

# absolute india

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**AN X PHONE WITH SAMSUNG AS A POTENTIAL PARTNER IS NOT OUT OF QUESTION: MUSK**



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Taking on the Apple-OpenAI collaboration in a big way, tech billionaire Elon Musk said on Tuesday that his own X phone is a possibility with Samsung as a potential partner which cannot be ruled out, as he slammed the integration of ChatGPT in iPhones and other Apple devices. Reacting to an X user who claimed that "X will partner with Samsung to manufacture an X phone" which will be optimised for the X app, offer an open-source operating system (OS) and a "direct connection to Starlink", Musk said "it is not out of the question". Musk earlier said that it is "patently absurd" that Apple isn't smart enough to make its own AI, "yet is somehow capable of ensuring that OpenAI will protect your security & privacy". "Apple has no clue what's actually going on once they hand your data over to OpenAI. They're selling you down the river," the Tesla and SpaceX CEO added. Apple is yet to comment on Musk's allegations.

## INDIA FASTEST GROWING ECONOMY: WORLD BANK

- The study was conducted on 2,586 Covid-19 positive patients tested through real-time PCR who were admitted at SGRH from April 8, 2020 to October 4, 2020.
- In the 2,586 Covid-19-infected patients, the frequencies of A, B, O, and AB were 29.93 per cent, 41.80 per cent, 21.19 per cent, and 7.98 per cent, respectively.
- Of the patients, 98.07 per cent were Rh positive. Blood group A and B are observed to be significantly associated with Covid-19 susceptibility, whereas blood group O and AB have low risk of Covid-19 infection.



India will remain the fastest-growing major economy recording a steady growth of 6.7 per cent in the next three years including the current financial year, said a world bank report released on Tuesday. "The forecast implies that over the course of 2024-26 countries that collectively account for more than 80 per cent of the world's population and global GDP would still be growing more slowly than they did in the decade before COVID-19," it said. Growth in the South Asia (SAR) region is projected to slow from 6.6 per cent in 2023 to 6.2 per cent in 2024, mainly due to a moderation of growth in India from a high base in recent years. "India will remain the fastest-growing of the world's largest economies, although its pace of expansion is expected to moderate. After a high growth rate in FY2023/24, steady growth of 6.7 per cent per year, on

average, is projected for the three fiscal years beginning in FY2024/25," the report said. This moderation is mainly due to a slow-down in investment from a high base. "However, investment growth is still expected to be stronger than previously envisaged and remain robust over the forecast period, with strong public investment accompanied by private investment," it said. It further said that private consumption growth is expected to benefit from a recovery of agricultural production and declining inflation. Government consumption is projected to grow only slowly, in line with the government's aim of reducing current expenditure relative to GDP, it added. According to the report, global inflation is expected to moderate to 3.5 per cent in 2024 and 2.9 per cent in 2025, but the pace of decline is slower than was projected just six months ago. Many central banks, as a result, are expected to remain cautious in lowering policy interest rates. Global interest rates are likely to remain high by the standards of recent decades -- averaging about 4 per cent over 2025-26, roughly double the 2000-19 average, it said. In India, World Bank said inflation has remained within the Reserve Bank's target range of 2 to 6 per cent since September 2023. However, apart from India, regional inflation, though below peak levels, has remained elevated, reflecting persistently high food price inflation from local food supply disruptions, and increased energy prices.

**ABSOLUTE COMMENT**  
Nagendra Sharma

### Bhagwat advised 'RAJDHARMA' to Modi

Mohan Bhagwat, the chief of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), voiced concern on Monday about the condition of affairs in Manipur, the northeastern state riven by conflict and severely impacted by unrest since May 3 of last year. This was his first statement on the Manipur dispute, which has drawn harsh criticism for the BJP. After the results of the Lok Sabha elections were declared, Bhagwat made his opinion regarding the violence in Manipur in a mere six days. Was Modi being advised to adopt 'RAJDHARMA' in the manner of Atal Vihari Vajpayee? He described Manipur as being in pain. That abrupt emergence of disagreement is still blazing and burning in its flames. Who is going to be interested in this? It is our responsibility to give it careful thought, he said. Bhagwat also vented his anger about how contemporary technology was abused to fabricate a story for the country's most recent elections. Bhagwat made reference to the opposition's narrative about amending the Constitution and eliminating reservations for communities of backward castes, without mentioning the opposition. It's regrettable that Bhagwat also said that "decency and limitations" were absent from the campaign. He expressed his hope for goodwill within the Parliament and acknowledged that rivalry could exist, but it shouldn't escalate into violence. Additionally, the head of RSS stated that "election is a process of building consensus". RSS chief added that now that the elections are done, focus should be turned to and discussion of the issues the country is currently experiencing. He undoubtedly condemned the opposition for spreading a false narrative, in his opinion, but he also cautioned the Prime Minister and the BJP to uphold their statements and serve as an impartial head of state. "A true servant works without causing harm to others and lacks ego. A decorum-abiding person works, but doesn't get involved. I have no ego when I say that I did this. It is only appropriate to refer to such a person as a servant", he stated. Is he going to be heard?

**Was Modi being advised to adopt 'RAJDHARMA' in the manner of Atal Vihari Vajpayee? He described Manipur as being in pain. That abrupt emergence of disagreement is still blazing and burning in its flames. Who is going to be interested in this? It is our responsibility to give it careful thought, he said.**

### Uma Bharti's security officer received a call from Pakistan and Dubai, asked for location

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The security officer of former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and BJP leader Uma Bharti received calls from Pakistan and Dubai. The callers asked for information about Uma Bharti's location. A statement issued by the office of former Chief Minister Uma Bharti said, the police officer deployed for the security of Uma Bharti received calls from Pakistan and Dubai and was repeatedly asked about her location. He introduced himself as a Crime Branch officer and said that he wanted to know the location for questioning. The statement issued by Uma Bharti's office in-charge further said, when both the phone numbers were searched through Truecaller,



one number was found to be in the name of M. Hussain of Pakistan and the other number was found to be in the name of Abbas of Dubai. After confirming that both the phone numbers were external, the police inspector posted under Uma Bharti's security sent complete information to the Director General of Police and ADG Intelligence. Uma Bharti has also shared the statement issued by the

office in-charge on her social media platform. Uma Bharti has been identified as a Hindutva and aggressive leader. His name has been at the forefront of discussion in the list of those who demolished Babri structure in Ayodhya. She remains in discussions because of her statements. He did not seem very active in the recently held Lok Sabha elections. Uma Bharti had definitely come to Guna parliamentary constituency to campaign in support of BJP candidate Jyotiraditya Scindia. During that time he remembered the relationship between him and the Scindia royal family. He also assured the voters that Jyotiraditya Scindia will do whatever he says. At present his biggest emphasis is on cleaning the Ganga river.

### Mohan Charan Majhi to be BJP's first CM in Odisha

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Tribal leader and four-time MLA from Keonjhar Mohan Charan Majhi will be the new Chief Minister of Odisha, where the Bharatiya Janata Party has come to power for the first time, it was announced on Tuesday. Following a meeting of newly elected BJP MLAs at the party headquarters here, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh declared that 52-year-old Majhi had been unanimously elected as the leader of the legislature party, paving the way for him to become the Chief Minister. As Majhi's name was proposed for the Chief Minister's post, legislators Surama Padhi, Laxman Bag, Rabinarayan Nayak, and Prithiviraj Harichandan seconded the proposal while



other MLAs showed their support. Majhi was first elected to the Odisha Assembly from Keonjhar in 2000, and has represented it since then, save between 2009-14, as the Biju Janata Dal of Naveen Patnaik repeatedly swept the state. Majhi has also served as the Secretary of the BJP's State Adivasi Morcha, the Deputy Chief Whip from 2005 to 2009 during the BJD-BJP coalition government. He also served as the Chief Whip of the party in the last Assembly.

### PM Modi requests supporters to remove 'Modi Ka Parivar' from social media profiles

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Thanking millions of his supporters for lending massive support during the just-concluded Lok Sabha elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday urged them to remove 'Modi Ka Parivar' from their social media profiles, asserting that the message of "everyone being one family has been effectively conveyed". "Through the election campaign, people across India added 'Modi Ka Parivar' to their social media as a mark of affection towards me. I derived a lot of strength from it," PM Modi posted on X. The slogan had found a strong resonance on the ground and struck a right chord with lakhs of citizens over the past few months after PM Modi, while responding to RJD chief Lalu Prasad's taunting remarks on not having a family, declared that the whole country and its 140 crore citizens are his family. On Tuesday, PM Modi thanked the people of India for giving the NDA a majority for the third consecutive time, saying that it is "a record of sorts" and has given the BJP-NDA government the mandate to keep working for the betterment of the

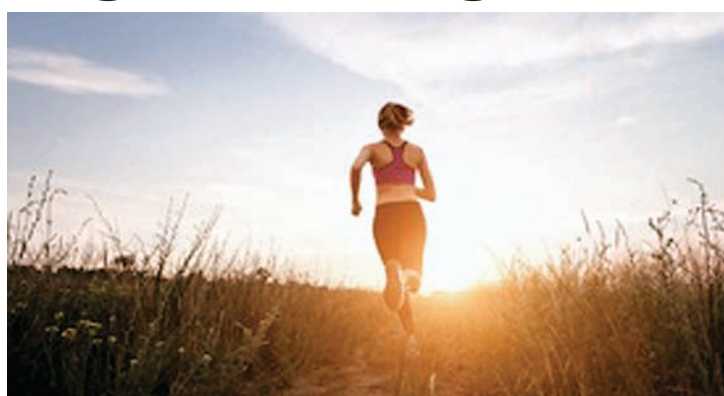


nation. "With the message of all of us being one family having been effectively conveyed, I would once again thank the people of India and request that you may now remove 'Modi Ka Parivar' from your social media properties. The display name may change, but our bond as one Parivar striving for India's progress remains strong and unbroken," he said. Several apps, merchandise, and even songs with 'Main hoon Modi Ka Parivar' theme have been launched in the past few months with all BJP leaders, ministers, and supporters updating their social media profiles by putting 'Modi Ka Parivar' next to their name.

## Exercise during evening most beneficial for lowering blood sugar levels: Study

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Finding it hard to lower your blood sugar levels? Doing exercises in the evening hours may help, according to a study on Monday. The study published in the journal Obesity showed that moderate to vigorous physical activity in the evening for sedentary adults with overweight and obesity is most beneficial in lowering daily blood sugar levels. "Our results highlight the importance of the field of precision exercise prescription," said Jonatan R. Ruiz, Professor of physical activity and health, at the Department of Physical and Sports Education, University of Granada in Spain. "In clinical practice, certified sports and medical personnel should



consider the optimal timing of the day to enhance the effectiveness of the exercise and physical activity programs they prescribe," he added. The team studied a total of 186 adults who exercised between 6 a.m. and

greater than 50 per cent of moderate to vigorous physical activity in the evening was associated with lowering day, night, and overall blood glucose levels compared with being inactive. The association was found to be stronger in participants with impaired glucose regulation and was similar in both men and women. A previous study, published in the journal Diabetes Care, and based on data from 30,000 people who were followed over almost 8 years also showed that exercise during the evening may offer more health benefits against obesity. Aerobic moderate to vigorous physical activity between 6 pm and midnight reduced the risk of premature death and death from cardiovascular disease, the study showed.

### 'UP showed the way', Rahul, Priyanka thank voters of Raebareli, Amethi

Raebareli | Agencies

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday thanked the people of Raebareli and Amethi for voting for the INDIA bloc and said that it was a vote against "violence, lies, and arrogance". While Rahul Gandhi won the Lok Sabha elections from Raebareli, in addition to retaining his seat in Kerala's Wayanad, Congress' Kishori Lal Sharma won from Amethi. Addressing an 'Aabhar Sabha' here, Rahul Gandhi said that in the recent Lok Sabha elections, people voted against those who planned to change the Constitution. "People have forced them to touch the Constitution to their foreheads now," he said. The Congress MP also said that it was for the first time that different parties across the country fought together as one army and it was Uttar Pradesh that showed them the way. "You have changed the political narrative of the country. But the work is not over yet. In fact, it has only begun. The BJP lost Ayodhya because not a single person from the poor or weaker sections was present in the consecration ceremony. Ayodhya gave a befitting reply in the elections," he said.



Rahul Gandhi also said that had Priyanka agreed to contest the Varanasi seat, the results would have been different there. He also assured the gathering that though he had been elected from Raebareli, he would make sure that Amethi gets whatever Raebareli gets for development. Speaking on the occasion, Priyanka Gandhi thanked all the leaders and workers of the Congress and Samajwadi Party and said the results have sent a message that the country wants clean politics. "You have worked hard for us and now we will work with double the strength for you," she said. Samajwadi Party leaders were also present on the Congress stage, as Priyanka Gandhi expressed her gratitude to the SP workers.





# HARYANA "DELIBERATELY", "ILLEGALLY" HALTING WATER SUPPLY TO DELHI: ATISHI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Water Minister Atishi on Tuesday slammed the Haryana government and alleged that it was "deliberately" and "illegally" halting the water supply to the capital.

In a press conference here, Atishi alleged that the Haryana government was releasing less water to the city because of which Delhi is unable to meet the daily water requirement.

Citing an affidavit submitted by the Haryana government in the Supreme Court, the minister said, "The Haryana government has been lying that they have released adequate supply water to Delhi. Their affidavit filed in the Supreme Court presents the data on actual discharge of water which has exposed their lie."

According to the affidavit, from May 23 ahead of the elections in Delhi, the water quantities released was reduced by the Haryana government, she alleged.

"The figures of the affidavit given by the Haryana government in the Supreme Court show that from May 1 to 22, Haryana is releasing 719 cusecs



of water in CLC and 330 cusecs of water in DSB through Munak canal. That means 1049 cusecs of water was released daily. But after this, it started decreasing from May 23. That means, that when there were elections in Delhi, Haryana reduced the sending of water," said Atishi.

"Compared to 719 cusecs of water in CLC and 330 cusecs in DSB, the water supply became 675 cusecs and

283 cusecs, this is Haryana's figures. The elections in Delhi were on May 25, before that, the water supply to Delhi was reduced for four days, which is clear from his Supreme Court affidavit itself," she added.

The minister stated that according to Haryana's data, on June 7, 8, 9 and 10, the state was supposed to release 719 cusecs of water in CLC, instead of which only 675 cusecs of water were

released, and in DSB, instead of 330 cusecs, 310 cusecs of water was released.

"Today the lies of the Haryana government have been exposed and it has become clear that Haryana is releasing only 985 cusecs of water instead of 1050 cusecs, which is getting even less in Delhi due to transmission loss. Due to this, water production is decreasing and the people of Delhi are troubled," she said. The minister also said that she will write a letter to Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini regarding this and also approach the Supreme Court to present before it the data in the affidavit. "We will submit all these figures to the Supreme Court and tell how the Haryana government is also disobeying the Supreme Court," she said. Atishi said that Delhi was falling short of 40-45 million gallons per day of water due to the stalled water supply from Haryana.

The Delhi government's quick response team has been tasked to inspect the water distribution plants in Delhi to check for any leakages amid the water crisis in the city, she added.

# Chandrababu Naidu set to take oath as Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister

Vijayawada | Agencies

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) President Nara Chandrababu Naidu is all set to be sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh here on Wednesday.

Jana Sena Party (JSP) President and actor Pawan Kalyan, Naidu's son and TDP General Secretary Nara Lokesh, senior leaders like Kanna Lakshminarayana, Yanamala Ramakrishnu, Butchiah Chowdary, Atchen Naidu, and Jana Sena besides a couple of MLAs from BJP are likely to take oath as ministers.

At 11.27 a.m., Governor S. Abdul Nazeer will administer the oath of office and secrecy to 74-year-old Naidu, who led the National Democratic Alliance to a landslide victory in the just-concluded elections.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, other central ministers, leaders of NDA partners and Chief Ministers of some



states will be attending the swearing-in, to be held at Kesarapalli IT Park near Gannavaram Airport.

The Prime Minister will land at Gannavaram Airport from Delhi at 10.40 a.m. He will then proceed to the venue and attend the swearing-in ceremony from 11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., and then leave for Bhubaneswar at 12.45 p.m.

There was no official information about the number of ministers to take oath along with Naidu. Naidu may initially induct a few ministers from all three NDA partners

and later go for an expansion.

Pawan Kalyan's role remained unclear. There are reports that he may be appointed Deputy Chief Minister. On Tuesday morning, Naidu was unanimously elected as the leader of NDA. Pawan Kalyan and state BJP chief D. Purandeswari attended the meeting of the newly-elected NDA MLAs. At separate meetings, newly-elected MLAs of the TDP and the Jana Sena unanimously elected Naidu and Pawan Kalyan as their leaders, respectively.

# West Bengal announces major tax rebates for commercial vehicle owners

Kolkata | Agencies

The West Bengal government on Tuesday announced major rebates ranging from 15 per cent to 40 per cent on the tax paid by commercial vehicle owners.

According to a notification issued by the state Transport Department, any commercial vehicle owner paying tax for three years in advance will get a rebate of 15 per cent on the total amount payable by him or her during that period.

The rebate rate will be extended to 30 per cent in case the advance tax is paid for five years and to 40 per cent in case of 10 years.

"The rebate offer will encourage many commercial



vehicle owners to pay the advance tax, which will add to the kitty of the state exchequer," said a senior Transport Department official.

According to him, a proposal to offer a rebate on advance payment was

passed on the floor of the state Assembly earlier this year. However, due to a model of conduct in the wake of the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections, the department was unable to issue any notification on this count.

# Mohmad Haneefa, Independent MP from Ladakh meets Rahul Gandhi in Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Mohmad Haneefa, the Independent MP from Ladakh, along with some local leaders met Congress MP Rahul Gandhi in the national Capital on Tuesday, sparking off a buzz about his likely support to the Congress-led INDIA bloc.

Any official statement to this effect is yet to come but speculations are rife over his extending support to the INDIA bloc.

Notably, just two days after the election results, an Independent MP from Maharashtra's Sangli constituency Vishal Patil pledged his support to the Congress party.

He had met party President Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi before announcing support



to the Opposition-led alliance.

Mohmad Haneefa, who fought Lok Sabha elections from Ladakh Union Territory as an Independent, dealt a blow to the BJP by snatching this seat

from its hold.

Mohmad Haneefa, a rebel National Conference (NC) leader defeated the rivals Tsering Namgyal of Congress and Tashi Gyalson of BJP with an

impressive margin. Out of Ladakh's 1.35 lakh votes, Haneefa received 65,259 while the BJP and Congress bagged 31,956 and 37,397 votes respectively.

Days ago, the Ladakh MP told a publication that he was yet to take a call on supporting any party or alliance at the Centre and would do so after consulting all the stakeholders of the Union Territory as the Sixth Schedule status and statehood were the biggest demands of the people there. After the June 4 election results, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) formed its third-constitutive government under the leadership of PM Modi while Congress-led INDIA bloc marked its best performance with 99 seats in the last three Lok Sabha elections of 2014, 2019 and 2024.

# Fan's murder: Kannada superstar Darshan named accused No. 2, wife Pavithra Gowda as prime accused

Bengaluru | Agencies

The Karnataka Police on Tuesday named Kannada superstar Darshan as the accused No. 2 and his second wife Pavithra Gowda as the prime accused in the alleged murder of a man named Renukaswamy (33) from Chitradurga, who was a big fan of the actor, sources said.

The police have arrested 13 persons in connection with the case, including Darshan and his wife Pavithra Gowda, the sources said.

The accused were taken to the Bowring Hospital for a medical check-up after which they will be produced before the court where the police are likely to seek their custody for further investigation.

The other accused persons have been identified as Pavan, M. Laxman, Nikhil Nayak, Keshava Murthy, Karthik, M. Deepak Kumar, R. Nagaraju, and Raghavendra, among others.

Darshan was arrested on Tuesday morning in connection with the alleged murder of 33-year-old Renukaswamy, whose body was found in Bengaluru on June 9.

The probe said the deceased was a die-hard fan of Darshan. While the police earlier maintained that the actor had been detained for questioning,



Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara later confirmed the arrest.

"His role came up during the investigation, based on which Darshan is being investigated by the police. Nothing more can be said about the murder now. Darshan is in police custody, and considering the seriousness of the case, he has been arrested," Parameshwara said. Meanwhile, sources said the actor allegedly tried to mislead the police by impli-

cating four of his fans after Renukaswamy's body was found in a canal. When the police questioned them, they claimed to have committed the crime over a financial dispute. However, their statements were not convincing. When their call records were checked, Darshan's role in the case became apparent, sources said.

Preliminary investigations revealed that Renukaswamy was a hardcore fan of Darshan and was reportedly disturbed by the conflict between Darshan's first and second wives.

Renukaswamy wanted Darshan to be with his first wife and son, so he targeted Pavithra Gowda whenever she posted her photos with the actor on social media. Police sources said Darshan and his associates allegedly attacked Renukaswamy brutally, hitting him on his head, face, chest, and back. The accused also slashed his nose, mouth, and jaw. Burn injuries were found on the body, hinting at the use of a hot iron rod.

Sources claimed that more than 10 people attacked Renukaswamy, including Darshan, and threw him against a wall multiple times.

The deceased's family said that Renukaswamy worked at a pharmacy and got married a year ago. His wife is three-month pregnant.

# Kshema General Insurance launches a new national marketing campaign for the Kharif

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Kshema General Insurance Limited today announced the launch of its national marketing campaign aimed at raising awareness about crop insurance to coincide with the beginning of the Kharif season. The centrepiece of the 360-degree campaign is a TVC which will reach farmers as they start sowing with the onset of the monsoons. The TV campaign will be further augmented by a concurrent campaign in print, digital, and outdoor media. The campaign highlights the importance of crop insurance in creating a financial safety net for farmers when extreme climate events are becoming more frequent and intense.



The 30-second TVC was developed in-house to forge a deeper connection with farmers, and easy accessibility of Kshema's industry-first crop insurance plan Sukriti along with Prakriti. The product is available on Kshema's proprietary platform which can be downloaded from Google Playstore. Any farmer

or family member with insurable income can buy this customisable crop insurance starting from Rs 499 per acre and protect more than 100 crops from a combination of one major and one minor peril. All they need to do is download the app, register, geo-tag their farm and pay the premium.

# SHRI VINEET ABHISHEK TAKES OVER AS CHIEF PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER OF WESTERN RAILWAY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Vineet Abhishek, an Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) Officer of 2010 Civil Services batch, has joined as the new Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) of Western Railway on 10th June, 2024. A management graduate, Vineet has more than 19 years of experience in urban planning and transportation and has straddled public, corporate and non-profit sectors. In his previous position as the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager of Mumbai Central Division, Western Railway, he led multiple initiatives in the field of ticket checking and non-fare revenue which led the Division to cross the Rs. 4000 crore revenue mark in year 2023-2024 for the first time in its history.

Vineet pursued higher studies and research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA during the year 2019-2020 and 2021-2023, where along with cross registration at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, he specialized in sustainable transportation, infrastructure planning, municipal financing, budgeting and Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). At MIT, he held various fellowships like Hubert H Humphrey Fulbright fellowship, JN Tata Fellowship and MIT's Governance Innovation Research Fellowship. During his higher studies, Vineet participated in various on-site projects - namely TOD project with Massachusetts Bay



Transportation Authority, Urban Transport Financing Project with ITDP Africa, Chennai City Partnership Project with the World Bank, Public Bus Electrification Project with Nairobi Metropolitan Area Transport Authority and Institute for Transportation & Development Policy (ITDP) + International Association of Public Transport (UITP). Between June to August, 2023, Vineet Abhishek was in Brazil as the MIT Gov/Lab fellow on a joint-collaborative project with the country's Ministry of Governance and Innovation (MGI) to research the civil services reforms in the country.

# Lord Shiva's Temple Base Discovered Underground In Maharashtra's Nanded

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar | Agencies

In a significant archaeological discovery, the base of a Lord Shiv temple has been uncovered during conservation work at Hottal village in Nanded district, an official said.

Hottal, known for its temples from the Chalukyan era, has yielded three stone inscriptions mentioning the contributions of donors who helped construct these temples around 1070 AD, the official added.

This area, once the capital of the Kalyani Chalukyas, is famous for its temple complex adorned with intricate sculptures.

As part of the ongoing conservation work on some of these historic temples, a team of archaeology department officials discovered the temple base while clearing debris near a temple under restoration.

"Four trenches were dug to ascertain the structure and uncovered the base of a Lord Shiv temple, complete with a Shivaling."

"Additionally, we found a substantial number of bricks, indicating that bricks were used in the temple construction



here," Amol Gote, the in-charge of the Nanded division of the state

Archaeology Department, told Press Trust of India.

# SECURITY FORCES SURROUND AREA IN J&K'S KATHUA AFTER REPORTS OF TERRORIST FIRING



Jammu: Security forces surrounded a village in J&K's Kathua district on Tuesday after locals reported that terrorists had opened fire there, officials said.

Official sources said that the security forces surrounded Sedaa village in the Hiranagar area of Kathua for searches.

"Locals reported that terrorists had opened fire in the area. Immediately after receiving the information, the area was surrounded for searches. There is no report of any casualty so far," a source said, adding that further details are awaited.





## MP CABINET HAILS CM MOHAN YADAV FOR BJP'S CLEAN SWEEP IN LS ELECTION

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh cabinet, which met on Tuesday here, hailed Chief Minister Mohan Yadav for the BJP's clean sweep in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections.

After the cabinet meeting, senior Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya briefed the media and said the BJP has won all 29 Lok Sabha in the state for the first time.

"BJP won all 29 Lok Sabha seats in Madhya Pradesh and CM Mohan Yadav led the BJP's campaign as state unit head. Therefore, MP's cabinet on Tuesday congratulated him for this achievement," Vijayvargiya said.

The minister further informed that in the Lok Sabha elections, the BJP has received around 61 per cent vote share in Madhya Pradesh.

"BJP not only won all 29 seats but won in 207 Assembly seats vote-wise. The average victory margin in 207 Assembly seats was around 3.5 lakh



votes in each segment," the BJP minister added.

The BJP has been in power in Madhya Pradesh since 2003 (except for 15 months). During the Assembly elections in November 2023, the BJP won 163 out of 230 Assembly seats

amid claims of anti-incumbency. CM Mohan Yadav, who replaced

four-time former CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan following BJP's resounding victory in the Assembly elections last year, addressed as many as 139 public meetings and did 49 roadshows

between March 16 and May 13 in Madhya Pradesh.

Chouhan, who won the Lok Sabha election from Vidisha, has become the Minister of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare in PM Modi's cabinet.

## Shivraj Chouhan takes charge as Union Agriculture Minister, vows to work for farmers' welfare

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan took charge as Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on Tuesday.

Union Minister Chouhan said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has resolved to double the income of farmers and the government will take every possible step for the welfare of farmers.

Chouhan pointed out that the first file signed by the Prime Minister after taking charge on Monday was to release the instalment of PM Kisan Nidhi Yojna to benefit 9.3 crore farmers.

He asserted that Prime Minister Modi is a visionary leader and called upon the officials to work on a roadmap for achieving goals set up in the manifesto. He said improving upon the lives of 'Annadatas' should be the mission of the ministry.



The Union Minister also said that the NDA government has been committed to farmers' welfare for the past 10 years and his ministry will continue to work to achieve the goals.

After taking over the charge, Union Minister Chouhan visited various offices in the ministry and interacted with staff at various levels. He exhorted them

to work as a team to achieve the government's vision for the welfare of farmers and work in cooperation with each other.

He also visited the Krishi Integrated Command and Control Centre in the ministry and saw facilities to review the agriculture scenario within the country including crop production and drought preparedness.

## FIR will be registered against electricity employees in Madhya Pradesh for indecency

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Due to interruption in electricity supply during the summer season in Madhya Pradesh, consumers at many places misbehave with employees and officials.

The Electricity Department has decided to lodge FIR in the police stations against those who misbehave or assault the employees and officers. Instructions have also been issued to officials for this.

The company has said that it is being seen that anti-social elements are beating and misbehaving with electricity workers while on duty. Such incidents lower the morale of the electricity officers and employees, therefore, all the controlling officers working in the company's area of work have been directed to take the incidents of misbehavior or assault with field officers and employees



with utmost seriousness.

Let us tell you that the demand for electricity has increased a lot during the summer season. Besides, the load on the transformer has also increased. In these situations, power failure is common in many areas. In such a situation, electricity workers become the target of consumers' anger. Central Region Electricity Distribution Company has given instructions to take immediate legal action in cases of misbehavior or assault by officers and

employees on duty.

The company has said that no one can be allowed to lower the morale of the officers and employees who are working dedicatedly in difficult circumstances for the supply of electricity. The company has asked the field officers and employees to constantly keep an eye on the power supply situation and contact the District Collector and Superintendent of Police to get necessary cooperation from them in case of any untoward situation.

## Farmers and consumers in Madhya Pradesh will get electricity subsidy of Rs 24,000 crore

APPROVAL FOR CREATION OF 46491 NEW POSTS IN HEALTH INSTITUTIONS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Many major decisions have been taken in the first cabinet meeting of Mohan Yadav government after the Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh. A subsidy of Rs 24,000 crore has been approved to be given to the farmers and general consumers of the state in electricity.

Giving information about the decisions of the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, Urban Administration Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya said that the state government has taken a big decision in the interest of farmers and common consumers. Electricity subsidy of Rs 24,420 crore was approved in the cabinet meeting. Subsidy worth Rs 6,000 crore has been given to domestic consumers. A subsidy of Rs 13,000 crore has been approved for farmers and Rs 5,000 crore for Scheduled Tribe category farmers. He



said that the government has also taken a big decision to improve the quality of health services. If qualified candidates are not available for the posts to be filled through promotion

in the Health Department, then direct recruitment will be done on those posts. There are a total of 1,214 posts, out of which 50 percent posts will be filled by direct recruitment. New posts

are being created in the health department in Madhya Pradesh. As per health standards, creation of 46,491 new posts has been approved. This includes class III, IV along with paramedical staff.

He informed that three universities, Avanti Bai University, Tatyta Bhil University and Tatyta Tope University, have been established in the state. Instructions have been given to link all three universities with the Higher Education Department and fulfill their needs. Doctors can also be sent on deputation to the hospital of Bhopal gas accident victims. Apart from this, the state government has also taken a big decision regarding cow protection. According to this, 'Cow Protection Year' will be celebrated this year. It will be celebrated starting from Gudi Padwa till next year. During this period, cow shelters will be upgraded. The cattle roaming on the road will be taken to the cow shed.

## Swarn Prashan Ceremony Conducted at AYUSH Department of AIIMS Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The AYUSH Department of AIIMS Bhopal organized a Swarn Prashan ceremony yesterday on 10.06.2024. This ceremony aimed at enhancing the overall health and well-being of children through the administration of Swarna Bhasma, a traditional Ayurvedic formulation. The event witnessed the participation of 110 children, who eagerly gathered at the AYUSH Department of AIIMS Bhopal. Swarna Prashan program in Pushya Nakshatra is organized



every month under the direction of Executive Director (Dr.) Ajai Singh at AYUSH Department of AIIMS Bhopal.

The Swarn Prashan cere-

mony, conducted by Dr. Ranjana Pandey, Medical Officer marked a significant effort to provide holistic healthcare. Swarn Prashan is an ancient Ayurvedic

practice that involves administering Swarna Bhasma to children to boost their immunity and promote overall growth and development. Swarna Bhasma, prepared from purified gold, is known for its therapeutic properties in Ayurveda. It is believed to enhance memory, cognitive abilities, and immunity, thereby contributing to the overall well-being of children. The AYUSH Department of AIIMS Bhopal continually strives to promote Ayurveda and integrate it with modern medical practices for the benefit of patients.

## BHOPAL POLICE SEIZED 33.3 TOLA GOLD FROM FRAUD ACCUSED

Bhopal: Ashoka Garden police have seized 33.3 tola gold from an accused in a fraud case. The accused is accused of cheating 51 tola gold and Rs 31 lakh by pretending to be a Tantrik that there was a threat to the life of the child. On May 30, 2024, Meera Pippal submitted an application at the Ashoka Garden police station, accusing Abdul Sohail and Faraz of defrauding her of 51 tola gold and approximately Rs 31 lakh by posing as Muslim Tantrik. During investigation, on the basis of statement of the applicant, copies of gold bills and online transactions, sections 420, 120B, 506 IPC were registered against the accused. A case was registered under. A total of 33.3 tola gold jewelry was seized from the accused, whose current value is approximately Rs 23,31,000. The accused was arrested and presented in the Court.

## Air ambulance will be helpful in saving the life of the patient: Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla has said that 'PM Shri Air Ambulance Service' is an important initiative to provide high level medical services to the citizens in emergencies. In case of emergency, timely availability of proper medical care can save many lives.

While meeting with departmental officials at Vallabh Bhawan, the Deputy Chief Minister directed to strengthen the operational system of 'PM Shri Air Ambulance Service' and to make the general public aware about the availability

of the service. It was told that 'PM Shri Air Ambulance Service' will stabilize the condition of patients and air lift them to higher medical centers if a medical emergency arises anywhere in the state or if there is a need for an identified special type of medical facility or medical experts.

It has been told that the ambulance service will provide air transport facility for quick treatment to serious victims and injured persons in accidents occurring on roads and industrial sites or in natural disasters. In case of heart-related or various other serious diseases, in which the patient or victim requires immediate treatment, air

transport facility will be available for quick treatment in good and highest medical institutions.

To operate the air ambulance service, 1 'Heli Ambulance' and 1 'Fixed Wing Converted Flying Ambulance' have been launched, which will be deployed to serve the citizens of all the districts and administrative departments of the state. A team of highly trained medical and paramedical staff will always be deployed in the air ambulance. The patients of the state will be airlifted to Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad or other higher medical institutions of the country.

## New tourism air service will be started in the state: CM will flag off

► AIR TRAVEL AT LOW COST: QUICK AND CHEAP AIR SERVICE IN THE STATE. BOOKING COUNTER READY: ROUTES AND RATES SET FOR AIR TAXI. WEBSITE LAUNCHED: BOOKING STARTED ON 'FLYOLA' (WWW.FLYOLA.IN).



through two 6-seater aircraft. The first flight will leave from Bhopal Airport on June 13 on the Bhopal-Jabalpur-Rewa-Singrauli route. On March 14, 2024, Chief Minister Dr. Yadav launched this service from the State Hangar in Bhopal.

Flyola website (www.flyola.in) has been launched to facilitate booking. Principal Secretary Tourism and Culture, Shri Shiv Shekhar Shukla said that this initiative has been taken under the guidance of Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav to improve connectivity between tourist destinations.

Booking counters have been set up at the airports of Indore, Bhopal and Jabalpur. At present, eight cities are being connected by air service, which will be further expanded in future.

Air travel will start from Gwalior on 15th June and from Ujjain on 16th June. Interested tourists can get offers, schedules and fare related information on the Flyola website.

This new service will prove to be important not only for the tourism sector but also for the promotion of industry, trade, health, education and culture.

## BJP's 'Operation Chhindwara' started after MP Assembly poll results

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

BJP's operation to wrest Chhindwara, the last stronghold of Congress in Madhya Pradesh, had begun six months ago after the grand old party suffered an embarrassing defeat under the leadership of former Chief Minister Kamal Nath.

Kamal Nath, who had brought the Congress back into power (2018) in Madhya Pradesh six months after he was sent from Delhi. He has full control over the state party unit, however, a loss in the Assembly polls weakened his position in the party.

IANS spoke to several people, including those from Chhindwara, and a few of them who worked in Kamal Nath's team during the Assembly (2018, 2023) and Lok Sabha election concluded recently, and they were of the view that after the Assembly loss, he (Kamal Nath) was left alone and helpless.

However, the post-Lok Sabha results drama from Bhopal to New Delhi -- rumours about his



possible shifting to the BJP, dented his credibility especially when the political circles were abuzz that Rahul Gandhi was upset with Kamal Nath and the latter did not have much say in the party like in the past. This particular period came as a crucial moment for the BJP to corner Kamal Nath, who till then already had been replaced with Jitu Patwari as the state unit chief. Returning to power with 163 of the 230 Assembly seats and finding Kamal Nath struggling to get a place in his party, the BJP started tightening its grip on his stronghold Chhindwara. "BJP destroyed Kamal Nath's base in Chhindwara ruthlessly. They first snatched ground-level workers and then trusted allies. In most of the Assembly constituencies, the entire team,

which was working for Kamal Nath was snatched by the BJP. We could not find a replacement for the team broken by BJP," said a person associated with Kamal Nath's team on condition of anonymity.

He also claimed that the disloyalty of top Congress leaders did not have much effect on the ground as their credibility was questioned after they joined the BJP, but the shifting of ground-level Congress workers in chunk dented a lot.

Former MLA Deepak Saxena, a loyalist of Kamal Nath, who had even resigned as MLA for Nath in 2019 from the Chhindwara Parliamentary constituency, had shifted to the BJP ahead of the recently concluded Lok Sabha election, accusing Nakul Nath of disrespecting senior allies of his father Kamal Nath.

Saxena then said that his loyalty would remain with Kamal Nath, but he would not support his son Nakul Nath, who does not know even how to behave with senior party leaders.

## RAJESH RAJOURA BECAME ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE CM, SANJAY SHUKLA PRINCIPAL SECRETARY



Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Government has handed over the responsibility of Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister to Dr. Rajesh Rajoura, Vice Chairman of Narmada Valley Development Authority and Additional Chief Secretary of Water Resources Department. They will also continue to fulfill the responsibilities given earlier.

In the order issued by the General Administration Department, Sanjay Kumar Shukla, Principal Secretary, Women and Child Development Department, has been made the Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister.

Meanwhile, Rashmi Arun Shami, Principal Secretary, School Education Department, has been given the additional charge of Special Commissioner, Coordination Madhya Pradesh Bhawan, New Delhi and Anand Department.





EDITOR'S SPECS

**Rahul Gandhi irrelevant in MP**

Madhya Pradesh is perhaps the only state where the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi-led two yatras, Bharat Jodo Yatra and Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, passed through. Bharat Jodo Yatra entered Madhya Pradesh in November 2022, just before Assembly elections. The Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra entered on March 2024 in the state. Interestingly, in the context of the Lok Sabha elections, Nyay Yatra's impact in Madhya Pradesh was even worse than Bharat Jodo Yatra, leading to Congress' humiliating defeat in the state. The Congress had high expectations that Rahul's yatra would help them to win respectable Lok Sabha seats. The party has relatively performed well in this particular region (Morena, Gwalior, Guna, Rajgarh, Dewas, Ujjain, Dhar, and Ratlam) in the state assembly elections in November last year. But, Congress lost all these seats, including Rajgarh where heavyweight leader and two-time Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh contested. The party even lost Chhindwara seat, the strongest bastion in the state. The Congress has been out of power in Madhya Pradesh since 2003 (except from December 2018 to March 2020). The party's ground in the context of the Lok Sabha elections has also continued to decrease since 2014. By 2024, it lost all 29 Lok Sabha seats, including Chhindwara, which the party retained since 1980. This humiliating defeat has once again triggered infighting in Madhya Pradesh Congress as some party leaders have raised questions on the party's current state leadership - Jitu Patwari, who has replaced former Chief Minister Kamal Nath as state unit head after the loss in the assembly election.

**The Three Big Takeaways From Modi 3.0**

Amitabh Tiwari

Prime Minister Narendra Modi took oath for a third term yesterday along with 71 ministers of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government. He is the first non-Congress Prime Minister - as also only the second Prime Minister after Jawaharlal Nehru - to be elected for a third term in a row.

The new government will include 30 Cabinet ministers, five Ministers of State with Independent Charge, and 36 Ministers of State. Ministers from 11 allies and 24 states have found a place in the Modi 3.0 Cabinet - 65% of whose members come from OBC, SC, ST and minority communities.

The NDA altogether won 293 seats in this election, of which 240 were the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP). The party fell 32 seats short of a majority. The INDIA bloc was not far behind with 232 seats. The result was quite different from what the exit polls predicted: 365 seats for the NDA (NDTV's poll of polls). Against the BJP's campaign call of 'Mission 400', the final verdict was a big setback.

On the other hand, in a revival of sorts, the Congress almost doubled its tally from 52 in 2019 to 99 in 2024. Regional parties have emerged as kingmakers for the NDA, with the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Janata Dal (United) (JD-U) winning 16 and 12 seats, respectively. The Trinamool Congress and the Samajwadi Party (SP) have also performed well, winning 29 and 37 seats, respectively.

There are three key messages embedded in the 2024 mandate: balance of power, stability and continuity.

India has returned to the coalition era of 1989-2014 after a 10-year Modi regime, in which the BJP had ruled with a simple majority of its own. Though the party didn't require allies in the last 10 years, the NDA government did make space for ministerial positions with allies. However, the control of power rested with the BJP primarily.

The voter seems to have voted for 'balance' in this election as well as against the chorus of 'Abki baar 400 paar'. Currently, 20 states have NDA governments while 10 are led by opposition parties. The verdict spotlights the strength of India's federal structure. It's a vote for regional parties and it enables them to claim their due share in the Central pie. The government requires the coming together of various institutions and actors; Modi himself had defined this early in his first term as 'cooperative federalism'.

While 60 ministers are from the BJP, 11 are from alliance partners. Almost all allies - ranging from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), the Janata Dal (United) (JD-U), the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), the Apna Dal, the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), the All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU), the Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM), the Janata Dal (Secular) (JD-S), the Republican Party of India (Athawale) (RPI-A), the Shiv Sena - have found representation.

Three factors provide stability to Modi 3.0: This is a pre-poll alliance, more stable than any post-poll



government; The BJP is the dominant partner, accounting for about 80% of the seats of the alliance; The BJP continues to be the central pole of Indian politics. Its tally is 2.4 times the Congress; it's also more than the combined tally of the INDIA bloc True, both Atal Bihari Vajpayee with 182 MPs and Manmohan Singh with 145 MPs in UPA 1 and 206 in UPA 2, did complete full terms. But those were not without hiccups. Modi 3.0 government can instead be compared to the 1991 P.V. Narasimha Rao government, when Congress had a similar number of MPs at 244. The era of economic liberalisation was ushered in during that period from 1991-96. Former chief ministers, including Shivraj Singh Chouhan, H.D. Kumaraswamy, Jitan Ram Manjhi, Manohar Lal Khattar and Sarbananda Sonowal are part of the Cabinet, and their presence lends stability to the government given the years of administrative experience under their belt. The voters have voted for continuity of the BJP-led NDA government, albeit with a reduced majority. The mandate rewards the BJP and Modi for the development carried out during the last 10 years, but also places checks and balances.

Modi at the helm signals continuity of his party's policies and programmes, in consultation with allies. His foreign policy, which has made India a vishwabandhu (universal ally) on the global stage, is likely to remain in place. The BJP's economic policy of focusing on growth with welfare receives an impetus with its two key allies, Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar, also championing these aspects.

At least 16 senior members of the previous cabinets have been sworn in, which lends another layer of continuity to the government. They include Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, S. Jaishankar, Nirmala Seetharaman, Piyush Goyal, Manuskh Mandaviya, Jyotiraditya Scindia and J.P. Nadda, to name a few. The continuity has also re-energised the market, which saw a big jump that erased the losses recorded on June 4.

PM Modi has emphasised that he would strive to ensure "sarvamat", that is, consensus, in all decisions taken by his next government. This is the key to honouring the mandate of balance, stability and continuity.

international

**US continues push for Gaza ceasefire, peace deal in Israel visit**

Tel Aviv | Agencies US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Israeli President Isaac Herzog on Tuesday as part of ongoing efforts by the US, Qatar and Egypt to negotiate a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

The talks have stalled for months. Blinken's trip in the Middle East aims to garner support for the latest proposal for a ceasefire in three phases.

On Monday in New York, the UN Security Council gave its backing to the multi-stage plan presented by US President Joe Biden.

According to the US, only the Palestinian Islamist Hamas movement has not yet agreed to the plan. However, the government of Israeli Prime Minister



Benjamin Netanyahu has not given clear and public approval to the plan either. Blinken arrived in Egypt on Monday for the first leg of the tour and later held talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem.

He told Netanyahu that "the United States and other world leaders will stand behind the comprehensive proposal outlined by President Biden," according to a statement issued by the US State Department.

Blinken "updated the prime minister on ongoing diplomatic efforts to plan for the post-conflict period," the statement said.

On Tuesday, Blinken also met opposition leader Yair Lapid and is due to hold talks with Israeli lawmaker Benny Gantz, who just quit the Israeli emergency government formed following the October 7 attacks.

Blinken's Middle East tour is expected to last until Wednesday and also includes a stop in Qatar.

**Malawi's Vice President confirmed dead in plane crash**

Lilongwe | Agencies Malawi's Vice President Saulos Chilima, along with nine other individuals who were on board a military aircraft, have been confirmed dead after the plane went missing on Monday morning, President Lazarus Chakwera announced on Tuesday.

The wreck of a plane carrying the Vice President has been found with no survivors, President Chakwera said.

Chilima, 51, was travelling to a funeral of the country's former Attorney General and Minister of Justice Ralph Kasambara, who was found dead in a room at a lodge in Lilongwe on Friday.

The plane failed to land at its intended destination at Mzuzu Airport in northern Malawi due to adverse weather conditions, and the pilot was advised to return to Kamuzu International Airport in Lilongwe before the aircraft went off the radar around 10 a.m. local time (0800 GMT) on Monday. Soldiers had been searching Chikangawa Forest overnight and into the morn-



ing in an effort to find the plane.

In a news briefing on Tuesday, President Chakwera said the Malawi Defence Force commander informed him that the search and rescue operation has been completed and the plane was found. Chakwera said he was "deeply saddened and sorry" to inform Malawians of the terrible tragedy, the BBC reported.

He said the rescue team found the aircraft completely destroyed.

Chakwera paid tribute to Chilima, describing him as "a good man", "devoted father" and "formidable VP".

"I consider it one of the great honours of my life to have had him as a deputy and as a counsellor," he was quoted as saying by the BBC.

**Nepalese Army retrieves four bodies, tonnes of rubbish from Mount Everest**



Kathmandu | Agencies Nepalese soldiers have retrieved four bodies and a skeleton from Mount Everest and the neighbouring peaks of Lhotse and Nuptse during a cleaning operation.

According to the army, the recruiter also collected 11 tonnes of rubbish since April. At 8,849 metres, Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world and has also gained the sad notoriety of being the world's highest rubbish dump.

Tonnes of broken tents and clothing, food packaging, cookers, empty water bottles, beer cans and oxygen bottles lie there, left behind by thousands of adventurers.

There is also a lot of human waste - and dozens of corpses, some of which mountaineers even use as trail markers.

When people die on the mountain, they are often left behind. This is because recovering a frozen corpse is difficult and expensive - it costs between \$32,000-64,500, according to US mountaineer and blogger Alan Arnette.

In most cases, a team of six to 10 experienced Sherpas with oxygen cylinders is deployed, and a helicopter flies the body off the mountain.

**German Chancellor urges more air defence for Ukraine at Berlin conference**

Berlin | Agencies At an international reconstruction conference for Ukraine, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has called for a further strengthening of the country's air defence against Russian attacks.

He called on allies to support a German initiative to bolster Ukraine's air defence "with everything possible."

"Because the best reconstruction is the one that doesn't have to happen in the first place," Scholz said at the start of the conference, which is being held in the German capital of Berlin. Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky is also attending the conference. Scholz held out the prospect of far-reaching and long-term commitments for reconstruction in the country, which has been severely scarred by more than two years of costly all-out war and years of simmering conflict before that.

Scholz said he will push for those kinds of commitments at an upcoming summit of the G7 group of wealthy democratic countries, which



begins in Italy on Thursday. The chancellor pointed out that the World Bank estimates that \$500 billion in reconstruction aid will be needed over the next decade.

He also called on private companies to participate in investments: "In view of the scale we are talking about

here, private capital must be added." Hundreds of German companies continue to do active business in Ukraine, with automotive firms alone employing about 35,000 people in Ukraine, Scholz emphasised.

Despite the war, there was no reduction in German

investment in Ukraine, Scholz said, and the volume of trade had significantly increased since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

"All of this shows that the business sector understands Ukraine's potential," Scholz said.

**Four Israeli soldiers killed in Rafah building explosion**

Tel Aviv | Agencies Four Israeli soldiers have been killed in an explosion at a building in Rafah in the south of the Gaza Strip, according to the Israeli military.

The army announced the deaths of the four men, aged between 19 and 24, on Tuesday.

According to Israeli media reports, the soldiers had thrown an explosive device into a suspicious three-storey building in Rafah to detonate possible booby traps. However, an explosion only occurred when the troops



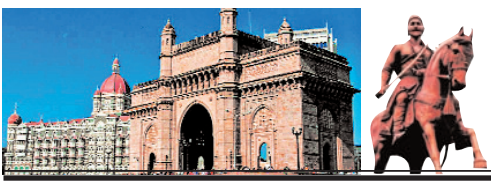
had already entered the building. The building collapsed and buried several soldiers underneath it. Seven soldiers were also injured, some of them seriously.

The army later found a tunnel entrance in the building and said they believed that a high-ranking member of the Islamist Palestinian organisation Hamas had been living there.

During the operation in the coastal strip, Israeli soldiers went from house to house looking for weapons, among other things. According to the military, many buildings have been rigged with explosives. According to the army, the incident on Tuesday means that 650 soldiers have been killed and more than 3,700 others injured on the Israeli side since October 7.

According to the Palestinian health authority, more than 37,100 Palestinians have been killed in the ensuing war.





# Mumbaikars give 'thumbs up' to city Coastal Road Phase II on first day

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Excited Mumbaikars gave a broad smile and a big 'thumbs up' as the second phase of the Mumbai Coastal Road (MCR) was thrown open for motorists - a day after Chief Minister Eknath Shinde inaugurated it with a drive in a 94-year-old vintage Rolls Royce beauty.

Scores of vehicles were seen entering the south-north arm of the MCR at Marine Lines and the motorists were pleasantly surprised to complete the commute till Haji Ali junction in barely 8 minutes flat - a far cry from the agonising nearly one hour it took till yesterday.

Many motorists raved about the MCR - officially a mouthful, as 'Dharmveer Swarajrakshak Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj Mumbai Coastal Road' - as their vehicles sped through the new thoroughfare including a tunnel running under the Malabar Hill and emerging at the new interchange at Haji Ali junction, along the Arabian Sea shore.



The remaining part of the project running up to Bandra Worli Sea Link is expected to be completed in a month or so and the entire phase will be fully ready by October affording Mumbaikars huge relief by saving time, fuel, pollution and other benefits. A global marketing consultant Pradeep Menon decided to go on a 'joy-ride' from his Powai home, driving first to Marine Lines (north-south), reversing at Churchgate to enter the newly-inaugurated (south-north) stretch and coming out at Haji Ali. "This was unbelievable... I could complete the stretch in barely 20 minutes both ways, plus it is toll-free and on par with similar projects the world over," gushed an awed Menon to reporter. Several other thrilled

motorists spoke to the media lavishing praises on the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and state government for giving a long overdue and huge infrastructure project to the country's commercial capital, and how it would even benefit future generations.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde inaugurated the first phase, roughly 10.5 km long, the north-south arm from Worli to Marine Lines, along with the twin tunnels, which proved to be immensely popular with motorists.

The Chief Minister said that the new stretch has been equipped with all the modern amenities and will be a boon as it shall decongest traffic to and from south Mumbai to the northern parts of the city. The work to link MCR with the BWSL bridge at Worli is also nearing completion and over the next few years, the coastal road will be constructed up to Borivali in northwest Mumbai, with multiple interchanges, big and small bridges, tunnels, etc.

# On 4th day of hunger strike, Jarange-Patil's condition worsens, declines treatment

Team Absolute | Jalna (Maharashtra)

On the fourth day of his fifth indefinite hunger strike agitation for Maratha quotas, the health of Shivba Sanghatana chief Manoj Jarange-Patil has worsened but he refused to take medical treatment, here on Tuesday.

An aide said that a medical team checked Jarange-Patil and found that he is suffering from weakness, low blood pressure, reduced weight and related ailments, besides certain existing medical issues.

However, he has steadfastly declined to take any medication or treatment and vowed to continue his hunger strike till the government concedes to his demands on Maratha reservation, said the aide.

A medico from a government hospital team, which examined him on Tuesday, said that the Maratha leader needed treatment immediately owing to his health condition but he was not willing to get it.

"My fast will go on... Some people are sweet-talking the Marathas to weaken the agitation, but it will not work. The government must find a solution to the pending demands immediately," said a fatigued Jarange-Patil in a brief interaction with the media.

Responding to a query on state Minister Chhagan Bhujbal's statement on Monday



that the Mahayuti allies' Lok Sabha elections performance was not impacted due to the series of agitations in 2023-2024, Jarange-Patil said, "Wait a little more and you will know."

Earlier, the Shivba Sanghatana leader had warned that he would put up candidates on all the 288 Maharashtra Assembly seats for the October elections if the government failed to fulfil its promises.

Four days after the Lok Sabha election results were announced, Jarange-Patil launched his fresh agitation on June 8, with the hunger strike in his native village Antaravali-Sarati.

# Mumbai Airport increases eGates from 24 to 68, highest in India



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) has increased the terminal entry points (eGates) from 24 to 68, the highest number of such eGates at kerbside/landside in the country, an official said here on Tuesday.

This will enhance the CSMIA's processing capacity to 7,440 passengers per hour at Terminal 2 and 2,160 at Terminal 1, which is triple its current capacity, drastically reducing the waiting time to less than one minute at the kerbside.

The new initiative expanding its cutting-edge digital gateway program will improve the travel experience for both DigiYatra and non-DigiYatra passengers at CSMIA. "By increasing the number of eGates and integrating advanced biometric systems, we are committed to ensuring swift, secure and seamless travel for all our passengers," said the spokesperson, on the expansion of its DigiYatra facility.

The CSMIA's Digital Gateway combines the benefits of technology, process excellence, big data analytics and design thinking to deliver an exemplary passenger experience.

Here, the number of terminal entry points has surged from 24 to 68, achieved solely through advanced technology without any need for any major civil works.

The Digital Gateway at T2 now provides for 28 dedicated DigiYatra e-gates alongside 28 dedicated non-DigiYatra e-gates.

Additionally, Terminal 1 (T1) features 6 dedicated DigiYatra e-gates and 6 non-DigiYatra e-gates, further enhancing the airport's overall capacity and passenger experience. Besides, an additional 118 e-gates are being deployed at the pre-embarkation security check area at T2 to further simplify passenger movements, said the spokesperson.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said on Tuesday that BJP allies Nitish Kumar and N Chandrababu Naidu are dissatisfied with their cabinet portfolios. Speaking to reporters, he invoked the term "bhakti aatma" (wandering restless spirit), which Prime Minister Modi had used for NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar, claiming that this restless soul would not stop till the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in Maharashtra were deposed.

Raut said that if RSS president Mohan Bhagwat considered the NDA administration at the Centre was not advantageous to the country, he should take steps to remove it. He alluded to Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu as "dissatisfied souls" and accused the BJP of failing



to please its partners with portfolio allocations.

"There are two 'trupta aatmas' (dissatisfied souls) in the Centre -- (Bihar Chief Minister) Nitish Kumar and (TDP chief) Chandrababu Naidu. You (BJP) should satisfy these two trupta aatma. The way portfolios have been allocated, it seems all souls are dissatisfied, especially the NDA allies," Raut said.

According to the report, in the most current cabinet allocation, Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal-United's Lalan Singh

earned the Panchayati Raj, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairy Ministries. K Rammoan Naidu of the TDP has been appointed minister of civil aviation. Raut stated that JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy was given the "most rejected" portfolio, which included Heavy Industries and Steel.

Raut criticised the BJP of hoarding critical portfolios for themselves and pointed out the absence of a Muslim minister in Modi's cabinet,

arguing it violated the Constitution. He claimed that Modi's actions during the elections were intended to create differences between Hindus and Muslims because he believed Muslims did not vote for the BJP, the report added.

"Modi had made it clear during the polls. They want to place a wedge between Hindus and Muslims in the country.

He thinks Muslims have not voted for the BJP, which is why they are not in the cabinet," Raut alleged.

Raut also criticised the lack of "life" in groups such as the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, the Ajit Pawar-led NCP, and Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, claiming that these parties were founded out of fear and to weaken the Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (Sharad Pawar), it further stated.

# In attack on Congress, Sharad Pawar camp, BJP's praise for Uddhav Thackeray

Team Absolute | Mumbai

BJP leader Chandrakant Patil on Tuesday said though Uddhav Thackeray took a great deal of efforts during the Lok Sabha elections campaign, the allies Congress and NCP (SP) seem to have benefited more than his own party.

Thackeray was not keeping well but he still campaigned hard, said Patil, a senior Maharashtra minister, at an event here. "Uddhav Thackeray's health was not in good condition, still he took a lot of efforts. I was worried about his health. However, the outcome indicates that NCP (SP) and Congress benefitted more from his efforts than his own party.



"When Thackeray was with BJP, his party had won 18 Lok Sabha seats.

With Congress and NCP (SP), he ended up winning nine seats. He

needs to introspect," Patil further said.

Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) contested 21 out of 48 Lok Sabha seats in the state but won only nine.

Congress, on the other hand, contested 17 and won 13. Congress leader and rebel candidate in Sangli Lok Sabha constituency also won and later extended support to the party. The NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) contested 10 seats and won eight.

Patil further taunted Thackeray saying, "Thackeray also earned a tag of winning due to the votes of minorities. An MNS leader has also put it succinctly, saying the colour of Uddhav's victory is not saffron but green."

# 33 Kg gold found hidden in undergarments, luggage at Mumbai Airport

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Customs has seized 32.79 kg of gold valued at Rs 19.15 crore concealed in undergarments and luggage of two women foreign nationals at

the Mumbai international airport in separate cases, an official said today. The two passengers from African countries were subjected to search on suspicion after landing at the Chhatrapati Shivaji

Maharaj International Airport on Monday, he said.

In both cases, gold was found concealed in undergarments and baggage. The women were arrested and further probe was on.

# Lightning strike destroys home, kills cattle in Shahpur

Team Absolute | Thane

Lightning-caused fire burned a house in Khaire village, Shahapur, and killed four buffaloes, according to a civic official on Tuesday. According to disaster control official Vasant Chowdhari, lightning struck the house overnight between Sunday and Monday. The fire swiftly engulfed the entire edifice, turning

everything to ashes. The report added that in addition to the four buffaloes that died, five more livestock were hurt. The revenue department assessed a total loss of Rs 6.68 lakh. The Thane Municipal Corporation's Regional Disaster Management Cell said that in the last 24 hours, Thane received 11.94 mm of rainfall. Between June 1 and June 11, it received 105.07 mm of rainfall.

# Supriya Sule takes dig at Pune MP after he gets cabinet berth, he hits back

Team Absolute | Pune

Pune MP and Union Minister Murlidhar Mohol on Tuesday hit back at NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule for her remarks that his position in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet should benefit Puneckars rather than contractors.

Former corporator and Pune mayor Mohol has been appointed as minister of state for civil aviation and cooperation in the Modi government.

Speaking to reporters on Monday, Baramati MP Sule congratulated Mohol for getting the cabinet berth.

"We are happy that Pune got a ministerial berth, but its use should benefit Puneckars rather than contractors," she said.

In a post on the micro-blogging site, 'X', Mohol said, "Tai (Sule), I can understand your displeasure. For a party worker from an ordinary household like me to get a chance to become a minister is not easy to digest for someone like you who was born with a gold-



en spoon." The minister further said as far as contractors are concerned, the entire Maharashtra knows who nurtured them, who made them big and who are partners of big contractors from Pune and Maharashtra.

# Don't get depressed due to LS drubbing, strive for Assembly polls success, Ajit Pawar tells NCP workers

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In wake of the dismal performance in the Lok Sabha elections, Nationalist Congress Party President Ajit Pawar on Monday asked his party workers not to get depressed but to strive with full strength for success in the Maharashtra Assembly elections slated for September-October this year.

In his address at the function organised on the occasion of the party's 25th anniversary, he declared that even though the NCP is a key member of the NDA, it will not compromise or leave its "Shiv Phule Shahu and Ambedkar ideology" and has told this to the leaders of MahaYuti and NDA.

Pawar also scoffed at the rumours that some party legislators would switch sides to NCP-SP led by his uncle Sharad Pawar.

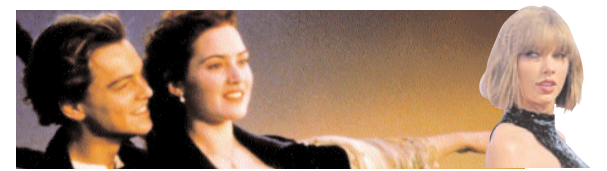
He also targeted the opposition for setting the narrative that the Constitution will be changed if the BJP returns to power. "Even though it was repeatedly clarified by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other NDA leaders, including us, that no one can change the constitution of Babasaheb Ambedkar, the opponents struck to its narrative which impacted poll prospects of MahaYuti in the state," he maintained. The NCP chief, however, added that this narrative won't work in the Assembly elections as his party would increase the outreach with the Dalits, Muslims, tribals and OBCs in the run-up to the polls by taking up a slew of initiatives - some implemented and others lined up during upcoming budget.



On the party's drubbing where NCP won only one of the four seats it fought, Pawar said the entire responsi-

bility was his. He hailed the work done by the party leaders and workers for the party candidates, and also the MahaYuti nominees. "One need not get depressed due to defeat while becoming arrogant after the victory," he told the gathering. On the party refusing to accept the post of a Minister of State (Independent Charge) in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third government, Pawar said that it was a conscious decision taken unanimously as the party had recommended the name of its Working President Praful Patel, who had been a Cabinet Minister earlier. "Despite this, some people spread misinformation about interrelated differences. The situation was totally different. We have decided to remain with the NDA and wait for expansion as the party will soon get two Rajya Sabha seats," he said. In his speech, Pawar, who broke ranks with his uncle and NCP founder Sharad Pawar in July last year, became emotional and recalled the latter's contribution to the party's formation in June 1999. "I express my gratitude, even if I am now a part of MahaYuti," he said. "Everyone worked shoulder to shoulder and brought this party forward. Some leaders are not among us. Sharad Pawar has also done a great job in establishing the party. I express my gratitude to him," he added. Meanwhile, senior leader Chhagan Bhujbal reiterated that the MahaYuti partners should quickly settle the seat-sharing arrangement for the Assembly elections. "The BJP is a big brother, it is accepted. But the NCP should get as many seats as the Shiv Sena gets," he noted, adding that in the recent party meeting, he had said that the NCP should get 80 to 90 seats.





# Meghan McCain Claims Jennifer Lopez Was 'Unpleasant' person

Los Angeles | Agencies

**M**eghan McCain isn't a fan of Jennifer Lopez, she revealed during a recent episode of her "Citizen McCain" podcast. While recalling a past appearance on *The View*, Meghan, 39, claimed that Jennifer, 54, was "a deeply unpleasant person."

"I was a host at *The View*, she was not nice," Meghan said about Jennifer. "You don't always have to be so nice, but it was surprising that people like Kim Kardashian couldn't be more delightful. When you're coming on a show for a 10-minute segment ... just fake it 'til you make it for 10 f\*\*king 10 minutes."

While describing Jennifer's apparent team surrounding her at the time, Meghan added, "She had the biggest entourage I've ever seen. More than Kim Kardashian and the president. I just don't really understand why it was needed."

However, Meghan's podcast guest, Carlos King, came to



Jennifer's defense by recalling how "nice" she was to him in the past and added that she "didn't have a big entourage" around him.

"I went to see J. Lo in Vegas and — top 5 shows I've ever been to in my life ... She performed and danced for 90 minutes straight — no

break," he recalled, before adding, "She's a hard worker, and I was shocked that people weren't buying the tickets."

Billie Eilish Reveals She 'Lost All of Her Friends'



Los Angeles | Agencies

**B**illie Eilish might have millions of fans, but her inner circle tightened once she became famous. While appearing on the BBC's "Miss Me?" podcast on Monday, June 10, the 22-year-old singer-songwriter revealed that she lost all of her friendships after her music career skyrocketed her to stardom.

"Well, I lost all of my friends when I got famous," the "What Was I Made For?" vocalist said. "I suddenly was famous and I couldn't relate to anybody. It was tough. It was really hard." While pointing out that she is "very freaked out by loss, and I have a lot of abandonment problems,"

Billie recalled a former employee of hers quitting and not speaking to her afterward. "And then it was my 20th birthday, and I

remember looking around the room and it was only people that I employ. And all 15 years or more older than me," she explained. "It was the worst thing that happened to me. And that made me realize like, 'Oh wait, this is a job.' If they left me, they would never see me again."

Despite the rough patch she went through, the Oscar winner revealed that she caught up with "a bunch of old friends" last year. Now, she has a larger friend group, Billie added.

"Exactly a year ago, I reconnected with a bunch of old friends and now, I have so many friends," the "Bad Guy" hitmaker noted. "I have a crew now. I could literally cry about it. It's been the greatest thing that's happened to me. ... I was like, 'Guys, I have friends and I just love you guys so much, and it's been so long since I've had friends.' I cried, and it's literally because I actually have friendship now again."



# NAOMI WATTS & BILLY CRUDUP GET MARRIED IN BEAUTIFUL MEXICO CITY

Los Angeles | Agencies

**N**aomi Watts and Billy Crudup reclaimed their vows in a wedding ceremony in Mexico City. "I'm making a video .....but tomorrow I'm taking pictures. Family x friends and lotsa fun @naomiwatts x Billy in Mexico City #wedding @benwatts #scrapbooking #familyandfriends," captioned the 55-year-old actress' brother, Ben Watts, in an Instagram post where his sister was heard saying, "This is a reminder of what life's about...The affirmation of love..one of the simplest things but most importance."

The King Kong star first tied the knot with

the 55-year-old actor in June 2023 at a courthouse ceremony in New York City. During an interview on *Live with Kelly and Mark*, Naomi gave insight into her intimate wedding by saying, "Nothing was planned because we wanted to keep it lowkey. I even got my flowers from the bodega at the corner. I wrapped them in old ribbon. I keep my ribbons for a good reason. Pulled them out of the drawer, made it myself. And then yeah, we ended up finishing the whole ceremony — It's very quick — and we just called a few friends, randomly, or just spontaneously, and whoever was in town just came and joined us. It was really celebratory and lovely."



# Rick Ross to auction rare sneakers, piano with Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' art

Los Angeles | Agencies

**A**merican rapper Rick Ross is auctioning his exclusive collection of street and contemporary art, rare sneakers, designer wear, music memorabilia, and other prized possessions.

The rapper has partnered with Julien's Auctions to sell these items for a good cause, reports 'People' magazine.

Proceeds from the auction will benefit the Boss Up Grant, a programme that helps underserved entrepreneurs who lack access to affordable credit and capital. Among the auction items are 300 rare sneakers, including more than 150 pairs of Air Jordans, and Michael Jackson memorabilia.

According to 'People', the two-day auction will begin on June 25. Bidding is available online or over the phone. The Michael Jackson memorabilia includes a sealed One by Cirque du Soleil light-up glove, a sealed 'Bad' 25th anniversary vinyl, and a 'Thriller' album-themed 1866 William Knabe & Co. grand piano.

Fashion items and menswear offerings are from designers such as Gucci, Stefano Ricci, Dolce & Gabbana, and Versace -- some of which Ross wore in television appearances and music videos. The sneakers include Virgil Abloh collaborations, Nike Air Max 90s, and Air Jordans (Retro University of Michigan PE and 5 Retro Fab Five models).

The art collection features work by street and contemporary artists such as Mr. Brainwash, Franky Cardona, Picasso Blac, Bankrupt, Jon Moody, Waldemar Swierzy, and Christian Weber. Other eye-popping possessions up for grabs include lion sculptures, drinking goblets, handwritten lyrics, and a 24-carat gold-plated Bengal tiger skull.

# Matthew McConaughey & Camila Alves Celebrates 12th Anniversary

Los Angeles | Agencies

**M**atthew McConaughey shared a snap to honor his 12th wedding anniversary with wife Camila Alves via an Instagram post on Sunday, June 9. "Thank you #happyanniversary," captioned the 54-year-old actor.

In the picture, the Academy Award-winning actor gave the 41-year-old model a kiss on the forehead while he dressed in a white button-up, jean jacket, and a cowboy hat.

The *Interstellar* star and Camila first tied the knot in 2012 with many Hollywood stars in attendance, such as Reese Witherspoon, Kenny Chesney, Woody Harrelson, and more. Since that special day, the two have welcomed three kids — Levi, Vida, and Livingston. "Our real merit comes from how we're trying to be as people, how we are as parents, how we love you, how we love each other...but we try to do our best," Matthew told *People* in 2020.



# EMINEM DOES HIS OWN STUNTS WEARING A CAPE IN 'HOUDINI' BLOOPER REEL

Los Angeles | Agencies

**R**apper Eminem seems to have enjoyed being his own stuntman on the set of the music video of his song 'Houdini'.

Following the release of the song, the 51-year-old "Lose Yourself" rapper shared a bloopers reel on Instagram, reports 'People' magazine. The reel features him dressed in the same superhero suit from an earlier video, with the caption, "I do my own stunts."

"Don't try this at home," a straight-faced Eminem jokingly warns viewers at the beginning of the clip before performing tiny jumps off a bed and repeatedly face-planting on the floor.

"Oh, you want me to smack my p\*\*\*\*\* face? I can't control my cape, bro," he sarcastically says to someone off-camera. "I cannot be responsible for my cape."

According to 'People', the footage then cuts to the rap star attempting -- and failing -- to scale a wall with a rope, flailing around and flipping over.

"Holy s\*\*t, it's actually not easy," he notes, pretending to be shocked. In another scene, the rapper tries a few unserious superhero tuck-and-roll moves, saying, "You like the roll? I thought I killed it." The behind-the-scenes clip concludes with the Grammy-winning rapper filming a slow-motion punching scene as his blond Slim Shady persona, before the camera cuts to him noting that his shoe came off between takes.



Katie Maloney





## T20 WORLD CUP: CLINICAL PAKISTAN KEEP ALIVE THEIR HOPES WITH A SEVEN-WICKET WIN OVER CANADA

New York | Agencies

Clinical bowling performance led by Mohammad Amir (2-13) and Haris Rauf (2-26) and an unbeaten half-century by Mohammad Rizwan (53 not out) helped Pakistan beat Canada by seven wickets to register their first win in preliminary round Group A in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup here on Tuesday.

Two defeats in successive matches against the USA and India had left Pakistan teetering on the brink in Group A with three teams above them in the race for Super 8 qualification. By beating Canada, they have now raised some hopes of qualifying if other results go in their favour. The former champions made slow progress towards their target, eventually reaching 107/3 to win by seven wickets after 17 and a half overs.

A strong showing in the field meant they were able to secure the victory they knew they needed if they were to progress - but they may yet regret not winning more resoundingly if they fail to grab their place in the next stage of the tournament.

Canada made 106/7 from 20 overs, thanks primarily to a brilliant half-century by Aaron Johnson, who



has now scored eight fifty-plus scores in T20s, the most for Canada, breaking Navneet Dhaliwal's record. Johnson scored 52 off 44 balls, studded with four boundaries and as many sixes.

Pakistan went into the match knowing that they needed a win at the Nassau County International

Stadium, and quite possibly by a significant margin, to get their campaign back on track with one more group fixture (against Ireland) to follow. Mohammad Amir made an early breakthrough with a terrific ball demolishing the stumps of Navneet Dhaliwal, leaving Canada 20/1 after three overs.

### Brief scores

Canada 106/7 in 20 overs (Aaron Johnson 52, Mohammad Amir 2-13, Haris Rauf 2-26) lost to Pakistan 107/3 in 17.3 overs (Mohd Rizwan 53 not out, Babar Azam 33; Dilon Heyliger 2-18) by seven wickets.

## Osaka wins first grass court match since 2009

's-Hertogenbosch (Netherlands) | Agencies

Former World No.1 Naomi Osaka kicked off her grass-court season with a win at the Libema Open, defeating No.32 Elise Mertens in straight sets in the first round on Tuesday. Osaka defeated Mertens 6-2, 6-4 to register her first win on grass since the 2019 Wimbledon.

Making her tournament debut in Rosmalen, Osaka made good of the wild card into the main draw of the event. Following up on her outstanding performance in the second round of the French Open, where she held match point on eventual champion Iga Swiatek, Osaka's sublime serving and crisp baseline hitting was once again on full display in the 70-minute victory.

Osaka improved her head-to-head over Mertens to 4-2 with an unbreakable serving performance. After saving break point in her second service game, Osaka did not face a break point for the remainder of the match, winning 90 percent of her first-serve points. She was also perfect on her own break-



point chances, breaking Mertens three times. Pegula is the top seed in both doubles and singles this week in 's-Hertogenbosch. Facing No.70 Sasnovich, Pegula showed no signs of rust from her competitive break.

She played a clean and disciplined match off the ground, hitting nine winners to just six unforced errors to seal victory in 58 minutes. She broke Sasnovich five times from seven break points and was broken just once herself.

Charleston Open in April. Pegula is the top seed in both doubles and singles this week in 's-Hertogenbosch. Facing No.70 Sasnovich, Pegula showed no signs of rust from her competitive break. She played a clean and disciplined match off the ground, hitting nine winners to just six unforced errors to seal victory in 58 minutes. She broke Sasnovich five times from seven break points and was broken just once herself.

## Gayle to lead West Indies Champions in World Championship of Legends

New Delhi | Agencies

Celebrated Jamaican cricketer Chris Gayle will lead the West Indies Champions at the upcoming edition of World Championship of Legends, starting from July 3 in Birmingham UK.

The team led by the Gayle includes well-known players like Dwayne Smith, Samuel Badree and Daren Sammy and the complete squad will be announced soon.

"I look forward to rejoining my family in our quest to win the cup. We are also delighted to keep having the opportunity to play more matches such as the prestigious World Championship of Legends to return to our fans in a whole new participation, said Gayle.

The England and Wales cricket board has approved the World Championship of Legends, which features six franchises: India Champions, Australia Champions,



England Champions, Pakistan Champions, South Africa Champions and West Indies Champions.

Ajay Sethi, the Chairman of Channel 2 Group Corporation has officially assumed ownership of the West Indies Champions franchise in the World Championship of Legends

cricket league. "This league represents an exciting opportunity to bring together some of the greatest cricketing talents and offer fans a nostalgic yet exhilarating experience. I am confident that our team will perform exceptionally and uphold the legacy of West Indies cricket," said Sethi.

## T20 World Cup: 'Not a good call...', Hridoy criticises umpiring in Bangladesh's loss to SA

New York | Agencies

Bangladesh's batter Towhid Hridoy criticised the umpiring standards during their 4-run loss to South Africa, citing a controversial call in the 17th over of their run chase at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium on Monday.

In the 17th over of Bangladesh's run chase, a ball from Otneil Baartman hit Mahmudullah's pad and went for four. South Africa appealed for LBW which was initially upheld but overturned on review.

Since the on-field umpire declared it out, the ball was deemed dead. The call denied Bangladesh the four runs and ultimately they lost the game by the same margin.

"To be honest that was not a good call for us in such a tight match. In my point of view, the umpire gave that out but it was pretty hard on us. Those four runs could have changed the match scenario," Hridoy told reporters following the game.

"The laws are not in my hands. In that time those four runs were really



important. Umpires can make a call and they are human too and can makemistakes. They also didn't give

wides which were wides on a few occasions. Five balls after the controversial

call, Hridoy who scored 37 off 34, was given out LBW on a delivery from Kagiso Rabada, despite replays showing the ball was only clipping the leg stump.

The 23-year-old batter admitted that the umpiring standards could have been better in such a close game, especially when they were chasing a small target.

"In this kind of a venue where low-scoring matches are taking place, one or two runs are a big thing. I think those four runs or two wides are close calls and I was given out on umpire's call and there are room for improvements,"

"Actually we were very much confident with that score and from that position I should have finished the match. It is difficult for new batter to go and adjust to the conditions. In that position I should have finished the match," he added.

South Africa successfully defended the lowest total of 113/6 in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup history to all but seal their qualification for the Super 8 stage with a nail-biting win over Bangladesh.

## PARIS 2024 ROHAN BOPANNA, SUMIT NAGAL SECURE QUOTAS FOR INDIA IN TENNIS



New Delhi | Agencies

Indian tennis stars Rohan Bopanna and Sumit Nagal secured Paris 2024 Olympics quotas in tennis through their ATP Rankings in doubles and singles, respectively.

World No. 4 Bopanna, who had represented India at the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Olympics, comfortably secured a quota for India, maintaining a spot in the top 10 of the doubles rankings since November last year.

Meanwhile, Nagal made the cut-off after climbing 18 places in the singles rankings last week, occupying the last spot among the eligible players who secured quotas via world rankings, as per Olympics.com

Nagal, who was ranked 95th last week, achieved a career-high ranking of 77th following his ATP Challenger title win at the Heilbronn Neckarcup in Germany on Sunday.

The men's and women's singles events at Paris 2024 will each feature 64 players. The top 56 eligible men's singles players, as per the ATP rankings released on June 10, have secured quotas for their respective countries. However, each nation can obtain a maximum of four quotas.

The men's and women's doubles draws at Paris 2024 will feature 32 teams, a team being a pair of athletes from the same nation, a maximum of two teams per nation.

The tennis qualification window for Paris 2024 concluded on Monday. National Olympic Committees have until June 19 to confirm the utilisation of their allocated quotas.

## India to host 2025 FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup

Lausanne (Switzerland) | Agencies

The Executive Board of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) have awarded the hosting rights of 2025 FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup to India.

The tournament will be played in December 2025. It will be the first time ever that a Junior World Cup will include as many as 24 teams.

"Giving more opportunities to play to a larger and more diverse number of National Associations is one of the key pillars of our Empowerment and Engagement strategy. We saw at the FIH Hockey5s World Cup in Oman this year how more diversity brings a huge added value to our events," FIH president Tayyab Ikram said.

"I'm very happy that we've increased the number of participating teams for the FIH Hockey Junior World Cups and I look forward to seeing these 24 young teams, representing the future of our sport, next year! At this stage, I would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to Hockey India for their commitment to organise yet another fantastic event!" he added.

Dilip Tirkey, president of Hockey India said, "We're delighted that the International Hockey Federation (FIH) chose India to host the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup 2025. We would like to express our sincere thanks to the FIH and FIH President Dato Tayyab Ikram for entrusting us with this tournament.

"This prestigious tournament highlights India's growing importance in international hockey and

shows our dedication to developing the sport for future generations. We're excited to share India's rich hockey history and provide a stage for young talent to showcase their skills."

Bhola Nath Singh, secretary general of Hockey India added, "Hosting the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup 2025 is a significant step for us, and we appreciate the FIH's trust in us. This event offers a fantastic chance to bring hockey to even greater heights, inspiring a whole new generation of players and fans in India and globally. We're committed to making this tournament a memorable experience that celebrates everything hockey is about."

The last edition of the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup took place in 2023 in Malaysia and was won by Germany.



## 'Not many players in world as lethal as Ronaldo', opines Sunil Chhetri

New Delhi | Agencies

The 2024 Euros are just around the corner and just like it has been for the past two decades, the spotlight will fall on Cristiano Ronaldo who has often been hailed as Portugal's greatest player ever.

The 39-year-old has not scored an international goal since November, 2023 and has also been benched a few times for young striker Goncalo Ramos.

Ahead of the tournament, India's all-time top scorer Sunil Chhetri talked about Ronaldo's role and importance in the team in an exclusive conversation with IANS.

"I hope Ronaldo starts as many games as possible. I would love to see him. I think if there's one team that can keep him as a number nine and not expect too much defensive work, I don't mean that he should not or that he does not but I'm saying can expect less is Portugal," Chhetri told IANS.

"It is a star-studded team they're very good at keeping the ball, more than often they're dominating. They are dominant when it comes to keeping the ball more than often. They have some top players so they can afford to have Ronaldo on the box," he added.

Ronaldo is only one of three players in the world to have scored more international goals than Chhetri. He has been the Portugal team's pillar and led them to the 2016 Euro title.

"He might not be doing as many quick turnarounds and quick defensive work, but when you get half a chance, there probably aren't many players in the world as lethal as him. So I think as a fan, somebody who has learned so much from him the last 20 years, I hope we get to see more of him on the pitch as far as playing 11 is concerned.

"I'm pretty sure the coach is going to pick the best one, but having Ronaldo always gives you an edge because half a chance is a goal when it comes to him," the former Indian skipper said.

Chhetri is the expert panellist on Sony Sports Network's studio show Football Extra for UEFA Euro 2024. Watch UEFA Euro 2024 from June 15, 12:30 AM IST onwards, live on Sony Sports Ten 2 SD & HD, Sony Sports Ten 3 SD & HD (Hindi), Sony Sports Ten 4 SD & HD (Tamil / Telugu), Sony Sports Ten 5 SD & HD (Malayalam / Bengali).







## COUNTDOWN STARTS FOR SONAKSHI-ZAHEER MARRIAGE: SANGEET ON JUNE 19

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sonakshi Sinha and her beau Zaheer Iqbal are the latest couple in B-town to tie the knot. Ahead of their wedding on June 23, the couple will have a Sangeet ceremony on June 19 in Mumbai.

According to unconfirmed reports, their Sangeet ceremony will be a close-knit affair and will be held on June 19 in Mumbai.

Sonakshi and Zaheer reportedly met at a

party hosted by Salman Khan.

The two even worked together in the film 'Double XL', which was released in 2022 and also starred Huma Qureshi.

Rumours of their relationship began circulating in 2022 when Zaheer wrote "I love you" on social media, to which Sonakshi replied, "Love you."

The couple has reportedly been living together for a year and is set to make it official at their wedding venue, Bastian - At The Top, in the Dadar area of Mumbai.

## Anupam Kher calls Rajinikanth 'God's gift to mankind'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Veteran actor Anupam Kher shared a video of himself meeting Tamil megastar Rajinikanth at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's swearing-in ceremony in New Delhi.

Anupam took to his Instagram on Tuesday and shared the video in which he can be seen in the company of the Tamil megastar.

Anupam also expressed his admiration for "Thalaivar".

The video shows Anupam walking beside Rajinikanth as they are surrounded by security guards and many other people who were present at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's swearing-in ceremony. He then heaped praise on Rajinikanth, saying, "The one and only, Mr. Rajini-the-kanth! The one and only! The God's gift to mankind! Waah (wow)."

A shy Rajinikanth looked into the camera and smiled without saying anything.

Anupam wrote in the caption, "God's gift to mankind! The one and only - #Rajinikanth! Jai Ho! (sic)".

The oath-taking ceremony of Prime Minister Modi and his cabinet was held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in the national capital. The event was attended by the who's who of the country from different walks of life.

Bollywood icon Shah Rukh Khan, Akshay Kumar, Bhojpuri star Ravi Kishan, Telugu superstar Pawan Kalyan, Bhojpuri actor and politician Nirahuaa, actor Manoj Tiwari, actress Raveena Tandon, and others attended the event.



## Rihanna flaunts neck-pieces by Sabyasachi, Manish Malhotra

Team Absolute | Mumbai

It was a moment to highlight for Indian designers Sabyasachi Mukherjee and Manish Malhotra as singer-songwriter Rihanna wore neck-pieces designed by both of them at a fashion event for her brand Fenty Hair in Los Angeles.

However, a whiff of controversy filled the air as Manish concealed Sabyasachi's design by cropping out his long necklace from the picture as he used only his choker necklace in the image, giving the impression that Rihanna exclusively wore his design.

However, Sabyasachi's brand used the entire picture of Rihanna showing both his and Manish's designs. Many Netizens slammed Manish for unfairly hogging the entire credit.

The 'Love The Way You Lie' hitmaker donned an oversized zipper jacket, skirt, and camisole in the shade of ruby. She accessorised her look with a three-drop rubellite necklace from Sabyasachi and a choker necklace by Manish Malhotra.

While Sabyasachi's necklace was made with tourmaline crystals with brilliant cut diamonds, Manish's design was crafted in 18K gold and custom-cut rubies encrusted in diamonds.



## 'My happy place': Kangana Ranaut at Isha Foundation in Coimbatore



Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut, the newly-elected BJP Lok Sabha MP from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh, paid a visit to the head of the Isha Foundation, Sadhguru, in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

The National Award-winning actress, who was last seen in 'Tejas', took to the Stories section of her Instagram and shared pictures from her visit on Tuesday. While one picture shows her seeking the blessings of Sadhguru, the others show her praying before the statue of Lord Shiva at the Isha Foundation.

"My happy place", the actress-politician wrote as caption.

In the Lok Sabha polls, Kangana defeated Vikramaditya Singh of the Congress by 74,755 votes from Mandi.

## DILJIT DOSANJH ON PLAYING A PUNJAB COP

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Punjabi singer and actor Diljit Dosanjh, who was present at the trailer launch of his upcoming film 'Jatt & Juliet 3', opened up about playing a cop in the movie and shared how the attitude and style of Punjab Police is very different, saying he has tried to copy as much as he can.

At the trailer launch, Diljit wore a brown coat, matching trousers, and a white shirt. He was accompanied by his co-star Neeru Bajwa and other team members.

Talking about his role as a police officer, Diljit said: "The attitude of the Punjab Police is very different from others. Just as the Maharashtra police have their own attitude and style. Similarly, the Punjab Police has an altogether different style. So, we have seen that a lot in our childhood, like you are going on a scooter, you see Punjab Police every day."

"They have a very sweet, witty humour, and style. We cannot copy each and everything, but we tried to copy as much as we can," said Diljit, who is known for his work in movies like 'Honsla Rakh', and 'Mukhtiar Chadha' among others.

Recalling an incident from the shoot, the 'Arjun Patiala' actor added, "I remember we were in costume and shooting in Canada. I went into a mall to use the washroom, and I met an Indian man who said to me, 'Tussi ethe bhi aa gaye' (You have come here too)."



## Vikrant Massey talks about challenges of driving for one whole night

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Vikrant Massey, who is receiving a lot of praise for his work in the streaming film 'Blackout', has shared that he drove through all night for the sequences in the film. The actor also shared that the challenges compounded because of the rains as it became quite tough to shoot and drive with all the rigs attached to the car amidst the rain. 'Blackout' features many adrenaline-boosting car chase sequences and all of them are set during the nighttime. Sharing insights on the challenges faced during the shoot, Vikrant said: "We had a lot of fun while shooting, but it was also a daunting task as we had to shoot all through the night. It was challenging as there was heavy rainfall and your entire car was rigged. It is difficult to shoot in heavy rain and during the night." 'Blackout' is a comedy-thriller that delves deep into human nature and explores the consequences of one's actions amidst adversity. Vikrant also shared that sometimes the car wiper wouldn't work. Every time before entering the car, he had to make a 360-degree check to ensure each camera was properly mounted and every piece of equipment was in place. "The main stress was to protect the equipment. It wasn't challenging just for the actors but also for the crew because the whole night you're shooting which is both mentally and physically exhausting and changes your body cycle. Road blocking, shooting action sequences, and crashing the cars was difficult," the actor said.



Disha Patni