

# absolute india

VOL. 9, ISSUE 174, BHOPAL | TUESDAY, MAY 07, 2024 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI

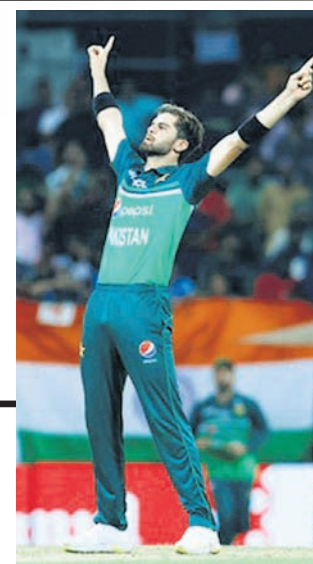
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## Delhi L-G recommends NIA probe into alleged funding of AAP by extremist group

## FLIRT COVID VARIANTS

# MORE TROUBLE

# No need for panic or extra caution, say experts

The latest move came after the L-G received a complaint from Ashoo Mongia, the National General Secretary of the World Hindu Federation, alleging that AAP received a staggering amount of \$16 million in funding from pro-Khalistan groups between 2014 and 2022 for facilitating the release of 1993 Delhi bomb blast convict Davinder Pal Singh Bhullar. It has also been alleged that a clandestine meeting took place in 2014 between Arvind Kejriwal and pro-Khalistan groups at the Richmond Hill Gurdwara in New York.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, V.K. Saxena, has written to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) seeking a probe by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) into the alleged funding of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) led by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by pro-Khalistan extremist group Sikhs For Justice.

CM Kejriwal is presently under judicial custody at Tihar Jail in connection with the alleged excise policy scam. It has also been mentioned in the letter that Arvind Kejriwal wrote to former President Pranab Mukherjee seeking clemency for Bhullar. "In this context, a copy of a letter by Arvind Kejriwal addressed to a person named Iqbal Singh has been enclosed. The letter dated 27.01.2014 mentions that 'Our government is sympathetic to the issue and would take all necessary steps to ensure full justice.' It further mentions that the Delhi government has already recommended to the President the release of Bhullar and would be working on other issues, including the formation of an SIT, etc. The same was widely reported by the media. As per news reports of that time, Iqbal Singh was sitting on a fast at Jantar Mantar,



demanding a written assurance for the release of Bhullar," the L-G's letter read. The L-G also said that the complainant requested a comprehensive inquiry into the allegations of funding of AAP by Sikhs for Justice.

"Since the allegations have been levelled against the Chief Minister and are related to alleged funding of a political party, amounting to millions of dollars, by a terrorist organisation already banned in India, the electron-

ic evidence adduced by the complainant requires investigation, including forensic test," the letter said, adding that the L-G has desired that the Home Ministry may consider referring the matter to the NIA for conducting a thorough probe into the matter.

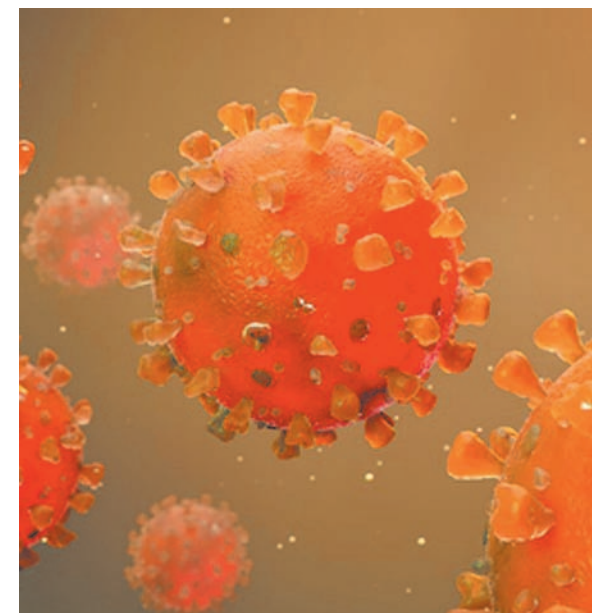
### K. Kavitha's bail denied

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Monday denied regular bail to Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) leader K. Kavitha in the excise policy case, noting the gravity and seriousness of the offence, nature of the allegations against her, and the offences invoked in the case.

The court noted that the investigation is in a very crucial stage on certain key aspects, including the involvement of public servants and private persons and to ascertain the flow of ill-gotten money (proceeds of crime). The judge noted that prima facie, Kavitha appears to be the key conspirator of the criminal conspiracy hatched for the purpose of collection and payment of upfront money to the Aam Aadmi Party through the co-accused for getting favourable provisions in the now-scrapped Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22.

### THE L-G'S LETTER TO THE HOME MINISTRY

"During the said meeting, Kejriwal purportedly promised to facilitate the release of Devender Pal Bhullar, in return for substantial financial backing from the Khalistani factions to AAP. In his communication, the complainant referred to the contents of a video, purportedly featuring Gurpatwant Singh Pannun (founder of the banned outfit Sikhs For Justice). The complainant also said that as per some posts on X (formerly Twitter), Munish Kumar Raizada, who used to be an AAP worker, shared a picture of the meeting between Arvind Kejriwal and Sikh leaders that took place at the Richmond Hill Gurdwara in 2014."



Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the new Covid-19 variants, nicknamed FLIRT, have raised fresh concerns, health experts on Monday said that there is no need for panic or extra caution.

FLIRT is a new set of Covid variants, from the lineage of the highly transmissible and immune system evading Omicron.

The FLIRT variants, which majorly include KP.1.1, and KP.2, are named based on the technical names for their mutations, one of which includes the letters "F" and "L", and another of which includes the letters "R" and "T".

According to data from the US Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention, KP.2 accounted for about one in four or 25 per cent of new sequenced cases in the country in the last weeks of April.

"Overall, there is no need for panic or extra caution, nor is there a requirement for any specific medications. Improving immunity through a healthy lifestyle will be crucial," Dr Swapnil M. Khadake, HOD & Consultant

Critical Care, Fortis Hiranandani Hospital, Vashi, told correspondent. The symptoms of the new variants seem to be more or less similar to previous ones. They include a sore throat, runny nose, congestion,

tiredness, fever (with or without chills), headache, muscle pain, and sometimes loss of taste or smell, the doctor said.

The rate of hospitalisation is expected to be lower, with outpatient management being sufficient for most cases.

"Ward hospitalisation may be necessary in some instances, but ICU admissions should be rare. Existing vaccinations should provide coverage against this variant to some extent. Precautions such as wearing masks in public places and practising hand hygiene can significantly reduce transmission," Dr

Khadake said. While the variants are likely to be "more transmissible and defy immunity as compared to previous strains", they are unlikely to produce severe symptoms in the form of pneumonia, Dr Dhiren Gupta, Senior Consultant, Dept of Paediatric Pulmonology and Allergy, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, told correspondent.

"Only patients who are having severe uncontrolled comorbidities or chronic lung diseases should be a little cautious about getting infected as it can worsen their existing symptoms," he added.

## Congress leader turned servant's house into warehouse of black money: PM Modi

Rajahmundry | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that a Congress leader in Jharkhand had turned their servant's house into a warehouse of black money.

Reacting to the Enforcement Directorate's raids in Jharkhand, he said that the ED dug out heaps of currency notes from the house of the servant of the Congress minister's personal secretary.

Addressing NDA's election rally here, he wondered why heaps of notes are recovered from those who are close to the first family of Congress.

"Congress and INDI alliance people shout ED, ED in anger. You know why. Today, the entire country is watching. The ED has dug out heaps of currency notes in Jharkhand," he said.

The PM said this was not the first time and recalled that a larger amount was recovered from a Congress legislator. "There are so many notes that even machines get tired of counting," he said. He said that the country wants to know from 'shaheezada' of Congress if the



seized money was kept for supply somewhere and if the first family has made similar warehouses of black money across the country.

"Whenever Modi seizes their black money, they abuse Modi but Modi is not bothered about abuses. He is bothered about the poor, whose money is looted by the corrupt," he said. The Prime Minister also revealed that he is taking legal advice on how the seized money can be returned to their rightful owners.

## RUSSIA WARNS OF STRIKES ON UK MILITARY TARGETS IN UKRAINE AND "BEYOND"

Moscow: Moscow on Monday said that it could launch strikes at British military targets inside Ukraine and elsewhere if Kyiv's forces used British-supplied long-range missiles to strike Russia.

The statement issued by the Russian foreign ministry came after British Foreign Secretary David Cameron said during a visit to Ukraine that Kyiv "absolutely has the right to strike back at Russia". He also said that London did not put "caveats" on how Ukrainian forces use weapons supplied by Britain. The Russian foreign ministry announced it had summoned the UK's ambassador in Moscow, Nigel Casey, and warned him that if Ukrainian forces use British-supplied weapons to strike Russia, Moscow could hit "any UK military facility and equipment on Ukrainian territory and beyond." "The Ambassador was urged to reflect on the inevitable catastrophic consequences of such hostile steps by London and to immediately refute in the strongest and most unequivocal manner the bellicose provocative statements by the head of the Foreign Office," the statement added.

## Reservation quota will increase beyond 50 pc if Cong forms govt: Rahul Gandhi

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday said that his party will increase the reservation quota beyond 50 per cent if the party returns to power.

He claimed the Congress is fighting the ongoing Lok Sabha elections to protect the rights of the citizens and reservation for ST/SC and OBC people in the constitution.

"Congress will increase reservation quota beyond 50 per cent. The court has fixed a limit of reservation upto 50 per cent, which the Congress government is going to change and people belonging to ST/SC and OBC will be given reservation as per their needs," Rahul Gandhi said while addressing a public rally in Jobat assembly segment of Ratlam Lok Sabha constituency in Madhya Pradesh for Congress candidate Kantilal Bhuria.

Holding a booklet of the Constitution in his hand during his public address, Rahul Gandhi claimed previous Congress governments have worked for the upliftment of tribals.

Addressing public rallies in, Gandhi accused the BJP of planning to change the Constitution in a bid to end reservation for the ST/SC and OBC commu-



nities. "They (BJP leaders) have made it clear that if they win, they will change the Constitution. This is the reason why they gave the slogan of 'abki baar 400 paar'... Forget about 400, they won't even get 150 this time around," said the former Congress President while addressing back-to-back rallies in Ratlam and Khargon.

## Kharge's son-in-law named in Rs 800 crore scam



The complaint was registered by BJP Bengaluru South District President N.R. Ramesh.

The complaint has named Radhakrishna Doddamani, who is the Management Committee Chief in the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Medical College and Dr B.R. Ambedkar Dental College as the prime accused. The charges against him include alleged corruption, cheating, creation of fake documents, forgery and misuse of power.

H.S. Mahadeva Prasad, Dr N.T. Murali Mohan and V. S. Kuber are the other accused. The complaint has also been lodged against the Public Relations Officer Amanulla Khan.

The complainant N.R. Ramesh said that the accused indulged in collecting hundreds of crores from failed and ineligible students of rich families to provide them seats to study MBBS and BDS courses by creating fake documents.

Bengaluru | Agencies

A complaint has been registered with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Karnataka Lokayukta against Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge's son-in-law Radhakrishna Doddamani and five others on Monday in connection with alleged Rs 800 crore scam.

## Mumbai SS-UBT candidate claims Gujarati society bars Marathi poll campaigns



Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a fresh row, the Shiv Sena-UBT's Mumbai North East Lok Sabha seat candidate Sanjay Dina Patil on Monday claimed that a Gujarat-dominated housing

complex has reportedly barred Marathi political activists from campaigning on their premises.

The purported incident occurred late on Sunday when Patil, along with his supporters, had gone to the

Samarpan Housing Society, in Ghatkopar West suburb, to distribute poll campaign pamphlets and publicity material.

"However, we were told by some society members that they would not allow can-

vassing in Marathi and we were prevented from entering... They claimed that they were not permitting Marathis to campaign inside their complex and asked us to leave," Patil later told media persons.

SS-UBT local unit chief Pradeep Mandavkar said that the society members "remained adamant even after they were informed that we had the relevant permission as the election rules".

Reacting strongly, SS-UBT MP Sanjay Raut demanded to know the response of "those people who claim their party is the real Shiv Sena", and said his party will overcome the challenge, as videos of the incident went viral on social media.

Hitting back at Raut, Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Nitesh Rane said that if anybody attempts to foment a Gujarati-Marathi linguistic controversy, then there could be repercussions in election times.

## Indian-origin Sunita Williams, Butch Wilmore to fly to space on Boeing's Starliner Today



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian-origin NASA astronaut Sunita Williams is all set to fly to space on Boeing's Starliner on Tuesday, along with Butch Wilmore.

The flight is expected to take off from Space Launch Complex-41 at Cape Canaveral Space Force

Station in Florida at 8.04 a.m. IST on May 7 on a United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket. The 59-year-old is set to create history by being the first woman to fly on the maiden mission of a new human-rated spacecraft.

This will be Sunita's third flight to space -- the first in 2006 and the second in 2012. According to NASA, "Sunita has spent a cumulative total of 322 days in space." "When I reach the International Space Station, it will be like going back home," she was quoted as saying to NDTV.

Sunita, who will serve as the mission pilot, has named the CST-100 Starliner spacecraft "Calypto" for her love of the ocean.

It is also "in reference to the ship of famed explorer Jacques Cousteau, who sailed across the world on his own ship bearing the same name," NASA shared in a post on X.com.



# INDIAN AIRLINES POISED TO CAPTURE 50% OF COUNTRY'S GLOBAL PASSENGER TRAFFIC: CRISL

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The airlines in India are poised to capture 50 per cent share of the country's international passenger traffic by 2027-28 with a 7 per cent jump in market share from 43 per cent at present, according to a CRISIL report released on Monday.

The report points out that Indian airlines, such as Air India and IndiGo, are strategically adding new aircraft to their fleets and launching new international routes which are cutting travel time.

According to the CRISIL report, Indian airlines have the advantage of superior domestic connectivity compared to their foreign competitors, which serve only select Indian cities. This enables Indian carriers to offer end-to-end international connectivity on a single ticket to travellers from tier 2 and tier 3 cities.

"Increasing disposable incomes, easing visa requirements, growing number of airports and enhanced air travel connectivity are boosting international travel," said Manish



Gupta, Senior Director and Deputy Chief Ratings Officer at CRISIL Ratings. The government's focus on making India a hub for tourism is also expected to provide a fillip to

inbound traffic.

"To capitalise on the growth in international travel, Indian airlines are investing in widebody and long-range narrowbody aircraft for net-

work expansion, adding new international routes and introducing long-haul non-stop flights to key destinations," said Ankit Kedia, Director, CRISIL Ratings.

Thus, international passenger traffic is likely to clock a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10-11 per cent over the next four fiscals, against a mere 5 per cent CAGR in the four years before the pandemic, he added. Indian airlines have added 55 new international routes over the past 15 months, which takes the total number of flights beyond the 300 mark, the report states.

These include direct flights originating from more cities to popular long-haul destinations in the United States, Europe, and Australia, effectively reducing flying time and eliminating layovers, CRISIL said.

India's geographic location connections between the Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) and Asia Pacific regions, would facilitate the country emerging as a hub for international travel, the report added.

# Poonch terror attack: Security forces release sketches of two terrorists



Jammu | Agencies

Security forces on Monday released sketches of two terrorists responsible for the attack on IAF vehicles in J&K's Poonch district on May 4.

One air warrior, Corporal Nikky Pahadem was killed and four others injured when terrorists attacked two IAF vehicles in the Bakrabal (Sanai) area of Surankote in Poonch on

May 4.

The officials said, "Police have detained around 20 people for questioning so far. A massive cordon and search operation continues in Danna Top, Shahstar, Sheindra and Sanai Top areas of Poonch. Senior officers of the Army and police, including GOC 16 Corps and ADGP Jammu visited the spot of attack and took stock of the security arrange-

ments yesterday." "A group of two to three terrorists are believed to have carried out the attack on the IAF convoy near Shaistar Sanai in Surankote area on Saturday. Anyone who will give fruitful and reliable information about the whereabouts of these terrorists leading to their arrest will be rewarded and identity will be kept secret," the officials said further.

# Sangeet Som calls Akhilesh Yadav 'Babur Ki Aulad' World Sindhi Federation to rehabilitate Sindhi Hindu refugees from Pakistan with Indian Govt support

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former BJP legislator Sangeet Som said on

Monday that he was 'pained and peeved' over the insult meted out to India's hero and valiant Rajput warrior Maharana Pratap by Akhilesh Yadav and his men, saying that the 'Kshatriya Samaj' will teach a lesson to the Samajwadi Party (SP) in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. He also dubbed SP chief Akhilesh Yadav as 'Babur Ki Aulad', and claimed that it was he who led his party workers and supporters in treading over the statue of India's greatest warrior while wearing shoes.

"The way Akhilesh Yadav and his supporters insulted Maharana Pratap's statue in Mainpuri is unacceptable and unbearable. The 'Babur Ki Aulad' (descendant of Mughal emperor Babur) will



have to pay the price for this grave insult in these elections," Som said in a video message issued on social media.

He also said that the Kshatriya Samaj and the Sanatanis of the region won't forgive Akhilesh Yadav and will teach his party a lesson in the upcoming phases of Lok Sabha polls. Notably, a case has been lodged against at least 100 Samajwadi Party workers for creating a ruckus

during Akhilesh Yadav's recent roadshow in Mainpuri in support of his wife and party nominee Dimple Yadav.

Three persons have also been reportedly arrested for climbing and disrespecting the statue of Maharana Pratap during the roadshow, as shown in a video.

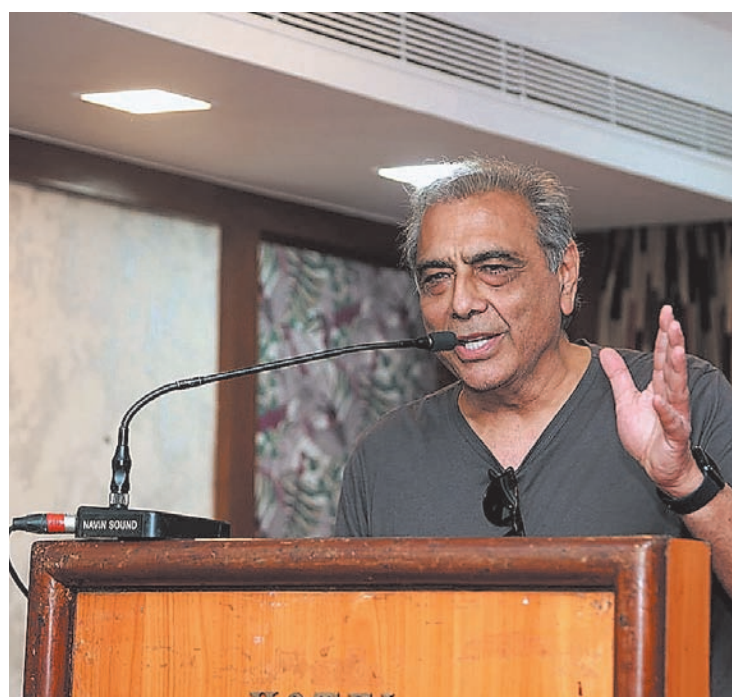
Akhilesh Yadav's wife and SP candidate Dimple Yadav is contesting the elections from the Manipur Lok Sabha constituency.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sindhi Hindus in the neighboring country of Pakistan are terribly hit as there is always a fear that the womenfolk would be abducted and forcibly converted to other religion and to protect them the Government of India has taken a giant step forward to amend the Citizenship (Amendment) Act so as to provide citizenship to the immigrants who come to India, said Mahesh Jethmalani, sitting BJP MP and International President of Federation of World Sindhi Association.

Addressing members of the Federation at a function in Mumbai recently, Jethmalani said the government had taken this step as there were reports of forcible conversion of Sindhi Hindus in Pakistan triggering immigration of people from the neighboring country into India in the recent years.

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was passed in 2019 but there is a challenge to the law in the Supreme Court of India. Many have crossed over to India



from Pakistan as refugees and we have to find out where they are located in India so that the process

of granting them Indian citizenship becomes easy, said Jethmalani, who is also a leading Supreme Court

lawyer.

Jethmalani further assured that the Federation would help the affected Sindhi Hindu people to rehabilitate in India and funds are being collected in this regard by appealing to the Federation members to contribute.

Sindhi Hindu people from Pakistan come to India because they have no other home other than India to go and settle down, Jethmalani, who is supporting the CAA, said. He said Sindhi Hindu people have registered for getting citizenship of India but first we have to find out where they are located in India.

"We are equally concerned about the religious conversion of Sindhi Hindu people in Ulhasnagar town of Maharashtra in India" and steps are being taken to stop this practice."

Jethmalani also urged the members of the Sindhi Community to protect the Sindhi language and culture as it would help in giving them their identity. He praised Prasar Bharati for allowing DoorDarshan to start a Sindhi Channel some years ago for one hour, twice a week.

# First 'Wed in India' expo inaugurated in Jaipur

Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

Along with cultural aspects of India, the rapid infrastructure development happening across the country, especially improvement in accessibility thanks to number of airports getting doubled in last few years and improvement in digital and physical connectivity are aiding destination weddings across the world, said Manisha Saxena, IAS, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

She was speaking during the inaugural of 1st 'Wed in India' expo being organised from 5th May to 7th May, 2024 at Rambagh Palace in Jaipur.

An initiative of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, the 'Wed in India' expo is being organised jointly with Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) alongside the Great India Travel. It is



also supported by Hotel and Restaurant Association of Rajasthan (HRAR), Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA) and Rajasthan Association of Tour Operators (RATO).

Citing the experience of one of the G20 Tourism Group meetings held in Goa during India's G20 Presidency, Ms. Saxena said, "We catered to all the ministerial delegates in a 500-year old

house which keeps its 200 years old cutlery. India has several such kinds of assets. We, in the Ministry of Tourism, are in process of documenting this repository of assets both tangible and intangible." During the inaugural session, a 'Wed in India' film titled 'Say I do In India' was premiered showcasing India's enchanting destinations and architectural marvels for weddings

which attracted huge applause by the audience. With leading cities of Rajasthan, such as Jaipur, Udaipur and Jodhpur already popular for wedding amongst Indians and foreigners, an audio-visual presentation titled 'Romance in Rajasthan' was played showcasing the potential of rural Rajasthan for wedding as well as honeymoon. A number of panel discussions, including 'India Awaits you: Evaluating the readiness of India's wedding ecosystem to face international competition', 'Local But Global: India in the NEWS', 'Session with International Wedding Planners' and 'Getting Inspired: Analyzing success stories and challenges' are scheduled to take place during the day, wherein the experts will discuss India's preparedness and opportunities for making India a wedding destination. Policymakers, key players from the tourism and hospitality industry and tour operators from over 50 countries are participating in the 'Wed in India' expo.

# Sandeshkhali agitation was BJP's ploy to win elections in Bengal: Mamata Banerjee

Kolkata | Agencies

The agitation in Sandeshkhali against alleged sexual harassment of women by local Trinamool Congress leaders was nothing but a plot scripted by the BJP to win elections in Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee claimed on Monday.

Addressing a rally at Saithan under the Birbhum Lok Sabha constituency in support of Trinamool candidate Satabdi Roy, the Chief Minister said, "A video has surfaced which exposes BJP's scripted plan in Sandeshkhali. But they don't know that self-dignity is more important for women than money."

She also cautioned the BJP against 'scripting' such blueprints in the future.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said that Trinamool is the only force that can protect the people of West Bengal on issues such as the NRC, CAA, or the Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

"I will not allow the implementation of NRC, CAA, or UCC in Bengal at any cost. If needed, I will sacrifice my life but I will never



bow down before the BJP," she said.

The Chief Minister also accused the Union government of stopping the flow of central funds for the 100-day job scheme under MGNREGA for the last three years.

"Yet, we have managed to continue with the state's own job scheme, Karmashree, under which people are entitled to 50 days of job each year. The state government is providing the funds required for the scheme," she said.

# Amazon India launches 'Sushruta' - a comprehensive health and wellness program for truck drivers

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amazon India announced the launch of 'Sushruta', a comprehensive health and wellness program for truck drivers. Amazon works with over 350 trucking partners who employ thousands of truck drivers. The initiative aims to prioritize the health needs of these truck drivers, who spend a significant part of their working day on the road. In addition, it will raise awareness about long-term health practices, which will be beneficial to truck drivers and their families. A series of health camps are being organized in Bengaluru, Manesar (Haryana), and other parts of the country for truck drivers, offering screenings for over 70 health parameters. Organized in collaboration with NGOs such as Premansh Foundation, Anchal Health Centre and DocOnline, the inaugural camp in Bengaluru in January 2024 and the



recently concluded camp in Manesar was a significant success with encouraging participation from truck drivers.

Thipparaju G, a truck driver working with Amazon's trucking partner from Bengaluru says "I am thankful to Amazon for initiatives like Sushruta. As we are mostly on the move, it's reassuring that Amazon prioritizes our healthcare and organizes health camps for our betterment." In 2022, Amazon in partnership with Lenskart, conducted a pilot of the program and organized an eye check-up camp. The 25-day-long camp, spanning across fulfillment centers and sort centers in Delhi NCR, aimed to enhance eye care accessibility for truck drivers and support staff.

# Sex video victim kidnap case: JD-S leader Revanna sent to SIT custody till May 8, helpline for victims launched

Bengaluru | Agencies

Karnataka court on Sunday sent JD-S lawmaker H.D. Revanna, the son of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, to the custody of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) till May 8 in the sex video scandal involving his son JD-S MP and NDA candidate Prajwal Revanna.

The SIT produced Revanna before the 17th Additional City Metropolitan Magistrate Ravindra Kumar B. Kattimani at his residence in Koramangala locality of Bengaluru as per procedure and sought five days custody. It made a submission mentioning 15 points explaining why he needed to be questioned by them.

Revanna was arrested on Saturday evening in connection with the kidnap case of one of the victims of the sex video scandal involving his son.



As counsel for the SIT sought his custody considering the seriousness of the case, Revanna's lawyer Muthy D. Naik accused the SIT of torturing his client who is facing health issues. The magistrate allowed Revanna to meet his advocate for one hour and also directed the SIT to ensure good food arrangements for

him. Meanwhile, the SIT has established a helpline for the victims of the sex video scandal.

It said that its probe has revealed that there are many more victims and if the victims and informants need legal protection and assistance, they can contact it at the helpline (6360938947).

Karnataka Police registered an FIR against Revanna in connection with the kidnapping of the woman, believed to be one of the victims of the sex video scandal involving his son, on Friday after the woman's son had registered a missing complaint, accusing him.

His relative Satish Babu was named the second accused in the FIR, and arrested from Mysuru district on Friday.

The woman's son alleged that his mother went missing after the surfacing of a purported sex video in which Revanna could be seen sexually assaulting her. He also alleged that his mother was locked up in an undisclosed location, as he pleaded with the police to initiate legal action against Revanna and Satish Babu.

Prajwal Revanna, the sitting JD-S MP from Hassan, has reportedly fled from the country.

# ED recovers over 19 kg gold from bank locker of cyber thug

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized 19.5 kg of gold valued at Rs 14.04 crore from the locker of a cyber fraudster maintained in the name of his mother with the Ballabgarh branch of Indian Bank in Haryana's Faridabad on May 3, said an official on Monday.

The financial probe agency said the fraudster, identified as Punit Kumar a.k.a Puneet Maheshwari, a resident of Moti Nagar in the national capital, was arrested on April 3 from the Arrival Hall, Terminal-3 of IGI Airport.

"He was produced before the Delhi PMLA Court on the same day and granted ED custody for 12 days and is presently under judicial custody," said the senior ED official. The seizure follows specific intelligence indicating that Punit Kumar has hidden the proceeds of cybercrimes in the form of gold in a locker



held at Indian Bank under his mother's name.

Additionally, previous searches conducted under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, at 14 locations in February and March 2024 resulted in the confiscation of various assets.

These include foreign-made gold bars totalling eight kg valued at Rs 5.04 crore found at Punit Kumar's premises, cash amounting to Rs 75 lakh, jewellery, high-end luxury watches, luxury vehicles like Mercedes, Audi, and Kia, along with incriminating documents and electronic devices containing evidence. These actions are part of a money laundering scheme involving foreign-based online gaming companies exploiting Indian residents.



## JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA, SHIVRAJ & DIGVIJAYA IN FRAY IN 3RD PHASE OF LS POLLS

## Over 5L first-time voters to exercise franchise in phase 3 of LS polls

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The campaigning for the third phase of Lok Sabha polls in Madhya Pradesh in which voting will be held on May 7 in nine Parliamentary constituencies in the state ended on Sunday.

Several heavyweight candidates are in the fray in the third phase of polling. Among them, two are former chief ministers -- Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Vidisha) and Digvijaya Singh (Raghograh), and Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia (Guna).

In the third phase, polling will be held in Bhopal, Guna, Raghogarh, Vidisha, Morena, Bhind (SC), Gwalior, Sagar, and Betul (SC) Lok Sabha constituencies.

As per the original schedule, the election in Betul was to be held in the Lok Polls' second phase on April 26. However, the sudden death of a BSP candidate prompted the Election Commission to reschedule the polling in the seat in the third phase.

As the deadline for campaigning ended, individuals from outside the area who are not enlisted as voters in



that particular Parliamentary constituency will have to leave the region.

An intensive monitoring campaign is being conducted for this, Madhya Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Anupam Rajan said.

Rajan said that voter information slips have been distributed to the voters.

He informed that a total of 1.77 crore voters are registered across nine Lok Sabha constituencies, who will

cast votes at 20,456 polling booths. "In view of the heat due to summer, other necessary arrangements including shade, water, medicines have been made at the polling stations," Rajan said.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Anupam

Rajan on Monday said that more than five lakh first-time voters will exercise their franchise in the third phase of the Lok Sabha election for the nine Lok Sabha seats in the state.

"More than 5.25 lakh first-time voters (age group 18-19) will exercise their rights. There are around 1804 voters -- above 100 years -- who will also vote in the third phase," Rajan said during a press conference.

A total of 127 candidates are in the fray for the third phase elections, the highest (22) in Bhopal and lowest (7) in the Bhind constituency.

There are more than 1.77 crore voters -- 92.68 lakh male and 84.83 lakh female -- and 491 third-gender voters and 1,66,431 Divyang (specially abled) voters in the



state.

A total of 20,456 polling booths have been set up in the nine Lok Sabha seats, which will cover as many as 18 districts of the state.

Of them, 5744 polling booths have been earmarked as critical and most of them are in three constituencies - Bhind, Morena and Gwalior. As many as 2043 polling

booths have been designated as 'pink booths' in the third phase, where the polling will be conducted by women and Divyang employees.

The nine Lok Sabha constituencies that will go to polls in the third phase on May 7 are Bhopal, Vidisha, Gwalior, Morena, Bhind, Sagar, Betul, Raigarh and Guna.

## Govt to provide ex gratia sums to kins of ASI Bagri, Cpl Vikki Pahade

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, on Monday, said that his government will provide an ex gratia sum of Rupees one crore to kins of Indian Air Force (IAF) soldier Cpl Vikki Pahade, who was killed by militants in Poonch region of J&K on May 4. A compensation of the same amount will be provided to Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) Mahendra Bagri, who was killed by sand mafia in Shahdol on May 3.

In an official statement issued on Monday, CM Yadav said that the state government would send a proposal to the Election Commission regarding approval for the ex gratia sum as the Model Code of Conduct for Lok Sabha elections is in force.

"The state government will send the proposal to the Election Commission for the approval of ex gratia of Rupees one crore to kins of ASI Mahendra Bagri and IAF Jawan Vikki Pahade," Chief Minister's Office said on Monday.

CM Yadav will also attend the funeral of martyred Vikki Pahade and has left for Chhindwara.

The last rites of ASI Mahendra Bagri was



performed on Sunday, in the presence of Shahdol Collector and SP. This was the second instance in six months when sand mafia ran a tractor-trolley loaded with illegally mined sand over a government servant.

In December last year, a Patwari (regional revenue officer) was crushed to death by sand mafia in Shahdol district.

## Voters will be able to vote by showing any one of 13 photo documents

### More than 1 crore 77 lakh 52 thousand voters will vote in nine parliamentary constituencies on May 7

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan said that in the third phase of Lok Sabha elections 2024, one crore 77 lakh 52 thousand 583 voters will vote in nine parliamentary constituencies. Voter information slips with QR codes have been distributed to all voters. The voter information slip containing QR code will provide other important information like name of their polling station, address, number, voter number in the electoral roll, helpline number of the state and district to the voters.

Rajan said that if a voter does not have a voter information slip and his name is registered in the



voter list, then the voter will be able to cast his vote by showing

any one of the 13 alternative documents containing photo.

### 13 OPTIONAL DOCUMENTS

The voters can show any of the following 13 optional documents to vote. These documents are Voter ID Card with photo, Aadhar Card, PAN Card, Unique ID Card for persons with disabilities, Driving License, MNREGA Job Card, Pension Document (with photo), Passport, Passbook (issued by Bank/Post Office with photo), Service Identity Card with photo (Central/ issued by State Governments/PSUs/Public Limited Companies), official identity cards issued to MPs, MLAs and Legislative Council Members, smart cards issued by RGI under NPR, Health Insurance Smart Card (issued under the scheme of Labour Ministry). He has urged all voters to vote with enthusiasm.

## Delegations from Sri Lanka and Philippines observe voting material distribution process

Team Absolute | Bhopal

An international 11 member delegation from Sri Lanka and Philippines has come to Bhopal to see all the processes of Lok Sabha Elections-2024 and understand the various stages related to it. This delegation reached the voting material distribution site in Bhopal on 6th May in the morning, saw the voting material distribution process and sought detailed information about it. During this, Joint Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Khatri, Collector and District Election Officer Kaushalendra Vikram Singh, CEO District Panchayat Rituraj Singh were present along with the delegation.

The international delegation was given step-wise detailed information about the entire election process by Collector



Singh and Master Trainer. They were also given information about other election related processes including EVM, VVPAT, polling team formation, voting material distribution, monitoring and security related arrangements.

Various questions related to

the election process were asked by the members of the international delegation, and were resolved by Collector Singh. The international delegation met and discussed with the polling parties at the material distribution site and sought various information related to the process.

## 4 CHILDREN, TEEN DRIVER KILLED AFTER TRACTOR OVERTURNS IN JABALPUR

Jabalpur: Four children and a tractor driver were killed, and two others were injured when a tractor-trolley overturned in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur district on Monday, police said.

The accident occurred in Tineta Deori village under Chargavan police station limits in the morning, city superintendent of police (CSP) Sunil Nema told media. Four boys, in the age group of 10 to 15 years, and an 18-year-old driving the tractor-trolley were killed, while two children sustained injuries, he said.

The children were transporting a water tank to a wedding, the official said.

The driver was operating the tractor recklessly and lost control, causing it to overturn, he said. Additional superintendent of police Suryakant Sharma said Anup Barkade (12), Rajveer Gond (13), Devendra Barkade (15), Lucky Markam (10) and Dharmendra Thakur, who was driving the tractor, were killed.

Dalpat (12) and Vikas (10) sustained injuries and are undergoing treatment at the medical college hospital, he said.

## Scared BJP engaged in sabotage: Kamal Nath

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Kamal Nath has accused BJP of instigating defection due to fear of defeat.

Former Chief Minister Kamal Nath has written on Instagram, "Veer Bhogya Vasundhara means only the brave rule the earth. In this Lok Sabha election, the public is with the Congress Party and the India Alliance. Fearing this, the Bharatiya Janata Party is busy sabotaging the Congress."

Kamal Nath alleges that breaking the Congress leaders, getting them to change their party, getting their nomination papers returned, getting their nominations canceled are all part of this conspiracy. BJP wants to break the morale of Congress workers by doing this and confuse the people who are angry with BJP. But dedicated Congress workers do not need to worry about this. They should work with full commitment and stand



firm in their locality, at their booth and on the responsibility given to them by the party.

He further said, when the election results will be declared on June 4, the public will punish those who indulged in conspiracies and frauds and the result of the penance of those working hard for the party will come out in the form of victory of Congress and India alliance.

## FIRE BREAKS OUT IN UNION CARBIDE FACTORY, FIRE BRIGADE TEAM REACHES THE SPOT



Bhopal: A major accident has taken place in the capital city Bhopal. A massive fire broke out in the Union Carbide factory here. Due to which old machines, plastic and paper goods were present in the factory. The video of this incident has also surfaced. In which after the fire, clouds of smoke were seen flying in the sky. Let us tell you that this factory has been closed since the time of Bhopal gas tragedy.

The administration has issued an alert and asked people to stay safe in their homes. Along with this, Collector and Police Commissioner have reached the spot. As soon as information about the incident was received, the fire brigade team reached the spot and controlled the fire. The cause of fire has not been confirmed yet.

## State Congress President Jitu Patwari has lost his mental balance: VD Sharma

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bharatiya Janata Party's state president and MP Vishnudutt Sharma has written a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner of the country demanding that the Commission immediately stop the campaigning by Jitu Patwari, so that law and order is maintained in the state and the remaining two phases of elections are held, may it end peacefully.

Vishnudutt Sharma has said in a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner that State Congress President Jitu Patwari had gone to the house of the gang rape victim girl in Jobat and had shared her photo with her family on social media. Due to this, the identity of the victim girl was revealed. This is a violation of the court and an FIR was registered against Jitu Patwari regarding this. Enraged by this, Jitu Patwari, while discussing with journalists on May 1, advised the Chief Minister of the state, Dr.



Mohan Yadav, to drown himself in a handful of water. A memorandum regarding this was submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer by the Bharatiya Janata Party on May 01. After this, while discussing with the media in Gwalior, Jitu Patwari made indecent remarks against the

reserved category woman and former minister Imarti Devi and said that she has lost her interest.

In this regard, Bharatiya Janata Party had given a memorandum to the Chief Electoral Officer on 03 May. But Jitu Patwari did not stop here. While discussing with jour-

nalists in Bhind district, he compared the country's Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Ravana. There is huge anger among the public due to the use of such words against the popular Prime Minister of the country who holds a constitutional post. A memorandum in this regard has been submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer on May 4. Sharma has said in his letter that it is clear from the statements made about Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and reserved category woman Imarti Devi that Jitu Patwari has lost his mental balance. These statements of his have caused anger in the state and can pose a threat to law and order at any time, due to which the third and fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections can be affected. Therefore, there should be an immediate ban on election campaigning by State Congress President Jitu Patwari, so that the elections can be conducted peacefully.

## 36 people booked under NSA in MP since announcement of LS polls in March

Team Absolute | Bhopal

As many as 36 people were booked under the National Security Act (NSA) in Madhya Pradesh since the announcement of General Elections on March 16, the state's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Anupam Rajan said on Monday.

Briefing the Press ahead of the third phase of elections on Tuesday in nine Lok Sabha seats in Madhya Pradesh, CEO Rajan said that a total 1,433 FIRs had been registered till May 6.

He added that preventive measures were taken in more than two lakh cases between March 16 and May 6. He also said that the Election Commission (EC) had so far received 4,435 complaints through the C-Vigil App during the same period and all of them had been resolved.

The nine Lok Sabha seats that will go to polls in the state in the third phase on



May 7 are Bhopal, Vidisha, Sagar, Betul, Gwalior, Morena, Bhind, Guna and Raigarh. There are a total of 127 candidates in the fray for the third phase of elections, the highest (22) in Bhopal and lowest (7) in Bhind constituency. There are more than 1.77 crore voters, out of which 92.68 lakh are male and 84.83 lakh female and third gender voters are 491 and Divyang voters are 1,66,431. A total of 20,456 polling booths have been set up in the nine Lok Sabha seats, which will cover as many as 18 districts of the state. Of them, 5,744 polling booths have been earmarked as critical and most of them are in three constituencies of Bhind, Morena and Gwalior.



## EDITOR'S SPECS

## 'School on Wheels' launched for children staying in relief camps

Manipur Governor Anusuiya Uikey on Sunday launched the "School on Wheels" initiative aiming to impart education to students sheltered in relief camps in the state in view of over a year-long ethnic violence. The school bus, equipped with a library, computers, and sports items, would visit different camps accompanied by a teacher. The Governor after launching the pioneering initiative at Bal Vidya Mandir Complex in Imphal said that the incidents which started on May 3 last year affected thousands of people, especially huge number of students of Manipur. "The 'School on Wheels' scheme would reach out to students staying in the relief camps and impart them with required teaching," she said. Noting that she understands the pain and sorrow of the displaced persons, Uikey told the gathering that she had already discussed with the Chief Minister (N. Biren Singh) and Chief Secretary (Vineet Joshi) to initiate a process for permanent settlement of the displaced people staying in relief camps. She said that the "School on Wheels" initiative is being implemented by Vidya Bharati's Shiksha Vikash Samiti, which decided that children living in relief camps should not face any kind of problem in their academic aspects. The Manipur government currently runs around 320 relief camps, housing more than 59,000 men, women, and children. Around 18,000 students are currently staying in relief camps. After the ethnic violence broke out in Manipur on May 3 last year, over 70,000 people, including women and children, of both the Meitei and Kuki-Zomi communities were displaced from their homes and villages and took shelter in safer places in different districts of Manipur and outside the state, including neighbouring Mizoram.

# SC Decision on Hindu Marriage Praiseworthy

Lalit Garg

By delivering a major decision on Hindu marriage, the Supreme Court has not only confirmed rites, rituals and traditional customs of Hindu marriage, but has also accepted them as necessary from the legal point of view. Today, when the sanctity, social acceptance and efficacy of Hindu marriage is getting undervalued due to so-called modern life under influence of western culture, there was a dire need to reinforce it. Those who consider marriage ceremonies just as a registration need to be wary. They have to understand the underlying meaning of taking seven rounds around the altar; without these seven rounds, Hindu customs and wedding ceremonies will not be valid in the eyes of the law. The latest decision of the Supreme Court on Hindu marriage is welcome, and its long-term consequences will be pleasant for society. This decision will reinforce Hindu culture and traditions. The institution of family will get strengthened.

While rendering this decision related to Hindu marriage, the Supreme Court said that marriage is not an occasion just for 'singing and dancing', 'drinking and eating' or for demanding dowry and gifts by exerting undue pressure. Hindu marriage is not a commercial transaction. It is a serious basic cultural and family event which is celebrated to create a relationship between a man and a woman who attain the status of husband and wife for a good family in the future. It is a basic unit of the Indian Hindu social system, which has a strong cultural and religious dimension. In fact, the Supreme Court has made it clear that Hindu marriage cannot be recognized without taking seven rounds around the altar, that is, the rules and provisions made in the Hindu Marriage Act will have to be followed strictly for solemnizing the marriage. In this way, the Court in its decision has clarified the legal requirements of solemnizing a Hindu marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act 1955. According to the Act, a Hindu marriage shall be solemnized according to traditional rites, rituals and ceremonies of either party. The ceremonies include Saptapadi (the taking of seven steps jointly around the sacred fire by the bride and groom both); the marriage becomes complete and binding when they take the seventh step together. Overall, Hindu marriage is an institution, a ritual and the marriage is not a commercial transaction.

The Supreme Court has stressed that proper rites like Saptapadi (seven rounds around the



sacred fire) and associated rituals and ceremonies are necessary for the validity of a Hindu marriage. In case of later disputes between husband and wife, it is necessary to present proof of the solemnizing of the marriage ceremony. This effort of the Supreme Court to explain the value of the seven rounds and the ceremony related to it will not only strengthen the institution of Hindu marriage, but will also reinforce the values that are getting blurred in the storm of modernity. There is no doubt that the basic importance of marriage ceremony has reduced in the modern times as compared to the earlier times; now marriage has become just a show, compulsion or compromise for many. Justice B Nagarathna in her relevant and useful judgment has rightly said that Hindu marriage is a sacrament, which should be given status of an institution of great value in the Indian society. A marriage without traditional rites or rituals like seven rounds around the sacred fire will not be considered a Hindu marriage as per Section 7 of the Hindu Marriage Act. For this reason, the Court has urged young men and women to think deeply about the institution of marriage before entering into it; and to consider how sacred they said institution is in Indian society.

The question is why did the Supreme Court need to stress upon Hindu marriage and strengthen Hindu values? In fact, many cases have been coming to the court's doorstep regarding the rituals and traditional customs related to Hindu marriage, and every time the court has been presenting its view on the matters related to

the institution of marriage with alertness, foresight and prudence. The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court recently held that as per the Hindu Marriage Act, the ceremony of Kanyadaan is not necessary to solemnize a Hindu marriage. The importance of Saptapadi was also shown in that decision. In the decision of a family court of Madhya Pradesh, it was explained to the woman's side that applying vermilion is a religious duty of a married Hindu woman. A similar attempt at persuasion is reflected in the latest decision of the Supreme Court. Overall, the message of the court is that the basic meaning of marriage should be understood, while avoiding unnecessary pomp and show. There is now a need for more clarity regarding Hindu marriage and especially to emphasize Hindu rituals and culture; because the family institution continues to exist in India, the reason for this is Hindu values and traditions. In this way, the Court in its decision has clarified the legal requirements and sanctity of Hindu marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act 1955.

Hindu marriage is an ideal tradition and culture. In Hindu religion, marriage is considered one of the sixteen sacraments; Marriage or Vivaah, hence its literal meaning is to bear special responsibility. The marriage ceremony is commonly known as Hindu marriage. In other religions, marriage is a kind of contract between husband and wife which can be broken under special circumstances, but Hindu marriage is a relationship between husband

and wife for many births which cannot be broken under any circumstances. By taking seven rounds of sacred fire and keeping the Pole Star as witness, the two bodies, mind and soul get tied in a sacred bond. It is also a union of two families. In Hindu marriage, there is more spiritual relationship between husband and wife than physical relationship and this relationship is considered extremely sacred.

Hindu marriage not only contains family, social and cultural significance, but it also has deep spiritual significance. Hinduism has prescribed four purusharthas (four basic pursuits of life), i.e. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The purpose of the marriage ceremony is to complete the effort of 'Kama' and then gradually move towards 'Moksha'. Many important things in the life of a man and woman are associated with marriage; for example, love between man and woman, their relationship, children, their parents, various happy events falling in course of their life, social status and prosperity. In Hindu society, a married woman is viewed with utmost respect. The sight of a woman with kumkum-sindoor on her forehead, wearing a mangalsutra around her neck, green bangles, toe rings and a six or nine-yard saree automatically generates respect for her in the mind of an observer. Of the seven Hindu marriage vows, there are at least three where the couple promises to take care of their elders. The fifth promise is to have children and take care of them.

In recent years, many anomalies and distortions have been added to the Hindu marriage tradition and culture in India. With the introduction of dating culture, the prevalence of love marriage has increased. Potential brides and grooms prefer to choose life partners on their own. Today's romantic relationships are not actually marriage, but a new practice, which has the opposite effect of disintegrating the family institution. Along with marriage, the practice of pre-wedding has also become the carrier of many distortions, big grand events and hotel culture has also blurred the sanctity of marriage. Widespread use of alcohol and other drugs at events has also become a cause of accidents. Due to which cracks are seen appearing in marriage bonds even before it takes place.

Lalit Garg is Writer, journalist, columnist based in Delhi. The views expressed are personal.

international

## Russia announces tactical nuclear forces exercises



Moscow | Agencies

Russia will conduct an exercise of its tactical nuclear forces on the orders of President Vladimir Putin, the Defence Ministry announced on Monday. The announcement did not say if the missiles would be equipped with nuclear warheads. Russia has previously carried out nuclear forces training without nuclear warheads. "As part of the exercise, a series of activities will be carried out to practice the preparation and use of non-strategic nuclear weapons," the Defence Ministry in Moscow said. It was initially unclear when and where exactly the exercise, in which the southern defence district and the naval forces are involved, would begin. In October, the Russian military fired two intercontinental missiles and several cruise missiles for training and deterrence purposes. It justified the exercise, which it had announced, by alleging "provocative state-

### Six killed in Ukraine drone attack in border region: Russian authorities

Six people have been killed in a Ukrainian drone attack in the Russian border region of Belgorod, according to Russian authorities. Further, 35 people have been injured as Ukrainian forces targeted three vehicles near the village of Beryozovka, Belgorod Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov wrote on his Telegram channel on Monday. Two of the vehicles were reportedly buses carrying workers, although no further details are available about their employers. Gladkov also published a photo showing a badly damaged bus. Ukraine has sporadically attacked arms depots and transport infrastructure in Russian border regions during the conflict, which Moscow started more than two years ago. However, the number of casualties Ukraine has inflicted is far lower than its own losses since the Russian invasion.

ments and threats by individual Western officials against the Russian Federation." Since the start of its full-scale war against Ukraine more than two years ago, Russian representatives have repeatedly tried to test

### Russian airstrikes in Ukraine cause power outages

Russian airstrikes in the north-eastern Ukrainian border region of Sumy have led to power outages despite many drones being shot down, Ukrainian officials said on Monday. Authorities said that more than 4,00,000 households in three districts and the regional capital, Sumy, were affected. The Russian military attacked the area with 13 Iranian-made combat drones, they said. Although 12 of them are said to have been intercepted, energy systems were damaged, according to the energy supplier Ukrenergo. Meanwhile, more than 1,300 villages lost power. However, most of them have now been supplied with electricity again. Ukraine has been fending off a Russian invasion for more than two years. Russian attacks with missiles and drones have repeatedly targeted the country's power supply. Since heavy attacks in March, there have been regular power failures, particularly in the eastern Ukrainian region of Kharkiv.

international support for Kyiv by stirring up fears of a nuclear war.

## French President Macron criticises blockades at university Gaza protests

Paris | Agencies

French President Emmanuel Macron has criticised blockades at pro-Palestinian demonstrations at French universities, saying that the tactics went beyond legitimate means of debate and protest.

Macron said he understands that the events in the Gaza Strip, in particular, are upsetting people, "but preventing a debate has never helped resolve the conflict," according to an interview published on Sunday in the newspapers La Provence and La Tribune Dimanche.

"It is perfectly legitimate and even reasonable and reassuring that our youth can say that



international events affect them and discuss them. But using violence and blockades to force an institution to adopt

this or that policy, to prevent other students from entering a lecture hall on the pretext that they are Jewish - that is not the

Republic," Macron said.

He said such behaviour does not reflect mutual respect, pluralism and a condemnation of racism and anti-Semitism.

On Friday, police broke up a sit-in by pro-Palestinian students at the renowned Sciences Po University in Paris, at which protesters had blocked entrances to university buildings.

The protesters denounced their university's stance on the Gaza war and are demanding, among other things, that cooperation with Israeli universities be reconsidered.

The university management's attempt to put an end to the conflict with a large-scale internal debate failed.

## Over 1,000 documents wrongly issued from govt portal in S. Korea



Seoul | Agencies

In a cyber incident, more than 1,000 civil documents were wrongly issued from the government's online civil service portal called 'Government 24', leading to the leak of personal information, the interior ministry said on Sunday.

The documents - 646 graduation and other certificates, and 587 corporate tax payment certificates - were issued under the name of the wrong individual or business representative, exposing sensitive personal information, including names, addresses and resident registration numbers, according to the ministry.

The services have been restored to normal, it said, blaming the error on the program developer's mistake, reports Yonhap news agency.

The ministry said the wrongly issued documents have been deleted and those whose personal information was leaked have been informed via phone or mail.

It also said the cases were reported to the Personal Information Protection Commission under relevant regulations.

"We currently do not know the details of the leak and are looking into how far the leaked information has spread," a commission official said. "It's unclear yet when the results of the investigation will come out."

## After Hamas rocket attack, 16 killed in Israeli airstrikes in Rafah



Tel Aviv | Agencies

The Hamas health department said that 16 people were killed in an Israeli air attack on Monday. Media has reported that nine people from one family and seven members from another family were killed in the air attack.

The airstrike was in retaliation to the barrage of rockets fired by Hamas at a ground near Kerem Shalom in Southern Israel killing three Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers and injuring 11 soldiers. The injured included soldiers from the 931 Battalion and one soldier from the Shaked Battalion.

The attack, according to IDF, was staged from the Rafah region early morning. Highly

placed sources in the Israel Prime Minister's Office (PMO) told IANS that the war cabinet will meet on Monday and decide on the ground invasion of Rafah. Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and Minister without portfolio, Benny Gantz will be participating in the war cabinet to be held later in the day. It may be recalled that in the recent indirect mediatory talks in Cairo, Israel has insisted on the release of at least 33 of its hostages in the custody of Hamas in exchange for 600 Palestinian prisoners in Israel jails. The rocket and mortar firing by Hamas at Kerem Shalom crossing killing three IDF soldiers and Israel's retaliation is likely to affect the progress of peace talks in Cairo.

## China regards Europe as important dimension of its foreign policy: Xi Jinping

Paris | Agencies

China regards Europe as an important dimension in its major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics and an important partner on its path toward Chinese modernisation, Chinese President Xi Jinping said here Monday.

Xi made the remarks at a China-France-EU trilateral meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at Elysee Palace, Xinhua news agency reported.

Expressing his delight in meeting with Macron and von der Leyen again, Xi noted that France is the first stop of his overseas visit this year and that the trilateral meeting amplifies the Europe-wide significance of this visit.

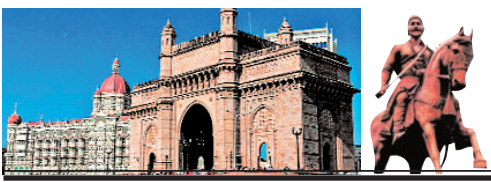
China always approaches its relations with the European Union (EU) from a strategic and long-term perspective, Xi said.

It is hoped that China-France and China-EU relations would reinforce each other and thrive together, he added.

As the world enters a new period of turbulence and transformation, China and the EU, as two major forces in the world, should continue to see each other as partners, stay committed to dialogue and cooperation, deepen strategic communication, enhance strategic mutual trust, build strategic consensus, carry out strategic



coordination, work for the steady and sound growth of China-EU ties, and continue making new contributions to world peace and development, Xi said.



# Maha Congress Working President takes back resignation, to campaign for MVA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Congress Working President, M Arif Naseem Khan announced on Monday that he has withdrawn his resignation from the state party campaign panel and will canvass for all Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) candidates in the Lok Sabha polls.

A prominent Muslim leader and ex-Minister, Khan made the official announcement in the presence of AICC General Secretary Ramesh Chennithala, state Chief Spokesperson Atul Londhe and other senior leaders.

IANs had first reported on May 4 on the likely developments and how Khan's name was included as a 'Star Campaigner' for the fifth phase of the Lok Sabha elections on May 20 and that he would campaign for all the INDIA bloc candidates in the state.

"I am not hankering after any posts. I only sought to highlight the sentiments of the Muslim community. The senior party leaders have discussed the matters with me and I



hereby withdraw my resignation from the Congress Campaign Committee," declared Khan. Khan's abrupt move 10 days ago (April 26) had rattled the Congress and MVA allies after he publicly questioned why the Opposition alliance had for the first time not fielded a single Muslim candidate in any of 48 LS constituencies in the state.

A contender for the Mumbai North Central LS seat, he had warned that the minority community was perturbed and was asking "whether the Congress only wants Muslim votes but not Muslim leaders", creating

apprehensions of loss of minority votes for Opposition candidates.

On Monday, Khan reiterated that along with the party, he would strongly campaign for Mumbai North Central candidate Prof. Varsha Gaikwad and other MVA candidates in the state.

With Khan's decision that was widely hailed in Congress and MVA political circles, the curtains have fallen on a potentially embarrassing situation with the possibility of Muslim voters staying off voting to express their angst over 'non-inclusion'.

Interestingly, barring the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi and All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul, no other mainstream parties in the state including the ruling Mahayuti or the Opposition MVA have put up any candidates from the Muslim or other minority communities like Christians, Sikhs in the state for the 2024 LS polls. However, in 2014 and 2019, the Congress had fielded a sole Muslim, Hidayatullah Barkatullah Patel from Akola LS constituency who was trounced both times by the BJP's Sanjay Dhotre.

# Ujjwal Nikam denounces Vijay Wadettiwar's remarks on 26/11 attack

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ujjwal Nikam, a BJP candidate and former prosecutor in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, has questioned Congress politician Vijay Wadettiwar's recent comments about the incident. Wadettiwar, the Maharashtra Assembly's Leader of Opposition, stated that former Mumbai ATS chief Hemant Karkare was slain by a police official affiliated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

Nikam criticised Wadettiwar's allegations as "baseless" and compared them to "Goebbels' propaganda," alluding to Hitler's senior propagandist. He was outraged by Wadettiwar's charges, accusing him of demeaning Hemant Karkare's memory and casting doubt on the case's legal



conclusions. "What allegations are you making? What will Pakistan say? Pakistan has never denied this, because we produced judicial proof. But our man is doing politics. You just want to do propaganda - that too Goebbels' propaganda. This doesn't defame Nikam. It defames you," Nikam told to a news agency on Monday.

According to the report, the BJP candidate chastised Wadettiwar for making such comments after his candidature was declared, pointing

out that Kasab's confession and eyewitness testimony confirmed Karkare's death during the 26/11 attack. Nikam further underlined the disrespect paid to Karkare and other martyrs by challenging accepted facts. "I am not bothered by Vijay Wadettiwar's allegations against me but the fact that Kasab and his colleague Abu Ismail killed Hemant Karkare was never disputed even by Pakistan but the leader of the opposition is questioning the whole case, it is not just an insult to the 166 people died but all our martyrs. I am sad that an Opposition leader who doesn't know the entire thing believes in a book and makes baseless statements. It means that you are insulting Hemant Karkare," Nikam further told the news agency.

# BJP files complaint with EC against Maharashtra LoP's remarks on ex-ATS chief Karkare's death

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The BJP has lodged a complaint with the Election Commission (EC) against Maharashtra's Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Vijay Wadettiwar, who reportedly claimed that former Mumbai Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) chief Hemant Karkare was killed by an "RSS-affiliated cop, and not by terrorist Ajmal Kasab, during the 26/11 terror attack".

Mumbai BJP chief Ashish Shelar in a complaint on Sunday urged the poll body to direct the registration of FIR against Wadettiwar under the stringent provision of law. He also urged the EC to direct the Congress leader to tender an unconditional apology.

In the complaint, the BJP further sought a comprehensive investigation into Wadettiwar's statement to ascertain whether the Congress is supporting and propagating this "harmful narrative".

Shelar claimed that Wadettiwar's statement violates the Model Code of Conduct and "risks inciting communal tension and causing enmity".



Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis claimed that the Opposition "is worried about Ajmal Kasab" and wants to "support terrorists by targeting Ujjwal Nikam", the BJP candidate from Mumbai North Central.

Speaking to reporters on Saturday, LoP Wadettiwar said Hemant Karkare was "not killed by bullets of terrorists like Ajmal Kasab, but by a policeman affiliated to the RSS... Ujjwal Nikam, who appeared as special public prosecutor, is a traitor who suppressed this fact and BJP has given an election ticket to a traitor like him".

# After losing voice at poll rally, Sharad Pawar recovering but advised to rest by docs



Team Absolute | Pune

NCP(SP) President Sharad Pawar, who lost his voice briefly at an election rally on Sunday night, is recovering but has been advised to take rest for a day or two, party leaders said here on Monday.

The senior Pawar, 83, who was addressing an election rally on Sunday, stood up and spoke for barely five minutes and then suddenly became silent, apparently losing his voice, and then stopped his address.

As his concerned party leaders and workers waited, Sharad Pawar was helped off the stage and taken home, while some other speakers pitched in for him.

Indicating he was returning to his cheerful but fighting mode, Sharad Pawar on Monday morning paid tributes on the 102nd death anniversary of the legendary Chhatrapati Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur.

"Pawar Sahib was mistakenly offered cold water to drink at one of the rallies yesterday... Normally, he doesn't take chilled water and that affected his voice. Otherwise, he is absolutely fit and fine with no cause for worries. He has been advised

to rest his throat for one or two days," a top leader told IANS on Monday morning.

He explained that in the past three weeks, the senior Pawar has addressed a staggering 52 poll rallies across the state, braving the extreme heat and kept up a grueling election campaign schedule despite his advanced age, for all the Maha Vikas Aghadi and NCP(SP) candidates.

Accordingly, he has cancelled all his engagements for today, and possibly tomorrow also depending on the pace of recovery.

On Tuesday, polling for the third phase of LS polls shall be held in the state and other parts of India.

The leader assured that Sharad Pawar is already scheduled to campaign vigorously for the remaining two phases of the elections on May 13 and May 20, including a mega-rally of the INDIA-MVA alliance top leaders in Mumbai next fortnight and there is no change in his plans as of now.

Meanwhile, many party workers expressed concerns over Pawar's health, and some have taken to social media, requesting him to "take care of your health, we shall work very hard and deliver victory at your feet".

# CM Shinde urges Mahayuti workers to boost voter turnout in final phases

Team Absolute | Thane

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde expressed concern over the low voter turnout in the state during the Lok Sabha elections and urged Mahayuti workers to improve engagement in the remaining phases.

Shinde, speaking at an election rally in Thane in favour of Shiv Sena candidate Naresh Mhaske, emphasised the need to increase voter turnout despite the adverse weather circumstances, an agency reported.

"The elections are being held in severe heat, and it is reflected in the voting percentage in the state. While there is no doubt that we will win by a huge margin, there is a need to increase the voting percentage," the chief minister said.

According to the report, recognising the confidence in winning by a large margin, Shinde emphasised the need of mobilising voters, particularly in the early hours of voting, and urged booth-level workers and block in-charges to maximise participation.

Reflecting on the Mahayuti alliance's extensive support as a result of the government's efforts, Shinde praised the commitment of all alliance elements, including the Shiv Sena,



BJP, and NCP, led by Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, the report added.

"I am happy that all constituents of the Mahayuti and the parties that support the alliance are working seriously," he said.

Shinde also praised Maha Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray for his contributions to the alliance's triumph, emphasising the joint efforts of all parties involved, the report further stated.

On Tuesday, voting for 11 of Maharashtra's 48 Lok Sabha seats will take place, with the focus on the high-stakes struggle in Baramati, where Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule is up against Sunetra Pawar, wife of the venerable leader's estranged nephew and Maharashtra deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar.

# ICSE Results 2024: 99.96 pc students from Maharashtra clear exams



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), headquartered in New Delhi, announced the results for the ICSE and ISC examinations on Monday afternoon. The ICSE Class

10 exams concluded on March 28, while the Class 12 (ISC) exams concluded on April 3. Results for both ICSE and ISC can be accessed on the official CISCE website - cisce.org. Last year, the results were declared on May 14 for exams conducted between February 27 and March 29.

**ISC (Class XII)**  
In ISC exams, the overall pass percentage this year is 98.19 per cent (98,088 passed), marking a slight decrease from last year's 96.93 per cent. The state pass percentage for ISC exams has risen to 99.71 per cent compared to 98.69 per cent in 2023.

**ICSE (Class X)**  
This year, the national pass percentage for ICSE is 99.47 per cent (2,42,328 passed), reflecting a slight increase compared to last year's 98.99 per cent. In Maharashtra, the state pass percentage stands at 99.47 per cent (2,42,328 passed), showing a slight decrease from last year's 99.83 per cent.

# PPE-clad thieves clean Nashik ICICI Home Finance locker of Rs 5 cr gold jewellery

Team Absolute | Nashik

In a sensational operation, at least two thieves, one shrouded in a PPE kit, broke into the locker hold of the ICICI Home Finance Co. Ltd Nashik branch and scooped off with gold jewellery worth around Rs 4.93 crore, police said here on Monday.

The theft is believed to have happened around midnight of Friday-Saturday but came to light late on Saturday evening when a bank official had gone to the locker room to deposit a customer's valuables, said Sarkarwada Police Station's woman Investigating Officer, declining to be identified.

"From the CCTV footage, there were at least two thieves who broke into the strong room of the branch, of whom one was wearing a PPE kit and the other had his face covered. A third accomplice was waiting outside the branch. They have broken into one main locker where many customers' gold jewellery and other valuables were stored," she told reporter. As per investigations, the locker contained the valuables of at least 222 customers comprising a total estimated 1.34 kgs of gold ornaments with an approximate value of Rs 4.93 crore, which are missing, said the IO, even as the crime sent shockwaves in the com-



pany and the customers.

Following a complaint by the ICICI-HFC, she said that the police have swung into action, and formed multiple teams of the local police and crime branch unit, to investigate the case and trace out the three unidentified desperadoes seen in the CCTV footage.

The ICICI-HFC branch is situated on

the third floor of the Indira Heights business complex of the busy thoroughfare known as Gangapur Naka with heavy traffic and crowded with people.

Despite repeated attempts, ICICI-HFC officials or ICICI Bank authorities were not available for comments on the matter even as police have tightened patrolling in the Gangapur Naka vicinity.

# Gadchiroli Police neutralises maoist IED threat in Tipagad area

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a proactive operation, Gadchiroli Police successfully dismantled a potential threat posed by Maoist insurgents in the Tipagad area. Acting on credible intelligence indicating Maoists' plans to execute IED attacks during the Lok Sabha elections 2024, security forces preemptively deployed extensive area domination and heavy troop presence to thwart any subversive activities. Following a diligent investigation, authorities pinpointed a location in Tipagad where the insurgents had concealed explosives and Claymore mines. In response, a specialized team, comprising two Bomb Detection and Disposal Squads (BDDS), one unit of C60, and one Quick Action Team (QAT) of the CRPF, was swiftly mobilised to neutralise the threat.

Upon reaching the designated area, the teams discovered and safely destroyed six pressure cookers filled with explosives and detonators, as well as three Claymore pipes rigged with explosives and shrapnel. Additionally, three claymore pipes devoid of explosives were recovered. Alongside these ordnances, authorities found gunpowder, medicines, and blankets at the site. "The meticulous operation culminat-



ed in the in situ destruction of nine IEDs and three Claymore pipes by the BDDS team. The remaining materials were promptly incinerated on-site. As

the teams make their way back to the nearest outpost, formal charges will be registered against the perpetrators," said Neelotpal, SP Gadchiroli.



# Emily Blunt reveals how she felt sick after kissing certain co-stars



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Emily Blunt has talked about how she felt sick after kissing certain co-stars, despite having chemistry with them that she didn't like. "I've had chemistry with people I haven't liked," Blunt said during an appearance on "The Howard Stern Show". When asked: "Who?" she simply replied: "I'm not gonna tell you."

"I have had chemistry with people who... I have not had a good time working with them," she said, still declining to divulge any names, reports people.com.

"Sometimes it's a strange thing. Sometimes you could have a rapport that's really effortless, but it doesn't translate onscreen," she said, discussing her approach to establishing chemistry.

"Chemistry is this strange thing. It's an ethereal thing that you can't really bottle up and buy or sell. It's like there or it's not. It's just easier when you have a natural rapport with someone," she added.

Blunt also spoke about some methods she uses to find chemistry with a co-star when there isn't any.

"I've got to find something I love about everybody. I have to find something... Even if it's one thing," she said.

"It might be that they have a nice laugh, or I like how they speak to people. They're polite. I mean, it might be something random. But find something you love about that person or something you love about them as a character, and then kind of lean into that."

Additionally, Blunt shared that some moments on set have been downright "gross".

When discussing on-screen kisses with a co-actor, the host asked: "Have you wanted to throw up?"

To which she responded: "Absolutely. Absolutely."

"I wouldn't say it's sort of extreme loathing, but I've definitely not enjoyed some of it," added the actress, who has collaborated with figures such as Dwayne Johnson in 'Jungle Cruise', her husband John Krasinski in 'A Quiet Place', and Cillian Murphy in 'Oppenheimer'.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Kate Beckinsale shared that she is extremely "tired" of being asked if she has gone under the knife to look younger, revealing her experience of being "bullied" over her youthful appearance.

Sharing a series of videos filmed 20 years apart on Instagram, Beckinsale wrote: "I hate talking about this because I hate adding to this conversation but I'm doing it because insidious bullying of any kind over time takes a toll." "These videos might be 20 years apart - maybe more. Every time I post anything - and by the way, this has been the case since I was about 30 - I am accused of having had unrecognisable surgery / using Botox using fillers / being obsessed with looking younger, and it's really such a tiresome and subtly vicious way to bully a person," she added.

"I don't actually do any of those things - I've even gone to the trouble of having a plastic surgeon categorically state that I don't and haven't, and still, every time you don't even look like yourself anymore, it happens constantly and it's usually women over the years and is insulted by the notion that she "cannot handle" getting older, reports femalefirst.co.uk. "Life happens - obviously I have aged, everybody ages; I'm not too concerned about ageing because I found my father dead at the age of 5, I spent most of my teenage years and a good deal of my 20s absolutely crippled with severe anxiety and panic attacks that I was going to die of a heart attack too, and went to emergency rooms often, and was almost, at that time of my life, completely immobilised by that anxiety," she wrote. The actress said that being "bullied about is an assumption that I can't handle the idea of getting older is so deeply ironic when my all-consuming terror was that I never thought I'd even see the end of my 20s." Beckinsale added: "As you can see from these two videos, what is different is that I lived in the UK, and was paler, I used to pluck the shit out of my eyebrows, I loved that brown lipstick that everybody wore. I had a fuller face, as most of us do in our late teens and 20s."

**Why Kate Beckinsale is 'tired' of being asked if she has had botox done**



## Imelda Staunton opens up about 'difficult' atmosphere on 'The Crown' set after Queen's death

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Imelda Staunton, who portrayed the late monarch, revealed that she had a "difficult" time filming "The Crown" following Queen Elizabeth's passing. "For the better part of three years, I was inhabiting someone real in a true story that was serious and challenging. We'd resumed filming, and very soon after, the Queen died, so it was difficult," she told Yours magazine, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"We carried on with as much dignity and grace as everyone always had done, but, obviously, there was a very different atmosphere in the world and on set."

The actress reminisced about just having to "carry on" as normal but noted that she and her castmates were all "a bit sad" and the Queen's passing had changed things in some way. "We just had to carry on as before, but we were all a bit sad. I think it inevitably informed the temperature, if you like, rather than altered the material at all. But, there's no doubt, it was different."

Staunton had never realised the extent to which the late Queen's "strength" relied on her personal faith before taking on the role and "clung on to" that notion while portraying the character.

"I didn't realise, or think about, how much her faith meant to her. That was an element I clung on to quite firmly and it helped me with her ability to be very still and thoughtful. I realised her strength came from her faith."

## Whoopi Goldberg prefers being single because she sparkles when not in love

Los Angeles | Agencies

The actress added: "So, just in case - and I'm directing this to folks who may want to write me on the Internet - here's the deal. I know how cute I am, so you don't have to tell me how I'm not attractive enough to have a boyfriend because, shockingly, I've had many."

Actress Whoopi Goldberg said that she "sparkles" when she is not in love and cannot see herself ever getting into a relationship again.

During the 1970s, the actress was married to Alvin Martin. Later, she was married to David Claessen in the late 1980s, and finally to Lyle Trachtenberg from 1994 until 1995.

"I think other people seem to sparkle when they're in love, and I like to see that. But for me, I sparkle when I'm not in love, which is kind of okay. And the older I get, the happier I am," Goldberg told CBS Sunday Mornings, reports femalefirst.co.uk.



Holocaust "was not about race" and, even though she is "very confident," declined to give a specific response when asked if she "regrets" her comments.

## MEGAN FOX HAS A MAKEOVER, CHOPS HER HAIR, GOES BACK TO BEING BRUNETTE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Megan Fox has undergone a massive hair transformation. The actress is known for her brunette locks, but in recent times she sported grey and platinum blonde tresses.

But now the American actress has decided to go back to her roots - literally - and sport brunette hair once again, reports 'Mirror.co.uk'.

Megan took to Instagram on Sunday to share a slew of photographs where she rocked a choppy bob, complete with a full fringe, and a dark brunette finish. Pouting up a storm, Megan looked sensational as she displayed her new look.

As per 'Mirror.co.uk', Megan's hair now grazes her jawline, with the colour a deep chocolate brown hue. The fringe she has grazes her brows, and in some of the snaps she shared debuting the look, she wore a deep pink-red-hued lipstick, a white vest, a red bandana around her neck, and a denim jacket.

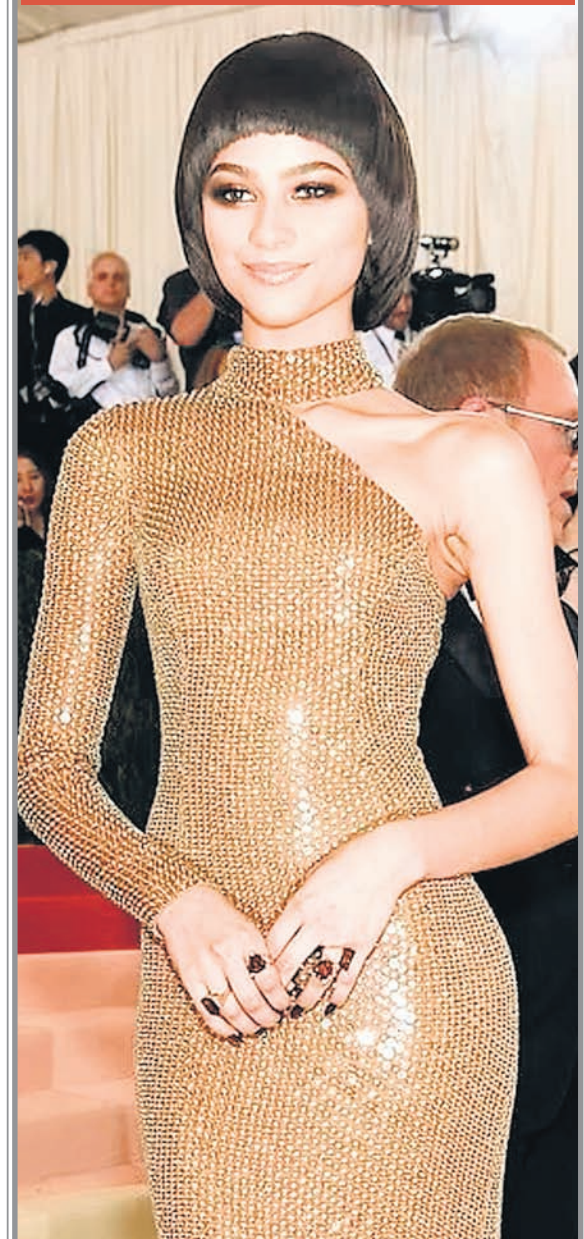
While the other snap she shared of her new look was a selfie she took in natural light where she wore a fuzzy black cardigan. She pouted up a storm while resting her chin on her hand, with her long blue nails in full view.

Sharing the transformation snaps, Megan gushed over her new look and declared: "She's a brunette again". Fans went wild in the comment section, with many swooning over her choppy brunette bob.

"Megan Fox you're the most beautiful woman in the world babe," penned one fan. Another then said: "Looks great! Hope you leave it like this for a while to give your hair a chance to recover," referring to the different colours she has recently sported.



## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Shanina Shaik



## IPL 2024: Surya's unbeaten ton guides Mumbai Indians to 7-wicket win over SRH

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Suryakumar Yadav proved why he is rated as the best batter in T20 cricket with a brilliant fighting unbeaten century that helped Mumbai Indians beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by seven wickets with 16 balls remaining in Match 55 of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 at the Wankhede Stadium on Monday. It is the first century for Suryakumar of the season and the first since December 2023 as he had missed the start of the IPL 2024 because of an injury and surgery for a sports hernia.

Mumbai Indians were in trouble at 31/3 after they had restricted SRH to 173/8 with skipper Hardik Pandya and experienced spinner Piyush Chawla claiming three wickets apiece. But just when it appeared that the Mumbai Indians innings would go the way it had in the previous match when they lost to Kolkata Knight Riders chasing a small target.

Suryakumar had struck a half-century in that match but could not guide his team to victory. On Monday, SKY did not leave things undone as he played a brilliant



innings, hitting shots all over the ground, and completing his century with a six as Mumbai reached 174/3 in 17.2 overs.

Suryakumar scored 102 not out off 51 balls, hitting 12 boundaries and six maximums, operating at a strike rate of 200.00 that left the Sunrisers players shell-shocked and the capacity crowd mesmerised.

On Monday, Suryakumar also became the second MI batter after Rohit Sharma to record 25 scores of 50-plus for Mumbai Indians in the IPL. With this victory, Mumbai Indians moved to eight points from the bottom to ninth position. SRH remained fourth with 12 points from 11 matches, the same as Chennai

Super Kings and Lucknow Super Giants. Mumbai Indians got off to a poor start as they lost Ishan Kishan (9), Rohit Sharma (4) and Haman Dhir (0) in quick succession as the hosts slumped to 31/3 in the fifth over. Though he appeared to be facing a bit of physical discomfort, Suryakumar Yadav, the best T20 batter in the World as per the ICC rankings, played some unbelievable shots and raised a century partnership for the fourth wicket partnership with Tilak Varma that pulled Mumbai Indians to safety.

Tilak Varma proved an ideal partner to Suryakumar as he kept the other end intact, giving him company, encouraging his partner and hitting a few good shots as he remained unbeaten on 37 off 32 balls, studded with six boundaries.

### Brief scores

Sunrisers Hyderabad 173/8 in 20 overs (Travis Head 48, Pat Cummins 35 not out; Hardik Pandya 3-31, Piyush Chawla 3-33) lost to Mumbai Indians 174/3 in 17.2 overs (Suryakumar Yadav 102 not out, Tilak Varma 37 not out; Bhuvneshwar Kumar 1-22)

## AFRIDI, ERASMUS AND WASEEM IN ICC MEN'S PLAYER OF THE MONTH SHORTLIST FOR APRIL

Dubai | Agencies

Pakistan's left-arm fast-bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi, Namibia captain Gerhard Erasmus and UAE skipper Muhammad Waseem have made it to the shortlist for ICC Men's Player of the Month award for April 2024. Afridi earns the nomination for his wicket-taking endeavours in the side's drawn T20I series against New Zealand at home. Erasmus was a pivotal figure for Namibia as they recorded a notable series victory in Oman. Waseem, also UAE's opening batter, impressed in his side's run to ACC Premier Cup triumph.

Afridi was the primary catalyst for both of Pakistan's victories in the T20Is against New Zealand. The second T20I saw Afridi blitz through the Blackcaps batting lineup, taking 3-13 as Pakistan registered a dominant victory. Then, trailing in the series ahead of the fifth and final contest, Afridi once again wreaked havoc, taking 4-30 to salvage the series draw for Pakistan. Eight wickets in the series at an average of 10.00 saw Afridi taking the Player of the Series prize.

On the other hand, Erasmus was at the forefront of his side's success in Oman, amassing 145 runs and picking eight wickets as Namibia got a 3-2 series victory in Muscat. Erasmus claimed the Player of the Match prize on two separate occasions; first for a tight spell of three wickets for seven runs.

It was followed by a controlled half-century in the second match and his efforts in the



decider. Poised at 2-2, the skipper blasted an eye-catching 64 not out in 29 balls before his two wickets and a run out restricted Oman's run chase to clinch the series with an emphatic win.

Waseem, meanwhile, enjoyed another prolific month at the crease in April as his side claimed the ACC Premier Cup in Oman. A brisk 65 against Bahrain was followed by scores of 45 and 48 against Oman and Cambodia respectively.

Despite failing against Nepal, the 30-year-old regained form at the right time, smashing a fine century in the final against the hosts. The batter struck 269 runs at an average of 44.83 during the month and is now seeking to become the first UAE cricketer to win an ICC Men's Player of the Month award.

## Team India's new T20 jersey launched ahead of World Cup

New Delhi | Agencies

Adidas, India's official kit partner, has revealed the team's jersey for the upcoming T20 World Cup to be played in the USA and Caribbean from June 1. The new gear features tri-colour stripes on a V-shaped neck with blue and saffron colours on the sleeves.

Adidas shared a video on its official Twitter handle revealing India's T20 jersey.

The video features skipper Rohit Sharma, spinner Kuldeep Yadav and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja at the Dharamsala stadium. A chopper is seen carrying the blue-orange jersey.

The jersey displays the hallmark three stripes emblem of sports apparel giant Adidas along with the BCCI logo. "The new jersey can be bought from stores and online from May 7," Adidas captioned the video.



On April 30, the BCCI named India's 15-member squad for the upcoming T20 World Cup to be held in the US and West Indies.

## 'Sunil Narine has been the Player of the Season up to this point': Graeme Smith

Lucknow | Agencies

After Sunil Narine played a vital hand in Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) thrashing Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) by 98 runs to go on top of the table for IPL 2024, former South Africa captain Graeme Smith thinks the all-rounder has undoubtedly been the Player of the Season in the competition so far.

At the BRSABV Ekana Cricket Stadium on Sunday night, Narine crashed 81 off 39 deliveries as KKR made an imposing 235/6. He then took 1-22 in his four overs to help KKR get its eighth win of IPL 2024 by bowling out LSG for 137.

"Whatever plan Lucknow had coming into this game, it didn't show. They bowled length, half-volleys, and Narine was able to put them all around the ground. Once he gets momentum in his innings and he settles, he's so dangerous.

"He's coming off a lot of confidence through good performances this season, and no doubt whatsoever, he's been the Player of the Season up to this point," said Smith on JioCinema



after the match.

Brett Lee, the former Australia fast-bowler, was impressed with KKR pacer Harshit Rana's spell to dismantle LSG chase alongside spinner Varun Chakaravathy, who took 3-30. "He obviously did a great job, didn't he? He picked up 3 for 24 in 3.1 overs, his economy was great, but it was his aggressive way of bowling. He bowled some real good bumpers, he bowled on a good line and length, and also showed that he has a good change of pace, to go along with it also."

KKR were also helped by seam-bowling all-rounder Ramandeep Singh who hit an unbeaten 6-25 at the end and even took a hair-raising catch of Arshin Kulkarni by running 21 meters from cover and timed his dive well to complete a stunning grab. "It's brilliant... Ramandeep, 25 from 6, one four, three sixes, how good is that? Just to finish, it was a brilliant innings and he finished strong, with power all around the ground. To walk in and have the ability to do that at the end of the innings is a supreme talent," stated Smith.

## KKR skipper Shreyas Iyer hails openers' strokeplay after win over LSG

Lucknow | Agencies

After beating Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) by 98 runs to go on top of points table in IPL 2024, Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) skipper Shreyas Iyer said he has been in awe of breath-taking strokeplay from openers Sunil Narine and Phil Salt, which has been a major factor in their good run so far. On Sunday, at the BRSABV Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, Narine and Salt shared a 61-run opening stand, their sixth fifty-plus stand in 11 games of IPL 2024, which is the most by any opening pair this season. Narine went on to slam a whirlwind 39-ball 81 and propel KKR to 235/6. "They have been splendid for us, the way they are playing their shots is pure bliss. They are setting us up and giving momentum and no matter

what the situation is, we are playing with a positive mindset. "A lefty-righty combination makes things difficult for the opposition, the bowlers have to change their plans and that makes a difference. It's all about the freedom, to go out and express themselves. We want to go out and be positive whatever the situation is, sometimes it doesn't work out but sometimes it does," said Iyer after the match.

With his latest blitz, Narine sits at third spot in the Orange Cap race with 461 runs at a strike-rate of 183.66. After being adjudged Player of the Match in Sunday's game, Narine credited the KKR management for initiating his batting transformation in IPL 2024. "The most important thing is starting well and it's good to have the backing of the support staff. I think you have to pick your strengths and



pick your spots, sometimes it works out and sometimes it doesn't. It's going very well, Varun is picking up wickets, it's making my job easier to keep things tight. "He is a hard worker and it's good to see him do well. The boys are anxious and eager to play, so no matter what the situation is they are up for the challenge and they are contributing for us," he added.

It has been a roller-coaster ride for KKR, but with them on top of the table, they are all but assured of entering IPL 2024 playoffs. "The last six matches in the dressing room there has been havoc, teammates are coming in and asking what's happening! We are losing tosses, but we are winning games... that's what matters," concluded Iyer.

## Athapaththu, Matthews, Wolvaardt make the cut for ICC Women's Player of the Month award

Dubai | Agencies

Sri Lanka's influential leader Chamari Athapaththu, West Indies' stellar captain Hayley Matthews and South Africa skipper Laura Wolvaardt have made the cut for the ICC Women's Player of the Month award for April 2024.

Chamari, who was ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year for 2023, continued her dominance in the 50-over format by reclaiming the top spot in the ICC Women's ODI batting rankings after a stellar showing in April. She smashed an unbeaten 195 in Potchefstroom against South Africa as the tourists won in a record run chase. Her 258 runs in the ODI series were complemented by 148 runs in the T20Is, which included two half-centuries in South Africa.

The Sri Lankan's stellar run continued by smashing a fifty against Scotland in the ongoing Women's T20 World Cup Qualifier in Abu



Dhabi, where Sri Lanka eventually sealed their qualification thanks to their semifinal success over UAE on Sunday. On the other hand, Hayley, a past winner of the ICC Women's Player of the Month, and current holder of the ICC Women's T20I Cricketer of the Year, grabbed headlines in April due to her top-notch performances on the West Indies tour of Pakistan.

Hayley, 26, piled on the runs in her six outings for the West Indies, notch-

ing two brilliant ODI centuries followed by back-to-back half-centuries in the T20I contests against Pakistan. Alongside her 451 runs in April, Matthews also flourished with the ball, taking 12 wickets; six in the ODI matches at an average of 14, and six more in the T20Is at 10.50.

Laura, meanwhile, is looking to claim her maiden Player of the Month award in what is her fourth nomination, and is a strong contender after another historic series of displays in April. The right-handed opener started the month with a half-century in the final T20I contest against Sri Lanka before carrying her excellent form into the ODI series.

Her innings of 41 in the first match preceded an emphatic 110 not out in the second to claim a vital win, but the 25-year-old saved her best score for the last game, blasting a national record score of 184 in 147 balls only for South Africa to be outdone by the brilliance of Chamari's unbeaten 195.

# Norris takes first F1 win in Miami GP

Miami Gardens (US) | Agencies

McLaren's Lando Norris took advantage of a mid-race Safety Car period to beat Max Verstappen and win his first Formula One Grand Prix in Miami.

Norris had been running sixth in the early stages of the race, but everything changed when the Safety Car was deployed on lap 29 after Kevin Magnussen tangled with Logan Sargeant at Turn 3, sending both into the barriers.

Crucially for Norris, he was the only one of the leading runners not to have changed tyres by this point, and was thus able to pit without losing the lead he had inherited as others had pitted, reports Xinhua.

When racing resumed on lap 33, Norris had the pace to hold off the

threat from Red Bull's Verstappen, and managed the gap for the rest of the race to score a fairy-tale first Grand Prix win on his 110th start.

"About time, huh?" said Norris, who had lost a potential debut win at the 2021 Russian Grand Prix when a late rain shower had caught him out as he was leading the race.

"What a race, it's been a long time coming but finally I've been able to do it. I'm so happy for my whole team, I've finally been able to deliver for them. A long day, a tough race, but finally on top so I'm over the moon.

"The whole weekend has been good. I've had a few setbacks along the way. I knew on Friday we had the pace and just a couple of mistakes here and there but today we managed to put it together, we put the perfect strategy, it all paid off."



McLaren had brought upgrades to Miami, and Norris had shown genuine pace on his way to victory, crossing the line 7.6 seconds ahead of the previously dominant Verstappen. The Dutchman, who had won Saturday's Sprint event and led the early stages of the Grand Prix, also cut the chicane on lap 22 and struck a plastic bollard, with Red Bull saying the incident cost him some performance.

Behind the top two, Ferrari's Charles Leclerc rounded out the top three, with teammate Carlos Sainz fourth after overtaking Norris' teammate Oscar Piastri, who subsequently needed to pit for a new front wing, ruining his chances of points.

Verstappen's teammate Sergio Perez had a low-key run to fifth place, ahead of Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton in sixth.

Yuki Tsunoda had a fine drive to seventh in his RB, with Hamilton's teammate George Russell following in eighth.

Fernando Alonso took ninth for Aston Martin, and Esteban Ocon scored the beleaguered Alpine squad's first point of 2024 with tenth place.

Despite being beaten to victory, Verstappen extends his lead in the Drivers' Championship and now has 138 points. Perez remains second on 101 points, and Leclerc is third on 98.

Red Bull remain top of the Constructors' Championship with 237 points. Ferrari are second with 189 points, with McLaren third with 127.

The seventh round of the 2024 F1 World Championship is the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix in Imola, Italy on May 19.



## Before baby I used to sleep straight all hours on all flights

### Bipasha Basu

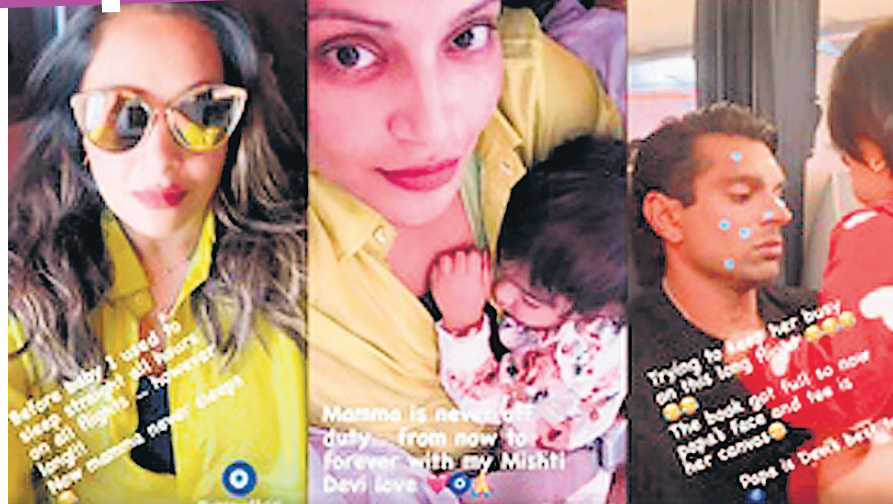
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Bipasha Basu offered a glimpse into her experience of being on baby duty with her daughter Devi during a flight, revealing that prior to motherhood, she used to sleep straight for hours on airplanes, but now she "never" sleeps.

Bipasha, accompanied by her husband, Karan Singh Grover, and daughter Devi, had been vacationing in Mauritius.

On their return journey to India, the actress shared a series of pictures and videos on her Instagram stories.

In one video, Bipasha can be seen saying, "Mama got a little break," before panning the camera towards Karan, who is holding little Devi on his lap. Captioning the clip,



the actress wrote: "Before baby, I used to sleep straight all hours on all flights.... However long. Now, mamma never sleeps."

She then posted a picture of Devi resting on her lap, with the caption: "Mamma is never off duty... from now to

forever with my mishti Devi love."

Bipasha further shared a video of her daughter putting stickers on her father's face and captioned it: "Trying to keep her busy on this long flight. The book got full so now papa's face and tee is her

canvas. Papa is Devi's best boy."

Karan and Bipasha fell in love while working on the film 'Alone' in 2015. A year later, they got married. The couple welcomed their first child, a daughter named Devi Basu Singh Grover, in 2022.



## Janhvi Kapoor shimmers in golden outfit

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Janhvi Kapoor, who has recently started shooting for her upcoming film on Monday, dropped mesmerising glimpses of her new photoshoot, looking like a goddess.

Taking to Instagram, Janhvi, who has 24.1 million followers, shared a string of pictures wearing a golden outfit posing against a golden backdrop.

For the makeup, she went all glam -- brown glossy lips, with a hint of golden glitters on it, golden eyeshadow and heavily blushed cheeks.

Her hair is styled in soft curls and accessorised the look with a golden tiara and matching earrings.

The post is captioned: "In the garden of Eden". A fan commented: "Beauty on duty", and another wrote: "queen". A fan said: "My kinda golden hour".

## "Playing grey characters takes a toll on artists : Ashutosh Rana

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ashutosh Rana, who is set to portray Peter in the upcoming psychological thriller, has shared insights into his role, revealing how playing complex characters gives him a kick.

The actor, who is known for playing roles like 'Lajja Shankar Pandey' in 'Sangharsh', shared: "I'm known for playing complex characters, and that's what gives me a kick. My portrayal in 'Murder in Mahim' is something I have never explored before. The emotions and persona of this character in the series attracted me the most, to say yes to this role. Audiences will get to see me doing something that I have never done before."

Talking about his experience portraying dark characters, Ashutosh said: "Playing grey characters takes a toll on artists, to get into the skin of the character; you become that demon, and you have to act, think, and express in the same way. But the best part is when you get back to reality, you come back with more humanity in you."

The social commentary series delves into a chilling murder mystery and explores the underbelly of Mumbai, highlighting the reconciliation of a lost friendship between Peter



(Ashutosh) and Jende (Vijay Raaz).



## Happy to see Indian street food getting international credit : Arjun Kapoor

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Arjun Kapoor shared a video featuring an Indian-origin contestant, Sumeet Saigal, teaching the judges of 'Masterchef Australia' how to make panipuri.

Arjun took to his Instagram stories and shared a clip from the 'Masterchef Australia' profile.

In the clip, Saigal is seen teaching the judges that they need to "break" the puris first, fill them with potatoes and dry spices, top them with mint, date, and tamarind chutney, and then fill them up with mint and coriander water. After the judges take a bite, they are left stunned by the taste.

A proud Arjun captioned the clip: "Love this!! Happy to see Indian street food getting international credit."



## Samantha shares beautiful peek into her 'heart' - Chennai

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who is an ardent social media user, on Monday gave a glimpse of her 'heart' -- beautiful Chennai. Born and brought up in Chennai,

Tamil Nadu, Samantha, who was last seen in romantic drama 'Kushi' took to Instagram, and shared a video, wherein we can see the vast sea and the beach. She captioned it as "My (white heart emoji)". Samantha gave the geotag of Chennai, India.

Meanwhile, Samantha who celebrated her 37th birthday on April 28th announced her debut Telugu feature film tentatively titled 'Bangaram' under her banner Tralala Moving Pictures.

## Manoj Bajpayee starts shooting for 'The Family Man' Season 3

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Acclaimed actor Manoj Bajpayee has started shooting for the third season of 'The Family Man' under the direction of the duo Raj & DK.

Streaming giant Prime Video took to Instagram and shared a picture of the clapboard alongside an image of the cast. It was captioned: "#TFM3W us - shoot begins, drop your excitement."

In season three, currently in production, Manoj will reprise the character of Srikant Tiwari, a middle-class man and a spy.

The first season, which premiered in 2019, stars Priyamani, Sharad Kelkar, Neeraj Madhav, Sharib Hashmi, Dalip Tahil, Sunny Hinduja, and Shreya Dhanwanthary. Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu joined the cast in the second season.



Amayra Dastur