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Scorching heatwave grips parts of India as monsoon arrives late

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the southwest monsoon finally made its entrance in Kerala on Thursday, its most-delayed arrival in seven years, certain parts of India are now grappling with scorching heatwave conditions.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued warnings that several regions would be affected in the coming days with the heat wave.

It forecasts that Bihar will experience heatwave to severe heatwave conditions from June 8 to 12, while Gangetic West Bengal and Jharkhand are expected to endure similar conditions from June 8 to 11.

"Additionally, Odisha and the sub-Himalayan West Bengal region will likely face heatwave conditions during June 8-10. Telangana will experience high temperatures on June 8 and 9, while parts of Uttar Pradesh will persist with heatwave conditions until June 11," the IMD said.

Amidst this heatwave, southwest monsoon has advanced into remaining parts of south Arabian Sea and some parts of central Arabian Sea, entire Lakshadweep area, Kerala, parts of Tamil Nadu, remaining parts of Gulf of Comorin area, Gulf of Mannar and Bay of Bengal on Thursday.

"Southwest Monsoon has set in over Kerala today," said the IMD.

"Conditions are favourable for further advance of Southwest monsoon into some more parts of central Arabian Sea, remaining parts of



Kerala, some more parts of Tamil Nadu, some parts of Karnataka and some more parts of southwest, Central and northeast Bay of Bengal and some parts of north-eastern states during next 48 hours," it said.

Meanwhile, a senior official of IMD said that temperatures in northwest India are likely to rise, reaching as high as 40-42 degree Celsius. "However, no heatwave conditions are anticipated in the region for the next four to five days. In contrast, east India and adjoining areas of northwest India, such as east Uttar Pradesh, are currently experiencing heatwave conditions.

While eastern India grapples with extreme heat, other parts of the country have encountered unexpected hailstorms and excessive rainfall.

The IMD also issued a warning on Thursday, cautioning about isolated hailstorms in Uttarakhand on June 11 and 12.

Meteorologists attribute the unusual surplus of rainfall and below-normal temperatures during the pre-monsoon season (March to May) to an increased frequency of western disturbances.

These weather systems originate in the Mediterranean region and bring untimely rain to northwest India.

Meanwhile, the western coast of India is bracing itself for heavy rainfall over the upcoming weekend as Cyclone Biparjoy intensifies.

Previously, meteorologists had mentioned that the cyclone was influencing the intensity of the monsoon, leading to a "mild" onset over Kerala.

Cyclone 'Biparjoy' hits Arabian Sea

Gandhinagar: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an advisory to all ports in Gujarat, instructing them to hoist the distant warning (DW II) signal as a deep depression in the Arabian Sea has transformed into a cyclonic storm named "Biparjoy."

According to the IMD, the storm has shifted in a northward direction and poses potential risks to the coastal regions.

In light of this weather phenomenon, fishermen have been warned against venturing into the deep sea. The IMD has advised them to refrain from fishing activities due to the potentially hazardous conditions. The cyclonic storm is anticipated to bring squally winds with speeds reaching 45-55 kmph along the North Gujarat coast, with gusts temporarily reaching 65 kmph. The sea is expected to be rough with waves from mainly westerly directions.

The IMD predicts that Cyclone "Biparjoy" will intensify into a severe cyclonic storm in the coming hours, with wind speeds potentially reaching 135-145 kmph and gusts up to 160 kmph over the next three to four days. The weather office has urged fishermen to adhere to the warnings and avoid venturing into the sea.

The impact of cyclone on the monsoon onset is also being closely monitored. Private forecaster Skymet suggests that the formation of the cyclonic storm may cause a delay in the monsoon onset by two to three days. As the storm progresses, it is expected to move northwards and further intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm.

Conversion via app case shows how children get swayed by virtual world



▶ IN THE CONVERSION EPISODE THAT RECENTLY SURFACED, THE PERPETRATORS USUALLY LOOKED FOR CHILDREN WHOSE SCREEN TIME WAS ON THE HIGHER SIDE, THOSE WHO STAYED ALOOF FROM THE FAMILY, AND HAD LESS INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL GATHERINGS.

▶ PARENTS SHOULD KEEP A WATCH ON SUCH 'DEVIATED' CHILDREN, ACCORDING TO SABHARWAL, WHO BELIEVES THAT KEEPING AN EYE ON THEM SHOULD BE THE PRIMARY TASK OF THE PARENTS.

▶ MEANWHILE, THE POLICE AND INVESTIGATING TEAMS ARE LOOKING FOR THE PRIME ACCUSED IN THE CASE, SHAHNAWAZ KHAN, A.K.A. BADDU, WHO IS LEARNT TO BE A TECH-SAVVY WHO CHANGES HIS SIM CARDS AND LOCATIONS FREQUENTLY, MAKING IT CHALLENGING FOR THOSE IN HIS PURSUIT TO TRACE HIM.

Team Absolute | Ghaziabad

The case of religious conversion using the Fortnite gaming app, wherein children were allegedly motivated and encouraged to read verses of the Quran and offer Namaz to "win games" before eventual-

ly they embraced Islam, has once again drawn attention towards children taking to the virtual world due to neglect or lack of attention they experience at home.

A cleric (maulavi) in Ghaziabad was arrested on Sunday in connection with the conversion case. The matter has created quite a flutter, sending alarm bells ringing across the security agencies, with mental health experts emphasising on parents giving more attention to their children, whose delicate minds are soft targets.

Psychiatrists believe that children turn to the virtual world and begin finding a parallel universe mainly due to the loneliness and neglect they feel or face at home.

Anuneet Sabharwal, a psychiatrist and founder-director at The Happy Tree De-addiction and Mental Health Hospital, told reporter that children's screen time (on TV or cellphones) increases mainly due to the ambience at home, loneliness, and a feeling of being neglected.

Sabharwal said episodes of trauma and sexual harassment also lead to children spending more time in the virtual space, adding that their brain begins absorbing the imagery of the virtual domain, and it impacts their mind and overall mental growth.

According to Sabharwal, since children's brains are generally at a formative stage, "they believe that all that happening in the virtual space takes place in the actual world as well".

Nathuram Godse too was a 'patriot': Ex-Uttarakhand CM Trivendra Rawat

Dehradun: BJP leader and former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat termed Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse a 'patriot'.

He mocked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for 'merely' sharing the surname. The BJP leader also targeted Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav and Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal.

Speaking to reporters at the party's district headquarters in Ballia on Wednesday, Rawat said, "Gandhi ji was killed. That is a different issue. But as far as I have understood and read Godse, he too was a patriot. We do not agree with the killing of Gandhi ji." Targeting the former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, Rawat said that merely having the Gandhi surname did not make Rahul Gandhi's ideology Gandhian. Rawat said that making a show of wearing the 'janeu', does not change Rahul Gandhi's identity.

Canadian envoy appalled over 'celebrating' Indira Gandhi's assassination in Brampton

Chandigarh | Agencies

The High Commissioner for Canada in India, Cameron MacKay on Thursday said he was appalled by reports of an event in Canada that celebrated the assassination of late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

"There is no place in Canada for hate or for the glorification of violence. I categorically condemn these activities," he said in a tweet.

His reaction came after social media was abuzz with videos depicting a tableau depicting the assassination of the late Prime Minister by her Sikh bodyguards as part of a five-km-long parade by the Indian diaspora in Brampton on June 4. The tableau depicted Khalistan flags with a



poster that said "revenge". People in Punjab were agast over the development.

They had said India should summon the Canadian High Commissioner to strongly object to the inclusion of Indira Gandhi assassination tableau in a parade.

Intelligence agencies here believed that it seemed to be linked with the 39th anniversary of the Indian Army's

'Operation Bluestar' in Amritsar that was carried out between June 1 and 8, 1984, claiming several lives and left the Golden Temple and its complex damaged.

'Operation Bluestar' was a military action ordered by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to flush out militants led by Jarnail Singh Bhindrawale holed up in the Golden Temple complex.

Patch up with Pilot is permanent: Gehlot

Team Absolute | Jaipur

After a patch up meeting held in Delhi recently, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot for the first time has reacted, and said that 'reconciliation with Sachin Pilot is permanent'.

"Rahul Gandhi, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, state in-charge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa and Organisation General Secretary K.C. Venugopal made us sit and talk," he said further. "The question is not personal, but it is of the country. Today Congress is the need of the country," he explained further.

Regarding the Manesar case, the CM said, "I have forgiven everyone. As soon

as I left the hotel in Jaisalmer, I said 'forget it, go ahead.'"

The CM said that he has known Pilot since the age of two and a half years. Pilot himself told this to him during the reconciliation meeting held in Delhi, he added.

In an interview to a media house going viral on social media, he said, he also spoke on the demand of Pilot, and said, "RPSC committee is constitutional and hence cannot be dissolved."

"He is a member of our party, so his words carry more weight. We had inquired after his demand but there is no such provision that we should dissolve the RPSC committee. This is a constitutional matter," he added.

Air India flight to San Francisco: Airline to refund ticket fare to all 216 passengers

New Delhi: The Tata-owned Air India on Thursday said that the airline will fully refund ticket fare to 216 passengers of a Delhi-San Francisco flight that made an unscheduled two-day stop at Magadan in Russia after the aeroplane developed a technical issue. "We will fully refund the fare for the journey and, in addition, provide a voucher for future travel to the passengers on Air India," senior airline executive Rajesh Dogra said, while apologising to the passengers in a letter.

On Tuesday, Air India flight AI173, from Delhi to San Francisco, was forced to divert and make an emergency landing at Magadan airport due to a technical issue with one of its engines.

Alternate flight AI173D was sent to Magadan airport from Mumbai by the airline on June 7.

Earlier on Thursday, the Air India in a statement said that flight AI173D landed safely in San Francisco (SFO) at 00:07 hours (local time).

New York sets record for air pollution; Governor says it's 'emergency'

Arul Louis | New York

As smoke continues to shroud parts of the north-eastern US, the nation's financial and media capital has recorded its worst air pollution level, which Governor Kathy Hochul called it an "emergency".

On Wednesday evening, at 7 p.m. (local time), New York was the city with the world's worst air pollution, hitting 241 on the Air Quality Index (AQI), far higher than the 179 recorded by Lahore, which came next on the index.

On Thursday morning at 10 a.m., it continued to hold the record of the most polluted city with a reading of 182, according to IQAir, which monitors air quality around the world in real time.

"What we're experiencing right now with the sub-standard air quality, (is) a crisis, it is also a dangerous situation," Hochul said on Wednesday.



The crisis was caused by forest fires in Canada, which ironically celebrated Wednesday as Clean Air Day with the motto, "Clean Air Everywhere" while smoke streamed south towards its southern neighbour.

Describing the condition in New York, Hochul said: "The haze and the smoke from the fires, you could feel it even sitting indoors here,

it's clogging much of our air. In fact, it's almost impossible to see the sunset or see the sky."

The National Weather Service (NWS) tweeted: "It is recommended to limit time outdoors. Wearing a mask may help limit irritation for those suffering from respiratory illnesses. More smoke expected Thursday and Friday."

'Agni Prime' ballistic missile successfully flight-tested by DRDO

New Delhi: New generation ballistic missile 'Agni Prime' was successfully flight-tested by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

The Ballistic missile 'Agni Prime' was tested from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha. During the flight test, all objectives were successfully demonstrated, a defence ministry official said on Thursday.

The test was conducted in the night hours of June 7. Range Instrumentation like Radar, Telemetry and Electro Optical Tracking Systems were deployed at different locations, including two down-range ships, at the terminal point to capture flight data covering the entire trajectory of the vehicle, the ministry added.

Senior officials from DRDO and Strategic Forces Command witnessed the successful flight-test, which has paved the way for induction of the system into the Armed Forces.

The Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO and the Armed Forces for the success as well as the copy-book performance of the 'Agni Prime'.

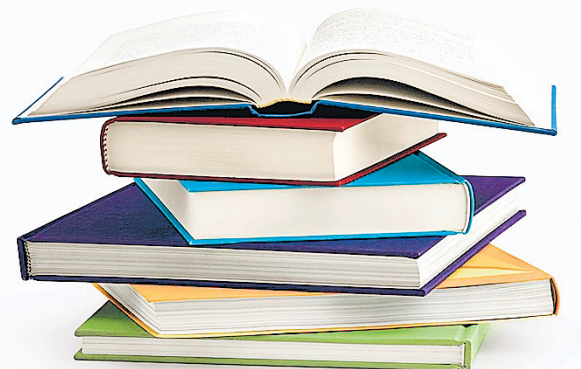
Karnataka textbook revision row escalates, Education Minister says process already begun

Bengaluru | Agencies

Amid the warning of the BJP that it won't sit quiet over revision of the academic syllabus in the state, Karnataka's Congress government on Thursday said that it has already taken up the process of revision of textbooks.

Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa told the Assembly that during the ongoing academic year, the "unscientific" and "anti-constitutional" content would be revised.

"The previous BJP government has added objectionable content in the syllabus. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah himself is concerned about revision of those aspects," he said. "Many rounds of talks have taken place with academic experts. Authors and litterateurs have also given their opinions. The experts who are giving advice that the syllabus taught to children should be scientific and have social orienta-



tion are not connected to any political parties." The suggestion is given with a concern that the young minds should not be fed with the wrong knowledge. The experts will also give their recommendations on which aspects of the syllabus should be continued and which of them should be dropped. Based on that the government has sent a circular to the schools," Bangarappa

said. "Since the textbooks have already been published and reached schools, it is not possible to publish revised syllabus. Presently, the students are not taught the syllabus yet. The government will release the guidelines at an appropriate time in this regard. A decision would be taken in this regard in the next cabinet meeting," he added.



KUKI TRIBALS ACCUSE MEITEI OF ETHNIC VIOLENCE, REITERATE SEPARATE STATE DEMAND

Team Absolute | Imphal

The Kuki tribals in Manipur have again reiterated their demand to create a separate administration, equivalent to a separate state for them, even though the Central and state governments, on a number of occasions, rejected any division of the northeastern state. The Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), an apex body of the Kuki tribals, in a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, claimed that the ongoing violence in Manipur was a pre-planned ethnic cleansing campaign against the Kuki community by the majority Meiteis and this has become clearer day by day. KIM General Secretary Khaikhoradh Gange, in the letter, alleged that during a recent interview to media, Meitei Leepun chief Pramot Singh made a damning revelation that he and his organisation were in the know about the "genocide" being planned against the Kuki people. "How the hate campaign against the Kuki people transformed into ethnic



cleansing under a very communal government was also very clear through the contents of the interview given by Meitei Leepun chief Pramot Singh," Gange said and demanded to declare the Meitei Leepun as outlawed organisation. The KIM said that in the interview, "filled with hatred and malice against the Kuki people, Pramot Singh categorically

issued a stern warning to the Kuki people that the Meiteis are still discussing among themselves on how to go about annihilating the Kuki people". Demanding arrest of Pramot Singh, the KIM said: "The enemy to them is the Kuki community and living together with a group of people who want to annihilate us is impossible. Hence, the urgent need for total

separation from Manipur where the Kuki community can live peacefully as dignified Indian citizens, living in their ancestral lands under the Constitution of India." A week after the ethnic violence started in Manipur, 10 MLAs belonging to Kuki tribals (including seven ruling BJP members) demanded a separate administration equivalent to a separate state for the tribals in Manipur. After the May 3 and the subsequent ethnic violence, all the 10 MLAs belonging to the Kuki community have accused the N. Biren Singh government of "failing miserably" to protect the community. Therefore, they have resolved to pursue a "separate administration under the Constitution of India and live peacefully as neighbours with Manipur". Both Biren Singh and Amit Shah, after his four day Manipur visit, categorically rejected the separate state demand for the tribals. The tribals constitute around 37 to 40 per cent of the total 2.72 million population (as per the 2011 census) of Manipur.

Back-to-back meetings in New Delhi fuel speculations of change of guard in Rajasthan BJP

Archana Sharma | Jaipur

Back-to-back meetings being scheduled in New Delhi to discuss the BJP's election strategy for the states, including Rajasthan, going to poll later this year, has triggered speculations of change in leadership in the party's state unit. Former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje also held a meeting with BJP's national General Secretary, Organisation, B.L. Santhosh in New Delhi on Wednesday after which it is being discussed if she will be appointed as the party's election campaign committee chief. Party sources confirmed to correspondent that the meeting also discussed if social equations in the state have been balanced and if any further changes at the party's organisational level are required. In the election year, the saffron party doesn't want much changes, but it is still being considered that Brahmin candidates are Presidents of the BJP and BJYM. While C.P. Joshi is the state BJP chief, Himanshu Sharma is the state BJYM President and the latter could be replaced. Similarly, speculations are rife if the state BJP in-charge Arun



Singh and state BJP Organisational Secretary Chandrashekhar will be retained or changed. Meanwhile, correspondent contacted Raje's office to know the details of the meetings, but the officials preferred staying silent on the issue. However, they confirmed that she will be travelling to Jharkhand on June 13-15. While these dates could be rescheduled, as of now these are the tentative dates. Raje, as per officials, will embark on this Jharkhand tour for three days as she has been made the in-charge of the Mahasampark Abhiyan in Jharkhand for the Modi government's achievements in the last nine years.

'Diplomacy not ruled out in Kulbhushan Jadhav case': Jaishankar

Team Absolute | New Delhi

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Thursday said that the government has never ruled out diplomacy in the case of Indian national and former navy officer Kulbhushan Jadhav, who he said is being kept in captivity in Pakistan in violation of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgement, and also in case of eight Indians facing trial in Qatar. Speaking to mediapersons, he said that both were "exceptional situations" and therefore, the government



has never ruled out diplomacy. "It is in the DNA of this government to help Indians facing difficulties abroad, whether they are officials or students. And these are (referring to Jadhav and the trial of

Indians held captive in Qatar) exceptional situations. We have never ruled out diplomacy," he said. Referring to Jadhav's case, Jaishankar said that he was kidnapped by Pakistan and is being held in violation of the ICJ judgement. On the Qatar issue, he said that three hearings have been conducted so far, and the government is giving support for legal representation to the captive Indian nationals, even though there is no clarity on charges against them. Kulbhushan Jadhav is an Indian national who is on death row in Pakistan.

BJP SUPPORTER HELD IN TN FOR SPREADING FAKE NEWS ABOUT ODISHA TRAIN ACCIDENT

Team Absolute | Chennai

The Tamil Nadu Police on Thursday arrested an advocate, who is a supporter of the BJP, for spreading false information regarding the Odisha train accident. Advocate Senthil Kumar, a supporter of BJP in Thuckalay in Kanniyakumari district, had tweeted that Bahanaga Bazaar railway station master Mohammed Sheriff Ahmed went underground after the tragic train accident and that he should be questioned. Inquiries revealed that one S.B. Mohanty was on duty as Station Superintendent at the time of the accident and one S.K. Patnayak was the station manager. It was also found that there was no one working in the name of Mohammed Sheriff Ahmed in the station. A DMK member, Dinesh Kumar filed a complaint with the police accusing Senthil Kumar for spreading wrong information through his Twitter account



with the idea of creating religious division and hatred. The Thuckalay police registered a case under Sections 153 (wantonly giving provocation with the intent to cause riot), 153A (committing offence in any place of worship or in any assembly engaged in the performance of religious wor-

ship or religious ceremonies), 505(1)(b) (causing or likely to cause fear or alarm to the public) and 505 (2) against the advocate and arrested him. The Tamil Nadu Police headquarters when contacted said that further investigation is underway in the case.

BJP CLUELESS ON HOW TO COUNTER OPPN UNITY, SAYS TEJASHWI

Team Absolute | Patna

Bihar's Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav on Thursday claimed that BJP leaders were clueless on how to counter a strong opposition unity in the country. Reacting to BJP claims that the Chief Ministers of Telangana and Odisha were not coming to Patna for the meeting of opposition parties on June 23, Tejashwi said: "They are making worthless statements. They are scared of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP recently lost Karnataka, before that Himachal Pradesh. They will be also defeated in the upcoming elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chattisgarh. Don't worry about it. "The opposition unity is strong and the leaders are coming for the meeting on June 23. There will be 15 political parties, including the Congress, in the opposition camp and their senior-most leaders are coming here for the meeting. They are not sending representatives." On Wednesday, Tejashwi and JD(U) national president Lalan Singh had announced that the opposition meeting, that was earlier scheduled to be held on June 12 and then deferred, will now be held on June 23 at the Gyan Bhawan in Gandhi Maidan. Top Congress leaders including Rahul Gandhi and party president Mallikarjun Kharge, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, Left leaders D. Raja, Sitaram Yechury, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and CPI-ML national secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya have already given their consensus



'Couldn't find a single toilet', K'taka woman writes to Prez Murmu on her ordeal

Team Absolute | Chikkamagaluru (Karnataka)

A Karnataka woman's letter on how she was forced to attend nature's call in public in the absence of public toilets at a pilgrimage centre in Chikkamagaluru district has gone viral on social media. Jademma, the devotee, who wrote the letter in Kannada, has described her ordeal in detail. She has urged President Droupadi Murmu to ensure the construction of public toilets at the pilgrimage centres, which are visited by lakhs of people. She also stated that the President is an inspiration and symbol of confidence for a woman like her. The letter reads, "the main objective of the letter is to bring forth the pain of common women like me. "Few days ago, I visited Bababudangiri Datta Peeta, Mullaiyyanagiri and Seethalaiahyanagiri, all Hindu pilgrimage centers. At Bababudangiri, I started to get a sensation for nature's call. I could not find a public toilet. Suppressing the urge, I climbed Mullaiyyanagiri hill. I searched for toilets but to no avail. "Later, I climbed Seethalaiahyanagiri and looked for the public toilet. Every moment the sensation was growing stronger. I could not tolerate it and swallowing humiliation, I peed in the public place swallowing the humiliation and insult. "Every day, people fight for their religions and gods. But, their negligence towards building toilets is unfortunate. When we get the urge for nature's call, we forget which religion we belong to and attend it. If there is any place in the world which is used by people of all religions at all places, it is the toilet. "You are also a woman like me. But, you don't face my problems as you are



in power and you have people to serve you. But, non availability of toilets has brought down the dignity of women like me. You can understand the pressure of a normal woman regarding attending nature's call. "Women know the difficulties faced by women. The absence of a public toilet at a Pilgrimage centre visited by lakhs of people is a violation of Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution. We have reached Mars but could not build a toilet at these pilgrimage centers. "India is the capital of diabetes in the world. They are highly dependent on public toilets. The people of Karnataka won't forget if you build a toilet facility here."

ASSAM SPEAKER, WHO URGED PEOPLE TO SIT UNDER TREES TO BEAT HEAT, HAS 22 ACS AT HIS HOUSE

Team Absolute | Guwahati

Assam Assembly Speaker Biswajit Daimary, who earlier advised people to sit under trees to combat soaring power bills amid the scorching heat wave conditions that are sweeping the state, has been found to have installed at least twenty-two air conditioners at his official residence. Reportedly, the air conditioners were installed in the prayer room and in each bedroom of the Speaker's official residence, including the rooms of the security personnel. This has drawn wide-scale criticism from a section of the population and opposition. People have been saying that a person who is habituated to using 22 air conditioners at his home cannot understand the problem of extreme heat. Congress MLA Kamalakhya Dey Purkayastha, who earlier sat under the trees in front of Daimary's official residence, told reporter: "A person who has been literally using ACs in every corner of his residence is giving people advice to sit beneath the trees. This is an absolute mockery of the people. I believe that he has insulted the citizens of the state." Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha member Sushmita Dev said, "A government is always for the people. But what we have been constantly witnessing is that BJP leaders are experts at insulting people's sentiments. Daimary's statements are the latest in that list." Earlier,

Daimary said: "The power tariffs have increased, and people should avoid excessive use of fans to save electricity bills. Instead, everybody should sit under trees to combat rising tariffs." He further said that the Assam government does not have enough of its own production of electricity to meet the daily needs of consumers, and the state is heavily dependent on private companies for electricity. "If the power companies are hiking the tariffs, the state government should pass that on to the consumers, and people have to pay. So, I believe that an increase in power tariffs is not at all an issue, and consumers must pay the bills against their usage," Daimary added. Despite facing criticism, the Speaker chose to stand by his remarks. "I have said nothing wrong. People are taking my comments with the wrong notions," he said on Wednesday.

Mother alone does not have right over child: Delhi court in Shikhar Dhawan's case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi court has ordered Aesha Mukerji, the estranged wife of cricketer Shikhar Dhawan, to bring their nine-year-old son to India for a family gathering observing that a mother alone does not possess exclusive rights over a child. The duo has initiated legal proceedings in both India and Australia regarding divorce and child custody. Justice Harish Kumar of Patiala House Courts reprimanded Mukerji for objecting to bringing the child to India. The family court was informed that Dhawan's family has not seen the child since August 2020. Initially scheduled for June 17, the family reunion was postponed to July 1 to accommodate the child's school vacation. However, Mukerji objected again, claiming that the event would be unsuccessful as many extended family members were not consulted about the new date. The



judge observed that even if Dhawan did not consult his extended family, it would not have serious consequences, as some family members might not be able to attend the gathering. The judge acknowledged that the child has not visited India since August 2020, and Dhawan's parents and other family members have not had the opportunity to meet the child. Therefore, the judge deemed Dhawan's desire for the child to meet his grandparents as reasonable. The judge questioned Mukerji's reasons for not wanting the child to be familiar with Dhawan's home and relatives in India. Considering the child's school holiday and the fact that the child is comfortable with Dhawan, the judge found his request for the child to spend a few days in India to be realistic.



HIJAB ROW IN POLL-BOUND MP NOW LINKED TO TERROR FUNDING CASE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

// Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has ordered a high-level inquiry into a recent hijab controversy, involving a private school in Damoh district.

In a new twist to the hijab row in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh, the management of the school -- where the controversy erupted over a poster of topper students (girls) wearing head scarves -- has been accused of having terror links.

The controversy broke out at a private English medium school 'Ganga Jamuna' in Damoh district when a poster of topper students, including Hindu girls, wearing hijab emerged.

Amid allegations of 'religious conversion' and 'terror funding', Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has ordered a high-level inquiry into the matter. MP BJP head V. D. Sharma, who has levelled serious allegations against the school management and



pushing for an inquiry, said DGP Sudhir Saxena and Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains will supervise the high-level inquiry ordered by Chief Minister Chouhan. Meanwhile, state Home Minister Narottam Mishra said investigation in the matter was at primary stage and the names of accused involved in alleged 'religious conversion' will be revealed soon. When asked about the alleged terror funding link, Mishra said the central agency will conduct an inquiry. "Central agency NIA will investigate the terror funding link issue. As of now, NIA has not approached MP

police for the same. If MP police asks for assistance, there will be full cooperation," Mishra said while briefing the press on Thursday.

Mishra also said that staff members of Ganga Jamuna school will be interrogated to identify the particular person who forced students for alleged 'religious conversion'. "As the investigation proceeds, the name of the particular accused involved in the case would be revealed. An FIR against the school management was lodged on Wednesday and accordingly a case has been registered under Section 289 A, 506 B of IPC along with Juvenile Justice Act," he added.

Damoh district SP Rakesh Singh has said the issue has become very sensitive and further action would be taken on the basis of statements of women (students) who were allegedly forced to convert their religion.

While briefing the press on Wednesday, SP Singh mentioned that

regular instructions were received from the state government and following which an inquiry was conducted and the case has been registered on the basis of statements of two - three women. "Regular directions were being issued from the state government, following which an investigation was carried out. Cognizance was taken on the basis of statements of two women and the FIR was lodged," Rakesh Singh stated. State government had ordered the derecognition of the registration of Ganga Jamuna school within 24 hours when the controversy broke out last week. The order issued by Damoh district education department, however, has not mentioned the alleged hijab controversy, instead it claimed the action was taken as the school management did not comply with the norms properly. For instance, lack of separate washrooms for girl students and benches for the students etc.

Girl stuck in borewell for 52 hours, died

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A two-year-old baby girl pulled out from a 300-foot borewell after three days in Madhya Pradesh was declared dead at a hospital on Thursday, said officials.

The incident was reported from Sehore, nearly 40 km from capital Bhopal.

The minor's body, which has been sent for post-mortem, was badly decomposed, officials said.

The girl - Srishti - had fallen into the borewell in Mungavali village around 1 pm on Tuesday. She was pulled out at 5.30 pm on Thursday and was rushed to the district hospital in an ambulance for a check up, another official said.

She was initially stuck at the depth of about 40 feet in the borewell, but due to vibrations caused by



machines engaged in the rescue operation, she slid down further to about 100 feet, making the task more difficult, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Wednesday.

Along with the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State

Disaster Emergency Response Force (SDERF), the Army and a team of robotic experts had also joined the rescue operation.

The girl, named Srishti, fell into the borewell at around 1 p.m. on Tuesday and since then efforts have been on to rescue her.

State is fortunate to have the International Yoga Day main programme in Jabalpur: CM Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Madhya Pradesh is fortunate to have got the opportunity to host the national programme of International Yoga Day.

Preparations are underway on a large scale for this programme to be held in Jabalpur. With co-operation of Union Ministry of AYUSH, Ramchandra Mission Heart Fullness Institute, Jan Abhiyan Parishad and Yoga Commission, all the schools, wards, villages and institutions dedicated to yoga in the state will be linked to the Yoga Day programme. People will get a chance to connect with the positivity of Yoga. Through this programme being organized on the theme of Yoga for



Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. Chief Minister Chouhan, along with Union AYUSH Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, was reviewing the ongoing preparations at his residence office for the national level programme to be held in Jabalpur on International Yoga Day-June 21. Union Minister Sonowal said that 25 core people will be connected with the programme.

It was told that the main programme will start at 6 am at the Garrison Ground in Jabalpur. Participation of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar and Governor of Madhya Pradesh Mangubhai Patel is proposed in the programme. Recorded message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be broadcasted. Chief Minister Chouhan, Union AYUSH Minister Sarbananda Sonowal will also attend.

Lokayukta seeks probe into disproportionate assets complaint against Minister

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Lokayukta department has sought an inquiry report against senior BJP leader and Urban Development Minister Bhupendra Singh over a complaint of disproportionate assets.

Inquiry was sought on the basis of a complaint against him filed by a Congress leader, Puneet Tandon.

Tandon is the head of RTI cell of Madhya Pradesh Congress unit, and he has accused the minister of having disproportionate wealth and has demanded an inquiry.

On the basis of Tandon's complaint, the Lokayukta has issued a directive to the Director General of Special Police Establishment (Lokayukta) to register a case and conduct an inquiry.

"Lokayukta has sought an inquiry



report by August 8 about the Congress leader's complaint against Urban Development Minister

Bhupendra Singh," said an official. The minister, however, claimed the opposition was trying to tarnish

his image and he would file a defamation suit against the Congress leaders.

The case comes at a time when the Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh are just five months away and the ruling BJP is trying hard to reduce the anti-incumbency feeling and the growing sentiment of people against the corruption allegations against the BJP government.

Bhupendra Singh (63), MLA from Khurai in Sagar district, had also supervised the 'Mahakal Lok' corridor project in Ujjain. Singh, who was the Home Minister (2013-2018) during the previous tenure of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan government, was also reportedly said to be challenging the state leadership.

Singh was also elected as an MP from the Sagar Lok Sabha constituency in 2009.

Vyapam scam whistleblower Anand Rai joins BRS

Team Absolute | Hyderabad/Bhopal

Hyderabad/Bhopal: Prominent social activist from Madhya Pradesh, Anand Rai, on Wednesday joined the Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS).

Anand Rai, who brought to light the Vyapam scam that created a sensation in Madhya Pradesh, joined the party in the presence of BRS national President and Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu at Pragati Bhavan here.

KCR invited Anand Rai to the party by offering a pink scarf. Rai is a popular RTI and tribal rights activist and enjoys good support from people.

Prominent tribal rights organisation Jai Adivasi Yuvasakti Sangathan (JAYS), which is fighting for the rights of tribals, declared its support for the BRS party.

It is a prominent organisation fighting for the rights of tribals and adiva-



sis in Madhya Pradesh. Anand Rai is a key leader in this organisation. Along with them, JAYS president Lal Singh Burman, Pancham Bheel, Ashwin Dube, Gaziram Badole, Kailash Rana and others joined the BRS party.

JAYS founder Vikram Achalia said that a slew of welfare and development programmes are implemented with a humanitarian aspect for the development of SC, ST, BC and minorities under CM KCR as leader-

ship in Telangana.

The JAYS leader said that the aspirations of the poor, backward classes, Dalits and Adivasis have not been fulfilled in the 75 years of independent India.

Girl who watched 'The Kerala Story' with BJP MP Pragya Thakur goes missing again

Team Absolute | Bhopal

An 18-year-old girl, who was recently taken to a theatre to watch the controversial Hindi movie 'The Kerala Story' has gone missing once again. Her parents have filed a missing complaint at Kamal Nagar police station in Bhopal.

Notably, the woman had gone missing once earlier as well on May 11, and she was brought back home by the police.

Bhopal MP Pragya Singh Thakur recently took her along to watch 'The Kerala Story' in an attempt to make her learn a lesson of alleged 'love jihad' at a theatre. However, a few days later her parents again lodged a missing complaint about their daughter. In the complaint, the family has suspected that she has eloped with her Muslim boyfriend, who has a criminal record. The family has also alleged that she carried Rs 70,000 in cash and jewellery, police said. "Family has lodged a missing complaint, and a search operation is being carried out. Once the

girl is found, her statement would be recorded and further action will be taken accordingly," Anil Bajpai, in-charge of Kamla Nagar police station, told reporter. When the girl went missing once on May 11, the family had sought help from Pragya Singh Thakur, their MP, and she was finally recovered with the help of the police. Pragya Singh Thakur had included her in the group of women she had taken with her to watch 'The Kerala Story' - the controversial movie about alleged radicalisation and conversion of young Hindu women to Islam in Kerala by Muslim men. The woman went missing on the morning of May 15. The family claimed that she was not in the house when they woke up. They also alleged that when they went to file a complaint, the police were not ready to cooperate, citing the earlier instance. The woman had come in contact with Yusuf Khan through his sister, who was her classmate at a nursing school. The man is a school dropout and a history-sheeter. He has been accused of crimes like assault, theft, and arson.

Team Madhya Pradesh working to benefit 1.25 crore Ladli Bahnas

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana will be a scheme to bring historical change in the lives of sisters. Team Madhya Pradesh has worked diligently for better implementation of the scheme. The efforts made in the districts to provide benefits of the scheme to about 1.25 crore sisters are commendable. Social organisations, administrative officers and public representatives are giving a new dimension to the scheme. Eligible sisters should get the maximum benefit of the scheme, so that the work of transfer of funds for the scheme is done without any hindrance from the scheduled date of June 10 and the sis-



ters start receiving funds, for this many innovations were also done in the districts. In the review meeting held on Wednesday late night, the public representatives and collectors apprised about the innovations made for the implementation of the scheme.

Collector Datia told that groups of Ladli Bahnas have also been formed on WhatsApp. After the gram

sabha on June 8, the sisters should pledge to play a leadership role in the social sector, such a framework was made. The changes in the lives of the sisters from the scheme were mentioned on various forums.

Similarly, on June 9, there will be Sitolia and local games in Datia district. They have been named as Anand Utsav. In this, groups of women will cook and bring

dishes from homes and eat together. This will develop friendly relations between the beneficiary sisters. Bands and DJs will create a festive atmosphere in urban areas.

Public representatives of Ujjain district told that street plays were performed on the occasion of giving letters of acceptance to sisters in large panchayats. The scheme is being publicised by displaying the picture/flex of Ladli Bahna at the residence of the beneficiaries.

Collector and public representatives of Tikamgarh district informed that arrangements have been made for safas for the programme on June 10, which will be worn by the guests and dignitaries in the programme. Along with this, there will also be a programme of folk songs.

Yellow rice is given to invite the sisters.

Public representatives of Burhanpur district told that inspiring and encouraging slogans have been used in the district. The information about Ladli Bahna Yojana has reached the masses.

Mandsaur Collector informed about the innovations done in the district. MLA Shri Yashpal Singh Sisodia said that initiatives have been taken for Kalash Yatra and Deepotsav in wards and villages. A large number of wall writing work has been done in the district.

In the capital Bhopal too, the Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana has been given a festive look. Among the innovations, preparations have been made to decorate various intersections on June 10.

OFFICE OF THE NAGAR PALIKA PARUSHAD GUNA DISTRICT GUNA
(BECOND CALL)
Section-1
Notice Inviting e-Tenders
NIT.No.01/2023_UAD_266136_2 Dated:-06/06/2023

Online **PERCENTAGE HATE TENDER** foling **AMRUT 2.0** works are invited from ons of repute fulfilling eligitty criteria:

S.No.	Work	Probable amount of contract (Rs.in lacs)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Cost of Bid Document (In Rs)	Time of Completion
1.0	REJUVENATION WORK OF SINGWASA TALAD UNDER AMRUT 2.0 SCHEME	Rs. 105 LACS+ 18%GST Extra	Rs.52500/-	Rs.12500/-	06 Month (including Rainy Season)

1. Intrested Bidder can view the NIT on website www.mpteriders gov in and www.mpurban.gov.in
2. The Bit Document can be purchased only Online from 10:30 Hrs of 06/06/2023 to 10:30 Hrs of 20/6/2023 Comar key dates may be soon in Bid data sheet)
3. Amendment to NIT if any, would be published on website only, and not in Newspaper
4. GST shall be paid separately as per norms.
5. Pre-Qualification Criteria as per Annexure-C Similar nature of Works means Strengthening of Embankments, Stone Packing, De-Silting/ Earth Works/Concrete work, Diversion of Polluted Drain Harvesting Rain Water to Water Body through SWD, STP etc.Experience Certificate of any similar work is Mandatory for Bid Participation.
The initial period of 1 year after completion shall be treated as Defect Liability Period (DLP).

अध्यक्ष नगरपालिका परिषद गुना
मुख्य नगरपालिका अधिकारी नगरपालिका परिषद गुना



EDITOR'S SPECS

K'taka BJP reworking on strategies after loss in Assembly elections

After suffering a humiliating defeat at the hands of Congress in the Karnataka Assembly elections, the BJP is in the process of reworking on its strategies for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. BJP which had faced the Assembly elections with utmost confidence by allotting tickets to 72 new faces, while denying them to senior top party leaders was still decimated by the grand-old party. The saffron party lost its deposit in 46 Assembly constituencies and its candidates were relegated to third and fourth positions in most of the seats. In many seats the candidates did not manage to get the winning margin votes. Adding to the woes, five independent candidates have either won or secured second position in the elections pushing the BJP candidates further down. In the 2018 Assembly elections, BJP polled 1.33 crore votes. It had managed to get 36.35 per cent of votes and won 104 seats. The Congress party polled 1.39 crore votes and managed to get 38.14 per cent of votes. It had won 80 seats then. JD(S) polled 67 lakh votes (18.3 per cent). BJP in the state had got more votes than the previous elections but failed to win seats. The Congress party which increased its tally from 38.14 per cent to 42.88 per cent emerged victorious with a clear majority. About 15 lakh votes of JD(S) in the last elections have gone to the Congress, according to experts. BJP think tank is mulling all the factors to come out with a strategy to win maximum seats out of 28 in Karnataka. In 2019, the BJP had swept 25 seats and Congress managed only one seat. This time Congress is hopeful of winning more than 20 seats.

THE VADODARA BOHRAS OF GUJARAT



Arshia Malik

The Vadodara Bohras are a community of Bohra Muslims tracing their origins to Yemen. They belong to the Alavi Bohras, a Tayyibi Musta'lavi Isma'ili Shi'i Muslim community from Gujarat, India. The Alavi Bohras trace their roots to missionaries sent from Yemen during the time of the 18th Fatimid Imam Al-Mustansir Billah in the 11th century AD. These missionaries established a religious mission in Khambhat, Gujarat. Following the division of the Musta'lid community, the Yemenite Da'wah continued to follow their 21st imam, At-Tayyib Abu'l-Qasim, as their Imam of seclusion. The Bohras are descendants of the Tayyibi Da'wah established in Gujarat in the 11th century AD and include immigrants from Yemen. In the 11th century AD, Yemeni missionaries were sent to Gujarat, India, by the 18th Fatimid Imam, Al-Mustansir Billah, to establish the Isma'ili-Tayyibi Da'wah. This led to the formation of the Bohra community in Gujarat, with designated individuals called Wulaat ul-Hind serving as deputies of the Yemeni missionaries. The Alavi Bohras emerged as a prominent group among the Bohras, known for their role as traders and merchants. They are described as patriotic, peace-loving, and harmonious, with a strong emphasis on maintaining positive relationships. The term 'Bohra' is derived from a Gujarati word meaning 'to trade'. It should be noted that there are Sunni groups in Gujarat who adopted the name 'Vohra' or 'Vora' but do not follow the beliefs and customs of the Isma'ili-Tayyibi Bohras. Throughout history, the mainstream Bohra community experienced divisions regarding the spiritual succession of the representative of the Imam, known as Da'i, in Ahmedabad between the 15th and 17th centuries. These divisions led to

the formation of three major Bohra groups: Alavis, Dawoodis, and Sulaymanis. The Alavi Bohras, as one of these groups, have their own spiritual leadership and practices within the broader framework of Tayyibi Musta'lavi Isma'ili Shi'ism. They maintain distinct traditions, customs, and religious rituals that differentiate them from other Bohra groups. Initially, the Yemeni migrants faced challenges in adapting to a new culture and way of life. However, they gradually found their footing and began to integrate into the local society while preserving their unique customs and traditions. Over time, the Yemeni community formed close-knit networks and established mosques, cultural centres, and Yemeni associations to maintain their cultural heritage. One significant aspect of the Yemeni community in Vadodara is their contribution to the local economy. Yemeni migrants have been involved in various businesses, including textiles, spices, and retail trade. They have established themselves as successful entrepreneurs and traders, adding to the economic growth of the city. Culturally, the Yemeni community in Vadodara has played a vital role in enriching the city's diversity. Yemeni traditions, cuisine, and clothing have become part of the multicultural tapestry of Vadodara. The Yemeni community celebrates their religious festivals, such as Eid and Ramadan, with great enthusiasm, creating a vibrant atmosphere of cultural exchange. Education has been a priority for the Yemeni community in Vadodara. Many Yemeni families have emphasised the importance of education and have encouraged their children to pursue higher studies. As a result, several Yemeni individuals have excelled academically and professionally, becoming doctors, engineers, and professionals in various fields. The Yemeni community has also made efforts to preserve

their language and heritage. They teach their children the Arabic language and Quranic studies, ensuring a connection to their roots. Yemeni cultural programmes, language classes, and events are organised regularly, allowing for the transmission of Yemeni traditions and values to the younger generation. The Yemeni migrants in Vadodara have experienced both acceptance and challenges in their integration process. The local community has generally been receptive and welcoming, fostering a sense of inclusivity. However, like many migrant communities, they have also faced occasional discrimination and social barriers, which they have worked to overcome. The Yemeni community in Vadodara has found support from local authorities, non-governmental organisations, and interfaith groups, which have played a role in creating an environment of cultural harmony and understanding. Efforts to promote cultural exchange, intercommunity dialogues, and initiatives to address common social issues have further strengthened the bond between the Yemeni community and the larger Vadodara community. In conclusion, the Yemeni migrants who settled in Vadodara, Gujarat, have left a lasting impact on the city's social, cultural, and economic landscape. Despite the challenges they faced during their journey of integration, they have thrived and become an integral part of the diverse tapestry of Vadodara. The Yemeni community's contributions to the city's economy, culture, and educational sphere are noteworthy, and their presence enriches the multicultural fabric of Vadodara.

international

IN RESPONSE TO INDIA'S NEW MAP, KATHMANDU MAYOR PLACES MAP OF 'GREATER NEPAL'

Kathmandu | Agencies

As the row over India's 'Akhand Bharat Map' placed in the new Parliament building is intensifying among the opposition parties in Nepal, Kathmandu Mayor Balendra Shah has put a new 'Greater Nepal' map in his office as a counter move. Although the Nepal government has remained silent on the issue, the opposition parties, including the CPN-UML, have opposed the map which shows the Himalayan nation as part of the ancient Indian landmass. They have and asked the government to take up the matter with India. Mayor Shah, who is currently in Bengaluru for his wife's treatment, had placed the map in his office before his visit to India. At one time, the territory of Nepal was spread from the Teesta in the east to the Sutlej in the west. However, after the war with the British, Nepal lost a large part of its land. After the war, the territories from Mechi to Teesta and from Mahakali to



Sutlej were permanently annexed to India. On March 4, 1816, the Sugauli Treaty was signed between Nepal and the East India Company, which reduced the territory of Nepal to Mechi-Mahakali. The 'Greater Nepal' map in Shah's office incorporate areas from East Teesta to West Kangra which is currently Indian territories. Voices are still being raised that

India should return those lands to Nepal. Nationalist activist Phanindra Nepal has been campaigning for Greater Nepal for a long time. On Thursday, Gagan Thapa, General Secretary of Nepali Congress, the largest party in Parliament, said that the country should also official publish the 'Greater Nepal' map. "If any county publishes the cultural map and moves ahead, Nepal also holds the right to publish the map of Greater Nepal and think over it. If Nepal thinks of publishing the new map, India should not object to it. Rather it should accept it," Thapa added. Amidst the ongoing row, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Wednesday came to India's defence

over the 'Akhand Bharat' map, saying it was not a political issue. In an address to the National Assembly, Prachanda, as the Prime Minister is popularly known, said that he had raised the issue during his recently-concluded India visit. "We raised the issue of the new Indian map which is placed in Parliament. We have not made a detailed stud but as reported in the media, we raised this issue on a serious note. But in its response, the Indian side said that it was a cultural and historic map and not a political one. This should not be seen as a political way. It needs to be studied. But I have raised it," he said. Boundary disputes have been taking place in the areas of Kalapani, Lipu Lekh and Limpiydhura which are currently under Indian territory that Nepal also lays claims to. In response to Indian claims, the Nepal government in 2020 issued a new political map incorporating the areas as part of its territory. This dispute brought bilateral ties to an all time low.

Indian-American Ritu Kalra named Harvard's VP finance, CFO

New York | Agencies

Ritu Kalra, an Indian-American investment banking and financial management expert, has been named Harvard University's vice president for finance and chief financial officer. Kalra currently serves as Harvard's assistant vice president of finance and treasury and special projects adviser. In her new role beginning July, she will oversee all aspects of financial management, including long-range planning, annual budgeting, endowment fund spending policy, treasury, and financial accounting and reporting. Overall, she will lead multiple financial departments with a full-time workforce of more than 200 people, a University statement released on Tuesday said. "Harvard's ability to forge collaborations within and beyond the University, across a

breath-taking breadth of disciplines, doesn't happen by accident. It requires a rare and sustained marriage of strategic leadership and executional excellence," Kalra said. In her treasury management role, Kalra oversees and advises on the University's capital structure, including the critical role of forecasting debt and liquidity needs, and managing cash operations and investments. "Since joining Harvard in 2020, she has provided exceptional leadership and been a trusted adviser on an array of financial matters and University priorities," Executive Vice President Meredith Weenick said. "Her Harvard experience, coupled with her track record as an innovator in private sector banking and finance, positions her well as a leader who will continue to build on what has been strong stewardship of the University's finances in recent years." Before joining the University, Kalra spent 18 years at Goldman Sachs,

where she held several progressive roles culminating in managing director and served as head of public sector and infrastructure finance for the western region, and as head of higher education finance nationally. In her infrastructure financing practice, she provided strategic advisory services to public and private sector entities throughout the US, including designing innovative financing strategies to manage climate-related risks, according to the University statement. She also advised the state of California in capitalising a \$21 billion fund to mitigate the impact of catastrophic wildfires, led a restructuring of the Long Island Power Authority to create financial capacity to harden the electrical grid following Hurricane Sandy, and created debt financing strategies that leveraged philanthropic capital for land and forest conservation across the country.

China, Pakistan, Iran hold 1st-ever anti-terror talks

Islamabad | Agencies

China, Pakistan and Iran held their first counter-terrorism dialogue in Beijing in a move that suggests new alignments in the region, the Foreign Office in Islamabad confirmed. The Office issued a statement confirming the first meeting of Pakistan-China-Iran Trilateral Consultation on counter terrorism and security was held at Directors General level on Tuesday in Beijing, reports The Express Tribune. Abdul Hameed, Director General (Counter Terrorism), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan; Bai Tian, Director General of the Department of External Security Affairs,



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China; and Seyed Rasoul Mosavi, Assistant to the Foreign Minister and Director General of South Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran; led their respective delegations. The statement said the delegations held detailed discussions on the regional security situation, particular-

ly the threat of terrorism faced by the region. Based on the outcome of these consultations, they decided to institutionalise the Trilateral Consultations on counter terrorism and security for which further details will be worked out, The Express Tribune reported. A separate statement issued by the Chinese foreign ministry also said that the three countries had "in-depth" exchanges on the regional counter-terrorism situation, and decided to hold the meeting on a regular basis.

NEW YORKERS SUFFER FROM SMOKE HAZE DUE TO CANADIAN WILDFIRES

New York | Agencies

Smoke from raging wildfires in Canada has triggered air quality alerts in a number of US states, with the sky over New York City rapidly darkening and New York State Governor Kathy Hochul calling the development "an emergency crisis". The air quality index in New York City reached "hazardous" levels on Wednesday afternoon, reports Xinhua news agency. By 3 p.m., it was above 300, according to US government online platform AirNow, an air quality data site, which warned that at that level, "everyone should stay indoors and reduce activity levels". The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has extended its citywide air quality health advisory, and those who have underlying health conditions are advised to



avoid outdoor activity as much as possible. The state's Long Island and Hudson Valley are under the air quality advisory as well.

A number of cities and municipalities around the area also issued individual air quality alerts, urging residents to take precautions while cancelling some out-

door events. In New York City and several large cities across the state, public schools have cancelled outdoor activities.



DIABOLIC ACT: THANE MAN CHOPPED, MINCED AND COOKED LIVE-IN PARTNER'S BODY PIECES, FIND POLICE

Team Absolute | Quaid Najmi/Thane

The prime accused in the Thane murder case allegedly stooped to unimaginably gory levels to disguise his live-in partner's killing, stunning even the police investigators, officials said on Thursday.

Accused, Manoj Sahani, 56, was nabbed late on Wednesday night after he was found living in his rental flat with several body pieces of his live-in partner, Saraswati Vaidya, 32, whom he had killed recently.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Jayant Bajwale and his team have uncovered how he stored the body pieces in plastic bags strewn around the 7th floor flat of Akashdeep Building in Geeta Nagar area of the Mira Road town, around 10 km north of Mumbai borders.

Sahani, who is a shopkeeper in north Mumbai, had reportedly disposed off some portions of the woman's upper half and he is believed to have used a saw (cutter) to chop off her heavy limbs and



bones.

Some body pieces he allegedly cut and chopped in a mixer and a few others he boiled in a pressure cooker ostensibly to kill the odour emanating from the decomposing body parts, and police found the victim's feet in the kitchen awaiting a round of cooking.

In fact, it was the very stench that

blew the lid off the heinous crime when neighbours complained to the police and a team rushed there on Wednesday afternoon.

DCP Bajwale told IANS that the couple had been in a live-in relationship for at least three years at the rented flat, and the murder is suspected to have taken place early this week (around Sunday-Monday).

"They apparently had a bitter fight over some issue and in a likely bout of rage, Manoj killed Saraswati in their home. Later he indulged in the other acts to erase the evidence of his crime. However, as soon as we entered the flat, it was clear that a gruesome murder had been committed and we caught him," said Bajwale.

Police suspect that some of the missing body parts Sahani may have flushed down the toilet drain, or fed to the stray dogs as claimed by some neighbours or disposed of them in the mangroves nearby and investigations are ongoing.

The exact motives of the chilling murder are yet to be ascertained, but

Sahani, who appears unrepentant, is being grilled by a police team before he is produced before a court later on Thursday, said an official.

Shocked residents in the Geeta Nagar neighbourhood speak of the sensational case in hushed tones, and some recall the couple as aloof, not mingling with the people around them and keeping to themselves.

The unsold flat had been leased out by the builder through a property agent to Sahani-Vaidya three years ago, where they lived since.

A worried woman property consultant in Mira Road said that whenever such heinous crimes come to the fore, it immediately adversely affects realty prices in the complex, immediate neighbourhood, and the vicinity.

"It becomes very difficult for people wanting to sell/dispose off the flat, as the property and the locality acquires a bad reputation... there are few takers or it has to be condemned to a distress sale at a huge loss," the woman, who declined to be identified, said.

NCP to Maha DGP: Women cops must interact with hostelites, keep an eye on male staff

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Two days after the rape and murder of an 18-year-old girl in a government-run Savitridevi Phule Women's Hostel, the NCP led a delegation to the Director General of Police (DGP) Rajnish Seth and submitted a memorandum of demands, here on Thursday.

In their memo, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) delegation asked the DGP to ensure that women officers/constables reach out with regular visits to the women/girls' hostels in their jurisdiction and interact with the hostelites to learn of their problems.

They also urged Seth to prepare secret dossiers on the local 'romeos' or suspect male employees of such hostels and their behaviour with the women inmates to avoid recurrence of similar incidents.

The NCP leaders said the police must also keep an eye on the male or private employees of these hostels and take full information on the antecedents of those hailing from out of Maharashtra as a precaution.

"We have also demanded that the government and police must implement and launch awareness campaigns of the stringent Shakti Act enacted by the Maharashtra government



to prevent any such incidents in the future," said NCP Chief Spokesperson Mahesh Tapase. The delegation comprised Tapase, National Spokesperson Clyde Crasto and other leaders like Surekha Pednekar, Raja Rajpurkar, Mahesh Chavan and others.

The state government is under severe fire from the MVA constituents -- Congress, NCP, Shiv Sena (UBT), besides prominent social leaders, female activists and commoners after the Mumbai hostel tragedy.

They are rooting for ensuring the security of women/girls who come to live-work in the city from different parts of Maharashtra, the rest of India and even from abroad.

The state government has set up two different committees to probe the incident and the issue of safety-security at all women's hostels in the state, besides the ongoing police investigations.

Muslim leaders to Maha CM: Hike budget for Urdu panel, fill vacant posts

Team Absolute | Aurangabad

Muslim organisations in the state demanded a hike in the annual budget for the Maharashtra State Urdu Sahitya Academy (MSUSA) and to fill up the vacant posts that hamper its functioning, here on Thursday.

A delegation of Muslim leaders led by Mohsin Ahmed, Samiuddin Athar, A.A. Irfan, T.A. Khan, Rafiuddin Nasir, Salim Mohiuddin, Yusuf Dewan, Shaheen Fatima, A.A. Khan, Muhammad Yasir, Syed Muzaffar and S.A. Quddus met the Collector and submitted a memorandum with a request to forward it to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Ahmed said that presently the MSUSA gets funds of just Rs 1.31 crore and the memorandum demanded that it should be hiked to at least Rs 5-crore to enable carry out all its activities. Besides, the MSUSA currently has six vacant posts and only one superintendent is managing the show which is seriously hampering its functioning. The delegation has urged the government to fill up all the vacancies on priority. The MSUSA, coming under the state minorities department, engages in various public activities to promote the Urdu language, through seminars and literary meets, organising mushairas and conducting drama festivals, among others.

Netizens rap 'Adipurush' director for kissing Kriti on the cheek at Tirupati temple

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai: Om Raut, the director of the upcoming film 'Adipurush', sparked a controversy when he gave a peck to Kriti Sanon on her cheek during their recent visit to Tirupati Balaji temple with a section of people on the Internet condemning the act.

Recently, a video surfaced on the Internet which shows the director kissing Kriti, who plays Sita in his film, at Lord Venkateswara temple in Tirupati, sparking negative reactions. The head priest of the temple has termed it a "condemnable act".

As per reports, he mentioned that even a husband and wife do not go to the temple together, and that the



director and the actress "can go to a hotel room and do it".

Ramesh Naidu Nagothu, the BJP State Secretary in Andhra Pradesh, also criticised the same in a now-deleted tweet.

He had tweeted, "Is it really necessary to bring your antics to a sacred place? Engaging in public displays of affection, like kissing and hugging in front of the Lord Venkateswara Swamy temple in Tirumala is deemed disrespectful and unacceptable".

Meanwhile, 'Adipurush' which has been at the centre of attention, mostly for wrong reasons, including the earlier botched up job on the VFX, is set to release on June 16 in theatres.

Man scams over 100 people from Goa with promise of overseas jobs

Team Absolute | Panaji/Mumbai

The Goa Police have arrested a man from Mumbai for allegedly cheating more than 100 people in Goa to the tune of Rs 13 lakh by offering them jobs abroad, an official said on Thursday.

The accused, Aniket Gaikwad, belonging to Ahmednagar in Maharashtra, was arrested from Mumbai on Wednesday, a police spokesperson said.

Based on a complaint by one of the victims, the Old Goa police registered a case on June 3 against Gaikwad and another accused Savio Da Silva for allegedly posing as recruitment agents and taking nearly Rs 13 lakh from the victims by promising them jobs in countries like the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand and on passenger and cargo ships with foreign companies, the official said.

A number of job aspirants got lured



with the offer.

The accused persons took money, passport and other documents from them. They also called the victims to Mumbai for some training and docu-

ment verification, but failed to provide the jobs as promised, the official said.

Gaikwad later discontinued communication with the victims.

Initially, the accused returned money to some of the victims, but they later stopped taking their calls and fled, the police said.

The Old Goa police gathered information about the accused over the last five days and two teams searched for them in Margao and Ponda areas, the official said.

A team led by sub-inspector Laureen Sequeira visited Panvel, Belapur in Navi Mumbai, as well as Dadar, Kurla and Mulund areas of Mumbai in search of the accused.

Finally, Gaikwad was traced and arrested with the help of Deonar police in Mumbai, the official said.

The accused was subsequently brought to Goa on transit remand and placed under arrest, he said.

It is suspected that the accused cheated more than 100 people of a very huge amount, the police official said, adding a probe was on into the case.

Sharad Pawar's reminder after massive clashes over Tipu Sultan, Aurangzeb

Team Absolute | Pune

Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar today said the violence that took place in Kolhapur and some other places over the posters and social media posts allegedly glorifying Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan was not in line with the culture of Maharashtra.

Tension gripped Kolhapur city, 285 kilometres from Mumbai, on Tuesday after some persons allegedly kept an image of 18th-century ruler Tipu Sultan and an offensive audio message as their social media status, resulting in a protest by some Hindu outfits at Shivaji Chowk the next day.

Police had to resort to lathicharge (baton charge) to quell the stone-pelting and



violence that the protest descended into, following which 36 people were held in connection with the incidents in the western Maharashtra city.

Speaking to reporters in Baramati, Pawar said, "People of the state and these places where such incidents took place must maintain peace. Whatever happened at two to three places is not in line with the culture of Maharashtra. Maharashtra is

known as a peace loving and patient state, and people here do not have a tendency to take the law into their own hands." "I also would like to tell those who try to create disputes deliberately that common people have to pay the price for all this. I appeal that for the betterment of the common people, ensure such things do not take place. People must fully cooperate with police," the former Union minister added.

Bombay HC to hear Sameer Wankhede's plea seeking quashing of CBI case against him

Team Absolute | Mumbai

On Thursday, the Bombay High Court will hear a petition filed by Narcotics Control Bureau's former Mumbai zonal director Sameer Wankhede seeking to quash the CBI's case of extortion and bribery lodged against him, reported the news agency.

The case of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is that Wankhede and others accused had allegedly demanded Rs 25 crore bribe from actor Shah Rukh Khan for not framing his son Aryan Khan following alleged seizure of drugs from a cruise ship.

Wankhede moved the HC last month seeking to quash the case and also sought interim protection from any coercive action.

A vacation bench of then HC had then granted interim protection from arrest to Wankhede till June 8 and directed him to cooperate with the investigation.

The CBI in its affidavit filed last week sought for the protection to be recalled, saying it had a prima facie case against Wankhede.

A division bench of Justices A S Gadkari and S G Dige will on Thursday hear Wankhede's plea.

Wankhede and the other accused in the



case have been booked under charges of criminal conspiracy and extortion threats under the Indian Penal Code and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act pertaining to bribery.

Earlier in May, Sameer Wankhede on revealed alleged chats between him and Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan, in his petition moved before Bombay High Court seeking relief and cross FIR against NCB Deputy Director-General Gyaneshwar Singh who has conducted vigilance probe against him.

Sameer Wankhede, an IRS officer, filed a plea in the Bombay High Court regarding the alleged ₹ 25 crore extortion case related to the arrest of Aryan Khan, Shah Rukh Khan's son, in 2021. Wankhede claimed that the actions taken by the CBI against him are an act of retaliation.

Aryan Khan and several others were arrested in October 2021 for alleged possession, consumption and trafficking of drugs.

Later, Aryan Khan was granted bail by the high court after spending three weeks in jail.

The NCB subsequently filed its chargesheet, but did not name Aryan as an accused in the case citing lack of evidence.

The anti-drugs agency had then set up a special enquiry team to carry out an inquiry into the case and against its own officers.

BOY KILLS MINOR AFTER ARGUMENT OVER CRICKET IN CHANDRAPUR

Team Absolute | Chandrapur

A 13-year-old boy has been accused of killing another minor boy aged 12 after an argument over playing cricket in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district, police said on Thursday.

The incident took place on June 3 when the accused allegedly hit the victim on his head with a bat following which the latter died on June 5 while undergoing treatment, they said.

The victim's family later buried the body without registering a police complaint, an official from the city police station said.

His mother approached the police on Tuesday, following which the body was exhumed on Wednesday for a probe into the case, he said.

On June 3, some boys from Bagadkidki area

here were playing cricket on a ground.

The victim had some argument with other boys during the game following which the accused allegedly hit him with a bat, the official said.

The victim fell on the ground. He was immediately taken to the District General Hospital where he died while undergoing treatment on June 5, he said.

His relatives subsequently performed the funeral without registering a police complaint. However, his mother approached the police on Tuesday and lodged a complaint, the official said.

The police later exhumed the body for an inquiry into the case, he said.

A case was registered against the accused under Indian Penal Code Section 302 (murder), the official said, adding the boy was yet to be apprehended.



Dua Lipa wins bid to dismiss lawsuit over 'Levitating' copyright

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Dua Lipa and music label Warner Records have won their bid to dismiss a copyright lawsuit against hit song 'Levitating'. The songstress and label were being sued by Artikal who claimed the 2020 tuned copies the core hook from their song titled 'Live Your Life', which was released in 2017, reports 'Mirror.co.uk'.

Artikal Sound System had put forward a theory that claimed that one of Dua Lipa's co-writers had previously worked with a woman who was allegedly taught guitar by the brother-in-law of one band member.

According to Billboard, in her ruling, U.S. District Judge Sunshine S. Sykes appeared to be unimpressed as she said: "These attenuated links, which bear little connection to either of the two musical compositions at issue here. Also do not suggest a reasonable likelihood that defendants actually encountered plaintiffs' song."

Judge Sykes also found that there was no sign that anyone involved in the creation of Dua's top hit had had "access" to the little-known song from the reggae group.

However, the band claimed that their song was "widely available" and insisted that one of the writers for 'Levitating' must have heard it, adding that it had been played at concerts and had sold "several hundred" physical CDs and that it was available on some streaming platforms.

As per 'Mirror.co.uk', Judge Sykes found that the claims were "too generic or too insubstantial" to sustain a lawsuit.

She added: "Plaintiffs' failure to specify how frequently they performed 'Live Your Life' publicly during the specified period, where these performances took place, and the size of the venues and/or audiences precludes the Court from finding that Plaintiffs' live performances of the song plausibly contributed to its saturation of markets in which Defendants would have encountered it".



EZRA MILLER ON 'THE FLASH': 'THERE'S SOMETHING REALLY HUMAN ABOUT THE STORY'

Los Angeles | Agencies

After several delays, 'The Flash' is all set to see the light of day on the big screen. It's actor Ezra Miller spoke about the story arc and said that there's "something really basic, human" about it. Directed by Andy Muschietti, the film will see Miller reprising the titular role of The Flash/Barry Allen in the DC Super Hero's first-ever standalone feature film.

Miller said: "There's something really basic and human about the story. Barry lives with the pain of trying to solve problems in his past. And this is his journey, someone who refuses to give up hope that he can resolve them and can find a balance between his ceaseless hope-which we love about him-and the acceptance that makes a future possible."

Delving deeper into his character and what differentiates Barry Allen and The Flash, Ezra said: "What I like about him is I feel like there's a lot in Barry's personality that distinguishes him from the rest of the gang. I've always really enjoyed him as someone who's vulnerable and lacks the self-assurance and cockiness that we generally associate with super heroism."

He added: "And what I love about The Flash as a Super Hero is that it's theoretically just a singular power-his speed-but when combined with his intelligence and then pushed to extremes means so many different capacities, capabilities and powers."



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio has been spotted enjoying an evening meal with Gigi Hadid in London. The duo joined the 'Titanic' star's dad and stepmom for the fine dining experience in England's capital city, reports Mirror.co.uk.

The meeting came as a surprise after the actor, 48, and model, 28, were said to have shared a brief romance earlier in the year. However, their dalliance reportedly fizzled out with Leo having been linked to a number of other women in the months that followed.

The 'Wolf of Wall Street' main man was spotted exiting the Chiltern Firehouse before making his way to the famous

LEONARDO DICAPRIO AND GIGI HADID REUNITE OVER DINNER WITH HIS PARENTS

London restaurant. Dad George and stepmom Peggy Farrar arrived earlier in the evening.

Mirror.co.uk further states that Gigi was later seen leaving the same spot and making her way to the eatery on her own just after Leo. A few hours later the pair left moments apart. Hollywood star Leo was seen looking very casual in a black bomber jacket which was buttoned up.

He paired the outfit with black jeans, white trainers and an all-black LA Dodgers baseball cap, while also wearing a light blue face covering. Stepmom Peggy wore a down jacket, along with matching white pants. For footwear she went with a pair of lavender and blue Hoka trainers, while she completed her attire with a cream scarf around her neck.



'TITANIC' MEGAFAN HAS 1,560 COPIES ON VHS, WON'T STOP UNTIL HE HAS 1 MN

Los Angeles | Agencies

A megafan of the iconic Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet-starrer 'Titanic' has a whopping 1,560 copies of the film on Video Home System (VHS).

In a conversation with Variety, the fan introduced Jack Dawson, i.e. a large dummy with head of Leonardo DiCaprio's character of the same name from the 1997 blockbuster 'Titanic'.

"We got Jack Dawson," he said, reports 'Variety'.

"And 'Titanic,' and Captain Smith. You know what's going on."

JD, a video editor who lives in Florida, is best known for his energetic love of the movie 'Titanic' on VHS, and his collection is approaching 1,600 copies of the two-tape set.

Although he's picked up about 300 himself, mostly from thrift stores and yard sales, the rest come from enthusiastic fans mailing him copies over the last year, as he's documented his growing collection on TikTok to over 1,08,000 followers, reports 'Variety'.

JD says his obsession with the movie came when he saw it in theaters at 6 years old.

"It was Jack Dawson mania," he says.

"You already know what's going down. You couldn't escape it back in the day. And my family loved 'Titanic,' so I just blended myself in with all the 'Titanic' going around at the time."

JD said the collection began a bit more than a decade ago, but really took off in the last year.



Zack Snyder's upcoming space adventure 'Rebel Moon' to release in two parts



Los Angeles | Agencies

Director Zack Snyder's sci-fi epic drama 'Rebel Moon' will be divided into two movies, before it hits Netflix on December 22 due to its massive length.

Initially asked to trim its runtime, Snyder argued that cutting the runtime would ruin the movie's themes, character arcs and plot points.

So instead, the director decided to release the movie in two parts with the release dates being fairly close to one another though the second part's date has not been revealed yet, a good choice given Netflix's release schedule.

In addition to that, on Vanity Fair,

the director gave a big reveal of the movie sharing first images of the movie on Vanity Fair while revealing little of the things to come.

Speaking to Vanity Fair, Snyder said: "The first version of Rebel Moon to hit screens will be a fantasy adventure "that anyone can enjoy and watch." The later cut will be strictly for adults. "I think for fans of mine and people who are ready to take a deeper, harder dive, that'll be fun for them."

A somewhat polarising figure in Hollywood, Zack Snyder is known for his originality as well as usually taking things on the longer side which causes a mixed response from audiences. While space adventures and sci-fi is nothing

new in Hollywood, original ones are a rarity as most follow generic plots.

So it would be interesting to see what Zack Snyder will do, because one thing you can definitely expect from the director is creative and original ideas, good or bad.

In simpler terms, it would seem that the director of films such as '300', 'The Watchmen', 'Man of Steel', 'Batman Vs Superman', 'Zack Snyder's Justice League', 'Army of the Dead' etc is doing a Star Wars style space adventure with his own twist on it. So, the director once again embarks on a world-building adventure full of action, space ships, various planets, robots and a pretty interesting storyline.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Jordana Brewster



WTC FINAL, DAY 2

Bowlers put Australia in pole position at stumps after removing India's top order

London | Agencies

For the second straight day, Australia maintained their pole position in the World Test Championship final against India at The Oval. On Thursday, they posted 469 in the first innings, thanks to Travis Head's 163 and Steve Smith's 121 along with Alex Carey's cameo of 48.

Their potent bowling unit used the fuller deliveries and bounce in the pitch to good effect to leave India on 151/5 in 38 overs at stumps, with Australia still leading by 318 runs. All of Australia's five bowlers took a wicket as India's top four batters failed to pass the 15 run mark.

A 71-run partnership between Ajinkya Rahane and Ravindra Jadeja kept India afloat till off-spinner Nathan Lyon took the latter out 15 minutes away from stumps, as Australia dominated another day of proceedings in the marquee clash.

The final session began with Cheteshwar Pujara playing a lovely on-drive off Scott Boland for four, followed by punching Cameron Green through off-side for another boundary. But Green bounced back as Pujara misjudged the line of the nip-backer coming in from outside off and saw the top of his off-stump being rattled, dismissed for 14.

Rahane, playing his first Test since January 2022, was off the mark by cutting a short and wide delivery off



Boland over slip cordon for four, followed by pulling Pat Cummins for four. Mitchell Starc struck when he hit the pitch hard and got extra bounce to take the shoulder edge of Kohli's bat and was caught at second slip.

Jadeja got going by driving past non-striker for four off Starc while Rahane brought out a pristine square drive off Cummins. Rahane was trapped lbw on 17 but replays showed Cummins had overstepped, giving him and India a huge sigh of relief, though later he took a blow on his thumb.

Jadeja continued to be fluent, driv-

ing and flicking off Starc for two boundaries. He followed it up by driving Green through mid-off for four more and flicked Boland extravagantly for six. Rahane played a lovely cover drive off Boland for four while Jadeja leaned into a drive off him as the duo brought up half-century of the partnership.

After steering past gully and getting a thick outside edge to take two fours off Starc, Jadeja fell for 48 when he lunged forward to defend against Nathan Lyon with hard hands, but the ball turned away to take the outside edge to slip. Rahane and KS Bharat,

Brief scores

Australia 469 in 121.3 overs (Travis Head 163, Steve Smith 121; Mohammed Siraj 4/108, Shardul Thakur 2/83) lead India 151/5 in 38 overs (Ravindra Jadeja 48, Ajinkya Rahane 29 not out; Nathan Lyon 1/4, Cameron Green 1/22) by 318 runs

who took blows on elbow and chest, remained not out on 29 and 5 respectively to take India past 150 till stumps arrived.



WOMEN'S JUNIOR HOCKEY ASIA CUP

India storm into semis with 11-0 win over Chinese Taipei

Kakamigahara, Gifu Prefecture (Japan) | Agencies

The Indian women's hockey team stormed into the semi-finals of Women's Junior Asia Cup 2023 with a thumping 11-0 win over Chinese Taipei in their last Pool match, here on Thursday.

The win also cemented India's position atop Pool A. India finished the Pool stage of the tournament unbeaten, having won three games and drawn one.

The scorers for India were Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke (1'), Deepika (3'), Annu (10', 52'), Rutuja Dadaso Pisal (12'), Neelam (19'), Manju Chorsiya (33'), Sunelita Toppo (43', 57'), Deepika Soreng (46'), and Mumtaz Khan (55').

India displayed their dominance from the word go, launching consistent attacks against Chinese Taipei. Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke (1') opened the scoring for India with a field goal, followed by Deepika (3') who converted a

penalty corner to double the team's lead. Also, Annu (10') and Rutuja Dadaso Pisal (12') scored a goal each before the end of the first quarter, giving India a comfortable 4-0 advantage. The second quarter continued in a similar fashion, with India maintaining control of the game through ball possession and relentless attacks. Notably, Neelam (19') found the back of the net, allowing India to enter halftime with a commanding 5-0 lead.

Unflustered by their substantial lead, India continued their dominance as Manju Chorsiya (33') and Sunelita Toppo (43') netted field goals to make sure that the third quarter ended with India leading 7-0.

The Indian team showed no signs of slowing down in the final quarter, as Deepika Soreng (46'), Annu (52'), Mumtaz Khan (55'), and Sunelita Toppo (57') each scored a goal to help India win the match 11-0.

The Indian team will now play against Japan or Kazakhstan in the semi-final of the Women's Junior Asia cup 2023 on June 10.

French Open: Miyu Kato, Tim Puetz clinch mixed doubles title

Paris | Agencies

Japan's Miyu Kato and Germany's Tim Puetz clinched the French Open mixed doubles title on Thursday, defeating Bianca Andreescu and Michael Venus 4-6, 6-4, [10-6] in the final, here. The French Open is Kato's first Grand Slam title and capped off an emotional week for the 28-year-old Japanese doubles specialist, who was disqualified from the women's doubles competition after inadvertently hitting a ball girl with a ball in the third-round match.

Andreescu and Venus climbed from a break down



to take the opening set (4-6) but Kato and Puetz struck back to level the match, taking the second set 6-4.

The Japanese/German duo built a 6-3 lead in the tiebreak after Venus struck a double-

fault down 4-3 and Kato followed with courageous work at the net to extend the lead. Kato and Puetz rode their momentum to the win, sealing the match after Venus' forehand fell into the net.

Steve Smith equals Joe Root's record of most Test centuries against India

London | Agencies

Australian batter Steve Smith on Thursday equalled former England captain Joe Root's tally of scoring most centuries -- nine -- in Test cricket against India after he scored 121 on day two of World Test Championship final at The Oval, here. Smith needed just two balls on day two's morning session to go from his overnight score of 95 not out to breaching triple figures via successive flicks on half-volleys from Mohammed Siraj to reach his century. With this ton, he went past Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Matthew Hayden to score 31 Test hundreds.

When he got out for 121 after chopping on to his stumps off Shardul Thakur, Smith enhanced his excellent record at The Oval,



now managing to score three Test tons at the venue. Only the great Sachin Tendulkar (11) has scored more Test hundreds in matches between India and Australia. Smith is now one century behind Steve Waugh in the list of players with the most Test centuries for Australia, with Ricky Ponting leading the way with 41 hundreds.

With seven tons, Smith is now joint-second with Steve Waugh and is now only behind Sir Don Bradman's 11 hundreds for most centuries by visiting batters in England.

Smith also beat Ponting (174 innings) to be the second quickest to 31 Test centuries, taking only 170 innings to reach the milestone, and is now behind only Sachin Tendulkar (165 innings).

Singapore Open: India's campaign ends with Srikanth's round of 16 loss

Kallang (Singapore) | Agencies

India's campaign at the Singapore Open Super 750 badminton tournament came to an end after Kidambi Srikanth lost his Round of 16 men's singles match against Chia Hao Lee of Chinese Taipei, here on Thursday. World no 23 Srikanth, who defeated Thailand's Kantaphon Wangcharoen in the first round, suffered 15-21, 19-21 straight games loss at the hands of the world no 42 Taipei shuttler, in what was the pair's first meeting.

Earlier in the day, young singles' player Priyanshu Rajawat and the doubles duo of M.R. Arjun and Dhruv Kapila crashed out after their respective second round losses.

Rajawat, who caused a big upset by beating World No.15 Kanta Tsuneyama of Japan in the opening round, went down to another Japanese, Kodai Naraoka in straight games at the Singapore Indoor Stadium 1. The 21-year-old Indian lost 17-21, 16-21 to Naraoka in a 47-minute encounter in the BWF World Tour Super 750 event.

The doubles combine of Arjun and Dhruv were ousted by England's experienced Ben Lane and Sean Vandy 15-21, 19-21 at Singapore Indoor Stadium.

India's top singles players -- two-time Olympic medallist P.V. Sindhu, Malaysia Masters winner H.S. Prannoy, former World Championship bronze medallist



Lakshya Sen and London Olympics bronze medallist Saina Nehwal -- had crashed out in the first round itself.

On Wednesday, the top doubles pairs, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, ranked 11th in the world in the latest list, and Commonwealth women's doubles bronze medallists, Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand were ousted in the first round.

Satwik and Chirag, seeded fifth in his event, went down to Japan's Akira Koga and Taichi Saito in three games, 18-21, 21-14, 18-21 in just over an hour. Treasa and Gayatri also put up a tough fight but could not get the better of Hong Kong's Ting Yeung Nga and Lam Yeung Pui, 14-21, 21-18, 19-21 in a 66-minute encounter.

Europa Conference League: West Ham edged out Fiorentina in final, end 43-year title drought

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Jarrold Bowen scored the winning goal in the 90th minute as West Ham United secured an incredible 2-1 win over AFC Fiorentina to lift the UEFA Europa Conference League trophy.

This was West Ham's first major continental title since the 1965 European Cup Winners' Cup and a first piece of silverware since 1980's FA Cup.

West Ham made it through the whole campaign unbeaten with their

final record standing at 14 wins and one draw.

Moyes becomes the first Scottish coach to win a UEFA competition since Sir Alex Ferguson claimed the Champions League title with Man United in 2008.

After a goalless first half in the final in Prague, West Ham went ahead from a penalty awarded following a VAR review for a handball by Cristiano Biraghi on the hour.

Four minutes later, Fiorentina equalised on 67 minutes, when Giacomo Bonaventura fired a low vol-

ley into the bottom corner.

As the match ticked into additional time at the end of the second half, Lucas Paqueta played in Bowen, who kept his composure to finish into the far corner.

Fiorentina finished as the top scorers in this season's Europa Conference League with 37 goals with West Ham being second on that list with 29.

Having won their first major trophy since 1980, West Ham will join Liverpool and Brighton & Hove Albion in the 2023/24 UEFA Europa League.

Athletics: India's Jyothi wins silver; Amlan Borgohain bags bronze in Finland



Jyväskylä (Finland) | Agencies

Indian athletes continued to shine in European meets in the run-up to this year's Asian Games in China as Jyothi Yarraji won silver and Amlan Borgohain bagged bronze in the Jyväskylä Motonet GP 2023 athletics meet here.

Jyothi claimed a silver medal in the women's 100m hurdles event while Borgohain claimed bronze medal in the men's 100 race on Wednesday evening. The 23-year-old Jyothi registered a time of 12.95s in a strong eight-women final race at the event, rated as a Bronze event on World Athletics Continental Tour, for her podium finish in Finland. She had earlier finished second in her heat with a time of 12.96. Reetta Hurske of Finland took gold ahead of the Indian athlete with a time of 12.80s while another Finn, Nooralotta Neziri, clocked 13.17s to take the bronze. It was the fourth medal of the season for the Visakhapatnam-born Jyothi, who holds the national record of 12.82 in the women's 100m hurdles. In the men's 100m race, India's Borgohain clocked 10.49 seconds, his season-best time, to finish third.

Hockey: India go down 1-4 to hosts Netherlands in men's FIH Pro League

Eindhoven | Agencies

India scored an early goal but hosts and World No.1, the Netherlands came back strongly to defeat them 4-1 in a closely-fought encounter here in the ongoing men's FIH Hockey Pro League 2022-23.

While Harmanpreet Singh (11') scored India's lone goal, Pepijn Reyenga (17'), Boris Burkhardt (40') and Duco Telgenkamp (41', 58') scored in the home team's victory on Wednesday night.

Riding on a good outing in London last weekend, the Indian men's hockey team, placed fifth in the FIH Ranking, got off the blocks in



Eindhoven establishing an early 1-0 lead in the first quarter.

Though the team led by Harmanpreet Singh took

Netherlands' D. Backed by a boisterous home crowd, the young Netherlands team bounced back in the second quarter with a fine equaliser through Pepijn Reyenga.

The equaliser put India on the back foot, with the hosts enjoying most of the ball possession. It took India a few minutes to regain their rhythm and foray into the circle with a well-worked attack down the right flank but the hosts defended well to keep the scoreline even.

Starting the third quarter in a 1-1 stalemate, the match promised to keep the audience glued to their seats.

The deadlock was finally broken in the 40th minute

when the Netherlands managed a P.C. Boris Burkhardt picked up a good injection to put it past Pathak. Seconds later, Duco Telgenkamp extended the lead to 3-1 with a well-timed field goal in the 41st minute.

While a late surge for India looked bleak at this moment with the Netherlands defence being relentless, Harmanpreet Singh's side conceded a goal in the 58th minute when Telgenkamp scored his second goal of the match taking the Netherlands lead to 4-1.

Next in this three-team mini-tournament, India will take on Argentina on Thursday evening.



SARA ALI KHAN

on cloud nine after her performance in her latest film



Team Absolute | Chennai

Sara Ali Khan is on cloud nine after enjoying the success that her latest film 'Zara Hatke Zara Bachke' has brought.

Her performance and chemistry with Vicky Kaushal have wowed the audience and fans can not have enough of them together. Currently, everything about her performance as Soumya is trending on social media, be it her songs, her dialogues or snippets of performance.

Talking about all the love that she is receiving for the film, she says: "It feels happy that people are giving love to the film. I had come to watch the film with my mother and brother on Sunday and they both cried during the film. Watching my mother and brother cry in my film, I genuinely felt that this is why we make films - to see people we care about have an emotional experience."

"Mom hamesha se filmy rahai hai (My mother is an actress and

is always filmy so she can cry) but Ibrahim is a 22-year-old urban youth and if he could cry, I can say that this is not just a rural Indore story. It will connect to everyone. When I saw my mom and brother both cry together while watching the film, I felt good."

When asked about the best compliment she received, for Zara Hatke Zara Bachke, Sara said, "I read somewhere Sara Ali Khan is back, I don't know why, that felt good. And my mother's and brother's reaction to the film, for sure."

With a collection of Rs 30.60 crore so far, Sara is adding another glory to her feather proving her to be one of the most promising actors in her generation.

Her small-town character of 'Soumya' is etched forever in the hearts of her fans. On the other hand, Sara will next be seen in Homi Adajania's 'Murder Mubarak' and Kannan Iyer's 'Ae Watan Mere Watan'.

Diljit has a hilarious response to reports of being 'touchy' with Taylor Swift

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Popular Punjabi-singer Diljit Dosanjh had a hilarious reaction to a news report claiming he got "touchy" with American singer Taylor Swift at a restaurant in Vancouver. In a now deleted tweet, Diljit joked about the news report and said that there's "something called privacy." Diljit was replying to a news report by a Canadian outlet, which had the headline: "BREAKING: Vancouver patrons were in for a surprise when they saw two of their favourite stars dining together at Cactus Club Cafe Coal Harbor on Monday night. Multiple sources confirmed that Taylor Swift and Diljit Dosanjh were laughing and being 'touch touch'."

To which, Diljit re-tweeted with the caption: "Yaar privacy naam di v koi cheez hundi aa."

The tweet by the singer-actor has now been deleted. However, screenshots of his tweet are doing the rounds.



Monika Bhadoriya on opening up about 'TMKOC': Wanted to expose 'wrongs done to me'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Monika Bhadoriya, who was seen in 'Tarak Mehta Ka Oolta Chashma' (TMKOC), has revealed the reason for opening up about the work culture in the show. In an earlier interview, Monika spoke about how it was a torture for her to be on the sets. Talking about her decision to open up, she said: "I just wanted to be open about my experience and what I had felt throughout. I just wanted to share this with my fans and media. There is no revenge or avenge in this. "But yes, I wanted to bring out all the wrong things that they had done with me," she says. Meanwhile, the actress adds that the show was her first. "I have done 'Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon' Star Plus, I was playing a negative character here. The show went off air in 2013, after this I was offered 'Tarak Mehta ka Oolta Chashma'. I played the role of Bavri and this show definitely changed my life, so it is a big show for me," she says.

HITMAKER JASLEEN ROYAL SLAMS INDIAN MUSIC LABELS, CALLS THEM 'EXPLOITATIVE'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer Jasleen Royal, who has given chartbuster hits such as 'Ranjha', 'Nachde Ne Saare' and 'Din Shagna Da' among many others, has slammed Indian music labels claiming that they are artist friendly. Jasleen took to Twitter, where she shared that she is sick of how "music labels work in India."

She wrote: "Sick of how music labels work in India! They never lose a single opportunity to say how artist friendly they are but in reality they are the most exploitative."

She then urged all artistes to consult before giving out their work to films and labels.

"All the artistes who are reading this please wait and consult before selling your songs to labels and films. Know your rights and values before you sign. #EmpoweringArtists." she concluded.



Sumbul Touqeer to croon with sis Saniya for her next music video

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sumbul Touqeer Khan, who has become a household name post her stint in the 'Bigg Boss' house, is all geared up for her music video in which teams up with her sister Saniya. Television stars are increasingly taking to music videos and Sumbul was to be seen in Fahmaan's latest video 'Beirada', but the final video was shot with Hiba Nawab.

At Munawar Faruqui's album launch on Wednesday evening, the actress was present and she spoke about her upcoming music video. "My next music video is very special for me, my sister and my father," she said. "The song has been sung by me and Saniya. We are trying our best to give our hundred per cent to it. The song is almost ready now and we are waiting to shoot. The video will be a big surprise for my fans."

Conveying her best wishes to Munawar, Sumbul said: "He has sung the song really well. It is a beautiful song and the hard work of the team is clearly visible in it. Munawar is a very good person and I'd definitely love to work with him."

Raveena felicitates Onir with Kashish Rainbow Warrior Award

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Filmmaker Onir was felicitated by actress Raveena Tandon with the prestigious Kashish Rainbow Warrior Award at the opening ceremony of the 14th Kashish International Queer Film Festival for his film 'Pine Cone', recently. The event celebrated diversity, inclusion, and the power of cinema.

The film explores the complexities of queer relationships, pushing the boundaries of societal norms and shedding light on the experiences of the LGBTQ+ community. The Kashish Rainbow Award holds a special significance for Onir in the light of Pride Month and the recent debate around same-sex marriage.

Onir said: "This award is incredibly special, not only because it is Pride Month, but also because it's Kashish, and it's special that this award of love happens in My city... Mumbai. I thank Kashish Film Festival and Sridhar for this award. I am humbled."

Onir also expressed his heartfelt gratitude towards Raveena Tandon, who has been his steadfast friend and supporter for the past 23 years.

"I am happy to receive this award from my friend Raveena who is a lifelong ally. And I am happy that in the audience today is my friend, my biggest support system, my Nikhil, my business partner Sanjay Suri."

He also added: "For me this award is for all those in countries across the world where we are still criminalised, murdered and humiliated. This is to tell them that we will win and you are in our thoughts," he added.



Tanvi Gadkari