

absolute india

VOL. 8, ISSUE 286 BHOPAL | SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 2023 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI

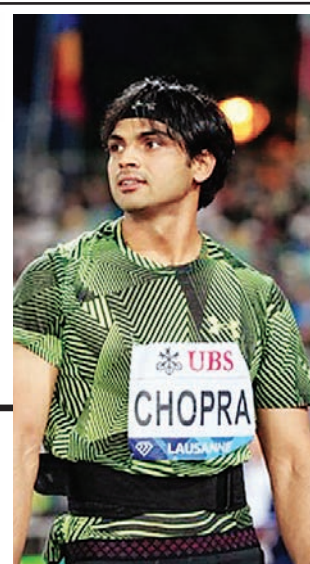
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Smart Cities awards: MP is the best state, Indore retains the top spot



THE SELECTION PROCESS OF SMART CITY AWARDS

- The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs had received 845 nominations for the ISAC 2022 from 80 qualifying smart cities, evaluated in five stages:
- A pre-screening of the 845 proposals took place in this stage; 423 proposals moved to the next stage
- Top 12 proposals were identified for each award category
- Each proposal proponent made a presentation to a panel of subject experts; a total of six proposals were moved to the next stage for each category
- The six proposals made an elaborate presentation to a jury
- Top 3 proposals were identified for each award category

Team Absolute | New Delhi
The central government declared 66 winners of the fourth edition of the India Smart Cities Award Contest (ISAC) on Friday, which was launched in April 2022 at the Smart

Cities-Smart Urbanisation event in Surat. Indore retained its top position, securing the National Smart City Award. Madhya Pradesh emerged as the top performing state under the fourth edition of the India Smart Cities Award Contest (ISAC), organised under Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's Smart Cities Mission to upgrade the country's cities. Indore retained its top position, bagging the National Smart City Award. The Central government declared the 66 winners of the fourth edition of the India Smart Cities Award Contest (ISAC) on Friday, which

was launched in April 2022 at the Smart Cities-Smart Urbanisation event in Surat. Among states, Tamil Nadu was at the second position, and Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh shared the third spot jointly. Among cities, Surat and Agra followed Indore at the second and third

positions respectively. Chandigarh won the Union Territory award. In the previous edition of the contest, held in 2020, Uttar Pradesh was declared the best state whereas Surat and Indore were joint winners in the city category.

A MICHAEL JACKSON 'ACT' & RAMP WALK - INDIA'S ROVER ROCKS ON THE MOON

Chennai | Agencies

India's moon rover did a Michael Jackson 'act' on the lunar surface after walking down on the ramp!

Well, it did a 'moonwalk' after slowly rolling down on the moon lander's ramp, the Indian space agency said.

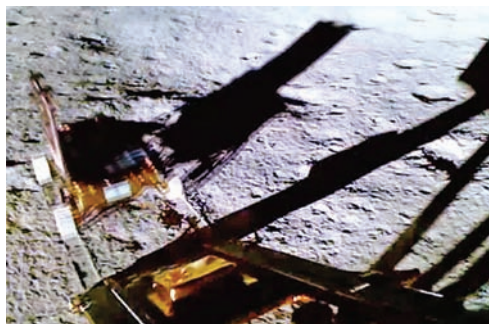
Moonwalk is a dance move that became very popular after Michael Jackson did it during the performance of the song 'Billie Jean' on 'Motown 25: Yesterday, Today, Forever'.

The lander - part of the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft - had landed safely near the moon's south pole on Wednesday in a text book style.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter) on Thursday, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) had said: "Chandrayaan-3 ROVER: Made in India Made for the MOON! The Ch-3 Rover ramped down from the Lander and India took a walk on the moon!"

While the rover did its moonwalk on Thursday, ISRO released the much awaited video on Friday.

In the video, taken by one of the lander cameras



- India's first lunar selfie - the rover with its solar panel deployed could be seen slowly going down the ramp, touching the moon soil and moving forward.

One can also see the rover's wheel imprint on the lunar soil as well as the shadow of the rover with the solar panel. In another post on X, ISRO said: "A two-segment ramp facilitated the roll-down of the rover. A solar panel enabled the rover to generate power." The Indian space agency also posted the video of the ramp and solar panel deployment

prior to the rover rolling down.

"The deployment mechanisms, totalling 26 in the Ch-3 mission, were developed at U R Rao Satellite Centre (URSC)/ISRO, Bengaluru," ISRO said.

The space agency had earlier posted: "Lander Module payloads ILSA, RAMBHA and ChaSTE are turned ON today (Thursday). Rover mobility operations have commenced. All activities are on schedule. All systems are normal." According to ISRO, on Sunday, the propulsion module payload SHAPE was turned on.

The Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft comprises a propulsion module (weighing 2,148 kg), a lander (1,723.89 kg) and a rover (26 kg).

With the landing, a major portion of the Rs 600 crore Chandrayaan-3 mission has been realised.

The remaining portion is the moon rover moving around and doing the programmed experiments.

According to ISRO, the moon rover has Alpha Particle X-ray Spectrometer (APXS) and Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (LIBS) for deriving the elemental composition in the vicinity of the landing site.

PM TO VISIT ISRO TODAY

New Delhi: Within hours of his returning from Greece, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday will visit the ISRO Telemetry Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) in Bengaluru. He will reach the ISRO campus at around 7:15 a.m., immediately after returning from his visit to South Africa and Greece, official sources said. Modi will meet and interact with ISRO scientists involved in the Chandrayaan-3 mission. He will also be briefed about the findings and progress in the Chandrayaan-3 mission, sources said. After witnessing the successful soft landing of Chandrayaan-3 mission's soft landing on Moon on Wednesday via video conferencing from South Africa, the Prime Minister had described it as a historic moment for the whole country.

Manipur violence: SC directs trial of CBI cases in Guwahati

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Supreme Court on Friday asked the Chief Justice of Gauhati High to designate courts in Assam's Guwahati to conduct trials in cases which were transferred to CBI by the Manipur government as they involved sexual violence against women and children.

A bench comprising of CJI DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said that victims and witnesses in Manipur may get their statements recorded with these courts in Assam, through video conferencing. The bench also allowed that applications pertaining to production of accused, remand, judicial custody, extension of custody, etc. may be conducted in online mode. It directed that statements under Section 164 CrPC will be recorded in presence of a local magistrate

in Manipur, while adding that applications seeking search and arrest warrants could be made by investigating agency through virtual mode.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta suggested that the Supreme Court may order transfer of the CBI cases including trial to any neighbouring state outside the State of Manipur.

Investigation were transferred to CBI in relation to the disturbing incident where two young tribal women were paraded naked in Manipur along with other similar cases involving sexual violence against women and children after Supreme Court took suo moto cognisance of the viral videos on July 20.

Through an affidavit, the Union Government had then requested the top court to order transfer of the entire case including trial to any state outside the State of Manipur.

No proposal to cut import duty on electric vehicles: Sitharaman

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said that there was no proposal before the government to cut import duty on electric vehicles.

She said this in response to queries on whether the finance ministry was planning to cut import duty on electric vehicles, amid reports that such a move was on the anvil and it may facilitate entry of Tesla vehicles in the country. "There is no such proposal before me to lower import duty on electric vehicles," Sitharaman was quoted as saying while speaking to



reporters on the sidelines of the B20 summit.

A section of the media had reported earlier today that such a move was on the anvil, and it would allow automakers to import fully-built electric vehicles into India at a reduced tax of 15 per cent, compared to the existing 100 per cent tax, which is applicable on cars which are priced more than \$40,000. It is 70 per cent for the rest.

KERALA ACCIDENT KILLS NINE TEA PLANTATION WORKERS IN WAYANAD

Thiruvananthapuram: Nine people died in an accident near Thalappuzha in Wayanad of Kerala, after the jeep they were travelling in overturned and fell into a gorge. There were 12 people in the jeep, all of them tea plantation workers returning from work. Three people, injured in the accident, have been shifted to the Mananthavadi Medical College.

Of the 12 people in the jeep, 11 were women. Asianet News gives the names of the deceased as Rani, Shantha, Chinamma, Leela, Shaja, Rabia, Shobhana, Maryakka and Vasantha of Makimala Colony Number 6.

Nuh violence was not over religion, hate speech won't be tolerated: Gurugram police commissioner

Gurugram | Agencies

Vikas Arora, the newly-appointed Police Commissioner of Gurugram, on Friday said the recent violence in Haryana's Nuh, which spread to several other districts, was not over religious issue, but was an act of some anti-social elements.

"Some anti-social elements were behind the communal clashes. However, police will not spare anyone and those involved in the violence will be arrested and police will trace every case. He also added that Gurugram Police will not tolerate hate speech. Police have already taken action against people



involved in hate speech and sent them behind bars," Arora said. He asserted that to tackle cybercrime, a help desk has already been installed at each four cyber-crime police stations in Gurugram. Policemen will be given training to investigate cyber crime cases and help will be taken from corporates and training sessions will also be organised for effective action.

"Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, and Google companies have their headquarters in Gurugram. Efforts will be made after talking to their management to provide necessary information for the police in the investigation. To deal with cyber crimes, better coordination with the Nuh police and Bharatpur police was established to tighten the noose on cyber criminals operating there," Arora said.

ADANI-HINDENBURG CASE: 22 OUT OF 24 PROBE REPORTS FINAL, SEBI TELLS SC

New Delhi: In a fresh status report filed before the Supreme Court, the Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said on Friday that it will take appropriate action based on the outcome of the investigations into the Adani-Hindenburg matter. The market regulator said that as on August 25, it has examined 24 matters in compliance with the orders of the top court.

"Out of the said 24 investigations, 22 are final in nature and two are interim in nature. As on date, the said 22 final investigation reports and one interim investigation report have been approved by the competent authority in accordance with SEBI's extant practice and procedures," said the status report filed by SEBI Executive Director, V.S. Sundaresan. Further, it said that in respect of one remaining matter, interim findings have been approved by the competent authority, and SEBI has sought information from external agencies or entities. "Upon receipt of such information, SEBI will evaluate the same vis-a-vis the interim investigation report to determine further course of action, if any, in the said matters," it said. On August 14, the SEBI had sought an extension of 15 days to conclude the investigation process and file a status report in the matter.



MADHYA PRADESH BAGS 2792 unauthorised colonies legalized, THE BEST STATE AWARD 35 lakh people to get better life

MP SHINES WITH 13 AWARDS IN INDIA SMART CITIES AWARDS CONTEST-2022

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Five smart cities in Madhya Pradesh bagged 13 awards in various categories on the for excellent performance in the India Smart Cities Awards Contest-2022. Madhya Pradesh has secured the best state award. Indore ranks first in the National Smart City Award. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has congratulated the citizens and departmental officers of Smart City for this achievement. Congratulating the officers and employees, Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh has said that these awards were secured due to the deeds done under the guidance of Chief Minister Chouhan. The results of the awards have been declared on August 25 by Joint Secretary and Mission Director, Smart Cities Mission, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India Shri Kunal. Smart City Indore bagged 5, Jabalpur 2 and Bhopal, Gwalior and Sagar one each awards in project awards.

Indore has secured the first place for the Gobardhan Bio CNG Plant in Swachhata theme, Air Quality Improvement in Urban Environment theme and Ahilya One with Vertical Garden and Saraswati and Kanh Life Line in Jal theme, Rainwater Harvesting and Rejuvenation of lakes, wells and step wells. Indore has got second place for river front development in Built Environment Theme. Bhopal has got second place for Sadar Manzil



Restoration Project. In the economy theme, Jabalpur has got first place for start-up incubation center and Indore has got second place for value capture financing. In the governance theme, Jabalpur has got the third position for the implementation of 311 application. In ICCB business model theme, Gwalior got third place for Intelligent Traffic Management System and Sagar got third place for Intelligent Traffic Management System Improving Road Safety in Mobility theme.

In the Innovation Award category, Indore has got the second position for Covid-19 Responses-Multiple Initiatives on the theme of Covid Innovative.

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The Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that no colony will remain unauthorized. All unauthorized colonies will be legalized. He said that every poor must have housing facility as housing is a fundamental right.

The houses are being built for the rural poor under the Prime Minister's Awas Yojana. Similarly, houses are being provided to the urban poor. CM Chouhan was addressing a state-level program held at Jabalpur today to launch the Su-Raj Colony scheme.

Martyrs' Memorial in Gol Bazaar, the declaration of unauthorized colonies, the Bhavan Anujna, and the Su-Raj Colony plan, as well as the distribution of benefits under various welfare schemes.

CM Chouhan also gave away building permission. The Su-Raj Colony Scheme has been designed using 23,000 acres of land freed from encroachers.

The process of legalizing more than six thousand unauthorized colonies is also underway. He said that celebration of development is underway. In Jabalpur, the inauguration and bhoomi puja of 70 development works costing Rs 130 crore 15 lakh is being done.



CM Chouhan said that the state government has resolved to ensure that no poor person is left without housing and residential land title. All needy will get housing. He said that criminals will not be spared. Crusade against them and land grabbers is continuing. More than 900 houses are being built in Jabalpur. Those displaced from Madan Mahal Hill in Jabalpur are being provided houses. No poor person will be allowed to stay without housing.

All basic facilities will be available in Su-Raj colonies. A total of 2,792 colonies in the state are being legal-

ized, including 39 colonies in Jabalpur. This will benefit 35 lakh citizens of the state. CM Chouhan said that under the Kaayakalp campaign, funds will be released to all 413 urban bodies and efforts will be made to make cities beautiful and attractive.

The Chief Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for various development projects worth a total of 11.76 crore rupees. These projects include road construction from Anand Mukh Chauk to the Medical College at a cost of 11.76 crore rupees, a multi-level parking facility in Bhavartal worth 8.43 crore

rupees, a 5 MLD sewage treatment plant near Rani Talab costing 8.08 crore rupees, a sewage project in Bhedaghat worth 18.88 crore rupees, the establishment of a 18 crore rupee Bio CNG plant, the construction of a 9.63 crore rupee garbage transfer station, and the inauguration and foundation laying for various other development works.

Member of Parliament, Rakesh Singh, welcomed the guests. Those present included Urban Development Minister Bhupendra Singh, MLA Shri Ashok Rohani, Ex. Minister Ajay Vishnoi.

The state government has introduced new rules for unauthorized colonies built, until December 31, 2016. Those have come into effect from Jan 22. Approximately 8013 unauthorized colonies in urban areas have been identified, and with the completion of this campaign, approximately 80 lac citizens will get benefit.

So far, the initial survey has been conducted for 7,001 colonies, and the results for 3,863 colonies have also been published. Building permissions have been issued for 499 colonies. In Jabalpur, the municipal corporation has granted building permits for 15,200 families in approximately 224 colonies and benefited 39 colonies in the municipal area.

Cong to contest MP Assembly polls on agenda of state's future: Kamal Nath

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Chief Minister and state Congress chief Kamal Nath said on Friday that his party is contesting the Assembly election due later this year only on the agenda of building the 'future of Madhya Pradesh'.

He denied that the Congress contested the Assembly elections on 'Hindutva' agenda, and said that he has only agenda which is to make the future of Madhya Pradesh better. "My only agenda is the future of Madhya Pradesh and nothing else," he said while talking to the media in Morena on Friday.

Responding to the selection of candidates, Kamal Nath said the candidates would be selected on the basis of survey reports only. He said a lot of ticket aspirants have been meeting him every day, but he would pick the candidates who can win the elections.

"Multiple surveys are going on and the selections of candidates



would be decided on the basis of reports only. Tickets would be given only to those who can win the elec-

tions," Kamal Nath said, however, he did not reveal when the first list of Congress candidates would be

announced.

Addressing a rally in Morena, the veteran Congress leader termed BJP's -- 'Jan Darshan Yatra' as 'Jan Sauda Yatra'.

Reiterating "50 per cent commission charges" on the ruling BJP government, Nath said, "Every person in Madhya Pradesh is either a victim of corruption or a witness to it."

Meanwhile, responding to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's announcement of making Pandhurna a district (under Chhindwara district), Kamal Nath said that he (CM Chouhan) has been making this announcement for the past 10 years.

"The people of Madhya Pradesh are well aware of the reality of CM Chouhan's promises.

I feel sad after coming to Morena as many big leaders are being neglected here.

Today the Bharatiya Janata Party is taking out not a Jan Darshan Yatra, but a Jan Sauda Yatra," he said while addressing the rally.

BJP's strong Brahmin leader switches over to Cong ahead of MP polls

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A powerful leader BJP Brahmin leader has switched over to Congress ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh.

As part of its poll strategy, the grand-old party continues to poach and corner the loyalists of Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia in Madhya Pradesh.

The latest move has been aimed at Scindia loyalist Govind Singh Rajput -- one among the 22 MLAs who had switched over to the BJP in March 2020. Giving a tough competition to Rajput in his Assembly constituency - Surkhi in Sagar district, the Congress on Thursday pitted one of the most powerful local Brahmin leaders Neeraj Sharma.

Sharma, a wealthy contractor and private bus operator in addition to being a big farmer, reportedly led the motorcade of over 1000 vehicles from his hometown Rahatgarh to Bhopal (around 120 km), before joining the Congress at the state party headquarters.

Just a few hours before Sharma joined the Congress, the Rahatgarh police in Sagar district, lodged a case u/s 353 and 186 IPC (assaulting or using criminal force to deter a public servant from discharging duty) against him and his supporters on Wednesday night on the complaint of RTO-Sagar.

Interestingly, Sharma was in the Congress



only till 2009, but owing to growing dominance of Rajput, he joined the BJP and won the Rahatgarh Janpad Panchayat chief polls in 2010 as well as Rahatgarh Nagar Palika polls later. In the 2010 Rahatgarh Janpad Panchayat polls, Sharma defeated Govind Singh Rajput's elder brother Gulab Singh Rajput.

Notably, Govind Singh Rajput who had won Surkhi seat in 2003, 2008 and 2018 as Congress candidate, retained the seat in November 2020 as BJP candidate.

He is the only Scindia loyalist minister in the present BJP government in MP, who holds the same portfolios (revenue and transport) which he held in the previous Kamal Nath government.

Congress also managed to dent one of the oldest BJP families of Satna district of Vindhya region, by taking into fold Devraj Bagri and Vandana Bagri -- the son and daughter-in-law of five times former BJP MLA Late Jugul Kishor Bagri.

Lawrence Bishnoi aide among five thieves held in MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh police have arrested five persons in connection with a series of thefts in Indore. According to the police, one of the arrested happens to be an associate of Khalistan supporter Lawrence Bishnoi.

The accused have been identified as - Rajendra Singh Baranwala, Badal, Rajesh, Siddhant and Balwant Singh. They were arrested for allegedly creating panic among the people through a series of thefts in different areas of the city, late on Thursday.

"The kingpin of the gang, Rajendra Singh Baranwala (35), and his four accom-



plices Badal, Rajesh, Siddhant and Balwant Singh were arrested on Thursday night in connection with a series of thefts in different areas of Indore," Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Abhinay Vishwakarma told reporters on Friday.

He informed that Baranwala had been arrested in Delhi in 2021 and 18 illegal pistols were recovered from him at that time amid accusation that he was supplying arms to Khalistan supporters.

"The gang tried to break into 15 houses in Indore between August 1 and 20 and was successful in stealing gold and silver coins as well as cash from three of the places," Vishwakarma added.

During interrogation, the accused told the police that they sold the coins to a jeweller, the police officer said, adding that their claim is being verified.

Police said Baranwala and his gang members claimed to manufacture locks and keys, but instead made pistols and supplied them across the country. "Investigations revealed that the gang had supplied arms to the dreaded gangsters of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana," Vishwakarma said.

Tribal man detained by police found dead at home in MP's Raisen

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A tribal man, who was detained by police for creating a ruckus in an inebriated state, was found dead at his home under mysterious circumstances in Raisen district of Madhya Pradesh, sources said on Friday.

The incident took place in the Silvani area of the district on Wednesday. The deceased has been identified as Sriram, a resident of Silvani village under Jaithari police station.

As per the information, Sriram reached a religious programme in the locality on Tuesday and created a ruckus. Upon receiving information of the same, local police reached the spot and detained him.

The next morning, Sriram was



found dead at his home. His family alleged that he was beaten up by police which led to his death. Silvani village Sarpanch said the

police detained Sriram around 4 p.m. on Tuesday and released him around 9 p.m. on the same day. "Next morning (Wednesday), he was found lying

unconscious. He was rushed to a nearby hospital

where doctors declared him dead on arrival," Sarpanch Nitin Thakur said. The last rites of the deceased were performed in the presence of heavy police force on Thursday.

Raising apprehension, former chief minister and state Congress president Kamal Nath shared a post on his social media handle, "Family alleges that the police beat up Sriram with shoes and he was found dead in the morning."

He alleged that under the BJP rule, the Dalits of the state are being harassed and demanded an inquiry into the matter. "I urge CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan to order for an impartial inquiry in the matter and strict action should be taken against the culprit," Kamal Nath said.

Madhya Pradesh Emerging As Indias Sports Hub

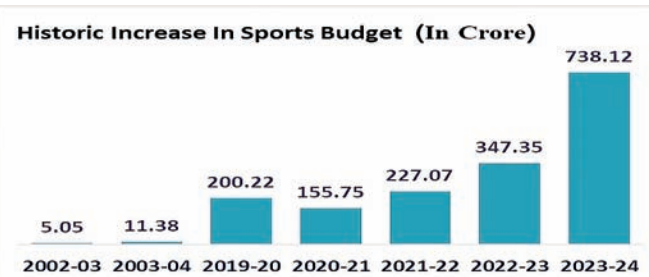
Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh is emerging faster as India's Sports Hub with improving sports infrastructure at pace. The first phase construction of International Sports Complex at Nathu Barkheda costing Rs 176 crore, construction of athletic and hockey stadium is underway. Multipurpose indoor stadium and multiple sports facilities will be available soon in the second phase involving a cost of Rs 174 crore and in the next phase at a cost of Rs 593 crore.

Two "break dance" and "e-sports" academies are coming up. Both are included in the Olympic and Asian Games as medal winning sports.

In order to encourage women's football and junior team, a programme will be started with the joint effort of Football Association of India. Under the Mukhyamantri Khel Yojana, sports infrastructure is being built up upto block level.

Madhya Pradesh has now become a strong competitor with Haryana and Maharashtra in respect of sports facilities. It is even far ahead in some spheres. The sports scenario has completely changed in the last decade and a half. Madhya Pradesh is the only state having maximum number of sports academies and training centres. From 2006 to 2015, 11 sports academies have been opened. These academies help players receive high-level training from high performance coaches and use modern training facilities. Many players have made their mark at national and international levels.



There has been a historic increase in the budget of the Sports Department. This

year a budget provision of Rs 738.13 crore has been made. The State has maximum number of astro turf hockey grounds. As many as 12 hockey synthetic turf are there and 7 grounds are being constructed at pace. Similarly 5 athletics synthetic tracks have been constructed and 8 tracks are taking shape. The State's Shooting, Equestrian and Water Sports Academies have world-class infrastructure with all advanced technology and modern facilities have no parallel at present. An international level sports complex is coming up soon on 100 acres of land at Nathu Barkheda in Bhopal. It will have athletic track and field, athletic stadium, outdoor sports area, practice hockey ground, hockey stadium, indoor stadium, centre of excellence for football and football ground, which will have two natural and one artificial turf.

The world's best shooting academy is situated in Bishankhedi Bhopal. In the Madhya Pradesh State Shooting Academy of Excellence, along with shooting ranges of 10, 25 and 50 meters, the best final range has also been prepared, built to match international standards. The academy has 5 trap and skeet shooting ranges. International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) President Luciano Rossi has hailed the world-class shooting infrastructure during his visit to Bhopal for the World Cup Championships.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Land only to domicile landless in J&K

The J&K government has issued detailed guidelines through the revenue department that makes allotment of land permissible to only the domicile landless citizens of the UT. The guidelines permit the allotment of land measuring 5 marlas (1/4th of a Kanal) to the domicile landless people in J&K. Lt Governor Manoj Sinha had launched the land to landless scheme in July this year even as political parties in the Valley questioned the move alleging that the same was intended to bring in outsiders to change the demography of the UT. As per the the guidelines issued by the Revenue Department, the UT administration has accorded sanction to the allotment of 5 marlas of state land on lease basis to landless and PMAY beneficiaries. The category of people, out of the Rural Development Department's permanent waiting list of 2018-19, eligible for the scheme include those residing on state land, forest land, 'rakhs' and farms. It also includes people in possession of custodian land, and those residing on land already allotted by the government near Dachigam Park for agricultural purposes, where construction is not permitted. The lease shall be for a period of 40 years, extendable further for a period of another 40 years, subject to the fulfilment of all formalities/norms. If a beneficiary fails to build a house on the allotted land within a period of two years, such lease shall be cancelled forthwith, the order said. The assistant commissioner (development) of the Rural Development Department of the district concerned shall verify the case and place an indent before the deputy commissioner concerned together with complete details of the proposed allottee.

Locally-designed floating farm programme in Sundarbans wins \$100,000 at GEF Assembly

Vishal Gulati

Community programme on locally-designed floating farms, run by the South Asian nature Forum for Environment (SAFE) and supported by the Adaptation Fund, for flood-stricken communities in the Sundarbans region is among 23 civil society organisations selected by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the Inclusive GEF Assembly Challenge Program.

The programme is a novel initiative reflecting commitment to support and elevate community-driven climate and nature projects and the unique contributions of indigenous peoples, women, girls, and young people across the GEF partnership.

The winning projects were announced during the GEF Assembly, a once-every-four-year gathering of 185 countries taking place this week in Vancouver, Canada.

Each awardee will receive a grant of up to \$100,000 and gain access to networking, training, and knowledge exchange opportunities through the GEF, a family of funds that finances international efforts to address biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change.

The winning organisations will be celebrated during the assembly's Partnership Forum and will share their experiences in a number of panels and sessions throughout the week, reflecting the GEF's focus on supporting environmental action and results through a "whole of society" approach.

SAFE's initiative is designed to naturalise hydroponic float-farming and integrated aquaculture as an adaptive, climate-resilient agricultural method for vulnerable communities in coastal South Asia.

It is designed not only to improve people's nutrition and food and livelihood security, but to create opportunities for agro-business entrepreneurship.

Emission-less regenerative farming in float-farm growbags with recycled organic soil-mix is supported by solar desalination and micro-irrigation systems.

The 23 winners were chosen from nearly 600 applications, by a selection panel made up of the GEF's CSO



Network, Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Group, and Gender Partnership, as well as youth representatives linked to international environmental conventions.

They span 26 countries including Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Bolivia, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Congo, Ecuador, Haiti, India, Kenya, Kiribati, Madagascar, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, and Uganda.

The winning initiatives include a project applying the Maasai peoples' indigenous knowledge for climate resilience in Tanzania; an effort to mobilise rural youth in Costa Rica to preserve biodiversity; activities to bring together women and girls to protect coastlines in Antigua and Barbuda; and a project aiming to empower marginalised and vulnerable groups in Thailand to adapt to climate change.

Esther Morenikeji Emmanuel of U-recycle Initiative Africa, one of the winning groups, said support from the Inclusive GEF Assembly Challenge Program would help expand the organisation's efforts to reduce plastic waste in Nigeria.

"If you want to see change, you have to start small in the areas where you can have a direct impact," she said. "It is also easy to begin taking action locally

because you can see the issues so clearly."

Tom Bui, Canada's representative on the GEF Council, welcomed the Inclusive GEF Assembly Challenge Program as a cornerstone of the gathering in Vancouver where a record number of civil society representatives are sharing their perspectives and priorities, on the stage and at the table.

"The only way we can achieve lasting transformational change to safeguard a livable planet is by listening to each other," he said. "We need to embrace our differences and tap the rich diversity of views existing in all societies. This programme does this by celebrating our unsung environmental heroes."

GEF CEO and Chairperson Carlos Manuel Rodriguez said: "Global environmental challenges affect us all, but their impacts are almost entirely locally felt. It is our privilege to celebrate and fund these locally-designed, locally-led remedies for climate resilience, coastline protection, biodiversity conservation, and more."

"The Inclusive GEF Assembly Challenge Program is a concrete example of our focus on supporting civil society and lifting up the voices and innovations of indigenous peoples, women, youth, and others who have been historically under-represented in international environmental financing and policy," Rodriguez added.

Pappachan, Moon, Chandrayaan, a ret'd Navy Capt recalls

Amid euphoria over the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 mission's Lander Module on the Moon's surface, spotting 80-year-old Pappachan -- a newspaper agent -- walk past his house in the sleepy town of Kunnammtham in Pathanamthitta district, transported retired Naval Captain Ramesh Babu to 1969 when Neil Armstrong made the historic landing on the Moon.



Babu said while watching Chandrayaan-3 make a glorious touchdown on the moon last evening, his mind wandered back in time to July 1969 when Neil Armstrong took that "baby step" that has finally made India take this "giant leap".

"The news of Armstrong's landing on the moon arrived a day after through Pappachan, our newspaper agent in the village. As an eight-year-old I was a wee bit anxious (what if the fellow falls off the moon to land on me?), as an excited Pappachan waved the newspaper and announced that man had landed on the moon," recalled Babu.

"This morning around 7.30 a.m, Pappachan was spotted limping and passing by my house and taking me back in time -- 54 years back. Even though he continues to eke out his living from the agent's commission, he said the old age has taken a toll on him and he is unable to exert much. He has entrusted a person to do it and after paying him Rs 2500, he takes Rs 1000," added Babu.

Pappachan, who for long has been the darling in his village for six decades, the distance that he cycled to deliver newspapers would probably take him even beyond the Moon.

"Over the years, though several newspaper agents have come up here, riding motorcycles, practically driving Pappachan out of business, none of them has been as loyal as him. He ensured that the paper reached us without fail, every single day. He would inform us of opportunities like entrance exams, job vacancies etc that the paper carried. That way, he has launched many successful lives in the village, including mine. He would also ensure that the paper reported weddings, deaths and other important occurrences in the village," said Babu.

With the passage of time and technology taking precedence, the morning newspaper is no longer a keenly awaited commodity, but still some like Babu subscribe to newspapers only for Pappachan in the village.

international

Trump frontrunner despite Milwaukee debate as he plans media focus on him with surrender in Atlanta

T.N. Ashok | Washington

Former US President Donald Trump has scored a double whammy against eight of his rivals in the GOP race for nominations by first releasing a taped interview five minutes before the debate and he hopes to garner all limelight in the media with his announced surrender before the Atlanta courts in his fourth indictment on election interference.

While media houses are working at a furious pace to collate the numbers on the Milwaukee debate on how many people watched the debate live.

Even as most American voters would digest the debate via online clips that would be pushed out by the debaters and the media, media reports said.

As of now, Trump leads with 53 per cent backing from supporters and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis with 16 per cent and surprisingly political novice Indian-American billionaire Vivek



Ramaswamy with 11 per cent over all others in the polls. MO News, which provides a digest of

the morning news online to readers in the country, said given Trump continues to dominate in early state polls, the question is whether any of the eight alternatives did enough to convince GOP primary voters that they should switch their allegiances?

The former President remained pretty unscathed and none of the candidates, except Chris Christie, really made a case to voters as to why they should stop supporting Trump. Both burly Christie and slim-fit Ramaswamy were booed by the audiences on their views.

Both Ramaswamy and Nikki Haley seem set to get some momentum from Wednesday night's debate from the respective wings of the party.

Its everyone's guess that Trump will remain in the driver's seat.

With media circus in the offing later in the day, attention will quickly be back on Trump today as he formally surrenders to authorities in Georgia, where he was most recently indicted.

China activates emergency response to flooding in 13 regions

Beijing | Agencies

China's Ministry of Water Resources on Friday activated a level-IV emergency response to flooding in 13 provincial-level regions. The regions are Jiangsu, Anhui, Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Chongqing, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Tibet, Shaanxi and Gansu, Xinhua news agency quoted the Ministry as saying.

From Friday to Sunday, heavy rain will sharply increase water levels in rivers including parts of the Yangtze and Huaihe rivers, the Ministry said, adding that some small and medium-sized rivers in affected areas may see floods exceeding warning levels.

It urged relevant water conservancy departments to closely monitor rain situations and strengthen early warning, with focus on ensuring the safety of reservoirs and the prevention of mountain torrents and floods in small and medium-sized rivers.

Russia claims to destroy 42 Ukrainian drones over Crimea

Moscow | Agencies

The Russian Defence Ministry on Friday claimed to have destroyed 42 Ukrainian drones over Crimea, the latest in a series of recent reported attacks by Kiev on the occupied Peninsula.

In a social media post, the Ministry said that nine of the drones were shot down and the remaining 33 were jammed by electronic warfare equipment and crashed without reaching their targets, CNN reported.

"Overnight, an attempt by the Kyiv regime to carry out terrorist attacks using unmanned aerial vehicles on Russian Federation territory has been thwarted," the post added.

The Ministry also claimed that Ukraine had launched an upgraded S-200 air defence complex missile that was detected and shot down by Russian forces over the Kaluga region southwest of Moscow.

Ukraine is yet to comment on the developments. Russia's claims came a day after Ukraine carried out what appeared to be



one of its most complex and ambitious operations to date against Russian military facilities in Crimea, involving Ukrainian special forces landing on the western shore of the peninsula to attack Russian units.

Ukrainian officials have repeatedly vowed to restore Kiev's rule in Crimea, which was illegally annexed by Russia in 2014. In recent weeks, Ukraine has stepped up drone attacks in the area, including the key Kerch Bridge that links the peninsula to mainland Russia.

Norway joins Denmark, Netherlands to donate F-16s to Ukraine

Oslo | Agencies

Norway has become the third European nation after Denmark and the Netherlands to pledge to provide Ukraine with F-16 fighter jets.

"We are planning to donate Norwegian F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine, and will provide further details about the donation, numbers and time frame for delivery in due course," CNN quoted Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store as saying on Thursday. Norway had first announced its plans to support the training of Ukrainian personnel on F-16 fighter jets in May.

"Norway is supporting Ukraine in its efforts to build a modern air defense system. This is both important and necessary," the Prime Minister added. Also on Thursday, Norway said that it will be donating anti-aircraft missiles and de-mining sets to Ukraine, as well as 1.5 billion NOK (\$140.5 million) to secure gas and electricity supply in the country.

This brings the total value of Norway's support over five years to 75 billion NOK, a statement on the government website said.

Last week, a US State Department spokesman had announced that Washington approved the transfer of American-made F-16 fighter jets from Denmark and the Netherlands to Kiev as soon as Ukrainian pilots are fully trained to operate them. Denmark and the Netherlands have taken the



lead in preparing a program to train Ukrainian pilots on the American jet, but the US is still working with other countries to see who may provide F-16s to the Ukrainian Air Force.

While the Dutch are thought to have about 24 operational F-16s which are scheduled to be taken out of service and replaced by more advanced war planes, Denmark is also planning an upgrade of its fleet of some 30 F-16s.

An 11-member coalition of Ukraine's allies in the West is due to start training Ukrainian pilots later this month and they are expected to be ready next year. Ukraine is believed to have dozens of combat aircraft -- mostly MiGs -- all dating from the Soviet era.

Wildfires force evacuation in US town amid extreme drought, heat

Washington | Agencies

Amid an ongoing drought and extreme heat, raging wildfires have prompted the evacuation of residents of a town in the US state of Louisiana, authorities said.

The evacuation order for Merryville town was issued by the Beauregard Parish Sheriff's Office Thursday evening, saying the fire could reach the town limits within hours, CNN reported citing the Louisiana State Police.

Merryville has a population of about 1,200 people, sheriff's office spokesperson Shannon Burgess told CNN.

The town is located just east of the state border with Texas, about 120 miles northeast of Houston.

For residents who need transportation out, buses have been made available at the Merryville town hall, the sheriff's office said. "We had buses immediately headed that way," Burgess said,



adding that a shelter has been opened at the First Methodist Church in DeRidder, northeast of Merryville.

Earlier this week, there were almost 350 wildfires burning in the state, CNN quoted Mike Steele, communications director at the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, as saying.

Every parish in the state is under a red flag warning, according to the National Weather Service.

State emergency operations centers were activated on Wednesday morning to help battle the blazes. As of Thursday, more than 10,000 acres have burned in Beauregard Parish.

Lake Charles, around 40 miles southeast of Merryville, has seen temperatures over 37 degrees Celsius every day since August 18 and temperatures over 35 degrees since June 29.



55 DAYS AFTER NCP BREAKUP, SHARAD PAWAR CLAIMS 'NO SPLIT'

Quaid Najmi | Pune

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) President Sharad Pawar on Friday again set Maharashtra politics in a flutter by claiming that his party has "not split" -- 55 days after the breakaway group led by his nephew Ajit Pawar walked out to join the state government.



"The legislative group has yet to be recognised by the Speaker, unlike the case of the Eknath Shinde precedent... We have already informed the legislature and the Election Commission on the same. Hence, there is no justification to term it a 'split' till the legislative status is cleared," the leader, preferring anonymity, told correspondent.



"The NCP National President is Sharad Pawar Saheb, Maharashtra President is Jayant Patil. Ajit Pawar is also a senior legislator and leader of our party and we are all working together," declared Sule.

Arguing that there was no "split", Sule said they have made a representation in the matter of Ajit Pawar to the Maharashtra Assembly Speaker and the latter's reply is awaited.

The sudden spate of statements -- made sporadically in the past seven weeks -- ignited the political atmosphere in the state, coming a week before the national opposition

alliance INDIA's third conclave scheduled to take place in Pune on August 31-September 1.

Maha Vikas Aghadi allies Congress's Leader of Opposition (Assembly) Vijay Wadettiwar and Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Leader of Opposition (Council) Ambadas Danve frowned at the Pawar clan statements saying "they confuse the people and the MVA workers".

The ruling alliance BJP leaders like state chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule, Sudhir Mungantiwar, Pravin Darekar and others said that "(Sharad) Pawar's statements imply that he is fully supporting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's developmental policies, akin to Ajit Pawar".

The NCP has also rejected theories that Pawar senior's statements could create confusion in the party's rank and file, and also drive a wedge in the INDIA alliance, reiterating that the party is very much part of the national opposition group.

The breakaway NCP faction of Ajit Pawar has been claiming since July 1 that there's "no split" and Sharad Pawar continues to be their leader.

On at least two occasions, Ajit Pawar and his supporters had visited Sharad Pawar to pay their respects and "seek his blessings and guidance".

INDIA alliance to make major change in communication strategy to take on NDA in 2024 LS polls

Team Absolute | Mumbai

With almost eight months left for the crucial 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) will be bringing several changes in the communication strategy to take on the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

According to sources in the INDIA alliance, the changes in the communication strategy of the opposition parties have been taken in view of the aggressive campaigning that will be held by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led NDA.

The source said that in view of the Lok Sabha elections, the INDIA alliance parties instead of focusing on the main media platforms will be focusing on the alternative media to increase their reach in the far flung and remote areas of the country.

The source said that this has been done to communicate in much better way to the voters as they do not get enough screen space on televisions.

The source also said that as the INDIA alliance part-



ners have not much resources like the BJP, so it will also lower their cost for advertisements and publicity. The source further said that a sub-committee will also be formed to coordinate the spokespersons of the INDIA alliance to take on the spokespersons of the NDA in the debate shows on televisions.

The source further said that there will be a separate team of the national and regional level spokespersons of the INDIA alliance to take on the BJP.

And even the strategy of the national and the regional level spokespersons will be different.

The source said that the national spokespersons of the INDIA alliance will focus completely on the national

issues and have a clear line on national issues, while the regional spokespersons will set the narrative by highlighting the failures of the BJP in dealing with the region level issues on televisions and through press conferences.

The source said that a joint meeting of the national and regional spokespersons will take place in the coming days to decide the strategy.

However, senior leaders of the INDIA alliance members remained tight-lipped on the issue.

The third meeting of the INDIA alliance is all set to take place in Maharashtra's Mumbai on August 31 and September 1. The INDIA alliance partners had already met twice in Bihar's Patna on June 23 and in Karnataka's Bengaluru on July 18 and 19.

Maha cops nab 2 Gujarat men with fake currency notes of Rs 50L face value

Team Absolute | Navi Mumbai

The Navi Mumbai Police have arrested two persons, hailing from neighbouring Gujarat, here and seized fake Indian currency notes with a face value of around Rs 50,00,000 from their possession, officials said on Friday.

Senior Police Inspector Rajeev Shejval of Kharghar Police Station informed IANS that both the accused shall be produced before a Magistrate Court later today for remand, and further investigations are underway.

Following a tip-off, a team of Kharghar Police Station kept a close watch on the duo from Bhuj town in Kutch district and caught them late on Thursday night.

A search of the accused revealed cash of over Rs 1 lakh of genuine currency and more than 9,980 fake currency notes of Rs 500 denomination.

Though appearing to be similar to the real currency notes, the fake notes had no serial numbers and are printed with 'Children Bank



of India', and having a total face value of nearly Rs 49.90 lakh, confirming the fraud.

The police suspect that the duo - identified as Usman D. Saha, 40 and Abdul H. Turk, 41 - planned to circulate them in the markets to dupe unsuspecting people.

The accused Saha and Turk have been charged under various Indian Penal Code sections, and the sleuths are probing on to find out where the fake notes were printed or acquired from, identify their associates and nexus in Gujarat and Maharashtra and since how long the counterfeit currency racket is being perpetrated.

10-YR-OLD MUMBAI BOY BECOMES WORLD'S YOUNGEST PADI-CERTIFIED SCUBA DIVER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a significant achievement, a city student has become the world's youngest PADI-certified Junior Open Water Diver, a day after his 10th birthday, his family members said on Friday. The boy, Dwit A. Nandu, studying in Class 4 in St. Francis D'Assisi High School, celebrated his 10th birthday on Thursday (August 24) and the new laurel was proclaimed on Friday at Temple Adventures, Pondicherry, said his joyous father Dr. Amit Nandu, who is a professor of Accountancy in H.R. College of Commerce & Economics. Scuba Diving is regulated by the Australia-based Professional Association of Dive Instructors (PADI), working



in 186 countries, and it issues certification to divers which make them qualified to dive around the world.

The first level certification is called 'Junior Open Water Diver' (12 metres), followed by 'Open Water Diver', then 'Advanced Open Water Diver' (30 metres), 'Deep Diver' (40 metres), and then the professional 'tech-diver' categories

for greater depths.

"As per PADI rules, the minimum age for a certified diver is 10 years. At 10 years one can begin the course and then get certified. Dwit's 10th Birthday was on 24 August. He had started preparing for the course well in advance and he completed it today, creating a world record," gushed Dr Nandu. He

explained that the rigorous course involved learning advanced swimming, ability to swim 200 meters without any aid or support, studying five modules, cracking a written exam based on them, finishing confined water training in a swimming pool and then completing four open water dives. For the past one year, Dwit was immersed deep in the preparations for his global record, undergoing swimming coaching at a club in Borivali, then for the PADI-certified Temple Adventures diving centre in Pondicherry.

In a certificate issued by the instructor Riyas Jalal, the East Coast Watersports Pvt Ltd said: "Dwit has completed his Scuba Diver Course on his 10th birthday on 24 August, 2023, diving to the depth of 40 feet and finished

his PADI Junior Open Water Diver Course on 25 August, 2023 around 0800 hrs. Thus, he attained the position of youngest Junior Open Water Diver in the world by completing the course at the age of 10 years and 18 hours."

Incidentally, scuba diving practically runs in the family for years with Dr. Nandu himself a Certified Deep Diver, his elder son Jinay, 21 - studying at IIT Bombay -- is an Advanced Open Water Diver, and now Dwit has become a world record-holder Junior Open Water Diver (12 metres). The divers' family is looked after by Charmi Nandu, a former banker turned housewife, who ensures her sons, Jinay and Dwit, are on their toes both -- academically and in the diving arena.

Sun Mission Is fine, centre should also focus on onion issue: Team Uddhav

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Shiv Sena (UBT) on Friday said the Narendra Modi government can send a mission to the Sun, but it should first focus on the onion issue in the country or else the ruling party will not even realise that their 2024 Lok Sabha endeavour will go haywire.

In an editorial in Shiv Sena (UBT) mouthpiece Saamana, the party slammed the Centre's decision to impose 40 per cent export duty on onion. "The people (of the country) are being engaged in new missions like Moon Mission, Sun Mission and Venus Mission. Mission Sun is all fine, but it is very much essential that the onion issue in the state stabilises," the editorial said.



Nashik, Ahmednagar and Pune districts of Maharashtra are known for their onion produce. A section of farmers have been protesting against the Centre's decision to impose a 40 per cent import duty on onion.

"You do send a mission to the Sun, but before that you should ensure the onion issue is settled or else your mission to 2024 (Lok Sabha polls) will go haywire and you will not even realise it," he said.

Scripting history, the ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 landed on the Moon on Wednesday.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has also planned missions to the Sun, Venus and the Gaganyaan mission which aims to send Indian astronauts to Low Earth Orbit.

DRIVER GOES MISSING WITH CONTAINER CARRYING GADGETS WORTH RS 1.10 CRORE

Team Absolute | Thane

A case of misappropriation has been registered in Maharashtra's Thane district after a transporter carrying electronic gadgets and other valuables worth Rs 1.10 crore went missing along with its driver, police said.

Narpoli police registered a First Information Report (FIR) on Thursday against Rafique Mehboob, resident of Mathura, under section 407 (whoever being entrusted with property as a carrier commits criminal breach of trust in respect of such property) of the IPC, an official



said. A transporter company had tasked the accused with taking a container of electronic gadgets and other goods including iPads, iPhones and laptops from Ahmedabad to Sagar

Complex at Bhiwandi in Thane district on August 17, he said.

But the truck did not reach the destination the next day and the driver too was untraceable, he said.

30 students hospitalised after suspected food poisoning in Maharashtra school

Team Absolute | Bhandara

Thirty students of an ashram school in Bhandara district of eastern Maharashtra were hospitalised due to suspected food poisoning, an official said on Friday.

The incident occurred at Yerali Ashram School in Tumsar town on Thursday, he said.

Talking to PTI, Bhandara district health officer Milind Somkuwar said, "Some students of the ashram school complained of vomiting, abdominal pain and fever on Thursday, after which a team of district health department examined 325 students residing in the school hostel." Of them, 30 students were admitted to



the sub-district hospital at Tumsar for treatment, he said.

"We suspect it to be a case of food poisoning as the students took ill after consumption of food served to them at the hostel," he said, adding that all the students are now stable and will be

discharged soon.

The health department has collected the samples of food and water for testing, Somkuwar said.

Ashram schools are residential schools that impart education up to the secondary level to children from tribal communities.

MUMBAI TRAIN FIRING: COURT DENIES PERMISSION FOR NARCO TESTS, SAYS TO REMAIN SILENT IS FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A magistrate's court in Mumbai has denied permission to subject dismissed Railway Protection Force (RPF) constable Chetansinh Chaudhary, accused of shooting four people on a moving train, to narco tests. The court's reasoning is based on the principle that an accused person's right to remain silent is a fundamental right and cannot be violated.

The court's order, issued on August 11, emphasizes that an accused cannot be forced to undergo narco tests, brain mapping, or polygraph tests solely for the purpose of "smooth investigation." The Government Railway Police (GRP) had requested permission from the Borivali magistrate court to conduct these



tests on Chaudhary.

He is currently in judicial custody, lodged in a jail in neighbouring Thane district. The prosecution had said that he was accused of com-

mitting a serious offence and to complete the investigation, narco and other tests were necessary.

Chaudhary's lawyers Surendra Landage, Amit

Mishra and Jaywant Patil opposed the application, saying that narco tests are a violation of fundamental rights and cannot be conducted if an accused does not consent

to undergoing them. The court said in the order that the accused was, admittedly, arrested in connection with a heinous crime.

Referring to a Supreme Court judgement, the magistrate noted, "If we minutely go through the entire judgement, it clearly reveals that only in external circumstances, that too with the consent of the accused, a test can be conducted. But, there is no room for compelling the accused to go for a test without his consent. Since the accused is not ready to face such tests, to protect his fundamental rights, the application deserves to be rejected."

The court further said that to remain silent is a fundamental right of an accused. "In my opinion, only for the smooth investigation the permission cannot be granted," the court added.



Miley Cyrus song 'Used To Be Young' tribute to 'who we were, are, will be'



Los Angeles | Agencies

Popstar Miley Cyrus has released her new song 'Used To Be Young' along with its music video. The song is highly melancholic, and features delicate acoustic instrumentation, before cutting to a strong climax which amplifies the track's nature and its emotionality. Miley Cyrus called the song a tribute to who we were, are and will eventually be.

Detailing the song's meaning, the singer said: "This song is about honouring who we've been, loving who we are and celebrating who we will become. I feel proud when reflecting on my past and optimistic when thinking about the future. I am grateful to my loyal fans who make my dreams a reality daily. I am sincerely thankful for the stability of your steadfast support. This song is for you."

The music video which features Cyrus in some different outfits changes tone with each subsequent outfit, all the while the song becomes increasingly bleak and Miley becomes more emotional and teary eyed on screen.

Talking about the video, Miley noted: "It's super emotional because I am kind of a mini-me of my mom and I could see her inside of the camera by using a technology where I could livestream with my mom from inside of the camera."

"So, we could see each other and as she was dancing it just made me cry, it made me laugh, it brought up so many real emotions and I think it's really letting people into true emotion, which I don't feel we get to see very much these days," she added.

Celebrating the release of 'Used To Be Young', Miley went on to share several stories and insights from the many chapters of her life within the TV special event 'Endless Summer Vacation: Continued (Backyard Sessions)'. The special features a new interview as well as music from her latest release 'Endless Summer Vacation' and aired on ABC just hours before the release of the song.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Days after actress Drew Barrymore was freaked out by an alleged stalker while she was interviewing singer-actress Renee Rapp in a talk show, the man was arrested by the New York police when he showed up uninvited at her farm house.

As reported by TMZ, there is an "ongoing investigation" into the man who has been identified as Chad Michael Busto, who showed up uninvited on August 23 night at Drew's Southampton farmhouse.

Busto was reportedly spotted going house-to-house in search of Drew's \$6 million property. After he found it, Busto walked onto some steps outside before police took him into custody. The actress was apparently not home at the time.

The man was first seen sitting in a crowd in the Talk show, where the actress was interviewing Rapp. Busto, who was in the packed crowd had said "Hello" to her, after which Barrymore also cheerfully said "Oh Hi!"

However, in an unexpected turn of events, both Drew Barrymore and Renee Rapp were caught by surprise and then visibly freaked out as Busto ran up to the stage and screamed at Drew: "You know who I am, I need to see you at some point." Soon after Chad Busto was quickly caught by the security guards and was escorted out of the venue, though he was not arrested and instead merely scolded and let out after a warning.

Drew Barrymore's stalker finally arrested after showing up uninvited to her farm house



Billie Eilish flies economy on commercial airline, gets praised



Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Billie Eilish was spotted flying in economy on a commercial airline a few days ahead of her show at Reading and Leeds Festivals in the UK.

The 21-year-old singer could be seen sitting on one of the passenger seats in an economy class of a commercial airline in a video uploaded via TikTok, reports aceshowbiz.com.

In the clip that soon went viral, she appeared comfortable despite not flying in a private jet. The footage went on to show Billie getting out of the airplane in an oversized blue hoodie and a gray hat that came with blue star patterns on it.

She was also documented carrying a black backpack on her shoulder. At that time, she was standing while being surrounded by a number of people who appeared to be her team.

The clip additionally displayed a screenshot of Billie's selfie which she uploaded on her Instagram Story around the same time of the flight. In the snap, she could be seen wearing the same hoodie and beanie that were documented in the beginning of the fan's video.

The fan who released the video claimed that other passengers of the flight were not allowed to use a bathroom in the front and only one in the back which could be used at that time. The fan also shared that they tried to get closer to Billie during the flight.

However, her team allegedly prohibited them from approaching the 'Ocean Eyes' singer. In the comments section of the footage, one fan could not help but gush, "Omg shes so humble being in economy!!" adding a crying face emoji.

Vin Diesel posts throwback pic from India trip with him, Deepika posing in auto



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Vin Diesel has shared a throwback photograph with Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone from his trip to India in 2017.

Diesel took to Instagram, where he shared a picture posing in a colourful auto-rickshaw. The actor is seen dressed in a white vest paired with black pants while Deepika wore a colourful dress as she sat next to him on the driver's seat.

The image is from the time he came to the country to promote their Hollywood actioner 'XXX: Return of Xander Cage'.

"So grateful and blessed, to have travelled to so many wonderful countries, like India... and to experience their beautiful cultures... a lucky kid from New York. Haha. All love, Always," he captioned the image.

'XXX: Return of Xander Cage' is directed by D.J. Caruso. It also stars Donnie Yen, Kris Wu, Ruby Rose, Tony Jaa, Nina Dobrev, Toni Collette, Ariadna Gutierrez, Hermione Corfield, and Samuel L. Jackson. It is the third installment in the XXX

film series and a sequel to both XXX (2002) and XXX: State of the Union (2005).

On the work front, Diesel will next be seen in the Part 2 of 'Fast X' is also slated to release next year. Deepika will be seen in 'Figher', 'Kalki 2898 AD' and in 'Pathaan' in a cameo.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Malin Andersson

Shania Twain

SAYS SHE FELT UNCOMFORTABLE WITH HER FEMININITY AS A TEEN

Los Angeles | Agencies

In a weird twist, actress-singer Shania Twain has said that she didn't enjoy being a "female" during her teenage years, and was uncomfortable with her femininity.

According to Aceshowbiz, the 57-year old singer-actress' life was changed by a group of male friends, who helped liberate her and ultimately inspired her to write 'Man! I Feel Like a Woman!', her 1999 hit single.

"When I was in my late teens, I was sharing an apartment with friends. They were all going to college, and I would stay home during the day and write songs. But Thursday, Friday and Saturday, we would all go to the gay bars together," Shania told The Messenger.

She continued: "All the guys in our group would wear make-up, and they would help me - I didn't know how to wear make-up. I dressed more like a boy. I didn't love being female. I didn't love being undressed by men with their eyes and stuff like that. It just made me uncomfortable, so I down-dressed my body, and I didn't enjoy my femininity."

"But the guys would dress me up, and they would put make-up on me, and we would share this experience together. And then I would go to clubs, and I felt safe there. I could shake my body around and feel good about being female, and it was liberating. I wasn't self-conscious about it," she added.

Shania explained that 'Man! I Feel Like a Woman!' was a reflection of the journey she's been through. She said: "When I wrote 'Man! I Feel Like a Woman!' I reflected back on how sad it was that it had taken me so long to embrace my curves, and reject the sexism and embrace, for the first time, a confidence in being female. That's why it was such a statement - not just 'I Feel Like a Woman', but 'Man! I Feel Like a Woman!' and I love it and I'm enjoying it and I'm wearing it well."





World Athletics Championships

NEERAJ CHOPRA ENTERS FINAL WITH SEASON-BEST 88.77M THROW; SEALS 2024 PARIS OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION

Budapest | Agencies

Reigning Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra began his World Athletics Championships campaign in style as he qualified for men's javelin throw final with a season best of 88.77m and sealed qualification for 2024 Paris Olympics, here on Friday.

The season-best distance of 88.77m saw Chopra breaching Paris Olympic qualification mark of 85.50m. The qualification for the Paris 2024 Olympics for track and field athletes began on July 1, 2023.

The Indian national record holder sent the spear to his season's and fourth career-best distance in his very first attempt while competing in Qualification Group A.

A total of 37 javelin throwers, divided into two groups - A and B - are competing in the qualifiers for a place in the 12-man final, scheduled on Sunday. The automatic qualifying mark is 83.00m.

Those who throw 83m or the top-12 best performers from both Group A and B qualify for the Sunday's final.

The 25-year-old entered the championships as the world's top-ranked javelin thrower and eyeing that elusive gold medal both for his personal



medals cabinet and the country. Chopra came close to becoming the first Indian world champion in any athletics discipline at the 2022 world championships in Oregon but

eventually had to settle for a silver medal after finishing behind Grenada's Anderson Peters. Another Indian DP Manu, who won the silver at the Asian Athletics

Championships this year in Bangkok, started off with 78.10m and made a bettered in his second attempt to jump to third in Group A with an 81.31m throw.

India conclude with six golds at Baku Shooting Worlds

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India concluded their Baku World Championship campaign with a sixth gold and three more bronze medals to bolster their tally to six gold and eight bronze medals, placing them second currently in the medal standings.

Tiyana, Sakshi Suryavanshi and Kirandeep Kaur combined to win the team gold in the Women's 50m Pistol, even as Tiyana also won an individual bronze in the event.

Tiyana shot 533 for the individual bronze, while Sakshi Suryavanshi shot 531 to place fifth in the Women's 50m Pistol. Kirandeep Kaur was 11th with 509. The trio however totalled 1573 to claim gold as China finished with 1567 and Mongolia 1566. India also won two bronze medals in the Men's 50m Pistol, when Ravinder Singh shot 556 in the individual event to nail third place and then combine with Kamaljeet (547 for 11th) and Vikram Shinde (543 for 18th) for the team bronze as well.



They totalled 1646.

In the final Olympic event of the World Championship, the Indian pair of Prithviraj Tondaiman and Manisha Keer shot 133 to finish 22nd, while Kynan Chenai and Preeti Rajak also shot the same score but were placed 24th in the end calculations.

In the Olympic events at Baku, India won a gold and two bronze medals while having seven finalists and picking up four Paris Olympic quota places. The Asian Games next month will be the next big assignment of the Indian Shooting team.

WWE champion Windham Rotunda, also known as Bray Wyatt, passes away at 36

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The three-time WWE world champion Windham Rotunda, also known as Bray Wyatt passed away at the age of 36, WWE office chief content officer Triple H announced the news on social media platform X.

"Just received a call from WWE Hall of Famer Mike Rotunda who informed us of the tragic news that our WWE family member for life Windham Rotunda - also known as Bray Wyatt - unexpectedly passed earlier today. Our thoughts are with his family and we ask that everyone respect their privacy at this time," Triple H wrote on X, formerly (Twitter).

However, the main cause of his death is yet to be known. According to wrestling reporter Sean Ross Sapp, Wyatt got Covid earlier this year which exacerbated a heart attack and he suffered a



heart attack and passed away on Thursday. Wyatt is survived by his fiancée and former WWE ring announcer Joseph Ann Offerman, their four children, brother Bo Dallas (Taylor Rotunda), and sister Mika. "Known for his captivating performances and incredible in-ring presence, Wyatt was a defining Superstar of his generation and accomplished many feats in WWE, including becoming

WWE Champion in 2017," WWE condole the demise of the wrestler.

Wyatt had been out of action since late February with an illness and it was recently reported that he was getting closer to getting cleared with creative coming up with plans for him, according to Wrestling News.

Dwayne Johnson, aka The Rock, was among those paying tribute to the star.

NATIONAL RACING CHAMPIONSHIP 2023 SET TO ROAR INTO ACTION IN COIMBATORE

Coimbatore | Agencies

Motorsport enthusiasts are in for a treat as the iconic JK Tyre FMSCI National Racing Championship (JKNRC) revs back with a brand-new season this weekend on August 26-27, here.

The Kari Motor Speedway, is all set for high-octane action, continuing its legacy of discovering and nurturing emerging talent. The track which is nestled on the outskirts of Coimbatore and surrounded by natural beauty has been a home to JKNRC for a long time and has time and again proved to be a worthy and rewarding venue for motorsports enthusiasts.

JKNRC which is in its 26th year of existence, enjoys an iconic status and has been a breeding ground for Indian motorsports which yielded desired results and helped various drivers including Narain Karthikeyan, Armaan Ebrahim, Karun Chandhok, Arjun Maini, Kush Maini and others graduate to the next level to realise their dreams. Over the years, it has given a platform to aspiring drivers from all parts of the country to make



it big in motorsport. And like every edition, this year too it will see pan-India participation from Jammu, Chandigarh, Delhi in North to Sikkim in North-East, Mumbai in West and, Hyderabad, Bangalore & Chennai in South and will give an opportunity to both male and female drivers to prove their mettle on a level-playing field. The opening round will see the contenders push their limits for the coveted National Champion title in the Indian make LGB Formula 4, and becoming the overall champion in the JK Tyre Novice Cup and JK Tyre presents Royal Enfield Continental GT Cup with an aim to grab early advantage and set the tone for the

remainder of the season. "JK Tyre's commitment to fostering motorsports inclusively across the nation remains unwavering," Sanjay Sharma, Head-Motorsport, JK Tyre said. "Our championships have consistently delivered thrilling results. Given the impressive lineup this year, we anticipate an array of surprises on the track," he added. The LGB Formula 4 category features the most economical Indian made single-seater racing cars. The cars are powered by a carbureted 1298cc Suzuki engine and feature a 5-Speed gearbox and a chrome molybdenum tubing frame. The battle for supremacy in this flagship category

of JKNRC, will see fierce competition between last season's podium finishers Amir Syed (Ahura Racing), Diljith TS (Dark Don Racing), Raghu Rangasamy (MSport), amongst other seasoned drivers like Ruhaan Alva (MSport) who has been dazzling in international circuits lately. As a part of its unrelenting commitment to promote women in motorsport, this season the grid features India's premier female driver Mira Erda (MSport) and Anushriya Gulati (Dark Don Racing) who are set to challenge their male counterparts, showcasing their prowess in this year's championship. Furthermore, female participation extends beyond the LGB Formula 4. In the JK Tyre Novice Cup which is for amateurs who are setting their foot in the world of formula car racing, 15-yr old Aashi Hanspal (MSport) from Mumbai who was part of the FIA Girls on Track - Rising Stars project in 2020 along with the Ahura Racing pair of Priyanka Vijay from Bangalore and Avani Veeramani from Hyderabad are ready to rub shoulders with the boys for glory, aiming to etch their names in the records of Indian motorsport.

Coimbatore Open

HARSHJEET SINGH SETHIE DRIVES HIS WAY TO MAIDEN TITLE

Coimbatore | Agencies

Delhi golfer Harshjeet Singh Sethie saved his best for the last as his gallant effort of five-under 67, the eventual final day's lowest score, took him into a playoff where he upstaged the experienced Om Prakash Chouhan of Mhow by driving his way to his maiden title at the Rs 1 crore Coimbatore Open 2023.

The 21-year-old Harshjeet (69-67-72-67), who stands tall at a towering height of six feet and seven inches, collected the winning cheque worth Rs 15,00,000 to skyrocket 70 spots from 81st to 11th position in the TATA Steel PGTI Rankings.

Om Prakash Chouhan (67-71-68-69), who like Sethie also totaled 13-under 275 for the week before losing out on the second playoff hole to the latter, further consolidated his lead on the PGTI's money list with his runner-



up finish that earned him a cheque worth Rs 10,00,000.

Harshjeet Singh Sethie, lying overnight fifth and four off the lead, began his day with a bogey-birdie on the first two holes before he made one and all sit up and take notice with his eagle on the 11th and birdies on the ninth, 10th and 13th. The pro from the Delhi Golf Club drove the par-4 11th green before sinking a 15-footer there for an eagle-two. After a bogey on the 14th, Harshjeet drove the green on the par-4 15th to set up another birdie.

Sethie, playing his third season as a pro and struggling in the first half of 2023 making just two cuts out of eight starts, then met PGTI Order of Merit leader Om Prakash Chouhan in the playoff who had shot five birdies and two bogeys for his 69 on Friday. Om Prakash, a winner earlier this year, had begun the final round being two off the lead in tied second place.

Budapest | Agencies

Olympic champion Miltiadis Tentoglou clinched the men's long jump title with a tremendous last jump at the World Athletics Championships.

Heading into the sixth and last attempt on Thursday final, Tentoglou and Jamaica's Pinnock had both jumped an impressive 8.50m. However, the Greek athlete's second-best result was just 1cm behind Pinnock's 8.40m, placing him in second position, Xinhua reports.

Tentoglou, coming in second in the previous year's World Championships, delivered his final jump with unwavering determination, achieving a season-best of 8.52m, out of Pinnock's reach. Last year's defending



Americans Janee' Kassanavold and DeAnna Price trailed with results of 76.36m and 75.41m, respectively. China's Olympic silver medalist, Wang Zheng, struggled in her last four throws and ended in eighth place with 72.14m.

Both the men's 400m and the women's 100m hurdles saw Jamaican athletes taking the lead. Debutant Antonio Watson clinched the gold in the 400m with a time of 44.22 seconds, and 30-year-old Danielle Williams reclaimed her world title in the 100m hurdles, finishing in 12.43 seconds after an eight-year hiatus. Additionally, Femke Bol won the Netherlands their first gold in this championship, clocking 51.70 seconds in the women's 400m hurdles.

FIFA TO HOLD CLUB WORLD CUP 2023 DRAW IN SEPTEMBER

Geneva: FIFA announced that the draw for the FIFA Club World Cup Saudi Arabia 2023 will take place on September 7.

The world football governing body will livestream the draw from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on its official website on Thursday. Seven teams are set to compete in the tournament. The lineup includes Urawa Reds from Japan, Al Ahly from Egypt, Club Leon from Mexico, Auckland City from New Zealand, Manchester City from England, and Al Itihad from Saudi Arabia. The winners of the CONMEBOL Libertadores 2023 are yet to be determined, Xinhua reports. Al Itihad and Auckland City will face off in the first round on Dec. 12. The victors will move on to the second round, joining Urawa Reds, Al Ahly, and Club Leon. Both Manchester City and the CONMEBOL representative have secured byes for the first two rounds, positioning them directly into the semifinals. Furthermore, FIFA plans to unveil the official emblem for the tournament during the Sept. 7 draw ceremony.



Chosen a squad focused on combinations: Sanjay Bangar unveils his 15-member squad for ODI World Cup

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former India cricketer Sanjay Bangar revealed his preferred 15-player squad for the upcoming Men's ODI World Cup, to be held in the country from October 5 to November 19.

In his squad, Bangar sprung a huge surprise by naming left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh in his team ahead of fast-bowling all-rounder Shardul Thakur. Arshdeep has only played three ODIs so far, but is yet to take a wicket. Moreover, he is not named in the Asia Cup squad.

Bangar was the batting coach of the Indian team when they reached the semi-finals of 2019 Men's ODI World Cup in England, before losing to New Zealand in the knockout game at Manchester.

"For the World Cup, the way I have chosen

my squad is focused on combinations. The combination will be as follows: five specialist batsmen, two wicketkeeper-batsmen, two spin-bowling all-rounders, one pace-bowling all-rounder, one specialist spinner, and four fast bowlers," said Bangar to Star Sports.

"The five specialist batsmen will be Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, and Suryakumar Yadav. The two wicketkeeper-batsmen would be Ishan Kishan and KL Rahul," he added.

Just like the Asia Cup squad, leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal doesn't find a place in Bangar's 15 for the ODI World Cup. "The two spin-bowling all-rounders, both I have chosen from the left-arm category, would be Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel." The pace-bowling all-rounder would be Hardik Pandya. One specialist spinner - Kuldeep Yadav. And the four fast bowlers would be Jasprit Bumrah,

Mohammed Siraj, Mohammad Shami, and Arshdeep Singh. "India's next international assignment will be participating in the 2023 Asia Cup, by opening their campaign against arch-rivals Pakistan on September 2, before playing Nepal on September 4. Both of India's Group A matches will be played at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium. Top two sides from Groups A and B will progress to the Super Fours, where they will play three more games at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo, which will also host the final on September 17. On returning home, India will play three ODIs at home against Australia from September 22-27.

After playing warm-up matches against England and the Netherlands on September 30 and October 3 respectively, India will open their Men's ODI World Cup campaign against Australia on October 8 in Chennai.





SRK unveils poster of his upcoming depicting all his five faces

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Director Atlee's upcoming action-thriller film 'Jawan' is one of the most discussed Bollywood releases of 2023 ever since superstar Shah Rukh Khan unveiled his new look in the trailer. On Friday, Atlee and SRK both unveiled a new motion poster for the upcoming film which showcases five of the actor's faces in the film, with each face having a story of its own.

SRK releasing the motion poster on his Instagram, captioned: "The Many Faces of Justice...yeh teer hai...abhi dhal baaki hai...yeh anth hai abhi kaal baaki hai. Yeh poochta hai khud se kuch...abhi Jawaab baaki hai (The Many Faces of Justice...This is an arrow...Now a spear is remaining...This is the end, right now death awaits. This is something you ask of yourself...Right now the answer still remains)."

He further mentioned: "There's a purpose and meaning behind every Face. But this is just the beginning...Wait for the Ace!!" #Jawan releasing worldwide on September 7, 2023 in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu."

Atlee captioned the motion poster: "Behind each face, lies a story of its own. #Jawan releasing worldwide on 7th September 2023, in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu."

What the story for each face really is can only be speculated, but the first face portrays SRK looking all serious in a bald look with his mummy like bandaged fighter striking a spear below.

The second one features a more grounded look of SRK with hair, looking like a senior intelligence officer or a commander. The third one portrays him exactly the way he looks now with the image of a shadowy fighter walking amidst burning flames.

The fourth features a cybernetic masked look, which is the creepiest and most intriguing of all, and below him there is a soldier holding a gun.

The fifth is his most discussed bald look where he was seen dancing inside a Metro compartment in the most bizarre fashion, with everyone just looking at him and wondering what is going.

After National Award for 'Sardar Udham', Amol Parashar hails 'passion, honesty of the team'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Amol Parashar plays Bhagat Singh in Vicky Kaushal-starrer 'Sardar Udham', which bagged the Best Hindi Film honour at the 69th National Film Awards, said that although he has a small part of this stupendous film, he got to witness the passion, craft and honesty of the team at work.

Amol said: "It is heartening to see Sardar Udham winning deservedly at the National Awards 2023. Although I am a small part of this stupendous film, I got to witness the passion, craft and honesty of the team at work. When I saw the film for the first time, I myself was stunned by it, by the craft at display."

Filmmaker Shoojit Sircar's film 'Sardar Udham' has been honoured with five honours, which includes Best Hindi Film, Best Production design, Best Cinematography, the Best Costume Design and Best Audiography category.

He added: "I am proud to have been a part of the film and to have gotten a chance to work with some of the best



people at their jobs, especially Shoojit sir and Vicky as my on set collaborators."

Amol shared that the film talks about social and political revolution from a humanist point of view, a theme that is both universal and timeless.

"I hope we tell more stories like this, that speaks to the great and selfless parts of us. These are the heroes of history who built this great nation, and they deserve a little more than just being pictures on our walls. We need to take forward their legacy of humanism, selflessness and true inclusivity."

'When it comes to dating, honesty is everything,' says Janhvi Kapoor

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Janhvi Kapoor has opened up about dating and relationships. She shared that as a Gen Z woman, she has learnt that having high standards is not being picky but valuing yourself enough to know what you deserve.

Popular social media content creator and actor, Kusha Kapila, takes the driver's seat once again to pick up Tinder users to meet their dates. In a new episode for Swipe Ride, they talk about transparency and authenticity in dating, being confident in your own skin and not negotiating on your expectations.

Janhvi on Tinder's latest episode of Swipe Ride said: "Self-love is all about knowing you're worth more and not settling for anyone that doesn't see that. Beauty comes in all shapes and sizes and happiness starts with loving every bit of yourself. As a Gen Z woman I've learnt that having high standards isn't being picky; it's valuing yourself enough to know what you deserve."

She added: "And when it comes to dating, honesty is everything. No games, just genuine connections. This episode of Tinder's Swipe Ride is just a reminder that in a world that loves labels, your worth, your body, and your rules are yours to set. You deserve a relationship that loves all of you, just as you are."

During the conversation, Janhvi addressed how women are often made to feel they are not enough, or don't meet the ideal beauty standards.

She emphasised that being confident in your skin and refusing to settle for less is the key to self-love and fostering a healthy relationship. This sentiment resonates with 86 per cent women daters in India say their personal self-care is a priority while dating.

They also chat about how situationship is an exciting and low-pressure way to get to know someone today. This holds true for 40 per cent young women daters in India today who pick situationships as their current dating preference, reflecting a desire to redefine love on their own terms.

"Young women today are upfront about what they want when it comes to their dating lives. They are doing so by normalising conversations around female desire, body positivity, consent and boundaries which the viewers will also get to witness on Swipe Ride."

"For the third season, I got a chance to witness female Tinder users be absolutely confident about their dating choices and take charge of what they want. I was more than happy to play a role in facilitating these meaningful conversations," added Kusha Kapila.



Mohit Raina says he always struggles with drinking scenes

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Mohit Raina, who is gearing up for the release of his upcoming streaming show 'The Freelancer', has shared that he always finds it difficult to perform in drinking scenes.

For the show, Mohit spent enough time to understand the nuances of his character Amniah Kamath. The actor decoded his character and what went into preparing for the role.

Talking about the same, Mohit Raina said: "Well to stay true to the story I had to show the transition of the character from early failures in life to a mature guy who has lived his life and gained experience."

He further mentioned: "For the early life we tried to look lean and for the current life it was slight grey hair and someone who would come across as harmless and would easily blend in a crowd. I always struggle with drinking scenes, it's something that doesn't come easy to me. Apart from that it was more action related and getting used to the terrain on a daily basis."

The show follows the story of a man on an extraction mission and a young girl held captive in war-torn Syria. The series is based on the book, 'A Ticket to Syria' by Shirish Thorat. The show also stars Anupam Kher, Kashmiri Pardeshi, Sushant Singh, John Kokken, Gauri Balaji and Navneet Malik, Manjiri Faddnis and Sarah Jane Dias.

Directed by Bhav Dhulia and produced by Friday Storytellers with Neeraj Pandey as the Creator and Showrunner, 'The Freelancer' will drop on September 1, 2023 on Disney+ Hotstar.

'I HAVE TRIED TO PROJECT WOMEN VERY DIFFERENTLY THROUGH MY FILMS': RANI MUKERJI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As her film 'Mardaani' clocked nine years in Hindi cinema, actress Rani Mukerjee has spoken about the franchise and said that she has tried to project women very differently through her films.

In the 'Mardaani' franchise, Rani essays the character of a cop Shivani Shivaji Roy. In the first installment, the actress works hard to uncover a Delhi-based child trafficking cartel.

Rani said: "I'm very proud of the Mardaani franchise. As an actor, I have tried to project women very differently through my films. I realised I could contribute towards showcasing women as real agents of change for society to look at."

She added: "I have tried to show women as ambitious, self-reliant, courageous, go-getters who are uncompromising, feisty and upright individuals."

"Mardaani" fits into my vision for women in cinema aptly and because of this synergy, I think I have been able to give 200 per cent to

this character."

Rani feels there is a lot of similarity between her 'Mardaani' character, Shivani Shivaji Roy and how she is in real life.

Rani said: "Shivani and I are the same. There is no difference. I have never let anyone tell me how to lead my life and I have fought all my battles by myself. Shivani Shivaji Roy is exactly the same."

"Maybe this is why people love the franchise and my character so much because I'm actually playing myself through this cop."

The 'Mardaani' franchise is truly a game-changer for Indian cinema. It subverts gender-norms and shows how a woman can deliver huge box office hits all by herself and commander a franchise that keeps growing with time!

"Mardaani franchise is quite a glass-ceiling shattering one as it's a blockbuster franchise with a woman as the lead. I hope the success of this franchise will help in many more films being made with women at the forefront," she says.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Aamna Sharif