

**NATION** > 02

India, Nepal ink pacts on enhancing physical connectivity ...



**HOLLYWOOD** > 06

Kim Cattrall returns as Samantha Jones ...



**SPORTS** > 07

Thailand Open 2023: Kiran George, Lakshya Sen in ...



**WRESTLING MESS: IOC CONDEMNS POLICE ACTION AGAINST WRESTLERS, URGES IOA TO PROTECT ATHLETES**

# Wrestlers got support



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has condemned the alleged manhandling by Delhi Police of protesting wrestlers over the weekend by calling it "disturbing" and urged the authorities to ensure the "well-being of the athletes" throughout the investigation against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) sidelined chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

Close on the heels of a similar statement by United World Wrestling, the sport's world governing body, the IOC also urged the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to take all necessary action to protect the protesting wrestlers.

Since April 23, prominent Indian wrestlers led by Olympians Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik, and Vinesh Phogat have been staging a protest at the Jantar Mantra demanding the arrest of Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh over sexual harassment of female

athletes, including a minor.

The IOC also confirmed its close communication with the United World Wrestling (UWW), the global governing body for the sport, regarding the matter.

Last weekend, the protesting wrestlers were detained by the Delhi Police during their march towards the new Parliament building.

As the protesters tried to breach the security cordon, a fierce tussle broke out -- the wrestlers and cops pushed, shoved and grappled with one another.

## Khaps extend full support to wrestlers, mull approaching President

**Muzaffarnagar (UP):** The Mahapanchayat of Khaps that met in Muzaffarnagar on Thursday has decided to meet President Droupadi Murmu if need be and seek justice for the protesting wrestlers demanding the arrest of Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh on charges of sexual harassment.

Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) spokesman

Rakesh Tikait said the final decision on the issue of wrestlers' protest will be taken at a meeting in Haryana on Friday.

The Mahapanchayat held at Sauram village extended full support to the protesting wrestlers and demanded the arrest of WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. Meanwhile, farmer leader Mangeram Tyagi alleged that the wrestlers' protest is being

given a casteist colour.

BKU chief Naresh Tikait, who had persuaded the wrestlers not to immerse their medals into River Ganga on Tuesday, made it clear that they will leave no stone unturned.

The wrestlers have been on a warpath since January, demanding action against WFI chief Singh, whom they accused of sexually harassing seven athletes.

## Security tightened at Delhi borders following SKM's nationwide protest call

**New Delhi:** Delhi Police have tightened security measures along the city's borders, including Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur, in the wake of a nationwide demonstration call by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) in support of the country's top grapplers protesting against the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

"Additional police personnel have been deployed, and extra checkpoints were set up to prevent any undesirable occurrences," a senior police official said on Thursday. "Security has been heightened, and we have increased the presence of police personnel while setting up additional checkpoints at Delhi's borders. Our objective is to ensure the maintenance of law and order and prevent any untoward incidents," said another officer. The officer also mentioned that vehicles entering Delhi from neighbouring states are being subjected to thorough inspections at the borders. On Tuesday, the SKM had announced demonstrations and effigy burning of the WFI chief at villages and town centres on June 5, the day RSS workers and Mahants have called a rally in support of Brij Bhushan in Ayodhya.



## Manipur govt extends Internet suspension till June 5

Meanwhile, The state government on Thursday appointed senior IPS officer Rajiv Singh, belonging to the neighbouring Tripura cadre, as Director General of Police (DGP) replacing incumbent state police chief P. Doundel.

Team Absolute | Imphal

As the sporadic incidents of violence continued in Manipur, the government extended the suspension of Internet services till June 5 to prevent the spread of rumours and videos, photos, and messages, which might affect the law and order situation in the ethnic-violence hit northeastern state. Commissioner, Home, H. Gyan Prakash, in a fresh notification extending the suspension of Internet services till June 5, said that the Director General of Police, Manipur, reported that there are still reports of incidents like arson of houses and premises. "There is an apprehension that some anti-social elements might use social media extensively for transmission of images, hate speech and hate video messages inciting the passions of the public, which might have serious repercussions for the law and order situation in the state," the order said.

After the widespread violence broke out on May 3 in 11 of the 16 districts during and after the 'Tribal Solidarity March' called by the All Tribal Students' Union of Manipur to oppose the demand for inclusion of the Meitei community in the Scheduled Tribe category, the Manipur government suspended the Internet to control the situation.

When shortage of various essentials, transport fuel and life-saving drugs, disturbances in banking and ATM facilities shattered the normal life, the Internet suspension for around a month across the mountainous state further added to the problems of the people.

Media, students and business communities are facing lots of problems in the

## Shah announces separate judicial, CBI probes into Manipur violence

**Imphal:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday announced a judicial probe into the month-long ethnic violence in Manipur by a retired High Court Chief Justice and a CBI investigation into six specific cases. After a four-day visit to the strife-torn Manipur, the Home Minister said that a high-level peace committee headed by Governor Anusuya Uikey would be formed and people from all sections and communities would be included in the committee. He said that a joint security command headed by Chief Security Advisor to Manipur Kuldeep Singh (Retired IPS officer and former CRPF Chief) would be formed and it would impartially conduct all the security related operations. The Home Minister announced that a Joint Secretary and five director level officers would be posted in Manipur by the central government to supervise to deal with all the issues and actions in the Manipur crisis. The Centre would provide an additional 30,000 MT of rice besides taking all out efforts for uninterrupted supply of petrol, diesel, cooking gas, essentials, vegetables and all other required items.

absence of Internet services.

Various organisations, including have been demanding immediate restoration of Internet service in Manipur.

## INDIA CARRIES OUT SUCCESSFUL TRAINING LAUNCH OF MEDIUM-RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILE AGNI-1

**New Delhi:** India carried out successful training launch of medium-range ballistic missile, Agni-1, from APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha, the defence ministry said on Thursday.



"The missile is capable of striking targets with a very high degree of precision. The training launch successfully validated all operational and technical parameters of the missile," the ministry informed.

Earlier, a successful test of Agni 5 missile was carried out in December last year. The Agni 5 is a nuclear capable ballistic missile. It was a night trial of Agni 5 ballistic missile and the test was successful.

The test of Agni 5 was also carried out from Odisha. The missile is capable of striking targets at ranges up to 5,000 kilometres with very high degree of accuracy. Range of the missile can be further increased based on the results of the testing.

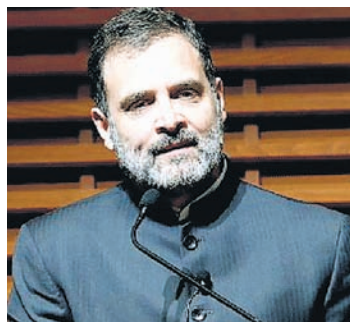
## Not seeking any int'l support, our fight is ours: RaGa at Stanford

SAN FRANCISCO | Agencies

In his address at the Stanford University, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi clarified he was not seeking any international support and said that "our fight is ours".

While addressing a gathering at the California-based varsity on Wednesday, Rahul, who is on a six-day trip to the US, was asked about his opinion on many opposition parties across the world seeking international support. To this, the former MP said: "I'm not seeking support from anyone or anybody. I am very clear that our fight is our fight."

The Congress leader said that he wanted to speak to a group of young students from India at the Stanford University and build rela-



tions with them.

"I think it is my right to do it and I don't understand why Prime Minister Narendra Modi doesn't come here and do it. The Prime Minister needs to answer some hard questions," Rahul said.

On a number of occasions, the BJP

has attacked Rahul Gandhi for defaming the country on foreign soil.

Breaking his silence on his disqualification from Parliament, former Congress Rahul Gandhi has said that he had never imagined that he would get maximum punishment in a defamation case and would be disqualified as an MP, but asserted that it has given him a lot of opportunity to work. He said on Wednesday that "democracy isn't about opposition, it is about sacred institutions that support the opposition, and those institutions by the capture certainly want to change the role it is supposed to do." He made the remarks while delivering a lecture at the prestigious Stanford University Campus in California on the changing world order and India's crucial role within it.

## 'Man Mein Ek Aas Hai', Pilot's video triggers speculations

Jaipur | Agencies

With Assembly polls nearing in Rajasthan, the Congress high-command recently 'resolved' the internal conflict between Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his former deputy Sachin Pilot after two months of constant exchange of barbs between the two camps.

As the party leadership is now trying to show that everything is fine in Rajasthan Congress, a tweet by Sachin Pilot has triggered speculations in the political circles.

Pilot has posted a video story on his Twitter handle, in which he is seen with the people of the state.

He captioned the video: "There is hope in my mind, there is a belief in the heart, will build a strong Rajasthan, when people are together."



While Pilot is visible in every slide in the video, no other Congress leaders, nor the party's symbol, could be seen in it.

Actually, Pilot and Gehlot have not been in the best of terms ever since the Congress government was formed in 2018. On many occasions, Pilot has expressed his displeasure with the Congress high-command for not resolving his pending issues.

## Man kills wife for refusing sex in Hyderabad

**Hyderabad:** Enraged over his wife refusing sex, a man strangled her to death in Hyderabad.

The shocking incident came to light with the autopsy report revealing the cause of the death. Though the crime was committed on the night of May 20, the police could solve the case 10 days later.

Hailing from Nagarkurnool district of Telangana, the couple had a love marriage in 2021. Tarun told police that on the night of May 20 he expressed his desire. Jhansi told him that she was very tired. The man, however, started forcing her. When she started shouting, he pressed her mouth with his hand. As he kept her mouth and nose blocked with his hand for some time, this apparently cut the air supply. When she became motionless and started foaming at the mouth, Tarun panicked and alerted his relatives. She was rushed to Owaisi Hospital, where doctors declared her brought dead.

The hospital authorities informed the police, which shifted the body to government-run Osmania General Hospital for autopsy.

## SC refuses urgent hearing on plea against HC order on exchange of Rs 2K notes

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday declined urgent hearing on a plea challenging the Delhi High Court's May 29 judgement allowing exchange of Rs 2,000 currency notes without any identification.

A bench comprising Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and KV. Viswanathan told advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, appearing-in-person, the court is not taking up these kinds of cases during vacation and "you can always make a mention to the chief (Chief Justice of India)".

Upadhyay submitted that all the kidnappers, gangsters, drug smugglers, etc., are exchanging their



money and according to media reports in last one week Rs 50,000 crore have been exchanged and urged the court to grant urgent

hearing in the matter. The bench reiterated that he can mention the matter before the chief and "we are doing nothing...bring to the notice of the RBI..."

Upadhyay pressed that money was being exchanged by mining mafias, kidnappers, neither there is a requirement of requisition slip and also no identity proof is required.

"This is happening for the first time in the world ... I filed a writ in the Delhi High Court and the high court disposed of the matter without issuing notice...this is happening for the first time in the world ... entire black money will become white," said Upadhyay. The bench allowed Upadhyay to mention the matter after the vacation.

## Hundreds of bras found scattered on Goa bridge

**Panaji:** Hundreds of branded bras were found scattered on the Carona-Calvim bridge of Aldona village of North Goa district.

Village resident Sameer Gadekar told reporter that he noticed the weird scene on Wednesday evening and collected the undergarments to throw into a dustbin.

"I was passing by this bridge, where I first noticed three undergarments of ladies and later saw them everywhere scattered on the bridge. I felt it was like disrespect to women as these branded bras were also placed on railings of bridge, which were visible to public," he said.

Gadekar said that he collected all the stuff from the bridge and threw it at the garbage point. "As a responsible citizen, it was my duty to clear the mess from the bridge, so I informed Sarpanch of our village and then cleared it," he said.

He expressed surprise over the incident and said that there should be CCTV cameras on bridge to check such things.



# INDIA, NEPAL INK PACTS ON ENHANCING PHYSICAL CONNECTIVITY; POWER, TOURISM COOPERATION

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said that several agreements have been signed between India and Nepal, focussing on enhancing physical connectivity, as well as cooperation in power and tourism sectors.

Addressing the media during a joint press conference with his visiting Nepalese counterpart Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' after their bilateral meeting, Modi said: "We have established new rail links to increase physical connectivity. Long term power trade agreement has been established between India and Nepal today. This will give strength to the power sector of our countries."

He further added that the religious and cultural ties between India and Nepal are very old and strong.



"To further strengthen this, we have decided that projects related to Ramayana Circuit should be expedited," Modi added.

On his part, Prachanda said: "This is my fourth visit to India. The relationship between India and Nepal is age-old. Today we discussed

over steps to strengthen the ties between both nations. We also jointly launched many groundbreaking projects." Modi and Prachanda virtually participated in the groundbreaking and inauguration ceremony of various projects, giving boost to cross-border connectivity

and flow of people, goods and energy. Both leaders jointly unveiled the e-plaque of the Kurtha-Bijalpura section of the railway.

They also jointly flagged off the Indian Railway cargo train from Bathnaha to Nepal Custom yard. They participated in the

handing over of Kurtha-Bijalpura section of railway line and also witnessed the inaugural run of an Indian railway cargo train from Bathnaha (India) to the Nepal Customs Yard.

The two Prime Ministers inaugurated inland container ports (ICPs) at Nepalgunj (Nepal) and Rupaidiha (India). They also participated in the groundbreaking ceremony of ICPs at Bhairahawa (Nepal) and Sonauli (India) and also in the groundbreaking ceremony of phase-II facilities under Motihari-Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline.

Modi and Prachanda also virtually participated in the groundbreaking ceremony of the Indian portion of Gorakhpur-Bhawal transmission line.

Prachanda arrived in India on Wednesday on a four-day official visit.

# Dalit man attacked in Gujarat for wearing 'fashionable' attire

Ahemdabad | Agencies

A Dalit man has been attacked in Gujarat's Banaskantha district by some persons of the upper caste for wearing fashionable clothes and sunglasses.

Jigar Shekhalia was attacked as the upper caste persons felt he was "flying too high these days". When his mother tried to intervene, the accused also assaulted her and also tore her clothes.

The assault took place on Tuesday night in Mota village, with the victims now receiving medical treatment at a hospital.

Shekhalia lodged a complaint against seven persons, leading to the filing of a First Information Report (FIR) at Gadh police station.

The accused, who carry the Rajput surname, reportedly expressed displeasure at Shekhalia's stylish dress and eyewear, triggering the inci-



dent. According to the complaint, on Tuesday morning, one of the accused confronted Shekhalia outside his house, threatening him and saying him that he was "flying too high these days".

Later, six of the alleged perpetrators approached him outside a village temple, wielding sticks and demanding an explanation for his attire. Following a heated conversation, they attacked.

When Shekhalia's mother intervened, attempting to save her son, the assailants

turned their ire towards her, physically assaulting her and ripping her clothes, the police said.

The accused were booked under the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. No arrests have been made so far.

# Foxconn to start manufacturing iPhones at K'taka plant by next April: Minister

Bengaluru | Agencies

Karnataka Minister for Large and Medium Industries, M.B. Patil, said on Thursday that Apple Inc supplier Foxconn has plans to start manufacturing iPhone units at its proposed plant in Devanahalli by April 2024, and the state government will hand over the required land to the company by July 1 to facilitate the process.

Patil said this after the representatives of the company led by George Chu met him as part of a courtesy visit in which Information Technology



of land at ITIR in Devanahalli will be handed over by July 1. Along with this, the government will ensure providing 5 MLD of water, quality power supply, road connectivity and other infrastructure facilities," Patil said.

"The company has been asked to provide the details of the skill sets it seeks in the employees. Accordingly, steps will be taken to facilitate training programmes for the eligible candidates to make them employable," Patil added.

and Biotechnology Minister Priyank Kharge was also present.

The Rs 13,600 crore project which is expected to create 50,000 jobs. "The identified 300 acres

# Party is supreme, will contest elections unitedly: Jairam on fresh Gehlot-Pilot tussle

New Delhi | Agencies

Days after truce was hammered out between Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and senior party leader Sachin Pilot, the Congress on Thursday said that party is supreme and it will fight the Rajasthan Assembly polls unitedly to emerge victorious.

The remarks came a day after Pilot refused to budge from his demands for the Gehlot government to act against corruption.

Addressing media at the party headquarters here, Congress General Secretary communications in-charge Jairam Ramesh said, "On May 29, (Congress President Mallikarjuna) Kharge, (former party chief) Rahul Gandhi, Gehlot, Pilot, party General Secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal and state in-charge Sukhjinder Singh

Randhawa were present and they had long meeting where they had a detailed discussion on all issues."

"All issues were discussed during that meeting and we had decided to contest the elections unitedly as the party is supreme," he added.

Pilot on Wednesday during his visit to the assembly seat of Tonk said that action would have to be taken on the issues that he had raised, particularly on corruption in the previous BJP rule.

After the long meeting at Kharge's residence on Monday, Venugopal told media: "In view of upcoming Rajasthan Assembly elections, Kharge and Rahul Gandhi had a detailed discussion with Gehlot and Pilot.

"In this election, we have decided to fight the election unitedly and both of them are in agreement that the Congress has to go together in

Rajasthan. Both have agreed to work together and definitely we will win in Rajasthan. Both the leaders Pilot and Gehlot unitedly and unanimously

agreed to the proposal." Asked about the details of the proposal, Venugopal said: "Both left it to the high command."

# SAD alleges jail inmate appointed market committee chief in Punjab

Chandigarh: The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Thursday condemned Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann for criminalising politics by appointing a jail inmate, who was booked for abetting suicide, as Chairman of the Anandpur Sahib Market Committee. Expressing shock that four Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) functionaries had been appointed Chairmen of Improvement Trusts, which had been dissolved by the government, SAD leader Bikram Singh Majithia said "the AAP government has achieved the dubious distinction of touching new lows day after day." Asking the Chief Minister to explain his conduct, Majithia said "it is not conceivable that the government was not aware of Kamikkar Singh Dhaddi's case, especially considering his close proximity to the Chief Minister. The very fact that he has been appointed Chairman of a market committee despite being arrested after being accused of driving a person to commit suicide by jumping into the Bhakra canal speaks of his closeness to the Chief Minister." "It also sends across a clear message that this anti-people and corrupt government does not care for the law of the land and will do as it wishes regardless of the consequences of its actions on civil society," the SAD leader added.

# 10 SHOOTERS OF LAWRENCE BISHNOI-GOLDIE BRAR GANG HELD IN GURUGRAM



Gurugram | Agencies

A total of 10 sharpshooters of the notorious Lawrence Bishnoi-Goldie Brar gang have been nabbed from two different places in Gurugram, the police said on Thursday.

A police officer said that Crime Branch units of the Gurugram Police apprehended the shooters on Wednesday, following inputs, from Bhondsi and another place near Devial Stadium.

A total of four foreign-made pistols, 28 live cartridges, two vehicles (1 Scorpio and 1 Honda City), seven police uniforms, among other things, have been recovered from their possession. It was learned that the

Honda City vehicle was stolen from Delhi.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Varun Dahiya told reporters that acting on a tip-off, seven persons -- Kumar a.k.a. Anil (24), Harjot Singh (23), Ajay Isharwalia a.k.a. Punjabi (20), Prince a.k.a. Golu (18), Joginder a.k.a. Joga (31), Sandeep a.k.a. Deep (23) and Sinderpal a.k.a. Bittu (33), were nabbed from Bhondsi area in Gurugram. After questioning the arrested individuals, their three other accomplices -- Dharmender a.k.a. Dharma (27), Deepak a.k.a. Dilawar (26) and Bharat (24), were also nabbed along with illegal weapons from a place near Devial Stadium in Gurugram.

"It was learnt that all of them are active shooters of notorious gangsters Lawrence Bishnoi and Goldie Brar gang, and had come to Gurugram to execute a major incident of robbery and kidnapping. As part of their plan, Joginder had to disguise as a police inspector while other members would wear police uniforms and carry out the crime in police uniform.

"They were planning to kidnap a person and extort crores of rupees as ransom. However, before they could do anything, they were nabbed. Seven of the accused were wearing police uniforms at the time of arrest," ACP Dahiya said. They were in constant contact with Goldie Brar and others.

# GUJ WOMAN STRIPPED & BEATEN IN PUBLIC, 4 ARRESTED

Dahod (Gujarat): A tribal woman was publicly abused, stripped, and beaten by a group, including her estranged husband, in Gujarat's Dahod district, police said, adding that four accused have been arrested.

The incident took place on May 28, but a video of the shocking incident went viral on the social media on Wednesday, following which the arrests were made after widespread public outcry.

According to an official report, the woman's estranged husband, upset with her for living separately from him and their four children for the past 19 months, collaborated with two others to abduct her from Rampura village.

The victim was subsequently taken to Margala village, where the public assault took place, an official from Sukhsar police station said.

Officials revealed that the woman, belonging to a tribal community, had been living with another man in Chanasma in the Mehana district, where they both earned a living as daily wage labourers.

The man's mother had invited them to a wedding in Rampura village and also extended an invitation to the woman's estranged husband.

Upon arrival, the estranged husband, accompanied by a group of men in a four-wheeler, abducted the woman and her companion, and transported them to Margala village.

The matter is still under investigation.

# Everyone has the right to visit Bihar, BJP scared of opposition unity: Tejashwi

Patna | Agencies

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav on Thursday made light of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's expected visit to address a string of rallies, saying that everyone has a right to come to Bihar and who is stopping him.

"Since we have come together in Bihar and formed the government, they (BJP) are in a deep scare. They are frightened about what will happen in the 2024 Lok Sabha election and this fear is not leaving their hearts. I don't know if their fear would go or not but one thing is sure that they would be thrown out from power through people's mandate," he said.

There is a buzz in Bihar that PM Modi will address four rallies in Bihar soon. The dates of the rallies are not finalised yet but the decision has been taken to counter the meeting of opposition leaders from 18 parties in Patna scheduled on June 12.

The BJP has also decided to protest on June 11 and 12 against the meeting of opposition parties.

Sources in BJP are saying that Home Minister Amit Shah came to Bihar several times and held rallies in Purnea, Nawada and some other



places but the things are not going in the favour of BJP. Hence, the BJP wants to launch its trump card - the PM - to turn the tables in its favour. So

far, the performance of the BJP's Bihar unit and rallies of Amit Shah are failing to sway voters similar to the situation before 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

# 9 IAF trainer aircraft crashes in K'taka, pilots eject safely

Chamarajanagar(karnataka) | Agencies

Lightweight Kiran trainer aircraft crashed into an open field at Bhogapura in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar district on Thursday.

The pilots managed to eject from the aircraft and landed safely using parachutes.

According to authorities, the trainer aircraft had taken off from the HAL airport of Bengaluru in the morning. The aircraft developed a technical snag and crashed. The aircraft was completely damaged and gutted in the fire. The parts of the aircraft were strewn all around the place.

No casualties were reported in the incident. One female pilot and one male pilot were in the aircraft and they safely ejected.



A court of inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the incident.

This is the second such incident in the state this week. A major tragedy was averted as a training aircraft developed technical snag and made an emergency landing at a farm in Marihal police station limits of Belagavi district on Tuesday (May 30).

The training aircraft VT-RBF belonged to Redbird Institute and took off from the Sambra Airport in Belagavi and was on routine sortie. Two persons, including the pilot, were on board. There were no casualties.

# BOYS INDULGE IN 'PDA' ON SCOOTY IN UP DISTRICT

Team Absolute | Rampur

A video clip of two boys involved in public display of affection (PDA) on a scooty in Uttar Pradesh's Rampur district has surfaced on the social media.

It shows the two boys in a kiss during their ride on the two-wheeler.

Responding to the video clip, the Rampur police tweeted that they are looking into the matter.

The tweet read: "The concerned (purportedly traffic dept.) have been directed to take necessary action."

Earlier this year, two girls from Tamil Nadu were seen hugging and kissing one another when the bike was in motion.



More recently, a young couple was seen in a

video clip kissing on a motorbike in Lucknow.



# BHOPAL CELEBRATES ITS 'GAURAV DIWAS' ON DAY OF MERGER INTO INDIAN UNION

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

'Gaurav Diwas' was being celebrated in Madhya Pradesh's capital Bhopal on Thursday, to mark its merger into the Indian Union in 1949, with different departments of the state administrations having made elaborate arrangements, sports activities having begun a day before and an extravagant cultural programme to be held. The concept of 'Gaurav Diwas' initiated by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in February last year when he had appealed the representatives of each village, town, district of the state to celebrate the occasion on a particular day - for instance Indore's 'pride day' was celebrated to mark the foundation day of state's commercial city last week. Similarly, Bhopal district administration is celebrating capital city's 'Gaurav Diwas' on its merger day with India after Independence.

Bhopal, which remained a princely states even after Independence like many others across the country, was merged with the Union of India on June 1, 1949, hence it is the 74th anniversary of the merger.

Chouhan had greeted people of the city on the occasion. "This auspicious time came on June 1, 1949, two years after independence of the country, when Bhopal became an integral part of India. Number of people had made sacrifices for this day. I bow at the feet of determined, brave sons."

There are many stories on how Bhopal's last Nawab, Mohammad Hamidullah Khan, who had acquired a high profile by virtue of being the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, harbored aspirations of an independent Bhopal and made his best possible effort to achieve it but was foiled.

One such untold story on merger of Bhopal, written by senior journalist Sandeep Bamzai, who is Editor in-Chief and CEO of



IANS, in his book "Prinestan", which explain how the unity of a newborn nation was insured by Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Lord Mountbatten.

As per the book, some courses that some of the Princes, particularly the Nawab of Bhopal, had hoped to present to the politicians in British India were "already in disarray by the time the Congress and the Muslim League had agreed to accept the plan for Indian independence, and the situation deteriorated rapidly thereafter".

"The Nawab of Bhopal was harbouring delusions of grandeur - like several others - was completely spooked. He reckoned that the Congress would swoop down on him (which they did eventually). He resigned as Chancellor of the Chamber and announced that he would consider himself free and

independent the moment the British departed from India, to choose the destiny of his state for himself."

The Nawab, as per the book, had due to his "high profile by virtue of being the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes", shared an excellent rapport with Mohammad Ali Jinnah and an excellent equation with Lord Mountbatten as well.

"But the Nawab, like Travancore, Hyderabad and Kashmir, harbored aspirations of an independent Bhopal and thought the British crown would bail him out in crunch situations. In fact, with Mountbatten arriving in India, Hamidullah Khan's hopes were high before the new Viceroy crushed the ambition without so much as a by-your-leave." The Nawab thought of a brighter future in Pakistan such as planned to abdi-

cate in favor of Abida Sultan, the heir apparent, and leave for Karachi. The Nawab was even promised the post of Governor General of Pakistan. He was prevented from doing so by a grievous family dispute that he could not resolve, although he tried his best.

In March 1949, V. P. Menon (the then Secretary of the government of India) arrived in Bhopal to finalise the merger agreement. According to this, Hamidullah Khan was to receive a privy purse of Rs 11 lakh annually and the Princely State of Bhopal was relegated to the annals of history. Subsequently, the state of Bhopal was taken over by the Union Government on June 1, 1949. Later, according to the States Reorganisation Act 1956, Bhopal was integrated into the state of Madhya Pradesh and Bhopal was declared as the capital of the state.

# GROWING TENSION IN THE CONGRESS ON THE FACE OF THE CHIEF MINISTER

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A new debate has started in the state since senior leader Rahul Gandhi's opinion on who will be the face of the Congress and who will become the chief minister in the upcoming assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh. Leader of opposition Gobind Singh has even said that his supporters are also using his name.

The Congress has been in a state of controversy over the Chief Minister's face for the past few years. In the state, the Congress has made up its mind to contest elections on the face of Kamal Nath. Many Congress leaders have also put up posters declaring Kamal Nath as the future and inevitable Chief Minister. On this, the senior leaders of the Congress, former minister Ajay Singh and former Union minister Arun Yadav, citing the party constitution, have said that elected MLAs and party chiefs select the leaders.

Recently, when Rahul Gandhi was asked about the face of the Chief Minister, he not only avoided it directly, but only said that the Congress is winning 150 seats.

After Rahul Gandhi's statement, the statements of many leaders of the state have come. Leader of Opposition Dr. Gobind Singh was asked about the face of

the Congress Chief Minister, and he said that some people are using our name, who are talking about whomever they support. People of Chhindwara want our leader to become Chief Minister. Jahan Tak Meri Baat Hai To Leader Nahi Main Karte Hoon.

When former Chief Minister Digvijay Singh was asked about Rahul Gandhi's speech, he said that in which parliamentary democracy there is no direct election of the Chief Minister, by what means are the members of the Legislative Assembly selected, what has been said is correct in his opinion.

According to public opinion of Madhya Pradesh, 99 percent of people are in favor of contesting elections under the leadership of Kamal Nath and this is the public opinion that he should become the Chief Minister.

While tweeting the statement of former Chief Minister Digvijay Singh, Kamal Nath's media adviser Piyush Babel has tweeted, BJP, which cheated God, will face the curse of the people this time. No matter how many lies BJP spreads, Kamal Nath will come. Digvijay Singh has bluntly said that 99 percent of the people of Madhya Pradesh want to make Kamal Nath the Chief Minister. There is only one slogan in Madhya Pradesh, Jai Jai Kamal Nath.

# Cleanliness increases the prestige and pride of the city: Chief Minister Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, while giving the message of cleanliness to the residents of Bhopal on Gaurav Divas, reached Prabhu Nagar, Hemu Kalani Colony of Idgah Hills, and collected dry and wet waste from the houses and put it in the garbage van and appealed to the residents for active cooperation in cleanliness. The residents welcomed Chief Minister Shri Chouhan by performing aarti and thanked him for implementing the Mukhya Mantri Ladli Bahna Yojana. Talking to the residents of the area regarding cleanliness, Chief



Minister Chouhan said that cleanliness is necessary for a healthy and happy life. Cleanliness increases the reputation and pride of the ward, locality and city. Mutual cooperation of government

and society is necessary for cleanliness. Medical Education Minister Vishwas Kailash Sarang, Mayor Malti Rai and former Mayor Alok Sharma also participated in the cleanliness campaign.

# "WE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY": ENVIRONMENT MINISTER ON CHEETAH DEATHS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With three cheetahs and as many cubs dying at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh in three months, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav Thursday said, "We take responsibility for whatever happened", but asserted that the translocation project will be a major success.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the first batch of eight spotted felines from Namibia into a quarantine enclosure at Kuno in Madhya Pradesh on September 17 last year. In a second such translocation, 12 cheetahs were flown in from South Africa and released into Kuno on February 18.

Three cheetahs died in March and April. Of the 17 remaining adult cheetahs, seven have already been released into the wild. The death of three adult cheetahs and three of the four cubs born to a female Namibian



cheetah, Sisaya, has prompted questions from several experts on the suitability of the habitat and wildlife management.

"It's an international project and we had anticipated mortality. It's mentioned in our report too (cheetah

introduction action plan). One of the cheetahs was unwell before it even came to India. We have provided the reasons for the deaths of the two other (adult) cheetahs.

"The three cubs died due to extreme heat. The temperature

soared to 47 degrees Celsius... We take responsibility for whatever happened. However, the project will be a major success and the whole country will be proud of it," he said in reply to a question at Times Network's conclave.

Shortly after news emerged about the death of two cheetah cubs last week, the Centre set up an 11-member high-level steering committee to review and monitor the progress of the cheetah reintroduction programme.

The government and experts involved in the project have maintained that the mortalities are within the normal range. The action plan for cheetah reintroduction anticipated up to 50 per cent mortality in the first year of relocation.

The steering committee met for the first time on Wednesday and decided to release seven more cheetahs, including two females, into the wild by the third week of June.

# Karni Sena leader found dead in his car in Indore

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A 27-year-old local functionary of Karni Sena was found dead in his car with bullet wounds in Indore, the police said on Thursday.

The deceased has been identified as Mohit Patel, who was the district president of Karni Sena. The car was parked on the road side.

The police said that Patel's licensed revolver was also found in the car with two bullets less in the magazine.

"We are probing whether it was a suicide or a murder, Additional Commissioner of Police, Jayant Rathore, told mediapersons.

Patel was found in his car in the



Kanadiya police station area late on Wednesday night.

"At first glance, it appeared that two bullets were pumped into his chest from point-blank range," Rathore said.

Since Patel was working as a property dealer, the police are looking into the

rivalry angle.

According to Rathore, Patel left his home alone at around 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

Patel had reportedly told his friends that he was going to some place and they should meet him there. But when his friends reached there, they found Patel lying dead in his car with bullet wounds on his chest.

"Patel had rung up some of his friends and called them to a place. According to his friends, when they reached there, they found Patel's blood-soaked body in the car," Rathore said.

The officer said that Patel's friends took him to a hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

# JUNE 1 WILL BE A HOLIDAY ON BHOPAL GAURAV DIWAS FROM NEXT YEAR: CM CHOUHAN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that from next year on Bhopal Gaurav Diwas, June 1 will be a holiday in Bhopal. A research institute focused on the history of Bhopal will be established with the aim of making the coming generation familiar with the history of Bhopal. On Bhopal Gaurav Divas, CM Chouhan reached Bhopal Gate and felicitated the Safai Mitras. While extending

greetings of Bhopal Merger Day, he said that as a result of the sacrifices of innumerable people and the struggle of warriors, on June 1, 1949, two years after the country's independence, Bhopal became an integral part of India.

Chief Minister Chouhan unfurled the national flag amid shower of colour-gulal, flowers and fireworks. He paid floral tributes to Bharat Mata after recitation of Jana-Gana-Mana and remembered the martyrs of merger by lighting a mashaal (torch).



Tribute was also paid by offering flowers on the portraits of the martyrs. CM

Chouhan also visited the picture exhibition focused on the Bhopal merger movement.

# BIRTHDAY CELEBRATED BY PLANTING SAPLINGS WITH CM CHOUHAN

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Neem, Amla and Kachnar in the garden located at Shyamla Hills. Along with CM Chouhan, Sarvshri Sushil Yadav, Saubhagya Choubey, Kuldeep Gurjar, Navneet Soni and girl child Khushi planted saplings on their birthday. Their acquaintances and family members Sarvshri Sukansh Yadav, Sandeep Rathore, Utkarsh Tiwari, Dheeraj Soni, Yogendra Soni, Durgesh Soni, Sushri Megha Soni and Kanta Yadav also participated in plantation. It is notable that CM Chouhan constantly motivates the people of the state to plant saplings on their birthdays, marriage anniversaries and other important occasions of life.

In Ujjain's Mahakal Lok, now the urn installed at the Nandi gate suddenly broke and fell down. When this incident happened, many devotees were also present there. Although no one got hurt. Let us inform that earlier on Sunday, 6 out of 7 idols of Saptarishis fell down due to strong storm. Devotees enter Mahakal Lok from Nandi Gate only. In this, there is a Kalash shaped design on the top. Suddenly in the evening, a vase broke and fell in the design of the door. This is a stone urn.

The Congress team was inspecting when the urn had broken and fell, at that time the members of the Pradesh Congress Committee were inspecting in Mahakal Lok.



Some media persons were also present. Congress state spokesperson Siddharth Singh

Rajawat told that suddenly this urn fell down. This is also a sample of corruption. An appli-

cation has been given to Baba Mahakal on behalf of the Congress party.

City Congress President of Ujjain Ravi Bhadoria said that the team had come to inspect on behalf of the Congress Committee. These letters have come to be given at the feet of Mahakal. May Baba Mahakal give wisdom to those who indulge in corruption. Have seen this urn falling down. These stones are glued with gum. Its weight is about three kilos. Tiles cracked.

In no time, the tiles were also broken due to the fall of the stone urn which was pasted again. According to officials, it is feared that these urns are sticking to the substance. Probably due to loosening of grip or drying of gum, the urn fell. However, the administration present there immediately pasted the urn back with gum. The tiles were also replaced.

Four days ago, on Sunday, there was a strong storm in Ujjain at around 4 pm. Due to this, 6 out of 7 idols of Saptarishis established in Mahakal Lok had fallen. Many devotees had narrow escape in the accident. These idols, 10 to 25 feet high, are made of red stone and Fiber Reinforced Plastic (FRP). Artists from Gujarat, Odisha and Rajasthan associated with MP Babariya firm of Gujarat have done workmanship on these. On October 11, 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the new complex 'Mahakal Lok' of Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain. CM Shivraj has given instructions to install new idols in place of these idols. While the Congress has made allegations of corruption in the construction of Mahakal Lok.



EDITOR'S SPECS

### Cong to move HC over 'scam' in 'Mahakal Lok' corridor

The Congress on Wednesday said it will approach Madhya Pradesh High Court to seek its intervention over alleged financial irregularities in 'Mahakal Lok' corridor of Ujjain. The opposition also raised question on Ujjain district collector Kumar Purusottam, saying the officer has acted like "puppet of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan." Congress MLA Sajjan Singh Verma and Shobha Oza, who were among the seven opposition leaders who visited Mahakal Lok corridor on Tuesday, levelled serious allegations on the ruling BJP. The Congress leaders claimed China's local material was used for building the statues of 'Saptarshi'. He further claimed damaged statues were kept in a hidden place and were being redeveloped. When asked why the Congress is demanding judicial inquiry into the matter when Ujjain district collector Kumar Purusottam has said that 'statues collapsed due to gusty wind and there is no need of any investigation. However, Urban Development Minister Bhupendra Singh ruled out the Congress' allegations and accused the opposition of doing politics on religious issue. The Minister further said that over 100 Fibre Reinforced Plastic (FRP) statues were made at a cost of Rs 7.5 crore and artwork carried out on them "was only possible on such statues" and cited the examples of Kingdom of Dreams in Gurugram, Haryana, the Akshardham temple in Delhi and other other projects where FRP statues were used. Notably, six out of the seven idols of 'Saptarishis' installed at the Mahakal Lok corridor, developed on the Mahakaleshwar temple premises collapsed and suffered damages due to gusty winds. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first phase of the Mahakal Lok corridor project on October 11 last year.

# STUDIOS CLAIM OWNERSHIP OF RIGHTS

Vinod Mirani

It was since foreign companies entered the Indian film market that filmmakers in the country, especially in the Hindi film industry, took huge strides. Films with budgets in lakhs suddenly started costing crores. With projects being underwritten by big-time backers, the films with stars started costing over Rs 100 crore. This was just the beginning of the whole filmmaking industry going haywire! Creativity went for a toss and greed took over. The budgets went high but content suffered. Films depended solely on the kind of draw a star commanded! Actors wanted to be paid in crores and so did the director. Soon, the stars started asking for Rs 100 crore or more and the ones with just a single success wanted Rs 10-15 crore. Female artistes started demanding in crores, even thought their films, at best, collected Rs 5 crore or less in lifetime business. Somewhere along the line, the filmmaking happened with no sense of the economics. The prices the stars demanded were artificial, much against their draw or potential to recoup. This continued for a long time because the companies which backed these films opened their purse strings generously. The producer had nothing to lose and stood only to gain. Nobody cared for what a star charged or a director did. Ridiculous budgets were presented and sanctioned by the new corporate entrants who were under the impression that they were producing films when, in fact, they were actually outsourcing the film production activities. They had neither the knowledge of filmmaking the way it happened in India, nor any control. Besides the budgets of the films, the manipulations extended to the media and on social media. Amitabh Bachchan, at his peak, commanded the price of Rs 15 lakh, it is said. That price was meant to be the equivalent to one major circuit (Mumbai circuit was one), there being about six. Yet, the maker stood to earn an amount worth one circuit. It was all worked out to everybody's satisfaction and interest. Bachchan's films drew massive footfalls and his price was recovered within a day if you added up all-India box-office collections. In those days, only net collections were made public after deducting the entertainment tax as well as the cinema rentals. That was unlike the practice now, which is aimed at deceiving the people with gross figures, or the recovery from ticket sales, being put out, which is unfair. If Bachchan recovered his price within a day, the films of stars today don't recover their own price, let alone the cost of the film in the lifetime business. A star is someone who assures an initial draw to his every new release. But when the star's prices became



unviable, filmmakers resorted to giving out inflated collection figures. There was no way a film costing Rs 100 crore could recover the investment; the film was now limited to multiplexes with an average ticket price (ATP) of Rs 270. The masses, who accounted for a film's success and flocked to the single screens, were driven out. Even at today's prices with inflation and all things considered, one can buy a few things of necessity for that kind of money! Just about everybody was making money, except for those who backed these films. As the things worked in the film industry in India, the negative belonged to the producer of the film, albeit considering there was no lien on the film. That all the financiers' claims had been settled as often there were multiple people from whom the producer borrowed in the process of making his film. The various financiers' claims were guaranteed by the film processing laboratory with whom vested the film's entire negative footage shot for the film. Unless, there was another kind of arrange-

ment in place. It was called World Rights Controller, which involved a single financier. He would let the film release even if his monies were not recovered, but the rights to the negatives vested with him till the time the money was recouped. In those days, the normal practice was to release a film in various circuits through local distributors with an understanding that they paid a price described as MG, and after recovery, shared, what was called the overflow equally with the producer. In the World Rights arrangement, that overflow went to the world rights controller. Now, of course, the recoveries are not only from the overflow of a film, but there exist various other avenues, such as OTT, satellite and other rights. These rights are given out for a stipulated period and recur again. Some of the studios backing Hindi films withdrew from the trade and some were left to wonder what came to them in this whole exercise? It was their money so, rightfully, the rights

in the content should belong to them. After all, the producer on record was being paid what is called the Runner Fees to produce a film for the studio, like the director was paid his, so was the star as well as the other crew. As things work now, projects are sanctioned and financed by the principal, say a television channel or an OTT streaming platform, and they own the content. Even during the good old days of Doordarshan, if your serial was sanctioned and televised, the rights and the content finally belonged to DD. The studios that financed film production recently took up this issue with the filmmakers whose films they had bankrolled. The studios staked their claim to the films they had financed because it was their product by all logic. After all, even the producer was paid for his work. In other words, some of our top-rung filmmakers, who were hogging the glory and the limelight when a film was a success, were no more than mere production controllers or, at best, executive producers, and they were making the film on behalf of a studio. So, some of the big-time filmmakers, for that is the kind these studios preferred to deal with, were asked to cede the film rights, rock stock and barrel, to the principal studio, it must have come as a bolt from the blue! The fact that the studios were correct in their demand must have played on their mind. It resulted in the few top names who stood to lose it all, to get into talks. The settlement reached, according to reports, is that the one who produced the film will share the gains from the film on a 50:50 basis. The arrangement will last for ten years from the date of the film's release. Thereafter, all rights in the film in subject will revert back to the studio in toto. Can you imagine that the films that will feed many of your generations to come, won't be yours eventually! Many filmmakers of the yesteryear, such as Raj Kapoor, Shakti Samanta, G.P. Sippy, N.N. Sippy, N.C. Sippy, Pramod Chakravorty, Manmohan Desai, Prakash Mehra, Devendra Goel and many others who made a number of films (though some of them may have sold their film negatives for various reasons), have left them behind and their value in the era of satellite, OTT and other rights are worth crores. Unlike them, the present-day producers may have made a lot of money while they made their films, but nothing will remain with them for the future. Among all these, the one production house that has emerged with no claims on its films is Yash Raj Studios. It has never been reported to seek finance from the corporate studio houses.

## international

# MIKE PENCE TO ANNOUNCE 2024 BID NEXT WEEK: REPORT

Washington | Agencies

Former US Vice President Mike Pence will announce his bid for the 2024 US presidential election next week -- the latest to join an increasingly crowded field for the Republican Party's White House nomination, a media report said. Citing informed sources, the BBC report said that the 63-year-old will launch his campaign on June 7 in Iowa. Launching his campaign will put Pence face-to-face with former President Donald Trump. Relations between the two soured after Trump turned on Pence for lacking "courage" after the latter refused to help overturn the 2020 election results, the BBC report said. They have largely kept their distance since January 6, 2021, when pro-Trump rioters stormed the US Capitol and were heard chanting "Hang Mike Pence!". Calm and soft-spoken,



Pence began his career in conservative politics as a talk radio host. He was elected to the House in 2000 and served until 2013. When Pence was the Governor of Indiana from 2013-17, he passed the largest tax cut in the state's history and signed bills to restrict abortion and protect religious freedom. Besides Pence, former

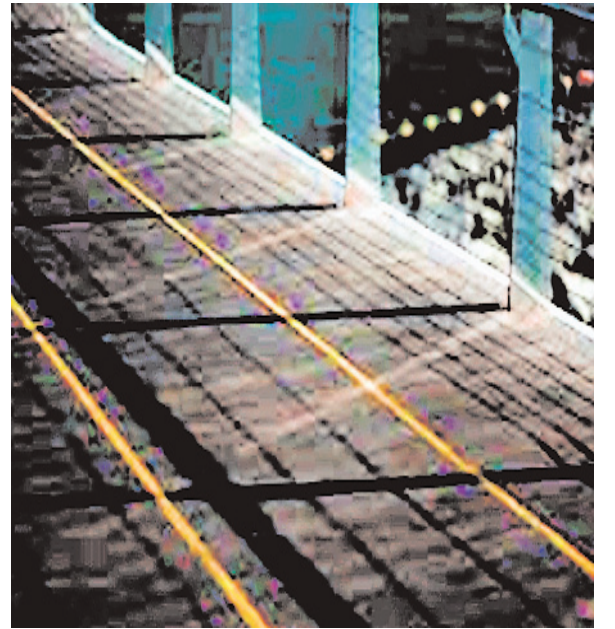
New Jersey Governor Chris Christie is planning to announce his candidacy on June 6 at a town hall event in New Hampshire, where the first Republican primary election will be held, the BBC report said citing multiple sources. After his 2016 presidential bid failed, Christie allied himself with Trump, leading the

incoming president's transition team and preparing him for debates against incumbent President Joe Biden in 2020. But Christie has become a critic of Trump since the Capitol riot, calling the latter "a TV star, nothing more, nothing less". After months of speculation, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis launched his 2024 bid during a live Twitter Spaces event, which was plagued by a technical glitch, delaying his announcement by at least 20 minutes. The other names that have already announced their bids for the Republican Party nomination are former US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley, Indian-American entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, South Carolina Senator Tim Scott, former two-term Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin, businessman Perry Johnson and conservative radio host Larry Elder.

# 17 kids, 1 adult injured in Canada walkway collapse

Ottawa | Agencies

Seventeen children and one adult were injured after falling off an elevated walkway in central Canada, local media reported. The accident happened at Fort Gibraltar in Winnipeg's St. Boniface area on Wednesday when the children aged 10-11 from St. John's-Ravenscourt School were on a field trip, reports Xinhua news agency. Some children fell directly from the 5-metre-high walkway when it collapsed and others slipped down, said local media reports, adding that three of them were taken to hospital in unstable condition, while the remaining were in stable condition. A City of Winnipeg spokesperson said that inspectors will be attending the scene and that a provincial workplace safety and health investigation will take place.



An initial search of our records would seem to indicate that repairs were made to the elevated walkway in 2004 and 2013. We

have not received any complaints related to the property based on an initial search of our records," the spokesperson was quoted as saying.

### SHOPLIFTING CASES SPIKE IN UK; STEAK, CHEESE, COFFEE MAIN TARGETS

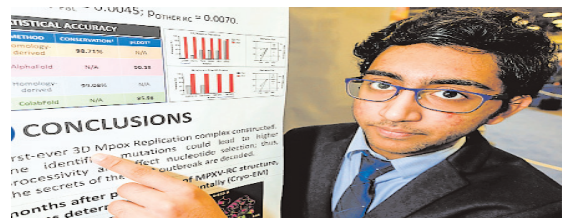


London: Amidst an increase in the number of shoplifting cases in the UK, supermarkets are fitting steak and cheese with security tags and replacing coffee with dummy jars as these are the most targeted items, the media reported. In March, police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland recorded nearly 33,000 incidents of shoplifting, according to data analysed by the BBC. This was a significant 30.9 per cent increase compared with March last year. According to the data, shoplifting offences have now returned to pre-pandemic levels as the cost of living is on the rise.

# Indian-American teen wins \$50,000 Young Scientist award

New York | Agencies

A 17-year-old Indian-origin student in Missouri has won the prestigious Regeneron Young Scientist Awards of \$50,000 for his research relating to the mpox virus. Saathvik Kannan of David H. Hickman High School in Columbia was awarded for using biocomputational methods to understand the causes of heightened infectivity in the disease mpox after it re-emerged in 2022. Saathvik's approach, named Bioplex, uses a combination of machine learning and three-dimensional comparative protein modeling to decode structures like those that enable the mpox virus to replicate. This allowed him to identify the mutations in the virus



that likely made it more infectious as well as other mutations that could make it resistant to antibiotics. He credited his mentor, Kamalendra Singh, an assistant professor of veterinary pathobiology at the University of Missouri. "I was overjoyed and incredibly excited!" Saathvik wrote in an email to the Columbia Daily Tribune about the prize. "I felt that it reflected our work with Dr. Singh's mentorship and guidance over the last few years cul-

minating in my project for this year." Saathvik believes scientists will also be able to apply Bioplex to future outbreaks of other viruses. More than 1,600 young scientists and engineers representing 49 states and 64 countries across the world competed at the 2023 Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair. Saathvik also took first place in the fair's computational biology and bioinformatics division, receiving another \$5,000.

# N.KOREA WILL CORRECTLY PLACE SPY SATELLITE INTO ORBIT SOON: KIM JONG-UN'S SISTER

Seoul | Agencies

The influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has vowed that Pyongyang will "correctly" place a military reconnaissance satellite into orbit soon, state media reported on Thursday, a day after Pyongyang's attempt to launch a spy satellite failed. Kim Yo Jong made the remarks as she slammed the US for its denouncement of North Korea's botched launch on Wednesday of what it claimed to be a "space launch vehicle," according to a statement carried by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). "If North Korea's satellite launch should be particularly censured, the US and all other countries, which have already launched thousands of satellites, should be denounced," she said. "It is certain that the North Korea's military reconnaissance satellite will be correctly put in space orbit in the near future and start its mission." "We confirmed once again that the enemies are most afraid of North Korea's access to excellent reconnaissance and information means including reconnaissance satellite and,



accordingly, we are aware that we should direct greater efforts to developing reconnaissance mean," she added. Kim, who serves as the vice department director of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party, also called the UN Security Council's resolutions that ban Pyongyang's use of ballistic tech-

nology as "gangster-like" and "wrong" for violating North Korea's right to use space, Yonhap news agency reported. Meanwhile, she reiterated that North Korea is not interested in talks with the US, citing Washington's "hostile policy" toward Pyongyang. "We have no content of dialogue and do not feel the necessity of dialogue with the US and its stooges... we will continue our-style way of counteraction in a more offensive attitude so that they should not but realise that they will have nothing to benefit from the extension of the hostile policy toward North Korea," she said. On Wednesday, North Korea fired the rocket southward, but it fell into the Yellow Sea after an "abnormal" flight, according to Seoul's military. North Korea confirmed the failure, saying its new "Chollima-1" rocket, carrying a military reconnaissance satellite, "Malligyong-1," fell into the sea due to the "abnormal starting of the second-stage engine," adding that it plans to conduct a second launch as soon as possible, the KCNA said. The latest launch drew immediate condemnation from South Korea, the US and Japan.



UDDHAV THACKERAY, SHARAD PAWAR INVITED TO JUNE 12 OPPOSITION MEET": SANJAY RAUT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray) leader Sanjay Raut on Thursday said that Uddhav Thackeray and NCP chief Sharad Pawar have also been invited to the Opposition meeting in Patna under chairmanship of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on June 12.



of Opposition parties in Patna on June 12. However, ahead of the opposition leaders' meeting, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Bihar in June and is likely to address a public meeting, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s Bihar unit president Samrat Choudhary confirmed.

I belong to BJP but it's not my party: Pankaja Munde

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former Maharashtra minister and Bharatiya Janata Party national secretary Pankaja Munde on Thursday said that she belongs to the BJP but the party doesn't belong to her. Munde, daughter of late senior BJP leader Gopinath Munde, has maintained a low profile since her defeat in the 2019 assembly elections.



president Chandrashekar Bawankule said in January that some people were trying to create a rift between the party and Munde. In the last state polls, she lost to her estranged cousin and Nationalist Congress Party leader Dhananjay Munde on her home turf Parli.

CBI files case against Mumbai airport worker for demanding bribe from bizman

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The CBI has lodged a case under the Prevention of Corruption Act against a man working at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport for allegedly demanding a bribe on behalf of a customs official from a businessman to clear his imported goods.



also obtained a few screenshots of WhatsApp messages in this regard. The agency said they were looking into the matter.

NAVI MUMBAI MAN HELD FOR TRYING TO HIT COPS WITH HIS VEHICLE

Mumbai: The Navi Mumbai police on Wednesday said they have arrested a 23-year-old man from the Ulwe area for allegedly making an attempt to run over policemen with his dumper truck and preventing them from doing their duties.

The accused, identified as Monish Gharat, was booked under relevant sections of the IPC, including 307 (attempt to murder) and 353 (assault or use of criminal force to deter public servant from discharging his duty).

The police said on Wednesday he drove his dumper truck in a rash and negligent manner and damaged the gates of the housing society where he was residing, dashed against two cars and also collided with a motorcycle. He tried to run over two policemen who tried to stop him, said the police.

Villagers 'lift up', pick holes in new road built under PM Gram Sadak Yojana

Team Absolute | Jalna

Rate villagers of Karjat-Hastpohhari in Maharashtra's Jalna district recently 'lifted up' a newly-laid road under the Prime Minister Rural Road Scheme, ostensibly to highlight the poor quality of construction of the village thoroughfare.



rural folk claimed that the thin cloth carpet forms the foundation of the road on which asphalt was poured and levelled to make it appear like a new road, allegedly using some German technology, but it had a shoddy, shaky base, as shown in the video. They demanded action against the contractor, the road engineers and the concerned depart-

ment for trying to fool the villagers with the substandard work quality that may not last too long. Social media users reacted strongly to the video and the villagers' predicament with comments slamming the concerned authorities for reneging on their promise to provide good rural connectivity.

Goa liquor traders object granting wine shop license at Mopa airport

Team Absolute | Panaji

The Goa Liquor Traders Association has alleged that the state government is in the process to grant a wine shop license to a corporate company from Mumbai at the Manohar international Airport in Mopa, objecting the move.



wine shops and 800 bar and restaurants in the coastal state. He said that as per law, a wine shop license can be granted to a person only when he possesses a certificate of residing in Goa for the past 25 years.

Goans at the Mopa airport on the pretext to boost tourism. "Will the footfall of tourists increase if there are wine shops at the airport?" he questioned. He said that by allowing wine shops at Mopa airport, the collective sale of 3076 wine shops of the state will benefit one single person.

PANIC AT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AFTER PASSENGER CLAIMS TO CARRY BOMB IN BAG

Mumbai: On Wednesday, a panic broke out at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai after a passenger claimed that she was carrying a bomb in her luggage bag. The police arrested the woman passenger who was later produced in court.

Insurer liable to pay compensation to accident victim's kin even if offending vehicle driver's licence is invalid or expired: Bombay HC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

An insurance company is liable to pay compensation to accident victim's kin even if the driving licence of the offending vehicle's driver has expired and not renewed as an expired licence would not make him an unskilled driver, the Bombay High Court has said, reported news agency.



vehicle later. The court was hearing a petition filed by the family members of the deceased woman challenging an order passed by the Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal exonerating the insurance company from paying compensation as the driving licence of the driver of the offending vehicle had expired.

Pune in November 2011 and was riding pillion on the motorcycle when a truck rammed into it at high speed. Bavisakar fell under the truck and died. The bench in its order noted that the deceased died after the truck rammed into her scooter and at the time of the incident the truck was insured with the insurance company. Hence there was a contractual liability of the insurance company to indemnify the compensation, the court added.

Man who poses as PMO official arrested

Team Absolute | Pune

Pune crime branch police have arrested a man for allegedly posing as an IAS officer posted with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the police said on Thursday. The accused identified as Vasudev Nivrutti Tayade (54), a resident of Talegaon Dabhade, was caught when he came to attend an event on May 29, officials said.



He had introduced himself as an IAS officer to the attendees of the event and had been deceiving people by pretending to be a Deputy Secretary. Based on the same, a case has been registered against him under IPC sections 170 and 419 at Chaturshringi Police station. Officials were further investigating the

matter to check for a possibility of his involvement in other crimes. Police also said that he had a history of impersonating IAS officers and had been booked for a similar offence by Dhule police in 2000. Tayade holds BCom and MA degrees, but is unemployed and hails from Jalgaon.

MAHARASHTRA SSC RESULT 2023: 10TH RESULT TO BE DECLARED TODAY

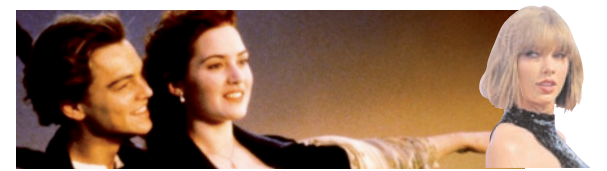
Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra State Board Of Secondary And Higher Secondary Education (MSB-SHSE) will declare the Maharashtra SSC results 2023 at around 11 am today. The Maharashtra State Board Of Secondary And Higher Secondary Education (MSBSHSE) will declare the result of the SSC results 2023 on June 2 at 11 am. The students can track the official website of the Maharashtra board: mahahssboard.in, mahresult.nic.in, and others to check their results.



Click on the link for SSC Result 2023 Enter your roll number or seat number Review your marks Students can also download or print the result. In 2023, around 15,77,256 students enrolled to appear for the SSC exams and the exams were held across 5,033 exam centres. Last year, Maharashtra state witnessed an impressive performance in the Class 10th exam result. As many as 16.38 lakh SSC students had registered for the class 10 exam, which included 8.89 lakh boys and 7.49 lakh girls. In the Mumbai division alone, 3,45,697 students had registered. While the overall pass percentage this year is 96.94 per cent, girls yet again out-

shone boys with their pass percentage of 97.96 as against the boys' 96.06 per cent. Last year, the Konkan division registered the highest pass percentage of 99.27, while Nashik division is at the bottom with 95.90 per cent This year, the question papers of SSC exam was not distributed ten minutes prior to the students. Rather, an extra ten minutes was given to students appearing for the board exam later. The paper began at 11 am and rather than concluding at 2 pm, the exams were concluded at 2:10 pm. Earlier this week, MSBSHSE declared HSC exam results. The overall pass percentage of HSC this year is 91.25 per cent.



## 'I HAVE IMPOSTER SYNDROME'

Gal Gadot opens up on her insecurities as actress

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Gal Gadot shared that every time she acts, she doubts herself and worries no one will like what she's doing. "It's funny, I always feel like I have this imposter syndrome, because I feel so lucky and I'm so happy that I get to do what I really, really, really love. I always feel like, 'I hope they're gonna like it'. There's never a moment when I'm like, 'They're gonna love this,'" she said in a cover interview with L'Officiel magazine, reports aceshowbiz.com.

The 38-year-old actress also shared the one piece of advice that has helped her with the psychological disorder that makes people feel a fraud.

Recalling a conversation with Hollywood director Francis Ford Coppola, 84, the actress said: "Francis said, 'You know, something? I'm always filled with doubts. I'm always afraid they're not going to like it. I just follow my heart and I come into it humble.'"

In an interview, the 'Fast X' actress spoke about working with her husband Jaron Varsano on her film 'Heart of Stone', which she stars in and co-produced with her spouse.

She said: "Jaron has the business mind, and who else can take care of my interests better than my life partner."

The 'Death on the Nile' star - who has three children with Jaron - said that she loved getting to play the villainous Evil Queen in the upcoming 'Snow White' movie.

She said: "It was a great shift. I can't believe I got to play the Evil Queen, the first evil villain in the history of Disney. I get to sing and explore my theatrical, evil dark side."



## 'JACK RYAN 4' TRAILER TRACES CONVERGENCE OF DRUG CARTEL, TERRORISM

Los Angeles | Agencies

The trailer of the fourth and final season of 'Jack Ryan' was unveiled recently. It shows the titular character on his most dangerous mission yet: facing an enemy - both foreign and domestic.

As the new CIA Acting Deputy Director, Jack Ryan is tasked with unearthing internal corruption, and in doing so, uncovers a series of suspicious black ops that could expose the vul-

nerability of the country. During the course of uncovering the corruption, Jack discovers a far-worse reality: the collusion of a drug cartel with a terrorist organisation.

The series stars John Krasinski as Jack Ryan, Wendell Pierce as James Greer, Michael Kelly as Mike November, and Betty Gabriel as CIA Acting Director Elizabeth Wright, with Abbie Cornish returning as Cathy Mueller. Joining the cast this sea-

son are Michael Pena as Domingo Chavez and Louis Ozawa as Chao Fah.

Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan is co-produced by Amazon Studios, Paramount Television Studios, and Skydance Television, and executive produced by Allyson Seeger, Andrew Form, John Krasinski, Brad Fuller, Michael Bay, and John Kelly.

The fourth season will drop on Prime Video on June 30 with two episodes premiering each Friday, leading up to the epic series finale on July 14.

## KIM CATTRALL RETURNS AS SAMANTHA JONES

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Kim Cattrall will reprise her iconic role as Samantha Jones in the Season 2 finale of 'And Just Like That', the revival of 'Sex and the City'.

But she will only appear in one scene. According to sources, Cattrall shot her dialogue on March 22 in New York City, without seeing or speaking with the stars of the series, including Sarah Jessica Parker, or with 'And Just Like That' showrunner Michael Patrick King, reports 'Variety'.

In the scene, Samantha, who in the show has moved to London, will have a phone conversation with Parker's Carrie Bradshaw.

In the first season of 'And Just Like That', Carrie engaged with an estranged Samantha over text, and in the finale, the two made a plan to see each other in order to reconcile.

Famed 'Sex and the City' costume designer Patricia Field, who has not been working on 'And Just Like That', dressed Samantha for her scene.

A rep for Cattrall didn't respond to request for comment. Max did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Cattrall's appearance as Samantha will not be a continuation of the character for now.

Still, the return of Samantha in any form will certainly thrill 'Sex and the City' fans, who have been clamoring for even a glimpse of the beloved, empowered publicist who put the "sex" in the groundbreaking series that ran on HBO for six seasons from 1998 to 2004, and led to two movies.

Cattrall publicly announced in 2016 that she was done playing Samantha when she didn't feel like the script for a proposed third film did justice to the character.



## Grammy-winning Jon Batiste drops new anthem to open 'Coke Studio' Season 2



Los Angeles | Agencies

The new track, titled 'Be Who You Are (Real Magic)' is written and performed by Grammy-award-winning American songwriter and musician, Jon Batiste, and features artists NewJeans, J.I.D, Camilo and Cat Burns for the second season of 'Coke Studio'.

As a platform that celebrates borderless collaboration, Coke Studio has brought together Verve Records/Interscope/UMG signed artist Jon Batiste and over 16 of the biggest breakthrough music artists of the moment from the US, UK, Canada, South Africa, Colombia, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey, China, Korea and the Philippines. The artists include representation from India with Diljit Dosanjh and Shreya Ghoshal as part of the collective.

These artists have created 9 brand new multi-artist collision songs and exclusive Coke Studio sessions from each artist, which will be released to global music fans on all music platforms in June and July.

The 'Be Who You Are (Real Magic)' anthem and music video, being released today, is a celebration of the power of staying true to yourself.

It reflects on the idea that it is when people are their authentic selves and accept each other's differences, the 'Real Magic' happens.

Penned by Jon Batiste, the song finds him collaborating with the global breakout group NewJeans, pushing the boundaries of K-Pop; Latin Grammy-Award winning pop artist from Colombia, Camilo, British, BRIT Award and Ivor Novello-nominated, chart-topping singer songwriter Cat Burns and Atlanta-born eclectic rapper J.I.D.

## Ryan Reynolds flew Charlotte Church to US to sing before they even met

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Charlotte Church has revealed that Ryan Reynolds flew her and her three kids over to America despite never meeting before.

The Welsh singer-songwriter praised the Wrexham FC owner for welcoming her to New York as part of his documentary, reports Mirror.co.uk.

Hollywood actors Ryan, 46, and Rob McElhenney purchased the Welsh footballer club and even starred in a TV series about their promotion race. Cardiff-born Charlotte, 37, has explained she was chosen by the stars to sing the Welsh national anthem.

She told Nick Grimshaw and Angela Hartnett on their podcast 'Dish', quoted by Mirror.co.uk: "Ryan Reynolds flew me and my kids out to New York. Because... 'cause yeah, they were doing the show about Wrexham, and I went and I sang the national anthem, Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau. Yeah, and I was like, look, I'm a mum, I'm a working mum 'cause the kids were like, 'It's Ryan Reynolds! We have to go!' So I was like, I'm a working mum, unfortunately you're gonna have to bring all three of my children out, and



they were like, yeah, sure, fine."

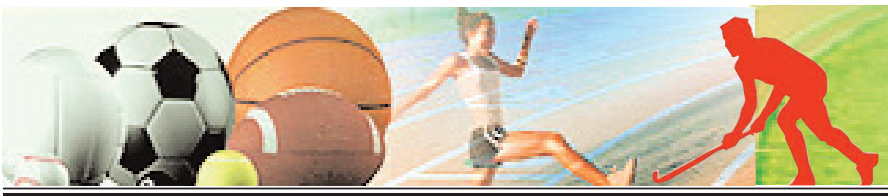
She added: "And then they got to meet him. Him and Rob McElhenney. And they were delicious. They were so kind, they're so lovely. So yeah, I think what they're doing for Wales - in terms of Wrexham and stuff - it's really genuine. You know what I mean?"

Charlotte continued: "Like often when people - unfortunately the way that Wales has been portrayed for such a long time is like we're the poor relation, do you know what I mean? And a lot of people talk about us with - taking the p\*\*\*, but actually it feels like, it's really like, uplifting. And they're doing it with a lot of care, and integrity."

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE



Tasha Ghouri



## THAILAND OPEN 2023

# KIRAN GEORGE, LAKSHYA SEN IN QUARTERS AS SATWIK-CHIRAG, SAINA NEHWAL CRASH OUT

Team Absolute | Bangkok

Kiran George and Lakshya Sen stormed into the quarterfinals even as star doubles pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty besides Olympic bronze medallist Saina Nehwal and Ashmita Chalia crashed out on a poor day for India in the Thailand Open 2023, here on Thursday.

Kiran George, the Odisha Open 2022 Champion, continued his superb form as he reached his first quarterfinal at a BWF World Tour Super 500 event, beating world No. 26 Weng Hong Yang of China in straight games, 21-11, 21-19 in the Round of 16 clash. Kiran George had stunned third seed Shi Yu-Qi of China in the first round on Wednesday.

Lakshya Sen kept the Indian flag flying by sealing his berth in the quarterfinals. He upset fourth seed Li Shi Feng of China 21-17, 21-15 in a 49-minute clash.

But the big setback for India was the stunning defeat of the top-seeded men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who was stunned by Indonesia's Muhammad Shohibul Fikri and Maulana Bagas in three games, losing 26-24, 11-21, 17-21 in 62 minutes.

Saina Nehwal, the 2012 London Olympics bronze medallist, joined them on the sidelines as she lost to third seed He Bing Jiao of China, going down 11-21, 14-21 in a women's singles Round of 16 encounter.



Ashmita went down 21-18, 21-13 to former Olympic and World Champion Carolina Marin of Spain losing 18-21, 13-21.

In the men's singles clash, Kiran George took an early lead from 2-2 in the first game to go up 6-3 in the match played on

Court 2 at the Indoor Stadium Huamark in the Thai capital.

The Chinese shuttler, however, levelled scores at 8-8. But Kiran George went ahead again 12-9 and went on to win 21-11.

The second game was a neck-and-neck battle in which the 23-year-old Indian ranked 59th in the BWF Rankings, shot off to an early 5-2 lead but his Chinese

opponent caught up with him at 5-5. Lead changed hands at regular intervals as the players went up to 17-17.

Ashmita put up a good fight in the opening game of her Round of 16 clash with Marin, who surged to a 5-0 lead. Ashmita reduced the margin to 4-5 and then 7-8 as she fought for each point. Marin won the next three

points (11-7) and then maintained a slight gap as she went on to extend it to 20-13. Ashmita saved five game points and made it 18-20 before Marin won the game 21-18.

In the second game, Marin won five points in a row from 5-4 to open up the lead and did not give the Indian shuttler many chances as she won the game and match at 21-13.

In men's doubles, Satwik and Chirag fought back from a 7-12 deficit in the first game to level barrow it down to 11-12 before the Indonesians surged to a 12-17 lead. Satwik and Chirag eventually caught up with them at 20-20. After a neck-and-neck battle for the next few points, the Indians, who had six game points, eventually won the game 26-24 to take a 1-0 lead.

Playing against He Bing Jiao, Saina conceded an early 0-4 lead and though the Indian fought back to make it 2-4, the Chinese shuttler won the next five points to make it 9-2. She did not allow Saina any more chances of coming close as she won the opening game 21-11.

He Bing Jiao opened up a 9-2 lead in the second game before Saina reduced the margin to 10-8. The Chinese shuttler maintained her upper hand as she won the second game 21-14 and sealed a comfortable victory.

## Key for both teams will be to dismiss Kohli and Smith as early as possible: Finch

Team Absolute | Bangkok

Kiran George and Lakshya Sen stormed into the quarterfinals even as star doubles pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty besides Olympic bronze medallist Saina Nehwal and Ashmita Chalia crashed out on a poor day for India in the Thailand Open 2023, here on Thursday.

Kiran George, the Odisha Open 2022 Champion, continued his superb form as he reached his first quarterfinal at a BWF World Tour Super 500 event, beating world No. 26 Weng Hong Yang of China in straight games, 21-11, 21-19 in the Round of 16 clash. Kiran George had stunned third seed Shi Yu-Qi of China in the first round on Wednesday.

Lakshya Sen kept the Indian flag flying by sealing his berth in the quarterfinals. He upset fourth seed Li Shi Feng of China 21-17, 21-15 in a 49-minute clash.

But the big setback for India was the stunning defeat of the top-seeded men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who was stunned by Indonesia's Muhammad Shohibul Fikri and Maulana Bagas in three games, losing 26-24, 11-21, 17-21 in 62 minutes.

Saina Nehwal, the 2012 London Olympics bronze medallist, joined them on the sidelines as she lost to third seed He Bing Jiao of China, going down 11-21, 14-21 in a women's singles Round of 16 encounter.

Ashmita went down 21-18, 21-13 to former Olympic and World

Champion Carolina Marin of Spain losing 18-21, 13-21.

In the men's singles clash, Kiran George took an early lead from 2-2 in the first game to go up 6-3 in the match played on Court 2 at the Indoor Stadium Huamark in the Thai capital.

The Chinese shuttler, however, levelled scores at 8-8. But Kiran George went ahead again 12-9 and went on to win 21-11.

The second game was a neck-and-neck battle in which the 23-year-old Indian ranked 59th in the BWF Rankings, shot off to an early 5-2 lead but his Chinese opponent caught up with him at 5-5. Lead changed hands at regular intervals as the players went up to 17-17.

Ashmita put up a good fight in the opening game of her Round of 16 clash with Marin, who surged to a 5-0 lead. Ashmita reduced the margin to 4-5 and then 7-8 as she fought for each point. Marin won the next three points (11-7) and then maintained a slight gap as she went on to extend it to 20-13. Ashmita saved five game points and made it 18-20 before Marin won the game 21-18.

In the second game, Marin won five points in a row from 5-4 to open up the lead and did not give the Indian shuttler many chances as she won the game and match at 21-13.

In men's doubles, Satwik and Chirag fought back from a 7-12 deficit in the first game to level barrow it down to 11-12 before the Indonesians surged to a 12-17 lead. Satwik and Chirag eventually caught up with them at 20-20.

## Rybakina overcomes Noskova to reach third round



Team Absolute | Paris

No.4 seed Elena Rybakina booked her place in the French Open third round for a third straight year, defeating Linda Noskova 6-3, 6-3 in 1 hour

and 26 minutes, here on Thursday.

The result was Rybakina's eighth straight victory following her first WTA 1000 clay-court title in Rome two weeks ago. The reigning Wimbledon champion

extended her overall 2023 record to 32-7, also including the Indian Wells title and Australian Open final on hard courts.

The 18-year-old Noskova made her tour-level debut exactly 12 months ago after qualifying for Roland Garros 2022. A year later, she has risen to World No.50 after an impressive transition to the WTA Tour, including a run to her first

final in Adelaide this January.

Having dealt with Noskova's power, Rybakina will next face a very different test in the form of Sara Sorribes Tormo, who defeated Petra Martic 6-4, 6-1 in 1 hour and 29 minutes.

Sorribes Tormo won her only previous encounter with Rybakina 6-1, 3-6, 6-2 in the third round of Miami 2021.

### GAEL MONFILS WITHDRAWS WITH WRIST INJURY

Paris: Gael Monfils withdraws from French Open with a wrist injury, calling his first-round triumph his top win at Roland-Garros.

The announcement came less than 24 hours after the Frenchman produced a magical late-night performance on Court Philippe-Chatrier in the first round against Sebastian Baez.

While he had recovered well from the physical effort of Tuesday's extraordinary three-hour 47-minute first-round rollercoaster, the flare-up of an injury to his left wrist has left him unable to continue.

Monfils was scheduled to play sixth seed Holger Rune on Thursday evening for a place in the third round. The injury is to the TFCC of his left wrist. Monfils is unsure exactly how long he will be out but is hopeful of returning for the grass-court season.

## Sevilla overpower Roma in penalties to lift seventh Europa League title

Team Absolute | Budapest (Hungary)

Top Spanish club Sevilla made a remarkable comeback to clinch the Europa League title, with goalkeeper Bono thwarting two attempts to ensure a 4-1 victory in the penalty shootout at the Puskas Arena in Budapest on Thursday.

The opening period proved challenging for both sides, marked by numerous fouls that disrupted the rhythm of the match.

The first genuine scoring opportunity came 12 minutes into the match when Roma's Leonardo Spinazzola tested Sevilla's goalkeeper with a shot from the edge of the penalty area, reports Xinhua.

Despite being Europa League record winners, Sevilla struggled to penetrate Roma's staunch defense.

Roma eventually broke the deadlock when Gianluca Mancini's through ball, following a counterat-



tack, allowed Paulo Dybala to strike past Bono into the far post corner, 35 minutes into the game.

Sevilla rebounded well and nearly levelled the score before the break, but Fernando's header from Ivan Rakitic's corner kick sailed just over the target.

Rakitic, the veteran midfielder, remained a central figure, rattling the woodwork with a 20-meter hammer in the closing stages of the first half.

The momentum shifted after the restart, as Sevilla's Alex Telles squandered another promising attempt from a favourable position.

Sevilla's persistence paid off when Mancini inadvertently deflected a dangerous cross from Jesus Navas Gonzalez into his own goal, equalizing the score 10 minutes into the second half.

Roma nearly reclaimed the lead in the 67th minute, but Bono deftly defused Tammy Abraham's close-range shot.

A potential penalty for Sevilla was revoked by referee Anthony Taylor after a review 10 minutes later.

The final minutes saw both teams trading attacks, as Bono denied Andrea Belotti from close range following a free kick. Conversely, Suso and Fernando couldn't bypass Rui Patricio in quick succession at the other end of the pitch.

After a goalless extra time, the match was decided by penalty kicks. Sevilla converted all attempts, while Mancini and Roger Ibanez were denied by Bono.

## Axar Patel confident of India shifting into top gear for WTC final

Team Absolute | Dubai

With IPL fever only just settling down, India now have little time to switch gears for a format change with the ICC World Test Championship Final starting on June 7.

Several members of the India squad have already reached England and kicked off their preparations for the big finale at the Arundel Cricket Club.

While they managed to catch a glimpse of the thrilling IPL 2023 final, all-rounder Axar Patel, who



was among the training group, confirmed that their preparations were

going well for the WTC showdown against Australia.

The switch between formats in a short timeframe comes with its challenges, but Axar revealed that the preparations had begun during the IPL season itself where they practiced with the red ball.

"We knew about this before the start of IPL," Axar told the ICC.

"So even during the IPL, it was discussed that we will bowl with the red ball. We had red balls, so we were using them. You know when and how to play, how much time you have. This mental switch from

white ball to red ball is obviously tough, but we have enough time."

"Those who did not qualify (for IPL Playoffs) got more time. So I don't think there will be many problems because we have had a good time to prepare."

While India play their red-ball games at home with the SG ball, the WTC Final will have the Dukes ball which is used in English conditions. Axar stated that they were practicing with the Dukes ball during the IPL, but maintained that the focus was on hitting the right spot irrespective of the ball used.

## Stokes' ability to fully fulfil that all-rounder function is absolutely critical: Michael Atherton



Team Absolute | London

Former captain Michael Atherton said it would be a big blow for England if skipper Ben Stokes' knee problem limits his ability to bowl during the upcoming Ashes, saying the allrounder's role he fulfils in the side is absolutely critical. Stokes suffered a flare-up of a left knee injury during the drawn Test series in New Zealand in February. Since then, he has only bowled just one over in one of his two matches for Chennai Super Kings (CSK), in IPL 2023, where his appearances were limited due to various niggles.

Ahead of the one-off Test against Ireland at 'ord's, Stokes had said the left knee was in a much better position than it was in New Zealand and has given himself the best opportunity to play a role with the ball in England's home summer.

"Stokes' knee is a concern because of the balance of the side. He has asked for good, true pitches against Australia but if England only have four bowlers that puts a lot of work on those bowlers, one or two of whom (in James Anderson and Stuart Broad) are cracking on in years."

"Stokes' ability to fully fulfil that all-rounder function is absolutely critical. I wouldn't expect him to bowl too much in this Ireland game but hopefully, his knee will be okay come the Ashes."

## Mumbai City FC welcome back Juanm Cruz as goalkeeping coach for upcoming season

Mumbai: Mumbai City FC on Thursday announced the return of Spain's Juan Maria Cruz Arias as the goalkeeping coach for a second stint. The Spaniard was part of the club's coaching staff during the 2020-21 season, winning the League Winners' Shield and the ISL Trophy. The 55-year-old brings to Mumbai City FC his vast experience having previously coached at clubs like CD Vizcaya and CD Mirand's (Spain), Al Itihad (Saudi Arabia), Moghreb T'ouan (Morocco), Al Ahli SC and Umm Salal SC (Qatar) and most recently at fellow CFG club Sichuan Jiuniu in China. Cruz will join Des Buckingham's first team coaching staff along with Hiroshi Miyazawa (assistant coach), Anthony Fernandes (assistant coach) and Danny Deigan (strength & conditioning coach). Welcoming him back, Buckingham said, "With his vast coaching experience, Juanma is a great addition to our coaching staff. Everyone at Mumbai City FC who has worked with Juanma spoke highly of him and his familiarity with the Club, the players and the staff here will certainly be an advantage."

## Indian Golf Union approves MATI, the country's first Mid-Amateur Golf Tour

Team Absolute | New Delhi

To give a boost to amateur and recreational players in the country, the Indian Golf Union (IGU) has given sanction to the first Mid-Amateur Tour of India (MATI), which will be organised from October this year.

The Mid-Amateur Tour of India (MATI), the first structured tour for amateur golfers, will be conducted under the aegis of the Indian Golf Union (IGU), the governing body of golf in India.

The MATI is the brainchild of former senior sports jour-



nalist Robin Bose, co-founder and director of the promoting company the Golfinghub Media and Events Private Limited. While amateur golf has always been the stepping stone for those keen to pick up the sport as a profession, MATI opens a window for serious golfers in the age group of 35-54 years who have chosen to strike a balance between their work-space and competing on the golf course. It is also an opportunity for those who have been restricted to club events due to a lack of opportunities in this segment.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actor Vicky Kaushal and Sara Ali Khan are currently in the national capital to promote their upcoming film 'Zara Hatke Zara Bachke'.

The stars were photographed in the popular tourist flea market called the Janpath market, where the actress was seen getting pictured trying out jhumkas.

In one picture, Vicky and Sara are seen together smiling at the camera. Vicky is seen holding an earring while Sara leans to try it. The actor looks dapp-

per in casual wear paired with sunglasses while Sara kept it cool with Indian wear. The film, scheduled for a June 2 release, also features Rakesh Bedi, Anubha Fatehpuria, Neeraj Sood, Sharib Hashmi and Inaamul Haq in lead roles.

Helmed by Laxman Utekar, the film revolves around a middle-class couple struggling in their marriage.

The story revolves around two college sweethearts, Kapil and Saumya (Vicky and Sara), getting married. They are pretty much in love, but now they are each other's mortal enemies who wish to go their separate ways.

Vicky Kaushal, Sara Ali Khan go jhumka shopping in Delhi's Janpath market

## ACTING IS THE ONE TIME I FEEL MEDITATIVE: ANUPRIYA GOENKA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Anupriya Goenka is all set to reprise the role of Naina Nair in the second season of 'Asur: Welcome To The Dark Side'. She reflected on her own journey in the film industry as well as her personal experience working in this thriller show.

Reminiscing on what inspired her to transition from the corporate world to acting, Anupriya spoke about her immense love for the art and the zen effect it has on her.

"I am an overthinker and my mind goes on constantly talking. I feel acting is the one time when I feel meditative. Between action and cut, no matter what is happening in my life, I'm just there in the present moment."

"That is the most fulfilling feeling. It's almost as if you breathe through it (acting) and everything in life is justified for the purpose of acting - the emotions, the good, the bad. I have started searching for new experiences because I want to be a better performer and push myself."

Coming to her role as Naina, Anupriya also spoke about how closely she relates to the character.

"There is a lot of similarity between me and Naina. I relate to her in the sense that I'm also very strong-headed, I'm very opinionated, I don't shy away from my opinions but at the same time I'm extremely vulnerable sometimes, and I show my vulnerability too."

"I have my own struggles with right and wrong, my value systems. But through Naina, I was able to touch upon that part, that one can cross a line for what they believe in."



## Fashionably fearless

Nyrra goes on a shopping spree for reality show

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Pishachini' actress Nyrra M. Banerji went on a shopping spree to curate an edgy and chic wardrobe for her stint on the stunt-based reality show 'Khatron Ke Khiladi 13'.

From colourful athleisure to animal prints, Nyrra is all set to stun viewers with her bold fashion choices while taking on challenging stunts in breathtaking locations.

Nyrra said: "I am excited to showcase my unique style on 'Khatron Ke Khiladi 13' and make a statement with my fashion choices while taking on the most challenging stunts. I believe that fashion is not just about looking good, but also about reflecting one's personality and attitude."

She added: "I have curated a wardrobe that is both colourful and daring, with pieces that mirror my eclectic tastes and fearless spirit. From exquisite coats to stylish shoes, I have made sure that I have options for every occasion and every kind of weather. I am ready to stand out with every appearance and prove that fashion and fearlessness go hand in hand."



## Sonakshi has different plans for her birthday

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha, who has been receiving a lot of positive response for her work in the streaming series 'Dahaad', will be celebrating her birthday on Friday, June 2.

The actress has ditched her ritual of travelling on her birthday to an exotic location and will be spending the time with her family at her new home.

As per sources, Sonakshi has been working on decorating her new home for a while and the actress intends to continue the same on her special day with her close friends. The actress will also be taking some time off to have an interactive session with her fans and discuss environmental issues for World Environment day, a cause she closely relates to.

Meanwhile, 'Dahaad' which marked the OTT debut of Sonakshi, is being praised for its taut storytelling and the top-notch performances of its cast members. The 8-episode series is available to stream on Prime Video.



## Adah Sharma didn't drink water for 40 hours, shot in minus 16 degrees

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'The Kerala Story' actress Adah Sharma prepared in extreme conditions and did not even take a sip of water for 40 hours during the film's shoot.

Adah took to her social media to share some shocking pictures from the shoot of the 'The Kerala Story'.

She captioned the image: "Sunkissed, After and Before from #TheKeralaStory Secret to chapped cracked lips like these ... dehydrate for 40 hours in minus 16 degrees #sunkissedmakeup #adahsharma @makeupbyshyam P.S. the mattress was kept to practice the fall ... but we didn't use it #bruisedknees and chila hua elbows but uff all so worth it the last pic is a handful of coconut oil in the hair, safety pins and tight plaits." Adah said: "As an actor it is a pleasure to do stuff that will push me mentally and physically. I wanted to look as convincing as I could. I'm a big foodie and I usually drink five litres of water a day so it was difficult. But if you put your mind to it anything is possible."

A source said: "Adah wanted to look convincing so for the portions in Afghanistan where she runs away from the terrorist camp, to stay in character, she didn't drink water." "We shot in difficult conditions in -16 degrees and very very low oxygen. The unit members were calling sick but Adah managed well even without food and water."

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Ruchi Thakur