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89% Expanding Glacial Lakes In Himalayas Grew More Than Twice In 38 Years may cause

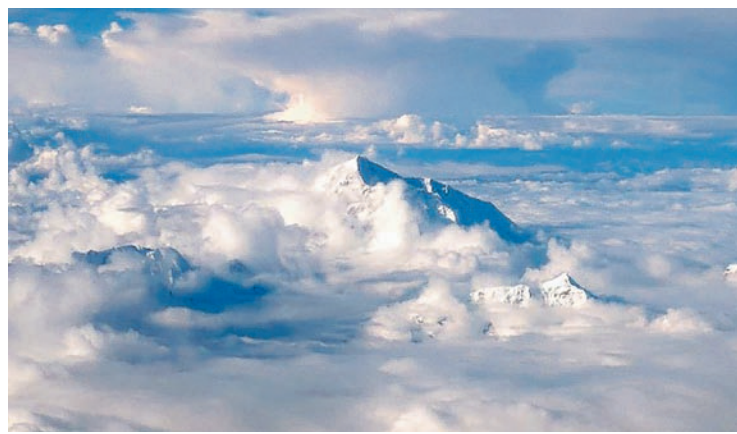
CASCADING CONSEQUENCES

The results of the ISRO analysis is worrying as expanding glacial lakes due to warming can lead to cascading consequences in the lower regions, say experts. Satellite data archives spanning the past three to four decades provide valuable insights into changes occurring in glaciated environments, ISRO said. Long-term satellite imagery covering the catchments of Indian Himalayan river basins from 1984 to 2023 indicates significant changes in glacial lakes, ISRO said in the report.

- The ISRO report said 601 glacial lakes, or 89 per cent, have expanded more than twice, and 10 lakes have grown between 1.5 times and double their size. Sixty-five lakes have expanded 1.5 times.
- Of the 2,431 glacial lakes larger than 10 hectares, 676 have significantly expanded, and at least 130 of these lakes are in India - 65 (Indus river basin), 7 (Ganga river basin), and 58 (Brahmaputra river basin).
- Elevation-based analysis shows 314 lakes are located in the 4,000 to 5,000 metres range, and 296 lakes are above 5,000 metres elevation, ISRO said in the report 'Satellite Insights: Expanding Glacial Lakes in the Indian Himalayas' released.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

At least 89 per cent of 2,431 glacial lakes in the Himalayas that were identified in 2016-17 have notably expanded since 1984, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said in a report. The long-term changes in the Ghepang Ghat glacial lake (Indus river basin) at an elevation of 4,068 metres in Himachal Pradesh show a 178 per cent increase in size from 36.49 to 101.30 hectares between 1989 and 2022, the ISRO said. The rate of increase is about 1.96 hectares per year. The satellite-derived long-term change analyses also provide valuable insights for understanding glacial lake dynamics, which are essential for assessing environmental impacts and developing strategies for glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) risk management and climate change adaptation in glacial environments, ISRO said. The study faced challenges due to the inaccessible and rugged terrain, the ISRO said. Satellite remote sensing technology, however, helped as an excellent tool for inventory and monitoring due to its wide coverage and revisit capability, the



space agency said.

The Himalayan mountains are often referred to as the "Third Pole" because of their extensive glaciers and snow cover, and are highly sensitive to changes in the global climate, both in terms of their physical characteristics and their societal impacts. Research conducted worldwide has consistently shown that glaciers across the globe have been experiencing unprecedented rates of retreat and thinning since the onset of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, ISRO said in the report. This retreat leads to the formation of new lakes and the enlargement of existing ones in the Himalayan

region. These bodies of water, created by the melting of glaciers, are known as glacial lakes and play a crucial role as freshwater sources for rivers in the Himalayan region. However, they also pose significant risks, such as GLOFs which can have devastating consequences for communities downstream. GLOFs occur when glacial lakes release large volumes of melt-water due to the failure of natural dams, such as those made of moraine or ice, resulting in sudden and severe flooding downstream. These dam failures can be triggered by various factors, including avalanches of ice or rock, extreme weather events, and other environmental factors.

BJP opens account before counting as Surat candidate wins unopposed



Surat | Agencies

Even as campaigning for the second phase of Lok Sabha elections on April 26 gains momentum, the BJP on Monday opened its account with Mukesh Dalal being declared winner from the Surat parliamentary constituency after several withdrawals and disqualifications of opposition candidates. Asserting that the development symbolises the beginning of a comprehensive victory for the party in Lok Sabha polls, Gujarat BJP President C.R. Paati expressed his joy on social media, heralding the unopposed election of Dalal as a historic win not just for Surat, but also for the BJP's prospects across India. "Surat has offered the first lotus to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Congratulations to Surat Lok Sabha candidate Mukeshbhai Dalal for

being elected unopposed," Paati posted on X. In an interesting turn of events, the nomination papers of Congress candidate Niles Kumbhani and his substitute were rejected by the Returning Officer (RO), Surat Collector Sourabh Pardhi, due to alleged discrepancies in the signatures of their proposers. The candidatures were dismissed under Section 36(2) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which permits the RO to examine and reject nominations based on valid objections. The situation escalated when eight other candidates, including Pyarelal Bharati of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), withdrew their nominations under unclear circumstances, effectively leaving Dalal as the lone contender. A somewhat similar situation was witnessed in Madhya

Pradesh last week as the BJP candidate for Khajuraho almost got a walkover after the nomination of Samajwadi Party nominee Meera Yadav was cancelled due to "incomplete form". However, at the last minute, the Congress and SP decided to support the All India Forward Bloc candidate R.P. Prajapati, who will now take on MP BJP chief Vishnu Dutt Sharma who is contesting his second Lok Sabha elections from the seat. Meanwhile, the withdrawals have prompted allegations of foul play from the opposition, with Gujarat Congress chief Shaktisinh Gohil claiming the nomination was sabotaged by the BJP, describing the incident as a "murder of democracy". Gohil also said that the Congress would challenge the RO's decision in the high court, alleging a conspiracy to eliminate the opposition through procedural tactics.

Ex-Vice Prez Venkaiah Naidu, former UP Guv Ram Naik, actor Mithun Chakraborty receive Padma awards

Team Absolute | New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu presented the Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri Awards for 2024 at a ceremony held here at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday. Among notable recipients were former Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu, founder of Sulabh International Bindeshwar Pathak (posthumously), actor Mithun Chakraborty, philanthropist and industrialist Sitaram Jindal, singer Usha Uthup, and former Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik. The event was attended by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and other dignitaries, who marked the recognition of outstanding contributions across various fields. The Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian honours of the country announced annually on the eve of Republic Day. The awards seek to recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved.



FIRE BREAKS OUT AT MAHARASHTRA BJP OFFICE IN MUMBAI; NO CASUALTIES

Mumbai: A major fire broke out on Sunday at the Maharashtra BJP office here in Nariman Point, an official said, adding that no casualties, however, were reported. An official said that the fire that broke out at around 4.55 p.m. has been brought under control. No one was trapped in the building when the fire broke out, which, according to preliminary reports, happened due to a short circuit. The firefighters immediately rushed to the spot to bring the blaze under control. Sources said that the renovation work at the office kitchen was underway. According to eyewitnesses, a short circuit occurred, during the welding, and then a fire broke out. As the office had documents and wooden furniture, the fire went on to spread, leading to smoke everywhere.

Man linked to 26/11 terror attacks held for targeting Abhishek Banerjee, claim Kolkata Police

Kolkata | Agencies

The Kolkata Police on Monday claimed to have arrested an individual having links with the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai for reportedly targeting Trinamool Congress National General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee. The accused identified as Rajaram Rege was arrested from Mumbai, the Kolkata Police said in a press conference addressed by Additional Police Commissioners Murli Dhar and V. Solomon Nesakumar. "Some people were conducting reces on the movements of certain important political personalities in the state. We came to know about a person who approached some local people here. He also managed to get the mobile numbers of Abhishek Banerjee and his personal assistant. That person -- Rajaram Rege -- has now been arrested from Mumbai," Nesakumar said. The officer said that Rege came to the city and rented a room in south Kolkata. He also conducted reces around the residence of Abhishek



Banerjee. Meanwhile, sources in the police said that before the November 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai, David Headley had got in touch with Rege in Mumbai. Headley is currently serving a 35-year sentence in the United States after pleading guilty to 12 international terrorism charges. The police are investigating the reasons behind Rege

conducting reces in Kolkata. The police have also registered a case at the Shakespeare Sarani Police station in the city, under whose jurisdiction the hotel where Rege stayed for two days falls. Security measures have been beefed up around Abhishek Banerjee's residence, police sources said.

DREADED MAOIST, WITH RS 1.5 LAKH BOUNTY ON HEAD, HELD IN GADCHIROLI

Gadchiroli (Maharashtra): At the height of the Lok Sabha elections, the Maharashtra Police have apprehended a dreaded Maoist, who carried a bounty of Rs 1.5 lakh on his head, officials said on Monday. The rebel is identified as Dilip Motiram Pendum, 34, who was caught in the Bhamragad region after he was found moving around suspiciously near the villages and the forests there. Among other crimes, Pendum is accused of planting a deadly claymore mine and 2 pressure cooker bombs in the Nelgunda-Gongwada and Laheri in March 2023, intending to kill security forces personnel and loot their arms and ammunition. He is also accused of helping other hardcore Maoist groups in the region, organising logistics and ration supplies, and distributing publicity banners and literature among the people. The Gadchiroli police said that since January 2022, 78 Maoists, including several women, have been arrested and appealed to other rebels to give up arms and join the national and social mainstream.



Indians can now apply for a multiple entry Schengen visa with longer validity

The Schengen area consists of 29 European countries (of which 25 are EU states) -- Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden, along with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Constantly working to deepen and broaden political ties with India, the European Union (EU) on Monday announced that Indian nationals can now apply for a multiple-entry Schengen visa with longer validity. "On April 18, 2024, the European Commission adopted specific rules on the issuing of multiple entry visas to Indian nationals, which are more favourable than the standard rules of the Visa Code that applied to date," the EU said in a statement. "This new visa 'cascade' regime for Indian nationals residing in India who apply for Schengen (short-stay) visas in India will provide easier access to visas with multi-year validity for travellers with an estab-



lished travel history, if the passport validity allows," it added. According to the newly adopted visa 'cascade' regime for India, Indian nationals can now be issued long-term, multi-entry Schengen visas valid for two years after having obtained and lawfully used two visas within the previous three years. The two-year visa will normally be followed by a five-year

visa, if the passport has sufficient validity remaining. During the validity period of these visas, holders enjoy travel rights equivalent to visa-free nationals. "This decision comes in the context of strengthened relations under the EU-India Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility, which seeks comprehensive cooperation on migration policy between the EU and India, with facilitation of people-to-people contacts being of key aspect due to the importance of India as a partner for the EU," the statement mentioned. Schengen visas allow the holder to travel freely in the Schengen area for short stays of a maximum of 90 days in any 180-day period. The visas are not purpose-bound, but they do not grant the right to work.

Delhi court nixes CM Kejriwal's plea for consultation with his doc; to be given insulin in jail

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi court on Monday turned down the application moved by incarcerated Delhi Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal, seeking permission to consult a private doctor of his choice daily for 15 minutes through video conferencing for his acute diabetes and fluctuating blood sugar levels. However, Special Judge Kaveri Baweja of Rouse Avenue Court stressed that the AAP leader be provided with adequate medical treatment while he remains under judicial custody. The court ordered that in case, CM Kejriwal requires special consultation in jail, the prison authorities will consult the medical panel to be constituted by the Director of AILMS, Delhi. This Medical Board will also determine the dosage of insulin to be administered to CM Kejriwal, in addition to his diet and exercise plan, as per the court's decision. In the meantime, CM Kejriwal can continue to have



access to home-cooked food, as far as it continues to be in line with the recommendations made by the medical panel, the judge clarified in her order. Last week, CM Kejriwal approached the court seeking direction to jail authorities to administer insulin to him and allow him to consult his regular doctor via video conferencing saying that his blood sugar level dropped to 46. He also sought a direction that his wife Sunita Kejriwal should be allowed to join the virtual consultation with Dr Ravichandra Rao. During the hearing, the probe agency alleged that CM Kejriwal was deliberately eating mangoes and other high-carb food in jail to raise his blood sugar levels to build a case for bail.



PM MODI ASKS PEOPLE TO PUT A STRONG LOCK ON NEPOTISM, CORRUPTION AND APPEASEMENT

Aligarh (UP) | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday that the time had come to free the country from corruption, nepotism and appeasement.

"The last time I came to Aligarh, I urged you to lock up the factories of nepotism, corruption and appeasement. You put such a strong lock that the two 'shehzades' have not yet found the key. For your good future and Viksit Bharat, keep the key with you," he said while addressing an election rally here.

Urging voters to vote for BJP, the Prime Minister said "When you press the lotus button, the vote goes straight to Modi."

He said that he was aware that people are busy with harvesting, wedding season and then there is the heat wave. "But you must ignore all this and put the nation first and cast your vote in the morning because every vote counts," he said.

The Prime Minister said that earlier there used to be regular firing at the borders and soldiers were being killed. "All that has stopped. Earlier, terrorists had not even spared



Ayodhya and Kashi but today the atmosphere is peaceful," he said.

He further said, "The first-time voters may not be aware but there was a time when there used to be advertisements asking people not to touch unidentified objects and to inform the police if they see any such objects. This was because there used to be bomb blasts. It is Modi-Yogi ka kamaal that all this has stopped." He further said that the trademark

of the Samajwadi government was kidnapping, murders and crime against women.

"These parties followed the appeasement policy but also made sure that the social, economic and political condition of Muslims did not improve. When I spoke about Pasmada Muslims, these parties were unnerved. Modi brought in the ban on triple talaq and this came as a relief to families who were in distress

because of their daughters and sisters. The Haj quota was less and there was corruption in it so I spoke to the Saudi government and got the quota increased. We also ensured that women could go alone on Haj without a companion," he said.

The Prime Minister reiterated his earlier statement that the Congress if voted to power, could seize people's wealth. He said that the INDI alliance had mala fide intentions and was eyeing the people's property and wealth.

"Congress Prince says that when his party comes to power, he will probe how much wealth one has. If you have two houses, they will take away one. The gold that our mothers and sisters have is their personal stree-dhan but the Congress is eyeing that too," he stated.

The Prime Minister also lauded Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and said that he should not be known only for his bulldozer policy but also for maximising industrial development in Uttar Pradesh.

The Prime Minister said that he continued to work 24x7 and would continue to do so till 2047. "Modi will never stop because your dreams are my resolve," he said.

Caste discrimination in Tenkasi, TN: SC men denied haircut in village salon following diktat from MBCs

Chennai | Agencies

Scheduled Caste men of a village in Tenkasi District of Tamil Nadu have lodged a verbal complaint with the local Village Administrative Officer (VAO) that they were refused a haircut from a village salon.

In the complaint they said that this was due to a ban by the Most Backward Classes (MBC) communities in the village.

Ayanarkulam Village in Tenkasi District is inhabited by SC, Backward Classes and MBCs.

Around 1,000 families live in the village and according to SC families they have to walk to a nearby village for a haircut.

The SC communities have yet to file a written complaint with the police as they fear repercussions.

A police officer at Alangulam police station told reporter that they have not got any complaint from the SC community members about such an ostracisation from the MBCs.



He said, "The police can act only on the basis of a written complaint."

The VAO of Ayanarkulam, Santhosh Kumar told reporter, "The SC community members frequent a salon at the neighbouring village as they were denied service at the local salon."

An SC community member told IANS on condition of anonymity that the members of the MBC were forcefully not allowing them to get their haircuts in the village.

It may be recalled that in

many south Tamil Nadu districts there have been several violent clashes between the Dalits and the intermediary castes, leading to casualties.

R Sakhivel, social activist and election analyst based out of Tirunelveli told reporter, "The police have to act in this case and settle the matter. This can boil into a major caste war and these areas of Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Madurai, Theni and Kanniyakumari are noted for attacks and killings in the name of caste."

Hopes of normal monsoon boosts market sentiment

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Nifty made strong gains on Monday as the market sentiment was boosted by hopes of a normal monsoon and better-than-expected direct tax collections.

Nifty opened higher and maintained its strength throughout the session to close at the day's high with gains of 189 points at 22,336 levels, said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"On the domestic front, the hope of normal monsoon and above expected direct tax collection added fuel to the market sentiment," he added.

Majority sectors ended in green with PSU Banks rallying 3 per cent, followed by consumer durables. PSU Banks witnessed fresh buying on the day following reports that the Centre may disinvest minority stakes in five public sector



banks (PSBs) if they fail to comply with the minimum public shareholding (MPS) norm by raising fresh capital from the market in a year, he said. Capital goods, pharma, auto and fertilizer stocks were other major gainers. Positive global cues provided support to the market as the tensions eased out a little in the Middle East, while China left its prime lending rate untouched. Oil prices too have eased off to \$86 following reduced geopolitical tension and expectation of OPEC to increase oil production, Khemka added.

This week, the US will be releasing GDP and core PCE data which will provide direction to the market while stock-specific actions will be seen in the earnings season, he said.

Kunal Shah, Senior Technical & Derivative Analyst at LKP Securities, said that the Bank Nifty index exhibited continued bullish strength as it witnessed follow-up buying from lower levels. Currently, it is approaching a crucial resistance level around 48000, marked by the highest open interest on the call side.

'Taken out of context', Maha Congress counters PM Modi's remarks on Manmohan Singh's 2006 NDC speech

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former Congress Rajya Sabha MP and noted economist Bhalchandra Mungekar said on Monday that as the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi had attended the National Development Council (NDC) meeting presided over by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2006, as he accused the Prime Minister of taking one sentence out of context to spread "falsehoods".

The statement of Mungekar, a former member of the now-defunct Planning Commission of India, came after PM Modi claimed on Monday that Manmohan Singh's government had said that Muslims have the first right to the country's assets.

"At the NDC meeting held on December 9, 2006, then PM Singh had clearly said that 'Dalits, tribals, OBCs, women, and the children of the country should be able to taste the fruits of development, and the minority community should also benefit from it, especially the Muslims', Mungekar said during a presser here.

He said the former PM's statement implied that the SCs, STs, OBCs, and



minorities have the first right on the country's resources, and 'minority' here means not only religious minorities, but also linguistic minorities, and the Justice Rajinder Sachar Commission Report on Muslims had just come out then (November 2006).

After the NDC meeting, then Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of India, M.S. Ahluwalia and Mungekar had briefed the media

and explained all the matters discussed at the NDC conclave in which even Gujarat CM Modi, and CMs of all the other states were present.

Criticising PM Modi for raking up the issue after 18 years, Mungekar also claimed it was intended to give a 'communal' twist to the ongoing Lok Sabha elections and create discord among communities for the BJP's political benefit. Addressing an elec-

tion rally in Rajasthan on Sunday, PM Modi said, "If the Congress comes to power, the Muslims will have the first right on the wealth of the country and it would be shared within the community as they have more children. Are you okay with this?"

Mungekar pointed out that a person of Manmohan Singh's stature would never make such a statement, adding that it does not behave a person holding the PM's chair (PM Modi) to make such utterances for his party's political interests.

Mungekar also said that although the Uniform Civil Code has been on the BJP's agenda for decades, "why did it fail to make a UCC that is acceptable to all, and even on this count they are spreading confusion among the masses?"

"But the people of the country will not fall for such things anymore," he said. The Congress leader also claimed that the first phase of Lok Sabha polls held on April 19 caused huge disappointment to the BJP, which has now realised that it cannot achieve the '400-plus' target and that is why the party is trying to create discord among the communities with baseless claims.

KERALA GOVT TO IMPART AI TRAINING TO 80,000 TEACHERS

Thiruvananthapuram: The Kerala government will be sending 80,000 teachers from its Secondary school teachers to a three-day AI hands-on training.

The training is being conducted by Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE).

The AI training will focus on techniques to simplify complex documents in PDFs, images, and videos and to generate concise summaries that retain crucial information and even create new content using AI tools.

Teachers would learn image generation techniques to create and edit subject-specific visuals, transform them into cartoons or paintings, and integrate text with the images.

K. Anvar Sadath, Chief Executive Officer of KITE said this programme will give opportunities to teachers to identify potential risks associated with AI while fostering a culture of responsible AI usage.

"In the training, teachers would also create their own avatars to understand the concept of deepfakes while gaining insights into privacy concerns and algorithm bias," said Sadath.



Each batch will have 25 teachers who will use their laptops and mobile phones.

A total of 180 Master Trainers of KITE have already completed one month-long AI training for this.

GOVT EMPLOYEE SHOT DEAD BY TERRORISTS IN J&K'S RAJOURI

Jammu: A government employee was shot by terrorists in J&K's Rajouri district on Monday evening and succumbed to his injuries in a hospital, officials said.

Officials said that terrorists fired at Mohd Razaq of Kunda Tope village in the Shahdara Sharif area of Rajouri.

"He was shifted to hospital where he succumbed to critical injuries. Terrorists had fired four pistol shots at the victim from close range," an official said.

As per officials, Razaq was an employee of the Social Welfare Department and the brother of a Territorial Army soldier.

The area has been surrounded for searches to trace the assailants, an official said.

Hearing in defamation case against Rahul now on May 2

Sultanpur (UP) | Agencies

The defamation case against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in Sultanpur, will now be heard on May 2.

The case against Rahul Gandhi, who is on bail in the defamation case, could not be heard in court on Monday due to the transfer of the judge of MP MLA Court.

The date of May 2 has been fixed in the case.

It may be recalled that during the Karnataka Assembly elections, Rahul Gandhi had given an objectionable statement against the then BJP National President and current Home Minister Amit Shah during a Press conference.

Sultanpur BJP leader Vijay Mishra had filed a complaint in the MP MLA court here. The court had summoned Rahul Gandhi last



November. Later, Rahul Gandhi appeared in court on February 20 and got his bail.

Akhilesh Yadav not to contest Kannauj, names Tej Pratap Yadav as candidate

Lucknow | Agencies

The Samajwadi Party, on Monday, set at rest speculation about its president Akhilesh Yadav contesting the Lok Sabha elections when it announced the candidature of Tej Pratap Yadav from Kannauj.

Akhilesh Yadav, according to reports, was said to be keen on contesting the Kannauj seat.

During his recent visit to Kannauj, he even assured the party workers that the seat would be contested by the family only.



Akhilesh had won the seat in a by-election in 2000 and

then in 2004 and 2009.

His wife Dimple Yadav won the seat in the 2012 by-election and then in 2014. However, she lost her seat to the BJP in 2019.

Party sources said that Akhilesh Yadav had decided against contesting the elections since he wanted to devote his time to the campaign.

Tej Pratap Yadav is a nephew of Akhilesh and was earlier MP from Mainpuri.

The party has also announced the name of Sanatan Pandey as the candidate from Ballia.

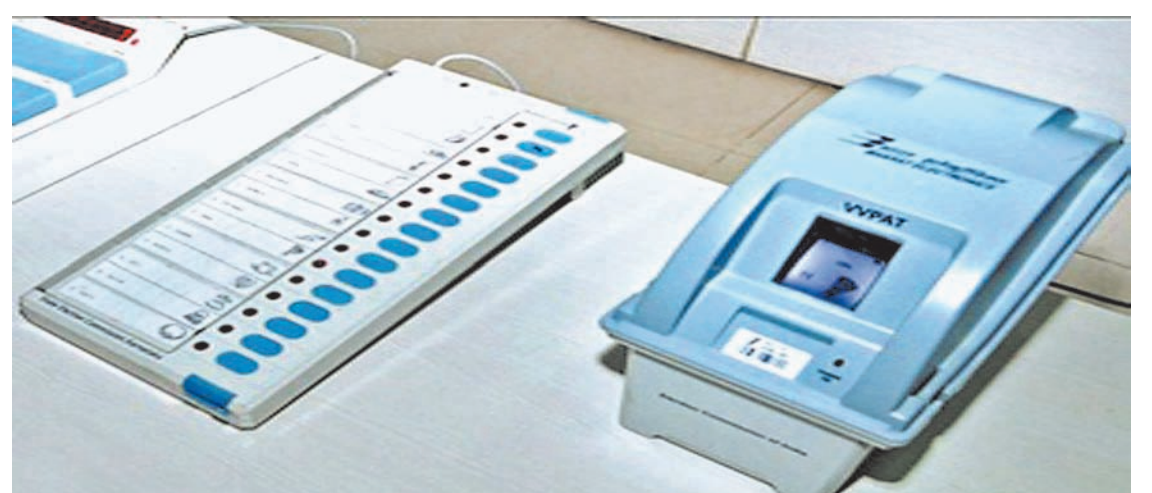
EC ORDERS FRESH POLLS IN 8 POLLING STATIONS IN ARUNACHAL ON WEDNESDAY

Itanagar | Agencies

The Election Commission has declared as 'void' the elections held at eight polling stations in four districts in Arunachal Pradesh and announced fresh polling in these stations on Wednesday, officials said on Monday.

Election officials said that Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were damaged and incidents of violence were reported in these eight polling stations during simultaneous polling to Lok Sabha and Assembly on the first phase of voting on April 19.

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer, Pawan Kumar Sain, quoting the Election Commission letter said in an order that fresh polling would be held from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday in these eight polling stations under four districts -- East Kameng, Kurunq Kumey, Upper Subansiri, and Siang. During the first



phase of polling on April 19, over 76.44 per cent of 8.92 lakh voters exercised their franchise in the simultaneous Assembly and Parliamentary polls to the two Lok Sabha constituencies and 50 of the 60 Assembly

seats in the border state. Ruling BJP candidates in 10 Assembly seats including Chief Minister Pema Khandu (Mukto) and Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein (Chowkham), have been elected unopposed.

The counting of votes for the Assembly elections will be taken up on June 2, while the results of the Lok Sabha elections will be announced on June 4.



Manifesto Promises Manifest

Maharashtra villages fully 'electrified', state got new air & rail links in 10 years

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

In August 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised to provide electricity to all the 5,95,464 villages dotting the country and in April 2018, he confirmed 'mission accomplished'.



all public health.

In February 2024, the government took a major step to connect the Vidarbha and Marathwada regions of the state through the new Wardha-Nanded railway project with the opening of the Wardha-Kalamb broad-gauge line.

This line is part of the 284-km long Wardha-Yavatmal-Nanded upcoming broad gauge line rail project that would give a new link between the Marathwada-Vidarbha regions of the state.

The government also opened the new Ashti-Amalner broad gauge railway line, part of the Ahmednagar-Bheed-Paril link within the

Marathwada region.

These projects have boosted the links between the Vidarbha-Marathwada regions, boosted socio-economic development and benefited students, traders, farmers and commuters, eased road traffic while contributing to increased passenger and freight revenues by transporting cotton, foodgrains, steel, iron ore and other materials.

Though the Wardha-Yavatmal-Nanded project was planned in 2008-2009, the work was delayed by nearly seven years owing to major problems in land acquisition of nearly 2,140 hectares, which has almost been completed.

On the aviation front, last month (March 2024), the government opened the new terminal building at Kolhapur Airport, proving as a boon to air connectivity in the western Maharashtra region.

Several private airlines have announced or operate flights to and from Kolhapur, connecting different cities like Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, and other states. Earlier in 2021, the state got the greenfield Sindhudurg Airport under the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) UDAN, but with few services currently, the airport has yet to gain popularity with more flights linking it to other state-national destinations.

The government has started more than 61 airports, half-a-dozen heliports and nearly 400 new routes to operate flights under the RCS-UDAN scheme.

Parts of Thane to see water cut on Thursday



Team Absolute | Thane

Thane Municipal Corporation on Monday said that it is essential to relocate the main distribution channel supplying water to the Uthalsar ward committee and thus the corporation will be undertaking water cuts in parts of the city. The TMC said that the shift from the jail water tank to the main distribution channel was necessitated since it was hampering the work of the K Villa Nala bridge.

water from the jail water tank and connect it to the main distribution channel as the work of the K Villa Nala bridge is being hampered," the TMC's note on Thane water cut stated. It further read, "The water supply department will carry out the work on Thursday, April 25 from 9.00 am to Friday, April 26, 2024. During this period, the water supply from the Uthalsar Ward Committee Jail Water Tank will be completely shut for 24 hours."

Uddhav Thackeray will not vote for SS (UBT) in 2024 LS polls

Team Absolute | Mumbai

For the first time in over three decades, Maharashtra ex-Chief Minister and Shiv Sena (UBT) President Uddhav Thackeray would not vote for a Lok Sabha candidate of his own party or former ally Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2024 parliamentary elections.



The LS constituency, Mumbai North Central - and prior to 2008 as the Mumbai North West seat - where the Thackerays' home 'Matoshri' is situated in Bandra East - has been allotted to the Congress in the seat-sharing among the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies.

Accordingly, in another first, Thackeray and his family would be voting for a new ally, the Congress candidate, as the SS (UBT) is now a key constituent of the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance and INDIA bloc.

As per the seat-sharing formula, the SS (UBT) will contest Mumbai South, Mumbai North, Mumbai South Central and Mumbai North East seats, while the Congress will fight Mumbai North and Mumbai North Central, and the Nationalist Congress Party (SP) got no seat in the country's commercial capital.

The Congress nominees are slated to be announced next week for the two seats it is contesting, including Mumbai North Central comprising the SS (UBT) tiger's den,

from where the undivided party of Balasaheb Thackeray reportedly had an unofficial understanding with the late actor-turned-politician, Sunil Dutt, elected five times to LS.

It may be recalled that from 1989, the (undivided) Shiv Sena and BJP had an alliance in all the parliament and assembly elections, which helped elect its candidates in a majority of the LS seats in Mumbai.

Among them were the sitting two-time MPs - BJP's Poonam P. Mahajan (Mumbai North Central) and Shiv Sena's Gajanan Kirtikar (from Mumbai North-West, who is now with the rival Shiv Sena of CM Eknath Shinde).

From 1989, the saffron alliance candidates elected from Mumbai North Central include Vidyadhar Gokhale in 1989, Narayanrao Athawale in 1996, ex-LS Speaker and ex-CM Manohar G. Joshi in 1999 (all Shiv Sena), and lastly Poonam P. Mahajan in 2014 and 2019, when the SS-BJP alliance collapsed.

Now, Bishnoi gang threatens NCP-SP leader

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After Bollywood actor Salman Khan, the Bishnoi gang on Monday targeted NCP-Sharadchandra Pawar General Secretary and former Maharashtra Minister Dr Jitendra Ahwad with an extortion threat.



Awad got a call, purportedly from Australia, from a person claiming to belong to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang and demanding a huge amount as extortion money, allegedly at the behest of gangster Rohit Godara. The call, which came on Ahwad's personal mobile number around 1.30 p.m., warned that if he failed to cough up the amount, "you will meet the same fate as Salman Khan".

Contacted, an unruffled Ahwad confirmed the developments to IANS but said he has not yet lodged a formal police complaint in the matter. However, he said that he would write a letter to the Thane Police (where he lives) later in the day informing them of the threat calls and initiating the necessary action that may be required. The Bishnoi gang threat to the NCP-SP leader

comes 8 days after two gang members fired around 5 bullets at Galaxy Apartments where Salman Khan and his family live on the first floor in Bandra west. The Mumbai Police managed to track and nab the two culprits within 36 hours from the Pakistan-bordering district of Kachchh in Gujarat where they fled after trying to terrorise the mega-star and his clan. Days after the shooting, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde visited the Khan household and assured full security to the actor's family and a detailed probe into the incident that left Bollywood also shaken. The two shooters, identified as Vicky Gupta, 24 and Sagar Pal, 23, are currently in Mumbai Police custody till Thursday, April 25, and further probe is underway.

Salman Khan house firing

Crime Branch sleuths reach Surat looking for firearm used in case

Team Absolute | Surat

Mumbai Crime Branch, which is investigating the Salman Khan house firing case, is in Surat city searching for the gun used by the shooters. The accused persons, during interrogation, told the crime branch sleuths that they threw the gun in Tapi River in Surat while escaping to Kutch Bhuj.



Nearly 10-15 persons from Unit 9 of the crime branch reached Surat on Monday morning and took one of the accused with them to locate the firearm used in the Salman Khan house firing case. The officials are being assisted in the search by the Surat Crime Branch, divers and fishermen there to recover the gun.

The crime branch began the search operation at around 11 am and will be continuing with it till the end

of the day. Until now, they have not retrieved any guns.

An official said, "The gun used in the Salman Khan house firing incident was of good quality. The bullet was sized 7.62 mm."

The assailants told the cops that after they reached Surat, they walked towards

the railway bridge over the Tapi River and then disposed of the gun in the river. They later fled to Kutch Bhuj in a government bus.

On April 14, the two accused had opened fire outside Salman Khan's Bandra residence in Galaxy Apartments.

NCP manifesto: Caste-based census, MSP for farmers

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), which is now an ally of the NDA and the ruling partner in the MahaYuti government in Maharashtra, has demanded the caste-based census and Minimum Support Price for farmers.



The party released its manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections on Monday and said that the party will pursue its demands for giving the prestigious Bharat Ratna award to former Chief Minister Yashwantrao Chavan and also for providing the classical language status to Marathi language status.

Besides, the party strongly believes that the MahaYuti government is capable of making Maharashtra a \$1 trillion economy. The manifesto was released by the party's national president Ajit Pawar in the presence of working president Praful Patel, state president Sunil Tatkare and senior minister Chhagan Bhujbal. It extends support for the Minimum Support Price to farmers as their right and assures them of safeguarding it.

NCP demands an increase in the grant of Rs 12,000 comprising Rs 6,000 from the Centre and Rs 6,000 from the state government paid to the farmers annually under the Kisaan Samman Nidhi. It favours widening the scope of the

Agricultural Crop Insurance Scheme and making it more farmer-friendly. Further, the party proposes to make efforts to increase the loans to Rs 20 lakh from Rs 10 lakh under the Mudra Yojana Scheme.

To reduce farmers' dependency on conventional sources of power, NCP said that efforts will be made to provide sustainable sources of power supply and provide a fillip to solar energy, kinetic energy, hydropower projects, etc., to increase agricultural productivity and income. Further, the party proposes to make efforts for Maharashtra to become the skill development capital of India and to grow industries with modern skill development technology by increasing the scope of Vishwakarma Yojana for 12 Balutedar (artisans, craftsmen) classes.

The party will try to increase educated and skilled youth's remuneration to Rs 20,000 per month in

private companies on a contractual basis from the current Rs 12,000 in the state.

"To do away with patriarchy, it has been made mandatory for people to use their mother's name before the father to honour motherhood. NCP resolves to replicate the revolutionary decision at the national level," reads the manifesto.

On the 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and state Assembly, the party claims it has been in its favour for a long time.

Amid recent controversies over paper leaks during various recruitment exams, the NCP demands a strict law be enacted to curb paper leaks and make the recruitment process more transparent.

Termining the senior citizens as the 'Silver economy', NCP proposes a 50 per cent discount on railway and metro travel to those above 60 years old over the country and implementation of the Ayushman Bharat Scheme for citizens aged above 70 years.

Delay in trial for serious offence cannot be a ground to grant bail: Bombay HC on plea in gang rape case



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court has denied bail to a man arrested for the gang rape of a 15-year-old girl in 2020, citing that mere delay in the trial for serious and grave offences cannot be a ground to grant bail.

A single bench of Justice Madhav Jamdar, in the order on April 18, said the accused was facing a serious offence, and hence, no case was made out for grant of bail on the ground of long incarceration. The bench, however, directed the sessions court to complete the trial in the case in nine months. The accused, Somnath

Gaikwad's advocate, Sana Raees Khan, had argued that he had been incarcerated since his arrest in October 2020, and there was no progress in the trial.

Even the charges against the accused persons have not been framed yet, she said. The Hadapsar police in Pune registered a first information report (FIR) against Gaikwad in October 2020 in connection with the gang rape of a 15-year-old girl.

The court, in its order, noted that Gaikwad was facing the charge of gang rape, which is a serious offence for which an accused faces a minimum punishment of life imprisonment.

"This is a very serious case where the allegation is that the applicant (Gaikwad) is involved in committing the offence of gang rape. When the incident took place, the victim was only 15 years old. Therefore, there is no case made out for grant of bail even on the ground of long incarceration," it said.

"Mere delay in the trial pertaining to grave offences, by itself, cannot be a ground to enlarge an accused on bail, debors the facts," the court noted.

It further said that there is no straitjacket formula in law to hold that there has been long incarceration of an undertrial.

PM's 'redistribution of wealth' remarks disheartening: Sanjay Raut



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ahead of upcoming Lok Sabha elections 2024, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Monday termed as "disheartening" the comments of Prime Minister Narendra Modi suggesting that if the Congress comes to power, it would redistribute wealth of people to Muslims, reported news agency.

Addressing a Lok Sabha elections 2024 rally in Rajasthan's Banswara on Sunday, PM Modi said the Congress plans to give people's hard-earned money and valuables to "infiltrators" and "those who have more children".

"This urban Naxal mindset, my mothers and sisters, they will not even leave your 'mangalsutra'. They can go to that level," PM Modi said.

Asked about the comments, Raut said it is "disheartening" when a senior leader like PM Modi makes such comments. "He even talked about mangalsutra (sacred thread worn around neck by women). It means he is completely disillusioned and is going to lose this election," the Rajya Sabha member claimed.

"The possibility of electoral loss bothers him, and that is why such language...how can individuals having a certain number of kids be a campaign issue?" he said.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) leader also asked why PM Modi has not discussed his government's performance over the last 10 years. The PM has not outlined his future plans if he returns to power, Raut claimed.



EDITOR'S SPECS

VIP culture vanished under Modi government

Prime Minister Narendra Modi leads by example and makes it a point to abide by the old adage 'practise what you preach'. From ending VIP culture to cutting down red tape to promoting ease of doing business, several trailblazing initiatives form the hallmark of the Modi government. And, the Prime Minister has led from the front in setting and achieving all these milestones. In a video shared by Modi Bharosa, a popular X handle, the PM recounts many instances where he took the lead in furthering his call and effort to dismantle the VIP culture. Recalling his mother's demise, PM Modi says she passed away in a government hospital and her cremation was also done at a state government-run crematorium. Talking about the vaccination drive against Coronavirus, PM Modi says that he could have got the vaccine administered early but waited for his number. "I could have taken the vaccine early but I decided to take it only when my number comes," says PM Modi. Talking about ending VIP culture during Republic Day celebrations, PM Modi says that the shramiks and workers, who built the Central Vista, were made special guests at the occasion. Talking about University convocations, PM Modi says that he always advocated for participation of the poor children in those events. In the past 10 years of the Modi government, many ground-breaking and pioneering initiatives designed on the lines of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' have paved the way for taking the 140 crore population along. The disappearance of red beacons from vehicles of government servants was one of the first moves to end VIP culture. PM Modi, in his Mann ki Baat address, in 2017 itself, had given a call for ending the VIP culture with EPI (Every person is important) culture.

If mangoes were for bail, then CM Kejriwal would ride out of jail

Deepika Bhan

As the common people await mangoes to flood the market, a special 'Aam Aadmi' has been quietly devouring them in Delhi's Tihar Jail. There is nothing wrong with eating a mango, but it can create a mess if not done properly. And, this is what the Aam Aadmi Party and its founder Arvind Kejriwal have landed in. The Aam Aadmi Party chief has been caught in the act literally -- eating mangoes, sweets, aloo-puri, etc., in jail. Again, there is nothing wrong with relishing mangoes and all those dishes. After all, he is the CM of the national capital and can have any type of home meal, even inside the jail (as the court has permitted).

However, controversy arose when the ED revealed in court that the CM, who is diabetic, was eating mangoes, sweets, etc. to fall sick to create conditions for making a bail plea. A diabetic is supposed to be cautious with food because any deviation can be detrimental to the health system. This is what almost every household in the country knows. Kejriwal and his family know too. So, then why eat mangoes and sweets?

CM Kejriwal is known for disruptive politics and does things for a reason. When he ate mangoes and other things prohibited for a diabetic, he knew what he was doing. However, the likely-would-be-disruption got caught in the eagle eyes of the ED, which complained to the court.

Outside the court, Kejriwal's food has now become the only issue for the AAP to raise the flag against the BJP. Its leaders are alleging that there is a "conspiracy to kill Kejriwal". While the BJP is countering this with its logic of Kejriwal's hit-and-run politics, the Congress is sitting pretty. Interestingly, the main complainant in the excise policy case is the Congress, and yet it has not been attacking Kejriwal, a partner in the INDIA bloc.

Both AAP and BJP are trying to play up the mango episode to their advantage. While they push and shove, the common people are amused at the turn of events.

Kejriwal's image of a typical middle-class babu with oiled hair and slippers has worked wonders for him. Delhiites gave him a huge mandate in the Assembly elections in 2015 and 2020. Instead of acknowledging the mandate and fulfilling all the promises he made during the Anna Hazare-led India Against Corruption movement, he simply turned the button off.

Kejriwal's 'style' of working saw his close friends like Yogendra Yadav, Prashant Bhushan, Kumar Vishwas, Mayank Gandhi and several others, losing favour and finally getting out of the party which they had helped to form. Mayank Gandhi had even said in 2015 while launching his book 'AAP and Down', that "Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has compromised with party principles." He and many others have said that Kejriwal "is autocratic and not democratic" - certainly a quality that does not go with the 'Mango Man' image. For CM Kejriwal, who claimed that the party was based on the principles of transparency, most activities have not been so transparent. And the alleged excise policy scam case is a pointer to this. The ED, which has arrested him in connection with the probe into the alleged case, has called him the 'kingpin'. How the case shapes up in the court cannot be predicted.

The Kejriwal of 2011 has simply vanished and the Kejriwal of 2024 is a typical politician whose only concern is to stay in power



and get votes somehow. He shares the stage with all those whom he had accused of corruption a decade ago and is, sadly, seeking their validation and support.

Thirteen years ago, he began with the Lokpal movement that sought an ombudsman to look into complaints of corruption against government officials. But today, this former government official and serving Chief Minister of Delhi is in jail on corruption charges. He had said years ago: "Without jumping into the system, it will be impossible to clean up the system. We are going to challenge this system." He did jump into the system but the glitter of

power was perhaps too strong. Ironically, today he is the accused in corruption cases and is using *Mangifera Indica* to beat the system and create a sensation. The now-not-so-mango-man has a lot to answer to the 'mango' people, who prefer to visit and jostle in local markets where the king of fruits, incidentally, is yet to make an appearance.

international

Desperate Pak PM fails to get support on Kashmir issue from Iranian President Raisi

Hamza Ameer | Islamabad

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Monday thwarted Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's attempt to raise the Kashmir issue as he kicked off his crucial three-day visit to Islamabad. While making his opening statement during the joint presser, Sharif thanked the Iranian President for taking Pakistan's side on the Kashmir dispute between Islamabad and New Delhi.

"We are thankful to Iran for its support for the Kashmir cause," said Sharif adding that the both sides have identified and agreed to cooperate on matters of mutual interest and regional concern. However, he failed to get any word of support from the Iranian President as he refrained from giving any comment on the issue and remained focused on addressing the Israel-Palestine conflict.

"It is now established how the United Nations has failed to



live up to its mandate and stop the ongoing genocide of innocent Palestinians in Gaza by Israel," he said during his opening statement at the joint presser at the Prime Minister's house. The Iranian President's comments are being seen as a clear snub to Islamabad on its repeated efforts to garner support on the Kashmir dispute from regional and global players. "Pakistan should know better about the relationship

between Iran and India. Our Prime Minister should have been careful in mentioning Kashmir during the presser, knowing that Iran's main focus is on its current conflict with Israel," said Abdullah Momand, a political analyst.

"Kashmir issue and Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to gather support have not been strong enough to get a supportive statement out of a country's supreme leader like Raisi. It

was rather embarrassing to see that our premier thanked the Iranian President for a supportive stance on the Kashmir dispute, a stance that was neither established nor reciprocated by Raisi," he added.

However, while Pakistan failed to get any word on Kashmir from the Iranian President, both sides agreed to increase the volume of trade and business ties to at least \$10 billion. "We are committed to strengthening relations to high levels. Economic and trade volume between Iran and Pakistan is not acceptable. We have decided as a first step to increase trade volume between our two countries to \$10 billion," Raisi said during the presser. At least 10 MoUs (Memorandum of Understanding) were signed between the two countries that aim at enhancing mutual cooperation towards trade and development.

Myanmar junta launches heavy air strikes on the border with Thailand

Bangkok | Agencies

The military junta in crisis-hit Myanmar has responded to the takeover of the important trading town of Myawaddy by rebel groups with heavy airstrikes. Since Friday, the army has dropped at least 130 bombs over the town on the border with Thailand, members of the armed wing of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and local media reported on Monday. According to unconfirmed reports, at least 10 civilians were killed.

However, as airstrikes also hit remote villages near Myawaddy, the exact number of casualties is still unclear, said a 25-year-old woman who is helping refugees on the Thai side. According to Thai Foreign Minister Parnpree Bahiddha-



nukara, around 3,000 more people have fled to the border town of Mae Sot in Thailand since the weekend.

"It was like it was raining bombs from the sky. We were so scared," one of the refugees, 23-year-old Saw Htoo, told dpa.

Myawaddy in Myanmar and Mae Sot in Thailand are only separated by the Moei River. A revolutionary alliance led by

the KNLA occupied the last military garrison in the city on April 11. Since then, some of the remaining soldiers have been holding out at a bridge to Thailand. According to reports, they are refusing to surrender to the rebels. The Thai army has been deployed at Moei for days with numerous armoured vehicles. Soldiers patrol the border to provide security.

PYONGYANG LAUNCHED BALLISTIC MISSILE TOWARDS SEA OF JAPAN: SEOUL

Seoul | Agencies

North Korea has fired an unspecified ballistic missile, the South Korean military said on Monday.

North Korea launched the missile towards the East Sea, also known as the Sea of Japan, South Korean news agency Yonhap cited the general staff in Seoul (JCS) as saying.

North Korea is prohibited by UN resolutions from launching or even testing ballistic missiles of any range.

These are usually surface-to-surface missiles that can also be equipped with a nuclear warhead.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have again risen in recent months.

US help for Ukraine is not too late: NATO chief

Washington/Kiev | Agencies

The US House of Representatives approval -- after months of wrangling -- of a nearly \$61 billion military aid package for Ukraine has not come too late, but the delay has had real consequences, NATO's Chief Jens Stoltenberg said. "The Ukrainians are now four months being out-gunned," Stoltenberg told US broadcaster MSNBC on Sunday. "The Russians have had much more ammunition. And Ukraine has been forced to ration their ammunition," the NATO Chief said. "But it's not too late. The Ukrainians have demonstrated enormous skill in defending their country." On Saturday, after months of deadlock, the US House of Representatives approved the multibillion-dollar aid package by an overwhelming bipartisan majority. It includes urgently needed arms supplies for defence against Russia. The necessary Senate approval is considered certain and is expected in the middle of the week. US President Joe Biden, a strong supporter of the bill, must then sign it into law.



Stoltenberg emphasised that there are still no plans for a NATO combat presence in Ukraine. However, NATO partners have the right to help Ukraine. This does not make NATO a party to the conflict. "But of course several NATO allies have men and women in uniform at the embassies, giving advice," said the NATO Chief when asked about a

Politico report on the deployment of additional US military advisors. The report said the US was considering sending additional advisers to its embassy in Kiev. These advisers would not take part in combat operations, but would advise and support the Ukrainian government and the Ukrainian military, the report added.

Putin unpredictable, could use nuclear weapon, Navalny's widow warns

Berlin | Agencies

The widow of late Russian dissident Alexei Navalny has warned of the unpredictability of Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying the possibility that he might use nuclear weapons at some point cannot be ruled out.

"We don't know what to expect from him," Yulia Navalnaya told DPA. "He probably would do it."

She compared the question to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, saying she had not expected Putin to attack back then, given the strong ties between the two countries. "But he decided to do it. He frightens people, keeps them in fear. Nobody knows what Putin is going to do next."

Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, after illegally occupying Crimea in 2014.

Navalnaya said she was not sure whether Putin really has a "strong strategy." The Navalnys were the most prominent opposition activists in Russia for many years.

Navalny, a long-standing and staunch opponent of Putin, died in a prison camp in the Arctic Circle in Siberia on February 16. It has not been independently established whether the 47-year-old died naturally, as his death certificate says. However, his supporters say he was murdered.



Navalnaya also commented on the recent arrests of several suspected Russian spies in Europe, saying these are a further sign that Putin has long been waging war in the heart of Europe, using all means necessary.

"Putin did not just start, he has been doing this all along. He starts wars, he kills his opponents," she said, adding that their presence comes as no surprise to her. "I always assumed that there were many Russian spies in Europe: Russian spies, that's obvious."

Earlier this week, two German-Russian dual nationals were detained in Bavaria for allegedly scouting targets for possible acts of sabotage in Germany for Moscow. Both are now in custody.

In Poland, the security agencies arrested a man who allegedly sought to help Russian military intelligence plan an assassination attempt on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Navalnaya said it was a pity that Europe failed to recognize the danger presented by Moscow sooner, saying if the issue had been raised sooner and more frequently, some wars and some murders might have been prevented.

She reiterated her determination to fight Putin and called for the strongest possible support from the West, during the interview at the Tegernsee, a lake in the Bavarian Alps to the south of Munich.

Navalnaya herself is not afraid, she said, despite living with a certain degree of risk, a risk that will grow if she does a good job, she added.



PM MODI'S ROAD SHOW TOMORROW IN BHOPAL, WILL ADDRESS PUBLIC IN SAGAR & HARDA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Madhya Pradesh on April 24 and will address three back-to-back public rallies in the state. PM Modi will address an election rally in the Sagar Lok Sabha seat, following which, he will reach Harda (Betul LS seat) and then attend a roadshow in Bhopal. Meanwhile, Congress Rajya Sabha MP Vivek Tankha said that the BJP has asked schools and parents to send children to attend PM Modi's rally.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit MP on Wednesday 24 April. In the second phase of Lok Sabha elections, PM will reach three Lok Sabhas in a single day. According to the information received so far, PM Modi will reach Sagar on April 24 at around 12 noon and address the public meeting. After Sagar, PM Modi will reach Betul. Here BJP candidate Durgadas will address a public meeting in support of Utk. After this, there will be a road show in Bhopal at 7.30 pm.

On March 24, PM Modi's first program will be held at Bartooma in Sagar. Sant Ravidas temple is being constructed in Bartooma itself at a cost of Rs 100 crore. Only about eight months ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had performed the Bhoomi Pujan of Sant Ravidas Temple. PM Modi will try to help the Dalit class of Bundelkhand from Bartooma itself. It is known that the Dalit class is decisive in Bundelkhand of MP. BSP has good penetration among the Dalit class in this area. BJP is trying to bring this vote bank to its fold. Sagar, Tikamgarh, Damoh and Khajuraho Lok Sabha areas come in Bundelkhand of MP.

After Sagar, PM Modi will address a public meeting in Harda district, which falls in Betul Lok Sabha constituency. PM Modi will address a public meet-



ing in Abgaon, Harda. Congress is in control of two assemblies of Harda district. In the last 2023 assembly elections, Congress's Ramkishore Dogne had won from Harda and Abhijeet Shah had won from Timarni. PM Modi will address a public meeting in this district.

There will be about one and a half kilometer long road show of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the capital Bhopal. MP BJP has sent two-three proposals for road shows to the central office. It will be finalized after getting permission from SPG. More than 2 thousand policemen will be deployed on the route of PM Modi's road show on April 24. The super vision of PM Modi's security arrangements is handed over to ADG Chanchal Shekhar and 30 IPS officers.

The road show will start from the statue of Lal Bahadur Shastri right in front of the Old Assembly. The road show will go to Apex Circle via Roshanpura. Traffic will also remain diverted during this period. The traffic police will soon issue an advisory regarding the diverted route.

Intelligence agencies from center to state are on high alert to protect PM Narendra Modi. SPG has taken command of the security arrangements. Three layer security arrangements have been made. SPG commandos will be deployed in the first layer.

BJP has destroyed the social fabric: Anil Shastri

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Anil Shastri has made a big attack on BJP. He alleged that in the past years, the BJP governments of Madhya Pradesh and the country have destroyed the social, political, constitutional and economic fabric to satisfy their hunger for power.

He further said that today is a testing time for the country's democracy, we are confident that the people of the country will win and the BJP government will be defeated. We have full confidence that the people of the country will defeat the BJP governments which have insulted the farmers, youth, daughters, Dalits, backward classes and wrestlers.

Discussing unemployment, Anil Shastri attacked the Modi government and said that it had promised to provide two crore jobs every year. The report of the International Labor



Organization shows that 83 percent of India's youth are unemployed. Congress promises that if it comes to power, youth up to 25 years of age will be assured of their first job of Rs 1 lakh per year. 30 lakh government vacancies will be filled.

He said that the BJP government has thrown the country into the fire of infla-

tion. The gas cylinder which was costing Rs 400 during the Congress government, has crossed Rs 1,000 today. Pulses crossed Rs 60 and Rs 70 and oil crossed Rs 200. Petrol and diesel of Rs 60 and Rs 70 have crossed Rs 100. Flour has been increased from Rs 20 per kg to Rs 50 and milk has been increased from Rs 38 to Rs 66 per litre.

Digvijay Singh's close associates join BJP

Team Absolute | Ashok Nagar

The first phase of Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh has been completed and the second phase is near. At the same time, the phase of party change is also going on.

Chanderi Municipality Chairman Dashrath Koli, close to former Chief Minister Digvijay Singh, joined BJP in front of Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia.

Ashok Nagar falls in Guna parliamentary constituency and from here Union Minister Scindia is the BJP candidate. Chanderi Municipal Council comes under Ashok Nagar and its president Dashrath Koli along with his councilors took membership of BJP in



the presence of the Union Minister. Dashrath Koli has been counted among the close friends of former Chief Minister Digvijay Singh.

Dashrath Koli's defection is being considered very important politically. Digvijay Singh is contesting from Rajgarh parliamentary con-

stituency. Whereas Union Minister Scindia is in the fray from the neighboring parliamentary constituency Guna. The political enmity between Scindia and Digvijay is not hidden from anyone, hence both are engaged in the game of politically checkmating each other.

CLASS 5TH-8TH BOARD PATTERN EXAM RESULT ON 23RD APRIL

Exam results can be seen on the link

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The results of class 5th and 8th board pattern exam in the state are being declared on Tuesday, April 23 at 11:30 am.

The result of the examination will be announced in the State Education Center auditorium of the School Education Department located in Arera Hills, Bhopal.

About 24 lakh children had appeared in the board pattern examination. These include around 12 lakh 35 thousand children of class-5 and around 11 lakh 37 thousand children of class-8. Madhya Pradesh is recognized as the leading state across the country in conducting board pattern examinations at the primary level. The exam result can be seen from 12:30 pm on the website <https://www.rskmp.in/BoardExam/Result24/StudentResult.aspx>.

SATNA LOK SABHA SEAT EMBROILED IN TRIANGULAR CONFLICT

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Satna parliamentary seat in Vindhya region of Madhya Pradesh is embroiled in a triangular contest. Here, BSP has made the contest between BJP and Congress triangular.

BJP has made Ganesh Singh its candidate for the fifth time from Satna Lok Sabha seat. Congress has given a chance to MLA Siddharth Kushwaha. Apart from this, former MLA Narayan Tripathi is in the fray as Bahujan Samaj Party candidate.

This is a parliamentary constituency where caste mathematics is very important. Along with Brahmmins, voters from backward classes are also in large numbers here. This is the reason why all three parties have fielded candidates keeping caste mathematics in mind. Ganesh Singh belongs to Kurmi, Siddharth Kushwaha belongs to Kushwaha and Narayan Tripathi belongs to Brahmin class. If we look at the history of Satna parliamentary constituency, there have been 15 Lok Sabha elections so far in which BJP has won nine times while Congress candidates have been elected five



times. Once Bahujan Samaj Party has won.

Ganesh Singh has been the BJP candidate for the last four elections and has been winning. Once again the party has expressed confidence in him. Recently, during the assembly elections held in the state, BJP had fielded Ganesh Singh from Satna and he faced Siddharth Kushwaha of Congress. In this election, Siddharth Kushwaha defeated BJP candidate Ganesh Singh. Once again both the candidates are face to face and former MLA Narayan Tripathi has made this contest completely triangular.

In this election, BJP is keeping its campaign sharp on the basis of

Modi's guarantee, while Congress is continuously raising the issue of inflation and unemployment and is also raising the issue of Ganesh Singh's inactivity. Whereas BSP candidates are busy cornering both the parties. Vindhya region of the state has four Lok Sabha seats. In the 2019 elections, BJP had won all the places. In the first phase, voting has taken place in Shahdol and Sidhi parliamentary seats of this area and in the second phase, voting is going to be held in Rewa and Satna on 26th April. There are eight assembly seats in Satna parliamentary constituency, out of which six are held by BJP and two by Congress.

127 candidates are in fray in 9 Lok Sabha constituencies of the third phase

14 candidates withdraw nomination papers on Monday

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan has said that according to the election programme of Lok Sabha Elections-2024, finally 127 candidates are in fray after the process of withdrawal of nomination papers filed for the third phase. On Monday, the last day of withdrawal of nominations, 14 candidates withdrew their nomination papers.

Rajan said that there are 15 candidates left in fray in Lok Sabha parliamentary constituency number-1 Morena, 7 candidates in number-2 Bhind (SC), 19 candidates in number-3 Gwalior, 15 candidates in number-4 Guna, 13 candidates in number-5 Sagar, 13 candidates in number-18 Vidisha, 22 candidates in number-19 Bhopal, 15 candi-



dates in number-20 Rajgarh and 8 candidates in Lok Sabha parliamentary constituency number-29 Betul (ST). The affidavits and other information of these candidates can be seen on Election Commission of India the website of link <https://affidavit.eci.gov.in/>. Voting for the third phase will take place on Tuesday, May 7. Counting of votes will take place on June 4. It may be noted that on April 22, 1 candidate has withdrawn his nomination papers in Lok Sabha parliamentary constituency number-1 Morena, 1 candidate in number-2 Bhind (SC), 2 candidates in number-3 Gwalior, 2 candidates in number-4 Guna, 1 in number-5 Sagar, 3 candidates in number -18 Vidisha, 3 candidates in number 19 Bhopal and 1 candidate in Lok Sabha parliamentary constituency no. 29 Betul (ST).

Man arrested for raping; illegal portion of his house razed in Guna

Team Absolute | Guna

Authorities have demolished the illegal portion of the house of a 20-year-old man in Madhya Pradesh's Guna district after his arrest for allegedly raping and assaulting his woman friend, an official said.

The accused, Aayan Khan, also put an instant adhesive into the 23-year-old woman's eyes due to which she suffered serious injuries to one of her eyes, the official said on Sunday.

The authorities demolished the illegal portion of his house on Sunday, he said.

The woman approached the police on April 17, saying she had been staying with the accused for 10 days. But when she asked him to marry her, he turned violent, the woman alleged.



The accused allegedly hurled abuses at the woman, thrashed her with a belt and put a strong glue into her eyes, the official said citing her complaint.

The man was arrested on April 18 when he was carrying 60 litres of country liquor on his motorbike.

He has been booked for rape, assault, and charges

under the Excise Act, the police official said, adding the authorities on Sunday demolished the illegal portion of his house. An ophthalmologist from a Guna-based private hospital who treated the woman said she had suffered serious injuries to one of her eyes. She was sent to Gwalior for advanced care, he added.

Successful treatment of a child suffering from TB with malnutrition in the smart unit of AIIMS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A 13-month old Ruhaan from Gairatganj, Bhopal had reached the Pediatric OPD of AIIMS Bhopal due to high fever and frequent vomiting. The family told the doctor of the department that the child has this problem for the last two months. During examination of the child, his weight was found to be only 5 kg and length was 73 cm. seeing this, the doctors immediately admitted him to the smart unit. During the examination here, problems like severe malnutrition, lung TB and anemia were found. The situation was so serious that if the child did not get proper treatment, he could have died. Under the guidance of Professor (Dr.) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, the doctors of the Pediatric Department successfully overcame the challenge of difficult treatment of the child. Due to which not only the child's life could be saved but his weight and height also increased in just three months. Now he is developing like normal children.

This was the situation when he was brought to OPD

The family reached AIIMS Bhopal on 8 December 2023 with 13-month-old Ruhaan. During this time it was seen that Ruhaan's weight was 5.165 kg and height



was 73 cm. His mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) was recorded as 8.1 cm and hemoglobin level was found to be 8.26.

TB treatment was done first

The child was first given medicine to control pulmonary TB. After being admit-

ted for about 15 days, the child's weight had become 5 kg 939 grams. Besides, hemoglobin level was also better than before. From which it became clear that pulmonary TB was the main cause of the disease in the child.

Child was admitted in AIIMS for 15 days

With treatment at the Smart Unit, Ruhaan's condition gradually improved and he achieved his target weight of 5.939 kg within 15 days. During this time his family members were also given information about proper eating habits and cleanliness. When the child was discharged after 15 days, his weight was 6.10 kg and MUAC was 8.9 cm. Family took proper care - weight increased at every follow up. Strict adherence to nutritional care by the family led to remarkable improvements in Ruhaan. When he came for the first follow up, his weight was 7.040 kg and he was already very playful. Similarly, in the second follow up, his weight was 7.500 kg, in the third time it was 8 kg and in the fourth time it was 8.200 kg. This is the target of children's growth. The child's growth and development path is targeted by the smart unit. Under which the target of children's height is 73 cm and weight is more than 12.6 kg. This success story speaks to the effectiveness of integrated medical and nutritional interventions.

Christina Hendricks marries DOP George Bianchini with 'grand celebration'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Christina Hendricks has tied the knot with cinematographer George Bianchini.

The wedding ceremony took place at the historic Napoleon House in New Orleans.

The guest list included 'Mad Men' creator Matt Weiner, Christian Siriano, Mae Whitman, and Retta, reports 'People' magazine.

Hendricks told 'People' that both she and Bianchini opted for the Big Easy as their wedding destination due to their shared affection for the city.

"New Orleans is a place that I always loved to go before I met George, and a place that he always loved to go before he met me. And then, when we first started dating or meeting up, because we lived across the country from one another, it was the place in the middle," she explained.

"It just feels like our city together, even though we both loved it individ-



French Quarter landmark that was once the residence of New Orleans mayor Nicholas Girod, who famously offered

Napoleon Bonaparte refuge during his exile -- after being captivated by the restaurant's history and eclectic charm.

"It's got this rustic Cuban, Spanish, European-textured, high-low feeling to it, which I guess is how we feel about ourselves a little bit -- a little high-low," Hendricks said.

"It's got the most gorgeous walls with paint peeling off, and then you walk upstairs and there's these grand dining rooms with the beautiful ceilings."

As per 'People', the couple, who began dating in 2020 and got engaged in February 2023, invited 76 guests, a number Hendricks says felt perfect for her and Bianchini.

"It seemed like the right amount for us to be able to embrace and visit with everyone and not feel overwhelmed," she explained.

"But it's certainly not a tiny, intimate wedding. No, (we wanted) a celebration -- a grand celebration."



Kerry Washington

Reflects on how sexual assault impacted her life

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actress Kerry Washington, renowned for her portrayal of Broomhilda in Quentin Tarantino's 'Django Unchained', has opened up about the impact of sexual assault on her life. The 47-year-old 'Scandal' star talked about the assault while addressing her September 2023 memoir, 'Thicker Than Water', at the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books held at the University of Southern California, Washington told Erika D.

Washington told Erika D. during the event, she explained that she included her experience of sexual assault in the book because it exemplified the truth that I want to tell is the version of figuring out the truth of who I am and what were the obstacles that got in the way of me being able to know my truth and experience my truth. In response to a question about the earliest instances in her life when someone denied the truth to her, she said, "I was one of the earliest instances in her life when someone denied the truth to her, causing her to doubt her intuition."

According to 'People', 'Thicker Than Water' chronicles Washington's journey of self-discovery, particularly focusing on the revelation that her father, Earl Washington, was not her biological father, which she learned in the spring of 2018 at the age of 41. During the event, she explained that she included her experience of sexual assault in the book because it exemplified the truth that I want to tell is the version of figuring out the truth of who I am and what were the obstacles that got in the way of me being able to know my truth and experience my truth. "And one of those things was that I had survived this sexual assault that was happening. I didn't know that something was happening," Kerry did not disclose the identity of the person who was doing it, he told me that it was in my imagination and that I didn't know what I was talking about and that I was crazy," she shared at the event.

Here's why Katy Perry warned fiance Orlando Bloom 'don't do this again'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Katy Perry recently took to social media to express her disapproval regarding her fiance Orlando Bloom's new TV series. 'Orlando Bloom: To The Edge' features the British actor attempting daring stunts and extreme sports, something 'American Idol' judge Katy Perry clearly isn't a fan of, reports 'Mirror.co.uk'.

The show has not been well received by the 'Roar' hitmaker. Katy, 39, voiced her disapproval of her partner's participation in the programme on her Instagram, advising him to "don't ever do this again." According to 'Mirror.co.uk', the three-part series showcases Orlando attempting skydiving, diving underwater without an air tank, and rock climbing. "The person who has been #OnTheEdge this whole time is me," Katy said regarding the show's series trailer released on social media. "Stream baby daddy @orlandobloom's show on @peacock now to see why I'm so proud, but don't ever do this again." Fans rallied to support Katy as well, with one stating, "I'm so happy for you! You found someone you deserve to have your heart! I can see through your eyes that you are happy and completed."

Another fan added, "Legolas living on the edge!" Katy's criticism of Orlando's new show follows his latest episode of 'American Idol'. Last week, she took to his partner's Instagram post to jest about her attire, comparing it to a cooking utensil. "Katy had shared images of her outfit on the social media platform, and while most comments were highly complimentary of the metallic top, Orlando's was less so. "Glad I could bend that frying pan with my bare hands for you baby," Orlando quipped.

Cher, Jimmy Buffett, Dave Matthews, Mary J. Blige inducted into Rock & Roll Hall of Fame

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame has revealed the names of 16 artists who will be inducted in 2024.

According to 'Variety', the diverse list includes R&B/rock pioneer Big Mama Thornton, pop superstars Cher and Dionne Warwick, as well as 1970s-rooted rockers like Peter Frampton, Foreigner, and Ozzy Osbourne, alongside 1990s icons such as the Dave Matthews Band and Mary J. Blige. Jimmy Buffett's inclusion among the inductees comes as a surprise. His entry is unexpected not only because the late singer/songwriter was not on the ballot this year but also because he had never been nominated before.

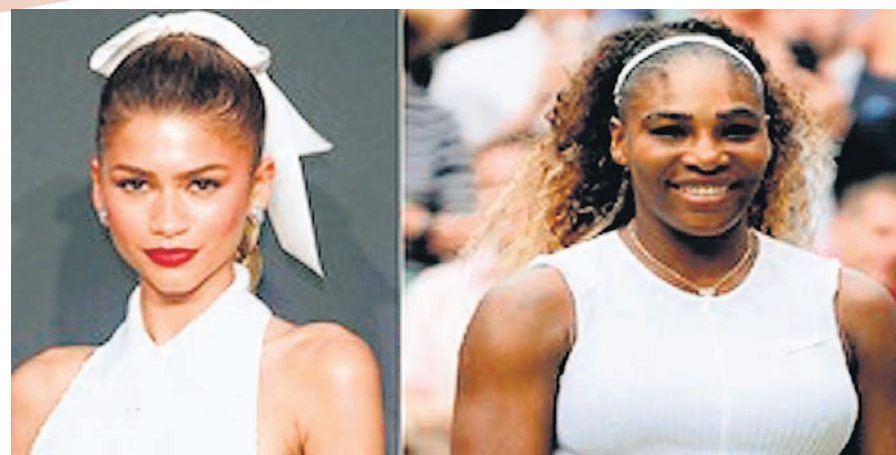
'Variety' reports that the Rock Hall's committee, seemingly in a sentimental mood after Buffett's passing seven months ago, chose to honour him via a separate, non-voted category for "musical excellence".

This honorary category also serves as the entry point for two other performers, who had previously been nominated without securing enough votes from the public -- Dionne Warwick and MC5. The latter group had been nominated six times without ever being voted in. The complete list of inductees includes Mary J. Blige, Cher, Dave Matthews Band,



Foreigner, Peter Frampton, Kool & The Gang, Ozzy Osbourne, A Tribe Called Quest, Alexis Korner, John Mayall, Big Mama Thornton, Jimmy Buffett, MC5, Dionne Warwick, Norman Whitfield, and Suzanne de Passe.

It remains to be seen how Cher will respond to her induction. Just last December, during an appearance on 'The Kelly Clarkson Show', she said: "You know what, I wouldn't be in it now if they gave me a million dollars... I'm never going to change my mind. They can just go you-know-what themselves."



ZENDAYA REVEALS SERENA WILLIAMS' REACTION TO HER WORK IN 'CHALLENGERS'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Zendaya's performance in the romantic sports comedy film 'Challengers' left an impression on Serena Williams. The 27-year-old actress revealed that the tennis icon, 42, has watched her latest performance as tennis player-turned-coach Tashi Duncan in the upcoming movie and she's a fan, reports 'People' magazine.

Zendaya told ET, "She was like, 'I know there definitely weren't real (tennis) balls. She knows. She's the best of the best. She did say that it was great considering that I had never, never touched a tennis ball before.'"

Previously, Zendaya told the outlet that she was "very nervous about her seeing my tennis skills," and apologised "in advance" to Serena and her sister Venus. As per

'People', the actress had a fun back-and-forth with Venus on social media earlier in the week, and at the end of the month. She spoke about who specifically inspired her performance in the film, directed by Luca Guadagnino.

Since the film marks Zendaya's on-screen debut as a mom, she explained that the "mothers in my life and around me" were to thank for the role. As she explained, she's even had some practice taking care of kids. "I have many, many nieces and nephews, so they're like my borrowed children, you know? I get to have fun and give them back to their parents," Zendaya said. "But I'm definitely inspired by how they tackle and take on motherhood." Zendaya stars in the romantic sports comedy alongside Mike Faist and Josh O'Connor, with a synopsis noting that the film follows

"three players who knew each other when they were teenagers as they compete in a tennis tournament to be the world-famous grand slam winner and reignite old rivalries on and off the court." Director Guadagnino, 52, told 'Variety' in 2022 that the 'Dune' star actually "spent like three months" training with pro tennis coach and former player Brad Gilbert for the role, sharing that the team behind the film "almost actually don't use any of her double." The film also has some intimate scenes, Zendaya explained on Jimmy Kimmel Live, noting that her family was "absolutely" warned about them ahead of time. "Well they know it's a Rated-R movie OK so I was like you know, walking into this, 'If you can't handle the heat get out the kitchen,'" said Zendaya, who is also a producer of the film.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Camila Morrone



VIRAT KOHLI FINED 50 PERCENT MATCH FEE FOR DISSENT AFTER DISMISSAL IN KKR MATCH

Kolkata | Agencies

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) batter Virat Kohli, has been fined 50 percent of his match fees for breaching the Indian Premier League (IPL) Code of Conduct during Match 36 of the IPL 2024 against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Eden Gardens on Sunday evening. Kohli was hauled up for expressing dissent against the umpire's decision as he was unhappy with the manner of his dismissal as he believed the ball on which he got out was above the waist and thus

should have been called a no-ball. "Kohli committed a Level 1 offence under Article 2.8 of the IPL's Code of Conduct. He admitted to the offence and accepted the Match Referee's sanction," the BCCI statement read.

For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Match Referee's decision is final and binding.

In the chase of 223 against Kolkata Knight Riders, Kohli was off the blocks quickly by hitting two sixes and a four. But Kohli lobbed a slower high full-toss from Harshit Rana back to the bowler, and the decision was sent to third

umpire Michael Gough.

The review system showed that the ball was dipping on Kohli, who was batting out of his crease, via a procedure where they match the height of a batter up to his waist with the height of the ball, leaving Kohli livid as he made his displeasure known to umpires before walking off for 18.

Needing 21 to win in the final over, Kam Sharma hit Mitchell Starc for three sixes before being caught and bowled by the left-arm pacer. Wicketkeeper Phil Salt then ran out Lockie Ferguson on the last ball as RCB lost the match by 1 run.

Kothari, Sitwala win silver and bronze medals in World Matchplay Billiards

Mumbai | Agencies

India's ace cue sports exponents, Sourav Kothari and Dhruv Sitwala, won the silver and bronze medals respectively in the World Matchplay Billiards Championship played at Carlow, Ireland. The Kolkata-based Kothari tripped at the final hurdle, losing rather tamer to Englishman David Causier 2-8 in the best-of-15-frame, 100up final played on Sunday evening.

Earlier in the semifinals, India No. 2 Kothari, defeated compatriot and National Champion and India No. 1 Sitwala 7-3 in the best-of-13-frame all-Indian contest. Causier tamed countryman Martin Goodwill 7-2 to book his place in the final.

In the quarterfinals, the left-handed Mumbai-based Sitwala brushed aside the challenge of England's fancied cueist Robert Hall 6-4 while Kothari sidelined reigning World champion Peter Gilchrist, recording a 6-4 win to set up an all-Indian semifinal encounter.

In the other last eight matches, Causier was in great form and blanked host country's Aidan Murray 6-0, while Goodwill prevailed over Peter Sheehan 6-2.

Results:
Quarterfinals: Sourav Kothari beat Peter Gilchrist 6-4; Dhruv Sitwala beat Robert Hall



6-4; David Causier beat Aidan Murray 6-0; Martin Goodwill beat Peter Sheehan 6-2. Semifinals: Sourav Kothari beat Dhruv Sitwala 7-3; David Causier beat Martin Goodwill 7-2. Final: David Causier beat Sourav Kothari 8-2.

Bhavesh, Simranpreet win second 25m pistol Olympic Selection Trials

New Delhi | Agencies

Bhavesh Shekhawat and Simranpreet Kaur Brar won the 25m men's rapid-fire pistol (RFP) and women's pistol OST T2 trials, respectively at the first-ever Olympic Selection Trials (OST) for Rifle and Pistol, here at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting range.

Bhavesh shot 34 in the RFP final, comfortably holding off OST T1 winner Anish Bhanwala (29), to extend his good form in the trials. Vijayveer Sidhu was third with 22 hits.

Adarsh Singh (17) and Ankur Goel (13) finished fourth and fifth, to yet again finish outside the podium places. In the women's pistol, Simranpreet, who has also been having a good run in the trials, got 37 hits in the 10 series of five-shots each, to emerge triumphant. She too held off OST T1



winner and Olympian Manu Bhaker, who signed off with 35 hits on the day. Esha Singh with 30 hits took third and the final podium points avail-

able. Rhythm Sangwan (24), the second quota holder in the event, finished fourth while Abhidnya Patil (16) was fifth.

TENNIS: RAFAEL NADAL JOINS TEAM EUROPE FOR LAVER CUP 2024

New Delhi | Agencies

The 22-time Grand Slam champion Rafael Nadal has confirmed his participation in the seventh edition of the Laver Cup, to be held at Uber Arena in Berlin from September 20-22.

Nadal will team up with fellow Spaniard and World No. 3 Carlos Alcaraz, World No.4 Daniil Medvedev, and World No.5 Alexander Zverev as Team Europe eyes to win back the Laver Cup led by captain Bjorn Borg.

Nadal returned to action in the Barcelona Open last week but suffered a second-round straight-set defeat to Alex de Minaur. "I am very happy to be playing Laver Cup in Berlin for Team Europe," Nadal was quoted as saying on the official website of Laver Cup. "I have some really special memories from my Laver Cup experiences, including all the emotions from London two years ago playing alongside Roger for the last time."



"At this stage in my career, I really want to go out there and make the most of every opportunity I am given.

Teaming up is always an incredible experience and I have always enjoyed it, the competition is different and exciting. I'm looking forward to going to Berlin and helping Team Europe win back the Laver Cup," he added.

Berlin will be Nadal's fourth Laver Cup appearance, having competed in Prague in 2017, Geneva in 2019 and then alongside close friend and long-time rival Roger Federer in doubles, for the last match of Federer's career at London in 2022.

Team Europe captain Bjorn Borg expressed delight over Nadal's participation as he announced a six-man roster for the final time this year. "Rafa is an absolute legend in our sport, a true champion in every sense of the word," said Borg. "It's my last year as Captain. Having him on Team Europe this year was a

goal of mine and I'm thrilled he has accepted my invitation and will be with us in Berlin."

"He loves playing Laver Cup and is one of the greatest competitors the sport has ever seen. The aim is to win back the Laver Cup and having Rafa alongside Carlos, Daniil and Sascha is an unbelievable line-up for us so far."

Australian No. 1 Alex de Minaur and Americans Taylor Fritz and Tommy Paul were named as Team World captain John McEnroe's initial three additions to the lineup earlier this month. All three were part of Team World's historic first Laver Cup victory in London. Fritz and Paul were also part of the victorious team last year in Vancouver.

After serving in the capacity since the competition's inception in Prague in 2017, Borg and McEnroe will go head-to-head for the last time this year as a captain.

Sehwag slams Sam Curran after PBKS' loss to GT

New Delhi | Agencies

Former Indian opener Virendra Sehwag questioned Punjab Kings (PBKS) stand-in skipper Sam Curran's role in the team and said he would never even pick a bits-and-pieces player in his team.

Sehwag's remark came after PBKS suffered their sixth loss of the season after suffering a narrow three-wicket loss at the hands of Gujarat

Giants in low-scoring thriller. Curran scored 20 off 19 balls and claimed one wicket after conceding 18 runs from his two overs.

"If I was in the PBKS dugout, I would not even pick him in my team, neither as a batting all-rounder nor as a bowling all-rounder. I wouldn't pick him," Sehwag said on Cricbuzz.

"A player is not of any use if he can bowl a bit and bat a bit. You either bat properly

and win us the match, or you bowl and win us the game. I don't understand this bits and pieces part," he added.

Curran's showing this season has been underwhelming, tallying a mere 152 runs across eight innings at a strike rate of 116.03, with a solitary half-century to his credit. In terms of bowling, he has 11 scalps at an economy rate of 8.79 in eight games.



Squash: Ramit Tandon's impressive run at El Gouna ends in third round



El Gouna (Egypt) | Agencies

Ramit Tandon's impressive run at the El Gouna International Open squash, a USD 198,000 PSA Platinum event was snapped by Peruvian world No 3 Diego Elias in the third round.

Elias won 11-2, 11-4, 11-2 in 35 minutes to move into the quarterfinals. Indian world No. 40 Tandon also had key takeaways from the match as he prepares for next month's World Championships in Egypt.

Tandon upset French world No 11 Victor Crouin in the second round after brushing aside Egyptian world No 62 Aly Hussein in his opener, but former world No 1 Elias was unstoppable on the day.

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Team Absolute | New Delhi

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In the women's pistol, Simranpreet, who has also been having a good run in the trials, got 37 hits in the 10 series of five-shots each, to emerge triumphant. She too held off OST T1 winner and Olympian Manu Bhaker, who signed off with 35 hits on the day. Esha Singh with 30 hits took third and the final podium points available. Rhythm Sangwan (24), the second quota holder in the event, finished fourth while Abhidnya Patil (16) was fifth.





Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress and former Miss Universe Lara Dutta, has shared that with age, she is shedding the notion of being glamorous. Instead, she aims to focus on roles that make a lasting impression

LARA DUTTA:

AS I GROW OLDER, I'M BREAKING FREE FROM THE IDEA OF BEING GLAMOROUS

on the audience. The actress expressed her desire to explore the psychological crime genre, stating that she would readily portray a negative character without hesitation.

Elaborating on the same, Lara said: "As I grow older, I'm breaking free from the idea of being glamorous or just seen as a pageant winner. Instead, I'm finally delving into the kind of work I've desired for a while. It's important to recognise the women who came before us, making space for us to succeed. Nowadays, women are leading the way in all sorts of roles, from making movies to writing scripts."

The actress said: "I feel lucky to be part of an industry that's changing for the better. Personally, I'm interested in exploring the psychological crime genre, even if it means playing a negative character. It's an exciting direction for me, and I would love to do a slightly darker role on screen."



Big B plays Ashwathama

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After the recent poster featuring Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan, the makers of the upcoming mythology sci-fi film 'Kalki 2898 AD' unveiled a new video asset. The special video introduces the character of Big B as

Ashwathama.

The video was unveiled in a projection in Nemaar, Madhya Pradesh, along with an exclusive glimpse on Star Sports amid the ongoing IPL 2024.

The video features multiple Indian languages spoken, with Amitabh Bachchan in his Ashwathama avatar speaking Hindi, alongside a child conversing in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada.

The video shows the character of a child inquiring Big B about who he is. Big B who's shrouded in bandages has differ-

ent wounds, one from a gunshot, and tells the kid that his time has come to fight the ultimate battle.

The film also stars Kamal Haasan, Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, and Disha Patani in pivotal roles. The film, helmed by Nag Ashwin, made waves after its groundbreaking debut at San Diego Comic-Con last year.

The film is bankrolled by Vyjayanthi Movies and is a mythology-inspired sci-fi spectacle set in the future.



RAPPER BADSHAH PARTIES WITH PAKISTANI ACTRESS HANIA AAMIR IN DUBAI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Pakistani actress Hania Aamir, who is known for 'Mere Humsafar', had a gala time with her friend, the Indian rapper Badshah in Dubai. The actress took to her Instagram and shared pictures and videos from their meet-up in the Middle Eastern city of the UAE.

The first picture featured Hania and Badshah in it whereas the second picture was of a food spread.

Lastly, there was a video, which showed Hania enjoying a drink as she posed for the camera. She wrote in the caption, "Rescue arrived from Chandigarh."

In another video posted by the actress, the two can be seen jamming over one of Badshah's songs as they frequently burst into laughter as none of them was able to remember the lyrics to the track.

Hania shared that she would attend Badshah's concert in Dubai.

She wrote in the caption, "Concert time."

Badshah took to the comments section, and wrote, "What should be described about this music festival and acting."

Last year in November, the two went shopping and on a coffee outing after which fans sensed something brewing up between the two.

Hania Aamir's name has been often associated with Pakistan's former cricket captain Babar Azam for a while.

However, neither of them has responded to these rumours.

DIVYA KHOSSLA-STARRER UPCOMING FILM TO BE SHOT ACROSS 35 LOCATIONS IN HYDERABAD

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The upcoming film 'Hero Heeroine', marking the Telugu cinema debut of actress Divya Khossla, will be filmed across 35 locations in the Ramoji Film City of Hyderabad.

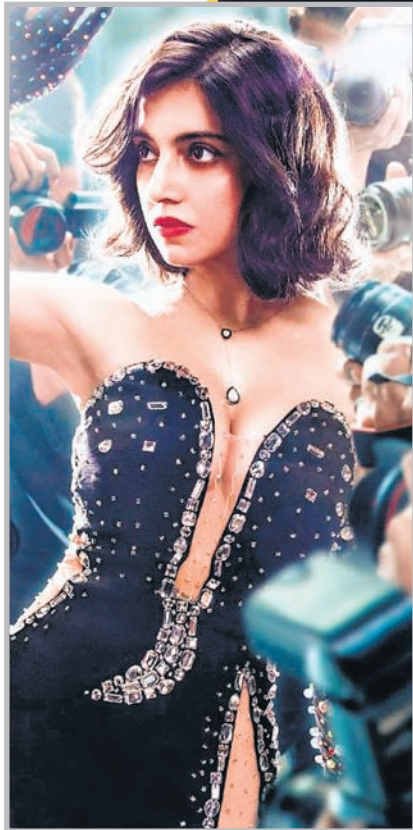
These locations encompass outdoor-indoor settings as well as real locations.

Directed by Suresh Krissna, the film also stars veteran actor Paresh Rawal portraying the role of a director.

The makers of the film have infused a contemporary twist into traditional elements by incorporating a fusion song that blends modern and traditional dance styles.

Perna Arora, the film's producer, said: "With 'Hero Heeroine', our aim is to revolutionise storytelling while remaining steadfast in our commitment to honouring our cultural heritage. Suresh Krissna and I spent countless hours brainstorming, meticulously ensuring that every cultural nuance is impeccably portrayed without sacrificing an ounce of entertainment."

"Mirroring the film's adrenaline-fueled narrative, the dance sequence will be a glamorous spectacle, pulsating with electrifying beats and set against iconic backdrops of Hyderabad," she added.



ALLU ARJUN, JACKIE SHROFF CALL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION ON EARTH DAY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Telugu superstar Allu Arjun and Bollywood actor Jackie Shroff observed the Earth Day on Monday. Allu, took to his X handle and shared a creative of the planet in safe hands and flourishing. He cap-

tioned it, "Happy Earth Day".

The Telugu superstar, known to ensure that film shoots don't cause any damage to the environment, is also the brand ambassador of the Telangana Forest Department.

Senior actor Jackie Shroff,

who often makes appearances at public events with plants, shared a video raising the awareness about cutting down on the usage of plastic. He urged his followers on Instagram to opt for the reusables in order to cut down on the wastage.



Zakir Khan promises mix of emotions

Stand-up artiste and actor Zakir Khan is set to make a comeback with the third season of his hit streaming series, 'Chacha Vidhayak Hain Humare'.

Ahead of the new season's release, Zakir revealed that it promises an adventurous journey of emotions, filled with unexpected twists and turns.

The upcoming season continues the story of Ronny, who finds himself entangled in a series of comical misadventures after reluctantly agreeing to steer clear of politics, following the firm insistence of Ashwini (Chacha Ji), portrayed by Abhimanyu Singh. Despite his best efforts to avoid political entanglements, Ronny's destiny repeatedly intersects with Ashwini's, resulting in a chain of hilarious incidents and crazy encounters.

Expressing his excitement about the upcoming season, Zakir shared: "Bringing the third season of 'Chacha Vidhayak Hain Humare' feels like a homecoming. The love and support we've received from fans has been truly humbling. Their enthusiasm fuels our passion for storytelling, and it's an honour to entertain and connect with them through our work."

He continued, "With each passing season, we've witnessed Ronny evolve, grow, and face new challenges head-on. Season 3 promises to be no different; it's an adventurous journey of emotions, filled with unexpected twists and turns that will keep viewers on the edge of their seats."



Sakshi Dwivedi