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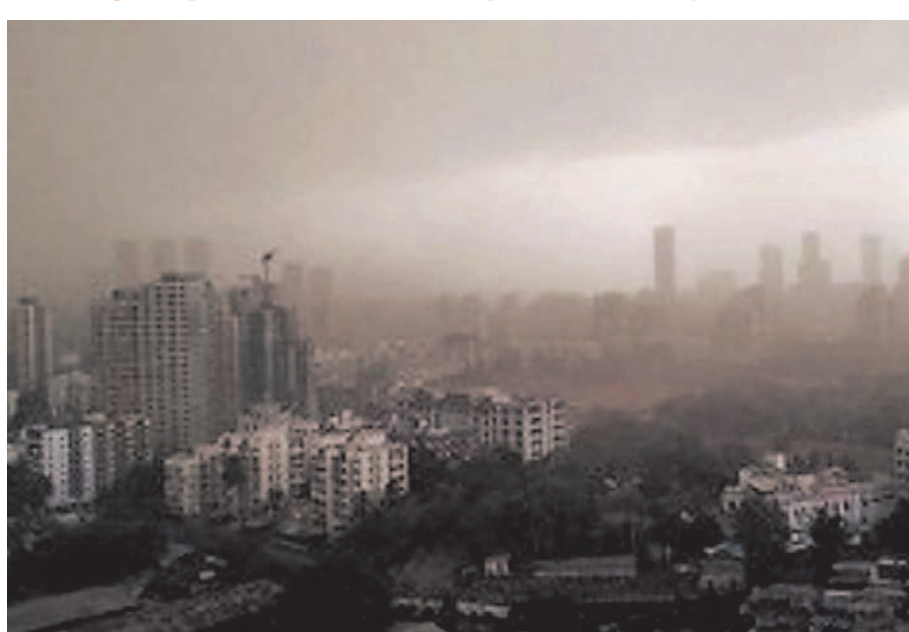
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MASSIVE DUST STORM ENGULFS MUMBAI

The dust-storm, something rare for coastal Mumbai, whipped up suddenly with strong gusty winds around 3 p.m. and within minutes, enveloped almost the entire city, dipping visibility, darkening the atmosphere and hampering movement of vehicular traffic and pedestrians. After over an hour, the dustiness gave way to dark clouds with showers reported in many parts of Mumbai which appreciably dropped the scorching temperatures and also improved visibility to normal levels.

- ▶ A monstrous hoarding of advertisements crashed in the gusty winds on several houses and a petrol pump in Pant Nagar, Ghatkopar east suburb around 4.15 p.m.
- ▶ At least 54 people were left injured and another 70 are still feared trapped under the hoarding when many vehicles queued up to refill petrol and diesel.
- ▶ In Wadala, a multi-storied, vertical steel parking lot near the Shreeji Towers building crashed on a main road in the squally dust-storm this afternoon.
- ▶ The tumbling parking lot crushed around a dozen vehicles and one person sitting in a car was trapped, said the officials. -Local trains, a section of the metro network, and airport services were temporarily stopped amid a darkening sky.
- ▶ The suburban services on the main line have been stopped, the chief spokesperson of Central Railway said.
- ▶ The unseasonal rain brought some respite from the scorching heat, but power outage in Thane's Kalwa and some other areas led to more trouble for residents.



The causes of the dust storm in Mumbai, often referred to as the concrete jungle, were not immediately known, but the IMD had forewarned it in an alert earlier on Monday afternoon. Many people complained that their homes, shops, offices and other places were covered in a thick layer of dust that blew in abruptly before they could shut the doors and windows. At least 36 people were injured in various incidents after a massive dust-storm on Monday hit Mumbai, the country's commercial capital and surroundings, which are now bracing for a thunderstorm predicted to lash over the next few hours, officials said. The dust storm and gusty winds, coupled with light rains paralysed flight operations at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA), forcing suspension of services for around 66 minutes. The normal opera-

tions resumed at 5.03 p.m. but there were at least 15 flight diversions in the intervening period, said an official spokesperson. There were several incidents of tree crashes in different parts of Mumbai and Thane, a couple of road accidents, and other tragedies in the dust-storm, and more details are awaited. The BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has issued a warning of a thunderstorm likely to hit parts of Mumbai with strong winds of 50-60 kmph, after dusk. The IMD Pune head K.S. Hosalkar said that a moderate to intense thunderstorm would hit Thane, Raigad, Palghar, Ahmednagar, Pune and Satara, besides parts of Mumbai. "Due to the inclement weather and dust storms in the city, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) temporarily suspended flight operations for around 66 minutes due to low visibil-

ity and gusty winds," Mumbai airport said in a statement. "Operations resumed at 17:03 hours. During this time, the airport saw 15 diversions. CSMIA last week completed its pre-monsoon runway maintenance successfully, ensuring safe and smooth aircraft operations. Committed to efficiency and passenger safety, the airport remains steadfast to prioritise seamless operations," it said. Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis in a post on X said the state government has ordered an investigation into the incident.

100 Feared Trapped After Massive Billboard Falls



Mumbai: A hundred people are feared trapped under the debris of a massive billboard that collapsed on a fuel station amid a strong dust storm in Mumbai's Ghatkopar this evening. Police said 35 people were injured, and 47 were rescued. The billboard was opposite the fuel station. Visuals show the structure crashing down right in the middle of the refuelling facility. The metal frame of the billboard tore through the roof of several cars that were at the fuel station. The police said teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) are at the site, and are looking for survivors trapped under the debris.

India signs 10-year pact to operate Chabahar Port in Iran



Team Absolute | New Delhi

India on Monday signed a 10-year contract with Iran to develop and operate the Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar port on Iran's south-eastern coast. The contract was signed in Tehran by India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) and the Ports and Maritime Organisation of Iran in the presence of Union Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister, Sarbananda Sonowal, the Indian Ambassador in Iran posted on X. Under the agreement, government-owned IPGL will invest about \$120 million while there will be an additional \$250 million in financing, bringing the contract's value to \$370 million, Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development, Mehrdad Bazrpash, told journalists in Tehran. The agreement was signed in the presence of Sarbananda Sonowal, who flew to Tehran for the crucial event amid the hectic Lok Sabha poll campaign. Sonowal said with the signing of the agreement, the two countries have laid the foundations for India's long-term involvement in Chabahar. The new pact replaces an earlier agreement signed in 2016, allowing India to operate the Shahid Beheshti terminal in Chabahar port which was ad hoc in nature and had to be renewed every year. "Chabahar Port's significance transcends its role as a mere conduit between India

and Iran; it serves as a vital trade artery connecting India with Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries," Sonowal said after the signing of the agreement. "The signing of this contract will have a multiplier effect on the viability and visibility of Chabahar Port," Sonowal said, adding, "Chabahar is not only the closest Iranian port to India, but it is also an excellent port from a nautical point of view." India has been developing a terminal at the port in Chabahar to transport goods to Iran, and the landlocked countries of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. The new agreement with Iran would open a trade route between South Asia and Central Asia via Iran, bypassing Karachi and the Gwadar Port in Pakistan. There are plans to link the Chabahar Port with the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) that connects India with Russia via Iran, giving India access to the Central Asian region. This would be an alternative route bypassing the congested Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz sea lanes. The development also comes at a time when China has been keen to increase its investments in ports and other coastal infrastructure in Iran. Meanwhile, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said in Mumbai that the agreement would provide the pathway for bigger investments and more linkages coming out of the seaport.

PM Modi guarantees 'Viksit Bihar' will be reality soon

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As he addressed back-to-back public meetings in Bihar's Hajipur, Muzaffarpur, and Saran on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi detailed his and BJP's "unwavering dedication" to build a 'Viksit Bharat' and a 'Viksit Bihar' by launching a slew of infrastructure and connectivity projects that will ultimately lead to significant development and employment generation in the state. "Modi's decision to modernise more than 90 railway stations in Bihar reinforces the commitment to job creation. Additionally, the construction of four crore pucca houses across the country, including 40 lakh in Bihar alone, has not only provided



shelter but also stimulated economic activity. The procurement of construction materials from local shops has further benefited Bihar's youth by fostering employment, trade, and entrepreneurial opportunities," PM Modi said in Hajipur. With the Congress making 'youth unemployment' a major issue during the ongoing Lok Sabha elections,

Prime Minister Modi stated how several ongoing projects in Bihar have created jobs for the youth in various sectors. "Over the past decade, the expansion of highways, including the construction of expressways, coupled with ongoing projects such as fertiliser factories and thermal power plants in Bihar, indicates substantial employment potential.

SUSHIL MODI, EX DY CM OF BIHAR PASSES AWAY

New Delhi: Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Sushil Modi died at Delhi's All-India Institute of Medical Sciences this evening. The 72-year-old was battling cancer and was admitted in the intensive care unit of AIIMS for the last one month.



The stalwart leader, once the BJP's best-known face in Bihar, had opted out of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections also on account of his health. He had announced it on social media with a post on X, formerly Twitter, on April 3. His absence was expected to be felt the most in Bihar, where he had considerable influence on the party, built over three decades. Over 11 years between 2005 and 2020, in two stints, he had served as the Deputy Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

INDIA bloc will form govt at Centre on June 4: Rahul Gandhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As voting is underway for the fourth phase on 96 Lok Sabha seats across 10 states and union territories on Monday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi urged people to exercise their right to vote and exuded confidence that India bloc winning the elections. Rahul said voting for the fourth phase is underway, and "it has already been clear from the first three phases that the INDIA bloc will form a government at the Centre on June 4." Emphasising the significance of voting and urging people to participate in large numbers, he wrote: "Remember, your one vote will not only protect your democratic rights but will also change the fate of your entire family." "One vote is equal to the first job of Rs one lakh per year guaranteed for youth. One vote is equal to Rs one lakh per year in the bank account of poor women," he added, highlighting his election promises. Reiterating that voting could bring about significant changes, the Congress leader added: "So come out in large numbers and vote and show that the country will now vote on its issues - it will not get



distracted!" With the completion of the third phase of the general elections, voting has taken place in 283 parliamentary constituencies across 20 states/union territories. The counting of votes is scheduled for June 4.

CBSE Class 10 and 12 results declared

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has announced the much anticipated results for the class 10 and 12 examinations on May 13, 2024. Students can check their results on the official websites including cbse.gov.in, cbseresults.nic.in, results.digilocker.gov.in, and umang.gov.in. The collective sigh of relief echoes with an overall pass percentage of 87.98% for class 12th, marking a notable increase of 0.65% compared



to the previous year. The overall pass percentage of Class 10th 2024 has been recorded at 93.60 per cent this year, which is an increase of 0.48 per cent from last year's 93.12 per cent.

KP.2 Covid variant appears more transmissible, but not virulent: Doctors

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The new KP.2 Covid-19 variant appears to be more transmissible, but is not virulent, said doctors on Monday, amid reports of 91 cases being detected in Maharashtra. KP.1.1, and KP.2 strains are part of the new variant dubbed FLiRT, based on the technical names for their mutations, one of which includes the letters "F" and "L", and another of which includes the letters "R" and "T". Genome sequencing of March and April revealed 91 cases of KP.2 in Maharashtra -- Pune (51), Thane (20),

Amravati (7), Aurangabad (7), Solapur (2), Ahmednagar (1), Nashik (1), Latur (1), and Sangli (1). "There is no reason to believe that the FLiRT group of variants being reported are more virulent than the existing variants," Dr Lancelot Pinto, Consultant Pulmonologist and Epidemiologist, P. D. Hinduja Hospital and MRC, Mahim, told reporter. "KP.2 appears to be more transmissible," he added. The doctor advised people who are immunocompromised to take precautions such as masking, avoiding crowded closed spaces, and keeping comorbidities under control.

FLiRT variants belong to the Omicron lineage, which was highly transmissible and showed great immune escape. First identified globally in January, KP.2 is a descendant of Omicron's JN.1. Data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that KP.2 accounted for about 25 per cent of new sequenced cases in the country in the last weeks of April. The symptoms of the new variant typically include a sore throat, runny nose, congestion, tiredness, fever (with or without chills), headache, muscle pain, and sometimes loss of taste or smell.

62.84 PER CENT POLLING IN 'PEACEFUL' FOURTH PHASE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

An approximate voter turnout of 62.84 per cent, as of 8 p.m., was recorded in the largely peaceful polling on Monday for the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha elections covering 96 constituencies across 10 states and one UT, with West Bengal (8 seats) logging the highest polling at 75.94 per cent and Jammu and Kashmir (1 seat), the lowest at 36.58 per cent, the Election Commission said. However, the polling in the Srinagar constituency of J&K - its first election since the abrogation of Article 370 - was the highest since the 40.94 per cent turnout recorded in 1996.



The weather was largely conducive, with no marked heat wave-like conditions, leading to an enthusiastic response from the voters, young and old. Madhya Pradesh, where 8 seats went to the polls in the state's final phase, recorded a 68.63 per cent turnout, while Andhra Pradesh, where simultaneous polls to the state's 25 parliamentary constituencies and 175 Assembly seats were held, recorded 68.12 per cent turnout, which is set to increase as voting was on at a few booths even at 9 p.m.



AMIT SHAH PREDICTS 'HUGE VICTORY' IN SOUTH, NAMES FOUR STATES WHERE BJP WILL BAG SEATS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday reiterated claims of BJP's 'solid' performance in the ongoing polls and claimed the party is awaiting a 'huge victory' in the Southern states.

In an exclusive interview with NDTV, the Home Minister said that the BJP is moving towards big victory in four Southern states including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

Notably, 'Mission South' is one of the key thrusts of the BJP this time, as the party aims to cross past the '400 mark', a goal set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Amit Shah predicts 'huge victory' in South, names four states where BJP will bag seats.

The four states - Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu together sent 109 seats to Lok Sabha, out of which BJP won 29 in 2019 elections.

In Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, BJP drew a blank but this time it is hoping for 'magnificent'



gains in both states, besides opening its account in Kerala.

The Home Minister also spoke on a couple of issues including the Opposition's charges on

Constitution change and reservations. Taking the opposition to task, he asked it to refrain from inventing fake narratives and not mislead the voters to derail the democratic

process.

"Modi ji became Prime Minister twice. He had a clear mandate both times. So, if the BJP government wanted to change the Constitution, or remove reservation, who could have stopped us?" Amit Shah said.

"Rahul Gandhi wants to mislead the country. The people of the country know this. Either he is delusional or is spreading delusion," he added. Amit Shah also highlighted how the BJP government used its majority to finish Article 370, Triple Talaq, to build Ram Mandir, to conduct a surgical strike, to land Chandrayaan, to save 130 crores during the Covid pandemic and also undertook wide-ranging projects to ease up the life of common people.

On queries about the fall in stock markets, he said that the market crash shouldn't be linked with elections.

Highlighting that a stable government helps shoot up markets, he said that the markets will see a fresh surge after June 4, as the BJP-led alliance will return to power with a thumping majority.

Income Tax Dept rolls out new functionality in AIS for taxpayers

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Income Tax Department has now rolled out a new functionality in Annual Information Statement (AIS) to display the status of the information confirmation process to taxpayers, according to a statement issued by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) on Monday.

This functionality will display whether the feedback of the taxpayer has been acted upon by the source, by either, partially or fully accepting or rejecting the same. In case of partial or full acceptance, the information is required to be corrected by filing a correction statement by the source.

The following attributes shall be visible to the taxpayer for status of Feedback confirmation from source.

Whether feedback is shared for confirmation: This will let the taxpayer know if the feedback has been shared with the Reporting Source for confirmation or not. Feedback Shared On: This will let the taxpayer know the date on which the feedback has been shared with the Reporting Source for confirmation.

Source Responded On: This will let the taxpayer know the date on which the Reporting Source has responded to the feedback shared with it for confirmation. Source Response: This will let the taxpayer know the response provided by the Source on the taxpayer's feedback (if any correction is required or not).



"This new functionality is expected to increase transparency by displaying such information in AIS to the taxpayer," the official statement said. AIS is available to all registered income taxpayers through the compliance portal, accessible through the e-filing website (www.incometax.gov.in).

AIS provides details of numerous financial transactions undertaken by the taxpayer which may have tax implications.

AIS is based on financial data received from multiple information sources.

In AIS, the taxpayer has been provided with functionality to furnish feedback on every transaction displayed therein. This feedback helps the taxpayer to comment on the accuracy of the information provided by the Source of such information. In the case of wrong reporting, the same is taken up with the Source for their confirmation, in an automated manner. Information confirmation is currently made functional with regard to information furnished by Tax Deductors/Collectors and Reporting Entities, the statement added.

SC issues notice to ED on ex-Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren's plea

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday issued a notice to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on a plea filed by former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren challenging his arrest in connection with a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam.

Agreeing to examine Soren's latest Special Leave Petition challenging the dismissal of his writ petition by the Jharkhand High Court, a Bench presided over by Justice Sanjiv Khanna asked the anti-money laundering agency to file its reply in the matter by May 17.

However, the Bench, also comprising Justice Dipankar Datta, refused to pass any directions on the prayer for interim relief.



Last week, the top court disposed of a separate plea filed by Soren seeking his release in view of the elections.

It said that the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader's prayer has become infructuous in view of the May 3 order passed by the Jharkhand High Court dismissing his plea against arrest. Earlier, the Supreme

Court had issued a notice to the ED on Soren's plea seeking interim bail on the grounds of delay in delivery of judgment by the Jharkhand High Court, despite reserving an order on his petition challenging the ED arrest in the last week of February.

After the top court issued the notice, the Jharkhand High Court pronounced its decision and dismissed Soren's plea, saying that "there is an abundance of documents that lay a foundation for the arrest and remand of the petitioner to police and judicial custody."

Hemant Soren resigned from the chief minister's post on January 31, after the ED informed him that it was arresting him under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

'SBI Life's Mother's Day digital film highlights how mothers can nurture their children as well as career

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Motherhood is a sacred journey which demands unwavering strength and resilience. In today's fast paced world, mothers selflessly manage multiple roles with grace, commitment and determination, it is no surprise that they are often seen as an inspiration for their children, families and the society at large. In a tribute to the remarkable spirit of motherhood, intertwined with professional ambition, SBI Life Insurance released a new 'Mummy Ki Apni Pehchaan' digital film which aims to highlight the invaluable contributions made by mothers to embrace their identity as a Life Mitra i.e. SBI Life's insurance agent, who also act as financial advisors for their client's families, while continuing to be the caregivers for their own loved ones. The film highlights how one such Life Mitra becomes an inspiration for her



daughter, when she steps in her mother's shoes for a day.

The digital film unfolds with a heart-warming scene in an ordinary

household, where a mother in her early 40's is seen managing her professional duty as a 'Life insurance advisor' along with her personal responsibility. Struggling with a sore throat, the woman is seen taking a few work calls. Post the calls, her daughter comes in and offers to take over her mother's work calls for the day, showcasing her eagerness to help her mother rest. A montage follows, depicting the daughter diligently taking calls, taking notes, and attempting to handle her mother's workload. The mother is amused and proud to see her daughter's enthusiasm and effort. During a conversation over a meal, the daughter realizes that her mother's job involves providing advice and understanding people's needs to guide them appropriately. She expresses her admiration towards her mother's role as a 'Life Mitra' and is inspired by the way her mother manages everything from work to home needs.

REVIEW PLEA FILED IN SC AGAINST EVM-VVPAT TALLY VERDICT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A review petition has been filed in the Supreme Court against its recent verdict dismissing a batch of petitions seeking mandatory cross-verification of the votes cast in Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) with Voter-Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips.

The review petition, filed under Article 137 of the Constitution, stated that there are "mistakes and errors apparent on the face of the impugned order" and the judgment is liable to be reviewed.

On April 26, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta said that while it acknowledged the fundamental right of voters to ensure their vote is accurately recorded and counted, the same cannot be equated with the right to 100 per cent counting of VVPAT slips, or a right to physical access to the VVPAT slips, which the voter should be permitted to put in the drop box.

The apex court said that giving physical access to VVPAT slips to voters is "problematic and impractical", and will lead to misuse, malpractices, and disputes. It rejected the submission to return



to the ballot paper system as "foible and unsound", adding that the weakness of the ballot paper system is well-known and documented.

However, the Supreme Court passed two directions not because it had any doubt, but to only further strengthen the integrity of the election process. First, all Symbol

Loading Units (SLUs) will be sealed on or after May 1 on completion of the symbol loading process and will be kept in the strong room at least for 45 days post declaration of results.

"The candidates or representatives shall sign the seal. The containers containing SLUs shall be kept in strong rooms, along with

EVMs, at least for a period of 45 days post-declaration of results. They shall be opened, examined and dealt with as in the case of EVMs," the top court said.

Second, the burnt memory or microcontroller in 5 per cent of the EVMs per Assembly segment of a parliamentary constituency will be checked and verified by a team of engineers from EVM manufacturers post announcement of results on a written request made by candidates securing second and third-highest votes. "All candidates or their representatives shall have the option to remain present at the time of verification. Such a request should be made within a period of seven days from the date of the declaration of results...The actual cost or expenses for the said verification will be notified by the ECI and the candidates making the said request will make payment of said expenses. Expenses will be refunded in case EVM is found to be tampered" with, the apex court ordered.

It said that the District Election Officer in consultation with the team of engineers will certify the authenticity and intactness of the burnt memory or the microcontroller.

INDIA bloc will win 315 seats, BJP 195: Mamata Banerjee

Kolkata | Agencies

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday predicted that the India bloc will at least win 315 seats while the BJP will win a maximum of 195 seats.

"The polling so far has been good. That is why the leaders of the ruling party at the Centre are tense. They have realised that Narendra Modi will not be back as the Prime Minister. They should not brag about 400 seats anymore. They will only win 195 seats while the INDIA bloc will win 315," Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said at an election rally at Bangaon Lok Sabha constituency in North 24 Parganas district on Monday. She said that the people of the Matua community will have to fill the applications under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) to get citizenship.

"If the Prime Minister has so much love for the Matuas,



he should grant them citizenship without asking them to fill up the CAA form. We are determined to stop the implementation of CAA at any cost. If they want to do it, they will have to do it over my dead body," the Chief Minister said. She also

accused the BJP of spending crores of rupees to tarnish the image of West Bengal by fueling unrest in Sandeshkhali. "They are insulting the women of Sandeshkhali," the Chief Minister said.

Odisha CEO directs arrest of 2 presiding officers in Ganjam, three others suspended

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

As Odisha voted in the first phase of its simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections on Monday, the state's Chief Electoral Officer directed the suspension and arrest of two presiding officers in Ganjam district for serious dereliction of duty, while three others in Ganjam and Kalahandi have been suspended.

"We have ordered the Ganjam District Collector to put three presiding officers on suspension and arrest two of them as well as they have committed serious dereliction of duty. The presiding officers of polling booths number 27 and 163 in Chatrapur will be suspended and arrested. Similarly, it has



been ordered to suspend the presiding officer of polling station number 193 in Gopalpur," CEO Nikunja Bihari Dhal said.

The accused officials were allegedly found to be influencing voters to vote for a particular political party. Earlier, a polling officer

posted at Narla in Kalahandi district and a presiding officer at Chikiti in Ganjam were placed under suspension over dereliction of duty.

As per the Election Commission of India, Odisha has registered 62.96 per cent voter turnout till 5 p.m.

Bihar: RJD files complaint after people 'not allowed' to vote in Munger

Patna | Agencies

RJD leaders on Monday filed a complaint before the Election Commission claiming that scores of voters were "not allowed" to exercise their franchise in Bihar's Munger Lok Sabha constituency.

The fourth phase of polling for the five seats including Munger, Darbhanga, Begusarai, Samastipur and Ujiarpur ended at 6 pm on Monday.

A delegation of RJD leaders led by Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Jha filed the complaint before the election commission. They pointed out irregularities allegedly which took place during voting in the Munger Lok Sabha con-



stituency. The RJD leaders claimed voters were not allowed to vote in Lakhisarai, Mokama and Barahia in the Munger Lok Sabha constituency and district administrations of Patna and Lakhisarai did not help them.

They have urged the Election Commission to take cognisance of the matter and take appropriate action. So that people who are deprived of voting can cast their vote peacefully.

The RJD leaders pointed out irregularities at booth numbers 200, 201, 202, 205, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 219, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236 of Mokama assembly constituency.



WE WILL WIN ALL 29 SEATS: MOHAN YADAV

Team Absolute | Ujjain

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has said that the state is Modi-like and BJP will win all the 29 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

In Ujjain, Chief Minister Dr. Yadav reached the polling station with his wife and voted. While discussing with the reporters on this occasion, he said that Ujjain will once again create a new record, the voting percentage will also increase. Madhya Pradesh is Modi-friendly and Bharatiya Janata Party will win all the 29 seats in the state.

Indore in Madhya Pradesh is such a parliamentary constituency from where



Congress has no candidate against BJP and Congress is urging the voters to press the NOTA button. Giving his reaction on this, Chief

Minister Dr. Yadav said that this is the negativity of Congress. This is an unfortunate situation. This cannot be considered appropriate for

democracy from any point of view. Wherever NOTA is in the world, no one promotes the way Congress is promoting it.

On Maharashtra Congress leader Nana Patole's statement on purification of Ram temple, Mohan Yadav said that his statement is unfortunate because the country's President and tribal daughter Draupadi Murmu visited there and after that there is talk of cleaning the temple. It means they have a dirty mentality. Congress people do not trust Ram Mandir at all. Jawaharlal Nehru had rejected the invitation to Somnath temple and now Congress and Rahul Gandhi have rejected the invitation to Ram temple in Ayodhya.

68.01 PERCENT VOTING TILL 5 PM

Bhopal: Chief Electoral Officer Shri Anupam Rajan has said that in the fourth phase of Madhya Pradesh Lok Sabha Elections-2024, voting is going on from 7 am in all the polling centers of eight Lok Sabha parliamentary constituencies of the state. Voting will take place here till 6 pm.

Rajan said that till 5 pm, 68.01 percent voting took place in all the eight Lok Sabha parliamentary constituencies. He told that 71.53 percent voter turnout in Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency No. 21 Dewas (SC), 70.44 percent in No. 22 Ujjain (SC), 71.76 percent in No. 23 Mandasaur, 70.61 percent in No. 24 Ratlam (SC). 67.55 percent voting has been recorded in serial no. 25 Dhar (ST), 56.53 percent in serial no. 26 Indore, 70.80 percent in serial no. 27 Khargone (ST) and 68.21 percent voting has been recorded in serial no. 28

Returning Officer suspended in Ujjain

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Voting for the fourth and last phase of Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh's eight parliamentary seats was underway on Monday.

A returning officer in Ujjain was suspended after he was found violating election norms at a polling booth.

With rain showers bringing down the temperature slightly, the voters are turning out in large numbers. An average 15 per cent voter turnout was recorded till 9 a.m., according to the Election Commission's data. Ujjain recorded the highest voter turnout at 16.80 per cent, while Indore registered lowest at 11.48 per cent. Voter turnout in Khandwa, Khargone and Dewas was recorded at 14.68 per cent, 13.35 per cent and 16.79 per cent respectively.

Similarly, voter turnout in Dhar, Mandasaur and Ratlam was recorded at 15.61 per cent, 16.61 per cent and 13.73 per cent respectively. Reserved seats where polling is underway are Ratlam Scheduled Tribe (ST), Dhar (ST),



Khargone (ST), Ujjain Scheduled Caste (SC) and Dewas (SC). Three non-reserved seats where voting is underway are - Khandwa, Indore and Mandasaur. A strong 1,63,70,654 electorate, including 82,48,091 men, 81,22,175 women and 388 third-gender persons are expected to seal the fate of 74 candidates. The eight constituencies spread over 64 assembly segments in 15 districts in the state's Malwa-Nimar region, are considered the bastion of the BJP. The Indore Lok Sabha seat has the maximum number of 14 candidates and Khargone has the least five nominees. Out of the eight seats, Indore also has the highest number of eligible voters at 25,26,803, while Ujjain has the least number of 17,98,704 electors, the CEO said.

5 dead as military truck crashes into bus, car after tyre burst in Rajgarh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

At least five persons, including two Army jawans, were killed in an accident in Madhya Pradesh's Rajgarh district on Monday.

Several others were injured and have been rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment. The incident occurred when the tyre of an Army truck burst, after which the vehicle hit a passenger bus on the National Highway (NH-46) in Rajgarh district.

Eyewitness called the police immediately and a rescue operation was carried out. Heavy police personnel were deployed and traffic on NH-46 was halted for several hours. Prima facie, the acci-



dent occurred after one of the tyres of the military truck burst, causing it to collide with a private bus and an SUV, Kurawar Police Station in-charge Mehtab Singh Thakur said. Om Kori (23), the cleaner of the bus, and

passenger Hariom Shivhare (26) died on the spot, while 15 persons, including two military personnel, sustained injuries. The injured military personnel were referred to Bhopal for treatment, he said.

Congress leader Arun Yadav cast his vote, reached the polling place with a copy of the Constitution

Team Absolute | Khargone

Voting for the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections is taking place in Madhya Pradesh. In Khargone Lok Sabha constituency, former Union Minister Arun Yadav voted at the polling booth of his home village. During this time he had a copy of the Constitution in his hand.

After voting, Arun Yadav said that the Constitution made by Baba Saheb Ambedkar empowers us and many countries of the world follow this Constitution. Efforts are being made in the country to destroy this Constitution.

He further said that we all have resolved to protect the Constitution. This is the responsibility of all of us. We will fulfill this responsibility and



no matter how hard anyone tries, no one will be able to change the Constitution made by Baba Saheb Ambedkar. Voting is being held in eight parliamentary constituencies in the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elec-

tions in Madhya Pradesh. Many colors were seen during the voting and one voter was of such a small height that he came to vote in the lap of his family members. In the fourth phase, voting is being held in Dewas, Ujjain,

Mandasaur, Ratlam, Dhar, Indore, Khargone and Khandwa. In polling number 177 of Neemuch of Mandasaur parliamentary constituency, short stature voters came to vote on Vikas Khathi.

Vikas is 24 years old. But, his height is very short. He came to vote in his lap. Tribal women arrived in many rural areas of Barwani of Khargone parliamentary constituency wearing special makeup. Looking at her it seemed as if she was going to attend some festival as she was dressed in traditional attire and was celebrating the voting as a festival.

In Jhabua of Ratlam parliamentary constituency, 109 year old voter Gangabai Patidar reached Sarangi and cast her vote. Many family members were present with him.

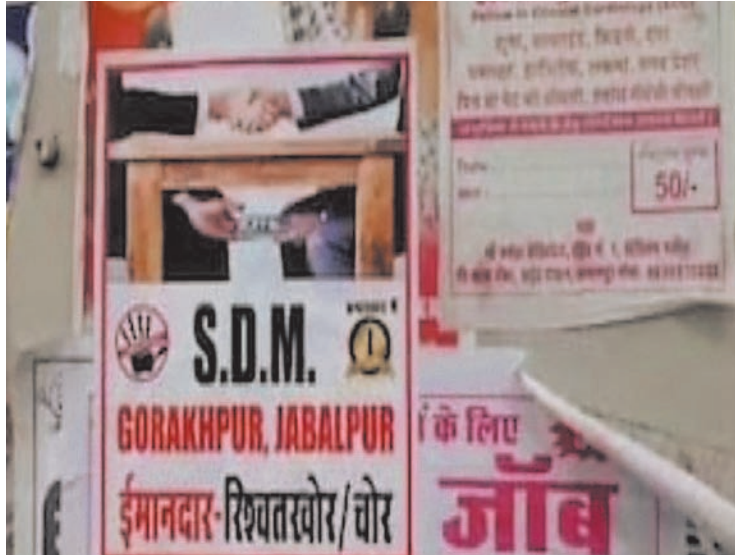
Posters of an officer put up in Jabalpur, calling him a bribe-taking SDM

Team Absolute | Jabalpur

Troubled by the attitude of administrative officials in Jabalpur, people did something which is now being discussed in the entire city. Posters of SDM Pankaj Mishra of Gorakhpur sub division of Jabalpur have been pasted at various places on the walls of the city. Bribery SDM is written on these posters. What has happened now that people have to put up posters of the administrative officer writing Bribe SDM on the walls of the entire city. This is a matter of investigation.

At present, instead of finding out this matter, the Jabalpur Collector is trying to find out who has got these posters pasted on the walls. Jabalpur Collector alleges that there are some people who want to get unethical work done by putting pressure on the officials. When people refuse to do their unethical work then such people try to defame the officials.

In fact, in these posters, Gorakhpur



Tehsil SDM Pankaj Mishra has been described as a bribe taker and a thief. These posters put up at many places in the city are raising questions on the

functioning of the administrative officials. At the bottom of the posters it is written 'Courtesy of tortured people'. That means these have not been

imposed by any organization but by common people only.

On one hand, people's curiosity about the working methodology of SDM Pankaj Mishra has increased. The District Collector has termed it as a conspiracy to tarnish the image of the SDM. Collector Deepak Saxena says that nowhere in these posters is there any mention of any wrongdoing done by the SDM. If someone has been harassed by the SDM or has done any wrong, then a complaint should be made.

Complaints can also be made to administration, government and investigating agencies. But this was not done, many times people want to get work done as per their wish and when officials refuse, similar reactions come to the fore. In this matter, the SDM has complained to the police and the people who put up these posters are being searched. Only after they are caught will the reason for putting up the posters become clear.

Girls topped in 12th-10th: Ashmi Rai of Bhopal got 97.40%, Pavani Agarwal of Itarsi got 95% marks

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has declared the results of class 10th and 12th. The result of Ajmer region in class 12th has been 89.53 percent. Ajmer region ranks 10th in the country. At the same time, about 2 hours after the release of 12th result, the result of 10th has also been released. The result of Ajmer region in 10th board was 97.10 percent and is 5th in the country. Let us tell you that in 2023 the 12th result was 89.27%.

Rishabh from Chhindwara got 96% marks in bio stream. Rishabh Shukla, a class 12 student of Vidya Bhoomi School in Chhindwara, has secured 96% marks in bio stream. Sandeep Kushwaha, studying in Adarsh Academy, Dhamnod Nagar in Dhar district, has secured 96.4 percent marks in class



12th. Navya Sharma of Bhopal topped, got 96.4% marks

Navya Sharma, a class 12 student of St. Joseph's Co-ed School, Bhopal, was the topper. Navya has scored 96.4% marks in Humanities. Babandeep Singh Ahluwalia was at second place. Babandeep scored 95.8% marks in commerce subject. Mudit Yadav stood second. He got 93.6 percent marks in PCB exam. Vaishnavi Dubey

got 93.6 percent marks in PCM subject.

Ishika of Bhopal scored 97.4 percent marks

The result of class 12th in International Public School, Bhopal was 100%. Ishika Garghe scored 97.4% marks. Aditya Sahay, who stood second, scored 97.2% marks. Similarly, Vidushi S. Solanki got 96.8%, Vainya Saxena got 96.6%, Pragya Jain got 96.4%, Sarthak K. Jain scored 95.2% marks.

Businessman commits suicide in Bhopal: Allegations against operators of Som Distillery

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a tragic incident in MP Nagar area, a local businessman committed suicide by consuming poison in his car after allegedly being harassed by the operators of Som Distillery. The deceased had sent a video message to his wife, in which he accused the owners of Som Distillery of financial irregularities and non-payment.

After this incident, the police have recovered a suicide note in which it has been written that he was troubled by debt. The deceased's son said that his father had worked at Som Distillery and accused the operators of the firm of mis-using his documents and causing him financial loss.

Police are investigating on the basis of video message and suicide note and are recording the statement of the family of the deceased. Further action in this matter will be decided after the completion of the investigation. The incident has sparked concern and grief in the business community, and also shows how financial pressure and harassment can force individuals to take extreme measures. This incident is being thoroughly investigated so that the truth can come out and justice can be ensured.



BJP's tension increased due to voting percentage in Indore...?

Team Absolute | Indore

Voting for the fourth and final phase of Lok Sabha elections voters casted their vote on 8 Lok Sabha seats of the state. At many places, voting is gone very fast and at many places, voting is happened very slowly due to rain and storm. Everyone is under tension due to low weighting percentage in the first and second phase. So far, the lowest turnout has been recorded in Indore Lok Sabha seat.

Indore Lok Sabha seat has been in the news ever since the Congress candidate withdrew his nomination. Here, Congress had appealed to vote for NOTA. Which is not only a matter of concern for BJP but is also a matter of great concern for the government administration. According to the administrative staff, the voting percentage is expected to increase in the afternoon instead of the morning. Now it has to be seen whether Congress's campaign really shows any impact in Indore or whether it reduces the voting percentage.



In the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections, 48.52% votes were cast on 8 seats of Madhya Pradesh till 1 pm on Monday. So the lowest turnout was in Indore at 36.60 percent. Maximum 52.11%

voting took place in Dewas. Ujjain - 49.71%, Khandwa - 48.15%, Khargone - 51.48%, Dhar - 49.37%, Mandasaur - 50.39% and Ratlam - 51.13%.



EDITOR'S SPECS

'Har Dil Mein Modi'

Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency is gearing up for polling in the last phase on June 1, however the election fervour has already gripped the city residents. The city looked immersed in the political hue of saffron, as hundreds of people were sporting and flaunting T-shirts, with 'Har Dil Mein Modi' inscribed on it. Residents of Kandwa market in the city also organised a voter awareness programme wearing these T-shirts and appealed the fellow residents to exercise their franchise in the ongoing polls. Many residents of Varanasi, the Lok Sabha constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, spoke about the progressive policies of the Modi government and enumerated reasons as to why they should give him a third term. Holding placards and wearing saffron caps, many locals said that Varanasi has witnessed immense development over the past decade. They said that development looked like a 'distant dream' under the previous regimes but the same was getting realised under the Modi government. "Success of schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana, and Ayushman Yojana and Clean India campaign is firm evidence of the transformation under BJP rule, the locals emphasised and said that they are benefiting people to a great deal. Holding the placards with 'Har Dil Mein Modi' slogans, a local said, "Before 2014, there were narrow streets, but after PM Modi came to power, he transformed this place. We are very happy and satisfied by his initiatives." Another local said, "From roads and electricity to water facilities, everything is being developed. The city has undergone huge transformation and we hope to see this change in the future also." They also mentioned that the cleanliness of the ghats is attracting more tourists and generating employment opportunities for the locals.

How Kashmir saw decline in Hindu numbers

Deepika Bhan

As the debate rages on the decline of the Hindu population, the exodus of the minority community from Kashmir is a case for study. It took only a couple of years for a 'motivated ecosystem' to reduce a happy contented Kashmiri Pandit community into rootless, shattered refugees. From a number of over seven lakh in 1990, the community has only a few thousand left in the Valley with a majority of them being government employees living in protected areas.

For the present-day generation, it may come as a surprise to know that Kashmir was once a Hindu land. Great emperors like Lalitaditya Muktapada ruled the Valley. Kashmir was also a seat of learning. Sharada Peeth established by Kashmiri Pandits was on par with Nalanda and Takshila. However, the decline started with the advent of Islam in the Valley in the 14th century.

After continued persecution which continued till 1948, the divided Valley was left with about six per cent Kashmiri Pandits.

Over the decades, this percentage gradually decreased. Pandits moved to other parts of India due to discriminatory policies and attitudes of the governments in the state administration and political class which was shielded by Article 370.

Till late 1980s, the population had come down to almost two per cent. In February 1986, organised attacks were carried out against the Kashmiri Pandits in Anantnag district. Many houses were looted and temples burnt.

This was followed by a full-blown terror onslaught the target of which was the Kashmiri Pandit community which everyone perceived to be pro-India.

The minorities were ruthlessly attacked. It was during the tenure of Farooq Abdullah, who became the Chief Minister on November 7, 1986 (till January 18, 1990) that Kashmir witnessed organised attacks on Kashmiri Pandits.

The Home Minister of the country was Mufti Mohd Sayed, a Kashmiri Muslim who was largely suspected by the community to be behind the 1986 Anantnag riots.

Hundreds were killed, many kidnapped, women were abducted and raped. Many were brutally killed and bodies hung from trees and poles.

Mosques were openly used to carry out anti-India and anti-Hindu agendas. Loudspeakers atop mosques would blaze slogans against the Kashmiri Pandits. As targeted violence was unleashed on minorities, there was no one to help them or stand for them. Threats were openly given in local vernacular newspapers; posters were pasted on Hindu homes and hit lists were released.

The Pakistan-backed ecosystem openly gave only three options to the Kashmiri Pandits - convert, face death or flee. The community chose to flee, leaving movable and immovable properties, temples and shrines, treasured books and archives.

A whole community, which is the original native of the land and has a rich heritage of over 5,000 years, was suddenly uprooted, thrown in the hot plains of the country and forced to live in tattered tents and camps.

In the Valley, there was no remorse, no one came forward to



help the beleaguered community. There were no political voices, or human rights organisations in the Valley who could raise the voice for the persecuted Hindus.

Once the Kashmiri Pandits were forced out, the next on the agenda of the ecosystem was to usurp the properties. Hindu houses were looted and many of the stolen goods were put up for sale in markets by looters. Lands were encroached upon and taken over. A majority of the Hindu house owners were forced to sell their houses and lands for peanuts.

Three decades after the mass exodus, there is no case of ethnic cleansing or genocide. What happened to Kashmiri Pandits is termed as mass migration as if the community people willingly left their homes to live in tents in hot humid conditions.

No one stands guilty and none has been sentenced for the crimes perpetrated against the minority Hindus. All those perpetrators who were directly or indirectly involved in killings/kidnappings/rapes and gang-rapes/ arson and loot were not outside marauders like in earlier centuries but were locals. In a majority of cases, the attackers were known, either neighbours or colleagues or friends.

While the victims knew who the attackers were, the police, administration and the political class had just shut their eyes to the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits. They were probably following the plan to a perfect execution, which was done meticulously.

The ecosystem was so strong and well organised that it challenged the country's secular ethos and converted the Muslim-majority Kashmir into almost a 'Hindu-free' place in the 1990s.

The political class that existed in the Valley when the Kashmiri

Pandits were being persecuted continues to be there today as well. They remained silent in those times and have till today not sought justice for fellow Kashmiri minorities. There has been no SIT or judicial commission to probe the persecution and the exodus.

The only time the country's justice system mentioned the tragedy of the community was during the trial of JKLF chief Yasin Malik. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) told a Delhi court in 2022 during arguments on the sentencing of Yasin Malik in a terror funding case that he was responsible for the Kashmiri Pandits' exodus from the Valley.

On June 11, 1999, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in a ruling stated that the violence against the community was genocide-like and stopped short of terming it as genocide.

The Supreme Court too dismissed petitions seeking a probe into the alleged mass murder of Kashmiri Pandits in the valley in 1989-1990. However, a judgment authored by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul on the abrogation of Article 370 in 2023 did mention the ordeal of the community and recommended a structural investigation of the events and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to rebuild the social fabric and heal wounds.

Today the same community is struggling to keep alive its culture, language and traditions. The faceless ecosystem that worked to uproot the Kashmiri Hindus from the Valley is today sitting pretty, somewhere unidentified and scouting for new lands.

international

Gaza war to determine lives of Israelis for decades, says Yoav Gallant

Tel Aviv | Agencies

The outcome of the ongoing Gaza war between Israel and Hamas will determine the lives of Israelis in the coming decades, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said on Monday.

"This is a war with no alternative," said Gallant during a speech to mark the country's official memorial day to commemorate its fallen soldiers.

"This is a war that will continue until we return our hostages, smash Hamas' rule and its military capabilities, and return the State of Israel to its prosperity and creativity and bring back a smile to citizens' faces," the minister said.

Israel began its military campaign to eliminate Hamas following the unprecedented October 7 attacks on southern Israel when the Hamas-led militants killed around 1,200 peo-



ple, mostly civilians and took a further 250 people hostage in the Gaza Strip.

Israel responded with massive airstrikes and launched a ground offensive into the sealed-off coastal area at the end of October.

Some 35,000 Palestinians have been killed in the war so

far, according to Gaza's Hamas-controlled health authority.

Gallant said one of the aims of the Israeli military campaign was to enable the roughly 250,000 Israeli citizens who had to leave their homes near Gaza and Lebanon amid fighting with the Shiite Hezbollah militia to return.

Israel marked its annual Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of the Wars of Israel and Victims of Actions of Terrorism on Monday.

According to the Defence Ministry, more than 25,000 soldiers and Jewish fighters have been killed in conflict since 1860.

The count begins with the immigration of Jews into what is now Israel long before the founding of the state in 1948. Sirens sounded for two minutes across the country on Monday morning to commemorate the dead.

Since October 7, more than 700 Israeli security forces have been killed, including 620 soldiers, according to the Defence Ministry.

The figures include both those killed by militants in the October 7 attacks and during the Gaza war.

Kyiv admits 'tactical successes' of Russian troops in Kharkiv

Kyiv | Agencies

The Ukrainian military conceded on Monday that Russian forces are making progress in their offensive in the north-eastern Kharkiv region.

Moscow's troops have been engaged in a concerted push into the region, raising alarm among Ukrainians and their Western allies that a large-scale assault on the major city of Kharkiv is coming.

Kharkiv city, the second-largest in Ukraine, is located just 30 kilometres south of the Russian border.

"The enemy is currently achieving tactical success," the Ukrainian General Staff said in its situation report posted on social media early Monday morning.



Following the capture of several villages in the predominantly Russian-speaking Kharkiv region, fighting is currently underway around the city of Vovchansk, only 5 kilometres from the Russian border, the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed

Forces said.

Despite incurring heavy losses, Ukraine said the Russian military is deploying significant forces in the battle for Vovchansk, with up to five battalions bearing down on the city. Vovchansk had come under Russian occupation at the beginning of the war. During Ukraine's autumn offensive in 2022 in the Kharkiv region, Russian troops withdrew from Vovchansk. According to Ukrainian figures, around 3,500 people were still living in the city at the time.

Russia launched a renewed campaign in the Kharkiv region on May 10. Over the past two days, the Russian Defence Ministry has reported the capture of nine villages.

German digital group reports rise in cyber attacks from Russia, China



Berlin | Agencies

The German digital association Bitkom says it has recorded an increasing number of cyber attacks from China and Russia over the past 12 months. Within two years, a doubling of attacks from Russia has been measured, said managing director Bernhard Rohleder on Monday morning on German public broadcaster ZDF.

There was also a 50 per cent increase in the number of known incidents from China, he said. Of the companies affected, 80 per cent were targeted by attacks, such as data theft, espionage and sabotage, according to the Bitkom Director. Germany's Interior Minister Nancy Faeser and the president of the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA), Holger Munch, plan to present the "National Situation Report on Cybercrime" for 2023 on Monday morning.

In particular, the number of offences committed from abroad or from an unknown location has been increasing for years, the BKA said in advance. This also applies to the amount of damage caused by cybercrime to companies in Germany.

"The damage is 148 billion euros (\$159 billion) per year from cyber attacks alone, meaning digital attacks," said Bitkom's Rohleder. "That is a very significant amount." Organised crime is often behind these attacks, as are foreign intelligence services, he added. "Some are after money," Rohleder said, adding that other perpetrators want to cause as much damage as possible, such as to critical infrastructure like the energy supply or hospitals. "And there are still some, especially private individuals, who just want to have fun," he said.

Death toll in Indonesia's lava flood rises to 44



Jakarta | Agencies

The death toll due to cold lava flood in Indonesia's West Sumatra province has mounted to 44, a senior official of a local disaster agency said on Monday. Although many big stones and waste materials from the flooding hampered the search for the victims, rescuers discovered another seven bodies in the affected areas, said Fajar Sukma, head of the emergency unit of the disaster management and mitigation agency of West Sumatra province, Xinhua news agency reported.

"We have found several bodies, bringing the total death toll to 44. Big stones and the waste have hampered the searching, but we continue to look for the 15 people reported missing," he told Xinhua. Some machinery equipment has successfully reached the flood-stricken areas, according to him.

The search operation would focus on Tanah Datar and Agam regencies, where the 15 missing were reported, he added.

Spokesman of the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) Abdul Muhari said the natural disaster on Saturday had forced over 3,000 people to flee home and take shelter in both regencies, as the cold lava floods destroyed houses, buildings and other infrastructure facilities.

The government had conducted emergency relief efforts in responding to the disaster, while the head of the BNPB, Lieutenant General Suharyanto, would supervise the evacuation and distribution of aid to the affected residents, he said. Earlier media reports put the death toll at 37.

Protestors inch closer to Muzaffarabad in PoK as talks fail

Hamza Ameer | Muzaffarabad

An uneasy calm prevails in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir's Muzaffarabad as the government announced a holiday for one more day in offices and educational institutions of the region amid fears of more riots and violence. A complete shutdown and wheel jam strike is being observed in the city in support of a long march being taken out by the Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) Joint Action Committee aka People Action Committee, which is marching towards Muzaffarabad from Rawalakot and other parts of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), protesting against rising inflation and high electricity bills.

As protestors marched towards Muzaffarabad, violent confrontations were witnessed between the security forces and the protestors over the last two days, resulting in the death of a police official and over 45 other personnel getting injured.

"In Muzaffarabad only, at least 35 police officials have been injured so far after being beaten by angry protestors. There is a complete shutter down strike in the city for the third day. Everything is closed and locals are having problems in managing their



daily household requirements of food and medicine," a local resident told correspondent on Monday.

The deadlock between the protestors and the government prevailed as the negotiations failed, prompting senior leadership of the People Action Committee in Rawalakot to announce the continuation of the march towards Muzaffarabad.

"The government is playing tactics of making false commitments and delaying the entire issue. All of it is nothing but a lie and a fraud. We do not agree with it and the march towards Muzaffarabad will continue," said Sardar Nazeer Kashmiri, a senior leader of the People Action Committee.

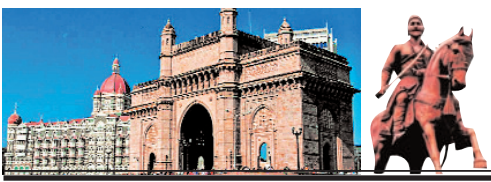
The protest has prompted President Asif

Ali Zardari to call an emergency meeting with senior leaders Sardar Yaqoob, Chaudhry Yasin, Chaudhry Yasin and Latif Akbar.

On the other hand, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has also called an emergency meeting with the PPP and PML-N leadership of the region.

People Action Committee has put forward three major demands to the government and has been protesting for over a year, demanding fulfilment of commitments. It includes providing free electricity (or at a production price of Rs 5 per unit), subsidised flour like being provided in Gilgit Baltistan and immediate stopping of perks and privileges being given to ministers, officers, bureaucrats and others.

People Action Committee maintains that it will not call off its long march towards Muzaffarabad until these demands are met and implemented by the government. The protestors are also planning an indefinite protest sit-in after reaching Muzaffarabad. Heavy security deployment is guarding all entry points into Muzaffarabad as the long march protest inches closer with every passing hour.



Amit Shah slams Uddhav Thackeray for backing Congress' agenda

Team Absolute | Dhule (Maharashtra)

Targeting Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday asked the former Maharashtra chief minister if he was backing the Congress which "supports" Pakistani terrorist Ajmal Kasab who was involved in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. Speaking at a rally in Maharashtra's Dhule Lok Sabha constituency to garner support for Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) nominee Subhash Bhamre, HM Shah, posed several questions for Uddhav Thackeray. "Congress leaders are supporting Kasab. I ask Uddhav Thackeray -- are you with the Congress leaders? The Congress wants to bring back Muslim Personal Law, are you with them? Rahul Gandhi opposes Veer Savarkar, do you agree with him? Udhayanidhi Stalin opposes Sanatan



Dharma, are you supporting him?" he asked. Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) is an alliance partner of the Congress -- the principal opposition party.

Addressing the rally, HM Shah also wondered why the Congress as well as Uddhav Thackeray, despite being invited for the January 22 Pran Partishtha ceremony of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, did not turn up. "Because they were scared of losing their vote bank, but we are not afraid," the Home Minister said. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi built the Kashi Vishwanath corridor which was destroyed by Aurangzeb. Bomb blasts were happening almost every day when the Manmohan Singh-led government was in the Centre. Mumbai was also shaken by explosions. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in power, terrorists attacked Uri and Pulwama. In just 10 days, our military forces entered Pakistan and carried out surgical strikes and air strikes, and wiped out the terrorists," HM Amit Shah said.

Senior citizen loses Rs 1.90 lakh to cyber fraud

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 65-year-old man was allegedly duped by a cyber fraudster who posed as a Mumbai Police official on the phone and forced him to transfer Rs 1.90 lakh in a bank account threatening action for 'money laundering', reported news agency. The complainant received a call on April 25 from an unknown number. The caller claimed he was a police inspector from the cyber police station in Andheri, Mumbai. He told the complainant that he was involved in money laundering activities, a Nagpur Police official said on Sunday. "The complainant panicked and made an online transfer of Rs 1.90 lakh in the bank account on directions of the caller," he said. The man later realised that he had been cheated and approached police. A case has been registered under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology Act.

Huge cash-flow in Maha LS polls, alleges MVA

Quaid Najmi | Nashik/Ahmednagar

The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi leaders claimed that large amounts of cash were reportedly being transferred to and fro, ostensibly to buy votes in the Lok Sabha elections, even as anti-graft crusader Anna Hazare frowned at the developments while the MahaYuti flatly dismissed the allegations, here on Monday. Crying foul, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut, Nationalist Congress Party (SP) MLA Rohit R. Pawar and Congress MLA Ravindra Dhangekar who is contesting from Pune, hurled the allegations targeting the ruling alliance of Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party-Nationalist Congress Party in Pune, Ahmednagar and Nashik Lok Sabha constituencies. Posting a purported video of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde alighting from a helicopter in Nashik with two security personnel lugging at least two heavy bags, Raut demanded to know why the CM travelled with such bulky luggage for just a two-hour-long poll campaign trip. Rohit R. Pawar posted another supposed video showing bundles of cash lying on a road in the Ahmednagar LS constituency and claimed that it contained 'prasad' for disbursing among the voters. "Today, a packet arrived here in the name of everyone called 'Raja' with the 'prasad' and a plea by the guardian min-



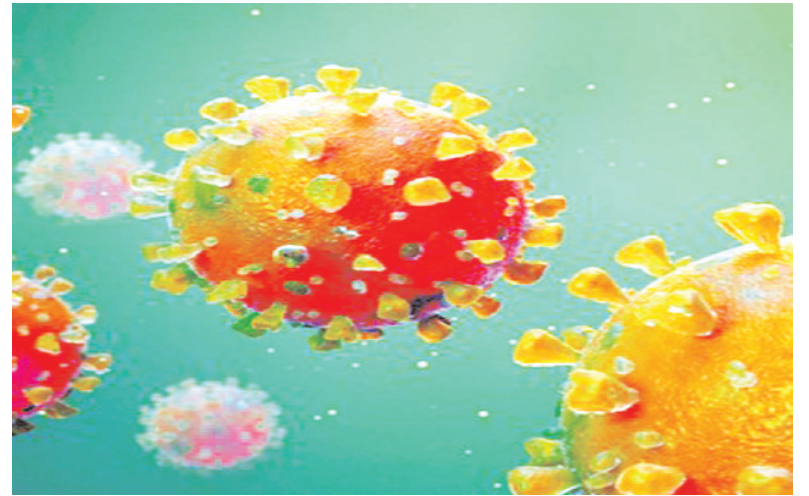
ister to vote for his party. The irony is that in many villages, the local refused to accept the 'prasad' and in others, the village elders siphoned off half the 'prasad'," said Rohit R. Pawar in a jibe at the BJP's LS candidate from Ahmednagar Dr Sujay R. Vikhe-Patil, who is battling against NCP (SP)'s challenger Nilesh D. Lanke. Dhangekar alleged that last night in Pune, a large amount of cash was distributed during the weekend to lure the voters in the Sahakar Nagar slums in his constituency reportedly supporters of the ruling MahaYuti. Early on Monday, he and hundreds of MVA activists had gathered to lodge a police complaint which was not accepted ostensibly due to lack of evidence. Raut claimed that as per his information, the bags hauled by the CM's security personnel may have been filled with "around Rs 12-13 crore" and demanded a statement from the government. Rohit R. Pawar said more complaints of 'prasad' packets are pouring in and

alleged that there are reports of more than Rs 2,000 crore cash being splurged by the ruling side to get votes and buy out leaders of opposition parties. Responding to the developments, anti-corruption crusader Anna Hazare appeared sad and termed it as regretful besides posing a 'threat to the survival of democracy'. "If money power enters into the election arena in this way then democracy will be finished, only autocracy will remain," he warned, after casting his vote in the Ahmednagar LS constituency. On his part, Ahmednagar BJP candidate Dr Sujay Vike-Patil hit back saying it was a planned operation to create confusion in the minds of voters. He also referred to an incident in the 2019 LS elections when some employees of the Rohit R. Pawar-headed Baramati Agro Co. were caught distributing cash for votes and a case was registered in the matter. State BJP President Chandrashekhar Bawankule dismissed the MVA's contentions saying, "they are starting at defeat in the allegations and hence it is not surprising that they are levelling such baseless charges". Shiv Sena's Sanjay Shirsat also rubbished the MVA allegations and said that this is an attempt to divert attention from the impending defeat of the Opposition parties.

As Maha detects 91 FLiRT Covid cases, expert rules out any immediate concern

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Even as the 91 cases of new FLiRT Covid-19 variants, accounting for more than a third of cases in the US, have reportedly been detected in Maharashtra, there is nothing to worry immediately, a top expert said on Sunday. The new set of variants dubbed FLiRT, majorly includes KP.1.1, and KP2 strains. These are named based on the technical names for their mutations, one of which includes the letters "F" and "L", and another of which includes the letters "R" and "T". Genome sequencing of March and April showed that Maharashtra has 91 cases of KP2 -- Pune (51), Thane (20), Amravati (7) Aurangabad (7), Solapur (2), Ahmednagar (1), Nashik (1), Latur (1), and Sangli (1). "What we see now, is the result of genome sequencing of the last two months, that is March and April. So, there is no cause of concern immediately as out of the 91 cases, not a single death, hospitalisation, or severe disease has been reported," infectious disease expert Dr Ishwar Gilada, told reporter. "Even the test positivity rate is around 1 per cent," he added. Dr Rajesh Karyakarte, Maharashtra's genome sequencing coordinator, said that KP2 has become the predominant Covid strain in the state. However, there hasn't been a corresponding increase in hospitalisations or



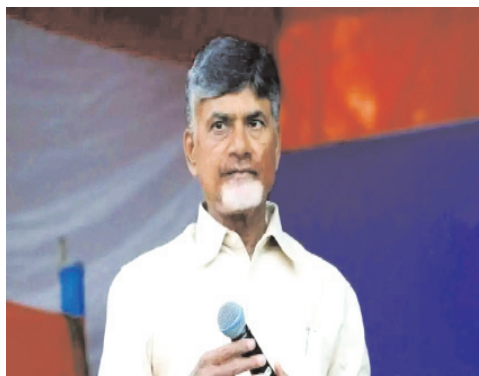
severe cases, The Times of India reported. FLiRT variants come from the lineage of the highly transmissible and immune system-evading Omicron. First identified globally in January, KP2 is a descendant of Omicron's JN.1. According to the data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, KP2 accounted for about one in four or 25 per cent of new sequenced cases in the country in the last weeks of April. Similar to previous variants, the symptoms typically include a sore throat, runny nose, congestion, tiredness, fever (with or without chills), headache, muscle pain, and sometimes loss of taste or smell.

"Covid has not gone away, but it is not creating any havoc. It is not creating any hospitalisation or deaths, and it is much milder than the flu. So, it should not be considered a separate disease. It should be considered like the flu and we can call it Covi-flu," said Dr Gilada, Consultant in Infectious Diseases Unison Medicare and Research Centre, Mumbai. However, he called for proper whole genome sequencing. "Though the variant will become prominent in numbers, it is not causing a surge in demand for oxygen, beds, ICUs, or ventilators, and there are also no deaths. "So, I think we should not be worried and concentrate on other emerging health problems," he said.

Bombay HC denies ex-AP CM Chandrababu Naidu's plea to quash assault case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court's Aurangabad bench has dismissed a motion to dismiss a case against former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and TDP leader Nakka Ananda Babu for allegedly attacking police officers in Maharashtra in 2010. In their ruling on May 10, Justices Mangesh Patil and Shailesh Brahmne noted that there was strong evidence linking both Naidu and Babu to the alleged crime. According to the report, the HC dismissed petitions filed by Telugu Desam Party (TDP) head Naidu and Babu seeking to overturn an FIR lodged against them by the Dharmabad police in Maharashtra's Nanded district. The FIR contained allegations of attacking or using criminal force against a public worker, inflicting harm with dangerous weapons, reckless case risking the life of others, malicious insult with the goal to create a breach of peace, and criminal intimidation, the news agency report stated. The bench emphasised that witness accounts directly linked Naidu and Babu in the offence,



while medical certifications confirmed the injuries inflicted by multiple police officers. "The FIR expressly alleges about the applicant accused no. 1 (Naidu) having instigated fellow prisoners and even threatened of there being a war between the two states," the HC said and added, "It is clear that the offence was committed by sharing a common intention to carry out assault on police

personnel." The HC further added, "The FIR was lodged promptly and even the injured police personnel were medically examined immediately." "There is enough material revealing complicity of the applicants (Naidu and Babu) in commission of the crime with which they have been charged and it would not be appropriate to quash the crime and the criminal case," the high court said, per the report. According to the report, Despite objections from the defendants' counsel, Sidharth Luthra, the court affirmed the accusations, citing that the Prisons Act did not give grounds for dismissing the FIR. In July 2010, Dharmabad police arrested Naidu and Babu, along with 66 others, in connection with another protest and agitation case. During their detention, they allegedly refused to cooperate with authorities and incited war amongst states. While Luthra claimed that the claims were untrue and fabricated, the court ruled that the charges under the Indian Penal Code were separate from the Prisons Act, dismissing the request to dismiss the case. The court granted Naidu and Babu interim protection until July 8, as asked by their counsel.

Team Absolute | Pune

Former Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal Pradeep Vasant Naik on Monday expressed surprise over the name of his wife Madhubala having been deleted from the voters list. ACM Naik, 75, along with his wife and son Vineet, 43, went to vote at polling booth 26 at Sampling School Baner Road in Pune on Monday morning as soon as voting began. "While I and my son were able to vote, my 72-year-old wife's name was found deleted from the voters list. When we brought this to the attention of the official there, he said that there was nothing he could do to help," ACM Naik said. "We are disappointed. Several such deletions were noticed in the list. It must be found out as to why such deletions are happening," he said. "We had the necessary slips given by the

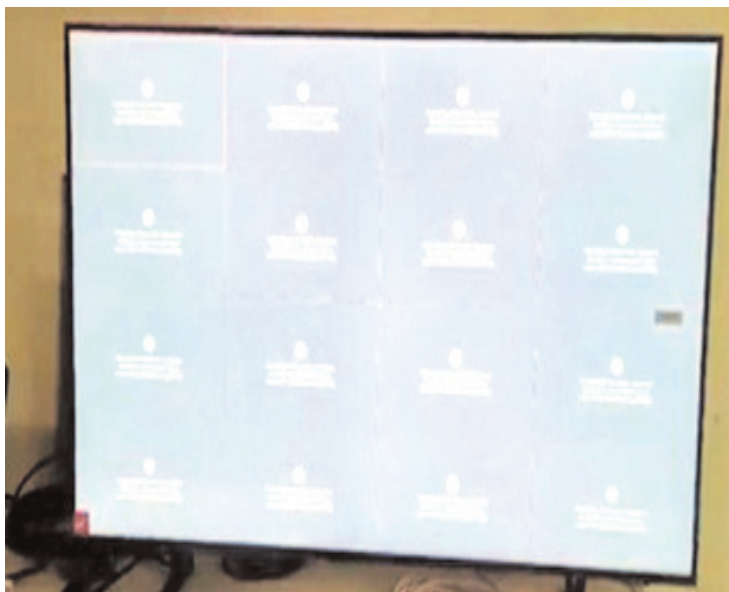


local corporator with us when we reached the polling centre. But it was of no use as my wife's name was not there in the list," the former IAF chief said. After the death of his sitting Pune MP Girish Bapat, the BJP has fielded former mayor Murlidhar Mohol from Pune Lok Sabha constituency. The Congress has fielded Ravindra Dhangekar, who defeated the BJP in the Kasba assembly bypoll last year.

NCP (SP) furious as Baramati EVMs' strongroom CCTV blanks for 45 minutes

Team Absolute | Pune

In a bizarre development, the CCTV in an EVM strongroom for the Baramati Lok Sabha constituency, allegedly went blank for some 45 minutes, raising howls of protest from the Opposition Nationalist Congress Party (SP), here on Monday. The elections for the prestigious Baramati LS seat were held on May 7 in the third phase of polling along with 10 other constituencies, after which all the EVMs from across the constituency were shifted to the secure strongroom till the counting of votes scheduled on June 4. It was the NCP (SP) worker who first noticed the purported breakdown of the CCTV - long considered a 'neutral third-party eye' - this morning in the EVMs warehouse. Suspecting something amiss, he quickly raised a hue and cry and even complained to the local concerned officials and the party higher-ups on the matter.



NCP (SP) Working President Supriya Sule, who is in the race for the Baramati seat opposite her sister-in-law, Sunetra A. Pawar, wife of Nationalist Congress Party chief Ajit Pawar, has cried foul at the latest development. "It is highly suspicious that the CCTV is switched off where a very important device like the EVMs are

kept. This is big laxity on the part of the authorities," she fumed on social media, posting a purported video of the incident. She pointed out that when her election representatives brought the matter to the notice of the concerned authorities and the administration, "they did not get any satisfactory reply." "Besides, there was no technician available at the place, our representatives were not allowed to inspect the EVM's status. This is very serious and suspicious," said Sule, daughter of NCP (SP) President Sharad Pawar. Sule demanded that the Election Commission of India (ECI) should immediately take notice of this and reveal the reasons why the CCTVs were shut down and take appropriate action against those responsible for the lapse. There has been no reaction to the development from Sunetra A. Pawar's side so far on the accusations today - a week after the polls which turned into a fight for supremacy between the Pawar clan's famous uncle-nephew duo.

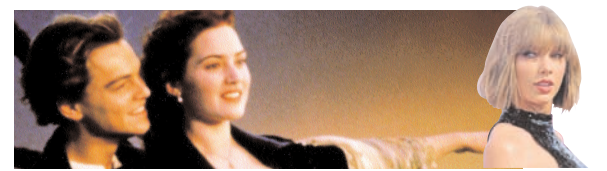
Team Absolute | Jalgaon

Bharatiya Janata Party MP from Raver, Raksha N. Khadse cut a cake marking her 37th birthday at her home in Muktainagar (May 13) -- and also the day which would decide her fate as she targets a hat-trick to the Lok Sabha, here on Monday. Raver in Jalgaon district is among the 11 Lok Sabha constituencies going to vote in Maharashtra's decisive fourth phase of voting. Appearing edgy on V-day, Raksha -- the daughter-in-law of senior Nationalist Congress Party (SP) MLC Eknath Khadse -- and her entire family and close relatives gathered for a brief birthday celebration at her home. Attempting to manage a smile, she bent and touched the feet of her father-in-law (Eknath Khadse) while her mother-in-law Manda Khadse performed the traditional 'aarti' for the dual occasion of her birthday and the election day. Surrounded by her minor children, nephews-nieces and other family members, Raksha blew out a candle and cut the cake on her 37th birthday with claps, cheers and singing the all-time favourite 'Happy Birthday To You' song. After a round of cake eating by all, greetings, wishes, blessings and merriment, the entire Khadse family trooped out to the polling station near their home in



Muktainagar to cast their votes, with a large number of friends, relatives and admirers also joining them. Incidentally, Raksha was first elected as MP in 2014, and along with her party colleague Dr. Heena V. Gavit of Nandurbar LS, had become the two youngest MPs of the 2016 Parliament, and both young women are now hoping for a hat-trick performance. A widow, Raksha -- a Computer Science graduate hailing from Khetiyta town in Madhya Pradesh -- was married to Eknath Khadse's son, the late Nikhil Khadse who passed away in May 2013.





Los Angeles | Agencies

Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, wore a sentimental necklace that belonged to Princess Diana to honour her during her trip to Nigeria. Meghan wore the necklace to a reception for military families in Abuja, Nigeria.

The delicate necklace features a diamond cross on a gold chain and was a gift from Harry to his wife. It once belonged to Princess Diana, reports people.com.

Meghan often pays tribute to Harry's mother through fashion and has several pieces in her jewellery box that belonged to the late Princess of Wales, including butterfly earrings and an aquamarine ring.

Prince Harry also famously included two diamonds from his mother's personal collection in the tri-stone engagement ring he designed for Meghan when he proposed in 2017.

King Charles and Princess Diana visited Nigeria for an official visit in March 1990.

Meghan Markle wears Princess Diana's diamond cross necklace



Rihanna, A\$AP Rocky celebrate son RZA's birthday

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Rihanna and her boyfriend A\$AP Rocky celebrated their eldest son's birthday with a special bash.

They stepped out in New York City to celebrate their son, RZA's second birthday, as they showed off their impeccable style, reports 'Mirror.co.uk'.

Holding their youngest child, Riot Rose, in her arms, Rihanna emanated serious cool-mum energy.

The 36-year-old 'Umbrella' hitmaker wore an all-grey outfit, opting for baggy jeans and a stunning corset top, finishing off the look with a fur grey cropped jacket and oval-shaped sunglasses. Following in his fashion-forward mum's footsteps, the youngest of the family wore a denim jacket over a graphic tee and chunky sand-coloured Vans.

As per 'Mirror.co.uk', A\$AP cut a casual dad look in jeans, a white T-shirt, and a striped blue shirt, waving while carrying RZA as they left the bash. The birthday boy -- who turned two on Monday -- showed off his style in brown patterned trousers and a denim jacket. The foursome went to a private party for family and friends in New York City.

Rihanna recently revealed that her rapper boyfriend has always been the inspiration behind her sons' looks.

Speaking to Entertainment Tonight, she said: "When I dress them, I always try to dress them like Rocky. Because I always envisioned dressing a girl, right? We all do as women, like, 'Oh, I'm going to dress her in these cute little things,' but then you get sons and you're like, 'What do I do?' and I was like, 'You know what, I have the biggest hack - their dad!'"

FOR JIM PARSONS, REPRISING 'BIG BANG THEORY' ROLE



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Jim Parsons, known for his portrayal of the affable and geeky Sheldon Cooper in the sitcom 'The Big Bang Theory', said that playing the character once again in the spin-off series 'Young Sheldon' was like a gift for him. The actor will be seen reprising the character one final time for the finale of 'Young Sheldon' on May 16.

Speaking with people.com ahead of the 2024 Tony Awards, Parsons said reprising the role, particularly alongside former co-star Mayim Bialik, was "really special, actually."

Parsons was at peace with his off-screen-only role in the 'Big Bang Theory' spinoff, but the way the finale was written changed his mind entirely, he said.

"I felt a slight hesitancy when they first asked, just as I thought, I don't really want to go revisit the character. But the way that they wrote it in was I thought so beautiful that it ended up being like this little extra coda or whatever to my experience with the character," he told people.com.

"It was this gift of a second layer of losing it out in a way that I had never seen coming, and it was a real treat."

When asked if he had any advice for 15-year-old Iain Armitage, who has portrayed the younger Sheldon since he was 9, Parsons said: "Oh God, no."

"It's such a different experience for him, and he's so smart. He doesn't need any," Parsons added.

CHRIS HEMSWORTH WISHES 'HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY' TO WIFE ELSA, MOM

Los Angeles | Agencies

The 'Thor' actor Chris Hemsworth has honoured the special women in his life on the occasion of Mother's Day. The actor (40) posted a sweet tribute to both his wife Elsa Pataky and mother Leonie as he marked Mother's Day for the pair on Instagram on Sunday, reports 'People' magazine.

"Happy Mother's Day to my two favourites," Hemsworth wrote in the caption of his post while sharing photos that featured the special moms in his life, reports 'People' magazine.

In the first photo, Pataky (47) pouted at the camera as she appeared with cream on her nose from a mug of hot chocolate she held up to her face.

Hemsworth planted a kiss on his mom's head in the second shot he shared. In the sweet snap, the actor had his arm around Leonie while they posed together for the outdoor photo.

The actor also included a black-and-white photo of himself dressed up as his iconic character Thor alongside Pataky, who appeared as her character Wolf Woman from 'Thor: Love and Thunder' in a similar armoured costume with a long mullet wig and fake fanged teeth, as the pair embraced and held hands.



OLIVIA MUNN REVEALS SHE UNDERWENT FULL HYSTERECTOMY AMID BREAST CANCER BATTLE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Olivia Munn shared that she underwent a full hysterectomy in April amid her battle with breast cancer. "I have now had an oophorectomy and a hysterectomy. I took out my uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries," Munn told Vogue, reports pagesix.com. The actress tagged it as the life-altering decision "the best."

"It was a big decision to make, but it was the best decision for me because I needed to be present for my family," the 43-year-old said.

Munn shared, "I had friends try to cheer me up by saying, 'Malcolm's not going to remember this. Don't worry!' But I just kept thinking to myself, 'I'm going to remember this, that I missed all these things.' It's his childhood, but it's my motherhood, and I don't want to miss any of these parts if I don't have to." This would mark the actress' fifth surgery in her cancer journey, as she previously underwent a full double mastectomy, a lymph node dissection, reconstructive surgery, and a nipple delay.

Brooke Shields says one is never relieved as a parent

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actress Brooke Shields' kids are set to head off to their college. But the actress says her parenting journey is far from over.

The model and actress shared that she thought she would feel "relieved" when she reached the point where her two daughters — Rowan, 20, and Grier, 18 — were all grown up and living independently, reports 'People' magazine.

Instead, she's discovered that moms never really stop worrying about their kids. She said, "You get on vacation and all you do is think about where they are and what they're doing. It's like there's really no relief."

She told 'People', "It's like people say, 'Oh, it's going to be great. Just when they start to be able to walk. You don't have to carry them everywhere. Then they're walking all over and you're worried about them falling off the stairs and in the pool and down the street, and then they're able to walk.'"

She added, "And every step of the way, you think it's going to be a relief. And then a whole new set of worries just smacks you in the face."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Lottie Moss



Nikhat Zareen off to a flying start in Elorda Cup 2024

Astana (Kazakhstan) | Agencies
India's reigning world champion Nikhat Zareen (52kg) began her campaign with a convincing 5-0 win against Kazakhstan's Rakhymerdi Zhansaya on the opening day of the Elorda Cup 2024 here on Monday. Minakshi (48kg) also made her way into the next round with a 4-1 victory over Gassymova Roxana of Kazakhstan. Conversely, Anamika defeated Zhumabayeva Aralym with a Referee Stops the Contest (RSC) win in the first round of the 50kg category bout.



Meanwhile, Ishmeet Singh (75kg) and Sonia (54kg) bowed out after losing 0-5 against Kazakhstan's Armanuly Armat and China's Chang Yuan respectively. Six-time Asian Championships medallist Shiva Thapa (63.5kg), Sanjay (80kg) and Gaurav Chauhan (92+) will be in action on Tuesday alongside three other Indian boxers. The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) has sent a 21-member squad for the prestigious tournament which has been witnessing the participation of pugilists from strong boxing nations such as Kazakhstan, China, India, Japan and Uzbekistan.

BCCI Secretary Jay Shah, skipper Rohit Sharma unveil Indian team's jersey

New Delhi | Agencies

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah and captain Rohit Sharma attended the unveiling of India's new T20 World Cup kit at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, here on Monday.

Adidas, India's official kit partner, earlier revealed the team's jersey for the upcoming T20 World Cup to be played in the USA and Caribbean from June 1. BCCI's official social media handle posted a video of Jay Shah and Rohit Sharma, unveiling the Indian kits, including the training kit, coaching staff kit, and the main kit.

"It is time to welcome our team in new colours. Presenting the new T20I #TeamIndia Jersey with our honorary secretary Jay Shah, captain Rohit Sharma and official partner Adidas," BCCI posted on X, formerly Twitter.

On April 30, the BCCI named India's 15-member squad for the upcoming T20 World Cup to be held in the US and West Indies. India will begin their campaign against Ireland on June 5 at Nassau County International Cricket



Stadium, India Squad for T20 World Cup: Rohit Sharma (c), Yashashvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (WK), Sanju Samson (wk), Hardik Pandya (vc), Shivam Dube, Ravindra

Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj. Reserves: Shubman Gill, Rinku Singh, Khaleel Ahmed, Avesh Khan

Women's football nationals: Haryana pip Bengal on penalties; to meet Manipur in final

Kolkata | Agencies

Haryana beat hosts Bengal 4-3 on penalties in the second semifinal of the 28th Senior Women's National Football Championship for Rajmata Jijabai Trophy at the Kishore Bharati Krirangan on Monday.

After a goalless 120 minutes, Haryana's Shreya Hooda made a fine save, before Dular Marandi hit the post for Bengal to seal the result. Haryana are now through to their second consecutive Senior Women's NFC final and will hope to better their runners-up finish from last year.

Ravi Kumar Punia's side will face Manipur in the final on May 15, who defeated defending champions Tamil Nadu 2-0 earlier on Monday. Sibani Devi and Bala Devi scored for Manipur.

The contest began in frenetic fashion, with attacks from both sides. Varshika's goal-line block and a few good saves from India international Shreya Hooda prevented an early Bengal opener. Haryana mostly rallied forward on the wings, utilising their pacy wingers to build attacks from crosses and cutbacks.

However, their finishing let them down a bit in the first half. Senior



India striker Renu and youth international Varshika each sent a header wide, while Neha hit the side netting, missing the bottom corner by a whisker. Sunita Munda also had a great chance for Bengal as a rebound fell kindly on her feet, but she could only shoot straight at Hooda from six yards out.

A different and more offensive Bengal side came out of the tunnel

after the break. Haryana remained pegged back in their own half, while the hosts launched wave after wave of attacks. The best of the lot fell for skipper Sangita Basfore who fluffed her lines from just six yards out in the 61st minute, hitting the side-netting with just Hooda to beat.

The pendulum of momentum shifted once again as Haryana tried to get a foothold with some substitu-

tions. In the 68th minute, Neha's glancing header off Rajni Bala's cross from the right went wide.

Haryana crafted a similar move deep in added time as Bala, once again looking for Neha, swung in a cross, this time from her left foot. But goalkeeper Manju was alert and punched the cross away confidently.

The 30 minutes of extra time did not see as much goalmouth action, and it remained scoreless with neither team creating any notable threat. From the penalty spot, Anay Bai, Shailja and Neha all converted for Haryana, while Poonam Sharma, Mugli Saren and Sangita Basfore did the same for Bengal.

It remained 3-3 before Ngangom Anibala Devi saw her low shot to Hooda's left saved by the Haryana custodian. Bengal got a chance to stay alive when Rajni Bala struck Haryana's fourth penalty onto the crossbar. However, Dular Marandi was unable to capitalise for Bengal as she also hit the right post with Bengal's fifth and final penalty.

Haryana will face Manipur in the final of the 28th Senior Women's National Football Championship for Rajmata Jijabai Trophy at the Kishore Bharati Krirangan here on Wednesday.

Moody backs Rohit & Hardik to regain form ahead of T20 WC

New Delhi | Agencies

Mumbai Indians' (MI) IPL 2024 campaign was majorly overshadowed by the Rohit Sharma-Hardik Pandya debacle with both players being criticised individually as well as for their impact on the team.

However, former Australian cricketer Tom Moody has backed the two players to regain form ahead of the T20 World Cup, starting from June 1 in "I wouldn't be overly concerned with Rohit Sharma's form at this stage. When it comes to representing his country for major events like an ICC World Cup, I see the experience of Rohit Sharma as invaluable not just with the bat but as the captain as well."

"When it comes to form for players like Rohit Sharma, the way the event is structured there's a number of games in the group stage for players to find some form against less competitive sides," Moody, cricket expert and commentator with official TV broadcaster Star Sports for IPL 2024, told IANS in an exclusive chat.

"When it comes to individual form or team form momentum can be captured quite early and then the team will be peaking at the right time when it comes to the back end of the tournament," he said.

Hardik, on the other hand, has had a rollercoaster of a season which began with him being booed at the Narendra Modi Stadium in their opening match against his former team, Gujarat



Titans.

The 30-year old all-rounder is averaging only 18.18 runs a game which has fallen down from 31.45 in the previous edition. Alongside his average batting stats, he is also leaking way too many runs. His economy of 10.59 in this edition of the tournament is the worst it has been in the ten years he has played in the tournament.

"Same answer as Rohit, they're both having challenging times when it comes to their franchise and Hardik is obviously a critical part of that side, because in ICC events you don't have impact players so your all rounders are important when it comes

to creating balance in your playing XI. I am sure Hardik Pandya will benefit from those early games getting some sort of momentum and confidence back into his game, more so with the bat than ball.

"In recent games he has found some sort of rhythm and form with the ball in hand. T20 can be quite a fickle format when it comes to batting in the middle order or as a player, who comes in the back end of the innings. I am sure he will have his moments in those first few games to recapture some sort of form into his batting," added Moody.

BUTTLER, JACKS, TOPLEY TRAVEL BACK TO ENGLAND FOR T20I SERIES AGAINST PAKISTAN

New Delhi | Agencies

Jos Buttler, Will Jacks and Reece Topley have travelled back to England leaving the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 midway for their respective franchises for the T20I series against Pakistan. England will be hosting Pakistan in a four-match T20I series starting on May 22 at Leeds.

After Punjab Kings all-rounder Liam Livingstone flew back to England on Monday evening to get his "knee sorted out", England T20 World Cup skipper Jos Buttler and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) players Reece Topley and Will Jacks also travelled back to England for the preparation for World Cup.

Buttler's Rajasthan Royals are in the second position on the IPL points table and will play their last two league matches against Punjab Kings (PBKS) and Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) on May 15 and 19 respectively. Buttler has scored 359 runs from 11 games at an average of 39.88 and a strike-rate of

140.78 with 2 hundreds.

The Royals dropped a post on 'X' where Buttler was seen leaving the team, RR wrote, "We'll miss you, Jos bhai!" Bengaluru too will miss the services of Will Jacks and Reece Topley in the virtual quarterfinal against Chennai Super Kings, scheduled on May 18.

KKR might also miss the services of Phil Salt for the Play-offs who is also expected to leave in the coming days. Salt has amassed 435 runs at a strike rate of 182 in just 12 matches.

Moeen Ali of Chennai Super Kings will also be unavailable for the playoffs while his participation in the crucial clash with Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) on May 18 at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru.



Shooting: Adarsh, Manu top qualifications in fourth 25m Olympic Selection Trial



rapid-fire pistol (RFP) Olympic Selection Trial (OST) T4 respectively, as all five athletes in the event heading into the final to be held at the MP State Shooting Academy ranges on Tuesday morning.

The men went first as Anish Bhanwala took a healthy four-point lead from the first precision stage into the second rapid-fire stage, only to be pipped by Adarsh on countback, after both posted scores of 583 with the same number of 24-hits in the inner 10-ring.

Ankur Goel too shot the same score but had 10 fewer hits in the inner ring, while Vijayveer Sidhu clinched fourth with a 581, scoring just one inner-10 more than Bhavesh Shekhawat.

Olympian Manu Bhaker in the women's 25M Pistol, also pipped Esha Singh on inner-10s after both shot an identical 586. Rhythm Sangwan came in third while Abhidnya Patil (582) and Simranpreet Kaur Brar (564) were fourth and fifth respectively.

On pure calculations and taking the best of three scores, Manu Bhaker and Esha Singh take the top two spots in the women's event, while Anish Bhanwala and Vijayveer Sidhu are 1-2 in the men's RFP, irrespective of what happens in the finals.

The final team for the Paris Olympics will however only be declared after a meeting of the selection committee post the trials.

Bhopal | Agencies

Manu Bhaker and Adarsh Singh topped the qualification rounds of the women's 25m pistol and men's 25m

McIlroy turns 2-shot deficit into 5-shot win for 4th Wells Fargo title

Charlotte (US) | Agencies

Rory McIlroy overturned a two-shot deficit as he played his final 11 holes in six-under to win the Wells Fargo Championships by a whopping five shots despite a closing double bogey.

The 35-year-old Northern Irishman produced a stunning burst of golf by landing two eagles and four birdies over an eight-hole stretch from Hole No. 8 to breeze to his second win of the season. He also won the Hero Dubai Desert Classic on the DP World Tour and was third at the Texas Open. Korea's Byeong Hun An (66) was third at 9 under, and Jason Day (70) and Sungjae Im tied for fourth a 6-under.

Indian-Americans Sahithi Theegala (72) at 8-over was T-52 and Akshay Bhatia (74) was 5-over and 42nd. Both will head to the PGA Championships at Valhalla next.

McIlroy won the Wells Fargo for a record fourth time even as no other player has won the event more than twice. It was his second straight PGA Tour event after partnering Shane Lowry to take the Zurich Classic two weeks ago in New Orleans. It was also



his 26th PGA Tour win.

The two wins in two starts should give McIlroy ideal momentum heading to Kentucky for the PGA Championship at Valhalla Golf Club, the site of his last major win 10 years ago.

"I really got some confidence," McIlroy said. "My golf swing feels a

lot more comfortable than it has. So going to a venue next week where I've won, it feels like the stars are lining a little bit. But I've got a lot of golf to play and a lot of great players to try to beat next week. Going into the next major of the year feeling really good about myself."

McIlroy has often called Quail

Hollow one of his favourite courses because it allows for him to take advantage of his length off the tee. But it was his putting that won him the 26th career PGA TOUR title Sunday. He needed just 25 putts, making five longer than 10 feet.

Schauffele finished second for the second straight year and saw his winless drought stretch to 39 tournaments, a streak dating to 2022. He led by four shots after 36 holes.

An set himself up for a strong showing at the upcoming PGA Championship, the year's second major. The 32-year-old An hit an impressive seven birdies against two bogeys at Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte, North Carolina to post his career best score in the US\$20 million tournament even though he finished a distant eight shots back of runaway winner, Rory McIlroy

It was his fifth top-10 of the season, and second in successive weeks after a T4 in The CJ Cup Byron Nelson last weekend.

An is also a strong contender to qualify for the Paris Olympic Games in August and make the International Team for the Presidents Cup against the U.S in September.



Team
Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Saiyami Kher, has shared that she likes to do roles that challenge her and push her out of her comfort zone. The actress, who is known for 'Mirzya', 'Ghoomer', 'Special OPS', and

'Breathe', expressed her contentment with being recognised as an actor capable of handling rugged and challenging roles in Bollywood.

Elaborating on the subject, she said: "I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities I've had to portray strong characters in the work I have done so far. It's immensely fulfilling to be recognised for my ability to take on roles that push me out of my comfort zone and demand physical and emotional dedication. I've always been drawn to roles that demand everything from me because, in return, they give me so much. My attempt has always been to lose myself in the character."

"So when someone says, 'Oh, the 'Ghoomer girl' is the same girl from 'Choked'? I take it as a compliment because, as an actor, it feels great not to find the same person in every character. My journey as an actor has been one of constant learning, growth, and I am grateful for every opportunity to challenge myself and inspire and touch people's lives. Acting is a very powerful medium. So when people come back and say your film inspired me, taught me, or moved me, I feel it's a big success for me," she added.

My attempt has always been to lose myself in the character: Saiyami Kher

"In honour of Mother's Day, share your first picture with your baby" : Bipasha Basu

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Bipasha Basu on Monday shared the newborn picture of her baby girl Devi, portraying the divine bond between a mother and child.

Taking to Instagram stories, Bipasha shared the first picture of her baby daughter.

The snap shows the 'Raaz' actress lying down on a hospital bed while the doctor holds the child, wrapped in a white baby blanket, close to Bipasha's face.

In the image, Bipasha is seen giving a kiss to her daughter.

The post is captioned: "In honour of Mother's Day, share your first picture with your baby."

The actress also added an evil eye sticker to the post.

Bipasha married her 'Alone' co-star, Karan Singh Grover, in April 2016. Their daughter, Devi, was born in November 2022.



KJo reveals he has been a big fan of filmmaker Jon M. Chu, poses with Michelle Yeoh



and dynamic @belabajarja who has been such an inspiration to the community in the world of media and entertainment...and my dearest friend and co-founder of @goldhouseco...@prabalgurung...," he wrote.

He expressed humility and appreciation for being recognised by Gold House, emphasising its significance in honouring Asian achievers and promoting representation and inclusivity. Talking about American designer Prabal Gurung, he said: "Prabal is a force of nature and a powerhouse of talent... always pushing boundaries and maintaining fashion relevance for the ages... every day!" He makes us all so proud!

"I dedicate this award to the love of my life... My mother on Mother's Day... 25 years of making movies, and I have so many more stories to tell..."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Indian filmmaker Karan Johar, who was feted with the Gold Legend honour at the third annual Gold House gala, posed with American filmmaker Jon M. Chu and Oscar winner Michelle Yeoh.

Karan took to Instagram stories and shared images from the gala, showcasing himself posing with Yeoh and M. Chu. He shared a photo posing with M. Chu and captioned it: "Was so excited to meet with @jonmchu! Been a big fan! And can't wait for WICKED." Additionally, Karan shared a picture with Yeoh, where the two are seen looking at the camera and smiling.

Expressing gratitude upon

receiving the honour, Karan shared a video on his Instagram handle, capturing the moment of him accepting the award.

"Humbled and Honoured to receive the Gold Legend Honour @goldhouseco's Gold Gala in LA... Gold house is such

an important platform that not only honours and acknowledges Asian Achiever's and Talent from across the globe but also stands tall for representation and inclusivity..."

"Was so grateful to receive the award from the incredible

SONAM KAPOOR BRINGS HER FASHION GAME FORWARD, DONS GENDER-NEUTRAL OUTFIT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress and fashionista Sonam Kapoor flaunted her "killer" style as she shared pictures looking classy in a gender-neutral outfit. Sonam took to her Instagram and shared a string of pictures. In the image, the actress is seen wearing a Ralph Lauren jacket, black pants, and formal shoes. She was styled by her sister, Rhea Kapoor, and celebrity fashion stylist, Abhilasha Devnani. Sonam opted for nude makeup, completed her look with chunky gold earrings, and chose to keep her hair open. For the caption, she wrote: "If looks could (knife emoji)" Sonam was last seen in the 2023 film 'Blind', directed by Shome Makhija, alongside Purab Kohli, Vinay Pathak, and Lillete Dubey. The film was a remake of the popular 2011 Korean film of the same name and traced the story of a blind police officer in search of a serial killer.



'Khatron Ke Khiladi 14' adds 5 contenders

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The makers of the stunt-based reality show 'Khatron Ke Khiladi' season 14 on Monday announced the names of the next five contestants.

They are -- Aditi Sharma, Karan Veer Mehra, Niyati Fatnani, Samarth Jurel, and Abhishek Kumar.

Earlier, the makers had announced Krishna Shroff and Asim Riaz as contestants.

Speaking about the journey, the 'Rabb Se Hai Dua' fame actress Aditi Sharma said: "Being an actor has been about pushing the boundaries and testing my limits. I get to do exactly that at an entirely new level with 'Khatron Ke Khiladi'."

She said that for years, she has poured her heart and soul into bringing characters to life on the screen.

"As I step aboard Khatron Ke Khiladi, the audience will witness a side of me that has remained largely unexplored -- the raw, unfiltered version of who I truly am," she said.

She said that on this journey, there are no scripts and no rehearsals.

"The fears, the doubts, and the moments of exhilaration will be laid bare before the world. This show is my chance to connect with the audience on a deeper, more authentic level," she added.

Karan, who is known for his work in shows like 'Baatein Kuch Ankahee Si', 'Ziddi Dil Maane Na' said: "As someone whose life revolves around the pursuit of fitness and adventure, I am super excited to be part of the adrenaline-packed ride that is 'Khatron Ke Khiladi 14'."

He said that this opportunity is a dream come true, a chance to push the boundaries of his physical and mental limits in a way that few experiences can rival.

"With the legendary Rohit Shetty sir at the helm, guiding us through this uncharted territory, I will not only face my fears head-on. I am ready to embrace this journey with open arms. I'm sure it's going to be



a transformative experience," he added.

The 'Tere Ishq Mein Ghayal' fame actress Niyati shared that the new season of 'Khatron Ke Khiladi' will mark her debut in the realm of reality shows.

"I am confident that this show will give me that perfect opportunity to overcome my fears, push my limits, and learn new skills. With a background in dance, I've gained flexibility, which I intend to leverage to the fullest during the show. It's an honour to showcase my stunt skills in the presence of Rohit Shetty sir, and I look forward to making some new memories," she added.

The wild card entrant of 'Bigg Boss 17', Samarth said: "After the rollercoaster ride that was 'Bigg Boss' I find myself once again at the doorstep of an extraordinary opportunity, one that will test the depths of my courage like never before. My journey on 'Bigg Boss'

last year taught me lessons about resilience, adaptability, and the importance of staying true to oneself in the face of adversity."

"However, 'Khatron Ke Khiladi' presents an entirely different challenge-- one that demands not only mental strength but also physical prowess. I can't put the thrill of performing stunts in a new adventure place in words. It's a chance to redefine the boundaries of what I thought possible," he added.

The runner-up of 'Bigg Boss 17' Abhishek said: "I hope the course of receiving love from my fans continues as I showcase my daredevil side. I am claustrophobic and this show will allow me to overcome my fear. I'm a big fan of Rohit Shetty's sir action films and it is a dream come true to be mentored by him. To my beloved fans, I make this promise: I'm so grateful to have you all stand by me through thick and thin, I shall give my best to this show."