

absolute india

VOL. 9, ISSUE 175, BHOPAL | WEDNESDAY, MAY 08, 2024 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI

NATION > 02
Rahul waves copy of Constitution at Jharkhand rally, says 'ready...'



HOLYWOOD > 06
Sandra Bullock's says Keanu and she need to act together again...



SPORTS > 07
'I needed to play till the end', says SKY after match-winning ton...



Lok Sabha elections 2024: 61.45 percent voting in third phase of polling

SLOW AND STEADY AGAIN

63 % voting in 9 seats of MP

MAHA SEES 53.40 % TURNOUT FOR 11 SEATS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the third phase of Lok Sabha in Madhya Pradesh, about 63 percent voting took place in nine parliamentary constituencies. In this phase, the fate of 127 candidates including Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan is sealed in EVMs.

Voting in the state started at 7 am and continued till 6 pm. Till 6 pm, 62.61 percent voters voted.

The highest turnout in the third phase was in Rajgarh at 72.08. Whereas, 69.72 percent voting took place in Guna, 69.20 in Vidisha, 68.47 in Betul, 61.70 in Sagar, 58.42 in Bhopal, 57.86 in Gwalior, 56.61 in Morena and 51.34 percent in Bhind.

There were more than 1.77 crore voters in this



phase. The number of voters above 50 years of age is 88,106 and the number of voters above 100 years is 1,804. In this phase of elections, everyone's eyes are on the three parliamentary constituencies Rajgarh, Vidisha and Guna. From Rajgarh, Congress has fielded former Chief Minister Digvijay Singh and he is contesting

against BJP's Rodmal Nagar.

In Vidisha, former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan is in the fray as a BJP candidate and is facing Congress's Pratap Bhanu Sharma. In Guna, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia is contesting as a BJP candidate for the first time and is facing Congress's Yadendra Singh Yadav.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra recorded a voter turnout of 54.09 per cent on Tuesday in the third phase of the Lok Sabha elections 2024, the officials said.

Voting was held in 11 out of the 48 Lok Sabha constituencies in Maharashtra May 7 in the third phase of the general elections.

The first two phases of polling in the state saw more than 62 per cent voter turnout. As per the data shared by the election authorities, the Kolhapur seat saw the highest turnout of 63.71 per cent, while the Baramati seat, where two members of the politically influential Pawar family were locked in a bitter tussle, recorded the lowest turnout of 47.84 per cent.

Meanwhile, Hatkanangale recorded a voter turnout of 62.18 per cent, Osmanabad 56.84 per cent, Latur 55.38 per cent, Satara 54.74 per cent, Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg 53.75 per cent, Sangli 52.56 per cent, Raigad 50.31 per cent, Madha 50.00 per cent and Solapur 49.17 per cent.

Prominent contestants in this phase of polling in the state included royal scions Shahu Chhatrapati of the Congress in Kolhapur and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s Udayanraje Bhosale in Satara

as well Union minister Narayan Rane in Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg. A total of 2.09 crore persons were eligible to vote for 258 candidates in the third phase, for which 23,036 polling centres were set up,

an election official said. There were 1,07,64,741 male voters, 1,02,26,946 female voters and 929 from the third gender, the news agency reported on Tuesday.

Man torches 3 EVMs at Sangola village

Solapur: In a shocker, a man poured petrol and set afire at least three electronic voting machines at a polling station in Maharashtra's Bagalwadi village of the Madha Lok Sabha constituency, here on Tuesday afternoon.

According to officials, around 1 p.m., the man barged into the polling station with a bottle of petrol, poured it on at least three EVMs there and set them afire, shocking the other voters and the on-duty election officials there.

He was reportedly shouting slogans like 'Jai Maratha', 'Ek Maratha, Lakh Maratha', etc, before rushing out, but was apprehended by the police security deployed outside the polling booth. Simultaneously, some election officials quickly brought a can of water and doused the burning equipment, but at least three EVMs were seen rendered useless, even as videos of the incident went viral on social media.

The election process was halted briefly as the booth officials managed to get replacements for the burnt EVMs, and resumed the voting.

Maha women's panel chief booked for performing EVM 'puja'

Pune: The Chairperson of the Maharashtra State Commission for Women (MSCW), Rupali Chakankar, allegedly performed EVM 'puja' before voting at a polling station in the Baramati Lok Sabha constituency on Tuesday. Though she had entered empty-handed, later she was seen with a small 'puja thali' with flowers and other assortments with which she performed a brief prayer ceremony of the EVM booth, with an unidentified woman standing beside her. Some pictures of Chakankar performing the rituals were flashed on social media drawing strong reactions from the netizens, with some even tagging the police and the Election Commission of India (ECI).

LS polls cross halfway mark

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The voter turnout in the third phase of the Lok Sabha elections on Tuesday, covering 93 constituencies in 11 states/UTs, was approximately 61.45 per cent as of 8 p.m., with the highest voting reported from Assam (4 seats) at 75.26 per cent, and the lowest from Maharashtra (11 seats) at 54.77 per cent, the Election Commission said.

Goa (2 seats) recorded 74.27 per cent voting, followed by West Bengal (4 seats) 73.93 per cent, Karnataka (14 seats) 67.76 per cent, Chhattisgarh (7 seats) 66.99 per cent, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (2 seats) 65.23 per cent, Madhya Pradesh (9 seats) 63.09 per cent, Gujarat (25 seats) 56.76 per cent, UP (10 seats) 57.34 per cent, and Bihar (5 seats) 56.55 per cent, the poll panel said.

Polling began at 7 a.m. and officially closed at 6 p.m., with many braving the heat to exercise their right to franchise. Those in the queue were allowed to cast their votes even after 6 p.m.

With the conclusion of Phase 3, polling in half of the Lok Sabha seats (283) is over now, covering 20 states/UTs.

The election process finished in Assam, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, and the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu on Tuesday.

"The voter turnout figures which are approximate as of 8 p.m. will continue to be further updated on the VTR App on a continuous basis as vari-



ous polling parties formally close the poll and hand over Form 17 C to the polling agents of candidates at each of the polling stations," the EC said in a statement.

A further update will be posted at 11.30 p.m., it said.

Of the 1,331 candidates in the fray, notable contenders included Union Home Minister Amit Shah contesting from Gujrat's Gandhinagar, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan from the state's Vidisha, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia from Guna (Madhya Pradesh) (all BJP), Congress heavyweight and former Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh from Madhya Pradesh's Rajgarh, Samajwadi Party's Dimple Yadav from Uttar Pradesh's Mainpuri and Aditya Yadav (Budaun), former BJP Karnataka Chief Ministers Jagadish Shettar (Belgaum), Basavaraj Bommai (Haveri), Congress' Geeta Shivarajkumar (Shimoga), industrialist Pallavi Dempo, contesting from South Goa on a BJP ticket, and NCP-SP's Supriya Sule who faced her sister-in-law and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra Pawar in the family borough Baramati, among others.

BHOPAL (5 PM) - 58.42%		62.28% ON 9 SEATS (5 PM)	
Sehore	- 70.82%	Morena	- 55.25
Berasia	- 67.85%	Bhind	- 50.96
Govindpura	- 56.15%	Gwalior	- 57.86
Huzur	- 59%	Guna	- 68.93
North	- 60.20%	Sagar	- 61.70
Narela	- 56.10%	Vidisha	- 69.20
South Wes	- 49.90%	Bhopal	- 58.42
Madhya	- 50%	Rajgarh	- 72.08
		Betul	- 67.97

No relief for Kejriwal, SC likely to hear case on May 9

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court bench, which initially decided to pronounce its judgement on Tuesday on the interim bail plea of incarcerated Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the excise policy case, will most likely take up the matter again on May 9 or the next week.

CM Kejriwal promised the court to refrain from signing any official documents if granted interim bail in connection with the case. This assurance came through his counsel, Senior Advocate



AM Singhvi. CM Kejriwal said that he would not sign any official file given that the Lieutenant Governor (L-G) would not halt government work on the

basis that files were unsigned by him.

The bench had clarified that it was merely informing both sides to get prepared on the question of interim bail as the final hearing in the case could be prolonged. "If it (conclusion of hearing) is going to take time, it does appear it may take time, we may then consider the question of interim bail because of the elections," the apex court had said. Further, it had asked ASG Raju to take instructions if CM Kejriwal, because of the position he holds, can be allowed to sign official files in custody.

J&K: 2 TERRORISTS KILLED IN KULGAM ENCOUNTER

Srinagar: A top commander of the banned militant outfit Lashkar-e-Toiba's front organisation The Resistance Front (TRF) was killed along with another terrorist in an encounter with the security forces in J&K's Kulgam district.

IGP Kashmir V. K. Birdi told reporters that the top TRF commander identified as Basit Dar is one of the two terrorists killed by the security forces in the encounter in the Redwani area of Kulgam district.

After the security forces closed on the hiding terrorists, they opened fire triggering an encounter during which two terrorists were killed.

Haryana: 3 Independent MLAs withdraw support; Govt lose majority

Rohtak | Agencies

Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls in Haryana slated on May 25 in all 10 Parliamentary seats in the state, the Congress on Tuesday got a major shot in the arm as three Independent legislators extended their support to the grand old party.

The legislators are Somveer Gangwan from Charkhi Dadri, Randhir Golan from Pundri, and Dharampal Gondar from Nilokheri. They withdrew their support from the BJP. Responding to the development, senior Congress leader and former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda said the BJP government has lost majority after the withdrawal of support from the JJP and three Independents.

The three legislators announced their support while addressing the media in



the presence of Leader of Opposition in Haryana Assembly Bhupinder Singh Hooda and state unit Congress president Chaudhary Udaibhan. The three MLAs have sent letters withdrawing their support from the government to the Governor. The legislators submitted that the public was tired of the BJP, and now there was no justification in giving opportunity to the BJP because every section is unhappy with unemployment, inflation,

increasing crime, family identity and property identities in the government. They jointly said every class, including farmers, labourers, employees and traders are agitating today.

The Independent MLAs added they tried to warn the BJP on different occasions while they were in the government but the BJP did not give up its stubbornness. The MLAs stated that now the public's expectations are only from the Congress. Bhupinder Hooda, meanwhile, expressed his gratitude to the three legislators for their support and said they had taken this decision, keeping in mind public sentiments. Following the resignations of Independent MLA Ranjit Chautala and former chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar from the 90-member Haryana Assembly, the BJP now has only 40 MLAs out of 88.

Gandhi, Nehru could never have imagined being called "Traitors": Priyanka Gandhi

Raebareilly | Agencies

Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru could never have imagined that a government in the country would one day call them "deshdrohi (traitors)", Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra alleged on Monday.

Addressing party workers in the Rae Bareilly constituency, the Congress general secretary alleged, "Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru undertook movements so that the people's rights could be strengthened. They could never have imagined that a government would come that would call them traitors."

"They could not even have imagined that the government itself would try to weak-



en our people," she alleged. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also referred to farmers'

protests during the British Raj. She claimed, "The farmers'

protests during the time of Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru -- the first time when Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru were arrested, it was in Rae Bareilly when they had come to participate."

"Since then, during all the fights and elections in Rae Bareilly, there was democracy and truth on one side while on the other side it was terror and a (kind of) politics that never considered the people 'sarvopari (above everything)'. In this fight, you always ensured victory for truth and the principles of democracy," Priyanka Gandhi claimed.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is contesting the elections from Rae Bareilly, a constituency held by his mother Sonia Gandhi for the last two decades.

GOOGLE LAUNCHES PIXEL 8A WITH INDUSTRY-FIRST AI FEATURES IN INDIA

New Delhi: Google on Tuesday launched its latest A-series smartphone called 'Pixel 8a' that is available for pre-order in India on the e-commerce platform Flipkart. The device comes with Tensor G3 chip and features several new AI features, including Gemini and Circle to Search.

Pixel 8a is priced at Rs 52,999 for the 128GB version and Rs 59,999 for the 256GB variant. The phone has a dual rear camera system with a 64-megapixel main lens and a 13-megapixel ultrawide lens, as well as a 13-megapixel front-facing camera, said the company. Pixel 8a also includes Super Res Zoom up to 8x and features like Magic Eraser, Night Sight and Photo Unblur. It includes Real Tone to "accurately represent everyone's skin tone in photos and videos".

SC terms top medical body chief's comments "Unacceptable"

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court today termed as "very, very unacceptable" the statements made by Indian Medical Association (IMA) president RV Asokan targeting the top court in a recent interview to PTI where he answered questions about Patanjali Ayurved's misleading advertisements case.

Expressing displeasure over Asokan's comments a day before the top court was slated to hear the matter, a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah sought his response on an application filed by Patanjali Ayurved Ltd.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Patanjali, told the bench that they have filed an application urging the court to take judicial notice of the "wanton and unwarranted comments" made by the IMA president. "You can say anything but still a majority of doctors are conscientious... practising according to ethics and principles. It does not behove the Supreme Court to take a broadside against the medical profession of the country which, after all, sacrificed so many lives for the Covid war," he had said.

During the hearing on Tuesday, the top court observed the president of the IMA, which is a petitioner before it in the matter, goes to the press and makes statement in a



matter that is sub-judice "This court is aware of the fact and you should be aware of it that it has broad shoulders to handle it all," Justice Kohli said. "Very, very unacceptable," Justice Amanullah added.



RAHUL WAVES COPY OF CONSTITUTION AT JHARKHAND RALLY, SAYS 'READY TO SACRIFICE LIFE TO PROTECT IT'

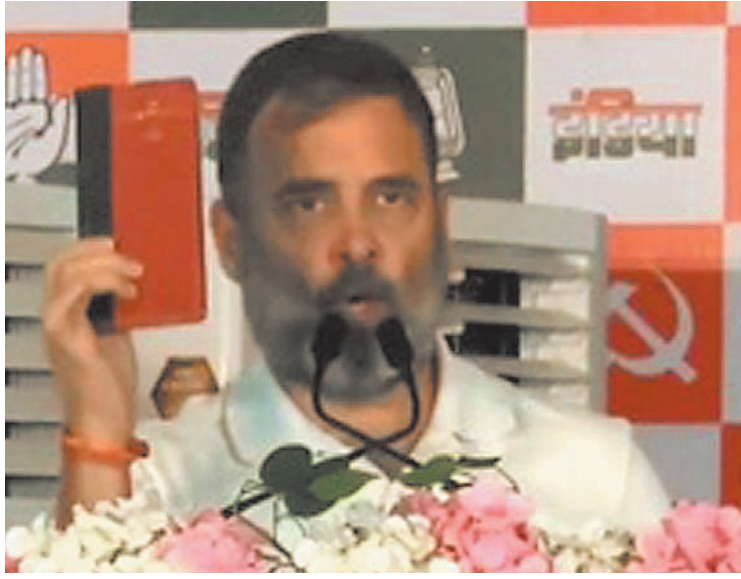
Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said on Tuesday that this election is about Adivasis, Dalits and the backwards and made a promise to the electorate to 'save the Constitution' even if it comes at the cost of his life.

Addressing a public gathering in Jharkhand's Singhbhum, Rahul waved a copy of the Constitution from the stage and said, "This is not an ordinary book, this is the Constitution - the voice of the Adivasis, the Dalits, the backwards and the poor."

He accused the BJP and RSS of hatching a plot to destroy the Constitution and said that it is his guarantee that he and his party won't allow it to happen.

"I am ready to sacrifice my life for the protection of the Constitution," he told the gathering. He said that this election is important for the future of the Dalits, the Adivasis, the backwards and the poor as all the rights like reservation, education, health-



care etc are granted and protected by the Constitution only. He added that the Constitution is not just a book but a guiding principle for the citizens and claimed that the BJP wants to

"tear" it. "If the Constitution goes, everything will go along with it," he said and asserted that Congress and the INDIA bloc are fighting it out together to nullify the "evil designs" of

BJP.

Gandhi greeted the people at the rally with 'Johar' saying, he did not say 'Namaskar' as people in Jharkhand use 'Johar' to greet each other. He said that the BJP calls them 'Vanvasis', which means that they are just inhabitants of the jungle without any rights while the Congress sees them as 'Adivasis' which means they are the original owners of the forest, its land and resources and have the first right on everything there.

Referring to Congress guarantees, he said that his party will make crores of 'lakhpatris' (millionaires) and one woman in every poor family will receive Rs one lakh every year.

"The youth will access to 'pehli naukri pakki', under the Right to Apprenticeship under which every fresh graduate and a diploma holder will be entitled to get a one-year apprenticeship with a guaranteed income of Rs one lakh," he said.

"The farmers' debt will be waived off and they will get the legal guarantee for the MSP on the crops," he added.

Congress biggest opponent of reservation to backward caste community: Amit Shah

Patna | Agencies

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said the Congress is the "biggest opponent" of reservation for the backward caste community.

"Today, if there is any opponent of the backward community, it is Congress; and Lalu Prasad Yadav is sitting in the lap of that party. The Kaka Kalelkar Commission was the first to prepare a report recommending the reservation for the backward caste people but Congress never implemented that. Then, the Mandal Commission came but it was also put on the back-burner by the Congress. When the Mandal Commission was approved, Rahul Gandhi's father Rajiv Gandhi opposed it the most," Home Minister Shah said addressing a rally in Bihar's Ujjainpur on Monday.

"Many years passed and no one did anything for the backward and extremely backward classes in the country. After the formation of the Narendra Modi government, the Backward-Extremely Backward Commission was constituted," he added.

"The Narendra Modi government had given 27 per cent reservation in AIIMS for doctors of backward and extremely backward communities. Congress robbed the reservation of the backward class. When the Congress government was formed in



Karnataka, they gave 5 per cent OBC reservation to the entire Muslim community overnight. 4 per cent reservation was also given to Andhra Pradesh," the Home Minister said, adding that the BJP "end it immediately if it comes to power in the two states".

Home Minister Shah said that Lalu Prasad Yadav, who roams around "pretending to be a well-wisher of the backward community", should respond to these issues.

The Home Minister hailed the government's move to confer socialist icon Karpoori Thakur with the Bharat Ratna. "He (Karpoori Thakur) did a lot of work for the poor. On his demand, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government had included the Maithili language in the Eighth Schedule," Home Minister Shah said.

Mayawati strips nephew Akash Anand of all posts, calls him 'immature'

Lucknow | Agencies

In a surprise development, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) President Mayawati has removed her nephew Akash Anand as her political heir and from the post of national coordinator of the party till he becomes "mature".

In a series of posts on X, Mayawati said that her brother Anand, the father of Akash Anand, will continue to discharge the responsibilities allotted to the latter.

Mayawati said she had appointed Akash Anand as her political successor and national coordinator but he apparently lacks maturity. He is being removed from all posts till he attains maturity, she added.

The BSP supremo also said that the late Kanshi Ram and she were committed to carrying forward the legacy of B.R.



Ambedkar, and she is preparing the young generations for this.

Last month, Akash Anand landed in trouble when he made some derogatory remarks at a rally in Sitapur after which a case was lodged against him.

Thereafter, Mayawati cancelled all his rallies and made sure that Akash did not campaign in the elections.

The decision to strip her nephew of all responsibilities is bound to impact BSP's campaign in the middle of the general elections.

SC stays Calcutta HC's order cancelling school jobs; rebukes Bengal govt for alleged recruitment scam

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed a Calcutta High Court order, which cancelled 25,753 appointments in teaching and non-teaching posts in the state-run schools made by the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) in 2016.

Stating that expeditious disposal of the matter will be in the interest of justice, a bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI), D.Y. Chandrachud, and comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, allowed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to continue with its investigation into the alleged scam, but restricted the agency from taking any coercive action against the candidates or officials.

Calling the alleged recruitment scam in West Bengal a "systemic fraud", the bench observed that the authorities have a responsibility to maintain digitised records concerning the appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff.



In an order passed in the third week of April, the Calcutta High Court had nullified the appointment of the candidates selected by the

expired panels and asked them to return the entire salary drawn during their tenures, along with an annualised interest of 12 per cent, within

the next four weeks.

Besides directing the WBSSC to initiate the recruitment process afresh, the division bench of Justices Debangsu Basak and Shabbir Rashidi also directed the probe agency to carry on with its investigation into the matter.

On Tuesday, the apex court bench said that it is willing to continue the ad interim protection given to the candidates, subject to the express stipulation that any person found to have been appointed illegally and continued as a consequence of the present order shall refund the salary.

The CJI said: "... We direct that the investigation ordered by the HC as per Clauses 7 and 8 in Para 363 shall continue but no coercive steps be taken..."

Last time, the top court had directed that no precipitative action will be taken by the CBI against the state government officials who were involved in approving the creation of super-numeric posts till the next date of listing.

Landslides hit train services in few NE states, affects supply of essentials, fuels

Guwahati/Agartala | Agencies

Movement of passengers and transport of goods, including essentials, has been affected in southern Assam, Tripura, Mizoram and Manipur for the past two weeks, due to the restricted movement of trains in the region, officials said on Tuesday.

Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) sources said that the operation of passenger and goods trains has been affected since April 25 owing to heavy landslides, and damage to railway tracks after heavy rains in Assam's mountainous Dima Hasao district, which is a connecting route to south Assam, Tripura, Manipur, and Mizoram.

Hundreds of workers and technicians, led by several top railway engineers, are working round-the-clock to fully restore the train services



between Jatinga-Lumpur and New Harangajao stations under the Lumding division of NFR.

"We have removed the debris from the mudslides and partially rectified the railway tracks that pass through the mountainous areas. That's why we are only operating trains in the

daytime and stopping train services at night in the hilly route," a senior NFR engineer told reporter.

He said that to closely monitor the railway tracks, fragile soil conditions and other related aspects, eight watch towers were installed and through these, railway personnel

monitor the situation round-the-clock.

The engineer said that it was uncertain when the normal train services through the Dima Hasao district would be resumed.

Given the inclement and unpredictable weather conditions and for the safety of the passengers and goods trains, train movements are being restricted and this will continue till the railway tracks are fully restored. "The NFR has taken some long-term plans to construct tunnels and elevated railway tracks to resolve the lasting solutions to the recurring problems," the engineer said.

According to the officials, the stock of fuel -- petrol and diesel -- and other essential goods in southern Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, and parts of Manipur are not adequate in view of restrictions on goods train movement.

Polling concludes in four LS seats in Bengal amid reports of violence

Kolkata | Agencies

Polling concluded in four Lok Sabha constituencies in West Bengal on Tuesday amid reports of violence coming in from different parts of the state, especially from Murshidabad and Jangipur seats.

The polling percentage in these four constituencies till 5 p.m. was 73.93 per cent (provisional figures), as per the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO).

Maximum polling was recorded at Murshidabad at 76.49 per cent, followed by Maldaha Dakshin (73.68 per cent), Maldaha Uttar (73.30 per cent), and Jangipur (72.13 per cent).

Also, by-elections were held for the Bhagawangola Assembly constituency in



Murshidabad district, which recorded a voter turnout of 73.68 per cent till 5 p.m.

A source in the CEO's office said that the final polling percentage will be known by Wednesday.

"Polling continued in certain booths even after the scheduled closing time of 6 p.m., as many voters were still standing in the queue,"

the source said. The CEO's office received 433 complaints on Tuesday, of which 253 came from registered political parties, while the remaining were individual complaints.

The CPI-M filed the maximum complaints at 163, followed by the Congress (29), BJP (27), and Trinamool Congress (18).

TN CM STALIN FELICITATES ONLY TRANS WOMAN TO CLEAR CLASS 12 BOARD EXAMS

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Tuesday felicitated Nivetha (20), the only trans woman to appear for and clear the Class 12 board examination in the state.

The Chief Minister felicitated Nivetha at his chamber in the presence of Minister for School Education, Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi, and Chief Secretary, Shiv Das Meena.

A total of 7,60,606 students appeared for the Class 12 board examination in the state this year.

Chinnadurai, an SC student, was attacked with sharp-edged weapons by three intermediate caste students in August 2023 in his hometown Nanguneri after he refused to buy cigarettes for them. The issue became a major subject of discussion in Tamil Nadu, forcing the Chief Minister to intervene and shift Chinnadurai and his family members from the village.

West Nile fever alert in three Kerala districts, 10 cases reported

Thiruvananthapuram:

Kerala Health Minister Veena George on Tuesday said an alert has been issued after West Nile fever was reported from three districts in the state, and authorities directed to ensure the eradication of mosquito breeding spots.

Case of West Nile cases have been reported from the Malappuram, Kozhikode, and Thrissur districts of the state but there need be no reason for any worry as things are all under control, she said.

"At the review meeting held to discuss this issue, authorities have been directed to ensure mosquitoes are eradicated at the source. Steps have been taken to ensure that the pre-monsoon clean-

ing drive is strengthened," said George.

The Minister said there is no need to worry about West Nile fever as it's not fatal as compared to Japanese Encephalitis, but caution has to be there as it causes fever and headaches. Affected people should ensure they get medical attention.

Spread by Culex mosquitoes, West Nile fever was first detected in 1937 in Uganda and in Kerala, the first case surfaced in 2011. A total of 10 people tested positive for West Nile fever now, of which five of them have already been cured, while the others are under treatment. "Since there are no vaccines or medicines for this, the only way is prevention and for that, mosquitoes should be eradicated," said George.

Stop providing safe haven to criminal & secessionist elements: India tells Canada

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India on Tuesday reacted strongly to pro-Khalistani elements taking the centre stage, raising anti-India slogans, and displaying objectionable posters against Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a 'Nagar Kirtan' organised at Malton in Canada, urging the government led by Justin Trudeau to stop providing criminal and secessionist elements a safe haven and political space in the country.

The parade organised on Monday from Malton to Rexdale in Ontario witnessed not just the raising of anti-India slogans, but also floats threatening India's top leaders.

"As you are aware, we have repeatedly raised our strong concerns regarding the violent imagery being used by extremist elements in Canada against our political leadership. Last year, a float depicting the assassination of our former Prime Minister was used in a procession.

"Display of posters of Indian diplomats have also been put out across Canada threatening violence against them," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a statement. Insisting that celebration and glorification of violence should not be a part of any civilised society, the MEA



official made it clear that democratic countries "which respect the rule of law" should not allow intimidation by radical elements in the name of freedom of expression.

"We continue to remain concerned about the security of our diplomatic representatives in Canada and expect the Government of Canada to ensure that they are able to carry out their responsibilities without fear.

"We again call upon the Government of Canada to stop providing criminal and secessionist elements a safe haven and political space in Canada," Jaiswal said in the statement.

Four killed as heavy rain lashes parts of Telangana

Hyderabad | Agencies

Four persons were killed as heavy rain accompanied by strong winds lashed several parts of Telangana, including Hyderabad, on Tuesday.

Two persons died in Medak while one death each was reported from Warangal and Hyderabad.

Two construction workers died in a wall collapse in Medak district. They were working at a poultry farm near Rayulapur village in Kaudipalli mandal. The deceased have identified as Subrahmanyam (45) and N. Nagu (35).

One person died in Warangal district when a tree fell on him. The incident occurred on the National Highway near Katralaya village in Wardhanapet mandal. In Hyderabad, one person died of electrocution in the Bahadurpura area after he touched an electric pole.



Heavy rain lashed Hyderabad and its suburbs on Tuesday evening, throwing vehicular traffic out of gear. The rain accompanied by hailstorms though provided much-needed respite from the sweltering heat.

The rain, which lasted for an hour, inundated the roads in a few areas, throwing vehicular traffic out of gear as trees fell at a few places due to strong winds.

Emergency teams from the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) have been pressed into service to clear the stagnant water and fallen trees.



PM MODI ASSAILS CONGRESS FOR 'DEMEANING' ARMED FORCES, SLAMS ITS 'DANGEROUS INTENTIONS'

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the campaign trail to Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday tore into the Congress party and accused it of hatching dangerous conspiracies to harm the nation.

Addressing a public rally in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone, PM Modi said that the terrible intentions of the Congress party are clear from the statements made by those quitting the party, after two to three decades of association.

"A woman leader who went to Ram Mandir was tortured so much that she had to leave the Congress. Another leader who quit the party said that the Congress has been taken over by Muslim Leaguers and Maoists," he said.

He further told the crowd, "Congress' Shehzada (referring to Rahul Gandhi) is planning to change the Supreme Court's decision on Ram Temple. And, I am not saying this, but leaders who were with the party for several years, are saying this."

PM Modi also slammed the grand old party and the leaders of INDI



alliance for their "new-found love" for Pakistan in election season. PM Modi cited instances of objectionable and detestable statements of Congress

leaders on the valour of armed forces and urged the voters to give them befitting replies for their shameless remarks. "A Congress leader (Charanjit Singh Channi) gives clean chit to Pakistan and blamed our forces for (Poonch) terror attack, a leader of the alliance party says 'Pakistan is not wearing bangles'," Prime Minister told the gathering.

The election in Khargone along with seven other constituencies, including Indore and Ujjain, will be held in the fourth phase on May 13 while the third phase voting in nine parliamentary seats - Bhopal, Vidisha, Guna, Gwalior, Bhind, Morena, Sagar and Betul is underway.

'THOSE ON BAIL ARE BATTING FOR MUSLIM RESERVATION'

Bhopal: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday tore into Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad Yadav for making a fresh quota pitch for Muslims, saying the INDI Alliance cannot see beyond 'appeasement'. Addressing a public rally in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar, PM Modi berated the INDI Alliance for Lalu Prasad's 'reservation must for Muslims' statement and said that those who were in jail till some time ago are now rallying behind religion-based reservation. "One big leader of INDI Alliance, who was in jail for corruption and recently came out on bail due to health reasons, said today that Muslims should be given full reservation," PM Modi said, responding to Lalu Prasad's statement. He also said that Lalu Prasad's statement has exposed the INDI Alliance. "He (Lalu Prasad) said that full reservation should go to Muslims. It means whatever reservations SC/ST and OBC communities have, they want to take that away and give to the Muslims," PM Modi told the gathering.

Scindia held the hand of a 103-year-old elderly woman who came to cast her vote and took her to the booth



Team Absolute | Shivpuri

An elderly woman came to cast her vote during voting in Guna-Shivpuri parliamentary constituency on Tuesday. During this time, a different style of BJP candidate Jyotiraditya Scindia was seen.

Actually, a 103-year-old woman came to cast her vote in Bamor Kalan Gram Panchayat. He was noticed by BJP candidate Jyotiraditya

Scindia. After this, Scindia held the hand of the old woman and took her to the booth to cast her vote.

A total of 15 candidates are in the fray from Guna-Shivpuri Lok Sabha seat. There is a contest on this seat between BJP candidate Jyotiraditya Scindia and Congress candidate Yadendra Singh Yadav. Guna seat is considered the stronghold of Scindia. However, in the year 2019, Jyotiraditya Scindia had to

face defeat from the same seat. Let us tell you that in the third phase of Lok Sabha elections, votes are being cast for 93 Lok Sabha seats in 12 states and union territories. The fate of 1351 candidates is to be decided in the third phase of voting. The list of 1351 candidates includes names of veteran leaders like Home Minister Amit Shah, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Shivraj Singh Chauhan, Digvijay Singh, Supriya Sule.

Shivraj Singh Chauhan voted with his family

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Voting has started at 7 am on nine Lok Sabha seats in the third phase of Lok Sabha in Madhya Pradesh. The nine seats where voting is taking place include Vidisha, Rajgarh, Guna, Morena, Sagar, Gwalior, Bhind, Bhopal and Betul.

Former CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan along with his family reached the polling station of his home village Jait and cast his vote. Shivraj Singh Chauhan is the BJP candidate from Vidisha Lok Sabha seat.

The former Chief Minister offered prayers before voting. He posted on his X "Today, before voting for the Lok



Sabha elections, I offered prayers at my home village Jait and received the blessings of God. This great festival of democracy is going to be successful with the voting of all of you." After the puja, Shivraj Singh Chauhan reached the polling booth with his family and cast his vote. He has also appealed to everyone to vote.

Lok Sabha elections are between Mother India and the son of a foreign mother: Mohan Yadav

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has hit back at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's attacks on BJP regarding the Constitution. He has said that this Lok Sabha election is for the sons of Mother India and the sons of foreign mothers. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, during a discussion with reporters, said that this election is between two people, one is Narendra Modi, the son of Mother India and the other is the son of a foreign mother. Who neither saw poverty nor suffering in his life. His family ruled for more than sixty years.

Accusing Rahul Gandhi of intimidating people, the Chief Minister said that while invoking democracy, he is alleging that the Constitution is in danger and will change the Constitution, whereas the Nehru family has made more than a hundred amendments in the Constitution.



Dr. Mohan Yadav said that the leaders of Congress and the arrogant alliance who are on bail are also abusing and those who are in jail are also abusing because Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has said that neither will I eat nor will I let him eat. He has dedicated his life to serving the public. He is engaged day and night in the service of the public, engaged in the service of Mother India. He said

that our workers are made of 24 carat gold, it will turn into Kundan in heat. On one hand, Sun God is showing his heat and on the other hand, BJP workers are also gathering for the party in such scorching heat. BJP is a party of workers only. It does not run on the trust of any one family, but on the trust of lakhs of workers.

Here a person from a poor family becomes the Prime Minister and

the son of a poor laborer becomes the Chief Minister. All castes and classes have developed under the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. There was no caste discrimination against anyone.

Dr. Mohan Yadav said that the list of sins of Congress is very long. He has committed many sins from the beginning till now.

The sin of dividing the country, the sin of imposing Article 370, the sin of not removing poverty, the sin of changing the Constitution and by not consecrating the Shri Ram Temple, we have committed a great sin. The Congress Party surrendered before the Muslim League in 1947. Earlier reservation was done among the Muslim community, it was for seats.

Unless Congress supported the Muslim League, the security of the Muslim League was confiscated. Patriotic Muslims won. Congress has always done politics on the basis of caste vote bank. This is the manifesto of Congress.

MP High Court: Illegal recruitment on thousands of posts in EWS quota due to wrong roster of the government!

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Jabalpur High Court on Monday gave a historic decision regarding the 10 percent reservation given to poor general category candidates under EWS, saying that OBC/SC will not get the benefit of EWS reservation. /S.T. The category has been kept restricted. Reservation of 10% posts for EWS out of the total advertised posts for recruitment is inconsistent with the provision of Article 16(6) of the Constitution and thousands of recruitments done under EWS quota are illegal.

In the decision of Jabalpur High Court, it has been said that in EWS reservation, 10% reservation has been provided for the economically weaker section of the general category, but except the posts reserved for /SC / ST / OBC, the remaining unreserved



posts are given to EWS. There should be reservation on 10% posts.

In its decision, the court said that Madhya Pradesh Government had issued an erroneous roster on 19/12/2019 by the General Administration Department and recruitments have been done by reserving 10% of the 100% posts under EWS quota, hence from 2019 onwards. Thousands of EWS candidates have been appointed in the recruitment of lakhs of posts.

According to the High Court, the rights of other classes should not be affected in the system of EWS reservation, like to fill 100 vacant posts of any post, 16 posts should be given to SC, 20 posts to ST and 27 posts should be given to OBC category, after this the remaining 37 posts are for unreserved category and out of 37 unreserved posts, the ratio of 10% posts is 4 posts which are reserved for EWS.

Madhya Pradesh BJP's request: Polling agent's expenses should not be added to the candidate's expenses

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party urged the Election Commission not to add the amount spent on polling agents to the candidate's account. A BJP delegation, in a memorandum submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer of Madhya Pradesh, demanded that the amount paid to polling agents should not be included in the candidate's expenses.

The BJP delegation has said in its memorandum that the political parties have requested the concerned officer to appoint 4 polling agents per polling. The BJP has submitted the names to the authorities to appoint its workers as polling agents.



BJP workers work as polling agents voluntarily; they are not given any kind of honorarium by the party. They bring their own food from home and even snacks are not provided by the party.

The memorandum states that in 29 Lok Sabha constituencies in Madhya Pradesh, there are 2200 to 2600 polling stations per Lok Sabha constituency. If the administration has fixed the

payment of Rs 400 per polling agent, then an expenditure ranging from Rs 17 lakh 60 thousand to Rs 20 lakh 80 thousand will be added to the candidate's account. The maximum expenditure for Lok Sabha elections has been fixed at Rs 95 lakh. If the provision of payment to polling agents is not deleted, then the amount of this item will be added by the expenditure observers to the expenditure item of BJP candidates and the election expenditure of the candidates will increase.

BJP has demanded from the Election Commission of India that the expenditure amount fixed by the collectors for polling agents should be deleted, so that the campaign is not adversely affected.

The public voted to make Narendra Modi the Prime Minister again: VD Sharma



Team Absolute | Bhopal

State President of Bharatiya Janata Party and Khajuraho MP Vishnudutt Sharma, while reacting on the third phase of Lok Sabha voting in Madhya Pradesh, said that the way Janata Janardan has come forward and participated in the voting in 9 Lok Sabha constituencies of Madhya Pradesh. Due to that, the voting has reached around 68 to 70 percent. Sharma said that today

the citizens of Madhya Pradesh, our voter brothers and sisters have also made an important contribution in this great festival of democracy. Our mothers and sisters, youth and new voters aged 18-19 years have also participated enthusiastically in voting.

I congratulate and thank all the voters and citizens of the state for peaceful and orderly voting in Morena, Bhind, Gwalior, Guna, Sagar, Vidisha, Bhopal, Rajgarh and Betul Lok Sabha constituencies.

BJP workers are also working to increase the voting percentage in the fourth phase.

Along with this, I also thank the state administration and the Election Commission. Sharma said that I also congratulate Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whom the people of the country and the state have voted for once again as the Prime Minister. I also thank the booth workers of BJP who have worked for maximum voting.

Annual conference of the IATO will be held in Bhopal from 30 August

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board has participated in the Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB) organized in Jaipur with the aim of promoting the tourism destinations of the state at the international level and increasing the number of foreign tourists. GITB, held from May 05 to May 07, was organized in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan and Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

During B2B (Business 2 Business) meetings with various stakeholders from America, Canada, European countries UK, Spain, Germany, Poland, Russia, France, Italy and South East countries like Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius were exposed to diverse cultural heritage and beautiful landscapes as well as eco-friendly tourism activities. At the Great Indian



Travel Bazaar, Madhya Pradesh Tourism showcased its rich heritage from the majestic forts of Gwalior and Mandu to the serene lakes of Bhopal

and the dense forests of Kanha and Bandhavgarh. M.P. Madhya Pradesh Tourism delegation led by Bidisha Mukherjee,

Additional Managing Director (AMD), Tourism Board, met travel industry professionals, tour operators and visitors and provided information about the state's unique attractions and experiential tourism opportunities. Through interactive sessions and presentations, events and achievements in cultural heritage, wildlife sanctuaries, pilgrimage sites and adventure tourism of Madhya Pradesh were highlighted.

Mukherjee informed the foreign tourists about safe tourism for women operated by the Board under the Responsible Tourism Mission and also shared the efforts of the Board to make Orchha, Khajuraho, Chanderi, Maheshwar and Mandu of the state a major destination of 'Wedding Destination'. Did it. It is noteworthy that, from August 30 to September 2 this year, the annual conference of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), the largest organization of inbound tour operators, was hosted in Madhya Pradesh will be done by Tourism Board in Bhopal.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Congress: Passionate about self-goal

Having not learnt at all from its past mistakes, the opposition parties led by the Congress have yet again fueled BJP's campaign blitz in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections by making irresponsible statements on Saturday's terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district which claimed the life of an IAF soldier and injured four others. "These are all stunts and not terrorist attacks. There is no truth in it. BJP is playing with the lives of people and bodies," former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi said in Jalandhar on Sunday. As his remarks - labelled as "shameful" and "disgusting" by many - triggered a massive row, the Congress leader emphasised on Monday that he respects the "bravehearts" and was only talking about "those who attack and orchestrate it". The damage, however, has already been done with the Congress now being blamed for handing another opportunity on a platter to the BJP. Raising another storm in the political circles, another Congress leader - Maharashtra's Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Vijay Wadettiwar - has been accused of levelling allegations that former Mumbai Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) chief Hemant Karkare was killed by a RSS-affiliated cop and not terrorist Ajmal Kasab during the 26/11 terror attacks. Even as the BJP lodged a complaint with the Election Commission, ascertaining whether the Congress is supporting and propagating the "harmful narrative", MP Shashi Tharoor on Monday backed his colleague, putting his party in further line of fire. Tharoor was also accused by the BJP on Monday for writing an article in a Bangladeshi publication that reportedly refers to India's Jammu and Kashmir as "Indian administered-Kashmir". Severely criticising the "shocking" comments made by the Congress leaders on matters of national security, experts reckon that the party leaders are committing the same old mistakes which have proved to be their nemesis over the past 10 years.

How will heatwave impact poll season in India?

How will heat impact the biggest democratic exercise of the world? India, where parliamentary polls are underway, has been sweltering under unprecedented heatwaves ever since the beginning of the summer season in April, and these are more pronounced in east and peninsular India than the north and northwest.

The 2024 Indian general elections 2024 are a two-and-a-half-month process, with voting taking place in seven phases till June 1 where nearly 97 crore people are expected to exercise their voting rights. As elections enter the key phase at the beginning of May, the temperatures have also started peaking. Globally as well, each month is setting a new all-time record. The last 10 months, since June 2023, have been the hottest on record, mainly because of a super El Nino.

April 2024 also seems to be following similar temperature trends and will most likely be the 11th hottest month in a row. Sheer temperature and humidity will increasingly make it harder to work in the open and India's ongoing election process has shown how much the complexities of weather and climate impact the voting and canvassing process.

What led to an intense heatwave in India?

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had already predicted more than double the average heatwaves during April-June, i.e. 10 to 20 days of heat waves against a normal of four to eight days to be precise.

The heat this year is expected to be worse than in 2023, which has been the warmest year on record to date. Mercury has been settling between 42 and 45 degrees, even soaring to 47 degrees in some parts of the country. April has seen one of the longest spells of heatwave extending up to 15 days. Parts of east and peninsular India have been the worst hit, as they are also battling humidity. Kerala is under the grip of a record heatwave and has reported 10 deaths due to heat stress while waiting in voting queues. According to the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA), around 413 heat-related health issues like sunburn, rashes, and heat stroke cases have been reported until April 22. Odisha has also recorded one death and around 124 have been hospitalised due to heat-related illnesses across 16 districts.

Maximum temperatures across India show large parts of the country as a large red mass, indicating above-normal day temperatures over most parts of the country. An unprecedented rise in temperatures can be attributed to the absence of pre-monsoon rain and thundershowers dur-



ing April.

Countrywide cumulative rainfall was deficit to the tune of 20 per cent. Rainfall during April over south peninsular India (12.6 mm) was the fifth lowest since 1901 and the second lowest since 2001. This was followed by east and northeast India which was deficit by 39 per cent.

According to Climate Central, a US-based organisation working on climate change, day temperatures were at least twice as likely because of climate change. The temperature conditions in the southern half of the country had a much stronger climate change influence. In coastal areas, 37 degrees Celsius is commonly used as a threshold for dangerous heat. This temperature occurred throughout most of the country, including along the eastern coast. Thirty-six out of 51 major cities had three or more days above 37 degrees since the start of the election season (April 19-April 30), and 18 cities had more than

three days above 40 degrees.

"Persistence of anticyclones over Oman and adjoining areas and over Andhra Pradesh did not let the formation of any weather systems. In wake of this, the sea breeze was cut off over Odisha and West Bengal for most days, paving the way for unabated hot winds from land, leading to soaring temperatures," IMD Director General Mrityunjay Mohapatra said.

"However, due to the passage of western disturbances at regular intervals, heatwaves did not set in over northwestern plains. In addition to this, remnants of receding El Nino have also contributed to the heat stress."

Ashok Lavasa, former Election Commissioner, explains how India can adjust its election process to increasing summer heatwaves.

"Weather conditions are always taken into account to avert major disruption. There are

mitigation measures which are taken well beforehand like arrangements for making people stand in the queue in cool places, availability of drinking water, etc," he said.

"There is a provision by which the Election Commission of India can conduct elections anytime in 180 days but they have to be extremely careful that the term of the government is not curtailed even by a day."

Another problem is that the February-March period is exam time in schools and colleges so one cannot disrupt the academic cycle as well. "The maximum precautions are taken to minimise the extremes. However, one may consider this, if (temperatures) continue to increase," he said.

international

Work to form multi-polar world order will continue, says Putin

Moscow | Agencies
Promising continuation of his efforts to form a "multipolar world order" and an "equal and indivisible security system", Vladimir Putin, who took office as President of Russia for the fifth time on Tuesday, said that Moscow remains open to strengthening good relations with all countries that see it as a "reliable and honest partner".



"We do not refuse dialogue with Western states. The choice is theirs: do they intend to continue trying to restrain the development of Russia, continue the policy of aggression, continuous pressure on our country for years, or look for a path to cooperation and peace," he said after the ceremony held at St. Andrew's Hall of the Grand Kremlin Palace which marked the beginning of his new six-year presidential

term. The 71-year-old leader was quick to add that the conversation - including on issues of security and strategic stability - is possible "only on equal terms, respecting each other's interests" and "not from a position of strength".

"Together with our partners in Eurasian integration and other sovereign development centres, we will continue to work to form a multipolar world order and an equal and indivisible security system," he added.

The ceremony began with the ceremonial introduction of the State Flag of Russia, the Standard of the President, the Constitution of Russia and the Badge of the President of Russia.

Elected with 87 per cent of the vote, Putin took the oath to the people of Russia following which Valery Zorkin, Chairman of the Constitutional Court, announced his assumption as President of the Russian Federation. Later, the Presidential Regiment was presented to Putin, who is also the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

"I am confident that we will pass through this difficult, milestone period with dignity, become even stronger and will definitely implement long-term plans and large-scale projects aimed at achieving development goals," said Putin.

40 mn Filipinos have no access to potable water: Govt

Manila | Agencies
At least 40 million people in the Philippines have no access to fresh or potable water, the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said on Tuesday.

Responding to the dire situation, Philippine President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos has directed the government agencies to come up with concrete solutions to provide sufficient water supply to Filipinos deprived of potable water, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Let's come up with a plan for the 40 million who do not have at least potable water to take in. We need to come up with a plan for the remaining 40 million who do not have an assured water supply -- a locally sourced water supply," the PCO said, quoting Marcos' order.

The PCO said Marcos stressed the need for the government to focus on the 40 million underserved Filipinos and to balance the water requirements for irrigation, household and industrial use.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga told Marcos that the 40



million residents who do not have enough access to water supply usually ride a motorbike to fetch water from the nearest island.

In a press briefing at the presidential palace, DENR Undersecretary Carlos Primo David said the department has devised a few strategies to provide sufficient water supply to the 40 million individuals who are primarily residing in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao in the southern Philippines.

According to David, one promising strategy being considered for small island villages and other coastal areas is implementing the desalination process, a method that converts seawater into freshwater.

Saudi Crown Prince could visit Islamabad next week



Islamabad | Agencies
Saudi Arabia Crown Prince, Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS), is likely to travel to Islamabad next week, a visit that has been long overdue and suffered last-minute cancellations in the past.

The last time the Saudi Crown Prince visited Pakistan was in February 2019 when the then Prime Minister Imran Khan personally drove him to the Prime Minister's House.

Even though Islamabad has made arrangements and extended invitations to Prince

Mohammad Bin Salman on multiple occasions after that, his proposed visits have been cancelled due to various unknown reasons.

Last year, the ruling government in Pakistan was left embarrassed when the Saudi Crown Prince travelled to India to attend the G20 Summit in New Delhi.

Islamabad tried hard to push for a brief stopover by MBS in Pakistan at that time but the efforts did not bear fruit, leaving the government in a spot of bother.

Sri Lanka renews visa-free entry for Indians

Susitha Fernando | Colombo

To promote tourist arrivals to the Island nation, Sri Lanka renewed visa-free entry for visitors from India and several other select countries. The Sri Lankan government's move will open exciting possibilities for seamless travel between the two nations.

The country's Cabinet on Monday decided to award free visa entry to nationals from India, China, Russia, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia who are on a 30-day visit to the island nation.

The scheme was launched in October as a pilot project to rebuild the tourism industry in the country.

According to the Department of Immigration and Emigration which handles visa-free entry, foreigners from the above-mentioned countries should apply visa via website www.srilanka-visa.lk before arriving in Sri Lanka and the validity period of this free visa is 30 days.

Meanwhile, amid recent controversy over high charges under a private company, the cabinet has decided to maintain \$50 fee for visitors who enter the country on arrival visa for 30 days.

Shifting the visa-issuing process from the government to a private company with an increased fee up to \$100 was criticised by many parties including tourism-related industries. They complained that the fee and complex procedure under the private player was discouraging tourists' arrival to the country which is



recovering from the worst-ever financial crisis.

Tourism, one of leading foreign exchange earners of the country, has suffered a setback due to the Covid-19 pandemic and economic and political crises in the South Asian country.

Israeli army takes control of Rafah crossing in Gaza

Jerusalem | Agencies

Israel's military said on Tuesday that it had started "a precise counterterrorism operation" in Rafah city in the south of the Gaza Strip and assumed "operational control" over the Rafah crossing in Gaza.

The crossing, which has served as a passage for humanitarian aid from Egypt to war-torn Gaza, was out of service, Xinhua news agency reported.

Since the beginning of the assault overnight on Monday, Israel said it has taken control of the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing, with the Israeli forces killing at least 20 militants.

Israeli forces attacked the Rafah city from the ground and air, the military said, as residents reported heavy and relentless bombardments.



The military said it had struck "military structures, underground infrastructure, and three operational tunnel shafts".

Meanwhile, The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) on Tuesday called on the US administration and the international community to put pressure on Israel to

stop the storming of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt.

Hamas said in a statement that the attack is "a dangerous escalation against a civilian facility protected by international law, aiming to exacerbate the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, by closing it and preventing the flow of emergency relief aid through it to our besieged people".

Hamas added that the escalation threatens the lives of hundreds of thousands of displaced civilians in Rafah and the entire Gaza Strip, Xinhua news agency reported.

Israel's military said on Tuesday that it had taken control of the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing in an overnight attack.

The crossing, which has served as a passage for humanitarian aid from Egypt to war-torn Gaza, was out of service.



'Congress backing terrorist Ajmal Kasab', PM Modi says party's 'B Team' has become active across the border

Team Absolute | Ahmednagar (Maharashtra)

Lashing out at the Congress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that the grand old party is backing Pakistani terrorist Ajmal Kasab now, adding its 'B Team' across the border has become active since the 'Team A' was staring at defeat in the Parliamentary elections. Speaking at a rally here, PM Modi said that the statement of a Congress leader (Vijay Wadettiwar) in Maharashtra regarding the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks was "very dangerous".

"These Congressmen are now together taking the side of the terrorist Ajmal Kasab. The person who was a Minister during the Congress regime and a close friend of the family has also declared Kasab innocent. This is an insult to all the innocent civilians killed in the Mumbai attacks... this is an insult to all the security forces who killed all the terrorists in the Mumbai attacks. Also, this is an insult to martyrs like Shaheed Tukaram Omble," PM Modi



said while addressing the rally to garner support for BJP candidate Sujay Vikhe-Patil from Ahmednagar and Shiv Sena candidate Sadashiv Lokhande from Shirdi constituency. PM Modi said that tweets are being made from across the border to encourage the Congress, and in return, the Congress is giving clean chit to Pakistan over terror attacks.

PM Modi said that the Congress election manifesto carries an imprint of the 'Muslim League'.

"You see for yourself the difference between issues and the agenda of the NDA and the Congress. Our focus is on the development, welfare, security, safety and dignity of Bharat. On the other hand, the Congress doesn't have anything even to discuss over

these issues," PM Modi said.

Addressing the rally, PM Modi also said that the expiry date of INDI-Aghadi (INDIA bloc) is fixed on June 4, adding the alliance will disintegrate like a sand dune.

"INDI-Aghadi's tactics have failed before the public, and the very frustration emanating from this can be seen across the border too! None of the tactics of the INDI-Aghadi are working among the public. 'Team A' here is losing, so the 'Team B' of Congress across the border has become active.

"The third phase of voting has made it clear that the expiry date of 'INDI-Aghadi' has been fixed on June 4. After that there will be no one to carry the flag of INDIA bloc," PM Modi said.

The Prime Minister said that this time, the election is taking place between satisfaction and appeasement. "BJP-NDA's entire effort is to satisfy the people of the country with their hard work, whereas the INDI-Aghadi people are busy appearing their vote bank with their conspiracies," PM Modi said.

Supriya Sule meets Ajit Pawar's mother to seek blessings after casting vote

Team Absolute | Pune

Supriya Sule, who is contesting the Lok Sabha election from Baramati constituency in Pune district of Maharashtra, on Tuesday met Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's mother by visiting the latter's house after casting her vote.

Supriya Sule, who is seeking a fourth term in the Lower House of Parliament from Pawar family's home turf Baramati, is pitted against her cousin Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra Pawar. Polling for the Baramati seat is undergoing on Tuesday.

This is for the first time that two members of the influential Pawar family are fighting an election against each other. This is Sunetra Pawar's first Lok Sabha election. Deputy Chief Minister and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Devendra Fadnavis dubbed Supriya Sule's meeting with Ajit



Pawar's mother an "emotional tactic".

Supriya Sule, after exercising her franchise, reached Ajit Pawar's house at Katewadi in Baramati and met his mother Ashatai Pawar. Speaking to reporters after their meeting, Supriya Sule said she had come to meet and seek her aunt Ashakaki's blessings.

"It is my kaka's house and I came here to meet her and seek her blessings," the NCP

(Sharadchandra Pawar) leader said.

Meanwhile, addressing a press conference in Mumbai, deputy CM Fadnavis said Supriya Sule's visit to Ajit Pawar's house is an "emotional tactic".

"After all they are political opponents and not enemies. She (Sule) is his (Ajit Pawar's) sister. Let's see how this emotional tactic plays out," he said in response to a question.

Man fatally stabbed near polling station in Osmanabad

Team Absolute | Osmanabad

In a shocker, a man was allegedly stabbed to death while another was injured in a brawl that erupted on Tuesday near a polling station in Patsangvi village during the voting for Lok Sabha polls, the police said.

According to officials, in the charged political atmosphere of voting day, a verbal war broke out between two opposing groups near two polling booths at the Zilla Parishad polling station in the village at Bhoom taluka, around 11.45 a.m., sparking panic in the vicinity.

The incident, purportedly triggered over bringing in voters and supporters to the polling booths, led to heated arguments and soon degenerated into a full-fledged brawl between the two groups.

In the violent melee, one person whipped out a knife and repeatedly stabbed his rival Sadhan Patil, and injured at least one more person, before fleeing from the scene.

Local residents claimed that the deceased was a supporter of the Shiv Sena (UBT) candidate, sitting MP Omprakash Raje Naiknimbalkar.

"Trouble arose out of a 'personal dispute' among some local people and not having any political connections, as speculated. It did not affect the elections in any manner and voting



proceeded smoothly," Osmanabad Superintendent of Police Atul Kulkarni told reporter.

Subsequently, when the locals and police rushed there to calm down the groups, an uneasy peace returned.

The alleged assailant, identified as Gaurav Naiknaware, 23, is, however, on the run, and a police team is looking for him.

Patil was rushed to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead, while the other person was undergoing treatment.

Patil's body has been sent for an autopsy even as police tightened security in and around the polling station, and further investigations are underway.

Narayan Rane exudes confidence, says Mahayuti will win 40-42 seats in Maharashtra

Team Absolute | Sindhudurg

Narayan Rane, the BJP candidate from Maharashtra's Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg Lok Sabha constituency, expressed confidence in the party's performance, stating that he expects to win 40-42 seats.

Speaking to a news agency on Tuesday, Rane emphasised his commitment to creating job opportunities in the region, proposing the construction of engineering and food processing companies over the next two years.

"I am working to bring employment here. In the coming 2 years, we will get engineering and food processing industries here. We will win 40-42 seats in Maharashtra," Rane said.



Voting has begun in the Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg constituency, with Rane casting his ballot after praying at a

local temple in Sindhudurg district. Rane will compete against the incumbent MP, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader

Vinayak Raut, the news agency further reported.

According to the report, Rane, the BJP-led Central Government's Minister of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME), is determined to win despite the challenge provided by Raut, who won the 2019 general elections.

In earlier polls, Raut received approximately 50.8 per cent of the votes, while Rane, representing his own party Maharashtra Swabhimaan Paksh, received 31 per cent, the report added.

Maharashtra has 48 Lok Sabha seats and elections are held in five phases. The BJP hopes to repeat its performance from the 2019 elections when it won 23 out of 25 contested seats and the Shiv Sena won 18 out of 23.

Sitting MP rejoins BJP after Shiv Sena gives up Palghar LS seat

Team Absolute | Mumbai

It is a 'ghar vapsi' for Shiv Sena's sitting MP from Palghar Dr Rajendra Gavit as he rejoined the BJP on Tuesday. Gavit, who was in the Congress and worked as the minister of state in Maharashtra, joined the BJP in 2018 and was elected in a bypoll to the Lok Sabha from Palghar seat. In 2019, as per the agreement, Dr Gavit joined Shiv Sena and successfully contested the Lok Sabha seat.

However, on Tuesday, Dr Gavit rejoined the BJP in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and the state unit chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule.

Dr Gavit's move comes days after the BJP got Palghar seat during the seat-sharing arrangement with Shiv Sena. He was subsequently approached by Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inviting him to rejoin the BJP. Dr Gavit decided to rejoin the party after Fadnavis received a nod from Shiv Sena chief leader and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in this regard. Rajendra Gavit thanked the BJP and DyCM Fadnavis for



inducting him into the party, saying that he will work for the MahaYuti in the state.

DyCM Fadnavis said that the BJP decided to reinduct Dr Gavit considering his experience as the MP, legislator and minister and also taking into view his abilities to take party work forward in the state.

Meanwhile, DyCM Fadnavis targeted the Congress and the INDIA bloc for their criticism that members from the Muslim and minorities have not got due representation in various schemes implemented by the Modi government in the last 10 years.

"In a number of schemes, including Prime Minister Awas Yojana, Ujjwala scheme and Toilet Scheme, Muslim and minority community members have been the beneficiaries. There is a difference between the thinking. Congress claims the Muslims have first right in the national resources while BJP says poor have first right," he added. He accused the Congress party of playing divisive politics.

The Deputy Chief Minister supported the CM Eknath Shinde's statement that the Maha Vikas Aghadi government had planned to put him in jail during its two-and-a-half-year rule. "It is true. The 'supari' was given to many. A Police Commissioner in Mumbai was appointed to carry out this job. However, nothing happened. They could not touch me as I continued to work as the leader of the opposition," he noted.

15-year-old girl gang-raped in Palghar; two held

Team Absolute | Palghar

The Palghar district rural police in Maharashtra on Monday arrested two suspects for allegedly raping a 15-year-old girl, the police said. According to a news agency, the accused were held from Talasari under section 376 (rape) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, an official said. Both men are in their mid-20s, the official said.

One of the accused befriended the victim on Instagram, and on April 30, he took her to his house, where he raped her, he said, as per the agency.

On May 4, the two accused repeatedly raped the girl at different locations, the official said.

The duo had used fake names to identify themselves, but based on intelligence and technical inputs, the police zeroed in on them, he said.

The accused have been remanded to police custody till May 9, and further probe is underway, the official said, the news agency reported.

Western Railway records highest season ticket sales for AC local trains

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The popularity of AC local services on the Western Railway (WR) is growing rapidly, with an increasing proportion of passengers choosing these air-conditioned trains. This trend is seen in the increasing number of passengers travelling on AC locals. On May 6, 2024, WR distributed 3737 season tickets to AC locals, the greatest amount ever recorded. This milestone demonstrates the growing demand for air-conditioned travel options among passengers.



i.e. 3737 was the highest, ever since the induction of AC locals over WR," the Western Railway said in their press statement. Furthermore, in May 2024 (up to May 6), a total of 1,60,645 tickets for AC local services were booked, representing a considerable rise of more than 30% over the same period last year. This rise in tickets demonstrates the increasing popularity and acceptance of AC trains among commuters.

The data stated that in May 2023-24, the average ridership for AC locals was 1, 06, 925 and the average ridership for May in 2024-25 until now is 1, 52, 682. Currently, Western Railway provides 96 AC services on weekdays, with 7 rakes on its suburban portion. This wide network of AC trains offers passengers easy and comfortable travel options, adding to the growing demand for AC local services.

Mumbai to get additional water supply from Bhatsa, Upper Vaitarna: BMC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), on Tuesday, said the city will be getting additional water supply from the Bhatsa and Upper Vaitarna dams. The civic body said that the state government had sanctioned the same although the reservoirs supplying to the metropolis have less water than last year. The municipal commissioner Bhushan Gagrani, who held a review meeting, stated that the available water storage is being closely monitored and urged the citizens to use water judiciously.

"Although the reservoirs that supply water to the Mumbai metropolis have less water storage than in previous years, the state government has already approved additional water storage for Mumbai from Bhatsa and Upper Vaitarna reservoirs. The administration is keeping a close eye on the available water resources and the available water resources have been planned in such a way that it will be sufficient till 31st July 2024 as every year. So Mumbaikars should not worry. However, everyone needs to use water sparingly," said



Municipal Commissioner and Administrator Bhushan Gagrani in a statement. In a recent review meeting, it was revealed that Mumbai's seven reservoirs currently hold 16.48 per cent of the annual requirement. To bolster supply, additional water allocations have been sanctioned from the Bhatsa and Upper Vaitarna dams, with plans to fill all reservoirs by July 31.

"Currently, there are 238,552 mil-

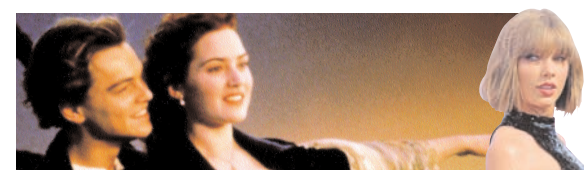
lion litres of water available across the seven reservoirs that serve Mumbai, accounting for 16.48 per cent of the annual requirement of 1,447,363 million litres." Mumbai would also receive an additional 137,000 million litres from the Bhatsa Dam and 91,130 million litres from the Upper Vaitarna Dam. The administration has planned to use these reserves until July 31st each year. The municipal administration

is closely monitoring the water storage situation to assure a constant supply," the statement read.

While there is currently no water shortage, the administration is urging residents to use water judiciously. BMC suggested that Mumbaikars use measures such as bathing in a bucket, avoiding wasteful practices like leaving taps running and urged fixing leaks promptly. Additionally, commercial establishments are advised to adopt water-saving techniques, such as using nozzles to limit faucet flow and serving water only upon request in restaurants.

Individuals are encouraged to contribute to conservation efforts by adopting simple practices like washing vehicles with a wet cloth instead of a hose and minimizing water use during laundry. The administration emphasises the need for collective engagement in water conservation and encourages all Mumbai residents to join these efforts.

By implementing these measures, the administration hopes to secure Mumbai's adequate water supply while also encouraging sustainability and responsible water usage throughout the city.



Kendall Jenner Sizzles in Black Low-Cut Gown at Met Gala

Los Angeles | Agencies

Kendall Jenner never walks the Met Gala steps without a grand entrance. This time around, the 28-year-old multi hyphenate wore an all-black, low-cut gown to the Monday, May 6, event. She tied her hair up in a half updo, letting her brunette waves scale down her back in a naturally sleek style. Although Kendall's outfit was a hit, this wasn't the first time the Kardashians star has wowed the crowd at the annual event in New York City. Last year, the 818 Tequila founder attended the Costume Institute's event wearing a black sequined bodysuit with long, floor-length sleeves. Her sisters Kim Kardashian and Kylie Jenner accompanied her on the carpet at the time. As one of the most iconic models in the biz, Kendall is no stranger to the fashion world. She has attended the annual event in the Big Apple multiple times in her career.



Why Did Rihanna Skipp the Met Gala?

Los Angeles | Agencies

While plenty of stars showed off their fabulous looks on the red carpet for the 2024 Met Gala, one celeb was noticeably absent: Rihanna! The "Umbrella" singer, 36, surprised fans when she didn't arrive on the red carpet for the fashion event of the year. While many viewers were wondering where RiRi was, it's been reported that she unfortunately was sick and couldn't make it to the Met Gala on Monday, May 6.

A source close to the "Love the Way You Lie" singer revealed that she was under the weather in a report from People. "Rihanna had to cancel attending as she is sick with the flu," the outlet reported. Unfortunately, no one got to see what the singer had planned for her look this year, but we can all look forward to seeing her make her grand return at next year's Met Gala.

Rihanna has been a staple at the Met Gala for a number of years. Last year, she turned heads as she showed off her baby bump in an all-white dress for the event. Her partner and father to her children A\$AP Rocky has attended alongside her in recent years.

Mindy Kaling 'melts away in time' as she walks MET Gala



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor, writer, and producer Mindy Kaling turned heads as she strutted the MET Gala carpet in a creation by renowned designer Gaurav Gupta, which he labels "The Melting Flower of Time."

Gupta, whose creations have previously been worn by Grammy-winner Beyonce and socialite Paris Hilton, among many others, took to Instagram to share pictures.

In the images, Kaling is seen wearing an architectural gown in a nude shade. She completed her look with basic makeup and a sleek bob.

The designer captioned the images: "Mindy Kaling in 'The Melting Flower of Time' at the MET Gala 2024. Mindy radiates grace, making her the ideal muse for this design. Just as a flower blooms only once before withering away, this gown embodies the transient yet exquisite essence of style. It's almost like the gown Mindy is wearing melts away in time, evoking a surreal journey through loops of infinity, as represented by our brand logo" - @ggpanther Stylist: @mollydickson Placement: @maisonbose @boseh1 #GauravGupta #GauravGuptaCouture #MetGala #MindyKayling."

'Wonder Woman 3' Director Patty Jenkins Reveals The Gal Gadot-Starrer Isn't Likely to Happen

Los Angeles | Agencies

Filmmaker Patty Jenkins has shared an update on 'Wonder Woman 3', and said that the Gal Gadot-starrer will most likely never happen.

When questioned about the status of the third instalment of 'Wonder Woman', Jenkins said: "Yeah, for the time being, but probably easily forever."

The director appeared on Max's Talking Pictures Podcast, where she shared all the details, reports deadline.com.

Asked if another director would take on the film, Jenkins said: "No, they're not interested in doing any 'Wonder Woman' for the time being."

"So, when I left Star Wars to do 'Wonder



Woman 3', and I started working on that, we talked about, 'Well, maybe I'll come back to Star Wars after 'Wonder Woman 3', so we started a deal for that to happen," she said.

"When 'Wonder Woman 3' then went away, Lucasfilm and I were like, 'Oh, we've got to finish this deal.' We finished the deal right as the strike was beginning, so I now owe a draft of Star Wars. So we will see what happens there. Who knows?"

Jenkins said that Lucasfilm has "a hard job in front of them of what's the first movie they're going to do."

"They have other directors who have been working, but I am now back on doing Rogue Squadron. We'll see what happens. We need to get it to where we're both super happy with it," she added.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Sandra Bullock, who has shared screen space with Keanu Reeves in films such as 'Speed', 'Speed 2: Cruise Control', and 'The Lake House', said that the two need to come in front of the camera together before the actress "dies".

Reeves is more than confident that he and Bullock could pull off a third 'Speed' movie. During a joint interview on the '50 MPH' podcast, Reeves talked about 'Speed 3', saying, "I mean, you know - we'd freakin' knock it out of the park." Bullock added: "There's no formula. It just is... Before I die, before I leave this planet, I do think that Keanu and I need to do something in front of the camera." "Are we, you know, in wheelchairs or with walkers? Maybe. Are we on little scooters at Disneyland?"

"It does feel like there is a siren call to it like there's something that wasn't done. I would love to work with you again before our eyes close," Reeves chimed in.

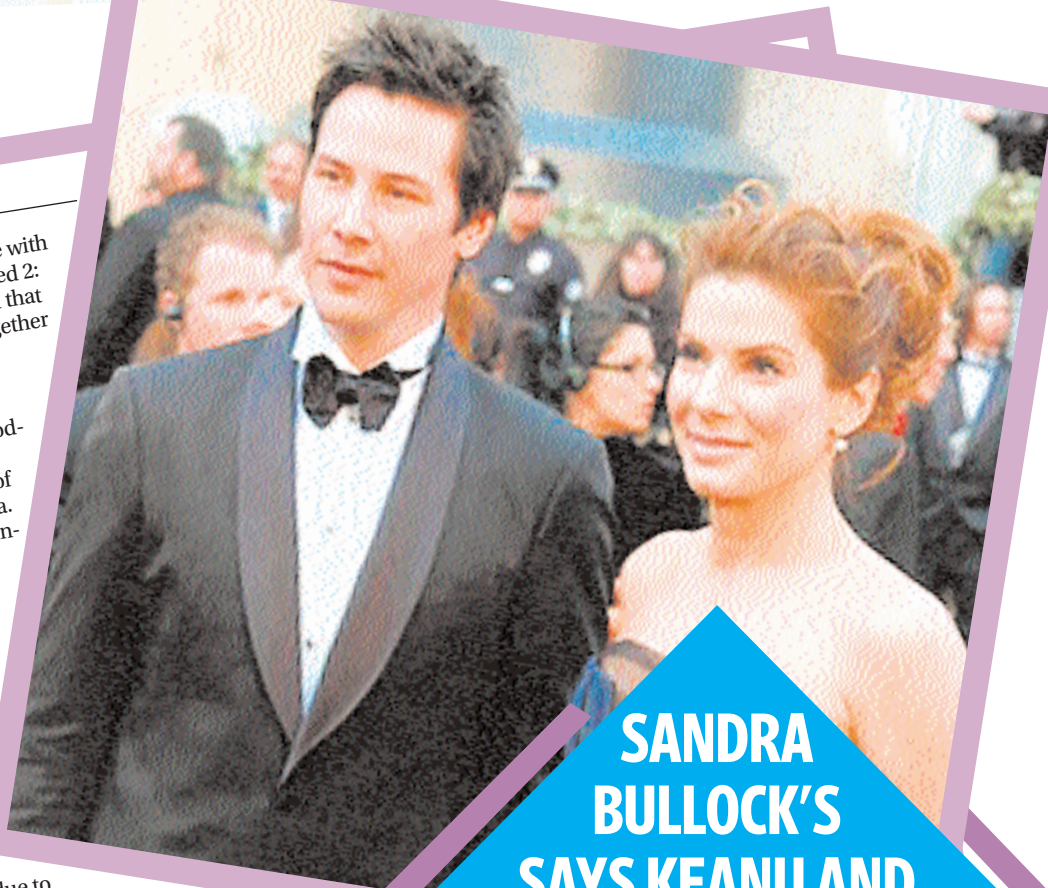
While Bullock returned for the 1997 sequel 'Speed 2: Cruise Control', which turned into a box office flop, Reeves declined 'Speed 2' due to concerns about the screenplay.

Together again on the podcast, Reeves and Bullock both agreed that creating chemistry on the set of the action thriller became effortless, reports variety.com. Reeves said: "We had an affection. And the characters themselves have affection. I think Jack and Annie's is different than Sandra's and Keanu's, but I think we played off each other, and I think it was just fun. I think, also, we kind of trusted each other, right?"

"Yeah. I mean, people have full-blown affairs in movies, and you don't feel something between them. And then people can hate each other in movies, and you go, 'That was electric, you know?'" Bullock said.

"We didn't really look at each other in this movie except maybe three or four times, because we were constantly battling the elements. And I think that's what made it so electric, too, is that, watching it, I guess you want them to connect. That was a really clever setup, to sort of keep people apart. Foreplay, I guess." The actress felt very comfortable with Reeves.

"There was nothing that I couldn't try or do or say that he wouldn't have, I felt, fought for me to do or say or try, and that kind of trust is very rare with actors. Anytime I threw something his way, he swatted it right back and you just go, 'Okay, there's my partner.'"



SANDRA BULLOCK'S SAYS KEANU AND SHE NEED TO ACT TOGETHER AGAIN 'BEFORE I DIE'



Jennifer Lopez Stuns in Shimmering Sheer Winged Dress

Los Angeles | Agencies

Jennifer Lopez was absolutely stunning as she arrived at the 2024 Met Gala on Monday, May 6. The actress, 54, looked gorgeous as she arrived to the Costume Benefit without her husband Ben Affleck, 51. J.Lo is also serving as a co-chair for the event, where the theme is "Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion," with a dress code that is "the garden of time."

The multi hyphenate dazzled in a sparkling winged-like gown as she smiled for the cameras. Among with the dress, J. Lo accessorized with a matching diamond choker necklace. Additionally, the "On the Floor" hitmaker wore a pair of gold pump heels and matched those with a clutch purse.

Jennifer is no stranger to the Met Gala. She's attended many times in the past (making her first appearance back in 1999), and after reuniting with Ben in 2021, the pair had also made out on the red carpet as they made their debut as a couple. After she and Ben skipped in 2022, J.Lo returned in 2023 with an amazing Ralph Lauren dress with a huge cutout in the bodice, showing off her abs, waist and some cleavage for an eye-catching look.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Kim Kardashian



IPL 2024: BOWLERS EXCEL AS DC KEEP PLAYOFFS HOPES ALIVE WITH 20-RUN WIN OVER RAJASTHAN

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Kuldeep Yadav and Mukesh Kumar bowled superb spells as bowlers came to the fore as Delhi Capitals kept alive their hopes of reaching the Playoffs of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 with a 20-run win over Rajasthan Royals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Tuesday.

After Jake Fraser-McGurk and Abishek Porel slammed fifties in contrasting fashion, while Tristan Stubbs applied finishing touches with a 20-ball 41 to propel Delhi Capitals to 221/8, Kuldeep and Mukesh bowled decisive spells of 2-25 and 2-30 respectively to restrict Rajasthan Royals to 201/8.

The win sees DC jump to fifth place in the points table and are now tied with Lucknow Super Giants, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Chennai Super Kings at 12 points. It is also the second straight time that RR, despite a brilliant 86 from captain Sanju Samson, have failed to complete a chase and need to wait longer to seal their Playoff spot.

Khaleel Ahmed struck in his first over as he had Yashvi Jaiswal miscuing a slower bouncer to mid-off. Sanju Samson upped the ante with sublime timing on his loft, drive, flat-batted smashes, punch, flick and piercing the gaps in cover with precision to hit five fours and three sixes in the power-play. But RR lost Jos Buttler in the last over of the six-over phase,



as he chopped onto his stumps off Axar Patel, meaning his catch being dropped by Tristan Stubbs didn't become costly for DC. With Axar and Kuldeep operating in tandem, DC forced a slowdown by giving 25 runs in overs 7-10, though Riyan Parag got two sixes and a four.

With 91 run needed off 42 balls, Samson just cleared cover off Ishant for four, before Shubham Dubey punched and muscled the pacer for four and six respectively to take 17

runs off the 14th over. Khaleel giving away four wides in an 11-run 15th over meant the equation for RR became 63 runs off 30 balls for the win. From there, DC came back in the match as Shubham Dubey holed out to long-on off Khaleel. Kuldeep trapped Donovan Ferreira plumb lbw and had Ravichandran Ashwin holing out to long-on in his final over. Despite a slow-over rate penalty in the final over, where DC could field only four fielders outside the 30-yard

circle, Mukesh castled Rovman Powell, which was enough to get DC a crucial win.

Brief scores

Delhi Capitals 221/8 in 20 overs (Abishek Porel 65, Jake Fraser-McGurk 50; Ravichandran Ashwin 3-24) beat Rajasthan Royals 201/8 in 20 overs (Sanju Samson 86; Kuldeep Yadav 2-25, Mukesh Kumar 2-30) by 20 runs

Kyren Wilson wins maiden snooker world title



London | Agencies

World No. 12 Kyren Wilson clinched the world title for the first time after beating qualifier Jak Jones 18-14 in the final of the Snooker World Championship.

Wilson became the 23rd player to lift the World Championship trophy at the Crucible. It's a sixth ranking title for Wilson and first since the 2022 European Masters, and his first Triple Crown success. Banking the top prize of £500,000, he jumps nine places up the rankings to a career high position of third.

On the other hand, Jones missed out on becoming only the second qualifier, after Terry Griffiths and Shaun Murphy, to lift the trophy. But having appeared in his first ranking final, the £200,000 prize boosts him 30 places to number 14, as he joins the elite top

16 for the first time. Having won the first seven frames during the opening session on Sunday, Wilson was able to nurse his advantage to the winning post, and although tenacious Jones fought hard, he couldn't narrow the gap to less than three. By coming from 17-11 to 17-14 he created an exciting finish, but it proved too little, too late, world snooker reports.

Wilson's scoring was impressive throughout, making four centuries and eight more breaks over 50 as he joined the exclusive group of players to have captured the sport's biggest prize. "I have dreamed of this since I was six years old. To win it with all my family there was just how I imagined it. Jack fought and made it so hard for me, it was tough to hold it all together. In the last frame I just kept potting balls and suddenly I had potted match ball and I was World Champion. It means everything," said Wilson after the win.

MotoGP 2024: Mir and Marini back in the saddle for French Grand Prix

Le Mans (France) | Agencies

With the season now in full flow, the Honda team is back on track for the French Grand Prix after an important weekend last time out in Spain in the MotoGP 2024 Championship. Made world famous for two and four-wheeled endurance races, the Le Mans Bugatti Grand Prix circuit sits just outside the town of Le Mans and has featured full-time on the World Championship calendar since 2000.

Joan Mir did well in front of his home fans to recover to two-point scoring results in the Sprint and the Spanish Grand Prix.

Recreating that form and improving throughout the French GP weekend will be the objective again. The last race showed what Mir and his team can do throughout the weekend, building each session to maximise the potential of their package.

"Finally, when we look at what happened in Jerez, we have to be content, we achieved the maximum that we could. Doing the same again this weekend is the goal. Le Mans is a different kind of track with lots of slow-speed corners, so we need to work to setup for that as much as possible. It's true it has been a bit of a tricky track for me in the past, but we approach with our goals and our plan this weekend," said Joan

Mir.

On the other side, Luca Marini continues to work on improving his feeling with the Honda RC213V. Experimenting with setup options during the post-race test should give the Italian more tools when he arrives in France for Friday practice.

"Another opportunity for us to make improvements. My team and I are giving our maximum to make progress and we enter the French GP weekend with the same intensity. It's important to stay focused and make the most of every opportunity we are presented. The weather in Le Mans can be quite wet and cold, so let's see what we can achieve," said Luca Marini.

Want to see Rohit Sharma with a World Cup trophy: Yuvraj Singh

New Delhi | Agencies

The ICC men's T20 World Cup ambassador and former India star all-rounder Yuvraj Singh has backed skipper Rohit Sharma to end India's ICC trophy drought, that stretches back to the 2011 Men's Cricket World Cup, at the upcoming T20I showpiece in the USA and the West Indies, commencing from June 1.

After multiple failures in the major ICC tournaments, such as heartbreaking losses in the semi-final of the ICC men's T20 World Cup in 2022, the finals of the World Test Championship in 2023 and the World Cup in 2023, the focus now shifts to the 2024 T20 World Cup to showcase the potential on the global stage.

After spending time with Rohit and seeing his incredible exploits, Yuvraj has a firsthand understanding of the commitment, talent, and fortitude that have elevated the devastating hitter to the top of Indian cricket.

"(Rohit's presence is going to be) very crucial. I



think we need a really good captain, a sensible captain who takes decisions well under pressure. And he's the one to take them. He was the captain when we lost in the (World Cup) 50-over final (in 2023). He has won five IPL trophies as a captain. I think

we need somebody like him to captain India," Yuvraj told the ICC.

Yuvraj was in the team when Rohit made his India debut against Ireland in 2007, it was at the fall of Yuvraj's wicket that he first appeared in international cricket. The 42-year-old recollected his first impression of Rohit, who joined the Indian squad at the early age of 17 and lavished the captain of India with compliments, highlighting his leadership, camaraderie, and humility both on and off the field.

"Very poor English," Yuvraj said jokingly. "Very funny guy. From the streets of Borivali (in Mumbai), we always tease him. But a great guy at heart. The more success he's had, he has never changed as a person. That's the beauty of Rohit Sharma.

"Fun-loving, always having fun with the guys, A great leader on the park and one of my closest friends from cricket. I really want to see Rohit Sharma with a World Cup trophy and a World Cup medal. He really deserves it," added Yuvraj.

'I needed to play till the end', says SKY after match-winning ton against SRH

Mumbai | Agencies

Suryakumar Yadav has said it was the need of the hour for him to bat the way he did, playing traditional shots at the start before unleashing trademark 360-degree batting to help Mumbai Indians (MI) to a seven-wicket victory against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in the IPL 2024 match at the Wankhede Stadium here.

Suryakumar hammered a 51-ball unbeaten 102 and raised a 143-run partnership with Tilak Varma (37 off 32 balls) as MI reached 174/3 in 17.2 overs after skipper Hardik Pandya (3-31) and Piyush Chawla had combined well to restrict SRH to 173/8 in 20 overs. Mumbai were in trouble at 31/3, losing Ishan Kishan, Rohit Sharma and Naman Dhir cheaply. But Suryakumar started cautiously initially but later uncorked some sensational shots to guide the hosts to a memorable victory. "I feel it was the need of the hour for me to win. Three wickets were down and I needed to play till the end. Knew that



dew was heavy and I had to bat till the seam came off. Traditional shots came from the Mumbai school of arts," said Suryakumar, who was adjudged Player of the Match for his mesmerising knock.

About unleashing the shots towards the end of the innings, SKY said he waited for the seam to go off the ball and the dew to take its full effect before going after the bowling. "I knew what to do when the ball was seaming and then brought out all the shots that I practiced. I feel the intent would've been the same. As overs would've passed it'd been easier, and I'd have gone big but like how I did today," he said.

Though he was seen limping and grimacing during his knock, the top T20 batter in the world said it was only because of tiredness as he was on the field for a long time. Suryakumar had missed the first few matches of the IPL season because he had suffered an injury during the South Africa series in December 2023 and had later undergone surgery for a sports hernia in Germany.

'IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE ROHIT FINDS HIS FORM AGAIN', BELIEVES CLARKE

New Delhi | Agencies

Former Australia cricketer Michael Clarke shared his thoughts on Rohit Sharma's form in the IPL 2024 and opined that it's only a matter of time that he will find his form again.

Rohit started well in this season of IPL and scored 297 in his first seven innings but only managed to score 34 in his next five innings, overall in 12 innings he scored 330 runs with a mere average of 30.

The only consolation inning that came from the Indian skipper bat was a century against Chennai Super Kings (105 off 63 balls) that too in a losing cause. It was his second century in the history of IPL that came after more than 12 years.

"With someone like Rohit, it's only a matter of time before he finds his form again. How many times do you see that exact ball go for six though?



It happened to SKY. The exact same ball, exact same shot, except these went for six, Rohit gets out. Rohit, being the wise judge of his own performances, will undoubtedly be disappointed, especially considering his strong start," said Clarke on Star Sports.

However, Clarke also believed that it might be a feeling of fatigue for Rohit and advocated for a break. "In my view, he might be feeling a bit fatigued as well. A break to freshen up could do wonders for him, but as the Indian captain and a key player for Mumbai Indians, you're not getting a break. So he's going to have to find form. He doesn't seem to be struggling with his timing; it's just a matter of getting out."

Clarke also backed Rohit for the T20 World Cup, leading the Indian side and asked him to focus on his game rather than the result. "Hopefully, he stresses less and focuses on his game because he's too talented to keep missing out. He's at his best when he's timing the ball, rather than trying to force it. He's a great player, and I have no doubt he'll bounce back soon. Let's just hope it's not at the World Cup again (said jokingly)," Clarke concluded.

IT'S ALWAYS FUN AND I ENJOY BATTING WITH SHAFALI: SMRITI MANDHANA

New Delhi | Agencies

India opener Smriti Mandhana believes that having a good opening partnership with Shafali Verma is fun and it has improved their performance during the last two and half years as they now know how to complement each other.

It all began in 2019 when Mandhana and Verma were paired as openers in T20Is. With each match, they decoded the nuances of each other's game, learning to complement strengths and cover weaknesses. The result? A staggering 2079 runs in 66 T20Is--the most successful opening pair for Indian women in the shortest format.

Their partnership didn't stop there. In 2021, they ventured into the realm of ODI cricket as openers, and in just 19 games, have amassed 767 runs, with an average of 34.86 and are on course to become the country's most successful opening pair in this format



as well.

In the ongoing T20I series against Bangladesh, Mandhana and Verma showcased their prowess once again, adding 118 runs in just four matches.

Reflecting on their journey, Mandhana expressed joy in their mutual growth and understanding.

"I am really happy and it's always fun to bat with Shafali. I think in the last two-and-a-half years we have got a better understanding of which bowlers she would target and which bowler I can and how do we go about batting together," Mandhana told T-Sports.

"I think in the last two-and-a-half years there is a better understanding in terms of

knowing which role to play. Sometimes she also plays the second fiddle when I go and most of the time she goes and I try to give her strike," she said.

"I think that understanding has come and it's just going to grow, and we start to understand each other better we will be able to give a better platform for India to launch especially going into the World Cup and I really hope we both can again" she said.

Mandhana highlighted the importance of their partnership ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup, emphasising their role in providing a solid platform for India's batting lineup.

"After a good WPL I really wanted to come here and all of us bonding together, so I am really, really happy with the way (things are going). I think the bowlers have bowled and the fielding has been a little up and down and the batting has been really good so really happy. We have come here with a plan for World Cup preparation," she said.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

“Nothing embodies tradition and innovation like the saree : Alia at MET Gala

Alia shared her MET Gala look on Instagram, radiantly donning the saree on the carpet. The saree's colour palette paid homage to "nature's beauty." Describing her look, Alia said it's called the "Garden of Time - an ode to art and eternity." "Timelessness is endless, and we acknowledge that things crafted with time and care, can last forever. In our journey for an Indian interpretation of this universal theme, the outfit took on a life of its own," she added. "Nothing embodies tradition and innovation like the saree; in the skilled hands of #SabyasachiMukherjee, this vision found its fullest expression. We looked to the past as a guide for the future, drawing inspiration from the timeless sophistication of Indian nobility."

The actress added: "We focused on intricate craftsmanship, incorporating hand embroidery, precious stones, along with elegant beadwork and fringes, distinctive of the 1920's fringe style. Our colour palette pays homage to nature's beauty, echoing the earth, sky, and sea."

Talking about the look, Alia said she chose a delicate nostalgia for "hair and makeup - an elevated coiffure embellished with intricately woven braids and soft freckles - a homage to time's gentle caress." "Creating this has been quite an experience... fun and stressful in equal parts. It has taken a collective effort of 163 dedicated individuals, including master craftspeople, embroiderers, artists, and dyers, investing a total of 1965-man hours to create this ethereal saree."

The actress then went on to thank her crew for the look. The MET Gala is an annual fundraising event which is held in celebration of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute. It is one of the most exclusive events of the year.

RANVEER 'DELETES' WEDDING PICS WITH DEEPIKA?



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The fans of Ranveer Singh on Tuesday were left disappointed after they noticed that the superstar 'deleted' the wedding pictures with Deepika Padukone from his Instagram account. However, there is no confirmation whether the 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani' actor has deleted the photos or has archived them. Ranveer, who has 47.3 million followers on the photo-sharing application, has 133 posts.

The first post dates back to January 24, 2023, which is a Reel video shot for a sportswear brand. The last post appearing on his account is an advertisement with actress Alia Bhatt, which was posted on April 26. However, his account still features some photographs of the couple. Bollywood's power couple Ranveer and Deepika, who tied the knot in November 2018, in both traditional Konkani and Sindhi ceremonies in Italy had shared love-filled wedding pictures on their respective handles. For the unversed, a few years ago, Deepika had also archived the wedding pictures on her Instagram account.

Meanwhile, some fans took to the comment section of Ranveer's latest post and said: "mene suna shadi ki album jalaa di?"

Another user said: "kon kon wedding photo delete dekhne aaya hai".

The couple is currently expecting their first baby together.

RITEISH, GENELIA URGE PEOPLE TO COME OUT AND EXERCISE THEIR DEMOCRATIC RIGHT



Mumbai: Actor Riteish Deshmukh and his wife Genelia took to Instagram after they cast their vote in Latur, Maharashtra, to urge fellow citizens to come out and exercise their democratic right. Riteish, dressed in a white churidar and sky blue kurta, had a simple message: "We have voted. Have you?" Genelia, who wore a light yellow chiffon sari with a silver border, wrote: "Vote for you. Vote for your future. Vote for your country."

Latur is the Assembly constituency that Riteish's late father, Vilasrao Deshmukh, who was Maharashtra's chief minister and a Union minister as well, represented in the years he was active in state politics. In Genelia's post, Riteish and she are seen sitting along with his mother, Vaishali Deshmukh, under a picture of a beaming Vilasrao Deshmukh. The contest for the Latur parliamentary seat, for which the Deshmukhs cast their vote, is between the sitting MP Sudhakar Tukaram Shrangare from the NDA and the INDIA bloc's nominee, Kalge Shivaji Bandappa.

Riteish, who was last seen in the successful Marathi movie, 'Ved', will appear next in 'Housefull 5' with Akshay Kumar and Abhishek Bachchan.

I wants to live in the woods : Nargis Fakhri

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Nargis Fakhri desires to live in the woods, as she says there is nothing better than spending days in nature. Nargis took to her Instagram stories and shared a video of her trekking through the woods.

Without sharing details about her whereabouts, Nargis wrote: "I want to live in the woods, there is nothing better than waking up to this and spending your days in nature. I feel so grateful and blessed, nature heals us."

Talking about her work, Nargis, who made her Bollywood debut in 2011 with the Ranbir Kapoor-starrer 'Rockstar', was last seen in the Hindi comedy film 'Shiv Shastri Balboa' starring Anupam Kher and Neena Gupta.

The actress will next be seen in the Telugu period action adventure film 'Hari Hara Veera Mallu Part 1 - Sword vs Spirit' starring Pawan Kalyan and Bobby Deol.

DIVYANKA FLIES TO HOMETOWN BHOPAL WITH HER HUSBAND, VIVEK DAHIYA, TO CAST HER VOTE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Divyanka Tripathi Dahiya on Tuesday took a flight to her hometown Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, saying she is 'off to vote'. Divyanka was accompanied by her husband, Vivek Dahiya, to cast her vote in the third phase of the Lok Sabha elections. Taking to Instagram stories, the actress shared a video from the flight, wearing a blue chikankari kurta set. In the video, she can be heard saying, "Off to Bhopal to cast vote. Taking my hubby with me, he is my 'sehat ka rakhwala'." To which Vivek responded: "At your service, mam."

In another video, Divyanka can be seen dressed up in a Barbie pink-coloured ethnic outfit, with her hair left loose and adorned with a pink bindi and matching lipstick. She accessorised the look with sunglasses. The 'Teri Meri Love Stories' actress said in the video: "Off to vote." The 39-year-old actress is currently recovering from a forearm fracture.

In Mahesh Bhatt I hv found not only a mentor but also a role model : Mallika Sherawat

Team Absolute | Mumbai



Mallika Sherawat has penned an appreciation note for her 'mentor' and 'role model' - filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt, saying his words of encouragement during moments of doubt have been a source of strength. Mallika, who played the lead in producer Mahesh Bhatt's 2004 thriller movie 'Murder', co-starring Emraan Hashmi, took to Instagram on Tuesday and penned a beautiful note for the director. She shared two snaps wherein we can see her sitting on a couch alongside Bhatt, and is holding a book in her hand. The hot diva is wearing an off-shoulder white coloured long breezy dress.

The caption read: "In Mahesh Bhatt I hv found not only a mentor but also a role model who's passion, dedication & fearlessness continue to inspire me. His words of encouragement during moments of doubt hv been a source of strength. I'm truly grateful to have the opportunity to learn from him @maheshfilm." She gave the geotag of Mumbai to her post.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Ihana Dhillan