

absolute india

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5TH CRICKET TEST MATCH, DAY 3

MASSIVE WIN OVER ENGLAND, CLAIM SERIES 4-1

Dharamshala | Agencies

Ravichandran Ashwin made his 100th Test match memorable with a five-wicket haul while Kuldeep Yadav and Jasprit Bumrah took two scalps each as India thrashed England by innings and 64 runs to emphatically win the fifth and final Test at the HPCA Stadium & win the five-match series 4-1.

On day three, India were bowled out for 477 in their first innings, taking a handy lead of 259 runs. Under pressure, England capitulated in stunning fashion as Ashwin took 5-77, his 36th five-wicket haul in the format, also the most fifters in this format for India.

He now joins spin legends Muttiah Muralitharan, Shane Warne and Anil Kumble as the bowlers to bag a five-wicket haul in their 100th Test match. Kuldeep followed up his five-wicket haul in the first innings with 2-40, while Bumrah picked 2-38 and Ravindra Jadeja returned with 1-25 as England were bowled out for 195 in 48.1 overs, with India securing an impressive series win.

In the morning, off-spinner Shoaib Bashir took his second five-wicket haul in Tests while veteran pacer James Anderson became the first fast-bowler to pick 700 wickets in the format as England bowled out India for 477 in their first innings.

Kuldeep and Bumrah added four more runs to the overnight total before Anderson picked his 700th Test wicket in the form of the former. Anderson lured Kuldeep into poking outside the off-stump and got a healthy nick behind to keeper Ben Foakes, ending the 49-run stand for the ninth wicket.

It made Anderson only the third



bowler to pick 700 or more Test wickets after Muralitharan (800 wickets) and Warne (708 wickets). Bashir then got his five-wicket haul when he drew Bumrah forward on the front foot and had him stumped from behind to end India's innings quickly. Bashir also became the first England bowler to claim a five-wicket haul twice in Tests before the age of 21. Though India captain Rohit Sharma could not take the field due to a stiff back, as per the BCCI, with Jasprit Bumrah taking charge of the proceedings, taking a lead of 259 runs meant the hosts' had done enough to put almighty pressure on England. That came true when Duckett tried to take the attacking route against Ashwin, but totally played down the wrong line after dancing down the pitch and seeing his off-stump being rattled. Crawley was next to fall for a 16-ball duck,

with short leg catching his flick off Ashwin. An unsettled Ollie Pope top-edged to a running square leg, giving Ashwin his third wicket of the innings. Jonny Bairstow was aggressive in his strokeplay to make 39 off 31 balls, laced with three fours and as many sixes. But he was trapped lbw after being unable to account for sharp turn from Kuldeep, with replays showing the ball clipping top of leg-stump. Ashwin came back for another over and that move paid off when his slider castled Ben Stokes through the gate at the stroke of lunch. The post-lunch session saw Foakes and Root hanging around for 15 minutes, before Ravichandran Ashwin teased the former to go for a slog-sweep, which he did and castled him through the gate.

Tom Hartley resisted by hitting four boundaries, before being trapped plumb lbw by Jasprit

Bumrah. Two balls later, Bumrah trapped Mark Wood lbw for a two-ball duck with a straighter delivery. Root marched forward to bring up his fifty in 88 balls with a flick through backward square leg for four. He and Bashir hit nine boundaries between themselves, before the latter saw his off-stump being rattled by Jadeja. Kuldeep ended the match by having Root hole out to Bumrah at long-on to secure a 4-1 series win for India.

Brief scores

England 218 and 195 in 48.1 overs (Joe Root 84; Ravichandran Ashwin 5-77) lost to India 477 in 124.1 overs (Shubman Gill 110, Rohit Sharma 103; Shoaib Bashir 5-173, James Anderson 2-60) by an innings and 64 runs

GAIL cuts CNG retail prices by Rs 2.50/kg

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Chennai

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) players like GAIL (India) Limited, its wholly owned subsidiary, GAIL Gas Limited and AG&P Pratham on Saturday announced a reduction of Rs 2.50/kg in their retail prices.

The price cut comes into effect in the locations where the companies retail their CNG.

The move comes close on the heels of Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) reducing the selling price of gas in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) by Rs 2.50 per kg with effect from Thursday.

This reduction underscores GAIL's commitment to offering environmentally friendly fuel solutions at competitive prices, in line with the nation's efforts to combat pollution and reduce carbon emissions. "The decision to lower CNG prices comes at a crucial time when the automotive industry is witnessing



a surge in the production and adoption of CNG vehicles by leading manufacturers such as Suzuki Motors Tata, Hyundai and Mahindra," GAIL said in a statement.

With this price reduction, GAIL aims to facilitate the transition towards cleaner and greener transportation options, ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come, the statement added.

On its part, AG&P Pratham said it has cut its retail price from March 7 onwards in cities it operates in Kerala (Alappuzha, Kollam, Thiruvananthapuram - current price Rs 85.50/kg) and Andhra Pradesh (Nellore Rs

91.50/kg, Chittoor, Tirupati-Rs 91.50/kg, Anantapur and Kadappa Rs 91/kg).

According to Thivahar Bethune, VP Marketing, AG&P Pratham, three-wheeler auto-rickshaws, cars, small commercial vehicles, trucks and bus owners using CNG fuel can now save up to 35 per cent and 50 per cent compared to diesel and petrol respectively.

In Kerala, AG&P Pratham currently operates 34 CNG stations and plans to set up over 150 CNG stations and in Andhra Pradesh, it currently operates 42 CNG stations and plans to set up over 200 CNG stations in the coming years.

71st Miss World: Kriti Sanon makes splashing entry in green on Red Carpet

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Red Carpet of the Miss World 2024 is turning out to be a starchy affair as after actresses Pooja Hegde and Kriti Sanon made a splashing entry at the event in the BKC area of Mumbai on Saturday.

The actress was recently seen in the theatrical film 'Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya' opposite Shahid Kapoor. She played a humanoid robot SIFRA in the film.

For the event, Kriti was dressed in a green-coloured off-shoulder gown with matching stilettos. She tied her hair in a bun.

On the work front, she will be next seen in 'Crew' in which she will share the screen with Tabu and Kareena Kapoor Khan.

Meanwhile, Miss World 2024 will be held at the Jio Convention Centre in the BKC area of Mumbai on Saturday from 8:00 pm.

This time around the beauty pageant is returning to India after 28 years.

27 Indian startups raise \$308 million in funding this week

Team Absolute | New Delhi

At least 27 startups in India raised about \$307.8 million this week, which includes 17 early-stage and seven growth-stage companies.

Nearly 32 early and growth-stage startups raised more than \$384 million last week, startup news portal Entracker reported on Saturday.

Seventeen early-stage startups raised about \$166.8 million, like mPokket, Ema, Hunch and Rozana, among others.

Startups based in Delhi-NCR led the funding with 10 deals, followed by Bengaluru at 9 deals. Digital lending platform mPokket raised up to Rs 500 crore (around \$60 million) in debt capital from BPEA Credit's private credit platform.

mPokket said that the funds will be used to meet the growing credit demand from its 24 million registered customer base while accelerating product development in the career accelerator and insurance verticals. Rural e-commerce startup Rozana received \$22.5 million in the latest funding round. The round was led by the investment firm Bertelsmann India Investments (BI) with participation from the VC firm Fireside Ventures and existing



investors. "With this funding, we will continue building out our logistics and supply chain infrastructure to reach new districts and empower rural communities with access to essential products," Ankur Dahiya, CEO and Co-founder of Rozana, said in a statement.

NAVANA.AI LAUNCHES 'BODHI' MULTILINGUAL VOICE MODEL AS INDIA BETS BIG ON AI



New Delhi: As the government doubles down on AI with IndiaAI Mission, homegrown startup Navana.ai on Friday announced 'Bodhi', its second-generation multilingual Voice AI model that is available in more than 11 languages. Founded in 2018 by Raoul Navavati and Jai Navavati, Navana.ai empowers businesses to create user-friendly digital interfaces for the next billion.

The plug-and-play methodology of the current version of Navana Automatic Voice Recognition (ASR) software simplifies adoption and implementation while offering enhanced customisation and above 85 per cent accuracy with faster reaction times, the company said in a statement. "Recognising that nearly 75 per cent of the population prefers voice-based interactions, Navana.ai is dedicated to bridging communication barriers and facilitating online engagement, particularly among non-English speaking Internet users," said Raoul Navavati, Co-founder, Navana.ai.

Faridabad docs ace 'bloodless' liver transplants in 2 young girls

Faridabad (Haryana) | Agencies

In a medical marvel, doctors in Haryana's Faridabad have successfully conducted liver transplants in two young girls with rare diseases, using a bloodless technique.

The girls, aged 10 and 11 years, suffered from Wilson's disease, an inherited disorder that accumulates copper in the body; and an autoimmune liver disease, where the body's immune system mistakenly attacks the liver. Their livers were transplanted using the bloodless technique -- the most advanced technique applied in high-end surgeries, including organ transplants. In the technique, the blood spillage from the patient is transfused back into the body, rendering the requirement of the transfusion of external blood unnecessary, said the doctors at Marengo Asia Hospitals, who pioneered the technique in India and South Asia. "I have witnessed the resilience of these young patients. Despite their small stature, their courage and strength in facing such a challenging



surgery inspire hope not just in their families but in all of us," Dr Punit Singla, Director & HOD, Liver Transplant, Marengo Asia Hospitals, told IANS. "Every transplant is a testament to the power of medicine, teamwork, and the generosity of organ donors. Today, we have not just given them a new liver; we have given them the chance to embrace life with renewed vigour and optimism," he added. Baby Lachyn, 11, suffering from Wilson's disease, was admitted to the emergency with abdominal distension in an unconscious state. She had severe jaundice

and hepatic encephalopathy. In individuals with Wilson's disease, the defective protein impairs the body's ability to eliminate excess copper, leading to its accumulation in the liver and subsequent release into the bloodstream.

While the complex surgery lasted for 12 hours, the bloodless technique helped the surgeons overcome significant risks. The second patient, Aruzatym, 11, from Kyrgyzstan was presented to the hospital with decompensated liver disease, along with low platelet count and recurrent bleeding from the nose.



'Invest in Yourself'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

On International Women's Day 2024 we get candid with the multifaceted Nikita Chawla - an award-winning journalist, content creator, motivational speaker, travel writer and anchor. (Excerpts from the interview)

Q. Food critic, political analyst, anchor... People usually stick to one career option. Why do you juggle so many things?

It's a matter of passion. In my 20's people would say what is Nikita doing and why is she doing so many things? But I flipped the script. Today the same people

ask how can we do what you are doing and then take dates for personal coaching sessions.

Q. As a woman, what's your biggest strength?

To follow my heart and not the herd. As women we are taught early on to people-please and succumb under the societal pressure of 'settling down', fitting into the mould etc but I left a high paying job and placed all bets on myself. By not or sticking to one thing I decided to carve my own path. It hasn't been an easy journey but is definitely a rewarding one.

Q: How do you handle trolls and critics?

I focus on creating value rather than arguing with strangers and bots on the internet but sometimes peers and acquaintances can't contain how they feel and it spills over as trolling. With time I've realized that people deal with their own jealousies and insecurities by projecting it onto others so when the attacks get personal, I choose not to take it personally.

Q. As a woman, what barriers do you face professionally and how do you overcome them?

TV Journalism in a male dominated industry where mansplaining and mansplaining is the norm. Often, I'm the

only woman on the national panel but to hold my own I improve my argument, not raise my voice.

Q. Lastly, what advice would you give to young women enamoured by social media?

I see a lot of young women who are clones of each other and go to great lengths to keep up appearances and fit in. Focus on your mental health, dare to be original and let your authentic self shine through! You are the biggest project you'll ever work on so invest your time effort and energy in building your self up and not comparing your life to others on social media.



MASSIVE FIRE ON THIRD FLOOR OF MADHYA PRADESH SECRETARIAT, NO CAUSALITIES

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A major fire broke out on the third floor of a building in the Madhya Pradesh secretariat complex 'Vallabh Bhawan' here on Saturday morning, but no one was injured and the flames were extinguished after five hours, officials said.

Personnel of the Army, National Disaster Response Force and police firefighters joined the municipal fire brigade in fire-dousing operation.

It being a Saturday, the government offices inside were closed and the premises were almost empty when the fire broke out around 9.30 am, sources said. While Chief Minister Mohan Yadav directed officials to take necessary steps to prevent such incidents in the future, state Congress chief Jitu Patwari claimed it was a "conspiracy" to destroy the evidence of corruption.

Patwari and Leader of Opposition in the assembly Umang Sarang staged a sit-in outside the secretariat for a couple of hours, seeking a CBI probe into the fire.



"The fire has almost been put out," the Bhopal Municipal Corporation's Fire Officer Rameshwar Neel told PTI around 3 pm. Around 40 to 50 fire tenders and water bowsters (tankers) including a few from the Army fought the blaze, he said. Asked if sacks containing papers lying on the secretariat

premises had been removed before the fire started, Neel said he had no information in that regard. Some sanitation workers near gates 5 and 6 noticed smoke coming from the building around 9.30 am and alerted authorities, sources said. "I was in Bhopal, and I learnt that a fire has broken out on the third floor of the old building of Vallabh Bhawan. I sought

information from the collector and asked the chief secretary to monitor the situation. The fire has been brought under control," chief minister Yadav told reporters. "A directive has been issued to (take steps to) prevent such incidents and ensure that no papers and no important files are destroyed. I hope that such incidents do not recur," he added. Patwari claimed this was the fifth incident of fire at Vallabh Bhawan since the BJP came to power in 2003. "Which files have been burnt? Of which departments?" the Congress leader asked in a statement, alleging that the fire was a "conspiracy" of the BJP government steeped in "corruption, indebtedness and crime" to destroy the evidence. State BJP spokesperson Pankaj Chaturvedi dismissed Patwari's tirade, stating that the opposition party has not established a single charge of corruption in all these years and it should instead look at the record of the UPA government.

B'luru water crisis: There is no water in my house, says Shivakumar

Bengaluru | Agencies

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, while referring to the water crisis in Bengaluru city, on Saturday said that there is no water in his house as well.

"Media is showing the water crisis. I don't deny it. Borewells have gone dry. In my house too there is no water. There is no water in my village and surroundings," Shivakumar told media persons.

He said that Bengaluru Rural, Ramanagar districts are also facing water crisis. "We are preparing to bring water from outside to face any emergency situation. There is no need to panic. The value of water should be known to everyone," Shivakumar said. "The water



will be supplied to 110 villages around Bengaluru by May end under the Cauvery 5th stage project," he added.

He said that for the first time in the history of Bengaluru, tankers are controlled, and regulated while

the tanker mafia has come to an end.

"We are also checking the BWSSB plan of action in terms of supplying drinking water. Nodal officers are told to identify the sources of water," he said.

Not even given a chance to speak in Delhi assembly: BJP MLA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA from Rohini, Vijender Gupta, on Saturday accused the Delhi government of not giving a chance to the opposition to raise even a single question throughout the ongoing budget session.

Hitting hard at AAP-led Delhi Government, Gupta said that the government is afraid of questions over the corruption, committed by Arvind Kejriwal.

"Opposition members have been kept out of the assembly for almost 20 days now. Orders are brought from the court and then Article 280 is used to silence opposition leaders. Opposition is not even given a chance to speak in the assembly," Gupta claimed.



He said that during the ongoing budget discussions, not a single opposition member was allowed to participate. He said it's unheard of that a budget of 80 thousand crores is being presented, and opposition members are

not even allowed the right to speak.

"The Delhi government is afraid that if opposition members speak, the veil of corruption surrounding the Kejriwal government will be lifted," he said.

TWO OUT OF THREE AAP COUNCILLORS REJOIN PARTY IN CHANDIGARH

Chandigarh | Agencies

In a major development in the Municipal Corporation Chandigarh and for the INDIA Bloc days ahead of the implementation of the mode code of conduct for the Lok Sabha elections, two out of the three AAP councillors -- Neha Musawat and Poonam Kumari -- who had switched loyalties last month, did a 'Ghar Wapsi' by rejoining the AAP on Saturday.

"Two AAP councillors -- Neha Musawat (Ward No. 19) and Poonam Kumari (Ward No. 16) -- have rejoined the Aam Aadmi Party under the leadership of @RajbirGhumanAAP, OSD to Punjab CM and S.S. Ahluwalia, Sah-Prabhari, AAP Chandigarh," Punjab AAP announced on X, adding, "Warm welcome to both the councillors on their 'Ghar Wapsi'."

This development is significant, coming just two days ahead of the polls to the crucial five-member finance and contract committee (F&CC) of the Municipal Corporation scheduled on March 11.

Both the AAP and the Congress are part of the INDIA Bloc in Chandigarh.

Political observers said with the strengthening of the House, the Corporation can implement its poll promise of supplying 20,000 litres of free water to each household in Chandigarh every month, on the pattern of Delhi, and the charges will be levied after the fixed quantity. Chandigarh is the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana. After the General House, the



F&CC is the second-most powerful committee, holding the power to approve projects and developmental works worth Rs 50 lakh. Projects costing more than Rs 50 lakh are discussed and approved by the House. Now, the BJP has 15 councillors in the House of 35, while AAP has 12, and the Congress seven. The Shiromani Akali Dal has one councillor.

Chandigarh's BJP MP Kirron Kher also has voting rights as an ex-officio member of the Corporation.

The BJP's Kuljit Singh Sandhu and Rajinder Sharma had on March 4 won the posts of Senior Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor, respectively, by defeating INDIA bloc candidates Gurpreet Singh Gabi and Nirmala Devi in the re-elections.

PM MODI UNVEILS 125-FOOT STATUE OF LACHIT BORPHUKAN IN ASSAM

Guwahati: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday unveiled the 125-foot long statue of 16th century Ahom general Lachit Borphukan in Assam's Jorhat district. PM Modi unveiled the 'Statue of Valour' at the Lachit Barphukan Maidam Development Project in Hollongapar, which is close to Teok area in the district.

The Prime Minister took a helicopter from Arunachal Pradesh to Jorhat, where he donned traditional attire and headgear. He took part in the unveiling of the statue through an Ahom rite.

During the programme, the Prime Minister was accompanied by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

The statue, which was constructed by Ram Vanji Sutar, is 84 feet tall and stands on a 41-foot pedestal, giving the entire structure a height of 125 feet. In February 2022, former President Ram Nath Kovind laid the statue's foundation.

Kamal Haasan not to contest LS polls, will be sent to RS on DMK ticket

Chennai | Agencies

Tamil Superstar and President of Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) Kamal Haasan will not contest the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. He will instead be the star campaigner for the DMK alliance, as his party (MNM) has formally joined the alliance.

Sources in DMK said that Kamal Haasan will be given a Rajya Sabha seat from the DMK alliance.

However, the DMK was keen to field Kamal Haasan from the Coimbatore Lok Sabha seat but the CPI-M representing the seat was adamant that it would not leave the Coimbatore seat.

Sources said that the DMK has also asked its alliance partner, Congress, to allocate one of its seats to Kamal but Congress has asked the actor-turned-politician to contest on Congress ticket.

Sources said that as the Kamal Haasan issue has been settled, the DMK alliance will now be able to fin-



ish its seat-sharing exercise in the next few days. Political analyst George Abraham told reporter that it is a good decision that Kamal Haasan will become the star campaigner instead of contesting the elections. "He will be a major asset to the DMK in its poll campaigning," Abraham said.

ELDERLY WOMAN DIES IN STAMPEDE DURING POLITICAL EVENT IN NAGPUR

Nagpur: A 60-year-old woman was killed while at least five others were injured in a stampede during a political programme organised here on Saturday, officials said.

The incident took place after a huge crowd had gathered to collect household articles that were being distributed to the construction labourers at the S.B. Auditorium in the Reshimbagh area of the city. There was a rush of people to pick up the kits when one woman, identified as Manubai Tulsiram Rajput (60), lost her balance and fell, as some others also fell beside her. She suffered serious injuries and was rushed to a nearby hospital where she was pronounced dead on admission.

Petrol pumps in Rajasthan to remain shut from March 10-12 to protest high VAT

Jaipur | Agencies

Petrol pumps across Rajasthan will remain closed from March 10-March 12 as their owners will be protesting against the high VAT on diesel and petrol in the state.

Speaking to reporter, Rajasthan Petroleum Dealers Association president Rajendra Singh Bhati said, "The government has not been reducing VAT on fuel since long. Also, the commission of dealers has not been increased."

In such a situation, petrol and diesel pump operators across the state have decided to go on strike from March 10. "We will march till secretariat and request the Chief Minister to address our grievances on video conferencing as he is under isolation after being tested COVID positive,"



the association's president added. "Due to high VAT in Rajasthan, petrol pump operators are continuously incurring losses. We have been demanding the government to reduce VAT since long, but in vain. Petrol is being sold much cheaper in neighboring states than in Rajasthan," he said. "On the other hand, there has been no increase in the commission of dealers for

the last seven years. Due to this, most of the petrol pumps in Rajasthan are on the verge of closure," he claimed.

"Further, petrol pump operators from across the state will also surround the secretariat in Jaipur on March 11 so that we can convey our legitimate demands to the government," he added.

Bengaluru cafe blast: NIA releases new photos of suspected bomber



Bengaluru | Agencies

National Investigation Agency (NIA) has intensified its search against the suspected bomber in connection with the Rameshwaram Cafe blast and also released four new photos of the suspected bomber on Saturday.

The photos show the suspected bomber without a cap, walking confidently with a backpack, wearing a pink T-shirt and trousers. He is seen wearing a mask

in the photos. In the earlier photographs released by the authorities, the suspect was wearing a cap and dark-coloured T-shirt.

"NIA seeks citizen cooperation in identifying the suspect linked to the Rameshwaram Cafe Blast case. Call 08029510900, 8904241100 or email to info.blr.nia@gov.in with any information. Your identity will remain confidential," the NIA said. Meanwhile, the

Rameshwaram cafe, Brookfield branch had resumed its service on Saturday morning. The cafe was reopened on Friday. The cafe founder has brushed aside any possibility of business rivalry in the incident.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Home Minister G. Parameshwara have expressed confidence that the agencies probing the blast case will find the suspect soon.

Ex-DMK functionary Jaffer Sadiq arrested for running international drug cartel

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has arrested former DMK functionary Jaffer Sadiq in connection with the smuggling of drugs valued at Rs 2,000 crore.

The NCB said that it apprehended the drug "baron" on Saturday.

Sadiq, a former office bearer of the NRI cell of DMK, had also produced films and has been on the run for the past few days after the NCB arrested a few of his aides a week before.

The racket was busted after New Zealand and Australian authorities informed Indian agencies that drugs concealed in food products were being smuggled to their countries. Sadiq was sacked from the DMK amid reports of his links with the international drug cartel.

Deputy Director General, NCB, Gyaneshwar Singh said that after developing specific intelligence, they arrested Sadiq, the kingpin of the drug trafficking network busted by NCB in February 2024.

Sadiq was absconding and had been on the run since February 15



when NCB had seized 50.070kg of Pseudoephedrine from the godown of a firm named Aventa Company and arrested three accomplices of Sadiq.

"NCB had mounted intense efforts to track down Sadiq after he had gone absconding. We were able to track him down and he was arrested in

Delhi," said Singh.

According to NCB, Sadiq spear-headed a network which sourced Pseudoephedrine in India and trafficked it to Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia in the guise of food-grade cargo.

"It is believed that the drug syndicate operated by him has sent 45 con-

signments over the past three years to various countries, containing approximately 3,500 kilograms of pseudoephedrine," said Singh.

Sadiq has also revealed that he has earned a huge amount of money from his illicit drug trafficking operations and has invested the same in legitimate businesses in industries like film, construction, hospitality etc.

"His financial linkages to drug trafficking are under investigation to identify his sources of funds and the beneficiaries of proceeds of drugs. The investigations are still underway, and more details will be revealed soon," said Singh.

Pseudoephedrine is a precursor chemical that is used in the manufacture of Methamphetamine, a dangerous and highly addictive synthetic drug.

Even though it has some legal uses, it is classified as a controlled substance in India, bringing strict regulation on its production, possession, trade, export and use. Illegal possession and trade is punishable up to 10 years of imprisonment under the NDPS Act, of 1985.

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When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on.



Franklin D. Roosevelt

World's longest bi-lane Sela Tunnel at 13,000 feet in Arunachal Pradesh inaugurated

STRATEGICALLY-VITAL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday dedicated to the nation the strategically-crucial Sela Tunnel, constructed at a cost of Rs 825 crore, in Arunachal Pradesh. It is the world's longest bi-lane tunnel at 13,000 feet. The ambitious Sela Tunnel would boost India's defences and lead to a faster response time for the armed forces to threats on the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

- The tunnel, stretching through the Sela-Charbela ridge and constructed with the New Austrian Tunneling Method (NATM), will be the world's longest bi-lane tunnel at an altitude of 13,000 feet.
- The NATM is widely accepted and used in construction of tunnels worldwide especially for Himalayan geology.
- The Sela Tunnel System consists of two tunnels of lengths 1,003 metre and 1,595 metre respectively with an 8.6 km approach and link roads constructed at a cost of Rs 825 crore.
- Officials said that the second tunnel also has an escape tube adjacent to the main tunnel as per international norms.
- The escape tube constructed parallel to the main tube is connected with cross passages after every 500 metres and in case of emergency this escape tube can be used for the movement of rescue vehicles and evacuation of stranded people.
- The tunnel has been designed for a traffic density of 3,000 cars and 2,000 trucks per day with a maximum speed of 80 kmph.



The PM lauded the efforts of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in providing last mile connectivity to the border region and for constructing an engineering marvel in such difficult terrain under extremely trying conditions. Apart from the Sela Tunnel, the PM virtually inaugurated from Itanagar 123 key developmental projects and laid the foundation of 95 new projects worth Rs 55,600 crore in six northeastern states -- Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh.

An official said that on the road connecting Assam's Tezpur to Tawang, the tunnel will enable "all-weather" connectivity to the region and it is strategically significant due to its proximity to the LAC. The Balipara-Charduar-Tawang

Road on which this tunnel has been constructed is an important axis connecting Tawang region and provides connectivity to the hinterland, up to Tezpur.

The road had various bottlenecks like Nechiphu, Bomdila Town and Sela Pass, which have been addressed by the BRO by constructing Sela and Nechiphu tunnels and Bomdila Bypass.

The foundation stone of the Sela Tunnel was laid by the PM on February 9, 2019 and its construction commenced within two months.

The tunnel has been completed in just five years overcoming challenges of difficult terrain and adverse weather conditions.

The Sela Tunnel will not only facilitate smoother movement of troops

and supplies and reinforce defence capabilities in the region, it will also herald a new era of economic prosperity for the Tawang region, fostering trade, tourism, employment, education and overall development.

Earlier the route to Sela Pass had only single lane connectivity and treacherous bends due to which heavy vehicles, container trucks and vehicles with trailers could not get to Tawang, officials stated.

According to officials, due to adverse weather conditions, specifically in winters, evacuation of patients was affected along the existing Sela Pass. All this will now be a thing of the past with the opening of the tunnel. The completed Sela Tunnel System will reduce the travel distance by more than eight kms and travelling time by an hour.

The execution of this ambitious project took over 90 lakh man-hours with an average of around 650 personnel and labourers working every day for the last five years.

The enormity of the task could be judged by the quantity of 71,000 metric tonnes of cement, 5,000 metric tonnes of steel and 800 metric tonnes of explosives used for construction.

The tunnel has state-of-the-art safety features and it has a ventilation system to maintain air quality and a world-class electro mechanical system, including jet fan ventilation system, fire fighting devices, CIE norms-based illumination system and SCADA-controlled monitoring systems.

CJI launches e-court facility in Bikaner, bats for use of simple language in courts

Bikaner | Agencies

The Chief Justice of India, D.Y. Chandrachud, on Saturday announced the launch of an e-court facility in Bikaner, and said that the lawyers settled here will now be able to practice from the city itself.

"The Supreme Court of the country is located on Tilak Marg, Delhi. But it is not the Supreme Court of Tilak Marg, it is the Supreme Court of India. Similarly, the Rajasthan High Court also doesn't belong to Jaipur or Jodhpur alone, it is for the entire Rajasthan. Now, the lawyers in Bikaner will be able to practice and plead in the high court from here itself," the CJI said at a programme organised by the Ministry of Law and Justice at the auditorium of Maharaja Ganga Singh University here.

The Chief Justice said that the Government of India has approved a budget of Rs 7,000 crore for the e-court Phase 3 project. The facility of video conferencing will be made available in Bikaner using this fund, he said.

The CJI also said that court



rulings should be made in the local language in any court of the country.

"When I am sitting in Delhi and making a decision for a lawyer or a judge, it may be in a particular language, but if I am making a decision for the common man, it must be in a simple language," he said. The CJI also said that there is a connection between democracy and the Constitution of India.

"Understanding the Constitution also develops and nurtures the understanding of democracy. There is a need to convey the messages of the Constitution to every person. The spirit of the Constitution will have to

reach every citizen," he said. The Chief Justice also said that Bikaner made a big contribution to the making of the Constitution of India.

"One of the 284 members of the Constituent Assembly was Jaswant Singh from Bikaner. Maharaja Ganga Singh of the princely state of Bikaner was selected as the first Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. The Constitution of India is closely linked to Bikaner," he said.

Earlier, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal informed that as the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, Maharaja Ganga Singh used to sit at the same place where the Chief Justice sat initially.

BSP WILL GO SOLO IN LS POLLS: MAYAWATI

Lucknow | Agencies

BSP supremo Mayawati on Saturday said the party will contest the Lok Sabha elections on its own strength and dismissed rumours of the party forming electoral alliance.

Taking to X, Mayawati said, "BSP is fighting the Lok Sabha general elections in the country on its strength with complete preparation. Spreading rumours about electoral alliance or Third Front is fake and wrong news."

"Media should not lose its credibility by reporting such fake news. People should also be careful," she said in a post in Hindi.

"In UP, political rivals are restless because



the BSP is contesting elections alone with great strength. That is why they keep trying to mislead people by spreading rumours," Mayawati claimed.

"But, in the interest of Bahujan Samaj, BSP's decision to contest the elections alone is firm," she

said. Earlier, Mayawati had announced that her party would contest the LS polls independently, asserting that past experiences with alliances did not go well.

Recently, the political circles were abuzz that BSP is set to ally with NDA in the Lok Sabha polls after its lone MLA Uma Shankar Singh, had voted for the BJP candidate in the Rajya Sabha polls.

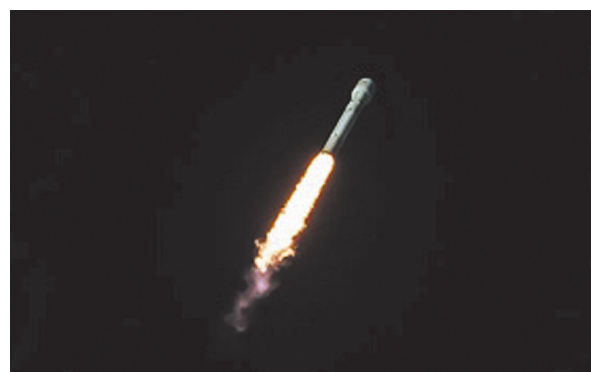
Agnikul plans to launch sub-orbital mission in March-end

Chennai | Agencies

Private rocket maker Agnikul Cosmos Private Ltd is planning a sub-orbital mission for its AgniBaan rocket sometime this month-end and is waiting for official permission, said officials in the space sector.

The company will launch its rocket from its launch pad in Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. The launch pad is located inside Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) rocketport in Sriharikota. "Agnikul's application for the permission to launch its rocket in a sub-orbital flight is under our consideration," a senior official of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) told IANS preferring anonymity.

"The company's rocket is on its launch pad here. The



company is looking for a launch sometime towards this month-end," an official of ISRO in Sriharikota told IANS, not wishing to be named. The rocket AgniBaan SORTeD (SubOrbital Technological Demonstrator) is expected to fly between March 22 and March 28. The company just mentioned on X: "March 22-28, 2024." According to Agnikul, AgniBaan is a two-stage rocket with a capacity to

carry up to 300 kg to a height of 700 km. The rocket engines are powered by liquid oxygen/kerosene. AgniBaan can access both low and high-inclination orbits and is completely mobile - designed for accessing more than 10 launchports, the company said. Agnikul Co-founder and CEO Srinath Ravichandran was not available for comments when contacted by reporter.

ELECTION COMMISSIONER ARUN GOEL STEPS DOWN WEEKS BEFORE LS POLLS

New Delhi: Weeks before the Lok Sabha elections, Election Commissioner Arun Goel, resigned from his post on Saturday.

According to the officials in the know of things, Goel's resignation has been accepted by President Droupadi Murmu.

"In pursuance of Clause (1) of Section 11 of The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, the President is pleased to accept the resignation tendered by Shri Arun Goel, Election Commissioner, with effect from March 9, 2024," read a gazette notification issued on Saturday.

March 15 to be 'Red-Letter Day' for Indian Railways as Metro train to run through tunnel under Hooghly

Kolkata | Agencies

The wait is finally over. Come March 15, Indian Railways' first underwater commercial service will commence between the twin cities of Kolkata and Howrah. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Esplanade-Howrah Maidan (Green Line) Metro Railway link on March 6.

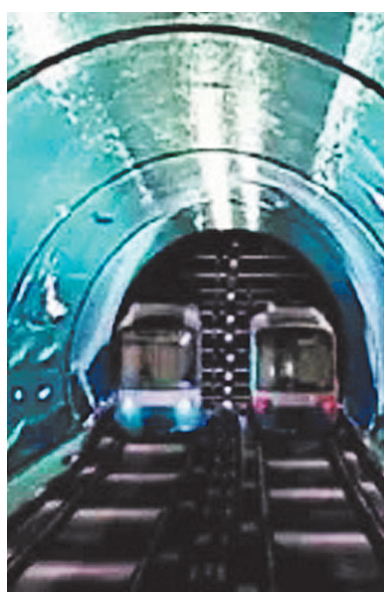
Metro Railway, Kolkata has now decided to start running commercial services along this stretch from March 15.

Several lakhs of people are waiting with bated breath for commercial services to begin, so that they get an opportunity to travel through the tunnel under Hooghly river.

This is not only India's first underwater Metro link, it is also the country's first ever underwater rail link.

Metro Railway, which ran India's first Metro service in Kolkata, will be operating 130 services between Esplanade and Howrah Maidan.

Services will be available every 12-15 minutes depending upon the time of



day. Services will begin at 7 a.m. and the last trains will leave both Esplanade and Howrah Maidan stations at 9.45 p.m., Metro Railway general manager P.

Uday Kumar Reddy announced on Saturday.

While those with valid smart cards for the North-South Metro will be able to use them along this stretch, other commuters will also be able to access any Metro stretch with a single smart token.

"If somebody wishes to reach the Ruby Crossing (Hemanta Mukhopadhyay station) on the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass from Howrah Maidan, s/he will just need to purchase one smart token though two changeovers will have to be made - one at Esplanade and the other at Kavi Subhas. There will be no requirement to get off a train and queue up at a counter for another token. The ride will be seamless for smart card holders," a Metro Railway spokesperson said.

On Wednesday, the Prime Minister had also inaugurated the Kavi Subhas-Hemanta Mukhopadhyay stretch of the Orange Line and the Joka to Majerhat link of the Purple Line.

These will also become operational from Friday (March 15).

SMARTPHONES' EFFECT ON KIDS UNDER 10 GO BEYOND EYES: DOCTORS

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, children under five must spend less time watching screens. While the UN health body does not recommend screen time for infants and 1-year-old, those aged 2 years should not be exposed for more than an hour.
- The doctor noted that illnesses such as "diarrhoea, fever, and other health issues are observed in children who spend excessive time on their devices".
- Several studies have shown the negative impact of smartphone use on the eye. Prolonged use of smartphones in children has been linked with vision impairment, and dry eyes among others.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

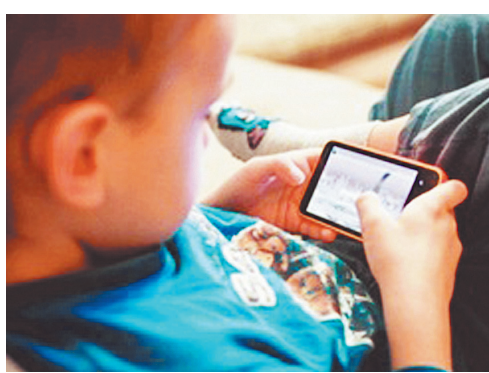
Smartphone addiction among children under the age of 10, is known to be detrimental for the eyes. However, doctors on Saturday warned that spending excessive time on the device may worsen physical health and cause a host of behavioural issues.

However, "even toddlers as young as one and a half years old are being handed smartphones by their parents," Dr Rajiv Uttam, Director, Paediatric Pulmonology, Critical Care Paediatrics (PICU), Paediatric Care, Medanta The Medicity, Gurugram, told reporter.

Dr Vikas Taneja, Consultant Paediatrics, Manipal Hospital, Dwarka explained that this is majorly due to radiation, as the children use their mobile phones at a very close distance.

"Children can present with excessive eye strain, which can lead to redness of the eyes and excessive itching. This can lead to frequent rubbing and watering. The strain in the eyes can lead to headaches, and their sleep might get disturbed. Excessive mobile phone use can also affect the muscles of the eye," he told reporter.

This sleep loss can, further, lead to a lot of anxiety and depression. Usually, such children tend to be alone, have low self-esteem, become excessively irri-



table, have a lot of aggression and behavioural changes, and may throw tantrums. Rajiv said that overuse often leads to a detachment from the real world, and the children are likely to display symptoms akin to virtual autism.

"Habitual smartphone use during meals also contributes to poor eating habits, obesity, and related health issues such as high blood pressure and sugar levels ultimately leading small kids to pre-diabetic stage." Importantly, the visual impairments and attention deficits further compound these concerns, often remaining unnoticed until academic performance suffers, the doctor said.

Regional Passport Office, Madurai honours woman who donated Rs 7 cr land to school; issues her passport in a day

Chennai | Agencies

The Regional Passport Office (RPO) in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, honoured Pooranam Ammal alias U Aayi Ammal, who had recently donated her land for the upgradation of a government school, by issuing her a fresh passport in one day.

Pooranam Ammal had donated 1.52 acres of land worth Rs 7 crore for the upgradation of Madurai East Panchayat Union Government School and also donated land to the education department.

The RPO office had organised a programme to mark International Women's Day on March 8, and had invited Pooranam Ammal as the chief guest. Passport Officer, Vasanthan B and other officials felicitated her for donating such a large parcel of



land for the construction of additional buildings for a school to convert it into a high school.

Vasanthan B, in his speech also said that her act was a great motivation for others to also donate for philanthropic causes.

The Regional Passport officials said they would honour her by providing a passport

in a day and on Saturday a new passport was handed over to her after she had filled up her application form on Friday.

The philanthropist had donated the land in memory of her daughter, Janani.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, MK Stalin, had honoured her during Republic Day celebrations for her noble act.



Seat-sharing talks among MahaYuti partners remain inconclusive in Maharashtra

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Despite three rounds of talks among the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party, the MahaYuti alliance partners are struggling to arrive at a consensus over the seat-sharing arrangement for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in Maharashtra.

MahaYuti sources said that the next meeting is likely on March 11 as there is every possibility that the Election Commission of India may announce the Lok Sabha poll by March 15.

NCP insiders admitted that the meeting that took place on late Friday night between Home Minister Amit Shah and Ajit Pawar, who was accompanied by Praful Patel and Sunil Tatkare, remained inconclusive as the party is stuck to its demand for 9 to 10 seats.

However, NCP insiders, who are privy to Friday's talks, said the party may get only three seats -- Baramati, Shirur and Raigad (won by united



NCP in 2019 general elections) while the BJP has offered Dindori and Gadchiroli seats to NCP with a rider that its nominees will have to contest on the Lotus symbol.

Incidentally, Ajit Pawar is not reportedly happy with BJP's offer as he strongly feels that the party may get its due share in the seat-sharing arrangement. Besides, few party leaders argue that if BJP gives three or five seats, it will demoralise the cadres as

it may find the party difficult to convince them to vote for the candidates of BJP or Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena in the absence of NCP candidate. There has been no official comment from BJP and NCP on seat-sharing talks. Though few leaders from both the parties hope for a consensus as ultimately winning maximum seats in Maharashtra will be crucial to see Narendra Modi becoming Prime Minister for the third time.

Meanwhile, talks for seat-sharing between BJP and Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena have remained incomplete and they are expected to meet again on March 11.

Shiv Sena Minister Shamburaj Desai said that the party is insisting for 22 seats while party MP Gajanan Kirtikar claimed that the party should not succumb to the BJP's pressure and settle below 22 seats (united Shiv Sena had fought 22 seats and won 18 seats in 2019 elections).

Shiv Sena sources hinted that the party may have to settle at a single digit or maximum at 12 seats. BJP has sought the cooperation from Shinde and Pawar as the party wants the partners to fight the coming Lok Sabha elections with unity in order to win 45-plus seats in Maharashtra. The party, which had won 23 seats in an alliance with united Shiv Sena in 2019 elections, is keen to field its candidates on 32 to 36 seats by riding on the Modi wave. However, the party sees difficulty in transfer of votes from Shiv Sena and NCP if it leaves more seats to them.

Mumbai Coastal Road inauguration put off till Monday



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Coastal Road project's phase one is partly ready for inauguration, but getting delayed ostensibly as VIPs are reportedly 'unavailable' owing to multiple reasons, officials said here on Saturday.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde was scheduled to cut the ribbon today (March 9) throwing open the north-south arm, but it has been postponed to March 11 as the other MahaYuti alliance leaders are said to be busy in the Lok Sabha seat-sharing talks.

In January, when Shinde went on a tour of the swank new road including the tunnel, he had announced that one lane from Worli to

Chowpatty would be operational by that month-end, but it didn't happen.

Later, there was speculation that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would inaugurate it, either in person or remotely, but he is tied up in the poll campaign, and another date was set for March 9, with the official invitations also printed and distributed. Even this has been pushed back by two days till Monday (March 11), though the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) remains non-committal on whether the inaugural will actually take place that day. In case the government misses the date again, then uncertainty stares at the starting of the MCR in view of the Model Code of Conduct that may be imple-

mented anytime next week.

However, civic officials have confidently announced that phase one will be fully completed by May, comprising the two lanes from Marine Drive to Worli and other facilities coming up in the vicinity, which will slash travel time from the current one hour to barely 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, the delays in making mega-projects available for public use has evoked sharp criticism from the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi top functionaries like Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Sanjay Raut, Aditya Thackeray, Kishore Tiwari, Congress' Nana Patole and M. Arif Naseem Khan, Nationalist Congress Party (SP) and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena leaders.

Court acquits undertrial in prison officer assault case in Thane

Team Absolute | Thane

A court in Maharashtra's Thane has acquitted an undertrial prisoner in a case of alleged assault on an officer of Thane Central Jail due to lack of evidence.

Assistant sessions judge, G T Pawar, in an order issued on February 20, acquitted Munna Moinuddin Shaikh alias Guddu, giving him a benefit of doubt.

Additional public prosecutor M N Pawse

said the incident occurred on December 29, 2021, when prison constables Tushar Wagh and Ramesh Ghule found the undertrial prisoner smoking a 'bidi' during a count. An altercation between them, following which the constables presented him before their superior. The accused then tried to bag the prison officer's head on a wall and also grabbed him by his shoulder. However, defence counsel Ramrao Jagtap refuted the charges, and said the accused was not involved in the incident.

In his order, the judge said there were discrepancies in the prosecution's case, including the failure to gather CCTV footage and the absence of statements from other inmates present during the incident. Moreover, the medical certificate presented showed only a minor abrasion, casting doubt on the prosecution's narrative. The court concluded that the prosecution failed to prove the accused's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, and acquitted him.

Raj Thackeray: 'Impossible to build Chhatrapati's Arabian Sea memorial off Mumbai'

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) President Raj Thackeray has said that it would be difficult and prohibitively expensive to build the proposed grand memorial of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in the Arabian Sea off Mumbai, here on Saturday. The monument proposal was first mooted 20 years (2004) ago by the then Congress-Nationalist Congress Party government, then carried forward by subsequent regimes of Bharatiya Janata Party-Shiv Sena, the MVA administration of Shiv Sena (UBT)-Congress-Nationalist Congress Party (SP), and still remains a 'live issue' under the present Shiv Sena-BJP-NCP rule.

The project was expected to kick off in a big way after Prime Minister Narendra Modi went in a motorboat and performed the 'Jal Pooja' at the proposed site, 1.5 kms opposite the Marine Drive sea-face on December 24, 2016.

Raj Thackeray categorically said that irrespective of the promises all these governments have made, "It is impossible and impractical to build the memorial of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in the sea off Mumbai."

Pooch-pooching claims that the statue would be taller than the Statue of Liberty (Oct. 1886) off New York harbor, Raj Thackeray said that it is built on a tiny



rocky island which is firmly entrenched on the sea-bed.

"Here, there is no such thing. The government will have to create an artificial islet with materials. At today's rate, I can say that it will cost at least Rs 25,000-30,000 crore. It's simply not possible to build the statue there," affirmed Raj Thackeray, reiterating his statement made eight years ago.

He questioned the need to spend so much money, "when the real legacy is the majestic forts built by the Chhatrapati, why not revamp them", and asked whether we want to bequeath the future generations a statue in the sea.

Raj Thackeray's strong remarks came on the 18th foundation day of the MNS celebrated at Nashik with great fanfare. The MNS chief also frowned at the

manner in which society is being divided on 'caste lines' with promises being doled out that can't be fulfilled, as in the case of the Maratha community.

"When I met (Shivba Sanghatana leader) Manoj Jarange-Patil, I bluntly told him that what (quota) he was seeking is out of the question, owing to various reasons like the Parliament, Supreme Court, etc., and giving it to one community will lead to similar flare-ups of different groups from all over India," warned Raj Thackeray.

The estranged cousin of Shiv Sena (UBT) President and ex-CM Uddhav Thackeray, he said that "we have to build a new Maharashtra which has no place for the poison of divisions based on caste, community" and called upon the MNS activists to shun such practices always.

MahaYuti to aggressively take up Rs 8 lakh crore infra projects with voters

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Transformation of Maharashtra through the implementation of a slew of infrastructure projects worth Rs 8 lakh crore will be one of the leading planks of the MahaYuti comprising BJP, Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar-led NCP as it plans to aggressively take it up with the voters during the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

MahaYuti believes that the infrastructure development will help it to achieve Maharashtra to be a \$1 trillion economy.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his two deputies Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar argue that the infrastructure development will lead to asset creation, employment generation, revenue mobilisation, increase in consumption that will ultimately bring the money back in the economy giving the push for its growth. A number of infrastructure projects



include Metro rail, roads, highways, bridges and sea links, coastal roads, upgradation and strengthening of railway network and airports.

The government has formed Maharashtra State Infrastructure Development Corporation with a mandate to implement infrastructure projects such as roads, ports, airports, Railways, Metro and banking.

MahaYuti's focus is also to aggressively push the Mumbai Metropolitan Region's economy to \$300 billion by 2030. The alliance believes that it is an achievable target with the timely implementation of infrastructure projects.

MahaYuti plans to project the commissioning of the 701 km Mumbai Nagpur Samruddhi Marg and the 21.8 km Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) as game changers to spur the economic growth and the development of various districts. Of the 701 km, 625 km of Samruddhi Marg is currently opened for vehicular traffic and after its full completion it will open up numerous opportunities in 10 districts along the highway for the development of growth centres, agriculture and agri-based industries, manufacturing and services units.

On the other hand, the

government sees that the MTHL will make the Navi Mumbai and Raigad district as the new hub for data centres and IT and ITES industry in addition to the realty, hospitality, manufacturing and engineering sectors.

The Rs 12,000 crore Mumbai Coastal Road project is expected to ease traffic and make the travel smooth also because of declines in noise and air pollution. One lane of 10.58 km will be opened on March 11. The number of roads on both sides of the lane is 8 (six in the tunnel). The government expects that 70 per cent of the time and 34 per cent of the fuel will be saved due to the Coastal Road.

This apart, the MahaYuti is banking on the completion of 337-km Metro network in Mumbai Metropolitan Region. Currently, the 46-km route is operational. The government is simultaneously pushing the Metro network in Pune, Pimpri Chinchwad and Nagpur.

Mumbai BJP launches six digital campaign chariots to showcase PM Modi's development works

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai BJP on Saturday flagged off six digital 'chariots' which will apprise Mumbaiers in six Lok Sabha constituencies about the various development works undertaken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. Mumbai BJP President Ashish Shelar said that in comparison to the other parties, BJP has taken the lead on all fronts and started campaigning for the forthcoming elections.

"BJP will continue to reach out to every section of the society," he said.

He said that under the guidance of PM Modi, the BJP had started to build a connection with various elements of the society including the women's self-help groups, the Anganwadi workers and the health workers from Mumbai.

"BJP has set up a competent 'Super Warrior' system at every polling station. Every worker is working



hard to ensure that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is once again elected to power," he said.

He said that BJP's six District Presidents are being entrusted with the responsibility of the elections whereas the former Corporators and office bearers will be active at the local level.

BJP's move is important as the party is in alliance with Eknath Shinde-led Shiv

Sena and hopes to win all six Lok Sabha seats in Mumbai, riding high on PM Modi's wave. Although the seat-sharing talks between the two allies are inconclusive, BJP is expecting to contest seats leaving two to Shiv Sena in seat-sharing arrangement.

In the 2019 general elections, BJP and United Shiv Sena had bagged three seats each.

Mumbai Airport flyover to finally open to the public

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Motorists travelling from the airport terminal-2 (T2) to Bandra via the Western Express Highway (WEH) will be able to use the newly constructed flyover starting tomorrow or the latest by Sunday, as Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has plans to do the inauguration on Saturday. Shiv Sena leader Aaditya Thackeray on Friday had once again pointed out that the flyover inauguration was pending for three weeks.

Thackeray had criticised the authorities for delaying the flyover's opening earlier as well. On Friday he tweeted about the delayed inauguration again. "The Coastal Road will be partially opened to people tomorrow, after a long delay of dates since February 19. This only shows how the VIP culture has been fuelled by the BJP, to claim credit for the work not done by them. Reminder: 1) Domestic airport flyover inauguration, pending for 3 weeks now. 2) Pune's new terminal building inauguration pending for 6 months now. 3) Pune's metro



rail from Ruby Hall Clinic to Ramwadi, pending for 3 months. Is the wait for election date declaration so important that people can be hassled but inaugurations won't be done?"

Sources from MMRDA told mid-day that the work to add finishing touches to the domestic airport flyover will be completed by late Friday night and the flyover is expected to be inaugurated on Saturday evening, mid-day has consistently reported on the newly constructed domestic airport flyover. The structure, also known as the T1 flyover, was expected to open on February 15. On February 20 an MMRDA official told mid-day that only final touches remain to be added, including the installation of signboards, and

the flyover will be opened after the work is complete.

Construction work on the 790-m-long project started in June 2021 at a cost of R48.43 crore (provisional). The MMRDA decided to construct the two-lane flyover as motorists coming via the Sahar elevated road and going towards Bandra via the WEH got stuck in traffic near the domestic airport flyover signal.

With the construction of the new flyover, which is adjacent to the existing domestic airport flyover, motorists will be able to bypass the signal. However, Vile Parle East residents, who did not wish to be named, have been expressing concerns that the new flyover might lead to traffic jams once it is opened.

Doctor swindled of Rs 7.33 lakh by cyber fraudster posing as a cop

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 27-year-old doctor working at a civic-run hospital in Mumbai fell prey to a computer scam and lost Rs 7.33 lakh to a fraudster impersonating a Mumbai police officer, an official revealed on Saturday.

Authorities filed a complaint against the unidentified perpetrator last week under sections 419 (cheating by personation), 420 (cheating), and 465 (forgery) of the Indian Penal Code, as well as pertinent provisions of the Information Technology Act, reported a news agency.

According to the report, Dr Blessy Esther, a senior doctor at KEM Hospital, filed a complaint alleging that she received a call from an unusual number on February 29.

The caller, posing as a courier business employee, informed her that a parcel intended for her had been impounded at the Mumbai airport. The shipment allegedly included five passports, three credit cards, 140 grams of mephedrone pills, clothing, and a laptop.

The call was then transferred to someone purporting to be from the cyber police, who grilled Dr Esther and told her to submit a police report after denying knowledge of the parcel.

During a following video chat, the fraudster, posing as a police officer, presented the Mumbai police emblem and briefed the doctor about putative fraudulent bank accounts made in her name and allegedly used to fund terrorist activities, the report added.



JOLT TO CONGRESS IN MP AS SURESH PACHOURI, SEVERAL PARTY LEADERS JOIN BJP



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, Congress faced yet another big jolt in Madhya Pradesh as senior party leader Suresh Pachouri, along with several leaders, joined BJP on Saturday.

Pachouri, who had tendered his resignation to AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge on March 7, joined the BJP in

the presence of Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and state BJP President V. D. Sharma.

Pachouri, who has been sidelined for the last few years even when the MP Congress unit was headed by former CM Kamal Nath, has been upset and was exploring his political future.

Pachouri, who also served as state Congress President and also held various posts

during the 40 years of his association with the grand-old party, has strong hold in Bhopal region.

A signal for his disappointment was made ahead of the assembly election in November last year when one of his close aides was replaced from the post of Bhopal district president. Since then, Pachouri has been upset with the party's top leadership.

Apart from Pachouri, several other Congress leaders, including former MP Gajendra Singh Rajukhedhi and ex-MLA Sanjay Shukla (Indore) also joined the BJP.

Former MLA Shukla had contested the assembly election against senior BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya, and lost. However, he is considered a close aide of Vijayvargiya, as he often called the senior BJP leader as his father figure.

CHIEF MINISTER DR. YADAV PAYS TRIBUTE TO MAHANAYAK RAJA RAO TULARAM

Bhopal : Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, on Saturday, garlanded the statue of immortal martyr Raja Rao Tularam ji, the brave hero of the first freedom struggle of 1857, at Mahendragarh district during his stay in Haryana.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav paid tribute to the brave hero Tularam ji by paying floral tributes to him. A large number of local public representatives were present on this occasion.

Raja Rao Tularam Bahadur, was born on December 9, 1825 in Rampura palace of Rewari ruler Raja Rao Purna Singh. Rao Tularam died on 23 September 1863 at the young age of 38. In his short life, he actively participated in the freedom struggle of 1857 to liberate the country. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav remembered the contribution of the brave hero.

If there was no BJP government, Article 370 would not have been abrogated: Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav

MADHYA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER DR. MOHAN YADAV WAS WELCOMED BY HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR ON HIS ARRIVAL IN GURUGRAM.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that if there was no BJP government, no one could have removed Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir. Before Modi government, 40 thousand people were brutally murdered in Jammu and Kashmir. He said that today the country is safe under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Yadav said these things while addressing the cluster meeting at the party office Gurukamal in Gurugram.

Earlier, upon reaching the office, Dr. Yadav was welcomed by Haryana Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal had come to meet Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav at Gurukamal office after the program organized in Nuh. Here Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar also formally welcomed Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav. After this, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar left for his upcoming programs.

After the formal welcome in the meeting, State Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav discussed various organiza-



tional issues related to the Lok Sabha elections as well as the party's strategy and told about election management. Dr. Yadav called upon the workers to start making full preparations from now onwards to ensure a big victory for the party in the Lok Sabha elections. Election management officials of Gurugram, Faridabad and Mahendragarh-Bhiwani Lok Sabha were present in this meeting of the cluster.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that we are people who believe in the culture of Lord Ram and Krishna. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP is taking Sanatan culture forward. He said that in 10 years, Ujjain and Banaras were revived and a grand and divine temple of Lord Shri Ram was built in Ayodhya. Yadav said that it is the miracle of Prime Minister Modi's leadership that the entire country is happy.

Dr. Yadav said that now Lok Sabha elections will be announced soon. In the elections, all the workers have to put aside personal interests and work for the benefit of

the party. The worker has to give his best in the work he has got. He said that democracy is alive because of BJP workers. The Chief Minister said that we have to fulfill Prime Minister Modi's mission of a developed nation. Dr. Yadav said that every member of the BJP family should get involved in fulfilling the target of 'crossing 400 this time'.

Dr. Mohan Yadav said that only the workers working in BJP get a chance to move forward. The party keeps an eye on the hard working workers. He said that I am a worker myself and am among you as the Chief Minister. He said that I feel proud to come to Haryana and meet workers like you.

In the meeting, Dr. Mohan Yadav created an atmosphere of laughter and fun and also discussed with the workers. Dr. Mohan Yadav said that being a BJP worker is the biggest honor. He also called upon all the party workers to discharge their responsibilities for the Lok Sabha elections and create history by ensuring BJP's victory for the third time.

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER SHUKLA INAUGURATED THE MASSIVE HEALTH CHECK-UP CAMPAIGN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla has said that a massive health check-up campaign has been started to fulfill the resolve of a healthy and prosperous Rewa along with infrastructural development works. Regular health checkups provide timely information about disease outbreaks, nutritional deficiencies, and immunity status. If the symptoms of any disease bigger than this are detected in time, then treatment can completely prevent it. Shukla launched the massive health check-up cam-



Deputy Chief Minister said that every citizen should take advantage of the testing facilities in these camps and take medicines as per the doctor's advice.

paign in the auditorium of Medical College, Rewa.

paign in the auditorium of Medical College, Rewa. Deputy Chief Minister said that every citizen should take advantage of the testing facilities in these camps and take medicines as per the doctor's advice. Do exercise, pranayama and yoga to protect your health. Due to lack of awareness about health, we often become victims of serious diseases. Every person should be aware of his health. The free health check-up campaign will continue till March 22 in medical colleges, district hospitals, community health centres, primary health centers and Sanjeevani centres. Non-communicable diseases will mainly be investigated in the campaign. MP Janardan Mishra, Collector Pratibha Pal, Dean Dr. Manoj Indulkar, local public representatives and general public were present.

Recovery file of Rs 140 crore and joke of Kailash Vijayvargiya

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress leader Sanjay Shukla was under pressure after losing the assembly elections in 2023. Recently, the district administration had made a file against Shukla for recovery of Rs 140 crore in an old case related to illegal mining. However, it is not yet clear whether its notice has been issued or not. After this, Sanjay Shukla's troubles had increased.

Kailash Vijayvargiya also made fun of Sanjay Shukla when he joined BJP. Minister of Mohan Yadav government in the state, Kailash Vijayvargiya, presented a saffron scarf to Sanjay Shukla, his opponent in the assembly elections, while joining BJP on Saturday (March 9).



During this, Kailash Vijayvargiya jokingly said to Sanjay Shukla, "I heard a lot of abuses from you during the assembly elections and now I am getting you to join BJP." While joining BJP on

behalf of Kailash Vijayvargiya, the leaders present there laughed loudly by jokingly taunting Sanjay Shukla. This video of Kailash Vijayvargiya is also going viral on social media.

PRIME MINISTER MODI WILL FLAG OFF KHAJURAHONIZAMUDDIN VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS

Bhopal: Khajuraho, the world famous tourist destination of Madhya Pradesh, is going to get the gift of Vande Bharat Express. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off this train on March 12.

BJP MP and State President VD Sharma said that Prime Minister Modi has given a big gift to Khajuraho parliamentary constituency. Vande Bharat Express will run between Khajuraho-Nizamuddin. Prime Minister Modi will flag off this train on March 12.

He said that the running of Vande Bharat Express is expected to further boost tourism in the region. Khajuraho is also connected by air and rail along with national highways.

This is a government fire set in the government's ministry of corruption, debt and crime: Jitu Patwari

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Congress President Jitu Patwari has asked Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and the BJP government regarding the fire in the Ministry Vallabh Bhawan in the capital Bhopal, who is responsible for the Bharatiya Janata Party government setting fire to Vallabh Bhawan five times in a row? Which file got burnt? Which department was burnt and why has no action been taken till date?

Patwari and Leader of Opposition Umang Singhar reached Vallabh Bhawan along with the Congressmen and took information from the officials regarding the cause of the fire. After not getting satisfactory answers from the officials, Patwari and Singhar sat on a dharna along with the Congressmen.

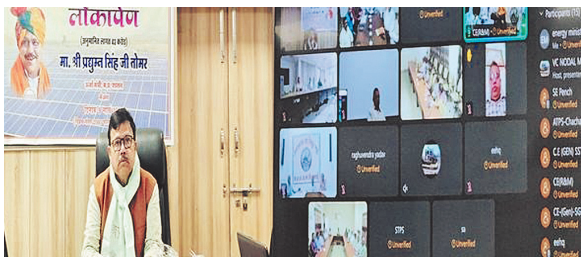
Patwari said that there was a fire and it could not be extinguished even after five hours, so we had to come. This fire is an official fire set by the Bharatiya Janata Party government of corruption, debt and crime, it is a fire to hide the sin



of corruption. The fire in Vallabh Bhawan is a conspiracy hatched to erase the achievements of the government busy in corruption, debt and crime. The fire in the ministry before every election and corruption documents worth crores being destroyed is not a coincidence. Leader of Opposition in Madhya

Pradesh Legislative Assembly, Singhar said that the fire is the result of the feud between the present and former Chief Minister, the internal feud of BJP is coming out in the form of Vallabh Bhawan fire, it is a loss to the public, after all, fire safety. Why does BJP not answer why the system audit was not done?

Madhya Pradesh Power Generating Company's first solar power plant inaugurated



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar on Saturday inaugurated seven MW solar power plants of Madhya Pradesh Power Generating Company located at Rataguradia in Mandasaur district through video conferencing. The construction of these plants cost about Rs 42 crore and it is estimated that about 1.25 crore units of electricity will be produced every year.

Congratulating Energy Minister Tomar, he said that the power generating company will increase the production of electricity by doing better work in the field of renewable energy. Rataguradia Solar Power Plant is the first solar plant of Madhya Pradesh Power Generating Company. Earlier, Madhya Pradesh Power

Generating Company was producing electricity only from coal and water based power plants. Keeping in view the need of the hour, efforts are also being made to install other solar plants on the vacant land of the currently operational thermal power plants of the company. On this occasion, Additional Chief Secretary Energy Manu Srivastava, Managing Director of Madhya Pradesh Power Transmission Company Sunil Tiwari, Managing Director of Madhya Pradesh Power Generating Company Manjit Singh and senior engineers of all power houses, State Water Resources Department and Madhya Pradesh Western Region Electricity. Engineers from the distribution company participated in the inauguration program through video conferencing.

MEDIFEST 2024-TWO DAYS NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN AIIMS BHOPAL

Team Absolute | Bhopal

National Conference on Cardio-metabolic, chronic hepatic and Infectious diseases - Medifest 2024 organized by Department of Medicine AIIMS Bhopal started from today. This literary fest included speakers among leading academicians and doctors from various specialties and medical colleges from India as well as post graduate students/ residents research scholars as delegates. Medifest will include a number of engrossing sessions over 2 days - including lectures, panel discussions and poster presentations. This event has Dr Sunil Malik, President AIIMS Bhopal as patron and Prof Ajai Singh, Executive Director & CEO AIIMS Bhopal as the chief guest. Organizing team from AIIMS Bhopal include Professor Rajnish Joshi, Head Medicine and Prof Medicine Dr V N Mishra and Prof. Dr Seema Mahant. Prof Ajai Singh stressed the importance of holistic approach in medical disorders and also emphasized development of clinical skills in medical students.

Medifest 2024 Oration was delivered by Prof A K Das, Ex-Prof & HOD Endocrinology JIPMER. Keynote address on 'Newer paradigms in management of heart failure' was delivered by Prof P P Joshi, Director AIIMS Nagpur today and 'Initiating ART what is new' by Dr B B Rewari, Professor (Epidemiology and Public Health) will be delivered on 10th March. Other speakers of repute will include Dr Prof Soumitro Ghosh, Head General Medicine, IPGIMER Kolkata; Dr Prof Puneet Rastogi, Professor and Head Cardiology, GRMC Gwalior; Dr Ajay Jain,



Consultant Choithram Hospital; Dr A K Pandit, Senior neurologist AIIMS Delhi; Dr Prof. Ashish Bhalla, Medicine PGIMER Chandigarh and Dr. Prof.D. Himanshu, Medicine, KGMU Lucknow. Various employees and Medical students were awarded achievement awards by President and Director AIIMS Bhopal.

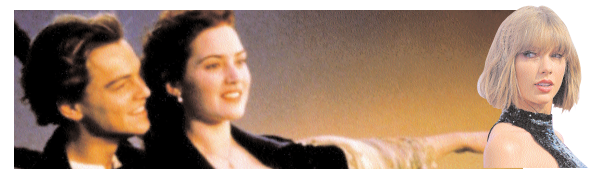
AIIMS Bhopal is a leading hospital and teaching institute in central India and the Conferences like Medifest 2024 are part of continuous efforts to organize academic events for exchange of ideas and knowledge shall enable doctors to adopt best treatment modalities to the patients attending AIIMS Bhopal.

PANIC BROKE OUT AMONG THE CONSPIRATORS OF THE NATIONAL HERALD CASE

Bhopal: There has been a panic among the conspirators of the National Herald case and the leaders who were hiding their actions. Mohd Saeed and Sanjay Chaturvedi of Navjeevan Employees Union, Bhopal are continuously fighting regarding this entire matter. The employee leaders said in the release issued here that they have met many Congress leaders from Bhopal to Delhi and told them the reality which all the Congress leaders were trying to hide from the Gandhi family.

Now Ajay Maken, close to the Gandhi family, has the command of AJL. This has created a stir among the conspirators and the Congress leaders who are engaged in hiding this conspiracy. Kamal Nath's name is included in this link but his BJP entry case is hanging in the balance but Congress By the grace of Suresh Pachauri, who was holding a high position, he changed sides.

When Suresh Pachauri was the State Congress President, the then Governor Rameshwar Thakur had called him along with the delegation of Navjeevan Employees Union to Raj Bhavan and asked him to make a detailed report of the case, but Suresh Pachauri, who was dominating the Gandhi family, avoided him. Now that due to the efforts of Mohd Saeed and Sanjay Chaturvedi, the truth of the National Herald case has started reaching the Gandhi family, these leaders have started leaving Congress and joining BJP to avoid accountability.



John Travolta shares glimpses of his 70th birthday bash in Brazil

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actor John Travolta has shared moments from his birthday celebration in Brazil with his followers on social media. The 'Pulp Fiction' star took to his Instagram, and shared a video montage in which he highlighted the activities from his 70th birthday vacation, reports People magazine.

"My trip to Brazil to celebrate my birthday," he wrote in the caption. "I thank you my friends!! Love JT."

The video started off with the actor's flight's descent into the South American country, as it showed the magnificent views from the plane's window seat.

As per People, the clip then continued with one of the few solo shots of Travolta enjoying the night time view of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro.

He continued to capture moments by the coast, documenting the blue ocean and white sandy beaches. The video then concluded with a couple more shots of Christ the Redeemer statue at night.

The video is accompanied by Sergio Mendes' song 'The Look Of Love (feat. Fergie)'.

Earlier, for his milestone birthday, the actor shared a sweet video to his Instagram Stories celebrating with his family. In the Story, Travolta blew out his birthday cake candles, and also shared an adorable moment with his dog Peanut.



InStyle



Taylor Swift runs into Travis Kelce's arms for kiss on fifth night of Singapore Eras Tour

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift put up a public display of affection with her boyfriend Travis Kelce in Singapore during the latest leg of her Eras tour. The Kansas City Chiefs tight end attended the fifth night of his girlfriend's Tour run at Singapore National Stadium, reports People magazine.

Swift changed the lyrics of 'Karma' to shout him out once again, before they shared a kiss following the show. Kelce, 34, flew across the globe to see Swift, 34, in concert.

As per People, she expressed her appreciation by editing the lyrics of her 'Midnights' track 'Karma', singing on stage, as per fan videos. "Karma is the guy on the Chiefs coming straight home to me."

After her performance, concert-goers spotted the NFL star standing behind the stage waiting for the Grammy winner, who ran into his arms for a hug and a couple of kisses, as per a video shared on social media.

Fans realised Kelce would be in attendance for the show upon spotting him in the stands with friends at the venue in Kallang, per a photo posted to X, formerly Twitter.

The football player's friend Harry Clark also shared an Instagram Story video of himself sporting an Eras Tour wristband, and he tagged his location as the National Stadium.



Demi Lovato has a beauty advice for her teenage self: Have your own standards

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Demi Lovato has spoken up about the influence of beauty standards on her teenage self.

Lovato, who uses she/they pronouns, shared the advice she would give her teenage self, reports People magazine.

She also spoke about how beauty standards shouldn't impact how people see themselves. She told People: "What I would tell my teenage self is don't hold yourself to anybody else's standards but your own."

She added: "And if your own becomes too critical, then look within yourself and try to find that self-love. I think it's really important to find self-love no matter what age you are."

As per People, Lovato has been in the limelight for most of her career, she starred in 'Barney & Friends' at the age of 10, and after a career-making stint on Disney Channel, 8 albums under her belt, Lovato has had time to think about what beauty and age mean in the music industry.

For Lovato, spending so much time on sets has given her a lot of opportunities to learn about beauty and makeup from the best of the best.

"The best beauty tip that I've got from someone on set is to never sleep in your makeup," they revealed. "I never did that anyways, but to hear it over again was just really important and kind of stuck with me. I never sleep in my makeup. It doesn't matter how late the night goes, it doesn't matter if I'm up until the morning, I take my makeup off and I do my skincare routine and I'm very diligent about it. I'm just past that."

The singer and actor has also been candid about her struggles with bullying, addiction and mental health. She revealed that people would write "hate petitions" about her and would say hateful things on social media while she was in the throes of addiction. Now, Lovato has better ways to deal with hate online.

Cardi B nearly throws up trying Filipino delicacy of fertilised duck egg

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Cardi B set out to test her foodie limits and had instant regret. She recently shared a TikTok video of herself trying balut, a fertilised duck egg dish popular in the Philippines.

The rapper, who has ventured in the food space with her spiked whipped cream brand Whipshots, started her food tasting video as she paid an homage to TikTok's food critic Keith Lee, reports People magazine.

"I've been seeing this for a long time, it's called balut. I got it, let's try it and rate it from 1-10," she said, copying Lee's well-known TikTok intro. "This egg is huge! Like this egg is giving two yolks."

However, before she took a bite, she popped pills including Pepto Bismol to "protect the stomach."

"I have a very sensitive stomach," she said, quoted by People. "Now, let's start it off."

"If you're a real Bardigang, you know that I can eat anything with lemon and salt, so I got lemon and salt and pepper," she said, showing off her bowl of seasoning ready to sprinkle on the egg. "Let's try it!"

Balut is prepared by taking a fertilised egg, usually duck or sometimes chicken, allowing the egg to develop for anywhere from 16 to 20 days, and boiling it with the meat inside. A broth that's said to have a strong flavour is produced, along with a tender duck meat (that sometimes comes with feathers and a beak if it's been incubated for long enough).

As per People, it was previously used on James Corden's 'Spill Your Guts' segment but was removed after claims that the bit encourages racism against Asians. Cardi continued her video by pouring her lemon mixture into the open egg and took a sip of the broth, before immediately gagging.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Olivia Culpo

Natalie Portman, Benjamin Millepied focused on being 'best co-parents' amid divorce

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Natalie Portman and her ex-husband Benjamin Millepied's top priority are their kids amid their divorce. The 'Black Swan' actress filed for divorce from her director/choreographer husband in July which was finalised last month in France, where the family lives, reports People magazine.

Natalie and Millepied have always focused on caring for their kids: son Aleph and daughter Amalia.

"Her biggest priority has been ensuring a smooth transition for her children," a friend of the couple told People about Portman. "She and Ben really love their kids and are equally focused on being the best co-parents they can be. Nothing is more important."

The separation followed after media reports in May 2023 of an extramarital affair by Millepied, and it hasn't been easy for Portman.

"It was initially really tough for her, but her friends rallied around her and helped get her through the worst of it," said the insider. "Natalie is coming out of a really tough and painful year but she's come out the other side of it stronger and is finding joy in her family, friends and work."

As per People, there have been signs that there were issues in the marriage, Portman hasn't worn her wedding ring since last spring after reports of Millepied's "short-lived" affair came to light but, the pair have been able to take time to privately work through issues and toward a "new normal."

This past summer, a source said that Millepied was "doing all he can to get Natalie to forgive him and keep their family together" while Portman's "biggest priority is protecting her children and their privacy."





BCCI secretary Jay Shah announces 'Test Cricket Incentive Scheme' after India's 4-1 series win over England

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Shortly after India thrashed England by an innings and 64 runs to win the fifth and final Test at HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala to clinch a 4-1 series win, BCCI secretary Jay Shah has announced the initiation of 'Test Cricket Incentive Scheme' for the senior men's team.

The incentive scheme serves as a financial boost for the players who prioritise playing Test cricket and comes on top of existing match fee of INR 15 lakh per match. "I am pleased to announce the initiation of the 'Test Cricket Incentive Scheme' for Senior Men, a step aimed at providing financial growth and stability to our esteemed athletes."

"Commencing from the 2022-23 season, the 'Test Cricket Incentive Scheme' will serve as an additional reward structure on top of the existing match fee for Test matches, set at INR 15 lakh," wrote Shah on his 'X' account.

According to the incentive structure posted by Shah, players featuring in more than 50 per cent of Tests in a season since 2022/23, will benefit the most. A player who plays five to six Tests in a nine-match season, will receive INR 30 lakh per match as a playing eleven incentive, while 15 lakh per match is kept as a non-playing eleven incentive.

Every player who features in at least 75 per cent of matches (which is seven or more matches in a



nine-game season), will get a playing incentive of INR 45 lakh per match, while the non-playing eleven incentive is fixed at INR 22.5 lakh. The incentives' structure does not apply to those who play less than four Tests in a season.

This move comes after Shah wrote a letter to the centrally-contracted players last month, asking them not to prioritise playing IPL over domestic cricket matches, calling the trend as a cause of concern. Later, it showed seriousness after the letter was dispatched, by omitting Shreyas Iyer and Ishan Kishan from the 2023/24 BCCI annual contracts list due to no regular participation of the duo in domestic cricket matches.

"It is essential to recognise that domestic cricket forms the backbone of Indian cricket and serves as the feeder line to Team India. Our vision for Indian cricket has been clear from the outset - every cricketer aspiring to play for India must prove themselves in domestic cricket. Performance in domestic tournaments remains a critical yardstick for selection, and non-participation in domestic cricket will carry severe implications," said Shah in the letter. After India won the fourth Test against England by five wickets in Ranchi to take an unsailable 3-1 lead, captain Rohit Sharma did talk about selecting players who have the hunger to prioritise playing Test cricket.

"This (playing Test cricket) is the toughest format. If you want success and want to excel in this tough format then you need that hunger. It is very important. We will give opportunity only to players who have that hunger. You come to know (easily) the players who don't have that hunger, players who don't want to stay here (and play Test cricket). We come to know that."

"Players who have that hunger, players who want to stay here and perform, (and) play in tough conditions, we will give preference to them. Obviously, it is pretty simple: if you don't have hunger, there's no meaning playing such players," Rohit had said at that time.

Indian Wells: Rublev ends Murray's journey

California | Agencies

Britain's Andy Murray fell to a straight-set defeat against Russian fifth seed Andrey Rublev in the third round at Indian Wells. Three-time Grand Slam champion Murray, 36, was beaten 7-6 (7-3) 6-1 by Rublev. The match unfolded with Murray showcasing glimpses of his trademark resilience, particularly in the first set where he held a 5-4 lead and held four set points. However, Rublev's tenacity proved insurmountable as he rallied to claim the set in a tie-break, leaving Murray to rue missed opportunities.

As the contest progressed, Murray's resolve wavered, and Rublev capitalized on the momentum shift, swiftly closing out the match with a dominant second set performance. Murray, who had strong support on court two, kept showing glimpses of his talent and defeated Rublev with a well-executed lob as the players battled for the upper hand in the second set. But Murray was unable to overcome a third break opportunity as Rublev surged ahead 3-1, becoming the first player to face pressure points in a service game he had led 4-0.

After being disqualified from the Dubai Tennis Championships last week, the 26-year-old Rublev prevailed in an appeal and did not let up, breaking Murray once more before



winning his fourth match point. Meanwhile, rising stars like Jannik Sinner and defending champion Carlos Alcaraz showcased their prowess, advancing further in the tournament with impressive victories of their own.

The 22-year-old Italian, ranked third in the world, won 6-3, 6-0, and will now play either Croatia's Borna Coric or German Jan-Lennard Struff in the third round.

After losing the opening set to Italy's Matteo Arnaldi, the defending champion Carlos Alcaraz, ranked second, rallied to win 6-7 (7-5) 6-0 6-1.

James Anderson becomes first pace bowler to pick 700 Test wickets



Team Absolute | Dharamshala

Veteran England pacer James Anderson on Saturday became the first-ever pace bowler to pick up 700 Test wickets during the third day of the fifth match against India at HPCA.

The legendary fast bowler became only the third man after Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan (800) and leg-spinner Shane Warne (708) to achieve the feat in the longest format of the sport.

With 698 wickets in his account going into the fifth Test in Dharamshala, Anderson's start with the ball was less than ideal as he was the victim of Shubman Gill's masterpiece. Ultimately,

though, the seasoned pacer prevailed over the youthful Indian player to bag his own 699th victim. Anderson dismissed Kuldeep Yadav on Day 3 of the fifth Test against India on Saturday to reach the milestone. An off-cutter from around the wicket lured Kuldeep into the drive. The ball took the outside edge and Ben Foakes did the rest behind the stumps.

As Warne and Muralitharan were both under 40 when they became members of the enigmatic 700-wicket club, the 41-year-old Anderson is the oldest bowler to reach the milestone. Warne, meanwhile, was the one who kicked off the elite club on December

26, 2006, when he got the wicket of Andrew Strauss in the Boxing Day Test against England. A year later Muralitharan joined him on the list, meanwhile, it took around 17 years for any player to join the two greats on the list.

For England, off-spinner Shoaib Bashir took his second five-wicket haul in Tests as England bowled out India for 477 in their first innings early on Day Three. India now have a lead of 259 runs over England, with Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma making 100 and 103 respectively. The hosts' were also helped by a fine 65 from debutant Devdutt Padikkal and 56 from Sarfaraz Khan.

Shoaib Bashir becomes youngest English bowler to pick multiple fifters before turning 21

Team Absolute | Dharamshala

England young off-spinner Shoaib Bashir became the first English bowler to pick up multiple 5-wicket hauls in Test cricket before turning 21 during the day three of the fifth and final Test match against India at HPCA.

Bill Voce, James Anderson, and Rehan Ahmed are the only other Englishmen with 1 fifer before 21.

Day 3 of the Test match witnessed Bashir's brilliance as he spun a web around the Indian batting lineup, claiming the prized wicket of Jasprit Bumrah (20) to secure his second five-wicket haul in Test cricket before the age of 21. Debutant Devdutt Padikkal (65) and Sarfaraz Khan (56) could not convert their fifties into tons as Bashir sent them back. Dhruv Jurel (15) were his other victims. Bashir finished with a figure of 46.1-5-173-5.

While he missed the third Test, he took his maiden fifer in the preceding fourth game (5/119 & 3/79). With another five-fer, he has raced to 17 Test wickets, averaging 33.35. Bashir made history by becoming the second-youngest English bowler to take five wickets in a Test



match earlier in the 4th Test at the JSCA International Complex in Ranchi. Rehan Ahmed holds the record for the youngest England bowler to pick up a five-wicket haul.

Rehan accomplished the feat at the age of eighteen years and 126 days. Contrarily, Bashir accomplished the feat at the age of twenty years and 133 days. In Test matches against India, Bashir is one of the six spinners for England to record multiple 5-wicket hauls.

Bundesliga: Stuttgart ease past Union Berlin

Berlin | Agencies

Third placed Stuttgart narrowed the gap with runners-up Bayern Munich to one point after moving 2-0 past 10-man Union Berlin at the opener of Bundesliga's 25th round on Friday.

The visitors from the capital started brightly as Yorbe Vertessen shrugged off two Stuttgart defenders before pulling wide from promising position three minutes into the game, reported Xinhua.

The Swabians gained the upper hand and opened the scoring as Enzo Millot missed the target from inside the box before Serhou Guirassy tapped home Atakan Karazor's square pass in the 19th minute. Stuttgart dominated possession and should have doubled the lead, but Joshua Vagnoman couldn't overcome Union goalkeeper Frederik Ronnow, who showed a great reflex on the goal line just before the break.

Union came out strong after the restart but neither



Lucas Tousart nor Kevin Volland was able to beat Stuttgart custodian Alexander Nubel.

Clinical Stuttgart made it two after Chris Fuhrich benefited on Diogo Leite's misplaced clearance before curling the ball past hapless Ronnow in the 65th minute.

Things went from bad to worse for Union as Andras Schafer was sent off for a

rude foul play. Stuttgart remained on the front foot but couldn't utilize its numerical advantage. Ronnow neutralized Vagnoman's 20-meter effort in the closing stages.

With the result, Stuttgart cemented its third spot with 53 points after securing the second straight win, while Union stay on the 14th spot with 25 points.

Olympic Games 2024 are on track, IOC committee informed in final meeting



Paris | Agencies

The organising committee for the Paris Olympic Games 2024 has informed the International Olympic Committee (IOC)'s Coordination Commission that everything is on track for the Olympic Games to be held in the French capital from July 26 to August 11 this year.

Just like athletes around the globe who are preparing for the upcoming Olympic Games, the organising committee for Paris 2024 is diligently working towards reaching peak performance this summer.

This was the final Coordination Commission meeting before the Games, during which it was confirmed that the Olympic Games Paris 2024 Opening Ceremony will begin at 19:30 local time (CEST) on July 26.

Following the conclusion of meetings, the Coordination Commission Chair, Pierre-Olivier Beckers-Vieujant, reflected on progress. He said: "Paris 2024 is on

track to deliver their exceptional Games vision. With the continued support of stakeholders, they are incredibly focused on what's ahead and on the ultimate goal of delivering spectacular, impactful and sustainable Games."

Throughout this week's discussions, there was acknowledgement of the important progress achieved so far, but also recognition of areas of focus over the coming weeks.

Final testing is underway, with 15 test events and activities remaining, putting all the people who will deliver the Games, as well as processes and infrastructure, to the test.

Other key tasks remaining include training the Games-time workforce and around 45,000 volunteers, as well as finalising detailed operating plans to ensure the seamless enjoyment of the Games and the smooth functioning of the host and co-host cities.

While the Commission expressed strong confidence in Paris 2024's preparations, there was also an opportunity to

reflect on the wide-reaching Games legacy initiatives which are already delivering results.

These include Paris 2024's flagship "30 minutes" project, which now sees two million French primary schoolchildren doing 30 minutes of physical activity every day and the 1,100 sports-led social impact projects throughout France that have benefitted from around EUR 50 million from the Paris 2024 Endowment Fund.

In addition to attending meetings at Paris 2024's headquarters, members had the opportunity to tour two facilities - the Olympic Village and the Arena Porte de la Chapelle, which was holding a badminton test event in conjunction with the French Open.

This first-hand experience offered insights into the high level of operational and team readiness within these newly-completed venues, which are the exception for a Games where 95 per cent of the facilities being used are existing or temporary.

La Liga: Teenager Yamal gifts Barca narrow win over Mallorca

Madrid | Agencies

Teenager Lamine Yamal scored the only goal of the game to give FC Barcelona a narrow 1-0 win at home to Mallorca to keep their slim hopes of this season's title alive. Yamal, born in July 2007, produced a moment of magic to move Barca to within five points of Real Madrid, who entertain Celta Vigo on Sunday, reported Xinhua.

Barca coach Xavi Hernandez produced a surprise in his starting line-up, with Robert Lewandowski rested and young striker Marc Guiu given a chance, ahead of January signing Vitor Roque.

With Pedri and Frenkie de Jong both injured, Joao Felix was picked to play in midfield, while 17-year-old Marc Cubarsi was also selected in defense, with Andreas Christensen again playing in midfield.

A close opening 20 minutes were interrupted when Barcelona were awarded a penalty after Copete clipped Raphinha's heel in the penalty area.

Without Lewandowski on the pitch, Ilkay Gundogan took responsibility from the spot, but his kick was too central and comfortably saved by Mallorca keeper Predrag Rajkovic.

Rajkovic produced another save to frustrate Felix, before Raphinha had to leave the game with an ankle injury, and he also saved a header from Fermin Lopez, who replaced the Brazilian.

There were timid boos as the Barca players left the pitch at halftime, but the home side still struggled to break down the Mallorca defense at the start of the second half, with Vedat Muriqi hitting the post.

Yamal cut inside and hit the crossbar in the 57th minute, with Rajkovic getting his fingertips to the shot, before Xavi



made a double change with Lewandowski and Vitor Roque on for Guiu and the ineffective Felix.

Yamal broke the deadlock with 18 minutes left when he cut in from the right of the area and curled a shot into the far corner of the net beyond Rajkovic's reach.

Urwashi storms into Bristol Open squash semis

Bristol | Agencies

India's Urwashi Joshi is one step away from her maiden Professional Squash Association final, as she booked a semifinal spot in style at the University of the West of England the Bristol Open. The 28-year-old Maharashtra girl rallied to beat higher-ranked Australian fifth seed Erin Classen 9-11, 11-8, 11-7, 11-7



in the quarterfinals of the USD 3000 PSA Challenger event late on Friday.

World No 153 Urwashi, semifinalist at the 2023 National Championships, will meet higher-ranked Breanne Flynn of Ireland in the last-four stage.

Meanwhile, Breanne, ranked 139 in the world, eased past fourth seed Colette Sultana (Malta) 3-0 in her quarterfinal outing.



Raashii Khanna 'steals glances' in body-hugging outfit

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Raashii Khanna, who will be soon seen in action thriller 'Yodha' alongside Sidharth Malhotra, on Saturday, set the social media ablaze with her pictures in a scintillating body-hugging outfit.

Raashii took to Instagram where she enjoys 10.8 million followers, and shared a series of pictures from her latest photoshoot amid the promotion of 'Yodha' in Chandigarh.

In the snaps, we can see Raashii in a teal sleeveless crop top with turtle-neck, paired with a matching skirt. Her makeup is all about nude brown lips and smokey eyes. She opted for a gold bangle and matching earrings.

She kept her hair parted on the side, styled in soft curls.

The diva is flaunting her perfect curves as she poses looking in the mirror. The post is captioned: "S-TEAL-ing glances."

'Yodha' is directed by Sagar Ambre and Pushkar Ojha, and also stars



Disha Patani and Tanuj Virwani. It is set to release in cinemas on March 15.

Raashii next has 'Aranmanai 4', and 'Methavi' in the pipeline.

Rakul Preet shimmers in white, says 'fashion with chooda izza vibe'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rakul Preet Singh is at the top of her fashion game and the new bride dropped stunning pictures of herself, flaunting her bridal pink chooda.

Rakul Preet got married in Goa on February 21 to actor-producer Jacky Bhagnani. The diva is currently enjoying being a new bride, and has shared a sneak peek of her latest photoshoot.

In the photos, we can see Rakul wearing an embellished white outfit. The ensemble includes a white long sleeve blouse, and matching palazzo pants.

The 'Doctor G' fame actress opted for a glam makeup look with glossy pink lips, kohl-rimmed eyes, thick brows, and contoured cheeks. She tied her hair in a neat ponytail.

For the jewellery, she sported a white and golden choker necklace, and matching round earrings.

But it was her pink chooda, diamond ring and mehendi that stole the show. The post is captioned: "Fashion with chooda izza vibe." She gave the tune of recently released song 'Naina' sung by Diljit Dosanjh, Badshah, and Raj Ranjodh from the movie 'Crew'.

Rakul and Jacky had a wedding with twin ceremonies: first, the 'Anand Karaj' in the Sikh tradition; and the second, a Sindh-style ceremony, reflecting both Rakul and Jacky's cultural backgrounds.

On the work front, she has 'Meri Patni Ka Remake' and 'Indian 2' in the pipeline.



Karisma Kapoor is 'a true team player': Nikhil Khurana

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Nikhil Khurana, who is set to star in the captivating murder mystery 'Murder Mubarak' has opened up on working with Karisma Kapoor in the upcoming streaming film. He shared how the latter approached the work as a true team player and called her "incredibly professional."

'Murder Mubarak' stars Sara Ali Khan, Pankaj Tripathi, Vijay Varma, Dimple Kapadia, Karisma and Sanjay Kapoor, and revolves around the 'Royal Delhi' club. Talking about working with the ensemble cast, the 'Made In Heaven 2' fame actor said: "I shot with Sara, Vijay, Pankaj, Karisma and Dimple."

Working with Karisma was particularly delightful as we had scenes together, and she was incredibly welcoming and professional.

During our scene discussions, she approached the work as a true team player, dedicated to making each scene the best it could be.

"It was inspiring to collaborate with individuals who are driven to work hard, as it encourages you to deliver your best performance. It was indeed one of the best experiences to work with Homi Adajania and Maddock Films. They are always been on my wish list to collaborate with the best in the business," shared Nikhil. Nikhil feels a great team is



always instrumental in an actor's career.

He said: "I have always aspired to be in the same team as Homi and Maddock Films. They are individuals who truly understand the craft. Every actor desires to work with acclaimed producers and directors in order to further develop their craft."

Kartik Aaryan begins shoot for sequel, calls it his 'biggest film'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Kartik Aaryan, who was last seen in the 2023 film 'Satyaprem Ki Katha', has started shooting for his upcoming film 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3'.

On Saturday, the 'Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweeti' star took to his Instagram and shared the news of starting the "biggest film" of his career.

He uploaded a picture of himself praying to the Gods with his back facing the camera.

He wrote in the caption: "Starting The Biggest Film Of My Career Today #Shubharambh #BhoolBhulaiyaa3."

The film, which also stars Vidya Balan and Triptii Dimri, is the third installment of the Hindi horror-comedy franchise film 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa'. Its first part was directed by Priyadarshan, and was released in 2007.

Earlier, Kartik was seen at the office of T-Series along with actress Triptii Dimri, who was last seen in the blockbuster film 'Animal'. The meeting seemed to be for 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3'.

Triptii was dressed in smart casuals, which included a pair of denims, a yellow ochre coloured shirt and a jacket.



She accessorised her look with a sling bag.

Kartik sported a pair of black pants and a denim shirt. He was seen walking next to the iconic machine gun that was used as a prop in the Ranbir Kapoor-starrer 'Animal'. Earlier, Kartik Aaryan, introduced a mystery lady from the upcoming installment of the horror-

comedy franchise 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa'. The actor took to his Instagram and shared a piece of a jigsaw puzzle from the picture of an actress. The netizens were quick to make their guess, saying it's Triptii Dimri. Kartik wrote in the caption: "Solve kijiye Is Bhool Bhulaiyaa ko #Bb3MysteryGirl #BhoolBhulaiyaa3 #Diwali2024."

Surbhi Chandna dances with hubby Karan, blushes in her mehendi ceremony

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Surbhi Chandna who recently tied the knot with her longtime beau Karan Sharma, on Saturday dropped a video of her mehendi ceremony, giving her fans major fashion goals for wedding.

The couple, who have been together for over 13 years, tied the knot on March 2 in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

The 'Qubool Hai' fame actress took to her Instagram account, where she enjoys 5.9 million followers, and shared a Reel, wherein we can see her dressed in a multicolored blouse with hues of green, blue, and purple with golden work on it. The choli had small colourful embellishments hanging to it.

She opted for olive green plain lehenga and a matching dupatta. For makeup, she opted for muted brown lips, blushed and highlighted cheeks, and a blue bindi. Surbhi's long tresses were left open and styled in soft curls.

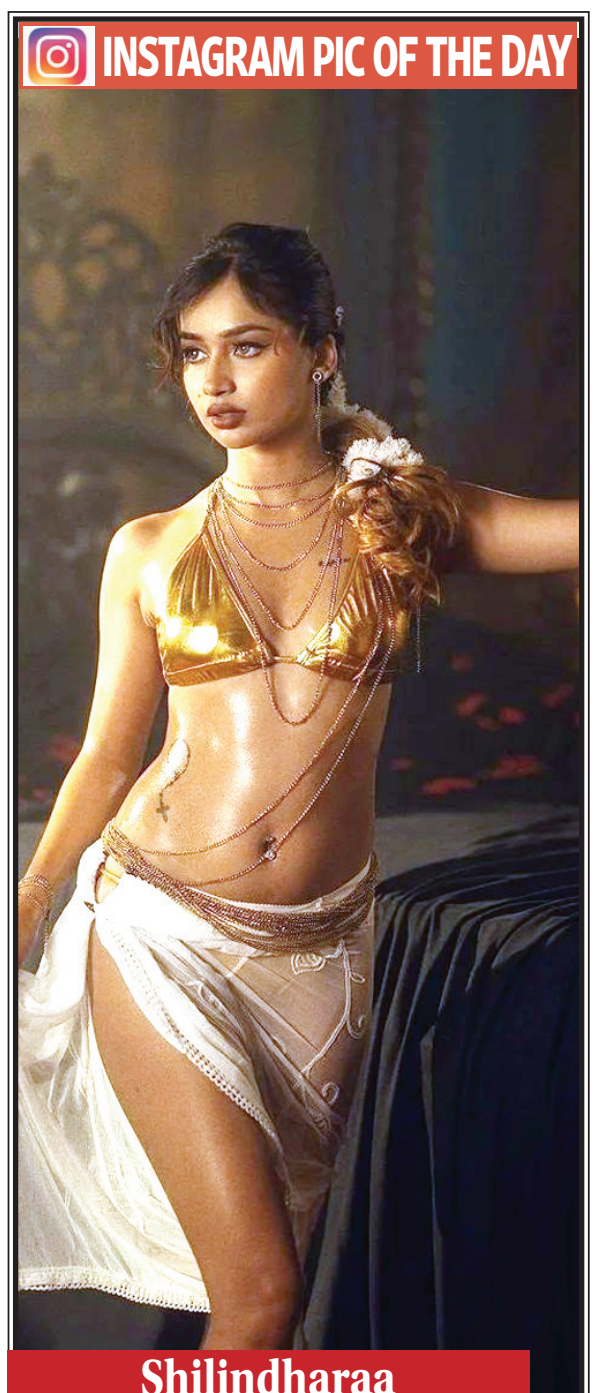
For the accessories, she wore big green jhumkas, bangles and a big nose ring.

The video shows the groom in green ethnic kurta pyjama with golden work on it. The lovebirds can be seen dancing against a picturesque royal backdrop. They are both laughing their hearts out, hugging and Karan giving his ladylove a kiss.

The post is captioned: "Haaye Ve Main Kalli Hoyi... Tere Pichhe Challi Hoyi."

The video garnered 62.2K views in just 20 minutes, with fans showering love for the newlyweds in the comment section.

Meanwhile, Surbhi was last seen in the show 'Sherdil Shergill'. She is also known for her role in 'Naagin 5'.



Shilindharaa