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OVER 61% VOTER TURNOUT RECORDED IN PHASE 2 OF LOK SABHA POLLS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Voting for 88 constituencies in the second phase of the 18th Lok Sabha elections across 13 states and union territories has begun. Over 1,200 candidates, including 4 candidates from Outer Manipur, are contesting the polls.

All 20 seats in Kerala, 14 of the 28 seats in Karnataka, 13 seats in Rajasthan, 8 seats each in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, 7 seats in Madhya Pradesh, 5 seats each in Assam and Bihar, 3 seats each in Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, and 1 seat each in Manipur, Tripura and Jammu and Kashmir will go to polls tomorrow.

The prominent contestants in the fray for the second phase are Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar, BJP's Tejasvi Surya, Hema Malini and Arun Govil, Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Shashi Tharoor, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's brother DK Suresh and former Karnataka chief minister HD Kumaraswamy.

In 2019, the NDA had won 56 of the 89 seats and the UPA 24. Six of



these seats have been redrawn as part of the delimitation exercise.

Out of the seven stages, the first phase of the elections were held last Friday for 102 seats across 21 states and Union territories. The

polls saw a voter turnout of around 65.5%.

Over 60 per cent turnout was recorded in polling for 13 Lok Sabha seats on Thursday in the second phase of the Lok Sabha elec-

tions in Rajasthan, according to the latest figures from the Election Commission.

Polling had taken place in the first phase on April 19 for the other 12 parliamentary constituencies in the state, which sends 25 representatives to Parliament.

TOO GOOD FOR NDA": PM MODI

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that the phase two of the Lok Sabha polls has been "too good" for the BJP-led NDA, describing the support to the ruling alliance as unparalleled.

He said on X as polling ended, "Phase Two has been too good! Gratitude to the people across India who have voted today. The unparalleled support for NDA is going to disappoint the Opposition even more." "Voters want NDA's good governance. Youth and women voters are powering the strong NDA support," PM Modi said.

SC dismisses pleas seeking mandatory EVM-VVPAT tally

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a batch of petitions seeking mandatory cross-verification of the votes cast in Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) with Voter-Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips.

However, a bench headed by Justice Sanjiv Khanna asked the Election Commission of India to examine the suggestion if the VVPAT slips may, in addition to the party symbol, have unique barcodes on them, which in turn could be counted by an electronic machine.

In his verdict, Justice Khanna passed two directions in the matter. First, all Symbol Loading Units (SLUs) will be sealed on or after May 1 on completion of the symbol loading process and will be kept in the strong room at least for 45 days post declaration of results.

"The candidates or representatives shall sign the seal. The containers containing SLUs shall be kept in strong



rooms, along with EVMs, at least for a period of 45 days post declaration of results," the apex court said.

Second, the burnt memory semicontroller may be examined and verified by a team of engineers from EVM manufacturers post announcement of results on a written request made by candidates securing second and third highest votes.

"All candidates or their representatives shall have the option to remain present at the time of verification. Such a request should be made within a period of 7 days from the date of the declaration of results. After the verification process is conducted,

the actual cost or expenses for the said verification will be notified by the ECI and the candidates making the said request will make payment of said expenses.

Expenses will be refunded in case EVM is found to be tampered," ordered the Supreme Court.

It said that the district election officer in consultation with the team of engineers will certify the authenticity and intactness of the burnt memory of the microcontroller. Justice Dipankar Datta, authored a separate opinion, concurring with the directions issued by Justice Khanna.

CBI RECOVERS HUGE CACHE OF ARMS, EXPLOSIVES FROM HOUSE OF SHAHJAHAN'S RELATIVE AT SANDESHKHALI

Kolkata: The CBI on Friday afternoon conducted a raid at the residence of a relative of suspended Trinamool Congress leader Sheikh Shahjahan at Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas District and seized a huge cache of firearms and explosives.

Sources said the CBI got a tip off about the cache of arms and crude bombs at the residence of Shahjahan's relative Hafizul Khan, who is also an elected panchayat member from the ruling party.

Soon after getting the information, a CBI team escorted by personnel of the Central Armed Police Forces conducted the raid at the residence that was located within a pisciculture farm.

Till the time of filing of the report the CBI team was engaged in a search operation at the house. It is suspected that the firearms, explosives and crude bombs were stocked there for use on polling day in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Maha state unit Congress Working President quits 2024 LS polls campaign

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major jolt for the Congress, a senior Muslim leader of the party and one of the 'star campaigners' on Friday opted out of the campaign for the ongoing Lok Sabha election, and also quit the poll campaign committee.

Congress' Maharashtra unit Working President M. Arif Naseem Khan has shot off a letter to the party's national president Mallikarjun Kharge, expressing deep disappointment over Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies for not fielding any Muslim candidate in Maharashtra for the 2024 LS elections.

"From the total of 48 seats in the state, the MVA has not nominated a single Muslim candidate. Many Muslim organisations, party lead-



ers, and staunch workers were hopeful that at least one promi-

nent Muslim leader would be in the fray, but that has not happened," said Khan.

He pointed out that now the minority community is making embarrassing statements such as "the Congress wants Muslim votes, but doesn't want any Muslim candidates in elections", and rued that "now I can't face them as I have no answers as the Muslims have always supported the party".

"I am very upset with this unfair decision of the Congress... in the past, whenever the party assigned me election responsibilities in states like Gujarat, Goa, Karnataka, Telangana, West Bengal and others, including Maharashtra, I faithfully executed them. Now, I shall not campaign for the third, fourth and fifth phases of the LS 2024 elections," Khan said.

NOTICE TO EC ON NOTA

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to examine a plea seeking directions to the Election Commission (EC) to frame guidelines or rules, if in any election, all the contesting candidates individually do not surpass NOTA.

Issuing notice, a bench headed by CJI DY Chandrachud sought the response of the ECI in the matter.

The plea filed by a motivational speaker Shiv Khera stressed on framing of rules to the effect that if NOTA gets a majority, the election held in the particular constituency be declared null and void and a fresh election be conducted.

It referred to various orders passed by diverse State Election Commissions providing that NOTA shall be treated as a "fictional candidate" and fresh elections were to be conducted in case NOTA received the highest number of votes.

Paying for uniform implementation of the NOTA vote option, the petitioner sought directions that the candidates who poll fewer votes than NOTA be debarred from contesting all elections for a period of 5 years.

SCARED MODI WILL CRY ANY TIME: RAHUL GANDHI

Bengaluru | Agencies

The excitement of Lok Sabha elections is going on across the country and meanwhile, the round of allegations and counter-allegations is also going on between the leaders of the party and the opposition. Meanwhile, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scared and because of this he can shed tears on any stage. While addressing a public meeting in Vijayapura, Karnataka, Rahul Gandhi said that if you have heard



the Prime Minister's addresses, you would have felt that he is scared. Rahul expressed the possibility that the PM may shed tears on any plat-

form. Recently, PM Modi had targeted Congress over Mangalsutra, redistribution of wealth and tax on ancestral property. Now the former Congress President has accused the Prime Minister of diverting the public's attention through different mediums. Rahul Gandhi said that PM Modi is trying to divert your attention. Sometimes he talks about China, sometimes about Pakistan, sometimes he asks you to clink plates and sometimes he asks you to switch on the light of your mobile phone. In this way, efforts are being made to divert people's attention.

WhatsApp has threatened to exit India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Sparking a debate in India, Meta-owned popular messaging platform WhatsApp has said it will exit the domestic market if asked to break message encryption.

The government had said earlier that if there is no way to find the originator of messages without breaking encryption, then the company should come up with some other mechanism. In 2019, the Centre asked the messaging platform to implement an identifier. It



will allow the government and WhatsApp to pinpoint who sent which message, without having to read its contents. Now, during a hearing of WhatsApp and Meta's petition challenging a rule of Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 in the Delhi High Court, the company has threatened to quit the Indian market, if asked to do so. The bench will now hear the cases on August 14.

WHATSAPP SAYS

In its petition, WhatsApp has sought that the rule be declared "unconstitutional and that no criminal liability should accrue to it for non-compliance." The traceability requirement, the petition said, would force the company to break end-to-end encryption and violate the fundamental rights to privacy and free speech of the hundreds of millions of users who use WhatsApp's platform to communicate. Advocate Tejas Karia, appearing for WhatsApp, told the Delhi High Court that people use the messaging platform because it guarantees privacy with its end-to-end encryption.

Indian healthcare platform exposed 4.5 lakh sensitive documents, clinical data of patients: Report

Team Absolute | New Delhi

HealthGenie, a Delhi-based healthcare IT solutions provider, has allegedly exposed 4.5 lakh sensitive documents of patients that include clinical data and personal data like phone numbers, addresses and payment details, a report claimed on Friday.

Importantly, the documents were exposed for several months, claimed the report.

"Exposing personal medical data poses severe risks for affected individuals as attackers could use the information for identity theft, financial fraud, targeted phishing attacks, blackmail, and potentially compromise patients' medical histories and personal information. Individual healthcare data can be



sold on dark web forums," Cybernews said. The research team also contacted HealthGenie for an official comment "but received no response before publishing".

The Health Genie app with over 100,000 downloads on the Google

Play store, offers services such as finding doctors, booking appointments, Electronic Health Record systems, reporting and analytics, and financial monitoring, among others. India has lately been facing a significant rise in cyber attacks, particularly in the healthcare sec-

Mizoram once again grapples with African Swine Fever outbreak, 174 pigs dead

Aizawl | Agencies

The Mizoram government has sounded a high alert after the African Swine Fever (ASF) struck again in the bordering state resulting in the deaths of as many as 174 pigs so far, officials said on Thursday.

According to the officials of the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary (AHV) Department, the outbreak of the ASF has been confirmed in three districts -- Aizawl, Champhai and Saitual.

As per the Prevention and Control of Infectious and Contagious Disease in Animals Act 2009, the department has declared various villages and localities of the three districts as infected areas following the confirmation of ASF, and imposed a prohibition on the export or import of pigs from infected zones of the state and other states, besides the sale or slaughter of both healthy and sick pigs.

Dead pigs must be buried with lime powder in designated areas, a department notification said. Mizoram Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Minister C. Lalsawivunga held a meeting with department officials to review



the situation. He appealed to all concerned to adhere to the government's guidelines and directives in the fight against ASF. The ASF first hit Mizoram in 2021 and since then, reports of the outbreak of ASF have been reported time and again. Between May 2023 and April 2024, the state witnessed the loss of thousands of pigs to the contagious disease.



ALLEGATIONS FLY THICK AMID HIGH VOTER TURNOUT IN BARMER

Jaipur | Agencies

Allegations and counter-allegations flew thick and fast in the Barmer Lok Sabha constituency that went to the polls on Friday. The constituency recorded the highest voter turnout among the 13 seats that went to the polls in the state on Friday at 69.79 per cent (provisional figure).

Barmer is witnessing a triangular contest between Union Minister Kailash Chaudhary of the BJP, Congress' Umedaram Beniwal, and Independent candidate Ravindra Bhati, who is also the MLA from Sheo Assembly constituency.

Bhati made serious allegations against the administration. He said his polling agent was thrown out of the booth in Baytu Assembly. A label was put ahead of my name on the EVM so that I don't get voted. The vehicles of migrants who came to vote for me were stopped. No matter how many such tactics are used to defeat me, I have made a place in the hearts of my voters. How will you get me out of those hearts?

In his tweet, he said, "Inside Baytu Assembly, my agents are being thrown out of the booths and a label has been put in front of my name on the voting machine. What kind of



democracy is this? After all, under whose pressure is the administration working," said Bhati on his X account.

However, the Rajasthan police denied his allegations and said that they have received no such complaint.

Bhati questioned the silence of the administration, election commission

and the police and said, "The government is trying its best to reduce polling. Many vehicles are being stopped. Many people are being stopped. Whatever we can do, we are doing it. I would like to tell them that the people of Barmer, Jaisalmer and Balotra are strong. You can't do anything by stopping like this."

Meanwhile, the Jaisalmer police

banned Bhati's brother from roaming in Jaisalmer constituency.

The police wrote in a post that "the brother of independent candidate Ravindra Singh Bhati, who is not a voter of Jaisalmer, is influencing the voters by roaming in Jaisalmer district. Jaisalmer District Police appeals to the brother of the independent candidate to immediately leave the district."

Congress candidate Umedaram Beniwal said that some outsiders tried to disturb the peace and harmony of that.

"Sheo Vidhan Sabha constituency is known for peace and brotherhood. However the news coming in of handling and goondaism each minute is worrying. Outsiders who are miscreants are trying to demolish peace and spirit of brotherhood here," he added.

Baytu MLA Harish Chaudhary alleged that a Congress agent was manhandled. He charged that a Rajasthan government official has been flouting all norms of democracy. Dalit women have been mistreated in the presence of the IG and were injured. Villagers kept demanding that fake voting should be stopped but no one intervened. He asked the Election Commission to investigate the matter and take action.

Court extends Manish Sisodia's judicial custody till May 8 in ED case



Team Absolute | New Delhi

A local court on Friday extended the judicial custody of former Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia till May 8 in connection with a money laundering case being probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) related to the alleged excise policy scam.

On Wednesday, the same court extended Sisodia's judicial custody till May 7 in a parallel case in the same matter being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Last week, Sisodia withdrew his interim bail plea to campaign for the Aam Aadmi

Party (AAP) for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. Sisodia was produced before Special Judge Kaveri Baweja of the Rouse Avenue Court on the expiry of his previously extended judicial custody on Friday.

The court had last time reserved its judgement for April 30 on the regular bail plea moved by Sisodia, who has sought bail in the cases being probed by both the CBI and the ED. Earlier, the ED had accused Sisodia and the other accused persons of delaying the trial in the case.

To back his bail plea, Sisodia's counsel advocate Mohit Mathur has argued against the delay in complet-

ing the probe, claiming that no evidence has been found linking his client to the alleged bribe money in the case. He argued that the alleged proceeds of crime were not proven to cause any loss to the exchequer or the private consumers. The counsel also stressed the delay in the trial, stating that the Supreme Court's order allowing Sisodia to approach the court is six-month old, and the investigation should have been completed by now. Citing the bail granted to another accused in the case, Benoy Babu, Mathur had argued for his bail, arguing that Sisodia no longer holds a position of influence.

Delhi court dismisses ex-WFI chief's plea seeking further probe, lists hearing on framing of charges for May 7

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi court on Friday dismissed an application by BJP MP and former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, seeking further examination of evidence concerning his whereabouts on the date -- September 7, 2022 -- of an alleged incident. Singh is accused in a sexual harassment case in which several women wrestlers accused him of indulging in inappropriate behaviour.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Priyanka Rajpoot of Rouse Avenue Court dismissed Singh's application. The judge also listed the matter concerning the framing of charges against Singh for May 7.

On April 18, the court deferred the hearing on framing of charges after Singh's application seeking further investigation in the case. He had told the court that he was not in Delhi when one of the complainant wrestlers was allegedly sexually harassed.

The application had argued for a detailed investigation into Singh's claims of being abroad when the incident purportedly took place. The application had also demanded that the Delhi Police produce the Call Detail



Record (CDR). Additional Public Prosecutor Atul Srivastava, representing the Delhi Police, had opposed the application, arguing that the timing of the request was strategic and intended to prolong the case. He had stressed the potential legal ramifications of reopening the investigation at this stage. Meanwhile, the legal counsel for the complainants had criticised the application as a tactic to delay the proceedings.

Mamata Banerjee continues to fire salvos at Calcutta HC against ruling in school jobs case

Kolkata | Agencies

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday continued to fire salvos at a section of the judiciary in the Calcutta High Court over its recent ruling in the school jobs case even after the court on Thursday admitted a petition seeking action against the Trinamool chief for her 'anti-judiciary' remarks made in the past few days.

In a crucial ruling on Monday, the Calcutta High Court cancelled 25,753 appointments in teaching and non-teaching posts made by the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) in 2016. The case is being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Addressing an election rally in West Midnapore district on Friday, the Chief Minister said, "The com-



mon people expect justice from the honourable court. There are many cases which have been pending for years. But whenever the BJP moves any PIL, they are bailed out. But the opposite happens when Trinamool files any petition."

She also attacked a portion of the Calcutta High Court ruling that ordered the return of salaries along with interest drawn by those who were recruited illegally in 2016.

"After ordering the cancellation of jobs of so many individuals, there was

an order to return the salaries drawn along with an annualised interest of 12 per cent. I do not want to name anybody. But I want to ask that if they are also asked to return their salaries similarly, will they be able to do it? Is there anarchy in the state that so many jobs can be cancelled at one go," the Chief Minister asked.

To recall, addressing an election rally in Bolpur on Wednesday, Banerjee had said, "The BJP controls the affairs of the high courts due to its financial strength. I am not saying anything against the Supreme Court. We are still seeking justice there. But in the high courts, the BJP always has its way. Others do not get justice."

At another poll rally on Tuesday, she said, "I do not want to name anybody. The judges will earn their livelihood from the public exchequer. The state exchequer will bear the cost of their security. Yet they will terminate services."

Free haircut, 'mehendi' for women on offer as Maharashtra votes in Phase 2

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A voter turnout of 53.51 per cent was recorded till 5 p.m. for the 8 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra where voting was held on Friday.

Wardha registered the highest polling percentage till 5 p.m. at 56.66 per cent, followed by Amravati (54.50), Yavatmal-Washim (54.04), Parbhani (53.79), Akola (52.49), Nanded (52.47), Buldhana (52.24), and Hingoli (52.03).

The voters at the Hivari polling station in the Yavatmal-Washim constituency were made to wait for around 25 minutes as the polling staff took a 'break' for lunch. For a while, the voters, including senior citizens, got confused as they were made to wait as if they had gone to some government office. The polling was stopped from 2.10 p.m. to 2.35 p.m. due to this reason.



In Akola, a salon operator named Anant Kanulkar gave a novel offer of free haircuts to the customers who cast their votes. "Show your inked finger and get a haircut for free," read a board outside his salon. Stating that the offer was part of his efforts to encourage people to vote, Kanulkar appealed, "Wake up voters, become a part of democracy."

In Washim, District Collector Bhuvaneshwari S. cast her vote at the Lions Vidya Niketan and thereafter planted a sapling on the school campus. She also said the district administration had made efforts to increase the polling percentage to 75 per cent.

As part of the voter awareness drive, the Washim district administration also resorted to a novel idea of applying free 'mehendi' to the female voters who cast their votes on Friday.

SP CANDIDATE'S NOMINATION REJECTED FROM SHAHJAHANPUR

Shahjahanpur (UP): The nomination of Samajwadi Party (SP) candidate Rajesh Kashyap from Shahjahanpur Lok Sabha seat was rejected by the Returning Officer on Friday, citing 'technical grounds.'

The SP has now issued the election symbol to Jyotsna Gond who had filed her nomination papers two days ago. The SP had initially nominated two candidates on the seat for unexplained reasons.

Jyotsna Gond is a resident of Hardoi and is the niece of SP leader and OBC Morcha head, Rajpal Kashyap.

CM Vijayan loses cool when asked if elections would be assessment of his governance

Kannur (Kerala) | Agencies

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Friday lost his cool while speaking to the media after casting his vote at home base Kannur.

Kerala is voting to elect 20 new Lok Sabha members. Asked by the media on Friday if the Lok Sabha elections would be an assessment of his governance, CM Vijayan hit back saying, "What sort of person are you? Don't you know that this is a General Election for the country? Just because some people say something, don't you have the rationale to think?"

However CPI(M) state Secretary and close aide of the CM, MV Govindan differed with Vijayan when he was asked the same question.

He said, "May be one can assume that this is going to be an assessment of the state government."

However, two-time former state Finance Minister and veteran CPI(M) leader Thomas



Isaac was more direct when the same query was put to him.

Thomas Isaac, who is fighting it out at the Pathanamthitta Lok Sabha seat, replied with a simple, "Yes." Earlier, Vijayan had told the media that the Left was going to register a historic win. However, Leader of Opposition, VD Satheesan is equally confident and said the Congress-led UDF would win all the 20 seats in Kerala.

NCPCR INITIATES ACTION AGAINST MEHBOOBA MUFTI FOR 'USING SCHOOL CHILDREN FOR ELECTION CAMPAIGN'

Srinagar: In a significant development, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) on Friday took cognisance of a report on 'X' accusing PDP President and Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat candidate Mehbooba Mufti of using school children for campaigning in the election. In a communication to Chief Election Commissioner, Rajiv Kumar, NCPCR Chairperson Priyanka Kanoongo said that the child rights panel has taken suo motto cognisance of the matter and is informing the CEC of the same for deemed appropriate action against her.

Mehbooba Mufti is the PDP candidate for the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat and her main rivals are Mian Altaf Ahmad of the NC and Zafar Iqbal Manhas of the J&K Apni Party. The constituency goes to vote on May 7 in the third phase of the Lok Sabha polls.

114 candidates file nominations for India's biggest LS constituency in T'gana

Hyderabad | Agencies

Malkajgiri, which is the biggest parliament constituency in the country, accounts for the highest number of candidates filing their nominations in Telangana.

As many as 177 nominations were filed by 114 candidates in the constituency on the periphery of Hyderabad.

According to the Election Commission, a total of 895 candidates filed their nominations in all 17 constituencies in the state. On Thursday, which was the last day for filing of nominations, 348 candidates, mostly independents, filed their papers.

A total of 1,488 nominations were filed in all the constituencies with many candidates filing multiple sets. Chief Electoral Officer Vikas Raj said the scrutiny of nominations was taken up on Friday. April 29 is the last date for withdrawal of candidatures while voting will take place on May 13. In Malkajgiri, the last day saw 63 aspirants filing their nominations, taking the total number of candidates to 114.



Chevella, which is also spread over Assembly segments on the outskirts of Hyderabad and surrounding districts, has the second highest number of contestants at 66. A total of 88 nominations were filed here. In Peddapalli, 63 candidates filed their nominations while this number is 61 in Bhongir. Warangal and Hyderabad saw 58 and 57 aspirants filing their nominations respectively. Secunderabad constituency also recorded nominations by 57 candidates. Adilabad saw the lowest number of candidates (23) filing their nominations. In Mahabubnagar and Nizamabad, 42 contestants each filed their nominations. Majority of the candidates are independents or from smaller parties. Almost all the constituencies are likely to witness three cornered contests among ruling Congress, opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In 2019, BRS had bagged nine seats while BJP had won four. The Congress candidates were elected from three constituencies. All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) had retained the lone seat (Hyderabad).



WE WILL IMPLEMENT UCC IN ENTIRE COUNTRY, IT IS 'MODI KI GUARANTEE': AMIT SHAH

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Assuring that it is a 'Modi ki Guarantee' (PM Modi's guarantee), Home Minister Amit Shah said on Friday that the government led by the BJP will implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) across the country.

Addressing an election rally in Madhya Pradesh's Guna, Amit Shah accused the Congress of playing appeasement politics by encouraging the reform of personal laws.

"Rahul Baba, do whatever you want for appeasement. As long as the BJP is there, we will not allow personal law to be brought in. This country will run on a Uniform Civil Code. This is the soul of our Constitution, we have just brought UCC in Uttarakhand. This is Modi ji's guarantee, we will implement UCC across the country," Amit Shah told the gathering. He also mentioned that the Congress used to threaten that there would be a bloodbath if Article 370 is removed, but not a single incident has taken place in Jammu and Kashmir since its abrogation.

"It's been five years since Article 370 was removed... Forget about bloodshed, not a single stone was pelted. This is the Narendra Modi-led



BJP government, and not the Congress government," he said. Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia is contesting from Guna on BJP's symbol for the first time. Scindia contested the last Lok Sabha on a Congress ticket and lost against BJP's K.P. Yadav in 2019. One year later, Scindia along with his 22 loyalist MLAs joined the BJP.

Amit Shah called Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia a 'committed leader for development' as he urged the voters to elect him to the Lok Sabha from Guna in Madhya Pradesh. "What KP Yadav's role will be in the party, leave all that to me. Your leaders - Jyotiraditya Scindia and KP Yadav -- will continue to work for you. Elect Scindia as a Lok

Sabha MP, he is a committed leader for development," Shah said.

Scindia, who had contested the last Lok Sabha election on a Congress ticket in 2019, had lost to the BJP's KP Yadav. The first-ever defeat of a member of the erstwhile royal Scindia family of the Gwalior dynasty in its bastion Guna was a major setback for Scindia.

He joined the BJP in 2020 and was made a Rajya Sabha MP and elevated to Civil Aviation Minister in the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led BJP government.

While addressing the rally, Amit Shah said that people want their leader to be big. "Your leader is already big, support him and send him to the Lok Sabha. Your support

to him (Scindia) means support to PM Modi," Shah said. Jyotiraditya Scindia has represented the Guna seat four times between 2002 and 2014, including a by-poll in 2001.

TIME FOR PERMANENT FAREWELL OF DIGVIJAY SINGH: AMIT SHAH

Rajgarh: Union Home Minister Amit Shah while attacking former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Digvijay Singh in Rajgarh said that now the time has come for his permanent departure.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah discussed Digvijay Singh and his tenure in a public meeting held in Rajgarh and described him as 'Bantadhar' and said that he came many times and went many times, now the time has come to bid him a permanent farewell. The people of Rajgarh have to bid permanent farewell to Digvijay Singh from politics. Do bid a permanent farewell. But, the funeral of the lover is to be done with great pomp and as per his respect bid him farewell by beating him with lead.

Congress wants to take away the rights of OBC, Dalits and tribals through inheritance tax: Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader and former Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that the Congress Party wants to snatch the rights of Other Backward Classes (OBC), Dalits and Tribals by imposing inheritance tax. Congress wants to end India's tradition by dividing the country into castes through inheritance tax. Congress has dangerous intentions behind the inheritance tax and socio-economic survey. The hidden agenda of Congress has come to the fore in front of the country, which the people of the country will never accept. Former Chief Minister Chouhan said this while giving a bite to the media on the statement of Congress leader Sam Pitroda.

On Congress leader Sam Pitroda's statement on imposing inheritance tax, Chouhan said that by imposing inheritance tax, the Congress party wants to end the tradition of the country. This tax was there earlier, but



late. After the death of Indira Gandhi, Late. Rajiv Gandhi had abolished this tax.

Rajiv Gandhi his mother late. This tax was removed so that she could get the property of Indira Gandhi. Now Congress may try to find a way to escape from Sam Pitroda's statements, but the hidden agenda of Congress has come to the fore in front of the country.

Chouhan said that Sam Pitroda is not an ordinary leader, he is Rahul Gandhi's mentor. He has also been an advisor to Rajiv Gandhi. Leaders like Sam Pitroda give ideas to Congress and Congress implements those ideas. But Congress has to understand that this is not America. There is inheritance tax in America, but this is India. The path that Congress is following is not the path of India, it is dangerous.

History-sheeter Shamim Kabadi's house worth Rs 3 crore bulldozed in Jabalpur

Team Absolute | Jabalpur

On the lines of CM Yogi Adityanath in Uttar Pradesh, now bulldozer is going on against mafias and history-sheeters in Madhya Pradesh also. The latest case has come to light from Khajri in Jabalpur, where major action has been taken in the blast case at Raza Metal Industries. Shamim Kabadi's palatial house has been razed to the ground with a bulldozer.



In the presence of top officials, his house worth Rs 3 crore, located near Anand Nagar bus stop in Jabalpur, was razed to the ground in the blink of an eye.

It is being told that there are many more houses in the area of Shamim Kabadi, which can also be razed to

the ground further. IG Anil Singh Kushwaha and DIG Tusharkant Vidyarathi reached the spot on Friday morning and prepared a complete plan to raze Shamim's house to the ground. Apart from this, officials have also become active to take stock of the current

situation of all the scrap shops of Shamim. Earlier on Thursday, there was a big explosion in the junkyard of Shamim Kabadi in which two people were killed. The investigation of the case has been handed over to NIA. Shamim Kabadi is absconding after the accident.

PANDIT DHIRENDRA SHASTRI'S BROTHER BEATS UP TOLL WORKERS

Team Absolute | Chhatrapur

Saurav Garg alias Shaligram Shastri, brother of Peethadhiswar Pandit Dhirendra Krishna Shastri of Bageshwar Dham, beat up toll workers in Chhatrapur. When asked for toll, he attacked along with his associates. Police have registered a case against 10 people including Shaligram Shastri. All the accused are absconding.

The incident took place on Thursday night at Mangwari toll plaza located on Sagar Road in Gulganj police station area of Chhatrapur. SP Agam Jain told that Shaligram was going to attend a wedding ceremony with his friends late at night. Meanwhile, his car was stopped at the toll plaza and toll was demanded, on this he got enraged and assaulted him. Toll workers had given the names of Jitu Tiwari, Lokesh alias Shaligram Garg. Police have registered a case against 10 people.

Shaligram has been in controversies before also. Shaligram had threatened by firing at the wedding of a daughter of Ahirwar community on 11 February 2023 in Gadha village of Chhatrapur district. Actually, the family had applied for marriage in the mass marriage conference of Bageshwar Dham, but later decided to hold a pri-



vate function. As soon as he came to know about this, Shaligram reached the wedding ceremony with his friends at around 12 o'clock in the night.

Here he created a ruckus and threatened the people present there. After the video surfaced, the police had registered an FIR against Shaligram.

Congress candidate Arun Srivastava did intensive campaigning in Sehore

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress Lok Sabha candidate Arun Srivastava on Friday intensified his election campaign in Sehore district of Bhopal parliamentary constituency. The general public and Congress workers gave a grand welcome to Srivastava, who reached Sehore on Friday, and extended their support.

Srivastava told the voters present in large numbers in different areas of this area that BJP has been in power in the state for 20 years. The Sehore area adjacent to the capital was supposed to get major development but BJP leaders and ministers are only focusing on collecting money and for 20 years. Even after this, the people of Sehore continued to



year for basic facilities and development.

Srivastava started his public relations campaign from Lunia intersection of this area on Friday morning. Here he assured the voters present in large numbers that whether Jitu or Haru, now I will continuously struggle for the development of Sehore and Berasia, two backward areas of Bhopal parliamentary constituency. Said that with the help of one lakh rupees per year to the poor women of Congress, their standard of living will improve, while for the young farmers and laborers, their lives will also become brighter with the excellent schemes of Congress. He said that BJP is only bringing guarantees but these guarantees are not being known among the general public. He appealed to the voters to make Congress victorious.

The bride cast her vote before bidding farewell in Narsinghpur

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Voting is taking place in six parliamentary constituencies in the second phase of Lok Sabha in Madhya Pradesh. There is enthusiasm among the people regarding voting. An interesting picture has come to light in Hoshangabad parliamentary constituency, where the bride reached the polling booth to vote before her farewell. Voting is being held in six parliamentary constituencies in the state in the second phase, which includes Hoshangabad seat.



There is enthusiasm among people about voting. Sakshi Sahu cast his vote before bidding farewell at a polling booth in Narsinghpur here.

Sakshi Sahu reached the polling station with her family members and cast her vote. During this time her husband was also with her.

Awareness program on cancer organized by AIIMS Bhopal



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Professor (Dr) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, always emphasizes that we should go out of the hospital premises, among the people in the community to provide them health information. Only then will we be able to truly make people health conscious. In view of the increasing cases of cancer in the country, it is very important to create awareness. HPV vaccination is very important to combat the problem of

cervical cancer especially in women. Professor Singh places great emphasis on the education of children in particular.

According to him, educating or making a child aware means educating or making a generation aware. In this connection, Dr. Shashank Bansal, Assistant Professor, Department of Medical Oncology, AIIMS Bhopal, recently organized an awareness program on cancer for the children of class 11th and 12th at Orion International School.

In this awareness program, children were told about the screening technique through which any person can check himself at the primary level whether he has cancer. The risk of cervical cancer in women is almost completely eliminated after HPV vaccination. Besides, children were also given information about how to maintain their lifestyle. Because in the present lifestyle, children are mostly attracted towards junk food. Around 200 children participated in this cancer awareness program.

Amit Shah, angry over low voting in the first phase, called for reports of MLAs till late night

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Amit Shah has expressed displeasure over the low turnout in the first phase. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav and State President VD Sharma and other leaders including him were told in clear words that the party MLAs are not active. Tell every MLA that a report card will be prepared on the basis of the results of the Lok Sabha elections and on that basis their political future will be decided.

Amidst the Lok Sabha election campaign, BJP's chief strategist Home Minister Amit Shah came to Bhopal on Thursday night and reviewed the election preparations of Madhya Pradesh till late night.

The BJP high command is worried over the low voting percentage in 6 seats including Chhindwara in the first phase in the state. If there is similar low turnout in the next phases, then it will be difficult to achieve the target of increasing 370 votes at each booth and winning all 29 seats.

In this meeting which lasted till late night, Amit Shah also talked about the assembly-wise situation in the voting on 6 seats in the first phase. According to BJP sources, the national leadership of BJP is keeping an eye on the activism of leaders and workers up to the booth level in every Lok Sabha constituency. Information is being collected about every MLA as to how active he is in his area. And his activism is being compared with his activism in the 2023 assembly elections.

Amit Shah was to reach Bhopal at 8:30 pm, but he reached at 11.45 pm. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, Lok Sabha election in-charge Dr. Mahendra



Singh, co-in-charge Satish Upadhyay and election committee coordinator Hemant Khandelwal welcomed Amit Shah at the State Hangar. Initially 10-15 leaders were likely to meet him.

It was being said that apart from the top leadership of the state, he would also meet the cluster in-

charges for the Lok Sabha elections. But as the night approached, he met only Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, Organization General Secretary Hitanand Sharma and Lok Sabha in-charge Dr. Mahendra Singh and co-in-charge Satish Upadhyay.



EDITOR'S SPECS

AIUDF diminish Cong's chances in Assam

Five Lok Sabha seats in Assam - Nagaon, Karimganj, Silchar, Darrang-Udalguri and Diphu parliamentary constituencies went to the polls in the second phase of General Elections on Friday. Among them, 24, the highest number of candidates, are in the fray in Karimganj Lok Sabha seat. This constituency was de-reserved in last year's delimitation exercise. Minorities dominated the electoral politics in this seat in the last few Lok Sabha polls and the BJP could win this seat in 2019 after many years due to a triangular contest between the Congress, AIUDF and the saffron party. Post delimitation, political observers believe that Muslim voters have outnumbered Hindu voters in Karimganj Lok Sabha seat with a margin of 1.5 lakh. This makes this constituency a favourable seat for the Congress party. However, as Badruddin Ajmal's party AIUDF also fielded a candidate here, the task of the Congress in Karimganj is not an easy one, many now believe. The BJP has again fielded incumbent MP Kripanath Mallah, while senior advocate of Gauhati High Court Hafiz Rashid Ahmed Choudhury has been contesting on a Congress ticket in Karimganj. The AIUDF has given a ticket to Sahabul Islam Choudhury, who earlier fought two Assembly elections in Karimganj and lost both. However, if he is able to pull a sizable portion of minority votes this time, the Congress candidate will find it hard to defeat the BJP. The delimitation exercise has changed the voter demographics in Nagaon Lok Sabha seat where Muslims now outnumber the Hindus. The Congress has given the sitting MP Pradyut Bordoloi a ticket to fight the polls in Nagaon while the BJP has fielded Congress turncoat Suresh Bora in this constituency.

INDIA bloc aims to divide the country on religious grounds: UP CM Yogi Adityanath

Lashing out at the Congress on Friday, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the Congress manifesto is harmful to India, the world's largest democracy. Talking to reporters at his official residence, the chief minister said that the BJP had entered the elections with the issues of development, security, and governance.

The first phase of voting was held on these issues, but just before the first phase, the manifesto of Congress, the most important component of the INDIA bloc, drew the attention of the entire country.

"The Congress, in its manifesto, wants to lay the foundation for the country's division on religious grounds by supporting issues ranging from implementing Taliban rule to personal law. The BJP will strongly oppose it in any case," he added.

He said that everyone had read the statements of Congress advisor Sam Pitroda.

During the tenure of the UPA government, reports from the Ranganath Mishra Committee and the Sachar Committee were brought in by the Congress, he said.

"Additionally, in Karnataka, the government led by the Congress is forcibly including Muslims in the reservation for backward classes, thus unfairly dividing the rights of the OBCs" he said.

He further said that by discussing the Inheritance Tax, conducting an X-ray of property and seizing property, they aim to lay the foundation for the country's division on religious grounds.



"Along with this, they are also discussing taking half of the inheritance property and reintroducing laws such as personal laws. The partition of this country took place due to these reasons. If any political party tries to do this, it will be opposed at all costs," he said.

"Naxalism is on the decline in India. If there is any attempt to revive this, we will never accept it. The BJP government has been taking action against corruption from the beginning. However, if anyone tries to impose dacoity on the property of the common man, we will not allow it to happen," said the chief minister.

Attacking the Congress and its allies for "endorsing a Taliban-like mentality" in the country's politics, the chief minister said, "They are trying to resurrect the Maoist insurgency and are attempting to demean women by reintroducing practices like triple talaq through personal laws. Hence, in the present scenario, the BJP is opposing these issues."

He mentioned that "we are bringing up these issues and capturing the public's attention. The public's attention is constantly being drawn to what is the mentality of Congress and INDIA bloc. To prevent their intentions from materialising, it is imperative for the public to act decisively and thwart them through every vote they cast, he said.

The Chief Minister stated that there is enthusiasm and a positive atmosphere in the country regarding the work of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The country wants to see progress, and PM Modi has provided a new direction to the country in 10 years.

KCR family not in election battle for first time in two decades

For the first time in two decades, the family of former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Reddy (KCR) is not in the fray for Lok Sabha elections. No member of the family of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) founder has filed a nomination for the May 13 polls in the state.

This is the first since the formation of TRS (now BRS) in 2001 that the KCR family is staying away from the contest.

The former chief minister or his family member fought every Parliament and Assembly election since 2004.

KCR, who had resigned from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) to float TRS to revive the Telangana movement, had contested for Lok Sabha from Karimnagar and for Assembly from Siddipet. He was elected from both seats but vacated Siddipet to enter Parliament and became a minister in the Congress-led UPA government at the Centre.

KCR's nephew and TRS leader Harish Rao was elected from Siddipet in the by-election.

The TRS founder, who forced by-elections in 2006 and 2008 after differences with Congress over the Telangana issue, retained Karimnagar's seat on both occasions.

In 2009, KCR was elected to Lok Sabha from Mahabubnagar. It was during this term that he succeeded in achieving the goal of Telangana state. KCR's son K.T. Rama Rao made his electoral debut in the 2009 elections with a win from the Sircilla Assembly seat and



he retained the seat in the 2010 by-election.

In 2014, KCR contested for Lok Sabha from Medak and for Assembly from Gajwel. He was elected from both places. As the TRS secured a majority in the 119-member Telangana Assembly, he quit the Medak seat to become the first chief minister of the new state.

In the same elections, KCR's daughter Kavitha was elected to Lok Sabha from Nizamabad. His son and nephew, who were once again elected to the Assembly from Sircilla and Siddipet respectively, became ministers in his Cabinet.

While TRS retained power in 2018, Kavitha lost the Nizamabad Lok Sabha seat to BJP's Dharampuri Arvind in the 2019 elections. She was later elected to the Legislative Council.

In 2022, KCR changed the name of TRS to BRS to focus on national politics. However, after ruling the state for 10 years, the party lost power to Congress late last year.

KCR contested from two Assembly seats -- Gajwel and Kamareddy. He retained Gajwel but could not win Kamareddy. This was the first electoral defeat for the seasoned politician since 1985. KTR and Harish Rao retained their respective seats.

There were indications that Kavitha would again contest from Nizamabad but finally, KCR decided not to field her. She was recently arrested in the alleged Delhi excise policy case.

There was also speculation that KCR may contest Lok Sabha elections from Medak or Malakjiri but the leader of the opposition decided to focus on state politics.

international

China's top diplomat: 'Negative factors' up in relationship with US

Beijing | Agencies
On the last day of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to China, Beijing has warned of a deterioration in relations between the two powers.

Although the two sides are talking to each other again, the "negative factors" in the relationship between the US and China have increased, said China's chief diplomat Wang Yi on Friday in Beijing.

Wang cited China's right to develop being "unreasonably suppressed" as one of the reasons. According to him, the two countries are faced with the question of whether their relationship will either stabilise or slide into a downward spiral.

According to US media reports, Blinken said that



progress had been made in some areas to close the gap between the two countries. However, he wanted to express clearly and directly the issues on which there were differences of opinion with China. In talks on Thursday with the

Party Secretary of Shanghai, Chen Jining, Blinken addressed points of difference with China regarding unfair trading practices, US press reports said. During his three-day visit to China Blinken also met students and US business repre-

sentatives in Shanghai.

After a year of complete radio silence, US President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, met in person last November near San Francisco in order to stabilise strained relations.

However, since then, new disputes on political and economic issues have continued to boil over. China is angry about US sanctions in the tech sector or against Chinese companies supplying componentry, which could be used in Russia's war machine against Ukraine.

Washington is concerned about Chinese influence and recently passed a law to force the Chinese company ByteDance to divest itself of its video-sharing platform TikTok in the US.

Several killed and injured after junta airstrikes in Myanmar

Bangkok | Agencies
Several civilians were killed and many more injured in a heavy airstrike by the military in Myanmar on a rebel-controlled region on the border with India. The bombs hit a hospital in the town of Mindat in the state of Chin in the west of the crisis-torn country on Thursday evening, eyewitnesses and local media reported on Friday.

At least four people died at Wanma Thu District Hospital, and 15 others were seriously injured, a man who helped rescue the victims and spoke on condition of anonymity told dpa.

In the region, rebels began resisting the



junta shortly after the military coup in February 2021.

As recently as Wednesday, the Chinland Defence Force celebrated the third

anniversary of its founding to fight the junta. The group now controls various areas in the region.

A plane flew two attacks during the night and dropped a total of six bombs over and around the hospital, the eyewitness said.

Since their overthrow and the ouster of former prime minister Aung San Suu Kyi, the generals have ruled Myanmar with an iron fist and great brutality.

However, they have come under increasing pressure in recent months. Rebel organisations have partially taken control in various towns on the borders with India, China and Thailand. The army repeatedly responds to this with airstrikes.

Won't divest stake in TikTok: Chinese parent ByteDance tells US



Beijing | Agencies
China-based internet giant ByteDance on Friday said it will not sell its stake in TikTok as directed by the US government in a new bill passed by President Joe Biden earlier this week to ban the short-video making platform in the country.

The Chinese platform's parent company said in a social media post that it "doesn't have any plans to sell TikTok".

The information earlier reported that ByteDance was exploring the potential sale of TikTok's operation in the US.

"Foreign media reports of ByteDance selling TikTok are not true," the Chinese company said in the post. "TikTok has already stated that it will challenge the 'unconstitutional law' in courts. TikTok has also denied claims that China has control over ByteDance. Biden earlier signed a massive foreign aid package bill that will also ban TikTok in the country if ByteDance doesn't divest its stake within a year. The bill gives TikTok owner ByteDance nine months' time to force a sale, with a 90-day extension. Meanwhile, on the last day of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to China, Beijing has warned of deterioration in relations between the two powers.

S. Korea doctors' protest: More medical professors considering weekly breaks



Seoul | Agencies
Professors from around 20 major medical schools in South Korea will decide on Friday whether to take a weekly day off while struggling to fill the void of trainee doctors who have walked off their jobs for more than two months, officials said. The emergency committee for national medical professors will hold a general meeting online later in the day and discuss the potential suspension of all surgeries and treatment for outpatients once a week, according to its officials, Yonhap news agency reported. "Professors have hit their limit both mentally and physically," said a committee official, adding: "We will review whether to take a day off on a regular basis, and details will be fixed in accordance with the situation of each hospital." Despite looming closures, hospitals will likely continue the operations of their emergency rooms and intensive care units, he added. The committee involves professors from around 20 medical schools, and those affiliated with some of the schools have already decided to have a weekly break starting next month. Earlier, professors of the Seoul National University's medical school vowed to suspend their work on April 30, and they will decide on possible regular breaks later. The professors serve as senior doctors at major hospitals.

Making UNGA more effective can't be divorced from UNSC reforms: India

Arul Louis | United Nations

Making the General Assembly more effective cannot be divorced from the wider context of the reform of the UN, including the Security Council, according to India.

"Revitalisation of the General Assembly must also be seen in the wider context of the overall reform of the United Nations," Pratik Mathur, a minister at India's UN mission said on Thursday.

Speaking at a meeting of the ad hoc working group on revitalising the Assembly, he said, "It is our firm belief that the urgent and comprehensive UN reform, including of the Security Council, is imperative to make it reflective of current geopolitical realities and enhance its capability to meet increasingly complex challenges of our time."

"Let us strive to make this reform of global governance architecture that is fit for purpose for the 21st century a reality in the Pact of the Future that we are currently negotiating," he said.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has convened a 'Summit of the Future' in September where the world leaders are to adopt the 'Pact of the Future' to make the world



organisation more effective in meeting global challenges.

The primacy of the Assembly, which is the closest to a "global parliament", must be recognised in any efforts to revitalise it, Mathur said.

"India has always been of the view that the General Assembly can be revitalised only when its position as the primary deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations is respected in letter and in spirit," he said.

"The essence of the General Assembly is in its intergovernmental nature," he said. "It is

the closest thing to a global parliament."

He said that any changes to its working methods should be to enhance its role "as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations".

"The UN's success rests on the effectiveness of the Assembly as the chief deliberative and policy-making body as envisaged in the UN Charter," Mathur said.

He drew attention to the annual general debate at which the heads of state and government of most of the 193 mem-

bers participate in September, but increasingly finds itself competing with other high-level events scheduled at the same time.

India "is of the view that for the revitalisation of the General Assembly, the sanctity of the annual general debate and its associated elements must be restored", he said.

The meeting "has a special place in the annual agenda of the UN and we should not let it be equated with various high-level events which do not enjoy the participation of all member states", he added.



Maha MLA takes MP wife on bike ride to cast vote in Amravati

Quaid Najmi | Amravati

Actress-turned-politician BJP candidate for Amravati (SC) Lok Sabha constituency, Navneet Kaur-Rana knows how to grab eyeballs, not just inside dark cinemas but also in broad daylight. As the much-awaited E-day dawned, Navneet, 38 - sporting a dazzling golden-orange sari with small designs - decided to do something different while stepping out to vote on Friday morning. In the 39 degrees Celsius fiery heat, she discarded her cool comfy car and hopped onto her independent MLA husband Ravi Gangadhar Rana's Bullet motorcycle as a pillion rider to cast her vote, but minus the protective helmets.



"I have taken the blessings of Lord Hanuman and recited Hanuman Chalisa before stepping out of home... I am certain that Bajrangbali will shower his blessings on me, and provide me with another opportunity to serve the people of my constituency," said Navneet with a grin.

With her husband acting as the 'driver', Navneet happily perched pillion behind him while her retinue of supporters and excited media crews followed suit on their own motorcycles, and she indulged in some straight talk, unmindful of the blazing sun.

Navneet grabbed a media person's mike and delivered homilies asking people to step out and vote, how each vote would be an endorsement for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and exuded supreme confidence that she would win the LS elections for the second consecutive time with a three-lakh vote margin.

Attired in a casual white kurta-pyjama, MLA Ravi gingerly negotiated the sparse oncoming traffic of vehicles, the occasional tractor or a JCB, had to slow down a couple of times as the couple's motorcycle glided off some sharp speed-breakers, but keeping his full concentration on the road.

In full form, the radiant Navneet got carried away a couple of times to raise her right arm plus mike to

make some point and peppered her interaction invoking Hindu gods aplenty, besides praising PM Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other state or Central leaders.

When the couple reached the polling station, they got off and entered the polling booth, voted in turn, displayed their inked fingers and stepped out to mingle with the ordinary voters.

The Mumbai-born daughter of an ex-armyman of Punjabi roots, Navneet (Kaur) has a passion for life on the fast lane and has been seen zooming around on the roads several times in the past.

In June 2023, she had gone for a farm visit just ahead of the rains and in Patur taluka, drove a dazed farmer's tractor for some distance in the barren farmland being readied for the first Kharif season crop. Soon after her acrimonious face-off with ex-Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray heading the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Mumbai, Navneet made several reels and posted them on social media.

Clad in salwar-kameez or kurtas in black, raging reds or stark saffron hues, a 'sairat' (plucky or carefree) Navneet could be seen zipping around on her motorcycle, hailed Lord Hanuman and other gods, or mouthed small messages for the youth and youngsters - whose crucial support could sail her through in these elections.

Massive 25,000 ton girder installed to connect Mumbai Coastal Road with Sea Link



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has successfully installed a massive 25,000-ton girder connecting the southbound lane of Mumbai Coastal Road to the Bandra Worli Sea Link. The civic body issued a statement announcing the achievement.

The installation of the 136-metre-long bow-string-arch-type girder at Worli began at 2 am and was completed by 3.25 am. This engineering feat is the first of its sort in India, involving installation at sea.

According to the report, the girder, which is 18 to 21 metres wide, would connect the 10.5-kilometer section of coastal road to the Bandra-Worli Sea Link. The southbound corridor of the coastal road between Worli and Marine Lines opened for traffic on March 11 of this year, but it was not connected to the sea link until now.

Furthermore, another girder measuring 143 metres long and 26-29 metres broad for the coastline road's northbound sector has arrived at Nhava Sheva port. Its installation is

scheduled for the end of May, following the launch of the first girder, the report added.

"Another 143-meter long, 26-29 meter wide girder of the coastal road's northbound corridor has also reached Nhava Sheva port and its launch is planned for May-end. The transportation of the second girder will be planned after the launch of the first girder," the BMC had said earlier.

Anti-rust paint has been applied to the girders to protect them from the effects of salinity and humidity. This safeguard guarantees that fishing vessels off the Worli coast do not encounter any difficulties.

"These girders, painted with anti-rust colours to protect them from saline water and humidity, are being installed to ensure fishing boats off the Worli coast do not face hassles," the BMC said.

The BMC hailed this achievement as a significant milestone, marking the success of the first-of-its-kind experiment in India. "With the success of this first-of-its-kind experiment in India, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation added a new feather in its cap," the release said.

Ailing Maratha leader Manoj Jarange-Patil goes in ambulance to cast vote in Jalna

Team Absolute | Jalna (Maharashtra)

Shiva Sanghatana leader Manoj Jarange-Patil left in an ambulance from Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad) for neighbouring Jalna to exercise his franchise on E-day, on Friday.

Jarange-Patil, who had rattled the Maharashtra Mahayuti government with his serial Maratha quota agitation and hunger strike starting from August 29, 2023, will cast his vote at his native Antarawali-Sarati village later this afternoon. Lying on a stretcher in a fully equipped ambulance which left Galaxy Hospital of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Jarange-Patil was in the care of a medical team to ensure an event-free 60 km-long journey to Jalna, an aide said.

"After casting his vote, Jarange-Patil is expected to return to the hospital where he was admitted on Wednesday, after he suddenly felt unwell during a tour in Dharashiv (Osmanabad)," the aide from Satara told reporter.

Appearing frail but firm, Jarange-Patil reiterated that he would not recommend the names of specific Lok Sabha candidate/s belonging to any political party to the Marathas for their support.

"I will only say that you should vote wisely for those who will fight for your interest... and not for those who are opposing the Marathas getting reservation from the OBC category," reiterated Jarange-Patil.

Jarange-Patil will visit a polling station in



Antarawali-Sarati village, where a deserted large marquee still stands testimony to the Maratha quotas stir he launched with the first 'fast unto death' agitation on August 29, 2023. Thereafter, there were at least four hunger strikes, protest marches, record public rallies to drum up the quotas cause and massive Maratha processions which reached the doorsteps of Mumbai in January, rattling the Mahayuti government.

Two killed, six injured as drunk driver rams tempo into pedestrians

Team Absolute | Palghar

Two persons were killed and six injured, some of them seriously, after a drunk man driving a tempo knocked down pedestrians and two-wheeler riders in Maharashtra's Palghar district, police said on Friday, reported news agency.

The incident took place in the Wada area on Wednesday night, he said. The police have arrested the tempo driver but are yet to share his details.

The tempo first hit pedestrians Ashok Kalingada (36) and Ajinkya Berde (35), killing them on the spot. The drunk driver then rammed the vehicle into a few two-wheelers, injuring six persons, a police official said.

The injured individuals have been admitted to a local hospital where some of them are said to be in critical condition, he said.

The station house officer of Wada police station said the tempo driver has been booked under the Indian Penal Code for culpable homicide not amounting to murder and the Motor Vehicles Act.

Pune doctors remove turmeric pieces that formed layers in elderly man's lungs



Team Absolute | Pune

Using home remedies such as turmeric root or cloves to fight cough is a common practice, but a doctor on Friday warned against using these, after removing turmeric pieces that formed layers in an 85-year-old farmer's lungs. The farmer was presented at DPU Super Speciality Hospital in Pune with an intractable cough that he had been suffering for the last three months and subsequently led to difficulty in breathing. The man had previously visited several hospitals, but could not find a proper treatment for his cough. The doctors suggested a CT scan of the lungs which indicated the presence of a foreign body.

Further, during a bronchoscopy procedure, it was observed that a foreign body had enlarged and formed layers in the lungs -- about 2cm long and 1 cm wide -- making it difficult to remove. Using forceps and specialised instruments, and under local anaesthesia, the team of doctors successfully dislodged and extracted the foreign object from the man's lungs. They were initially unable to confirm the nature of the foreign body. But after cutting it they discovered that it had a yellowish colour, and it exhibited a yellowish hue. "During the post-procedure interactions with the patient, the patient reported that he tended to put a piece of turmeric root in his mouth before going to bed, to alleviate cough symptoms," said Dr M. S. Barthwal, Head of the

Department of Pulmonary Medicine, who led the team of doctors. He concluded that the piece of turmeric root must have accidentally entered the lungs during sleep and inadvertently lodged in his airway. Following the treatment, the patient's prolonged battle with the painful cough ended, and he was discharged after a few days of recovery, the doctor said. "Last year also, we removed a clove stalk from the lungs of a patient who was keeping it in his mouth for relief of his intractable cough. It is advised that keeping these objects -- turmeric pieces and clove stalks -- do not lead to improvement in cough but land patients in serious condition," Dr Barthwal said.

India, Japan review progress of Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Railway project

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India and Japan on Thursday reviewed the progress of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Railway (MAHSR) project during the 17th Joint Committee meeting held in an online format.

Railways and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw co-chaired the meeting along with Masafumi Mori, Special Advisor to the Japanese Prime Minister.

From the Indian side, the meeting was also attended by top officials from the Railways and the Ministry of External Affairs as well as the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL).

Executives from relevant ministries and agencies, including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Economy, Trade and Industry, Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism as well as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) participated in the meeting from the Japanese side.



"At this meeting, we confirmed the progress of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail project and held technical discussions to ensure the steady progress of the project going forward," said a statement issued by the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

"The Japanese government will continue to work closely with the Indian government to realise the introduction of the Shinkansen system on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed railway," it added.

Earlier this week, in an exclusive chat with the reporter, Vaishnaw said that "significant progress" has been made in the construction of various stations for India's first bullet train.

"More than 290 km of work has already been done. Bridges have been built over eight rivers... The work is going on at a very fast pace with the target of opening the first section in 2026," he revealed.

Polling impacted in Marathwada, Vidarbha due to technical glitches

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Polling was impacted in Maharashtra's Marathwada and Vidarbha districts due to technical snags in the EVMs.

After EVMs malfunctioned in Marathwada's Hingoli and Nanded constituencies, and Vidarbha's Akola, Amaravati and Wardha constituencies, the district election personnel swung into action to replace them or repair them to have smooth and hassle-free polling in these constituencies.

In Hingoli, the district election personnel found technical problems in 39 ballot machines, 16 control units and 25 VVPAT machines. However, after the corrective steps, the polling was resumed.

In the Amaravati constituency, the EVM was not functional for 15 minutes which impacted the polling.

At another polling station from the Wadarpura area of Amravati, the polling was affected due to the technical snag in the EVM.

In Umara village of Akot tehsil from Akola district, the EVM was non-functional but it was replaced,



after which the polling began.

In Takli village polling station in Nanded district, the polling was affected for one hour due to EVM snag.

BJP nominee and sitting MP Ramdas Tadas from Wardha constituency, along with his family, reached Devil's Yashwant Girls High School to cast their votes. However, they along with other voters, had to wait for over 40 minutes due to technical snag in the EVM. The polling was restarted after it was repaired.

Till 9 a.m., 7.45 per cent 7.45 per cent polling was recorded in eight constituencies of Maharashtra.

Wardha recorded 7.18 per cent polling followed by Akola (7.17 per cent), Amravati (6.34 per cent), Buldhana (6.61 per cent), Hingoli

(7.23 per cent), Nanded (7.73 per cent), Parbhani (9.72 per cent) and Yavatmal - Washim (7.23 per cent).

A total of 1,49, 25, 912 eligible voters will exercise their voting rights in 16,589 polling stations in these eight constituencies.

In Nanded, the BJP has renominated Pratap Patil Chikhaliakar against Congress nominee Vasant Chavan. Chikhaliakar had defeated Ashok Chavan who had contested as the Congress nominee in the 2019 elections but during this election, Chavan, who became the Rajya Sabha member after joining BJP, had sought votes for Chikhaliakar.

In Akola, the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi founder Prakash Ambedkar, who could not agree to a sharing arrangement with Maha Vikas

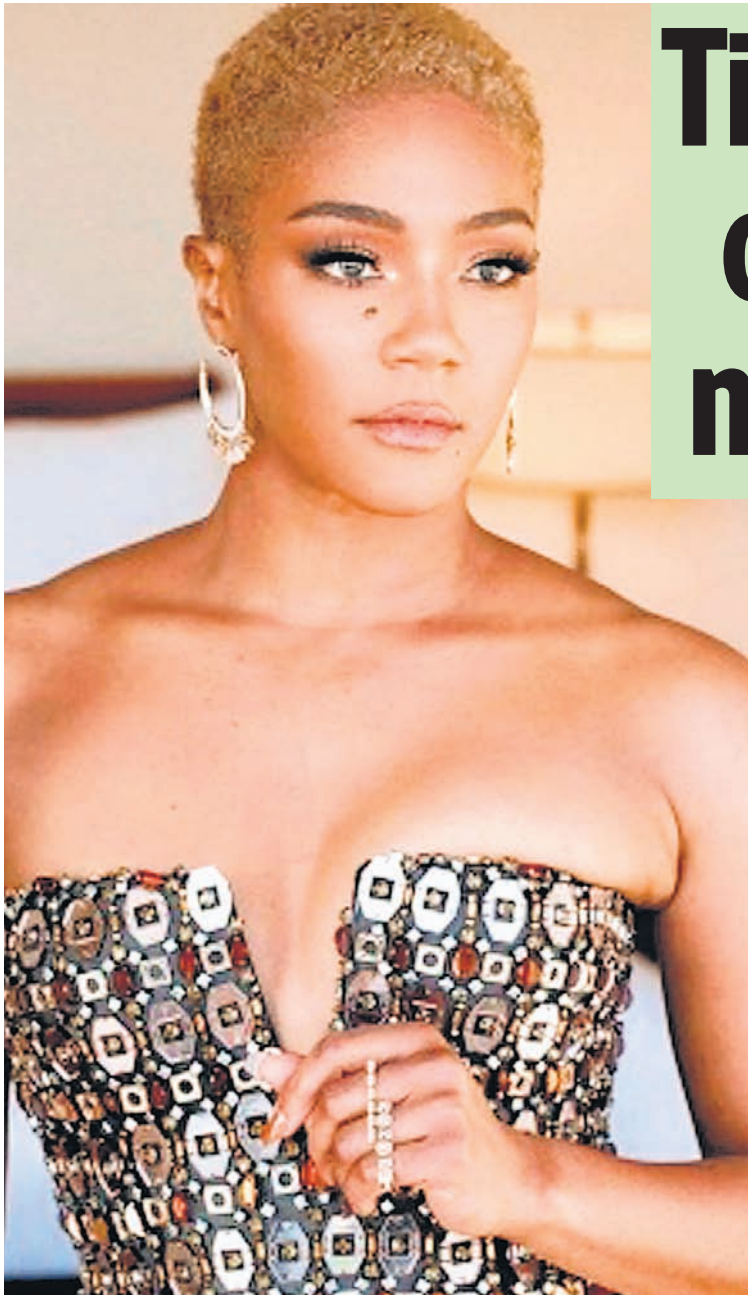
Aghadi partners, is in the fray against BJP nominee Anup Mhatre and Congress candidate Abhay Patil.

In Amaravati, the BJP nominated Navneet Rana, who was elected as an independent in the 2019 elections, against Congress nominee Balwant Wankhede. The Prahar Janashakti Party founder and former minister Bachhu Kadu has fielded his party's nominee in this constituency.

In Wardha, NCP SP has nominated youth Amara Kale against BJP's two-term MP Ramdas Tadas while in Yavatmal-Washim there is a fight between Shiv Sena nominee Rajashri Patil and Shiv Sena UBT candidate Sanjay Deshmukh.

In Hingoli, the Shiv Sena nominee Baburao Kadam Kohalikar is pitted against Shiv Sena UBT candidate Nagesh Patil Ashitkar. In Parbhani, the NCP led by Ajit Pawar left the seat to MahaYuti ally Rashtriya Samaj Paksha founder Mahadev Jankar who faces challenge from the Shiv Sena (UBT) nominee and sitting MP Sanjay Jadhav.

In Buldhana there is a fight between two factions of Shiv Sena. The Shiv Sena nominee and sitting MP Prataprao Jadhav is pitted against Shiv Sena UBT candidate Narendra Khedekar.



Tiffany Haddish opens up on miscarriages

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress-comedian Tiffany Haddish revealed she has suffered eight miscarriages and battled with painful heavy periods for years. The actress told People magazine: "It's so devastating. Every time I find out I'm pregnant, I'm like, 'Don't drink, don't smoke, don't do nothin.'" "Even if I don't really want (the baby), I still try to give it a chance..." She said: "It's like, I don't know why there's so much blood. And then I go to the doctor, and they're like, 'Oh, you're miscarrying right now. And I just D.C. (dilation and curettage, a procedure to remove pregnancy tissue)."

Haddish said there is "a part" of her that would still like to have a child, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The actress said: "I've got all this love, I should give it to somebody who can grow with it."

Haddish has struggled for years with painful periods and was told recently she likely has endometriosis, a condition where the endometrium extends outside of the uterus, after experiencing pain so bad because she thought she was "dying" and regularly passes out as a result.

"My body be playing tricks on me. I'm pretty sure the devil is real because on the first day of my period, no matter what, the devil goes into overdrive. I feel like my life gets turned upside down," she said.

Explaining how she visited the doctor in November last year because of her frequent fainting, she said: "She gave me something because I kept passing out."

"I don't talk about it, but people just think I'm sleeping everywhere, but I'm passing out because I'll be in so much pain. The pain is crazy. It feels like somebody is kicking me in the back."



Emma Stone reveals she wants to be known by her real name - Emily

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oscar-winning actress Emma Stone has expressed her preference to be called by her given name, Emily, rather than the name she adopted at the beginning of her career.

The 35-year-old star shared with The Hollywood Reporter: "That would be so nice. I would like to be Emily."

Although the actress initially adopted her stage name when she registered for the Screen Actors Guild, she actually prefers when her colleagues use her birth name, as reported by femalefirst.co.uk.

She explained: "When I get to know them, people that I work with do. It's just because my name was taken (by another actress in SAG)."

"Then I freaked out a couple of years ago. For some reason, I was like, 'I can't do it anymore. Just call me Emily.' Nathan calls me Em, which is easier."

Stone previously disclosed that her stage name was inspired by Spice Girls star Emma Bunton.

Selena Gomez's Boyfriend Benny Blanco Recalls the Moment He Fell 'in Love'



Los Angeles | Agencies

Benny Blanco has become the Internet's favorite boyfriend. Ever since Selena Gomez revealed they were together in December 2023, the music producer, 36, found himself at the center of attention among her fans. Now that they've been together for nearly a full year, Benny recalled the moment he realized that he was "in love" with the Wizards of Waverly Place star, 31.

"I was the last one to know," he told WSJ Magazine in an interview that was published on Thursday, April 25. "It's crazy how your partner could just be sitting there the whole time, right in front of your eyes, and you don't even notice, and then you have that Clueless moment where you're like, 'Wait, I'm in love.'"

Elsewhere in his interview, Benny discussed his other passion aside from music: cooking. In fact, this is one of his and Selena's favorite pastimes, he mentioned earlier this year.



Amid rumours of split, source says Zendaya, Tom Holland have discussed marriage

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Zendaya and Tom Holland have reportedly been discussing marriage, according to a source.

"There has been talk of marriage, and that is a reality," a source told people.com.

The two met while filming their trilogy of Spider-Man movies together. Since then, they've kept their off-camera romance private.

"They are not the kind of stars who put their lives out there on social media for the most part," explained the source.

"Both are private," said the source, who added that the attention on them while in the public eye "has never been easy or comfortable for either of them."

Zendaya's film 'Challengers' is set to release, and Holland, who stars in 'Romeo and Juliet' on London's West End in May.

"Work is important to both, and that keeps them busy now," added the source.



EMINEM ANNOUNCES NEW ALBUM 'THE DEATH OF SLIM SHADY'

Los Angeles | Agencies



Rapper Eminem, who recently appeared at the NFL Draft, has announced that his twelfth studio album, "The Death of Slim Shady (Coup de Grace)", will be released this summer.

A trailer for the album features a true crime reporter discussing the demise of Eminem's alter ego, Slim Shady.

"Through his complex and oft-criticised, tongue-twisting rhymes, the anti-hero known as Slim Shady has had no shortage of enemies," he said.

Eminem's longtime associate 50

Cent also makes a cameo, reports variety.com.

"He's not a friend, he's a psychopath," he says.

The reporter in the video continued, "The same rude lyrics and controversial antics may have ultimately led to his demise. Join me as we recreate the events that led to the murder of Slim Shady."

Eminem himself makes an appearance and stated: "I knew it was only a matter of time for Slim."

The rapper surprise-released his previous album, "Music to Be Murdered By," in January 2020, which quickly soared to the top spot on the Billboard 200 and spawned the hit single 'Godzilla' featuring Juice Wrld.

Slim Shady has long served as an alter ego for Eminem, dating back to 1997's 'Slim Shady EP' and 'The Slim Shady LP', which arrived two years later.

The character has often been one he's assumed to deliver his more aggressive and violent lyrics, which have marked him as a controversial rapper since the beginning of his career.

Sophia Bush Recalls the Unexpected Moment She Fell in Love

Los Angeles | Agencies

Sophia Bush is ready to share new details about her relationship with soccer player Ashlyn Harris. In her self-written Glamour cover story published on Thursday, April 25, Sophia, 41, recalled the moment her friendship with Ashlyn, 38, turned into something more.

It began in the summer of 2023 when the actress was separated and planning to file for divorce from Grant Hughes.

"Groups of women in my life started opening up about issues they were going through in their own homes," Sophia wrote. "It seemed like every week there were more of us, including Ashlyn, whom I'd first met in 2019 and who was in the process of figuring out her own split from her wife."

In August 2023, Sophia officially filed to end her marriage to Grant. One month later, Ashlyn filed for divorce from Ali Krieger after nearly four years of marriage.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Tina Kunakey



IPL 2024: BAIRSTOW'S UNBEATEN 108, SHASHANK'S 68 NOT OUT HELP PBKS COMPLETE HIGHEST SUCCESSFUL CHASE IN T20S

Kolkata | Agencies

Jonny Bairstow slammed an unbeaten 108 while Shashank Singh shone with 68 not out as Punjab Kings completed a record chase of 262 at Eden Gardens to secure an eight-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders in an absolute run-fest on Friday.

After openers Phil Salt and Sunil Narine slammed rollicking half-centuries while sharing an opening partnership of 138 runs in 10.2 overs to propel KKR to a mammoth 261/6, Prabhsimran Singh laid the foundation with a quick fifty, before Bairstow and Shashank dished out sensational knocks as PBKS set the record of highest successful chase in T20 history. For Bairstow, this was a much-needed second IPL century, with his 108 coming off 48 balls and aided by eight fours and nine sixes after being dropped due to poor form. Friday's knock boosts his chances of entering England's squad for the T20 World Cup.

Shashank's whirlwind 68 not out came off 28 balls, laced with two fours and eight sixes. Amidst the carnage, Sunil Narine was still at his economi-



cal best, with figures of 1-24. The win now takes PBKS to eighth place in the points table.

The introduction of Anukul Roy and Sunil Narine didn't do much to

stop the boundary flow as Prabhsimran got his fifty in just 18 balls with a swept six. Bairstow hit three fours and two sixes against Anukul Roy in the last over of Power-

play, before Prabhsimran was run out on the final ball as PBKS ended the phase at 93/1.

But Bairstow continued to unleash carnage on KKR's bowlers, getting his fifty off 23 balls by slogging Varun Chakravarthy over long-off for six on the fifth ball of the ninth over. From overs 10-13, Bairstow blasted seven boundaries, despite losing Rilee Rossouw to Narine.

Shashank came in to hit two sixes and a four, followed by Bairstow reaching his century in just 45 balls off Harshit Rana. Shashank then carted Chameera for three sixes, before hitting two more maximums and a four off Harshit to get his fifty. He and Bairstow hit three more boundaries collectively to complete a mammoth chase with eight balls to spare.

Brief scores

Kolkata Knight Riders 261/6 in 20 overs (Phil Salt 75, Sunil Narine 71; Arshdeep Singh 2-45, Rahul Chahar 1-33) lost to Punjab Kings 262/2 in 18.4 overs (Jonny Bairstow 108 not out, Shashank Singh 68 not out; Sunil Narine 1-24) by eight wickets

Nethra Kumana secures India's second Paris 2024 quota in sailing



Hyeres | Agencies

India's Nethra Kumana qualified for the Paris Olympics 2024 in sailing after finishing fifth on Day 5 of the Last Chance Regatta in the ILCA 6 Category in France. Nethra scored 69 points and finished fifth on the leaderboard. Nethra won the ENP (Emerging Nation Program Quota) which will be given to the best ENP sailor after the top 3. After Vishnu Saravanan secured the coun-

try's first Paris 2024 Olympics quota in sailing at the ILCA World Championship 2024 in Adelaide, Australia this will be the second Olympic quota for India in sailing.

This will be the second consecutive Olympics for Nethra after she became the first Indian woman to qualify for the Olympics in sailing directly at the Olympic qualifier event for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. At her maiden Olympics, she finished 35th out of 44 participants.

Squash: Senthilkumar, Akanksha in QF of PSA Challenger Tour event



New Delhi | Agencies

Top-seeded Indian Velavan Senthilkumar eased past Frenchman

Matteo Carrouget in straight games to move into the quarterfinals of the Batch Open squash, a USD 12,000 PSA Challenger Tour event in

Paris. National champion Senthilkumar, ranked 58 in the world, beat Carrouget 11-4, 11-6, 11-7 in 29 minutes in the second round on Thursday after receiving a bye in the opening round.

He will meet fifth seed Jakub Solnický of the Czech Republic in the quarterfinals. Elsewhere, National Games women's champion Akanksha Salunkhe advanced to the quarterfinals of the Expression St James Open, a USD 20,000 PSA Challenger Tour event in Springfield, US.

Salunkhe, ranked 70 in the world, beat Winiifer Bonilla of Guatemala 11-8, 11-2, 11-9 in 25 minutes in the second round following a bye in the first.

The fourth seed Indian will take on fifth seed Alina Bushma of Ukraine next.

IPL 2024

Every game is important; this is a very important stage of the tournament, says Ganguly

New Delhi | Agencies

After pulling off a thrilling four-run win over Gujarat Titans in their previous match of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024, a confident Delhi Capitals have sprung back into the intense race for entering the playoffs.

With four wins and five losses from nine matches, the side is currently placed sixth on the points table and another win against Mumbai Indians on Saturday afternoon will enhance their position in the race to playoffs.

For DC, Ishant Sharma and David Warner are injured and may not be available for selection for Saturday's match. Ahead of the game, DC's director of cricket Sourav Ganguly expressed why this phase of the competition is crucial from the side's point of view.

"If you look at the table, except Rajasthan, everybody is one game this way or that way, and it normally happens in such big tournaments like IPL and World Cup. It's rare that some teams will just go right through."

"Every game is important. And also, what it does is, you're already into the tournament, you've played eight or nine games and players are in form,



they know what to do. So, that's why this is always a very important stage of the tournament," he said in the pre-match press conference.

Both matches of IPL 2024 at the Arun Jaitley Stadium have seen scores of 200 and above from the two teams, with the Delhi-Mumbai clash also promising to be a run-fest. With flat pitches and the Impact Player rule resulting in tall scores being

posted consistently, Ganguly, the former BCCI President, thinks pitches need to have some help for bowlers to restore the balance between bat and ball.

"We've given and we've scored (above 200). Because this is a fantastic wicket, it's not the biggest of grounds, and it's very hard on the bowlers. Really not easy on the bowlers at all. The way it's going all around IPL, bowlers are getting carted all over. That's one area that needs to be looked at in the future, a proper balance between bat and ball."

The last match between the two teams in Mumbai saw DC falling short by 29 runs at the Wankhede Stadium and Ganguly thought the side won't have any issues in chasing against the Hardik Pandya-led side on Saturday.

"We are open to chasing and we might chase tomorrow. I don't think there's any hard and fast rule. Depends on the situation, on the ground, on the teams we are playing."

Ganguly signed off by saying captain Rishabh Pant, Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav are certainty to be in India's squad for the T20 World Cup from DC camp. Axar had made a fine 66 when promoted to number three against GT on Wednesday and even bowled an economical spell of 1-29.

IPL 2024: 'Sometimes your job is to take game deeper', Finch defends Kohli's innings vs SRH

Hyderabad | Agencies

Former Australia cricketer Aaron Finch defended Virat Kohli's innings after the star Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) batter scored 43-ball 51 against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), saying sometimes a set batter's role is to take the game deeper, which somewhere limit the intent to hit boundaries.

While opening the inning for RCB, Kohli was quick in power play as he scored 23 in just 11 deliveries but he laboured to score his next 28 runs in 32 deliveries due to some tight overs from T Natarajan and Shahbaz Ahmed.

However, the presence of Rajat Patidar did not let RCB's scoring rate drop. He came into the game with a strike rate of 125 against pacers and 197 against spinners in this IPL, and banked on his strength to score 20 ball fifty-- the joint second-fastest fifty in RCB's history, which powered Faf du Plessis' side to 206 in 20 overs, later winning the game by 35 runs.

The former Australian skipper urged people not to



consider Kohli's innings slow as he was trying to build a partnership with Patidar after the early loss of wickets. "I think it is a combination of a few things here. Yes, he got off to an absolute flyer. But after the powerplay, he dropped to 19 from 25. But one thing you have to keep in mind is that Patidar was going crazy at the other end. Sometimes your job as a set batter is to take the game a little bit deeper and get Patidar on strike as much as possible. That's where the intent to hit boundaries goes out," said Finch to broadcasters.

Kohli and Patidar added 64 runs in just 35 deliveries for the fourth wicket partnership of which Patidar played the aggressive role and Kohli anchored the inning. Finch felt that the partnership between both the batter was perfect example of building the inning.

"You can look at him in isolation and say 'yes it dropped.' But as a partnership, it worked really well. Because the last thing you want when you're on fire is to be stuck at the non-striker's end a lot. He did the right thing by getting Patidar up there," said Finch.

SC ISSUES SHOW CAUSE NOTICE TO AIFF PRESIDENT KALYAN CHAUBEY

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday issued a show-cause notice to Kalyan Chaubey asking why he should not be relieved from the post of president of the All-India Football Federation (AIFF) and the joint secretary of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA). This move comes amidst allegations of Chaubey's alleged defiance of court orders and lack of cooperation in ongoing legal proceedings.

Justice Surya Kant and P.S. Narasimha observed that Chaubey was willfully defying court orders and warned of the issuance of non-bailable warrants against him if he fails to appear before Calcutta High Court. "We are satisfied that he is defying court orders willfully. Non-bailable warrants will be issued if he does not



remain present before the High Court," the Court said.

The Court was hearing a petition alleging that Chaubey was not present and cooperating with the election petition filed by him before the Calcutta High Court.

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE SHIVAM DUBE IN THE INDIAN T20 WC SQUAD, SAYS YUVRAJ SINGH

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former India cricketer Yuvraj Singh has picked Rishabh Pant and Sanju Samson as the wicketkeeper batter options for India's T20 World Cup and identified Suryakumar Yadav and Jasprit Bumrah as a 'key player'.

The Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee has to finalise the 15-member India squad ahead of the May 1 deadline for boards to submit their Men's T20 World Cup squads. The most toughest choice will be the wicketkeeping option as there are multiple options starting from Rishabh Pant, Sanju Samson, KL Rahul and Dinesh Karthik.

In a video posted by ICC on Friday, Yuvraj Singh was unveiled as an ambassador for the T20 WC 2024 tournament and picked his Indian squad for the event. Yuvraj identified the World's No.1 ranked T20I batter Suryakumar Yadav as the player who must have a good tournament in the USA and Caribbean if India are to claim the title, while he also suggested pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah needs to be at his best.

"Suryakumar Yadav (is India's key player)," Yuvraj suggested to ICC. "Because the way he

plays, he can change the complexion of a game in 15 balls. And he is definitely a surety...for India to win this T20 World Cup, Surya is going to be the key."

"I think Jasprit Bumrah is also the key with the bowling and I would like to see a leg-spinner in the squad as well, like Yuzvendra Chahal as he has been bowling really well. But being a batter, I would say Suryakumar Yadav (is the key player)," he added.

Suryakumar after missing the first three games for Mumbai Indians due to injury made his comeback and has amassed 140 runs in five matches.

However, the most surprising name on the list could be Dinesh Karthik, who is yet again claiming the spot at his best. He has scored 262 runs in nine matches at a stunning average of 52.40.

While Yuvraj has been impressed by what Karthik has been able to do in the IPL this year, he believes the veteran keeper should only win a place in India's squad for the T20 World Cup if he is guaranteed a spot in the playing XI and suggested Pant and Samson as a wicket-keeper option for India.

"DK (Karthik) has been batting well, but the

thing with DK is the last time (2022) they picked him and the T20 WC was on he didn't get to play," Yuvraj noted. "If DK is not in your XI I don't think there is any point in picking him."

"There is Rishabh Pant and Sanju Samson and both guys are in great form and obviously they are younger. I would like to see DK in the mix, but if he is not going to play then you would rather have someone who is younger and can make the difference."

In nine matches of IPL 2024, Pant scored 342 runs in nine innings, averaging 48.86 at a strike rate of 161.32. With the gloves, Pant has been massively impactful, taking 10 catches and effecting three stumpings.

Samson has shown the consistency and ability to make big scores, as seen from his 314 runs coming at an average of over 50 and a strike rate above 150. Yuvraj



also wanted to see more explosive batters utilised in India's middle-order at the T20 World Cup and has identified Chennai Super Kings left-hander Shivam Dube as one player that he wants to see feature.

IPL 2024 has also seen Dube garner runs against fast bowlers, especially against short balls, which has been his nemesis for a long time. With conditions in the West Indies expected to aid spinners more, Dube's presence will be all-important for India and utilise his spin-hitting prowess. Dube has amassed 311 in 8 matches for Chennai with an average of 51.83.

"I would like to see Shivam Dube in the squad," Yuvraj said. "He has been in and out of the (India) team, but this IPL he has been batting very well and he is someone who can be the game-changer. There are a lot of other guys who have been playing for a while now, but I would like to see Shivam Dube in the mix," he said.

Yuvraj also suggested Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli should consider giving up on playing T20I cricket after the completion of the T20 World Cup and concentrate on other formats.



I didn't have a luxurious childhood : Samantha

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu has opened up about how success has been her focus since childhood, as she did not experience a luxurious upbringing. Samantha discussed this topic on her podcast 'Take 20', where she aims to assist people by sharing her experiences, helping them relate, understand, and seek help when needed.

In one episode, Samantha explored the human body's fight or flight response in certain situations alongside wellness coach and nutritionist Alkesh Sharotri.

"I used to believe that exhaustion and the need for rest were signs of weakness. I was proud of being a hustler, thriving on only six hours of sleep, and being exceptionally productive throughout the day," said the actress, who has been diagnosed with an autoimmune condition called myositis.

"Despite feeling exhausted, I refused to acknowledge it, working tirelessly without a break for 13 years."

The actress added: "Growing up, I didn't have a luxurious childhood, so success was my focus from an early age. I always felt intense pressure to 'Make It' in life. Constantly

fed with the notion that I wasn't good enough, so that became an intense motivation for me to succeed at any cost."

Samantha, who captivated the nation with her sizzling performance in the song 'Oo Antava' from 'Pushpa: The Rise', said that people often perceive "acting as glamorous, which it is, but that's not the entire reality".

"It is a lot of hard work and pressure, especially when you're constantly in the spotlight and being judged. I started in this industry when I was just 22-23 years old, and some girls start even younger. We don't come into this knowing everything; we let others dictate and define us," she said.

Reflecting on her own journey, Samantha said: "I've been letting others define me since childhood, creating a pattern where I worked tirelessly to please and seek approval from others. Eventually, my own thoughts, feelings, and desires became insignificant."

Fears emerged once she achieved success. "When I achieved success, I feared losing it, immediately searching for the next big accomplishment. So, I believe I've been in fight or flight mode throughout my career," she explained.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Nine-time Grammy-nominated sitarist, producer, and film composer Anoushka Shankar will receive an honorary degree from the University of Oxford and described it as a "pinch-me moment" in her career.

The prestigious recognition is being conferred "in recognition of her outstanding achievements within the music industry" and underscores her profound influence on the global music landscape and her unwavering commitment to bridging cultural divides through her art.

Anoushka said: "This is truly a pinch-me moment in my career; I never even dreamed I might receive an honour such as this, let alone from one of the most prestigious universities in the world. I am deeply grateful to Oxford University for conferring me with an honorary degree."

"I also feel reflective and grateful for all my past teachers who got me to this point. I was fortunate to have had the most precious education in music under the guidance of my father and unbelievable coaching and support in my career aged thirteen onwards from my mother. This is all thanks to them," she added.

Anoushka will be awarded her degree on June 19 at the university's annual Encaenia academic ceremony.

ANOUSHKA SHANKAR TO GET HONORARY DEGREE BY OXFORD UNIVERSITY



Vidya recalls how Pradeep Sarkar told her 'Ae ladki tere saath film banaunga'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Nearly two decades have passed since the release of the song 'Kabhi aana tu meri gali' by pop band Euphoria, featuring Vidya Balan. Reflecting on her experiences while shooting the song alongside Palash Sen and under Sarkar's direction, Vidya told: "I remember when I shot 'Kabhi aana tu meri gali', it was over five nights. When I say nights, the shoot was supposed to be from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. But dada (Sarkar) would shoot beyond that."

The National-Award-winning actress used to reside two hours away in Chembur, Mumbai, from the shoot location in Boisar.

"For five days, I did not come back

home. I had a model friend living close by, and I would go to her house, bathe, come back, and sleep on location," she recalled with laughter.

Vidya confessed that she still loves the song.

"I love the song, and I loved the opportunity I was getting to do a music video and to work with Pradeep Sarkar and Euphoria. It was so much fun," Vidya said.

The actress then recounted another anecdote from the shoot, where she got giddy during a particular scene.

"I remember on the last day in the morning we were supposed to finish at 6 a.m., but we were continuing to shoot. It was 10 a.m., and there was a shot of me pouring water into the

Tulsi, and when I went there, suddenly the sun hit me," she said.

"I got giddy, and people started saying 'shakkar lao, paani lao, and all, and dada is telling me, 'I don't have time for all this, come on, come on!... And I was like, 'what?' Dada was so passionate, unhe kuch nahi dikhta tha."

Vidya added: "At that time, I thought he was so rude, but later, once I got to know him, I realised that dada was different."

"That was my first big work with dada. I had done an ad with dada, but that was my first big work with him. At the end of the shoot, he said, 'Ae ladki tere saath film banaunga,' and I was like, 'haan haan'. Dada actually kept his word," she shared.



REKHA BLESSES MOM-TO-BE RICHA CHADHA, GIVES HER BABY BUMP A KISS

Mumbai: Veteran actress Rekha blessed mom-to-be Richa Chadha and was seen giving her blossoming baby bump a kiss.

Rekha was attending the premiere of the upcoming series 'Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar'.

A clip showcases the iconic actress engaging in a conversation with Richa, who will be seen in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's show.

Rekha then bends down and gives a sweet little kiss to Richa's baby bump.

'Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar' is a period

drama by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, marking his debut in the world of web. It also stars Manisha Koirala, Sonakshi Sinha, Aditi Rao Hydari, Sanjeeda Sheikh, and Sharmin Segal. The series portrays the lives of tawaifs in the red-light district of Heera Mandi in Lahore during the Indian Independence movement against the British Raj.

Team

Absolute | Mumbai

Kajol shared a hilarious glimpse of her workout from her pilates classes and asked everyone whether the picture was taken before or after her exercise. Kajol took to Instagram and posted a funny picture from her pilates class.

In the photo, the actress is seen lying down on the pilates machine, wearing athleisure and sunglasses.

"Since everyone wants to know what my workouts look like... Here is a pic... Ab batao yeh workout ke pehle ka hai ya baad main," she wrote in the caption.

Kajol shares hilarious sneak peek into her workout



RAJKUMMAR RAO, KHUSHI, NAYANTHARA LEAD CELEB LINEUP AT GQ MOST INFLUENTIAL YOUNG INDIANS

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A galaxy of stars, including names such as Rajkumar Rao, Tiger Shroff, Nayanthara, Navya Naveli Nanda, and Khushi Kapoor, among many others, illuminated the red carpet of the GQ Most Influential Young Indians event.

Rajkumar looked dapper in a classic black suit with a white shirt, while Tiger brought his stylish self in a blue suit with striped pants and completed his look with sunglasses.

Actress Nayanthara looked drop-dead beautiful in a black plunging neckline gown.

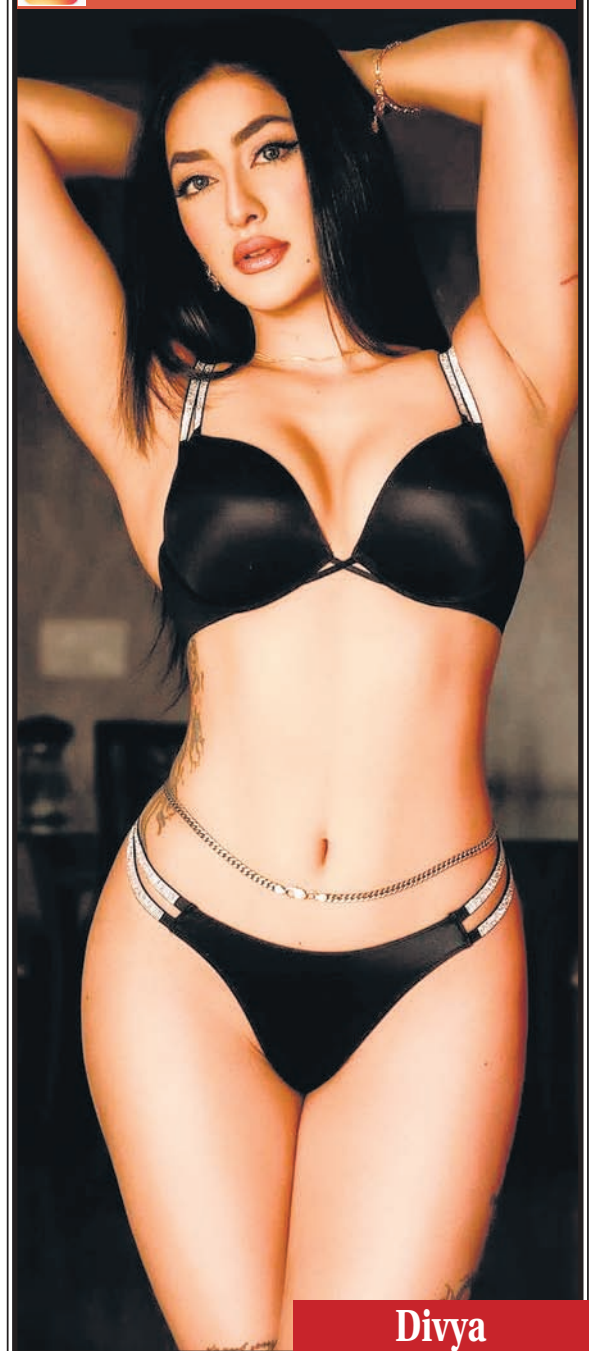
Actress Alaya F chose a white number, while Khushi looked gorgeous in a vintage-styled black and white co-ord outfit.

Brother-sister duo Agastya and Navya Naveli Nanda looked like Yin and Yang, with the 'Archies' actor in a black suit and Navya looking surreal in white. Breaking away from the monochromes were actors Varun Dhawan, Sanya Malhotra, and Palak Tiwari, who wore a navy blue suit, denim anti-fit ensemble, and a colourful shimmery short dress, respectively. Actress Pednekar flaunted her curves in an ivory-hued cutout outfit, while designer Kunal Rawal walked the red carpet in a gender-fluid number. Bhabhi Mira Kapoor, who wore a bright orange dress with a side trail, posed with her 'devar' Ishaan Kapoor on the red carpet.

Others seen at the event included names such as Ali Fazal, Richa Chadha, Kunal Kemmu, Akshay Oberoi, Tahir Raj Bhasin, Sunny Singh, Chef Ranveer Brar, Mannara Chopra, and Kubbra Sait.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Divya