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WON'T ALLOW THIEVES TO HAVE A SOUND SLEEP, WILL EMPTY THEIR COFFERS: PM MODI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that the 'looters' of public wealth will have a tough time and his government in the third term will not only deprive them of a sound sleep but also empty their coffers.

PM Modi's stern message for 'looters and plunderers' came at a public rally in Jharkhand's Koderma and was directed at the rampant corruption under the INDIA alliance government in the state.

Notably, a mountain of cash, amounting to Rs 35 crores was recovered during ED raids from the servant of the personal secretary of Jharkhand Congress minister Alamgir Alam.

"I will not let the thieves sleep peacefully. I will take away their sleep and also empty their coffers. You are the owner of this money. No one can steal or loot it. Our govt is taking strict action against them," said PM Modi at the public rally and added that his political rivals are peeved over him because of this. "It's because of our government's zero-tolerance on corruption, INDI alliance is hurling



abuses at me," he said.

He held the 'Shahi Parivaar' responsible for criminals and ruffians 'gaining ground' in the state and exploiting people for their personal prosperity. "I had said from the Red Fort, I will spend my life to free the country from corruption, nepotism and appeasement. The INDI alliance of JMM-Congress-Left is the biggest model of all these evils," the Prime Minister pointed out. Notably, PM Modi was addressing the public rally

in Jharkhand, hours after filing the nomination from the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency in UP. Addressing the huge gathering, PM Modi listed out many milestones of his government and explained how the Centre's welfare policies were benefiting the people. "Rs 5 lakh free medical treatment is our guarantee for all. Our government has built 4 crore houses for the poor and marginalized, after returning to power, we will ensure that others also get this benefit. In

Koderma alone, 1.25 lakh puccas houses have been built," he informed, drawing applause from the gathering.

"In the third term, free ration for 80 crore people will continue for another five years while farmers will continue to get the benefits under Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana," he added.

He also slammed the ruling dispensation in Jharkhand and said that despite the state being a powerhouse of mining resources, the locals haven't benefited from it.

Earlier, May 14 (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday declared his total assets amounting to Rs 3.02 crore in cash and fixed deposits worth Rs 2.85 crore in the State Bank of India (SBI).

The gross total value of his assets is Rs 3,02,06,889. He has not declared any immovable assets. The Prime Minister doesn't own a house or a car, the affidavit said.

As per the document, PM Modi's income increased from Rs 11.1 lakh in 2018-19 to Rs 23.56 lakh in 2022-23.

Powering Amethi-Raebareli campaign

Cong invokes Gandhi family's 100-year-old ties with pocket boroughs

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amethi and Raebareli are the two prestige seats of Uttar Pradesh that will see intense political activity and brisk canvassing over the next few days. All eyes will be on these seats to assess and gauge the public mood here.

Congress, faced with twin tasks of securing Raebareli for Rahul and snatching Amethi from BJP, on Tuesday invoked the Nehru-Gandhi family's 100-year connection with these pocket boroughs, to develop an emotional connect with the electorate and mobilise them in its favour.

'Seva sau saalon ka, rishta pidiyon ka' (100 years of Seva and ties dating back generations) is the party's punchline for wooing and winning the support of the electorate in these family bastions.

Rahul Gandhi, fighting his first Lok Sabha election from Raebareli, a constituency his mother held four times, on Tuesday shared a 6-minute long video, capturing the Nehru-Gandhi family's century-old connection with these constituencies.

Sharing the video, Rahul tweeted, "Amethi and Raebareli are not just Lok Sabha seats for us but also our karmabhoomi. Whenever the residents of these constituencies remember us, we will be right there."

The video features the then pictures and clippings of Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi at the hustings in these con-



situencies. Over the next few days, the party is likely to push this narrative not just on social media but also promote it aggressively on the ground. With the initiative, they seek to renew the Gandhi family's age-old connection with people in these bastions and also woo the fresh voters by showcasing the family's 100-year-old 'seva' there.

Priyanka has already been vigorously campaigning in these two constituencies by holding public meetings and organising the nakkad sabhas.

She has been setting the tone of the campaign by asserting from various platforms on how the four generations of the Gandhi family stood with the people of the constituency.

Bhupesh Baghel, former Congress CM, addressing a public gathering today, also invoked Indira Gandhi and said that the people of Raebareli will not just vote for electing a Lok Sabha member but for electing the country's next Prime Minister, this time.

Misleading ads by Patanjali

SC reserves order in contempt proceedings against Ramdev, Balkrishna

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday reserved its verdict in the contempt notice issued to Baba Ramdev and Patanjali Ayurved's Managing Director Acharya Balkrishna over the continued publication of misleading advertisement by the ayurvedic company.

Dispensing Ramdev and Balkrishna's personal appearance in further proceedings, a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah allowed three-week time to Patanjali to file an affidavit regarding the withdrawal of the sale of banned products and their



advertisements.

It took note of the submission that the entire page of newspapers containing the public apology published by Patanjali has been placed on record. Earlier, the top court had rejected the "unconditional and unqualified apology" tendered by Ramdev and Balkrishna and took strong exception over the violation of the undertaking given to the Supreme Court in November last year. Patanjali had earlier

assured the Supreme Court that it would not make any casual statements claiming the medicinal efficacy of its products or advertise or brand them in violation of law and would not release any statement against any system of medicine to the media in any form. The Indian Medical Association has sought action against Patanjali for violation of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954 - which prohibits the advertisement of certain products for the treatment of specified diseases and disorders, including diabetes, heart diseases, high or blood pressure and obesity.

Pune | Agencies

In a major breakthrough, the Pune zonal unit of the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) has busted a multi-state fake input tax credit (ITC) racket worth over Rs 145 crore and arrested one person from Rajasthan, official sources said here on Tuesday.

The operation was carried out by the Pune zonal unit over the weekend after starting a probe involving some firms in Pune and Goa, and finding that the tentacles spread across Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Delhi, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, with the possibility of other states not ruled out.

The sources said that the scam involved at least 50 bogus firms which used fake/morphed/amended copies of documents and then claimed huge amounts of ITC without any actual supply of goods.

The sleuths of the zonal unit probed the CDRs, CAFs, and pattern of filing returns and analysed bank accounts to conclude that the syndicate, operating from different cities/states in the country, was creating bogus firms using aliases or fake identities



using forged legal documents and even by-passing the unique biometric requirements for issuing SIM cards.

After chasing the culprits in several cities in different states, the GST sleuths got a tip-off that Rahul

Kumar, the alleged mastermind of the bogus firms and the whole racket, was operating from Jaipur. "We finally traced his exact location based on some e-commerce deliveries and SIM operators' inputs. The team raided his home on Friday, found incriminating evidence and arrested Kumar," said a DGGI Pune zonal unit official.

The GST sleuths also uncovered his unique modus operandi whereby they created many fake identities of proprietors/authorised signatories, using SIM cards based on forged Aadhar cards to have full control of filing the GST registrations, returns, payments, cancellations, getting OTPs, etc at any time as per their convenience. Kumar was produced before a Jaipur court, which granted transit remand, and was brought to Pune where a Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court sent him to 14 days remand on Monday. The sources said that further investigations are underway to trace out more fake firms that may have been created for committing fraud, the involvement of other associates/scammers in this racket, mapping the end beneficiaries and recovering the cheated amount.

Arvind Kejriwal Office Staffer "Misbehaved" With Swati Maliwal: AAP Leader

Team Absolute | New Delhi

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal was harassed by party boss Arvind Kejriwal's personal assistant - he "misbehaved" with her at the Delhi Chief Minister's city residence - party leader Sanjay Singh said Tuesday, a day after unconfirmed reports said she had been assaulted by the staffer in question.

Singh called the incident "highly condemnable" and said Chief Minister Kejriwal - who has been hammered by rivals BJP, and on-paper allies Congress, since the news broke, "will take strict action".

"A very distressing incident took place yesterday morning. Arvind Kejriwal had called Swati Maliwal for



a meeting. She was waiting in the drawing room to meet him when Bibhav Kumar came in and misbehaved with her. After this, Maliwal called the police and told them what happened."

"This is a condemnable incident. Arvind Kejriwal has taken cognisance and has said the strictest possible action should be taken..." Singh told reporters, "Swati Maliwal has done great work for the people and country, and is one of the party's oldest and senior-most leaders. We stand with her and will deal with this issue seriously, as per Kejriwal's order. The AAP does not support such behavior." Maliwal has not yet commented on the incident.

Jaipur child suffering from rare disease administered injection worth Rs 17.50 cr

Jaipur | Agencies

Hridayansh (23-month-old) was administered an injection worth Rs 17.50 crore at JK Lon Hospital in Jaipur on Tuesday.

Medical practitioner Priyanshu Mathur, in charge of the Rare Disease Unit in the hospital, and his team administered the injection of Zol Genesma, which was imported from America.

Hridayansh suffers from a rare disease called Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA). His family worked round the clock to raise the mammoth funds via crowdfunding.

His parents Naresh Sharma and Shama came to know



about this rare disorder when Hridayansh turned six. The hapless parents took him to the doctor and came to know about this rare disorder. Dr. Priyanshu Mathur after administering the injection said that the child will be kept under observation for 24 hours. The child's maternal grandfather Naresh Kumbaj

thanked everyone for extending support to the child.

Hridayansh's family had launched a crowd-funding campaign on social media to buy the injection.

Indian cricketers Deepak Chahar and Sarfaraz Khan had also appealed to save the child's life.

One killed, six rescued after fire breaks out at ITO building in Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A 46-year-old man died while six others were rescued after a fire broke out on the third floor of the Central Revenue building in the ITO area of the national capital on Tuesday, officials said.

Several people working in the building were evacuated through the windows using ladders, a fire department official said.

Atul Garg, Director of Delhi Fire Service (DFS), said a call regarding the blaze opposite the old Delhi Police headquarters was received at 2.25 p.m. "A total of 21 fire



tenders were rushed to the spot," he said, adding that at 4 p.m., a message was received from the spot that seven persons, including five men and two women, were rescued by DFS personnel from the third floor of the building. However, a senior police officer said that among the rescued persons, a 46-year-old man was found in an unconscious state, who was declared dead at the hospital.

How eating more junk food can impact your child's mental health

Junk food or fast food has become a common part of children's eating habits nowadays and lacks important nutrients for better growth. It is also known to cause weight gain and obesity -- a major risk factor for diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and cancer. In addition, junk food can also affect children's behaviour and mood.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

While the association between junk food -- rich in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats -- doctors on Tuesday warned how these may also contribute to poor mental health in young children

Studies have provided evidence that a diet high in fast food and sugary drinks can lead to behavioural problems, including hyperactivity, attention



deficit disorder (ADD), and even depression "Junk food can significantly

impact a child's mental health. Excessive consumption of junk food, which is often high in sugar, unhealthy fats, and additives, can lead to nutritional deficiencies and imbalances," Dr. Amitabh Saha - Associate Director, Mental Health & Behavioural Sciences, Max Hospital, Vaishali, told IANS. "This can affect concentration, cognitive function, and mood regulation, ultimately influencing a child's overall mental well-being," he added.

Another cooperative bank scam surfaces in Kerala, CPI(M) leader on the run

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Even as the Enforcement Directorate is probing two Left-controlled cooperative banks, a fraud to the tune of Rs 4.76 crore has been detected by the bank itself at the Karadka Agriculturist Cooperative Society in Kerala's Kasargod. This bank is under the control of the CPI(M), which is a big force in Kasargod, the northernmost district of the state.

On Tuesday, following a complaint from the president of the society, the local police

swung into action and registered a case against the secretary -- K. Ratheesan, a top CPI(M) leader in the locality. Ratheesan has been suspended and is presently on the run.

The police have named Ratheesan as the sole accused. He is alleged to have given gold loans on fictitious names and extended loans to some without taking gold as collateral security.

Meanwhile, reports have surfaced that Ratheesan is understood to have told a few people that the entire loan that he has given will be closed in a few days.



NDA HAS ALREADY CROSSED 270 SEATS: AMIT SHAH

Kolkata | Agencies

The Union Home Minister on Tuesday said that NDA has already secured the requisite number of seats to secure a majority in the Parliament and will form the government again at the Centre.

"We have already secured 270 seats and ensured Narendra Modi's third term as the Prime Minister. From the fifth phase, we will achieve our target of 400 seats," the Union Home Minister said while addressing an election meeting at Uluberia Lok Sabha constituency in Howrah district in support of the party candidate Arun Uday Pal Chaudhury.

Amit Shah also accused West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of misleading the people about the centrally-sponsored scheme.

"The funds for these schemes are provided by the Central government and the Mamata Banerjee-led state government is changing the names of



these projects and projecting them as the state government projects," the Union Home Minister said.

He also accused the Chief Minister of spreading rumours that if the BJP comes to power 'Lakshmir Bhandar' woman scheme will be stopped. "I want to assure you that Lakshmir Bhandar will continue and that too with a higher payment amount," the Union Home Minister said.

He added that those responsible for the sexual harassment of women in Sandeshkhali will not be spared. "All the accused will be dragged and put behind bars," Amit Shah said.

He also said that the people of West Bengal are frustrated with the appeasement politics pursued by Trinamool Congress.

"These Rohingya and Bangladeshi infiltrators are the principal constituents of the Chief Minister's vote bank. But how long can this continue and time has come for a change," he said.

India bloc will form government at Centre: Karnataka Deputy CM Shivakumar

Bengaluru | Agencies

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar on Tuesday

claimed that there is a strong positive wave for the India bloc in the country and the alliance will form the government in the Centre.

"A favourable environment is developing in the country for us and the India bloc will form the government at the Centre," he said, speaking to reporters at his Sadashivanagar residence.

"The Maharashtra Chief Minister has spoken of a Maharashtra-like operation in Karnataka, but his own government can fall anytime," he said.

Asked about the video of the kidnap victim saying that he was not kidnapped at all, he said, "The SIT will respond to this. I don't know anything about this. They are using my name as they think they will



get more media coverage."

Asked about Leader of the Opposition R. Ashoka and senior BJP leader C. N. Ashwathnarayan accusing him of masterminding the Hassan sex scandal pen drive leak, he said, "We will give answers to them at an appropriate time."

Shivakumar asked his fans and supporters not to celebrate his birthday on May 15.

"I would be travelling to other states for the election campaign and request everyone not to pay me a visit to wish me," he said.

HD Revanna walks out of jail; police lathicharge to disperse celebrating JD(S) workers

Bengaluru | Agencies

Soon after Jailed JD(S) MLA H. D. Revanna on Tuesday walked out from the Bengaluru Central Jail, police resorted to lathicharge the party workers who were celebrating the release of their leader on bail, in order to disperse them.

H.D. Revanna was arrested on May 4 by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the sex video scandal involving his son, JD(S) MP and Lok Sabha candidate Prajwal Revanna.

The JD(S) leaders escorted H. D. Revanna from jail premises to the residence of his father and former Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda. After reaching his father's house, H. D. Revanna sought blessings of Deve Gowda.

On May 3, the Karnataka Police registered an FIR



against H. D. Revanna in connection with the kidnaping of the woman, believed to be one of the victims of the sex video scandal involving his son Prajwal.

The victim's son had registered a missing complaint naming H. D. Revanna as the prime accused in the case. The victim's son alleged that his mother went missing

after the surfacing of a purported sex video in which Prajwal Revanna could be seen sexually assaulting her.

The victim's son alleged that his mother was locked up in an undisclosed location, as he pleaded with the police to initiate legal action against H.D. Revanna and Satish Babu, a relative of H. D. Revanna's wife.

Viral Sandeshkhali video: Calcutta HC bars police from taking coercive action against BJP leader

Kolkata | Agencies

A single-judge bench of the Calcutta High Court on Tuesday barred the West Bengal Police from initiating a probe or adopting coercive action in connection with a sting operation involving a local BJP leader from Sandeshkhali, which had gone viral recently.

In the purported video, local BJP leader Gangadhar Kayal could be heard claiming that the protests staged by the women against alleged sexual harassment by local Trinamool Congress leaders in Sandeshkhali were orchestrated by the BJP.

On May 10, Kayal approached the single-judge bench of Justice Jay Sengupta, claiming that his voice was doctored in the video using artificial intelligence.

In his plea, he also sought protection from coercive action against him by the state police.



On Tuesday, Justice Sengupta's bench barred the state police from

initiating a probe or adopting coercive action against Kayal for the time being. The matter will next come up for hearing on May 17.

After the video surfaced on May 4, Kayal, a mandal president of the BJP in Sandeshkhali, first approached the CBI claiming that his voice was doctored in the clip using artificial intelligence. The CBI, following an order from the Calcutta High Court, is already conducting a probe into the complaints of sexual harassment, illegal land grabbing, and extortion in Sandeshkhali by a section of the local Trinamool Congress leaders.

Referring to the ongoing CBI probe which is court-monitored, Justice Sengupta on Tuesday questioned the basis on which the FIR was registered against Kayal in the matter.

He also said that the FIR could have been registered after obtaining the necessary permission from the judicial magistrate.

Dharav High School Celebrates Remarkable Achievement of Kunjal Agarwal as Jaipur City Topper with 99.6%

Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

Dharav High School is delighted to announce the exceptional academic achievement of Kunjal Agarwal, who has emerged as the City Topper in the Class X board exams with an outstanding score of 99.6 percent. This remarkable feat not only reflects Kunjal's dedication and hard work but also underscores the commitment to excellence that Dharav High School upholds.

With Kunjal's accomplishment, Dharav High School continues its legacy of producing consecutive City Toppers, a testament to the institution's unwavering pursuit of academic excellence. This achievement fills us with immense pride and joy, highlighting the collective efforts of our students, teachers, and parents.

Kunjal, who hails from Dharav



High School, is the epitome of talent and determination. Alongside

her academic pursuits, she finds solace in the world of chess and

has a penchant for exploring fiction and mythological literature. Her passion for dance is equally noteworthy, reflecting her vibrant and multifaceted personality.

Expressing their happiness and gratitude, her parents have acknowledged the invaluable support and guidance provided by Dharav High School and its dedicated teachers. Kunjal, in turn, dedicates her hard-earned success to her school teachers and family for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout her academic journey.

Seema Sehajpal, Principal of Dharav High School, extends her heartfelt congratulations to Kunjal Agarwal and commends her for her exemplary achievement. She emphasizes the school's commitment to nurturing every student's potential and providing them with a conducive environment for holistic development.

Top Political Leaders Should Set Good Examples Of Campaign Discourse: Poll Body

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Election Commission said today that top leaders of political parties should set "good examples" of campaign discourse expected of them in the ongoing Lok Sabha election.

The Election Commission also asserted that it was primarily the leaders' responsibility to correct their poll speeches in the remaining phases of the election to avoid a permanent dent on the social fabric of the country.

Coming out with its second report on the enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct since the March 16 announcement of the Lok Sabha election, the poll panel said it has disposed of over 90 per cent of complaints and



no major complaint from parties was pending, except some by the Congress and the BJP.

"With about two months completed since the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) came into effect, campaign

by various political parties and candidates at constituency level has largely remained violence free, less noisy, less cluttered and intrusive, free of inducement..." the commission added.

Five teenage boys drown in river during picnic in UP's Jalaun

Jalaun (UP): Five teenage boys, who had gone for a picnic at Betwa River in UP's Jalaun district, drowned while taking a bath, police said on Tuesday.

Superintendent of Police Iraj Raja said that the victims were identified as Aryan, 16, Anubhav Bundela, 17, Shiva, 16, Mahendra Pratap, 17, and Hemant, 17 - all residents of Bagaura locality of Orai Kotwali area.

The incident occurred on Monday late evening when the five boys went for a picnic and were taking a bath in the Salaghat of the Betwa River in the Kotra area. They slipped into deep water and drowned, the SP said.

The matter came to light when some villagers saw the boys' clothes, motorcycle and scooter on the banks of the river and informed the police, he said.

Advocates cannot be sued under Consumer Protection Act for professional negligence: Supreme Court

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that advocates cannot be held liable under the Consumer Protection Act for deficiency of services.

A bench presided over by Justice Bela M Trivedi said that the very purpose and object of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 was to provide protection to consumers from unfair practices and unethical business practices only, adding that the legislature never intended to include professions or professional services under the statute.

"We have distinguished 'profession' from 'business' and 'trade'. We have said that a profession would require advance education and training in some branch of learning or science. The nature of work is of skilled and specialised one, substantial part of which would be rather mental than manual... a professional cannot be treated equally or at par with a busi-



nessman or a trader or a service provider of products or goods as contemplated in the Consumer Protection Act" said the bench, also comprising Justice Pankaj Mishra.

However, the Apex Court clarified that an advocate could be sued for professional negligence in an ordinary course of law. Earlier in 2007, the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) had ruled that the services rendered by advocates fall under the purview of the Consumer Protection Act. On appeal, the apex court, in an ad-interim order passed in April 2009, stayed the implementation of the NCDRC ruling during the pendency of the appeals.

Mamata Banerjee calls BJP-Congress-CPI-M 'job eaters'

Kolkata | Agencies

The Calcutta High Court's recent cancellation of 25,753 teaching and non-teaching jobs was the result of a joint conspiracy hatched by the CPI-M, Congress, and the BJP, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee alleged on Tuesday.

"Whenever we are trying to arrange jobs, they approach the court and stall the appointment process. We have heard of man-eating tigers... But they are job-eaters," the Chief Minister said while addressing an election rally at Kalyani under the Bangaon Lok Sabha constituency in support of party nominee Biswajit Das.

She also said that the lawyers of the Congress, CPI-M, and the BJP were disheartened after the Supreme Court put a stay on the Calcutta High Court order.

To recall, in a crucial ruling



last month, the Calcutta High Court cancelled 25,753 appointments in teaching and non-teaching posts made by the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) in 2016. The case is being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Later, the Supreme Court stayed the order of the Calcutta High Court, invalidating their appointment made by the WBSSC in the state-run and state-aided schools.

Addressing the gathering on Tuesday, the Chief Minister also launched a scathing attack on

Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the latter's recent pronouncement of five guarantees for West Bengal at an election rally in the state.

"Whenever someone gives a guarantee, he should honour that. Ten years back, he gave the guarantee to transfer Rs 15 lakh to each citizen's account. But the money never came. Five years back, he promised two crore jobs. But instead of creating government jobs, the public sector units are being privatised. So, such guarantees mean nothing," Banerjee said. The Chief Minister also alleged that out of the fear of defeat (in the Lok Sabha elections), the BJP and the Union government are trying to manipulate the polling process by tampering the EVMs.

"An attempt was made at Krishnanagar on Monday, which was foiled after the Trinamool staged a protest," the Chief Minister said.

Maha CM should save his state first: Siddaramaiah

Bengaluru | Agencies

Responding to Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's remarks about the collapse of the Congress government in Karnataka after Lok Sabha polls are over, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Tuesday that "he (Eknath Shinde) should save his state first before talking about the Karnataka government". "There is no fighting in the Congress. Had there been any disruption in the party, it would not have been possible for us to work unitedly during the Lok Sabha election in the state," the Chief Minister told media persons.

He dubbed the statements of Maharashtra Chief Minister and BJP leaders on the "collapse of the Congress government" as a "political statement". Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar said that Eknath Shinde's own government in Maharashtra will come under threat. "Everything will happen in reverse," the Deputy Chief Minister said. Commenting over the BJP and JD-S alliance for the MLC election, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that during the Lok Sabha election, both parties had an alliance but failed to have any impact. On the impact of the sex video scandal on the MLC election, the Chief Minister said that the voters are mature and know what is right and wrong. "They can take a call over the achievements of our government and the Central government and decide for themselves what is right for them," the Chief Minister said.





'LADLI BEHNA'S' WILL GET 3 THOUSAND RUPEES, BIG ANNOUNCEMENT OF FORMER CM SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Ladli Behna Yojana of the BJP government of MP is talked about all over the country. Under Ladli Behna Yojana, the state government gives Rs 1250 to women every month. Under the scheme, this amount is transferred directly to the eligible sisters in their bank accounts. The BJP government has also promised to increase this amount. Now the statement of senior BJP leader and former state CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan has also come to light on this.

Ladli Behna Yojana was started in Madhya Pradesh during the tenure of Shivraj Singh Chauhan. Initially, under this scheme, women were given Rs 1000 every month. The then CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan had also talked about increasing this amount gradually. Later it was increased by Rs 250. Now once again Shivraj Singh Chauhan has talked about increasing the amount of Ladli Behna Yojana.

Former CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan has said that the amount of Ladli



Behna Yojana will be increased to Rs 3 thousand. He repeated this once

again. Former CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan mentioned Ladli Behna Yojana in an election rally in West Bengal. He also said in clear words in the meeting that by increasing the amount under the scheme, the sisters will be given Rs 3,000 per month.

The special thing is that former CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan has been talking about gradually increasing the amount under the scheme since the beginning. MP CM Mohan Yadav also promises to continue this scheme. This time the amount of Ladli Behna Yojana was transferred to the accounts of the sisters on May 5 itself.

It is noteworthy that before the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh last year, former CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan had started the Ladli Behna Yojana. Under the scheme, 1.29 crore women of the state were given Rs 1000 every month, which has now been increased to Rs 1250. Under Ladli Behna Yojana, the amount of the scheme is transferred to the accounts of all eligible women on the 10th of every month.

Hostel operator arrested for raping an innocent child in Bhopal, Sub Inspector in custody

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The police has arrested the school director accused of raping an innocent girl in the hostel of a private school in Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh. The sub-inspector who tried to hush up this matter is also in police custody.

Actually, an incident of rape of an eight-year-old girl took place in the hostel of a private school in the Misrod police station area of the capital. An FIR was lodged in this case on 30 April. The police had registered a case against three unidentified people including the female warden of the hostel. The police did not arrest the accused and after that questions were also raised on the investigation of the SIT in the case. The girl was medically examined thrice, but no one was arrested. Later this matter reached the Child Rights Protection



Commission (CWC) and it took the statement of the girl and after that the police became active.

Eventually the police arrested the school director Maniraj, Sub Inspector Prakash Rajput of the police station tried his best to hush

up this entire matter.

The mother of the victim girl also complained about the role of the sub inspector and the police also registered a case. Finally, Sub Inspector Prakash Singh Rajput has been taken into custody by the police.

ONE POLLING PARTY MEMBER KILLED IN BUS-TRUCK COLLISION IN MANDSAUR

Bhopal: One member of a polling party was killed and nine others injured when the bus they were travelling in met with an accident in Mandhsaur.

The incident occurred on Tuesday morning when the polling party was returning from the polling booth to Mandhsaur district headquarters.

Mandsaur was among the eight Lok Sabha seats where the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections was held on Monday.

Police said the private bus collided with a truck on the Muvasara-Mandsaur highway. A home guard died on the spot and those injured in the collision were rushed to a nearby hospital.

The condition of three of them was critical, police said.

Bhopal candidates were also very active on social media platforms, BJP-Congress spent 8.38 lakhs

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Before voting for the Lok Sabha elections in Bhopal, the candidates were very active on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook. At the same time, he also made SMS, audio and video a medium of publicity. Alok Sharma of BJP and Arun Srivastava of Congress spent a total of Rs 8.38 lakh for this. However, Arun remained at number-1 in expenditure, who spent 10 times more than Alok.

To deal with the voting on May 7, now the activity of the candidates of Bhopal on social media platforms has been detected. A report of this has also been submitted to Collector Kaushalendra Vikram Singh. If reports are to be believed, candidates have also made social media a major way of campaigning in this Lok Sabha election. When voters were requested to vote at the ground level, they also campaigned through the biggest platforms of social media. So that maximum votes can be cast in their favor.

Congress's Arun Srivastava spent the maximum Rs 3.38 lakh on Facebook and Instagram. This amount was paid in exchange for promoting more than 150 videos on both social media sides. At the



same time, votes were also sought through sending audio-video messages on mobile and through Twitter. 8.5 thousand rupees were spent on this. Arun spent a total of Rs 7.45 lakh through other ads. BJP's Alok Sharma stood second. Whose expenditure was Rs 83 thousand, which is only 10 percent of Arun Srivastava's expenditure.

diture.

This payment has also been added to the election expenses. For this, Collector Singh has sent a report to the Nodal Officer of Expenditure on Monday. On the other hand, other candidates uploaded videos on social media but did not spend money on it.

A total of 22 candidates were in the fray for Bhopal Lok Sabha seat. He made his election videos very viral on Instagram and Facebook, but other Congress candidates also got their videos boosted. The MCMC committee kept an eye on the social media accounts of the candidates. Especially the Facebook and Instagram accounts of BJP and Congress candidates were viewed. In which payment for any reel boost was also added to the expense.

This time a candidate could spend a total of Rs 95 lakh in the Lok Sabha elections. The election expenses of the candidates include campaigning and all expenses related to it. In this, all kinds of items and publicity mediums including vehicles, tents, food and drinks, snacks, fans, flowers, bouquets etc. are added to the expenditure incurred by him and his supporters for campaigning. Even attending a sponsored event gets its expense added to their account.

Former Mahamandaleshwar Mandakini arrested in Ujjain, accused of fraud

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Mahamandaleshwar Mandakini alias Mamta Joshi has been arrested by the police on charges of fraud in the name of making Mahant a Mahamandaleshwar in the religious city of Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh.

On the complaint of Jaipur resident Sureshwaranand Giri, a case of fraud was registered against former Mahamandaleshwar Mandakini and his associate Ashwini Chaudhary, expelled from Niranjani Akhara, at Chimanganj police station in Ujjain. The complaint alleged that Mandakini had taken Rs 7.50 lakh to get him the title of Mahamandaleshwar and later neither the title was given to him nor the amount reached the Akhara headquarters. Later it was revealed that neither any amount was taken by Niranjani Akhara for building Mahamandaleshwar nor any decision has been taken in the name of Mahant. On the basis of this complaint, the police of Chimanganj police station arrested Mandakini. When the complaint was filed, former Mahamandaleshwar Mandakini had consumed phenyl and since then he was undergoing treatment in the hospital. As soon as she was discharged from the hospital, the police arrested her. It has been told that Mahamandaleshwar of Jaipur has also lodged a complaint in Mahakal police station in this matter, in which it has been said that



Mandakini had cheated to make Acharya Mahamandaleshwar. He had taken the amount through online transfer in different installments in the last seven months.

5-Year-old girl raped by minor boy: Police

Team Absolute | Agar Malwa

A 17-year-old boy allegedly raped a five-year-old girl residing in his neighbourhood in Madhya Pradesh's Agar Malwa district, police said.

The incident took place on Sunday evening in a village under Soyat Kala police station limits, an official said on Monday.

The girl was playing outside her home when the boy lured her to his house where he raped her. Soyat Kala police station in-charge Yashwant Rao Gaekwad said.

Later at night, after experiencing pain in her abdomen, the girl informed the incident to her family members who then filed a police complaint, he said.

The accused has been on the run after the incident, the official said.



The girl's medical examination confirmed the crime, he said.

A case has been registered against the minor boy under relevant provisions of the

Indian Penal Code and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the official said.

An investigation was on into the incident, he said.

Injured female leopard rescued and brought to Van Vihar National Park

Team Absolute | Bhopal

On May 9, in Van Vihar National Park, an injured female leopard was rescued and brought to Van Vihar from the house of a villager in the Lateri range of Vidisha general forest division. Van Vihar was kept in quarantine.

The injured female leopard is being treated by Van Vihar's wildlife doctor Dr. Atul Gupta after consulting experts. Senior Veterinarian of State Veterinary Hospital, Bhopal, Dr. Sunil Kumar Tumadia, Wildlife Veterinarian of Van Vihar, Dr. Atul Gupta and Wildlife S.O.S. On May 14, Van Vihar's wildlife doctor Dr. Rajat Kulkarni sedated the injured female leopard and conducted a joint health checkup.

During the examination by the team, it was found that



the bones of the back left paw were found broken and due

to it being gangrenous and in order to save the life of the injured female leopard, its paw was amputated. The activities of the female leopard are being monitored and she is being continuously treated.

BIG NEWS FOR PILGRIMS, BAN ON VEHICLES IN SALKANPUR

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Big news has come for those who go to visit and worship at the famous Bijasan Mata temple of Sehore. Vehicular movement has been restricted in Salkanpur. This restriction has been imposed due to Devi Public Works work in Salkanpur temple complex. Devi Lok is being developed here by Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation for which many constructions are being done. For this reason vehicles have been banned in the temple premises.

Vehicular movement has been banned in the Salkanpur temple complex till June 13. An order in this regard has been issued by Additional District Magistrate Vrindavan Singh. The special thing is that during this period there will be no ban on vehicles on Saturday and Sunday.

According to the order, a ban has been imposed on cars, bikes etc. on the road access road to Salkanpur temple. Now no vehicle will be able to ply from entrance number 1 of Salkanpur Devi Temple to the temple on Rehti-Budni road. This order has been issued under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 in view of the public interest and safety of life and property. Till June 13, only vehicles engaged in



construction work or government vehicles will be able to come here.

The Salkanpur temple complex is being developed as Devi Lok Salkanpur temple. Many constructions are being done for this by Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation. Along with material and columns etc., stone statues are also being installed for the construction work in the Salkanpur temple complex. Necessary arrangements are being made by the construction agency at the road entrance of the

temple. The order of ban on cars and bikes will be strictly implemented by the police. This order of ban on vehicles will remain in force from Monday to Friday. All vehicles will be free from this restriction on Saturday and Sunday. The district administration has also said that there will be exemption from restrictions on vehicles on any special day or festival etc. This order of ban on cars and bikes will remain effective till June 13, 2024. Violation of the order will be considered a punishable offence.

Awareness program on cancer organized by AIIMS Bhopal



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Professor (Dr) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, always emphasizes that we should go out of the hospital premises, among the people in the community to provide them health information. Only then will we be able to truly make people health conscious. In view of the increasing cases of cancer in the country, it is very important to create awareness. HPV vaccination is very important to combat the problem of cervical cancer especially in women. Professor Singh places great emphasis on the education of children in particular. According to him, educating or making a child aware means educating or making a

generation aware. In this connection, Dr. Shashank Bansal, Assistant Professor, Department of Medical Oncology, AIIMS Bhopal, organized an awareness program on cancer for the students of SAGE University Bhopal on 14th May 2024. In this awareness program, students were told about the screening technique through which any person can check himself at the primary level whether he has cancer.

The risk of cervical cancer in women is almost completely eliminated after HPV vaccination.

Besides, students were also given information about how to maintain their lifestyle. In the modern lifestyle, children are mostly attracted towards junk food.



Special on International Family Day 15 May 2024

The Role of Families in Combating Climate Change

Lalit Garg

International Day of Families is celebrated as an annual celebration on 15 May to celebrate the importance of families and their role in society. The United Nations adopted it as a resolution in 1994 to raise awareness of the importance of families, highlight the challenges they face, promote the ideals of solidarity, and demonstrate efforts that strengthen family units around the world. This year we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of the International Day of Families, the theme of which is Families and Climate Change. Its goal is to raise awareness of the effects of climate change on families and encourage them to take action to reduce these impacts. Family and community initiatives aim to raise awareness about the threats to the environment and life from climate change and to clean up the environment by providing education, information access, training and community participation. Family is the smallest unit in the animal world and social organization. It is difficult to even imagine running a human society in the absence of a family, we have understood this very well during the Corona crisis.

Every person is able to make his life journey pleasant, prosperous and development oriented only by being a member of some family. Its existence cannot be thought of apart from it. Our culture and civilization has been refining itself by going through many changes, but there has been no impact on the existence of the family institution. They may have been created or broken, but their existence cannot be denied. Its form changed and its values changed but its existence cannot be questioned. No matter how much modern ideology we are growing up in, but in the end we experience satisfaction and fullness and meaning of life only in converting our relations into a family by linking them with the institution of marriage.

The importance of family is not only in India but everywhere in the world that is why International Family Day is celebrated with the aim of strengthening the family institution. The main objective of this day is to make the youth aware of the family so that the youth do not get away from their families in the flow of so-called modernity. The family institution continues to exist despite facing many struggles and changes. If we talk about old eras or even on the basis of religious beliefs, then like today, there used to be disintegration of families earlier too. But in modern society disintegration of the family has become a common thing. In such a situation, International Family Day is celebrated with the mission and vision that families should not break. By living among the family, you remain stress-free and happy, and you also do not become a victim of loneliness or depression. The concept of society is incomplete without family and to create a family it is very important for people to live together and connect.



There are two types of families - one is nuclear family and the other is joint family. Father, mother and children live in a nuclear family. In a joint family, father-mother, children, grandparents, uncle, aunt, elder father, elder mother, aunt etc. The first celebration of this day was announced by the United States of America on 15 May 1994. This day holds great importance for the people who are suffering the tragedy of breakdown and disintegration of joint families. In fact, the unique identity of human civilization is the joint family and wherever it is, there is heaven. Old age shudders due to the actions of family members who destroy the importance of relationships and love and the so-called modernist thinking. While the disintegration of joint families and the emergence of the nuclear family have caused pain to the elderly, it has also deprived the children of many events. The power to bear sorrow and endure hardships which is seen in joint families

is not found in those who live alone. In today's modern era, in view of rising inflation and increasing needs, joint families can be called the need of the hour.

India is a country of villages, a country of families, perhaps this is the reason that despite not wanting to, we have emerged as the world's largest population nation and perhaps this is the reason that despite the challenges arising from population pressure, as a 'family', did not feel the need to formulate population policy. A part of the land surrounded by walls made of brick, stone and lime is called a household, with which 'I' and 'me' are associated. The organizational unit of relationships committed by values is each member of that household. The happiness and sorrow of every member touches each other's heart. The mind is affected by feelings of love.

Where the sun rises every morning in the struggle for food, clothing, shelter, education and proper medical care, and every evening the family comes and stays at home carrying the burden of half-fulfilled wishes. Sometimes profit, sometimes loss, sometimes happiness, sometimes sadness, sometimes coincidence, sometimes separation, the cycle of life moves between these dualistic situations. There is a struggle between luck and effort. Every effort of a man is to create a 'home and family'. In the true

sense, home and family are the place where life values like affection, harmony, cooperation, organization, sharing of joys and sorrows, acceptance of lessons in everything are lived. Where there is complete freedom to tolerate and understand everyone. There is creative freedom with discipline, the right to make decisions with integrity & where childhood is nurtured in good values. Youth is lived by a relative lifestyle. Old age remains tolerant and balanced while sharing the experiences lived among everyone. Such a family definitely becomes a temple of worship.

Family is like a resource. Then what is the reason that if we look into the atmosphere of any family today, we will see the shadows of sorrow, worry, discord, jealousy, hatred, partiality, dispute, opposition and rebellion moving around. There would be a feeling of alienation even among our own people. Difference of opinion will lead to discord. Faith will descend into doubt. In such a crowd of untold tensions, man yearns for a moment of happiness. No one tries to tolerate/understand anyone. Because in that family, within the scope of its own existence, the changing peripheries of objectives, ideals, expectations, faith and belief go astray, obliterating the centre. To control this fragmentation and disintegration, we launched the " Sukhi Pariwar Abhiyan" under the leadership of Gani Rajendra Vijayji, through which extensive initiatives are being taken to strengthen the family institution.

The concept of Nuclear Family is not yet widespread in India. Even today, there are many families in India whose generations live together and support each other at every step. But the situation is gradually worsening in metropolitan cities like Delhi and Mumbai. It is expected that soon the importance of joint family will start increasing again in the society and awareness will spread among people that they should live together in a family which has many benefits. This step and resolution of life taken in the name of human relationships and family tradition will be a unique gift to the family in welcoming tomorrow.

From: (Lalit Garg)
Writer, Journalist, columnist
E-253, Saraswati Kanuj Apartment
25 IP Extension, Patparganj, Delhi-92
Phone: 2272486, 9811051133

EDITOR'S SPECS

18-year-old girl gives new lease of life to four

An 18-year-old girl from Haryana gave a new lease of life to four critically-ill patients after her tragic death. In a deeply moving generosity, Joginder Pal Singh and Pinky Rani, the parents of the 18-year-old girl, chose to donate their daughter's organs. The girl was declared brain-dead at Alchemist Hospital, Panchkula, on Saturday. On April 29, she met with an accident. The donated organs were harvested, and the liver was sent to Max Hospital at Saket in Delhi. The pancreas and one kidney were sent to PGIMER, Chandigarh, and one kidney was donated to a critical kidney failure patient at Alchemist Hospital, Panchkula, near here. For timely transportation of organs, green corridors were created on Sunday between Alchemist Hospital, Panchkula, to Max Hospital Saket, Delhi, and PGIMER as well. Neeraj Goyal, associate director (kidney transplant), Alchemist Hospital, said the significance of organ transplantation in restoring health and vitality to patients. While emphasising the importance of awareness regarding organ donation, Medical Superintendent Paramjit Maan said many precious lives could be saved through transplantation. Director General of Health Services (DGHS) Randeep Singh Punia commended the family for their noble gesture while emphasising the life-saving importance of organ donation. With the coordination of Deputy Commissioner of Police Himadri Kaushik and Haryana Police, the organs reached their destinations on time, ensuring that the life-saving transplant surgery could proceed without delay.

Indian is first international UN employee killed in Gaza conflict; Guterres condemns attack

Arul Louis | United Nations

An Indian working for the United Nations in Gaza has become the first non-Palestinian staffer to be killed during the current Gaza conflict when his vehicle was attacked on its way to a hospital in Rafah. The victim was identified as Col. Waibhav Anil Kale, who had started working a month ago as a security coordinator for the UN in Gaza, according to The Washington Post, which quoted unnamed informed sources.



Haq did not say who carried out the attack.

Kale, who worked for the UN Department of Safety and Security (DSS) joins the roster of more than 200 Indians who have died in the service of the UN.

The majority of them - 179 - are peacekeepers but many other Indian civilians, who like employees of the DSS are not peacekeepers, have died working for the UN in various capacities in trouble spots.

Earlier, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's Spokesperson Farhan Haq, who announced the death, did not identify him pending notification to his family and government.

Haq said that Guterres condemned the attack and called for a full investigation.

Another UN employee was injured in the Monday attack, he said.

The blame for the attack has not been fixed because the situation remains murky in Rafah.

Al Jazeera broadcast clips showing windows with bullet holes on the attacked vehicle flying UN flags and bearing large UN markings.

From the nature of the damage, it did not appear to have been an air or heavy artillery attack.

He said that Monday's victim was the first international employee of the UN killed in Gaza since October 7, although 188 Palestinian employees of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the UN arm for humanitarian services for Palestinians, have been killed.

"We will be working with the authorities on the ground to get restitution for all of those who have been killed," Haq declared.

The Post said that according to its sources, Kale was a 46-year-old father of two teenage children.

Other media reports said that he had

earlier worked for the Indian Army.

Israel Defense Forces said that according to an initial inquiry, Monday's attack happened in an active combat zone and that it was not made aware of the vehicle's movement.

Haq said that the DSS staffers were in the vehicle with clear UN markings that was in a convoy engaged in "their regular work [for which] they go to different locations to assess security conditions. And this was the European Hospital in Rafah".

Asked what the UN was doing to seek justice for the UN employees killed in the conflict, Haq said, "In all cases, we are going to set up measures for accountability".

"A lot of that, as you know, requires ultimately for an end to the conflict so that we can work these out," he said.

Guterres reiterated his call for a humanitarian ceasefire and the release of the hostages taken by Hamas, which sparked the conflict with an attack on Israel in which about 1,200 people were killed and 128 were kidnapped.

Israel's retaliation on Gaza, from where Hamas launched the attack, has killed about 34,000 Palestinians, most of them women, children or the aged.

Last month, four foreigners and three Palestinians working for a non-profit organisation, were killed in Gaza.

Russia aiming to build buffer zone near Kharkiv: ISW



Washington | Agencies

Russian forces advancing near Ukraine's north-eastern city of Kharkiv will likely limit their push to the rapid creation of a buffer zone between the two countries, according to US military experts. That goal is apparently being prioritised over a deeper offensive into the Kharkiv region, the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW) wrote in its latest report on Monday. Geolocated footage published on May 13 shows that Russian forces that crossed the border last week had entered Hlyboke, some 30 kilometres north of Kharkiv, and raised a flag in the centre of the village.

Further images showed that Russian troops had advanced southwest of the village of Olynykove. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian troops had achieved some success near Lukyantsi, also just to the east of Hlyboke.

Russia launched an offensive into the Kharkiv region on May 10, after which the Defence Ministry reported the capture of several villages.

According to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, the military is doing everything in its power to prevent Russia from expanding the front and has launched counterattacks.

"The area has been reinforced," Zelensky said in his evening video message on Monday. Russian forces that invaded Ukraine in February 2022 initially took large areas of the Kharkiv region but not the city itself before being driven back by a Ukrainian counter-offensive that autumn. Kharkiv is Ukraine's second-largest city, with a pre-war population of 1.4 million people.

No exemptions for India firms, says US on Chabahar deal



Washington | Agencies

A few hours after India and Iran signed a 10-year agreement regarding the Chabahar port, the US has said there will be no exemptions for Indian firms dealing with Iran from sanctions already in force.

This signals a dramatic shift away from the previous exemption from sanctions granted by the Trump administration in 2018 when the then-president rescinded the Iran nuclear deal signed by his predecessor President Barack Obama.

Vedant Patel, the Principal Deputy Spokesperson for the US State Department, told reporters on Monday that while the agreement was a bilateral matter between India and Iran and that India was free to run its foreign policy the way it wants, "any entity (or) anyone considering business deals with Iran... need to be aware of the potential risks that they're opening themselves up to the term risk of sanctions".

Asked if there will be no exemptions, the Spokesperson said, "No."

He was responding to questions on the agreement signed by New Delhi and Tehran that allows India to operate the Chabahar port for 10 years.

4,000 animal and plant species affected by smuggling worldwide

Vienna | Agencies

Wildlife trafficking has not substantially reduced over the past two decades, despite positive signs in reducing trafficking of iconic species like elephant and rhino, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported in Vienna on Monday.

"The global scope and scale of wildlife crime remain substantial with seizures during 2015-2021 indicating an illegal trade in 162 countries and territories affecting around 4,000 plant and animal species," the office's third edition of the World Wildlife Crime Report says.

During the six-year period, around 13 million individual animals and plants had been



seized that had been intended for use as food, medication or luxury items. More than 16,000 tons of illicit goods, such as wood, had also been confiscated, it said.

The UNODC stressed that the true figures were consider-

ably higher.

The UN office added that beyond the conservation threat to target species, population reductions could trigger ecosystem-level impacts by disturbing interdependencies and undermining functions

and processes, "including those important to climate change resilience and mitigation." It noted that some of the species worst affected, including rare orchids, succulents, reptiles, fish, birds and mammals, received little public attention, though wildlife trafficking had played a major role in their local or global extinctions.

"Wildlife crime also threatens the socioeconomic benefits people derive from nature, whether as a source of income, employment, food, medicine or other values. It further corrodes good governance and the rule of law through corruption, money-laundering and illicit financial flows," the agency said.

Kyiv | Agencies

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has asked US Secretary of State Antony Blinken for Patriot air defence systems for Kharkiv, which is routinely threatened by Russian missiles.

Two of these systems are necessary to protect Ukraine's second biggest city and its surrounding area, which borders Russia, Zelensky said in Kyiv during Blinken's surprise visit.

US assistance for the campaign against the Russians was of crucial importance, and air defence was the "biggest deficit," Zelensky said.

According to Ukrainian media reports,



Blinken promised Ukraine weapons aid that could change the situation on the battlefield.

Blinken said on X: "I returned to Kyiv today to demonstrate our unwavering sup-

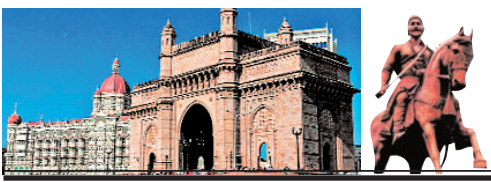
port for Ukraine as they defend their freedom against Russian aggression."

The visit, which, as usual, was not announced for security reasons, is Blinken's fourth since the start of the war in February 2022 and is also the first visit since the US approved a long-delayed aid package of \$61 billion.

Ukraine has been on the defensive for months due to a lack of weapons, ammunition and soldiers.

Russia has been bombarding Kharkiv, and last week Russian troops also began a ground offensive on the border and have already captured several Ukrainian villages.

international



After 14 deaths, axe to fall on illegal hoardings dotting Mumbai

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A day after a gigantic hoarding, measuring 120x120 or 14,400 square feet crashed killing at least 14 persons, the Mumbai Suburban District Disaster Management Authority (MSD-DMA) has decided to wield the axe on all illegal hoardings that violate various norms, an official said.



and around 60 more rescued.

Simultaneously, Mumbai's Pant Nagar Police Station has lodged a complaint against Bhide invoking charges of culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

Bhide has been reportedly absconding since Monday night and police have started a probe into the incident.

As per some reports, the EGP Media Co. was earlier "blacklisted" by the Central Railway (CR) and it is not clear how the firm was allowed to erect the mammoth hoarding, billed as the biggest in Mumbai, and commanding a huge hiring price from the advertisers.

The hoarding, weighing hundreds of kilos along with the supporting metal rods and girders, got uprooted in barely seconds in the squally winds, and crushed several homes and a petrol pump in Pant Nagar area of Ghatkopar east, with the current casualties standing at 14 deaths, plus 88 injured

the opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders.

Last evening, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde visited the tragedy site and ordered the BrihanMumbai Corporation and Mumbai Police to thoroughly investigate the incident, carry out a special audit of all illegal hoardings across the city and take remedial measures.

An ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakhs for kin of deceased

Mumbai: Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde, addressing the Ghatkopar hoarding collapse incident, stated that the government would cover the expenses of the injured and provide a Rs 5 lakh ex-gratia to the families of the deceased.

Expressing sorrow over the Ghatkopar hoarding collapse, CM Shinde assured support to the injured and announced compensation for the victims' families.

"It is a painful and sad incident, I visited the spot yesterday. The government will bear all the expenses of the people injured in this incident. Rs 5 lakh as compensation will be given to the next kin of the victims," said CM Shinde.

According to an ANI report, CM Shinde also promised strict action against the hoarding's owner, stating that a case of culpable homicide has been registered. CM Eknath Shinde said, "Strict action will be taken against the owner of the hoarding. A case of culpable homicide has been registered."

Three killed, toddler critical as car-State Transport bus collide in Nashik



Team Absolute | Nashik

Three persons, including two women were killed and a two-year-old boy was critically injured when the car in which they were travelling collided with a state transport bus, officials said here on Tuesday afternoon.

According to a police official, the accident took place on the Nandgaon-Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Road near Gangadhari village around 10.30 a.m., when the Maharashtra State

Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) passenger bus was plying from Chalisgaon to Mammad.

At that time, the speeding bus attempted to overtake a vehicle ahead, and banged headlong into the car coming from the opposite direction. The crash was so severe that the front portion of the bus, as well as the car, were badly smashed and the occupants in the smaller vehicle reportedly succumbed instantly. Their identity, place of origin and other details are awaited.

The bus passengers - who pointed fingers at the ST bus driver for rash and negligent driving - summoned the police who rushed there to probe the accident. The police also arranged to shift the two vehicles from the road and cleared a massive traffic snarl that had developed in both directions shortly after noon.

Meanwhile, police have rushed the injured to a nearby hospital for treatment and sent the bodies of the three deceased for autopsy.

Political stability first criteria for robust markets and PM Modi guarantees that: FM Sitharaman

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Financial markets play a crucial role in capital mobilisation and allocation, and the stability of government is the first criterion for the Indian stock indices to make a difference to the growing economy, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said here on Tuesday. Addressing an interactive 'Viksit Bharat 2047' session focused on the Indian financial markets at the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), the Finance Minister said, that standing here at the BSE, "I want to clearly lay before you that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third term will be a stable, good governance regime".



domestic product (GDP) growth forecast, inflation being at a manageable level, and political stability at the central government level.

"This has made India the fastest-growing economy. Most investors who visit India are keen to see where their money can be placed or parked," the Finance Minister said.

India has fared relatively well compared with other countries as far as the government debt to GDP ratio is concerned and the country is the third least indebted nation among low- and middle-income countries (LMIC).

The Finance Minister said the stability in policy -- particularly taxation -- predictability in policy-making and the soft-touch regulatory framework are the high points in which markets function without volatility.

The performance of India's financial markets has also exceeded people's expectations in the recent past.

"It has performed with distinction at a time when global markets are fluctuating, there is so much volatility, and a fear of uncertainty setting in most markets. Even in this atmosphere, Indian stock markets have performed very well, attracting both foreign and domestic investors," the Finance Minister said.

"The adoption of technology has made a big difference to the performance of the stock market," she added.

Siemens board approves demerger of energy business into separate listed entity

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Board of Directors of Siemens Limited, the Indian subsidiary of German technology giant Siemens AG, on Tuesday approved the proposal to demerge its energy business into a separate legal entity - Siemens Energy India Limited.

The new entity will be subsequently listed and will mirror the shareholding of Siemens Limited, upon the receipt of requisite approvals, the company said.

As per the scheme of arrangement, shareholders of Siemens Limited will receive one share of Siemens Energy India Limited for every one share of Siemens Limited. The new entity will subse-



quently be listed on the BSE Limited and National Stock Exchange of India Limited, according to a company statement.

The demerger will lead to

the creation of two strong and independent entities which are able to better address their respective markets and customers with a more focused approach,

according to a company statement.

Sunil Mathur, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Siemens Limited, said: "Siemens Energy India Limited and Siemens Limited will script new paths as two independent, publicly-listed companies. The demerger will enable both companies to pursue their specific strategies, focus on their core portfolios and to take decisions on capital allocation. This will enable the full value of each of the businesses to be unlocked for the benefit of the shareholders."

The process of demerger, including receipt of requisite approvals, and subsequent listing of Siemens Energy India Limited is expected to be completed in 2025.

Bhima Koregaon-Elgar Parishad case: SC grants bail to Gautam Navlakha

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered Gautam Navlakha, an accused in the Bhima Koregaon-Elgar Parishad case, to be released on bail. Observing that the completion of the trial would take "years and years", a bench presided over by Justice M.M. Sundresh refused to extend the stay granted by the Bombay High Court on the implementation of the bail order.

However, the Bench, also comprising Justice S.V.N. Bhatti, added a condition that Navlakha should deposit Rs 20 lakh with the authorities at this stage, as a part of the expenses incurred on him during house arrest.

The apex court took note of the submission made on Navlakha's behalf that the activist-journalist



remains incarcerated for over four years and there exists a likelihood of prolonging trial proceedings since charges are yet to be framed in the case. In December last year, the Bombay High Court granted bail to Navlakha, who has been in custody since April 14, 2020, for his alleged links with Maoists. However, a division bench of Justices A.S. Gadhkari

and Shivkumar S.Dige of the High Court deferred the implementation of its order for three weeks after the anti-terror agency sought a stay for filing a special leave petition in the Supreme Court. This stay was extended from time to time by the apex court. Navlakha, 73, has been in continuous custody in jail and after a Supreme Court order, was placed

under house arrest in November 2022, on account of his advanced age and health conditions.

Navlakha, along with the other accused was arrested and charged by the Pune Police and later by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for plotting to overthrow the government and instigating the caste riots at the Bhima Koregaon memorial near Maharashtra's Pune on January 1, 2018 which left one youth dead, and created a political turmoil in the state.

A former office-bearer of the PUJDR, he was also accused of Maoist links, furthering the agenda of the outlawed CPI(Maoist), possessing incriminating documents, supporting Kashmir separatists, and other offences. His earlier bail applications were rejected by the Special NIA Court.

ECI defers biennial polls to 4 Maharashtra MLC seats due to vacations



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday announced that it had postponed the June 10 biennial elections for four Maharashtra Legislative Council seats. This follows a representation received by the poll panel to hold the elections at a later date after the summer vacations in schools are over. Accordingly, the ECI said it had considered the representation and deferred the biennial election programme to a later date.

Last week, the ECI announced the elections for the four seats comprising two seats each of the Teachers Constituency and the Graduates Constituency, with the terms of the present members expiring on July 7.

The MLCs whose tenure ends are: Kishore B. Darade (Nashik Division Teachers Constituency), Kapil H. Patil (Mumbai Division Teachers Constituency), Niranjan V. Davkhare (Konkan Division Graduates Constituency) and Vilas V. Potnis (Mumbai Division Graduates Constituency).

Salman Khan firing case

Suspect held in Haryana sent to Mumbai Police custody till May 22

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai court on Tuesday remanded a suspect arrested from Haryana in connection with Salman Khan firing case to the custody of Mumbai Police till May 22.

The suspect, a member of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang was arrested in connection with firing outside Bollywood superstar Salman Khan's residence which took place last month.

The suspect was identified as Harpal Singh (34), a resident of Fatehabad in Haryana. He was apprehended by the Mumbai Crime Branch from his home town on Monday evening, an official said.

After being brought to Mumbai, Harpal Singh was



produced before a special MCOCA court in Mumbai.

According to the PTI, the police sought his remand for 14 days on the ground that the probe was at an initial stage and a thorough investigation was needed to ascertain the role of the accused in

the case.

His name came to light during the interrogation of an accused arrested earlier in the case, the prosecution said, the news agency reported.

In the court proceeding held in-camera, special judge

B D Shelke remanded Harpal Singh to police custody till May 22.

Harpal Singh is the sixth accused to be arrested in connection with the firing incident.

Two motorcycle-borne persons opened fire outside Khan's residence at the Galaxy Apartment in Mumbai's Bandra area on April 14 and fled the spot.

Singh's name surfaced during the interrogation of accused Mohammed Rafique Chowdhary, another Bishnoi gang member who was arrested earlier this month in the firing case, a police official said.

Harpal Singh had asked Chowdhary to conduct a reconnaissance around Khan's residence and also gave Rs 2-3 lakh to him, the police said.

Maharashtra records 91 cases of KP.2 variant of Omicron: Health department

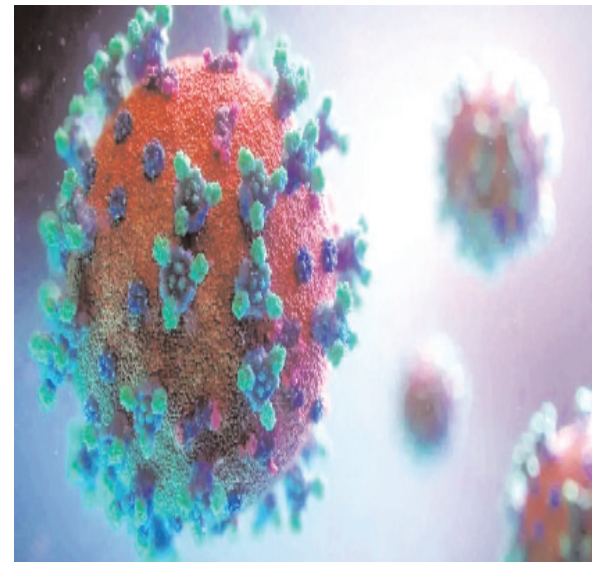
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra has so far recorded 91 cases of the KP.2 variant of Omicron, including 51 in Pune, the health department said on Monday, reported news agency. State's genome sequencing coordinator, Dr Rajesh Karyakarte, said this is in addition to JN.1, KP.2 and KP.1.1 sub-variants of Omicron that have been recorded in Maharashtra. He said both KP.2 and KP.1.1 are sub-lineages of JN.1.

Thane has recorded 20 cases of KP.2 sub-variant of Omicron, seven each in Amravati and Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, two in Solapur and one each in Sangli, Latur, Ahmednagar and Nashik, he added.

The health department said Maharashtra on Monday recorded six new cases of COVID-19 with three each in Mumbai and Pune city.

Meanwhile, in March, Maharashtra experienced a



slight increase in cases, with an average of around 250 detections, which is likely attributed to the spread of the KP.2 variant.

Earlier, as British-Swedish pharma giant AstraZeneca recalled its Covid-19 vaccine globally, Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) said it

stopped the manufacturing and supply of additional doses of Covishield in December 2021.

AstraZeneca has voluntarily withdrawn the "marketing authorisation" of its Covid vaccine, sold as Covishield in India and Vaxzevria in Europe.

Shop, 16 bikes gutted after power transformer catches fire

Team Absolute | Thane

A shop and 16 bikes were reportedly gutted after a power transformer caught fire near a railway station in Maharashtra's Thane district on Tuesday morning, a civic official said. According to the news agency, a power transformer near Badlapur railway station caught fire around 6.30 am, said Bhagwat Sonanwane, chief fire officer of the Kulgaon-Badlapur fire station. Local firefighters rushed to the scene, and the blaze was put out within an hour, he said. No one was injured in the incident, but a shop and 16 motorcycles parked in the area were gutted, the official said. Preliminary reports suggest that the fire was a result of a short circuit, he said.



Jennifer Lopez reveals why she's 'super shy' when she is off stage

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star and singer Jennifer Lopez is "super shy" when she is off stage and shared that some might think she is "standoffish" when that is not really the case. "I know people think that's a crazy thing to say. I get super closed off... super friendly but also super shy. I think people read it like, 'Oh, she's like maybe standoffish or something like that', but it's not that," Lopez told USTV show 'Extra'.

The 'Jenny From The Block' hitmaker, who is now starring in the title role of 'Atlas' on Netflix, said that she is "worried" about the sudden rise of AI in real life as she discussed shooting some of the more intense scenes in the movie, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"I am. I'm worried about that. I think it's a scary thing, and we have to kind of be careful about it and really think about where it's going," she said.

"I thought it would be me, by myself, do the takes, be so fast, don't have to worry about anybody else not remembering their lines... First day, you're falling through the planets. It's all going crazy. Now, your leg's broke..."

"It was so high-intensity every day, and without having another actor kind of to give you half the energy, it's just all you. I was exhausted. I would leave the 'Atlas' set limping," she added.



TABU BAGS ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL OTT SERIES 'DUNE: PROPHECY'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Tabu has been roped in for the upcoming streaming series 'Dune: Prophecy'. She will be seen in a recurring role in the series that serves as the prequel to filmmaker Denis Villeneuve's 'Dune', which was released in 2021.

The series was originally commissioned in 2019 under the title 'Dune: The Sisterhood', reports 'Variety'.

It is inspired by the novel 'Sisterhood of Dune' written by Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson.

The official logline says, "Set within the expansive universe of 'Dune', created by acclaimed author Frank Herbert, and 10,000 years before the ascension of Paul Atreides, 'Dune: Prophecy' follows two Harkonnen sisters as they combat forces that threaten the future of humankind, and establish the fabled sect that will become known as the Bene Gesserit." As per 'Variety', Tabu will be seen in the role of Sister Francesca.

The character is described as "strong, intelligent, and alluring, Sister Francesca leaves a lasting impression in her wake. Once a great love of the Emperor, her return to the palace strains the balance of power in the capital".

'Dune: Prophecy' will also star: Emily Watson, Olivia Williams, Travis Fimmel, Johdi May, Mark Strong, Sarah-Sofie Boussnina, Josh Heuston, Chloe Lea, Jade Anouka, Faoileann Cunningham, Edward Davis, Aoife Hinds, Chris Mason, and Shalom Brune-Franklin.



Julia Fox Reveals She's Been Celibate for '2.5 Years' Following Kanye West Romance

Los Angeles | Agencies

Julia Fox is making one thing clear about herself — she doesn't need a relationship. The 34-year-old model recently celebrated being celibate for more than two years. Although she didn't mention her most recent ex-boyfriend, Kanye "Ye" West, Julia isn't afraid to get candid every now and then.

Over the weekend, a fan shared a TikTok video featuring multiple billboards promoting the dating app Bumble. The post included slides of the ads, all of which read, "Celibacy is not the answer." Across the first slide included a message from the social media user, who wrote, "Imagine pretending to be a dating app for women and launching a million dollar ad campaign blaming women for a very normal reaction to men's violence."

In response to the clip, Julia commented, "2.5 years of celibacy and never better tbh [sic]." Several fans complimented the Uncut Gems star for her transparency, as one commented, "Queen behavior." Another chimed in, "I never knew Julia and I would have so much in common."



Chris Hemsworth spent his time at Met Gala taking selfies

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Chris Hemsworth spent his time inside the Met Gala taking selfies with the other guests as he co-chaired the event during his first appearance.

"My wife and I... we live in Australia. So any sort of big awards show, we haven't become jaded because it's still new and exciting. And this in particular, eclectic group of people, different than the normal crowd of, you know, film award shows we've been doing...sports people, musicians, artists, so we had a really fun night...it's...heaps of selfies."

"Selfies everywhere. A lot of selfies on my phone. Like, 'When did I take that? Let's delete that one,'" he shared with E! News, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The 'Thor' depicter was the co-chair for this year's edition of the annual charity event, where he was hand-picked by head organiser and Vogue editor Anna Wintour.

He talked about how she had jokingly brought up the fact that he wore flip-flops to a red carpet event at one of his first events in Hollywood several years ago.

"Anna called me. My agent said she was gonna call and I didn't know much about the Met Gala, and she made a reference last night at the dinner about me wearing flip-flops to one of my first red carpets back in Australia," he said.

"And the interesting thing was, that was actually me making an effort! This has taken a lot of work!"



"They don't judge you, they just love you," Zayn Malik about his animals

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Zayn Malik revealed that he turns his phone off for "two or three days at a time" to spend time with his animals and loves doing so because there is "no catch".

The 31-year-old pop star now resides on a ranch in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and "enjoys" spending time with his furry friends.

"I've got three dogs, four cats, three turtles, and ten chickens. I'll just turn my phone off for two or three days and not use it at all. They (the animals) just have that down. They're very present in their being," he said.

"They're just in the moment there with you, and that helps me to be there with them too, that's why I enjoy animals. There's no hinge point, there's no catch, they don't want anything from you except love."

"They don't judge you, they just love you," he told The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Malik recently explained that one day he wants to have a "proper farm" and dreams of having horses.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Neelam Gill



IPL 2024

ISHANT SHARMA TAKES 3-34 AS DC SURVIVE ARSHAD SCARE TO BEAT LSG BY 19 RUNS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Veteran pacer Ishant Sharma took 3-34 as Delhi Capitals survived a late scare from Arshad Khan to beat Lucknow Super Giants by 19 runs in Match 64 of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Tuesday.

After half-centuries by Abishek Porel and Tristan Stubbs propelled DC to a daunting 208/4, Ishant started to reduce LSG to 44/4 in the fifth over. While Nicholas Pooran made a hard-hitting 61, Arshad threatened to take the game away with an unbeaten 58.

But it wasn't enough as LSG ended up at 189/9, as DC ended their group stage with a win and awaited the results of other games to know if they could enter the playoffs. The result also means Rajasthan Royals have qualified for the Playoffs.

In defence of 208, Impact Player Ishant scythed through the LSG top-order in the Power-play. K.L. Rahul was undone by lack of timing in lofting an Ishant out-swing and gave a catch to cover-point. Quinton de Kock was next to fall to Ishant -- mistiming a loft to mid-on.

Marcus Stoinis danced down the pitch on Axar Patel's first ball to loft but missed the deliv-



ery which turned enough and was stumped easily. Pooran injected some momentum into LSG's innings by hitting Axar for two fours and as many sixes over the shorter boundary area.

Though Pooran hit two more sixes and a four, including a reverse-sweep off Kuldeep Yadav, he wasn't getting support from the other end as Ishant trapped Hooda lbw, while Ayush Badoni toe-ended a loft to long-off against Tristan Stubbs.

Pooran continued to wage a lone battle by clipping Gulbadin Naib for consecutive boundaries and reached his fifty in 20 balls. But his counter-attacking knock ended in the 12th over when Axar dived forward to take a superb catch at cover, off Mukesh Kumar. Once Krunal was stumped off Kuldeep, it felt that DC would coast home to victory.

Brief scores

Delhi Capitals 208/4 in 20 overs (Abishek Porel 58, Tristan Stubbs 57 not out; Naveen-ul-Haq 2-51, Ravi Bishnoi 1-26) beat Lucknow Super Giants 189/9 in 20 overs (Nicholas Pooran 61, Arshad Khan 58 not out; Ishant Sharma 3-34, Tristan Stubbs 1-4) by 19 runs

Manu, Vijayveer win final 25m pistol Olympic Selection Trial

Bhopal | Agencies

Tokyo Olympian Manu Bhaker and Paris quota holder Vijayveer Sidhu have won the fourth and final Olympic Selection Trial (OST) in 25m pistol events, here at the MP State Shooting Academy (MPSSA) ranges on Tuesday.

Manu shot a world-record equalling 42 in the women's 25M Pistol OST T4 final, while Vijayveer shot 34 in the decider of the men's 25M Rapid-Fire Pistol (RFP) OST T4, to emerge triumphant.

Manu completed a dominance of the women's 25M Pistol trials as she won two and came second in the other two. She was also the only shooter among the selected five to have not gone below 580 in the qualification round even once.

Abhidnya Patil (35) was second while Simranpreet Kaur Brar (30) took home the final available podium point. Esha Singh and Rhythm Sangwan were fourth and fifth, respectively.

In the men's RFP final, Vijayveer took the lead after the second five-shot series and held on till the eighth and final series to register his first outright victory in the trials. Anish was second with 30 while Adarsh Singh was third with 25. Ankur Goel (20) and Bhavesh Shekhawat (18) took the minor



places.

Anish, however, was the most successful of the five in the event, having won a couple of trials and coming second in the other two. Bhavesh Shekhawat had won the second trial. Vijayveer, on the other hand, had come second twice in the three earlier trials.

Wednesday will see the qualification rounds of the men's and women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions event play out with local hopes Aishwary Tomar and Ashi Chouksey set to participate.

Harmanpreet, Richa, Radha advance in latest ICC women's T20I rankings

Dubai | Agencies

Following an impressive 105 runs in a five-match series sweep over Bangladesh, Indian skipper Harmanpreet Kaur rose three places to 13th in the latest ICC Women's T20I Player Rankings released on Tuesday.

India looked in good touch just months out from this year's ICC Women's T20 World Cup as they registered a hard-fought series white-wash against Bangladesh.

Teammate Richa Ghosh shot up two places to 23rd following her unbeaten 28 in the final match of the series.

Radha Yadav (up seven spots to 23rd) and Titas Sadhu (up 18 rungs to 60th) made ground on the updated T20I rankings for bowlers following a string of good efforts in Bangladesh.

Following their series' first game at home against Pakistan, several English players have also risen in the rankings.

Skipper Heather Knight moved up four spots to 18th place among T20I batters following her innings of 49 in



Birmingham. With her blistering 37 and four catches behind the wickets, seasoned keeper Amy Jones was

named Player of the Match in England's 53-run victory. The 30-year-old moved up three spots to 26th

on the new T20I batting rankings.

Sarah Glenn took four wickets in that contest to help dismiss Pakistan for just 110 in reply to England's total of 163/6 and the leg-spinner rose two places to fourth behind teammate Sophie Ecclestone on the updated list for T20I bowlers. Lauren Bell jumped four spots to seventh and a new career-high rating following her spell of 3-22 against Pakistan.

Sri Lanka players also gained big in the rankings after their success in the T20 WC Qualifier. Chamari Athapaththu was the leading run-scorer at the tournament and contributed a brilliant century in the final against Scotland to rise two places to equal seventh on the list for T20I batters as Sri Lanka ensured their place at this year's T20 World Cup.

The left-hander also jumped one place to fifth on the list for T20I all-rounders after taking seven wickets in the tournament. Inoshi Fernando (up five spots to 19th) and Udeshika Prabodhani (up five places to 30th) also gained big in the updated T20I rankings for bowlers.

'It is indeed a very proud moment for me': Manika Batra after achieving career-best ranking

New Delhi | Agencies

India's best paddler, Manika Batra says she feels 'very proud' after breaking into the top 25 and achieving a career-best ranking just months before the Olympic Games. Batra on Tuesday achieved a new career-high ranking of World No. 24 in the latest ITTF Rankings. Manika jumped 15 places from No. 39 to become world No. 24. Moreover, she reclaimed her India No. 1 place from Sreeja Akula.

The 25-year-old paddler has become the first Indian woman to break into the top 25 singles rankings. She also matched the world No. 24 ranking achieved by Sathiyana Gnanasekaran (currently world no. 65) in 2019, which is the highest rank attained by an Indian in singles.

"It is indeed a very proud moment for me. To break into the top 25 and achieve my career-best ranking just months before the Olympic Games is definitely a very potent boost to my preparations," said Manika Batra.

"I am truly honoured to have achieved this feat and it is incredibly fulfilling to see all my hard work and efforts pay off. As I look ahead to Paris 2024, I'm motivated more than ever to continue this performance and move upward in the ranking to make my country proud. I really want to thank God for the blessings that helped me to give my best performance



at the highest level. Improvement is a continuous process, and I am committed to it." Manika's ranking jump came on the back of her quarterfinal finish in the Saudi Smash event last week, where she registered an upset win over top Chinese

player and Olympic medalist World No. 2, Wang Manyu in the round of 32. She then defeated World No. 14 Nina Mittelham of Germany to make it to the quarterfinal, where Manika eventually lost to World No.5 Hina Hayata of Japan.

Women's cricket: India to host South Africa for multi-format series between June & July

Mumbai | Agencies

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Tuesday announced the fixture of South Africa's visit to the country for three T20Is, as many ODIs, and a women's Test match. Chennai will host a women's Test match for the first time since 1976 after West Indies played a red-ball match against India.

After hosting England and Australia last year in Mumbai, the Indian women will play a Test match against South Africa in the home series in June. South Africa previously

played a Test match in India back in 2014, when India recorded an innings victory. The home series will start with ODIs in Bengaluru, scheduled for June 16, 19, and 23, as part of the 2022-2025 ICC Women's Championship while Chennai's M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chepauk will host the one-off Test and the three T20Is.

The Test match has been scheduled for June 28 to July 1. It will be India's third Test in six months and South Africa's third Test ever. The T20Is are likely to be held on July 5, 7 and 9.



Barcelona beat Real Sociedad to return to second in LaLiga

Madrid | Agencies

FC Barcelona returned to second place in LaLiga after a 2-0 home win over Real Sociedad on Monday night.

This win helped Barcelona rebound from their 4-2 defeat to Girona last week, moving them above their Catalan neighbors with three games remaining in the season.

Real Sociedad dropped to seventh place, behind Real Betis in their efforts to qualify for next season's Europa League.

Lamine Yamal opened the scoring in the 40th minute, finishing off a counter-attack with a classy shot across Real Sociedad goalkeeper Alex Remiro, reports Xinhua.

The goal came two minutes after Raphinha had hit the post for Barca after being set up by Pedri, who was back in Barcelona's starting 11 along with Inigo Martinez, who was facing one of his former clubs.

The second goal came in the closing moments after the VAR penalized Alvaro Odriozola for handball. Raphinha scored from the spot to seal the win.

The game got off to an even start, with most of the play in the middle of the park, before Sheraldo Becker twice went close to putting the visitors ahead, with a goal ruled out for



offside, before Marc Andre ter Stegen saved another effort soon afterwards.

Real Sociedad looked to get back into the game after the break, with Brais Mendez having the best chance after an error from Ilkay Gundogan, but the midfielder pulled his effort wide of the post. Barcelona's next game is away to already-relegated Almeria, while Real Sociedad face Valencia ahead of a vital game away to Betis, which could decide who plays in Europe next year.

IPL 2024: Ravi Shastri believes 'Impact Player' rule contributed in thrilling finishes

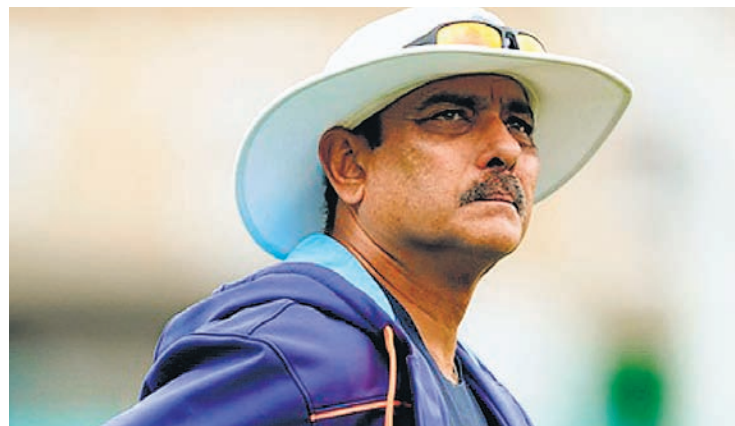
New Delhi | Agencies

As the IPL's Impact Player rule drew some criticism from experts, former Indian cricketer and ex-head coach Ravi Shastri favoured the rule saying it has contributed to a number of thrilling finishes in the tournament.

BCCI introduced the Impact Player rule in the 2023 edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL).

"The Impact Player rule is good. You have to evolve with the times," Shastri told Ravichandran Ashwin on his YouTube channel. "You know, it happens in other sports as well. It's got tighter finishes. You have to evolve with the times and I think it's a good rule. You saw the number of tight finishes we had in last year's IPL. So, you know, it has made a big difference."

Jay Shah, the BCCI secretary, himself said last week that the Impact Player rule is "not permanent" and a



call on its use in subsequent editions of the IPL will be taken after a discussion with stakeholders following the conclusion of 2024 T20 World Cup.

"Impact Player is like a test case. We have implemented it slowly. The biggest advantage of it is that two Indian players are getting a chance in each game, which is the most impor-

tant," Shah had told reporters at the BCCI headquarters in Mumbai on Thursday. "We will consult with the players, franchises, broadcasters and take a call. This is not permanent but I am not saying that it will go."

While some believe the rule hinders the growth of allrounders, including Indian captain Rohit

Sharma, Ashwin gave the example of Dhruv Jurel, who started as an Impact Player in the IPL 2023 and made his Test debut for India a year later.

"You know when any new rule comes in, there will be...people will try and justify why that's not right," Shastri said. "But in time when you see the scores - 200 and 190 - and then like you mentioned individuals grabbing that opportunity and making the most of it, people will start re-looking at how they think about it."

Still, DC head coach Ricky Ponting had expressed his satisfaction with the IPL keeping the Impact Player if it was contributing to a "better spectacle" during the competition. However, he acknowledged that as a coach, he wasn't too fond of the regulation, referring to it as a "nightmare".

Delhi Capitals (DC) players Axar Patel and Mukesh Kumar were among those who spoke out against the Impact Player rule.



Saif Ali Khan modifies tattoo, seems to have covered up Kareena's name



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actor Saif Ali Khan, who will be seen making his Telugu debut with 'Devara', has modified his wife Kareena Kapoor Khan's tattoo on his forearm. The actor was recently spotted at Mumbai airport when he caught the attention of the shutterbugs. Saif had inked his wife's name on his left fore-

arm in Hindi while they were dating. The new tattoo design seems to have covered up Kareena's name.

However, it's unclear if Saif modified the tattoo as per the demand of his character in a film or if it's a temporary modification.

Saif and Kareena tied the knot in 2012, and are parents to Taimur Ali Khan and Jehangir Ali Khan.

Virat, Anushka thank shutterbugs for respecting privacy of their kids

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Star cricketer Virat Kohli and actress Anushka Sharma have thanked the paparazzi for their thoughtfulness towards protecting the privacy of their children, Vamika and Akaay. The power couple sent out gift hampers to the shutterbugs along with a note expressing gratitude for respecting the privacy of their children.



In a heartfelt note, the couple wrote: "Thank you for respecting the privacy of our kids and for always being cooperative! With love, Anushka and Virat"

Fondly referred to as Virushka, Anushka and Virat got married in December 2017 in an intimate ceremony in Italy. The two welcomed their first child, a daughter, whom they have named Vamika. Their son Akaay was born on February 15 of this year. The couple kept the news of the second pregnancy under wraps, sparking intense speculation.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Esha Deol was in the news because of her divorce with Bharat Takhtani after 11 years of marriage. The actress, who is busy shooting for upcoming projects, revealed that she is happy to be working again.

Deol was present at a tree plantation drive in Mumbai when she spoke about her upcoming projects.

The actress, who was last seen last year with Suniel Shetty in the OTT series, 'Hunter Tootega Nahi Todega', said, "I am busy shooting for upcoming films. Announcements will be made very soon for them. I can only say I am very happy to be working."

Esha Deol happy to be working again

The

'No Entry' actress also spoke about the importance of planting trees. "It is a wonderful feeling to plant a tree as this is not for us but for our future generations," Deol said.

"Yesterday, we saw a terrible storm in Mumbai; earlier, Dubai got flooded because of freak rains. All these are wake up calls from Mother Nature to preserve her beauty," the actress added.

Staying on the subject of trees, Deol said, "Nowadays, more and more trees are being cut and new buildings are being constructed on the pretext of city life. It is our responsibility, however, to plant more and more trees for our future generations."

SHAMITA SHETTY HAS ENDOMETRIOSIS, TO UNDERGO SURGERY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shamita Shetty was admitted to the hospital after being diagnosed with endometriosis and will be undergoing surgery, going by her video on social media. Shamita took to Instagram, where she was seen talking about endometriosis, a disease in which tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside the uterus.

The video, captured by her sister Shilpa Shetty, features Shamita in a hospital bed, with Shilpa commenting, "What a view... Waah, Kya hua hai."

Shamita responds, "I have endometriosis, I didn't even know what it was. All the women out there please google endometriosis. You need to know what this problem is all about."

Shilpa then asks, "Why should they know?", to which Shamita replies, "Because you probably have it and you don't even know you have it and it is painful. It's uncomfortable."

Shilpa then asks her sister if she has "any last words before the surgery."

Shamita shared that the pain in the body is for a reason and "listen to your body" and then Shilpa concluded the video by saying, "swasth raho mast raho."

For the caption, Shamita wrote: "Did you know that almost 40 per cent of women suffer from endometriosis.. and most of us are unaware of this disease!!!"

ANANYA PANDAY SHARED A SERIES OF PHOTOS, FEATURING HER POSING IN VARIOUS BIKINIS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Gen-Z diva Ananya Panday shared some unseen 'forgotten' pictures as a throwback Tuesday post, which are mostly from her beach vacations.

The actress, who has 24.6 million followers on Instagram, shared a series of photos, featuring her posing in various bikinis. In the snaps, Ananya is seen wearing a sky blue coloured bikini, a pink bikini, and a blue bikini, striking poses at the beach.

In one photo, she is wearing a backless white and black striped bodycon dress. Another picture shows Ananya in a black tank top and matching flared denims, posing with a sign board that reads: "Famous for no reason". The last photo in the series features her wearing an orange off-shoulder dress. The post is captioned: "Forgotten photos from my camera roll (the last pic is a breadstick and it's meant to be a cute pic pls calm down)."

The location of the photos is not mentioned in the post, however, in July 2023, Ananya went on a vacation in Lisbon, Portugal, Spain, and Ibiza.

The pictures might be from Ananya's Europe holiday last year.

Ananya next has 'Call Me Bae'. The show follows the story of a billionaire fashionista, Bae (Ananya) who is disowned by her ultra-rich family owing to a salacious scandal. She is left to fend for herself, for the first time ever as she overcomes stereotypes, negotiates around prejudices and as she explores her true self in this journey.



Kiara Advani to represent India at 77th Cannes Film Festival

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Kiara Advani is set to represent the country at the Red Sea Film Foundation Women in Cinema gala dinner at the 77th edition of the Cannes Film Festival, to be held in the French Riviera from Tuesday.

Hosted by Vanity Fair, the gala will bring together six women from across the globe to honour their achievements, both in front of and behind the camera.

Kiara made her debut with 'Fugly' in 2014, she was then seen playing myriad characters, from the independent Naina in 'Jugjugg Jeeyo' to the complex Nanki in 'Guilty' and Preeti, a vulnerable woman caught in a passionate but troubled relationship in 'Kabir Singh'.

Kiara has then worked in movies such as 'Shershaah' and 'Satyaprem Ki Katha', where she showcased her acting prowess.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Nora Fatehi