







## JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA, SHIVRAJ & DIGVIJAYA IN FRAY IN 3RD PHASE OF LS POLLS

## Over 5L first-time voters to exercise franchise in phase 3 of LS polls

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The campaigning for the third phase of Lok Sabha polls in Madhya Pradesh in which voting will be held on May 7 in nine Parliamentary constituencies in the state ended on Sunday.

Several heavyweight candidates are in the fray in the third phase of polling. Among them, two are former chief ministers -- Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Vidisha) and Digvijaya Singh (Raghograh), and Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia (Guna).

In the third phase, polling will be held in Bhopal, Guna, Raghogarh, Vidisha, Morena, Bhind (SC), Gwalior, Sagar, and Betul (SC) Lok Sabha constituencies.

As per the original schedule, the election in Betul was to be held in the Lok Polls' second phase on April 26. However, the sudden death of a BSP candidate prompted the Election Commission to reschedule the polling in the seat in the third phase.

As the deadline for campaigning ended, individuals from outside the area who are not enlisted as voters in



that particular Parliamentary constituency will have to leave the region.

An intensive monitoring campaign is being conducted for this, Madhya Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Anupam Rajan said.

Rajan said that voter information slips have been distributed to the voters.

He informed that a total of 1.77 crore voters are registered across nine Lok Sabha constituencies, who will

cast votes at 20,456 polling booths. "In view of the heat due to summer, other necessary arrangements including shade, water, medicines have been made at the polling stations," Rajan said.

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Madhya Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Anupam Rajan on Monday said that more than five lakh first-time voters will exercise their franchise in the third phase of the Lok Sabha election for the nine Lok Sabha seats in the state.

"More than 5.25 lakh first-time voters (age group 18-19) will exercise their rights. There are around 1804 voters -- above 100 years -- who will also vote in the third phase," Rajan said during a press conference.

A total of 127 candidates are in the fray for the third phase elections, the highest (22) in Bhopal and lowest (7) in the Bhind constituency. There are more than 1.77 crore voters -- 92.68 lakh male and 84.83 lakh female -- and 491 third-gender voters and 1,66,431 Divyang (specially abled) voters in the



state.

A total of 20,456 polling booths have been set up in the nine Lok Sabha seats, which will cover as many as 18 districts of the state.

Of them, 5744 polling booths have been earmarked as critical and most of them are in three constituencies - Bhind, Morena and Gwalior. As many as 2043 polling

booths have been designated as 'pink booths' in the third phase, where the polling will be conducted by women and Divyang employees.

The nine Lok Sabha constituencies that will go to polls in the third phase on May 7 are Bhopal, Vidisha, Gwalior, Morena, Bhind, Sagar, Betul, Raigarh and Guna.

## Govt to provide ex gratia sums to kins of ASI Bagri, Cpl Vikki Pahade

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Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, on Monday, said that his government will provide an ex gratia sum of Rupees one crore to kins of Indian Air Force (IAF) soldier Cpl Vikki Pahade, who was killed by militants in Poonch region of J&K on May 4. A compensation of the same amount will be provided to Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) Mahendra Bagri, who was killed by sand mafia in Shahdol on May 3.

In an official statement issued on Monday, CM Yadav said that the state government would send a proposal to the Election Commission regarding approval for the ex gratia sum as the Model Code of Conduct for Lok Sabha elections is in force.

"The state government will send the proposal to the Election Commission for the approval of ex gratia of Rupees one crore to kins of ASI Mahendra Bagri and IAF Jawan Vikki Pahade," Chief Minister's Office said on Monday.

CM Yadav will also attend the funeral of martyred Vikki Pahade and has left for Chhindwara.

The last rites of ASI Mahendra Bagri was



performed on Sunday, in the presence of Shahdol Collector and SP. This was the second instance in six months when sand mafia ran a tractor-trolley loaded with illegally mined sand over a government servant.

In December last year, a Patwari (regional revenue officer) was crushed to death by sand mafia in Shahdol district.

## Voters will be able to vote by showing any one of 13 photo documents

### More than 1 crore 77 lakh 52 thousand voters will vote in nine parliamentary constituencies on May 7

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Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan said that in the third phase of Lok Sabha elections 2024, one crore 77 lakh 52 thousand 583 voters will vote in nine parliamentary constituencies. Voter information slips with QR codes have been distributed to all voters. The voter information slip containing QR code will provide other important information like name of their polling station, address, number, voter number in the electoral roll, helpline number of the state and district to the voters.

Rajan said that if a voter does not have a voter information slip and his name is registered in the



voter list, then the voter will be able to cast his vote by showing

any one of the 13 alternative documents containing photo.

### 13 OPTIONAL DOCUMENTS

The voters can show any of the following 13 optional documents to vote. These documents are Voter ID Card with photo, Aadhar Card, PAN Card, Unique ID Card for persons with disabilities, Driving License, MNREGA Job Card, Pension Document (with photo), Passport, Passbook (issued by Bank/Post Office with photo), Service Identity Card with photo (Central/ issued by State Governments/PSUs/Public Limited Companies), official identity cards issued to MPs, MLAs and Legislative Council Members, smart cards issued by RGI under NPR, Health Insurance Smart Card (issued under the scheme of Labour Ministry). He has urged all voters to vote with enthusiasm.

## Delegations from Sri Lanka and Philippines observe voting material distribution process

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An international 11 member delegation from Sri Lanka and Philippines has come to Bhopal to see all the processes of Lok Sabha Elections-2024 and understand the various stages related to it. This delegation reached the voting material distribution site in Bhopal on 6th May in the morning, saw the voting material distribution process and sought detailed information about it. During this, Joint Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Khatri, Collector and District Election Officer Kaushalendra Vikram Singh, CEO District Panchayat Rituraj Singh were present along with the delegation.

The international delegation was given step-wise detailed information about the entire election process by Collector



Singh and Master Trainer. They were also given information about other election related processes including EVM, VVPAT, polling team formation, voting material distribution, monitoring and security related arrangements.

Various questions related to

the election process were asked by the members of the international delegation, and were resolved by Collector Singh. The international delegation met and discussed with the polling parties at the material distribution site and sought various information related to the process.

## 4 CHILDREN, TEEN DRIVER KILLED AFTER TRACTOR OVERTURNS IN JABALPUR

Jabalpur: Four children and a tractor driver were killed, and two others were injured when a tractor-trolley overturned in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur district on Monday, police said.

The accident occurred in Tineta Deori village under Chargavan police station limits in the morning, city superintendent of police (CSP) Sunil Nema told media. Four boys, in the age group of 10 to 15 years, and an 18-year-old driving the tractor-trolley were killed, while two children sustained injuries, he said.

The children were transporting a water tank to a wedding, the official said.

The driver was operating the tractor recklessly and lost control, causing it to overturn, he said. Additional superintendent of police Suryakant Sharma said Anup Barkade (12), Rajveer Gond (13), Devendra Barkade (15), Lucky Markam (10) and Dharmendra Thakur, who was driving the tractor, were killed.

Dalpat (12) and Vikas (10) sustained injuries and are undergoing treatment at the medical college hospital, he said.

## Scared BJP engaged in sabotage: Kamal Nath

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Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Kamal Nath has accused BJP of instigating defection due to fear of defeat.

Former Chief Minister Kamal Nath has written on Instagram, "Veer Bhogya Vasundhara means only the brave rule the earth. In this Lok Sabha election, the public is with the Congress Party and the India Alliance. Fearing this, the Bharatiya Janata Party is busy sabotaging the Congress."

Kamal Nath alleges that breaking the Congress leaders, getting them to change their party, getting their nomination papers returned, getting their nominations canceled are all part of this conspiracy. BJP wants to break the morale of Congress workers by doing this and confuse the people who are angry with BJP. But dedicated Congress workers do not need to worry about this. They should work with full commitment and stand



firm in their locality, at their booth and on the responsibility given to them by the party.

He further said, when the election results will be declared on June 4, the public will punish those who indulged in conspiracies and frauds and the result of the penance of those working hard for the party will come out in the form of victory of Congress and India alliance.

## FIRE BREAKS OUT IN UNION CARBIDE FACTORY, FIRE BRIGADE TEAM REACHES THE SPOT



Bhopal: A major accident has taken place in the capital city Bhopal. A massive fire broke out in the Union Carbide factory here. Due to which old machines, plastic and paper goods were present in the factory. The video of this incident has also surfaced. In which after the fire, clouds of smoke were seen flying in the sky. Let us tell you that this factory has been closed since the time of Bhopal gas tragedy.

The administration has issued an alert and asked people to stay safe in their homes. Along with this, Collector and Police Commissioner have reached the spot. As soon as information about the incident was received, the fire brigade team reached the spot and controlled the fire. The cause of fire has not been confirmed yet.

## State Congress President Jitu Patwari has lost his mental balance: VD Sharma

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Bharatiya Janata Party's state president and MP Vishnudutt Sharma has written a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner of the country demanding that the Commission immediately stop the campaigning by Jitu Patwari, so that law and order is maintained in the state and the remaining two phases of elections are held, may it end peacefully.

Vishnudutt Sharma has said in a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner that State Congress President Jitu Patwari had gone to the house of the gang rape victim girl in Jobat and had shared her photo with her family on social media. Due to this, the identity of the victim girl was revealed. This is a violation of the court and an FIR was registered against Jitu Patwari regarding this. Enraged by this, Jitu Patwari, while discussing with journalists on May 1, advised the Chief Minister of the state, Dr.



Mohan Yadav, to drown himself in a handful of water. A memorandum regarding this was submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer by the Bharatiya Janata Party on May 01.

After this, while discussing with the media in Gwalior, Jitu Patwari made indecent remarks against the

reserved category woman and former minister Imarti Devi and said that she has lost her interest.

In this regard, Bharatiya Janata Party had given a memorandum to the Chief Electoral Officer on 03 May. But Jitu Patwari did not stop here. While discussing with jour-

nalists in Bhind district, he compared the country's Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Ravana. There is huge anger among the public due to the use of such words against the popular Prime Minister of the country who holds a constitutional post. A memorandum in this regard has been submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer on May 4. Sharma has said in his letter that it is clear from the statements made about Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and reserved category woman Imarti Devi that Jitu Patwari has lost his mental balance. These statements of his have caused anger in the state and can pose a threat to law and order at any time, due to which the third and fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections can be affected. Therefore, there should be an immediate ban on election campaigning by State Congress President Jitu Patwari, so that the elections can be conducted peacefully.

## 36 people booked under NSA in MP since announcement of LS polls in March

Team Absolute | Bhopal

As many as 36 people were booked under the National Security Act (NSA) in Madhya Pradesh since the announcement of General Elections on March 16, the state's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Anupam Rajan said on Monday.

Briefing the Press ahead of the third phase of elections on Tuesday in nine Lok Sabha seats in Madhya Pradesh, CEO Rajan said that a total 1,433 FIRs had been registered till May 6.

He added that preventive measures were taken in more than two lakh cases between March 16 and May 6. He also said that the Election Commission (EC) had so far received 4,435 complaints through the C-Vigil App during the same period and all of them had been resolved.

The nine Lok Sabha seats that will go to polls in the state in the third phase on



May 7 are Bhopal, Vidisha, Sagar, Betul, Gwalior, Morena, Bhind, Guna and Raigarh. There are a total of 127 candidates in the fray for the third phase of elections, the highest (22) in Bhopal and lowest (7) in Bhind constituency. There are more than 1.77 crore voters, out of which 92.68 lakh are male and 84.83 lakh female and third gender voters are 491 and Divyang voters are 1,66,431. A total of 20,456 polling booths have been set up in the nine Lok Sabha seats, which will cover as many as 18 districts of the state. Of them, 5,744 polling booths have been earmarked as critical and most of them are in three constituencies of Bhind, Morena and Gwalior.



EDITOR'S SPECS

'School on Wheels' launched for children staying in relief camps

**M**anipur Governor Anusuiya Uikey on Sunday launched the "School on Wheels" initiative aiming to impart education to students sheltered in relief camps in the state in view of over a year-long ethnic violence. The school bus, equipped with a library, computers, and sports items, would visit different camps accompanied by a teacher. The Governor after launching the pioneering initiative at Bal Vidya Mandir Complex in Imphal said that the incidents which started on May 3 last year affected thousands of people, especially huge number of students of Manipur. "The 'School on Wheels' scheme would reach out to students staying in the relief camps and impart them with required teaching," she said. Noting that she understands the pain and sorrow of the displaced persons, Uikey told the gathering that she had already discussed with the Chief Minister (N. Biren Singh) and Chief Secretary (Vineet Joshi) to initiate a process for permanent settlement of the displaced people staying in relief camps. She said that the "School on Wheels" initiative is being implemented by Vidya Bharati's Shiksha Vikash Samiti, which decided that children living in relief camps should not face any kind of problem in their academic aspects. The Manipur government currently runs around 320 relief camps, housing more than 59,000 men, women, and children. Around 18,000 students are currently staying in relief camps. After the ethnic violence broke out in Manipur on May 3 last year, over 70,000 people, including women and children, of both the Meitei and Kuki-Zomi communities were displaced from their homes and villages and took shelter in safer places in different districts of Manipur and outside the state, including neighbouring Mizoram.

# SC Decision on Hindu Marriage Praiseworthy

Lalit Garg

**B**y delivering a major decision on Hindu marriage, the Supreme Court has not only confirmed rites, rituals and traditional customs of Hindu marriage, but has also accepted them as necessary from the legal point of view. Today, when the sanctity, social acceptance and efficacy of Hindu marriage is getting undervalued due to so-called modern life under influence of western culture, there was a dire need to reinforce it. Those who consider marriage ceremonies just as a registration need to be wary. They have to understand the underlying meaning of taking seven rounds around the altar; without these seven rounds, Hindu customs and wedding ceremonies will not be valid in the eyes of the law. The latest decision of the Supreme Court on Hindu marriage is welcome, and its long-term consequences will be pleasant for society. This decision will reinforce Hindu culture and traditions. The institution of family will get strengthened.

While rendering this decision related to Hindu marriage, the Supreme Court said that marriage is not an occasion just for 'singing and dancing', 'drinking and eating' or for demanding dowry and gifts by exerting undue pressure. Hindu marriage is not a commercial transaction. It is a serious basic cultural and family event which is celebrated to create a relationship between a man and a woman who attain the status of husband and wife for a good family in the future. It is a basic unit of the Indian Hindu social system, which has a strong cultural and religious dimension. In fact, the Supreme Court has made it clear that Hindu marriage cannot be recognized without taking seven rounds around the altar, that is, the rules and provisions made in the Hindu Marriage Act will have to be followed strictly for solemnizing the marriage. In this way, the Court in its decision has clarified the legal requirements of solemnizing a Hindu marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act 1955. According to the Act, a Hindu marriage shall be solemnized according to traditional rites, rituals and ceremonies of either party. The ceremonies include Saptapadi (the taking of seven steps jointly around the sacred fire by the bride and groom both); the marriage becomes complete and binding when they take the seventh step together. Overall, Hindu marriage is an institution, a ritual and the marriage is not a commercial transaction.

The Supreme Court has stressed that proper rites like Saptapadi (seven rounds around the



sacred fire) and associated rituals and ceremonies are necessary for the validity of a Hindu marriage. In case of later disputes between husband and wife, it is necessary to present proof of the solemnizing of the marriage ceremony. This effort of the Supreme Court to explain the value of the seven rounds and the ceremony related to it will not only strengthen the institution of Hindu marriage, but will also reinforce the values that are getting blurred in the storm of modernity. There is no doubt that the basic importance of marriage ceremony has reduced in the modern times as compared to the earlier times; now marriage has become just a show, compulsion or compromise for many. Justice B Nagarathna in her relevant and useful judgment has rightly said that Hindu marriage is a sacrament, which should be given status of an institution of great value in the Indian society. A marriage without traditional rites or rituals like seven rounds around the sacred fire will not be considered a Hindu marriage as per Section 7 of the Hindu Marriage Act. For this reason, the Court has urged young men and women to think deeply about the institution of marriage before entering into it; and to consider how sacred they said institution is in Indian society.

The question is why did the Supreme Court need to stress upon Hindu marriage and strengthen Hindu values? In fact, many cases have been coming to the court's doorstep regarding the rituals and traditional customs related to Hindu marriage, and every time the court has been presenting its view on the matters related to

the institution of marriage with alertness, foresight and prudence. The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court recently held that as per the Hindu Marriage Act, the ceremony of Kanyadaan is not necessary to solemnize a Hindu marriage. The importance of Saptapadi was also shown in that decision. In the decision of a family court of Madhya Pradesh, it was explained to the woman's side that applying vermilion is a religious duty of a married Hindu woman. A similar attempt at persuasion is reflected in the latest decision of the Supreme Court. Overall, the message of the court is that the basic meaning of marriage should be understood, while avoiding unnecessary pomp and show. There is now a need for more clarity regarding Hindu marriage and especially to emphasize Hindu rituals and culture; because the family institution continues to exist in India, the reason for this is Hindu values and traditions. In this way, the Court in its decision has clarified the legal requirements and sanctity of Hindu marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act 1955.

Hindu marriage is an ideal tradition and culture. In Hindu religion, marriage is considered one of the sixteen sacraments; Marriage or Vivaah, hence its literal meaning is to bear special responsibility. The marriage ceremony is commonly known as Hindu marriage. In other religions, marriage is a kind of contract between husband and wife which can be broken under special circumstances, but Hindu marriage is a relationship between husband

and wife for many births which cannot be broken under any circumstances. By taking seven rounds of sacred fire and keeping the Pole Star as witness, the two bodies, mind and soul get tied in a sacred bond. It is also a union of two families. In Hindu marriage, there is more spiritual relationship between husband and wife than physical relationship and this relationship is considered extremely sacred.

Hindu marriage not only contains family, social and cultural significance, but it also has deep spiritual significance. Hinduism has prescribed four purusharthas (four basic pursuits of life), i.e. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The purpose of the marriage ceremony is to complete the effort of 'Kama' and then gradually move towards 'Moksha'. Many important things in the life of a man and woman are associated with marriage; for example, love between man and woman, their relationship, children, their parents, various happy events falling in course of their life, social status and prosperity. In Hindu society, a married woman is viewed with utmost respect. The sight of a woman with kumkum-sindoor on her forehead, wearing a mangalsutra around her neck, green bangles, toe rings and a six or nine-yard saree automatically generates respect for her in the mind of an observer. Of the seven Hindu marriage vows, there are at least three where the couple promises to take care of their elders. The fifth promise is to have children and take care of them.

In recent years, many anomalies and distortions have been added to the Hindu marriage tradition and culture in India. With the introduction of dating culture, the prevalence of love marriage has increased. Potential brides and grooms prefer to choose life partners on their own. Today's romantic relationships are not actually marriage, but a new practice, which has the opposite effect of disintegrating the family institution. Along with marriage, the practice of pre-wedding has also become the carrier of many distortions, big grand events and hotel culture has also blurred the sanctity of marriage. Widespread use of alcohol and other drugs at events has also become a cause of accidents. Due to which cracks are seen appearing in marriage bonds even before it takes place.

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

## international

## Russia announces tactical nuclear forces exercises



Moscow | Agencies

**R**ussia will conduct an exercise of its tactical nuclear forces on the orders of President Vladimir Putin, the Defence Ministry announced on Monday. The announcement did not say if the missiles would be equipped with nuclear warheads. Russia has previously carried out nuclear forces training without nuclear warheads. "As part of the exercise, a series of activities will be carried out to practice the preparation and use of non-strategic nuclear weapons," the Defence Ministry in Moscow said. It was initially unclear when and where exactly the exercise, in which the southern defence district and the naval forces are involved, would begin. In October, the Russian military fired two intercontinental missiles and several cruise missiles for training and deterrence purposes. It justified the exercise, which it had announced, by alleging "provocative state-

### Six killed in Ukraine drone attack in border region: Russian authorities

Six people have been killed in a Ukrainian drone attack in the Russian border region of Belgorod, according to Russian authorities. Further, 35 people have been injured as Ukrainian forces targeted three vehicles near the village of Beryozovka, Belgorod Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov wrote on his Telegram channel on Monday. Two of the vehicles were reportedly buses carrying workers, although no further details are available about their employers. Gladkov also published a photo showing a badly damaged bus. Ukraine has sporadically attacked arms depots and transport infrastructure in Russian border regions during the conflict, which Moscow started more than two years ago. However, the number of casualties Ukraine has inflicted is far lower than its own losses since the Russian invasion.

ments and threats by individual Western officials against the Russian Federation." Since the start of its full-scale war against Ukraine more than two years ago, Russian representatives have repeatedly tried to test

### Russian airstrikes in Ukraine cause power outages

Russian airstrikes in the north-eastern Ukrainian border region of Sumy have led to power outages despite many drones being shot down, Ukrainian officials said on Monday. Authorities said that more than 4,00,000 households in three districts and the regional capital, Sumy, were affected. The Russian military attacked the area with 13 Iranian-made combat drones, they said. Although 12 of them are said to have been intercepted, energy systems were damaged, according to the energy supplier Ukrenergo. Meanwhile, more than 1,300 villages lost power. However, most of them have now been supplied with electricity again. Ukraine has been fending off a Russian invasion for more than two years. Russian attacks with missiles and drones have repeatedly targeted the country's power supply. Since heavy attacks in March, there have been regular power failures, particularly in the eastern Ukrainian region of Kharkiv.

international support for Kyiv by stirring up fears of a nuclear war.

## French President Macron criticises blockades at university Gaza protests

Paris | Agencies

**F**rench President Emmanuel Macron has criticised blockades at pro-Palestinian demonstrations at French universities, saying that the tactics went beyond legitimate means of debate and protest.

Macron said he understands that the events in the Gaza Strip, in particular, are upsetting people, "but preventing a debate has never helped resolve the conflict," according to an interview published on Sunday in the newspapers La Provence and La Tribune Dimanche.

"It is perfectly legitimate and even reasonable and reassuring that our youth can say that



international events affect them and discuss them. But using violence and blockades to force an institution to adopt

this or that policy, to prevent other students from entering a lecture hall on the pretext that they are Jewish - that is not the

Republic," Macron said.

He said such behaviour does not reflect mutual respect, pluralism and a condemnation of racism and anti-Semitism.

On Friday, police broke up a sit-in by pro-Palestinian students at the renowned Sciences Po University in Paris, at which protesters had blocked entrances to university buildings.

The protesters denounced their university's stance on the Gaza war and are demanding, among other things, that cooperation with Israeli universities be reconsidered.

The university management's attempt to put an end to the conflict with a large-scale internal debate failed.

## Over 1,000 documents wrongly issued from govt portal in S. Korea



Seoul | Agencies

**I**n a cyber incident, more than 1,000 civil documents were wrongly issued from the government's online civil service portal called 'Government 24', leading to the leak of personal information, the interior ministry said on Sunday.

The documents - 646 graduation and other certificates, and 587 corporate tax payment certificates -- were issued under the name of the wrong individual or business representative, exposing sensitive personal information, including names, addresses and resident registration numbers, according to the ministry.

The services have been restored to normal, it said, blaming the error on the program developer's mistake, reports Yonhap news agency.

The ministry said the wrongly issued documents have been deleted and those whose personal information was leaked have been informed via phone or mail.

It also said the cases were reported to the Personal Information Protection Commission under relevant regulations.

"We currently do not know the details of the leak and are looking into how far the leaked information has spread," a commission official said. "It's unclear yet when the results of the investigation will come out."

## After Hamas rocket attack, 16 killed in Israeli airstrikes in Rafah



Tel Aviv | Agencies

**T**he Hamas health department said that 16 people were killed in an Israeli air attack on Monday. Media has reported that nine people from one family and seven members from another family were killed in the air attack.

The airstrike was in retaliation to the barrage of rockets fired by Hamas at a ground near Kerem Shalom in Southern Israel killing three Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers and injuring 11 soldiers. The injured included soldiers from the 931 Battalion and one soldier from the Shaked Battalion.

The attack, according to IDF, was staged from the Rafah region early morning. Highly

placed sources in the Israel Prime Minister's Office (PMO) told IANS that the war cabinet will meet on Monday and decide on the ground invasion of Rafah. Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and Minister without portfolio, Benny Gantz will be participating in the war cabinet to be held later in the day. It may be recalled that in the recent indirect mediatory talks in Cairo, Israel has insisted on the release of at least 33 of its hostages in the custody of Hamas in exchange for 600 Palestinian prisoners in Israel jails. The rocket and mortar firing by Hamas at Kerem Shalom crossing killing three IDF soldiers and Israel's retaliation is likely to affect the progress of peace talks in Cairo.

## China regards Europe as important dimension of its foreign policy: Xi Jinping

Paris | Agencies

**C**hina regards Europe as an important dimension in its major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics and an important partner on its path toward Chinese modernisation, Chinese President Xi Jinping said here Monday.

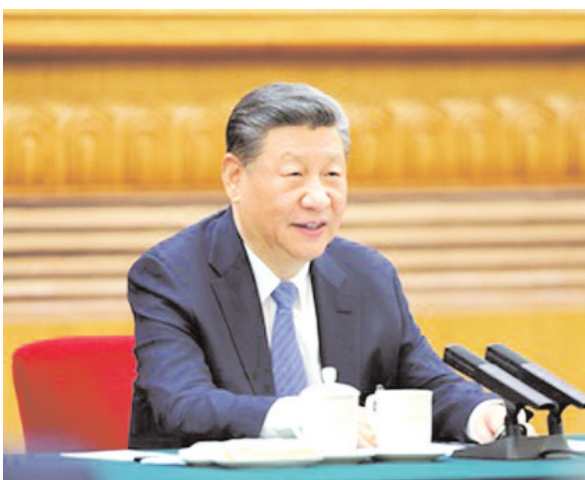
Xi made the remarks at a China-France-EU trilateral meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at Elysee Palace, Xinhua news agency reported.

Expressing his delight in meeting with Macron and von der Leyen again, Xi noted that France is the first stop of his overseas visit this year and that the trilateral meeting amplifies the Europe-wide significance of this visit.

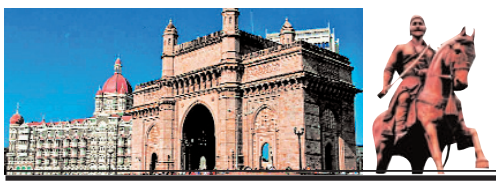
China always approaches its relations with the European Union (EU) from a strategic and long-term perspective, Xi said.

It is hoped that China-France and China-EU relations would reinforce each other and thrive together, he added.

As the world enters a new period of turbulence and transformation, China and the EU, as two major forces in the world, should continue to see each other as partners, stay committed to dialogue and cooperation, deepen strategic communication, enhance strategic mutual trust, build strategic consensus, carry out strategic



coordination, work for the steady and sound growth of China-EU ties, and continue making new contributions to world peace and development, Xi said.



# Maha Congress Working President takes back resignation, to campaign for MVA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Congress Working President, M Arif Naseem Khan announced on Monday that he has withdrawn his resignation from the state party campaign panel and will canvass for all Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) candidates in the Lok Sabha polls.



hereby withdraw my resignation from the Congress Campaign Committee," declared Khan. Khan's abrupt move 10 days ago (April 26) had rattled the Congress and MVA allies after he publicly questioned why the Opposition alliance had for the first time not fielded a single Muslim candidate in any of 48 LS constituencies in the state.

A contender for the Mumbai North Central LS seat, he had warned that the minority community was perturbed and was asking "whether the Congress only wants Muslim votes but not Muslim leaders", creating apprehensions of loss of minority votes for Opposition candidates.

On Monday, Khan reiterated that along with the party, he would strongly campaign for Mumbai North Central candidate Prof. Varsha Gaikwad and other MVA candidates in the state. With Khan's decision that was widely hailed in Congress and MVA political circles, the curtains have fallen on a potentially embarrassing situation with the possibility of Muslim voters staying off voting to express their angst over 'non-inclusion'.

# BJP files complaint with EC against Maharashtra LoP's remarks on ex-ATS chief Karkare's death

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The BJP has lodged a complaint with the Election Commission (EC) against Maharashtra's Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Vijay Wadetiwar, who reportedly claimed that former Mumbai Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) chief Hemant Karkare was killed by an "RSS-affiliated cop, and not by terrorist Ajmal Kasab, during the 26/11 terror attack".



Mumbai BJP chief Ashish Shelar in a complaint on Sunday urged the poll body to direct the registration of FIR against Wadetiwar under the stringent provision of law. He also urged the EC to direct the Congress leader to tender an unconditional apology.

# After losing voice at poll rally, Sharad Pawar recovering but advised to rest by docs



Team Absolute | Pune

NC(PS) President Sharad Pawar, who lost his voice briefly at an election rally on Sunday night, is recovering but has been advised to take rest for a day or two, party leaders said here on Monday. The senior Pawar, 83, who was addressing an election rally on Sunday, stood up and spoke for barely five minutes and then suddenly became silent, apparently losing his voice, and then stopped his address.

As his concerned party leaders and workers waited, Sharad Pawar was helped off the stage and taken home, while some other speakers pitched in for him. Indicating he was returning to his cheerful but fighting mode, Sharad Pawar on Monday morning paid tributes on the 102nd death anniversary of the legendary Chhatrapati Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur. "Pawar Sahib was mistakenly offered cold water to drink at one of the rallies yesterday... Normally, he doesn't take chilled water and that affected his voice. Otherwise, he is absolutely fit and fine with no cause for worries. He has been advised to rest his throat for one or two days," a top leader told IANS on Monday morning.

# Ujjwal Nikam denounces Vijay Wadetiwar's remarks on 26/11 attack

Team Absolute | Mumbai



Ujjwal Nikam, a BJP candidate and former prosecutor in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, has questioned Congress politician Vijay Wadetiwar's recent comments about the incident. Wadetiwar, the Maharashtra Assembly's Leader of Opposition, stated that former Mumbai ATS chief Hemant Karkare was slain by a police official affiliated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Nikam criticised Wadetiwar's allegations as "baseless" and compared them to "Goebbels' propaganda", alluding to Hitler's senior propagandist. He was outraged by Wadetiwar's charges, accusing him of demeaning Hemant Karkare's memory and casting doubt on the case's legal conclusions.

"What allegations are you making? What will Pakistan say? Pakistan has never denied this, because we produced judicial proof. But our man is doing politics. You just want to do propaganda - that too Goebbels' propaganda. This doesn't defame Nikam. It defames you," Nikam told a news agency on Monday. According to the report, the BJP candidate chastised Wadetiwar for making such comments after his candidature was declared, pointing out that Kasab's confession and eyewitness testimony confirmed Karkare's death during the 26/11 attack. Nikam further underlined the disrespect paid to Karkare and other martyrs by challenging accepted facts. "I am not bothered by Vijay Wadetiwar's allegations against me but the fact that Kasab and his colleague Abu Ismail killed Hemant Karkare was never disputed even by Pakistan but the leader of the opposition is questioning the whole case, it is not just an insult to the 166 people died but all our martyrs. I am sad that an Opposition leader who doesn't know the entire thing believes in a book and makes baseless statements. It means that you are insulting Hemant Karkare," Nikam further told the news agency.

# CM Shinde urges Mahayuti workers to boost voter turnout in final phases

Team Absolute | Thane

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde expressed concern over the low voter turnout in the state during the Lok Sabha elections and urged Mahayuti workers to improve engagement in the remaining phases. Shinde, speaking at an election rally in Thane in favour of Shiv Sena candidate Naresh Mhaske, emphasised the need to increase voter turnout despite the adverse weather circumstances, an agency reported. "The elections are being held in severe heat, and it is reflected in the voting percentage in the state. While there is no doubt that we will win by a huge margin, there is a need to increase the voting percentage," the chief minister said.

According to the report, cognising the confidence in winning by a large margin, Shinde emphasised the need of mobilising voters, particularly in the early hours of voting, and urged booth-level workers and block in-charges to maximise participation. Reflecting on the Mahayuti alliance's extensive support as a result of the government's efforts, Shinde praised the commitment of all alliance elements, including the Shiv Sena, BJP, and NCP, led by Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, the report added.



"I am happy that all constituents of the Mahayuti and the parties that support the alliance are working seriously," he said. Shinde also praised Maha Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray for his contributions to the alliance's triumph, emphasising the joint efforts of all parties involved, the report further stated. On Tuesday, voting for 11 of Maharashtra's 48 Lok Sabha seats will take place, with the focus on the high-stakes struggle in Baramati, where Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule is up against Sunetra Pawar, wife of the venerable leader's estranged nephew and Maharashtra deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar.

# ICSE Results 2024: 99.96 pc students from Maharashtra clear exams



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), headquartered in New Delhi, announced the results for the ICSE and ISC examinations on Monday afternoon. The ICSE Class 10 exams concluded on March 28, while the Class 12 (ISC) exams concluded on April 3. Results for both ICSE and ISC can be accessed on the official CISCE website - cisce.org.

Last year, the results were declared on May 14 for exams conducted between February 27 and March 29.

**ISC (Class XII)**  
In ISC exams, the overall pass percentage this year is 98.19 per cent (98,088 passed), marking a slight decrease from last year's 96.93 per cent. The state pass percentage for ISC exams has risen to 99.71 per cent compared to 98.69 per cent in 2023.

**ICSE (Class X)**  
This year, the national pass percentage for ICSE is 99.47 per cent (2,42,328 passed), reflecting a slight increase compared to last year's 98.99 per cent. In Maharashtra, the state pass percentage stands at 99.47 per cent (2,42,328 passed), showing a slight decrease from last year's 99.83 per cent.

# PPE-clad thieves clean Nashik ICICI Home Finance locker of Rs 5 cr gold jewellery

Team Absolute | Nashik

In a sensational operation, at least two thieves, one shrouded in a PPE kit, broke into the locker hold of the ICICI Home Finance Co. Ltd Nashik branch and scooped off with gold jewellery worth around Rs 4.93 crore, police said here on Monday. The theft is believed to have happened around midnight of Friday-Saturday but came to light late on Saturday evening when a bank official had gone to the locker room to deposit a customer's valuables, said Sarkarwada Police Station's woman Investigating Officer, declining to be identified. "From the CCTV footage, there were at least two thieves who broke into the strong room of the branch, of whom one was wearing a PPE kit and the other had his face covered. A third accomplice was waiting outside the branch. They have broken into one main locker where many customers' gold jewellery and other valuables were stored," she told reporter. As per investigations, the locker contained the valuables of at least 222 customers comprising a total estimated 1.34 kgs of gold ornaments with an approximate value of Rs 4.93 crore, which are missing, said the IO, even as the crime sent shockwaves in the company and the customers.



Following a complaint by the ICICI-HFC, she said that the police have swung into action, and formed multiple teams of the local police and crime branch unit, to investigate the case and trace out the three unidentified desperadoes seen in the CCTV footage. The ICICI-HFC branch is situated on

the third floor of the Indra Heights business complex of the busy thoroughfare known as Gangapur Naka with heavy traffic and crowded with people. Despite repeated attempts, ICICI-HFC officials or ICICI Bank authorities were not available for comments on the matter even as police have tightened patrolling in the Gangapur Naka vicinity.

# Gadchiroli Police neutralises maoist IED threat in Tipagad area

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a proactive operation, Gadchiroli Police successfully dismantled a potential threat posed by Maoist insurgents in the Tipagad area. Acting on credible intelligence indicating Maoists' plans to execute IED attacks during the Lok Sabha elections 2024, security forces preemptively deployed extensive area domination and heavy troop presence to thwart any subversive activities. Following a diligent investigation, authorities pinpointed a location in Tipagad where the insurgents had concealed explosives and Claymore mines. In response, a specialized team, comprising two Bomb Detection and Disposal Squads (BDDS), one unit of C60, and one Quick Action Team (QAT) of the CRPF, was swiftly mobilised to neutralise the threat. Upon reaching the designated area, the teams discovered and safely destroyed six pressure cookers filled with explosives and detonators, as well as three Claymore pipes rigged with explosives and shrapnel. Additionally, three claymore pipes devoid of explosives were recovered. Alongside these ordnance, authorities found gunpowder, medicines, and blankets at the site. "The meticulous operation culminated



in the in situ destruction of nine IEDs and three Claymore pipes by the BDDS team. The remaining materials were promptly incinerated on-site. As the teams make their way back to the nearest outpost, formal charges will be registered against the perpetrators," said Neelotpal, SP Gadchiroli.



# Emily Blunt reveals how she felt sick after kissing certain co-stars

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Emily Blunt has talked about how she felt sick after kissing certain co-stars, despite having chemistry with them that she didn't like. "I've had chemistry with people I haven't liked," Blunt said during an appearance on "The Howard Stern Show". When asked: "Who?" she simply replied: "I'm not gonna tell you."

"I have had chemistry with people who... I have not had a good time working with them," she said, still declining to divulge any names, reports people.com.

"Sometimes it's a strange thing. Sometimes you could have a rapport that's really effortless, but it doesn't translate onscreen," she said, discussing her approach to establishing chemistry.

"Chemistry is this strange thing. It's an ethereal thing that you can't really bottle up and buy or sell. It's like there or it's not. It's just easier when you have a natural rapport with someone," she added.

Blunt also spoke about some methods she uses to find chemistry with a co-star when there isn't any.

"I've got to find something I love about everybody. I have to find something... Even if it's one thing," she said.

"It might be that they have a nice laugh, or I like how they speak to people. They're polite. I mean, it might be something random. But find something you love about that person or something you love about them as a character, and then kind of lean into that."

Additionally, Blunt shared that some moments on set have been downright "gross".

When discussing on-screen kisses with a co-actor, the host asked: "Have you wanted to throw up?"

To which she responded: "Absolutely. Absolutely."

"I wouldn't say it's sort of extreme loathing, but I've definitely not enjoyed some of it," added the actress, who has collaborated with figures such as Dwayne Johnson in 'Jungle Cruise', her husband John Krasinski in 'A Quiet Place', and Cillian Murphy in 'Oppenheimer'.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Why Kate Beckinsale is 'tired' of being asked if she has had botox done

Actress Kate Beckinsale shared that she is extremely "tired" of being asked if she has gone under the knife to look younger, revealing her experience of being "bullied" over her youthful appearance.

Sharing a series of videos filmed 20 years apart on Instagram, Beckinsale wrote: "I hate talking about this because I hate adding to this conversation but I'm doing it because insidious bullying of any kind over time takes a toll." "These videos might be 20 years apart - maybe more. Every time I post anything - and by the way, this has been the case since I was about 30 - I am accused of having had unrecognisable surgery / using Botox using fillers / being obsessed with looking younger, and it's really such a tiresome and subtly vicious way to bully a person," she added.

"I don't actually do any of those things - I've even gone to the trouble of having a plastic surgeon categorically state that I don't and haven't, and still, every time you don't even look like yourself anymore, it happens constantly and it's usually women over the years and is insulted by the notion that she "aged" like everybody else reports femalefirst.co.uk. "Life happens - obviously I have aged, everybody ages; I'm not too concerned about ageing because I found my father dead at the age of 5, I spent most of my teenage years and a good deal of my 20s absolutely crippled with severe anxiety and panic attacks that I was going to die of a heart attack too, and went to emergency rooms often, and was almost, at that time of my life, completely immobilised by that anxiety," she wrote. The actress said that being "bullied" about is an assumption that I can't handle the idea of getting older is so deeply ironic when my all-consuming terror was that I never thought I'd even see the end of my 20s." Beckinsale added: "As you can see from these two videos, what is different is that I lived in the UK, and was paler, I used to pluck the shit out of my eyebrows, I loved that brown lipstick that everybody wore. I had a fuller face, as most of us do in our late teens and 20s."

Imelda Staunton opens up about 'difficult' atmosphere on 'The Crown' set after Queen's death

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Imelda Staunton, who portrayed the late monarch, revealed that she had a "difficult" time filming "The Crown" following Queen Elizabeth's passing. "For the better part of three years, I was inhabiting someone real in a true story that was serious and challenging. We'd resumed filming, and very soon after, the Queen died, so it was difficult," she told Yours magazine, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"We carried on with as much dignity and grace as everyone always had done, but, obviously, there was a very different atmosphere in the world and on set."

The actress reminisced about just having to "carry on" as normal but noted that she and her castmates were all "a bit sad" and the Queen's passing had changed things in some way. "We just had to carry on as before, but we were all a bit sad. I think it inevitably informed the temperature, if you like, rather than altered the material at all. But, there's no doubt, it was different."

Staunton had never realised the extent to which the late Queen's "strength" relied on her personal faith before taking on the role and "clung on to" that notion while portraying the character.

"I didn't realise, or think about, how much her faith meant to her. That was an element I clung on to quite firmly and it helped me with her ability to be very still and thoughtful. I realised her strength came from her faith."



## Whoopi Goldberg prefers being single because she sparkles when not in love

Los Angeles | Agencies

The actress added: "So, just in case - and I'm directing this to

Actress Whoopi Goldberg said that she "sparkles" when she is not in love and cannot see herself ever getting into a relationship again.

During the 1970s, the actress was married to Alvin Martin. Later, she was married to David Claessen in the late 1980s, and finally to Lyle Trachtenberg from 1994 until 1995.

"I think other people seem to sparkle when they're in love, and I like to see that. But for me, I sparkle when I'm not in love, which is kind of okay. And the older I get, the happier I am," Goldberg told CBS Sunday Mornings, reports femalefirst.co.uk.



Holocaust "was not about race" and, even though she is "very confident," declined to give a specific response when asked if she "regrets" her comments.

## MEGAN FOX HAS A MAKEOVER, CHOPS HER HAIR, GOES BACK TO BEING BRUNETTE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Megan Fox has undergone a massive hair transformation. The actress is known for her brunette locks, but in recent times she sported grey and platinum blonde tresses.

But now the American actress has decided to go back to her roots - literally - and sport brunette hair once again, reports 'Mirror.co.uk'.

Megan took to Instagram on Sunday to share a slew of photographs where she rocked a choppy bob, complete with a full fringe, and a dark brunette finish. Pouting up a storm, Megan looked sensational as she displayed her new look.

As per 'Mirror.co.uk', Megan's hair now grazes her jawline, with the colour a deep chocolate brown hue. The fringe she has grazes her brows, and in some of the snaps she shared debuting the look, she wore a deep pink-red-hued lipstick, a white vest, a red bandana around her neck, and a denim jacket.

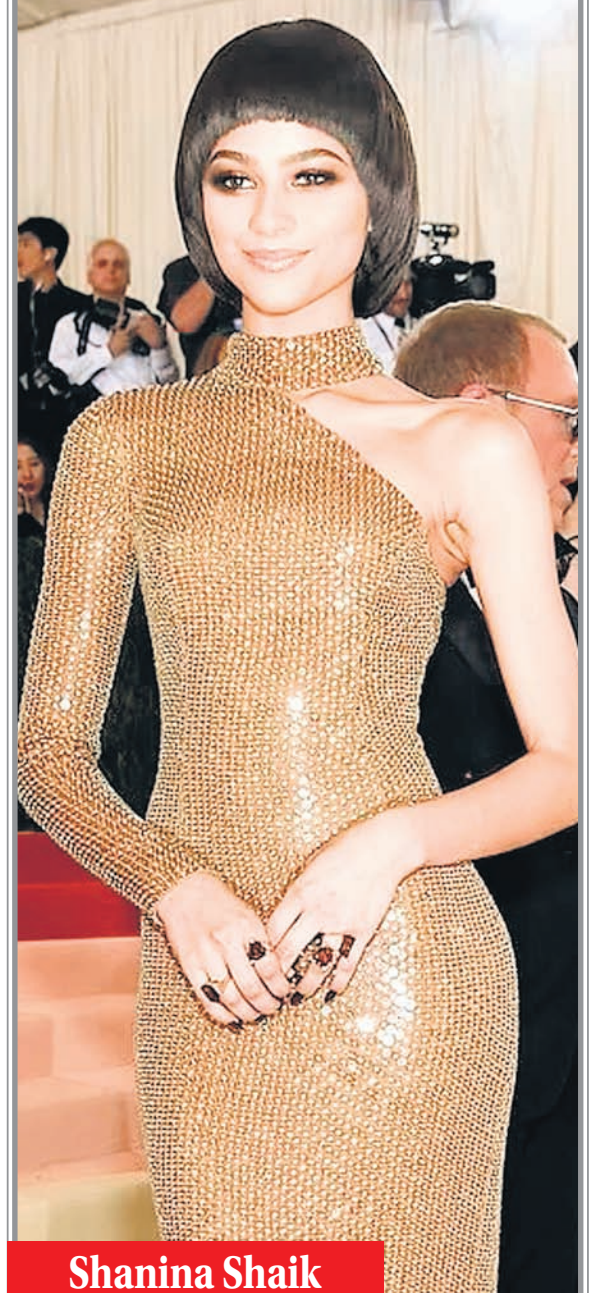
While the other snap she shared of her new look was a selfie she took in natural light where she wore a fuzzy black cardigan. She pouted up a storm while resting her chin on her hand, with her long blue nails in full view.

Sharing the transformation snaps, Megan gushed over her new look and declared: "She's a brunette again." Fans went wild in the comment section, with many swooning over her choppy brunette bob.

"Megan Fox you're the most beautiful woman in the world babe," penned one fan. Another then said: "Looks great! Hope you leave it like this for a while to give your hair a chance to recover," referring to the different colours she has recently sported.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Shanina Shaik





## Before baby I used to sleep straight all hours on all flights

### Bipasha Basu

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Bipasha Basu offered a glimpse into her experience of being on baby duty with her daughter Devi during a flight, revealing that prior to motherhood, she used to sleep straight for hours on airplanes, but now she "never" sleeps.

Bipasha, accompanied by her husband, Karan Singh Grover, and daughter Devi, had been vacationing in Mauritius.

On their return journey to India, the actress shared a series of pictures and videos on her Instagram stories.

In one video, Bipasha can be seen saying, "Mama got a little break," before panning the camera towards Karan, who is holding little Devi on his lap. Captioning the clip,



the actress wrote: "Before baby, I used to sleep straight all hours on all flights...."

However long. Now, mamma never sleeps."

She then posted a picture of Devi resting on her lap, with the caption: "Mamma is never off duty... from now to

forever with my mishti Devi love."

Bipasha further shared a video of her daughter putting stickers on her father's face and captioned it: "Trying to keep her busy on this long flight. The book got full so now papa's face and tee is her

canvas. Papa is Devi's best boy."

Karan and Bipasha fell in love while working on the film 'Alone' in 2015. A year later, they got married. The couple welcomed their first child, a daughter named Devi Basu Singh Grover, in 2022.



## Janhvi Kapoor shimmers in golden outfit

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Janhvi Kapoor, who has recently started shooting for her upcoming film on Monday, dropped mesmerising glimpses of her new photo-shoot, looking like a goddess.

Taking to Instagram, Janhvi, who has 24.1 million followers, shared a string of pictures wearing a golden outfit posing against a golden backdrop.

For the makeup, she went all glam -- brown glossy lips, with a hint of golden glitters on it, golden eyeshadow and heavily blushed cheeks.

Her hair is styled in soft curls and accessorised the look with a golden tiara and matching earrings.

The post is captioned: "In the garden of Eden". A fan commented: "Beauty on duty", and another wrote: "queen". A fan said: "My kinda golden hour".

## "Playing grey characters takes a toll on artists : Ashutosh Rana

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ashutosh Rana, who is set to portray Peter in the upcoming psychological thriller, has shared insights into his role, revealing how playing complex characters gives him a kick.

The actor, who is known for playing roles like 'Lajja Shankar Pandey' in 'Sangharsh', shared: "I'm known for playing complex characters, and that's what gives me a kick. My portrayal in 'Murder in Mahim' is something I have never explored before. The emotions and persona of this character in the series attracted me the most, to say yes to this role. Audiences will get to see me doing something that I have never done before."

Talking about his experience portraying dark characters, Ashutosh said: "Playing grey characters takes a toll on artists, to get into the skin of the character; you become that demon, and you have to act, think, and express in the same way. But the best part is when you get back to reality, you come back with more humanity in you."

The social commentary series delves into a chilling murder mystery and explores the underbelly of Mumbai, highlighting the reconciliation of a lost friendship between Peter



(Ashutosh) and Jende (Vijay Raaz).



## Happy to see Indian street food getting international credit : Arjun Kapoor

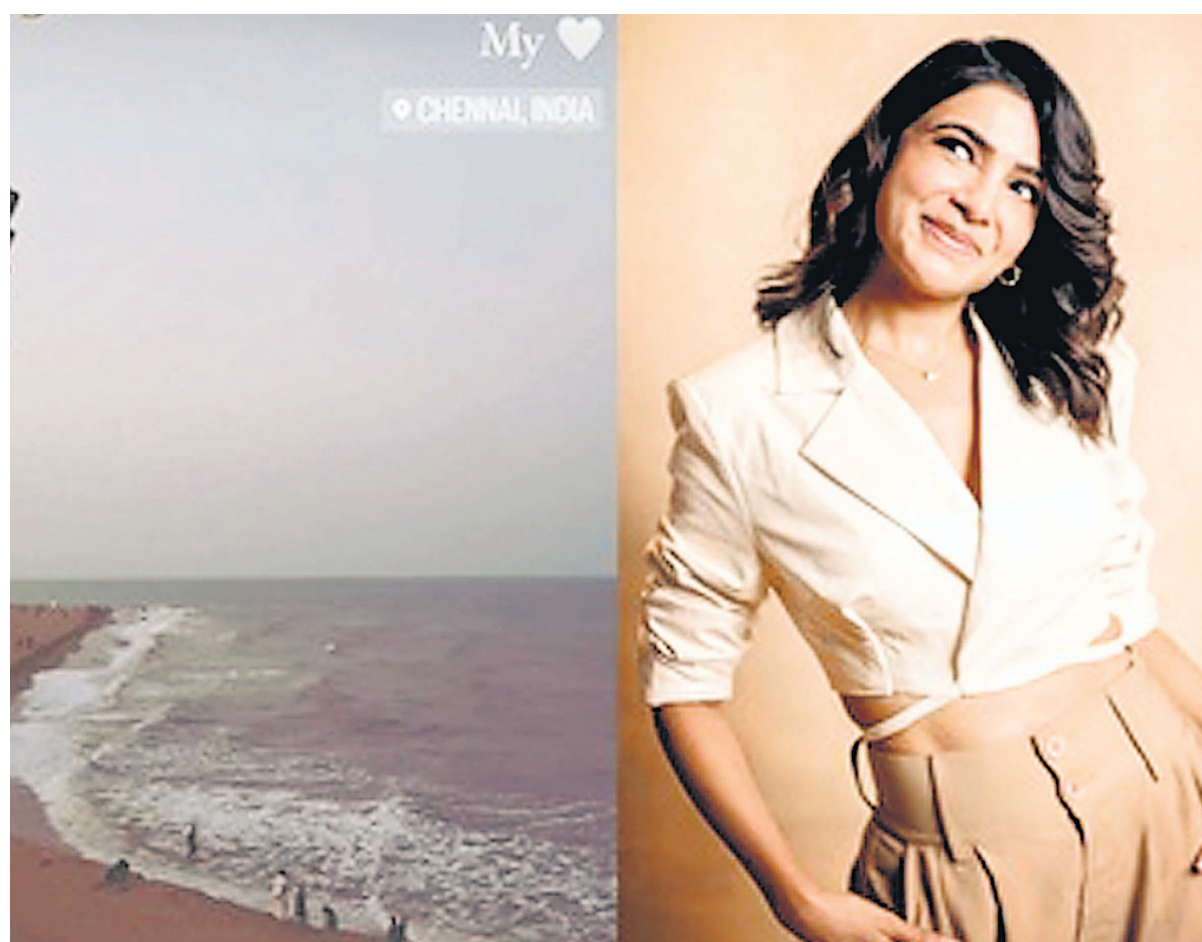
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Arjun Kapoor shared a video featuring an Indian-origin contestant, Sumeet Saigal, teaching the judges of 'Masterchef Australia' how to make panipuri.

Arjun took to his Instagram stories and shared a clip from the 'Masterchef Australia' profile.

In the clip, Saigal is seen teaching the judges that they need to "break" the puris first, fill them with potatoes and dry spices, top them with mint, date, and tamarind chutney, and then fill them up with mint and coriander water. After the judges take a bite, they are left stunned by the taste.

A proud Arjun captioned the clip: "Love this!! Happy to see Indian street food getting international credit."



## Samantha shares beautiful peek into her 'heart' - Chennai

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who is an ardent social media user, on Monday gave a glimpse of her 'heart' -- beautiful Chennai. Born and brought up in Chennai,

Tamil Nadu, Samantha, who was last seen in romantic drama 'Kushi' took to Instagram, and shared a video, wherein we can see the vast sea and the beach. She captioned it as "My (white heart emoji)". Samantha gave the geotag of Chennai, India.

Meanwhile, Samantha who celebrated her 37th birthday on April 28th announced her debut Telugu feature film tentatively titled 'Bangaram' under her banner Tralala Moving Pictures.

## Manoj Bajpayee starts shooting for 'The Family Man' Season 3

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Acclaimed actor Manoj Bajpayee has started shooting for the third season of 'The Family Man' under the direction of the duo Raj & DK.

Streaming giant Prime Video took to Instagram and shared a picture of the clapboard alongside an image of the cast. It was captioned: "#TFM3W us - shoot begins, drop your excitement."

In season three, currently in production, Manoj will reprise the character of Srikant Tiwari, a middle-class man and a spy.

The first season, which premiered in 2019, stars Priyamani, Sharad Kelkar, Neeraj Madhav, Sharib Hashmi, Dalip Tahil, Sunny Hinduja, and Shreya Dhanwanthary. Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu joined the cast in the second season.



Amayra Dastur