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**Why air Mehrauli murder case alone and not others, Delhi HC asks news channel**

## A MORAL QUESTION

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked news channel Aaj Tak/TV Today Network why it wants to air content like narco-analysis test and charge sheet related to Shraddha Walkar murder case alone. Aaftab Amin Poonawala is accused of strangling his live-in partner Walkar and then chopping her body into several pieces for disposal.

**Justice Rajnish Bhatnagar arguments:**

▶ "THERE ARE MORE HEINOUS CASES THAN THIS... THERE ARE 20 MURDERS ALL OVER INDIA DAILY. WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT THIS CASE? WAS THE NIRBHAYA CASE PLAYED ON TV CHANNELS? WHY ARE YOU CHOOSING THIS PARTICULAR CASE?"

▶ "WILL YOU DISPLAY ATIQ AHMED'S MURDER ALSO? USKA BHI JAWAB LE KE AAVIYEGA (BRING THE ANSWER TO THIS QUERY TOO)." THE JUDGE SAID AND POSTED THE MATTER FOR HEARING NEXT ON AUGUST 3. "YOU CAN'T TAKE THE CHARGE SHEET IN A CASE AND AFFIX THEM ON WALLS. SOME LINE NEEDS TO DRAW ABOUT HOW MUCH THESE PUBLIC DOCUMENTS (IN A CRIMINAL TRIAL) CAN BE DISPLAYED ON TV." AS COUNSEL FOR INDIA TODAY ARGUED THAT THE INJUNCTION ORDER EFFECTIVELY VIOLATES THEIR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT, THE COURT SAID: "THIS IS YOUR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT? TO DISPLAY THE MATTER UNDER SUB-JUDICE ON TV? HOW MANY CRIMINAL CASES PENDING BEFORE COURTS ARE BEING DISPLAYED ON TV?"



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi's Saket court had earlier this month framed charges against Poonawala under Sections 302 (Murder) and 201 (Disappearance of evidence) of the Indian Penal Code.

The court was hearing TV Today's application seeking vacation of an earlier order dated April 19, wherein the court had restrained several media channels from airing Poonawala's psychological assessment, voice layered test, narco analysis and charge sheet content.

Counsel said that the content they wanted to publish are public documents and that the only

request for the court to set an early hearing date.

Counsel added that he will respond to all of the court's inquiries and that the case had acquired a special status in the public's eyes. Justice Bhatnagar said that such materials are there in every case but they are not shown on TV. The court has also issued notice on India Today's application.

**FRESH AGAINST RBI DECISION TO WITHDRAW RS 2,000 NOTES**

New Delhi: A fresh Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been filed in the Delhi High Court challenging the recent decision of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to withdraw Rs 2,000 notes from circulation. The PIL argues that the RBI lacks the independent authority, as per the Reserve Bank of India Act, to make such a decision.



Furthermore, it contends that the withdrawal of the banknotes after 4-5 years, with a specific deadline, is deemed "unjust, arbitrary, and contrary to public policy". The PIL reads: "It is respectfully submitted that the RBI, as Respondent no 1, does not possess independent power under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, to direct the non-issue or discontinuance of any denominational value banknotes. Such power is exclusively vested with the Central Government, as stated in section 24 (2) of the RBI Act, 1934." The PIL highlights that the circular in question fails to indicate that the decision to withdraw the banknotes has been made by the Central government. It argues that the RBI has provided no explanation other than the "Clean Note Policy" for taking such a significant and arbitrary step of withdrawing the banknotes from circulation, without adequately considering the potential repercussions for the general public.

## Will BJP face reprise of Karnataka in MP as infighting peaks?

Highly-placed sources in BJP's central leadership told correspondent that the decision-making power of both regarding upcoming elections has been cut, and they have been asked to just follow the instructions from the Central leadership regarding organisational and party-related issues.

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

Will Madhya Pradesh's ruling BJP face a Karnataka-like result as the party goes to polls with a baggage of almost two decades of anti-incumbency, infighting, and corruption charges?

Meanwhile, the strained relationship between Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and state unit President V.D. Sharma has annoyed the central leadership.

On the face of it, both the top leaders are not indicating any rift and leave no stone unturned when it comes to attacking the opposition Congress, but the things are very different behind the curtains. The faction has escalated such an extent that both these leaders leaving no opportunity to weaken each other and for that they are using the party's rebels.

Even some state BJP workers and leaders privately admit that the strained relationship between the Chief Minister and the state BJP chief is affecting the party's preparations for the assembly elections. According to high placed sources, multiple surveys conducted by the central BJP leadership have indicated no signs of increase in number of seats at current situation and therefore, overall command has shifted from Bhopal to New Delhi



now. However, the cracks are not confined to top leaders, but also among some senior ministers. A crisis broke out recently when PWD Minister Gopal Bhargava and Revenue Minister Govind Singh Rajput, along with a couple of party MLAs, complained to Chouhan about Urban Development Minister Bhupendra Singh.

All three ministers belongs to Sagar district but Bhupendra Singh is considered close to Chouhan and Rajput belongs to Scindia faction.

If it wasn't enough, the state

BJP faced with yet another rift in Gwalior-Chambal regions - between Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and Guna MP K.P. Yadav - and the differences between old vs new leaders was yet to die down.

Yadav had defeated Scindia (then in Congress) in Lok Sabha elections in 2019.

Also, the anti-incumbency sentiment, especially against Chief Minister Chouhan and rampant corruption as scams broke out in the two decades of rules in Madhya Pradesh will be another major concern for the BJP.

## Delhi Police head constable cracks UPSC in 8th attempt

New Delhi | Agencies

Delhi Police head constable Ram Bhajan Kumar, serving in the cyber cell police station, has achieved a remarkable feat by securing the 667th rank in the highly competitive Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) examination of 2022.

Hailing from a humble background, the 34-year-old Ram Bhajan is the son of a hardworking labourer in Rajasthan. Despite facing several challenges, he persevered and appeared for the UPSC exam for the eighth time, finally achieving his dream of cracking the prestigious exam.

Ram Bhajan's journey to success is an inspiring tale of determination and grit. Born into a family with limited resources, he faced numerous obstacles on his path to becoming a police officer. However, his unwavering resolve

and dedication propelled him forward, leading to his remarkable achievement in the UPSC examination.

He himself along with his parents was indulged in labour work during his school time to support his family needs.

Speaking to reporter, Ram Bhajan, who hails from a small village Bapi in Dausa district, Rajasthan said: that his parents did labour work to earn the daily bread. "I received my early education from a government school in the village. After completing the 12th grade, I was selected as a constable in the Delhi Police.

Alongside my service, I pursued my graduation and post-graduation as a self-study student from Rajasthan University and obtained a NET/JRF in Hindi. In 2015, inspired by my senior officers, I began preparing for the civil services."

## IIM Ahmedabad's executive education programmes ranked No. 1 in India

Team Absolute | Ahmedabad

As per the latest Financial Times Executive Education Rankings 2023, the executive education programmes of Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA) have been ranked No. 1 in India, the management school said on Wednesday.

The institute has also secured the second rank in Asia and the 35th position globally. Bharat Bhasker, Director at IIMA, said, "IIMA has consistently received high praise for its executive education programmes from professionals and industry leaders alike. It's rewarding to see our commitment and effort get reflected in the FT rankings."

Bhasker also emphasised the institute's sustained improvement over the years, attributing

its success to a deep understanding and connection with the industry, "which allows IIMA to serve as a valuable knowledge partner through its executive education programmes".

This year, IIMA has ascended in the rankings, moving up two spots in the Open Enrolment Programmes category, and five places in the Custom Programmes rankings. The combined category rankings saw the institute advance four places, landing the 35th spot globally.

On numerous parameters, including international participants, international location, faculty, programme design, teach-



ing methods, aims achieved, and value for money, IIMA's executive education programmes have been lauded.

With a diverse range of over 200 programmes in both open enrolment and customised formats, IIMA caters to a broad audience, from business leaders and policymakers to industry professionals. These programmes are offered through a variety of modes - in-person, online, and blended.

## 'EVEN DEADLIER': WHO CHIEF CAUTIONS WORLD OVER NEXT PANDEMIC

Geneva | Agencies

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned all countries to gird up for the next pandemic which could be "even deadlier" than coronavirus.

WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who had recently announced that the Covid-19 pandemic is no longer a public health emergency, however, underscored that this downgrade does not mean that it has ceased to be a global health threat.

"The threat of another variant emerging that causes new surges of disease and death remains, and the threat of another pathogen emerging with even deadlier potential remains," he said in an address to the 76th World Health Assembly on Monday.



Covid-19 may no longer be a global public health emergency, but countries must still strengthen their response to the disease and prepare for future pandemics and other threats, so that when the next pandemic arises, a decisive and collective response is in place, he said.

Ghebreyesus also reminded the world that in the face of overlapping crises, "pandemics are far from the only threat we face".

## 'FALSE ALLEGATIONS BY WRESTLERS': CLAIMS PLEA IN DELHI COURT IN SEXUAL HARASSMENT CASE

New Delhi | Agencies

A criminal complaint has been filed by a social activist and chief of Atal Jan Shakti Party in a Delhi court against wrestlers Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia, and Sakshi Malik for pressing "false allegations" of sexual harassment against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

Additionally, the complaint alleges the protesters were involved in delivering "hate speech" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The case is scheduled for a hearing on Thursday, before an Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate at Patiala House Court.

The petitioner, Bam Bam Maharaj Nauhatiya, challenged the credibility of the allegations made by the accused individuals against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

The plea argues that the accusations lack truth and are not motivated by any genuine concern but by potential influence or personal gain.

## Karnataka govt all set to overturn hijab ban

Bengaluru | Agencies

The new Congress government in Karnataka is all set to remove the ban on hijab in the state, sources said on Wednesday.

The new government is waiting to settle down and complete the cabinet expansion.

While campaigning for the May 10 Assembly polls, the Congress Congress, especially Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, had vehemently stated that ban on hijab and all laws made on communal basis by the previous BJP government would be withdrawn once the party assumes power in the state.

Asked about Amnesty International's rising concern on hijab ban in Karnataka, DyCM Shivakumar on Wednesday stated in Vidhana Soudha, "I don't want to comment on the matter of hijab as it is a policy matter."

However, Priyank Kharge, the cabinet minister addressing press reporters maintained that



the Congress will withdraw the ban on hijab, halal cut and cow slaughter laws.

Sources claimed that the party is all set to withdraw these laws, including the Anti-Conversion law brought by the previous BJP government. A decision will soon be taken on the construction of a 114-foot tall Jesus Christ statue in Kapalabetta near Kanakapura town. This is proposed to be the largest Christ statue in the world.

The Hijab row which was started by six students of Udipi Pre-University Girl's College had turned out to be a crisis in the state last year. The students refusing to attend classes without hijab still maintain that they will wait for the final verdict of the Supreme Court.

## Married people who have affairs do not regret it: Study

- The participants were questioned about the state of their marriage, the reason for their desire to have an affair, and their general well-being.
- The findings revealed that participants generally reported high levels of love for their spouses.
- They did, however, report low levels of sexual satisfaction, which was cited as the primary motivator for having an affair. Other motivators included the desire for independence and sexual variety, the study mentioned.
- Moreover, the study said that fundamental relationship problems, such as a lack of love or anger towards a spouse, were the least-mentioned reasons for having an affair.
- The findings suggested that infidelity is not always the result of deeper relationship issues.



SAN FRANCISCO | Agencies

Married individuals who engage in extramarital affairs experience a sense of satisfaction, display limited remorse, and believe cheating doesn't hurt their marriage, a new study has shown.

According to the study published in the journal Archives of Sexual Behavior, a size-

able number of people choose to cheat on their romantic partners, with estimates around 20-25 per cent of married people and 33-50 per cent of young adults in dating relationships.

In the study, researchers from the US-based Johns Hopkins University surveyed people

using Ashley Madison -- a website for extramarital affairs -- about their views on cheating. The researchers' goal in the study was to better understand the psychology of people who actively seek out and engage in extramarital affairs.

They turned to Ashley Madison, where they surveyed 2,000 users, both before and after they had affairs.



# PARLIAMENT NOT MADE WITH BRICKS OF ARROGANCE BUT WITH CONSTITUTIONAL VALUES: RAHUL

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday slammed the Centre for not inviting President Droupadi Murmu to the inauguration event of the new Parliament House, and said that 'Parliament is not made with bricks of arrogance but with constitutional values'.

His remarks came after the 19 parties, including Congress, on Wednesday announced to boycott the inauguration of the new Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 28.

In a tweet in Hindi, Rahul Gandhi said, "Not allowing President to inaugurate and neither calling her in the inauguration ceremony is an insult to the top constitutional post of the country. Parliament is not built by bricks of arrogance but by Constitutional values."

Jairam Ramesh, the Congress general secretary in a tweet said, "The clarinet of 'democracy' should be played in the Parliament, but ever since the self-proclaimed Vishwaguru has arrived, the cannon of 'monop-



oly' is being fired. Change the intention, not the building!"

Earlier in the day, 19 like-minded parties issued a joint statement and said, "When the soul of democracy has been sucked out from the Parliament, we find no value in a new building and announce our collective decision to boycott the inauguration of the new Parliament

building." A war of words had erupted between the Congress and BJP over the inauguration of the new Parliament House by Prime Minister Modi on May 28. PM Modi will be inaugurating the new Parliament building -- a triangular-shaped four-storey building with a built-up area of 64,500 square metres.

The construction started on January 15, 2021 and was to be completed by August 2022.

Built in an area of 64,500 square metres, the new building will house 1,224 MPs. It has a library, multiple committee rooms and dining rooms.

Tata Projects has constructed the building at an estimated cost of Rs 970 crore.

# Rajya Sabha MP Sahney helps bring 15 stranded Indian women back from Oman

Team Absolute | Chandigarh

Eight more women were reunited with their families hailing from Punjab on Wednesday after they landed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi from Oman. Seven women were rescued last week under the initiative #Mission Hope, taking the total figures to 15.

AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Vikramjit Singh Sahney said the women were stranded in Oman after being lured by unscrupulous agents and so-called manpower consultants on the pretext of providing jobs there.

Of the identified 34 women, 15 have been reunited with their families with the efforts of Sahney in coordination with the Indian Embassy and the Oman government.

Sahney, who is also the international president of World Punjabi Organisation, said after the details of the estrangement were brought to his notice, a team from his Parliament office visited Muscat and interacted with the women stranded at shelter homes where community kitchen support was being provided by Sahney and the office-bearers of the Oman chapter of World Punjabi Organisation. "After comprehensive discussions with the



sponsors for the revocation of the unreasonable contracts, penalty waivers and ticket costs, we ensured homecoming of these women," Sahney said.

Sahney added that these women had been offered free skill training at the World Class Skill Centre in Delhi, and the Multi-Specialty Skill Development Centre in Amritsar, with the commitment of providing jobs to them.

Speaking about #Mission Hope, Sahney said that he is committed to bring back all the women from Punjab who are stranded in Oman.

# Western disturbance brings respite from scorching heat, rain likely in Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With an active western disturbance over the western Himalayan region, several states of North India, including the national capital and its surrounding areas, got respite from the scorching summer heat, a India Meteorological Department official said on Wednesday.

The IMD had earlier predicted relief from the heat from May 24 to May 27 due to the effect of Western Disturbance.

According to IMD, rain and thunderstorms are in likely in the national capital



on Wednesday.

"There will be a drop in temperature. Apart from thunderstorms today and tomorrow in Delhi, it will be cloudy with drizzle on May 26 and 27 and the temperature will drop to 35 degree Celsius," as per IMD officials. Residents of Delhi have

been facing a severe heat wave, with temperatures soaring above 45 degrees Celsius in seven out of the 22 weather stations across the city. Specifically, Najafgarh, among other places, experienced a maximum temperature of 46.7 degrees Celsius, surpassing the 46-degree mark for the second consecutive day on Tuesday.

As per the IMD, the maximum temperature will drop to 36 degrees Celsius by Thursday as a western disturbance active over the western Himalayan region will bring rain, hailstorm and gusty winds in the northwestern plains starting Wednesday.

# WILL NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO TAKE LAW INTO THEIR HANDS: SHIVAKUMAR

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

In an apparent dig at former CM Basavaraj Bommai's statements supporting saffronisation of police force and moral policing, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Wednesday asserted that his government will not allow anyone to take law into their hands.

While interacting with reporters at Vidhana Soudha here, Shivakumar said, "The former Chief Minister had stated why not saffronisation? Why not moral policing? But we will not allow anyone to take law into their hands."

"Be it a Congressman or any other political party worker, no one should take law into their hands. The law should be protected by police. What I mentioned yesterday (in the meeting of police officers) was, at three or four places, the entire staff of the police department had worn clothes representing



political agenda instead of uniform and posed for photographs. This is not what the Constitution says and this is not according to the law. Police department has a big image in Karnataka," Shivakumar explained.

He, however, refused to comment on a statement by former Home Minister Araga Janendra that he has started dominating over the police officers.

"People have given Araga Janendra and his government a befitting answer in the elections. I don't have time to reply to his statements," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister recalled that cabinet minister Priyanka Kharge, who holds a big position in the party, was summoned when he raised the issue of corruption. "How many people are summoned? Why not others? Was he targeted because he is a Dalit? Congress MLA? The police have to work as per law, country comes first," Shivakumar stated.

Shivakumar, on Tuesday, rapped Karnataka police officials and questioned them that they are trying to saffronise the state police department. "Are you all set to saffronise the police department? We will not allow it under our government," he asserted.

His statements drew sharp reactions from Bommai and Jnanendra.

# JAGAN FINDS FAULT WITH OPPN FOR BOYCOTT OF NEW PARLIAMENT INAUGURATION

Amravati | Agencies

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has found fault with the decision of the opposition parties to boycott the inauguration of the new Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The leader of YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) has stated that boycotting such an auspicious event is not in the true spirit of democracy.

In a tweet on Wednesday, he appealed to all political parties to attend the event and announced that his party would attend.

"Setting aside all political differences, I request that all political parties attend this glorious event. In the true spirit of democracy, my party will attend this historic event," he wrote.

He congratulated the Prime Minister for dedicating the grand, majestic and



spacious Parliament building to the nation. "Parliament, being the temple of democracy, reflects our nation's soul and belongs to the people of our country and all the political parties," he said.

Jagan Mohan Reddy's tweet came hours after 19 opposition parties including Congress announced their decision to boycott the inauguration of the new Parliament building on May 28. The opposition parties said that Prime Minister Modi's decision to inaugurate it himself and completely sidelining President Droupadi insults the high office of the President and violates the letter and spirit of the Constitution.

# ED raids online gaming firms; says over Rs 4K crore sent abroad

Amravati | Agencies

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said that they recently carried out search and seizure operations at 25 premises in a FEMA violation case lodged against foreign registered online gaming companies and websites operating in India.

The ED's probe suggests that more than Rs 4,000 crore was sent abroad through shell firms.

The ED said that the raids were conducted at 11 locations in Delhi, seven locations in Gujarat, four locations in Maharashtra, two locations in Madhya Pradesh and at one location in Andhra Pradesh.

"These online gaming companies/ websites are reg-



istered in small island countries like Curacao, Malta and Cyprus. However, all of them are linked to Indian bank accounts opened in the name of proxy persons who have no links with online gaming activity.

"The amount so collected from the general public through gaming websites is then routed through multiple bank accounts and finally remitted out of India by mis-declaring the purpose of remittances against import of

services," an ED official said. The official said that remittances out of the income from racing or riding, or any other hobby are not allowed under the provisions of FEMA. The ED said that in this connection, searches were conducted at premises linked to several Hawala operators, namely Ashish Kakkar, Neeraj Bedi, Arjun Ashwinbhai Adhikari, Abhijeet Khot and the persons and entities associated with them.

# HYDERABAD MAN KILLS LIVE-IN PARTNER, STORE BODY PARTS IN FRIDGE



Team Absolute | Hyderabad

In a macabre act, a man in Hyderabad murdered his live-in partner and cut her body into pieces with a stone cutting machine to dispose of them at different places.

The accused had preserved the legs and hands of the victim in a refrigerator in his house and was spraying disinfectants and perfumes to avoid foul smell in the vicinity. The shocking crime came to light on Thursday after Hyderabad police solved the mystery behind a severed head found near the Musi river in the city on May 17.

The case has similarities with the Shraddha Walker and Nikki Yadav murder cases of Delhi in which the accused had stored body parts of the victims in refrigerators to dispose of them.

Deputy Commissioner of Police, South East Zone, Rupesh Chennuri, said the police achieved the breakthrough with the arrest of B. Chandra Mohan, a bachelor who was doing online trading on the stock market. The 48-year-old had an illegal relationship with Yarram Anuradha Reddy, 55, for the last 15 years.

The woman who was separated from her husband long back was living with Chandra Mohan at his house in Chaitanyapuri colony in Dilukhannagar.

# Assam, Meghalaya CMs meet to resolve border disputes in 6 areas

Guwahati: The Chief Ministers of Assam and Meghalaya held a second round of meeting on Wednesday to resolve the interstate dispute in the remaining six areas along the 884.9 km border of the two northeastern states.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad K. Sangma had signed a Memorandum of Understanding on March 29 last year in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah "resolving" six of the 12 disputed areas in the first phase.

Sarma and Sangma accompanied by their ministerial colleagues and senior officials in a meeting in Guwahati on Wednesday decided to initiate the process to resolve the interstate border disputes in the remaining six areas.

After the meeting, the Assam Chief Minister said that in the last part of June the Chief Ministers of both states would visit Karbi Anglong and West Jaintia Hills districts, where some unrest is going on, as a goodwill gesture.

"The regional committees of the two states would visit all the six disputed areas and would talk to the bordering people and all the stakeholders before submitting their reports to the respective Chief Ministers," he said, adding that the states would work with the spirit of long existing friendship between Meghalaya and Assam to resolve the area of differences.

Sarma said that the meeting did not fix a time frame or period to resolve the disputes as the situation in the remaining six disputed areas was complicated.

# Army choppers make emergency landing in Bikaner due to inclement weather



Thiruvananthapuram | Jaipur

Two army helicopters had to make emergency landing on a 'kutcha' road at Khara village in Bikaner due to inclement weather caused by Western disturbance.

Both the helicopters, which landed safely, had departed from Lohawat in Jodhpur before the weather turned bad. They

lost contact with the control room near Khara in Bikaner.

The pilots of both the choppers are safe. A large number of people gathered at the spot after seeing the choppers landing near their village. A team from the Army also reached the spot.

The villagers praised the presence of mind of both the pilots as the helicopters landed safely amid heavy dust storm and rain in Bikaner.



# KOLGARHI, A SYMBOL OF HONOUR AND PRESTIGE OF KOL SOCIETY, WILL BE RENOVATED: CM CHOUHAN



Team Absolute | Bhopal

**First Kol Bhavan will be built in Rewa. Residential lease will be given to every member of Kol Samaj who built a home for Lord Shri Ram**

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that the Kolgarhi of Teonthar, a symbol of honour and prestige of Kol Samaj, will be renovated. Three crore 12 lakh rupees have been approved for this. The renovation work will start from June 9, the martyrdom day of Lord Birsa Munda. Kol Bhavans will be built at various

places in the state, it will start from Rewa. The government and the society will work together for the progress and upliftment of the Kol community. Special activities will be launched in the field of education, employment, self-employment and health.

Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing the Kol Tribe Convention at the residence premises. He inaugurated the programme by lighting the lamp and garlanding the picture of Lord Birsa

Munda. The CM welcomed the brothers and sisters of the Kol tribe who came to the CM residence by showering flowers and presenting bouquets to the senior members of the community and tribal artists. On behalf of the society, Mangesh Gotia presented a self-made portrait of the Chief Minister to Chouhan. Chief Minister Chouhan was felicitated by the Kol Samaj by tying a turban and presenting him with a bow and arrow.

## SURVEY OF THE PEOPLE WHO DO NOT HAVE LAND TO LIVE ON WILL BE CONDUCTED

Chief Minister Chouhan said that under the Mukhya Mantri Bhu-Awasiya Adhikar Yojana, people are being made the owners of the land by giving them lease. Instructions were also given to conduct a survey of the people of Kol Samaj who do not have land to

live on. The CM said that every eligible person would be given a plot, necessary assistance would also be provided to construct a house along with a lease. In case of non-availability of government land, plots will be made available by purchasing land.

# Congress in the mood to take an aggressive stand in MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Congress is upbeat after the big victory in the assembly elections in Karnataka, with the help of this success, the Congress wants to win the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh this year as well. This is the reason that the Congress has made up its mind to take an aggressive stand in the state.

Pawan Kheda, the publicity in-charge of the media department of the party, and Supriya Shrinete, the national spokesperson of the party, visited Bhopal on Tuesday. During this, he had a one-on-one conversation with some officials of the media department and then took a group meeting of the spokespersons.

Pawan Kheda said that whether it is business, unemployment of youth, inflation, gas cylinder, women's safety, petrol, diesel, health, we should work on these issues in politics. have come for BJP is in the govern-



ment, so there is no relation of BJP on these issues, we have also seen poor services, seen during Covid. National spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said Karnataka's victory cleared a few things. Without any doubt, the public is clearly saying to the politicians, political parties, the Prime Minister and the opposition that if they talk about our issues, they will vote and make them sit in the gov-

ernment, if they talk here and there, they will make them sit in the opposition.

Overall, the Congress's stand in the state assembly elections should be completely aggressive, its efforts have intensified since now. While the party will further train its media team, it will also focus on those issues which can corner the BJP's state and central government.

# 4 Dead, 2 injured after dumper hits auto in Dewas

Team Absolute | Dewas

Four people died while two sustained injuries after a dumper allegedly hit a loading auto-rickshaw in Madhya Pradesh's Dewas district on Wednesday, said the police.

The incident occurred at the Indore-Bhopal bypass in Dewas at around 4 am on Wednesday. Those who died were identified as Dharmendra, a resident of Sagar district, and her two children Hrithik (2) and Anshu (3).

Rani's husband Suraj (35) and the driver of the auto-rickshaw Bablu, a resident of Raissen district sustained severe injuries in the accident. They are undergoing treatment at Dewas district hospital.

"Information was received on dial



100 about a road accident at the Indore-Bhopal bypass after which the police rushed to the spot. A total of four persons, including a woman and two children died and two others sustained injuries after a recklessly driven dumper hit a loading auto. The auto was going to Indore from Bhopal," Nahar Darwaza police station in

charge, R C Kalsiya said. The driver, Bablu told police that he was going from Bhopal to Indore. The family of Suraj was boarded in the auto from Shiv Nagar locality in Bhopal and they left around 10 pm on Tuesday from Bhopal. The dumper broke the road divider, hit the auto from the front side.

# "Not in our control": official on relocating Cheetahs after cub dies

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After a cheetah's cub died at Kuno National Park, the Madhya Pradesh Principal Chief Conservator of Forests JS Chouhan said that the decision to relocate cheetahs is beyond their jurisdiction and can only be taken by the central government. According to Kuno National Park officials, the number of young cubs in the park decreased from four to three. "The decision to shift the Cheetahs to some other place can only be taken by the central government, it is not in our control," Madhya Pradesh Principal Chief Conservator JS Chouhan told news agency.

He said that the cub of a female cheetah named Jwala died due to weakness at Kuno National Park.

Chouhan further said, "On March 24



this year, a female cheetah named Jwala gave birth to four cubs. We are continuously monitoring them. After one and a half months, these cubs along with mother Jwala were being taken out and since then it was being observed that one cub was a little weak among them. It was not able to compete with the other three."

On Tuesday morning, he said, the monitoring team observed that all the cubs and mother cheetah were staying at the same place. After that three cubs and Jwala got up and went away. When the team reached the cub lying there, it was alive. Following this, the monitoring team called the veterinary team. They tried to take the cub to the hospital but the cub died within 5 to 10 minutes in the morning itself, he said.

Speaking about the cause of death, Chouhan said, "The cause of death is due to immense weakness. Further, a full-scale postmortem will be done. After the postmortem report, it will be known if there was any other problem or not." The remaining three cubs are completely fit, good and very playful, he added. Responding to questions being raised on the functioning at Kuno Park

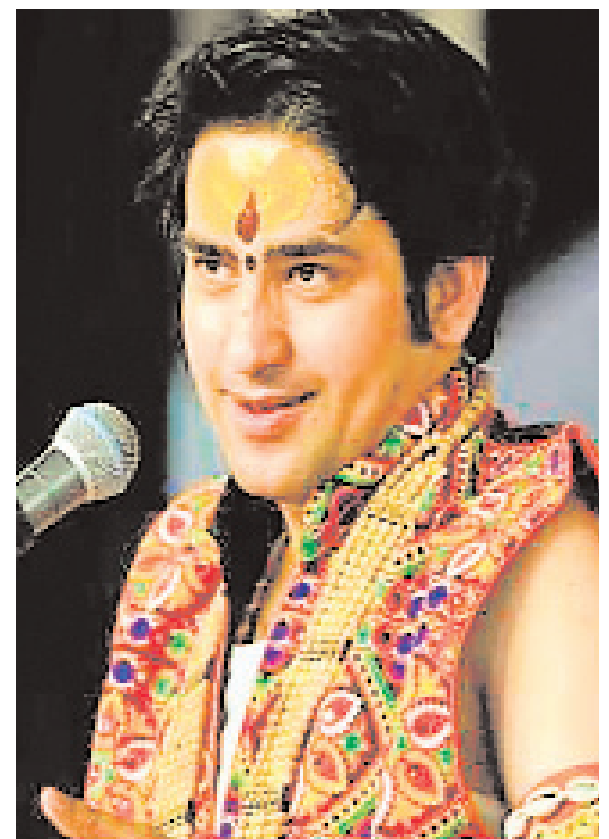
and whether there is any kind of lapse as continuous deaths of cheetahs are being reported, he further said, "In all these cases, we do not think that there is any lapse or any mistake on the part of anyone. These are reasons that are beyond our control."

A female cheetah named Jwala brought from Namibia at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district, has given birth to four cubs in March this year.

Notably, in the past few months, three cheetahs have already died at the National Park, raising fingers at the Kuno management and administration.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the eight cheetahs brought from Namibia at Kuno National Park on the occasion of his birthday on September 17, last year.

# Tribals oppose Dharendra Shastri's Vanvasi Ram Katha



Team Absolute | Bhopal

The two-day Vanvasi Ram Katha is being opposed in Paraswada of Balaghat district by Pt. Dharendra Krishna Shastri of Bageshwar Dham. The tribals say that the place where the story is taking place is the place of their deity 'Bada Dev'. This is completely tribal area. This event is an encroachment on tribal culture. Even the approval of the Gram Sabha was not taken for such a big event.

They allege that Dharendra Shastri has insulted the tribals by saying that he is going to narrate among the wild tribals. Tribal does not mean the people living in the forest. Now time has changed. Tribals say that Draupadi Murmu, who holds the post of the highest President of the country, is also a tribal. State Governor Mangu Bhai Patel is also a tribal. In such a situation, how can a narrator say that he is telling a story among the tribals of the forest.

# 19 thousand Patwaris of state on 3 days leave

**Bhopal:** about 19,000 Patwaris of Madhya Pradesh went on leave for three days from Wednesday. He has displeasure on the issue of demarcation and promotion. Patwari will not work even if it is a government holiday for two days. In this way they will be on leave for five days. On the call of the Madhya Pradesh Patwari Sangh, a memorandum was submitted on May 4 regarding abstaining from demarcation work in all the districts of the state, giving 2800 grade-pay on the basis of equal pay for equal work and other subjects. In which it was said that the demands should be fulfilled by May 23, but the demands were not fulfilled within the stipulated time limit. Due to this Patwari went on mass leave till 24, 25 and 26 May.

# Rift between Scindia and BJP MP K.P. Yadav comes to the fore again

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The political rift between Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and BJP MP from Guna K.P. Yadav came into the open once again ahead of the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh. Yadav, who had defeated Scindia in the Lok Sabha elections in 2019 from Guna has expressed his disappointment over not inviting him to meetings organised by Scindia loyalists in the Gwalior-Shivpuri district.

Miffed over not being invited to a meeting of the Yadav community in Shivpuri district, K. P. Yadav said, "I wasn't called to the meeting of my own community. For the first time I wasn't invited or informed about the meeting of the Yadav community. It seems a conspiracy against me, which is why I wasn't invited for the meeting," Yadav told the media in Bhopal on Wednesday.

Yadav's remarks came two days after Scindia addressed a gathering of local people (Gwalior, Shivpuri) on May 22 in Shivpuri district.



Sources privy to the development told reporter that Scindia addressed two gatherings of different communities - Kewat, Majhi, Yadav, Vaisya and some others.

While addressing a gathering of the Vasya community in Shivpuri on May 22, Scindia apologised to the people with folded hands saying "I apologise for whatever mistakes

occurred in the past. Please pardon me."

Yadav said on Wednesday that personal rifts need to be kept aside and he should have been invited as he is an elected representative of the area. "These things send wrong messages to the society. We need to be united. I am disappointed with the development," Yadav added.

However, it is not the first time that the rift between Scindia and Yadav has come to the fore, it has happened several times in the past also. Yadav had earlier alleged he was not invited to Scindia's meeting. Later, the state BJP leadership tried to close the gap between these two leaders in an attempt to send a message that things are fine now.

Meanwhile, the Madhya Pradesh Congress on Wednesday shared a video on its official Twitter handle, in which Yadav can be heard saying, "Some people are trying to create problems. He should have contested the election against me again and then it would have shown how popular he (Scindia) is."

## Efforts to connect 1 crore people on Yoga Day in MP

**Bhopal:** Efforts are on to involve one crore people in the yoga program to be held on the occasion of International Yoga Day in Madhya Pradesh. International Yoga Day is celebrated every year on 21 June. For the participation of more and more people in this event, effective efforts are being made by the Department of AYUSH to connect one crore people by running a public awareness campaign.

### CHANGE IN DOB

I, JAYA VILAS MOHALE is legally wedded spouse of No. JC 4584478F NK MOHALE VILAS RAMJI presently residing at Malegaon, Washim, Maharashtra Pin: 444110 have changed my DOB from 27-06-1993 to 12-07-1993 vide affidavit No. 75AA 781789.

### NAME CHANGE

I JESMINARA KHATUN is legally Wedded spouse of No. JC 572458H NB/SUB SAHAJAHAN SK presently residing at LOLNATHPUR, Lokenathpur, Murshidabad, West Bengal Pin-742189 have changed my name from JESMINARA BEGAM to JESMINARA KHATUN vide affidavit No. 75AA 781790.



EDITOR'S SPECS

## BSP will reach out to youth in UP to counter Bhim Army

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), that had avoided banking on young blood, is now apparently feeling threatened by the growing influence of the Bhim Army among Dalit youth. The Bhim Army has been rapidly making inroads among the Dalit youth and its leader Chandra Shekhar is popular among them. BSP President Mayawati has now told her party cadres to bring in youth and give them responsibility in the party. The party will decentralise responsibilities and assign more of its workers the important work within the party structure. Mayawati has already appointed her nephew Akash Anand as the party's national coordinator but he lacks visibility and outreach among the cadres. The BSP has its focus on Lok Sabha 2024 elections and is keen to retain its national party status. The party also wants to do well in the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana in 2023, said sources. "While in UP, the focus will still be on Muslim votes -- even though the strategy did not work in municipal polls -- as was conveyed in the review meeting to the leaders and workers, the other states will have to work out their strategies to reach out to Muslims, Dalits and EBCs, without overlooking the upper caste," said a party functionary.

# FAUJI APPEAL GONE, CHANDENI YOUTH LOOK AT OTHER CAREERS TO SECURE FUTURE

Sat Singh

The nondescript village of Chandeni in Haryanas Charkhi Dadri district recently hit the headlines after son of the soil Anurag Sangwan topped the prestigious National Defence Academy entrance examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission.

The village with 600 households and 3,000 people has the distinction of sending hundreds of faujis (soldiers) to serve the motherland. In fact, its relation with the Indian Army dates back to the British era, when faujis from this village participated in the World Wars. Post-Independence, many fought in the Indo-Pak, Indo-China, and Kargil wars.

A bumpy ride on a narrow link road takes one to Chandeni, located around 25 km from Charkhi Dadri district headquarters. Agriculture is the oldest occupation of the place, with cotton and wheat being the main crops. However, with the share of cultivable lands dwindling and most families holding one acre or less, people are taking up government and private jobs or working as mine labourers.

Shaky mobile connectivity is the first change that one notices on reaching the dusty village, where farmers are seen harvesting their mustard crop and sowing cotton. A statue of Satyawar Singh, a martyred para-commando, establishes the Army connection right at the village entrance. At the memorial, sarpanch Raj Singh Sangwan could be seen waiting for this reporter, along with a group of elderly men.

"Welcome to Chandeni - the land of soldiers," announces an affable Raj Singh (65). "Our village is a goldmine of talent. Besides soldiers, we have at least 15 commissioned officers serving in the Indian Army and as many retired hands. Two of our boys have entered the Indian Administrative Service, while 20 doctors work at different locations. If 600 soldiers from this village are part of the Army, there are 300 pensioners also. It shows our passion for the olive uniform," he adds.

Downtick in craze for the uniform

For a long time, joining the Indian Army has been every child's dream. By the age of eight, most of them would have a set routine of going to the panchayat-operated village stadium and gymnasium to run and exercise. Retired Army personnel also train them by introducing a tough exercise regime. As years passed, girls also began to use the stadium. However, of late, defence jobs are losing their sheen.

Amit Sangwan (20), who was seen sweating it out on the village playground, told 101Reporters that he also aspired to make it to the Indian Army, but not anymore. He is now preparing to crack exams related to other government institutions, including the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

"For the last six to eight years, I have been working hard for selection as an Army sepoy. But the halt on recruitment due to the pandemic and the launch of Agnipath Scheme that came with the provision of four years' service dashed my hopes,"



says Amit, who has completed class 12 in non-medical stream.

He said he had applied during two Army recruitment rallies, but had failed in both. "Things are really difficult for soldier aspirants. Their struggle is much more than that of officer rank aspirants."

Amit believes things have changed socially as well. "What will the future hold forth for agniveers after four years? Earlier, upon getting an Army job, there will be a flurry of marriage proposals for the boy. But now, due to the temporary nature of the job under the Agnipath, many hesitate," he explains.

Sachin Sangwan (24), who had trained for the last five years for an Army job, echoes Amit.

"I am preparing for a fireman's job. Agnipath Scheme dashed my dreams. What is the future of agniveers after four years? If they will be absorbed in the Army, it is fine. Otherwise, they will have to struggle afresh for a job," he reasons.

Citing the impact the scheme had on his family, Chandeni resident Suresh Chowkidar says his sons Ajay and Deepak have started working as labourers at a mining zone in Charkhi Dadri.

"Otherwise, what will work with this four-year service? We have a family to run, so mine labour seems like a better option now. It made sense when the faujis had a 20-year service tenure, but not anymore," he rues.

Like individuals and families, coaching institutions have also been affected. Manish Kumar runs one of the largest coaching institutes for Army aspirants in the state under the brand name AMS in Rohtak. He attests that the number of aspirants has reduced significantly, following the introduction of Agnipath Scheme.

"Each of our batches used to have more than 100 students, but there are only a few takers now. Most of the youth have switched over to institutes that can help them study in coun-

tries such as the US, Canada and Australia," he says.

"Yes, I am taking coaching classes for the IELTS [International English Language Testing System] exam, to explore opportunities in a foreign land. I plan to settle down within the next four years. Hopefully, my career will take off by then. If I chose to become an agniveer, there will be a question mark on my employment prospects after four years of service," surmises Ankit Kumar (23) from Hisar district, who had trained relentlessly for four years to become a defence personnel. However, Hukam Singh (70), a retired Nayak Subedar from Rajputana Rifles, could not help but point to the change in attitude over the generations.

"The Army had always been the first love for the youth of Chandeni. The first words their mothers spelt out after giving birth was 'I have given birth to a fauji'... Youth would hit the ground before sunrise to practice. No other thoughts crossed their mind. Nowadays, not many come to the ground," says Hukam, who retired from service a decade ago.

For villagers, loss of fauji uniform is not the only challenge. The struggle for potable water is evident in Chandeni. Charkhi Dadri district borders Rajasthan, where land is semi-arid. "The government borewell is simply not enough. Each household has to shell out Rs 300 to the private suppliers to meet its drinking water requirement," informs Sumitra Devi, a woman in her 50s.

Most of the villagers live in pucca houses, built in their farmlands to monitor the growing crops round-the-clock. Electricity is available for 16 to 18 hours in the day.

(The Author is a Rohtak-based freelance journalist and a member of 101Reporters, a pan-India network of grassroots reporters)

## international

# PAKISTAN GOVT CONSIDERING BAN ON PTI

Islamabad | Agencies

As Pakistan's political crisis deepens, the incumbent government is mulling a possible ban on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Wednesday, in light of the May 9 protests against arrest of party chief Imran Khan in the 190 million pounds settlement case, local media reported.

He, however, said that the matter will be referred to the Parliament for approval if the government finally decides to ban the former ruling party, Geo News reported.

The move comes days amid political instability in the country by Khan's arrest on May 9 on corruption charges, before he walked free on bail as per court orders.

Responding to the leaders' call for countrywide protests, the PTI workers and supporters took to the streets, but the demonstrations turned deadly as they attacked public and private property including military installations and buildings.

They also resorted to arson and set afire the Corp Commander House, also known as the Jinnah House, in Lahore.



The armed forces have, since then, resolved to try the arsonists and those involved in anti-state activities on the day of the protests under relevant laws, including the Pakistan Army Act and the Official Secrets Act.

"The PTI has attacked the very basis of the state, that never hap-

pened before. It can't be tolerated", Asif said while addressing a presser in Islamabad on Wednesday, Geo News reported.

"Is there a crime that didn't happen on May 9?" he asked.

Asif said that the miscreants involved in the violent episode had

nefarious motives.

Referring to the events that unfolded ahead of the no-confidence vote against Khan in April last year, Khawaja Asif said: "All the steps taken by Imran Khan after April 9 have cost him. We did not harm him. He is suffering due to his own actions."

# Trump's hush-money trial date set for March 2024

New York | Agencies

A New York judge has set March 25, 2024 as the trial date in the hush-money payment case involving former US President Donald Trump and adult film actress Stormy Daniels.

Trump received the news during a hearing in the case on Tuesday, the BBC reported.

The payment of \$130,000 was said to be used to prevent Daniels from going public about an alleged sexual encounter that she had with Trump in 2006.

The former President has denied that the affair happened, dismissed any wrongdoing, and charged that the inquiry is politically motivated.

Tuesday's hearing was the second time that Trump appeared in court for the case.

He was first arrested and



appeared in a New York courtroom in April, where he was charged with 34 felony counts of fraud in a 16-page indictment.

Although providing the so-called hush money is not illegal, the case against Trump centres around how his former lawyer, who paid Daniels, had his reimbursement recorded in the former President's accounts.

Trump is accused of falsifying his business records in the first degree by saying the payment was for legal fees, reports the BBC.

In response to the development, Trump said on his social network, Truth Social: "They forced upon us a trial date of March 25th, right in the middle of the primary season... very unfair..."

March 2024 is set to be a busy month for Trump and the other candidates vying to become the Republican presidential candidate.

Candidates attend a series of conventions, primaries and caucuses in every US state and territory, beginning by early February and ending in or around June.

## SOUTH AFRICA ON HIGH ALERT OVER IMPORTED CHOLERA INFECTIONS

Johannesburg: The National Health Department of South Africa has said that it is on high alert to prevent imported cholera from crossing its borders as the Southern African region is experiencing the outbreak.

"Given the ongoing cholera outbreak in the Southern African region, there's a high possibility of continued importation of cases to South Africa," said Aneliswa Cele, an official with the department, on Tuesday.

The recent cholera outbreak in Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria, South Africa's administrative capital, has resulted in 15 fatalities and more than 90 people have sought medical help, Cele added. South Africa detected its first two cases of cholera in February from two sisters who had travelled back to Johannesburg together from Malawi, Xinhua news agency reported.

## Heavy rain death toll in Congo rises to 443; heavy equipment needed: UN

United Nations | Agencies

With a continuing emergency response to the heavy rains in Congo, the official death toll has reached 443, UN humanitarian said.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said on Tuesday that hundreds of people were injured and many are missing from the early May rains that triggered deadly flooding and landslides. Rescuers and responders urgently call for heavy equipment to excavate and bury bodies, mainly in the Kalehe territory of eastern South Kivu province, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Other top priorities are



shelter and relocation of survivors, food assistance and fixing roads and bridges so we can reach people affected," OCHA added.

More than 3,000 houses and schools serving more than 9,000 children were damaged, the humanitarian office said.

At least 17,000 people received assistance since May 10, including food,

health care, shelter and psychosocial support, OCHA said. Humanitarians provided more than 50,000 litre of clean water daily to affected communities.

The UN humanitarian coordinator in Congo, Bruno Lemarquis, allocated \$3 million from the Humanitarian Fund to strengthen continuing operations, the humanitarian office added

## JAPANESE COURT REJECTS CALL TO HALT RESTART OF NUCLEAR REACTOR

Tokyo | Agencies

A Japanese court on Wednesday rejected a call by local residents to halt the restart of a nuclear reactor in Miyagi prefecture on grounds they believed emergency evacuation plans were flawed.

The Sendai District Court ruled that the plaintiffs' claims to halt the planned restart of the Onagawa nuclear plant's No.2 reactor in February 2024 were not relevant as a serious accident is unlikely, reports Xinhua news agency.

"It cannot be assumed that a specific danger of an accident exists that leads to the abnormal release of radioactive materials," Presiding Judge Mitsuhiro Saito said.

He added when handing down his decision that there was no need to take into account whether the evacuation plans are effective, as there is no certainty regarding the potential danger.

The suit to halt the restart of the reac-



tor at the plant operated by Tohoku Electric Power Co. was made by residents from neighbouring Ishinomaki, who said the city and prefecture's evacuation plans in the case of a severe emergency were "flawed and impractical".

The restarting of the idled reactor

would mark the first in the northeastern area that was struck by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster that triggered the worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl in 1986 following multiple meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.



# KEJRIWAL, THACKERAY SLAM CENTRE FOR 'ARROGANCE OF ORDINANCE'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Attempting to drum up support for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s fight against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called on former Maharashtra chief minister and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray at his home here on Wednesday. Addressing the media jointly, both leaders slammed the Centre for attempting to force the Ordinance to control Delhi services as "an Ordinance emerging from arrogance" and the need to "wake up the people of the country".



people of the country". Thackeray said that the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Matoshri are known for maintaining relations which go beyond politics. "The Supreme Court verdict was necessary for Delhi and the country's democracy. But what kind of democracy is it when the Centre brings an Ordinance like this? We have to make the people aware of all this," Thackeray said. Kejriwal said even the AAP keep

good relations with all and "now we are part of the Thackeray family". "The people of Delhi have fought a big battle for rights. The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is taking away our authority by the Ordinance though the SC verdict came (May 11) in our favour after 8 years," Kejriwal said. "Their politics is unethical, wrong and dangerous to the country and a threat to democracy. They are blatantly misusing power and various institu-

tions to hound political rivals," said Thackeray. Soon after the apex court judgement giving the powers to the state government to appoint officers in Delhi, the BJP government brought forth an Ordinance to annul the decision on grounds that Delhi does not have full statehood, and gave all the powers to the Lt. Governor. Kejriwal has been on an all-India round of all the top Opposition parties in the country to block the Centre's Ordinance in the Rajya Sabha. Earlier, he met Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, on Tuesday he met West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee, on Wednesday Thackeray, and on Thursday he will have a sojourn with Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar. Congress state president Nana Patole has already stated that his party would abide by the decision of the Central leadership.

# ANIL DESHMUKH CLAIMS HE GOT OFFER TO JOIN BJP & TOPPLE MVA GOVT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

For the second time in four months, senior Nationalist Congress Party leader and former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh claimed that he was given an offer to join the BJP and help topple the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi government. Deshmukh said that the purported proposal had come over two years ago, and also when he was jailed for alleged corruption charges. "If I had accepted that offer, the MVA government would have fallen much before... But I declined it and had to face action by various central agencies," Deshmukh told a private Marathi news channel. Earlier, in February also Deshmukh had made a similar claim while talking about the blatant misuse of central investigating agencies against



the Opposition leaders. MVA ally and Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut said that he was aware of the developments claimed by Deshmukh and similar offers were made to other MVA leaders too, including himself, but they didn't succumb to the BJP's pressures. Reacting sharply to the NCP leader's assertions, Maharashtra BJP President Chandrashekhar Bawankule dismissed Deshmukh's contentions outright and reminded him that he is "only out of jail on bail". "He has been granted bail on health grounds by the court... The case hearings are still on and his utterances tantamount to a contempt of the court. If he continues making such statements, we shall complain to the court," warned Bawankule. It may be recalled that Deshmukh was jailed in alleged corruption and money-laundering cases for nearly 13 months before he secured bail and walked out of the prison on December 28.

# Maha Congress expels ex-MLA Ashish Deshmukh for 'anti-party' statements

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra Congress on Wednesday expelled former MLA Ashish Deshmukh for six years for making public statements against the party leadership including Rahul Gandhi and state unit chief Nana Patole. The expulsion order was issued to Deshmukh by former Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan, the Chairperson of the MPCC Disciplinary Committee vide a letter of May 22. The committee had discussed the show-cause notice served on April 9 to Deshmukh -- son of former Minister and ex-state Congress president Ranjit Deshmukh -- and his reply to the same. "We found the reply regarding your public utterances against the party unsatisfactory. You are expelled from the primary membership of the party for six years with immediate effect," the dis-



ciplinary committee's letter to Deshmukh said. Deshmukh had fomented a huge row when he called upon Gandhi to apologise to the OBC community over his 'Modi surname' remarks that finally led to his losing the Lok Sabha membership. Later, he accused Patole of allegedly being

hand-in-glove with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and taking 'One Khokha' (slang for Rs 1 crore) per month from him, which the party had dismissed, saying Deshmukh had lost his mental balance. Deshmukh had created a flutter in January when he shot off a letter to Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge demanding the removal of Patole and holding him responsible for the party's nosediving fortunes in the state with a spate of electoral losses. After his series of statements targetting state and central leaders, the MPCC had set up a disciplinary committee headed by Chavan to probe the same and submit its findings. Incidentally, Deshmukh is a former Bharatiya Janata Party MLA from Katol in Nagpur who joined the Congress and, in the 2019 assembly polls, was fielded opposite Devendra Fadnis in Nagpur South West constituency, but lost.

# Tanishq launches its new store in Powai, Mumbai

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Tanishq, the jewellery retail brand from the house of Tata continues to expand its retail footprint with the addition of its new store in Mumbai. The newly-launched store, spanning across 4000 sq. ft., caters to a wide range of signature Tanishq designs across vibrant colour stones, dazzling gold, shining diamonds, and precious solitaires. The store features Tanishq's exclusive collections such as Alekha inspired by Indian art forms along with the stunning diamond collection Colour Me Joy - The Carnival Edit; an uplifting line of jewellery col-



lection inspired by the symphony of colours set in the spirit of stones. Additionally, the store also houses Tanishq's wedding jewellery collection from Rivaah by Tanishq with mesmerising jewellery designs for the brides-to-be. It also houses their latest 'Celeste x Sachin Tendulkar' solitaire collection which includes an array of spectacular designs for both women and men, including rings, earrings and bracelets. Each piece comes with intricate work of art rich in splendour with unique design sensibilities. The store also has a Zoya Gallery and Exclusive High-Value Zone. The store was inaugurated by Noel Tata, Chairman of Trent and Vice Chairman of Titan Company Ltd., Ajay Chawla, CEO Jewellery Division, Titan Company Limited and Niraj Bhakare, Regional Business Head, West, Titan Company Limited at 10.30 A.M. As part of the grand inauguration, Tanishq is offering free gold coin on every purchase. The offer is valid from 19th to 22nd May, 2023.

# 'Anupamaa' actor Nitesh Pandey dies of cardiac arrest at 51

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Nitesh Pandey, who essayed the role of Dheeraj Kumar in the top rated television show 'Anupamaa', passed away due to cardiac arrest at the age of 51. Reports claim that the actor suffered a massive cardiac arrest late on Tuesday night in Igatpuri near Nashik. He succumbed to the same instantly. Nitesh started his journey with theatre in 1990. In 1995, he bagged the role of a detective in 'Tejas'. He went on to work in serials like 'Manzilain Apani Apani', 'Astiva...Ek Prem Kahani', 'Saaya' and 'Durgesh Nandini'. Apart from television, he also worked in films. His work in the National Award winning film 'Khosla Ka Ghosla' received widespread appreciation. He also starred in 'Om



Shanti Om' and 'Badhaai Do'. He also worked in television show 'Pyar Ka Dard Hai Meetha Meetha Pyara Pyara' and also ran an independent production house named Dream Castle Productions. Last seen in 'Anupamaa' and 'Pyar Ka Dard Hai Meetha Meetha Pyara Pyara', Nitesh, who has been a popular face in the television industry for over two decades, was from Almora Kumaon in Uttarakhand. He is now survived by his actress-wife Arpita Pandey. The two had met on a TV show 'Justajoo' after which they got married in 2003. Nitesh was earlier married to actress Ashwini Kalsekar.

# Mumbai BJP chief meets Sharad Pawar

Mumbai: Bharatiya Janata Party's Mumbai unit chief and MLA Ashish Shelar on Wednesday called on Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar at the latter's residence in south Mumbai. What transpired at the meeting, however, could not be known. The meeting between the two leaders assumes significance as Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is scheduled to meet the NCP chief in the city on Thursday. Kejriwal, who met Shiv Sena (UBT) president on Wednesday, is seeking support of different political parties and leaders for the Aam Aadmi Party's fight against the Centre's ordinance on control of services in Delhi. Although Shelar and Pawar belong to rival parties, they have been on the same page when it comes to controlling the cricket boards of Mumbai or the apex body of the sports. Shelar, a BJP MLA from Bandra West, has been in the world of cricket and politics for almost a decade, while Pawar had earlier served as the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), the International Cricket Council (ICC), and the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA).

# MVA on same page to boycott new Parliament unveiling by PM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

With the Nationalist Congress Party also joining the Congress and the Shiv Sena-UBT on Wednesday, all the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) constituents are now on the same page visa-a-vis the opposition move to boycott the inauguration of the new Parliament House by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 28. A majority of the Opposition parties have decided to keep off the inaugural in New Delhi on Sunday on grounds that the government has flouted democratic tradi-

tions by not inviting President Draupadi Murmu for the event. "The Bharatiya Janata Party is trying to undermine the country's top constitutional post by not inviting the President to inaugurate the new Parliament. It's an insult to the democratic traditions of the country. The BJP is clearly trying to project Modi's image ahead of the 2024 elections," said NCP chief spokesperson Mahesh Tapase. Accordingly, all the NCP MPs have voiced their displeasure and have decided to keep away from the Parliament inaugural event. Shiv Sena-UBT chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut reiterated that his party will also show its back to the Sunday event. "All the Opposition parties have decided to boycott the inaugural of the new Parliament building on May 28 and we shall also follow suit," Raut declared. Tapase added that the President is the custodian of the fundamental rights of the citizens and also the Supreme Commander of the Indian armed forces, and hence most in the Opposition feel that the President should rightfully inaugurate the new Parliament house.

# 2024 Lok Sabha elections under PM Modi's leadership will be record breaking: Eknath Shinde

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde on Wednesday said that all records will be broken in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, reported the news agency. Reacting to the Opposition parties boycotting the inauguration of the new parliament building, CM Shinde said, "The progress of the country is in front of the world and India is getting respect everywhere. The development that did not happen in the past 70 years, has happened in the last 8-9 years. Public knows everything. All records will be broken in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections under PM Modi's leadership," a news agency reported. Meanwhile, as many as nineteen opposition parties, including the Congress, Left, and TMC, collectively declared their decision to boycott the inauguration of the new parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, deeming it an "undignified act" that insults the esteemed



position of the president, PTI reported. They expressed that the inauguration of the new parliament building is a significant event. Despite their belief that the government poses a threat to democracy and their disapproval of the "autocratic manner" in which the new parliament building was constructed, they were willing to set aside their differences and observe this occasion, the parties said in a joint statement, according to the PTI. The statement further said that PM Modi's decision to exclusively inaugurate the new parliament building, disregarding President Murmu, is not only a grave insult but a direct attack on our democracy, which warrants an appropriate response.

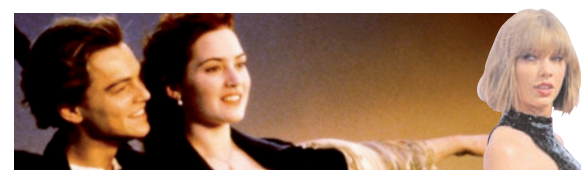
# Indian e-commerce to grow 1000% & emissions 8-mn tons by 2030

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Portending an alarming situation, Indian e-commerce is expected to grow 1000 percent and emissions will shoot up by 8 million tons (80 Lakh) by 2030, as per a new research by the Clean Mobility Collective (CMC) and Stand.earth Research Group (SRG), released globally on Wednesday. The domestic e-commerce market is likely to witness a 10-fold hike - from the current levels of 4-billion parcels delivered per annum to 40 billion per year by 2030. The total annual emissions from this sector would zoom up to 8 million tons of CO2 - equivalent to 16.50 lakh petrol cars driven for a year - by 2030, said the CMC-SRG study. The report said that the global e-commerce market is anticipated to witness substantial growth with parcel growth projected to more than double from 315 billion parcels in 2022 to over 800 billion parcels by 2030. This heightened activity will contribute to a total emission of 16 crore tons of CO2 in the next 8 years, or equal to 400 gas-fired power plants. Already notorious as a significant contributor to Greenhouse gas emissions world over, the transportation sector will



see exponential emissions increase by 2030, as stated by the report. Titled a Cost of Convenience: Revealing the hidden climate and health impacts of the global e-commerce-driven parcel delivery industry through 2030, the report forecasts that global annual e-commerce emissions related to last-mile delivery alone could rise to as high as 160,000 tons of CO2 per annum by 2030. To sequester the last-mile delivery sector emissions for 2022 alone, over one billion trees are required to be planted every year and allow them to grow for a decade, says one of the key points in the report. "With e-commerce growing exponentially over the coming years, the industry needs to address its ballooning emission footprint. Decarbonising the sector is not only economically viable and saves India significantly massive expenditure on import but has the co-benefits of reducing and avoiding emissions and air pollution as well," said Siddharth Sreenivas, CMC's India Coordinator. "Unabated growth of last-mile delivery will have significant climate and health impacts if e-commerce companies fail to act at scale before 2030," added SRG Investigative Researcher Dr Devyani Singh. The reports said that in the normal business scenario for 2023-2030, major players like Amazon, Flipkart and DHL will together contribute an additional 17 million tons of CO2 emissions. The report has frowned upon global e-commerce market leader Amazon "for its insufficient commitments towards achieving zero emission deliveries by 2030", plus other things.



# Sylvester Stallone writes breakup texts on behalf of his daughters

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Sylvester Stallone's daughters have revealed that he has written break-up texts for them in the past and teased that he has been "standoffish" with their potential partners.

The actor - best known for his roles in the 'Rocky and Rambo' film series - was discussed by his daughters Sophia Stallone and Sistine Stallone on a podcast recently, reports 'Mirror.co.uk'.

The siblings - who appear alongside their father in the reality TV show 'The

Family Stallone', which debuted this month - spoke about how he handles them dating people. They made the remarks about their father whilst they were guests on the latest episode of the 'Giggly Squad' podcast, which is hosted by Hannah Berner and Paige DeSorbo.

Asked about how he handles them dating, Sistine said, quoted by 'Mirror.co.uk', "My dad is a savant when it comes to our dating lives in so many areas. In one area, he writes most of our breakup texts."

Her elder sister Sophia agreed, saying: "I highly suggest

girls should go up to their dad and have their dad write a breakup text because men know men. I'm telling you."

'Mirror.co.uk' further states that Sistine teased that their exes "never got mad for being honest," before adding that Sylvester has been known to be "standoffish" when the siblings first bring dates home.

She said: "We're like 'Oh, this (date) is a good egg. We're gonna bring him home.' (Dad) is always standoffish. (He) stands in the corner. Doesn't say anything just to intimidate."



# Florence Pugh says Indie film community people were 'pissed' when she joined MCU

Los Angeles | Agencies

Although many would look at joining the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) as a huge career achievement, Florence Pugh said that not everyone thought the same when she landed her role.

During an interview with Time magazine, published online Tuesday, the actress, who joined the MCU as Yelena Belova with 2021's 'Black Widow', said that some people in the independent film community were "really pissed off," reports hollywoodreporter.com. "They were like, 'Great, now she's gone forever,'" she said.

"And I'm like, 'No, I'm working as hard as I used to work. I've always done back-to-back movies. It's just that people are watching them now. You just have to be a bit more organised with your schedule.'"

Pugh also made an appearance in the Disney+ show 'Hawkeye'. But before Marvel, she made her name in Hollywood with several indie films, including 'Midsommar' and 'Lady Macbeth', and continues to work on them, like her more recent projects 'The Wonder' and 'A Good Person'.

During a previous interview in March, she also recalled people in the industry telling her: "I was never going to go back to small movies again." But Pugh said that she believes "there's beauty in all types of those films."

After nearly a decade in the industry, Pugh continues to find balance with the projects she takes on. But no matter what it is, the actress told Time that she can also get a sense of a film's success while working on set. She didn't share the project's name but noted that she has "definitely" seen a movie fall apart before.

As for what's next, Pugh said that she hopes her future includes some time singing on stage, especially after writing and performing music in 'A Good Person'.

# TOM HANKS, RITA WILSON SCOLDED AN EMPLOYEE AT CANNES

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Tom Hanks and his wife Rita Wilson were involved in a tense exchange with a man at the Cannes Film Festival.

The actor and his wife seemingly scolded an employee as they attended the premiere of his new movie 'Asteroid City', reports aceshowbiz.com.

On Tuesday, May 23, the pair walked the red carpet together to support the special screening of Wes Anderson's film. In photos which have circulated online, the Oscar winner was seen furiously pointing his finger at the younger man and making a stern face while his wife was also holding her hand up in front of her as she spoke to the man.

It's not clear what they were discussing, but the man was also seen gesturing at Hanks as he posed with his 'Asteroid City' co-stars on the red carpet.

Despite the apparent misunderstanding, Hanks and Wilson continued to trek down the red carpet and were all smiles as they posed together on the stairs before heading inside the venue. The two were also seen dancing together as they reunited on the red carpet after posing for the cameras separately.

Hanks cut a dapper figure in a black tuxedo



and matching bow tie teamed with a smart white shirt for the premiere. He completed his look with shiny black shoes.

As for Wilson, she looked glamorous in a chic black dress with a long black cloak which trailed the ground behind her. The dress was adorned with silver gems which shimmered under the spotlights. Her hair was styled in an elegant updo.

'Asteroid City' is a sci-fi romantic comedy-drama film which is set in the 1950s in a fictional American desert town that has an eerie feel to it. It follows the transformative events that occur at an annual Junior Stargazer convention in 1955.

Anderson penned the script based on a story he developed with Roman Coppola. It will be released in select U.S. theaters on June 16 before expanding to a wide release on June 23.

# 'I DON'T CONSIDER MYSELF DISCIPLINED'

Arnold Schwarzenegger wasn't allowed breakfast before doing 200 sit-ups, push-ups as child

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Arnold Schwarzenegger doesn't think he was "disciplined" in terms of fitness. Despite, the actor has been exercising since he was a child and won a string of awards as a bodybuilder before starting up his career in Hollywood movies and explained that, because he has spent decades sticking to the same exercise routines, it all comes naturally to him now, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"You know, I don't consider myself disciplined because something that I've done since I was a little kid was working out in the morning. I remember when my father said, 'You cannot have breakfast first, you have to do

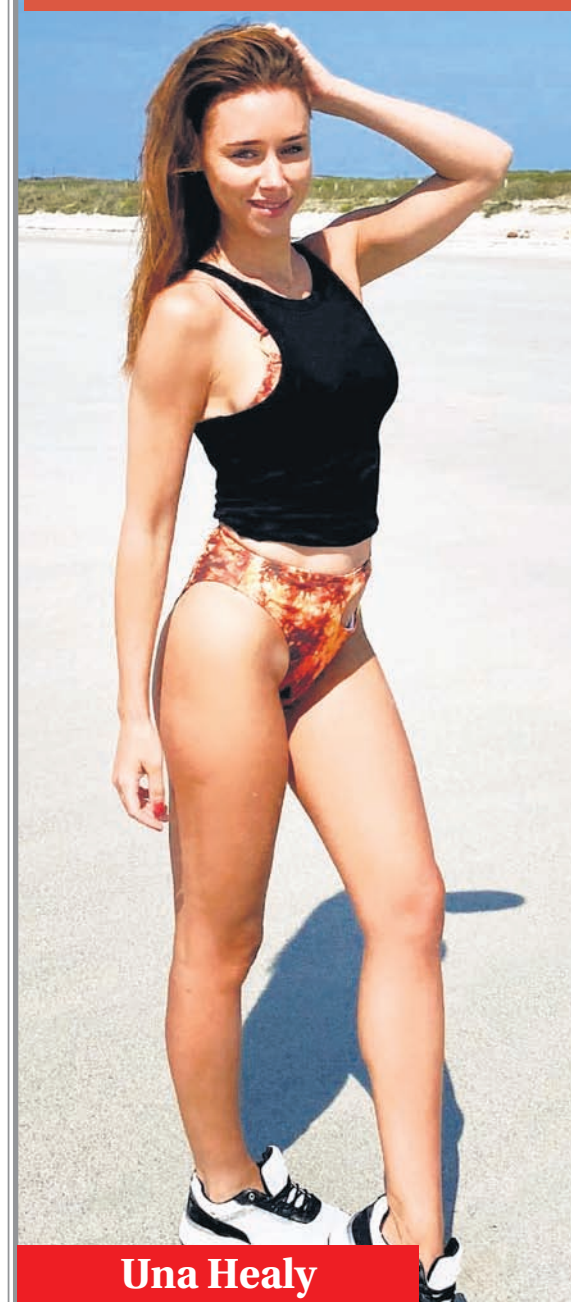
200 sit ups and push-ups," he told Entertainment Tonight.

"So that's how I grew up. So now, this is [what I do]. I'm now addicted to working out every day. If I do a film, or like when I was doing FUBAR, we were working out when we were night-shooting, we were working out at three in the morning sometimes, and at five in the morning, or at nine in the morning. So it really doesn't matter. I just have to get my one-hour workout in and then some bike riding to kind of get some cardiovascular training."

The 'Terminator' star went on to insist that working out just makes him "feel good" regardless of whatever else he is working on at any given time. "It just makes you feel good, no matter what you do," he shared. "If you do a TV series, if you do a movie, if you write a book, if you go and do a speech. Whatever you do, you need to feel fit and full of energy."



# ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Una Healy

# Joe Jonas cried tears of jealousy when Nick became 'The Voice' judge

Los Angeles | Agencies

Joe Jonas said that he cried tears of jealousy when his younger brother Nick was hired as a judge on 'The Voice'.

The 'S.O.S.' singer made the admission when he joined a podcast with his two siblings Nick, 30, and 35-year-old Kevin - who released their sixth Jonas Brothers studio record, titled 'The Album', earlier this month, reports Female First UK.

He added that he heard the news while watching Fleetwood Mac play 'Landslide' at New York's Madison Square Garden in March 2019.

He told on 'The Armchair Expert with Dax Shepard' show: "It was at the most picturesque setting, it was at the Fleetwood Mac show at (Madison Square Garden) and as they're playing 'Landslide' I found out that he was going to be a judge on 'The Voice'. I was so jealous I cried my eyes out to 'Landslide'. It was bitter-sweet, of course, 'cause I'm super happy for him, but I'm also bummed 'cause I want that f\*\*\*\*\* gig." As per Female First UK, Joe served as a coach on the Australian 'Voice' for one sea-



son in 2018, with Nick going on to work as a voice coach on series 18 and 20 of the singing show before he was replaced by 29-year-old 'The Way' singer Ariana Grande.

Joe said: "I just enjoyed the job, so I was like, 'What the f\*\*\*? But (Nick) crushed it and, you know, it was great.'"

Despite their sibling rivalry, they insisted on the podcast their overall aim is to see someone "with the last name Jonas" winning. Nick also revealed that he and Joe auditioned for the same role in 'Wicked'.

But he said that while they are "competitive" in "sports and other things" they ultimately support each other when it comes to their careers.

Joe agreed, adding about the 'Wicked' auditions: "Yeah, we said, 'Go in there and kill it 'cause it's gotta be one of us. It has to be one of us.' That being said, never got that call."

Kevin also revealed he felt "some of that" jealousy when Nick and Joe embarked on solo careers amid the Jonas Brothers band break several years ago.

Nick said: "We always say we want someone with the last name Jonas to win. That's our goal."



## IPL 2023 Eliminator

# MADHWAL'S 5/5 THRASH LSG, MI ADVANCES TO QUALIFIER 2

Chennai | Agencies

Pacer Akash Madhwal picked a sensational five-wicket haul (5/5) and helped Mumbai Indians thrash Lucknow Super Giants by 81 runs in the eliminator and move into Qualifier 2 of IPL 2023 at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, here on Wednesday.

Lucknow were 68/2 in eight overs at one point in their chase of 183. But from there, they fell in heaps to be all out for 101 in 16.3 overs, with Madhwal finishing with 5/5 in 3.1 overs, which is also the best-ever bowling figures in IPL playoffs history.

Mumbai were also aided by three hara-kiri run-outs from Lucknow's batting to book their spot in Qualifier 2, where they will face defending champions Gujarat Titans at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Friday.

Chasing 183, Mumbai made the breakthrough in the second over as Madhwal had Prerak Mankad slicing to deep point. Two overs later, Mayers miscued pull to mid-on off Chris



### Brief scores

**Mumbai Indians 182/8 in 20 overs (Cameron Green 41, Suryakumar Yadav 33; Naveen-ul-Haq 4/38, Yash Thakur 3/34) beat Lucknow Super Giants 101 all out in 16.3 overs (Marcus Stoinis 40; Akash Madhwal 5/5) by 81 runs**

Jordan.

Mumbai could have got their third wicket had Nehal Wadhwa not misjudged the catch of Marcus Stoinis while running in from deep cover in the fifth over. From there, Stoinis swung off Cameron Green for four,

before pulling twice off Hrithik Shokeen for back-to-back boundaries through square leg and mid-wicket.

He followed it up with a straight six down the ground as 18 runs came off the last over of power-play. But he was losing support from the other end as Krunal holed out to long-on of Piyush Chawla in the ninth over.

Madhwal's return in the tenth over truly broke the game open for Mumbai -- Ayush Badoni's off-stump was sent for a cartwheel ride, followed by Nicholas Pooran nicking behind to keeper to fall for a golden duck.

A collision with Deepak Hooda while taking the second run resulted in Stoinis being run-out in the 12th over, followed by Krishnappa Gowtham being run-out in the next over. Madhwal had Ravi Bishnoi caught at long-on, before another horrible mix-up resulted in Hooda being run-out.

In his final over, Madhwal completed his five-fer with a yorker hitting the base of Mohsin Khan's off-stump to seal a dominating and emphatic win for Mumbai.

## La Liga: The final two matches in the 36th round of games to be played today

Madrid | Agencies

The final two matches in the 36th round of games in La Liga will be played today night, with Mallorca at home to Valencia and Osasuna entertaining Athletic Bilbao.

Mallorca are safe from relegation on 44 points, but need to recover from a 3-0 thrashing to Almeria last weekend, while Valencia still have some work to do to ensure their top-flight survival.

A 1-0 win at home to Real Madrid which was overshadowed by racist insults aimed at Real Madrid's Vinicius Jr gave Valencia 40 points, but if Espanyol and Getafe both win their matches on Wednesday, they would be only two points from the bottom three and with work still to do to survive, a Xinhua report said.

Coach Ruben Baraja has benefited from giving a chance to youngsters Javi Guerra and Diego Lopez, with Lopez scoring the winner against Madrid, and they do have the advantage of



knowing the results of their rivals in the battle to avoid relegation 24 hours before their match kicks off.

Today's second game is a repeat of the Copa del Rey semi-final between Osasuna and Athletic Bilbao which Osasuna won 1-0 in their El Sadar Stadium, before a 1-1 draw in Bilbao booked them a final place against Real Madrid.

Athletic are seventh in La Liga and a win would keep them in pole position for a

place in next season's UEFA Conference League, while another victory for Osasuna would put them above their rivals on head-to-head goal difference.

The visitors have problems in defense and midfield, with Inigo Martinez, Yeray Alvarez, Dani Garcia and Ander Herrera all likely to miss the rest of the season, with Mikel Vesga and either Oier Zarraga or Unai Vencedor likely to play in midfield.

## WTC Final: Ravi Shastri reckons Ashwin, Jadeja will feature in India's playing XI

New Delhi | Agencies

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri reckons the Rohit Sharma-led side could include both Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja in the playing eleven for the upcoming World Test Championship final against Australia, set to be played at The Oval from June 7-11. Apart from ace off-spinner Ashwin and top-ranked all-rounder Jadeja in the 15-player squad, India also has the services of left-arm spin all-rounder Axar Patel.

Shastri was the head coach when India beat England in the fourth Test at The Oval, though it came on the back of efforts from fast bowlers, all-round performance of Shardul Thakur and Rohit's important century in the second innings.

Former head coach also felt the void left by Jasprit Bumrah's absence will hurt India's chances and that it should be countered by picking another spinner to accommodate for the lack of fast-bowlers.

With India missing Rishabh Pant, KL Rahul and Shreyas Iyer through various injuries,



they will likely have Shubman Gill opening with Rohit Sharma, followed by Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane at number three, four and five respectively.

Shastri believes Rahane has earned his spot back in the Test side after being out of the team post the tour of South Africa in January 2022. Shastri signed off by mentioning that the application will be the key for the Indian team if they are to go one step further from the runners-up finish in the 2021 WTC final at Southampton. Ravi Shastri's predicted India XI: Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane, Ravindra Jadeja, KS Bharat (wk), Shardul Thakur, Ravichandran Ashwin, Mohammad Shami, Mohammed Siraj.

## Malaysia Masters: Sindhu, Srikanth advance to second round; Ashmita, Aakarshi bow out

Kuala Lumpur | Agencies

Ace Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth advanced to the second of the Malaysia Masters badminton tournament with their respective first-round wins on Wednesday.

In the women's singles, two-time Olympic medallist Sindhu registered a hard-fought 21-13, 17-21, 21-18 wins over Denmark's Line Christophersen in the round of 32 of the BWF Super 500 event.

The 27-year-old Indian will face world No. 28 Aya Ohori of Japan in the round of 16 today.

Sindhu took her time to settle into the match and went into the break, leading 11-8 but soon built on it to win the first game convincingly. Both the shuttlers fought hard to have the upper hand in the second game as



Christophersen executed the drop shots well to trouble Sindhu after the scores were tied at 17-17 and took the match into the decider.

After taking an early lead in the decider, Sindhu found herself in a bit of trouble, trailing 13-16. She then

dug deep to level the scores and used her experience to defeat Christophersen in a match lasting one hour and two minutes.

In the other women's singles contest, Aakarshi Kashyap lost 17-21, 12-21 to reigning world champion and

world No. 1 Akane Yamaguchi of Japan. On the other hand, Ashmita Chaliha suffered a 17-21, 7-21 defeat at the hands of world No. 9 Han Yue of China.

In the men's singles, former world championships silver medallist Kidambi Srikanth, got the better of world No. 28 Frenchman Toma Junior Popov 21-12, 21-16.

Meanwhile, world No. 40 Malvika Bansod will be up against world No. 8 Wang Zhi Yi in women's singles while India's top-ranked player and world No. 9 HS Prannoy and Commonwealth Games 2022 champion Lakshya Sen will take the court in men's singles, later in the day.

While Prannoy will be up against world No. 6 Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei, Lakshya will lock horns with former world champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore.

## JORDI ALBA TO LEAVE BARCELONA AFTER 11 SEASONS

Madrid | Spain international left-back Jordi Alba will leave FC Barcelona at the end of the current season, Spanish media reported on Wednesday.

The 34-year-old leaves Barca after 11 seasons at the Camp Nou Stadium, during which time he has won multiple La Liga, Copa del Rey and Spanish Super Cup titles, as well as lifting the 2015 UEFA Champions League, a Xinhua report said.

The defender has decided to leave despite having another year remaining on his contract after a season in which he has appeared less than previously, making just 13 starts from 23 appearances in La Liga, as youngster Alejandro Balde has stepped up to become first choice in his position.

So far, Alba has made 458 appearances for Barca, scoring 27 goals, and during their time together, his understanding with Lionel Messi formed a key part of the club's attacking armory.



## Champions League: Real Sociedad close in on Top 4 finish, Barca lose in Valladolid

Madrid | Agencies

Real Sociedad edged closer to Champions League qualification with a 1-0 victory at home against Almeria.

Takefusa Kubo netted the game's only goal during the fourth minute of first-half stoppage time, striking a brilliant shot into the top corner of the net, reports Xinhua.

Almeria was reduced to 10 men just 10 minutes later following a harsh challenge from Luis Suarez on Robin Le Normand. Despite not managing to equalize in the second half, their resilience suggested that they might yet avoid relegation.

Celta Vigo and Girona settled for a 1-1 draw, a result that likely assures Celta's La Liga



survival. Carles Perez put the home team ahead just four minutes before halftime.

Cristhian Stuani equalized with a twice-taken penalty in the 58th minute, and both

goalkeepers made excellent saves in the closing moments, resulting in a split of points.

Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez altered his starting lineup significantly for the league champions' visit to relegation-threatened Valladolid.

Pablo Torre made his league debut for Barca, with Eric Garcia and Marcos Alonso also included in the starting lineup. Barcelona fell behind in the first minute when Andreas Christensen inadvertently headed the ball into his own net.

Larin doubled Valladolid's lead from the penalty spot in the 21st minute, after Eric Garcia was adjudged to have fouled Gonzalo Plaza. This happened amidst another underwhelming performance by Barcelona.

## Back-to-back International tournaments good for Indian team: Gurpreet Singh Sandhu

New Delhi | Indian senior men's football team goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu believes that playing back-to-back international tournaments will be beneficial for the side as it presents a great opportunity for players to polish their skills.

India are set to play an unprecedented number of matches, with back-to-back international tournaments lined up on home turf -- the Intercontinental Cup in Bhubaneswar, and the SAFF Championship in Bengaluru, followed by the Kings Cup in Thailand (September) and the Merdeka Cup in Malaysia (October). "Back-to-back tournaments are very good for us. We've got a good number of games in front of us, and that's something that I personally appreciate. I don't think we have ever done this before," Gurpreet told aif.com.

"Tournaments such as these are always a challenge, but they also present a great opportunity to polish our skills against good teams and even to win some silverware," he added. Currently, on a preparation path for the AFC Asian Cup, which is set to be held in January next year in Qatar, the Blue Tigers are hard at work in their training camp in Bhubaneswar ahead of the Intercontinental Cup.

"The Asian Cup is very important for us. We need to play more competitive games at every opportunity we get, which will be good for us in our preparation for the Asian Cup. Just to have the squad come together, spend more time with each other, and to figure out the best ways for the team to play will be good for us," he said.

## Happy for Nadal that he's giving himself the necessary time: Federer

New Delhi | Agencies

Roger Federer said he will miss seeing Rafael Nadal play at this year's French Open, emphasizing that Nadal's remarkable record at the clay-court major stands as one of the most extraordinary achievements in the history of all sports.

The 14-time Roland Garros champion, Nadal, announced his withdrawal from the clay court major at the Rafa Nadal Academy last week as he is recovering from his hip injury. The Spaniard will not play in the season's second major for the first time since his tournament debut in 2005.

Nadal played Federer at the French Open six times and won on every occasion, including four finals. Federer conducted a question-and-answer session with his fans on Twitter, where the Swiss legend was asked about Nadal not playing in Paris this year.

In reply to the user, the 20-time Grand Slam winner wrote: "Yes I will miss seeing him



play," adding that "French Open + Rafael Nadal = one of the most incredible records in the history of all sports." Federer also said, "I'm happy for him (Nadal) that he's giving himself the necessary time so that he can come back healthy and make a few more magical runs." The former World no. 1 also hinted at a potential return to the court to play exhibition matches. "I'd love to play exhibitions in the future and if so, coming to South America again would be amazing," Federer wrote.

## MEN'S CRICKET WORLD CUP QUALIFIER IRELAND ANNOUNCE SQUAD, STEPHEN DOHENY MISSES OUT

Dublin | Agencies

Cricketer Ireland on Wednesday announced that right-handed batter Stephen Doheny has missed out from the 15-player squad to be captained by Andrew Balbirnie for the upcoming ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe.

The Qualifier event, to be held in Zimbabwe from June 18-July 9, will see 10 teams competing for two remaining spots in the ten-team 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, to be held in India from October-November.

Ireland are in Group B alongside 1996 World Cup winners Sri Lanka, Scotland, Oman and United Arab Emirates, while Group A comprises hosts Zimbabwe, 1975 and 1979 World Cup winners West Indies, Netherlands, Nepal and United



States. Each side will play the other teams in their group once with the top three from each group progressing to the Super Six stage. In the

Super Six, they will play the sides they did not meet in the group stage.

All points won in the group stage will be carried over to the Super Six

stage apart from those gained against the teams that fail to make it to the Super Six stage. The two top teams after the Super Six stage will contest the final, and will both progress to the main ODI World Cup event in India.

For the first time in this tournament, DRS will be used for all matches from the Super Six stage onwards. Ireland has warm-up matches against USA and Netherlands on June 13 and 15 respectively, before playing in their Group-stage matches from June 19-27. Super Six matches begin from June 29.

Ireland squad: Andrew Balbirnie (captain), Mark Adair, Curtis Campher, Gareth Delany, George Dockrell, Graham Hume, Josh Little, Andy McBrine, Barry McCarthy, PJ Moor, Paul Stirling, Harry Tector, Lorcan Tucker, Ben White and Craig Young.



# Priyanka reveals a Bollywood filmmaker 'needed to see her underwear'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas did not shy away from talking about an unsavoury incident in Bollywood when a filmmaker had said that he "needed to see her underwear". Priyanka in an interview with The Zoe Report opened up about shooting for a film in which the actress played the role of an undercover. About the incident, she said it was a "dehumanising moment" adding that she had walked out of the film.

"This may have been 2002 or '03. I'm undercover; I'm seducing the guy -- obviously, that's what girls do when they're undercover. But I'm seducing the guy and you have to take off one piece of clothing (at a time)," she recalled.

"I wanted to layer up. The filmmaker was like, 'No, I need to see her underwear'. Otherwise, why is anybody coming to watch this movie?"

The actress added: "He didn't say it to me. He said it to the stylist in front of me. It was such a dehumanising moment. It was a feeling of, I'm nothing else outside of how I can be used, my art is not important, what I contribute is not important."

After working for two days, she said that she exited the movie. Her father Ashok Chopra asked her to pay back the production, with her money, for what they had spent.

Talking about the director, Priyanka also said that she "just couldn't look at him every day".

Priyanka made her acting debut with the 2002 Tamil film 'Thamizhan'. She made her foray into Bollywood in 2003 with 'Andaaz'.

After that she was seen in Hindi films such as 'Aitraaz', 'Mujhse Shaadi Karogi', 'Fashion', 'Don', 'Barfi', 'Bajirao Mastani', 'Mary Kom', 'The White Tiger' and many more.



## ANURAG KASHYAP WAS ADAMANT ON GETTING SUNNY'S LAUGH RIGHT FOR UPCOMING FILM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sunny Leone is making her Cannes debut with Anurag Kashyap's 'Kennedy'. The film follows the story of an insomniac former cop, Kennedy (essayed by Rahul Bhat), who has been presumed dead for years.

He continues to work for a corrupt system while seeking redemption. Leone plays a pivotal character named Charlie, reports Variety.

Talking about her character, the



Leone's

laugh in the film is distinctive and the actor said that Kashyap was "very adamant" that she got it right.

She told Variety: "It's not something that's a part of who I am. So I had to practise and when I mean practice, I practised in the car, I practised in front of my family, my kids, my husband, my friends, on set, in the middle of shooting a song or shooting something, I would practise laughing like Charlie." "That way, when I got on set, it was out of my system, wasn't something that I felt odd about, it was just part of the character," she added.

actress said: "She's a little bit of a complex character and she hides behind some of her motions. And one of the things she hides behind the most is this laugh. And I believe she's a woman who's caught in two different worlds - one is the one that she wants to live in and one is the one she has been caught up in. I really enjoyed playing this character. And I think she is someone who's trying her very best to be as strong as possible at every moment of the day."

Talking about her character, the

## ARSHAD WARSI'S WEB SHOW SEQUEL TO DROP ON JUNE 1

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The formidable duo of Arshad Warsi and Barun Sobti will be back as Asur threatens to rise and take over the world. The streaming crime series has been renewed for its second season and will be dropping on OTT on June 1.

The second season will also feature the ensemble star cast including Ridhi Dogra, Anupriya Goenka, Amey Wagh, Meiyang Chang and Gaurav Arora.

The season 1 of the show, which was released in March 2020, ended with a cliff-hanger, pondering over the fate of the elusive killer and the horror games that unfolded. The first look promo of the second season offers a sneak peek into the upcoming story line with the marvels of mythology and the genius of forensic science colliding to create an unmissable viewing experience.

Season 2 of the show promises to be a rollercoaster ride of suspense, mystery, and adrenaline-pumping thrills as the show drops on JioCinema on June 1, 2023.



## 'An action film is something I've wanted to do,' says Shahid

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Actor Shahid Kapoor's upcoming film 'Bloody Daddy' is set to release on OTT on June 9. He said that doing an out-an-out action film was something he had wanted to do. Speaking about his unconventional role, Shahid said: "Doing an out-an-out action film was something I have wanted to do but I was waiting for the right one to come my way. When Ali came to me with this project, I knew this was it! It's high octane, its action packed, it's thrilling, and it's intense, created especially for a digital first audience."

"Ali is a true master when it comes to this style of films, and it's been very enriching for me to partner with him on this. We really love what we have created together and are bloody excited to see the audience reaction now."

The film will exclusively stream on JioCinema. The platform unveiled the action-packed trailer of the Ali Abbas Zafar-directorial at a grand event in Mumbai, in the presence of Shahid Kapoor and the director ahead of its release.

Ali Abbas Zafar said: "We see a lot of dark crime thrillers in the west, but hardly any in India that are made at that level and intensity. 'Bloody Daddy' breaks all stereotypes right from Shahid's transformation into a 'killing machine' to being one of the first direct to OTT films to be created at this grand scale! 'Bloody Daddy' is a hard-hitting out and out dark action thriller that promises raw and real action."

Bloody Daddy unravels the story of Sumair (played by Shahid Kapoor) as he faces off against Gurugram's white-collar drug lords, deceitful friends, a ruthless crime boss, murderous narcs, and both corrupt and honest cops - all during one fateful night. In the midst of a post-COVID party apocalypse, this embattled man embraces a precarious new normal and will stop at nothing to save the one relationship that truly matters to him.



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sidhika Sharma

## Manoj Bajpayee speaks about the obstacles he faced for the upcoming movie

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Acclaimed actor Manoj Bajpayee has notched up another triumph with his upcoming film 'Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai', a courtroom drama based on the real-life case of a once-revered and powerful Indian religious leader who is currently serving a life sentence for the rape of an underage girl. In the Apoorv Singh Karki directed film, Manoj plays a prosecuting lawyer who is pitted against a slew of celebrity lawyers, reports 'Variety'.

"Usually what happens is that you spend some time with the real person. Somewhere, I realised it's a two-hour film, you have to have your own preparation away from the real guy, who is somebody who's not even known to the world. And he's achieved a feat in five years of continuous court hearings that is remarkable," Bajpayee told 'Variety'.

"Instead of just creating or imitating a real person, let's have the essence of him - the relentlessness and the

courage and somebody who is stubborn about what he's doing, completely focused, and he's a good son, good father. I wanted to take all of it and make a character of my own and take a little bit of his physicality when I got to meet him before the shoot - I think it worked."

What Bajpayee found the most strenuous was understanding the legal jargon and then interpreting it in a way that a lay audience would understand.

"To make the character work, he has to be consistent; it should not leave realism at all. It cannot at any cost, just because it's a two-hour drama film, it has to be real. And as a character, and even if he's arguing in the court, it should be very real and should have that kind of an edge when people are watching it," Bajpayee said.

Another challenge was a seven-page monologue that the director wanted to shoot in a single take. Bajpayee says that after the 150th time he read the pages, he stopped counting and once

he'd memorised it, he'd catch hold of anyone and begin practising the monologue on that person.

"By God's grace, the first shot, first take, it was okay. You can achieve all of these things, if you really put your mind into it; put your focus into it."

On the underlying themes of 'Bandaa,' the actor said: "You can't trust your child even with your brother in a room where there is no monitoring happening, and there's no female member there."

"So, we are talking about all of that, we are talking about child safety, we're talking about how a family is also responsible for all of this because in 95 per cent of cases, most of the predators were known to the family. So that means as parents we failed, we took it for granted."

"It is an eye opener that way and our focus is mostly on the security and safety and protection of the child, which is an issue which is very close to my heart - always been," Bajpayee added.

