

absolute india



VOL. 11, ISSUE 184, MUMBAI | FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2024 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHOPAL AND NEW DELHI

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INDIA BLOC WILL DISINTEGRATE 'KHATA KHAT' AFTER JUNE 4: PM NARENDRA MODI

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI SAID ON THURSDAY THAT THE INDIA BLOC WILL DISINTEGRATE AFTER JUNE 4 WHEN THE VOTES FOR THE ONGOING LOK SABHA ELECTIONS ARE COUNTED.



khata," said PM Modi. He added: "You will be here and I will be here to serve you - that is my guarantee," he said to a thunderous

Team Absolute | Pratnagarh (UP)

Slamming Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 'khata khat' remark made in Raebareilly, Prime Minister said that the opposition alliance will also disintegrate "khata khat, khata khat" in the coming weeks.

"After June 4, not only will there be a Modi government, but a lot more will happen. The INDI alliance will break apart, 'khata khat, khata khat'. A scapegoat will be found 'khata khat, khata khat' and the prince will go on summer vacation 'khata khat, khata

applause.

The Prime Minister said that the coffers of INDIA bloc members were empty since they had been out of power for 10 years and now the Congress had an eye on the common man's property and wealth.

Continuing his attack on the opposition, he said that his government has given houses, tap water supply, gas cylinders to the people but still the opposition parties say "what difference will this make".

"The Congress makes a joke of last 10 years' achievements," he stated.

He further said that what seemed impossible earlier had now become possible only because of the strength of people's votes.

"The INDIA bloc has no formula to run the country. Their formula is to have five Prime Ministers in five years belonging to five different parties so that all can get a share in the loot. Can such people run the country," said PM Modi.

Free ration to poor being given from taxpayers' money: Mayawati

Lucknow | Agencies

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) President Mayawati lashed out at "BJP and company" on Thursday, saying "they want to take credit for providing free rations to the country's poor."

In a post in Hindi on the social media platform X, Mayawati wrote, "Far from freeing the people of the country from rising inflation, poverty, unemployment and backwardness, BJP and company are bent upon extracting electoral gains for giving the poor a little bit of ration. This is not right as this is not kindness." She further wrote, "Free ration to the poor is not a favour by the BJP or the government, it comes from the taxpayers' money."



Therefore, it is inappropriate to make fun of the poor by asking them for votes in return." The BJP has mentioned it in its election manifesto that it will continue the scheme till 2029 after coming to power.

Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde's luggage checked by poll officials

Nashik | Agencies

Three days after the opposition parties alleged huge amounts of cash being transferred to



considered unprecedented by many - comes three days after the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi allies Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and Nationalist Congress Party (SP) alleged that large amounts of cash were allegedly being transferred for use in the elections.

On May 13, SS (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut tweeted a video of two bags being taken out of a helicopter and claimed that they contained at least Rs 12-13 crore. Similar allegations of wads of currency notes being found on a road in Ahmednagar were also levelled by NCP (SP) MLA Rohit R. Pawar while Congress MLA and Lok Sabha candidate Ravindra Dhangekar complained that cash was distributed in a slum in Pune.

However, the ruling MahaYuti allies rubbished the allegations terming them nothing but acts of frustration, saying that the opposition parties were staring at defeat in the ongoing elections.

and fro during the ongoing elections, security and Election Commission of India (ECI) officials checked Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's luggage at a helipad in Panchwati, on Thursday. As soon as his helicopter landed, Shinde's bags were checked and opened on the tarmac itself in full public and media glare. However, the team found only some sets of clothes, medicines and other personal belongings of the CM. The video of officials checking the luggage has now gone viral on social media. Not finding anything objectionable in bags, the local police and the ECI officials handed over both bags to the CM's aides who proceeded to attend election rallies in the region. The development - con-

I am part of INDIA bloc, but not with Bengal unit of Cong and CPI-M: Mamata Banerjee



Kolkata | Agencies

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, on Thursday, claimed that although she and her party Trinamool Congress are an integral part of the opposition INDIA bloc, the West Bengal unit of Congress and CPI-M are not included in it.

"Some are misunderstanding and misinterpreting me. The opposition INDIA bloc was formed at the national level. We will remain a part of that alliance at the national level. I took the main initiative in the formation of that opposition bloc. Hence I am part of that national unit. But neither the West Bengal unit of Congress nor the state unit of CPI-M is included in that national bloc. They are with

BJP in West Bengal," the Chief Minister said while addressing an election meeting at Tamluk Lok Sabha constituency in East Midnapore district in the afternoon.

Observers feel that probably the Chief Minister on Monday tried to give a clarification following confusion over two contradictory statements made by her on the opposition INDIA bloc during the last couple of days.

On one hand, she said that the INDIA bloc's tally in the current Lok Sabha will end up at 315 with BJP finishing at 195 and on the other hand she said that if the INDIA bloc is in a position to form the government at the Centre, Trinamool Congress would provide outside support to that government.

Speaking on the occasion, she referred to the results of the Nandigram assembly constituency, one of the seven seats under Tamluk Lok Sabha, in the 2021 West Bengal assembly elections where she lost to the current leader of the opposition Suvendu Adhikari.

"That day, they got elected from Nandigram by disconnecting the power at the counting venue. Everything was changed taking that advantage. I have not forgotten that. I will take revenge someday. BJP will not be in power always. ED and CBI will not be there to protect you forever. The NIA and Income Tax department will also not be with you always. I will take revenge," the Chief Minister said.

COVISHIELD VAX LINKED TO ANOTHER RARE FATAL BLOOD CLOTTING DISORDER

New Delhi: British-Swedish pharma giant AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine, made in collaboration with Oxford University has been found to raise the risk of vaccine-induced immune thrombocytopenia and thrombosis (VITT) -- a rare but fatal blood clotting disorder, claimed researchers on Thursday.

While not new, VITT emerged as a new disease following adenovirus vector-based Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine -- sold as Covishield in India and Vaxzevria in Europe -- at the height of the Covid pandemic in 2021. "An unusually dangerous blood autoantibody directed against a protein

termed platelet factor 4 (or PF4) was found as the reason for VITT.

In separate research in 2023, scientists from Canada, North America, Germany and Italy described a virtually identical disorder with the same PF4 antibody that was fatal in some cases after natural adenovirus (common cold) infection.

Now in a new research, Flinders University in Australia and other international experts found that the PF4 antibodies in both adenovirus infection-associated VITT and classic adenoviral vector VITT share identical molecular fingerprints or signatures.

GOODBYE MOTHER



Gwalior: Revered Madhavi Rajee Scindia was lit by her son, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia.

CM Arvind Kejriwal, AAP to be named in supplementary charge sheet: ED to SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) will soon file a supplementary charge sheet in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam arraying Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as an accused, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) SV Raju informed the Supreme Court on Thursday.

Opposing the plea filed by Kejriwal against arrest, ASG Raju apprised a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta that a prosecution complaint against AAP and its national convenor is in the pipeline and will be soon lodged before the special court.



Earlier, the probe agency, opposing the bail plea of former Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi Manish Sisodia filed before the Delhi High Court, said that it will soon file a supplementary charge sheet against the ruling party in the national capital.

In an order passed last week, the apex court ordered CM Kejriwal to be released on interim bail in the excise policy case till June 1 and directed him to surrender on June 2.

It prohibited CM Kejriwal from signing official files unless it is required and necessary for obtaining clearance/approval of the Lt Governor of Delhi. Also, while out on interim bail, he will not visit the CM office or the Delhi Secretariat.

ED can't arrest accused after special court has taken cognizance of money laundering complaint, rules SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday held that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) cannot arrest an accused on money laundering charges after cognizance has been taken by the special court on the probe agency's complaint.

A bench headed by Justice Abhay S. Oka ruled that in case, the custody of such an accused is needed for further investigation, the ED would have to approach the special court.

"After hearing the accused, the Special Court must pass an order on the application after recording brief reasons. While hearing the application, the court may permit custody only if it is satisfied that custodial interrogation is required," said the Bench, also comprising Justice Ujjal Bhuyan.

However, a person not arrayed as an accused in the complaint may be arrested by the ED fulfilling the mandate of Section 19 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, the apex court said.

Further, it added that a person not arrested during the money laundering probe but appearing before the special court pursuant to the summons issued under PMLA need not satisfy stringent twin conditions for grant of bail.

Under Section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), twin tests



must be met to obtain bail.

First, the court should be convinced that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accused is not guilty of such an offence. Second, the court should be convinced that the accused seeking bail is not likely to commit any offence while on bail.

In November 2017, a division bench of Justices Rohinton Nariman and S.K. Kaul struck down Section 45(1) of the PMLA for imposing two additional conditions to grant bail to the money laundering accused calling them arbitrary.

However, this decision was overruled by the July 2022 judgement by a bench comprising Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, Dinesh Maheshwari, and C.T. Ravikumar in the Vijay Madanlal Choudhary case. The three-judge bench upheld the 2019 amendments made to the PMLA, 2002 making it nearly impossible for the accused to secure bail and shifting the burden of proof of innocence onto the accused rather than the ED. Subsequently, a bench headed by then CJI N.V. Ramana agreed to review the PMLA judgment for two main concerns -- non-providing of ECIR to the accused at the time of arrest and negation of presumption of innocence.

In November last year, days before Justice S.K. Kaul was due to retire, a special bench headed by him ordered the pleas challenging the powers of ED to be placed before the Chief Justice of India (CJI) for the constitution of a new bench.



'IF YOU VOTE FOR AAP, I MAY NOT GO BACK TO JAIL': KEJRIWAL

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday brought to the notice of the Supreme Court statements made by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal appealing to people to vote for Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) if they wished he (Kejriwal) did not return to jail.

Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta, the second highest law officer of the Centre, representing the ED, told a bench presided over by Justice Sanjiv Khanna, that such statements are a direct "slap on the system" and he would like to place CM Kejriwal's videos for the perusal of the apex court.

SG Mehta referred to CM Kejriwal's speech, where the AAP supremo had said that he would not have to go to jail if people voted for the "broom" symbol.

The law officer said, "This is a slap on the system. He (Kejriwal) says, 'If you vote for me, I will not have to go to jail on June 2'. How can that happen?"



"Our order is very clear. We have fixed the timeline, i.e., the dates of release and surrender. We are not making any exception to anybody,"

clarified the Bench, also comprising Justice Dipankar Datta.

"He ought not to have said this. This is slapping on the face of the institution and I take an exception to that. I leave it to that end," SG Mehta said.

In response, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing CM Kejriwal, said that the AAP leader was alleging mala fide against the government and many senior ministers of the Centre made various kinds of statements against his client.

The apex court called the parties to "confine" themselves to the legal questions and proceeded to hear the matter. In an order passed last week, the apex court ordered CM Kejriwal to be released on interim bail in the excise policy case till June 1 and directed him to surrender on June 2.

It prohibited CM Kejriwal from signing official files unless it is required and necessary for obtaining clearance/approval of the Lt Governor of Delhi. Also, while out on interim bail, he will not visit the CM office or the Delhi Secretariat.

Mumbai hoarding crash: Billboard owner Bhavesh Bhide nabbed from Udaipur

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a big breakthrough, a Mumbai Police team has tracked and arrested Bhavesh Bhide -- the owner of the hoarding that crashed in Ghatkopar on May 13 -- from his hideout in Rajasthan's Udaipur, sources said here on Thursday.

Bhide, a director at EGO Media Co., was on the run ever since the gigantic billboard crashed on Monday, claiming 16 lives and injuring 88 others.

Soon after the tragedy, the Mumbai Police had lodged a case against Bhide invoking the stringent charge of culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

An official source said the Bhandup police had formed multiple teams to track down Bhide, who was constantly on the move and changing locations, making it difficult for the police to pin him down. Finally, a Crime Branch team pursuing him managed to zero in on Bhide in Udaipur. He is



being brought to Mumbai.

Besides the hoarding crash case, Bhide - who claims to be politically connected - is facing several other cases at different police stations in the city.

Bhide is likely to be produced before a Mumbai court on Friday.

Besides the human casualties, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said on Thursday that so far, the civic teams have recovered mangled remains of 71 vehicles, including two trucks, 31 four-wheelers, 8 autorickshaws, and 30 two-wheelers.

Swati Maliwal's statement recorded in alleged assault case: Police sources

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Special Cell of Delhi Police on Thursday recorded the statement of AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal, days after she was allegedly assaulted at Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's official residence, sources said.

Additional Commissioner of Police (Special Cell), Pramod Kumar Kushwaha, along with other officers reached Maliwal's house on Thursday afternoon and spent around four-and-a-half hours there, police sources said. "Yes, the MP's statement has been recorded," said a police source.

On Monday, DCP (North) Manoj Kumar Meena said that a PCR call was received at 9:34 a.m. at the Civil Lines police station, wherein the caller claimed that she was assaulted at CM Kejriwal's official residence.

The PCR call record said "the woman is saying that she is at the CM's house and has been assaulted by CM's PS Bibhav Kumar".

DCP Meena, however, said that no formal complaint was lodged by Maliwal in this



regard. Meanwhile, the National Commission for Women (NCW) has taken suo motu cognisance of the matter and issued summons to CM Kejriwal's Personal Secretary (PS) Bibhav Kumar, asking him to appear before the Commission on Friday.

CONGRESS, SP NEGLECTED REFUGEES OVER VOTE BANK POLITICS: PM MODI

Azamgarh (Uttar Pradesh) | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi while addressing an election rally in Uttar Pradesh's Azamgarh on Thursday, launched a scathing attack on the Congress, SP and other INDIA bloc parties and accused them of portraying themselves as secular and neglecting refugees over vote bank politics.

PM Modi also took a jibe at the Congress on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and said that the grand old party persecuted refugees for decades and never paid heed to their needs.

Mounting the attack, PM Modi said the Congress wants to snatch the rights of tribals and give them to its vote bank. "They also want to allot the country's 15 per cent budget to the minorities," PM Modi said. He accused the Congress of neglecting refugees and said, "Taking Mahatma Gandhi's name, these people scaled the ladder of power but do not follow his ideology."

"For the unity of the country and to live by the principles of Babasaheb Ambedkar, we need to be cautious of those people who indulge in Hindu-Muslim politics. We have to be united to make India proud and successful," he said. PM Modi also accused the leaders of the INDIA bloc of being



neck-deep in corruption.

Taking a swipe at the SP and the Congress, he said that the "Congress" 'shehzada' (prince) is running a mission and attacking our 'aastha' (faith). The SP's 'shehzada' 'honoured terrorists. The SP and Congress are two parties but dukaan ek hi hai."

He said that the enthusiasm of the people of Uttar Pradesh's Lalgarh clearly indicates that their blessings were with the BJP and the NDA.

"Two days ago, I was in Banaras, the way residents of Kashi celebrated the festival of democracy! From Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Attock to Cuttack, there is one voice 'Phir ek baar Modi

sarkaar', newspapers across the world are full of the democratic exercise of the country," he claimed. "The world is seeing that people's blessings are with the BJP and NDA. Wherever we go only one slogan is being heard, 'Phir ek baar Modi sarkaar'," he said. "The people have reposed so much faith. The world is surprised by the people having faith on 'Modi's guarantee'. One example of 'Modi ki guarantee' is the CAA," he said.

"I am saying it clearly, it's 'Modi's guarantee'. I dare you...you can't end CAA. It is 'Modi ki guarantee' that you will not be able to remove CAA," he said referring to the Opposition who has promised to remove the legislation if it is voted to power at the Centre. On Wednesday, refugees living in India for long were given Indian citizenship certificates.

PM Modi emphasised that individuals who received citizenship certificates under CAA were victims of the country's Partition based on religion. He said that now the refugees granted Indian citizenship would be called "children of Bharat Mata."

He also said that after 40 years, Srinagar registered a record turnout in the Lok Sabha polls. "Earlier, people were afraid of stone pelting and terror attacks, but Modi had promised peace and scrapping of Article 370, which was delivered," he said.

MONSOON LIKELY TO ARRIVE IN KERALA BY MAY 31: IMD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has announced that this year, the southwest monsoon is likely to set in over Kerala on May 31, with a model error of ± 4 days.

Southwest monsoon normally sets in over Kerala on June 1, with a standard deviation of about seven days. IMD has been issuing operational forecasts for the date of monsoon onset over Kerala from 2005 onwards. An indigenously developed state-of-the-art statistical model with a model error of ± 4 days is used for the purpose, according to an IMD statement.

Last year, the monsoon arrived in Kerala on June 8. The IMD had forecast the arrival on June 4 with a margin of ± 4 days.

In its latest bulletin, the IMD has forecast heatwave conditions over Northwest India from May 16 and in the eastern region from May 18. Concurrently, heavy rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning



and gusty winds, is anticipated over the southern states until May 20.

IMD has forecast above average monsoon rainfall in 2024, which augurs well for the country's agricultural sector which was hit by erratic weather last year.

The monsoon, which normally

arrives in Kerala around June 1 and retreats in mid-September, is expected to total 106 per cent of the long-term average this year.

The monsoon plays a key role in the Indian economy as over 50 per cent of the country's farmland does not have any other source of irriga-

tion. The monsoon rains are also crucial for recharging the country's reservoirs and aquifers from which the water can be used later in the year to irrigate crops.

India has emerged as a key exporter of foodgrains but had to resort to curbing overseas shipments of sugar, rice, wheat and onions in order to increase domestic supplies and keep prices in check due to the erratic monsoon last year which hit farm production. A robust growth in the farm sector helps to keep inflation in check. IMD defines average or normal rainfall as between 96 per cent and 104 per cent of a 50-year average of 87 cm (35 inches) for the June-Sept season. Apart from supplying food, the farm sector also plays a key role in providing a demand for industrial goods such as two-wheelers, fridges and fast moving consumer goods. An increase in agricultural production and incomes, therefore, apart from contributing directly to GDP growth also leads to an increase in industrial growth.

Delhi HC issues notice to CBI on K. Kavitha's bail plea

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Thursday issued a notice to the CBI on bail plea of Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader K. Kavitha, an accused in the alleged excise policy scam.

A bench of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma also called for CBI's reply on writ petition filed by Kavitha, daughter of BRS President and former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu (KCR), challenging her arrest by the CBI and the subsequent remand in the corruption case. The matter will be taken up for further hearing on May 24 along with her bail plea in the money laundering case.

Kavitha moved the high court after a special court here on May 6 turned down her regular bail pleas in cases being probed by both - the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Last week, the ED filed its seventh chargesheet before a Delhi court in connection with the money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam, naming Kavitha and others as accused.



Kavitha was first arrested by the ED and later by the CBI on April 11 when she was in Tihar Jail.

Kharge, Thackeray, Pawar & Kejriwal to address INDIA bloc rally in Mumbai on May 17

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the Lok Sabha elections' fifth phase campaign enters the crescendo stage, top leaders of the national opposition alliance INDIA bloc and Maha Vikas Aghadi will address a mammoth rally here on Friday.

Among the top leaders who will attend and address the public meeting at Bandra Kurla Complex grounds include Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Nationalist Congress Party (SP) President Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena (UBT) President and ex-CM Uddhav Thackeray.

Besides, there will be Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and representatives of other constituents of the INDIA-MVA alliance.

In addition, other senior MVA leaders like Nana Patole, Sanjay Raut and Jayant Patil are expected to speak at the rally, coming just three days ahead of the fifth



phase of Lok Sabha polls on May 20, covering 13 constituencies, including the crucial Mumbai Metropolitan Region. An MVA leader claimed that Friday's rally would be the biggest combined opposition show of strength in the state since the poll campaign started and people are expected to participate from all over the state. This is the second INDIA-MVA multi-party rally coming two months after a

similar show of strength held in Mumbai on March 17, marking the end of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra.

In the last two months after the Lok Sabha elections were announced on March 16, INDIA-MVA top leaders have addressed several rallies, public meetings across Maharashtra in the 48 Parliamentary constituencies -- the second highest in the country.

Sex scandal: Party, Deve Gowda family has no idea about Prajwal Revanna's whereabouts: JD(S)

Bengaluru | Agencies

Reeling under the impact of the sex scandal involving Prajwal Revanna who is a JD(S) MP and grandson of former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, the party stated on Thursday that it does not have any idea about the whereabouts of the prime accused in the case.

Prajwal Revanna, who is the NDA's Lok Sabha candidate for the Hassan seat is absconding as the videos showing him sexually assaulting women have taken Karnataka by storm.

Speaking to reporters in Mysuru, JD(S) Core Committee President and MLA, GT Devegowda claimed that neither party leaders nor the HD Deve Gowda family have any idea about Prajwal Revanna's whereabouts.

The government has issued a Blue Corner notice to 196 countries regarding Prajwal Revanna, and he can only be tracked through this. "Prajwal Revanna has not been in touch with the leaders since the scandal came to light. No one knows where Prajwal Revanna is," Devegowda stated.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the scandal is carrying out the probe and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah asserted that he believes in the officers.

"The crimes related to the scandal were committed in Chennai city and Malaysia, and in this



backdrop, we are demanding an investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)," Devegowda stated.

Meanwhile, Prajwal Revanna, who had booked a ticket to Bengaluru from Munich in

Germany, did not board the flight on Wednesday.

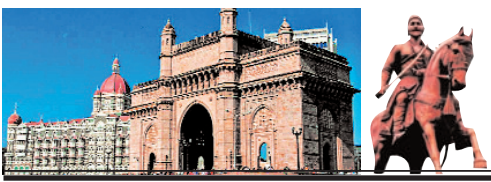
Sources stated that this is the third time Prajwal Revanna did not board a flight after booking tickets from Germany. Prajwal Revanna's father, JD(S) MLA HD Revanna, who was jailed and released on conditional bail, has not gone back to his native Holenarasipur town in Hassan District to meet his wife Bhavani since his release.

In turn, Bhavani has also not come to meet him in Bengaluru where he is staying at his father HD Deve Gowda's residence in Padmanabhanagar. He has been visiting temples since his release.

Family sources explained that Deve Gowda and former CM HD Kumaraswamy are upset with her in the backdrop of the events related to her son Prajwal Revanna.

Meanwhile, the SIT has issued a second notice to Bhavani to appear for questioning in the kidnap case of a victim seen in one of the videos.

The SIT has registered cases under IPC Sections 376 (2) N (committing rape repeatedly on same woman), 506 (criminal intimidation), 354 (A) (1) (behaving in unwelcome way, explicit sexual behaviour, demanding sexual favours), 354 (B) (using criminal force on woman) and 354 (C) (voyeurism, capturing image of a woman in a private act without her consent) and Under Sections of the Information Technology Act.



Govt provides ration to population greater than US-EU together, says Ashwini Vaishnaw

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Union Minister for Railways, Communications and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw, on Thursday, said that the Modi government's thrust on inclusive growth is yielding results and it will gain greater visibility in the next few years. He added that this has been possible because of a robust growth framework in place.

He underlined the Modi government's resolve to bring "generational change" in people's lives and also explained how the country is breaking barriers in public welfare schemes.

Citing example of the Centre's free ration scheme to the poor and marginalised, he said that the Modi government is feeding a population larger than the combined populace of United States and the European Union (EU).

"US population is about 35 crore while EU accounts for about 40 crore. India is providing free ration to a population of 80 crore, which is bigger than both, for past four years," informed the Union Minister, highlighting the scale and size of India's public welfare scheme.

Addressing the Viksit Bharat Ambassador event in Mumbai, the Union Minister said that the gov-



ernment's thrust on infrastructure investment, manufacturing, simplification of laws and inclusive growth have served as four pillars of growth.

Vaishnaw said that the Central government has earmarked adequate funds for building physical infrastructure and shoring up the digital economy.

"In previous regimes, Railways allotted Rs 1,140 crore for Maharashtra-specific growth. Under NDA, it has increased 10-fold to Rs 15,000 crore. In past ten years, 1,800 crore rail network has been built in Maharashtra alone" he said.

He further said that a 15 km railway network per day and 23 km road network per day are being built

under the NDA government.

"In terms of digital infrastructure, Maharashtra had 35,000 telecom towers 10 years ago, which has now grown to 2,75,000," he pointed out.

He further said that the government is committed to building social infrastructure as well and has built new universities and medical colleges, and developed new centres of higher education over the past decade.

"Earlier there were seven AIIMS, today they are 18. Out of the previous seven, six AIIMS were built during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government. In the past ten years, 390 universities and 315 medical colleges have been built," the Union Minister told the Viksit Bharat Ambassadors.

Emphasising that inclusive growth is essential for the harmonious growth of a nation, he said that 'Antodaya' is one of greatest ideas towards bringing change in the lives of the poor and marginalised, and this has been one of the party's foremost pledge since the days of Jana Sangh.

He also listed some milestone achievements of the Modi government including 10 crore free LPG connections, four crore pucca houses for the poor, and explained how they have brought multi-dimensional change in people's lives.

Helped Narendra Modi a lot when he was CM, took him to Israel: Sharad Pawar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi slammed Sharad Pawar over farmers' plight, the Nationalist Congress Party (SP) chief said on Thursday that when he was the Union Minister (2004-2014), he had helped the then Gujarat Chief Minister -- now the Prime Minister -- a lot for the agricultural crisis in his state.

Sharad Pawar was the Union Agriculture Minister from 2004 to 2014.

He said that on one occasion, the then Gujarat CM once called him and said he wanted to visit Israel to study the unique farming techniques there.

"He used to come to me with the problems of the agriculture sector and even took me to Gujarat. Once he



wanted to visit Israel so I took him there also. Whatever Modi says now I am not concerned," said Pawar.

Years later, Modi became the first Indian PM since Independence to visit Israel in July 2017.

The NCP (SP) supremo's retort came a day after PM Modi again attacked Sharad Pawar -- without taking his name -- accusing him of

doing nothing for the cause of farmers when he was the Union Agriculture Minister.

Even on earlier occasions during the ongoing Lok Sabha campaign, PM Modi has slammed Pawar for having abandoned the peasantry, and not doing anything for their welfare, while contending that the farmers benefited hugely during the last 10 years of the Bharatiya Janata Party government.

PoK is India and it will come back to India: EAM Jaishankar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar on Thursday said that Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) is an inseparable part of the country that will eventually come back to India.

Reacting to the growing unrest and continued violence that is taking place in PoK, he said that there is no doubt that people in PoK have been watching and getting affected with the massive development that has been taking place in Jammu and Kashmir over the last few years.

"People in PoK are seeing the positive changes across the Line of Control and they are asking themselves that if things are like that, then why are we suffering and why are we accepting this kind of mistreatment? So, they are undoubtedly getting affected by all this. We would



love to see where this goes," said EAM Jaishankar while speaking at 'Vishwabandhu Bharat' interaction in Nashik, Maharashtra.

Complete chaos prevails in PoK's Muzaffarabad which has been rocked by violent protests as the locals, fed up with the rising inflation and high electricity bills, continue to clash with police over the past many days.

"PoK is a different category because eventually PoK is India and it will come back to India, I don't think we should

ever have any doubt about it. Pakistan has a lot of other problems, including in Balochistan and various other parts as well," commented the EAM.

Pakistan's economic woes too continue to dampen its credibility amid fears of a complete meltdown, he said.

"They also have severe economic problems right now. Whether they do the right reforms, and whether they take the right policies... Because, this policy of continuously going against India, today has brought Pakistan down to where it is. We have to see whether there is any change in thinking there," stated Jaishankar.

Earlier this week, while addressing a campaign rally in Palghar, Union Home Minister Amit Shah also made it clear that "PoK was, is, and will continue to be an integral part of India" and no power can challenge this position.

Chaos At Mumbai Metro Station Amid Restrictions For PM Modi's Roadshow

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's grand roadshow in Mumbai on Wednesday evening drew huge crowds. However, as thousands thronged the streets to catch a glimpse of the Prime Minister, chaos ensued at the Ghatkopar metro station, with stampede-like situations caught on cameras.

Ahead of PM Modi's roadshow, authorities took precautionary measures by suspending train services between Jagruti Nagar and Ghatkopar stations. This move, intended for security reasons, inadvertently disrupted the commute of countless office-goers, with services only resuming nearly two hours later, at 7:46 pm.

Social media platforms buzzed with videos shared by dismayed commuters showing the overwhelming crowd at the Ghatkopar metro station. Among the voices of concern was Shiv Sena (UBT)



leader Priyanka Chaturvedi as the Mumbai Metro, a lifeline for over three lakh daily commuters, bore the brunt of the security measures implemented for the Prime Minister's visit.

"PM Modi in Mumbai for campaigning, public services go for a toss for security reasons and has led to creating massive chaos," Chaturvedi wrote on social

media. The chaos extended beyond the metro station, with blockades impeding the movement of locals returning from work. Partial suspension of services between key stations disrupted the routines of citizens.

PM Modi's roadshow was held ahead of the May 20 polling for six Lok Sabha constituencies in Mumbai and seven others across Maharashtra. The event, stretching from Ashok Silk Mills in Ghatkopar (West) to Parshawanath Chowk in Ghatkopar (East), saw thousands of people waving BJP flags and chanting slogans for the Prime Minister.

Earlier on the same day, PM Modi delivered speeches at two campaign rallies within Maharashtra - one in Kalyan, situated in Thane district, and another in Dindori, located in Nashik district - to endorse the Lok Sabha candidates from the BJP-Shiv Sena-NCP 'Mahayuti' coalition.

Posing As Crime Branch Cops, 6 Men Take Rs 25 Lakh From Cafe Owner's Home

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Six men claiming to be from the crime branch entered a cafe owner's home in Mumbai's Sion area and allegedly took away Rs 25 lakh, an official said on Thursday. The police have arrested four of them.

The complainant, who runs a popular cafe in the city's Matunga area, told the police that six persons came to his house near the Sion hospital on Tuesday saying they were from the Mumbai crime branch.

The men claimed that they were on election duty and had information that he had



kept money for use in connection with the Lok Sabha

polls, the official said citing the complaint.

Mumbai will vote in the fifth phase of general elec-

tions on May 20. The hotelier told them that he had only Rs 25 lakh cash from his food business and it had nothing to do with the elections, the official said.

However, the six accused took the money and left his home threatening to implicate him in a crime. The cafe owner then approached the Sion police station, prompting an investigation.

During the probe, the police arrested four of the accused. Cops suspect the involvement of a retired police constable and personnel of the police motor transport department in the crime, the official added.

Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal's wife passes away after battling cancer

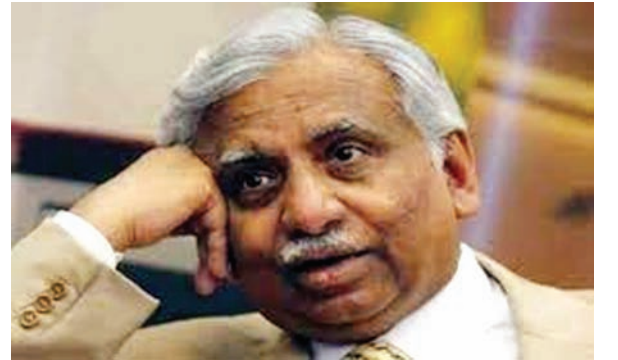
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal's wife Anita Goyal passed away on Thursday morning after suffering from the final stage of cancer.

Anita Goyal is survived by her husband and two children, Namrata and Nivaan Goyal. According to reports, she passed away around 3 a.m. and Naresh Goyal was at their Mumbai residence.

As executive vice president, Anita was part of operations at the company.

Naresh Goyal, himself suffering from multiple health issues, sought interim bail from the Bombay High Court earlier this month on humanitarian grounds to be



with his wife. He was nabbed on September 1, 2023, in connection with a money-laundering case. He is currently in judicial custody and lodged at the Arthur Road Central Jail (ARC).

In the bail plea, Naresh Goyal had claimed that he did not siphon off loan amounts for personal benefits, as alleged by the ED in the Canara Bank loan of Rs 538.62 crore given to the Jet Airways group.

Mumbai hoarding crash: Death toll rises to 16 as two more bodies recovered



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Two more bodies were recovered here from the debris at the site of the giant hoarding crash of May 13, taking the toll to 16, the BMC Disaster Control said here on Thursday.

The bodies of a male and a female were found in a highly decomposed state and have been identified as Manoj Chansoria, 60, and Anita Chansoria, 59.

The rescue work is still underway at the site of Chheda Nagar for the fourth day after the monstrous hoarding collapse. The rescue operation on Wednesday also led to the recovery of several vehicles buried under the debris, raising fears of more casualties.

The incident sent shockwaves in Mumbai which is dotted by 1025 big and small hoardings, besides many others on railways properties.

The BMC has started yanking off all illegal or oversized hoardings violating the permissible size of 40x40 feet (1600 sq feet).

The civic body has also slapped notices to the Central Railway and Western Railway to immediately identify and remove all illegal hoardings on its properties immediately.

BMC announces water cut, low pressure supply in parts of city for 16 hours, check details

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Brihanmumbai municipal Corporation (BMC) on Thursday said that there would be water cut and low pressure water supply in several parts of city for 16 hours on May 22 and 23. According to an official statement, the BMC said that in the K/East Ward, the work of cross-connection of the newly laid 1500 mm dia. Water main with the newly laid 1200 mm dia. Parla outlet and discarding of the old leaking 1200 mm dia. water main at the junction of B.D. Sawant road and C.G. Road to the junction of C.G. Road and Sahar Road in Andheri (East) will be undertaken. The work will be commenced on May 22 from 09:00 am and will be completed on May 23 at 01:00 am.

"Post this work water levels of Veravali reservoirs I, II and III will be improved, subsequently water supply of Andheri (East) & (West), Jogeshwari (East) & (West), Vile Parle (East) and (West) will be improved," the BMC said.

Due to this work there will be curtailed supply in some parts of K/West, P/South ward and no supply in some part of K/East, P/south and K/West ward, the civic body said.

The BMC also shared the details of the affected areas.

1) K/East - Tripathi Nagar, Munshi Colony, Bastiwal Compound, Collector Colony, Durga Nagar, Matoshree Club (Normal supply timing - 08:00 am to 10:00 am) Remarks regarding supply condition- 08:00 am to 09:00 am there will be complete water cut.

2) K/East - Durga Nagar, Sariput Nagar (Normal supply timing - 10:00 am to 12:00 pm) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

3) K/East - Datta Tekadi, Oberoi Splendor, Kelti Pada, Premises near Ganesh Mandir Jogeshwari-Vikhroli Link Road (Normal supply timing - 09:00 am to 11:00 am) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

4) K/East - Bandrekar Wadi, Franciswadi, Makhrani Pada, Subhash Road, Chacha Nagar (Normal supply timing - 11:00 am to 2:00 pm) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

5) K/East - Bandra Plot, Hari Nagar, Shivaji Nagar, Shankarwadi, Pascal Colony (Normal supply timing - 01:30 pm to 3:40 pm) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water



supply.

6) K/East - Vishal Hall, Varma Nagar, Kamgar Kalyan, Manjarekarwadi, Bima Nagar, Panthaky Baug, Teli Gully (Lane), Kol Dongari, Jiva Mahale Road, Sai Wadi, Jivan Vikas Kendra, Shivaji Nagar, Sambhaji Nagar, Hanuman Road, Shradhdhanand Road, Nehru Road, Tejpal Road, Shastri Nagar, Rajendra Prasad Nagar, Ambedkar Nagar, Kajuwadi and Vile-Parle East Area, Domestic Airport, Amrutnagar, Kanakia SRA, Chakala Gaothan, Chakala Vajan Kata (Normal supply timing - 05:00 pm to 08:00 pm) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

7) K/East - Pump House, Vijay Raut Road, Patilwadi, Hanjar Nagar, Zagdapada, Parsi Colony, Jijamata Road, Gundavali Hill, Ashirvad Chawl (Normal supply timing - 05:00 pm to 08:00 pm) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

8) K/East - Old Nagardas Road, Mogarapada, New Nagardas Road, Parsi Panchayat Road, RK Singh Road, Nicholaswadi Road (Normal supply timing - 08:00 pm to 10:30 pm) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

9) P/South - Bimbisar Nagar, Vanrai, SRFPP Camp, Bandrekar Wadi, (Normal supply timing - 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm) Remarks regarding supply condition- Supply will be given with low pressure.

10) P/South - ODC Ram Mandir Road Goregaon (West) (Normal supply timing - 7:45 pm to 9:15 pm) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

11) K/West - C.D. Barfiwala Road, Upashray Lane, SV.Road Andheri, Dawood Baug, Kevni Pada, Dhakusheth Pada, Malcum Baug (Garden), Andheri Market, Bhardawadi, Ambre Garden Pump (Normal supply timing - 7:30 am to 12:00 Noon) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

12) K/West - Juhu Koliwada, Juhu Tara Road (Normal supply timing - 09:00 am to 11:00 am Koliwada Supply zone KW-11) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

13) K/West - Deoraj Chawl, Swami Vivekanand Road (JVLR to Jogeshwari Bus Depot) (Normal supply timing - 11:00 am to 1:00 pm SV. Road Part 2 KW-01) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

14) K/West - Four Bungalow, D.N. Nagar, Juhu Versova Link Road (Normal supply timing - 12:15 pm to 02:10 pm Four Bungalow supply Zone KW-07) Remarks regarding supply condition- Water supply will be given with low pressure.

15) K/West - Vile Parle (West), Lallubhai Park, Lohiya Nagar, Vile Parle Gaothan, Milan Subway, Entire Juhu area. V.M. Road, Nehru Nagar. (Normal supply timing - 02:30 pm to 4:40 pm Vile Parle supply zone KW-09) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

16) K/West - Moragaon, Juhu Gaothan (Normal supply timing - 02:30 pm to 4:40 pm Moragaon supply zone KW-08) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

17) K/West - Yadav Nagar, Sahakar Road, Bandivali Hill Road, Momin Nagar, Khajur Wadi, Jogeshwari Phatak, Jogeshwari Station Road, Captain Samant Road. (Normal supply timing - 09:30 pm to 12:00 am Yadav Nagar supply zone KW-04) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

18) K/West - Gilbert Hill, Sagar City, Gaondevi Dongri, Juhu Gully (Lane), Wireless Road, Shreenath Nagar (Normal supply timing - 10:00 pm to 12:30 am Gilbert Hill supply zone KW-06) Remarks regarding supply condition- No water supply.

"The municipal administration appeals to citizens to store sufficient water and use water prudently. As a precautionary measure, citizens are requested to filter the water and use it after boiling for next 4 to 5 days," the BMC said.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Gehlot's new attack on Pilot

The tussle between ex-Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his former Deputy Sachin Pilot came to the fore once again on Tuesday after the former launched a veiled attack on the latter without taking his name for saying that he wasn't invited to Jalore for campaigning for the Lok Sabha elections. Answering a question recently on why he did not campaign in Jalore, Pilot said that he was not invited. Gehlot, while speaking to the media in UP's Amethi on Tuesday, said, "No one should make such comments during elections. One shouldn't say 'stupid' things such as 'I was not called...' Such a statement was not required." Gehlot also said that Priyanka Gandhi came for campaigning in Jalore-Sirohi. "Had he come along, he would have been accorded a warm welcome. I was invited to campaign in support of Anil Chopra in the Jaipur Rural seat. He spoke to my OSD. However, my programme could not be rescheduled. Now if I say that I was not invited by Anil Chopra, it will not look decent. Such statements would have sent a wrong message to the public that Gehlot did not come because he was not invited," the senior Congress leader said. It needs to be mentioned here that Gehlot's son Vaibhav Gehlot is contesting from Jalore on a Congress ticket. In 2019, Vaibhav Gehlot had unsuccessfully contested from Jodhpur against BJP's Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

Whether we travel home to vote or to escape the heat, trains are pivotal in our lives as in these movies

Akshay Acharya

The summer season has brought with itself a surge in travel, for which train is the most preferred mode of transport for the vast majority of people. While the scorching summer is pushing people out of their homes to cooler places for vacations, the Lok Sabha elections, being held across the country in seven phases, have further compounded the number of travellers across state borders as they exercise their right to vote. While the Indian railways have been an integral part of nation-building and the lives of its citizens, they also have had a major influence on Hindi cinema serving as an important plot point in many stories on the celluloid. Here are some Bollywood films where the trains played a pivotal role in the narrative. 'Saathiya', which was released in 2002, had the Mumbai local as an important catalyst to the love story between its lead pair. Vivek Oberoi, who made a sensational debut with 'Company' in the role of a gangster, underwent a 180-degree shift for his role of a lover in the film, which was a Hindi adaptation of 'Alai Payuthey' directed by Mani Ratnam. 'Jab We Met' is considered to be a defining film in Kareena Kapoor Khan's filmography, the one that established her as a leading female force in Hindi cinema. The story of 'Jab We Met' can't be separated from the train on which she finds Aditya Kashyap (Shahid Kapoor) without a purpose, only to later change his life for the good. Who could forget the fascination of Geet (Kareena) for the side berth? The two miss out



on the train twice and embark on a journey where they get to know more about each other. 'Baton Baton Mein', directed by Basu Chatterjee tells the story of an honest and hard-working middle class as they make their way around the Bombay of the 1970s. The director set a major part of the film in the 9:10 local that his protagonists commuted in. As legendary 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge' is

in itself, it has also given the famed scene to Hindi cinema where Raj is aboard the train, calling Simran for one last time as her father tightly holds her hand. It was at that moment when Chaudhary Baldev Singh (played by Amrish Puri) underwent a change of heart. As he understands Raj's eternal love for Simran, he lets her go with the dialogue, "Jaa Simran jaa, jee le apni zindagi."

The list would be incomplete without the mention of 'The Burning Train'. The multi-starrer film tells the story of passengers aboard a special train Super Express which suffers a sabotage. The film has quite a few elements similar to the James Cameron directorial 'Titanic' mainly in terms of the luxury and the novelty that both the modes of transport promised and a tragedy that leaves the passengers scrambling inside a limited physical space. The film was one of the most expensive films of its time given its production value. The song 'Chaiya Chaiya' deserves a special mention in this list. Although the plot of 'Dil Se..' has no relevance to the trains, it's the song that has over the years gained a cult status and why not? After all, it features some of the finest talents in our cinema including Shah Rukh Khan, Malaika Arora, Mani Ratnam, Sukhwinder, A. R. Rahman, Gulzar, Farah Khan and Santosh Sivan. The iconic song was shot on the Nilgiri Mountain Railway Line. The narrow gauge railway and the geography of Ooty posed a serious logistical challenge to the crew but, eventually they came out shining at the other end given how the song and its visuals have aged in 26 years since its release.

BJP faces tough challenge to retain supremacy amid triangular contest in Bhiwandi

Sanjay Jog

BJP nominee and Union Minister Kapil Patil, NCP(SP) candidate Suresh Mhatre and an Independent, Nilesh Sambre are locked in a triangular contest in Bhiwandi constituency which is famous for its powerloom industry and logistic activities in Thane District. Patil, who hopes to score a hat-trick, faces a tough challenge from Mhatre, who is a seasoned politician and Sambre who runs a well-known Jijau Sanghatana. While Patil and Mhatre come from the Aagri community, Sambre hails from the Kunbi community. Incidentally, Aagris and Kunbis along with the sizable Muslim community will be the deciding factor in this constituency. In addition, the three candidates cannot neglect the tribal community which is struggling to stay afloat due to the rising threat of encroachment on their lands. Patil hopes to weather anti-incumbency especially in the wake of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally at Kalyan on Wednesday and also because of praises showered upon him by his boss. Even though Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis intervened to bring together the warring Patil and party Legislator from Murbad, Kisan Kathore, the BJP is struggling to put up a show of unity which is crucial to send an "all is well" signal to the voters. However, Patil hopes to ride on PM Modi's guarantee and the support from cadres of the BJP, NCP, Shiv Sena, RPI and MNS. Patil is confident of getting overwhelming support from the Muslim community due to his outreach and a number of works carried out for their development during his two terms. On the other hand, Mhatre with his network of logistics and



storehouses is optimistic about encashing on the anti-incumbency factor against Patil due to the simmering discontent among the youth due to burgeoning unemployment, price rise and also among the Aagri and farming communities due to constraints on carrying out their traditional activities due to rapid urbanisation. Mhatre heaved a sigh of relief after the former Congress MP Suresh Mhatre opted out of the fray. Suresh Mhatre had staked his claim but Congress ultimately withdrew from the contest, adhering to the alliance dharna. Further, Mhatre expects that there won't be a division of Muslim votes despite the MIM's candidate in the fray. He hopes that Muslims will largely support him because of the Samajwadi Party's association and also due to their strong opposition to the BJP fearing change in the Constitution if it comes to power for the third time. On his part, Sambre expects victory due

to the division of votes and on the dint of his social work. Apart from that, the Prakash Ambedkar-led Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi's support is another positive for Sambre. There are 27 candidates in the fray with a total number of 20,87,244 voters. As many as 37 per cent belong to the Kunbi community, 21 per cent are Muslim, 15 per cent Aagri and 27 per cent Dalits and others. Of the six Assembly segments, the BJP represents Bhiwandi West and Murbad while Bhiwandi Rural and Kalyan West are held by Shiv Sena, Bhiwandi East by Samajwadi Party and Shahapur by NCP. The power distribution done by a franchise appointed by the state-run Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company and the issues with regard to supply has been a major issue raised by voters. They are making a strong pitch for cheaper power tariffs. The powerloom industry, once a flourishing sector, faces a survival threat after demonetisation and implementation of the GST regime amid volatile economic conditions. The industry expects time-bound solutions in the form of tax benefits.

The voters are insisting that connecting Bhiwandi with Thane and Kalyan through the Metro rail corridor will partially ease the traffic congestions in the area. Moreover, the increasing traffic jams in Bhiwandi and Kalyan, rising water scarcity and inefficient health system are some of the other important issues faced by the citizens from the constituency.

international

European Commission investigates Meta over child protection concerns

Brussels | Agencies

The European Commission announced on Thursday that it has opened investigations into Meta over child protection concerns regarding its Facebook and Instagram platforms.

The investigations concern fears the two platforms "may exploit the weaknesses and inexperience of minors and cause addictive behaviour," according to a commission press release. Another concern is "rabbit hole" effects that "draw you into more and more disturbing content," a commission official said. The EU executive is also concerned about minors' access to inappropriate content, as well as privacy.

The two probes into Facebook and Instagram, respectively, fall under the European Union's Digital Services Act (DSA), a broad online content law that requires large platforms to assess and mitigate various risks arising from the use of their services, especially for children.

"We are not convinced that Meta has done enough to comply with the DSA obligations -



to mitigate the risks of negative effects to the physical and mental health of young Europeans on its platforms Facebook and Instagram," said EU industry commissioner Thierry Breton on X. A commission official explained that a "rabbit hole effect" is created when a platform's algorithms "feed users with content of a certain type - for example leading to depression, or unrealistic body images - that can foster mental health issues in children."

Meta may also be failing to use age verification tools that are "reasonable, proportionate and effective" to prevent minors from accessing content that is inappropriate for children, the commission's press

release said.

The commission will also investigate whether the company is falling short of "DSA obligations to put in place appropriate and proportionate measures to ensure a high level of privacy, safety and security for minors."

The EU executive will pay particular attention to the responsibility of the EU's 27 member states, whereas the European Commission is the DSA enforcer for the large platforms.

Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) have to pay a yearly "supervisory fee" to cover the commission's costs, capped at 0.05 per cent of each VLOP's global annual revenue.

The company is already subject to DSA investigations over its handling of political advertising, ahead of the forthcoming European Parliament elections on June 6-9.

The commission is also investigating TikTok over similar child protection concerns.

Other DSA provisions - such as obligations to have mechanisms allowing users to flag illegal content - also apply to smaller platforms.

But heaviest fines are only applicable to very large platforms. Monitoring smaller platforms' DSA compliance is the responsibility of the EU's 27 member states, whereas the European Commission is the DSA enforcer for the large platforms.

Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) have to pay a yearly "supervisory fee" to cover the commission's costs, capped at 0.05 per cent of each VLOP's global annual revenue.

Slovakian President convenes cross-party meeting after attack on PM Fico

Bratislava | Agencies

Following the assassination attempt on Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, outgoing President Zuzana Caputova and her successor Peter Pellegrini have invited all political parties for consultations. "Let's get out of the vicious circle of hatred and mutual accusations," Caputova appealed to the public in a televised speech in Bratislava on Thursday. She said the attack on Fico had been an individual act. "But the tense atmosphere of hatred was our collective work." During the speech, Caputova and Pellegrini made a joint appearance. "We want to send a signal of understanding in this tense situation," said Caputova, from the liberal Progressive Slovakia party. Both politicians once again condemned the attack on Fico. Pellegrini, who joined Fico's coalition, called on the political parties to suspend or at least limit their election campaigns ahead of the European elec-



tions in June until the situation has calmed down. After their speech, both left to attend a special meeting of the Security Council at the government office. Pellegrini and Caputova met frequently for talks after Fico's third term as prime minister in the years after 2018 - both during Pellegrini's time in government from 2018 to 2020 as Fico's successor and during his years in opposition.

It was only when Pellegrini joined Fico's coalition that their personal relationship cooled.

Five Israeli soldiers killed in Gaza by errant Israeli tank shelling



Jerusalem | Agencies

Five Israeli soldiers were killed and seven others injured, three of them seriously, by errant Israeli tank fire in the Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a statement on Thursday.

The casualties were with a force that entered Gaza City and seized buildings as part of a resumed attack on the refugee camp, Xinhua news agency reported.

Two IDF tanks, positioned several dozen meters away, apparently spotted a gun in a window of one of the buildings and fired two shells towards the target.

The army said it was investigating why the soldiers were misidentified as Palestinian militants.

A total of 626 soldiers have been killed in Hamas' Oct. 7 attack and Israel's ensuing attacks on Gaza, according to the IDF tally.

Indonesia's Ile Lewotolok Volcano erupts, forcing flight to cancel landing

Jakarta | Agencies

Ile Lewotolok Volcano in Indonesia's East Nusa Tenggara erupted on Thursday, causing a flight to cancel its landing at Wunopito Airport. A plane of Wings Air on the Kupang-Wunopito Lembata route with 40 passengers was supposed to land at Wunopito Airport at 11 a.m. local time, but the pilot decided to return to the departure airport, Xinhua news agency reported. "The pilot saw indications of volcanic ash near the landing strip, so he took the plane back to Kupang, for security reasons," said head of Wunopito Airport Muhammad Syaiful Zuhri.



Wunopito Airport due to volcanic ash, added Zuhri. Previously, the same incidents occurred on May 7 and May 14.

The mountain released one earthquake eruption and 102 earthquake gusts since 06.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. local time, according to the Ile Lewotolok Volcano Monitoring Post.

Several wounded in Switzerland knife attack

Geneva | Agencies

Several passers-by were injured in an indiscriminate knife attack in the northern Swiss town of Zofingen, according to the local police.

Police said on social media on Wednesday evening that the perpetrator had been apprehended by special forces after hiding in a building for two hours.

The victims had been transported to the hospital with stab wounds, Xinhua news agency quoted police as saying.

A large-scale police operation continued in the evening. The authorities advised people to avoid areas near the local



train station. It was still unclear if there was more than one attacker, police said.

Jerusalem/Beirut | Agencies

Dozens of rockets were fired by Lebanese armed group Hezbollah at northern Israel on Thursday in retaliation for overnight Israeli airstrikes in eastern Lebanon, Israeli and Lebanese sources said.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a statement that about 45 launches were identified crossing from Lebanon toward the annexed Golan Heights and the community of Zarit in the Galilee, triggering sirens in the country's north, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Several of the launches were successfully intercepted by the IDF Aerial Defense Array," the military said, adding that no injuries have been reported.

Later, the IDF carried out strikes in southern Lebanon, saying it targeted the sources of fire.

Hezbollah said in a statement that its fighters launched "more than 60 Katyusha rockets," targeting several Israeli military posts in the Golan Heights. The group said



that the strikes were a response to Israeli attacks overnight between Wednesday and Thursday in the Baalbek area in eastern Lebanon. Tensions along the Lebanon-Israel border escalated on October 8, 2023,

following a barrage of rockets launched by Hezbollah toward Israel in solidarity with Hamas' attack on Israel the day before. Israel then retaliated by firing heavy artillery toward southeastern Lebanon.



BUZZ OF BY-ELECTIONS IN MADHYA PRADESH

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Voting for the Lok Sabha has been held in four phases in Madhya Pradesh and the results are yet to come, but the murmur regarding the assembly by-elections has increased. There is a reason for this - three Congress MLAs have joined BJP, while five MLAs are contesting the Lok Sabha elections. By-elections are scheduled to be held in three to eight assembly constituencies in the state in the coming time. This is possible because three Congress MLAs, Kamlesh Shah from Amarwada in Chhindwara, Nirmala Sapre from Bina assembly constituency in Sagar district and Ramniwas Rawat from Vijaypur assembly seat in Sheopur district have joined BJP. In this way, by-elections are certain to be held on these three seats in the coming time. Apart from this, BJP and Congress have made



five MLAs candidates for Lok Sabha.

There are 29 Lok Sabha seats in the state, where voting has been held in four phases and the election results will be declared on June 4. Present MLAs are contesting elections at five places. BJP has made Budhni MLA and former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan its candidate from Vidisha. Congress has fielded MLA from Satna Siddharth

Kushwaha from Satna parliamentary constituency, MLA from Dindori Omkar Singh Markam from Mandla parliamentary constituency, MLA from Pushprajgarh Phundel Marco from Shahdol and MLA from Tarana Mahesh Parmar from Ujjain parliamentary constituency.

In this way, by-elections are certain in the state due to the change of party by three MLAs, while there is a possibility of by-elections at other places also depending on the victory and defeat of the five MLAs who are contesting the Lok Sabha elections. This possibility has already activated many contenders to become candidates in the by-elections.

A round of discussions have started within BJP and Congress regarding the assembly by-elections. There is a possibility that BJP will field only MLAs from Congress from those three places, while Congress can bet on new faces. Apart from this, after the results of Lok Sabha elections, both the parties will start searching for a fresh candidate.

22 out of 35 Congress MLAs who defected in Madhya Pradesh are in anonymity: Jitu Patwari

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the last decade in Madhya Pradesh, the party has suffered a big loss due to the defection of 35 Congress MLAs. Once it even lost power to Congress. Congress state president Jitu Patwari has claimed that out of the 35 MLAs who switched parties, 22 have gone into oblivion.

Jitu Patwari wrote on social media platform, "The only truth is that in the last 10 years, 35 Congress MLAs left Congress and joined BJP. But, out of them, the political journey of 22 leaders has almost gone into oblivion. Most of the leaders either lost the elections or did not get tickets. Found. Out of these 35 leaders, there are currently only nine MLAs and only four of them have reached the post of minister."

Accusing the BJP, Patwari said, "BJP wants to eliminate the opposition on the basis of



fear and greed. Some opportunists are scared and are changing their minds. But, the public is also seeing and understanding their situation. Sometimes friend, com-

panion. I have full sympathy towards such supportive faces. I also wish that God helps them if they consider politics as a means of public service."

Leopard attacks villager who went to pluck tendu leaves in Dewas

Team Absolute | Dewas

A leopard attacked a villager who was collecting tendu leaves in Dewas district of Madhya Pradesh. The villager injured in this attack has been brought to the primary health center for treatment.

According to the information received, Jagdish Mali was engaged in plucking tendu leaves in the forest between Amala-Haran village under Vikrampur sub range of Khategaon.

During this time a leopard attacked him. The friends who were plucking tendu leaves made noise and lit the fire. Then the leopard ran away from the spot. Jagdish, who was injured by the leopard attack, has nail marks at



many places on his body. It has been told that the district officials had given instructions to start pluck-

ing tendu leaves from Thursday, but the villagers started plucking tendu leaves even before that.

Financial assistance of Rs 4 lakh each to the families of eight deceased in Indore road accident

Team Absolute | Indore/Bhopal

Eight people lost their lives in a road accident near Betma, Indore, Madhya Pradesh. Expressing grief over this accident, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has approved an assistance amount of Rs 4 lakh each to the families of the deceased.

It is reported that a Bolero collided with a sand-filled dumper near Betma on Indore-Ahmedabad road late on Wednesday night. Eight people died on the spot in this accident. The people traveling in the vehicle were going towards Guna from Alirajpur when they met with an accident.

On receiving information about the accident, Additional Superintendent of Police Rupesh Dwivedi and others reached the spot. A police card has also been found from one of the deceased, Kamlesh, in which it has been



revealed that he was posted in Shivpuri.

Police are investigating the matter and are searching for the unknown vehicle.

Expressing grief over this accident, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said, "The news of untimely demise of eight precious lives in a road accident on Indore-Ahmedabad highway under Betma police station of Indore district is extremely sad and heart-wrenching. May God rest their departed souls." It is a prayer to give place to Shri's feet and strength to the bereaved family to bear this deep sorrow.

He said that financial assistance of Rs 4 lakh each will be provided to the families of the deceased from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Besides, instructions have been given to the district administration for proper treatment of the person injured in the accident.

'DENGUE WILL BE ELIMINATED BY UNITING THE COMMUNITY'

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Any work is not completed without participation, hence public participation is necessary for every work, with public participation we all will definitely eliminate dengue from Bhopal district. On the occasion of Dengue Day on Thursday, through the Department of Public Health and Medical Education Pledge for dengue control was administered to the people present during the labor health camp jointly organized by District Malaria Office and Embed Project Family Health India Bhopal.

Under the direction of Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr. Prabhakar Tiwari and guidance of District Malaria Officer Akhlesh Dubey, National Dengue Day was organized by Malaria Team and BCCF of Embed



Project in all zones, in which this year the theme is Connect with Community, Control and motivated people to participate on the topic of controlling dengue by connecting the community. During this period, the team created awareness among the people everywhere in the health camps

organized. Health camp team, malaria team and embed team were present. Various activities are being organized in Bhopal district under the vector borne disease control program for the eradication of mosquito borne diseases. This year the main theme of National Dengue Day by

the Government of India is "Connect with Community, Dengue Control" i.e. control dengue by connecting with the community. Public participation plays an important role in making any program 100% successful, hence together we will make Bhopal district dengue free.

In this sequence, there is an appeal to all of you not to allow water to accumulate around the house, dengue mosquito thrives in clean water, this mosquito lays eggs in seven days, hence drain the water within seven days and keep the water covered. In case of fever, go to your nearest health center and get yourself checked and take the medicine prescribed by the doctor for a regular period. Dengue mosquitoes usually bite during the day, so be sure to use available means to protect yourself from mosquitoes during the day.

NATURE PAINTING WORKSHOP

Bhopal: Regional Museum of Natural History, Bhopal (A Regional Centre of National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi) organized a Nature Painting Workshop on 16th May, 2024 under Summer Nature Study Programme-Green Cub. 18 students participated in the programme. Shri Navin Kumar, Artist of the Museum demonstrated to participants that how to make nature painting easily.

During the programme, participants made nature painting of mountains, waterfall, rivers, clouds, trees, animals, birds under the learned guidance of Navin Kumar.

Manik Lal Gupta, Scientist-C was the coordinator of this programme.

Congress formed a flying squad of 55 members, will inform the police about the Akshay Bam

Team Absolute | Indore

A 55-member surveillance flying squad has been formed by the Congress to arrest the fugitive Lok Sabha election candidate of the Congress party and the accused of Section 307, Akshay Bam, who stabbed the back of the Congress party, this cheater and traitor.

Acting President of City Congress Committee and State President of Madhya Pradesh Rajiv Vikas Kendra, Devendra Singh Yadav, while making the above disclosure, said that this flying squad will keep a watch on Akshay Bam accused of section 307 in their respective areas and wherever it is seen or hidden, the police will immediately inform. By giving information to the control room number 0731-2522500 or to the police officer of the concerned police station area or to the Police Commissioner number 7049100306, Deputy Police Commissioner number 7049100411, the person will cooperate in getting arrested.

According to Yadav, Section 307 was increased on Akshay Bom on the orders of the court, Akshay Bom was to appear in the court on 10th, but he did not appear in the court, was seen in many programs in



Indore itself, warrant on the orders of the court.

Even after leaving, on the day of voting on May 13, he was seen roaming around the Sindh Colony polling booths of Assembly-4, on which Indore Right to Information Cell Chairman Girish Joshi and Indore Divisional Spokesperson Vivek Khandelwal followed him to give information to the police. And he ran away from there.

PM Modi made a record of lying, targeting a community: Digvijay Singh

Team Absolute | Prayagraj/Bhopal

Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set a record of lying. In many public meetings, he is directly targeting a community by taking its name and doing politics of hatred. Despite this, he is trying to cover up his statement. The former CM said that the consequences of the politics that Modi is doing on the basis of religion are going to be very dire. He is working to divide the society and the country.

Congress leader Digvijay Singh was talking to journalists at the residence of the party's Rajya Sabha MP Pramod Tiwari in Civil Lines on Thursday. He said that this election is quite different from other elections. Institutions like ED and CBI are being misused a lot in this election. Preparations are being made to change the Constitution of the country. BJP included scam-ridden Ajit Panwar in its party and gave him the post of Deputy Chief Minister. Leaders of other parties appear corrupt to BJP. When the same leader joins BJP, he becomes clean and tidy. He said that the India Alliance is contesting the elections with full strength. UP and Bihar have always turned the tables. This time too these two states are ready to oust BJP from power. Said that the genie of hate politics



which Modi had let out of the bottle to gain power, is now not coming out of the bottle despite Modi's wishes. Today the entire country is being thrown into the fire of hatred.

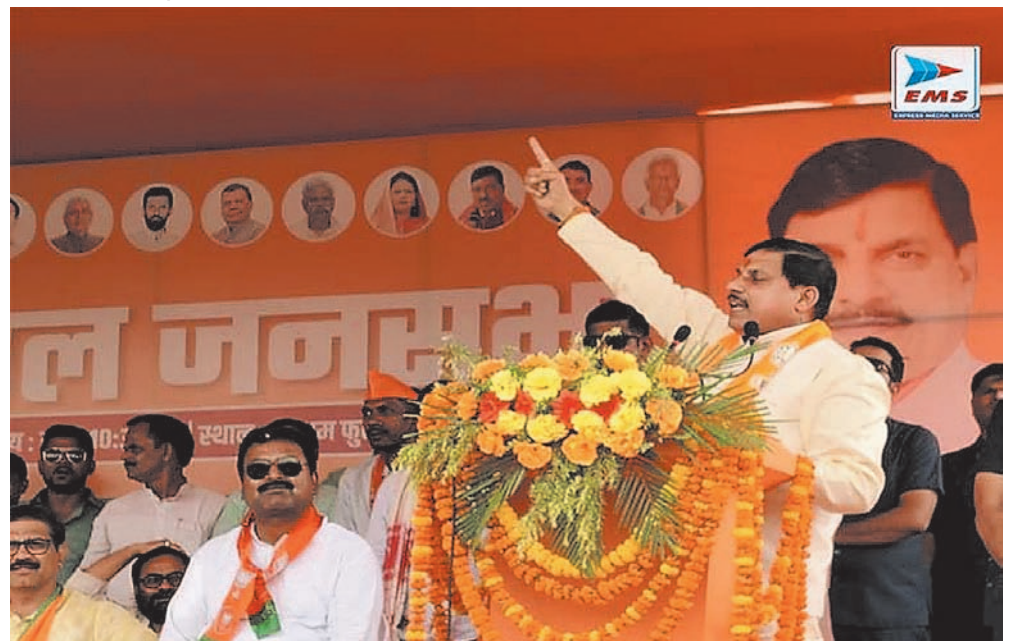
He refused to react to Kejriwal's statement that Modi would retire next year. He said that this time Congress is winning many seats in Madhya Pradesh. BJP's dream of a clean sweep will not be fulfilled. Said that if the alliance loses the elections, it will be the fault of EVMs. Last time BJP people were saying 300 crossed and it was right. This time these people are saying that it has crossed 400, which means that EVMs have been tampered with.

Will not let the country be tarnished by the actions of dishonest people: Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, while addressing the public meeting organized in Jayanagar in support of BJP candidate Manish Jaiswal from Hazaribagh (Jharkhand) Lok Sabha seat, Jail Ground, Chhatro, Barhi and BJP candidate Annapurna Devi from Koderna Lok Sabha seat, said that the Congress Party Have done the work of tarnishing the country. Congress has done the work of increasing the respect of the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that neither will he eat nor will he let him eat, that is why the dishonest people are in jail.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that on one hand Rahul Gandhi is dreaming of becoming the Prime Minister, but on the other hand he is not finding candidates to contest the elections. Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi say that compete with me, I am not afraid, but how to compete, five generations of Congress were born in Delhi, but the people of Congress do not have the courage to compete in Delhi. It is the misfortune of this country that the British left the country, but left the Congress. They had spoiled our education policy, where are their ideals? Dr. Mohan Yadav said that the Congress Party has committed the great sin of tarnishing the country. Ruled the country for 70 years, but could not build the temple of Lord Shri Ram. Always kept



fighting Hindus and Muslims and continued doing his politics. Section 370 was imposed in Kashmir and when Prime Minister Narendra Modiji took the initiative to remove it, there were obstacles in that too. Could not implement law like triple talaq in the

country. Made the lives of Muslim sisters and daughters hell. Today the Muslim sisters and daughters of the country are living a happy life because Prime Minister Narendra Modi implemented the law like Triple Talaq in the country.



Olivia Culpo wants to stick to old wedding tradition for wedding day

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress-model Olivia Culpo, who is all set to tie the knot with football player Christian McCaffrey, has talked about the one thing she will refuse to do when it comes to getting married. "I know for sure we're not going to do a first look, so he won't see me until I'm walking down the aisle. I think that that's a little less common these days," Culpo told People magazine, reports femalefirst.co.uk. Without revealing the exact wedding date, the model said that she is already "excited" to walk down the aisle and see her groom "at the end". Culpo also shared that she's keen on having her dog Oliver as "the ring bearer" on the day. "I think anything can happen at any moment when you are on the day. And I'm just trying to prepare as much as possible and then let it lie. Whatever happens, will happen. "At least I know I prepared as much as I could, but I'm really taking a laid-back approach to all of this," she added.

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Game of Thrones' star Sophie Turner revealed that she was not sure about stepping into motherhood in her early 20s and even considered terminating her first pregnancy.

Turner spoke about how she considered not keeping the child and discussed the situation with her estranged husband, Joe Jonas.

In Bali, Turner found out she was pregnant and said that sat on the news for a week.

"Maybe because I was so young, I sat on it for a week," the actress told British Vogue, reports pagesix.com.

Turner said she threw the pregnancy test at Joe Jonas, asking, "What do you think we should do? Do you think we should have it?"

The actress shared that she didn't know if she wanted to be a mother at the time and even spoke to therapists about her feelings.

"When you're in your early 20s, life is so frivolous," she said. Turner said that she "didn't know" if she "wanted to be a mother," but after discussing it with Joe, "something changed" in her.

"I just knew I had to have her," the 'Dark Phoenix' star said. Joe and Turner welcomed their daughter, Willa, in 2020. Two years later, they had another daughter, Delphine.

The actress added: "Because my ex and I travel so much, I wanted Willa to have a sibling. I wanted them to have each other. They're so much fun, total girlie girls, and absolute rays of sunshine in my life."



SOPHIE TURNER REVEALS SHE CONTEMPLATED TERMINATING FIRST PREGNANCY WITH JOE JONAS



My relationship with Dan is a very complex one : Victoria Justice

Los Angeles | Agencies

Victoria Justice is addressing her "complex" relationship with former Nickelodeon producer Dan Schneider. Two months after Quiet on Set: The Dark Side of Kids TV aired on Investigation Discovery, the Victorious alum, 31, opened up about her experience working with Schneider in a new interview, which was published on Wednesday, May 15.

"I'm not condoning any of his behavior," Justice insisted to Marie Claire, before adding, "At the end of the day, my relationship with Dan is a very complex one: I met him when I was 12 years old, and he's the person that gave me this big break. He completely changed my life. Most likely, I wouldn't be here where I am today if it weren't for him, and for him seeing something in me. For that I will always be grateful."

The former Zoey 101 cast member also acknowledged Schneider's apology, in which he admitted regretting his past behavior while working on various Nickelodeon sets.

"After watching his apology, I think he recognizes that he did a lot of things wrong," Justice said, adding, "And I think if he could step back into a time machine, he would do a lot of things differently." Nevertheless, Justice noted that she is "definitely one of the people on that list" that Schneider owes an apology to.

THRILLED TO HAVE HER DAUGHTER CALL HER BY HER STAGE NAME : KATY PERRY

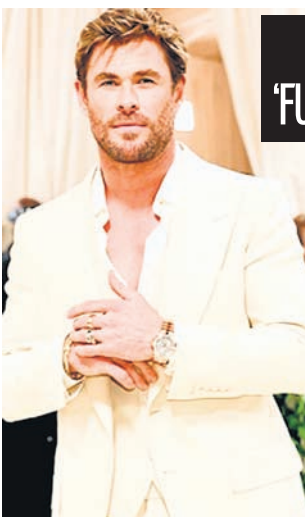
Los Angeles | Agencies

Katy Perry recalled a hilarious story of her and Orlando Bloom's daughter Daisy Dove calling her "Katy Perry" during an appearance on HSN's The List With Debbie D on May 9. The "Teenage Dream" singer, 39, revealed that she wasn't all too pleased when her three-year-old daughter began calling her by her stage name unprompted.

While talking about her daughter, Katy showed that she wasn't really thrilled to have her daughter call her by her stage name. "She called me Katy Perry yesterday," she said on the show, via E! News. "I was like 'Uh uh girl, I'm mama to you.' She's like, 'You're also Katy Perry. I'm like, 'Uh uh. I'm mama. Don't you call me Katy Perry, I'm mama!'"

For those who may not know "Katy Perry" isn't the American Idol judge's real name. Katy was born Kathryn Elizabeth Hudson, but she changed her name to Katy Perry to avoid any confusion with actress Kate Hudson. Her albums have been released under the stage name.

Katy shared a few other stories about her daughter throughout her appearance on the Home Shopping Network. It's clear that she and her fiancé Orlando Bloom, 47, are very loving parents to their girl. The popstar shared her reasoning behind her daughter's middle-name Dove. "I like the alliteration of the DD," she said. "Dove is peace, I want her to be a peace maker. Even though she is just wild and fun and crazy, I just think there's a peace that I want to surround her and for her exude."

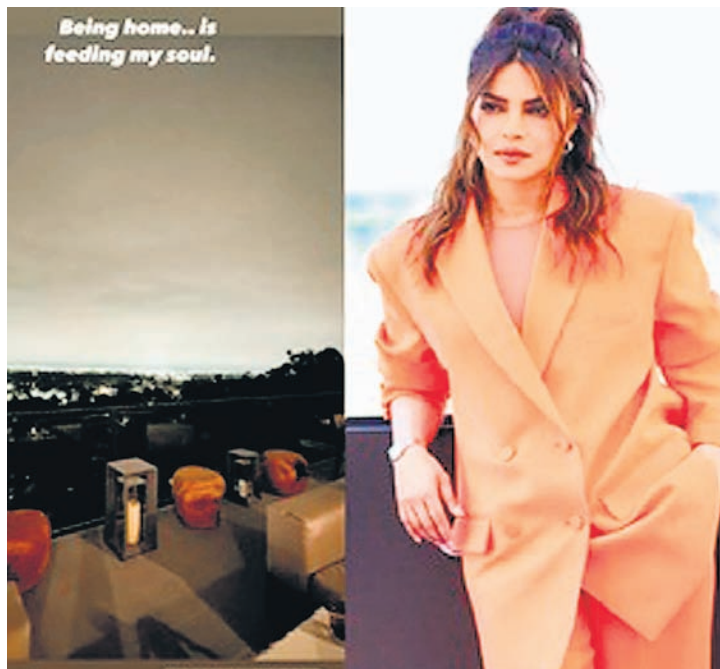


CHRIS HEMSWORTH IS OVERCOME BY EMOTIONS AS 'FURIOSA' GETS 6-MINUTE STANDING OVATION AT CANNES

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Chris Hemsworth and Anya Taylor-Joy-starrer 'Furiosa' received a thunderous response at the 77th Cannes Film Festival. The audience at the world premiere of director George Miller's prequel, 'Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga', gave the high-octane action film a six-minute standing ovation at the Cannes Film Festival. Taylor-Joy blew kisses into the camera, while Hemsworth looked teary-eyed at the rapturous response. "We worked very hard on this film, and it'll be very interesting to see what you make of it," Miller said briefly, taking a microphone to address the crowd. "Thank you for having us." Set in a post-apocalyptic world before the events of 'Fury Road', 'Furiosa' steps into the shoes of Charlize Theron for the title role, reports variety.com. The 'Fury Road' prequel was one of the most-anticipated premieres at this year's Cannes.

Priyanka Chopra is back in LA, says 'being home is feeding my soul'



Mumbai | Agencies

Priyanka Chopra Jonas is ecstatic to be back in Los Angeles after shooting for her film 'Head of State' in France.

Priyanka took to her Instagram stories and shared her happiness. The actress posted a picture from her balcony along with a glimpse of her home's interior.

"Being home... is feeding my soul," she described her feeling after being back.

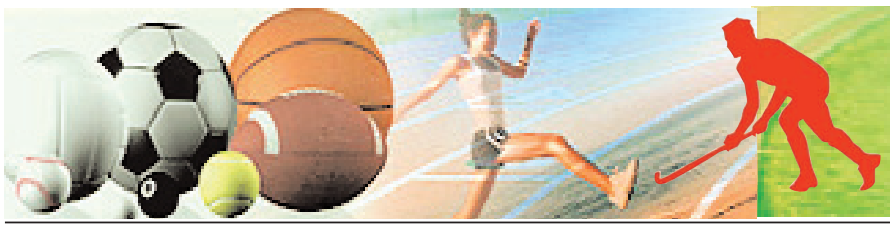
The actress had been shooting for 'Head of State' in Nice, France. The film also stars Idris Elba and John Cena. It is an action-comedy film directed by Ilya Naishuller.

On May 8, Priyanka shared that she had wrapped up shooting and announced that the film would be released on a digital platform. To mark the completion, the 41-year-old actress posted a reel on Instagram, featuring moments from the film's set.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Chloe Bailey



ELORDA CUP 2024

Nikhat Zareen, three other Indian women boxers cruise into finals

Astana (Kazakhstan) | Agencies

Reigning world champion Nikhat Zareen registered a sensational 5-0 win over Kazakhstan's Tomiris Myrzakul to enter the women's 52kg final at the Elorda Cup 2024 here on Thursday. Besides Nikhat, Minakshi (48kg), Anamika (50kg) and Manisha (60kg) also made their way into the finals with comfortable wins.

Minakshi and Manisha put up similar dominating displays in their semifinals to grab 5-0 unanimous victories against Kazakh boxers Gulnaz Buribayeva and Tangatar Assem respectively.

Anamika, on the other hand, was adjudged victorious after her opponent Kazakhstan's Gulnar Turapbay was disqualified for excessive holding after three warn-



ings. Meanwhile, Sonu (63kg) and Manju Bamboriya (66kg) ended their campaigns with bronze medals after suffering contrasting defeats in their last four stage clashes.

Sonu fought valiantly against Uzbekistan's Zieda Yarasheva but ended up on a losing side with a 2-3 scoreline whereas Manju Bamboriya faced a tough 0-5 loss against China's Liu Yang.

Shalakra Singh Sansanwal (70kg) and Monika (81+ kg) will play in their semifinals later on Thursday.

Four Indian men pugilists Yaiphaba Singh Soibam (48kg), Abhishek Yadav (67kg), Vishal (86kg) and Gaurav Chauhan (92+kg) will play their semifinal bouts on Friday.

The finals will be played on Saturday.

SHOOTING: ANJUM, SWAPNIL POST FIRST WIN OF OLYMPIC SELECTION TRIALS



Bhopal | Agencies

Olympian Anjum Moudgil and Paris Olympics quota winner Swapnil Kusale, posted their first victories of the ongoing Rifle and Pistol Olympic Selection Trials (OST) 3&4, winning the women's and men's 50M Rifle 3 Positions (3P) OST T3

respectively here at MP State Shooting Academy range on Thursday.

The men's 3P final was the first event on schedule and Swapnil, who had finished second in qualifications on Wednesday with a score of 587, shot 463.7 to lord it over Akhil Sheoran, who finished second with 461.6. Local lad and qualifications topper

Aishwarya Tomar shot 451.9 to finish third, being eliminated after the 44th shot of the 45-shot final.

In the women's 3P final which followed, Anjum Moudgil shot 463.9 to leave India number one Sift Kaur Samra 1.9 points behind in second. Yet another local, Ashi Chouksey, took third with 447.3.

'RETIRING AS A LEGEND': FIFA PAY TRIBUTE TO CHHETRI WITH MESSI, RONALDO COMPARISON

New Delhi | Agencies

Following Sunil Chhetri's official announcement in which the striker announced that he will be playing his last game for India against Kuwait on June 6, many boards, teams and players have come out pay tribute to the Indian captain's stellar career.

The official handle for the FIFA World Cup has posted a tribute for Chhetri as well which included the iconic photo of him standing with Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo on a podium, which signifies the top three active international goal scorers.

The picture was coupled with a caption, "Retiring as a legend".

"Sunil Chhetri, the world's third-highest active international goalscorer, will play his final game for Indian Football in next month's FIFA World Cup qualifiers," added the official account for the FIFA World Cup on X (formerly known as Twitter).

The 39-year old played his 150th game for his country against Afghanistan last month. He has scored 94



goals so far in his international career with fans hoping he finds the back of the net at least one more time in the blue tigers jersey during the game vs Kuwait at Salt Lake Stadium.

FIFA World Cup's official account also posted a video of Chhetri's previous interview in which he talked about the comparisons made between him, Messi and Ronaldo.

"Some of the fans go overboard and think about comparing (with Messi & Ronaldo) but there are footballing fans who understand there is no comparison between the kind of players that we are but I will definitely compete with them with all my might in terms of giving the best for my country. There I probably would not lose," Chhetri had said to FIFA +

Playing against Pakistan tricky as they and India do not play much against each other : Harbhajan Singh

New Delhi | Agencies

Harbhajan Singh, former off-spinner and member of the 2007 Men's T20 World Cup winning team, believes it will be a tricky time for India when they face Pakistan in the upcoming edition of the mega event as both countries don't play much against each other internationally.

It's little less than a month now for the highly-anticipated 2024 Men's T20 World Cup Group A match between India and Pakistan to be held at the newly-built Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York on June 9.

In the seven meetings between these two teams in the Men's T20 World Cup, India have emerged victorious six times. The last time the two teams faced off internationally was in the Men's T20 World Cup in October 2022 inside a packed Melbourne Cricket Ground, where Virat Kohli's sensational 82 not out helped India get a thrilling four-wicket win over Pakistan.

"At the end of the day, playing against Pakistan is always (tricky) as both countries do not play much against each other. We do not know much about their strong and weak zones but the Indian management keeps track of every player and



their strong and weak zones."

"In the bowling department too, Pakistan bowlers keep themselves mentally and physically strong. These aspects will be taken care of by the Indian team. These things will come into play when both sides will battle it out on the field," said Harbhajan while responding to an IANS query during an episode of the 'Star Sports Press Room' show.

Pakistan's unpredictability factor along with how the New York pitch would behave also adds as a challenge for India. But Harbhajan thinks the Indian team being more aware about their own game and taking decisions based on the on-ground conditions will be key.

"It also depends on what decision you take on that particular day. You know Virat Kohli plays

cover drive beautifully but bowlers still check him in the same area to get an outside edge in the slip. These chances you have to take according to the conditions. It is not important how much you know about your opponent but how much you are aware of your game. That is what matters the most and everything else is basic," he added.

Manika, Sharath to lead India's six-member TT squad at Paris Olympics

New Delhi | Agencies

As women's table tennis star Manika Batra and Commonwealth Games medalist Sharath Kamal will spearhead the team events of Indian women and men's challenges, respectively, at the Paris Olympics in what will be the first-ever participation of our squads at the Games.

"The senior selection committee of the Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI), which met here on Thursday, picked a six-member squad (three in each section) as per the Olympics norms, besides naming the individuals who would compete in the singles events," the TTFI said in a statement.

Achanta Sharath Kamal, Harmeet Desai, and Manav Thakkar will form the three-member men's team, while Manika Batra, Sreeja Akula and Archana Kamath will be squad members in the women's category.



The "Alternate Player" in each section would be G. Sathiyam and Ayhika Mukherjee, it said.

In the men's singles, Sharath and Harmeet will compete and it will be Manika and Sreeja in the women's event.

Since the selection of the squads and the individuals were as per the

already pronounced TTFI criteria, three players "got selected themselves" because of their consistent performances over time and world rankings.

"However, there was a debate over the third player for the women's squad. After Manika and Sreeja Akula walked in on the back of their higher

world rankings (top 50). Archana Kamath made it to the team as the third player. The Bengaluru paddler edged Ayhika Mukherjee out as the former scored over the latter on several counts, including her world ranking (No.103), 33 places ahead of Ayhika.

"As for the men, Sharath picked himself as the top-ranked Indian at No. 40, while Hareem (No. 63) and Manav (No. 62) were separated by one slot in WR. Though both made it to the team composition, National champion Harmeet got the selectors' nod based on his international (better win-loss proportion to his participation) and national performances," the statement further read.

Incidentally, Massimo Costantini's presence as a special invitee at the meeting also added teeth as the foreign expert's inputs proved handy in the selection of the squads, it added.

Premier League: Chelsea beat Brighton to boost European hopes



Brighton (UK) | Agencies

Chelsea maintained their European charge as they moved up to sixth in the Premier League table with a 2-1 win over Brighton & Hove Albion.

The win means Chelsea head into their final game of the season at home to Bournemouth on Sunday knowing victory would guarantee us European football next season.

Cole Palmer's 22nd Premier League goal of the season and his 27th in all competitions, plus a second from Christopher Nkunku helped the Blues move sixth, three points above Newcastle

United and Manchester United in seventh and eighth respectively.

The game's opening goal arrived just after the half-hour mark when Palmer stooped low to head Cucurella's cross from the left beyond the diving Verbruggen and into the far, top corner. Chelsea might have had a second had it not been for an impressive block from Lewis Dunk as a slick move down the right saw Palmer side-foot Gusto's low cross goalwards, only to be stopped by the England defender, Chelsea website reports.

Chelsea thought the second had arrived in injury time when Benoit Badiashile crossed expertly to the far post and the ball was nodded in from close range by Jackson, but the forward had just strayed into an offside position.

With nine minutes of injury-time, there was still time for Jackson to go close once more before the break when he toe-poked Palmer's low cross over the bar. But the first-half action wasn't finished there, as another dangerous cross from Lamptey on the right picked out the head of Joao Pedro and he rattled the crossbar.

The game's next goal came in the 64th minute when Gusto drove inside the penalty area and pulled the ball across the box for Nkunku to direct the ball past Verbruggen. Brighton piled on the pressure from there and Simon Adingra struck a post on the volley before a low cross from the left by Joao Pedro was poked home at the near post by Danny Welbeck.



F1: Imola all set for thrilling race weekend after Lando Norris' historic win in Miami

Imola (Italy) | Agencies

Following the Miami Grand Prix, the Formula 1 race weekend returns to screens across the globe for the iconic Emilia Romagna Grand Prix at the historic Imola circuit. A track with a unique history linked to Formula 1 greats Ayrton Senna and Roland Ratzenberger, Imola will once again open its doors from May 17 - 19, following a hiatus in 2023 due to adverse weather conditions.

As anticipation builds for the race weekend, Formula 1 fans can expect the unexpected when it comes to the Emilia Romagna region. Known for its

unpredictable weather, racing enthusiasts will be mindful of the possibility of rain looming large over the weekend, which could promise an extra layer of excitement to the racing action.

Holding a special place in the hearts of Formula 1 enthusiasts, Imola holds special significance to Ferrari fans across the globe - often considered the home of the icon 'The Prancing Horse'. As one of the oldest circuits in the world, its anti-clockwise layout will also present challenges unlike any other - testing the skills of drivers and teams alike.

Following Lando Norris's breakthrough victory in Miami courtesy of

McLaren's significant upgrades, all eyes will now turn to Ferrari, and Mercedes as they look to respond with developments at Imola. With Scuderia keen to perform in front of their passionate tifosi, expectations will be at an all-time high for the iconic red of Italy.

While Redbull's Max Verstappen continues to dominate in the early stages of the season with his four wins in six races, Ferrari will also be optimistic following flashes of brilliance from Carlos Sainz in Australia. As the battle for supremacy intensifies, fans can truly expect the unexpected at the legendary circuit.



I just want to have fun with fashion : **Bhumi Pednekar**

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Bhumi Pednekar revealed that she struggled with confidence while growing up and said that she turned to fashion as a form of self-discovery. "When I was growing up, I struggled with feeling confident, especially because of the pressure to fit into certain beauty ideals. But instead of letting that define me, I turned to fashion as a form of self-discovery," Bhumi said.

The actress added: "As I've gotten older, my relationship and understanding of beauty and fashion have evolved."

Bhumi said that it's not just about looking good anymore or following trends. "It's about embracing my individuality, expressing my personality, and celebrating what makes me unique. Today, fashion and beauty are a medium through which I can express myself, my emotional canvas, and my state of mind."

Even though Bhumi has received mixed views over her fashion and style statement, Bhumi will still experiment with her looks as she loves it.

"I love experimenting. I just want to have fun with fashion, and I think I'm doing this with all my heart, which is why people are appreciating my fashion-forward turn. It is good when I can work both ends of the spectrum - from relatable to edgy fashion," she said.

The actress added: "People tend to box someone, and it happened to me too. In maximum films that I have done so far, I have played a girl from a small town, and that has set the perception that I can look amazing being this girl next door."

Bhumi loves it that way, but her fashion is to shatter that perception and show people who she really is and how she wants to be seen.

"I'm a young, confident Indian woman who is expressing herself through fashion, and I'm enjoying the love that my looks are getting," said Bhumi.

I feel that you need to be on top of your game : **Kiran Rao**

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Basking in the warm reception accorded to 'Laapataa Ladies', Kiran Rao has a message for all aspiring screenwriters: be on top of your game. Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the 15th KASHISH Pride Film Festival, Rao said: "I always feel that there are some films that do well and some that don't. In order to be relevant, you have to make something that speaks to you as an audience."

A good story, according to Rao, is "something that you resonate with, something that you find interesting and important to talk about."

She added: "If it is important to you, then you will never be irrelevant."

Speaking about the evolution of the audience, Rao said, "People's attention span is reduced because they have access to multiple screens and different types of content that are easily available."

Adding her personal take on the subject, she noted: "As a filmmaker, I feel that you need to be on top of your game. If you are good, and tell stories that are interesting, that are relevant to you, that you have a certain desire to communicate, you will be a good storyteller, whether you are on an OTT platform or making a film."

Giving a shout out to Aamir Khan for producing 'Laapataa Ladies', Rao said: "A film like this could have been made only by a producer such as Aamir Khan because he wants to make the best possible films." Speaking about the unconventional casting for the film, Rao said, "(Aamir) realised this film would work best with no known actors. Very few producers would realise that and give you that kind of support. He was also the person who found the story, so in some way, the film could not have been made without him."



Fans laud Aishwarya's 'professionalism' as she heads to Cannes with arm in a sling

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, a regular at the Cannes red carpet, was seen entering the airport with her daughter Aaradhya Bachchan, wearing an arm sling, as they headed to attend the 77th edition of the prestigious event at the French Riviera. Fans quickly noticed the injury and lauded her professionalism.

This year, the theme of the event, which began on May 14 and will conclude on May 25, is "Many Ways To Be An Icon".

Aishwarya will be seen strutting the red carpet on May 16 and 17 for the beauty brand L'Oréal Paris to celebrate its 27th year, along with actress Aditi Rao Hydari.

Fans on social media have expressed their concern over the injury sustained by Aishwarya, who was the first Indian female actor to serve as a Cannes jury member.

One fan praised her commitment to work despite the injury, writing, "And she's on her way to Cannes with a broken hand. No one is as professional as her! Can't wait for more."

Another fan wished her a speedy recovery, saying, "Speedy recovery, queen. #AishwaryaRaiBachchan #AishwaryaRai."

A fan showed concern and questioned if she was "fine and well?"

Other comments included, "OMG she will walk Cannes with injured hands," and, "Can't wait to see her at Cannes. Love her so much."

At the airport, Aishwarya chose a casual look, wearing a blue overcoat paired with a black ensemble, while Aaradhya sported black joggers and a white sweat-shirt.

Despite being asked about her injury by the shutterbugs, the 'Fanny Khan' star remained quiet but responded with a "thank you" when the paparazzi wished her to "take care" as she was stepping into the airport.



Now I will never gain weight for any project : **Shivangi Verma**

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shivangi Verma, who gained 10 kg for a song named 'Nana Buluku' of the movie 'Pichaikaran 2', has opened up about her weight loss journey, stating that she will never gain weight for any project again.

The actress, known for her work in 'Choti Sarraamni', 'Reporters', and 'TV, Biwi aur Main', shared that she was able to shed 10 kg through dedication and hard work.

Shivangi said: "I managed it somehow. It literally took me, like, one year, from 69 to 59. Thanks to my dietitian, I think I was pretty focused. My workout was on point, which is why I was able to achieve this."

However, she is very clear now that she will not agree to gain weight for a role.

"Now, I will never gain weight for any project. I'm going to let go of the project, even if I have to," said the 'Nach Baliye Season 6' finalist.

Regarding the most important aspects of losing weight, Shivangi added: "The first one will be to diet properly, the second one will be to regularly workout, and the third one is to keep your willpower intact. I think you need to literally have control over your tongue because your tongue is something that decides how much weight you put on or lose. You need to keep a check on your tongue. Only then things are going to be possible."

Sanya Malhotra exudes elegance in golden lehenga & ethnic jewellery

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sanya Malhotra is a vision to behold, as she has shared a 'throwback Thursday' post, dropping mesmerising pictures in a golden lehenga. The actress, who was last seen in 'Sam Bahadur', took to Instagram, and shared a string of photos with her 3.7 million followers.

In the pictures, she can be seen graciously posing in a golden choli, matching lehenga and dupatta.

For the makeup, the diva opted for nude lips, golden eyeshadow, winged eyeliner, highlighted cheeks, and a maroon bindi. She tied her curly tresses in a low bun with a golden hair accessory on it.

Sanya rounded off the look with a golden ethnic choker necklace, matching earrings, and a ring.

The actress shared the post with the caption: "Throwback Thursday," followed by a full moon face emoji.

On the work front, Sanya will be next seen in 'Mrs', which is a remake of the Malayalam film 'The Great Indian Kitchen'. She also has 'Baby John' and the Tamil film 'Thug Life'.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sonali Raut