

absolute india



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As Mercury Climbs, 6 Home Guards On Poll Duty Die In UP, 17 Hospitalised

DEADLY CLIMATE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The unprecedented heat wave across north India has cost the lives of dozens including that of six Home Guards who were on election duty in Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh. There have been reports of multiple deaths in Rajasthan as well, though the official figure is five.

RB Kamal, the Principal of Mirzapur Medical College said six of 23 Home Guards admitted to the hospital have died. All of them were admitted with other complaints -- including high blood pressure, heart problems and other diseases. Currently, the condition of two jawans is critical. "Twenty-three people have been sent to us so far among whom one is from Fire Service and one from civil police. There were 20 jawans from the Home Guard. Six



jawans have died. Two are critical," he said.

Asked about the symptoms, he said they were brought in with high grade fever, high blood pressure, high blood sugar. "They have a high chance of brain stroke, which could be fatal," he said.

Over the last week, as temperature across north India shot onto unprecedented levels, unconfirmed reports of multiple deaths of homeless people have been flowing in. Unidentified bodies have been piling up in morgues and in many cases, post-mortem reports are awaited to con-

firm the cause of death.

The situation got so alarming that yesterday, the Rajasthan High Court took suo motu cognizance of deaths and urged the Centre to declare the ongoing heat wave as a national emergency.

The court also directed the state government to pay compensation to the victims' families and issued several guidelines to the government to provide relief to the people.

Among other things, the court directed the state government to sprinkle water on roads, mark out shaded areas and distribute water, ORS and cooling drinks like mango panna. Labourers, cart and rickshaw pullers should be allowed to rest between noon and 3 pm, the court said. Heat alerts should also be sent through bulk messages, print and electronic media to caution the people.

8.2 per cent GDP growth to boost business sentiments, create roadmap for Viksit Bharat: Experts

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Industry experts on Friday hailed the 8.2 per cent GDP growth estimate for the full financial year 2023-24 calling it significant as it would boost business sentiments and create a roadmap for 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

The Indian economy clocked a robust GDP growth of 7.8 per cent in the January-March quarter while for the full financial year 2023-24, the growth rate works out to a stellar 8.2 per cent -- up from 7 per cent in FY 2022-23.

"The GDP estimates have come in as per expectations. The 8.2 per cent growth estimate for the full FY23-24 is significant as it is above the psychological mark of 8 per cent that should boost business sentiments," said Ranen Banerjee, Partner and Leader Economic Advisory, PwC India. The GDP numbers have been buoyed by a strong print in manufacturing supported by a low base



given the negative growth printed in the previous year, said experts.

"Mining and quarrying has also helped the higher print," said Banerjee.

The high GDP growth has been driven by a strong performance of the manufacturing and mining sectors, according to the Ministry of Statistics data. Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, Head of Research and Outreach at ICRA, said that the expansion in manufacturing and construction remained quite robust, "printing at above 8 per cent in the quarter".

According to the ministry, the growth has been propelled mainly due to signifi-

cant growth of 9.9 per cent in the manufacturing sector in 2023-24 over -2.2 per cent in 2022-23 and a growth of 7.1 per cent in 2023-24 in the mining sector up from 1.9 per cent in 2022-23. "India's growth at 8.2 per cent is a reflection of the efforts for 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047 and the growth momentum is expected to continue and strengthen in the coming times," said Sanjeev Agrawal, President, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"Despite deepening geopolitical distress and global macroeconomic headwinds, India remains resilient," he added.

2 POLL PERSONNEL DIE, HEATSTROKE SUSPECTED

Sonbhadra: Two people on election duty died and nine taken ill of suspected heat stroke as they were being dispatched to their assignment locations in Uttar Pradesh's Sonbhadra district, a senior official said on Friday.

The nine poll personnel are undergoing treatment at the district hospital where their condition is said to be serious, said District Magistrate Chandra Vijay Singh.

While the exact cause of death is yet to be ascertained, the district magistrate said the symptoms appeared to be that of heat stroke.

Thirteen seats in Uttar Pradesh go to the polls in the last phase of the Lok Sabha elections on Saturday.

HEATWAVE CLAIMS OVER 80 LIVES IN BIHAR

Patna: Amid an intense heatwave in Bihar, more than 80 persons have lost their lives in different districts of the state in the last three days.

The officials said that in the majority of the cases, postmortem reports of the deceased have not come as of yet. The maximum impact is being seen in Aurangabad where 19 have lost their lives. On Thursday, the maximum temperature of Aurangabad reached 48.2 degrees Celsius.

Around 200 people have also fallen sick due to heatstroke in Aurangabad. Medical Officer of Sadar Hospital Abhishek Kumar said that about 200 patients who came to the hospital were all treated.

An official of the Health Department said that more than 300 people have been admitted to various hospitals in several districts of Bihar and are undergoing treatments.

The department has advised people to avoid stepping out of their houses unnecessarily. An official of the Disaster Management Department said eight people died due to heatwave in Arwal, Buxar, Rohtas and Begusarai districts. In Arrah city of Bhojpur district, nine people including five polling personnel died due to the heatwave. Besides, the heatwave also took the life of a state committee member of CPI-ML.

In Rohtas, eight people died due to heatwave. In Jehanabad, eight persons died including a soldier who was on election duty in the district. He died during treatment.

In the Kaimur district, six people including a teacher died due to heatstroke. The teacher had left home for election duty while returning home, his health deteriorated and while being taken to the hospital, he succumbed.

In Gaya, three persons died due to heatstroke in the last two days. They were identified as Manoj Ram (50), Raghunandan Yadav (80), and Satendra Singh (68). Three people died due to heat stroke in Buxar and three in Chapra on Friday.

Two persons died in Sheikhpura and two in Munger on Friday. Deaths were also reported in Gopalganj, Jamui, Lakhisarai, and East Champaran districts.

Air India flight chaos: Passengers faint amid 20-hour delay

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A passenger on an Air India flight bound for San Francisco claimed that several people experienced fainting spells inside the aircraft due to a lack of air conditioning after a delay of more than eight hours.

The flight, originally scheduled for departure on Thursday afternoon, is now set to take off Friday at 11 am, following a delay exceeding 20 hours.

According to Shweta Punj, a journalist who shared the incident on X, Flight No. AI 183 was delayed by more than eight hours on Thursday, with passengers being required to board the plane and endure the discomfort of sitting without air conditioning at Delhi airport. In a tweet on Friday morning, she said that the passengers were sent to a hotel late last night, to be back at 8:00 am to the airport



and now they have been asked to go back to the hotel.

Meanwhile, Air India in the reply to tweets said that they are working to address the delay. "Dear Ms. Punj, we truly regret to note the disruptions. Please be rest assured that our team is actively working to address the delay and appreciate your ongoing support and understanding. We are also alerting our team to provide necessary assistance to the passengers," it said on X.

Sex videos case: Court gives Prajwal Revanna's custody to SIT till June

Bengaluru | Agencies

Arrested JD(S) MP and prime accused in the sex videos case, Prajwal Revanna, was produced before the 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) on Friday.

After arguments and counterarguments, the court gave his custody to the SIT till June 6. Videos allegedly showing former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda's grandson Prajwal Revanna sexually abusing women surfaced during the Lok Sabha elections and created a furore in Karnataka. Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) Ashok Nayak submitted to the court that Prajwal Revanna should be handed over to the custody of the SIT for 15 days. Nayak said that following



the circulation of the videos on social media, the victims are facing a crisis, with their husbands viewing them with suspicion.

Arun, the counsel for Prajwal Revanna, submitted that the rape charge was not made in the initial complaint. "There is no video record of the complainant. It is a four-year-old case. According

to the complaint, the rape charge was added following the victim's statement in court under CrPC Section 161. There was no mention of a rape charge between April 28 and May 2. The courtroom was teeming with counsels and others. Earlier, Prajwal Revanna had undergone a medical test at Bowring Hospital in Bengaluru.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, on Friday bagged the Nelson Mandela Award for health promotion for 2024 by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Established by WHO in 2019, the Nelson Mandela Award recognises individuals, institutions, and/or governmental or non-governmental organisations that showcase remarkable contributions to health promotion. It is "a recognition of India's efforts in inclusive healthcare," said Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya while congratulating NIMHANS for this award.

"We are immensely proud," said Pratima Murthy, Director, NIMHANS, adding that the award recognises both "past and present achievements"



and is "a validation to the enduring legacy" of NIMHANS.

The award comes as NIMHANS, which has been pioneering mental health and neurosciences, championing innovative approaches to

research, education, and patient care, celebrates 50 years of its formation.

India has made major strides in the field of mental health in recent times. Under the National Health Mission, almost all districts of the country have

mental health units. The country's national tele-mental health helpline Tele-MANAS, launched in October 2022, also recently achieved the landmark of having handled 10 lakh calls.

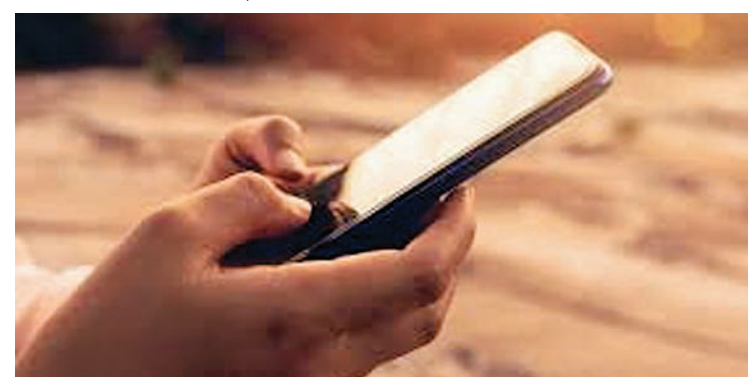
Centre introduces separate mobile numbering series for service, transactional voice calls

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Centre on Thursday introduced a new numbering series, 160xxxxxx, for making service or transactional calls, to help citizens easily identify legitimate calls and curb unsolicited voice calls from telemarketers using 10-digit mobile numbers.

Currently, 140xxxxxx series has been allocated to telemarketers for making promotional/service/transactional voice calls.

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) said in a statement that since the 140xx series is being used extensively for promotional calls, "consumers normally do not respond to such calls and many important service/transactional



calls are missed". "This has resulted in wide use of regular 10-digit numbers by genuine entities for making service/transactional calls. This also gave opportunity to fraudsters to deceive consumers using 10-digit

numbers," the DoT added. To address this, the DoT has allocated a new numbering series, 160xxxxxx which will exclusively be used for service/transactional voice calls by the Principle Entities.

This clear differentiation between service/transactional calls versus other types of calls will make it easier for citizens to manage their communication. "For example, the service/transactional calls originating from Financial Entities like by RBI, SEBI, PFRDA, IRDA, etc shall start from 1601," said DoT.

The Department said that telecom Service Providers (TSP) will need to ensure "adequate verification of every entity before assigning a number from 160 series and the entity shall undertake to use it only for service/transactional calls".

For any suspected fraud communications, citizens can report it on the Chakshu facility at Sanchar Saathi (www.sancharsaathi.gov.in).

RBI shifts 100 tonnes of gold from vaults in UK to India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has shifted around 100 tonnes of its gold kept in bank vaults in the UK to its own vaults in India in a move aimed at saving storage costs, according to media reports.

This is the first time since 1991 that India has undertaken such a large-scale overseas transfer of gold reserves.

Economist Sanjeev Sanyal, a member of the PM's Economic Advisory Council, said, "While no one was watching, RBI has shifted 100 tonnes of its gold reserves back to India from the UK." "Most countries keep their

gold in the vaults of the Bank of England or some such location (and pay a fee for the privilege). India will now hold most of its gold in its own vaults. We have come a long way since we had to ship out gold overnight in 1991 in the midst of a crisis," he added. In 1991, when the country was in the grip of a severe foreign crisis with no money to pay for essential imports, the Chandra Shekhar government pledged gold to raise funds. The RBI then pledged 46.91 tonnes of gold with the Bank of England and the Bank of Japan, to secure \$400 million.

More than half of the RBI's gold reserves are held overseas in secure custody with

the Bank of England and the Bank of International Settlements, while approximately a third is stored in the RBI's vaults in Nagpur and Mumbai. The central bank held 822.10 tonnes of gold as part of its foreign exchange reserves as of March 31, 2024, an increase from the 794.63 tonnes held at the same time last year, according to the annual data released by the RBI. RBI has, like other central banks, been buying gold as a safe-haven asset. The strategy of holding gold is primarily aimed at hedging against inflation and reducing foreign currency risks, especially in times of uncertainty triggered by geopolitical tensions.



NEARLY 2 LAKH PEOPLE HIT, RAJ BHAVAN OFFICES, MEDICAL COLLEGES INUNDATED IN MANIPUR FLOODS

Imphal | Agencies

Around two lakh people have been affected in 348 villages and urban localities in eight districts of Manipur, where the flash floods continued to impact normal life for the fifth day on Friday but respite is in store as water levels are now receding, officials said.

Officials said that besides important installations including medical colleges and government offices, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh's private residence, and various hotels were inundated in knee- to waist-deep water. Water also surged into the Raj Bhavan complex, leaving the Governor's Office and Secretariat, staff quarters, and the security personnel's barracks under flood water, with only the vintage building, which is the official residence of the Governor, unaffected.

However, with the intensity of the rain weakening, the flood waters in the city, its outskirts, and other places, as well as in major rivers, are receding.

State Water Resource Minister Awangbow Newmai said that inces-



sant rainfall since Monday in the aftermath of Cyclone Remal, most of the state, spanning the hills and valley districts of Imphal East, Imphal West, Kangpokpi, Bishnupur, Noney, Churachandpur, Senapati, and Kakching, had been affected.

Three persons have died in different flood-related incidents so far while one person is missing and ten injured. Besides the National Disaster Response Force, the State Disaster Response Force, Army, Assam Rifles

and other central forces are engaged in relief and rescue works.

The minister said that 56 relief camps have been opened and over 20,000 people took shelter there. He also said 434 hectares of crop areas were affected and landslides occurred in several hill district areas.

The repair of the embankments, and tackling breaches and overflow of key rivers flowing in Imphal Valley is going on, he added.

The Chief Minister held a review

meeting with ministers and top officials on the flood situation. He also inspected the rescue operation going on in Imphal city.

He said that a large number of people and livestock have been affected due to a breach of the river banks in many areas. "Inspected the situation on the ground at Ima Market and nearby areas along with my cabinet colleagues and MLAs. All possible measures are being taken up to control the flooding in these areas. Chaired a meeting with Ministers, MLAs, Chief Secretary, security officials and all department officials to review the flood situation in the state, while assessing the ongoing measures to provide necessary aid and assistance to the affected families," the Chief Minister said in a post on X.

He said that out of the 18 spots where the breach occurred in the embankments of rivers, 17 were sealed and the flooding in the surrounding areas has been successfully brought under control.

All the major rivers, including Imphal, Nambul, and Kongba, which were flowing above the danger level till late Thursday night, are now receding.

Swati Maliwal case: Delhi court sends Kejriwal aide Bibhav Kumar to 14-day judicial custody

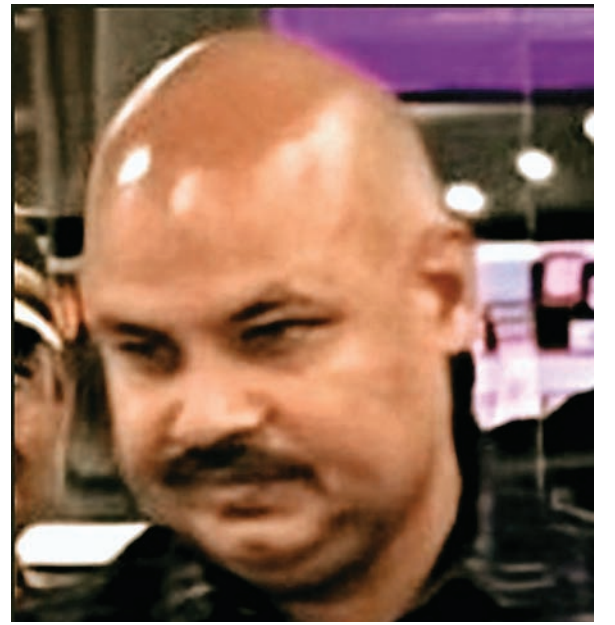
Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi court on Friday sent Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar to 14-day judicial custody in the Swati Maliwal assault case.

Bibhav Kumar was arrested on May 18 in connection with the assault on Maliwal, an Aam Aadmi Party Rajya Sabha member and former Chairperson of the Delhi Commission for Women, on May 13.

The Delhi Police had moved an application seeking Bibhav Kumar be sent to judicial custody. While his counsel opposed the plea, the prosecution said that Kumar might interfere with the current investigation.

In a related development, the Delhi High Court on Friday reserved its order on the maintainability of Kumar's plea challenging his arrest in the case. On Monday, the Tis Hazari Court had dismissed Kumar's bail plea.



During the hearing, Maliwal broke down in the courtroom, alleging character assassination and citing life threats being made to her. Delhi Police had opposed the claim of Kumar's counsel that Maliwal went to the CM's res-

idence with the intent to malign his aide, and alleged a three-day delay in filing an FIR. He had further argued that Kumar was not present at the CM's residence and that Maliwal had no appointment.

Stalin to skip INDIA bloc meeting in New Delhi, Baalu to represent DMK

Mumbai | Agencies

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin who was scheduled to participate in the INDIA bloc leaders meeting in New Delhi on Saturday, will not be attending the event, it was announced on Friday.

The Chief Minister's Office did not specify any specific reason for Stalin not attending the meeting.

The DMK's parliamentary party leader, T.R. Baalu has been deputed to attend the meeting, which will be chaired by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge.

In the June 1 meeting, senior leaders of the INDIA bloc were slated to discuss their performance in the Lok Sabha polls and future



moves after the June 4 election results.

The opposition alliance claimed that they would get a majority and form the

government. The meeting is scheduled on the seventh and last phase of polling day in the Lok Sabha elections.

Lok Sabha polls set to end with final phase on Saturday, PM Modi among candidates

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's democratic exercise, unparalleled in its expanse, vibrancy, and outreach, is set to end its course on Saturday with polling for the remaining 57 Lok Sabha seats in eight states/UTs, extending from the plains of Punjab to the ghats of Varanasi and its eastern UP hinterland, and the hills of Himachal to the teeming urban sprawl of Kolkata and its environs.

The 57 seats, including 13 reserved for SCs and three for STs, are in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab (13 each), West Bengal (9), Bihar (8), Odisha (6), Himachal Pradesh (4), Jharkhand (3), and Chandigarh (1). Polling will also be held for the remaining 42 seats in Odisha in the simultaneous Assembly elections there.

Also in a key sideshow, bypolls to six Assembly constituencies in Himachal Pradesh are scheduled on



Saturday - and their results will determine the fate of the Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu government.

The bypolls were necessitated after six Congress MLAs cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha elections and subsequently resigned from their seats to join the BJP. There are a total of 908 candidates in the fray, with the maximum in Punjab (328) and the least in

the adjoining UT of Chandigarh (19). Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Varanasi) heads the list of prominent candidates in this phase.

The electorate for the final round of the Lok Sabha elections comprises over 10.06 crore voters - 5.24 crore males, 4.82 crore females, and 3,574 of the third gender, the Election Commission said, adding that around

10.9 lakh polling officials have been deployed across 1.09 lakh polling stations. "Polling parties have been dispatched along with machines and poll materials to their respective polling stations. The polling stations are ready to welcome the voters with all basic facilities, including ample shade, drinking water, ramps, and toilets to ensure that polling takes place in a comfortable and secure environment. "Concerned CEOs and state machineries have been directed to take adequate measures to manage the adverse impact of hot weather or rainfall wherever predicted," the EC said.

While polling will begin at 7 a.m., the "closure of poll timings may differ PC wise", the poll panel said.

With this, the mammoth seven-phase Lok Sabha elections will conclude and all will wait for the counting of votes slated to be held on June 4.

Anti-Dowry Section 498A being misused in matrimonial disputes with ulterior motives, Kerala High Court

Kochi | Agencies

The Kerala High Court on Friday asked courts to look into cases of matrimonial disputes with care as several women misuse Section 498 of IPC to put the close relatives of their husbands in distress by leveling allegations of cruelty.

Justice A. Badharudeen pointed out that in matrimonial disputes, many women misuse Section 498 A against their husbands and their relatives to defame them in society.

Justice Badharudeen said, "It is noticed that in matrimonial disputes, certain wives initiate criminal proceedings on the strength of vague and omnibus allegations against the parents, sisters, brothers and other relatives of the husband with ulterior motive to put them under the veil of prosecution involving non-bailable offences and to face the ordeal of criminal prosecution and trial by the parents, sisters, brothers and other relatives of the husband, to malign and defame their image in the society. "In such cases, the court must analyse materials available when quashment is sought whether the



allegations specifically state anything dealt under Section 498A so as to prosecute the accused for the said offences, by subjecting themselves for trial," said the High Court.

The Court made these observa-

tions while quashing criminal proceedings initiated by a woman against her 61-year-old mother-in-law on the allegations of committing cruelty and demanding dowry.

The High Court held that there

were only sweeping and general allegations against the mother-in-law without mentioning any specific instance of cruelty, and hence it quashed criminal proceedings against her.

Delhi hospital fire tragedy: One more infant succumbs to injuries

Team Absolute | New Delhi

One more infant -- around 2 months old -- who was rescued after a fire broke out at Baby Care New Born Hospital here in the Vivek Vihar area, succumbed to injuries during treatment on Friday, an official said, adding that the death toll from the tragedy has now risen to seven.

"She succumbed to injuries on Friday morning. Further probe in connection with the fire incident is going on," a senior police officer said without divulging more details on the case.

The fire incident happened on May 25. "In the hospital, there were 12 newborn babies admitted and one was already dead before the fire incident. All the 12 newborn babies were rescued from the hospital with the help of other people and shifted to East Delhi Advance NICU Hospital, for treatment. Six died during the treatment," said the official. As per police sources, Baby Care New Born Child Hospital flouted the guidelines of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) regarding the storage of oxygen cylinders.

According to an MHA circular dated April 23, 2021, on guidelines for the safe storage, transportation, and handling of liquid oxygen for medical use, oxygen must be kept at least 20 feet away from flammables and com-



bustibles.

Additionally, "No Smoking" and "No Open Flames" signs must be posted. Delhi Police has arrested the hospital owner and the doctor on duty at the hospital in connection with the incident. The owner was identified as Naveen Kichi, a resident of Bhairon Enclave, Paschim Vihar while the doctor was identified as Aakash (26), a resident of district Charkhi Dadri in Haryana.

Delhi gov't petitions SC seeking additional water supply from neighbouring states

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As mid the rising water crisis in the national capital, the Delhi government has petitioned the Supreme Court seeking additional water supply from the states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

The plea demanded that the states neighbouring Delhi be directed to release extra water for a month to address the extraordinary and excessive water demand of the city triggered due to a surge in summer temperature.

Meanwhile, Delhi Water Minister Atishi has sought urgent intervention from the Centre on the issue of water shortage and apprised the Union Jal Shakti Minister that Haryana must immediately release Delhi's rightful share of water into the Yamuna

River to bring the waters to the normal level.

"Delhi is heavily dependent on water from the Yamuna River to meet its day-to-day demand for water. However, in the last few days, there has been a drastic dip in the water levels at the Wazirabad Barrage as Haryana is not releasing the required amount of water in the Yamuna River. This has resulted in a massive crisis of water in the national capital," said Atishi in her letter to Union Minister Gajendra Shekhawat.

She added that the temperature in Delhi has touched almost 50 degrees and this has further intensified the demand for water putting additional burden on the already strained demand-supply chain of potable drinking water in Delhi.

JP Nadda slams Cong over Exit Poll boycott

'It shows party's antipathy towards world's largest democratic process'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

BJP President J.P. Nadda on Friday slammed the Congress' decision to boycott Exit Poll debates slated for Saturday, saying that this indicates an unequivocal confirmation that it has conceded defeat ahead of the announcement of Lok Sabha election results on June 4.

With the seventh and final phase of polling concluding on Saturday, the Exit Polls conducted by several poll survey agencies and pollsters will be out by the evening, giving a 'fair' indication of what to expect on the counting day.

However, the Congress on Friday announced to give the Exit Poll debates a miss while dubbing the entire exercise as a "slugfest for TRPs".

Objecting to Congress' decision, the BJP chief said, "It is not surprising since the Congress usually opts out when it doesn't expect the results to go in its favour, but has no compunction showing up if it thinks it has even an outside chance. Their hypocrisy is not lost on



anyone. Let no one in Phase 7 waste their votes on them."

He also said that by boycotting the Exit Poll exercise, Congress has sought to question the rigorous exercise carried out by several professional agencies that work day and night to compile the figures. "It doesn't behove India's grand old party to behave like a child, whose toy has been taken away. One expects a certain level of maturity from the largest political party in the Opposition," J.P. Nadda said in a post on X.

He also said that what is more discon-

cerning is Congress' antipathy towards the largest democratic process in the world, which saw the participation of over 960 million aspirations.

"While Indians were electing their leader, who would lead them in the new world order, improve their lives, bring opportunities and prosperity, Congress was working assiduously to undermine the very institutional process on which rests our robust democracy's foundations. "Instead of focusing on winning the elections, Congress repeatedly approached the Supreme Court, making outrageous demands, to mutilate our well-established electoral process," he said. The BJP chief also slammed the grand old party over its whining on electoral losses and pinning the blame on 'EVM tampering' for electoral defeats.

"The Congress has no complaints about either the EVMs or the electoral process when it wins. Himachal and Telangana are recent examples. But it whines endlessly when it expects a rout," Nadda said.

SIT to probe EVM hackers 'stay' at Bihar Raj Bhawan

Patna | Agencies

The Economic Offence Unit (EOU) of Bihar Police has constituted SIT which will probe the allegation of two EVM hackers "staying" at Raj Bhawan.

After the serious allegation levelled against the Bihar Raj Bhawan, Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arleker himself directed the officials to take action against the accused.

The EOU has registered the FIR following a written complaint given by Principal Secretary Robert L Chongthru under the Representation of People Act, IT Act and other related IPC sections.

A person named Nitesh Karthikeyan, who calls himself a Laluwadi, uploaded a post on social media where he alleged that two EVM hackers have been "staying"

in Raj Bhawan.

"On the instructions of the Home Minister of India, two EVM hackers have been made to stay in Bihar's Raj Bhawan. It is being said that two suspicious persons named P Kashyap and Dr. MK Bhai. Both these persons are staying in Raj Bhawan," he wrote. Nitesh Karthikeyan said that the Chief Minister of Bihar is also the Home Minister here. "Now in such a situation, Nitish Kumar should answer in what capacity these two suspicious persons are staying at the Raj Bhawan. Are they IAS or an officer of any department? Will the Chief Minister answer this or the Election Commission?" he said.

He has alleged that there is also information that both these persons are experts in hacking EVMs.



THE ATMOSPHERE IS IN FAVOR OF BJP EVERYWHERE: DR. MOHAN YADAV

BJP will win at 80 percent booths and will get 68 percent votes: Vishnudatt Sharma

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav and Bharatiya Janata Party State President and MP Vishnudatt Sharma addressed a press conference at the State Media Center on Friday. During this, Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav thanked the people of the state for conducting the elections peacefully and harmoniously. He said that a tsunami is going on in the entire country in favor of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and signs of 'This time, 400 paar' are visible in every part of the country. Addressing the press conference, Bharatiya Janata Party State President and MP Vishnudatt Sharma said that the party, as a team under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has fought this election by moving ahead on its strategy and action plan and the Bharatiya Janata Party. The party will achieve a landslide victory on all 29 seats in the state. Lok Sabha election results of Madhya Pradesh will become a subject of study for political analysts and researchers.



Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that in the last phase of Lok Sabha elections, voting will be held in the remaining Lok Sabha constituencies of the country on Saturday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been working actively throughout this election campaign. This time the election campaign was quite long but our illustrious Prime Minister led this campaign successfully. Dr. Yadav said that the Prime Minister had talked

about absolute majority in the 2014 elections, a government was formed with absolute majority. In the 2019 elections, it crossed 300 seats and the party won more than 300 seats. Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji fulfilled what he said. This time he has given the slogan of 400 paar and signs of 400 paar are also visible all over the country.

State President and Khajuraho MP Vishnudatt Sharma, while addressing the press conference, said that the 2024 Lok Sabha election campaign was completed under the leadership of the world's most popular leader, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the last phase of voting will be held tomorrow on June 1. During the election campaign across the country, people have blessed Prime Minister. In the assembly elections, the people of the state had proved that Madhya Pradesh was in the minds of Modi and Madhya Pradesh was in the minds of Modi ji.

At the same time, during the Lok Sabha elections, the people of the state once again trusted Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The party will get a historic victory on all 29 seats including Chhindwara. This belief is because our party workers have worked with full hard work and team spirit under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. When the results will be declared on June 4, the political success of the party in the state will become a subject of study and research by political pundits and analysts.

Yodha Sthal located in Dronachal in Bhopal to have light and sound show soon

HERBAL GARDEN AND WELLNESS CENTER WILL BE DEVELOPED IN THE MILITARY STATION AREA OF BHOPAL. SUDARSHAN CHAKRA CORPS COMMANDER LIEUTENANT GENERAL SINGH CALLS ON CHIEF MINISTER DR. YADAV



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has said that activities will be conducted to encourage civil-military cooperation in the state. A light and sound show will soon be started for the general public at Yodha Sthal located in Dronachal. Two tanks provided by the

Army will soon be displayed at the Shaurya Smarak. In this regard, a discussion was held with Corps Commander Sudarshan Chakra and Lieutenant General P.P. Singh. Developing a herbal garden focused on wellness in collaboration with the AYUSH Department of the state was also discussed with

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav in the Bhopal Military Station area. The Army will provide land for the garden, and Bhopal residents will also benefit from the Herbal Garden and Wellness Centre. Station Commander Brigadier Chhibber was also present in the meeting at Samatva Bhawan.

Celebration, colorful program in Indore on the 300th birth anniversary of Ahilyabai

Team Absolute | Indore

The 300th birth anniversary of Goddess Ahilyabai, the great ruler of the Holkar dynasty, is being celebrated on Friday. There is a festive atmosphere in Indore and various colorful programs are going on.



A series of programs started in Indore from Thursday night on the eve of the 300th birth anniversary of Goddess Ahilyabai. A heritage walk was organized on Friday morning, in which a large number of people participated.

This event helped a lot in making people know about the contribution of Indore and Ahilyabai. Not only this, many programs were organized at many places and this

trend is continuing. People tasted Poha along with various dishes of Indore with great enthusiasm.

Ahilyabai was the queen who, despite difficult circumstances, ran the empire efficiently for three decades and gave shape to the public welfare state system. They

repopulated the pilgrimage sites that were destroyed by the Mughal rulers. He constructed Dharamshala, water structures etc. at pilgrimage sites at more than 100 places in the country. Not only this, he also got the Kashi Vishwanath and Somnath temples renovated.

IMMEDIATELY LODGE COMPLAINT ON SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

Police will take action sensitively under POCSO Act. No anticipatory bail will be given

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The POCSO Act is a provision to protect children from crimes of sexual abuse. This law not only deals with sexual abuse of girls but also with minor boys, then it will also be considered in the category of crime. Under this Act, apart from the traditional definition of rape, those acts have also been termed as rape due to which the child is molested with wrong intentions. If a person is convicted under the POCSO Act, then there is a provision to give him severe punishment considering him a criminal. Before the amendment in the POCSO Act, there was a provision for anticipatory bail. But after the amendment, the accused is not even given anticipatory bail.

Process of filing a complaint under the POCSO Act

If you or someone you know has been a victim of sexual abuse, then you can file a complaint under the POCSO Act. The first step is to contact the police and report the incident. You can either visit the police station in person or call the police helpline number to register a complaint. You will need to provide details such as the date, time and place of the incident as well as the identity of the perpetrator if possible. The police will arrange for a medical examination of the victim to collect evidence of the abuse. If the police find that the complaint falls under the purview of the POCSO Act, they will file a First Information Report and begin an investigation. The case will be tried in a designated court under the POCSO Act. The victim and witnesses will have to give testimony in court. It is important to note that the POCSO Act also makes provisions for the protection of the identity of the victim and

witnesses.

Police Responsibilities under POCSO

The police play a vital role in enforcing this law and ensuring justice for victims of such crimes. Under the POCSO Act, when a complaint of sexual offence against a child is received, the police will immediately register the complaint. The police is responsible for recording the statement of the victim or any witness in a manner that is sensitive to the age, gender and mental condition of the child. The police will ensure that the victim undergoes a medical examination within 24 hours of the complaint to collect evidence of the crime. The police have the power to arrest the accused person without a warrant if there is a reasonable suspicion of their involvement in the crime. The police must ensure the safety of the victim, including providing protection and assistance during the investi-

gation and trial. The police must conduct a thorough investigation of the crime, collect all evidence related to the crime and present it in the court. The police must ensure that the trial of the accused is conducted in a timely and expeditious manner as per the provisions of the POCSO Act. The police have an important responsibility under the POCSO Act to ensure the safety of children and bring the perpetrators of sexual crimes against children to justice.

Punishment and bail in POCSO Act, no anticipatory bail

The crime under POCSO Act is considered a very serious crime. In which there is a provision to provide the harshest punishment to the guilty person whoever is found guilty of committing this crime. This act provides for punishment ranging from minimum 3 years to life imprisonment depending on the severity of the crime.

Hooliganism of Dharendra Shastri's younger brother Shaligram, entered the house and beat up women

Team Absolute | Chhatarpur

Shaligram, brother of Baba Bageshwar Dham head Pandit Dharendra Shastri, is once again in the headlines for his hooliganism. Shaligram has created terror by entering a village and by entering a house, he has brutally assaulted women and children. Women have been injured in the fighting. The surprising thing is that the entire video of the fighting incident has surfaced in which a policeman is also seen.

The incident is being reported from Gadha village where Pandit Dharendra Krishna Shastri's brother Shaligram had reached with his companions. Here Shaligram and his associates created terror and entered a family's house and beat them fiercely. Women and children were beaten to death by Shaligram and his



associates. A video of the entire incident has also surfaced which has been made by a girl from the victim's

family. In the video, she is clearly heard saying that Bageshwar Dham Pandit Dharendra Shastri's brother

Shaligram had entered the house and killed the women.

The surprising thing is that in the video that has surfaced, a policeman is also seen in uniform. Due to which it seems that the police was present on the spot and yet this incident of assault took place. The women injured in the incident reached the police station in a blood-soaked condition to lodge a complaint. The victim's family and women allege that their complaint is not being registered in the police station.

This is not the first case of hooliganism of Pandit Dharendra Shastri's brother. Earlier, Shaligram's name was in the headlines in the case of assault at the toll plaza and also in the case of assault and aerial firing at a wedding in the house of a Dalit family.

IPS Varun Kapoor becomes special DG

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The state government has promoted Additional Director General of Police RAPTC Indore Varun Kapoor to the post of Special DG. Kapoor has been posted at his old place of posting in Indore. Kapoor is a 1991 batch IPS officer and has got a chance to be promoted to the post of Special DG due to the retirement of Special DG Anuradha Shankar Singh on Friday. Kapoor will be considered promoted to the new place of posting from June 1.



BJP will review the performance of leaders contesting Lok Sabha elections, review meeting will be held after June 4

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the results of Lok Sabha elections, Bharatiya Janata Party will again review its leaders and office bearers. At the state level, the work of Lok Sabha in-charges, convenors, MLAs and leaders associated with election management of all 29 Lok Sabha seats will be reviewed. Along with this, 38 departments of the Election Management Committees of all the Lok Sabha and the Election Management Committee of the Legislative Assemblies will also be reviewed.



After the Lok Sabha elections, BJP will review what responsibilities were given to which officer in election management and how much of the tasks given to him have been completed. Along with this, it will be seen how many booths the party won in whose area, especially in the area of MLAs, it will be

reviewed by making a comparative report as to how many booths were won in the 2023 Assembly elections and how many of them were lost in the Lok Sabha elections. Found. If the lead on the assembly seat decreases, the organization can seek answers from the MLA.

Lok Sabha Elections: BJP was far ahead of Congress in campaigning in Madhya Pradesh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The campaign for Lok Sabha elections has ended. No political party left any stone unturned in campaigning in the seven-phase elections. Congress has lagged far behind BJP in the four phases of election campaign in Madhya Pradesh.

Voting was held in four phases for 29 Lok Sabha seats in Madhya Pradesh. Counting of votes is scheduled to take place on June 4. If we look at the election campaign in the state, one thing becomes clear that BJP had put all its strength into the campaign.

In the BJP's election campaign, many big faces including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, National President JP Nadda, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were seen campaigning in favor of the candidates. Talking about Congress, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi reached Madhya Pradesh to cam-



aign for the candidates. The visits of Congress leaders were

very limited. On behalf of BJP, Prime Minister Modi held eight public

meetings and two road shows. Home Minister Amit Shah participated in four public meetings, one road show and one cluster meeting, booth level meeting and conference of enlightened people.

BJP national president JP Nadda attended seven public meetings, one Shakti Kendra conference and one Prabuddha Jan Sammelan. Defense Minister Rajnath Singh held six public meetings and one social meeting. Apart from this, state election in-charge Mahendra Singh and co-in-charge Satish Upadhyay remained active in the entire state. If we look at the election campaign of Congress, one thing becomes clear that Rahul Gandhi held five public meetings. Priyanka Gandhi held one public meeting and National President Mallikarjun Kharge held two public meetings. State leaders played an important role in the campaign campaigns of both the parties, be it BJP or Congress. While the new age leaders of BJP got the support of senior people, the new generation remained completely active in Congress.



EDITOR'S SPECS

All eyes on UP's final phase elections

The stakes are high for the seventh and final phase of Lok Sabha polls in Uttar Pradesh and the eyes of the entire nation will be fixed on this phase as Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks a third term from Varanasi. There is no guessing who will emerge as the winner from this high-profile constituency. The campaign in the constituency has been marked by the presence of over a dozen union ministers, NDA alliance leaders and the well-wishers of the Prime Minister, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani. Another constituency in the state which is grabbing eyeballs is Gorakhpur, the hometown of UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Though the BJP candidate in Gorakhpur is actor-politician Ravi Kishan, it is the prestige of Yogi Adityanath which is at stake. The Chief Minister himself has actively campaigned in the constituency. In the seventh phase, polling will be held in 13 Lok Sabha constituencies including Maharajganj, Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, Deoria, Bansaon (SC), Ghosi, Salempur, Ballia, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Mirzapur and Robertsganj (SC). A total of 144 candidates are in the fray in the seventh phase, according to Chief Election Officer Navdeep Rinwa. The two BJP allies who will be on test in the final phase are the Suheldev Bharatiya Samaja Party (SBSP) and Apna Dal (S). The BJP faces a challenge from the INDIA bloc to retain the seats it won in 2019. The BJP had bagged nine of these 13 seats while its ally Apna Dal (S) won two seats. The BSP bagged two seats. The seventh phase has 2,50,56,877 voters including 1,33,10,897 men, 1,17,44,922 women and 1058 third gender voters.

HOW BSP'S VOTE BANK GOT DEMOLISHED BY BUREAUCRATS ONCE CLOSE TO MAYAWATI

Political parties are made or marred by the decisions taken by their leaders but the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), in Uttar Pradesh, is an exception. This is one party that thrived on its loyal band of bureaucrats and also lost its vote bank as the bureaucrats began moving away from the BSP. BSP President Mayawati, as chief minister, was always lucky to have a loyal and dedicated band of bureaucrats to help her steer through the turbulent waters of Uttar Pradesh politics. The bureaucrats, mainly Dalits, showed unflinching loyalty towards her and were a major reason for her success as a chief minister. When she first took oath as chief minister, she was a complete novice when it came to administration and running the government. It was then Rai Singh, an IAS officer known to be close to Kanshi Ram, who took charge and even guided her through the swearing in ceremony. However, within weeks, Mayawati allegedly became suspicious of his style of functioning and showed Rai Singh the door. He was replaced with PL Punia who guided the chief minister through all administrative and political decisions. Over time, PL Punia earned the sobriquet of 'mini chief minister' and since Mayawati did not meet her party cadres, it was left to him to deal with them and address their problems. Mayawati, as chief minister, never opened her doors for anyone - whether it was bureaucrats, party leaders or the media. It was PL Punia who sorted out issues with other officers, listened to grievances of party leaders and workers and even wooed the media that was initially very hostile towards Mayawati. Seeing PL Punia, other bureaucrats posted in Mayawati's Secretariat also began adopting a similar style of functioning. This suited the BSP President because she did not wish to be bothered with 'smaller problems'. The people too, were satisfied because the bureaucrats solved their problem. However, gradually, the loyalty of BSP cadres veered towards bureaucrats who addressed their problems and it is here that the problem began in the BSP. PL Punia left Mayawati after the Taj Corridor controversy and later joined the Congress. Brijlal, former Special DG in Uttar Pradesh, was another Mayawati favourite who left her. An upright IPS officer, he was known to tackle the law-and-order situation with an iron hand. However, he was apparently eased out of her coterie and has now joined the BJP. Brijlal is now Rajya Sabha MP and also the Dalit face of the BJP in UP. Dalits who came to him to sort out their issues when he was in the BSP, now meet him when he is in the BJP. "He still helps us and that is what matters to us. BSP has nothing left for us. We will go with those who still interact with us," says Ramraj Prasad of Siddhartha Nagar. According to a retired IAS officer, once known to be in Mayawati's good books, "She is now completely under the influence of non-Dalit leaders and this has been her undoing. She refuses to entertain Dalit leaders and this is evident from the exodus of senior leaders from the party. It is a matter of



time before the BSP completely disintegrates." Almost all these bureaucrats - now retired - are moving away from the BSP and have no qualms in criticising her style of function and deviated from Kanshi Ram's ideology. Retired IAS officer Kunwar Fateh Bahadur, who served as Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister in the Mayawati regime and was one of the most powerful officers in her regime, had questioned her decision to send leaders to the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha from the Brahmin community. He has now joined Samajwadi Party and sources close to the former IAS officer said that he was 'pained' to see Kanshi Ram's party move away from his ideology. As these bureaucrats moved away from the BSP, party cadres also moved out with them. "Since these people come to us, it is our moral duty to help them and we do so," said another former IAS officer. Tribhuvan Ram, a former Chief Engineer in the PWD, had taken voluntary retirement in 2011 to join the BSP. He was elected to the Vidhan Sabha twice but later joined the BJP. Former bureaucrats like Ram Bahadur and Shri Krishna who were known to be trusted babus in the Mayawati regimes, have now moved away from the BSP President. Padam Singh, Mayawati's Personal Security Officer, was known to be the man she trusted most. He was known as her shadow and she trusted him more than any of her party leaders and officers. However, he fell out of favour for reasons not known and is now in the BJP. Jatavs, supposedly the core BSP voters, are also in a quandary about the BSP's future. A generation of Jatavs, the caste BSP chief Mayawati herself comes from, had once been part of the Bahujan movement and are sworn loyalists of the party. A weakened BSP, however, has resulted in most Jatav voters feeling let down. Jatavs in many areas believe that the selection of wrong candidates in elections and Mayawati's 'muted' campaign may

have done the party in. The voices of dissent among the community in Uttar Pradesh are no longer few and far between. Mayawati's absenteeism from "active" politics is also haunting Jatavs. "Woh kabhi aayein, hum logon se milen. Ek rally se kya hota hai? (She should come at times and meet us. One rally doesn't achieve anything)," said Umakant, a Jatav in Kajitola locality of Kannauj. In Jahta, a Dalit-dominated village in Malihabad, on the outskirts of Lucknow, discontent among the BSP cadre is obvious. "What candidates Behenji has fielded this time baffles me. I cannot recall most of these names, though I am a party worker myself. Jo party ka kaam kare, ticket usko dena chahiye (They should give tickets to people who work for the party)," said a local party functionary. Malihabad is the Assembly segment under the Mohanlalaganj LS seat. In fact, Azad Samaj Party's Chandrashekhar Azad resonates more with the voters in Jatav-dominated villages in the constituency than Mayawati's nephew, Akash Anand, who has been removed from all party posts. Mayawati's "disconnect" with the Jatav population is quite pronounced in many regions. "We know she is a very big leader and cannot come to meet us on an ordinary day, but election is the time for it," said Babulal, a resident of Gopramau Village. Since 2016, the BSP has seen a mass exodus of top brass who were either from the foundational stream of the party or formed a strong second line in the hierarchy. Many of them either quit or Mayawati expelled them. As a result, the party presently lacks any other Dalit face than Mayawati whose campaign many Jatavs find "confusing" as compared to other parties in the fray.

international

In historic verdict, Trump convicted in porn star hush money case

Arul Luise | New York Former US President Donald Trump has been convicted on criminal charges relating to hush money paid to buy the silence of a porn star alleged that she had a sexual tryst with him. The jury of 12 ordinary citizens on Thursday found him guilty of all 34 charges in the case after two days of deliberations. Most of the charges are repetitive and are basically that he falsified his business records by showing the payments to porn actress Stormy Daniels as legal expenses for his lawyer, Michael Cohen, who became the prosecu-



tion's star witness. Outside the court, a crowd of his opponents sent out loud cheers as the verdict trickled out. This is the first time that a former President faced a

criminal case and was convicted. The verdict comes in the middle of the presidential campaign and has the potential to sway it. The conviction will not disqualify from running for President and being elected, under US law. Exiting the court, a stone-faced Trump said the real verdict will be in November when the country goes to the polls. He called the trial "rigged and disgraceful" and said Judge Juan Merchan was "corrupt". Merchan set the sentencing for July 11, just four days before the Republican Party Convention that is expected to formally declare him the candidate for President. He faces a range of sentences, that could be a probation or fine, or be as much as four years in prison. Trump will almost certainly appeal the verdict.

Germany says weapons sent to Ukraine can be used on Russian targets



Berlin | Agencies The German government has authorised Ukraine to use German-supplied weapons against military targets in Russia, German government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit announced on Friday in Berlin. Ukraine has pressed supporters in recent weeks for permission to use weapons supplied by the West to strike Russian forces on Russian territory. Several other countries, including the US, have recently made similar moves to give Ukraine more leeway in its use of Western-supplied weapons. Many Western countries put conditions on military aid packages that limited Ukraine to use those weapons only in Ukrainian territory. Those conditions were intended to avoid escalation with Russia and prevent Ukraine's allies from being drawn directly into the conflict. But Ukraine has contended recently that Russian forces are exploiting those limitations to mass troops near the border and stage attacks against Ukrainian territory.

South Korea warns of 'unendurable' actions against North Korea unless it stops provocations



Seoul | Agencies The unification ministry of South Korea on Friday warned that "unendurably" painful measures would be taken against North Korea if it continues to stage "irrational" provocative acts, such as this week's sending of balloons carrying trash and manure into South Korea and staged GPS jamming attacks in waters near South Korea's northwestern border islands for a third straight day until Friday. The country also fired a salvo of short-range ballistic mis-

Yemen's Houthis claim they attacked US aircraft carrier Eisenhower



Sanaa | Agencies Yemen's Houthis on Friday claimed responsibility for launching ballistic missiles at the US aircraft carrier Eisenhower in the Red Sea and said that the attack was accurate. The group's military spokesman, Yahya Sarea, said in a statement that the attack was "in response to last night's multiple airstrikes launched by the US-British coalition" against Houthi positions in the Yemeni Red Sea port city of Hodeidah, the capital Sanaa, and the southwestern province of Taiz, reports Xinhua news agency. He added that his group "will not hesitate to respond directly and immediately to every new aggression on Yemeni territory by targeting all sources of threat and all hostile American and British targets in the Red Sea and Arabian Sea."

Five killed in Russian missile attacks on Ukraine's Kharkiv



Kyiv | Agencies At least five people were killed and more than 24 injured in Russian missile attacks in the north-eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, Governor Oleh Syniehubov said on Telegram on Friday. Most of the victims lived in a five-storey apartment block. The attacks also damaged a fire engine and an ambulance, he said. At least 20 residential buildings were damaged as a result of the attack. The Russian military fired five missiles at the city, he said. The capital, Kyiv, was attacked with at least one cruise missile, the authorities said, adding that a car repair shop, a car wash and half a dozen vehicles were damaged by falling rocket debris. A transformer station was damaged, the energy company DTEK said, but the power supply has already been restored. There were no casualties. Ukraine has been fending off a full-scale Russian invasion for over two years. Due to Russian attacks on the Ukrainian power supply, there are repeated power cuts.

UK declares itself free from bird flu

London | Agencies The UK has declared that the country is now free from highly pathogenic avian influenza, or bird flu. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said the declaration has been reviewed and published by the World Organization for Animal Health. This follows Northern Ireland's declaration of freedom from bird flu on March 31. The UK had faced its largest outbreak of bird flu with more than 360 cases



confirmed across the country since late October 2021. The UK has had no recent cases of avian influenza in kept birds, with the last case confirmed on February 14, 2024, DEFRA said. The current risk to poultry from HPAI H5 in Britain is low. However, HPAI H5N1

continues to be found at low levels in wild birds in Britain and across Europe with outbreaks occurring in poultry and other captive birds in many European countries. The UK health authorities advise that the available evidence suggests viruses currently circulating in birds in the UK do not spread easily to people and food standards bodies advise that avian influenza pose a very low food safety risk for UK consumers. There is no impact on the consumption of properly cooked poultry products, including eggs.



Lakhs of commuters in Mumbai hit as CR starts 63-hour mega-blocks for infra-upgrades

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 63-hour long 'special mega block' for infrastructure upgradation, implemented by the Central Railway on certain sections of its suburban network, threw Mumbai into a mega-chaos with delays in local trains, commuters flaring up in the heat, coupled with road snarls and crawling traffic, here on Friday.

The CR has launched its 'mega-block' on the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT)-Kalyan section on from 00.30 hrs of May 31 (Friday) and it will continue till 3.30 in the afternoon of June 2 (Sunday), said an official spokesperson.

The CR teams took up the upgrade works to widen Platform No. 5/6 at Thane station by dismantling the existing railway tracks, the overhead electrical wires, equipment, etc.

Expected to be completed by Sunday afternoon, the wider platform by around 3.05 metres, will enable seamless movement for commuters at this major station.

The other block is for the extension of the railway platform No. 10/11 to accommodate 24 coach trains at CSMT.

CR General Manager R. K. Yadav has appealed to the people to refrain from travelling unless absolutely necessary in view of the delays and



curtailment in services.

The two simultaneous blocks of varying durations have hit suburban and long-distance train services with 42 outstation trains cancelled, and around 160 other trains are short-originating,

short-terminating, or rescheduled, besides the crucial suburban time-tables going haywire.

Consequently, lakhs of daily commuters rushing to their workplaces have experienced huge delays during the morning peak hours, with serv-

ices operated at long intervals of 20-30 minutes, and the cascading effects felt on the Western Railway and the CR's Harbour Line.

The railway stations in the Thane-Raigad sections were jam-packed with harried, perspiring commuters making a beeline to catch a local and reach their workplaces on time, though the authorities had deployed extra buses to clear the commuter rush.

Expecting commuting problems - a lesson learnt from past mega-blocks - many Mumbaikars opted to commute in their two-wheelers or cars, but they made slow and painful progress as the arterial roads, main thoroughfares and highways got clogged with vehicles.

A woman IT professional from Mulund, Mini P. Menon, who commutes a short distance to Ghatkopar in 15 minutes daily said she took a BEST bus but it took her over an hour to reach her workplace in the massive road traffic.

A Thane-based shipping consultant S. Bhaskaran said he spent over two hours by road to reach his office in Bandra Kurla Complex and he was resigned to a similar delay on his return journey home this evening.

Rattled by the surging crowds and the intense heat, many people decided to 'work from home' and those working five days availed a casual leave for a long weekend.

Woman scammed out of Rs 28 lakh in fake Gold deal

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Navi Mumbai police have arrested two men for dacoity after a woman lost nearly Rs 28 lakh in a scam involving the promise of gold at a cheap rate, an official reported on Friday.

The 36-year-old woman from Nerul filed a complaint stating that one of the arrested men contacted her, offering to sell her half a kilo of gold for Rs 27.81 lakh, below the market price. On May 18, the man took her to Sanpada station in a car for the deal. Once there, a group of people threatened the woman and snatched her bag containing the money. The man and an accomplice who was in the car fled the scene, she alleged, the report stated. According to the report, following various leads, police arrested Rakesh Shivaji Shingte (39), who had contacted the woman, and Roopesh Subash Sapkale (42), both residents of Thane. Efforts are ongoing to apprehend the others involved, the official added.

2 elderly men killed in Mumbai building slab crash

Team Absolute | Mumbai

At least two persons were killed when the slab of a partly occupied building crashed in Vikhroli suburb on Thursday, the BMC Disaster Control said.

The incident happened at around 6.45 p.m. when a portion of the slab on the top floor in the three-storey Gurukripa Building in Kannamwar Nagar suddenly came crashing

down.

Two elderly persons who were trapped under the debris were brought out and rushed to the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Hospital nearby, but they were declared dead on admission.

They are identified as Sharad Mhaslekar, 75 and Suresh Madhalkar, 78.

The work of clearing the rubble was underway.

Ghatkopar hoarding collapse: Structural engineer remanded in police custody till June 5



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai court on Friday remanded a structural engineer in police custody till June 5. The structural engineer was arrested in connection with the May 13 hoarding collapse that killed 17 persons in Ghatkopar. Structural engineer Manoj Sanghu was produced in the magistrate court after he was arrested by the Crime Branch on Thursday.

Sanghu, who was appointed by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation

(BMC), had given a stability certificate to the hoarding, which crashed onto a petrol pump after gusty winds and unseasonal rains hit the city on May 13.

Ego Media Private Limited had erected the hoarding on a plot which belonged to the Government Railway Police (GRP).

Sanghu is the second person to be arrested in the case. Police had earlier arrested Ego Media Private Limited director Bhavesh Bhide, who is currently in judicial custody. Bhide and others were charged under

Indian Penal Code sections 304-2 (when there is knowledge that death may be caused by one's act), 338 (endangering life or personal safety of other) and 34 (common intention). The police have now added IPC section 120B (criminal conspiracy) to the FIR. As many as 17 people, including a former GM of Mumbai airport ATC and his wife, died after a massive billboard crashed onto a petrol pump in suburban Ghatkopar on May 13 when the city experience sudden dusty winds and unseasonal rains.

Porsche crash case

Accused minor's father, grandpa get 14-day judicial custody

Team Absolute | Pune

Court here on Friday sent Pune builder Vishal S. Agarwal and his father Surendrakumar B. Agarwal to judicial custody for 14 days in connection with the case about threats and abduction of their driver and other charges.

The accused are the father and grandfather of the accused minor boy -- currently in a juvenile correctional home -- whose speeding Porsche car killed two Madhya Pradesh techies, both aged 24, early on May 19, triggering an outrage.

While Vishal S. Agarwal, 50, was arrested late on Monday (May 27), Surendrakumar B. Agarwal had been arrested earlier under fresh charges, and both were remanded to police custody till May 31.

Simultaneously, the minor



accused's mother, Shivani V. Agarwal has now come under the police radar in connection with the probe into the swapping of the boy's original blood report which was swapped, ostensibly to get him off the hook in the serious

crime.

In a related development, a couple of friends of the 17-year-old boy who were in the Porsche, have told the Pune Police that he was heavily drunk and driving at the time of the crash

that killed IT professionals Ashwini Koshtha and Aneesh Awadhya that morning.

Earlier, another eyewitness to the car crash had recounted how he barely missed getting a deadly hit by the Porsche which, barely seconds later rammed into the motorcycle ahead on which the techies were travelling, killing them. Subsequently, the resident of Kalyani Nagar noticed a heavily sozzled boy along with another person emerging from the vehicle and getting thrashed by an angry mob that had gathered there.

The eyewitness further claimed before mediapersons that the boy pleaded and even offered 'as much money as you want' to spare them the thrashing before they were handed over to the Yerawada Police Station, and it triggered a national furore the next day (May 20).

Adani Electricity Mumbai detected power thefts worth Rs 46 crore last year

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Clamping down on the menace of illegal power connections, Adani Electricity Mumbai Limited detected 26.21 million units of power thefts worth an estimated Rs 46.04 crore in the city last year, an official spokesperson said on Friday.

In the financial year 2023-2024, the company lodged 974 FIRs for power thefts, compared to the 778 FIRs registered in the previous fiscal (2022-2023). Power theft is a non-bailable offence that attracts a stringent fine/jail term of three years for the offenders.

During multiple raids carried out last year, the company seized 60.5 tonnes of illegal wires and the actions resulted in bringing down the Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses by 0.46 per cent - from 5.93 per cent (2022-2023) to a commendable 5.47 per cent (2023-2024), the official said.

This has placed Adani Electricity with the lowest AT&C losses among all Discoms nationwide, given its extensive power network and diverse con-



sumer base, the official added.

Among the major power thieves caught last year was Jaimi Traders in Kurar village, Malad East, for illegally using a three-phase direct supply that led to theft worth Rs 1.33 crore. The case was probed by the Kandivali police station in June 2023.

In July 2023, the company's vigilance teams caught Crohast Plastic Moulding Mfg. Ltd in Andheri for using an illegal power connection

worth Rs 1.09 crore, and the matter was probed by the Kherwadi police station.

The third case was lodged by Kandivali police station in December 2023 when the Kinny Farmhouse and Resort in Malad West was caught using an illegal power connection worth Rs 1.04 crore.

Adani Electricity teams, along with the concerned police authorities, conduct regular mass raids, apprehend the offenders, and confiscate the equipment used for power theft.

The incidents of power theft are rampant in high-demand areas like slum clusters, where new network development is challenging due to space constraints, while overload of the existing infrastructure increases maintenance costs due to more frequent cable and transformer failures.

"Power theft unfairly burdens the honest, paying consumers, and we at Adani Electricity are committed to eliminating the menace of power theft to safeguard the interests of our customers. We shall intensify the efforts in specific areas to further reduce AT&C losses this year," said the spokesperson.

Cooperative Shelters for rehabilitation of street children in Thane: NCPCCR chief

Team Absolute | Thane

NCPCCR chairperson Priyank Kanoongo has proposed setting up cooperative shelters to rehabilitate street children and their families in Maharashtra's Thane district.

According to a release by the District Administration on Friday, the Chairperson of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCCR), Kanoongo emphasized upon the urgency for collective efforts to ensure permanent rehabilitation of street children and their families.

On Wednesday, in a meeting held at the collector's office, Kanoongo presided the need for urgent action and highlighted the necessity of collaborative efforts for sustainable rehabilitation of children and their families.

Kanoongo highlighted the efforts initiated since 2016 for the same cause. He emphasized on Municipal Corporations' and Municipalities' responsibilities to take proactive steps, to enhance financial capacity and facilitating school enrollment for these street children in the



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS

rehabilitation.

Kanoongo proposed the establishment of "Cooperative Shelters" as an effective solution. He has told officials to study the successful Rehabilitation Project in Bhopal for inspiration and replication.

NCPCCR, back in June 2022, has launched a 'CISS application' under Bal Swaraj Portal, to help in the rehabilitation process of Children in Street Situations (CISS). The CISS portal is launched for online tracking and digital real-time monitoring mechanism of children in need of care and protection. The CISS application is used for receiving data of children in street situations from all the states and union territories,

tracking their rescue and rehabilitation process. It follows a detailed six stages framework for the rehabilitation of children.

The portal also provides a platform for professionals and organizations to provide any help that they can to children in need.

The Standard Operating Procedure for Care and Protection of Children in Street Situations 2.0 categorizes any child under 'Children in Street Situation', if the child is living on the streets alone, living on the streets during the day, or living on the streets with the family.

The root cause of the children in streets is found to be migration of families from rural to urban areas in search of a better standard of living.

As per the release by the District Administration, Kanoongo urged officials from Women and Child Development Department to visit and study such projects, study their methods, and replicate them in the Thane district Street Children Rehabilitation Project to ensure positive results.

Maharashtra Minister Hasan Mushrif promises reforms in civil hospitals

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra minister Hasan Mushrif has committed to improving the civil hospital system to prevent future incidences of malpractice. This guarantee comes after the alleged manipulation of blood samples at Pune's Sassoon Hospital in connection with a recent Pune car crash. The medical education minister addressed the topic when speaking with reporters in Mumbai on Thursday. Police have arrested Dr Ajay Taware, then head of forensic medicine at Sassoon, medical officer Dr Shrihari Halnor, and staff member Atul Ghatkamble for allegedly changing the blood samples of the adolescent who was supposedly driving the Porsche at the time of the Pune car crash, stated the



report.

Reportedly, according to authorities, the adolescent driver was inebriated during the Pune car crash that killed two IT professionals in Kalyani Nagar on May 19.

"The police found that Dr Ajay Taware was on leave on the night of the Pune accident and he got a call from someone. He accepted Rs 3 lakh and called Dr Halnor to

manipulate the blood samples. This was absolutely wrong," Mushrif stated.

Police told the court that the juvenile's blood sample was changed with that of a lady, apparently his mother, to demonstrate that he was not intoxicated at the time of the accident, stated the report.

"We need to introduce some changes and take strict

action to stop the outsider interference in the functioning of hospitals. We will overhaul the system and make it foolproof," Mushrif stated. He also stated that the department would ensure Dr Taware faced serious punishment for his involvement in the Pune car crash.

Regarding Dr Vinayak Kale, dean of Sassoon General Hospital, being sent on leave, the minister emphasised, "The report of the committee (set up to probe the blood sample episode) stated that Dr Kale did not perform his duties properly. The decision to send him on leave has nothing to do with him taking my name during a press conference." Earlier, Dr Kale had claimed that the orders to give additional charge to Dr Taware came from Mushrif, the report stated.



Bebe Rexha opens up on her struggles with PCOS, 'painful' symptoms

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Bebe Rexha has shared that she has been struggling with painful cysts, acne, and weight gain due to polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). Diagnosed with PCOS last year, she has now opened up about her symptoms to her followers on social media. Asked about the condition, she recalled that the first sign was having "super irregular" periods, including once having it for 20 days, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The singer also started gaining weight, putting on "a lot in four years", and now she has to count calories to maintain herself. She is currently consuming 1,400 calories a day and burning around 700 through exercise.

She added: "My doctor once told me that a woman with PCOS can eat a bowl of blueberries, and it would be equivalent to a normal person eating a whole pie of pizza." Bebe Rexha has also been suffering from "bad cysts" and even had to go to the hospital because of them.

The singer said: "Two weeks ago, I was in urgent care. I was in so much pain. My doctor thought it was appendicitis, it was so bad. It was actually a cyst that had burst. Tylenol didn't work, and Advil didn't work. I was sick to my stomach, and the pain was so bad."



Brie Larson is a 'mentor' to actors starring in superhero films

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Brie Larson, known for portraying Captain Marvel, is always happy to "reach out" to newcomers to the comic book movie world because it can be quite a "strange" experience.

Asked about stories in which Larson reaches out to people cast as superheroes during the Hollywood Reporter's Drama Actress Roundtable, Naomi Watts asked: "Wait, you're a superhero mentor?"

Larson confirmed: "Always. I'm the first person to email everybody because it's very specific and very strange."

"People are like, 'I don't know how to do this.' Yeah, no one does. Why would you? I'll say, 'Train because you'll want to be as prepared in your body as you possibly can because it only gets harder as the job goes on. And I really understand how to be able to go to the bathroom in your suit,'" she said.

"The first 'Captain Marvel', it was a 45-minute thing to get me in and out of that costume. I can't stand when people have to wait for me to go to the bathroom, so I'd have to time it out," she said.

Larson said that it is a lot of pressure, reports femalefirst.co.uk. "And I think it's a strange thing, especially when you're a newcomer and you're tasked with being the most powerful blah, blah, blah, and you feel scared. It's so hard to be the cool, confident one when you're like, 'Do I know what I'm supposed to be doing?'"

The 34-year-old actress, who won an Oscar for her portrayal of a kidnapping victim in the 2015 film 'Room', said she struggled to shake off the "dark" role for over a year afterwards.

"I basically haven't done anything as dark as 'Room' since 'Room', because it took me a year to get out of it. And it was really scary. It took me a long time to be able to just do basic things that I used to enjoy in my life," she said. "So, yeah, you hope that you have the grace of a line producer who's scheduled it so that there are moments where you can offload," she added.

Kris Jenner Opens Up About Her & Boyfriend

Los Angeles | Agencies

Kris Jenner got candid about her and boyfriend Corey Gamble's age gap during the latest episode of The Kardashians. In one scene of the episode, which was released on Thursday, May 30, the 68-year-old reality TV personality recalled the early days of their romance.

"I used to say to Corey all the time when I first started dating him, like, 'Why do you want to date somebody who is older than you?'" Kris said, referring to their 25-year age difference. "I didn't get the age gap, and then he taught me that age is just a number."

After pointing out that their difference in age is "a f**king big number," the manager of the Kardashian-Jenner family noted that it's still just "a number," as Corey, 43, told her.

"Listen, I can't explain someone's chemistry or why people fall in love, but it's been an amazing almost 10 years and we have a great time," she concluded.



PRINCESS KATE WILL MISS THIS UPCOMING ROYAL EVENT REHEARSAL AMID CANCER BATTLE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Princess Kate will not be the Inspecting Officer at this year's Trooping of the Colour event amid her cancer battle, the palace confirmed. Moreover, she will skip the dress rehearsal for the event next month, according to multiple outlets.

However, it's unclear whether or not she plans to attend the event, which is scheduled to take place on June 15. Last week, a spokesperson for Kensington Palace noted that the Princess of Wales, 42, is still committed to her duties — primarily her Royal Foundation Business Taskforce for Early Childhood — despite not being able to attend public events at the moment.

"This is a clear commitment she has made throughout her life of public service that this will be focus," the representative told Daily Mail on May 21. "That will continue when she returns to work. But we have been really clear that she needs the space and the privacy to recover right now."



Jack Reynor joins Paul Rudd, Nick Jonas for musical comedy 'Power Ballad'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Irish actor Jack Reynor will once again collaborate with filmmaker John Carney in the upcoming musical comedy 'Power Ballad', after working together in 'Sing Street'.

The film also stars Paul Rudd and Nick Jonas. Tagged as an "uplifting and music-driven story," the film follows a wedding singer, a rock star, and the song that comes between them.

Details about who will play what are still under wraps, reports variety.com.

This marks the fourth collaboration between Reynor and Carney, following the musical comedies 'Sing Street' and 'Flora and Son', as well as the series 'Modern Love'.

'Power Ballad' is currently filming in Dublin.

Reynor is also well-known for his role in Ari Aster's horror film 'Midsommar'. He has showcased his acting prowess in 'Transformers: Age of Extinction' and the series 'The Peripheral'. He will next be seen in 'The Perfect Couple' adaptation and the series 'Citadel', now in its second season.

Paul Rudd made his acting debut in 1991. With a long career in cinema, he received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2015 and was named People magazine's 'Sexiest Man Alive' in 2021.

He is known for his work in films such as 'Clueless', 'Halloween: The Curse of Michael Myers', 'Romeo + Juliet', 'The 40-Year-Old Virgin', and 'Knocked Up'. Most famously, he has played the superhero Scott Lang/Ant-Man in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), beginning with 'Ant-Man'.

Nick, who is married to actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas, was recently seen performing at the 77th Cannes Film Festival's AIDS gala.



KYLIE JENNER AND TIMOTHÉE CHALAMET'S LOVE CONTINUES TO GROW STRONGER

Los Angeles | Agencies

Kylie Jenner and Timothée Chalamet's love continues to grow stronger, a new report claims. According to PEOPLE, the duo was spotted on a double date in New York City, and a source claimed they prefer to keep their romance low-key.

Kylie and Timothée have been dating since mid-2023. Although they've never directly spoken about their romance, they've supported one another privately. Moreover, they've been seen on various outings together, including the 2023 U.S. Open.

The A-list pair's last public outing was in January at the 2024 Golden Globe Awards. While seated at a table at the event, the movie star, 28, was photographed giving the makeup mogul, 26, a quick kiss as cameras flashed.

At the time, the outlet reported that the couple "are super serious and very involved with each other's day to day lives, family on both sides included."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Blake Lively



India have a brilliant team, they'll give their hearts and souls : Irfan Pathan

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the ICC Men's T20 World Cup is set to kick-off from June 2 (IST) in the West Indies and USA, former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan has expressed confidence that the Men in Blue will "give their hearts and souls" to lift the coveted trophy. Pathan was part of the Indian team that won the inaugural edition of the showpiece event in 2007, beating Pakistan in the thrilling final.

The Rohit Sharma-led side will begin its campaign against Ireland on June 5 at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York.

"Cricket is all about unmatched energy, thrilling moments, and undying passion. With the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2024, fans across the country are excited for big sixes, amazing catches, and non-stop cricketing action. Be it a friendly game of gully cricket or a tournament at the world level, the fans' love for cricket is what makes the sport so appealing," Pathan said



Norway Chess: Praggnanandhaa loses lead in Rd-4; Vaishali wins

Stavanger (Norway) | Agencies

Just a day after registering his first classical win over the five-time World Champion Magnus Carlsen, India's prodigy R Praggnanandhaa went down against America's Hikaru Nakamura in Round 4 of the Norway Chess 2024, here on Thursday. Nakamura displayed masterful preparation against Praggnanandhaa, who sacrificed a knight in a desperate bid to save the game. Nakamura, having anticipated this very sacrifice, played flawlessly and secured a convincing victory to climb to the top spot of the overall standings.

Pragg's sister Vaishali, on the other hand, continued her dominant performance by defeating the legendary Pia Cramling, extending her lead to a total of 8.5 points.

Indian women's chess Grandmaster Koneru Humpy suffered a loss in the classical game against Anna Muzychuk in Round 4. In another exciting game of the women's tournament, Ju Wenjun triumphed over her compatriot Lieke Tjeng in the fourth Armageddon tiebreak of the tournament.

The local hero Carlsen registered a



narrow victory over Fabiano Caruana in the main event to bag three points. Caruana had a golden opportunity to close the rating gap with Carlsen to just four points, but the game, initially calm, took a dramatic turn in the endgame. Carlsen capitalised on a small advantage, ultimately clinching the win when Caruana blundered with only seconds left on his clock.

Meanwhile, Alireza Firouzja stunned the reigning World Champion Ding Liren to earn three crucial points ahead

of the rest day.

After a rest day, Round 5 of the Norway Chess 2024 will take place on Saturday.

Round 5 Pairings
Norway Chess main event
Magnus Carlsen vs Alireza Firouzja;
Ding Liren vs Hikaru Nakamura;
Praggnanandhaa R vs Fabiano Caruana
Norway Chess Women's Tournament
Vaishali R vs Lei Tingjie; Ju Wenjun vs Koneru Humpy; Anna Muzychuk vs Pia Cramling

FRENCH OPEN: ANDREEVA DISPATCHES AZARENKA TO ENTER THIRD ROUND

Paris | Agencies

Rising teenager Mirra Andreeva clinched a spot in the Roland Garros third round for the second straight year after beating former World No.1 Victoria Azarenka 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 in a late-night stunner.

The 17-year-old Andreeva successfully completed the third-round lineup with a 2-hour and 31-minute victory over No.19 seed Azarenka. The match ended just after 1 am local time in Paris (4:30 am IST).

Andreeva, last season's WTA Newcomer of the Year, has already collected five Top 25 wins this season, including in half of her last six matches -- she also beat Marketa Vondrousova and Jasmine Paolini in Madrid a month ago, WTA reports.

World No.38 Andreeva will look to make the Round of 16 at a Grand Slam for the third time in her young career when she takes on another surging player, Peyton



Stearns of the United States, Stearns registered and upset win over No.10 seed Daria Kasatkina 7-5, 6-2 to book a third-round spot at Roland Garros for the second

consecutive year. Andreeva and Stearns have faced off once before, with Stearns winning 6-2, 2-6, 6-1 in the first round of WTA 1000 Dubai in February.

Boxing World Qualifiers: Clinical Nishant Dev seals Paris Olympic quota, Ankushita Boro misses out

New Delhi | Agencies

Nishant Dev became the fourth Indian and first male boxer to qualify for the 2024 Paris Olympics after he convincingly got the better of Moldova's Vasile Cebotari 5-0 to reach the semifinals of the 71kg category at the 2nd Boxing World Qualifiers at Bangkok, Thailand, on Friday.

Dev, who had missed out on the Paris Olympic berth in the 1st Qualifier in Italy after going down to 2021 world championships silver medalist Omari Jones of USA at the same stage, was determined not to lose out this time around as he took control of Round 1 with a combination of a right-hand jab and a left-handed hook. Cebotari did put up a fight in Rounds 2 and 3 but the experience of Dev shone bright as he mixed caution with aggression and landed a few hooks and uppercuts to earn a unanimous verdict. India has already secured three quotas for the Paris Games with Nikhat Zareen (women's 50kg), Preeti (54kg), and Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) confirming their berths by winning bronze



medals at the 2022 Asian Games.

However, it was the end of the road for former World Youth Champion Ankushita Boro in the 60kg quarterfinals as she was unlucky to go down 3-2 against Sweden's Agnes Alexiussen.

Boro was slow off the blocks and that allowed her Swedish opponent

to take control. But the Indian fought back in Round 2 and looked on course to reverse the deficit as she earned a 4-1 verdict for the round.

She continued to attack the Swede in the final round but Alexiussen landed a few punches of her own at the right time to convince three of the

five judges to rule in her favour.

Four Indian boxers will be in action in the evening session on Friday with all of them -- Arundhati Choudhary (66kg), Amit Panghal (51kg), Sachin Siwach (57kg), and Sanjeet (92kg) -- just two wins away from a Paris Olympic spot.

T20 World Cup: Suresh Raina weighs in on the Kohli/Jaiswal opening dilemma

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Virat Kohli is coming off a stellar season in the Indian Premier League and will be looking to carry his form into the World Cup. In an event in New Delhi, former India big-hitter Suresh Raina weighed in on who should open for India in the upcoming World Cup.

Kohli played as an opener during the 2024 Indian Premier League (IPL) season, a position in which Indian fans are not accustomed to seeing him bat, but ended the tournament as the highest run-scorer which is why the question arises of who will accompany Rohit Sharma to open the innings.

"I prefer Virat to play at No. 3 in the World Cup. He's a run machine.



Yashasvi is in good form, and I'm sure he will do well as an opener. With the

itches and conditions in the United States expected to be slow, in my opinion, Virat should play at No. 3," Raina told reporters at an event in New Delhi.

Yashasvi Jaiswal is a prodigy in the making as the 22-year-old has performed exceptionally well over the course of the past year which saw him being named in the 15-man squad that will take part in the T20 World Cup in the United States and Caribbean from June 2 (IST) till June 29.

The Kohli/Jaiswal dilemma will be one of the key points of contention for the side and it will be interesting to see the order that the skipper, Rohit Sharma fields during the side's warm-up match against Bangladesh on June 1.

SINGAPORE OPEN: TREESA-GAYATRI STUN KOREAN DUO TO ENTER MAIDEN SUPER 750 SEMIS

Singapore | Agencies

Continuing their brilliant run, Indian women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand defeated another Korean duo, world no. 6 Kim So Yeong and Kong Hee Yong in a nail-biting quarterfinal, here on Friday.

The Indians, ranked no. 30 in the world, registered a superb comeback victory 18-21, 21-19, 24-22 to enter their first-ever semifinal at a BWF World Tour Super 750 event.

Treesa and Gayatri will face the winner of the second quarterfinal between Nami Matsuyama-Chiharu Shifa of Japan and Apriyani Rahayu-Siti Fadia Silva Ramadhanti of Indonesia on Saturday.

Earlier in the tournament, the young Indian pair 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.

Treesa and Gayatri are the only Indians left in the BWF Super 750 Badminton tourna-



ment. On Thursday, ace shuttler PV Sindhu faced a defeat against former Olympic medalist Carolina Marin 21-13, 11-21, 20-22 in the women's singles second round while, in the men's singles, HS Prannoy was outclassed by Japan's Kenta Nishimoto 21-13, 14-21, 21-15 in the hard-fought encounter.

T20 WC: West Indies beat Australia in warm-up match

Port of Spain | Agencies

Co-hosts the West Indies registered an impressive 35-run victory over Australia in their ICC T20 World Cup warm-up fixture on Friday (India time).

Nicholas Pooran was the star of the show with a superb 75 as the West Indies posted a massive total of 257/4 at Queens Park Oval.

Pooran smashed eight sixes during his 25-ball stay, skipper Rovman Powell (52), left-hander Sherfane Rutherford (47 not out) and opener Johnson Charles (40) also got in the act as the two-time champions delighted the home crowd with some scintillating power-hitting. ICC reports. All of Australia's bowlers felt the wrath of the West Indies' top-order batters, with first-choice spin-



ner Adam Zampa conceding 62 runs from his four overs while picking up two wickets.

Australia put up a decent show in reply despite missing a host of key players, with Josh Inglis (55), Nathan Ellis (39) and Ashton Agar (28) looking the most dangerous in what was always going to be a difficult chase as the 2021 T20 World Cup winners finished with 222/7 in their final warm-up match.

Spinner Gudakesh Motie (2/31) and pacer Alzarri Joseph (2/44) picked up a pair of wickets each for the hosts.

Boxing Federation of India agrees to join World Boxing

New Delhi | Agencies

The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) has agreed to become a member of World Boxing, the International Federation established to ensure boxing remains at the heart of the Olympic Movement.

The membership application has been approved by the BFI's General Assembly, and will be ratified by World Boxing's Executive Board. The BFI president, Ajay Singh, recently met with World Boxing's President and Secretary General to discuss ways in which India can support the International Federation in growing its membership base in Asia, where the BFI is one of the largest National Federations.

"As part of its commitment to the future development of World Boxing, the BFI aims to play a leading role in establishing an Asian Confederation and



drive the recruitment of other National Federations in the region," the BFI said in a release.

"It also intends to actively participate in the work of World Boxing Committees and all Commissions as well as bidding to host World Boxing competi-

tions and we look forward to welcoming the BFI into the growing World Boxing family. This is a very exciting development which will significantly increase our presence in Asia and I look forward to working closely with the BFI in delivering our common goals.

"In both its public comments and during our recent meeting, the IOC has delivered a clear message to all National Federations that if they want boxers from their country to have the opportunity to compete at future Olympic Games then they must now join World Boxing. This is the only path that will see our sport remain in the Olympic Games after Paris 2024 and National Federations must act now and follow the example of the BFI if they want boxing to have any chance of still being part of the programme at Los Angeles 2028," he added.

BFI president Ajay Singh said their goals and values align with World Boxing and they wish to expand the sport in the continent.

"It is absolutely vital to the sustainability of boxing that it retains its Olympics status, so we are delighted to join World Boxing and look forward to working closely with the Executive Board and our fellow members to shape the future development of the sport and deliver a brighter future for boxers across the world," he said.

"The BFI shares the same values and goals as World Boxing and are keen to play a leading role in its development. We also wish to be at the forefront of the formation and hosting of a new Asian confederation to ensure boxing continues to expand and grow its membership on the continent," the BFI president added.



The greatest treasure on Earth are the people who love : MALAIKA ARORA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid talk of a breakup with actor Arjun Kapoor, actress Malaika Arora shared a cryptic post on Friday, saying "the greatest treasure on Earth are the people who love and support us".

Taking to Instagram Stories, Malaika, who has 18.8 million followers, shared a quote that read: "The greatest treasure on Earth are the people who love and support us. They cannot be bought or replaced, and each of us has only a few of them."

Earlier in the day, a source confirmed that Malaika and Arjun, who started dating in 2018, have split.

"Going by Arjun's body language and how he is right now, it has happened. They have been dating for so long; hence, it has been very peaceful, dignified, and respectful. Malaika and Arjun are still amicable with each other," the source said.

The rumours about the duo dating spread in 2018



after they were spotted together at a fashion show.

However, it was on Malaika's 45th birthday in October 2018 that they confirmed their relationship status.

They were often seen expressing love for each other on social media by dropping love-filled pictures and posts. They also went for romantic getaways to New York, Berlin, and

Salzburg in Austria. On the personal front, Malaika was earlier married to actor Arbaaz Khan, and they have a son, Arhaan. They were officially divorced in May 2017.

I DON'T THINK BOLLYWOOD IS THE WAY TO GO FOR HER, SHWETA ABOUT NAVYA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shweta Bachchan Nanda has dispelled rumours about her daughter, Navya Naveli, getting all set to make her Bollywood debut.

The rumours gained momentum after the debut of Navya Naveli's brother, Agastya Nanda, in 'The Archies', but Shweta was firm in denying that Navya had no plans to enter the film industry. Both Navya Naveli and Agastya Nanda are Amitabh Bachchan's grandchildren and Raj Kapoor's great-grandchildren. Shweta was representing Navya Naveli at an event for podcasters in Mumbai. She said, "I am here to represent my daughter, and I am very excited for her and proud for her. I am thrilled to be here to collect the award on her behalf." Navya Naveli runs the podcast, 'What The Hell Navya'.

Talking about her daughter's talent as a podcaster, Shweta emphasised, "I think it is wonderful, it is a great way of reaching out to people. You can carry it wherever you go, you can listen to it on a train or a bus. I think it is a fantastic and wonderful medium of getting your word across." When asked about Navya Naveli making an entry into Bollywood, her mother was emphatic. She said, "I think you are very well acquainted with the work Navya does and she has her hands full. I don't think Bollywood is the way to go for her."



TELEGU ACTRESS ANJALI CLEARS THE AIR OVER INCIDENT WITH NANDAMURI BALAKRISHNA

Mumbai: A raging controversy erupted when Telugu superstar Nandamuri Balakrishna was seen pushing away the actress Anjali on stage during a promotional event of her upcoming film 'Gangs of Godavari'. Social media users went into a frenzy, calling the superstar names and demanding a boycott of his films or an apology from him. It has led the actress to share a post to clear the air over the episode. Anjali took to her social media profile and posted, "I want to thank Balakrishna garu for gracing the 'Gangs of Godavari' pre-release event with his presence. I would like to express that Balakrishna garu and I have always maintained that we have mutual respect for each other and we share a great friendship from a long time." She concluded by saying, "It was wonderful to share the stage with him again. @VishwakSenActor @vamsi84 @SitharaEnts #KrishnaChaitanya"



Apparently, according to Anjali, Balakrishna and she were just having some fun on stage, but certain people read more into the superstar's action than was warranted.

One should never underestimate any artiste : Rahman

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Music maestro A.R. Rahman has said that India, being culturally such a rich country, presents "a great opportunity to bring everybody together through sounds, words, thoughts, and by also bringing forward those musicians who are extraordinary and who never got a chance before."

The Oscar- and Grammy-winning music director was launching the third season of Nexa Music in Mumbai when he also that the power of the human mind is more immense than we imagine it to be and that with empowerment, everything becomes achievable.

The launch was also attended by celebrated singers Raja Kumari, King, Arjun Kanungo and Mame Khan.

Discussing the catalysts for advancing regional music in our nation, he emphasized, "Human mind works with empowerment. I feel if the mind is empowered, everything can be done. One has to manifest while making any song that this is the best song that I am going to make and everyone is going to love it. Every language is important and everyone can shine anywhere. One should never underestimate any artiste."

When asked by the media about what to expect from Season 3, Rahman said: "I would like to use Michael Jackson's favourite word: Wonderment. People should expect 'wonderment' from Season 3. All the contestants will come together and shine and bring something new."



Vidya Balan describes her tryst with reels on social media

Mumbai: Acclaimed actress Vidya Balan has become a social media sensation thanks to her engaging "reels" on the platform, which she says she started making about two years ago and is having fun making them.

Talking about her tryst with making reels on social media and going viral with them, Vidya told: "It has been about two years, and I was shooting in London for 'Neeyat', and I had a lot of time, and that's why one day, I just decided that my manager had been telling me, 'Why don't we do reels?'"

After her first reel video went viral and received love from her fans, Vidya found herself hooked. An avid social media user, she consistently entertains her followers with her clips.

"I would do one reel in one or two months, and then she said we have the time to shoot a reel, and I was just having fun. After it went viral, I realised that I did what I enjoy, and people are also enjoying it. So, I started doing it regularly. I am just having fun, honestly," said the actress, who boasts a following of over 9.4 million on Instagram.

Vidya was last seen on screen in the romantic comedy 'Do Aur Do Pyaar', directed by Shirsha Guha. It also stars Pratik Gandhi, Ileana D'Cruz, and Sendhil Ramamurthy.



Patralekhaa expressed her gratitude to Hansal Mehta for identifying her talent

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As her debut film 'CityLights' marks its decade since release, actress Patralekhaa, who is married to actor Rajkumar Rao, has expressed her gratitude to filmmaker Hansal Mehta, who gave her the big break, for "identifying her talent."

Reflecting on her journey, the actress said: "It has been an incredible journey filled with learning, growth, and unforgettable moments. I owe a special thanks to my director, Hansal Mehta, for identifying my talent and giving me the opportunity to perform the beautiful and complex role of 'Rakhi Deepak Singh'."

Talking about her upcoming projects, she added: "I am thrilled to share that there is so much more to come. I've worked on projects that I am very passionate about, and I can't wait for the audience to see them."

Released in 2014, 'CityLights' is a drama film that was a remake of the BAFTA-nominated British film 'Metro Manila' (2013). It tells the story of a poor farmer from Rajasthan who comes to Mumbai in search of a livelihood. The crime drama 'Metro Manila', directed by Sean Ellis, is set in the Philippines.

Over the past ten years, Patralekhaa has showcased her acting prowess in 'Love Games', 'Nanu Ki Jaanu', 'Badnaam Galli', and 'Teerandaz'. She made her debut in the web space with 'Bose: Dead/Alive' in 2017.

Talking about her personal life, Patralekhaa has been dating her now-husband Rajkumar Rao since 2010. The two got married in 2021 in Chandigarh.



Mouni Roy