

# absolute india

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**NATION** > 02  
Welfare of the poor top priority: Prime Minister Narendra Modi .....



**HOLYWOOD** > 06  
Kendall Jenner 'Hanging Out' With Exes...



**SPORTS** > 07  
'Double trouble' for Hardik Pandya ahead of T20 World Cup! ...



## 'MEDITATION'



**PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI ARRIVED AT KANYAKUMARI. HE REACHED THE SOUTHERNMOST TIP OF THE COUNTRY IN AN AIR FORCE HELICOPTER.**

Chennai | Agencies

PM Modi will now reach the government guest house for a brief rest and after that he will offer his prayers at the Kanyakumari Devi temple. He will also pay his respects before the statue of Tamil cultural icon and saint, Thiruvalluvar. The Prime Minister will now move from the

Kanyakumari mainland to the Vivekananda Rock Memorial on a ferry.

He will be at Vivekananda Rock Memorial for three days from May 30 to June 1 and will meditate for 45 hours at the meditation hall of the Rock Memorial. The opposition Congress and the CPI-M have come out against the Prime Minister's meditation programme at Kanyakumari and

the Congress had even written a letter to the Election Commission of India not to allow him to undertake meditation. Tamil Nadu Congress Committee President, K. Selvaperunthagai, has said that the Election Commission should not allow the PM's meditation programme as the Model Code of Conduct under the People's Representation Act is in force.

### 2 LAKH PEOPLE AFFECTED IN ASSAM DUE TO FLOODS

Guwahati: Around 2 lakh people have been affected due to the devastating floods in the nine districts of Assam, an official said on Thursday.

The Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) has identified the nine districts as Hailakandi, Hojai, Golaghat, Nagaon, Karimganj, Cachar, Karbi Anglong West, Karbi Anglong, and Dima Hasao.

"All these districts have been badly affected due to floods. Nearly, two lakh people have been affected due to the flood. More than 36,000 children have faced difficulties in this pre-monsoon deluge," the official said. The state government has started relief camps in the flood-affected regions with the highest being operated in the Cachar district.

In the southern Assam region, many roads have been submerged by the rising level of water which has scrapped the communication.

### Porsche crash: Pune court extends police custody of trio accused of swapping blood sample

Pune (Maharashtra) | Agencies

A Pune court on Thursday extended till June 5 the police custody of two doctors and a peon of the Sassoon General Hospital who were arrested for allegedly changing the blood samples of the minor accused in the May 19 Pune Porsche crash that left two techies dead.

The accused doctors, Ajay Taware and Shrihari Halnor, and peon Atul Ghatkamble - who were suspended by the state government on Wednesday - were produced before the court after their first police remand ended on Thursday.

Arguing for extending the custody of the accused trio, the police lawyer told the court that the blood sample of the minor accused was replaced with the blood sample of a woman, ostensibly to prove that the 17-year-old boy was not in an inebriated state at the time of the crash. The police said that they wanted to probe the woman's identity and match her blood sample with the boy's blood sample to determine the swap and related aspects. The three accused were raided and arrested after the police probe revealed that they had changed the minor's blood sample in the bin and taken the blood sample of a woman - suspected to be his mother - and two others, to help him get off the hook.

The police said that Halnor did not show



away the boy's blood sample - as informed earlier by the city police chief to the media - but had handed it over to someone else and the police now want to trace and recover the original sample.

Last week, the minor's mother, Shivani V. Agarwal, became emotional and flatly denied that her son had recorded a purported video of a rap song following his arrest on May 19 after the Porsche speeding at around 160 kmph killed IT professional duo Ashwini Koshtha and Aneesh Awadhya, both aged 24, sparking a nationwide furore.

Till date, the police have arrested around 10 persons in connection with the case, while the Dean of the Sassoon General Hospital has been sent on compulsory leave pending probe. Two police officers have also been suspended, while the minor boy's mother is now under the radar of the investigators.

### POLL OFFICIALS TREK UP TO 15 KM TO REACH VOTING STATIONS IN HIMACHAL

Shimla | Agencies

A total of 6,589 polling officials on Thursday moved towards their designated voting stations in Himachal Pradesh, some trudging up to 15 km to reach their destinations, an election official said.

At Mehla block in Chamba district which falls under the Mandi Lok Sabha seat, the polling party walked around 15 km to reach the polling

booth located in Aehlami.

Similarly, poll officials walked over 11 km to reach the far-flung polling booths at Pandaar in Dodra-Kwar and Shaakti in the Great Himalayan National Park in Kullu district.

Elsewhere, a 13 km trek took the election officials to the Chakki polling station under the Kangra parliamentary constituency. The EVMs had to be airlifted along with the officials to Bara Bhangal village in Kangra dis-

trict.

As per sources, 1,617 polling parties have been deputed for Kangra district, followed by Mandi (1,196), Shimla (967), and Chamba (624) districts.

The high-decibel campaigning in Himachal, which will see polling in all its four parliamentary seats along with six Assembly bypolls on June 1, ended on Thursday with both Congress and BJP making last-minute efforts to woo the 57 lakh electorate in the state.

### DECLARE COMPENSATION FOR HEAT WAVE VICTIMS, RAJASTHAN HC TELLS STATE GOVT

Jaipur: The Rajasthan High Court on Thursday took suo motu cognizance of the deaths due to the heat wave and directed the state government to pay compensation to the victims' families. Justice Anoop Kumar Dhand said that the time has come when heat waves and cold waves should be declared a national disaster and preparations should be made in advance to deal with them.

The court directed the state government to give proper compensation in case of deaths due to heat waves. Along with this, the court also issued several guidelines to the government to provide relief to the people. The High Court said that on 18 December 2015, the Central government introduced the Death Prevention and Cold Wave Bill 2015 in the Rajya Sabha.

### J&K: 21 killed, 69 injured in Akhnoor road accident

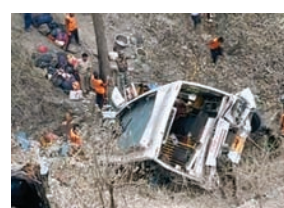
Jammu | Agencies

The death toll in Thursday's road accident in the Akhnoor area of Jammu district has risen to 21 while 69 injured people have been rescued from the accident site.

Doctors at the Akhnoor hospital have confirmed to reporters that 21 dead bodies were brought to the hospital while 69 others were brought as injured.

"Some of the critically injured people have been shifted to government medical college hospital in Jammu city for specialised treatment," doctors said.

A bus carrying pilgrims from Hathras (UP) went out of the driver's control and



skipped off the road before it dropped into a 150 ft deep gorge in the Chungi Morh area of Akhnoor on the Jammu-Poonch highway.

The bus was carrying pilgrims to the Shiv Khori temple in the Reasi district of the Jammu division.

President, Droupadi Murmu and J&K Lt Governor (L-G) Manoj Sinha have expressed grief over the tragic accident. "Pained beyond words to

learn about the loss of lives in a bus accident in Akhnoor near Jammu. My deepest condolences to the bereaved families. I wish speedy recovery of the injured," the President wrote on X.

L-G Sinha said: "The bus accident in Akhnoor, Jammu is heart-rending. I condole the loss of lives and pray to the almighty to give the bereaved families the strength to bear the irreparable loss. "Praying for the speedy recovery of the injured. The administration is providing all possible assistance to the bereaved families and is also extending medical facilities to those who have been injured," he wrote on X.

### Delhi court issues notice to ED on CM Kejriwal's pleas for bail in excise policy case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A court here on Thursday issued notice to ED seeking its response on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's regular bail plea in connection with a money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam.

Special Judge Kaveri Baweja of Rouse Avenue Court also sought the agency's reply on his plea seeking interim bail for a week on medical grounds.

The judge issued notice to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) seeking their response on both the regular and interim bail pleas.

Appearing on behalf of the ED, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) SV Raju sought additional time to file a response. Raju argued that Kejriwal had not disclosed critical information and that the ED needed to bring these issues to the court's attention.

"He is not in custody. He has been



granted interim bail by the Supreme Court. He is today in Punjab campaigning. His health did not hinder him from campaigning. He moves the bail on the last date so that we get very little time. His conduct doesn't entitle him to any orders today," Raju contended. Judge Baweja has scheduled the next hearing for June 1 to consider the ED's response and further arguments regarding Kejriwal's bail appli-

cations. On May 10, Kejriwal was ordered to be released on interim bail till June 1 by the Supreme Court in view of the ongoing general elections.

On Wednesday, the Supreme Court registry had refused to accept the application moved by him seeking a seven-day extension of interim bail to undergo medical examinations, including a PET-CT scan. The SC registry said that the top court had already reserved its verdict in the matter and the application seeking a 7-day extension has no relation to the main petition.

As SC had allowed him to move the trial court to obtain regular bail, the application is not maintainable, it added. As per the Aam Aadmi Party, CM Kejriwal's health has deteriorated since he was arrested in the alleged Delhi excise scam. The party has said that he has lost 7 kg in weight after his arrest and his Ketone levels are also very high indicating a serious medical disorder.

## Monsoon arrives simultaneously in Kerala, northeastern states

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The southwest monsoon has arrived simultaneously in Kerala and the northeastern states on Thursday, two days ahead of its expected date of June 1.

"Southwest monsoon has set in over Kerala and advanced into most parts of northeast India today, May 30, 2024," India Meteorological Department announced in a post on X.

IMD had said on Wednesday that conditions were rapidly becoming favourable for the onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala within the next 24 hours. This was a day earlier than IMD's first forecast for the onset of the monsoon on May 31.

The influence of Cyclone Remal is reported to have accelerated the onset of monsoon over the northeast as well. Normally, the monsoon arrives in the northeastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram,



Manipur, and Assam on June 5.

The onset of the monsoon in Kerala marks the start of India's southwest monsoon season, which stretches from June to September, and accounts for over 70 per cent of the country's annual rainfall.

The monsoon plays a key role in

the Indian economy as close to 50 per cent of the country's farmland does not have any other source of irrigation. The monsoon rains are also crucial for recharging the country's reservoirs and aquifers from which the water can be used later in the year to irrigate crops.

India has emerged as a key exporter of foodgrains but had to resort to curbing overseas shipments of sugar, rice, wheat and onions in order to increase domestic supplies and keep prices in check due to the erratic monsoon last year which hit farm production. A robust growth in the farm sector helps to keep inflation in check.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) defines average or normal rainfall as between 96 per cent and 104 per cent of a 50-year average of 87 cm (35 inches) for the June-Sept season.

Apart from supplying food, the farm sector also plays a key role in providing a demand for industrial goods such as two-wheelers, fridges and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG). An increase in agricultural production and incomes, therefore, apart from contributing directly to GDP growth also leads to an increase in industrial growth.

## Heatwave claims 19 lives in Bihar

Patna | Agencies

At least 19 people have died due to the heatwave across various districts of Bihar in the last 24 hours, an official said.

In Buxar, three people died, including a youth who was found on the roadside in the Sikraul police station area. Local people said that he died due to sunstroke.

In Nalanda, three persons lost their lives. The deceased included a teacher, a home guard Jawan and a farmer. The deceased home guard Jawan has been identified as Ramesh Prasad (54), teacher Vijay Kumar Sinha and farmer Surendra Prasad.

In Rohtas, three people including a sub-inspector have died due to the heat stroke.

In Bhojpur district, three persons died due to scorching heat. They have been identified as Chandrama Giri (80), Gupta Nath Sharma (60) and Keshav Prasad Singh



(30). In West Champaran, two people died due to heat stroke, including a 40-year-old unidentified person and a 16-year-old teenage boy named Golu.

In Gopalganj, a tourist going to Nepal died due to a heat stroke. The deceased has been identified as Somnath Agra (60) a resident of Nashik, Maharashtra. A Head Constable, Nikku Ahuja, who came from Arunachal Pradesh for elec-

tion duty in Arwal, also died due to heat stroke.

In Sheikhpura, an Anganwadi assistant died due to heat stroke while another farmer died in Begusarai. One more person died due to heat stroke in Aurangabad.

The Meteorological Department has issued an alert of severe heat waves for the next two days in Bihar. The maximum temperature in the majority of the districts was over 45 degrees Celsius.





# WELFARE OF THE POOR TOP PRIORITY : PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

Hoshiarpur | Agencies

Stating that the welfare of the poor was his government's top priority, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday took a pledge that he would not let anyone snatch the quota of the poor and Dalits.

"The Congress and INDI Alliance people are agitated with this effort of mine. Their track record has been of snatching reservation from the SCs, STs and OBCs. They are insulting the spirit of the Constitution, the spirit of Baba Saheb Ambedkar. They want to take away the reservation of Dalits and Backward Classes and give it only to the Muslims," PM Modi said at a big rally in Punjab's Hoshiarpur town.

The PM said that he had exposed the Opposition's conspiracy and "this is why they are furious and keep abusing Modi." This was PM Modi's fourth rally in Punjab, a last minute attempt to motivate the voters just hours ahead of the campaigning coming to a close for the final and seventh phase of the General



Elections.

From the Hoshiarpur (Reserved seat), once a Congress bastion, the BJP has fielded Anita Som Parkash, the wife of outgoing Union Minister Som Parkash. The Congress gave the ticket to Yamini Gomar, the AAP nominated Congress turncoat Raj Kumar Chhabewal and the Shiromani

Akali Dal (SAD) made ex-minister Sohan Singh Thandal its candidate.

Citing Guru Ravidas as his inspiration, PM Modi said, "Empowering the poor is the top priority of my government, and this is greatly inspired by Guru Ravidas.

"Guru Ravidas had said, 'I desire a state where everyone gets food, and

where people of all statuses live together.' After forming the government, we will work towards the naming of the airport in Adampur after Guru Ravidas."

PM Modi targeted the Congress and the INDIA bloc by saying, "We are hearing a lot about the Constitution from the people of INDI Alliance. These are the same people who strangled the Constitution during Emergency." When in 1984, people of the Sikh community were being murdered, at that time, they did not think about the Constitution." Slamming the ruling AAP government, PM Modi said they have destroyed industry and farming.

He said the work on the roadmap for the first 125 days of the BJP's third term has been completed.

An optimistic PM Modi, who gave a clarion call for making the 21st Century India's century, said, "After decades, it is time for a full majority government at the Centre to score a hat-trick. Every Indian aligned with the Viksit Bharat dream, give us your blessings."

# Prajwal Revanna leaves Munich, SIT readies for his arrest at B'loru airport

Bengaluru | Agencies

Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S) MP and prime accused in the sex video scandal, Prajwal Revanna, has boarded a flight from Munich in Germany and is headed to Bengaluru, a source with the Special Investigation Team (SIT) said on Thursday.

According to the source, the flight departed Munich at around 4.10 p.m. (Indian time) and is expected to land here at the Kempegowda International Airport at around 12.30 a.m.

Prajwal Revanna is likely to check out between 12.45 a.m. and 1 a.m. SIT officers stationed at the airport are instructed to arrest the JD-S MP upon his arrival.

Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara said that he has information about Prajwal Revanna returning to Bengaluru. An arrest warrant has already been issued against him, and he will be



arrested at the airport.

Prajwal Revanna left the country on April 26, the polling day in Karnataka, and has remained in an undisclosed location for 34 days now. A court-issued warrant and a Blue Corner notice against him are in effect. Meanwhile, security has

been tightened on the premises and surrounding areas of Bengaluru airport to avoid any untoward incident. The SIT officers also held a meeting with Bengaluru Police Commissioner B. Dayananda regarding security arrangements.

# Mamata Banerjee sharpens attack against NDA in final campaign rally

Kolkata | Agencies

Addressing her final campaign rally for the Lok Sabha elections on Thursday, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee sounded hopeful of ousting the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) from power at the Centre.

Speaking before a roadshow in the Jadavpur Lok Sabha constituency on the last day of campaigning for the final phase of Lok Sabha elections scheduled on Saturday, the Chief Minister said, "The people of Jadavpur are always close to my heart. I am confident that the voters here will back the Trinamool Congress this time as well. In all probability, the NDA will not return to power after the Lok Sabha elections." Stating that the people of West Bengal should not



vote for the BJP, CM Banerjee said, "The Centre has stopped releasing funds required for making payments under the 100-day job scheme in the state." She also took a swipe at the three-day meditation programme undertaken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Vivekananda Rock Memorial in Kanyakumari, saying: "There is no harm in meditation. But why do you need to take a camera along while

doing meditation?" Taking note of the fact that there is a large chunk of voters in Jadavpur whose families came as refugees from Bangladesh after the Partition, the Chief Minister said: "There are no more colonies here. These are all permanent settlements. We should not use the word slums for such areas. The youth staying here are going for higher education now. This is called real elevation in life."

# L-G VK Saxena seeks maximum punishment for Medha Patkar in defamation case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi court on Thursday adjourned the awarding of sentence to Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) activist Medha Patkar, who has been convicted in a defamation case filed by Delhi Lieutenant Governor (L-G) V.K. Saxena, to June 7.

On May 24, Metropolitan Magistrate Raghav Sharma of Saket Courts convicted Patkar in the case, marking an important development in a pro-longed legal battle spanning over two decades between Patkar and Saxena, who was the head of the Ahmedabad-based NGO, National Council for Civil Liberties, when the legal disputes began in 2000.

On Thursday, the parties concluded their arguments in the matter of sentencing after which the judge posted the matter for next hearing on June 7.

Saxena, the complainant, has submitted written arguments stressing the

necessity of imposing the maximum sentence on Patkar. The submission cites several critical points to support his call for stringent punishment. Firstly, the 'criminal history' and 'antecedents' of Patkar have been brought to the court's attention, showcasing a persistent defiance of the law that is a 'characteristic of the accused'. This defiance is further evidenced by the admonishment of the NBA by the Supreme Court for false pleadings. The seriousness of the offence of defamation has also been stressed upon, equating it with 'moral turpitude'. Such a 'serious offence', argues the complainant, demands stringent punishment, especially as there is no evidence that Patkar respects the law.

Patkar is identified as a 'habitual offender' by the complainant, citing another defamation case from 2006 that is still pending adjudication before the court.

The complainant also claimed that Patkar shows no concern for social control and defies ethical and moral justifications, aggravating circumstances that indicate her culpability based on her past conduct and criminal history. The submission concluded that a deterrent punishment is necessary, adding that the "maximum sentence should be imposed to deter Patkar and set an example in society, discouraging others from engaging in similar acts that hinder the country's development". 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. 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. While convicting her, the magistrate noted that Patkar made and published imputation that the complainant had visited Malegao, 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."

# Delhi hospital fire tragedy: Owner sent to 14-day judicial custody

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi court on Thursday sent the owner of the Baby Care New Born Hospital, where seven children were recently killed in a massive fire, and a co-accused, to 14-day judicial custody.

Hospital owner Dr. Naveen Khichi was arrested in the wake of the tragedy at the private hospital, along with an employee, Akash, who was on duty at that time.

On Thursday, Akash was also sent to judicial custody for the same period. Naveen Khichi, meanwhile, has moved a bail plea which will come up for hearing on June 3.

Police probe into the hospital fire has revealed that the licence issued to the hospital by the Delhi Government Health Services (DGHS) had expired on March 31.

The probe also revealed that the doctors at the hospitals were not qualified to treat newborn babies, who needed neonatal intensive care,



as these doctors were only BAMS degree holders.

"In the hospital, there were 12 newborn babies admitted and one was already dead before the fire incident. All the newborn babies were rescued from the hospital with the help of other people and shifted to East Delhi Advance NICU Hospital for treatment," the police said.

Delhi Fire Services chief Atul Garg said that seven children were declared dead at the hospital while five newly born babies are undergoing treatment.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Surendra Chaudhary said that after dousing the fire, burst oxygen cylinders were found.

Further, when the hospital was inspected by police, fire brigade staff and crime team, it was also found there were no fire extinguishers, improper entry and exit, and no emergency exits.

The probable cause of the fire was stated to be a short circuit.

Gurugram | Agencies

In a shocking violation of safety norms, most hospitals in Gurugram do not have the fire No Objection Certificate (NOC), a fire department official said on Thursday.

All such hospitals were issued notices last month to get the NOC or face first information report (FIR) and subsequent legal action, Gulshan Kalra, Deputy Director, Technical, Fire Department, Gurugram said.

It is estimated that there are around 100 private hospitals and clinics currently operational in the city.

According to the official, 44 private hospitals in the city are operating without fire safety clearance. What seems even more shocking is that the sole government hospital situated in the Sector 10 area has fire NOC but the fire



equipment installed on the premises is not of good quality. According to official sources, most of these institutions have not applied for fire safety clearance. Medical institutions that are operating without the NOC pose life-threatening risks to thousands of patients.

"Such places are also a threat to the general public since these units are situated in densely populated areas," the sources said.

According to law, it is mandated that any building that is 15 metres in height must renew its NOC on fire safety every year, yet most public buildings do not adhere to the rules. According to fire department officials, the Fire Service Act was amended about eight years ago. After this, hospitals higher than 15 meters must have trained staff along with fire equipment. Hospitals with small buildings should also have NOC.

# Azam Khan gets 10 years in jail, Rs 14 lakh fine in 2016 case

Rampur (UP) | Agencies

Senior Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan has been sentenced to 10 years in prison and fined Rs 14 lakh by a Rampur MP/MLA court in a case related to the forcible eviction, looting, and intimidation of residents of Durgapur colony in Rampur during the SP government's tenure in 2016.

The court found Azam Khan guilty under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, including criminal trespass, intentional insult, criminal intimidation, and mischief causing damage.

Three others, including the former Rampur municipal chairperson Azhar Ahmed Khan and former circle officer Aale Hasan, were also con-



victed and sentenced to 5 years with a fine of Rs 2.5 lakh each. The case dates back to 2016 when houses in the Durgapur colony were allegedly demolished by Azam Khan and his aides to make way for government

shelters. Residents accused them of forcibly entering their homes, assaulting them, and looting money and belongings. An FIR was registered in 2019 after the change of government in Uttar Pradesh.

# RAJKOT FIRE TRAGEDY: FAILURE ON MULTIPLE FRONTS, FINDS SIT

Rajkot | Agencies

The Special Investigation Team's report on the Rajkot fire incident in Gujarat has highlighted several loopholes and identified key issues related to the police, fire department, municipality, and road-building authorities, said sources on Thursday.

Among the notable findings, the SIT revealed that only a 4 to 5-foot wide ladder led to the first floor, raising serious safety concerns.

The SIT has pointed out "negligence by Police Inspector N.I. Rathore and V.R. Patel in issuing licenses.

The sources have said that both officers failed to verify the fire NOC and did not obtain municipal approval for the temporary structure of the Game Zone.

The SIT has made six specific observations regarding the municipality's actions, noting that the TRP Game Zone had been operating for



over three years without proper oversight despite being classified as a temporary structure.

The SIT report also criticized officials, saying, "Gautam Joshi and Jaideep Chaudhary for not taking action against unauthorised non-agricultural, commercial activities. The local station fire officer did not conduct necessary verifications."

Additionally, the SIT found that "officials Paras Kothia and M.R. Suma from the road and building department failed to inspect the site adequately. The stairs from the first floor to the ground floor were not checked, contributing to the tragedy."

A massive fire broke out at an indoor game zone in Gujarat's Rajkot city on May 25, killing 27 people, including children. The zone had been set up under a tin shed with air-conditioners mounted on it. The shed collapsed after the fire broke out trapping people underneath.

Five culprits have been arrested in the case so far.





## SOUND OF WATER CRISIS WITH INCREASING HEAT IN MADHYA PRADESH

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Heat is increasing in Madhya Pradesh. The heat waves are scorching and with this, sounds of water crisis have started being heard in many parts. Efforts are being made by the government to deal with these situations. There are also preparations to save rain water.

There are many areas of the state which have to face water crisis during the summer season, especially in the months of May and June. This time also the sound of water crisis is gradually being heard. Many steps have been taken to overcome the water crisis. In the same sequence, about a dozen districts including Satna, Mairhar, Mauganj, Katni, Jabalpur, Chhatarpur, Singrauli have been declared as water scarce areas. There is a complete ban on boring for tube wells and misuse of water at these places.

The increasing water crisis in many parts of the state can be understood in such a way that here a 16 liter can of water for domestic use is available for Rs 5, whereas the same quantity of drinking water is available for Rs 30 to 40.

With increasing heat the demand for water has also increased. Apart from drinking, a large amount of water is also being used in coolers etc. If we look at the increasing heat



situation in the state, the mercury has crossed 47 degrees Celsius. Heat wave is also wreaking havoc in most parts of the state.

Due to increasing heat, there is a fear of diseases spreading. Many people have also fallen ill due to heat and sunstroke. There is talk of even death.

Not only this, there is very little water left in the water sources of most

parts. In many areas, water sources have dried up and have turned into open fields. Steps are also being taken by the state government to ensure that people in the state do not have to face water problems.

Efforts have been made to continue the supply of drinking water without any hindrance, while urban bodies and panchayats have been instructed

to take care of the needs of the common people.

Along with this, Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has announced to run a special campaign for water conservation in the state from June 5. During this campaign, water sources will be conserved and efforts will also be made to ensure that maximum amount of rain water reaches them.

## This time Congress will be left with only one tempo to ride on: CM Dr Yadav

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav held a road show and organized a public meeting in Deoria Sadar Assembly in support of BJP candidate Shrawan Gaur in the assembly by-election in Sonbhadra of Duddhi Assembly of Robertsganj Lok Sabha constituency of Uttar Pradesh and BJP candidate from Deoria Lok Sabha seat Shashankmani Tripathi. Addressing the gathering, he said that no one takes the words of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi seriously. Rahul Gandhi talks irrationally. Now his words have ended in the country. The way Rahul Gandhi is talking about saving the



Constitution, but he does not know that the Congress Party has done the maximum work of changing the Constitution. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has taken the initiative to save the Constitution. The Congress party has become completely hollow and their leaders talk in vain. This time Congress will be left with only one tempo to ride on. The entire country is Modilike and there is an atmosphere of BJP everywhere. This time BJP will return to power with 370 seats and NDA with 400 seats. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, during his visit to Punjab on Thursday morning, paid obeisance at the Golden Temple and also discussed with the intellectuals over tea.

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that Congress and the entire arrogant alliance is a factory of lies. He has always made false promises to the people of the country

and has created a history of lying. They are still lying. In Congress, five generations each from the same family became Prime Ministers, but they never wanted the welfare of the poor of the country. Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi ran the government from behind the scenes for 10 years and always kept giving the slogan of removing poverty, but they could not remove poverty from the country. Now Rahul Gandhi is saying that make him the Prime Minister and he will remove poverty from the country. How much does Rahul Gandhi lie? No one takes his words seriously. They just talk in vain.

The BJP government has done good to the poor of the country. Only those who have seen poverty can do this work. Prime Minister Narendra Modi came from a

poor family and has worked to eliminate poverty from the country in the last 10 years. Have built permanent houses for the poor. Gas cylinders have been given to women. Farmers and soldiers have been given rights and respect.

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that since independence till now, Congress has committed only sins. The first sin Congress committed was by dividing the country. After this, Section 370 was implemented in Kashmir, there were always obstacles in the temple of Lord Shri Ram. Created a deep gap between Hindus and Muslims. Divided education. Congress has committed an even bigger sin by rejecting the invitation sent for the consecration of Lord Shri Ram in Ayodhya. These people have not even gone to see Lord Shri Ram till now.

## State government is suffering from 'three C's': Jitu Patwari

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress has once again raised questions regarding the law and order situation of Madhya Pradesh. State party president Jitu Patwari has alleged that the state government is suffering from 'three C's'.

Expressing concern over the state's faltering law and order situation and increasing crime, Congress state president Patwari wrote on Twitter, "The government of Madhya Pradesh is suffering from the 'three C's' - debt, crime and corruption have become the mission of this government!"

He further said, "Today, every day a new mafia is emerging in the state, which is tarnishing the identity of the state. In this most serious period of injustice, terror, chaos and anarchy, justice has become impoverished, the foresight of the onlookers has been destroyed. It's done."

Congress State President Patwari says that he has informed Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav about the law and order situation in the state. The state is turning into jungle raj, law and order has



broken down. The fear of law and administration along with the police has also ended. Apart from sand mafia, mineral mafia, education mafia, even political mafias have established their roots.

It may be noted that Congress is on the attack in the state after the death of a Dalit girl in suspicious condition after falling from an ambulance in Barodia Naunagir village of Sagar district recently. Two people from the same Dalit family were also murdered.

Apart from this, the exploits of sand mafia have come to light in many areas. Nursing college scam and

B.Ed college scam have come to light in the education world.

After the death of the Dalit girl, many big leaders including Congress state president Jitu Patwari, Rajya Sabha member Digvijay Singh have visited Barodia Naunagir and are also accusing the government of not taking appropriate action.

State Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav also came to meet the victim's family and assured that strict action will be taken against the culprits. He said that keeping security in mind, a police post will also be established. Financial assistance has also been given to the victim's family.

### MAY 31 WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

## LET'S TAKE A PLEDGE TO CREATE A HEALTHY AND TOBACCO-FREE SOCIETY: DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER SHUKLA

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla on May 31, World No Tobacco Day emphasized that tobacco consumption poses serious health risks and negatively impacts families and society. He highlighted that tobacco use leads to deadly diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and lung disease.

Deputy Chief Minister Shukla urged everyone to pledge to quit tobacco and raise awareness about its harmful effects. He stressed the importance of taking action now to foster a healthy and happy society. He extended his wishes for good health and a happy life to all the people of the state.

World No Tobacco Day is observed annually on May 31. The primary goal of this day is to increase awareness about the health and social dangers of tobacco use and to encourage people to quit using tobacco.



## PRIVATE SCHOOLS SHOULD UPLOAD FEES AND OTHER INFORMATION ON THE PORTAL BY JUNE 8.

Special campaign will run till June 30. All collectors should identify irregularities in private schools in the campaign

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The state government has directed all the private schools of the state to upload information about school fees and other subjects on the portal by June 8. The government has instructed all the collectors of the state to run a special campaign till June 30 to identify irregularities in private schools.

In the instructions given to the collectors by the School Education Department, it has been said that fake and duplicate ISBN text books are being included in the curriculum by some schools. If irregularities are identified in the campaign, instructions have been given to ensure that appropriate action is taken against the concerned publishers and book sellers. After investigation, all the collectors will submit report



to Commissioner, Public Education, Madhya Pradesh. Instructions have been given to make it available.

In the guidelines issued to the collectors, it has been said that the state government is receiving complaints of irregularities by some private schools by violating the instructions issued by the government. Collectors should ensure strict compliance with all the provisions of this Act.

It is noteworthy that to

regulate the increase in fees and its collection by private schools in the state and other related matters, MP Private Schools (Regulation of Fees and Related Matters) Act-2017 has been enacted. Under this Act, M.P. It has been provisioned in the Private Schools (Regulation of Fees and Related Matters) Rules-2020 that the State Government will be able to regulate the fees of private schools by taking decisions on fees and other matters.

## THE BUDGET SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY WILL BE COMMENCED FROM JULY 1 TO 19

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The budget session of Madhya Pradesh Assembly will start from July 1. After the discussion between Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav and Assembly Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar, the Assembly Secretariat has issued the notification. This session will continue till July 19. There can be 14 meetings in this. Due to the Lok Sabha elections, the budget will be presented this time in the monsoon session of this assembly. Along with discussion on budget and grant demands, the government will also bring half a dozen bills for approval in the Assembly.



## CSDS chief made this assessment for BJP and Congress in MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Voting for Lok Sabha elections 2024 in Madhya Pradesh was completed in four phases. Voting was conducted on 29 Lok Sabha seats in the state between April 19 and May 13. Now the wait is for June 4, when the fate of all the candidates will be decided. Meanwhile, many political experts are predicting how many seats other parties including BJP and Congress will get. A big estimate has also been made that this time BJP may have to face loss in Madhya Pradesh.

Sanjay Kumar of Lokniti-CSDS says that in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, BJP had captured 28 out of 29 Lok



Sabha seats of MP. There is no possibility of going above this at present. However, it is possible that the party may suffer some losses here.

Sanjay Kumar says that it seems difficult that BJP cannot achieve a unilateral victory in this Lok Sabha election. BJP faces a tough challenge on many seats in MP. Senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh is standing against BJP

candidate Rodmal Nagar in Rajgarh.

There is a tough contest in Ratlam between BJP candidate Anita Nagar and Congress's Kantilal Bhuria. In such a situation, Congress is looking somewhat strong on these seats including Chhindwara. For your information, let us tell you that last time BJP had won 28 out of 29 Lok Sabha seats in Madhya Pradesh.

Chhindwara was the only seat on which Nakulnath of Congress had won. Chhindwara is considered the stronghold of the Nath family. Kamal Nath was MP from here 9 times. At the same time, his son Nakul Nath is a one-time MP and current Congress candidate.

## WHO Team visits AIIMS Bhopal to enhance Pre-Service Nursing Education in Madhya Pradesh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office, New Delhi, and the Department of Public Health and Medical Education, Government of Madhya Pradesh, visited the Skill Lab and Nursing College of AIIMS Bhopal. This visit aimed to strengthen pre-service nursing education in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The delegation included Dr. Hilde De Graeve (Team Leader, Health Systems, WHO Country Office for India), Rakshita Khanijou (National Professional Officer, Health Workforce,

WHO, New Delhi, India), and Dr. Rajashree Bajaj (Joint Director, Nursing, Department of Public Health and Medical Education, Government of Madhya Pradesh). They were warmly welcomed by Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal who highlighted the pivotal role of nurses in the healthcare system of India and emphasized the importance of high-quality clinical training, nursing education, and patient care.

Over the past two years, AIIMS Bhopal has undertaken several initiatives to improve pre-service nursing education. These initiatives include the establishment of



a Nurse-Led Clinic, the KARUNYA initiative for compassionate care, an exit module for nursing students to prepare them for their professional careers, an

increased intake capacity for the B.Sc (Nursing) program, the introduction of a competency-based nursing curriculum, and a postgraduate fellowship course on compas-

sionate and palliative care nursing. Prof. Singh stated, "AIIMS Bhopal is committed to reducing regional imbalances in healthcare service delivery through close cooperation with the state government, National Health Mission (NHM), and global health agencies like the World Health Organization (WHO)."

During their visit, the WHO team interacted with faculty members, undergraduate and postgraduate nursing students, and commended AIIMS Bhopal for its efforts to maintain high standards in clinical training and nursing education.





EDITOR'S SPECS

**What will be voter's verdict in Bihar?**

The campaign for the Lok Sabha election 2024 ended at 5 p.m. on Thursday. The seventh and last phase of polling in Bihar will be held in Karakat, Sasaram, Patliputra, Arrah, Buxar, Patna Sahib, Nalanda, and Jehanabad on June 1. Upendra Kushwaha is contesting from the Karakat Lok Sabha seat on behalf of the NDA while the CPI-ML has given the ticket to Rajaram Singh Kushwaha from the Grand Alliance. At the same time, Bhojpuri star Pawan Singh is in the fray as an independent candidate. Due to his presence, the contest has become triangular. Many big names of the Bhojpuri film industry like Khesari Lal Yadav came to campaign for him. In the Sasaram Lok Sabha seat (reserved), the BJP and the Congress have changed the 2019 candidates. In Patliputra, the main contest is between BJP candidate Ram Kripal Yadav and RJD candidate Misa Bharti. Atough fight is expected between the two. In Arrah, Union Minister RK Singh is the BJP candidate while the CPI-ML has given the ticket to Sudama Prasad from the Grand Alliance. In Patna Sahib the BJP has fielded current MP Ravi Shankar Prasad while the Congress has given the ticket to Anshul Avijit, son of former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar. In Nalanda, the JD-U has once again fielded current MP Kaushalendra Kumar while the CPI-ML has given the ticket to Sandeep Saurabh from the Grand Alliance. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's credibility is at stake in this seat. The RJD has once again expressed confidence in Surendra Prasad Yadav in the Yadav and Bhumihar-dominated Jehanabad Lok Sabha seat. Last time he lost to the JD-U's Chandreshwar Chandravanshi by a very narrow margin of 1751 votes. This time Chandravanshi is in the electoral fray as well.

**VARANASI READY FOR A GRAND FINALE TO LOK SABHA POLLS**

The Ganga River is calm and the iconic Dasaswamedh Ghat is quiet too. However, street corners are still buzzing with activity as the campaign folds up on Thursday in one of the most prestigious Lok Sabha seats in the county -- Varanasi. As dozen odd ministers and supporters from across other states, prepare to leave Varanasi when campaigning ends on Thursday evening, the main contestant Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be thousands of miles away in Kanyakumari where he will undertake a three-day meditation. The street corners and small kiosks are buzzing with activity as tourists gather to discuss the Prime Minister's victory margin -- the outcome of the elections is not even debated upon -- and local people indulge in small talk. The poll juggernaut in UP will reach a grand finale on June 1 when Varanasi votes along with 13 other constituencies. There is no dearth of walkers even after midnight. Many from places like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are here to queue up for the Mangla Aarti, the first aarti of Lord Shiva that starts around 2.30 am. The BJP, meanwhile, has shifted its focus to improving the tally of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. In 2019, the PM had a comfortable victory by a margin of around 4.79 lakh votes. He secured 6.74 lakh votes which were around 63 per cent of the total votes polled. Ajay Rai of Congress had garnered 1.52 lakh votes. This time, Ajay Rai of the Congress is the INDIA bloc candi-



date while Athar Jamal Lari is contesting on a BSP ticket. Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a massive roadshow here on May 13 -- a day before he filed his nomination papers. He was lustily cheered by crowds that thronged the route. Thereafter, to promote a feeling of belongingness, the party focused on personalising the election campaign. As part of the strategy, BJP functionaries visited a total of 2,000 odd intellectuals, awardees of Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan and celebrities from Varanasi and handed them a personal letter from the Prime Minister urging them to vote and encourage others to do so. The BJP is also handing over personalised letters to first-time voters of Varanasi. Out of the total 1.26 lakh identified voters, around 90,000 have been chosen for personalised letters. "The idea behind this exercise is to ensure at least 60 per cent voting this time so that the victory margin of the PM crosses at least 5 lakh mark," a BJP functionary said. The increased participation of women voters in the BJP campaign is a sign of the Prime Minister's soaring popularity. Women are volunteering to make 'rangoli' at polling centres and are decorating the polling venues with balloons and bunting. "This Kashi is completely 'Modified' -- both, literally as well as otherwise. The transformation of the heritage city in the past 10 years has been remarkable. Modi does not even need to come here to campaign. It is the people who will record a historic win," says Pandit Sandip Acharya, a local priest.

**BJP to Return with 294 Seats; Young leaders will be given opportunities to take the reins**

Atul Malikram

With just days remaining until the results of the 18th Lok Sabha elections, India's vibrant democracy is poised for a decisive moment. Prime Minister Narendra Modi predicts a resounding victory, foreseeing BJP securing a commanding 370 seats. Meanwhile, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi is confident in a coalition government. Assessing the ground realities, BJP appears poised for another term in power. My prediction suggests BJP could clinch 294 seats, somewhat similar to their 2014 and 2019 performances of 282 and 303 seats respectively, a forecast that might surprise political pundits. In Modi 3.0, we can anticipate significant changes. It is likely that the BJP, under the leadership of PM Modi, will entrust substantial responsibilities to educated, dynamic, and popular leaders among the youth. Key figures to watch include Tamil Nadu BJP chief Annamalai, Union Minister



Jyotiraditya Scindia, Apna Dal (S)'s Anupriya Patel, late Sushma Swaraj's daughter Bansuri Swaraj, the charismatic Navneet Kaur Rana from the Amravati seat in Maharashtra, and Madhavi Lata, who is

challenging Owaisi. These leaders represent a promising new wave within the BJP, all set to shape the future of Indian politics. Despite favourable conditions for the BJP, PM Modi's third term will not be without its challenges. The most significant hurdle is his age, as he turns 75, an unwritten rule within his party that he himself has endorsed. While the party believes the nation still needs Modi's leadership, continuing in office might be seen as conflicting with the rules he has championed. Additionally, the strategy of promoting new faces and integrating opposition rebels could incite internal dissent, amplifying rebellious sentiments within the party. These challenges will be formidable for both the BJP and PM Modi to navigate.

international

**ISIS-K calling for 'Lone Wolf' attack on India-Pakistan Cricket World Cup match: Police**

Arul Louis | New York  
ISIS-K has called for a "Lone Wolf" attack on the India-Pakistan World Cup Cricket match here next month, a top police official has warned while putting security on high alert. In a video that has gone global, the terror group is "calling for that 'Lone Wolf' to act out", said Patrick Ryder, the Police Commissioner of Nassau County where the match is scheduled for June 6. "Lone Wolves" are members or sympathisers of terrorist organisations who take cues from the organisations and operate independently by themselves making it more difficult to track them down. On Wednesday, New York Governor Kathy Hochul said that she has "directed the



New York State Police to engage in elevated security measures, including an increased law enforcement presence, advanced surveillance, and thorough screening processes". Bruce Blakeman, the head of Nassau County bordering New York City, said at a news conference, "We make sure that we are on top of every situation that could potentially arise. Now to that end,

we have taken many many precautions." Additional police officers will be mobilised at the cricket stadium at Eisenhower Park, Ryder said at the news conference. "We will go to every fine detail when it comes to the security and safety of the residents here," he added. Earlier there had been some ambiguity about the level of the threat posted in a

chat group by ISIS-Khorasan, the offshoot of the Islamic State terrorist organisation operating in South and Central Asia. Before the news conference by Nassau officials, Hochul had said that "there is no credible public safety threat at this time," but added, "We continue to monitor the situation closely." ISIS-K has carried out attacks in Pakistan and has threatened terror strikes on India. In March, ISIS-K terrorists attacked a concert hall in Moscow killing about 130 people adding gravity to the latest threat. The World Cup Cricket stadium, which has a 30,000-capacity, was built specially for the tournament and will share the fixtures in the US with the arena in Dallas.

**IDF takes control of key Gaza-Egypt border road, discovers 20 tunnels**



Tel Aviv | Agencies  
The Israeli military has said that it has taken operational control of the entire route along the Gaza-Egypt border, known as the Philadelphi area, and discovered 20 tunnels that were used for cross-border smuggling. This was announced by the spokesperson of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Rear Admiral Daniel Hageri on Wednesday night. He said several rocket launchers were discovered on the border. The IDF spokesman said that the newly captured strip of land runs 14 km along the Gaza-Egypt border and is considered Hamas's Oxygen Pipeline for smuggling weapons. Hageri said that of the 20 tunnels discovered, some were known to the Israeli

Army but others were discovered for the first time. The spokesperson said that 82 tunnel shafts leading into the tunnels have been located in the newly captured border area. The IDF said its troops are physically controlling most of the corridor but a small section is controlled by aerial surveillance. The Israel Defense Forces spokesperson in the statement also said that Hamas terrorists positioned the rocket launchers near the Egypt border believing that Israel won't shoot fearing that it would reach into Egyptian territory. "Hamas took advantage of the Philadelphi area, and built its infrastructure just dozens of metres from the border with Egypt so that we can't strike there," Hageri said.

**Israel not officially informed by Brazil about recalling ambassador**



Jerusalem | Agencies  
The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs has said that no official message has been received from the Brazilian government regarding the decision to recall the ambassador to Israel Frederico Meyer. Earlier on Wednesday, Brazil announced the appointment of Meyer as the country's special representative to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Xinhua news agency reported. Meyer has not been in Israel for about three months since he returned to Brazil for "consultations" following the diplomatic crisis between the two countries over the conflict in Gaza, with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva accusing Israel of "genocide". The Israeli Ministry noted that it will summon the Brazilian chief of mission for a meeting on the issue on Thursday.

**South Korea to push for reusable space rocket development: KASA**

Seoul | Agencies  
South Korea's new national space agency on Thursday said it will work to develop small reusable space rockets in collaboration with the private sector and explore one of the stable Lagrange points in a bid to become a top-five global space power. In a press briefing, Rho Kyung-won, deputy chief of the Korea AeroSpace Administration (KASA), said KASA plans to assign the reusable rocket development project to the private sector, Yonhap news agency. These reusable rockets will be capable of launching a 500-kilogram payload into an orbit with an altitude of 500 kilometres, aligning with the latest space trend. Until now, the South Korean government has led all space projects, focusing on developing single-use space rockets, including the 200-ton rocket Nuri and the next-generation rocket, named KSLV-?. This new plan reflects KASA's commitment to transforming the country's space sector from a government-led industry to a private-led one. KASA also intends to create a launch complex for private space vehicles within the Naro Space Center in the south-



ern coastal village of Goheung, as well as establish a separate space centre at a yet-to-be-determined location. In addition, KASA plans to unveil a road map to explore deep space beyond the moon and Mars through international cooperation in a bid to expand South Korea's space economy territory. Two years ago, the country announced its plan to land a home-grown spacecraft on the moon in 2032 and Mars in 2045. It now plans to also send a spaceship to L4, one of the five Lagrange points about 380,000 kilometres from Earth, to observe the sun. Lagrange points are positions in space where the gravitational forces of a two-body system like the sun and Earth create areas of stability, allowing spacecraft to conduct exploration missions with

minimal fuel consumption. Among the five Lagrange points, L4 and L5 are considered stable as they form the apex of two equilateral triangles that have large masses, the sun and Earth, at their vertices. No country has sent a spacecraft to L4 yet. KASA also unveiled a plan to train a second Korean astronaut in connection to its push to build a lunar base in the 2040s. It also plans to develop a strategy to explore the asteroid 99942 Apophis, which is expected to approach Earth in 2029. ASA's long-term plans include developing high-resolution and next-generation communications satellites, along with securing deep space optical communications and space internet technologies. KASA named the envisioned programs the Space Gwanggaeto Project after King Gwanggaeto the Great from the ancient Goguryeo dynasty (37 BC-AD 668), who is known as the greatest conqueror in Korean history. The agency said it also aims to create a private-led space ecosystem to foster growth and facilitate international cooperation, including taking part in NASA's "Moon to Mars" programme, which incorporates the Artemis project.

**Iran rules out sabotage explosion behind Raisi's helicopter crash**

Tehran | Agencies  
Iran has ruled out the possibility of a sabotage explosion leading to the helicopter crash that resulted in the deaths of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his entourage, local media reported. The General Staff of Iran's Armed Forces released the second report on the causes of the helicopter crash on Wednesday, reports the official news agency IRNA. The report said given the results of the tests on the helicopter's wreckage and remaining parts and the way the remains had been scattered at the scene of the incident as well as their distance from the fuselage, the possibility of an explosion caused by an act of sabotage during the flight or moments before the



chopper's crash into the mountain was dismissed. No sign of an act of electronic warfare was detected on the crashed helicopter, it said, adding that the weather condi-

tions on the way back to Tabriz, the capital of East Azerbaijan province, would need further investigations. According to the report, the total weight of the passengers and equipment onboard was proportionate to the helicopter's maximum load limit at the time of takeoff and during the flight. In addition, during the flight and until 69 seconds before the incident's occurrence, contact had been maintained with the crashed helicopter's flight crew on the specified frequencies, which dismisses the possibility of any disruption in the communication system or frequency interference, reports Xinhua news agency. The first report of the investigation committee of the General Staff of Iran's Armed Forces was released on May 23.





# Minister admits NCP MLA rooted for reinstating tainted doctor as Sassoon Hospital MS

Team Absolute | Pune

Maharashtra Medical Education Minister Hasan Mushrif has admitted that a ruling MahaYuti ally Nationalist Congress Party had recommended the reinstatement of the tainted medico, Ajay Taware - now arrested and suspended - to the coveted post of Medical Superintendent (MS) in Sassoon General Hospital, here on Thursday.

The recommendation was made by MLA Sunil Tingre, and a letter purportedly penned by him had gone viral on social media last week, though the legislator had vehemently denied the development.

Mushrif said that Tingre had written the recommendation letter around December 2023 which he (as Minister) had endorsed for further action to the concerned hospital authorities.

When questioned over this, Mushrif pointed a finger at the hospital Dean Vinayak Kale - currently sent on compulsory leave - asking why he failed to oppose the name of Taware.

"If he (Kale) did not consider Taware to be a suitable candidate for the MS post, then why did he not clearly inform the government about it," Mushrif



shot back, as fresh developments continued to crop up almost daily since the May 19 Porsche crash.

On May 29, Kale hinted at the involvement of the legislator and the minister in the return of Taware as the MS despite his questionable professional record at the hospital.

Incidentally, Tingre is under a cloud for attempt-

ing to use his political clout and misguide the police investigations, and the Opposition parties have questioned whether the legislator's son was also in the Porsche along with the builder's minor son.

Targeting the government, Congress' Leader of Opposition (Assembly) Vijay Wadettiwar has alleged that a "top person" in the regime was reportedly shielding the officials and the murky goings-on at the Sassoon General Hospital and would reveal the names later.

As the Sassoon General Hospital is caught in the eye of the Porsche crash storm, the axe is falling on several officials with the Dean eased out on compulsory leave and replaced by Chandrakant Mhaske.

Two senior medicos Ajay Taware and Shrihar Halnor plus a peon Atul Ghatkamble were arrested and suspended, and they shall be produced before a Pune Court later in the day for extension of their custody.

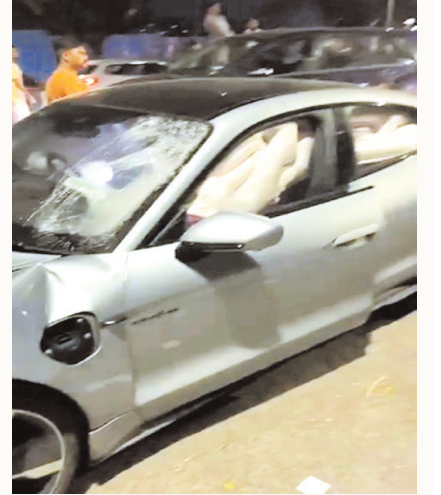
The police have also questioned over two dozen other staffers of the hospital including medicos, nurses, administrative and medical employees for the probe.

# Porsche crash twist: Minor's mom under police scanner

Team Absolute | Pune

In a major twist, the Pune Police are investigating the role of Shivani Vishal Agarwal - the mother of the minor boy accused in the Porsche car crash that killed two persons - in the probe pertaining to the destruction of evidence, official sources said here on Thursday. The officials said that the Sassoon General Hospital authorities - who had chucked the minor boy's blood samples into a dustbin on May 19 - had allegedly taken the blood sample of his mother and two others present there that day.

Taking a serious view of the lapses that are emerging, the police shall collect the blood samples of the woman and proceed against her in the matter after securing the necessary legal clearances. Last week, Shivani had cried and denied a purported video of a rap song recorded by her minor son after his arrest on May 19 for the Porsche crash that killed two Madhya Pradesh techies, Ashwini Koshtha and Aneesh Awadhya, both aged 24, sparking a nationwide furore. So far, the police have arrested around 10 persons, the



Sassoon General Hospital Dean has been shunted on compulsory leave pending the probe, two senior doctors and a peon have been arrested and suspended, two police officials have also been suspended, and now the minor boy's mother is under the scanner.

# Chhota Rajan gets life term in Mumbai hotelier Jaya Shetty murder case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai Special Court has awarded mafia don Rajendra S. Nikhalje alias Chhota Rajan to life imprisonment after finding him guilty of the 2001 murder of a city-based hotelier Jaya Shetty, here on Thursday.

Special MCOCA Court Judge A.M. Patil found Chhota Rajan guilty under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code and other laws invoked against him in the killing 23 years ago.

The victim Jaya Shetty was the owner of the famed Golden Crown Hotel & Bar in the Grant Road area of south Mumbai, and had run foul of Chhota Rajan and henchmen.

On the night of May 4, 2001, two of Rajan's shooters allegedly barged into the hotel premises and killed Shetty on the upper floor of the joint, sparking terror in hospitality circles.

Shetty had complained of getting extortion threats and calls from Chhota Rajan's associates and was provided police security.

Later, he asked for the security to be withdrawn but he became a target barely two months after the security cover was taken away.

This is the second lifer for Chhota Rajan in Mumbai after the life sentence he was given in May 2018 for the sensational daylight killing of journalist J. Dey on June 11, 2011.

One of the dreaded mafia syndicate bosses in Mumbai, Chhota Rajan, 64, sneaked off to Dubai in 1989 and was deported to India from



Indonesia in November 2015, after spending nearly 27 years as a fugitive on the run.

In September 2000, Chhota Rajan narrowly escaped a murderous attack on him in a hotel in Bangkok, allegedly ordered by his underworld rival and the wanted terrorist-gangster, Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar.

After that attack, Chhota Rajan again 'disappeared' till he was nabbed by the Indonesian Police in October 2015, and deported to India.

# After 10 Unsuccessful Attempts, Man Clears Class 10 Board Exam

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Krishna Namdev Munde from Maharashtra's Beed has become the embodiment of perseverance and determination as he finally passed his Class 10 board exams on his 11th attempt. After years of relentless effort, Krishna's success has not only brought joy to his family but also inspired his entire village, who celebrated his achievement with a grand procession and lively drumbeats.

Despite facing disappointment ten times since 2018, Krishna never wavered in his resolve. This year, his efforts bore fruit, proving that with hard work, one can overcome any challenge. "He has passed after 10 attempts in 5 years. But I kept submitting the fees, as I wanted to give him every opportunity," Krishna's father, Namdev Munde, shared with NDTV, reflecting the family's steadfast support throughout the journey.

Krishna, a student of Ratneshwar School in Parli taluka, had previously stumbled in the subject of History, but this time, he cleared all his subjects. His achievement not only marks



a personal triumph but also serves as a testament to the power of perseverance and the importance of never giving up on one's dreams.

As soon as the results were declared, his father took out a procession. Villagers joined in with drums and even carried Krishna on their shoulders.

The Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (MSBSHSE) announced the SSC (Class 10) results on Monday, with 95.81 per cent of the students clearing the exam. Girl students outshone boys, scoring 2.56 per cent higher than the latter. In 2023, girls secured a pass percentage of 95.87 per cent, while boys achieved a pass percentage of 92.05 per cent. Girl students outshone boys, scoring 2.56 per cent higher than the latter. In 2023, girls secured a pass percentage of 95.87 per cent, while boys achieved a pass percentage of 92.05 per cent.

This year, approximately 15 lakh students appeared for the SSC exams, which were conducted from March 1 to 26. The minimum requirement to pass the MSBSHSE 10th exams is scoring at least 33 per cent.

# Anti-Narcotics Cell of Mumbai Crime Branch seizes drugs worth Rs 1.12 cr

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Kandivli unit of the Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC) of the Mumbai Crime Branch arrested two drug suppliers from the Borivali area of Mumbai, Maharashtra, with 'Heroin' drugs, reported news agency.

Reportedly, the cost of seized narcotics was worth Rs 1 crore 12 lakhs in the international markets, weighing around 280 grams.

The police registered a case against the accusers under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS Act) and presented them in court. Upon hearing the case, the court sent the accusers to police custody until June 3. Initially, the Anti-Narcotics Cell of Mumbai Crime Branch team got the lead from sources regarding the drug peddling. As soon as the Crime Branch Team received information regarding the drug sup-



pliers heading towards Borivali to supply the narcotics, they went to the designated spot.

Taking the matter into cognizance, the team laid a trap and after waiting for a few hours, they identified the two suspicious men standing there and arrested them immediately. Upon interrogation and investigation, the Anti-Narcotics Cell of Mumbai Crime Branch team recovered 280 grams of 'Heroin' drugs from them. Reportedly, both the accusers were residents of Uttarakhnad and have been living in a rented room in the Palghar district of Maharashtra for the last two months.

# Pune woman to cycle solo around the world, aims to be fastest to do so

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The top bar of Vedangi Kulkarni's bicycle frame has a telling line - 'It's just around the corner'.

For someone who will be embarking on a 29,251-km solo unsupported bicycle ride, it may well serve as motivation to keep going even in a most inclement weather and other adversities.

In mid-July, 25-year-old Vedangi will embark on the ambitious journey from Finland, aiming to finish in the same country to become the fastest woman to cycle around the world.

This is not the first time that this Pune-born cyclist will be undertaking an adventure like this. In 2018, she undertook a similar ride, albeit along a different route, and completed it in 159 days to emerge as the fastest Asian to cycle around the globe.

This time, her attempt would be to do it in under 124 days to break the current world record, she told Press Trust of India earlier this week from Inverness in Scotland where she is based currently.

"From the last ride, I have had learnings on what it takes to execute such a ride successfully," she said, sounding confident of achieving the feat.

In the last five years since her previous ride, Vedangi has found a mention in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' address, and has



also earned the tag of being the fastest woman to cycle on the arduous Manali-Leh stretch in 2023.

Vedangi was into various sports including football during her schooling at Pune's Dnyan Prabodhini, and cycling caught her fancy later.

During her undergraduate studies at University of Bournemouth, the idea of cycling around the world came, and she executed it before the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

The last few months were spent on training, collecting the right gear, route planning and paper-work for visas, Vedangi said.

Her training includes regular yoga sessions and meditation besides putting in miles on the bicycle, both on an indoor trainer and out in the open. During her ride, she will have to clock more than 300 km every day to achieve the record, Vedangi pointed out.

As things stand now, Vedangi will be cycling through Finland, Estonia, Russia, Mongolia, Australia, New Zealand, US, Canada, Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Sweden before ending the ride in Finland.

In her past rides she has encountered incidents like being robbed at knife-point (in Spain) and chased by a grizzly bear (in Canada). She says cycling continues to be full of challenges, but the key is to have the right strategy for every situation.

The endurance athlete-turned-entrepreneur pursues other interests including open water swimming, mountain biking and cross-country skiing. She acts as a consultant for adventure expeditions, and also delivers motivational talks, among other things. She is funding her coming ride through sponsorships. She also plans to make a film on her journey.

# Maharashtra agriculture minister abroad while farmers hit by drought: Vijay Wadettiwar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Congress leader Vijay Wadettiwar on Monday said Maharashtra Agriculture Minister Dhananjay Munde was on a visit abroad while farmers in the state were reeling under drought, reported news agency. Talking to reporters before heading to Jalna to review the drought situation, the leader of opposition in the state assembly claimed 267 farmers committed suicide in the Marathwada region in the last three months and demanded that loans of cultivators be waived.

"The Maharashtra agriculture minister should take a review of seeds availability, crops, fertilizer availability this month. But he has gone abroad, leaving the farmers facing drought, which is unfortunate. How can he go in such a situation?" he said.

"Such a tough drought situation and the government is fooling the people, farmers by saying the model code of conduct is in place (in view of the Lok Sabha polls). On the



other hand, they released tenders of Rs 25,000 crore by seeking permission from the Election Commission," he claimed. Farmers in the state had also faced losses due to unseasonal rains and hailstorms, Wadettiwar said.

"The government orders a crop loss survey but no aid is given by it to farmers. In Marathwada, people are devastated by drought. In the past three months, 267 farmers committed suicide in the region. People don't get drinking water here," he said. Wadettiwar demanded

that loans and electricity bills of farmers be waived and they be provided seeds free of cost. The cattle should be provided water and fodder, he added.

"A Goods and Services Tax of 2 & 3 per cent is levied on gold and diamonds. But there is 18 per cent GST on tractors, farming tools and seeds. This is a sin the Modi government is committing," Wadettiwar claimed.

The prices of seeds have gone up by 25 to 38 per cent and the subsidy on fertilizers has been revoked, he said.

# Central Railway's mega block Shiv Sena leader appeals CM to allow work from home between May 31 and June 2

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A day after the Central Railway announced a 63-hour mega block starting at midnight on May 30 for platform extension works on the Mumbai network, Shiv Sena spokesperson Advocate Susieban Shah on Thursday appealed to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde to either declare holidays or allow work from home for government, semi-government, and private offices to prevent any untoward incidents.

As many as 930 local trains will be cancelled, short-termination of 444 services, and short-terminating of 446 services between May 31 and June 2 due to Central Railway's mega block.

"Millions of commuters travel on Central Railway on a daily basis. As a result, there will be commotion across the railway network. To avoid any untoward incident during these days, I

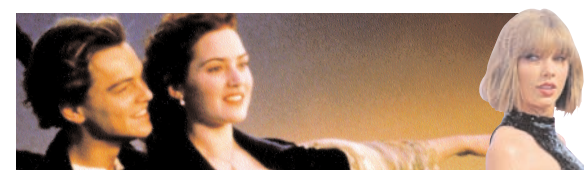


appeal to the Government of Maharashtra to issue a notification to allow work from home or give holidays to all private as well as public offices. I also appeal to you to urge the citizens travelling from and to the areas affected to be safe and travel only if necessary," Shah stated in the letter to Eknath Shinde.

Starting Friday, there will be a mega block at two major stations-CSMT and Thane. Due to the disruptions, there is a likelihood of massive crowds during rush hours. "Mumbaikars will get huge relief if they are allowed to work from home on Friday and Saturday. This will ensure public safety and facilitate infrastructural development simultaneously," she said.

The Central Railway's mega block will be operated for platform extension and widening works at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) in south Mumbai and the Thane station.





## Kendall Jenner 'Hanging Out' With Exes



## Blake Lively attends Taylor Swift's first Madrid Eras show

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift's closest friends cheered for her during the latest stop of her Eras tour.

Blake Lively and the Haim sisters were in the crowd at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium to watch the pop superstar, 34, perform her first of two shows in Madrid, reports 'People' magazine. Multiple concertgoers raved about seeing Swift's celebrity friends in attendance.

One user on X shared a video of Este, Danielle, and Alana Haim dancing next to Lively. Other users shared photos of the Haim sisters and Lively in the audience.

As per 'People', Lively's husband, Ryan Reynolds, previously said he planned to attend Swift's concert in Madrid during an appearance on 'Today' with Hoda and Jenna

earlier this month. Reynolds, 47, said that Lively and their children have already been to "five or six" Eras Tour shows.

"They love it, they're obsessed", he said on 'Today'. Lively and Reynolds are parents to James, 9, Inez, 7, Betty, 4, and a fourth baby (whose name has not been revealed).

Apart from attending the 2024 Super Bowl together, where Swift cheered on her boyfriend Travis Kelce, Lively previously shouted her out in a sweet Instagram post in December 2023. Next to photos of her, Swift, and Beyoncé at the premiere of 'Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé', Lively wrote, "When I grew up, women were always pit against one another. It took me until adulthood to see that the instinct for women to lift each other up to their highest potential is the norm, not the exception."



Los Angeles | Agencies

Kendall Jenner has been spending time with both of her ex-boyfriends Bad Bunny and Devin Booker, according to a new report from Us Weekly published on Thursday, May 30. Insiders close to the reality star, 28, explained that she's "keeping her options open," and she sees "nothing wrong" with spending time with both of her exes. The source said that Kendall has been "enjoying hanging out" with Devin, 27, and Bad Bunny, 30, despite having dated both of them in the past. Kendall has been seen with the Un Verano Sin Ti singer a few times recently, despite their split in December 2023. Earlier this month, they were seen getting very close at an afterparty for the Met Gala, but more recently, the pair were seen sneaking out of a side door of a hotel, where they were both seemingly staying. "Kendall loves the way he treats her," the source told Us Weekly. "He makes her feel like a queen."

## Dance Mom's Kelly Hyland Shares Her Breast Cancer Diagnosis



Los Angeles | Agencies

Kelly Hyland is ready to talk about her health. The Dance Moms star revealed she has been diagnosed with breast cancer after discovering a lump in her breast. "I went from clean results to a malignant mass in eight months," Kelly, 53, shared with E! News in an interview published Wednesday, May 29. "I was shocked that it had grown that quickly and scared of the battle I knew I was about to face."

Kelly found a lump in her breast in late March, nearly eight months after having a routine mammogram. Although she received clean results at her last appointment, the reality star's self-exam pushed her to book another mammogram. After more testing, Kelly's official diagnosis was invasive carcinoma stage 1, grade 3, meaning that her breast cancer is fast-moving.

"All of my former co-stars are aware of what is going on," Kelly — who hosts the "Dear Dance Mom..." podcast — shared. "They have been extremely supportive and are willing to film around my treatment schedule and how I'm feeling. I'm very lucky to have such great friends and a flexible job that allows me to keep some normalcy during all of this."

## Sofia Vergara reveals she hired dialect coach to improve her accent

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Sofia Vergara was once determined to get rid of her melodic accent, fearing her speech would limit opportunities. While discussing the roles she has been offered since her days on 'Modern Family', the actress revealed that she didn't want to be cast as her character 'Gloria (Pritchett) again' in another comedy series, reports 'People' magazine.

However, the actress said: "I cannot take this accent away, no matter what. I tried at the beginning of my career."

"When I moved to Los Angeles, I was like, 'I cannot believe Penelope Cruz or Salma Hayek don't change their accent, they'd have so many more opportunities. I'm going to do it,'" she said.

"Then I spent so much money and time with people teaching me, and it was a f\*\*\*\*\* waste," Vergara added.

As per 'People', after spending 11 years on the ABC sitcom as Gloria, a Colombian bombshell and single mom, the actress opened up about the difficulties with finding a dramatic role.

"It was almost playing myself in a way," she explained. "I never went to an acting class in my life. And when I decide to do something different, it's hard because this accent is beautiful, but it's like, I cannot be a scientist, I cannot be an astronaut."

Hiring a dialect coach wasn't the only preemptive measure she took to further her career. While Vergara revealed she's never lied to "get a job", she confessed she lied to her agents so they'd take her when she moved to Los Angeles.



## Princess Kate Is 'Doing a Lot Better' Amid Cancer Treatment

Los Angeles | Agencies

Princess Kate's is on the mend, according to friend close to the royal family. In a new report by Vanity Fair, the unnamed source — whom the publication noted is a pal of Kate's — claimed that the 42-year-old is "doing a lot better" since she was diagnosed with an undisclosed form of cancer earlier this year.

"It has been a great relief that she is tolerating the medication and is actually doing a lot better," the friend told the outlet in its report published on Tuesday, May 28. "It has, of course, been a very challenging and worrying time."

The pal added that Kate's husband, Prince William, and her whole family have "rallied around her," including "her parents, and her sister and brother."



## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Natalia Zoppaalso

## PEOPLE "ARE AFRAID" OF BEING SINGLE, BUT "GOT USED TO IT": SELENA GOMEZ

Los Angeles | Agencies

Selena Gomez didn't want another same old love that would tear her up, which is why she was "alone for five years." The 31-year-old multi-hyphenate recalled her single years before meeting boyfriend Benny Blanco during her latest interview with TIME. While speaking to the publication in a profile published on Wednesday, May 29, Selena noted that many people "are afraid" of being single, but she "got used to it."

"I was alone for five years, and I got really used to it," the "Love On" artist explained. "A lot of people are afraid of being alone, and I probably tortured myself in my head for like two years being alone, and then I kind of accepted it."

While using those years for self-reflection, Selena "came up with [her] plan, which was [she] was going to adopt at 35 if [she] had not met anyone."







## 'DOUBLE TROUBLE' FOR HARDIK PANDYA AHEAD OF T20 WORLD CUP!

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After a few rough years due to back injury needing surgery and inconsistent form, 2022 finally became the year when Hardik Pandya was back as India's go-to all-rounder, especially in the T20I format. But in the run-up to 2024 Men's T20 World Cup, Pandya is under pressure - on and off the field.

But right now, as India prepare for the showpiece event in New York, all eyes will undoubtedly be on Pandya, who had a torrid time in IPL 2024 as an all-rounder and captain for Mumbai Indians, who finished at the bottom of the ten-team points table.

He was also subject to unprecedented and constant boos and jeers from the crowd in Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Hyderabad, with fans angry over him for making a switch from Gujarat Titans to Mumbai Indians, where he replaced five-time championship winning skipper Rohit Sharma as the side's captain.

Moreover, rumours of the end of his relationship with wife Natasa Stankovic have added more fuel to the scrutiny on Pandya. Pandya is everything India envisaged since he came into limelight via his IPL 2015 exploits for Mumbai Indians - a world-class seam-bowling allrounder who packs a punch with the bat in both skillsets, especially at the international level.

Since coming into the Indian team in 2016, Pandya excelled in his all-round roles in all formats, till a back injury in the 2018 Asia Cup and a surgery post the 2019 World Cup stopped him from being



back at his absolute best, resulting in him playing only as a batter in the 2021 T20 World Cup, where India didn't even enter the semifinals.

But everything changed for the good for Pandya in 2022 - a move to new IPL franchise Gujarat Titans, that too as their captain, helped Hardik prove his fitness as an all-rounder in IPL - making 487 runs with the bat and taking eight wickets, including 3/17 in the title clash, as the side won the trophy in its first year.

That was enough to earn him a recall for T20Is against South Africa in June and from there, he

became an inseparable part of the Indian team yet again. He even got to captain India in T20Is against Ireland and hit his first T20I fifty as well as pick four wickets in a stellar spell against England at Southampton.

In the 2022 Men's Asia Cup league match against Pakistan in Dubai, Pandya took 3-25, hit an unbeaten 33, including the winning six off left-arm spinner Mohammad Nawaz in the final over of a tense chase of 148 to beat Pakistan as India's campaign was off to a winning start.

In the T20 World Cup, Pandya was the calming figure at the other end when he and Virat Kohli took India from 31/4 to acing the chase against Pakistan at Melbourne. He would also hit a fifty in the semi-final against England, and be one of the shining lights for India in the campaign.

He would be India's captain in T20Is till an ankle injury while saving on his follow through in the 2023 Men's ODI World Cup clash against Bangladesh at Pune ruled him out of action. IPL 2024 saw Hardik far from his best as an all-rounder - amassing 216 runs at a strike rate of 143 and picking 11 wickets at an economy of 10.75. The batting didn't have the calmness and punch associated with him and in his power-hitting, while the bowling was bereft of zip and penetration, especially as a middle-overs enforcer.

With India playing only one warm-up match against Bangladesh on June 1, Pandya needs to be free from clutter in his mind to execute his skills to the best-possible extent in the World Cup, like he did in 2022.

## Boxing World qualifiers: Sachin, Sanjeet win to close in on Paris berth

Bangkok | Agencies

India's Sachin Siwach (57kg) and Sanjeet Kumar (92kg) took another step towards Paris Olympic qualification as they registered convincing victories over their respective opponents to advance to the next round of the Boxing World Qualifiers, here on Thursday.

Siwach started the proceedings for India with a clinical 5-0 win over Olympian Batuhan Ciftci of Turkey in the pre-quarterfinal round. Sanjeet then saw off the challenge from Luis Sanchez of Venezuela with an identical margin in the Round of 32.

In the 57kg Category only three boxers will make cut for the Paris Olympic, Siwach therefore needs to win two more bouts to make the cut while Sanjeet, who got a bye in the Round of 64, will have a similar target as all four semi-finalists will qualify in his weight category.

Up against an experienced boxer, Siwach came out all guns blazing in Round 1 and that strategy worked wonders for the Indian as he took control of the bout very quickly. He earned a unanimous verdict even in Round 2 and though Ciftci attempted a comeback in the third and final round, the Indian was too comfortable in the end. The 92kg bout between Sanjeet and



Sanchez followed a similar trajectory as the 2021 Asian Championship gold medalist did not allow his Venezuelan opponent to get a look in, in Round 1.

Sanchez did show some spark in Round 2 and 3 but the experienced Sanjeet kept him at bay and landed his punches on counter attacks to win easily.

Later in the day, 2022 Commonwealth Games gold medalist Amit Panghal will face Mauricio Ruiz of Mexico in the 51kg second round while Jaismine will be up against Mahsaht Hamzayeva of Azerbaijan in women's 57kg category.

## Squash: Rathika Seelan enters Hong Kong PSA Challenge Cup QF

Hong Kong | Agencies

Rathika Suthanthira Seelan advanced to the quarterfinals of the Hong Kong PSA Challenge Cup - 4th leg with a come-from-behind 3-2 win over local challenger Ka Huen Leung.

The sixth-seeded Indian edged out Leung 4-11, 5-11, 11-4, 11-4, 11-7 in the second round after receiving a bye in the opening round.

The Tamil Nadu player, who won her maiden Professional Squash



Association Tour title at the HCL Squash Tour in Indore last weekend, will meet third-

seeded Malaysian Sehveettraa Kumar in the quarterfinals.

## Singapore Open: Treesa/Gayatri enters quarters; Sindhu, Prannoy ousted

Singapore | Agencies

The Indian women's doubles pair of Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly advanced to the quarterfinals of the ongoing Singapore Open BWF Super 750 Series badminton event after ace shuttlers PV. Sindhu and H.S. Prannoy bowed out of the tournament here on Thursday.

The Indian duo defeated the World No. 2 Korean pair of Baek Na Ha and Lee So Hee in an intense Round of 16 match 21-9, 14-21, 21-15 that lasted close to an hour.

They will face the World No.6 Korean pair of Kim So Yeong and Kong Hee Yong in the quarterfinals on Friday. Earlier in the day, Sindhu faced a defeat against former Olympic medalist Carolina Marin 21-13, 11-21, 20-22 in the second round match. In the men's singles match, Prannoy was outclassed by



Japan's Kenta Nishimoto 21-13, 14-21, 21-15 in the hard-fought encounter. The 31-year-old came back strong

in the second game after losing the first game. In the final game, Prannoy fell short against his opponent in one hour and 18-minute-

long match. Treesa and Gayatri are the only Indian players left in the BWF Super 750 Badminton tournament.

## T20 World Cup: When and where to watch India matches; Time, venues, schedule

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The ninth edition of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup is set to begin on June 2 (as per IST) with co-hosts USA taking on Canada in the opening fixture at Grand Prairie Stadium in Texas. India, the champions of the inaugural edition in 2007, will kick-start their campaign against Ireland on June 5 (IST).

A total of three venues in the USA and six in the Caribbean will be used for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024. The T20 showcase features a total of 55 matches to be played by 20 teams across nine venues, culminating in the final on June 29 in Barbados. Ten of the 20 teams will play their first match of the 29-day tournament in the USA, with 16 contests to be held in Lauderdale, Dallas, and New York with the much-anticipated clash between arch-rivals India and Pakistan scheduled for the new Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in Long Island on June 9.

In all 41 matches will be played in the Caribbean across six different islands, with semifinals in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana and the summit clash scheduled to be played in Barbados on June 29. The event is



split up into four groups consisting of five teams, with the top two sides from each group then progressing to the Super Eight phase of the tournament ahead of the knockout semifinals and final. Joining co-hosts USA in Group A are arch-rivals India and Pakistan, as well as Canada in their first appearance at the event as well as the European side Ireland. Group B consists of the last two winners of the Men's T20 World Cup in England and Australia, with the pair to take on Namibia, Scotland, and Oman. The West Indies are placed in Group C alongside New Zealand, Afghanistan, Uganda, and Papua New Guinea, while Group D sees South Africa, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Netherlands,

and Nepal grouped against each other. The ICC T20 World Cup venues in the USA: Texas Grand Prairie Stadium, Florida Central Broward Regional Park Stadium, New York Nassau County International Cricket Stadium. ICC T20 World Cup 2024 venues in the West Indies: Saint Vincent & the Grenadines: Arnos Vale Stadium, Antigua and Barbuda: Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, Barbados: Kensington Oval, Saint Lucia: Daren Sammy Cricket Ground, Trinidad and Tobago: Brian Lara Cricket Academy, Providence, Guyana: Providence Stadium. ICC T20 World Cup 2024 live broadcast on television in India: Star Sports Network will broadcast the tournament in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. ICC T20 World Cup 2024 live stream in India: The live streaming will be available on Disney+ Hotstar. India ICC T20 World Cup 2024 squad: Rohit Sharma (c), Hardik Pandya, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd. Siraj. Reserves: Shubman Gill, Rinku Singh, Khaleel Ahmed, Avesh Khan. ICC T20 World Cup schedule as per Indian time.

## Praggnanandhaa's first win over Carlsen in classical chess sends netizens into frenzy

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa defeated world No. 1 GM Magnus Carlsen for the first time in a classical game during round three of the 2024 Norway Chess tournament in Stavanger, netizens went into a frenzy over the Indian prodigy's significant achievement.

The 18-year-old Indian Grandmaster beat Carlsen on his home turf on white pieces, emerging as the sole leader with 5.5 points.

Carlsen and Praggnanandhaa had drawn their previous three encounters in this format, two of which in the 2023 World Cup final.

On Wednesday night, the 18-year-old Indian grandmaster punished Carlsen's risky play. Carlsen never castled and eventually lost as his king couldn't find a safe haven.

Following Praggnanandhaa's win over world no 1 Norwegian, social media was flooded with congratulatory messages.

"Latest global sensation from India!" a fan wrote on X. "Waking up to this mind-blowing good news. #Praggnanandhaa, India's 18-year-old chess prodigy, managed to defeat World No 1 #MagnusCarlsen for the first time



in a classical game," another user added. "This win is special indeed, defeating Carlsen in his home is no mean feat," a fan posted on X. "Here's the one who is making India proud. He is a hero oh no he is a champion! Many congratulations to Praggnanandhaa! Here's a game he played against Magnus Carlsen and won. @rpraggnanandhaa you beauty. We surely have the next Vishwanathan Anand in the making," another user posted.



## French Open: Iga Swiatek saves match point to beat Naomi Osaka

Paris | Agencies

World No.1 Iga Swiatek came back from 0-3 down to save a match point at 5-3 in the decider before overcoming Naomi Osaka and pulling off a great escape into the third round at the French Open here on Wednesday.

In a clash between two four-time Grand Slam winners, Swiatek, the top seed, pulled things back to 5-5 and ultimately prevailed 7-6(1), 1-6, 7-5 under the roof on Court Philippe Chatrier.

While raindrops were pelted the stadium roof, and disrupted the schedule on the outer courts, Swiatek of Poland faced some tough questions from former World No.1 Osaka, a

two-time winner at both the Australian and US Open, in this early second-round test.

Though she was playing her least favourite surface and is just five months into her comeback following the birth of daughter Skai, Osaka pushed Swiatek, a three-time winner at Roland Garros, to the absolute limit.

In a tense and thrilling match that had the look and feel of a championship final, Osaka was her vintage self. Despite being ranked No.134 in the latest WTA rankings, the Japanese star played like it was 2019, the year she won her first Grand Slam in Australia, achieved the World No.1 ranking and also won the WTA Tour Finals.

However, in the end, Swiatek tapped into her energy reserves and fought back bravely

to emerge victorious.

This was Swiatek's 16th consecutive win at Roland Garros, the most since Justine Henin won 24 straight between 2005-10. This was also Swiatek's 14th straight win this year.

Osaka actually won more points, had 17 more winners and more service breaks -- but Swiatek was better when it mattered.

After splitting the first two sets, Osaka faced three break points in her opening service game -- and saved them all. She then broke Swiatek with a backhand crosscourt winner to go 2-0 up. In Osaka's second service game, she saved five more break points, before Swiatek's forehand return found the net. Now Osaka led 3-0 and went on to serve for the match at 5-3. But at 30-all, she

smashed a forehand into the net followed by a backhand that flew long. On Swiatek's second break point, Osaka hit what looked like a makeable backhand just long and the match was back on serve.

In the end, Osaka just could not close the deal. There were some tired-looking forehands and, with Osaka serving at 5-all, a double fault that gave Swiatek a pivotal 6-5 advantage. Leading 30-15, Swiatek hit a screaming backhand crosscourt winner to go up 40-15. One more errant backhand from Osaka gave her the match.

Gauff ousted Zidansek No.3 seed Coco Gauff edged former Roland Garros semifinalist Tamara Zidansek 6-3, 6-4 to move through to the third round.





# Sanya Malhotra-starrer 'Mrs' to be closing film for New York Indian Film Festival



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The upcoming film 'Mrs,' starring Sanya Malhotra in the lead, has been selected as the closing film for the 24th edition of the New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF). 'Mrs' is a captivating account of a woman's strength and resilience. It also stars Nishant Dahiya and Kanwaljit Singh in pivotal roles. It is the Hindi remake of the acclaimed Malayalam film 'The Great Indian Kitchen,' which starred Nimisha Sajayan.

Reacting to the news, Sanya said: "It is a proud moment for me that 'Mrs' has been chosen as the closing film for NYIFF. Playing Richa, a character grappling with the delicate balance between tradition and ambition, was an immense honour and responsibility, given that it embodies the struggles of so many Indian women. Our endeavour to breathe life into this story has been incredibly rewarding, and I am eagerly awaiting to share it with the world."

Sharing his excitement, director Jayant Rohatgi said: "After a heartwarming response in Tokyo and Palm Springs, I am excited to be a part of another prestigious film festival at NYIFF. It's a privilege to be amid such powerful films and filmmakers celebrating the best of Indian cinema. Hetal's journey is simply remarkable."

"Her tenacity in breaking through gender stereotypes, social prejudices, a lack of opportunities, and her own demons to make a seemingly impossible dream come true moved me immensely. I hope our film resonates with and inspires the audience in New York as well," he added.

## NEHA SHARMA SAYS SHE WOULD CHOOSE ANUPAM KHER AS HER ONSCREEN FATHER ANYTIME



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Neha Sharma has expressed her admiration for veteran actor Anupam Kher, sharing that if she had the chance to choose an onscreen father, he would undoubtedly be her first choice.

Neha, who recently featured in the courtroom drama 'Illegal 3', shared: "I have always admired the work of Anupam Kher, and if I have the chance to choose an onscreen father, he would undoubtedly be my first choice. His presence and demeanour remind me so much of my real father. Both share a warmth and wisdom that radiate through their actions and words."

For the unversed, Neha has previously shared

screen space with Anupam in the 2012 adult comedy film 'Kyaa Super Kool Hain Hum', where she played Simran and Anupam portrayed Francis Marlo. The 'Youngistaan' actress went on to say, "Anupam's ability to portray complex emotions with such authenticity resonates deeply with me, echoing the nurturing and supportive nature of my own dad. There's a certain gravitas in his performances, an underlying strength tempered with a gentle humor that mirrors my father's personality." "Seeing Anupam Kher play a fatherly role on screen feels like watching a reflection of my life experiences, making his characters all the more relatable and heartfelt. His roles encapsulate the essence of fatherhood that I always cherish," added Neha.

## KERALA HC GRANTS INTERIM ANTICIPATORY BAIL TO DIRECTOR OMAR LULU FOR ALLEGED RAPE OF ACTRESS

Team Absolute | Kochi

Popular upcoming director Omar Lulu, on Thursday, got a huge relief after Kerala High Court granted him interim anticipatory after he was booked by Kerala Police for allegedly raping a young actress. The Court granted him relief and in case he is arrested, he has to be given bail on a bond of two sureties.

The Court has posted the case for further hearing on June 6. He shot to fame in the hugely popular romantic comedy film 'Oru Adaar Love' released in 2019, and since then, has done a few other films.

Incidentally, the victim had acted in the films of Lulu and according to him, they were good friends and had travelled together. But after a rift in their friendship, they have not had any contact for the past several months.



## Kartik followed a strict fitness regimen and lost 20 kg

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The song 'Tu Hai Champion' from the upcoming Kartik Aryan-starrer sports drama film 'Chandu Champion' was unveiled on Thursday.

The song has been composed by hit-machine Pritam.

The visuals of the song show Kartik's transformation as he trains in the army. He skips, jumps, punches, and swims to attain his full physical

potential.

The song is sung by superstar singer Arijit Singh, who has once again collaborated with his mentor Pritam, following numerous chartbusters like 'Dilliwaali Girlfriend', 'Phir Le Aya Dil', 'Channa Mereya', and others.

The loops in the song bear a resemblance to the one used in 'Selfie Le Le Re' from the Salman Khan-starrer 'Bajrangi Bhaijaan', also composed by Pritam.

Kartik's transformation shines through in the song with his toned muscles. The actor underwent rigorous training for his part in the film. He even gave up on sugar for more than a year. To get into the skin of the character, Kartik followed a strict fitness regimen and lost 20 kg.

At the trailer launch of the film, director Kabir Khan praised Kartik for his dedication, stating that the kind of body Kartik has developed will stay with him for life as it's completely natural.



## NAZIA FELT COMFORTABLE WEARING BIKINI 'I BELIEVE IN EMBRACING MY BODY'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Nazia, who was recently seen in the movie 'Tipppsy', donned a bikini for one of the sequences, and said it made her feel confident and comfortable.

Nazia, who made her acting debut with the Hindi film 'Say Yes to Love', played the role of Iris, an adventurous, strong, and independent girl, in Deepak Tijori's directorial.

Sharing her experience, she said: "Wearing a bikini on screen was an experience for me, but I felt confident and comfortable. I believe in embracing and loving my body. It's important to be comfortable in your own skin, and I'm glad I could convey that confidence through my role."

The movie is a thriller and revolves around some friends who let their hair down in Goa, but unfortunately end up getting into trouble.

Asked if she is a party animal or enjoys house parties, Nazia said she enjoys a good balance of both.

"I love going out and partying with friends, but I also cherish cozy house get-togethers. There's something special about spending quality time with close friends and family in a more intimate setting," she said.

She is now looking for roles that challenge her and also help her improve her craft.

"I'm interested in diverse characters and stories that have a strong impact. Whether it's drama, comedy, or action, I'm open to exploring different genres," added Nazia.

## YOU NEED TO BE DISCIPLINED ABOUT YOUR DIET STAYS IN SHAPE BY 'MUTING' TASTE BUDS : GURMEET CHOUDHARY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Gurmeet Choudhary takes fitness very seriously. The actor boasts of a chiselled build, and the secret behind achieving that perfect body is his aversion to delectable food and only focusing on healthy eating.

The actor spoke about his food habits, how he curbs the food temptations and his advice for fitness enthusiasts.

To get that perfect muscle tone and shape, Gurmeet believes that it's important that the diet is on point and that one consumes the right combination of calories throughout the day.

The actor said that he eats a protein-rich diet consisting of meat and boiled foods.

He told "I eat all boiled food — boiled chicken, boiled fish, boiled eggs, boiled vegetables, maybe broccoli and mushrooms mostly — and green juice, which I consume at least once a day. The juice contains celery, mint, amla, and juice extracted from kheera, which contains collagen. All my meals consist of chicken, fish, and vegetables, all of which are boiled."

The actor recently shared on social media that he hasn't eaten a samosa in 14 years. When asked how he keeps the food temptation at bay, he said that he has muted his taste buds. He told: "If you want a good physique or if you want to do something good in life, then you have to stop caring about your taste buds. I don't have taste buds; in an athlete's life, we shouldn't focus on taste buds, so I am living that way." Talking about healthy alternatives to tempting food, he said: "Nothing fried, nothing refined. Cutting sugar, etc. If I feel like having something sweet like I need sugar in my body, then I consume blueberries, coffee, dark chocolate, or curd."

Sharing his advice for all fitness aspirants, he said: "If you want to achieve anything in your life, in any field, and excel in it, then you need to be disciplined about your diet. One should control their sugar and carbs intake in order to stay fit and healthy."



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Neha Malik