

# absolute india

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## Debate over Hindu-Muslim count between 1950 & 2015: How politicians and experts reacted

## Congress's family is in danger, not the Constitution: Mohan Yadav

# CRUTCH FOR ELECTION

According to the EAC-PM, the share of the majority Hindu population declined by 7.82 per cent from 84.68 per cent to 78.06 per cent between 1950 and 2015 while that of Muslim population rose by 43.15 per cent to 14.09 per cent from 9.84 per cent during the period. The paper said the Christian population share rose 5.33 per cent from 2.24 per cent to 2.36 per cent during the period. The share of Sikh population increased by 6.58 per cent from 1.24 per cent in 1950 to 1.85 per cent in 2015. Even the share of the Buddhist population witnessed a noticeable increase from 0.05 per cent to 0.81 per cent.



Union Minister and firebrand BJP leader Giriraj Singh said that the drastic rise in the Muslim population was a matter of concern and if not addressed timely, will have serious ramifications. Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya blamed the Congress for unhindered growth of one community at the cost of other. BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi told correspondent that in 1950s, the population of Muslims was comparatively less while the number of learned Muslims was higher. Congress leader Udit Raj, replying to query on the EAC-PM report, slammed the current dispensation for not conducting Census in 2021. "Census is due for long. This government is deliberately delaying it. Unless, there is a detailed survey, we won't get to know the real demography," he said. Former Congress veteran Acharya Pramod Krishnam hit out at the INDIA bloc for plunging numbers of Hindus. He said that the Opposition wants to divide the majority, so that it succeeds in pushing its dangerous agenda. Manu Gaur, the TAXAB president also raised concerns over the changing demography and said that an effective population policy was the need to time to arrest this disparity.

"The rise in their population resulted in their degradation. Muslim community should introspect into this rather than reacting with anger over findings."



**Sudhanshu Trivedi, Spokesperson, BJP**  
"Every community has seen growth in their numbers, over the years. It's understood that those belonging to poor and deprived sections will have bigger families but this can't be seen through a religious prism."



**Mufti Shahabuddin Barelvi, AIMJ Chief**  
"The report cites the period between 1950 and 2015. Why does it not talk about the period after that? Moreover, the EAC report is bound to be tailored to suit the ruling party's convenience"



**Surendra Rajput, Spokesperson, Congress**  
"We have been demanding a caste census but they are turning a blind eye to this demand because it will not fetch them votes. The Hindu-Muslim population ratio will now make them scare Hindus and derive political mileage. We do not accept such reports."



**Shivpal Yadav, Leader, SP**



Team Absolute | Khargone  
Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said in a public meeting organized in Pansemal of Khargone parliamentary constituency that the Constitution is not in danger, in fact the family of Congress is in danger. He said that Rahul Gandhi has forgotten that Narendra Modi's government has been in power for 10 years, Prime Minister Modi saved everyone's lives in Covid. Then, reservation did not end. Now they are saying that they will end reservation. The public knows that you are lying and want to form your own government. People of Congress and alliance are abusing Prime Minister Modi because Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, son-in-law Robert Vadra, Sonia Gandhi and all their associates are on bail. Those who are not on bail are in jail. Law should be equal for everyone. This is to follow the election law. The Chief Minister said that when we take names of temples, it hurts the Congressmen. They cannot tolerate the praises of God. If we do not praise the gods, then this life is useless. Dirt has entered the minds of Congressmen. They insult mothers and sisters. The time has come to teach them a lesson. His previous Chief Ministers also used to insult women in the same manner, they will settle their accounts on the election day. He further said that during the difficult times of Corona, doctors were not available in the hospital. All transport facilities were closed. Such a bad time had come. Our leader Narendra Modi came in front of everyone in such bad times and said that everyone should stay where they are. He tried to save the entire country by imposing lockdown. Rahul Gandhi's father Rajiv Gandhi used to say that I send one rupee, 15 paise reaches there. Till date his son Rahul Gandhi has not apologized for that matter.

## Air India Express row: 85 flights cancelled as cabin crew members continue strike

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Over 80 flights were cancelled on Thursday following the mass sick leave taken by the cabin crew members of Air India Express, said an official. "We will be operating 283 flights today. We have mobilised all resources and Air India will support us by operating on 20 of our routes. However, 85 of our flights stand cancelled and we urge our guests booked to fly with us to check if their flight is affected by the disruption before heading to the airport," said the Air India Express spokesperson. "If their flight is cancelled, or delayed beyond 3 hours, they may opt for a full refund or reschedule to a later date without any fees on Tia on WhatsApp (+91 6360012345) or airindiaexpress.com," the spokesperson added. Since Tuesday, over 300 cabin crew members have gone on mass sick leave alleging that despite assur-



ances of job security, salary preservation, and recognition of seniority and expertise, there has been a visible departure from these commitments during the transition from AirAsia to Air India Express. In 2023, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) gave its go-ahead to the Tata Group's initiative to merge the budget airline AIX Connect (previously known as AirAsia India) with Air India Express.

"Since last (Tuesday) evening, over 100 of our cabin crew colleagues have reported sick prior to their rostered flight duty, at the last minute, severely disrupting our operations. Because this action was mostly by colleagues assigned LI role, the impact was disproportionate, disrupting 90+ flights even though other colleagues reported for duty", read the letter by CEO Alok Singh on Wednesday.

## EIGHT KILLED IN BLAST AT FIREWORKS FACTORY IN TN'S SIVAKASI

Chennai: Eight people, including two women, were killed in a blast at a fireworks factory in Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar district on Thursday, while several others were injured, officials said.

Police and fire personnel reached the spot for rescue operations and the injured, which include two in serious condition, were being taken to the Virudhunagar government medical college and hospital. Further details were awaited. Sivakasi is the "fireworks capital" of India with an annual turnover of Rs 6,000 crore and employing more than 1 lakh people directly and around two and half lakh people indirectly.

## US trying to 'complicate' Lok Sabha elections: Russia

Moscow | Agencies

Targeting the US for interfering in India's internal affairs, Russia has said that Washington is trying to "complicate" the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, including by making "regular unfounded accusations" on threats to religious freedom in the country. Reacting strongly to the recent report released by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said Washington not only "groundlessly" accuses India, but also many other states. "Regular unfounded accusations by the United States against New Delhi - we see that they groundlessly accuse not only India, but also many other states - of violating religious freedoms are a reflection of the United States' misunderstanding of the national mentality, the historical context of the development of the Indian state and disrespect for India as a state," Zakharova told mediapersons in Moscow on Wednesday. "I am sure that this also



comes from the neocolonial mentality, the mentality of the colonial period, the period of the slave trade, and imperialism... This does not only apply to India. The reason is the desire to unbalance the internal political situation in India in order to

complicate the general parliamentary elections taking place in the country. Of course, this is part of interference in India's internal affairs," added the Russian MFA spokesperson. During the regular media briefing, Zakharova was also asked about a report published in a US newspaper that accused an Indian official of a "foiled assassination" plot on foreign soil. "According to the information we have, Washington has not yet provided any reliable evidence of the involvement of Indian citizens in the preparation of the murder of a certain G.S. Pannun. Speculation on this topic in the absence of evidence is unacceptable," stated Zakharova. Last week, India slammed the USCIRF report, saying that the agency's efforts to interfere in India's ongoing elections will never succeed.

## 'Right to campaign not fundamental'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A day before the Supreme Court is set to pronounce its order on the interim bail plea moved by incarcerated Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the excise policy case, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday opposed the grant of interim relief saying that a politician can claim no "special status" higher than that of an ordinary citizen and is as much liable to be arrested and detained for committing offences as any other citizen. The affidavit filed by ED's Deputy Director stated that there is no principle that justifies giving differential treatment to a politician for campaigning over a farmer or a businessman who wishes to pursue his vocation. "If the right to campaign is treated as a basis for grant of interim bail, it would breach



the principles of Article 14 for the reason that harvesting for a farmer would be an equally important factor for seeking interim bail as would a board meeting or an annual general meeting for a director of a company who commits a crime, as these are their respective vocations or professions," read the affidavit. The agency said that the right to campaign for elections is neither a fundamental right nor a constitutional right and not even a legal right.

## K'TAKA SEX SCANDAL

## NCW says three men claiming to be cops forced one 'victim' to lodge false complaint

Bengaluru | Agencies

In a twist to the sex video scandal in Karnataka involving Prajwal Revanna -- the sitting JD-S MP who has been renominated from Hassan -- the National Commission for Women (NCW) said on Thursday that one of the woman complainants in the case has claimed that she was forced by a group of people to lodge a false complaint after being threatened with harassment. The NCW said in a statement, "One woman complainant came to the Commission to register a complaint against three individuals dressed in civil uniform, allegedly introducing themselves as Karnataka Police officials and forcing her to give a false complaint in this case."



"The woman claimed that she received calls from random numbers threatening her to lodge a complaint. It has come to light that this complainant was forced by a group of individuals to file a complaint under the threat of potential harassment and false implications. The complainant has sought protection for her family, underscoring the seri-

ousness of the situation, the NCW said, adding that it has asked Karnataka DGP Alok Mohan to provide appropriate security to the woman. Prajwal Revanna is the grandson of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, and son of JD-S MLA H.D. Revanna, who has been arrested for his alleged role in the kidnapping of a victim of the sex scandal involving his

son. The NCW statement added, "In a separate development, it has been noted that the 700 women who submitted online complaints are affiliated with a social activist group and have no direct involvement or association with the primary complainant in the case. "The NCW stands firm in its condemnation of any form of violence or sexual abuse perpetrated against women. The recent developments surrounding the Prajwal Revanna case have prompted the NCW to take swift and decisive action." In response to the distressing reports circulating in the media, the NCW initiated suo motu action, demonstrating its commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of women, the statement said.

## People with two wives will get two lakh rupees annually: Kantilal Bhuria

Team Absolute | Ratlam

Congress candidate from Ratlam-Jhabua parliamentary constituency of Madhya Pradesh and former Union Minister Kantilal Bhuria has given a strange statement. He has said that people who have two wives will get Rs 2 lakh annually. A public meeting was organized in support of Congress candidate Bhuria in Sailana in the presence of Congress state president Jitu Patwari and former Chief Minister Digvijay Singh. On this occasion, Bhuria, citing the Congress manifesto, said that if Congress comes to power, it will give Rs 1 lakh annually to women

and those who have two wives will get Rs 2 lakh.



On this occasion, state party president Jitu Patwari also supported Bhuria and said that your future MP Kantilal Bhuria has made a big announcement. Those who have two wives will get double.







## BJP IS A MISGUIDED PARTY, HAS NEITHER POLICY NOR INTENTIONS: KAMAL NATH

**Team Absolute** | Bhopal

Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Kamal Nath has described BJP as a misguided party and said that BJP has neither any policy nor intention for different sections.

Kamal Nath wrote on Twitter on Thursday, "The BJP leadership is not able to clarify any policy or intention regarding the country's farmers, youth, women, government employees, Dalits, backward classes, tribals, minorities or any other class. The citizens of India are ready to defend the country from the misguided party."

He further said, BJP was trying to divert this election from the issues from the beginning but by diverting it, it itself has got lost. The public mind has now become clear in this Lok Sabha elec-



tion. The people of India are going to hand over the keys of power to the Indian Alliance.

Earlier on Wednesday, Kamal Nath had said that reservation has become a big issue in the Lok Sabha elec-

tions. He had accused BJP of snatching reservation by changing the Constitution.

### Fire broke out during summer camp in private school of Gwalior, children safe

Gwalior: A sudden fire broke out during the summer camp in a private school located in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. All the children present in the school were evacuated safely. According to the information received, a summer camp is going on these days in a private school located in Kanti Nagar of Padav police station area. A large number of children are participating in this camp.

Meanwhile, on Thursday, a sudden fire broke out in the school, leading to a stampede. The teachers and children present in the school premises took everyone out safely. The cause of the fire is said to be an electric scooter which was being charged and during this time it caught fire.

The fire spread to a large part of the school. The fire brigade vehicle reached the school and brought the fire under control. There has been no casualty in this accident.

## Rahul Gandhi's roots in Italy: Shivraj Singh Chauhan

**Team Absolute** | Khandwa

Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chauhan has targeted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and said that his roots are not in India but in Italy. That is why he is making absurd statements.

Shivraj Singh Chauhan, who reached Mundi in Khandwa parliamentary constituency, said that he has strong objection to the statements of Congress, because Congress wants to destroy the idea of India, India's land, India's soil, India's tradition, India's life values. Rahul Gandhi's land, his roots are not in India, his roots are in Italy. They don't even know India. That's why they are talking nonsense. Congress has become dangerous. This is the reason why people like Suresh Pachauri left Congress and joined Bharatiya Janata Party.

He further said that one Sam Pitroda of Congress is saying what every day. Once said that inheritance tax should be imposed. After that he said that the people of North East look like Chinese. People from the South look like Africans. He said that Manthara has taken over the intelligence of Congress. When the idol of Lord Ram was consecrated in Ayodhya,



the country was happy. Sisters lit lamps, youth hoisted flags. But, one party was crying. Ansari family fought the battle of Babri. But, he also participated in the consecration of Ram Lalla. Congress was also called. But, he refused in writing started saying that the time is bad. As long as the earth, sun and moon exist, it will remain written that Congress rejected the invitation.

## After killing the mother in Sheopur, the body was buried in the wall

**Team Absolute** | Sheopur

A heart-wrenching incident has come to light in Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh. Here a son, out of greed for property, murdered his widowed mother and got her body buried in the wall.

According to information received from the police, a youth from Kotwali police station area had complained about his mother's disappearance on May 6. When the police investigated the matter and interrogated the complainant's son, the matter came to light.

According to the police, accused Deepak was interrogated on Wednesday night on the basis of suspicion.



Initially he kept misleading the police but after strict interrogation he confessed to the murder of his mother.

Why he brutalized his mother has also been revealed. He murdered his

mother out of greed for property and then buried the body in the wall.

The son has confessed to his crime. The police is trying to recover the body.

## FIR against Bhopal district panchayat member who got his minor son to vote

### ENTIRE POLLING PARTY INCLUDING PRESIDING OFFICER SUSPENDED

**Team Absolute** | Bhopal

An FIR has been registered against Bhopal District Panchayat member Vinay Mehar, who got his minor son to cast his vote.

Meanwhile, booth presiding officer Sandeep Saini, his assistants CR Batham, Manoj Kumar Maurya and Madan Gopal Patel have been suspended. Line has been attached to Head Constable Santosh posted at the booth.

Actually, on May 7, voting was going on in all the polling stations of Bhopal. Selfie points were also made at all places so that anyone can take a selfie if they wish. But no one can even imagine what a BJP leader did. In Bhopal, BJP's District Panchayat member Vinay Mehar has been accused of having sex with his minor son. These allegations have not been made by anyone but Vinay himself has made



a video in which he is seen getting his minor son to cast his vote. Vinay Mehar also posted this video on his Facebook. After which there is panic in the administration. People are raising questions on the election process. Bhopal Collector Kaushalendra Vikram Singh has expressed strictness in this mat-

ter and said that this matter is being thoroughly investigated. Any action will be taken only after the investigation report comes out. Kaushalendra Vikram Singh said that the investigation has been handed over to Berasia SDM and Berasia SDOP. If the investigation is found correct, strict action will be taken by registering an FIR against the concerned. And the presiding officer will be suspended.

According to the officials of the Election Commission, the voter himself can cast his vote. Apart from him, no other person can vote. Mobile phones are not allowed inside the polling booth. In such a situation, when BJP leaders enter inside with mobile phones, people are raising questions on the electoral process. In this case, serious questions arise about the role of the presiding officer and other officers engaged in election duty.

## 2 accused arrested for hunting and smuggling of rare wild animal Pangolin, absconding for two years

**Team Absolute** | Bhopal

State Tiger Strike Force Madhya Pradesh Regional Unit Jabalpur, Forest Division South Seoni, Forest Division South Balaghat and Police Station Lanji jointly cordoned off and arrested Aamir Hussain, resident of Silchar District Cachar Assam and Amulya Mandal District Cooch Behar West Bengal from Kachari Chowk Seoni. .

A case was registered against the said accused under various sections of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 in Forest Division South Balaghat, Forest Crime Case No. 11614/20 dated 20 September 2014, in relation to hunting of wild animal pangolin and smuggling of its parts. The said accused were absconding for the last 2 years and a permanent arrest warrant was issued against them by the Honorable Judicial Magistrate First Class Lanji District Balaghat. Continuous efforts were being made to catch them by the State Tiger Strike Force. State Tiger Strike Force Madhya Pradesh received information from the informer on 8 May 2014 that the above two accused had



come to Madhya Pradesh around Seoni.

The joint team cordoned off the area near Kachari Chowk and as per

the above description, the suspicious person was stopped and interrogated. He revealed his name as Aamir Hussain and Amulya Mandal, who were arrested and handed over to the local police. The accused will be produced before the Honorable Judicial Magistrate First Class, Lanji, District Balaghat.

Pangolin scales are purchased by these smugglers mainly from Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and sold to traders from Assam, Mizoram, Meghalaya, where the traders send them to China via Myanmar (Burma).

STSF has exposed an inter-state and international gang involved in smuggling of parts of rare species of wild animal, Pangolin. In this, 197 accused have been arrested from 15 states of the country.

Interpol has named the pangolin the most trafficked mammal in the world. Parts of the wild animal pangolin are smuggled from many countries in Asia and Africa. Its demand is mainly in countries like China, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Vietnam etc.

## 4 thousand 555 complaints of violation received on "C-Vigil App"

**Team Absolute** | Bhopal

Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan has said that the Model Code of Conduct is in force from March 16 for the Lok Sabha elections 2024 in the state. Complaints of violation of Model Code of Conduct are being received from citizens on "C-Vigil App". From March 16 to May 9, 4 thousand 555 complaints of violation of the code of conduct have been received on the C-Vigil app. All these complaints have been resolved promptly.

Rajan said that mostly 525 complaints have been received in Gwalior, 349 in Sagar, 306 in Damoh, 273 in Ujjain, 239 in Morena, 198 in Rajgarh, 211 in Indore, 168 in Rewa, 152 in Katni, 127 in Kargone, 120 in Sehore, 135 in

Bhopal, 114 in Chhatrapur, 110 in Narsinghpur, and 105 complaints have been received in Satna district. Similar complaints have been received from other districts of the state also.

Rajan has urged the citizens of the state that if they want to make any direct complaint related to violation of Model Code of Conduct in elections, then they can do so through "C-Vigil App". For this, the concerned citizen will have to go to Google Play Store and download "C-Vigil App".

### Action will be taken within 100 minutes

Shri Rajan said that if a citizen has information about any incident related to violation of the code of conduct, he will have to upload the photo or video on the "C-Vigil App". On receiving the complaint,

action will be taken within the next 100 minutes.

It is noteworthy that "C-Vigil App" has been prepared by the Election Commission of India for redressal of complaints regarding violation of Model Code of Conduct. Through this app, people can prevent political parties or candidates from distributing money, goods, clothes, jewellery, etc. in any way to vote voters, threatening voters to vote in their favour, transporting voters in their own vehicle and can make other types of complaints including pasting or putting up election campaign material on the building or walls or premises of any building owner or getting election advertisements written on the walls without the permission of the building owner.

## VD Sharma called Akshay Bam a Counterfeit coin...?

**Team Absolute** | Indore

State BJP President VD Sharma attacked Congress without taking the name of Akshay Kanti bomb in Indore and said that if your coin turns out to be Counterfeit then why should people vote on NOTA? Congress is going towards the ground. Jitu Patwari is taking Congress towards closure.

Sharma said that the people of Madhya Pradesh and the country are no longer going to vote for the Congress Party, the party which could not even field its candidates on many seats in the country including Khajuraho and Indore, is talking about pressing the NOTA button. After the independence of the country, Mahatma Gandhi had talked about abolishing the Congress. Jitu Patwari is bent upon fulfilling that dream of Gandhiji.

It is very unfortunate that there is no opposition in the country. All the opposition parties in the country are doing politics for their families. Jitu Patwari's statement is an insult to the 8.5 crore people of Madhya Pradesh.

Sharma further said in the discussion with the media that there is an atmosphere of extreme disappointment and frustration in the Congress leadership of the country



including Madhya Pradesh. Congress has betrayed the people of Indore. Congress left the field in Khajuraho, supported Samajwadi Party. He also changed the candidate, then the other candidate filled the wrong form and left the field. Congress could not field candidates on many seats in the country, which makes it clear that Congress will not get even a single seat, it will not even be able to open its account here. He said that appealing to vote for NOTA is weakening democracy. Your one vote will strengthen India's democracy.

## RGPV: NEW REVELATION IN THE SCAM OF RS 19.50 CRORE

**1.34 crore distributed among traders and 9.50 crore transferred to the account of Dalit Sangh**

**Team Absolute** | Bhopal

A new revelation has come to light in the Rajiv Gandhi Technological University (RGPV) scam case. Out of the Rs 9.50 crore transferred from the account of RGPV to the account of Dalit Sangh Sohagpur, about Rs 1.25 crore was distributed to the traders. Dalit Sangh Secretary Ratan Umre has delivered this amount to the traders.

This disclosure has been made by the Gandhinagar Police of Bhopal, which is investigating the case of transfer of Rs 9.50 crore from the account of RGPV to the account of Dalit Sangh. Also, the police have made union secretary Ratan Umre and treasurer Ashok Chaurasia accused in this case. It is noteworthy that this amount was deposited by the students in the university account as fees for examination, enrolment, registration and other processes.

According to the investigation report of Gandhinagar Police, Rs 9 crore 50 lakh was transferred from the account of the University to the account of Dalit Sangh Sohagpur on January 23, 2023. A few hours after the money was credited to the account, Dalit Sangh Secretary Ratan Umre withdrew Rs 3 crore 20 lakh. Whereas Rs 55 lakh 73 thousand 500 were withdrawn through cheque. Apart from this, Secretary Ratan Umre had transferred Rs 25 lakh 65 thousand to his own State Bank



of India account.

Out of Rs 9.50 crore deposited from the account of RGPV to the account of Dalit Sangh, Rs 3 crore 75 lakh were withdrawn through separate checks by Secretary Ratan Umre and Treasurer Ashok

Chaurasia. This has been confirmed by Pipariya-based branch manager of ICICI Bank Sumit Jharia and Axis Bank manager Vinay Verma in their statements given to Gandhinagar Police. Ratan Umre transferred a huge amount to his own account.



EDITOR'S SPECS

**Loyalties, like the fragrance of Ittar, last long in Kannauj**

'Ittar', a non-alcohol based perfume, is known for being long-lasting and loyalties in Kannauj, the nation's Ittar hub, also last long. People here develop loyalties with leaders and parties and do not change them every five years. For the SP and BJP candidates in Kannauj, this is a major advantage. The Lok Sabha elections in Kannauj that goes to polls on May 13, turned high profile after SP President Akhilesh Yadav threw his hat into the ring here. Former Uttar Pradesh (UP) CM, Akhilesh Yadav is contesting against Subrat Pathak, the sitting BJP MP, who defeated Dimple Yadav in 2019. He is confident that the work done by the double engine governments will ensure a smooth victory for the BJP. SP chief Akhilesh's presence in the fray, meanwhile, has enthused the party cadres. The SP office in Sadar area is buzzing with activity as motorcycles whizz in and out. The constituency has over 19 lakh voters, with Muslims accounting for around 3 lakh and Brahmins and Yadavs being slightly more than 2.5 lakh each. Dalits, who constitute the biggest chunk with a population of over 4 lakh, may play a decisive role. Rajputs, Vaishyas, Lodhs, and Kurmis are also present in significant numbers. The winners from this constituency include Dr Ram Manohar Lohia in 1967, Sheila Dikshit in 1984 and Mulayam Singh Yadav in 1999. The biggest problem in Kannauj relates to unemployment. Though the district has more than 100 cold storages and over 400 small 'ittar' manufacturing units, besides 23 private distilleries, there are many who find it tough to make ends meet. Most Muslims and Dalits work as daily wagers, who may not find work for months together. The ittar industry, however, has learnt to sustain itself over the years and remains unaffected by political churnings.

**Why don't general masses' woes become Election Issue?**

Lalit Garg

The third phase of Lok Sabha elections has been completed; as the elections are progressing, the layers of tainted character of politicians and poll candidates are being exposed, in the process. There was a time when people used to follow the conduct of country's leaders in public life. Leaders were also concerned about their image and reputation in the society. But in recent years, leaders of many satraps' families have also entered the politics, who in their pursuit of power, kept aside all the morals and decorum. Recently, the serious allegations made against Prajwal Revanna, MP of Janata Dal (Secular) from Hassan seat in Karnataka, of misconduct with hundreds of women, have shown the nadir point of degradation in politics. Moreover, the Enforcement Department, which is investigating an old case in Ranchi, has recovered Rs 39 crore in cash from the house of a servant working at the house of private secretary of Jharkhand government minister Alamgir Alam. This election involving leaders and tainted candidates tainted with sexual harassment, misconduct, corruption and treason is a serious question on democracy. Our politics is becoming a tragedy. The politicians started doing everything for power and in this race they forgot the ideals of politics, this is why the poison of inequalities and inconsistencies is mixed in the atmosphere of the country, and there is no hope of light from anywhere. We are afraid of the politically corrupt, of those who glorify crime, of those who misuse power, of those who put the unity and integrity of the country at stake, and of those who tear down women's dignity through sexual harassment and misconduct.

The country is faced with a complex mix of sorrow, pain and insensitivity; problems are scary and horrifying in new masks. A lot has changed in the society, including -values, thoughts, life-style, architecture, and a lot more. The election process is increasingly becoming very expensive. Being honest is a vice in today's politics. Taking action against crime has become a sin. Taking interest in religion and spirituality has come to be considered communal. Exposing any irregularity is considered prejudice. Speaking the truth falls into the category of ego-feeding. Candor is impractical. Not supporting corruption is not recognizing the time. It is necessary to discuss these and such basic questions in the context of elections. After all, for how long will these new definitions being coined in the name of political interests continue to push the



society and nation in deplorable directions? How long will our country and our society remain forgotten in the name of the strong storm of evolution? In this grand show of elections, the talk of reform, morality, values and principles is not being heard anywhere? There is no light visible anywhere. It is a very dark and dense night. There is neither self-confidence, nor moral strength.

This great sacrifice of elections organized for building a great and strong India is today becoming 'Mahabharata'. How this undertaking of establishing values and standards is becoming a medium to hollow out democracy is a matter of deep concern and contemplation. A naked dance of character devaluation, economic anomalies and giving support to disparities has started taking place in the elections and every party is displaying its strength in it with great enthusiasm. It is not only about election donations, but also about donations received from foreign countries. Today the question is very big, and that is how to protect Indian politics from direct foreign influence. The allegations against Aam Aadmi Party of taking huge sums of money from alleged anti-India foreign powers are a challenge to our entire electoral system.

Have the people associated with the ruling party, or the opposition parties, or the newly emerging political contenders, and those who talk about ideals, ever given any feeling through their actions that they should be considered as politicians who have risen above limited vested interests? Here the names of the leaders are not that important, nor is the political party important, what is important is the fact that this kind of

Kupmandu leadership can overall make the politics of the country shallow. The kind of moral integrity that is required for positive politics and the kind of maturity that is required from politicians for this, the lack of it in the entire opposition parties is creating a painful situation. And we are the ones who are engaged in creating such leaders!

Elections are considered the beginning of the democratic process, but today elections have become a mockery of democracy. The methods adopted in elections are contrary to the basic idea of democracy. Faced with these conditions, Indian democracy, which is said to be the world's best, is today at the crossroads of anarchy; where no path leading from here appears to be safe. The fault of putting it at the crossroads lies much more with the political parties and leaders than with the public, who have weakened it greatly by making it a medium to fulfill personal and party interests. Today these parties, these people have lost the ability to take it out of the current quagmire. Only Kauravas and Pandavas were not affected in the battle of Mahabharata. The sparks of that war had reached far and wide. It is clearly visible that even in this Mahabharata, the so-called anarchist political and economic forces are trying to show their influence, which will have far-reaching consequences. In these circumstances, such an effort is now necessary in which intentions of those who wrote the new story of 'Mahabharata' in the name of 'Great India' are identified. India needs leaders with Arjun's concentration. If neces-

sary, it is not wrong to attack the top leadership for wrong conduct.

It is true that today there is no dearth of such parties in the country, which are formed not on the basis of policy, but on the sick ambitions of the individual, but such parties also talk about policies. The discrepancy between words and actions should be a matter of concern for a democratic system. Although, in reaching the golden age of independence, our political parties have not presented such examples of policies and ideals which indicate that the democratic system is strong and healthy, yet there has always been an expectation that policies and morality will be there somewhere near; will play any role in deciding the direction of our politics. Even though it was a misunderstanding, it was true. Now there doesn't even seem to be a chance to maintain such a happy understanding. But today is the opportunity to ask the question: when will policies become the basis of our politics? It is also important to ask - when will opportunism be considered a crime in politics? It is an irony in itself that talking about politics based on principles and policies seems strange today. It is true that a person's thoughts can change at any time, but on what basis can it be said that changing thoughts like clothes every day is right? The truth is that today in our politics the very definition of right and wrong has changed - everything that serves political interests becomes right and everything that is related to the interests of the common man becomes wrong. What kind of democracy is being created in which the 'people' themselves are disappearing?

Narsi Mehta's bhajan "Vaishnav Jan to Tene Kahiye, Je Peer Parai Jaane Re" had become the life thread of Gandhiji, but why does it not become the life thread of today's leaders? Why don't today's politicians accept someone else's pain and sorrow as their own? Why not connect your thoughts with the pain and feelings of the people? Any person, event or opportunity is important if it makes the nation hopeful even for a day. But here one day's ignorance is a preparation to hand over five years i.e. eighteen hundred and twenty-five days to darkness. What kind of responsibility are we fulfilling as voters and what kind of political leadership is being created?

(Lalit Garg is Writer, journalist, columnist based in Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

international

**30 killed during Israel's continuing ground assault in Rafah**



**Jerusalem** | Agencies Israel's army has announced that it is continuing its ground assault on Gaza's Rafah, reporting approximately 30 casualties since the offensive began on Monday night. According to an army statement issued on Wednesday, the 30 casualties were mili-

attacked about 100 "targets" in the region, including militant infrastructure and "suspicious buildings" from which Hamas fighters fired at Israeli soldiers, the army said. Israel launched the ground assault on Rafah overnight between Monday and Tuesday, citing its aim to eliminate four Hamas battalions that remain in the southern city. Troops gained "operational control" over the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, a key entry point for humanitarian aid from Egypt to the famine-stricken Gaza, and shut it down.

**US won't supply Israel with weapons for Rafah offensive: Biden**

US President Joe Biden has threatened Israel with further restrictions on the supply of military equipment were Israel to carry out a major military offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah. "I made it clear that if they (Israel) go into Rafah... I'm not supplying the weapons that have been used historically to deal with Rafah, to deal with the cities - that deal with that problem," Biden told broadcaster CNN in an interview, stressing "they haven't gone in Rafah yet". On Wednesday, the US said it paused a large shipment of weapons to Israel amid ongoing concerns in Washington about military operations in the southern Gaza city. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said it had been clearly communicated to Israel that the US government did not support Israel's long-threatened all-out offensive in Rafah, the southern city in the Gaza Strip that is seen as the last place of refuge for civilians in the territory.

**Deadly storms claim 100 lives, damage 100,000 homes in Brazil**



**Sao Paulo** | Agencies At least 100 people have died and nearly 100,000 homes have been destroyed or significantly damaged from more than a week of record rainfall and flooding in south Brazil's Rio Grande do Sul state, local authorities have said.

The National Confederation of Municipalities said in an update on Wednesday that overflowing rivers and floods in the state have affected around 1.45 million people and forced some 200,000 residents to flee their homes, Xinhua news agency reported.

Based on data from the Civil Defense agency, some 99,800 residences of all types have sustained either total or partial damage since the state's worst weather-related disaster hit on April 29, according to the confederation.

As many as 414 of 497 towns in the state, a top agricultural and livestock producer that borders Argentina and Uruguay, have suffered from the storms and declared emergencies.

The confederation estimates the economic losses at 4.6 billion reals (about \$904 million), taking into account the damage to housing and public infrastructure, as well as agriculture, livestock, industry, commerce and services.

In just one week, Rio Grande do Sul saw five months' worth of rain, sparking unprecedented flooding.

**Israeli police raid Al Jazeera offices in Nazareth**



**Tel Aviv** | Agencies Israeli police have raided the offices of broadcaster Al Jazeera in the city of Nazareth, confiscating equipment belonging to the Arabic-language TV channel. The raid comes several days after the Israeli government banned Al Jazeera, both blocking access to Al Jazeera's content in Israel and banning the broadcaster from operating. Israel's communications minister signed a closure order for the broadcaster on Sunday, and Al Jazeera's office in the Ambassador Hotel in East Jerusalem was raided that same day. Israel accuses the channel of biased reporting in the Gaza war. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had already announced his intention to close the TV network's facilities operating in Israel more than a month ago.

Israel's parliament had previously approved a measure widely known as the Al Jazeera law that enables the government to shut down and ban foreign broadcasters if they are classified as a risk to state security. The broadcaster has categorically rejected the Israeli accusations and described the ban as a "criminal act" that violated human rights and the fundamental right of access to information. Al Jazeera said it would take all possible action against the move and defend the rights of the broadcaster and its employees.

**New dispute looms between Rome and German NGOs helping migrants**

**Rome** | Agencies A new dispute is brewing between Italy and private German aid organisations over the handling of boat refugees in the Mediterranean. Despite a ban by the right-wing government of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, the German non-governmental organisation (NGO) Sea-Watch said it was continuing its flights to spot refugee boats.

A video posted by Sea-Watch showed a small private plane taking off from the island of Lampedusa towards the central Mediterranean, one of the most important routes for refugees from Africa to Europe.

At the beginning of this week, Italy's aviation authority, which reports to the transport ministry of right-wing Prime Minister Matteo Salvini, issued several decrees.

Accordingly, no more flights of this kind are allowed to take off from Lampedusa and three other airports in the south. This is also justified on the grounds that it would jeopardise the safety of migrants. Violations could result in the confiscation of aircraft and heavy fines.

Sea-Watch has said that it intends to defy the ban. "The flight ban is politically motivated and legally untenable," a spokesman said.

"In the middle of the European election campaign, Italy is trying to get rid of the last witnesses to European crimes in the Mediterranean. We will not be intimidated by this."



There has been a dispute between the aid organisations and Rome for many years. Salvini - formerly Italy's interior minister - has already suffered several defeats in court.

**Seven killed in terrorist attack in Pakistan: Police**



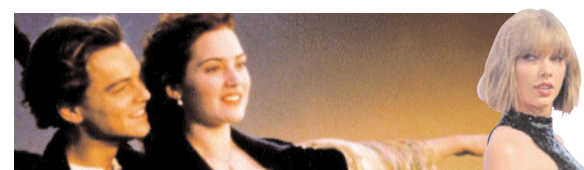
**Islamabad** | Agencies Gunmen in southwestern Pakistan executed at least seven people in their sleep, in what police on Thursday said was the second incident of ethnic terrorism in the same region within a month. The attack occurred in the volatile coastal town of Gwadar where Pakistan's political ally China is building a deep-sea port, a project opposed by the West and locals alike. The victims were from the central province of Punjab and were running a barber shop in the town, local police

saying the agents of spy agencies were targeted. No group has so far claimed responsibility for Thursday's attack, but police said they suspect the BLA. Much of the violence in the region is seen against the Chinese projects to connect its Muslim-dominated region of Xinjiang with the Arabian Sea through Pakistan to reach markets in the Middle East, Europe, Africa and beyond. Baloch militant and political groups accuse China of stealing their land and resources including several hundred kilometres of shores.

and killed them in an execution-style shooting. The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), a nationalist militant group that opposes Chinese investments in the province, claimed the previous attack, chief Mohsin Ali said. It was the second incident targeting people from Punjab in the militancy-infested province of Balochistan in around three weeks. Last month militants off-loaded nine bus passengers







# Sobhita Dhulipala to walk Cannes red carpet

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sobhita Dhulipala will be seen walking on the red carpet at the 77th Cannes Film Festival on the French Riviera, representing the premium ice cream brand Magnum India.

Sobhita said: "Taking my journey with Magnum a notch higher with the Cannes Film Festival is both exciting and symbolic of my relationship with the brand, where we progress alongside creating colourful memories."

"This experience allows me to create these moments of pleasure, as this association is a perfect blend of fashion, film, and flavour."

In addition to Sobhita's captivating appearance on the carpet, she will be attending the exclusive party and the lounge by the ice cream brand with celebrated names like Troye Sivan and Mura Masa.

"Partnering with Sobhita for this year's Cannes Film Festival embodies everything Magnum ice cream stands for -- sophistication, boldness, and the pleasure of indulgence," said Shiva Krishnamurthy, Executive Director, HUL Foods & Refreshment.

## Chad Michael Murray reveals why he picks up roles keeping his children in mind

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Chad Michael Murray has talked about how he considers his children while signing on to a role for a film. "I don't want my kids going to school, being freshmen in high school, and dad's... posted all over their locker," he said in a recent interview with Numero, reports deadline.com.

Murray began his acting journey on TV with appearances on 'One Tree Hill', 'Gilmore Girls', 'Dawson's Creek', and 'Riverdale'. He then featured in films such as 'A Cinderella Story', 'Freaky Friday', and 'Fruitvale Station'. The actor also starred in 'Chosen', 'Sun Records', and 'Sullivan's Crossing' before returning to TV with the series 'Agent Carter'.

Murray, who is a father to an 8-year-old son, a 6-year-old daughter, and a month-old daughter welcomed last August with wife Sarah Roemer, expressed how fatherhood has changed his outlook.

"So very much. I would say, a lot of material, especially over the past 5 to 8 years since my son was born, I choose because I think one of the last things you really want is for your kids to be berated in school for what their parents are doing," Murray said.

The actor ensures his family travels together when he has to film on location. "When we are in Nova Scotia filming 'Sullivan's Crossing', we're all there. I get to work, and I get to go home and play with the babies," he said. "Now, is this extra work for me on top, so I can't be solely focused on Sullivan's Crossing? Yeah, but that just means I need to better place my time and figure out how do I manage this all." The actor added: "But it's important that they're here, because I don't believe in breaking up the pack to the point where they're like, 'Oh, dad's on another trip'. And for me, I wouldn't trade this for anything, no matter the amount of success, it doesn't matter. It trumps all of that."



## Rebel Wilson made no money on 'Bridesmaids', even bought her own dress for premiere

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Rebel Wilson has shared that she made just \$3,500 (Rs 2,92,201) from the 2011 comedy film 'Bridesmaids'.

Wilson said on the 'Diary of a CEO' podcast: "It was my first job in America. I mean, I was very lucky to get it... But to be paid that little. Basically, that \$3,500 I then had to pay to the union to join the union. So I basically made no money."

"I lost money, because I had to pay to go to the premiere, like to buy my dress and everything. So, I lost money doing 'Bridesmaids', the actress added."

Wilson featured alongside names such as Kristin Wiig, Maya Rudolph, Rose Byrne, Ellie Kemper, and Melissa McCarthy in the comedy film.

The actress was living on a very tight budget before she found fame, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"The Australian actress said: "That was a really skint year where I was living on \$60 a week in L.A. once I'd paid my rent and my car hire. I wasn't partying or living this (movie star) life. It was basically having that focus, trying to write for myself, going to auditions."



## Why Chris Pine 'hated' working as restaurant host before becoming a star

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Chris Pine once worked at a restaurant before finding success in Hollywood. However, he has now shared that he hated it and wasn't a "people person" at the time.

"I was a host at a restaurant and just hated it. Could not have hated it anymore. I was not a people person. It was all about just getting work," Pine told Business Insider.

A gamut of romantic comedies, including names such as 'Just My Luck', 'Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement', and 'Blind Dating', helped Pine gain the spotlight.

The actor did admit, though, that he didn't really watch a lot of his earlier movies, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

When asked if he would ever watch his own films on television, Pine replied: "I mean, not a chance. And that's for most of my films."

Olivia Rodrigo declares she is 'changing the lyric' as she responds to fan's tattoo mix-up

## Tom Sandoval Calls Ex Raquel Leviss a 'F\*\*king Coward'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Tom Sandoval is not impressed with Rachel "Raquel" Leviss' exit from Vanderpump Rules and subsequent transition to podcast host. In a preview of the season 11 reunion released Wednesday, May 8, Tom, 40, called out his ex-girlfriend for continuing to discuss the show.

"Looking back, I think she's a f\*\*king coward," he said in the sneak peek. "Like, I'm sorry to say it and I think her sitting here preaching to everybody that she's moving on but still talking relentlessly about me and everybody is just f\*\*king ridiculous." Both Tom and Rachel, 29, found themselves in the hot seat when it was revealed they had a months-long affair while filming season 10. Rachel was ripped apart by her costars for being friends with Ariana Madix while secretly hooking up with Tom. She later checked herself into a mental health facility and announced she wouldn't be appearing on Vanderpump Rules again.

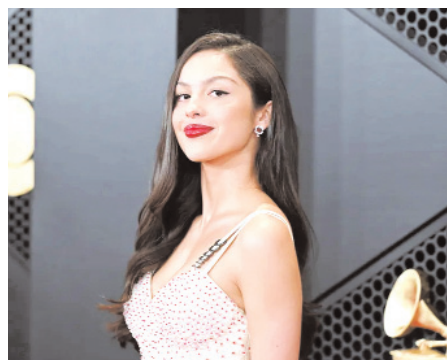


Actress-singer Olivia Rodrigo has helped a fan feel better after their tattoo mishap.

The singer's fan revealed in a TikTok video that she had asked for a tattoo of Rodrigo's 'Hope Ur Ok' song lyric, "address the letters to the holes in my butterfly wings" on her wrist.

However, she later discovered it read "butter wings" instead of "butterfly wings", reports 'People' magazine.

The singer commented under the post, "HAHAHAHAH-HAHAHAHAHAHAHA OMG this is the new lyric, I'm changing it to butter wings". Speaking about the 'Drivers License'



singer's comment, the fan said that she couldn't believe Rodrigo saw her video and responded, adding that she's now unsure if she'll accept the tattoo artist's offer to correct the mistake.

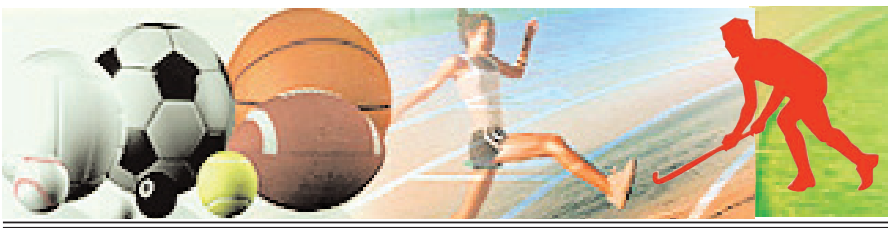
"Not changing it definitely makes it more unique and special. I kind of want to keep it, but also want to get the right lyrics," she said. "Maybe I'll keep this one, and get the right lyrics somewhere else."

As per 'People', opening up about what the lyric meant to her, the Colorado native, who got the tattoo in April, said: "Everybody already has their own wounds or holes. So I take the (line), 'Address the letters to the holes in my butterfly wings,' (to say) if somebody's gonna say something mean, they can say it to me. But, it's just gonna go through me. It's gonna go through that hole."

### ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Christy Teigen



## IPL 2024: RCB KEEP PLAYOFFS HOPES ALIVE AS PBKS ARE ELIMINATED AFTER 60-RUN DEFEAT

Dharamshala | Agencies

Virat Kohli's majestic 92 off 47 balls, coupled with a collective bowling effort helped Royal Challengers Bengaluru get a 60-run win over Punjab Kings at the HPCA Stadium here on Thursday. The result means RCB keep their playoffs hopes alive with their fourth win on the trot, while PBKS join Mumbai Indians as the second team to be eliminated from the tournament.

After Kohli's knock, along with Rajat Patidar's 55 took RCB to 241/7, their fourth-highest overall total in the tournament, PBKS had a glimmer of hope of reaching the target following a 65-run partnership between Jonny Bairstow and Rilee Rossouw. Though Rossouw made 61, none of PBKS' batters stood up to the challenge as they were bowled out for 181 in 17 overs.

RCB had a superb start to their defence as Swapnil Singh trapped Prabhsimran Singh lbw on the fourth ball. Bairstow hit four boundaries and a six in his 16-ball 27, before falling to Lockie Ferguson on the second-last ball of the powerplay. Rilee Rossouw kept PBKS in the hunt by smashing boundaries at will to hit his first fifty of the competition, which he reached by thumping



a six over Cameron Green's head. After getting some attention from the physio for an injury, Rossouw holed out to long off against Karn Sharma, who went on to castle Jitesh Sharma.

### Brief scores

Royal Challengers Bengaluru 241/7 in 20 overs (Virat Kohli 92, Rajat Patidar 55; Harshal Patel 3-38, Vidwath Kaverappa 2-36) beat Punjab Kings 181 in 17 overs (Rilee Rossouw 61, Shashank Singh 37; Mohammed Siraj 3-43, Swapnil Singh 2-280 by 60 runs

## MI senior players unhappy with Hardik's leadership style: Reports

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Sunrisers Hyderabad's (SRH) demolition of Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) on Wednesday saw the tied-record five-time IPL Champions, Mumbai Indians become the first team to be officially eliminated from the contention for the playoffs race.

According to reports, some of the senior members of the team have expressed their concern regarding Hardik Pandya's style of captaincy which has seen the team's morale falter through the course of the IPL season.

Senior players in the likes of Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah and Suryakumar Yadav held a meeting following a loss in which the players expressed what they believe is the underlying problem and individual meetings were also held to determine the problem, an Indian Express report stated. Mumbai Indians have been under the leadership of Rohit Sharma for the past decade and with a new captain coming into a set hierarchy is bound to ruffle feathers around the dressing room.



A Mumbai Indian official attributed the team's struggles this season to the transitional phase that they are in. "These are regular teething problems for a team that sees leadership change. This happens in sports all the time," the official was quoted as saying in the report.

Following MI's loss against the Delhi Capitals, Pandya spoke about how he believed Tilak Varma could have targeted Axar Patel more and blamed the loss on game awareness. This particular incident did not sit well with

the team considering Varma played a great innings scoring 63 off 32 deliveries on the night and is also the top scorer for the team this season.

Mumbai India currently sits in ninth place in the points table having played a game more than the Gujarat Titans. With all hopes of qualification to the playoffs now behind the franchise, it is of utmost importance for the management to iron out all possible wrinkles before the next season to maximise their chances of winning their sixth IPL trophy next season.

## ISSF World Cup: Anant Jeet Naruka finishes 15th in skeet in Baku

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Anant Jeet Singh Naruka needed two perfect rounds to be in contention to reach the final, but missed one target in both, to bow out in 15th place in the skeet competition of the ongoing International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun in Baku.

Anant Jeet, a Paris quota holder in the event, shot rounds of 24 each on Day Two of qualifications to finish with a score of 120, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) informed in a release on Thursday.

The seasoned Federico Gil of Argentina took the sixth and final qualifying spot in the final at 122 while Great Britain's Ben Llewellyn topped the charts with 124.

Among the other Indians in the fray, Sheeraz Sheikh shot 115 to finish 54th while Mairaj Ahmad Khan shot 105 to finish in 76th spot.

In women's skeet, Raiza Dhillon (27th) was best placed Indian with a score of 114. Maheshwari Chauhan (20th) shot 113 while



Ganemat Sekhon (25th) was further back with a score of 111.

## 'Anything's possible in Paris Olympics': Neeraj Chopra expects three Indians to be in medal contention in javelin

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The defending champion in Olympic Games' javelin throw competition, Neeraj Chopra anticipates that three Indians will be in contention for medals in the upcoming Paris 2024. He emphasized the need for India to carry forward the belief from the World Championships in Budapest, where Indian throwers held three out of the top six in the final.

India's javelin stars will kick off the outdoor season in the Doha leg of the Diamond League season on May 10. Leading the challenge will be reigning world champion Chopra and his comrade-in-arm, Kishore Jena.

The events, including the Federation Cup in Bhubaneswar on May 14-15, leading to Paris 2024 will also evaluate the returns from some intense overseas training under top coaches.

Chopra and Jena, who produced a historic gold-silver finish at the Hangzhou Asian Games, have both qualified for the upcoming Summer Olympics in July-August, but Chopra believes a third javelin thrower, DP Manu, should make the Paris cut as well. "There was a time when I was not even sure of qualifying for a World Championship but see how times have changed. In Budapest last year, we had three Indians (out of the top six) in the finals and that has made us believe we are no less than the Europeans who have dominated world javelin for so long. We have to take this Budapest belief forward and in Paris anything is possible," Chopra told SAI Media. Manu is in line to join Chopra and Jena in Paris 2024. Manu is yet to breach the qualifying standard of 85.50 metres but is placed comfortably in the 11th spot in the Road to Paris rankings. That should be enough to earn him a ticket to

Paris unless several others pass him and he is unable to improve his own distance.

At the Indian Grand Prix I in Bengaluru recently, Manu won the men's javelin throw competition with an effort of 81.91m, a drift of the Paris Olympics qualification mark of 85.50m and his personal best of 84.35. He had been training in Potchefstroom, South Africa with his coach Kashinath Naik, a former Commonwealth Games bronze medalist. Leading up to the new outdoor season and until the Olympics, proper and intense training has been a top priority for the javelin throwers and all three - Chopra, Jena and Manu - have benefited from the government's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) that funds athletes to prepare and peak at global events, especially the Summer Games.

In the current Paris Olympics cycle, Government has spent more than Rs



4.87 cr on these three javelin throwers with Chopra receiving close to Rs 4 cr alone. The major expenses include training and competition related, equipment, coach's salary and out-of-pocket allowances.

## Real Madrid complete dramatic comeback over Bayern Munich to book 18th Champions League final

Madrid | Agencies

Real Madrid, the undisputed kings of Europe took a step towards their 15th Champions League trophy after reaching its 18th final after beating Bayern Munich in a game filled with drama, late goals and controversy.

Substitute Joselu's late double took Real Madrid into their 18th final with an aggregate 4-3 win over Bayern Munich.

The 14-time winners produced memorable semifinal turnaround at the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu to set up a final against Borussia Dortmund at Wembley on June 1.

Two years ago, Real beat Manchester City, thanks to two late goals by Rodrygo, in what many deemed to be the greatest CL semifinals of all time and the Los Blancos have only gone ahead and done it again.

Unlike the first leg at the Allianz Arena, Madrid were on the front foot from the starting whistle try-



ing to carve their way past a valiant Bayern Munich defense. Vinicius Jr was once again lighting up the Bernabeu, keeping Joshua Kimmich very busy. Real's first big chance of the game came near the 13th minute mark when Vinicius Jr's attempt was pushed onto the post by Neuer who made an excellent double save, denying the rebound attempt by Rodrygo. After a cagey first half that ended 0-0, Santiago Bernabeu came alive in the second half. The LaLiga winners put on a flurry of attacks not

giving the German giants any breathing space. It looked as if the first goal was imminent but it was Bayern Munich's Alphonso Davies, who added his name to the scoresheet in the 68th minute thanks to a brilliant curling effort from the edge of the box that nestled into the back of Lunin's net.

Madrid answered back almost instantly scoring a goal from a corner in the 72nd minute but the goal was disallowed after a VAR check as Nacho, who was involved in the goal, could be seen fouling Kimmich during the build up.

Real Madrid is a club of dreams and it was an unlikely hero in Joselu, who made all the difference on the night. The former Stoke City man was subbed on in the 81st minute in a desperate attempt by Carlo Ancelotti to try and regain control in the game. It was not until the 88th minute when Manuel Neuer, who was having a world class game up until this moment spilled a shot by Vinicius Jr with Joselu smashing the rebound in the back of the net.

## WTT Saudi Smash: Manika Batra knocked out in quarterfinals

Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) | Agencies

The brilliant campaign of top Indian woman paddler Manika Batra at the World Table Tennis (WTT) Saudi Smash came to an end after she lost to World No. 5 Hina Hayata of Japan in the quarterfinals, here on Thursday.

Japan's Hayata beat World No. 39 Manika 4-1 (7-11, 11-6, 11-4, 13-11, 11-2) in 39 minutes to reach the semifinals.

The 28-year-old Indian had started her campaign in Saudi Smash with a 3-0 (11-6, 13-11, 11-8) win over Andreea Dragoman of Spain



in the first round.

In the round of 32 Manika came back after losing the first game to win the next three to stun the top Chinese player and Olympic medalist World No. 2, Wang Manyu and won the match 6-11, 11-5, 11-7, 12-10 in 38 minutes.

Manika is expected to regain her status as the top-ranked Indian female in the ITTF World Rankings after a successful run in Jeddah.

## IPL 2024: I DON'T THINK WE COULD HAVE EVER EXPECTED CHASING IT LIKE THAT, SAYS TRAVIS HEAD

Hyderabad | Agencies

Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) batting star Travis Head 'never expected' the way he and fellow opener Abhishek Sharma chased down the total of 166 in 9.4 overs in the IPL 2024 match against Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) on Wednesday night at Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium.

Head smashed a 16-ball half-century with some astonishing display of cricketing shots and remained unbeaten on 89 off just 33 deliveries to guide his team home. He along with his opening duo Abhishek Sharma stitched up 166 runs opening partnership and hammered 107 runs in the powerplay in comparison to LSG's 27.

"I don't think we could have ever expected chasing it like that," acknowledged Head at the post-match press conference. "It looked like a tough wicket in the first innings, it looked like it was holding and a slow pitch. I guess, knowing that as a batter, you know that the powerplay is important. (We were) trying to maximise that and we played beautifully, we were able to get ahead of the rate, which is nice. And once we got going in the first two or three overs, it was just about trying to maximise that as much as we can and I felt we picked our targets and played very well," he said.

SRH obliterated LSG's challenge by first stifling them with the new ball and then launching a sensational chase of 166 in just 9.4 overs, the highest 10-over score in any T20. In all T20 cricket, only seven times 100 or more been scored in the powerplay, SRH have the two top scores, both in IPL 2024.

"You always want to perform, you always want to be con-



sistent, you always want to try and be doing the job; it's not going to always happen in T20 cricket (but) I felt the way we have been playing is great. We're going to have ups and downs, we've had that. Nice to be able to chase a score tonight after being put under pressure by them batting (first).

"A couple of times we've chased throughout the season, we've been put under pressure. To be able to do the job tonight, and chasing, (it feels great). Looking forward to the next two games being at home as well," said Head.

Head and Abhishek have combined for three century stands in the IPL with two of the, coming in the powerplay. SRH is the only side with more than one century opening stand in the IPL 2024.

"It's nice to just come here and contribute. I wasn't sure if I was going to play. Nice to get a go, nice to be performing, and the partnership with Abhi has been fantastic. He's such an exciting talent for Indian cricket, he's exceptional. We complement each other well and he's very, very enjoyable to be around. He's so excited and thinks about the game, he's got loads of energy, so he's a great partnership to be involved in," Head said of the opening stand before he added that the middle order has also played a key role for SRH. "I guess the Kings game (against Punjab Kings) is a blueprint for us in the way we're able to go about the game. It's not always going to work at the top of the order, we are going to lose wickets, but we want to be brave through the whole middle. Nitish [Reddy] has played some unbelievable innings, obviously we've got Klassy (Heinrich Klaasen) and (Abdul) Samad tops it off for us...



## A sane person will never make negative remarks about your caste : Manoj Bajpayee



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Manoj Bajpayee, who comes from Bihar, opened up at a media interaction on Thursday on how people from his state, UP and "even Chhattisgarh" were treated with contempt elsewhere in the country. The actor spoke about how

some people still have a stereotypical view of their counterparts from Bihar, whom they consider to be less intelligent. Without mincing words, he said those with a regional mindset only expose their narrowness and it shows that something is wrong with them. Pulling the media person's leg, Manoj said,

"Kuch na kuch vivaad toh hona hi chaahiye, hai na (We need to have some argument or the other, don't we)? See, whenever someone tells you something negative with regards to your background or your ethnicity, it means that the problem is with the other person, not with you."

He added: "A sane per-

son will never make negative remarks about your caste, your religion or the region where you come from."

"Mazaak mat udaao izzat do, aadar do, people from UP, Bihar and even Chhattisgarh are addressed as 'Bhaiyya' jokingly, which should not be the case," the actor noted.

## During my school days, I experienced all the petty politics : Zakir Khan

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Comedian and actor Zakir Khan reminisced about his school days, revealing how participating in elections helped shape his understanding and maturity.

Zakir, who is back as Ronny with the third season of 'Chacha Vidhayak Hain Humare', shared about the inspiration behind the series, saying: "As I saw or heard other stories, they didn't quite resonate with my own experiences. Surprisingly, when I recounted my college days and life experiences to my friends, they were all astonished. It left me wondering, why not share these tales with the world? That's what inspired me to work on this story."

"When I moved from a boys' school to a coed school, we had elections for house captains. During my school days, I experienced all the campaigning and petty politics that people typically encounter later in life. I believe my maturity comes from this early exposure," he added.

Zakir said: "Now, when I observe others engaging in similar behaviours, I sense that they may not have had the opportunity to experience this aspect during their own school days."



## Fashion is something that comes from within you : Aditi Rao Hydari

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress Aditi Rao Hydari, who oozes elegance in every outfit that she wears, feels that fashion should be effortless and there shouldn't be any burden.

With 10.9 million followers on Instagram, Aditi's social media feed is full of pictures of her wearing Indian outfits, traditional wear, gowns, co-ord sets, pantsuits and floral dresses.

Speaking about what fashion means to her, Aditi told: "Fashion is something that comes from within you. You can play with fashion, but I believe fashion can be created from my cupboard, your cupboard, my sister's cupboard or my brother's cupboard also. Fashion is fun. And sometimes fashion ends up costing a lot, but sometimes you can create from your own thing. It's about being creative."

She went on to say, "When I started in 2011-12, that time I didn't care, but after a few years it became a burden for me that I have to look glamorous, wear heels, put on makeup. But I was always like I don't want to do all these things. I used to say that I will do this on screen but not in real life." "But in the last 4-5 years I feel like I am what I am, I am who I am. I will sit for an interview without makeup, with my hair all tied up. I feel my heart has to con-



nect to you. And if this connects everything else works. Fashion, face, skin everything else also falls into place. And, I think fashion should be effortless. There shouldn't be any burden. Maybe some people will like it, some will not. If you feel good, then do

it," shared Aditi, she follow any Gen-Z trends? Aditi said she doesn't know about any trends but wears whatever she feels like.

"Sometimes things that are in trend are 'behuda'. If I don't like things which are in trend I don't wear them. But

in my everyday clothes, I decide it myself. I take it out from my cupboard and wear it. For me, fashion should be effortless, and it should be authentically you. If you are going for an event, then you can do all the 'taam jhaam', she said.

## Janhvi Kapoor wears outfit inspired by red cricket ball

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Janhvi Kapoor hit a six with her fashion game for the promotions of her upcoming film. The actress elevated her fashion game by donning a red dress inspired by a cricket leather ball. The dress featured white stitches resembling the stitch marks on a cricket ball, lending a sporty touch to her ensemble.

Adding to the theme, small leather balls were attached to the back of the dress, further enhancing the cricket-inspired look.

Janhvi was accompanied by her co-star Rajkumar Rao at the promotions.

The film narrates the story of an imperfectly perfect partnership between a couple with a shared love for cricket.



## Rashmika Mandanna will be female lead with Salman Khan in 'Sikandar'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rashmika Mandanna, who is currently experiencing a dream run in the movies, will be portraying the female lead in the upcoming Salman Khan-starrer film 'Sikandar'.

This marks the first collaboration between Salman and Rashmika. 'Sikandar' is directed by A.R.

Murugadoss, who is known for films like 'Ghajini' and 'Holiday: A Soldier Is Never Off Duty'.

On Thursday, the makers of the film made the announcement about Rashmika joining the cast.

They posted on X: "Welcoming the fabulous @rashmika\_mandanna to star opposite @beingsalmankhan in #Sikandar! Can't wait for their on-screen magic to unfold on Eid 2025! #SajidNadiadwala's #Sikandar Directed by @a.r.murugadoss Releasing in cinemas Eid 2025." The film is produced by Sajid Nadiadwala of Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment, marking the reunion of Salman with Sajid after 'Kick', which was released in 2014. The film, which is currently in pre-production, will soon go on floors and is scheduled for release on Eid 2025.



Meanwhile, Rashmika, who last appeared in the blockbuster 'Animal' alongside Ranbir Kapoor, also has the

Allu Arjun-starrer 'Pushpa 2: The Rule' in which she will reprise her role of Srivalli.

## Neha Kakkar shared her childhood memory, her mom used to console her with aloo paranthas



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The super judge of the kids singing reality show 'Superstar Singer 3', Neha Kakkar, gets emotional about her mother in the new episode, reminiscing about her childhood memory of how her mom used to console her.

The upcoming episode is titled 'Thank You Maa', and it will celebrate mothers, their boundless love, and their sacrifices with some heartwarming performances delivered by the contestants.

Amid multiple captivating performances, 11-year-old Diya Hegde from Sagara, Karnataka, captivated everyone with her beautiful rendition of the song 'Tu Kitni Achhi Hai' from the film 'Raja Aur Runk'.

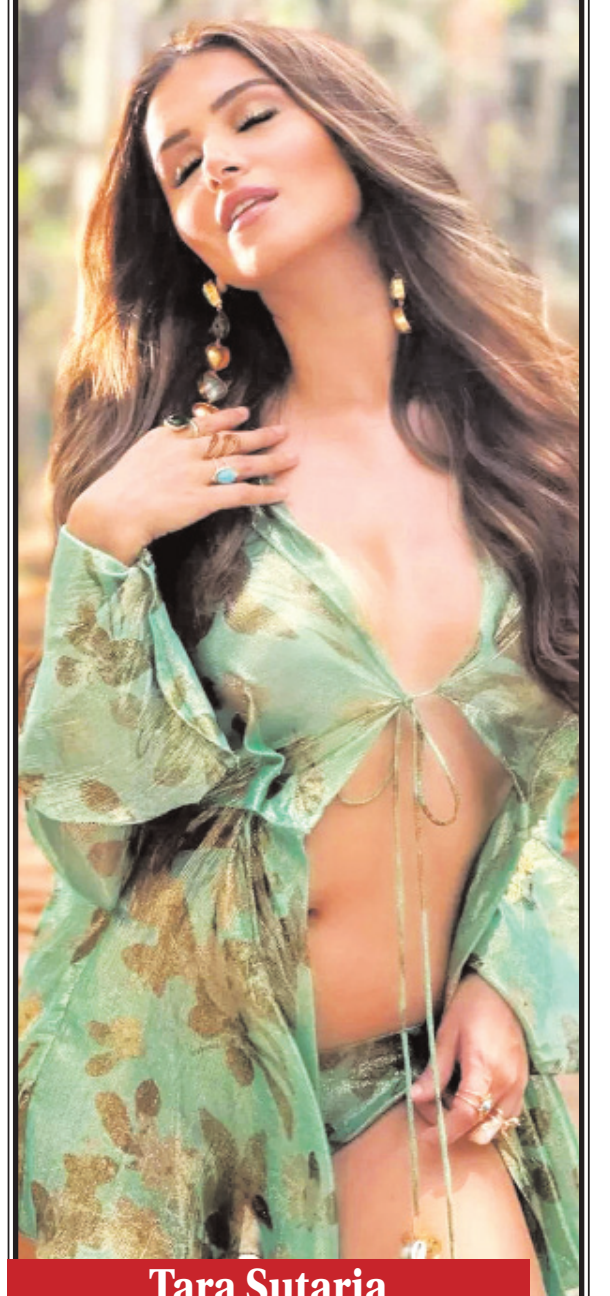
Dedicating this performance to her mother, Aparna, Diya read her a heartfelt letter expressing gratitude that

promises to leave everyone emotional.

Amazed by the performance, Neha said: "Diya, your performance today brought back memories of when I sang this song for my mother. Your performance was truly beautiful, and I felt joy hearing the heartfelt words you shared for your mother. Aparna, your words about Diya being talented and caring resonate deeply. Diya, you're incredibly sweet, and your singing is amazing."

The singer then shared her childhood memory of how her mother used to console her with her favourite 'aloo paratha' when she used to get upset. Captain Arunika added: "I'm at a loss for words. This episode holds such significance, and all the children are singing beautifully. We're all feeling emotional and missing our parents. Diya, your performance was melodious."

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Tara Sutar