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'SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS'

SC ISSUES NOTICE ON WRESTLERS' PLEA FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT CASE AGAINST WFI CHIEF

Wrestler's Plea..

- The plea said women athletes who make the nation proud are facing sexual harassment, and instead of getting the support they deserve, they are being forced to run from pillar to post to get justice.
- It said the accused person in this case is an influential person and is misusing the process of law to evade justice and further manipulating the legal system and obstructing justice.
- The plea said that "it is crucial that the police take all complaints of sexual harassment seriously and register FIRs promptly and not create yet another obstacle by delaying the registration of FIR".
- The plea contended that despite filing complaints which ex-facie disclose the commission of a cognizable offence, the Delhi Police in complete disregard of the law laid down by the constitutional bench of the apex court has failed to register FIRs against the persons accused therein.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday called the sexual harassment allegations against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) President and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh "serious" and issued notice to the Delhi Police in the matter. The plea was mentioned before the bench by senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Narendra Hooda, representing the wrestlers. Sibal submitted that this is the wrestlers' matter and they are sitting in dharma, and seven women have complained and one is a minor. He said the wrestlers have been sitting on a protest, but "the police are not acting... look at the allegations. ...Even police personnel can be prosecuted for not registering an FIR". Citing that matter involved sex-

“There are serious allegations in plea on behalf of international wrestlers with regards to sexual harassment meted out to them. Issue notice returnable on Friday. Liberty to serve standing counsel NCT Delhi. The complaints which form an attachment in sealed cover and shall be again resealed.”

Supreme Court

ual harassment, Sibal stressed that police were bound to register a case. The top court directed redaction of the identities of the petitioners from their petition and said that the redacted copy of the plea should be made available in the public domain.

Grapplers and their families are getting threats: Vinesh Phogat

New Delhi: Olympian wrestler Vinesh Phogat on Tuesday alleged that some of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) officials are threatening female wrestlers and forcing them to withdraw their complaints of sexual harassment against WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. She said that attempts were being made to break the unity of the seven women wrestlers.

"Their (complainants') family members are getting threats now. Their lives are in danger. Police must register the FIR and help the innocent people," Vinesh told reporter. "If something happens to these complainants, Delhi Police and the government will be responsible for it." On Sunday, top wrestlers from the country, including Bajrang Punia, Vinesh, and Sakshi Malik, returned to the protest site at Jantar Mantar and demanded that an FIR be lodged against the WFI chief.

The plea -- filed by three women wrestlers, and four complainants supporting the petition -

How far can courts go when Parliament empowered to legislate on marriage, SC to same-sex marriage petitioners

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday queried the petitioners' counsel, seeking legal sanction for same-sex marriages, how far can the court go to allow recognition of same-sex marriages as only Parliament is empowered to legislate on the subject of marriage, divorce, inheritance etc and legalising these marriages without touching personal laws would not be an easy task. A five-judge bench, said the Parliament has legislative powers over the canvas which is covered by these petitions and the entry 5 of the Concurrent List, which specially covers marriage and divorce, but the question is, which are the interstices left in which this court can interfere.

The bench said even in the context of privacy in Puttaswamy or in the Vishaka case, the framework set out by the court has to be fleshed out by the legislature. The hearing in the matter will continue on Wednesday.

- said they attempted several times to convince Delhi Police to register an FIR, but they failed.

INS Teg reaches Sudan with relief material for stranded Indians



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Even as INS Sumedha evacuated the first batch of 278 Indian citizens from violence-hit Sudan on Tuesday, another Indian Navy warship INS Teg has also joined Operation 'Kaveri'. External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted that INS Teg has reached Port Sudan with relief material for Indians who are still stuck in Khartoum. "INS Teg joins #OperationKaveri. Arrives at Port Sudan with additional officials and essential relief supplies for stranded Indians. Will boost ongoing evacuation efforts by Embassy Camp Office at Port Sudan," he posted. Meanwhile, Minister of State for External Affairs, V. Muraleedharan also reached Saudi Arabia's Jeddah to oversee the preparations and receive the first batch of Indian citizens, who, earlier in the day, left Sudan on board INS Sumedha. "Upon arrival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to join Team #OperationKaveri, visited the control room set up to facilitate evacuation of Indians from Sudan. Necessary infrastructure is in place in both Port Sudan and Jeddah. Team is in full readiness on the ground," Muraleedharan tweeted. The first batch of 278 Indian citizens on Tuesday boarded INS Sumedha from Port Sudan and will be ferried to Jeddah.

'DON'T GIVE MORE THAN 40 SEATS TO BJP': RAHUL APPEALS TO K'TAKA VOTERS

Bengaluru: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday appealed to the voters of the poll-bound state of Karnataka to not give more than 40 seats to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the upcoming May 10 assembly elections. Addressing a public rally at Hangal town in Haveri district, the former Congress president requested the people to give at least 150 seats to Congress, "otherwise the BJP will again try to form a government". "Don't give more than 40 seats to them," he reiterated. Rahul Gandhi said even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi talks of corruption, "he shares the stage with corrupt leaders who take 40 per cent commission". "This shows that he doesn't fight against corruption," he said.

POLICE STATION SET ON FIRE IN BENGAL AMID PROTESTS AGAINST TEENAGER'S DEATH

Team Absolute | Kolkata Parts of Kaliyaganj in West Bengal's North Dinajpur district turned into a virtual battlefield on Tuesday following violent protests by the local people against the alleged rape and murder of teenage girl last week. Tension was brewing in the area for some time now, which exploded on Tuesday. A local police station was set on fire by the angry mob, while a couple of police vehicles were also torched as the protesters turned violent. Some policemen have suffered minor injuries, sources said. It is learnt that a local pressure group, reportedly backed by the BJP, started protesting in front of the Kaliyaganj police station on Tuesday. The protest



was announced in advance, and the cops had raised a three-tier barricade in front of the police station. The district police officers claimed that while the protest was peaceful initially, the situation turned violent after some of the agitators tried to break through the barriers. The police had to resort to lathi charge and firing of tear gas

shells in a bid to bring the situation under control. However, some of the protesters reportedly crossed the barricades, entered the police station and destroyed public property. They also set fire on the police station and torched a couple of police vehicles. Meanwhile, a political slugfest has erupted in the state over the violence.

Drone spotted over Delhi CM's residence, police probing



New Delhi: A drone was sighted hovering above the home of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday and a probe has been launched, a Delhi Police official said. According to police, information was received regarding a drone seen over Chief Minister's residence in the Civil Lines area. "Police teams have initiated investigation into the matter," a senior police official said. Further details are awaited.

Agniveer recruitments in NE witness large number of female candidates

Guwahati | Agencies

The newly-introduced system to recruit Agniveers in the Indian Army has witnessed a huge number of candidates in the northeastern region, including a sizable figure of female candidates this time, an official said on Tuesday. The Indian Army has changed the procedure for recruitment of Agniveers this time, with the introduction of a Computer Based Online Common Entrance Exam (CEE) as the first step. Army PRO in Guwahati, Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said: "The new recruitment procedure of online entrance examination as the first stage, has attracted youth from Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. A large number of youths including female candidates have appeared for the Agniveer examination for this year." The online CEE for eligible registered candidates commenced at 375 examination centres in 176 pan-Indian locations on April 17 and will continue till Wednesday. In the northeast, the exams



are being conducted at 26 centres across 14 cities -- Nahaarlagun in Arunachal Pradesh; Dibrugarh, Guwahati, Jorhat, Silchar and Tezpur in Assam; Imphal, Ukhrul and Churachandpur in Manipur; Shillong in Meghalaya; Aizawl in Mizoram; Dimapur and Kohima in Nagaland; and Agartala in Tripura.

IIT Guwahati develops liquid marbles for drug delivery, cascade chemical reactions

The IIT Guwahati claimed that liquid marbles can be rolled, squeezed, and even float without spilling when put in a water pool. In nature gall-forming aphids create liquid marbles by coating the honeydew they secrete in a powdery wax. Liquid marbles are soft spherical solids that can be used for multiple applications by replacing the liquid inside them. Some examples are in the field of sensor platforms, soft robotics, healing agents, bio-systems, among others.

- The nano clay marbles were made of a shell of nano clay that holds the liquid. To programme the marbles for timed release of the content, the researchers modified the nano clay with chemical groups that were either water-loving (hydrophilic) or water-hating (hydrophobic).
- A water droplet was laid on a powder bed consisting of hydrophilic and hydrophobic nano clay powders. The properties and stability of the liquid marbles changed according to the relative amounts of the water-hating and water-loving groups on the nano clay surface.

GUWAHATI | Agencies

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati have developed liquid marbles using nano clay that can be pre-programmed for drug delivery and cascade chemical reactions. Conventionally for treating any disease we take medicines in the form of tablets, capsules, syrups, ointments while a controlled drug delivery system is a more efficient technique to deliver the required dose at the specific site gradually over the desired period of time. Loading and release of drug in its soluble

form is another important aspect, which can be achieved with this liquid marble, an statement said. The team from IIT Guwahati led by Dr Uttam Manna, associate professor, Department of Chemistry and Centre for Nanotechnology, has used the liquid marbles approach for the controlled release of drugs and programmed chemical reactions. The statement said that the team has engineered liquid marbles to have a 'time bomb' type release effect and to carry out a spontaneous chemical reaction. Unlike normal droplets, a liquid marble is a non-sticking, non-



wetting droplet, it said, adding that it is created by wrapping a droplet with fine hydrophobic particles --

water-repelling particles. Explaining the research challenge, Manna said, "Release of drugs from a li-

quid marble in response to a stimulus for instance light, temperature, electricity has been reported earlier. But the time-programmed release was not yet achieved. We have chemically modified the lifetime of a floating liquid marble on a water pool." "The surface modifications on the nano clay changed the time taken for the liquid marble to break and release its contents when put in a pool of water. We were able to control the timing of the release of the content from seconds to hours by changing the nature of the surface groups. This is the time bomb type collapse of LMs," Manna said.

Five-time Punjab CM Parkash Singh Badal passes away at 95

Chandigarh:

Five-time Punjab Chief Minister and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) patriarch Parkash Singh Badal, who was suffering from bronchial asthma, passed away at a private hospital in Mohali on Tuesday evening. He was 95. Badal is survived by his son and SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal, and his Member of Parliament daughter Parneet Kaur. A media bulletin from the Fortis Hospital said that Parkash Singh Badal was admitted to the hospital on April 16 with acute exacerbation of bronchial asthma. He was shifted to the medical ICU on April 18 as his respiratory condition worsened.





MODI A BLUFFER, SPEAKS LIKE AN ORDINARY RSS/BJP WORKER: CPI-M

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Hours after Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday thanked visiting Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the help to the state in sanctioning the Vande Bharat train and other developments, the ruling CPI-M's state Secretary M.V. Govindan termed the PM a "bluffer".

"There is nothing new in what Modi said and he has bluffed when he said development is lacking in Kerala because in the NITI Aayog ratings Kerala is number one. He spoke like an ordinary BJP/RSS worker, which is devoid of facts. The long-promised railway coach factory (Palakkad) and an AIIMS is still not happened in Kerala," Govindan told the media here. His statements came an hour after Modi left Kerala, concluding his two day visit to the state.

At Kochi on Monday, Modi, addressing a public meeting of mostly youth, had slammed the state's traditional rival fronts for not addressing developmental issues and came down



heavily on the CPI-M-led government, claiming that it are only interested in seeing the party grow at the expense of the growth of the state.

As Modi also referred to gold smuggling case, Govindan said that figures clearly show that the maximum gold smuggling takes place in Gujarat.

"With regards to the gold smuggling case, despite the Centre having all the

agencies under its hand, why is that they are still unable to trace the origin from where the gold comes and who all are the recipients here. Also, on one hand, they are attaching properties of those who engage in such acts, the central agencies, in an affidavit, allowed release of the property of (prime accused) Swapna Suresh," he said.

Another "bluff" of Modi that Govindan tagged was on the giant strides that the BJP has made in the Northeast and Goa, especially in states having a considerable Christian population.

"In the Northeast, the BJP is just only a small player and is riding piggy-back riding on parties there. In Goa they purchased Congress legislators. If you look this is the case in Maharashtra when they split the Shiv Sena. In Madhya Pradesh also Congress legislators were purchased. In Uttar Pradesh, the total tally of the BJP fell down drastically. Hence it's only in Gujarat where the BJP has above 50 per cent votes and it's because they have a direct fight with a weak Congress party. So the writing on the wall is clear that if the opposition unite, it will be the end of BJP and for that things are moving forward," Govindan said.

He also pointed out that Modi was able to walk down the streets at Kochi freely "because this can happen in Kerala only and we are happy for it".

Rahul Gandhi moves Gujarat HC for stay on defamation conviction

Ahmedabad | Agencies

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday filed an appeal in the Gujarat High Court, seeking a stay on his conviction by a magistrate's court in a criminal defamation case.

The appeal will be heard by a single-judge bench in due course. On April 20, a sessions court in Surat dismissed Gandhi's plea for the suspension of his conviction.

Gandhi, now disqualified as a parliamentarian, was convicted by a magistrate's court on March 23 for his controversial remark, "All thieves have Modi surname," made during a political campaign in Karnataka's Kolar in 2019. Former BJP MLA



Purnesh Modi claimed that Gandhi's statement humiliated and defamed persons with the Modi surname. The magistrate court accepted Modi's contention that Gandhi

intentionally insulted people with the 'Modi' surname. The sessions judge refused to stay the conviction, leading to Gandhi's present plea before the High Court.

Those registered with HKRNL will get jobs in private sector too: Khattar

Gurugram | Agencies

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said on Tuesday that candidates registered with the Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam Limited (HKRNL) will now get employment opportunities in the private sector as well.

Khattar said this while addressing a meeting with the representatives from the corporate sector in Gurugram.

The corporate dialogue programme was organised by HKRNL to provide employment opportunities to the youth of the state in the private sector. The Chief Minister said: "Apart from appointing employees in government departments on an outsourcing basis through the HKRNL, manpower will also be made available to the private sector as per the latter's requirement." With the initiative of the Haryana government, it will be easier for the corporate sector to get a workforce according to its needs, he said. The officials informed



that about eight lakh youth of the state are registered on the HKRNL portal.

Khattar said that through HKRNL, the data of registered youth in categories like skilled, unskilled, management etc. will be shared with the corporate entities.

Slain IAS officer's wife urges PM to intervene to stop release of Anand Mohan

Hyderabad | Agencies

G. Uma Krishnaiah, widow of slain Dalit IAS officer G. Krishnaiah, has requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene and stop release of former MP Anand Mohan Singh, who was convicted for the bureaucrat's lynching.

A day after the Bihar government decided to release Anand Mohan Singh by amending the Bihar prison manual, she said she was shocked by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's move.

Uma Krishnaiah said Modi should intervene and make Nitish Kumar withdraw his decision which will set a bad precedent and have serious repercussions for the entire society. "My husband was an IAS officer and it is the Centre's responsibility to

ensure that justice is done," she said.

She alleged that Nitish Kumar is releasing killer of her husband for votes of Rajputs and to form a government again.

"He (Nitish Kumar) thinks that by releasing him, he will get votes of all Rajputs and this will help him form the government again. This is wrong," said Uma, who lives in Hyderabad.

"This goes on in Bihar but this is not good. There should be good people in politics and not criminals like Mohan," she said.



like Anand Mohan Singh can do any good to them and to the society. She believes that this action of

The widow of the slain bureaucrat said that she was not happy when he was awarded life imprisonment instead of the death penalty. "Now it is heartbreaking for me that he being released even before completing the sentence," she said.

Uma Krishnaiah, who had moved to Hyderabad a few days after losing her husband, said the Rajput community should also think if a criminal

Nitish Kumar will embolden criminals to take law into their hands. Uma Krishnaiah, 60, is of the view that release of Mohan may endanger the lives of civil servants and government officers discharging their duties honestly as the criminals will think that they can take law into their hands and do whatever they want and come out of jail.

She revealed that some IAS officers of 1985 batch are in touch with her and they were contemplating to move the Patna High Court or the Supreme Court to challenge the decision of Nitish Kumar government. It was a life full of struggle for Uma Krishnaiah. After losing her husband, she had moved to Hyderabad with two daughters, aged 7 and 5. The family was traumatised after what it had to go through.

GITB 2023 ENDS WITH EUPHORIA AMONG THE TRAVEL TRADE

283 FTOS FROM 56 COUNTRIES PARTICIPATE

Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

The 12th edition of the Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB 2023) ended with euphoria among the travel trade at Jaipur Exhibition & Convention Centre (JECC) at Sitapura on Tuesday. The 'buyers' and 'sellers' expressed great satisfaction on the networking opportunities. A total of 283 major inbound Foreign Tour Operators (FTOs) from 56 countries participated as foreign buyers in this mega event.

The 3-day GITB was organized by Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). It is supported by leading national and regional associations like Hotel & Restaurant



Association of Rajasthan (HRAR), Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA) and RATO.

Speaking about the success of the Mart, Principal Secretary, Tourism,

Government of Rajasthan, Gayatri Rathore said that GITB has been hugely successful in attracting serious buyers and sellers. As many as 11,000 pre-scheduled B2B meetings were

held over the course of two days. The participation of 9 States including the Host State of Rajasthan shows that the mart has established itself across the country. It is a leading event in terms of FTOs who take part in the mart in large numbers.

Chairman, FICCI Rajasthan State Council and President, Indian Heritage Hotels Associations (IHHA), Randhir Vikram Singh said that GITB has been an excellent networking platform for stand-alone hotels which can interact with foreign buyers and meet all the stakeholders under one roof. With well-screened buyers, GITB is much stronger than other marts organized in the country. Here the sellers can pick and choose which parties they are interested in connecting with and pre-schedule their meetings accordingly.

Defamation case lodged against Siddaramaiah for statement on Lingayats

Bengaluru | Agencies

A defamation case was lodged on Tuesday against Karnataka's Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah over his alleged statement on corruption practised by Lingayat Chief Ministers in the state.

Activist Shankar Sait had lodged a private complaint with the Magistrate court in Bengaluru in this regard. The court had adjourned the matter to April 29, after accepting the petition.

A complaint had also been registered against the Congress leader with the Election Commission in this regard already. The statement that Lingayat CMs indulged in corruption and destroyed the state has stirred a controversy ahead of the May 10 Assembly elections.

The BJP has also made it a big poll issue in the state and used it as a weapon to control the damage caused by the exit of former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar and Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi.

The Lingayat Yuva Vedike Legal Cell, which



had lodged a complaint with the Election Commission, claimed that Siddaramaiah had insulted the Lingayat community and defamed it.

Siddaramaiah had clarified that he meant to say Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who is the present CM, is indulged in corruption and destroyed the state and he didn't mean to comment about others.

BJP leader Annamalai releases another purported audio of TN Minister PTR Thiagarajan

Chennai | Agencies

Tamil Nadu BJP President, K. Annamalai, on Tuesday released another audio clip of 57 second duration which he claims is of state finance minister, PTR Thiagarajan.

As per the audio clip, the person seems to be complaining about the DMK rule in Tamil Nadu. In a tweet, the BJP leader Annamalai said, "Listen to the DMK ecosystem crumbling from within."

In the audio clip, the person says that he had been a proponent of 'one man, one post' since he entered politics. He is also heard saying, "It is what I like about the BJP. Who looks after the party, who looks after the people. Separate those right?"

The person also says that such distinction of responsibilities and power was absent in DMK.

In the part of the clip, the person is heard saying "The party which is CM's son and son-in-law," in an apparent reference to Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, his son and minister for youth affairs and sports development, Udayanidhi Stalin, and his son-in-law, V. Sabareesan.



The person is further heard saying "So I decided after watching this for eight months. This is not a sustainable model." In the last part of the audio clip, the person seems to indicate that he was contemplating resigning from his position before the situation worsened and that he would still have a clear conscience as he did not give up the fight too early.

PTR Thiagarajan responded to the first audio clip and said that it was not authentic. A delegation of Tamil Nadu BJP met Governor R.N. Ravi on April 23 and submitted a representation for an independent forensic audit of the audio reportedly of Thiagarajan.

Nigerians arrested for cheating over 700 victims on matrimonial website

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Two Nigerians were arrested for cheating more than 700 victims across the country after impersonating as wealthy NRI or foreign national, especially doctors on a matrimonial website, an official said on Tuesday.

The accused were identified as Chife Monday (27) and Igwemma Jame (33), both presently residing in Delhi's Nihal Vihar area.

Police said that the accused came to India in 2018 and were staying without valid documents.

According to police, a case was registered in which the victim woman, a resident of Rani Bagh area, alleged that she had registered herself on Bharat Matrimony website and met with one user Ahmad Nafees online.

As per the woman's complaint, the man started messaging her on WhatsApp and both became friends with each other.

"She started regular conversation with him over the phone and the man introduced himself as a resident of California, the US. Later on, Ahmad Nafees informed that he is sending her a gift parcel and shared a picture of the same," said Harendra Kumar Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer).

The woman later received a phone call from a caller Riya Mehta who cheat-



ed Rs 2.40 lakh from her on the pretext of customs duty and other taxes for the gift parcel.

"The mobile numbers used by alleged persons were found switched off and the alleged matrimonial user profile was also found deleted. She later on came to know that she had been cheated online as she did not receive further response from alleged persons," said the DCP.

During investigation, detailed analysis of matrimony profile and calling numbers was done and the location in Nihal Vihar was identified.

claimed that they could identify the hideouts of Nonso, his wife, and Samson S in various parts of Delhi," said the official. Police have also recovered 13 mobile phones, 18 Indian mobile SIM cards and two international SIM cards of a UK telecom service provider from the possession of the accused.

The DCP said that the accused were cheating their victims since 2018. "The accused disclosed that they have cheated more than 700 victims so far. The analysis of their mobile phone has revealed that one of the accused has purchased a piece of land in Nigeria from the cheated money," the official added.

5-member committee to probe IIT-Madras research scholar's suicide

Chennai | Agencies

The Indian Institute of Technology-Madras has constituted a five-member committee to probe into the suicide of a research scholar of the institute, Sachin Kumar Jain on March 31, 2023.

The five-member inquiry committee constituted on Tuesday is headed by former Tamil Nadu Director General of Police (DGP), G. Thilakavathi. Students protested in the campus alleging that Jain had committed suicide following harassment by a faculty member. The registrar of IIT-Madras in an email to the students said that a committee headed by former Tamil Nadu DGP, Tilakavathi has been constituted on the allegations in the suicide death of Sachin Kumar Jain who was a research scholar in Mechanical Engineering department.

Sachin Kumar Jain's brother Bhawesh Kumar Jain had in a complaint to the institute stated that his brother was harassed by a faculty member, Ashish Kumar Sen.

The other committee



members are former IAS officers D. Sabitha, Kannegi Packianathan, Professor Ravindra Gattu who is a faculty in the institute and Amal Manoharan, who is a research scholar at IIT-Madras.

The registrar in the mail said, "Students who want to depose before the committee can contact the research scholar member of the committee and faculty who want to depose can contact the faculty member."

A Joint Action Committee (JAC) has also submitted a memorandum to the IIT-Madras director demanding an unbiased inquiry into the suicide of the research scholar and also demanded inclusion of external members in the committee. The JAC has also demanded the suspension of the research guides and his academic activities during the probe.



MP CONG RETORTS TO PM'S 'STEP-MOTHERLY' TREATMENT TO RURAL INDIA REMARK

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused the previous governments of meting out step-motherly treatment to rural India, the Congress hit back at the BJP and dubbed the claims a 'bunch of lies.'

While addressing the people on the occasion of 'Panchayati Raj' day in Rewa district of poll-bound Madhya Pradesh on Monday, the Prime Minister hailed Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan for executing development schemes at ground level.

Retaliating to the statements made by both PM Modi and CM Chouhan, the state Congress led by former Chief Minister Kamal Nath also raised questions on "double engine" government.

To the Prime Minister's allegation that the rural part of the country faced discrimination during the previous governments, the Congress claimed that during the last financial year, the Centre has allocated insufficient funds for implementing schemes under the Panchayati Raj system in Madhya Pradesh. "Under the Panchayati Raj system, the Centre gives 60 per cent funds while the remaining 40 per cent is spent by the state. But, during the



last financial year (from April 2022 to March 2023), the Centre was liable to give a total Rs 21,800 lakhs, out of which, the MP government was allocated only 19.39 per cent of the total expected amount," the Madhya Pradesh Congress said in a statement. Further, the Congress accused Shivraj Singh Chouhan of making false statements regarding the economic growth of farmers in the state. Notably, on Monday, CM Chouhan had claimed that the economy of farmers in the state has witnessed a tremendous growth in the last few years and it has "doubled" due to efforts and the schemes of the BJP's "double engine" government. "It is highly unfortunate that CM Chouhan made a false statement regarding the economic growth

of farmers in Madhya Pradesh. In its reports presented in Parliament, the Centre has itself claimed that the annual economic growth of farmers in 2022 have decreased to Rs. 8,339 from Rs. 9,740 in the year 2015-2016. According to the Centre's data, farmers' daily income is estimated at Rs. 27, while the debt of each farmer in the country is at an average of Rs 7,40,00," it said. The Opposition also stated that the Centre has allocated only 22 per cent amount under the schemes - "Kisan Kalyan" and "Krishi Vikas" in the last financial year. It claimed the Shivraj Shivraj Singh led BJP government "did not spend a single rupee for at least 20 schemes for the rural parts of the state."

"HIS HABIT TO CRITICISE": SHIVRAJ CHOUHAN ON KAMAL NATH'S FARMERS' INCOME JOB

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday took a jibe at former Chief Minister Kamal Nath for raising questions related to the income of farmers.



"Jaki Rahi Bhavna Jaisi, Prabhu Murat Dekhi Tin Taisi (Those who have become habitual to criticise, they find fault in spite of having thousands of virtues!). It is Nath's habit, he will criticise." Chief Minister Chouhan told reporters here. He added, "I am giving the example of Rewa alone, the production of wheat has increased 4.5 times, paddy by 5.5 times, mustard by 35 times and moong has increased 7 times. Now what does Kamal Nath know about poor farmers? What is his relation with farming?"

Reacting to the Congress claiming the announcements of the state government as election announcements, the chief minister said that the construction of Shri Mahakal Mahalok was not started after seeing the election. The first phase had been completed and soon the second phase would get completed.

Notably, Kamal Nath on Monday wrote on twitter, "Today, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, you (CM Chouhan) announced in Rewa that the income of farmers in Madhya Pradesh has more than doubled. During your present tenure, the MLAs have asked many times questions regarding the doubling of farmers' income in the assembly, but your government did not talk about the doubling of farmers' income even in answer to a single question. I would like to know from you on the basis of which report and which study, you have claimed that farmers' income has more than doubled. Please make that report public, if the farmers of Madhya Pradesh accept that report as true, I will congratulate you," Nath further wrote.

Must follow precautions all 365 days to save energy: Mangubhai Patel



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that it is necessary to follow small precautions and actions for 365 days to save energy. Saving energy today is protecting tomorrow's future. He said that social thinking is necessary for the success of energy conservation campaign. Efforts are necessary to make energy conservation a habit.

Governor Mangubhai Patel was addressing the inauguration programme of Saksham "Sanrakshan Kshamata Mahotsav 2023" today. Shri Patel blew balloons in the sky, flagged off the Jagriti Rath on this occasion. Energy conservation pledge was administered. A street play based on Saksham Abhiyan was performed in the programme. Saksham Mahotsav launch programme was organized at Model Higher Secondary School, Bhopal under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Petroleum Conservation Association.

Governor Patel said that the participation of society in the efforts of the government is the basis of its success. It is generally seen that parents save money for the happy future of their children but ignore the environment, while the future of the next generation can be secured not by money, but by a healthy and clean environment. Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi had said that the earth provides enough resources to satisfy every man's needs, but it cannot satisfy every man's greed.

In the beginning, the state level coordinator of the programme, Executive Director, Indian Oil Corporation Deepak Kumar Basu greeted the Governor and gave the welcome address. The vote of thanks was presented by the State Head, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited P. Motirmani. Battu Koteswara Rao, Deputy General Manager, GAIL India Ltd. and Prashant Kumar Shukla, Deputy General Manager, Retail, were also present on the dais.

AHEAD OF POLLS, SHIVRAJ CHOUHAN'S BIG ANNOUNCEMENT FOR BRAHMIN

Bhopal: The Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led government in Madhya Pradesh, in what appears a last-minute strategy tweak, is trying to court Brahmins months ahead of the assembly elections with the constitution of a Welfare Board for the community.

Besides, the government has also announced that it would develop the Bhagwan Sri Parashurama Lok religious corridor in Indore's Janapav. Temples, meanwhile, have been given more power over their own land. "We have decided that the government will not have any control over the activities of the temples and the auction of temple land will be done by priests and not by collectors," Chouhan said. "Brahmins have always protected religion and culture. So for their welfare, we will set up a 'Brahmin Welfare Board'," he added. Madhya Pradesh has 21,104 temples including two Jyotirlingas. Of these, 1,320 temples have more than 10 acres of agricultural land. For temples without agricultural land, priests are paid an honorarium of ₹ 5,000 a month. The Congress has scoffed at the BJP move, saying the Chief Minister is thinking of giving respect to Brahmins after 18 years. "Till date, he kept neglecting them in the cabinet, now he is making announcements to woo the Brahmins," said Congress spokesperson KK Mishra.

'Concerned' forest officials to discuss action plan after two Cheetahs die in Kuno

Team Absolute | Gwalior

Two deaths of Namibian Cheetahs within a month in Kuno National Park has concerned the forest officials in the state.

A meeting was held in this regard at the Chief Conservator of Forests' office in Gwalior on Tuesday. Wildlife experts and forest department officials from Bhopal were present in the meeting, along with District Forest Officer (DFO) of Gwalior Chambal.

Earlier, the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department had written a letter to the Central Government and the Tiger Conservation Authority, regarding shifting the Namibian Cheetahs to some other place. This comes



after the forest department has expressed a concern that they do not have enough resources to take care of the Cheetahs. However, officials have refused to speak on camera. Notably, Cheetah 'Uday', brought from South Africa died on Sunday (April 23) evening while Namibian

cheetah 'Sasha' died on March 27. A well-known wildlife activist Ajay Dubey has also claimed the failure of forest department's failure behind the death of two cheetahs at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district.

THREE KILLED IN AUTO-BUS CRASH IN SINGRAULI DISTRICT

Singrauli: Three persons, including a woman, were killed and as many seriously injured when an auto collided with a bus in Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli district on Tuesday, police said. The accident occurred near Deori village, some 15km from the district headquarters, at around 12.30 pm, an official said.

Kotwali Police Station in-charge Arun Pandey said three persons, including a woman, died when their auto collided head-on with the bus. Three other auto passengers were seriously injured in the crash and admitted for treatment at the district hospital, he said.

Rs 2847 crore 63 lakh sanctioned for 70 fully equipped CM Rise schools

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Ministers at Mantralaya. The Cabinet decided to construct 70 well-equipped schools in the state with an estimated cost of Rs 2847 crore 63 lakh, according to the proposal of school education and the recommendation of the Project Examination Committee. In the first phase of the CM Rise School Schemes in the state, 275 schools are being developed by the School Education Department.

Revised administrative approval for irrigation projects worth Rs 1207 crore 36 lakh Revised administrative approval of Runj medium irrigation project costing Rs.513 crore 72 lakh, storage area of 14 thousand 450 hectare was granted by the Cabinet. The project will get the benefit of irrigation facility in 14 thousand 450



hectare area of 47 villages of Ajaygarh tehsil of Panna district.

Free land allotment

The Cabinet decided to allot 1.215 hectare land free of cost to Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Smarak Pratishthan, Indore village town. Ratification regarding lien rights of government land holders of urban areas The Cabinet ratified the order given by the Chief Minister on March 31, 2023. The eligibility period (date of occupation) for the lease of persons occupying government land in urban areas, should be increased from December 31, 2014 to December 31, 2020, in the Mukhyamantri Urban Land Rights Scheme, in connection with the

Other decisions

- Approval for computerization of revenue courts,
- Approval of 25 new mobile and 20 new permanent Rasoi Kendra,
- Approval for 972 posts,
- Revised administrative approval of Rs. 328 crore,
- Amendment in norms of crop damage assistance amount,

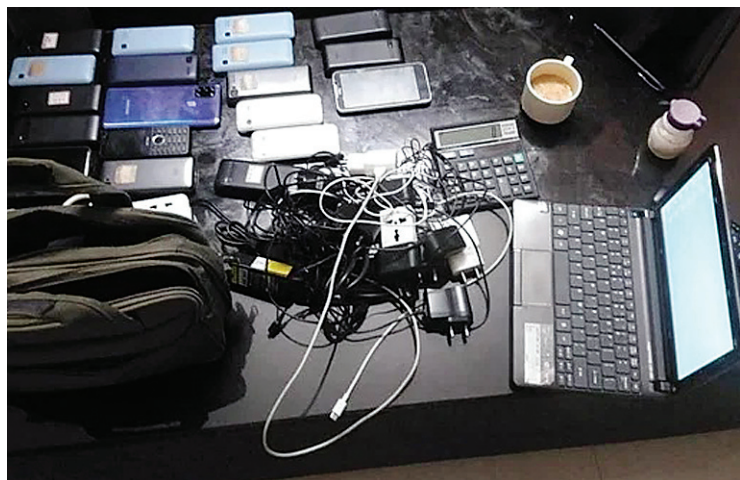
Six held for gambling on IPL match car, 12 mobile phones, cash seized

Team Absolute | Gwalior

The police claimed to have arrested six people betting on an IPL cricket match between Hyderabad at Balwant Bagar in the city on Tuesday. A car, a sum of Rs 29,000, 12 mobile phones, a laptop, three calculators and seven registers containing accounts of Rs 2 crore were confiscated from their possession.

Superintendent of police Rajesh Singh Chandul said when he came to know that gambling on a cricket match was going on in Balwant Nagar, he sent a team to the spot.

The police team saw a car standing outside a residence, and when the



team entered the house, they found six people using mobile phones.

As soon as they saw the policemen, they began to run away, but the police caught hold of them.

They confessed to the police that they were involved in online cricket betting. When the police team checked the mobile phones, they came to know that the speculators were betting on an IPL match by sending links to others.

The arrested speculators said they had 500 clients in Gwalior, Morena, Bhind and Datia, who are involved in online betting. The gamblers said that two speculators in Gwalior gave them ID for betting.

Three-day global meet on wildlife at Kanha Tiger Reserve from April 27

Team Absolute | Balaghat

The forest department is going to hold an international conference from April 27 to April 29 at Kanha Tiger Reserve to celebrate the centenary of forestry research in Madhya Pradesh. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will inaugurate the seminar in which wildlife conservation and plans to deal with upcoming challenges will be discussed.

Wildlife experts from USA, Europe, South Africa, Namibia, including Padma Bhusan HS Pawar from India, will take part in the conference.

According to deputy director of State Forest Research Organisation in Jabalpur Ravindra Mani Tripathi, Chouhan will inaugurate the meet on April 27.

The conference is being organised to comply with Chouhan's declaration in Narmadapuram on March 27 last year, Tripathi said. Besides wildlife management, conservation and rehabilitation, research



mp forest department

papers on man-animal clash will be presented at the meet. According to the discussions, the government will make a strategy to conserve and rehabilitate wildlife, Tripathi said. Madhya Pradesh, whose total land area is 3,08,252 square km area, has 94,689 square km forestland.

MP HC issues notices to Centre, state govt on PIL seeking recognition for trees as living entities

Team Absolute | Indore

The Madhya Pradesh High Court's Indore bench on Tuesday sought a reply from the Central and state governments on a public interest litigation (PIL) seeking that trees be recognised as "living entities". The PIL filed by local social activist Dr Aman Sharma raised concerns about the alleged threat to more than 1,800 trees due to the construction of flyovers at two different locations in city.

Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari and Justice Prakashchandra Gupta issued notices to the Central and state governments, Indore Municipal Corporation and Indore Development Authority on this petition. The next hearing on the petition is likely on May 10. The petitioner's lawyer Abhinav Dhanodkar said that his client had drawn the high court's attention to the alleged crisis of more than 1,800 trees being cut or shifted to



build two flyovers at Khajrana Square and Footi Kothi Square in the city. The petition also cites famous Indian scientist Jagdish Chandra Bose's experiment, in which he had proved that like other living beings, trees and plants also have life, Dhanodkar said. The High Court has been requested to recognise trees as living entities, declare them living entities entitled to rights, and direct the respondents to formulate a policy so that trees are not cut for future events.

State government starts helpline to assist people stranded in Sudan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The government of Madhya Pradesh has started a helpline to assist people from the State as well as other parts of the country who are stranded in strife-torn Sudan, an official said on April 25.

India on April 24 launched 'Operation Kaveri' to bring back its nationals from the African country that has been witnessing fierce fighting following a power struggle between the regular Army and a Paramilitary force.

"Those stranded in Sudan and are keen to come back to Madhya



Pradesh or other States can contact the helpline "91-755-2555582" and

share their details," the official said. "The State government will coordinate with the Centre to facilitate their evacuation," he said. The government has appointed the State's Home Secretary Gaurav Rajput as the nodal officer for the purpose. "Besides, relatives of Madhya Pradesh residents stuck in Sudan can also contact the CM Helpline "181" to register details about their near and dear ones for getting assistance," the official said. Sudan has been witnessing deadly fighting between the country's Army and a Paramilitary group for the last 11 days making things difficult for the people stranded.



EDITOR'S SPECS

BJP WORKING TIRELESSLY FOR JAGADISH SHETTAR'S DEFEAT

Upset over his defection to Congress, the BJP leadership is working tirelessly to ensure former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar's defeat in his home turf in the May 10 Assembly elections. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has taken the matter seriously and is personally strategising and monitoring the execution of the plan in this regard, sources said. Following the developments, the contest for Hubballi-Dharwad Central constituency has become one of the most keenly watched in Karnataka. Shah has personally spoken to the local leaders and office-bearers of the constituency and asked them to put their best efforts to defeat Shettar. He claimed that the party had given him all the positions. If he was to contest as an independent candidate it could have been a different matter. But, since he is contesting as a Congress candidate, he should not be pardoned. He had assured the leaders of all the support and backing through him to face six-time MLA Shettar. Amit Shah has thanked the city corporation members for taking back their resignations and supporting party candidate Mahesh Tenginakayi. Meanwhile, a special team from RSS has come down to Hubballi to work against Shettar and counter the charges made by Shettar and Congress. Sources explain that the teams have been deputed to identify the supporters and movements of the people at his residence are also being watched closely to ensure he receives no support from BJP members. Meanwhile, Shettar claims that he has given back to the party as a worker and built the party from scratch in north Karnataka. Sources close to him are confident that Shettar will emerge as winner and he is now focusing on winning seats for Congress in north Karnataka districts. He is being made a star campaigner by the Congress and sources say that his services will be utilised in Kittur Karnataka region.

PROTECTING FIVE-ELEMENTS TO MAKE INDIA NET ZERO BY 2070!

Pavan Kaushik

In our Vedas, the Atharvaveda the three coverings of our surroundings are referred as Chandamsi. The Atharvaveda says, wisely utilize three elements on earth -- water, air and plants or herbs. Not just earth, human life is also made of five-elements -- earth (prithvi), water (jala), fire (tejas), wind (vayu) and space (akasha). Protecting these five-elements would protect our planet as well as human life, or else, the extension is evident.

To breathe or not to breathe, but the fact is, every breath that we inhale and exhale is now being counted as adding to global warming. Enough evidence supports that even the CO2 emission through breathing of 8 billion people around the world is now being accounted for. In one day, an average person breathes out around 500 litres of the greenhouse gas CO2 -- which amounts to around 1kg in mass. The question is, what happens when the population reaches an estimated figure of 9.7 billion by 2050?

Currently, the Earth is already about 1.1 degree Celsius warmer than it was in the late 1800s, and emissions continue to rise. In November 2-21, at the 26th Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Prime Minister Narendra Modi also pledged that India would cut its emissions to net zero by 2070.

No surprises, the current global average concentration of CO2 in the atmosphere is 421 ppm as of mid-2022, which is an increase of 50 per cent since the industrial revolution began. Experts believe that human activity is the primary cause of the increase of CO2 emission of such magnitude. Since the start of the industrial revolution, human emissions of carbon dioxide from fossil fuels, etc., have risen to more than 35 billion metric tons per year.

The majority of emissions is coming from transportation -- 28 per cent of 2021 greenhouse gas emissions. The transportation sector generates the largest share of greenhouse gas emissions and it primarily comes from burning fossil fuel for our cars, trucks, ships, trains, and planes.

Between 1990 and 2021, the warming effect on our climate -- known as radiative forcing -- by long-lived greenhouse gases rose by nearly 50 per cent, with carbon dioxide accounting for about 80 per cent of this increase. Despite the decline in 2020, global energy-related CO2 emissions remained at 31.5 Gt, which contributed to CO2 reaching its highest ever average annual concentration in the atmosphere of 412.5 parts per million in 2020 -- around 50 per cent higher than when the industrial revolution began.

The oceans absorb much of this increased heat, with the top 100 meters (about 328 feet) of ocean showing warming of more than 0.6 degrees Fahrenheit (0.33 degree Celsius) since 1969. Global sea level rose about 8 inches (20 centimetres) in the last 100 years, and the last two decades have been worse. For the record, our planet stores 90 per cent of the extra energy in the ocean.

There is much other evidence as well. Earth's average surface temperature has risen



about 2 degrees Fahrenheit (1 degree Celsius) since the late 19th century, a change attributed to emission of carbon dioxide and human activities. The glaciers are retreating almost everywhere around the world. Sprint snow cover in the Northern Hemisphere has decreased over the past 50 years and the show continues to melt earlier. You can blame any country that you want -- as of 2020, China is the largest emitter of carbon dioxide gas in the world, with 10,668 million metric tons of total carbon dioxide emissions. Russia is the fourth-largest contributor, emitting 1,577 million metric tons, and Japan is the fifth-largest producer of CO2 emissions, with 1,577 million metric tons.

No wonder, the years 2016 to 2020 are attributed as the warmest year on record. While Earth's climate has changed throughout its history, the current warming is happening at a rate not seen in the past 10,000 years. If every problem has a solution, and the solution lies in the roots of the problems -- we all know what to do and what not to do. We have no other planet to go to, no matter how many alien ships we see suggesting lives outside Earth. If we seriously want mother earth to protect all of us from elimination of our species, we better protect mother earth from extinction.

(Pavan Kaushik is a well-known author and storyteller)

international

BIDEN ANNOUNCES 2024 RE-ELECTION BID, WITH HARRIS AS RUNNING MATE

Yashwant Raj | Washington

US President Joe Biden announced on Tuesday he is seeking a second term, with Vice-President Kamala Harris as his running mate once again. "The question we are facing is whether in the years ahead we have more freedom or less freedom, more rights or fewer," Biden said in a video announcement. "I know what I want the answer to be. This is not a time to be complacent. That's why I'm running for re-election."

Biden, at 80, is already the oldest President in US history and he will be 86 at the end of his second term. His age has raised questions about his suitability for President even among Democratic voters. But they



have been rallying to his side since he has decided to seek a second term. The 2024 run will be his fourth campaign for the White House. He first ran in 1988 and then in 2008, which was won by President Barack Obama, who picked him for his Vice President.

Biden was widely expected to run in 2016, at the end of Obama's second term, but gave it a miss. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton won the Democratic nomination that cycle but went on to lose to Republican nominee Donald Trump. Biden suc-

ceeded on his third, in 2020, and now is mounting his fourth, and last. He has been running for office since 1970, which was a city council. In 1972, he ran for the first time for the Senate and won and went on to hold that seat for decades, till he became Vice President. As sitting President, the Democratic party nomination is his, even though two people have announced so far their desire to seek it as well -- self-help author Marianne Williamson and Robert F. Kennedy, a nephew of late President John F. Kennedy and son of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, whose run for the White House was ended by his assassination. Neither of them is capable of mounting a credible challenge to the President.

Powerful earthquake jolts Indonesia, tsunami alert issued

Jakarta: A 7.3-magnitude earthquake struck Indonesia's western province of West Sumatra early Tuesday and was potential of triggering a tsunami, the meteorology, climatology and geophysics agency said. The earthquake happened at 03:00 a.m. Tuesday Jakarta Time (2000 GMT Monday), with the epicenter at 177 km northwest in Mentawai Islands district and a depth of 84 km under the seabed, Xinhua news agency reported.

A tsunami warning has been put in place by the agency, as the tremors of the quake have the potential of triggering giant waves.

Two Indian expats killed in separate accidents in UAE: Report

Seoul | Agencies

North Korea vowed on Tuesday to strengthen its ties with Russia on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the first summit between the leaders of the two nations.

Vice Foreign Minister Im Chon-il issued a statement confirming "mutual support and solidarity" between Pyongyang and Moscow, marking the anniversary of the 2019 summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, held in Vladivostok, reports Yonhap News Agency.

"The two countries are strengthening mutual support and solidarity in the struggle to resolutely smash the dangers of war and military threats from the outside," Im said.



The official stressed the North will "invariably" stand to elevate the long-standing and traditional relations of friendship" between the two nations. The North has been strengthening its close ties with Russia despite international condemnation over

Moscow's war with Ukraine. The North has denied allegations that it has provided arms to Russia for use in the Ukraine war. North Korean arms exports are banned under UN Security Council resolutions over Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs.

PAKISTAN DEFENCE MINISTER TO SKIP DELHI TRIP FOR SCO MEET

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif will attend the meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers virtually while skipping attending the event in person at a time when his counterparts from China and Russia will be in New Delhi this week, media reports said. The two-day meeting of the SCO Defence Ministers will kick off on April 27 in the Indian capital.

India had invited the Pakistani Defence Minister as well as other SCO members for the meeting. However, Asif will join the meeting via video link, according to official sources, Express Tribune reported.

India is currently the President of SCO and is holding a series of events this year that would culminate with the summit in July. SCO comprises China, Russia, India, Pakistan and four



Central Asian States. India and Pakistan were admitted full members of the regional grouping in 2017. Despite tensions, both sides attended SCO events including joint counter-terrorism drills by member states. The decision to send Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Goa in May was seen as surprising.

Given the current state of the relationship, many were expecting either Pakistan would downgrade its participation or the minister would attend the conference virtually, Express Tribune reported.

Sudan's warring factions agree to 3-day ceasefire amid intense evacuations

Khartoum | Agencies

The warring parties in Sudan have agreed to a three-day ceasefire, as many countries are racing to evacuate civilians from the violence-hit north African country.

Following intense negotiation over the past 48 hours, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have agreed to implement a nationwide ceasefire starting at midnight on April 24, to last for 72 hours," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a written statement on Tuesday morning.

Previous attempted ceasefires have failed as the brutal fighting, which first erupted on April 15, has killed at least 427 people and injured more than 3,700, according to UN agencies.

Since the violence began, residents of the battle-scarred capital Khartoum have been told to stay inside, and food and water supplies have been running low.

The bombing has hit key infra-



structure, like water pipes, meaning that some people have been forced to drink from the River Nile.

Hours before Blinken's announcement, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that the violence "risks a catastrophic conflagration within Sudan that could engulf the whole region and beyond" and called on UN Security Council members to exert maximum leverage.

In a written statement on Monday, the RSF said it had agreed to the truce "in order to open humanitarian corridors, facilitate the movement of citizens and residents, enable them to fulfil their needs, reach hospitals and safe areas, and evacuate diplomatic missions". Over the week-end, several countries have evacuated their diplomats and citizens as fighting raged in densely populated parts of the capital.

INDIANS AMONG 60 DELIVERY DRIVERS HELD FOR WORKING ILLEGALLY IN UK

London | Agencies

As part of a week-long crackdown on illegal migration, 60 delivery drivers, including Indians, have been arrested across London for working illegally, the UK Home Office said.

The drivers, working for companies including Deliveroo, JustEat, and UberEats, were arrested for offences, including illegal working and possession of false documentation.

The majority of offenders were of Brazilian nationality. Indian and Algerian nationals were also found to be working without the right to do so in the country, a UK Home Office statement read.

Of those arrested, 44 were detained by the Home Office, pending their removal from the UK, with the remaining 16 being released on immigration bail. It is also expected that a number of the arrests will result in voluntary departure from the UK.

"Illegal working damages our communities, cheats honest



workers out of employment and defrauds the public purse. As the Prime Minister has set out, we are committed to going further and faster to prevent the abuse of our laws and borders." Britain's Indian-origin Home Secretary Suella Braverman said in a statement. "The British public deserve a labour market that is fair and honest and must have confidence that goods and services they buy are from legitimate businesses," she added.



NOW, MAHA DY CM FADNAVIS BUGGED BY 'FUTURE CM' BANNER IN NAGPUR

Amid an atmosphere of political suspense in Maharashtra, a banner proclaiming BJP's Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis as the Future CM has suddenly caught the attention of people on Tuesday.

Team Absolute | Nagpur

The banner, reportedly put up by his supporter/s, has hailed former CM Fadnavis as a 'Future CM', though the real reasons behind it are not clear.

Unfazed by the abrupt 'promotion', Fadnavis, currently on election campaign in Karnataka, promptly told media persons that if it's so, "then just tear it up".

He also took pains to reiterate that Chief Minister Eknath Shinde will continue in his post till 2024 (when Maharashtra goes to the polls).

Fadnavis' comments came even as a reportedly miffed Shinde went on a surprise three-day 'leave' to his hometown in Satara on Monday.

Nationalist Congress Party's (NCP) national spokesperson Clyde Crasto



has speculated that Shinde may be upset as the BJP wants him to 'switch roles' with Fadnavis. On the other hand, Shiv Sena's

(UBT) national spokesperson Kishore Tiwari said that "perhaps, Shinde knows his time has come and may be preparing to pack up", even as

Fadnavis prepares to fly to Mauritius later this week.

There has been a fierce debate after reports suggesting how, lured by the purported offer of CM's post, NCP's leader of opposition Ajit Pawar was planning to join the BJP with some 38 MLAs. However, top NCP leaders, starting from his uncle Sharad Pawar, cousin Supriya Sule, state party chief Jayant Patil and others, have trashed all such speculation on Ajit Pawar.

In Maharashtra, 'Future CM' posters are becoming quite the norm in recent months, and serve to stir the political cauldron, albeit briefly.

In March, the one-MLA party Maharashtra Navnirman Sena's President Raj Thackeray was anointed as a 'Hindu Jannayak' and 'the future CM in the minds of the people' of the state.

Shiv Sena (UBT) dares Shinde-Fadnavis to campaign for MES in K'taka polls

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Pushing the ruling Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party alliance in Maharashtra into an embarrassing corner, the Shiv Sena (UBT) on Tuesday urged Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to campaign for the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES) candidates in the May 10 Karnataka Assembly polls.

The MES, espousing the cause of the Marathi-speaking people of the border areas of Belagavi and others since over six decades, has put up half a dozen candidates -- opposing the ruling BJP -- in the neighbouring state.

"If they are really concerned about the welfare of the Marathi-people in the borders, then they should go and campaign for the MES candidates," said Sena (UBT) MP and chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut, throwing the gauntlet at Shinde-Fadnavis on what is a political-cum-emotional subject in the two states. On his part, Raut announced to media-persons that he would be going to campaign for the MES candidates in Belagavi on May 3-4, and other party leaders are also likely to follow. Simultaneously, the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies, Congress-Nationalist Congress Party-Shiv Sena (UBT) also plan to help the MES candidates win against the BJP nominees there.



Raut said that he has already discussed the issue of bolstering the MES candidates with NCP President Sharad Pawar and Sena (UBT) President and former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

"I also request Shinde-Fadnavis to join us and campaign for the MES candidates in Belgauma if they don't come, and then their assurances of standing with the Marathi-speaking people of the border regions are hollow. So they should participate actively for the MES." In the last quarter of 2022, the governments of Karnataka and Maharashtra were at loggerheads on various policy issues and special initiatives announced by both sides for the people on the disputed boundary regions.

As the row escalated, it prompted Central intervention with Union Home Minister Amit Shah ordering both sides to refrain from making any claims till the Supreme Court verdict is delivered on the issue, cooling the matters temporarily.

Senior citizen dead after man jumps on him in swimming pool

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 72-year-old man died after another person jumped on him from a height in a swimming pool in Mumbai, a police official said.

The incident took place on Sunday evening at Ozon swimming pool in Goregaon area.

The dead, identified as Vishnu Samant, was swimming when a 20-year-old man jumped into the pool from a height, the official said.

"Samant suffered injuries on his neck and other parts of the body. He was declared



dead on arrival at a nearby hospital. On his wife's complaint, a case has been registered against the 20-year-old

man under Indian Penal Code Section 304-A (causing death by negligence)," he said.

2 MEN ARRESTED FOR PLANTING DRUGS ON ACTOR HELD IN UAE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai police on Monday arrested two men for allegedly cheating a 27-year-old actor by promising her a role in Hollywood web series and then sending her for an "audition" to the UAE's Sharjah city, where she was later caught in an alleged drugs case, an official said.

Sleuths of Unit 10 of the Mumbai crime branch arrested the accused -- Ravi Bobhate and Anthony Paul -- who also cheated the actor's mother, Pramila Pareira, by promising her hefty commissions in real estate deals in Hyderabad, he said.

The incident came to light when 56-year-old Pareira approached the crime branch with a complaint that her daughter, Chrisann, had been cheated under the pretext of providing her a role in Hollywood web series, the official said.

According to the complaint, accused Bobhate contacted her posing as a web series financier working on a project between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and offered a role to Chrisann, who has worked in Hindi web shows, movies and plays,



he said. Accordingly, the complainant discussed the offer with her daughter and after meeting the accused person, the schedule of her overseas journey for an "audition" was finalised, said the official.

The actor was scheduled to go to the UAE's Dubai city, but her air tickets were booked from Mumbai to Sharjah for April 1 and she was supposed to return on April 3. Around the same time, Pareira went to Hyderabad with the second accused Paul to finalize a property deal, he said.

While in Hyderabad, Pareira got a call informing her that Chrisann has been caught at the Sharjah airport with opium and cannabis, said the official.

UAE authorities informed the Indian embassy about the case and information was also shared with the Mumbai police. Accused Paul told Pareira he has contacts in Sharjah and sought Rs 80 lakh from her to help her daughter, he said.

At this point, Pareira realised she and her daughter had been cheated and approached the crime branch with the complaint.

During investigation, it came to light that Paul and Bobhate together hatched a conspiracy to cheat the mother-daughter duo, said the official. A first information report (FIR) was filed and the accused were arrested from different locations in Mumbai, he said, adding further probe was on.

"Ajit Pawar's Family Party, Won't Want To Be BJP's Slave": Sanjay Raut

Team Absolute | Mumbai/New Delhi

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut today said that Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is in depression as he is forced to work under his junior Eknath Shinde. This latest attack from the Rajya Sabha MP comes just a day after Fadnavis took a "high at 9 am" swipe at him for his prediction that the Eknath Shinde-led government would collapse soon.

"That man has been the Chief Minister and is being forced to work under someone so junior to him. His mental state is definitely not fine. It's not about getting high, the issue is that we are speaking the truth, fighting for the people of the state, and they are supporting us, that's why such leaders have gone into depression. This high of depression is very bad," he said.

On Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MP Supriya Sule's claim that there will be two 'explosive' developments in Maharashtra, Sanjay Raut said he thinks those will be the state government's collapse and replacing the Chief Minister.

He reiterated his earlier claim that if fresh state elections are held before the general elections next year, the Maha Vikas Aghadi coalition



will win 180-185 seats in the Assembly and at least 40 seats in the Lok Sabha polls in Maharashtra. Amid speculations on the unity between MVA

constituents -- Congress, NCP, and Shiv Sena's Thackeray camp -- following Sharad Pawar's non-committal response to the opposition alliance going to the poll battlefield together again, Raut said the NCP chief's remarks were deliberately twisted.

"Pawar had just said that we are all in the MVA together, and there will be some uncertainties on the existence of the MVA till there is a discussion on seat-sharing. But he clarified yesterday that we will contest elections together as the MVA, we are united," he said, adding that whether it's state or Lok Sabha elections, in 2024 the Maha Vikas Aghadi will fight together.

Raut dismissed speculations that top NCP leader Ajit Pawar might jump ship to the BJP, saying he clearly told the media yesterday that he will be in the NCP as long as he's alive.

"Rumours are being spread about him. It's his family party, where will he go to serve as a slave," he said.

The MVA is holding rallies in every district of Maharashtra, Raut said, adding that all top leaders, including Ajit Pawar from NCP, Nana Patole from Congress, and Uddhav Thackeray from Shiv Sena (UBT), will share the stage at the Mumbai rally on May 1 which his party is organising.

Court Acquits Three Persons Accused Of Rape, Extortion

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A court in Maharashtra's Thane district has acquitted three persons, including a woman, accused of repeatedly raping and extorting money from a 40-year-old woman.

Additional sessions judge Amit M Shete on April 19 acquitted the accused of charges under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code.

Additional public prosecutor Sanjay B More informed the court that the victim, who is a widow, lived with her children in Kashmirira and the accused were also from her neighbourhood.

According to the prosecution, the crime had taken place between 2010 and 2014, when one of the alleged accused helped the victim financially and even offered to marry her. He later raped her on multiple occasions.

The victim then approached the woman accused, who promised to help her and demanded Rs 30,000, which the victim managed to collect by pawning her jewellery, they said. The victim has also alleged that she was repeatedly raped by another man, who was present during her meeting with the woman accused, the prosecution said.



After examining the evidence, the court expressed doubts that the victim, who had been subjected to sexual assault for a considerable period of time, had not shown any resistance.

It further said that it appeared that the relationship, if so, must be by consent. The court also raised questions on why the victim had accepted financial assistance from one of the accused, when she could raise Rs 30,000 by pawning her gold jewellery.

The prosecution's version, rather the allegations, are nothing but a concocted or an imaginary story of the victim, the judge said, adding that there was no material on record to support the charges levelled against the accused.

PUNE MAN KILLS TODDLER BY DIPPING HIM IN BOILING WATER: POLICE

Pune: Pune Police has arrested a man for allegedly killing a one-and-a-half-year-old toddler by dipping him in a bucket full of boiling water in Pimpri Chinchwad, police said on Monday. According to Vaibhav Shingare, senior inspector, "On April 6, the man, identified as Vikram Kolekar, allegedly dipped the toddler in hot boiling water. The accused had an affair with the toddler's 20-year-old mother, Kiran."

The officer said the accused wanted to marry Kiran but she turned down his proposal. Enraged at being refused, he killed the child, the officer said. "A woman saw the accused person committing the crime but did not report it as she was scared," Shingare said. "The witness, who saw Vikram committing the horrific act, briefed his mother on the actual reason behind the child's death," the officer said, adding that accused was arrested based on a complaint.

Mumbai Hotelier Abducted At Gunpoint, Rescued; 7 Arrested: Police



Team Absolute | Mumbai

A businessman running a hotel in Mumbai was allegedly abducted at gunpoint by some persons over a financial dispute, police said on Tuesday.

The incident took place on Monday afternoon and the police later rescued the businessman, Anup Kumar Shetty, from neighbouring Thane, an official said, adding that seven persons

have been arrested in this connection.

Four persons entered Shetty's cabin at Hotel Veera Residency run by him on Andheri-Kurla Road. The accused allegedly beat up the hotelier, fired three rounds from pistols and threatened him with a knife before abducting him, the official said.

The accused took Shetty to Thane from where a police team rescued him on Monday night, he said.

According to police, the incident was the fallout of a financial dispute between Shetty and one of the accused persons, who had operated the hotel for six months. Seven persons have been arrested and booked under Indian Penal Code Sections for kidnapping, extortion, rioting, voluntarily causing hurt, criminal intimidation and provisions of the Arms Act, the official said. A probe is on into the case, he added.

Protests against proposed mega-refinery in Maha with Arab help

Team Absolute | Ratnagiri

Protests have erupted against the proposed Ratnagiri Refinery & Petrochemicals Project (RRPL) coming up in Maharashtra's Rajapur taluka with the help of Saudi ARAMCO and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, activists said here on Tuesday.

Over 500 residents of around six villages have taken to the streets against the soil surveys that were due to start which would affect their lands, according to activist Sachin Chavan.

The opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) leaders of Congress, Nationalist Congress Party, Shiv Sena (UBT), and local parties have come out in support of the villagers, who apprehend that 20 acres of their land will be taken away for the RRPL project. NCP's Leader of



Opposition Ajit Pawar, Congress Legislative Party Leader Balasaheb Thorat, Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Sanjay Raut and others have urged the ruling Shiv Sena-BJP government to call off the survey in view of the opposition from the villagers.

The police have deployed a massive force of over 1,500, 300 SRP personnel and four platoons of riot control police in and around the villages of Barsu, Goval, Dhopeswar Varchiwadi-Goval, Rajapur,

Khalchiwadi-Goval, Panhale-Tarfe.

A Score of women activists protested on Tuesday by squatting and lying on the roads to stop the survey teams from entering their villages as police attempted to physically lift them aside.

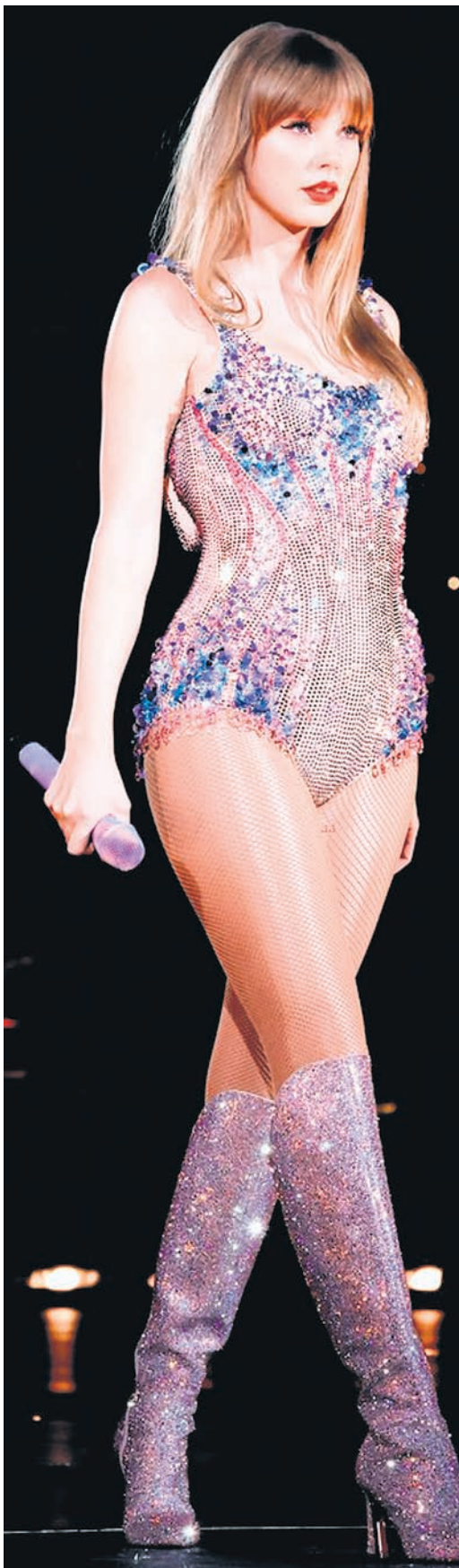
Chavan claimed that over a 100 protesters have been either detained or arrested in the past three days, allegedly flouting norms and being produced in distant courts beyond the stipulated time of

24 hours after they are nabbed.

Prohibitory orders have been clamped till May 31 outside the (above) villages to enable the soil testing for the RRPL project, and notices have slapped on many villagers, he added.

Attempting to persuade the villagers to call off their protests, government officials like Vaishali Mane and Sheetal Jadhav held unsuccessful talks with the protesters. Adding to the government's woes was the overturning of a police vehicle en route to the protest site in which around 17 personnel were injured but their condition is stable in a local hospital.

The RRPL is promoted by IOCL, BPCL and HPCL and plans to construct the mega-refinery and petrochemical complex with help of the two Arab giants which have signed a MoU with the government.



Taylor Swift is 'totally fine' after fans notice her hand

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Taylor Swift is "totally fine" despite a noticeable open wound on her hand.

One day after her fans noticed that she was performing in Houston with the nasty injury, the 'We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together' hitmaker tried to relieve their worries by revealing what really happened, reports aceshowbiz.com.

On Monday, April 24, the 33-year-old singer turned to Instagram to reassure her fans that she's okay.

"For those asking how I cut my hand, I'm totally fine and it was my fault completely," she stated referring to her hand injury Swifties saw during her Sunday night's gig.

Explaining how she suffered the injury, the "Bad Blood" singer spilled: "Tripped on my dress hem and fell in the dark backstage while running to a quick change - braced my fall with my palm. It was all very Mercury in retrograde coded."

She then stressed, "Don't worry about me I'm gooooood."

Injury aside, Taylor wrote in the caption to express excitement over her successful three-night shows in Houston for her "The Eras Tour".

She wrote, "Just got to play 3 insane shows in Houston and I'm waking up smiling reminiscing about how much fun we all had."



Keanu Reeves kept spinal injury secret so he didn't lose 'The Matrix'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Keanu Reeves didn't tell anyone about his spinal injury so he could star in 'The Matrix'. The 58-year-old actor agreed to play Thomas Anderson/Neo in the 1999 sci-fi action film and recalled how he had to keep the problem secret through four months of training so he didn't lose the part, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I met with the Wachowskis and I loved the script, and they showed me pre-vis for bullet time which was extraordinary, and one of the things they talked about in the meeting was training in Hong Kong-style martial arts and asked if I was okay with that, and that it was over four months and I was like, 'Yeah, that sounds okay,'" Keanu said on The Art of Action podcast.

"The only problem - I was dealing with a neck issue which was getting worse, I'd spent a couple of years fighting it off, I was getting tingling. I had done a film called 'Chain Reaction' in Chicago and had a couple of epidurals put in, shot up in the spine."

"I had a bulging disc and I had a fractured disc too, and I started losing feeling and balance." Reeves explained how he had to train in a neck brace for the demanding fight scenes in the blockbuster. The "John Wick" star said, "My spinal column was being sausage'd basically, so I had to have a two level fusion on my spine before training, and they put a plate in my neck."



Jennifer Lawrence lets sex jokes fly in raunchy 'No Hard Feelings' footage

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Lawrence attended CinemaCon to promote the raunchy comedy 'No Hard Feelings'.

The footage played to huge laughs at the annual movie theater trade show, reports 'Variety'.

Director Gene Stupnitsky praised Lawrence as "a true comedy natural."

He says the film is about two helicopter parents who hire a woman to "date" their introverted 19-year-old son so he doesn't leave for college as a virgin.

"And this is based on your life, right?" Lawrence jabbed at Stupnitsky, who retorted, "No, it's actually based off a Craigslist ad."

She tried again. "But you were a virgin for, like, a crazy long time. You were 26?"

The filmmaker sighed before rolling an extended clip from the trailer. "Jennifer, you're so hilarious. I wrote this part for you."

Lawrence stars in 'No Hard Feelings' as an Uber driver named Maddie Barker, who is forced to resort to desperate measures after her car is repossessed. She accepts an unusual Craigslist posting, where her new employers are the wealthy parents of an academically gifted but socially clueless teenage boy named Percy. He's not interested in human interaction, much less a relationship. In exchange for a new ride, Maddie agrees to seduce and date their son to bring him out of his shell before he goes to college.



GUY RITCHIE WATCHED EVERY ACTION, SPY FILM HE COULD FOR 'OPERATION FORTUNE'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Director Guy Ritchie, who has helmed the action-comedy film 'Operation Fortune: Ruse De Guerre', has shared that he watched every action and spy film he could get our hands on in the run up to the production of the film.

The film, which stars Hugh Grant, Aubrey Plaza, Jason Statham, Bugzy Malone, follows the story of special agent Orsen Fortune as he learns about a dangerous arms deal. Putting together his best team of operatives they take on the charmingly villainous billionaire, Greg Simmonds played by Hugh Grant.

Talking about his inspiration for the action-comedy, Guy Ritchie said, "We had the idea

to do a spy film about eight months prior to the start of production. In preparation, we watched every action and spy film we could get our hands on. I didn't like our initial premise, so I started again. After I wrote a new scene, which now opens our story, I knew what the tone of the movie would be, and I liked it."

'Operation Fortune: Ruse De Guerre' is releasing on May 5, 2023 on Lionsgate Play in India.

BLACK and SEXY



CIARA AND DEMI LOVATO LOOK GLAMOROUS IN SEXY BLACK DRESSES AS THEY ATTEND MONOT DINNER PARTY IN LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles | Agencies

Ciara and Demi Lovato led arrivals at Sunday night's star-studded, exclusive Monot dinner party in Los Angeles, reports dailymail.co.uk.

The 37-year-old Level Up hitmaker and the 30-year-old former Disney star showed off their style in sexy black dresses. Ciara - who attended Coachella with her family - stunned in one of the designer's signature looks.

The songstress sizzled in an off-the-shoulder gown with a sheer corset bodice that flashed her abdomen.

Demi was equally eye-catching as her dress balanced chest cutouts with a turtleneck design.

The look also boasted a thigh-high slit and the fashionista added open-toe strappy black heels.

The entertainer, whose full name is Demetria Devonne Lovato, slicked her bob haircut and styled it in a side part.

BRAD PITT WILL RACE IN BRITISH GRAND PRIX FOR HIS FORMULA ONE MOVIE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Brad Pitt has been specially allowed to take part in the first parade lap in July alongside the likes of Lewis Hamilton in order to shoot scenes for his upcoming yet-untitled new movie, in which he plays a veteran driver who comes out of retirement to mentor a rising star.

"Watching Brad Pitt leading the field in the British Grand Prix will be an incredible and surreal moment for TV viewers and fans at Silverstone this July," a source told The Sun newspaper, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Lewis' own production company, Dawn Apollo Films, are making the film and the 38-year-old driver is helping with casting. He previously said, "It's a cool project... (and) spending good time with Brad is pretty epic."

The movie - which is being directed by Joseph Kosinski - will be released next year.

The 'Babylon' actor and the 'Top Gun, Maverick' filmmaker previously attempted to make a racing movie with 'Go Like Hell' back in 2013. The story would have chronicled the rivalry between Ford and Ferrari at Le Mans.



Malin Andersson



IPL 2023: GUJARAT TITANS' ALL-ROUND SHOW THUMPS MUMBAI INDIANS BY 55 RUNS

Ahmedabad | Agencies

Riding on an incredible batting display followed by a classy show with the ball, Gujarat Titans registered a clinical 55-run win over Mumbai Indian in their IPL 2023 match at the Narendra Modi Stadium here on Tuesday.

With this win, the Titans jumped to the second spot with 10 points on the points table while MI are placed seventh with eight points in seven games.

A half-century from Shubman Gill (56 off 34) followed by a late onslaught by Manohar (42 off 21) and Miller (46 off 22), who shared a 71-run partnership, helped Titans recover from a poor start. Rahul Tewatia gave the finishing touches to the innings with his unbeaten 20 off 5 as GT posted 207/6 in their 20 overs.

Afghanistan spinners Rashid Khan (2-27) and Noor Ahmad (3-37) starred with the ball as Gujarat Titans restrict Mumbai Indians to 152/9 and sealed a comprehensive victory by 55 runs.

Chasing the huge 208-run target,



MI had a dismal start as they lost the skipper Rohit Sharma cheaply for four in the Power-play. Rohit tried to flick on the leg-side, but got a leading edge of the bat, the ball chipped back to the bowler and Hardik Pandya completed the catch.

Titans' bowlers continued to keep the run rate in check from the beginning of the chase except in the fourth over when Hardik Pandya conceded two big hits from Cameron Green as Mumbai managed to score just 29 runs and lost a crucial wicket of their skipper in the Power-play.

Then, Rashid Khan's double strike in the eighth over put a further dent in MI's run chase. The leg-spinner first removed Ishan Kishan for 13 then he trapped Impact Player Tilak Verma with his googly for lbw, and MI were reeling at 45/3 in eight overs.

Skipper Pandya rotated his bowler smartly and kept a tight hold on the match as MI were reeling 58/3 at the halfway stage through the chase and the asking run rate climbed to over 15 runs per over.

Noor Ahmad then caused further misery to Mumbai Indians when he

sent Cameron Green packing for 33 and a dot ball later removed Tim David for a duck and half of the Mumbai side was back in the pavilion with 59 runs on the board in 11 overs.

Suryakumar smashed Rashid for two boundaries and six in the 12th over and Nehal Wadhwa joined the party as he hit a couple of boundaries and a maximum in the next overs before Ahmad caught and bold SKY on the last ball of the over, making the chase even tougher for MI.

Thanks to a few big overs, Mumbai Indians collected 83 runs in between 7 and 15 overs and the equation was 96 needed in 30 balls to win for Mumbai.

Brief scores

Gujarat Titans 207/6 in 20 overs (Shubman Gill 56, David Miller 46, Abhinav Monahar 42; Piyush Chawla 2-34) beat Mumbai Indians 152/9 in 20 overs (Cameron Green 33, Nehal Wadhwa 40; Noor Ahmad 3-27, Rashid Khan 2-27, Mohit Sharma 2-38) by 55 runs

Ajinkya Rahane recalled to India Test squad for WTC final against Australia

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Senior batter Ajinkya Rahane was on Tuesday recalled in India's 15-member squad for the ICC World Test Championship final against Australia, scheduled to be played at The Oval from June 7 to 11.

The 34-year-old batter has been out of the India team since the Cape Town Test against South Africa last year, after an extended run of low scores, but injuries to key personnel and his own spectacular form in the ongoing IPL 2023 has helped him make a comeback.

Playing for the Chennai Super Kings in the IPL 2023, Rahane has scored 209 runs in five matches so far, at an average of 52.25 and a strike-rate of 199.04. The right-hander batter also had a decent season for Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy 2022-23 campaign, scoring 634 runs at 57.63 including two centuries.

Back in the India squad, Rahane could be a leading contender to take up the No.5 slot vacated by the injury-enforced absence of Shreyas Iyer. KL Rahul, who was left out of the final two Tests against Australia and lost his vice-captaincy along the way, is an alternate choice if India decide to rejig their order.

In absence of injured Shreyas Iyer, Rahane could be a leading contender to bat at No. 5 in the Indian batting line up. KL Rahul, who was dropped for the final two Tests against Australia and lost his vice-captaincy along the way, is another option for that slot.



India's Test squad WTC final:

Rohit Sharma (Captain), Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane, K L Rahul, KS Bharat (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Shardul Thakur, Mohd. Shami, Mohd. Siraj, Umesh Yadav, Jaydev Unadkat.

Defending champion Jabeur withdraws from Madrid Open due to injury

Team Absolute | New Delhi

World No.4 Ons Jabeur, who won her first career WTA 1000 title at the Madrid Open last year, won't be able to defend her title this season as she has pulled out from the tournament because of a left calf injury.

Tunisia's Jabeur made it to the final four of last week's Stuttgart Open, but she retired from her semifinal match against World No.1 Iga Swiatek while trailing 3-0 due to her ailing left calf.

Two-time Grand Slam finalist took to twitter to give an update on her injury.

"Further to many medical exams done, it shows that I have a small tear in my calf and I will need more time to recover. I am sad to announce that I won't be able to compete and defend my title this year," Jabeur said in a statement. It is the second injury to affect Jabeur's season. Following this year's Australian Open, she underwent minor knee surgery which kept her out of the entire Middle East swing in February. Jabeur returned for the Sunshine Double, and then seemed back to her best on clay. She won her



fourth career WTA singles title on the dirt in Charleston at the start of April, then defeated Jelena Ostapenko and Beatriz Haddad Maia in Stuttgart before her semifinal retirement.

MULTIPLE COUNTRIES INTERESTED IN HOSTING 2027 FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Geneva (Switzerland): FIFA has announced that it had received a total of four expressions of interest from member associations to host the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup.

Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands expressed their interest in jointly hosting the tournament. The United States and Mexico also want to stage the tournament together. Brazil and South Africa informed FIFA with their separate intentions, a Xinhua report said. FIFA will send the bidding agreement to the interested member associations and they need to return it before May 19, 2023, to confirm their involvement.

The FIFA Congress on May 17, 2024, will make the decision on the hosts.



IPL 2023: Mark Wood to miss final stages of the tournament

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Lucknow Super Giants' (LSG) English pacer Mark Wood is set to miss the final stages of IPL 2023 to attend the birth of his child.

The LSG pacer, who has already missed the last two matches due to illness, is expected to fly back home in late May.

The English speedster has been in impressive form in IPL 2023, picking 11 wickets in his four appearances including 5 for 14 on his IPL debut against Delhi Capitals.

According to an ESPNcricinfo report, Wood and his wife Sarah are expecting their second child towards the end of May, and Wood will fly home at some point in the coming weeks to be present at the birth.

LSG play their next fixture



against Punjab Kings on Friday and will have back-to-back home matches against Royal Challengers Bangalore and Chennai Super Kings on May 1 and 3.

The IPL qualifiers are scheduled for May 23 and 26 with the final set to be played on May 28.

England is also scheduled to play a one-off Test against Ireland at Lord's on June 1, four days after the IPL final.

England Test skipper Ben Stokes has previously indicated that he may leave the IPL early to prepare for the Ireland Test. But, despite the Ashes this summer the ECB does not intend to pull players out of the tournament against their will.

According to ESPNcricinfo, the ECB has assured the BCCI and franchises that England players would be available for the full season.

Sonora Rally 2023

BUHLER FINISHES 10TH; ROSS BRANCH IN 11TH IN FIRST STAGE IN MEXICO

Mexico City | Agencies

Sebastian Buhler finished the stage in the 10th fastest time of the day, while Ross Branch followed closely behind in the 11th position as Hero MotoSports Team Rally completed the first stage of Sonora Rally 2023 with a steady performance.

Sebastian Buhler was the third rider to start the Stage, and had a challenging time navigating his way through the dust. However, the young German managed to keep his focus on the road book and made it to the finish in good time. However, an unfortunate penalty for speeding at a particular check point marred his otherwise great performance. He is placed at the 12th overall position.

For Ross Branch, the first stage did not go as well as expected. The Botswanan lost some precious time



due to a small navigation mistake halfway through the stage. However,

his Hero 450 Rally performed at its best, and he managed to cross the

finish-line just outside the top-10. Ross currently holds the 10th position in the overall standings of the Rally.

Stage 1 gave the riders a deeper overview of what to expect over the week -- a true Mexican welcome to the first timers at this Rally. The 339 km loop through the ranchlands surrounding Hermosillo featured a 170 km timed section, and an equal amount in liaisons.

The competitors found themselves navigating their way through winding desert tracks around sky-high cacti forests, occasional wildlife spotting, and more. The loose dirt and gravel throughout the route made navigation all the more difficult, with riders often getting caught behind each other's dust, the Hero MotoSports Team Rally informed in a release on Tuesday.

Neeraj Chopra to compete in Golden Spike Ostrava athletics meet

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Reigning Olympics champion Neeraj Chopra will feature in a strong javelin throw field at the Ostrava Golden Spike, 11th World Athletics Continental Tour Gold meeting of the season, in Ostrava on June 27.

The Asian Games and Commonwealth Games gold medalist will begin his 2023 season at the Doha Diamond League Meet on May 5.

The 25-year-old is the reigning Diamond League champion. He won the coveted title in September last year at the Diamond League finals in Zurich, becoming the first Indian athlete to win the trophy.

At an event in Ostrava, the javelin will again be in the spotlight. India's Olympic champion Chopra, who claimed a historic world silver in Oregon will again face the two athletes who had joined him on the podium there -- Grenada's two-time world gold medalist Anderson Peters and Czech Republic's bronze medalist Jakub Vadlejch.



Besides, 3000m steeplechase runner Lamecha Girma and 100m hurdler Tobi Amusan will join their fellow world record-holder Paul Vauter Mondo Duplantis at the Ostrava Golden Spike.

In the women's category, the Japanese athlete Haruka Kitaguchi (66.00), the bronze medalist at the World Championships and winner of the DL meetings in Paris and Silesia will be up against the World and European championships finalist Czech Republic's Nikola Ogrodnikova.

If SRH doesn't trust Umran Malik, it's better to bring in a batsman, says Wasim Jaffer

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former India batter Wasim Jaffer has questioned the utilisation of Umran Malik by Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH). He stated that if the team think tank doesn't have enough belief in Malik's bowling abilities, they would be better off adding a batter to the team.

Malik bowled only two overs in the match against Delhi Capitals (DC) on Monday. He conceded 14 runs and went wicketless. The fast bowler picked up five wickets in six matches so far and hasn't bowled his full quota of 4 overs in most of the games.

The capitals were struggling at 62/5. Then, Axar Patel struck a crucial run-a-ball 34 and with help from Manish Pandey (34 off 28) propelled DC to a below-par 144/9 in 20 overs. "SRH are playing Umran



Malik, but he bowled only two overs in the match against Delhi. Instead of him, they could have played a batter. If you don't trust him as a bowler, it's better to bring in a batsman to the team."

"Delhi were 62/5 at one point, but Hyderabad allowed them to reach 144. If they had bowled better, things could have been easier for them. Letting Delhi make 144 was a mistake by SRH," Jaffer told ESPNcricinfo.

Defending a modest 144, DC put up a brilliant bowling effort as Axar, Kuldeep Yadav, Anrich Nortje and Ishant Sharma restricted SRH to 137/6 as the Sunrisers succumbed to their third defeat in a row. Jaffer further suggested a change in Sunrisers' batting lineup to improve their performance, suggesting that Abhishek Sharma should open the innings and Harry Brook to bat in the middle.

Premier League

All eyes on title decider at Etihad, but big games elsewhere

London | Agencies

Manchester City host Arsenal on Wednesday night in what promises to be the decisive match of this season's Premier League.

City go into the match five points behind the league leaders but with two games in hand, and a repeat of their triumph at the Emirates Stadium earlier this campaign would leave them just two points behind their rivals.

Arsenal fought back from 2-0 and 3-1 down to take a point against Southampton on Friday but has conceded seven goals in three games. The bad news for coach Mikel Arteta is that defender William Saliba is unlikely to have recovered from his back injury to be able to play, while a hamstring problem will sideline City's Nathan Ake.

West Ham entertain Liverpool on Wednesday, with the home side looking for a win that would lift them well clear of the relegation zone and



allow them to focus on their upcoming UEFA Europa Conference League semifinal.

David Moyes' men looked impressive as they

scored four against Bournemouth on Saturday, and the Scot will look for their high press to work against a team that has regained confidence in recent games and aim to qualify for Europe.

Two wins and two draws have given Liverpool a huge boost, with coach Jurgen Klopp saying they have recovered the football that made them so dangerous in recent seasons. However, as Nottingham Forest's two goals against them showed at the weekend, the Reds can still be vulnerable.

Frank Lampard is seeking his first win since returning to Chelsea in a south London derby at home to Brentford, while Forest has a must-win match at home to Brighton.

It could be a good moment to face Brighton, who will have tired legs after the heartbreak of their FA Cup semifinal defeat against Manchester United, but after 11 games without a win, nothing but three points will be good enough for Steve Cooper's side.



Social media trolling impacted my mental health:

Chahatt Khanna

Team Absolute | Mumbai

TV actress Chahatt Khanna has revealed that social media trolling, negative and abusive comments often affected her mentally but now she is learning to handle the trolls peacefully.

She said: "Earlier, I used to take the comments more seriously, I have now learned to ignore them and focus on the positive aspects of my life. It is essential to address the issue of online trolling and cyberbullying, as it can have a severe impact on people's mental health."

The actress, who is known for television programmes 'Kumkum', 'Kaajjal', 'Qubool Hai', 'Bade Achhe Lagte Hain', further shared that online trolling can affect a person's mental health and well-being.

She added that people unnecessarily comment on someone's looks and that is unfortunate and insulting. Chahatt requested everyone to spread positivity.

She added: "I have also urged people to spread positivity and kindness on social media, rather than spreading hate and negativity. I believe that social media can be a powerful tool for connecting people and spreading positivity if used in the right way. It is important to remember that everyone has the right to express themselves and to be themselves without fear of harassment. We should all strive to use social media responsibly and to spread positivity instead of hate."



My biggest learning from supernatural film was importance of pushing boundaries: Ekta

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Tczarina Ekta Kapoor talked about her supernatural thriller film 'U-Turn', which is directed by Arif Khan and features Alaya F in the lead role. Ekta said that while making this movie, she learned to experiment with something new and take risks. She added that these supernatural thrillers are popular and people are interested in watching this kind of content on-screen.

Ekta said while sharing her experience of

producing 'U-Turn': "My biggest learning from 'U-Turn' was the importance of pushing boundaries and taking risks. As a producer, it can be easy to stick to what has worked in the past, but by taking risks and trying new things, we can create something truly unique and impactful."

"I also learned the importance of collaboration and attention to detail in the filmmaking process, as well as the need to embrace challenges and adapt to unexpected situations. Finally, I was reminded of the power of storytelling to connect with audiences on an emotional level and to provoke thought and discussion," she added.



Dimple Kapadia: High time that women got a chance to showcase their strength

Mumbai: Veteran Bollywood actress Dimple Kapadia, who will be seen playing the role of a matriarch Savitri in the web series 'Saas Bahu Aur Flamingo', has spoken about how the portrayal of women is changing with time and they are shown to be more bold.

She is playing the role of a woman, Savitri, who runs a company and uses it as a cover for her drug business. She is the most important female person of the family which consists of four women including her two daughters-in-law and a daughter.

The 65-year-old actress has given a number of hits such as 'Saagar', 'Rudaali', 'Gardish', 'Lekin..', 'Kaash', 'Prahaar', 'Narsimha' and 'Hum Kaun Hai' among others.

Talking about her role, Dimple said: "It feels absolutely exhilarating, we have always seen men taking on these powerful roles, and it's high time that women got a chance to showcase their strength and determination in such roles and playing a Queenpin certainly fits the bill."

On sharing about the portrayal of women on-screen and how it is changing, she added: "I strongly stand for embracing who you are as a person and showcasing that out there. There are a lot of films that showcase women as strong characters - one with multiple layers and emotional complexities."

"So yes, we are evolving and so are our content consumption choices, we just need the right creators to tell the story and with the advent of streaming services, now these stories can travel across the globe," she concluded.



Saiyami Kher reunites with Gulzar, to recite his poetry in her next



Mumbai: Actress Saiyami Kher, who worked with legendary writer-director-lyricist Gulzar in her Bollywood debut 'Mirzya', has reunited with the maestro in her upcoming movie '8 A.M. Metro'.

The movie, helmed by the director Raj R, also stars Gulshan Devaiah, and features poetry by Gulzar. The actress will be seen reciting Gulzar's poems in the film.

Sharing her experience of working again with the veteran artist, the actress said, "8 A.M. Metro' is a beautiful story and is decorated with poetry written by Gulzar Saab. His poems bring so much life into the film. I feel lucky to have gotten a chance to mouth those poems. He was gracious enough to release the poster of the movie. I have been fortunate to start my acting career with him in Mirzya and Gulzar Saab's words and existence has left a huge impact on my life. His body of work, humility, and knowledge is so vast, all I can do is sit back and wonder how one man can do so much".

Aayush Sharma hits back at trolls who ridicule wife Arpita over her looks

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Aayush Sharma, who recently hosted the Eid party at his Khar residence along with his wife Arpita Khan, has hit back at trolls who constantly ridicule Arpita on her looks every time her new pictures come on the internet. The actor was recently speaking at Tedx Talks platform and defended his wife as he said, "My wife, she is constantly trolled for being overweight, she is a constant target and being a celebrity she should not be fat or she should dress a certain way and she is dark in colour. Every time a picture comes live, people remind her that she is dark in colour." He further mentioned that the world has largely forgotten that beauty is intrinsic. He shared, "You should come to terms that beauty is no longer internal, nobody wants to know you as a human being, people want to see you beautiful externally...but I am proud of my wife because she is comfortable in her own skin." "She is proud of who she is and behind closed doors, she tells me I am not a celebrity, I have done nothing and I am never gonna in front of the camera, so I am gonna be who I am and I am gonna live my life as I want to," he concluded.



Fortunate to be able to work with Nawaz: Nikki

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former 'Bigg Boss 14' contestant Nikki Tamboli shared her working experience with the well-known Bollywood actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui in the family comedy film 'Jogira Sara Ra Ra'. She will be seen dancing along with the actor in an item number. The film also stars Mithun Chakraborty's son Mimoh Chakraborty. Nikki said that there could be no better start for her in Bollywood than getting an opportunity to work with Nawazuddin in the film.

Nikki made her acting debut with a Telugu film 'Chikati Gadilo Chithakotudu'. Later, she also did a Tamil film 'Kanchana 3'. She made her TV debut with 'Bigg Boss 14' which gave her a lot of fame and made her place in the entertainment industry. She also took part in 'Khatron Ke Khiladi 11'. She shared her working experience with the 'Gangs of Wasseypur' actor and said: "I am extremely overwhelmed and thrilled. It was such an amazing experience working with veteran actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui. Sharing screen space with Nawaz sir

will be a great start for my journey in Bollywood. It's a really catchy song that will pick up quite fast and nonetheless I hope my fans love it."



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Aamna Sharif