

# absolute india

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Brett Lee hails Pathirana as 'once in a generation player'...



Weather office forecasts above average monsoon for 2024

Maha CM predicts Opposition's rout in 2024 LS elections

# THE GOOD NEWS

India is likely to witness rainfall above the normal level this monsoon, the weather department has said. Sharing the forecast, the India Meteorological Department said the country will receive cumulative rainfall estimated at 106 per cent of long-period average of 87 cm.



**INDIA RECEIVED "BELOW-AVERAGE" CUMULATIVE RAINFALL -- 820 MM COMPARED TO THE LONG-PERIOD AVERAGE OF 868.6 MM -- IN 2023, AN EL NINO YEAR.**

**BEFORE 2023, INDIA RECORDED "NORMAL" AND "ABOVE-NORMAL" RAINFALL IN THE MONSOON SEASON FOR FOUR YEARS IN A ROW.**

**EL NINO CONDITIONS -- PERIODIC WARMING OF SURFACE WATERS IN THE CENTRAL PACIFIC OCEAN -- ARE ASSOCIATED WITH WEAKER MONSOON WINDS AND DRIER CONDITIONS IN INDIA.**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India is likely to experience above-normal cumulative rainfall in the 2024 monsoon season with La Nina conditions likely to set in by August-September, the IMD has said on Monday.

However, normal cumulative rainfall does not guarantee uniform temporal and spatial distribution of rain across the country, with climate change further increasing the variability of the rain-bearing system.

Climate scientists say the number of rainy days is declining while heavy rain events (more rain over a short period) are increasing, leading to frequent droughts and floods.

Based on data between 1951-2023, India experienced above-normal rainfall in the monsoon season on nine occasions when La Nina followed an El Nino event, India Meteorological Department chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra told a press conference here.

India is likely to see above-normal rainfall in the four-month monsoon season (June to September) with cumulative rainfall estimated at 106 per cent of the long-period average



(87 cm), he said. Positive Indian Ocean Dipole conditions are predicted during the monsoon season.

Also, the snow cover in the Northern Hemisphere is low. These conditions are favourable for the Indian southwest monsoon, he said. Moderate El Nino conditions are prevailing at present. It is predicted to turn neutral by the time monsoon season commences. Thereafter, models suggest, La Nina conditions may set in by August-September, Mohapatra said. Reacting to the southwest monsoon forecast, BoB Economist Jahnnavi Prabhakar said the prediction comes in the wake of the extreme heatwave conditions ongoing in the country. "The water reservoir level has also been lower at 33 per cent of their total capacity compared with 39 per cent reservoir levels noted last year (as of April 12, 2024). However, the expectations of normal monsoon bodes well for the agriculture sector and will also keep a check on food prices," she said.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), while retaining its inflation and growth projections, in its recent monetary policy statement had assumed a normal monsoon which will also be positive for the kharif crops, Prabhakar added. Out of the last 8 years, this is the first time in 2024 that the IMD has forecast above-normal

rainfall (104-110 per cent of LPA) in its first forecast. In 2022, India had above-normal rainfall, against the expectation of normal rainfall. Last year in 2023, in line with expectations, the country actually witnessed normal rainfall at 94 per cent of LPA, Prabhakar added.

## CLIMATIC PHENOMENA

Three large-scale climatic phenomena are considered for forecasting monsoon season rainfall. The first is El Nino, the second is the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), which occurs due to differential warming of the western and eastern sides of the equatorial Indian Ocean, and the third is the snow cover over the northern Himalayas and the Eurasian landmass, which also has an impact on the Indian monsoon through the differential heating of the landmass. The southwest monsoon delivers about 70 per cent of India's annual rainfall, which is critical for the agriculture sector.

Kolhapur | Agencies

Maharashtra Chief Minister and Shiv Sena leader, Eknath Shinde on Monday claimed that the Opposition, which was routed in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections, will once again be defeated in the forthcoming General Elections.

CM Shinde, who was accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister, Ajit Pawar and ministers Hasan Mushrif, Chandrakant Patil and Shambhuraj Desai, addressed the rally at Kolhapur ahead of filing of nominations by Shiv Sena nominees Sanjay Mandlik from Kolhapur and Dhairyashel Mane from Hatkanangale constituencies.

"This election is not for one person and not for one constituency but this election is going to take the country towards becoming a

superpower.

"This election will make Narendra Modi the Prime Minister for the third time. PM Modi has not only strengthened the Indian economy but also brought it from the 11th position to the 5th position.

"Now we want to strengthen the hands of PM Modi so that India attains the third position," said Shinde.

"Due to the tireless efforts of PM Modi, India's respect has increased worldwide. The grand alliance government in the state is also working tirelessly for overall development," said Shinde. He taunted his former boss and ex-Chief Minister, Uddhav Thackeray that the Mahayuti government did not sit at home and work through Facebook.

Shinde appealed to the Mahayuti workers to fight the General Elections unitedly, considering it a fight for patriotism and development.

## BJP's Idea That India Should Have Only One Leader Is Insulting: Rahul Gandhi

Sultan Bathery | Agencies

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday accused the ruling BJP at the Centre of imposing the idea of "one leader in the country" and said it was an "insult" to the people of the nation.

India is like a bouquet of flowers and each one has to be respected because it promotes the beauty of entire bouquet, the Wayanad MP said.

"This idea that India should have only one leader is an insult to every single young Indian," he said.

Gandhi was addressing party workers and voters in this high range constituency after a massive road show as part of his election campaign.

He asked why India could not have more leaders and claimed that this line of thought is the main difference between the Congress and the BJP.

The MP said the Congress wants to listen to the people of the country and love and respect their beliefs, language, religion, culture. But, the BJP wants to impose something from the top, he alleged.

"We did not get freedom from the British to be colonised by the ideology of the RSS. We want India to be ruled by all her people," he said.



Gandhi, who is seeking his electoral luck again from Wayanad, came to the constituency for the second time after the date of the Lok Sabha polls were announced. He kicked off the poll campaign in Wayanad early this month by filing his nomination papers and holding a massive road show.

Gandhi won from Wayanad with a record margin of 4,31,770 votes during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Polling in Kerala's 20 Lok Sabha seats will be held on April 26.

## AUSTRALIA IN SHOCK AS ANOTHER STABBING INCIDENT REPORTED FROM SYDNEY

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Sydney: In yet another shocking incident, a bishop and a few other worshippers were stabbed by a man during a church service that was being broadcast online in Sydney on Monday evening (local time).

In a video that has now gone viral on social media, a man could be seen attacking Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel at a church in Wakeley before being overpowered by the locals. The New South Wales (NSW) Police said the injured individuals suffered non-life-threatening injuries and were treated by NSW Ambulance paramedics before being shifted to the hospital. "A man was arrested who remains in police custody. A large police response is underway and the public are urged to avoid the area," said a statement released by the NSW Police. Local media reported that hundreds of people gathered outside the crime scene where the situation remains tense. This is the second major stabbing incident reported from the city in as many days.

## Everyone Will Regret": PM Modi On Scrapping Of Electoral Bonds Scheme

The scrapping of the electoral bonds - in a landmark decision by the Supreme Court in February - is a decision "everyone will regret when there is honest reflection" and has "completely pushed the country towards black money", Prime Minister Narendra Modi told news agency on Monday.

The Prime Minister said the electoral bonds scheme launched by his government was meant to fight the use of 'black money', referring to unaccounted cash or funds from criminal activities, in election campaigns, and that he had "never claimed this was an absolute way" to achieve that goal.

Modi also attacked the opposition for spreading "lies" about the bonds and said his government had introduced the scheme to cut down on 'black money' during elections. He countered criticism - that his Bharatiya Janata Party was the largest beneficiary, to the tune of thousands of crores. "There has been a discussion in our country for a long time... that black money allows for dangerous games to be played during elections. That money is spent in elections... no one denies. My party also spends... all parties and all candidates



spend, and this money is taken from the people. I wanted to try something... how can our elections be free from this black money? How can there be transparency for people giving donations? This was a pure thought in my mind," the PM said. "We were looking for a way. We found a small way... never claimed this was absolute," he said, building on comments from earlier this month, when he told a Tamil news channel "no system is perfect... shortcomings can be improved".

Modi's comments on electoral bonds came in a wide-ranging interview aired this evening - four days before the start of the Lok Sabha election - that included detailed remarks on the opposition INDIA bloc, the contentious 'One Nation, One Election' scheme, and allegations his government uses central investigative agencies, like the Enforcement Directorate, to target rivals before polls.

## RBI eases rules on hedging of gold price risk in overseas markets

Mumbai: The RBI on Monday eased rules to allow resident entities to hedge their exposures to the price risk of gold using the OTC derivatives in the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in addition to the derivatives on the exchanges in the IFSC. Resident entities such as banks were permitted to hedge their exposure to the price risk of gold in the IFSC that are recognised by the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), and the new directive provides them with further flexibility to hedge their exposures to the price risk of gold.

## IIT Madras launches India's 1st mobile medical devices calibration facility



Chennai | Agencies

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras on Monday launched India's first medical devices calibration facility on wheels.

Calibration is key for life-saving medical devices as it will help check the accuracy of medical instruments for precise disease diagnosis, which will lead to improved treatments.

Irrespective of geographical locations across the country, the new mobile facility will ensure quality health-care. This will also help test and maintain medical devices that are used in a

wide range of hospitals including those in remote villages.

"Proper diagnosis and treatment are extremely important and for that, the medical devices need to be calibrated accurately and frequently," said Prof. V. Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras. The initiative boosts the United National Sustainable Development Goal (SDG-3), which calls for health and well-being for all.

The infrastructure in the mobile unit includes state-of-the-art equipment that will test the safety of medical devices as per international standards.

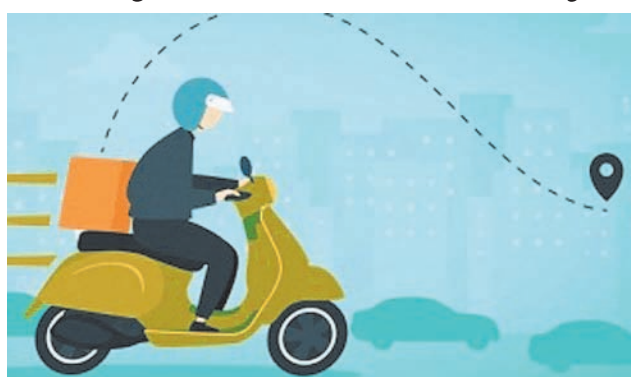
## Online food delivery menus missing key nutritional information: Study

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As more and more young people increasingly use apps to make food purchases, a new study warned on Sunday that most advertised items are missing nutritional information in online food delivery menus that would otherwise help consumers make healthy choices.

Researchers from the University of Sydney investigated menu items on major online food delivery outlets and apps.

They found that less than 6 per cent of menus of food outlets on online food delivery apps like UberEats, Menulog and Deliveroo had complete nutritional labelling. A total of 482 menus from UberEats, Menulog and Deliveroo were reviewed by the researchers in the study published in the journal Public Health Nutrition. "There are multiple studies



that show menu labelling having real-world impact that consumers who were provided with nutritional information selected meals with significantly lower energy content," said lead study author Sisi Jia.

"Although there is increasing demand for food delivery services, it is unknown how well menu labelling is implemented by online platforms," added Jia

from the Charles Perkins Centre and Susan Wakil School of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of Sydney.

The use of online food delivery services has grown rapidly, including during the pandemic. Online food delivery is also making it easier for people to buy food of low nutritional quality, according to the researchers.

## Firing at Salman Khan's home

## Shooters identified; motorcycle used bears Raigad registration number

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After the brazen firing at Bollywood megastar Salman Khan's home, the motorcycle used by the two shooters is reported to have origins in adjoining Raigad district, investigations revealed on Monday.

The motorcycle, with a Raigad registration number plate as seen in the CCTV footage, is being tracked to ascertain whether it was sold by someone, missing or stolen. The police have also been attempting to trace out the attackers, at least one of whom is identified as Vishal from Gurugram and the other from Rajasthan, both reported to be members of the Rohit Godara's gang. While Vishal a.k.a. Kalu is a history-sheeter who spent time in Delhi's Tihar Jail for thefts in 2020, the police have also identified the other shooter but have not revealed much details.

It may be recalled that at around 5 a.m. on Sunday morning, Mumbai woke up to a rude shock with at least four bullets fired



at the home of Salman Khan in Galaxy Apartments in Bandra west. Hours later, Anmol Bishnoi -- the brother of notorious gangster Lawrence Bishnoi -- claimed responsibility for the attack in a social media post. He termed the firing incident as the 'first and last warning' for Salman Khan, and ominously decreed that the next time "the bullets won't be fired at walls or an empty home", indicating the actor would be directly targeted for a hit.

The social media post (Facebook) by Anmol Bishnoi, was purportedly on behalf of other 'Bishnoi group' baddies like Goldy Brar, Rohit Godara, and Kala Jathedi. "Salman Khan, this is just to show you a trailer, to make you understand our power and not to test our patience further... this is the first and final warning to you," the post read.





# CAN KEJRIWAL RUN DELHI GOVT FROM TIHAR? PRISON MANUAL SAYS OTHERWISE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Can Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is presently in judicial custody in Tihar Jail in connection with the excise policy case, run the government from prison?

As per the prison manual, an under-trial prisoner is only allowed to write letters to his/her family members, relatives, close friends, and counsels from inside the jail.

A senior prison official said that Kejriwal, or any other inmate under judicial custody, is permitted to sign only two categories of documents, which cannot have any political implications and are restricted to legal documents related to property matters.

The official's statement followed assertions by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders, claiming that the Chief Minister will continue in his role in government affairs while incarcerated. The AAP has also indicated that starting next week, the Chief Minister plans to conduct weekly reviews with two ministers in the prison to assess the progress being made in their respective departments.

However, the jail manual says that an MLA can communicate only with the Speaker of the House from the prison.

"All communications addressed by a prisoner, who is a member of the state Assembly or the Parliament, to the Speaker or Chairman of the House of which he is a member, or to the Chairman of the Committee (including the Committee on Privileges) of such a House, or of a Joint Committee of both Houses of the state legislature or the



Parliament, shall be immediately forwarded by the Superintendent of Prison to the government to deal with it in accordance with the rights and privileges of the prisoner as a Member of the House to which he belongs," read Rule No. 628 of the 2018 prison manual. It added that prisoners may be allowed to write letters only to their family members, relatives, and close friends, or legal counsels.

"Prisoners should also be allowed to correspond with the counsels handling their cases. In case it is found that the prisoner is corresponding with undesirable persons or receiving letters from them or if any correspondence is found detrimental to the prisoner's rehabilitation, such letters, both incoming and outgoing, shall be withheld.

"Prisoners should be informed of such action without divulging the contents of the letters

received. If necessary, they may also be warned in this regard," read the prison rule.

Till now, Kejriwal has sent messages to AAP MLAs, leaders, and workers through his wife Sunita Kejriwal since he was sent to judicial custody in the excise policy case on April 1. During his Enforcement Directorate (ED) custody, Kejriwal, who was arrested on March 21, had issued two directions to his council of ministers.

Kejriwal is lodged at Jail No. 2 in Tihar. He had earlier provided a list of six names, including Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, his family members, and friends, who he wanted to communicate with from the prison.

## NOTICE TO ED ON CM KEJRIWAL'S PLEA AGAINST ARREST

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice on a plea filed by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal challenging his arrest and subsequent remand by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the excise policy case. Agreeing to examine the matter, a bench presided over by Justice Sanjiv Khanna asked the federal anti-money laundering agency to file its reply by April 24. The Bench, also comprising Justice Dipankar Datta, allowed the petitioner side to file a rejoinder affidavit, if any, by April 27 to the reply filed by ED. The matter will be taken up next on April 29 for further hearing.

# 'Govt's priority is to bring peace', HM Amit Shah says at rally in Manipur

Imphal | Agencies

Union Home Minister and senior BJP leader Amit Shah on Monday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's priority is to establish peace, and ensure unity among all communities in Manipur.

Addressing an election rally at the Hapta Kangleibung, Palace compound in Imphal, HM Shah said that the upcoming election was to unite Manipur, and resist against the division of the state.

"We would not allow dividing Manipur at any cost," the Home Minister told the gathering amid cheers and claps by thousands who gathered at the rally.

Since the ethnic riots began in Manipur on May 3 last year, 10 tribal MLAs belonging to Kuki-Zomi communities and several leading tribal organisations including Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum and Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM) have been demanding separate administrations or a separate state for the tribals living in the state. Claiming that attempts of infiltration were being made in the northeastern state to change its demography, HM Shah



said that the upcoming Parliamentary election is a fight between forces trying to divide Manipur and those making efforts to keep the state united.

"PM Modi always said that the destiny of the country would change when that of the northeast and Manipur would transform," HM Shah said. "PM Modi is not only developing the region and the country but also protecting Manipur and India as well. Your votes in the two Lok Sabha seats to BJP and its ally would make it clear to the entire world on whom the people of the state are with," HM Shah said.

## Congress leader to contest as Independent against SS (UBT) in Sangli

Sangli | Agencies

On expected lines, Congress leader Vishal Prakashbapu Patil on Monday filed his nomination papers as an Independent candidate for the Sangli Lok Sabha seat -- challenging the official INDIA bloc-Shiv Sena (UBT) nominee Chandrarah Patil.

Vishal Patil, the grandson of the late chief minister Vasantdada Patil and son of the veteran 5-time MP Prakashbapu Patil, will lock horns with the BJP's sitting two-term MP Sanjaykaka Patil attempting a hat-trick in Sangli. Supporters of Vishal Patil claimed that they were still hopeful of a Congress ticket, and he is likely to file a second set of nomination papers on Tuesday, though party officials declined to comment on the developments.

Congress MLA Dr. Vishwajeet Kadam from Palus-Kadegaon in Sangli along with Vishal Patil and other district senior party leaders had called on the Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and other top brass in Delhi several times insisting that the Congress should contest Sangli.

Kadam-Patil duo last week also made a fervent request to the Shiv Sena (UBT) President and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to 'give up' the Sangli seat



to Congress but the latter has spurned their pleas. Since the past few days, there were political murmurs in Sangli that the aggrieved party workers would not campaign for the SS (UBT) nominee Chandrarah Patil, a wrestling champion. Earlier, the state Congress leaders including President Nana F. Patole and others had raised objections to the SS (UBT) unilaterally 'grabbing' the Sangli seat even when the seat-sharing negotiations were in progress last month. Meanwhile, the Congress has kept mum on the latest development though Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) circles believe that Vishal Patil's decision to contest as an Independent could lead to a triangular contest and upset the prospects of Chandrarah Patil, proving beneficial to the BJP.

# IndiGo flight lands in Chandigarh with '1-2 minutes of fuel left', airline rejects claim

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch in Delhi) Satish Kumar claimed that the IndiGo flight, originating from Ayodhya and bound for Delhi, landed in Chandigarh after a diversion with only 1 or 2 minutes of fuel remaining, the airline on Monday said that their flight had sufficient fuel at all times to divert to an alternate airport, as per regulations.

"IndiGo flight 6E 2702 operating between Ayodhya and Delhi on April 13 was diverted to Chandigarh due to bad weather in Delhi. The captain executed a go-around which is in line with the standard operating procedure. This is an absolutely safe manoeuvre," said the airline spokesperson.

"The aircraft had sufficient fuel at all times to divert to an alternate airport, as per regulations. The safety of our esteemed passengers is of prime importance to us. We regret any



inconvenience that may have been caused due to factors beyond the airline's control," the spokesperson added.

However, Satish claimed that he got to know after landing that they had landed in the nick of time with only 1 or 2 minutes of fuel left from

the crew staff.

"Had a harrowing experience yesterday with IndiGo 6E Flight No. 6E2702 from Ayodhya to Delhi. Scheduled departure time 3:25 p.m. and schedule arrival time 4:30 p.m. Around 4:15 p.m., the pilot announced that there's bad weather

at Delhi Airport and assured that the plane has 45 minutes of Holding Fuel," the DCP wrote on X.

Satish further said that the pilot attempted landing twice, but couldn't due to bad weather and still wasted a lot of time deciding the next course of action. "At 5:30 p.m. (after a lapse of 75 minutes since the Holding fuel announcement), the pilot announced that he'll finally attempt landing at Chandigarh. By that time, several passengers and one of the crew staff started puking out of panic," he further stated.

"Finally, the plane managed to land at 6:10 p.m. at Chandigarh Airport after a lapse of 115 minutes since the 45 minutes Holding fuel announcement..... What an ordeal it was for the passengers. DGCA and MoCA kindly enquire if all SOPs were followed or was it the narrowest escape?," he wrote.

Meanwhile, the aviation watchdog, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation is yet to respond.

# EC cracks down on money power, seizes record Rs 4,650 cr

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Agencies have seized over Rs 4,650 crore before the first phase of polling on April 19, which is the highest-ever seizure of inducements recorded in the 75-year history of Lok Sabha elections, said the Election Commission on Monday.

This marks a sharp increase over Rs 3,475 crore seized during the entire Lok Sabha election in 2019. Significantly, 45 per cent of the seizures are of drugs and narcotics, which are under the special focus of the Commission.

In the country-wide operation, the EC said that the seizures were possible through comprehensive planning, scaled-up collaboration and unified deterrence action from agencies, proactive citizen participation and



optimal engagement of technology.

The Commission said that the use of black money could have disturbed the level playing field.

In an incident in Nilgiris, Tamil

Nadu, the Commission suspended the flying squad team leader for laxity in duty and selective checking of a cavalcade of a prominent leader.

Similarly, officials checked vehicles

in the convoy of a CM of a state and also the vehicle of a Deputy CM in another state.

The commission has also taken strict action against approximately 106 government servants who were found assisting politicians in campaigning, thereby violating the Code of Conduct and instructions.

CEC Rajiv Kumar has stressed strict compliance with BCAS instructions on surveillance and inspection of non-scheduled aircraft and helicopters by income tax, airport authorities and SPs of concerned districts, said the officials.

Border agencies have also been asked to keep a close watch on international checkpoints, and the GST authorities have to closely monitor godowns, especially makeshift godowns meant for storing freebies, the EC said.

## Mamata Banerjee warns of possible tension in Bengal on Ram Navami

Kolkata | Agencies

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday cautioned about possible attempts to trigger tension and violence in the state on the occasion of Ram Navami.

"The BJP candidate is a leader of the goons. There might be a repetition of the event of the Central forces firing witnessed at Sitalkuchi during the 2021 state assembly polls. April 17 is the day when they might try to trigger tension and violence. I am warning everybody not to get trapped by provocation. They do not want peaceful polls. They want only violence," the Chief Minister said while addressing a rally at Cooch Behar district on Monday.

She also referred to the reported event of Income Tax raids at the chopper of the party General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee. "IT sleuths checked his chopper thinking there was gold and cash. We do not move around with such things. BJP leaders do that. If we need anything we will beg from our mothers," the Chief Minister said.

She also attacked the BJP for including the Uniform Civil Code issue in the party mani-



fest. "The manifesto reflects exactly what I had predicted earlier. The Uniform Civil Code will mean that the tribal population will not have a separate identity," the Chief Minister said.

## Former Telangana MLA quits BJP, joins Congress

Hyderabad | Agencies

In a jolt to the BJP in Telangana, former MLA Rathod Babu Rao left the party to join the ruling Congress on Monday.

Babu Rao, a two-time MLA from Boath constituency, joined the Congress in the presence of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and state minister Seethakka.

Babu Rao, who was elected on the Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) ticket in 2014 and 2018, quit the party after he was denied re-nomination by the party in the November 2023 Assembly elections. He had joined the BJP but was unhappy over not getting the ticket.

With the Congress wresting power from the BRS, Babu Rao decided to join the



ruling party. His joining is likely to strengthen the party in Boath, one of the seven Assembly segments under the Adilabad Lok Sabha constituency.

In the recent Assembly elections, the BRS had retained the Boath seat with its candidate Anil Jadhav defeating his nearest rival and Adilabad MP Soyam Babu Rao of the BJP by over 22,000 votes. The Congress had finished a poor third.

# Don't play politics on words, says Sharad Pawar on 'outsider' row

Satara | Agencies

Smarting under criticism over his off-the-cuff 'outsider' remark, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) President Sharad Pawar on Monday urged political opponents "not to play politics on words".

Speaking to the media, Pawar sought an end to the row that erupted after he indirectly labelled his daughter-in-law Sunetra A. Pawar - wife of Nationalist Congress Party President and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar -- as 'an outsider'.

Sunetra A. Pawar is the NCP candidate from Baramati where she is pitted against her sister-in-law



(nanad), the sitting MP and NCP (SP) Working President Supriya Sule in what is described as a 'tough contest'.

"My comments were totally misinterpreted. Ajit Pawar had said that you (the people) have elected Sharad Pawar, me, so now elect your

daughter-in-law... I had spoken pertaining to this statement only," said Pawar, resting the controversy.

Reiterating that he had the highest regards for women, Sharad Pawar mentioned several decisions benefitting women in the state in government services, and as Defence Minister to recruit girls in the armed forces.

After Sharad Pawar's statement last Friday (April 12), the rival NCP and local Bharatiya Janata Party activists kicked up the dust alleging that the NCP (SP) chief had cast aspersions on all daughters-in-law, treating them as 'outsiders', while not treating Sunetra A. Pawar as part of the Pawar clan.

## Kshatriya community holds rally in Rajkot, demands withdrawal of Union Minister's candidature

Rajkot | Agencies

More than 1,50,000 people reportedly belonging to the Kshatriya community from across Gujarat and neighbouring states gathered in Rajkot on Sunday evening, demanding the immediate withdrawal of Union Minister Parshottam Rupala's candidature as the BJP candidate from Rajkot Lok Sabha seat.

Union Minister Rupala is facing backlash from the community after he claimed in March that erstwhile 'maharajas' succumbed to the persecution by foreign rulers and Britishers and even married off their daughters to them.

The Union Minister has issued two apologies since the row erupted and even engaged with Kshatriya leaders to quell the unrest.



The 'Kshatriya Maha Semmelan' in Rajkot was the largest such gathering following previous meetings in Dhandhuka, Patan, and Himmatnagar, signalling a significant escalation in the community's protest.

A second phase of the agitation will begin on April 19, coinciding with the last day to withdraw candidature.

A leader threatened to block highways if detained post-meeting, while others suggested confrontational "treatment" if the Union Minister comes to campaign in their village.





# Indira Gandhi tried to 'end' democracy, PM Modi 'protected' Constitution: Devendra Fadnavis

Team Absolute | Nagpur

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Monday criticised the Congress, saying that Late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi tried to "end" democracy in the country while Prime Minister Narendra Modi has "protected" the Constitution in his last 10 years of rule. "For the last 10 years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has had an absolute majority. But he protected the Constitution. Supreme Court has clearly said that the Parliament cannot change the basic structure of the Constitution. So this is Congress' jumla," Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister said while addressing a press conference in Nagpur.

Deputy Chief Minister Fadnavis also criticised the Late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, saying she tried to end democracy in the country. "It is absurd to claim that the



Constitution will be in danger. Democracy is in India's blood. Indira Gandhi tried to end democracy in India.

She kept lakhs of leaders and activists of opposition parties in jail for two years. Even after the suppression Indira Gandhi could not end democracy in India," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

On Rahul Gandhi's statement that if the Congress comes to power the Agniveer Yojana will be scrapped, he said that Congress has never fulfilled its promises.

"Congress must show its track record. Congress has not fulfilled its promises in any state like Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Himachal, and Karnataka. They know that they will not get elected. Rahul Gandhi can also promise that he will build a Taj Mahal for every citizen of the country," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

# MVA slams Goyal for aversion to 'fishy odour' in coastal hamlets, slums of Mumbai

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Congress and Nationalist Congress Party (SP) took a swipe at Bharatiya Janata Party's Mumbai North Lok Sabha candidate and Union minister Piyush Goyal for displaying his abhorrence to the strong smell of fish while going around a Mumbai slum, here on Monday.



Congress General Secretary Sachin Sawant said that Goyal "couldn't stand the smell of fish" when he passed through the fishing village and was seen walking around with a handkerchief to his nose.

NCP (SP) Chief Spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said that an MP is supposed to represent all sections of society, particularly the poor who form the backbone of Indian democracy and must be seen in public as a sensitive and sympathetic person.

On a campaigning spree, the usually dapper Goyal had gone around some humble slums of Borivali west suburb -- which has some fishers living and working -- and the vicinity emitted the stench of fish, a familiar atmosphere in many part of Mumbai North, and other coastal areas of

the country's commercial capital.

Unable to take a lungful, Goyal -- fighting his maiden LS election -- tied a handkerchief around his face, covered his nose and then tried walking around in the poor neighbourhood of Kolis, whose chief vocation is fishing in the Arabian Sea, as per his schedule.

"The Koli brothers-sisters are the original inhabitants of Mumbai. Goyal walked around with a handkerchief on his nose and cannot be representative of the poor people. Maybe now he wants to evict them to some other place," said Sawant sharply.

Tapase felt that peoples' representatives must ideally not display such 'airs' in

public, particularly when they are seeking the votes of the very same ordinary masses who can make or break a candidate's prospects.

Sawant added that Kolis and sea-food are a part and parcel of Mumbai culture, but after witnessing Goyal's behaviour the people of Mumbai North, especially shanty slum dwellers and fisher people will teach him a lesson 'for displaying an insulting attitude towards the poor voters'.

Locals contended that many of the fishing folks and slum dwellers found Goyal's actions offensive and even bordering on rude, which could serve to alienate them from the BJP nominee at the height of the electioneering.

# Congress to contest in Bhandara-Gondia after 25 years

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Following demarcation in 2008, the name of the constituency was changed to Bhandara-Gondia. While the seat has seen intermittent control by the BJP, Congress-NCP has wielded influence over it for a substantial period.

Originally under Congress's control, from 1951 to 1998, the Bhandara-Gondia constituency was primarily represented by the Congress party. Former Union Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel served as a Congress MP for Bhandara-Gondia in the election years 1991, 1996, and 1998. However, the dynamics shifted when Patel switched allegiance to the Sharad Pawar-led NCP in 1999, diminishing Congress's stronghold in the region. Subsequently, in the Congress-NCP alliance, the constituency remained firmly with the NCP. In 2009, Patel secured victory and was elected as an NCP MP from this seat.

Congress candidate Prashant Padole during the public meeting at Sakoli in Bhandara. Pic/Satej Shinde. Congress candidate Prashant Padole during the public meeting at Sakoli in Bhandara. Pic/Satej Shinde

In the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, during the Modi wave that swept the nation, Patel lost to Nana Patole who was in BJP then. However, in 2017, Patole quit the BJP, necessitating a by-election in 2018. NCP candidate Madhukar Kukde emerged victorious, defeating the BJP's Hemant Patle in the by-election, delivering a blow to the BJP. In 2019, the BJP fielded Sunil Mendhe, who defeated the NCP's Nana Panchbudhe to become an MP from the constituency.

The Bhandara-Gondia Lok Sabha constituency comprises six Assembly constituencies, evenly distributed between Bhandara and Gondia districts. In the Bhandara district, Tumsar, Bhandara, and Sakoli constitute the assembly segments, while Arjuni Morgaon, Tirora, and Gondia represent the assembly segments in the Gondia district.

Elections in this constituency are often shaped by caste dynamics, with the Kunbi community exerting considerable influence, followed by the Teli and



Powar communities. Historically, candidates from the Kunbi community have enjoyed success in electoral contests here.

In the current elections, both the BJP and Congress have fielded candidates from the Kunbi community. Meanwhile, the Bahujan Samajwadi Party has nominated Sanjay Kumbhalkar from the Teli community. Notably, many members of the Teli community are rallying behind Praful Patel, who has endorsed the BJP. The final outcome may hinge on the support of the Powar community, which holds significant sway across the two districts.

# Man kills 3 children by throwing them into well

Team Absolute | Jalna

A man allegedly killed his two daughters and 12-year-old son by throwing them into a well in a village in Maharashtra's Jalna district, police said on Monday.

The accused, Santosh Dhondiram Takwale, was arrested on Sunday after he called up the police to inform them about the deaths, an official said. Santosh Takwale allegedly threw his son Soham and daughters Shivani (8) and Dipali (7) into a well in Domegaon village in Ambad tehsil on Saturday, he said. The victims were Santosh Takwale's children from his first wife, who died, and he had remarried, inspector Raghunath Nachan of Ambad police station said.



A case has been registered, and a probe is on to ascertain the motive behind the crime, he said. According to sources, the accused, a resident of Kachner village in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, worked in a hotel and arrived in Domegaon with the children over the weekend. The accused himself called up the police to inform them about the murders and later switched off the phone, they said.

# CM Shinde relieved as Independent MLA opts out of race in Hatkanangale LS seat

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Chief Minister and Shiv Sena chief leader Eknath Shinde heaved a sigh of relief after Independent MLA Prakash Awade on Monday declared that he would not contest from Hatkanangale seat in Kolhapur district.

Awade, who was elected as an Independent in the 2019 assembly elections from the Ichalkaranji seat, is supporting the MahaYuti government in Maharashtra.

Shinde's timely intervention has paid off as Awade, who had decided to enter the poll fray on Saturday to seek votes on making Narendra Modi the Prime Minister for the third time, has announced to work for Shiv Sena nominee Dhairyashel Mane.

Awade accompanied Shinde and other Shiv Sena leaders for the filing of nomination by Mane at Kolhapur district collector's office. Shiv Sena was worried



after Awade unilaterally declared to contest the elections from Hatkanangale. Shinde had held a marathon meeting with Awade on Saturday but despite that, the latter remained firm on his decision.

The party was of the view that had he remained in the fray, it would adversely impact Mane's poll

prospects. With Awade's decision not to contest the elections, Mane faces a fight from Shiv Sena (UBT) nominee Satyajee Patil, Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana founder Raju Shetti, Shetkari Sanghatana leader Raghunath Patil and Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi nominee DC Patil.

# Salman Khan's security team gets more personnel after gunshots near home

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Additional personnel have been added to Bollywood actor Salman Khan's security a day after gunshots were heard outside his home in Mumbai. He earlier had two personal security officers (PSO), two commandoes, two escort vehicles and 11 cops under Y+ category security, now three more cops and one PSO have been added to his team. His security level has not been upgraded, only more personnel have been added.

Salman Khan has also been asked to inform the Mumbai Police before moving out of his house. He has been advised to stay at home unless something important comes up.

Two people fired four rounds outside Bandra's Galaxy Apartments, around 5 am and fled from the spot. Later, CCTV footage released by the police showed the men on a motorcycle. The man riding pillion was also seen firing shots.

The motorbike, which was abandoned near Mount Mary Church, a little over a kilometre from the actor's house, was registered in the name of a man living in the Panvel area of Navi Mumbai, officials said.

A probe revealed that the abandoned two-wheeler was registered in the name of a person residing in Panvel, and a team from the crime branch went



there and brought the vehicle owner and two others for questioning, the official said.

The police are questioning the owner of the motorcycle. The man had recently sold the two-wheeler, assistant commissioner of police Panvel Ashok Rajput said.

Police are also trying to gather information if the two accused or the bike dealer or owner are linked to the trespassing case at Salman Khan's Panvel farmhouse.

# Four booked for duping Thane man of Rs 10.8 cr in business deal

Team Absolute | Thane

The police in Maharashtra's Thane city have registered a case against four persons for allegedly cheating a government contractor of more than Rs 10.8 crore by fabricating documents for a business deal, an official said on Monday, reported news agency.

A first information report has been registered under sections 406 (criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code against a couple who were directors of two companies and two others, an official from Shrinagar police station



said. The Thane man has alleged that the accused couple wished to sell their elec-

trical goods manufacturing units in Andheri MIDC and Palghar and showed all rele-

vant documents to him. He also visited the manufacturing units, he said.

The Thane man paid Rs 5.82 crore to purchase the two plants, and he examined the document a few days later and found that they were fake, the official said.

The accused allegedly did not present the original documents and refused to transfer the shares to the complainant's name, the official said, adding that the accused couple also allegedly shut their office in Thane.

The complainant was duped of Rs 10.8 crore, which included the amount he paid to buy the factories and earnings from his investments in the units, he said.

# Prakash Ambedkar accuses Mahayuti, MVA of excluding Muslim candidates

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Prakash Ambedkar, the head of the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA), has criticised both the ruling and opposition parties in Maharashtra for failing to include any Muslim candidates in the fray for Lok Sabha Elections 2024. He emphasised that neither the ruling MahaYuti nor the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi have nominated any Muslim candidates thus far.

In the forthcoming Lok Sabha Elections 2024, neither alliance has fielded any Muslim candidates, however, VBA has nominated a few nominees. In previous elections, the Congress ran one Muslim candidate in Akola but was unsuccessful.

Ambedkar, per the report, said, "If the MVA has to exclude Muslims - like the BJP - then what is the difference between the two...? On Bhim Jayanti



Day, I am raising this point on inclusion and exclusion." He also raised concerns about why the media had not addressed the issue either.

There is considerable pressure among Congress, NCP (SP), and smaller parties to nominate at least one Muslim candidate to ensure minority representation, especially in districts with a large Muslim population, such as Mumbai North-Central, the report stated.

Per the news agency, amid deliberation for a candidate who will contest from the Mumbai North Central seat,

rumour mills are abuzz that Congress is considering naming former state minister and Congress Working President M Arif Naseem Khan for the seat.

Despite senior party leaders, per the agency report, declining to comment officially on the issue, they highlighted that the grand-old party had been nominating leaders from all minority communities including Muslims to both houses of the Parliament regularly since Independence.

Although Maharashtra has an average Muslim population of 18 per cent, particular constituencies have larger Muslim populations, which influences the political landscape.

Subsequently, Ambedkar tore into both--the BJP and Congress for circulating false information and propaganda about him and Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi and claimed that they were afraid of the VBA's growing power.





EDITOR'S SPECS

**Ayodhya gears up to welcome 25L devotees on Ram Navami**

With just two days left for Ram Navami, Ayodhya is gearing up for massive crowd control -- bigger than the one seen in the holy city during the pran pratistha ceremony in January. Police officials deployed at Ayodhya for the Ram Navami celebrations, which will begin from midnight on April 16, have been asked to do 24-hour long shifts. Chief Secretary D.S. Mishra said that the government is anticipating the arrival of around 25 lakh devotees in the temple town. He said that the Health Department had been directed to station ambulances at all main areas while all hospitals have been directed to remain in alert mode. Temporary health centres have been set up at 12 spots and they will be equipped with all necessary medicines and facilities, he said. "For crowd control and the convenience of devotees, large LED screens are being set up in the Ayodhya and in holding and parking areas where live streaming from the sanctum sanctorum of the temple will be done. Security personnel will be stationed in the temple premises and the Mela area on 24x7 duty. CCTV coverage of the entire area will be done around the clock. These should be used to monitor the movement of devotees, for traffic control and crowd assessment," the chief secretary said. He further said that 24 automatic number-plate recognition cameras had been installed across Ayodhya and cameras installed at the borders of Ambedkar Nagar, Sultanpur and Barabanki districts would be monitored to get an assessment of visitors entering the city.

**Rahul Gandhi's 'Khatakhath' genie won't snap votes**

Deepika Bhan

The pressure of staying relevant in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls seems to be forcing Congress to promise the moon and the sun to people. A manifestation of this is the slew of promises made by Rahul Gandhi just ahead of the polls. During his election speech in Rajasthan last week, he had said: "The Congress government will transfer Rs one lakh to the bank account of a woman from every poor family in the country... khatakhath khatakhath aata rahega aur ek jhatke se hum Hindustan se gareebi ko mita denge (it will come instantly and, we will remove poverty from Hindustan)."

The best jiffy moment has always been Aladdin's magic lamp but Rahul Gandhi's "khatakhath khatakhath" claim could well be the new one. The closest translation of Khatakhath, a Hindi word, could be jiffy or in one stroke or instant. And, instant for most of the present-day generation is always noodles, a Chinese-origin food item.

As all political parties are making promises to woo the electorate, the perpetual youth leader of his party offered the ultimate 'Khatakhath' solution to address poverty in the nick of 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The solution is a sharp contrast to the statement that Rahul Gandhi made 11 years ago in Uttar Pradesh when he said that "poverty is a state of mind."

In August 2013, the Congress leader was participating in a discussion in Uttar Pradesh when he said: "Poverty is just a state of mind. It does not mean the scarcity of food, money or material things. If one possesses self-confidence, then one can overcome poverty." To prove his point, he even cited the example of a poor woman from Amethi, who got hold of her life by taking help from Rajiv Gandhi Mahila Vikas Pariyojana.

If, in 2013, Rahul believed that providing the right atmosphere to earn and sustain can help tackle poverty, then why the U-turn in 2024? A decade of sitting in the opposition has made the Congress scion believe that promising doles is the only way to impress people. And the khatakhath system of transferring money in accounts is the easiest way to the hearts of people. Had it been so easy then Karnataka and Telangana economies would not have been struggling with fulfilling the pre-election promises on guarantees. Various development activities have almost stopped and legislators, even from the Congress, are unhappy as fund flow is slow.

Overlooking the ground realities, Rahul also made another equally startling promise which is to do a wealth survey, very much a Communist idea that actually originates from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' Communist Manifesto. Rahul Gandhi said that if voted to power, his government would conduct a caste census to know the exact population and status of backward communities, SCs, STs and minorities. After that, the financial and institutional survey will be done and finally, the "historic assignment to distribute the wealth of India, jobs and other welfare schemes to these sections based on their population" will be done.

History has examples of several countries under the influence of Communism going for this concept, but after suffering the ill effects, decided to change again. China tried the same in the 1960s but failed and finally reworked its policies. Today, China's economy is huge with a rise in wealth, private properties and income



gaps. But, in India, the Congress scion is seeking the 1848 idea for developing the country where youths constitute 66 per cent of the population.

By talking about wealth distribution, he also appears to be taking an about-turn from the liberal economic model of 1991. It was Manmohan Singh, the then Finance Minister in P. V. Narasimha Rao's government, who presented a landmark budget, ushering in a new dawn for the country's economy. Since then, India has not looked back.

Rahul Gandhi, with such withered and weird ideas, is seeking to impress the youth of the country who want to move ahead and not get entangled in caste and religion wars. It is an aspirational India in 2024 which is seeking new opportunities to grow, prosper and lead.

With less than a week to go for the first phase of elections on April 19, what has the Congress shaped itself into? Inner contradictions are galore and its leaders at all levels are just running away

with a majority of them picking the lotus merrily. Those abandoning the grand old party's ship do not hesitate to blame Rahul Gandhi for "suffocating them" and the party for being directionless. While the BJP has built a strong narrative of developmental politics, the Congress has been unable to come up as a challenger. In fact, it is today seen as a party standing with the corrupt and openly giving impetus to caste politics.

As surveys predict, Congress may find it difficult to even retain the 52 seats that it secured in 2019. The blame squarely rests on the top leadership. There is no Khatakhath genie that can help Rahul Gandhi get even near 100 seats. His aunt Maneka Gandhi has the best advice for him. He should take a break, she said, and perhaps this could work for him.

international

**Situation worsening in southern Russian regions hit by spring floods**

Moscow | Agencies

Conditions are deteriorating in regions of southern Russia hit by spring flooding, authorities in the area reported on Monday. Up to 15,600 homes and 28,000 inhabited properties were under water, with the situation in the Kurgan region on border with Kazakhstan particularly dangerous. Here, the Tobol River in western Siberia had risen by 1.5 metres to around 6.5 metres within a 24-hour period, the reports said.

The Orenburg region to the west has also seen record levels along the Ural River, which takes spring runoff from the Ural Mountains flow.

Exceptional flooding this spring has washed away roads, bridges and other infrastructure in the region. The authorities



in the cities of Orenburg and Orsk have estimated the damage at more than 40 billion rubels (\$430 million), but the final figure could be higher.

Dozens of bridges have been closed to traffic, and the health authorities have launched a vaccination campaign against Hepatitis A amid concerns about water

quality.

There have been complaints that the authorities reacted too late and that assistance has been inadequate and delayed. According to the authorities, 193 localities and 33 regions have been affected, among them Samara and Omsk.

Preparations are also being made in the Novosibirsk region to the east where flooding along major rivers is expected.

Kurgan Governor Vadim Shumkov has urged residents to pack documents, valuables and clothes and evacuate to safe areas. The situation was extremely difficult and was deteriorating, he posted on the Telegram messaging service.

Police, accompanied by members of sports clubs, were organizing patrols to prevent looting, he said.

**High-level Saudi delegation to visit Pakistan**

Hamza Ameer | Islamabad

As Pakistan moves ahead towards privatisation of its assets including the Islamabad International Airport and the National Flag carrier airline the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) along with other major projects; a high-level delegation from Saudi Arabia will land in Islamabad on Monday to materialise the agreements done between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman. Pakistan's Foreign Office confirmed the visit stating that the high-level Saudi delegation would be led by Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah, who



will be accompanied by a team of important and esteemed figures from the business community. Saudi delegation comprises important government dignitaries including Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources Bandar Ibrahim Alkhorayef, Minister of Water and Agriculture Engineer

Abdul Rahman Abdul Mohsen Al-Fadley, Deputy Minister of Investment Badr AlBadr, Head of Saudi Special Committee Mohammad Mazyed Al Towajri and other senior officials from Saudi Fund for General Investments and the Ministry of Energy.

The delegation will be in

Islamabad on 15 and 16 April with an objective to take the agreements done between Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman during the recent meeting in Makkah.

Sources said that the Saudi delegation is scheduled to have important meetings with key figures from various ministries of Pakistan. Meetings are also scheduled with President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir and the APEC Committee of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

**At polarised UNSC meet on Iran attack, only consensus is Middle East tensions shouldn't escalate**

Arul Louis | United Nations

After hearing a warning at the polarised Security Council's emergency meeting from Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that the "Middle East was on the brink", the only consensus was that there should be no further escalation of tensions there.

"The message around the Council table was very, very clear that there should be no further escalation. Everybody was of the same opinion on this," Council President Vanessa Frazier told reporters after the meeting on Iran's thwarted massive attack on Israel.

At the meeting convened hastily at Israel's request within 24 hours of Saturday's attack using barrages of missiles and fleets of drones, Israel and Iran traded charges, the US and Britain strongly condemned Iran, and Russia mounted a defence of Tehran.

The Council immobilised by its divisions did not take any action and the meeting was only an occasion for venting.

The opinions, however, coalesced around Guterres' call "to step back from the brink".

"It is vital to avoid any action that could lead to major mili-



tary confrontations on multiple fronts in the Middle East," he said briefing the Council on Iran's attack.

"The people of the region are confronting a real danger of a devastating full-scale conflict. Now is the time to defuse and de-escalate. Now is the time for maximum restraint," he said.

The capture of the Israeli-owned ship, Aries, by Iran, came up during the meeting with several countries calling for the release of the crew, including Indians.

Israel's Permanent Representative Gilad Erdan asked the Council to not only condemn the attack but also to

impose the strongest sanctions on Iran for going ahead with its nuclear programme.

He said that almost all of the missiles and drones were destroyed by Israel and its allies before they could hit their targets, but the failure of the attack should not mean that Tehran is not punished for the attack.

Holding up a video on his tablet, Erdan said it showed Israel neutralising missiles and drones over Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of the holiest Muslim shrines and said that Tehran was targeting Islam's holy places in its quest for Shia domination.

Iran's Permanent

Representative Amir Saed Iravani said that Tehran was using its right to self-defence under the UN Charter to attack Israel after it had struck its diplomatic mission in Syria and killed its personnel.

His country decided to attack Israel not because the Council did not act against it.

US Deputy Representative Robert Wood said his country "is not seeking escalation", but it "also supports Israel's exercise of its inherent right to defend itself in the face of this attack".

He said that a strong condemnation by the Council of Iran and its proxies is the surest way to prevent an escalation of tensions in the Middle East.

Wood countered Iran's claims of self-defence listing several actions by it across the region and said, "These and other reckless Iranian actions, are not inherently defensive actions".

Russia's Permanent Representative Vassily Nebenzia accused the US and its allies of following a double standard when it came to Iran because they would consider an attack on a diplomatic mission a justification for war under international law.

**US not seeking war with Iran: National Security spokesman**



Washington | Agencies

The US does not want to go to war with Iran, a White House national security spokesman has said. Appearing on CNN's State of the Union news program one day after Iran launched attacks against Israel, US National Security Council Coordinator for Strategic Communications John Kirby on Sunday was asked by host Jake Tapper if the Biden administration supports an Israeli retaliatory operation directly aimed at targets inside Iran.

"As the President has said many times, we don't seek a wider war in the region. We don't seek a war with Iran. And

I think I'll leave it at that," he said. Kirby seemed to be showing more restraint in his remarks, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to US media reports citing White House officials, President Joe Biden told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the phone on Saturday night that the US would neither participate in nor support any offensive operations by Israel against Iran. Iran and allied armed groups launched coordinated drone and missile strikes on Israel late Saturday night in retaliation for a strike on the Iranian consulate in Syria two weeks ago.

**German Chancellor warns China not to support Russia ahead of meeting with Xi**



Shanghai | Agencies

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz says he will warn Chinese President Xi Jinping against providing military support for Russia.

He will point out that Russia is waging a war of conquest against Ukraine, "and insist that no one must help this to succeed," Scholz said in Shanghai on Monday. "That is why we are also calling on everyone not to circumvent sanctions... and that is why we are also calling for no arms deliveries."

This also applies to goods that can be used for both civilian and military purposes, emphasized Scholz. China is considered Russia's most important ally and is suspected of supplying such goods.

Scholz is meeting Xi and Premier Li Qiang in Beijing on Tuesday. The Russian war against Ukraine is not just a European issue, Scholz said. "If this sets a precedent, it is a threat to peace and security everywhere on the planet," he said.





## KAMAL NATH'S AIDE BOOKED FOR CONSPIRING TO CIRCULATE OBSCENE VIDEO TO DEFAME BJP'S CHHINDWARA CANDIDATE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Police has registered a case against former Chief Minister Kamal Nath's right-hand man RK Miglani and a journalist associated with a national news channel for allegedly conspiring to circulate a fake obscene video of BJP candidate, Vivek Banti Shahu.

The case has been registered on the basis of a written complaint submitted by a journalist Sudesh Nagvanshi, who claimed that he was asked to circulate an obscene video of Vivek Banti Shahu with a woman, in Chhindwara.

Vivek Banti Shahu will take on sitting Congress MP from Chhindwara and ex-CM Kamal Nath's son Nakul Nath. The complainant told the police that he received a call from another journalist Sachin Gupta telling him to reach Kamal Nath's bungalow in Chhindwara.

"Upon reaching the bungalow, Sachin Gupta took me inside (to an office) where Kamal Nath's PA, RK Miglani was already present. They showed me an obscene video of BJP candidate, Vivek Banti Shahu and asked me to share the video two days before voting in Chhindwara," a copy of the complaint available with reporter stated. Nagvanshi added that after leaving Kamal Nath's bungalow, he contacted Vivek Banti Shahu and told him about his obscene video



with a woman.

Subsequently, a police team knocked on the doors of Kamal Nath's residence in Chhindwara on Monday afternoon and interrogated Miglani.

However, the police did not respond to the mediapersons standing outside the former CM's bungalow. Speaking to the media after the police team left the house, Miglani said, "I was not questioned by the police. I was served a notice. I told them I will respond to it after the elections." This incident has taken

place just three days before the first phase of General Elections on April 19 have heated up Madhya Pradesh's political scenario.

Importantly, this entire drama has unfolded a day before Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, is set to visit Chhindwara where he will participate in a mega roadshow and address a public rally for the party candidate.

Piyush Babele, media adviser to Kamal Nath, confirmed that a police team reached the senior Congress leader's residence to conduct a search.

### Police team at Kamal Nath's residence in Chhindwara, 3 days ahead of voting

Bhopal: A police team on Monday reached former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath's residence in Chhindwara in connection with a complaint filed by BJP candidate Vivek 'Bunty' Sahu.

As per the information, Bunty, who is contesting Lok Sabha elections against Kamal Nath's son Nakul Nath from Chhindwara, has alleged that ex-CM's right hand R. K. Miglani has given money to some journalists to create fake videos to defame him. In his complaint, Sahu has alleged that Miglani has given Rs 20 lakh to some independent journalists to make fake videos against him and spread them on social media platforms. Police, however, did not say anything on this matter.

The development came as senior BJP leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah is set to arrive in Chhindwara on Monday. Chhindwara Lok Sabha constituency is a stronghold of the Congress party. It goes to polls in the first phase on April 19. In the 2019 elections, the BJP swept the state winning 28 out of 29 seats, barring Chhindwara.

## Respect for both farmers and army personnel was kept in the resolution letter: VD Sharma

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bharatiya Janata Party State President and MP Vishnudutt Sharma said that the Bharatiya Janata Party has fulfilled the resolutions taken during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and the central leadership has also fulfilled the resolution letter issued for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Yes, it will also be followed completely, that is a letter of guarantee from Prime Minister Modi ji.

He said that in the party's manifesto there is a determination to make India better and there is also a road map to make India a developed nation by 2047. Sharma said that Modi ji has described only four castes in the country, youth, poor, farmers and women. The party's resolution letter is dedicated to the development of all these. He said that the party's manifesto will pave the way for the next five years of service, good governance and poor welfare.

Sharma said that the Bharatiya Janata Party had taken suggestions from the people for its resolution letter. For this, suggestion boxes were set up and suggestions were also taken online through NaMo app. 15 lakh suggestions were received from across the country and four lakh suggestions were also received online. For this, boxes were installed at 1100 places in Madhya Pradesh.

In Madhya Pradesh too, 26,000 citizens had given their valuable suggestions for the party's manifesto, which makes it clear how much the people of the state trust Modi's guarantee. He said that many suggestions



received from the state have also been included in the party's resolution letter. For this, I thank Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav and former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan, members of the Resolution Committee.

Sharma said that although the party's manifesto is very broad, its 10 major provisions are such that they will also affect the lives of the people of the state. Madhya Pradesh is also going to play a big role in the fabric of development of the country. There are a large number of elderly citizens in the state and there is a provision in the resolution to provide free treatment up to Rs 5 lakh to every senior citizen above 70 years of age under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme.

Vishnudutt Sharma said that the work done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in the last 10 years has increased the confidence in India in the whole world. Indians living abroad are feeling proud today and India has established itself as the mother of democracy in the whole world.

## Candidates will be able to spend up to Rs 95 lakh in election campaign

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan said that the Election Commission of India has set the limit of election campaign expenditure for a candidate at Rs 95 lakh, for the Lok Sabha elections. For this, the candidate is required to open a separate account in the bank. Rajan

has said that all daily expenditure accounts will have to be maintained in the election expenditure register received from the Returning Officer.

All posters, banners, pamphlets, handbills, even if they are printed/published before nomination, but are being used/displayed after nomination, will be added to the election expenses of the

candidate. He informed that all expenses for commercial vehicles hired/rented for organizing the rally will be included in the publicity expenditure account. All expenses incurred on any rally attended by the candidate/display of photo/sharing of stage etc. will also be added to the election campaign expenditure account of the candidate.

## RB Prajapati will be the joint candidate of India Alliance from Khajuraho

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress has decided to support All India Forward Bloc candidate RB Prajapati from Khajuraho parliamentary seat of Madhya Pradesh. In such a situation, RB Prajapati will be the joint candidate of the alliance.

SP had fielded Meira Yadav from Khajuraho parliamentary seat, but her nomination was canceled due to technical glitches.

Actually, Indi alliance had given Khajuraho seat



to Samajwadi Party (SP) as per mutual agreement. When the nomination of SP candidate was rejected, the party has decided to support Forward Bloc candidate Prajapati.

There are a total of 29 Lok Sabha seats in Madhya Pradesh, out of which Congress has fielded its candidates on 28 seats. Whereas, one seat went to SP. Earlier SP had decided to support Prajapati and now Congress has also supported him. In this way, RB Prajapati will try his luck in the election field as a joint candidate of the alliance.

## Swachhta Pakhwada Culminates with Nukkad Natak and Awareness session at AIIMS Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Swachhta Pakhwada at AIIMS Bhopal concluded today with a dynamic blend of education and entertainment, leaving a lasting impact on attendees regarding infection control and biomedical waste management. Prof. (Dr) Ajai Singh, Executive Director and CEO of AIIMS Bhopal was the chief guest. The event was also graced by Shri P.C. Prasad, Director PMSSY (MoHF) with participation from officers, faculty members, nursing personnel, students, patients, and visitors. Prof. Ajai Singh expressed his delight at the innovative approach of spreading awareness through the medium of a Nukkad-Natak, emphasizing its effectiveness in engaging and educating the audience. He pledged the commitment of all present to extend this awareness beyond the premises of the institution, reaching colleagues,



friends, and family members. The captivating Nukkad-Natak focused on Hand Hygiene awareness, skillfully blending education with

entertainment. Presented by the Nursing Officer from the cardiology CTVS Department, the performance underscored the crucial role of hand

hygiene and sanitation in disease prevention, resonating with the audience. Following the spirited theatrical performance, the Hospital Infection and Control Committee (HICC) organized an insightful education session on Infection Control and Biomedical Waste Management. Dr. Prabhakar Tiwari, CMHO Bhopal, stressed the significance of regular sensitization, particularly for newly recruited doctors and nursing officers, to ensure safe clinical practices and efficient waste management. The session, attended by approximately 300 doctors and nursing staff, provided a platform for learning and exchange of best practices in infection control and waste management. As the Swachhta Pakhwada concludes, AIIMS Bhopal reaffirms its commitment to fostering a culture of cleanliness, hygiene, and responsible waste management, contributing to a healthier environment for all.

## Muslims can never be majority in India: Digvijay Singh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Digvijay Singh, contesting from Rajgarh Lok Sabha seat, targeted RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat during the campaign. Said that Muslims can never be majority in India, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) only spreads false propaganda.

Digvijay Singh said that RSS tries to confuse people. The work of RSS is to create division between Hindus and Muslims. RSS preachers go to Hindus and say that Muslims marry four times and produce dozens of children. All the Muslims present in this meeting should stand up. Then he said that those who have more than one wife should stand. Then all the Muslims sat down.



Digvijay Singh asked the question for the second time, how many Hindus are there in this meeting? Who has two wives. Just then a disabled person stood up. Digvijay Singh came forward and shook hands with the disabled person. The Congress leader further said that he is a Hindu and has also married for the second time after the death of his first wife and has five children. Jaivardhan Singh also has elder sisters.

On hearing this, Jayavardhan sitting in the meeting started laughing.

Digvijay Singh said that population growth basically depends on ignorance and poverty. As people are becoming smarter, they are having fewer children. It is becoming difficult to run a big family in times of inflation. Actually, Digvijay Singh was explaining the difference between Hindus and Muslims and putting the mentality of RSS in the dock.

Congress candidate from Rajgarh Lok Sabha seat Digvijay Singh gave a statement comparing Prime Minister Modi with Hitler. Said that just as Hitler had killed the Jews by calling them traitors, in the same way dictators want to prove a group as traitors.

## Minor boy sexually assaulted by neighbour in Rajgarh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Neighbouring youth allegedly stripped naked a 10-year-old boy and applied red chilli powder all over his body including genitals, accusing him of injuring his rooster in Madhya Pradesh's Rajgarh. The child cried inconsolably and had to sit in water tub for hours to soothe his irritation. He was rushed to the hospital.

The child's mother reached the police station to register a complaint application into the matter. Ahimsa Welfare Society has also taken cognizance of the matter. According to local media reports, the woman lives with her 10-year-old son in Baradwari locality of Rajgarh. The father of the child died almost 7 years ago. Since then his mother has been running the family by working as house-help. The victim is a class 6 student.

Notably, the child was playing 'Kanche' with his friends in Baradwari locality



on Friday and his mother has gone to work. Meanwhile, his neighbour Golu Mewade (40) came and dragged the child to his home, accusing him of breaking the leg of a chicken. After taking off the child's clothes, he applied red chilli powder all over the child's body. Mewade also applied red chilli on the private parts of the child.

When the child's mother returned from work on Friday evening, she saw the child crying sitting in a tub of water. When asked, the child told the whole story. After that the woman took the child to the hospital for treatment. On Saturday, the woman reached Rajgarh police station with her son and filed a complaint.

## Congress will end in one stroke: Jyotiraditya Scindia

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Jyotiraditya Scindia, who reached Gwalior on Monday before the Lok Sabha elections, has made a big attack on Congress. Scindia has made this attack on Rahul Gandhi's question for the first time. Scindia has hit back at Rahul Gandhi's statement of ending inflation in one stroke. It is noteworthy that BJP candidate from Gwalior Bharat Singh Kushwaha filed his nomination in the presence of Jyotiraditya Scindia and CM Mohan Yadav.

On Monday, Jyotiraditya Scindia made a major attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in Gwalior. When Scindia was asked that Rahul Gandhi says that he will end inflation in one stroke, Scindia retorted and said that I feel that the way Congress is being ended in one stroke, which Mahatma Gandhi had said at the time of independence that it should end its work now, Congress talks about poverty, it has been doing for



65 years: eliminate poverty, provide food, clothing and shelter. But no one will be uplifted, now this is the loud-

est slogan of Congress.

On Congress terming BJP's resolution manifesto as an apology,

Jyotiraditya Scindia said that the Congress party which made its policy against the promise, the Congress party which made corruption its policy, the Congress party which made its promise to destroy Sanatan Dharma. We have full confidence that the people are going to completely abandon that Congress Party which has made its goal to destroy power.

Scindia will go to file nomination from Guna-Shivpuri parliamentary constituency on Tuesday 16 April. He will reach Shivpuri district headquarters on Tuesday morning and submit nomination papers in the collector's office. The time was fixed from 11 am to 3 pm. Excluding government holidays 13, 14 and 17 April, nomination papers can be filled till 19 April 2024. After this, the nomination papers will be reviewed on April 20. Nominations can be withdrawn till 3 pm on 22 April 2024. The third phase of voting will take place on May 7. After this the election results will be declared on June 4.



# Taylor Swift, Travis Kelce kiss and dance with each other at Coachella backstage

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift and her beau Travis Kelce were spotted enjoying their time at the Coachella festival. The duo was spotted kissing and dancing together backstage as Swift's friend Jack Antonoff's band Bleachers performed their set, as reported by 'People' magazine. The night prior to their appearance at the fest, Swift and Kelce were spotted holding hands while leaving a date night at Sushi Park, as seen in photos obtained by 'People'.

Swift has a few weeks off from her Eras Tour before she resumes shows in May in Paris, France.

As per 'People', next week, the Grammy-winning singer will release her 11th studio album, 'The Tortured Poets Department'.

She teased some lyrics from the forthcoming album in honour of the solar eclipse on April 8.

Meanwhile, Kelce recently received his college diploma alongside his older brother Jason Kelce at a "surprise commencement" ceremony at the University

of Cincinnati.

During the ceremony, Travis notably wore a beaded bracelet reminiscent of the kind Swift's fans famously exchange during the singer's Eras Tour.

Ahead of their trip to Coachella, the couple was spotted holding hands during a trip to the Bahamas.

"They vacationed in the Bahamas for several days," a source said. "It was a much-needed break for both of them. They very much enjoyed it. They are so happy together."



Drew Barrymore would 'love to support' daughters in acting, but not until they're older



Los Angeles | Agencies

Drew Barrymore's children sometimes express interest in following her footsteps in the world of acting, but the actress says not until they are older. Barrymore's daughters, Olive and Frankie, are 11 and 10, respectively. "When I first had kids, I remember people asking me, 'Well, would you want your kids to go into the business?' And it always gave me such a sad feeling, as if this business was so toxic, like, 'Ew,'" said the actress, reports people.com. "And I just thought, that's not how I feel about this business at all. It has given me every opportunity under the sun, and I couldn't appreciate my life more." Barrymore, whose father, grandfather, great-grandparents, great-aunt, and uncle were all actors, got her first commercial at age 11 months and was cast in 'E.T.' at age 6, followed by films including 'Firestarter' and 'Irreconcilable Differences'. "My kids ask me all the time -- they would love to be in film or on social media or sing or whatever. I always just say, 'School plays, theater camp, everything (yes)!' "But being in the public eye, (no) until..." And then they say, "Well, what's the number?" And I always say, "I know you want an answer, and I know the fact that I can't give you one that's so specific isn't satisfying, but it's going to be a feeling. It's going to be when I think you're ready." Barrymore will be their biggest cheerleader when the moment comes. "As a parent, I would really love to support my kids when they're older. Again, what number is that? I don't know, but it's not 13, and it's probably not 14." She added: "It's up there, but your kid will present themselves in a way where you've got to listen to them and support them and trust them. And I don't know what number that is, but it's probably north of 14, 15."

# TOM CRUISE GIFTED DAKOTA FANNING HER FIRST MOBILE PHONE WHEN SHE TURNED 11



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Tom Cruise gifted actress Dakota Fanning her first mobile phone for her 11th birthday after they starred together in 2005's 'War of the Worlds' and has sent her a gift every year since.

Fanning told Harper's Bazaar in a joint interview with her 47-year-old 'Ripley' co-star Andrew Scott about the phone present when they were asked: "Who gave Dakota her first cell phone?"

Scott guessed: "Okay, well it's going to be some Hollywood icon... Tom Cruise?" She agreed and said Cruise had given her a Motorola Razr when she turned 11, with Andrew asking: "Were you so excited?"

The actress replied: "Oh, my God, I was so excited," reports femalefirst.co.uk.

However, she said she "didn't have

anybody to call or text at that time," adding: "You know, I was 11. But I loved having it. I loved it. I felt so cool. Tom sends me a birthday gift every year, and has since that birthday. So thoughtful. Really, really nice."

Her co-star then quipped: "He's never given me anything."

Cruise's gift was far from the only gift Fanning got from a Hollywood A-lister during the early days of her career.

While again appearing alongside Andrew for 'Ask Me Anything' interview another magazine series, the actress said the "best" wrap gift she ever received was given to her by Kurt Russell, 73, with whom she co-star in 2005's 'Dreamer'.

She said: "Kurt Russell gave me a horse."

Andrew joked: "That could be your autobiography: 'Kurt Russell Gave Me a Horse: The Dakota Fanning Story'."



OLIVIA RODRIGO PERFORMS ON 'BATHWATER' WITH NO DOUBT AT COACHELLA 2024

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-actress Olivia Rodrigo doled out a surprise performance at the Coachella Main Stage as she joined the rock band No Doubt for the band's performance on their song 'Bathwater' on the second night of the annual Los Angeles music festival. This marks both Rodrigo's and No Doubt's first time performing at the festival. For the eighth song of their set, the southern California ska-pop band welcomed Rodrigo to the stage as a special guest, reports 'Variety'. Stefani and Rodrigo traded verses on the 2000 single, with Rodrigo sporting a tanktop that read "I <3 ND". The crowd ate it up, and the pair hugged at the end of the rendition before exiting the stage together. As per 'Variety', in a recent sit-down with American Songwriter, Rodrigo cited No Doubt as a key source of inspiration, and praised frontwoman Gwen Stefani as a "true artiste." Gwen's ability to evolve and explore different styles of music, songwriting and aesthetic while still remaining true to herself is incredibly inspiring," Rodrigo said. "To me, she's a prime example of an artist who defies stereotypes and preconceived boundaries and just makes stuff that she thinks is cool. If that's not a true artist, I don't know what is." Rodrigo explained in a cover profile by Nylon that she discovered No Doubt's 2000 record 'Return of Saturn' at the age of 15 years. The dichotomy in Stefani's music between wanting her independence and the desire to start a family has always stuck with Rodrigo after all these years.

# Director Shawn Levy clarifies 'Deadpool & Wolverine' movie is not 'Deadpool 3'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Shawn Levy, the director of 'Deadpool and Wolverine', has clarified that despite featuring Ryan Reynolds as Deadpool, the film is not to be titled 'Deadpool 3'. Levy explained why the movie, which also stars Hugh Jackman reprising his role as Wolverine, is not labeled 'Deadpool 3' despite being the third instalment in the 'Deadpool' series.

"As far as crafting the Deadpool and Wolverine story, I just felt privileged every day because you're talking about two massive movie stars in their most iconic roles," Levy told Screen Rant during CinemaCon, reports deadline.com. "It also gave me an opportunity. It's the third 'Deadpool' movie, but it's not 'Deadpool 3'. It's a different thing that's very much Deadpool and Wolverine. And it's not trying to copycat anything from the first two movies."

"They were awesome, but this is a two-hander character adventure." Levy shared that the movie is "going to be gnarly" and "it's gonna be funny", and ultimately "wanted to build a great time at the theater for audiences" as their main goal. He also revealed that early screenings of the film "were extremely, extremely promising." "I wouldn't say that there were any big surprises, but you feel where the pace wants to tighten, you feel where you can afford to slow down and have a deeper, more durable character moment," he added.



# ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Jenifer Lopez



DRAKE HITS BACK AT KENDRICK LAMAR WITH 4-MINUTE 'DISS TRACK' ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Kendrick Lamar earlier pointed guns at Drake and J. Cole on Metro Boomin and Future's 'Like That'. But, Drake is not the one to take it lightly. The Canadian rap-

per seemingly launched a counter-offensive. Drake has apparently fired back -- although there's been no official confirmation -- with a diss track that surfaced on social media, reports 'Variety'.

As per 'Variety',

Early in the day, a four-minute "leaked" song attributed to Drake circulated on social media, with some doubting its authenticity and speculating that it was an AI-generated record.

As per 'Variety',

Drake's song, apparently titled 'Push Ups', sees the rapper firing shots in all directions. He, of course, goes at Lamar straight out of the gate with a few jabs.

He also poked fun at Lamar's guest appearances on mainstream pop songs and suggested that Lamar's former label, Top Dawg Entertainment, demanded half of his earnings.

Drake's team did not immediately confirm the track's legitimacy.

Following a day filled with online discussion, Drake seemingly confirmed the track's legitimacy by posting a photo on Instagram of Uma Thurman as the Bride in 'Kill Bill', wielding a Samurai sword while surrounded by a group of attackers.

Not only Power 105 but also its parent company, iHeartRadio -- the country's largest radio network -- have posted the song, which also supports its authenticity.

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## MYKOLAS ALEKNA BREAKS OLD WORLD RECORD IN DISCUS THROW WITH 74.35M IN OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma (USA) | Agencies

In the Olympic year, Lithuania's Mykolas Alekna broke the longest-standing men's world record, throwing an incredible 74.35m to smash the discus throw mark at the Oklahoma Throws Series meeting in Ramona, the United States.

That throw improved the world record of 74.08m set by Jurgen Schult in 1986 - 16 years before Alekna was born - and it formed part of a series of six 70m-plus throws by the 21-year-old on Sunday. The record will be ratified by World Athletics as per the usual procedure.

Competing on a weekend when discus throwers were blessed with perfect conditions, Alekna showed he meant business from the start, opening with 72.21m, according to a report on World Athletics' website. That improved on his Personal Best of 71.39m, which had moved him up to No.10 on the world all-time list on April 6, but still he looked frustrated. The two-time world medallist fol-



lowed that with 70.32m in the gusty conditions but seemed much happier with his third-round attempt. It measured at 72.89m - a mark that strengthened his place at fourth all-time. Despite that huge performance, Alekna maintained his composure to throw 70.51m in round four and the best was yet to come.

Returning to the throwing circle for the fifth time, he launched the implement and pointed at it as it flew through the air. It landed at 74.35m - initially measured as 74.41m but later revised - and Alekna made history, going on to complete his series with 70.50m from his final attempt.

The Alekna family now has two of the three best men's discus throwers in history, with two-time Olympic champion Virgilijus Alekna - the father of Mykolas - now placed third on the world all-time list with his 73.88m from 2000.

Mykolas Alekna's performance came the day after Cuba's Yaime Perez threw 73.09m in Ramona for the longest women's discus throw in the world since 1989.

## At 50, IRS officer Ekta wins national powerlifting medals

New Delhi | Agencies

While the majority of the world thinks of early retirement at 50, a senior woman bureaucrat in Delhi - Ekta Vishnoi - has proven that when it comes to fitness, age is just a number and you can continue to be on the top with hard work and dedication.

While Ekta Vishnoi, Deputy Director General at Sports Authority of India, has already made in the world of fitness, she is now making even bigger waves in the world of Powerlifting having won multiple medals and broken records at the recently concluded National Senior Powerlifting Championship in Hyderabad.

At 50, Vishnoi won a silver in a deadlift with the best lift of 165kg and a Bronze overall with the best lifts of 132.5 kg in squat, 70 kg in bench press and 165 kg in a deadlift. With these lifts, she also broke all records of the Master 2 cate-



gory in the competition. Earlier, Vishnoi had also won the gold medal in the national masters powerlifting championship and a gold and a silver medal in Commonwealth Powerlifting Championship and Asian Powerlifting Championship 2022. For her feat, she was also awarded a certificate of honour by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in 2023.

What is more, she is not making waves as an athlete, but also as an administrator.

An Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer of the 1999 batch, Vishnoi is currently serving as the Mission Director of Fit India Movement, a Government of India initiative to make India a fit and healthy nation, and heading the prestigious Khelo India Scheme.

Her aim now is to represent India and win medals at the World Masters Powerlifting Championship which will take place in South Africa in October this year.



## British boxer Willie Limond dies aged 45

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former British and Commonwealth super-lightweight champion Willie Limond has died at the age of 45, a week after suffering a suspected seizure while driving near Glasgow. Limond was rushed to hospital after being discovered unresponsive in his car. He was due to take part in a public training session in Glasgow.

In a post on social media, his son Jake said, "Dad passed away in the early hours of the morning. He fought on for nearly enough 10 days. Warrior"

Limond last faced fellow countryman Ricky Burns in September and was scheduled to have his return fight in Glasgow on May 3 against Joe Laws. From 1999 to 2023, the Glaswegian won 42 of his 48 professional fights, including 13 by knockout; however, just three of those fights occurred after 2016.

Four of Limond's six defeats were against fighters who won world titles - Amir Khan, Anthony Crolla, Erik Morales, and Ricky Burns. During his boxing career, he won the Commonwealth light-welterweight, WBU lightweight, IBO Inter-Continental lightweight, and British super-featherweight, lightweight, and super-lightweight titles.

## 'Absolutely ordinary', says Gavaskar on Hardik's captaincy against CSK

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Legendary India cricketer Sunil Gavaskar criticised Mumbai Indians (MI) skipper Hardik Pandya for "absolutely ordinary bowling and captaincy" after he conceded 26 runs in the final over of Chennai Super Kings innings in Sunday's match, which eventually proved to be decisive in the visitors' 20-run win.

At the Wankhede Stadium, Pandya was hit for three sixes by MS Dhoni as he scored 20 runs off just four balls in the last over, which yielded 26 runs for CSK to post an imposing 206. Dhoni's stunning cameo of 20 not out eventually became the exact winning margin for CSK as MI suffered their fourth defeat of the tournament.

Pandya eventually had figures of 2-43 in his four overs with the ball. "One six is fine. But the next one again a length ball when you know that this batter is looking for a length ball to hit. The third ball again, a full toss on the leg side and he's looking for it and hits it for a six. Oh, (that was just) absolutely ordinary bowling, ordinary captaincy. They should have been restricting CSK to 185-190 despite the fact that Ruturaj Gaikwad had batted so well along with Shivam Dube," said Gavaskar on Star Sports.

Kevin Pietersen, the former England skipper, thinks the boos and jeers Pandya has received regularly in the stadium from fans in the stadium has started to affect his on-field performances. "I actually think with Hardik



Pandya, everything away from the game is affecting him so much. He's smiling too much when he does the toss. He's trying to act like he's so happy. But he's not happy at all! I've been there, as I've been in the firing line and been there proper! I can tell you now that it affects you."

"What's happening with Hardik Pandya is the boos we have been hearing now and how happy they are to see former CSK captain and the Lion (MS Dhoni) smacking him all over the park, it hurts you. He has emotions, as he's an Indian player. He doesn't want to be treated like this. With this happening, it's affecting him and his cricket and some-

thing needs to happen." Just like Gavaskar, Pietersen was also critical of Pandya's performance with the ball in the last over. "What I saw this evening was not good enough. I saw a captain that had a plan A from a team meeting that was five hours ago and the captain didn't want to go to Plan B when he should have gone for it. "How on earth have you not bowled a spinner when your seamers are going for 20 runs? Brain Lara was saying on commentary, 'Can we please bowl spinners?' They have spinners that can bowl. You need to change the pace of the game," said Pietersen.

## Tsitsipas beats Ruud for third Monte-Carlo title



Monte-Carlo | Agencies

Stefanos Tsitsipas dispatched Casper Ruud 6-1, 6-4 to win his third Monte-Carlo title in four years. With his one-hour, 37-minute win, Tsitsipas became the fifth player to win three or more Monte-Carlo titles, joining Rafael Nadal (11), Bjorn Borg (3), Thomas Muster (3) and Ilie Nastase (3).

"It has been very difficult, so to be back on the podiums, winning tournaments just feels amazing. The third time is even more special than the first or second time. This is an unbelievable win for me. Capturing that win today was nerve-wracking. I really wanted this trinity. I am extremely happy today," said Tsitsipas.

After taking the first set on his second set point, the 12th seed, Tsitsipas saved one break point in his opening service game of the second set. Ruud struggled to find the court with consistency on his forehand in the first set, frequently overhitting. While he improved in the second set, he was unable to find the required level to hurt the Greek. In a tense 13-minute seventh game, Tsitsipas fended off three break points before holding. He then gained a decisive break himself to seal victory, ATP reports. The Greek, who has won 11 tour-level trophies, including three Masters 1000 titles, will return to the Top 10 for the first time since February on Monday when he climbs to No. 7.

## LEVERKUSEN ROMPS PAST BREMEN TO CLINCH FIRST BUNDESLIGA TITLE

Berlin | Agencies

Bayer Leverkusen clinched its first-ever Bundesliga title with five rounds to spare, ending Bayern Munich's streak of 11 consecutive championships, following a commanding 5-0 victory over Werder Bremen at the conclusion of the 29th round.

The Werkself entered the match highly motivated, aware that a victory over the Green-Whites would prematurely secure them the championship crown. The game began with Leverkusen applying pressure early on, as Piero Hincapie tested Werder goalkeeper Michael Zetterer in the eighth minute, reports Xinhua.

Leverkusen's efforts paid off when Victor Boniface scored from a penalty at the 22-minute mark, setting the tone for the match. Despite Amine Adli hitting the crossbar in the 38th minute, the hosts continued to dominate. Leverkusen goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky kept the scoreline intact, intercepting a dangerous cross that could have equalized for Bremen.

The second half saw Leverkusen resume its dominance, with Granit Xhaka doubling the lead in the 60th minute with a precise strike from 16 meters. Florian Wirtz then took center stage, first extending the lead with a powerful 18-meter shot into the net in the 68th minute, and later completing his hat-trick with goals in the 83rd and 90th minutes, sealing a historic win for his team. With this victory, Leverkusen has now gone 43 games unbeaten in all competitions, a remarkable feat that includes an unprecedented 29-match unbeat-



en streak in the Bundesliga this season, amassing a record 79 points. "I still can't realize what we have achieved today," said Wirtz. "It's incredible and indescribable. I hadn't dreamed it. If you look at it objectively it is also deserved. It feels so great," added Jonas Hofmann.

Alonso's men can lift another two titles this season as the UEFA Europe League and Germans Cup are still up for grabs.

In the other match on Sunday, Freiburg increased Darmstadt's relegation worries as the Breisgau secured a 1-0 win thanks to Ritsu Doan's sole goal.

## Brett Lee hails Pathirana as 'once in a generation player'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Australia fast-bowler Brett Lee hailed Chennai Super Kings (CSK) young pacer Matheesha Pathirana as "once in a generation player" after his match-defining spell against Mumbai Indians.

CSK picked up their fourth win of the IPL 2024 by defeating MI by 20 runs at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Sunday. Chennai set a target of 207 runs but Mumbai could only muster 186 runs in their stipulated 20 overs largely due to a century by Rohit Sharma.

Defending 206, it was Pathirana who led the CSK bowling department with figures of 4-28. In his game changing spell that fetched him Player of the Match award, Pathirana dismissed Ishan Kishan and got the big wicket of Suryakumar Yadav in the same over. Then he took over Tilak Varma and Romario Shephard in the second half of the innings to derail MI's chase.

Brett Lee, "He's a once in a generation player. Probably 2.0 in terms of the slinger, but he's bowled beautifully once again tonight. It's the pace he's bowling at. 150 kmph from right in front of the umpire's chest, it's a different trajectory off the wicket, out of the hand.

Pathirana, who missed CSK's last two matches due to a hamstring nig-



gle, has eight wickets to his name after conceding in three matches he

played so far this season. "He got four wickets, he's content

with it. He seems like a lovely kid as well. He's going from strength to strength and that's a huge reason why the Men in Yellow are doing as well, with guys bowling as well as he is," said Lee on Jio Cinema.

Lee also commended Rohit's unbeaten knock of 105 off 63 that rallied the MI charge in the run chase. "It was a brilliant hundred. The fact that he went out there and played, and got it at a good clip too. I liked it when he scored the hundred and didn't raise his bat because that tells me the win means more than the personal hundred."

"He played with real intent right from ball one. He played shots all over the ground. But the power, the finesse came into play. 105 not-out, 63 balls, 11 fours, five sixes. Some of those sixes could have gone out of the ground in other stadiums. It was beautiful batting, but unfortunately, sometimes you can't do things on your own," the Aussie added.

The 47-year-old also commended CSK skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad for his batting skills while also expressing surprise to see him bat at number 3. "I was shocked that he came in at No. 3 and not at the top of the order. He didn't leave it long until he got to his business. He just finds a way to find the boundary, he has power that other batters can't seem to find. But hopefully next game, back to the top of the order please," added Lee.





many.... And heartbreaking in equal measure! Don't empower someone who doesn't have the same feeling for you.... Self worth always wins!



## Don't empower someone who doesn't have same feelings for you: Karan Johar

romance, heartbreak, and family, last directed 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani' starring Alia Bhatt and

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker Karan Johar shared some words of wisdom on self-worth, advising not to "empower someone who doesn't have the same feeling for you". Karan took to Instagram and shared an animated video depicting a girl unable to express her feelings to a boy who doesn't reciprocate them.

"This is so true to so many... And heartbreaking in equal measure! Don't empower someone who doesn't have the same feeling for you... Self-worth always wins!" he captioned the clip. Karan, who is known for his films revolving around love,

Ranveer Singh.

At a recent film festival in Chandigarh, he confirmed that 'Student of the Year 3' would be developed as a series directed by Reema Maya. The first instalment, featuring Alia Bhatt, Varun Dhawan, and Sidharth Malhotra, was released in 2012.

## NEHA DHUPIA SHARES HER OWN 'HIGHLIGHTS' FROM CSK-MI MATCH



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Neha Dhupia attended the Indian Premier League (IPL) match between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians along with her "crew" featuring Kareena Kapoor Khan, John Abraham, and Angad Bedi. Neha took to

Instagram and shared her "very own highlights" from the evening, which included Kareena retouching her lipstick, Neha cheering as Mahendra Singh Dhoni hit a hat-trick of sixes, and then all four posing together. The actress captioned the string of pictures: "My very own highlights from last evening! Love

the sport (cricket emoji) loved the energy... loved our crew." Dhoni, 42, in a packed Wankhede Stadium on Sunday, hammered Hardik Pandya for a hat-trick of sixes and a double to help his team Chennai Super Kings, cross the 200-run mark. His team won by 20 runs against Mumbai Indians.

## VIDYA BALAN: I NEVER SAW MYSELF EVER GETTING MARRIED UNTIL MET SIDDHARTH

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Acclaimed star Vidya Balan, while giving the mantra of a perfect relationship, talked about how she never pictured herself getting married until she met Siddharth Roy Kapur, her husband. Touted as one of the best in Indian cinema, Vidya, a National Award winner and a Padma Shri honouree, got married to the love of her life and film producer Siddharth Roy Kapur in 2012.

Asked what, according to her, is the mantra to a perfect relationship, Vidya told: "I don't think there is one. At least I haven't discovered that... The mantra is unique to every relationship. Koi aapke kaan main yeh mantra nahi batayega. Every relationship has its own unique mantra." Vidya's understanding of relationships has evolved.

"Like through the 12 years of marriage and the years of my dating, my understanding of relationships has changed. My understanding of marriage has grown. I am not someone who (ever) saw myself getting married, but then Siddharth happened to me."

"These years have taught me, and I am sure I will continue to understand and grow with passing time in a relationship," she added. However, Vidya did share a secret ingredient for keeping the relationship healthy.



Sanya Malhotra

## NARGIS FAKHRI AS A CHILD DREAMT OF BECOMING A VETERINARIAN AND NOT AN ACTOR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Nargis Fakhri, has shared her childhood dream. The actress is an "animal" and she attributes her compassion towards animals to her childhood dream of becoming a veterinarian.

However, the actress shared that over the years, she fell in love with the profession of acting and her craft.

Walking down the memory lane, the actress said, "I wanted to become a veterinarian as a child. I love animals and since my childhood, I always have wished to provide them with a safe environment, but destiny had other plans and I landed up in the film industry. And if I had to reflect on my life, I wouldn't change a thing."

"Over the years, I fell in love with my craft. I mean, look at it, I can do and be whatever I want on screen. And also, I have experienced how impactful films are on people's lives, which is why my endeavour is to try and do films that are important and films are sort of an escapism from our daily struggles."

Nargis made her Hindi cinema debut opposite Ranbir Kapoor in 'Rockstar'.

The film was directed by auteur Imtiaz Ali, who is currently scooping acclaim and audience love for his streaming movie 'Amar Singh Chamkila' starring Diljit Dosanjh and Parineeti Chopra.

## COURAGE IS THE ACCEPTANCE OF FEAR: SUSHMITA SEN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sushmita Sen, who garnered immense praise for her role in 'Aarya 3', has shared wisdom on how to tackle fear. The actress and former Miss Universe took to the Stories section of her Instagram and shared a de-glam picture of herself looking into the camera. Sushmita wrote on the picture: "Courage is not absence of fear. It in fact begins with the acceptance of fear." The actress is known to be a fighter and is often lauded for her attitude of standing tall against adversities. Earlier, the actress shared on social media that she doesn't chase but attracts and chooses to see possibilities, hope, kindness, love, gratitude and abundance. The actress earlier took to Instagram and shared a photo wearing a black tank top and pink-tinted oversized sunglasses. She wrote in the caption: "I don't chase, I attract... My rose-tinted glasses often remind me... it's not about 'what's there', it's more about 'what I choose to see'... I choose to see possibilities, hope, kindness, love, gratitude, oneness and abundance... what I choose, I attract." A gentle reminder to check, if the default mode of your life is Automatic... switch to Manual!!! I love you guys!!! #happyweekend #dug-gaduga," she added.

The actress earlier suffered a heart attack while shooting for the streaming series 'Aarya 3' but made a full recovery and returned to the sets to complete the shoot.

"Courage is not the absence of fear, it in fact begins with the acceptance of fear"

Team Absolute | New Delhi

This autism month, actress Sanya Malhotra shared that it is critical to find a structured yet flexible learning environment for neurodivergent people focused on life skills and independent living.

April marks Autism Awareness Month, a period dedicated to raising awareness about autism, a developmental disability stemming from differences in brain functioning.

Sanya, who was last seen in the movie 'Sam Bahadur', attended the opening ceremony of 'So-Hum Smiles', a special school for neurodivergent individuals.

This school, which is supported by an NGO, looks after providing exceptional care and support to neurodivergent people.

Sanya believes that the school is more than just a therapy centre, as it also embodies a vision of inclusivity, empowerment, and compassion.

The actress said: "I am truly happy that this centre is opening, which is the need of the hour to provide help for neurodivergent individuals. It is critical to find a structured yet flexible learning environment for these people focused on life skills and independent living."

"It is imperative to find acceptance and a place for these kids and adults in society, not just for these kids but also for society to do better and be uplifted. I am sure the centre will create a fruitful impact on numerous lives," added Sanya.

Neurodivergent people need greater acceptance in society

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Manushi Chiller