

absolute india

VOL. 10, ISSUE 206, MUMBAI | SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 2023 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

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HIMACHAL ROADWAYS WOMAN BUS DRIVER BREAKS BARRIERS!

- Earlier, Seema Thakur was the only woman driver among the nearly 9,000 HRTC employees who drove on the Shimla-Chandigarh route and became the first woman driver on an inter-state route.
- She believes gender equal leadership will lead to a more inclusive and effective society. "With my new responsibility, now more and more women will come forward to work with HRTC's buses and cabs."
- Earlier, her work as Covid-19 warrior was recognised by the Government of India for helping people. between females and males, were some that are known to play a role in inflammation, damage repair, blood clotting, cardiovascular disease and the immune system.
- Her father was also in the state Transport Department and she took over his duties after he died.



Vishal Gulati | Shimla

Breaking stereotype barriers and empowering the fair sex at workplace, state-run Himachal Road Transport Corp (HRTC) driver Seema Thakur, the first and only woman driver in the fleet of 2,773 buses, has become the first woman on the wheel to drive on some of the toughest and long inter-state motorable roads.

Believing the women have multiple roles in society, she drove the HRTC's luxury to and fro bus from Rohru to Delhi via Shimla, a distance of 500 km with the travel time of over 12 hours. As a trendsetter in a man's

world, local residents and politicians of Theog, Jubbal, Kotkhai and Rohru towns honoured Seema Thakur, who joined the HRTC as a driver on May 5, 2016, while she was on the wheel.

An elated Seema Thakur told correspondent: "It is really a marvellous experience to drive on an inter-state bus and that is of longer duration. I am the only first woman bus driver in the region. I will continue to serve the people of Himachal Pradesh."

"For Himachal, Seema Thakur is proud. We feel safe while travelling a long distance with her even during night," remarked an elderly passenger Kanta Negi.

Describing Seema Thakur's feat a

source of inspiration for women and a step towards women empowerment, apple grower-turned-politician Chetan Bragta, who honoured her by donning a Himachali cap and offering a woollen shawl along with other, remarked that it was for the first time that a woman bus driver of the state reached Rohru from Delhi by taking a Volvo bus. "I am happy to honour HRTC driver Seema Thakur of Arki area of Solan district for this achievement," Chetan Bragta remarked.

Chetan is the son of two-time BJP minister, Narinder Bragta, a prominent apple grower who died on June 5, 2021, due to post-Covid complications.

IITR develops haemoglobin self test kit that gives result in 30 seconds



Team Absolute | Lucknow

The CSIR-Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (IITR) has come up with an indigenous innovative rapid haemoglobin detection test kit called 'SenzHb', a paper-based kit that gives results in just 30 seconds. It costs just Rs 10 for a test.

IITR scientists said, "As compared to testing facilities available in the market, SenzHb is economical and easy to use."

They said the traditional methods for getting haemoglobin checked involve sophisticated instruments and clinical laboratory settings that are often unavailable in remote/rural areas.

"This paper-based, colorimetric strip-type sensor of SenzHb addresses these challenges by providing a rapid and reliable haemoglobin assay," IITR director Bhaskar Narain said.

All one needs to do is prick with the help of a needle that comes with the strip, drop

blood on the strip and as soon the strip colour changes, match it with the 'changed colour guidelines' given along with the kit.

The results can help one know if he or she is anaemic or not.

Similar kits available in the market are not just high priced, but do not offer accurate results and are not 'made in India'.

"Also, this kit incorporates a QR code that provides detailed instructions for conducting the test in eight languages. The QR code also includes a colour chart, further simplifying the interpretation of results," he said.

The IITR scientists team said to ensure the accuracy and reliability of SenzHb, extensive validation has been conducted.

It is a point-of-care test (POCT) kit that can be used by healthcare workers, even in the absence of advanced laboratory facilities. Its simplicity and user-friendly design enables efficient and accurate haemoglobin estimation.

Report waste dumping on streets and earn up to Rs 2,500 in Kerala

Team Absolute | Thiruvananthapuram

With the menace of dumping waste by people on roads and open public spaces, the Kerala government has now come up with a novel scheme to reward all those who report such acts and earn up to Rs 2,500 for each reporting.

This is part of the 'Malinya Muktham Nava Keralam' campaign to make the state garbage-free.

Additional Chief Secretary, Local Self Government Department, Sarada Muraleedharan, issued an order in this regard, suggesting citizens to report littering/dumping of both solid and liquid waste in public spaces, private property and water bodies.

The person who informs authorities of such violations will be given Rs 2,500 (maximum) or 25 per cent of the fine imposed on those resorting to

disallowed disposal of garbage.

The report must be backed with evidence, including credible photograph or video clip, along with details such as the place and time of the wrong-doing.

The order states that citizens have to report with a WhatsApp number and E-mail and authorities will not publicise the informer's name or details.

The order also asks all local bodies to conduct widespread awareness campaigns against littering of waste and garbage-dumping, besides on the citizens' responsibility of reporting violations and obtaining reward for it.

The enforcement teams can seize and confiscate vehicles that illegally carry garbage.

If needed, the carriers can be arrested and legal steps be taken against the violators.

BOY SETS SWIMMING RECORD IN PRAYAGRAJ

Prayagraj (UP): A seven-year-old boy, Rudra Kapoor, created a record of sorts when he swam across the Yamuna in just 10.30 minutes through breaststroke swimming.



This is the first time when a child of his age crossed the river using breaststroke style, said master trainer Tribhuwan Nishad.

A student of class 2 at Tagore Public School, Rudra started swimming under the guidance of his trainers Kamla Nishad and Manas Nishad.

Nishad said, "Rudra was committed to setting a record for himself by crossing the Yamuna river which has 600 m length and 25 ft depth. He learned swimming in just 15 days."

Rudra's father Raj Kapoor, mother Bandani Kapoor and sister Avika Kapoor along with other family members and other locals present on the occasion on Thursday lauded his performance.

"It is a dream come true for the little boy who was committed to carve a niche for himself by crossing the river. He was determined to learn how to swim and cross the river Yamuna in the shortest time. He always used to talk about swimming tips with his family members and wants to set many records," his father said.

Disha Patani spends two days with elephants to highlight their plight

AGRA | Agencies

Popular actor Disha Patani spent two days at the Wildlife SOS Elephant Conservation and Care Centre (ECCC) in Mathura and celebrated 'World Environment Day' by drawing attention to the plight of India's jumbos.

During her visit to the Elephant Conservation and Care Centre, Disha Patani interacted with the Wildlife SOS team and gained valuable insights into the treatment routines implemented at the Elephant Hospital and care centre, which aims to provide essential care to elephants rescued from abusive working conditions.

Disha Patani is primarily known for her work in the Hindi film industry and is recognised for her award winning films. Her Bollywood debut was the biopic M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story. An avid animal lover, Disha passionately advocates her voice for the protection of animals and their welfare.



June 5 is celebrated as World Environment Day to raise awareness about the world's environmental problems and urge people to take individual as well as collective action to help preserve the planet's natural habitats. In India, the natural environments of Asian elephants are also under threat from various factors such as deforestation, causing degradation and destruction of their habitats. In an effort to contribute to the fight to conserve Asian elephants, Disha Patani spent time at the Wildlife SOS Elephant Conservation

and Care Centre in Mathura. She learnt about how the elephants were rescued from decades of ill-treatment and cruelty, leaving them in a battered state.

The Bollywood star engaged in volunteer activities such as chopping fruits and vegetables which were distributed to the resident elephants to give them their daily dose of nutrition. Brimming with energy, Disha also lent her hand in creating and distributing enrichments that keep elephants physically and mentally stimulated.

Indian Navy demonstrate formidable capability in Arabian Sea with aircraft carriers

New Delhi: Amid China's increasing forays into the Indian Ocean, the Indian Navy carried out one of the biggest demonstrations of its formidable capability in recent years by carrying out exercise in the Arabian Sea involving both its aircraft carriers - the INS Vikramaditya and the indigenously built INS Vikrant, along with participation of over 35 aircrafts.

In a series of tweets, the Indian Navy said: "Sky is the limit. Indian Navy undertakes twin-carrier CBG ops with more than 35 aircraft in Arabian Sea, demonstrating its formidable capability in ensuring sustained air ops across the vast maritime expanse and underscoring our commitment to safeguarding India's national interests."

"The seamless operational integration of the two aircraft carriers INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant as well as fleet ships and submarines is a powerful testament to the pivotal role of sea based air power and India's role as the preferred security partner in the Indian Ocean and beyond," it said.

INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant, centre-pieces of the exercise, serve as 'floating sovereign airfields', providing a launch platform for a wide array of aircraft, including MiG-29K fighter jets, MH60R, Kamov, Sea King, Chetak and ALH helicopters.



Microsoft's new feature to let users react to comments in Word

SAN FRANCISCO | Agencies

Microsoft is introducing a new feature in Word that will let users react to comments like the reactions feature in Outlook.

The company is incorporating a Like button into Word, designed to make it easier for the users to respond to comments.

According to Windows Central, the feature is rolling out to Current Channel (Preview) users running Version 2305 or later, and is already available for the web users and Beta Channel users.

To react to a comment in Word, users will need to open a document and head to the comment section and then head to the comment section and click the 'Like' button in the top right corner.

It is likely that this document already has comments, and if not, users will need to create one.

Moreover, the report men-



tioned that the tech giant has also indicated that the feature ships with two known issues.

First, iOS and Android users won't be able to see comment reactions, and second, the feature might not be available when editing older documents.

However, users should be

able to react to newer comments added to the document.

Further, the tech giant added that the feature will be available to Word for Mac users in the next few weeks, the report said.

Meanwhile, Microsoft has released a new Windows 11

dev build that allows Insiders to view their phone's camera roll in the File Explorer Gallery.

After installing the latest Windows 11 Insider Preview Build, users can add photos from their phone by clicking a new button added to the File Explorer's command bar.

Asia Cup, ICC Men's World Cup to be streamed for free to mobile users of Disney+ Hotstar

Mumbai: The sports enthusiasts will be able to watch the upcoming Asia Cup 2023, which will be held from September 2 to September 17, and ICC Men's Cricket World Cup tournaments, which will be held from October 5 to November 19, for free on their mobile devices. The tournaments will be made available as free-to-view to all mobile phone users accessing Disney+ Hotstar. The move to lift the payroll for mobile-only viewers of both, the Asia Cup and the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, is aimed at further democratising the game of cricket. It is also aimed to directly take on OTT platform JioCinema which recently hosted the IPL tournament for its subscribers for free. Earlier, the streaming rights for IPL were with Disney+ Hotstar. However, it went to JioCinema of the Jio ecosystem after the last bidding of streaming rights. Asia Cup 2022, ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022, ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2022, and the recently concluded India vs Sri Lanka, India vs New Zealand as well as India vs Australia tournaments were also streamed on Disney+ Hotstar.





'ALLIANCE VERY MUCH INTACT AND WILL CONTINUE TOO', HRY CM ON 'RIFT' WITH JJP

Team Absolute | Chandigarh

Amid talks of a possible rift in the ruling alliance between the BJP and the JJP in Haryana, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar asserted on Saturday that the alliance was reached for public welfare, and it will continue in the future as well. "No change has been made," he categorically told the media here, setting aside rumours of fissures between his party and alliance partner Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) led by Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala. "We are having cordial relations. We are meeting, both officially and personally. We (BJP) didn't get the adequate numbers to form the government (in 2019). Keeping in mind the aspirations of the people, we entered into an alliance with the JJP to form a stable government in Haryana," Khattar said. Without mincing words, he added, "The alliance is very much intact and will continue too." Amid preparations by the



BJP and the JJP to woo the electorate ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls separately, five Independent legislators met BJP in-charge for the state, Biplab Kumar Deb, in the national capital. Deb, the former Chief Minister of Tripura, tweeted photos of MLAs Dharam Pal Gonder, Rakesh Daultabad, Randhir Singh and Somveer Sangwan, who

expressed confidence in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, after the meeting on Thursday. On Friday, Sirsa MLA Gopal Kanda of Haryana Lokhit Party also met Deb in Delhi. After the meeting, Kanda expressed faith in Prime Minister Modi and Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar's leadership. The meetings assumed significance given

that the BJP was non-committal in continuing its alliance with the JJP. On Deb's meeting with the five legislators, Khattar said, "The party organisation works at its own level and the government works on its own. We are running the government and there is no such issue. The in-charges of the organisation work to foresee the challenges facing the party, not the government (functioning). They have to make preparations keeping in mind the future elections. Maybe they have some plans or strategies, at least I can't comment on them," Khattar said. On Friday, Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala had said that the JJP-BJP alliance was forged under the leadership of Amit Shah to run a stable government in Haryana, adding that there was no compulsion in forging an alliance. The Lok Sabha elections are due in May next year, while the term of the present Vidhan Sabha ends in October 2024.

Punjab expresses gratitude to Canada for postponing student deportation

Team Absolute | Chandigarh

With a major relief to the protesting Indian students in Canada facing deportation proceeding postponed until further notice, Punjab NRI Affairs Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal on Saturday expressed happiness. He said Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has been keeping an eye on the issue for the past several days and he has given clear instructions that whatever effort the government can do in the interests of these 700 students should be done. Keeping in view that most of the students are from Punjab, Dhaliwal had earlier announced free legal assistance to the students while talking to students virtually. He also wrote letters to the High Commissioner of India in Ottawa, Sanjay Kumar Verma, and the High Commissioner of Canada, Cameron Mackay, to resolve the issue of these students at the earliest. The minister said so far only one



youth, Lovepreet Singh, has got relief and until the matters of all the students are settled, the government will continue to make all-out efforts. Dhaliwal has expressed gratitude towards all MPs of Punjab origin in Canada who came forward to help the students.

If Godse is India's good son so are Veerapan, Vijay Malya, Dawood Ibrahim: JD(U) MLC

Team Absolute | Patna

Day after Union minister Giriraj Singh stirred a controversy by calling Mahatma Gandhi's killer Nathuram Godse a good son of India, JD(U) chief spokesperson Neeraj Kumar on Saturday shot back saying by this metric even Veerapan, Vijay Malya, Dawood Ibrahim and dacoits of Chambals are. Giriraj Singh made the remark during his two-day visit to Dantewada in Chhattisgarh on Friday. "If Nathuram Godse is a murderer of Gandhi then he is a



good son of the country. He was born in India unlike Babar and Aurangzeb who were attackers of the country." Slamming Singh,

Kumar said, "The killer of our father of the nation can never be a good son of the country." "Anybody calling Nathuram Godse a good son of our country. How can a killer of our 'Father of the Nation' be a good son of the country? And if Godse is the good son of the country then Veerapan, dacoits of Chambal, Vijay Malya, Dawood Ibrahim too should be called so," Kumar said. "BJP leaders glorifying the murderer of Gandhiji reflects their ill-political culture. They lack the knowledge of history," he added.

VOTE FOR STRONGEST OPPONENT WHERE WE WONT HAVE CANDIDATE: BJPs CAMPAIGN FOR BENGAL PANCHAYAT POLLS

Team Absolute | Kolkata

With the apprehension that the party might not be able to field candidates in all the 75,000 seats in the three-tier panchayat in West Bengal, the state unit of BJP is adopting a new campaign strategy for the June 8 rural civic body polls. "If there is no candidate from any registered political party for a particular seat, then our plea will be to vote for the strongest independent candidate," said a member of the state committee of BJP. He admitted that this strategy is in line with the recent call given by the Leader of the Opposition in West Bengal Suwendu Adhikari where the focus is "no vote to Trinamool". Adhikari's belief is that Trinamool Congress's success in the 2021 Assembly polls was to an extent contributed by "no vote to BJP". His belief is also that once the ordinary voters are pursued and convinced on this "no vote to Trinamool Congress" campaign-line, BJP as the



strongest opposition party in West Bengal now will be the automatic choice in most cases. Meanwhile, state BJP president Sukanta Majumdar has said that in the campaign for the upcoming polls the focus will be more on door-

to-door campaign and small street-corner meetings rather than big rallies considering the limited time of campaign before the polls. Meanwhile, the state committee leader of BJP said that corruption issued against the state government and ruling party leaders will be the main subject of campaign for the rural civic body polls. "We are keeping our legal teams ready with the apprehension of massive violence unleashed by the ruling party during the nomination, pre-poll days, polling day and on the day of counting, so that appropriate courts can be approached urgently whenever required," he said.

HYDERABAD TO INTRODUCE WARD OFFICE SYSTEM TO ADDRESS CIVIC GRIEVANCES

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Hyderabad will become the first metro city in the country to introduce a ward office system to enable people to lodge their civic grievances, Telangana's Minister for Municipal Administration, K. T. Rama Rao said on Saturday. The minister said that 150 Ward Offices will be inaugurated on June 16. Each of the ward offices will have 10 staff members from various departments led by the Ward Administrative Officer (WAO). An Assistant Municipal Commissioner rank officer will be the WAO. People can lodge their civic grievances at these offices. The pioneering initiative will take administration closer to people, he said. Asserting that no other metro city in the country has implemented the Ward Office system, minister KTR exuded confidence about its success. He hoped



that this will become a model for other cities in the country. He held an interactive session with Ward Level Officers of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). The programme was organised on the occasion of Telangana Good Governance Day held as part of the decennial celebrations of Telangana State formation. KTR detailed the main functions of ward offices and job responsibilities of each of the staff members. One of the objectives of the offices is to ensure proper

maintenance of all civic infrastructure provided under all ongoing schemes, development projects in the ward. The minister also said that a Citizens Charter will be released which will detail the time to redress a grievance. This will be displayed at the offices. The following staff members will be assigned to each ward office: Ward Administrative Officer (WAO), Engineer, Town planner, Entomologist, Sanitary Jawan,

Community Organiser, Urban Biodiversity Supervisor, Assistant, Line Inspector, Computer Operator and Receptionist. The minister said that a WAO will coordinate with all government departments, escalate issues to additional or deputy commissioners or others. Ward engineers will look after roads, drains, repair or construction of community halls and other infrastructure in the ward. They also have to address water logging issues, filling of potholes, and repair of minor patches on roads. Ward town planners monitor buildings construction, ensure public property is not encroached, and enforce building rules. A Ward Entomologist has to identify water logging areas and undertake anti larval operations. Ward Sanitary Jawan will supervise overall sanitation works in the ward. Ward Urban Biodiversity Supervisor is responsible for all the green programs of the government.

Mumbai NCB cracks drug cartel; 3 nabbed with 20 kg MD, Rs 1.10 cr cash

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has busted a major drug trafficking racket in south Mumbai and seized 20 kg Mephedrone (MD) worth Rs 50 crore. Three persons, including a woman, were arrested in this operation in Saturday, an official said on Saturday. NCB Mumbai Zonal Director Amit Ghawate said that large quantities of gold ornaments and cash, which were amassed as the financial proceeds of the drug sales, have also been seized. Based on a specific tip-off about a group furtively involved in smuggling bulk quantity of MD and distributing it in various parts of

Mumbai and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region comprising Navi Mumbai, Thane, Raigad and Palghar areas, the NCB swooped on a Dongri-based person named N. Khan on Friday. The NCB laid a trap for Khan and soon they found his associate A. Ali, who was caught with 3 kg MD. A raid and search on Khan's home resulted in the seizure of another 2 kg MD. Khan spilled the beans about a woman operative, A.F. Shaikh, who had supplied the contraband to him. The NCB also paid a visit to Shaikh's house from where they seized 15 kg MD, Rs 1.10 crore in cash and around 187 gm of gold ornaments. After giving evasive replies, the woman finally

admitted that the cash and gold were the proceeds of the drugs sales and the NCB took charge of more incriminating documents from her. The accused trio also revealed that they were partners in the illegal narcotics trade for the past around 7-10 years, the NCB said. The accused woman was dealing in bulk quantities of drugs, had spread her supply network to several other cities and even set up a company to disguise the drug trafficking business and its related financial transactions. The NCB had earlier booked some members of this syndicate and it is now on the lookout for the remaining associates and the other ill-gotten assets created from the drugs money.

BIHAR BJP CHIEF COMPARES RAHUL TO OSAMA BIN LADEN



Patna: In a scathing attack, Bihar BJP chief Samrat Chaudhary on Saturday likened Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to slain Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden, saying that by just growing a beard, one cannot become the Prime Minister of a country. While addressing a gathering in Araria to inform the people of the Central government's achievements in the past nine years, Chaudhary said: "Rahul Gandhi while enhancing the beard like Laden and roaming in the country will not make him Prime Minister. We perceive him as a 50-year-old child in politics. The state BJP chief also went on to say that if the party comes to power in Bihar, it will stop practices like cattle murder, love jihad and illegal intrusions.

GURUGRAM: FIVE VEHICLE THIEVES ARRESTED; 10 BIKES, 1 CAR RECOVERED



Team Absolute | Gurugram

With an aim to curb incidents of vehicle theft in the city, the district police during its special operation nabbed five vehicle thieves and recovered 10 stolen motorcycles and one car from their possession on Saturday, police said. During a special operation a crime branch team of Sohna, led by Sub-Inspector Satyaprakash, overpowered the thieves involved in carrying out vehicle thefts. The accused have been

identified as Sahab alias Sukha, Asif, Hariom, Mohammad Zaheer and Arshad alias Kala. During preliminary police inquiry and from the criminal record of the accused, it has been revealed that they have carried out 11 incidents of vehicle theft. All the accused have already gone to jail. Asif, Mohd Zaheer and Arshad were wanted in 5 cases of vehicle theft. "The accused have been arrested, they are in police custody and will be interrogated to know about their associates and incidents," Varun Dahiya, ACP crime, said.

Delhi court acquits man in 2020 riots case; pulls up police

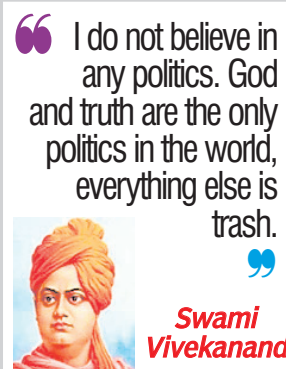
Team Absolute | New Delhi

A court here has pulled up the Delhi Police for falsely claiming that a complainant can identify the accused in a case pertaining to the 2020 north-east Delhi riots, while acquitting the accused Noor Mohammad of offences related to rioting and unlawful assembly. The court also questioned the credibility of a police witness, saying "it seemed his statement was obtained falsely and belatedly". "The fact that the state falsely cited the complainant as a witness who can identify the accused as the offender, indicates that the case of the prosecution that the offence was committed by the accused Noor Mohammad is false," Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Shirish Aggarwal of Karkardooma Courts said. The judge also expressed doubts about the identification of Mohammad by a head constable who claimed to be an eyewitness to the rioting. The court highlighted the head constable's failure to take action or provide evidence despite witnessing the offence. "It is hard to fathom that a police officer who is courageous enough to stop the mob just stood there as a mute spectator when the rioting and plundering was taking place... no explanation has been given by the said witness who is a police officer for standing by and just watching and waiting. He did not even deem it fit to make a video of the offence being committed, even though he was at a relatively safe distance," it said. During the trial, the complainant, who



was the prosecution's first witness, was declared hostile for failing to identify Noor Mohammad as the offender. Another prosecution witness, a head constable, admitted to not reporting the offence or identifying the offenders. The court deemed the testimony of the head constable unreliable due to contradictions. The judge found it hard to believe that the head constable, as a police officer, did not report the offence or make any attempt to arrest the offenders.





'WE ARE FACING PRESSURE TO COMPROMISE', ALLEGES SAKSHI MALIK

"There's huge pressure on us to compromise," Sakshi told a television channel, claiming that people close to Brij Bhushan have been calling and threatening them. She claimed that the father of the complainant minor wrestler is suffering from depression because of the pressure put on him to withdraw the complaint.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Pressure is being put on the protesting wrestler to compromise and it is under pressure that the minor wrestler, who has levelled allegations of sexual harassment against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the sidelined president of Wrestling Federation of India has changed her statement, Olympic bronze medallist Sakshi Malik has reportedly claimed. Amid the ongoing talks to resolve wrestlers' issues, grappler Sakshi Malik on Saturday also said they will not participate in Asian Games unless the matter is completely resolved. Talking to reporters in Sonapat, Malik said that no one understands what the wrestlers are going through mentally each passing day. The 30-year-old reached Sonapat to attend the Mahapanchayat to decide on the future course of action for wrestlers, who have been demanding the resignation of Brij Bhushan Singh over allegations of sexual harassment. Sakshi's comments have come at a time when trials for the Asiad are



scheduled to take place in the ongoing month. All the wrestlers, including those involved in the protest, need to compete at trials and earn their place in the India team for the Asian Games, which will be held in

Hangzhou, China from September 23 to October 8, 2023. Earlier on Wednesday, Sakshi along with Bajrang Punia and others had met Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur at his home and said

"We will participate in Asian Games only when all these issues will be resolved. You can't understand how mentally exhausting this is and what we are going through every day."

that the government has asked for time till June 15 for the police investigation to complete.

"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 panchayats. So, we won't have any protest till June 15 but our 'movement' against the WFI chief will continue," Sakshi had told reporter.

Assam, Manipur CMs hold meetings in Imphal, net suspension extended till June 15



IMPHAL | Agencies

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday held a series of meetings in Imphal with his Manipur counterpart N. Biren Singh and various other bodies and civil society organisations on the ethnic violence in the state in which at least 105 people have been killed so far and over 320 injured since it first broke out on May 3. The Assam Chief Minister's visit came nine days after Home Minister Amit Shah's four-day visit to the violence-hit northeastern state. Sarma held a series of meetings with Biren Singh, many MLAs and organisations in an effort to tame the ethnic hostilities. Meanwhile, amid sporadic

incidents of violence, the Manipur government on Saturday extended the suspension of Internet services for the eighth time till June 15, to prevent the spread of rumours and videos, photos, and messages, which might affect the law and order situation. Various Kuki tribal organisations continue to block the Imphal-Dimapur National Highway (NH-2) in Manipur, creating a serious problem of transporting essentials, food grains, transport fuel, and life-saving drugs. Though the state government with security escorts has been trying to ferry various essentials from different parts of the country through the Imphal-Jiribam National Highway (along southern Assam), the NH-2 (via Nagaland) is considered as

the lifeline for Manipur. Sarma, who is also the Convenor of BJP-led North-East Democratic Alliance (NEDA), arrived in Manipur on Saturday on a day-long visit. Soon after his arrival, Sarma headed to the CM's secretariat in Imphal and held a closed-door meeting with Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, some ministers and other officials. After the meeting, he went to a hotel, where he met some leaders of several Civil Society Organisations, besides some MLAs and key leaders. According to political analysts, Sarma, who is close to the Union Home Minister, was carrying a message from Delhi to find a solution to the ethnic violence by involving all stakeholders.

10 ROBBERS HOLD CMS STAFF CAPTIVE IN LUDHIANA; DECAMP WITH RS 7 CRORE



Team Absolute | Chandigarh

At least 10 masked robbers, with two barging into the office from the front door and others from the rear entrance of cash management service company CMS - Connecting Commerce, in New Rajguru Nagar in Punjab's Ludhiana, and fled with cash worth around Rs 7 crore. The miscreants held five office security employees captive at gunpoint. The robbers took Rs 4 crore kept at the office and fled with the

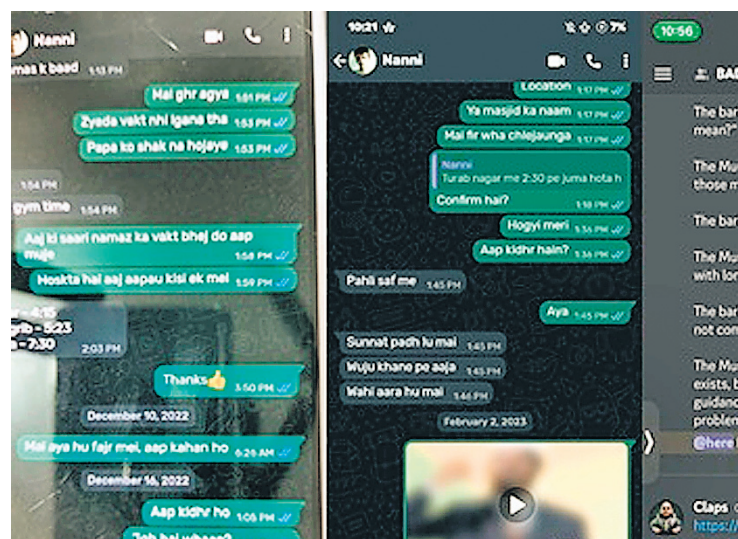
cash van containing Rs 3 crore on the intervening night of Friday. Police suspect an insider's involvement in the robbery. Ludhiana Police Commissioner Mandeep Singh Sidhu told the media that the incident happened around 1.30 a.m. but police were informed at 7 a.m. "There were at least 10 robbers who also took away the CCTV cameras and the DVR along with them," he said, adding, "The robbers held the night duty staff captive and fled with the cash. They also stole the cash van

which too had a huge amount of money in it." Later, police found the abandoned cash van near Mullanpur on the Ludhiana-Ferozepur road. Two weapons were found inside the abandoned van," Sidhu said. Prima facie, he said, there was negligence on the part of the company as a huge amount of cash was not kept in lockers. Some reports say that Rs 10 crore was looted but Sidhu said the amount is being ascertained. Special teams have been formed to track the criminals.

Conversion via app case: WhatsApp chats between child, cleric surface

Ghaziabad | Agencies

Many shocking revelations have come to the fore in the case pertaining to conversion through a gaming app in Ghaziabad. New WhatsApp chats between a cleric (maulavi) and a minor boy of a Jain community have surfaced that show how he was brainwashed through chats and motivated to adopt Islam. The purported conversation happened in December 2022, in which the boy is told about the 'wudhu' (ablution) and Namaz time. In the chat, the student can be seen saying: "I am in school now... will not be able to offer Namaz", to which the cleric replies: "Today is Friday, it is very important to offer Friday prayer." The cleric -- identified as Abdul Rahman, was arrested in Ghaziabad for his alleged role in the religious conversion of at least four youth. The prime accused, Shahnawaz Khan a.k.a Baddo, a resident of Thane, is on the run. The police have launched a manhunt to nab him. The Ghaziabad Police have received information about the con-



version of four minors from different parts of the country. One is from Faridabad, one from Chandigarh, and two are from Ghaziabad. A four-member team of Ghaziabad Police has also been sent to Maharashtra to nab Khan. Khan's mother and brother are in

constant touch with the police. Meanwhile, the Ghaziabad Police have started probing the bank accounts of Khan, Rehman and the families of both individuals. About 20 bank accounts linked to them are being probed. The police have received Khan's bank transaction report of around 150 pages.

Assam, Manipur CMs hold meetings in Imphal, net suspension extended till June 15

Imphal: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday held a series of meetings in Imphal with his Manipur counterpart N. Biren Singh and various other bodies and civil society organisations on the ethnic violence in the state in which at least 105 people have been killed so far and over 320 injured since it first broke out on May 3. The Assam Chief Minister's visit came nine days after Home Minister Amit Shah's four-day visit to the violence-hit northeastern state. Sarma held a series of meetings with Biren Singh, many MLAs and organisations in an effort to tame the ethnic hostilities. Meanwhile, amid sporadic incidents of violence, the Manipur government on Saturday extended the suspension of Internet services for the eighth time till June 15, to prevent the spread of rumours and videos, photos, and messages, which might affect the law and order situation.

FROM RS 55L CR IN 2014, INDIA'S DEBT ROSE TO RS 155L CR IN 9 YRS: CONGRESS

New Delhi: The Congress on Saturday slammed the BJP-led Union government over the country's debt terbling in the last nine years, and demanded a 'white paper' on the state of the economy with total debt crossing Rs 155 lakh crore and the debt-to-GDP ratio touching 84 per cent. Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters here, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said, "The Narendra Modi-led government has trebled India's debt, which from Rs 55 lakh crore in 2014 has now gone past Rs 155 lakh crore." She said that 14 Prime Ministers in 67 years raised debt to Rs 55 lakh crore, but Modi alone has increased it by over Rs 100 lakh crore in the last nine years. "Economy cannot be managed by managing the headlines, nor can it be managed by WhatsApp forwards. It can only be managed with efficient economic management," said Shrinete, who is also the Chairperson of Social Media and Digital Platforms. She also said that every child born in India today carries a debt of Rs 1.2 lakh on his head right from his birth. Claiming that every year the country spends Rs 11 lakh crore on servicing this humongous debt, she pointed out that India's debt-to-GDP ratio has gone up to 84 per cent which is alarming when compared to other developing and emerging market economies, where the average debt-to-GDP ratio is 64.5 per cent.

Common diabetes drug may cut long Covid risk by 40%: Lancet

In the trial, 6.3 per cent (35/564) of participants given metformin reported a long Covid diagnosis within 10 months of follow up, compared to 10.4 per cent (58/562) of those receiving an identical placebo. These findings reflect previously published results from this trial which found metformin prevented over 40 per cent of emergency department visits, hospitalisations, and deaths due to Covid within two weeks of starting the treatment, compared to a placebo. Other arms of the trial looked at ivermectin and fluvoxamine and found that neither prevented long Covid.

Bengaluru | Agencies

Taking a two-week course of metformin, a safe and affordable diabetes medication, after testing positive for SARS-CoV-2, may lead to 40 per cent fewer long Covid risk, according to a results of trial published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases journal. Currently, there are no proven treatments or ways to prevent long Covid, other than reducing the risk of infection in the first place. The phase 3 trial is the first to show a medication that can reduce the risk of long Covid when taken after testing positive for SARS-CoV-2, said researchers from University of Minnesota, US. However, the results do not indicate whether metformin would be effective as a treatment for those who already have long Covid, they said. "Previous studies have found that metformin stops the SARS-CoV-2 virus from replicating in the lab, which is consistent with predictions from our mathematical modelling of viral replica-



tion, so that might be what is causing the reduction in both severe Covid-19 and long Covid diagnoses seen in this trial," said co-author David Odde, a biomedical engineer at University of Minnesota. The study included 1,126 patients who were given either metformin or an identical placebo pill after testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 between December 2020 to January 2022. Participants were followed up for 10 months with data gathered by self-report questionnaire every 30 days. The researchers also acknowledge some limitations to the study, including that the trial excluded

those with a BMI under 25 and those younger than 30 years, and therefore it is unknown if these findings could be generalised to those populations. "If confirmed, the findings are profound and potentially landmark (a) this is the first high-quality evidence from a randomised controlled trial to show that the incidence of long Covid can be reduced by a medical intervention, metformin -- an inexpensive treatment with which clinicians have ample experience," said Dr Jeremy Faust of Harvard Medical School, who was not involved in this research.

Russia to withdraw from European armed forces treaty on Nov 7

Moscow: Russia will officially pull out of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) on November 7 this year, the Foreign Ministry announced in a statement. As required, Russia has notified all participants of the CFE of its decision to withdraw from the treaty and its departure will come into force 150 days after the notification, Xinhua news agency quoted the statement issued on Friday as saying. Last month, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law on the denunciation of the CFE following the approval of the parliament. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Russia's withdrawal would have no direct impact because the mechanism had been non-working for a long time. The CFE was originally signed in 1990 by the then NATO members and the then six Warsaw Treaty states. The agreement came into force in 1992.





NCP'S FACE-CHANGE: SUPRIYA SULE, PRAFUL PATEL NEW WORKING PRESIDENTS

Team Absolute | Quaid Najmi | Thane

With less than a year remaining for the Lok Sabha elections, and ahead of upcoming polls in various states, Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar has overhauled the party, naming senior leader Praful Patel and his daughter Supriya Sule (Pawar) as the new Working Presidents.

He made the important declaration as the party enters the Silver Jubilee year, at a function held in Delhi, with the top brass in attendance.

The developments on Saturday came exactly 35 days after Pawar had vigorously stirred the NCP cauldron with his 'resignation drama' and then bowed before the party's wishes to remain as the party supremo on May 6.

Cracking the whip as he had promised last month, Pawar has effected a



major reshuffle in the party's organisation at the top levels, starting with the General Secretaries (GS).

Patel, Rajya Sabha MP, shall be in-charge of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Goa and the upper house of parliament, besides being the Chairman of Economic Affairs.

Sule, Lok Sabha MP from Baramati, shall also be in-charge of Maharashtra, Punjab and Haryana, women, youth, students and the lower house of parliament, besides being Chairperson of Central Election Authority.

P.P. Mohammed Faizal, MP and GS will look after Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Kerala, the Overseas India and

Foreign Affairs departments.

GS Sunil Tatkare, MP, will handle Odisha and West Bengal, plus national committee, sessions and conferences, Election Commission, Minority Department, Farmers Cell.

GS Dr. Yoganand Shastri is entrusted with organisations, Seva Dal and also President of Delhi NCP.

Another GS K.K. Sharma will look after Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, plus Panchayati Raj Department in the party.

GS Narendra Verma shall oversee the party work in all the seven northeastern states, media and IT departments.

GS Dr. Jitendra Awhad, MLA in Maharashtra is given the responsibility of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Jammu & Kashmir, plus Labour, SC/SC/OBC, Cooperatives and Consumer Affairs departments in the

party.

Permanent Secretary S.R. Kohli is entrusted with press, publicity, administration, assist Patel and Sule, and the treasurer in accounts and coordinate with the Election Commission.

Pawar has instructed all the national general secretaries to consult the new National Working Presidents for major policy decisions and keep him in the loop on various activities regularly.

On questions on why his nephew Ajit Pawar is not given any additional assignments, Pawar Sr. said that he (Ajit) is already have a crucial responsibility as the Leader of Opposition in Maharashtra Legislative Assembly.

On his part, Ajit Pawar made it clear that "he is not sulking", and heartily congratulated all the new appointees, wishing them the best in their endeavours to build and fortify the party.

State NCP President Jayant Patil has congratulated all the new appointees including Patel and Sule, saying that the party will grow stronger and now all will get down to work ahead of the elections as the party enters its 25th year.

NCP National Spokesperson Clyde Crasto and Chief Spokesperson Mahesh Tapase have hailed the appointments of Patel and Sule to the high posts and said they will prove beneficial to the party.

Tapase added how Sule has been particularly instrumental in bringing the youth and new voters to the party fold which will be a boost in the upcoming elections.

Man arrested for objectionable social media post against Devendra Fadnavis

Team Absolute | Mumbai

On Saturday, the Thane police arrested a man from Sangli district for allegedly posting an objectionable social media post against Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and a few other senior political leaders.

Based on a complaint lodged by a social activist from the Eknath Shinde faction of Shiv Sena, the Naupada police registered a case against the accused.

"The case has been registered under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code," he said.

"The accused had allegedly posted objectionable post on social media against Fadnavis, Kalyan MP Shrikant Shinde, who is the son of CM Ekanth Shinde and other senior politicians," the official added.

Man held for strangling son

Thane: A 55-year-old man allegedly strangled his 32-year-old son to death over a petty issue in Thane district.

The victim's body has been sent for post-mortem.

The police have arrested the accused, a resident of Dongarwadi Nalgaon area in the Thane district.

"We have arrested the accused under section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code," assistant police inspector K D Bacchav of Khinavli police station said.

"The accused allegedly strangled his son after the latter sold some pipes from the house without his knowledge on Friday," he said.

Further probe is underway.

Maha PUCL slams communal violence in Kolhapur, caste-killing in Nanded

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra PUCL has condemned the communal violence that erupted in Kolhapur on June 8 and the preceding caste-killing of a youth in Nanded on June 2, and urged the state government and police to take urgent measures for restoring peace and harmony in the state, here on Saturday.

The PUCL Chairman Mihir Desai and General Secretary Lara Jesani also expressed concern over the manner in which vested interests are spreading hatred and inciting caste-communal violence with impunity in the state.

"These are just the latest in a series of incidents of violence against religious minorities, Dalits and tribals in the state... and stoking caste and communal conflicts in Maharashtra," said Desai and Jesani.



They referred to the killing of a Dalit youth, Akshay Sharavan Bhalerao by nine persons as he had organised a rally to celebrate the anniversary of Dr B. R. Ambedkar in Bhandar (Nanded) on April 30.

The PUCL also highlighted how on June 7, a large number of people owing allegiance to various Hindutva organisations gathered at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Chowk

in Kolhapur following a shutdown call in protest against social media posts of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and the Mysore King Tipu Sultan.

The Sakal Hindu Samaj also took out a rally in Sangamner town of Ahmednagar where hate speeches were reportedly made to incite violence against Muslims, followed by stone-pelting incidents.

Earlier on May 28, there was a communal clash in Sangamner, Akola and and Shevgaon (Ahmednagar) were also rocked by violence on May 15-16, and the Hazrat Peer Shahdud Din Khattalshahwali Dargah in the Panhalgad Fort of Kolhapur was also vandalised on May 24.

"Divisive forces are making all attempts to break peoples' unity. But in the Panhalgad incident, people from both communities immediately came forward to repair the damage and ensured that peace

prevailed," said Desai.

Jesani added that despite court orders, these (Hindutva) organisations operated with impunity to provoke violence and instability and are a fallout of the inaction by the police and state to prevent hate-speeches, book offenders and maintain law and order.

The PUCL also condemned the utterances by Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' on "sons of Aurangzeb" attempting to disrupt the law and order and said that such remarks stereotype members of one community and further vitiate the atmosphere while deflecting attention from the real perpetrators of violence.

The civil rights organisation has also demanded that Bhalerao's killing case should be given to a fast-track court, protection to witnesses and compensation to the victim's family..

"Some leaders are trying to Eknath Shinde's Son's big claim

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena MP and Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's son Shrikant Shinde on Friday hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders in the State's Dombivli unit and said there are some leaders who are trying to create obstacles for BJP-Shinde faction for their "selfish politics".

Speaking with ANI, Shrikant Shinde said, "Some leaders from Dombivli are trying to create obstacles for the alliance (BJP-Shinde faction) for their selfish politics. I have no desire for any post. I will back whichever candidate the senior leadership of the alliance decides".

His remarks came days after CM Shinde on Monday said that the Shiv Sena and the BJP will jointly contest all upcoming elec-



tions including Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha, and local body

elections in the State. Shiv Sena MP further said

their (Shinde faction) aim is form the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance again and form a govt with the BJP at the Centre.

"If someone opposes the work we are doing in this direction, if someone is angry and if there is any disturbance in the alliance, then I am ready to resign from my post," CM Shinde's son said.

"We've decided that Shiv Sena and BJP will jointly contest all upcoming elections including Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha, and local body elections," tweeted Eknath Shinde earlier in the month.

Earlier, Eknath Shinde and Maharashtra deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis met Union Home Minister Amit Shah at his residence in New Delhi to discuss several issues related to the State.

Senior Maharashtra official arrested in Pune for corruption

Team Absolute | Pune

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) arrested an Additional Divisional Commissioner from Pune on Friday for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 8 lakh from a representative of farmers, promising assistance in land acquisition matters.

Searches were conducted at the official and residential premises of the accused at three locations in Pune, leading to the recovery of cash amounting to Rs 6 crore, property-related documents including 14 immovable properties in the name of the accused and his family, investment and bank account details, and other incriminating documents.

A senior CBI official said that a case was registered against Anil Ganpatrao Ramond, the Additional Divisional Commissioner.

The complainant was handling land acquisition-related cases of farm-



ers from Satara and Solapur districts. The farmers from the villages were seeking higher compensation for their land, and the complainant was representing their cases to secure higher compensation before the office of Additional Divisional Commissioner and the Arbitrator for Satara, Pune, and Solapur districts, as per the National Highways Act.

The accused allegedly kept the complainant's cases pending, and when the complainant approached

him in this regard, he demanded an undue advantage of 10 per cent of the increased compensation amount.

The accused demanded Rs 10 lakh from the complainant for the increased compensation of around Rs 1.25 crore and finally settled for Rs 8 lakh. The CBI laid a trap and caught the accused red-handed while demanding and accepting the bribe, and will produced before the competent court at Shivajinagar, Pune (Maharashtra) on Saturday.

New Airport in Navi Mumbai on track to be operational by 2024

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Navi Mumbai is set to get an international airport, which is being built with an eye on the high air traffic demand. The new airport will be located in the center of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) at Ulwe in Navi Mumbai.

The airport will be built and managed by Adani Airports, one of India's largest airport operators. To be constructed in four phases, the plan is to make the airport one of the most energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable in the world.

All vehicles that will be used at the station will be electric, and charging stations will be installed across the airport. It will also extensively use green electricity, a large part of which shall be solar power generated on the site, the group managing the project said in a statement.

The terminal's design is inspired by the lotus, India's national



flower. The first two phases will be completed by December 2024. The Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) will be built over an area of 1160 hectares.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde yesterday reviewed

the work going on the site along with his deputy Devendra Fadnavis.

After an aerial inspection of the site, the two leaders were given a detailed presentation by the Adani Group's representatives on the features of the airport.

The Chief Minister said that the new airport will be an important one not just for Maharashtra, but also for the country. He added that it will reduce the burden on the Mumbai airport.

Detailing the challenges faced in the project, the project team

said that they still have to tackle tall hills, and rocks and also change the course of the Ulwe river. "Challenges were galore in the 1160-hectare land meant for the project. Especially, in the southern part which was shortlisted there was a 2 km long, 100-meter-tall hill with 55 million cubic meters of rock in it," says Charudatta Deshmukh, Joint President - Planning and Design of NMIA Project.

"The Ulwe river had its 40-meter-wide course cutting across the site. The river was recoured and the current river course is 200 meters wide and it doesn't impact the site," he added.

The distance between the new Navi Mumbai airport and the Mumbai airport will be less than 40 km.

The airport would be connected to the 22-km Mumbai Trans-Harbour Link (MTHL), which will serve as the main road connector between the airport and the metropolis.

Kangana calls Ranbir 'skinny white rat' for starring as Lord Ram in 'Ramayana'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After the news of Ranbir Kapoor playing Lord Ram in the upcoming film 'Ramayana' did the rounds, actress Kangana Ranaut reacted to it calling the actor a "skinny white rat."

There were reports claiming that star couple Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor will play Goddess Sita and Lord Ram in Nitesh Tiwari's 'Ramayana.'

Kangana took to Instagram and criticised the casting for the film. She wrote: "Recently, I am hearing news about another coming up Bolly Ramayana... Where a skinny white rat (so-called actor) who desperately needs some sun tan and conscience he is infamous for doing nasty underhand PR about almost everyone in the industry... known for womanising and drug addiction after desperately trying to prove himself Lord Shiva in a trilogy (which no one watched or want to make more parts of) has now grown fancy to be Lord Rama..."

The media reports also claimed that south star Yash would essay the role of Raavan.

"Whereas a young southern superstar who is known to be self-made, a devoted family man a traditionalist also according to Valmiki ji description he looks more like Lord Rama in his complexion, demeanour and facial features... is offered to play Ravana... What kind of Kalyuga is this?? No pale-looking drug-gie soy boy should play Lord Rama... Jai Shri Ram."





WILL 'LADLI BEHNA YOJNA' RE-ESTABLISH SHIVRAJ IN MP?

// Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that several steps have been taken in the direction of women empowerment in the state. In this series, the 'Mukhya Mantri Ladli Bahna' Yojana has been implemented. This scheme has been guided by my conscience. This will increase the self-confidence of the sisters, respect in the family and society. Eligible beneficiary sisters will get Rs 1000 every month under the scheme. He said that an amount of Rs one thousand each will be transferred from Jabalpur to the accounts of one crore 25 lakh sisters of the state with a single click.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday sought BJP leader Uma Bharti's blessings at her residence before leaving for Jabalpur to launch the ambitious women-centric financial scheme 'Ladli Behna Yojana' ahead of the Assembly polls.

Accompanied by state sangathan mantri Hitanand Sharma, Chief Minister Chouhan touched the feet of Uma Bharti, who is known as 'dididi' in the political circles of Madhya Pradesh.

While receiving a coconut wrapped in saffron colour cloth as 'sagun' on the auspicious occasion, Uma Bharti - who still enjoys a con-



siderable hold among the women in the state -- was heard quipping 'Sabe Pehli Ladli Behna Mai' (I am the first Ladli Behna).

Bharti has the distinction of being the first woman Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, under whose leadership the saffron party had

managed to end the ten-year rule Digvijaya Singh-led Congress government in 2003.

However, she had to leave the post and was succeeded by (late) Babulal Gaur and then Shivraj Singh Chouhan occupied the chair. Since then, the BJP has won two consecutive Assembly elections in 2008 and 2013.

In the 2018 elections, the Congress under the leadership of veteran leader and state unit president Kamal Nath managed to romp back to power after a gap of 15 years. However, a political crisis within led to the debacle of his government in 15 months and Chouhan returned to power with the help of Jyotiraditya Scindia in March 2020. Saturday morning, after meeting Bharti, Chief Minister Chouhan left for Jabalpur to address a huge gathering of

women - the beneficiaries of the schemes hoping to retain power after the Assembly polls slated later this year.

The much talked about 'Ladli Behna' scheme, has been formulated on lines of Chief Minister Shivraj's flagship 'Ladli Laxmi Yojana' during his previous tenure, which earned him the tag of 'Mama' (maternal uncle). With the elections just five months away and the BJP and the CM reeling under high anti-incumbency, an obvious question arises whether this new ambitious scheme would fetch him the tag of 'Bhaia' (brother)?

The outcome of this scheme would also be a test of leadership of CM Chouhan, for which he has been vigorously campaigning for the last three months.

Shivraj's 'Ladli Behna Yojna' attempt to wash away 18 yrs of sins: Kamal Nath

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath on Saturday slammed Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan over his ambitious 'Ladli Behna Yojna' scheme terming it an attempt to trick the people into casting their votes in favour of the BJP in the upcoming Assembly elections. His remarks came hours before Chief Minister Chouhan was to release the first installment of his flagship 'Ladli Behna Yojna' scheme in Jabalpur city.

The opposition launched scathing attacks on him citing poor health system and atrocities against the women in the state. Kamal Nath issued a statement raising various questions pertaining to the women, including their security, rising crime graph and unavailability of ambulances for pregnant women in the state.

He reiterated his question on time of the launch of the

scheme claiming it to be an attempt to cheat the people once again to seek their votes in the coming Assembly elections. The former Chief Minister stated that though atrocities on women are on a rise, the ruling BJP has not done anything about it. Now, that the elections are approaching, the women are being remembered for their votes. Respect of women and their security has always been the prime agenda of the Congress and this culture of respect will continue, he asserted. "The news of unavailability of ambulances for pregnant women would often be seen in different parts of Madhya Pradesh. The number of cases of atrocities against the fairer sex has surpassed several states, while the health system has almost collapsed. And now, after 18 years of rule, CM Chouhan is once again trying to cheat the people with his fake promises," Kamal Nath said.

MP forest dept joins hands with wildlife body to resolve corridor challenges

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Forest Department has joined hands with the Coalition for Wildlife Corridors (CWC) to tackle the issues related to wildlife corridor conservation plans in the state.

The development came during a two-day workshop attended by the stakeholders from various agencies to discuss the challenges of corridor conservation in Madhya Pradesh.

As per a senior forest official, the workshop primarily focused on two significant corridors -- Satpura Tiger



Reserve to Pench National Park, and Satpura to Melghat.

The official said that the two corridors connect the protected areas in Madhya Pradesh and neighboring Maharashtra.

"The need for such a workshop was evident as the corridors faced fragmentation. It was a crucial step to bring all the stakeholders together to find out a solution," the official told reporter.

Two women die in Bhopal after portion of pond caves in

Team Absolute | Bhopal

At least two women were reported killed after a portion of a pond they were working at caved in in Bhopal. Two other women, who were also stuck at the same spot have been rescued.

The incident occurred in Balrampur village located at the border of Bhopal and Raichur district on Saturday. A team of SDRF reached the spot and the officials of district administration began investigation the matter.

The deceased are identified as Firoza Bi (35) and Pinki Adivasi (16), both residents of Balrampur. As per



the reports, the women had removed around 7-8 feet deep soil. Two women (those died) were inside and digging, while other were upside. All of sudden, the upper portion caved in. Bhopal District Collector Ashish Singh said that a team of local administrative officials have been rushed to the spot for investigation. The kins of the deceased will be given a compensation of Rs four lakh

After delivering K'taka, Shivakumar to get more responsibilities ahead of MP polls

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bhopal

New Delhi: With organisational changes on the cards, the Congress has decided to give Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar additional responsibilities ahead of the crucial Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections slated to be held this year.

According to party leaders, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is all set to address her first public meeting in Jabalpur on May 12. A party source said that to get the things in order to kick off the first big public meeting in the state, Congress has sent Shivakumar, who is also known as the party's 'troubleshooter' to the poll-bound state.

The source said that Shivakumar played a key role in ensuring victory for the party in Karnataka, where he along with Siddaramaiah worked together and brought Congress back to power with



a thumping majority.

Looking at the organisational skills and handling of the party workers, Shivakumar is likely to get more responsibility in Madhya Pradesh, where Congress lost the power in March 2020 after a rebellion from several MLAs close to Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia after they ditched the party and joined the BJP, the source added.

Calling Shivakumar an "asset" for the Congress, the source said he knows how to handle the party workers and also listens to their grievances and sorts it out.

3 kids charred to death in Bhind



Team Absolute | Bhopal

At least three children were charred to death and four others sustained serious injuries after a fire broke out in a house in Madhya Pradesh's Bhind district on Saturday, police said.

The incident occurred at the house in Danekapura village under Gormi police station due to the blast of an LPG cylinder.

Sub Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Rajesh Rathore said that victims comprised a 4-year-old boy, his 10-year-old sister, and their 5-

year-old cousin sister.

He said that the house owner, Akhilesh Rajput, and his wife sustained grievous injuries and were referred to Gwalior for treatment.

The deceased were grandchildren of the house owner.

Rathore said that Akhilesh's daughter-in-law and daughter are also undergoing treatment at Gormi Health Centre.

"LPG leakage appears to be the reason of the fire. A forensic team has reached the spot for inspection and the exact cause will be known after the investigation is over," Rathore said.

As Shivraj counters anti-incumbency with freebies, MP's debt balloons out of control

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

In the run-up to the Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh due to be held later this year, the ruling BJP government led by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is leaving no stone unturned to fight the anti-incumbency factor.

The state government is announcing a series of populist schemes and freebies to woo the voters while the state is reeling under debt of around Rs 3.5 lakh crore.

Experts say that the average per capita debt in the state has sharply increased in the past five-six years. If the debt figures are taken into consideration, every citizen in the state has a debt of Rs 41,000. It was estimated at Rs 13,853 by the end of March 2016, compared to Rs 10,896 recorded in FY 2013-14. They



claim that the Madhya Pradesh government is "going through a period of severe economic crisis".

The economic condition of Madhya Pradesh can be understood by the fact that in the previous year 2022-2023, the state presented an annual budget of Rs 2.79 lakh crore, while the mounting debt on the government was at Rs 3.31 lakh crore.

Even the Rs 3.14 lakh crore

'self-reliant' annual budget presented in March this year by the Shivraj government for the financial year 2023-2024 could not surpass the total debt of Rs 3.29 lakh crore on the state.

Shashikant Trivedi, a senior journalist who has been covering Madhya Pradesh's economic status for over two decades, said the economic structure had started deteriorating since 2005-2006, but

the enormous changes introduced after 2008 made the situation worst.

According to him, "carousel fraud" was one of the main reasons.

"People only understand the GDP growth, which the government highlights but it does not elaborate on the factual data of the state's economic condition. The depth of the economy of the state needs to be transparent to a degree that a layman can understand. For instance, GDP has gone very high, but does it reflect in daily life?"

Congress has held the Shivraj-led BJP government responsible for the "very poor" economic condition of the state.

Senior Congress leader Tarun Bhanot, who was Finance Minister in Kamal Nath's 15-month government, said: "BJP government claims

it borrowed loans from banks for the developments of the people, while the situation is quite different. The debt during Digvijaya Singh-led Congress government was at Rs 26,000 crore, now it has reached close to Rs 4 lakh crore, and the financial condition of the people in the state continues to decline."

The former minister claimed the situation has worsened to such an extent that students were not given dues of their scholarship for the last two years.

"During the 15-month government, Kamal Nath has made several reforms and multiple revenue resources were created without putting any extra burden on citizens. The Shivraj government has pushed the state 10-15 years back (in terms of economic development)," Bhanot added.

Debt-ridden farmer commits suicide in Harda

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A 44-year-old farmer allegedly committed suicide by consuming a poisonous substance in Madhya Pradesh's Harda district, the police said on Friday.

However, the police note yet.

The deceased has been identified as Rajesh Karode, a resident of Dagashankar village in the district. He was reportedly struggling to repay some loans he took from local moneylenders for farming purposes.

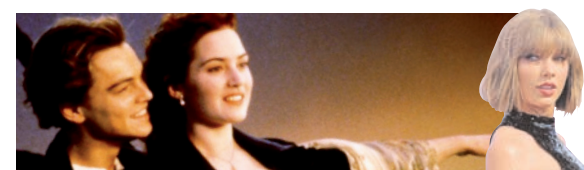
Karode had consumed sulfas on Thursday and was rushed to the nearby hospital for treatment. He was later shifted to a private facility from where he was referred to the district hospital. He died there

during treatment at around 12 noon on Friday, the police said.

Meanwhile, the deceased's son Virendra Karode claimed that his father had a debt burden of Rs 40 lakh and moneylenders were troubling him every day because of which he took the extreme step.

He also alleged that the moneylenders had imposed 10 per cent interest on the amounts his father had borrowed, because of which the outstanding amount had increased to Rs 40 lakh, adding that they even had to sell 10 acres of land to repay the loans.

Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath, who was on a visit to Harda to address an election rally on Friday, has appealed to the farmers not to end their lives due to debt.



JENNIFER LAWRENCE 'TOTALLY OPEN' TO PLAYING KATNISS AGAIN IN NEW 'HUNGER GAMES'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Jennifer Lawrence said that she is open to returning to the 'Hunger Games' franchise after she became a household name for her work as Katniss in the four movies.

"Oh, my God - totally!" Lawrence told Variety while promoting her new coming-of-age comedy 'No Hard Feelings'.

The actress said: "If Katniss ever could come back into my life, 100 per cent."

Looking off camera, she added: "My producing partner just clutched her heart."

The four 'Hunger Games' instalments starred Liam Hemsworth, Josh Hutcherson, Stanley Tucci, Elizabeth Banks, Donald Sutherland and Woody Harrelson.

The first, released in 2012, was directed by Gary Ross with the following three helmed by Francis Lawrence. An upcoming prequel movie, 'The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes', stars Viola Davis, Rachel Zegler, Tom Blyth, Peter Dinklage, Jason Schwartzman and

Hunter Schafer.

The film chronicles Coriolanus Snow's rise to power to become President of Panem. It is set for release November 17. 'No Hard Feelings' is a raunchy comedy starring Lawrence as a 32-year-old Uber driver who is hired by a wealthy couple to date and seduce their 19-year-old son to help him get out of his shell before heading off to college in exchange for a car. 'No Hard Feelings' directed by Gene Stupnitsky ('Good Boys') will release in theaters on June 23."

'Gladiator 2' stunt accident LEAVES SEVERAL CREW MEMBERS INJURED IN MOROCCO

Los Angeles | Agencies

While shooting a stunt sequence for 'Gladiator 2', several crew members were injured on the Morocco set of the sequel to the 2000 film starring Russell Crowe and Joaquin Phoenix.

"While filming a planned stunt sequence on the set of the 'Gladiator' sequel, an accident occurred during which several crew members experienced non-life-threatening injuries," a spokesperson for Paramount Pictures, the studio behind the film, said in a statement, reports 'Variety'.

"The safety and full medical services teams on-site were able to act quickly so that those who were impacted immediately received necessary care. They are all in stable condition and continue to receive treatment."

A total of six people received treatment, four of whom remain in the hospital. All of the impacted crew members were treated for burn injuries, according to an individual with knowledge of the production. Two other crew members were treated locally and then discharged. The accident occurred towards the end of the shooting day. No cast members were harmed. The sequel to the 2000 epic stars Oscar-nominee Paul Mescal, Pedro Pascal, Denzel Washington and Connie Nielsen. Ridley Scott, who directed the first film, is returning behind the camera, with David Scarpa writing the script. 'Gladiator' was one of the highest-grossing movies of the year it debuted, going on to win the Oscar for best picture, as well as a best actor prize for Russell Crowe. The sequel is slated to hit theaters on November 22, 2024.

Josh Hartnett, Joel Edgerton eyed the role of Two Face in 'The Batman - Part II'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Director Matt Reeves is all set to shoot the sequel to his mega hit superhero noir crime film 'The Batman', with antagonist Two-Face being decided upon as one of the villains for the upcoming sequel.

According to Collider, insider John Rocha has shared while chatting on the 'The Hot Mic' podcast

with Jeff Sneider, the two actors eyed for the role of Harvey Dent include, Josh Hartnett and Joel Edgerton. Once an ally of Batman and GCPD Commissioner James Gordon, after being horribly disfigured, the once honest District Attorney became mad and took on the criminal avatar Two-Face.

According to Rocha, the film will focus on the character of Dent, who "may become Two-Face by the end

of the film."

One of Batman's most famous villains, the character has since been portrayed in a variety of ways.

Actor Billy Dee Williams played the character in 1989's 'Batman', later he was played by Tommy Lee Jones in 'Batman Forever' in 1995 and by Aaron Eckhart in Christopher Nolan's 'The Dark Knight' in 2008. 'The Batman - Part II' is due to be released in October 2025.



Jessica Alba calls Priyanka 'stunning' as she shares pictures from Rome

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Jessica Alba was in awe of actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas' pictures from Rome and called her "stunning". Priyanka was attending the opening of the Bulgari Hotel in Rome.

The actress took to Instagram, where she dropped pictures from the event.

In the photos, the actress was seen wearing an all-white thigh-high slit gown with a plunging neckline and white heels. She tied her hair into two pigtales and completed her look with a necklace.

Along with the pictures, Priyanka wrote: "Congratulations to my @bulgari family on the inauguration of @bulgarihotels in Rome #BulgariHotelRoma #BulgariHotels."

Taking to the comment section, Jessica Alba wrote: "Stunning."

On the work front, Priyanka was seen in 'Love Again' and spy series 'Citadel'.

The actress will next be seen in 'Jee Le Zara', by Farhan Akhtar.



Amy Schumer reveals why she dropped out of 'Barbie' film six years ago

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Amy Schumer has revealed why she chose to take a step back from the 'Barbie' film project six years ago. Way back before the current cast of Margot Robbie, Ryan Gosling, and director-writer Greta Gerwig were attached to the upcoming summer film 'Barbie', Schumer was developing the project at Sony as her own vehicle.

But in 2017, her involvement ended, and the project moved to Warner Bros, reports 'Deadline'.

"They said I was too thin," Schumer joked on Thursday's episode of Bravo's 'Watch What Happens Live with Andy Cohen'.

The actress said: "I can't wait to see the movie. I think it looks awesome. I think we said it was scheduling conflicts. That's what we said. But it really



was just like, creative differences. But there's a new team behind it and it looks like it's very feminist and cool, so I will be seeing this movie."

Wolverine and Predator to clash in Marvel's new limited series edition

Los Angeles | Agencies

X-Men's most famous and beloved character Wolverine will be battling the Predator from the 1987 Hollywood sci-fi action horror blockbuster film, in a limited issue Marvel comic titled 'Predator vs. Wolverine #1'.

According to Marvel's official website: "The four-issue limited series will be written by Benjamin Percy, the acclaimed writer known for taking Wolverine's ferocious spirit to its limits in the character's current ongoing solo series."

"Percy will be joined by a host of all-star artistic talent including Greg Land, Andrea Di Vito, Ken Lashley, Kei Zama, and many more. The series will reveal a bitter rivalry between Wolverine and a

Yautja who's been stalking him since his earliest days. Witness these never-before-told encounters as Percy brings the bloodiest hunters in all pop culture to their knees!"

The plot synopsis on Marvel is as follows: "One Yautja seeks the greatest prey in existence - and finds it in Weapon X. From the blood-ridden snows of the Canadian wilderness to the sword-slinging streets of Madripoor, Wolverine and a Predator break everything in their paths on their way to the ultimate victory or glorious death."

The new series is set over the course of several decades and will follow the long and harsh life of Logan, and explore key periods from his past, including his time as the test subject of the Weapon X programme and his time in Madripoor.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Jessie James



WTC FINAL

KOHLI-RAHANE'S STAND KEEPS INDIA ALIVE

London | Agencies

Australia looked to be in a prime position to win the World Test Championship (WTC) Final when they declared on 270/8 and set India a daunting target of 444, something which has never happened in the successful fourth innings chase in history of Test cricket.

But Virat Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane put together a solid unbeaten 71-run partnership on yet another day of gripping Test cricket action and took India to 164/3 at stumps on Day Four, keeping India alive in the chase with 280 runs needed on the final day of the match on Sunday.

On a pitch that has flattened out and looks devoid of demons in terms of movement and bounce, Kohli was in fantastic touch to be 44 not out off just 60 balls. On the other hand, Rahane is unconquered on 20 as the duo set up the match towards an exciting finish, while Australia will be aiming to get seven right balls to bowl out India quickly.

Cheteshwar Pujara began the final session by cracking a fierce cut through point off Scott Boland for four while surviving an inside edge off him for another boundary. Rohit Sharma continued to be in great touch, pulling and driving beautifully off Mitchell Starc to bring India's fifty



in just nine overs.

Pujara followed it up by gently clipping and driving through mid-off against Starc for boundaries, followed by a flick off Cummins to pick another four. Rohit was exquisite in his cut shot off Starc and pull against Green to pick a brace of fours to raise fifty of the partnership.

But Australia bounced back by taking the duo in quick succession. Rohit tried to sweep against Nathan Lyon from around the wicket, but the ball went under the bat to be trapped lbw. Pujara, meanwhile, tried to upper-cut against Cummins but got a thick toe-edge behind to keeper Alex

Carey.

Kohli looked in the zone from the time he arrived at the crease -- bringing his bottom-hand and supple wrists into play to hit five boundaries off pacers in the arc from mid-on to backward square leg, apart from a glorious off-drive against Starc for another boundary.

Rahane, playing with an injured right index finger, proved to be his perfect partner, oozing pristine timing in his sweep, steer, and drive. Kohli again brought out the bright off-drive against Starc for four and ended the day by glancing Lyon through fine leg for another four.

Brief scores

Australia 469 and 270/8 decl. in 84.3 overs (Alex Carey 66 not out, Mitchell Starc 41; Ravindra Jadeja 3-58, Mohammed Shami 2-39) lead India 296 and 164/3 in 40 overs (Virat Kohli 44 not out, Rohit Sharma 43; Nathan Lyon 1-32, Scott Boland 1-38) by 280 runs

WOMEN'S JR ASIA CUP

India outshine Japan 1-0 to enter final, qualify for FIH Jr Hockey Women's World Cup

New Delhi | Agencies

The Indian Junior Women's Hockey Team edged out hosts Japan 1-0 in a neck and neck semi-final clash of the Women's Junior Asia Cup 2023 in Kakamigahara, Gifu Prefecture, Japan on Saturday.

Sunelita Toppo (47) scored the only goal of the game.

The victory means that the Indian team will compete in the prestigious tournament's Final for the second time, having previously reached the summit clash in 2012.

India qualified for the FIH Junior Hockey Women's World Cup 2023 by reaching the tournament's Final, which will be held in Santiago, Chile from November 29 to December 10, 2023, as the top three teams from the Women's Junior Asia Cup 2023 were set to qualify for the Junior World Cup.

India went on the offensive right away and played a pressing game to put Japan under pressure. However, the hosts not only stood firm to prevent India from taking an early lead, but they also began creating scoring opportunities to put pressure back on India. Japan also won a couple of penalty corners but failed to convert them, resulting in a goalless



first quarter.

The second quarter was as intense as the first with both teams attacking relentlessly to break the deadlock. Japan came close to scoring a couple of times but India's goalkeeper Madhuri Kendo made some fine saves to deny the hosts from finding the back of the net. Notably, neither India nor Japan were able to score in the second quarter as both sides went into the half-time break with the score levelled at 0-0.

The third quarter witnessed Japan keeping the possession and making more attacks to keep India on backfoot. However, the Indian team got the perfect opportunity to take the lead when they were awarded a penalty stroke, but they failed

to capitalise on it. Despite making several chances, both teams were still unsuccessful in finding the back of the net as the third quarter also ended goalless.

The fourth quarter started with India dominating the game and it paid off when Sunelita Toppo (47) scored a brilliant field goal to give the Indian team a much-needed 1-0 lead. With the scoreline in their favour, India shifted their focus on keeping possession while playing more aggressively to deny Japan from netting the equaliser and the strategy paid dividends as the match ended 1-0 in favour of India.

India will now play against China or Korea in the final of the Women's Junior Asia Cup 2023 on June 11.

Intercontinental Cup: Stimac all praises for Chhangte after Mongolia victory

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

It was an untroubled 2-0 victory for India against Mongolia on the opening day of the Intercontinental Cup 2023 with head coach Igor Stimac claiming that his side ticked most of the boxes on a humid evening, here.

"We're overall happy with our performance. We did everything we sought today - a clean sheet and a victory. The boys enjoyed their time on the pitch, passing the ball, creating chances, and scoring goals. I feel a bit sorry that there were no more goals because there were enough chances to do that," said Stimac in the post-match press conference.

India are now on a six-game winning streak on home soil, a run stretching back to the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers in Kolkata last



June. The Blue Tigers have kept five clean sheets, scoring 13 goals and conceding just one, which has left Stimac pleased and wanting for more.

Winger Lallianzuala Chhangte, who celebrated his 26th birthday on

Thursday, was adjudged the Hero of the Match against Mongolia. He found the net in the 14th minute, adding to Sahal Abdul Samad's early opener to double India's tally by pouncing on a loose ball and volleying it in from point-blank range.

Athletics: Kipyegon sets World Record in 5000m; Girma races to 3000m steeplechase

Paris | Agencies

On a historic night, Faith Kipyegon of Kenya and Lamecha Girma of Ethiopia set world records in the 5000m and 3000m steeplechase respectively at the Meeting de Paris, providing the standout moments at a highly memorable Wanda Diamond League meeting in the French capital.

A week after breaking the 1500m world record in Florence, Kipyegon etched her name into the record books for 5000m, winning in 14:05.20, here on Friday night.

Participating in her third-ever race at the distance, and her first 5000m outing in eight years, Kipyegon went quietly about her job as she quelled a strong challenge from world record-holder Letesenbet Gidey.

But the 29-year-old Kenyan, the world and Olympic champion showed no fear as she navigated her way through the race, passing 3000m in 8:32.1 tucked behind world record-



holder Letesenbet Gidey.

Kipyegon took the lead with about 600 metres to go, but Gidey kept close contact. Kipyegon - now speeding up with each and every stride - hit the bell in 13:04.1, needing a final lap of about 62 seconds to break Gidey's record. She did exactly that, covering the last 400m in 61.1 seconds to cross the line in 14:05.20 - a 1.42-second improvement on Gidey's mark.

Gidey finished second in 14:07.94, the third-fastest time in history, the World Athletics informed in a report on Saturday.

Girma, who started his year with a world indoor record over 3000m, had requested an ambitious pace for the men's 3000m steeplechase -- one that would result in a finishing time of about 7:52. The world and Olympic silver medalist almost got a bit carried away mid-race, though, and ran well ahead of the pacing lights through the middle section of the race.

ASIA CUP ARCHERY STAGE 3: INDIA END CAMPAIGN WITH SEVEN MEDALS

New Delhi | Agencies

India finished the Asia Cup 2023 archery stage 3 in Singapore with seven medals - six silvers and one bronze -- on Saturday.

India's Parth Salunkhe won a silver in the individual recurve men's event while Ruma Biswas also finished second in the individual recurve women's category on the final day of the continental archery event. In the individual recurve men's gold medal match, Parth Salunkhe lost 2-6 to Qi Xiangshuo of China in the final.

En route to the final, the 19-year-old Parth eliminated Won Sung Tin, Uzbekistan's Amir Khan Sadikov and Bangladesh's Mohammad Hakim Ahmed Rubel and Wang Dapeng of China.

Meanwhile, in the individual recurve women's final, Ruma Biswas went down to China's An Qixuan 2-6 to settle for the silver medal. On the way to the final, Ruma Biswas beat Hussa Yaqoub Ahmed Alawadhi of the UAE, Great Britain's Kim Lavender and Han Sol of the Republic of Korea, Nguyen Thi Thanh Nhi of Vietnam and Qiu Muyan of China.



On the other hand, the Indian men's trio of Parth Salunkhe, Rohit Kumar and Juyel Sarkar settled for the silver medal in the recurve team events after a 5-1 defeat to the Chinese team of Qi Xiangshuo, Li Zhongyuan and Wang Dapeng in the gold medal match.

In the compound medal matches, Pragati beat compatriot Deepshikha 147-146 to win the individual women's compound bronze medal. The 19-year-old Pragati, who was seventh in the qualification, lost 145-143 to Song Yun Soo of the Republic of Korea in the semi-finals to make the bronze medal match.

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UAE vs WI: Athanaze smashes joint-fastest fifty on ODI debut, equals Krunal's record

Sharjah | Agencies

Alick Athanaze made a stunning debut for the West Indies with a blazing and record-equalling fifty, setting up their four-wicket victory over the United Arab Emirates in the third ODI and completing the 3-0 series sweep over UAE at Sharjah Cricket Stadium, here.

The left-hander reached his half-century in only 26 balls to match the record on ODI debut set by India's Krunal Pandya against England in 2021.

Athanaze raced to 30 off his first 11 balls faced, and went on to make 65 from 45 balls as the West Indies chased down the UAE's target of 185 with 89 balls remaining to complete the series sweep on Friday night.

The 24-year-old has been made to wait for a West Indies



debut after amassing 418 runs to be top-scorer at the ICC U19 World Cup 2018 ahead of future India opener Shubman Gill.

Athanaze is yet to appear in a Test or T20I for the West Indies but now looms as an exciting

prospect for the national setup. The West Indies also called Kevin Sinclair into the line-up for the first time in the series to great success, as the off-spinner took 4/24 from 7.1 overs.

Athanaze and Sinclair have both been left out of the West Indies squad for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier. The Cricket World Cup Qualifier will be played in Zimbabwe from June 18 with the West Indies campaign to start that day against the USA.

The West Indies will also take on Nepal on 22 June, Zimbabwe on 24 June and the Netherlands on 26 June in Group A with the top three teams progressing to the Super Six stage.

The top two teams at the Cricket World Cup Qualifier will earn a spot in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup to be held in India later this year.

Andy Murray accepts wildcard for Nottingham Open

Nottingham (England): British tennis star Andy Murray has accepted a wildcard to play in the Nottingham Open next week to continue his grass-court preparations for Wimbledon.

The three-time Major champion has skipped the French Open this year to concentrate on his preparations for the grasscourt season.

According to a BBC report, Murray has opted to play in Nottingham instead of Stuttgart to cut down on travel but also because the surface is similar to both Queen's and Wimbledon.

Another British player and World No.25 Dan Evans also accepted a wildcard to the Challenger event as he seeks to find his best form before heading to SW19 in July.

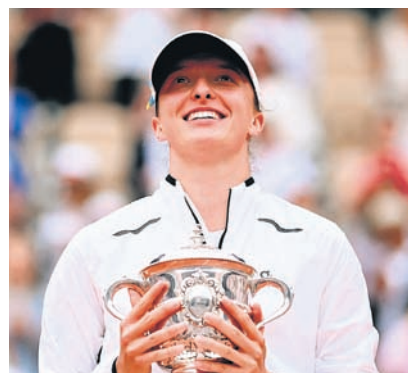
Evans, who lost in the second round of the Surbiton Trophy, is the highest-ranked player in the event. He is joined by fellow Britons, Liam Broady and Jan Choinski, as well as Murray, who has reached the semifinals at Surbiton this week and faces Australia's Jordan Thompson on Saturday for a place in the final.

FRENCH OPEN: SWIATEK WINS THIRD ROLAND GARROS TITLE

Paris | Agencies

World No.1 Iga Swiatek defended her women's singles title in the French Open 2023, capturing a second consecutive Roland Garros title, and fourth Grand Slam crown overall, with a hard-fought 6-2, 5-7, 6-4 victory over a gritty Karolina Muchova here on Saturday.

Muchova of the Czech Republic fought back from 2-6, 0-3 down to make this an incredibly close final but it was the 22-year-old Swiatek who eked out the win in



the end.

With this win, Poland's Swiatek bagged her third title in French Open adding to the crowns she bagged in 2020 and 2022 and the fourth Grand Slam overall with the US Open she won in 2022.

Muchova has won their only previous meeting, in Prague back in 2019. At the time, Muchova (who needed a wildcard to enter the tournament) was ranked No.109 while Swiatek, who reached the main draw via qualifying, was ranked No.95.

Korneeva clinches junior title with win over Alarcon

Paris: The No.3 seed Alina Korneeva captured the French Open junior girls' singles title after defeating No.6 seed Lucciana Perez Alarcon 7-6(4), 6-3 in the final, here on Saturday.

The 15-year-old Korneeva overcame 18-year-old Perez Alarcon in 1 hour and 36 minutes, saving four set points at 5-4 in the opening set along the way.



Rakul Preet Singh stayed in water for 14 hrs for a scene

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rakul Preet Singh pushed the envelope for her upcoming film 'I Love You'. For one of the scenes in the film, the actress was required to stay under water for two minutes 30 seconds and to prepare for that the actress did everything she could - staying in water!

Talking about the training the actress stated, "The film required me to be in a certain frame of mind

to understand emotions deeply.

"On the whole, I did rigorous prep for a month of truly connecting with my emotions. On training for the underwater sequence, there was a scuba instructor named AzahaanAdenwala who trained me for underwater holding for two mins 30 secs that we were timing for." The sequence was shot from 2 in the afternoon to 4 a.m. She was required to shoot under water for the day and night sequence both. "So I did a couple of sessions of that. Overall, one month every-

day of connecting with the emotions and the physical training for the film." She further added: "The biggest challenge to shoot the underwater sequence was that I was in water from 2 p.m. in the afternoon to literally 4 a.m. in the morning and I was wet all day and the water was very cold." "They were pouring hot water over me after every shot so that my body does not get extremely cold. Of course, you have burning eyes due to the chlorine in the water and that is also a challenge but I really enjoyed this



My rap songs speaks about double standards of society: Sherlyn

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai: Actress Sherlyn Chopra says her rap song 'Yeh Karte Hain Judge' speaks volumes about the double standards that society has become used to.

The song is said to be based on the constant and consistent harsh judgment that the actress has been subjected to due to her unconventional career moves and life choices.

Asked whether her rap song will make any shocking revelations, the feisty 34-year-old actress replied, "It's for you to find out! My upcoming rap song speaks volumes about the double standards that our society has become used to. It's not easy to believe in oneself. It takes years and years of effort, struggle, hard work, rejections, judgment, betrayals, heart-breaks to discover one's self worth and to hold on to it no matter what!

"The crux of my rap music video is based on the quintessential need to live life with faith and belief in oneself."



Jasleen Royal, Arijit Singh collaborate for 'passion project' romantic song

Mumbai | Agencies

Hitmakers Jasleen Royal and Arijit Singh have joined forces for the former's upcoming romantic song. The two had earlier collaborated for the track 'Mitra Re' from Ajay Devgn-starrer 'Runway 34'. Jasleen has not only composed and sung the number but also produced the music video.

Jasleen shared: "It is a very special song for me, I am not only composing and singing it but also producing the music video. It is my passion project and naturally wanted the best of the best for my song, which is when I asked Arijit to sing for my song. He was extremely sweet and responded instantly saying he's on board." She said that Arijit is loved for his magical and soulful voice that resonates with the audience everywhere.

"I have been an admirer of his work and as an artist he always inspires me to do better. Even for our song, when he recorded it and I heard it, I was blown away by his rendition."

"He is not only a great artist with an incredible hold over his art but also a gem of a human being with a huge heart. I am very grateful to him for doing the song and his support throughout."

The duo would mark their first romantic song with Jasleen's upcoming composition for an independent single.

Other details about the track are yet



RASHMIKA PRAISES 'STUNNER' MAITREYI'S 'SAAMI SAAMI' DANCE IN SERIES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress Rashmika Mandanna has called 'Never Have I Ever' star Maitreyi Ramakrishnan after seeing her dance on the number 'Saami Saami' from 'Pushpa: The Rise' and the young performer has reacted saying she will never have 'imposter syndrome' about dancing again.

Rashmika took to Twitter, where she re-shared a clip by a fan, where Maitreyi is seen dancing on the track originally pictured on Allu Arjun and herself.

Praising Maitreyi, Rashmika wrote: "Stunner! you did soooooo goooooooodddd. Sending you full love."

Maitreyi could not contain her excitement

seeing Rashmika's message.

She tweeted back: "I will NEVER have imposter syndrome about dancing again. Thank you so much @iamRashmika."

'Pushpa: The Rise' was released in 2021.

The Telugu-language action drama film is directed by Sukumar. It stars Allu Arjun as the titular character alongside Fahadh Faasil (his Telugu debut), and Rashmika Mandanna.

'Never Have I Ever' Season 4 is the final season. It is a teenage comedy series on Netflix. It first came out in 2020. It revolves around Maitreyi's character Devi, an Indian-American high school student. The final season will be released on June 8 on the streaming giant.

Aman Maheshwari on working with Rupali Ganguly: 'It's a blessing'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Aman Maheshwari has made an appearance in popular show 'Anupamaa'. He spoke about working with Rupali Ganguly and Aparna Mehta.

Discussing his character, Aman said: "There is a new track in Anupama where my character's name is Nakul. I am sharing the screen with Rupali ma'am and Aparna ma'am, where Aparna ma'am is playing my Guru Ma. There is this Gurukul track where Anupama always wanted to dream of going to America and becoming a classical dancer." "I am the favourite student of



Guru Ma and she is a legend. I am playing the main person who has always been there with Guru

Ma." He also added: "I introduce Anupama to Guru Ma so that we

can take her to America and include her in our USA group. I started getting jealous as Anupama started giving the impression to Guru Ma that she is very good and she is dancing better than me.

Sharing his views on working with Rupali Ganguly, Aman said: "Rupali ma'am is a phenomenal actor, how many transitions she has given playing her character, the expressions are like a switch off and on for her and she is very welcoming. It's a blessing to share a screen with her."

"She knows her work and she also knows how to enjoy her life. She is an animal-loving person, she loves dogs just like me."

ADAA KHAN ROPED IN TO PLAY A SOCIALLY IMPACTFUL ROLE IN FAMILY DRAMA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Adaa Khan has joined the cast of 'Wagle Ki Duniya', a slice-of-life family drama TV show, where she will be seen playing the role of Sakhi Warge. The character she is set to play is socially impactful.

Sakhi Warge is Sakhi Wagle's (Chinmayee Salvi) friend from dance class. A happy young girl with dreams in her eyes, Sakhi Warge is extremely innocent and takes things as they are. However, while Sakhi's innocence and acceptance of things can be seen as positive attributes, it also leaves her vulnerable to exploitation.

She is easily manipulated and deceived. Her character will prove to be one that resonates with viewers and her journey will

empower women to raise their voice against any form of exploitation.

Adaa said: "I've always admired Wagle Ki Duniya as a show as it conveys a message and raises awareness on issues that people experience in their everyday life along with some very pertinent issues affecting women. All the characters in the show are extremely well defined, relatable and resonate with common people."

"When they approached me to be part of the show, I instantly said yes. Life has brought me full circle as I started my career with them. I could also easily relate to the character of Sakhi Warge, a happy-go-lucky girl who sadly ends up trusting the wrong people and gets exploited in the bargain and was keen to take up the roll."

'Wagle Ki Duniya: Nayi Peedhi Naye Kissey' airs on Sony SAB.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sakshi Malik