

# absolute india

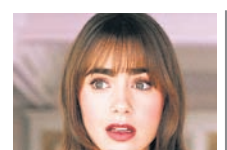
VOL. 8, ISSUE 210 BHOPAL | THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 2023 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

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**NATION** > 02  
'Oppn meeting will be held on June 23 in Patna': JD-U leader ...



**HOLLYWOOD** > 06  
'Emily in Paris' Season 4 filming delayed due to writers' strike ...



**SPORTS** > 07  
French Open: Haddad Maia becomes first Brazilian woman...



## CHARGE SHEET AGAINST BRIJ BHUSHAN BY JUNE 15, WFI ELECTIONS BY JUNE 30: SPORTS MINISTER

# HOPE OF JUSTICE

**“Our protest will continue... The government has asked for time till June 15. We are hopeful of a favourable outcome. If the government fails to deliver the outcome in the given time, we will discuss it with our seniors and plan the future course of action.”**



Bajrang Punia

**“The government has asked for time till June 15 for the police investigation to complete. It has agreed on most of our proposals related to wrestling. Now, we will keep these proposals in front of the farmers' unions, women's unions, our seniors and khap pan-chayats. So, we won't have any protest till June 15 but our 'movement' against the WFI chief will continue.”**



Sakshi Malik



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur said on Wednesday that a "very positive discussion" was held with the protesting wrestlers, adding that a charge sheet pertaining to the allegations of sexual harassment levelled against outgoing Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh will be filed by June 15. "They (wrestlers) have demanded that the investigation (into the charges against the WFI chief) should be concluded and a charge sheet be filed by June 15. WFI elections will be held by June 30," Thakur told reporters after a marathon meeting with the protesting wrestlers. "WFI will have an Internal Complaints Committee headed by

a woman. Also, two names of coaches were suggested by the wrestlers who will be part of the ad-hoc committee for technical assistance," he added. The Sports Minister said all the decisions were taken unanimously at the meeting, adding that the wrestlers had also demanded the withdrawal of cases against various academies and sportspersons as well as not allowing Singh and his associates to participate in the election process. "All these issues were agreed by consensus," Thakur said. Asked about the wrestlers' demand for Singh's arrest, Thakur said the investigation will be completed and a charge sheet will be filed by June 15. This was the second meeting between the government and the protesting wrestlers in a span of five days. The wrestlers had met

### Make woman WFI chief, scrap FIRs against us: Wrestlers to Anurag Thakur

**New Delhi:** Wrestlers Bajrang Punia and Sakshi Malik have made four demands to Sports Minister Anurag Thakur, including the appointment of a woman WFI chief and scrapping of police FIRs against them, sources said. "They demanded free and fair elections to the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) and the appointment of a woman chief. They also said Brij Bhushan Singh or his family members cannot be part of the federation. Also reiterated their demand for the arrest of Brij Bhushan Singh," sources said. However, the question now arises, can the government interfere in the WFI working or will there be change in constitution? The protesting wrestlers have been invited by the government for the second time days after they met Home Minister Amit Shah.

Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday night and apprised him of their demands.

## Dreaded criminal shot dead in Lucknow court

**Team Absolute | Lucknow**  
An assailant, who had donned a lawyer's robes, shot and killed dreaded criminal Sanjeev Maheshwari Jeeva who had come to the SC/ST court for a hearing inside the court room on Wednesday afternoon, police said.



Booked in several other criminal cases and was lodged in Lucknow jail, Jeeva, a dreaded shooter of the Mukhtar Ansari gang, received multiple injuries and then succumbed. The accused assailant, identified as Vijay Yadav of Kerakat in Jaunpur district, was overpowered and handed over to the police. However, he was beaten up so badly by other lawyers that his condition is said to be critical. A minor girl who was present in the court, has also received a gunshot injury on her back. A police constable was also injured in the attack and has been sent to Lucknow Civil Hospital for treatment. Initial reports suggest that the shooter arrived in the court dressed as lawyers, and opened fire at Jeeva. Jeeva was a co-accused in BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai murder, in which Mukhtar Ansari is also an accused. He was also an accused in the murder of BJP MLA Brahma Dutt Dwiwedi. Jeeva's wife Payal Maheshwari has recently said that she feared her husband would be killed in custody. Jeeva started his 'career' as a compounder in Muzaffarnagar and then became a member of the underworld after joining the Mukhtar Ansari gang. He was a close associate of Munna Bajrangji who was shot dead in 2018 in Baghatpail. Meanwhile, after the shootout, police faced the ire of lawyers who pelted stones at them. Additional forces have been rushed to the spot.

### Yogi sets up SIT to probe gangster's murder in court

**Lucknow:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT), to probe the courtroom murder of gangster Sanjeev Maheshwari Jeeva, a dreaded shooter of the Mukhtar Ansari gang. The three-member team includes ADG technical Mohit Agarwal, IG Nilabja Chaudhary and IG Praveen Kumar. The SIT has been asked to complete its inquiry within one week. Meanwhile, the government spokesman has denied reports appearing in a section of the media that Jeeva always wore a bulletproof jacket when he came for court hearing but was not wearing one on Wednesday when he was shot dead. "There is no truth to such reports," the spokesman said.

## Manipur 8-year-old, mother killed after mob sets Ambulance on fire

**Guwahati | Agencies**  
A gunshot wound to the head of an 8-year-old boy with parents on either side of the ethnic divide in Manipur - his tiny body one of three charred inside an ambulance set ablaze - will now join the unforgettable scars of the month-long carnage in the north-eastern state. The vehicle was set on fire in the Iroisemba area of Imphal West, under the jurisdiction of Lamphel police station, on Sunday. Those dead have been identified as 8-year-old Tonsing Hangsing, his mother Meena Hangsing, and their relative Lydia Lourembam. According to police and army sources, the ambulance was transporting the injured boy, who sustained a bullet wound in his head during a shootout, to the hospital. The family, a Meitei mother married to a Kuki man, and their son were reportedly residing in an Assam Rifles relief camp at Kangchup when the incident occurred. A senior Assam Rifles officer confirmed the incident and said security has been strengthened in and around the camp where it happened. On Sunday evening, a gunfire started in the area, and despite being in the camp, the child was hit by a bullet. A senior Assam Rifles officer immediately spoke to the police in Imphal and arranged for an ambulance. Since the mother was from the majority community, a decision was taken to take the child to the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences in Imphal by road, sources added. The ambulance was under Assam Rifles escort for a few kilometres, after which the local police took over. Around 6:30 pm, the ambulance was waylaid by civilians at Iroisemba and set ablaze. All three in the vehicle were reportedly killed, sources added.

## Kolhapur tense after protests, police cane & teargas mobs

**Kolhapur | Agencies**  
The erstwhile royal town of Kolhapur in Maharashtra was tense after protests and a shutdown call was issued by some Hindu organisations on Wednesday over alleged praise to the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and the Mysore King Tipu Sultan. Police resorted to mild caning and bursting teargas as some mobs resorted to attacking the security forces, pelted stones, overturned some vehicles and forced local shopkeepers to down shutters. The police were seen chasing the protesters, caning a mob at one spot and later catching and detaining many of the mobsters. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis are closely monitoring the situation. Several Hindu groups and organisations had called for 'Kolhapur bandh' to protest against alleged paeans to Aurangzeb and Tipu Sultan on social media, waving of posters in Ahmednagar and such other stray incidents in the past few days. Meanwhile, tight police security has



been deployed in Kolhapur particularly some of the sensitive pockets with other forces reportedly kept on alert. Meanwhile, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved one of the highest rises in minimum support price (MSP) of several commodities in recent times for kharif season (2023-24), including the ones mentioned above. The hike in the MSP for commodities is up to 10 per cent.

Minister for Food and Consumer Affairs, Commerce and Textiles Piyush Goyal said that the government's top priority is to keep inflation in check and therefore. The hike in MSP of groundnut is up to 10 per cent, for Tur/Arhar it is a 7 per cent hike for Urud it is Rs 6,950 per quintal. The hike in MSPs in Jowar, Bajra and Ragi is up to 6 per cent to 7 per cent.

## Goods train wagons run over eight workers in Odisha, six killed

**Bhubaneswar:** Days after the horrific train tragedy in Odisha that stunned the entire world, rakes of a goods train ran over eight labourers, near Jajpur-Keonjhar Road station in the state on Wednesday, killing six of them and seriously injuring the other two, officials said. The contractual labourers, engaged by a contractor for railway work, had taken shelter under the stabled rake (without engine) from the wind and rain of a 'Norwester' storm near Jajpur-Keonjhar Road, when the accident took place, East Coast Railway's (ECOR) Chief Public Relation Officer Biswajit Sahu said. The monsoon reserve rake without engine, at the line near Jajpur-Keonjhar Road station, rolled on due to heavy thunderstorms, he said, adding it had materials required for maintenance of railway tracks stationed for upcoming monsoon. "It is a very unfortunate incident. The workers engaged by the contractor to carry out railway works were taking shelter under the stationed wagons. When the wagons started moving due to heavy wind flow, the workers were trying to come out from the tracks. This incident occurred at this time," Sahu said. The railway officials present at the spot have taken them to hospital. So far, six of them have died while two critically injured workers have been admitted in the SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack, he said. Divisional railway officials led by DRM Khurda Road rushed to the accident spot, he added. Expressing deep grief over the unfortunate incident, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced Rs 5 lakh ex-gratia for the next to the kin of deceased persons.

## Cyclone Biparjoy may delay onset of monsoon rains in India

**Team Absolute | New Delhi**  
The wait for southwest monsoon might be a little longer for India with cyclonic storm Biparjoy developing in the Arabian Sea, met experts said on Wednesday. The weather system is presently sustaining the strength of a very severe cyclone. According to meteorologists, atmospheric conditions and cloud mass are indicating that the system is likely to sustain the strength of a very severe cyclone till June 12. The India Meteorology Department (IMD) said the system is likely to be more organised and may intensify up to a very severe cyclonic storm by June 9. "Weather conditions are very ripe for the system to continue to gain more strength. With long sea travel ahead, sea surface temperatures are very warm, infusing more heat and moisture into the atmosphere. This would help the system sustain its strength for a longer period," said G.P. Sharma, President,



Meteorology and Climate Change, Skymet Weather. "The oceans have become warmer already on account of climate change. In fact, a recent study shows that the Arabian Sea has warmed up by almost 1.2-degree Celsius since March, thus conditions are very much favourable for the rapid intensification of the system so it has potential to sustain the strength for a longer period," added Raghu Murtugudde, professor,

Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Science, University of Maryland and IIT Bombay. Further, there has been an 80 per cent increase in the total duration of cyclones in the Arabian Sea during the last two decades. The duration of very severe cyclones has increased by 260 per cent. The IMD predicted the onset of monsoon on June 4 with an error margin of plus/minus 4 per cent.

### Hijab row in MP: FIR registered against Ganga Jamuna School authorities

**Bhopal:** An FIR has been registered against the management of Ganga Jamuna school where a hijab controversy erupted a couple of days back in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district. The school management has been booked under Sections 295, 506 of the Indian Penal Code and also under the Juvenile Justice Act. The development came hours after state Home Minister Narottam Mishra ordered the Damoh district police to take prompt action in the matter and investigate the issue from all angles. The school management was accused of alleged religious conversion. Damoh SP Rakesh Singh said on Wednesday that the FIR has been lodged on the basis of the statements of two women, who (according to the official) have spoken against the school management. "Regular directions were being issued from the state government, following which an investigation was carried out. Cognizance was taken on the basis of statements of two women and the FIR was lodged," Rakesh Singh stated.

### Tikait slams lathicharge on farmers demanding crop MSP, threatens larger agitation

**Chandigarh | Agencies**  
Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait on Wednesday threatened a larger agitation than the yearlong protest against the now repealed farm laws if the government didn't announce a legal guarantee of the minimum support price (MSP) for procurement of crops. Tikait, who reached Shahabad in Haryana's Kurukshetra district, to extend support to the agitating farmers and those who were arrested, condemned the police lathicharge on protesting farmers who had blocked a national highway a day earlier demanding that the Haryana government should procure sunflower seeds at the MSP. "The struggle that began in Shahabad would reach the national level as every farmer is concerned about the MSP for different crops. An agitation bigger than the one in Delhi will have to be undertaken for the MSP," Tikait told the media



in Karnal. Nine leaders of the BKU (Charuni) faction, including its president Gurnam Singh Charuni, were arrested on Tuesday evening for blocking the national highway 44 connecting Chandigarh with Delhi.



# 'OPPN MEETING WILL BE HELD ON JUNE 23 IN PATNA': JD-U LEADER

Team Absolute | Patna

Janata Dal-United (JD-U) leader Lalan Singh on Wednesday said that the opposition meeting, that was earlier scheduled to be held on June 12 and then deferred, will now be held here on June 23. Speaking to the mediapersons, accompanied by Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav, the Bihar unit JD-U president said the June 12 meeting was postponed as "there were some issues over the date, and top Congress leaders were not available for the earlier planned date". "Now, top Congress leaders including Rahul Gandhi and party president Mallikarjun Kharge, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee, Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin, Left leaders D. Raja, Sitaram Yechury, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and CPI-ML national secretary Dipankar



Bhattacharya have agreed on the date and they have given their consensus for this meeting. The venue of the meeting is Patna," Lalan Singh said. Earlier, the Congress had said that Rahul Gandhi is in the US, and party president Mallikarjun Kharge also has pre-scheduled programmes which cannot be postponed. "There were some issues over the date and hence we have rescheduled it. All top

leaders of like-minded parties will assemble in Patna. It was possible through the efforts of our CM Nitish Kumar, former CM Lalu Prasad and other leaders. All parties in the opposition camp have general consensus to form a strategy against BJP and remove it from power as it (BJP) is hurting the Constitution," Tejashwi Yadav said. "They (BJP) have imposed an 'emergency' in the coun-

try. No one would say anything. If anyone says anything against the Narendra Modi government, they would start targeting him by using the CBI, ED and Income Tax department. We will hold a meeting of all opposition parties to remove the BJP government from the Centre, and bring democracy to the country again," said Lalan Singh. According to sources, the Congress had objections over the original date as June 12 was the day when Jayaprakash Narayan had started the Sampoorna Kranti movement against the Congress party in 1975 in Patna. A source said: "Hence, the Congress had an uneasy feeling. There was also a buzz over the party's top leadership not being satisfied with the venue. They wanted the meeting to be held in one of those states where the Congress is in power. Shimla was proposed as a possible venue." However, according to the source, Nitish Kumar was very firm on the venue, and so was Mamata Banerjee.

# Cancel interim protection to Sameer Wankhede: CBI to Bombay HC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has urged the Bombay High Court to recall an order granting interim protection to former Mumbai Zonal Director of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Sameer Wankhede, in an alleged extortion case, a day before his plea is slated for hearing on Thursday. In its affidavit filed recently, the CBI has contended that the allegations in its FIR against Wankhede and others are very serious and of a sensitive nature, pertaining to acts of extortion threats, corruption and criminal conspiracy, after the sensational drugs raid on a cruise ship in October 2021. Following a written complaint from the NCB, the CBI had registered the FIR on May 11, along with the clearance required to take action against a public servant under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act. The complaint followed an internal Special Enquiry Team probe into the corruption allegations against Wankhede and others in the case. The CBI had earlier opposed



Wankhede's petition in the court arguing that the investigations are in the initial stages and granting protection to him could adversely hit the probe. Wankhede and others are accused of allegedly demanding a bribe of Rs 25 crore from Bollywood mega-star Shah Rukh Khan, whose son Aryan Khan was among the 17 arrested after the raids on Cordelia cruise ship off Mumbai harbour on the evening of October 2, 2021. At the previous hearing, the court had granted Wankhede conditional interim protection against any coercive action by the CBI, but asked him to cooperate with the probe, refrain from commenting anything about the same, or tamper with the evidence, etc.

# Kuki women protest outside Amit Shah's residence, detained

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A group of women belonging to Manipur's Kuki tribal community staged a protest outside the residence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi on Wednesday against the ethnic violence in the north-eastern state that has so far killed more than 100 people. The Union Minister had recently visited Manipur from May 29 to June 1. According to information, the women gathered outside Shah's residence at around 9



a.m. However, all the protesters were instructed to leave by the Delhi Police, as staging any kind of protest is not allowed in the area. A Delhi Police official said that upon receiving information about the protest, they dispatched a team to pacify the protesters. The police ini-

tially informed the protesters that assembling outside Shah's house was illegal. "All the protesters were detained and brought to Jantar Mantar. We informed them that they can stage their protest there if they wanted," the police said. Manipur has witnessed unprecedented ethnic violence since May 3 after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in 11 hill districts by the All Tribal Students' Union of Manipur to protest the Meitei community's demand for a Scheduled Tribe status.

# INDIA WILL HAVE 220 AIRPORTS IN NEXT 2-3 YEARS, SAYS SCINDIA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Civil Aviation Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia, announced on Wednesday that India is set to have 200-220 airports, heliports, and water aerodromes in the next two to three years. Speaking at a Press conference in Delhi, the minister highlighted that until 2014, only 74 airports were operational in the country. However, by March 2023, another 74 airports, helicopters, and water aerodromes have been successfully established. Scindia outlined the objective of reaching a total of 220 airports by 2024-25, including the recent declaration of Tirupati, Vijayawada, Kushinagar, and Mopa Airports as international airports, bringing the total number of international airports in India to 30. The minister further emphasised ongoing efforts to enhance capacity at metro airports, with plans to increase overall capacity



from the current 221 million passengers per annum (MPPA) to over 456 MPPA in the next decade. "Expansion projects are underway or completed at airports such as DIAL, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Chennai. Additionally, the construction of Greenfield Airports in Jewar and Navi Mumbai will boost capacity expansion in Delhi and Mumbai, respectively," he said. Scindia also highlighted the substantial progress in Greenfield airport development, with 11 operationalised in the past nine years. "In-principle approval has been granted for an additional 11 Greenfield airports, including Dholera and Hirasar in Gujarat," said the minister. The minister underscored the significant increase in the number of airports in the northeastern states, nearly doubling from nine airports in 2014 to 17 airports currently operational. The new airports include Hollongi, Ziro, Paisghat, Dibrugargh, Tezpur, Pakyong, etc.

# AIR INDIA PASSENGERS STRANDED IN RUSSIA'S MAGADAN FORCED TO SLEEP ON SCHOOL FLOOR

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A video footage has surfaced on Twitter showing stranded Air India passengers forced to sleep on the floor of a school after their San Francisco-bound flight was diverted to Magadan in Russia due to a technical snag. Meanwhile, Union Minister of Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia said that the alternate flight was dispatched for the Magadan airport from Mumbai around 1 p.m. and it will take six hours to reach there. "Once the flight reaches, the passengers will be flown to their destination which is San Francisco," he said. Earlier, on Tuesday Air India flight AI173, from Delhi to San Francisco, was forced to divert and make an emergency landing at Magadan airport in Russia due



to a technical issue with one of its engines, officials said. The Air India spokesperson said that the ferry flight is carrying food and other essentials for our passengers. "All of us at Air India are concerned about the passengers and staff and are making every effort possible to operate the ferry flight as soon

as possible, and to ensure the health, safety, and security of all while they wait," said the airline in a statement issued on Wednesday.

"As we do not have any Air India staff based in the remote town of Magadan or in Russia, all ground support being provided to the

passengers is the best possible in this unusual circumstance through our round the clock liaison with the Consulate General of India in Vladivostok, Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India), local ground handlers, and the Russian authorities," it added.

# Court quashes Nagaland govt's order banning dog meat sale

Team Absolute | Guwahati

Nagaland government order prohibiting the sale and eating of dog meat in the state issued in 2020 was recently quashed by the Kohima Bench of the Gauhati High Court. On June 2, Justice Marli Vankung ruled that the state government could not have prohibited the consumption of dog meat without a valid legal basis. The Court order mentioned: "The prohibition of sale and consumption of dog meat, by the Executive branch of the Government, without there being any law passed by the legislature in relation to trade and consumption of dog meat is liable thus to be set aside even though the impugned notification dated July 4, 2020 is said to have been passed in accordance with a Cabinet decision." The Court reasoned that there is no indication



of any authority to issue prohibition orders in the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, which served as the foundation for the government's issuance of the order. It also observed that dog meat was not covered by the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, though this was not 'surprising'. "The meat of dogs is consumed only in some parts of the North Eastern states and the very idea of consuming dog meat is alien in other parts of the country. The thought of adding canine/dogs as an animal for human consumption under regula-

tion 2.5.1(a) would be inconceivable, since consumption of dog meat would be considered unthinkable..." "The consumption of dog meat appears to be an accepted norm and food amongst the Nagas even in modern times, wherein the petitioners are able to earn their livelihood by transporting dogs and selling of dog meat," the court said. The court emphasised that under long-standing precedent, the FSS Act's Commissioner of Food Safety - not the State's Chief Secretary -- was the only person authorised to issue orders outlawing the sale of any meat within the state. It was acknowledged that the management of the dogs intended for slaughter in the current situation was not entirely hygienic or in accordance with the Slaughter House Rules. The Court ruled that the same did not, however, support a blanket ban.

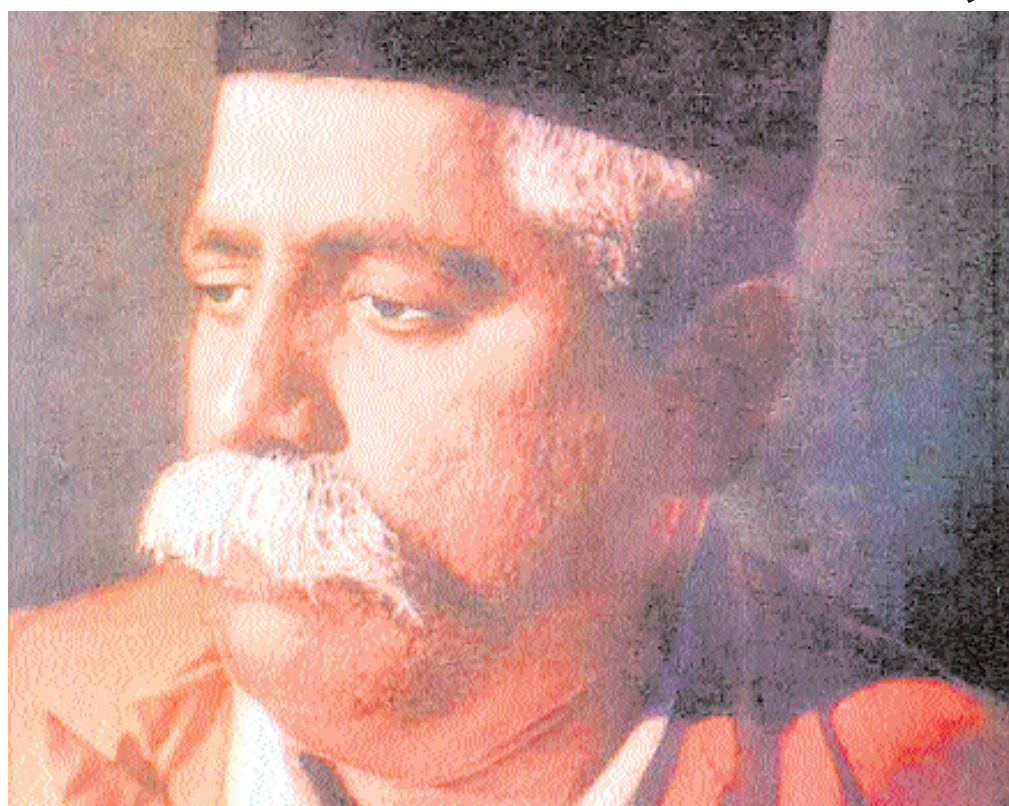
# SISODIA MEETS SAILING WIFE AFTER 103 DAYS IN JAIL

New Delhi: Former Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, Manish Sisodia, who is facing money laundering charges in connection with the Delhi liquor policy scam, met his sailing wife, Seema, on Wednesday. Confirming their meeting, his wife wrote an emotional note on Facebook, stating that she met her husband after 103 days. She mentioned that her husband was in jail due to dirty politics. During their last attempt to meet, Sisodia couldn't see his wife as she had to be hospitalized in Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital due to her deteriorating condition. The court has also instructed the media not to be present during his visit to meet his wife, as media personnel had previously attempted to speak to him. After the meeting, Seema Sisodia wrote an emotional note on Facebook in support of her husband. "Today, I met Manish after 103 days. For 7 hours, he sat outside the police bedroom door, continuously watching me and listening to everything I said. Perhaps that's why they say politics is dirty," read her letter. She mentioned that when they were forming a party, many well-wishers cautioned her, saying that journalism and activism are fine, but they shouldn't get involved in politics as people already in politics would trouble her family and hinder their work.

# K'taka to exclude lessons on RSS founder from school syllabus

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

Congress-led Karnataka government is all set to drop lessons on RSS founder Keshav Baliram Hegdegar for the students this academic year. It has also been decided to issue directions to teachers not to teach other lessons included during the tenure of the BJP government. Sources explained that the Congress government would issue a circular soon in this regard. The lessons on the right-winger Chakravarthy Sulibele and scholar Bannanje Govindacharya will also be dropped. Since the textbooks of the 2023-24 academic year have already been published, the government would not order republication, but ask teachers to exclude the lessons. It was decided on Tuesday at the meeting chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and attended by Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa and progressive thinkers, according to sources. It has also been decided to drop controversial and objectionable texts from teaching, examination and evaluation process. Siddaramaiah directed that a committee be formed to look into the controversial content added during the tenure of BJP and submit a report in a week. The matter is likely to be discussed in the cabinet before the issue of an official circular. Earlier, Siddaramaiah had made a categorical statement that the content, which poisons the mind of students, would be deleted. While talking to reporter, senior BJP spokesperson



Ganesh Karnik stated that Congress moves to blatantly withdraw, refuse and stop the steps taken by the BJP government in the interest of the nation, are closely observed. "The power tariff hike, withdrawal of Rs 1.50 milk subsidy given to farmers by the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF), increase in excise tax show that Congress government is taking money from the middle and upper middle class pockets. It is very much likely that the Rs 4,000 contribution of the state government to Kisan Samman Nidhi would also be withdrawn," he said. "The changes to the textbooks by the BJP government were made as per the guidelines of the National Curriculum Forum (NCF). The BJP brought the syllabus up to 12th standard into the NCF framework from the state framework. It can't be done as per whims and fancies of CM Siddaramaiah and Dy CM D.K. Shivakumar," Ganesh Karnik stated. He said, "The changes will have to be in accordance with the NCERT guidelines. The Congress government will have to face the consequences. It is provoking the emotions of large sections of people who love the history of India. Hegdegar was the Congress party secretary. When he found that there is no value in that party for the land and culture he founded the RSS." "This is your fall. This is injustice to youth. The power is not permanent. The new Congress government which is now a '420 government' will pay for the arrogance and leading the country down the wrong path," he underlined.



# CM INTERACTS WITH LADLI FAMILY AT MUKHYA MANTRI LADLI BAHNA SAMMELAN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

**Rs 2100 crore interest of farmers will be waived on June 13. Farmers will also get crop insurance and Kisan Samman Nidhi. Massive Mukhya Mantri Ladli Bahna Sammelan held at Bamhori in Raisen. Bhoomi puja and dedication of construction and development works worth over Rs 328 crores. Bamhori to become tehsil and 30 bed hospital will also be built. Sultanganj will get Tehsil status, SDM office will open in Udaipura**



Silvani and Udaipura assembly constituencies. In the programme, foundation laying, bhoomi-pujan of various works worth more than Rs 319 crore was performed and various works worth more than Rs 8 crore 45 lakh were dedicated. Public Health and Family Welfare minister Dr. Prabhuram Chowdhary, MP Shri Ramakant Bhargava, MLA Shri Rampal Singh and Shri Surendra Patwa including public representatives were present on the occasion. The Chief Minister said that the farmers should also be happy as the government will pay the interest amount of Rs 2100 crores of farmers on coming June 13. Apart from Rs 2,900 crore for crop insurance, a Kisan Samman Nidhi of Rs 2,000 each will also be deposited in the accounts of the farm-

ers. Chief Minister announced to provide tehsil status to Bamhori town and Sultanganj and build an SDM office for Udaipura. Along with making Bamhori a Municipal Council, he also announced the opening of a 30-bed Community Health Center. The Chief Minister also announced to upgrade the colleges of Silvani and Begumganj to post graduate colleges from the next session. Apart from the approval letters of Ladli Bahna Yojana, he also distributed residential land rights letters and approval letters of funds to the Livelihood Mission to women. Mentioning the immediate formation of Ladli Bahna Sena in every village, Chief Minister Chouhan said that these Senas would be the eyes of the government, which would monitor development and welfare schemes and get them implemented. There will be a Sena of 11 sisters in a small village and of 21 in a big village. These Senas and all the sisters will now be a beloved family, which will become a weapon to eradicate poverty with co-operation and organisation. The Chief Minister assured the sisters that he would continue to work for the honour of daughters, sisters and

mothers till his last breath. He said that Ladli Bahna Yojana is a social revolution and heralds a new era of women empowerment. Schemes prepared by him like Ladli Laxmi, Mukhyamantri Kanya-Vivah have made daughters a boon from earlier a curse in the society, while elections to local bodies and reservation in government services have ensured adequate participation of half the population in development along with power. Criticizing the previous government for discontinuing the schemes, the Chief Minister said that we have re-started all the schemes for the welfare of the poor. The Chief Minister said that now he will give e-cooties along with laptops to meritorious daughters and will also pay the fees for higher education of eligible nephews and nieces. No one will remain homeless in the state and the government will also give them plots. The Chief Minister told the sisters that now they will not have to be dependent for their small needs, an amount of Rs. 1000 will be deposited in their accounts on June 10. He appealed to celebrate the Ladli Bahna Gram Sabha on June 8 and the festival on June 9 and 10.

## Rescue operations continue for 2nd day to save girl stuck in borewell in Sehore

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Rescue operations were on to save a three-year-old girl who fell into a borewell in Madhya Pradesh's Sehore, said officials on Wednesday. The operation has been going on for the past 18 hours after the girl fell in the borewell on Tuesday while she was playing. "The rescue operation is still underway on the second day," the Sehore district administration officials said, without elaborating much about the current situation of the girl. The officials said that the digging of a parallel hole/tunnel was still underway which will take some more time. The girl, Shristi Kushwaha, was stuck at a depth of 25-30 feet in the 300-ft deep borewell. Oxygen was being supplied to her and her movements were being monitored through a camera. An official said digging was delayed due to the presence



of hard rock. On Tuesday, Chief Minister Shrivraj Singh Chouhan directed the district administration to rescue the baby girl. Earlier, in March this year, a 7-year-old boy fell into a borewell in Vidisha district and was rescued after 24 hours operation jointly by Indian Army and SDRF team, however, by the time the boy was rescued, he had died. Following which, the state government had ordered the officials to check all the borewells and ensure that all of them are covered. However, no heed was paid to the instruction. In the last one and a half years, nearly half a dozen such incidents were reported in different parts of Madhya Pradesh.

## Two wagons of goods train carrying LPG derail in Jabalpur

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Two wagons of a goods train carrying Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) derailed in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur, said officials on Wednesday. The incident reportedly occurred near Bharat Petroleum Depot on Tuesday night. According to the West Central Railway CPRO, the derailment took place when the two wagons of the goods train were unloading rakes of LPG at Bhinoti railway station located near Jabalpur railway station. "Two wagons of the LPG rake of a goods train derailed while being placed for unloading last night. No mainline movement of trains was affected. Train movement is normal in the main line. Restoration work started after sunrise in the presence of authorities. Fitness certificate issued by siding owners," CPRO



West Central Railway said. On June 2 three trains including one goods train collided in Odisha's Balasore district. At least 278 passengers were lost and over 1,000 were injured. The horrific accident has also sparked political controversy and questions were raised by the opposition on various grounds, including safety.

## Home Minister questions Bajrang Sena's 'influence' a day after it announced support to Cong

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra has questioned the reach and acceptance of 'Bajrang Sena' in the country. The minister's remarks came a day after the social organisation established in 2013 extended its support to the Congress in the upcoming Assembly elections slated for later this year. Responding to the media queries on Bajrang Sena's support to the opposition ahead of the Assembly polls, Mishra said, "Has anyone heard about Bajrang Sena's name before yesterday?" He further said the Congress uses such tactics to remain in the news. "What is the



acceptability of Bajrang Sena? Has anyone ever heard of it, and that it's national president is meeting with someone? Who knows Bajrang

Sena? It is the Congress that brings such people to remain in the news," the minister added. On Tuesday, national convener of Bajrang Sena along with his around 100 members were at the Congress headquarters in Bhopal and met former Chief Minister Kamal Nath. He has also raised slogans - "Jai Sri Ram" before addressing the gathering. Kamal Nath, who claims to be a devotee of Lord Hanuman said, "You (Bajrang Sena) have decided to support the Congress, it means you are supporting the truth. Madhya Pradesh has become a state of scams during the BJP rule, be it Mahakal Lok or Narmada scam. We have to protect xxour culture."

## Digvijay and Scindia have an eye on each other's areas

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In Madhya Pradesh, the color of the political feud between senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh and BJP leader and Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia is going to deepen. Both the leaders have each other's areas of influence and they want to realize their strength by defeating there. Gwalior-Chambal is the area of Madhya Pradesh where the command of Congress has been in the hands of Digvijay Singh, while now Jyotiraditya Scindia is preparing to handle the same feat in BJP. It is a different matter that BJP's Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Narottam Mishra, minister in the state government, besides Jai Bhan Singh Pawaiya, many other leaders come from this area. The influence of the Scindia royal family has been in almost every area of Gwalior-Chambal, while the political land of Digvijay Singh's family is in Guna and Rajgarh districts. Both Digvijay and Scindia are members of the Rajya Sabha while Digvijay Singh's brother Laxman Singh Chachoda and his son Jaivardhan Singh are

MLAs from Raghogarh. So Scindia's aunt Yashodhara Rajee Scindia is the BJP MLA from Shivpuri. Digvijay Singh's activism has increased continuously in the Gwalior-Chambal area and he is busy preparing to weaken Scindia in his own house. They are also trying to connect old leaders who were once with Scindia but are still in the Congress. Not only this, the efforts of the former Chief Minister are going on to bring the disgruntled leaders of the BJP to the Congress. On one hand, where Digvijay Singh's activism has increased, on the other hand, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has also intensified his efforts to strengthen his land in Rajgarh and Guna areas with which Digvijay Singh has a deep connection. Union Minister Scindia met with several BJP leaders from Chachoda and Raghogarh constituencies. In this meeting, the leaders and workers were directly instructed to increase activism in these areas. Scindia Chachoda and Raghogarh are not trying to let go of any opportunity to reduce the influence of Digvijay Singh.

## State government will not make anyone homeless : CM Chouhan Residents of Bairad Nagar Panchayat will get residential lease

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Singh Chouhan has said that the state government will not make anyone homeless. The state government is running a campaign to provide residential leases to such residents in urban and rural areas who do not have their own home to live in. In this sequence, residential land pattas will also be made available to the residents of Bairad. Chief Minister said this during a discussion with the residents of Bairad Nagar Panchayat of Pohri assembly constituency of Shivpuri district who came along with Minister of State for Public Works Suresh Dhakad at the CM's residence. In a discussion with the Chief Minister Chouhan, the residents of Bairad urged him to declare the grazing land of Bairad on which SC, ST and OBC families have been living for 20-25 years as a population land.



## Soft vs Hard Hindutva, How Cong plans to use Hindutva card to ace MP polls (Anchor)

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

In the run up to the assembly elections later this year, the Madhya Pradesh Congress is set to counter the party's portrayal as anti-Hindu. The opposition led by veteran leader Kamal Nath has drawn up elaborate plans to take on the ruling BJP and it's saffron allies - the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Bajrang Dal and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). The idea is to counter the BJP's hard-Hindutva with soft-Hindutva, and for this purpose, the Congress has made the "Dharmik and Utsav Prakosth" fully active now. The committee was formed two years back and had enrolled kathavachak Richa Goswami who has an ashram in Amarkantak,



along with several priests, religious storytellers and priests of temples. The Congress "Dharmik and Utsav Prakosth", which also projected Kamal Nath as a devotee of Lord Hanuman, has organised 30 religious programmes across the state in the last two years. It is now set to take forward its vision across 230 assembly seats in the coming days. The fresh segment of religious programmes will start with a mega event of

the "Bhagwat Gita" kathavachan by Richa Goswami in Panchasheel Nagar of Bhopal on June 5, sources privy to the matter told correspondent. "The religious programmes are being organised across the state to counter the portrayal of the BJP and its ideological mentor, the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh of the Congress as anti-Hindu. Local party leaders will be organising the programmes at their

expense by involving the local people," a Congress spokesperson said requesting not to be named. Sources claimed the preparations for this had begun a couple of months ago with the formation of a 'mandir pujari prakosht'. In a meeting with MP Congress head Kamal Nath, the priests had voiced their grievances, which include ownership of the temple's land and that they should be given the status of farmers. The plan is also an attempt to dent the BJP's Brahmin voters. A similar concept was utilised during the last elections in 2018 and Hindu religious leaders such as Computer Baba and Mirchi Baba were enrolled to organise programmes before it returned to power in Madhya Pradesh in 2018. Later, they

were given cabinet rank also which had led to a political controversy. The Congress, however, lost power two years later when 22 legislators quit the party and resigned from the assembly in March 2020. This crisis within the Congress had resulted in Shrivraj Singh Chouhan coming back into power again after 15 months. Importantly, the Congress will take up the recent incident of the 'Mahakal Lok' corridor to corner the BJP in the coming elections. Six Saptarshi idols had collapsed following which the opposition Congress criticised the ruling BJP, accusing it of indulging in corruption in the Mahakal Lok corridor project, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in October last year.

## National level event to be held in Jabalpur on June 21 - International Yoga Day

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shrivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the national level main event on International Yoga Day will be held in Jabalpur on June 21. This national level programme on the theme of Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam should be organised with full dignity and maximum people should be connected with the programme. Chief Minister Chouhan apprised himself about the ongoing preparations for the programme from the residence office Samatva. It was told that the national level main programme will start at 6 am at the Garrison Ground in Jabalpur. Participation of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Governor of Madhya Pradesh Mangubhai Patel is proposed in the programme. Chief Minister Chouhan, Union AYUSH Minister Sarbananda Sonowal will also participate in the programme. Yoga



programmes will also be held in all the tourist and historical places, urban bodies and gram panchayats of the state on International Yoga Day. Information about ongoing preparations for the programme was also given in the meeting.



EDITOR'S SPECS

**Karnataka BJP's internal strife comes out in open ahead of LS polls**

Following its humiliating defeat in the Karnataka Assembly elections, the BJP is all set to revamp its strategy for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections but the prospect of dropping several sitting MPs has created heartburn. Meanwhile, the ruling Congress, buoyed by the success, is looking to wrest more than 20 seats out of 28 parliamentary constituencies in the state. Sources in the BJP says that the party is looking forward to credible fresh faces from the party cadres and from government services. Amid strong rumours that most of the sitting MPs may not even be considered for tickets, Bengaluru North MP and former Chief Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda has urged the party high command to issue clarification in this regard. A total of 13 MPs have approached Sadananda Gowda and he has raised his voice for them, pulling up the party and leaders for remaining tight-lipped and warning that the development will send the wrong signal to the people of the state. Sadananda Gowda maintained that introspection should take place regarding the defeat but there are no souls who would make an attempt to introspect. Sources in BJP maintained that including Sadananda Gowda, Mangala Angadi, MP from Belagavi, who gave a statement that Jagadish Shettar would win in elections against the BJP candidate would not be considered. G.M. Siddeshwara, MP from Davanagere is also likely to miss a Lok Sabha ticket. The party had given tickets to 72 new faces in the Assembly elections. However, former CM Basavaraj Bommai stated that the experiment of giving tickets to new faces has backfired for the party. The party think tank is disturbed with the state Assembly results and till date not able to make a decision on the Leader of the Opposition.

**WATER WARS: THE NEW NORMAL?**

Asad Mirza

The recent border clashes between Iran and Afghanistan have a really dreaded portent for the future, both at the local and global levels, besides being a pointer to how we have managed our environment resources in a foolish manner.

As per reports from the Iranian Tasnim News Agency, deadly clashes broke out between border guards and the Afghan soldiers in the border area encompassing the Zabul district of Sistan and Baluchestan province on the Iranian side and the Keng district of Nimruz province in Afghanistan.

The deadly clashes resulted in death of two Iranian border guards in clashes with Taliban forces, while the Iranians, on their part, claimed to have killed 12 Taliban soldiers.

Perplexingly, the issue over which tensions between the two neighbours ran high is how to divide the waters of the Helmand River, which the two nations must share.

Iran accuses Afghanistan's Taliban rulers of violating a 1973 treaty by restricting the flow of water from the Helmand River to Iran's parched eastern regions, an accusation denied by the Taliban.

China's Xinhua news agency reported that Iranian MP Hossein-Ali Shahriari, who represents Zahidan, the capital of Sistan and Baluchestan province, charged the Taliban government in Afghanistan with stopping up the flow of the Helmand River and storing extra water in the Kamal Khan Dam and other reservoirs. He complained that the Afghans have recently built new dams that are storing water that would otherwise have flowed to Iran.

Though this development might be a shocking news to many, however this is not a new phenomenon but was bound to happen not just between Iran and Afghanistan but amongst other countries too. Journalist Fatemeh Aman wrote a good summary of this conflict for the Atlantic Council, noting that drought and climate change have exacerbated the tensions over water sharing.

Both countries have built dams on the Helmand and irrigated off it, often to raise water-hungry crops not suitable to this arid environment.

Fatemeh noted that Helmand is the longest river in Afghanistan, constituting over 40 per cent of Afghanistan's surface water. With 95 per cent of the Helmand located in Afghanistan, it is a critical source of livelihood for the country's southern and southwestern provinces. The river further flows into Iran's arid southwest to feed the Hamoun wetlands



on the Iranian side and lakes on the Afghan side, but damming, irrigation, and drought have partially dried these up, creating conditions for toxic dust clouds.

As per environmentalists, Iran and Afghanistan are projected to heat up faster than the world average, twice as fast, in fact. Already, poor water management and extra heat have had a devastating effect on the Helmand basin. Extra heat dries out the soil and contributes to more intense and more frequent droughts. It also causes greater and more rapid evaporation of water from lakes and rivers.

The water resources are critical for people living in the increasingly drought-prone Sistan and Baluchestan region; in addition the Sistan wetland ecosystem also supports flamingos, pelicans, and other migratory birds. And while the history of conflict over the Helmand River is long, the scenario is similar to conflicts over water in other regions of the world. Many social scientists foresee water wars as a result. This border clash is a small omen of bigger conflicts to come.

Tensions between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia over the latter's Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and Blue Nile River resources haven't been resolved in years, with both Egypt and Ethiopia threatening a military response at various points.

Last year, Russian troops destroyed a Dnieper River dam that diverted water away

from Crimea and into Ukraine. Armed groups in Mali, Somalia and beyond destroyed water infrastructure needed by civilians. Mexico, Chile, Israel and Palestine, Kenya and Peru - the Water Conflict Chronology database lists hundreds of conflicts over water in the modern era, as well as across history.

Journal Sustainability Times quoting UN Statistical Division's data pertaining to 2019, reports that the number of water conflicts by different regions globally as of April 2022 runs up to more than 1100 conflicts.

Environmentalist Laureen Fagan in her report for Sustainability Times further quoted Dr. Peter Gleick, co-founder of the Pacific Institute in the US and author of The Three Ages of Water, as warning that the frequency of water-related conflicts has grown in the past two decades. That's due to violence in the Middle East, growing disputes during severe droughts over access to water in regions like Indian subcontinent and ethnic and community confrontations in sub-Saharan Africa.

Fagan further referred to a February 2023 paper on the database, co-authored by Shimabuku and published in the journal Environmental Research Letters, saying that it's the uneven access to fresh water around the world that makes it a strategic priority during conflict, as is the case along the Iran-Afghanistan border.

Gleick and Morgan are of the view that social, economic, and political challenges associated with freshwater resources pose a variety of severe risks to communities around the world, from water-related diseases, to crop failures, to ecological destruction, to actual violence, the risks and incidences of water-related conflicts in recent years, are on the rise, and the factors driving such violence appear to be worsening. We need to understand the root causes of water conflicts and more effective strategies for reducing their probability and consequences.

Increasing tensions over water resources point out to the emergence of a new dimension to the global geopolitics, adding to the regional and neighbourly rivalries.

Now indeed the time seems to be apt to work cohesively to find a collective solution to the global demand & supply and sharing of water resources, besides taking a conscious, serious and determined approach to care more for our environment instead of just hollow talks, which seem to have become the trend of most global environmental agencies and plans. If indeed we do not act even now, then it may be too late when the real wars due to scarce water resources start erupting across the globe.

international

**PUTIN 'MAY TRY TO BLOW UP LARGEST NUCLEAR PLANT IN EUROPE', WARNS UKRAINE**

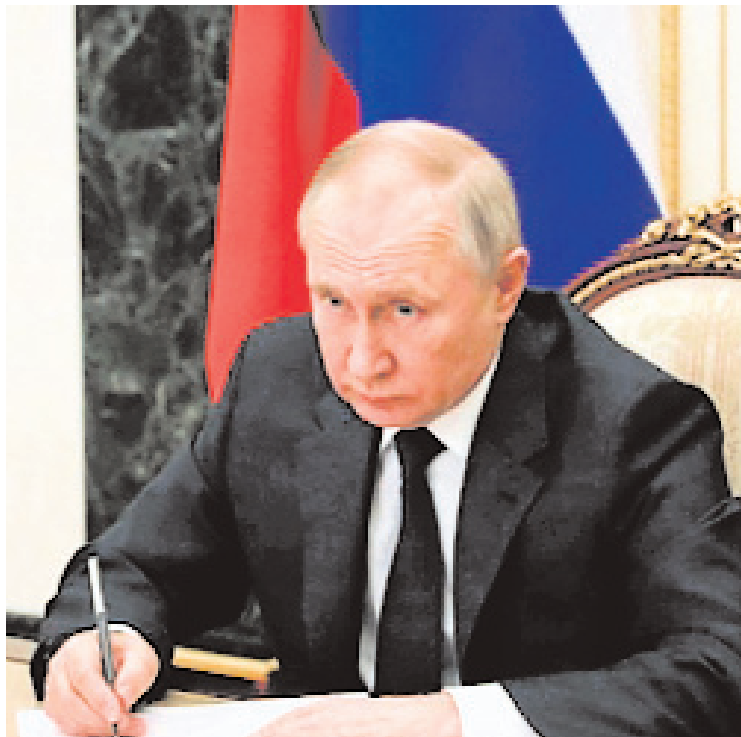
London | Agencies

Russia may be plotting to blow up the largest nuclear power plant in Europe, Ukraine has warned, after explosions at a major dam and hydroelectric plant caused mass flooding in the Kherson region and sparked a humanitarian disaster, the media reported.

A series of blasts caused the critical Nova Kakhovka dam, which lies along the Dnieper river in Russian-held territory, to partially collapse and led to 'catastrophic' floods, the Daily Mail reported.

Around 24 towns were overrun by the deluge with shocking footage from the region showing how entire villages were submerged and houses swept away, Daily Mail reported.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky accused Russia of detonating an 'environmental bomb of mass destruction', saying authorities expected up to 80 settlements to be flooded and urging the world to 'react'.



"This crime carries enormous threats and will have dire consequences for people's lives and the environment," Zelensky said, while US security officials warned there would likely be 'many deaths' as a result of the floods. The Kremlin, meanwhile, has blamed Ukraine for the blast, claiming it was a ploy by Kyiv to distract from the launch of a major counteroffensive Moscow says is faltering, the Daily Mail reported. But Zelensky's top security official Oleksiy Danilov dismissed the allegations and said that Putin's next step may be to attack the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, which lies just 80 miles up the river from Kakhovka and relies on water from the dam to cool its reactors, the Daily Mail reported. Danilov told the Times that since Putin has entered 'a fundamentally new stage of Russian aggression' and that since he 'had the hydroelectric power plant blown up on his demand, he is ready to do anything'.

**UK to have one of highest inflation rates in the world in 2023: Forecast**

London | Agencies

A new forecast by the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on Wednesday revealed that the UK will have one of the highest inflation rates in the developed world this year. The OECD's Economic Outlook predicted that inflation in the UK will be higher than nearly any of its other members, expect for Argentina and Turkey, Sky News reported. The UK will grow by 0.3 per cent this year and 1 per cent in 2024, according to the Economic Outlook. But the Paris-based body also said that there were "significant risks" to its forecast. "The high interest burden on public debt and the recent drop in average debt maturity leave the public finances exposed to movements in bond yields. "Renewed increases in



wholesale energy prices due to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine would further squeeze real incomes given the United Kingdom's high dependence on natural gas. Faster-than-expected resolution of uncertainty regarding future trade relationships is an upside risk," Sky News quoted the OECD as saying. The Organisation added the UK's inflation rate should average 6.9 per cent this year, higher than the OECD average and indeed nearly every other country in the developed world.

The warning comes after Chancellor Jeremy Hunt told Sky News he would back the Bank of England to raise interest rates in the coming months to bring inflation under control, even if it pushed the UK into recession. Responding to the OECD forecast, Chancellor Hunt said: "Today's report boosts our growth forecast, praises our action to help parents back to work with a major expansion of free childcare, and recognises our cuts to business taxes which aim to drive investment."

**UN OFFICIAL WARNS OF CONSEQUENCES OF DESTRUCTION OF UKRAINIAN DAM**

United Nations: UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths has warned of the grave consequences of the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant dam in southern Ukraine. The dam's destruction is possibly the most significant incident of damage to civilian infrastructure since the start of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in February 2022, Griffiths told an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council, Xinhua news agency reported. "The sheer magnitude of the catastrophe will only become fully realized in the coming days. But it is already clear that it will have grave and far-reaching consequences for thousands of people in southern Ukraine," he said.

**Head-on collision between truck-bus in B'desh kills 14**

Damascus | Agencies

Dhaka: At least 14 people were killed and 12 others injured following a head-on collision between a truck and a pick-up van in Bangladesh's Sylhet district on Wednesday, a senior police official said.

Md Abul Hossain, inspector at Sylhet's Dakshin Surma Police Station, told Xinhua news agency that all of the deceased were construction workers. Some workers were also critically injured in the road accident that occurred at around 6 a.m. in the district, some 240 km northeast of capital Dhaka, said the official.

All the injured were rushed to local hospitals and clinics, he said, adding that the cause of the acci-



dent is under investigation. Bangladesh has one of the highest fatality rates for road accidents in the world mainly due to shoddy highways, poorly maintained vehicles, violation of traffic rules by drivers, and lack of monitoring of the traffic department. As many as 328 people were killed and 565 others injured in 304 road accidents from April 15 to 29, during the Eid al-Fitr festival rush in Bangladesh.

**NEW YORK STATE COMES UNDER AIR QUALITY ALERT AMID CANADIAN WILDFIRES**

New York | Agencies

The central and eastern areas of New York state will come under an air quality health advisory on Wednesday as air quality worsens amid wildfires in Canada, according to the local government.

Levels of pollution, either ozone or fine particulate matter, are expected to exceed an air quality index (AQI) value of 100, Xinhua news agency quoted the state government as saying in a statement.

The New York City government is also urging residents to limit their outdoor activities to only what is absolutely necessary, especially if they have heart or breathing problems.

According to the National Weather Service, rampant wildfires in the Canadian province of Quebec brought widespread haze and smoke to the Northeast and Great Lakes areas of the US.

Environment Canada still has smog



warnings for areas north and east of Gatineau and special air quality statements for the rest of eastern Ontario and western Quebec.



MUMBAI HOSTEL HORROR

Mumbai hostel girl's rape-murder accused found dead

OPPN SAYS BJP MORE OBSESSED WITH UORFI JAVED'S ATTIRE THAN WOMEN'S SAFETY

Team Absolute | Quaid Najmi/Mumbai

Day after the rape-cum-murder of an 18-year-old girl in a women's hostel, prominent Maharashtra Opposition women politicians and female activists here on Wednesday pounced on the ruling Shiv Sena-BJP government accusing it of throwing women's safety-security to the winds, and the Congress even saying that 'the BJP was more obsessed with Uorfi Javed's attire than women's safety'.



Condemning the incident, state BJP Mahila Morcha President Chitra K. Wagh said that the previous (Maha Vikas Aghadi) regime had committed to install CCTV in the entire hostel, but it was done only on the ground floor, and said that the present government will now take up the incomplete work.

State Mahila Congress President Sandhya Savalalke termed it as "a heinous crime", especially on a day when the state was celebrating the 350th anniversary of the Coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj - an epitome of justice and equality for women.

She feels this was not surprising under the BJP where women are under stress everywhere, the perpetrators of such crimes are getting political support and they become more brazen each time.

"The BJP is more interested in discussing (model-actress) Uorfi Javed's wardrobe for weeks than taking tough measures to ensure safety-security of girls or women who come here from all over Maharashtra, rest of India as well as abroad to study and work," said Savalalke, taking a potshot without naming Wagh for

her raging war with the young celeb (Uorfi Javed) for several days in January.

Accusing the Centre and state of 'not being serious', Nationalist Congress Party MP Supriya Sule said that the question of CCTV cameras and security must be prioritised in and around women's hostels.

Terming it as a failure of the home department, she referred to the agitation of the Delhi women wrestlers and said that the very same government which gave the slogan of 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' denies justice to the womenfolk, and "from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, women have anger and hatred against the central government".

Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Dr. Neelam Gorhe, Deputy Chairperson of Maharashtra Legislative Council has written a letter to the Chief Minister

Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis highlighting the burning issue of women's safety and security.

Expressing apprehensions over safety in women's hostels, Shiv Sena (UBT) MLC Dr. Manisha Kayande has demanded that the government must conduct a thorough audit of the safety-security measures in all such hostels in the state, ascertain if are CCTVs installed there, the antecedents of the security personnel or other staff appointed there, etc.

"In yesterday's incident, the hostel is nearly vacant, the victim girl was given a room on the lower floor, she was found dead on the 4th floor, she had complained to the hostel authorities but they failed to heed her... All this needs to be fully investigated," demanded Dr. Kayande.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The prime suspect in the rape and murder of an 18-year-old student at the government-run Savitridevi Phule Women's Hostel in Mumbai's Chowpatty, has been found dead in an apparent case of suicide, even as the Opposition slammed the government for throwing women's safety to the winds.

The suspect was identified as security guard/laundryman Omprakash Kanojia, 32, hailing from Pratapgarh in Uttar Pradesh, whose body was recovered on the railway tracks near Charni Road railway station on Tuesday morning.

On Tuesday at around 4 p.m., the naked body of the victim was recovered from her 4th floor hostel room, the door of which was locked from outside. The rape and murder by strangulation was committed the previous night, after which she had gone 'incommunicado'. While the suspect Kanojia was reported 'missing', and a

CCTV grab last showed him leaving the hostel around 5 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

Mumbai went into a tizzy as details of the heinous crime came to light sparking a major political row here on Wednesday.

The girl from Akola was studying in the second-year course of a Bandra polytechnic. She was also working part-time in a private company, and was preparing to leave for her hometown on Thursday.

Many inmates in the hostel had already gone to their respective native places and the victim was the only one living on the fourth floor of the hostel, and investigators believed that Kanojia may have taken advantage of the situation. The crime came to light only after the hostel officials found that she was not responding to calls and when they peeked into her room through a window, found her lying there, and alerted the Marine Drive Police Station which rushed a team there.

Guj firm to build 3 PSH power plants of 5,700 MW in Maha

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a significant development for the state power sector, Torrent Power Ltd. Gujarat will construct three Pumped Storage Hydro (PSH) projects of 5,700-MW, costing around Rs 27,000 crore, in Maharashtra, an official said here on Wednesday.

The Maharashtra government has inked an MoU with TPL, Ahmedabad, in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, for the project which is expected to generate around 13,500 jobs during the five-year long construction period.

The projects shall come up at Karjat (Raigad) where a 3,000 MW PSH will be set up, and two units in



Pune at Maval (1,200 MW) and Junnar (1,500 MW), said TPL Executive Director Jayesh Desai.

All the sites are off-stream and the 3 PSH projects are planned to provide a minimum of six hours of energy storage daily, said TPL.

The PSH is an established and cost-effective technology for firm, flexible and dispatchable power, according to the power major.

It is a configuration of two water reservoirs at different elevations. Water is pumped to the upper reservoir at the time of excess power when it is the cheapest and in the reverse direction during high demand when power is expensive and generates power with a hydraulic turbine, explained TPL.

It added that the share of renewable power, which is intermittent in nature, is rapidly increasing in the grid, which necessitates storage for load management and meeting peak demands. The PSH is a superior solution compared with battery for energy storage, being cheaper, a longer life span of 40 years, higher duration storage of 6-10 hours with feasibility of multiple cycle operations during the day.

Navi Mumbai heatstroke tragedy: NCP slams delay in probe report

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on Wednesday slammed the delay by a one-man panel in probing the causes leading to the deaths of 14 people during an open-air government function in Navi Mumbai on April 16.

The committee comprises a senior IAS officer and Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue) Nitin Kareer which would probe the heat-stroke tragedy after the Maharashtra Bhushan Award ceremony.

It was attended by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis and an



estimated 20-lakh followers of the awardee -- social worker Dattatreya Narayan Dharmadhikari, also known as Appasaheb -- in an open-to-sky ground in Kharghar in scorching temperatures.

Now, the Kareer panel has sought a month's extension to complete its probe and submit the report, said NCP national

spokesperson Clyde Crasto.

"The Maharashtra government should keep in mind that the delay of the report will not make people forget that 14 innocent lives were lost due to insensitivity," said Crasto.

After a huge uproar by the Opposition parties like NCP, Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and other organisations, trips to the Raj Bhavan and protests, the state government had appointed the probe panel four days after the tragedy (April 20).

Crasto said that first, the government resolution on it was delayed, "now it's almost two months, but the report is not yet out and the panel has sought a month's extension to complete

its work".

"Why? Many questions arise. How can an incumbent bureaucrat probe an issue that occurred during a government function? Why has it not been able to complete the probe within the stipulated (one month) time?" Crasto questioned.

He accused the Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party government of trying to bide time so that people forget the tragedy at the event held at the peak of summer resulting in the deaths due to heat-stroke.

The NCP has called upon the state government to complete the investigation without more delays and ensure accountability in the matter.

WON'T NOTIFY FACT-CHECKING UNIT TILL JULY 10, CENTRE TELLS BOMBAY HC



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Centre on Wednesday told the Bombay High Court it was extending till July 10 its earlier statement that it won't notify its fact-checking unit to identify fake news against the government on social media, even as two new petitions were filed challenging the recently amended IT Rules.

The Union government had in April told the HC that the fact-checking unit would not be notified till July 5. The statement was made when the court was hearing a petition filed by stand-up

comic Kunal Kamra challenging the constitutional validity of the Information Technology Rules.

On Wednesday, a division bench of Justices Gautam Patel and Neela Gokhale was informed that two new petitions have also been filed challenging the Rules.

The petitions filed by the Editors Guild of India and the Association of Indian Magazines claim that the Rules are arbitrary and unconstitutional. The court said it would hear all the three petitions from July 6.

"Not Coincidence": Devendra Fadnavis on "riot-like situation" comments

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday said statements of some politicians fearing a riot-like situation in the state and a section of people of a particular community glorifying Aurangzeb and Tipu Sultan cannot be a mere coincidence.

Speaking to reporters in Navi Mumbai, Fadnavis, who holds the Home portfolio, said the acts of glorifying Mughal emperor Aurangzeb will not be tolerated in Maharashtra.

He said a probe would be conducted to identify the people who are instigating a section of youths.

He was speaking against the backdrop of some youths displaying photos of 17th Century Mughal



emperor Aurangzeb in a procession in Ahmednagar and tension in Kolhapur city on Wednesday over the alleged use of Tipu Sultan's image along with an objectionable audio message as social media "status" by some local people.

The BJP leader claimed that a riot-like situation is developing in some areas of the state only because people of a particular community are glorifying Aurangzeb.

"Some politicians had been saying that there could be a riot-like situation in the state.

Responding to the comments of these leaders, youths of a particular community showcased pictures of Aurangzeb. They also glorified Aurangzeb and Tipu Sultan. It cannot be a mere coincidence.

"Why suddenly these images have been displayed in various districts of Maharashtra? It does not happen easily or automatically. As it cannot be a mere coincidence, we will have to dig deeper into this matter," he said.

Fadnavis also said he was surprised that in Kolhapur, a chief leader of the opposition said that he was aware that riots will happen.

"After his statement, some youth there glorified Aurangzeb and Tipu Sultan, and thereafter comes a reaction. Is there a connection between the statement and the incidents? We are conducting a probe into who is glorifying Aurangzeb and who is provoking people to do so. Once the probe is over, I will reveal those things," he said.

Sharad Pawar Says "Anti-BJP Wave" in Country, but praises Nitin Gadkari

Team Absolute | Aurangabad

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar today claimed there is currently an "anti-BJP wave" and people of the country want a change considering results of the recent Assembly polls in Karnataka.

If this mindset of people continues, the country will witness a change in the forthcoming elections, Sharad Pawar said at a press meet in Aurangabad. He also claimed that small incidents in Maharashtra were being given a "religious colour", which was not a good sign.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) faced defeat in the recently held Assembly elections in Karnataka, where the Congress came back to power after a gap of five years.

The Lok Sabha elections are due in 2024, and the Maharashtra Assembly polls are also due in the later part of next year.

Sharad Pawar said, "Looking at the scenario, I think there is an anti-BJP wave going on. Considering the Karnataka election results, people



are in the mood for a change. If this mentality of people continues, there will be a change in the country in the forthcoming elections. There is no need of any astrologer to tell this."

Asked about the possibility that the Lok Sabha and Maharashtra Assembly polls may be held simultaneously, the NCP chief said many people from his party and allies are also of the same view.

"But, I don't think so. Considering the results of the Karnataka Assembly polls, I don't think rulers of the country will fall into a mess of conducting the state Assembly elections along with the Lok Sabha polls. They will only focus on the Lok Sabha polls," Pawar said.

Asked who is his favourite minister at the Centre in view of the Narendra Modi government having completed nine years, Pawar said, "There are some whose work is indisputable. For example, Nitin Gadkari. He doesn't keep a party angle (in his work). If we take an issue to him, he checks its importance and not the person telling about it."

Boy stabs man to death with screwdriver for teasing his mother

Mumbai: A 17-year-old boy allegedly killed a man in Mumbai for making abusive comments against the former's mother, a police official said.

The 43-year-old, identified as Abdul Rahim Malik, from Iraniwadi locality in Kandivali, used to tease and verbally abuse the boy's mother, he said.

On Sunday, the man again abused the woman following which she filed a complaint of molestation against him at the Kandivali police station.

Later, the boy came to know of the man's act and in fit of rage, he allegedly stabbed him on the neck and head with a screwdriver, the official said.

The man was rushed to a nearby hospital where he died on Monday during treatment, he said.

Later, a case of murder was registered against the boy, who was detained and sent to a correctional home, the police said.



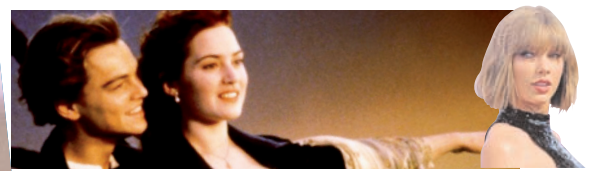
# ELLE FANNING DIDN'T GET A ROLE AT 16 BECAUSE SHE WAS 'UN-F\*\*\*\*\*'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Elle Fanning didn't get a part in a film because she was thought by bosses to be "unf\*\*\*\*\*able" when she was 16 years old. The 25-year-old actress was going for a part in a father-daughter comedy movie when she was 16 but was unsuccessful and was later told by bosses that it was because she was not sexy enough to appear on screen, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She told The Hollywood Reporter: "I've never told this story, but I was trying out for a movie. I didn't get it. I don't even think they ever made it, but it was a father-daughter road trip comedy. I didn't hear from my agents because they wouldn't tell me things like this - that filtration system is really important because there's probably a lot more damaging comments that they filtered - but this one got to me.

"I was 16 years old, and a person said, 'Oh, she didn't get the father-daughter road trip comedy because she's unf\*\*\*\*\*able.' Yeah, it's so disgusting. And I can laugh at it now, like, 'What a disgusting pig!' The 'Girl From Plainville' star - who started acting as a child alongside her older sister Dakota Fanning in the 2001 movie 'I Am Sam' - went on to add that has always been "immensely confident" because she has been in the public eye from such a young age and while the comment didn't "damage" her in any way, it definitely made her more self-aware.



# 'Emily in Paris' Season 4 filming delayed due to writers' strike

Los Angeles | Agencies

The fourth season of 'Emily in Paris' was initially set to start in late summer or early fall in the French capital that gives the show its name, but filming has been delayed by two months due to the writers' strike, 'Variety' has learned.

That could stretch longer if WGA members remain on the picket line, reports 'Variety'. Streaming giant Netflix has declined to comment. The plan is still to start shooting by the end of fall, according to a source close to the streamer.

Netflix announced the renewal of Darren Star's Emmy-nominated romantic comedy in January 2022. Season 3 dropped on the streamer on December 21 following a massive premiere event in Paris, which lured crowds of overjoyed fans and was attended by Star and the entire cast, including Lily Collins, Ashley Park, Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu, Kate Walsh, Camille Razat, Lucas Bravo, Lucien Laviscount (who wore a shiny purple suit), Bruno Gouery and Samuel Arnold.

Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu, who plays Emily's chic French boss, suggested that the next season of 'Emily in Paris' could be affected by the writers strike on the red carpet of Kering's Women in Motion gala dinner during the Cannes Film Festival.

# Rapper Lil Tjay livestreams himself on Instagram while getting arrested in Manhattan

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Lil Tjay has just been arrested again and it was all documented on Instagram Live.

He was arrested for the second time this year on Tuesday, June 6, reports aceshowbiz.com.

On Tuesday afternoon, the 22-year-old turned on his Instagram Live. But instead of greeting his fans, he showed the ordeal to his followers. In the video which has since been reposted online, he's seen telling cops to "not touch" him and asking why he's arrested.

"Nah. Do not touch me, bro," Lil Tjay told officers while standing next to his car.

"What am I under arrest for?" When one of the officers told him to turn around, he responded, "No, n\*\*\*\*a. No, bro. Hell no. What's in the car? I don't know what's in the car. Don't touch me. There's no firearm in the car."

His phone ended up in someone else's hand as Lil Tjay was being surrounded by cops. Some people in the crowd were heard telling him to stop resisting arrest.

After the video went viral, Lil Tjay's attorney Dawn Florio released a statement addressing his arrest. The attorney said the rapper was filming a music video in Manhattan when the police arrived and arrested him for reckless endangerment. It is unclear what led to the arrest, but his lawyer has asserted that it was not for gun possession.

"Lil Tjay was arrested by the police in New York City while he was on Instagram Live," the lawyer said in the statement.



Los Angeles | Agencies

"Captain America: New World Order" is now "Captain America: Brave New World". Marvel Studios announced the title change for its upcoming fourth 'Captain America' movie on social media alongside a first look photo of stars Anthony Mackie and Harrison Ford on the film's set, reports 'Variety'.

Marvel originally announced last July that "Captain America 4" would be subtitled "New World Order" and be released on May 3, 2024. The release date remains unchanged for the newly-titled "Brave New World".

As per 'Variety', Anthony Mackie stars in the title role, making 'Captain America 4' his first outing as the eponymous hero in a feature film. The actor got his start in the Marvel Cinematic Universe as the Falcon, but he took on the Captain America shield in the Disney+ series "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier".

Chris Evans originated the role of Captain America in the MCU, but he exited the part in "Avengers: Endgame".

"Captain America: Brave New World" is directed by Julius Onah and co-written by Malcolm Spellman, who was the creator of Mackie's "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier". The cast includes Harrison Ford in his MCU debut as Thaddeus "Thunderbolt" Ross, taking over for William Hurt.

Ross is now the President of the United States in "Brave New World". Liv Tyler and Tim Blake Nelson also star, reprising their roles of Betty Ross and Samuel Sterns from "The Incredible Hulk". The supporting cast also includes Shira Haas and "Top Gun: Maverick" star Danny Ramirez.



'CAPTAIN AMERICA 4' RETITLED 'BRAVE NEW WORLD'

'Thor: Love and Thunder' was 'too silly': Chris Hemsworth



Los Angeles | Agencies

While the fourth installment in Marvel Cinematic Universe's (MCU) Thor movies, also known as 'Thor: Love and Thunder' was a commercial hit grossing over \$760 million worldwide at the box office, the MCU phase 4 has been heavily criticised in general. 'Thor 4' was not spared from some ruthless criticism with many criticising its overreliance on childish humour, bad VFX, Thor's

portrayal of being overly stupid, bad writing and in general undercutting much of the movie's dark moments. Australian actor Chris Hemsworth, who plays the MCU version of the Norse god of thunder has come out saying that "Thor: Love and Thunder" was a bit "too silly." Speaking to GQ Magazine, Hemsworth addressed the criticism regarding the movie.

"I think we just had too much fun. It just became too silly," he said, further adding "It's always hard being

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Liberty Poole



## WTC Final

# TRAVIS HEAD'S COUNTERATTACKING FIFTY POWERS AUSTRALIA TO 170/3 AT TEA

London | Agencies

Middle-order batter Travis Head led a superb counterattack with an unbeaten 60 to power Australia to 170/3 in 51 overs at Tea against India on day one of World Test Championship final at The Oval, here on Wednesday.

At Tea, Steve Smith was 33 not out and gave Head company in an unbroken 94-run stand for fourth wicket as 97 runs came off the second session.

Head was also aided in his free-flowing stroke play by Indian bowlers, giving him width and overpitched deliveries on pads for him to hit ten boundaries in his unbeaten 75-ball stay.

India fetched success immediately in the start of the session as Mohammed Shami's fuller delivery from over the wicket came back in and cas-

ted Marnus Labuschagne through the gate on an attempted drive.

But from there, they were kept on bay by Head, who hit four boundaries off the fast bowlers in the first 12 balls he faced, with a glorious flick over mid-wicket off Siraj being the standout. He then took back-to-back fours off Shami --- flicking on his fuller ball, before slashing off a back of the length delivery.

On the other end, Smith hanged around despite not looking in his typical fluent self and flicking twice through leg-side. He was hit on the body by Siraj while Thakur beat him with the outswingers as the two fast-bowlers kept a check on run-flow.

That changed in the 38th over when Thakur overstepped twice, conceding a four to Head while Smith hit a superb square drive and flick to pick back-to-back fours in a 16-run over.

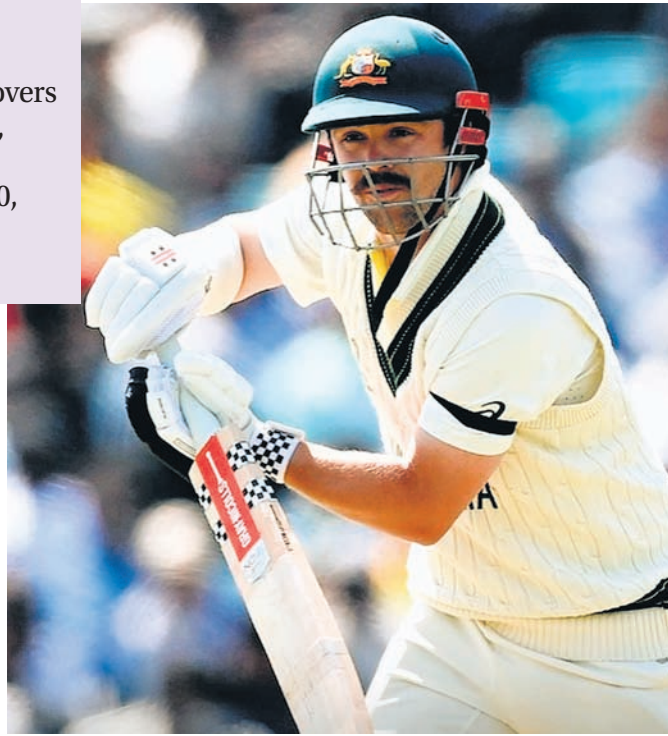
### Brief scores

Australia 170/3 in 51 overs (Travis Head 60 not out, David Warner 43; Mohammed Shami 1/30, Mohammed Siraj 1/40) against India

Ravindra Jadeja beat Head on the outside edge and had the leading edge fall short of cover. But Head brought up his fifty in 60 balls with a well-timed punch past deep point for four.

He then broke a lull of six overs by making use of width from Umesh to crunch through point for four as Australia made the second session theirs' with immaculate ease.

Earlier, Siraj and Thakur picked a wicket each in an absorbing first session, taking out Usman Khawaja and David Warner respectively.



### Jadeja picked ahead of Ashwin as India win toss

London: India captain Rohit Sharma has won the toss and elected to bowl first against Australia in the 2023 World Test Championship final at The Oval here on Wednesday.

Both captains Rohit and Pat Cummins will be playing their 50th Test match through the WTC final. The winner of the 2023 WTC final will become the first team to win all ICC titles in men's international cricket.

After winning the toss, Rohit said India have picked Ravindra Jadeja as sole spin option ahead of Ravichandran Ashwin, while going with four fast bowlers in Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Umesh Yadav, and Shardul Thakur.

Ajinkya Rahane also returns to the Test team after last playing in the format in January 2022, with KS Bharat being the wicketkeeper-batter. "The conditions and also the weather being overcast (led to bowling first). The pitch won't change too much."

"He (Ashwin) has been a match-winner for us, it is not a great occasion to leave him out, but you have got to do what is best for the team in the given conditions. He (Rahane) brings a lot of experience, he's played 80-odd Tests," said Rohit.

Cummins said he would have bowled first as well and confirmed pacer Scott Boland is playing his first Test in England, with Josh Hazlewood out due to injuries in left achilles and side.

## French Open

# Haddad Maia becomes first Brazilian woman to enter semis in Open Era

Paris | Agencies

Beatriz Haddad Maia on Wednesday became the first Brazilian woman to reach the Roland Garros semifinals in the Open Era after upsetting No.7 seed Tunisian Ons Jabeur 3-6, 7-6(5), 6-1, here.

Maia also became the first Brazilian woman to reach a Grand Slam semifinal since Maria Bueno in 1968 (US Open). Bueno made the French Open semifinals on five occasions prior to the Open Era, including a run to the 1964 final.

Jabeur, who is the first African woman to reach the last eight at Roland-Garros since Amanda Coetzer in 1997, grabbed the opening set 6-3 in 45 minutes.

However, Maia bounced



back and snatched the second set tiebreak, levelling the match for 3-6, 7-6(5). She continued with her resilience and clinched the third set 6-1 to

wrap up the historic win. After an upset win, the 27-year-old awaits Iga Swiatek or Coco Gauff, who are up next on Court Philippe-Chatrier.

### Alcaraz books semifinal clash with Djokovic

Paris: World No.1 Carlos Alcaraz delivered a phenomenal performance to reach his first Roland-Garros semifinal by blitzing two-time Grand Slam finalist Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece. The Spaniard was largely untouchable in a 6-2, 6-1, 7-6(5) victory on Tuesday night, setting up a semi-final showdown against Novak Djokovic on Friday, in what will be one of the most eagerly-anticipated matches in years. His clash against Djokovic will be their second overall and first at a major. It pits a young champion versus a legend. Speaking on playing Djokovic in the semifinals, Alcaraz said: "This match, it is one everyone wants to watch. I would say it will be a really good match to play and to watch as well. I really want to play this match well. If Alcaraz defeats Djokovic to reach his second major final, he will retain the No. 1 ATP Ranking following the tournament. Should Djokovic win, he could reclaim the top spot by winning his third Roland Garros title."



## INDIA'S MMA FIGHTER ANGAD TO DEFEND FLYWEIGHT TITLE AGAINST BRAZIL'S HUGO ON JULY 1

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's mixed-martial arts, Matrix Fight Night, will return to the National Capital Region once again with MFN 12 set to take place on July 1 at the Noida Indoor Stadium.

In the Main Event of MFN 12, India's Angad Bisht will defend his Flyweight title against Brazil's Hugo Paiva. Bisht defeated Egypt's Mohamed Gamal for the Flyweight title at MFN 10 in November 2022.

Speaking on the upcoming title match, Angad said, "I am ready for the fight as always. I have trained well over the past few months and retaining the prestigious MFN title has been my goal ever since the match-up was announced. I will give my all once again, but it will be a good fight against Brazil's Hugo Paiva, who is a tremen-



dously skilled fighter as well. But I will have a few tricks up my sleeve."

Asked about his opponent, Brazil's Hugo Paiva said, "I am excited to come to India to win the MFN title. I have a strong opponent to face who has been unbeaten in his past couple of fights. But I have trained well with my

team and we are confident that we will make an impact. My aim is not only to win the title, but also to entertain the fans."

Meanwhile, India's highest-ranked female MMA fighter Puja Tomar will also defend her Strawweight title against Russia's Anastasia Feofanova.

## Stuart Broad returns to top-10 in ICC Test rankings ahead of Ashes

Dubai | Agencies

England fast bowler Stuart Broad has made a ranking gain after his six-wicket performance in a one-off Test against Ireland as leaped back into the top 10 in the latest Test Bowling Rankings updates released by International Cricket Council on Wednesday.

Claiming the figures of 5/51 and 1/62 across two innings in the Test against Ireland, Broad jumped two places to 10th with 744 rating points ahead of Ashes, joining teammates James Anderson, who placed 2nd with 850 rating points) and Ollie Robinson (seventh, 777 points) in the top 10.



Meanwhile, England batters Harry Brook went one place up to the 18th position, Ollie Pope climbed 10 places to be placed 23rd and Ben Duckett gained eight places to 34th, have made substantial gains after the one-off Test against Ireland at Lord's.

Brook had scores of 56 and 12 not out in England's 10-wicket victory. Pope won the Player of the Match award for his first innings of 205 while Duckett reaped the dividends of his knock of 182.

On the other hand, Josh Tongue has entered the rankings at an impressive 82nd position after his five-wicket haul in the second innings.

London | Agencies

England spin bowling all-rounder Moeen Ali has come out of Test retirement to join the squad for the first two of the Ashes Tests against Australia, starting from June 16.

Moeen replaced Jack Leach, who was withdrawn from the original 16-player squad on Sunday after sustaining a low back stress fracture, which rules him out of the five-match Ashes Test series.

The 35-year-old all-round-



er, who retired from Test cricket at the end of the 2021 summer, has reversed his decision following discussions with Test Captain Ben Stokes, Test Head Coach Brendon McCullum and Managing Director of England Men's Cricket Rob Key.

The off-spinner will be looking to add to his 64 Test caps. He has scored 2,914 Test runs and has 195 wickets in Test cricket. He will celebrate his 36th birthday during the first Test at Edgbaston on June 16.

## Two Chinese snooker players given lifetime bans for match-fixing

London: Chinese snooker players Liang Wenbo and Li Hang have been handed lifetime bans as part of a group of 10 players penalized by the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA) for match-fixing.



The WPBSA issued a statement on Tuesday, confirming that the ten players were charged with match-fixing offenses. It pronounced lifetime bans for Liang and Li and imposed significant suspensions for the other players involved, reports Xinhua. Liang, 36, who has been under suspension from snooker events since last October, was found guilty of manipulating or participating in the manipulation of five snooker matches, attempting to persuade or enable other players to fix nine matches. He also bet on snooker matches and failed to cooperate with the WPBSA investigation.

Li, 32, was also charged with match-fixing and inciting or facilitating other players to manipulate match outcomes.

Additionally, the 2021 Master champion Yan Bingtao has been handed a five-year ban until 11 December 2027. Zhao Xintong, with two ranking titles to his name, received a suspension of one year and eight months, set to expire on 1 September 2024.

## WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP QUALIFICATION

# China beats Chinese Taipei in AFC U-20

Yangon | Agencies

China started the 2nd round of the 2024 AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup qualification by beating Chinese Taipei 1-0 here.

At the Thuwunna Stadium in the evening, Lu Jiayu headed the lone goal on Wang Aifang's cross in the 65th minute, reports Xinhua.

"We can see that Chinese Taipei played more defending. Actually today's match was a little bit lower than my expectations," said China's head coach Wang Jun at a post-match press conference.

Also on Tuesday, host Myanmar thrashed Nepal 5-0 in Group B, with goals scored by Zin Moe Pyae, Yin Loon Eain and



Yoon Wadi Hlaing.

The remaining matches of Group B will be played on June 8 and 10.

Group B consists of China, Myanmar, Nepal, and Chinese Taipei, while Group A includes Australia, Vietnam, Iran, and Lebanon.

Following a round-robin format, top two teams from each group will qualify for the finals of the tournament.

They will be joined by the top three teams from the 2019 AFC U-19 Women's Championship - Japan, DPR Korea and South Korea - as well as hosts Uzbekistan.

The 2024 AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup is scheduled to take place from March 3 to 16, 2024.



## Rasika Dugal begins shooting for new web series in Udaipur

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rasika Dugal has commenced shooting for an exciting new web show in the city of lakes, Udaipur in Rajasthan.

While the project's details are under wraps, sources have revealed that it is a highly anticipated production by a major production house. Rasika will play as one of the protagonists.

Rasika flew to Udaipur in the first week of June to begin the first schedule, which will extend until the first week of July. Subsequently, the shooting will move to Mumbai for the second schedule in August.

Rasika shared her enthusiasm for the new endeavour on her Instagram account, where she posted a picture reading the script against a stunning backdrop. The hashtags she used, including #UdaipurDiaries, #ShootLife, and #Udaipur, hinting about the new project.

Among her upcoming releases is the Amazon Prime supernatural thriller 'Adhura', which promises to keep viewers on the edge of their seats. Rasika has recently completed shooting for the highly anticipated third season of Mirzapur which is also due to release this year. Her other upcoming projects include - 'Spike', 'Lord Curzon Ki Haveli', 'Fairy Folk', and 'Little Thomas.'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

## HOW MAHESH BHATT GUIDED PAPON THROUGH THE EMOTIONS WHILE RECORDING UPCOMING FILM TRACK

Playback singer Papon, who is known for tracks like 'Moh Moh Ke Dhaage', 'Bulleya' and several others, has lent his voice to the track 'Woh Kahani' from the upcoming film,

'1920 Horrors of the Heart'. The singer revealed that during the recording of the song, filmmaker-producer Mahesh Bhatt visited the studio to monitor the recording as the latter has a profound understanding and keen interest in the music of his productions.

The filmmaker-producer also guided Papon with regard to the emotions that were needed to be incorporated in the track.

'Woh Kahani' has been composed by Puneet Dixit, with lyrics penned by Shweta Bothra. The song portrays the feelings of separation and longing for loved ones. Papon's soulful vocals convey the emotions of love and loss.

Speaking about the song, Papon said: "It's always a wonderful experience to sing a song like this. I truly had a great space to work in, thanks to Puneet who provided me with creative freedom to do what I do best. The cherry on the cake was when Bhatt

Sahab (Mahesh Bhatt) himself personally came to the studio. He took me through the journey and explained the essence of the song. While I was recording, he was present on the other side of the room, guiding me through the emotions."

He further mentioned: "It becomes so much easier to capture the mood when the person in front of you is completely involved. Everyone present during the recording was fully immersed in the story, feeling every word sung. Bhatt Sahab is a true professional with an amazing mind and a childlike heart. The way he guided me while I sang was an unforgettable experience." Papon also shared his thoughts on collaborating with Vikram Bhatt, stating: "From the very beginning, when I shared a rough recording to convey my vision of the song, Vikram Bhatt understood exactly what I wanted to convey and how I perceived the song. It was truly remarkable to work with such a dedicated team where everyone was fully committed to the project. The synergy between all of us was exceptional, and it was a pleasure to be part of a team that shared a unified vision and put their hearts into making the song a success."

Directed by Krishna Bhatt and written by Mahesh Bhatt, '1920 Horrors of the Heart' stars Avika Gor and Rahul Dev in the lead roles. The film is set to hit the theatres on June 23.

## Actress Sonnalli Seygall ties the knot with hotelier Ashesh L. Sajjani

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Pyaar Ka PUNCHAMA' actress Sonnalli Seygall tied the nuptial knot with her long-time partner Ashesh L. Sajjani on Wednesday. The couple had an intimate Gurudwara wedding ceremony in Mumbai and were surrounded by their family and loved ones.

The two were in a relationship for the last six years. Ashesh is a hotelier and restaurateur by profession. They had a traditional roka ceremony amongst their families in May. For her wedding ceremony, Sonnalli wore a Manish Malhotra saree and Ashesh opted for an off white sherwani by Kunal Rawal with a turban matching the colour

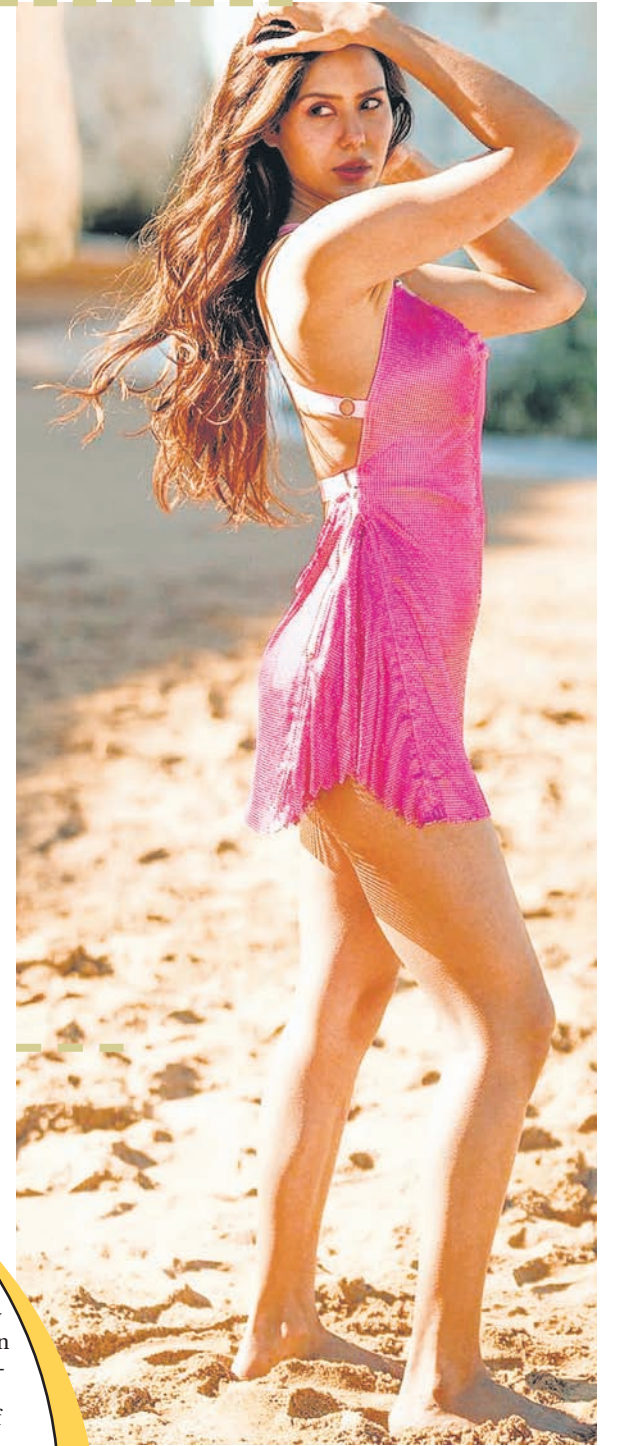
of her bride's outfit.

Talking about the new phase of her life, Sonnalli said: "Ashesh and I were very sure about this one thing that we wanted, a very simple wedding with people who mean something to us. It's a very private moment for us and hence, we chose to have our wedding in a Gurudwara. It is what both our mothers wanted and we feel glad that we could do it for them. We really look forward to exploring this new phase of our life together."

The actress made her bridal entry on the song she had always envisioned and much to her delight, it is a part of Pakki Gurbani. The theme of the wedding was kept in the tones of pink and green.



## DILJIT DOSANJH INSPIRED SONAM BAJWA TO BE MORE ACTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Popular Punjabi actress Sonam Bajwa spoke about how actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh inspired her to be more active on social media. Sonam will be seen on 'The Kapil Sharma Show'. She will be joined by the cast of her Punjabi comedy film 'Carry On Jatta 3' which includes Gippy Grewal, Binnu Dhillon, Kavita Kaushik, Gurpreet Ghuggi, Jasvinder Bhalla, and director Smeep Kang. The show's host Kapil Sharma will be seen pulling Sonam's leg as he enquires about her social media.

He asked: "I heard that you weren't on Instagram before, but you joined after Diljit Paaji's (Diljit Dosanjh) suggested it. What made you do it?"

To which Sonam replied: "No, I had an account, but I did not post much. Diljit Paaji advised me to use this platform and explained its numerous benefits. He told me that we could handle our own public relations through this app. He motivated me a lot to be active on Instagram as he is so good with his social media presence." 'The Kapil Sharma Show' airs on Sony Entertainment Television.

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Malaika Arora



## VIJAY VARMA REACTS WITH FIRECRACKER EMOJI TO RUMOURED GIRLFRIEND TAMANNAH'S PIX

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia shared a slew of pictures on social media every she looked every inch gorgeous. In the images, she was seen sporting a crop shirt paired with a black bralette to complete her look along with denim cargo pants.

She captioned it: "Crop it like it's hot."

What caught the eyes of many was a comment by Vijay Varma, who is rumoured to be dating Tamannaah.

He dropped a fire and a firecracker emoji.

It was reported in January that Tamannaah and Vijay started dating as they had been caught kissing in Goa. They reportedly met on the sets of 'Lust Stories 2'.

Directed by Amit Ravindernath Sharma, Konkona Sen Sharma, R. Balki, and Sujoy Ghosh, the Netflix original 'Lust Stories 2' also stars Neena Gupta, Kajol, Mrunal Thakur, Amruta Subhash, Kumud Mishra, and Tillotama Shome.