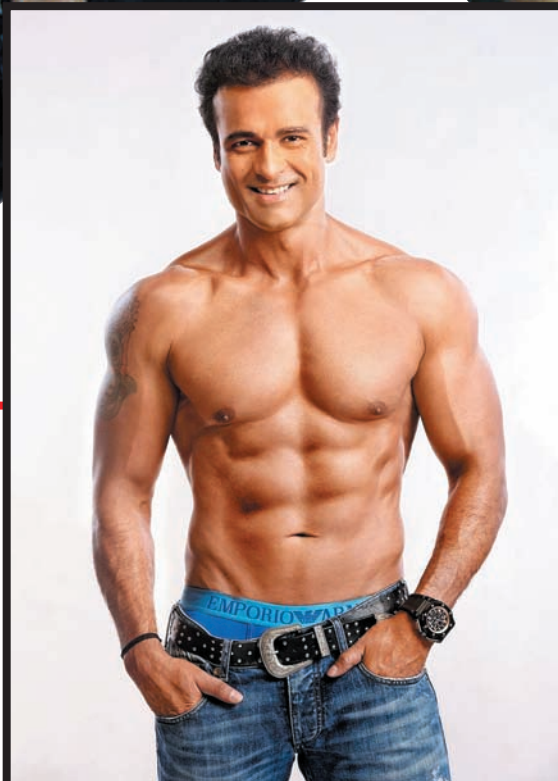
Priyanka transitioned to the west almost a decade ago as she explored opportunities in music and worked with the likes of Pitbull and will.i.am, and eventually starred in projects like 'Quantico' and 'Baywatch', with 'Citadel' on the horizon.

The first episode of 'Citadel' perfectly sets the tone for the series with its pitch-perfect mounting of action and establishment of characters as a lot of drama unfolds between the heavy action sequences. When asked if she did any improvisation or if she went completely by the book, The actress said: "The most interesting part about the opening sequence was that there was a lot of action happening inside the train - People were dying, an explosion was happening and I and Richard were still having a dialogue, screaming at each other across the two ends of the coach because that's how the relationship between these two agents is."

"So, there were a lot of improvisations even before the camera started rolling, while preparing the scenes we used to exchange a lot of information about the scene," she added. As a closure to the conversation with media, PC spoke about the merits of long-format content: "Long format content is a blessing for the actors because they get to explore the character more and the back stories."

"As for the viewers, they also find it more engaging and invest more of their time trying to understand the world of the series or the film, the characters and where they come from," she concluded. 'Citadel' premieres on Prime Video on

April 28.



THERE IS NO PRIVACY LEFT ANY MORE: ROHIT ROY

Shachi Chaturvedi | Mumbai

It's understandable that celebrities are frequently the subject of scrutiny in a sector of the industry that lives on rumours and scandal. As photographers go to great efforts to record their clients' most private moments, this has made paparazzi culture more toxic than ever. In an exclusive interview with Absolute India News, Rohit Roy discussed this mentality and expressed his belief that the younger generation does not truly value privacy protection and said, "There is no privacy left any more. It is not like the younger generation wants to protect their privacy, they only want to protect who they are having affairs with. Other than that people know everything from what toothbrush I use to what underwear I wear." Later, the Chengiz actor revealed that, in his opinion, there won't be any mega-star after this generation. "I think the days of privacy have gone and so are the days of stardom. This is the last of the Mohicans. I don't think after the last slot you will see the mega stars" he added. The actor is currently writing, directing, producing, and acting in a show that will begin production in August, the speaker revealed in the closing remarks. It should be noted that Rohit recently appeared in the bilingual movie Chengiz.

'FIRST EID FOR SWARA BHASKER WITH HUSBAND'; SHARES PICTURE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Swara Bhasker celebrated her first Eid with her husband Fahad Ahmed, who is the president of Samajwadi Party's youth wing in Maharashtra. She also shared happy pictures from the festivities. On Sunday, Swara took to Twitter to share her pictures with husband Fahad Ahmad. The couple twinned in pink outfits. The actress wore a light pink and powder blue sharara. Fahad chose a baby pink kurta with ivory pajamas. She also had pictures with Fahad's family members. Swara captioned it: "Pehli Eid (First Eid), New Beginnings, Eid Mubarak 2023, Fahad Zair Ahmad." Swara and Fahad got married in February. She shared the news on her social media accounts.



Sakshi Malik

'Incredible Adventure'

Manoj Bajpayee announces direct-to-digital premiere of his upcoming on his b'day

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bajpayee and a solid supporting cast."

National Award winning actor Manoj Bajpayee, who is celebrating his birthday on Sunday, has announced that he will next be seen in the film 'Bandaa' which is said to be inspired by true events.

The film is a courtroom drama which will take the direct-to-digital route, and will see Manoj essaying the role of an eminent lawyer who single-handedly fought against all odds for the truth and justice.

Talking about the film, director Apoorv Singh Karki said: "Bandaa' has everything in it - a hard-hitting story, calm and assertive actor like Manoj



The film will soon be available to stream on OTT platform ZEE5. Talking about the same, Manoj Bajpayee said: "It gives me immense joy to announce my third collaboration with ZEE5 for Bandaa. After our successful partnership with Silence... Can you hear it? And Dial 100, we are now bringing a captivating story to life that deserves all the attention, and I can't wait for you to join us on this incredible adventure."

A Zee Studios and Bhanushali Studios Limited presentation, Suparn S. Varma's courtroom drama directed by Apoorv Singh Karki, 'Bandaa' is produced by Vinod Bhanushali, Kamlesh Bhanushali, Asif Sheikh and Vishal Gurnani and co-produced by Juhi Parekh Mehta.

Kapil reveals once he video-called Kartik to fulfil his daughter's Demand

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Kartik Aaryan is the most talented celebrity of our generation, and there are no two opinions on that. The superstar has a tremendous fan base among all age groups and is especially popular with children since he has managed to make the entire country fall in love with his charisma. He never ceased a chance to interact with his fans, and we have time and again seen that in paparazzi videos.

An example of the same had recently been witnessed on 'The Kapil Sharma Show' when Kapil Sharma shared how his 3-year-old daughter Anayra is a big fan of Kartik and once she demanded to meet the superstar. In a recent episode of 'The

Kapil Sharma Show', the host Kapil Sharma was seen sharing an incident when his daughter was keen to meet Kartik and then Kartik fulfilled her wish by talking with her on a video call.

Kapil said, "One day, my daughter saw Kartik Aaryan's dance video and she asked me 'Papa Kartik is dancing, why he isn't coming to our place?'"

I told her he is busy. Then I texted Kartik to once make her talk to him as she kept demanding. I video-called Kartik and they spoke. Now, she has more demands like this."

On the work front, Kartik has interesting films in the pipeline like 'Satyaprem Ki Katha', 'Aashiqui 3', and Kabir Khan's Untitled Next among a few other unannounced ones.

