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Hardik Pandya is critical to team India's success in the World...



Asian Games: Indian men's hockey team clinch gold; secure Paris Olympic quota

GOLD WITH STICK

► On Friday, India defeated Japan 5-1 in the final, riding on a brace by skipper Harmanpreet Singh (32nd, 59th minutes), while Manpreet Singh (25th min), Amit Rohidas (36th min) and Abhishek (48th min) struck a goal each. Japan's lone consolation was scored by Seren Tanaka off an indirect penalty corner in the 51st minute.

► This is India's fourth-ever gold medal in the Asian Games after 1966 in Bangkok, 1998 in Bangkok and 2014 in Incheon, India has also won nine silver medals and three bronze medals in the Asian Games so far.

► India joined South Korea as the second-most successful team in Asian Games men's hockey with four gold medals each. Pakistan are the most successful with eight gold medals.

B Shrikant | Hangzhou

Playing a brand of hockey that has led to its recent metamorphosis into a medal contender in world hockey, the Indian men's hockey team defeated defending champions Japan 5-1 to re-established its superiority in the continent by winning the gold medal in the Asian Games for the fourth time in 19 editions.

The bonus they gained for their consistent performance in the hockey competition in Hangzhou was a berth in next year's Paris Olympics as the Asian Games in a qualifying tournament for the Olympics. The first quarter had both teams struggling to improve themselves and Japan did well to counter the Indian forwards. India had a couple of chances including their first penalty corner but Japan's goalkeeper Tukumi Kitagawa blocked Harmanpreet's drag flick.

The second quarter looked like going the same way with the Indians looking for inspiration upfront, their attempts to breach the Japanese defence proving futile as the Japanese defended strongly in the final third.

The Tokyo Olympic Games bronze medalists, who are ranked fourth in the world, earned their second penalty corner in this period but could not



capitalise.

But five minutes before the half-time hooter, India found some inspiration upfront and a good attack resulted in their first goal. Former skipper Manpreet Singh capitalised on a good attack and struck a powerful shot home to open the scoring for India. After the change of ends, India earned three penalty corners back-to-back and off the third, Harmanpreet Singh slammed home a rebound to make it 2-0.

India continued to attack and with a full-capacity crowd mostly rooting for it, they earned another penalty corner in the 36th minute and this time Amit Rohidas blasted home a

direct drag flick to make it 3-0.

Abhishek, who scored twice in India's 4-2 in the preliminary group stage in Hangzhou, scored India's fourth goal when he muscled his way into the shooting circle and took a blistering shot past the goalkeeper.

Japan, who earned their first penalty corner in the 51st minute, found the back of the net in and off a re-take Serene Tanaka deflected the ball into the goal to make it 1-4 for Japan.

India then added one more goal in the 59th minute with Harmanpreet Singh slamming home a drag flick to make it 5-1.

This is India's biggest win in the Asian Games men's hockey final.

Sikkim deluge

22 bodies recovered from West Bengal including 6 army personnel

Kolkata | Agencies

The number of bodies recovered from the northern sector of West Bengal following the devastating flash-flood in adjacent hill-state of Sikkim has increased to 22 as of Friday, as per the records of the state disaster management department.

At least, 17 were recovered till Friday morning. The bodies were mainly recovered from the overflowing Teesta River in Jalpaiguri district in the northern sector.

As per the initial estimates of the state disaster management department, of the 22 bodies recovered at least six are of the Indian army personnel posted at Sikkim who went missing following the flash flood. More bodies might be recovered as the



work of recovery and rescue operations progress," an official from the disaster management department said.

The bodies recovered so far have been preserved at four different hospitals at Malbazar, Maynaguri, Jalpaiguri Town in Jalpaiguri district and in North Bengal Medical College & Hospital at Siliguri in adjacent Darjeeling district.

Meanwhile, the National Highway 10 connecting north Bengal with Sikkim has been damaged following landslides. State disaster management department sources said that smaller relief and rescue vehicles are being sent to different parts of Sikkim through an alternative route, which is of a longer distance than the conventional route.

Army weapons, equipment swept away in Teesta River

Guwahati: The deluge in Sikkim led to a large amount of military equipment, including weapons and explosives, being carried away in the Teesta River, defence officials said on Friday, urging people to be cautious.

Defence PRO, Lt. Col. Mahendra Rawat said: "Due to severe floods in Sikkim, certain military equipment including firearms and explosives were carried away in Teesta River. An urgent notice for the public has already been issued by Jalpaiguri district authorities."

He also said that the Army has established lookout teams all along the river downstream. In a statement, the Army said: "We urge the public to remain vigilant and report any unfamiliar objects, crates, packages, firearms or any suspicious item floating in the water to the nearest police station immediately." Please refrain from handling these items in any manner, as they pose a potential risk of a dangerous explosion."

Remove child sexual abuse material or face action: Centre warns X, YouTube, Telegram

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Ministry of Electronics and IT on Friday issued notices to social media intermediaries X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, and Telegram, warning them to remove any kind of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) from their platforms on the Indian internet or face action.

The notices served to these platforms emphasise the importance of prompt and permanent removal or disabling of access to any CSAM on their platforms. They also call for the implementation of proactive measures, such as content moderation algorithms and reporting mechanisms, to prevent the dissemination of CSAM in the future.

"We have sent notices to X, YouTube and Telegram to ensure there are no Child Sexual Abuse Material that exist on their platforms. The government is determined to build a safe and trusted internet under the IT rules," Union Minister of State for



Electronics & IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said.

"The rules under the IT Act lay down strict expectations from social media intermediaries that they should not allow criminal or harmful posts on their platforms. If they do not act swiftly, their safe harbour under section 79 of the IT Act would be withdrawn and consequences under the Indian law will follow," the minister warned.

The notices from MeitY stated that non-compliance with these requirements will be deemed a breach of Rule 3(1)(b) and Rule 4(4) of the IT Rules, 2021. The ministry warned the three social media intermediaries that

any delay in complying with the notices will result in the withdrawal of their safe harbour protection under Section 79 of the IT Act, which currently shields them from legal liability. Chandrasekhar has been a vocal advocate for removing such harmful content from the Indian internet, ensuring this approach becomes the ministry's policy vision. The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, provides the legal framework for addressing pornographic content, including CSAM. Sections 66E, 67, 67A, and 67B of the IT Act impose stringent penalties and fines for the online transmission of obscene or pornographic content.

FIVE TEENAGE BOYS DROWN IN GANGA IN PRAYAGRAJ

Prayagraj (UP): Five teenage boys drowned here on Friday while bathing in the Ganga river, the police said.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed condolence over the deaths and asked officials to provide assistance to the family members of the boys.

The five teenagers -- Himanshu (16), Priyanshu (16), Akash (14), Shani (17) and Mulayam (17) -- had gone to bathe in the river in the Shivkuti area, SHO Sanjay Gupta said.

According to locals, when Himanshu started drowning, the other boys jumped into the river to save him. However, all of them eventually drowned, the police said.

All the deceased were residents of Myrabad and Belf Kachar villages, the SHO said, adding that the bodies have been recovered with the help of divers and sent for post-mortem.

RBI retains repo rate; GDP growth at 6.5%, inflation at 5.4%

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), as was widely expected, left the key lending rate unchanged at a fourth policy meeting in a row on Friday with a focus on growth even though inflation is currently above its comfort level.

"MPC (Monetary Policy Committee) voted unanimously to leave the repo rate -- the rate at which the central bank lends short-term funds to banks -- unchanged at 6.5 per cent," RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said while announcing the Committee's decision.

The MPC also decided that Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) and Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rates are also left unchanged at 6.25 per cent and 6.75 per cent, respectively.

"Global headline inflation is easing but rules above the target of many major economies. Sovereign bond yields have firmed up, US



dollar has appreciated, and equity markets have corrected," Das said at the press conference.

The country's MPC took a unanimous decision to leave the repo rate untouched.

At the same time Governor Das said, "the committee remains resolutely focused on aligning inflation to the 4 per cent target on a durable basis".

The RBI also maintained its policy stance of "withdrawal of accommodation" to ensure inflation progressively aligns with the committee's target while remaining supportive of economic growth. Annual retail inflation eased to 6.83 per cent in August, from a 15-month high of 7.44 per cent in July, but remained well above the central bank's 2 per cent-6

per cent comfort zone.

The erratic monsoon has hit production of vegetables, cereals and fruits triggering a sharp increase in food prices. Global oil prices have also been soaring which has further pushed up the inflation rate.

On GDP growth, the MPC's forecast for 2023-24 was left unchanged at 6.5 per cent. The overall tone of the bi-monthly monetary policy remained tilted towards the inflation fight. In the October MPC decision, Das said that CPI inflation forecast for 2023-24 left unchanged at 5.4 per cent. He also mentioned that throughout the third quarter, food inflation pressure may not seem to change, while core CPI eased 140 basis points from its earlier peak in January.

The retail inflation fell to 6.83 per cent in August as vegetable prices cooled compared to the previous month but it was still above the RBI's tolerance band of 2-6 per cent.

ANOTHER BLOW TO BRS, TWO SENIOR LEADERS JOIN CONGRESS

New Delhi: In a setback for the ruling BRS in Telangana, two of its senior leaders, one MLC and a sitting legislator, left the party on Friday.

Ajmeera Rekha, the legislator from Khanapur, in a press conference today announced her resignation from the party while MLC Kasireddy Narayana Reddy joined the Congress party in the presence of AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge in the national capital.

Ajmeera Rekha was unhappy with the party as she was denied a ticket to contest the forthcoming assembly polls.

She further said she would contest from the constituency either as a rebel candidate or from some other party.

Speaking to reporters in Delhi, Kasireddy Narayana Reddy said that although he still has four years of his tenure as MLC left, he joined the Congress in the presence of Mallikarjun Kharge and PCC president Revanth Reddy. Along with him, several other leaders from Nagarkurnool district have also joined Congress, he added.

Kasireddy Narayana Reddy said his supporters and followers advised him to join the Congress as the "six guarantees" it announced recently are beneficial to people. If the Congress Party gives him an opportunity to contest, he will contest polls, he said.

SC issues notice on plea against cash assistance announcements made by CMs of poll-bound Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday issued notice on a plea seeking declaration that promise or distribution of cash assistance made by Chief Ministers of poll-bound Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan amounts to bribery and undue influence.

A bench comprising of CJI D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra agreed to examine the plea and sought responses from the Union government, Election Commission and both the states concerned within a period of four weeks.

"Everything that the government says in 'public interest' need not to be in 'public interest'. There cannot be anything more atrocious than permitting a government to distribute cash. Six months before the election, these



things start," submitted the petitioner, adding that the burden caused due to distribution of illegal freebies ultimately shifts on taxpayers.

The bench expressed its reservation, saying that "before elections, all kinds of promises are made and it cannot control them". However, it ordered that it will tag the present plea with the existing issue of 'freebies' being dealt by the apex court in the Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay case. The bench also questioned

the petitioner for naming the office of the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan as respondents in the case and asked him to substitute them with respective state governments.

The petitioner said that he also impleaded the RBI as a respondent party to prevent the central bank from disbursing further loans to the two states.

The plea sought a declaration that promise or distribution of irrational freebies from the public fund before elec-

tion to lure voters is analogous to the bribery and undue influence - offences under Section 171-B and Section 171-C of the IPC. The petition said that comprehensive guidelines should be framed for announcements made by the Chief Minister before election for utilisation of consolidated funds purportedly made for public purpose. In the pending case filed by advocate Upadhyay, the top court had earlier remarked that freebies announced by political parties may push states towards imminent bankruptcy and referred the matter to a three-judge bench. In the 2013 Subramanian Balaji vs Tamil Nadu case, the Supreme Court had held that distribution of free colour TV sets by the DMK after winning the Tamil Nadu assembly elections could not be called "corrupt".

IIM Rohtak in top 2% of Stanford global rankings

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As per prestigious 2023 rankings released by Stanford University in collaboration Elsevier, IIM Rohtak has excelled with an impressive representation among the top 2 per cent of scientists from all IIMs worldwide.

Stanford University releases a list of top 2 per cent researchers in the world every year. These researchers are picked up based on their research contribution to their respective fields. After applying deep analysis and using statistical measure the ranking is established.

All the world scientists are classified into 22 scientific fields and 174 sub-fields according to the standard Science-Matrix classification. According to the IIM Rohtak, the rankings for the top IIMs in terms of faculty representation among the



top 2 per cent of scientists globally include, IIM Rohtak with 7.69 per cent.

IIM Ahmedabad stands at 4.81 per cent, IIM Jammu: 4.65 per cent, IIM Lucknow: 4.55 per cent, IIM Nagpur: 2.78 per cent, IIM, Visakhapatnam: 2.70 per cent, IIM Bodh Gaya: 1.92 per cent and IIM Bangalore shares 1.77 per cent of top 2 per cent. IIM Rohtak's outstanding achievement includes its Director, Prof Dheeraj Sharma, among the top scientists. His research has also been recognised by World Health Organisation last year. He also previously was listed as top 10 researcher by the list developed and released by Omega Journal.



"HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN OATHS...": PRIYANKA GANDHI TO PM OVER 'RAVAN' POSTER

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party over a graphic prominently featuring her brother and party leader Rahul Gandhi with a bearded visage and seven heads, reminiscent of Ravana.

"Most respected @narendramodiji and @JPNadda, to what level of degradation do you want to take politics and debate? Do you agree with the violent and provocative tweets being posted from the official Twitter handle of your party? Not much time passed and you took a vow of uprightness. Have you forgotten oaths like promises?", Priyanka Gandhi wrote on X, roughly translated from Hindi.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday launched a scathing attack against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi by sharing a graphic por-



traying him as the mythical character Ravana. The poster also linked the Congress leader to George Soros, a billionaire investor who has



been accused of being involved in anti-India activities.

The BJP shared the graphic on their official handle of the social

media platform 'X, and captioned it, "India is in Danger. He is Evil. Anti Dharma. Anti Ram. His aim is to destroy Bharat."

The graphic ignited a debate on social media, with supporters and critics expressing various opinions about its symbolism and intent.

It underscores the intense political rivalry and polarization in India's contemporary political landscape.

Meanwhile, Congress general secretary KC Venugopal called the graphic of Rahul Gandhi posted by BJP, "shameful".

"No words are enough to condemn the 'shameful' graphic on the BJP handle comparing Rahul Gandhi ji to Ravana. Their nefarious intentions are clear, they want to murder him.

He, who lost his grandmother and father to assassinations. They withdrew his SPG protection to score petty political points," Mr Venugopal posted on X.

SC to hear on Oct 9 plea against remission granted to convicts in Bilkis Bano case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday fixed October 9 for hearing batch of pleas filed against the Gujarat government's decision allowing early release of convicts in the case of gang rape of Bilkis Bano and murder of her family members committed during the 2002 post-Godhra riots.

A bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan directed counsel appearing for petitioners, including Bilkis Bano, to file rejoinders by this Monday.

Earlier, the convicts had argued before the apex court that remission orders granting them early release have an essence of judicial order and cannot be challenged by way of filing a writ petition under Article 32 of the Constitution.

Senior advocate Indira Jaising, appearing for Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra - who is one of the PIL petitioners, had argued that Bilkis Bano was five months' pregnant when she was gang raped and crime committed against her and her family was a "crime against humanity" perpetrated on the basis of religion.

The Centre, Gujarat government, and convicts have opposed the public interest litiga-



tions (PILs) filed by CPI-M leader Subhashini Ali, Trinamool's Moitra, National Federation of Indian Women, Asma Shafique Shaikh and others, saying that once victim herself has approached the court, others may not be allowed to intervene in a criminal matter.

Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, appearing on behalf of the Centre, had argued that remission is reduction of sentence and a PIL cannot be entertained on the question of sentence.

The 11 men convicted in the case were released on August 15 last year, after the Gujarat government allowed their release under its remission policy. The convicts had completed 15 years in jail.

Manipur govt extends internet ban till October 11

Imphal | Agencies

The ban on mobile internet services in troubled Manipur has been extended for another five days till October 11, officials said on Friday.

Extending the ban on mobile internet services till October 11, Commissioner (Home) T. Ranjit Singh said in his order: "There is apprehension that some anti-social elements might use social media extensively for transmission of images, hate speech and hate video messages inciting the passions of the public which might have serious repercussions for the law and order situation in the state of Manipur."

Following a massive students' agitations, the Manipur government had on September 26, two days after the ban was lifted after 143 days, had suspended mobile internet data services, internet/data services for five days before extending it



again till October 6. Manipur witnessed massive students' agitations in the last week of September to protest the killings of a 17-year-old girl student Hijam Linthoingambi and 20-year-old Phijam Hemjit, who hailed from Bishnupur district and had gone missing on July 6 during the height of ethnic violence. The photographs of the two murdered students were circulated on different social media platforms on September 25, triggering intense agitations in which at least 100 students, including girls, were injured after they clashed with the

security forces, who prevented them from marching towards the Chief Minister's bungalow. Meanwhile, annoyed with suspension of mobile internet services in Manipur, a student body in Senapati district has imposed an indefinite economic blockade since Thursday evening, leaving several goods-laden vehicles stranded along the Manipur-Nagaland border.

The state government, following the students' agitation, had also closed all government, government-aided and private schools, which reopened on Friday.

LWE WOULD BE ELIMINATED IN NEXT 2 YEARS: AMIT SHAH

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said that success has been achieved in curbing Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in the last few years, adding that LWE will be eliminated in the next two years.

Chairing a meeting to review the security situation in LWE-affected States, Shah also said that the year 2022 witnessed the lowest number of incidents of violence and deaths in Maoist-hit areas in the last four decades.

In his address, the Minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, success has been achieved in curbing Leftist extremism in the last few years and now this fight has reached a decisive phase.

He said that with the determination of the Prime Minister and the cooperation of all the states affected by the LWE, major successes have been achieved against it in 2022 and 2023.

Shah asserted that "this is the year of taking resolution to completely eliminate Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in the next two years".

Shah said that vacuum areas have been shrinking since 2019, and we have established 195 new camps of

CAPFs, 44 more new camps will be established.

He said that the deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) against LWE, rationalization of development and setting up camps in vacuum areas are the priorities of the Modi government. He also asserted that there is a need to maintain constant surveillance in the areas liberated from LWE so that this problem does not revive there again. He said that there is also a need to monitor that left wing extremists from areas where this problem has been eliminated, do not take shelter in other states. Shah said that the Modi government has adopted a policy of "zero tolerance" against LWE since 2014.

"As a result of our zero tolerance policy, the lowest level of violence and deaths has been recorded in 2022 in last 4 decades," the Minister said.

"There has been a decline of more than 52 per cent in Left Wing Extremism related violence, 69 per cent in deaths, 72 per cent in security forces deaths and 68 per cent in civilian deaths between 2014 and 2023 compared to the period from 2005 to 2014," Shah said.

Union Home Minister said that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Enforcement

Directorate (ED) are working closely with all state agencies to attack the financing of LWE.

He added that all the affected states need to make efforts by forming a joint team of civil and police administration to dismantle the network of financial support of LWE.

He further said that the Modi government had increased the ex-gratia amount for victims of LWE from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 20 lakh in 2017, now it has been further increased to Rs 40 lakh.

Highlighting the work of the government in the LWE areas, Shah said that the government is taking several steps to speed up the development in LWE-affected states and special attention is being given to areas like road construction, telecommunication, financial inclusion, skill development and education.

Shah said the government has launched more than 14,000 projects under the Special Central Assistance (SCA) scheme to accelerate development in the districts most affected by LWE.

"More than 80 per cent of these projects have been completed and Rs 3,296 crore has been released to LWE-affected states under the scheme," the Minister said.

He said under the Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS), projects worth Rs 992 crore have been sanc-



tioned for the construction of Fortified Police Stations, strengthening of State Intelligence branches and Special Forces of LWE-affected states.

In the last nine years, the Modi government has increased the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) by more than double in comparison to the earlier period, he added.

SC to constitute 7-judge bench to hear money bills issue soon: CJI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud on Friday said that he would soon be constituting a seven-judge bench to address the money bill issue.

While replying to Senior Advocate Menaka Guruswamy, the CJI said that he was listing all pending seven-judge matters and nine-judge matters for directions next week.

Appearing before the 3-judge bench comprising the CJI, Justice J.B. Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra, the Senior Advocate drew their attention to the matter of the money bills and said that a seven-judge bench was to be constituted.

"This is about the money bills. The specific challenge is to the PMLA," Guruswamy said.

According to Article 110 of the Indian constitution, a money bill is a bill that has provisions regarding imposition, abolition, remission, alter-



ation or regulation of any tax; regulating government borrowings and financial obligations, custody, and flow of funds from the Consolidated Fund of India.

The matter of the money bill came into question when the Centre passed the Aadhaar Act in 2016. The Rajya Sabha cannot amend or reject a money bill. The Centre introduced the Aadhaar Bill in Parliament as a money bill. It was alleged that since the government lacked a majority in the Rajya Sabha it introduced the Bill as a money bill to circumvent the Upper House of Parliament.

The amendments made to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) were introduced as money bills. The apex court has earlier upheld the constitutional validity of the PMLA, but it is yet to decide whether the amendments to the PMLA can be passed as a money bill.

The seven-judge constitutional bench will address this question.

Minor tribal girl gang-raped in Bengal jungle

Kolkata | Agencies

In a shocking case, a minor tribal girl was gang-raped and abandoned in an unconscious state in the jungles of Kanksa community development block in West Bengal's West Burdwan district.

The minor girl was rescued from the jungles in an unconscious state on Friday morning. She is currently under treatment at a Durgapur Sub-Divisional Hospital. Her condition, according to the local police, is extremely critical.

The police have arrested four persons in this connection. Tension is prevailing in the area as the local people have started demonstrations demanding exemplary punishment for the offenders.

It is learnt that the tribal girl went to the jungles to collect for fuel along with one of her friends on Thursday evening. While they were returning they were stopped by four local youths. While the friend managed to run away, the victim girl could not escape the clutches of the offenders, who then dragged



her in the deeper forests and gang-raped her.

The friend of the victim, who managed to escape, told her parents about this incident, who in turn informed the parents of the victim. The parents immediately rushed to the spot and also informed the local police. Finally, she was rescued in an unconscious state and was shifted to the hospital.

The accused will be presented in a district court in West Burdwan district on Friday and the public prosecutor will seek their police custody. State leadership of BJP has claimed that the incident proved the deplorable law and order situation and the plight of women in the state.

Use guns in defence or sports not to make reels: Bihar ADGP

Patna | Agencies

Bihar ADGP Jitendra Singh Gangwar on Friday appealed to the youth of the state to use the guns in defence service of nation or for achieving medals in sports and not for making reels on social media.

"Bihar police has started recruitment for various posts. Join the force and you will get a chance to hold the real guns," he appealed youth.

He said that the India defense services are also recruiting a large number of youths so that youth should join them too and get real guns.

"These are some of the constructive approaches by which youth can serve the nation," ADGP said.

He said that Asian games



are underway and a number of shooters from our country have won medals.

"Bihar police want to appeal to the youths who are wasting their energy and talent in making reels. We are suggesting that they should participate in shooting competitions and justify their tal-

ent," Gangwar said.

He said that in the last few months, a number of youths have been waving firearms on marine drive in Patna and making reels while driving bikes. "Some of them have shown off toy guns but they too have been penalised heavily," Gangwar said.

Haryana waives taxes, penalties on outstanding property tax

Chandigarh | Agencies

Giving a major relief to the residents, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Friday announced complete waiver of taxes and penalties on outstanding property tax, providing a substantial direct benefit to property owners of nearly Rs 8,000 crore.

Also, the Chief Minister announced a 15 per cent rebate on the principal outstanding property tax, giving property owners an extra benefit of approximately Rs 1,200 crore.

The Chief Minister told the media here that the government has decided to shift 33,000 volts (KV) and 11,000 volts (KV) power lines passing over colonies, houses, 'phirnis', parks, ponds, schools, etc.

In this regard, the Uttar Haryana Bijli



Vitran Nigam and the Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam have prepared a proposal to shift all such lines, which has been approved.

The Chief Minister said that in view of public interest, the government had launched a campaign of laying power lines over houses in 2016, on which an expenditure of more than Rs 112.17 crore was incurred.

In this sequence, the government has once again decided to start a similar campaign, for which a provision of Rs 151 crore has been made, he said.

The Chief Minister said for shifting the high tension lines at 2,707 places, a proposal of Rs 96 crore has been prepared. Under this, an estimated cost will be Rs 78.35 crore on 11,000-volt lines and Rs 17.30 crore on 33 KV lines.



CAN'T SHIFT ONUS OF PUBLIC HEALTHCARE ON PRIVATE HOSPITALS,SAYS BOMBAY HC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Friday observed that the Maharashtra government cannot shift the burden of ensuring public healthcare on private hospitals...



hospitals don't adhere to norms for patient referrals, and there is heavy inflow into government hospitals...

saying that while everything may be "in place on paper", it was important that everything works even at the ground level...

Team Absolute | Mumbai/New Delhi

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Friday urged the Centre to form a group comprising the Enforcement Directorate, the Income Tax Department, and the Financial Intelligence Unit to probe the funding of Maoist groups in the country.

Every year, billions of rupees are being sent to the Maoists, while "urban naxalism" is being propagated through the Internet and social media...

Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Secretary Manoj Saunik, DGP Rajnish Seth and others were present from the state.

The CM said that in the past one year, Maoism is being curbed in Maharashtra due to effective implementation of various developmental schemes in the affected areas.

"We will soon succeed in completely eradicating Naxalism (Maoists) from areas like Gadchiroli... Operations to weaken the grip of Naxalites will intensify in the next two years," he said at the meeting.



For the development of the Maoist-hit areas, the CM urged the need to expand the railway network in the regions bordering Gadchiroli like Chhattisgarh and Telangana.

"If the railway network from Mancheril in Telangana to Sironcha and then from Bhopalpatnam in Chhattisgarh to Jagdalpur, and similarly, from Aheri to Shirpur (Kagaznagar) is developed, it will benefit the Surjagad iron project and overall development," he said.

Referring to the issue of police officials injured during anti-Maoist operations who needed urgent medical attention, the CM called for permitting night-landings for helicopters to facilitate such rescue missions...

To leading the battle against Maoists, Shinde said that a Special Task Force, Special Intelligence Bureau, fortified police stations, including 20 in Gadchiroli district, are being enhanced with special facilities at a cost of Rs 61.35 crore.

The capacity of the Special Task Force is being enhanced with an expenditure of Rs 12 crore and approval has been give for 500 staff and 25 officers...

He added that presently, 49 per cent of the 'active' Maoist cadres in Maharashtra are from Chhattisgarh, and there are 4 Joint Task Force camps on the border between the two states...

Thackeray demands CBI probe into Mahagovt corruption & help for patients

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a scathing attack, Shiv Sena (UBT) President and ex-Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray alleged corruption in the current government of Maharashtra and demanded a "CBI probe" into its affairs...



to the poor. "The CM and both Deputy CMs (Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar) should have gone to Nanded, studied the situation and taken remedial measures..." said the ex-CM.

Demanding the resignation of the Health Minister Tanaji Sawant, the Shiv Sena (UBT) chief said that he is only seen in advertisement posters, and a traitor MP, Hemant S. Patil was booked for forcing the Acting Dean of Nanded Hospital Dr S. R. Wakode to clean toilets/urinals.

Questioning this, Thackeray asked pointedly: "Why only the Nanded Dean is booked on charges of culpable homicide not amounting to murder. Is he (Dean) being deliberately targeted after he filed the atrocities against the turncoat MP (Patil)?"

He also slammed Shinde for clicking photos with Bollywood stars during Ganeshotsav when large parts of Nagpur had been submerged under floods at the height of the 10-day festival.

Five women among 7 killed in Mumbai building parking lot fire

Team Absolute | Mumbai

At least seven persons, including five women, were killed and another 61 injured when a major fire engulfed the parking lot of a high-rise in suburban Goregaon, here early on Friday, the BMC Disaster Control said.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis and others expressed grief over the tragedy and condoled the families of the victims.

The PM announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakhs to the kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 to the injured, while Chief Minister Eknath Shinde declared a compensation of

Rs 5 lakhs to the kin of the dead and full free treatment for all the injured.

According to the BMC Disaster Control, the fire broke out around 3 a.m., in the 2000-sq. ft. parking lot of ground-plus seven-storied Jay Bhavani Building on MG Road, a SRA project.

It quickly spread to at least four cars and over two dozen two-wheelers and then caught the electrical meter box, staircase, and the flames reached the residential floors above, jolting the people awake from sleep.

The Mumbai Police, Mumbai Fire Brigade and other agencies rushed to the spot and managed to deploy ladders to rescue 30 residents from the building with shops and establishments partly occupying the ground floor.

The blaze claimed seven persons, comprising five females, including two minors, and 2 males, plus 61 more injured, among them 25 women.

While 47 persons still continue under treatment in different hospitals, the condition of five is described as "critical" and nine others have been discharged, some going against medical advice.

A majority of the victims were rushed in ambulances to the HBT Hospital and the Cooper Hospital and other nearby private hospitals. After massive efforts by the fire-fighters, the blaze was extinguished around 6.55 a.m., said the BMC Disaster Control, and the causes of the conflagration are being probed by the Mumbai Police.

Mumbai Police seizes Mephedrone worth rs 300 crore, arrests 12

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai police has seized mephedrone worth Rs 300 crore and arrested 12 persons from several cities in an operation that was underway for the past few days, a senior official said on Friday.



He said 151.305 kilograms of mephedrone worth Rs 300.26 crore were seized after a factory was raided in MIDC Shinde Gaon in Nashik district.

A team from Saki Naka police station arrested 12 members of a syndicate from various parts of the metropolis as well as Hyderabad in Telangana and Nashik, he informed. Mephedrone is a synthetic stimulant drug that is known by a variety of street names, including 'meow meow', white magic, bubble, m-cat etc.

NHSRCL achieves milestone with 1st mountain tunnel for Mumbai-Ahmedabad high speed rail project

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

In a major development in the Mumbai-Ahmedabad 508-km-long High Speed Rail train project, the National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) has achieved a major milestone with the breakthrough of a mountain tunnel for the high speed rail corridor project, a spokesperson said.

A NHSRCL spokesperson here said that this is the first mountain tunnel which has been completed in a short span of 10 months.

NHSRCL spokesperson Sushma Gaur said that the tunnel is located at around 1 km away from Zaroli village of Umbergaon taluka in Gujarat's Valsad district.

She added that the tunnel structure comprises of tunnel, tunnel portal and other connecting structures like tunnel entrance hood. She said that the tunnel is being



constructed by New Austrian Tunneling Method (NATM) which includes the procedure like marking

of drill holes on the tunnel face, drilling of holes, charging of explosives, controlled blasting, removal of

muck (blasted rock pieces) and installation of primary support which includes steel ribs, lattice girder, shotcrete, rock bolts based on the type of rocks as assessed by geologist after each blast.

She also pointed out the mountain tunnel is 350 m in length and its diameter is 12.6 m while the height of the tunnel is 10.25 m.

She said that the single tube horse-shoe shaped tunnel has two tracks.

Gaur also added that there are a total of seven tunnels on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high speed corridor, which will be constructed using the NATM method.

The foundation stone for India's first Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Project was laid in September 2017 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his then Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe.

The project is scheduled to be completed by 2026.

Maharashtra hospital deaths: Bawankule hits back at Uddhav's criticism of state govt

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra hospital deaths: Maharashtra Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Chandrashekhar Bawankule on Friday hit back at Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray after his attack on the Eknath Shinde government on deaths in state-run hospitals by alleging the former chief minister did not desist from taking a cut in the procurement of body bags.

The BJP had, during the Covid-19 pandemic, accused the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government of buying body bags at inflated prices and had alleged kickbacks in such procurement.

In a post on social media site X, Chandrashekhar Bawankule said that when patients were dying due to lack of oxygen (during the pandemic),

Uddhav Thackeray was engrossed in distributing tenders.

Asking Uddhav Thackeray to recall the "loot" when he was chief minister of Maharashtra, Bawankule said, "You did not even spare taking a cut from procurement of bags for the dead bodies."

Leaders of the Shiv Sena (UBT) are under the scanner for alleged irregularities in procurement during the coronavirus pandemic.

On Uddhav Thackeray's criticism that CM Eknath Shinde did not visit the kin of those who died in government-run hospitals, Chandrashekhar Bawankule said the Shiv Sena (UBT) head as CM ran the government from home.

Uddhav Thackeray attacked the Eknath Shinde government on Friday over the death of several patients in some state-run hospitals in a short time, alleging people were losing lives

due to its corrupt governance.

Addressing a press conference in Mumbai, Uddhav Thackeray also alleged there was an "outbreak of corruption", adding the government had money for advertisements but no funds to save the lives of people.

The former state chief minister also accused the government of procuring medicines without any tendering process, and demanded a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into it. "If that (medicine procurement without tenders) is going to happen, then you are opening the doors for corruption. People are losing lives because of corrupt governance," Uddhav Thackeray alleged, as per the report.

"There should be a CBI probe wherever medicines did not reach...or is there anyone's middlemen involved there?" he asked.

Thirty-one patients, including



infants, died at the Dr Shankarrao Chavan Government Medical College and Hospital in Nanded in 48 hours since September 30, while the death of 41 patients was recorded at the Government Medical College and Hospital at Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar between October 2 and 3.

Miscreants place boulders on railway tracks, Railway initiates probe

Team Absolute | Pune

The Central Railway officials on Friday said that miscreant activity was perpetrated in the Pune division by some anti-social elements. The officials said that in the Chinchwad-Akurdi section, the staff noticed someone had intentionally placed boulders on the tracks.

Railways, in their media statement, stated that the boulder was planted on the UP line track in the Chinchwad-Akurdi section. They spotted the boulders while carrying out work there at around 4 pm, they said.

"While the staff of the Civil engineering department had gone in the

Chinchwad-Akurdi section for routine track maintenance & weld testing work, they observed major boulders placed on the UP Line track. Timely detection of this miscreant activity by staff avoided the possibility of a major untoward incident," the Railway said adding that further probe is underway. They said the probe is being carried out by the Railway Protection Force and Government Railway Police. Placing of boulders could lead to derailment of a train which could cause great damage and also lead to loss of lives.

In another recent incident, a supposed deliberate attempt was made to derail the Vande Bharat Express in Rajasthan, how-

ever, it was averted due to alert train operators. Some persons had placed boulders and rods on railway tracks in an attempt to derail the train. However, the alert train operators spotted the rocks and stopped the high-speed train in the nick of time. The Vande Bharat Express was plying between Jaipur and Udaipur. Railway staff then promptly responded and cleared the rocks and rods. Meanwhile, Railway police and local law enforcement authorities began probing into the incident.

According to media reports, the Railway officials said that an FIR has been registered in the case and miscreants will be duly punished.



EDITOR'S SPECS

IT'S BJP VERSUS BJP

The issue related to the division of Uttar Pradesh by creation of a separate state in the western part has created a piquant situation for the ruling BJP itself. Union Minister Sanjeev Baliyan raised the demand for making western Uttar Pradesh a separate state at the International Jat Sansad in Meerut, earlier this week. He even suggested that Meerut be made the state capital of the proposed state. While Baliyan's statement has revived the decades' old demand for statehood in the region, opposition came within hours from the BJP itself. Former BJP MLA Sangeet Som said that if this happens, the region will become a "mini-Pakistan". Instead, western Uttar Pradesh should be merged with Delhi, Som, a prominent BJP leader from the region, said. Som explained that over the decades, western Uttar Pradesh has seen demographic changes and separate statehood for the region was no longer feasible. The contrasting opinion of two senior BJP leaders on the issue, has left the party in a Catch 22 situation. A senior spokesman of BJP said: "We would rather not comment on the issue unless the party leadership takes a call on it. Both the leaders have their own points of view and we cannot discard any one of them." Meanwhile, Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) chief Om Prakash Rajbhar, an ally of the BJP-led NDA, backed Baliyan's demand for the division of Uttar Pradesh into four states -- western Uttar Pradesh, Bundelkhand, Purvanchal and Central Uttar Pradesh. The BSP government had decided to divide Uttar Pradesh into four parts -- Purvanchal (21 districts), Bundelkhand (seven), Awadh Pradesh (21) and Paschim Pradesh (26). The MLC said if the BJP is committed to the formation of smaller states, it should convene a special session of Parliament to get the resolution in this regard passed.

CMFRI embarks on 100-day coastal survey on marine mammals

Amid frequent whale stranding events, a research response team from the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) embarked on a 100-day coastal survey to better understand the diversity and distribution of marine mammals on the Indian coast.

The survey is in continuation of a joint research project with the Fishery Survey of India under the Ministry of Fisheries, aimed at assessing marine mammal stock and population in Indian waters.

The researchers, who began the survey from Kochi, will study the marine mammal diversity on the Indian coast within 12 nautical miles and analyse the relation between stranding events and changing climatic conditions.

They will also engage in habitat modeling and recording of stranding events, considering the potential impacts of climatic and oceanographic conditions on the biological dynamics of marine mammals.

This collaborative project also aims to achieve a holistic understanding of marine mammal behaviour, population dynamics and ecology, setting the stage for effective conservation measures in India.

Marine scientists believe that climate change and ensuing impacts on ocean ecosystems might be one of the reasons for



increased events of whale stranding.

Recently, the carcass of a 50-ft blue whale had been washed ashore in Kozhikode district.

R Ratheesh Kumar, Principal Investigator of the project, said the increased frequency of cyclones and storm surges could potentially lead to such strandings, hence there is a critical

need to study the impact of these extreme climatic events on behaviour and distribution patterns of marine mammals.

"These species are highly sensitive to both biotic and abiotic environmental factors, including habitat changes, shifts in distribution, alteration in migration routes, and climatic conditions such as rising ocean temperatures, changing cyclonic patterns, and storm surges. The CMFRI team will closely monitor such occurrences at sea and collect crucial data on these for further analysis", said Kumar.

The institute initiated the marine mammal assessment project in 2021, during which 16 marine mammal species were recorded through on-board visual surveys within the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), including different species of whales and dolphins. After a temporary hiatus, the project was resumed in 2023.

The survey employs the line transect methodology, primarily involving the sighting and species-level counting of animals. During the sighting survey, specific areas are systematically sampled for marine mammals, ensuring representative coverage of the entire region.

These surveys are carried out by well-trained observers who scan the sea with binoculars and alternating with the naked eye.

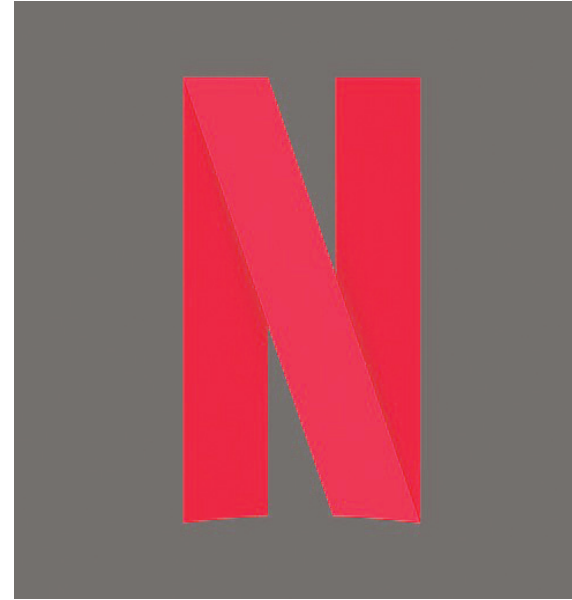
Netflix yet to scale up India biz due to lack of local content: Report

San Francisco | Agencies

With about 65 lakh subscribers in the country at the moment, streaming major Netflix has reportedly "not succeeded" in scaling up its business in the key Indian market. Netflix's slower growth in India is primarily owing to the lack of local content, TechCrunch reported on Friday, citing analysts at global asset management firm AllianceBernstein. The analysts reportedly said that only "12 per cent of the titles" Netflix offers in India were local content. In comparison, nearly 60 per cent of Amazon Prime Video's offerings were in domestic languages in the country. Prime Video has about 2 crore subscribers in India and Disney+ Hotstar continues to dominate the market with over 40 million subscribers, said the report. "Perhaps the lesson from India points to both the need for higher density of local-language content, but also a recognition that in many emerging markets, value is less tied to a comparison with other streaming services and more tied to a much lower cost of linear TV or Internet video," write the analysts.

"India, for example, is likely YouTube's largest market, and a key growth area for social media names," they added in a note. Netflix was yet to comment on the report.

Meanwhile, a significant price reduction in subscription



tiers in India helped Netflix grow engagement in the country by nearly 30 per cent (year on year) in the first quarter of 2023. Over time, Netflix has adapted our prices to meet local needs and to further deepen its penetration, it lowered prices in India by 20-60 per cent.

"These reductions -- combined with an improved slate -- helped grow engagement in India by nearly 30 per cent year on year while F/X neutral revenue growth in 2022 accelerated to 24 per cent (versus 19 per cent in 2021)," the company said in its quarter earnings report.

Streaming giant Netflix is reportedly planning to increase the price of its streaming service again -- starting with the US and Canada first -- to make up for the revenue lost during the Hollywood strike, a media report said.

Learning from the success in India, Netflix reduced prices in an additional 116 countries in Q1. Streaming giant Netflix added 5.9 million subscribers globally in the second quarter (Q2), with the US and Canada making up 1.17 million new members in the April-June period.

international

N.KOREA SENDS ARMS TO RUSSIA AFTER KIM-PUTIN SUMMIT: REPORT

Washington/Seoul | Agencies

North Korea has started sending artillery to Russia as Moscow continues its war in Ukraine after last month's rare summit between President Vladimir Putin and Pyongyang's Kim Jong-un about a potential bilateral arms deal, a media report said. Citing an unnamed US official, CBS News reported on the apparent arms transfer that came in the wake of the Kim-Putin summit at the Vostochny Cosmodrome, a Russian spaceport, last



month. The summit raised speculation that it might have led to a deal feared to help advance North Korea's efforts to build spy satellites and

other weapons and in return prop up Russia's war in Ukraine, reports Yonhap News Agency.

"It was not immediately

clear whether the transfer is part of a new, long-term supply chain or a more limited consignment, or what North Korea is getting in return for the weapons," the report said. Seoul and Washington have criticised any possible transfer of arms between Pyongyang and Moscow, warning they would flout multiple UN Security Council resolutions, which Russia itself voted for. This was the longest overseas trip by Kim since taking power. Including travel time, the North Korean leader spent a total of eight days on his visit to Russia.

Tree falls on bus in Colombo, 5 dead

Colombo | Agencies

At least five passengers were killed and about a dozen others injured after a tree fell on their bus in Colombo on Friday. The incident occurred when the bus was parked at a bus stop in the Sri Lankan capital. According to the police, 17 passengers were rushed to the hospital, but it took nearly an hour to rescue two who were stuck inside the bus that was crushed by the tree. Deputy Director of the Colombo National hospital said that five people out of 17 admitted to hospital died. Due to the continued heavy rain in Sri Lanka since the last two weeks, a number of incidents of falling of trees, landslides and floods have been reported across the island nation.



Drone attack on cadet graduation ceremony in Syria kills 100

Damascus | Agencies

At least 100 people were killed in a drone attack that struck a military academy in Syria's Homs province while a cadet graduation ceremony was underway, state media reported on Friday. Citing a statement from the General Command of the Armed Forces, Syria's state-run SANA news agency said several drones carrying explosives targeted the academy just after the ceremony ended on Thursday afternoon, reports the BBC.

The armed forces "considers this act an unprecedented criminal one, and affirms that it will respond with full force and determination to these terrorist groups wherever they are", the statement added. In another report, SANA quoted Health Minister Hassan al-Gabbash as saying that the attack had injured more than 200 people, while the victims included six women and six children. The cadets' families, and women and children were among the dead, it



added. So far, no individual or group has claimed the attack, the BBC reported. According to the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), the country's Defence Minister had attended the ceremony but left minutes before the attack. Describing the attack as "horrific", UN special envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen has called on all parties to the decades-long conflict to "exercise the utmost restraint". "All sides must respect their obligations under international law and ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. Today's developments

further highlight that the status quo in Syria is unsustainable and that, in the absence of a meaningful political path... I fear we will only see further deterioration, including in the security situation," the BBC quoted the envoy as saying late Thursday. More than half a million people have been killed by the civil war that erupted after President Bashar al-Assad cracked down violently on peaceful pro-democracy demonstrations in 2011.

Some 6.8 million people are internally displaced, while another 6 million are refugees or asylum-seekers abroad.

Turkish military kills 26 Kurdish militants

Ankara | Agencies

The Turkish Defence Ministry on Friday said that its forces responded to an "attack" by the Syrian Kurdish People's Defense Units (YPG) and killed 26 Kurdish militants. Ankara's retaliation came after the YPG launched an "attack" on the Dabiq Base area in the Euphrates Shield Operation zone of the Turkish military in northern Syria late Thursday, Xinhua news agency quoted a Ministry statement as saying.

Turkish warplanes also launched airstrikes against the YPG and hit 30 targets in the Tal Rifaat, Jazira and Derik regions on Thursday night, according to the Ministry. Early on Thursday, the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) hit the weapons and ammunition warehouses of the YPG with armed drones, the semi-official Anadolu Agency reported. The tensions between the Syrian Kurdish group and Turkish forces in the war-torn nation have escalated following a suicide bombing in Ankara on Sunday. The outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has claimed responsibility for Sunday's attack that occurred in front of the Turkish Interior Ministry, in which one assailant blew himself up and another was killed in a shootout with police. Two police officers were injured in the attack. In another development, Turkish police on Friday detained 75 suspected members of the PKK across 11 provinces,



Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said. On Wednesday, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan warned that all the PKK and the YPG infrastructure and energy facilities in Syria and Iraq were now "legitimate targets" for the Turkish military. The Turkish army has conducted three air operations against the PKK targets in northern Iraq since Sunday. The Turkish army launched Operation Euphrates Shield in 2016, Operation Olive Branch in 2018, Operation Peace Spring in 2019, and Operation Spring Shield in 2020 in northern Syria in order to create a YPG-free zone along its border within the neighbouring country. The PKK, listed as a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the United States, and the European Union, has been rebelling against the Ankara government for more than three decades. Turkey sees the YPG group as the Syrian branch of the PKK.

Indian-origin family of 4 found dead in New Jersey in suspected murder-suicide



New York | Agencies

An Indian-origin family of four has been found dead in New Jersey in what officials suspect to be a case of murder-suicide, police said. Police in Plainsboro who went to their home on Wednesday evening responding to a request to check on their welfare found them dead, County Prosecutor Yolanda Ciccone said.

She identified the dead as Tej Pratap Singh, 43, Sonal Parihar, 42, their 10-year-old son and six-year-old daughter. Ciccone did not say how the family died, but Daily Voice said that a spokesperson in her office ruled out shooting. "This tragedy remains under investigation

and autopsies are being performed today," she said on Thursday. Plainsboro Mayor Peter Cantu said in a post on social media platform X, "What happened in our community is beyond comprehension." "We are saddened by this tragic event," he added.

WABC TV reported that law enforcement sources, who were not identified, said that the man killed his family and then himself. Family members, who gathered outside the home, told WABC TV that the parents were a happy couple and could not believe what happened. The station said that both worked in the information technology sector, one of them in human resources.



THREE ROOM NURSING COLLEGE IN MADHYA PRADESH EXPOSES A LARGER PROBLEM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Even as the Central Bureau of Investigation is probing over 600 nursing colleges in Madhya Pradesh after it was found that many such institutions were running without proper faculty or infrastructure, NDTV reported.

What makes this particular college so problematic, and symptomatic of a much larger issue, is that it is run by a former director of medical education - the person charged with ensuring that such institutions maintain the highest standards.

The recognition of 19 such institutions was cancelled in August amid allegations of 'ghost' nursing colleges being run in the state. The next month, the Madhya Pradesh High Court had ordered a CBI investigation into all 670 nursing colleges registered in the state in 2020-21.

Reporters visited the Savita Institute Of Health Science in Bhopal's Data Colony and found that the college is being run out of just one floor of a three-storey residential building. The college, run by NM Srivastava - a former director of medical education in Madhya Pradesh - offers a B.Sc in Nursing as well as a diploma course.

Entering the building, the first thing one notices is a paper pasted on the wall listing the numbers to call if no one from the college is around. The ground floor and the second floor are home to residents and the college is run out of just the first floor.

To register as a nursing college, an institution needs to have an area of 23,000 square feet, a certain number of faculty members, a



mess, library and a 100-bed hospital. The Savita Institute has a grand total of three rooms.

Finding nobody in the college, when reporter of news channel called one of the numbers on the paper, we were told that two of those rooms had laboratories and that the institute used to be run out of the entire building at one point. The person also claimed that they had a tie-up with a hospital for training, which is against the rules, if it is true.

Shockingly, the college was started in 2015-16 and at least four batches have graduated from it since, raising questions about the training received by some of the nurses working in hospitals. The last batch was inducted

in 2020 and no new students have been admitted because it is being investigated.

The last batch of students in the college have been in the first year for three years because no exams have been held. Reporters attended a protest by students of the Savita Institute and other such colleges and heard heartbreaking stories of institutes toying with their future.

Some students said the same one or two faculty members teach in as many as 15 colleges and several colleges have held no exams for years. During the investigation, channel found that one James Thomas teaches in 10 colleges in Bhopal, Gwalior and Jabalpur, and is the principal of some colleges and an associate professor in others.

Two other faculty members, Kumari Leena and Vishnu Kumar Swarnakar, teach in 18 and 15 colleges, respectively.

Some students said they have taken jobs at call centres and petrol pumps to make ends meet while they endure the interminable wait to graduate.

Ajay Rajak, a nursing college student, said, "We live in the city on rent and pay loans. There is a lot of pressure if there is no exam. It is a four-year degree. It has been three years and the first-year exam has still not been held.

Another student, Himanshu Shekhar, said, "The education department needs to promote the first- and second-year students and hold the third-year exams. Playing with our future will not work." Investigating agencies have also found that many colleges have no faculty, impart no training whatsoever and just hand out certificates to students, jeopardising the well-being of patients as well.

What Ministers Said

When Madhya Pradesh Health Minister Prabhuram Choudhary was asked about what the government is doing to ensure that the people of the state get good, qualified nurses, he said, "We are working to improve things all the time. We have increased hiring of doctors, nurses and paramedical staff."

Asked specifically about the nursing college scam, he said the matter is sub-judice and it would not be appropriate to comment on it. Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang also said that the matter is before the courts and it would not be right to comment.

CM Chouhan deposits Rs 219 crore into the accounts of over 36 lakh women Women will get gas cylinder at Rs 450 under the gas refill yojana

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan deposited Rs 219 crore grant amount of Gas Refill Yojana of Rs 450 for PM Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries and non-Ujjwala Ladli Bahnas with a single click into the accounts of over 36 lakh sisters. Chief Minister Chouhan inaugurated the state-level programme by performing kanya-puja and lighting the lamp at Kushabhau Thackeray Auditorium. Every district of the state joined the programme virtually.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that Ladli Lakshmi Yojana, Kanya Vivah Yojana, Ladli Bahna Yojana are a part of the mission to improve the lives of women. Reservation for women was introduced so that they could be elected to Panchayat and urban bodies. Women's reservation in government services has now been increased to 35 percent. Now women are no longer weak. One crore 32 lakh women have got the benefit.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that a permanent arrangement has been made to provide cylinders



to women at Rs 450 per month. The difference between the price of gas cylinder and Rs 450 will be reimbursed by the state government. The women will have to pay the amount same as the gas cylinder's worth.

The difference amount between the price of the gas cylinder of the gas company and Rs 450 will be released by the state government into the women's account. In this way, now the women will get the cylinder for only Rs 450 per month. The women who have not availed the benefit of the scheme will also be included in the scheme.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that many schemes are being run for the welfare of women. Making the life of women respectable is the mission of our life. Ladli Behna Sena has been formed with the aim of ensuring that women remain united, face problems and progress.

CM Chouhan plants saplings along with members of social organisations and students



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Banyan, Peepal and Jamun saplings in the garden located at Shyamla Hills.

Along with CM Chouhan, Gwalior's author Udaybhan Rajak, poet Hemant Sharma, Sarvjan Sukhaya Samajik Sanstha's Pushpa Patel, Om Hari Patel, Vishwakarma Welfare Board's

Premnarayan, Parmanand ji and other members planted saplings. Along with CM Chouhan, students of class 4 to 8 of Poddar World School, Bhopal and teachers of the school also planted saplings.

YASHODHARA RAJE SCINDIA WON'T CONTEST ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Team Absolute | Shivpuri

Madhya Pradesh Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Yashodhara Rajee Scindia has announced that she will not contest elections from Shivpuri Assembly seat.

While addressing the people at Shivpuri, Yashodhara Rajee Scindia said, "I had resolved earlier that I was not going to contest elections. Along with everyone, I want to thank you all, in a way this is my 'goodbye'. I have always tried to follow the footsteps of my mother, Rajmata Rajee Scindia. It was with her inspiration that I took this decision, and today I pray to all of you that you will support me in this decision."

This came as Madhya Pradesh is slated to go to polls later this year.

"The time passes for new generation to come forward. I want to thank all the people of Shivpuri who stayed with me in all the challenges," Yashodhara added.

Earlier, Yashodhara Rajee Scindia wished to not contest elections citing health issues. BJP state chief VD Sharma had confirmed that MP minister Yashodhara Rajee Scindia has



requested the party that she does not wish to contest the upcoming state assembly polls due to health issues.

"Yashodhara Rajee Scindia is our senior leader. Due to her health issues, she has requested the organisation that she does not want to contest elections this time. The organisation

will take appropriate decisions on this," Sharma told reporters here.

Nonetheless, discussions are also going on in the political corridor, since the assembly constituency of Yashodhara Rajee Scindia, Shivpuri has been associated with the Scindia family for a long time, it is also being

speculated that Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia is likely to be fielded from the seat.

On the other hand, it is also said that Yashodhara Rajee Scindia will contest for General elections in 2024 from Jyotiraditya Scindia's Guna constituency.

CM Chouhan bestows gift of numerous construction works worth Rs 334 crore 43 lakh to Budhni assembly constituency

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that development is taking place in Budhni assembly constituency like the incessant flow of Narmada. He performed bhoomi-pujan and dedicated development and construction works worth more than Rs 334 crore 43 lakh in Budhni assembly constituency. The Chief Minister said that today no component of development is left untouched. He said that there was a time when there was lack of basic facilities and resources. Today, new dimensions of development have been established in all sectors

including roads, electricity, drinking water, irrigation, health, education, employment, women empowerment. Today every person in the society is benefiting from some scheme of the government.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that the foundation of construction and development works worth Rs 53 thousand crore has been laid and dedicated in the state. In Budhni Assembly, he laid the foundation of several construction and development works worth Rs 264 crore 43 lakh and dedicated various works worth Rs 71 crore 28 lakh. He said that the construction work of Medical College at Budhni at a cost

of Rs 700 crore and Devi Lok at Salkanpur at a cost of Rs 200 crore is in progress. He said that to develop temples and temple complexes, he has laid the foundation of many construction and development works at Pataleshwar Mahadev Satdev. Bhoomi puja and dedication of various works was done in gram panchayats including Budhni, Rehti, Shahganj and Bherunda Municipal Council.

The Chief Minister said that there is no dearth of funds for development and welfare of the people. I am continuously working and will continue to work to make the lives of my citizens happier and better. He said

that Budhni assembly constituency is changing and progressing rapidly. He told to ensure that all the works for which bhoomi puja has been performed today, are of best quality and are completed within the time limit, so that it remains useful for the people in the long run. Chief Minister Chouhan said that many schemes are being run not only for development but also for the welfare of the people. People are being benefited from many schemes like free ration, free treatment, Ladli Lakshmi Yojana, Ladli Bahna Yojana, Matru Vandana, Gaon ki beti, education arrangement of education for bright children of poor, Kisan Samman Nidhi etc.

Gufa Lok will be developed in the Gufa Mandir area of Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan performed the Bhoomi Pujan of development works worth more than Rs 566 crore of Municipal Corporation Bhopal and Bhopal Development Authority in the Gufa Mandir complex Lal Ghati. Under this Bhoomi Pujan was performed for construction of 43 MIGs, 61 LIG and 96 Multiunit cells in Misrod-Barrai-Bagali Road, Raksha Vihar Phase-3, City Development Plan, Aerocity Phase-2 City Development Plan, Aerocity Phase-1 along with Manas Bhawan, which is being built at a cost of Rs 35 crore in the Gufa Mandir complex, construction of buildings of Government Higher Secondary School Barrai and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Government Higher Secondary School Karond under CM Rise School Project. Chief Minister Chouhan said that not only Manas Bhawan will be constructed in the Gufa Mandir, along with it Gufa Lok will also be built. Chouhan has



given instructions to the officials to make plan for Gufa Lok. CM SChouhan said that in order to ease the parking system in old Bhopal, parking will be made at Sheesh Mahal located near Moti Masjid. This will provide convenience to the traders and buyers of the old Bhopal markets and will encourage business. CM Chouhan was addressing the Bhoomi Pujan programme organised at the Gufa Mandir. Chouhan greeted the saints and batuks present in the programme by showering flowers and expressed his gratitude to the Mahant of the Gufa Mandir, Rampavesh Shastri ji Maharaj by gifting a shawl, shrifal and Tulsi plant and received blessings.

Central India's Biggest Tech event for WordPress Education, Networking, and career opportunities

WordCamp Bhopal 2023 is set to ignite the WordPress community in India, bringing together professionals, enthusiasts, and experts from across the nation. This highly anticipated two-day event, scheduled for 7th and 8th October '23, promises to be an exceptional opportunity for anyone interested in WordPress, from beginners to seasoned professionals. The first day of the event starts with an Openverse Walk, which will be held at Van Vihar National Park, Bhopal, on 7th October '23. This is followed by Contributor Day at the Zappian Media Office, where the reg-

Team Absolute | Bhopal

istered attendees can contribute to different teams. The main conference will be held on 8th October at Radisson Hotel Bhopal. One of the standout features of WordCamp Bhopal 2023 is the unparalleled networking opportunities it offers. Professionals and attendees from all corners of South Asia will converge in Bhopal to exchange insights, ideas, and experiences. The event will feature a mix of personnel,



including Developers, Bloggers, Content Creators, Designers, etc., with the aim to expand professional networks, seek career advice, discover job opportunities within the WordPress industry, and much more.

WordCamp Bhopal 2023 boasts an impressive lineup of speakers and experts who will cover a wide range of topics related to WordPress. From coding to marketing and blogging, attendees will have the chance to attend sessions and workshops led by professionals at the forefront of their respective fields. The event promises to deliver valuable insights and practical knowledge that can benefit both beginners and experienced WordPress users.

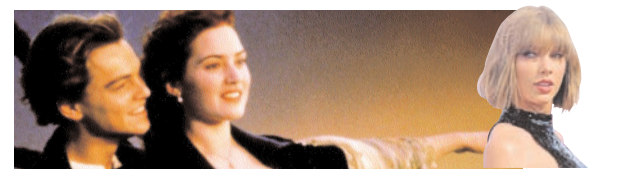
कार्यालय नगर परिषद बक्सवाहा जिला छतरपुर
क्र०/लोक निर्माण/निविदा/2023-24/2253 बक्सवाहा दिनांक 06.10.2023
// निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना //

केन्द्रीय ई-रजिस्ट्रेशन प्रणाली के अंतर्गत 'म.प्र. लोक निर्माण विभाग' में पंजीकृत समस्त ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु ऑनलाइन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा का विस्तृत विवरण वेबसाइट www.mptenders.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है।

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मुख्य नगर पालिका अधिकारी
नगर परिषद
बक्सवाहा जिला छतरपुर



Kim Kardashian used sex hotline to prank men as a teenager



Los Angeles | Agencies

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian loved to prank men using a sex hotline when she was a teenager.

The 42-year-old reality star revealed that she and her sister Kourtney Kardashian, 44, would go to a local mall when they were growing up and use the phone to contact random men through an adult hotline only to stand them up and take random photos of them, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"We would talk to these guys, we were like 15, and then they would be like, 'Ok, yeah. Meet me at Blockbuster at the mall.' We'd see the poor guy, stand him up, and we'd take a Polaroid. We had a book of Polaroids of these guys that we would stand up at the mall," Kim said on this week's episode of 'The Kardashians'.

She then got in touch with her sister to see if she could remember the hotline she used and after Kourtney recited the number from memory, Kim decided to give them a call.

A voice could be heard saying, "This is (censored), where naughty is nice" and Kim was connected to a random man via the chatline.

Kim said: "Hi, this is Samantha," and learned that the stranger lived in Ventura County but could not get his name. The reality star then hung up the phone but was seen jotting down the number for future reference.

Travis Scott tour tickets drop to Rs 900 after Astroworld tragedy

Los Angeles | Agencies

Travis Scott (II) tour tickets have dropped a few years after a tragedy happened at his "Astroworld" show, tickets to the rapper's upcoming concerts are being resold for as low as \$12 (Rs 998.54).

As of Wednesday, tickets to several of the 32-year-old Houston native's "Utopia Tour" stops are still being resold for cheap on Vivid Seats.

For example, tickets to his show in Charlotte, North Carolina which will take place on October 11 at the Spectrum Center are being resold for \$12 (Rs 998.54). Meanwhile, the ticket price for his gig at the PNC Arena in Raleigh, NC on October 13 is \$13 (Rs 1,081.73). Other cheap tickets ranging from \$15 (Rs 1,248.15) to \$17 (Rs 1,414.56) are for ones at the BOK Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma on November 18 and at the Bridgestone Arena in Nashville, Tennessee on December 4. In the meantime, other tickets for Travis' show in other cities are ranging from \$25 (Rs 2,080.23) to \$121 (Rs 10,068.31). The most expensive tickets are for ones at the Rogers Arena in Vancouver on November 10 and those at the Scotiabank Arena in Toronto, Canada on December 28. The cheap tickets came around two years after a number of people died at his "Astroworld" concert. Back in 2021, as many as 10 people were killed and hundreds were injured following a stampede at the outdoor music event. Additionally, approximately 60 people were injured following an incident at his show in Italy on August 7 this year. He held a concert at the Circus Maximus in Rome wherein an incident occurred and caused concert goers to require medical treatment. On the reason behind the incident, Rome's civil protection department declared that there was one person who released pepper spray into the crowd. Aside from that, one 14-year-old fan was hospitalised after attempting to scale a 13ft wall at the concert venue. Italian news site Ansa and New York Times also revealed that Travis' Apple Music-sponsored concert at the iconic stadium caused an earthquake-like effect through the city.



LA MÚSICA LATINA



Paris Hilton puts on a glamorous display at the Billboard Latin Music Awards

Los Angeles | Agencies

Paris Hilton looked stunning at the annual Billboard Latin Music Awards on Thursday.

The 42-year-old media personality put on a glamorous display in a bright green sequined gown with short sleeves and cutouts at the bust to resemble a halter style.

To go with the dazzling dress, she sported a pair of silver, pointed-toe heels adorned with delicate studs.

While posing on the red carpet at the star-studded affair held at the Watsco Center in Coral Gables, Florida, she also sported chunky, diamond-studded statement bracelets. The entrepreneur - whose bombshell memoir is set to be turned into a television series produced by Elle and Dakota Fanning - also carried a sparkly, rectangular clutch.

The model looked incredibly chic with her platinum blonde tresses styled into a twisted updo with her bangs swept to the side to frame her features.

As for makeup, she rocked a sultry and shimmering smoky eye teamed with dark eyeliner as well as full, fluttering eyelashes.

For a radiant flush, she wore a peachy pink blush and highlighter for a subtle glow. The reality TV star finished off her look with a coral pink glossy lip.

For an additional touch of glamour, the socialite wore a pair of large diamond stud earrings.



Emma Stone says starring in silent movie is her 'favorite thing'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Emma Stone wants to make a silent movie when the Hollywood strikes are over. The 34-year-old actress features in director Yorgos Lanthimos' new 30-minute short film "Bleat", which has no dialogue and is accompanied by a live music ensemble and full chorus, and she admitted it was a "dream come true," reports aceshowbiz.com "I'm being serious. It's my favorite thing to not have to speak. I wish often think we could cut many lines of dialogue because I think people can say a lot more without speaking. I mean, sure, sometimes they can say it with words. I like language..." she said at New York Film Festival for the film's premiere. Stone and Lanthimos were able to discuss the project due to an interim agreement amid the SAG-AFTRA strike. The movie is set on a small Greek island and follows themes of loneliness, death, love, desire and interactions between humans and animals. It follows a young woman (Stone) who is devastated by the loss of her partner - played by Damian Bonnard - but still has "an animal instinct for life." After hearing how much the actress enjoyed working without dialogue, Lanthimos - who first collaborated with her on 2018's 'The Favourite' and this year's 'Poor Things', which they can't discuss due to the strikes - suggested she should "make a silent feature." She asked the audience to "clap if you like that idea" and she was met with an enthusiastic response. She teased, "I'll do it... once the strike is over!" The pair joked that the filmmaker's movies often return to themes of sex, death and goats, which is true of "Bleat". The actress quipped, "It's, like, nonstop, every day. He calls me and he's like, 'Goats - what do you think? Death? I'm like, 'OK, still? We shot this three years ago.'"

Matthew McConaughey reveals why he had to cut his mom out of his life

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Matthew McConaughey didn't speak to his mother for almost a decade after she developed a habit of spilling intimate details about him to the press. The 52-year-old actor shot to fame in the 1990s with roles in films like 'A Time To Kill' and 'Contact' but said that because of his status, he and his mother Mary ended up becoming "estranged" for a period of time as she would spill intimate details about him to the media, reports femalefirst.co.uk. Speaking on the 'Whine Down' podcast, he told host Jana Kramer: "I tried to change my mom. For eight years her and I had an estranged relationship where I couldn't have more than a conversation of, 'Hi,

Mom, doing good. Love you. Bye.' Anything she asked me, I couldn't tell her personally because she didn't have a governor, she'd go to the press." "She showed up on (TV show) 'Hard Copy', taking people to my childhood room, showing people, 'This is where he lost his virginity.'

"There were years where I could not talk to her. I tried to change her. I need just a mom right now, not a fan and I didn't have it," reports femalefirst.co.uk. The 'How To Lose a Guy in 10 Days' star went on to add that he tested his mother by seeing just how much personal information she would share about him as he added that there are still some people in his life that he prefers to keep "at arm's length" and only sees occasionally.



Shanina Shaik



Asian Games

INDIA BEAT BANGLADESH BY 9 WICKETS TO ENTER FINAL IN MEN'S CRICKET

Hangzhou | Agencies

India men's cricket team stormed into the final after beating Bangladesh in the semifinal by 9 wickets (with 64 balls remaining), here on Friday.

It took just 9.2 overs for India to chase down 97. Ruturaj Gaikwad set the ball rolling early, offsetting the departure of Yashasvi Jaiswal. Tilak fed off the dominance Gaikwad showcased, and ultimately overtook Gaikwad, registering a 26-ball 55, with his fifty coming off 25 balls and skipper Gaikwad's 40* runs, guided India to victory. India's decision to field first proved astute as Bangladesh struggled to find their footing. Pervez Hossain Emon's painstaking 23 was the highest individual score, while most of the team faltered in single digits. Jaker Ali's resilient unbeaten 24* and Rakibul Hasan's brief cameo



of 14 pushed Bangladesh to a modest 96/9 in 20 overs. The Indian spinners, led by Sai

Kishore (3/12) and Washington Sundar (2/15), dominated the proceedings. The disciplined bowling

performance included contributions from Tilak Varma, Ravi Bishnoi, debutant Shabbaz Ahmed, and Arshdeep Singh, each grabbing a wicket. In the gold medal match, India will face the winner of Pakistan vs. Afghanistan's second semifinal on Saturday.

Brief score:

Bangladesh 96/9 (Jaker Ali* 24, Parvez Hossain 23; Sai Kishore 3/12, Washington Sundar 2/15), India 97/1 (Tilak Verma* 55, Ruturaj Gaikwad* 40; Ripon Mondol 1/26) win by 9 wickets.

Gill tests positive for dengue, doubtful for India's opener against Australia

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian opener Shubman Gill is reportedly suffering from dengue ahead of India's opening match of the ICC ODI World Cup against Australia.

The match is scheduled to be played at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Sunday, and according to a report, Gill has tested positive for dengue.

"He is under the weather, the medical team is closely monitoring him. We are hoping he gets better soon," the BCCI official was quoted as saying by Indian Express.

Gill did not attend India's training sessions on Wednesday and Thursday. The team management is hoping it is nothing more than flu.

Gill is the leading run-getter for India in ODIs this year with 1230 runs at an average of 72.35 and a strike rate of 105.03. In his last four ODIs, he smashed two centuries and a half-century, two of those knocks coming against Australia.



Messi leads Argentina squad despite injury doubt



Buenos Aires | Agencies

Pellegrino, Lucas Esquivel, Carlos Alcaraz, Bruno Zapelli, and Facundo Farias.

Lionel Messi has been named in Argentina's squad for World Cup qualifiers against Paraguay and Peru later this month, the Argentine Football Association said on Thursday.

The Albiceleste captain's inclusion comes despite an undisclosed muscle injury that has kept the 36-year-old Inter Miami forward out of the Major League Soccer club's past four games. Argentina manager Lionel Scaloni called up five uncapped players: Marcos

But there was no place in the 34-man squad for Angel di Maria, who is recovering from a thigh injury, and Lisandro Martinez, who has a broken metatarsal.

Argentina will face Paraguay in Buenos Aires on October 12 and Peru in Lima five days later.

The reigning world champions began their qualifying campaign for the 2026 edition of football's showpiece tournament with victories over Ecuador and Bolivia in September.

Sturm Graz beats Rakow in UEFA Europa League

Warsaw | Agencies

William Boving's goal secured Sturm Graz a 1-0 victory over Rakow Czestochowa in the UEFA Europa League group stage in Sosnowiec, Poland on Thursday evening.

The Polish champions are yet to earn their first points in the UEFA Europa League in the club's history. After a defeat against Atalanta in the first round, they were not able to stop Sturm. Christian Ilzer's side took a fully deserved triumph with 18 attempts.

The visitors controlled the



game from the very beginning, converting their domination into a score in the 24th minute. William Boving found the ball in the penalty area after Adnan Kovacevic's mistake and put Sturm in front with a precise low shot near the post.

After the break, Sturm Graz continued their attacks and created several good chances, but goalkeeper

Vladan Kovacevic made some incredible saves to keep Rakow in the game. In the final phase of the game, Sturm focused on defense, while Rakow tried to find an equalizer with long balls and crosses, but they couldn't threaten the opponent, who finally secured three points with a 1-0 result on the scoreboard.

Sturm earned three points in two games, equalling Sporting CP. Rakow has yet to earn any points, while Atalanta Bergamo sit at the top of Group D classification with a perfect record of two victories.

Hardik Pandya is critical to team India's success in the World Cup: Aakash Chopra



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Indian cricketer turned commentator, Aakash Chopra believes Hardik Pandya's role as an all-rounder is critical to India's success in the World Cup. Hosting JioCinema's daily sports show '#AAKASHVANI', Aakash Chopra opined whether India is too dependent on Hardik Pandya and his role in the team, as Ravindra Jadeja hasn't performed with the bat lately. "I am a bit worried that India is too dependent on Hardik Pandya. There is no other player like him in the squad - nobody bowls in the top 6.

Ravindra Jadeja can play at No. 7, but his batting form hasn't been great lately. Also, Pandya is the only batting all-rounder in the team and Shardul Thakur isn't - he can't bat at No. 6. Hence, I believe that Hardik Pandya is critical to team India's success in the World Cup, said Aakash Chopra. Aakash also felt a bit worried about Hardik Pandya's recent form, as he hasn't played much 50-over cricket after coming back from injury, which might hinder his performance. India will play their first World Cup match against Australia, on Sunday at M. A. Chidambaram Stadium.

This is a 'baby step' towards Paris Olympic Games, says PR Sreejesh after hockey team wins gold

Hangzhou | Agencies

Goalkeeper of the Indian men's hockey team PR Sreejesh on Friday termed India's triumph in the Asian Games as "baby steps" towards the ultimate goal -- gold in the Paris Olympic Games next year.

India defeated Japan 5-1 in the final to reclaim Asian Games glory, winning their fourth title in the Continental multi-discipline sport and also bagging a berth in the Paris Olympic Games.

With this, Sreejesh and his teammate Manpreet Singh became the only two players to win two gold medals in the Asian Games. Both were important members of the team that won the gold in the 2014 edition in Incheon, South Korea.

"We now know how to beat the big teams in tough conditions. This Asian Games win is a baby step. The players are getting the experience of knockout matches, to bounce back from tough situations, and to control their emotions and (absorb) pressure. Like, the win against South Korea taught us a lot," Sreejesh told the media after the final.

Sreejesh was also delighted that with this win, the Indian men's team has also booked their ticket to the Paris Olympic Games in 2024.

"It feels wonderful to earn our Paris Olympics ticket. We raised the level of our play when it mattered the most. We won a medal at the Olympics (bronze in Tokyo 2020) and recently we claimed the Asian Champions Trophy in Chennai," he added, saying the team has now learned how to win matches.

The veteran goalkeeper said the next Olympic cycle had already started after the Tokyo Olympics, and this was a major step in that cycle.

"Our Olympics cycle has already started. We need to prepare well for the Paris Games by playing well in all major tournaments ahead," he said.

INDIA WIN 4TH GOLD IN ASIAD HISTORY
India's Olympic bronze medal-winning men's hockey team beat defending champion Japan 5-1 to win the gold and secure their place in the 2024 Paris Olympics.

INDIA IN ASIAD FINALS
Played 13 | Won 4 | Lost 9

India won the gold medal last in Incheon

ROAD TO THE FINAL
Pool A Matches

- India 16-0 Uzbekistan
- India 16-1 Singapore
- Japan 2-4 India
- Pakistan 2-10 India
- India 12-0 Bangladesh

Semifinal: India 5-3 South Korea

WHO SCORED FOR INDIA?
Goal No. 1: 30th Minute: Sreejesh converts a penalty corner. Defender Kishore Singh scores via a flick. Japan's goalkeeper Takumi Kitagawa fails to protect his right corner.
Goal No. 2: 40th Minute: Sreejesh scores after he receives the ball from Hardik and flicks it into the goal. Incidentally, it was his brace in India's earlier knockout against Japan that secured our berth in the semi.
Goal No. 3: 36th Minute: Amit Kohli converts a penalty corner with a powerful high flick that comprehensively beat the Japanese goalkeeper.
Goal No. 4: 32nd Minute: It's yet another penalty corner (the third in a row). Hardik passes to Manpreet, who stops the ball, pushes it to Harmanpreet, who scores with a powerful drag flick.
Goal No. 5: 25th Minute: Manpreet scores from a rebound with a powerful reverse hit from top of the circle after Ashish's initial try. From closer range, we're saved by the Japanese goalkeeper.

IANIS

India bag Silver medal in Men's Recurve Team event

Indian Recurve Men's Team of Atanu Das, Tushar Shelke and Dhiraj Bommadevara lost the final against South Korea 1-5, here on Friday.

India trailed 55-60 in the first set, as the Koreans got their game on point--10 off all their attempts.

Three 10s off the last three shots took India's score to 57. The Koreans respond with 10s to tie the second set score at 57-all, taking a lead to 3-1.

Korea won the final set with three 10s, two 9s, and one 7s, scoring a total of 55. India responded strongly with three 10s, two 9s, and one 8s, a total of 56 was not enough as Korea clinched the match 5-1.

South Korea returned to the top of the podium for the first time since 2010.

Indian men's team bag silver medal in Bridge

India won a silver medal in the bridge when the men's team went down to Hong Kong China in the final by a score of 238.1-152, ending the competition with an upgrade on the bronze it won in the 2018 edition in Indonesia. The Indian team comprising Raju Tolani, Ajay Prabhakar Khare, Sumit Mukherjee, Rajeshwar Tiwari, Jaggy Shivdasani and Sandeep Thakral was trailing 132.1-97 after scores went 55-32, 46-29, 28-30 in the first three sets in the two-day final. On Friday, the Indian team lost the first set 32-42 and the second 17-38. The result in the third and last set of the day went in favour of Hong Kong China, 17-12 at the Hangzhou Qi-Yuan (Zhili) Chess Hall. Japan and China won the bronze medal. The Indian men's team had reached the final by beating hosts China 180-60 in the semifinal.

Sonam bags bronze medal, beats reigning Asian Champion Long Jia of China in Wrestling

Indian women wrestler Sonam Malik beat Chinese opponent and reigning Asian Champion, Long Jia 7-5 in women's freestyle 62kg, here on Friday. Sonam was under immense pressure from Jia Long but the Indian did well to avoid conceding more than 2 points. Soon some great counter from the Indian resulted in a pushout, as Sonam led 4-2 with less than a minute left. In the last 30 seconds left in the match, Long made it 4-4 and had the criteria on her side. But Sonam quick on her feet, immediately launched an attack to go up 6-4 with 13 secs left. A fine effort in the end by Sonam to defeat her Chinese opponent with a clutch 2-point with seconds left in the bout. Earlier in the day, Sonam lost her Women's Freestyle 62kg bout to North Korea's Hyongyong Mun 0-7 after a loss by fall.

Men's ODI WC

Adaptability, skills execution on variety of pitches, conditions key on David's mind for tournament success

Team Absolute | Chennai

India head coach Rahul Dravid believes that the adaptability of teams and skills execution of the players in the playing eleven on a particular day over a variety of pitches and conditions across ten venues will be the key for achieving success in the 2023 Men's ODI World Cup.

"I don't think this World Cup will be decided on how well you read the pitches. But it will be decided on how well you play on those pitches and variety of conditions you get to execute your plans. Adaptability is going to be a really good challenge in this World Cup and how teams adapt to various pitches, conditions, and bowling they will have to face.

"Honestly, we try to read the pitches as possibly well as we can and both teams will try to do that. But at the end, it's about executing your skills on those pitches; it comes down to the guys who can actually execute those skills. Sure, you can read the pitch well when you decide to bat or bowl first, but at the end you need to execute those skills on that pitch," said Dravid in a press conference at MA Chidambaram Stadium on Friday.

India will be resuming its quest to win a global trophy when they open their 2023 World Cup campaign against Australia on Sunday. "All these factors will decide how successful the teams are and for us, it's really important to build a squad that allows us to play two or three different combinations that we see on a particular day. Based on that, we will try to mix and match some of those combinations that we can put up."

Asked on what score will be safe for the opposition to win matches, Dravid said, "It's going to be hard to predict as it's the beauty of the World Cup; there are so many venues that these matches are going to be played in on so many different wickets on those venues. In some of the squares in India, you are going to have red-soil, black-soil and mix of red and



black.

"Each one is going to be unique and one can't be saying that - this or that is going to be a safe total and you just have to adapt, react based on those conditions and ground sizes will be different. Like, we will be playing here on a relatively bigger ground in Chennai as relatively compared to a Bangalore or Delhi. So, each one will be different and you will have to assess what it is like."

Dravid also feels that the Indian team could take the aggressive route in winning the middle-overs with both bat and ball in the competition. "It is quite obvious that the middle-overs have become quite important, especially with the extra fielder in the ring and the two new balls."

"You got to get and in some ways, beat teams in the middle-overs by scoring more runs than them or by taking more wickets. So, there will be focus on trying to be a little bit aggressive with both bat and ball."

"Wicket-taking in the first ten overs and death overs helps you a lot when you don't have to bowl to the main batters or to the lower-order. Certainly, with the ball becoming softer and with the game as well as pitch does slow down, you can maximise it in first 30-35 overs and this could be a big factor."

PGA: Akshay Bhatia tied 4th at Sanderson Farms Championship



Jackson (Mississippi) | Agencies

Recent PGA tour winner Akshay Bhatia was in focus as he put together a round of 6-under 66 at The Country Club of Jackson to be part of a seven-man tie for fourth in the opening round of the Sanderson Farms Championship.

Bhatia, winner of the Barracuda Championship in July, is two shots behind leader Chesson Hadley.

Another young star holding attention was Ludvig Aberg, who shot 5-under 67 and was T-11. Aberg, the 23-year-old Swede who made his Ryder Cup debut last week at Marco Simone Golf & Country Club, shot 67 despite

carding an early bogey and missing three birdie putts inside seven feet.

Hadley was 8-under 64 and led the way with Brandon Wu and Swede Henrik Norlander holding second place after rounds of 65. Hadley played bogey-free for a one-shot lead in his latest bid to secure his PGA TOUR card. This is the third straight year Hadley has been on the bubble to finish among the top 125 in the FedEx Cup.

He had two stretches of three straight birdies at The Country Club of Jackson to move past Henrik Norlander, who had a 65 in the morning, and Brandon Wu, who made an 18-foot birdie putt on his final hole in the afternoon for a 65.



First time ever

Fans of Tiger, Kriti and Big B join forces to exclusively launch of trailer

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Fans of actors Tiger Shroff, Kriti Sanon and megastar Amitabh Bachchan from across the globe are being offered a golden opportunity to launch the film's trailer themselves.

This move not only engages fans on a global scale but also creates a connection to the movie. This groundbreaking approach to trailer launches in Bollywood has shattered conventional norms, granting fans an unprecedented opportunity to be part of the film's reveal. Fans across the world are going to receive the trailer exclusively by joining the 'Ganapath ka Gang' WhatsApp broadcast channel.

Joining the 'Ganapath' gang not only promises action-packed thrills but also the chance to take centre stage in the trailer launch, a feat never before witnessed in the cinema world.

This unique approach not only generates buzz but also ensures that the trailer launch becomes a memorable event celebrated by fans worldwide.

'Ganapath: A Hero Is Born' has taken a bold step to involve fans in the very heart of the film's promotion. Operating from the belief that cinema is a collec-



tive experience, the makers have outdone themselves with this move.

As fans eagerly scan QR codes and simply join the film's whatsapp channel and await their chance to shine, 'Ganapath' continues to prove that it's not just a film; it's an immersive experience that unites fans across the globe.

Pooja Entertainment presents

'Ganapath: A Hero Is Born' in association with Good Co., directed by Vikas Bahl.

The film is produced by Vashu Bhagnani, Jacky Bhagnani, Deepshikha Deshmukh, and Vikas Bahl.

The film is set for a worldwide release in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada on October 20.

ANNU KAPOOR: 'BEING A SUPERSTAR IS NOT A PRIORITY TO ME'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Annu Kapoor, who will be seen in 'The Last Envelope', has spoken about the term "superstar" and said that it is not a priority for him. During a conversation regarding his recent film alongside co-actor Sheeba Chaddha, titled 'The Last Envelope', the actor is seen expressing his firm beliefs once again. The film is set to feature in the JioCinema Film Fest, which will release 20 films over the course of 20 days. It is a touching exploration of the emotional journey of an elderly couple who hire an actor to stand in for

their deceased son. Asked about Annu's popular opinion on 'I'm not a superstar', he said: "Indeed, I am not a superstar and my thoughts on it haven't changed. I had to slog a lot in this industry and put in a lot of effort to prove myself.

Unfortunately, it's a typical sign of a success-oriented society where individuals are evaluated and assessed based on social success rather than talent." "Amitabh Bachchan, Akshay Kumar, Shahrukh Khan, they are all superstars! God bless them, but I'm not a superstar. There's nothing wrong with that, and you cannot label me a sinner." "Being a superstar is not an important priority for me. As long as I am not harmful to society or my country, I have every right to express my views and opinions." Asked whether he became emotional during the filming of the movie, the actor boldly replied: "I believe the primary focus for an actor is not to become emotional or not while filming a movie; it is to convincingly engage the audience and viewers. Cinema, or any art form, aims to entertain the audience to the best of our ability, irrespective of our personal identities." "An actor's duty is to craft a character that thoroughly convinces the audience, no matter what the actor or character is meant to justify. That's the essence of acting!" Annu and Sheeba Chaddha-starrer 'The Last Envelope' will air on October 12 in the JioCinema App.



Dating reality series 'Temptation Island' to get an Indian spin

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The popular American dating reality series 'Temptation Island' is all set to get an Indian spin and will be streaming on JioCinema.

For the first time ever in India, couples will be seen putting their relationship to test in front of the entire nation in the enchanting setting of a tropical paradise called 'Temptation Island'.

Produced by Banijay Asia and powered by Too Yumm, 'Temptation Island' will provide a unique opportunity for viewers to witness the ultimate relationship test. The couples will be tempted to sever old ties and explore new romances as they willfully separate and immerse themselves in an environment filled with irresistible allure.

Surrounded by charming singles, they will grapple with their feelings, confront unfamiliar temptations, and delve into their deepest desires.

'Temptation Island' India will soon premiere on JioCinema.



Dia Mirza: 'I learnt how to ride a bike at the age of 40'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress and beauty queen Dia Mirza revealed how her upcoming project pushed her to forget about her fears of riding a bike and learning it at the age of 40.

Recalling her childhood, Dia shared: "As a child, I would hold my father tight as he rode his bike and feel the wind in my face and dream of riding a bike someday."

The actress said: "But somehow my fears didn't allow me to take the chance and learn to ride... and when I was offered to be a part of my upcoming film my heart was bursting with joy! I knew I had no excuses now, I would finally get to live my dream." Dia then revealed after learning how to ride a bike, she did a journey from Delhi to Khardungla. "I learnt how to ride a bike at the age of 40 and become a part of this epic journey from Delhi to Khardungla! I can't WAIT for people to watch this movie and discover the sheer joy that it is." Dia won the title of Miss Asia Pacific International in 2000 after being crowned Femina Miss India Asia Pacific 2000. She made her acting debut with the film 'Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein'. The actress was later seen in films such as 'Dus', 'Lage Raho

Munna Bhai', 'Honeymoon Travels Pvt. Ltd.' and 'Sanju'. She also starred in the web series 'Kaafir' in 2019.



Amitabh lauds batsman Yashasvi Jaiswal: 'Inspiring to hear their stories'



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan, who is currently seen as the host of the 'Kaun Banega Crorepati' season 15, shared how he is proud of the brilliant players in the Indian Cricket team, saying it is really inspiring to hear the stories of the players.

The actor also opened up on the young cricketer Yashasvi Jaiswal, and how he became the part of the 'Men in Blue', coming from a humble background. In the episode 39 of the quiz reality show, rollover contestant Rahul Kumar from Ahivaharanpur, Uttar Pradesh continued his journey on the hot seat. The contestant asked Big B: "I have a question, sir. Sir, you've received the Golden Ticket for the World Cup. Will you be going? It was given to honour you."

The 80-year-old actor replied: "It was not to honour me. It was generous of the BCCI to give the Golden Ticket to a few people to enable them to visit any stadium and watch the World Cup match." The young boy said: "It was imperative you get it, sir. You'd surely receive it, sir. You're the heartbeat of the nation." Amitabh said: "Forget about me, but this is a great initiative. In a way, they are felicitating those people who have made the country proud."

The actor humbly shared that he had no contribution. The contestant further said: "Sir, I have a personal question. Sir, please tell us your favourite batsman and bowler. We don't know." Big B said: "I am fond of cricket. Honestly, the Indian Cricket Team is my favourite." To this the contestant said: "Anyone in particular?" Amitabh then went on to say, "They are all such brilliant players. And what I really like is that play-

ers from small towns of the country are making a mark and they play so well. It is commendable. It's really inspiring to hear their stories." "You must know Yashasvi Jaiswal. He's a batsman. He was not allowed inside the stadium. He used to climb trees to watch the IPL. And do you know what he did for a living? He used to sell 'pani puri' on the streets. That's his background. He then became a part of the IPL team," said the 'Coolie' fame actor.

He further shared: "Small towns are churning out magnificent players like him, and it makes me so proud. This is us honouring the citizens of India."

"You, too, are from a small town. I salute you for making it to the hot seat. May you win a big amount of prize money and make not just your town proud, but your parents as well," added Big B.

