

**NATION** > 02  
**Cong sets free terrorists, defames country worldwide: PM Modi ...**

**HOLLYWOOD** > 06  
**'Selective cancel culture': Jameela Jamil slams Met Gala for honouring ...**

**SPORTS** > 07  
**IPL 2023: Ishan-SKY show helps MI chase down 215, beat PBKS ...**



**LIKELIHOOD OF EL NINO DEVELOPING LATER THIS YEAR INCREASING: WMO**

# Climate getting worst

▶ NO TWO EL NINO EVENTS ARE THE SAME AND THE EFFECTS DEPEND PARTLY ON THE TIME OF YEAR.

▶ EL NINO IS A NATURALLY OCCURRING CLIMATE PATTERN ASSOCIATED WITH WARMING OF THE OCEAN SURFACE TEMPERATURES IN THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN TROPICAL PACIFIC OCEAN. IT OCCURS ON AVERAGE EVERY TWO TO SEVEN YEARS, AND EPISODES USUALLY LAST NINE TO 12 MONTHS.

▶ EL NINO EVENTS ARE TYPICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED RAINFALL IN PARTS OF SOUTHERN SOUTH AMERICA, THE SOUTHERN US, THE HORN OF AFRICA AND CENTRAL ASIA.

▶ IN CONTRAST, EL NINO CAN ALSO CAUSE SEVERE DROUGHTS OVER AUSTRALIA, INDONESIA, AND PARTS OF SOUTHERN ASIA.



tures. The unusually stubborn La Nina has now ended after a three-year run and the tropical Pacific is currently in an ENSO-neutral state (neither El Nino nor La Nina).

There is a 60 per cent chance for a transition from ENSO-neutral to El Nino during May-July 2023, and this will increase to about 70 per cent in June-August and 80 per cent between July and September, according to the update, which is based on input from WMO Global Producing Centres of Long-Range Forecasts and expert assessment.

At this stage there is no indication of the strength or duration of El Nino.

"We just had the eight warmest years on record, even though we had a cooling La Nina for the past three years and this acted as a temporary brake on global temperature increase. The development of an El

**"The world should prepare for the development of El Niño, which is often associated with increased heat, drought or rainfall in different parts of the world. It might bring respite from the drought in the Horn of Africa and other La Nina-related impacts but could also trigger more extreme weather and climate events. This highlights the need for the UN Early Warnings for All initiative to keep people safe."**

**Prof. Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General, WMO**

Nino will most likely lead to a new spike in global heating and increase the chance of breaking temperature records," said WMO Secretary-General Prof. Petteri Taalas.

According to WMO's State of the

**IMD predicts cyclone over Bay of Bengal around May 9**

**Bhubaneswar:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday said that there is a possibility of the formation of a cyclone over the Bay of Bengal (BoB) around May 9.

A cyclonic circulation will form over southeast Bay of Bengal around May 6, which will convert into a low pressure area over the same region on May 7. The system is likely to concentrate into a depression on the next day, the IMD said.

"Thereafter, there is a good possibility of its intensification while moving nearly northwards towards central Bay of Bengal," it said.

However, the IMD has not yet predicted its intensity, path and impact on Odisha coast.

Global Climate reports, 2016 is the warmest year on record because of the "double whammy" of a very powerful El Niño event and human-induced warming from greenhouse gases.

The effect on global temperatures usually plays out in the year after its development and so will likely be most apparent in 2024.

## Centre says 'not marriage, but could grant certain legal rights to gay couples'; 'step forward', says SC

New Delhi | Agencies

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said Centre's proposal to set up a committee to examine whether certain legal rights could be granted to same-sex couples without legal sanction of their relationship as a "marriage" is an incremental step and "sometimes beginnings are small, those



**SC declines to commute Rajoana's death penalty**

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Wednesday declined to grant relief on a plea filed by Balwant Singh Rajoana, seeking commutation of his death penalty in the 1995 assassination case of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh and others, in view of over 10 years delay in deciding a mercy petition, saying "it is within the domain of the executive to take a call on such sensitive issues".

The bench said the petitioner himself never submitted any mercy petition and the alleged mercy petition of 2012 was filed by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC).

The bench said it would not be within its domain to delve upon the decision of the competent authority to defer taking of any decision at present.

beginning could be very substantial".

The top court stressed that if the government takes the first step forward in this matter, there will be substantial benefit and also substantial advancement in recognition of the relationship of same-sex couples, as it told the petitioners' counsel, "This is a step forward and therefore, don't have to go for all or nothing."

At the beginning of the hearing, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submitted before a five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India, D.Y. Chandrachud, that the government was agreeable to setting up a committee under the Cabinet secretary to examine what types of legal rights could be given to same-sex couples. "The government is positive. What we have decided

is that this would need coordination between more than one ministry. Therefore, a committee headed by no less than the Cabinet secretary will be constituted," Mehta said, as he sought suggestions from the petitioners on the problems they are facing. The petitioners contended that the resolution intended by the government was in the nature of administrative tweaking, and not legal.

At this juncture, the Chief Justice said that at the constitutional level, there is a serious problem if one goes by what young people feel, as a constitutional court then, "we would be subject to volumes of data on how people feel... Therefore, the great salutary safeguard of the constitutional adjudication is that the court is to go by what the Constitution mandates, therefore we do not go by either popular morality or

**SC questions ED Director's extension**

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Wednesday shot a volley of questions at the Centre in connection with the third extension of service given to ED Director Sanjay Kumar Mishra.

The bench asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, "is there no competent person in the entire agency and can one person be so indispensable? What will happen to the agency post-2023 when he does retire?"

The top court, in a 2021 judgment, had said that any extension of tenure granted to officers holding the post of director after attaining the age of superannuation should be for a short period, adding that no further extension will be given to Mishra.

segmental morality, we decide what the Constitution says." The CJJ told the petitioners that mere declaration of right to marry is not adequate itself, unless it is implemented by statutory provision, which recognises, regulates and confers entitlement on those who are married. Last week, the top court had asked Mehta to seek instructions on whether certain rights could be granted to same-sex couples to ensure their social security and welfare.

## If you want UP style of governance, shut courts: Bihar law minister

Team Absolute | Patna

While the BJP leaders are advocating a Yogi Adityanath style of governance in Bihar, state Law Minister Shamim Ahmed has said that first it needs to close all the courts and then think of governance like Uttar Pradesh has at present. "When BJP is in power, Bihar is having Mangal Raj and when it goes out of power, Jungle Raj comes in Bihar. Go to Uttar Pradesh and experience the governance there. If you want Uttar Pradesh like governance in Bihar, first it needs to close all the courts," Ahmed said while interacting with media persons in Motihari. "If all the decisions have to be taken by the chief



minister, what is the need for courts," he said.

"We have Nitish Kumar style of governance in Bihar. I admit that the crime graph has increased in Bihar but

that is only due to population growth. Our DGP has taken an initiative to deploy two SHOs in one police station to check the crime graph in Bihar," Ahmed said.

**JEE Advanced 2023 Delhi HC dismisses plea seeking relaxation for students**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday dismissed a plea seeking relaxation for the students appearing in the JEE Advanced 2023.

Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav, hearing a petition filed by a group of 67 students, dismissed the plea urging that it should be made possible for them to retake the engineering entrance exam as technical issues plagued both JEE Main 2022 sessions, which were held in June and July last year.

These errors prevented the candidates from giving the exam a fair shot, which led to significant decreases in many candidates' scores and percentages. Last year, there were a number of technological issues with the JEE exams,

including frequent computer crashes, a frozen screen for many minutes, questions that took too long to load, unfinished questions, and more.

Some students had claimed that they were unable to take the exam because their centres were abruptly relocated without intimation. Some candidates encountered mistakes in their results as well as differences in their response sheet.

Students encountered similar technical issues during JEE Advanced 2022. For many of the students who experienced technical difficulties, it was their final try.

It was the final JEE Main test for students who finished Class 12 in 2020, and the final JEE Advanced attempt for students who passed Class 12 in 2021.

**PT Usha meets protesting wrestlers at Jantar Mantar**

New Delhi:

IOA president PT Usha on Wednesday met wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik and other grapplers, who have been sitting on a protest demanding the arrest of Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, and assured them of support.

Usha had a discussion with the protesting wrestlers and left the protest site without speaking to the media. Later, Bajrang Punia told reporters that Usha has assured them that she will help them get justice.

"PT Usha met us and assured her support. She said she is first an athlete and then an administrator. She assured us that she will help us in getting justice," Bajrang said.

Earlier, the former athlete had on April 27 said that the wrestlers should have approached the IOA instead of going out in the streets against the WFI and its president, whom the wrestlers accused of sexual harassment and mismanagement of athletes.



**Russia warns of retaliation for Ukrainian attack on Kremlin**

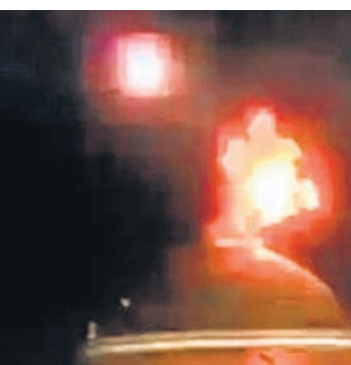
MOSCOW | Agencies

Russia reserves the right to retaliate "anywhere and anytime it deems necessary" in response to the drone attack on President Vladimir Putin's residence, the Kremlin has said, according to a media report.

Officials said two Ukrainian drones attempted to strike Kremlin early on Wednesday morning, but the raid was thwarted, RT reported.

The President was not hurt in the "terrorist attack", and the Kremlin complex did not suffer any damage, Putin's office said, as per the report.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov told RIA Novosti that the Russian leader was not in Kremlin when the raid happened, adding that Putin was working at his Novo-Ogaryovo residence near Moscow on Wednesday. Ukraine launched two drone



attacks overnight intended to strike the Kremlin residence of Putin, the President's office said, RT reported.

The aircraft were downed using electronic warfare measures and caused no casualties or damage, it said in a statement. Moscow considers the incident as an "act of terrorism".

The incident occurred late on Tuesday night, and both unmanned aircraft fell on the grounds of Kremlin, according to the President's office. His schedule was not affected, RT reported.

## 'Border Haats' in Tripura along India-Bangladesh border to reopen after 3 yrs

Sujit Chakraborty | Agartala

After three years of closure, one of the two 'Border Haats' (markets) in Tripura along India-Bangladesh border will resume trading from May 9, officials said on Wednesday.

A top official of the Tripura Industries and Commerce Department said that after a recent meeting between the district officials of Feni (Bangladesh) and South Tripura, it was decided to resume the business of the Purba Madhugram (Bangladesh)-Srinagar (South Tripura) 'Border Haats' from May 9.

"Efforts were on to restart the Kasba (Bangladesh)-Kamlasagar (Tripura) Border Haat in Sepahijala district," the official told Correspondent.

The four Border Haats, two each in Tripura and Meghalaya, have remained closed since March 2020 after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdowns, causing immense loss to the people living in the bordering villages.

Both the Tripura and Meghalaya governments have been pressing the



Centre to take up the matter with the Bangladesh government to resume the Border Haats.

The two Border Haats in Meghalaya -

at Balat (East Khasi Hills district) and Kalaichar (South West Garo Hills district) -- were reopened last year and both are functional once a week now.





# CONG SETS FREE TERRORISTS, DEFAMES COUNTRY WORLDWIDE: PM MODI

Bengaluru | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi continued attacking the Congress on Wednesday and said the governments ruled by the party set free terrorists and also defame the country globally. Addressing a massive public rally in Mulki near Moodabidri town in Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada district, PM Modi said, "A few years ago in Rajasthan 50 people were killed in an incident of bomb explosion. You imagine the big conspiracy against the nation. But, the Congress government and the police let the culprits out of prison. No punishment was given. "Appeasement is the only identity of the Congress party. You want to let them rule this state? Let Karnataka be destroyed? Whichever state wants progress and prosperity they will put the Congress party out first. If peace is there in the society, Congress can't be at peace. If the country is progressing, Congress can't tolerate it. "The Congress party pursues the policy of divide and rule. Karnataka



has seen its scary face. They are saving terror suspects and letting them out. "I have a dream of taking the country's economy to the third position from the present fifth place. Without Karnataka state, I can't achieve it. No one noticed India until it became the fifth largest economy.

We have surpassed the UK, which had ruled India for 250 years and made us slaves. This is what the Modi government can do," PM Modi said. While highlighting the government's achievements, PM Modi said, "Today children from every city and town are talking about the G20 summit. The conferences of G20 are tak-

ing place in small cities across the country. One of the agenda of G20 is female-led development. "BJP wants to make Karnataka a number one state in terms of development. What does Congress want? They want to make Karnataka, the ATM of a family based in New Delhi. The party had taken 85 per cent cuts in every project that would destroy the state. The people of Karnataka should be cautious of Congress and JD(S) as well." PM Modi appealed to the first-time voters to vote for the BJP in order to make their career and shape the country's future. "If you elect an unstable government, your career will become unstable. Congress is an enemy of peace and investors run away from states where Congress is ruling," he said. "Our country respects soldiers. The Congress gets saddened. It insults our Army, soldiers and Army Chiefs. At a time when the whole world is giving respect to Indian democracy, Congress is defaming the country worldwide," PM Modi said.

## If you won't vote for Cong, Yogi's bulldozer will come to haunt K'taka: Kharge

Kalaburagi | Agencies

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said on Wednesday that if the people of Karnataka do not vote for the party, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's bulldozer will come to haunt the southern state as well. Addressing a huge public rally in Alandi in Kalaburagi district, Kharge stated that these days the UP CM is coming to Karnataka frequently. Giving the appearance of a saint, wearing saintly clothes, instead of showing the good path of humanity he instigates clashes between the people. CM Yogi says jo hamare baat nahi manenge, use bulldozer lagake nikal denge. Is desh mein nahin rah sakte. (whoever doesn't listen to us, we will get rid of them through the bulldozer, they can't live in this country), said Kharge. "I think those who are foreigners should be asked to leave the country, not us who are the natives of this country.



So I want to tell you, if you won't give the vote to the Congress party then Yogi's bulldozer will come here also," Kharge stated. Chief Minister Bommali should beware of Modi ji and Amit Shah. The BJP claims they will give a "Mazboot Sarkar" in Karnataka, but they changed multiple CMs. It is an important 'do or die' election for Karnataka. The 40 per cent commission state government is damned. It has cheated our people, Kharge said. This election is not only significant for Karnataka, but for the nation. Karnataka must become corruption free. It must be freed from the 40 per cent BJP misrule, Kharge stated. Modi ji often says in his speeches that 'na mein khaunga, na khane dunga!' (I

won't take bribes, I will not let others take bribes). But Bommali sits next to him. The PM should ask him for a 40 per cent commission, Kharge taunted. "Modi ji complains about me, baap aur bete ne kuch kaha! (father and son duo have said something against me) He is our Prime Minister, how can we insult him? Irrespective of the party he belongs to, we accept our Prime Minister! We have not insulted him, instead Modi ji has insulted Karnataka, he said. We brought a Central University in this area. We spent Rs 400 to Rs 500 crore for the building. But teachers are not in full strength. There are vacancies and the number of departments have gone down, he alleged. We have constructed a Mega ESI hospital here. Later I requested the BJP government to start an AIIMS here. We had spent a thousand crores on the infrastructure. In the main hall in the hospital, 5,000 people can sit, it is such a grand building.

## K'taka: Rs 1 cr found hidden in tree located in Cong candidate's brother's house

Mysuru | Agencies

Days before Karnataka goes to the polls, Income Tax officers on Wednesday seized Rs 1 crore hidden between the branches of a tree in Mysuru. According to sources, the money was seized from a tree located inside the residential compound of K. Subramanya Rai, the brother of Ashok Kumar Rai, who is contesting from the Puttur Assembly constituency in Dakshina Kannada district on a Congress ticket. The authorities are investigating the money trail to ascertain whether it leads to the Congress candidate, and why the money was hidden in Mysuru, sources said. The money found was in the denomination of Rs 500 currency notes, which were hidden in boxes used to keep fruits and kept between the branches of the tree, according to sources. The 224-member Karnataka Assembly goes to the polls on May 10, while the counting of votes will be taken up on May 13.



## HEAVY RAIN IN DELHI CAUSES WATERLOGGING, TRAFFIC SNARLS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National capital hit with an unexpected and unusual weather phenomenon, witnessed heavy rain and hailstorm on Wednesday leading to waterlogging and traffic congestion in several areas. Normally, Delhi experiences dry and hot weather during this time of year, but the rain over the past few days has caused a major weather change. The sudden downpour caused significant traffic disruptions and slowdowns across the city. Many major roads were affected by the heavy rain and hailstorm, leaving motorists stranded and struggling to navigate through the flooded streets. Traffic was affected in the carriageway from Wazirabad flyover towards Timarpur police station due to waterlogging. Another situation was spotted near AIIMS. Traffic was badly affected in the carriageway from AIIMS towards IIT due to waterlogging near Yusuf Sarai. The rainfall and hailstorm not only caused traffic disruptions, but also caused damaged crops in the surrounding areas of the city.



## HAILSTORM HITS RAJASTHAN, ORANGE ALERT ISSUED

Jaipur: The MeT department on Wednesday issued an orange alert in Rajasthan after severe hailstorm battered the northern parts of the state. Several places in the state were covered under a white blanket. Late on Tuesday evening, hailstorm hit places like Churu, Bikaner, Ganganagar, Hanumangarh. Fields in many villages of these districts turned white. As per the MeT officials, there is a strong possibility of thunderstorm/strong wind at isolated places in Jaipur (North), Sawaimadhopur, Jhunjhunu, Churu, Sikar, Sriganganagar, Hanumangarh, Jodhpur, Rajasmand, Ajmer, Jodhpur, Pali, Bhiwara, Chittorgarh, Bundi, Kota districts and adjoining areas on Wednesday too.

## Delhi Hit-and-Run: Victim was seen lying on roof as car drove for 3 km

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A 30-year-old man was killed while his cousin was seriously injured in a hit-and-run case in Delhi's high-security VIP zone. The shocking incident, which was captured on camera by an eyewitness, took place at the intersection of Kasturba Gandhi Marg and Tolstoy Marg on the intervening night of Saturday-Sunday. The deceased has been identified as Deepanshu Verma, a resident of Gandhi Nagar. His cousin Mukul (20), a resident of Shastrri Park, is undergoing treatment at a hospital where his condition is stated to be critical. Verma, who owned a jewellery shop, is survived by his parents and a sister. According to an FIR that was registered on the statement of eyewitness Mohd Bilal (22), the incident occurred at around 12:55 a.m. "Around 12:30 a.m, me and my friends had gone to India Gate. While returning, when we reached



near the Tolstoy Marg-K.G. Marg red light, we saw a recklessly-driven Mahindra XUV coming from the

Connaught Place side hit two men on a bike," Bilal said in his statement. The impact of the collision was so strong that Mukul fell on the roadside, while Verma landed on the roof of the car. "Shockingly, the car driver did not stop to assess the situation, and instead sped towards the Ranjeet Singh flyover with the injured man still on the roof. We even followed the car on my scooter while recording the incident. But despite us honking and shouting, the car did not stop," the FIR stated. "The SUV driver was around 35-40 years old. He knew that an injured person was on the roof of the car, yet he kept on driving the car. Since he was driving very fast, I could not keep pace with his. So I returned to the spot where the accident took place, and took the injured person to the RML Hospital," the FIR added. As per sources, the man was killed when he was flung from the roof as the vehicle took a sharp turn near Delhi Gate and fled.

## Infiltration bid foiled, 2 terrorists killed in J&K's Machil

Srinagar | Agencies

Two terrorists were killed near the Line of Control in the Machil sector of North Kashmir's Kupwara district, officials said on Wednesday. The Army said based on specific intelligence input provided by SSP Kupwara of likely infiltration from one of the terrorist launch pads across the Line of Control (LoC) towards Machil sector, troops were put on high alert on May 1. The Army said the bodies of the two terrorists have been recovered along with two AK series rifles, magazines and a huge quantity of war-like stores. "Further extensive search of the area is under progress. "Identity of terrorists and



affiliated terrorist group is being ascertained. This successful intelligence based operation is yet another example of close synergy between Indian Army, J&K Police and all agencies.

"The security forces stand steadfast to defeat the nefarious designs of inimical elements supported by our adversary to disrupt peace and harmony of the area," the Army said.

## 12-YEAR-OLD BOY MAULED TO DEATH BY STRAY DOGS IN BAREILLY



Bareilly: A 12-year-old boy was mauled to death by a pack of stray dogs in C. B. Ganj area in Bareilly while another child was also injured. According to reports, the incident took place on Tuesday when dogs attacked the victim, Ayaan, who was playing with his friends in Khana Gauntiyia village. The boy ran for his life as the stray dogs went after him. However, he fell down on the ground, following which the dogs pounced on him. Passers-by saw the boy being attacked by dogs and rescued him. He was rushed to a hospital but succumbed to his injuries during treatment. Two months ago, a three-year-old girl died after she was mauled by stray dogs. She was playing outside her house when the canines pounced on her and dragged her for 150 metres, before killing her. A similar attack took place in December last year when stray dogs suddenly attacked a 12-year-old boy called Golu, injuring him in the process, in Mathurapur village in C.B. Ganj area.

## Despite being jailed, Atiq murder accused active on social media

Pratapgarh | Agencies

Lovelesh Tiwari, one of the accused in the murders of gangster Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf, is active on the social media despite being lodged in the Pratapgarh jail. The Banda police are said to have taken serious cognisance of the contents posted on Tiwari's social media accounts over the last two weeks. The posts are inflammatory and hateful in nature, according to the police. One of the accounts with the name "Maharaj Lovelesh Tiwari ChuChu" has been locked. SP Banda Abhinandan said the police were trying to look for the person handling Tiwari's social media accounts. "We have started an investigation. This is serious," he said. Tiwari is one of the three hitmen who eliminated the brothers, who were in police custody, on April 15 in Prayagraj. One of the posts shared on April 19 asked if people supported Tiwari. The post elicited 326 votes, with 42 likes and six comments. In another account, a picture of Tiwari with his parents was shared on April 24. A similar picture was posted on April 19 in another profile that is locked. On Monday, eight posts were updated in quick succession on what is said to Tiwari's primary account. They were hateful in nature. Officials said it appeared that others have access to Tiwari's accounts and were posting on his behalf.



## UP cop brothers gang-rape woman, case filed

Pilibhit | Agencies

UP Police constable, currently posted in Pilibhit, and his elder brother, posted as cop in Shamli district, have been booked for allegedly gang-rape a 26-year-old woman after keeping her in confinement for days. The woman, a resident of Shamli, came in contact with the 30-year-old cop, Imran Mirza, via Facebook in March 2021. She alleged that the constable said he "wanted to marry her" but took her to different places and raped her in hotels. Imran, who is also a resident of Shamli, recently kept her in a rented flat in his hometown for a couple of months where his brother, Furqan, joined him in abusing the woman. In her complaint, the woman also alleged that she became pregnant twice and was forced to abort by Imran both times. "I remained quiet for two years. When I confronted him recently, I was brutally



beaten up. That is when I decided to take legal action. Now, I am getting death threats from Imran and his brother to withdraw the case," the woman said. Superintendent of Police (SP) (Pilibhit) Atul Sharma told reporters, "Preliminary probe revealed that the woman belongs to a different community. The key accused, Imran, had taken a long leave and was expected to rejoin duty on May 3. Action will soon be taken in the matter."





# NO DELIBERATIONS ON SHARAD PAWAR'S SUCCESSOR YET: PRAFUL PATEL

Senior NCP leader Praful Patel on Wednesday said Sharad Pawar remains the party chief till he reconsiders his decision to step down from the post, and there would be no discussions to pick his successor till then.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Speaking to reporters here, Patel, who is the NCP's national vice president, also said he himself was not in the running for the top post.

The committee, which Pawar himself set up on Tuesday to decide on his successor, did not meet on Wednesday, he said.

"If the situation arises, the committee will decide on Sharad Pawar's successor and the decision will be unanimous. He sought time to think over his decision after the party asked him to reconsider it, and till the final decision is arrived at, there is no question of deliberating on his successor," Patel said.

"There is no vacancy," he said, adding, "whether Pawar remains president or not, he is the party's identity and soul." The NCP leader was reacting to speculation about Supriya Sule emerging as the choice for national president and Ajit Pawar as the Maharashtra unit chief. Some reports



also suggested that Patel could succeed Pawar.

The party was trying to persuade Pawar to reconsider his decision, Patel said. "Party workers should have patience and stop resigning from their posts en masse (in protest against Pawar's decision)," he said.

As he was the convener of the committee, he would inform when its meeting is scheduled, Patel told the reporters. He also denied that state NCP chief Jayant Patil was upset with the party. Patil was in Pune to attend a meeting of his sugar cooperative factory, Patel said. The 'Vajramooth' rallies of the Maha Vikas Aghadi -- the alliance of the NCP, Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT) -- were postponed due to the hot summer conditions and it was decided on Sunday when a rally was held in Mumbai, Patel said.

"It has nothing to do with Pawar stepping down as NCP chief," he said.

# Family of Maharashtra man killed in 2019 accident to get Rs 1.19 crore aid

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) here has awarded a compensation of Rs 1.19 crore to the Mumbai-based family of a 33-year-old man killed in a road accident in 2019.

MACT member M M Walimohammed, in the order passed on April 25, directed Gulnar Plastics Pvt Ltd at Silvassa, the owner of the offending vehicle, and its insurer Tata AIG General Insurance Company Ltd, to jointly and severally make the payment of Rs 1,19,64,400 to the claimants within two months along with an interest of seven per cent per annum from the date of filing of the claim.

If they fail, they will have to pay the interest at eight per cent per annum till the realisation of the compensation amount, as per a copy of the order made available on Wednesday.

The claimants in the petition were deceased Shailesh Mishra's wife, minor daughter and parents.

Their counsel S L Mane told the MACT that Mishra worked as a manager with a garments company and earned Rs 60,000 salary per month. The claimants submitted that on June 17, 2019, Mishra was travelling in a car from Kandivali to Andheri on the Western Express Highway in Mumbai.

Another car came in a high speed from the wrong side and dashed Mishra's car near Durgadi in Goregaon. Mishra received severe injuries and died on the spot.

He was the only earning member of the family, the claimants said.

The lawyers of the offending car owner and its insurer contested the claim on various grounds. The MACT in its order said the FIR followed by spot panchama (inspection), the accidental death report and statements referred prove the involvement of the offending vehicle and the negligent driving of its driver.

The police papers are relied by the parties, it said. "The opponent insurance company is directed to pay the compensation and is at liberty to recover the amount from the owner of the vehicle," it said.

The MACT directed that on realisation of the amount, a sum of Rs 25 lakh be kept in a fixed deposit in the name of the deceased's child, Rs 15 lakh FD in his wife's name and Rs 10 lakh each be paid to the parents of the deceased. The balance amount be paid to Mishra's wife, it directed.

The compensation amount includes figures under various conventional heads, including loss of estate, loss of consortium as well as funeral expenses.

# Mumbai Dabbawalas buy gifts for King Charles' coronation

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ahead of the coronation ceremony of Britain's King Charles, the famous Dabbawalas of Mumbai were seen purchasing gifts on Tuesday.

74-year-old King Charles will be formally crowned as monarch on May 6 at Westminster Abbey in London.

The Dabbawalas bought Purneri Pagadi and a shawl of the Warkari community. Purneri Pagadi is a unique style of turban and is considered a symbol of pride and honour in Pune. Purneri Pagadi was granted the Geographical Indication status in the year 2009.

Talking to news agency, the Dabbawalas said that they have been sent invitations by the British Consulate and the British Embassy.



"Mumbai Dabbawalas have had good relations with British royalty. Two dabbawalas were invited to his wedding. It was an honour for us. He is about to become the King. So, we want to present King Charles with Purneri Pagadi and a shawl of the

Warkari community," said Mumbai Dabbawalas Spokesperson Vishnu Kaldoke.

Mumbai's Dabbawalas are famous worldwide for their lunchbox delivery and return system in the metropolitan city.

# Operation Kaveri: 231 Indians evacuated from Sudan land in Mumbai

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Operation Kaveri' continues to bring stranded Indians back to the country from conflict-hit Sudan, another flight with 231 passengers landed in Mumbai today.

Taking to Twitter, the official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Arindam Bagchi informed about the flight's arrival and said that citizens are back home now.

"Another #OperationKaveri flight brings citizens back home. Flight carrying 231 passengers lands in Mumbai," Mr Bagchi tweeted.

The 12th flight carrying 231 stranded Indian evacuees, departed from Jeddah earlier.

"12th outbound flight departs from Jeddah. 231 passengers are heading to Mumbai," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted on Wednesday.

On Tuesday night, 328 more Indians landed at the New Delhi



International Airport from strife-torn Sudan. Nearly 3,000 stranded Indians have reached India till now.

"328 more passengers have landed in New Delhi. #OperationKaveri moving steadily forward as around 3000

have reached India now," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar tweeted.

Committed to ensuring that no Indian national is left behind in Sudan, India started Operation Kaveri on April 24 and deployed its military

planes and warships in the war-torn country.

Earlier on Tuesday, another 'Operation Kaveri' flight carrying 231 Indian evacuees reached Gujarat's Ahmedabad on Tuesday from Saudi Arabia's Jeddah, Mr Jaishankar said.

It was the 10th flight carrying Indian nationals that left Jeddah earlier. The United Nations humanitarian coordinator in Sudan has warned that the humanitarian crisis in the country is turning into a "full blown catastrophe" and that the risk of spillover into neighbouring countries was worrisome.

Fighting is underway in Khartoum as the UN warns that Sudan is at a humanitarian "breaking point". Rival military forces accuse each other of new violations of a ceasefire that they had just agreed to extend as their devastating conflict enters a third week. Sudan continues to face bloodshed as a result of clashes between the army and paramilitary forces.

# MUMBAI HOTEL STAFF BREAKS INTO A DANCE TO WELCOME BACKSTREET BOYS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Members of popular American former boy band 'Backstreet Boys', who are all set to start the India leg of its DNA world tour, were greeted by the staff of a Mumbai hotel with a dance on their all-time hit number, 'Larger Than Life'.

Tweeting about it from the hotel lobby on Wednesday, Backstreet Boys frontman Nick Carter said: "This is the first time I have seen this in my entire career... Crazy!"

The band, which has been dishing out hits and setting records since 1993, has been making the wrong kind of news lately because of the sexual assault charges against Carter.

Carter and AJ McLean, another leading voice of the pop group, were greeted by a swarm of paparazzi waiting to catch a glimpse of the musicians at the airport. The band members



were visibly taken by surprise at the reception they got and started recording every moment of their arrival. The group, which was formed in 1993, is in India country for its DNA World Tour 2023. The band will first perform in Mumbai on May 4 after which it will be setting the tone right for the music lovers in Delhi on May 5 at the

Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. The group rose to fame with its debut album 'Backstreet Boys' in 1996. They released their second international album 'Backstreet's Back' in 1997 and rose to superstardom with their third studio album 'Millennium', anchored by the worldwide hit 'I Want It That Way'. The band has sold more than

100 million records worldwide, making it the best-selling boy band of all time, and one of the world's top-selling music performers. The band holds the record for being the first group since Led Zeppelin to have its first 10 albums reach the top 10 on the Billboard 200, and the only boy band to do so.

# 25 passengers injured after Bus hits Truck

Team Absolute | Palghar

Twenty-five people were injured when their bus rammied into a trailer truck after the latter's driver applied brakes suddenly in Maharashtra's Palghar district, police said on Wednesday.

The accident took place at around 10 am on Tuesday near Kodus when the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus carrying 65 passengers was heading from Palghar to Wada area, they said. The driver of a trailer truck applied brakes suddenly. As a result, the bus which was behind the truck rammied into it, an official from Wada police station said. Twenty-five people, including the bus driver and conductor, were injured, he said. Local people and police rushed to the spot and helped in transporting the injured people



to a nearby public health centre, the official said.

A 47-year-old woman, who was seriously injured, was shifted to the Wada rural hospital for treatment, he said.

# Woman burnt to death, driver injured after auto catches fire

Team Absolute | Thane

An unidentified woman passenger was burnt to death when an auto-rickshaw in which she was travelling caught fire after hitting a road divider in Maharashtra's Thane city on Wednesday, civic officials said.



the official said.

The vehicle was reduced to ashes, he said.

After being alerted, local firemen and the RDMC team rushed to the spot and put out the blaze within half-an-hour, he said.

The driver was rushed to a hospital and was undergoing treatment. The woman's body was sent to a government hospital for post-mortem and police were trying to identify the woman, the official said.

The Kasarwadavali police were carrying out a probe into the incident, he added.

# BMC, Mumbai Police crack down on illegal hookah parlours in Malad West

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After the illegal Pan Bidi shops were demolished across the city, BMC and Mumbai police jointly began taking action against the illegal Hookah Parlours on Wednesday morning.

In a joint operation by BMC and Bangur Nagar police, the authorities demolished the illegal Hookah Parlour that was constructed on the terrace of Aura Hotel at Malad West. BMC demolished the entire hookah parlour, including glasses, tables, seats, and seized all materials from the Hookah Parlour.

In the last five days, BMC and Mumbai police demolished around 866 illegal pan bidi shops. Police sources told Mid-day that "many illegal Hookah Parlours have also cropped up on building terraces illegally and are selling flavoured hookah, which includes tobac-



co. Only herbal hookah is permissible to sell. We found that above Aura Hotel they constructed an illegal hookah parlour that doesn't have any

licence to run." A police officer from Bangur Nagar police station said, "We received information from the BMC about the illegal Hookah

Parlour above the terrace at Aura Hotel in Malad West. We helped BMC to demolish it. This is a part of an NDPS special drive only."

# POLICE ARREST 5 FOR EXTORTING MONEY WHILE POSING AS POLICEMEN

Mumbai: Mumbai Police on Tuesday arrested five persons including two from Kolkata and one from Hyderabad for allegedly extorting money online by posing as policemen.

An official of the Bangur Nagar police station said they had received multiple complaints where persons posing as police officials called the victims and claimed to have found a parcel with the victim's name and containing drugs or weapons. Once the victims got scared, the callers managed to obtain their bank account numbers and forced them to download some software.

With the help of this, money was transferred from the victim's account into the fraudsters' account.

Similar complaints were also registered in Pune and Sangli.

During the probe, police nabbed two accused from Kolkata, two from Thane and the main accused from Hyderabad.

The main accused was also involved in crypto currency trade, the official said, adding that they have attached 40 bank accounts and recovered Rs 1.5 crore so far.

A case of cheating under IPC section 420 has been registered.

If someone threatens citizens in the name of police, they should contact the nearest police station instead of getting scared, the official added.





EDITOR'S SPECS

**Bajrang Bali: Poll tool of BJP**

The BJP is pursuing an aggressive campaign in Karnataka as the state inches closer to the May 10 Assembly polls, especially after the Congress in its election manifesto promised to impose a ban on the Bajrang Dal if voted to power. The BJP national leadership, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, are making it a point to include the "Jai Bajrang Bali" slogan in their public rallies. They are claiming that the Congress is insulting Lord Hanuman, revered by all Hindus. The trend is fast catching on as the "I am Bajrangi" campaign is going viral on social media in Karnataka. Adding to it, Hindu outfits and the Bajrang Dal have given a call for reciting the Hanuman Chalisa in all temples of the state on Thursday (May 4). The Hindu organisations and the Bajrang Dal have expressed outrage over comparing the Bajrang Dal to the banned Popular Front of India (PFI). Bharatiya Janata Party Karnataka president Nalin Kumar Kateel proclaimed in the presence of PM Modi at a public rally in Moodbidri that if the Congress has the capacity, let it ban the Bajrang Dal. However, Karnataka Congress president D.K. Shivakumar, reacting to the row following the proposal to ban the Bajrang Dal in the manifesto, asked what is the connection between the Bajrang Dal and Bajrang Bali (Lord Hanuman). Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shobha Karandlaje stated that the Bajrang Dal is a part of the RSS and working with the youth for the nation. It has never indulged in anti-national activities. The Congress manifesto has been released to appease the Muslims.

**BJP CREATES ITS SATRAPS WHILE REGIONAL LEADERS CONTROL CONGRESS!**

Vinod Kumar Shukla

New Delhi: For any political party with PAN India reach, its regional satraps are very important. They play a pivotal role in the political and electoral affairs of the party they belong to. Is this the case why national political parties groom their regional satraps or these leaders try to carve space for themselves? But this is an unending process and debate that is always relevant in the Indian political scenario. But what warrants a sudden discussion on regional satraps?

Regional satraps are playing an important role in the forthcoming Karnataka elections so their role for two principal national political parties becomes important. Regional outfits have different political dimensions. So, it is important to discuss how two big national political parties deal, manage and engage with their respective state leaders. Some of the important regional leaders of the BJP have grown up so much that they are now calling shots at the national level but there appears to be a sea change in the working style of the BJP which was actually done by the present Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he was sent to Gandhinagar in 2001 as Chief Minister of Gujarat to replace one of its most powerful leaders in the state -- Keshubhai Patel.

This has even changed the political trajectory of the BJP as PM Modi not only strengthened himself in Gujarat but rose to become Prime Minister of the country. He devised a new strategy to create a regional Satraps side lining the established leaders of the party who are not very popular but are riding piggyback on the popularity of PM Modi and if at all they are popular they draw their strength from Narendra Modi or claim to draw their strength from him. For instance, in the biggest state of the country in terms of population, the BJP leadership sent Yogi Adityanath to Lucknow as the CM but did not allow him complete freedom. Occasional differences pop up in the state but they are dubbed as problems between the Centre and Lucknow as infightings between lieutenants of the PM without anyone challenging the authority of the PM. The Centre appears to be calling shots in Lucknow.

The case of Manohar Lal is like from nowhere to being anointed as Haryana CM. Jai Ram Thakur was made Himachal Pradesh CM when Anurag Thakur, his father Prem



Kumar Dhumal and BJP president J P Nadda were in the race. Pramod Sawant succeeded Manohar Parrikar as many other seniors were ignored in Goa. Basawraj Bommai is the face of the BJP in Karnataka who has his background in the Congress and so is case with Himanta Biswa Sarma in Assam who seems to be the most prolific among the new lot of the regional satraps of the BJP in terms of oratory, governance skills and proximity with the top brass in Delhi for delivering Maharashtra to the BJP and handling many other issues in the North East that suits the political narrative and expansion plans of the party. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan after the defeat in the last Assembly elections reconciled to the fact that it is better to be submissive than confrontational. So he is a regional satrap and contemporary to the PM but accepts Modi as his leader like rest of the BJP CMs and Dy CMs. In Maharashtra, the BJP groomed Devendra Fadnis by preferring him over many senior leaders in the state including Prakash Javadekar, Nitin Gadkari and a few more. They conciliated with the fact and accepted Modi as their leader despite being RSS hands on their back. Another leader, who was doing quite well, was former Tripura CM Biplab Kumar Deb who lost his job certainly not for political mismanagement and poor governance but ambition of people close to him

whom he could not avoid. Deb is also the creation of the present day top leadership who was sent from Delhi to take over Tripura BJP chief later becoming the CM. He is not yet done after being removed and may bounce back anytime.

But states where the BJP is not in power and wants to regain it or expand its base, it is contemplating replacing established leaders with the lesser known leaders. In Rajasthan, attempt to look for the alternative of Vasundhara Raje did not work so far as attempt to pit Gajendra Singh Shekhawat against Vasundhara failed miserably and a mistake of Rajawardhan Singh Rathore during last LS elections is still haunting him who is trying hard to regain confidence of the top brass. The BJP is grooming K Annamalai, a former IPS officer, in Tamil Nadu despite some issues to be ironed out. The party is looking forward to bring Shashi Tharoor to its fold. Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, they are allowing lesser known leaders to emerge as Hindutva icons to begin with. Strings of all these leaders are with the central leadership who work on their command because they are obliged to make them big.

But the case of the Congress is just reverse to the BJP as the party strength is being drawn from states to Centre. This is a new phenom-

enon that the Congress is encountering which was once the party of leaders who commanded state leadership from the Centre with absolute authority. Rajasthan is the most blatant case where CM Ashok Gehlot defied the wishes of the Gandhies and they appeared hapless in front of him. So is the case with Chhattisgarh where Bhupesh Baghel is all powerful but not submissive for everything. He proved his worth by organising Congress plenary in Raipur as a never before event. But he did not make way for T S Singh Dev on the other hand inducted a senior BJP leader Nand Kumar Sai to the Congress fold. His policies are more like a BJP government than the Congress with Hindutva tinge in it. He appears to be very much in the saddle in the state.

Karnataka has D K Shivkumar, Siddaramaiah and national president Mallikarjuna Kharge as separate groups besides some small camps but none of them is being controlled by the top central leadership. Himachal Pradesh too is not submissive to the central leadership. The loose grip of the Congress over its leadership became the reason for the unprecedented humiliation of the party in Punjab and later in Gujarat. The party failed to rein in Ghulam Nabi Azad and many more who either landed in some other party or formed a new party or waiting for the opportune time to switch over. Ever since Shashi Tharoor contested against Kharge contrary to the wishes of the top leadership of the Congress, he has become a persona non grata for the Congress leadership.

Moreover, the loss of Rahul Gandhi in Amethi and UP Assembly polls under Priyanka Gandhi dented the image of Gandhies that they cannot win elections for the party. However, Rahul Gandhi is trying hard and putting a tough challenge to the government. But the going gets tough for the Congress if a leader like Tharoor switches sides with a good following among Christians and the BJP wooing them in Kerala. So the Congress seems to have completely lost its control over its regional satraps so much so that the party that ruled Delhi for 15 years, no one knows who the leader of the party in the state is. As the power goes, an equation change is enough to suggest what the BJP and Congress are in?

international

**US REPORTS OVER 10,000 WEEKLY CHILD COVID CASES**

Washington | Agencies

More than 10,000 child Covid-19 cases were reported in the US in the week ending on April 27, according to the latest report by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Children's Hospital Association.

Almost 15.6 million children have been reported to have tested positive for the virus since the onset of the pandemic in early 2020, Xinhua news agency quoted the report as saying.

Over the past seven months, weekly reported child cases have plateaued at an average of about 27,000 cases, while in the past four weeks the average reported weekly cases have dropped further to about 10,000, according to the report.



Reported cases are likely a "substantial undercount" of Covid-19 cases among children, it added.

There is a need to collect more age-specific data to assess the severity of illness

related to new variants as well as potential longer-term effects, said the report.

It is important to recognise there are immediate effects of the pandemic on children's health, but importantly there

is the need to identify and address the long-lasting impacts on the physical, mental, and social well-being of this generation of children and youth, said the AAP.

**9 KILLED, 7 INJURED IN SERBIAN SCHOOL SHOOTING**

Belgrade: Nine people were killed and seven others injured on Wednesday after a 14-year-old boy allegedly opened fire in an elementary school in Serbia, according to the interior ministry and local media. According to the press release of the interior ministry, the police were "informed that this morning at 8:40 a.m., a shooting occurred at the Vladislav Ribnikar" elementary school in the Municipality of Vracar, Xinhua news agency reported.

"The police dispatched all available patrols, immediately went to the field, and arrested the suspected minor, a student of the seventh grade, who, as is suspected, fired several shots from his father's gun in the direction of the students and security of this school," the press release said. The interior ministry said that six severely injured people are being treated at hospital.

According to RTS, Serbia's public broadcaster, a security guard and eight kids lost their lives; one teacher and three children are at the Emergency Medical Centre in Belgrade, while three more children are at the children's hospital."

**S.Korea dismisses Japan's 'unfair' territorial claim over disputed islets**



Seoul | Agencies

South Korea's Foreign Ministry has dismissed a protest from Japan over a Seoul lawmaker's recent visit to Dokdo, a set of disputed islets in the Sea of Japan between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago, an official said on Wednesday.

According to Japan's Kyodo News on Tuesday, the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo lodged a protest to Seoul over the visit by Jeon Yong-gi of the main opposition Democratic Party to Dokdo earlier that

day, reports Yonhap News Agency. The Seoul Foreign Ministry official said the government "dismissed the unfair claim from Japan through diplomatic channels".

The official added the Ministry reiterated its stance that Dokdo is South Korea's sovereign territory "historically, geographically and under international law". South Korea has been in effective control of Dokdo, with a small police detachment, since its liberation from Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule.

**NEPAL AVALANCHE: THREE BODIES RECOVERED**



Kathmandu: Three bodies were recovered on Wednesday, a day after five pickers of yarsagumba, a caterpillar fungus, went missing following an avalanche in Darchula district in Nepal.

"The three bodies were recovered from 500 meters away from the incident site. The search for the two missing is continuing," Kiran Joshi, the chief district officer, told Xinhua.

Initially, the avalanche left 12 people missing, but seven of them reported to the authorities later on Tuesday, Xinhua news agency reported.

**DEATH TOLL CLIMBS TO 550 AS ARMED CONFLICT CONTINUES IN SUDAN**

Khartoum | Agencies

As the armed conflict continued between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Sudan's Health Ministry has announced that the death toll has climbed to more than 550.

A total of "550 deaths and 4,926 injuries were recorded in all hospitals in Sudanese states", the ministry said in a statement on Tuesday, adding that the situation was calm in all states except for Khartoum and Central Darfur.

Despite the sixth 72-hour truce, intermittent clashes continued between the SAF and the RSF in various areas in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum and Omdurman, Xinhua news agency reported.

The SAF carried out intensive airstrikes against RSF positions in Bahri (Khartoum North), west of Omdurman, and around the army's general command in central Khartoum, eyewitnesses said.

The RSF, meanwhile, accused the SAF of violating the humanitarian truce.



In a statement on Tuesday, the RSF said it managed to shoot down a SAF military plane, but the SAF spokesman's office could not be reached to comment on the claim.

Regarding the regional efforts to seek a settlement to the armed conflict in Sudan, local media reported

an initiative by South Sudan's President Salva Kiir Mayardit for reaching a 7-day cease-fire.

South Sudan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the SAF Commander Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and the RSF Commander Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo had accepted the

initiative. However, neither side has commented on the statement.

Meanwhile, the Forces of Freedom and Change Alliance (FFC), a civilian political coalition in Sudan, on Tuesday called on the Sudanese people to stage demonstrations demanding the end of the conflict.

"Today (Tuesday), the alliance called for large-scale protests at the areas which are not affected by the conflict to push for negotiations and stoppage of the war," tweeted Yassir Arman, the FFC's spokesman.

"We, in villages and cities which are not affected by the war, must come out in masses to push for negotiations and stoppage of the war," said Arman.

The Sudanese police forces on Tuesday carried out widespread campaigns in Khartoum to combat crimes, blocking the roads to prevent criminals and outlaws from committing illegal activities.

According to UN statistics, thousands of Sudanese citizens have been displaced or forced to seek refuge in safe areas in Sudan and neighboring countries, including Egypt, Ethiopia and Chad.

**Indo-Canadian Sikh's book among most banned in US schools**

Toronto | Agencies

Canadian-Sikh poet, whose Twitter account was withheld in India last month over the Khalistan issue, now has her debut work among the 11 most banned books in the US classrooms for the first half of the 2022-23 school year.

Rupi Kaur's 'Milk and Honey', which released in 2014, was banned for exploring issues of sexual assault and violence, according to data provided by non-profit PEN America.

The book, banned in multiple districts in Missouri this year, tied in ninth place with Toni Morrison's 'The Bluest Eye', according to the report. Both books were reportedly banned in 10 districts in the first half of this school year alone.

"It deeply concerns me that there is a group of people hell bent on taking away literature that students find refuge in," Punjab-born Kaur



wrote in an Instagram post last week.

Apart from violence, the rest of the titles in the list discussed race and racism, LGBTQ+ characters, grief or death, student health and well-being, and teen pregnancy, abortion or sexual assault. "Parents want to ban books to protect their kids but teachers and librarians say that students are old enough to be aware of the topics discussed in these books. Many actually seek these books out because they're going through those experiences themselves," she wrote.





## K'RTAKA'S 'BAJRANG DAL ROW' REACHES MP; BJP SEEKS KAMAL NATH'S STANCE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Controversy over Karnataka Congress's election manifesto promising to ban right-wing Bajrang Dal has entered poll-bound Madhya Pradesh with the BJP making all-out efforts to corner the grand-old party on the issue.

Madhya Pradesh BJP, along with VHP and Bajrang Dal, is planning a massive protest march to mark its protest.

In an attempt to corner the Congress, senior BJP leader and the State Home Minister Narottam Mishra on Wednesday wrote to former Chief Minister Kamal Nath seeking his stance on this issue.

In his letter, Mishra said the veteran leader Kamal Nath, who presented himself as 'Hanuman Bhakt' should clear his view on this issue.

The BJP leader also mentioned that former Chief Minister and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh has supported Karnataka Congress' manifesto which promises to ban the right-wing body.

"Digvijaya Singh is supporting the proposal of banning Bajrang Dal, which he had done years back. Now, he is repeating the same," Mishra



wrote. He further mentioned that Kamal Nath has often presented himself as a devotee of Bajrangbali. "Kamal Nathji, the promise to ban Bajrang Dal in Karnataka Congress' manifesto has hurt the senti-

ments of the devotees of Lord Hanuman. Since you often claim to be Lord Hanuman devotee, you should make your view clear on this issue."

In the manifesto, the Congress had promised "firm and decisive action against individuals and organisations such as the Bajrang Dal and the Popular Front of India (PFI) spreading hatred among communities on grounds of caste and religion."

The action will include a "ban" against such organisations, the party promised. The VHP too came out against the manifesto. Bajrang Dal is the youth wing of the RSS-affiliated Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP).

Notably, Kamal Nath would often say that he has built a huge-size temple of Lord Hanuman in his home town Chhindwara and therefore, he won't require a certificate from the saffron leaders to probe it.

While addressing a poll rally in Karnataka on Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi slammed the Congress over its election manifesto, which proposed to ban Bajrang Dal. Since then, the BJP leaders have been launching scathing attacks on the grand-old party across the country.

## Congress' face has been completely exposed: Chief Minister

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The promise of banning Bajrang Dal in the Congress manifesto for the Karnataka assembly elections has heated up the politics. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has defended Bajrang Dal and said that it has completely exposed the face of Congress. Responding to the Congress manifesto released for the Karnataka assembly elections, Chouhan said, "Jako prabh darun dukh dehi, taaki mati pehle har lehi." The mind of the Congress has been killed.

He further said, there is talk of banning Bajrang Dal, that Bajrang Dal which is a strong nationalist organization. The Bajrang Dal which opposes terrorism, opposes Love Jihad. The sense of patriotism including social service, creates a sense of self-respect and awareness towards our religion and culture, it has been compared to PFI, a terrorist organization.

Referring to the old statements of Congress, Chouhan said, this is the same Congress which opposed the construction of Lord Ram's temple. This is the same Congress who called Ram Sethu imaginary. This is the same



Congress which opposes Hindutva as soon as it gets a chance. Today his face has been completely exposed.

Referring to the active SIMI network in the state, Chief Minister Chouhan said, who will forget who used to give manure and water to the SIMI network in Madhya Pradesh? Those opposing surgical strike, glorifying terrorists are now talking about banning Bajrang Dal.

Taking a jibe at Congress state president Kamal Nath, Shivraj said, Kamal Nath becomes a great devotee of Hanumanji. Congress is talking about banning Bajrang Dal. Kamal Nath should also answer this.

## Women empowered in every field and created a different identity: Chief Minister Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that women have created a distinct identity by being empowered and self-dependent in every field through several schemes for women empowerment in the state. Daughters have got respect in the society through Ladli Laxmi Yojana. Poor parents have been freed from the worry of marriage of their daughters by the Chief Minister Kanya Vivah-Nikah Yojana. He said that now Mukhyamantri Ladli Behna Yojana will bring historical changes in the lives of sisters and will strengthen them further. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan was performing bhoomi-pujan for the construction work of 10 roads, a boundary wall and a welcome gate to be constructed at a cost of Rs 41 crore 16 lakh at Jontala in Sehore district. He also distributed benefits to the beneficiaries of various schemes.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that 50 percent reservation for women in local body elections has brought a big change. The state govern-



ment has made a provision of 50 percent reservation for women in the recruitment of teachers and 30 percent in the police. Women will be able to fulfill their many needs with Rs 1000 per month under Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana. He said that from the month of June, an amount of Rs 1000 per month will be deposited in the accounts of 1.25 crore sisters of the state.

Chief Minister said that several schemes have been formulated and implemented in the state for the development of agriculture and the welfare of farmers, as a result of which not only has the income of the farmers increased, but their standard of living has also changed. Today, due to the availability of irrigation facilities, the farmer brothers are taking crops throughout the year. He said that water will be brought from Narmada river

for irrigation in Jontala also. Like last year, the state government will buy moong from the farmer brothers this year too. He said that the process of registration of farmers for the purchase of moong should be done in a better way. Chouhan said that the talented children of poor parents should not be deprived of education, for this the state government is paying the full fees of medical, engineering and IIM students. Along with this, Mama coaching classes are also being run in Budhni for the preparation of government jobs exams. Chief Minister Chouhan said that all the villagers should work together for the development of Jontala. Community hall and gymnasium will be built in Jontala and beautification of the pond will also be done. He also instructed to conduct a survey of damage caused by hailstorm in Basgahan.

## Doctors on strike in Madhya Pradesh, demand better facilities

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Doctors across government hospitals in Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday started an indefinite strike over a host of demands, including facilities for their colleagues posted in rural areas and putting an end to alleged bureaucratic interference.

The agitation is being organised by different medical associations under the umbrella body of Madhya Pradesh Shaskiya Swashasi Chikitsak Mahasangh after failed talks with the government. Nearly 13,000 doctors are participating in the protest, claimed the Mahasangh. In February too, the doctors had gone on a similar protest.

The protest is likely to affect outpatient services and other essential hospital work.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday night held a meeting with the district collectors and divisional commissioners over the impending strike and directed them to ensure the smooth operation of medical facilities in the state, said officials.

After the meeting, Chouhan said in a statement, "Health services are essential services. There should be



no hindrance in running such services. Leave no stone unturned for the smooth operation of emergency and critical services. This strike is unethical, there is a provision for action for this. Make necessary arrangements in medical colleges and hospitals and take services of PG doctors."

The CM asked officials to take the help of private hospitals and said the government will treat such patients (in private hospitals) under the Ayushman Yojana.

"Doctors are considered a form of God to save human life. Don't play with human life," he said.

In the Bhopal district, the adminis-

tration has arranged for doctors from private hospitals to run the government medical facilities.

Bhopal Collector Ashish Singh told reporters at the state capital's biggest government-run Hamidia Hospital, "One-hundred-fifty doctors from private hospitals have been called here and they are serving in the outpatient department (OPD) and wards."

Singh said 672 patients are admitted to Hamidia Hospital, where all facilities are running smoothly.

"We have booked 1,500 beds in two private hospitals. Those being shifted from here or being admitted through government ambulances

will be treated free of cost in these private hospitals," the collector said, adding that no patient is facing any problem. Divisional Commissioner of Bhopal division Mal Singh Bhaydiya said that critical patients are being shifted to big private hospitals.

According to an office-bearer of Madhya Pradesh Shaskiya Swashasi Chikitsak Mahasangh, which is spearheading the protest, "We had withdrawn our agitation on February 17 on the assurance given by the minister and chief minister. But no change has been made." The office-bearer said, "We are fighting this battle for the doctors who are serving in rural areas. They work 7 days a week without taking leave in those areas where no amenities like school and housing exist."

The demands of the agitating doctors will not put any financial burden on the state, he asserted.

Talking about alleged bureaucratic interference in their work, the office-bearer said, "It seems that the administrative officials have held our (health) department hostage."

The CM should intervene to take the health department out of the clutches of administrative officials, he added.

## AIIMS Bhopal Forms UG Research Forum to Encourage Biomedical Research

Team Absolute | Bhopal

AIIMS Bhopal has formed a UG Research Forum under the patron ship of Executive Director AIIMS Bhopal, Prof Dr. Ajai Singh. The forum's objective is to encourage undergraduate students to undertake biomedical research and provide them with an opportunity to present and discuss various ideas to enhance their research skills.

The UG Research Forum will be advised by the Dean Academic,

Dean Research, Dean Student Welfare, and Medical Superintendent. Dr. Deepti Joshi has been appointed as the Chairperson of the forum, while Dr. Shubham Atal will be the Convener.

Thirteen faculty members and eleven student teams, from different departments, including the Nursing College and AYUSH, will lead the UG Research Forum. The forum will offer students a platform to showcase their research abilities and interact with experts from various

fields. The UG Research Forum is a vital step towards promoting research and innovation among undergraduate students, enabling them to explore their potential in the field of biomedical research.

The forum will encourage young minds to take up research projects and help them develop essential research skills. The formation of the UG Research Forum is expected to attract students from various academic disciplines and create a research-oriented environment at

AIIMS Bhopal. The forum's initiatives will help students broaden their knowledge base and enable them to contribute to the field of biomedical research.

AIIMS Bhopal is committed to promoting research and innovation among its students and faculty members. The formation of the UG Research Forum is a significant step in this direction, and the institute hopes to achieve significant milestones in the field of biomedical research in the coming years.

## CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN PLANTED SAPPLINGS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted mango, jamun and peepal saplings in the garden located at Shyamala Hills. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, the founder of Bakri Chhap Agro Tourism Rupesh Rai planted saplings. Rai has embarked on a country cycle tour with the message of "Change, Before Climate Change". He has so far planted peepal and banyan saplings in 120 panchayats during the yatra.



## MBA GIRL TURNED SADHVI IN UJJAIN

Team Absolute | Ujjain

After studying and writing well, the young man cherishes the dream of living a life full of comforts, but the MBA daughter of a businessman in Ujjain was fascinated by the devotion and he left the worldly world and took the initiation of a sadhvi. Saloni, the 25-year-old daughter of Ujjain's big jeweler Bimal Bhandari and Pooja Bhandari, has earned education up to MBA and was helping her father's business, but one day she gave up the comforts of life and family for the path of sobriety, decided to choose For some time, the family members did not understand anything, but later they decided to fulfill the daughter's wish.

On the occasion of Saloni's initiation, five days of various religious and cultural programs were organized and she distanced herself from worldly customs by taking initiation on Wednesday. His farewell program was followed by a musical performance and the main initiation ceremony was completed. He



took initiation in the presence of thousands of people, giving up the sixteen ornaments of a woman and a life full of splendor.

Saloni studied MBA from a college in Ujjain and after that she got a job in Indore and then she joined her father's jewelry business. Not only that, she used to be very active on social media, but now she has to stop it all. She will either use a vehicle, stay away from electronic

devices, and will not be able to use any kind of luxury items. Not only this, you will have to spend your whole life walking and resting in the temple. He has renounced all worldly relations including parents and siblings and now he will live a simple life.

Saloni will now be known to the world as Sadhvi Sri Malli Darshana Sriji Masa. Now he has distanced himself from all the worldly relations of the world.

## RAIN CONTINUES IN MP; WILL REMAIN FOR A WEEK

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The rains continued in Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday as well. On Wednesday, 7 mm of rain was recorded in Chhindwara, 3 mm in Pachmarhi, 3 mm in Ujjain. At the same time, water fell in Malanjkhanda, Sagar, Jabalpur and Mandla. Due to the change in the weather, the day temperature also recorded a drop of up to 2 degree Celsius.

At present, there is no relief from rain, strong winds and hailstorm in the state. The weather will remain like this till next week and there is no possibility of increasing the temperature. This is happening because of three active systems in the state.

Meteorologist HS Pandey told that Western Disturbance is currently active in North India, while a trough line is passing from South West MP to North Tamil Nadu. The effect of the third system is being seen in the form of a cyclone, which is formed over South Chhattisgarh. Due to this, it is raining with thunder and strong winds in the state. Light rain will continue at some places in the state till May 8. Clouds will also remain. At the same time, for the next 2-3 days, heavy rains, strong winds at a speed of 40 to 50 km per hour and hailstorm will continue in some divisions.



Meteorologist Pandey told that usually in the first week of May, the average temperature remains between 41-42 degrees, while at present it is between 32-33 degrees, that is, the temperature has dropped by 9 to 10 degrees. Is. Till May 8, the weather will remain changed across

the state. Only after this the temperature will increase. Due to this, till May 15-20, there is less possibility of heat wave i.e. hot winds and strong heat in the state.

Capital to be drizzled more There is a possibility of rain in Bhopal till May 6. There is a possibi-

ty of rain in the capital till May 6. Light rain may occur in some areas on May 3, while the weather is expected to remain clear on May 4. There may be heavy rains on 5 and 6 May. Earlier on Tuesday afternoon, the weather changed. There were light clouds during the day.





# 'I felt a bit caged': Emma Watson on taking acting break

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Emma Watson is opening up about the reasons why she is taking an acting break. Watson, who rose to fame starring in the Harry Potter franchise as Hermione Granger, said that she "wasn't very happy," reports 'Deadline'.

"I think I felt a bit caged," Watson told Financial Times in a recent interview.

"The thing I found really hard was that I had to go out and sell something that I really didn't have very much control over. To stand in front of a film and have every journalist is able to say, 'How does this align with your viewpoint?' It was very difficult to have to be the face and the spokesperson for things where I didn't get to be involved in the process."

Watson's last film was Greta Gerwig's Little Women which was released in 2019 and co-starred alongside Saoirse Ronan, Florence Pugh, Eliza Scanlan, Laura Dern, Timothee Chalamet, Bob Odenkirk and Meryl Streep, among others.

Over the years, Watson starred in films like The Circle, Beauty and the Beast and The Bling Ring. The star mentioned that she felt like she "didn't have a voice" which made her feel have a sense of frustration.

"I didn't have a say. And I started to realize that I only wanted to stand in front of things where if someone was going to give me flak about it, I could say, in a way that didn't make me hate myself, 'Yes, I screwed up, it was my decision, I should have done better,'" Watson added.

For now, Watson will continue to her break from acting but assures that she will come back sometime in the future.

"I'm happy to sit and wait for the next right thing," she said. "I love what I do. It's finding a way to do it where I don't have to fracture myself into different faces and people. And I just don't want to switch into robot mode anymore. Does that make sense?"

# WHY KYLIE JENNER DENIED ENTRY AT MET GALA AFTER-PARTY?

Los Angeles | Agencies

Reality TV star and makeup mogul Kylie Jenner was all ready to join other stars at the Met Gala after-party in New York City.

She arrived in a stunning black-and-white dress in the wee hours, but unfortunately, she couldn't enter the bash, which was hosted by Richie Akiva, Doja Cat and Sean 'P. Diddy' Combs.

"They wouldn't let her in," said a witness to Page Six, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"They shut the door down because it was over capacity."

Another source claims that 'The Kardashians' star arrived after midnight to meet up with her sister Kendall Jenner and Bad Bunny who were already inside.

However, things were "chaotic" as there were over 100 people clamouring to get to the door.

While Kylie was a welcome VIP and could just wait to be escorted into the bash through a side door, the cosmetics mogul got out of her car before organisers were ready for her arrival.

"She prematurely got out of her car," explained the source.

"Then she decided to go home because she didn't want to be at a crowded party. She rarely goes to clubs."

Apparently, Kylie wasn't the only celebrity who was denied entry that night. Janelle Monae, who had performed on top of the bar during a posh party at the Boom Boom Room earlier, and 'Gossip Girl' star Evan Mock were turned away because the door was closed due to capacity.

"The door was rushed by crowds many times," a source claimed, adding that around 200 people couldn't enter the party.

It was also said that police arrived at the scene to help manage the crowds and keep the street clear.

The source continued, "At 6 a.m., a line of limos and SUVs were down the street."

# Nicolas Cage shares first memory of being in 'utero'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Nicolas Cage says his first memory is being inside his mother's womb. The actor has said that he can recall seeing "faces in the dark" while he was still in his mom's womb, reports aceshowbiz.com "Let me think. Listen, I know this sounds really far out and I don't know if it's real or not, but sometimes I think I can go all the way back to in-utero and feeling like I could see faces in the dark or something. I know that sounds powerfully abstract, but that somehow seems like maybe it happened," the Hollywood star said when asked about his earliest childhood memory on 'The Late Show With Stephen Colbert'. On the other hand, Nicolas conceded that his supposed memories may have just been triggered by "vocal vibrations." The actor said: "Now that I am no longer in utero, I would have to imagine it was perhaps vocal vibrations resonating through to me at that stage. That's going way back. I don't know. That comes to mind and I don't even know if I remember being in utero, but that thought has crossed my mind." Nicolas was also asked whether he believes in life after death. The movie star - who has won a host of accolades during his career, including an Academy Award and a Golden Globe - suggested that his "spark" will continue even after he passes away.

He said, "Oh, wow. Nobody really knows, I don't know. They say that electricity is forever eternal. That the spark keeps going. I like to think whatever spark is animating our bodies, once the body passes on, that the spark continues to go. But whether or not that electricity has consciousness or not, who can really say?"



Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Doja Cat broke an important rule at the Met Gala while attending the event. She was caught vaping on the red carpet at Vogue's prestigious ball despite Anna Wintour's strict rule against smoking, reports aceshowbiz.com.

In a video which has gone viral, Doja Cat was seen with a vape in her mouth and exhaling a cloud of smoke in the background of the Vogue livestream. She was seemingly waiting in line for her turn while Jennie of BLACKPINK got interviewed by a red carpet correspondent.

Doja, whose real name is Amala Ratna Zandile Dlamini was soon slammed by Internet users for refusing to adhere to the Met Gala rule.

"Can she like take something serious for once? What happened to having class?" someone wrote on Twitter. Someone predicted that Doja Cat will never be invited to Met Gala again after irritating Vogue editor-in-chief Anna. Some others pointed out that Doja Cat got tonsil infection

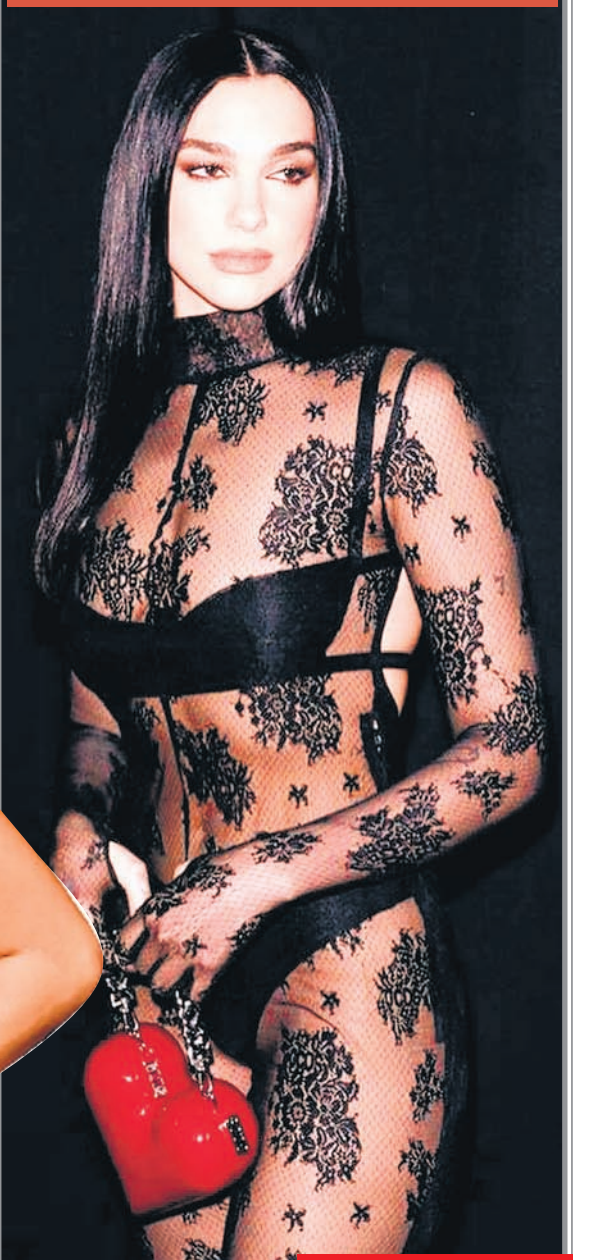
Doja Cat caught vaping at Met Gala 2023 despite ban on smoking

near-ly one year ago. "Didn't she have throat surgery?! Omg," a shocked fan commented. Another asked: "Did she or did she not like JUST have throat surgery and cancel her tour cause of vaping? Lmaooo." Representatives for the star told Daily Mail that there was no nicotine in the device and that it only had contained a flavoured water vapour. In May 2022, Doja revealed that she had a surgery to remove an abscess from her throat.

The Grammy winner admitted that her smoking habit exacerbated her condition before the surgery.



# ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Dua Lipa

# 'Selective cancel culture'

Jameela Jamil slams Met Gala for honouring Karl Lagerfeld

London | Agencies

Actress Jameela Jamil is calling out the Met Gala which this year was themed in honour of the late designer Karl Lagerfeld. In a scathing post on Instagram, she shared her thoughts on the "selective cancel culture" many of the attendees showcased by attending the event, reports 'Deadline'. "Last night Hollywood and fashion said the quiet part out loud when a lot of famous feminists chose to celebrate at the highest level, a man who was so publicly cruel to women, to fat people, to

immigrants and to sexual assault survivors," Jamil wrote. "And all the women's publications, and spectators online, chose to gleefully ignore it." Jamil continued: "Suddenly your appetite to find someone's tweets from when they were 12, has gone. Nobody has perfect morals, least of all me, but Jesus Christ we had a year to course correct here, and not award the highest honour possible to a known bigot." Jamil took to her caption to explain why she was sharing her take on social media and why it was important to reflect on this, especially with a presidential election coming up.

"This isn't about cancel culture. It's not even about Karl. It's about showing how selective cancel culture is within liberal politics, in the most blatant way so far. It's about showing why people don't trust liberals. Because of slippery tactics and double standards like this," she added. "And it's not just Hollywood here, the general public online participated and were entirely complicit in the erasure of the truth last night. They replaced their pitchforks with spoons last night, to lap that shit right up... If we carry on like this, don't be shocked when we lose the next election."







IPL 2023

## ISHAN-SKY SHOW HELPS MI CHASE DOWN 215, BEAT PBSK BY 6 WICKETS



Mohali | Agencies

Ishan Kishan slammed a terrific 75 while Suryakumar Yadav brought out his wide array of shots in a whirlwind 66 as the duo shared a 116-run partnership for the third wicket to help Mumbai Indians chase down 215 and beat Punjab Kings by six wickets at the IS Bindra PCA Stadium on Wednesday.

Mumbai were dealt with a big blow in the opening over as Rohit Sharma danced down the pitch to flay over off-side against Rishi Dhawan. Suryakumar, Mumbai's impact player, was off the blocks with his pull, cuts and sweep off Rahul Chahar. From the other end, Kishan got his fifty in 29 balls.



Suryakumar's hitting prowess continued by flaying Ellis over point and flicking Arshdeep for a brace of fours. Kishan further teared into Arshdeep by hammering over deep mid-wicket for six and slamming down the ground twice for two fours. After SKY, Varma ensured momentum stayed with Mumbai by pulling Arshdeep for six, scooping the next ball for four and launching another six over deep mid-wicket. David chipped in with a cheeky dab off Curran for four and

sliced off Arshdeep for the same result, before Tilak finished off the chase in style with a huge straight six slammed down the ground.

### Brief scores:

Punjab Kings 214/3 in 20 overs (Liam Livingstone 82 not out, Jitesh Sharma 49 not out; Piyush Chawla 2/29, Arshad Khan 1/48) lost to Mumbai Indians 216/4 in 18.5 overs (Ishan Kishan 75, Suryakumar Yadav 66; Nathan Ellis 2/34, Rishi Dhawan 1/20) by six wickets

## LSG vs CSK match called off due to rain

Lucknow | Agencies

Rain played a spoilsport as the IPL 2023 match between Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) and Chennai Super Kings (CSK) has officially been called off with 19.2 overs bowled in the first innings, at the Ekana Stadium here on Wednesday.

As a result of the abandonment of the play, both the teams will split points and CSK move up to second. Earlier, the toss was delayed for 30 minutes due to a slight drizzle and the game began at 3:35 pm.

After winning the toss, CSK opted to bowl first and kept LSG batters at bay with the scintillating bowling efforts before Ayush Badoni's unbeaten 59 off 22 injected momentum in the slog overs as Lucknow scored 125/7 in 19.2 overs.

Putting into bat first, LSG had a dismal start as CSK spinners ripped through Lucknow's top order and the hosts mus-



tered 31 runs in the Powerplay for the loss of three wickets.

Moeen Ali gave CSK the first breakthrough in the fourth over to dismiss Kyle Mayers.

Maheesha Theekshana's double strike in the sixth over reduced LSG to 27/3. He first cleaned up Manan Vohra and followed that up with a wicket of skipper Krunal Pandya.

Badoni took Chahar to the cleaner as he lined up

4, 6, 6, taking 20 runs off the over. In the process, he completed his Fifty off just 30 balls. The youngsters took LSG to 125/6 from 62/5.

### Brief scores

Lucknow Super Giants 125/7 in 19.2 overs (Ayush Badoni 59 off 33; Moeen Ali 2/13, Ravindra Jadeja 1/11) against Chennai Super Kings.

## RAHUL, UNADKAT RULED OUT OF IPL 2023: REPORTS



Mumbai Lucknow Super Giants skipper KL Rahul in all likelihood will take no further part in the Indian Premier League (IPL) after sustaining a serious thigh injury during team's last game against Royal Challengers Bangalore. The PTI can also confirm that veteran pacer Jaydev Unadkat's shoulder condition is serious and he too is ruled out of the IPL. It is understood that it will be a race against time for BCCI Sports Science & Medical Team to get the senior batter-keeper Rahul ready for World Test Championship final in London from June 7 to 11. Both Unadkat and Rahul had a good chance of making it to India's XI for the WTC final but if both of them are ruled out, the Indian selectors will have to think of other options.

## World Boxing Championships

# Nishant sails into pre-quarters with a clinical win in 71kg category

Tashkent | Agencies

Young Indian pugilist Nishant Dev produced a power-packed performance and recorded a scintillating victory to advance to the pre-quarterfinals of the IBA Men's World Boxing Championships, here on Wednesday.

Facing the 2021 bronze medallist Sarkhan Aliyev of Azerbaijan in the 71kg, Nishant was presented with a tough challenge initially but the exuberant pugilist put up a world-class display of strength and supreme technique to secure a 5-0 victory.

The 22-year-old from Karnal utilised his strategy of attacking from a distance and landed a swift combination of punches to begin the bout on the front foot. After judging his opponent's attacks well and defending sternly, Nishant gave the Azerbaijani



no chance to execute his attacks. The southpaw, who hardly put a foot wrong throughout the bout, proved to be too quick for Aliyev. Nishant will now face Lee Sangmin

of South Korea for a place in the quarterfinals. Having reached the quarter-finals of the competition in the last edition as well, the Indian will be aiming to go

all the way this time round.

On Thursday, four Indian pugilists will take the ring for their respective tournament openers. The 2022 Thailand Open champion Govind Sahani (48kg) will square off against Mehron Shahev of Tajikistan while the 2019 Asian silver medallist Deepak Kumar (51kg) will take on Luis Delgado of Ecuador.

Record six-time Asian medallist Shiva Thapa (63.5kg), who received a bye in the first round, will begin his campaign from the Round of 16 stage as he aims to add another World Championships medal to his kitty, bagging a bronze in the 2015 edition in Doha. The bronze medallists of the 2022 Asian Championships, Narender Bervall (+92kg) and Muhammad Abroridinov of Tajikistan, who also received byes in the first round, will go head-to-head against each other.

## ISSF World Cup Shotgun

# Shooters Bhowneesh, Prithviraj, Rajeshwari still in line to qualify

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Three Indians, Bhowneesh Mendiratta, Prithviraj Tondaiman and Rajeshwari Kumari, ended day two of the Trap qualifications at the on-going ISSF World Cup Shotgun in Cairo, Egypt, with a fighting chance to qualify for the top eight.

Among them, Paris 2024 Olympics quota winner Bhowneesh Mendiratta was best placed with a four-round score of 94, giving him 11th spot currently among medal contenders. His senior mate Prithviraj Tondaiman was at 13th spot with the same score, while Rajeshwari in the women's trap, shot 88 over two days to be placed 14th in



her 55-women field. Bhowneesh shot rounds of 25 and 23 respectively on the day to move up from his overnight position while Prithviraj had rounds of 24 and 23. Zoravar Sandhu, the third Indian in men's trap was placed 36th currently with a total score of 91.

In the women's trap, besides Rajeshwari, Preeti Rajak shot 85 to be in 25th position while Shreyasi Singh was at 27th spot with a total of 84. The Trap shooters come back on Thursday for the fifth and final qualification round before the finals get underway.

## Messi suspended for 2 weeks by PSG for unauthorized Saudi trip: source

Paris | Agencies

Lionel Messi has been disciplined by Paris Saint-Germain for his trip to Saudi Arabia without the club's permission, a source with knowledge of the matter confirmed to Xinhua.

The source didn't specify the length of the suspension, but French media RMC and L'Equipe reported earlier in the day that the Argentine star will be hit with a two-week suspension with "no training, no match, and no salary."

Messi wasn't present at the team's training session the following day as he traveled to Saudi Arabia to attend a commercial activity as a tourism ambassador.

L'Equipe reported that PSG coach Christophe Galtier had initially planned two days off - Monday and Tuesday - for his players if they beat Lorient. Otherwise, the team would train on Monday and have Tuesday off.



However, Messi made the decision to go to Saudi Arabia without getting the green light from the club.

A two-week suspension means that Messi will miss his team's away match against Troyes and the home clash with Ajaccio. His contract with PSG expires at the end of this season, and it's very likely that he has only three more games to play with the French capital team since the two sides seem to have drifted apart.

## La Liga ROUND 33RD TO END WITH FOUR BIG IMPACT GAMES TODAY

Madrid | Agencies

The 33rd round of games in La Liga ends today with four more games that will have a big impact on the race to qualify for Europe and to avoid relegation.

Seventh-placed Athletic Club Bilbao entertains sixth-ranked Betis in the San Mames Stadium, knowing a win will see them climb above their rivals into a place that (providing Osasuna doesn't win Saturday's Copa del Rey final) would qualify them for next season's UEFA Europa League, reports Xinhua.

Athletic recovers Oihan Sancet after suspension, but could be without central defenders Yeray Alvarez and Inigo Martinez, while Iker Muniain remains sidelined.

They also go into the game with 48 hours less recovery time than Betis, whose last game was against Barcelona on Saturday, while Athletic



faced Mallorca on Monday night.

Betis is also without defenders Luiz Felipe and Edgar Gonzalez through injury and suspension respectively.

Girona's win away to Sevilla on Monday means they have suddenly put themselves in the race for Europe and they entertain Mallorca, who is comfortable in mid-table after taking a point off

Athletic Club.

Sevilla's defeat against Girona was the first they have suffered since Jose Luis Mendilibar took over as coach and tired legs no doubt played a role. Their game at home to Espanyol comes a week before they play the first leg of their Europa League semifinal away to Juventus, and Mendilibar will need to see an improvement from his team.

Espanyol is third from bottom despite Sunday's narrow win against Getafe, but with Barcelona looking to assure the title against them on May 14, it is absolutely vital they get something from this match, otherwise relegation will be staring them in the face. Rayo Vallecano and Valladolid play Thursday's remaining game, with Rayo having a chance of a top-seven finish despite last weekend's defeat to Elche, while Valladolid is still very much in the relegation dogfight after their 5-2 defeat at home to Atletico Madrid on Sunday.

## Tori Bowie, a three-time Olympics medalist dies aged 32

New York | Agencies

Tori Bowie, a three-time Olympics medalist and a 100m sprint world champion has died aged 32, with the cause of her death unknown. In the 2016 Rio Olympics, she won a silver medal in the 100m and bronze in the 200m individual races.

Tori also ran the anchor leg in the 4x100m relay race at the 2016 Rio Olympics, teaming up with Tianna Bartoletta, Allyson Felix and English Gardner to clinch the gold medal.

She then won the 100m individual race apart from the relay event at the world championships in London in 2017, finishing less than a



hundredth of a second ahead of Marie-Josée Ta Lou of the Ivory Coast.

## Madrid Open

# TSITSIPAS REACHES QUARTER-FINALS WITH WIN OVER ZAPATA MIRALLES

Madrid (Spain) | Agencies

Stefanos Tsitsipas advanced to the quarter-finals of the Madrid Open after beating Bernabe Zapata Miralles in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

The Greek conceded three service breaks to World No. 42 Zapata Miralles but remained in charge throughout thanks to seven service breaks of his own in a 6-3, 6-1 victory.

The two-time Monte-Carlo champion dominated his opponent's serve, restricting Zapata Miralles to a first-serve winning percentage of 38 per cent. Tsitsipas, who has reached the quarter-finals or better of his past 10 clay-court events, will next meet Germany lucky loser Jan-Lennard Struff.



German Struff continued his hot clay-court, charging into his second consecutive ATP Masters 1000 quarter-final after a tight 7-6(7), 6-7(7), 6-3 win over Argentine Pedro Cachin. After rallying from 1-4 in the second set to force a tie-break, Struff missed the opportunity to close out the match in straight sets when he held match point at 6/7 in the 'breaker. But he carried the momentum of his comeback into the third set to twice break Cachin to close out the match in two hours and 28 minutes.

## KUDERMETOVA REACHES SEMIFINALS

Madrid | Veronika

Kudermetova took out No.3 seed Jessica Pegula in a rollercoaster three-setter in the Madrid Open to reach the biggest semifinal of her career with a 6-4, 0-6, 6-4 win over the American in the quarterfinal on Wednesday. Kudermetova had previously reached three quarterfinals at WTA 1000 level or above; all in 2022 at Indian Wells, Roland Garros and Guadalajara, and Wednesday's result moved her into the last four at this level for the first time.

The 12th seed will face world number one Iga Swiatek or Croatia's Petra Martic in semifinal.



## Chess

# WGM Vantika Agrawal rises to India No. 3 rank

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Rising Indian chess player Vantika Agrawal continues to take rapid strides in her career as she achieved career-high rank of India No. 3 in the women's section with a total of 2428 rating points.

The 21-year-old, who was part of the 2020 Olympiad-winning Indian team, has been impressive in her recent outings as she added 61 points from her last four international tournaments, which also includes becoming women's champion at the Menorca Open in Spain. Women's Grandmaster

Vantika has been a consistent performer on the international circuit. She also became the 11th Indian woman to attain the International Master title last month. The Noida resident Vantika will look to continue her brilliant show when she plays some top tournaments later in order to prepare for the 2022 Asian Games, to be played in Hangzhou, China from September 28 to October 8.

The youngster is also confident of becoming Grandmaster this year as she required three GM norms and cross 2500 rating points to achieve that title.





## ANUSHKA HAS A HILARIOUS REACTION TO DOJA CAT'S 'MEOWS' RESPONSE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Anushka Sharma has heaped praise for rapper Doja Cat, who hilariously responded to all the Met Gala 2023 red carpet questions with just "meows." Taking to her Instagram Stories, Anushka re-shared a video where an interviewer asked Doja Cat questions. Doja chose to respond with just "meows."

Anushka wrote: "I propose for this to become an acceptable way of communication on the red carpets."

Apart from Doja, Jared Leto and Lil Nas X paid tribute to Choupette, Karl's cat.

Others who were seen attending the event included Alia Bhatt, Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Penelope Cruz, Karlie Kloss, Gigi Hadid, Kendall Jenner, Nick Jonas, Anne Hathaway, Jason Derulo and Rihanna.



## The more local we go, the more global we reach: Ayushmann

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Ayushmann Khurrana, who will soon be seen in 'Dream Girl 2', spoke at the inaugural event of the media and entertainment industry powwow, FICCI Frames 2023, on Wednesday, its opening day.

He stated emphatically that to move forward the entertainment fraternity has to stay more rooted as that only stories which are truly local have the potential to go global.

Citing the example of the Oscar-winning documentary 'The Elephant Whisperers', the 'Vicky Donor' star said he had never imagined that a relationship between man and animal will bring India an Academy

Award.

He said during the panel discussion: "Ten years ago, I had gone to this wildlife sanctuary at the trijunction of Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, and witnessed firsthand the relationship between man and animal. I never thought that in 2023, that relationship would've been told worldwide and give us an Oscar."

He further mentioned that the Indian entertainment industry is at the cusp of achieving greatness on a global level.

"The more we're connected to our roots, the more we'll move ahead. The more local we go, the more global we reach. Our film industry is at the cusp of global greatness. I am fortunate to be living in a time where the world has become a creative melting pot of culture", he added.



## ANIL KAPOOR REVEALS HOW HIS ICONIC 'JHAKAAS' GOT A LIFE OF ITS OWN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

It has been over three decades to Anil Kapoor's iconic dialogue 'jhakaas' as his film 'Yudh' has clocked 38 years in Hindi cinema.

Anil took to Twitter, where he shared a slew of stills from the film, which marked the directorial debut of producer Gulshan Rai's son Rajiv Rai in 1985. He wrote: "38 Years of Yudh and 38 years since Jhakaas came into our lives and never left! I always remember Yudh very fondly for so many reasons! Working with the producer Gulshan Rai and his son Rajiv was a pleasure, Tina Munim was a fabulous costar and Jackie was, as always, a blast!"

Anil shared that he also loved working with Nutan because "she was always so

warm and caring, she reminded me of my own mother."

"Plus, who can forget a dream chance to dance with the one and only Hemaji! Yudh really was a gift that hasn't stopped giving."

'Yudh' stars Jackie Shroff, Anil in dual role, Tina Munim, Pran, Danny Denzongpa, Nutan, Shatrughan Sinha and Hema Malini. The film revolves around a policeman, who dies trying to save a woman named Savitri and her twin boys from a gangster.

While Savitri raises the policeman's son, her own sons are raised by a lawyer and a kidnapper, respectively. Anil will next be seen in 'Fighter' starring Hrithik Roshan and Deepika Padukone.

## 'Extremely special project'

Sonakshi says her series is first ever Indian series to be presented at the 2023 Berlinale Film Festival

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The trailer of the upcoming streaming series 'Dahaad' was unveiled on Wednesday. The series, directed by Reema Kagti and Ruchika Oberoi, marks the webseries debut of Bollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha, who will be seen essaying a fierce cop chasing serial murders.

The trailer follows the story of 27 missing women in the state of Rajasthan with an unsuspected killer on the loose as he eyes his next victim. There's a pattern to these murders and Sonakshi's character of Anjali Bhaati gets the breakthrough as she realises the events are making a chain pointing to one perpetrator.

Sonakshi said, "Dahaad" for me, is an extremely special project. It not only marks my streaming debut, it is also the first ever Indian series to be presented at the 2023 Berlinale Film Festival. Anjali Bhaati is different from any other character I've played before. Reema and Zoya have created a character that is not just unafraid, but has the potential to become a role model for the generation. Working with this cast and crew has been incredible."

Her co-actor in the series, Vijay Varma said in a statement, "Dahaad" is a gritty-and-gripping shot of adrenaline in a way that is nothing short of special. It is also the most challenging-yet-rewarding character I have played. Anand is a simple teacher, a family man who spends his weekends teaching underprivileged kids. But there is more to him than meets the eye, and that is where the mystery lies."

He lauded the creative duo of Zoya and Reema with whom he has worked in 'Gully Boy'.

He said, "Reema and Zoya are some of the finest filmmakers of our time, and with 'Dahaad', they've taken it a notch higher. I'm thrilled to be associated with this series.

The eight part series, which also stars Gulshan Devaiah, and Sohumi Shah in pivotal roles, has been produced by Excel Media & Entertainment and Tiger Baby, with Ritesh Sidhwani, Farhan Akhtar, Reema Kagti, and Zoya Akhtar as executive producers.

The series will premiere on Prime Video on May 12.



## Soundous Moufakir learns Hindi for a stunt-based show

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Splitsvilla 14' winner Soundous Moufakir will be seen in the 13th edition of the stunt-based show 'Khatron Ke Khiladi' for which she is learning Hindi to be able to interact with her co-contestants and host Rohit Shetty. Speaking of her preparations, Soundous said: "Khatron Ke Khiladi 13 is not just any other show for me. It's a platform to showcase my abilities and test my limits. I

believe that language should never be a hindrance to expressing oneself, and I want to connect with the viewers on a deeper level."

She added: "By learning Hindi, I am taking a step towards making myself more accessible and relatable to the Hindi-speaking audience. I want to thank the show for giving me this opportunity to learn a new language and I'm determined to make the most of it. I hope that my efforts to improve my Hindi skills are appreciated by the viewers and that they enjoy watching me face my fears on the show."



## 'I don't like using stunt doubles'

Radhika Madan once got injured from hanging between two poles but still did a retake

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Radhika Madan, who is gearing up for her streaming series 'Saas, Bahu aur Flamingo', shared an incident from the sets of the show when she had to slide from second floor to the ground floor during a scene. However, things didn't go as planned and it led to Radhika hanging between two poles after being launched off a conveyor belt. The actress said: "For one of the action scenes, there was this conveyor belt from the second floor to the ground floor, and I had to slide from this second floor to the ground floor. I was really fired up and super excited to shoot this scene because I really like doing action scenes."

In fact, all the action scenes in Saas, Bahu aur Flamingo that are there, I have done it myself, I really don't like using stunt doubles. So for

this particular scene, I started the sequence and mid-way through it, I realised that my shoe or my heel had gotten stuck to the side and I flew and bounced off the belt."

She further mentioned: "While I had all the necessary protection with a harness, the thrust of the push wasn't regulated and hence threw me off the ground so I was left hanging between two poles after a great launch from the conveyor belt. There was pin drop silence on the set after this happened because everyone got really concerned in case I had hurt myself and I did get an injury mark on my leg.

After they got me off, my concern was did we at least get the shot, and I turned to Homi and asked him if he needed one more and he just looked at me and asked me to give one more take to this and there I was, doing this all over again, this time, successfully."



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Soundarya Sharma