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High-octane campaigning for sixth phase wraps up ahead polling on May 25

WITH COUNTER CHARGES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The high-pitched campaigning for the sixth phase of Lok Sabha elections scheduled on May 25 came to an end on Thursday, marked by fervent efforts by prominent figures across political parties to engage with the voters in 58 Parliamentary constituencies spanning eight states and Union Territories.

On the final day of campaigning, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a rally in Bhiwani, Haryana, while Defence

THE SEATS THAT WOULD SEE POLLING ON SATURDAY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Bihar: Valmiki Nagar, Pashchim Champaran, Purvi Champaran, Sheohar, Vaishali, Gopalganj, Siwan and Maharajganj.

Haryana: Ambala, Kurukshetra, Sirsa, Hisar, Karnal, Sonapat, Rohtak, Bhiwani-Mahendragarh, Gurgaon and Faridabad.

Jharkhand: Giridih, Dhanbad, Ranchi and Jamshedpur.

Odisha: Sambalpur, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Puri and Bhubaneswar.

Uttar Pradesh: Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Phulpur, Allahabad, Ambedkar Nagar, Shravasti, Domariyaganj, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Lalganj, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Machhlishahr and Bhadohi.

West Bengal: Tamluk, Kanthi, Ghatal, Jhargram, Medinipur, Purulia, Bankura and Bishnupur.

Delhi: Chandni Chowk, North East Delhi, East Delhi, New Delhi, North West Delhi, West Delhi and South Delhi.

Jammu and Kashmir: Anantnag-Rajouri



Minister Rajnath Singh addressed a gathering in Dwarka, Delhi. Additionally, Union Minister Piyush Goyal conducted a roadshow in the Najafgarh area of the national capital in support of BJP candidates. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi held a

rally in support of the party candidate for the North East Delhi Parliamentary seat and later held a 'Mahila Vichar Vimarsh' in Mangolpuri.

Meanwhile, party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra conducted a roadshow in Sirsa, Haryana. The leaders of both the BJP and the opposition-backed INDIA bloc spared no effort in their campaigning to win over the voters. The 58 Lok Sabha constituencies that will go to the polls on Saturday include 14 seats in Uttar Pradesh, followed by Haryana (10), Bihar and West Bengal (8 each), Delhi (7), Odisha (6), Jharkhand (4), and Jammu and Kashmir (1). A total of 889 candidates are in the fray for the crucial sixth phase of polling. The prominent candidates representing the BJP include Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan contesting from Sambalpur, Odisha, former Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar from Karnal, Manoj Tiwari from North East Delhi, and Bansuri

Swaraj from New Delhi. On the other hand, notable figures from the Congress include Kumari Selja vying for Sirsa, Haryana, Deepender Singh Hooda contesting from Rohtak, Haryana, J.P. Agarwal from Chandni Chowk, Delhi, and Kanhaiya Kumar from North East Delhi.

MODI GOVT NEVER WAIVED FARM LOANS: PRIYANKA

Panipat: Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra claimed on Thursday that the BJP-led Central government never waived the loans of the farmers who were forced to commit suicide due to debt, whereas loans worth Rs 16 lakh crore of 22 billionaires were waived by the same dispensation.

"The Modi government imposed GST (Goods and Services Tax) on farmers and refused to give MSP (Minimum Support Price) to them," she said at a public meeting in Panipat, Haryana.

"The farmers waited on the borders of Delhi for more than a year. The entire country was with the farmers, and even Congress MP Deepender Hooda sat with the farmers during the movement. But instead of showing sympathy towards our 'annadatas' (farmers), the BJP insulted them by calling them traitors."

She also said that a UP minister's son crushed four farmers to death, but to date, the government has not given justice to the victims. "When we went to Lakhimpur Kheri to meet the victims' families, we were stopped on the way and arrested. This reveals the anti-farmer, anti-worker and anti-poor mentality of the BJP," she stated.

HARYANA'S FARMERS SUFFERED CONGRESS-LED BETRAYAL: PM MODI

Bhiwani (Haryana): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday slammed the Congress model of governance, saying that the party has converted Haryana into "a machine of loot" by deceiving the state's farmers and youth.

He also said that the "inherently unstable" opposition INDI alliance only spreads the politics of communalism, casteism, dynasty and adheres to the 'five PMs-five year' formula. "Your vote will decide our country's future, not just the PM. INDI alliance promises five PMs in five years, showing instability," said PM Modi. Asserting that people now "know the true face of Congress", PM Modi accused the party of prioritising vote banks and also slammed its INDI Alliance partner TMC for granting OBC reservations to illegal immigrants from the minority community in West Bengal. The Prime Minister stated that he has come to assure SC-ST-OBCs of Haryana that reservation is their 'adikar' (right) and Modi is its 'chowkidar' (guardian). Haryana will go to the polls for 10 parliamentary seats on May 25.

Market at all-time high as Nifty inches closer to 23,000; Adani Enterprises top gainer



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Signalling investor confidence in the economic growth, development and investment prospects of India amid political stability, equity benchmarks surged to fresh all-time highs on Thursday, as shares of Adani Group saw a sharp rise with Adani Enterprises becoming the top gainer. BSE and NSE benchmarks reached 75,499 points and 22,993 points, respectively, during intra-day trading. Sensex closed up 1,196 points or 1.61 per cent at 75,418 while Nifty went up 369 points or 1.64 per cent at 22,967 points.

Adani Enterprises was the top gainer in Nifty with 7.84 per cent rise. Adani Ports was also among the top three gainers with a 4.73 per cent rise. Sun Pharma was the top loser in the Nifty with a fall of 2.87 per cent. After this, Power Grid and Hindalco were among the top three losers. Most indices includ-

ing Auto, IT, PSU Bank, Fin Service, FMCG, and Energy closed in the green. Only the Pharma index closed in the red. A recent report by research firm Bernstein said Nifty could touch the figure of 23,000 around June 4 when the Lok Sabha election results are announced.

According to market experts, the sharp rally in the stock market ahead of poll results reflects an optimistic outlook for the world's fifth largest economy despite global economic and geopolitical uncertainties.

"India is the shining beacon of stability, growth and resilience in the current global economic order. I am confident that we can soon cross the \$5 trillion economy by 2025 as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi," said Dr Vijay Kalantri, President -- All India Association of Industries (AIAI) and Chairman, MVIDC World Trade Centre.

'Don't test my patience'

DEVE GOWDA ISSUES STERN WARNING TO ASCENDING GRANDSON PRAJWAL REVANNA

Bengaluru | Agencies

Former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda on Thursday issued a stern warning to his fugitive grandson and JD-S MP Prajwal Revanna, the prime accused in the alleged sex video scandal in Karnataka.

Taking it to social media, Deve Gowda said, "I have issued a warning to Prajwal Revanna to return immediately from wherever he is and subject himself to the legal process. He should not test my patience any further."

In the two-page letter addressed to his grandson under the title 'My warning to Prajwal Revanna', the veteran



JD-S leader said: "It took me some time to recover from the shock and pain he has inflicted on me, my entire family, my colleagues, friends, and party workers."

The former Prime Minister also said that he would ensure that there is no interference in the inquiry against Prajwal Revanna by the family members.

Two Indian Restaurants On 2024 List Of World's Best Restaurants Ranked 51-100

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The World's 50 Best, the esteemed global rankings by the William Reed media company, recently unveiled the extended list of best restaurants for 2024. This consists of establishments around the world that have been ranked from 51 to 100. Two Indian restaurants, one in Mumbai and one in New Delhi, have been featured on this extended list for 2024. Masque in Mumbai made its debut on this international list, securing the 78th spot. Indian Accent in New Delhi made a re-entry on the list this year and was ranked 89th.

Masque is helmed by restaurateur Aditi Dugar (Director & Founder) and head chef Varun Totlani. The



restaurant emerged as India's best restaurant for 2023 and 2024, as per Asia's 50 Best Restaurants list. The World's 50 Best has lauded Masque as being "arguably India's most forward-thinking restaurant", adding that, "Masque's raison d'être is to show off the wealth of the

country's produce, extracting maximum flavour from local ingredients in a 10-course tasting menu served in a stylish former Mumbai textile mill."

Chef Manish Mehrotra is the driving force behind Indian Accent at The Lodhi, New Delhi. It had been

declared the best restaurant in India for seven consecutive years from 2015 to 2021. It was ranked 26th among Asia's 50 Best Restaurants for 2024. In its announcement of the Extended List for 2024, the World's 50 Best has called Indian Accent "a restaurant that continues to raise the bar of Indian contemporary cuisine." It added, "With a winning combination of creative, modern dishes and warm hospitality, season after season, chef Manish Mehrotra's inventive tasting menus have played judiciously with his country's palate to craft unique takes on Indian classics."

The list of the World's 50 Best Restaurants for 2024 will be announced live at an awards ceremony in Las Vegas on June 5, 2024.

Why Mehul Choksi hasn't returned to India?

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Diamantaire Mehul Choksi, a key accused in the multi-crore PNB scam, has told a special court here that he hasn't been able to return to India "due to reasons beyond his control" and hence cannot be declared a "fugitive economic offender".

The accused has claimed that he didn't leave India to avoid criminal prosecution nor is he refusing to return to the country. He said his passport has been suspended by Indian authorities.

The businessman made these claims in an application filed on Wednesday before a special PMLA court, seeking directions for summoning documents concerning the suspension of his passport and investigation files of the Enforcement



Directorate's (ED) case against him.

As per the Fugitive Economic Offender Act, 2018, the plea said, a "fugitive economic offender" is an individual against whom a court in India has issued an arrest warrant over a scheduled offence and he has left India to avoid criminal prosecution or refuses to return to the country to face criminal prosecution.

WHATSAPP TO INTRODUCE FEATURE TO CONTROL WHO CAN SEE YOUR STATUS UPDATES

San Francisco: WhatsApp is preparing to give users more control over who views their status updates. The Meta-owned messaging app's latest feature will be similar to Instagram's "close friends" list, where you can share your stories only with selected people.

The feature, in the testing stage at the moment, is part of the latest WhatsApp beta for iOS 24.10.10.75, available on the TestFlight app.

Before sharing images and videos via status updates, users can now select their selected contacts to view the updates. This upgrade gives users control over their sharing experience, allowing them to tailor who can see their updates.

The report states that allowing users to mention contacts in their status updates "generates a greater sense of interaction within specific contacts". This feature will make sure that important updates are "always brought to the attention of mentioned contacts since a notification is sent directly to them."

The report also states that these mentions will be private and won't be visible in the status updates "ensuring that they remain discreet and confined to the intended recipients."

Heatwave continues in parts of Northwest India



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Heat stroke is a serious medical condition that occurs when your body overheats due to prolonged exposure to high temperatures, often made worse by not drinking enough water.

Yesterday, Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan was admitted to a hospital in Ahmedabad after suffering a heat stroke. The actor was

in the city to watch the Indian Premier League (IPL) match between his team, Kolkata Knight Riders, and Sunrisers Hyderabad. He is now recovering and has been advised to rest.

As per the Mayo Clinic, heat strokes can occur if your body temperature rises to 104 degrees F (40 degrees C) or higher. It is most common in the summer and needs to be treated immediately. If left

untreated, these can quickly damage your brain, heart, kidneys and muscles. Common causes include being in hot weather for too long, not drinking enough fluids, and doing intense physical activities in the heat. Signs of heat stroke include - confusion, agitation, nausea, red and hot skin, fast breathing, a rapid heartbeat and a severe headache.

5 TIPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

1. Staying hydrated helps your body maintain a normal temperature. Drink lots of water throughout the day, even if you don't feel thirsty, to avoid dehydration.
2. Choose light and loose clothing to help your body cool down. Tight or heavy clothes can trap heat and prevent your body from cooling properly.
3. Sunburns can make it harder for your body to cool itself. Wear wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses when outside. Use sunscreen with at least SPF 50, and apply it generously. Reapply every two hours, especially if you are swimming or sweating.
4. Never leave children, pets or anyone else in a parked car, even if it is for a short while. The temperature inside a parked car can rise rapidly, becoming extremely dangerous. Make sure you lock your car to prevent children from getting inside when it is parked.
5. It takes several weeks for one's body to get used to hot weather. Limit your time working or exercising in the heat until you are acclimated. If you are not used to the heat or have a health condition or take medication that increases your risk, avoid the heat and watch for symptoms of overheating. Avoid peak sun hours and make sure medical help is available during strenuous activities in hot weather.

CAB DRIVER DETAINED IN BANGLADESH MP DEATH CASE

Kolkata:

The Criminal Investigation (CID) of West Bengal Police



detained a cab driver on Thursday in connection with the mysterious death of Bangladesh MP Anwarul Azim who was residing in a rented flat in a posh residential complex in New Town, Kolkata.

Azim, a three-time MP in Bangladesh, was missing for the last eight days. He came to Kolkata for some medical treatment purposes on May 12 and initially, had put up at the residence of his long associate and friend in the city Gopal Biswas at Baranagar. However, on May 14 he went out of Biswas's residence and informed the latter that he would be returning the same day.

State police sources said he went missing since then and his mobile phone was also switched off.



LENGTHY ELECTION SCHEDULE PLANNED TO SERVE PM MODI'S SELF-PROPAGANDA: MAMATA BANERJEE

Kolkata | Agencies

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday accused the Election Commission of India (ECI) of deliberately preparing such a long schedule for the Lok Sabha elections to facilitate Prime Minister Narendra Modi's self-propaganda.

"The current caretaker Prime Minister will become the former prime Prime Minister after the polls. But I am sorry to say, such a long election schedule was prepared to facilitate PM Modi's self-propaganda over this extended period of time," the Chief Minister said while addressing an election meeting in the North Kolkata Lok Sabha constituency in support of Trinamool Congress candidate and sitting MP, Sudip



Bandopadhyay.

Banerjee also accused the CPI-M of helping the BJP spread its base in West Bengal.

"The CPI-M is helping the BJP to gain strength in West Bengal. This is the only reason why the CPI-M should not be shown any mercy. They are responsible for destroying the state," the Chief Minister said. Banerjee also said that although she is not afraid of the 'slandorous' campaigns launched against her by the opposition, she is worried about being misunderstood by the people. "Throughout my life, I have faced abuse. But I am not bothered about those abuses anymore. I will be sad if I am misunderstood by the people. If such a day comes and the people ask me to leave, I will humbly obey and quit silently," the Chief Minister said.

'Shehzade' have already booked tickets for vacation abroad after June 4: Amit Shah

Domariyaganj | Agencies

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said that the two "Shehzade" (Princes) -- Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav -- have already booked tickets for their "vacation" abroad as they want to escape the heat here.

"They (Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav) are aware that in the five phases of elections, the BJP has already won 310 seats and will cross the 400 mark in the remaining two phases," the Home Minister said.

Speaking at a rally here, Amit Shah said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not taken even a single day's leave in the past 23 years.

"Now you know the difference. Hum kahan jayenge -yahin jiyenge, yahin marege," he said. He further said that the INDIA bloc is a congregation of corrupt elements who have done a scam worth Rs 12 lakh crores.

"But there is not a blot on the character of PM Modi," he pointed out. Listing the welfare schemes launched by the Modi government, Amit Shah said that the BJP had fulfilled the demand for 'one rank one pension' in the army. "During the Samajwadi regime, criminals were indulging in extortion, land grabbing, kidnappings etc. But when Yogi



Adityanath's government came to power, he turned all such elements upside down," he said. Referring to the reservation issue, the Home Minister said that the West Bengal High Court has already struck down the reservation given illegally. "I promise you that there will be no cut in the quota of SC/ST, OBCs and Muslims. It is the INDIA members who want to appease their vote bank," he added.

Home Minister Amit Shah underlined the importance of the region and said that the BJP government is working to develop the Buddhist circuit.

Some Delhi colleges receive hoax bomb threats

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Some colleges in the national capital, including Lady Shri Ram (LSR) College, received bomb threats on Thursday, which later turned out to be a hoax, a Delhi Police official said.

A senior Fire Department official said that a call regarding a bomb threat at LSR College was received at 4.38 p.m. Subsequently, two fire tenders were dispatched to the spot.

"Some calls were received regarding bomb threats in colleges. All are bogus calls," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Rajesh Deo. This comes a day after a bomb threat in the North Block was received via email on Wednesday. The email, which was ultimately



deemed a hoax, prompted a thorough search by multiple agencies. Recently, several Delhi hospitals, along with the Indira Gandhi International Airport and Tihar prisons, also received bomb threat emails. However, subsequent investigations by police revealed the threats to be false alarms. On May 1, more than 150

schools across Delhi-NCR received hoax bomb threat emails, prompting a wide-spread police response. Investigations suggested that the emails originated from Budapest, Hungary. Official sources indicated that the Delhi Police will soon reach out to their Hungarian counterparts to further the investigation.

VARUN GANDHI CAMPAIGNS FOR MOM MANEKA IN SULTANPUR

Sultanpur : BJP leader and Pilibhit's sitting MP, Varun Gandhi, reached Sultanpur on Thursday to campaign for his mother Maneka Gandhi who is contesting from the seat.

Addressing a rally Varun Gandhi said, "Elections are going on everywhere in the country... but there is only one region in the country where people don't call their MP, sansad ji, mantri ji, or by her name, but call her mata ji, and that is Sultanpur."

This is the first time that Varun Gandhi has addressed any rally this election season. Varun Gandhi has remained out of public space ever since he was replaced by the BJP, which chose Jitin Prasada to fight the Lok Sabha election from the Pilibhit constituency. Pilibhit went to polls in the first phase of the elections.

Bengal CM's 'no' to HC order is judicial contempt, says Rajasthan CM

Jaipur | Agencies

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma on Thursday said that West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee's open defiance of the court's order is judicial contempt.

He said, "We welcome the High Court's order on the issuance of OBC certificates to Muslims. Mamata ji has now proved to the whole country that her government is biased, it does the politics of appeasement and is against the interests of backward communities."

The Rajasthan CM further said, "declaration to disrespect the High Court order is judicial contempt, which is extremely reprehensible and unfortunate. It proves that she has no respect for the dignity of democracy and the dignity of law. For her, only Muslim appeasement is paramount."

"The Hon'ble Court has also cancelled all OBC certificates issued to Muslims in West Bengal from 2010 to



2024. Both these decisions show that Mamata Banerjee's government was unconstitutionally pursuing the politics of appeasement. Overall, it is clear that for Mamata Banerjee, appeasing the Muslim vote bank and furthering the agenda of the Muslim League are her top priorities," he said.

The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday cancelled all certificates to OBCs issued in the state since 2011 under the Trinamool Congress administration, calling them "illegal". In reaction, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said she "will not accept" the order.

Tension escalates in Nandigram over BJP activist's murder; locals block roads, burn tyres



Kolkata | Agencies

Tension has escalated in Nandigram under Tamluk Lok Sabha constituency in East Midnapore District in West Bengal over the murder of a woman BJP activist Rotibala Ari on Thursday morning by unknown miscreants. Nandigram residents have started staging protests against the murder by blocking roads and burning tyres.

Some of the shops owned by local ruling party activists were also set on fire.

At several places villagers cut down trees and used them to block roads.

The epicentre of the tension is

Sonachura area where unknown miscreants, allegedly having links with the Trinamool Congress, attacked local BJP supporters with sharp weapons, in which one woman activist was killed and several others were injured.

A huge police contingent including personnel from the Rapid Action Force (RAF) have been deputed there to keep the situation under control.

At some places police had to resort to lathi-charge to bring the situation under control. However, till the time of the filing of this report there was no official reaction from the district police administration there. Similar tensions were wit-

nessed at Nandigram in 2007 and 2008 following the protest movements by the villagers against a proposed land acquisition by then Left Front government for setting up a chemicals hub there.

In fact the Nandigram movement is considered a milestone for influencing the end of the Left Front rule in 2011 and the beginning of the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress regime in the state. Incidentally, Tamluk is one of the eight Lok Sabha constituencies going for polls in the sixth phase on Saturday and the legislator from Nandigram is the Leader of Opposition in West Bengal Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari.

ANJALI MURDER CASE: ACCUSED HANDED OVER TO CID FOR 8 DAYS BY K'TAKA COURT

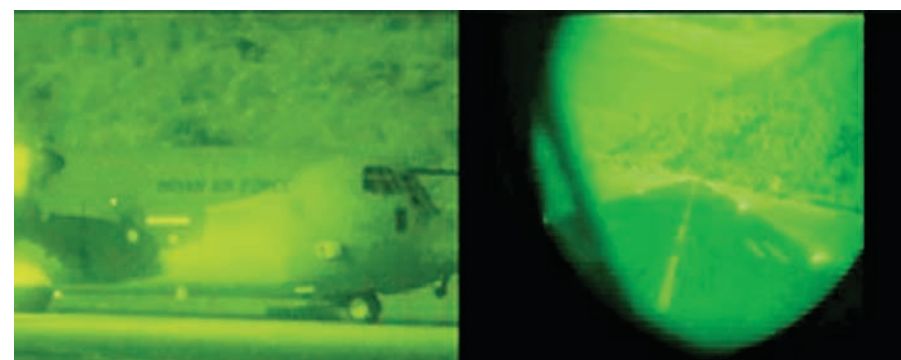
Hubballi: The Hubballi First Civil and JMFC Court on Thursday gave the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) eight days' custody of Vishwa, who is an accused in the Anjali Ambigera murder case.

The 20-year-old woman was stabbed to death in front of her family by the spurned lover at her residence in Hubballi city.

Though the CID had sought custody of Vishwa for 15 days, Judge Nagesh Naik passed the order giving eight days' remand.

The horrific murder had taken place close on the heels of MCA student Neha Hiremath's killing by a jilted lover. It had resulted in a furore over the law and order situation in the state and a lack of proper police action in Anjali's case as her family had informed the cops about the threat to her life by the accused.

IAF carries out successful night vision goggles-aided landing in Eastern sector



Team Absolute | New Delhi

In yet another significant milestone, an Indian Air Force (IAF) C-130J aircraft carried out a successful night vision goggles-aided landing at an Advanced Landing Ground in the Eastern sector.

Sharing two videos of the night landing on X, the IAF said on Thursday that it continues to expand capabilities and reinforce its commit-

ment to safeguard the nation's sovereignty by enhancing operational reach and defence preparedness.

Earlier this year, an IAF C-130J aircraft carried out a night landing at the Kargil airstrip by employing a terrain masking enroute in an exercise that also dovetailed a training mission of the Garud commandos.

According to the Ministry of Defence, IAF's C-130J is a

medium-sized, all-weather transport aircraft capable of inter-theatre and intra-theatre airlift operations.

It is capable of delivering combat troops, personnel or cargo by air-drop or air-landed operations.

IAF has significantly enhanced the night operational capability of the aircraft by procuring the latest generation of night vision goggles.

Priyanka Gandhi, Dimple Yadav to hold roadshow in Varanasi on May 25



Varanasi | Agencies

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi and Samajwadi Party MP Dimple Yadav will hold a joint roadshow in support of the INDIA bloc candidate Ajay Rai in Varanasi on May 25.

UP Congress President and INDIA bloc candidate Ajay Rai said, "Priyanka and Dimple will address a pub-

lic rally in Kashi on May 25 where they will talk about women's issues."

The roadshow will start from the Seer Govardhan area after the two leaders offer prayers at Ravidas temple. Rai said that Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and SP president Akhilesh Yadav are also expected to hold a roadshow in Varanasi on May 28 or 29. He said that the details are being finalised.

EVM smashing case: Absconding Andhra MLA moves HC seeking anticipatory bail

Amaravati | Agencies

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) legislator Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy, whom the police are searching after he was caught on camera smashing an EVM inside a polling booth in Andhra Pradesh, has approached the high court seeking anticipatory bail.

The MLA from Macherla Assembly constituency in Palnadu district filed a petition before the Andhra Pradesh High Court through his lawyer.

Ramakrishna Reddy is the accused No. 1 in the case registered by the police after a video of him smashing the EVM went viral two days ago.

The incident occurred at a polling booth in Macherla on May 13 during the simultaneous polling for the Assembly and Lok Sabha in Andhra Pradesh.

Meanwhile, at least eight police teams continued their search for the ruling party MLA for a second day on Thursday after the Election Commission



of India ordered his immediate arrest.

On Wednesday, the police found a couple of vehicles part of the MLA's convoy near Hyderabad. The MLA's driver and security guard have been detained for questioning.

Meanwhile, the Chief Electoral Officer, M.K. Meena, has ordered the suspension of the polling officer and assistant polling officer of the booth where the MLA smashed the EVM for

failing to provide information about the incident.

Ramakrishna Reddy, who is seeking re-election from Macherla as a YSRCP candidate for a fifth consecutive term, has been booked by the police under the relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Representation of the People Act, 1951, and Prevention of Damage to Public Property (PDPP) Act, 1984. According to Meena, under these sections, the MLA could be jailed for up to seven years.

He also said the case was initially registered against unknown persons, but after going through the video footage, the MLA has been named as the main accused. The CEO said the police went to Hyderabad on the night of May 21 and raided the house of the accused, but he was not found there.

Ramakrishna Reddy had allegedly fled from Macherla while he was under house arrest, and was reportedly staying in Hyderabad since then.

Woman sits in pothole to flag poor condition of roads in Hyderabad

Hyderabad | Agencies

In a unique protest to highlight the poor condition of roads in the city, a woman in Hyderabad sat in a pothole filled with muddy water on Thursday.

The woman, a resident of Anandnagar Colony in Nagole, staged the protest on Thursday to draw the attention of the municipal authorities to the problems faced by the people due to potholes on the road. Vexed with the failure of the municipal authorities to respond to her pleas to fill the potholes, the woman sat in a pothole filled with muddy water. The woman claimed that her children suffered injuries after falling into potholes, adding that the stretch from Nagole to Uppal has as many as 30 potholes.

"Where is our road tax and municipal tax," read a placard she was holding.

A couple of residents from the area also joined her in highlighting the problem.

She said instead of silently suffering, people should join her in the protest. She also said that her repeated requests to the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) to fill the potholes failed to yield any response.

Later, a couple of traffic police officers persuaded the woman to end her protest.

She told mediapersons later that the local corporator facilitated a telephonic conversation between her and the municipal commissioner, who told her that a budget has been allocated (to resolve the issue).



WHEN INVESTIGATORS TURNED SCAMSTERS: MADHYA PRADESH NURSING SCAM EXPLAINED

Inspector Rahul Raj, who was the leader of the CBI gang which took bribes from nursing colleges and declared them suitable, has been dismissed by the Home Ministry without any delay. But, Rahul's role is not limited to nursing scam only. Senior CBI officials have confirmed that Rahul Raj was also entrusted with the investigation of several important cases related to the Vyapam mega scam.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A new team from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is likely to take over the investigation into Madhya Pradesh's nursing colleges scam after members of the agency's earlier team allegedly became a part of it. Four CBI officers, including a Deputy Superintendent-rank officer, have been named in the FIR and three have been arrested.

The Enforcement Directorate, it is learnt, can register a separate case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act against the officers. Also, the colleges tagged "suitable" earlier could be re-examined.

The Case

An investigation by a news channel last year found gross irregularities in the functioning of nursing colleges in Madhya Pradesh. Top officials in the health education department were found running nursing colleges that did not even have a campus. Some "colleges" were found running from a few rooms. In the aftermath of the shocking revelations, the state nursing council cancelled the affiliation of 19 colleges. Following a high court order, the CBI investigation started a probe into the functioning of 670 colleges registered in 2020-21.

The CBI Twist

In its report on 308 nursing colleges, the CBI tagged 169 colleges "fit", 66 "unfit" and 73 "deficient". But there were questions. A government college in Rewa was declared "unfit". On the other hand, a college that was tagged "fit" had the address of a rented building from which a school was running. It is



alleged that CBI officers were providing "fit" tags in exchange for bribes. The agency's team would charge between Rs 2 lakh and Rs 10 lakh to tag an "unfit" college "fit". The investigation has revealed that the bribery cartel functioned through Rajasthan. A middleman would send the bribes to Jaipur and it would then be routed to a CBI officer, the probe has found. CBI officers Rahul Raj, Sushil Kumar Majoka and Rishi Kant Asathe have been arrested. Deputy SP Ashish Prasad is also an accused.

The CBI has searched 31 locations across Madhya Pradesh and Jaipur and found over Rs 2.3 crore in cash, 4 gold bars and incriminating documents. Rahul Raj, it is alleged, would coordinate with middlemen and share schedule of CBI inspections, fix and collect bribe amounts, and provide suitability report. He was caught red-handed while accepting Rs 10 lakh as bribe, it is learnt. Rahul Raj has

now been terminated from service.

Codewords such as "Chaach Glass", "Achar Ki Barni" and "Kilo Aam" were used to relay messages about bribe amounts and their collection, it is learnt.

The Rule Change

The gross irregularities coming to the fore in the functioning of nursing colleges in the state are playing out against the backdrop of the changes in the state government's guidelines for such institutions earlier this year. Earlier, such a college could only function if it had an area of at least 23,000 square feet. This minimum area requirement was reduced to 8,000 square feet. Also, the 10:1 ratio of assistant professor and students was tweaked to 20:1. The minimum area for a nursing lab was revised from 1500 square metres to 900 metres.

Channel's investigation had earlier found that many nursing colleges were running

without proper faculty or infrastructure. One faculty member was found teaching in at least 10 colleges across three cities -- as principal in some and associate professor in others. NDTV also found colleges that have no faculty hand out "certificates".

The Politics

The shocking findings in the case and the scale of corruption has prompted the Opposition to target the Mohan Yadav-led BJP government. Congress's Hemant Khatre, deputy leader of Opposition in the Assembly, has said a Supreme Court-monitored probe was required. "We have lost faith in CBI. The agency is functioning as a tool of the BJP. We will question the government in the Assembly, but if it does not reply convincingly, we will hit the streets," he said.

Asked about the matter, Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav had said the government "has to learn from past mistakes" and added he had issued several directions to ensure such irregularities do not happen. He had refused to elaborate, saying that the matter is sub-judice.

The Casualty

Trapped in the web of corruption and the politics surrounding the matter are the students, who stare at an uncertain future. Amid allegations of irregularities, about a lakh students waited for four years for their exams. The exams have finally started now, but the 12,000 students of colleges that were declared "unfit" have been left in the lurch. With the buzz of a relook at all the colleges after the fresh charge against CBI officers, these students are now wondering when they will begin their careers.

EC begins preparations for vote counting in MP



Team Absolute | Bhopal

After elections in all 29 Lok Sabha constituencies in Madhya Pradesh concluded on May 13, preparations for vote counting, which is scheduled for June 4, have begun.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Anupam Rajan is visiting the strong rooms in different Lok Sabha constituencies in the state for the inspection.

On Thursday, the CEO visited the counting rooms, assembly-wise, and reviewed the preparations. Necessary guidelines have also been issued for inspecting the security arrangements and the monitoring of the strong rooms through CCTV.

District election in-charges have also been directed to review preparations and submit reports to the CEO.

Meanwhile, the Congress

and the BJP are also preparing for the counting.

MP Congress leadership has called for a meeting in Bhopal on Thursday, during which the party's polling agents will be given training.

As the state BJP leadership is busy campaigning for the remaining two phases, a meeting of polling agents will be called in the coming days.

Last week, the state Congress leadership held a meeting with all Lok Sabha candidates to take stock of the situation in each constituency. The meeting was chaired by MP unit head Jitu Patwari and the state in-charge, Bhanwar Jitendra Singh.

Notably, in the previous two general elections, the BJP had won 27 (2014) and 28 (2019) out of 29 seats in Madhya Pradesh. The Congress in the last election could only win Chhindwara.

Shivraj Singh Chauhan's son Kunal got engaged to the daughter of Jain family of Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chauhan got his son Kunal engaged to the granddaughter of Indermal, a Jain family of Bhopal. After the engagement, the family of former CM Shivraj is filled with happiness. After the engagement, there is an atmosphere of happiness in both the families.

It is noteworthy that Shivraj Singh Chauhan has two sons, the name of the elder son is Kartikeya and the name of the younger son is Kunal. Let us tell you that Shivraj's elder son Kartikeya Chauhan is very active in politics like his father. It is said that Shivraj's political legacy will be carried forward



by his son Kartikeya. Kartikeya has been campaigning for his father Shivraj since 2013.

Kunal Singh Chauhan is the younger son of Shivraj Singh, whose engagement remains a topic of discussion. In such a situation, if we talk about his personal life, Kunal remains far away from poli-

tics. Kunal is currently the Managing Partner of M/s Sundar Foods and Dairy. At present, his entire focus is on Sundar Foods and Dairy, where along with milk, ghee, paneer, lassi, curd and water are also available. The company says that since Kunal became partner, our company has progressed a lot.

Congress, TMC and Indi alliance want to end away Dalit, tribal and OBC reservation: Krishna Gaur

Team Absolute | Bhopal

State Government Minister Krishna Gaur, while addressing a press conference at the State Media Center of the Bharatiya Janata Party on Thursday, said that the Kolkata High Court has given a historic decision on Wednesday, in which the OBC certificates made after 2010 have been cancelled. Orders have been given. This decision of the High Court has awakened the confidence of the OBC community of West Bengal in justice and protection of their rights.

Bharatiya Janata Party welcomes it and demands from the West Bengal Government that this decision of the High Court should be implemented immediately. Gaur said that due to the temptation of Muslim appease-



ment, Mamata Banerjee is contemptuous of this decision of the court and is saying that she will not accept it.

Bharatiya Janata Party condemns this arrogant attitude of Mamata Banerjee. Backward Class Morcha workers protested against this attitude of Mamata Banerjee today by demonstrating and burning effigies in the entire state.

Krishna Gaur said that due to this action of Mamata Banerjee government, it had become ingrained in the minds of the OBC class of the entire country that Congress, TMC and Indian alliance are robbing the rights of OBCs. They want to end away the reservation of Dalit, tribal and OBC brothers and sisters. They want to violate the rights of backward classes by snatching reservation from these classes and giving it to Muslims.

MP LS POLLS: CONGRESS IN HIGH HOPES, BJP HAS WRINKLES ON FOREHEAD

Team Absolute | Bhopal

BJP, which held 29 to 28 seats in Madhya Pradesh in the last Lok Sabha, is facing the possibility of a major reshuffle this time. Amidst the difficulties faced by Malwa-Nimar, clouds of loss are also looming from Gwalior-Chambal. Everyone's eyes are on the results to be declared on June 4 and a period of speculation is also going on.

The assessment of political critics is going against BJP's unilateral victory. Their assessment says that there could be major upsets on five seats in Madhya Pradesh. According to their opinion, there is a close contest in Chhindwara, Rajgarh and Morena. Also, shocking results can be found in Ratlam and Mandla also. It is being said that there is a close contest between Nakulnath and Bunty in



Chhindwara. This assessment is saying that Diggi's magic can work on Rajgarh seat. Whereas in Morena, Congress and BSP can spoil the game of BJP. These political pundits say that BJP has hope in Ratlam only because of Modi factor. Whereas a triangular

contest in Satna can spoil the game. Similarly, BJP's Faggan Singh Kulaste may face a big challenge in Mandla. Election commentators believe that BJP may face a tough challenge in Gwalior, Chambal Malwa and Vindhya. They say that there is resent-

ment among the workers for BJP candidates in Gwalior-Chambal. Bharat Singh Kushwaha, who had lost the assembly elections in Morena, was made the Lok Sabha candidate. Similarly, in Vindhya too, there was resentment among local workers regarding the candidates. Rajesh Mishra from Sidhi and Janardan Mishra from Rewa were BJP candidates. Here in the Lok Sabha elections, there is a tough fight between BJP and Congress.

Here, tough competition has been seen in Dhar Ratlam and Khargone in Malvanchal. It is noteworthy that Congress has maximum seats in Dhar, Ratlam and Khargone. Out of total 66 assembly seats in Malwa-Nimar, Congress has 47 seats. The feedback received from the visit of party leaders to these areas after the elections has increased the concern of BJP.

ENVIRONMENTAL GAME IN RMNH

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Regional Museum of Natural History, Bhopal (A Regional Centre of National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi) is organizing various programmes under Summer Nature Study Programme-Green Cub for the students of class 5th to 7th. In continuation of the programmes 'Environmental Game' was organized for the participants on 23rd May, 2024 to make them understand the importance of various components of Environment. Dilip Kumar Chakravarty, Environmental Education Officer from EPCO arranged



various interesting environmental games like Tree Ecosystem, Build the Pyramid, Know your

National Parks and Sanctuaries, Segregation of Waste, Dripping Tap, Wishing Tree etc.

BJP LEADER WAS RUNNING A BETTING HOUSE, POLICE RAIDED, LEADER THREATENED OFFICERS

Police from Khajrana police station area raided a betting base and arrested Salim Mansoori, a supporter of BJP MLA Mahendra Hardiya, and his son. This henchman was betting in his house. Here betting on numbers and cards was being conducted 24 hours a day. DCP was receiving information for a long time. He even warned TI, yet the betting booth was not closed.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

On this, the DCP formed two teams of IPS officers from two other areas and conducted the raid. During the action, the police seized Rs 11 lakh 77 thousand in cash, 8 mobiles, 9 bundled rolls, ATM and credit cards. TI can also be punished after being caught betting because, this raid was conducted by the police team of another police station area.

Zone-2 DCP Abhinav Vishwakarma had received information that betting was being done on a large scale in Khajrana area. On receiving information, DCP gave the responsibility of action to Pardeshipura ACP Narendra Rawat. They raided the concerned house along with heavy police force including Vijaynagar ACP Krishna Ramchandani, Pardeshipura police station incharge Pankaj Dwivedi, Sub Inspector Kamal Singh Raghuvanshi. Suddenly, seeing the police, the bookies started running away, but due to the promptness of the police, they could not succeed.



Abhinav Vishwakarma told that the raid was carried out in a three-storey house located in Ashrafi Nagar. This base belongs to Salim Mansoori, a leader associated with BJP Minority Morcha. Mansoori operated the betting booth through his son Alam. There were separate rooms for betting on all three floors. Some time ago, in the meeting of police station in-charges, the DCP had warned the station in-charges regarding betting. Khajrana TI still did not take action. Now the role of the entire police station staff including TI is being explored.

Sources said that Khajrana police was aware that betting was being conducted, but due to the setting it did not take any action. When the accused were arrested, many BJP leaders came to rescue them. The matter quickly went viral, so pressure on the police did not work. Despite Khajrana TI Sujit Srivastava having information about the betting den, he did not consider it appropriate to take action. This was the reason why the senior officer handed over the responsibility for action to the ACP of another police station.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Battle of egos

An unusual battle of egos between two big leaders from eastern Uttar Pradesh has taken everyone by surprise. Apna Dal (S) leader and Union Minister Anupriya Patel and Kunda MLA Raghuraj Pratap Singh a.k.a Raja Bhaiya have been issuing statements against each other which have shaken the political alignments in the region. The two are not contesting against each other and neither are their parties locked in the electoral battle. Yet, this is on its way to becoming a 'mother of all battles' in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh. Apna Dal (S) leader and Union Minister Anupriya Patel -- normally known to be a non-controversial politician -- ruffled feathers when she slammed the "self-proclaimed kings who thought Kunda (an Assembly segment in Kaushambhi) was their fiefdom". The statement, apparently directed at Raghuraj Pratap Singh a.k.a Raja Bhaiya who is an influential politician in the region, was seen as Patel's aggressive posturing to consolidate Dalit and OBC votes in the region. Raja Bhaiya hit back saying that "EVMs give birth to Jan sewaks (public representatives) and not kings. His party workers are reaching Mirzapur to campaign for the SP candidate, Ramesh Bind, who is the outgoing BJP MP from Bhadohi but joined SP after being denied a ticket. Raja Bhaiya, the scion of Bhadri estate in Pratapgarh, has been a seven-time MLA from Kunda since 1993 and wields clout in Kunda and its adjoining areas. His popularity among the Pasi community is well-known in political circles. Till this war began, Anupriya Patel was comfortable in her constituency because Raja Bhaiya had maintained his neutrality. But with his supporters now aggressively campaigning for SP, the ground situation could change in the coming days.

Addressing the Challenges of Low Voter Turnout in Elections

Atul Malikram

Voting for the five phases of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections has concluded, with an average voter turnout of around 57.44 percent across 429 seats. The Election Commission views a turnout of less than 60 percent as concerning. In light of this, it is crucial to address the factors contributing to the declining voter participation and to identify measures that could improve turnout. To tackle this issue, we must first raise pertinent questions, seek solutions, and consider making certain facilities more accessible. For instance, why shouldn't any adult citizen be able to vote from any location within the country? Why not implement mobile polling booths for individuals over 75 years old or those who are unwell? Additionally, why can't there be a system to transport voters over 75 years old or those in need? Furthermore, why shouldn't voters who are traveling for tourism or essential work be able to cast their votes? Although elections incur costs amounting to thousands of crores of rupees, if increasing voter turnout can be achieved by investing a few crores more in such initiatives, then these measures should be taken into seri-



ous consideration. According to the rules of the Election Commission, you have the right to vote only in your constituency, and for this, you need to register yourself in the voter list. While this is understandable, why not develop a system that accommodates voters who, due to employment, business, tourism, or medical emergencies, are unable to be in their constituency on polling day? Arrangements could be made in private or government buildings in every city to allow these voters to exercise their right to vote.

We live in an era of advanced technology with new innovations emerging daily. Why not create a technology-based system that allows a voter from Indore to cast their vote even if they are in Kanpur? This could be done through an online mode, with the vote being registered at the Indore polling station. Although there may be some initial challenges, these can be addressed to solve the issue of low voter turnout.

Just as members of the Army, security forces, or employees on election duty can cast their vote on a ballot paper from their place of work, similar arrangements should be made for individuals who, for various reasons, cannot be at their polling station. Such measures would ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the electoral process, regardless of their location on polling day.

In the current Lok Sabha elections, there are 2.18 lakh voters over the age of 100. Why not arrange for mobile booths to accommodate these elderly voters? Mobile booths could operate in every city, positioned near the homes of identified voters, making it easier for them to cast their vote. Additionally, arrangements could be made to transport elderly individuals over 75 years of age to the polling station.

LS polls: BJP wants to improve tally, SP & BSP keen to retain hold in UP

With the sixth phase of polling in Uttar Pradesh scheduled to take place on May 26, the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) face the onerous task of retaining their seats in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections in the state. BJP won nine seats in 2019 including Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Basti, Allahabad, Domariyaganj, Sant Kabir Nagar, Bhadohi, and Machhlishahr. The BSP had won four seats - Ambedkar Nagar, Shrawasti, Lalganj and Jaunpur while SP won Azamgarh which it later lost to BJP in a by-election and now face an uphill task to retain this seat in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. The constituencies going to polls in the sixth phase include Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Phulpur, Shrawasti, Basti, Jaunpur, Allahabad, Ambedkar Nagar, Domariyaganj, Sant Kabir Nagar, Lalganj, Azamgarh, Bhadohi, and Machhlishahr. This time, BJP's Maneka Gandhi is facing Ram Bhual Nishad of the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Udraj Varma of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Maneka has successfully steered her campaign towards local developmental issues and is placed comfortably. In Pratapgarh, the sitting BJP MP Sangam Lal Gupta is taking on the SP's Shiv Pal Singh Patel and Prathmesh Mishra of BSP. The prestigious seat of Allahabad is witnessing a close contest between Neeraj Tripathi of the BJP and Ujjwal Rewati Raman Singh of the Congress. Neeraj is the son of the former Speaker late Kesri Nath Tripathi and Ujjwal is the son of former MP Reoti Raman Singh, both are working overtime to carry forward their father's political legacy. In Ambedkar Nagar, two former BSP leaders are challenging each other, albeit from different parties. Former BSP MP Ritesh Pandey is contesting on a BJP



ticket while Lalji Verma, former leader of the BSP legislature party, is the candidate from the Samajwadi Party. In Domariyaganj, Jagdambika Pal, sitting BJP MP, is locked in a close contest with Bhisma Shankar Tiwari of the SP and Khwaja Shamsuddin of the BSP. In Basti, sitting BJP MP Harish Dwivedi is being challenged by Ram Prasad Chaudhary of SP while in Machhlishahr, BJP MP B Saroj is seeking his third term and is facing Priya Saroj who is the SP candidate and daughter of former MP Tufani Saroj. Lalganj features Neelam Sonkar from the BJP and Daroga Saroj representing the SP with a young professor Indu Chaudhary of BSP, making the fight triangular. It is the Azamgarh seat, a stronghold of the SP with a sizeable Muslim-Yadav electorate, that is witnessing a keen contest between Bhojpur actor Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua' of the BJP and former MP Dharmendra Yadav. All top SP leaders have been campaigning for Dharmendra Yadav

and are pulling out all stops to ensure his win. Nirahua is banking on the work of the double-engine government to get a second term. Jaunpur is another seat that is witnessing an interesting contest between former Maharashtra minister Kripa Shankar Singh of the BJP and Babu Singh Kushwaha of the SP. The sitting MP Shyam Singh Yadav is the BSP candidate again. Mafia don-turned-politician Dhananjay Singh, whose wife Srikala Reddy Singh was denied a BSP ticket at the last moment, is playing the role of a kingmaker in this constituency. The Trinamool Congress is making its debut in UP politics in this election. Laliteshpati Tripathi is the TMC candidate in Bhadohi. He is the great-grandson of veteran Congress leader, late Kamlapati Tripathi. He is being challenged by Vinod Kumar Bind from the BJP and Athar Ansari of BSP. "We are winning all 14 seats in this phase because the voters have consolidated in favour of BJP," said BJP spokesman Rakesh Tripathi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has campaigned aggressively in this phase, pushing a UP-centric narrative. "In the election, our country has two models. Modi's model is focused on 'Santushikaran' (satisfaction) while the SP, Congress and 'Ghamandiya' (selfish) model is based on 'Tushikaran' (appeasement). The playbook of the SP and the Congress is dangerous. These people seek votes here, while in south India, their allies abuse and humiliate the people of UP," PM Modi said in Jaunpur.

international

Recognising Palestinian state is a 'reward for terrorism', says Netanyahu

Tel Aviv | Agencies
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned against the intended recognition of an independent Palestinian state as announced by Norway, Ireland, and Spain. "The intention of several European countries to recognise a Palestinian state is a reward for terrorism," Netanyahu said in a statement on Wednesday. "Eighty per cent of the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) support the terrible massacre of October 7," he asserted. "This evil cannot be given a state." "This would be a terrorist state. It will try to repeat the massacre of October 7 again



and again; we will not consent to this," the Israeli Prime Minister asserted. "Rewarding terrorism will not bring peace and neither will it stop us from defeating Hamas," Netanyahu added.

state solution, as does the Palestinian Islamist Hamas movement. The Israeli Prime Minister would have little support from his ultra-right coalition partners for a more conciliatory approach to relations with the Palestinians. Critics have repeatedly accused Netanyahu of having tolerated or even encouraged the rise of Hamas in the Gaza Strip. As a rival to the more moderate Fatah of President Mahmoud Abbas, it has served to divide the Palestinian people to prevent a Palestinian state. Many right-wing Israelis consider a Palestinian state to be an intolerable security risk for Israel.

Norway bars entry to most Russian tourists

Copenhagen | Agencies
Norway will bar entry to Russian tourists starting next week, the government said on Thursday, as Oslo continues to tighten its 198-kilometre Arctic land border with its neighbour. The Norwegian government began making it difficult for Russians to obtain entry visas for non-essential purposes in May 2022, in the wake of Russia's all-out invasion of Ukraine. The border region also became subject to stricter controls to prevent illegal crossings of Russians trying to escape military conscription or those who fear Moscow could impose an exit ban on its citizens. Starting next Wednesday, Norwegian police will have the power to expel Russians who are in the country on a tourist visa that was issued before May 2022. Such visas allow access to Europe's passport-free Schengen travel area. The new measures also apply to Russians in Norway who have a visa issued by other Schengen member countries. There will be exceptions to the new rules, however, including those visiting close family members living in Norway. Russians working or studying in Norway will not be affected. "The decision to tighten the entry rules are in line with the Norwegian approach of



standing by allies and partners in the reactions against Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine," said Minister of Justice and Public Security Emilie Enger Mehl in a government press release. The only legal crossing point is the Storskog border station. The Norwegian authorities are monitoring border traffic there closely and taking the necessary measures, according to the government. Finland indefinitely closed its entire border with Russia in April.

Teen boy among three dead after stabbing in Canada

Ottawa | Agencies
Three people, including one teenager, died after being stabbed during a fight in Montreal, Canada, two days ago, local media reported. According to the report, Montreal police received numerous 911 calls at 7 p.m. on Wednesday about the fight between at least 15 people in an alleyway on Rachel Street between Saint-Andre and Mentana streets in Plateau-Mont-Royal borough. Police said the suspect or suspects fled the scene before officers arrived and confirmed that the dispute was not related to organised crime or gangs, CTV News reported. The conflict unfortunately led to the deaths of three people, including a 15-year-old teenager as quoted by Xinhua news agency report. The people who died participated in the conflict, said the report. There have been seven homicides in Montreal in the last ten days. The deaths have been confirmed as the city's 14th, 15th and 16th homicides, CTV News reported.

Tough times ahead for Sharif govt as Oppn plans grand alliance, long marches to Islamabad

Islamabad | Agencies
A grand opposition alliance is in the making in Pakistan which plans to "topple" the coalition government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif by holding massive rallies, protest sit-ins and forming a combined joint resistance. The current government, formed after the February 8 elections, has been on thin ice as political instability in the country remains a damaging constant. Important meetings have already begun between the top leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), which is the largest opposition party in the National Assembly under the umbrella of Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), and formidable Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F). The opposition plans to assert pressure on the government to call an early election in the country. Interestingly, JUI-F leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman was the Chairman of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), an opposition coalition alliance of political parties, which joined hands against the then-ruling government of former Prime Minister Imran Khan and later



ensured his ouster through a successful no-confidence vote in the parliament. Fazlur Rehman has accused PTI and Imran Khan of being funded by India and Israel, accusing party leaders of being foreign agents who were working to spread chaos and instability in Pakistan. On the other hand, PTI and its Chief Imran Khan have labelled Fazlur Rehman as "diesel" and "maulana diesel" during various political rallies and campaigns in the past. However, with both sides sitting in the opposition benches now, it seems that they have buried their differences and joined hands to "topple" the ruling government.

Experts believe that a stronger opposition alliance can make life difficult for the Sharif government which is already facing massive criticism due to the charges of manipulation and deliberate rigging taking place during the February elections. Sources said that the opposition parties including PTI and JUI-F are gearing up to start an anti-government campaign by holding rallies, protests and multiple long marches towards the capital Islamabad. It is believed that Imran Khan has also called on his party leadership to start a campaign of protest rallies across the country. As the opposition parties join hands, top PTI leadership, including Imran Khan, has also started to get some relief in its ongoing legal cases. Khan has given a call to his leaders, who have been hiding for a long time, to come out and join consultations on the formation of an opposition alliance. Analysts say that the current situation and the ongoing open war between the country's judiciary and establishment work massively in Khan's favour.

Haley will vote for Trump, triggers V-P slot talk

Washington | Agencies
After running a spirited primary challenge to former US President Donald Trump, Nikki Haley, the former Ambassador to the UN, said on Wednesday that she will vote for him. "I will be voting for Trump," the Indian-descent politician said in a speech at Hudson Institute, a think-tank where she will hold a chair. "She went on to explain her reasons. As a voter, I put my priorities on a President who's going to have the backs of our allies and hold our enemies to account. Who would secure the border, no more excuses. A President who would support capitalism and freedom. A President who understands we need less debt, not more debt." "Trump has not been perfect on these policies. I have made that clear many, many times. But Biden has been a catastrophe." Haley's endorsement triggered talk of joining the Trump ticket as running mate. Trump, who has stoked speculation about his running mate naming those in consideration, has ruled out Haley. But if Haley can change her mind



about Trump, so and Trump about her. Running against him for the party's nomination to run for the White House, she had called him "unhinged" and chaos followed him wherever he went. She had even suggested a mental acuity test for candidates running for President citing some of his many fumbles, which included mistaking Haley for Nancy Pelosi, a former Democratic Speaker of the House of Representatives. A key reason Trump could change his mind on Haley is her supporters in the Republican Party, who remain so deeply hostile to him that they have continued to vote for her in the ongoing primaries even though she is no longer in the race. And these are not a handful of voters. She won 21 per cent of the votes in

the Indiana primary earlier this month even though she has been out of the contest for weeks now. Haley reminded Trump about her supporters. "Trump would be smart to reach out to the millions of people who voted for me and continue to support me and not assume that they're just going to be with him. And I genuinely hope he does." Even President Joe Biden's campaign has been eyeing Haley's supporters and has been wooing them as a sizable voting block. Trump has a tight grip on the core of the Republican Party, which ensured his victory in the primaries and grants him an extortionist's hold on the lawmakers of his party who fear the support of his base if they upset him. But Trump will need to carry his party to come within striking range of the White House and he needs Haley's supporters. None of the other Vice-President aspirants who Trump paraded at a recent fundraiser at his Mar-a-Lago resort, have anything similar to offer to the former President. She has secured 14 per cent in the Republican primaries even after exiting the race.



Solapur dam boat tragedy: Five bodies fished out, one missing

Team Absolute | Solapur

The NDRF has found the bodies of five persons, comprising a family of four and a boatman who perished after a motorboat flipped over in a sudden storm hit Ujani Dam, an official said here on Thursday.

According to Indapur Police Inspector Suryakant Kokane, the NDRF and police rescue teams have brought out the bodies of the Jadhav family and the boatman Anurag Avghade.

"After a massive day-long search operation, we have recovered the bodies of five victims. A teenage boy Gaurav Dongre is still missing. We have launched a fresh effort to track him down," Kokane told reporter.

Kokane said that the ill-fated boat has been recovered as also a motorcycle, reportedly belonging to the sole survivor, Assistant Police Inspector (API) Rahul Dongre, who swam to safety late that



night.

The tragedy occurred late on Tuesday (May 21 night), when a regular motorboat ferry plying in the dam backwaters between Kugaon in Solapur and Kalash in Pune flipped over in the sudden storm that lashed the region.

The Solapur Police said that the vessel with

seven passengers set sail from Kugaon to Kalashi but midway the weather abruptly changed into a thunderstorm accompanied by strong winds that churned up strong waves in the lake waters which toppled the small motorboat.

The identities of the victims whose bodies were recovered are Gokul D. Jadhav, 30 years, his wife Komal 25, their kids including daughter Mahi, 03, and son Shubham, 01, plus the boatman Anurag Avghade, 35.

It was the API Dongre, who could swim to Kalashi who sounded an alarm and alerted the villagers, the Pune Police and the district administration besides other rescue authorities who rushed to the spot but could do little in the darkness with sporadic rains.

On Wednesday, the NDRF deployed a team which started the search with expert divers, boats, ropes and other specialised equipment, and a search is on for the missing boy Dongre.

6 killed, 48 hurt after triple explosions and fire rock Thane chemical factory

Team Absolute | Thane

At least six persons were killed and 48 others were injured after three powerful explosions followed by a massive fire engulfed a chemical factory located in the MIDC complex at Dombivli in Thane district on Thursday afternoon.

The triple explosions at quick intervals were so huge that they shook nearby homes, and shattered windowpanes as terrified locals rushed onto the street. The sound of the explosions could be heard from several kilometres away, locals said.

Minutes later, a huge fire engulfed the factory as thick clouds of smoke were seen billowing in the air even as half a dozen fire-tenders, water tankers, and rescue teams rushed to the spot.

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that at least six persons died in the blast-cum-blaze while 48 others were rescued from the factory and rushed to nearby hospitals.



The blasts took place in a boiler at the Amudan Chemical Co. Ltd. around lunchtime. The district authorities have pressed the NDRF, SDRF, and the local fire brigade into service to carry out the rescue operation along with the police and ensure that the flames do not spread to the other industries located nearby.

Indian Army's Mumbai COD seeks to stop Godrej's 'illegal' luxury realty project

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Indian Army's Central Ordnance Depot (COD) in Mumbai's Kandivali has objected to a deluxe private housing project coming up in its vicinity, initiated by the realty major Godrej Properties Ltd., called 'Godrej Reserve'.

Taking a grim view, the COD authorities have shot off a missile to the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to immediately issue a 'Stop Work Notice' to GPL for its upcoming luxury building project on Akurli Road, barely a from the Kandivali East railway station in north-west Mumbai suburb.

In a letter the BMC dated May 15 -- accessed by IANS -- the COD top brass has pointed out that the GPL's Godrej Reserve project plot is located at a distance of around 250 metres -- or within the restricted 500 metres zone -- from the boundary wall of the sensitive military establishment.

The COD letter to the BMC Executive Engineer, (Building Proposals), has said that as per the Centre's rules of May 2011, all construction activities are banned within a 100-metre radius of a defence establishment perimeter wall.

Moreover, construction of buildings up to a maximum of ground-plus-three floors is permitted only within 100-500 metres distance after obtaining a no objection certificate (NOC) from the Defence Department.



"Resultantly, any construction activity within 500 metres radius from the perimeter wall of army establishment without obtaining NOC from the Defence Department is contrary to the existing rule as envisaged in the above guidelines. Hence the construction by the private builder (GPL) is an unambiguous violation of government orders/guidelines and is therefore illegal," the COD asserted.

The COD called upon the BMC to forthwith serve a Stop Work Notice, to the concerned builder (GPL), in order to avoid any legal complications at a later stage.

It has also asked the BMC to provide all details and documents of the project

like the Commencement Certificate, IOD, copy of the approved development plan, etc., for the COD's records.

Defence sources in Mumbai said that all such notices for NOC issues pertaining to defence establishments are dealt with as per the Centre's clear guidelines of last year.

When contacted, a BMC official declined to comment on the sensitive matter involving a defence department and a prominent private realtor.

A Godrej official said that so far they have not received any notice from the BMC or any other department and would comment after they get any communication.

Last month, the GPL launched its prestigious project proposing at least three towers of around 52 floors each, with car parks, eco-friendly initiatives and other amenities in salubrious green surroundings, adjacent to the Western Express Highway.

Termed its most successful launch ever in Mumbai -- within 15 months of acquiring the lands -- in terms of the value and volumes of sales achieved, the GPL said it had sold more than 800 flats worth around Rs 2,700 crore, with a total area of around 1.5 million sq. feet, in the Godrej Reserve project.

Offering 3-BHK and 4-BHK luxury flats starting from a minimum of Rs 2.35 crore per (small) flat, the project on around 18 acres of land, is slated for completion by mid-2030.

Pune Teen's Porsche Crash Puts Spotlight On Supari Case Against Grandfather

Team Absolute | Pune

The teen driver, whose drunken drive in a Porsche Taycan left two 24-year-old software engineers dead in Pune, was out on bail within 15 hours of the crash. The bail order says he was being released on the assurance of his grandfather that he will keep the teen away from "bad company". It has now emerged that the grandfather, who is learnt to have started the family's real estate business, has links with gangster Rajendra Sadashiv Nikalje, widely known as Chhota Rajan.

The matter dates back to a 2009 attack on a Shiv Sena corporator Ajay Bhosale. According to the CBI chargesheet filed in the case, the boy's grandfather was locked in a property dispute with his brother and had allegedly contacted Chhota Rajan to mediate. The gangster got in touch with Shiv Sena corporator Ajay Bhosale, who knew the brother. But Bhosale was busy with the Assembly polls that year and refused to intervene. The boy's grandfather



suspected that the Shiv Sena leader was backing his brother and allegedly asked Chhota Rajan to bump him off, the CBI chargesheet said. The Shiv Sena leader's car was fired at near Pune's Koregaon Park, but bullet missed him and hit his driver instead, injuring him.

Bhosale, who is now with the Eknath Shinde-led Sena, told NDTV that his 'supari' was given by the builder, who is not being named because the accused in the Porsche case is a minor. The grandfather was also listed as an accused in the chargesheet,

but not arrested. The attempt to murder case is now part of a bunch of cases against Chhota Rajan pending before a Mumbai CBI court.

In fact, back then too, Pune Police had faced questions regarding its probe into the attempt to murder case. Significantly, despite an underworld connection, the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act was not invoked in the case and only IPC sections were invoked. In the FIR registered at Bund Garden police station, the builder grandfather was not named. It was only after the

CBI took over the investigation that he came under the radar and was named an accused. But while most other accused were arrested, he secured an anticipatory bail.

Amid growing outrage over the software engineers' deaths and allegations of preferential treatment, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis was questioned about the family's mafia links. The BJP leader, who is also in charge of the Home portfolio, assured a thorough probe. "Whatever be the links, these will be thoroughly investigated and action will be taken in the matter."

Amid growing outrage, the juvenile justice board has modified its order and the teen has been remanded in an observation home. The board is also examining a police request for permission to try the accused as an adult. His father has also been arrested under sections of Juvenile Justice Act. The boy's grandfather was questioned today by officers of Pune Police crime branch, which is probing the Porsche case.

MahaRERA cancel registration of 20,000 real estate agents

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Starting January 1, 2024, real estate agents are mandated to undergo training, clear the examination and register their certificate as detailed out by the Maharashtra Real Estate Regulatory Authority (MahaRERA), failing which they will not be able to continue doing business.

So far, approximately 20,000 real estate agents have failed to fulfil the conditions

as laid down by MahaRERA. One of the factors being non-uploading of Certificate of Competency on the regulatory authority's website. Hence, registration in such cases has been suspended for a period of a year. If they complete the training, obtain the Certificate of Competency, and upload the same on the portal within a year, their license will be renewed.

Those who do not follow the procedure within the

stipulated time frame, their registration will stand cancelled after a year.

Thereafter, for the next six months, they will not be able to apply for a fresh registration, which translates into being unable to deal in real estate transactions.

Those found violating the rules will be subject to appropriate action. The above mentioned detailed guidelines has recently been announced by MahaRERA through a circular.

Shinde Sena leader seeks action against MP of own party

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena leader Shishir Shinde on Wednesday demanded sacking of party MP Gajanan Kirtikar, accusing him of hurting the interests of the outfit led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde by speaking in favour of his son and Shiv Sena's (UBT) Mumbai North West candidate Amol Kirtikar.

In a letter addressed to the chief minister, Shinde said Kirtikar criticised the former while speaking in favour of his son.

"[Gajanan] Kirtikar is eager to prostrate before 'Matoshree', the residence of Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray," said Shinde, a former legislator.

"Eknath Shinde is our leader and he should behave in an exemplary manner. We expected the same from a senior leader like Gajanan Kirtikar. Amol Kirtikar is your son and you can speak in his favour, but why defame our leader," he said.

"He [Kirtikar] should not act in a way that will hurt the party or lead to confusion among people. This is my firm opinion," he added.



Kirtikar had said that CM Shinde had offered to make his son Amol an MLC and invited him to the party.

"But, he refused as he is a loyalist. I don't think that I have violated the party discipline," he said.

Gajanan Kirtikar represented the Mumbai North West Lok Sabha constituency twice from 2014. Following a split in the Shiv Sena, Kirtikar aligned with CM Shinde while son stayed with Thackeray-led Sena (UBT). He contested the Mumbai North-West Lok Sabha seat as a Shiv Sena (UBT) candidate.

Hot and humid conditions to continue in Mumbai, Thane and Palghar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai continued to reel under hot and humid conditions on Thursday amidst the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing a yellow warning alert for the city and its neighbouring areas. With temperatures in the range of 34-35 degrees Celsius, the city is experiencing extreme discomfort due to high humidity levels.

The IMD said that hot and humid conditions will continue in Mumbai, Thane and Palghar.

On Thursday, temperatures in Mumbai reached a maximum of 36.0 degrees Celsius, with minimum temperatures hovering around 28.0 degrees Celsius.

Man held for stealing police probe equipment, deleting data from it



Team Absolute | Thane

A 22-year-old Navi Mumbai man was arrested on Thursday in Maharashtra's Navi Mumbai township for allegedly stealing a police kit used in crime investigation and deleting data from it, an official said, reported news agency. The police had detained the accused and a juvenile on May 17 in another case after they fought on a road, Koparkhairne police station's senior inspector Audhumbar Patil said.

During their questioning at an interroga-

tion room in the police station, the Navi Mumbai man allegedly stole the "yatharta kit" (used during probe into a crime) and fled. He later deleted all data from the probe kit, the official said. The entire data of the collection of evidence pertaining to crimes was lost, he said. The man was arrested on Thursday in Koparkhairne area and booked under Indian Penal Code sections 380 (theft) and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of offence), the official said. The accused is a habitual offender involved in house-breaking thefts, the police added.

Mumbai doctors treat 77-year-old Zambian man with triple cancers

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 77-year-old man from Zambia was given a new life by doctors here after suffering from cancers of the colon, metastatic prostate and thyroid. The patient George Namakando was presented to Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre in Mumbai with symptoms of rectal bleeding and constipation.

He had, in 2015, undergone surgery for benign prostatic hyperplasia, which revealed prostatic malignancy.

Evaluation by doctors at Jaslok revealed a growth in his large intestine that was diagnosed as a cancer of the sigmoid colon -- the S-shaped last part of the large intestine. In addition, an enlarged prostate with extensive osteosclerotic skeletal lesions indicative of metastasis (spread) was observed.

Imaging studies, including a PET scan, revealed localised sigmoid colon tumour, localised thyroid cancer, and prostate cancer with extensive bone metastasis.

A multidisciplinary team comprising gastroin-



testinal surgeons, head and neck cancer surgeons, medical oncologists, urologists, and a nuclear medicine specialist decided on a surgical intervention for colon and thyroid cancer followed by Lutetium PMSA Radiation therapy for prostate cancer.

On January 6, 2024, George underwent two

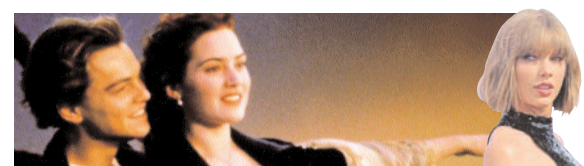
major surgeries simultaneously under single anaesthesia. Despite the lengthy duration of approximately 7 to 8 hours of surgery, he demonstrated remarkable tolerance to the procedures.

"The patient had three malignancies of the colon, thyroid, and prostate at the same time. PET CT scans with different isotopes helped to characterise these three malignancies and map out their spread in the body and to decide which malignancy had spread," said Dr Vikram Lele, Director of Nuclear Medicine at Jaslok Hospital.

"Thyroid cancer will be treated with radioactive Iodine later. Nuclear medicine is thus playing the major part in the diagnosis and therapy of this patient," he added.

The doctor said that George has been discharged from the hospital under stable conditions and is doing well now.

"I have survived this only because of the complete team of well-experienced doctors. They always kept my family updated about every minute detail," said George, while thanking the medical team.



Tiffany Haddish insists she is 'still dating' despite being celibate for months

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Tiffany Haddish said that she has not stopped dating but is still celibate amid her sobriety. "I didn't stop dating. I'm just not having intercourse, girl. I love a free meal," she told Extra, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Haddish shared that her sobriety is "going pretty good" after she decided to quit booze after being arrested on suspicion of DUI in November 2023.

The 'Girls Trip' star quipped that the only time she'll drink again is if she gets engaged and wants to let her partner see "how crazy I get just for one day."

The actress said: "Not drinking any alcohol. Never doing that again unless I get engaged and I can show him how crazy I get just for one day."

"I don't want to do it because it feels good to wake up in the morning and my elbows ain't aching, my knees ain't burning, and the crooks of my ankles ain't on fire. No inflammation."

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Cate Blanchett is getting mocked for calling herself "middle class" despite her estimated \$95 million fortune.

The Oscar-winning actress made this statement during a United Nations press conference at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival.

Talking about her experience as a UN goodwill ambassador and giving refugee filmmakers a platform, she said: "I'm white, I'm privileged, I'm middle class, and I think, you know, one can be accused of having a bit of a white saviour complex, but to be perfectly honest, my interaction with the refugees in the field and also in resettled environments has totally changed my perspective on the world."

Blanchett has been a long-standing activist for humanitarian causes, and she stressed how "utterly grateful" she was for the experience and encouraged others with a platform to create a "dialogue with these people."

She added: "I've met some extraordinary people with extraordinary creative talents and amazing perspectives."

However, this did not go down well with netizens, who immediately started to troll her over the "middle class" claim on social media, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

One said: "You think you're middle class, Cate Blanchett?"

"I love Cate Blanchett, but in what world is she 'middle class', she's been in two major franchises and is worth an estimated \$90 million," said another.

A user said: "Under no circumstances is a net worth of \$95 million middle class!!!"

There were some who defended the actress, saying she may have meant she was "middle class" compared to billionaire showbiz figures.

CATE BLANCHETT GETS TROLLED AFTER DESCRIBING HERSELF AS 'MIDDLE CLASS'



Kate Hudson reveals she 'took a year off' men to stop negative dating patterns

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Kate Hudson shared that she once took a year long break from dating as per her therapist's recommendation.

"I took a full year off. I was like, 'What?' I couldn't floor no, yea, none of it. But it was great," Hudson said on the Call Her Daddy podcast.

The actress said she decided to go through the process when she was "thirty-something."

"I was at that place where I was, like, I don't wanna keep repeating any patterns anymore. I have a great therapist who was, like, 'I can help you, but you have to do it,'" she said.

The actress said she got off track during the process because she likes to flirt.

"Basically, I was like, OK. Well, I guess I can't even text guys," Hudson said, adding that she stopped giving men her number, reports people.com. The actress said that while the process was "strangely empowering,"

it got "very uncomfortable" after it started affecting her mojo and was "not fun." "Because we were going through various specific types of therapy, it was really about figuring out certain things that were happening with me," she said. "And then I had this one sort of breakthrough that was very emotional that I don't think I would have been able to access if I had any distraction."

Hudson said she began to "see things much more clearly" and, within six months, stopped worrying about things like her phone or who she was going out with.

"There was no desire for me to be doing anything that had anything to do with potential, you know, flirtation," she said.

"So, then, when I was doing that, I remember my therapist a year later was like, 'Okay, I think you can flirt again!'"

The actress said that while men began messaging her again, she didn't have the "same attachment" to flirting anymore. She also credited being single during that period with helping her end up with her now fiance, Danny Fujikawa.



James Lafferty insists he never got used to fame

Los Angeles | Agencies

'One Tree Hill' star James Lafferty said he "never got used" to fame, even though he first rose to prominence almost 20 years ago when he started off in the show. The actor told E! News: "It's surreal for everybody involved, including me. I never get used to (it) but in the best way."

The star recently got together with fellow co-stars Bryan Greenberg, Stephen Colletti, Paul Johansson, and Craig Sheffer for a charity basketball game and raised money for cancer, and he noted it was such a "gift" to be able to reunite with some of his former castmates for the event, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

James said: "It feels great to play a small part in supporting the (foundation's) progress. It means the world for us to be drawn back together. It means the world for us to be able to interact personally with the best fans in the world and to be able to do it all for a good cause."

"Just being back in this gym in particular, where we actually shot the show, and being with all the guys who originally played on the Ravens basketball team, it's surreal and it's wonderful," he said.

"Some of these guys, I haven't seen for a very long time. Some of them I have. But to have all of us together again, it's incredible. It's a gift," he added.



I AM PROMOTING WOMEN BEING SEEN AS PEOPLE: ANYA TAYLOR

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Anya Taylor-Joy revealed she was bullied at school and grew up feeling she was "wrong", which she believes is because her intensity and passion can be "frightening" for some people.

"The message I was getting at school was that everything about me was wrong. I think the way that I looked played into it, and then the extremes of my personality definitely played into it," she told Britain's GQ magazine's Heroes issue.

"If I loved something, I loved something. I have no chill in any regard, and that can be frightening for people, I guess."

The actress learned to "bury" herself as a defence mechanism in response to the bullying she faced.

"As a survival mechanism, you learn to be self-effacing and self-deprecating. You bury yourself before anybody else does," she said.

"What I'm coming to understand is: as long as you're not causing anyone



else harm, you have to stand your ground."

The 28-year-old actress has developed a "reputation for fighting for feminine rage," reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"How do I say this? I've developed a bit of a reputation for fighting for feminine rage, which is a strange thing because I'm not promoting violence -- but I am promoting women being seen as people. We have reactions that are not always dainty or unmessy," she said.

Jeremy Renner recalls how his muscle memory kicked in during the shooting of action sequences

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Jeremy Renner is back doing stunts after he nearly died in a snow-plough accident. The actor said that his muscle memory kicked in during the shooting of action sequences.

The 53-year-old actor, who suffered blunt chest trauma and orthopaedic injuries when he was crushed by the 14,000-pound vehicle in January 2023, didn't expect to be shooting action scenes again, reports 'Female First UK'.

However, he's got stuck in during filming of the upcoming third season of his show 'The Mayor of Kingstown' and expects to be fitter than ever in the coming months.

During an appearance on 'The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon', the host asked the



'Avengers: Endgame' actor if he was "back up to 100 per cent", to which he replied: "I don't know what that is. But I expect to be, like, 150 per cent by maybe the end of the year."

He further mentioned, quoted by 'Female First UK': "And doing stunts was like not on the docket for me because I was barely kind of walking around. But you know I went up and just said 'I'll just try it' and put on these tennis shoes. Let me try it. Muscle memory just kind of happened."

Jeremy admitted he wasn't "confident" in performing the stunts, but was pleased to have "got it done".

The actor added that performing the stunts was another sign he was "moving forward" from his accident.

He said: "It's moving forward. And it's always nice to get a little pat on the back of progress, right? And progress is great fuel to keep progressing."

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Bella Thorne



The way we turned things around and qualified was truly special: Kohli

New Delhi | Agencies

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) star batter Virat Kohli said it was a 'special' Indian Premier League (IPL) season for the franchise after they qualified for the playoffs following a six-match winning streak in the league stage.

RCB were knocked out of the competition after losing to Rajasthan Royals in the Eliminator match at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Wednesday. But before that, they scripted one of the best IPL comebacks as they finished above defending champion Chennai Super Kings to book a place in the last four after just winning one game after the first eight matches.

Sharing his thoughts on their IPL season, Kohli said he will cherish this always for the character shown by the team on the field.

"We started expressing ourselves, started to play for our self-respect and



then the confidence came back. The way we turned things around and qualified was truly special, something that I will always, always cherish and remember, because it took a lot of character from each member of this team, something that we can be really proud of. And eventually, we played the way we wanted to play," Kohli said in the RCB dressing room.

As always, RCB's 12th-man army was a vocal supporter of the team throughout the season and captain Faf du Plessis said he was grateful for RCB's 'incredible fanbase'. "We were extremely down halfway through the season. But still the fans, at every stadium, every match, you can hear the chants from a long way away. And once we got the momen-

tum, we just ran with that. Extremely grateful for our incredible fanbase." "Sad that we as a group can't get those final two steps to get to the trophy. But if I look back on the season, from where we were, to where we finished, I am very proud of the boys," du Plessis said.

Kohli also acknowledged the support of RCB fans, saying their backing has been unwavering every season.

"This season was exactly the same, it wasn't any different. We are very thankful for that and we will always be grateful for, the way they turn out in numbers, not just in Bangalore but all over the country where we play, so thank you very much for all your support and your wishes," Kohli signed off.

Kohli is anticipated to bag the Orange Cap for the season after finishing with 741 runs including a century and five fifties. He has a distant gap of more than 150 runs with the second batter on the list among the teams alive in the competition.

Karthik got an emotional guard of honour from his RCB teammates

Ahmedabad | Agencies

Veteran wicketkeeper-batter Dinesh Karthik has hinted that his time on the cricket field in the Indian Premier League (IPL) may have come to an end following Royal Challengers Bengaluru's (RCB) loss to Rajasthan Royals in the IPL 2024 Eliminator.

After soaring with six consecutive wins following a dismal start, their hopes for a fairytale season were dashed with 4-wicket loss to RR on Wednesday at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

Karthik got an emotional guard of honour from his RCB teammates before the players walked off the field.

The official X handle of the Indian Premier League shared a heartwarming video of the moment following the match.

He also received a resounding round of applause from teammates and fans in attendance. The 38-year-old took off his keeping gloves and acknowledged the fans, who were applauding the veteran with chants of "DK... DK..."

While Karthik hasn't officially announced his retirement from the IPL, if this season turns out to be his last, he will conclude his IPL career with 4,842 runs in 257 matches. The wicketkeeper-batter debuted in the



inaugural 2008 season with the Delhi Daredevils (now Delhi Capitals). He transitioned to Punjab in 2011 and subsequently played for the Mumbai Indians, Gujarat Lions, Kolkata Knight Riders, and Royal Challengers Bangalore.

He concluded the current season with 326 runs in 15 matches, maintaining an average of 36.22 and an impressive strike rate of 187.36.

Diksha, Pranavi, Tvesa to lead India's challenge in Jabra Ladies Open in France



Evian Les Bains (France) | Agencies

Diksha Dagar, Pranavi Urs and Tvesa Malik will lead the Indian challenge at this week's Jabra Ladies Open. The trio is being joined by Vani Kapoor, Amandeep Drall and Sneha Singh.

The same six had played a week earlier in German Masters with varying fortunes. While Diksha, Pranavi and Tvesa finished an identical T-24, the other three missed the cut and are keen to make up this week.

While Diksha is firmly established on the Ladies European Tour (LET), Pranavi has shown good signs in her first full year and Tvesa is trying to find her feet back on the tour, just as Vani and Amandeep.

Sneha, who topped the Women's Pro Golf Tour in India in 2023, is getting to learn the ropes after a lot of success at home.

Only Diksha and Tvesa are playing in the morning wave and the rest will come out in the afternoon.

Local golfer, Pauline-Roussin Bouchard will be drawing in the home crowds as the two-time LET

winner plays at her home club, Evian Resort. Roussin-Bouchard announced herself on the LET stage when she finished second and qualified for the Amundi Evian Championship as an amateur in 2019.

Five years later, the 23-year-old says that she will use the same approach as she did back then. Roussin-Bouchard took her early golf lessons at the Evian Academy and has played at the Evian Resort since the age of nine.

Roussin-Bouchard is currently sitting in 16th place on the LET Order of Merit and the highlight of her results so far this year is a runner-up spot in the Lalla Meryem Cup in Morocco.

Roussin-Bouchard is also a track athlete and she competed last week in a race on a 13-kilometre track which she completed in one hour and 23 minutes.

One of 16 French hopefuls in the tournament, she will start round one at 13:13 in the company of Denmark's Nicole Broch Estrup and Australian Amy Walsh.

'In future, bowlers also need to be hitters': Ashwin on impact player rule

Ahmedabad | Agencies

Rajasthan Royals (RR) spinner Ravichandran Ashwin feels that in the future bowlers will also need to be good at hitting in the T20s as the introduction of impact player rule in the Indian Premier League (IPL) has made their role difficult.

Ashwin's remark came after the four-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in the Eliminator clash at Narendra Modi Stadium on Wednesday. The off-sinner has joined the list of players including India captain Rohit Sharma and others who have criticised the rule in the ongoing edition of the cash-rich league.

"Even if the Impact Player rule wasn't there, scores would be this high. In my opinion, batters have more confidence and pitches everywhere have been stan-

darized. In the future, all bowlers will need to be hitters because we know that no matter how well we bowl, we also need to be able to bat. The game is headed in that direction," Ashwin told JioCinema.

Chasing 173, Yashasvi Jaiswal's 45, Riyan Parag's 36 and Rovman Powell's eight-ball 16 unbeaten cameo enabled RR to get over the line with one over to spare.

Rajasthan will now take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in Qualifier 2 on Friday, in the hope of setting up a final against Kolkata Knight Riders on Sunday.

Ashwin's effort of 2-19 in four overs bagged him the Player of the Match after restricting RCB to 172/8 in 20 overs.

Talking about his bowling in the tournament, Ashwin said he made slight changes to his action to get more repetitions on the ball. "My tournament has



gone in two halves. The first half was coming off the Test series, so my body didn't feel fresh. My arm speed wasn't there and I also had an injury, an abdomen tear. I played through the injury but didn't get much bowling time or repetitions.

"I am someone who depends on bowling repetitions. Over the last 6-7 games, I feel like my rhythm came back. I was able to bowl off-spin. I changed my action slightly. My plan was simple. I came with a single-minded focus on changing the line and length of my deliveries and it was executed well," he said.

Ashwin has picked nine wickets in 14 games for the franchise in this season. However, teammate and fellow spinner Yuzvendra Chahal has bagged 18 wickets, the most for the side and sixth-highest overall.

Lookman scores hat-trick as Atalanta stun Leverkusen to win Europa League title

Dublin | Agencies

Ademola Lookman scored an exceptional hat-trick as Atalanta put an end to Bayer Leverkusen's 51-game unbeaten run to win the UEFA Europa League title. Lookman scored all three goals as Atalanta stopped the clock on Leverkusen's extraordinary unbeaten run, and brought 66-year-old coach Gian Piero Gasperini the first major trophy of his long career.

Atalanta pressed high from the off and with Leverkusen's danger men making a cold start in unseasonably chilly conditions, the Italian side were ahead after 12 minutes.

Played in brilliantly by Teun Koopmeiners, Davide Zappacosta delivered an angled ball back across the box that eluded two of his team-mates, but not the Lookman, who crashed in a



shot at the far post. He needed no assistance for his second on 26 minutes, weaving his way to the edge of the box and smashing a low effort past the exposed Matej Kovar, Europa League reports. Alejandro Grimaldo failed to test Juan Musso with

Leverkusen's best chance of the first half after 35 minutes, and while the Jeremie Frimpong probed diligently for weak spots, Xabi Alonso's side did not look like a team, who were unbeaten in 51 games. The only consolation at the

break was that it could have been worse, Kovar saving well from Charles De Ketelaere on 43 minutes.

Victor Boniface was introduced at the break, and with Atalanta sitting a little deeper, Leverkusen smouldered to life, Frimpong blazing a loose ball over just before the hour mark. However, Atalanta maintained their threat, and Gianluca Scamacca played in Lookman on 75 minutes, the Nigerian steadying himself before blasting past Kovar.

"That was perhaps our peak in recent years. We've won it against top teams. We beat Sporting who are the Portuguese champions. We played Liverpool when they were top of the Premier League. We played Marseille who are a very good side, and tonight we beat the German champions. To have beaten such great sides adds gloss to our achievement," Atalanta coach Gasperini said.

SENTHILKUMAR, ABHAY ADVANCE AT QSF 3 SQUASH IN DOHA



Doha: National champion Velavan Senthilkumar and Asian Games medalist Abhay Singh have made a winning start at the prestigious USD 53,500 QSF 3 squash, a PSA World Tour Bronze event.

World No 55 Senthilkumar from Tamil Nadu beat local challenger Yousef Essam Farag 11-7, 11-4, 11-4 in 32 minutes in the first round.

Meanwhile, Abhay, ranked 67 in the world, moved past Pakistan's Muhammad Asim Khan 11-2, 11-9, 15-13 in 38 minutes on Wednesday.

Senthilkumar will meet Egyptian seventh seed Omar Mosaad next, while Abhay will lock horns with sixth-seeded Frenchman Auguste Dussourd.

Have always respected decisions taken by MS, says CSK CEO Viswanathan on Dhoni's future

Chennai | Agencies

K.S. Viswanathan, the CEO of Chennai Super Kings (CSK), said they have always respected the decisions taken by the legendary MS Dhoni and that the decision on his future in the franchise has been left to him, which they expect will come at an appropriate time.

The future of Dhoni, 42, as a CSK player has been a topic of immense speculation after CSK failed to enter the IPL 2024 playoffs following a 27-run loss to Royal Challengers Bengaluru in its must-win final league match, to finish in fifth place in the points table.

"I do not know. It is a question only MS (Dhoni) can answer. We have always respected the decisions taken by MS. We have left it to him and as all of you know he has always taken his decisions and announced them at the appropriate time," the CSK boss said.

"We do expect that we will get a decision and when he decides. But we are very hopeful he'll be available for CSK next year. That is the view and expectation of the fans and mine," said Viswanathan in a video posted by the franchise



on YouTube.

He also felt CSK's long-serving head coach, former New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming, won't apply for the India men's head coach job, whose deadline for applications is May 27. "Actually I got a lot of calls from the Indian journalists inquiring whether he is interested in taking a job with the Indian team."

"So I jokingly asked him, 'Have you applied for the Indian coaching assignment?' And Stephen just laughed and said, 'Do you want me to? I know that it's not going to be his cup of tea because he doesn't like to be involved for nine to 10 months in a year. That's my feeling. I have not discussed anything more with him,' he added.

Just ahead of the IPL 2024 season, Dhoni handed over the leadership duties to opener Ruturaj Gaikwad, surprising many onlookers. Viswanathan revealed how the CSK management had discussed the leadership handover from Dhoni to Gaikwad.

"The discussions we had with the team management from before a couple of years ago when Ruturaj came into the CSK and started performing well, we felt that he would be a

good choice to captain the side. Both Flem (Fleming) and MS (Dhoni) had long discussions with him, they had plans to make him as a future captain."

"His performances, and also the way he approached the game, and his thoughts whenever he spoke with MS as well as Fleming... both of them felt that he'll be a good captain at CSK. And we were not disappointed; he led the side comfortably. The seniors also helped him. It has not affected his performance with the bat. He has continued to be a very consistent performer," he noted.

Viswanathan observed that Gaikwad wasn't affected by leadership duties and expressed gratitude to CSK fans for accepting the change in the side's leadership.

"The pressure of captaincy has not affected him. We look forward to his contribution to CSK in the future. The pressure is too high because he's following the footsteps of MS Dhoni."

"Nobody can match him, but MS had the confidence that Rutu (Gaikwad) has in him to do a very good job. The acceptance from the crowd really helped him for sure, that is for sure. Because if there is pressure from the

crowd, you can imagine what happened to other captains," he said.

"I think CSK fans accepted what MS Dhoni had given to Ruturaj as captain because he (Dhoni) had chosen him. The team management chose him as the captain. And all of you know, never has the management of CSK interfered with the cricketing matters."

"So, that helped Rutu also, because he was very clear that the instructions have come from team management. He had the responsibility to deliver. I'm confident he will do very well in the future years also."

"Definitely, the CSK management, as well as the fans, have helped the CSK team to do very well. That is important because there is no interference in creating matters with the team. They are left with their job to do."

"It adds more responsibility to the team. They know now there is not going to be interference from the management, which means they have to deliver. They are professionals; they have to deliver. That has helped us," he concluded.



Telugu actresses Hema and Ashi Roy's blood samples test positive for drug use after rave party raid

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Telugu actresses Hema and Ashi Roy's blood samples have tested positive for the consumption of drugs at a rave party in Bengaluru.

The rave party bust happened near Electronics City in Bengaluru. The blood samples of the attendees at the busted rave party were sent to a laboratory for testing, as per Bengaluru City Police Commissioner B Dayananda.

The blood samples of 59 men tested positive for drugs while the blood samples of 27 women tested positive.

Both Hema and Ashi Roy were present at the party. Hema, who was detained by the cops, used the excuse of going to the washroom to record a misleading video. She reportedly pleaded with the police not to arrest her and to keep her identity concealed.

The rave party case, which was initially handled by the Electronic City Police, was transferred to the Hebbagodi Police station before being taken over by the Central Crime Branch. The rave party reportedly had MDMA pills, crystals, hydro cannabis and cocaine at the venue.

Divya Khosla recounts how she shot for 45 days at 6 degrees Celsius in the UK

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Divya Khosla, who is gearing up for her upcoming thriller movie, has shared that the team shot for 45 days at -6 degrees Celsius in the UK.

She also recollected how she had to wear heavy winter clothing in Mumbai in order to maintain continuity while shooting certain parts of the film.

The actress said: "The whole movie was shot in 45 days at -6 degrees Celsius temperature. When you watch the movie, you will feel cold. I personally enjoy working in cold weather and don't prefer working in the summer."

She further mentioned, "We had to do a small bit of shoot here in Bombay also when I had to wear the layered jackets and everything and shoot in this hot weather and that was actually more difficult than shooting in the cold."

The trailer of 'Savi' gives a glimpse of a riveting story where Divya's character carries out a prison break to save her husband (Harshvardhan Rane) from a potential threat to his life after he is framed in a case.

The trailer features several intense sequences including gun fights, hand-to-hand combat, and planning and execution of the jail break.



I was brought up in an environment that boosted my moral compass : Neha Sharma

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Neha Sharma, who will soon be seen in the third season of 'Illegal' alongside Akshay Oberoi, said that she knows many people who operate in the gray area, but she was raised by her parents to firmly see things as either black or white.

While speaking about the plot development in season 3, Neha said: "This season, Niharika will be seen in a new form. Of course, you will still see glimpses of the old Niharika, but now that she has built her own firm with Punnet, she has changed."

"We see a bit of resemblance between



her and JJ (Janardhan Jaitley) as her goals have shifted. She takes on many interesting cases this season, all inspired by real-life incidents."

The actress added: "I was brought up in an environment that boosted my moral compass. I know many people who operate in the gray area, but my parents raised me to firmly see things as either black or white."

"I can't relate to Niharika in this season, as she ventures into the gray zone a lot. However, I do understand our writers and director's intention for Niharika's character development and consider it necessary."

Rashmika Mandanna

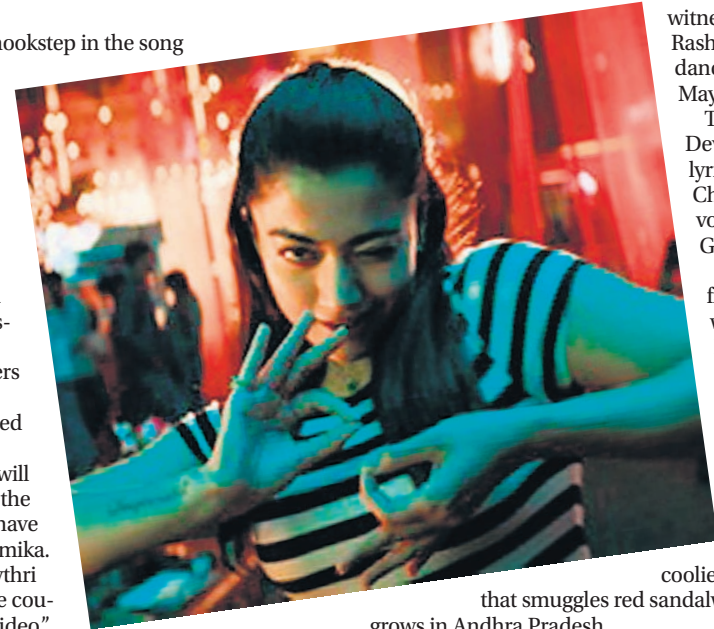
showcases new hookstep for song 'Sooseeki'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After giving the viral hookstep in the song 'Saami Saami' from 'Pushpa: The Rise', actress Rashmika Mandanna is all set to showcase her dancing prowess with another catchy step in the upcoming track 'Sooseeki' in the second instalment of the Allu Arjun-starrer 'Pushpa 2: The Rule' as per the teaser.

On Thursday, the makers of the film Mythri Movie Makers took to X and shared the teaser of the song and announced that the track will drop on May 29. Calling it the 'Couple Song', it will also have Allu Arjun alongside Rashmika.

Dropping the teaser, Mythri Movie Makers, wrote: "The couple song announcement video." On YouTube, the song was



that smuggles red sandalwood, a rare wood that grows in Andhra Pradesh.

described as: "Get ready to witness the true 'Sooseeki'! Rashmika is coming with a dance step! Song releasing on May 29. Stay tuned!"

The song is composed by Devi Sri Prasad, and the lyrics are written by Chandra Bose, with the vocals given by Shreya Ghoshal.

The first track from the film titled 'Pushpa Raj' was released in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Bengali and centred around Allu Arjun.

The first instalment 'Pushpa: The Rise', was released in 2021. It revolved around Allu Arjun's character, a

coolie, who rises in a syndicate

I just like to experience my life through people and their reactions : Nimrat Kaur

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Nimrat Kaur, who started her acting career with the music video 'Tera Mera Pyar' in 2005, has reflected on her two decades of journey in the industry, sharing that she has tried to enjoy the moments, and not rest on past laurels.

The actress featured in Kumar Sanu's song 'Tera Mera Pyar' before doing a few commercials for television.

She made her film debut with a small role in the English movie 'One Night with the King', before starring in the 2012 crime thriller 'Peddlers' directed by Vasan Bala.

Nimrat said, "So much has

happened. I have learned so much. And I have enjoyed every bit of it. 'Tera Mera Pyar' was my first work on camera. I had just come to Mumbai... I was very fortunate that it came my way, and opened the advertising world before me. I did a lot of ads after that. Then I did a lot of theatre."

She added, "I have always been a student of life as an actor, and tried to learn every medium that I have explored. When I did 'The Test Case', it was one of the few web series to be made in India. I enjoyed every turn of this journey. I have tried to enjoy the moments, and not rest on past laurels or 'ki wo experience jo

tha wahi hona chahiye dubara'.

"The Lunchbox waisi thi, waise hi dubara ho'. No experience is ever repeated in life."

Nimrat, who last featured in the movie 'Sajini Shinde Ka Viral Video', said she enjoys life's reality, adding that everything comes with its own set of problems and excitement. "I don't feel like it's been 20 years... It feels like a lot, sounds like a lot. What happens with actors is when you are essaying a part, a part of your life and your years are gone. Time keeps passing by... It's very interesting when you look back, I just like to experience my life through people and their reactions, and understandings," she added.



SHIRISH SPEAKS SO MUCH THAT ALL OF US HIDE BEHIND THE COUCH : FARAH KHAN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker-choreographer Farah Khan has spilled the beans on who wears the pants in the family and how it's a role reversal at home with her husband, Shirish Kunder, being the boss. Farah appeared along with senior actor Anil Kapoor on the new episode of 'The Great Indian Kapil Show', hosted by comedian Kapil Sharma.

During the conversation, Farah revealed that at home, her husband-filmmaker and film editor Shirish, is the more talkative one.

Kapil asks Farah what the situation is like at home with Shirish, saying, "When she is the director, she scolds everyone. The audience wanted to know this. Have you ever scolded Shirish at home?"

Farah replies, "It's the opposite for me. Shirish is the boss in the house. He doesn't speak when he is out. At home, he speaks so much that all of us hide behind the couch. Thinking that he'll come and start giving us lectures. So at home, I am very calm, and polite."



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Chahatt Khanna