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Two killed, Four injured in shootout between armed groups in Manipur

STILL BURNING

Imphal | Agencies

At least two people were killed and four others injured during a shootout between two armed groups in Manipur's Bishnupur-Churachandpur border areas on Friday, officials said. The incident took place early morning near the Phougakchao Ikhai village. The injured people have been taken to the Churachandpur hospital. Para-military and Manipur armed police personnel immediately rushed to the area and launched a search operation to nab the armed cadres.



CONG SLAMS CENTRE OVER US AMBASSADOR'S COMMENTS

New Delhi: Reacting sharply to Garcetti's statement, the Congress said it's very rare for a US envoy to make such a statement on India's internal affairs and that the country has never appreciated any such "interference". "To the best of my recollection going back at least 4 decades in Public life I have never heard a US Ambassador making a statement of this nature about the internal affairs of India," Congress leader Manish Tewari said. "We faced Challenges in Punjab, J&K, North East over the decades and surmounted those with sagacity & wisdom. I doubt if the New @USAmbIndia @ericgarcetti is cognisant of the convoluted & torturous history of US-India relations & our sensitivity about interference perceived or real, well intentioned or mal intentioned into our internal affairs," Tewari said.

Peace meet of 10 political parties slams PM for his silence

Imphal: A Peace Convention of 10 parties, including the Congress, AAP, four Left parties, here on Friday strongly condemned Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for his total silence on Manipur turmoil "as he has neither spoken a single word on the situation nor appealed for peace and restoration of normalcy in the state as yet in the last 65 days". Accusing Chief Minister N. Biren Singh for the ethnic violence and asking him to quit from his post, the Convention resolved that the need of the hour is to restore peace and normalcy, bridge the unprecedented divide among the ethnic groups and heal the wounds of the people. The Peace Convention expressed gratefulness to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his two-day visit to Manipur as a 'Peace Messenger' and hoped that the Parliamentary team of 5 MPs of the Left parties, who came to assess the situation in Manipur, to recommend, through Parliament, to the Centre to take necessary action to restore normalcy, peace and tranquillity in the state and to urgently resolve the ongoing violence in the state. Manipur state Congress President Keisham Meghachandra, Nationalist Congress Party state President S. Iboiyama Singh, Janata Dal-United state President K. Biren Singh, Trinamool Congress Convener Inaocha Singh, Aam Aadmi Party state Coordinator Bishwanath, CPI state Secretary L. Thoiren Singh, CPI-M state Secretary Santa Singh, RSP state Secretary K. Manoranjan Singh, Forward Bloc state Secretary Gyaneshwar Singh and Shiv Sena-UBT state President T. Devananda Singh spoke in the convention.

Rahul Gandhi's request in defamation case rejected by Gujarat High Court

CONGRESS SAYS, RESPECT HIGH COURT JUDGEMENT, WILL APPROACH SUPREME COURT

The Congress party on Friday staged protests against the Gujarat court's verdict on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in different states, terming it as Bharatiya Janata Party's 'political vendetta'.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Gujarat High Court turned down Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's request seeking a hold on his conviction in a defamation case over his 2019 Modi surname remark.

The Gujarat High Court said, "Refusal to stay conviction would not in any way result in injustice to the applicant. There are no reasonable grounds to stay conviction. The conviction is just, proper and legal."

The High Court said there were "as many as 10 cases pending" against Rahul Gandhi and he was "seeking a stay on absolutely non-existent grounds. A stay on conviction is not a rule", said the judge. Soon after the Gujarat High Court on Friday denied stay on the conviction of former Congress president Rahul Gandhi in a 'Modi surname' remark defamation case, the Congress said that it respects the court judgement and would approach the Supreme Court. The party termed the judgement "disappointing but not unexpected." Addressing a press conference here at the party headquarters, Congress



leader and senior lawyer Abhishek Manu Singhvi said: "Today, a single judge bench of the Gujarat High Court passed an order dismissing

Rahul Gandhi's application asking for a stay on conviction. This is highly disappointing, but it is not unexpected."

CONGRESS TO HOLD 'MAUNA SATYAGRAHA'

New Delhi: The Congress on Friday asked all the state units chiefs to hold one-day 'Maun Satyagraha' (silent protest) in front of Gandhi statues in all state headquarters in solidarity with former party chief Rahul Gandhi on July 12. In a communication to all the state presidents, Congress General Secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal said: "The entire world has seen how Rahul Gandhi has consistently been questioning and exposing the relationship between Modi and Adani, on various platforms. His courageous pursuit has forced the Prime Minister and BJP to resort to crooked measures leading to his conviction and disqualification from the membership of Lok Sabha."

Balasore triple train tragedy: CBI arrests senior Railways engineer, two others

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Days after taking over the probe of the triple train accident in Odisha's Balasore in which 292 people died and over 800 injured, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) arrested three people in connection with the case, including a senior Railways engineer. "The agency has arrested Arun Kumar Mahanta, posted as Senior Section Engineer in Balasore, Mohammad Amir Khan, posted as Section Engineer at Soro, and Pappu Kumar, a technician posted at Balasore in connection with the case," a CBI official told reporter. The official said that they have been arrested under Sections 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and 201 (destruction or concealment of evidence) of the Indian Penal Code.



At least 292 people died and over 800 were injured when the Chennai-bound Coromandel Express, a goods train, and the Howrah-bound Howrah-SMVT Superfast Express met an accident at Bahanaga Bazar railway station in Odisha's Balasore on June 2. The railways first ordered a Commissioner of Rail Safety (CRS) probe and then also ordered a CBI probe. The CRS, earlier this

TOMATOES AT RS 250 A KG IN UTTARAKHAND

Uttarakashi: The humble tomatoes are now going at princely rates up north, with the kitchen staple going at Rs 250 per kg in Gangotri Dham and Rs 180 to 200 per kg in Uttarakashi district.

A vegetable seller said tomatoes have become dearer in the region all of a sudden.

"Consumers are bearing the brunt of the rising prices of the tomatoes in Uttarakashi. People are not even willing to buy them. In Gangotri, Yamunotri, tomatoes are going at Rs 200 to Rs 250 per kg," Rakesh, a vegetable seller told news agency.

Many attributed the sharp rise in the vegetable prices to the prevailing heatwave in key tomato-growing areas, as well as heavy rains, leading to a disruption in supply chains. Tomatoes also have a relatively lower shelf life, which is also believed to be having a bearing on their prices. In Chennai, tomatoes are currently selling at Rs 100-130 per kg. Faced with a price pinch, the Tamil Nadu government has started selling tomatoes at a subsidized rate of Rs 60 per kg at ration shops in state capital Chennai in a bid to bring some respite to the consumers amid the price spiral. Like many states, Karnataka has also seen tomato prices go through the roof in recent days. Tomato prices in Bengaluru range from Rs 101 to 121 per kilogram. The high prices have been attributed to the sudden temperature increase in March and April, resulting in pest attacks on the tomato yield higher market rates.

Excise policy case

ED attaches assets worth Rs 52 cr of Sisodia, his wife, others

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a major move, the Enforcement Directorate said on Friday that it has attached assets worth Rs 52.24 crore belonging to arrested AAP leader Minister Manish Sisodia, his wife and some other accused persons in connection with the Delhi excise policy case.

The ED said in a statement that the agency has attached assets worth Rs 52.24 crore belonging to Sisodia, Amandeep Singh Dhall, Rajesh Joshi, Gautam Malhotra and others in connection with the case.

The agency said that the attached assets include immovable properties worth Rs 7.29 crore -- including two immovable properties of Sisodia and his wife Seema Sisodia, land/flat of Joshi or Chariot Productions Media Pvt Ltd and land/flat of Malhotra.

The probe agency said that the attachments also include movable assets worth Rs 44.29 crore, including bank balances of Sisodia worth Rs 11.49 lakh, Brindco Sales Pvt Ltd worth Rs 16.45 crore, and others. This was the second attachment in the



case by the agency. The ED had earlier attached properties worth Rs 76.54 crore of AAP communication in-charge Vijay Nair, Sameer Mahandru, Amit Arora, Arun Pillai and others.

Delhi court summons Brij Bhushan Singh in sexual harassment case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi's Rouse Avenue court has summoned Brij Bhushan Singh, a Member of Parliament from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the former Wrestling Chief of India, in connection with allegations of sexual harassment made by the country's leading female wrestlers. The court took note of the charge sheet filed in the case, responding to the claims made by six women wrestlers who have accused Singh of engaging in sexual harassment and intimidation. The summons were issued by the Rouse Avenue court, requiring Singh to appear before the court on July 18. Additionally, Vinod Tomar, former Assistant Secretary of Singh, has also been summoned by the court. The Delhi Police's charge sheet running over 1,000



pages was filed before Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mahima Rai of Rouse Avenue Courts for the offences under Sections 354 (Assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 354A (making sexually coloured remarks), 354D (stalking) of Indian Penal Code (IPC) against accused Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. Tomar has been accused of offences under Sections 109 (abetting offence), 354, 354A, 506 (criminal intimidation) of the IPC. Reportedly, the charge sheet contains statements of around 200 witnesses.

Global temperatures the highest in at least 100,000 years

The planet's temperature has soared again to levels not seen in the modern record-keeping era, marking the fourth straight day of record temperatures. These alarming new records are likely the highest temperatures in "at least 100,000 years", one scientist told CNN.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The global average daily temperature climbed to 17.23-degree Celsius on Thursday, according to the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer, which uses data from the US National Centers for Environmental Prediction, CNN reported.

It's been a week of record-breaking temperatures. On Monday, the average global temperature reached 17.01-degree Celsius, the highest in the NCEP's data, which goes back to 1979. On Tuesday, it climbed to 17.18-degree Celsius, where it remained on Wednesday. Before this week, the record in NCEP's data was 16.92-degree Celsius, which was set in August 2016, CNN reported. Though

this week's records are not yet official, another global climate tracking agency confirmed several in its own data. The European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service said that Monday's and Tuesday's global temperatures were also records in its data, which dates back to 1940. While the records are based on observational data sets that only go back to the mid-20th century, they are "almost certainly" the warmest temperatures the planet has seen over a much longer time period, according to Jennifer Francis, a senior scientist at Woodwell Climate Research Center, CNN reported.

Scientists know this because of the many millennia of climate data extracted from proxies like tree rings, ice cores and coral reefs - data that is a cornerstone to their understanding of

the climate system and how humans have contributed to rapid global

"The climate change is out of control. If we persist in delaying key measures that are needed, I think we are moving into a catastrophic situation, as the last two records in temperature demonstrates." Antonio Guterres, Secretary General, UN

Sex in case of breach of promise for marriage cannot be deemed rape: Orissa HC

Cuttack | Agencies

In a landmark verdict, the Orissa High Court has held that in a relationship, initially started and developed genuinely with friendship but souring after the male partner decided not to marry his partner, sexual intimacy should not always be branded as a product of mistrust and mischief, thereby accusing him of rape.

This judgement was delivered by a bench of Justice R.K. Pattanaik on July 3, while hearing a petition challenging the legality of criminal proceedings initiated against a man in a case where a relationship had gone sour after seven years.

The court observed that in case that a relationship goes sour and a person decides not to marry his partner, the sexual intimacy that preceded should not always be considered as rape. Terming the act as dissimi-

lar to having sex under the false promise of marriage, Justice Pattanaik said: "There is a subtle difference between breach of promise, which is made in good faith but subsequently could not be fulfilled, and a false promise to marriage. In the former case, for any such sexual intimacy, an offence under Section 376 IPC (sexual assault) is not made out, whereas, in the latter, it is, since the same is based on the premise that the promise to marriage was false or fake from the very beginning, which is given on the understanding by the accused that it would be broken finally."

The court, considering the complaint and other materials, said that is of the view that the entire story unfolded revealed the existence of friendship and thereafter, a relationship which was developed under different circumstances.



IN CHHATTISGARH PM SAYS CONGRESS AN OBSTACLE IN DEVELOPMENT; CM BAGHEL HITS BACK

Raipur | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday attacked the Congress calling it a 'panja' -- an obstacle -- in the development of Chhattisgarh.

Attacking Congress, PM Modi claimed 36 promises were made by the Congress. "Five years have passed. The truth is Congress has done a liquor scam worth thousands of crores in Chhattisgarh. And its complete information is in the newspapers," he said.

He said, "This is the 'panja' of Congress, which is snatching your rights. This 'panja' has decided that it will loot and ruin Chhattisgarh."

Modi was on a visit to Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur where he inaugurated several projects and also laid the foundation stones for the upcoming projects.

He said that it is only the BJP which understands the people of Chhattisgarh and knows their needs. "Foundation stone and inauguration of projects worth more than Rs 7,500 crore have taken place in the state,"



he said.

However, the Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel hit back at Modi saying his visit has started spreading lies in the state and BJP leaders are continuously misleading the farmers that paddy is procured with the money of the Centre.

"You are the Prime Minister. You know the truth. But you lied. This is

the biggest lie in the name of farmers that the center takes 80 per cent of the state's paddy procurement. If the role of your government is this much in paddy purchase of the states, then why are farmers in your Lok Sabha constituency Varanasi forced to sell paddy at Rs.1000-1200 a quintals," Baghel asked.

Later, Prime Minister launched 29 development projects worth around Rs 12,110 crore here on Friday.

Addressing a public meeting at Wazidpur, the Prime Minister said that his government had ensured that the benefits of schemes reach the beneficiaries. "We have been sending the benefits to the people and also talking directly to them to ensure that they have received the benefits of the schemes. This leaves no room for middlemen or scams," he said.

Modi said that those who have got houses from the government are now witnessing an appreciation in costs.

He thanked the people of Varanasi for ensuring the victory of BJP in the recent municipal polls and for supporting the journey of development.

'GITA PRESS NO LESS THAN TEMPLE'

Gorakhpur : Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who attended the closing ceremony of Gita Press in Gorakhpur on Friday, said the publishing house is "no less than any temple".

"Sometimes saints show the way, sometimes institutions such as the Gita Press guides humanity through its work," Modi said.

The Prime Minister also said that Mahatma Gandhi had an emotive relationship with Gita press, and he contributed to its monthly magazine 'Kalyan'. "Even now, 'Kalyan' follows his advice of not running advertisements," he said. It may be recalled that the Congress had condemned the decision of the government to award the Gandhi Peace Prize to Gita Press because of the "stormy relations it had with Mahatma Gandhi", as it allegedly ran "campaigns that were against his thought".

Delhi HC seeks response from NDMC on historic mosque's potential demolition

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Friday directed the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and Delhi Police to respond to a petition filed by the Delhi Waqf Board, expressing concerns over the potential demolition of a historic mosque that stands strong for over 150 years at the Sunehri Bagh Road roundabout in Lutyens' Delhi.

In a bid to gather accurate information, the court also instructed all parties involved to conduct a joint inspection at the site.

Justice Prateek Jalan has issued a notice on a plea seeking to protect a mosque from potential harm caused by the NDMC while listing the matter for further hearing on August 14.

During the proceedings on Friday, the court also emphasised the need for a practical and holistic approach, urging both parties to adopt a reasonable perspective.

The judge highlighted that indigenous properties are not exempt from acquisition as long as statutory conditions are met. He stressed the importance of treating all religious structures equally and applying consistent policies.

Consequently, the court ordered a joint inspection to take place on July 12 at 3 p.m., with the option for further inspections if necessary. "Notice shall be issued. The concerned



parties are instructed to conduct a joint inspection on July 12, 2023, at 3 pm, and may schedule additional inspections as required. The NDMC is authorised to notify any other relevant authority about the inspection," the court said. "The respondents are directed to submit their response to the petition along with the necessary records within a period of two weeks. The report of the joint inspection should be presented as well," the court ordered. The petitioner's advocate, Wajeeh Shafiq, informed the court that the authorities had conducted an inspection at the site without the petitioner's presence.

The plea also stated that the mosque had been in existence for over 150 years and served a large number of worshippers, hosting daily prayers, Friday prayers, and Eid prayers. It alleged that the congestion in the area was not due to the mosque but rather due to uncontrolled vehicle parking on both sides of Motilal Nehru Marg.

I'll be on the ground on Sat, says Bengal Guv on panchayat poll eve

Kolkata: West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose said on Friday that he will be on the ground during the panchayat elections in the state on Saturday.

"I will be on the ground on Saturday for the sake of the security of the common people," the Governor told media-persons during his tour to the violence-hit Murshidabad district on Friday. Even as he was saying this, West Bengal reported the 19th death in pre-poll violence since the announcement of election date on June 8 after the bullet-ridden body



of a man was found in Bangaon in North 24 Parganas district.

Reacting to allegations levelled by Trinamool Congress that his district tours are only

meant to seek publicity, the Governor said, "This publicity is required for the sake of the safety and security of the common people. To ensure that the democratic rights of the people are protected, I will resort to such publicity drives again and again. My only aim is to ensure that people can exercise their democratic rights without fear."

On Thursday, the Governor had launched a scathing attack against State Election Commissioner Rajiva Sinha, and asked him to perform his duties neutrally.

Inter-state arms trafficker supplying high-end weapons to Delhi criminal networks held

Team Absolute | New Delhi

An inter-state arms trafficker supplying high-end weapons to several criminal gangs, including infamous Kapil Sangwan alias Nandu outfit in Delhi and its surrounding areas, has been arrested by the Special Cell, an official said on Friday.

The accused, identified as Mohd Sajid alias Rashid, 38, a resident of JJ Colony near Wazirpur, used to purchase an illicit pistol of .32 bore for around Rs 30,000 and used to sell the same to the criminals for around Rs 40,000.

Special Commissioner of Police, Special Cell, H.G.S. Dhaliwal said that an information was received that Sajid, who is previously involved in several criminal cases, is indulged in smuggling of illicit firearms from Uttar Pradesh and is supplying



the weapons to the gang members of different syndicates, including the group of most wanted gangster Kapil Sangwan.

"The team deployed sources and made efforts to collect more information about Sajid and his

activities. After persistent hard work, specific information was received that Sajid would come near Uttam Nagar Bus Terminal to deliver a consignment of illegal firearms to some member of Nandu gang on the night of June 28," he said.

A trap was laid and Sajid was apprehended. "On search, eight illegal firearms (five sophisticated pistols of .32 bore and three single shot pistols of .315 bore) were recovered from his possession," said Dhaliwal.

On interrogation, it was revealed that when Sajid used to work as a meat contractor in Ghazipur Murga Mandi, he came into contact with Ashok and Hazi, who inducted him into the business of arms trafficking. "Hazi was a Meerut-based arms supplier. Thereafter, Sajid started supplying arms to criminals in Delhi," the Special CP said.

SC issues contempt notice to Yati Narsinghanand for derogatory remarks

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday sought a response of Hindutva leader Yati Narsinghanand in a contempt of court petition filed against him for allegedly making derogatory and baseless remarks on the top court.

A bench of Justices A.S. Bopanna and M.M. Sundresh issued the notice on the contempt petition filed by activist Shachi Nelli over Narsinghanand's controversial statement that "those who believe in this system, in these politicians, in the Supreme Court, and in the Army will all die the death of a dog."

In January 2022, the then Attorney General (AG) K.K. Venugopal had granted consent to activist Nelli who had sought to initiate contempt proceedings against Narsinghanand over his remarks against the Supreme Court and constitution.

In his consent letter, AG Venugopal had said that the statement made by Narsinghanand was "a direct attempt to lower the authority of the Supreme Court" and "would certainly amount to contempt of the



Supreme Court of India".

In an interview given by Narsinghanand last year, he had allegedly said, "We have no trust in the Supreme Court of India and the Constitution. The Constitution will consume the 100 crore Hindus of this country. Those who believe in this Constitution will be killed. Those who believe in this system, in

these politicians, in the Supreme Court, and in the Army will all die the death of a dog."

"This is perhaps the most vicious attack on the Supreme Court in its history. To permit these remarks to pass unaddressed will be to allow this attempt of lowering the authority of the apex court to succeed, if not wholly then in considerable meas-

ure," wrote activist Shachi Nelli to the Attorney General while seeking his consent to initiate criminal contempt proceedings against Narsinghanand.

Earlier, Yati Narsinghanand was in the headlines across the country because of his open call for the "genocide of Indian Muslims" in Haridwar.

Five Congress MLAs suspended for entire session from Tripura Assembly

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Five MLAs of the opposition parties in Tripura were suspended for the day by the assembly speaker amid an uproar. Their suspension was, however, revoked later in the day.

Minutes after the Budget Session started, the opposition members - belonging to Tipra Motha Party (TMP), CPI-M and the Congress - raised slogans, demanding action against BJP MLA Jadb Lal Debnath, who was caught on camera watching an obscene video in the assembly earlier this year.

Leader of the opposition Animesh Debbarma moved an adjournment motion to discuss the row over the BJP MLA - which was rejected by the Speaker, triggering protests.

The members started raising slogans while state Finance Minister Pranajit Singha Roy had just started presenting the annual budget for 2023-24.



The assembly witnessed uproarious scenes as the MLAs jumped into the well forming a chain, and some even walked on the tables.

Assembly Speaker, Biswa Bandhu Sen, amid the uproar, announced the suspension of five MLAs - Sudip Roy Barman (Congress), Nayan Sarrkar (CPI-M) and Brishaketu Debbarma, Nandita Reang and Ranjit Debbarma (TMP).

Later all the opposition members staged a walkout protesting the Speaker's

decision and demanding disciplinary action against Debnath.

Earlier, a video allegedly showing Debnath watching an obscene video while the session was on, went viral on social media, drawing sharp criticism.

The 55-year-old leader, who is also the secretary of BJP's Tripura state unit, however, said that when he received a phone call then a site was automatically opened and he immediately closed it.

India joins UN's Global Crisis Response Group



Global Crisis Response Group

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India has joined the Champions Group of the Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG), after accepting an invitation from United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The GCRG was set up by the UNSG in March 2022 to address urgent and critical global issues pertaining to interlinked crises in food security, energy, and finance and to coordinate a global response.

It is overseen by the Champions Group comprising of representatives of Bangladesh, Barbados, Denmark, Germany,

Indonesia, and Senegal. The decision to join the Group reflects India's increasing global leadership and commitment addressing contemporary global challenges. India's participation will further boost the efforts of the United Nations in finding result-oriented solutions on developmental issues that impact the world, particularly developing countries, a statement issued by the External Affairs Ministry said.

Sanjay Verma, Secretary, West, in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been designated as Sherpa to the GCRG process.

A meeting of the Champions is scheduled for July 21.

Speeding BMW runs over civic employee in Hyderabad

Hyderabad | Agencies

A civic employee was critically injured after he was hit by a speeding BMW in posh Banjara Hills neighbourhood here in the early hours of Friday.

Police suspect that the person driving the car was under the influence of alcohol.

CCTV footage of the incident shows the man on the two-wheeler being hit by the speeding SUV coming from the opposite direction. The man on the scooter had slowed down but the car rammed into his vehicle and dragged him for some distance before coming to a halt. The person who was driving the car escaped after the incident.

A passersby shifted injured G. Bala Chander Yadav to a hospital. A circle manager of



Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), Yadav was on his way to duty when the incident occurred. Banjara Hills

police registered a case and launched a hunt for the person driving the SUV.

The incident came three days after a speeding car

mowed down morning walkers in Bandlaguda Jagir on the city outskirts.

Two women were killed and two others were injured in the accident. Police have arrested a 19-year-old student who was driving the car. He along with his two friends was going to Moinabad to celebrate his birthday.

The horrific crash was captured on CCTV camera. The speeding car failed to negotiate a turn and lost control before hitting three women walking on the road. After throwing the three walkers off the ground, the car skidded off the road and rammed into a tree.

Another person was also injured. The person driving the car and other occupants escaped leaving behind the vehicle. The driver was later arrested.

Bihar: 60 snakes found inside a house



Patna | Agencies

Around 60 poisonous snakes were found inside a house in Rohtas district of Bihar.

Officials said that the incident occurred at Agred Khurd village under Suryapura police station in the district.

The snakes were found in the house of Kripa Narayan Pandey on Wednesday, officials said.

The residents first fled from the house and informed

the forest officers. However, the family members came back with other villagers and killed most of the snakes.

"We have recovered around 30 snakes which were taking shelter near the wall. We broke the wall and rescued the reptiles. They were released in the forest area," said Amar Gupta.

"We are living here since 1955 when the house was constructed. It is a two story building. We have not seen such an incident in the past," said Kripa Narayan Singh.



AFTER WASHING TRIBAL MAN'S FEET, CM CHOUHAN GIVES RS 6.5L AID

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh government has sanctioned Rs 6.50 lakh to the tribal labourer who was urinated on by a man, said officials on Friday.

Of the total amount, Rs 1.50 lakh has been allocated for the construction of a house for the family.

The announcement came hours after Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan washed victim Dashmat Rawat's feet, had breakfast with him and planted a sapling in Bhopal on Thursday. Chouhan also apologised to the labourer for the inhuman act of Pravesh Shukla, who is said to be a BJP worker.

Sidhi collector Saket Maliya posted a message on his official Twitter handle, which

read, "As per the instructions of CM, an assistance of Rs. 5 lakh has been sanctioned to Dashmat Rawat and financial assistance of Rs. One lakh 50 thousand for the construction of a house." Dashmat, a resident of Kubri village in Sidhi district, works as a labourer at a local mandi.

In a viral video, Pravesh Shukla, who was associated with local BJP MLA Kedarnath Shukla, was seen urinating on Rawat's face. The accused, Pravesh Shukla has been lodged at the Rewa's central jail with stringent charges, including the National Security Act (NSA) among other sections.

The house that belonged to Pravesh Shukla's family was also bulldozed, declaring it illegal on Tuesday.

Shukla's family has questioned the state



government's decision to demolish their house. The administration demolished the house that Shukla lived in, forcing his wife, toddler daughter and elderly parents to survive in a makeshift arrangement amid the

rain. A major portion of their house has been razed to the ground, leaving them without shelter or substance. For the last two days, the family was dependent on some kind neighbors who provided them meals. Shukla's wife along with her aged mother-in-law and toddler was seen sitting outside the home with a cooking gas and some utensils.

Shukla's wife claimed the house that was bulldozed by the administration was built by her grandmother. "We were told that the house was built without the panchayat's permission and had to be vacated within 24 hours. Such actions are not representative of a democracy," Shukla's wife Kanchan Shukla said.

CASE AGAINST MAN IN SAME INCIDENT TO INSULT TRICOLOUR

Bhopal: An FIR has been registered against a person for allegedly using an image of the Sidhi urination incident and doctoring it to insult the Tricolour, police said on Thursday.

According to police, a person with the Twitter handle 'Shafeeq 2.0' used an image from the Sidhi urination incident and doctored it to insult the Indian flag.

Anil Bajpai, SHO Kamla Nagar, Bhopal said that a case has been registered against the person operating the account Shafeeq 2.0 under sections relevant sections of the IT Act as well as provisions of the Prevention of Insults to National Honor Act.

Cop slaps grieving mother for refusing to hand over body of 9-yr-old son



Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a shocking case, a mother carrying the body of her nine-year-old son was slapped by a policeman in Madhya Pradesh's Shahdol district on Friday after she refused to hand it over for autopsy.

As per a report, the boy was admitted to a hospital for treatment two days ago after a snake bit him at a village in Jaitpur in the district.

Doctors tried their best to save the boy, however, he died during the treatment on Friday. While carrying the body of her boy, the mother was crying incessantly out-

side the hospital. A policeman, identified as Santosh Singh Parihar, came to her and asked her to hand over the body for post-mortem.

The aggrieved mother resisted and refused to hand-over the body. The family alleged that Parihar got irritated and slapped her.

"Head constable Santosh Singh Parihar asked the woman to handover the body for post-mortem. Family has alleged that Parihar slapped the mother of the deceased. Parihar has been line attached immediately and further inquiry is underway," Mukesh Vaishya, ASP Shahdol said.

FIR AGAINST NEHA SINGH RATHORE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA POST

Bhopal: Bhojpuri singer Neha Singh Rathore, known for her song 'UP me ka ba' has been booked for her social media post in the pee-gate controversy in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh.

In her social media post, Rathore shared a picture depicting a half-naked man, presumably accused Pravesh Shukla, urinating on the tribal, Dashmesh Rawat. The urinating man was seen wearing a white half-sleeved shirt, a black cap on his head and his khaki shorts were kept aside. The FIR was lodged by BJP worker Suraj Khare at Habibganj police station in Bhopal alleging that Rathore has targeted RSS through her social media post. The FIR was lodged under Section 153(A) (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race etc.) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).



Administrative staff should be active to protect citizens from rain-related problems:CM Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that with the advent of the rainy season, the administrative staff should be active in urban and rural areas to save citizens from rain-related problems. Chief Minister Chouhan has instructed the collectors to ensure necessary arrangements in advance in such areas in their district where there is water-logging in case of excess rainfall.

Chief Minister Chouhan directed the collectors that appropriate action should be taken by the health department staff for the prevention of rain-borne diseases and



treatment of the affected. Chief Minister Chouhan has given instructions to the collectors to ensure the availability of fertilizers and necessary storage arrangements for the farmers for Kharif. See that there is no shortage in

the supply and availability of manures and fertilizers in any area. Chief Minister Chouhan also discussed with the collectors regarding the purchase of moong in various districts including Narmadapuram.

Lecture cum Awareness Programme under Van Mahotsav

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Regional Museum of Natural History, Bhopal (A Regional Centre of National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi) organized a Lecture Cum Awareness Programme on 7th July, 2023 under Van Mahotsav-2023 (01st to 07th July).

Dr. Sudesh Waghmare, Former Deputy Conservator of Forest, Government of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal delivered the lecture on "Where is Greenery, There is Prosperity". 114 students from Rajpupsh Higher Secondary School, Bhopal; Govt. Shubhas Excellence Higher Secondary School, Bhopal Govt. Sarojini Naidu Girls Higher Secondary School, Bhopal; St. Geevarghese Convent School, Bhopal participated in this programme.

The programme began with the welcome address by Scientist-in-Charge of the museum Dr. Manoj Kumar Sharma. Dr. Sharma wel-



comed Dr. Sudesh Waghmare, students of various schools, teachers and

other invitees. Dr. Manoj Kumar Sharma made an appeal to students

to conserve our forest to retain greenery.

During the lecture, Dr. Sudesh Waghmare detailed that forest is one of the most important natural resource on earth. He informed that approximately 1/3rd of world's total land area are covered by forest. Dr. Waghmare detailed about the status of forest of India & world, forest produce, threats to forests, measures to protect forest etc. Dr. Waghmare also told that forest provides us Oxygen, Water and Food which are basic need for our life. Dr. Sudesh Waghmare made appeal to students to plant at least one plant & care it which will help to maintain greenery.

Scientist-C of the museum Dr. Beenish Rafat; Scientist-C Manik Lal Gupta, teachers and staff members were present during the programme.

The programme was concluded with the vote of thanks proposed by Manik Lal Gupta, Scientist-C & Coordinator of the programme.

Training Program on Melioidosis at AIIMS Bhopal Creates Awareness on Endemic Infection

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Training program on Melioidosis diagnosis was successfully conducted at AIIMS Bhopal on July 7th. The program aimed to raise awareness among clinical doctors and clinical microbiologists in Madhya Pradesh regarding the endemicity of this infection in the state.

The training program was attended by esteemed clinical faculties and microbiologists from major government and private hospitals in Madhya Pradesh, including GMC Bhopal, LNM Bhopal, MGM Indore, GRMC Gwalior, and Sri Aurobindo Institute of Medical Sciences Indore. Furthermore, faculties from various institutes across India participated virtually in the program. The Chief Guest at the event was Prof (Dr) Ajai Singh, the Executive Director and CEO of AIIMS Bhopal. He expressed his satisfaction in seeing this neglected disease being recognized in the state. However, he also expressed concern over the



presence of this infection in Madhya Pradesh. Prof Singh emphasized that future research efforts should be directed towards not only diagnosis but also the prevention of this fatal disease. The training program was conducted under the extramural projects funded by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and was awarded to Dr. Ayush Gupta, Associate Professor in the Department of

Microbiology at AIIMS Bhopal. Dr. Harpreet Kaur, Scientist F from the Epidemiology and Communicable Disease Division of ICMR, attended the event virtually from New Delhi. Dr. Kaur expressed her satisfaction with the efforts of clinicians and microbiologists at AIIMS Bhopal in managing the cases of Melioidosis and raising awareness about this fatal disease. Melioidosis is a multisystemic

infectious disease caused by the bacterium Burkholderia pseudomallei. Traditionally, it has been reported in coastal states such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Orissa. While previously unknown in Madhya Pradesh, the Department of Microbiology at AIIMS Bhopal has been diagnosing cases of Melioidosis for the past three years. This disease has a high mortality rate, with a majority of cases found in rural areas, particularly among individuals associated with agricultural activities. During the event, a laboratory manual for the diagnosis of Melioidosis was also released, providing clinicians and microbiologists with valuable resources to aid in the identification and management of this infectious disease. The successful completion of the training program marks an important milestone in raising awareness about Melioidosis in Madhya Pradesh. By equipping medical professionals with the necessary knowledge and resources, the program aims to contribute to the prevention and early detection of this potentially fatal infection.

CM SHRI CHOUHAN PLANTS SAPLING OF PARIJAT



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a sapling of Parijat during his stay in Hyderabad. CM Chouhan is continuously planting saplings in fulfillment of his resolve to plant saplings every day. CM Chouhan also inspires the people of the state to plant saplings on their birthdays, marriage anniversaries and in the memory of their family members.

Scindia's restaurant outreach draws Rahul Gandhi parallel

Team Absolute | Bhopal

From truck drivers to gig workers, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has been interacting with people from all walks of life to keep up the personal touch he has brought to his politics since his Bharat Jodo Yatra ended in January this year. So, when his former close aide - and now senior BJP leader - Jyotiraditya Scindia stopped by at a restaurant in Gwalior yesterday and spoke to the staff and patrons there, the comparisons were unavoidable.

Scindia posted a video on Twitter, showing him interacting with the cooks at the restaurant and taking the blessings of an elderly woman amid loud chants of 'Long live Jyotiraditya Scindia'. "Along with having delicious food, it's important to meet the cooks! During my visit to Gwalior today, I met the young staff at a restaurant and discussed food and local issues," the Union Minister tweeted in Hindi.

When a Twitter user pointed out minutes



later that Scindia seemed to be taking a leaf out of Rahul Gandhi's playbook and learning from him, however, the BJP leader took a veiled dig at Gandhi and tweeted: "Actually, unlearning".

Dalit family denied food, seating at temple feast in Sagar district

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A Dalit family in Madhya Pradesh faced discrimination at the hands of villagers when they refused food and seating to the family at the temple feast. The incident has left the family in shock. A complaint has also been registered with the police and the situation is being investigated. This particular incident took place in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. The incident happened at the Ram Janaki Temple in the Semra Village in the district of Sagar. The temple was hosting a communal feast which it organized by collecting donations as well as grains from the

entire village.

It is worth noting that even the members of the Dalit community made contributions for this purpose. However, once they arrived at the temple feast or bhandara to get prasad, they were denied. They alleged that two people from the upper-caste community refused to hand them the prasad.

The two people were identified as Ram Bhajan Yadav and Babloo Kushwaha who are the residents of the same village. According to the complainants, the two people, instead of respectfully handing them prasad, flung it towards Dalit women and children. The incident happened on the 4th of July.

Bhupendra Yadav appointed election in-charge for MP, Ashwini Vaishnav as deputy

Team Absolute | Bhopal

BJP has appointed election in-charge and co-in-charge in four states. Union Forest and Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav has been made election in-charge of Madhya Pradesh. At the same time, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav has been given the responsibility of co-in-charge. Assembly elections are to be held in Madhya Pradesh by the end of this year. Bhupendra Yadav is considered expert in election strategy. Whereas, Ashwini is an IT expert. He is a retired IAS officer and is trusted by PM Modi. Not only this, Vaishnav has also worked with former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.



With these two leaders becoming in-charge, it has become clear that BJP's central team will keep a direct eye on Madhya Pradesh elections. With the help of Bhupendra Yadav, who was the election in-charge of Gujarat, the OBCs will woo voters.

There are 48 percent voters from the OBC category in

Madhya Pradesh. Out of 230 MLAs, 60 belong to the OBC category. Out of these, 32 seats are held by BJP and 28 seats by OBC MLAs of Congress. OBC voters especially Yadav voters will also be affected by Bhupendra Yadav becoming election in-charge. There are about 18 to 20 seats in MP where Yadav voters play a decisive role.



EDITOR'S SPECS

India's private consumption to cross \$2.4 trillion amid increased prosperity

While the macro picture has been bleak for the last two quarters, India's private consumption, which dipped to \$2.2 trillion in Q3-Q4 in FY23, is on its way up and expected to cross \$2.4 trillion in the fourth quarter of FY24, a report showed on Friday. Indicators across emerging sectors, such as credit card spends, air travel and sales of vehicles, show signs of recovery in Q1 FY24 (April-June period), according to the report by Redseer Strategy Consultants. The Indian macros are best positioned with a GDP of \$6.5 trillion and a retail goods market size of \$2 trillion, with the private final consumption expenditure (PFCE) at \$4 trillion. According to the report, India's digital ecosystem is already at the gold standard with over 350 million active digital payment users, more than 50 million digital-using merchants and over 50 per cent digital ad share. Other categories expected to accelerate with long-term growth, include education, personal vehicles, personal care, food, and clothing. "Premiumisation, brand proliferation and digitisations being the core consumption themes across sectors. While the journey so far has been turbulent, India's Internet is poised to be in cruise control momentum until the end of the decade at a 25 per cent CAGR," the findings showed. Although the total number of Internet transactors is 350 million, the mature Internet transactors who are frequent online buyers have plateaued around 40-45 million. Solving key concerns among non-mature online transactors, such as complex ordering processes, lack of trust, and better offline offerings, is also needed to improve the total user base and high-frequency users, the report mentioned.

THE CRICKETING SPIRIT EVAPORATED MANY MOONS AGO

Yajurvindra Singh

The words of Sherlock Holmes, the famous detective come to mind - "Elementary My Dear Watson" - when one reviews the Jonny Bairstow stumping incident. In a tight situation, especially, during a critical Ashes Test match, every cricketer on the ground is looking to get that one extra bit of advantage. The batter tries to stay on the wicket, whereas, the fielding side hopes to get one. The 10 modes of dismissal for a batsman are foremost on the mind of a fielding side. Aspiring Cricketers right from their elementary days are taught to not fall victim to them. Bairstow, unfortunately, in a world of his own, forgot the basic rule, that the ball is not dead until the umpire says so. Strolling up to meet his non-striker captain at the other end with the ball in play was a folly that even a schoolboy cricketer would have avoided. The reason is, that school and club cricket is where one actually learns the importance of the rules of how one can get out. This is a growing-up process in cricket when one is still unaware of the rules and consequences that may arise by not adhering to them. Jonny Bairstow knows he made an elementary error and quite rightly has kept quiet for others to debate the issue, rather than for him to get embroiled in it. The famous "Spirit of Cricket" and lack of "fair play" are some words that emerge from such incidents and "gamesmanship" from others, opposing it. As an international Indian cricketer, I have been through many such incidents wherein opposition players and teams have tried every means in the book to try and get me out. Yes, I have fallen victim to it on several occasions, annoyed at making myself vulnerable to the 10 commandments of getting out in cricket. I was once "run out" by a bowler as a non-striker for unintentionally being out of the batting crease. I remember when I was "timed out" for not coming to the wicket in the 2 minutes stipulated and for "hitting the ball twice". The last was in anger in exchange for a verbal retort by the bowler. On all these occasions my team lost and I learned over time to be careful and not careless.



Cricket used to have that aura of being a gentleman's game. One that was played hard but fair. This feeling, unfortunately, when assessed today, dates back to the initial days of Test cricket. Incidents of unfair play then were few and far between. Douglas Jardine, the famous England captain in the Ashes series of 1932 in Australia, a gentleman by all accounts, was the first one to put a spoke on the spirit of the game. In trying to stop the Australian run-machine, Sir Don Bradman, and to win the Ashes series utilized the famous "Bodyline tactics" to demolish Australia. He did not break the rules of cricket then, however, he destroyed the very essence of the game. In today's parlance, his tactics would have been the case study of success for several of the top business schools around the world. Jardine undertook many hours of research to plan and implement his winning ways and although it proved successful, his fellow gentlemen and members of the MCC disapproved of it quite vehemently. The irony is that 91 years later at the famous Long

Room at the Lord's, the very members who talked and upheld the spirit of the game, booed and made ugly remarks of cheating when the Australian team came back to the pavilion victoriously. The Long Room for a visiting cricketer playing at Lord's is like walking through history when one is going out to bat or field. There is an aura that engulfs one. It gives one a halo-like experience and evokes thoughts that take one back to the legends who have walked through it, earlier. The Mecca of cricket is how Lord's is identified and quite rightly so, being the centre point of all cricketing matters in the past. The boisterous and uncanny behaviour of its members has truly testified the very ingredients of what it stood for. A behaviour that one disapproved of from the spectators at the cheaper stands has now entrenched itself amongst the so-called elite members as well. Personally, as a former cricketer, the onus of playing fair lies in the actions of a cricketer. Winning is important, however, how one achieves it, is even more important. The rules are there for one to follow and sense should prevail when one applies it. One marvel at Courtney Walsh not running out Saleem Jaffar in a crucial World Cup match in 1987. Cricket has had umpteen number of such heartwarming and wonderful gestures as well in the years gone by. The famous line that comes to one's mind is, "Playing is not about winning and losing but how you play the game". The Australians may feel that they have done nothing wrong in getting Jonny Bairstow out and quite rightly so. However, subconsciously they know it was not in the right spirit to do so. The spirit of the game of cricket, however, had evaporated many moons ago, and one wonders whether it will ever come back.

(Yajurvindra Singh is a former India cricketer. The views expressed are personal)

international

TWITTER THREATENS TO SUE META OVER 'COPYCAT' THREADS PLATFORM

San Francisco | Agencies

Alarmed at Instagram Threads' steep rise, Elon Musk-run Twitter has threatened to sue Meta for allegedly using its trade secrets and poaching its former employees to build the new "copycat" platform that saw over 30 million users in just 24 hours. Twitter lawyer Alex Spiro sent a letter to Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, accusing the company of engaging in "systematic, willful, and unlawful misappropriation of Twitter's trade secrets and other intellectual property", reports Semafor. "Twitter intends to strictly enforce its intellectual property rights, and demands that Meta take immediate steps to stop using any Twitter trade secrets or other highly confidential



information," Spiro wrote in a letter. "Twitter reserves all rights, including, but not limited to, the right to seek both civil remedies and injunctive relief without further notice to prevent any further retention, disclosure, or use of its intellectual property by Meta," the Twitter lawyer added. Spiro also accused Meta of hiring dozens of former Twitter employees who "had and continue to have access to Twitter's trade secrets and other highly confidential information." Andy Stone, Meta's communications director, told Semafor that Twitter's accusations are "baseless". "No one on the Threads engineering team is a former Twitter

employee - that's just not a thing," he was quoted as saying. Musk said in a tweet on Friday: "Competition is fine, cheating is not." Twitter CEO Linda Yaccarino on Thursday appealed to the Twitter community to stay together. She said that on Twitter, everyone's voice matters. "Whether you're here to watch history unfold, discover real-time information all over the world, share your opinions, or learn about others -- on Twitter you can be real," Yaccarino posted. "You built the Twitter community. And that's irreplaceable. This is your public square," she added. Yaccarino said that "we are often imitated but the Twitter community can never be duplicated".

8 kids killed in Pak landslide

Islamabad: Eight children were killed in a landslide in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, rescue officials said on Friday. A group of children were playing cricket in a ground located at the foot of a dune in Shangla district and got buried under it due to the landslide that occurred on Thursday, the state-run Rescue 1122 said in a statement. After an hours-long operation till late Thursday night, Rescue 1122, local volunteers and rescue teams from Pakistan Army recovered eight bodies and an injured child from the rubble, reports Xinhua news agency. Locals have confirmed that there is no more missing kids under the rubble. The rescue teams said that the landslide was triggered by heavy rain lashing the area since Wednesday.

Ukraine claims of making advances against Russian troops in Bakhmut

Kiev | Agencies The Ukrainian military on Friday claimed that troops were making advances against Russian positions around the eastern city of Bakhmut amid fierce fighting. The battle for the city in the Donetsk region has been the longest and bloodiest since the war began in February 2022. It has little strategic value, but is important symbolically both for Kiev and Moscow. The capture of Bakhmut would bring Russia slightly closer to its goal of controlling the whole of Donetsk, one of four regions in eastern and southern Ukraine annexed by Russia last September following referendums widely condemned outside Russia as a sham. Speaking to Ukrainian TV on Friday, military spokesman Serhiy Cherevatyi said: "The defence forces continue to hold the initiative there (Bakhmut), putting pressure on the enemy, conducting assault operations, advancing along the northern and southern flanks." In particular, over the past day, they (Russian troops) have advanced more than one kilometre." On a similar note, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian armed forces general staff said troops had had "partial success" near the village of Klischchiivka, just southwest of Bakhmut, the Independent reported. Friday's development comes just over a month after Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar had confirmed that Ukrainian troops were making advances on the eastern front around Bakhmut, which she described as the "epicentre of hostilities". In May, the US had said that it believed more than 20,000 Russian soldiers had been killed in the battle for Bakhmut and another 80,000 wounded. Ukraine however, has not released figures on its casualties in Bakhmut, but admitted to sustaining heavy losses. There were about 70,000 people living in Bakhmut before the invasion, but only a few thousand remain in the devastated city, once best known for its salt and gypsum mines and huge winery.

SWEDISH PROSECUTION CHARGES GRETA THUNBERG WITH DISOBEYING LAW ENFORCEMENT

Stockholm | Agencies

The Swedish Prosecution Authority has charged climate activist Greta Thunberg with disobeying law enforcement after she allegedly refused to leave a protest site last month. "The prosecutor has filed charges against a young woman who, on June 19 this year, participated in a climate demonstration which, according to the prosecution, caused disruption to traffic in Malmo," CNN quoted the Authority as saying in a statement on



Thursday. The woman "refused to obey the police command to leave the scene", it added. While the statement does not identify the climate activist by name, Annika Collin, a spokesperson for the Swedish Prosecution Authority, told CNN that the woman referred to is Thunberg. "The criminal classification is disobedience to law enforcement. According to the prosecutor, the act was committed with intent," the Prosecution Authority's statement added. Thunberg faces a fine or a sentence of up to six months in jail, according to the Authority.

Six dead in Milan retirement home fire

Milan | Agencies

Milan: Six people were killed and 81 others injured in a fire at a retirement home in Milan on Friday, media reports said. A fire alarm was raised at the Casa dei Coniugi home for the elderly in the early hours of Friday, reports the BBC. According to Milan Mayor Giuseppe Sala, the blaze was put out quickly but rescuers had to bring everyone out "almost one by one by the arm". "Six deaths is a very heavy toll," he told reporters, adding that all evidence pointed to the fire erupting in a room where two women had been living. They were killed by the fire, he said, while the four other deaths were caused by smoke inhalation. "The fumes are as lethal as the fire," the BBC quoted the Mayor as saying. According to Italy's state-run Ansa news agency, five of the six victims were women. All those taken to hospital were suffering from smoke poisoning, and 14 are said to be in a serious condition, the agency added. The retirement home, in the Corvetto area of southern Milan, housed 167 people, according to local reports.

Russian state TV takes aim at Prigozhin

Moscow | Agencies

For the first time since the failed Wagner rebellion last month, the Russian state TV has embarked on an apparent campaign to discredit the mercenary group's chief Yevgeny Prigozhin by showing personal and damaging details. Before the rebellion on June 24, Russian TV had portrayed a positive image of the Wagner mercenary group, which has fought alongside the Russian military during its invasion of Ukraine, the BBC reported. But from July 1-5, the country's state-run network Rossiya showed images taken during searches at his opulent home outside St Petersburg, arguing that his riches reflected very badly on him. "Let's have a look how this fighter for the truth lived, someone who has two criminal convictions and who kept claiming that everyone else was a thief," the BBC quoted a commentator



on '60 Minutes', a Rossiya talk show, as saying. "Let's have a look at the palace built for this campaigner against corruption and crime," the commentator added. The footage showed piles of cash, various weapons, the house's opulent interiors and vast gardens complete with a parked helicopter, an assortment of wigs and apparently fake passports issued to the Wagner chief in different names. Later, similar footage was shown as part of Rossiya's main evening news bulletin, which featured ingots of gold and "suspicious packets of white powder". It also dwelt at length on Prigozhin's criminal past.

He received his first criminal conviction in 1979, aged just 18, and got a suspended two-and-a-half-year sentence for theft. Two years later, he was sentenced to 13 years in jail for robbery and theft, nine of which he served behind bars, the BBC reported. "They say that it is the experience and connections he received from crime lords behind bars which helped him walk the path from a hot dog seller to an authoritative master of cauldrons and pans," Rossiya 1's correspondent said referring to Prigozhin's past role as a caterer for the Kremlin. This role also earned him the nickname "Kremlin's chef". While the state TV's Channel One suggested that Prigozhin was linked to Western intelligence, NTV, one of Russia's three most-watched television stations, argued that he was driven by greed and criminal past.



SHIV SENA-UBT 'LEAKS': NEELAM GORHE JOINS SHIV SENA, PRAISES CM SHINDE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In another rude jolt to the Shiv Sena (UBT), its senior leader and Deputy Chairperson of Maharashtra Legislative Council Dr Neelam Gorhe joined the ruling ally Shiv Sena, here on Friday.

Dr Gorhe has been with the Shiv Sena (UBT) for over three decades, and her decision comes barely three weeks after the party's spokesperson Dr Manisha Kayande had joined the Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Dr Gorhe was welcomed to the Shiv Sena fold by Shinde, Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis and other senior leaders.

Upon her entry to Shiv Sena, she said that Shinde is on the right track and the party belongs to him as per the decision of the court.

"I have officially joined the Shiv Sena. It is heading in the right direction under the leadership of CM Shinde," she announced.

Dismissing suggestions that she was unhappy or disgruntled with the Shiv Sena (UBT), she said that it was a conscious decision keeping in mind the women's issues and overall development of the state and country.

Incidentally, political circles have been abuzz with speculation about



Dr Gorhe's political moves since the past over five months.

However, the Shiv Sena (UBT) top brass, including Leader of Opposition Ambadas Danve, had stoutly denied any such possibility even this morning.

Welcoming her, Shinde said that Dr Gorhe holds a Constitutional post and pointed out that she is not 'defecting' but has come back to the original Shiv Sena.

He added how his Shiv Sena is emerging stronger by the day and people keep joining it seeing the impact of its unity with the ruling ally

Bharatiya Janata Party.

"People are seeing the work we are doing. Even Dr. Gorhe will be able to work freely with all her heart for women's issues," assured the CM.

Shinde pointed out how it was the wish of the people of the state who wanted the Shiv Sena-BJP to be together as per the elections mandate of Nov. 2019, and that's why he and 50 other MLAs walked out in June 2022.

"We did not come together for the lust of power... We were already in power. We had a common ideological ground from the days of the late Balasaheb Thackeray and the late PM

Atal Behari Vajpayee. We did not compromise our ideals and our ideology. Even the Supreme Court has ruled in our favour," declared Shinde.

Fadnavis said that Dr Gorhe has taken a wise decision and so he had come personally to welcome her into the alliance.

To a query whether there was any scope for the Opposition, the Deputy CM smiled and said that he believes that there should be a strong opposition in a democracy.

"However, the Opposition should be a constructive one, and not destructive as we are witnessing," Fadnavis urged.

Referring to the political grapevine of the past four days, Shinde reiterated that the Opposition is 'planting rumours' that he was preparing to quit to confuse the people.

"Let them do so. We are strongly united, PM Narendra Modi is leading the nation ahead to become a superpower and we think we have a role to play as a state. The Opposition should introspect before hurling allegations," said Shinde.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut slammed Dr. Gorhe's move to quit after the party did so much for her, while senior leader Chandrakant Khaire said she was hankering for positions and has left.

Pankaja Munde says not quitting BJP, claims 'plot to finish off my political career'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader Pankaja Munde on Friday categorically stated that she is not quitting the party as speculated, but claimed that there's a plot to finish off her political career.

Speaking to the media, Munde -- the daughter of the late Union Minister Gopinath Munde -- said that since the past four years, periodic rumours have circulated that she's disgruntled with the BJP and planning to join some other party.

In the latest such 'news', it was reported by a TV channel that she would soon join the Congress -- prompting the state party President Nana Patole on Thursday to even 'welcome' her if she decided so.

"This is nonsense, I have never expressed any so-called 'unhappiness' with the BJP or demanded any posts or said I will go to any party... Yet every now and then such



mischievous news is being spread in the media. This is clearly a conspiracy to finish off my political career," declared Munde.

She made it clear that she has never seen or met Congress leaders like Sonia Gandhi or Rahul Gandhi in her life, and threatened to slap a libel suit on the con-

cerned TV channel in the matter.

Munde reiterated that she has been with the BJP since the past two decades and will continue to work with it as "backstabbing and betrayal are not in my blood", while announcing a two-month 'break' to tide over the current spate of speculation.

"Centre Targeting Rahul Gandhi": Team Uddhav after defamation case setback

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The centre is trying to target Rahul Gandhi, said Sanjay Raut of the Uddhav Thackeray faction of Shiv Sena, expressing hope that the Congress leader will get justice in the defamation case over his "Modi surname" remark.

His remark came hours after the Gujarat High Court upheld a sessions court order convicting Mr Gandhi in the criminal defamation case.

"We are hopeful that Rahul Gandhi would get justice from the higher court and his plea would be heard and his disqualification as MP would be revoked. Centre was trying to target him," said Raut.

He said, "Due to Ajit Pawar, they (the Shinde faction) left Shiv Sena, and now they have formed an alliance again. Eknath Shinde and his 40 thieves are now saying that the government has become stronger and they are friends. This is all pretence."

Raut further said, "There's no need for



mediation to talk to Raj Thackeray. Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray are brothers. My friendship with Raj Thackeray is known to everybody. Our political paths have separated but we have shared a large part of our lives with each other. We still have an emotional attachment. Both of them can talk to each other over the phone." On Ajit Pawar's age jibe at Sharad Pawar, Sanjay Raut said, "Sharad Pawar always inspires us. Balasaheb Thackeray was 84-86 years old, we always drew inspiration and strength from him. It is not about the age."

"SYMPATHY OVER AGE": DEVENDRA FADNAVIS TO SHARAD PAWAR SUPPORTERS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday said he hoped to see Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) founder Sharad Pawar live till 100 but criticised what he called attempts by his followers to "attract sympathy" by highlighting his age.

"He has our blessings. I hope he lives till 100. He can be in politics as long as he wants. But this attempt by some of his followers to attract sympathy by highlighting his age is not right," Mr Fadnavis said at a news conference, sitting next to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

The comments come amid a back-and-forth between Sharad Pawar's camp and members of the break-away unit of his party led by Ajit Pawar that has joined the BJP-Shiv Sena government over the 83-year-



old's age. At a public meeting two days ago, Ajit Pawar appeared to question his uncle's leadership of the party he

now wants to take over. "In other parties, leaders retire after an age. In BJP, leaders retire at 75, when are you going to stop? You

should also give new people a chance. If we make mistakes, tell us. Your age is 83, will you ever stop or not? You give us blessings," Ajit Pawar, 63, said, addressing a meeting where he paraded MLAs who supported him.

"Everybody has his innings. The most productive years are from 25 to 75 years," said Ajit Pawar, who joined the Eknath Shinde-led government in a shock move on Sunday.

Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule's counter came at the parallel rally of Sharad Pawar, where far fewer MLAs showed up.

"Some people are saying that people who are senior now should give us blessings. Why should they stop working? Ratan Tata is 86 years old. Serum Institute's Cyrus Poonawala's age is 84. Amitabh Bachchan is 82..." Sule said, also naming Warren Buffet and Farooq Abdullah.

Eknath Shinde's midnight meet ahead of Maharashtra cabinet expansion

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Days after Ajit Pawar's break-away Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) faction joined the Maharashtra coalition government, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis met with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde late last night to discuss power sharing.

In the meeting that lasted till 2 am, Eknath Shinde and Devendra Fadnavis discussed a cabinet expansion after the entry of a third ally, Ajit Pawar, who was sworn in as Deputy Chief Minister on Sunday.

The discussions took place hours after the Shinde camp refuted reports that its MLAs had been uncomfort-



able with Ajit Pawar's entry into the ruling coalition. The party asserted

that Eknath Shinde has no plans of stepping down as Chief Minister.

"We are not resignation givers but takers. His leadership is to take everyone along and be patient.

Yesterday, all the MLAs, MPs have reposed faith in Eknath Shinde... all this (reports of discontent) is being done to malign Eknath Shinde," said Shiv Sena leader Uday Samant.

Eknath Shinde also denied any differences within the party. "With our government now made up of three parties, the strength of our MLAs is more than 200. Our government is only getting stronger.

We have the support of PM Modi and Amit Shah," said the Chief Minister.

Deepika Padukone faces criticism as she skips b'day post for hubby Ranveer

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Deepika Padukone has drawn flak for not sharing any post for her husband and actor Ranveer Singh, who celebrated his 38th birthday on July 6.

Deepika, who has an illustrious career, is also one of the most loved and followed celebrities on the social media, especially Instagram, where she has 74.6 million followers. Time and again, Deepika's unparalleled popularity, wide global appeal, and unbeatable stardom has put her in the limelight.

However now, the 'Piku' fame has faced major backlash from the netizens, for not posting anything for Ranveer on his birthday.

Expressing their disappointment over the same, fans took to Deepika's last Instagram post, where she had posted a picture of her relishing an ice cream, and flooded her comment section.

One user wrote: "Me waiting for Ranveer's bdy wish post on Deepika's insta whole day",



while the other said: "Husband ki bday ka post nhi lagaya???"

Another fan commented: "Post something on your hubby birthday". One user said, "Is this for @ranveersingh...? #BirthdaySpecial."

On the other hand, Ranveer's social media was flooded with birthday wishes from the fans and celebrities.

ANDHERI SUBWAY CLOSED FOR TRAFFIC DUE TO WATERLOGGING

Mumbai: Mumbai witnessed heavy showers on Friday as the rain intensity increased in the city. According to the Mumbai Traffic Police, the Andheri subway has been closed due to waterlogging.

A tweet by the Mumbai Traffic Police, said, "Due to water logging, Andheri Subway is closed, while traffic is diverted to Vile Parle bridge & Captain Gore Marg SV road." Further, updating about the traffic in the city, the Mumbai Traffic Police stated that there is slow moving traffic in Kanjurmarg and at Sahara Star Ramnagar Subway due to waterlogging issue.

The Mumbai Traffic Police, tweeted, "Due to water logging, vehicular movement is slow at Gandhinagar Junction, Kanjur Marg"

Meanwhile, IMD Mumbai has issued a 'yellow' alert for the next 48 hours. The IMD Mumbai predicts heavy rainfall in isolated places in the city. According to the Regional Meteorological Centre, Mumbai City received 25.01 mm of rain and eastern suburbs and western suburbs received 36.70 mm and 50.13 mm of rain respectively in the last 24 hours.

NEED TO KNOW BOUNDARIES OF 3 WORDS: HIGH COURT ON IT RULES AGAINST FAKE NEWS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Friday said before it considers the effects of amended Information Technology (IT) Rules on the fundamental rights of citizens, it needs to know the boundaries and limits of three words - 'fake, false, and misleading'.

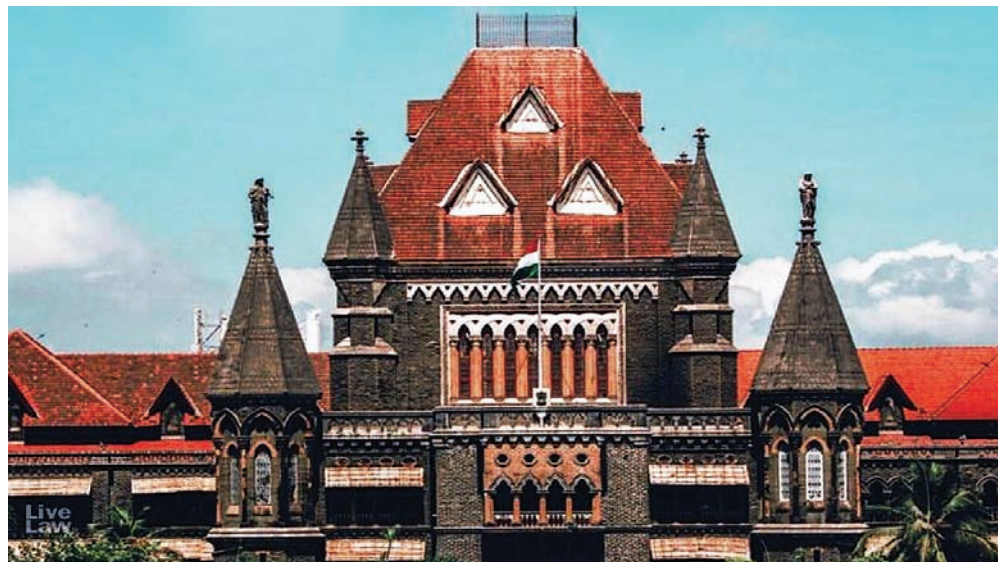
It asked if opinions and editorial content on any policy of the government can also be held as misleading, and sought to know if it was permissible in law for a statute to have unbound and limitless discretionary authority.

A division bench of Justices Gautam Patel and Neela Gokhale said this while hearing a bunch of petitions challenging the IT Rules that empower the Centre to identify fake, false, and misleading information posted on social media against the government and its business.

Stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra, the Editors Guild of India, and the Association of Indian Magazines filed petitions in the high court against the rules, terming them as arbitrary, and unconstitutional, saying that they would have a "chilling effect" on the fundamental rights of citizens.

"What are the limits and boundaries of these three words - fake, false, and misleading? Before we get into the effect of the Rules on fundamental rights of citizens, as claimed by the petitioners, we need to know this. If these words were capable of limits and bounds, then we need not go into effect," the court said.

The bench also sought to know what is construed as government business and what is not.



The court said the Rules say action would be taken when some content/information is fake, false, and misleading and some authority, in this case the Fact Checking Unit (FCU), is assuming the power to unequivocally say that the content is false or not.

"Having an FCU is fine, but what we are concerned about is with the authority conferred on this FCU. What we find extremely and seriously problematic is these words - fake, false, and misleading," Justice Patel said.

The court questioned if this would also include opinions and editorial content.

"I do not know or cannot make out what the boundaries of these words are. Is it permissible in law for a statute to have unbound and limitless discretionary authority like this? What are the limits and boundaries of these words," Justice Patel said.

The bench noted that as per the Rules, the FCU would be determining whether a statement or content posted is true or not.

"I have a problem with this. How can someone say with finality that this is false. What is the source of this power? At most, the FCU can say whether the information is credible or not. Even a civil court cannot authoritatively pronounce what is true. At the most, it can make the comment on probability," Justice Patel said.

The bench questioned if the opinion of a person and editorial content fall in the Rules.

"For example, criticism of government figures about the country's economy. The figures may come from government sources, but the analysis of the same would be different. Does that make this false, fake, and misleading information?" the court asked.

"One may find an editorial hard-hitting, but does that make it false, fake, or misleading," Justice Patel said. The bench said it would continue hearing the matter on July 13.

The Union government had earlier assured the court that it would not notify the FCU till July 10.

The bench on Friday said this statement shall stand extended till July 14.

On April 6 this year, the Union government promulgated certain amendments to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, including a provision for a fact-checking unit to flag fake, false, or misleading online content related to the government.

The three petitions sought the court to declare the amended Rules unconstitutional and direct the government to restrain from acting against any individual under the Rules.



LEONARDO DICAPRIO AND GIGI HADID SEEN GETTING 'FLIRTY'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Los Angeles: Hollywood actor Leonardo DiCaprio and supermodel Gigi Hadid are continuing to enjoy each other's company, and even got "flirty" at times. A source told People that the 'Inception' actor, 48, and Hadid, 28, spent time together in the Hamptons over the July 4 weekend - where they got "flirty" with each other.

"They were with separate groups of people but partied together for two nights. They were flirty and Gigi looked happy," says the source.

"It's pretty obvious that they are seeing each other. Maybe not exclusively, but they are definitely dating," the source added.

"It's just always very predictable: Leo shows up to parties first, then Gigi second. It's like a game."

The source said that inside the parties "there is subtle touching and lots of flirting" when "they are able to be more private". And Hadid typically "stays by his side."

A separate source close to Hadid said the model (who shares two-year-old daughter Khai with ex Zayn Malik) is simply "single and enjoying the summer."

"She sees Leo when they are in the same place. She has fun with him. It's more of a flirtatious connection than a relationship," says the insider. "She likes the attention."



Taylor Swift releases new album 'Speak Now (Taylor's Version)'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Country-pop singer Taylor Swift has finally dropped her latest album titled 'Speak Now (Taylor's Version)', a re-recorded version of her 2010 album 'Speak Now'. The 22-track album has been released and includes all 16 songs from the original along with deluxe versions of the project.

In addition, the album contains seven new 'From the Vault' tracks along with two collaborations with Hayley Williams and Fall Out Boy.

Taking to social media to celebrate her new release, the musician took to Instagram and captioned: "It's here. It's yours, it's mine, it's ours. It's an album I wrote alone about the whims, fantasies, heartaches, dramas and tragedies I lived out as a young woman between 18 and 20."

"I remember making track list after track list, obsessing over the right way to tell the story." She further added: "I had to be ruthless with my choices, and I left behind some songs I am still unfaithfully proud of now. Therefore, you have 6 'From The Vault' tracks!"

"I recorded this album when I was 32 (and still growing up, now) and the memories it brought back filled me with nostalgia and appreciation. For life, for you, for the fact that I get to reclaim my work. Thank you a million times, for the memories that break our fall."

"Speak Now' (My Version) is out now!"
"The songs that came from this time in my life were marked by their brutal honesty, unfiltered diaristic confessions and wild wistfulness."

"I love this album because it tells a tale of growing up, flailing, flying and crashing... and living to speak about it. With six extra songs I've sprung loose from the vault, I absolutely cannot wait to celebrate Speak Now (Taylor's Version) with you," she added.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Eva Mendes has praised Ryan Gosling, her partner and father of their two kids, as the "greatest actor" she has ever worked with. The couple have largely kept their relationship private.

Eva took to Instagram to praise Gosling and publicly called him her "man, life, and love", ahead of the release of his new film 'Barbie', directed by Greta Gerwig and also starring Margot Robbie.

Eva shared a quote from Rolling Stone this past week, in which the director called Ryan's performance as the Ken doll "some combination of Marlon Brando meets Gene Wilder meets John Barrymore meets John Travolta."

In response, Eva added: "One of my favorite things the insanely talented and beautiful Greta Gerwig says in @rollingstone about Mi Hombre, Mi Vida, Mi Amor ... RG." The English translation reads: "My man, my life, my love."

In a second post, Eva added: "Mi Hombre, Mi Vida... To say he's the greatest actor I've ever worked with is an understatement. Gracias to the brilliant & beautiful Greta Gerwig ed and beautiful Greta Gerwig from their 2012 film 'The Place Beyond the Pines'.

As per People, in a recent interview with GQ, Gosling revealed that he knew he wanted to have a family with Mendes after their first meeting. "I wasn't thinking about kids before I met her, but after I met Eva, I realised that I just didn't want to have kids without her," he said. "And there were moments on 'The Place Beyond the Pines' where we were pretending to be a family, and I didn't really want it to be pretend anymore."



EVA MENDES PRAISES RYAN AS THE 'GREATEST ACTOR' SHE WORKED WITH



Now Drake gets an object hurled at him during concert

Los Angeles | Agencies

After Bebe Rexha, Pink, and Kelsea Ballerini among many others got hit onstage by thrown objects, rapper Drake suffered the same.

The Canadian singer-rapper was hit on the left wrist Wednesday night in Chicago while performing the song "So Anxious", reports Deadline.

Drake looked at the phone on the ground, but didn't indicate that he was injured or particularly annoyed, and carried on with the show, part of his It's All a Blur tour.

He became the latest victim in a disturbing trend of fans throwing objects at the stage in an order to get a clickable video moment. Artists including Bebe Rexha, Pink, Kid Cudi, Steve Lacy, Kelsea Ballerini and Ava Max have been victimised.

Singer Adele recently warned from the stage that she would fight anyone who threw anything at her.

Rexha has been the most serious injury, with a thrown phone hitting her near her eye, causing her to collapse on stage. A 27-year-old man was arrested.

Ballerini stopped her show in Idaho to address her audience after an object was thrown.

"Can we just talk about what happened?" she asked. "All I care about is keeping everyone safe. If you ever don't feel safe, please let someone around you know. If anyone's pushing too much or you just have that gut feeling, just always flag it. ... Don't throw things, you know?"

Adele has had the strongest reaction. She told her audience this week: "Have you noticed how people are like, forgetting show etiquette at the moment? People just throwing s- onstage, have you seen them? If I dare you. Dare you to throw something at me and I'll f- kill you."



Makers explain the controversial 'Barbie' map which got it banned

Los Angeles | Agencies

Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling's upcoming film 'Barbie' hit a bit of a snag when it got banned in Vietnam due to a crayon drawing by Barbie featuring a controversial map that includes the nine-dash line.

Explaining the drawing, an executive said that the picture is a childish drawing which depicts Barbie's transition from the Barbie world to the 'real world'.

Explaining the map in 'Barbie', a spokesperson for Warner Bros. Film told Variety: "The map in Barbie Land is a child-like crayon drawing."

He added: "The doodles depict Barbie's make-believe journey from Barbie Land to the 'real world.' It was not intended to make any type of statement."

The 'nine-dash line' is a controversial topic in both Vietnam as they dispute it due to China's claims over the South China Sea. As there are only eight lines in the 'Barbie' map which differ from global maps, this was

seen as strengthening China's claims and violating Vietnam's sovereignty.

"What some have taken to represent the nine-dash line is what one source described as 'journey lines', the serial dashes often used in family animation and kid's drawings to represent where a character has travelled to or from."

"Representatives for Gerwig and Warner Bros. would not comment on plot points of the film. Depicted in high resolution above, the map features other so-called 'journey lines' as well as arrows and boats," as reported by Variety.

The filmmakers have decided to keep the spoilers to a minimum, keeping most of the details under wraps, though the drawing has been described as essentially Barbie's road to enlightenment.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Olivia Rodrigo





Canada Open

SINDHU, LAKSHYA SEN ADVANCE TO QUARTERS; KRISHNA PRASAD/VISHUNVARDHAN OUT

Calgary (Canada) | Agencies

India's PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen continued their onward march in the Canada Open, reaching the respective singles quarterfinals while the men's doubles combine of Krishna Prasad Garaga and Vishnuvardhan Goud Panjala made its exit.

Sindhu, seeded fourth in the event, did not have to take the court as she got a walkover from Japan's Natsuki Nidaira in the second round while Lakshya Sen defeated Brazil's Ygor Coelho in straight games, 21-15, 21-11 in just 31 minutes.

Krishna Prasad and Vishnuvardhan went down to Mohamad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan of Indonesia 9-21, 11-21 in 24 minutes in the BWF World Tour Super 500 event with a prize fund of USD 420,000.

She will next face China's Gao Fang Jie for a place in the semifinals. Gao defeated Switzerland's Jenjira Stadelmann 21-14, 22-20 in a second-round clash.

In the second round against Ygor Coelho, Lakshya Sen took a 2-0 lead but the Brazilian opponent had four points in a row to surge ahead 4-2. Scores went neck and neck with the lead changing hands regularly till 15-14 when Lakshya took control and won the next five points to take a 20-14 lead. Coelho saved a game point but Lakshya won the next one to win the first game 21-15.



Lakshya dominated the second game and from 3-2 won nine consecutive points to take a 12-2 lead. He extended the lead to 16-4 and though the Brazilian won three points in a

row, Lakshya maintained his upper hand as he went on to win the second game 21-11 and seal a comprehensive win.

Lakshya, who stunned second seed Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand in the first round, next faces Julien Carraggi of Belgium in the quarterfinals.

Wimbledon

Kvitova, Kostyuk through to third round, Badosa retires

London | Agencies

Two-time champion Petra Kvitova made her way into the third round of Wimbledon for the ninth time with a 6-2, 6-2 defeat of world No.69 Aliaksandra Sasnovich in 74 minutes, here on Friday.

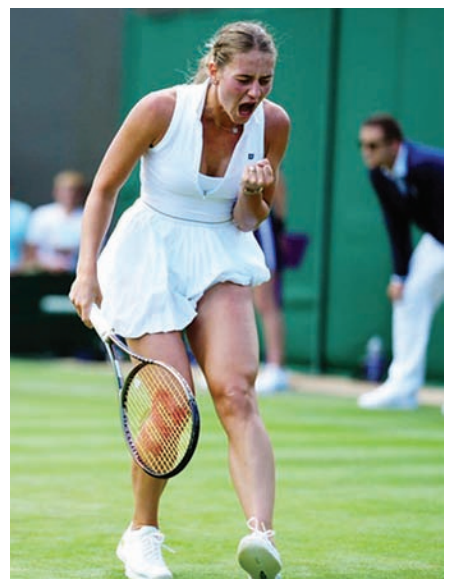
No.9 seed Kvitova dominated from the start on No.2 court, taking just 39 minutes to secure the first set in the Wimbledon sunshine.

Following an exchange of breaks at the start of the second, the Czech broke again for 4-2 to stamp her authority on the match.

She now has a chance to improve that record when she faces either qualifier Natalija Stevanovic or lucky loser Tamara Korpatsch. Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk moved to her maiden Wimbledon third round after Paula Badosa of Spain retired from second-round due to an injury, here on Friday.

Badosa was trailing 2-6, 0-1 when she withdrew from the match due to a lower back injury, which also forced the former World No. 2 to miss Roland Garros in May.

Kostyuk defeated eighth seed Maria Sakkari



in the first round and will hope to continue her run against 25th seed Madison Keys in the third round on Saturday.

MEDVEDEV MOVES TO THIRD ROUND

London: Third seed Daniil Medvedev on Friday claimed the third set tie-break against Frenchman Adrian Mannarino to complete a 6-3, 6-3, 7-6 win in the second round of Wimbledon, here.

The 2021 US Open champion was earlier locked at 4-4 in the third set with the Frenchman when darkness forced the postponement of the match on Thursday night.

Resuming the match in contrasting warm, sunny conditions on Friday, Medvedev recovered from an early mini-break in the tie-break to book a date with the winner Marton Fucsovics. The 27-year-old has yet to lose a set this fortnight. He opened his campaign with a straight-sets win against home favourite Arthur Fery on Wednesday and will hope to keep his perfect run alive when he returns to the court for a third round on Saturday.



Badminton Asia Junior C'ships

Indian team starts campaign with 5-0 win over Bangladesh

Yogyakarta | Agencies

Indian team made a stunning start to their campaign at the Badminton Asia Junior Championships with a resounding 5-0 victory against Bangladesh on the opening day of the competition, here on Friday.

The opening match saw the mixed doubles pair of Samarveer and Radhika setting the tone for the team as they defeated Bangladesh's Nazmul Islam and Smrity Rajbongshi with a convincing score of 21-12, 21-10. Their exceptional coordination and strategic play gave their opponents absolutely no chance throughout the match. Tara



Shah and Ayush Shetty continued the winning streak with dominant performances in their respective matches. In the girls' singles match, Tara showed her class and completely outclassed her opponent Smrity Rajbongshi with an impressive score of 21-2,

21-7. In the boys' singles category, Ayush Shetty displayed his skillset and prowess on the court as he defeated his opponent Sifat Ullah 21-5, 21-9 in just 21 minutes.

The boys' doubles duo of Nicholas and Tushar also won their match comfortably as they got the better of Nazmul Islam and Sifat Ullah with a scoreline of 21-13, 21-12. The girls' doubles pair of Taneesha, Kamika showcased excellent teamwork and synchronization against Jesmin Kona and Mathena Biswas enroute their 21-8, 21-15 win in 19 minutes.

The Indian team will face Hong Kong, China and Malaysia on Saturday.

ODI WC Qualifiers

SRI LANKA HAMMER WEST INDIES, FINISH SUPER SIX UNBEATEN

Harare | Agencies

Spinner Maheesh Theekshana's four-wicket haul and Pathum Nissanka's third ODI century led Sri Lanka to an emphatic eight-wicket victory over West Indies in a Super Six stage match of Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2023 at Harare Sports Club, here on Friday.

Opening batters Pathum Nissanka (104) and Dimuth Karunaratne (83) did the bulk of the damage to chase down 243 after Keacy Carty (87) had dragged Windies to a respectable target.

The victory means that Sri Lanka remain unbeaten in the Qualifiers and will go in as favorites against Netherlands in the final, set to be played on Sunday. Both Sri Lanka and Netherlands have already claimed their main prize, a place in India next October for the Men's



Cricket World Cup 2023 but neither will want to end their time in Zimbabwe with defeat.

Chasing a target of 244, Sri Lanka got off to a flying start as Nissanka and Dimuth Karunaratne put together a commanding 190-run opening stand that took the game away from West Indies. Kusal Mendis (34) and

Sadeera Samarawickrama (17) did the rest to easily reach their target of 244, for which Windies had Keacy Carty (87) to thank after Maheesh Theekshana (4/34) had ripped through much of their top order.

Put in to bat first, West Indies had started strongly, racing to 31 from their first four overs before

Theekshana conceded just two from his first over and cleaned up Brandon King (10) in his second.

The spinner struck again in his third, Shamarh Brooks (2) nicking behind before captain Shai Hope (2) became his third victim from his fourth over, pinned leg before.

In reply, Sri Lanka began their chase quickly, bringing up 50 inside nine overs before Nissanka reached his 10th ODI half century in as many balls in the 16th over.

Brief scores

West Indies 243 all out in 48.1 overs (Keacy Carty 87, Johnson Charles 39; Maheesh Theekshana 4/34) lost to Sri Lanka 244/2 in 44.2 overs (Pathum Nissanka 104, Dimuth Karunaratne 83; Kevin Sinclair 1/52) by 8 wickets.

Golf: Pranavi makes the cut in Singapore but Avani, Seher are yet to finish round



Singapore | Agencies

Pranavi Urs made sure of making the cut, even as the play was suspended early on the second day of the Singapore Ladies Masters at the Laguna National Golf Course here.

Pranavi was the only Indian of the three playing here this week to do so and she scored even-par 72 to be 3-over for 36 holes and was lying Tied-37th. She was tied at 60 after the first day.

Avani Prashanth after a first-round 73 suffered two double bogeys in the 15 holes she had played. She was 3-over for the day and 4-over for the tournament and Tied-48th. Seher

Atwal, whose 77 on the first day put her in danger continued to be in the zone as she was 3-over for the 10 holes she had played on the second day. She was 8-over for 28 holes and the cut was likely at 6-over. She was T-81 in the US \$100,000 China LPGA

event. Thailand's Prima Thammaraks, who like Pranavi plays on the Epson Tour in the US, had the day's best of 5-under 67 and grabbed the lead at 6-under. She held a one-shot lead over three players, Chinese Taipei's Chang Tzu-Yi (70), Thai Pakin Kawinpakorn, who was 4-under through 14 holes, and China's Sui Xiang, who was 1-over for the day through 12 holes.

Pranavi opened with a birdie on the

10th and was bogey-free 2-under through 13 holes. A double bogey on the Par-3 fifth spoiled that run but she closed with pars on the last four holes. Avani playing in the afternoon had one bogey on the third but got a birdie on the sixth to turn in even par. With rain hanging over the Laguna, a double bogey on the 10th was followed by a birdie on the 12th before she double-bogeyed again on Par-5 15th. Play was suspended soon after that with Avani needing to come back to play her last three holes of the second round. Seher started on the 10th and began with a bogey before back-to-back double bogeys on the 16th and 17th seemed to end her hopes.

Tamim Iqbal reverses retirement decision after PM's intervention

Dhaka | Agencies

After announcing his shocking retirement from international cricket, veteran Bangladesh batter Tamim Iqbal on Friday reversed his decision after intervention from country's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The 34-year old cricketer met the Prime Minister at her residence with his wife, his former captain Mashrafe Mortaza and BCB president Nazmul Hassan and later briefed the media about his decision. "Today afternoon, the Prime Minister invited



me to her house. She admonished me and asked me to play again, so I have decided to come out of retirement at this moment," Tamim was quoted as saying by Cricbuzz. "I can say no to everyone

but it was impossible for me to say no to someone of the PM's authority. Papon (Nazmul Hasan) bhai, Mashrafe (Mortaza) bhai were big, big factors too. Mashrafe bhai called me here and Papon bhai was also here. The Prime Minister also gave me a one and a half month break for my treatment and other things. After becoming mentally free, I will play the rest of the matches," he added.

Earlier, in an emotional press conference on Thursday, Tamim had made a shocking retirement announcement.

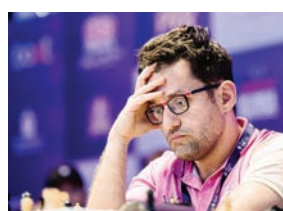
Global Chess League Great idea to have six games with one colour at the same time: Levon Aronian

Dubai | Agencies

Grandmaster Levon Aronian Global Chess League champion described as magical and historical Triveni Continental Kings' come-from-behind triumph and said it was nice to see the entire team playing with the same colour in a match.

The Global Chess League ended a few days back on an exciting note in one of the most unexpected events with Triveni Continental Kings surging from behind to become champions of the inaugural edition.

From being almost out of the title contention, Triveni Continental Kings became the first team to qualify for the final of the inaugural season and



eventually ended up winning the league in a thrilling sudden-death Blitz encounter thanks to the team's youngest member Grandmaster (GM) Jonas Buhl Bjerre. While GM Bjerre stole the show in the epic tie-break after losing his first two boards against GM Javokhir Sindarov of upGrad Mumbai Masters, it was the Icon player of the team GM Levon Aronian who played a crucial role in steering the team to the final.

India to open campaign against Japan in Round 2 of Women's Olympic Qualifiers

Kuala Lumpur | Agencies

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) on Friday announced the fixtures for Round 2 of the AFC Women's Olympic Football Tournament Paris 2024 with India opening their campaign against Japan on October 26.

The draw for the Women's Olympic Qualifiers was earlier conducted in May.

India, ranked 60 in the world, will face London 2012 silver-medallists Japan (ranked 11) in their first Group C match on October 26 at the JAR Stadium in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Three days later, the Blue



Tigresses will take on 32-ranked Vietnam, who qualified for their first FIFA Women's World Cup this year, at the same venue. India's final opponents in the

group will be 49-ranked Uzbekistan on November 1 at the Bunyodkor Stadium. India qualified for Round 2 courtesy of two comfortable victories over Kyrgyz

Republic (5-0 and 4-0) in Bishkek in April.

Round 2 consists of three groups of four teams each. Group A features Australia, Chinese Taipei, Philippines and IR Iran. Group B has China PR, Korea Republic, Thailand and DPR Korea while Japan, Vietnam, Uzbekistan (hosts) and India are placed in group C.

The three group winners and the best-ranked runners-up will progress to Round 3 to play two pairs of home and away matches in February 2024. The winners will take the two spots reserved for AFC in the Women's Olympic Football Tournament Paris 2024.

FC Goa sign Carlos Martinez as new foreign striker

Goa | Agencies

FC Goa have signed Carlos Martinez as their new foreign striker for the upcoming 2023-24 season, the Indian Super League (ISL) club confirmed on Friday.

Martinez is the seventh new addition to the Gaur's squad this summer, following the arrivals of Rowlin Borges, Udanta Singh, Sandesh Jhingan, Boris Singh, Raynier Fernandes and Paulo Retre.

In a footballing career spanning 18 years across 13 different clubs, the 37-year-old has notched 123 goals and 8 assists from 357 appearances.

"I've followed FC Goa for a while now, and I'm aware of their achievements in Indian



football. To be one of the most successful teams in the league, while following a style of play that I'm quite familiar with, made it easy to form an association with the Club," Martinez said after signing for the Men in Orange.

"The attacking style of play and the fighting spirit that the team has consistently shown over the years excite me, and I'm eager to arrive in Goa soon and join up with my teammates. We'll challenge together for all the trophies, and I want to make the fans of this team proud," he added.



Exploring storytelling as a voice actor is insightful: Richa



Watching Kapil Sharma's journey has brought so much laughter in my life: Parizaad Kolah

Team

Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Richa Chadha, who is set to return as 'Dr Gayatri Rajput' the season two of the thriller audio series 'Virus 2062', said that it is an insightful and interesting experience to explore this form of storytelling as a voice actor. 'Virus 2062' is a Hindi adaptation of 'Caso 63', a Spotify Original from Chile. Voiced by real life couple Richa and Ali Fazal as protagonists, this season of the audio thriller brings back the mystery of time, space, and reality. "Following the success of season one, reprising my role as Dr Gayatri Rajput for the second season of Virus 2062 has been an exciting challenge. In season two, we emerge in a new timeline, where Gayatri has to grapple with a reversal of roles and a new reality," said Richa. "It continues to be an insightful and interesting experience to explore this form of storytelling as a voice actor with Spotify and Mantra, and we are excited to see how listeners receive this season of Virus 2062," she added. While season one focused on the interactions between Dr Gayatri and Peter, in this season, Dr Gayatri wakes up in a timeline to find that roles have been reversed, and she is now both the time traveller and the enigmatic patient of a psychiatrist. "In season two of Virus 2062, my character of Peter Pereira returns, stranded in a lost future. It has been both exciting and enriching to return to this show and continue to expand my creativity voicing this extraordinary world, in a podcast, and I hope the audience enjoys listening to this season as much as we enjoyed making it," said Ali. Director Mantra Mugdh shared, "Virus 2062 has been the most mind-blowing project I have had the chance to create. Adapted from the original podcast Caso 63 from Chile, this story travels between the past, present, and the future as we know it, and leaves you questioning what really is 'time'."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Anchor Parizaad Kolah has spoken about how proud she feels seeing actor-comedian Kapil Sharma's achievement. She would be seen talking about him during 'The Kapil Sharma Show'. It will host renowned female anchors - Mini Mathur, Renuka Sahane, Richa

Anirudh, Parizaad Kolah, and Deepthi Bhatnagar, this weekend.

Amidst the fun conversation, Parizaad talks about the journey of Kapil from the 'Laughter Challenge Show' till successfully hosting his own show.

"I am truly proud of Kapil's success. It's amazing how far he has come since our days on the 'Laughter Challenge Show' I still remember being the host back then, and now, sitting here on his show, it feels surreal."

"Watching Kapil's journey has brought so much laughter into my life, it has even strengthened my core muscles (laughs). But beyond the laughter, I genuinely feel a sense of pride today," said Parizaad.

"We started our journey together on that stage, and I distinctly recall introducing Kapil Sharma to the audience. Now, after all these years, hearing him mention my name fills me with immense joy. I am genuinely happy and tremendously proud of you, Kapil," she added.



Sara Ali Khan takes an auto ride for gym session, surprises bystanders

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Doing exactly what 'nepokids' aren't supposed to do, Sara Ali Khan, fresh from the success of the mid-budget 'Zara Hatke Zara Bachke', was spotted enjoying an auto-rickshaw ride along with a friend for her gym session in Bandra. Dressed in a gym top and shorts, sporting slippers and carrying her handy bag, Sara not only posed for the paparazzi, but also waved to the other auto-drivers and fans, who were surprised to see their favourite actress travelling like a commoner.

On the work front, Sara will soon be seen in four highly anticipated releases -- 'Ae Watan Mere Watan', 'Metro In Dino', 'Murder Mubarak' and an untitled film with Jagan Shakti.

Backed by Dharna Productions, 'Ae Watan Mere Watan' is a biopic based on the freedom fighter Usha Mehta, who started an underground radio station in Mumbai, called the Congress Radio, during the Quit India Movement of 1942. In the few months it was around, the radio station left a big mark as it greatly assisted the freedom movement by broadcasting uncensored news and other information banned by the British Raj. The film will be released on Prime Video.

GUT-WRENCHING SAGA OF '72 HOORAIN' WILL BLOW YOUR MIND



BY AAKRUTI BAGLA

Directed by: - Sanjay Puran Singh Chauhan
Cast:- Pavan Malhotra, Aamir Bashir, Saru Maini, Rasheed Naz, Ashok Pathak and Namrata Dixit.
Runtime: - 80 minutes
Rating: - ****



India is one of those countries in the world that is among the worst sufferers of terrorism spread in the name of religion. And everyone knows how religious fanaticism is being used to burn the social fabric of the country.

There have been films that showcase how terrorism deeply impacts our day-to-day life, but there are hardly any films that daringly question the practice of brainwashing youth into becoming terrorists and killing innocent people in the name of religion.

Director Sanjay Puran Singh Chauhan's '72 Hoorain' exposes the dirty game to trick people into becoming terrorists and turning them into killing machines.

The best part of the film is that it doesn't preach to convey its message and directly points fingers at the perpetrators of such terrorist syndicates and lays bare their fanatical agenda.

Anil Pandey's brilliant story and Sanjay Puran Singh Chauhan's hard-hitting direction are the highlights of this unusual saga. Deeply seeped in the dark realities of religious fanaticism and terrorism, the story of the film is so captivating that the audiences will be hooked to the screens till its end.

The film excels in all departments -- from the story to screenplay, dialogues, direction, cinematography, to editing. Watching the movie, you get the feeling that you are not watching a drama unfold on screen, but watching the ghastly acts of terrorism unfold live and shake you up from within.

Enacting the roles of flag-bearers of terrorism in the film, Pavan Malhotra and Aamir Bashir have done commendable jobs and bring lot of conviction to their parts. No matter how much you praise these two brilliant actors, it is not going to be enough. The other actors also have done justice to their roles in the film. The brilliant and apt casting deserves to be praised.

Audiences are hardwired to watch films for entertainment. Hence, it is all the more necessary that such audiences also watch this film, for it exposes the nexus between religion and terrorism brilliantly, and brings the debate over religious fanaticism to the centre stage.

REALITY SHOWS CAN CHANGE LIVES, SAYS SHILPA SHETTY

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Actress Shilpa Shetty, who is all set to reprise her role as a judge on 'India's Got Talent' season 10, said that the reality show has the ability to change lives, and she cannot wait to witness awe-inspiring talent.

Expressing her excitement, Shilpa shared: "India is racing ahead to become a force to be reckoned with, backed by a talent pool which is already making its mark on a global level, proof being our Talent being unique and outstanding on even America's Got Talent (AGT)."

"Be it dance, singing, magic, stunts, comedy - you name it, and India has it all. I am ecstatic to be returning as a judge on India's Got Talent, which celebrates 'hunar' in all forms. Last season, this stage brought alive daring acts and age-old art forms, introducing viewers to the real India."

"And this being the 10th season, a milestone to celebrate, I cannot wait to witness awe-inspiring talent. Being a judge on such a huge platform has been exciting and a learning curve for me as well, and I feel privileged to be a part of the transformational journey of budding talent."

"India's Got Talent has the ability to change lives and I am looking forward to discovering unique talents along with my co-judges, Kirron Ma'am and Badshah," she added.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Saanyaa Khattar