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Karnataka Exit Polls predict close BJP vs Congress fight, JDS holds key

HUNG VERDICT?

Karnataka is heading for a hung assembly, five of 10 exit polls have predicted. Three have predicted an outright victory for the Congress and one for the BJP. Those expecting a hung house also indicated that HD Kumaraswamy's Janata Dal Secular is likely to play the king-maker. The majority mark in the 224-seat assembly stands at 113 seats.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Three exit polls -- India Today-Axis My India, News 24-Today's Chanakya and Times-Now ETG -- have predicted the possibility of an outright Congress victory. India TV-CNX and Zee News-Matrise have given an upper limit exceeding 113 to the Congress. News Nation-CGS have predicted a BJP victory, and Suvarna News-Jan Ki Baat has predicted an upper limit of 117 for the BJP. Exit polls do not always get it right. News Nation-CGS has predicted that the state's ruling BJP will cross the majority mark with 114 seats, the Congress will win 86 seats and the JD(S) 21. The Suvarna News-Jan Ki Baat has also given an edge to the BJP, predicting it will emerge as the single largest party with anything between 94 and 117 seats. The Congress, it said, will get 91-106 seats and the JD(S) 14-24 seats. Five other exit polls are counting on a Congress win or a pole position as the single largest party. India Today-Axis My India is expecting the Congress to win 122 to 140 seats and the BJP to get 62-80 seats. News 24-Today's Chanakya has predicted 120 seats for the Congress and 92 for the BJP. The JD(S), it said, will get 12 seats.



Times Now-ETG is predicting the Congress will touch the majority mark -- barely. It predicts the party will win 113 seats and the BJP will get 85. Twenty-three seats will go to the Janata Dal Secular, it has predicted. The Republic TV-P MARQ has predicted that the BJP will win 85-100 of the 224 assembly seats, the Congress will win 94-108 and the JD(S) 24-32 seats. The TV 9-Bharatvansh-Polstrat predicted 88-98 seats for the BJP, 99-109 seats for the Congress and 21-26 seats for the JD(S). The Zee News Matrise has predicted 79-94 seats for the BJP and 103-118 seats for the Congress and 25-33 seats for the JD(S).

ABP News-C Voter are expecting the BJP to win 83-95 seats and the Congress 100 to 112 and 29 seats. The JD(S) it expects will win between 21 and 29 seats. India TV-CNX is also giving the Congress an edge with 110 to 120 seats and 80 to 90 seats to the BJP. The JD(S), it predicted, will get 21 to 29 seats. The triangular contest for Karnataka ended this evening. The counting of votes will be held on Saturday. The Congress and HD Kumarasamy had partnered in 2018 to keep the BJP out of power. The alliance government had lasted a little over a year before collapsing as MLAs from both parties joined the BJP in an alleged Operation Lotus. Their earlier alliance in 2004 had collapsed as well. This time, both parties have brushed off the possibility of entering an alliance. In 2006, Mr Kumaraswamy has tied up with the BJP but the government lasted for less than a year before President's rule was declared in the state. The government had collapsed after Mr Kumaraswamy, who was the Chief Minister, refused to hand over the top post to BS Yeddyurappa, who was his deputy. To retaliate, the BJP had withdrawn support, reducing the Kumaraswamy government to a minority.

SIDDARAMAIAH MOST PREFERRED CM CHOICE IN KARNATAKA, SHOWS SURVEY

New Delhi: If the trends thrown up by the ABP/C-Voter Exit Poll for Karnataka hold, former Chief Minister and Congress leader Siddaramaiah could be back as the CM of the southern state. Voters in Karnataka seem to have identified him as their first choice for the top job. The exit poll data suggest that 40.1 per cent of the electorate in Karnataka want Siddaramaiah as the next Chief Minister. The Congress leader is followed by current Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who is the preferred choice for 34.1 per cent of the voters. JD(S) leader and another former Chief Minister, H.D. Kumaraswamy, comes a distant third with 18.1 per cent of the electorate backing him as their first choice. Karnataka Congress President D.K. Shivakumar had openly declared his ambition of becoming the Chief Minister prior to the polls, and he is considered by political analysts to be a strong contender.

'May not be correct course of action'

Centre on SC's hint at declaration on same-sex marriage

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Centre on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that the court's hinting on Tuesday at a possibility of declaration being made something less than marriage but something more than the present status may not be the correct course of action. It stressed that the legislature has the wherewithal to regulate the fallout and the court "will not be able to foresee, envisage, comprehend, and thereafter deal with the fallout of that declaration". Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, submitted before a five-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, that during Tuesday's dialogue, "it fell from your lordships that there is a possibility of declaration being made something less than marriage but something more than the present status". "Having examined that, my lord, that may not be the correct course of action. Your lordships' declaration would be a law within the meaning of Article 141, binding all and not all just courts, binding the whole nation," he said. On Tuesday, senior advo-



cate Kapil Sibal, assisting the court, in a debate over the issue of same-sex marriage countered the petitioners' side argument that since Parliament would do nothing about their right to marry, the apex court must issue a constitutional declaration to force it to enact a law giving legal sanction to their marriages. "I say that it is a very dangerous route to take," he said. The bench - also comprising Justices S.K. Kaul, S. Ravindra Bhat, Hima Kohli, and P.S. Narasimha -- observed that it may not be correct to say the apex court cannot issue a constitutional declaration. It had said that the Parliament, in the past, did follow up on constitutional declarations by making laws. During the hearing on Wednesday, Mehta said that "the difficulty would be this, any declaration of law would bind every individual in the country, who is not before your lordships...".

Congress slams govt for arrested DRDO scientist's links with RSS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress on Wednesday slammed the government over the alleged links of DRDO director P. M. Kurulkar with the RSS, arrested in an espionage case, and questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi on how it happened under his nose. Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters here, Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera released a video of Kurulkar speaking at a RSS event and also his interview where he accepted his ties with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). He had also attended a programme with RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat. Khera said, "Kurulkar, a director of DRDO, who was arrested on espionage charge by the Maharashtra ATS has association with the RSS for four generations. Maharashtra ATS arrested P.M. Kurulkar for providing secret information to Pakistan through a woman. It is being said that he was honey trapped." Highlighting his association with the RSS, the Congress leader said, "He (Kurulkar) used



to play saxophone in RSS shakha for 14 years. Even his father was associated with the RSS." Hitting out at the Prime Minister, Khera said, "DRDO works under the Prime Minister. This happened under the nose of PM Modi from a man (Kurulkar), who has been associated with the RSS."

PAK ARMY TO BE DEPLOYED IN PUNJAB, KP PROVINCES AMID AGITATION

Islamabad: As political tensions continue to escalate following the dramatic arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial authorities have also called in army troops to control the situation on the ground following the suit of the Punjab province government, local media reported. In a separate statement, Punjab provincial police said action had been taken against those attacking government property, police force and law enforcement agencies in the province, Geo News reported. Protesters had attacked more than 14 government buildings, looted and caused serious damage to government property, he shared, Geo News reported. Following the violent protests, at least 30 people were arrested in Peshawar, police confirmed, adding that cases had been registered against the alleged miscreants, Geo News reported.

NEET aspirant girls asked to wear clothes inside out at Maharashtra exam centre

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Some girl students in Maharashtra taking the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for undergraduate admissions to medical colleges, on Sunday, alleged they had to face an uncomfortable situation at their exam centres as they were asked to change their clothes in the open. Some students at the exam centre at Smt Kasturba Walchand College in the Sangli area were asked to undress and wear their clothes inside out. Some girl students allege that there was no designated place to change, and they were made to feel uncomfortable in public. Some girls reportedly had something written on their kurtas. The National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducts the NEET exam, is probing the matter after receiving complaints. There has been no official statement so far. Some reports say college authorities told the aspirants that they were not adhering to the dress code mandated by the National Testing Agency, which is why they had to comply with a last-minute change in attire. Media reports say another incident was reported in West Bengal where some girls were asked to change clothes. Unable to locate a clothes shop in the vicinity,



some girls reportedly had to switch clothes with their mothers. Some reportedly alleged that they were asked to strip, and their underwear checked. The National Testing Agency conducted this year's National Eligibility cum Entrance Test for Undergraduate (NEET-UG) 2023 exam on May 7. Over 20 lakh candidates were expected to appear for India's only medical entrance examination. NEET UG is conducted in 13 languages, through which admission is granted to 10 courses, including MBBS. The examination was conducted under the pen-and-paper system at 499 locations across the country.

LMV LICENCE ENABLES ONE TO DRIVE TRANSPORT VEHICLE TOO: HIMACHAL HC

Shimla: The Himachal Pradesh High Court has ruled that a light motor vehicle (LMV) licence enabled the holder to drive a transport vehicle too. Observing that there is only one licence category i.e. LMV, Justice Vivek Singh Thakur dismissed an appeal filed by Oriental Insurance Company against the Workmen Compensation Commissioner's order who held it liable to indemnify the claimants. As per the case, Raj Paul was engaged as a driver of a pickup jeep. He met with an accident on December 3, 2003, and died. His licence was valid for driving motorcycle and scooter as well as LMV non-transport only. The vehicle involved in the accident was a goods carrying commercial vehicle, but undoubtedly falls in the category of LMV in terms of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. Counsel for the insurance company pleaded that being holder of the licence valid for LMV (non-transport), Paul was not authorised to drive a transport vehicle. The court held that there was no provision in the Motor Vehicle Act to make endorsement of LMV non-transport.

Sporadic violence reported as Manipur limps back to normalcy

The situation in the ethnic violence-hit Manipur improved further on Wednesday with the authorities relaxing curfew in 11 districts, including Imphal West and Churachandpur, for six hours in the morning even as the Army and central paramilitary forces continued their vigil in the sensitive areas.

Imphal | Agencies

Mobile internet service will continue to remain suspended in the state till May 13. Defence sources said that armed miscreants on Wednesday fired upon the Army and Assam Rifles at Dolaithabi in Imphal East district when the security personnel were on an area domination patrolling. "After firing a few rounds, the miscreants ran away. An Assam Rifles jawan who sustained gunshot injury in the firing has been safely evacuated to the military hospital by an Army helicopter," the sources said. In all, 128 columns of the Army and Assam Rifles continued flag marches in the tension-ridden and violence-hit areas in different districts. The forces also undertook round-the-clock aerial surveillance using drones and Army choppers. A defence release said on Wednesday that the Indian Army's three-pronged domination strategy in Manipur is helping the state return to normalcy. As Manipur limps back to normalcy, inimical elements may once again attempt to spread malicious unverified content, the defence release said.



Court seeks Delhi Police's status report on sexual harassment case against WFI chief

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A court here on Wednesday sought from the Delhi Police a status report pertaining to the sexual harassment case against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. Since April 23, prominent Indian wrestlers such as Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik, and Vinesh Phogat, who have achieved Olympic and World Championships recognition, have been staging a protest at Jantar Mantar against WFI chief. Farmers have also extended their support to wrestlers and had arrived from Haryana and Punjab on Monday to join the wrestlers' protest. During the hearing, the judge issued notice to Police on protesting wrestlers' plea seeking monitoring of the investigation and recording of the statement of the alleged victims before the court. The court then directed the police to file the report by May 12, also the next date of hearing. On Tuesday, Delhi



Commission for Women also issued summons to Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Pranav Tayal for failing to arrest the accused in the matter of sexual harassment with women wrestlers. The women wrestlers had approached the Supreme Court and two FIRs were registered on April 28, one under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act for allegedly sexually harassing a minor girl and another for sexual harassment of other complainants.

2 TERRORIST ASSOCIATES ARRESTED IN J&K'S SOPORE

Srinagar: Two terrorist associates linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT were arrested by a joint security forces team in Jammu and Kashmir's Sopore on Wednesday, and arms and ammunition, including an IED, recovered from their possession, police said. Police said based on a specific input regarding presence of two suspected individuals near Saidpora Bypass area, a joint cordon and search operation was launched by the police, the army, and the CRPF. They have been identified as Kaiser Manzoor Mir, resident of Behl Mohalla Saidpora, and Muzaffar Majeed Mir, resident of Shalpora, Brath Kalan. Arms and ammunition including 15 pistol rounds, 25 AK-47 rounds, an IED, and two hand grenades were recovered from their possession.



VOTING ENDS IN K'TAKA; 65.69% POLLING TILL 5 P.M.

Bengaluru | Agencies

The voting in Karnataka for the 224 Assembly seats on Wednesday which began at 7 a.m. ended at 6 p.m. with the state recording a voter turnout of 65.69 per cent till 5 p.m., an official said.

Barring some incidents, the polling was overall peaceful. Those standing in queues at the polling booths till 6 p.m. were allowed to cast votes.

The final polling percentage will be known later on Wednesday evening as the Election Commission is expected to receive reports from all constituencies.

Karnataka had crossed 50 per cent turnout in the post-lunch period. By 3 p.m., 52.18 per cent of voters turned out to exercise their voting rights.

The polling, which began on a dull note, picked up pace as the day progressed and the turnout crossed 75 per cent in high voltage constituencies across the state. Going by the trend, analysts opine that the final turnout will cross 75 per cent. This would also indicate a close fight between political parties.

The voter turnout in the high voltage Varuna seat reached 77.11 per cent by 5 p.m.

It is one among the keenly observed seats as Opposition leader Siddaramaiah and Minister for Housing V. Somanna are contesting from there.

The trend of huge voter turnout in coastal and hilly regions continued.

The turnout of voters reached 70.09 per cent in the Virajpet seat. Madikeri seat registered 70.81 per cent polling.

Dakshina Kannada district, which witnessed revenue killings and communal incidents, also saw a large number of voters turning out to booths.

Sullia recorded 70.01 per cent polling, Puttur 74.96 per cent, Bantwal 74.71 per cent and Mangalore 70.2 per cent polling.

Mangalore City South recorded 59.33 per cent turnout, Mangalore City North 67.2 per cent, Moodabidri 70.47 per cent, and Belthangady 73.64 per cent turnout.

Udupi district's assembly segments Karkal saw 75.53 per cent polling, Kapu 75.18 per cent, Udupi 71.98 per cent, Kundapura 75.08 per cent and Byndoor 71.83 per cent polling.



The Channapatna seat, where former CM H.D. Kumaraswamy and former BJP minister C.P. Yogeshwar are contesting, recorded 71.21 per cent. Kanakapura constituency, from where

JHARSUGUDA BY-POLL: 68.12% TURNOUT TILL 5 P.M.

Bhubaneswar: The Election Commission has recorded 68.12 per cent voter turnout till 5 p.m. in the by-poll for Jharsuguda Assembly constituency in Odisha.

Polling for the Assembly seat began at 7 a.m. and continued till 6 p.m. in all 253 booths in the constituency on Wednesday, said Odisha Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Nikunja Bihari Dhal.

A total of 1,51,035 voters casted their votes in the by-poll till 5 p.m., he said. Minor clashes were reported in three polling booths. However, there was no disturbance in voting, Dhal said. Live web-casting was conducted in all 253 booths. The polling was conducted smoothly in the constituency, the CEO said.

With the completion of voting, the fate of nine candidates including Naba Das' daughter Dipali Das (BJD), Tankadhar Tripathy (BJP) and Tarun Pandey (Congress) have been sealed in the EVMS.

Karnataka Congress President D.K. Shivakumar is contesting, saw 80.5 per cent turnout.

JALANDHAR BYPOLL SEES NEARLY 50% TURNOUT, AAP LEGISLATOR ARRESTED

Chandigarh: Amid clashes and arrest of a ruling AAP legislator, nearly 50 per cent of the 16.21 lakh electorate on Wednesday cast votes to decide the fate of 19 candidates in the fray for Jalandhar (reserved) parliamentary constituency, which witnessed a four-cornered fierce contest in the Dalit-dominated Doaba region, traditionally a Congress bastion. The counting of ballots will take place on Saturday. Voting began on a dull note, with below five per cent polling in the first hour but by 11 a.m., rose to 17 per cent. It picked up gradually as the day progressed. Women turned out in strength in the rural areas of the constituency that spread across nine assembly constituencies. There were minor hiccups as electronic voting machines developed snags at some places.

There were 16,21,759 voters, including 8,44,904 men, 7,76,855 women, 10,286 persons with disability, 1,850 service electors, 73 overseas electors and 41 transgenders in the constituency.



SC rejects sacked IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt's plea seeking judge's recusal

The Supreme Court on Wednesday junked a plea by sacked IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt to submit additional evidence supporting his appeal in the Gujarat High Court against his conviction in a custodial death case.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

It also rejected Bhatt's plea for recusal of a judge from hearing a matter.

A bench of Justices M.R. Shah and C.T. Ravikumar said it was not inclined to interfere with the high court order.

"Having gone through the impugned order passed by the High Court, we see no reason to interfere with the same in exercise of powers under Article 136 of the Constitution. Any observations by this court on the deposition of the aforesaid 3 witnesses (doctors) may ultimately affect the case of either party in the appeal, which is yet to be considered by the high court. Therefore, the special leave petition stands dismissed," said the bench, in its order.

"However, it is observed that the high court to finally decide and dispose of the appeal strictly in accordance with law and on merits and on re-appreciation of the entire evidence on record which were considered by the trial court and without in any way influenced by any of the observations made by the high court in the impugned order so far as the cause of death is concerned and any observations made by the high court in the impugned order shall be confined to deciding the application



under Section 391 Cr.P.C. only," it said.

The apex court also rejected Bhatt's plea seeking recusal of Justice Shah from hearing the matter.

On Tuesday, Bhatt's counsel had submitted that there was a reasonable apprehension of bias as Justice Shah, as a high court judge, had castigated the petitioner while hearing his plea linked to the same FIR. The Gujarat government counsel and complainant's counsel opposed this contention and termed it forum shopping.

The bench said merely because some proceedings might have been heard by

one of us before the high court in connection with the present matter and/or proceedings and some observations might have been made against the petitioner on the delaying tactics, cannot be a ground to accede to the request made by the petitioner.

Senior advocate Maninder Singh represented the Gujarat government and senior counsel A.N.S. Nadkarni represented the original complainant.

A jamnagar court awarded life term to Bhatt after he was held guilty on June 20, 2019 in a three-decade old custodial death case.

Cong in Hry extends 'Hath Se Hath Jodo' campaign for 3 months

Chandigarh | Agencies

The Opposition Congress in Haryana on Wednesday announced to extend the 'Hath Se Hath Jodo' campaign for three months, saying the party got tremendous support to the programme.

A decision in this regard was taken at the Congress Legislature Party meeting presided by former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

State President Chaudhary Udaybhan and Rajya Sabha MP Deepender Hooda were also present at the meeting. It was decided at the meeting that all party MLAs would go to Jantar Mantar to extend support to wrestlers on May 13.

Addressing the media after the meeting, Hooda said the Congress is constantly reaching out to the public through various programmes. The Leader of Opposition also talked about revelations made in the CAG report regarding the Excise Department. "The government does not have any record of production, sale and income from liquor. The CAG has revealed major irregularities in the Excise Department."



He said the government, claiming transparency, is proving to be a failure on every front.

In response to a question, two-time chief minister Hooda said digitisation had started during the Congress government and its purpose was to provide convenience to the public, while the BJP made arrangements like 'Meri Fasal, Mera Byora', property and family identities to trouble the public.

Maha Opposition leaders all set to welcome Nitish, Tejaswi in Mumbai on Thursday

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Opposition leaders are all set to accord a warm welcome to Janata Dal-U supremo and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and ally Rashtriya Janata Dal's Deputy CM Tejaswi Yadav here on Thursday.

The duo shall be accompanied by JD-U President Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh, Bihar Legislative Council Chairman Deveshchandra Thakur and Bihar Cooperation Minister Sanjay Kumar Jha, said JD-U national Secretary and Maharashtra MLC Kapil Patil said here on Wednesday.

After a welcome by the JD-U at the Mumbai airport, the delegation will first drop in to have lunch with Shiv Sena-UBT President Uddhav Thackeray at his residence 'Matoishi' in Bandra.

Later, they will drive down to call on Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar at his home Silver Oaks in south



Mumbai for a tete-a-tete over high tea.

The visiting delegation was hoping to meet Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi President Prakash Ambedkar, but he is out of Mumbai and hence the meeting has been postponed

for the present, said a party official here.

Nitish Kumar and Tejaswi Yadav will meet Thackeray and Pawar in a bid to forge a national united forum of non-Bharatiya Janata Party opposition parties in the country before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

They will invite Pawar and Thackeray to join the mega-opposition conclave likely to be held in Patna next week, soon after the Karnataka Assembly elections are out.

The day will be politically crucial for Maharashtra as the Supreme Court is scheduled to deliver its verdict on the June 2022 split in the Shiv Sena which led to the toppling of the Maha Vikas Aghadi government headed by then CM Thackeray.

As part of his initiative, Nitish Kumar has already met top Congress leaders like President Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, as well as Arvind Kejriwal, Sitaram Yechury, CPI's D. Raja, Mamata Banerjee, Navin Patnaik, former UP CM Akhilesh Yadav and other top functionaries of different parties.

EIGHT STUDENTS DIE BY SUICIDE AFTER FAILING IN INTERMEDIATE EXAMS

Hyderabad: Eight students have died by suicide since Tuesday after failing or scoring low marks to pass in the Intermediate exams. The results of Intermediate first year and second year (11th and 12th classes) were declared on Tuesday.

The incidents were reported from various parts of the state during the last 24 hours. Five of them were in Hyderabad.

P. Jhanvi (17) of Santosh Nagar area in Hyderabad hanged herself at her residence. She was upset after failing in the Intermediate second year examination. She was a student of MPC (Maths, Physics and Chemistry) at a private junior col-

lege. Another girl student ended her life in Vanashalipuram. Gayatri hanged herself at her residence. She and her younger sister had appeared in the exam. Gayatri was upset as she had failed to clear the exam while her younger sister had passed.

Gautam Kumar of Khairatabad area also ended his life after failing in the exam. Saifabad police registered a case and shifted the body for autopsy.

In Manikonda, a girl student jumped to death from the fifth floor of a building after failing in the exam. Shanta Kumari was a student of Intermediate first year at a government college in Raidurgam.

Another student ended his life at Neredmet in Secunderabad. Upset after failing in the intermediate second year exam, he hanged himself at his house.

A student from Armoor who was studying at a private college in Hyderabad ended his life after failing in the exam.

Meanwhile, a student from Mahabubabad district, who had committed suicide after appearing the exam due to fear of failure, has scored 892 out of 1,000 marks in Intermediate second year. Guguloth Krishna had ended his life on April 10. However, the results declared on May 9 show that he cleared the exam with good marks.

The series of suicides has been reported despite authorities taking action to provide counselling to students.

The Board of Intermediate Education has set up a separate cell to help students overcome any stress, strain and anxiety. This cell called 'Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking across the State (Tele Manas)' works round the clock.

Officials said the services of psychologists and psychiatrists for counselling and guidance are available. Students can contact toll free number 14416.

Late last month, nine students in Andhra Pradesh had ended their lives after failing to clear

Coal smuggling case: Delhi HC orders ED to issue fresh summons to Bengal law minister

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday ordered the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to issue fresh summons and give 15 days notice to West Bengal law minister Moloy Ghatak for questioning him in the coal smuggling case.

Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma also recorded Additional Solicitor General S. V. Raju's statement that Ghatak will not be arrested in relation to the summons that have already been issued. The probe agency



apprised the court that the minister has been issued at least nine summons.

While the judge passed the order, he also said that he will deal with the issue of Ghatak's plea that he should be questioned in Kolkata and not in Delhi.

In March, the ED summoned Ghatak to appear at

its headquarters in the national capital and had fixed March 29 as the date of his appearance. The central agency also summoned the minister's personal assistant to New Delhi on March 23. However, neither of them turned up.

In his plea, Ghatak has alleged that even after his statements have been recorded by the ED, he is being summoned to New Delhi just to "harass" him.

This was not the first time that Ghatak has been summoned by the ED in connection with the coal scam.

AAP legislator in Punjab held for poll violation

Chandigarh | Agencies

Ruling AAP legislator Dalbir Singh Tong in Punjab was arrested on Wednesday for violating model code during the polling for the Jalandhar Lok Sabha constituency bypoll, but later released on bail. Chief Electoral Officer Sibin C. told the media that Tong, the legislator of Baba Bakala, was arrested.

He said on receiving photographs of outsiders present near polling booths, the police have been instructed to conduct checks and make public announcements to ask non-voters to leave the constituency immediately.

As per the Election Commission, the presence of outsiders and political leaders is banned in the poll-bound areas after cam-



paigned ends. The polling for the reserved seat in Jalandhar is witnessing a four-cornered fierce contest in the Dalit-dominated Doaba region, traditionally a Congress bastion. The bypoll was necessitated with the death of Congress MP Santokh Chaudhary due to a heart attack while taking part in the Punjab leg of the Bharat Jodo Yatra of party leader Rahul Gandhi in January.

People full of negativity do not want to see good things happening in the country - Modi

Lalit Sharma | Nathdwara

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the central government has given a new impetus to the economy by working on modern infrastructure, but some people have become victims of distorted ideology and are so full of negativity that the country, they don't want to see anything good happen in me. Modi was addressing a public meeting here today after having a darshan at Shrinathji temple. Without naming anyone, he said that now he only likes to create controversy. Some people preach that flour is first, data is first, the road is first, and the satellite is first, but history is witness that along with basic arrangements, modern infra is also necessary for sustainable and fast development.

He said that those who weigh everything with the



help of votes at every step, do not plan keeping in mind the future of the country. Many times it is seen that the water tank in the village becomes small within four-five years. Roads and flyovers start becoming inadequate within four-five years. This thinking has not given priority to infrastructure construction in our country and the country

has suffered a huge loss due to this. Had medical colleges been built earlier, there would have been no shortage of doctors today. He said that if the railway lines were electrified, there would have been no need to spend thousands of crores of rupees for this. He said that if earlier every house had tap water, then the Jal Jeevan Mission worth Rs 3.5 lakh crore would not have to be started today.

The Prime Minister said that people full of negativity cannot think beyond politics. He said that what would have happened if the Nand Samand dam and Tantod dam of Nathdwara had not been built.

Modi said that Rajasthan has also suffered a lot for not building infrastructure with foresight. Due to the lack of facilities in the desert, it was difficult to come and go, it was also difficult to do business and trade.



NOW PEOPLE WILL NOT HAVE TO VISIT GOVERNMENT OFFICES FOR THEIR WORK: CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that now people will not have to visit government offices for their work. The first phase of Mukhya Mantri Jan-Seva Abhiyan was launched in the state from September 17, the birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in which the officials went from village-to-village, ward-to-ward to offer services to the public and connected the eligible people with government schemes. During this, the names of 83 lakh new beneficiaries were added to various schemes in the state.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that the second phase of Mukhya Mantri Janseva Abhiyan is starting from today. Officers and people's representatives will go from village to village and do public work. Camps will be organized in every panchayat of the entire state from May 16 to 31. Pending complaints of CM Helpline will also be resolved.

Chief Minister Chouhan attended the Mukhya Mantri Ladli Bahna Sammelan at Jobat in Alirajpur district today. He formally launched the Mukhya Mantri Janseva Abhiyan 2.0. Along with this, he also performed bhoomi-pujan and dedication of development works costing Rs 332 crore. He also distributed benefits to the beneficiaries of various schemes.



Chief Minister Chouhan said that Mukhya Mantri Ladli Bahna Yojana has been started to change the lives of the sisters of the state. In this scheme, Rs 1000 rupees will be deposited in the accounts of women on the 10th of every month. Along with this, the amount of old age pension will also be increased to Rs.1000.

Now both the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law will get Rs.1000 per month. The poor farmer husband will also be given Rs. 10 thousand in a year from Kisan Samman Nidhi and Kisan-Kalyan Yojana. The government is providing free ration, houses, medicines to the poor. Plots are being given to the poor to build

houses under the Mukhya Mantri Bhu-Awasiya Adhikar Yojana.

Distribution of Mukhya Mantri Awasiya Bhu-adhikar letters to beneficiaries in village Ringol

Chief Minister Chouhan reached village Ringol in Alirajpur district and paid tributes by garlanding the statue of late freedom fighter Parthi Bhai. The Chief Minister said that the announcements made by the state government are taking shape at the field level. A beautiful memorial of freedom fighter Parthi Bhai Jadav is ready in village Ringol. Along with the work of public interest, the work of preserving the memories of freedom fighters is being done by our government.

Bhoomi Poojan for construction of statue shed of Amar Shaheed Chandrashekhar Azad statue site in Chandrashekhar Azad Nagar

Chief Minister Chouhan performed bhoomi-poojan for the construction of a shed at the Amar Shaheed Chandrashekhar Azad statue site in Chandrashekhar Azad Nagar and paid floral tributes by garlanding the statue of Amar Shaheed Azad.

Had darshan at Charbhuj Nath Temple Chief Minister Chouhan visited Charbhuj Nath Temple located at Badi Khattali village of Alirajpur. The Chief Minister reached the residence of Gopal Prapajpat in Khattali village and greeted all the family members for the marriage programme.

CM Shri Chouhan welcomes Union Minister Singh and Tomar



Team Absolute | Bhopal

On the arrival of Union Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar at the Bhopal airport, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan greeted and wel-

comed them with a bouquet. Members of the State Cabinet Ministers and public representatives were present. Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and Narendra Singh Tomar have come to Madhya Pradesh to attend a private marriage ceremony.

People lose Rs 2.41 crore to cyber cheats from January to May 2023

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Cyber cheats have duped residents of Rs 2.41 crore from January to May 10, 2023. According to Bhopal district cyber crime cell, 527 complaints of cyber fraud complaints were registered during this period. The data outnumbers that of January to May 2022, in which 471 such complaints were registered. Worse, the cyber crime officials recovered Rs 19.51 lakh of the defrauded amount, which is mere 8.07 per cent of the total amount people lost to fraudsters. The new means adopted by cyber cheats include voice scams, offering government jobs and benefits under government-led schemes, tourism-related frauds, providing government jobs and offering loans through applications.

Highlighting the reason behind lack of arrest and recovery of money in all such cases, officials cited lack of adequate clues about accused as the latter's actual identity remains concealed.

Cyber cheats make fake websites, fake identity cards of government departments, fake job appointment letters and many other such documents, sources said.



"We need more personnel and experts in cyber wing, which faces manpower shortage," a senior official said wishing anonymity. Assistant commissioner of police (cyber crime) Sujeet Tiwari said people should immediately contact cyber helpline, which will ensure that the amount siphoned off is frozen by the banks concerned.

REZANGLA WAR MEMORIAL WILL ALSO BE DEVELOPED IN BHOPALS SHAURYA MEMORIAL - CM CHOUHAN

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the RezanGLA War Memorial will be developed at Shaurya Smarak in Bhopal. The statue of immortal revolutionary Rao Tularam ji will be installed in Indore.

The curriculum committee will be directed to include his biography in the curriculum of school education. Will discuss with Union Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh regarding formation of Ahir Regiment in Indian Army. Chief Minister Chouhan said this to the delegation of Yadav Ahir Regiment Jagrukta Abhiyan (York).

Chief Minister Chouhan was called on by a delegation led by Urban Development and Housing Minister Shri Bhupendra Singh at CM's residence office today. Representatives of Indore, Agar-Malwa, Dewas, Ujjain, Rajgarh, Ashoknagar, Sehore and Gwalior were in the delegation along with Shri Sunil Yadav. Minister Shri Singh said that the state government is committed for the welfare of all sections. The positive impact of the activities conducted to provide employment and entrepreneurship opportunities to the youth of other backward classes is visible.

MP Bus Tragedy: Collector ordered a magisterial probe into bus accident in Khargone

Team Absolute | Khargone

After a passenger bus plunged into a dry river bed resulting in the death of 24 passengers, district collector Shivraj Singh Verma ordered a magisterial probe into the case. During a meeting held here in the district collector's office, collector Verma, considering it necessary to conduct a magisterial inquiry into the accident on Tuesday itself, appointed SDM Omnarayan Singh Badkul as an investigation officer under Section 174 and 176 of CrPC 1973.

SDM Badkul will conduct a magisterial inquiry on the following points includes, what were the reasons for the incident, who is to blame for the incident, suggestions to prevent such incidents in future and apart from



the above points, if there are any other points, they will also be mentioned.

Collector Verma and SP Dharamveer Singh chaired a meeting with all the transporters on Tuesday late evening after the accident. In the meeting, strict instructions were given to the transporters stating the various reasons for the bus accident.

Collector Verma told the transporters that now the police, revenue and transport department will ensure strict action. If an unfit and overloading vehicle operation is found, FIR will be registered for playing with the lives of common citizens (culpable homicide not amounting to murder). In the meeting, SP Singh said that no unfit vehicle will ply. In case of plying overloaded vehicles, not only vehicles will be seized, but FIR will be registered.

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Olympic medalist Sakshi Malik seeks support from Chambal wrestlers, ask them to join protests in Jantar Mantar against WFI chief Brij Bhushan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A video of Olympic bronze medalist Sakshi Malik seeking support from wrestlers in the Chambal region went viral on Wednesday. In the video, Malik urged wrestlers to join the protest either at Jantar Mantar in Delhi or stage demonstration in their respective villages and raise their voices against the alleged injustice against female wrestlers.

The ongoing strike by wrestlers at Delhi's Jantar Mantar against former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) President Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh has entered its 18th day. They have accused Singh of sexual misconduct against female wrestlers. As per report of Dainik Bhaskar, the video featured Sakshi Malik along with other wrestlers, emphasizing the importance of unity in their fight for justice and truth. Malik called upon all residents of Chambal to rally behind their cause and support the



ongoing protest. Child Congress co-incharge Sachin Dwivedi stated that discussions would be held with wrestlers from Chambal, and they would soon travel to Delhi to show their solidarity by bringing soil from their respective akhadas (wrestling arenas).

In related developments, a court

hearing took place at Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court on Wednesday regarding the petition filed by women wrestlers. The court has requested a status report from the Delhi Police, and the next hearing is scheduled for May 12. During the court hearing, the wrestlers' advocate highlighted that a complaint had been filed earlier, but

no action was taken by the police. It was only after filing a petition with the Supreme Court that an FIR was registered on March 28 under the POCSO Act and other relevant sections. Malik called for a narco test to be conducted on the seven victims and Brij Bhushan under the supervision of the Supreme Court, suggesting that those found guilty should face immediate punishment.

In a show of support, Sachin Dwivedi, MP Congress Committee's PCC delegate and NSUI national convener, visited Jantar Mantar and extended his solidarity to the wrestlers' protest. Malik expressed her belief that the wrestlers of Chambal, known for their rebellious spirit against injustice, would step forward to support their cause.

To further amplify their protest, the wrestlers held a press conference and appealed to all concerned individuals to register their dissent by wearing black bands between 10 am and 2 pm on Thursday

Ratlam records highest maximum temperature of 43.6 degrees Celsius

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The maximum temperature shot up across the state on Wednesday. The highest maximum temperature of 43.6 degrees Celsius was recorded in Ratlam. Bhopal recorded maximum temperature of 40.3 degrees Celsius. As a result, roads wore a deserted look as people stayed indoors to avoid the burning sun. Few vehicles were seen on road during afternoon.

On an average, maximum temperature has been hovering around 40 degrees Celsius in most districts for past two days.

On Tuesday, Betul recorded maximum temperature of 40 degrees Celsius, Dhar recorded 42.8 degrees Celsius, Guna registered 41.5 degrees Celsius, Narmadapuram recorded 41.1 degrees Celsius,



Khandwa registered 40.5 degrees Celsius.

The day temperature in Raisen was 40.2 degrees Celsius, Shivpuri faced 40 degrees Celsius, it was 40 degrees Celsius in Ujjain.

Khajuraho's day temperature was 42.2 degrees Celsius, Mandla's was 39 degrees Celsius, Nowgond

sizzled at 41.2 degrees Celsius.

Sagar's day temperature was 40.6 degrees Celsius, Sidhi's was 40.6 degrees Celsius. According to meteorological department, moisture content in the wind has reduced in the state. The maximum temperature may rise by 1 or 2 degrees.

21 TUNNELS TO BE BUILT IN INDORE-KHANDWA GC PROJECT, OFFICERS INSPECT SITE



Indore: As many as 21 tunnels will be built in between Patalpani to Mukhtiyara section of Indore-Khandwa gauge conversion project, said Ashok Kumar Mishra, General Manager of Western Railway. Both--Mishra and MD of Rail India Technical and Economic service (RITES) inspected the site and reviewed the project in detail.

His visit comes after the strict instruction given by Chairman of Railway Board (CRB) AK Lahoti during the city visit last week.

Western Railway is giving a top priority in ironing-out the hurdles coming in the way of progress of Indore-Khandwa GC project. In the last visit CRB Lahoti has expressed deep anger over attitude of the officers of the construction department of railway while dealing with the Indore-Khandwa GC and Indore-Dahod new line project.

Two youths rape one-month-old calf in Bhind, booked for Animal Cruelty

Two youths were booked for raping a one-month-old calf in Bhind district on Wednesday.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The incident happened on Monday night. It's on Wednesday that the owner of the cow approached Gohad police and lodged an FIR against Halke Baretha and Mansharam Botham for allegedly raping a calf. The two accused have been booked for unnatural sex under IPC sections 377, 34 and the Cruelty to Animals Act. This is the second case of animal cruelty reported from Madhya Pradesh in a week. A few days ago a man identified as Sachin Agarkar thrashed a dog to death in Indore. He threw the body in the bushes and ran over by car to make it appear like an accident. The entire incident caught on CCTV camera sparked outrage among animal rights activists and locals as they demand strict action against the accused.



State government will leave no stone unturned for the welfare of mothers, sisters and daughters: CM Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan virtually participated in the mass marriage ceremony of Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah Yojana at village Gudbhela in Sehore district. While blessing 415 couples, he wished that the couples tying the sacred bond of marriage may lead a happy, joyful and blissful life and increase the honour and prestige of both the clans and families.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that the marriage of a daughter should not be a burden on any family in the society, therefore, in the year 2006, the Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah-Nikah Yojana was launched. Various schemes are run by the state government to provide opportunities for progress to the daughters. In Ladli Laxmi Yojana, along

with all possible help for studies, encouragement and cooperation is being extended to the daughters at every step. Giving reservation to women in Panchayat and urban bodies elections and rebate in stamp duty in registration of immovable property is an important step towards women empowerment. Ladli Bahna Yojana will boost the self-esteem and self-reliance of women. The state government will leave no stone unturned for the welfare of mothers, sisters and daughters. Chief Minister Chouhan extended best wishes to the daughters involved in the mass marriage for a happy life ahead with the lines of "Mama ki duayen leti ja, tu tujhok sukhi sansar mile". Local public representatives and family members of the brides and grooms were present in the Gudbhela marriage ceremony.



EDITOR'S SPECS

14 Haryana villages new hotspots of cyber fraudsters

Fourteen villages in Haryana's Nuh district are emerging as new hotspots of cyber-crime, and mostly the youths there are indulging in the crime by using stolen high-end mobile phones. This was disclosed by the police after questioning 125 cybercriminals, who were apprehended by as many as 102 teams comprising over 5,000 police personnel. The raids were conducted in 300 locations in the 14 villages on April 27. The police raided the 14 identified villages in the Pinangwa, Punhana, Ferozpur Jhirka, Nai, Aminabad, Tirwara, Jaimat and Bichhore areas. The police had earlier identified Khedla, Luhinga Khurd, Luhinga Kalan, Gokalpur, Godhola, Aminabad, Mahu, Gulalta, Jaimat, Jakhopur, Nai, Tirwara, Mamlika and Papda as cyber-crime hotspots. The police said the accused cheated people on the name of selling vehicles on OLX, seeking KYC data, offering loans and even sextortion. Most interestingly, the hackers have studied only up to Class 12, while some are even illiterate and some of them have rewards on their heads. During the raid, police nabbed the highest number of 31 cyber criminals from Nai village, followed by 25 from Luhinga Kalan village, 20 each from Jaimat and Jakhopur, 17 each from Khedla and Tirwara, and 11 from Aminabad. A total of 66 smartphones, 65 fake SIMs, 166 Aadhaar cards, three laptops, 128 ATM cards of different banks, two ATM swipe machines, one AEPs machine, six scanners, five PAN cards, etc., were recovered from the suspects. The two villages, located on the Haryana-Rajasthan border, have emerged as the 'cybercrime training hubs', said the police. The police disclosed that the accused mostly targeted job-seekers, senior citizens and students. They even offer lucrative offers on OLX. They said the accused usually committed crimes at the border areas of Rajasthan and Haryana as it is difficult to track the mobile locations of the criminals.

STRAINED INDO-PAK TIES TO STAY

Asad Mirza

India taking down Pakistan at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meet is indicative of changing diplomatic might of India. India will not stick to fake goody words any longer. It signals Pakistan about the need to do more to shed the tag of being a global headache on terrorism.

Coming soon after the recent Shanghai Cooperation Council's (SCO) Defence Ministers' Summit in New Delhi, India last week hosted the Foreign Ministers of the SCO at Goa.

The common thread between these two summits was the tough posturing by India against its two neighbours Pakistan and China.

At the Goa meeting, India's External Affairs Minister (EAM), S. Jaishankar, revealed that India had twice called out China and Pakistan at the summit for violating India's sovereignty through their connectivity projects.

The statement was made in response to a question on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which runs through Indian territory currently under Pakistan's illegal occupation.

Earlier, India had sort of reprimanded the Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu at the New Delhi meeting, on the issue of the stalled talks over the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

India's critique of Pakistan
Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was in Goa to represent Pakistan at the SCO-CFM. A visit, which happened after a 12-year gap.

The last Pakistani Foreign Minister to visit India was Hina Rabbani Khar, when she met her Indian counterpart S.M. Krishna in Delhi in 2011.

However, what soured the atmosphere this time in Goa, was references made by Zardari over Kashmir and Pakistan being a victim of terrorism itself. Though he also called for reviving the stalled talks.

India, in a strongly worded response to Pakistan's overtures for talks, said victims of terrorism do not sit together with perpetrators of terrorism to discuss terror.

Rebutting each of the points made by Zardari, EAM Jaishankar said he (Zardari) was "a promoter, justifier and spokesperson for a terrorism industry which is the mainstay of Pakistan. The tough Indian response came after the news of death of five Indian Army soldiers in a terrorist attack near the Line of Control (LoC) on Friday". Jaishankar said



Bilawal's suggestion to sit together and talk was "hypocritical" and said India was feeling "outraged" by the incident.

India's stand on China
Jaishankar had a similar position on China whose readout on the bilateral between him and its Foreign Minister Qin Gang described the situation on the boundary as stable.

Jaishankar said that there is an abnormal position in the border areas. "We have to take the disengagement process forward. I have made it very clear. India-China relations will not be normal if peace and tranquillity in the border areas is disturbed. This message was on the same lines as delivered by the Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to his Chinese counterpart Li Shangfu, a fortnight ago." Responding to Zardari's diatribe, Jaishankar said Bilawal's opposition to a G-20 meeting to be held in Kashmir had no basis since Pakistan was not even a member of that grouping.

On Bilawal's opening address at the SCO conference where he said the issue of terrorism should not be used to score diplomatic points, the Minister said: "We are not scoring diplomatic points. We are exposing Pakistan. As a victim of terrorism, we are authorised to do so. We have put up with it. It speaks so much about the mindset of that country."

He asked Pakistan to "smell the coffee" regarding its grouse about the abrogation of

Article 370 as a violation of international agreements. "370 is history. Sooner the people realise it, the better," Jaishankar said.

Indian response to CPEC
EAM Jaishankar also took an exception at the mention of CPEC at the SCO meeting, both by Pakistan and China. And rightly so, as SCO is a multilateral forum, not a bilateral one and further India's adversarial stand on the CPEC has been very clear from the beginning, as it passed through the PoK. India has consistently opposed the Belt and Road Initiative and CPEC, as these projects violate India's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Jaishankar very clearly stated that connectivity is good for progress, but connectivity cannot violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations.

Bilawal's overture
On his part Bilawal Bhutto Zardari blamed India's Kashmir policy for the "frozen peace" between India and Pakistan. The India-Pakistan relationship soured significantly after India announced the withdrawal of special powers from Jammu and Kashmir and the division of the state into two union territories in August 2019.

India has always maintained that it wants regular neighbourly ties with Pakistan while emphasising that the onus is on Islamabad to create a safe environment

for such an engagement.

The tough Indian response to both Pakistan and China, mainly stems from its exhaustion with its neighbours, who in spite of several Indian initiatives to better relations, prefer to stick with their age-old stands on the contentious issues, preferring not to respond positively to any Indian efforts in this regard.

The SCO meet also showed yet again that body language speaks volumes in geopolitics and diplomacy. The distance between the two foreign ministers while posing for photographs was noticeably gaping. However, the cold Indian demeanour, a departure from customary diplomatic niceties, and continuing with its old parroting by the Pakistani Minister were more targeted at their respective domestic audiences.

The Indian leadership in view of the forthcoming elections in Karnataka wanted to be seen as acting tough, while the Pakistani Minister wanted to showcase his ability to rake-up old issues in the backdrop of the economic woes of Pakistan. But overall this posturing does not augurs well for friendly relations between the neighbours in the foreseeable future.

international

IN LEGAL SETBACK, TRUMP ORDERED TO PAY \$5 MN TO WOMAN IN SEX ABUSE CASE

Arul Louis | New York

In a legal setback, former US President Donald Trump has been ordered to pay \$5 million in damages to a woman who accused him of rape but he does not face prison time because it was a civil case.

A jury gave the verdict on Tuesday in a civil case hinging on an attack in a fitting room in a high-end store decades ago and Trump defaming her by calling her accusations a "hoax".

The jury did not accept her claim of rape, but declared him liable for sexual abuse and defamation.

E. Jean Carroll, 79, brought the case against the front-runner to be the Republican Party's presidential candidate next year, Trump, who she said had raped her decades ago, but was not sure when it happened.

In a post on Truth Social media, Trump characteristically called the verdict a "continuing of the greatest witchhunt of all time" and said he would appeal.

There was a large crowd of demonstrators outside the courthouse denouncing his treatment of women when the verdict came down.

Carroll was a columnist for the Elle magazine at the time she said she was attacked around 1996.

Trump is facing a criminal case brought by a local prosecutor in New York accusing him of falsifying business records to cover up payments made to a woman who claimed to have had an affair with him.

If convicted in that case, he could be sentenced to prison



time, although that would not bar him from running for election under the US Constitution.

The first former President to face criminal charges, Trump was arrested and produced in court last month but was released pending the trial that could take place early next year. The latest opinion poll by ABC News and The Washington

Post taken before the verdict showed him six percentage points ahead of President Joe Biden.

Trump, who is busy campaigning for his presidential run, did not take the witness stand to contest Carroll's case. Several women have accused him of rape and sex abuse, but the thrice-married Trump, who once revelled in the image of a playboy, has not faced criminal charges.

A damning piece of evidence introduced against him related to a video of him using an obscenity and saying, "When you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything, grab 'em by the (genitals)." During a deposition - testimony and cross-examination outside a court to speed up the trial - he defended the statement saying that "historically that is true" when asked about it by Carroll's lawyer.

A video of his statement made during the cross-examination was shown to the jury, a citizens' panel made up of three women and six men, which gave the verdict in less than three hours of deliberations after eight days of the trial.

Carroll herself took the stand at the trial as did two other women who said that they had been abused by Trump, one of them while on a plane. "I'm here because Donald Trump raped me," Carroll told the jury and gave a graphic description of Trump abusing her with his fingers before raping her.

She said that the encounter took place in the lingerie department of the department store when he approached her on the pretext of trying to find a gift for a woman friend.

He banged her head on the wall of a fitting room before the attack, she said.

Sri Lanka issues landslide warning due to heavy rainfall



Colombo | Agencies

Sri Lanka's National Building Research Organization (NBRO) on Wednesday urged people to be cautious of possible landslides if heavy rain continues.

In its latest warning, the NBRO said people in the southern district of Galle, Kandy and Kegalle in the central part of the country and Kurunegala in the North Western Province are asked to be alert, reports Xinhua news agency.

The warning was issued as Sri Lanka experienced rainfall above 75 mm during the past 24 hours, according to the NBRO.

The NBRO asked people to take precautions if they notice cracks on the ground, subsidence of the ground, slanting of trees, electricity posts, fences and telephone posts, and cracks on their walls.

The Sri Lankan Department of Meteorology has forecast heavy rain in the island country accompanied by strong winds.

3 INDIAN-ORIGIN MEN JAILED IN UK FOR SMUGGLING CANNABIS WORTH 1 MN POUNDS

London: Three Indian-origin members of an organised crime group have been jailed for smuggling cannabis worth around 1 million pounds into the UK from Canada, police said.

Kuran Gill, Jag Singh and Govind Bahia, all in their 30s, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to import a 'class B' drug and were sentenced at Woolwich Crown Court, the Kent Police said.

The Border Force officers discovered two pallet-loads of cannabis within a shipment of computer casing at Heathrow airport in February 2021.

Valued at around 1 million pounds, the drugs had been flown across from Canada and were due to be delivered to a business address in Dartford.

The detectives were able to link the shipment to members of a criminal network who had been arranging the importation of cannabis over an illegally-encrypted mobile phone platform, which international law enforcement agencies cracked in the spring of 2020, according to the Kent Police.

INTERNET IN PAKISTAN SUSPENDED FOR INDEFINITE PERIOD

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) on Wednesday said that internet services across the country will remain suspended for an indefinite period.

The authority confirmed that the decision to block mobile broadband services was taken on the directives of the Ministry of Interior, Geo News reported.

On Tuesday, the services were shutdown as protests erupted after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's was arrested from the Islamabad High Court premises in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

Moreover, major social media sites including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are also reportedly down for many users in Pakistan as they are unable to access these platforms since Tuesday, Geo News reported.

Videos of violent protests were shared widely on social media platforms after unrest flared up following the former Prime Minister's arrest, after which mobile broadband services were blocked.

A PTA spokesperson had said that the regulatory authority was also receiving reports of social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, being down. However, these reports could not be confirmed, she added. Sources told Geo News that "unwarranted" clips of the protests were shared on social media after



which various platforms started experiencing disruptions around 8 p.m. on Tuesday, causing problems for citizens.

"Not much works without the internet in today's day and age and although I am no longer a working professional, tuning into the TV to follow the news on such a politically charged day is second nature to me. But I had an error message greet me because even my television channel subscription is tied to my internet services," Sameen Daud Khan, a researcher who worked on Pakistan internet, said.

Israel evacuates communities in Gaza, bracing for possible retaliation

Tel Aviv | Agencies

Israel is on high alert as it prepared for retaliatory rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip after a series of airstrikes killed militants and civilians in the besieged Palestinian enclave.

Israel's state-owned Kan TV news reported that over 2,000 Israelis have been evacuated from communities near the enclave, as a precaution against possible rocket attacks launched by Gaza-based militants, reports Xinhua news agency.

Residents in southern Israel were being relocated to hotels in central regions of the country.

In the city of Sderot, preparations have been made by the municipality to temporarily relocate approximately 4,500 elderly or sick residents.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant told local council heads near Gaza that they "must be prepared for every scenario". He added that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and security forces "are pre-



pared to defend every front", according to a statement released on his behalf.

On Tuesday, Israeli fighter jets and drones carried out simultaneous and surprise attacks at buildings and apartments which host the Islamic Jihad terror group's senior military leaders in Gaza. The Gaza-based Health Ministry said 15 Palestinians were killed and more than 20 were injured in the airstrikes, including 10 civilian women and children.



SUPREME COURT TO PRONOUNCE VERDICT ON MAHARASHTRA POLITICAL CRISIS ON THURSDAY

Team Absolute | Mumbai/New Delhi

The Supreme Court will on Thursday pronounce its judgment on the political crisis in Maharashtra...



volley of questions at senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing the Thackeray group...

vote?" As Singhvi said everything falls, the bench said that everything falls on would be simple...

resignation and not facing the trust vote is irrelevant. The Chief Justice observed: "That is, the court being told to reinstate a government (which has resigned)..."

Shiv Sena (UBT) delegation meets Governor, seeks probe into 'graft' in BMC

Team Absolute | Mumbai



A delegation of the Uddhav Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena on Wednesday met Governor Ramesh Bais at Raj Bhavan...

unprecedented challenge to its democratic standing, along with most other cities in Maharashtra...

ties have pointed out irregularities of the BMC in terms of financial mismanagement, favouring contractors and the absolutely chaotic administration...

Jalna, steel and mosambi hub, becomes Maha's 29th Municipal Corporation

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Jalna Municipal Council in Maharashtra's Jalna district - famed for its mosambi fruit and steel industries - has been upgraded as the 29th Municipal Corporation of the state...



said that Jalna town has an estimated population of around 350,000 and it is growing gradually over the years...

ment. CIDCO will prepare a financial feasibility report and submit it to the state government for the 11th proposed new town in Maharashtra...

SHINDE BURNS MIDNIGHT OIL TO REVIEW MUMBAI METRO-3 STATUS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde took time off around midnight to visit and review the progress of the ongoing first and only fully underground Mumbai Metro-3 Colaba-Bandra-SEEPZ...



system in the city and its work is proceeding at a fast pace. The work of the Metro-3 route is almost 90 per cent complete...

cent complete. It will reduce 600,000 vehicles on the roads," said Shinde, going around the underground sta-

tions. He added that the Metro-3 will be connected with Metro lines 1, 2, 6 and 9, the Mumbai Airport, the Monorail and the suburban railway lines at Churchgate and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus...

2 Arrested For Cheating People In Maharashtra, Gujarat By Posing As Women

Team Absolute | Thane

Police have arrested two men for allegedly cheating 19 people in Maharashtra and Gujarat by posing as women on phone calls and seeking money from them...



amount to be paid to him, for hospital related transactions, the official said. When the jeweller arrived at the hospital carrying 2 lakh cash in different denominations, the

accused collected the money from him and then asked him to go inside to take measurement of a gold bangle for the doctor and then take 2 lakh from him, he said.

As the jeweller went inside the hospital, the accused allegedly fled from the spot with the cash, the official said. The jeweller subsequently lodged a complaint with local police...

M. A. Naseem Khan slams slashed Haj-2023 quota, higher charges

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra ex-Minister and state Congress Working President M. A. Naseem Khan has slammed the government's move to reduce this year's quotas for the upcoming Haj pilgrimage...



The Congress leader also hinted at a scam in the hotel bookings in Mecca and Madina in Saudi Arabia for the pilgrims, why the subsidised tickets offered by Saudi Arabian Airlines are now booked through private airlines at higher rates...

Woman held for running prostitution racket in Thane; minor girl rescued



Police have arrested 45-year-old woman for allegedly running a prostitution racket and rescued a minor girl pushed into the flesh trade in Maharashtra's Thane city...

Monday evening, said senior police inspector Mahesh Patil from the police's anti-human trafficking cell. The police arrested the woman who was present at the spot along with a girl, the police said without specifying the minor's age...

Malegaon blast case trial

ANOTHER WITNESS TURNS HOSTILE, 37 SO FAR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A person allegedly known to Bharatiya Janata Party leader and Member of Parliament (MP) Pragna Singh Thakur has become the 37th witness to turn hostile in the 2008 Malegaon blast case trial...



giving any statement to the ATS. The court then declared him hostile. Of the more than 300 witnesses examined so far, 37 have not supported the

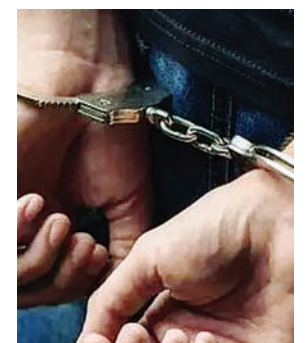
prosecution case. The trial in the case began in 2018 after the special NIA court framed charges against Lt Col Prasad Purohit, Thakur

and five others for terror activities, criminal conspiracy and murder, among others. All of them are out on bail.

Man nabbed from Parbhani for kidnapping 15-year-old girl

Team Absolute | Thane

The Government Railway Police (GRP) has arrested a 19-year-old man from Parbhani in central Maharashtra for allegedly kidnapping a 15-year-old girl from adjoining Thane, an official said on Tuesday...



managed to identify the accused and launched a search for him. On the basis of technical evidence and tip-offs, the police came to know the kidnapper was hiding at his relative's place in Parbhani from where he was nabbed on Monday...



Scarlett Johansson wasn't sure she'd see Jeremy Renner again



Hollywood star Scarlett Johansson is detailing her visit with Jeremy Renner following his near-fatal snow plough accident back in January.



Los Angeles | Agencies

In an interview with Variety, the 'Black Widow' actress claimed that she felt really emotional as she was unsure if she'd ever see him again after the accident, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I was honestly so f*cking happy to see him," Scarlett said of her co-star in Marvel movies. "I didn't know if I was ever going to see him again. To not only see him again but to see him thriving and in such an amazing space, mentally."

The 'Avengers: Endgame' actress continued: "He's a very spiritual person in general and a very soulful person. And you can see that in his work. It comes through. He has such a depth to him. And I just was so happy to see that he is full of life and light, and he's also hilarious. We laughed a lot."

Chris Evans, who joined Johansson during

the visit, later described the mood when they reunited. "No tears at all. A lot of laughs and smiles and hugs," he revealed.

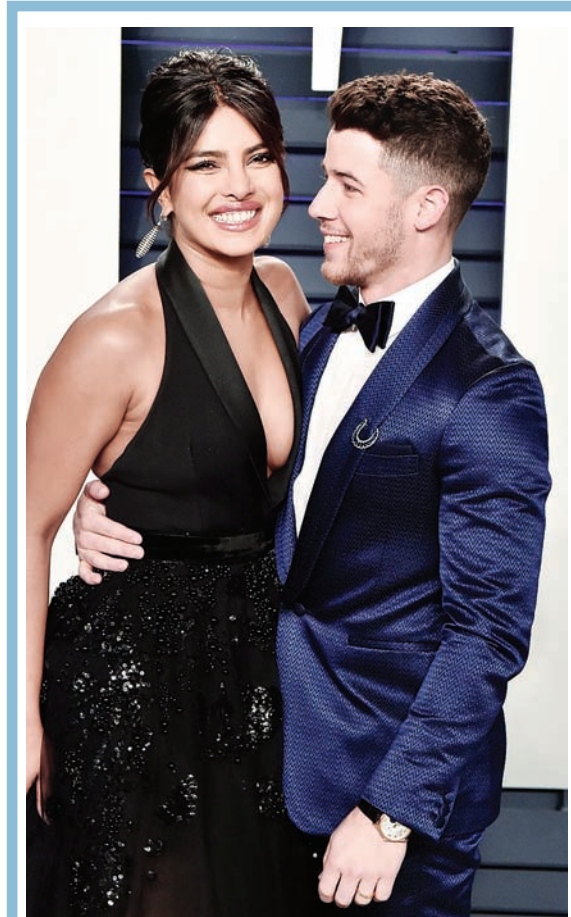
"Leave it to Jeremy to take something this potentially tragic and turn it into something so inspiring," Evans said.

In the interview, Johansson shared that she was filming her upcoming movie 'Project Artemis', which also stars Channing Tatum, when she woke up to the news that her 'Avengers' co-star was almost killed in the accident which left him injured and hospitalised. "I was very upset," she said. Despite the dire situations, Scarlett noted that Jeremy managed to make a few jokes about how the 52-year-old actor emerged as the real superhero among his MCU castmates.

"On the Avengers text chain, we're like, 'OK, you beat us all. That's it. You won'," she went on saying.

"That's like real superhero stuff. It's unbelievable."

Thankfully, Jeremy is in great condition amid his recovery. Earlier this month, the 'Hawkeye' star said that he had "lower pain levels" and had been "surpassing goals" daily in his recovery bid.



Priyanka shares her reaction to Nick Jonas' dating history

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Priyanka Chopra has said that she didn't pay attention to her man's past, with him previously being in high-profile romances with the likes of Selena Gomez, Miley Cyrus and Olivia Culpo.

Appearing on the 'Call Her Daddy' podcast, she told host Alex Cooper: "I don't give a f*** who he's dated."

"We are talking about the future... I always say this - I don't read my book backward. I believe you go forward in the chapters," reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She said: "I didn't even date Nick at that time because I was just, like, 'I need to know why I keep repeating my mistakes.'"

"And the repeating of the mistake was always feeling like I need to be the caretaker."

"Always feeling like it's okay to cancel my job or my work or my meeting or my priority to be to make sure that he's propped up... I just started feeling invisible in my relationships. (But) my husband makes me feel so seen. And so heard."

The 'Sucker' hitmaker made the first move

when he slid into his future wife's DMs with a very direct message.

She recalled: "Literally, his message was, 'I've been told we should meet'. How cocky? So sexy."

Once she had been on Google and seen the music video for his track 'Close', she decided to give him a chance.

She said: "(I thought), 'That body deserves at least a date.' Every time he sings that song on stage for me, I get weak in the knees... I landed on that video and I saw it and I had to like open the window or something."

She fired back with her own cheeky message, teasing: "My response to him was, 'Why don't you text me? My team can see my DMs.'"

Five years later, Priyanka explained his support for her helps keep their relationship strong.

She said: "He's the most excited about the shows that I'm doing, he was most excited, you know, when I'm on a carpet." "He'll step aside and he'll take like pictures of me. That's what you want. You want your man to be your champion."

TOM HANKS REFERS HOLLYWOOD STARS AS 'CRY-BABIES', 'TRAIN WRECKS' IN HIS NOVEL

Los Angeles | Agencies

Veteran star Tom Hanks believes he can "handle" criticism of his new novel.

Feeling proud of 'The Making of another Major Motion Picture Masterpiece', which has been inspired by his career in Hollywood, the actor said he won't be fazed by any negative reviews, reports aceshowbiz.com.

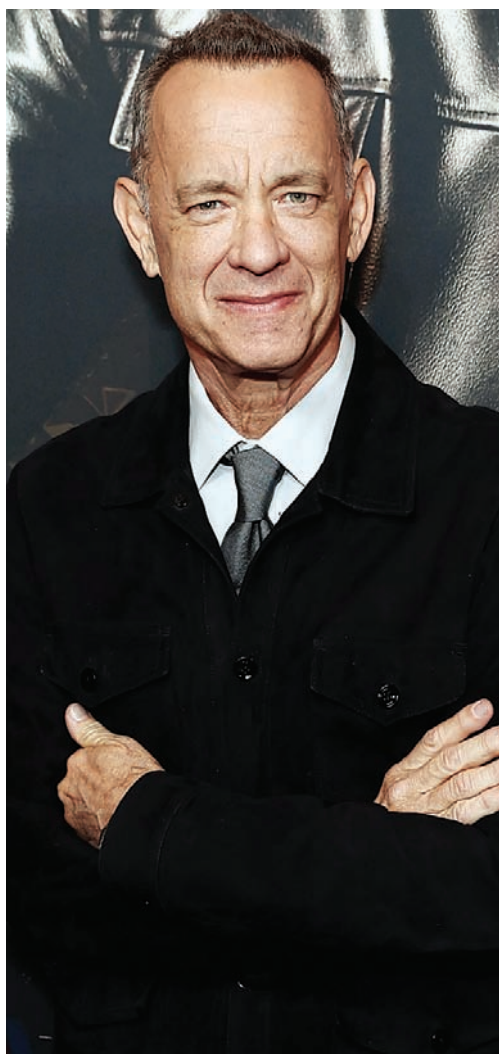
In an interview with BBC, the veteran movie star says he has become "stronger when it comes down to really being torn apart".

In his novel, Hanks refers to film stars who are "cry-babies, psychological train wrecks, on-the-wagon alcoholics (and) off-the-wagon addicts".

The actor also revealed that he opposes airbrushing classic books for modern audiences after novels by the likes of Ian Fleming and Agatha Christie were recently amended by their publishers.

Hanks said, "I'm of the opinion that we're all grown-ups here. Let's have faith in our own sensibilities as opposed to having somebody decide what we may or may not be offended by. Let me decide what I am offended by and what I'm not offended by. I would be against reading any book from any era that says 'abridged due to modern sensitivities'."

Meanwhile, Hanks previously claimed that he's only made four "pretty good" movies during his career. The Oscar-winning actor also described the film-making process as a "miracle".



Robert De Niro welcomes 7th child months before 80th birthday

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Robert De Niro has revealed that he has become a father to his seventh child, just months before his 80th birthday.

The actor shared the news in a recent interview while he was promoting his upcoming comedy film 'About My Father', which is set to be released later this month, reports 'Mirror.co.uk'.

He was asked during the interview about being a father-of-six, with interviewer Brittnie Blair saying: "I know you have six kids."

Robert however corrected her about his family. The Academy Award winner commented: "Seven, actually."

He subsequently confirmed: "I just had a baby."

It however remains unclear who he has welcomed the baby with.

It and 'Taxi Driver' -- has confirmed the news to the Mirror.

As per 'Mirror.co.uk', it's not been confirmed who the baby's mother is but Robert is rumoured to be dating Tai Chi instructor Tiffany Chen after they met on the set of his 2015 movie 'The Intern', according to PageSix.

Robert shares his eldest two kids with his first wife Diahnne Abbott. The former couple, who were married from 1976 to 1988, are parents to Drena, 51, and Raphael, 46.

He shares twin sons Julian and Aaron, 27, with his former partner Toukie Smith. They are understood to have been in a relationship from around 1988 until they separated in 1996.



He shared the news with ET Canada and a spokesperson for the actor -- whose credits include 'The Godfather Part

Niall Horan wants DiCaprio to play him in 'One Direction' biopic

Singer Niall Horan would love to have his doppelganger friend Allen Leech or Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio to play him in a 'One Direction' biopic.

Los Angeles | Agencies

The singer wants fellow Irishman Allen who he is often compared to, or the "Titanic" star to portray him if there is ever a movie about the popular boy band - which was also comprised of Harry Styles, Louis Tomlinson, Liam Payne and formerly, Zayn Malik, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"Currently, it would be Allen Leech from 'Downton Abbey'. I met him in a coffee shop in LA one time and we were just doing the whole, 'We look like each other.' Him or (Leonardo) DiCaprio. One of them," Niall said to ET Canada.

It comes after Allen tipped Niall to play a young Tom Branson -- his role in the period drama -- if there is ever a spin-off of 'Downton Abbey'.

Speaking to movies.ie, he said, "A spin-off, or we go back in time, and Niall Horan



could play young Branson; everyone keeps saying we look alike."

In a 2013 appearance on "Watch What Happens Live", Allen was asked about being compared to the "Heaven" singer and quipped, "He's my son."

He jokingly continued, "I had him really young. I had the choice to give him to the circus or a boy band, I chose a boy band. He's done much better there because his backflips are terrible."

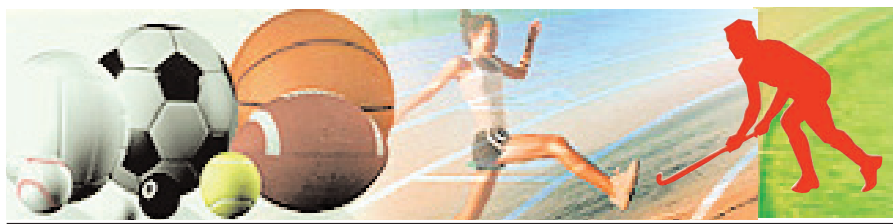
Meanwhile, Niall previously said he would only want to be part of a One Direction reunion if everyone was "completely" up for it.

The 'Slow Hands' singer admitted he has no idea when the 'What Makes You Beautiful' hitmakers will have the chance to be in the same room to discuss getting the band back together because they are all so committed to their solo ventures.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Kate Hudson



IPL 2023

DHONI'S LATE CAMEO, BOWLERS LEAD CSK TO 27-RUN WIN OVER DELHI CAPITALS

Chennai | Agencies

Skipper MS Dhoni's late cameo (20 off 9) followed by a clinical show from the bowlers lead Chennai Super Kings (CSK) to a comfortable 27-run win over Delhi Capitals (DC) in an IPL 2023 game at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, here on Wednesday.

Delhi spinners were at their best as they kept the CSK batters at bay with six batters crossing 20 and the highest individual score was 25. But Dhoni's crucial cameo ensured CSK finished with a fighting total of 167/8 in 20 overs.

In reply, Delhi got off to a dismal start as they lost their openers in the Powerplay. Then, Riley Rossouw and Pandey steadied the ship and built a 59-run stand. But CSK bowlers maintained the stranglehold on the Capital batters to restrict them to 140/8 and notched their seventh win of the tournament.

Chasing 170, Delhi Capitals suffered early blows as Deepak Chahar struck in the very first over to remove skipper David Warner for a second ball duck. Phil Salt flicked away to the deep backward square for a boundary



and stepped down and played a pull shot for a six in the second over to pump up the start.

He continued with his hit as he hammered Chahar for a six but the pacer was quick to bounce on the next delivery and removed the Salt for 17. DC lost both the openers within three overs. The next over Mitchell Marsh and Manish Pandey got a huge mix up between the wickets while looking for a single. Ajinkya Rahane smartly ran to the bowler's end and flicked the balls off and March got run out. DC were reeling 27-3 in four overs.

CSK bowlers were building pres-

sure with their clinical bowling with just two big hits coming in the next four overs. The duo of Rossouw and Pandey steadied the innings as they kept rotating the strike to keep the scoreboard reeling.

The duo built a 59-run stand, which Matheesha Pathirana broke by dismissing Pandey for 27. The latter greeted Pathirana with a six in the 13th over but the pacer had a quick comeback as he got the former for lbw on the last ball of the over.

An over later, Jadeja came into the attack and got the set batter Rossouw, who sat on a knee to go for a slog

sweep but ended up mis-hitting to long-on where Pathirana took a safe catch.

When 48 was needed in 12 balls, Tushar Deshpande bowled a brilliant 19th over, conceding just five runs. Also, DC lost Rupal Patel through runout and the chase almost came to an end as the visitors needed 43 off the 6 balls to win. Lait Yadav hammered Pathirana for three boundaries in the final over and pacer cleaned up Yadav on the penultimate delivery as CSK wrapped up a 27-run win.

Earlier, batting first, CSK lost the in-form opener Devon Conway early in the Powerplay. It was Axar Patel who got the big fish for lbw. Then, Ajinkya Rahane and Ruturaj Gaikwad took the Powerplay score to 49/1.

Brief scores

Chennai Super Kings 167/8 in 20 overs (Shivam Dube 25 off 12, MS Dhoni 20 off 9; Mitchell Marsh 3/18, Axar Patel 2/27) beat Delhi Capitals 140/8 in 20 overs (Rilee Rossouw 35 off 37, Manish Pandey 27 off 29; Matheesha Pathirana 3/37, Deepak Chahar 2/28) by 27 runs.

Men's World Boxing C'ships

Indian boxers create history; confirm three medals

Tashkent | Agencies

Deepak Bhorla (51kg), Hussamuddin (57kg) and Nishant Dev (71kg) created history on Wednesday as they assured at least a bronze medal each by reaching the semi-finals in their respective categories at the ongoing IBA Men's World Boxing Championships.

The Indian men's boxers have secured three medals for the first time in the history of the World Boxing Championships. Earlier, the best performance of the Indian men's boxers was recorded in 2019 when Manish Kaushik and Amit Panghal clinched medals for the country.

In the first quarter-final bout of the day, Deepak defeated Diushebaev Nurzhigit of Kyrgyzstan by a 5-0 unanimous decision to storm into the semis.

Meanwhile, Hussamuddin beat J. Diaz Ibanez of Bulgaria by a 4-3 split decision to confirm another medal for India at the ongoing tournament.

It was a neck-and-neck battle between both the boxers from the get-go as Hussamuddin took some time to gauge Ibanez's movements. The Southpaw used his speed and movement to defend and land some heavy blows on his opponent while counter-punching.

The second round was rather comfortable for the Indian pugilist as he quickly judged his rival's attacks and hit heavy punches. The



third round saw both the boxers throw caution to the wind and go on the offensive but Hussamuddin used his combinations well to secure the win. Hussamuddin will go up against Saidel Horta of Cuba in the semi-finals on Friday.

Nishant Dev beat Jorge Cuellar Of Cuba by a 5-0 unanimous decision to secure the third medal of the day for India. The Indian pugilist was facing a taller boxer with a good height advantage but used his movements and precise punches to gain an advantage over his rival in the first round. The second round also went in the favour of the Indian boxer as he continued to be on top of his game and denied any scoring opportunity to Cuellar. Nishant, then, continued his attacking intent in the third round as well to ensure a medal for the country. Nishant Dev will fight Asian champion Aslanbek Shymbergenov of Kazakhstan in the semi-finals on Friday.

ODI World Cup

India's 1st match to be against AUS, clash against PAK on October 15: Report

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With the Men's ODI World Cup set to be held in India later in the year, it has now emerged that the hosts' opening match of the competition will be against five-time winners Australia.

A report in Cricbuzz says India's opening match of ODI World Cup against Australia in all likelihood will be in Chennai. It added that India's blockbuster game against Pakistan will be on October 15, which is a Sunday, like the final on November 19. The tournament is likely to start with England-New Zealand clash, also a rematch of the 2019 ODI World Cup final, at the Narendra Modi Stadium on October 5, with the final to be held at the same venue.

The report further said Pakistan will play its games as per the tentative schedule in Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru, along with Kolkata, Delhi, Indore, Dharamsala, Guwahati, Rajkot, Raipur and Mumbai being other designated venues with Mohali and Nagpur missing out from the list.



2023 Men's ODI World Cup will be played between 10 teams and 48 matches will be played. India, England, Australia, New Zealand, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and South Africa earned direct qualification.

The last two spots will be filled through a qualifying tournament from June 18 to July 9 in Zimbabwe in which two World Cup winners, West Indies and Sri Lanka, will compete alongside the Netherlands, Ireland, Nepal, Oman, Scotland, UAE and hosts Zimbabwe.

Champions League

Real Madrid, Man City drew thriller by 1-1

Madrid | Agencies

Real Madrid and Manchester City drew the first leg of their Champions League semifinal 1-1 in the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium after a thrilling 90-minute game.

Vinicius Jr put Real Madrid ahead in the first half, but Kevin de Bruyne leveled for the Premier League leaders midway through the second half, reports Xinhua.

Manchester City made six changes from the side that beat Leeds United at the weekend, while Real Madrid's only changes from the team that won the final of the Copa del Rey were to bring in Luka Modric for Aurelian Tchouameni and Antonio Rudiger for the suspended Eder Militao.

Man City kicked off by dominating the ball, pressing high and winning possession high up the field, and Thibaut Courtois was called into action to save from De Bruyne in the eighth minute.



Five minutes later, he got down to push Rodri's low effort out for a corner and then made two relatively comfortable saves from Haaland as

City controlled midfield and denied Madrid any relevant possession.

Rodri's overconfidence then gifted Madrid their first chance of the match

as he allowed Vinicius to rob possession, and only a great clearance from Ruben Dias denied Karim Benzema a certain goal.

That gave Madrid hope, and from nowhere, Vinicius put them ahead from 25 yards after taking a pass from Eduardo Camavinga with his side's first shot of the game.

Things got a bit feisty in the closing minutes of the half after Jack Grealish reacted to several bad challenges from Dani Carvajal, which went unpunished, while Toni Kroos was perhaps lucky to see yellow for a late and high challenge on Ilkay Gundogan.

Real Madrid were on top at the start of the second half, with Rodrygo and Camavinga playing exceptionally well, but De Bruyne leveled for the visitors when Madrid were in their best moment.

Bernardo Silva slipped the ball to the Belgian, who drove in a rising effort from around 25 meters.

IRE-BAN 1st ODI washout gives South Africa direct qualification ticket to WC

Chelmsford | Agencies

The first ODI between Ireland and Bangladesh in Chelmsford was abandoned after persistent rain on Tuesday evening, helping South Africa clinch the last automatic qualification ticket for the 2023 Men's ODI World Cup, to be held in India in October-November.

Even if Ireland wins the ODI series against Bangladesh, they now cannot go past South Africa eighth place standing in the ODI Super League points table. Ireland will now participate in the ten-team ODI World Cup qualifying tournament, set to run from June 18 to July 9 in Zimbabwe, with former winners West Indies and Sri Lanka also playing in the competition.

South Africa had given them every chance of qualifying automatically for this year's ODI World Cup with the series over the Netherlands past the



West Indies and into the eighth and final spot on the Super League standings.

But their chances for automatic qualification still hinged on Ireland's

ODIs against Bangladesh. A 3-0 series victory for Ireland would have brought them level on points with South Africa, assuming they incurred no penalty points.

The net run rate would still have come into play to decide the final spot, but with Ireland's first ODI against Bangladesh abandoned; this is no longer a worry for the Proteas, who have now booked their spot for the ODI World Cup.

Also joining Ireland in the qualifying tournament will be Zimbabwe and Netherlands, who finished at the bottom of the Super League table. Scotland, Oman and Nepal finished in the top three of League 2 and booked their place in the World Cup Qualifier.

Nepal finished top three in dramatic fashion, winning 11 of their last 12 matches, overtaking Namibia to finish third in an incredible comeback story. After disappointing League 2 campaigns, USA and UAE bounced back in the Qualifier Play-off in April, ensuring their top-two finishes on the penultimate day of the competition.

Sergio Busquets to leave FC Barcelona at the end of season

Barcelona (Spain) | Agencies

Captain Sergio Busquets confirmed that he will leave FC Barcelona at the end of the season, after 18 years at the La Liga club.

The Barca midfielder announced his decision via social media in an emotional video in which he said it has not been an easy decision but the time has come. The former Spanish captain has played 718 matches in a Barca shirt which places him third on the all-time list. Furthermore, he is one of the players who has won the most trophies as a Blaugrana.

His list of honours won with the club includes 8 league titles, 7 Copas del Rey, 7 Spanish Super Cups, 3 Champions Leagues, 3 European Super Cups and 3 Club World Cups.



Busquets joined the club in 2005 and after two seasons with the U19A side, he moved up to a Barca B side coached by Pep Guardiola, helping them to promotion to the Second Division B. He made his debut for the first team in 2008 in a league game against Racing Santander. It was not long before Busquets became a vital part of the side that won six trophies in a calendar year.

Over his 15 years in his Barca career, Busquets has

scored 18 goals and provided 40 assists. After the announcement of his departure, Busquets still has the remainder of the 2022/23 season ahead of him. This season the midfielder has provided 4 assists in his 27 appearances.

He has the chance to end his Barcelona career with a ninth league title to his already impressive list of honours. FC Barcelona are 13 points clear at the top of La Liga with five games remaining.

MEXICO FOOTBALL LEGEND ANTONIO CARBAJAL DIES AT 93



Toluca (Mexico) | Mexican football legend Antonio Carbajal, who was the first footballer to play at five World Cups, has passed away at the age of 93, the Mexican Football Federation said on Wednesday. Nicknamed 'La Tota', Carbajal was also known as El Cinco Copas (five cups), after the former Mexican goalkeeper played in five editions of the FIFA World Cup between 1950 and 1966, a record he held alone for 32 years until it was equalled by Germany's Lothar Matthaus. "It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Antonio Carbajal, the first player to star in five FIFA World Cups. I send our most sincere condolences to his family and to all the Mexican fans who mourn his loss," said FIFA President Gianni Infantino in his condolence message.

ICC Men's ODI Player Rankings

PAK'S IMAM-UL-HAQ, NZ'S MATT HENRY MOVE UP IN RANKINGS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Pakistan's left-handed opener Imam-ul-Haq and New Zealand's right-arm fast bowler Matt Henry on Wednesday have moved up in the ICC Men's ODI Player Rankings after putting in notable performances in the recently-concluded five-match series which the hosts' won 4-1.

Ul-Haq has advanced one slot to fourth position in the batters' rankings after playing a match-winning knock of 90 in the third ODI.

The left-hander's rise is good news for Pakistan as they now have three batters in the top four, with skipper Babar Azam number one in the list and fellow left-handed opener Fakhar Zaman at



third place, with South Africa's Rassie van der Dussen sandwiched in between the Pakistan trio at second place. On the other

hand, Henry has inched up one slot after grabbing seven wickets in the last three matches of the series, to be back to a career best-

equaling fourth position, which he first achieved in October 2016 and most recently held in November 2022.

Injured Aditi Chauhan aims to return to action before Olympic qualifiers

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India women's football team goalkeeper Aditi Chauhan, who is recovering from her second anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) surgery, is aiming to make a comeback to the field either late this year or early next year ahead of the Olympic qualifications.

The ace goalkeeper suffered the injury while playing a friendly match against Nepal in Chennai.

"It's a long and challenging journey ahead, but I am positive and determined to do everything I can to keep going," said Aditi, who is recuperating at her home and undergoing intensive physiotherapy. "It's a very frustrating time



as an athlete but I want to channel this time and energy into something positive and constructive so I'll continue working towards my passion and work on ways I can contribute towards making things better for women footballers," she added.



Sonam Kapoor was in her element during Coronation Concert

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sonam Kapoor Ahuja, who delivered a spoken word piece at King Charles III's Coronation Concert, shared her experience of being a part of the ceremony.

The actress was invited by the Royal family of the UK and presented the Coronation Choir and 'Higher Love' hitmaker Steve Winwood. The coronation is the act of placing the crown upon a monarch's head, and is a major cultural event in the UK.

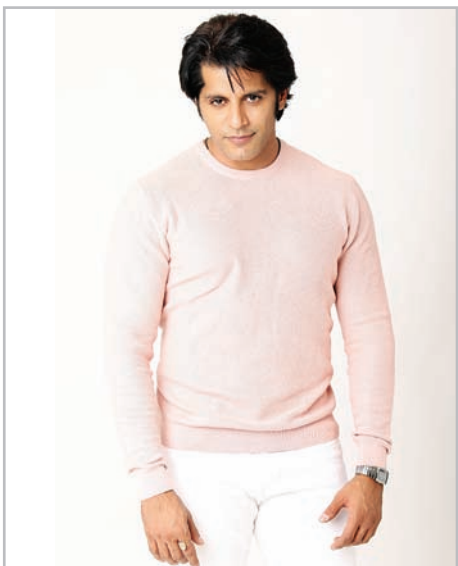
The concert was attended by more than 20,000 people, with millions watching around the world. Speaking about her experience, Sonam said, "It was an

unforgettable experience. Presenting the Coronation Choir and Steve Winwood in front of such a massive audience, with the world watching, was a real thrill."

Sonam introduced the Commonwealth virtual choir comprising performers from across the 56 Commonwealth countries, alongside Winwood.

She was dressed in an outfit created for the occasion by two prominent designers from India and the UK. The actress was accompanied by her husband, Anand Ahuja, and friends Imran Amed and Nikhil Mansata.

She further mentioned, "At the same time, I was in my element -- getting ready, going on stage, hearing the cheers, and seeing the love from people. It was a blast because my friends and family were right there cheering me on! I love moments like these that remind me why I do what I do."



I DO BEST WHEN I'M PLAYING GREY, COMPLEX CHARACTERS: KARANVIR BOHRA

Mumbai Actor Karanvir Bohra is all set to enter the show 'Hum Rahe Na Rahe Hum', starring Jay Bhanushali and Tina Datta. He will be seen in a negative light yet again, which he says he does best.

"This is what I do best, playing grey-shaded, complexed characters. The roles I play are never quite black or white," said Karanvir.

The actor talked about being roped in for the show, "I love my character, I love my look! I'm excited to be a part of a show that has gained so much popularity and love."

Without revealing much about his role, he said: "I don't want to say too much. I can't wait for everyone to see me in the show!"

The show also stars Kitu Gidwani. It revolves around a free-spirited girl named Surilii, who lives a modest life while Shivendra is brought up in the strict traditions of Ranagarh's royal family. Their worlds collide when the two fall madly in love with each

Richa Chadha promises to support three budding woman entrepreneurs

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Richa Chadha will support three upcoming woman entrepreneurs for any course they like to pursue which can come handy to brush up their skills to develop their businesses further.

The actress has announced an extension of her 2022 initiative -- 'Undercurrent Lab' -- which was targeted to help women in the film industry find training in departments where they lack representation or have no representation at all. Richa said, "Whether it's a small business or a big one, there are various aspects to it such as branding, marketing, financial planning etc., and it's very important to educate entrepreneurs about these. I want to help amazing female entrepreneurs who are putting in the work to stand up for their vision and create a space for them."

"Basically, three women entrepreneurs will be selected for courses in branding, marketing, financial planning etc. It's easy to write a note on women empowerment or coin a slogan on it, but the real work starts when you actually do something about it."

On the film front, Richa completed her maiden production 'Girls Will Be Girls' under her and Ali Fazal's production house, Pushing Button Studios. Richa has already finished shooting for 'Fukrey 3', and will be soon seen in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's series 'Heeramandi' on Netflix.



'An Intuitive Director'

Isha Talwar glad to work with Homi Adajania after their last collaboration didn't take off

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Isha Talwar, who is receiving good response to her streaming show 'Saas, Bahu Aur Flamingo', got to work with the director of the series, Homi Adajania, eight years after their earlier collaboration did not take off. The actress heaped praise on Homi, calling him an intuitive director.

She said: "There is something very nice about working with Homi, he is definitely more intuitive than most directors I've had an opportunity to work with. I remember when we were shooting the big

family sequence where Bijilee is doing some major 1,000 crore maths, she made my maths better, Homi just left the monitor and came and sat in the room which for me was very refreshing." "Saas, Bahu Aur Flamingo" is a crime drama that revolves around the Rani Cooperative (a cocaine-making factory that pretends to make handicrafts and herbs). The series also stars Dimple Kapadia, Radhika Madan, Angira Dhar, Deepak Dobriyal, Monica Dogra and Naseeruddin Shah in prominent roles. Isha plays the role of Bijilee in the series. Walking down the memory lane, the actress shared: "Even when I auditioned with Homi eight years ago for a project that did not take off, he personally came for the audition and was my co-actor! That's when I knew I had to work with Homi someday and what better opportunity than 'Saas Bahu Aur Flamingo'."



10 yrs of 'Go Goa Gone': Kunal Kemmu calls the film his baby

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Kunal Kemmu is celebrating the 10th anniversary of his zombie-comedy film 'Go Goa Gone'.

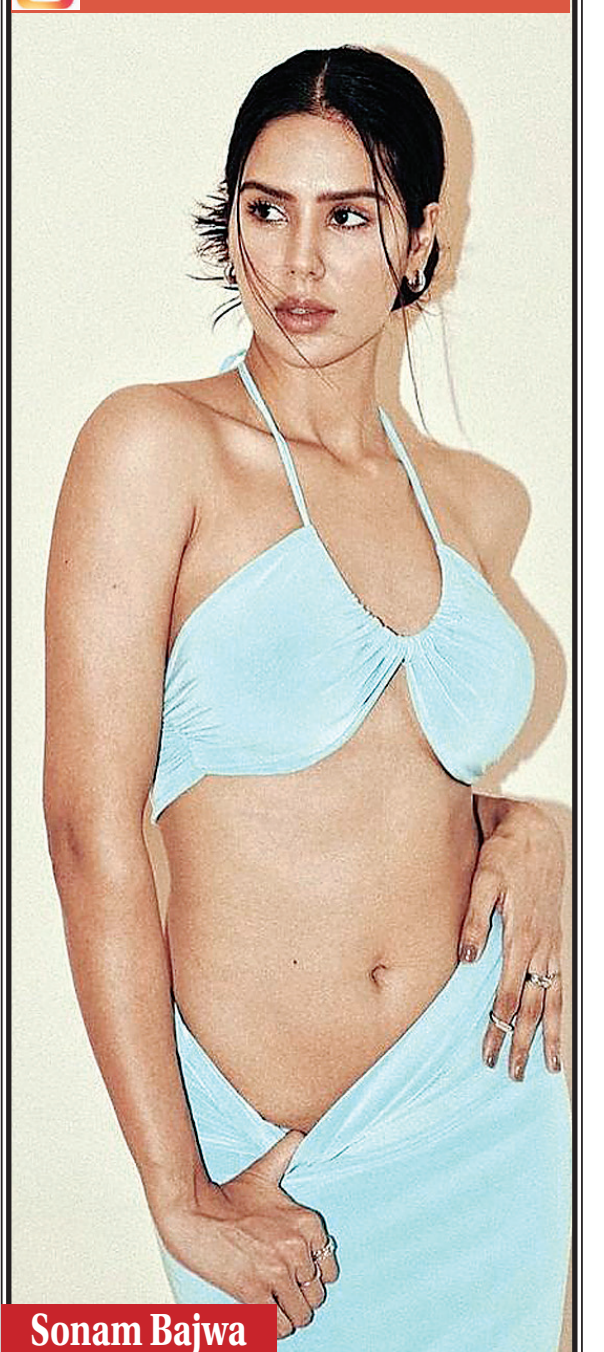
The actor calls the film his baby as he got his writer credit for penning the dialogues of the film.

The film, which released on May 10, 2013, has become a cult classic owing to its blend of horror and comedy and rib-tickling dialogues.

Talking about his experience of working in the film, the actor said, "'Go Goa Gone' is a special film and really close to my heart. The film was like my baby as it was my first film where I got the opportunity to be a writer and work on an idea that came to life between the three of us, i.e. Raj - DK & myself. It feels great to see how even after so

many years, it's still being talked about and at the receiving end of all this love." The film follows the story of a group of friends who go to Goa for a vacation only to find themselves fighting a desi zombie apocalypse. He further mentioned, "Contrary to everyone's belief that comedy is an easy genre, it requires a lot of hard work and skill. Nothing makes me happier than seeing the audiences laughing and enjoying my character. Doing zombie-comedy for the first time was an experience like no other and I feel honoured to have a film like 'Go Goa Goa' in my filmography."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sonam Bajwa

'SUPER NERVOUS AND EXCITED': ARJUN RAMPAL ON MAKING HIS TELUGU DEBUT

Mumbai Bollywood actor Arjun Rampal is all set to mark debut in the south with his maiden Telugu film with Nandamuri Balakrishna's upcoming film 'NBK108'.

The actor will be seen playing an antagonist in the movie. On Wednesday, the actor took to Instagram and shared the announcement video, where Arjun and the film's director Anil Ravipudi are seen talking. Sharing the clip, he wrote: "Making my South Debut with team NBK108. Feel super nervous and excited. I promise you all this is going to be one mad ride with lots of fun. Thank you for having me. Team NBK108 welcomes the talented National Award winning actor @rampal72 on board as the antagonist. Arjun also shared a poster and wrote: "It begins a new journey, onto a new territory, excited, nervous, ready to explore. There is a good feeling. Need all your support, love and blessings. Team NBK108."

