

# absolute india

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Rahul's convoy stopped by police at Manipur's Bishnupur

## CONG-BJP SPAR WORDS

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday visited relief camps in Imphal and Churachandpur, where displaced people took shelter after the ethnic violence broke out in Manipur on May 3. The Congress leader visited Churachandpur, one of the worst violence hit districts, and met the inmates in the relief camps there. After coming back to Imphal, he visited some relief camps in Imphal West District.

Imphal | Agencies

Congress leaders alleged that Manipur Police, under the instructions of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, on Thursday stopped party leader Rahul Gandhi from visiting Bishnupur district to meet the violence-affected people.

However, Bishnupur's Superintendent of Police Heisnam Balam Singh said that they cannot allow VIPs like Rahul Gandhi to visit in such a place where the militants create law and order problems and they use sophisticated arms and triggering IEDs. The Congress leaders were stopped by police at Bishnupur, around 20 km from Imphal.

After a few hours, Gandhi, who was accompanied by party General Secretary K.C. Venugopal and in-charge of several northeastern states, Ajay Kumar came back to the Imphal



airport and took a helicopter to Churachandpur, one of the worst violence hit hill districts. Immediately after his arrival on a two-day Manipur visit, he left for Bishnupur and Churachandpur districts but the police stopped his convoy in Bishnupur. Gandhi was scheduled to interact with the civil society organisations, tribal and non-tribal leaders, as well as prominent citizens in the two districts -- Bishnupur and Churachandpur. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge condemned the Manipur Police action.

"I came to listen to all my brothers and sisters of Manipur. People of all communities are being very welcoming and loving. It's very unfortunate that the government is stopping me. Manipur needs healing. Peace has to be our only priority."

Rahul Gandhi



"Rahul Gandhi's convoy in Manipur has been stopped by the police near Bishnupur. PM Modi has not bothered to break his silence on Manipur. He has left the state to fend for itself. Now, his double engine disastrous governments are using autocratic methods to stall a compassionate outreach by Rahul Gandhi."

Mallikarjun Kharge



"It is most unfortunate that the Modi Govt is preventing Rahul Gandhi from visiting relief camps and interacting with the people outside Imphal. His 2-day visit to Manipur is in the spirit of the Bharat Jodo Yatra. Why stop Rahul Gandhi's efforts to listen to all sections of the Manipuri society and provide a healing touch?"

Jairam Ramesh



"Gandhi was in a hurry to open the 'Shop of Love.' Exactly what we feared happened. People thronged the roads with placards asking Rahul Gandhi to go back. Due to heavy protests, his convoy had to be stopped at Vishnupur. If he had listened to us and travelled by helicopter, the situation would not have turned tense."

Sambit Patra



"He is no messiah of peace just a political opportunist, who wants to keep the pot boiling. His visit to Manipur is not borne out of concern for people but his own selfish political agenda. There is a reason no one trusts either him or the Congress."

Amit Malviya



Indian economy presents picture of resilience, robust financial system boosting growth: RBI document

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian economy presents a picture of resilience, supported by strong macroeconomic fundamentals, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) financial stability report has said.

The report, which is a half-yearly report card of financial institutions' health, while presenting an overview of the financial sector, noted: "Sustained growth momentum, moderating inflation and anchoring of inflation expectations, a narrowing current account deficit (CAD) and rising foreign exchange reserves, ongoing fiscal consolidation and a robust financial system are setting the economy on a path of sustained growth."

"Healthy balance sheets of banks and corporates are engendering a new credit and investment cycle. Strong revenue growth, higher profits and lower leverage are helping corporates to



improve their bottom lines," it added. Banks and non-bank financial intermediaries are posting strong earnings and robust credit growth with strengthening buffers, the report said. These improvements are brightening the prospects of the Indian economy, fortified by the rising pace, the RBI document added. However it cautioned at the same time, that the stability of the global financial system is tested by high inflation, tight financial conditions and banking system fragilities. Simultaneously, geopolitical tensions and economic fragmentation are threatening macroeconomic stability. Bouts of volatility surge through financial markets amidst rapid shifts in investor sentiments.

Bhim Army chief discharged from hospital, vows to continue fight

Saharanpur (UP): Bhim Army chief and President of Azad Samaj Party, Chandra Shekhar Azad, has been discharged from SBD Hospital in Saharanpur.

He was admitted here on Wednesday after armed men attacked his convoy and a bullet grazed his stomach.

Talking to reporters after coming out of the hospital, Chandra Shekhar said that the attack would not deter him from working on his mission which was to empower the weaker sec-



tions of society. "I am not going to give up my mission and those who attacked me should know that I will not bow to such tactics," he said.

US Supreme Court strikes down race-based affirmative action in college admissions

Yashwant Raj | Washington

In a landmark judgment, the US Supreme Court on Thursday declared race-based affirmative action in college enrollment unconstitutional.

The court held affirmative action violative of the US Constitution's 14th Amendment, which guarantees equal protection. All six conservative justices, including Chief Justice John Roberts, ruled to strike down affirmative action, while the three liberals ruled against.

The court's ruling came in a challenge to the race-based affirmative action by Harvard and University of North Carolina. "The student must be treated based on his or her experiences as an individual-not on the basis of race," Chief Justice Roberts wrote in the majority opinion. "Many universities



have for too long done just the opposite. And in doing so, they have concluded, wrongly, that the touchstone of an individual's identity is not challenges bested, skills built, or lessons learned but the color of their skin. Our constitutional history does not tolerate that choice." Roberts added that the court had previously "permitted race-based admissions only within the confines of narrow restrictions. University programs must comply with strict scrutiny, they may never use race as a stereotype or negative, and -- at some point -- they must end".

SWEETS EXCHANGED BY BSF, PAKISTAN RANGERS ON JAMMU BORDER ON EID

Jammu: The BSF and the Pakistani Rangers exchanged sweets on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha on Thursday at various border outposts of the Jammu Frontier in a very cordial atmosphere, officials said.

The BSF said the exchange of sweets was done all along the BoPs in Samba, Kathua, RS Pura, and Akhnoor border.

"BSF Jammu offered sweets to Rangers and Rangers also reciprocated the BSF gesture by offering sweets to them," the BSF said. "The BSF has always been on the forefront in creating a peaceful and congenial atmosphere on border while dominating the border effectively. Such gestures help build a peaceful atmosphere and cordial relationships on border between both border guarding forces."



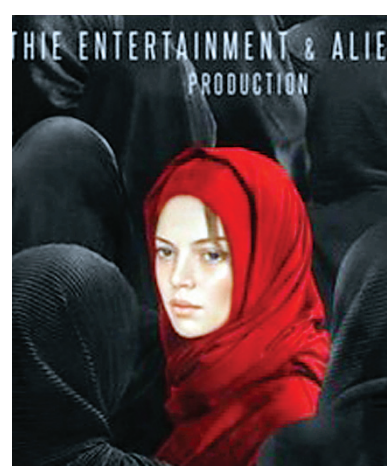
CBFC sets record straight on '72 Hoorain' trailer; says reports are 'misleading'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

"Misleading." That is how the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has described the storm in a teacup stirred by Ashoke Pandit with regard to the trailer of the upcoming film '72 Hoorain'.

The Board has officially stated that the reports about the film's trailer not getting a censor certificate are misleading as they don't paint a complete picture. The certification of the trailer is under due process.

The board officially communicated that contrary to reports, the film 'Bahattar Hoorain (72 Hoorain)' was granted 'A' certification on October 4, 2019. The certificate for the trailer of the film, directed by Sanjay Puran Singh



Chauhan, was applied for on June 19, 2023, and it is under due process.

Reports quoting Pandit, the co-producer, about the film's trailer being refused the censor certificate now seem like being a publicity stunt for the film before its release. The film tells the story of how brainwashing by terrorists is done. The Board said that the trailer has been examined in accordance with the Guidelines issued under Section 5B(2) of the Cinematograph Act, 1952.

"After this, the applicant was asked for requisite documentary submissions under intimation and upon receipt of the same, certification was granted subject to modifications," the Board said.

"A show-cause notice communicating the modifications was issued to the applicant/filmmaker on 27-6-2023 and the same is pending for the applicant's response/compliance," the Board added in its clarification.

Pawar shocker: Over 6,800 women-girls 'disappeared' in Maha in past one year

Pune | Agencies

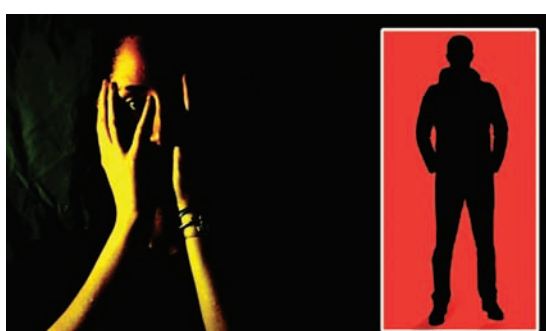
In a startling revelation, Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar on Thursday said that thousands of women or girls have 'disappeared' in Maharashtra in the past one year or so, raising serious questions on the law and order situation in the state.

"It has been one year since this new government (of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis) came to power in Maharashtra. The state is facing many issues, but law and order is at the top. Attacks on women and girls are the biggest concern and are increasing day by day everywhere," said Pawar.

Citing official figures collected from various municipal corporations, police commissionerates and rural police headquarters, he said that over 6,889 women/girls are missing in the past one year, May 2022-May 2023.

Reeling off specific details, Pawar said that in the first half of 2023, between Jan. 23-May 23, a total of 2,458 girls/women are mysteriously off the radar in four major municipalities of the state.

"This is a very serious matter... The state Home Minister should take measures for the safety of our daughters and sisters instead of just making statements. There is a need to trace them out and it's the government's responsibility to hand them over to their families," he demanded.



Pawar also slammed the ruling Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party regime - which will celebrate its first anniversary in office on Friday (June 30) - for the spate of riots that have erupted in different parts of the state in the past few months, on which the Maha Vikas Aghadi allies Congress and Shiv Sena-UBT have also raised questions in the past. Terming these as "planned", he contended that the riots broke out in Kolhapur, Ahmednagar, Akola and other places, and said it needs to be probed whether these clashes and disturbances were allegedly being engineered keeping in mind the upcoming civic, parliament and assembly elections.

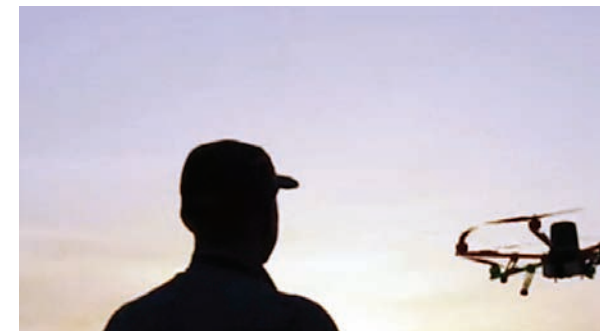
They comprise: 738 from Mumbai, 937 from Pune, 721 from Thane and 62 from Solapur, while the information on missing women/girls from the 10 other civic corporations was not available. From the state's 36 districts, a total of 4,431 females have disappeared from 14 districts of Amravati, Beed, Bhandara, Buldhana, Chandrapur, Dhule, Gondia, Jalgaon, Nandurbar, Nanded, Pune, Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Washim, as per the details from the local police. In the past one year -- May 2022-May 2023, a whopping 6,889 women/girls have gone missing in the state with no information on their whereabouts, said Pawar.

Chennai gets India's first Police Drone Unit

Chennai | Agencies

The Greater Chennai Police on Thursday launched the 'Police Drone Unit', touted as the first such in the country, for aerial surveillance over the Tamil Nadu capital.

The unit, which has a total of nine drones under three categories -- Quick Response Surveillance drones, heavy-lift multi-rotor drones, and Long Range Survey wing plane -- and 20 trained police personnel, was inaugurated by Tamil Nadu Director General of Police, C. Sylendra Babu. These drones are equipped with built-in artificial intelligence (AI) facilities and can be operated upto 10km from the ground station. Chennai City's Police Commissioner, Shankar Jaiswal, briefing media per-



sons, said that drones have thermal object imaging facility and will detect if any suspect has a knife or some other objects on his body.

He said that night patrolling will become much easier and based on information provided by drones, the suspects could be caught easily. He also said that drones will be used to monitor movements at isolated places

as well as uniting of anti-social elements.

The Commissioner also said that drones could be used to read the number plates of vehicles.

Sylendra Babu told media persons that deploying drone unit was an important milestone for the Tamil Nadu Police and added that the unit was established at a cost of Rs 3.6 crore.





# CONGRESS FAILED TO LAUNCH RAHUL GANDHI DESPITE TRYING FOR 20 YEARS: AMIT SHAH

Patna | Agencies

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday attacked Rahul Gandhi, saying that the Congress leader could not be launched in politics despite his party leaders making efforts for the last 20 years.

"Congress is a strange party where leaders are launched. I belong to a party where people launch the leaders, not the party. The Congress has been trying to launch Rahul 'Baba' (Rahul Gandhi) for the last 20 years. This time too the Congress is making unsuccessful attempt to launch Rahul 'Baba'," Shah said while addressing the Hunkar rally in Bihar's Lakhisarai district on Thursday.

"Recently, they held a meeting in Patna where the leaders tried to launch Rahul Gandhi. I want to tell them that he will fail again. The people of Bihar will not stand with corrupt people," Shah said.

"I want to appeal to the people of Bihar to make BJP victorious in all the 40 seats of the state in next year's Lok



Sabha elections. Narendra Modi will lead the BJP in 2024, will you not give him 40 seats," Shah asked the crowd, which replied in the affirmative. Attacking Bihar Chief Minister

Nitish Kumar at his Hunkar rally in the state's Lakhisarai, Amit Shah said, he was questioning those "who had given him his post." "Paltu Babu Nitish Kumar was asking

about what the Narendra Modi government has done in the last 9 years.. I want to ask Nitish Babu to give some respect to those who made you the Chief Minister of Bihar. You are asking questions to those who have given you the post of Chief Minister. "PM Narendra Modi has done many things for 70 crore poor people of the country. The Modi government has been working for the welfare of poor people, prestige and security of the country," Shah said.

"Nitish Kumar is asking about our work and I want to tell him that the Centre has given insurance for poor people up to Rs 5 lakh under Ayushman Bharat Yojana. We have constructed 75 lakh toilets in Bihar, and 37 lakh houses for poor people. Has Nitish Kumar given any house to the people of Bihar?" he asked.

"Nitish Kumar is not going to become the Prime Minister of the country. He is fooling Lalu Prasad Yadav. Nitish Kumar is sitting in the lap of the Congress. Nitish Kumar became a symbol of liquor, sand and Gundaraj in Bihar," Shah said.

# Delhi likely to witness light to moderate rain over next 5 days, says IMD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The national capital can expect a cloudy skies with light to moderate rainfall over the next five days, the India Meteorological Department said on Thursday.

The city on Thursday witnessed heavy rains in certain areas. The maximum temperature recorded was 34.2 degrees Celsius, three notches below normal, said the weather department's bulletin.

Following the heavy rainfall in Delhi and its surrounding regions, the weather department has also issued an 'Orange' alert for the city.

The maximum temperature for Friday is forecasted to reach around 36 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature is expected to settle at approximately 25 degrees Celsius. The IMD also predicted generally cloudy sky with light rain for Friday.



The Air Quality Index in Delhi was "moderate" category at 101 on Thursday, according to the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR). Numerous areas experienced waterlogging and severe traffic congestion after heavy rain lashed the national capital on Thursday morning.

A senior traffic cop said that a call was received regarding waterlogging near Jamia metro station. Similar complaints poured

in from Sarai Kale Khan, South Extension, Geeta Colony Ring Road leading to Akshardham Temple, and various other areas within the city. Additionally, officials have confirmed that a tree has been uprooted in the Kali Bari Marg in central Delhi.

Traffic was moving at a snail's pace at ITO, Akshardham, Sarai Kale Khan, Azadpur flyover, Mehrauli among others. An 'orange' alert has also been issued in the city by the weather department.

# AAP claims L-G didn't approve Cabinet reshuffle, calls it rumour

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) claimed on Thursday that the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, V.K. Saxena, did not give approval for the proposed Cabinet reshuffle.

AAP said that rumours are being spread about Cabinet reshuffle, as it urged the media to avoid falling for them.

Earlier in the day, it was reported that the L-G has approved the Cabinet reshuffle proposal sent to him by the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Delhi. Consequently, it was reported that AAP MLA Atishi has been allotted the of finance and revenue



portfolios, as well as given the responsibility of the public relations department previously held by Kailash Gahlot. If the L-G office insists on standing by its baseless claims, it should produce a

copy of the order of approval or any other relevant evidence to back its claim, AAP said. No one from the L-G office was available for comments on the matter till the time of filing this report.

# LONDON GOT PAINTED IN THE COLORS OF "RAJASTHANI GHOOMAR"

Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

Rajasthan Charitable Trust, UK organized 'Ghoomar' event at Feltham, London. The overseas Indian brothers participated in it with enthusiasm. This program is to save and relive the beautiful art and culture of Rajasthan and India.

Trustee Surjit Singh Dhaka said that the aim of Rajasthan Charitable Trust is to reach every corner of India in such a way that no child of the country remains deprived of proper opportunities despite education and ability, only because of lack of funds. Along with this, the Trust does this program to keep alive its invaluable culture and art among the overseas Indian community living in the UK. Women danced on Ghoomar in the programme and People couldn't control themselves to dance fiercely on the beat of Chang.

The very talk of our motherland fills the hearts of the Indians settled far away from their land. Here the melodious tune played by the



Rajasthani brass band and folk artist Sanjay's style and melodious tunes excited the audience.

People relished the delicious Rajasthani food 'Dal Bati Churma' by 'Ketraj' team of Hanwant Singh Rajpurohit. On this occasion, Trustee Surjit Singh Dhaka, Suresh Kumar, Anil Kulhar, Charulata Rajpurohit and Rachna Dhaka made the program

more special.

The event got a total of 2000 registrations, registration was completed on behalf of Amit Kumar Jhahadia, Kamal Saharan and Narendra Mandiwal. Rachna Dhaka, Achal Soni and Mukta Chowdhary did the stage operation. Monika Dotsara, Surya Soni and other Rajasthani in the UK

put on a mesmerizing performance.

Sponsors for the successful event were Sumit Agarwal, DNS Accountants, Anil Malik from One Financial Solutions, Binu Koshy, SBI UK. Charity partners were Ketraj, Osterley Park Hotel, SRKPS Jhunjhunu, Kurjaan Music, and Dr. Sangeeta Dahiya of Joni Consultancy UK.

# Bengaluru techie accuses drug addict hubby of sexually harassing her with friends

Bengaluru | Agencies

In a startling development, a techie in Bengaluru has lodged police complaint against her husband for sexual harassing her along with his friends, police said on Thursday.

She has told police that her husband, a drug addict along with his friends, made her private videos and sexually harassed her.

The complaint has been lodged in HSR Layout police station in Bengaluru.

Police said that the accused husband was identified as Akhilesh Dharmaraj, a native of Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada, and the couple met through a matrimonial site in 2019.

After their marriage, the woman from Vasanth Nagar locality shifted to HSR Layout with the accused husband. Initially, the accused was well



behaved but later the victim came to know that he is a drug addict. The accused allegedly brought ganja to home and started smoking in front of her. When questioned on this, he tor-

mented her and also started bringing his friends home and held ganja parties at his residence. The victim had told police that the accused's friends also sexually harassed her.

The victim had come back to her parent's residence not able to take sexual harassment by husband and his friends. The accused, with his friends, had then come to her parents place and threatened her to come back to him. They had also blackmailed her that if she revealed anything happened to her, she would be finished off.

The victim had also alleged that the accused husband had installed CCTVs in the bedroom and bathroom. When questioned on this, he had assaulted her.

He had threatened that he would make her private videos public.

The techie has lodged a complaint with Subramanyapura police station and alleged that the police have not initiated action against the accused persons. Police said that they have taken up the investigation.

# Ashok Gehlot fractures toe, advised week's rest

Jaipur | Agencies

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot fractured his toe on Thursday following which he was rushed to the Sawai Man Singh Hospital (SMSH), where the doctors discharged him after an hour of examination and treatment.

The Chief Minister has been advised complete rest for a week.

As per sources, Gehlot suffered the injury after being pricked by a sharp object, which uprooted a nail on his left foot besides causing a hairline fracture on the other foot. Due to the injury, there is a possibility that all his programmes and tours scheduled over the next one week will get cancelled.

Gehlot suffered the injury at around 6 p.m. on Thursday, following which he was rushed to the emergency ward of SMSH, where the doctors conducted all the routine checkups, including X-ray. Releasing a health bulletin, the Principal of SMSH, Rajeev Bagrahata, said: "Plastic surgeon Rakesh Jain has fixed and joined the nail of Chief Minister's left foot which



was uprooted. A strap has been tied on it. The CM has also told about the injury in the right leg, which has been shown to the orthopedic. He has advised the Chief Minister to take rest for seven days after X-ray. The Chief Minister's checkup will be done again after seven days. State Congress President Govind Singh Dotasra, PHED Minister Mahesh Joshi and other leaders also reached the hospital on getting the news of Chief Minister's injury. Gehlot's wife Sunita Gehlot, daughter-in-law Himanshi Gehlot and granddaughter also reached the hospital.

# NINE BUSES GUTTED IN FIRE AT RANCHI BUS STAND



**Ranchi:** At least nine buses were gutted in a fire at Khadgarha bus stand in Ranchi on Thursday, an official said.

The incident took place at Khadgarha bus stand in Kantatoli, Ranchi at around 12 p.m.

At first, five buses caught fire. After some time, the fire spread to four more buses. Although, no casualties were reported, police said.

The buses parked at the bus stand suddenly caught fire. Locals tried to douse the fire but flames spread fast and engulfed many vehicles.

The fire tenders were rushed to the spot to put off the fire but by then the buses were completely gutted. The cause of the fire was not known. Short-circuit is suspected to have caused the fire, the police said.

# Monsoon advances further in the country, heavy to very heavy rainfall likely in several states

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Conditions are favourable for further advance of Southwest Monsoon into remaining parts of the country including parts of Rajasthan and Haryana and Punjab, during the next two days, the India Meteorological Department said on Thursday.

In a statement, it said that north-west India is expected to experience light to moderate rainfall, ranging from fairly widespread to widespread, over the next three days.

"There is a likelihood of isolated heavy rainfall in Himachal Pradesh and Haryana. East Rajasthan will likely experience this weather pattern till July 3, while Uttarakhand and west Rajasthan may encounter it on June 30," the IMD said.

In central India, there will be light to moderate rainfall with fairly widespread to widespread coverage. "Isolated heavy to very heavy falls are expected in Madhya Pradesh over next two days," it predicted.

The IMD said that west India



should anticipate light to moderate rainfall, ranging from fairly widespread to widespread, in the coming five days.

"Konkan & Goa and the Ghat areas of central Maharashtra are likely to experience isolated heavy

to very heavy rainfall during this period. Gujarat can expect the same weather pattern over the next two days," it said.

In east and adjoining northeast India, there will be fairly widespread to widespread light to mod-

erate rainfall.

"Sub-Himalayan West Bengal & Sikkim, Assam & Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh are expected to have isolated heavy to very heavy falls over the next five days. Gangetic West Bengal may experience isolated heavy rainfall on June 30 while Bihar should expect it on June 30 and July 3," it said.

The IMD further said that south India will likely experience light to moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall.

"Kerala and Mahe and coastal and south interior Karnataka can anticipate this weather pattern over the next five days," said the weather department. Additionally, there may be isolated heavy rainfall in coastal Karnataka and Kerala during this period.

"On July 2 and 3, coastal Andhra Pradesh may experience isolated heavy rainfall, while south interior Karnataka and Tamil Nadu should expect it on July 3. There is also a possibility of isolated very heavy rainfall occurring in coastal Karnataka and Kerala on July 3," it added.

# MUMBAI DCP, SUSPENDED 15 MONTHS AGO FOR ALLEGED EXTORTION, REINSTATED

**Mumbai:** The Maharashtra government has decided to reinstate IPS officer Saurabh Tripathi who was suspended in March 2022 after his name cropped up in an alleged extortion case, officials said here on Thursday.

Tripathi, who was the Mumbai Deputy Commissioner of Police (II) had been accused of extortion charges by the influential Bhuleswar Angadia Association (the traditional personal couriers who ferry cash, jewelry, diamonds or other valuables to different parts of the country). Following the complaint, two policemen were booked and a FIR was filed against them by the LT Marg Police Station in February 2022, on charges of extortion, robbery, wrongful confinement, etc, and subsequently Tripathi's name was added to the FIR, resulting in his suspension.

Thereafter, Tripathi - who had gone underground for some time and a look out circular issued against him - had pleaded for reinstatement in service twice.

However, his requests were rejected and he made a third appeal recently citing a Supreme Court ruling that an officer can't be kept under suspension for more than three months. Last week, the state government's Suspension Review Committee headed by Chief Secretary Manoj Saunik met and decided to revoke Tripathi's suspension, and conveyed the same to the Home Department.





## PM Modi to visit Shahdol on July 1 to take part in various programmes

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Shahdol district in Madhya Pradesh on July 1 to take part in various programmes, including the culmination of 'Rani Durgavati Gaurav Yatra' and launch the National Sickle Cell Anemia Elimination Mission, a BJP functionary said.

He is also scheduled to kickstart distribution of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) cards, said Vishnu Dutt Sharma, MP unit president of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The prime minister was earlier scheduled to visit Shahdol on June 27 for these events, but his visit was postponed in view of heavy rainfall warning, Sharma told reporters.



PM Modi, however, visited Bhopal that day, where he physically and virtually flagged off five Vande Bharat trains, and also addressed BJP workers. The prime minister's visit

to Shahdol would be his second visit to the state this week.

Elaborate arrangements are being made to welcome PM Modi in Shahdol, Sharma added.

## MP govt approves 8 new medical colleges, slashes price of 'Deendayal Thali' to Rs 5

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet led by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday approved six proposals, including construction of eight new medical colleges and slashing the price of 'Deendayal Thali', a subsidised food scheme.

The new medical colleges will be set up in Khargone, Sidhi, Balaghat, Bhind and Dhar districts, among others.

At present, Madhya Pradesh has 13 government-run medical colleges, including the biggest and oldest Hamidia Medical College in Bhopal.

In another significant decision, Chief Minister Chouhan's cabinet has decided that people will be made available food pack 'Deendayal Thali' at Rs five instead of Rs 10. The BJP-led Madhya Pradesh gov-



ernment had launched the 'Deendayal Antyodaya Raso Scheme' to provide meals at a subsidised rate to underprivileged people in 2017. The scheme was halted during the Congress government in

2019. Chouhan re-introduced it after the BJP government came to power again in 2020, however, the price of the food scheme was increased to Rs 10 from Rs five. Now, the government

has approved the proposal to reduce its price and rename the scheme as 'Mama Thali', however, the cabinet disagreed with this proposal.

"There was a proposal to change the name 'Deendayal Thali' into 'Mama Thali', which was disapproved. The scheme will function with its old name and the price has been reduced to half," Chouhan said after the cabinet meeting was concluded. The cabinet has approved Rs 1335.20 crore for 33 'CM Rise' schools to be built across Madhya Pradesh.

Apart from this, the state government gave its approval to following decisions such as Rs 24,000 crore subsidy to the State Electricity department, of which Rs 18,000 crore is reserved for farmers. It has also sanctioned Rs 1,700 crore under the CM Infrastructure scheme to boost the development works in civic bodies.

## MP GOVT TO INCLUDE SAVARKAR'S BIOGRAPHY IN SCHOOL SYLLABUS

▶ THE RULING BJP IN MADHYA PRADESH HAS DECIDED TO INCLUDE VINYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR'S BIOGRAPHY AS A COMPULSORY SUBJECT FOR STUDENTS OF THE STATE BOARD.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

State Education Minister Inder Singh Parmar said the government has decided to include biographies of true heroes and the new syllabus will include Veer Savarkar, Bhagavad Gita Sandesh, Lord Parshuram, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru, and others.

The minister said Savarkar is one of those revolutionaries who have been imprisoned twice in one life.

He further said that Veer Savarkar was the first writer who called the movement of 1857 as freedom struggle, otherwise, people used to call it Ghadar.



"Veer Savarkar has an irreplaceable contribution to India's independence and he should be honored in society. But unfortunately, the great revolutionaries of India were not given a place in the pages of history," Parmar added.

Meanwhile, he criticised the Congress claim the true revolutionaries were not given enough space in school syllabus in the past several decades. "In 2019, a book, based on biography of Veer Savarkar was distributed in some schools, but the Kamal Nath led Congress government had suspended the school principals," he claimed.

The BJP government's this decision is likely to spark political controversy in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh as the Congress has objected the proposal.

Congress MLA Arif Masood talking to the press on Thursday said, he would oppose the government's decision.

"It is unfortunate that they want to include Savarkar. He apologized to the British and including him in the syllabus is an insult to freedom fighters," Masood said.

## It is necessary for goons and miscreants to have fear of police and general public should have faith in the police: CM Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan reviewed the law and order situation in Indore this morning. CM Chouhan instructed to take the strictest action against goons, miscreants and anti-social elements. He said that. It is necessary for the general public to have faith in the police. He said that activities like consuming liquor and intoxication in public places would not be tolerated. Immediate action should be taken against the persons involved in such activities.

Additional Chief Secretary Home Rajesh Rajoura, Director General of Police



Sudhir Saxena, ADG Intelligence Adarsh Katiyar, OSD to Chief Minister Anshuman Singh and other officers were present in the meeting held at the CM's Residence Samatva Bhavan

office. Indore Commissioner Pawan Sharma, Police Commissioner Makrand Deoskar, Collector T. Ilaya Raja and district administration officials attended the meeting virtually.

## CM Chouhan plants Banyan, Kachnar and Moulshree saplings



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Banyan, Kachnar and Moulshree in the garden located at Shyamla Hills. Along with CM Chouhan, Shubham Singh

planted saplings on his birthday with his mother Manju Rajput. Sameer Prasad and Sandeep also planted saplings on their birthdays. President of Janpad Panchayat Alot District Ratlam Shri Kalu Singh Parihar, Member of District Panchayat Ratlam

Ramesh Malviya and public representatives Gopal, Dilip Singh Rathore, Mangu Singh, Krishna Chandra Sisodia, social worker Pankaj Singh Tekam, Pooja Devi, Sonam Maravi, Pragati Srivastava and Manju Singh participated.

## Poster war in MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Amid ongoing poster war between the BJP and Congress in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh, digital payments company PhonePe has objected to the use of its logo in the posters warning of legal action.

In a statement, PhonePe has objected to the unauthorised usage of its brand logo, by any third party, be it political or non-political.

"We are not associated with any political campaign or party," it said. "PhonePe logo is a registered trademark of our company and any unauthorised use of PhonePe's intellectual property rights will invite legal action. We humbly request @INCMP to remove the posters and banners featuring our brand logo and colour."

Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra on Thursday said the government will take action on the matter, if PhonePe lodges the complaint. The minister claimed that objectionable posters of CM Chouhan were put up by Congress workers.

"Congress is playing dirty politics



to hide its internal conflict. Congress workers were seen putting up posters in Chhindwara, Gwalior, Narsinghpur, Bhopal and other places. CCTV footage revealed that Congress workers have put up these objectionable posters," Narottam Mishra said while talking to the media persons on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh Police on Wednesday filed a case

against unidentified persons in connection with objectionable posters featuring Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan which have emerged in Gwalior.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Rajesh Singh Chandel stated that a case has been registered under the relevant Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections at the Padoa police station following a complaint regarding the

objectionable posters of the chief minister.

The accused in the FIR have not been identified and further investigation was underway, he added.

The posters featuring a QR code and a picture of Chouhan with the message: "50% Lao, Kam Karao" (bring 50 per cent and get the work done) along with the name of a leading online payment app, PhonePe, have come up in several cities of Madhya Pradesh, including Gwalior, in the last few days.

Poster war between Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and state Congress chief Kamal Nath has escalated ahead of the Assembly polls.

Objectionable posters of Chouhan and Kamal Nath were put up with QR codes in Bhopal last week, and have sprouted across the state. At first, the objectionable posters of Kamal Nath were put up at market premises in Bhopal, in which he was accused of "corruption" during his 15-month Congress government in Madhya Pradesh. Next morning, similar posters of CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan were put up in various places.

## MP Shocker: Father declares daughter dead due to inter-faith marriage

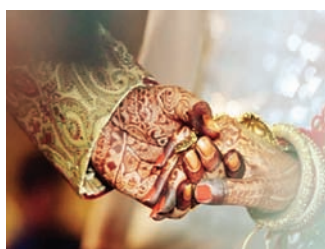
Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a shocking incident in Madhya Pradesh, a father declared his daughter dead after she married a man belonging to a different religion. More shocking was that the father took his daughter to a police station and covered her with white cloth - symbolising 'kafan' - used for wrapping a dead body.

The incident was reported from Mandsaur district last week. In a viral video which surfaced on social media, the father could be seen covering his daughter with white cloth. He could be heard saying, "She married a Muslim man, which is embarrassing for the family. She is dead for us from today."

Later, Mandsaur district SP Anurag Sujania suspended assistant sub-inspector and two constables who were present on duty at the Nahargarh police station, where the incident took place.

The police said that the family of the woman had lodged a missing complaint. She was later traced and called to record her statement on June 25. The father



also came to the police station and covered his daughter with a white cloth, declaring her dead.

According to the police, in her statement, the woman claimed that she converted to Islam and got married to Sahil Mansoori, a resident of Sanjeet Naka, Mandsaur.

A similar incident was reported a couple of weeks back when upset over their daughter marrying a man from a different religion, the parents performed her last rites on the bank of Narmada river in Jabalpur district. The family performed 'pind-dan' and 'mrityu bhoj' in the name of the girl who was alive. The family also distributed condolence cards to inform the relatives about the 'death' of their daughter on.

## CONGRESS LEADER PHOOL SINGH BAIIRIYA MAKES DEROGATORY REMARKS AGAINST MP HOME MINISTER

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bhopal: Congress leader Phool Singh Baiiriyaa made derogatory remarks against senior BJP leader and Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra. He challenged the latter to win Datia seat in the upcoming assembly election this year.

Baiiriyaa, a senior politician, who had shifted from BSP to the Congress a couple of years back, said, "If his (Mishra) father's blood is running in his veins, win the upcoming elections." He alleged that in the last assembly elections, the Congress lost Datia seat by close margin because police personnel, who were on duty, had captured the booths.

"I challenge Narottam Mishra that if he is the son of father, win this election. The Congress will form the government in Madhya Pradesh and he will face dire consequences for his sins," Baiiriyaa said while addressing the Mandalam sector Congress meeting in Bhandar block of Datia district on Thursday. Dalit leader Baiiriyaa is known for his bold remarks on political opponents and had often hit the headlines in the past also. For instance, earlier in April this year, he had said that if the BJP wins more than 50 seats in upcoming assembly elections, then he would blacken his face at Rajbhavan in Bhopal.



## Union Minister Patel To Give Up Damoh Police's Security To Protest FIR Against His Loyalist In Suicide Case

Team Absolute | Damoh

Union minister Prahlad Patel on Thursday announced to give up the security cover provided to him by the Damoh police in Madhya Pradesh to register his protest over the FIR filed against his loyalist in connection with the suicide of a man.

Vikram Rohit, a salesman of a ration shop in Damoh allegedly committed suicide five days back. The police have registered a case against Yashpal Thakur, Patel's representative in Damoh Municipality, in this connection, officials said. Patel, who is Minister of State for Food Processing Industries and Jal Shakti, represents the Damoh Lok Sabha constituency.

'Damoh Police Took Action in Haste'

Talking to reporters here, the minister said, "My sympathy is with the young man who committed suicide. But those people who frame false cases or get such cases framed to mount pressure should hear it carefully that their plans won't succeed." "I personally feel that the Damoh police took action in haste. I am against the Superintendent of Police and the action. Yashpal (Thakur) is



my worker and a responsible public representative. Names of others have also figured in it (complaint). My name is also there, so I should also be charged," he said.

"Will not avail any services of Damoh Police" "I am with them at all costs. I had said that a detailed investigation should be carried out, but the police acted in haste without a probe by a handwriting expert. Police should not take such an action. I strongly oppose it," he said.

The minister said that until justice was meted out, he would not use the services of the Damoh police. "I will not avail any services of the Damoh police. Today itself, I am giving up their security cover. Except for my private security, no personnel of the Damoh police will be posted at my bungalow or with me," the minister said.

## "LAW MUST BE SAME FOR ALL CITIZENS," SCINDIA SUPPORTS PM'S CALL FOR UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

Team Absolute | Gwalior

Gwalior: Extending full support to PM Modi's call for Uniform Civil Code, Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has said law should be same for all the citizens of the country.

"In our country, where every individual is equal, therefore policies too should be uniform," Scindia said. Listing achievements of the Prime Minister Modi to encourage people to vote for BJP in the upcoming assembly elections, Scindia said, "PM Modi's tenure has witnessed remarkable achievements in areas that remained unresolved for 70 years, such as the Triple Talaq ban, abrogation of Article 370, and now the establishment of a Uniform Civil Code. PM Narendra Modi has demonstrated the ability to accomplish the seemingly impossible."

He asserted that Shivraj-led govt turned MP from power deficit to power surplus state. The combination of PM Modi in centre and Shivraj in MP will take the country and state to new heights. Scindia added, "Opposition leaders Disappear After Elections" Furthermore, as Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal embarks on his tour to the Gwalior-Chambal region, Scindia remarked that politicians only appear for a few months every five years and then disappear. Scindia further highlighted that a vote for the Congress signifies a vote for corruption, while a vote for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) signifies a vote for a developed state.







EDITOR'S SPECS

Scientists find gene preventing bird flu virus from spreading to humans

An international team of scientists has identified a gene that is preventing the bird flu viruses from spilling over into humans. Scientists led by the MRC-University of Glasgow Centre for Virus Research (CVR) found that *BTN3A3* is commonly expressed in human airways, as a key human defence against avian flu. Avian influenza A virus, also commonly referred to as bird flu, primarily spreads among wild birds such as ducks. Since 2022 there has been a rise in bird flu cases around the world in both domestic and wild birds. The recent outbreak of avian influenza A (H5N1) virus has killed a record number of birds and also spread to otters, sea lions, foxes, dolphins and seals, cats among others. Scientists expect that bird flu that can cross the species barrier is expected to cause the next pandemic. Although rare, influenza A viruses have occasionally infected humans. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), from 2003 to 2023, a total of 873 human cases of infection with influenza A (H5N1) and 458 deaths have been reported globally from 21 countries. In the case of H7N9 virus, which since 2013 has infected more than 1,500 humans with 40 per cent case fatality rate, the team found these strains have a genetic mutation that allows them to 'escape' the blocking effects of the *BTN3A3* gene. The team also found that all the human influenza pandemics, including the devastating 1918-19 global flu pandemic and the swine flu pandemic in 2009 were caused by influenza viruses that were resistant to *BTN3A3*. As a result, this study suggests that having resistance to this gene may be a key factor in whether any flu strain has human pandemic potential.

# DEMYSTIFYING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

D.C. Pathak

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the new gift of (IT) that enables the handling of data - created and stored in the binary of computer language - with a speed that surpassed the human capacity for collation and analysis.

Just as IT made human processing 'smart', AI makes the Technology itself 'smart' - being 'smart' basically means being able to enhance 'productivity' per unit of 'resource' whether it is the 'human' resource or 'time'.

The first thing to know about AI is that it is an advanced application of IT but within the fundamental constraint of an 'input-output' process - which is a sober reminder that it was not a panacea for all human problems.

The progress is by way of a phenomenal increase in the capacity to analyse data but the basis of that exceptional performance was still the use of 'keywords' or 'patterns' fed into the computer system as was happening earlier - the only difference being that this capacity-building required the instrumentality of supercomputers.

A supercomputer comprises a very large number of processor chips that can perform billions or trillions of computations per second. Various facets of AI such as 'Machine learning', 'Deep learning', 'Natural language process' or 'Computer vision' are all dependent on the same input-output principle.

To the 'data processing' capacity is now added the AI's new achievement of being able to emulate human functions. In this era of multi-media applications, AI is enabling the simulation of voice, 'looks' and personal choices to produce authentic looking identities which may lie on the turf of entertainment presently but which should raise alarm for the potential it had of encouraging 'misinformation', fraud and social-media misuse for multiple purposes including the game of politics. This identity reproduction is again possible only because technology has the capacity to integrate multiple data fed into the system and collate them for responding to 'specific commands'.

Of course, the wherewithal for using this kind of AI application is elaborate and expensive - the computer has to have GPU (Graphic Processing Unit) in place of a CPU.

AI has surpassed the human capacity to absorb and analyse information but only in quantitative terms - not in terms of the versatility of thought that the human mind is capable of harnessing for examining a situation.

Albert Einstein, the world's greatest scientist, famously said that 'imagination is more



important than knowledge' - he was alluding not to any wild imagination but to the ability of the human mind to look beyond the facts in front, and to envisage 'what lay ahead'.

AI essentially serves people in the present without guaranteeing any capacity to control the future - beyond producing some learnings for human beings about what to do or not to do to safeguard the collective good. It is making a huge contribution in the fields of health, education, agriculture, environmental research and above all entertainment.

Technology companies are already offering newer forms of apps for entertainment and making commercial gains for which they cannot be blamed. If a product sells like a hot cake it is legitimate for the producer to offer it at a premium. The flip side of this entertainment is that children were becoming addicted to it in a way that would hamper their mental growth and create a problem for their parents.

The educational impact of exposure to the knowledge offered by IT platforms like mobile phones, iPads and robotic instruments, however, should not be underestimated.

What has brought AI into the news is the versatile and prolific ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence chatbot developed by OpenAI and released only a few months ago. It is a Generational PRE TRAINED Transform class of language models and is task specific. Its very description, however, confirms the input-output matrix of AI.

ChatGPT can have attractive applications. It can mimic the style of celebrities and highly successful business leaders, write business pitches, compose fairy tales and facilitate student essays. Its own acknowledgement of the

possibility that incorrect responses could be made, puts an element of risk in its operation.

A fundamental point about the information on the internet is that its reliability should never be presumed. In matters requiring serious decision-making, other corroborating inputs, therefore, should always be sought.

In matters of security, AI may have its use in detecting a breach of a technologically secured perimeter but the real call of security is to have Intelligence - classically defined as information about 'what lies ahead or what can happen in future' as regards the plans of an enemy.

AI works on data already fed into the system and does not go beyond indicating what would essentially be a repetition made based on collation and interpretation of a combination of patterns already known to it. It can at best throw light on the modus operandi of the adversary as assessed from the latter's past record without laying any claim on knowing what the current thinking in the enemy camp would be.

The human mind can use readings of the total environment around an issue as input which is not a given in an AI process. Even the importance of the 'prompt' is limited because this trigger essentially lies in what the system has in the present and does not enable AI to respond in the realm that belonged to the future. Predictive findings through AI are useful in a very limited sense in the sphere of security and defence - satellite imagery, signal intelligence and surveillance or communication interception could be helped by it. However, in the fragile geopolitics of

today while identification of a 'threat' could be refined through the use of highly developed technology symbolised by AI, the nature of 'response' must be determined on an exercise of the action taker's discretion which is a trait given to only a human mind.

In a nuclear setting, however, it is the first strike that has to be determined by the human mind though the second strike could always be automated. This was in fact the deterrence behind the Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) - the American strategy followed in the Sixties during the height of the Cold War. Nuclear deterrence somewhere still works on the certainty of the far more pervasive second strike.

The best field of AI application, however, is the socio-economic life of the people and it seems the world is already moving towards a consensus on that. It is at present that data analytics and emulation using the 'Internet of things' and cloud computing, offer the best utility whether it is distance learning, medical care, diversifying agriculture, aiding business operations or innovating games for entertainment. New services have made life more purposeful and richer. AI-assisted new models of digital education and human resource development through skilling can help to prepare people for the present knowledge economy.

Domestic use of robots in household chores like vacuum cleaning, cutting work in lawns and cleaning the bottom of a swimming pool, can upgrade the quality of day-to-day life. AI in its own ways can prove to be a socio-economic equaliser and work for the amelioration of acute class divides in the society. It is a measure of India's advancement in digital technology that Prime Minister himself, in his recent meeting with OpenAI's CEO Sam Altman at Delhi, appreciated AI's role in enriching the technology eco-system, particularly for the youth of India - Sam Altman later gave out that ChatGPT had been fully embraced in this country.

IT applications are powerful instruments of economic growth but they are also vulnerable to being misused against India by our adversaries and an awareness of threats to cyber security must therefore run through our sensitive establishments, government organisations and even public bodies engaged in national projects.

(The writer is a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau. Views expressed are personal)

## international

# 150 ARRESTED IN FRANCE AMID VIOLENT PROTESTS OVER POLICE KILLING TEEN

Paris | Agencies

At least 150 people have been arrested in France amid violent nationwide protests that erupted over the fatal shooting of a 17-year-old driver by the police at a traffic stop, authorities said on Thursday.

Taking to Twitter on Thursday, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said that "town halls, schools and police stations were set on fire or attacked" during a second straight night of "intolerable violence" on Wednesday, reports CNN.

On Tuesday, Nahel M was shot at point-blank range as he refused a traffic stop and drove away.

Videos circulating on social media showed protesters setting cars ablaze and ransacking shops on Wednesday night.

In Nanterre, the suburb from where Nahel came from, the police were forced to partially withdraw, the BBC quoted French newspaper Le Monde as saying.

In Paris, the demonstrators targeted police stations with fireworks



despite the presence of 2,000 additional security personnel.

On Tuesday night, 24 police officers were injured and 40 cars were set ablaze in the capital city. Meanwhile, in the northern city of Lille, clashes broke out between the protesters and police.

Also on Wednesday, about 300 people gathered in the town of

Renne to pay tribute to the teenager were dispersed by police, reports the BBC.

The officer who allegedly shot the teenager was taken into custody on Tuesday and will undergo questioning by prosecutors, Nanterre prosecutor's office told CNN.

On Thursday morning, President Emmanuel Macron chaired a meet-

ing of the interministerial crisis unit over the incident and subsequent protests, according to the Interior Ministry.

"We have seen scenes of violence against the police stations but also schools, city halls, therefore against institutions and against the republic," Macron told reporters before the meeting. "These actions are completely unjustifiable."

Macron's earlier reaction to the shooting, which he termed "unforgivable", drew criticisms from police unions, who accused him of rushing to judge the officers involved.

The Alliance Police union called for them to be presumed innocent until found guilty, while the rival Unite SGP Police also spoke of political interventions that encouraged "anti-cop hatred".

Darmanin said he would be taking legal action against another group, France Police, after it published what he called an "unacceptable and abject" tweet seeking to justify the teenager's killing.

# Russian General arrested over Wagner mutiny: Report

Moscow | Agencies

General Sergei Surovikin, the deputy commander of Russian military operations in Ukraine, has been arrested over his alleged involvement to the short-lived rebellion staged by the Wagner mercenary group last weekend, a local media report said.

Although there was no official confirmation of his arrest, The Moscow Times reported citing sources close to the Defence Ministry, saying that the "the situation with him (Surovikin) was not 'OK'".

The General, who is also Commander of the Aerospace Forces, has not been seen in public since June 24, the day when Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin launched an armed rebellion against the country's military leadership.

One of the sources told The Moscow Times that the arrest was carried out "in the context of Prigozhin".

"Apparently, he (Surovikin) chose Prigozhin's side during the uprising."

When asked about the General's whereabouts, the source replied: "We are not even commenting on this information through our internal channels." Earlier on Wednesday, pro-war military blogger Vladimir Romanov



had said that Surovikin was detained on June 25, a day after the mutiny, and claimed that the General was being held in Moscow's Lefortovo detention centre. In a Telegram post, Alexei Venediktov, editor-in-chief of the shuttered Ekho Moskvy radio station, said that Surovikin had not been in contact with his family for three days and his guards were also not responsive, The Moscow Times reported.

On June 24, mercenary troops led by Prigozhin took over the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don, marched on Moscow and shot down Russian military helicopters and a plane on their way, the BBC reported.

Their mutiny was later aborted after a deal was struck with the help of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

## NEW AGE COUNTING SYSTEM IN S.KOREA MAKES CITIZENS YOUNGER

Seoul: The international age counting system has been officially implemented in South Korea, replacing the nation's traditional methods of counting age and making all Koreans one or two years younger.

Implemented on Wednesday, the international system counts a person's age from zero at birth, whereas the abolished traditional systems added one or two years to a person's age, depending on the birth date.

There was not much confusion in government offices, as the international age has long been used in all administrative, civil and judicial affairs, such as the legal age to drink, smoke, go to school and join the military, Yonhap news agency reported.

Nevertheless, it is expected to take time for the new age counting method to become customary in Korean society due to confusion in many "age-sensitive" fields of social life and personal relations.

Indeed, many matchmaking service companies and travel agencies that charge different rates by age group have decided not to embrace the international age counting system for the time being to minimize confusion.

# 17 DEAD AMID HEAT WAVE IN SOUTHERN US

Houston | Agencies

At least 17 people have died from heat-related illnesses as a severe heat wave continued in Texas while spreading into other parts of the southern US.

In Webb County, southern Texas, medical examiner Corinne Stern said that 11 residents over the age of 60 have died due to the abnormal heat, reports Xinhua news agency.

"This is heat like we've not seen here before," said Stern.

"Deaths due to heat stroke are ruled as accidents, and accidents, by definition, are preventable deaths. All these deaths could have been prevented."

A 14-year-old boy from Florida died of heat-related fatigue in Big Bend National Park in Texas, when temperatures there rose to 48 degrees Celsius, the second-highest mark ever



recorded in the state.

Also among the confirmed victims were a 17-year-old hiker, a utility lineman, a postal worker all from Texas and two residents in the coastal state of Louisiana,

local media reported.

A Texas Tribune report said that since the heat wave gripped the state, at least nine inmates, including two men in their 30s, have died of heart attacks or

unknown causes in prisons lacking air conditioning.

It has been 11 years since the state's prison system last classified a death as heat-related.

According to Stern, the number of heat-related deaths also rose near the US-Mexico border in the past few weeks.

Five bodies have been found since last week in a desert close to the Mexican border and near human smuggling zones in the Sunland Park area, New Mexico, the El Paso Times reported.

It is unknown whether the bodies are those of migrants.

The US National Weather Service forecast temperatures will likely reach 43 to 46 degrees on Thursday and Friday in Texas as the heat spreads into Arkansas, Louisiana, Kansas and Oklahoma. More than 150 heat records could be broken during the next six days.

## China unveils sweeping foreign policy law to counter US

Hong Kong | Agencies

China has unveiled a sweeping foreign relations law enshrining its right to impose 'countermeasures' against actions that it deems a threat -- in Beijing's latest bid to bolster its position amid strained relations with the West, according to a media report.

The law, coming into force from July 1, comes as China's authoritarian government pushes back against what it sees as American efforts to suppress its development, following US export controls on some high-tech goods and efforts to reduce reliance on Chinese suppliers in the sensitive sectors, CNN reported. The two countries have entered a period of deep suspicion and tension that marks a low point in their relations, even as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited



Beijing earlier this month in an effort to stabilise ties. The new law stresses its right "to take corresponding countermeasures and restrictive measures" against acts that violate international law and norms and that "endanger China's sovereignty, security and development interests", CNN reported. It is China's first foreign policy legislation of this scope and lands as Xi Jinping -- the country's most powerful leader in decades -- has seen his drive to amplify China's power and influence on the world stage clash with concern from the US and other nations over Beijing's ambitions and increasingly assertive foreign policy.





# 2 KILLED AS HEAVY RAINS LASH MUMBAI, PUBLIC TRANSPORT UNAFFECTED

Team Absolute | Mumbai

At least two persons were killed in rain-related incidents as Mumbai and surrounding districts were clobbered with torrential rains since Tuesday night, even as the road, rail and air traffic were largely unaffected, officials said on Wednesday.

According to Mumbai Police, a 38-year-old man Kaushal Doshi was killed when a massive tree crashed on him at Mamladarwadi in Malad west.

Another tree collapse was reported at Mithanagar in Goregaon west and 30-year-old Premal Nirmal was killed, it said.

In a shocker, a landslide occurred on a portion of the road near the Mumbai Metro Magathane station, near Borivali, causing minor damage but there were no casualties.

The Western Railway, Central Railway and the Harbour Lines functioned normally despite heavy rains and reported no water logging on the train tracks on the entire suburban sections, officials said.

According to the IMD, Mumbai city and suburbs notched a total of 77 mm rains each till 6 p.m. on Wednesday. The BMC's weather stations have recorded 32 mm in the city, 84 mm in eastern suburbs and 83 mm in the western suburbs till 6 p.m.

The incessant downpour resulted in waterlogging in many low-lying areas of the city and suburbs, ranging from ankle-deep to knee deep water, leading to massive traffic snarls reported across Mumbai.

The BMC Disaster Control reported



22 instances of tree crashes, including two with fatalities (as above), 4 complaints of short-circuits, and six minor house-crashes in the city.

A 17-year-old youth Rehan Shaikh was injured in a house wall collapse in Govandi and has been admitted to the Shatabdi Hospital. In Vikhroli, the BMC and police evacuated over two dozen slum-dwellers after a landslide and mudslide due to the downpour and they shifted to their relatives' homes though a private school was kept ready to house them.

Facing flak from various quarters, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) teams swung into action to clear the water but their efforts were hampered by the high tide in the Arabian Sea this evening at

7 p.m. with waves reaching 3.48 metres that pushed back the drainage water. Sporting an orange raincoat, BMC Commissioner Dr. I.S. Chahal and his team of officials stepped into the field for a spot assessment of the rainfall situation in several areas, including a portion of the Mithi River, the pumping station at Hindmata and underground water storage tanks.

The downpour notwithstanding, the BMC has announced a 10 per cent water cut in the city from July 1, while Navi Mumbai will be slapped with a 15 per cent water cuts, said officials. A compound wall crash in an NRI complex in Navi Mumbai flattened around a dozen vehicles parked besides, including some high-end cars, and the rescue officials were deployed for

the clearing operations.

Large areas of Thane city - the hometown of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Badlapur, Bhiwandi, Kalyan, Dombivali and other towns - witnessed heavy rains with flooding in low-lying areas. The police, fire brigade, disaster teams and home guards were kept in readiness for quick deployment in any emergency as rains continue to pound Mumbai and surrounding districts.

The IMD has sounded rainfall alerts of varying degrees for Mumbai, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg in the coastal Konkan region over the next three days.

## 'HEAVY TO VERY HEAVY' RAINFALL PREDICTED IN 6 DISTRICTS

Mumbai: The Met department on Wednesday evening forecast heavy to very heavy rains in six districts of Maharashtra, issuing an 'orange alert'.

According to weather office, it will witness relatively less intense showers on Thursday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in a release.

It issued an orange alert for the districts of Thane, Raigad, Palghar (all three adjoining Mumbai), Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg and Nashik, indicating the likelihood of heavy to very rainfall at a few places.

Mumbai is likely to receive heavy to very heavy rainfall only at isolated places on Thursday, the IMD said, issuing a yellow alert for the city.

# Barricades removed from all Mumbai Metro project sites to ease traffic congestion

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In order to ease the traffic congestion on Mumbai roads, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has taken a significant step to remove 84 kms of barricades from the project sites.

Dr Sanjay Mukherjee, Metropolitan Commissioner of MMRDA stated that the unnecessary barricades have been removed from all ongoing Metro Projects across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. "This decision aims to provide substantial relief to the citizens by ensuring smoother commuting experiences during the monsoon period. A total of 33,922 barricades have been removed, resulting in the clearance of 84.806 kilometers (42 km one-way) of two-way road, opening up more space for traffic," the official press statement said.

Currently, implementing a 337-kilometer long metro network throughout the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, MMRDA has installed a total of 152.86 kilometers of barricades across several metro lines, including 2B, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7A, and 9. So far, MMRDA has successfully removed approximately 60 percent of these barricades, with a total of 84.8 kilometers cleared for traffic. "To ensure smooth traffic flow and minimal disruption for citizens, barricades have been removed from key locations



such as Eastern Express Highway (EEH), Western Express Highway (WEH), Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), S. V. Road, V.N. Purv Marg (Chembur Naka), New Link Road, Gulmohar Road, MG Road, Ghodbunder Road, Kapur Bawadi, Balkum, Dahisar, Mira Road, Bhayander, Thane, Tin Hat Naka, JVL, Infinity Mall, Powai, Kanjur Marg, and Mankhurd along the under-construction Metro lines. This strategic step has cleared one lane on both sides of the project for traffic, thereby minimising disturbance to citizens," the release stated.

"Recognising that barricades are necessary for citizen safety during construction projects, MMRDA has taken measures to install them in a way that occupies minimal space on the road. As a result, wider roads of over 8 kilometers in length are now available at specific locations, ensuring smoother traffic flow. This restructuring effort involved modifying a total of 3,352 barricades,"

added the statement. MMRDA has also implemented various measures to enhance the daily routine for citizens during the monsoon season. These measures include actively addressing road-related issues such as filling potholes, installing motor pumps in waterlogging-prone areas for efficient drainage, and establishing a 24x7 emergency control room for prompt resolution of citizen complaints.

Dr Sanjay Mukherjee, Metropolitan Commissioner, MMRDA, stated, "We are committed to minimizing inconvenience to citizens during the monsoon season and have implemented measures to address road-related issues and ensure smooth traffic flow. Our team has successfully removed over 33 thousand barricades within a month, and we will continue to review the project and barricades every 15 days. These initiatives aim to enhance the overall experience of citizens and mitigate disruptions caused by the monsoon."

# Next opposition meet in Bengaluru, not in Shimla: Sharad Pawar

Team Absolute | Pune

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar said on Thursday that the next opposition meeting will be held in Bengaluru on July 13 and 14.

On June 23, at the first opposition meet in Patna, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had announced that the next meet to strategise a united front against the BJP would be held in Shimla.

Sixteen opposition parties met in Patna to streamline a roadmap to take on the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

The four-hour meeting concluded with sharp exchanges between Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). The AAP said it will not participate in future opposition meetings that include the Congress until the party publicly denounces the central government's contentious ordinance on the control of administrative services in Delhi.

Pawar said recently that there was no discussion about the "prime ministerial post" at the Patna meet. The NCP chief said that the meeting instead focused on issues such as inflation, unemployment, and "deliberate



attempts" to encourage communal violence in some parts of the country.

At a joint press briefing following the Patna opposition meet, hosted by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the parties said they would fight the polls on a common agenda and with a state-wise strategy.

Top BJP leaders dismissed the meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah terming it as a mere "photo opportunity".

Party president JP Nadra said that the leaders who attended the meeting were those who were jailed by the Congress during the Emergency while Union Minister Smriti Irani said that the Congress is rallying opposition parties because it is unable to win elections on its own.

# "MERE OPPOSITION TO SHARIA...": SHIV SENA (UBT) ON UCC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Shiv Sena (UBT) today said that "mere opposition to Sharia" cannot be the basis for the Uniform Civil Code, asserting that Uniform Civil Code also means having equality in law and justice for all.

Sharia is an Islamic religious law based on the teachings of the Quran and the traditional sayings of Muhammad.

In an editorial in its mouthpiece 'Saamana', the Uddhav Thackeray-led party said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should first respect uniform law by disqualifying 40 MLAs including Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, whose Urban Development department has taken action against 18 ex-corporators from the Bhiwandi Nizampur City Municipal Corporation (BNCMC).

Earlier this week, 18 former Congress corporators of BNCMC were disqualified from contesting



any elections for the next six years for voting against their party's official mayoral candidate in 2019 and defying party whip.

"Only opposing the Sharia law of Muslims is not the basis for Uniform Civil Code. Having equality in law and justice is also

Uniform Civil Code," the editorial said. What law is it if "corrupt people, ministers, businessmen of the ruling party" are protected and leaders from opposition parties are implicated under anti-corruption statutes, it asked.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) also ques-

tioned the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) inquiry initiated by the Centre into alleged irregularities in the reconstruction expenses of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's official residence.

In an apparent reference to Chief Minister Shinde, it said the "landlords" of Maharashtra have kept two-four official bungalows and resorted to unchecked splurging. There should also be uniform law in this case, it said.

PM Modi on Tuesday pushed for implementation of a Uniform Civil Code in the country and said Muslims are being instigated over the sensitive issue.

Even the Supreme Court has advocated for a Uniform Civil Code, but those practising vote bank politics are opposing it, said PM Modi and asked how the country can have two systems, touching upon an issue closely identified with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with less than a year left for the Lok Sabha polls.

# Use Nandan Nilekani donation to improve infra, say IIT Bombay students

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani's Rs 315-crore donation to his alma mater Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay has been welcomed by students and alumni, but it has also put the spotlight on the poor state of some of the infrastructure at the premier institute.

Students at the institute say two students have to share hostel rooms meant for one, washing machines don't work in some hostels, reading rooms are cramped and the food is inedible.

"Facebook memes of our rooms look worse than Dharavi," said a student, adding that they want part of Nilekani's donation to be used for improving the infrastructure at IIT Bombay.

On June 20, Mr Nilekani had tweeted that he



would be donating Rs 315 crore to IIT Bombay to mark 50 years of his association with the institute.

Two tweets posted in response to Nilekani are now going viral. In one, Twitter user Gopal Srinivasan, who claims to be the father of an IIT Bombay student, shared a meme on prison cells in Norway having better facilities than a second-year hostel at the institute.

Responding to Srinivasan's post, Twitter user Amit Paranjape tweeted, "The meme has indeed gone viral. Feel very bad seeing it - this looks similar to the room I stayed in (1989-93) at @iitbombay - except that now there are two students in a room! No place to stand around with the two beds - let alone place for a study table/chair." The tweets are not verified.

Students at the institute say those pursuing the Bachelor of Technology (BTech) degree are affected the most.

# 16-year-old boy swept away in swollen nullah

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 16-year-old boy from Diva in Thane city of Maharashtra was swept away in a swollen nullah on Wednesday night, officials told news agency.

The boy, identified as Vaseem Sayyed and residing in MS Compound in Khardi village, fell into the water body located near his house and was swept away in the strong current, chief of the Disaster Management Cell of



the Thane civic body Yasin Tadvli told news agency.

The incident occurred around 9 pm, he said.

# 9 medical colleges among 31 proposals cleared ahead of polls

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The state cabinet on Wednesday approved 31 proposals for new schemes and restructured the existing ones in many departments. This indicated the rush ahead of the election year and reflected efforts to score political points and woo voters from different sections of the society.

The Mumbai Trans Harbour Link was named after former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the tallest leader of the BJP. It will be officially branded as Atal Setu, CM Eknath Shinde said after the weekly cabinet meeting. He said the Versova-Bandra sea link was named after V D Savarkar, the ruling partners' Hindutva icon. The proposals had come from Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis after the city's coastal road was last month given the name Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. In another



city-related decision, one of the country's oldest institutes, Sir JJ School of Art, its affiliates, the applied art school and architecture college have been clubbed to make it 'deemed to be university'. The proposal to this effect will be sent to the University Grant Commission soon.

# Pet dog scares off leopard outside home in Maha town

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A leopard, who tried to attack a dog sleeping outside a house, was scared away by the pet animal in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar. The whole incident was captured by a CCTV camera outside the home and has gone viral on social media.

The video, which has gathered over 400,000 views on Twitter so far, shows the pet dog sleeping in a corner at entrance of a house in Ahmednagar's Rahuri town at night. Moments later, a leopard appears on the scene and quietly makes its way towards the dog. As the leopard attempts to pounce, the dog swiftly gets up and begins barking at the big cat.

Even as the leopard has the dog

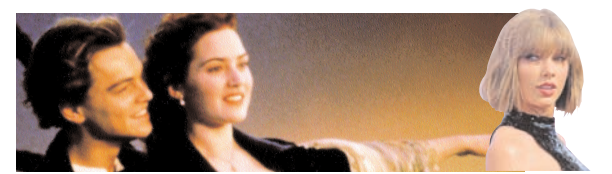


cornered, it continues to howl at the predator. Soon, the leopard begins to retreat as the dog's barks grow louder. Startled, the leopard backs off and quickly runs away.

Twitter users praised the dog's valiant effort at protecting itself and guarding the house. "The leopard got startled & left," one Twitter user claimed. In a similar incident last

month, a leopard crept up on a sleeping man and his pet dog in Maharashtra and attacked the animal before running away with the dog in his mouth.





## DOJA CAT SHOWS OFF HER NEW TATTOOS IN TOPLESS INSTAGRAM POST



Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Doja Cat has got inked and she is showing it off. The 'Need to Know' rapper, 27, added a spider to her back tattoo collection and more elaborate designs to her right hand. She shared two topless photos

on her Instagram recently, which showed off the spider tattoo added to her lower back. The insect appears to be spinning a web that continues from the tail of the bat skeleton tattoo she got in May, reports 'People' magazine. In the photo series, Doja Cat also included a photo of her right hand, which has a tattoo of an eyeball with a sword through it. She also has designs on her middle finger, as well as small dots near each nail. Doja Cat tagged the tattoo artist, Mr. K, adding a spider emoji.

"Another session w @dojacat in LA and perfectly healed," the artist wrote on his own Instagram page, where he shared the same photos.

As per 'People', the 'Streets' rapper's lower back ink is a fine-line tattoo like her bat tattoo. While Doja Cat did not provide context for her newest body art, she did explain the meaning behind the skeletal bat.

"Bats often represent death in the sense of letting go of the old, and bringing in the new," the rapper's May 4 message read.

"They are symbols of transition, of initiation, and the start of a new beginning," she added. The "new beginning" Doja Cat is looking forward to might be the start of her new tour.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actress Kim Cattrall has opened up on her highly-anticipated 'And Just Like That' cameo.

The actress, 66, detailed how she came to reprise her iconic role of Samantha Jones for the season 2 finale of the 'Sex and the City' revival series. Her character was only featured in the first season via text message exchanges with Carrie Bradshaw (played by Sarah Jessica Parker), reports People magazine.

"It's very interesting to get a call from the head of HBO saying, 'What can we do?' and I went, 'Hmm, let me get creative,'" Cattrall shared that during her appearance on 'The View' on Wednesday. "And one of those things was to get Pat Field back because I just thought that if I'm going to come back, I gotta come back with that Samantha style. I gotta push it. And we did," she revealed.

Cattrall made headlines earlier this month when it was announced that her 'Sex and the City' character Samatha Jones would be making an appearance in this season's finale of 'And Just Like That...' and that she was outfitted by none other than Field, 82. As per People, Field, who famously dressed the cast of the Sex and the City series and its two spin-off movies, notably didn't return for the TV series 'And Just Like That'. However, she made an exception for her good friend Cattrall's return.

According to Variety, Cattrall filmed the cameo on March 22 in New York City. The outlet also reported that Cattrall did her scene "without seeing or speaking with the stars of the series," including Parker, Cynthia Nixon and Kristin Davis, nor did she reportedly interact with series creator Michael Patrick King.

## Boris Becker's lookalike model daughter Anna turns heads at gala

Berlin | Agencies

Former German tennis ace Boris Becker's daughter Anna Ermakova turned heads on Tuesday night when she attended the Media Night at Aachen in Germany.

According to the Daily Mail: "The model looked stunning in a long black strapless figure-hugging dress which clung to her slim frame and accentuated her sculpted shoulders."

They added: "The 23-year-old model, who looks just like her famous father, finished the look with a Louis Vuitton black bag and 15,800 pounds Vintage Alhambra long necklace from Van Cleef and Arpels." "Her signature red locks were bumped up with volume as she posed with her arms raised above her head, finishing the look with a bold red lip."

Excited to attend, Anna shared clips

from the evening with her 131 thousand followers on her Instagram.

In March, Anna won the final of Germany's equivalent of 'Strictly Come Dancing' with a record number of votes. Boris, 55, had then taken to social media to express his deep love and admiration for his daughter. He conveyed that he could not be more proud of the remarkable young woman she is blossoming into. "I wish my beautiful daughter only the very best on her special day! I couldn't be more proud of the woman she is becoming in front of our eyes! Love," he wrote.

According to Mirror.co.uk, Anna was conceived during an infamous encounter between Becker and Russian model Angela Ermakova in a broom cupboard in London's Nobu restaurant in 1999.

Boris initially refused to acknowledge paternity of his daughter before a DNA test later confirmed he was the father.



THE BEE GEES WOULD ARGUE CONSTANTLY DURING RECORDING SESSIONS, SAYS NEW BOOK



London: Disco legends, the Bee Gees would argue constantly in recording studios, but always made up over a cup of tea, a new book reveals.

According to the book 'Bee Gees: Children of the World', the 'How Deep Is Your Love' singers, Barry Gibb, 76, and his twin brothers Robin and Maurice, knew it was "time to get back to work" once the kettle had boiled, reports Mirror.co.uk. Studio engineer John Merchant tells how the brothers were "world champions of sniping at each other" until they had made a cuppa. The book's author, pop historian Bob Stanley, wrote: "John reckoned the spats were part of the work process. They knew what the other was capable of, and would not rest until their brother had delivered. They would challenge each other consistently. And, like an unrealistic sitcom, everyone knew the situation would be resolved as soon as the kettle went on." Tragedy struck when Maurice died aged 53 in 2003, and Robin died in 2012 aged 62 from cancer.

When the Bee Gees peaked in the 70s with hits such as 'Saturday Night Fever', Barry never lost his taste for home.

## 'Celebration Tour postpones'

### Madonna rushed to NYC hospital after being unresponsive

Los Angeles | Agencies

International pop star Madonna was found unresponsive, and was rushed to a New York hospital after suffering from a bacterial infection leading to a multi-day hospital stay. Though she is on the mend with expectations of a full recovery, her upcoming 'Celebration Tour' has been postponed.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, "Guy Oseary, the singer's talent manager and producer, confirmed that she had been admitted to an intensive care unit on June 24 due to the infection."

"Her health is improving, however, she is still under medical care. A full recovery is expected," he wrote in an Instagram statement. "At this time we will need to pause all commitments, which includes the tour."

Back in 2020, Madonna underwent hip

replacement surgery, post her injury during her 'Madame X Tour', which forced her to cancel several North American shows.

The Grammy winning pop sensation had announced her 'Celebration Tour' back in January with a video featuring other big names such as Amy Schumer, Lil Wayne, Kate Berlant, Jack Black, Judd Apatow and Eric Andre among others. As per The Hollywood Reporter, "It paid tribute to her 1991 'Blond Ambition World Tour' documentary Truth or Dare."

USA Today states that Madonna's upcoming 'Celebration Tour' was expected to cover all sides of Madonna's 40-plus year career, and was scheduled to begin in Vancouver July 15.

Oseary added that a new start date for the Tour along with the dates of the rescheduled shows shall be announced soon.



## Bruce Springsteen set to rock Hyde Park after 11 years



Los Angeles | Agencies

Rock music legend Bruce Springsteen is returning to London's Hyde Park -- where he was famously cut off 11 years ago -- in July.

But this time, the organisers said, "The Boss" will not be silenced. Bruce is going to take stage earlier, at around 7 p.m., so his 'notoriously' long set won't run over and fall foul of the 10.30 p.m. curfew deadline, reports 'The Mirror'. A source said the scheduling would ensure that the icon gets to play all his hits with no interruption when he takes to the stage next on July 6 and July 8.

The source told 'The Mirror', "Fans needn't worry... There will be plenty of time to hear what will be

two historic sets."

The 73-year-old, whose hits include 'Born In The U.S.A.', 'Dancing In The Dark', and 'Streets of Philadelphia', among many others, last played at the Hyde Park in 2012 as part of the festival Hard Rock Calling, which was arranged by a different promoter.

Sir Paul McCartney had joined Springsteen and his E Street Band to play Beatles classics 'I Saw Her Standing There' and 'Twist and Shout'. But as the stars appeared ready to launch into another number, their microphones were switched off.

Westminster Council insists on a 10.30 p.m. finish, which caused Steve Van Zandt, one of the E Street Band guitarists, to vent his fury at the "police state".

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Chrissy Teigen





### Duleep Trophy

## NISHANT SINDHU'S 150, HARSHIT RANA'S MAIDEN HUNDRED PUT NORTH ZONE IN DRIVER'S SEAT

Bengaluru | Agencies

Wicketkeeper-batter Nishant Sindhu slammed 150 while pacer Harshit Rana notched up his maiden hundred in first-class cricket to put North Zone in the driver's seat against North East Zone on Day 2 of the Duleep Trophy quarterfinal at M Chinnaswamy Stadium, here on Thursday.

After opener Dhruv Shorey made 135 on day one's play, it was the turn of Sindhu and Rana, who remained not out on 122, to make merry against North East Zone bowlers, before the North Zone innings was declared at 540/8 in 136 overs. Before rain caused an end to day two's play, Rana, Siddharth Kaul and Baltej Singh took a wicket each to leave North East Zone at 65/3 in 20 overs, trailing North Zone by 475 runs. Sindhu began the day by reaching his hun-



ded in 165 balls, also his third century in first-class cricket. But North East Zone struck back as Palzor had Pulkit Narang dismissed for 46, ending a crucial 130-run stand

for the seventh wicket. However, the inexperienced bowling line-up had little respite as Rana came out all guns blazing, smashing all over the park to reach his fifty in just 37 balls.

#### Brief scores

North Zone 540/8 declared in 136 overs (Nishant Sindhu 150, Dhruv Shorey 135; Kishan Singha 2/74) lead North East Zone 65/3 in 20 overs (Nilesh Lamichaney 35 not out; Siddharth Kaul 1/3) by 475 runs.

Sindhu, a member of India's 2022 Men's U19 World Cup winning squad, continued his sublime batting to reach his 150, before falling on the same score to Imliwati. But Rana's stunning counterattacking knock continued and with clean shots in hand, he reached his hundred off just 75 balls, as North Zone went past 500.

After 40 more runs, North Zone declared their innings as Rana went back with 122 not out against his name, laced with 12 fours and nine sixes at a strike-rate of 141.86. After some quiet overs, North Zone drew first blood as Kishan Lyndoh was castled by Kaul. Baltej joined the wicket-taking spree by having Thankhuma nicking behind. After rain arrived, play was disrupted, before the skies cleared up. Captain R Jonathan was then trapped lbw by Rana, before covers came back again, causing an end to day two's play.

### FIFA Rankings

## India move up by one spot, reach top 100 for first time in five years

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian football team has risen by one place in the latest FIFA Men's World Rankings, from 101 to 100, which was released on Thursday.

This is the first time in five years that the Blue Tigers have reached the top 100, having last been ranked at the 97th place in 2018.

"India move up to 100 in the latest FIFA Men's World Ranking. Steadily we rise," said the Indian football team's official handle in a tweet. In April, India moved up to 101 in the FIFA Rankings. They have now gained 4.24 points which have helped them move into the top 100 after going unbeaten in June in the Intercontinental Cup and the SAFF Championships.

India have been on a hot streak of form recently and have been unbeaten since their 0-3 defeat to Vietnam in the 2022 VFF Tri-Nation Series.

They have won seven out of nine games in 2023 while drawing twice, recently against Kuwait in the ongoing SAFF Championship and one against Lebanon in the Hero



Intercontinental Cup. Igor Stimac's men have also won two titles this year -- Tri-Nation Series and the Intercontinental Cup.

In the nine games since the loss to Vietnam in September 2022, India have also netted 15 goals while registering eight clean sheets in a row -- a new national record.

Sunil Chhetri and Co. will look to continue their unbeaten streak as they face Lebanon in the SAFF Championship semi-finals on Saturday.

### Ashes 2023

## Steve Smith equals Steve Waugh's tally of 32 Test centuries



London | Agencies

Adding another feather to his cap, star batter Steve Smith on Thursday equalled Steve Waugh's record of 32 Test

centuries for Australia on Day 2 of the second Ashes 2023 Test against England at Lord's.

Smith now has only Ricky Ponting, who has scored 41 centuries, in his sights on

Australia's all-time Test ton scoring charts. Moreover, playing his 174th innings in his 99th Test, Smith is the fastest to reach the 32-ton mark. The 34-year-old also became the fourth Australian to have his name etched onto the Lord's Test batting honours board multiple times, joining Warren Bardsley (1912, 1926), Sir Don Bradman (1930, 1938) and Bill Brown (1934, 1938) to score multiple Test hundreds at Lord's, according to cricket.com.au. This achievement only amplifies Smith's extraordinary connection with Lord's, a venue that holds significant moments in his career. It was at the same where he made his Test debut against Pakistan in 2010 and showcased his brilliance by smashing a remarkable 215.

## KERALA READY TO HOST LIONEL MESSI'S ARGENTINA FOR FRIENDLY: MINISTER

Thiruvananthapuram: Days after the All India Football Federation (AIFF) turned down a proposal from Argentina to play a football friendly in India citing its staggering appearance fee, Kerala Sports Minister V. Abdurahiman said the state is ready to host the Lionel Messi-led world champions, provided they are willing to come.

Abdurahiman said he has already spoken to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in this regard.

"Everyone knows how passionate the Chief Minister is about sports. It was Vijayan who first mooted the idea of hosting Argentina for a friendly, which has been conveyed to them. Once we get a confirmation from Argentina, will go forward with it. We will also approach the AIFF, and I don't see any reason for it to turn down our proposal," said Abdurahiman, who hails from Malappuram, the most football crazy district in Kerala. When asked about the likely expenses and if the state will be able to afford it, Abdurahiman replied, "Kerala's love for football is known to all, so funds will not be an issue at all."

### Asian Kabaddi C'ship

## INDIA BEAT IRAN 33-28 TO QUALIFY FOR FINAL

Busan (South Korea) | Agencies

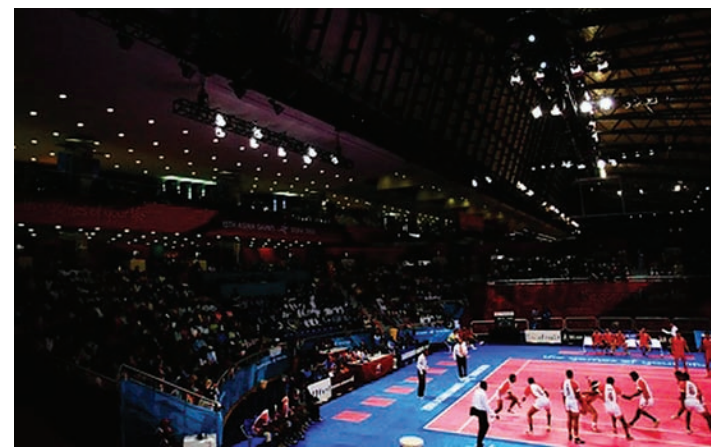
India stormed into the final of the Asian Kabaddi Championship after registering a narrow 33-28 win over Iran at the Dong-Eui Institute of Technology Seokdang Cultural Center, here on Thursday.

With a win over Iran, India stood strong on top standing. This was India's fourth win on the trot.

The Indian men's kabaddi team will play Hong Kong on Friday in the last league stage game before the final, scheduled on the same day.

The top two teams after the conclusion of the league stage will play the final. India captain Pawan Sehrawat led from the front, scoring 16 of the 33 points for India.

India and Iran, both on unbeaten runs coming into the contest, had a watchful start and were going head-to-head in the first quarter. Aslam Inamdar earned a 2-point raid in the 11th minute. Later, India inflicted an All-Out to extend their lead to 11-5.



Sehrawat escaped past two Iranian defenders to stretch their lead to 17-7 with four minutes left in the first half. Iranian defenders produced a Super Tackle against Inamdar to end the first half trailing by 19-9.

Iran, the reigning Asian Games champions, mounted a terrific comeback after the break as they inflicted an All-Out, cutting down the deficit to four points at 26-22

with six minutes left. A super tackle by India with 30 seconds to go in the match followed by a two-point raid by Arjun Deshwal helped India seal a thriller with a 33-28 scoreline to continue their unbeaten run in the tournament. India have won seven of the eight Asian Kabaddi Championship editions played so far while Iran won the title once, in 2003.

### Hockey Pro League

## NETHERLANDS MEN BEAT NEW ZEALAND, REMAIN IN TITLE HUNT

Amsterdam | Agencies

The Netherlands men's team thrashed the already relegated New Zealand as they continued their quest for the FIH Hockey Pro League title on the final day of the mini-tournament here.

The Dutch claimed a comfortable 4-1 victory on Thursday to take a step closer to overtaking Great Britain at the top of the standings, with two matches remaining. Both Spain and Belgium also remain in the running for the men's title, making for a thrilling final mini-tournament in Antwerp, starting on Friday.

The Dutch maintained their chances on Wednesday with a comfortable win against the Black Sticks.

Some sensationally speedy teamwork saw Teun Beins and Thijs van Dam combining to feed the ball through to Bijen Koen who lifted it into the roof of the net for the Netherlands' opening goal.

Just three minutes later, an attack down the left-hand side finished with Tjep Hoedemakers passing the ball back from the baseline for Jai van der Horst to tap it in as the home team doubled their lead.

A spectacular save from New Zealand keeper



Leon Hayward in the opening seconds of the third quarter prevented his side from dropping further behind. Instead, the Black Sticks pulled one back towards the end of the period with a move down the right. Sam Lane had a swing and a miss after

taking it into the circle (which was deemed not to be dangerous on review) and recovered well to cross it in for Dylan Thomas to slot it in. After a goal from Thierry Brinkman, playing his 150th match for the Netherlands, was disallowed, Jip Janssen fired in the home team's third off a penalty corner, dragging it through the keeper's legs, the FIH said in a report on its website.

Moments later, the Netherlands were awarded a penalty stroke after a bad tackle during a goal-mouth scramble, and Jasper Brinkman drilled it into the left corner to wrap up a 4-1 victory.

Terrance Pieters was named Player of the Match. "We started pretty well I think. We were 2-0 up at half-time and then we had the feeling that we still needed one more goal to seal the game, which we couldn't quite get in the third quarter. New Zealand came back to 2-1 so then it was very close again, but I think we managed to play well at the end, stay calm and get the victory," was quoted as saying by the FIH.

The win took the Netherlands men, who have 29 points from 14 matches, to the third position behind Great Britain (32) and India (30). Belgium are in fourth position with 24 points from 12 matches while Spain are sixth with 21 points from 12 matches.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has approved proposals by Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia for training in Kyrgyzstan and Hungary as they prepare for the upcoming trials for the Asian Games in Hangzhou.

The duo, who along with fellow Olympian Sakshi Malik, was leading a protest by wrestlers against the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh till a few days back, sent in their proposals to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) TOPS team and the same was cleared within 24 hrs of their request.



While Olympic bronze medallist Bajrang Punia will head out to Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan for 36 days training camp, World Championships medallist Vinesh Phogat will first head out to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan for a week-long training camp and then to Tata, Hungary for 18 days of training, the ministry informed in a release on Thursday. While Vinesh will be accompanied by physiotherapist Ashwini Jeevan Patil, sparring partner

Sangeeta Phogat and coach Sudesh, Bajrang will be accompanied by coach Sujeet Maan, physiotherapist Anuj Gupta, sparring partner Jitender and strength and conditioning expert Kaazi Hasan.

The government will fund Vinesh, Bajrang, their sparring partners, Sangeeta Phogat and Jitender, and coaches Sudesh and Sujeet Maan's air tickets, board and lodging costs, camp expenses, airport transfers, OPA and other miscellaneous costs. Additionally, the cost for the other support staff accompanying the wrestlers will be borne by Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ).

Both Vinesh and Bajrang are set to leave in the first week of July.

### Youth Women's National Boxing C'ship

## SUPRIYA DEVI ADVANCES TO QUARTER-FINALS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Indian pugilist TH Supriya Devi showcased her exceptional skills to secure a commanding victory and advance to the quarter finals on the third day of the ongoing 6th Youth Women's National Boxing Championship, here on Thursday.

Facing Kuldeep Kaur of Punjab, Supriya (54kg) utilised her smart attacking strategy and emerged victorious with a unanimous decision of 5:0. The Manipur-born pugilist who has the Asian Junior silver medal to her name, hardly put a foot wrong throughout the bout.

She will now face Meherunnis A Becum Mohd of Andhra Pradesh in the last-8. Contrasting to Supriya's result, another pugilist from Manipur, Kajal S



Devi registered a hard fought 4-1 victory against Harshita of Chandigarh. She will go head-to-head against Riya Toor of Punjab in the quarter-finals. In the 50kg category, Anshu of Haryana delivered a remarkable performance against Swati Yadav of Delhi to secure a victory after the referee stopped the contest (RSC) in the first round.

She will take on Kafi of Madhya Pradesh in her quarter-bout.

Displaying a smart combination of attack and quick movement, S Jaya Sree (81kg) of Telangana recorded a 5:0 win against Ritu of Haryana and booked her place in the quarter-finals where she will take square off against Mansi Lad of Maharashtra.

### Mallorca Championships

## HANFMANN UPSETS TSITSIPAS ON GRASS FOR FIRST TOP-5 WIN

Mallorca (Spain) | Agencies

Yannick Hanfmann continued his strong performance in the 2023 season as he claimed his first Top 5 victim, beating top seed Stefanos Tsitsipas in three games in the pre-quarterfinals of the Mallorca Championships here.

The German player overcame defending champion Tsitsipas of Greece 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 in the grass-court ATP 250 event in Spain's Balearic Islands for the biggest win of his career on Wednesday night. Hanfmann won 80 per cent (36/45) of points behind his first serve in a rock-solid performance to reach his first non-clay ATP Tour quarterfinal.

Hanfmann broke Tsitsipas' serve in the opening game of the match and two more times in the deciding set to seal his victory. The 31-year-old, who broke into the Top 50 in the ATP Rankings on Monday, now holds a 16-9 record for 2023. He



reached his maiden ATP Masters

1000 quarterfinal in May in Madrid,

a run that included Top 10 victories against Taylor Fritz and Andrey Rublev.

In the quarter-finals on his Mallorca debut, Hanfmann will next take on home favourite Feliciano Lopez, who extended his run at the final event of his professional career with a 7-6(6), 1-6, 6-3 triumph against Jordan Thompson.

With his two-hour, six-minute victory, the 41-year-old Lopez became the oldest ATP Tour quarterfinalist since Jimmy Connors reached the last eight in Halle aged 42 in 1995.

Christopher Eubanks also upset a seeded opponent to reach his first four-level quarterfinal on the grass in Mallorca. The American downed his countryman Ben Shelton 6-7(4), 6-4, 7-6(2) in the pair's maiden ATP Tour meeting. Eubanks hit 40 winners to Shelton's 30 for a hard-earned two-hour, 43-minute triumph.





## OTT IS SHIFTING TO FAMILY VIEWING FROM INDIVIDUAL VIEWING: RIDDHI DOGRA

Actress Riddhi Dogra, who is known for her work in 'Asur', 'Pitchers 2' and the recently released streaming series

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The actress, who has been juggling with different OTT projects, and has two big theatrical releases, 'Jawan' and 'Tiger 3', has opined that OTT is slowly becoming a family viewing medium.

Elaborating on the same, she said: "OTT is for individual viewing, primarily. But I feel the opposite is happening. There are many shows being made that are catering to the entire family. Or at the least is for family viewing, while individual viewing continues. There is definitely a move in the direction of content for people to sit and watch together. We are a country that lives together."

So on the contrary to what you're saying, any platform

will keep trying to get all eyeballs on their content, massy or not." Ever since her debut on OTT with 'Asur', the actress has picked up off beat subjects. When asked what compelled her to make such brave choices rather than massy entertainers on OTT, she said: "When I came into OTT, I had enjoyed a certain space of recognition through my work there. I never left tv for any other medium but for my growth as an artist. So I knew that if I'm leaving behind the privilege of having an entire show on my shoulders and the spotlight that it brings, I have got to push myself as an actor and do something that pushes me in a new direction. I guess that's why the choices."

The portrayal of women in Indian stories has evolved to a great extent. Expressing her views on this, the actress said: "Badtameez Dil" is a classic example of that. You see a very refreshing and real rom com. So while content is concerned, our show is a definite attempt in that direction. It may be a story about love on the face of it. But the writing is so interesting and real that today's audiences are bound to relate to it."

## 'A HORROR SHOW WITH MEDLEY OF FRIENDSHIP, LOVE & LONGING'

Ishwak Singh says 'Adhura' pushes boundaries of horror genre

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Ishwak Singh, who is set to act in the horror series 'Adhura', said that the series pushes the boundaries of the horror genre and it brings out its essence beautifully.

For the series, helmed by the duo Gaurav of and Ananya Banerjee, Ishwak Singh has joined forces with co-stars Rasika Dugal and Aparshakti Khurana.

Elaborating on the point, Ishwak said: "Adhura" is a gutsy horror show with a medley of emotions, for me it's a story of friendship, love and longing. Being authentic to the horror storytelling Ananya Banerjee and Gaurav Chawla have brought out the essence of the genre so

beautifully."

Talking of the show's theme, he said: "The show is a portal to the supernatural realm with spirits that gives a very unsettling feeling but the true masterstroke of the show is that it delves into the demons within us." In addition Rasika Dugal "As an actor, I found it extremely interesting to explore the life of a person who is seemingly in complete control... only to realise, as the story unfolds, that no one is free from their inner demons. That's why I was thrilled that a character like Supriya came my way," said Rasika Dugal. "As a student counsellor in a boarding school, Supriya has a complex and captivating journey in which she finds herself torn between her need to nurture and a terrifying past that she cannot seem to leave behind."

"Adhura" explores the delicate balance between human compassion and the unknown forces that lurk within. I'm glad to be back on Prime Video with a new genre and I am hoping audiences will resonate with the humanness of this story while enjoying the spookiness if it all", she added. "Adhura" is a horror series set in an elite boarding school harbouring a dark secret which rapidly shakes up the lives of everyone connected to it.

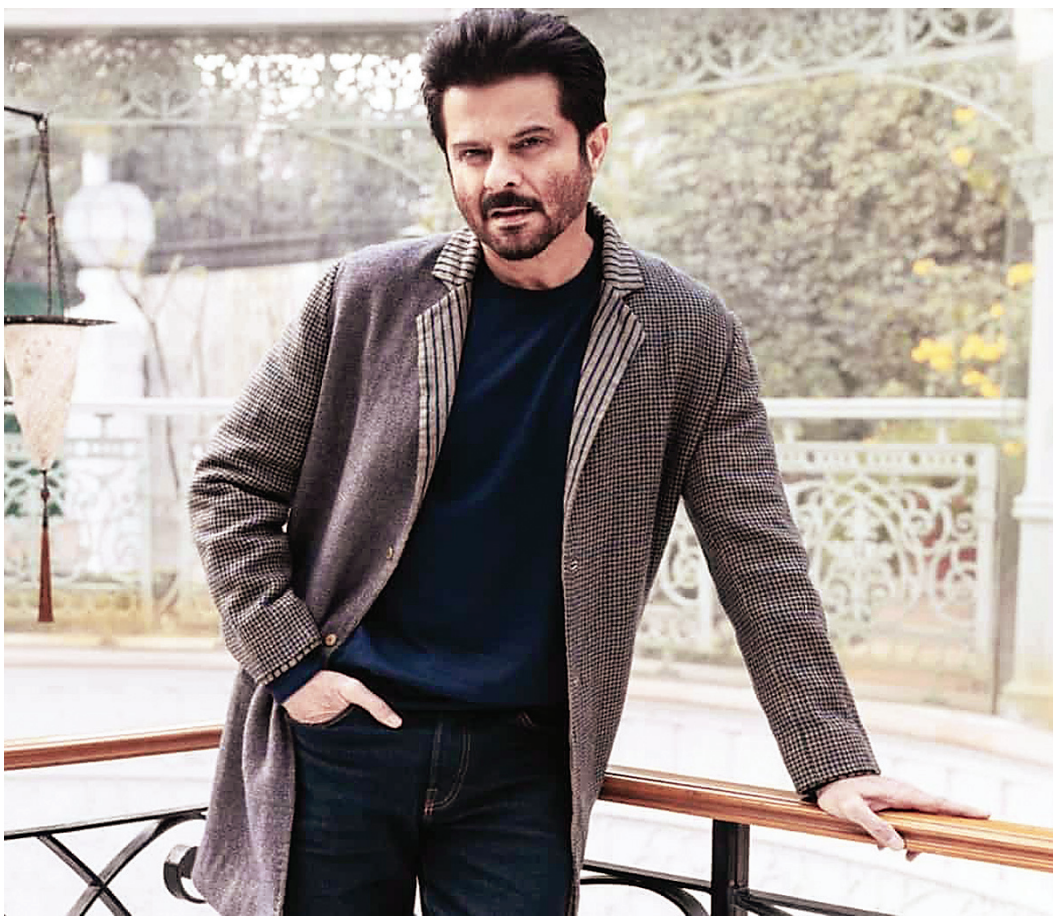
## ANIL KAPOOR'S BUCKET LIST INCLUDES 'DOING MORE THEATRE'

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Bollywood actor Anil Kapoor, who has been in the industry for over 40 years and has entertained the audience with many memorable roles, spoke about his bucket list - he wants to do more theatre and perform live in front of the audience. Anil Kapoor's role in 'The Night Manager' was loved by all. The first season garnered great response from the audience and everyone is super excited to watch part two of the show. A press conference was organised in Mumbai with the cast and crew of the show. Anil Kapoor spoke at length about the show, his journey in the industry so far and much more. Talking about his bucket list, the actor said, "My biggest regret is that I couldn't do theatre. I wish I had done more theatre in my career. It gives you great exposure to perform live in front of the audience. To do more theatre is definitely on my bucket list."

Talking about the preparation for this role, he said: "For this role, we had a book, we had an international show to look for. Apart from this, every actor has a different way to dive into the character. I had to get emotionally, physically and spiritually into the character. I used to dream about the role. I used to record the voice over and send it to my director and writer. I used to watch films which showcased a role like this.

When we started our career, we had to travel to Pune to watch the archives. Today everything is available at the tip of the finger and that is the reason today our actors are at par with international actors."



## Tilotama says it took a few filmmakers to imagine her in roles

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Tilotama Shome, who is a renowned Indian face on the global map, feels that it took a few filmmakers to take that risk and imagine her in roles which were different from representing a poorer section of our society.

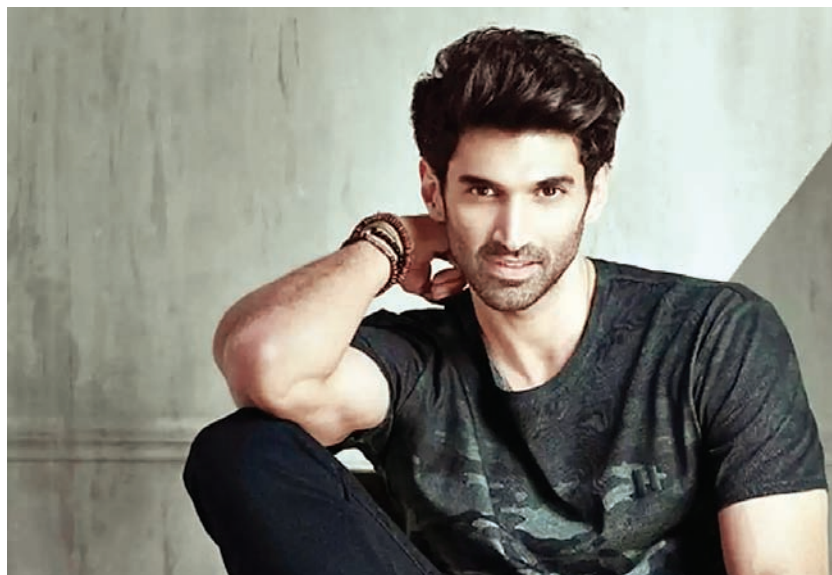
Tilotama Shome is a fine talent and the audience has been witness to that since her debut film 'The Monsoon Wedding'. The actress was present at the special press conference held for the season 2 of 'The Night Manager' recently in Mumbai.

The actress has performed varied roles in her career and her performances can not be boxed in any single genre. When asked if that has always been her criteria of choosing the roles that one should be different from the other, she said: "The thing is that I get bored very easily. It's a childhood thing. My father was in the Air Force so every four years we used to change locations, learn new languages, and go to new school. Of course then I never wanted to be an actor. But I think somewhere it was preparation for the future."

She further mentioned: "I played a maid in my debut film 'Monsoon Wedding' but the representation of a class that is less fortunate was depicted in such a romantic, magical way that I did not realise I would have to bear the cross of having played a maid and that directors could only imagine me to play a certain class. Initially in my career I did not have much of a choice. I kept taking those roles."



## Working with Anil Kapoor gives you a complex: Aditya Roy Kapur



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Aditya Roy Kapur, who has worked with Anil Kapoor on various projects, says there is a flip side of teaming up with an energetic star.

Aditya Roy Kapur was interacting with the media on 'The Night Manager 2' in Mumbai along with the Disney+ Hotstar show's creator, Sandeep Modi, and co-stars Anil Kapoor, Shobhita Dhulipala and Tilotama Shome.

After 'Malang', the 2020 action thriller directed by Mohit Suri, 'The Night Manager' marks the second outing of Aditya Roy Kapur with Anil Kapoor, so he was naturally asked about the pros and cons of working with a senior actor.

"One complex you do get while working

with Anil Kapoor is that you feel you aren't working hard enough, as he is the most hard-working actor," Aditya said. "I can only think of that as a con, for you feel like shit and keep thinking you need to pull up your socks."

Continuing in the same vein, he added: "There is plenty to learn from him. I was working with him for the second time, yet he never ceases to amaze you -- the kind of zest he approaches his work with, the passion with which he approaches his roles, his attention to detail, and being a team player who wants everyone to succeed."

"He has the wisdom, and he wants everyone in the team to succeed, so in return the whole project becomes successful. His love and experience have been invaluable to this project," Aditya added.

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Rashmika Mandanna