

# absolute india



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## 2023 was warmest year on record, says WMO's State of Global Climate report

# EARTH ON THE BRINK

A new report from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) on Tuesday showed that records were once again broken, and in some cases smashed, for greenhouse gas levels, surface temperatures, ocean heat and acidification, sea level rise, Antarctic sea ice cover and glacier retreat. It said that 2023 was the warmest year on record.

Heatwaves, floods, droughts, wildfires and rapidly intensifying tropical cyclones caused misery and mayhem, upending daily lives of millions and inflicting many billions of dollars in economic losses, according to the 'WMO State of the Global Climate 2023' report.

The WMO report confirmed that 2023 was the warmest year on record, with the global average near-surface temperature at 1.45 degrees Celsius (with a margin of uncertainty of plus/minus 0.12 degree) above the pre-industrial baseline. It was also the warmest 10-year period on record.



And it came at the end of "the warmest 10-year period on record", the WMO report said. "Earth's issuing a distress call," he said, pointing out that "fossil fuel pollution is sending climate chaos off the charts", and warning that "changes are speeding up". The WMO said the average near-surface temperature was 1.45 degrees Celsius above pre-

industrial levels last year -- dangerously close to the critical 1.5-degree threshold that countries agreed to avoid passing in the 2015 Paris climate accords.

"Never have we been so close... to the 1.5C lower limit of the Paris Agreement," WMO chief Andrea Celeste Saulo warned in a statement.

## RIISING SEA LEVELS

In fact, it pointed out, its maximum extent at the end of the southern winter was around one million square kilometres below the previous record year -- equivalent to the size of France and Germany combined.

The continued ocean warming combined with the rapidly melting glaciers and ice sheets also drove the sea level last year to its highest point since satellite records began in 1993, WMO said. The agency stressed that the global mean sea level rise over the past decade (2014-2023) was more than double the rate in the first decade of satellite records. It highlighted that the dramatic climate shifts are taking a heavy toll on people worldwide, fuelling extreme weather events, flooding and drought, which trigger displacement and drive up biodiversity loss and food insecurity. "The climate crisis is THE defining challenge that humanity faces and is closely intertwined with the inequality crisis," Saulo said.

## 'GLIMMER OF HOPE'

The number of people who are considered acutely food insecure around the world has more than doubled, from 149 million people prior to the Covid-19 pandemic to 333 million at the end of 2023, WMO pointed out.

The UN's weather and climate agency did however highlight one "glimmer of hope": surging renewable energy generation.

Last year, renewable energy generation capacity -- mainly from solar, wind and hydropower -- increased by nearly 50 percent from 2022, it said. Guterres also emphasised that there was an upside to the findings. The world, he insisted, still has a chance to keep the planet's long-term temperature rise below the 1.5C threshold and "avoid the worst of climate chaos. We know how to do it."

## CAA WILL NOT BE STAYED: SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to pass any interim order staying the implementation of the rules notified by the Union Home Ministry under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

Emphasising that the Union government must be given a reasonable time to respond to the interlocutory applications challenging the introduction of 2024 Citizenship Amendment Rules, a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud, posted the matter for further hearing on April 9.

The Bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, refused to pass any direction subjecting grant of citizenship under the impugned law to the outcome of the petitions challenging the validity of CAA.

Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, pleaded that the impugned law does not take away but grants citizenship and hence, no prejudice must be caused to the petitioners on implementation of the CAA. Referring to the multiple applications filed seeking stay on implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Rules, SG Mehta added that all these



applications had not been served on them and a four-week time may be allowed for filing of reply.

On the other hand, Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing on behalf of the petitioners, strongly pressed for a stay on implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Rules.

"The problem is if somebody gets citizenship, it will be irreversible to reverse it and these petitions (challenging CAA) will get infructuous," Sibal argued.

He reiterated that the top court in 2019 did not pass any stay order on implementation of the CAA because of non-existence of the rules.

Last week, the top court had agreed to urgently list the pleas seeking a stay on implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Rules. In its application, Indian Union Muslim League (IUMU) stated the rules notified under CAA are manifestly arbitrary and created an

unfair advantage in favour of a class of persons on the ground solely of their religious identity, which is impermissible under Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution.

It added that around 250 petitions challenging the provisions of the CAA are pending before the Supreme Court and in case CAA is held to be unconstitutional, an "anomalous situation" would arise when people who would have got citizenship under the impugned Act and Rules would have to be stripped of their citizenship.

"Therefore, it is in the best interest of every person to defer the implementation of CAA and impugned rules till this Hon'ble Court finally decides the matter... The petitioner had pressed for a stay of the implementation of the provisions of the impugned Act.

"However, the Union of India had told this Hon'ble Court that the rules have not been framed and therefore the implementation will not take place. The Writ Petition has been pending for the last 4.5 years," the application said.

The CAA 2019 grants citizenship to non-Muslim migrants who had come from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan on or before December 31, 2014.

## AAP's Sanjay Singh takes oath as Rajya Sabha MP for 2nd term

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday administered the oath of office to jailed Aam Aadmi Party leader Sanjay Singh after his re-election to the Upper House from Delhi for a second term. He was administered the oath in Dhankhar's office in Parliament House in the presence of his mother and father, wife, and son and daughter.

Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Harivansh

and secretary general P C Mody and AAP MPs Sanjiv Arora, Sandeep Pathak and N D Gupta were also present at the oath-taking ceremony. "Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha Jagdeep Dhankhar administered oath to re-elected Member of Rajya Sabha Sanjay Singh ji, in Parliament House today," the vice president's office said in a post on X while sharing pictures of the oath-taking.

Sanjay Singh, who is lodged in Tihar jail, was brought under a security cover on the order of a local court.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Global heat records were "smashed" last year, the UN confirmed Tuesday, with 2023 rounding out the hottest decade on record, as heatwaves stalked oceans and glaciers suffered record ice loss. The United Nations' World Meteorological Organization issued its annual State of the Climate report, confirming preliminary data indicating that 2023 was by far the hottest year ever recorded.

## Maha bureaucratic rejig

### Ashwini Bhide appointed as MD of Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major administrative reshuffle, the Maharashtra government on Tuesday transferred a few senior bureaucrats in the state.

Accordingly, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) Additional Commissioner, Ashwini Bhide, has been appointed as the Managing Director of the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC).

The Navi Mumbai Municipal Commissioner Rajesh Narvekar has been posted as the Cooperation Commissioner, Thane Municipal Commissioner Abhijit Bangar as the BMC Additional Commissioner,



while Sanjay Meena has been appointed as the Metropolitan Commissioner of Nagpur Metropolitan Region Development Authority. Further, the state government has appointed Ankit as the Buldhana Zilla Parishad CEO in place of

Vishal Narwade, who has been posted as the Dhule Zilla Parishad CEO.

Also, Amit Saini has been appointed as the Additional Commissioner in the BMC, while Shubham Gupta has been posted as the Jalgaon Zilla Parishad CEO.

### ECI replaces Bengal DGP again within 24 hours

Kolkata | Agencies

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has replaced the Director General Police in West Bengal on Tuesday within just 24 hours since Vivek Sahay was designated for the chair replacing his predecessor Rajeev Kumar.

On Tuesday, a fresh notification was issued ordering the replacement of Sahay with Sanjoy Mukherjee, a 1989-batch IPS officer who is currently the Director General of Fire and Emergency Services Department.

On Monday, after the ECI ordered the removal of Rajeev Kumar, it sought three alternative names from the state government as replacement. Accordingly, the state government recommended Vivek Sahay (1988 batch), Sanjoy Mukherjee (1989 batch) and Rajesh Kumar (1990) batch.

On the basis of seniority, the com-



mission nominated Sahay. However, before he could even complete 24 hours in the new chair, he was replaced by Mukherjee.

Sources aware of the development said that Sahay is scheduled to retire from active services in May this year when all seven phases of polls in West Bengal will be completed. The last phase of polling in the state is scheduled for June 1.

## Misleading ads by Patanjali

### SC summons Baba Ramdev, Acharya Balkrishna

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday summoned for personal presence Yogrishi Baba Ramdev and Patanjali Ayurved's Managing Director Acharya Balkrishna.

A Bench headed by Justice Hima Kohli noted that the ayurvedic company did not reply to the contempt notice issued to it over continued publication of misleading advertisements.

On February 27, the Bench, also comprising Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah, had initiated contempt proceedings against Acharya Balkrishna and Patanjali observing that the respondents prima facie violated the undertaking given to the apex court in November last year.

Patanjali had earlier assured the Supreme Court that it will not make any causal statements claiming



medicinal efficacy of its product or advertise or brand them in violation of law and will not release any statement against any system of medicine to the media in any form.

In its plea, the Indian Medical Association has sought action against Patanjali for violation of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954 - which prohibits advertisement of certain products for treatment of specified diseases and disorders, including diabetes, heart diseases, high or low blood pressure and obesity.

Multiple FIRs were filed against Yoga guru and Patanjali founder Baba Ramdev across several states over his controversial comments against allopathic treatment of Covid-19.

### ASIA'S LARGEST TULIP GARDEN TO OPEN FOR VISITORS ON MARCH 23

Srinagar: V.K. Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner (Kashmir) on Tuesday reviewed arrangements for the opening of Asia's largest Tulip garden in Srinagar.

The meeting attended by officers of the tourism, traffic, floriculture and municipal corporation held threadbare discussion regarding the opening of the garden for visitors, traffic management, parking space, sanitation, cleanliness drive, fixing of potholes, online ticketing and other arrangements. Asia's Largest Tulip Garden at the foothills of Zabarwan Hills in Srinagar will bloom with 17 lakh flowers of different varieties this year and will be thrown open for visitors on March 23.

## ZOMATO LAUNCHES 'PURE VEG MODE' WITH VEGETARIAN RIDERS FROM EATERIES THAT DON'T SERVE MEAT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Zomato Co-founder and CEO Deepinder Goyal on Tuesday announced a 'Pure Veg Mode' along with a 'Pure Veg Fleet' on his platform for customers with 100 per cent vegetarian dietary preference.

He said the 'Pure Veg Mode' or the fleet doesn't "serve or alienate any religion or political preference".

The 'Pure Veg Mode' will consist of a curation of restaurants that serve only vegetarian food and exclude all restaurants that serve non-vegetarian items.

"India has the largest percentage of vegetarians in the world, and one of the most important feedback we've got from them is that they are very particular about how their food is cooked and handled," Goyal posted in a thread on X.

The 'Pure Veg Fleet' will only serve orders from pure vegetarian restaurants.



"This means that a non-veg meal, or even a veg meal served by a non-veg restaurant, will never go inside the green delivery box meant for our 'Pure Veg Fleet'," said Goyal.

In the future, the company plans to add more specialised fleets for special customer needs. For example, there's a special cake delivery fleet coming up with hydraulic balancers that prevent the cake from getting smudged during delivery, the Zomato CEO announced.

"This feature will see a phased rollout across the country in the next few weeks."

The food delivery platform registered Rs 125 crore in profit in the third quarter (Q3) of the current financial year -- an improvement of Rs 390 crore as compared to the same quarter last year.

Its consolidated adjusted revenue grew 53 per cent year-on-year to Rs 3,609 crore in Q3 FY24.



# 11 'SHAKTI AMMAS' SHARE STAGE WITH PM MODI IN TAMIL NADU'S SALEM

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid the raging political controversy over 'Shakti', at least eleven 'Shakti Ammas' shared the stage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Tamil Nadu's Salem district on Tuesday.

While PM Modi along with top BJP leaders were on the stage for a public address, the group of eleven women dressed in traditional attires climbed the stage and shared a 'special moment' with the Prime Minister.

Shakti Ammas, 11 in total, also posed for the photograph along with PM Modi while the latter greeted them all and hailed the women's power.

The gesture came as a special acknowledgement of the women's power that PM Modi has repeatedly underlined and vowed to fight for, especially after the insult meted out to 'Shakti' by Opposition leaders.

PM Modi, addressing the huge gathering said that those who don't respect the Shakti and conspire against it will be destroyed on their own, our scriptures have been wit-



ness to it, in the past.

The controversy over 'Shakti' began after Rahul Gandhi, at a recent INDIA alliance rally in Mumbai, claimed that the Congress was fighting against a Shakti, whose 'mask' is Narendra Modi. He vowed to continue to his fight against this 'shakti' of oppression and suppression, allegedly by the misuse of Central agencies. However, Rahul soon found himself on the back foot

as his 'Shakti' statement received a huge backlash in political circles as well as on social media.

PM Modi, in today's rally, lambasted the INDIA alliance for casting aspersions on Shakti, a term that represents women's power and mother power.

He also said that the intentions of the INDIA leaders became clear in their first public rally.

"During their first rally in Mumbai,

they made statements about destroying 'Shakti', about fighting against 'Shakti'. Their statement has been a sheer insult to the Hindu religion, Hindu faith," PM Modi said.

PM Modi further hit out at the Opposition parties, Congress and DMK in particular for their hatred towards Hinduism and repeated slander on the Hindu faith with their distasteful and disgusting remarks.

# Peeved over being denied ticket, YSRCP MLA joins Congress

Vijayawada | Agencies

An MLA of Andhra Pradesh's ruling YSR Congress joined the Congress on Tuesday.

Toguru Arthuru, who represents the Nandikotkur constituency in Kurnool district, quit the YSRCP and joined Congress after he was denied a party ticket this time.

State Congress chief Y.S. Sharmila Reddy welcomed him into the party.

Arthuru, a commandant rank official with the Andhra Pradesh Police and chief marshal in the Assembly of the erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh from 2009 to 2011, is one of the several leaders who have quit the ruling YSRCP after being denied renomination. The Congress is likely to field him from the same constituency in the May 13 elections.

In the 2019 elections, Arthuru was elected from Nandikotkur, defeating his nearest rival Bandi Jayaraju of the Telugu Desam Party



(TDP) by over 40,000 votes. This time, the YSRCP denied a ticket to Arthuru and instead fielded Dr Sudheer Dara. Simultaneous elections to

the 175-member Andhra Pradesh Assembly and all 25 Lok Sabha seats in the state are scheduled to be held on May 13.

# Gurugram Police to apply for Elvish Yadav's production warrant on March 20

Gurugram | Agencies

Gurugram Police will apply for a production warrant for Bigg Boss OTT winner Elvish Yadav in connection with the assault case involving fellow YouTuber Sagar Thakur a.k.a Maxtem on March 20 in a Gurugram court.

Police will file Yadav's production warrant in the court of Harsh Kumar, Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) here in Gurugram.

SHO Sector-53 Police Station, Rajender Kumar told IANS: "The police are going to file a production warrant for seeking custody of Elvish Yadav on Wednesday. The court will decide the date on which Yadav will be produced by the Uttar Pradesh Police in the Gurugram court after the Gurugram Police will take Yadav into custody." He said once Elvish is



brought in on the production warrant, he will be questioned regarding the assault case and will also seek information regarding others involved in the incident based on the information obtained during the interrogation.

On March 8, a video went viral showing Elvish Yadav

physically assaulting a Delhi-based content creator. Following which an FIR was registered against Elvish and others under Indian Penal Code Sections 147 (rioting), 149 (unlawful assembly), 323 (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt), and 506 (criminal intimidation) at the Sector 53 police station.

# AMBEDKAR'S VBA TO SUPPORT 7 CONGRESS LS CANDIDATES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Livid over the purported stance of some of the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) has unilaterally offered to support 7 Congress candidates in the ensuing Lok Sabha elections in Maharashtra, here on Tuesday.

VBA President Prakash Ambedkar has written a letter to Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on the issue and the development comes two days after the INDIA bloc's mega-rally on March 17 held at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Park here.

Referring to his brief meetings with Kharge and MP Rahul Gandhi at the rally, Ambedkar claimed that "the MVA has been meeting continuously without inviting the VBA for any discussions or meetings".

"The Shiv Sena (UBT) and Nationalist Congress Party (SP) have refused to listen to VBA's representatives in the numerous MVA meetings and we have lost faith in both of these parties due to their unequal attitude towards VBA in the MVA," said Ambedkar.

He reiterated that the VBA's agenda remains unchanged - "unseat the Fascist, divisive, undemocratic BJP-RSS government".

With this aim in mind, he offered the VBA's full support to 7 Congress candidates for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections "in goodwill, but also an extension of a friendly hand for a possible alliance in the



future." Ambedkar urged Kharge to provide him the list of 7 constituencies selected by the Congress from the quota given by the MVA for whom the VBA will lend its complete ground and strategic support. The Congress and other major MVA allies have

not yet reacted to the abrupt change of strategy by the VBA as the notification for the first phase of LS elections for five seats in Maharashtra on April 19 opens tomorrow. The seats are: Ramtek (SC), Gadchiroli-Chimur (ST), Chandrapur, Bhandara-Gondiya and Nagpur (all GEN).

# Jharkhand: Sita Soren quits as JMM MLA, hours after resigning from party

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In brewing trouble for Shibu Soren-led Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), Sita Soren on Tuesday first snapped ties with the party as well as family and subsequently tendered her resignation as legislator from the Jharkhand Assembly.

Sita Soren, the JMM MLA from Jama Assembly seat, in a letter to Jharkhand Assembly Speaker wrote, "I have resigned from the primary membership of JMM and now listening to my conscience, I am quitting from the legislator post."

Sita Soren is the daughter-in-law of JMM President Shibu Soren and the sister-in-law of former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren.

Hours ago, she wrote a letter to Shibu Soren, announcing her decision to sever ties with the party and family 'with a heavy heart' and cited conspiracy and plot by certain ele-



ments in the party as the reason behind it.

"I, Sita Soren, General Secretary of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha" and the current MLA from Jama constituency, am resigning from all party posts with a heavy heart," she wrote.

Sita Soren has reportedly been livid with the party brass as she was not considered for a ministerial berth in the new Jharkhand government, formed under the leadership of Champai Soren. The arrest of the then Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren by ED necessitated the formation of new government.

Earlier in a moving letter to 'Guruji' Shibu Soren, she expressed gratitude to the party supremo for efforts to straighten things out but unfortunately failing in his bid.

"Despite the tireless efforts of Shri Shibu Soren (Guruji Baba) who worked hard to keep us all together, unfortunately his efforts also failed. I have recently come to know that there is a deep-rooted conspiracy against me and my family also. A conspiracy is being hatched. I am very sad. I have firmly decided that I will have to leave Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and this family," wrote Sita Soren.

# DELHI COURT EXTENDS SISODIA'S JUDICIAL CUSTODY TILL APRIL 6 IN EXCISE POLICY CASE

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Tuesday extended the judicial custody of former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia, in the excise policy case till April 6.

The former Dy CM was produced before Special Judge, MK Nagpal, of Rouse Avenue Court on the expiry of his previously-extended judicial custody in the case being probed by the ED.

Last week, the Supreme Court has dismissed the curative petitions filed by the senior AAP leader challenging the dismissal of review pleas against the 2023 verdict of the apex court denying him bail.

The ED had arrested the leader on March 9, 2023 after the CBI arrested him on February 26 last year in connection with the same case.

# JD-S committing suicide by fielding Deve Gowda's son-in-law on BJP ticket: Shivakumar

Bengaluru | Agencies

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar on Tuesday said that the JD-S is committing suicide by fielding former Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda's son-in-law, C. N. Manjunath, on a BJP ticket in Bengaluru Rural seat.

Reacting to confusion prevailing with JD-S and BJP alliance over seat sharing, he said: "I expected this. The JD-S is embarrassed by aligning itself with the BJP. The BJP has been doing this to its partners in other states too. It is their internal matter, let them decide."

Asked about plans to induct former CM and BJP MP DV. Sadananda Gowda into Congress, he said: "It is natural for politicians contesting elections for another



party when they are denied tickets.

"When Ayanur Manjunath was not given a ticket by the BJP, he contested on JD-S ticket. In Mudigere, M. P. Kumaraswamy contested on JD-S ticket when he was denied the ticket. Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy contested

on the JD-S ticket when we denied him the ticket. Shettar and Savadi contested on Congress tickets. We will take in anyone who joins the party by accepting the party ideology." Asked if Sadananda Gowda would be given a Congress ticket, he said, "I can't comment on that."

# Kejriwal moves Delhi HC against ED's 9 summonses

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday moved the High Court, challenging the Enforcement Directorate's nine summonses issued to him in the alleged excise policy scam.

The high court's division bench will hear the matter on Wednesday. In its ninth summons, the ED had asked CM Kejriwal to appear on March 21.

On March 16, a magisterial court granted bail to CM Kejriwal in complaints filed by the ED over non-compliance with the agency's summons to him in a money laundering case related to the now-scrapped excise policy case. Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Divya Malhotra of Rouse Avenue Court granted the Chief Minister relief on a bail



bond of Rs 15,000 and a surety of Rs 1 lakh. On February 27, the ED issued the eighth summons, to appear before it on March 4, to Kejriwal after he skipped the seventh summons issued on February 22. On February 19, Kejriwal skipped the ED's sixth summons in connection with the alleged excise policy scam. The ED on January 31, had issued its fifth summons to Kejriwal, telling him to appear before it on February 2. It had summoned him for the fourth time on January 13, asking him to appear before it on January 18.

# Demand for Inner Line Permit gains momentum in Meghalaya after CAA

Shillong | Agencies

Following the enactment of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the demand to introduce Inner Line Permit (ILP) has gained a fresh momentum in Meghalaya.

Although, CAA does not apply to the major portion of the hill state, different citizens' groups have demanded to introduce ILP in Meghalaya to check influx of "infiltrators".

The president of Hynniewtrep Youth Council (HYC) in Meghalaya, Roy Kupar Synrem told IANS, "Despite the tribal areas being exempted from CAA, the fact remains that the whole state of Meghalaya is not under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. There are still parts of Shillong City, the state capital, where the Sixth Schedule regulations do not apply and where a sizable immigrant population lives."

He said that individuals living in other places may migrate to these areas and then apply for citizenship under CAA.



Synrem said, "We are also concerned that Meghalaya will be affected by the spillover from the other states, especially from Assam. We worry that the exemption will be ineffective and that there may be an unjustified influx of people into the state if there is no legislation controlling the movement of people into the state."

According to him, the only defence against this spillover effect is the immediate introduction of the ILP system along with the complete exemption of

CAA in Meghalaya.

Three citizen bodies in Meghalaya -- Hynniewtrep Youth Council (HYC), Jaintia National Council (JNC) and Confederation of Ri Bhoi People (CORP) -- submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Conrad Sangma to bring ILP in the state.

Notably, following the passage of CAA in Parliament in December 2019, Meghalaya state Legislative Assembly passed a resolution to introduce ILP in the state. However, the matter is still pending with the Union Home Ministry.

In August previous year, Chief Minister Conrad Sangma met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and placed the ILP demand. He had said, "To protect our indigenous people, we need ILP in the state. I have apprised the Prime Minister about this and he listened patiently about our concern."

Many citizen bodies, student organisations have been demanding the introduction of ILP in Meghalaya for the last few years.

# Pandora box of corruption going to be out and open with arrest of Kavitha, says conman Chandrashekhar

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a three-page statement, alleged conman Sukesh Chandrashekhar, lodged in the national capital's Mandoli jail, said that a Pandora box of corruption is going to be out and open with the arrest of BRS leader K. Kavitha by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with alleged Delhi liquor policy scam case.

"By this arrest of yours Kavitha Akka you and all your corrupt associates including the king of corruption my dearest Arvind Kejriwal is going to be exposed to another level," said Chandrashekhar.

He added: "The truth has prevailed, the dramas of saying fake cases, fake allegations, political witch hunt has fallen flat... Now you have to face the power of truth... you

always thought you were untouchable, invincible but you forgot this new Bharat, law is strong and powerful than ever."

Chandrashekhar, who is accused to be the kingpin in a Rs 200 crore extortion case, claimed that thousands of crores "looted and stacked in Singapore, Hong Kong and Germany" by Kavitha and her political party will all be out in the open.

The statement said: "One sincere advice to you (K Kavitha), there's no use of you trying to still hide everything and try to safeguard the kingpin and the godfather of this scam Arvind Kejriwal.... However I welcome you to the greatest Tihar club, Akka."

Hinting at the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the alleged liquor policy scam, Chandrashekhar concluded



# MahaYuti leaders say Raj Thackeray welcome if he wants to join grand alliance

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Soon after Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray and his son Amit Thackeray met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the national capital on Tuesday, BJP legislator Atul Bhatkalkar said if the MNS chief joins hands with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the MahaYuti government in Maharashtra will win 45-plus Lok Sabha seats in the upcoming elections.

"The NDA is working under the leadership of the BJP. Our position is clear -- we will welcome all those to join the MahaYuti in Maharashtra who support Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister for a third term.

"If Raj Thackeray thinks like that, he is welcome. The people of Maharashtra and the country have decided that the MahaYuti will win more than 45 seats in the state, while the NDA will bag 400 seats in the country. If Raj Thackeray joins the alliance, it will surely benefit us in the upcoming elections," said Bhatkalkar.

Bhatkalkar added that at present, some of the BJP nominees and ally candidates have been announced, while the rest will be declared soon.

"Efforts are on to win six out of six seats in Mumbai. If Raj Thackeray joins the MahaYuti, it will



not only help us in Mumbai, but also in the rest of Maharashtra. The MahaYuti is winning 45-plus seats in the state. We will be happy if Raj Thackeray enters the MahaYuti," he added.

Senior NCP minister Chhagan Bhujbal also said that Raj Thackeray is welcome if he wants to join the grand alliance (MahaYuti).

"If Raj Thackeray wants to be an ally in the MahaYuti, a few seats will have to be given to his party. Even in the Maha Vikas Aghadi, a discussion is underway to include the Prakash Ambedkar-led Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi.

"Once the seat-sharing agreement is sealed, all other discussions will stop. With Raj Thackeray's entry, the MahaYuti's strength will increase and his

association will be helpful not just in the Lok Sabha elections, but also in the upcoming Assembly and civic body polls in the state," Bhujbal said.

Sources said that Raj Thackeray has reportedly expressed his preference for the Mumbai South, Nashik, and Shirdi Lok Sabha seats.

As far as Mumbai is concerned, sources said the BJP hopes that Raj Thackeray will be able to eat into the traditional votes of the 'Marathas Manos' of Shiv Sena Uddhav Thackeray and thereby hamper the latter's poll prospects.

However, a section of the BJP is also worried about its poll prospects due to the violent campaigns run by Raj Thackeray in the past against migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. They also recall the anti-BJP campaign run by Raj Thackeray in earlier general elections without fielding any candidate or extending support to any party.

MNS leader Sandip Deshpande, meanwhile, said that whatever decision Raj Thackeray takes, it will be in the interest of Maharashtra and the MNS.

Maharashtra Congress spokesman Atul Londhe, however, took a swipe at the BJP and said, "How can the BJP seek votes from the North Indians whom Raj Thackeray's men beat up with sticks? The BJP has not only betrayed the North Indian brothers, but also rubbed salt on their wounds and hurt their self-respect.

# Ajit Pawar to use clock symbol for polls, Sharad Pawar the trumpet for now

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The names and election symbols of the two factions of the Nationalist Congress Party will remain as the Election Commission decided for now, the Supreme Court said today, advising status quo ahead of the coming Lok Sabha elections. The order, though, is temporary and the matter would be revisited after the parties respond to the court's order, issued while hearing a challenge by the Sharad Pawar faction of the party against the poll body's decision.

The chief grouse of the Sharad Pawar faction -- the use of the clock symbol by the Ajit Pawar faction in the Lok Sabha election -- remained unaddressed.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and KV Viswanathan said the Ajit Pawar faction will be able to use the clock symbol, but they have to



publish advertisements saying the matter is sub judice. The public notices have to be there in all election-related audio-visual advertisements and publicity material like banners and posters.

The Sharad Pawar faction can use the "man blowing trumpet" symbol and the name Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Chandra Pawar), the court said, asking the Election Commission not to reissue them to any other party.

The undivided NCP, founded by Sharad Pawar, had "clock" as its election symbol, which was awarded

to the Ajit Pawar faction by the Election Commission last month along with the party name.

The Sharad Pawar faction has challenged the decision, saying in view of the high recall value of the poll symbol, it gives the Ajit Pawar faction an extra advantage during the election.

The judges have also asked the Ajit Pawar camp to file its response to the Sharad Pawar group's plea against the order of the Election Commission recognising the former as the real NCP. The response has to be filed within a month.

# Ahmedabad-Mumbai bullet train to be launched in 2026: Railway Minister

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Tuesday that the Ahmedabad-Mumbai bullet train will be launched in 2026. "India's first bullet train will be ready in 2026, and will run in one section from Surat," the minister said.

He said significant progress has been made in the construction of various stations and work has begun on the sea tunnel through which the train will reach Mumbai from Thane.

The Railway Minister had earlier shared a video of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad 'Bullet train' corridor which will cut the travel time on the 508 km route between the two cities to a mere 2 hours.

"Stay tuned for #BulletTrain in Modi 3.0!", the minister had posted on X.

The video described the project as "a marvel of world-class engineering" and the "future of India." The objective of the project is to develop a high-



frequency mass transportation system by constructing the High-Speed Rail between Mumbai and Ahmedabad, using Japan's Shinkansen technology (also known as the Bullet Train), thereby enhancing mobility in India and contributing to regional economic development.

On December 21, 2023, the government signed a loan agreement with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to provide an Official Development Assistance loan of 400 billion Japanese Yen (approx. Rs 22,627 crore) as the 5th

tranche for the construction of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail project.

The agreement also provides for the deployment of Japanese Shinkansen experts to work alongside the executing agency, the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRL).

The video highlights some of the features of the state-of-the-art train project being built with an investment of Rs 1.08 lakh crore. These include:

\*The Bullet train is expected to touch a maximum speed of 320 kilometres per hour on the route. \*The corridor will feature a slab track system, a technology to be used for the first time in India. \*As many as 24 river bridges, 28 steel bridges, and seven mountain tunnels are being erected for the Bullet train route. \*The corridor will also have a 7 km undersea tunnel.

# Ahead of LS polls, four Telangana Maoists killed in encounter with Maha Police

Team Absolute | Gadchiroli (Maharashtra)

At least four Maoists who sneaked in from Telangana, carrying varying rewards on their scalps, were reported killed in a fierce shoot-out with the security forces in the forests here on Tuesday, police officials said.

Following a tip-off that a large group of Maoists from a neighbouring state had entered the state with nefarious motives, the Gadchiroli Police's crack C-60 commandos launched a combing operation in Kolamarka hills of Repanpalli division.

Suddenly, the Maoists hiding in the jungles started shooting indiscriminately at the C-60 teams which also returned the fire in self-defence.

After the encounter stopped, the commandos led by Additional Superintendent of Police (Operations) Yatish Deshmukh carried



out a search in the vicinity and came across the bodies of four dreaded Maoists.

The police teams also recovered arms like an AK-47, a Carbine, two country-made pistols, ammunition, Maoist literature and other personal belongings of the deceased.

Officials suspect that the Maoists had slipped into Maharashtra to carry out violence or disruptive activities ahead of the Lok Sabha elections scheduled here in the first phase on April 19, for which the notification will be issued on Wednesday.

# Fishing boat sinks off Mumbai coast after collision with another boat; three rescued

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A fishing boat sank after it was hit by another boat off the Mumbai coast, the police said on Tuesday. According to the news agency, three fishermen on board the affected boat were saved by the crew of another boat sailing nearby after the incident which occurred on Monday afternoon.

"The fishing boat, named Saint Peter, sank due to the impact of the collision off the Madh island and three persons fell into the sea. They were saved by the crew of another fishing boat," said Madh Daryadip Fishermen's Co-operative Society president Santosh Koli. The boat was towed to the coast on Monday night, he added.

# Adani Electricity introduces EV 'Share Charge' for Mumbai housing societies

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Adani Electricity Mumbai Ltd has launched the 'Share Charge' initiative, simplifying electric vehicle charging in residential complexes in the city, an official spokesperson said here on Tuesday. The innovative technology eliminates the complexities of individual EV charging and offers a streamlined, cost-effective, sustainable solution, said the company.

Adani Electricity is rapidly rolling out 8,500 such chargers and installing them in 4,000 housing societies in suburban Mumbai with several key benefits to customers who are now taking to electric vehicles in a big way.

Most importantly, the Share Charge will do away with the need for separate chargers or complex wiring with one centralised, ARAI-certified charging station that maximises space but minimises installation hassles.

Customers can easily schedule their charging sessions, monitor usage and pay directly through a user-friendly mobile app. Share Charge promotes responsible energy use while offering the most com-



petitive charging rates leading to sustainability and money savings.

An Adani Electricity official explained that the Share Charge solution is unique, affordable and solves many challenges faced by housing complexes while planning their infrastructure for residents.

"We are committed to making the transition to electric vehicles seamless for housing societies and Share Charge is a testament to this, delivering a stress-free, cost-saving solution encouraging the widespread adoption of EVs," explained the official.

Residents of several housing societies like Borivali's Dheeraj Saveria Tower's Secretary M. Gouthaman and Andheri's Runwal Elegance Society's resident Amit Mulchandani lauded this initiative.

The Share Charge takes around seven hours for four-wheelers and four hours for two-wheelers, and one charger serves multiple vehicles on alternate days. This is considered the most affordable charging solution.

Since Adani Electricity already sources 35 per cent of its power from renewable sources and targets 60 per cent by 2027, the Share Charge offers a direct way for housing societies to contribute to a greener future.

# Man kills wife over suspicion of infidelity, buries her body; arrested

Team Absolute | Thane

The Thane Police in Maharashtra have arrested a man from Thane district for allegedly strangulating his 27-year-old wife to death over the suspicion of infidelity, and burying her body in a dilapidated house, an official said on Tuesday.

The body of the deceased woman was recovered from Angaon village in Bhiwandi taluka of the Thane district, he said.

"A police patrol team received information that a woman, identified as Jyotsana Shelar from Ambarnath, went missing since March 5. A missing person's report was filed by her relatives at the Shivaji Nagar police station," assistant inspector Dharmaraj Sonke of Ganeshpuri police station said, according to a news agency.

The police launched a probe and received several inputs, which led to the detention of her 29-year-old husband Digambar Shelar, he said.

During his sustained interrogation, he admitted that he had killed his wife and buried her body in a dilapidated house in his native Angaon village, he added.



During the probe, the police found that following their marriage, the couple lived together for a few months, but as the husband doubted her character, the duo started quarrelling frequently. Fed up with him, the woman stopped living with him and went to her parents' house in Ambarnath, the police official said.

On March 5, the accused met her and requested her to accompany him to his village. On their arrival there, he strangulated her to death, following which he dug a pit and buried her there, the police said.

Twelve days later, the police exhumed her body as per the details provided by the accused. The body,

which was highly-decomposed, was sent to the Mumbai-based J J Hospital for post-mortem, the official said.

A case under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 302 (murder) and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence) was registered against him and he was arrested, he added.

# Mumbai Ex-Cop Pradeep Sharma jailed for life in 2006 fake encounter case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday convicted and sentenced former policeman Pradeep Sharma to life imprisonment in connection with the fake encounter of Ramnarayan Gupta, an alleged close aide of gangster Chhota Rajan in 2006, in Mumbai.

A division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Gauri Godse quashed the sessions court's 2013 judgment acquitting Sharma, terming it as "perverse" and "unsustainable".

"The trial court had overlooked the overwhelming evidence available against Sharma. The common chain of evidence unerringly proves his involvement in the case," the court said.

The bench directed Sharma to surren-

der before the concerned sessions court in three weeks.

The high court also upheld the conviction and life sentence imposed by the trial court on 13 persons, including policemen, and quashed the conviction and life sentence of six other accused and acquitted them.

Twenty-two persons, including 13 policemen, were charged for the murder. The sessions court in 2013 acquitted Sharma due to lack of evidence and convicted 21 accused and sentenced them to life imprisonment.

Of the 21 accused, two died in custody.

While the accused filed appeals in the high court challenging their conviction, the prosecution and the victim's brother Ramprasad Gupta filed an appeal

against Sharm's acquittal.

Special public prosecutor Rajiv Chavan had argued that in the present case, officers who were custodians of law and order were themselves involved in a stage-managed cold-blooded murder.

The prosecution seeking Sharma's conviction in the case had argued that the former policeman was the main conspirator and chief of the entire operation of abduction and murder.

On November 11, 2006, a police team picked up Gupta alias Lakkhan Bhaiya, from neighbouring Vashi on the suspicion that he was a member of the Rajan gang, along with his friend Anil Bheda, and killed Gupta in a "fake" encounter near Nana Nani Park in suburban Versova the same evening.

# Scolded by father for eating junk food, Nagpur teen dies by suicide

Team Absolute | Nagpur

19-year-old female student of Bachelor of Business Administration died by suicide at home in Maharashtra's Nagpur after being scolded by father for eating junk food, police said today. The woman, Bhumika Vinod Dhanwani, resided in Sindhi Colony area of the city, they said. "Bhumika was a student of BBA and had a



thyroid problem. Upset over her father scolding her for

eating junk food, she hanged herself in the kitchen using a long cloth," an official of Pratap Nagar police station said.

"Her family members found her hanging this morning, following which she was rushed to the Government Medical College and Hospital, where she was declared dead," he said, adding that a case of accidental death was registered.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Back to Cricket ground

In the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls, cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu has made his comeback to commentary and will be seen during the IPL 2024, which gets underway on March 22. However, his continuation in politics is still suspense. "A wise man once said, 'Hope is the biggest 'tote'". And this wise man, the great @sherryontopp himself, has joined our Incredible StarCast!," said Star Sports in a post on X. The IPL season opener is between Chennai Super Kings and Royal Challengers Bangalore at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. Former Cabinet minister and Punjab Congress president Sidhu is lying low in politics after walking out of jail in April last year. He remained behind bars for 317 days in a Patiala jail in his hometown Patiala in a 1988 road rage case. A day earlier, Sidhu slammed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab. "Today, the shocking reality of Punjab's financial state has been brought to light. Recent figures reveal a dire situation with the government's debt soaring to Rs 47,262 crore in 2022-23, Rs 44,032 crore in 2023-24 (revised estimates), and Rs 41,831 crore in 2024-25 (Budget estimates)," he said. He said the Economic Survey of India highlighted a concerning reverse multiplier trend where Punjab's investment to GDP ratio has plummeted from 30.22 per cent in 1990's to a mere 14.07 per cent in recent years. Responding to Sidhu's rejoining cricket commentary, Punjab BJP spokesperson Pritpal Singh Baliawal said he was the first person in the world to foresee this. "I tweeted this two years back that you may be join back as cricket commentator or in comedy circus. Will watch your shows in the busy schedule of elections," he added.

Parties facing ethnic issues ahead of LS polls in violence-hit Manipur

Sujit Chakraborty

As the Election Commission readies to conduct elections to the two Lok Sabha seats in Manipur, the political parties here are grappling with ethnic issues to decide their strategies because of the over 10-month long ethnic violence between the non-tribal Meitei and the tribal Kuki-Zomi communities. Though Manipur has 34 different communities, the non-tribal Meitei and the tribal Kuki-Zomi and Naga people dominate the state's politics and other electoral aspects. Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the valley areas comprising six districts while the Nagas, Kuki-Zomi constitute a little over 40 per cent and reside in the remaining 10 mountainous districts. Even as the Election Commission will issue the statutory notifications in two days (on March 20), the major political parties including the ruling BJP and the main opposition Congress are yet to declare their candidates.

Political pundit Rajkumar Kalyanjit Singh observed that in view of the ethnic violence, the political parties have to consider the permutation-combination of the prevailing complex ethnic situation in the violence ravaged state.

"Political parties in Manipur have to give balanced consideration in selecting candidates and formulating election related strategies," Singh told correspondent.

Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Education Rajkumar Ranjan Singh of the ruling BJP won from the Inner



Manipur seat in 2019 while Naga People's Front (NPF) leader Lorho S Ploze represents the Outer Manipur constituency.

The BJP's senior most state vice-president Nongthombam Nimbus Singh said the party has already formed a state level election management committee to take up the overall task for the polls. Once the party's central election committee in New Delhi announces the names of the candidates for the state, the statewide campaign would be rolled out for which everything is in place, he pointed out. On the other hand, the opposition Congress has a different say, as its state vice-president and spokesperson Kh Debabrata Singh said that their first demand was to defer the election taking into account the unceasing ethnic violence.

"Our request is to bring a solution first and polls next. Though election is mandatory, the climate for the polls at this juncture is

not conducive," he said, adding that as the poll dates have been announced, "we have to participate in it." The Election Commission has decided to hold the election in Inner Manipur constituency on April 19 while polling would be held in the Outer Manipur seat (reserved for the tribals) in two phases on April 19 and April 26. Meanwhile, even as the Communist Party of India (CPI) is a partner in the 10 'like-minded' parties' alliance in Manipur led by the Congress, the Left party on Saturday nominated Laishram Sotinkumar as its candidate for the Inner Manipur Lok Sabha constituency. A CPI leader said that the party's national executive meeting held on March 14 decided to field Sotinkumar, a former state council secretary, from the Inner Manipur Lok Sabha seat. A veteran Left leader, Sotinkumar, who is currently serving as the General Secretary of the AITUC in Manipur, said that his party would extend full support to the Congress candidate in the Outer Manipur seat. Besides the Congress and the CPI, the other parties part of the alliance are the Aam Aadmi Party, Trinamool Congress, CPI-M, Forward Bloc, Revolutionary Socialist Party, Shiv Sena-UBT, Janata Dal-United and the Nationalist Congress Party. A Congress leader slammed the CPI for their unilateral announcement of the candidate and said that it will divide the anti-BJP opposition votes. In Manipur, a total of 20,26,623 voters, including 10,46,706, women, are eligible to cast their votes in 2955 polling stations in the state's two Lok Sabha seats.

Make or break election for MahaYuti, MVA after splits in Shiv Sena & NCP

Sanjay Jog

Even though uncertainty looms over the seat-sharing arrangements among the MahaYuti partners and the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies for the Lok Sabha elections despite the announcement of poll schedule, both sides are geared up to take on each other on several issues. This is the first election taking place in Maharashtra after the split in the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena and the Sharad Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). The ruling MahaYuti comprising the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and the BJP is determined to ride on the (Narendra) Modi wave and PM Modi's guarantees with the tagline 'Ab ki bar, 400 par', and also to cash in on the slew of pro-development decisions taken by the Centre and the state government. On the other hand, the MVA partners, including the Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (SP), and the Congress, are planning to corner the BJP and its allies on several issues, including the drought in the Marathwada region and other parts of Maharashtra, farmers' distress, rising unemployment, inflation, and the law and order situation in the state. While the MahaYuti allies propose to



reach out to the voters seeking a third term for Prime Minister Modi for stability and speeding up the growth process, the MVA partners have decided to approach the electorate with a call to save the Constitution and democracy in the country. The BJP and its allies strongly believe that the electorate will vote for the MahaYuti and the NDA at the Centre on issues such as the con-

struction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian economy becoming the fifth largest in the world, etc. As far as the state is concerned, the MahaYuti is optimistic that the voters will vote in its favour as the triple-engine government is ideally positioned to make

Maharashtra a \$1 trillion economy by promoting growth in every sector to generate jobs and revenues. The MahaYuti, in particular, will corner Uddhav Thackeray on Hindutva, claiming that he left it to become the Chief Minister by joining hands with the Congress and the NCP. Sharad Pawar may be a bit down after his nephew Ajit Pawar deserted him and joined hands with the BJP-Shiv Sena government in Maharashtra, but he is certainly not out as the veteran politician has given a call to relieve the country from the BJP regime by running a movement on the lines of 'Quit India'. The faction-ridden Congress is charged up following the conclusion of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Mumbai, as it plans to seek votes on 'Five Nyays' (guarantees) released recently. For the MVA, it is a fight to ensure that it can provide a strong alternative to the BJP and its allies to regain power after the Assembly polls scheduled to be held in Maharashtra later this year.

international

American Dream of several Indian-descent families ends inexplicably in pools of blood

Yashwant Raj | Washington

Their American dream ended in a pool of their own blood, at their own hand, and at their homes. But the world will never know what drove these Indian-origin families in the US to this extreme step because the police have either closed their investigation or will, as has been the trend.

Anand Sujith Henry, 37, his wife Alice Priyanka Benziger, 38, and their 4-year-old twin children Noah and Neithan were found dead at their home in San Mateo, California on February 13.

The police called it a case of murder-suicide in which Henry killed his wife, their children, and himself.

"We do not yet have an answer towards the motive to share," said Jeanine Luna, Community Relations Officer, San Mateo Police Department, on Monday, almost a month after the discovery of the bodies.

Henry and Benziger came to the US from Kerala for higher studies and stayed on. They were both IT professionals. Henry worked for Google and then Meta before founding his own AI company and she worked for Zillow. Both died of gunshots and the children had either been smothered or poisoned because there were no signs of trauma on their bodies.

A month ago, another Indian-descent family was found dead at their home in



Dover, Massachusetts. The police said Rakesh Kamal, 57, had shot his wife Teena Kamal, 54, and their daughter Arianna Kamal, 18, before turning the gun on himself.

The motive appeared to be financial troubles.

Kamal was under a mountain of debt and had been served an eviction notice from their multi-million dollar home.

He had been living it up without the means to support his expensive taste for luxury cars and bespoke suits.

But there are no leads to the motives or reasons for the two Indian-descent families that were found dead at their home in Dublin, Ohio in February 2023.

Rajan Rajaram, 54, had shot himself after killing his wife Santhalatha Rajan, 51, and their son Anish Rajan Rajaram, 19.

Rajaram worked as an engineer for

Technosoft Corporation, based in Cincinnati. "This case has been closed and ruled a murder-suicide. The Dublin Police Department does not have any information on a motive per that investigation," said Rebecca Myers, Public Information Officer for the city of Dublin, Ohio.

Why did Rajaram, who had lived in that house since 1998, take this extreme step?

Another family's end is headed for a similar blind alley.

Tej Pratap Singh, 43 had killed his wife Sonal Parihar, 42, and their son, 10 and daughter, six.

Singh, a software engineer from Kanpur, and the family came to the US in 2009 and neighbours have recalled them as a nice and happy family.

The bodies were found at their home in Plainsboro, New Jersey.

The police have suggested it was a case of murder-suicide. But why did Singh take this extreme step?

The police "informed me that they are in the process of closing out that investigation. No criminal charges are being filed due to the fact of all parties being deceased", said Brynn Krause, Public Information Officer of Middlesex County prosecutor's office, which has jurisdiction over the Plainsboro Township Police Department.

Hundreds stranded in Australia as cyclone evacuations suspended

Canberra | Agencies

Hundreds of residents of remote northern Australia have been left stranded after Tropical Cyclone Megan forced the suspension of evacuation efforts.

Tropical Cyclone Megan made landfall in the northeast of Australia's Northern Territory (NT) on Monday afternoon as a category 3 storm, bringing with it wind speeds of up to 200 km per hour and heavy rainfall, Xinhua news agency reported.

Earlier on Monday air evacuations from nearby towns being led by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) were suspended due to deteriorating weather conditions.

Evacuation efforts, which focused on the town of Borroloola nearly 50 km inland from where the cyclone made landfall and more than 700 km southeast of Darwin, began on Monday morning but were called off because Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) aircraft were unable to land safely.

It left 700 people trapped in the region as the cyclone approaches, with power cut off and residents urged to conserve batteries.

Speaking at a press conference on Monday, NT's Chief Minister Eva Lawler said there were up to 71 buildings in Borroloola rated to withstand a category 3 cyclone that remaining residents could shelter in, including the police station, health centre and homes.

"We're working with the local emergency management team to keep the community safe," she added.



"There are enough buildings in Borroloola that are rated to withstand a category 3 cyclone to keep the community safe."

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) has issued flood warnings across the northeast of the NT with up to 300 mm of rain expected but has said that large-scale destruction is unlikely.

Ukraine welcomes fresh military aid from EU

Kiev | Agencies

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba welcomed the decision of the European Union (EU) to allocate an additional 5 billion euros (about \$5.44 billion) for military support to Ukraine, the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said.

Speaking at the meeting of the EU Foreign Affairs Council, Kuleba said on Monday that the move to unlock the aid was an important step for Ukraine, Xinhua news agency reported.

Kuleba also thanked the Czech Republic



for its initiative to purchase artillery ammunition for Ukraine and appreciated the

countries that have joined the initiative.

Earlier on Monday, the Council of the EU allocated 5 billion euros (about \$5.44 billion) for Ukraine under the European Peace Facility (EPF). The funds are due to be used for providing Ukraine with lethal and non-lethal military equipment and training. Between 2022 and 2024, the EU mobilised 6.1 billion euros (about \$6.64 billion) for Ukraine under the EPF.

Last month, the Czech Republic proposed to EU countries to jointly purchase 800,000 artillery shells and send them to Ukraine.

Marriages in S. Korea rose for first time in 12 years in 2023: Report

Seoul | Agencies

The number of marriages in South Korea rose for the first time in more than a decade, but it hovered below the 200,000 level for three years in a row, according to a media report on Tuesday.

Data from Statistics Korea showed that around 194,000 couples tied the knot in South Korea last year, up 1 per cent from a year earlier, Yonhap news agency reported.

It marked the first time since 2011 that the country logged an on-year increase in the number of marriages.

In 2022, the country witnessed a record low ever of 192,000 marriages. The number of marriages was on a gradual decline over the past decades from 435,000 cases in 1996 to below 400,000 in 1997 and below 200,000 in 2021.

"Last year's increase came as



more couples held weddings from the second half of 2022 through the first half of 2023 after delaying their marriages during the earlier stages of the Covid-19 pandemic," an agency official said.

The number of South Koreans marrying foreign spouses surged 18.3 per cent on-year to 20,000 in 2022, which means that 1 out of every 10 marriages last year was an international marriage.

The average age for men getting married for the first time

reached an all-time high of 34 in 2023, up 0.3 from a year earlier, and that of brides also rose by 0.2 years to a new record of 31.5, the report said.

The number of couples getting divorced lost 0.9 per cent on-year to 92,000, the fourth consecutive yearly fall.

The number of international couples getting divorced, however, advanced 5.1 per cent on-year to come to 6,000 cases, the report said.

The latest tally came amid the country's ultra-low child-births. South Korea's total fertility rate, which is the average number of expected births from a woman in her lifetime, fell to a record quarterly low of 0.65 in the fourth quarter of 2023.

The number of babies born in the country shed 7.7 per cent on-year to an all-time low of 229,970 in 2023.

The country's birth rate has been on a constant decline over the past years, falling below the 400,000 mark for the first time in 2017, below 300,000 in 2020 and under 250,000 in 2022.

Experts say the falling number of marriages has an impact on birthrates as out-of-wedlock births are quite rare in South Korea, the report said.

More than 70 per cent of births in 2022 occurred within five years of marriage, data showed.

Israel-Hamas peace talks in Doha hit roadblock

Tel Aviv | Agencies

The ongoing indirect peace talks in Qatar capital have hit a roadblock after Israel refused to budge on many demands put forward on behalf of Hamas.

According to sources in the Israeli defense ministry, the Israeli delegation led by Mossad Chief David Barnea told the mediators, including those from Qatar and Egypt, that they may not be able to release several Palestinian prisoners who are charged with grave crimes, including murder. Hamas had demanded the release of 350 Palestinian prisoners who are in Israel jail for serious offenses, including murder.



The Israel side, according to information available, has also said that it wanted the release of its hostages in two slots. Earlier Hamas had said that they would release the Israeli hostages in three steps with women, elderly and injured given the first preference. The second slot, according to the Hamas conditions, was to release the Israeli women soldiers in captivity and the third step would feature the release of all those in custody, including male soldiers.

However, sources told reporter that the Israeli negotiators wanted all the male and female soldiers in custody to be released in the second slot.



## ABOUT 3 LAKH VOTERS ABOVE 85 YEARS OF AGE IN MADHYA PRADESH

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan has said that more than 5 crore 64 lakh voters will vote on 29 Lok Sabha seats. Of these, the number of voters above 85 years of age is approximately three lakh. At the same time, the number of voters aged 18 to 19 years is approximately 16.50 lakh.

Giving details of election preparations, the Chief Electoral Officer said that the number of voters in the state is 5 crore 64 lakh 76 thousand 110. Of these, the number of male voters is approximately 2 crore 90 lakh and the number of female voters is 2 crore 74 lakh. Third gender voters number 1,228 and those living abroad are 118. Service voters are 74,835. Of these, the number of voters aged 18 to 19 years is 16 lakh 49 thousand 641.

He further informed that the Election Commission has made arrangements for voters above 85 years of age to vote from home. The number of such voters is 2 lakh 89



thousand 503. Whereas, the number of disabled voters is 5 lakh 79 thousand 130. In the assembly elections, voters above 80 years of age had the facility to vote from home. This time some amendments have been made and only people above 85 years of

age will be able to vote from home.

Giving details of the status of Lok Sabha seats in the state, Anupam Rajan said that the least number of voters are in Chhindwara parliamentary constituency. Whereas, the maximum number of voters are in

Indore parliamentary constituency. This number is more than 25.13 lakh. There are 947 females for every 1,000 males in the state. Balaghat is a parliamentary constituency where there are 1,014 females for every 1,000 males.

He further informed that a total of 64,523 polling stations will be created in the state. The number of supporting centers will be 317. There will be approximately 3,500 polling stations which will be operated entirely by women, apart from this 250 polling stations will be operated by disabled people.

The Chief Electoral Officer said that elections are to be held in four phases in the state. The code of conduct has been implemented and licensed weapons are being collected. There are 2,84,503 licensed weapons in the state, out of which about 2.15 lakh weapons have been deposited. Action has also started at about 500 checkpoints. The vehicles carrying polling parties and EVMs will be fitted with GPS, so that their presence can be easily detected.

## Nath family hell-bent on retaining pocket borough Chhindwara as BJP looks to turn the tide

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress MP Nakul Nath, the son of former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath who will be seen defending his Lok Sabha seat in his family bastion Chhindwara in the upcoming general elections, has changed the profile picture on his X handle.

In the new photo, Nakul Nath could be seen with folded hands with the caption: "Congress Ka Haath, Vikas Ke Saat."

Last month, the Chhindwara MP had removed the word 'Congress' from his social media bio, triggering speculation of a probable shift to the BJP.

But the speculation ended after the All India Congress Committee (AICC) renominated Nakul Nath from Chhindwara as it announced 10 out of 29 candidates for the Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh.

Nakul Nath, the soft-spoken politician coming from an affluent background, is trying to fit into the shoes of his father Kamal Nath, a nine-time former MP from Chhindwara, who has also won two Assembly elections from there, including in 2023 and the bypoll in 2019.

In the past, Nakul Nath would often be seen attending political rallies with his father. But for the coming elections, he along with his team is interacting with the people in his constituency to seek their support.



Knowing that the ruling BJP will put up challenges and leave no stone unturned to snatch Chhindwara from the clutches of the Congress, the entire Nath family has jumped into action with the sole aim of retaining the pocket borough at any cost.

Veteran Congress leader Kamal Nath, who has already announced that he won't leave Chhindwara at any cost, is making all efforts to ensure that his son retains the Chhindwara seat. Nakul Nath's wife Priya Nath is also actively taking part in the campaign and meeting with the women of the constituency.

The ruling BJP has fielded Vivek 'Banti' Shahu from Chhindwara, who had lost to Kamal Nath in the Assembly elections held in November last year. The BJP is also attempting to dent the Nath family's efforts by luring several trusted leaders from Kamal Nath's close circle. In the past couple of months, several Congress workers from Chhindwara, many of whom were close to Kamal Nath, have shifted to the BJP.

## Concerns of Congress contenders are increasing in Madhya Pradesh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The announcement of Lok Sabha election dates and decreasing days of campaigning have increased the concerns of Congress contenders in Madhya Pradesh. This is because Congress has so far been able to decide candidates for only 10 out of 29 Lok Sabha seats.

Lok Sabha elections are going to be held in four phases in the state. In the first phase, voting is to be held on six seats on April 19. In this way, only one month is left for the first phase of voting. There are 29 Lok Sabha seats in the state, out of which Congress has to field candidates on 28 seats because under the agreement, Khajuraho parliamentary seat has gone to SP's account.

Congress has so far announced the names of 10 candidates. It contains the names of candidates from



three out of the six parliamentary constituencies to be held in the first phase. The election code of conduct has been imposed, BJP has announced candidates for all its 29 seats and the campaign has also started gaining momentum. This situation is becoming a cause of concern for the Congress contenders.

All those Congress leaders who want to contest elections and their names have not

been announced are worried. While on one hand the contenders are waiting for their turn to come, on the other hand many big leaders are not ready to contest the elections. Not only this, many leaders who were expected to be potential candidates have switched parties and joined BJP. In such a situation, it is becoming difficult for the party to select and find new faces.

## TWO INTER-STATE WEAPONS SUPPLIERS NABBED IN DELHI, 20 PISTOLS RECOVERED

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bhopal

Delhi Police's Special Cell has apprehended a 33-year-old man, who had been supplying illegal weapons, sourced from Madhya Pradesh, to gangsters of the national capital and elsewhere for more than 10 years, and his accomplice.

The accused were identified as Rahim aka Beti, a resident of Madhya Pradesh's Betul district, and Vishal Solav aka Atul, 26, a resident of Maharashtra's Amravati district.

The official said that on their search, 20 semi-automatic pistols were recovered, which were manufactured at Khargone and were being delivered to the end-user at the price of around Rs 30,000 per piece. Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Cell, Manoj C. said that on March 14, the police received a tip-off from a reliable source indicating that two key members of an inter-state illegal gun supply cartel would be present near Burari Chowk, Outer Ring Road, in the morning hours to deliver a significant consignment of illegal firearms to a resident of Shahdara named Asif.

Acting on this information, a police team laid a trap and successfully apprehended the accused. During interrogation, Rahim confessed to the police that he had been involved in the illegal trade of firearms for over a decade.

"He admitted to collaborating with his co-accused, Vishal, in procuring illegal pistols from a



person named Sheikh Azam in Betul. Subsequently, Rahim and Vishal would distribute these firearms to criminals in Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra," the DCP said.

Rahim revealed that Sheikh Azam would compensate them with sums ranging from Rs 10,000 to

Rs 20,000 per consignment.

Additionally, Rahim disclosed that Azam sourced the illegal weapons from manufacturers based in Madhya Pradesh and had been supplying them to various parts of the country, including Delhi, for several years.

## SOUND OF WATER CRISIS IN BUNDELKHAND, BAN ON TUBE WELL MINING STARTED

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bundelkhand is an area which has been characterized by drought, drinking water crisis, migration and unemployment. Efforts have been going on for a long time to change the situation, but water crisis is common here in summer. This time also the sound of water crisis has started being heard. This is the reason why the Chhatarpur district administration, along with banning tube well mining, has also declared it an area suffering from water scarcity.

There are a total of 14 districts in Bundelkhand, out of which seven are in Madhya Pradesh and seven in Uttar Pradesh. Many of these districts face water crisis every year.

To improve the condition of this area, the Manmohan government had approved a special package of Rs 7600 crore, but there was no significant improvement.

After that many irrigation schemes were approved and now efforts are going on to get the Ken-Betwa link project off the ground. This has raised hopes of complete freedom from water crisis. Here, summer has started from the month of March and the fear of worsening water crisis is looming.



The availability of water in water sources in many areas has reduced. Due to this, it is going to be difficult to get water for needs other than drink-

ing water. Every year many districts are declared as water scarcity areas to prevent tube well mining along with misuse of water.

Due to less than average rainfall this year in Chhatarpur district, there is a shortage of water in water sources. Therefore the water level in the reservoir and hand pumps is falling. Due to this, Collector Sandeep G.R. Using the powers granted under Section (3) of the Drinking Water Conservation Act 1986, the District has declared the district as a water-scarce area till the next rainy season or until other orders, by securing the water supply. Now no person will use the drinking water source for irrigation or commercial use without the permission of the collector.

The water source will not excavate any other hand pump or tube well within a radius of 200 meters from the hand pump or tube well and the water from any drainage pond will not be used for irrigation or commercial purposes.

Mining of all types of tube wells except those mined by government departments will be prohibited.

He said that many works have been done to increase the water level, which can have meaningful results. Along with this, no mining should be done near such water sources which have sufficient water. Immediate action will be taken on this.

## Farmer guarding garlic crop murdered in Ujjain

Ujjain | Agencies

In Ujjain district of Madhya Pradesh, a farmer guarding the garlic crop was murdered by slitting his throat with a sharp weapon. Police has started investigation.

According to information received from the police, farmer Kishan Singh of Bhat Pahlana village of Bhat Pahlana police station had gone to his farm on Monday night to guard the garlic crop and when he did not return home on Tuesday morning, his family members got worried.

When the family members reached the spot, they saw that he was bleeding from his head and had injuries on other parts of his body. The family members informed the police about this.

Police have started investi-



gating this case and it is being said that his close ones may be involved in this murder. Kishan Singh's other relatives also have farms near his farm.

It has been told that this time the garlic crop has been

good and people are hopeful that they can get good prices also. Therefore, farmers are also guarding the garlic crop.

On many farms, farmers have also deployed security personnel from private agencies.

## Women handing over piggy banks to Shivraj Singh Chauhan to contest elections

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The campaign for Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh is gradually gaining momentum. The candidates are active in their respective parliamentary constituencies. Former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan has been made the BJP candidate from Vidisha and he has started campaigning in rural areas.

Women and girls are providing him funds for campaigning. Some are giving envelopes and some are giving piggy banks. Shivraj Singh Chauhan was the Chief Minister of the state for almost 18 years and this time the party has made him its candidate from Vidisha parliamentary constituency.



Shivraj Singh Chauhan is contesting the Lok Sabha elections from here for the fifth time. He started the campaign in his parliamentary constituency from Monday. He remained active in many areas on Tuesday also.

Former Chief Minister reached the conference

organized in Khategaon Assembly of Vidisha Lok Sabha constituency. Here the dear sisters gave Vijay Bhava's piggy banks full of money to Chauhan to contest the elections and blessed him for victory. Besides, the nieces also gave money to their maternal uncle to contest the elections.

## Successful Treatment of Pregnant Woman with Pheochromocytoma Tumor at AIIMS Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Professor (Dr) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, always inspires his doctors to take up new challenges. One such challenge was the illness of a 25-year-old pregnant woman. The woman was admitted to AIIMS Bhopal's gynecology department during her ninth month of pregnancy due to unexplained high blood pressure. The reason for which was unknown. In fact, due to the woman being pregnant, doctors were avoiding prescribing radiation tests like CT scan and MRI. Finally, when there was no option left, the woman got an MRI examination done. In which the woman was found to be suffering from a rare pheochromocytoma tumor. This tumor was present in the left adrenal gland of the woman resulting in high blood pressure. This problem was fatal for both the woman and the child. Not only this, in future this tumor could also take the form of cancer. All these conditions together were making the care of mother and child challenging till delivery.

Under the strict supervision of the experts of AIIMS, Dr. K. Pushpalatha, Dr. Bharti Singh, Dr. Arun Kumar Dora, Dr. Karanpreet Bakshi of Gynecology Department and with the help of skilled management of Dr. Alpesh Goyal and Dr. Rahul Gupta of Endocrinology Department the woman underwent a safe delivery followed by immediate surgical removal of the tumor

through laparoscopy. Dr. Ketan Mehra of the Urology Department performed the surgery, resulting in minimal invasiveness and only five stitches for the patient. It was done under the guidance of Dr. Devashish Kaushal. Post-operation, the patient's blood pressure remains stable without the need for medication, marking a remarkable improvement in her condition. The anesthesia team, led by Dr. Vaishali Waindeskar and Dr. Sandeep Kumar, played a crucial role in ensuring the patient's comfort and well-being throughout the procedure and during her post-operative care in the Critical Care ICU.

It's noteworthy that all diagnostic tests and treatments for the tumor were provided free of cost

under the Janani Shishu Suraksha Yojana (JSSY) at AIIMS Bhopal, reflecting the institution's commitment to accessible healthcare. Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh, commended the medical team for their dedication and expertise in achieving this milestone, emphasizing the challenges posed by pheochromocytoma during pregnancy and the importance of specialized care.

Pheochromocytoma is a rare but treatable tumor originating in the adrenal glands, often presenting symptoms such as high blood pressure and headaches. Its management during pregnancy requires specialized attention due to the heightened risks involved.



## Ariana Grande & Dalton Gomez Are Officially Divorced

Los Angeles | Agencies

**A**riana Grande and Dalton Gomez's divorce was finalized in October 2023 but was only recently made official. The estranged spouses split last year, and the Eternal Sunshine artist began dating her Wicked costar Ethan Slater that summer.

According to the Associated Press, the "Yes, And?" artist, 30, and the real estate agent, 28, were declared legally divorced by a Los Angeles Superior Court judge on Tuesday, March 19. Initially, Ariana requested spousal support and for property to be granted, which is stated in her and

Dalton's prenuptial agreement, according to court documents obtained by E! News.

The records — which Ariana filed on September 18, 2023 — noted that Ariana wanted "miscellaneous jewelry and other personal effects," in addition to all earnings and accumulations to be confirmed as separate property. Furthermore, the Don't Look Up actress requested for attorney's fees to be paid for by both her and her estranged husband, 28.

The documents also list the pair's date of separation as February 20, 2023, and Ariana cited "irreconcilable differences" as the reason for their divorce.

## Dua Lipa looks back at the time when she had her eureka moment

Los Angeles | Agencies

**S**inger-songwriter Dua Lipa, who recently released her album 'Radical Optimism', has spoken up on her eureka moment.

The singer shared that it was a song called 'Illusion', where she felt that lyrically she got the radical optimism, reports 'Variety'.

Dua spoke with 'Variety' in an interview and shared that she felt very strong in the moment when she was writing that song.

The singer said: "I felt in a stronger power of position, because I was like maybe before, I would have fallen for something like this and now I can dance with the illusion, and it's something for me too, you know? I think musically also, when Kevin and Danny came together and it was the live drums and the synths and the big music breakdown, in my head the big dance moment, when all those came together it was just a feeling."

Dua further mentioned, quoted by 'Variety', "I had a feeling and I was like, now I have something to bounce off of. And in that first week, even though they're in the same world but they're very different, I wrote 'Illusion' and then I wrote 'Happy for You' and 'Happy for You' is a much bigger ballad, in a way.



Somewhat. I wouldn't really classify it as a ballad. Because I don't do songs that are slow and big and emotional, but I just put them in the ballad section, I'm like, I don't do those." "But this feels almost in a world where I can really have this epic singing record that I was able to be very vulnerable and open in. But still sonically, it has this tremolo sound that I'm really obsessed with and it's Kevin's voice replicated. We use it as a sample throughout. That was just a moment for me to be really vulnerable and open and honest in what was happening in my life at that point. But I feel overall, in this whole record, I just grew as I was writing," she added.

## EIZA GONZALEZ JUST WON'T DATE SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T ATTEND THERAPY

Los Angeles | Agencies

**A**ctress Eiza Gonzalez, who is known for 'Baby Driver', has made her dating terms very clear.

The actress has shared that anyone who doesn't go to therapy cannot date her.

The 34-year-old actress has been in therapy since she was young, and she considers it to be one of her dating "non-negotiables", reports 'Female First UK'.

Eiza told InStyle, "I definitely have a list of non-negotiables. "If you've not gone to therapy, I'm not dating you."

As per 'Female First UK' despite this, Eiza admitted that she was initially resistant to having therapy.

The actress shared, "I didn't want to talk about my feelings, because I was in shock and I was traumatised, and I couldn't bear the fact that my father had died."

Now, though, Eiza is convinced that anyone and everyone can benefit from therapy sessions.

The actress said: "Everyone needs therapy. Therapy is the most normal (thing). The concept of this prefixed negative idea about therapy is nuts to me. I think therapy is just the healthiest thing anyone could do."

Eiza is someone who fully commits herself to all of her romances.

The actress reflected, "I am telling you - When I'm in love, I fall in love so deep and it takes me so much to get over."

"And the older I get, it's harder for me because I don't play around. I go in and I give it all."

Eiza is actually feeling better about herself than she did in her 20s.

The movie star suggested that she's become more comfortable in her own skin in recent years.

The actress explained, "Shocking, I like myself so much more physically right now than I did in my twenties. And a part of it, obviously, is maturing and accepting yourself and doing all the hard work, but I also think I look better. I actually think I'm ageing into my looks in a way that I personally like."



## Rapper Drake turns Good Samaritan, gifts \$25,000 to pregnant fan at Texas concert

Los Angeles | Agencies

**C**anadian rapper Drake's gesture at his recent concert is winning hearts.

The rapper helped out yet another fan by granting their wish at his concert in San Antonio, Texas as a part of his It's All a Blur Tour.

In a video shared on X (formerly Twitter), Drake, 37, struck up a conversation with a female fan in the crowd, who was holding up a poster that said "I'm five months pregnant, can you be my Rich Baby Daddy?" reports 'People' magazine.

The poster was a nod to the track off his latest album 'For All the Dogs', which features Sexxy Red and SZA.

"Well first of all, I don't wanna offend your real baby daddy, but I would love to -- first of all, get you out of the pit so we can put you somewhere safe like the VIP or some s\*\*\*,"



he told the fan. "Cause you can't be pregnant getting bounced around. When I start playing some of these slappers, we can't have you getting

pushed around." The 'First Person Shooter' rapper has made something of a habit of offering generous gifts to fans in his audiences over the last six months. In August, he walked on stage in Los Angeles with a pink Hermes Birkin bag and scanned the crowd for a lucky recipient. "Drake ain't cheap", he told the audience before pointing at someone in the audience and handing them the designer purse, which costs between \$10,000 and \$30,000.

The rapper said: "This girl right here! In October, Drake gave \$50,000 to an audience member who was originally supposed to attend the show with his girlfriend, but the pair had recently broken up.

"I like that sign", Drake said in a video captured by fans.

"That's a good sign to pick tonight. Usually I'll do something nice for a lady. I'll do something nice, I'll give away a bag or some s\*\*\* like that."



Los Angeles | Agencies

**S**ophie Turner has reportedly requested to "reactive" her divorce case from estranged husband Joe Jonas. The former pair — who announced their shocking divorce last summer — are still working out a child custody settlement as well as a property settlement.

According to court documents obtained by Page Six on Tuesday, March 19, Sophie, 28, filed a petition in Miami, Florida, to have her and Joe's case "reactivated." Neither the Game of Thrones alum nor the Jonas Brothers vocalist, 34, has publicly commented on the situation yet.

Joe filed for divorce from Sophie in September 2023 shortly after the Jonas Brothers' tour kicked off. Fans of the couple were heartbroken at the news, since both had seemed happily in love the month prior, according to their now-deleted Instagram pictures of one another.

"After four wonderful years of marriage we have mutually decided to amicably end our marriage," Joe and Sophie wrote in a joint Instagram statement at the time. "There are many speculative narratives as to why, but truly this is a united decision, and we sincerely hope that everyone can respect our wishes for privacy for us and our children."

## Ellie Goulding feels 'sad as hell' after announcing she has split with her husband

Los Angeles | Agencies

**E**nglish singer-songwriter Ellie

Goulding has confessed that she is "feeling sad as hell" but assured that "tomorrow will be better", making the remarks just weeks after announcing her separation. It was announced last month that the singer-songwriter, 37, and her husband Caspar Jopling, 32, have separated, reports 'Mirror.co.uk'.

The former couple confirmed the news in respective statements that were shared with their followers on social media.

The singer has kept fans updated since then and took to Instagram with post about her feelings, as reported by OK! Magazine.

The BRIT Award winner wrote: "Solidarity to anyone else feeling sad as hell today. Tomorrow will be better."

As per 'Mirror.co.uk', the post comes just weeks after Ellie and her husband Caspar announced their separation. There had been rumours that the pair, who are parents to son Arthur, two, together, had split up prior to the announcement last month.

Addressing the speculation, Ellie wrote in her statement last month that she had been separated from Caspar for "some time".

The singer said that the former couple "remain the closest of friends" and have been "co-parenting" together.

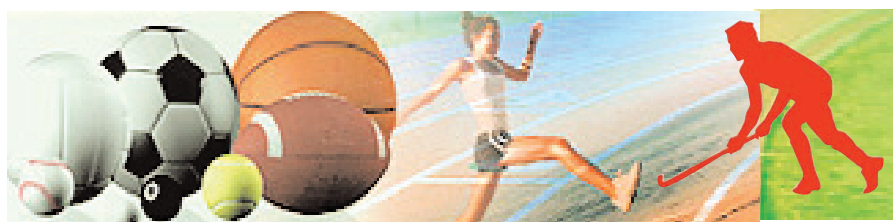
Ellie said: "In light of recent stories, I feel I have been left with no choice but to let you all know that Caspar and I privately separated some time ago. We remain the closest of friends and have been successfully co-parenting with our son's best interest at heart. We are committed to protecting our family privacy and thank people in advance for respecting our wishes - we won't be commenting further. Thank you."



## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Addison Rae



## Sr Women's Hockey Nationals: Manipur thrash Uttarakhand 11-2 to seal final quarterfinal spot

Team Absolute | Pune

Manipur Hockey thrashed Hockey Uttarakhand 11-2 in their final Pool G match to remain unbeaten in the league stages and seal the final quarterfinal berth in the 14th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2024 at the Major Dhyanand Hockey Stadium Nehrunagar, Pimpri near here on Tuesday.

Sarita Devi Bramhacharimayum (8th, 24th minutes), Prabhleen Kaur (14th, 45th), Sangai Ibemhai Chingshubham (53rd, 60th) scored a brace each, while Vartika Rawat (5th), Sonia Devi Kshetrimayum (7th), Ranjita Sanasam (44th), Lily Chanu Matengbam (57th) and Lanchenbi Khundrakpam Chanu (59th) found the net once each for Manipur Hockey.

Hockey Manipur ended their pool engagements with an all-win record, logging nine points from three wins. Hockey Manipur will take on hosts Hockey Maharashtra in the quarterfinals on Wednesday. In a Pool F match earlier in the day, Hockey Himachal played out a 4-4 draw against Hockey Rajasthan. Dhapa Devi (4th, 49th), Ritu (17th), Bhumika Chauhan (53rd) scored for Hockey Himachal, while Balawat Reena Kanwar (25th, 40th) and Reena Saini (41st, 48th) scored twice



from set pieces to secure the draw. In another Pool G match of the day, Hockey Karnataka spanked Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu Hockey 13-0.



## Sharath Kamal is highest-ranked Indian player in latest ITTF rankings

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Achanta Sharath Kamal, the seasoned table tennis maestro, reclaimed the India No. 1 spot with a staggering leap in the latest International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) rankings following a dream run at the recent Singapore Smash.

His remarkable resurgence followed a spellbinding performance at the Singapore Smash that ended with a loss in the quarterfinals. Despite beginning the competition as a qualifier, the 41-year-old Sharath advanced to the quarterfinals by defeating World Nos. 13 Darko Jorgic and 22 Omar Assar. Consequently, the current Commonwealth

Games men's singles gold medallist has shot up to 34th place in the men's singles rankings from 88th place. Harmeet Desai (65th) and Manav Thakkar (74th) are the other two Indian men in the top 100. In women's singles, Manika Batra continues to reign supreme as the highest-ranked Indian paddler, retaining her distinguished status despite a minor setback of slipping down two spots to 38th in the list. Meanwhile, Sreeja Akula's stellar performance has seen her ascend three places to secure the 47th position, further solidifying India's prowess in the international table tennis arena. Yashaswini Ghorpade is ranked World No. 100 in the latest rankings.

## Suryakumar Yadav fails fitness test at NCA, likely to miss initial matches of IPL 2024: Sources

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India and Mumbai Indians batter Suryakumar Yadav will miss the initial matches of the 2024 edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) as he failed to pass a fitness test and did not get the clearance from National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru.

A source privy to Suryakumar Yadav's case at the NCA told IANS, "He failed to pass the fitness test on Tuesday. We will have another fitness test for him on Thursday and if he passes, then only he can feature in the IPL."

Mumbai Indians will play their opening game against Gujarat Titans at Ahmedabad on March 24 and Suryakumar is unlikely to feature in that match.

Suryakumar, 33, has been

out of action since suffering an ankle injury during the tour of South Africa in December 2023. The Mumbai Indians batter went to Munich, Germany for surgery in January.

In the pre-season press conference of Mumbai Indians held in Mumbai on Monday, head coach Mark Boucher said he is still awaiting an update on Suryakumar Yadav's fitness from the Indian team management.

"So, Surya at the moment is under the guidance of the Indian cricket team as well. So we're just waiting for updates on that. I don't like to micro-manage. We've got a world-class medical team that's in control of all of that. Yes, in the past we've been hampered by a few fitness issues.



## Messi to miss Argentina friendlies due to hamstring injury

Team Absolute | Buenos Aires

Argentina captain Lionel Messi has been ruled out of friendlies against El Salvador and Costa Rica due to a hamstring strain, the South American country's football association said.

The 36-year-old suffered the injury while playing for Inter Miami in the team's 3-1 home victory over Nashville in the CONCACAF Champions Cup last Wednesday.

"Lionel Messi will not be in the squad for the friendlies in the United States due to a minor right hamstring injury sustained in the Inter Miami game against Nashville," the association said in a social media post.

Confirmation of Messi's absence comes after Roma forward Paulo Dybala, Bayer Leverkusen midfielder Exequiel Palacios and Bournemouth defender Marcos Senesi were forced to withdraw from the Albiceleste squad because of injuries, reports Xinhua.

Argentina will meet El Salvador in Philadelphia on Friday and Costa Rica in Los Angeles four days later.



## Sumit Nagal reaches final qualifying round on Miami Open debut

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian tennis player Sumit Nagal won the first-round qualifier match on his debut at the Miami Open beating Canada's Gabriel Diallo with a scoreline of 7-6(7-3), 6-2. With a win on Monday night, Nagal moved to the final qualifying round and will face 19-year-old Hong Kong's Coleman Wong, whom he had defeated previously at the ATP Bengaluru Challenger in two straight sets.

Nagal, who broke into the world's top 100 last month after winning the Chennai Open, is likely to reach a new career-high ranking of world No. 92 after this win in the ATP live rankings.

Talking about the match, after saving a break point in the seventh game, Nagal prevailed in the first set tiebreaker. In the second set, he dominated and broke Diallo in both the first and seventh games.

In his last tournament after Rafael Nadal's last-minute withdrawal from the Indian Wells tournament, Nagal advanced to the main draw but lost to Milos Raonic.

## Sardar of Commentary Box, Navjot Singh Sidhu to return to action in IPL 2024



Team Absolute | Mumbai

After an absence of many years, Sidhuism will be echoing in the Commentary Box to regale the fans during the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 season as Former India opener Navjot Singh Sidhu is returning to commentary duties for the franchise-based T20 league.

Renowned for his witty one-liners and insightful commentary, Sidhu will be part of the 'Incredible Star Cast', dedicated to enhancing the IPL 2024 experience by driving key narratives across, hyping rivalries, showcasing heroes, and amplifying memorable moments.

Star Sports, the official broadcaster of the highly anticipated IPL 2024 on Tuesday announced the return of former India cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu to the commentary box. The IPL 2024 on Star Sports will be presented in 9 language feeds, including English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Gujarati, Marathi, Malayalam, and Bangla with a host of reputed legends and

experts. Speaking about his return to commentary, Sidhu said, "Commentary is not like a sleeping pill that you will make people sleep. You need to make it understandable to the common man with an addition to what is happening. If you are an expert, whatever is happening on the screen is in front of everyone else as they are seeing it too.

"How you will add the component in the picture of what is not shown on the screen, is the strength of the commentator. I believe commentary is an art. In radio commentary, you paint a picture for fans, and they do believe in it. But here, we have visuals, and we need to slow down a bit while adding context to the picture," Sidhu said.

Sidhu, who had taken up commentary soon after quitting active cricket, has gone into politics and television reality shows. He was a member of the Lok Sabha from 2004 to 2014 representing Amritsar and a minister in the Congress government in Punjab.

## P.V. Sindhu shares off-court smile and friendship with Carolina Marin

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Two-time Olympic medallist P.V. Sindhu congratulated Carolina Marin on winning the All-England Open women's singles title and shared an off-court smile and friendship with the Spanish star. Carolina Marin ended a nine-year wait for a second women's singles title at the All-England after Akane Yamaguchi was forced to retire in the final on Sunday. The Spaniard was leading 26-24, 11-1 when her Japanese opponent withdrew because of a hip injury.

Sindhu, went down to the world No. 1 Korean shuttler 21-19, 21-11 in the Round of 16 of the BWF Super 1000 event.

Sindhu, who won silver in the Rio Olympic Games 2016 losing to

Carolina Marin in the final and then bagged a bronze medal in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, in a social media post on Instagram congratulated Marin on her title win and shared an off-court smile and friendship with her.

"We wage war every time we play, but off the court, the smiles and friendships persist, as they always should," Sindhu wrote in a post on Instagram. "Always wonderful to cross paths with you, dear friend! Congratulations on all of England," she added.

Sindhu and Marin faced each other back in November 2023 in the Denmark Open Super 750 tournament in Odense, however, Sindhu lost the match 18-21, 21-19, 7-21 in the semifinals.





## Priyanka puts activist foot forward, teases doc on violence against women

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who is spending some quality time with her husband Nick Jonas and their daughter in Mumbai, teased her upcoming documentary on Tuesday. The documentary, produced by Priyanka is titled 'Women of My Billion'. It showcases the struggles, dreams, rights, and fight against all forms of violence that unite women in India.

The film follows Srishti's journey of 3800 km over 240 days, from Kanyakumari in South India to Kashmir in the North.

It has been told through the lens of the UN SDG Changemaker Award winner and activist and gives a unique perspective on the group that deserves to be respected, empowered, and protected.

The glimpse of the film was shown at Prime Video's slate announcement event, 'Prime Video Presents' on Tuesday at a 5-star property in the Santa Cruz area of Mumbai.

The event saw the announcement of close to 70 titles. Talking to the media, Priyanka said, "The documentary raises an important question on violence against women which is not just an India issue but a global issue."



## Tiger Shroff reveals he found his first girlfriend when he was 25

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Action star Tiger Shroff, who will be soon seen in the 4th instalment of his action film franchise 'Baaghi', shared that he first got romantically involved at the age of 25.

The actor attended Prime Video's slate announcement event, 'Prime Video Presents' on Tuesday at a 5-star property in the Santa Cruz area of Mumbai.

Talking to Bollywood star Varun Dhawan, Tiger said: "You know Varun, I have always been a very shy and introverted kind of a person. I never had a girlfriend till the age of 25".

Varun was in for a shock when he heard this. He asked Tiger, "25! Are you serious?" To which Tiger replied, "Yes, I got my first girlfriend at 25 and it was during the audition of my debut film." Varun once again probed him, "Kriti Sanon?".

A startled Tiger corrected himself, as he said, "No no the film after my debut."

Varun, who had earlier made a slip at a television show with regards to Kriti's dating life when he hinted at Prabhas's name in jest, told the media, "Guys, it's a joke, it's joke!", given that all of India's media was present at the event.

Tiger, who was earlier rumoured to be dating actress Disha Patani, however, didn't reveal the name of the girl.

## Stars & Style: Kiara, Sara, Rakul, Pooja, Tamannaah slay in exquisite gowns & dresses

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The leading ladies of Bollywood -- Kiara Advani, Sara Ali Khan, Rakul Preet Singh, Pooja Hegde and Tamannaah Bhatia have set the internet ablaze with their stylish looks of the day. Taking to Instagram, Kiara dropped fresh new pictures of herself wearing a powder blue off shoulder gown, with a thigh high slit, and a long tail.

The actress, who was last seen in 'Satyaprem Ki Katha' opted for glossy lips, brown eye-shadow, and winged eyeliner. Her hair is tied in a clean bun, and accessoried the look with diamond ear cuffs. The look was rounded off with transparent heels.

Kiara captioned the post with blue butterfly and blue heart emoji. Sara, who recently featured in 'Murder Mubarak', looked drop dead gorgeous in a sleeveless powder blue coloured dress, with sweetheart neckline.

For the makeup, Sara opted for pink lips, and light pink eye shadow. Her hair is half tied with a pretty bow, and half left open. The look was rounded off with a matching stiletto.

The actress captioned the post: "Something borrowed, something blue, books and thoughts, coffee to brew, eyes that sparkle, eyes that are bold, that's what it takes...so she was told." Rakul looked alluring in a black out-arched brows, and contoured cheeks. Her hair was styled in a high bun, and she accessoried it with gold bangles and earrings. The actress, who was last seen in 'Chhatriwali' captioned the pictures as: "Kaun hai woh jisne dobara mudkar mujhe nahi dekha...". Tamannaah won the hearts with her hot look as she wore a black sleeveless dress. She kept her makeup minimal -- pink lips, and smokey eyes, while her hair is styled in soft waves.



## RAVEENA GETS READY FOR 'HOT SUMMER DAYS', DROPS PICS IN FLORAL DRESS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Raveena Tandon on Tuesday treated fans to beautiful pictures of herself wearing a floral dress, and said she is feeling like a 'gulaab gulaab bo'.

Taking to Instagram, Raveena, who has 8.5 million fans shared a string of photos, wherein she can be seen wearing a pink and white floral short dress.

She opted for a subtle makeup look -- pink lips, Kohl-rimmed eyes, and blushed cheeks. Her hair is tied in a ponytail, and rounded off the look with brown wedge heels.

The post is captioned as: "Hot summer days! Feelin like gulaab gulaab bo....", followed by a red heart emoji.

The pictures were showered love from her fans, and they wrote: "stunning, killer smile". One fan said: "So colourful."



## Varun Dhawan says without KJo 'I won't be at any stage in life'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

It's been over a decade for Bollywood star Varun Dhawan in the Hindi film industry but, he has never forgotten his guru Karan Johar. KJo launched Varun along with Alia Bhatt and Sidharth Malhotra in 'Student of the Year' in 2012. On Tuesday, Varun attended Prime Video's slate announcement event, 'Prime Video Presents'. The actor will be soon seen in the Indian counterpart of the global streaming series 'Citadel' along with Samantha Ruth Prabhu. The series 'Citadel: Honey Bunny' has been created by director duo Raj & DK. Sharing the stage with his co-star Samantha, Raj & DK and KJo, Varun told the media, "The moment I saw 'The Family Man', and I picked up the phone and called Raj & DK. I was absolutely blown away by it. Varun then expressed his gratitude to KJo as he said: "I won't be at this stage or on any stage without Karan Johar." The actor also sang the theme song of the Karan Johar directorial 'Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham' in jest. KJo too responded in a funny vein as he said, "That's what you call over-welcoming your stay."

## Tamannaah remembers the time she was rejected from 'Boogie Woogie'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia, who was recently seen in the Telugu film 'Bhola Shankar', shared that she was rejected from 'Boogie Woogie', and it has been one hell of a journey for her to get to collaborate with actor Jaaved Jaafari.

The actress on Tuesday attended Prime Video's slate announcement event, 'Prime Video Presents', with the team of her upcoming streaming title 'Daring Partners', which also stars Diana Penty and Jaaved

Jaafari.

Tamannaah told the media: "I was once rejected from 'Boogie Woogie'. Since, then it has been a journey to share the same platform with Javed sir, it all has come full-circle."

'Daring Partners' follows the story of two best-friends, who embark on a daring journey as partners in an alcohol start-up.

The series unfolds their audacious journey, where they challenge norms, bend rules, and 'craft' their destiny within a male-dominated industry.



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Niharika Gandhi