

absolute india



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FROM WHATSAPP TO TELEGRAM, HOW FRAUDSTERS ARE STILL CONNING INDIAN USERS

MISUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Delhi Police recently unearthed an international gang of cyber crooks based in China, Dubai and the mas-termind sitting in Georgia who have defrauded 11,000 of people on the pretext of providing online work from home jobs in Amazon. The gang duped crores of rupees on the pretext of providing online jobs. Police arrested three people in separate raids conducted at Delhi, Gurugram and Fatehabad (Haryana) in this connection. The investigation indicated that Chinese cyber-criminals developed a module to cheat people looking for online work from home or part-time jobs as Chinese loan fraud is now declining due to action by agencies and awareness among people.



where they lure them via WhatsApp and then take them to rival chat app Telegram and siphon off their hard-earned money. Although international spam calls have reduced in the past few days, people are still losing money via spam text messages on WhatsApp which has more than 500 million users in the country. A software engineer in Gurugram lost over Rs 42 lakh after scammers tempted him with promises of huge earnings for simply liking videos on YouTube, first via WhatsApp message and then adding him to a Telegram group. In April, with the arrest of four men, Delhi Police claimed to have busted a gang of cyber crooks for cheating over 500 people on the pretext of 'online trading' on a huge margin across the country. The official said that the gang members were

connected with Chinese accomplices operating from Dubai. A senior Delhi Police official told correspondent that in the past six months, several cases of fraud, ultimately connected to Chinese cyber gangs who are using WhatsApp to connect and lure people, have come to light. According to police, a woman in her recent complaint said she was searching for a job online when she received a WhatsApp message from an unknown number. "The message has an offer of paying Rs 50 per like for the link of social media accounts sent to her through WhatsApp. She opened the various links sent by the caller and liked them. She sent the screen shot to the sender named Xarina," Deputy Commissioner of Police, Central, Sanjay Kumar Sain said. Xarina asked her to open a

Telegram link to receive the credited amount. "She joined the Telegram channel and Rs 150 was credited in her bank account. Xarina then instructed her to join another Telegram channel and like some YouTube videos, which she completed and received Rs 200 in return," the DCP said. Later, Xarina convinced her to invest in crypto currency with the promise of significant profits. The woman initially invested Rs 1,000, and Xarina lured her with the prospect of even more profit. However, the woman ended up losing around Rs 22 lakh in a single day and has requested legal action against Xarina for her actions. It was revealed that the Telegram ID used by the scammers was being operated from Beijing and the WhatsApp number -- used to defraud the victim by convincing her to invest into a fake Amazon site -- was also found being operated from outside India. In another modus operandi, Delhi Police arrested eight people who used to dupe people on pretext of investment and online gaming. The gang used to contact the victims over WhatsApp and offered them to earn money through investment and online gaming. The gang also lured the victims to earn money through online gaming. Meta-owned WhatsApp last week took action on the growing menace of international scam calls in India, after the government took cognisance of the issue and announced to send a notice to the platform over the issue.

SC declines to interfere with HC order staying Bihar caste survey

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to interfere with the Patna High Court's interim order, staying the caste survey by the Bihar government. A bench of Justices Abhay S. Oka and Rajesh Bindal queried as to why the court should interfere with the high court order at this stage and asked the Bihar government to place its arguments before the high court, which has scheduled the hearing of the matter on July 3. Senior advocate Shyam Divan, appearing on behalf of the Bihar government, submitted that the state required only 10 days to complete the process. As the state government insisted on an order from the top court, the bench said it would have to examine if the exercise being carried out is a census in garb of survey, which has been pointed out by the high court, adding that "this is not a case where we can grant you interim relief". The state government counsel maintained that the survey was not on a 100 per cent basis like a census but voluntary for the people and argued that the state has got legislative competence to collect statistics. After hearing submissions, the apex court sched-



SC lifts West Bengal ban on 'The Kerala Story'

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the West Bengal government order banning the film 'The Kerala Story'. A bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud said the court intends to stay the West Bengal government's order passed on May 8, banning the screening of the film 'The Kerala Story'. The bench also directed Tamil Nadu to provide adequate security to every cinema hall for safe screening of 'The Kerala Story' and ensure safety of moviegoers, and also the state will not directly or indirectly thwart screening of the film. During the hearing the bench told senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, representing the West Bengal government, that the state government banned the film on the basis of 13 people, "you get any 13 people they will say ban any movie. Unless you're showing them cartoons or sports..." The top court noted that the film has been released everywhere in the country. if the high court is not able to hear the matter.

Supporters of Gehlot, Pilot exchange blows in Ajmer

Jaipur | Agencies

The ongoing tussle in Rajasthan Congress between two camps, one led by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and the other by former Deputy CM Sachin Pilot, is no longer limited to verbal attacks as the supporters of the two leaders exchanged blows in Ajmer ahead of AICC Secretary and Rajasthan co-incharge Amrita Dhawan's visit on Thursday. Videos of the supporters of the rival camps kicking and punching each other have gone viral on social media. The clash broke out around noon when Congress workers from the rural areas reached for the meeting called by the district Congress committee. The party leaders said that it was a feedback programme where Amrita



Dhawan was scheduled to collect feedback from the party workers. The Congress co-incharge was scheduled to have a one-to-one conversation with the party leaders. Sources said that the trouble started after the party workers from the rural areas started coming to the meeting venue. The party's office-bearers and the workers

Union cabinet reshuffle: Arjun Meghwal new law minister, Kiren Rijju gets earth sciences



New Delhi: In a major cabinet reshuffle, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appointed Arjun Ram Meghwal as the new Minister of Law and Justice, and moved Kiren Rijju to Earth Sciences, a communique from the Rashtrapati Bhavan said on Thursday. On the advice of PM Modi, President Droupadi Murmu has approved this change in the cabinet. According to this new change, till now Rijju, who was holding the responsibility of the Union Ministry of Law and Justice, has now been assigned the Ministry of Earth Sciences. Meghwal has been given independent charge as Minister of State in the Ministry of Law and Justice along with his current ministry.

Congress announces Siddaramaiah as K'taka CM, Shivakumar his only DyCM

Besides the new Karnataka Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister, there will be 18 ministers who are likely to be sworn in at the ceremony on May 20, including senior party leaders G. Parameshwara, M.B. Patil and others. According to party sources, there will be a total 28 ministers in the state cabinet with 14 each from both the camps of Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar.

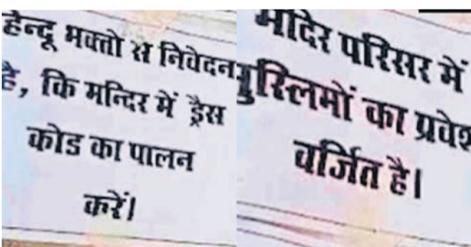
Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress on Thursday declared veteran party leader Siddaramaiah as the Chief Minister of Karnataka and state unit chief D.K Shivakumar his only deputy after three days of consultations. Addressing a press conference here at the party headquarters here, General Secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal along with Karnataka in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala thanked the people of Karnataka for the "spectacular victory in favour of Congress". Venugopal said, "Kharage had serious consultation with senior leaders and one to one discussion with Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar and we all were part of the discussion and he took views of Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi. Finally, Kharage took a decision on the Karnataka CM issue."



"He conveyed to me to announce his decision to the media and people of Karnataka. He (Congress president Kharage) decided to make Siddaramaiah as the CM of Karnataka. Siddaramaiah will be the CM of Karnataka. D.K. Shivakumar will be the only one Deputy CM of Karnataka and he will continue as KPCC president till Parliament elections are over," he announced. He said that the swearing-in ceremony will take place on May 20. Venugopal also said that on May 13 results of polling were announced and on May 14, we had a CLP meeting, three observers were there for the CLP meeting. He even hailed D.K. Shivakumar as a dynamic leader and said that he electrified the cadre of the party. Wherever there was a gap he reached there and filled the gap. Both are big assets of Karnataka. Everyone has their own wish and desire to become the CM, which is nothing wrong, he said. Venugopal also said that the party will be sending invitations to all the opposition leaders for the swearing-in ceremony.

UP TEMPLE BANS ENTRY FOR MUSLIMS, INTRODUCES DRESS CODE FOR HINDUS



Allgarh | Agencies

An ancient Hanuman temple in Uttar Pradesh's Allgarh has banned the entry of Muslims and also issued guidelines for a dress code for Hindu devotees. Posters put up outside the temple in Aachaltalab area, also known as the Gilhari Hanuman temple, say that Muslims are not allowed inside the shrine. The dress code for Hindu devotees says that people should not enter the temple

wearing distressed jeans and short and skimpy clothes. The temple Mahant Kaushal Nath said that wearing such clothes in a religious place is distracting and disrespectful. "People should come to the temple decently dressed. They can wear anything outside it. As for the ban on Muslims, what is the point of their coming to the temple if they do not want to worship?" he asked. This temple is famous because Lord Hanuman is worshipped in the form of a squirrel.

Global stroke deaths expected to rise to nearly 5mn by 2030

Ischemic stroke is caused by a blockage of blood flow to the brain and is the most common type of stroke. As the world population grew, the global number of ischemic stroke deaths increased from 2.04 million in 1990 to 3.29 million in 2019. However, the stroke rate decreased from 66 strokes per 100,000 people in 1990 to 44 strokes per 100,000 people in 2019. Researchers then used the database to predict the number of deaths for 2020-2030. They found that the death toll for ischemic stroke is expected to increase further to 4.9 million in 2030. When researchers factored in the risk factors, they predicted that the overall number of deaths from stroke could reach 6.4 million if these risk factors are not controlled or prevented.

Beijing | Agencies

The number of deaths worldwide from ischemic stroke increased from 2 million in 1990 to more than 3 million in 2019, and is expected to increase to nearly 5 million by 2030, according to a study. "This increase in the global death toll of ischemic stroke along with a predicted further increase in the future is concerning, but ischemic stroke is highly preventable," said Lize Xiong, from Tongji University in Shanghai, China. "Our results suggest that a combination of lifestyle factors like smoking and a diet high in sodium along with other factors such as high blood pressure and high body mass index



can lead to an increased risk of stroke," Xiong added. The study was published in the medical journal Neurology. For the study, researchers analysed data from the Global Health Data Exchange, from 1990-2019. "This decrease in the stroke rate likely means that the overall increase in the number of strokes worldwide is mainly due to population growth and ageing," Xiong said. Researchers found that seven major risk factors including smoking, a diet high in sodium, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, kidney dysfunction, high blood sugar, and high BMI contributed to the higher number of strokes. A limitation of the study was that quality and accuracy of disease data from some countries cannot be guaranteed as many did not have reliable information on strokes.

ARMY, ASSAM RIFLES PROVIDE SECURITY TO MANIPUR-BOUND GOODS TRUCKS

Imphal: The Army and Assam Rifles are providing security to Manipur-bound goods trucks in efforts to maintain the continued supply of essentials to the violence-hit state, defence sources said here on Thursday. In addition, the movement of vehicles is also being monitored by drones, according to a defence spokesperson. Since May 15, around 130 vehicles carrying essential items, food grains, medicines and other vital things entered Manipur through various highways, the spokesman said. He said that during the ethnic violence in Manipur, supplies to the non-tribal Meitei community-dominated Imphal valley were cut off due to a road blockade, as well as fear amongst transporters.



SC AGREES TO HEAR PLEA AGAINST HC ORDER ON SCIENTIFIC SURVEY OF 'SHIVLING' IN GYANVAPI MOSQUE



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to hear on Friday an appeal by the Gyanvapi mosque management committee challenging the Allahabad High Court order allowing scientific survey of a Shivling found inside the mosque complex last year.

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi mentioned the matter before a bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and comprising Justices P.S. Narasimha and J.B. Pardiwala.

The counsel said the high court has passed an order, pending judgment being

reserved, and an application was made for carbon dating, which was allowed by the high court. The bench agreed to examine the matter.

Earlier this month, the Allahabad High Court directed the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to carry out a 'scientific survey' of the 'Shivling' in the Gyanvapi mosque to ascertain its age.

The high court asked the ASI to ensure that no damage is done to the structure during the survey. A single bench of Justice Arvind Kumar Mishra was responding to a petition filed by the Hindu side, demanding carbon dating of the Shivling. The ASI had submitted its report in a sealed envelope.

'Stop harassing innocent Muslims for Akola riots': JIH urges Maha CM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) on Thursday wrote a letter to Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde demanding a halt to the "unilateral persecution and prosecution perpetrated on innocent Muslims" for the Akola riots last week. JIH president Hafiz Ilyas Khan Falahi called upon the Chief Minister to inquire into the circumstances leading to the Akola tension on May 14 which led to clashes and the death of one person. According to some



accounts, there was an offensive social media post after which some local Muslim youth informed the police. However, as they were leaving the police station, the police personnel were assaulted by some anti-social elements, then they went around damaging several private and government vehicles, targeting homes of the people and

even the Tarab Ali Mosque, even as the town was clamped under prohibitory orders for two days, and tight security continues to remain there. "Despite the quick response by the police, many innocent Muslim youth, who are totally unrelated to the violence were wrongfully detained and are targeted," Falahi pointed out. Demanding that the mosque defiling incident should be probed separately by lodging a formal FIR, Falahi urged Shinde to ensure that strict action is taken against those responsible for it.

Dwarka Expressway will be completed in 3-4 months: Gadkari

Team Absolute | Jaipur

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Nitin Gadkari, during his inspection on Thursday announced that Dwarka Expressway will be completed in next 3-4 months.

The construction work of the Haryana section (18.9 km) of the 29-km-long Dwarka Expressway from Shivmurti near IGI Airport through Dwarka near the Kherki Daula toll in Gurugram has reached the final stage. Dwarka Expressway starts near Shiv Murti on NH-48 and terminates near Kherki Daula Toll Plaza on the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway. This will be the country's first elevated urban expressway. The expressway has been constructed by dividing it into four parts, in which 10.01 km area has been kept in two areas in the Delhi region and 18.9 km area in Haryana region has



also been kept in two areas.

The construction work in the Haryana region has been completed by up to 99 per cent. The expressway is being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 10,000 crore as part of Delhi's decongestion plan. Dwarka Expressway will have a fully-automated toll system and the entire project will be equipped with an intelligent transportation system (ITS). It will provide connectivity to Indira Gandhi International Airport from the Dwarka side through Dwarka Expressway.

Nitish, Tejashwi to go to Bengaluru for swearing-in ceremony of Congress govt

Team Absolute | Patna

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav will go to Bengaluru for the swearing-in ceremony of the new Congress government in Karnataka on Saturday. The Congress has sent invitations to Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi Yadav and they have accepted it. The swearing-in ceremony will start at 12.30 pm on May 20 where Siddaramaiah will take oath as Chief Minister and D.K. Shivakumar will take the oath of Deputy Chief Minister. Some ministers are also like to be sworn in. The Congress is trying



to give a message to the BJP about opposition unity by sending invitations to top leaders of opposition parties. Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi Yadav are in fact

spearheading the opposition unity in the country. They have met several leaders of the opposition parties including Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leader Rahul Gandhi, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of the AAP, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of the Trinamool Congress, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, CPI's D Raja, CPI-M's Sitaram Yechury, NCP supremo Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena-UBT chief Uddhav Thackeray, and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik of the BJD. Apart from Patnaik, the other leaders have completely supported the efforts of Nitish Kumar.

Congress sets up 'fact-finding' team for in-depth study of Manipur violence

Team Absolute | Imphal

The Congress, which had dubbed the violence in Manipur "pre-planned" and demanded immediate imposition of President's Rule in the BJP-ruled state, has constituted a three-member 'fact-finding' team to study the violence in the state, ascertain the causes of widespread hostilities, and evaluate its extent. A Congress leader in Imphal said on Thursday that the party President Mallikarjun Kharge has constituted the three-member team, comprising party General Secretary Mukul Wasnik, in-charge for Tripura, Sikkim, and Nagaland Dr. Ajoy Kumar and party's Tripura MLA Sudip Roy Barman to visit Manipur. The team would study the Manipur situation in coordination with the state in-charge Bhakta Charan



Das, state President K. Meghachandra Singh and three-time former Chief Minister and incumbent Congress Legislator Party leader Okram Ibobi Singh. Congress General Secretary,

Organisation, K.C. Venugopal in a statement said that the 'fact-finding' team would submit its report to the Congress President at the earliest. Das last week visited Manipur and compared the valley-based organisations Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Bajrang Dal. "The condition in Manipur is visible to the country and world and I have been working in Manipur for the last three years. There are two areas -- hill area and the valley area," Das had said and demanded immediate imposition of President's Rule in the state. The ethnic violence in Manipur since May 3 claimed the lives of at least 73 people and injured 250 others, while 1,800 houses were destroyed besides a large number of government and private properties were also damaged.

Application for narcotic sample must be made within 72 hours, says Delhi HC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Thursday ruled that the application for drawing a sample of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances must be made within 72 hours to the Magistrate concerned under Section 52A of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. Justice Jasmeet Singh firmly asserted that the submission of such applications should not be subject to the arbitrary discretion of the Narcotics Control Bureau, which functions as the prosecuting agency. While acknowledging that the reasonable time for submitting such an application depends on the specific circumstances of each case, the court emphasised that



it is not the legislature's intention to allow the prosecuting agency to move the application arbitrarily. "Therefore, taking cue from the Standing Order 1/88, it is desirable that the application under 52A should be made within 72 hours or near about the said time frame," the court said. The court noted that Section 52A of the NDPS Act does not specify a specific timeframe for submitting an application to the magistrate for the collection of sam-

ples. It further clarified that the time-frame mentioned in Standing Order 1/88 solely pertains to the transportation of the samples to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL). According to the court, the legislative intent behind Section 52A of the NDPS Act is not to grant the respondent authorities the freedom to delay their submission of an application. Although the statute does not specify a time limit, the court emphasised that the application should be filed promptly to prevent any concerns of sample tampering. "It cannot be the intent of the legislature that since no time limit is mentioned in the statute, the respondent authorities can take their own sweet time in moving an application under section 52A NDPS. Rather, the said applica-

tion should be moved at the earliest to prevent the apprehension of tampering with the samples as the seizure, quantity and quality of contraband is the most crucial evidence in NDPS cases and drawing of sample and certification in the presence of magistrate is of utmost importance," the court said. Justice Singh emphasised the need for a coherent interpretation of Standing Order 1/88 and Section 52A, indicating that a reasonable timeframe should be considered when applying for sample collection and certification before the Magistrate. The court concluded that the violation of Section 52A undermines the integrity of the sample collection process, resulting in a benefit of doubt that should be extended to Kashif.

Around 8k to join human chain to save Mhadei

Team Absolute | Panaji

Save Mhadei, Save Goa Front' have urged the people to participate in a seven kilometre-long human prayer chain on May 20 along the banks of the Mandovi river where around 8 thousand persons are expected. Historian Prof Prajal Sakhardande, convenor of the campaign, on Thursday addressed a press conference and requested people of the state along with NGOs and politicians to participate in large numbers to draw government's attention and spread awareness about the protection of the Mhadei River. This human prayer chain will extend from the end of Miramar Beach to the Santa Monica jetty in Panaji,



a distance of seven kms. The 'Earthivist Collective', in association with the 'Goa Heritage Action Group' (GHAG) and the 'Save Mhadei Save Goa Front' have come together for this chain. Jack Ajit Sukhija, grandson of Dr Jack de Sequeira, was also present on the occasion. "Dr Jack de Sequeira, who is known as the father of opinion polls, saved Goa from merging into Maharashtra and protected our identity.

Today his grandson is with us to stop the diversion of the Mhadei River into Karnataka. We all need to support this cause and unite," Sakhardande said. According to front members, the event will offer people from all over Goa an opportunity to come together and connect with the river, its history and its soul. Jack Ajit Sukhija also appealed to people to join the movement and save Mhadei from getting diverted. "Mhadei is our mother. We need to know the importance of this river and unite to protect it," he said. "After coming together, we can get many positive ideas to go ahead with this movement. Government may get convinced with mass movement.

Abhishek Banerjee challenges Calcutta HC's order allowing central agencies to question him

Team Absolute | Kolkata

Trinamool Congress' national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Thursday approached a division bench of the Calcutta High Court, hours after the single-judge bench of Justice Amrita Sinha allowed central agencies to question him in connection with the teachers' recruitment case.

Expelled Trinamool Congress leader and another accused in the case, Kuntal Ghosh, had also approached the same division bench challenging Justice Sinha's order.

Besides allowing central agencies to question Banerjee and Ghosh in the matter, Justice Sinha also imposed a penalty of Rs 25 lakh on each of them.

The division bench of Calcutta High Court's Chief Justice T.S. Sivagnanam and Justice Hiranmay Bhattacharya has admitted the plea, but as of now it has not agreed for fast-track hearing of the matter. The case is likely to come up for hearing on Friday.

Earlier also, Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay had empowered the central agencies to question Abhishek Banerjee. The latter then approached the Supreme Court in the matter.

Following the Supreme Court order, two related cases in the matter were transferred to the bench of Justice Amrita Sinha.

Though the hearing in the matter concluded on May 15, Justice Sinha had reserved the verdict on that day.

Abhishek Banerjee's name surfaced in the matter after Kuntal Ghosh wrote letters to a local police station as well as to the judge of a lower court accusing central agencies of putting pressure on him to name Banerjee in the alleged scam.

During the course of hearing, last week, Justice Sinha had raised questions about the reasons for the petitioner's reluctance in facing the investigation in the matter. Observing that the petitioner should cooperate in the investigation process, Justice Sinha also observed that no one is above investigation. "Let the investigating agency decide who is involved



and who is not. The legal system is above all. Everyone should cooperate in the process of investigation," Justice Sinha had observed earlier.

Cop slaps woman farmer protesting land acquisition in Punjab

Kanpur | Chandigarh

A Punjab Police officer has been caught on camera slapping a middle-aged woman farmer at a village in Gurdaspur district, the video of which has gone viral on social media.

As per reports, the farmers were protesting against land acquisition for a Bharatmala project, which involves the construction of highways, in the area.

Sharing the video on Twitter, BJP leader Jaiveer Shergill said, "Shameful act of slapping a woman farmer by Punjab Police official in a village in Gurdaspur. @PunjabPoliceInd must take strict action against this individual."

The alleged manhandling of the woman has sparked statewide protests by the farmers against the acquisition of land for the Bharatmala project.

Hundreds of activists of Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee (KMSC) squatted on railway tracks at several towns and blocked rail traffic over inadequate compensation for the land acquired for the project.

KMSC spokesperson Gurbachan Singh Chhaba said the farmers were protesting over the compensation issue in connection with acquisition of land.

Coming out in the support of the farmers, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)



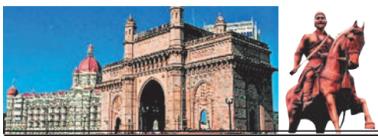
condemned the 'repression' let loose on the farmers and demanded action against the guilty, besides a high-level probe into the entire incident of assaulting the woman.

In a statement issued here, senior SAD leader Daljit Singh Cheema said, "The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government and its Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, who also holds the home portfolio, have exposed their real face. Instead of listening to the grievances of the protesting farmers, this anti-farmer gov-

ernment has chosen to thrash and detain them and even manhandled women and the elderly."

Asserting that no government should act in such a dictatorial manner, Cheema said, "It would have been better had the Chief Minister called the farmers and listened to their grievances instead of summarily evicting them from their land."

He also expressed solidarity with the farmers and demanded that they be given a sympathetic hearing.



FIGHT AMONG 3 FRIENDS AT TEA CENTRE IN NALASOPARA; 1 KILLED, 2 INJURED

Team Absolute | Palghar

In a shocking incident, three friends allegedly had a fight over a dispute following which one of them was killed and two others injured at a tea centre in Maharashtra's Palghar district, police said on Thursday. The incident took place at around 3 pm on Wednesday during which there was an explosion and subsequent fire at the tea centre located in Nalasopara area, Assistant Commissioner of Police Chandrakant Jadhav told reporters. He said the police were yet to establish what exactly happened at the tea centre as its shutters were down at the time of the incident. The victim has been identified as Rounak Tiwari (27), the police said. There was an explosion and fire inside the tea centre following which fire personnel from



the Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze, the official said. They found a body lying inside, he said. Blood stains were also found in the premises and there was evidence of a fight in which iron pipes might have been used, the official said. A gas pipe was also

found broken, he said. The official said they suspect there was some dispute among the three persons leading to the incident. The body was sent to a government hospital for post-mortem. The two injured persons were hospitalised, he said. A probe was on into the incident, he added.

MVA slams Nadda's 'prediction' that next Mumbai Mayor will be from BJP

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) has slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President J.P. Nadda's assertions saying the next Mumbai Mayor will be from his party, here on Thursday. At a party workers' meeting here on Wednesday, Nadda attacked the MVA saying its two-and-half year rule was marked with corruption and inefficiency. "However, the new government of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis has brought the growth engine back on the track in the state," said Nadda. Towards this aim, he called upon the party to work with full strength to ensure that the next BMC Mayor is from the BJP. Nadda's comments evoked sharp reactions from the MVA allies Congress, Nationalist Congress Party and Shiv Sena (UBT) as the elections to the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation will be a trailer for the upcoming Lok Sabha and later Assembly polls, both scheduled in 2024. State Congress President Nana Patole said that Nadda has no value in his own party and he couldn't even save it from the drubbing received in Karnataka last week. "It's strange that the National President of the BJP should be talking about city Mayor elections... It seems next he will be deciding who will be Village



Panchayat Sarpanchs," said Patole. NCP National Spokesperson Clyde Crasto said that to get its Mayor, the BJP should first hold and contest the BMC elections, but they are avoiding it as they will lose. "An internal survey of BJP has shown that if polls are held now, they will lose as getting Shinde on board has not gained them any voters, and instead they have lost their credibility after orchestrating the political coup (June 2022)," said Crasto. Sena (UBT) Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut dismissed the BJP President's predictions saying that "wherever Nadda goes, his party loses the elections... The latest example is Karnataka where he

had campaigned". Taking a swipe at Shinde-Fadnavis, Patole reminded that "now the winds of change are blowing" and the BJP cannot win elections with 'gadgaars' (traitors) henceforth. In a jibe at the state unit, Crasto said apparently they have not enlightened Nadda of the party's unacceptance by the Mumbai-Maharashtra voters and are trying to create a 'fake narrative' that everything is fine and they are confident of going to the polls. Raut said that Nadda is welcome in Mumbai and Maharashtra as that would ensure the BJP's defeat here in the next elections, starting with BMC - the country's biggest and richest civic body.

After Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP wants quick decision on MLAs' disqualification

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After the Shiv Sena (UBT), even the Nationalist Congress Party has demanded that the issue of disqualification of 16 MLAs - including Chief Minister Eknath Shinde - must be decided quickly, here on Thursday. NCP National Spokesperson Clyde Crasto called upon the Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar to act on the matter on priority now that the Supreme Court verdict is out. "Narwekar should take a non-partisan and quick decision to solve the issue... If not, then the delay in taking the decision might raise questions on the Constitutional position of the Speaker," Crasto pointed out. Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ally Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Thursday raised questions over the Speaker addressing the media several times on the 16 MLAs disqualification issue. Referring to Narwekar's statement that if the SC could take some 10 months on its judgement, why the



Speaker should not get a reasonable period to take a decision, the NCP leader said the apex court had studied the case minutely and then directed the Speaker to take certain decisions prescribed under authority as a constitutional head of the

Maharashtra Legislature. Crasto said that the SC has already termed the appointment of Shinde Shiv Sena's Whip Bharat Gogawale as illegal and this will actually make it easier for the Speaker to give his ruling as all directives issued by an unauthorised Whip are rendered invalid. On May 15 (Monday), a Sena (UBT) delegation led by its Whip Sunil Prabhu met Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal and submitted a memorandum urging that the Speaker should take his decision as early as possible. Last week, the SC had put the question of the 16 MLAs in the Maharashtra Speaker's domain, and to take the decision in a reasonable time. Simultaneously, other MVA leaders like state Congress President Nana Patole, state NCP President Jayant Patil, and Sena (UBT) have adopted a similar stance in the matter and appealed to the Speaker to dispose of it at the earliest. Meanwhile, the Speaker has already initiated the due process as directed by the SC verdict on this issue.

Woman arrested for husband's murder; two contract killers from Punjab held

Team Absolute | Navi Mumbai

The police have apprehended two individuals from Punjab for their alleged involvement in the killing of a transport company owner in Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra. With these arrests, the total number of individuals detained in connection with the case has risen to three, according to a police official on Thursday. Jaspal Singh Khosa Palsingh (48) was fatally attacked while on his morning walk on May 8 in Kalamboli. Following the incident, Crime Branch teams were formed to investigate the case, stated Senior Inspector Ravindra Patil of Unit II (Panvel). "After an investigation, our focus turned towards his wife, who was the



first to be arrested. Following her interrogation, we were able to apprehend two contract killers from Punjab at the Kurla LTT terminus in Mumbai. The woman allegedly had frequent disputes with her husband and had purportedly paid Rs 20 lakh to the duo to carry out the murder," he explained.

Sudipto Sen introduces the young women who inspired 'The Kerala Story'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker Sudipto Sen introduced the real inspiration for his controversial movie, 'The Kerala Story', at a press in Mumbai on Wednesday evening. A highlight of the press conference was an interaction with the young women who had escaped religious conversion in Kerala and were being looked after by the Aarsha Vidya Samajam Ashram. Sen said these young women had inspired him to make the film. "Their number is too many in our country, but few of them are with us today here, and I want to honour them all," Sen said. "Let me share with you a little incident," Sen continued. "I want to share this incident because without knowing it you probably wouldn't know where the roots of this film are. I will introduce Shruti, Chitra and Adhira. The first time I met Shruti in a small village she didn't have electricity in her house, because they had cut off the



supply. And every time she would go out to purchase vegetables, people would snatch away her bag. I had to interview them through a small little partition in their house because they were scared to come out." Sen went on to note: "People have misused these girls and forced them into a life of desolation, and that was my inspiration to make this film." And he added passionately: "This is not a day for me; this is the day these girls will be heard. Please treat them with compassion when you talk about them."

'The Kerala Story' producer donates Rs 51 lakh to ashram in the state



Mumbai: Following the release of 'The Kerala Story' in the UK, the team behind the film addressed the media to celebrate the success of the film. The film, according to its makers, is likely to cross the Rs 190-crore-mark in India today. 'The Kerala Story' has been facing the backlash of a certain political parties and groups that have claimed that the film is not based on facts, and propagates hatred against the Muslim community.

Cong lauds Trimbakeshwar citizens for foiling BJP's 'sinister plans'

Team Absolute | Mumbai/Nashik

The Maharashtra Congress on Thursday praised the citizens of Trimbakeshwar for effectively "thwarting the Bharatiya Janata Party's sinister plans" to foment communal troubles in this prominent pilgrimage centre. Maharashtra unit Congress president Nana Patole also demanded a Special Investigation Team probe against various Hindu groups which he alleged were 'conspiring to increase communal tensions in different parts of Maharashtra' as the civic, parliament and assembly polls approach. Simultaneously, former Congress MP Husain Dalwai along with his supporters went to the Trimbakeshwar Temple and offered their respects from outside the premises, just as the local Muslims have been doing since decades. Referring to the crisis after the May 13 incident which created tensions in this holy town, Patole said that the tradition of offering 'incense dhoop' at the Trimbakeshwar Temple has been going on for centuries. The ritual is



carried out during the annual 'Urs' procession of the Hazrat Pir Syed Gulab Shahwali Baba Dargah and Hazrat Pir Karim Shahwali Dargah Trust, both located within a km radius of the Jyotirlinga temple, and revered by people of all religions. However, on account of certain mischievous social media posts and videos this year, the situation suddenly became abnormal with allegations of 'trespassing' inside the temple by the local Muslim community and alleged 'clashes' which both communities have denied. "The BJP activists, the Hindu Maha Sabha,

All India Brahmin Federation, Yuva Morcha, Love-Jihad groups and others performed a maha-aarti, sprinkled cow urine and threw flowers to 'purify' the temple entrance after the alleged non-existent incident," said Patole taking a jibe. "However, the people of Maharashtra are now wary of these plots and tactics of the BJP and will not fall prey to them anymore. There was no forcible entry into the Trimbakeshwar Temple, and this has been confirmed by the local police and also the villagers," Patole pointed out. "Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis has ordered an SIT probe into the so-called incident. We demand that it should also investigate all the BJP-supported organisations which tried to incite violence and spoil the social harmony of Trimbakeshwar," said Patole. It may be recalled that on Wednesday, the Trimbakeshwar Temple trustees, the two dargahs officials, the former Municipal Council President, all local political parties and social groups met together and voted for peace in the region.

Two Russian nationals allegedly 'forced into sex trade' rescued from Thane; one person arrested



Team Absolute | Thane

Two Russian nationals, allegedly forced into a sex racket, in Thane have been rescued by the Police,

officials said. Thane police's Anti Human Trafficking Cell (AHTC) senior inspector Mahesh Patil said that following a tip off about a sex racket being operated in Wagle Estate indus-

trial area, police raided the place. "The two Russian nationals were rescued from the restaurant. One person has been arrested under Indian Penal Code and Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act provisions," he said. Meanwhile, officials said that police in Thane have arrested five persons who allegedly tried to sell a 20-day-old boy. Those arrested include the mother of the infant and a 61-year-old doctor, Thane Crime Branch Unit I senior inspector Dileep Patil said. "We received a tip off that a woman doctor from Ulhasnagar was selling infants to needy couples. We verified the tip off through a decoy customer. On May 17, the doctor told the decoy customer there was a 20-day-old boy who he could adopt for Rs 7 lakh," he said. "She was held while collecting money in her hospital. The other accused include two women from Nashik, a man from Belgaum in Karnataka and the child's mother, who is also from Nashik," Patil said. They have been charged under Indian Penal Code and Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and further probe into the child selling racket and activities of the accused is under way, the official said.

MCOCA COURT IN THANE ACQUITS SIX PERSONS IN 2006 DACOITY CASE

Team Absolute | Thane

Six persons were acquitted by a special MCOCA court in Maharashtra's Thane district in a 2006 dacoity case. Seven persons were accused of entering the house of a security agency owner on June 15, 2006 armed with a revolver and choppers and looting jewellery and cash totalling Rs 1.21 lakh. One accused had died during the trial, PTI reported. In his order of May 10, the details of which were made available on Thursday, Special Judge (Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act) AN Sirsikar acquitted six persons citing that the prosecution had failed to prove charges under the Indian Penal Code and MCOCA. The accused are from Thane, Beed district, and Borivali in Mumbai, as per the prosecution. The prosecution failed to establish the identity of any of the accused in commission of dacoity, and therefore, no offence under provisions of MCOCA is proved against them, Judge Sirsikar said in his order. Meanwhile, Police in Thane has



arrested five persons who allegedly tried to sell a 20-day-old boy, an official said on Thursday. Those arrested include the mother of the infant and a 61-year-old doctor, Thane Crime Branch Unit I senior inspector Dileep Patil said. "We received a tip off that a woman doctor from Ulhasnagar was selling infants to needy couples. We verified the tip off through a decoy customer. On May 17, the doctor told the decoy customer there was a 20-day-old boy who he could

adopt for Rs 7 lakh," he said. "She was held while collecting money in her hospital. The other accused include two women from Nashik, a man from Belgaum in Karnataka and the child's mother, who is also from Nashik," Patil said. They have been charged under Indian Penal Code and Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and further probe into the child selling racket and activities of the accused is under way, the official said.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Manipur violence: Over 6,520 tribals took shelter in Mizoram

Over 6,520 people from Manipur, fleeing due to the recent ethnic violence, had taken shelter in Mizoram, officials in Aizawl said on Tuesday. Mizoram Home Department officials said that as the situation in several tribal dominated districts of Manipur are very volatile, more tribals belonging to Chin, Kuki, Mizo, Zomi are likely to come to Mizoram to take shelter. Of the 6,520 people, the highest number of 2,238 tribals took shelter in Mizoram's Saitual district followed by 2,119 people in Aizawl district and 1,993 in Kolasib district. Over 140 displaced people took shelter in Champhai district, bordering Myanmar, while Khawzawl and Serchhip districts have 17 and 14 displaced people respectively. Officials said that a large number of people from Manipur took shelter in the homes of their relatives and friends in Mizoram, while many of the hapless people were lodged in community halls, schools and vacant buildings. Tribal leaders in Manipur and Mizoram are discussing among themselves and they would soon hold a meeting involving the civil societies to deliberate on the issue of the future of Zo tribal community in Manipur. Meanwhile, 10 tribal legislators belonging to Chin, Kuki, Mizo, Zomi, and Hmar tribal communities have been demanding a separate state for the tribals dividing Manipur. One of the tribal MLAs in Manipur said that they would soon meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi to apprise him about their demand. The riots in Manipur claimed the lives of 73 people and injured 250, and resulted in destruction or burning down of 1,800 houses and destruction of government and private properties.

CLEAR & PRESENT DANGER: 1.4 LAKH YOUTH ADDICTED TO DRUGS IN VIOLENCE-HIT MANIPUR

Sujit Chakraborty

Of Manipur's 28 lakh population, 1.4 lakh youth are affected by the drugs menace, forcing the state government to launch a 'War Against Drugs' campaign that led to the arrest of 2,518 drug peddlers and destruction of 15,496 acres of illegal poppy cultivation in the past six years, officials said on Tuesday. A senior official of Manipur's Narcotics and Affairs of Border Department said that while dealing with the drugs-related cases and destruction of illegal poppy cultivation areas, the state government never targeted a particular community. "Drugs ruined many precious lives in Manipur and India. Manipur has a population of only 28 lakh, of which 1.4 lakh are currently affected by the drugs menace. The state has become a gateway for illegal drugs smuggling into the mainland Indian states," the official told correspondent. Manipur government's actions against the drugs menace and destruction of illegal poppy fields in the reserved forests (RF) and protected forests are the two main reasons of unrest since early this year, which erupted in the ethnic violence from May 3. Poppy cultivation is prohibited in India under the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act 1985, except under a licence issued by the Central Bureau of Narcotics. At present, licit opium poppy cultivation is permitted by the Indian government in selected tracts in a few north Indian states. The official said that the Manipur government never targeted a particular community, and encroachment evictions from the reserve forest and protected forest were done statewide to preserve the forests in view of the deteriorating climatic conditions. According to the official, of the 2,518 drug peddlers arrested since 2017, 1,083 were Muslim, 873 people belonged to Kuki-Chin tribals, 381 belonged to the Meitei community, while 181 people belonged to various other communities. Out of the destruction of 15,496 acres of illegal poppy fields since 2017, 13,121 acres belonged to Kuki-Chin tribals, 2,340 acres belonged to Naga tribals, and 35 acres to other communities. The official said that the 291 encroachers evicted from the protected and reserve forest areas in various districts, including Imphal East, Imphal West, Kangpokpi, Thoubal and Noney, belonged to various communities, including Kuki-Chin, Naga tribals, Nepali, Meitei etc. The hills account for 90 per cent of the state's area and 10 per cent of its population, while the valley occupies 10 per cent land. Out of the 60 Assembly seats, the valley accounts for 40 seats, dominating the state government and policy-making decisions. In the valley, there are Hindu, non-tribal Meitei communities while the hills are inhabited largely by the Christian Naga and Kuki-Zomi communities. Protesting against the state government's action to evict them from forest lands and destruction of illegal poppy cultivation in the reserve and protected forests, the tribals had on March 10 organised protest rallies in three districts -- Churachandpur, Kangpokpi and Tengnoupal, during which five people were injured. Fresh incidents of violence, including arson and vandalisation of government properties, were triggered on April 27 in Churachandpur district after the tribals launched fresh protests against the state government's action against illegal poppy cultivation. Over 70 people died



while scores of others were left injured after rampant arsoning and clashed broke out in Manipur after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' organised in the 10 hill districts on May 3 to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. Government officials accused the Kuki militants of inciting Kuki tribal encroachers against the government, which has been evicting the tribals from the forest land and destroying poppy fields and these actions are said to be a precursor to the ethnic violence that was triggered on May 3. The Centre and the Manipur government had signed a tripartite agreement and 'Suspension of Operation' with three Kuki mil-

itant outfits -- the Kuki National Army (KNA), Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA) and Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) -- on August 22, 2008. After the March 10 agitations by the tribals, allegedly backed by the Kuki militants, the Manipur government had unilaterally withdrawn itself from the tripartite agreement. However, the Centre is yet to give its approval to the Manipur government's decision.

international

INDIAN-AMERICAN WINS DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION FOR TOP POST IN US COUNTY

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian-American attorney and educator Neil Makhija has won the Democratic nomination for Montgomery County Commissioner, thus inching closer to becoming the first Asian-American to hold the top post in Pennsylvania state. Makhija had thrown his hat in the ring for the primary election on Tuesday for Commissioner of Montgomery County, which has one of the largest Asian-American populations in Pennsylvania. "It's official! Our underdog campaign succeeded and I have officially won the Democratic nomination for Montgomery County Commissioner," Makhija took to his Twitter to share the news on Wednesday. "None of this would have happened without my incredible team + supporters, and for that I am immeasurably grateful. Together, we made history," he tweeted. Makhija, who belongs



to a Sindhi family from India, will now be competing in the November general election to determine control of the three-member Board of Commissioners in Pennsylvania's third largest county with over 865,000 people. If elected, the 36-year-old election law professor at the University of Pennsylvania would be the first South Asian member to serve for the position left open by outgoing commissioner Valerie Arkoosh. In an email to his supporters, a victorious Makhija said his campaign "inspired a new and diverse coalition of voters to turn out to vote in every corner of the county". Montgomery County commission is the governing body of Montgomery County, consisting of five members who are elected by districts. Each Commissioner is elected to a four-year term and represents approximately 45,000 constituents. The Montgomery County Commission's responsibilities include control of all

county public funds, adoption of an annual budget reflecting anticipated income and expenses (by law, expenditures cannot exceed revenue received). If elected, Makhija, along with other commissioners, will be tasked with managing a budget greater than \$500 million and 3,000 employees including elections, courts, district attorney's office, public health departments and public infrastructure. The commissioners will also oversee administration of the 2024 presidential election, which is expected to put local election officials in the spotlight in battleground Pennsylvania. Makhija worked at the White House, Senate, and earned his JD at Harvard Law School on the Horace Lentz Scholarship. As the son of Indian immigrants, the Pennsylvania native is passionate about enfranchising underrepresented communities and engaging new citizens in state and local politics.

Palestinians injured by Israeli soldiers during clashes in West Bank



Ramallah | Agencies

Several Palestinians were injured during clashes with Israeli soldiers on the outskirts of the northern West Bank city of Nablus, Palestinian and Israeli sources said. Palestinian security sources told Xinhua on Wednesday that the clashes broke out between

Palestinian protesters and Israeli soldiers who closed main roads in the city to escort dozens of Israeli settlers to Joseph's Tomb, a holy flashpoint site in Nablus. Dozens of stone-hurling protesters clashed with Israeli soldiers who fired teargas and rubber bullets to disperse them. Later Palestinian gunmen and Israeli soldiers

traded fire near the tomb, Palestinian eyewitnesses said. A Palestinian shot in the back with live ammunition was critically injured, seven others were injured by rubber bullets, and 80 suffered suffocation after inhaling teargas fired by Israeli soldiers, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society said in a statement.

RUSSIA CONFIRMS 2-MONTH EXTENSION OF BLACK SEA GRAIN DEAL



Moscow: Russia confirmed that the grain export deal, formally known as the Black Sea Grain Initiative, has been extended for two months, a day before it expires. "Thus, there is a chance, not in words but in deeds, to help ensure global food security," Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova told a weekly briefing on Wednesday. "Our fundamental assessment of the 2022 Istanbul agreement has not changed and the discrepancies in its implementation must be corrected as quickly as possible," she said.

8 dead, thousands evacuated in Italy floods

Rome | Agencies

At least eight people have died and 12,000 were forced to flee their homes two days ago after torrential rainfall caused flash floods in and around Italy's Emilia-Romagna region. Stefano Bonaccini, president of the region, said on Wednesday he feared the death toll would rise as reports of missing persons were pouring in amid rescue efforts aimed at removing residents stuck on the high floors of buildings or isolated on rooftops. According to local media reports, the region was hit by more than 50 cm of rain in 48 hours -- around half its normal total for a full year. Bonaccini



added the rainfall and flooding were "a catastrophic event that had never been seen before". Nello Musumeci, Italy's Minister for civil protection

and marine policies, vowed to rush aid workers and equipment to the beleaguered region, Xinhua news agency reported.

US court clears extradition of 26/11 attack accused Tahawwur Rana to India

New York | Agencies

A US court has cleared the extradition of Pakistani-Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana to India where he is sought for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. Said to be linked with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Rana, 62, was arrested in the US for his role in attacks that saw 10 Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists storm buildings in Mumbai, killing 164 people, including six Americans, in a 60-hour siege. "The court has reviewed and considered all of the documents submitted in support of and in opposition to the Request and has considered the arguments presented at the hearing," Magistrate Judge of the US District Court of California, Judge Jacqueline Chooljian, said in a 48-page court order on Tuesday, which was released on Wednesday. "Based on such review and consideration and for the reasons discussed herein, the court makes the findings set forth below and certifies to the Secretary of State of the US the extraditability of Rana on the



charged offenses that are the subject of the Request," the judge said in the order. Rana's arrest in the US was made at India's request as per the 1997 Extradition Treaty between the two countries. He was convicted in Chicago in 2011 of providing material support to the LeT, which planned the Mumbai terror attacks. The development comes after a US court last month dismissed a status conference motion moved by Rana, stating that it anticipates a ruling on his extradition to India within 30 days. Prosecutors in the court argued that Rana knew that his childhood friend Pakistani-American David

Coleman Headley was involved with the LeT, and helped him in scouting locations and landing zones in Mumbai for carrying out the attack. Rana was also aware of what was discussed in Headley's meetings, including planning of the attacks as well as the targets. While the extradition was contested by his lawyer, the judge ruled that there is sufficient competent evidence to extradite him. The extradition had been requested for conspiracy to wage war, to commit murder, to commit forgery for the purpose of cheating, to use as genuine a forged document or electronic record, and to commit a terrorist act; waging war; murder; committing a terrorist act; and conspiracy to commit a terrorist act. "It is therefore ordered that Tahawwur Hussain Rana be and remain committed to the custody of the US Marshal pending a final decision on extradition and surrender by the Secretary of State to India for trial of the offences as to which extradition has been granted pursuant to Title 18, US Code, section 3186 and the Treaty," the judge ruled.



CONGRESS'S KAMAL NATH PROMISES FREE ELECTRICITY, AID FOR WOMEN AND OPS FOR GOVERNMENT STAFFERS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Congress will provide 100 units of electricity free to households and subsequent units up to 200 at half price if voted to power in Madhya Pradesh, where Assembly polls are scheduled for later this year, the party's state chief Kamal Nath said on Thursday. Addressing a public meeting in Badnawar, some 50 kilometres from the district headquarters here, Nath also said the party would give Rs 1,500 per month to poor women and bring back the Old Pension Scheme for government employees if it wins the Assembly polls. "For the first time I am saying 100 units of electricity will be free and 100 units will be given at half price if the Congress is voted to power in Madhya Pradesh," Nath said. Incidentally, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has a scheme under which women whose family income is less than Rs 2 lakh annually get Rs 1,000 per month. Slamming the BJP-led Centre, Nath said a row



over Hindi had been triggered in Tamil Nadu, pro-Khalistani slogans were being raised in Punjab and Manipur was witnessing violence between tribals and non-tribals, which had led to the deaths of several persons. Efforts are on to divide society. This is a big challenge and we have to act as protectors of our culture. The BJP has politicised religion and brought it into the political arena," Nath said. "I am a proud Hindu but I am not a bewakoof (fool). We have to understand this thing. We have to understand the attacks taking place in our society and country," he said amid slogans of 'Jai Sri Ram' from the people at the rally. The Congress had emerged as the largest party with 114 seats in the 230-member Assembly in the 2018 polls and Nath went on to become chief minister. However, a rebellion by MLAs loyal to Jyotiraditya Scindia brought down his government in March 2020 and led to the BJP reclaiming power under Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

Family beats son-in-law to death over inter-faith marriage

Team Absolute | Khandwa

In a case of honour killing, a 36-year-old person from Sikar, Rajasthan succumbed to injuries after he was allegedly brutally bashed by his in-law's who belong to the minority community in Khandwa. According to local police, the deceased, Rajendra Saini, died on Tuesday while undergoing treatment at the district hospital. Before his death, Rajendra recorded his statement, and on the basis of his dying declaration, police booked three, including his brother-in-law Salman, 36, mother-in-law Munni bai, 55, and father-in-law Mumtaz, all residents of Singot village in Khandwa district, on murder charges, informed SP Satyendra Kumar Shukla. According to information, Rajendra, a resident of Sikar, Rajasthan, had a love marriage with Amrin of Singot, Khandwa, in 2021. After the wedding, both started living in Jaipur. The family coaxed Amrin to come to their place. Even after four months, when the wife did not return, Rajendra reached his in-law's house to get her back, but he was chased away by them, after they beat him twice. For the third time on May 13, when he insisted on meeting his wife, Amrin's parents, brother, and others beat him up. On May 15, his health deteriorat-



ed due to internal injuries, and on May 16 he died while undergoing treatment at Khandwa district hospital. According to the police, Rajendra used to work as a tile worker, and he had come to Singot village for work. During this, he met Amrin, 20, and both fell in love. Later in January 2021, the duo ran away from Singot to Rajasthan. Here in Khandwa, Amrin's family lodged her missing complaint. On January 7, 2022, the police found Amrin. At that time, Amrin stated in her statement that she had gone with Rajendra of her own free will, and they got married. She added that she wanted to stay with Rajendra, not with her parents. After this, Amrin returned to Jaipur with Rajendra. A few days later, Amrin started talking to her family on the phone and felt that the family had accepted her marriage. She came to Khandwa to meet the family.

Two families clash, woman among six injured in Morena

Team Absolute | Porsa (Morena):

More than six people, including a woman, were injured in a clash between two families over an old enmity in Pachauri Pura village under Porsa police station late Wednesday night, the police said on Thursday. Two families of the Khatig community, Billa Khatig and Nawab Khatig, live in Pachauri Pura village. Both the families are inimical to each other. A few months ago, a relative of Billa Khatig eloped with a girl of Nawab Khatig. A Panchayat was held and the girl returned to her family. Afterwards, there was bad blood between the two families. On Wednesday, members of both families attacked one another with sticks and rods. The incident has been caught in CCTV cameras. The police rushed to the spot and sent the injured to a hospital. Since the condition of the injured was serious, they were referred to the Morena district hospital.

The police registered a case against both the families. A video of the incident went viral on social media on Thursday. The family members of Billa

Khatig Omprakash, Satyendra, Ravi, Raju and a woman were injured. Raju was sent to Delhi. Devendra Khatig belonging to another group was injured.

MAN, WIFE BOOKED FOR FORCING MINOR NIECE INTO FLESH TRADE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A 20-year-old woman approached police on Thursday and said that her aunt and uncle forced her into flesh trade when she was a minor, police said. The police have registered a case against her uncle and aunt. Further investigation is underway in



the case. According to Nishatpura police station house officer Rupesh Dubey, the woman has been married to a man from Bhopal.

She was living with her aunt and uncle five years back before she got married. She told police that her uncle used to outrage her modesty often and her aunt would call other men at home who used to establish physical relations with her in exchange for money. Later, her uncle and aunt married her off to a man in Bhopal.

CM tells party's SM team to campaign against Congress through social media

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said misinformation spreads faster on social media than it happens through any other means of communication. Therefore, the party has to act fast on social media to counter Congress's misinformation campaign, he said. Chouhan made the statement at a meeting with the members of the BJP's social media and IT cell team who came to Bhopal from different parts of the state on Thursday. Everyone speaks openly on social media, Chouhan said, adding that the Congress should be exposed. According to Chouhan, since Congress's Vachan Patra is a bundle of lies, the BJP workers should take the government's welfare schemes to people. Party's state in-charge Muralidhar Rao said the people aged from 25 to



35 years should be recruited to IT cell and social media. Rao urged the party men to make a comparison between 2003 and 2023 and launch a campaign accordingly. President of the party's state unit VD Sharma said corruption of 15-month-old Congress government should be brought to public

through social media. Former minister Umang Singhar called Digvijaya Singh a mafia during the Congress rule, he said. Govind Singh made allegation of corruption against his own government, Sharma said, adding that all those cases should be publicised through social media.

Women are becoming self-dependent; & getting respect in society: Chief Minister Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that a social revolution is taking place in Madhya Pradesh, in which women are becoming self-dependent and their respect in the family and society is increasing. While in the Livelihood Mission, the government is providing assistance to women organized as self-help groups for various economic activities, they will be given an amount of Rs 1000 per month from June 10, under schemes like Ladli Bahna. So far, 44 lakh 90 thousand daughters of the state have been made millionaires under the Ladli Laxmi Yojana. Chief Minister Chouhan attended the Ladli Bahna Sammelan-cum-Chief Minister's Residential



Land Rights Scheme distribution ceremony at Sonkuch in Dewas district today. He dedicated and conducted bhoomi-pujan of development works costing about Rs 90 crore. Also, he distributed the Adhikar Patras of the Chief Minister's Residential Land Rights Scheme and benefits of other schemes. Chief Minister Chouhan

said that there was injustice with daughters in Madhya Pradesh previously but they are now considered a boon. The government gets every poor girl married under the Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah / Nikah Yojana. The Chief Minister announced to increase the amount given so far under this scheme from Rs 49 thou-

sand to Rs 51 thousand. Chief Minister Chouhan said that Ladli Bahna is not just a scheme but a sacred relationship between brother and sister. In Madhya Pradesh, sisters are being empowered in every field. Schemes like 50 percent reservation in local bodies, reservation in recruitment of police and teachers, exemption in stamp duty in property registry have empowered them. It is our endeavor to ensure that the income of each woman should be at least Rs.10,000 per month. The aim of my life is to bring smile on the faces of sisters. Forms of 2 lakh 80 thousand women have been filled in the Ladli Bahna Yojana in Dewas district. Ladli Bahna Sena is being formed in every village and ward to monitor the schemes related to sisters.

Congress to win 135 seats in MP, says Digvijaya

Team Absolute | Itarsi

Former chief minister Digvijaya Singh has said the Congress will win 135 seats in the ensuing Vidhan Sabha election. Singh made the statement at a press conference on Thursday. According to him, people are angry with the Shivraj Singh-led state government because of corruption, occupying of lands, temples and religious places. The ruling BJP is seeking votes in the name of religion, Singh said. Singh said that he and Rameshwar Nikhra had been given the responsibility to survey the constituencies that the Congress had lost in the last election and ensure the party's victory in those seats. He alleged that the BJP workers were involved in extortions, but the government was not taking any action against them. On the other hand, the administration is repressing the Congress workers, Singh said. The income-tax department raided the residences of his friends and they were terrorised, but the party will not tolerate it, Singh further said. To a question about Gau Seva (caring of cows) by the BJP, the Bajrang Dal and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Singh said that it was just



owbiz. According to him, a Gau Seva Commission was set up during the Congress, but after returning to power, the BJP abolished it. About the candidate to be fielded from Itarsi, Singh said that a Congress candidate had been given the ticket from this constituency. Only Sartaj Singh, who was from the BJP, was given the ticket in the last election, he said. Former MP Rameshwar Prasad Nikhra, vice-president of the state Congress Manak Agarwal, former legislator Savita Diwan Sharma and others were present at the press conference.

Digvijaya Singh should take lessons from his younger brother Lakshman Singh: Narottam Mishra

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra on Thursday took a jibe at the former chief minister and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh and said that he should get some guidance from his younger brother Lakshman Singh. Mishra made the remark while reacting to a recent tweet of Singh's younger brother and Congress MLA Lakshman Singh about Hindus. On May 17, MLA Singh tweeted in Hindi, "Hindus are repeatedly called 'violent'. Had it been so, India would not have been a slave for 450 years. Ants and bees also bite for protection. So are they violent?" Reacting to this tweet, Narottam Mishra told reporters, "Lakshman Singh should explain to his elder brother Digvijaya Singh, who sometimes talks about Sanatan Dharma, sometimes Hindu and Hindutva. Digvijaya Singh should visit his younger brother's place for some time, give him some blessing, and take some guidance from him." "Lakshman Singh wrote that if Hindus were violent, then India would not have remained a slave for 450 years. I believe Digvijaya Singh should learn from Lakshman Singh," Mishra added. The home minister further said, "You (Digvijaya Singh) call Bhagwa a terrorism, you turn Hindus towards terrorism but never speak on Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HuT). You don't speak anything about Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen-Bangladesh (JMB) but definitely speak against the Army." Meanwhile, the State

home minister said that he has ordered the suspension of an official who is alleged to have links with the contractual engineer Hema Meena against whom Lokayukta has initiated action in connection with disproportionate assets. "Lokayukta Police have taken action against Hema Meena. In this case, the name of project engineer Janardan has also come to light and serious complaints have been received against him. Therefore, I am ordering officials for his suspension," he added. Also in connection with the religious conversion angle that emerged during interrogation of the radical arrested members of the Islamist outfit Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HuT), Mishra said the name of one professor Kamal has come to light in the matter. "A Special Investigation Team (SIT) is investigating the whole matter. They are probing what the relations with Islamic preacher Zakir Naik were, how they work, where were their network, what were the sources of income, all these topics were being investigated," the minister said.

Madhya Pradesh first state in the country to provide air travel for pilgrims

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country, which is going to take elderly pilgrims for pilgrimage by aeroplane, under the Mukhya Mantri Teerth-Darshan Yojana. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will flag off the Indigo flight of pilgrims from Bhopal airport to Prayagraj on Sunday, May 21. In this, 24 men and 8 women will leave for Prayagraj. While reviewing the preparations at the Mantralaya, Additional Chief Secretary Home and



Religion Dr. Rajesh Rajoura said that Madhya Pradesh has also been the first state to make elderly pilgrims travel by rail. Now Chief Minister Chouhan is going to take the elders of the state on a pilgrimage for the first time in the

country by aeroplane. In the scheme, such senior citizens of the state above 65 years of age who are not income tax payers will be benefited. The first flight will leave on May 21 at 9:50 am from Bhopal airport for Prayagraj by Indigo. An escort will also accompany the 32 pilgrims going to Prayagraj. Pilgrims travelling by air can carry one check-in bag with a maximum weight of 15 KG and

one hand bag weighing 7 KG. A counter will also be set up at Bhopal airport to help the pilgrims. The pilgrims will return to Bhopal by Monday evening after visiting Prayagraj. It used to take 4 to 5 days for the pilgrims to visit the pilgrimage by rail. With the facility of air travel being made available to the elderly by the state government, it will be convenient for them to complete the journey in 24 to 36 hours. Dr. Rajoura told that the first phase of the Mukhya Mantri Teerth Darshan Yojana will start from Bhopal on May 21.



'Never ever' loved my body: Megan Fox

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Megan Fox spoke about having body dysmorphia and how it is to live with the disorder. The Hollywood actress said that she "never, ever" loved her body.

The 37-year-old 'Johnny and Clyde' actress, who turned 38 on May 16, has opened up about her body image struggles, reports [mirror.co.uk](#).

Speaking to Sports Illustrated for the Swimsuit Edition, which sees her donning a skimpy bikini and exuding a sultry vibe, Fox said: "I have body dysmorphia - I don't ever see myself the way other people see me."

Opening up further, the American actress who made her acting debut in the family film *Holiday* in the Sun said: "There's never a point in my life where I loved my body, never, ever."

"When I was little, that was an obsession I had of, like, but I should look this way," Megan went on in a video for Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition.

"And why I had an awareness of my body that young I'm not sure, and it definitely wasn't environmental because I grew up in a very religious environment where bodies weren't even acknowledged. The journey of loving myself is going to be never-ending, I think."

Body dysmorphic disorder is listed on various medical sites as a "mental health condition where a person spends a lot of time worrying about flaws in their appearance" with the so-called "flaws" often unnoticeable to others.

She first spoke about having body dysmorphia and the "deep insecurities" she suffered from back in October 2021.



Salma Hayek suffers wardrobe malfunction while dancing in a social media video

Los Angeles | Agencies

Mexican-American actress Salma Hayek showed a lot more than she intended to as she mistakenly flaunted her assets while dancing.

The actress, 56, was celebrating reaching 24 million followers on Instagram and seemed unfazed by her wardrobe malfunction, reports [Mirror.co.uk](#).

Instead, she labelled it "24 million reasons to smile" as she thanked her fans for "joining me on this wild ride."

Posting the cheeky video to her social media, the 'Magic Mike' star was seen dancing in a robe to Latino music.

Mirror.co.uk further states that the white gown failed to cover her modesty at all times - not that Salma let that bother her. Instead, she continued to shake her hips and move her feet while her breasts and other intimate parts flashed onlookers - albeit censored for the upload.

Those in the room joined in with the dancing to the trumpets and Salma added in the caption: "I cannot contain my excitement & gratitude."

Paris Hilton was among those sharing the love in the comments section, simply posting an emoji with love heart eyes.

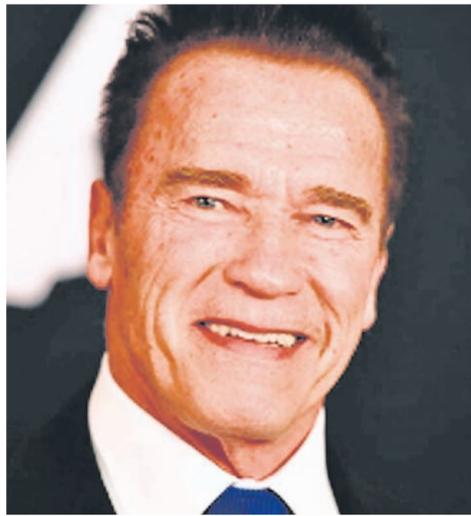
Others were a bit more sarcastic in their responses with one fan joking: "There's something wrong with this video it keeps going blurry."

Another added: "The best part is the censor. You know you're living your best life while dancing and it all comes out!"

But there was also scepticism from some, with one user writing: "lol I feel like she blurred it to be funny. I don't think anything actually popped out."

Schwarzenegger

ADMITS 'MISTAKES' AS HE REGRETS HIS MISCONDUCT TOWARDS WOMEN



Los Angeles | Agencies

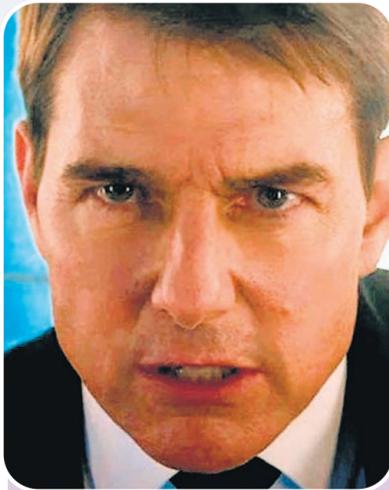
Hollywood star Arnold Schwarzenegger has said there is no "excuse" for him "behaving badly" with women. The 75-year-old actor - who apologised in 2018 for having "stepped over the line several times" after being accused of groping women - said no one ever called him out on his inappropriate conduct and, though he can't turn back time to correct his "mistakes," he does feel bad and is determined to be a better person, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#).

"We are not perfect. We try to be, but there's only one that's perfect - God. My mouth is great, but it gets me into trouble. My brain is great - it has the will to make a better world - but sometimes I f*** up. I make mistakes. I behaved badly," he told *The Hollywood Reporter*.

"All of those things I've addressed in the past. I feel bad about it. But I cannot roll the clock back. I have to be careful and be wiser. I'm smarter. I'm more sensitive about other people's feelings."

"No one said anything. Look, the bottom line is that even though the times were different, it doesn't matter if it was 100 years ago or today. You have to treat women with respect and you have to treat people with respect. None of it is an excuse. I should have behaved better."

The 'Terminator' actor shared that his stint as Governor of California helped him become a better person because he was looking beyond himself and his own wants and desires. Asked what made him change, he said: "I just think as time goes on, you just become wiser. You start thinking more about other people and not just about yourself. Not just what's fun for you, not just what makes you look bally."



'Mission Impossible 7' trailer: Tom Cruise is back with adrenaline pumping action

Los Angeles | Agencies

The trailer of 'Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One' was unveiled recently, and Tom Cruise is back to doing what he is best at - performing daredevil stunts. It starts off with the clip of Tom Cruise getting over the edge of a cliff that got leaked and went viral on the Internet.

The trailer then transitions into a full blown saga of thrill, action and adrenaline rush ably supported by the background score and an ever charming Tom Cruise. The film is the 7th installment from the 'Mission Impossible' franchise which has over the years cultivated a cult following. This time, the story follows Ethan Hunt (played by Tom Cruise) and his IMF team as they embark on their most dangerous mission yet: To track down a terrifying new weapon that threatens all of humanity before it falls into the wrong hands. With control of the future and the fate of the world at stake, and dark forces from Ethan's past closing in, a deadly race around the globe begins. Confronted by a mysterious, all-powerful enemy, Ethan is forced to consider that nothing can matter more than his mission - not even the lives of those he cares about most.

The film, presented by Paramount Pictures and Skydance Present and a Tom Cruise Production, will soon debut in cinemas.



MICHAEL DOUGLAS RECALLS HOW 'BASIC INSTINCT' SEX SCENES SHOCKED EVEN THE FRENCH

Paris | Agencies

By modern standards, Paul Verhoeven's 1992 sex noir drama 'Basic Instinct' might not seem that scandalous, but it was a much different story when it first premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, Michael Douglas, the film's male star, said on Wednesday, reports 'Variety'.

Considered genre-defining or high camp depending on who you ask, 'Variety' continues, the project was "unique, even for France", Douglas said during a conversation at Cannes.

"Seeing a lot of those sex scenes on the Grand Palais' huge screen, it was a little overwhelming for a lot of people. We had a very quiet dinner afterwards, everyone was sort of digesting it," Douglas recalled (the cast included Sharon Stone and Jeanne Tripplehorn). He was at the festival ahead of receiving the Honorary Palm d'Or as a salute to his "brilliant career and commitment to cinema".

'Basic Instinct', notes 'Variety', followed a weary homicide detective (Douglas) investigating a successful crime writer (Stone). The film was initially given an NC-17 rating, but

was downgraded to an R after studio lobbying.

A scene where Stone flashes detectives in a police interview is one of the contemporary film's most memorable scenes and is still referenced and parodied.

In addition to 'Basic Instinct', 'Variety' adds, Douglas has brought a number of memorable movies to Cannes all through his career, including 'The China Syndrome', co-starring Jane Fonda; Joel Schumacher's 'Falling Down'; and his award-winning Liberace project 'Behind the Candelabra'.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Lottie Tomlinson



IPL 2023

Virat century, RCB thrash SRH by 8 wickets

Hyderabad | Agencies

Virat Kohli's excellent century (100 off 63) and Faf du Plessis' fine fifty (71 off 47) helped Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) thrash Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) by eight wickets in Match No. 65 of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2023 at Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, here on Thursday.

With this win, RCB jumped to the fourth position in the table having 14 points in 13 matches and boosted their playoff chances. On the other hand, SRH remained at the bottom of the table with just four wins in 13 games.

South African wicket-keeper batter Heinrich Klaasen's maiden IPL century (104 off 51) propelled Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) to 186/5 in 20 overs. After Klaasen, Harry Brook (27 off 19) was the second-best scorer for SRH. Both Klaasen and Brook stitched a quickfire stand of 74 runs for the fourth wicket. On the other hand, Michael Bracewell was the most successful bowler for RCB with his superb 2-13.



Chasing 187 to win, Virat Kohli looked in fine touch right from the beginning and smashed a fantastic century after a long wait of four years. He stitched a massive opening partnership of 172 runs with Faf du Plessis.

In the very next delivery after his ton, Kohli got out to Bhuvneshwar Kumar in the fifth ball of the 18th over but he had done more than

enough for his side.

Though Du Plessis was dismissed by Natarajan in the next over, the likes of Glenn Maxwell (5 not out) and Michael Bracewell (4 not out) took RCB over the victory line with four balls to spare.

Earlier, put in to bat first, Sunrisers Hyderabad were off to a slow start as RCB pacers Mohammed Siraj and Wayne Parnell kept the openers --

Brief scores

Sunrisers Hyderabad 186/5 in 20 Overs (Heinrich Klaasen 104, Harry Brook 27; M Bracewell 2-13) lost to Royal Challengers Bangalore 187/2 in 19.2 overs (Virat Kohli 100, Faf du Plessis 71; T. Natarajan 1-34) by eight wickets.

Abhishek Sharma and Rahul Tripathi -- on a tight leash. SRH got some momentum in Parnell's second over with the openers hitting the pacer for 16 runs. However, New Zealand spinner Bracewell dismissed both openers in his first over to put a halt to the scoring rate.

Abhishek (11) got out while playing a cut shot while Tripathi (15) could only loft his shot to short fine-leg for a catch, leaving SRH at 28/2 after 4.3 overs. The in-form Heinrich Klaasen then came to the party and hammered Shabbaz Ahmed for 16 off his first over, as SRH ended the Power-play with 49-2.

The decision from SRH management to send the in-form batter Klaasen up the order paid dividends as he continued his aggressive

approach which resulted in a flurry of fours and sixes.

Despite taking Markram's wicket, RCB didn't get any respite and new batter Harry Brook also looked in fine touch from the very first ball, which he faced. Brook, who made a comeback to the side after missing a few games, played some classy shots to get sixes and boundaries. On the other hand, Klaasen was in no mood to stop and took the RCB bowlers to the cleaners with SRH reaching 133/3 after 15 overs.

The decision to bring Shabbaz in the 17th over by captain Faf du Plessis backfired as both Klaasen and Brook clobbered him for 19 runs. Parnell gave big relief to RCB by conceding just 7 runs in his over. Klaasen eventually smashed a poor delivery by Harshal for a straight six and got his ton off 49 balls.

However, Harshal had the last laugh as he bowled a dipping yorker to dismiss Klaasen. Siraj, who was playing on his home ground, then bowled an excellent over, giving just 4 runs and taking the wicket of Glenn Phillips, to keep Sunrisers to 186-5 in 20 overs.

HOCKEY

Indian women go down fighting 2-4 against Australia in opening test

Adelaide | Agencies

The Indian women's hockey fought back from a two-goal deficit and reduced the margin through Sangita Kumari but Australia scored two more goals in the second half to emerge 4-2 winner in the opening match of the four-match bilateral test series here on Thursday.

Australis scored through Aisling Utri (20th), Maddy Fitzpatrick (26th), Alice Arnott (31st) and Courtney Schonell (34th) while Sangita Kumari (28th) and Sharmila Devi (38th) scored for India in the first match of the series.

Australia got into their passing rhythm quickly and dominated India in the first quarter by keeping most of the possession and testing the visitors' defence numerous times. The hosts also won three penalty corners in the opening quarter of the game but failed to capitalise on those opportunities as the Indian team's captain and goalkeeper Savita along with the defence stood strong to deny Australia from taking



the lead.

However, in the second quarter, Australia netted two goals courtesy of their high tempo and attacking game.

Notably, India started playing aggressively after conceding the second goal and it paid off as Sangita Kumari (29') found the back of the net after Nikki Pradhan's shot from distance took a deflection off Fitzpatrick and Sangita found herself a perfect position to put the ball beyond Australia's goalkeeper Jocelyn Bartram. The hosts went into the half-time break

with a 2-1 lead.

The third quarter of the match started with Australia scoring a quick goal through Alice Arnott (32'), while Courtney Schonell (35') netted the fourth goal for the hosts. However, India didn't take much time to respond as forward Sharmila Devi (40') converted a penalty corner as the third quarter came to a close 4-2 in favour of Australia.

The fourth and last quarter of the match ended goalless even though both the teams came close to scoring a few times.

ITALIAN OPEN: RYBAKINA ADVANCES TO SEMIFINALS AFTER SWIATEK RETIRES WITH INJURY

Rome | Agencies

Reigning Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina advanced to the semifinals of the Italian Open after World No.1 Iga Swiatek was forced to retire in the third set with a right thigh injury.

Rybakina advanced to her first WTA 1000 semifinal on clay after Swiatek retired at 2-6, 7-6(3), 2-2. Rybakina will next face Jelena Ostapenko in the semifinals on Friday.

The Pole looked in pain after a desperate chase in the second set tiebreak, when her attempt to slide on the heavy clay at the bottom of the court failed and she immediately felt something in her upper right thigh.

Swiatek went for a medical time out off court and returned for the start of the decider with a big bandage, looking very cautious in her movements until she decided to stop early in the third set.

Swiatek, whose majestic 14-consecutive-match winning streak in Rome came to an end, took to social media on Friday morning



to confirm she suffered a thigh injury and said "the diagnostic is in progress".

With wins over Swiatek at the Australian Open and Indian Wells earlier this year, Rybakina is now 3-2 against reigning World No.1s in her career. The 23-year-old is into her third WTA 1000 semifinal of the season.

AFC Women's Olympic Qualifiers Round 2: India in Group C with Japan, Vietnam and Uzbekistan

New Delhi | Agencies

The Indian women's football team has been drawn in Group C alongside Japan, Vietnam and Uzbekistan in the second round of the AFC Women's Olympic Football Qualifying Tournament to be played between October 23 and November 1. The draw ceremony took place at Asian Football Confederation (AFC) House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Thursday. India qualified for Round 2 with two wipeouts of the Kyrgyz Republic earlier this year. The Blue Tigresses beat the hosts in a two-legged Playoffs, 5-0 and 4-0.

The second round of the AFC Women's Olympic qual-



ifiers will feature 12 teams. They have been equally divided into three groups A

Draw results:

Group A: Australia (Host), Chinese Taipei, Philippines, IR Iran
Group B: China PR (Host), Korea Republic, Thailand, DPR Korea
Group C: Japan, Vietnam, Uzbekistan (Host), India

progress to Round-3 to play two pairs of home and away matches, slated for February 24 and 28, 2024.

The winners will take the two spots reserved for Asia in the Women's Olympic Football Tournament Paris 2024. The Indian women's football team is currently placed 61st in the FIFA rank-

ings. London 2012 Olympics silver medalists and world No. 11 Japan are the second-best AFC side, behind Australia. Vietnam are ranked 33rd while hosts Uzbekistan are 50th.

In the lead-up to the Round 1 games against the Kyrgyz Republic, India also played Uzbekistan in a one-off friendly, losing to an injury-time goal 3-2. The Blue Tigresses have suffered narrow one-goal losses in the three previous times they have played Uzbekistan.

India last faced Vietnam in a friendly in Hanoi in 2019, drawing 1-1, while the last meeting with Japan came in the 1997 Asian Women's Championship, with India going down 0-1.

El Gran Derbi: A history of Real Betis vs Sevilla FC

New Delhi | Agencies

Seville, the Andalusian capital, is home to one of Spanish football's most colourful derby meetings, between Real Betis and Sevilla FC. Both among LaLiga's most historic clubs, and both previous LaLiga Santander title winners, the Seville derby rivalry has divided allegiances and even families within the city for over a century.

A strong British influence existed when organised football was first played in Seville back in the last decade of the 19th century. The first club in Seville was created in 1890, while today's Sevilla FC were founded in 1905. Real Betis Balompie came into being just two years later.



The two clubs were founder members of LaLiga's second tier, with Real Betis winning both meetings in the inaugural 1928/29 season, 3-0 away and 2-1 at home. Real Betis were the first to be promoted to the top flight and won what is to date their only LaLiga Santander title in 1934/35, a title run

which included a key 3-0 victory at their neighbours' Nervion stadium late in the season. Sevilla FC followed up with a title of their own in 1945/46, albeit with no derby win as Real Betis were by then back in the second tier.

In total the teams have met 116 times in LaLiga between the top two

divisions, and one thing that stands out is how often players and fans on both sides have enjoyed victories on their neighbours' patch. Real Betis spoiled the opening party with a 4-2 victory when the rivals' current Estadio Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan opened in 1958. Sevilla FC got revenge with a 4-1 away derby victory just the following year. More recently, Real Betis' 5-3 win at the Sanchez-Pizjuan in January 2018 is the derby with the most goals in LaLiga history. Last year, Sevilla FC won both meetings in the 2021/22 LaLiga Santander season, but Real Betis beat them in the Copa del Rey on their way to winning that trophy.

Another historic derby was in the 2013/14 Europa League round of 16 with Sevilla FC coming back to draw level at 2-2 on aggregate at the Estadio Benito Villamarin - and then go through 4-3 on penalties - on the way to winning the first of three consecutive trophies.

Sub-jr men's national hockey: Bihar, M.P., Tamil Nadu start on winning note

Rourkela (Odisha) | Agencies

Hockey Bihar, Hockey Madhya Pradesh and the Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu started their campaigns on a winning note on the opening day of the 13th Hockey India Sub-Junior Men's National Championship 2023 here on Thursday.

In the first match of the day played at the Birsa Munday Hockey Stadium, Hockey Bihar defeated Telangana Hockey 5-0 in the Pool G contest. Amrendra Kumar Singh (19'), Aashish Ranjan (27'), Captain Aakash Yadav (38'), Kumar Prince Pandey (41') and Ranjan Kumar (58') scored one goal each to help their side get a win over Telangana Hockey.

Aashir Aadil Khan and Karan Gautam scored five goals each as Hockey Madhya Pradesh thrashed Hockey Mizoram 27-0 in the second match of the day informed in a release on Thursday.

In the Pool G contest, Aashir Aadil Khan (2', 5', 27', 36', 52') and Karan Gautam (20', 23', 29', 47', 47') played the starring role with five



goals each. Ritendra Pratap Singh (8', 39', 40', 51') and Tushar Parmar (25', 29', 30', 35') scored four goals each to help their side, against their opponents. Subhan Abid (5', 10', 37') scored a hat-trick for Hockey Madhya Pradesh, while Sohail Ali (3', 18') and Avtar Nayak (38', 60') contributed a brace each to the score. Azad Sultani (11') and Sami Razwan (18') scored a goal each to help their side secure a comfortable win over Hockey Mizoram. In the third match of the day, the Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu defeated Hockey Andhra Pradesh 8-2.

India to take part in the FIFAE Nations Playoffs 2023

New Delhi | Agencies

Just two wins away from qualifying for the FIFAE Nations Cup 2023, India will be playing the Playoffs on May 19, and 20.

India will play the Playoffs in the Asia and Oceania Region along with seven other countries -- Australia, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea Republic and New Zealand -- qualified via online qualifiers Play-Ins and online qualifiers Main Stage.

The Playoffs will follow a double-elimination format. India are seeded fourth in the bracket, being the second highest ranked Nation among the four Winners of



the Quarter Final Matches in the Play-Ins stage.

All rounds in the Playoffs will have double-legged matches, the winner will be decided based on the aggregate score after the two legs. The team that wins two

rounds will qualify for the summit clash -- the FIFAE Nations Cup 2023.

India will play Indonesia on May 19 in the first match of the Playoffs. The FIFAE Nations Playoffs will feature a total prize pool of \$36,000.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Manchester City secure final spot with 4-0 win over holders Real Madrid

Manchester | Agencies

Bernardo Silva struck twice and Manuel Akanji and Julian Alvarez once each as Manchester City clinched a second UEFA Champions League final appearance with a resounding 4-0 win over reigning champions Real Madrid.

Pep Guardiola's side produced a breathless attacking display to overpower holders Real Madrid in the second leg of their UEFA Champions League semi-final tie on Wednesday night to set up a meeting with Italian side Inter Milan in the Istanbul final on June 10. After the two sides had drawn the



first leg 1-1 a week earlier, Man City made the breakthrough at 23 minutes, when Kevin De Bruyne played in Bernardo Silva, who kept his composure before firing in.

City continued to dominate and had their second 14 minutes later,

Silva again the scorer, this time heading beyond Thibaut Courtois.

Things got even better on 76 minutes, when a free-kick from De Bruyne was met by Manuel Akanji and his header went in off Eder Militao, before Julian Alvarez added a

fourth in stoppage time.

Inter confirmed their place in the final by defeating AC Milan 1-0 for a 3-0 aggregate win in Tuesday's semi-final.

It will be the second time City have figured in the final following our maiden appearance in 2021 when we were edged out 1-0 by Chelsea. Inter meanwhile are three times winners of European football's most prestigious tournament, their most recent successes coming in 2010 when the Italian side beat Bayern Munich 2-0.

This year's Champions League final will take place at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul, Turkey on June 10.



Sara stuns fans at Cannes in regal outfit

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Sara Ali Khan, who recently attended the prestigious Cannes Film Festival 2023, has said that as an Indian she feels proud to represent her country at such a global platform. She said that cinema and art have the power to transcend the boundaries.

The actress earlier exhibited two looks which received praises from the fashion police, however, it was her third look that won the Internet over. She donned a white Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla saree at the French festival. A few fans even compared the actor to her grandmother, veteran actor Sharmila Tagore, who is known for her regal looks in Indian outfits.

She said: "We should be proud and even more vocal of the culture that we have and that we should be able to bring to the rest of the world. I think cinema and art transcends language, regions and nationalities. I think we should come together and while we are here at a global stage representing our country, we should continue to not forget who we are so that we can remain organic in the content that we create because I think that's exactly what resonates with the rest of the world."

Sara also took part at the inauguration of the India pavilion event held recently, which was also attended by Oscar winner Guneet Monga, Madhur Bhandarkar and veteran south Indian actress Khushbu.

She further mentioned: "Being Indian and proud of our Indianness but also being global citizens, not being afraid of doing more and having a louder voice and more self-presence in cinema and general, worldwide! Thank you for having me and I hope that we continue to do more and make our nation more and more proud and international."



Richa Chadha's international debut film launched at House of Lords in London

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Richa Chadha's international debut with Indo-Brit production 'Ainaa' has had its official launch at the House of Lords in London.

Richa takes on the lead role alongside British actor William Moseley.

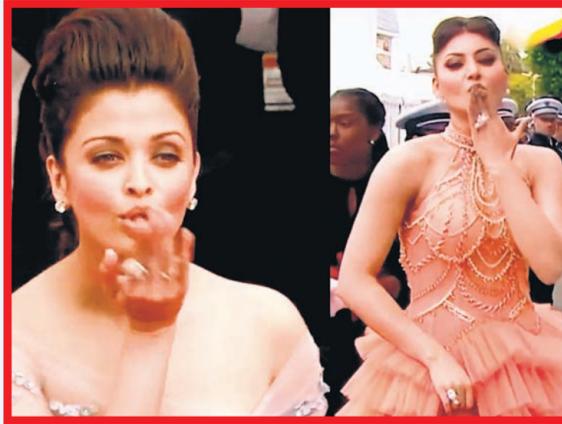
Ainaa was officially launched and announced at the prestigious House of Lords by the makers of the film last evening where R.t Hon. Stuart Andrew, M.P. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport announced the film alongside the lead cast, director and producers of the film.

'Ainaa' is helmed by Markus Meedt, who makes his feature debut with the project. The film is a social drama about the impact violence caused by war on human beings and the society at large.

Richa said: "I'm excited to be working in a new part of the world, I like to experiment. They have put together an impressive crew of the best of talent from India and the UK. It's truly going to be a collaborative effort to embark on a film that deals with such an important subject."

"We are currently in London prepping for the film with the shooting expected to commence on June 2nd. I have always strived for a challenging role and this one sure is one of the toughest parts I have taken up."

Sharing the screen with Chadha is William Moseley, a renowned British actor who gained fame as a child actor in 'The Chronicles of Narnia' films. Moseley also made an impactful appearance in the Indian film 'Margarita With A Straw', showcasing his exceptional talent and versatility as an actor. The film is being produced by Big Cat Films UK and the producers are Geeta Bhalla and P.J. Singh.



Urvashi Rautela gets mistaken for Aishwarya Rai on Cannes red carpet

Mumbai: Actress Urvashi Rautela was mistaken for Bollywood star Aishwarya Rai at the red carpet of Cannes Film Festival by the French paparazzi present there.

A video has been doing the rounds on social media, where the shutterbugs were heard calling Urvashi as Aishwarya at the prestigious event. The clip shows Urvashi sporting an orange layered floor-sweeping gown as she walked the red carpet at the screening of the film 'Kaibutsu'. She was seen greeting people and blew kisses, one could hear someone from the crowd shouting 'Aishwarya'. Urvashi is then seen turning around and smile.

A fan of Aishwarya shared the video on Twitter featuring Urvashi and captioned it: "Aishwarya's popularity will always be unmatched. Every Indian girl at global events is called Aishwarya..."

Former beauty queen and actress Aishwarya is expected to walk the Cannes 2023 red carpet.

Tom Cruise's 'MI 7' trailer trolled for 'plagiarising' from SRK's 'Pathaan'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The recently released trailer of 'Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One', which stars Tom Cruise in the lead, is drawing some amazing reactions from people on the Internet.

Netizens are comparing the bits of the trailer to the Shah Rukh Khan-starrer 'Pathaan' which broke all records for Hindi films at the box-office upon its release.

The trailer, which is a treat for the lovers of the action genre, has sequences in question which show Cruise hanging off a cliff. Another scene shows a train crashing. This has reminded the social media users of the Indian spy thriller, which also starred Deepika Padukone and John Abraham.

Soon after the trailer was released, several social media users took to Twitter to draw comparisons between the two movies.

"Few days ago, I saw the whole twitter making fun of #Pathaan train scene just because it accidentally has similarity with Jackie Chan



cartoon. But now that #MissionImpossible also has similar action scenes, nobody will say anything," one of the tweets read.

Another user commented: "Bollywood should be proud @iamsrk." A third user, referencing the director of 'Pathaan' - Siddharth Anand, wrote: "Lord Anand should be proud."

'Once the uniform comes on, everything changes'

Mumbai | Agencies

Actress Sonakshi Sinha, who is currently riding on the success of her latest release 'Dahaad', said that the intense workshops for her character of cop Anjali Bhati have shaped her to give better performance.

To bring authenticity to her role as a judo champion, Sonakshi went through intensive training leaving no stone unturned. Speaking about her preparation for the role, Sonakshi shared: "The role came with a lot of challenges, from learning a new dialect, riding a bike and even learning Judo. But what I can say is that these intense workshops have only shaped me to give a better performance and relate to the character in every way."

She added: "I wanted to play the part, and play it right. And once that uniform comes on, everything changes. You get this sense of authority and power. And then that's it, rest everything fell into place." 'Dahaad' also stars Gulshan Devaiah, Vijay Varma and Sohum Shah. It is currently streaming on Prime Video.



Spidey in Hindi & Punjabi

Shubman lends his voice to Spider-Man's Indian avatar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Cricketer Shubman Gill, who has been having a great run at IPL2023, has launched the Hindi and Punjabi trailers for 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse', introducing the first Indian Spider-Man named Pavitr Prabhakar.

Pavitr Prabhakar is being voiced by Gill, who has shown his ability to be as good a performer in the recording studios as he is on the cricket field.

Our friendly neighbourhood Spider-Man has landed in Mumbattan and gone desi. For the first time, a Hollywood film will be released in nine Indian languages -- Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Gujarati, Marathi, Punjabi and Bengali -- apart from English. The release date is June



1. The media statement announcing the trailer release says: "Whether it is the relatable dialogues or the grasping narrative that appears in the trailer, every bit of it will connect you to your Indian roots and will also excite you to get engrossed in the universe of Spider-Man, once again. And Indian fans have a big surprise as 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse' is all set to release a day prior in India before its US release!"



Kayan.a Ambika