

absolute india



VOL. 9, ISSUE 188, BHOPAL | TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2024 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

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IMD forecasts rain in southern states, heat wave in north

HEAT WAVE TO SEVERE HEAT WAVE CONDITIONS ARE VERY LIKELY IN MANY/MOST POCKETS OVER DELHI-HARYANA-CHANDIGARH, PUNJAB, RAJASTHAN; WEST UTTAR PRADESH AND NORTHWEST MADHYA PRADESH DURING MAY 20-24.

HEAT WAVE CONDITIONS ARE VERY LIKELY IN ISOLATED POCKETS OF EAST UTTAR PRADESH ON MAY 21-22; HIMACHAL PRADESH, GUJARAT AND NORTHEAST MADHYA PRADESH DURING MAY 20-24; UTTARAKHAND, BIHAR ON MAY 20; AND ODISHA DURING MAY 21-23.

HOT AND HUMID WEATHER IS VERY LIKELY TO PREVAIL OVER KONKAN AND GOA, BIHAR, JHARKHAND ON MAY 20-21; GANGETIC WEST BENGAL AND ODISHA ON MAY 20.

WARM NIGHT CONDITIONS ARE VERY LIKELY TO PREVAIL OVER WEST UTTAR PRADESH, GUJARAT, AND RAJASTHAN DURING MAY 20-24.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast widespread rain in the southern states and a continuation of the heat wave in the northern and eastern states, in its all-India weather bulletin issued at 4:30 p.m. on Monday.

Fairly widespread light to moderate rainfall accompanied with thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds (30-40 km/ph) likely over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, Lakshadweep, and Karnataka and isolated to scattered light/moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds (30-40 km/ph) over coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam, Telangana, and Rayalaseema during the next five days," the weather bulletin stated.

It attributed the rainfall to a cyclonic circulation over south coastal Tamil Nadu and the neighbourhood, and another cyclonic circulation over north Kerala and its neighbourhood.



The IMD has also forecast a heat wave and hot and humid weather warning for the next five days in the northern and eastern states.

The IMD bulletin also said that conditions are favourable for further advance of Southwest Monsoon over some parts of Southeast Arabian Sea, some more parts of

Maldives, Comorin area and South Bay of Bengal, and some more parts of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Andaman Sea during the next 2-3 days.

57.5% VOTING IN PHASE 5 OF LOK SABHA POLLS

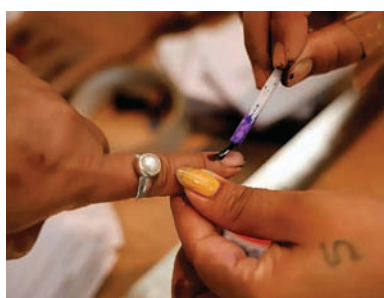
Team Absolute | New Delhi

Voters in 49 constituencies across 6 states and 2 Union Territories will decide the fates of many key leaders today -- Union Ministers and party chiefs. Among those in fray are Smriti Irani, Rahul Gandhi, Chirag Paswan and Omar Abdullah.

Voting in five seats in Bihar, Jharkhand (3), Maharashtra (13), Odisha (5), UP (14), West Bengal (7) and two Union Territories - Jammu and Kashmir (1) and Ladakh (1) was held today. With this phase, the Lok Sabha elections will be over in Maharashtra and Ladakh. A provisional turnout of 57.5 per cent has been recorded.

Voting was held on 35 seats of the Odisha Assembly and 21 Lok Sabha seats as part of the simultaneous polling in the state. While this phase has the least number of seats, most are high-profile constituencies from where Union Ministers and leaders of national and regional parties are contesting. In 2019, the BJP won 32 of these 49 seats.

The big fight is expected in the seven seats of Bengal and the 13 seats of



Maharashtra. Ten of the 13 seats are in the Shiv Sena stronghold and the clash will be between two factions of the party, led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his predecessor Uddhav Thackeray.

In Bengal, a tough fight is on the cards on several seats, with Congress and CPM muscling into what was expected to be a straight fight between the BJP and the ruling Trinamool Congress.

In Uttar Pradesh, the BJP had won 13 of the 14 seats going to polls today -- the exception being Raebareilly, won by Sonia Gandhi. The key candidates include Union Ministers Piyush Goyal (Mumbai North), Bharati Pawar (Dindori), Smriti

Irani (Amethi), Rajnath Singh (Lucknow). Among key allies are Lok Janshakti Party-Ram Vilas chief Chirag Paswan (Hajipur), Shrikant Shinde, son of Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde (Kalyan).

From the Opposition, Congress's Rahul Gandhi is defending his mother Sonia Gandhi's bastion Raebareilly after she moved onto Rajya Sabha; RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav's daughter Rohini Acharya is contesting against BJP's former Union Minister Rajiv Pratap Rudy from Saran; Shiv Sena-UBT leader and former Union Minister Arvind Sawant is contesting from Mumbai South.

In Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla, former Chief Minister and National Conference chief Omar Abdullah faces the PDP's Faiyaz A Mir, People's Conference chief Sajad Ghani Lone, and Awami Ittehad Party chief, the jailed Engineer Rashid.

The next and penultimate phase, comprising 58 seats, will be held on May 25. National capital Delhi and neighbouring Haryana will join in for a single-phase polling. The counting of votes will be held on June 4.

IRAN PRESIDENT DIES IN HELICOPTER CRASH, VICE PRESIDENT TAKES OVER

New Delhi: Iranian



President Ebrahim Raisi and his foreign minister died when their helicopter crashed as it was crossing mountain terrain in heavy fog, an Iranian official told news agency Reuters.

"The servant of Iranian nation, Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi has achieved the highest level of martyrdom whilst serving the people," state television said. The incident occurred during President Raisi's return flight to the Iranian city Tabriz after he and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev inaugurated the Qiz Qalasi Dam on their shared border. Video footage of the crash site can be viewed here.

The helicopter, carrying the 63-year-old President Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and other officials, lost contact approximately 30 minutes into the flight. This sparked immediate concerns and a massive search and rescue operation.

In last 10 years as banks' profit crosses Rs 3 lakh crore: PM Modi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The banking sector has witnessed a profit of Rs 3 lakh crore for the first time in the FY 2023-24.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi applauded banks for this remarkable achievement and said that the condition of banks has improved a lot in the last 10 years, adding that this has helped the poor, farmers, and MSMEs to get credit.

In a social media post, PM Modi said: "In a remarkable turnaround in the last 10 years, India's banking sector net profit crosses Rs 3 lakh crore for the first time ever."

Slamming the Congress party, PM Modi said that the UPA phone banking policy caused big losses and NPA to banks.

"When we came to power, our banks were reeling with losses and high NPAs due to the phone-banking policy of UPA. The doors of the banks were closed for the poor."

"This improvement in the



health of banks will help improve credit availability to our poor, farmers and MSMEs," the PM added.

For the first time, banks' profit crossed the Rs 3 lakh crore mark in FY 2023-24 with 39 per cent growth on a YoY basis. During this period, public sector bank profit jumped to Rs 1.4 lakh crore with an increase of 32 per cent on a YoY basis, and pri-

private banks reported Rs 1.7 lakh crore profit in the last financial year with an increase of 42 per cent on a YoY basis.

In the last 10 years, banks witnessed a major turnaround as their balance sheets strengthened and there was a significant decline in non-performing assets (NPAs) which has caused higher profits.

Arvind Kejriwal graffiti: Cops take cognizance, AAP blames BJP

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Police on Monday said that they have taken cognizance of the graffiti inside the Metro stations threatening Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

"We have initiated a probe and police teams are also scanning CCTV cameras to ascertain the crime sequence and identify the culprits," said a senior police official. Meanwhile, AAP alleged that BJP was behind the graffiti which was found on the walls of three Metro stations -- Rajiv Chowk, Patel Chowk and Patel Nagar.



"BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are plotting to harm Arvind Kejriwal. His life can also be taken in this. Death threats to Arvind Kejriwal are written inside many Metro trains including Rajiv Chowk and Patel Nagar Metro stations," said AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, while addressing a Press conference.

"This conspiracy is being hatched by the PMO and BJP. If Arvind Kejriwal gets even a scratch, then Narendra Modi and BJP will be responsible for it," he said. Hitting hard at BJP, AAP senior leader and Delhi Minister Atishi said that if BJP and Narendra Modi have the courage, then do the work like Arvind Kejriwal. "If you people have the courage, then show it by giving them free electricity and water for 24 hours. Show it by improving government schools and hospitals. You can't do this. BJP is losing all the seven seats in Delhi so now, it is preparing to attack Arvind Kejriwal," she said.

Rahul Gandhi, Akhilesh Yadav Chat On Stage As Rally Cancelled Over Chaos

Prayagraj | Agencies

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav engaged in a free-wheeling conversation on stage at Prayagraj's Phulpur as their public meeting got cancelled owing to a stampede-like situation at the public rally.

The Samajwadi Party chief has often claimed that the INDIA bloc will be winning 79 out of 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh and will be facing a cut-throat contest at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's constituency Varanasi which he referred to as 'Kyoto'. "The Prime MP (PM Modi) had promised the people of Kashi that 'Kyoto' will be the world's best city.



Whether it became a reality or not will be determined by the people of Kashi in the elections."

Akhilesh's reference to Kyoto is a

dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi who had promised that his government would be developing Varanasi in the style of Japan's Kyoto city.

Taking a veiled dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said, "This time Mann ki Baat won't work. They have to listen to us, 140 crore people and that of the Constitution."

Speaking about unemployment, Rahul Gandhi said, "PM Modi has made Uttar Pradesh the centre of unemployment."

Pointing out the strength of their alliance, Rahul Gandhi said, "The INDIA alliance that has been formed this time has never been seen. All the parties are together in the fight."

On the alliance between the Samajwadi Party and the Congress, Yadav said, "This is a natural alliance and people can see that. The youth can connect with us because we are highlighting issues like employment."

15 killed as pickup truck falls into deep gorge in Chhattisgarh

Raipur | Agencies

At least 15 people were killed after a pickup truck, in which they were travelling, fell into a deep gorge in a forest area in Chhattisgarh on Monday.

Over half a dozen were also reportedly injured and have been rushed to hospitals for treatment. Four of them are said to be in the critical stage.

As per the preliminary information received from the official sources, around 30 villagers were returning after plucking 'tendu patta'



(Tendu leaves) from a forest in Kawardha district.

The pickup truck, while crossing a valley in the forest area, lost its balance and fell into the deep gorge, resulting in the death of 15 people on the spot. Passersby who witnessed the incident, informed the police. The rescue team reached the spot a little later.

178-yr-old practice of distributing 'fish prasadam' in Hyderabad to be on June 8-9

Hyderabad | Agencies

Bathini family will distribute 'fish prasadam' to people suffering from asthma and other respiratory ailments here on June 8-9. The family announced on Monday that the annual event will begin at 11 a.m. on June 8 at Exhibitions Grounds, Nampally, and will continue till 11 a.m. on June 9.

Bathini Vishwanatham Goud, president, Bathini Mrigasira Trust, told media persons that they are making all arrangements for the distribution of fish prasadam.



Asthma patients from various parts of Telugu states and other places in the

country take this prasadam in June every year in the hope of finding relief from respiratory problems. The family requested concerned government departments to make arrangements like every year for the smooth conduct of the event. This will be the first event after the death of the head of the family,

Bathini Harinath Goud. He passed away at the age of 84 in June last year, following prolonged illness.

He was the last of the fourth-generation Gouds distributing free fish medicine to asthma patients from across the country. Harinath Goud was instrumental in organising the event for the last three decades after the demise of his elder brothers. The Bathini Goud family claims to have been distributing this medicine free of cost for the last 178 years. The secret formula for the herbal medicine was given to their ancestor in 1845 by a saint after he took an oath that it would be administered free of cost.

ICMR rejects BHU study on Covaxin, says findings misleading

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has rejected a recent study led by Banaras Hindu University (BHU), which claimed that Covaxin raised the rare risk of stroke, and Guillain-Barre syndrome, among others, and said that the findings are "misleading."

The ICMR has written to the Editor of the New Zealand-based Drug Safety Journal to retract the recently-published Covaxin side effects study by authors from BHU as the apex research body has been "incorrectly and misleadingly acknowl-

edged in the paper." "The ICMR is not associated with this study and has not provided any financial or technical support for the research," the apex research body wrote in the letter.

"Further, you have acknowledged ICMR for research support without any prior approval or intimation to ICMR, which is inappropriate and unacceptable," it added.

ICMR, DG, Dr Rajiv Bahl, in the letter, said that the apex research body cannot be associated with this poorly-designed study which purports to present a "safety analysis" of Covaxin.



RAHUL GANDHI, ARVIND KEJRIWAL HAVE MORE SUPPORTERS IN PAKISTAN THAN IN INDIA: AMIT SHAH

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal have more supporters in Pakistan than in India.

Addressing an election rally in support of BJP candidate from South Delhi Ramvir Singh Bidhuri at Sangam Vihar on Monday, Amit Shah came down heavily on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the Congress, and the opposition alliance.

Referring to the alleged assault on AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal at Arvind Kejriwal's official residence recently, Amit Shah said that a Chief Minister at whose home a female MP was beaten up cannot ensure the safety of women in Delhi.

Amit Shah also alleged that CM Kejriwal falsely boasts about his work worldwide, but the truth is he spends the largest part of Delhi's budget on advertisements.

The Home Minister also accused the AAP government of numerous scams during its tenure in Delhi, including those related to liquor poli-



cy, the Jal Board, fake medicines, panic buttons in DTC buses, etc. He said the list of scams is quite long, and only the liquor scam has

been investigated so far while the rest are yet to be probed.

Criticising the AAP government, Amit Shah said the Kejriwal regime

consists of three Gs -- Ghotala (scams), Ghooskhori (bribery), and Ghalebaji (swindling).

Calling Kejriwal a 'U-turn' person, Amit Shah said he has never seen a man who takes as many U-turns as the AAP supremo.

"Kejriwal used to say he would never support corrupt individuals, but today he sits with all the corrupt parties such as the Congress, DMK, Trinamool Congress, and RJD," said Amit Shah.

The Home Minister also targeted the AAP-Congress alliance, saying Kejriwal used to claim that he would remove the Congress government from Delhi and imprison its leaders, but today he is sitting on Congress' lap and contesting the elections together.

Criticising the AAP chief for not resigning from the CM's post despite being sent to jail, Amit Shah said that leaders like Lalu Prasad Yadav and Jayalalitha had resigned from their chairs before going to prison.

He sarcastically added that Kejriwal is stuck to his chair with Fevicol, but this Fevicol will come off on June 4 as the BJP will win all the seven seats in Delhi.

At 59 per cent, Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency records highest-ever turnout: EC

Srinagar | Agencies

Voting in J&K's Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency ended peacefully on Monday with a record turnout, pegged at around 59 per cent, as per election officials - the highest since 1996's 46.65 per cent, and much above 2019's 34.16 per cent.

J&K's CEO P.K. Pole told a press conference that the poll percentage in Baramulla constituency is expected to be 59 per cent. "As per the reports available with us, voting is still going on in some villages. The poll percentage in the constituency is likely to be 59 per cent and this can marginally increase as reports are still coming about the exact number of votes polled in the constituency. The biggest thing about today's polling in Baramulla has been the highest voter turnout and completely peaceful and violence-free election process," the CEO said. He said that the highest



voting percentage, segment-wise, has been in Handwara with a 67.5 per cent turnout and lowest in Gurez, at 40.82 per cent. Langate has witnessed second-highest voter turnout of 66 per cent.

"In the democratic history of Baramulla, today's 59 per cent turnout is matched only by 1984 when the same voter turnout was recorded while there was no militancy in the Valley. But since militancy started in J&K, today's turnout in Baramulla is not

only the highest, but it also reflects the people's faith in democracy and their firm belief that development and progress can only be achieved through this democratic process," the CEO said.

"A heartening news has come from the Sopore segment which had recorded just 4 per cent voter turnout in 2019. The voter turnout in Sopore has been 44 per cent today, which is a jump of 40 per cent over 2019," he added.

One killed in massive fire at four-storey building in Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The charred body of a man was recovered after a massive fire broke out at a four-storey building in northeast Delhi on Monday, the police said.

Sharing details, the police said that a call regarding a blaze at a Raymond showroom in the Durgapuri Extension area was received at 6:01 a.m., following which a police team was rushed to the spot.

"The four-floor property is built on a plot of 150 yards and owned by Padam Singh and his brother Sanjay. A Raymond outlet was being run from the ground floor. The godown is located on the second floor while living quarters are on the third and fourth floors," said Deputy



Commissioner of Police (Northeast), Joy Tirkey.

The DCP said when the fire broke out in the morning, all the residents came out of the building safely except Jitender a.k.a Chotu, whose body was found on the first floor later.

"The body has been shifted to the GTB mortuary for post-

mortem. A case under Section 285/304A of the Indian Penal Code has been registered at the Jyoti Nagar police station against the owners of the building," the DCP said.

"Around 20 fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the fire," the officer added.

JD-S MLA H.D. Revanna granted conditional bail in sexual harassment case

Bengaluru | Agencies

The Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (ACMM) court on Monday granted conditional bail to JD-S MLA H.D. Revanna in a sexual harassment case.

Revanna, the son of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, was recently released from prison in a kidnap case.

Magistrate J. Preeth directed Revanna to furnish a bond of Rs 5 lakh along with a surety.

Claiming that a rape charge has been included in the sexual harassment case against Revanna, the prosecution argued in the court that he should be remanded to judicial custody.

On Friday, special public prosecutor Jayna Kothari, appearing for the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case, had submitted that IPC Section 376 (rape) has been added to the sexual harassment case registered at the Holenarasipur police station.

"The victim claimed that she had left her house, as she was unable to bear the harassment at the hands of H.D. Revanna and his son Prajwal Revanna. The house allotted to her under the Ashraya scheme was taken back, but a complaint to



the District Commissioner in this regard made no difference," Kothari argued.

"Both H.D. Revanna and Prajwal Revanna committed sexual assault, and the court should not see the case against Revanna as separate from that of Prajwal Revanna. Under no circumstances should he be granted bail. Since a rape charge has been added to the case, the trial should be conducted in the session's court," she had claimed.

C.V. Nagesh, the counsel for H.D. Revanna, had claimed that the complaint in this regard was not lodged by the complainant in the first place.

"It is a false case created intentionally. The victim does not know what sexual assault is," he argued.

"The rape charge against Revanna has been added only now. The alleged act was not committed on the day when the complaint was lodged. It did not occur a week ago or even a year ago. The complaint states that the alleged act was committed years ago.

"The victim did not register the complaint at the Holenarasipur police station. Instead, the sub-inspector from Holenarasipur police station went to Bengaluru and got the complaint filed as desired by the victim," Nagesh said.

Taxila Business School's Management Conclave: A Powerhouse of Learning and Networking

Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

Taxila Business School's much-anticipated Management Conclave, held on May 18th, 2024, concluded with resounding success. The event, guided by the esteemed leadership of Mentor Kishore Sharma, President Anuradha Mehta, and Dean Prof. Rajat Bohra, served as a vibrant platform for knowledge sharing, industry insights, and fostering connections within the business community.

The conclave witnessed a stellar line-up of speakers, each sharing their invaluable life experiences and industry expertise. Dr. Irfan Rizvi (AVP-FWA New Delhi), Hajeet Khandvja (Sr. VP HR Reliance Jio), Norip Bajwa (Sr Vice President Shree Cement), Madhu Menon (Director Deloitte India), Sahil Naylor (HR Influencer), Dr. Ashok Aggarwal (Ex-CEO Escorts Securities), Prerna Sahni (National Editor City Bhaskar), Vikas Dua (Head of People Weber Shandwick), Kruti Pancholi (Talent Acquisition- PAN India Cipla) and Saurabh Chawla (Director - HR SAP India) captivated the audience



with their insights.

The success of the conclave wouldn't have been possible without the tireless efforts of Dr. Alka Jain, Prof. Lavina Khilnani, Dr. Sanjoli Jain, Dr. Riddhi Tambi, and all the dedicated faculty members who played a pivotal role in its organization. The students who volunteered for the event deserve immense credit for their enthusiasm and support, ensuring a smooth and enriching experience for all partici-

pants.

The conclave offered a multitude of benefits for attendees. Networking opportunities allowed participants to connect with industry leaders and fellow entrepreneurs, fostering potential collaborations. The esteemed speakers provided valuable insights into effective business strategies for scaling and promoting ventures. Thought-provoking discussions with industry leaders shaped the future of their fields ignit-

ed a passion for continuous learning among attendees.

Taxila Business School's Management Conclave proved to be a landmark event, leaving an indelible mark on all who participated. The combination of esteemed speakers, dedicated faculty, enthusiastic students, and a commitment to excellence created an environment conducive to professional growth and development.

Rave party involving techies & Telugu actors busted in Bengaluru, MDMA & cocaine seized

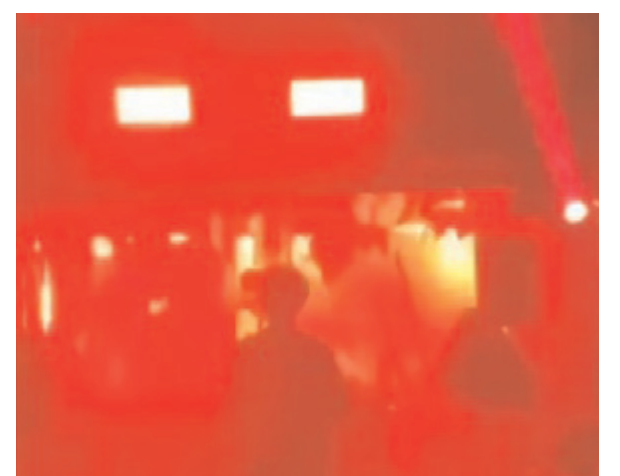
Bengaluru | Agencies

The Anti-Narcotics division of Karnataka Police raided a rave party organised at a farmhouse on the outskirts of Bengaluru, said officials on Monday.

The party, involving techies and Telugu actors, was held in the G.M Farmhouse in the Singena Agrahara area near Electronics City, till the early hours.

The police seized 17 MDMA tablets and cocaine from the scene. According to police sources, more than 100 participants, including techies, Telugu film actors, models, and young men and women from Bengaluru and Andhra Pradesh, were at the rave party.

The organiser had flown over 25 people from Andhra Pradesh to Bengaluru for the event. The cops found a pass belonging to an Andhra



Pradesh MLA in one of the cars parked at the farmhouse, sources stated.

Preliminary investigations revealed that an individual from Hyderabad organised the party under the pretext of a birthday celebration. As the party continued past 2 a.m., the Narcotics wing sleuths

raided the farmhouse.

The police also found more than 15 luxury cars at the venue and are tracking the identities of the participants. A case has been lodged with the Electronics City police station. More details are yet to emerge regarding the incident.

Congress too weak to even contest 400 LS seats: Yogi Adityanath

Chandigarh | Agencies

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday said the Congress has become too weak to even contest 400 Lok Sabha seats in the country.

He said Chandigarh is a stark example of it as "we see that it can't even fight single-handedly in the city."

"It needs to lean on the shoulders of a peripheral party like AAP to make a contest in Chandigarh. It demonstrates the depleting strength of the Congress which has spelt devastation for the country," he said at a public meeting seeking votes in favour of party candidate from Chandigarh, Sanjay Tandon. The Chief Minister



said the Congress candidate, who is largely banking on AAP, has no vision for the development of the city.

"The Opposition is helpless because of PM Modi's transformative vision which has shown a new light to the City Beautiful."

Yogi Adityanath said: "Pure desh mein ek hi mahaul ban raha hai, jo Ram ko laye hain hum unko layenge (there is only one atmosphere being created across the nation. Those who have brought Lord Ram, we will bring them to power)."

Farmers lift over month-long protest at Shambhu Railway Station; announce rally at border on May 22

Chandigarh | Agencies

Farmers on Monday ended their 34-day-long sit-in protest at the Shambhu Railway Station near the Punjab and Haryana border.

However, the farmers announced that they would start their sit-in protests outside the houses of prominent BJP leaders of Punjab and Haryana.

Their names will be announced at a protest rally at the Shambhu border on May 22. The farmers had been squatting on the railway tracks at the Shambhu Railway Station near the Punjab and Haryana border, impacting the movement of trains bound for Punjab.

The farmers started the blockade at the railway sta-



tion on April 17 demanding the release of three protesters.

However, Haryana Police has still not accepted their demand to release the three farmers arrested during the

protest bordering the state.

"Since BJP leaders have been trying to defame farmers, we have decided to focus our protest at Shambhu and Khanauri borders and also at locations where the BJP's star

campaigners have been visiting the state," said Jagjit Singh Dallewal, coordinator of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (non-political).

The three farmers, Navdeep Jalbera, Gurkirat Shahpur and Anish Kharkar, were arrested during the ongoing farmers' stir.

The farmers have been pressing the Centre to accept their demands which include a legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops.

Farmers led by the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha and SKM (non-political) have also been protesting at the Shambhu and Khanauri borders ever since February 13, when they were stopped on their way to Delhi to demand a legal guarantee for MSP for their produce.

Pawan Khera, miffed at Assam CM's taunt at Rahul, pens letter

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Senior Congress leader Pawan Khera on Monday penned a letter to Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma taking umbrage at his "harsh and distasteful" comments directed at Congress MP Rahul Gandhi. "Your recent public utterances have deeply concerned me, particularly regarding your views on the Indian Constitution," Congress Working Committee member Khera wrote in a letter to the BJP leader and Assam CM. Notably, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi has been showing a copy of the Constitution at his public rallies and vowing to defend it from the ruling party's "repeated onslaught".

CM Sarma, while taking a swipe at the Congress leader had said that he was flaunting

the Chinese Constitution and not Indian Constitution at the poll rallies. Congress' Media and Publicity Chairman Khera, taking to his X handle, shared his one-page letter to CM Sarma and said that the latter's remarks were "deeply disrespectful to the sacrifices of our soldiers." Claiming that he was troubled over statements linking the Constitution of India and China, the Congress leader said, "This comparison is not only unfounded but also deeply disrespectful to the sacrifices made by our brave soldiers, especially those who lost their lives in the Galwan Valley clash." Khera further said that he was also sending CM Sarma, a pocketbook version of the Constitution of India as that will keep "reminding him of the principles that should guide our nation."



VOTE TO MAKE THE COUNTRY THE THIRD ECONOMY IN THE WORLD: MOHAN YADAV

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Voting is took place on Monday for the fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, while discussing the changing country, mentioned the increasing respect of the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said that the country has to be made the third economy of the world, hence bring the Modi government back to power.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has appealed to the people of all the states to vote. He said that Prime Minister Modi has increased the respect of the country in the world. The entire country has been saved from all kinds of challenges during the difficult times of Covid. He further said, surely the public knows this. The people of the country are with Prime Minister Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party. Everyone is voting wholeheartedly



and those who are left should also vote, because this time Modi government has to be brought. BJP has promised to make the country the third economy in the world. Discussing this, Chief Minister Yadav said, India has to be established as the third economy to restore honor and respect in the world. For this, it is extremely important that Modi's government is formed.

Voting is taking place on 49 Lok Sabha seats in the country on Monday for the fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections. Former Chief Minister of the state Shivraj Singh Chauhan has also appealed to the voters of the fifth phase to participate in the great festival of democracy by voting in maximum numbers. Do vote for building a self-reliant India and developed India.

India has become the fifth largest economy in the world and BJP claims that in the next two years India will become the third largest economic power in the world.

Congress will run 'Manthan' program in MP after the results of Lok Sabha elections

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the results of Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh, Congress will start preparing for the upcoming elections. For this, 'Manthan' program will be run from 15th June to 15th August. Under this, all the big leaders will visit at the block level and interact with the workers.

While discussing with the reporters, Congress state in-charge Jitendra Singh said that the Congress party has also made its strategy for the upcoming elections, the results will come on June 4 and from June 5, the Congress party will start preparations for the next elections. Congress party will start a program called 'Manthan' and will know the feedback of the workers.

He said that in the first phase, under the 'Manthan' programme, all our senior leaders will talk to all the workers up to the block level. We will take suggestions from them regarding the vision of development of Madhya Pradesh and the Congress organization. The brainstorming program will run from June 15 to August 15. The Congress Party will make its strategy for all the upcoming elections and senior leaders of the party will meet the workers up to the booth level and discuss with them and take suggestions for preparing for the upcoming elections.



He further said that after the first phase, there will be a workshop at the regional level and brainstorming will be done regarding the structure of the organization and programs will be made to connect youth, women, Dalits, tribals and other backward class people with the party. A roadmap for the next 10 years will be made for Madhya Pradesh.

State President Jitu Patwari said that on the basis of the information given by the state in-charge regarding the upcoming strategies of the party, responsibility will be given according to the feedback based system and disciplinary action will be taken against them. Those whose performance is good will be given a place in the organization and disciplinary action will be taken against those whose report comes negative.

Digvijay Singh targets BJP and PM Modi on the issue of corruption

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress leader and former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Digvijay Singh has strongly targeted Prime Minister Modi.

He said, "The Prime Minister is only concerned about the Modi family, which includes all the corrupt leaders. It is surprising that this family includes those people on whom PM Modi and Amit Shah themselves had made serious allegations of corruption, but now all of them have become ministers, chief ministers and deputy chief ministers.

In fact, the Prime Minister had recently taken a jibe at the Congress and said that



this party only thinks about its family, on which Digvijay Singh has now retaliated.

He said, "The Prime Minister and the BJP themselves are scared, so now they say anything."

At the same time, when Digvijay Singh was questioned on the Swati Maliwal episode, he shrugged it off by saying that this is not a Congress issue but an Aam Aadmi Party issue.

Bulk transfers are on the cards in Madhya Pradesh, will be approved in the cabinet

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Due to the code of conduct for Lok Sabha elections, the hopes of government employees waiting for transfer may soon be fulfilled. It is believed that after the removal of the code of conduct, the Madhya Pradesh government led by Dr. Mohan Yadav will hold a cabinet meeting. The transfer can be approved in this.

The code of conduct for Lok Sabha elections was implemented across the country including Madhya Pradesh on March 16. This will continue till June 4. Then in the second week of June i.e. between 10th and 15th June, monsoon will knock in states like Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Therefore, the government avoids transfers during rains. This time the Meteorological Department has also predicted the



arrival of monsoon on time. In such a situation, it is expected that between June 4 and June 10, the government can give the green signal for bulk transfer. During the previous Shivraj government, the ban on transfer was lifted between June 15 and June 30. Shivraj cabinet had also issued a new transfer policy. Now it will be interesting to see whether Chief Minister Dr.

Mohan Yadav will make any changes in the old policy or the policy of the previous Shivraj government will be carried forward.

If we look at the previous transfer policy, transfers could have taken place with the approval of the minister in-charge in the district. Along with this, the transfer of department head and first class chief executive

officer in the state cadre was issued by the General Administration Department with the approval of the CM. However, Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has not yet given the charge of the districts to the ministers. In such a situation, there is no clear opinion on how much this rule will be applicable.

As per the previous transfer policy, the approval of the Chief Minister was required in the transfer orders of State cadre Heads of Departments of all departments and Class I Chief Executive Officers (by whatever designation they are known) posted in government undertakings and institutions. At the same time, transfers of other first class officers, second and third class officers-employees of the state cadre (except transfers within the district) were issued by the Administrative Department after the approval of the Chief Minister.

Demand for veterans of Madhya Pradesh to campaign in other states

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the elections in Madhya Pradesh, the demand for its leaders in other states has increased. From BJP's side, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, State President Vishnu Dutt Sharma, former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan and from Congress's side, former Chief Minister Digvijay Singh are visiting other states the most.

After voting for the Lok Sabha elections in the state, many leaders have been put on duty in other states. State leaders have been sent to Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Odisha and Bihar.

State leaders from both the parties, BJP and Congress, are camping in other states. In the Lok Sabha elections, among the prominent leaders of BJP in other states, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan, State



President Vishnu Dutt Sharma are in the highest demand, while from the Congress side, former Chief Minister Digvijay Singh is being fielded by the candidates for campaigning in their respective areas.

If we pay attention to the tours of these prominent leaders, then Chief Minister Yadav is continuously tour-

ing Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Maharashtra and Bihar. Apart from holding two to three meetings a day, he is busy doing road shows.

Former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan is participating in various programs in support of BJP candidates in West Bengal, Delhi and other states of the country.

Party state president Vishnu Dutt Sharma is also campaigning in support of the candidates outside the state. Many Congress leaders are also campaigning in support of party candidates in other states. The most active is former Chief Minister Digvijay Singh and he is holding public meetings in support of candidates in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and other states. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan are being targeted by a coalition of opposition parties during the campaign, along with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav. Whereas Digvijay Singh attacks Prime Minister Narendra Modi the most. The campaigning style of all the leaders is aggressive and they are not lagging behind in cornering the leaders of the other party.

Narmadapuram: BJP leader raised questions on sand excavation

Team Absolute | Narmadapuram

State convener of BJP Jhuggi Jhopri Cell, Akhilesh Khandelwal has raised questions on the district administration regarding the excavation going on by blocking the flow of Mother Narmada River and building a kutcha road in the river. He posted on social media and wrote that Retasur is straining Mother Narmada. But Collector, SP and Mineral Officer of Sehore district are not able to stop it. There is a BJP government in Madhya Pradesh. Former CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan is the MLA from Budhni constituency. In Budhni area, Retasur is coming into the middle of the river and taking out sand from the water, both legally and illegally, from the Narmada river. The officers sitting in the district are not able to follow the rules made by the government.

Despite this, both the administration and minerals are not paying attention to this. The BJP leader has also written to send angles to Sehore Collector, SP and Mining Officer for not being able to stop

Mother Narmada from silting. Today at 11 o'clock he will post the puja at Circuit House Ghat.

Sand mafia and sand thieves are excavating sand from Narmada river on a large scale. Power Make Company has the contract for excavation and transportation from sand mines in Budhni area. The company is excavating and transporting it from the mines of Narmada River. Under the guise of this, some sand mafias are leaving the mine and taking out sand from the water in the middle of the river. Sand is being transported in tractor-trolleys in front of the Circuit House in Narmadapuram city. A road of raw sand has also been made in the middle for the tractor-trolley to pass. Where sand was being taken out hundreds of times from morning to evening by bringing tractors into the water. Due to which there were potholes at many places in the river.

Sand thieves are coming to the border of Narmadapuram district at Chandgarh Kutli Ghat of Seoni Malwa, filling sand in a boat and taking it to another area bordering Sehore district.

18 PATWARIES TERMINATED, 2 CLERKS ALSO PUNISHED

Dewas: Big news has come out from Dewas district of Madhya Pradesh. Collector Rishav Gupta has terminated the services of 18 Patwaris. Besides, two clerks have also been punished. The Collector has taken this action against farmers for rigging the distribution of crop damage.

In this case, the Collector said that the relief amount was distributed about 4-5 years ago. There was some irregularity under that. After receiving this information, an investigation team was formed and the preliminary information about irregularities was found to be correct. On the basis of that, some clerks of the Patwaris were suspended.

After investigation the report was sent to SDM. After this, the concerned SDM has terminated the service of 1 Patwari in Sonkutch, 2 Patwaris in Tonkhurd, 4 Patwaris in Kannaud and 11 Patwaris in Khategaon. Apart from this, services of two clerks have also been terminated.

TERMINATED PATWARIES

Banshilal Dabur, Pyaarsingh Solanki, Amit Kushwaha, Dinesh Sisodia, Dilip Yadav, Bhaiyalal Nargave, Mahendra Mandloi, Nand Kishore Sharma, Anirudh Yadav, Anil Dhurve, Raisingh Deora, Vikas Sarothia, Naveen Dhiman, Arjun Verma, Ramotar Jonwal, Ajay Chaudhary.

'What harm have I done to you...?'

Trees pleading for help on a murder in the city

Team Absolute | Bhopal

You took a lot from me, what did you give me in return, stop cutting me, what harm did I do to you? I can't vote but I can breathe, my breathing is getting short, let us plant trees.....these are not the lines, this is the pain of these trees planted on Maharajpur Road in Mandla district. Trees cannot speak to the people of the world, but this poster on these trees is expressing their pain and saying that I have given you everything and in return you are cutting me.

Actually, the widening work along with beautification of Maharajpur road was earlier approved by the Municipal Council from CM Infrastructure. Now after about a year, the widening and light shifting work of the same road was started under the Kayakalp Project. For this, the old green fruit trees on both sides of the road are being cut by the municipality.

Till now a dozen trees have been killed. Anger is being seen among the environment lovers of Mandla district regarding this. The protest is not against road widening and beautification, but cutting trees in the name of development is causing pain to the common people. Knowing the importance of trees, now the youth of the city have made posters on behalf of the trees by writing different slogans on the remaining trees at their own expense.

Such slogans have been written on the posters that the common man who reads it is also joining this campaign. The youth of the city say that everyone wants development, but development should not be such that trees are killed. Such posters on trees are attracting people towards themselves. People have greatly praised



this campaign of the youth. Other youth are also gradually joining this campaign and understanding the importance of environment. When Municipality Chief Officer Gajanan Nafde was talked about

regarding this matter, he said that if the road is widened, some trees will be cut, but the trees on the other side will not be cut.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Boom in real estate sector

Real estate sector in India is in a booming stage. As per The Knight Frank-NAREDCO Real Estate Sentiment Index Q1 2024 (January-March) report, the Current Sentiment Index Score jumped to 72, compared to last quarter's 69, setting a decadal high. The Future Sentiment score experienced an increase, rising from 70 in Q4 2023 to 73 in Q1 2024. As per this quarterly survey, 73 per cent of the respondents are anticipating an increase in residential sales in the next six months, compared to 65 per cent in the previous quarter. The positive homebuyer sentiment and stability in home loan interest rates have led stakeholders to expect that growth in demand will prevail in the residential sector in the next six months. 80 per cent of survey participants in Q1 2024 believed that residential launches would improve in the next six months. 82 per cent of the survey respondents in Q1 2024 expect residential prices to increase in the next six months. However, during Q4 2023, 65 per cent of survey respondents held a similar view. Office leasing is expected to improve in the next six months by 74 per cent of survey respondents in Q1 2024. 69 per cent of survey respondents had a similar opinion in the previous quarter. 58 per cent of survey respondents expect office supply to improve in the next six months. In the previous quarter, 62 per cent of respondents held a similar opinion. With strong momentum in office leasing, the outlook towards new supply has also strengthened in the near term. In Q1 2024, 65 per cent of the survey respondents expect office rents to increase. The survey respondents in Q4 2023 shared a similar view, with 53 per cent holding it.

Cong to induct new faces after Lok Sabha polls to stay relevant in TN politics

Team Absolute | Chennai

Tamil Nadu Congress President, K Selvaperunthagai, said at a recent public meeting that the party needs to recapture power to get political respect from its alliance partner DMK. Selvaperunthagai's statement is considered an attempt by the party leadership to motivate its cadres, who have complained of ill-treatment by the DMK's local leaders. The last time the Congress was in power in Tamil Nadu was in 1967 when the iconic DMK leader, CN Annadurai defeated the party led by M Bhaktavatsalam and gained power. Bhaktavatsalam was the last Congress Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and since then the party was being relegated to the background by Dravidian majors, DMK and AIADMK. Sources in the Congress told IANS that the grand old party will effect a change after the results of the Lok Sabha elections on June 4 and that the party President wants to infuse young blood into the leadership. Young professionals and social activists drawn from all sections of the society are being targeted by the party leadership to be inducted into the Congress and given key positions. The Congress won 8 seats out of the 9 it contested in the 2019



Lok Sabha elections in an alliance with the DMK. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections also the Congress contested from 9 seats after strong positioning by the party leadership against the DMK move to cut its seats. The Congress last contested on its own in 1989 and had garnered only 4.5 per cent votes while in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections it received 12.61 per cent votes in alliance with the DMK.

Interestingly, the BJP has broken away from the alliance with the Dravidian major AIADMK and formed an alliance with the PMK and smaller parties in this General Election. A senior leader of the Congress told reporter, "The BJP has already set an example and the Congress must also try and assert itself. Otherwise, the party will always have to play second fiddle to either of the Dravidian majors in Tamil Nadu politics. The party has to revamp itself and fresh faces must lead it so that the party gains trust from the grassroots and gains maximum seats." Political parties like Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK), Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) and many others have erupted in Tamil Nadu representing different sections of society and the Congress has to find a space of its own to garner traction in state politics. Coimbatore-based psephologist and political analyst, George Thomas told reporter, "The Congress always has a space in Tamil Nadu and it has to assert its secular credentials and national outlook for emerging on its own. However, there is risk involved and the road ahead is not rosy. If the party decides to snap ties with the DMK, then it has to work hard from the grassroots and emerge on its own, which is a tough call."

They are not contesting but their shadow looms large over voters

Team Absolute | Lucknow

They are not contesting the Lok Sabha elections but their shadow looms large over the regions where they wield influence. An example of this is former minister Raghuraj Pratap Singh a.k.a. Raja Bhaiya. Raja Bhaiya heads the Jansatta Dal but his party is not contesting the ongoing elections. "We are not contesting because we could not work out an alliance," he said. Recently, the BJP and Samajwadi Party had been reaching out to Raja Bhaiya for his support and he even had a meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Bengaluru recently. Everyone wanted with bated breath for him to announce his decision, because Raja Bhaiya enjoys considerable support in Kunda and Babaganj Assembly seats in Kaushambhi Lok Sabha segment. However, Raja Bhaiya convened a meeting of his supporters and told them to cast their votes wherever they preferred. As a result, his supporters have fanned out in Pratapgarh and Kaushambhi Lok Sabha segments, wearing Jansatta Dal (yellow and green) 'gamchas' and are supporting the SP candidates. When asked, Raja Bhaiya said, "I have not asked them to vote for any specific party. It is now their choice because my party is not contesting



the polls." However, he admitted that he has ironed out past differences with SP President Akhilesh Yadav. In Kaiserganj, the BJP may have denied the ticket to six-time MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh and replaced him with his son Karan Bhushan Singh, but the influence of senior Singh is palpable from the moment one steps into his constituency. Now known as 'Bade Thakur Saheb', it is Brij Bhushan's 'power' that is guiding son Karan's campaign. His influence extends to about half a dozen seats around his own Kaiserganj constituency and even his arch-rivals admit to this. Though Brij Bhushan denies supervising his son's campaign, he admits that he will guide him if the need arises. Mukhtar Ansari may be dead but his presence is still felt in his family constituency Ghazipur, where his elder brother Afzal Ansari is a SP candidate. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has also kept Mukhtar 'alive' in his campaign since he cites the mafia's example to prove how he eliminated such elements. Talking about it, Afzal Ansari said, "Mukhtar lives in the hearts of the people here. He may not be

with us but his spirit is all over." In Jaunpur, former MP Dhananjay Singh could not contest the elections because he was sent to jail in an old case in March and his wife Sreekala Reddy Singh's ticket was also withdrawn at the last moment by Bahujan Samaj Party. Dhananjay Singh, out on bail after his conviction, announced his support for the BJP in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls but his supporters are still divided. Dhananjay Singh enjoys considerable ground support in Jaunpur and his role as a kingmaker is crucial to decide the winner. "What he (Dhananjay) said was obviously under pressure. We will wait for him to speak out," said Ritesh Singh, a supporter. In Domariyaganj, the Samajwadi candidate is Kushal Tiwari, son of mafia don, late Hari Shankar Tiwari. Though Hari Shankar Tiwari died last year, his influence among his own community is very strong in eastern Uttar Pradesh. Kushal Tiwari's campaigners admit that the deceased leader's goodwill is helping his son immensely in the elections. "Babuji (Hari Shankar Tiwari), is no longer here but his aashirwaad is definitely with us," said a supporter.

international

Global leaders mourn Iran President Raisi's death

Moscow | Agencies

Global leaders on Monday expressed their condolences over the death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash. In a message to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Russian President Vladimir Putin said, "Raisi was a 'true friend' to Russia and was admired both at home and abroad.



"Raisi was rightly highly respected by his compatriots and enjoyed great prestige abroad," Putin said in the condolence message released by the Kremlin. "As a true friend of Russia, he made an invaluable personal contribution to the development of good neighbourly relations between our countries and made great efforts to raise them to the level of strategic partnership," he added. In his message, Putin said that he would always fondly remember the "remarkable" Raisi. Chinese President Xi Jinping also expressed his "deep sorrow" over the death of Raisi. Xi offered his "sincere condolences" to the Iranian government and people, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry in Beijing said on behalf of the Chinese leader. Raisi had made "important contributions to maintaining Iran's security and stability, promoting national development and prosperity, and making positive efforts to consolidate and expand the comprehensive strategic partnership

between China and Iran." "His unfortunate death is a great loss to the Iranian people, and the Chinese people have also lost a good friend," the spokesman added. Expressing her condolence, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said, "I would like to express my solidarity and Italy's solidarity with the Iranian government and the Iranian people." "I see in these hours that the Iranian authorities recognise the hypothesis of the accident instead of conspiracy theories," she told private broadcaster Canale 5. European Council President Charles Michel expressed condolences on behalf of the European Union, saying, "Our thoughts go to the families." Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe said he was deeply shocked and saddened by the tragic death of his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and other senior Irani officials in a helicopter crash. Pakistani Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif took to X and wrote, "Pakistan had the pleasure of hosting President Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian on a historic visit less than a month ago. They were good friends of Pakistan. Pakistan will observe a day of mourning, and the flag will fly at half mast as a mark of respect for President Raisi and his companions and in solidarity with Brotherly Iran." Numerous Arab countries also expressed their condolences. Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani took to X and offered his "sincere condolences to the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran." Egypt and Jordan expressed solidarity with Iranians. Jordan's King Abdullah II said his "deepest condolences go out to the brothers, leadership, government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the death of brother President Ebrahim Raisi." Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad, a close ally of Iran, expressed his condolences for "this painful incident and the resulting great loss." The government in Baghdad also expressed its sympathy. Lebanon, for its part, announced a three-day mourning period. Raisi and eight other passengers, including Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, died when their helicopter went down on Sunday over mountainous terrain in dense fog.

Death toll rises to 31 in Israeli raids on Gaza

Gaza | Agencies

At least 31 Palestinians were killed on Sunday in an Israeli airstrike in the central Gaza Strip while the Israeli army announced the killing of two of its soldiers in battles in the enclave. Local sources and eyewitnesses told Xinhua news agency that Israeli warplanes targeted at Sunday dawn an inhabited house for the Hassan family in the Nuseirat Palestinian refugee camp, which led to its destruction. Medical sources told Xinhua that the Israeli raid resulted in the killing of 31 people, including children and women, and the wounding of several others with varying injuries, all of whom have been transferred to hospitals. Meanwhile, the Israeli army said in a press statement that two soldiers were killed in an incident in the southern Strip, while three others were



injured, one of them seriously, Xinhua news agency reported. Israel launched a large-scale offensive against Hamas in Gaza to retaliate against a Hamas rampage through the southern Israeli border on October 7, 2023, during which about 1,200 people were killed and more than 200 were taken hostage. Meanwhile, the Palestinian death toll from the ongoing Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip has risen to 35,386, and 79,366 were injured, according to Gaza health authorities on Saturday.

11 injured in mass shooting in US coastal city Savannah

New York | Agencies

Eleven people were injured after an argument between two women led to a mass shooting, in Savannah in the US state of Georgia, police said. The shooting in Ellis Square, a popular tourist attraction in the downtown area, occurred just before midnight on Saturday, Xinhua news agency reported. All 11 adult victims were treated for injuries, and no death has occurred, according to a statement by Savannah Police Department on Sunday. The coastal city has been plagued by a spree of shootings in recent days. Two separate deadly shootings on Saturday night killed one male adult and one male juvenile and injured a male juvenile, according to the Savannah Police Department.



The proliferation of guns is a factor in the shootings, and reasonable gun control laws are needed, according to Savannah Mayor Van Johnson. Savannah witnessed 12 homicides so far this year, up from one in the same period of 2023, ending May 11, according to the local police department.

Nepali PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal wins trust vote for 4th time



Kathmandu | Agencies

Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Monday won a vote of confidence in the House of Representatives for the fourth time after he re-assumed the premiership in December 2022. Dahal took the vote of trust amid protests from the opposition Nepali Congress, which has been demanding a probe committee against Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Rabi Lamichhane for his alleged involvement in the embezzlement of deposits in cooperatives, Xinhua news agency reported. "As many as 158 lawmakers took part in the vote of confi-

Lankan businessman arrested for assaulting Iranian Ambassador outside Colombo mall

Colombo | Agencies

A Sri Lankan court on Monday charged a local businessman with attempt to murder after he assaulted Iran's Ambassador to the country, Alireza Delkosh, over a parking issue last week. The police produced the 33-year-old suspect, arrested for allegedly attempting to run over the Iranian Ambassador inside the car park of a shopping mall following an altercation over parking, in court on Monday. Police investigators informed the court that the suspect had an argument with the foreign diplomat in a car park and later grabbed the Ambassador's neck and also assaulted him. Following the incident, the suspect - a businessman residing in Colombo - tried to flee in his vehicle, but the Ambassador stopped him by placing his hand on the car's bonnet. However, the suspect kept on driving, throwing the Ambassador on the car's bonnet and carrying him on it for nearly 15 metres until several onlookers and the mall's secu-



rity staff intervened. The suspect was later produced before a local court under the suspicion of assault and attempt to murder. Iran and Sri Lanka share close diplomatic ties for over six decades. Teheran started its mission in Colombo in 1975. Last month, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a tragic helicopter crash on Sunday, visited the island nation and signed five agreements covering various fields. The late President also inaugurated a \$514 million hydropower project and pledged to help Sri Lanka which is going through its worst-ever economic crisis.



MVA, Mahayuti leaders slam 'deliberately slow' voting process; Fadnavis alerts ECI

Quaid Najmi | Thane

Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ally Nationalist Congress Party (SP) National General Secretary Dr. Jitendra Awhad has alleged that the election process was being 'deliberately slowed' by the polling officials, even as Mahayuti Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis brought the issue to the notice of the Election Commission of India (ECI), here on Monday. He visited some polling stations in and around Thane and said that there were massive queues of people waiting for three-four hours for their turn, but the elections officials were going about their duties casually, putting the masses to great inconvenience and depriving them of their voting rights.



inadequate arrangements for voters to sit, drinking water, shade, fans and other amenities, especially in the lower-middle class localities that left many hassled, especially elders or senior citizens, and one voter had fainted in the heat.

Marathi actor and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aadesh Bandekar fumed as there was a malfunction in the EVM at a polling station in Powai, Mumbai, with huge crowds queuing up to cast their votes, but after waiting hours, many disappointed people returned without voting. There were several complaints of EVM glitches from Mankhurd, Tardeo (Mumbai), Bhiwandi and Dombivli (Thane), Satpur (Nashik) and certain other places which further prolonged the

voting process, and local leaders of various candidates filed complaints.

Dr. Awhad demanded that all the people who were standing in the queues must be allowed to exercise their franchise amid reports that many people had left polling centres owing to the delays and long queues in the blistering heat.

Fadnavis said that he asked the polling authorities to speed up the voting process to enable the maximum number of people to cast their votes. BJP Mumbai North seat candidate Piyush Goyal also complained about the 'slow election process' that left many people upset in the Magathane area of his constituency, with quite a few seen going back without voting.

Ruling Shiv Sena MLA Dilip Lande said that there were delays owing to certain technical issues, but claimed that the polling officials were working to rectify the problems.

At many polling stations in Mumbai, Thane, Palghar (ST), Dindori (ST), Dhule and Nashik districts, massive queues and crowds of voters were witnessed, braving the scorching temperatures to exercise their voting rights.

Outside a major polling centre at a college in Kandivali east suburb, serpentine queues were witnessed that spilled onto the roads from 7 A.M. onwards, but with a restricted entry permitting one person at a time from the gate. This created a huge bottleneck, sparking verbal duels among the voters, security and polling officials who attempted to separate the queues as per the polling booths. However, without faster access inside, chaos continued and added to the delays. An enraged senior citizen accused the local polling authorities of 'intentionally' hindering the voting, unmindful of elderly persons, women or even sick people waiting for hours, ostensibly to demoralise or force them to return without voting.

Maha CM helps rush road accident victims to hospital



Team Absolute | Thane

Donning the role of a Good Samaritan on voting day, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Monday rushed to help at least two elderly persons, a man and a woman, who were involved in an auto-rickshaw accident here. CM Shinde was proceeding to inspect the polling process in the constituency when he noticed that an auto-rick-

shaw had toppled on the busy Thane-Kalwa bridge, bringing traffic to a halt. The CM stopped his motorcade and went to check on the accident victims, a man who had fallen on the road with minor injuries on his right arm, and a woman still awaiting help in the auto-rickshaw.

Shinde helped the shaken man, offered him water, and instructed his security staff to help him reach a nearby hospital. When the

traffic police and others helped the scared elderly woman step out of the auto-rickshaw, CM Shinde accompanied her to another police vehicle, offered a bottle of water, and gently patted her head to pacify her. The CM assured her of all help and even asked his security personnel to ensure she was properly taken care of, before proceeding for his engagements, earning the admiration of the people around.

Elderly man found hanging, wife lying dead next to him in Mumbai flat

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 61-year-old man allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself while his 57-year-old wife was found lying dead next to him in their Mumbai flat, a police official said on Monday, reported news agency.

A foul smell emanated from their Mumbai flat at the Anubhuti Society at Arya Chanakanagar in

Kandivali on Sunday following which their neighbours alerted police.

They found Pramod Vasudev Chonkar hanging from a ceiling fan with a nylon rope and his wife Arpita Pramod Chonkar lying dead next to him, the official from Samta Nagar police station said.

The bodies had decomposed, he said, adding the couple did not have children.

A note was found at the spot in which the man mentioned they were mentally depressed and that they were taking the step on their own wish, and no one should be held responsible for it, the official said.

Based on preliminary information, the police registered an accidental death report and an investigation was underway, he said.

Maha CM predicts wipeout of Uddhav Thackeray, '400-plus' for NDA

Team Absolute | Thane

Ruling MahaYuti ally Shiv Sena Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has predicted a total wipeout of his rival Shiv Sena (UBT)'s ex-CM Uddhav Thackeray in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections and reiterated that the BJP-led NDA will win more than 400 seats, here on Monday. CM Shinde, his wife Lata, and other family members on Monday came together to vote at a polling station in their hometown, Thane.

With folded hands, he interacted with several voters around the polling station, expressed gratitude for their support and called upon the masses to vote in favour of the BJP to enable strengthening the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2024. In a tirade against rivals, CM Shinde said that after the June 4 results, the SS(UBT) will bite the



dust and will be wiped out from the political spectrum.

"Uddhav Thackeray has betrayed the mandate of the people of Maharashtra not once, but twice, to become the CM. He has compromised the teachings and the ideology of Balasaheb Thackeray and Anand Dighe to ally with traitors to grab power. The masses will teach him an appropriate lesson after the elections," asserted Shinde. On his son Dr Shrikant Shinde's prospects in the Kalyan LS seat (Thane) where he is pitted against SS (UBT)'s nominee Vaishali Darekar-Rane, the CM said that he (Dr Shrikant) will win with a record margin for a hat-trick there. "He has implemented immense development work in his constituency and the people have witnessed it. They will elect him for the third consecutive term (after 2014 and 2019), with an unprecedented winning margin," claimed Shinde.

Glamour galore as Thackerays join Bollywood stars to vote in Mumbai

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The glamour quotient picked up in the fifth and final phase of Maharashtra Lok Sabha 2024 elections for 13 constituencies with many top politicians and Bollywood personalities trooping out along with many other celebs and commoners to cast their votes, here on Monday.

Voting got underway in all six Lok Sabha seats in Mumbai at 7 a.m. with people queuing up outside polling stations to beat the heat. Shiv Sena (UBT) President and ex-CM Uddhav Thackeray, along with his wife Rashmi and sons Tejas and Aditya, came out to vote at a polling station in Bandra East.

For the first time, he is understood to have voted for a Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ally and Congress candidate Prof Varsha Gaikwad, who is pitted against Bharatiya Janata Party's Ujjwal Nikam in Mumbai North Central seat.

"People are fed up with all the 'jumla-baazi' and are voting for a change... We are confident of getting more than 40 of the 48 seats in Maharashtra," asserted Thackeray in a brief encounter with media persons, while son Aditya said that he voted in the interest of the country. Estranged cousin and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) President Raj Thackeray, with his wife Sharmila and family, went to a polling station in Dadar and cast his vote.

Former Union Minister Ram Naik, along with his family, voted in Goregaon, and Kapil Patil voted in



Borivali. LS candidates of major parties like Congress' Prof Varsha Gaikwad and Bhushan Patil, Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Arvind Sawant, Anil Y. Desai, Sanjay Dina Patil, Amol G. Kirtikar, BJP's Ujjwal Nikam, Piyush Goyal, Mihir Kotecha, Shiv Sena's Ravindra Waikar, Yamini Y. Jadhav, Rahul Shewale, and other nominees of different parties or independents cast their votes. Many candidates urged people to come out and vote as it is their duty and responsibility to the nation, as snaky queues were witnessed outside many polling stations in the city and suburbs. Elsewhere, poet-filmmaker Gulzar cast his vote and other celebs like Sonali Bendre, Tabu, Farhan Akhtar, Anil Kapoor, Zoya Akhtar, Suniel Shetty, Dharmendra, Hema Malini, Esha Deol, Paresh Raval, Shubha Khote, Akshay Kumar, Jahnuvi Kapoor and others were patiently waiting in queues for their turn to exercise their franchise. For Akshay Kumar, 56, who was a Canadian national (2011-2023) and acquired his Indian citizenship last year, it was his maiden vote after getting his new credentials.

He proudly pointed up his inked finger and appealed to the masses to come out and vote in large numbers. In the final phase, 13 LS constituencies in Maharashtra are voting: Palghar (ST), Dindori (ST), Dhule, Nashik, Bhiwandi, Kalyan, Thane, Mumbai North, Mumbai North East, Mumbai North West, Mumbai North Central, Mumbai South Central and Mumbai South.

Civic survey finds 499 dilapidated buildings in Raigad; notices issued to residents

Team Absolute | Alibag

The civic administration in Maharashtra's Raigad district has released a list of 499 dangerous buildings and issued notices to residents of the dilapidated structures, an official said on Monday.

The administration conducted a survey in which 499 buildings in the limits of 15 municipal councils were found to be in a dangerous and dilapidated state, the official said.

Notices have been issued to residents of 482 buildings, and they have been asked to vacate the premises, he said.

According to the survey, Panvel had the highest number of 215 dangerous buildings, followed by Karjat with 153, the official said.

Father of Pune teen, who killed 2 techies with Porsche, charged by Police



Team Absolute | Pune

The police have filed a case against the father of the 17-year-old Pune boy who killed two people while driving a Porsche at high-speed and under the influence of alcohol. The pub where the minor boy was served alcohol also faces a police case, sources told NDTV Monday evening. The father and the pub face charges der Section 75 and 77 of the Juvenile Justice Act.

The former deals with the willful neglect of a child, or exposing a child to mental or physical illnesses, for which punishment can stretch to a three-year jail term and a fine of Rs 1 lakh. The latter deals with supplying a child with intoxicating liquor, or any narcotics or drugs,

unless prescribed by a qualified medical practitioner, and those convicted could face up to seven years in jail.

The minor boy has been charged with rash and negligent driving, and causing harm by endangering the life or personal safety of others, which carries a maximum of two years in jail and a fine.

A senior Pune police officer confirmed that the minor boy has been arrested.

According to witnesses, the accident took place at 2.15 am. The speeding Porsche - reportedly driven at 200 km per hour - rammed a bike driven by Aneesh Awadhya and Ashwini Koshta, both 24 years old. Witnesses said Ashwini was thrown 20 feet in the air and Aneesh was flung into a parked car.

2 farmers come to vote with garlands of tomatoes, onions

Team Absolute | Nashik

Making heads turn, two farmers reached a polling station in Niphad, sporting garlands of tomatoes and onions, to protest against the Centre's farm policies, here on Monday. The two peasants came to vote at a polling booth in Naitale in Niphad town wearing the garlands of tomatoes and onions as a symbolic dissent over the government's farm poli-

cies that are detrimental to the industry of agro-communities. The duo was stopped briefly by the security personnel who checked their strange 'organic ornaments', and after voting they expressed disapproval at the Centre's policies that have created havoc in farmlands, issues of Minimum Support Price, the recent destruction of crops owing to unseasonal rains and hailstorms, plus others issues.

Mumbai police make over 200 preventive arrests; 46 held under anti-drugs law

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai police held extensive drills, made over 200 preventive arrests and took action against drug peddlers to ensure the smooth and safe conduct of India general elections 2024 in the metropolis, an official said on Sunday, reported news agency. In the past two days, the police have nabbed seven wanted accused, arrested 17 persons facing non-bailable warrants and took action against 46 people under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, he



said. Polling will be held in six seats in Mumbai and seven others in the fifth and final phase of India general elections 2024 in Maharashtra on May 20. Over 30,000 policemen have

been deployed across the city to maintain law and order during voting, which will be held between 7 am and 6 pm, the official said. Patrolling in sensitive areas is being conducted, while

checkpoints have been set up at several places, he said. Action has been taken against 31 people after illegal weapons were recovered from them, he said, while 25 persons were held in connection with gambling and sale of liquor in the past two days, he said. The police have arrested 212 people on their records under preventive measures. The official said that 5,836 vehicles were checked of which 1,558 vehicles have been penalised for violations. More than 700 hotels, lodges and guest houses were also checked in these two days, he added.



KATY PERRY GETS EMOTIONAL AS SHE BIDS ADIEU TO 'AMERICAN IDOL' AFTER SEVEN SEASONS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Katy Perry took the American Idol stage for the final time as a judge before bidding adieu to the singing-based reality show.

Perry, along with names such as Luke Bryan and Lionel Richie, sauntered into the 22nd season finale hand in hand.

The 'Roar' hitmaker was visibly emotional when she saw Ryan Seacrest, knowing this would be her last appearance on the show.

Perry took the stage with third-place finalist Jack Blocker as they performed 'What Makes a Woman' in a three-hour finale, reports deadline.com.

Throughout the finale, the mention of it being Perry's last show made her emotional and teary-eyed, reports deadline.com.

The ladies of the Top 12 took the stage to perform a medley of Perry's hits in honour of her last show.

After announcing the winner of Season 22, Abi Carter performed 'What Was I Made For?' which got Perry to shed some tears.



JOHN KRASINSKI ADMITS THAT HIS CHILDREN THINK EMILY BLUNT IS 'COOLER'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor-filmmaker John Krasinski shared that his children Hazel and Violet think their actress-mother Emily Blunt is much cooler than he is.

"When they found out that I was going to do it, it was really exciting because it was the first time that I had ever involved them in anything," Krasinski told people.com.

"I was pretty sure that they thought I was an accountant before this because their mom was Mary Poppins and in 'Jungle Cruise'. So she was off to a very biased start with our girls."

The actor, who is a part of 'IF', his new animated fantasy film, observed that his children "disappear into a magical world that we, as parents, aren't allowed into", reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"I said to Emily, 'That would make an amazing movie', he added.

The actor also recalled that the pandemic became a turning point for his children, who were pivotal in the production process of the film. Krasinski said: "I was just sketching all the IFs as I was writing, and I would show them. I'm a terrible artist, so then once I started interfacing with real artists and talking about how it would really look, they got really excited."

CATE BLANCHETT BLOWS KISSES AS 'RUMOURS' GETS 4-MINUTE STANDING OVATION AT CANNES

Los Angeles | Agencies

Acclaimed Hollywood star Cate Blanchett was seen blowing kisses to the Cannes Film Festival audience after her new apocalyptic comedy film 'Rumours' received a four-minute standing ovation at the prestigious event. The film was welcomed with laughter throughout the entirety of the late-night screening. While some of the auditorium emptied out while the credits rolled, the majority of filmgoers waited patiently to pay their respects to the film's stars.

The film's trio of directors, Guy Maddin, Evan Johnson, and Galen Johnson, made a speech together after the applause wrapped, thanking the audience and quoting their own film by saying, "It's better to burn out than to fade away."

'Rumours' follow a group of world leaders who meet at the G7, a political and economic meeting of the minds between Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, and the US, but get lost in the woods while trying to compose a joint statement.

The dark comedy film also features Alicia Vikander, Charles Dance, Roy Dupuis, Denis Menochet, Nikki Amuka-Bird, Rolando Ravello, Takehiro Hira, and Zlatko Buric.



Alfonso Ribeiro claims his role in 'Fresh Prince of Bel-Air' ended his acting career

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Alfonso Ribeiro shared that his iconic role in the sitcom 'The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air' as Carlton Banks was a "sacrifice" for his career in acting.

"Playing Carlton on 'Fresh Prince' became a sacrifice. I used to always say doing Carlton was the greatest and worst thing that ever happened to me," Ribeiro said in an interview with Closer Weekly, reports deadline.com.

"It was one of the greatest roles that I ever was fortunate enough to play. But it was also the role that stopped me from acting again because people couldn't see me as anything else. The sacrifice was not having an acting career anymore."

Ribeiro has some favourite memories from filming.

"It was about the cast and spending time with them. Before every show, we would go into Will Smith's dressing room, and we'd play music and dance and just have a great energy buildup to get ready for the show. Those are some great memories of just being together," he recalled.

The 52-year-old is currently co-hosting 'Dancing with the Stars'.

"I'm enjoying being a host and am very happy with it. But, yes, I would go back to acting if it was exactly the right thing," he said.

"My happiest moments, career-wise, are winning 'Dancing With the Stars' and now becoming host of 'Dancing With the Stars'. And after winning 'Dancing With the Stars', I got the opportunity to do the show that I always wanted to do -- America's Funniest Home Videos," Ribeiro said.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Eva Longoria has talked about why she approaches new projects by considering her circle of friends first and revealed that she wants to work with people she loves.

"I want to work with people I love," Longoria said, naming friends and fellow actresses Kerry Washington and Gabrielle Union, with whom she has upcoming projects, at the Cannes Film Festival to people.com.

"Life's too short to work with a-----, and I'd much rather be surrounded by people I love and creatives that I respect," she continued, talking about the process in which she decides what to work on next as "reverse engineering."

The actress considers who she wants to collaborate with first, and then seeks out projects that will work best for everyone involved.

"It's the people and their vision and what they bring to it more than the actual project" that will get her on a set.

Longoria has a list of directors and producers she would love to collaborate with.

According to her creative process, Longoria says she'll "develop projects around that idea," and eventually they'll be collaborating together on something.

"Like, 'Okay, if I want to work with Carmen Maura, what would be a good vehicle for that?'" she said.

Eva Longoria makes it clear she wants to work with people she loves as 'life is too short'

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Wallis Day

SHARON STONE OPENS UP ON WHY SHE WOULD REALLY LIKE TO HAVE HER 'LIFE BACK'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Sharon Stone said that her health negatively impacted her career, but she would love to get back to doing what she loves.

"I still don't have my acting career back. I would really like to work again as an actor so much... not just as a weak, supporting part," the actress told The Times newspaper.

Stone wants to get back to her career in acting, following a 2001 stroke.

"I'd like to really have the parts that I have earned and can do. I would really like to have my own real career back. I would really like to have my life back."

The actress said that she went through hell after the stroke, which impacted every area of her life, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Stone said: "Because it took seven years to really recover,

and I did lose custody of my child. And I did lose my career, and I did lose \$15 million -- every cent I had -- in child support and court fees... So I didn't really bounce back and have a rebirth."

"I would really like to have my life back. I didn't rebound, and it isn't some kind of wonderful story. It'd be great if it was, but it isn't. I survived," she added.

Stone shared that doctors only gave her just a per cent chance of survival. "I pretty

much knew it was serious when I came to the floor and I couldn't get up, and I kept calling for help, and I couldn't get it. I thought: 'I'm having a stroke'," she said.

The actress was going through "psychological chaos." "I couldn't walk. I couldn't talk. I couldn't read. I couldn't write my own name. I was stuttering. When I reached for something, I had no depth perception. It was complete psychological chaos."





Dhoni likely to visit London for muscle tear treatment

Team Absolute | New Delhi
With questions flying thick and fast about his retirement, former India and Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni is planning a visit to London for treatment of a muscle tear injury, CSK sources have said. Dhoni will take a call on his future course of action post-recovery, the sources said. CSK got eliminated from the Playoffs race of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 after a heart-wrenching defeat to Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in a do-or-die match on Saturday. It will be only the third

time that the five-time champion won't feature in the IPL playoffs. The defending champions suffered a 27-run defeat at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium and as soon as M.S. Dhoni walked out of the ground scoring 25 off 13 deliveries, the speculation grew regarding his future. However, in the latest development sources privy to information told IANS that Dhoni would be deciding about his retirement only after having surgery in London. "Dhoni might head to London for his muscle tear surgery which saw him struggling during the IPL. He is not fully fit but wants to continue to play cricket and he will only decide about his



future after treatment which will take him five to six

months to recover," sources told IANS. Chasing 219, CSK faltered in the middle overs after recovering from the sloppy start. Rachin Ravindra's 61-run and Ravindra Jadeja's unbeaten 42 failed to guide the defending champion over the line. Despite finishing the campaign with 14 points same as RCB in the league stage, CSK failed to seal the berth due to the latter's superior net run-rate. With CSK ending their campaign in the IPL, fans and experts speculated that it could be Dhoni's final season for the franchise, but the veteran has kept his cards close to heart and headed back home after the match on Sunday.

Para Worlds: Deepthi Jeevanji smashes world record to win gold in 400m T20 category

Kobe (Japan) | Agencies
20-year old Deepthi Jeevanji smashed the world record in the women's 400m T20 and grabbed her first gold at the World Para Athletics Championships, here on Monday. Deepthi clocked 55.07 seconds, breaking American Breanna Clark's earlier world record of 55.12 seconds, which she had set during last year's edition of the championships in Paris. The T20 classification is for athletes who have intellectual impairment. Aysel Onder of Turkey finished second with 55.19 seconds followed by Lizanshela Angulo of Ecuador on third with 56.68 seconds. Earlier, the Para Asian Games champion qualified for the final of the Women's



400m T20, with an Asian Record time of 56.18 seconds in the heats on Sunday. Later, Yogesh Kathuniya won the silver in the Men's Discus Throw F56 Final with a season's best mark of 41.80. On Day three, Preethi Pal won a bronze medal in the Women's 200m T35 final while Nidhad Kumar bagged silver in Men's High Jump T47 with an impressive season-best mark of 1.99 meters. India have won four medals so far (1 gold, 2 silver and a bronze).

SACHIN, GAVASKAR, RAHANE, SURYAKUMAR CAST THEIR VOTES DURING FIFTH PHASE OF LS POLLS

Mumbai | Agencies

Legendary Indian cricketers Sachin Tendulkar and Sunil Gavaskar, Ajinkya Rahane and Suryakumar Yadav exercised their voting rights in the fifth phase of the Lok Sabha Elections, here on Monday. Tendulkar, who is national icon of Election Commission of India (ECI), was joined by his son Arjun at the polling booth. "I am the national icon of ECI and I was involved in quite a few initiatives in raising awareness about the importance of casting a vote. Today as a proud Indian I am able to do that... I appeal all the citizens to vote as it is important for the future of our nation," Tendulkar told reporters after casting his vote. Star India batter Suryakumar also exercised his franchise. He shared his picture with an inked finger, encouraging fellow citizens to exercise their voting rights to shape a future of the nation. "Let's shape the future of our nation by casting our vote today," he posted on X. Rahane, on the other hand, shared a photo of himself and his wife Radhika after the couple voted in Mumbai. The 35-year-old cricketer wrote on X, "We did our duty. Have you?"



Golf: Diksha shoots 67, finishes 24th with Tvesa and Pranavi in German Masters

Brandenburg (Germany) | Agencies

Diksha Dagar, Pranavi Urs and Tvesa Malik, were all Tied-24th in the 2024 Amundi German Masters as local star Alexandra Försterling won the event after a dramatic playoff. Försterling holed her birdie putt on the second playoff hole to defeat close friend Emma Spitz and secure her fourth LET title. All four have come in 11 months and she has now won the last two starts on the LET in 2024. Diksha, who did not play as fluently as she had, finally hit form on the second nine of the final round. After being 1-over for the first nine holes, Diksha who started from the 10th hole, birdied six times in a span of eight holes to finish with 5-under 67. They all totalled 1-under 287. Pranavi Urs, who was Tied-second after the first round, shot 69 and it included four birdies from the 13th to



the 16th. Tvesa Malik who made the cut on the line, shot 71. The three golfers, all multiple winners on their home turf at Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour, will next play at the Jabra Ladies Open. Försterling and Austria's Spitz battled hard and finished as joint leaders

after starting the day on seven-under-par. They both shot 67 on the final day and totalled 276. As the duo headed down the last, Spitz had a one-shot lead but Försterling hit her second shot to leave a tap-in birdie of her own and have the scores level at 12-under-par after 72 holes. They went back to the 18th for the play-off and both made birdies on the first playoff hole before Försterling rolled in her birdie on the second playoff hole to become the first German to win on home soil on the LET. England's Gabriella Cowley had another excellent day shooting a six-under 66 to finish in outright third place on 10-under-par. Germany's Laura Fuenfstueck produced the round of the day firing a 64 (-8) to finish in a tie for fourth place alongside Australia's Kirsten Rudgeley, who carded a 65 (-7).

Taking wickets is key to stopping batters from big totals in T20s, says Harbhajan Singh

New Delhi | Agencies

Former India spinner Harbhajan Singh believes the key to restraining aggressive batting in modern-day cricket lies in the bowlers' ability to take wickets regularly after the Indian Premier League's (IPL) 2024 ongoing season saw teams breaching the 200-run mark at ease on multiple occasions. Harbhajan, who played 103 Tests, 236 ODIs, and 28 T20s for India, emphasised that bowlers should aim for wickets even at the cost of conceding runs. He shared his insights in Episode 5 of the podcast series '180 Not Out'. "I believe that any bowler who says he can stop the run flow is not true. Be it Lasith Malinga, there has never been a better bowler than him in the T20 world. Jasprit Bumrah is that in the modern-day cricket. You can only break the momentum after taking a wicket. To take wickets, you need to bowl well," Harbhajan told Raman Raheja, sports-preneur, media professional, and creator who put together this Podcast '180 Not Out'. The veteran player said that going for wickets in the shortest format is the only way out for the bowlers. "With skill, you can take wickets, not that with fluke you took a wicket, bowled the full toss ball and got the batter out. But that will not happen again. The full-toss ball will concede six more than



getting a wicket. Economy rate will only improve when you try for a wicket," he said. "That's what I think should be the mindset. Whenever I have played any format, T20s, Tests, or ODIs, I look to take wickets. In that process, even if you concede some runs at the cost of 2-3 wickets, you have done your job. That should be the mindset," the spinner added. The podcast series was also graced by former Indian cricketer Gautam Gambhir. The star batter expressed his views on the issue of two new balls being used in ODI cricket. "Two new balls in one-day cricket is probably the worst thing that can happen to One-day cricket. Imagine how many finger spinners play one-day cricket. There's Nathan Lyon who's got 400 wickets, there's R. Ashwin who's got 400 wickets, and they are not a part of the One Day team, and the only reason is that there is nothing for a finger spinner," said Gambhir. "Imagine someone who has taken 400 test wickets will not play one-day cricket because they don't become a wicket-taking option, or they end up becoming a defensive option. The reverse swing has gone out of the game completely. I want to see reverse swing, I want to see batters getting challenged, and someone bowling at 150 and reversing the ball is always a challenge. One rule that needs to change is getting rid of two new balls and having only one," he added.

IPL 2024: VIRAT KOHLI COULD GO WELL PAST HIS IPL 2016 PERFORMANCE, SAYS MATTHEW HAYDEN

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Australia batter Matthew Hayden believes that in-form Virat Kohli has the opportunity to carry forward his sensational league stage performance in the IPL playoffs and surpass his all-time highest run-scorer feat in the ongoing edition. With 708 runs in 14 matches, Kohli is having the second-best IPL season after the 2016 season where he amassed 973 runs in 16 games including seven half-centuries and four hundred. In the ongoing season, Kohli has struck five fifties and one century. He is still 265 runs behind his previous-best tally. He is also the leading run-getter in the season and holds the Orange Cap. With Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) qualified for the playoffs, the star batter has the chance to close the gap and even surpass his feat. RCB progressed to the knock-out round after a 27-run win



over defending champion Chennai Super Kings in Bengaluru on Saturday. "We are looking at Virat Kohli celebrating his second-best season thus far. He could go well past his IPL 2016 performance in the kind of form that he's in. So more than anything, I just think it's the energy and the love of the game, the passion, the commitment for it all—all of those describing words that you can glorify this great man with, whether it be on the field or with bat in hand," Hayden

Broadcasters issue statement addressing Rohit Sharma's comments on 'breach of privacy'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

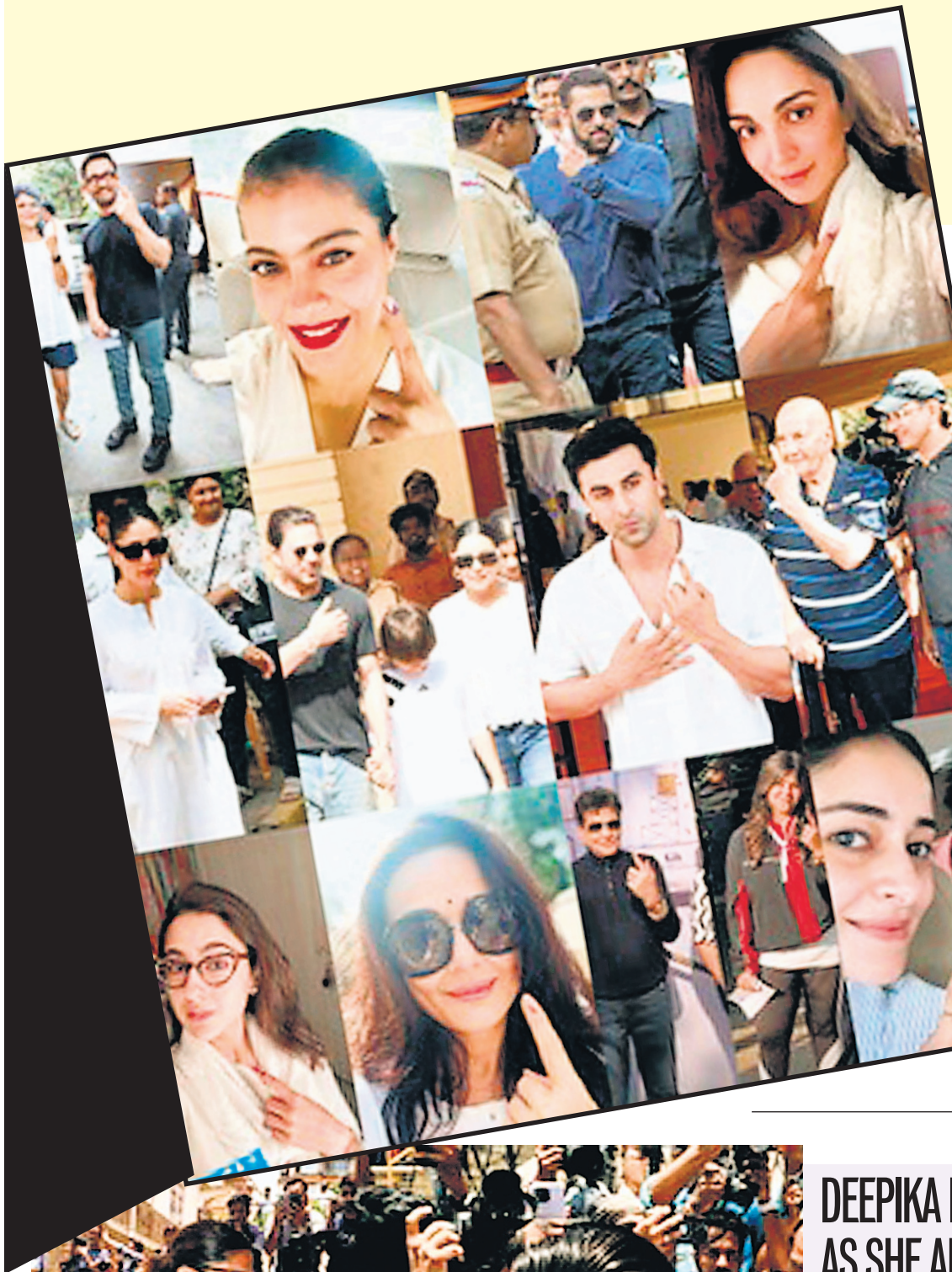
Following Rohit Sharma's public criticism of broadcasters of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 in which the India captain accused them of "breach of privacy," Star Sports has released a statement in response to the 37-year-old batter. Rohit has spoken against the invasion of privacy of players as the official broadcaster of the IPL 2024 aired a private conversation of the former Mumbai Indians captain during a training session, despite being told not to record it. "The lives of cricketers have become so intrusive that cameras are now recording every step and conversation we are having in privacy with our friends and colleagues, at training or on match days.

"Despite asking Star Sports to not record my conversation, it was and was also then played on air, which is a breach of privacy. The need to get exclusive content and focused only on views and engagement will one day break the trust between the fans, cricketers, and cricket," Rohit posted on X on Sunday. Reacting to the Indian skipper's comments, the broadcasters issued a statement, clarifying their stance on the matter. "A clip involving a senior Indian player and his post on social media have gained prominence since yesterday. The clip, taken during a training session on May 16 at the Wankhede stadium, for which Star Sports had authorized access, momentarily showed the senior player in conversation with his friends on the sidelines. No audio from this conversa-



tion was either recorded or broadcast," it said in a statement. "The clip, which only showed the senior player requesting for the audio of his conversation to not be recorded, got featured in Star Sports' live coverage of pre-match preparations and lacked editorial relevance beyond this. "Star Sports has always adhered to the highest standards of professional conduct while broadcasting cricket all over the world. Respect for players' privacy while bringing fans, moments of intense action and preparations, sits at the core of this ethos, which the broadcaster remains committed to," it added. "The incident in question was a clip of Rohit, who was seen having a private conversation ahead of Mumbai Indians' final game of the season against the Lucknow Super Giants.

It is altogether another matter that there is always a gap of 8 to 10 seconds between the actual action, and it being aired even in a 'live' broadcast. The gap is maintained to ensure no unwanted content is aired. The sequence of events began when the Kolkata Knight Riders shared a video featuring Rohit Sharma and assistant coach Abhishek Nayar. The video included audio of a light-hearted chat between the two, which was later deleted. Subsequently, during a live training session on Star Sports, Rohit Sharma was seen asking the cameras not to record any audio of his conversations with friends on the sidelines. "Bhai year audio band kar bhai, ek audio ne meri waat laga diya hai," said Rohit to the cameraman on the training ground which was then shown on air by Star Sports.



Bollywood stars shine in 5th phase, but don't inspire Mumbai voters to brave the heat

Team Absolute | Mumbai

One of the most visible features of the just-concluded fifth phase of polling in Mumbai, which also marked the completion of Maharashtra's tryst with the ballot, was the spotlight on Bollywood and, to a lesser extent, television stars showing up to vote.

As they turned up in casuals, away from the glamour and glitz of Bollywood events, in cars that ranged from a Maybach (Deepika-Ranveer) to an old-fashioned Maruti (Tabu), followed closely by the paparazzi, the stars obliterated the political figures who usually dominate headlines emanating from Maharashtra. Even high-profile candidates such as Piyush Goyal and Ujjwal Nikam could not dominate the media mindspace as much as the stars, from Akshay Kumar, who was voting after getting his Indian citizenship, to Shah Rukh Khan, who happily posed for shutterbugs with his wife Gauri and son Aryan, to Amitabh Bachchan, who showed up with wife Jaya, suffering the blazing heat but not showing the least discomfort.

Talking about family outings, 'Anupamaa'

star Rupali Ganguli, who recently joined the BJP, even declared, "A family that votes together, stays together."

Mumbai's peripatetic paparazzi had been alerted a day in advance about the polling booths where the stars could be spotted -- the most popular polling booths were the ones at St Anne's and Mount Mary, both in Bandra -- and the timings for these happy encounters.

Most of the stars, from Sanya Malhotra to Ranbir Kapoor, were happy to simply flash their inked index finger and not speak, but some, notably Dharmendra, Akshay Kumar, Manoj Bajpayee and Rajkumar Rao, gave statements to the media urging Mumbaiers to vote.

Yet others, such as SRK, Anupam Kher and Paresch Rawal, urged people to not waste the right in statements they put up on their social media handles hours before the fifth phase started at 7 a.m. on Monday.

There was a reason for this constant egging on. Mumbai had recorded a mere 55.11 per cent voter turnout in 2019, which, incidentally, was the highest in three decades -- and this was just 4 per cent higher than the percentage recorded in 2014.

2014, incidentally, was the year when, buoyed by the Modi wave, the voter turnout touched 66.44 per cent nationally. In 2019, the figure went up to 67.40 per cent -- way above Mumbai's 55.11 per cent.

Mumbai, it seems, talks more than it votes, although it has never gone as low as the 1991 turnout of 41.2 per cent.

And though the final figure is not out yet for the fifth phase, it appears that the Maximum City will again fall short of the

tantalising 60 per cent mark that seems to elude it in each election. Ironically, the city's richest and most educated constituency is likely to report the lowest turnout -- in the lower 50s.

Unlike the rest of the electorate, though, the stars took their job -- of voting and flaunting their index finger to the paparazzi -- very seriously. No star of note, despite the heatwave being blamed for the otherwise low turnout, missed his or her date with democracy.

Kiara Advani landed from Cannes, went home and was out to cast her vote. Another Cannes returnee, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, exercised her right dutifully, but not before raising eyebrows by showing up alone, without her in-laws or husband Abhishek.

Rajkumar Rao, who's also an Election Commission-designated National Icon, and Janhvi Kapoor cast their votes en route to the airport, from where they flew off for 'Mr. & Mrs. Mahi' promotions.

Aamir Khan flew in from the shoot of his upcoming movie, 'Sitaare Zameen Par', to be able to cast his vote along with ex-wife Kiran Rao, whose acclaimed film, 'Laapataa Ladies', he has just produced.

The stars came in droves -- from co-stars (Ranbir Kapoor and Bobby Deol) to star couples (Saif-Kareena, Dharmendra-Hema Malini, Ranveer-Deepika), from veterans (Gulzar, Anil Kapoor, Nana Patekar) to the Gen Next (Ananya Panday, Shraddha Kapoor), to grown-up children with their famous parents (Mahesh and Pooja Bhatt, Hema Malini and Esha Deol, Jeetendra and Ekta Kapoor, Rakesh and Hrithik Roshan, David and Varun Dhawan).

DEEPIKA FLAUNTS BABY BUMP AS SHE ARRIVES TO VOTE WITH HUBBY RANVEER SINGH

Mumbai: Bollywood star couple Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone cast their votes for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections in the Bandra area of Mumbai on a muggy Monday.

The couple, who are expecting their first child, arrived at the Mount Mary Church polling station in their Maybach. Ranveer was seen helping Deepika as she walked cautiously in the Mumbai heat.

Deepika's baby bump could also be seen in the videos. The couple twinned as both of them wore white shirts paired with washed denims.

On the work front, Deepika has 'Kalki 2898 AD' and 'Singham Again' in the pipeline; Ranveer will be seen sharing the screen with his wife in 'Singham Again'.

SALMAN SPENDS TIME WITH WHEELCHAIR-BOUND WOMAN BEFORE CASTING HIS VOTE

Mumbai: Bollywood superstar Salman Khan, who was last seen in 'Tiger 3', cast his vote on Monday at the Mount Mary school.

The actor arrived at the polling booth in a rugged look to do his bit for the electoral process.

The actor sported a light stubble and chose a grey coloured t-shirt and black cargo pants. He also interacted

briefly with a wheelchair-bound woman before he posed for the paparazzi stationed at the venue. Earlier in the day, Salman's father Salim Khan cast his vote along with his first wife Salma Khan in the Bandra area of Mumbai.



Gauahar Khan finally gets to vote after facing 'difficulties' at polling booth

Mumbai: Facing a lot of 'difficulty' at the polling centre in Mumbai.

"Yes, finally I have done it... Humne vote kardiya. I want to tell you that no matter how difficult and confusing it is, people can help... It can get confusing at the booths. But please guys, go and vote. Thoda mehnat kariye. Apne IDs dhoondiyee. Go look at all the addresses to find where your name is, in which booth. Just go and vote because voting is very important in a democracy," she posted on Instagram.

Earlier, the actress took to her Instagram Stories to slam the polling booth authorities after her name reportedly went missing from the list of potential voters. She, however, deleted the post later. In the now-removed post, Gauahar said: "I have an appeal -- why do we have Aadhaar cards if we are not considered citizens enough to vote? Your Aadhaar card is your identity that you are an Indian citizen and you should be able to vote. But when you go to the voting counter, the booth that has your building members on its list, everyone is there except people who actually live in the building."

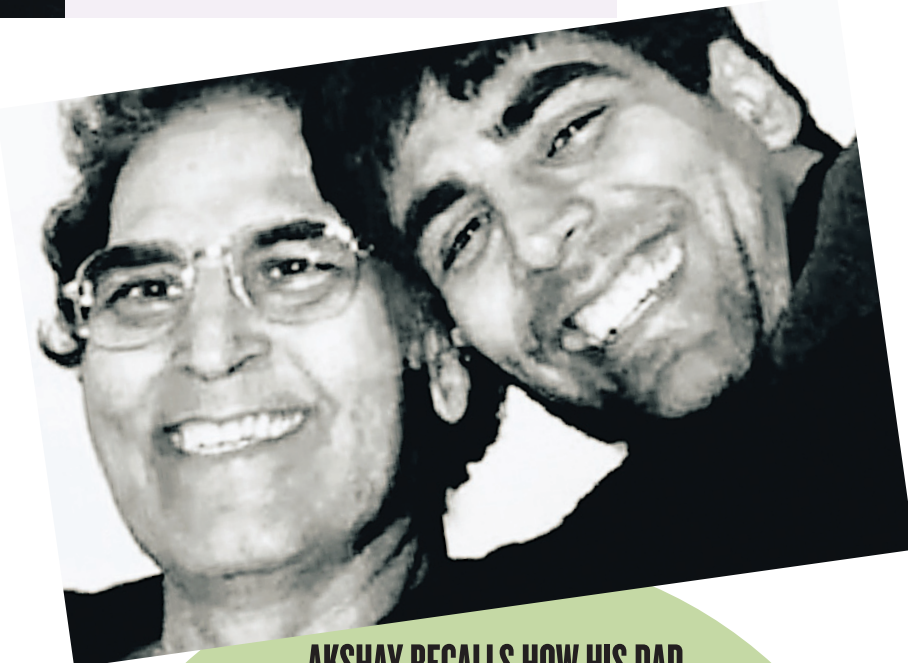
She also claimed that "people who left the building are still on the list".

"I am just making a humble appeal that on the basis of your Aadhaar card, you must be allowed to vote as Indian citizens," she said.

In another video, she asked, "If you are an Indian citizen and you present your Aadhaar card for every important thing in your life... Why not at the voting counters? Why are we being denied our right to vote?"

"The list does not have your names but it has names of people who are not even living in the building. They say it was this year's survey. But it cannot be, because they left the building three years ago."

She also appealed to the "Election Commission of India or whichever body that makes decisions for the voting process in India" to allow the use of Aadhaar cards or passports for voting.



AKSHAY RECALLS HOW HIS DAD ENCOURAGED HIM TO PRACTISE WRESTLING WITH BIGGER BOYS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood's 'Khiladi' Akshay Kumar recalled that his father, who was a wrestler, encouraged him to practice wrestling with the 'healthy and big' boys in his neighbourhood.

Akshay, who is the first guest on the talk show 'Dhawan Kareng' hosted by cricketer Shikhar Dhawan, talked about maintaining a healthy lifestyle and shared the inspiration behind his well-balanced and health-conscious approach.

The actor, who was last seen in the movie 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan', reminisced about his father, Hari Om Bhatia, and shared: "I have always been a sports enthusiast and suggest everyone to have at least one sport in their life to keep them alive. My dad, a wrestler for Punjab and an Army man, used to encourage me by calling the boys in my neighbourhood who were healthy or bigger than me and made me practice wrestling with them."

"He'd offer Cadbury chocolates to us as prizes. Despite facing older opponents, I enjoyed the challenge as Dad always taught us new tricks," he said.

Akshay further added: "We all used to wake up early for school. Somewhere along the line, it became trendy to sleep in. Waking up early has become a habit, and I enjoy it as I cherish those quiet two hours in the morning. I don't jump into exercise right away; I enjoy lazing around at home first."

The talk show delves into intriguing life stories, candid conversations, exciting games, and fun revelations with the who's who of Bollywood, cricket, and influencers.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Amayra Dastur