

# absolute india

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Intense heatwave claims 8 lives in Rajasthan, Barmer hottest in country at 48.8-degree C

# SCORCHING HEAT

- The temperature of the MP is continuously increasing. Guna was the hottest with a maximum temperature of 46.6 degrees Celsius. At the same time, the temperature in almost half of the state is more than 44 degrees Celsius and the heat waves are scorching.
- The IMD has issued yellow alerts in Maharashtra's 23 districts for the next two days including Dhule, Akola, Amravati, Bhandara and Nagpur with Akola having yellow alerts for the entire week. The IMD report states "Thunderstorm Lightning with Gusty Wind Speed Reaching 3040 Kmph Most Likely to Occur at Isolated Places" in its city forecast reports.



Meteorological Centre, adding that the mercury will reduce slightly after May 28. Meanwhile, two persons died due to extreme heat in Balotra.

Mularam (55) was working in the fields when his health condition deteriorated due to the heat. His family members rushed him to a hospital

where the doctors declared him dead. Similarly, Mantu (22), who worked with a refinery company in the area, fell ill and was rushed to a nearby hospital where the doctors declared him dead. A 35-year-old man also died due to the heatwave in Barmer. Deaths due to the intense heat

were also reported from Bhilwara and Jalore districts. After Barmer, Phalodi recorded the maximum temperature on Thursday at 48.6-degree Celsius, followed by Fatehpur (47.6), Jaisalmer (47.5), Jodhpur (47.4), Jalore (47.3), Kota (47.2), Churu (47), Dungarpur (46.8), Chhitorgarh (45.5), and Jaipur (44), among others.

A red alert has been sounded in most parts of Rajasthan for the next three days.

## SEVERE CYCLONIC STORM LIKELY TO HIT BENGAL COAST ON SUNDAY MIDNIGHT

New Delhi: India Meteorological Department on Friday said that a severe cyclonic storm is very likely to hit the West Bengal and Bangladesh coasts between Sagar Island and Khepupara around Sunday (26th May) midnight.

IMD attributed the cyclonic storm to a depression formed over central Bay of Bengal which is continuing to move northward.

Continuing to move nearly northward, it is very likely to cross Bangladesh and adjoining West Bengal coasts between Sagar Island and Khepupara around 26th May midnight as a severe cyclonic storm, it added. IMD has predicted light to moderate rainfall at most places with heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places over coastal districts of West Bengal and adjoining districts of North Odisha on 26th & 27th May and isolated extremely heavy rainfall likely over coastal districts of West Bengal on 26th May. Fishermen out at sea have also been advised to return to the coast.

## Bangladesh MP Murdered By Illegal Immigrant Who Skinned Him, Chopped Up Body

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A Bangladesh MP, believed to have been murdered in Kolkata, was skinned, chopped up in an apartment and disposed of in several plastic packets across the city, investigations have revealed. The MP, Anwarul Azim Anar, had been missing since May 14, two days after he arrived in Kolkata.

The West Bengal CID (Criminal Investigation Department) has made a significant breakthrough in the investigation after the arrest of Jihad Hawladar, an illegal immigrant from Bangladesh, who lived in Mumbai. According to CID sources, Jihad Hawladar confessed to his involvement in the murder and dismemberment of the Bangladesh MP's body in an



apartment in New Town, Kolkata. Shocking details have emerged of how the crime was meticulously planned and executed. Hawladar has reportedly disclosed that the mastermind was Akhtaruzzaman, a US citizen of Bangladeshi origin. On Akhtaruzzaman's orders, Hawladar, along with four other Bangladeshi nationals, smothered and killed the MP in the New Town apartment.



The revelations are nothing short of chilling. Hawladar allegedly told cops that after killing Anar, the group proceeded to skin the body, remove all the flesh, and mince it to obliterate any possibility of identification. The remains were then packed into plastic bags, with the bones cut into small pieces. These packets were transported and disposed of across Kolkata, the suspect allegedly said.

## 15 dead in rain-related incidents in Tamil Nadu

Chennai | Agencies

At least 15 people have died in Tamil Nadu between May 16 and May 22 in rain-related incidents, an official said on Thursday.

In a statement, the Tamil Nadu State Revenue and Disaster Management department said that three persons died in Krishnagiri, Salem and Cuddalore districts in the last 24 hours due to thunder, lightning and wall collapse. Also, 13 cattle deaths were reported while 40 houses and huts were damaged in various parts of the state. The statement mentioned that 4,385 hectares of crops have submerged in rain water. Tamil Nadu received an average of 1.58 cm of rain in the last 24 hours with Nilgiris recording the maximum rainfall of 6.15 cm. The weather department has issued an advisory to fishermen not to venture into the sea. District collectors have been instructed to



take all precautionary measures. An official said that 10 SDRF teams of 296 members have been stationed in Kanniyakumari, Coimbatore, Tirunelveli and Nilgiris districts.

Tourists have been advised to take precautions and to avoid travelling till May 24 in the state. The official also said that State and District Emergency Response Centres were functioning round the clock and additional officials have been deployed to monitor the situation.

Jaipur | Agencies

Intense heatwave claimed eight lives in four districts of Rajasthan -- Barmer, Balotra, Jalore, and Bhilwara -- as the maximum temperature at many places in the state shot up to 46-48-degree Celsius, with Barmer at 48.8 emerging as the hottest place in the country on Thursday.

According to the Met department, the maximum temperature soared to over 47-degree Celsius at seven cities in the state on Thursday.

The heatwave will intensify in the next two days, said the Jaipur

## DELHI SIZZLES AT 47 DEGREES CELSIUS

New Delhi: As temperatures continue to soar in the national capital, doctors on Tuesday advised caution against prolonged exposure to heat.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a heatwave and hot and humid weather warning for the next seven days in New Delhi. The maximum temperature will range between 44 and 47 degrees Celsius. On Monday, the national capital's maximum temperature reached 47.4 degrees Celsius -- the highest in the country. Meanwhile, the Delhi government has ordered an immediate closure of schools given the rising heatwaves.

A high body temperature may lead to nausea and vomiting, poor concentration and drowsiness, cramps, throbbing headache, confusion, dizziness, palpitation, fast strong pulse, and loss of consciousness, Dr G. J. Singh from Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital, Kaushambi, told reporter.

The experts advised staying indoors during extreme heat waves, wearing light clothes, keeping proper hydration, eating good and balanced food at home, and avoiding meals from outside.

## COMPARE THE PROGRESS AND NOT TERM

PM MODI ON QUESTIONS OF EQUALING NEHRU'S RECORD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, when questioned about 'bright prospects' of equaling Jawaharlal Nehru's three terms as Prime Minister, said that one should compare the progress (in his tenure) and not the terms.

"In Gujarat, analysts used to describe me as longest serving chief minister of the state. It's the job of analysts. You should not compare how many terms but how much progress the country saw in my term," PM Modi, replying to a query of 'very much possible' record third term.

Notably, Jawaharlal Nehru was India's first Prime Minister and won three consecutive elections, first in 1951-52, then in 1957 and 1962. In an exclusive conversation with NDTV, PM Modi also spoke about the government's conscious decision to celebrate the legacy of country rather than attributing the achievements to any specific family. He cited two



instances of Chandrayaan to underscore the government's focus on standing with scientists during times of adversity and recognising their achievements.

He said that the spot on the Moon where Chandrayaan-3 lander Vikram touched down was named 'Shiv Shakti' and not something else.

## Delhi court convicts activist Medha Patkar in defamation case by L-G VK Saxena

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi court on Friday convicted Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) activist Medha Patkar in a defamation case filed by Delhi Lieutenant Governor (L-G) V.K. Saxena.

This marks an important development in a prolonged legal battle that has spanned over two decades between the two -- Patkar and Saxena, who was also the Chairman of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).

The defamation case stems from a series of legal disputes that began in 2000. At that time, Patkar filed a suit against Saxena for publishing advertisements that she claimed were defamatory towards her and the NBA.

Saxena was then the head of the Ahmedabad-based NGO, National Council for Civil Liberties.

In response, Saxena filed two defamation cases against Patkar -- one for alleged derogatory remarks



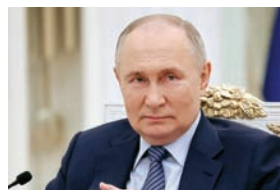
she made about him during a television appearance, while the second case involved a press statement issued by Patkar. Metropolitan Magistrate Raghav Sharma of Saket Courts noted that Patkar made and published imputation that the complainant had visited Malegaon, praised NBA, had issued a cheque of Rs 40,000, which came from Lal

Bhai Group, and that "he was a coward and not a patriot". Magistrate Sharma noted: "The accused by publishing the above imputation intended to harm or knew or had reason to believe that such imputation will harm complainant's reputation." Advocates Gajinder Kumar, Kiran Jai, Chandra Shekhar, Drishti, and Somya Arya appeared for the L-G, while advocate Sridevi Pannikar represented Patkar in the court. While the judge passed an order for her conviction, he made certain observations. Magistrate Sharma said that reputation is one of the most valuable assets a person can possess, as it affects both personal and professional relationships and can significantly impact an individual's standing in the society. Regarding Patkar's statements calling the L-G a coward, and not a patriot, and alleging his involvement in hawala transactions, the judge said they were not only defamatory per se, but also crafted to incite negative perceptions.

## Vladimir Putin Ready For Ukraine Ceasefire On Current Frontlines: Report

Moscow | Agencies

Russian President Vladimir Putin is ready to halt the war in Ukraine with a negotiated ceasefire that recognises the current battlefield lines, four Russian sources told Reuters, saying he is prepared to fight on if Kyiv and the West do not respond. Three of the sources, familiar with discussions in Putin's entourage, said the veteran Russian leader had expressed frustration to a small group of advisers about what he views as Western-backed attempts to stymie negotiations and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's decision to rule out talks. "Putin can fight for as long as it takes, but Putin is also ready for a ceasefire - to freeze the war," said another of the four, a senior Russian source who has worked with Putin and has knowledge of top level conver-



sations in the Kremlin.

He, like the others cited in this story, spoke on condition of anonymity given the matter's sensitivity. For this account, Reuters spoke to a total of five people who work with or have worked with Putin at a senior level in the political and business worlds. The fifth source did not comment on freezing the war at the current frontlines. Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov, in response to a request for comment, said the Kremlin chief had repeatedly made clear Russia was open to dialogue to achieve its goals, saying the country did not want "eternal war."

## JLR To Make In India - Range Rover, Range Rover Sport Prices To Fall 22%

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Tata Motors owned Jaguar Land Rover will start producing its Range Rover and Range Rover Sport in India, marking a first for the iconic models in their 54-year long history, to be rolled out from a country outside of the UK.

Rolling out the two models were only produced in Jaguar Land Rover's Solihull plant in the UK and then exported to around 121 markets globally, including India.

With enhanced localisation, the Marquee British brand aims to make the two products better in terms of pricing to cater to a larger set of customers in India. The price of two models is set to come down in the range of 18-22 per cent with the local production. Tata Group Chairman N Chandrasekaran lauded Tata Sons Chairman Emeritus Ratan Tata for bringing the JLR brand to the Tata



family 15 years ago.

"...the Range Rover will be manufactured right here in India is just a super feeling...it's a very special moment and I feel proud..." he said.

He noted that the company would see an increase in sales in the country going ahead. "We will sell more, I am very confident that it's going to be a great journey from here," Chandrasekaran said. And the manufacturing here should really send a signal and show the confidence that the company has in this market, he added.

In an interaction with PTI, JLR India Managing Director Rajan Amba said

the local production is a big step for the company to make the two models accessible to a wider set of customers in the country. "For the first time in the history of the company, the Range Rover and Range Rover Sport will also now be produced in India...this is a huge announcement for us as these are our flagship cars and have only been produced in Solihull in their 54 years long history," Amba said.

He noted that the step is also an indication of the kind of market India is developing when it comes to premium products. "This (local assembly) will allow us to take the benefit of the duty structure and to bring the price down of the two models by about 18 to 22 per cent," Amba said.

The dip in prices will help in making the models affordable and enhance sales, he added. JLR India reported an 81 per cent increase in retail sales last fiscal in India at 4,436 units.

## India's growth momentum to continue in April-March quarter of 2024-25: FinMin report

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian economy closed the financial year 2023-24 strongly despite strong external headwinds, and early indications suggest that the growth momentum will continue during the current April-June quarter of 2024-25, according to a Finance Ministry report released on Friday.

"The emerging robust trends in key high-frequency indicators of growth like GST collections, e-way bills, electronic toll collections, sale of vehicles, purchasing managers' indices, and the value and number of digital transactions attest to the growing strength of the economy," the Finance Ministry said in its monthly economic review for April. The industrial and service sectors of the Indian economy are performing well, backed by brisk domestic demand and partially by

tentative external demand. This can benefit India's manufacturing firms as part of the China Plus One strategy.

The EXIM Bank of India has forecast that merchandise exports will post a double-digit growth in Q1 of FY25, the report pointed out.

The report expects domestic manufacturing to receive stronger export orders due to improved economic activity and consumer sentiment in Europe and a steady US economy. It cites an uptick in India's exports in April to support the point.

It admits that geopolitical tensions and volatility in global commodity prices, especially of petroleum products, present substantial challenges. "Nonetheless, the expectation is that the macro-economic buffers will help the Indian economy navigate these challenges reasonably smoothly," the report added.



# NAXALISM WILL RETURN TO BIHAR IF CPI(ML) WINS: HM SHAH

Patna | Agencies

Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, on Friday said that Naxalism would resurface in Bihar if the CPI(ML) won Lok Sabha elections in the state.

The CPI(ML) is contesting in the three Lok Sabha constituencies of Arrah, Karakat and Nalanda as an ally of the Grand Alliance in Bihar.

While addressing a rally in Ramna ground in Arrah city in Bihar on Friday, HM Shah said, "Lalu Prasad Yadav has fielded CPI(ML) in Arrah and if its candidate wins even by mistake then Naxalism will resurface and bullets will be fired again."

"I want to ask the people of Arrah if they want farmlands to be occupied, kidnapping, and looting here. If the CPI(ML) wins, all this will happen here again," HM Shah said.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Naxalism was wiped out from Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.



"I want to appeal to the people to give us more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha and we will finish Naxalism in Chhattisgarh too in the third term of the Modi government," he said.

He also targeted the RJD, Congress and TMC on the OBC quota issue.

"The Congress, Lalu Prasad Yadav and Mamata Banerjee want to cut the quota of the OBCs and give it to the Muslims.

"The Congress has given 5 per cent reservation to Muslims in Karnataka and 4 per cent in Telangana and Mamata Banerjee added many

Muslim castes to the OBC category. On Thursday, the Kolkata High Court cancelled this illegal reservation in West Bengal. I want to tell you that as long as PM Modi and the BJP are there, we will not let the quota for Dalits, backwards and tribals to be touched. If this 'Ghamandia Gathbandhan' comes back, then all the schemes running for the poor will stop," he claimed.

"I want to ask you, whether you want Lalu Prasad Yadav's Jungle Raj or Narendra Modi's Garib Kalyan? The Congress and Lalu Prasad Yadav asked us not to talk about Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) as Pakistan has a Nuclear bomb.

"I want to tell Lalu Prasad Yadav and his alliance that we are BJP people, we are not afraid of Pakistan's Nuclear bomb. PoK is ours, it will remain ours and we will take it. This is BJP's resolution," he said.

He also claimed that the NDA had already bagged more than 300 seats in the first five phases of polling in India. The polling in Arrah will be held in the seventh phase on June 1.

# "Can't Go By Sentiment": Supreme Court Junks Manipur Violence Petition

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court said it cannot go by sentiments and has to act as per law, as it refused to entertain a petition seeking contempt action for alleged non-compliance with the top court's order on the protection of properties of people displaced during the Manipur violence.

A vacation bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mithal said it was not satisfied with the contention that a case of contempt was made out against the respondents, including Manipur's Chief Secretary, and the petitioners can take recourse to remedy which may be available under the law.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for Manipur, told the bench that no case of contempt was made out, and the state and the Centre are on the ground doing everything they can to assuage public concerns.

"The effort is to keep the pot boiling which is very unfortunate," Bhati said, adding that the state was duty-bound to protect all and can file an updated status report on the issue.

The top court was hearing a petition claiming the respondents committed contempt of its September 25, 2023 order on protecting the properties of those displaced during the ethnic conflict. "Who according to you are in contempt?" the bench asked the petitioner's counsel who said the Chief Secretary and others are. "They are not the encroachers," the bench shot back. When the advocate said the



petitioners are living outside Manipur and are not in a position to go anywhere near Imphal, the bench said, "That does not mean that notice be issued against the Chief Secretary".

Bhati referred to last year's order which said Manipur and the Centre have a week to respond to the directions, including ensuring protection of properties of displaced persons and preventing their encroachment.

"We had filed a status report. We can file an updated status report," she said, adding the state is duty-bound to protect its citizens and their properties. "Manipur is still in a situation of uneasy calm as we speak. There are conflicting views and the state and central government are trying to assuage everyone," Bhati said. When the counsel for the petitioners claimed that their properties were looted in the presence of the police and they could place those videos before the court, the law officer objected to it and said wild allegations were being made.

# Former BRS MLA booked for alleged land grab, criminal intimidation

Hyderabad | Agencies

Former BRS MLA A. Jeevan Reddy has been booked by police for allegedly grabbing a businessman's land.

Chevela police registered the case against the Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) leader on a complaint by businessman Sama Damodhar Reddy, who alleged that the former MLA and his family members grabbed his land at Erlapally village of Ranga Reddy district.

The complainant told police that he purchased 20 acres and 20 guntas of land on the outskirts of Erlapally village in 2002 and constructed a function hall. Since then he has been in possession of the land.

The businessman alleged that last year former MLA



Jeevan Reddy, his wife A. Rajitha and mother A. Rajubai, who own the land adjacent to his land, occupied half of his property, demolished the function hall and constructed a new building.

The complainant said when he entered his land, D. Suresh, a watchman and 'Bihar, Punjab gang' mem-

bers and others obstructed them and threatened them with dire consequences.

Damodhar Reddy said when he went to his land again on May 22, 2024, members of gangs from other states didn't allow him into the land and threatened him with dire consequences, brandishing deadly weapons.

Based on a complaint, the police registered a case against Jeevan Reddy under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at Chevela police station under the Cyberabad police Commissionerate and took up an investigation.

Jeevan Reddy was BRS MLA from Armour constituency in Nizamabad district. He was elected twice in 2014 and 2018 but was defeated in the November 2023 elections.

# Mumbai set for night racing after two decades; 60 Super Cars, 25 Super Bikes to take part

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In all, over 60 Super Cars and 25 Super Bikes will roar to action on Saturday evening as night motor racing returns to Mumbai after nearly two decades in the Drag Star Night Race. The competitions will take place at the restricted Juhu Airport, once a haven for racing and off-roading among the elite. In keeping with the times, the night offers the modern avatar of racing: Drag Racing.

Several categories have been earmarked to make each race a battle between equals. Among them are Up To 450 BHP, 451 to 599 BHP, 600 to 799 BHP and 800 BHP and above for Super Cars and 850cc-1100 and 1100 to 3000cc for Super Bikes, the organisers informed in a release on Friday.

The JK Tyre-backed Drag Star Night Race promises high adrenaline and non-stop thrills as cars and bikes race in pairs along a 400-metre strip. "This is a high-end racing event.



Spectators will witness some of the fanciest and fastest cars go against each other. After pioneering the racing movement in India, we are now focusing on exciting motorsports

events at such exclusive locations to attract the youth," Sanjay Sharma, Head-Corporate Communication & Motorsport, JK Tyre, informed on Friday.

As the Traction Partner, JK Tyre will equip a Super Car with their new premium tyres (Levitas Ultra) and pit it against a Formula 4 car in an exhilarating race.

"We will see a mix of factory-built and modified cars and bikes. In addition to Ferraris, Lamborghinis, and McLaren, electric cars like the Mercedes EQS, Audi RS e-tron GT, and Porsche Taycan EV, will also make an appearance," Rongom Mukerji of Elite Octane, the organisers of the Drag Star Night Race, said.

"We have received a tremendous response from not only owners of Super Cars and Bikes but also from race enthusiasts. We are expecting a full house, marking a successful return of racing to the city," he was quoted as saying in a release on Friday.

Among the Super Bikes are BMWs, Suzuki Hayabusas, and Kawasakis to name a few.

# A LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENT IN INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

Renowned architect Dikshu Kukreja blends evolving sentiments of environmental protection, engineering marvel and modernistic design.

Hydraulics Plant Manufacturing Unit in Jaipur. Designed by the renowned architect Dikshu Kukreja, Managing Principal of CP Kukreja Architects, this cutting-edge facility is poised to redefine the landscape of industrial spaces, showcasing a perfect blend of innovation and sustainability.

Spread across 16 acres at Mahindra World City, Jaipur, this ultra-modern plant takes a comprehensive approach towards environmental sustainability and employee well-being. The design incorporates innovative solutions to mitigate potential environmental impacts associated with manufacturing processes, such as water and air pollution. Situated in the arid climate, the facility boasts robust insulation for thermal comfort and is seamlessly integrated into the surrounding traffic flow.



Dikshu Kukreja remarked, "The facility in Jaipur epitomizes our commitment to blending innovative technologies with sustainable design principles. It stands as a testament to our evolving consciousness towards environmental protection and sustainability."

The Plant layout optimizes the manufacturing process, ensuring logical flow and proximity of each step, thereby minimizing time and distance. Safety measures are paramount, with comprehensive fire protection systems, emergency stop buttons, process segregation, safety movements and warning signs installed throughout the plant. Quality control measures are integrated into the design, including dedicated areas for product inspection and testing, along with systems for tracking products through the manufacturing process.

This INR 200 crore project is poised to create approximately 2000 direct and 10000 indirect job opportunities, catering to the stringent quality requirements of global customers.

# INDIA bloc headed for clear mandate, says Jairam Ramesh

Chandigarh | Agencies

Congress in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, on Friday asserted the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc was headed for a clear and decisive mandate in the Lok Sabha polls.

Ramesh told the media here that trends from the first two phases had established that the INDIA bloc was set to form the government at the Centre, and cited how Prime Minister Narendra Modi's language has changed since April 19 and he started communalising his election strategy turning everything into a Hindu-Muslim issue.

The Congress General Secretary said the feedback from different states, where the party had fared badly in 2019, was quite encouraging and it was doing very well this time. He said history was repeating itself after 20 years. He said just like the Congress-led alliance stormed to power in 2004, it would storm to power this time also.

As regards the appointment of the Prime Minister, he said once the INDIA bloc gets a majority, the Prime Minister will be appointed within days. He said in 2004 it took three days to appoint Manmohan Singh and this



time, it may take even less than that. Besides, he pointed out that in India, it is the party or the alliance which wins the elections, not an individual. He said in a parliamentary democracy like India, elections are not individual-centric. Ramesh reaffirmed 'Paanch Nyay' -- justice for farmers, youth, labourers, women and proportionate representation, with five guarantees each for every 'Nyay'. He said the Congress has guaranteed in its manifesto that the MSP (minimum support price) will have a legal status, besides, farmers' loans will be waived off.

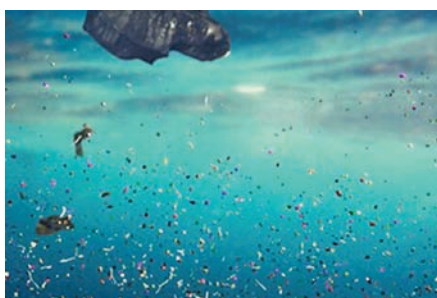
# Reducing plastic pollution by 5pc yearly may stabilise ocean microplastics: Study

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Cutting down plastic pollution by 5 per cent per year may help stabilise the level of microplastics -- plastics less than 5 mm in length -- on the surface of oceans, finds a study on Friday.

From human blood to testicles, to flora and fauna, microplastics have long been known as a significant environmental and health concern worldwide. To predict its impact on oceans, researchers at Imperial College London and GNS Science developed a model of eight different scenarios of plastic pollution reduction starting from 2026 up to 2100.

The results, published in Environmental Research Letters, showed that a reduction in plastic pollution by more than 5 per cent each year will stabilise and also prevent the increase of microplastics in the ocean. However, the modelling also predicted that even a yearly reduction of 20 per cent will "not significantly reduce existing microplastic levels, meaning they will persist in our oceans beyond 2100". Zhenna Azimrayat Andrews, from the Centre for Environmental Policy, Imperial College London noted that "stabilising



microplastic levels is the first step towards elimination" as they "never be a completely successful removal" from oceans.

"But the current global output of plastic pollution is so great, that even a 1 per cent annual reduction in pollution would make a big difference overall," added Zhenna. Meanwhile, the UN Environmental Assembly (UNEA) aims to adopt a legally binding resolution to completely eradicate the production of plastic pollution from 2040, including ocean microplastics. For this "a more coordinated international policy is necessary", and "changes should happen on an industrial and commercial level", the researchers argued.

# Benchmarking Reasonableness of Service Charges by Banks in India

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A pathbreaking new research benchmarks reasonableness of service charges levied by banks across India. The study, authored by Dr Ashish Das, Professor, Department of Mathematics, from the Indian Institute of Technology - Bombay (IIT-B), was commissioned by Moneylife Foundation. According to the Author, Dr. Das, this report is a holistic assessment of banks.

We are proud to share that the report says IDFC FIRST Bank come out as class apart vis-à-vis other banks in the private sector.

IDFC FIRST Bank has overall featured in Category A Bank among commercial banks. Even among the Category A Banks, IDFC FIRST Bank is the only Bank that charges ZERO FEES on all services in savings



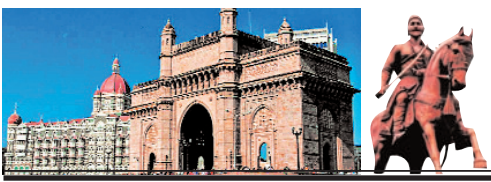
accounts, on all account variants, urban or rural, irrespective of AMB, whether Rs. 5000 (offered in Rural India), 10,000 or Rs. 25000.

The Moneylife Ashish Das report points out that On-Us (own bank's) ATM cash withdrawal, 16 banks charge Rs 10 or less, while the

remaining 9 banks charge at the caps set by RBI (Rs 20 or Rs 21). IDFC FIRST Bank is the only Bank that provides unlimited ATM cash withdrawal without any fees. For Off-Us (other banks'), while all banks charge Rs 20 or Rs 21, IDFC FIRST Bank charges ZERO.

IDFC FIRST Bank is one of the only four banks which do not charge for IMPS transactions. It is also one of the few banks that do not charge for SMS alerts which may vary to Rs. 100 or Rs. 150 per quarter, where limits have been specified by banks or higher if there are no limits specified.

The report also says that IDFC FIRST Bank is the only bank in India that does not charge debit card for any variant of its savings account, while annual fee for debit cards at most banks' ranges from Rs 100 to Rs 300. As per the report, NACH "mandate registration" are NIL at IDFC FIRST Bank, while charges in the system vary between Rs. 36 to Rs 108. Further, for failed NACH mandate, on an average, banks charge between Rs 261 to Rs. 455 while IDFCFB is the only bank that charges ZERO fees for failed NACH Mandate.



# Pune Police say Porsche crash accused was 'alert', faces 10-yr jail

Team Absolute | Pune

The Pune Police on Friday said the minor accused in the Porsche crash in which two persons were killed, was 'fully in his senses' at the time of the accident, and they have prepared a watertight case which can put him behind bars for 10 years.

Commissioner of Police Amitesh Kumar said the police were probing the case from all angles, right from the time when the accused left his house on May 18 (Saturday) night, and till the Porsche car disaster around 2.30 a.m. on May 19 (Sunday) that ignited protests and a nationwide furore.

On the discrepancies pertaining to the blood sample reports of the accused, the CP said that there were two blood reports taken, one in a private hospital and another in the government's Sassoon Hospital.

Speaking to the media on reports speculating that the family driver had reportedly claimed he (the driver) was at the wheel, Kumar said that the matter is being probed as to why he (the driver) uttered it or who forced him (the driver) to make such a claim.

Referring to political charges that there were two FIRs lodged in the matter, Kumar said that in the first FIR registered on Sunday (May 19) morning the IPC Section 304A was invoked, and as the seri-



ousness of the came forth, even the stringent Section 304 was added.

"There has been pressure on the police... We are making an absolutely watertight case to ensure that the accused can go to jail for 10 years," Kumar asserted.

On a purported rap video reel viral on social media networks since Thursday -- allegedly recorded by the accused youth inside the police station that day (May 19) with a huge dose of expletives -- the police chief said that it was a fake, and made by some other person.

"We are probing the fake video case, who has made it and the motives behind it, and take appropriate action," Kumar said while denying the Opposition leaders' allegations that the accused was served pizzas and burgers while in police

detention after the accident.

The fake video ostensibly using AI technology, was reportedly the brainchild of a techie from Madhya Pradesh who works for a New Delhi-based firm.

## Vishal Agarwal gets 14-day judicial remand

**Pune:** Pune builder Vishal S. Agarwal -- who was arrested in connection with the Porsche car crash driven by his minor son -- was remanded to a 14-days judicial custody, here on Friday, an official said. Agarwal was presented before a magistrate court after his two-day police remand ended today, and the police sought an additional seven days' custody to question him on various aspects of the case. Advocate Asim Sarode, representing some public interest groups said that this would pave the way for Agarwal to apply for bail.

A defence lawyer said that a bail application for Agarwal on Monday would be moved before a higher court. The Pune Police are likely to add more sections to Agarwal's case pertaining to attempts to destroy evidence after he allegedly asked his driver to take the blame for his son's crime on his head.

# Two drown as boat overturns in Sindhudurg

Team Absolute | Sindhudurg (Maharashtra)

At least two persons drowned and two others were missing after a boat carrying a consignment of ice toppled in windy weather here, an official said on Friday. The incident happened late Thursday night near Vengurla Port.

Three others sailing on the boat from Vengurla to Ratnagiri port, managed to jump off the sinking vessel and swam to safety in the darkness, said Vengurla Police Station Inspector Shivshankar Sawant.

"The body of one victim was fished out of the Arabian Sea waters this morning where it was flung by the strong water currents. Among those on the boat were five persons from Madhya Pradesh, one from Karnataka and one from



Ratnagiri in Maharashtra," Sawant told reporter.

The local fire brigade, Vengurla Police and SDRF with the help of local fisher-folks have launched a rescue to trace the two missing persons, said Sawant.

The boat flipped over around 9.30 p.m. off Vengurla but the police and other authorities learnt of it only after the trio swam ashore by midnight and raised an alarm following which a rescue operation

was organised this morning. Eyewitnesses said that

owing to the strong winds lashing the region since Thursday evening the small boat seemed to have lost control, went astray in the sea waters and started sinking.

As per preliminary information, the ill-fated boat was transporting ice for the fishing vessels which use it to preserve the fresh catch before it is offloaded at various big and small ports.

# Teen, Who Wrote Class 12 Exams With Feet, Passes With Distinction

Team Absolute | Latur

Physically challenged student from Maharashtra's Latur district, who wrote the Class 12 examination with his feet, overcame hurdles to score 78 per cent marks and is determined to become an IAS officer. Born without arms, Gaus Shaikh, a student in the Science stream, refused to take the help of an exam scribe and wrote with his toes during the examination for the Higher Secondary Certificate conducted in March. The results of the examination were declared earlier this week.

Hailing from a small village, the 17-year-old completed his schooling at Renukadevi Higher Secondary Ashram School in Vasantnagar Tanda, where his father works as a peon.

"Gaus started writing numbers and letters when he was four. His primary teachers got him to practise writing with his toes. He appears for exam papers just like other students within the duration. He takes care of all his work," said his father, Amjad.

Talking to media, Gaus said, "Since childhood, I have dreamt of serving my country, which is why I want to become an IAS officer."

# Thane blast toll rises to 13, chemical stink and ash cover 4 km area

Team Absolute | Thane

The death toll in the blast-cum-blaze of Amudan Chemicals Pvt Ltd factory in Dombivli town of Thane rose to 13 with another three bodies dug up from the rubble, officials said here on Friday. The disaster struck the industrial unit on Thursday afternoon.

Dombivli and surroundings of an area of around 4 km woke up to a strong stench of burnt chemicals and a thin layer of smoky ash on roads, shops and homes, from Thursday's tragedy and most people were seen moving around wearing face masks to avoid the stink.

The NDRE, SDRF and Fire Brigade, which had halted operations after dark, resumed the rescue operations and recovered three more bodies from the rubble, while another 64 persons were injured and admitted to various hospitals.

While the blaze was extinguished Thursday night, cooling operations were underway, the search continued for more victims feared trapped under the debris, and the effects of the disaster were felt in a radius of over 2-3 km.

This morning, the Amudan factory premises



inside the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) resembled a war zone emitting a foul smell of burnt metal, crashed buildings, chemicals and deaths.

Late on Thursday evening, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde visited the tragedy site and said that in view of the risks posed by certain categories of industries, the government plans to shift such hazardous factories to another location to avoid such disasters in future.

Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Leader of Opposition (Council) Ambadas Danve, who visited the accident site this morning called for booking the factory owners on charges of culpable homicide plus ordering a thorough probe into the incident. "The former Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government had planned to shift at least five factories having risk-prone units, but the subsequent government did nothing in the matter," Danve said, pointing an accusing finger at the ruling MahaYuti regime.

The Thane Police have booked the owners of the factory, Malay Mehta and his wife Malati Mehta under various sections pertaining to negligence, culpable homicide, etc.

# Laila Khan's Murder Case, Step-Father Gets Death Sentence



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The sessions court here on Friday sentenced Parvez Tak to death in the 2011 murder of his step-daughter and actor Laila Khan, her mother and four siblings.

Additional sessions judge Sachin Pawar had on May 9 found Tak guilty of murder and destruction of evidence, among other offences under the Indian Penal Code. The quantum of his sentence was decided on Friday. Tak was the third husband of Laila's

mother, Selina. The actor, her mother and her four siblings were killed at their bungalow at Igatpuri in Nashik district of Maharashtra in February 2011. The killings came to light a few months later when the Jammu and Kashmir police arrested Tak. The decomposed bodies of the victims were recovered from the bungalow later. The prosecution's case was that Tak first killed Selina after an argument over her properties and then killed Laila and her four siblings. The prosecution examined 40 witnesses against Tak.

# Heat wave to strike Akola, Amravati, Chandrapur

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Temperatures are most likely to rise in many parts of Maharashtra as reported by the Indian Meteorological Department. Several districts are also predicted to have momentary solace with rains and thunderstorms. With deteriorating conditions, the IMD warns people to brace themselves and prepare for the upcoming days.

The state can expect its highest temperatures at 46 degrees Celsius in the Akola district on Friday followed by heat wave declarations in Amravati and Chandrapur at 45 degrees Celsius each.

The wave is expected to continue in Akola for the next four days while Amravati and

Chandrapur are predicted to have the wave for the next two days.

Amidst the sweltering temperatures across the state, Nagpur, Yavatmal, Gadchiroli, Gondia Bhandara and Wardha can expect relief from the heat as showers are predicted on Friday and the following two days.

The IMD has issued yellow alerts in 23 districts for the next two days including Dhule, Akola, Amravati, Bhandara and Nagpur with Akola having yellow alerts for the entire week. The IMD report states "Thunderstorm Lightning With Gusty Wind Speed Reaching 3040 Kmph Most Likely To Occur At Isolated Places" in its city forecast reports. The minimum temperature expected is 27 in the upcoming week in almost all districts.

# Bombay HC permits sale of liquor in Mumbai after announcement of poll results on June 4

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Friday permitted the sale of liquor in Mumbai after the announcement of Lok Sabha poll results on June 4. A vacation bench of Justices N R Borkar and Somasekar Sundaresan said the ban imposed by the city Collector on sale of liquor by hotels, restaurants, bars and permit rooms shall cease to have an effect upon declaration of results of elections in the city of Mumbai.

Additional government pleader Jyoti Chavan informed the bench that the Collector for Mumbai district suburban has already issued a letter modifying the earlier notification declaring June 4 as a dry day.

However, no such modification was issued by the Mumbai city collector.

The bench then quipped that while people in the city suburbs can drink after declaration of results those in the city cannot.

"Let's work it out. There has to be some parity," the high court said.

The court was hearing petitions filed by the



Indian Hotel and Restaurant Association (AHAR) challenging the orders passed by the Collectors of the Mumbai city and Mumbai district suburban declaring the whole day of June 4 as a dry day.

The pleas said that the sale of liquor should be permitted once election results are declared.

As per the pleas, the petitioner association had in April approached the Mumbai city collector and the Mumbai district suburban collector requesting

them to review their decision declaring the whole day of June 4 as a dry day.

However, the collectors said no such review could be done as the orders were passed pursuant to directives from the Election Commission of India (ECI).

The petitions claimed that the association members pay huge amounts as license fees to the state government for carrying on business, whereas there are several illicit liquor manufacturers and bootleggers who have been manufacturing and selling illicit liquor as well as Indian Made Foreign Liquor and beer in Mumbai.

Whenever the authorised outlets for sale of liquor are closed for various reasons, such illegal businesses thrive and bootleggers make huge profits through the illegal and illicit sale of liquor, taking undue advantage of the fact that liquor is not officially available.

The pleas had sought for the Collectors' orders to be modified to state that the establishments which sell liquor be permitted to open up for business after the declaration of results instead of the whole day.

# Water stock in Maharashtra dams dips to 23 per cent; over 3,600 tankers pressed into service

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The water stock of the Maharashtra dams has dipped to 23.63 per cent and water is being provided through 3,692 tankers in 2,973 villages and 7,671 hamlets spread across 25 districts across the state due to water scarcity, the officials said on Friday.

Division-wise, 920 dams in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar currently hold only 9.55 per cent water stock, Pune 17.59 per cent, Nashik 25.74 per cent, Konkan 37.11 per cent, Nagpur 38.83 per cent, and Amravati 39.94 per cent, the figures issued by the irrigation department said, the news agency reported on Friday.

On May 15, 2023, a total of 334 villages and 774 hamlets were being provided water through 245 tankers.

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar division has borne the maximum brunt of water scarcity with 1,256 villages and 506 hamlets being provided water through 1,849 tankers. Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district



has 708 tankers to provide water to 435 villages and 65 hamlets, an official release said.

In Nashik division, 756 villages and 2570 hamlets are being supplied water from 812 tankers, while in Pune division 631 villages and 3,829 hamlets are getting water from 755 tankers.

In Konkan, 232 villages and 766 hamlets are being provided water from 177 tankers, Amravati division's 87 villages are being provided water from 92 tankers. In Nagpur 11 villages are getting water through seven tankers.

There is 55.09 per cent storage in all dam projects in the state as com-

pared to 80.94 per cent in the year 2023.

Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar division has 31.93 per cent storage, the official release said.

Meanwhile, the groundwater level has gone down, by more than three metres in some cases, in 51 out of 76 tehsils in Marathwada region of Maharashtra, an official report has said, reported the PTI. The situation is somewhat better in Nanded district of Maharashtra which had received good rainfall last year compared to the other seven districts, it said.

Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde on Thursday reviewed the drought situation in this central Maharashtra region by holding a meeting.

The official report submitted to the chief minister said that groundwater level has gone down by upto one metre in 18 talukas (tehsils), by between one to two metres in 15 talukas, between two to three metres in 14 talukas and more than three metres in four talukas.



EDITOR'S SPECS

### 'Mini-Assembly' election in UP...?

Uttar Pradesh could be heading for a mini-assembly election after the Lok Sabha polls are over if the 15 legislators contesting the parliamentary elections emerge as winners. The 15 legislators, including three ministers of the Yogi Adityanath government, are trying their luck in the elections while a Rajya Sabha member of BJP is also contesting the Lok Sabha polls. To fill up the assembly seats, vacated by the winning candidates, elections will have to be held within six months. The BJP, SP, Congress, RLD and Nishad Party have fielded their MLAs in the election for Lok Sabha seats of the state. The declared candidates include 13 state assembly members and two members of the Legislative Council. Not only the ruling BJP, but the SP has also fielded five of its MLAs candidates for the Lok Sabha elections. Leading from the front is the SP President and leader of the Opposition in the state, Akhilesh Yadav, who is contesting from the Kannauj Lok Sabha seat. Presently, Akhilesh is a member of the assembly representing the Karhal assembly segment of the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat. To challenge BJP candidate and Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on the prestigious Lucknow Lok Sabha seat, SP has fielded MLA Ravidas Mehrotra, who represents the Lucknow Central Assembly seat. Among the two Congress MLAs, Virendra Chaudhary, elected from Pharenda assembly seat of Maharajganj district, is also contesting from Maharajganj Lok Sabha to challenge the BJP that has fielded Union minister Pankaj Chaudhary from Maharajganj Lok Sabha seat. The two members of the Legislative Council (Upper House) contesting the elections are BJP's Jitin Prasad and BSP's Bhimrao Ambedkar. The BSP has also given the ticket to its Legislative Council member Bhimrao Ambedkar from Hardoi seat reserved for Scheduled Caste.

# A border state that needs to be secured

DC Pathak

The nation can still recall how Punjab was caught in the grip of terrorism in the latter 1980s that could be countered only through sustained use of armed police, socio-political efforts at restoring peace and the diplomatic initiatives taken for mobilising world opinion against the call of 'Khalistan'. The environment of hurt feelings amongst Sikhs created by Op Blue Star at the Golden Temple, the rise of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale as the fulcrum of the 'Khalistan movement' in the state, and the full exploitation of the situation by Pakistan which pumped in arms, explosives and trained militants into Punjab had all combined at that time to push the level of terrorist violence all over the state to an unprecedented high with things coming to a pass where people in Chandigarh and Mohali stopped leaving their houses after sunset. The comprehensive countermeasures of the state did succeed by the turn of the decade -- the execution of Operation Black Thunder in 1988, which was based on two fundamental precepts that no policeman would enter the premises of the Golden Temple and no bullet would be fired from outside towards the Temple, played a major part in turning the things around for the eventual return of peace to Punjab. What really marked the end of the chapter of terrorist violence in the border state was the restoration of Hindu-Sikh unity against the machinations of the external enemy to permanently damage their brotherly relations by instigating targeted killings on communal lines. This ground reality of peace rooted in Hindu-Sikh unity has held on for decades -- it found validation in the political alliance between the BJP and Akali Dal in recent times. Punjab happily is once more acknowledged as the prime contributor to the nation's defence as well as the country's food economy. The border state however is again being targeted by forces inimical to India. The situation in Punjab, with its strategic location, is becoming vulnerable in the face of the evil designs of the adversaries to revive the call of Khalistan outside India in the hope that this would produce an induction effect within the state. The people of Punjab are averse to any disruptive ideas and remain united in faith -- being totally devoted to the teachings of Guru Nanak and the recitation of 'Shabad' at Gurudwaras. There is complete socio-cultural harmony between Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab as also in the rest of the country. India's enemies are therefore trying to operate externally to work out ways of injecting trouble in the state from outside. The Khalistan movement is being revived in the US, Canada, Australia and the UK by enemy agents trying to work in the Sikh diaspora, particularly among the younger generations who had remained somewhat cut off from Punjab, the land of their origin, possibly losing some emotional attachment with India as well. They could fall for the separatist rhetoric more easily particularly when this was backed by the narrative of 'majoritarianism' and 'anti-minorityism' built against the regime by anti-India lobbies abroad often working with some of the civil society groups at home. In Punjab, sporadic attempts to use Gurudwaras to revive the Amritdhari cult have come to notice. Isolated incidents of assault on a Granthi or desecration of Guru Granth Sahib have to be guarded against



as they could prove to be the flag points for instigated trouble. It is also clearly evident that there is an organised attempt by the adversary to step up the induction of narcotics into Punjab from across the border to increase drug addiction among the youth there making them vulnerable to outside influence and the manoeuvring of enemy agents. Slowly but steadily the Pak-supported Khalistan movement is raising its head in Sikh diaspora abroad, particularly since 2022. Vandalism against India's diplomatic missions, defacing of temples and glorifying past incidents pertaining to Khalistan terror in India have been resorted to in a planned manner. These subversive activities abroad have been accompanied by some violent actions on Indian soil as well. There was infiltration of Khalistan elements in the farmer's agitation of 2020 and on January 26, 2021, some Sikh protestors entered Red Fort and hoisted Nishan Sahib's flag there. Meanwhile, Amritpal Singh, a known Khalistan protagonist who had links with the US-based Sikhs For Justice (SFJ), along with thousands of supporters carrying a copy of Guru Granth Sahib and also some firearms, raided Ajnala Police Station near Amritsar on February 23, 2023, and forcibly secured the release of Lovepreet Singh Toofan, an aid of Amritpal, arrested earlier in a case of violence. Amritpal Singh, the leader of self-styled Waris Punjab De, is known to have been trained by Pak ISI and housed in Dubai which is an important hub of ISI. He visited Rode village in Moga district the birthplace of Sant Bhindranwale in an attempt to emulate the latter. He was finally arrested in April 2023 and shifted to Dibrugarh jail in Assam considering his potential for whipping up violence in Punjab. Apart from spreading the Khalistan movement, Amritpal Singh was actively involved in smuggling drugs into Punjab and promoting addiction amongst the youth of Punjab. All of this proved Pak ISI's hand behind the revival of Khalistan call in Punjab and the pumping of drugs into the state with the intention of raising a body of addicted youth who would do its bidding in subverting the border state through the separatist Khalistan movement. The Sino-Pak axis remains hostile to India and has become much more active after the abrogation of Article 370 by the Indian Parliament. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passes through the northern part of PoK and it was vehemently opposed by India. Operational collusion between China and Pakistan against India has lately been

reflected in the use of Chinese drones by Pak ISI for dropping arms and narcotic consignments in Kashmir and Punjab. There are reports of Pak-based Islamic militant outfits being used for building contacts with Sikh extremist elements in Punjab. Pak ISI is likely to repeat its modus operandi in Punjab and do a few things that had helped it in the 1980s to build terrorism in the state. Gurudwaras were used for indoctrinating and even sheltering militants, training in techniques of making IEDs was imparted -- cycle bombs made by packing RDX into the cylinders of a cycle and fitting it with a timer became a trademark of terror at that time -- and Hindu-Sikh enmity and distrust was whipped up by directing targeted killings of Hindus. Any beginnings of this kind of violence should be promptly noticed. Pak ISI knows it is not easy to build the Khalistan movement at present but buoyed by the Sino-Pak axis, it is determined to press for it by first promoting the idea outside and using pro-Khalistan groups to inject the same into Punjab. Pak ISI is prompted to concentrate on Punjab in line with its old K2 plan as the Centre had successfully controlled the situation in Kashmir after abrogating Art 370 of the Constitution. It would be prudent to set off coordinated measures in Punjab to mitigate any chances of the revival of the Khalistan idea in the state. Punjab needs to be put in charge of a Governor with a national security background who had knowledge of how the terrorist problem in the state was handled in the past. An important function of the Head of the state would be to guide and educate the state government about the operational measures needed to be put in place, particularly in a border state and the socio-political environment that had to be created to mitigate the threat of separatism in the name of Khalistan. Security of the border state has to be kept above party politics. Since the adversary this time is using the pro-Khalistan elements abroad to inject violence in Punjab, intelligence coverage of Khalistan groups outside India already identified had to be stepped up further. India has designated some leaders of Indian origin actively engaged in promoting the call of Khalistan in countries like the US and Canada and all efforts have to be made to get them extradited to India to face legal action. India has launched a diplomatic effort to counter the anti-India activity abroad and called the ruling elites in the concerned countries to check the same. Watch on social media used for the spread of Khalistan separatism and indoctrination of youth has to be intensified and effective action taken particularly against insiders colluding with such activity -- under the new Penal codes passed by the Parliament in December last year. Democratic forces at home have to be encouraged to speak up against the subversive call of Khalistan and uphold the unity of India. We have to be ahead of the troublemakers within the country or outside in countering any threats to national security, integrity and sovereignty. (The writer is a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau. Views are personal)

## international

### Iran releases 1st investigation report on President Raisi's helicopter crash

**Tehran** | Agencies  
The General Staff of Iran's Armed Forces has released the first report on the causes of a recent helicopter crash that resulted in the deaths of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his entourage. Following the crash, a senior investigation committee composed of experts, specialists, and technicians arrived at the scene on Monday morning, the semi-official Tasnim news agency quoted the report by the General Staff of Iran's Armed Forces as saying on Friday. According to the report, the helicopter had remained on its predetermined course all along the way and had not deviated from the flight route. Nearly one minute and a half before the incident, the pilot of the crashed helicopter had contacted the other two helicopters of the President's convoy, the report said. No trace of bullets or similar items



and rescue operations to continue until nightfall and then throughout the night, the report said, adding, "At 5 a.m. local time on Monday, with the assistance of drones, the exact location of the incident was identified." No suspicious issue had been detected in the conversations between the watchtower and the flight crew, it added. More details would be provided after further investigations, it said. Raisi and his entourage were en route to East Azerbaijan province when the helicopter carrying them crashed in a mountainous area on Sunday. Also on board the helicopter were Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Mohammad Ali Ale-Hashem, the representative of Iran's Supreme Leader to East Azerbaijan. Raisi was laid to rest on Thursday in the holy shrine of Imam Reza in his hometown, the northeastern city of Mashhad.

have been detected on the wreckage of the crashed helicopter, it added as quoted by Xinhua news agency report. After crashing into the mountain, the helicopter had caught fire, it said. "Complications of the region, fog, and low temperature" had caused the search

### South Korea sanctions 7 North Koreans, 2 Russian ships for illegal arms, fuel trade with Russia

**Seoul** | Agencies  
South Korea on Friday imposed independent sanctions on seven North Koreans and two Russian vessels for engaging in illicit weapons and fuel trade with Russia and other activities in violation of UN sanctions. The latest move came as South Korea seeks to step up efforts to curb the North's activities banned under multiple UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions after a UN panel monitoring the enforcement of North Korean sanctions ended at the end of last month after Russia vetoed the resolution on extending the panel's mandate, Yonhap news agency reported. Rim Yong-hyok, head of the Syrian unit of the Korea Mining and Development Trading Corp., a major North Korean arms dealer, is among the seven North Koreans. Rim is suspected of involvement in the illegal trade of weapons and arms equipment with Russia. He was cited in the UN panel's March report on North Korean sanctions implementation as a man who handled weapons deals with Russia's Wagner mercenary group. Han Hyok-chol, head of Taeryong Trading Co., is accused of bringing Russian diesel into North Korea. Under Resolution 2397, adopted by the UNSC in 2017, UN member states are prohibited from exporting more than 4 mil-



lion barrels of crude oil and 5,000,000 barrels of refined oil to the North annually. The five others are: Kim Jong-gil, Jang Ho-yong, Ri Kyong-sik, Ri yong-min and Park Kwang-hyok. They are believed to have worked illegally at IT companies in Vladivostok in Russia's Far East to earn hard currency to fund the state's nuclear and missile programs -- also banned under Resolution 2375. The two Russian vessels, MAIA-1 and MARIA, are suspected of transporting containers loaded with military supplies to and from North Korea and Russia. The sanctioned vessels need special approval from South Korean port authorities if they wish to enter a South Korean port.

### ABOUT 100 FEARED DEAD DURING HUGE LANDSLIDE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

**Sydney** | Agencies  
About 100 people were feared dead after a huge landslide battered a remote village in Papua New Guinea, the media reported. The incident occurred around 3:00 a.m. local time in Kaokalam Village in Enga Province, located over 600 km northwest of Port Moresby, Xinhua news agency reported quoting ABC. "It has occurred when people were still asleep in the early hours, and the entire village has gone down," Elizabeth Laruma, President of the Porgera Women in Business Association, was quoted as saying. "From what I can presume, it's about 100-plus people who are buried beneath the ground," Laruma added. Details are awaited.

### Israel limits Spanish diplomatic services over Palestine recognition

**Tel Aviv** | Agencies  
Two days after Spain announced its intention to recognise an independent state of Palestine, Israel has imposed restrictions on the work of Spanish diplomats in the country. The Spanish Embassy in Tel Aviv and the Spanish Consulate General in East Jerusalem will in future be prohibited from offering their services to Palestinians from West Bank, Foreign Minister Israel Katz posted on the social media platform X on Friday. Katz justified the measure by pointing to a statement by Spain's Deputy Prime Minister, Yolanda Diaz, which he categorised as anti-Semitic. "In response to Spain's recognition of a Palestinian state and the anti-Semitic call by Spain's deputy prime minister to not just recognise a Palestinian state but to 'liberate Palestine from the river to the sea', I have decided to sever the connection between Spain's representation in Israel and the



Palestinians," he wrote. In a speech shared on X, Diaz used the controversial slogan, "Palestine will be free from the river to the sea." It suggests that there should be a free Palestine in an area from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea - which includes the area where Israel is located. Diaz belongs to the left-wing electoral alliance Sumar, a junior coalition partner of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. Spain, Ireland and Norway announced on Wednesday that they plan to recognise an independent Palestinian state at the end of May. Israel reacted with indignation to these announcements.

### 24 killed by Israeli army in Gaza



**Gaza** | Agencies  
At least 24 people were killed overnight when the Israeli army targeted two houses in northern and central Gaza, the media reported. A total of 16 Palestinians, including 10 children, were killed and several others injured after the Israeli army shelled a house in the center of Gaza City on Wednesday night, Palestinian official news agency Wafa said on Thursday. At dawn on Thursday, the forces targeted a house in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, killing at least eight, Xinhua news agency reported. The Israel Defense Forces said in a statement that its operational activities targeting "terrorists" would continue throughout the Gaza Strip.

### Taiwan reports 49 Chinese warplanes in airspace amid military drills

**Taipei** | Agencies  
Taiwan's Defence Ministry on Friday said it had registered 49 Chinese warplanes in Taiwan's airspace within 24 hours, the highest number of Chinese daily sorties so far this year. Among them, 35 Chinese military aircraft were spotted crossing the median line of the Taiwan Strait. In addition, the ministry said it had detected 19 Chinese navy vessels and seven Chinese coast guard ships operating around Taiwan on Thursday. China on Thursday launched a two-day major military exercise around Taiwan, apparently to simulate a blockade around the island. On Friday, Taiwan's Air Force also released photos and videos taken on Thursday, which showed the



activities of Chinese Navy vessels and coast guard ships in the waters west of Taiwan. The Chinese military exercises came three days after the inauguration of Taiwan's new President, Lai Ching-te, of the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Tensions across the

nature but also "destroyed the status quo." In the parliament, the DPP caucus on Friday condemned China's unilaterally altering the status quo, demanding an immediate halt of the drills. On Monday, Lai said that peace, mutual benefits, and prosperous coexistence would be common goals for both sides of the Taiwan Strait. A Chinese naval Colonel said on Thursday that conducting such military exercises was also "a severe punishment for the separatist forces of Taiwan independence and a serious warning against interference and provocation by outside forces." Taiwan has had an independent government since 1949, but China considers the self-ruled democracy part of its territory.





## ADEQUATE QUANTITY OF FERTILIZERS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE AT ALL PLACES FOR KHARIF: CHIEF MINISTER DR. YADAV

Farmers who bring good quality produce in crop procurement should be honored and rewarded. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav reviewed agricultural inputs.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has said that adequate quantity of fertilizers should be available at all places for Kharif. It should be ensured that there is no possibility of black marketing anywhere. Central government is being contacted continuously to provide adequate fertilizers in the state. He said that farmers should be encouraged to use balanced fertilizer NPK. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav was reviewing agricultural inputs in the ministry. Chief Secretary Veera Rana, Agriculture Production Commissioner Ashok Barnwal, Principal Secretary Cooperation Deepali Rastogi and other officials were present in the meeting.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav received information about the demand of urea, DAP, NPK, SSP and MOP fertilizers in the state, the quantity received so far and the distribution system. Information was also given in the meeting about the availability of



seeds of paddy, kodo, kutki, maize, sorghum, millet, urad, groundnut,

soybean, cotton etc. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that the process of honoring and rewarding the farmers who bring good quality produce in crop procurement should also be started.

It is necessary to encourage the use of natural fertilizers to maintain the fertility of the soil

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that farmers should be motivated to increase the use of natural manure in the state. A system should be developed to help farmers using bio-fertilizers, so that farmers come forward to buy organic products. There is also a need to motivate farmers to grow Anna by integrating animal husbandry and composting. This will help in keeping the crop cycle balanced and the fertility of the land will also remain for a long time. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that initiatives should be taken at the village level with Gau-Seva organizations, social-religious organizations for the protection of cows and their proper care.

## State government should take initiative to bring back children stranded in Kyrgyzstan: Congress

Team Absolute | Bhopal

There is unrest in Kyrgyzstan and around 1,200 children from Madhya Pradesh are stranded there. State Congress President Jitu Patwari has demanded from the state government to take necessary initiatives to bring the children safely.

Congress state president Jitu Patwari wrote on Twitter, "1,200 children of Madhya Pradesh are stranded in Kyrgyzstan. The Madhya Pradesh government has assured to take them out safely, but as per the political promise, there is no arrangement to bring them back."

Citing the statements of students stranded in Kyrgyzstan, Patwari said, "Students say that Pakistan has evacuated its students from here, but the Indian government has not taken any concrete steps yet. Only in statements and media headlines. The government is active. In reality, the children living in the flats are not able to go out because they have to go hungry. There is fighting going on. Local people are also beating up the girls."

Patwari further said, "Children say that earlier return tickets were available for around Rs 15-20 thousand, but since the situation has worsened, flight tickets are available for Rs 50 thousand. This is not possible for everyone. Expressing their displeasure, the children have also told the media that the Pakistan government has sent a free-of-cost flight to evacuate its students from Kyrgyzstan, but the



Indian government still seems to be unconcerned. Indian students stranded in Kyrgyzstan tagged the Indian Government, the Indian Embassy and the Foreign Minister on social media and appealed, but did not get any response. In this situation, children are more dejected and scared."

While describing the situation in Kyrgyzstan, Jitu Patwari wrote to the Chief Minister of the state, Dr. Mohan Yadav, "I have received information that some landlords are throwing out children living in flats in Bishkek. When they are going out, the local people Don't you know that their families are also very worried and are expecting that Madhya Pradesh will also take initiative in this serious situation. Will make efforts for the safe return of the children."

Let us tell you that the Chief Minister of the state, Dr. Mohan Yadav had recently talked to the children stranded in Kyrgyzstan on video call and had also assured of their return soon.

## Elderly man commits suicide by consuming poison in Guna

Team Absolute | Guna

An elderly man committed suicide by consuming poison in Guna district of Madhya Pradesh on Friday. The reason for suicide is said to be the two people not returning the borrowed money. The family members placed the body on the road and blocked it, demanding action against the accused.

According to the information, an elderly man named Chintaharan consumed poison on Friday in Bajranggarh area. He was taken to the hospital in critical condition, where doctors declared him dead. According to family members, when tea was sent to Chintaharan in the morning, he was repeatedly drinking water and refused to drink tea, saying that he had consumed sulfas.

Family members say that



two people were continuously harassing him. Both the people had taken loans and were not ready to return the borrowed amount.

The deceased elderly Chintaharan has two sons and a daughter, who are married. Angered by the death of the old man, the family members took the body to the old bus stand intersection and blocked it. Police reached the spot and explained to the family members. After that the traffic jam ended. A post-mortem of the body has been done.

The relatives of the deceased have told that about

eight months ago a person had borrowed Rs 50 thousand from them for two months. When Chintaharan asked for money from that person, he refused to return the amount and also misled him. Also threatened and said that I will not return the money.

According to family members, the person who had borrowed money is of criminal nature. Once when Chintaharan went with his son to ask for money, the person taking the loan threatened him and chased him away. Since then Chintaharan was worried.

After retiring from the forest department job, he had received Rs 85 thousand, out of which he had lent Rs 50 thousand. Chintaharan was upset over not getting back the loan amount and took the step of committing suicide.

## SEVERE HEAT WAVE IN MADHYA PRADESH

Team Absolute | Bhopal

With the increasing heat of the sun in Madhya Pradesh, the havoc of heat wave is also increasing, the temperature has crossed 46 degrees Celsius. At present, a large part of the state is not going to get relief from heat and heat wave.

The Meteorological Department has predicted cloudy sky at some places in the coming days. The heat is showing its full force in the state at the end of May. The situation is such that fans start blowing hot winds right from the morning, the intensity of sunlight is affecting the life of people.

By afternoon the situation is such that people have started shying away from coming out of their homes. The streets turn into silence. The temperature of the state is continuously increasing. Guna was the hottest with a maximum temperature of 46.6 degrees Celsius. At the same time, the temperature in almost half of the state is more than 44 degrees Celsius and the heat waves are scorching.

Summer is at its full strength in Malwa-Nimar. The temperature here is between 44 to 45 degrees Celsius. The temperature in Pachmarhi, the coldest place in the state, has also reached 37.6 degrees.



There is a possibility of increase in disease due to increasing heat and temperature and the effect is also visible in many parts.

The health of three girl students living in a college hostel in Narmadapuram deteriorated on Thursday night.

He complained of vomiting and dehydration. One student fainted. All three girl students were taken to the hospital.

Doctors say that the health of these girl students has deteriorated due to the heat.

According to the Meteorological Department, cyclonic circulation has formed over Rajasthan, due to which westerly winds are effective in Indore and Ujjain divisions of Nimar-Malwa.

Due to this reason, there is effect of heat wave in some districts. Along with Gwalior-Chambal, there is more impact of heat in Nimar-Malwa.

The Meteorological Department has predicted the effect of heat wave in Gwalior, Morena, Sheopur Kalan, Bhind, Shivpuri, Datia, Niwari, Ratlam and Dhar in the coming days. At the same time, some parts of the state may also remain cloudy, which will provide some relief from the heat in those parts. Overall, a large part of the state is scorching and the heat waves are scorching.

## VACCINATION CENTER STARTED IN THE DISTRICT VACCINE CENTER

WORKING PARENTS WILL NOW BE ABLE TO GET THEIR CHILDREN VACCINATED EVEN DURING HOLIDAYS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A model vaccination center has been created at the District Vaccine Centre. Vaccination will be done here every day from 10 am to 6 pm. In this centre, along with all the vaccines given to children, adult BCG vaccine will also be administered. Vaccination facility will be available at the center even on holidays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm so that officers and employees working in offices can get their children vaccinated. Chief Medical and Health Officer, Bhopal, Dr. Prabhakar Tiwari said that the vaccine is an effective way to protect against serious dis-



eases like TB, Hepatitis B, Polio, Measles, Rota Virus Diarrhea, Japanese Encephalitis, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Haemophilus Influenza, Pneumococcal Pneumonia. And there is a safe solution. Vaccination services

are regularly provided free of cost in health institutions and Anganwadi centres. But many times, working parents are not able to get vaccinated as per the scheduled vaccination schedule due to office commitments. In view of this, a model vaccination cen-

ter has been established in the District Vaccine Center located at Jaiprakash Hospital premises. So that the family members can come and get vaccinated as per their convenience. To get vaccinated, children will have to bring their vaccination card.

## POCSO Tracking Portal is a digital and transparent system for children suffering from sexual exploitation

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Recognizing the need for a dedicated system to monitor the implementation of the Act mentioned under Section-44 of the POCSO Act-2012 and to facilitate services to POCSO victims, the POCSO Tracking Portal was launched on July 17, 2022.

Keeping in mind the complex and sensitive issues related to sexual abuse of children in India, the POCSO Act was implemented in the year 2012. The main purpose of this Act is to protect children from crimes like sexual harassment, sexual harassment and obscenity.

The tracking portal has been conceptualised in collaboration with the National

Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights. This portal is an initiative of the Commission, where for the first time, monitoring of the rights and facilities being provided to children suffering from child sexual abuse is being ensured through technology. Currently, this portal is working to monitor the services of protection, care, compensation and rehabilitation of children suffering from child sexual abuse.

Features of Trekking Portal

This portal is a digital and transparent mechanism for child related services. It provides an easy and useful system for the police and DCPA to effectively discharge their duties. It improves the func-

tioning of DCPU, CWC and police. It implements child friendly processes. It facilitates the exchange of information between the Police Department, Department of Women and Child Development and Legal Services Authorities. It also has the function of monitoring the rehabilitation process in cases of child sexual abuse, fixing accountability of duty holders in cases of child sexual abuse, providing assistance to SCPCR for better monitoring of cases. Through this, NALSA / SLA will be able to see the status of pending cases of district level DLSA and will be able to access information about support persons, interpreters, translators, experts and counselors associated with the victims.

## Shaan-e-Bhopal Express completes 25 years of glorious service

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Under the guidance of Divisional Railway Manager Devashish Tripathi, Bhopal Division's prestigious train 'Shaan-e-Bhopal Express' completed 25 years of its glorious service on May 23, setting the standards of punctuality, high level cleanliness and excellent services. In these 25 years, Bhopal Express has received awards many times by living up to the standards set by the Railway Board and has become the pride of Bhopal Railway Division.

On this special occasion, railway fans, train crew (loco pilots and guards) and railway officials together celebrated the birthday with great joy on platform number 1 of Rani Kamalapati Railway Station. Shan-e-Bhopal Express is



an important and prestigious train of Indian Railways. This train became the first ISO certified train of Indian Railways in 2003. Due to its highest service standards and management system, it also had the distinction of being the first IMS (Integrated Management System) certified train of Indian Railways in 2021. Additionally, Shaan-e-Bhopal was also awarded

the "Ideal Train of Indian Railways" award in 2018, a testament to the recognition of its excellence and service.

On this golden journey of 25 years of Shaan-e-Bhopal Express, expressed gratitude to all the passengers, rail fans, and employees who contributed in making it successful. This train is a symbol of excellence and dedication of Indian Railways.

## 3 D Bioprinter inaugurated at AIIMS Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Professor (Dr) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, inaugurated a state-of-the-art 3D bioprinter in the Cell and Tissue Engineering Laboratory of the Department of Translational Medicine on 24.05.2024, heralding a new chapter in the institute's history. "With the introduction of this cutting-edge technology, we are poised to find cures for many previously incurable diseases," said Professor Singh. "This is an important step, especially in the fight against fatal diseases like cancer."

The 3D bioprinter, acquired under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund from the Vardhman Group, utilizes an advanced manufacturing process to create three-dimensional biological structures. This is achieved by layering bio-ink composed of living cells and biomaterials. The potential applications of 3D bioprinting are vast, spanning regenerative medicine, pharmaceuticals, and biomedical research.

Professor Singh elaborated on the

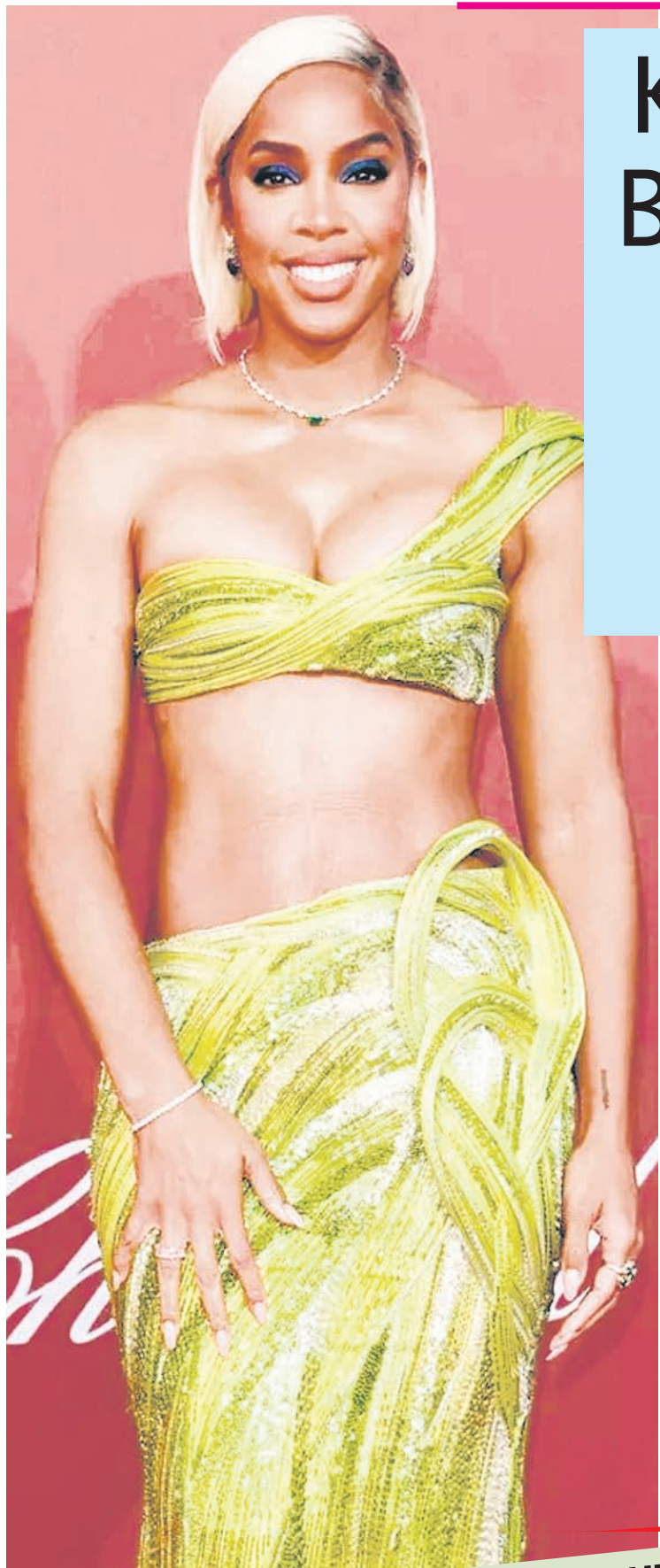


capabilities of the 3D bioprinter, explaining that it can create human tissues, such as skin, which previously required organ donation or surgical extraction. "This technology allows us to generate living tissues like blood

vessels, bones, heart tissues, and skin. It is particularly revolutionary for regenerating bone and skin tissues, offering new hope in treating severe conditions like cancer." Expressing gratitude to the

Vardhman Group, Professor Singh acknowledged their vital role in this achievement. "Their generous support under the CSR initiative has enabled us to set new benchmarks in healthcare. We look forward to continued collaboration to enhance our health services further." S Pal, Director of the Vardhman Group, and other officials attended the inaugural event. Dr. Rupinder Kaur, Additional Professor and Head of the Department of Translational Medicine, welcomed the gathering and highlighted the transformative potential of 3D bioprinting in shaping the future of healthcare.

This facility at AIIMS Bhopal is the first of its kind, positioning the institute at the forefront of medical innovation and research. The 3D bioprinter is expected to significantly advance the capabilities of AIIMS Bhopal in providing cutting-edge treatments and improving patient outcomes. This advancement marks a significant leap in the treatment of incurable diseases, including cancer, and opens new frontiers in medical research and healthcare.



## Kelly Rowland Breaks Silence on Cannes : 'I Have a Boundary'

Los Angeles | Agencies

The 'Mea Culpa' actress explained that both she and the woman 'know what happened,' when she was seen scolding a staff member at the French film festival. Kelly Rowland has spoken out about her heated exchange on the red carpet for the Cannes Film Festival on Tuesday, May 21. The Destiny's Child alum, 43, spoke about the experience in an interview with The Associated Press, shared on Thursday, May 23. While she didn't say directly what happened, Kelly did hint at some discrimination against her, while speaking about her thoughts.

When asked about the incident, Kelly explained briefly what had happened from her perspective. "The woman knows what happened. I know what happened, and I have a boundary, and I stand by those boundaries," she explained to AP. "I stood my ground, and she felt like she had to stand hers, and I stood my ground, and that's it."

During the interview, Kelly also alleged that there was some discrimination going on, but she didn't divulge many other details. She hinted that the woman had "scolded" her while she walked the carpet. "There were other women that attended that carpet who did not quite look like me, and they didn't get that: scolded or pushed off or told to get off," she told the outlet.

Kelly received much attention when a video of her having a heated exchange with a staff member at Cannes went viral. The singer sported a beautiful red strapless gown for the premiere of Marcello Mio, but during her time walking the red carpet, she could be seen getting into it with a staff member. At one point, she pointed her finger in the staff member's face, and appeared to scold them.



## Nick Jonas brings the house down at Cannes AIDS gala

Cannes | Agencies

Priyanka Chopra's husband and pop star Nick Jonas performed his headbanger number 'Jealous' in a white tuxedo jacket at the annual HIV-AIDS charity dinner at Cannes, getting the global A-list invites up on their feet after dinner was served late on Thursday night, reports 'Variety'.

"I had the pleasure of playing [the Four Seasons frontman] Frankie Valli in a movie coming out later this year called 'Jersey Boys,'" Jonas said, before crooning the Valli ballad 'Can't Take My Eyes Off You'. Nick, who was rocking out on a guitar, was joined by his brother Joe, who serenaded Cannes with 'Cake by the Ocean' -- the smash 2015 pop song from his band DNCE.

Before the Jonas Brothers performed, Cher, despite her 78 years, belted out one hit number after another for 15 minutes, dressed in a dazzling sequined purple pantsuit, from her own 'Believe' to an acoustic rendition of 'Walking in Memphis', Marc Cohn's ballad that she had covered on her 1995 album 'It's a Man's World', 'Variety' adds.

The 30th edition of amfAR Cannes drew a crowd of high bidders and celebrities that included,

according to 'Variety', Michelle Yeoh, Magic Johnson, Heidi Klum, Kelly Rowland, Colman Domingo, Paris Jackson, Andie MacDowell, Tommy Hilfiger, Michelle Rodriguez and Maria Bakalova.

Demi Moore, who served as the evening's host, kicked off the night by reminding the crowd of amfAR's mission.

"This has become the single most important year of the night in the fight against HIV," she said. "With your help, amfAR Cannes has raised more than a quarter of a billion dollars."

Moore recalled how she last hosted the black-tie charity dinner in 1997, filling in for one of the pioneering founders of the American Foundation for AIDS Research, 'Variety' notes.

"I happened to be a pinch hitter because the great Elizabeth Taylor personally called me at the last minute because she couldn't make it," Moore said. "Everyone that year was abuzz about a new research breakthrough -- a powerful drug cocktail made possible in part by amfAR's research that stopped people from dying of AIDS almost overnight."

Concluding on a note of hope, she said, "And now, a single pill each day allows many people living with HIV to enjoy a long and beautiful, full life."

## Why Jon Bon Jovi finds it 'crazy' to call Paul McCartney his friend

Los Angeles | Agencies

The rock icon Jon Bon Jovi has opened up about his friendship with the Beatles legend Paul McCartney. He revealed that they hang out quite often, which feels "crazy" to him as a longtime Beatles fan, reports 'People' magazine. During an interview with AARP the Magazine, Bon Jovi showed a photo of himself and the 'Let It Be' singer eating lunch at his home in East Hampton, New York, and said, "We do this all summer."

"I'm sitting there with a f\*\*\*\*\* Beatle," added the 'Livin' on a Prayer' musician, nearly not believing his own words.

"He comes to my house often, I go to his beach house often, and our wives are very close."

As per 'People', Bon Jovi also expressed admiration for McCartney's continued passion for making fresh material after more than a half-century of hits. "Oh, I've got new stuff!" he tells me. At 81, Crazy," he told the outlet.

The two artists have shared the stage many times, most recently at Keep the Party Going: A Tribute to Jimmy Buffett, a concert held in April at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles to honour the late "Margaritaville" musician, who died at age 76 last September.

Two days before McCartney's June 18 birthday in 2022, he brought Bon Jovi and Bruce Springsteen out on stage for a jam session at the final tour date of his Got Back Tour at New Jersey's MetLife Stadium.

## ROBERT DOWNEY JR. ROASTS CHRIS HEMSWORTH, ASKS 'AVENGERS' CAST TO DESCRIBE 'THOR' STAR IN 3 WORDS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Chris Hemsworth has received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Although it was a happy occasion, it didn't stop his longtime 'Avengers' co-star Robert Downey Jr. from marking the occasion with a public roast of everyone's favourite 'Thor' actor. Robert Downey Jr. asked their Marvel buddies Mark Ruffalo, Jeremy Renner, Scarlett Johansson, and Chris Evans to describe Hemsworth in three words, reports 'Variety'.

Their answers had the audience laughing. "What is Chris Hemsworth?" Downey asked. Renner said: "Absurdly, annoyingly amazing." Ruffalo came in strong with a "friend from work." Scarlett got to the heart of it with a "sensitive leading lady." On a more serious note, Downey lauded Hemsworth for being one of the most remarkable people he knows.



As per 'Variety', Hemsworth received his star the day before the opening of his latest movie, George Miller's 'Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga'.

Downey said he "cannot wait" to see the movie and predicted "this is going to be the film of 2024."

"I wrote all of my comments myself, which is why they are going to be quite insightful and brilliant," Downey continued. "Beyond the cape and the

hammer is a contagious Aussie charm. You are a remarkable human being. You are a legend. Chris is a bit daunting to describe. He's very elusive because of the pretty packaging. However, upon further inspection...down under...he has a true wit and depth of soul and it has been my sincere pleasure to know you. You keep us Hollywood folk on our toes because you're just a real deal," he added.



## Alec Baldwin savours sweet outing with granddaughter Holland

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actor Alec Baldwin is relishing his new role as a grandfather. He recently spent a delightful day with his daughter Ireland Baldwin, 28, and granddaughter Holland at the Museum of Ice Cream.

The actor shared a series of photos on his Instagram, reports 'People' magazine.

In the first image in Ireland's post, Alec is seen proudly beaming at Holland, who turned one this month, as the two rests on her mother's back in a baby carrier.

As per 'People', Ireland enjoyed a game of skee ball in a video, while Alec snapped a photo indulging in a fun-themed ice cream cone with swirls and decorative toppings.

The carousel ended with a picture of Alec walking solo inside an all-pink train car. Ireland affectionately captioned her post, "Torturing granddaddy pop pop peepaw (it's a working title) by forcing him and Andre to go to the museum of ice cream."

Sharing the same images and video on his Instagram, Alec said of his possible grandpa-inspired nicknames in the caption, "Call me...whatever you want to call me, Holland."

Ireland and her boyfriend RAC (born Andre Allen Anjos), welcomed Holland last May, making Alec and her mother, actress Kim Basinger, first-time grandparents. Alec also shares seven children with his wife, Hilaria Baldwin.

Hilaria celebrated Holland's arrival by posting a candid Instagram photo of her and Alec posing with all of their little ones.

"All of these aunts and uncles and us grandparents are so excited that Holland is here!!!" she captioned the picture.

"Congratulations to the mama and papa, Ireland and Andre. We love you so very much."



## BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN RECALLS HOW HIS FIRST UK CONCERT TOUR WAS 'DISCONCERTING'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Legendary singer-songwriter Bruce Springsteen shared that his first visit to London "was a little disconcerting".

The 74-year-old singer was awarded an Academy Fellowship at the Ivor Novello Awards, and during his acceptance speech, Springsteen reflected on his relationship with the UK, reports 'Female First UK'.

The 'Born in the U.S.A.' hitmaker, who first visited London in 1975, said: "The aeroplane food was not so great, and my first thought when we landed at Heathrow was, 'Where's all the cheeseburgers?' The cheeseburgers had either been hidden or replaced by something called fish and chips. It was a little disconcerting." "Then our next stop was the Hammersmith Odeon, where I was greeted by a huge sign announcing: 'London is finally ready for Bruce Springsteen'. And all I thought was, 'If London isn't ready for a cheeseburger, they may not be ready for me,'" he added.

As per 'Female First UK', during the ceremony in London, Springsteen was introduced by

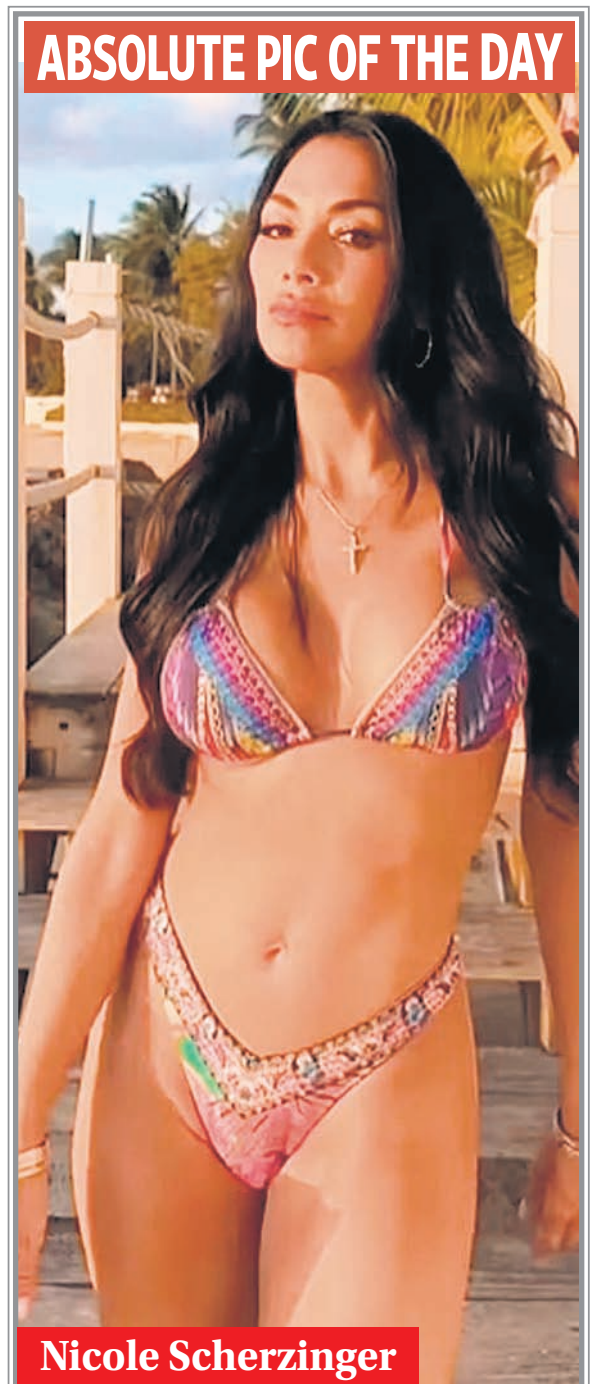
Paul McCartney, who affectionately mocked the award-winning star. McCartney, 81, said that he "couldn't think of a more fitting" recipient "except maybe Bob Dylan".

He added: "Or Paul Simon, or Billy Joel, or Beyonce, or Taylor Swift... The list goes on."

McCartney also joked about Springsteen's reputation for being a "working man".

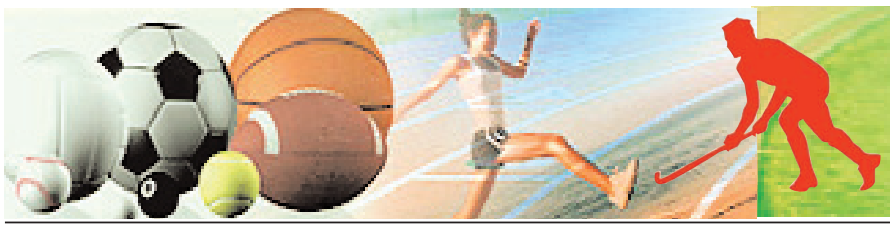
The former Beatles star said: "He's known as the American working man, but he admits he's never worked a day in his life."

Springsteen is actually the first foreigner to receive an Academy Fellowship, and he previously confessed to feeling honoured by the recognition.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Nicole Scherzinger



## MALAYSIA MASTERS

# Sindhu beats top seed Han Yue to reach SF; Chaliha bows out in quarters

Kuala Lumpur | Agencies

India's ace shuttler PV Sindhu sailed into the semifinals of the Malaysia Masters, BWF Super 500 badminton tournament, beating top seed Chinese Han Yue in three games, here at the Axiata Arena on Friday.

Sindhu, who is aiming for first title since winning the Singapore Open back in 2022, registered 21-13 14-21 21-12 win over world No.6 Yue, to whom she fell in three games for the first time at the Badminton Asia Championships in China last month.

This is the 28-year-old Indian's seventh tournament of the year. She returned from injury at the Badminton Asia Team Championships in February. Sindhu's slow and steady progress saw her make another significant step at Malaysia Masters as she reached her first semifinal in seven months. She last reached the semi-



final stage at the Denmark Open in October last year.

The Indian will next face Thai shuttler Busanan Ongbamrunphan, who came through her tussle with Putri Kusuma Wardani 21-12 21-23 21-16. Sindhu leads their head-to-head 17-1.

The two-time Olympic medallist clinched five consecutive points to win the first game from a 16-13 lead. But the Chinese bounced back and opened up a 15-3 lead in the second game. Although Sindhu was able to close the gap to 18-13, but

failed to overturn the initial deficit and was forced to play a decider.

Despite losing the second game, Sindhu managed to keep her composure in the decider to secure the win, taking the final game 21-16, over Yue in 55 minutes.

"The third game was crucial for both of us. From the first rally, I made sure I was in the game focused and didn't give away easy points. I was in control and I was confident of winning. I'm happy with how I played because I lost our last match. It's a shame as I was leading, but this is like a sweet revenge," said Sindhu of her performance, as quoted by BWF.

"I was prepared for three games, I was prepared for long rallies. At this level, you can't expect a straightforward match. The top 10 players are of the highest standards, you can't take it easy. It's good I've come to the semis, this gives me a lot of confidence to go much further," she added.

With Paris 2024 two months away, the two-time Olympic medallist -- Rio 2016 (silver) and Tokyo 2020 (bronze) -- is confident she could hit her peak with time.

"It's nice (to be back in a semifinal). I've got a good training block as well. Mentally and physically I'm 100 per cent. Now it's time to get that confidence back. I'm getting there but there's still a lot more inside. I need to get all of that out," said the 28-year-old Indian.

In other women's singles action, Ashmita Chaliha's loss to sixth seed Zhang Yi Man of China in straight games to end her campaign in the quarterfinals.

Chaliha suffered a 10-21, 15-21 loss at the hands of world No. 16 Chinese in 30 minutes. She had earlier stunned world No. 10 Beiwen Zhang of USA 21-19, 16-21, 21-12 to secure a place in the quarterfinals.

It means, Sindhu is now the only Indian left at the BWF Super 500 tournament.

# ICC appoints Shahid Afridi as T20 World Cup 2024 ambassador

Dubai | Agencies

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has roped in former Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi as the latest name on the star-studded roster of ambassadors for the T20 World Cup 2024 in the USA and the West Indies which begins on June 1.

Afridi joins T20 stalwarts Yuvraj Singh, Chris Gayle, and eight-time Olympic gold medallist sprinter Usain Bolt in the list of ambassadors for the showpiece event.

"A veteran of six T20 World Cups, two of which as captain, Afridi spearheaded Pakistan's 2009 triumph with a Player of the Match performance in the final at Lord's, and will feature in a range of promotional activities around the World Cup and lend expert insights to the event through a series of guest columns," ICC said in a release.

Afridi said he is thrilled to be part of the T20 World Cup and excited for the clash between arch-rivals India and Pakistan on June 9.

"The ICC Men's T20 World Cup is an event that is very close to my heart. From being Player of the Tournament in the inaugural edition to lifting the trophy in 2009, some of my favourite career highlights have come from competing on this stage. T20 World Cups have gone from strength to strength in recent years, and I'm thrilled to be part of this edition, where we will see more teams, more matches, and even more drama than ever before," he said in a release.

"I am particularly excited to witness the India v Pakistan fixture on June 9. It is one of the great rivalries in sport and New York will be a fitting stage for this unmissable encounter between two great teams," Afridi added.



Claire Furlong, ICC General Manager - Marketing and Communications, said, "He's a fan favourite around the world and alongside Yuvraj Singh, Chris Gayle, and eight-time Olympic gold-medallist Usain Bolt, will be bringing fans closer to the event ahead of what is set to be the biggest T20 World Cup ever."

The T20 World Cup will be played from June 1-29 with co-hosts USA taking on Canada in the opening fixture at Grand Prairie Stadium in Texas.

A total of 55 matches will be played by 20 teams across nine venues, culminating in the final on June 29 in Barbados.

# Boxing World Qualifiers: Sachin Siwach dominates Alex Mukuka, gives India a winning start

New Delhi | Agencies

A formidable punch by National Champion Sachin Siwach on the opening day of the 2nd Boxing World Qualifiers for the Paris Olympics in Bangkok on Friday ensured a decisive victory against New Zealand's Alex Mukuka in the Round of 64 bout in the 57kg category.

The 2024 Strandja Memorial gold medallist dominated his opponent, Mukuka, from the start and kept up the pressure throughout the bout to ensure he received a unanimous 5-0 verdict from the judges and gave the 10-

member Indian contingent a winning start.

Siwach made his intentions clear in the very first round as he went on the offensive early and took control of the bout with a couple of left-right combinations. If Mukuka was hoping for a breakthrough in the second round, his hopes were quickly dashed as the Indian was relentless in his attacks.

With the first two rounds comfortably in his pocket, Siwach ensured that there was no chance of a fight-back from his opponent and wrapped up the proceedings.

India has fielded seven

men and three women in the second world qualifiers and all boxers will have to at least make it to the semifinals to stand a chance to book their berths for Paris Olympics.

On Saturday, Abhimanyu Loura, a bronze medallist in senior nationals, will take on Bulgaria's Kristijan Nikolov in the opening round of the 80kg weight category.

The 2022 Commonwealth Games gold medallist Amit Panghal (51kg) and 2022 Asian Games bronze medallist Narendra Berwal (+92kg) have already got a bye in the opening round of their respective weight categories.

# Real Madrid midfielder Tchouameni to miss Champions League final due to injury

Madrid | Agencies

Ahead of the Champions League final against Dortmund, Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti has confirmed that midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni will miss the summit clash due to a foot injury.

Tchouameni has not played for the club since suffering a stress fracture during their Champions League semifinal win over Bayern Munich this month. The 24-year-old has played 38 matches for the Spanish champions across all competitions this season.

"He's doing individual work but he's not ready for the (Champions League) final. Let's see if he's ready for the Euros," Ancelotti told reporters



on Friday ahead of their last La Liga game against Real Betis.

Tchouameni was also named in France's 25-member squad for the

European Championship but the recent injury puts his participation in doubt for next month's tournament in Germany.

The last home game of the season will be an opportunity for the team and the supporters to honour midfielder Toni Kroos, who will retire after Euro 2024. The 34-year-old is among Real Madrid's most accomplished players, having won four Champions League titles with the team.

The German, who previously won the championship with Bayern Munich, is on the verge of becoming only the second player in history to win six European titles after Real Madrid great Paco Gento.

"I don't think it was a difficult deci-

sion for him. Veteran players, and legends, have to choose their destiny. Toni has made that decision and it must be respected," Ancelotti said.

"We have to say goodbye to him as best we can. I respect his decision. Saying goodbye like this would be ideal. Then you have to have the courage to do it and I have a lot of respect for what he has done. Replacing someone like this is almost impossible, but this squad has resources in young people so that they take responsibility and follow the path set over the last 10 years," he added.

Real Madrid will take on Dortmund in the Champions League final at Wembley Stadium in London on June 2.

# INDIAN WOMEN'S TEAM FALTERS 0-2 AGAINST BELGIUM IN FIH HOCKEY PRO LEAGUE

Antwerp | Agencies

The Indian women's hockey team went down 0-2 against Belgium in their closely-fought second match of the European leg of the FIH Pro League 2023/24.

Alexia 'T'Serstevens (34') and Louise Dewaet (36') netted a goal each for Belgium.

India began the match with an aggressive approach and won an early penalty corner, but couldn't capitalise on it. However, they continued to press Belgium, which initially struggled to keep possession and relied on counter-attacks, but India's defense stood strong to deny them any chances of going in front.

Also, the home side won a



penalty corner towards the end of the first quarter, but it was saved by the Indian goalkeeper Savita without much difficulty. Meanwhile, India made quite

a few circle entries but were unable to find the back of the net as the opening quarter remained goalless.

In the second quarter,

Belgium increased their pressure with rigorous passing and constant attacks. However, India absorbed the pressure well, shifting the tempo in their favor by maintaining possession and making quick passes, which allowed them to test Belgium's defense a couple of times. Despite these efforts, both teams failed to break the deadlock, and the score remained 0-0 at half-time.

Belgium came out all guns blazing in the third quarter and that helped them in going in front as Alexia 'T'Serstevens (34') and Louise Dewaet (36') scored a field goal each in two minutes, thus giving the home side a 2-0 lead.

In the meantime, India upped

their ante to bounce back in the match and even won a penalty corner towards the end of the penultimate quarter, but failed to make the most of it.

In the fourth quarter, India made early advances and tested Belgium's defense rigorously, but the hosts successfully defended their lead. Despite maintaining possession and making regular circle entries, India couldn't find the back of the net, and the match ended 2-0 in favor of Belgium.

Notably, Indian forward Deepika Soreng made her senior team debut in the match.

The Indian Women's Hockey Team will lock horns with Belgium again in their next match on May 25.

# 'When I was really struggling for confidence, he sat me down and helped', says Virat Kohli on Dinesh Karthik

New Delhi | Agencies

Talismanic India batter Virat Kohli has expressed immense gratitude to his Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) teammate Dinesh Karthik for helping him in his tough time, a phase where he struggled for confidence.

The veteran wicketkeeper-batter Karthik's long playing career ended when RCB exited the IPL 2024 after a four-wicket loss to Rajasthan Royals in the Eliminator at Ahmedabad earlier this week. Karthik represented India in 26 Tests, 94 ODIs, and 60 T20Is since his international debut in 2004.

"Off the field, I have had some really nice and interesting conversations with Karthik. He is a wise man and has great knowledge about a lot of things, not just cricket. I have thoroughly enjoyed my conversations with him."

"Even in that phase in 2022 when I did not have a great IPL season, I was really struggling for confidence, Karthik sat me down a couple of times and gave me a very honest explanation of how he is seeing things and maybe I am not able to see them myself," said Kohli in a tribute video posted by the franchise on Friday.

Karthik played in every season of the Indian Premier League since 2008, and it was his second stint in RCB after the 2015 season.

"So, I just like his honesty and courage to go and speak to anyone about things that he feels deeply about. And that I think is the most special thing for me when it comes to Karthik and that's one thing I have always cherished about him. That's why we get along really, really well," added Kohli.

The right-handed batter recalled his first meeting with

Karthik in the national team set-up. "The first time I met DK, I remember we were playing in South Africa if I am not wrong in the Champions Trophy 2009. It was the first time I shared the changeroom with Dinesh and I found him to be very amusing. I would say hyperactive, confused person, most of the time he was moving all over the place, never stopping."

"That was my first impression of Dinesh. Outstanding talent, brilliant batter to watch and my first impression and present-day impression are not far apart. Just that he has become wiser and calmed down a lot."

"I always looked at Dinesh and felt like he was such a correct player technically that he could adapt to any kind of role that's been given to him, and I remember watching him in the 2013 season where he got 600 runs or something and he batted brilliantly at three."

"I saw him play shots which were like 'wow'. I think he's done brilliantly to switch and become a renowned finisher. I wish him all the best for all his future endeavours moving forward because his expertise in cricket is priceless. I think he's of great value to this franchise."

RCB fielding coach Malolan Rangarajan touched upon how Karthik is now a calmer figure after being at his lowest ebb in the 2010s. "What everybody is seeing now is a very, very subtle version. People need to understand that his situation, especially in the last four or five years, is high-intensity. So, it's very difficult to just be sat on your seat, put your helmet on."

"Very few people in the world can do that. So he gets himself, gets his heart rate up and going, runs like a maniac, up and down maybe 25, 30,000 times, and does about 200,000 push-ups before he goes in. I think he's

faced the most number of balls in training in the history of cricket off the field."

Dipika Pallikal Karthik, the multiple-time squash medallist in the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games, lauded her husband for having a never-say-die attitude throughout his playing career. "One of the things I have really learned from him is that if he doesn't do well, he is dropped from the team, it's just two or three days when he is in a lull, and then he is back on his feet, thinking about what to do next."

"I feel that if anyone else was in that position, a lot of people would have given up long back. Even me, though I am an athlete, seeing him in different positions in his career, if I were him, I would definitely have given up. But I think the do-or-die or never-give-up attitude has always been there."



# 'TAKE IT ONE STEP AT A TIME': DEVMAN'S ADVICE TO SUMIT NAGAL ON WIMBLEDON DEBUT

New Delhi | Agencies

This year's Wimbledon will see Sumit Nagal make his maiden appearance in the main draw at Wimbledon, the grandest stage in the tennis circuit. Former India number one, Somdev Devvarman had some advice for the 26-year-old rising star.

"Take it one step at a time for now. I think it's important. It's a good achievement to be inside the top 100. Immediately you get to see your main draw here. You get to play a few more tournaments. He was the main draw in Geneva last week. He's going to play a few of the grass-court events probably. It's just a lot of positive things, you know, I think don't look so far ahead right now. Obviously, the important thing for this phase in the calendar, just before it gets incredibly physical and it's a very different kind of movement," Devvarman told IANS.

Nagal is one of the bright lights for Indian tennis in recent times, which has also seen him break into the top 100 in World Rankings. He is all set to take to the clay court and the French Open where he will face World number 18, Karen Khachanov in the first round on Sunday.

"He's got a great team. His team has been around professional players for 20-plus years now, you know, so they really know how to make that transition. They've helped him incredibly well so far to make the adjustments to be top 100 to play against quality players."

"So I have no doubt that they'll get him ready. In these situations, when you're in the Majors but not seeded sometimes you require luck. We've seen that in different parts of the draw so right now he just kind of has to make the best of his opportunities and, play with your heart, leave it all out there," concluded the 39-year-old Devvarman.

Somdev Devvarman is an expert panelist on Sony Sports Network's studio show Extraa Serve for Roland Garros 2024.



# AKSHAY KUMAR HAS OPENED UP ON HIS CHILDHOOD 'BOYS'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood's 'Khiladi' Akshay Kumar has opened up on his childhood 'boys group' story, sharing about his real friends from kindergarten, adding how they keep him grounded.

Akshay, who appeared as the first guest on cricketer Shikhar Dhawan's talk show 'Dhawan Kareng', discussed about his life and friends.

The actor, who was last seen in the movie 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' said: "We had a boys group named 'Bloody 10' in childhood. We were 10 friends, which is how that name came about. I'm still in touch with five to six of my friends from that group."

"Humne school mein danga macha ke rakha hua tha. I still meet at least some of them every month; they are my real friends since we all know each other from kindergarten. They are the ones who keep me grounded. I feel the school days and memories are the best, and whenever we meet, we discuss those things and enjoy a lot," added Akshay.



## SUPERSTAR RAJINIKANTH receives UAE's 'Golden Visa'

Team Absolute | Chennai

Superstar Rajinikanth received the UAE's 'Golden Visa' from Abu Dhabi's Department of Culture and Tourism (DCT), his office announced on Thursday.

Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Member of Abu Dhabi Executive Council and Chairman of the DCT, Abu Dhabi government, handed

over the Emirates ID to the legendary actor during an event at the DCT headquarters in Abu Dhabi on Thursday.

After receiving the Golden Visa, the superstar said: "I am deeply honoured to receive the prestigious UAE Golden Visa from the Abu Dhabi government. My heartfelt thanks to the Abu Dhabi government and also to my good friend

Yusuf Ali MA, CMD of Lulu group for felicitating the Visa and all support."

Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE's Minister for Tolerance, called on Rajinikanth at his palace.

The Tamil Superstar also visited the newly constructed BAPS Hindu Mandir and the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi.

## ROHIT SHETTY SHARES PICTURE OF HIS SINGHAM FROM SNOW-CLAD MOUNTAINS IN J&K

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Director Rohit Shetty, who is busy with the shooting of his upcoming film 'Singham 3', shared a picture of his lead actor Ajay Devgn from the set. On Friday, Rohit posted a photo on Instagram featuring Ajay in character as Singham, wearing his police uniform.

The picture shows Ajay surrounded by the armoured vehicles of the Jammu and Kashmir police, set against the backdrop of snow-clad mountains.

The director wrote in the caption: "SSP (SOG) Special Operations Group. Jammu and Kashmir police. Singham again. Coming soon #singhamagain." Rohit started shooting for 'Singham 3' in Srinagar on May 18. Ajay and Jackie Shroff were seen shooting in Srinagar, drawing the attention of dozens of locals who watched the shoot. The film stars an ensemble cast including Kareena Kapoor Khan, Akshay Kumar, Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone, Tiger Shroff, and Arjun Kapoor. 'Singham 3' is the fifth instalment of Rohit's cop universe, a sequel to 'Singham Returns'.



## AMMA PRESIDENT MOHANLAL NOT KEEN FOR SECOND TERM?

Team Absolute | Kochi

With the Malayalam film industry gearing up to elect a new set of office bearers for the Association of Malayalam Movie Artistes (AMMA), reports have surfaced that superstar Mohanlal, the incumbent president of the actors' association, is "not keen for a second term".

Reports also suggested that AMMA General Secretary Edavela Babu, who has held various positions in the association, is also not willing to serve as an office-bearer.

The AMMA elections are held once in three years. The elections will be held alongside the annual general body meeting of the association, which is scheduled to be held on June 30.

Filing of nominations begins on June 3.

The AMMA comprises around 506 members, of which around 120 members get a monthly dole of Rs 5,000 each.

Anyone not drawing a monthly pension is eligible to contest elections to the various posts ranging from the president to a member of the committee.



## AHEAD OF LS POLLS IN DELHI, PARINEETI & RAGHAV SEEK BLESSINGS AT SIDDHIVINAYAK TEMPLE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A day ahead of the Lok Sabha polls in Delhi, Parineeti Chopra and her husband and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Raghav Chadha, on Friday sought blessings at the Siddhivinayak Temple, in Mumbai.

The couple were spotted twinning in white outfits. The visuals show Parineeti wearing an off-white plain suit paired with a matching dupatta. She opted for a no-makeup look, tied her hair in a ponytail, and rounded off the look with kolhapuri juttis.

On the other hand, Raghav looked dapper in a plain white kurta pyjama, and rounded off his outfit with brown shoes, and black sunglasses.

The duo can be seen folding their hands and saying: "Ganpati bappa Morya". The video also shows Raghav adorably holding his wife Parineeti while they make their way among the crowd. They also posed for selfies with the fans. The couple tied the knot on September 24 last year in a private luxury hotel in Udaipur.

## Raza Murad reminded of young Asha after listening 14-year-old contestant Laisel Rai's

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Raza Murad, who appeared on the stage of Superstar Singer 3, was amazed by 14-year-old contestant Laisel Rai's performance on the songs 'Jo Wada Kiya Woh Nibhana Padega', and 'Gulabi Aankhen Jo Teri Dekhi' and called her a young Asha Bhosle.

The new episode paid a touching tribute to the legendary Mohammed Rafi in the 'Rafi Night'.

The episode saw a mesmerising performance by Laisel, who hails from Mohali, Punjab, along with her captain, Pawandeep Rajan, on 'Jo Wada Kiya Woh Nibhana Padega' from 'Taj Mahal', and 'Gulabi Aankhen Jo Teri Dekhi' from 'The Train'.

Speaking about the performance, Raza said: "Laisel, it's incredibly challenging to sing a song by Mohammed Rafi Sahab, especially for someone so young. But you sang it with such grace, and the way you handled the notes is truly commendable. It's a big challenge for any female singer to perform a famous song by a male singer, and you did it with such perfection."

"I have to say, your voice has a unique quality that reminds me of a young Asha Bhosle. Your voice carries the sweetness and style of Asha's early songs. Truly, your talent is remarkable," added Raza, who is known for his work in



movies like 'Yaadgar', 'Main Balwaan', 'Aunty No 1', and 'Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela', among numerous others.

Super Judge Neha Kakkar added: "Pawan, you sing so effortlessly. It really warms my heart to see such an innocent boy sing

with such beauty and innocence. And Laisel, your performance was truly melodious. You are one of the best singers this season. Your singing is so well planned, and I've seen you grow from good to exceptional with time and practice."

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Manushi Chhillar