

# absolute india

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## SHARE OF ORGANISED EMPLOYMENT IN INDIA ON THE RISE: FINANCE MINISTRY REPORT

# ON THE TRACK

The declining unemployment rates have been accompanied by a rising formalisation of employment. There is evidence of increasing net payroll additions under the Employee Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), with more members rejoining than exiting the social security net, the report states.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

There has been a decline in annual as well as quarterly unemployment rates since the highs witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic which has been accompanied by a rise in the share of employment in the organised sector of the Indian economy, according to the latest monthly economic review of the Finance Ministry. The creation of digital identities like Aadhar, registration of unorganised workers on the e-shram portal and registration of MSMEs on the Udyam portal has played a significant role in promoting the formalisation of the economy. As of May 22, 2024, 4.4 crore MSMEs have been registered on the Udyam Portal (including informal enterprises registered on the Udyam Assistance Platform), more than 97 per cent being micro-enterprises. The EPFO net payroll addition stood at 1.47 crore members during FY24, amounting to a year-on-year rise of 6.3 per cent from 1.39 crore members in the corresponding period of the previous year. Around 1.08 crore new subscribers were enrolled in FY24, with 56.7 per cent of the newly joined subscribers being in the age group of 18-25 years, indicating healthy hiring for youth. The relatively high number of members rejoining EPFO signifies a churning labour market opting to extend its social security protection.



Across months, the number of subscribers rejoining EPFO has been higher than new subscribers or existing subscribers' deletions. During FY24, 1.64 crore members rejoined after exiting previously. According to EPFO, these members switched their jobs and joined the establishments covered under EPFO and opted to transfer their accumulations instead of applying for final settlement, thus extending their social

security protection. The number of existing EPFO subscribers' deletions has also been lower in FY24 compared to the previous year. 1.25 crore EPFO subscribers exited during FY24, compared to 1.34 crore in the previous year, the report adds. It also states that at a broader level of the manufacturing and services sector as well, rising job creation is evident. The PMI Manufacturing employment sub-index suggests the genera-

tion of more employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector supported by improvement in operating conditions, buoyant demand, uptake in new business intakes and scaled-up production. Similarly, the PMI Services sub-index shows a step-up in employment generation in the services sector from a combination of buoyant domestic demand, new business gains and an upturn in international sales.



## 24 Indian startups raised \$444 million in funding this week

Team Absolute | New Delhi

About 24 Indian startups have raised around \$444 million in funding during this week, which include five growth-stage deals and 14 early-stage deals. Two early-stage startups did not disclose the amount raised, Entracr reported on Saturday. Last week, about 26 early and growth-stage startups collectively secured around \$240 million in funding. Among the growth-stage deals, seven startups secured around \$394.21 million in funding this week. E-commerce major Flipkart secured the highest funding of \$350 million from Google. This was followed by financial services platform Navi, which raised \$18 million in debt. Other startups such as managed accommodation provider Stanza Living,

rural financial services firm Save Solution, and NBFC operating in remote rural parts, Dvara KGFS, also raised funding during the week. In addition, 14 early-stage startups secured funding worth \$49.6 million during the week. SaaS (Software-as-a-service) startup UnifyApps topped the list followed by solar energy platform Soleos Solar Energy, NBFC Varthana, and producer of high-quality Single-Walled Carbon Nanotubes (SWCNTs) NoPo Nanotechnologies. The list of early-stage startups also includes -- Collective Artists Network, 8chili, Agrilectric, Fix My Curls, and Infinix -- which kept the funding amount undisclosed. City-wise, Bengaluru-based startups led with 14 deals followed by Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Ludhiana, and Chennai.

## PREITY HONOURS SANTOSH SIVAN AS HE BECOMES FIRST ASIAN TO GET CANNES CINEMATOGRAPHY AWARD

CANNES | Agencies

Preity Zinta presented Santosh Sivan, who shot her debut film 'Dil Se' in 1998, the prestigious Pierre Angenieux Excellens in Cinematography award in the presence of India's Ambassador to France, Jawed Ashraf, at the 77th Cannes Film Festival on Friday night. Sivan became the first Asian to be awarded the prized named after the inventor of the zoom lens that revolutionised cinematography. Before Sivan was given the award, the ambassador pointed out in his welcome speech how the "greatest film festival" had become "a very special one for India" in its 77th year. Ambassador Ahraf pointed out that Cannes, which had become "a symbol of the permanence of excellence", had always had a special place for India. "You have recognised and honoured our best," the ambassador said. "It is here that some of our best have been discovered for the world. But it is also here that some of our young dreams have landed softly and beautifully, and careers have taken off." Upon receiving the award, Sivan said: "It is the most awesome time I have had in my life. It is an amazing place to receive this ... for the



Cannes Film Festival is the most beautiful festival I have attended." A graduate of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) and Padma Shri recipient, Sivan has made 55 feature films and 50 documentaries, and has won a stack of national and international awards. His journey acquired a quicker pace with Mani Ratnam's 'Dil Se', which had Preity, Shah Rukh Khan and Manisha Koirala playing the lead roles. Preity and Sivan will once again work together in Rajkumar Santoshi's upcoming period drama 'Lahore 1947'.

## PARA-ATHLETICS WORLDS

# Indian contingent records highest-ever medal tally

KOBE (JAPAN) | Agencies

Simran Sharma won gold in the Women's 200 metres T12 category as medals continue to pour for India in the 2024 Para-Athletics World Championship in Kobe, Japan. Preethi Pal won her second medal of the Championship with a bronze in the Women's 100 metres T35 category. Preethi had earlier won bronze in 200 metres in the same category. India's Navdeep won a bronze medal with a season-best performance of 42.82 meters in the Men's Javelin Throw F41 category. With Saturday's medals, India's tally reached 17 including six gold, five silver



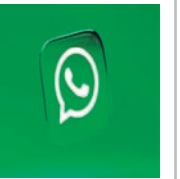
and six bronze, their highest ever in the history of the esteemed competition surpassing the 2023 tally. The Indian para-athletics team's performance in Kobe is a testament to their hard work, resilience, and the robust support system provided by coaches, support staff, and the Athletics Federation of India. Their success serves as an inspiration to aspiring ath-

letes across the country and reinforces India's growing stature in international para-athletics. Deepthi Jeevanji on Monday set a world record of 55.06 seconds in the Women's 400m T20 category which secured the gold medal in an incredible display of hard work and motivation. "Breaking the world record and winning gold at the World Championships is a dream come true. I am grateful for the support of my coaches, family, and the entire Indian contingent. This is just the beginning, and I am excited for the future, especially with the Paris Paralympics on the horizon," said Deepthi Jeevanji after breaking the world record.

## WHATSAPP'S NEW FEATURE LETS YOU SEE ALL MEDIA SHARED IN COMMUNITY GROUP CHATS

New Delhi: Meta-owned WhatsApp is reportedly working on a new feature that will allow users to see all media shared in community group chats.

As per WABetaInfo, this feature will let community members see an overview of all images, videos, and other media files shared within the community, which will make it easier for them to locate and access shared content. "This can help in maintaining their own community guidelines, ensuring that inappropriate content is identified and addressed promptly," the report said. This feature will also benefit community members who are not very active in certain group chats as they will be able to access media shared in those chats, ensuring they stay informed and are able to catch up on important updates, it added. The feature is presently under development and will be available in a future update of the app. The report also mentioned that this feature will simplify the search process by providing a centralised location to browse all shared media. Meanwhile, WhatsApp is reportedly working on a feature that will restrict users from taking screenshots of profile pictures on iOS. As shown in the screenshot shared by WABetaInfo, a message will occur on the screen notifying users that taking screenshots of profile photos has been blocked to protect everyone's privacy on the app.



## Celebrating Monsoon Magic: A Guide to Upcoming Festivals in Goa

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the monsoon clouds gather over the lush landscapes of Goa, the air is filled with anticipation for the vibrant festivals that mark this season. From cultural celebrations to religious rituals, each festival in Goa during the monsoon holds its own unique charm, offering visitors and locals alike a glimpse into the rich ensemble of Goan traditions. In this article, we will delve into the upcoming festivals that define the monsoon season in this coastal paradise. **Sao Joao Festival:** One of the most popular monsoon festivals in Goa is the Sao Joao Festival, celebrated with great fervor across the state. Named after St. John the Baptist, this feast day is marked by water-centric festivities, where revelers jump into wells, rivers, and ponds. The Sao Joao Festival is celebrated annually in Goa on 24th June. Colorful water floats, traditional music, and locals and tourists alike wear copels (floral wreaths) add to the festive atmosphere,

making it a joyous occasion for all. **Sangodd Festival:** Kicking off the monsoon festivities is the Sangodd Festival, a traditional boat festival celebrated by the fishing community in Goa. Annually, on June 29th, Goa commemorates the feast days of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. Saint Peter, holds profound significance for the fishing community and this festival marks the commencement of the 'rampon' fishing season, prompting rituals of sea blessings and boat preparations for the impending endeavors. In observance of this festivity, canoes are ingeniously interconnected with wooden planks, setting a transient stage atop the water. The day's festivities unfold upon this platform, adorned with embellished boats bedecked with coconut palms, blooms, and colorful balloons. Additional boat structures reminiscent of churches grace the water's surface. Equipped with sound systems, fishermen in vibrant attire entertain the audience with folk dances, musical performances, skits, and cherished traditional melodies.

**Chikhhal Kalo Festival:** A religious festival known as "The Mud Festival," is a traditional celebration observed during the monsoon season in Goa particularly in June. Originating from the village of Marcel in Ponda, this unique festival centers around the Devki Krishna Temple, dedicated to Lord Krishna and his mother Devki. While the precise origins of the festival remain unclear, the villagers commemorate it with great enthusiasm each year. Festivities include joyful revelry, where participants gleefully roll in the mud and engage in traditional games. The grounds adjacent to the Devki Krishna Temple transform into a bustling arena, welcoming attendees. **Touxeachem Festival:** At the core of this elaborate feast lies an intriguing custom where devotees offer cucumbers to St. Anne as a gesture of reverence. This unique tradition originates from the abundance of cucumbers during the season, symbolizing gratitude in a fitting manner. Cucumbers also

mark the first harvest of the season in Goa. According to the clergy, individuals bring two cucumbers, placing one at the feet of Our Lady while touching the other to the sacred statue. The cucumbers presented during the festivities are then shared among the local community, visiting priests, and nearby villages. Some prefer to savor the cucumbers fresh, while others incorporate them into revitalizing salads. **Bonderam Festival:** As the monsoon showers drench the landscape, the picturesque island of Divar comes alive with the vibrant Bonderam Festival. Held on the fourth Saturday of August, this festival is characterized by a colorful parade featuring mock battles between rival wards of the village. Each group displays elaborate floats adorned with flags, vying for the coveted Trophy. The festivities are attended by tourists in large numbers, it culminates in a spirited celebration of Goan culture, complete with music, dance, and delicious food.

## As temperatures rise, Rajasthan govt set to plant 6 lakh saplings

Jaipur | Agencies

As Rajasthan is witnessing a continuous heat-wave, the government has decided to plant six lakh saplings in the state. "Over five lakh saplings will be planted in the mining sector this monsoon season. For the plantation work, one officer each in all the departmental offices will be given the responsibility of overseeing this work while at the headquarters level, Additional Director Environment and Development Deepak Tanwar will monitor this drive," Mines Secretary Anandhi said. She said that since the Department of Mines & Geology Department is associated with mining activities, it also has more responsibility

for environmental protection. "In the mining lease areas of every district, where mining work has been completed, instructions have been given to identify at least one mine and get it backfilled and then carry out extensive tree plantation at that place," she said. The Medical and Health Department will also run the 'Hari-Van' tree plantation campaign' in all medical institutions of the state to protect the environment and increase greenery. The Medical and Health Secretary Shubhra Singh said that about one lakh saplings will be planted in the medical institutions of the state. She said that the campaign will start on July 1, 2024, and end on July 31, 2024, with an

aim to provide a better environment and greenery in the medical institutions. She said that five saplings would be planted in community health centres and other medical institutions while 10 saplings would be planted in higher medical institutions. "In this way, about one lakh saplings will be planted across the state," Additional Chief Secretary Shubhra Singh said. Director of Public Health Dr Ravi Prakash Mathur said that the concerned institution will be responsible for its maintenance, watering and security for five years. "The growth of the planted plants will also be regularly reviewed. The Directorate will also be informed about the progress of the plants," Mathur said.



## OVER 59 PER CENT TURNOUT IN 6TH PHASE OF LS POLLS, J&K SETS ANOTHER RECORD

A total of 889 candidates were in the electoral fray, including Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan from Odisha's Sambalpur, former Union Maneka Gandhi from UP's Sultanpur, former Calcutta High Court judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay from West Bengal's Tamluk, industrialist Naveen Jindal from Haryana's Kurukshetra (all BJP), Kumari Selja from Haryana's Sirsa, Deepender Singh Hooda from Haryana's Rohtak, J.P. Agarwal from Delhi's Chandni Chowk (all Congress), PDP President and former J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti (Anantnag-Rajouri), and actor-politician Deepak Adhikari Dev from West Bengal's Ghatal (Trinamool Congress).

Other prominent contests included Union Minister Sushma Swaraj's daughter Bansuri Swaraj making her electoral debut from New Delhi against Aam Aadmi Party's Somnath Bharti, Congress' Raj Babbar taking on Union Minister and sitting MP Rao Inderjit Singh in Gurgaon, Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav's cousin Dharmendra Yadav against sitting BJP MP Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirhua' in Azamgarh.

In Delhi, President Droupadi Murmu, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, former President Ram Nath Kovind, CJI DY Chandrachud, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Congress leaders Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, CEC Rajiv Kumar and ECs Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, cricketer Kapil Dev, actress Chitrangda Singh were among those who cast their votes.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Over 59 per cent turnout was recorded in 58 seats in 8 states/UTs that went to polls on Saturday in the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha polls, ranging from 78.19 per cent in West Bengal (8 seats) to 53.30 per cent in Bihar, while J&K's Anantnag-Rajouri seat logged 52.28 per cent - the highest in several decades, the Election Commission said.

The approximate turnout, as of 7.45 p.m., was 59.06 per cent, the poll panel said, adding that "in spite of hot weather in certain parts of the country, voters were undeterred in their enthusiasm as they were seen queuing up patiently to cast their votes across the country".

"A large number of voters were still in the queue at some polling stations at the prescribed time of closing of poll," it added.

The turnout in other states/UTs was 62.74 per cent in Jharkhand (4 seats), 60.07 per cent in Odisha (6 seats), 58.37 per cent in Haryana (10 seats), 54.48 per cent in Delhi (7 seats), and 54.03 per cent in UP (14 seats).

The Election Commission said that the turnout would continue to be updated state/PC/AC wise on its Voter Turnout App of ECI, and another update will be released around 11.45 p.m.

Polling in the Anantnag-Rajouri seat, where elections were deferred from the third phase on May 7, in Jammu and Kashmir was completely

peaceful, with enthusiastic voters, taking the turnout to the highest in many decades. The other two seats of the Kashmir Valley - Srinagar (38.49 per cent), and Baramulla (59.1 per cent) - also recorded turnouts which were highest in many decades.

With this phase, Delhi, Haryana, and J&K joined the 25 states/UTs where polling has already been concluded in the earlier phases and the number of parliamentary seats where the fate of the candidates has been sealed in the EVMs has reached 486.

Polling for the remaining 57 seats, in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Odisha, as well as Punjab, Chandigarh, and Himachal Pradesh, will be

## Raging inferno at gaming zone in Rajkot leaves 24 dead

Rajkot | Agencies

At least 24 persons were reportedly killed in a massive fire at a gaming zone in Gujarat's Rajkot on Saturday.

The fire broke out inside the gaming zone in a shopping mall when it was teeming with children.

Police teams and fire tenders were rushed to the spot to douse the fire. Sources said the owner of the gaming zone has been arrested.



The shopping mall was inundated with crowds because of the weekend. The intensity of the fire was so fierce that smoke was seen billowing from the shopping mall from a long distance.

A couple of people are believed to be trapped inside the gaming zone where a rescue operation is on in full swing. Meanwhile, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has instructed the officials to prioritise the rescue operation and ensure immediate treatment for the injured.

"Instructions have been given to the municipal corporation and the administration for immediate rescue and relief operations in the fire incident in the game zone in Rajkot. Instructions have also been issued to prioritise arrangements for immediate treatment of the injured," the Gujarat CM said.

"Instructions have been given to the Municipal Corporation and the administration for immediate rescue

and relief operations in the fire incident in the game zone in Rajkot. It has also instructed to prioritize arrangements for immediate treatment of the injured." Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said. "The rescue operations are on. The fire is under control. We are trying to retrieve as many bodies as possible. As of now, around 20 bodies have been recovered and they have been sent to the hospital for further investigation. Investigations will be carried out. The gaming zone is owned by a person called Yuvraj Singh Solanki. We will be registering an offence for negligence and the deaths which have occurred," Rajkot Police Commissioner Raju Bhargava said.

The state government has announced a compensation package of Rs 4 lakh each for the next of kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 for every injured person.

Expressing grief over the tragic incident Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X: "Extremely distressed by the fire mishap in Rajkot. My thoughts are with all those who have lost their loved ones. Prayers for the injured."

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said: "I am deeply saddened by the accident that happened in the game zone of Rajkot (Gujarat). I have spoken to the Chief Minister Shri @BhupendraPatel ji and got information regarding this incident."

Mourning the incident, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said in a post on X: "The news of the death of many people including innocent children due to a massive fire in the gaming zone of a mall in Rajkot, Gujarat, is very painful. I express my deepest condolences to all the bereaved families. I hope that all the injured recover as soon as possible."

## Nepalese woman scripts history, climbs Mt Everest thrice in two weeks

Kathmandu | Agencies

Nepalese mountaineer Purnima Shrestha has become the first woman to summit Mount Everest thrice in two weeks, local media reported.

Purnima, who is also a photojournalist, first summited the world's highest peak on May 12, then on May 19, and later on May 25.

Expedition Director at 8K Expeditions Lakpa Sherpa said Purnima's impressive list of 8x8000ers summits over the years showcases her passion and expertise in mountaineering. The Himalayan Times reported.

"Purnima made history this year by becoming the first woman to summit Mount Everest three times in a single season with 8K Expeditions!"

Purnima, a native of Gorkha, had earlier climbed Mount Everest, Kanchenjunga, Lhotse, Dhaulagiri, Mount K2 and Annapurna and Manaslu.



## INDIA Bloc Doing "Mujra" For Its "Vote Bank": PM Modi

Bikram, Bihar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today vowed to thwart alleged attempts to rob Dalits and backward classes of reservations by the INDIA bloc which he accused of "enslavement" and performing "mujra" for Muslim vote bank.

PM Modi launched the blistering attack at a rally in the Pataliputra Lok Sabha constituency, about 40 kms from Patna, where he also blamed parties like RJD and Congress for SCs, STs and OBCs "being deprived of quotas" in minority institutions.

"Bihar is the land which has given a new direction to the fight for social justice. I wish to declare on its soil that I will foil the plans of INDIA bloc to rob SCs, STs and OBCs of their rights and divert these to



Muslims. They may remain enslaved and perform 'mujra' to please their vote bank", said the PM. He also alleged that the opposition alliance was banking on the support of those who were indulging in "vote jihad" and referred to the Calcutta High Court order that struck down the West Bengal government's decision to include a number of Muslim groups in the list of OBCs.

## PM should maintain decorum: Priyanka Gandhi

Gorakhpur | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "mujra" remark at a rally in Bihar today drew a sharp response from Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who said the Prime Minister must maintain the decorum of his post.

The remark, made when the Prime Minister was accusing the Opposition of vote bank politics, was panned by other INDIA leaders too. Mujra is a dance performance widely associated with courtesans.

Hitting back, Priyanka said no Prime Minister would have used such language. "What is Modiji saying? Is it not his responsibility to maintain the decorum of his post? We respect the Prime Minister post. His reality can now be seen. Do not show so much reality to the country. He has forgotten that he represents the country. What will the



future generations say," the Congress leader said at a rally with ally and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav in Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur.

She also said it is the BJP's candidates who are going around claiming that the party will change the Constitution if it returns to power.

## RESCUERS TAKE GUARD AS CYCLONE REMAL GATHERS STEAM

Kolkata: Central and state agencies associated with disaster management are gearing up with severe cyclonic storm Remal hurtling towards the West Bengal and Bangladesh coastlines.

The landfall is expected sometime around mid-night on Sunday. While a control room has been set up at the Kolkata Police headquarters in Lalbazar for the state agencies, teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) are heading for the districts that are likely to be affected by the cyclonic storm.

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is also issuing alerts to mariners besides coordinating with its Bangladeshi counterparts for proper handling of the situation.

Apart from ICG ships, air assets are also in place at Kolkata and Bhubaneswar for immediate deployment. Two monitoring stations have been set up at Haldia and Paradip by the ICG.

The NDRF, meanwhile, has deployed 12 teams with equipment in seven districts. While one team will be deployed in Kolkata, there will be two each in the districts of North 24 Parganas, East Midnapore, and West Midnapore.

## 1 in 8 women at risk of developing thyroid disorder in their lifetime: Experts

THE CONDITION IN WHICH THE LEVEL OF HORMONES DECREASES IS CALLED HYPOTHYROIDISM. IT IS MOSTLY FOUND IN WOMEN AGED 20 TO 50 YEARS, ALTHOUGH IT CAN HAPPEN IN ANY AGE GROUP, ACCORDING TO EXPERTS.

ACCORDING TO EXPERTS, INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE SYMPTOMS OF THYROID IS CRUCIAL. DOCTORS SHOULD EDUCATE PEOPLE ABOUT THE SYMPTOMS TO ENSURE TIMELY TREATMENT.

INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY TO THYROID TESTING AND PROMOTING REGULAR CHECK-UPS CAN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF UNDIAGNOSED CASES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Highlighting the critical need for increased awareness about the importance of thyroid testing in infants, pregnant women, and those planning pregnancy, experts on World Thyroid Day on Saturday said women are particularly at risk, with one in eight at risk of developing thyroid disorder in their lifetime.

According to Dr Rajesh Rajput, Director, Endocrinology & Diabetology, Medanta, Gurugram, the burden of thyroid disorders is significant in India.

"Alarmingly, one in every ten individuals has thyroid dysfunction and the majority of these cases are diagnosed in late stages. Most thyroid conditions are chronic, requiring lifelong medication, and they are ten times more prevalent in women than men," Rajput said.

As per health experts, about 42 million people are believed to be suffering from thyroid disorders in India and the number of women affected by the disease is far greater compared to men. "Hypothyroidism" is more common in women.

"The level of thyroid hormones in the blood needs to be normal so that all the systems of our body can function nor-



mally. If there is a change in the level of thyroid hormones, either the level becomes high or the level becomes low, both conditions have many effects on our body," said Dr. Chandan Kumar Mishra, Senior Consultant, Endocrinology, Aakash Healthcare, Delhi.

As per Dr. Praveen Gupta, Principal Director and Chief of Neurology at Fortis Hospital, Gurugram, thyroid disorders can significantly impact neurological health, leading to a range of complications that affect the nervous system.

"Cognitive sequelae associated with hypothyroidism consist of memory loss, problems with focus/concentration, and changes in intellectual facility. Some patients may also feel a lack of mental clarity or what is called 'brain fog' where one feels dazed or gets easily confused," Gupta said.

## Google Maps turn awry, tourists land in Kerala pond

Kottayam: Too much reliance on Google Maps resulted in a tourist group from Hyderabad driving into a pond near here at Kuruputhura in the wee hours on Saturday.

The four youths from Hyderabad had visited the picturesque hill station destination at Munnar and were driving to the famed boating destination at Alappuzha.

The incident occurred around 3 a.m. when the youths, en route to Alappuzha, used Google Maps to navigate.

Due to heavy rains, the road, the tourists were travelling on, was covered by water overflowing from the pond, and as they were unfamiliar with the area, they landed in the water body.

"We were taken aback and soon realised it was water all around. We knew we had to escape and did it by opening the back side of the vehicle," said one of the tourists.

The vehicle was retrieved from the pond.

"This is not the first time such a thing has happened. Long back a troupe of late actor Rajan P. Dev had missed the original route and landed in the pond.

## "Handle Your Country": Arvind Kejriwal Snubs Pak Leader's Poll Shoutout



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid the ongoing sixth phase of Lok Sabha elections in eight states/UT, Pakistani politician Fawad Chaudhry caught the attention of netizens on Saturday after he posted a message for Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Though Kejriwal was quick to snub Chaudhry with a terse reply, the matter drew multiple angry reactions from the BJP leaders, who also advised the city residents to 'vote wisely'.

Kejriwal cast his vote along with his family members on Saturday and also shared a photo on social media.

Fawad Chaudhry, who was a minister in the erstwhile Imran Khan-led government in Pakistan, shared Kejriwal's post with the caption, "May peace and harmony defeat forces of hate and extremism," using the hashtags #MorePower #IndiaElection2024.

The BJP took exception to the former Pakistan minister's 'laudatory' message for Kejriwal and slammed the Delhi CM for giving a handle to Pakistani politicians to meddle in India's affairs.

BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla questioned the "relation between India's enemies and Kejriwal", as he asked, "Is this why Congress and AAP doubted surgical strikes and Balakote strikes?"



## MID-DAY MEAL DISTRIBUTED EVEN DURING HOLIDAYS IN TWENTY-THREE DISTRICTS, CENTER CAUGHT

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Mid-day meals were distributed on paper in 23 districts of the state. Look at the courage of those responsible that they also entered fake information about food distribution on the monitoring system portal, but they forgot that during this time they had entered information about food distribution, there were holidays in schools at that time. Now that the matter has come to light, preparations have been made to take action against those responsible.

According to the information, under the Prime Minister's Nutrition Program, mid-day meal is distributed among children in government schools. Information about distribution of mid-day meal in schools of 23 districts of the state from May 1 to June 15, 2024, is being recorded on the Automated Monitoring System (AMS) portal, while holiday has been



declared in schools during this period. When the officials monitoring the portal noticed this fraud, they wrote a letter to take action against the officials posted in schools of 23 districts.

According to Manoj Pushp, State Coordinator of Prime Minister Poshan Shakti Nirman, fraud is taking place in the schools of these districts. Mid-day meal has been distributed

during the vacation period in schools of Narsinghpur, Ratlam, Sagar, Seoni, Shahdol, Sheopur, Shivpuri districts.

Central government caught the matter. Information regarding distribution of mid-day meals to children in schools during vacation period was being recorded on the monitoring portal. Madhya Pradesh School Education Department did not come to know about this. The monitoring agency of the Central Government caught this fraud and informed the Madhya Pradesh School Education Department. After this, preparations have been made to take immediate action against the frauds taking place in 23 districts.

Action will be taken against school in-charges who indulge in mid-day meal fraud. For this, a letter has been written on behalf of Prime Minister Poshan Shakti Nirman to the Chief Executive Officer of the District Panchayat.

## Health camps in all night shelters of Bhopal from tomorrow

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Special health camps are being organized by the Health Department, District Bhopal for the people living in various night shelters of the city. These camps will run from 27th May to 1st June. Keeping in mind the convenience of the people taking shelter in night shelters, the camps have been organized from 8:00 pm onwards. In the camp, facilities for testing non-communicable diseases, skin disease screening, making Ayushman card and Abha ID will be provided. Along with this, arrangements for testing and counseling for mental health problems have also been made in these camps.

Chief Medical and Health Officer, Bhopal, Dr. rabhakar

Tiwari said that camps are being organized in 11 different night shelters of Bhopal from May 27. In which health testing and other health related services will be provided. Cooperation of Social Justice Department, Food and Civil Supplies Department, Women and Child Development Department will also be taken in these camps organized in coordination with the District Administration and Municipal Corporation.

Earlier, camps were organized by the Health Department at labor benches from 7 am. More than 25 thousand workers were benefited in these camps. Also, more than one thousand Ayushman cards and more than two thousand Abha IDs were made.



## Relief from scorching heat through initiative of Municipal Corporation



Bhopal: The Municipal Corporation has taken an important initiative during the scorching summer season. Work is being done to provide relief to the people by setting up tents at differ-

ent intersections of the city. Along with this, the Municipal Corporation has sprinkled water on traffic signals at major intersections. This will provide relief to people from the heat. Water is

also being sprayed from three different anti-fogging machines in Bhopal. This is being given to vehicles in different areas.

Big relief to officers

## The investigation that has been going on for years will be stopped, the govt instructed to GAD

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Mohan government of Madhya Pradesh has taken a big decision to close the complaints against officers that have been going on for years. The government has given instructions to the General Administration Department regarding this. After this decision, those officers will get relief against whom investigation was going on for years. This new formula has been introduced to ensure the responsibility of investigation.

Now whenever a complainant files a complaint against the officer, and he does not submit evidence and testimony, his investigation file will be closed. According to this instruction, the complainant giving evi-



dence and testimony during the investigation will also be taken into account. It has been issued by Manish Rastogi, Principal Secretary, General Administration Department.

This decision is an important step to ensure a fair and convenient investigation

process between the officers of Bhopal and the state. This will ensure that the complaints are investigated impartially and fairly by experts. This decision will ensure the safety and convenience of a fair and credible investigation process for the Bhopal gas victims.

## Study Visit at Solid Waste Management Plant by RMNH

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Regional Museum of Natural History, Bhopal (A Regional Centre of National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi) is organizing various environmental educational programmes under Summer Nature Study Programme- Green Teen for the students of class 8th to 10th.

In continuation of the environmental educational programmes; 'Study Visit of Solid Waste Management Plant' at Thuakheda, Bhopal was arranged for the participants on 25th May, 2024.

During the visit, Sanitary Inspector of the Transfer Station, Thuakheda, Ms. Veena Agrawal detailed about management of Dry and Wet Waste. She informed that hardboard, plastic glass, metals, thermocol being removed from Dry waste and sold for recycling and rest of wet waste is being transferred for making of fertilizer and dry waste for recycling.

In next session, In-charge



of Construction & Demolition Unit, Shri Amit Shrivastava told that Bhopal municipal corporation established a crusher plant, a fly ash brick machine plant, a paver block making plant, where fly ash bricks and paver block are produced.

He told that steel, wood, plastic, soil, concrete are segregated from construction and demolition waste and dumped separately in a yard. Pure concrete crushed into small parts & dust. Mixture of concrete, dust, cement, water & fly ash used to produce the bricks and paver blocks. During the visit, participants understand how we can go forward towards zero waste society.

## NO SHUTDOWN, UNINTERRUPTED POWER SUPPLY FOR THREE DAYS TILL TUESDAY IN BHOPAL

Bhopal: In view of the severe heat in Bhopal city, there will be no shutdown for the next three days. This decision has been taken by the Madhya Kshetra Vidyut Vitran Company City Circle Bhopal keeping in mind the convenience of the consumers. The Madhya Kshetra Vidyut Vitran Company has said that till Tuesday, May 28, no shutdown of any kind will be taken under the city circle Bhopal so that the consumers do not have to face inconvenience.

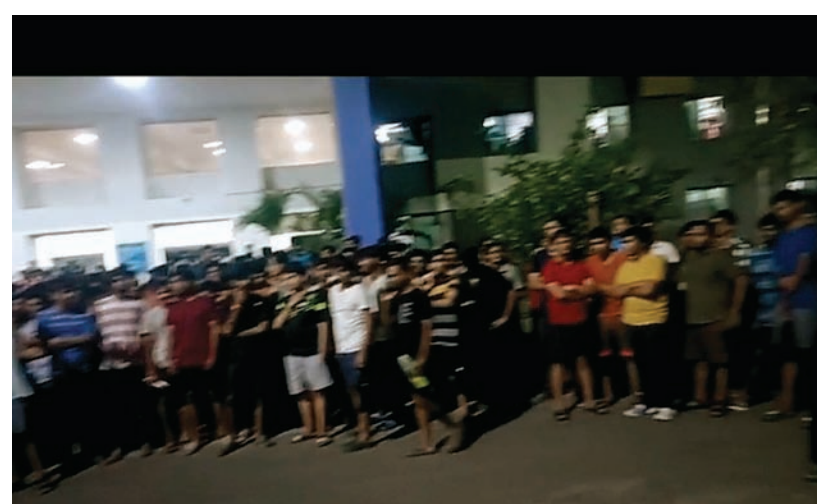
Madhya Kshetra Vidyut Vitran Company has appealed to all the consumers to use electrical appliances in their homes only as per their need. Do not keep electrical appliances on unnecessarily. This will save energy. Saving energy will not only reduce power interruptions in this scorching heat but will also lead to savings in electricity bills.

## VIT UNIVERSITY: Major water crisis, students create ruckus, 8 thousand children now forced to return home

Team Absolute | Bhopal

There is a water crisis in VIT University located near Sehore. Water is not available even for students to flush toilets. Agitated students created a ruckus in the university campus late on Friday night. The children are in trouble for the last fifteen days. They are neither getting good food in the campus or hostels nor adequate and clean water. Management is not ready to listen to anything.

There is a major water crisis in VIT Bhopal University located near Sehore. The situation is such that water is not available even for students to flush toilets. Troubled by the water crisis, students created a ruckus in the university campus late on Friday night. It is reported that students angry with the negligence of the university administration have also scuffled with the registrar of the university. However, the university administration has completely denied this. Here, about 8 to 10 thousand students troubled by water are now being forced to leave the



university and return home.

Thousands of children from various streams including engineering study in VIT Bhopal University, located at Kothri Kalan near Ashta on Bhopal Indore Highway. A large number of children are studying while staying in hostels. For a

long time this university has been in controversies regarding the inconvenience caused to the students. This time too, with the onset of summer, water crisis has arisen in the university. However, the university administration claims that it is trying its best to provide water to the stu-

dents. Despite this, there is a shortage of even drinking water for the students.

Here, the university administration has issued SOP in its official group, requesting the students not to flush the toilet, so that there is shortage of water. Apart from this, the university management has also repeatedly instructed the students not to use water due to water shortage. Frustrated with no attention being paid to the problems of the students despite their continuous demand for water, the students of VIT BHPAL UNIVERSITY created a ruckus in the university campus late on Friday night. It is being told that during the uproar, angry students also scuffled with the university registrar. Seeing the problem increasing here, the university management has instructed the students living in the hostel to go to their homes. According to Amit Singh associated with the university, there has been no dispute of any kind in the university. The university, on its part, is trying to provide adequate water to the students. Because the students' exams were over, they were asked to go home.

## 3 CHILDREN, BATHING IN RIVER AFTER FUNERAL, DROWN IN AGAR MALWA

Agar Malwa: Three children, including two siblings, drowned in a river in Madhya Pradesh's Agar Malwa district, police said on Saturday.

The incident occurred at Chhalda village, some 35 km from the district headquarters, on Friday evening, said Shashi Upadhyay, in-charge of Nalkheda police station.

Following the death of a family member and subsequent final rites, a few women had gone to take a bath in the Lakhundar river. These three children were also accompanying them, said the police official.

When the women returned to the bank after taking a bath, they found the children missing.

After being alerted about the incident, the authorities launched a search. Later, personnel from the State Disaster Emergency Response Force (SDERF) fished out the bodies of the kids, the official said. Police identified the children as Monu (7) and his sister Muskan (8) and their relative Pankaj (7).

## The Prime Minister has done in 10 years what was not done in the last 65 years: VD Sharma

Team Absolute | Bhopal

State President of Madhya Pradesh Bharatiya Janata Party and Khajuraho MP Vishnudatt Sharma, while addressing the meeting of workers of Godda Assembly of Godda Lok Sabha constituency of Jharkhand, said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has done in the last 10 years what he had done after independence. No government could do this in the last 65 years.

All of you godlike BJP workers should tell the public about the achievements of the BJP government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and also remind the public about the corruption of Shibu Soren and Hemant



Soren families who looted Jharkhand. Party MLA from Godda Amit Mandal also addressed the meeting. Bharatiya Janata Party State President and MP Vishnudatt Sharma said that due to the hard work of all the godlike workers of your party, BJP is going to get unexpected success in Jharkhand. All of you workers should contact every house in your respective areas and work to increase the vote share of the party by 10 percent by adding 370 new voters to the party in

every booth. Prime Minister implemented Ayushman Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana, free food grains scheme for free treatment of Rs. 5 lakh to every poor, along with guarantee of free treatment of Rs. 5 lakh to senior citizens of every age group above 70 years of age. Tell to Prime Minister has done the work of giving respect to India at the global level. They work to get votes by tricking and after coming to power, they only work to cheat the public. Be it Congress Party, Shibu Sone Party or other parties included in Indi alliance, all are supporters of nepotism. For these parties, the public is just a vote bank, but the Bharatiya Janata Party and Prime Minister are serving the public.

## AIIMS Bhopal's AYUSH department Witnesses Enthusiastic Participation in Yoga Sessions

Team Absolute | Bhopal

AIIMS Bhopal's Executive Director, Professor (Dr) Ajai Singh, has been a strong advocate for holistic health and well-being. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining an organized and balanced daily routine to ward off diseases and promote overall health. In line with this vision, AIIMS Bhopal's AYUSH department has become a hub for yoga enthusiasts of all ages, thanks to his dedicated efforts. Every week, more than 300 individuals, ranging in age from 9 to 70 years, gather at the AYUSH department to practice yoga. Remarkably, 90% of these participants are managing chronic health issues such as spondylitis, cervical problems, diabetes, arthritis, and high blood pressure. Through consistent yoga practice, they have experienced significant improvements in their conditions. The daily yoga sessions, held from 7 AM to 8 AM, see over 50 regular participants who have embraced yoga to maintain their health. The Senior Medical Officer



of the AYUSH department attributes this growing interest to the high-quality facilities and comprehensive treatments available. Yoga instructor Chanchal Suryavanshi noted the increasing number of attendees from across Madhya Pradesh, driven by the tangible health benefits they experience and their enthusiasm to spread

the word.

AIIMS Bhopal aims to ensure that everyone can benefit from the ancient practice of yoga, integral to Indian tradition, and apply its principles for lifelong health. Plans are underway to establish a dedicated yoga therapy clinic within the hospital premises. This clinic will offer personalized yoga prescriptions tailored to individual health needs, enhancing patient care.

Furthermore, AIIMS Bhopal is conducting research on the therapeutic potential of yoga in various medical conditions. This research aims to provide strong scientific evidence for the integration of yoga into evidence-based medical practice, reinforcing its role in modern healthcare.

Professor (Dr) Ajai Singh believes that adopting yoga can lead to a healthy and fulfilling life. AIIMS Bhopal remains committed to promoting this vision and encourages everyone to integrate yoga into their daily routines for optimal health and well-being.





# BEFORE DIVORCE RUMOURS, JLO WAS HELPED BY BEN AFFLECK

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Ben Affleck helped his wife Jennifer Lopez navigate certain scenes for the film 'Atlas', according to the actress' co-star Sterling K. Brown.

In an interview with Entertainment Weekly, Brown talked about the interactions between Affleck and Lopez on set. "Every once in a while, Ben would read the lines for Smith," Brown said.

"And I think the newlyweds, still very much in love, I think she just wanted to hear his voice. And so sometimes, the reactions that you got from her were because she was listening to her husband's voice."

This isn't the first time the couple has worked together, with 'Gigli', 'Air', and 'This Is Me...Now: A Love Story', among their joint projects.

In 'Atlas', Lopez essays the role of Atlas Shepherd, a data analyst with a deep distrust of artificial intelligence. She joins a mission to capture a renegade AI robot, voiced by actor Simu Liu, reports deadline.com.

The mission requires the assistance of Smith, another AI robot voiced by Gregory James Cohan.



# Madonna reveals she didn't know her address when she resided with Guy Ritchie

London | Agencies

Legendary singer and songwriter Madonna revealed she had no idea of her specific address because she was used to being driven around in the UK when she resided with Guy Ritchie. Madonna and the 'Gentlemen' filmmaker were married from 2000 to 2008 and spent most of their time together in the director's mansion, Ashcombe House, in Wiltshire, South West England.

Eventing champion William Fox-Pitt was contacted by Madonna asking for riding lessons, and he recalled to the Daily Telegraph newspaper: "She Googled me and said she wanted some lessons, but didn't have a horse. I asked her where she lived, and she said she didn't know."

"I told her I'd never heard of anyone not knowing where they lived, but she said she had only been driven there, and we established it might be somewhere near Salisbury. But she ended up coming to Hinton St Mary for lessons."

The Olympic veteran had a "good relationship" with Madonna, but she didn't always listen to instructions, and he was left terrified one day when she fell off her horse and thought she was "dead", reports femalefirst.co.uk.

He said: "I regularly had to pinch myself. We had a good relationship, she was a good learner but she didn't always want to learn. There were days when she just wanted to go for a ride. But it was a big risk [because of who she was] not to fall off."

"After she'd built an indoor school at Ashcombe, she got me over to see her new horse," he added.

"She was brave but not really a jump rider, and she fell off. I didn't know where to look. She was lying on the floor, didn't move and I was thinking, 'oh my god, she's dead.' Then she proceeded to come alive very quickly. And vocally."

# Chinese director Hu Guan's 'Black Dog' wins Un Certain Regard Prize at Cannes

Cannes | Agencies

Chinese director Hu Guan's 'Black Dog' won the Un Certain Regard Prize of the 77th Cannes Film Festival on Friday evening, reports 'Deadline'.

Anasuya Sengupta winning the Best Actress award for 'The Shameless', thereby scripting history by becoming the first Indian to take home a major acting award from Cannes.

Organised parallelly to the competition section, where the Palme d'Or is up for grabs, the Un Certain Regard section at the Debussy theatre annually features just 20 films with "unusual styles and non-traditional stories seeking international recognition".

Set on the edge of the Gobi desert in northwest China, 'Black Dog'

revolves around a man who returns to his hometown after being released from jail.

Working for the local dog patrol team to clear the town of stray dogs before the Olympics, he strikes up an unlikely connection with a black dog. The two lonely souls embark on a new journey together, 'Deadline' reports.

The Jury Prize went to Boris Lojkine's 'The Story Of Souleymane', which follows its titular character, an asylum seeker, as he cycles around Paris delivering food, rehearsing his asylum application interview in his head.

The appointment will be key to obtaining the papers he needs, but Souleymane is not ready. Abou Sangare, who plays Souleymane, got the Un Certain Regard Best Actor award.



**KIM KARDASHIAN, KANYE WEST'S DAUGHTER NORTH TO SING AT 'LION KING' CONCERT**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Kanye West and reality TV star Kim Kardashian's daughter North West is all set to make her singing debut at the Hollywood Bowl during the first of the two-night 'The Lion King' concert event. North will perform 'I Just Can't Wait to Be King'.

It was earlier reported that West will join 'Lion King' veterans Nathan Lane, Billy Eichner, Jeremy Irons, Ernie Sabella, Heather Headley, Lebo M, and Jason Weaver, as well as EGOT winner Jennifer Hudson. A full orchestra is set to perform Hans Zimmer's Oscar-winning musical score, led by conductor Sarah Hicks. The song list includes Elton John and Tim Rice classics such as 'Can You Feel the Love Tonight', 'Circle of Life', 'Be Prepared', and 'Hakuna Matata'.

The show will be filmed for later broadcast as 'The Lion King at the Hollywood Bowl' on Disney+.

The 1994 film was followed by the Tony-winning adaptation in 1998. A 2019 live-action movie starred Beyonce, Donald Glover, Lane, Eichner, and Alfre Woodard.

'Mufasa: The Lion King', a live-action prequel directed by Barry Jenkins, will be in theaters in December.

Beyonce and Jay-Z's daughter, Blue Ivy Carter, makes her feature film debut as Kiara, the daughter of Nala (Beyonce) and Simba (Donald Glover).

# 12-minute Cannes ovation for Iranian film that earned its maker 8-year jail term

Cannes | Agencies

'The Seed of the Sacred Fig', Iranian dissident director Mohammad Rasoulof's latest film, for which he received an eight-year prison sentence back home, got a rapturous 12-minute standing ovation at its Cannes Film Festival premiere on Friday, says 'Variety'.

Rasoulof risked his life by appearing at the film's premiere as he fled Iran for Europe on May 13 to avoid going to prison.

The only prominent member of the film's star cast who was with Rasoulof on the red carpet was Golshifteh Farahani, who was seen with Irrfan Khan in the Swiss-French-Singaporean Rajasthani film, 'The Song of



Scorpions', premiered at the Locarno Film Festival in 2017. There was undeniable applause as the credits of Rasoulof's film began to roll (it is 'Variety' policy, though, to begin timing standing ovations once the house lights come up). Rasoulof got teary and waved enthusiastically to the balcony.

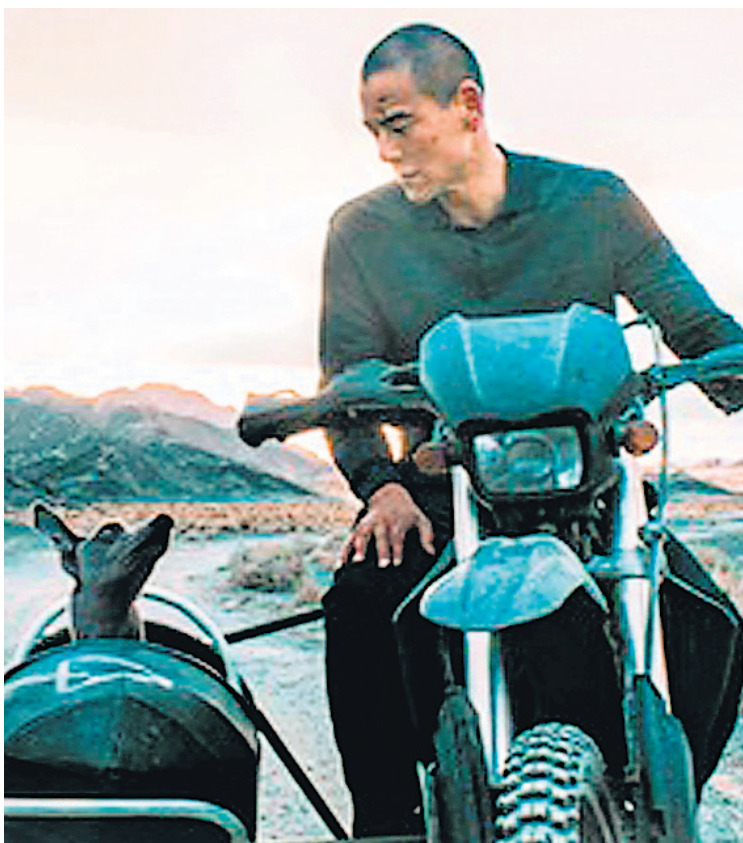
Ali Abbasi, director of fellow competition title 'The Apprentice', stood next to Rasoulof and encouraged the crowd to keep clapping -- not that they needed it, as their cheers just got louder and louder.

There was even a sign in the audience that read 'Femme! Vie! Liberté!' ('Woman! Life! Freedom!'), the slogan for solidarity with Iranian women who are demanding their fundamental rights.

The ecstatic response to and political weight of 'The Seed of the Sacred Fig' has cemented its status as a frontrunner for the festival's prestigious Palme d'Or, according to 'Variety'.

On the red carpet, Rasoulof, who has previously served prison time in Iran, held up images of stars Soheila Golestani and Missagh Zareh, who were unable to leave Iran for the premiere.

In addition to his prison sentence, adds 'Variety', Iranian authorities had been pressuring him to pull 'The Seed of the Sacred Fig' from Cannes and harassing the film's producers and actors. In an interview with 'Variety' on Thursday, Rasoulof said that Golestani has been arrested by Iranian security services.



Devon Windsor



## Malaysia Masters: Sindhu storms into final after hard-fought victory against Ongbamrunghan

Kuala Lumpur | Agencies

India's ace shuttler PV Sindhu has progressed to the final of the women's singles in the Malaysia Masters after defeating Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrunghan in the semi-final match here at Axiata Arena on Saturday.

In the hard-fought encounter, Sindhu outclassed the higher-ranked Thai shuttler 13-21, 21-16, 21-12 in the 88-minute-long encounter. She will play her first final in any tournament since March last year.

This is also Sindhu's fourth final at BWF World Tour Super 500 events. Playing in his first semi-final of the year, the two-time Olympic medallist lost the opening game before unleashing her true valour on the court.

In the second game, she took the lead from world no. 10 after a highly competitive battle and entered the halfway mark with two points lead. She kept her composure and added to her lead to win the game 21-16. In the deciding game, she came out with all guns blazing and gave no chance to her opponent to



make a comeback in the match. Before switching sides, Sindhu had 11-5 lead which she took to eight match points at the end. She easily took the game 21-12 to seal the encounter.

Sindhu will next take on China's Wang Zhi Yi in the final on Sunday. The reigning Asian champion outclassed compatriot Zhang Yiman in straight games to book a final berth.

## Boxing World Qualifiers: Abhimanyu Loura beats Nikolov in thrilling clash to advance

Team Absolute | New Delhi

National championships bronze medallist Abhimanyu Loura displayed his daunting attitude to pack off Bulgaria's Kristiyan Nikolov in a thrilling first-round clash in the 80kg category in the 2nd Boxing World Qualifiers for the Paris Olympics in Bangkok on Saturday.

Loura started slow as the 10-time Bulgarian National Champion took an upper hand in the opening round.

But the 21-year-old Indian quickly switched gears and went on the offensive in the second round and earned the bragging rights for the round with four of the five judges voting in favour of him. The Indian continued the flurry of punches in the third and final round too, to finally clinch the bout 3-0 and ensure two wins out of two for the Indian contingent in Bangkok.

Earlier, it was Sachin Siwach who had opened India's account with a win in the 57kg category against Alex Mukuka of New Zealand on Friday. India has fielded seven men and three women in the 2nd World Qualifiers and Abhinash Jamwal (63.5kg) and Nishant Dev (71kg)



will take the ring on Sunday for the first time. Jamwal faces Andrius Lavrenovas of Lithuania in his opening bout while Nishant takes on Amando Bighafa of Guinea-Bissau.

Nikhata Zareen (50kg), Preeti (54kg), and Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) have already secured their spots for Paris through their performances at the Asian Games.

## Erik Ten Hag denies exit rumors ahead of FA Cup final

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With the 2024 FA Cup final mere hours away, Manchester United boss Erik Ten Hag has dismissed any rumors regarding his future with the club.

"New owners told me directly that they want to change everything and that they want to rebuild with me. Carrington will get completely destroyed, new training ground will come to INEOS will change many things," said Ten Hag to Dutch football magazine Voetbal International.

Erik Ten Hag joined the Red Devils in 2022 and led the club to a Carabao Cup trophy, and ended the season in third place in the league and finished as the FA Cup runners-up in his first season in charge but followed it with the team's worst finish in the league and group stage exit in the UEFA Champions League.

Manchester United will face Manchester City in the final of the FA Cup, a rematch of last year's final which City won 2-1. Reports indicate that Ten Hag will be sacked by the club irrespective of the result in the important game.

"Manchester United won the league for the last time in 2013. But still, they expect us to win every game while competing at the top. This club is not ready for that," added the 45-year-old gaffer.

The club has severely been hit with injuries during the course of the season which surely



contributed to their poor run as they finished the season with the most injuries in the league, a fact Ten Hag emphasized on throughout the season.

"The injuries have been really crazy. Not long ago I had to start the 15th different center-back duo of the season. I have had 33 different defensive lines this season," concluded the former Ajax boss.

## T20 World Cup: Feel Pakistan should make the final; conditions will suit them, says Shahid Afridi

Dubai | Agencies

Pakistan's former all-rounder Shahid Afridi believes the Babar Azam-led side can make it to the final of the upcoming 2024 Men's T20 World Cup, citing that the conditions for the mega event in the West Indies and the USA can suit the team. Pakistan won the Men's T20 World Cup in 2009 in England under Younis Khan's leadership. They also have two runners-up finishes in the 2007 and 2022 editions of the showpiece event, apart from reaching the last-four stage in 2010, 2012, and 2021, respectively.

"I feel Pakistan should make the final. The reason is that the conditions (in the West Indies and the USA) suit our team. If we look at the spinners in our team, they are outstanding. They might not be in form but I know they will return in form. If we talk about fast bowling, it's an incredible attack. In batting, we have great strength," said Afridi to ICC.

He's also left excited by what Pakistan's fast-bowling line-up can achieve in the T20 World Cup. Left-arm fast-bowler Shaheen Afridi will spearhead the Pakistan pace attack alongside Naseem Shah, Haris Rauf, Abbas Afridi and Mohammad Amir. "I think in any cricket team in the world, nobody has such a strong bowling line-up. All our four fast bowlers have a lot of skill and even the bowlers sit-



ting on the bench like Abbas (Afridi)...has a lot of skill with a good slower ball."

"If the players with such good skills enter this World Cup against world-class batters they will perform well. All the names will also have a huge responsibility over them," he added.

Afridi also wishes to see Pakistan's batting line-up have a higher strike rate in the competition. "The thing that bothers me is the strike rate of our batters, especially in between the seven to thirteen over phase. I hope that the strike rate improves in that phase. In terms of runs per over, eight or nine runs per over are needed but still Pakistan are my favourite." Afridi was reluctant to single out one player who would hold the key to Pakistan's chances in the tournament. At the same time, he wished to see Babar leading the side from the front in his return to the role as the Pakistan captain.

"All players in the team are important. But if you look at the performances in the recent past, Babar (Azam), (Mohammad) Rizwan, Fakhar (Zaman), Shaheen (Afridi), Naseem Shah, Haris Rauf, Shadab (Khan) - all of them play an important role and will be key (for Pakistan) at the World Cup."

"But if I had to pick one, I would pick the captain Babar Azam, because he is the leader. I want him to perform well, and make timely decisions which will take the team to victory," he concluded.

## IPL 2024: We'll definitely win the trophy, says Bhuvneshwar ahead of final against KKR



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar is confident of winning the Indian Premier League (IPL) title as they gear up for the summit clash against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) at MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Sunday.

SRH defeated Rajasthan Royals by 36 runs in Qualifier 2 on Friday to reach the final. However, they lost Qualifier 1 against KKR by eight wickets and were scheduled to play the encounter against Rajasthan for the final spot.

This is the first time in six seasons that Hyderabad are playing the final. They last reached the final in 2018 and lost the title to MS Dhoni-led Chennai Super Kings.

In the last three seasons, they failed to reach the playoffs and in fact, finished at bottom in the previous edition of the IPL.

Bhuvneshwar expressed his excitement to play the summit clash and is eager to lift the trophy.

"It's a different feeling because we

hadn't played in the playoffs for the last three seasons. It's a great feeling. The way we were playing this season, we had a feeling we would reach the final, and then it was a one-match scenario. Everyone's happy with how everyone has contributed, it was fantastic teamwork... Winning the IPL title is really special and now that we have reached the final, we will definitely win the trophy," Bhuvneshwar told JioCinema.

Rahul Tripathi, who contributed 37 runs against Rajasthan, said he was waiting for his opportunity to showcase his talent. He played only five matches this season and scored 156 runs including a half-century.

"I had to wait for my opportunity, it was tough. Even when I wasn't playing, I was thinking about how I would help the team when the opportunity came my way and how I could put my best foot forward. That thinking helped me. My preparation was to contribute positively whenever I got an opportunity," he said.

Former India spinner Anil Kumble

lauded Shabaz Ahmed's all-round performance that awarded him Player of the Match on Friday.

He scored 18 runs and also bagged three crucial wickets of Yashasvi Jaiswal (42), Riyan Parag (6) and Ravichandran Ashwin (0) in his four-over spell to restrict Rajasthan for 139/7 in 20 overs.

"Even with his previous franchise, RCB, he had the cricket smarts. He came in a different position, and even today, he batted. Yes, he bowled really well and got the length right. On Chennai pitches, you need to get the length right and bowl stump-to-stump, that's all you need to do," Kumble said.

"You don't need to think about anything else. You have to try to spin the ball, hit the pitch, and bowl a good length where it's going to hit the stumps and that's exactly what Shabaz did. With the bat, his partnership with Klaasen, he batted really well. They were losing wickets, and his job was to be there till Klaasen was there and then take a chance. He did that to good effect," he added.

## 'Of course I am worried, I haven't been playing good at all this year' Djokovic after Geneva exit

Geneva | Agencies

World No.1 Novak Djokovic is "worried" about his performance and admits he hasn't been performing at his best after a surprising semi-final exit to Tomas Machac (4-6, 6-0, 1-6), at the Geneva Open on Friday. In an unexpected turn of events at the Geneva Open, Novak Djokovic's preparation for the 2024 Roland Garros has hit a stumbling block. Following a surprising semi-final exit to Tomas Machac, Djokovic openly acknowledged the hurdles he faces in his quest to defend his title in Paris. The 24-time major champion, who took a wild card into the ATP 250 event in Switzerland, hoped to fine-tune his form ahead of Roland Garros. Instead, he left with more questions than answers about his current state. Djokovic struggled with an upset stomach during his match against Machac, calling the tournament doctor to the court for a medical timeout at the end of the first set. Despite rallying to win the second set decisively, heulti-



mately faded in the third, losing the last six games. Reflecting on his performance and physical condition, Djokovic was candid about his concerns. "Of course I am worried... I haven't been playing good at all this year," he admitted. With a modest record of 14-6 for the year, Djokovic has yet to claim a title in 2024. His health issues in Geneva only compounded his worries, as he revealed. "It was a terrible feeling with stomach and health today... it was not a great night and today as well. I've had some [good] matches here and there but it is what it is. You have to accept it. I don't consider myself a favourite there. I'm going to take it match by match and

see how far I can go." Despite the setbacks, Djokovic refused to diminish Machac's achievement, acknowledging the Czech's deserved victory. "I don't want to take anything away from his win, he deserved it," he said. Looking forward, Djokovic expressed his intent to put the Geneva defeat behind him and focus on Roland Garros, where he aims to win his fourth title and his third in the past four years. Djokovic's candid assessment of his form was striking: "I don't consider myself a favourite there. I'm going to take it match by match and see how far I can go." His journey in Paris will be crucial, not just for the title defense but also for maintaining his position at the top of the rankings. Djokovic needs to reach at least the semi-finals to retain a chance of staying world no. 1, a status currently at risk with Yannik Sinner poised to take the lead in the PIF ATP Live Rankings.

As Djokovic prepares for his 20th Roland Garros campaign, he is set to face Frenchman Pierre-Hugues Herbert in the first round.

## My father and Yuvraj will be happy with my bowling performance : Abhishek Sharma

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Abhishek Sharma's surprise left-arm spin did wonders for the Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) as they overpowered Rajasthan Royals by 36 runs in Qualifier 2 to set up a clash in the final against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024. Abhishek picked wickets of Rajasthan captain Sanju Samson (10) and Shimron Hetmyer (4) to give big jolts to the side while chasing 176. He returned with figures of 2-24 in four overs in the match. The 23-year-old said his father and former legendary all-rounder Yuvraj Singh would be happy to see his bowling performance. "My father will be very happy, he was a left-arm spinner. He has been working really hard on my bowling. Somehow, I knew that if I kept on working on my bowling I could contribute to my team because I have that in myself," Abhishek said in a video posted on IPL's official website.

Abhishek explained he had to convince SRH coaches and captain Pat



Cummins to allow him to bowl. Before the clash against Rajasthan, Abhishek had only bowled three overs in the season. "From the junior cricket, I have been bowling a lot. I was waiting for this opportunity. It was not easy, I had to convince my captain and coach because they had not seen me bowling much."

"Whenever I had talks with Yuvi Paaji about my bowling, he used to say that I can be a better bowler than him, so that thing I had in my mind and he will be really happy with my performance," he said. Ahead of the final, Abhishek wants

the fans to turn up in large numbers and support Hyderabad at MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai.

"I've been playing IPL for quite a few years now and obviously as a youngster my dream was to play in the finals and finally we're playing this year. I know Chennai Super Kings (CSK) have a lot of fan following here. I would request all the CSK fans to come and support us in the final," he said. Abhishek was not the only left-arm spinner that had an imprint on Friday as Shebaz Ahmed also scalped three wickets to pick Player of the Match accolade. "Since the start of the campaign, we're very relaxed and we're still not very excited. Our main focus is to win the final. I'm happy and proud of my semi-final performance," said Ahmed. "When I was batting in the death overs, I felt the wicket was slow and the ball was coming slowly on the bat. In my first over of bowling, after getting Yashasvi Jaiswal's wicket, I was confident that left-arm spin would be tough for the right-handed batters," he added.



## Ranveer shared a series of pictures of his ladylove, Deepika

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Ranveer Singh on Saturday appreciated the beauty of his wife and soon-to-be mom, Deepika Padukone, a.k.a his 'sunshine', saying, 'buri nazar wale tera moonh kala'.

An avid social media user, Ranveer, who is known for his fun and quirky posts, took to Instagram stories and

shared a series of pictures of his ladylove, Deepika.

This is Ranveer's first post for Deepika, post May 7, when he was in the headlines for archiving the wedding pictures with Deepika from his Instagram account.

The snaps show Deepika wearing a yellow sleeveless gown, flaunting her pregnancy glow and baby bump.

The 'Chennai Express' actress opted for a minimal makeup look and tied her

hair in a low bun. She accessorised the look with small pearls and diamond earrings.

The series of posts are captioned: "My sunshine", "Ufff! Kya karun main? Marr jaun?" and "Buri nazar wale tera moonh kala."

The couple tied the knot in November 2018, in both traditional Konkani and Sindhi ceremonies, in Italy. They are expecting their first baby together.



## On 51st birthday, Karan Johar announces his new untitled directorial project

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker Karan Johar, who is celebrating his 51st birthday on Saturday, announced his next directorial project, which is yet to be titled.

Taking to Instagram, Karan shared a picture wearing a white shirt, holding a draft that reads: "Untitled narration draft... Directed by Karan Johar May 25."

The post is captioned: "Get...Set...Go!" followed by a red heart emoji.

Jackie Shroff's wife, Ayesha, commented on the post, saying: "Wooooooohooooo!"

Arjun Bijlani wrote: "Happy birthday sir." Director Zoya Akhtar commented: "Happy birthday."

Neha Dhupia said: "Best Best Best Happy Birthday."

Meanwhile, Karan's last directorial

venture was the 2023 romantic comedy 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani', starring Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt in the lead.

He has earlier directed 'Ghost Stories', 'Lust Stories', 'Ae Dil Hai Mushkil', 'Student of the Year', 'My Name Is Khan', 'Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna', 'Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham...', and 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai'.

## Anil Kapoor lauds 40 years of Anupam Kher: 'Privileged to see your unmatched talent'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Anil Kapoor on Saturday congratulated veteran actor Anupam Kher for his 'incredible' 40 years in the industry, calling his journey nothing short of inspiring. Anil took to X and re-shared Anupam's post, where the latter shared a video of his 40-year acting journey.

Anupam, who made his acting debut in 1984, with the Mahesh Bhatt-directed drama film 'Saaransh', penned a heartfelt note, expressing gratitude: "40 YEARS IN CINEMA AND STILL ROCKING: My first film #Saaransh released today on May 25, 1984. My directorial film #TanviTheGreat is my 541st film. God, my producers, directors and my AUDIENCES have been kind and generous to me."

"I have celebrated my successes and failures with equal humility and gratitude! I am still travelling on this path of creative journey with the same sense of wonder as I had 40 years back," the post read.

"Thank #MaheshBhatt Saab and @rajshrifilms for giving me my first opportunity! I don't believe in looking back so I have not looked back since May 25, 1984. There is so much to do. I am not a #Legend or a #Thespian or a #Veteran YET. I am a newcomer every single day. Years just get added since there is a calendar by default. Thank you for your continuous love, support and blessings," he added.

Re-sharing Anupam's post, Anil wrote: "Dear Anupam, Congratulations on an incredible 40 years in the industry! Your journey has been nothing short of inspiring. From our earliest days together to the heights of your amazing career, I've been privileged to witness your unmatched talent, dedication, and heart. @AnupamPKher."

"Your passion for your craft and the warmth you bring to everyone around you are truly special. Here's to celebrating your many achievements, and I'm especially looking forward to your next directorial venture, Tavni the Great! I'm so proud of you, my friend," added Anil.



## PAVITRA PUNIA ON HER BROKEN RELATIONSHIP WITH EIJAZ KHAN: 'WE TRIED, IT DIDN'T WORK OUT'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Pavitra Punia has addressed her breakup with actor Eijaz Khan and said that they tried but their relationship did not work out. Pavitra, who met Eijaz during their stint on the controversial reality show 'Bigg Boss 14', said: "Soch nahi milti hai. Aap try toh bahut karte hai. Logon ko yeh question mark rehta hai ke teen saal ke baat pata chala ki soch nahi milti hai. (Our thoughts didn't match. You do try a lot. People have this question mark that after three years you got to know you're thinking didn't match)."

"Teen saal aap try karte ho. Bhaag thodi na jaate hai situations ke saath. So we were trying. It didn't work out. (Trying after three years, you can't run away from situations. So we were trying. It didn't work out)."

"Why to get into a relationship, jisme aage chalkar aur bhi complications ho sakte hai. Woh cheez behtar hai ki woh cheez khatam. (Why to get into a relationship knowing that there will be complications. It is better if we finish it)."

Pavitra also spoke about "losing weight." "I want to be back in my old form the way I used to be before lockdown. It's the new me. For me, age is just a number. It is about how you maintain yourself. How graceful you keep yourself... It is about maintaining yourself and. Age is just a number," she shared.

## Sanjay remembers dad Sunil Dutt's love on his 19th death anniversary

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt remembered his father, the late iconic star Sunil Dutt, on his 19th death anniversary on Saturday, expressing that he holds onto his memories and love.

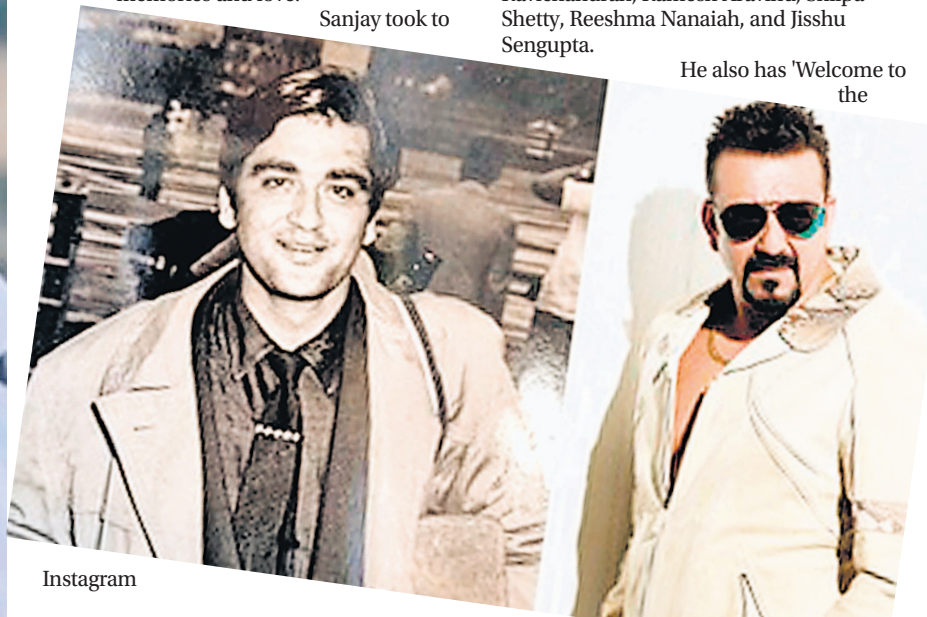
Sanjay took to

Miss you today and every day."

Sunil Dutt passed away in 2005 after suffering a heart attack at his residence in West Mumbai. He was 75.

Sanjay will next be seen in Prem's 'KD - The Devil', an actioner starring Dhruva Sarja, V. Ravichandran, Ramesh Aravind, Shilpa Shetty, Reeshma Nanaiah, and Jisshu Sengupta.

He also has 'Welcome to the



Instagram

and shared some pictures with his father, including a still from their 2003 film 'Munna Bhai M.B.B.S.'.

The 'Torbaaz' actor captioned the image: "Holding onto the memories and your love, Dad. You remain a guiding light in my life.

Jungle' in the pipeline, which features Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty, Raveena Tandon, and Paresch Rawal, among others.



Afreen Alvi