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Manipur tribal body rejects any dialogue with CM Biren Singh

THE REBELLION DEEPENED

The North East Students Organisation (NESO), an apex body of eight students' associations of seven northeastern states, would hold candlelight vigils in all state capitals of the northeast on June 28 in solidarity with the people of Manipur. While condemning the ongoing violence in Manipur following a meeting in Guwahati, NESO chairman said that candlelight vigils would be held in all state capitals of the northeastern states on June 28 to express solidarity with the distressed people of Manipur.

Imphal | Agencies

In a major setback to the peace efforts of the governments, an influential tribal organisation -- Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), which has been demanding imposition of President's rule in Manipur, on Monday rejected any offer of dialogue with Chief Minister N. Biren Singh or his government.

The ITLF spokesman Ginza Vualzong said that the Chief Minister's intention of reaching out to stakeholders following a meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah comes too late after the loss of so many innocent lives and properties and the untold hardships faced by the Kuki-Zo tribals, there is no point in talking about peace without a political solution.

He said that around 106 tribals have been killed, 201 villages burnt, over 5,000 houses burnt and 355 churches destroyed, while 41,425 tribals have been displaced by the conflict. "We have reached a point where the Kuki-Zo community can no longer live together with the



Meiteis. N. Biren Singh, the perpetrator of the current ethnic violence whose hatred for the Kuki-Zo community resulted in the genocide of the Kuki-Zo community, cannot be the harbinger of peace," Vualzong told the media. Returning from New Delhi, where he met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and discussed the prevailing situation in the state, Singh on Sunday evening said that efforts to restore peace would be further intensified involving all.



"Restoration of peace and normalcy in the strife-torn state is the first priority of both the Central and state governments. In the peace process, Civil Society Organisations (CSO) of all communities, leaders of churches, varied communities and other concerned stakeholders would be involved. No stone would be unturned to restore peace and normalcy at the earliest," he told the media in Imphal.

Biren Singh, who holds the home portfolio, said that the security forces have given maximum efforts in 47 vulnerable areas in different districts.

The ITLF, which along with 10 tribal MLA (seven of them belonging to the ruling BJP), has been demanding a separate administration (equivalent to separate state) for the tribals, in a statement said that all tribals and a large section of his (Biren Singh) own Meitei community have lost faith in

his leadership and his government.

The ITLF has held talks with various dignitaries including Union Home Minister Amit Shah, where Kuki-Zo tribals have voiced their demands including their political aspiration of total separation from Manipur, the statement said.

Violence erupted in the state on May 3 claiming over 100 lives and forcing thousands to take refuge in relief camps.

CONGRESS DEMANDS REMOVAL OF CM BIREN SINGH

New Delhi: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday took a swipe at Union Home Minister Amit Shah, saying that it seems he has finally spoken to the Prime Minister on the Manipur crisis, and demanded immediate sacking of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh.

Taking to Twitter, Kharge said, "Reports indicate that finally the Home Minister has spoken to Prime Minister Modi on Manipur. For the last 55 days, Modi ji did not say a word on Manipur. Every Indian is waiting for him to speak. If Modi ji is really concerned about Manipur, then the first thing he should do is to sack his chief Minister."

Monsoon fury hits Maha, 6 killed in Mumbai in 24 hours

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Delayed by over a fortnight, monsoon finally hit Maharashtra with full fury, claiming at least six lives in the past 24 hours in the financial capital Mumbai.

The IMD has forecast heavy rains in Mumbai over the next 48 hours with an orange alert for Tuesday.

Several districts like Palghar, Thane, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg have also been issued rainfall warnings of varying alerts till June 30. Late on Saturday, two contract workers fell into a manhole while cleaning up a rain-soaked road at Govandi in north-east Mumbai. They are identified as Ram Krishan, 30 and Sudhir Dhas, 35.

Early on Sunday morning, a senior couple Priscilla Misquitta, 65 and her husband Robi Misquitta, 70, were killed after a two-storied building crashed in Vile Parle goathan area in the western



suburbs.

Barely hours later, a tenement crashed in Ramabai Ambedkar Nagar in Ghatkopar east, trapping several persons of whom two were killed, and four others were injured.

They were identified as Alka Palande, 94 and her son Naresh Palande, 56, whose bodies were recovered from the debris on Monday morning. A senior citizen, Vasumathi Nair, 75, fell and suffered minor injuries when floodwaters from the adjoining road seeped into their ground floor flat in Badal

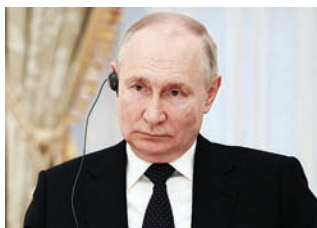
Society, Bhandup west - ironically, after the BMC carried out road repairs to prevent water seepage, said her daughter Mini P. Menon.

Heavy rains or showers continued to lash Mumbai and the coastal Konkan region all through Monday, though there was no major disruption of rail, road or air traffic.

Waterlogging was reported from some areas in the city and suburbs including water seeping into ground floor homes, some low-lying roads and subways, putting people on alert.

PUTIN MAKES FIRST VIDEO APPEARANCE POST WAGNER GROUP'S UPRISING

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday appeared in a Kremlin video address, speaking for the first time since the aborted mutiny of a mercenary chief this weekend. Putin addressed a youth forum dubbed the "Engineers of the future" where he praised companies for ensuring "the stable operation" of the country's industry "in the face of severe external challenges".



New images show Chinese 'spy' balloons over Asia

London | Agencies

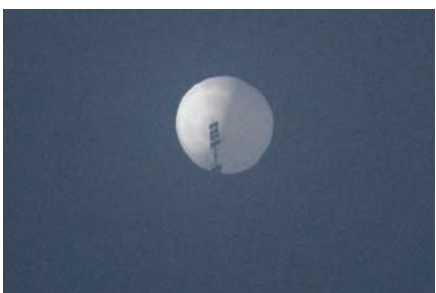
New evidence of China's 'spy' balloon programme - including flights over Japan and Taiwan has been uncovered, media reports said.

Japan has confirmed balloons have flown over its territory and said it's prepared to shoot them down in future, BBC reported.

US-China relations were thrown into turmoil earlier this year, when an alleged Chinese spy balloon was shot down off the US coast. China claimed the balloon seen over north-western US in late January was a civilian airship, used for scientific research such as meteorology - and that it was an unintended and isolated event.

John Culver - a former East Asia analyst for the CIA - told BBC Panorama that this "had been not just a one-off, but a continuing effort dating back at least five years."

He said the Chinese balloons were "specialty designed for these long-range missions"



and some had "apparently circumnavigated the globe".

Working with Synthetica, an artificial intelligence company which sifted through huge amounts of data captured by satellites, the BBC has found multiple images of balloons crossing East Asia. The company's founder, Corey Jaskolski, found evidence of one balloon crossing northern Japan in early September 2021. These images have not been published before.

BJP NATIONAL PRESIDENT JP NADDA'S SURPRISE VISIT IN BHOPAL

Bhopal: BJP National President JP Nadda reached Bhopal on Monday on a two-day tour. BJP leaders welcomed him at the State Hangar. Nadda addressed the training of workers organized at Motilal Nehru Stadium. He said that PM Modi has come after visiting US and Egypt. He made country proud. Egypt has honored Modi with its highest honor 'Order of the Nile'. It is a matter of pride for us. At the same time, despite being busy with the administrative work of the country, the Prime Minister always contributes to the organization. He is going to give a message to the country from Bhopal on Tuesday.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Kailash Vijayvargiya, BJP State President VD Sharma and Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang welcomed him at the State Hangar located at Rajabhoj Airport. During this, many other leaders and workers of Madhya Pradesh BJP including Urban Administration Minister Bhupendra Singh participated. After this JP Nadda left for Hotel Jahanuma.

Two BRS rebels decide to join Congress after meeting Rahul Gandhi, more to follow

Hyderabad/New Delhi | Agencies

In a big boost to the opposition Congress in Telangana ahead of Assembly elections, K Chandrasekhar Rao's Bharat Rashtra Samithi in Telangana is bracing for a blow as 35 of its key leaders are said to be set to join the Congress ahead of the state elections due later this year. The group, led by former BRS leader Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and the state's former minister Jupally Krishna Rao, have met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi in Delhi on Monday. Sources in the Congress said more leaders from the ruling BRS and some from the BJP will join the party at the event.

They announced their decision after meeting Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and MP Rahul Gandhi in the national capital.



Krishna Rao, Srinivas Reddy, along with their followers and some other leaders, will join the Congress at a public meeting to be addressed by Gandhi in Khammam district on July 2.

After the meeting, Srinivas Reddy told a news conference that after detailed discussions with followers and well-wishers and examining all aspects during the last six months, they decided to join the Congress. Srinivas Reddy said

they got several surveys conducted which reveal that 80 per cent of people are against the BRS government. He said they received offers from several parties including the BJP and the Congress and also smaller parties. They also discussed the proposal of floating a new regional party to counter the BRS but realised that such a move would split anti-KCR (as Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao is popularly known) votes.

Wrestlers move Delhi court seeking copy of charge sheet against WFI chief

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The protesting female wrestlers on Monday moved a Delhi court seeking a copy of the charge sheet filed by the police against outgoing Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh on charges of sexual harassment.

The Delhi Police's charge sheet running over 1,000 pages was filed before Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mahima Rai of the Rouse Avenue Courts for offences under Sections 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 354A (making sexually coloured remarks), and 354D (stalking) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) against accused Singh.

The charge sheet also mentions offences under Sections 109 (offer a bribe), 354, 354A, 506 (criminal intimidation) of the IPC against former WFI Assistant Secretary Vinod Tomar.



Reportedly, the charge sheet contains statements of around 200 witnesses.

Last week, the CMM transferred the alleged sexual harassment case to the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Harjeet Singh Jaspal, who deals with cases of MPs and MLAs, and is scheduled to take up the charge sheet for consideration on Tuesday.

Jaspal directed the complainants' lawyer to apply for a certified copy at the court's copying agency.

MONSOON HAS COVERED 80% OF INDIA, NEW PATTERN THIS YEAR

- Several cities in the country are witnessing heavy rainfall and a flood-like situation after the southwest monsoon brought showers over the past couple of days.
- The weather office has predicted heavy rain, thunderstorms and gusty winds in Punjab and Haryana. Light to moderate showers are likely to continue for the next two days.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

This year's monsoon has reached 80 per cent of India so far, India Meteorological Department's senior scientist Dr Naresh Kumar told NDTV on advancement of southwest monsoon in the country.

Monsoon reached different



parts of the country rapidly due to a low pressure area occurring in the Bay of Bengal yesterday, he said.

Monsoon arrived in Delhi and Mumbai on the same day on Sunday. This has happened after 62 years, Dr Kumar said.

The usual date for monsoon to reach Mumbai is June 11 and June 27 in Delhi, but reached the two metro cities on the same day. However, this can't directly be linked to climate

change as it takes data from 30 to 40 years to determine that, Dr Naresh Kumar said.

Monsoon has reached different parts of the country in a new pattern this year.

"Generally, monsoon is activated by a low pressure zone. High speed winds caused by the low pressure zone led to monsoon rapidly reached various parts of the country which saw rainfall," he said, and explained that western winds

from the Arabian Sea that push monsoon further up coincided with the formation of the low pressure zone in the Bay of Bengal when it was over Maharashtra.

This resulted in rainfall in Maharashtra, including in Mumbai, and at the same time the low pressure zone pushed winds towards north-western India, including to Delhi, covering both regions at the same time, Dr Kumar said.

KERALA HC RECOMMENDS INCLUSION OF SEX EDUCATION IN CURRICULUM

Kochi: The Kerala High Court has urged the state government to look into the need for including safe sex education in the curriculum of schools and colleges.

The Court made the observation while disposing of a petition filed by a man to medically terminate the pregnancy of his minor daughter who was impregnated by her own brother.

"Nobody can blame the parents. But we the society are responsible for this. Sibling incest may occur in a family system that does not provide a safe environment for its members. But it may also happen because of the lack of knowledge about safe sex. I am of the considered opinion that the Government should seriously think about the necessity of proper 'sex education' in schools and colleges ... A good family atmosphere is necessary for the society. To attain this, every citizen of this country should join together without pelting stones at such unfortunate people," read the judgment and asked to see that a copy of the judgment be send to the Chief Secretary of the state.

The Court has called for the constitution of a committee, if necessary, to study the issue of including "safe sex education" in the curriculum of schools and colleges.



PAKISTAN-OCCUPIED-KASHMIR IS A PART OF INDIA: RAJNATH SINGH

Team Absolute | New Delhi

People living in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir will raise a demand to go with India. Pakistan does not have a locus standi there as it has illegally occupied the area. The Indian Parliament has unanimously passed at least three resolutions which state that PoK is a part of India," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said this on Monday.

National security is the Government's top-most priority and it is committed to protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of the country. This was stated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh while addressing a National Security Conclave on June 26.

Rajnath Singh added that the network of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir has substantially weakened in the last few years as strict and consistent action is being taken. "Terror funding has been curbed. Supply of arms and drugs to terrorists has been stopped. Along with elimination of terrorists, work is being done to dismantle the network of underground



workers," he said. On the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, he stated that the decision has connected the people of the Union Territory with the country's mainstream and helped them to usher in a new era of peace and progress. He asserted that India

has witnessed a paradigm shift in its security scenario in the last nine years. He pointed out that India's image in 2013-14 was that of a weak nation which allowed its adversaries to create problems, but today the country has the ability to overcome every threat.

Rajnath Singh stated that no stone is being left unturned to equip the military with latest weaponry and modern technology, assuring the nation that the armed forces are fully capable of protecting the borders and the seas. "Our goal is to bring our armed forces in the frontline of modern militaries," he said.

"For a long time, Pakistan has tried to destabilise peace and harmony in the country through cross-border terrorism. However, when we came to power, we launched effective action against terrorism. We showed the world the meaning of 'zero tolerance against terrorism'. The bold and first-of-its-kind moves to eliminate terrorists following the Uri and Pulwama incidents are proof of India's 'zero tolerance against terrorism' policy and the unmatched valour of the armed forces. Today, most of the countries are united against terrorism. The joint statement issued after the Prime Minister's meeting with US President Joe Biden is an indication of how India has changed the mindset of the world on the issue of terrorism," the Defence Minister said.

Toyota Mobility Foundation launches a three-year Sustainable Cities Challenge to bring cities and innovators together

Jaipur | Agencies

The Toyota Mobility Foundation, in partnership with Challenge Works and World Resources Institute, has launched a \$9 million global challenge to help cities adapt to the future, with the potential to transform the lives of millions around the world.

As cities grow and evolve, the challenges of moving people and goods in reliable, efficient, and inclusive ways have never been more essential. At the same time, opportunities to apply advances in transport modes, infrastructure design, operations, energy options, and connected data systems have never been more promising.

The Sustainable Cities Challenge aims to improve the lives of people by increasing access to jobs, education and other essential services. It will bring cities and innovators together to implement mobility solutions that could



reduce carbon, improve accessibility, and use data to build resilient transport systems.

Ryan Klem, Director of Programs at the Toyota

Mobility Foundation, said: "Our experience over the past decade has underscored the importance of the local city's buy-in and engagement with our activities."

Call for Entries

Entry to the first stage of the Challenge is open to city leaders and municipal governments, transport departments and other related local and regional agencies. Entries should be submitted according to one or more of the following three themes:

Expanding access to safe, affordable, and inclusive modes of transportation
Harnessing the power of data to create connected and resilient mobility ecosystems
Reducing environmental impact through low-carbon and renewable energy solutions

Caste has no role to play in appointment of temple priests, rules Madras HC

Chennai | Agencies

The Madras High Court on Monday made it clear that pedigree based on caste will not have any role to play in the appointment of an 'archaka' (temple priest) if the person selected for the post satisfies the requirements such as proper training, being well-versed in knowledge required, and qualified to perform pujas and other rituals as per the requirements of Agama Sastra applicable to the temple concerned.

Justice N Anand Venkatesh made the ruling while disposing of the petition filed by Muthu Subramania Gurukul in 2018 challenging a notification issued by the



Executive Officer of the Sri Sugavaneswarar Swamy temple in Salem during that year calling up applications for filling up the post of archakar/sthanigar. The petitioner had

appealed that appointments must be made only on the base of Agama Sastra followed by the temple.

The Madras High Court constituted a committee headed by its retired judge, Justice M. Chockalingam to identify Agamic and non-Agamic temples in Tamil Nadu. As questions were asked whether the appointments of priests in temples should be deferred until the committee submitted its report, the court said that there would be no impediment for temple trustees and fit persons appointed by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department to appoint the priests even before the submission of the report.

Daylight armed robbery in Delhi raises concerns about security, video goes viral

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The daylight robbery inside the Pragati Maidan tunnel by four armed assailants on two bikes, the CCTV footage of which has gone viral, has raised concern about safety, security and the presence of Delhi Police personnel in the national Capital.

On Saturday afternoon (June 24), a delivery agent and his associate were robbed of around Rs two lakh cash at gunpoint inside Delhi's Pragati Maidan tunnel.

Interestingly, the tunnel is located near the Supreme Court, High Court, NIA office, old Delhi Police Headquarters and among others.

The footage, authenticated by the Delhi Police, reveals the shocking sequence of events as four men on two motorcycles intercepted the vehicle and swiftly executed their plan.

As per the CCTV footage, on Saturday afternoon when the cab (white colour Swift Dzire) was making its way through the busy tunnel, two bikes



abruptly came in the car's path, forcing it to come to a halt. Within moments, two of the assailants disembark and menacingly point their firearms at the frightened occupants of the vehicle, instilling a sense of fear and helplessness.

In an audacious move, one of the robbers swiftly opens the rear left door of the cab and snatches a black bag, presumably containing valuable belongings. The entire ordeal unfolded within a

matter of seconds, leaving the victims shocked and vulnerable.

According to police, the victim identified as Patel Sajan Kumar, working as a delivery agent at Omiya Enterprises in Chandni Chowk, came to Tilak Marg police station and submitted a written complaint regarding this incident.

Kumar told the police that he, along with his friend Jigar Patel, was going to Gurugram to deliver the bag of cash. "They hired an Ola cab from Lal Qila, and while on the way to Gurgaon on the Ring Road, when they entered the tunnel, four people on two motorcycles intercepted their cab and robbed his bag containing Rs 1.5 lakh to 2 lakh at gunpoint," said the police.

The official stated that based on his complaint, they have lodged an FIR under sections 397 and 34 of the IPC.

The officials said that police teams were scanning CCTV cameras in the area to identify the assailants. "We are tracing the route they took after committing the crime," the official added.

Jain temples in Prayagraj impose dress code

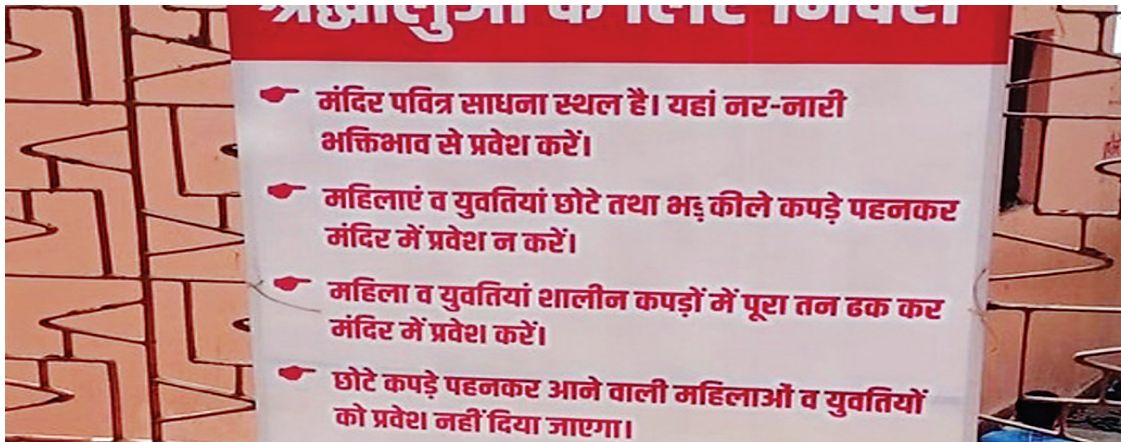
Prayagraj | Agencies

Following the trend of Hindu temples enforcing a 'dress code' for devotees in Uttar Pradesh, the Digambar Jain temples of Prayagraj have also adopted a similar rule.

Umbrella body, 'Sakal Jain Samaj', has banned devotees coming to Shri Digambar Jain Panchayat Mandir at Zero Road, Rishabhdev Taposthali, in Andawa besides temples in Katra and Beniganj localities, from wearing jeans, half-pants, frocks, distressed clothes as well as gaudy or revealing dresses.

Women and girls have been specifically requested to enter the temple with their heads covered. Only those who come wearing modest and decent clothes will be allowed entry.

Notice boards have also been installed in these temples in this regard. Secretary, Digambar Jain Samaj, Rajesh Jain confirmed the development and said that hence-



forth one should enter the temples only in decent clothes and with this in mind the dress code had been implemented.

"Devotees coming to the temple should try to have darshan with their heads covered and avoid entering wearing full black clothes. Let us try to set a good example by leading a

civilised and well-educated society," he said. Secretary, Parshvanath Digambar Jain Temple, Katra, Akhilesh Chandra Jain said renowned seer of the community Acharya Vidyasagar Maharaj had also given instructions to ensure the entry of devotees wearing decent clothes.

"Information related to the dress code has been put up at the temple while information has also been sent to the members of the community through WhatsApp groups," he said.

President of the society Dinesh Jain along with prominent members of the community, have requested devotees to come in decent clothes.

Mamata 'cautions' BSF of FIRs in case of firing at the border

Kolkata | Agencies

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday, without naming the Border Security Force (BSF), warned that FIRs will be registered against those resorting to firing at villages located near the India-Bangladesh border districts like Cooch Behar.

"I love Cooch Behar so much. Your children are killed here in firing at the borders. I have told the police to keep watch and take action after registering FIRs in case of any such firing at the bordering villages. The state government will take action. No one has the right to shoot people to death," she said while addressing a campaign rally for Cooch Behar for the forthcoming panchayat polls.

Stressing that law & order come under the jurisdiction of the state government, the Chief Minister said that if anyone engages in any intimidation or attempts to create fear, the matter should be immediately reported to the local police.

She also said that she and her government are committed to protect the people of Cooch



Behar for any kind of atrocities. Banerjee also launched a scathing attack against Union Minister of State for Home Nisith Pramanik, who is the MP from Cooch Behar, without directly naming him.

UP woman undergoes heart surgery, delivers twins via c-section

Lucknow | Agencies

A 32-year-old woman underwent a heart surgery and also a c-section operation to deliver her twins.

Doctors at the city-based Medanta Hospital successfully conducted the two operations.

The woman, who complained of breathlessness, was pregnant with twins through IVF.

The patient had an obstruction in the right ventricular outflow. In view of her condition, she was referred from Varanasi to Medanta Lucknow.

"The right (side) heart that pumps blood into the lungs effortlessly had a severe obstruction. The woman was taken to the cardiothoracic operating theatre. Firstly, the gynaecology department team conducted the delivery and then the heart surgery was performed," said Gaurang Mazumdar, the head of the cardiothoracic



vascular surgery department. Due to the obstruction, blood was not reaching her lungs properly. It was a tricky case that required a multi-specialty focus.

Counselling of the family was also done regarding the risk and procedure being adopted. Akash Pandita, head of the neonatology department, said: "Babies born were 1,200 and 1,300 grams in weight (respectively) and had breathing prob-

lems initially. However, this was solved without the use of a ventilator.

"As the mother was not in the condition to breastfeed her twins, she was shown the two newborns via a video call. The woman has been discharged now. Her babies are healthy."

According to doctors, such patients fall into a special group where pregnancy is accompanied by features of heart failure.

Harrowing time for motorists travelling to Kullu-Manali after landslides

Shimla | Agencies

Hundreds of tourists travelling towards the Kullu-Manali destination in Himachal Pradesh were inconvenienced on Monday after the closure of roads due to landslides triggered by rains, hampered the plying of vehicles. Most of the motorists had to spend the night in vehicles.

Incessant monsoon rainfall in the region over the past two days triggered massive landslides that blocked the Mandi and Pandoh highways.

"Work is on to reopen the road and it is likely to be reopened by evening," an official told reporter.

The highway has been blocked since Sunday evening. As a result, long queues of tourist vehicles were witnessed.

Due to the blockade, scores of domestic tourists were stranded at hotels in Manali and Kullu areas -- considered the gateway to the Keylong-Leh segment.

The picturesque Kullu and Manali Valleys are frequently visited by



tourists. A meteorological department official here said the state witnessed moderate to heavy rainfall in the past 24 hours. Nearly 100 metres of the national highway was badly damaged

in the landslide that occurred near Pandoh in Mandi district. Hundreds of vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the affected area.

A day earlier, the traffic on the highway was hampered near Aut

owing to swollen river that inundated the highway.

The police have stopped vehicular traffic beyond Mandi toward Kullu and from Kullu towards Mandi. Official sources said the supply of milk, bread, newspaper and other household items was impacted with the closure of the highway, the lifeline of Kullu-Manali segment.

The alternate road link between Mandi and Kullu via Kataula has been hampered by the massive landslide near Kamad since Sunday night, official sources said.

The district administration of Mandi and Kullu districts have advised visitors to suspend their journey on the Mandi-Kullu route until the restoration of highway. It is expected that the highway will be restored by this evening.

In the state, two people drowned over the past 48 hours while several vehicles and houses were damaged as the monsoon rains intensified. Mandi district is the worst affected that saw flash floods, landslides and cloudbursts.



MODI TO VISIT BHOPAL TODAY, FLAG OFF 5VANDE BHARAT, 2 FROM BHOPAL

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit poll-bound Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday where he will flag off five Vande Bharat Express trains at Rani Kamalapati railway station. States like Goa, Bihar and Jharkhand will get Vande Bharat train connectivity for the first time through these trains. Modi will also launch the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission in the state. Modi will also kick-off the distribution of Ayushman cards to about 3.57 crore beneficiaries across the state. Madhya Pradesh is



scheduled to go to the polls in December this year, just months before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Security strengthened ahead of PM's visit

3 cops to be deployed at every 50 metres for PM's visit

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra said security has been strengthened ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Tuesday visit to the poll-bound state. The minister said as many as 40 IPS officers and more than one hundred Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) and Superintendent of Police (SP) have been deployed for Prime Minister's security during his visit to the state on June 27.



During a day-long visit, PM Modi is scheduled to participate in various programmes, including a mega road show organised by the state unit of the BJP to give him a grand welcome in Bhopal. Upon reaching Bhopal, he will address 3,000 party workers from 34 states at Motilal Nehru stadium in Bhopal. Briefing the press on Monday, Narottam Mishra

Letter war between BJP, Congress ahead of PM Modi's MP visit

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A war of 'letters' began between the ruling BJP and the opposition Congress ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to poll-bound Madhya Pradesh.



Senior leaders of both the political parties on Monday wrote letters on different issues accusing each side. First, a letter was written by senior BJP leader and state Home Minister Narottam Mishra to state Congress president Kamal Nath. In his letter, Mishra accused Karnataka Minister Priyank Chugh of "promoting cow slaughter" and has sought Kamal Nath's reply on his statement. Mishra said Kamal Nath claimed to have set up several cowsheds during his 15-month Congress government in Madhya Pradesh, and on the other side, a minister of the Congress-led Karnataka government was "promoting cow slaughter" and pressuring police to put cow protectors into jail. "Soon after coming to power, the Congress led Karnataka government scrapped anti-conversion

law. The anti-conversion law was established to protect the rights of Hindu women. Now, a Congress minister is promoting cow slaughter in Karnataka. In my letter, I have asked MP president Kamal Nath to clear his view on this issue," Mishra said. Senior Congress leader and the Leader of Opposition (LoP) Govind Singh, who is MLA from Lahar Assembly constituency in Bhind district, wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and has sought a meeting with him during his visit to Bhopal on Tuesday. In his letter, Singh has highlighted the incident of

MahakalLok corridor issue, where six Saptarshi idols fell on ground due to a thunderstorm last month. "PM Modi is coming to Bhopal on Tuesday, therefore, I have requested him to allow me to meet him. I want to tell him something secret about the MahakalLok corridor issue," Singh said. Interestingly, the letter war ahead of PM Modi's arrival to poll-bound Madhya Pradesh began from both ruling and opposition sides. Notably, the assembly constituencies of both these political rivals - Mishra and Singh -- share borders and also they are considered good friends.

After Roadshow, PM Modi's Shahdol Visit Cancelled Due To Heavy Rain Alert

Bhopal: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Shahdol visit has been postponed due to heavy rain alert in the district, said CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday. However, his visit to Bhopal will remain unaffected and all the programs will be held as per schedule. In a video statement, Chouhan said, "Due to the possibility of heavy rains tomorrow, 27th June, PM Modi's visit to Lalpur and Pakaria (of Shahdol) has been postponed. Soon, the new date of his visit will be decided. The arrangements for the program will also continue in Lalpur. PM Modi's programs of Bhopal will remain the same" Roadshow Cancelled. Notably, earlier today, PM Modi's roadshow in Bhopal, scheduled for tomorrow, was also cancelled due to heavy rain alert in the city. PM Modi is scheduled to flag off two new Vande Bharat Express trains from Rani Kamalapati Railway Station on Tuesday. The trains include -- Rani Kamalapati-Jabalpur Vande Bharat Express; Khajuraho-Bhopal-Indore Vande Bharat Express. He will then participate in BJP workers' conference at Motilal Nehru Stadium.

MP Congress MLA receives hoax call for meeting with Rahul, probe on

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Congress MLA Govind Singh has claimed that he received a hoax call for a meeting with senior party leader Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi, Singh who represents the Lahar Assembly constituency of Bhind district, has lodged a complaint to the Crime Branch in Bhopal. In his complaint the MLA claimed that he received the WhatsApp call on June 22. "As I received the call, the person said he was speaking from Rahul Gandhi's office. The caller said Rahul Gandhi has asked me to come his office for an urgent meeting on June 24," Singh told the



police. Also the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly, Singh said that when he questioned the caller why did he make a WhatsApp call and

not a normal one, the person said his personal numbers were being. "I suspected that something was wrong and I immediately called the AICC. I was informed that no such meeting was scheduled. I was also informed that some other Congress leaders from other states have also received similar calls," he added. Meanwhile, police said preliminary investigation suggested that call was made through a computer generated number and the location was traced to Bathinda, Punjab. Bhopal police have shared the details with their counterparts in Punjab and has sought their cooperation into the matter, a senior official said.

Loktantra Senani Samman Nidhi will be increased from Rs 25 to Rs 30 thousand per month: CM Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that even during the Emergency, the Democracy fighters raised slogans of Bharat Mata. Democracy was suppressed by the rulers to keep themselves in power, but the fighters suffered all the torture without caring for the consequences. They fought the third war of independence of the country. It is our duty and dharma to honour this fight. Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing the conference of Democracy fighters of the state. Chief Minister Chouhan said that the Samman Nidhi of Rs 25 thousand being provided to them will be increased to Rs 30 thousand per month. Those who have been imprisoned for less than a month, their Samman Nidhi will be increased from Rs.8,000 to Rs.10,000. The fund given to the families of the deceased will also be increased from Rs 5,000 to Rs.8,000. Democracy fighters will have the facility to stay in Madhya Pradesh Bhavan during their stay in Delhi. It is the responsibility of all of us to save democracy Chief Minister Chouhan said that many fami-



lies were destroyed during the emergency. This was the time when no appeal - no lawyer - no argument was heard. Loktantra Senanis (democracy fighters) endured torture for a principle, ideology and organisation, it was an honour for the idea that saved democracy. Today this ideology is being respected all over the world. Prime Minister Modi has boosted the pride of India. At present also it is the responsibility of all of us to save democracy. Loktantra Senanis are the heritage of the country General Administration Minister Inder Singh

Parmar said that the change was brought about by the struggle of Loktantra Senanis during the Emergency. It was Chief Minister Chouhan who took the initiative to honour MISA detainees. Former Union Minister Vikram Verma said that whatever could be done during Emergency was done to break the morale of the Loktantra Senanis and their families. The family members deserve appreciation and congratulations for the hardships faced by the fighters as well as their families. It is our resolve to make the nation stronger and we are working in this direction even today. Released the book "Main Misabandi - AapatkaVyatha-katha - 19 Mahine" Chief Minister Chouhan inaugurated the convention held in the residence premises by lighting the lamp. After the recitation of Vande-Mataram and paying floral tributes to the picture of Maa Bharti, the Chief Minister welcomed the Loktantra Senanis by offering Angavastram and presented them with mementos. The Chief Minister released Ramesh Gupta's book "Main Misabandi - AapatkaVyatha-katha - 19 Mahine" based on the bitter memories of Emergency.

Kamal Nath Admits Congress Pasted "Shivraj Nahi, Ghotala Raj" Posters

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a rare case witnessed in political circles, Congress state chief Kamal Nath admitted that it was his party workers who pasted "Shivraj Nahi, Ghotala Raj" posters in the state capital, on Monday. "First BJP took the help of third party to fix my posters. In retaliation, the Congress workers put up posters disclosing scams by CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan", said former chief minister Kamal Nath to media persons, here on Monday. For past few days, both BJP and Congress have been indulged in the poster-war. Earlier, posters portraying Kamal Nath as "Wanted Corruption Nath" was seen at Bhopal's Manisha market. Just two day after, posters reading "Shivraj nahi, Ghotala raj" were pasted in the city. Purported posters also mentioned the various alleged scams including uniform scams, paper leak scams, Vyapam scams, dumper scams and e-tendering scams during Shivraj Singh Chouhan's



tenure. Nath also stressed that the BJP leaders have no work, but to curse Kamal Nath. "MP Most Corrupt Currently, PM Must See" Talking about the Prime Minister's visit to

Madhya Pradesh, Nath stated that the PM should see the corruption in the state, calling Madhya Pradesh the most corrupt state of the country, currently.

CM Chouhan Welcomes BJP Chief JP Nadda At Raja Bhoj Airport

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, along with BJP state president Vishnu Dutt Sharma, welcomed party's National President JP Nadda at Raja Bhoj Airport on Monday evening. Senior party leaders, ministers of Madhya Pradesh government, state office bearers of the party and public representatives were present on the occasion. Nearly 3000 booth workers from all over India have reached Bhopal to attend JP Nadda's address. City buses were roped in to ferry these workers to Motilal Nehru Stadium where Nadda will interact with them.



Congress holds protest against state government

Team Absolute | Khandwa

On the call of the district Congress committee, a protest was held at Kewalram Square on Saturday against the state government over alleged corruption in MahakalLok and fire incident in Satpura Bhawan in Bhopal. District media in-charge Premanshu Jain said that the demonstration was against the anti-people policies of the state government, as per the instructions of Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) chief Kamal Nath. The members also handed over a memorandum to Naib Tehsildar Mahadev Rathore addressing Governor Mangubhai Patel. As per, city Congress president Dr Munish Mishra, the party attacked the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government on corruption charges in the construction of MahakalLok. The criticism comes in the wake



of collapse of six of the 'Saptarshis' installed at the corridor due to gusty winds, resulting in damage. They also alleged 'corruption' and 'foul play' behind the massive blaze at Bhopal's Satpura Bhawan on June 12 where important files and furniture worth Rs 20 crore were gutted. They also demanded a fair judicial inquiry into the incident. Kundan Malviya denied false claim of Pandhana MLA Ram Dangore regarding development works worth Rs 5k crore in the region.

Madhya Pradesh emerged as a developed state in a decade and a half with public cooperation

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh, the heart-land of the country, has established new dimensions of development in the last decade and a half and has established itself as a developed state. According to the Good Governance and Development Report-2022 of Madhya Pradesh, due to the changes in the state, Madhya Pradesh has become an example among developed states rising from the Bimaru status. The model of development with people's participation in the state has played an important role in this great achievement. Under the able leadership of Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the double engine government at the

center and the state has made Madhya Pradesh exemplary for other states. In this period, along with road, electricity, water, agriculture, tourism, water-conservation, irrigation, investment, self-employment and infrastructure development, a new saga of well-thought-out and all-round development was written on all those aspects, which are related to public welfare and are necessary for development. Due to better financial management and all-round development, today the state's growth rate is 19.7 percent, which is the highest in the country. Madhya Pradesh is contributing 4.6 percent in the country's economy. The GDP has increased by 200 percent in the last decade. The

economic growth rate of Madhya Pradesh is continuously increasing. The rate of 4.43 percent in the year 2001-02 has increased to 16.43 percent today. The state's gross domestic product has increased from Rs. 71 thousand 594 crore to Rs. 13 lakh 22 thousand 821. In the year 2001-02, the per capita income was Rs 11 thousand 718, which has increased to Rs one lakh 40 thousand 583 in the year 2022-23. The GSDP growth rate of the state has been higher than the national GDP growth rate in the last decade. Keeping in view the importance of infrastructure in the development process, continuous infrastructure development is taking place in Madhya Pradesh. The infrastructure budget, which was Rs 3873 crore in

the year 2002-03, has increased to Rs 56 thousand 256 crore in the year 2023-24. There was a time when there was excess of power cuts. Today the state is self-sufficient in the power sector and there is 24-hour power availability. In the year 2003, the energy capacity was 5173 MW, which has increased to 28 thousand MW. Madhya Pradesh is also leading in the field of renewable energy. The work of 600 MW floating solar power plant has started in Omkareshwar with an investment of about Rs 3500 crores. There is a target of setting up 50,000 solar pumps in farmers' fields. Very soon the world heritage site Sanchi will develop into a solar city and make its own identity in the country.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Teens targeted by 'sextortion' schemes on social media

Nearly two out of every three teenagers have been targeted by sextortion schemes on social media apps, a new study has shown. According to Snap (the parent company of Snapchat), sextortionists primarily target young men for money on social media apps such as Snapchat, Instagram, Tumblr, Twitter, and Facebook, though girls are also targeted for explicit images and photos, reports Fox Business. "For young males who have experienced a sextortion incident -- and the majority are males -- they regularly tell us that when they share the situation with their parents, they feel relieved. We advise them to report to hotlines and helplines, to report to the platforms and to tell their parents, a friend or a trusted adult," Arda Gerkens, president of Offlimits, the Dutch child abuse hotline formerly known as EOKM, was quoted as saying. The survey included 760 teens in the US. According to the study, about 65 per cent of teens on Snapchat and other apps said they or their friends were victims of sextortion in which they were either "catfished" -- tricked into speaking with people lying about their identity online -- or hacked for private information, including explicit photos, that were then used against them. About 51 per cent said they or their friends fell victim to catfishing, and 47 per cent said they were hacked. Nearly one out of three teens who became targets of these scams shared explicit or private images, the study said. Moreover, around 56 per cent said they turned to friends, parents or other trusted adults after being threatened online, while 50 per cent said they reported the incident to the platform they were using. About 40 per cent blocked the perpetrator and 30 per cent updated their account security settings.

A NON-FILM CRITIC'S CRITIQUE: 'ADIPURUSH' IS A MINEFILED OF MISADVENTURES

Kavya Dubey

Within a week of its release, the Ramayana-inspired 'Adipurush' has had the interest of the audience crash and nearly die down for a number of reasons. To begin with, those who grew up following Hindu culture, whether or not they explicitly identify with the Ramayana-oriented belief system, are bound to raise eyebrows at this Om Raut misadventure touted to be an adaptation of the epic. And those who are not from the community, but wish to know a thing or two about 'Hindu culture' by way of casually watching a movie, will be comically misguided if they go by what they see. Poor dialogues are only the tip of the iceberg. Ravana was a great demon king -- yes, great, because even though he was a demon, his merit was incontestable and even the gods acknowledged it. His kingdom was situated in the tropical region of the Indian subcontinent and notwithstanding the vagaries of climate change, the Lanka of Ramayana would have been much greener than we can imagine -- not black! The details in the film, which could have been a mark of great cinematic finesse, are but a displeasing imitation of some iconic details from Hollywood films: the Harry Potteresque death eaters that float about Lord Ram (Raghav); the Game Of Thrones-style gait of Ravana (who has uncharacteristically neatly cropped and gelled hair) and his dragon-like bat for a vehicle; a charcoal-finished Lanka looking like the evil twin of Thor's Asgard, the Planet of The Apes-replica 'vanar sena', inclusive of a King Kong here and there; and costumes and hairdo of the villains that are just not Indian by any stretch of imagination. These striking details were lifted



without much effort to customise them to fit the context of Ramayan, which is not just an object of fancy but a deeply revered cultural heritage. Even Hollywood would have had exotic goblets, instead of those gold-streaked black wine glasses, knowing that it is a story from ancient times. This Rs 500-crore film could have been otherwise justified for its visual effects, which were impressive but terribly misplaced in an incredibly wrong storyline that just rushed to conclude. This amounts to a mockery and an insult to our cultural heritage. As far as common filmmaking goes, there may be no limit to imagination, but with regard to depicting an established piece of work, especially one that has religious sentiments attached to it, it becomes an obligation to accomplish such an undertaking much a sense of responsibility. The inept recitation of a part of the Tandav Stotra by Ravana before Sita, when he says that he will climb on to Ram's chest and do the Tandav, only betrays the embarrassing lack of research by the makers -- Tandav is a dance form (the divine dance performed by Lord Shiva), and Tandav Stotra is a hymn composed by Ravana in praise of the god -- it is not a victory jingle! Even if a handful of research scholars and artists struggling for stable employment were hired for

mindful and respect the line between creative liberty and distortion. It is said that in 1987, in villages and small towns, where a TV set was not a common possession, people gathered at a common place before one to watch Ramanand Sagar's 'Ramayan' and when Ram appeared, they held their hands together and bowed in devotion. This is just a snippet of the audience's sentiments associated with the epic and its popular depiction. Away from the screens, various Hindu religious outfits and political parties have joined the chorus to ban the film. It is important to recall here that last October, monks from Ayodhya had raised objections to the "distortions" seen in the film's trailer. The head priest of Ram Janmabhoomi, Acharya Satyendra Das, said that despite protests, the filmmakers misrepresented the characters of Ramayana and "distorted" Hindu deities. Mani Ram Das Chhavi Peeth, the most powerful body of Ayodhya saints, has also backed the demand that the film be banned. No doubt, 'Adipurush' is a thoroughly disappointing misadventure, but one might wonder what is the point of such a film at all. Also, how did the Censor Board not feel the need to "regulate" its content? When 'Adipurush' was not even released, there came the news of a 'Ramayana' being made by Nitesh Tiwari, starring Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor as Sita and Ram. So, does the Indian audience not know Ramayana enough to be educated about it (or entertained) through commercial cinema? Or does it serve some other purpose by keeping people engaged in a circular discourse and have them enforce their Hindu identity on the pretext of Ramayana for reasons that warrant another discussion? Let us wait and watch!

international

NEARLY 200 RUSSIAN SOLDIERS KILLED IN A DAY: UKRAINE

Kiev | Agencies
The Ukrainian military has claimed that nearly 200 Russian soldiers were killed and a variety of equipment had also been destroyed in the past one day. Although the claim was not officially verified, the military went on to say that in the last 48 hours, the frontlines across the war-torn nation witnessed heavy combat, with more than 20 engagements occurring in areas in the Donetsk region -- chiefly Lyman, Marinka and Bakhmut, CNN reported. In its latest update, the General Staff said the Russians also carried out 25 air strikes on Sunday. There had been heavy Russian artillery and mortar fire in the Kupiansk area of



Kharkiv, where the Russians have been trying to break through for over a month, the military added. The General Staff insisted all Russian efforts to take territory had been foiled. Across the Donetsk frontlines, the fighting was characterised by exchanges of indirect fire, but with little

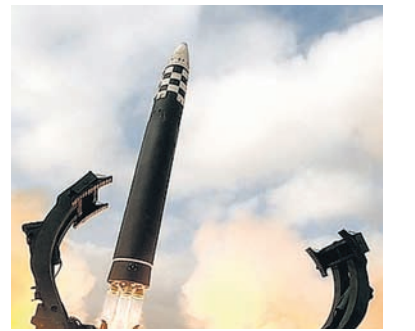
movement. However, the Ukrainians say they are on the front foot around Bakhmut. "(Troops) hold the initiative, continue assault operations and push the enemy back. Over the last day, the Ukrainian forces advanced 600 to 1,000 meters on the southern and northern flanks around Bakhmut," CNN quoted Serhii Cherevatyi, a spokesperson for the Eastern Grouping of the Armed Forces, as saying. In the south, where Ukrainian forces have attempted to break through Russian lines, the General Staff said a Russian effort to regain lost positions in the area of Novodarivka had also failed. Russian artillery continued to strike about 30 settlements along the frontlines in the Zaporizhzhia region, it added. In Kherson, Nataliya Humenyuk, a spokesperson for Ukrainian forces in the south, said the Russians struggled to regain positions on the east bank of the river Dnipro, which was flooded by the June 6 damage to the dam at Nova Kakhovka.

Erdogan urges Sweden to end PKK protests for its NATO membership

Ankara | Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has urged Sweden to prevent the demonstrations by supporters of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Stockholm in exchange for a green light on its NATO bid. In a phone conversation with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on Sunday, Erdogan said his country continues its "constructive attitude" toward Sweden's joining the alliance, according to a statement from his office. But Erdogan said the Nordic country's change on terror laws does not meet the expectation of Ankara as long as the PKK can demonstrate in the country "freely", reports Xinhua news agency. Turkey has long been saying that Ankara will only admit Sweden's NATO bid in the upcoming Vilnius summit if the latter takes concrete steps to prevent anti-Turkiye "terror" activities in the country, the statement said. The latest developments in Russia were also discussed during the phone call, it added.

N.Korea warns Korean Peninsula close to 'brink of nuclear war'

Seoul | Agencies
North Korea's Foreign Ministry on Monday accused Seoul and Washington of pushing tensions to "the brink of a nuclear war" akin to the 1950-53 Korean War, saying it will continue to bolster its self-defensive capabilities. In a research report released by the Ministry's Institute for American Studies, North Korea likened the current military tensions in the region to the night before the outbreak of the Korean War as it slammed the US and South Korea for their "delusional anti-communist military confrontation" and "rhetorical threats", reports Yonhap News Agency. "Such bellicose moves of the US have pushed the military tensions on the Korean peninsula and in Northeast Asia already plunged into an extremely unstable situation closer to the brink of a nuclear war," the Ministry said in a report released by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). The North argued that the US is "resorting to the worrying hostile acts of wantonly encroaching upon the sovereignty and security" of Pyongyang more



persistently this year than ever before and has reached a threshold that can no longer be tolerated. It then warned that a war on the peninsula would "rapidly expand into a world war and a thermonuclear war unprecedented in the world", causing "the most catastrophic and irreversible consequences" to peace and security in the region and the rest of the world. Pyongyang will continue to further accelerate its efforts to bolster "its self-defensive capabilities for safeguarding its sovereignty" unless the US withdraws its "anachronistic hostile policy" and persistent military threat against the North, the report said.

Lightning strike kills 10 in Pakistan

Islamabad | At least 10 people were killed and six others injured after lightning struck several parts of Pakistan's Punjab province, officials said on Monday. The fatalities were reported in the Sheikhpura and Narowal districts, where the lightning struck several houses after heavy rainfall, Xinhua news agency reported. The injured people were shifted nearby, whereas the rescue teams have been put on high alert across the province to meet any untoward situation. In a tweet, Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman said that pre-monsoon rains are forecast across the country till June 30, during which strong winds, thunder, and heavy rain are expected in various cities of Punjab. She mentioned that the heavy rainfall has sparked concerns about flooding in urban areas and potential floods and landslides in mountainous regions. "All concerned and local institutions have been instructed to be alert and tourists to be cautious. Citizens are requested to stay away from vulnerable infrastructure, power poles, and rivers during strong winds and rains to avoid any untoward incident," Rehman added.

Ottawa air quality rising to 'very high risk' again due to forest fires

Ottawa | Agencies
The air quality in the Canadian capital of Ottawa started out bad and got worse during the weekend, rising to "very high risk" on the federal air quality index's highest level. "High levels of air pollution have developed due to smoke from forest fires. Smoke plumes from forest fires in Quebec have moved into the area, resulting in deteriorated air quality," Environment Canada said in an official statement. In response, organisers of two out of the four major festivals in Ottawa have made the decision to cancel events, while the city of Ottawa has taken the step to cancel its outdoor programs and close wading pools and outdoor pools. The Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival on West Hunt Club ended a day earlier than scheduled due to concerns over air quality. The organisers assured attendees who were worried about the air quality



and chose not to participate in the activities that they would be reimbursed. The Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival, which in its final day, cancelled all paddling events. The City of Gatineau announced it was closing beaches on Sunday morn-

ing, while other measures could also become necessary. Air quality readings are expected to drop to a level 7 on Monday, which is still a high risk, returning to a moderate risk at night. Current weather conditions could worsen forest fires in Quebec and spark new ones, the Minister of Public Security announced. According to a statement from the ministry, several parts of the province are currently experiencing a flammability index ranging from "very high" to "extreme" indicating a significant risk of burning. The heightened risk is attributed to decreased levels of precipitation and rising temperatures, which have intensified the threat of forest fires. Several regions are currently under close surveillance including Abitibi-Temiscamingue, the North Shore, northern Quebec and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. SOPFEU, Quebec's forest fire agency, is actively engaged in combating 81 fires across the province, with

25 of them being classified as out of control. Presently, the agency has prioritized its resources towards managing 43 fires. Several municipalities have had to evacuate in the last few days, including some parts of the northwestern city of Senneterre. On June 23, authorities issued an evacuation order of 60 cottages in a rural area, around 30 km north of the city centre. Later in the day, evacuation orders were also issued for certain sectors of Beaucanton, Val-Paradis and Lac Pajegasque in the northwestern parts of the province. According to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, there were five new wildfires burning in Canada on Sunday, bringing the total across the country this year to 2,880. Wildfires have so far devoured about 74,000 square km of land in Canada, making 2023 one of the worst years for wildfires on record, according to the center.



MVA SLAMS KCR'S 'PILGRIMAGE' TO MAHA AS POLITICAL STUNT WITH DOUBTFUL MOTIVES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As Bharat Rashtra Samithi President and Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao reached Osmanabad for his pilgrimage to the temple town of Pandharpur on Tuesday, the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) questioned his 'intentions' behind the garb of expanding his party's influence in Maharashtra, here on Monday.



'Telengana Pattern' is as deceptive as the 'Gujarat Pattern'.

The MVA allies including Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar and MLC Amol Mitkar, Congress state President Nana Patole, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut and others slammed Rao who zoomed into this state with an entourage of around 600 vehicles, all ministers and legislators, plus BRS leaders to pray at the Shri Vitthal Rukmini Temple in Pandharpur, Solapur district.

When questioned on the Telangana CM's high-profile trip, Pawar merely said that "the impact of his (KCR's) trip remains to be seen".

Dubbing KCR as the 'B-Team' of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Patole said the trip will not create any political ripples in this state since the

"He is only making big announcements through the media... People who work don't need to advertise, but he has done nothing for the people of Telangana in the past 9 years. He is coming here to take political advantage from the Pandharpur pilgrimage which attracts over a million devotees from all over Maharashtra," said Patole. Raut questioned the "inten-

tions behind KCR's trip" and asked the Telangana CM to first decide whose side he's on. "KCR's intentions don't appear to be honourable... He's trying to divide the Opposition votes in Maharashtra," said Raut, adding that it won't work here.

NCP MLC Amol Mitkar alleged that KCR and his team are eating mutton-chicken and coming to the holy pilgrim centre in Solapur. "They are consuming royal mut-

ton-chicken and now going to defile the sacred pilgrimage town of Pandharpur. They must think ten thousand times before coming there and playing with peoples' emotions," warned Mitkar.

In the past few months, KCR has come to Maharashtra several times and opened the BRS's first office in this state in Nagpur last week, aiming for a national party status with presence in multiple states.

Political sources indicated that the BRS may plunge into the upcoming civic, Parliament and Assembly elections in Maharashtra, rattling the Opposition parties here as it could spell a vote-split benefiting the ruling Shiv Sena-BJP alliance.

Earlier, the Hyderabad-based All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) fought and won several elections with representatives in Lok Sabha, Maharashtra Assembly and a few civic bodies in the past 7-8 years.

However, other outstation parties - barring Samajwadi Party - have not been embraced by the state electorate, and the political fights are restricted to the major state-level players.

Progressive Indian Muslims bat for a 'religion-neutral, gender-just' UCC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Indian Muslims for Secular Democracy (IMSD) has supported the proposal for a Uniform Civil Code (UCC), terming it as consistent with the provisions of the Constitution, while demanding it should be 'religion-neutral and gender-just', here on Monday.



In a statement, the IMSD also urged the Indian secular political parties "not to fall in the trap of the Bharatiya Janata Party" or Muslim religious bodies like AIMPLB, JUEH, JeIH which oppose the UCC as being contrary to Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution. The IMSD Convenor Javed Anand and Co-Convenors A. J. Jawad, Arshad Alam, Feroze Mithiborwala, Irfan Engineer and Nasreen Contractor, also slammed the Muslim clergy for continuing to 'cling' to medieval, patriarchal notions of gender relations in the name of Islam, and contrary to their false claims, the Muslim Personal Law is not God-given but man-made. They said in recent

have understandably led to apprehensions that the motive of the Modi-led government is suspect. This notwithstanding IMSD calls upon secular political parties not to fall in the trap set by the BJP," it said.

The IMSD said that the Muslim Ulemas willfully ignore the fact that the Article 25 concerning the right to freedom of religion also states, "Nothing in this article shall... prevent the State from making any law "providing for social welfare and reform..."

"The personal laws of all religious communities that we inherited at independence were grossly discriminatory against women. In the decades since, there have been a number of enactments ushering in some reforms in the family laws concerning Hindus and Christians," said the IMSD.

However, the Muslim religious bodies have staunchly resisted any change and never taken a single step in reforming Muslim Personal Law many of whose provisions are blatantly unjust, anti-women, even un-Quranic.

Rights Body notice to Maha govt, Police Chief over 11 labourers kept chained

Team Absolute | New Delhi | Mumbai

The NHRC has sent notices to the Maharashtra government and the state's police chief over 11 labourers allegedly being kept chained in Osmanabad district by a contractor to dig wells and prevent them from escaping, officials said on Monday.



grave violation of the human rights of the labourers, the commission said.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in a statement observed that the provisions of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act have been "grossly violated" by the contractor in this case.

The incident clearly indicates the "failure of the local administration to safeguard the labourers from such brutality committed upon them by the contractors, without any fear of the law". The officers who failed to do their lawful duty are required to be dealt with according to law, the rights panel said.

The content of the media report, if true, amounts to a

The NHRC has taken "suo motu cognisance of a media report that 11 labourers were kept chained by the contractor to dig wells and prevent them from escaping in the Osmanabad district of Maharashtra," it said in the statement on Monday.

The labourers were allegedly forced to work for 12 hours a day to dig a well without any wages. They got food once a day and were forced to answer nature's call inside the well itself. Reportedly, they were rescued on June 17 after one of them managed to sneak out, reached his village

in the state's Hingoli district and informed the police about the torture, the statement said. Mere rescue by the police and arrest of some of the accused in this case is "not going to serve the purpose", the rights panel observed. Accordingly, it has issued notices to the state's chief secretary and the director general of police, seeking a detailed report within four weeks. According to the June 21 media report, the labourers were deployed by the contractors two-three months ago to dig a well in Khamaswadi and Wakharwadi villages under the Dhoki police station limits in Osmanabad.

Fadnavis needles Pawar's 1978 'feat'; the wily Maratha calls him an 'ignoramus'

▶ ATTEMPTING TO DEFEND RULING SHIV SENA CHIEF MINISTER EKNATH SHINDE, ALLY BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY'S DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER DEVENDRA FADNAVIS ATTEMPTED TO POKE NATIONALIST CONGRESS PARTY PRESIDENT SHARAD PAWAR, BUT ENDED UP WITH A BLOODY NOSE.



a slice of history to cover Shinde with a cloak of credibility.

Referring to the revolt of Shinde and others in June 2022, Fadnavis drew attention to a similar event in 1978 when Pawar, 38, had toppled the then CM Vasantao 'Dada' Patil to become the state's youngest CM - a record that he still retains. He went on to become the CM for three more times, an unbeaten achievement. Harking to this critical 45-year-old

piece of history, Fadnavis said Pawar had walked out of the late Patil's cabinet with 40 MLAs and formed the government with the help of the then Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party group and others, and his regime lasted some 18 months.

"What Pawar did was termed as political statesmanship, but when Shinde did the same, it's called 'beimaan' (dishonesty)... How can that be..." boomed Fadnavis,

attempting to push the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) into a corner.

When asked to comment on this, a relaxed and smiling Pawar said in Pune (on Monday) with a glint that when he had formed the government in 1978, "the then BJP was Jan Sangh" that came with him.

"Fadnavis may have been in primary school at that time. So has no knowledge of that period. He speaks such things out of ignorance, and should not be given much importance," said Pawar.

Compared with the onslaught, the 83-year-old Pawar's reply appeared on the dot - in 1978, Fadnavis, 53, was barely 8 years old and actually sitting on a primary school bench when Patil was dethroned..!

Emphasising Fadnavis' lack of historical knowledge, Pawar elaborated that: "I had formed the government with the support of everyone. The late Uttamrao Patil of the Jana Sangh was also a part of the government along with the late Hashu Advani and others. He (Fadnavis) may have been in primary school at that time so didn't know anything about that era..."

BJP GOVERNMENT WILL BE DISLODGED BY "INDIA'S WAGNER GROUP": TEAM UDDHAV

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Shiv Sena (UBT) on Monday claimed the "Wagner group" in India, a reference to opposition parties, will dislodge the Narendra Modi government through the ballot box by using the path of non-violence.



An editorial in the Sena (UBT) mouthpiece 'Saamana' drew a parallel between Wagner mercenary group's "revolt against Russian President Putin" and the meeting of opposition parties in Patna last week. Drawing the battle lines, over 32 leaders of more than a dozen opposition parties held a crucial meeting in Patna hosted by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on

Friday and resolved to take on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) unit-lessly in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. The editorial in Saamana said the "Wagner group" has shown dictatorship can be challenged. "Be it PM Modi or Putin, they have to face rebellion. The government in India will be dislodged by a non-violent Wagner and that route will be through the ballot box," it claimed. Like Putin, PM Modi has to go, but in a democratic manner, it said. "The Wagner group came together in Patna as a protector of democracy," the Marathi daily said, referring to the conclave of the opposition parties in Bihar capital last week.

8 killed, 7 injured in truck collision in Maharashtra's Ratnagiri

Team Absolute | Mumbai



At least eight persons were killed and seven others injured when a speeding truck collided with a passenger vehicle in Maharashtra's Ratnagiri district, police said on Monday.

The accident occurred at Asud on the Dapoli-Harnai Road when a truck heading towards Dapoli from Harnai being driven on the wrong side of the road rammed into a three-wheeler vehicle, carrying 15 passengers on Sunday afternoon, an official

said. Five passengers were killed on the spot and three others succumbed to their injuries at a hospital, the official said, adding that seven persons were injured. In a tweet, Maharashtra

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde expressed grief and announced voluntary funds of Rs 5 lakh to the family of each killed which will be paid from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Man stabs friend to death in Thane over argument

Team Absolute | Thane

A 25-year-old man allegedly stabbed his friend to death in an inebriated state during a quarrel in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Monday.



The incident took place in Pisavali area of Dombivili town on Sunday night, an official said.

The two men were consuming alcohol, when they entered into a heated argument and the accused whipped out a knife and stabbed the victim Shailesh Shilvant (28) multiple times, inspector Suresh Madne of Manpada police station said.

The victim managed to escape from the scene, but fell some distance away. People in the vicinity rushed him to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead, he said.

The accused was taken into custody following a probe, the official added.

2 Bodies recovered from debris of building that collapsed due to rain

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 94-year-old woman and a man aged 56 were found dead on Monday in the debris of a ground-plus-three storey building which collapsed in Ghatkopar area of Mumbai the previous day, a civic official said.



A portion of the building located in Chittaranjan Nagar of Rajawadi Colony in suburban Ghatkopar collapsed at around 9.30 am on Sunday.

Later, three persons were safely rescued and efforts were underway to bring out two persons trapped there, the official said. While removing the debris, fire personnel found two persons on Monday. They were rushed to a hospital where doctors declared them "brought dead," he said.

The dead have been identified as Alka Mahadev Palande (94) and

Nareesh Palande (56), the official said. After the incident on Sunday, fire brigade, police, civic personnel and a team of the National Disaster

Response Force (NDRF) had rushed to the spot to carry out rescue work.

In another incident on Sunday, a 70-year-old man and a 65-year-old

woman died and two persons were injured after a part of the balcony of a building collapsed in Vile Parle area here.



Hayley Atwell

Trained with Olympic martial arts expert for 'MI - Dead Reckoning'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Hayley Atwell, who plays Grace in 'Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One' said she had to train "for months" to get in shape, not just for the action sequences but also to keep up with co-star Tom Cruise, who reprises his role as Ethan Hunt.

"It blew my mind. Every day on set was like, 'What am I doing today? What am I jumping off?' I trained for months with an Olympic martial arts expert to develop a fight sequence for my character that was tailored to my own strengths," she told the Daily Star Sunday newspaper, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I can also now back-flip over a bridge, jump backwards off a moving train and run uphill in high heels while being handcuffed to Tom Cruise but I'm not sure when those skills might be useful."

Despite the difficulty of making the film, Hayley still had a great time. She said, "I do enjoy it when I'm able to do [stunts]. I played rugby at school, so I'm used to being knocked down, brushing myself off and going for it again."

The British star particularly enjoyed one driving scene where she was shackled to her co-star. She said, "It was intense. We were speeding round Rome with Tom driving with one hand and the other cuffed to me. It took months of training for that scene in a little car. We got to speed and drift around streets, fountains, down stairs all over Rome. It was quite something."



New 'Star Wars'

Projects to expand on franchise lore and mythology

Los Angeles | Agencies

At the recent Star Wars Celebration 2023, Disney+ unveiled a bunch of new projects and these include web series such as 'The Mandalorian' Season 3, 'Ahsoka', 'Andor' Season 2, and more.

As per the official Star Wars portal, forthcoming projects will focus on expanding the existing Star Wars lore and mythology, focusing on both the "great past" as well as the "distant future" post the events of the sequel trilogy. Keeping most of the details under wraps, Lucasfilm President Kathleen Kennedy had earlier said that

the new Star Wars movies will cover drastically different eras of the Star Wars timeline. One of them will go back to the beginning, focusing on the origins of the Force. The project will be helmed by 'Logan' director James Mangold, who is in the news because of the upcoming Indiana Jones movie: 'Dial of Destiny'.

In addition, Dave Filoni, SharmeenObaid-Chinoy and Taika Waititi are also set to get their hands on new Star Wars projects.

Earlier, Kennedy had stated that the new sequel films will be

set 15 years after the events of 'The Rise Of Skywalker'. The First Order has fallen and the Jedi are almost non-existent, so it is now up to Jedi Master Rey to build up a new Order, based on what Luke Skywalker taught her.

My series 'The Crowded Room' has been 'horribly reviewed': Tom Holland

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Tom Holland has been open about how difficult it was to film 'The Crowded Room' and how it affected his mental health.

"It's no secret that my show 'The Crowded Room' has been horribly reviewed," the 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' star said during an interview with Unilad's Get a Job!

Holland joked that his "resilience" to the criticism stems from being a fan of the Tottenham soccer club as they "have never won anything" and added, "Supporting them is incredibly difficult."

"I'm here today to promote the show," he continued. "I'm still here. I'm very resilient. It's a good quality in a new employee."

Later on in the video, Holland talked about what he wanted to convey with the series saying, "The message of the show, which can speak to so many different issues, is that asking for help should be something that we as a society celebrate. It's an act of bravery."

He continued: "Whether it is substance abuse, whether it is abuse at home, whether it is abuse at school standing up and asking for help is not something you should be ashamed of and I hope that this show can represent that in a truthful and authentic, and most importantly sensitive way. So, for me, if we can somehow make people feel empowered by saying, 'I'm not feeling good, I really need some help,' then we've done what we've set out to do."

AMBER HEARD RETURNS TO RED CARPET ONE YEAR AFTER JOHNNY DEPP TRIAL

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actress Amber Heard arrived in style at the 69th Taormina Film Festival for the premiere of her movie 'In The Fire', marking her first major public appearance since losing the widely-covered Johnny Depp defamation trial.

Heard, 37, was seen smiling at the Taormina Film Festival in Italy on Saturday.

It marked her first red carpet event since she and her ex-husband Johnny Depp's televised defamation trial came to an end a little more than a year ago.

As per 'People', the 'Aquaman' actress walked the red carpet in a long black dress that featured a belt across her waist.

She had her hair styled in tight curls that fell around her shoulders and wore a bold red lipstick.

Praising her new film 'In The Fire', Heard told 'People': "It's a beautiful movie about the almost supernatural effect and force of love. It is about the boundaries that love can cross and its creation, and really about the overwhelming power that love has."

She added: "I don't want to sound cheesy about it, but it's a movie about love."

In the supernatural thriller, Heard plays a "pioneering psychiatrist who sets out to treat a desperate child at a time when psychiatry is not yet a respected science".

'In The Fire' director Conor Allyn and co-star Eduardo Noriega also attended the premiere at the Taormina Film Festival on Saturday, alongside Heard.

Heard has largely stayed away from the public eye after losing the court battle, and had even moved to Spain with her daughter Oonagh Paige after selling her house in California.



Lily-Rose Depp finds filming racy scenes on 'The Idol' 'therapeutic'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Lily-Rose Depp, who plays Jocelyn on the controversial series 'The Idol', said that she didn't feel bothered filming those scenes and she found it "therapeutic" instead.

Los Angeles, June 26 (IANS) Actress Lily-Rose Depp, who plays Jocelyn on the controversial series 'The Idol', said that she didn't feel bothered filming racy scenes and she found it "therapeutic" instead.

"It's all me. I love doing that kind of work," Lily-Rose told 'The Sun', reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I don't think there's anything wrong with that. And I don't think there's anything wrong with enjoying that kind of work."

The daughter of Johnny Depp and Vanessa Paradis went on to say, "Every outfit and every interaction and every piece of nudity and all those things are very intentional and were really important to me."

She added: "Maybe this makes me, like, a little twisted but I feel really good after



doing scenes like that because there's something that feels very therapeutic about it to me - and maybe that's why I like doing this job."

"Maybe there's something wrong with me but it feels very cathartic and I feel very drained of anything that I maybe needed to let go of."

"Obviously when you go that far emotionally, you have to find it within yourself, it has to come from some place real. Some place inside of you," she continued.

"Even if you're performing a scene that is completely fictionalised, and you've never actually gone through any of that stuff, you have to find it within yourself. But I find that kind of work to be really healing, actually."

Lily-Rose isn't the only star defending 'The Idol' following backlash. Prior to this, The Weeknd, who stars as shady club owner Tedros, called the show "almost educational" in a new interview.



IDRIS, OLIVIA, WOODY HELP KING CHARLES LAUNCH NEW YOUTUBE CHANNEL

London | Agencies

Hollywood stars Idris Elba, Olivia Colman, Woody Harrelson have joined hands together to help King Charles launch a new YouTube channel dedicated to the environment.

RE:TV is the new platform for showcasing "sustainable solutions to the climate and biodiversity crisis," according to the King, reports 'Variety'.

It is the digital extension of his non-profit, also called RE:TV, which he founded in 2020. The org has made over 100 short films about innovative environmental projects worldwide, which have previously been launched on platforms including Bloomberg and Waterbear.

Now, with its own YouTube channel, RE:TV will be able to debut its content

directly online.

To celebrate the launch, RE:TV has made a short film titled "The Speeches: 50 Years of Speaking Up For The Planet" featuring 19 actors and environmentalists who quote some of the environment-focused speeches King Charles has delivered over the years between 1970 and 2020, when he was still the Prince of Wales.

They include Elba Colman and Harrelson in addition to actor Glenn Close, BBC gardening presenter Danny Clarke, YouTube environmental campaigner Jack Harries and climate activist Leah Thomas.

The speeches are interspersed with video clips of deforestation, garbage and the impacts of climate change such as floods.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Lana Del Rey



Special Olympics World Summer Games

INDIAN CONTINGENT CREATE HISTORY IN BERLIN, WON RECORD 202 MEDALS

Berlin | Agencies

The Special Olympics World Games 2023 came to close here on Monday, after an evocative, emotional and triumphant closing ceremony at the Brandenburg gate in the centre of the city.

The gate had served as a restricted zone when the city was divided by the Wall, and has, ever since been a beacon of unity - a fitting parable for a sporting event that celebrates unity, diversity and special skills.

India finished the final day of the Games by taking their medal tally to 202 medals (76 gold, 75 silver and 51 bronze), with the last of the medals coming from the athletics track. Indian athletes notched six medals from the track events (2 gold, 3 silver and 1 bronze).

The headlines would undoubtedly go to the gold medallists Aanchal Goyal (400m, Level B Female) and Ravimathi Arumugam (400m, Level C Female) who blew away their competition to take the top of the podium.



And yet, it is important to note that the colour of the medal is not in itself a judge of the performance. Saket Kundu, who had earlier grabbed a silver medal in the mini javelin Level B, also won a bronze in the Level B 400m, a rare double act in the track and field. Speaking about the Indian contingent's performance at the Berlin Games, Chairperson Special Olympics Bharat, Dr Mallika Nada was keen to highlight not just their

performance but also the need for inclusion and acceptance of these athletes by the mainstream.

"A huge number of our athletes have faced social discrimination of various forms, and are regarded as non functioning members of society in various quarters. It is an obsolete thought, and an inaccurate one too. Their performance in the sporting arena prove that they are capable of great feats, or strength, speed, concentration and discipline. And I hope this opens the eyes of those on the outside and proves that we need to expand this movement further and make it more inclusive."

The Games ended with an evening gathering at the Brandenburg gate, with members of every contingent invited up on a stage to represent the spirit of unity and bring to the fore the importance of the Special Olympics movement.

At the press conference to conclude the event, earlier in the day, the conversations circled around how the Berlin Games had been a groundbreaking event, with over 330,000 people attending the World Games live. Many others watched on television and through other media.

"I feel very humbled to be in this city. The city of Berlin has welcomed us," said Hanna Joy Atkinson, Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger. "This was my first World Games ever and I had the chance to do so many things as an athlete leader."

Jhulan Goswami, Heather Knight, Eoin Morgan join MCC World Cricket Committee

London | Agencies

Legendary India fast bowler Jhulan Goswami, England women's captain Heather Knight and 2019 Men's ODI World Cup winning captain Eoin Morgan have joined the MCC World Cricket Committee, said the Marylebone Cricket Club on Monday.

Jhulan, a Padma Shri, and Arjuna Awardee, is often regarded as one of the fastest bowlers in the women's game. She represented India in 12 Tests, 204 ODIs and 68 T20Is from 2002 to 2022, picking 355 wickets across formats, the most by any bowler in women's international cricket.

She also won the ICC Women's Player of the Year award in 2007 and rose to number one in the ICC Women's ODI bowling rankings in January 2016. Jhulan was also the captain of the Indian women's cricket team from 2008 to 2011.

In ODIs, she picked 255 wickets, a record in women's



international cricket. Jhulan played for India in five Women's ODI World Cups - 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2022. She remains the leading wicket-taker in the history of the Women's Cricket World Cups with 43 scalps and was made an Honorary Life Member of MCC in April this year.

Heather has captained England since 2016 and lifted the Women's ODI World Cup at Lord's only a year after taking on the role. The all-rounder has been one of the trailblazers for the women's

game in England, scoring over 5,000 international runs in white-ball cricket, and 705 runs in her ten Test matches.

Morgan captained England in both men's ODI and T20 cricket with distinction and became one of the most respected and successful international skippers in the modern era. He also lifted the Men's ODI World Cup trophy at the end of an unforgettable final against New Zealand in 2019, and was made an Honorary Life Member of MCC earlier this year.

Alcaraz clinches first title on grass at Queen's Club

London | Agencies

World No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz clinched his first title on grass as the Spaniard defeated Alex de Minaur of Australia 6-4, 6-4 at Queen's Club here on Sunday.

This victory also means that the 20-year-old will overtake Novak Djokovic to be the men's World No. 1, and will play at the upcoming grass-court Wimbledon Championships as the top seed, reports Xinhua.

Alcaraz battled hard in the first round at Queen's Club as he came from one set down to edge lucky loser Arthur Rinderknech on Tuesday. But the 2022 U.S. Open champion adapted his game well on grass, winning the following four matches all in straight sets.

Alcaraz reached the round of last 16 at last year's Wimbledon and said he believed he has many weapons on grass.

"I try to hit big shots all the time. I think I have improved my serves a lot. And with the forehand, I try to dominate all the time," he said.



Ashleigh Gardner claims 8/66 as Australia beat England by 89 runs

Nottingham | Agencies

Off-spinner Ashleigh Gardner starred with the ball, claiming a brilliant 8/66 in the second innings as England were bowled out for 178 before lunch on day five of the one-off Women's Ashes Test, handing Australia an easy 89-run victory, here on Monday.

Ashleigh's effort means she finishes the one-off Test with an astonishing 12 wickets, after previously picking four wickets in the first innings, with her haul being an Australian record. For England, debutant Danni Wyatt top-scored with 54 before she was trapped lbw by Ashleigh as Australia wrapped up the match within 21 overs on final day's play.

Ashleigh also became the second bowler to take eight wickets in an innings in women's Tests, after India's Neetu David took 8/53 against England in 1995. Her overall match figures of 12/165 are second-best figures in women's Tests after Pakistan's Shaiza Khan took 13/226 against West Indies in 2004. The result means Australia will need to win only two of the six white-ball matches to retain the



Ashes in the multi-format, with the first of the three T20Is starting from July 1 in Birmingham.

England resumed day five from 116/5, chasing a record target of 268, after losing five wickets in quick succession on day four left them requiring

152 more runs to get an improbable win.

Danni and Kate Cross added 25 runs for the sixth wicket before the latter was caught behind for 13 off Ashleigh, who spun a vicious web around the England batters to outclass them with ridiculous ease. Despite Danni hanging around for some resistance, she couldn't find support from the other end. Amy Jones was stumped by Alyssa Healy, Sophie Ecclestone was trapped lbw and Lauren Filer was castled for a duck, before Danni finally fell to give Australia four points.

For England, they had their moments with Tammy Beaumont scoring 208 in first innings, and Sophie Ecclestone taking a 10-wicket haul in the match, recording five wickets in both innings. But it was ultimately overshadowed by Ashleigh's stunning efforts.

Brief scores

Australia 473 and 257 beat England 463 and 178 in 49 overs (Danni Wyatt 54; Ashleigh Gardner 8/66) by 89 runs.

Ravi Bishnoi moves to Gujarat from Rajasthan ahead of 2023/24 domestic cricket season

Niharika Raina | New Delhi

India leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi has decided to move on from Rajasthan and join the Gujarat team ahead of the upcoming 2023/24 season of Indian domestic cricket.

On Monday, Bishnoi posted a story on his Instagram account, wearing the Gujarat practice jersey with the association logo and captioned the post with 'new beginning'.

Pradyot Singh Rathore, Bishnoi's coach alongside Shahrukh Pathan at the Spartans Cricket Academy in his hometown Jodhpur, said to reporter, "Yes I know, he will be playing for them (Gujarat) now."

IANA also reached out to Bishnoi, the Rajasthan as well as Gujarat Cricket Associations for further information. At the time of publishing the



story, it is still awaiting those responses. Bishnoi has featured in 10 T20Is since his debut in February 2022, picking 16 wickets at an economy rate

of 7.08. He also has one scalp from a solitary ODI appearance against South Africa at Lucknow last year. The Jodhpur-based leg-spinner

claimed 16 wickets for Lucknow Super Giants in IPL 2023, as the side reached the playoffs for second straight time before crashing out of the competition by losing to Mumbai Indians in the eliminator in Chennai.

Bishnoi first shot into limelight by being a part of the India U19 team becoming runners-up in 2020 Men's Cricket World Cup, after losing to Bangladesh in the final, where he finished as the leading wicket-taker with 17 scalps. Though Bishnoi has made regular appearances for Rajasthan in white-ball games in domestic matches, he played just one first-class match for the side in last season's Ranji Trophy. For the upcoming domestic season, Gujarat will be coached by former India spinner Ramesh Powar, who was also the head coach of the national women's team.

Italy take gold at European Athletics Team Championships

Warsaw | Agencies

Italy won the gold medal at the 2023 European Athletics Team Championships in Chorzow, Poland, followed by Poland and Germany.

Sunday was the last day of the championships, which form part of the 2023 European Games currently being held in Poland, reports Xinhua.

Italy, who were leading the general classification after Saturday's competition, handled the pressure to claim the title with 426.5 points. Second-placed Poland earned 402.5 points, while Germany took bronze medals with 387.5 points. Italy's Zane Weir led the way in the men's shot put, with a best throw of 21.59 meters. Britain's Scott Lincoln took second place, while Poland's Michal Haratyk completed the top three. Italy captain Gianmarco Tamberi also met expectations to win the men's high jump. He jumped 2.29, the same as Thomas Carmoy of Belgium, who needed two efforts to clear the bar and was



relegated to second place as a result. Thierry Ndikumenyayo made a dream debut on his first appearance for Spain, taking victory in the men's 5,000m with a time of 13:25.48. Andreas Almgren of Sweden finished second, 22 seconds adrift. In one of the final competitions of the day, fans at the Silesia Stadium were treated to a thrilling finish in the women's 1,500m as Spain's Esther Guerrero beat Martyna Galant of Poland by just 0.01 seconds, with 4:11.77 on the scoreboard.

Himanshu, Sift and Esha register wins in shooting trials

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Himanshu Talan of Indian Army stunned a quality field to win the sixth (T6) men's 10m air rifle national selection trials at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range, here on Monday.

Sift Kaur Samra in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P) and Esha Singh in the women's 25m pistol also emerged winners in their respective events.

The national selection trials 5 and 6 for Group A rifle and pistol shooters, currently underway at the DKSSR, assume greater significance as the Indian teams for the World Championships and the Asian Games are set to be selected right after the ongoing event.

Himanshu denied reigning air rifle world champion Rudranksh Patil, who had otherwise been shooting brilliantly to reach two finals in two days and finished fourth and second respectively. The Army man finished with a total of 252.9 after the 24-shot final, 0.9 ahead of the world champion. He did not shoot a single nine throughout and recorded four scores of 10.8, including his 24th shot, and five scores of 10.7. The other form shooter Hriday Hazarika of Assam, finished third on



the day to go with a second in the T5 on Monday. Hriday would be happy though that he topped qualification with a score of 632, a second successive day he has matched that score. Meanwhile, Punjab's Sift Kaur Samra looked a different league in the women's 3P. She shot a 592 first in qualification to top it, which was a repeat of the T5 trial qualification performance on Sunday. Then she won the 45-shot final, a huge four points ahead of second placed Manini Kaushik of Rajasthan.

Sift had opened up a huge gap over the field after the first 15 kneeling shots itself and never looked back. State-mate Anjum Moudgil was third, which along with her qualification score of 589 to finish second, will surely boost the confidence of the former world championship silver medalist.

SEAN WILLIAMS' 174 LEADS ZIMBABWE TO MAMMOTH 304-RUN WIN OVER USA

Harare | Agencies

Stand-in captain Sean Williams slammed a majestic 174 off 101 balls to lead Zimbabwe to a mammoth 304-run victory over USA in their Group A match of Men's ODI World Cup Qualifiers at the Harare Sports Club, here on Monday.

Apart from Williams, opener Joylord Gumbie's 78, as well as whirlwind knocks of 48 and 47 from Sikandar Raza and Ryan Burl respectively propelled Zimbabwe to their highest ODI total of a mammoth 408/6 in 50 overs.

The hosts then bowled out USA for just 104 in 25.1 overs to seal their fourth straight win in the group, also the second biggest winning margin in terms of runs in the history of ODIs. Raza and Richard Ngarava took two wickets each as only three USA batters could reach double figures in an innings which also had three run outs.



Brief scores

Zimbabwe 408/6 in 50 overs (Sean Williams 174, Joylord Gumbie 78; Abhishek Paradar 3/78, Jessy Singh 2/97) beat USA 104 in 25.1 overs (Abhishek Paradar 24, Jessy Singh 21; Sikandar Raza 2/15, Richard Ngarava 2/25) by 304 runs.

Pushed into batting first, Gumbie and Innocent Kaia added 56 runs

for the first wicket. Kaia eventually fell to Jessy Singh while going for a loft in the leg-side. It brought the inform Williams to the crease, who showed signs of aggression by hitting 6,4,4 off Nisarg Patel's bowling in the 15th over.

Despite the loss of Gumbie, Williams marched forward and found an able ally in Raza as they brought up their fifty-run stand in merely 27 balls to pile on the pain on USA bowlers.

By the time Raza fell for 48, the tournament hosts had already crossed the 300-run mark in the 43rd over.

Burl then lifted Zimbabwe even further in their innings with a quickfire 47 off 16 balls, and Williams went on to score freely before falling for 174 in the 49th over. Tadiwanashe Marumani Jessy Singh for 19 runs in the final over, including two fours and a six to take Zimbabwe past 400, effectively batting USA out of the game.



It has everything a good show needs: Addinath Kothare

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Addinath Kothare spoke about trying on a new dialect and why he said yes to the upcoming web show 'Crime Beat'. Talking about what compelled him to say yes to the crime beat script, Addinath said: "I have said yes to this show because it has everything that a good show needs whether it's a script, a great concept, and above all it's a fantastic series. I and Sudhir Mishra sir are working together for the second time so I had a great time with him."

The actor also spoke about his role in the web series by giving some detailed information.

Kothare said: "I always look forward to working with a great team and looking forward to working with different characters which will upgrade and challenge my acting skills so that I can learn something from me. And my role is a Delhi-based cop that I will be seen playing in this web series, and that's a different character, that's a different dialect, and that's a different personality which I have never done before."

"I love challenges, and I love to surprise the audience and myself. It's a great story based on a book. And as the trailers and more material will roll out, the audience will get to know more about the show, and one thing is sure that the audience is going to enjoy the show a lot," he added.

Maanvi Gagroo, Karan Wahi pair up for a unique love story



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actors Maanvi Gagroo and Karan Wahi will be seen sharing screen space in the upcoming show 'Half Love, Half Arranged', a captivating and unique love story.

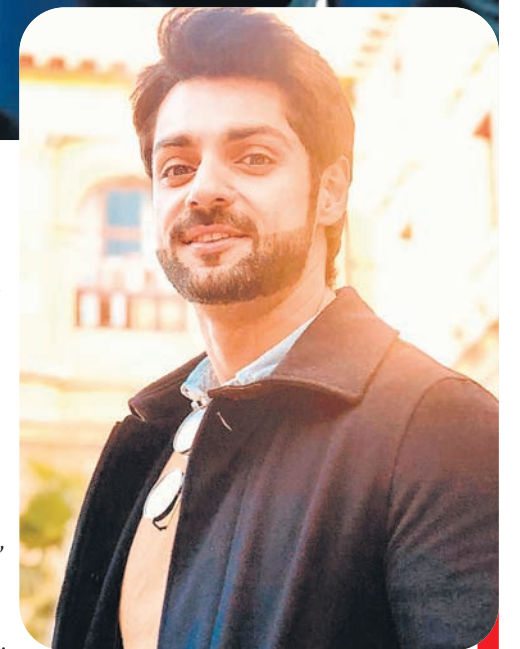
The makers announced the commencement of the shooting of the show.

The series boasts of a stellar ensemble cast including Maanvi, Karan, Pulkit Makol, Shruti Jolly, Supriya Shukla, Grusha Kapoor, Amit Singh Thakur, Bhavya Grover, and Kashish Saluja.

Maanvi said: "Super excited to be starting my next project with Dice Media. Have been a fan of their work in the past so naturally, I'm really looking forward to this. The show boasts a pretty stellar cast with a mix of senior actors and fresh faces."

"The script is very funny with very subtle messaging. The director, Simarpreet's take on the show is extremely fresh and I can't wait to bring this series to you!" she added.

Karan said: "I have come really close to working with Dice Media previously but for some or the other reasons it never worked out, I am glad it has worked out



this time. Shooting this project is going to be such a thrilling experience! It's a hilarious and relatable series that the audience will absolutely adore. Working alongside Maanvi and Simarpreet is going to be a thrilling experience as I am certain they have a lot to offer."

'Half Love, Half Arranged' is a romedy series that will be directed by Simarpreet Singh and will stream on Amazon miniTV post-completion.

UTKARSH SHARMA LEARNT URDU FROM SHAUKAT MIRZA FOR HIS MOVIE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Utkarsh Sharma, who starred in the 2001 release 'Gadar: Ek Prem Katha' as a child artiste (the son of Sunny Deol and Ameesha Patel's character) is now gearing up for the film's sequel, and for the same, the actor learnt the Urdu language to lend authenticity to the character.

The film has been shot in Lucknow which also forms its backdrop, and going by the script, Utkarsh had to learn Urdu for a month in order to get the diction right for his character. The makers hired veteran and renowned Urdu tutor-actor Shaukat Mirza on set during the shooting process. During breaks, Utkarsh used to sit with Mirza and learn Urdu dialogues and their right pronunciation.

Talking about the same, Utkarsh said: "Gadar 2 is a big film not just for me but for everyone involved. The 2001 film has the emotions of millions of Indians attached to it, thus if we are taking that legacy forward, we have to do this with utmost sincerity". He further mentioned: "Considering the backdrop of the film, my character's language is Punjabi but he has to speak in Urdu as well, which couldn't go wrong. It was important to me that I learn the language and its diction with utmost honesty and I hope that it has come out on the screen as well. I can't wait for the audience to see the film and get their honest feedback."

'Gadar 2' sees the return of the lead cast of Sunny, Ameesha and Utkarsh with Anil Sharma as the director. The movie is scheduled to release theatrically on August 11, 2023 where it will clash with the Ranbir Kapoor-starrer 'Animal' and the Akshay Kumar-starrer 'OMG 2'.



Rasika Dugal sports short hair and bangs for upcoming series

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rasika Dugal has unveiled her new look that includes a fresh hairstyle, for the character she will portray in the upcoming series for which she is currently shooting.

Talking to Instagram, Rasika shared her look. With shorter hair and stylish bangs, the actress radiates a sense of freshness.

She posted a video and wrote: "Fringe Benefits #NewWork #NewLook"

However, she did not share details about what the character is or what the series is called.

Rasika has a line-up of projects such as the supernatural thriller 'Adhura' for Amazon Prime, 'Spike: Sports Drama', 'Lord Curzon Ki Haveli: Black Comedy Thriller', 'Fairy Folk: Improv Comedy', and 'Little Thomas: Dramey' set to release this year.



MY UPCOMING DIRECTORIAL GAVE ME A 'DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF INDIAN HISTORY'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress-director-producer Kangana Ranaut, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming directorial 'Emergency', has shared that working on the film gave her a deeper understanding of modern Indian history.

'Emergency', which stars Kangana as the former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, follows the events of the state of Emergency declared by Gandhi in 1975, which is considered to be one of the darkest periods in Independent India as all civil rights including the press freedom were curbed. Talking about the same Kangana shared: "Through the course of filming 'Emergency', learning about the events that unfolded in 1975 gave me a deeper understanding of Indian history. People call it the darkest phase in Indian history, but a lot of people don't understand why Indira ji made that decision. With the film, I aspire to bring that side of the story out too. I am sure, a lot of people will view those events in a different light after watching the film." The film also features the late Satish Kaushik, Anupam Kher, Shreyas Talpade, Mahima Chaudhry, and Milind Soman in pivotal roles.

Presented by Manikarnika Films, 'Emergency' is directed and produced by Kangana Ranaut and has screenplay by Ritesh Shah and story by herself. The film is scheduled to release on November 24, 2023.



'New trend to promote films'

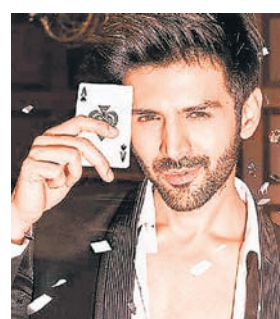
Kartik Aryan flies economy class

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Kartik Aryan was seen flying economy class in an airplane and a video of it has gone viral.

A video shared by celebrity paparazzi Viral Bhayani on Instagram, shows Kartik getting on an Indigo flight and is seen looking for his seat. He is seen wearing a powder blue T-shirt paired with pants.

The video has now got divided attention on social media as some hail the actor to be grounded while others



say it's a new way of promoting the film.

A user wrote in the comment section: "This is the new trend to promote films."

One defended the actor and said: "Lol guys Indigo only has economy class so please."

A netizen said it's a "publicity stunt". "KA will always be a boy with middle class values," said a fan. One quoted a line from the iconic film 'Hera Pheri' and said: "Promotion kachakkar Babubhaiya promotion kachakkar."

Kartik is gearing up for the release of 'Satyaprem Ki Katha' with Kiara Advani. The film will be releasing in theatres on June 29. Directed by Sameer Vidwans, it also stars Gajraj Rao and Supriya Pathak.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Alia Bhatt