

absolute india

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INDIAN RAILWAYS TO RUN RECORD 2,742 MORE TRAINS TO CLEAR SUMMER TRAVEL RUSH CONVENIENCE AHEAD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian Railways will operate a record-breaking 9,111 trips across the country to cater to the anticipated surge in travel during the summer season, the Ministry of Railways said on Friday.

This translates to an increase of 2,742 trips over the 6,369 trips offered during the summer of 2023. The additional trains have been planned to connect key destinations across the country, ensuring seamless travel on major railway routes, the ministry said.

All zonal railways spread across India have geared up to operate these additional trips, catering to the summer travel rush from states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi.

Planning and running of additional trains is a continuous process for which inputs are taken from all the communication channels like media reports, social media platforms, and the Railway Integrated helpline number 139, apart from details of waitlist passengers in the PRS system, to assess the demand of trains



on a particular route. Based on this requirement, the number of trains and number of trips are augmented, according to the official statement.

During the summer season, Zonal Railways have also been instructed to ensure the availability of drinking water at railway stations. Elaborate crowd control arrangements are

made at all major and important railway stations. Senior officers are stationed at these stations to monitor all the activities to regulate the crowd in a systematic manner, the statement added.

RPF personnel have been deputed at originating stations to ensure a queue system for entry in General

Class coaches. RPF staff are also deployed in the CCTV Control Room to keep a close watch on the crowded areas and render real-time assistance to passengers.

Passengers can book their tickets in these additional trains through Railway Ticket counters or the IRCTC website/app.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a significant initiative, the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) plans to replace more than 6,500 trucks operating in and around the port with battery-powered vehicles as part of its 'Zero Emission Trucking' strategy, officials said.

The shift to ZET will take place in phases over the next five years, starting with over 15 trucks serving the Inter Terminal Rail Operations to be converted to electric in six months, said JNPA Chairman, Umesh S Wagh.

This will be followed by converting over 400 diesel-fueled trucks plying within terminals for the vessel and yard operations, to electric in the next couple of years. The final phase would be converting 6,500-plus trucks plying from containers to Container Freight Stations and vice-versa, including the Centralised Parking Plaza Trucks at terminals, to elec-

tric operated in the coming 3-5 years, assured Wagh.

At present, a majority of the trucks operating within the sprawling JNPA run on diesel, contributing to massive emissions and pollution. "Recognising the critical role of decarbonising truck movements, especially within port premises, JNPA has embarked on the ambitious plan to transition its truck fleet from diesel to electric power." By transitioning to ZET, we aim to achieve the



vision of a fully electrified port, aligning with national sustainability goals such as the Harit Sagar guidelines and MIV 2030," explained Wagh. The 35-year-old JNPA is the country's premier container handling port, accounting for around 50 per cent of the total container cargo volumes, said officials. At present, the JNPA ranks at 26th globally among the top 100 container ports in the world, and is connected to more than 200 ports worldwide.

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Reunited with family, 95-year-old great grandma from Bihar seeks to cast vote



Team Absolute | Kolkata

A 95-year-old woman from Bihar's Banka district, who was found lying unconscious on a pavement in Howrah, near Kolkata, was reunited with her family on Saturday, thanks to efforts made by the police and members of the West Bengal Radio Club (WBRC) -- an organisation of amateur radio operators. Sajmu Nisha Sajman had made two pleas to her rescuers. She was eager to return to her great-grandchildren as they would only have their meals if she told them stories and she wanted to cast her vote for the last time at a booth close to her house in Salmanpur village.

"Some passersby had first spotted her as she lay unconscious. The authorities at Golabari police station were informed and they swung into action. Sajmu was shifted to a hospital where she was diagnosed with

severe dehydration due to the immense heat. She was administered intravenous fluids till she recovered. Thereafter, the police got in touch with us as the WBRC has reunited hundreds of lost people with their families through its wide network. The woman spoke of her great-grandchildren and said that she was from Salmanpur. She also said that she was eager to cast her vote," said Ambarish Nag Biswas, secretary of the WBRC.

While the police started looking for Salmanpur in Uttar Pradesh, the WBRC searched in Bihar. Finally, it came to be known that a woman matching her description had been reported missing from Salmanpur village in Banka, Bihar. The HAMS got in touch with her family and Saimu's grandchildren broke down on being shown her photograph. One of them immediately boarded a train for Howrah.

Welcomhotel Hamsa in Manali - an all season destination

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Mountain destinations are a favourite destination during summers. Welcoming guests in its pristine glory this season is "Welcomhotel by ITC Hotels, Hamsa, Manali". With 46 well-appointed rooms and suites including 7 expansive all-weather villas, Welcomhotel Manali brings cheer to travellers wanting to experience the mountain charm. The Welcomhotel brand continues with its impressive growth trajectory with the addition of this premier mountain resort making it a total of three Welcomhotel properties in Himachal Pradesh. The asset right strategy has been a catalyst for ITC's Hotel Group. The Welcomhotel brand has seen impressive expansion in hill destinations. Located in the north of Manali town at a well-planned about four-acre apple orchard, Welcomhotel Manali offers an enriching stay experience with a 360-degree view of the snow-clad Himalayan peaks. During summer, the resort and adjoining areas turn lush with both apple and plum orchards. Greenery envelopes the property all across, creating a beautiful scenic spectrum against the blue skies. Come winters and Welcomhotel Hamsa turns into the perfect snow destination offering delightful memories frozen in time.



Far from the hustle bustle, nestled in the lap of nature, Welcomhotel Manali offers a one-of-a-kind destination experience. This majestic resort rests at an elevation of 2255 metres offering breath-taking panoramic views of the Dhauladhar ranges, Pir Panjal ranges and the Manali Valley. This idyllic destination is a gorgeous getaway for both the adventure chaser and the leisure seeker amidst picture-perfect backdrops.

Families can choose to picnic in landscaped lawns that are perfect venues for lazing under the sun or simply viewing clouds floating across the sky in the cool breeze. Guests who prefer to lounge at the property can head to the cosy in-house library. Spend your day

learning about the varieties of flora and fauna on guided walks while embracing the stillness of the surroundings. Relish savouries and stories under the stars with your loved ones, over a warm, cheery bonfire and barbecue session.

Situated 25 minutes away from Old Manali, this tranquil destination in Burwa Village is enroute the popular Rohtang Pass and Solang Valley. In proximity to several popular tourist spots such as the Atal Tunnel (16 km), Manali Mall Road (10 km), Hadimba Temple (11 km) and Sissu (Lahaul Valley) (32 km), Welcomhotel Hamsa Manali is the perfect abode to create magical moments.

IPL 2024: 'WOULD HE LIKE TO BAT HIGHER...', SAYS BRIAN LARA AFTER DHONI'S 9-BALL 28

Team Absolute | Mumbai

West Indies legend Brian Lara has noted that former skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni is coming to bat at No 7-8 position for Chennai Super Kings but does not like to bat higher to give younger players opportunities to excel at the top. Speaking exclusively to Star Sports Cricket Live, Lara shared his thoughts on MS Dhoni's batting against Lucknow Super Giants after the former CSK captain hammered a 9-ball unbeaten 28 to help his team reach 176/6 in 20 overs at the Ekana Stadium on Friday night. However, CSK ended on the losing side despite Dhoni's cameo as K.L. Rahul (82) and Quinton de Kock (54) shared a 134-run opening partnership to guide LSG to an eight-wicket victory.

Lara said Dhoni's knock was just brilliant. "It's just brilliant. The question has to be asked would you like to bat higher? Because I can see he's making valuable contributions. But there are a cou-

ple of losing causes as well. So, I think that should be a consideration," he said.

"At 42, he's most likely thinking from the team's point of view, that the young guys got to do the job. But I think the middle of the innings told a little bit too much about CSK's batting. And it created the fact that even though he exploded at the end and he did that Dhoni thing at the end and it still was not enough," said Lara. The West Indies legend said that CSK will have to go to the drawing board to little bit more aggressive throughout the innings.



WHO IS PRAGYA MISRA, SAM ALTMAN-RUN OPENAI'S 1ST EMPLOYEE IN INDIA

New Delhi: Sam Altman-run OpenAI has hired Pragya Misra as its first employee in India. Sources confirmed to IANS on Friday that Misra has been appointed to lead public policy affairs and partnerships in the country.

She has served as the Director of Public Affairs for Truecaller, where she has collaborated closely with government ministries, investors, key stakeholders, and media partners.

Prior to that, she worked for three years with Meta Platforms. She also led WhatsApp's campaign against misinformation in 2018 and has worked with Ernst & Young as well as the Royal Danish Embassy in Delhi. Misra received her MBA from the International Management Institute in 2012.

She also graduated in commerce from Delhi University and holds a Diploma in Bargaining and Negotiations from the London School of Economics and Political Science. She is also a podcaster and Instagram influencer with a follower base of 35,000. She hosts the Pragmaan Podcast (@pragyaan_podcast), covering topics such as meditation and consciousness.



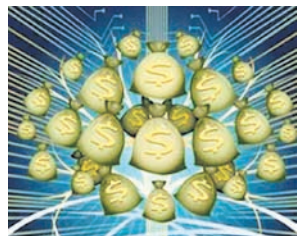
37 Indian startups secure \$310 million in funding this week

New Delhi: At least 37 startups in India secured about \$310 million in funding this week, including 10 growth-stage deals, as deals continued at a normal pace in the country.

Last week, as many as 21 startups secured nearly \$105 million in the country. This week, 10 startups raised \$225.86 million in funding, including GPS Renewables which secured \$50 million in debt funding, according to a report in Entracker.

DeepTech startup Ecozen raised \$30 million in a mix of debt and equity from existing investors, including asset management firm Nuveen.

Online B2B marketplace ProcMart raised \$30 million in its Series B funding led by Nandan Nilekani and Sanjeev Aggarwal's VC fund,



Fundamentum Partnership, and the Edelweiss Discovery Fund.

Gaming startup LightFury Games secured \$8.5 million in its maiden round, led by Blume Ventures and other key investors.

ClickPost, the logistics intelligence platform for online retailers, raised \$6 million in a Series A funding led by Infloxor Ventures partners and Athera Venture Partners. Emergency healthcare provider Medulance also secured \$3 million (about Rs 25 crore) in Series A funding.

ANUPAM KHER DRIVES LANSLOWNE KIDS TO SCHOOL: 'INNOCENCE RARELY SEEN IN BIG CITY CHILDREN'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Veteran actor Anupam Kher, who was last seen in 'Kaagaz 2', recently spent time with some children in Lansdowne town of Uttarakhand.

The actor shared videos from his meet-up on social media, reminiscing about the memories he made with them during his time in Lansdowne. On Saturday, the actor took to his X (formerly called Twitter) and shared two videos along with a heartfelt note.

In the first video, he can be seen driving the children of Lansdowne to their school while engaging in conversation with them. In the second video, he interacts with a different group of kids, asking them if they recognise him, to which one child responds that Anupam is a good man who feeds children.

The actor wrote in his tweet: "LIFE LESSON - The best reward I could ever get was from a five-year-old Abhishek in the second video at the end! In these



two videos, I got to see glimpses of my childhood spent in Shimla. I used to meet these children in Lansdowne. I used to see them going to school." Anupam said that conversing with the children made him feel relaxed and highlighted the innocence rarely seen in the kids who grow up in cities. "Sometimes I would even drop them

to school in my car! Sometimes I would even sit with them and have tea and breakfast. I used to feel good and relaxed after talking to them. May God always keep these children happy. Now this innocence is rarely seen in children of big cities. #Children #SmallTown #Lansdowne #TanviTheGreat," he added.



FOUNDATIONS OF INDIA STAND AT THRESHOLD OF 'DESTRUCTION': PRIYANKA GANDHI

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi on Saturday said that the foundations of the country stand at the threshold of "destruction" under the BJP government.

"Our country made us proud for its foundation of incomparable spirituality, unbreakable resilience, unfailing enterprise and its immense ability to embrace diversity and thrive in it. However, these very foundations of our nationhood stand at the threshold of destruction today," Priyanka said while addressing a public rally in Chalakudy, Kerala.

She said that the ongoing Lok Sabha election is a fight for the soul of this great nation.

"It is a fight for a democratic India that stood valiantly against tyranny and inequality. It is a fight for the freedom we once took for granted. It is a fight for hope and it is a fight for all that is right," she said.



She said that some people who owe allegiance to the Prime Minister speak haughtily about changing the constitution which was written with the blood of freedom fighters and martyrs. She said that the voices of

dissent are being silenced, students are arrested for expressing their opinions, activists are raided and jailed, journalists are sacked, beaten, and imprisoned for reporting the truth and much of the media is controlled.

"Government agencies that are meant to protect the law are turned into unlawful extortionists and used to silence dissent," she said.

Priyanka alleged that the government "protects" rapists and "defends" the oppressors and abusers of women as the "government vilified" victims using administrations.

"Public assets that belong to the people are handed to the Prime Minister's billionaire friends. Airports, ports, highways, vast tracts of public land and whole sectors of industry like cement, power and coal are virtually now being controlled by businessmen close to the Prime Minister," Priyanka said. She said that people in Kerala should recognise the ongoing general election as a fight for the soul of India.

BJP sponsors opinion polls, don't believe these surveys: Mamata Banerjee

Kolkata | Agencies

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday said that the opinion polls are sponsored by the BJP and asked people not to believe these poll surveys done by different agencies.

"Do not believe in any poll survey. All these opinion polls are sponsored by the BJP. They had claimed that they would cross 200 seats during the 2021 West Bengal assembly elections. They could not do it. BJP will not be successful this time as well in West Bengal," the Chief Minister said while addressing an election rally at Malda on Saturday.

She said that the Trinamool Congress has no alliance with the INDIA bloc in West Bengal. "I played the main role in the creation of the INDIA bloc. But in West



Bengal, I saw BJP, Congress and CPI-M joining hands. You should not vote for any of them here," the Chief Minister said.

She termed the long seven-phase election a "conspiracy" to benefit a particular political party.

"We had a norm to complete the election process in May. However, this time it has been extended till June. BJP does not understand the sufferings of the common

people," the Chief Minister said. On not allowing the Ayushman Bharat scheme in West Bengal, the Chief Minister said that if the West Bengal government had allowed the scheme, the state government would have to provide 50 per cent of the cost and only 50 lakhs of people would have benefited from it. "Our Swasthya Sathi scheme has benefited ten crore people," the Chief Minister said.

What's wrong if Rahul Gandhi contests from two places, Modi did it too: KC Venugopal

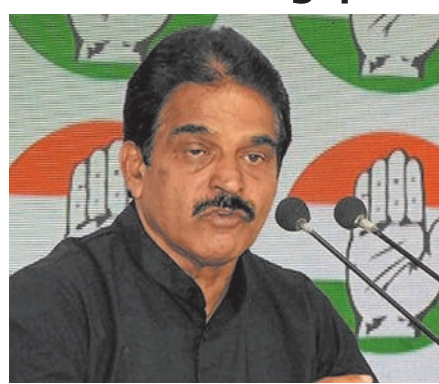
Alappuzha (Kerala) | Agencies

Reacting sharply to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remark that the Congress party's 'Yuvaraj' (Rahul Gandhi) ran away from North India to South India, AICC general secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal on Saturday said they never knew that it was Modi who was selecting candidates for the Congress.

Venugopal, who is fighting it out from the Alappuzha Lok Sabha constituency, was reacting to the interview of PM Modi given to a TV channel wherein he belittled Rahul Gandhi.

"Isn't Wayanad in India and didn't Modi contest from two seats in the past? It's surprising that Modi is saying such things and we never knew that it was Modi who was selecting the Congress candidates. Moreover what's wrong if Rahul contests from two seats," asked Venugopal.

Venugopal further pointed out that Modi has become jittery and that's why he is often saying that the BJP-led NDA will win 400 seats. "Modi finally appears to have realised that he is on the back foot and is trying to instil confidence by repeatedly saying about crossing 400 seats. Everyone knows what the reality is going to be," added Venugopal.



Meanwhile, veteran Indian Union Muslim League (IUM) legislator P.K. Kunhalikutty said there was nothing wrong with Rahul Gandhi contesting from two seats and their party general secretary PMA Salam said Vijayan was spreading canards that Rahul did not speak about CAA, in fact at Kozhikode addressing a mammoth rally he emphasised about CAA.

"He spoke in English and it was translated into Malayalam too," said Salam.

Vijayan since he began his election campaign has attacked Gandhi for not speaking a word on CAA.

FORCES WITHIN & OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY JOINED HANDS TO DEFEAT ME: PM MODI

Bengaluru | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that "big and powerful people" from within India and outside the country have united to defeat him in the Lok Sabha elections.

Addressing a massive gathering in Karnataka's Chikkaballapur city, PM Modi said that the first phase of voting has uplifted the spirit of the people in the country.

"With the blessings of 'Nari Shakti' and 'Matru Shakti', Modi is successfully facing the challenges and marching ahead. The INDIA bloc does not have a leader for the future, and also does not have a vision for the future as well," PM Modi said.

"The highest number of beneficiaries of Modi government's schemes are SC, ST and OBC families. During the tenure of the earlier governments, they lived in filth, did not get electricity and water, and they had lost hope from the government. Modi has rekindled their hopes on the government. The fact that 25 crore people are being lifted out of poverty in the country substantiates the fact," PM Modi said. PM Modi, speaking at the



rally, also said that those who were earlier called at last are being placed on the frontline today.

"A daughter from a tribal family went on to become the first citizen of the country," PM Modi said, adding: "Under the development for all objec-

tives, the NDA government has prioritised the education of Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and youth. "These sections are beneficiaries of Mudra Scheme which provides loans. It is being planned to increase

the loan amount from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh," PM Modi said.

He said that the Congress government has betrayed the farmers by stopping the Rs 4 crore subsidy given by the state government during the previous BJP government in Karnataka. "I am sure you will punish the anti-farmer Congress government," PM Modi said.

The Prime Minister further said: "The poor people of this country did not think that they would get free ration. This has been turned into reality. Lakhs of families are availing of free treatment. In Chikkaballapur, 4 lakh families have benefited from this. Free treatment would be given to senior citizens who are above the age of 70 years, up to Rs 5 lakh.

"In the last 10 years, in Chikkaballapur and Kolar, 25,000 houses have been built. Three crore more houses will be built."

PM Modi also said that the Nandi Hills, located close to Bengaluru, will be developed as a weekend getaway.

"The NDA gets inspiration from Nadaprabhu Kempe Gowda (founder of Bengaluru) to develop modern infrastructure," PM Modi added.

REVANTH REDDY WARNS KCR TO STAY AWAY FROM CONGRESS MLAS

Hyderabad | Agencies

A day after Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) president and former Telangana CM K. Chandrasekhar Rao claimed that 20 Congress MLAs are in touch with him, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday warned that if he dares to touch Congress MLAs, he would be "burnt".

The Congress leader gave the warning to the former chief minister while addressing a meeting after participating in the nomination filing of Mahabubnagar Lok Sabha candidate Vamshichand Reddy.

Revanth Reddy cautioned KCR against treating Congress MLAs like a herd of sheep that he can take away like he did in the past.

"The guard here is Revanth Reddy. Try it if you can. We will erect the fencing to protect our MLAs. Here is Revanth Reddy... high tension Revanth Reddy. Come and touch. You will turn a crow," he said.

"By evening you would know how



many MLAs will be with you," Revanth Reddy told KCR, hours after BRS MLA T. Prakash Goud met him amid indications that he will soon join Congress. Three BRS MLAs have already defected to Congress during the last one month.

On BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao's remark that the "car" (BRS election symbol) has gone to the garage for servicing, Revanth Reddy

said the car's engine has stopped working and remarked that it should be sold as scrap.

The Chief Minister said KCR as Mahabubnagar MP between 2009 and 2014 did nothing for the constituency. He alleged that the BRS chief also let down the people of Mahabubnagar during his 10-year rule. He said KCR did not complete Palamuru Rangareddy, Jurala and

other pending projects.

He assured the people that the state government will fight to get national status for Palamuru Rangareddy project and bring Rs 30,000 crore for it from the Centre.

Revanth Reddy said sitting MP M. Srinivas Reddy, who has been fielded by BRS again, never opened his mouth in the Parliament for Telangana or Mahabubnagar.

The Chief Minister told the people that voting for BJP candidate D.K. Aruna will also amount to wasting the vote as the BJP has done nothing for Telangana. He asked if she ever spoke about the problems faced by people of Mahabubnagar.

Revanth Reddy stated that the Congress government implemented the promise of free bus travel for women, enhanced the limit under Arogyasri scheme from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh and also gave cooking gas cylinders for Rs 500.

He claimed that the Congress government provided 30,000 jobs in just three months.

Every global brand wants to be in India: OYO's Ritesh Agarwal

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Ritesh Agarwal, Founder, and CEO of global hospitality chain OYO Rooms, on Saturday said this is the ideal time for global companies to come and start a business in the country, which offers a conducive atmosphere amid friendly government policies.

In a post on X, Agarwal who is a popular 'Shark Tank India' judge, said that today, every global brand wants to be in the country.

"From being the back office for the world to being the talent capital for the world, India has come a long way globally," he posted.

"If you are a global brand or a startup or a business and India is not on your radar,



you are probably missing out greatly," he noted.

The hospitality and travel-tech company clocked a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 30 crore in the third quarter

(Q3) of the last fiscal year (FY24).

The company registered a profitable quarter with a PAT of over Rs 16 crore in the second quarter (Q2) of FY24.

Ashok Gehlot's daughter-in-law touches feet of BJP candidate contesting against her husband

Jaipur | Agencies

In a rare scene, former Rajasthan Chief Minister and veteran Congress leader Ashok Gehlot's daughter-in-law Himanshi Gehlot was seen touching the feet of Lumbaram Chaudhary, the BJP candidate from the Jalore-Sirohi Lok Sabha constituency that will go to the polls on April 26.

Incidentally, Lumbaram Chaudhary is pitted against Himanshi's husband Vaibhav Gehlot in Jalore.

Himanshi was in Jalore on Saturday to attend a function at the residence of social worker Suresh Dewasi, a prominent figure in the area. Soon after she reached there, Chaudhary also reached Dewasi's residence.

Seeing him, Himanshi stepped forward and touched his feet, saying, "Please keep showering your blessings on us." In response, Chaudhary smiled and placed his hand on her head, giving his blessings to Himanshi.

Later, the Congress workers present there introduced Himanshi to some BJP leaders who also reached Dewasi's residence.

Vaibhav Gehlot had unsuccessfully contested the 2019 Lok Sabha elections from Jodhpur, where he was defeated by Gajendra Singh Shekhawat of the BJP.



Jobs data in past 6.5 years shows consistent rise, unemployment rate on decline

Team Absolute | New Delhi

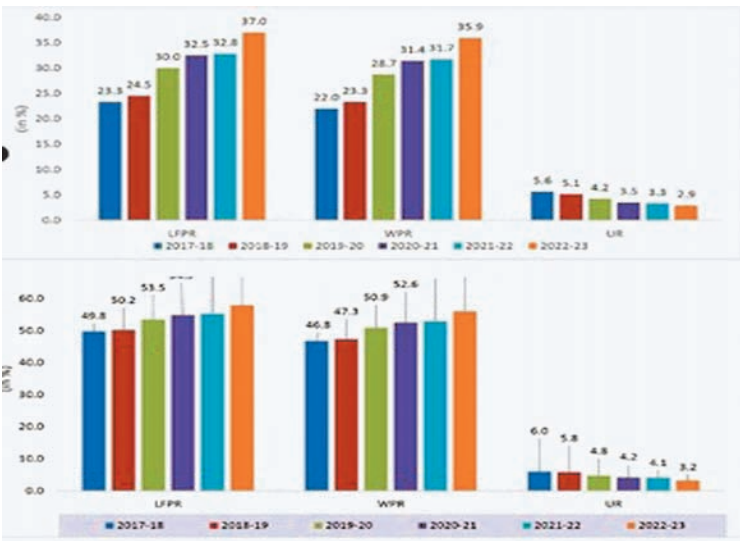
Amid the Opposition's claims of joblessness and unemployment hitting a new high, the latest findings on labour force data have come as a shot in the arm for the Centre.

As per the report of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), jobs and employment opportunities have seen a consistent uptrend in the past 6.5 years of the Modi government.

The growth parameters in terms of jobs, postings and employment opportunities have recorded a rise while the Unemployment Rate (UR) has consistently gone down. This has been found under three key jobs data pools including - PLFS, EPFO and National Career Service (NCS).

Various tools of PLFS including the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) and Worker Population Ratio (WPR) have logged consistent rise over the past 6 years while the Unemployment Rate (UR) chart shows a constant decline.

The positive trend over the years, promises much hope in 'gloomy times', a charge reiterated by the opposition parties.



The LFPR, defined as the percentage of persons in the labour force, was recorded at 49.8 per cent in the financial year 2017-18 and this rose to 57.9 per cent in FY 2022-23.

Similarly, WPR, defined as the percentage of employed persons in the population, was recorded at 46.8 per cent in FY 2017-18, which in turn rose to 56 per cent in FY 2022-23.

During the same period, the unemployment rate dropped from 6 per cent to 3.2 per cent.

The labour market trend for female workers also shows a positive trend.

LFPR, for women workers, was recorded at 23.3 per cent in FY 2017-18, which rose to 37 per cent in FY 2022-23 while WPR saw a rise from

22 per cent to 35.9 per cent for the same period. The unemployment rate for women workers also saw a decline from 5.6 per cent to 2.9 per cent in the period from 2017-2023.

The comprehensive set of data has been shared by the Bluekraft Digital Foundation CEO on his X handle.

As per the Employment Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) data, a total of 6.1 crore individuals joined formal jobs during the past 6.5 years.

National Career Service (NCS) records say that over 1 crore job postings were offered in FY 2023-24 alone. Earlier, the Employee Provident Fund (EPF) was the only tool to measure jobs data, however, with many tools launched under the Modi dispensation, one gets a fair account of the rise and fall in jobs data, over the years.

PLFS was launched by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) in April 2017 for collating labour force data at regular intervals while National Career Service (NCS) was launched in 2015 to replace the then Employment Exchanges and equipped with the IT enabled careers services, for easy and quick service.

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HK, Singapore food regulators red flag 'cancer-causing' ingredient in certain MDH, Everest spices

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

In a statement posted on its website on April 5, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS), Hong Kong's food regulatory authority, said that three spice products of MDH -- Madras Curry Powder (spice blend for Madras Curry), Sambhar Masala (Mixed Masala Powder), and Curry Powder (Mixed Masala Powder) -- along with Everest's Fish Curry Masala contain "a pesticide, ethylene oxide". Both MDH and Everest Foods were yet to comment on the food regulators' claims.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Food regulators in Hong Kong and Singapore have warned people against using four products from two big spice brands --- three from MDH and one from Everest -- over the presence of ethylene oxide at "levels exceeding the permissible limit". The International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified ethylene oxide as a 'Group 1 carcinogen'. Under its routine food surveillance programme, the CFS took the products from three retail outlets in Hong Kong. "The test results showed that the samples contained a pesticide, ethylene oxide," said a CFS spokesperson. The regulator instructed the vendors "to stop the sale and remove from shelves the affected products". Recalls have been initiated on the products, it said. "According to the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM), food for



human consumption containing pesticide residue may only be sold if consumption of the food is not dangerous or prejudicial to health. An offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction," the CFS spokesperson said. The CFS noted that "investigations are ongoing" and "appropriate action" may be initiated in the matter. Meanwhile, the Singapore Food Agency (SFA) also ordered a recall of Everest's Fish Curry Masala due to the presence of ethylene oxide at levels "exceeding the permissible limit".

The SFA posted a release on its website on April 18 that said it "has directed the importer, Sp Muthiah & Sons Pte. Ltd., to recall the products. The recall is ongoing." The SFA noted that ethylene oxide is not fit for consumption, but is "used to fumigate agricultural products to prevent microbial contamination". However, under Singapore's food regulations, ethylene oxide can be "used in the sterilisation of spices". While there is no immediate risk to eating foods "with low levels of ethylene oxide, long-term exposure may lead to health issues", said the SFA, noting that exposure to the "substance should be minimised as much as possible". It also advised people who bought the product to not "consume it", and those who have concerns about their health after consumption must "seek medical advice". According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, "ethylene oxide is a human carcinogen. It causes cancer".

India among top countries in artificial intelligence adoption



Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the Asia-Pacific region experiences a surge in the adoption of Generative AI (GenAI), India is set to join the most rapidly expanding markets in the forthcoming years. According to an IDC report, the Asia-Pacific region is witnessing an unprecedented surge in GenAI adoption, including software, services, and hardware for AI-centric systems. The region is likely to see GenAI spending soar to \$26

billions by 2027, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 95.4 per cent for the period. This surge underscores the region's pivotal role in driving the next wave of AI innovation and technological advancement, the report mentioned. Deepika Giri, Head of Research, Big Data and AI, IDC APJ, said that the investment in GenAI will reach its zenith within the next two years, followed by a period of stabilisation. "China is projected to maintain its position as the

dominant market for GenAI, while Japan and India are set to become the most rapidly expanding markets in the forthcoming years," Giri mentioned. From software development to customer service, GenAI is revolutionising industries, ushering in a new era of innovation in the region. The financial services sector is experiencing rapid growth in GenAI adoption in Asia -- projected to reach \$4.3 billion by 2027 with a CAGR of 96.7 per cent, the report said.

87 killed, over 80 injured as heavy rains wreak havoc in Pakistan

Islamabad | Agencies

At least 87 people have been killed and 82 others injured in separate rain-triggered incidents in Pakistan over the past week as heavy downpours continued to wreak havoc in parts of the country, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said. The NDMA on Friday added that the rains have partially or fully damaged 2,715 houses across the country, adding that most of the people died in the incidents related to structural collapse, lightning strike and flash flood, Xinhua news agency reported. Most of the damages and casualties were reported from the country's north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province,



where 36 people lost their lives and 53 others sustained injuries due to torrential rains, followed by the eastern Punjab province, which has reported 25 deaths and eight injuries, according to the NDMA. A total of 15 people

were killed and 10 others injured in the southwestern Balochistan province, whereas 11 people died with 11 others injured due to heavy rains in the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir during the period, said the NDMA.

K'taka Cong corporator flags daughter's murder probe, threatens to commit suicide

Bengaluru | Agencies

In a major development, Niranjan Hiremath, father of Neha Hiremath who was stabbed to death on her college campus, has claimed that the investigation of his daughter's murder is being "misled," and warned that his family would "commit suicide" if it continues. Talking to the press about photos of his daughter Neha with the accused Fayaz Kondikoppa being released on social media, the Congress corporator stated that "the photos are fake and 101 per cent done to botch up the investigation." "We will write a letter in the name of the Chief Minister and Home Minister and commit suicide. We will also send the letter to the Governor. Instead of getting us justice for the murdered child, they are resorting to bringing disrepute to her and our family," Niranjan warned. "How come the photos that bring



disrepute to my family and deceased daughter crop up all of a sudden? What is the police department doing about it? The killer is inside the prison, how come others are able to get these photos? Or has he been

allowed to do all this sitting inside the prison?" questioned Niranjan. "The cybercrime wing must act and put those who are posting these photos in prison. The accused and my daughter had studied together for

years and attended all the programmes. All of a sudden these photos at this juncture are coming up. This is the responsibility of the police department and the Home Minister. They should ensure these things are not done," said Niranjan. When asked about killer Fayaz and Neha having marriage plans, Niranjan stated that the boy might have had those feelings, but "my daughter did not have any such ideas on her mind." "My daughter Neha would never indulge in such dirty acts. Her photos have been edited. She had told me once that the accused was behind her, and I had advised her to strongly face it. She was a strong girl. The killer should not be alive, he should be hanged," Neha's mother, Geetha, said. Neha was stabbed to death on her college campus in Hubballi city on Thursday. The students had chased Fayaz, caught him and handed him over to police.

VEDDAS OF SRI LANKA HAVE CLOSE GENETIC AFFINITY WITH INDIANS, REVEALS STUDY

Hyderabad | Agencies

The Vedda, an indigenous group of Sri Lanka, has a close genetic affinity with the Indian population, revealed a landmark study by 10 researchers from five institutions. The significant findings of the study, which involved a comprehensive analysis of high-resolution autosomal and mitochondrial genomes and shed new light on the initial peopling of Sri Lanka and the ancient genetic ties between the Vedda and other populations in Asia, were published recently in the journal Mitochondrion, according to CSIR-CCMB. "The language isolate Vedda, who are among the least studied indigenous populations in Sri Lanka, have long intrigued scientists and historians alike due to their unique linguistic and cultural characteristics. This study, therefore, unravelling the mysteries of their genetic origins and affinities with the Indian population," said Dr. K. Thangaraj one of the senior authors of the study and JC Bose Fellow at the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular



Biology, Hyderabad.

Key findings from the research indicate that despite the lack of close linguistic similarities, the Vedda people share a significant genetic link with the ethnic populations in India. "Our autosomal analyses suggest a close genetic connection between the Vedda and Indian ethnic

populations speaking various tongues, pointing towards a deep-rooted history that predates linguistic diversifications," said Prof Gyaneshwer Chaubey, Molecular Anthropologist at the BHU, Varanasi. "Maternal DNA analysis supports the existence of an ancient link, reinforcing the notion of a shared genetic heritage. The study proposes that the Vedda population has undergone genetic drift and a recent bottleneck, resulting in a unique genetic makeup with limited gene flow from neighbouring Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamil populations," said the lead author, Dr Ruwandi Ranasingh, from Colombo University. Anjana Welikala, the first author of the study, stated that this unique discovery challenges the conventional isolation-by-distance model and underscores the distinct demographic history of the Vedda. The implications of this research are vast, offering novel perspectives on the demographic history of not only Sri Lanka but also the broader South Asian region.

Congress candidate's nomination invalidated provisionally in Surat

Surat | Agencies

The nomination form of Nitesh Kumbhani, the Congress candidate for the Surat Lok Sabha seat, has come under scrutiny. The election officer has provisionally invalidated Kumbhani's nomination after three proposers - Ramesh Palara, Jagdish Savaliya, and Dhruvin Dhameiliya - claimed they had not signed his nomination form. They presented themselves before the election officer with an affidavit to substantiate their claim. Surat has favored BJP candidates since the 1990s by considerable margins.



Adding to the complexity of the situation, AAP leader Gopal Italia has suggested that the proposers alleging forgery might be under duress, possibly coerced or even kidnapped, given their affiliation with the party. He

raised concerns about the pressure they might be facing. This issue arises just as the deadline for filing nomination papers, April 19, has passed. The Congress party had also nominated Suresh Padsala as a backup candidate, but his nomination form faces the same allegations of unauthorized signatures. Amidst this electoral controversy, Congress spokesperson Naishad Desai stated that the party is prepared to challenge the election officer's impending decision in court if it is unfavorable.

Elon Musk confirms not coming to India amid crucial Tesla quarter results

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Elon Musk, on Saturday, confirmed that he will not visit India this month amid crucial Tesla quarterly results and will possibly visit the country later this year to announce his investment plans. In a post on X, the billionaire said that unfortunately, "very heavy Tesla obligations require that the visit to India be delayed." "But I do very much look forward to visiting later this

year," Musk added. Last week, the billionaire had tweeted that he was looking forward to meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The SpaceX CEO was also set to meet representatives of Indian space companies during his India visit. Musk has a key conference call with analysts about Tesla's latest quarter (Q1) results, after the company reduced 10 per cent of its workforce, or around 14,000 employees - globally.

The layoffs at Tesla "gutted some departments by 20 per cent and even hit high performers," and the decision was apparently made "due to poor financial performance." Two high-profile Tesla executives -- Rohan Patel, VP of Public Policy and Business Development and Drew Baglino, Tesla's SVP of Powertrain and Energy -- have also quit. Tesla has just shelved plans to develop a low-cost EV for around \$25,000.

'ONE IN EVERY FIVE INDIVIDUALS IS AFFECTED BY FATTY LIVER'

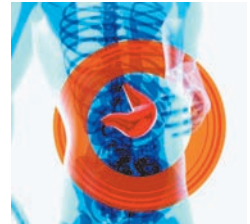
Hyderabad | Agencies

Cases of fatty liver, attributed primarily to sedentary lifestyles and increased social drinking habits, escalated dramatically in recent times, with approximately one in every five individuals now being diagnosed with this condition, say doctors. On the occasion of World Liver Day on Friday, they underscored the pressing need for heightened awareness and proactive measures to combat the burgeoning health crisis.

The liver's pivotal role in detoxification, nutrient processing, and metabolism underscores its indispensable function in maintaining overall well-being. However, the rising incidence of fatty liver across diverse age groups, including children, young adults, and middle-aged individuals, highlights the pervasive impact of lifestyle choices on liver health. Fatty liver, once dismissed as a benign

finding, now emerges as a potent indicator of underlying health risks, including diabetes, cholesterol-related issues, and cardiovascular ailments. Furthermore, the potential progression to more severe complications such as steatohepatitis, cirrhosis, and liver cancer underscores the imperative of proactive intervention and lifestyle modification, the health practitioners said. Addressing the root causes of fatty

liver necessitates a multifaceted approach encompassing lifestyle modifications and dietary adjustments. Combating prolonged sedentary behavior by incorporating regular physical activity, such as short breaks for walking, is paramount in mitigating the risk of fatty liver development. According to doctors, equally crucial is the adoption of a balanced diet rich in vegetables, pulses, lean proteins, and essential fats while minimising the consumption of fried foods and processed sugars.





"BETRAYERS," SAYS CONGRESS AFTER OVER 100 LEADERS JOIN BJP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A Congress ex-MLA from Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri district and several other local leaders of the party joined the BJP on Saturday, prompting a functionary from the grand old party to call them "betrayers".

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav welcomed Harivallabh Shukla, who represented the Shivpuri assembly constituency, and other Congress workers to BJP at an event here, a day after six Lok Sabha seats in the state went to polls in the first phase of parliamentary elections.

"We welcome you with open arms to the party. We are going to work with one accord. You are free to give suggestions and play an important role in the party (BJP)," Yadav told the new saffron party members.



More than 100 Congress leaders joined the BJP at the function, claimed a party release.

In the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls, the BJP had launched a cam-

paign to induct disgruntled Congress leaders into its fold in MP. Several Congress leaders have joined the BJP in the state in the past few months. Earlier, Yadav had said that Prime

Minister Narendra Modi's parivar (family) was expanding at the fastest pace in MP.

K K Mishra, media advisor to MP Congress chief Jitu Patwari, called Shukla a spent force. The departure of the former legislator will have no impact on Congress, he claimed.

"Those who are joining BJP are betraying their political mother. They got everything but when the time came to pay back to the party and fight the divisive forces, they showed their back and fled tempted by money and muscle power," he said.

"History won't forgive these 'betrayers'," Mishra added.

Of the 29 Lok Sabha seats in the BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh, six went to polls in the first phase on Friday. Polling will be held in the remaining constituencies in three more phases between April 26 and May 13.

CM Mohan Yadav extracted sugarcane juice during the road show

Team Absolute | Tikamgarh

Amidst the Lok Sabha elections, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav remains in the news for his unique style. Due to the election environment, the Chief Minister visits different areas of the state every day, meanwhile the CM reached Tikamgarh.

During this, he did about 3 km long road show with Lok Sabha candidate Dr. Virendra Kumar, in which a large number of workers along with the public also gathered. Wherever Chief Minister Mohan Yadav is going, he is getting a lot of support from the public.

During this road show, a different style of CM was seen, he was seen extracting sugarcane juice. In fact, the CM stopped his convoy and was seen extracting sugarcane juice with his own hands. Not only this, during this time the CM advised the cart operator not to use plastic disposables. He also took out the money for sugarcane juice from his pocket and gave it. While addressing the public meeting, the Chief Minister fiercely targeted Rahul Gandhi. CM said, we unfortunately have to say that the speech given by Rahul



Gandhi that he talks about one country, he talks about one culture, it means which is the other country in Rahul Gandhi's mind? Explain. He further said, unfortunately it has to be said that it is a matter of shame for them to bring in the multinational principle for the sake of votes. In the past, Congress had made the issue of Ram temple a fight between Hindus and Muslims. He further said that there is an atmosphere in favor of BJP under the leadership of PM Modi in the entire country and state. We are going to win all 29 seats in the state.

Bus taking cops after poll duty overturns in Betul, 21 injured

Team Absolute | Betul

Twenty-one police and Home Guard personnel were injured when the bus carrying them overturned in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district in the early hours of this morning, an official said.

These jawans were returning to their home district Rajgarh in the state after performing their election duty when the accident occurred near Baretha Ghat on the Bhopal-Betul highway, the official said.

The incident took place around 4 am, Sub Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Shalini Paraste said.

"It happened when the bus carrying a total of 40 jawans, including five policemen and remaining home guard, was on its way to Rajgarh after



their election duty in Chhindwara," she said.

Eight of the personnel who received serious injuries are being treated in the district hospital at Betul, while those with minor injuries are being treated in Shahpur hospital,

the police official said.

The incident took place when the bus swerved to avoid a truck that crossed its path, she said.

Polling for the Chhindwara Lok Sabha seat was held on Friday.

Big change in Muslim society under the leadership of Modi ji: BJP state chief

Team Absolute | Panna

In the coming phases of Lok Sabha elections, we should not entertain the illusion that the field is clear and there is no one else. This is a bigger challenge, hence the workers have to work with full strength. Public welfare schemes will have to be visited door to door and people will have to be asked to vote as much as possible. This election is a very different election and there is an atmosphere within the country that this time Prime Minister Narendra Modi has to become the Prime Minister for the third time with more than 400 seats.

The people of the country have made up their mind, hence the party workers will have to work harder to create a new history by winning every seat with huge votes. State President of Bharatiya Janata Party and Khajuraho MP Vishnudd



Sharma said this while addressing the Tridev and Panch Parmeshwar conference in Gunnaur of Panna dis-

trict on Saturday.

Sharma said that due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, there has

been a big change in the Muslim society. Triple Talaq was abolished by Prime Minister. Be it Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana or Ayushman Card Scheme and other public welfare schemes, the Muslim community is getting the benefits of all these. Women and men of the Muslim community have now started openly saying that if there has been a change in our lives, it has happened because of Prime Minister.

Due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's basic mantra of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas', every section of the country has been uplifted and development has taken place in every sector. Modi ji has said that I have four castes, poor, farmers, women and youth. Modi ji has worked a lot regarding these four castes and work is being done in this direction at a fast pace, so that by 2047 Till India can be made a world leader.

FORMER CHIEF MINISTER KAMAL NATH'S SHARP ATTACK ON BJP

Team Absolute | Betul

Addressing the public meeting, former Chief Minister Kamal Nath said, "They say that we built the Ram temple, whereas the Ram temple was built with your and our donations. Kamal Nath is on his election tour and attended the election meeting of Congress candidate Ramu Tekam in Betul in a pinch near Amla. Here he addressed the public meeting.

Targeting BJP on Ram Temple, he said that "What will they talk about? Will they talk about Lord Ram? We got the Ram temple built. Hey brother, you have the lease of the Ram temple. This Ram temple was built with your donations. This Ram temple is yours and mine, we all have our own religious sentiments, religion is a matter of choice, it is a matter of thought, politics is not a matter of propaganda. We have to remember this, do not bring religion on the political stage. I am a Hindu. I proudly say that I am a Hindu and I have my own feelings. I built the biggest temple, Hanuman Temple in Chhindwara, the biggest one is more than 101 feet high, but I



never publicized it. I did it in my private land. Nath said on the Constitution of the country that today efforts are being made to tamper with the Constitution. Amend the Constitution. Bharatiya Janata Party is making this effort. Their goal is to change the Constitution. You are the protector of the Constitution and

democracy. This is the meaning of this election. You are the protector of the country's culture. Compare Chhindwara how you were neglected. What did BJP do in 20 years, make it a corruption state? He further said that BJP people say that we built Ram temple. Do you have the lease of Ram temple? This Ram temple was built

with your donations and ours. We all have our own religious feelings. Religion is a matter of conduct and thought. It is not a matter of political propaganda. We do not bring religion onto the political platform. I proudly say that I am a Hindu. I built the biggest Hanuman temple in Chhindwara. But I never promoted it.

Over 63 pc voter turnout in MP with highest in Chhindwara at 82.39 pc

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The six out of the 29 Lok Sabha seats that went to the polls in the first phase of the general elections in Madhya Pradesh on Friday recorded a voter turnout of more than 63 per cent, with the highest in Chhindwara at 82.39 per cent.

The voter turnout in the state's Maoist-hit Lok Sabha constituencies -- Mandla and Balaghat recorded at 73.85 per cent and 72.15 per cent respectively, till 7 p.m.

The people from tribal communities came out to vote in large numbers as all three tribal-dominated seats -- Chhindwara, Mandla and Balaghat recorded more than 70 per cent voter turnout.

Other three Lok Sabha constituencies polled in the first phase of the general elections -- Shahdol (Scheduled Tribe) voter



turnout at 63.23 per cent, Jabalpur at 60 per cent, while Sidhi recorded the lowest at 54.36 per cent.

The State's Electoral Office, however, was yet to release a final update on voter turnout in the state as polling went till late Friday evening and therefore, voting percentage may see a little surge later.

The elections for the

state's 29 Lok Sabha seats are scheduled in four phases.

The first phase concluded in Friday while the second phase covering six more Lok Sabha constituencies, mostly in the Bundelkhand region, will be held on April 26.

The third and fourth phase elections will be conducted on May 7 and 13 and the results will be announced on June 4.

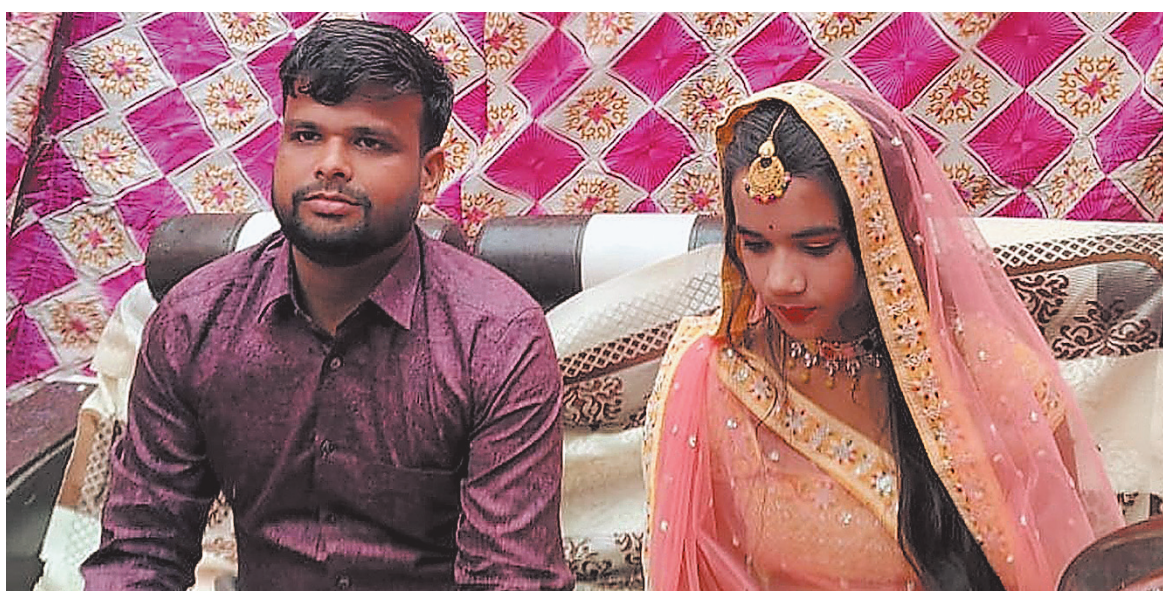
Wedding procession held hostage after accusing groom of drinking alcohol and extorted Rs 5 lakh

Team Absolute | Bhind

In Morena's a wedding procession came from Bhind was beaten severely by the hosts. Now you will say that the housewives take care of the wedding guests, so what have they done? You will get the answer to this in the beginning of the news itself, where the disadvantages of drinking alcohol have been mentioned. Yes, the main reason for beating the wedding guests was "alcohol."

There was a lot of chaos in the marriage procession that reached Bhadawali village of Morena district from Bhind. The bride's family created a ruckus, accusing the groom of being under the influence of alcohol. The bride and her family together took the groom and his father along with the wedding guests hostage and beat them severely with sticks. After the fight, now the question came about the expenses incurred in the wedding. The girl's family also recovered the wedding expenses on the spot.

After this, the father of the victim groom lodged a complaint in the police station. Actually, the relationship of Shivcharan Chauhan, son of Virendra Chauhan, resident of Pachpeda of Lahar police station area of Bhind, was fixed with the daughter of Raju Tomar, resident of Bhadawali of



Nagara police station area of Morena district. The groom's father is working as ASI in ITBP in Delhi. At 11.30 pm, the girl's side accused the groom of drinking alcohol and refused to marry. Due to which things got worse. After this, there was a huge dispute and people from the girl's side took the groom and the groom hostage and beat them up and in return of releasing the groom, they also recovered the wedding expenses.

The groom's father alleges that around 10 other people along with the bride's father Raju Tomar, Mohit Tomar, Saurabh Tomar came and started abusing. When they were refused to stop abusing, these people started beating with kicks, punches, sticks and sticks. In which three wedding guests were injured. The girl's family demanded Rs 5 lakh 10 thousand spent on the marriage to free the wedding procession and refused to marry.

The groom's father first gave Rs 44,000 in cash and Rs 4,46,000 through phone pay to the girl's family. After this the bride's family released the wedding procession. Many complaints about the incident have been lodged in Nagara police station. On the basis of which the police have started investigating the case.



People voted for NDA in first phase, says PM Modi

Team Absolute | Parbhani (Maharashtra)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that voting in the first phase of polling was in favour of NDA which made the INDIA alliance members lose their sleep. The bumper voting in favour of NDA in the first phase across the country has made the INDIA Alliance members lose their sleep. I am very excited to be with my family in Parbhani, Maharashtra," PM Modi said at the campaign rally for the MahaYuti partner Rashtriya Samaj Paksha founder and nominee Mahadev Jankar, who is pitted against the Shiv Sena candidate Sanjay Jadhav. The Prime Minister said that the NDA needs the blessings of the people for the development of Maharashtra.



PM Modi also took out a whistle from his pocket and gave it to Mahadev Jankar whose election symbol is a whistle. PM Modi gave a whistle to Jankar as a gift after which Jankar blew it on the stage itself. "Due to our government's policies, 12 lakh people in Parbhani are getting free ration. No one in these families has to sleep hungry. Such free ration will continue for the next five years as well," PM Modi said.

He said that 17 Janushadhi centres in Parbhani will get an 80 per cent discount on medicines while more than 1.25 lakh women have been given Ujjwala gas connections. "In Parbhani, more than 75 per cent of households are getting tap water. More than nine lakh animals in Parbhani have been vaccinated free of charge. Any government can do this only if it is sensitive to the poor," PM Modi said.

Attacking Congress, PM Modi said that after independence, they divided the country and also ignited the Kashmir issue and even Babasaheb Ambedkar's constitution was not allowed to apply to Jammu and Kashmir. "Congress is like a vine, one who supports this vine gets destroyed," PM Modi said. He said that the Congress also did not allow Dalits to get any rights. "Having the same mentality as the Nizam, the Congress did not allow the development of Marathwada. I appeal to people that don't give any space to the people who have Razakar mentality," PM Modi said. He said that Parbhani would help make India self-reliant and that the ongoing Lok Sabha election is the beginning of the economic development of the country. "I know the pain of the poor. I am thinking about how to ease their pain. The opposition worked to block the schemes brought to Marathwada," PM Modi said.

Ex-actress Navneet Kaur-Rana radiates charming confidence in Amravati LS seat, now for BJP

Team Absolute | Amravati

The green but hot and dry Amravati (SC) constituency is among the few in Maharashtra that has elected women to the Lok Sabha four times since 1952, including a future President Pratibha Patil (1991), the first woman to hold the top post in the country. A seat that is being closely monitored, it was a traditional Congress stronghold which elected the party's candidates 10 times, plus in one by-election, while the (undivided) Shiv Sena nominees were elected 5 times, besides the RPI, CPI and an independent once each, with the Bharatiya Janata Party feeling left out so far. This time, the BJP is hoping Dame Luck may smile on the party -- through its comely candidate, NDA-MahaYuti-BJP's Navneet Kaur-Rana, an actress-turned-politician who is set to capture the attention of the voters once again. With her background in entertainment and now in politics, she might bring a unique appeal to the electorate. It's not uncommon for candidates with a background in the arts to leverage their charisma and public image to connect with voters. At the same time, it will be interesting to see how her campaign unfolds and whether her charm res-



onates with the electorate for the second time. After all, in 2019, Rana overcame the BJP's 'second coming' to get elected as the sole independent MP in the state, of course, with the support of the (undivided) Nationalist Congress Party and other parties, to trounce the (undivided) Shiv Sena strongman Anandrao V. Adsul, a former Union minister, now with CM Eknath Shinde's party. Campaigning aggressively, this time Rana has locked horns with her chief rival MVA-INDIA Bloc-Congress' MLA Balwant B. Wankhade, while the third contender is Republican Sena's Anandraj Y. Ambedkar supported by his brother and Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) chief Prakash Y. Ambedkar, for the April 26 Lok Sabha polls. Moreover, there seems to be internal challenges from

within Rana's own party or coalition that could pose a threat to her electoral prospects. Rana will need to navigate these internal challenges effectively to maintain her momentum and focus on her campaign goals. A ruling MahaYuti ally, the Prahar Janshakti Party (PHP) founder Omprakash Babarao Kadu, alias Bachhu Kadu, has publicly vowed to "defeat" Rana at any cost and fielded its local heavyweight Dinesh G. Boob who has launched a blistering attack on his rival. Rana's campaign got off to a 'crying start' with the actress recounting her political struggles and hardships for the past 12 years since she entered electoral politics, how she was targeted in different ways by opponents and appealed for support to strengthen the hands of PM Narendra Modi in the LS 2024 elections.

Man loses Rs 45.6 lakh in share trading fraud; six booked



Team Absolute | Mumbai

44-year-old Navi Mumbai man was allegedly duped of Rs 45.6 lakh by cyber fraudsters who lured him to invest in share trading, police said on Saturday, reported news agency. The cyber police on Thursday registered a case against six persons under sections 419 (cheating), 406 (criminal breach of trust) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology (IT) Act, an official said. The Navi Mumbai man, a resident of Panvel, came across a link called "Stock Loss Recovery" on Instagram and was routed to various groups involved in stock market trading, he said. The official said the complainant started share trading and invested Rs 47 lakh in March and April. The complainant's account reflected a balance of Rs 98 lakh, including the profits earned from trading. But when he attempted to withdraw the earnings, he was asked to pay 18 per cent of his profits, around Rs 7 lakh, he said. Despite complying with the demand, the victim found that additional money was getting siphoned off from his account without authorisation, the official said. The complainant managed to reclaim Rs 1.30 lakh but could not recover Rs 45.69 lakh, he said.

MVA allies in fresh war of words over PM's post; BJP gleeful

Quaid Najmi | Sangli

A day after the first phase of Lok Sabha elections, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP, Sanjay Raut, set loose a rat - with broad hints suggesting ex-Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray as a possible claimant for the Prime Minister's post, here on Saturday. Speaking to the media in Sangli during an election tour, Sanjay Raut said that "if Maharashtra gets an opportunity to lead the nation after the current Lok Sabha elections, then it should be welcomed by all." While avoiding a direct reference, the Sena MP said that the question was not whether Thackeray was in the reckoning for the post of PM, but "why can't he be a contender for the top job." "He is a former CM of a major state like Maharashtra and performed exceedingly well during the Covid-19 pandemic... He enjoys mass goodwill and can take everybody along with him... So what's wrong if his name comes up. But all these things are first discussed with the INDIA bloc before anything is finalised," pointed out Raut, albeit with a cautious rider. Expectedly, the statement evoked a sharp retort from the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ally, Congress state President Nana F Patole,



who hit out at Raut for "changing his stance" daily, though the NCP(SP) has not yet reacted to the comment. "Till yesterday, Raut was seeming okay with Rahul Gandhi's name as PM, but today he has suddenly changed his opinion... This does not augur well..." said a peeved Patole. The tussle among the MVA allies was apparently music for BJP state President Ashish Shelar who attacked the Opposition alliance saying "they have no strong candidate for the PM's post, all the parties in INDIA bloc want to project their candidates and are trying to pull each other down." "Only PM Narendra Modi is capable of leading the country and has a strong developmental goal for the nation's progress... The Opposition parties and their leaders are busy fighting among themselves, lacking

a clear agenda and spoiling each other's chances," slammed Shelar. Justifying his contentions, Raut said in the past, senior leader and NCP(SP) President Sharad Pawar was also a strong contender for the PM's job, but owing to certain political circumstances he could not achieve it, "and we all regret it even now." However, attempting to nip any speculation in the bud, Raut announced that both Gandhi and Thackeray shall be seen sharing the dais at MVA-INDIA bloc rallies scheduled during the forthcoming four phases of LS elections in the state. "In the 2024 elections, the INDIA bloc will get between 300-310 LS seats, the BJP-NDA will be stuck between 180-200, at the highest at 230... Nothing can stop the INDIA bloc now," asserted a grim Raut.

Election 2024 is between Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi: Ajit Pawar

Team Absolute | Pune

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday said this Lok Sabha election is not about family relations but a battle between Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra, the NCP's candidate from the Baramati Lok Sabha constituency in Pune district, officially launched her campaign by offering prayers at the Hanuman temple at Kanheri on Saturday. Ajit Pawar, his sons Parth and Jay, and several local party leaders were present for the campaign launch. On Thursday, Sunetra and her sister-in-law three-term Lok Sabha member Supriya Sule filed their nomination papers for the NCP and NCP (SP) respectively. Ajit Pawar has also filed nomination papers for the seat, which an NCP functionary described as a backup plan in case his wife's nomination does not stand scrutiny or if any discrepancy is found. Addressing the gathering, Ajit Pawar said, "We are launching the official campaign after praying to Lord Hanuman. The election is not about family relations. The election is all about Prime Minister Narendra Modi versus Rahul Gandhi." Incidentally, Sule launched



her poll campaign on Friday by offering prayers at the Hanuman temple in the presence of her father, NCP (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar, and other members of the Pawar family. "Yesterday, everyone (members of the Pawar family) was sitting next to Pawar saheb. They attempted to show that the family was united. One of them claimed that Sharad Pawar established all institutions in Baramati. In that case, what have I done in the last 30 years?" Ajit Pawar said. The NCP is a constituent in the Mahayuti alliance, comprising the Shiv Sena and Bharatiya Janata Party, and the NCP (SP) is a part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi with the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress.

TISS Suspends Student Over "Anti-National" Activities

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) has suspended a PhD student for two years for indulging in activities that are "not in the interest of the nation" and referred to instances like him participating in a protest in Delhi under the PSF-TISS banner. Ramadas Prinisivanandan (30), who is pursuing his doctorate in Development Studies, has also been debarred from entering the TISS campuses in Mumbai, Tuljapur, Hyderabad and Guwahati. In a notice sent to Prinisivanandan dated March 7, TISS referred to instances like the screening of documentaries like 'Ram Ke Naam' ahead of January 26 as a "mark of dishonour and protest" against the Ram Mandir consecration in Ayodhya. He has also been accused of screening a banned BBC documentary on the TISS campus last January and also organising the Bhagat Singh Memorial Lecture (BSML) by inviting

"controversial guest speakers". It said that these issues are "very serious and it is discernible that you are intentionally and deliberately indulging in such unlawful activities in the name of freedom of speech and expression." "Your activities are not in the interest of the nation. Being a public institution, TISS cannot permit or tolerate its students indulging in such activities which are anti-national and bring a bad name to the nation. Hence all such activities fall under the category of serious criminal offence." "The committee recommended your suspension from the institute i.e. Tata Institute of Social Sciences for the period of two years and your entry shall be debarred across all campuses of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, which is accepted by the competent authority," the TISS notice dated April 18 reads. Prinisivanandan, who hails from Kerala, said he will appeal against the suspension.

BMC announces 100 per cent water cut in parts of Goregaon and Kandivali on April 23

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Friday announced that there will be a 100 per cent water cut in parts of Goregaon east on April 23 due to planned repair works. According to an official statement, the BMC said that the residents of Goregaon (East) in Mumbai's P South and P East wards are advised to brace themselves for a complete water cut from 10:00 am on Tuesday, 23rd April 2024, to 10:00 am on Wednesday, 24th April 2024. The civic body said that the 24-hour water cut is necessitated by the replacement of a 600 mm diameter water pipe with a 900 mm diameter water line at the Virwani Industrial Estate, Western Expressway. The BMC also shared the complete list of the areas that would be affected. The BMC urged the residents of the affected areas to use water judiciously during the period and make necessary arrangements to mitigate the inconvenience caused by the water cut, the statement said on Friday. Meanwhile, the BMC has so far removed 5,895 metric tons of water hyacinth, a free floating perennial herb found at the surface of water bodies, from the

Powai lake in Mumbai, the civic body said. The removal of these plants will help in protecting the lake's biodiversity

along with enhancing its natural richness, the BMC said in a release on Wednesday. The BMC said it has

cleared 23 per cent of the total 123 acres of water hyacinth-infected area of the lake, built during the British era.



111-Year-Old Maharashtra Woman Votes At Poll Booth

Team Absolute | Gadchiroli

Determined to exercise her franchise in the Lok Sabha polls, a 111-year-old woman travelled to a polling booth in a remote hamlet in Maharashtra's Naxal-affected Gadchiroli, a district official said on Saturday. Braving the hot weather, Phulmati Sarkar travelled on a two-wheeler to a polling booth in Govindpur village in



Mulchera taluka to cast her vote in the first phase of the Lok Sabha polls held on Friday, the official said. The centenarian had earlier refused to use the "home voting" facility introduced by the Election Commission and insisted on visiting the polling centre, he said. As per the details of her Aadhaar card, Sarkar, a resident of Govindpur, was born on January 1, 1913, and is 111 years old, the official said.

Areas that would face a 100 per cent water cut:

1. P South Ward - Vit Bhatti, Koyana Colony, Squatter's Colony, Sharma Estate, Cama Industrial Estate, Rohidas Nagar & Santosh Nagar etc. (Tuesday, 23rd April 2024)
2. P East Ward - Datta Mandir Road, Daftari Road, Khot Kuwa Road, Khot Dongari, Makrani Pada and Haji Bapsu Road, Tanaji Nagar, Kurar Village, Raheja Complex, Sai Baba Mandir, Vasant Valley & Koyana Colony (Tuesday, 23rd April 2024)
3. R South Ward - Bandongari, Kandivali (East) (Tuesday, 23rd April 2024)
4. P South Ward - Pandurang Wadi, Gokuldham, Jayprakash Nagar, Naikwadi, Gogatewadi, Kanyapada, Koyana Colony, I. B. Patel Road, Yashodham, Santosh Nagar, Vishweshwar Road, Pravasi Industrial Estate, Rajiv Gandhi Nagar, Aarey Road & Shreyas Colony etc. (Wednesday, 24th April 2024)
5. P East Ward - Pimpri Pada, Pal Nagar, Sanjay Nagar, M.H.B. Colony, Islamiya Bazar, Janu Compound, Shantaram Talav, Omkar Layout, Chitravani, Swapnapur, Gharkul, Gokuldham, Yashodham, Suchidham, Dindoshi Depot, A. K. Vaidya Road, Makrani Pada, Rani Sati Road (Wednesday, 24th April 2024)



JODIE FOSTER MARKS 10TH ANNIVERSARY WITH WIFE AT HAND AND FOOTPRINT CEREMONY

Los Angeles | Agencies

===lead

Los Angeles, April 20 (IANS) Actress Jodie Foster, renowned for her roles in 'The Silence of the Lambs' and 'Taxi Driver', celebrated her 10th anniversary with her wife, Alexandra Hedison, in the most special manner.

The 61-year-old actress got her hands and feet imprinted into the ground outside the TCL Chinese Theatre during the 15th annual TCM Classic Film Festival, reports 'People' magazine.

Foster, who most recently appeared in the sports documentary 'Nyad', received support from various friends, including Jamie Lee Curtis and Christopher Guest, and her wife, Alexandra Hedison, who sat in the front row.

During her heartfelt speech, Foster acknowledged that it was the couple's 10-year anniversary and expressed gratitude to Hedison, 54, for being "so generous" and "giving up" their special day for the event.

"Like, what were you thinking? How come you didn't say no? I love you so much, and I'm so grateful for the life we have together," Foster expressed.

After the event, the Best Actress Oscar winner shared how Hedison was more than willing to adjust their anniversary plans.

The actress told 'People', "I asked her, and she was just like, 'Oh yeah, that's okay. We'll figure it out. That's okay. We'll go to dinner'. We had a good day, so we kind of made it happen yesterday, and then we got a whole weekend of fun things to do."

Reflecting on the ceremony, she added: "I thought it was just something for me, because it meant something to me as a kid, but I didn't realise it was such a big deal, and all my friends were like, 'Wait, what? What's happening?' So it's kind of great."



Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Rihanna has reflected on some of her past fashion choices, expressing regret over certain aspects. The multi-hyphenate

spoke about her favourite looks and her least favourites.

The mother of two revealed that one of her current 'fashion icks' is showing off too much skin, reports 'People' magazine.

She told 'British Vogue', "It's gonna sound hypocritical because I did so much s*** in my life. I had my n*****

Rihanna regrets showing off too much skin in her past fashion appearances

out, I had my p***** out," she said. "But now those are the things that as a mom, an evolved young lady -- emphasis on young -- things that I just feel like I would never do, I'm like, 'Oh my god, I really did that? Nips out?'"

According to 'People', some of the Grammy winner's most notable looks were skin-baring moments, including the famed custom Adam Selman design -- which was an unforgettable fishnet dress, gloves, and headscarf that was hand-embellished with over 216,000 Swarovski crystals.

Another notable NSFW fashion moment was her 2014 Met Gala after-party gown, a Stella McCartney design that showed a lot of abs with a daringly low back.

In conversation with the outlet, Rihanna also said that the backless gown remains one of her favourite looks, highlighting that two of her top fashion moments are from the 2014 Met Gala.

The 'Umbrella' singer further expressed her fondness for her Stella McCartney white cropped top paired with a skirt worn at the Gala itself.

DWAYNE JOHNSON REVEALS HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH CHRIS JANSON STARTED IN A PARKING LOT

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actor Dwayne Johnson and Chris Janson share a close friendship. Recently, Janson released the music video for his summer anthem 'Whatcha See Is Whatcha Get', featuring none other than his buddy Johnson.

Both of them recently opened up about their friendship, the music video, and their mutual passion for country music, reports 'People' magazine.

Dwayne Johnson told 'People', "We met in a parking lot. My family and I were at one of my favourite hotels, having lunch, we were waiting for our car to pull around, when Chris approached with his son."

"He introduced himself and said, 'Can I take a picture with you?' I gladly agreed. We started chatting, and I discovered that Chris was a country music singer," the actor added.

He continued, "I mentioned, 'Yeah, dude, when I was 15, I used to live in Nashville and I tried to get into Tootsie's and a lot of the honky-tonks... especially the dive bars in Lower Broad, which I had no business being in at 14, at 15. And I said, 'My go-to song was always 'The Blues Man' by Hank Jr'. And he said, 'Dude, I just sang that song last night at the concert'. Then he starts singing it and we start singing it."

According to 'People', Janson shared that their meeting was "not forced" and they "quickly became friends".

He remarked, "That just doesn't happen to people every day. And I am just a firm believer that God puts people across your path at the right time and the precise location when you need it and right when they need it. The value of this friendship means more to me than music videos. It means more to me than business. It means more to me than anything."

He added, "It's just the value of a phone call and seeing someone in person and just being able to be friends with somebody on a real level. The entertainment business always takes us down so many avenues where we can forget what real life looks like and reality."



DRAKE USES AI-GENERATED VOICES OF TUPAC & SNOOP DOGG ON DISS TRACK 'TAYLOR MADE FREESTYLE'

Los Angeles | Agencies

The beef between Drake and Kendrick Lamar is escalating to new heights.

Drake dropped a track on his social media titled 'Taylor Made Freestyle'.

The song features AI vocals from Tupac Shakur and Snoop Dogg on a stopgap between diss records as he awaits Kendrick Lamar's response to his latest release 'Push Ups', reports 'Variety'.

On the track, an imagined Shakur addresses Lamar directly, questioning his silence since the release of his verse on 'Like That', a diss that initiated this feud last month.

"Kendrick we need ya, the West Coast saviour. Engraving your name in some hip-hop history," raps an artificial Shakur.

"Call him a b**** for me. Talk about him liking young girls as a gift for me."

According to 'Variety', Drake then uses Snoop Dogg's computer-generated vocals to directly address Lamar.

Snoop Dogg's AI-generated voice raps, "World is watching this chess game, but oh you out of moves Dot. You know that the OG never fucking doubted you. But right now it seem like you posted up without a clue or what the fuck you 'bout to do."

There's speculation that Drake rapped the Shakur and Snoop Dogg verses and used AI to alter their sound.

Drake closes the song with his own verse, stating that it's a stopgap until he receives a response from Lamar.

"The first one really only took me an hour or two. The next one is really 'bout to bring out the coward in you," he said.

On Instagram, where he shared the song, he wrote, "While we wait on you I guess."

He also suggests that Lamar is delaying his response track due to the massive cultural moment surrounding Taylor Swift's new album 'The Tortured Poets Department', and how everything else will be overshadowed by its release.

"But now we gotta wait a fucking week 'cause Taylor Swift is your new Top," he remarked, referencing Lamar's former record label Top Dawg Entertainment.



Goldie Hawn looks back at 'darling' daughter Kate Hudson's high school days

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oscar and Golden Globe-winning actress Goldie Hawn recently celebrated her daughter Kate Hudson's 45th birthday and shared some sweet memories.

The 'Private Benjamin' actress took to Instagram to share a sweet throwback image alongside Hudson, reports 'People' magazine.

In the photo, the mother and daughter are seen embracing, clad in matching white tank tops and blue jeans.

"Happy birthday, my darling daughter @katehudson," Hawn,



78, wrote in the caption.

"Among all the things you have already accomplished in your life -- amazing mother, great dancer, Academy Award-nominated actress, and now a fantastic singer -- let us not forget you were the fastest runner

in high school and all of Los Angeles."

"So keep on running sweetheart. You're a racehorse. I love you," Hawn concluded.

Hudson expressed her gratitude to her mom in the comment section, saying, "Haha! Mama you're the best! Being fast is still my favourite accomplishment. Catch me if you can!! Love you so much."

As per 'People', in addition to the fun tribute from her mom, Hudson received numerous birthday wishes via Instagram, including messages from Reese Witherspoon, Ike Barinholtz, and Sara Foster.

Post Malone covers all his tattoos for 'Fortnight' collaboration with Taylor Swift

experimentation, and those melodies he creates that just stick in your head forever."

According to 'People', Swift also shows a different side of herself in one of the video's opening scenes.

Replicas of Malone's facial tattoos appear on her face as she sings, "And for a fortnight there, we were forever. Run into you sometimes, ask about the weather. Now you're in my backyard, turned into good neighbours. Your wife waters flowers, I wanna kill her."

While the tattoos on her face disappear when she steps into another room to work on a typewriter, fans finally get a glimpse of Malone working on his own typewriter while

sitting across from her.

After streams of pink and blue begin coming out of each of their typewriters, they form a bright spark. Following its disappearance, Swift is seen reading to Malone, with his tattoos no longer on his face, as they lie in the middle of an empty road.

As the camera zooms out, Swift is seen running into Malone's arms and the two share a long embrace.

Malone gently grabs Swift's face, causing her to let out a smile. As papers begin to fly all around them, the two look into each other's eyes and grab each other's hands.



Los Angeles | Agencies

American rapper-singer Post Malone got a new aesthetic but, it isn't permanent. The rapper, 28, covered all his tattoos to play Taylor Swift's star-crossed lover in the new music video for their 'Fortnight' collabo-

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Rosie Huntington



Athletics: US quartet breaks distance medley relay world record in Eugene

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Brannon Kidder, Brandon Miller, Isaiah Harris and Henry Wynne teamed up to set a distance medley relay world record of 9:14.58 at the Oregon Relays in Eugene, USA.

The distance medley relay comprises legs of 1200m, 400m, 800m and 1600m. Kidder got things started with his 1200m leg of 2:49.60 before Miller ran 46.60 for 400m on Friday.

Harris then clocked 1:45.75 for 800m before Wynne brought the baton home after running 3:52.64 for the final 1600m leg, according to information received from World Athletics.

Their combined time of 9:14.58 improves on the previous world record of 9:15.50 set by USA's Kyle Merber, Brycen Spratling, Brandon Johnson and Ben Blankenship at the 2015 World Athletics Relays in The Bahamas.

The next edition of the World Athletics Relays returns to Nassau on May 4-5.



Indian Para-Canoeist Jaideep dominates in Asian Championship at Tokyo, wins gold medal

Tokyo (Japan) | Agencies

Indian para-canoeist Jaideep secured the gold medal in the VL3 Men's 200m event as the Indian contingent asserted their dominance at the Asian Canoeing/Para Canoeing Sprint Championships held here on Saturday. Sangeeta Rajput and Shabana Rajput added to India's medal total by winning bronze and silver in the KL3 Women's 200m division, respectively. Pooja Ojha and Prachi Yadav main-



tained their winning streak by earning gold medals in their respective categories, dominating the KL1 and KL2 Women's 200m events. Both Rajni Jha and Sonalben Ratilal Vasoya added silver medals to India's medal total in the KL2 and KL1 women's 200m competitions. Men's division winners Surender Kumar, Yash Kumar, and Gajendra Singh took home gold, silver, and bronze, respectively, in the VL1 and VL2 Men's 200m events, demonstrating equal talent.

ATP Tour: Tsitsipas saves two match points to win, advances to semifinals at Barcelona



Barcelona | Agencies

Greece superstar Stefanos Tsitsipas survived a major scare against Facundo Diaz Acosta of Argentina at the Barcelona Open, saving two match points to earn a dramatic three-set victory to advance to the semifinals. Tsitsipas defeated Diaz Acosta 4-6, 6-3, 7-6(8) in a quarterfinal clash on Friday evening and said it was "extremely difficult to sustain the same level throughout the entire match". The Greek player said he came close to losing the match at certain moments and reminded himself that he wore a headband that had a mountain and that he had to climb it. "So, it kept me going," Tsitsipas said after the match.

In a thrilling two-hour, 31-minute clash, Tsitsipas had the chance to serve out the match at 5-4 in the third set but hit two double faults in the game as Diaz Acosta broke back. The Argentine then failed to convert a match point on the Greek's serve at 5-6, before both players saved match points in the third-set tie-break.

With little to separate them, it was Tsitsipas who stood tall on Pista Rafa Nadal, saving another match point at 6/7 in the tie-break before he converted on his third opportunity to triumph. After his ninth win in a row, the fifth seed collapsed to the court in delight before he rose to his feet to embrace Diaz Acosta, who served two costly double faults in the tie-break. Tsitsipas is chasing his second title of the season, having captured his third Monte-Carlo Masters crown last week. He is up one spot to No. 7 in the ATP Live Rankings.

The 25-year-old, who is a three-time finalist in Barcelona, holds a 28-2 record against players ranked outside the Top 20 in the ATP Rankings on clay since the start of 2022. He will look to maintain that record when he meets No. 59 Dusan Lajovic in the semifinals on Saturday. Lajovic overcame Frenchman Arthur Fils 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 to reach his eighth tour-level semifinal and just his second since 2020. The World No. 59, who is a two-time tour-level champion, is the lowest-ranked semifinalist in Barcelona since then-World No. 63 Tsitsipas in 2018.



Nitin-Salman pair wins open doubles gold in Asia Cup rowing in South Korea

Chungju (Korea) | Agencies

Indian rowers Nitin Deol and Salman Khan won the gold medal in the Men's Open Doubles competition in the 2024 Asian Cup here on Saturday.

The final race of this category concluded on Saturday morning and in a keenly contested race, Nitin Deol and Salman Khan defeated a strong challenge from a local pair to win in a timing of 6:35.73.

Meanwhile, in the Asia Oceania Olympic Qualification Regatta being held alongside this event, India's Lightweight Men's Double Sculls pair Ujjwal

Kumar and Arvind Singh topped their race and qualified for the final (Final A) on Saturday.

Balraj Panwar, who finished second in the Men's Singles Scull race, also qualified for the Final A as he inched closer to qualification for the Paris Olympic Games to be held from July 26 to August 11.

The winner of the final in the Asia Oceania Olympic Qualification Regatta will qualify for the Olympic Games. Those who fail to get through the continental qualifiers will get a chance to make it through the final Olympic qualifying regatta to be held in a few weeks.



Wrestler Anshu Malik & Vinesh Phogat secures Olympic quota

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Wrestler Anshu Malik clinched the Olympic quota in women's 57 kg category after beating Laylokhon Sobirova of Uzbekistan by 11-0 at the Asian Olympic Qualification tournament on Saturday. World Wrestling Championship silver medalist Anshu won both her bouts by technical superiority in Bishkek.

Mansi Ahlawat faltered at the last hurdle as she missed out

on a quota after losing 0-6 to reigning Asian Games Champion in the 62 kg semis.

India's Vinesh Phogat clinched the Paris 2024 Olympic quota after beating Kazakhstan's Laura Ganiyzy 10-0 in the women's 50kg semifinal at the Asian Olympic qualifier on Saturday. Asian Games and Commonwealth champion Phogat won the bout via technical superiority against Laura in 4 minutes 18 seconds.

I am 100 per cent ready to represent India in T20 WC, says Dinesh Karthik

Team Absolute | Kolkata

India wicket-keeper batter Dinesh Karthik revealed that he will support Rahul Dravid, Rohit Sharma and Ajit Agarkar decision of his inclusion in the T20 World Cup squad.

The star Royal Challengers Bengaluru batter created a buzz after playing back-to-back sensation knocks in the ongoing Indian Premier League. Karthik has been one of the most consistent players for RCB, scoring 226 runs in 7 matches this season at a strike rate of 205.45 and an impressive average of 75.33.

"I am completely with Rahul Dravid, Rohit Sharma, and Ajit Agarkar, and I respect any decision that they take," said Dinesh Karthik in the pre-match press conference against Kolkata Knight Riders on Saturday.

"At this stage in my life, it would be the greatest feeling for me to represent India (at the upcoming T-20 World Cup). I'm very, very keen to do so. There is nothing bigger in my life other than representing India in this T-20 World Cup. I also feel there are three very, very stable, honest people who are at their helm to decide what should be the best Indian team for the World Cup. Rahul Dravid, Rohit Sharma, and Ajit Agarkar. And I'm completely with them.

I respect any decision that they take. But all I can say is I'm 100% ready. And you know I'll do everything I can to be on that flight to the World Cup," he added.

Karthik's most recent innings came against Sunrisers Hyderabad of 83-runs in 35 deliveries which gave his team a chance to chase down the



mammoth total of 288 runs.

DK's innings ultimately ended up in a losing cause, but it still meant that RCB were able to post a total of 262 runs in their 20 overs, with the margin of defeat being just 25 runs.

"It's been thoroughly enjoyable to do what I'm doing for RCB as a finisher," said Karthik.

"Look, I think these days as a play-

er, you need to understand your strengths. I'm not (Andre) Russell or (Kieron) Pollard who can mishit a ball and get a six for it. So I need to understand how I do.

How I can beat gaps, what sort of balls I can hit for boundaries. And I realised there was a certain pattern in which bowlers were bowling to me. So, I needed to try and work out a

solution for that. And hence, when I practice, I try and understand, okay, this is what they're going to bowl at me. How am I going to get a boundary visualizing a field that is going to be in place for me? It's been great to go out there and express myself, and it's been thoroughly enjoyable to do what I'm doing for RCB as a finisher," he concluded.

'Never doubted my abilities to come back into national setup', says Indian Team forward Preeti Dubey

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Preeti Dubey, the dynamic forward, was named among the 33 probables for the Indian women's hockey team that is currently training at SAI Bangalore. The 60-member assessment squad that reported to camp on April 1, was spruced up after selection trials that were held on April 6 and 7.

Out of 33, one name that stood out was -- Preeti Dubey. The 25-year-old, who hails from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, and made her last appearance for the Indian women's hockey team in the Hockey World League semifinal in 2017, clawed her way back into the National setup after impressing the selectors and coaches in the assessment camp.

Her selection comes after she put up an impressive performance in the 14th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2024, held in Pune.

Speaking about her inclusion, Preeti said, "It feels amazing to come back in the national setup. But this is just the first step. All my efforts and hard work have paid off. I would like to thank my family members, and all my coaches who supported me, motivated me and stood by me in difficult times. I always believed in myself that the right time would come, and I never doubted my abilities



and potential to come back into the national setup."

Recalling the struggles that she overcame, Preeti Dubey said, "I have seen a lot of ups and downs in the past few years, but I believe that because of what happened, it has made me mentally strong. When the lockdown happened in 2020, I faced a lot of problems because we couldn't play Nationals and due to that I couldn't get my allocated leave from my job at Centre Railway. That one year was the toughest for me. I used to work for eight hours and then come back to my room and prepare my own food as I was living in Mumbai without my family. But every day, I used to make time for my fitness and training from 8-9 pm. I made sure that my fitness level never went down."

"My next aim is to make the cut for the 18-member squad, gain my confidence and help my team win medals and accolades on an international circuit. My main focus is now on the 2028 Summer Olympics," she added.

Preeti also shared how she kept herself motivated each day and how she pushed herself to improve her game and made a comeback to the Indian women's hockey team. "My father calls me every day and he says that I have what it takes to make a comeback. All of my coaches have always told me that I have the potential and when so many people put their trust in me, it gives me that extra motivation to do better and it keeps me going even under adverse circumstances," she said.

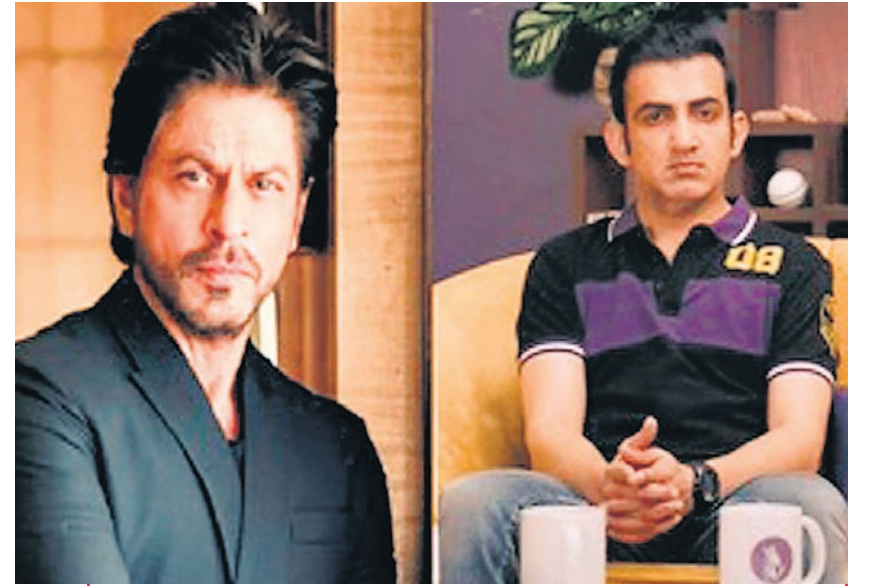


Sunny Leone slams physical violence, says even animals have code of conduct



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sunny Leone said ExSqueeze Me Please, gave a piece of mind to those contestants who feel that physical violence is permissible on the show. The actress came down heavily on them and that they are not allowed to hit each other though they can speak as much as they want about the person whom they have a problem with. During the episode, Sunny firmly said "Splitvilla" does not condone violence, when you raise a hand against somebody you are violating their personal space and breaking our rules. Mujhe pata hai bahot saare emotions nikal rahe hai but that doesn't mean we hit each other and fight like animals because that is what you guys were just now. I actually think that animals have a code of conduct better than what I just saw. You are not allowed to hit each other, bhagwaan ne zabaan di hai woh use karo." Her co-host, Tanuj also warned the contestants, as he said, "We understand there are unresolved issues but this is not the way, take this as the last and final warning from us." During the episode, the dome session kicked off with dazzling attires and some deliciously scandalous rumours. While Kashish revealed ongoing conversations over her Exploring tactics, sparking intrigue, Addy grappled with doubts about Arica. Sunny challenged Addy to pick a partner from the dumping ground for an oracle session. Uorfi Javed remarked: "Mera bhi bahut mann karta hai ki mein Oracle ke saamne jaau but then I just remember mera koi match hi nahi hain. Isliye main tumhare matches mein bhi gadbad karne aa jaati hoon." Uorfi plays the mischief card sending all the safe contestants to the unsafe side. As Uorfi invited questions, sparking the beginning of exes' clashes. Anicka recounted past trauma with Lakshay and how Aniket's intervention saved Deekila from a near-fatal experience when she was possessed. Amidst the emotional wreckage, Uorfi and Sunny stepped in to comfort Anicka as she breaks down, expressing her desire to leave. While reassuring her, Uorfi said, "Girl we have all been there and this will make you strong." In a moment of intensity, Uorfi scolds Siwet for not supporting Anicka and instead causing more conflict.



GAUTAM GAMBHIR OPENS UP ON SRK: 'HE NEVER QUESTIONED MY DECISIONS'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan, who was last seen in 'Dunki', is a man of focus, commitment, and sheer will. When he places his faith in someone, he makes sure to support the person, come what may. The mentor of SRK's Indian Premier League (IPL) team Kolkata Knight Riders, Gautam Gambhir, appeared on the podcast 'Knights Dugout Podcast' along with Manish Pandey. During the podcast, Gautam spoke about his journey with KKR and shared that SRK and he never had a cricket conversation except for once during his association with KKR. He heaped praise on the Bollywood megastar and called him the best team owner in the IPL. Gautam said: "I've said numerous times that he (Shah Rukh Khan) is the best owner I've ever worked with. I don't think in the seven years of my captaincy, we had a cricket conversation for seven minutes except for that rough patch when I was on the verge of dropping myself." He further mentioned how SRK never lost faith in him as a performer. Gautam shared: "I went and spoke to him, and the only thing he told me was that, till you are here, you are not going to drop yourself. That's the only conversation related to cricket that I had with him in seven years. He told me, 'You won't drop yourself. Whatever happens, you will play all the games. Then things turned around.'" "Imagine an owner, who himself is such a great achiever, not even talking about cricket. He trusted my decision-making. I'm not saying that in my seven years of being with KKR, I always made the right decision. I have made some of the worst decisions, but he never questioned my decisions," he added.

Ajay Devgn, Kajol shower their best wishes on Nysa on her 21st birthday

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A child's 21st birthday is a special occasion for any parent, so when their daughter Nysa turned 21 on Saturday, Ajay Devgn and Kajol took to social media to share their joy and best wishes. Kajol shared an array of pictures of Nysa and penned a sweet note for her daughter. In the pictures, Nysa can be seen playing with her pooch and sitting on a swing.

The actress wrote in the caption, "Happy 21st my darling... may u always smile and laugh with this same joie de vivre through life... know that you are loved always and forever. To the moon and back baby! Btw that last pic is how I look at you most days."

Earlier, the actress had shared a note about her motherhood journey, saying how her baby makes her grateful and overawed by her love and unflinching support. Kajol had then dropped an unseen throwback picture featuring little Nysa wearing a green frock and sitting on her mother's lap. Ajay also took to his Instagram and shared a picture of him with his daughter.

He wrote in the caption, "Happy Birthday, My Little Girl always! As many stars in the sky I wish that many wishes for you come true this Birthday. PS - My List For You Included. Love you forever."

Kajol and Ajay got married in February 1999. They have two children -- Nysa and son Yug.



KAREENA SHARES PICTURES OF TAIMUR, JEH SCRIBBLING LETTER FOR THEIR GRANDMA ON HER BIRTHDAY



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor Khan, who is basking in the success of her recent theatrical film 'Crew', is celebrating her mother Babita Kapoor's birthday on Saturday. The actress took to her

Instagram on Sunday and shared several pictures of her kids writing a letter to their grandmother and wishing her the best. Kareena wrote in the caption: "Happy birthday to our world. Meri maa." The pictures show Kareena and Sai's elder son Taimur scribbling a letter for his grandmother. While the

younger one, Jeh, has doodled on the paper in incoherent lines, but the emotion still shines through with the use of stickers like "Stay cool" and "Hot Stuff". The last picture in the carousel shows Kareena hugging her mother while her father, Randhir Kapoor is also seen in the background.



'Can I please stay?' Priyanka Chopra on her Swiss holiday

Mumbai: Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who recently visited India with her husband Nick Jonas, is enjoying every bit of her Swiss holiday.

On Saturday, the actress took to her Instagram and dropped pictures from her recent vacation in the Crans-Montana municipality of Switzerland.

Crans-Montana is located in the district of Sierre in the canton of Valais in Switzerland. In the pictures, the actress can be seen relaxing on her holiday as she shared several pictures of the snowfall and the snowclad mountains. In the pictures, PC can be seen dressed in comfortable winterwear. She wrote in the caption, "Oh to sojourn in Crans Montana even for a blink. Can I please stay?" Earlier, Priyanka Chopra Jonas had shared then and now pictures on her Instagram. The actress took to her Instagram and shared two pictures.

While the 1st picture was of her after she won the Miss World title, the second picture was a recent one. The actress also poked fun at her styling from the 2000s and said that back then she was just trying to fit in.

SONU SOOD

Introduced his new gym buddy 'Pyare Mohan'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Sonu Sood, who is gearing up for his upcoming film, had a new partner in the gym for a workout on Saturday.

The actor took to his Instagram and introduced his new gym buddy to his fans in a video. The video shows him in the company of a pip 'Pyare Mohan'. The actor said that he is inspiring him to workout "harder". He also urged fans to adopt stray dogs. The actor also did biceps curls on a cable machine as he lovingly held the pup in one hand. Earlier this week, Sood was seen getting into a heartfelt conversation with a specially-abled fan, who travelled to Mumbai all the way from Jharkhand to meet the actor. The video, which went viral on social media, received heaps of praise from the netizens.

On the work front, Sood is looking forward to the release of his upcoming actioner 'Fateh'. The film also stars Jacqueline Fernandez in the lead role. Sonu Sood had previously said that the audience would witness Hollywood-like action in the film, which took three years to be written and prepped.



Nishi Singh