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PM MODI'S OATH CEREMONY ON SUNDAY EVENING

Several South Asian leaders have been invited to the oath-taking ceremony and Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina and Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe have already confirmed their presence. Invitations have also been sent to Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', his Bhutan counterpart Tshering Tobgay and Mauritius PM Pravind Jugnauth.



Modi and the BJP are relying on their allies to be able to form the government - a situation neither has faced since 2014. The two biggest partners are Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party, which has got 16 seats, and Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal United, which has garnered 12. Both Mr Naidu and Mr Kumar, who have also aligned with the Congress in the past, are learnt to have made certain demands in exchange for their support. Apart from representation in the Cabinet and certain ministries, both parties have put forth other conditions as well.

The TDP has asked for the Lok Sabha Speaker's post, which, sources said, the BJP is unlikely to concede. It may offer the Deputy Speaker position instead.

JDU sources said the party may demand a Common Minimum Programme for the NDA and for Mr Kumar to lead a committee to implement it, if and when the panel is formed. The big four ministries - Home, Defence, Finance and External Affairs - are also expected to be retained by the BJP.

RAHUL GANDHI ALLEGES 'BIGGEST STOCK MARKET SCAM', DEMANDS JPC PROBE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday demanded a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) investigation into what he calls the 'biggest stock market scam'.

"Why did the PM and Union Home Minister give specific investment advice to the five crore families investing in the stock market? Is it their job to give investment advice? Why were both interviews given to the same media owned by the same business group which is also under SEBI investigation for manipulating stock?" Gandhi said at a press briefing. "What is the connection between the BJP, the fake exit pollsters and the dubious foreign investors who invested one day before the exit polls were announced and made a huge profit at the cost of five crore salaries?" he added.

"We are convinced that this is a scam. Somebody has made thousands of crores of rupees at the cost of Indian retail investors and the Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister have given an indication to buy. So we demand today a joint parliamentary committee to investigate this," Rahul Gandhi said. On May 23, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that the stock market will hit new highs after the Lok Sabha election results. "I can say with confidence that on June 4, as BJP hits record numbers, the stock market will also hit new record highs," he had said. On May 13, Union home minister Amit Shah had "The market has



nosedived in the past as well. So one should not link it directly to elections. Anyway, some rumours may have fuelled it (the fall). In my opinion, buy before June 4. The market is going to shoot-up," the minister had told in a news channel.

Rahul Gandhi alleged that PM Modi and Union home minister who had data on actual election results, advised retail investors to buy stock.

"This is a broader issue than just the Adani issue. It is connected to the Adani issue, but this is a much broader issue. This is directly the Prime Minister, the Union Home Minister, who is privy to data on actual election results, who has IB reports, who have their own data, who are advising retail investors to buy stock," he said.

Shivraj also in the race for BJP national president

Shivraj Singh Chauhan has won the Lok Sabha elections from Vidisha for the sixth time. He has been MLA seven times and Chief Minister of the state four times. In Madhya Pradesh, BJP has won all 29. One of the reasons for this is being said to be the Laadli Brahmin which started when Shivraj Singh Chauhan was the Chief Minister.

Team Absolute | Bhopal/ New Delhi

Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chauhan can be made the minister of an important department at the Centre. Meanwhile, speculations about making him the president in place of JP Nadda have also increased.

After the results of the Lok Sabha elections, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has got a clear majority. Because of this, the way has been cleared for the formation of NDA government for the third time under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Amidst preparations to form the government, BJP has summoned all its newly elected MPs to Delhi. Shivraj Singh Chauhan has played an important role at the Centre before also. He was elected to Lok Sabha for the first time in 1991. After that, he was elected MP from Vidisha in 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2004 also.



the president is high.

Even though the BJP may not have got a majority on its own, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has got a clear majority.

'Pehle NDA, then INDIA', says Shiv Sena's Sanjay Raut on government formation bid

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Thursday said that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) should initiate the government formation at Centre owing to its 'superiority' in terms of numbers.

His remarks give a clear indication that Congress-led INDIA bloc is not in race to stake claim and the alliance has accepted the people's mandate.

"Pehle aap, unke baad hum," Sena leader told newsmen when questioned about whether INDIA bloc was trying to woo allies of NDA, including TDP and JD-U.

He also refuted speculations that the INDIA bloc was ready to 'give away' the PM post if TDP and JD-U, the two pre-poll allies of BJP decided to switch sides.

"There has been no discussion regarding any such proposal," he said. Previous



reports said that the INDIA bloc partners were inclined to send feelers to TDP Chief Chandrababu Naidu and Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, the kingmakers post the 2024 election results and seek their support in its favour. Sanjay Raut further said that the INDIA bloc was ready to wait and watch while NDA stakes claim for government formation, the third consecutive term under PM Modi. Taking a satirical jibe at Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, Raut said that the 'elderly leader and Gangaputra' has earned a big mandate for his party by winning 240 seats and hence we are giving them 'due respect' by proposing 'pehle aap, unke baad hum'.

Taking a dig further, he said that Prime Minister was eager to take 'teesri kasam' in third term and they don't have any qualms with this. "If he fails in teesri kasam, then we would look at chauthi kasam," he added.

35 KILLED IN ISRAELI BOMBING ON GAZA SCHOOL

Gaza: Thirty five Palestinians were killed, most of them children and women, and dozens injured in an Israeli airstrike targeting a school housing displaced people in the Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip, medical sources told the media on Thursday morning. According to the sources, an Israeli fighter jet bombed at least three classrooms with several missiles, Xinhua news agency reported. In a statement, Hamas-run Gaza government media office condemned Israel's attack on the school as a "terrible massacre," saying that the continued implementation of these attacks by the Israeli army "is clear evidence of the crime of genocide committed against civilians". The office said that Israel and the US "should bear full responsibility for these crimes that endanger humanity and violate international law".

CISF constable slapped Kangana at Chandigarh airport, suspended

Chandigarh | Agencies

The CISF constable who "slapped and abused" actress-turned-newly-elected MP from Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, Kangana Ranaut, at the Chandigarh airport on Thursday has taken to the CISF Commandant Office for questioning after being placed under suspension.

The constable, Kulvinder Kaur, who has been on duty at the airport for the past two-and-a-half years, in fact, was seen on television channels after the incident, stating that she was upset because of the kind of statements made by Kangana during the farmers' agitation.

"My mother was also among the protesters when she (Kangana) made these remarks," Kaur could be heard saying. "She gave a statement that



the farmers are sitting there for Rs 100. Will she go and sit there? My mother was sitting there and protesting when she gave this statement," Kaur added.

It is learnt the constable was also unhappy because Kangana referred to the protesting farmers as

been "slapped and abused" by Kaur when she was on her way to board a flight from Chandigarh to New Delhi.

Kaur, Kangana confirmed, slapped her at the security checkpoint because she was upset with her earlier remarks on the protests by farmers in Punjab.

Kangana said she was safe and unharmed, but expressed her concern over the "rise of militancy and terrorism in Punjab".

An independent video shared on X immediately after the incident had shown the commotion that followed. There was reportedly a minor scuffle before the incident. It followed Kangana's refusal to hand over her mobile phone for the mandatory security check.

The actress-turned-MP is then said to have pushed aside the security personnel on duty.

INDIA'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DECREASED TO 3.1 PER CENT IN 2023: REPORT



New Delhi: India's unemployment rate decreased to 3.1 per cent in 2023, down from 7 per cent in 2022 amid robust government policies, a report showed on Thursday.

The country's national savings as a percentage of GDP increased to 33.4 per cent in 2023 compared to 29.9 per cent in 2022.

Meanwhile, the number of high net-worth individuals (HNWI) in the country increased by 12.2 per cent in 2023 as compared to the previous year, bringing the figure at 3.589 million, according to The Capgemini Research Institute's 'World Wealth Report 2024'.

The wealth of HNWI in the country increased by 12.4 per cent to \$1,445.7 billion in 2023, from \$1,286.7 billion in 2022.

In the APAC region, India and Australia were the best performers, which recorded HNWI wealth growth of 12.4 per cent and 7.9 per cent, and HNWI population growth of 12.2 per cent and 7.8 per cent, respectively.

Wealth growth in both of these countries was driven by a resilient economy and robust performance of the equity markets, the findings showed.

"India's economy expanded at its swiftest rate in the last six quarters, propelled by robust private consumption as well as positive trends in manufacturing and construction activities," the report mentioned.

The country's market capitalisation increased by 29 per cent last year, after an increase of 6 per cent in 2022.

Sindh gov't proposes Kartarpur-like religious corridor for Hindu, Jain pilgrims



Islamabad | Agencies

Sindh Tourism Minister Zulfiqar Ali Shah on Thursday proposed the development of a Kartarpur-like religious corridor from contiguous areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan to Umarmot and Nagarparkar in his province to enable Hindu and Jain devotees to worship at ancient temples there, reports said.

He made this proposal at a tourism promotion event in Dubai, Geo News reported.

Shah contended that there were legions of Hindus and Jains willing to visit the areas in Sindh where there are scores of temples.

The Shri Shiv Mandir, considered one of the oldest Hindu temples in Sindh, is in Umarmot -- the only Hindu-majority district in Pakistan, While the temple is

believed to be constructed more than 2,000 years ago, a local Hindu community leader claimed that it was 5,000 years old.

It is managed by the All Hindu Panchayat, which apart from regular repairs and upkeep, has built a guest-house, community hall, and various other amenities to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims every year. Umarmot also has the Kali

Mata Temple, the Krishna Mandir, and the Manhar Mandir Kathwari Mandir.

In Nagarparkar, there are 14 Jain temples, mostly abandoned. They include the Gori Temple, noted for having some of the oldest existing Jain frescoes in the world and also venerated by local Hindus for its image of Parasnath, the Nagarparkar Bazaar Temple, the Bhodesar Temples at the base of the Karoonjhar Mountains, and an abandoned but well-preserved temple near Viravah town, and the ruins of the ancient Parinagar seaport on the edge of the Rann of Kutch. Shah also suggested that the Sindh government could commence a weekly flight from India to Sukkur or Larkana as well for religious tourists.

The Kartarpur Corridor, inaugurated on November 9, 2019, stretches over 4 km from the Pakistan-India border and facilitates the visa-less visit of Indian pilgrims to the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, where Sikhism founder Guru Nanak lived his final years.

Health Ministry reviews States/UTs preparedness to tackle heatwave, hospital fire



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Union Health Ministry on Thursday conducted a virtual meeting with States/UTs to assess the preparedness for the ongoing heatwave conditions in the country.

The meeting led by Atul Goel, Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), also assessed fire and electrical safety measures adopted by various healthcare facilities across the states and UTs.

The India Meteorological Department's (IMD) long-range outlook for June reveals above-normal monthly maximum temperatures over most parts of the country, except in southern peninsular India, where normal to below-normal temperatures are most

likely. During June, above-normal heatwave days are likely over most areas of Northwest India and adjoining parts of Central India. In the meeting, states were urged to implement a heat health action plan; disseminate early warnings of heat waves issued by IMD; assess the preparedness of all healthcare facilities and ambulance preparedness for prevention and management of heat-related illnesses (HRI); dedicate heat stroke room at all healthcare facilities; issue health advisories. The states have also been asked to sensitise and do capacity building of medical officers and health care staff of health facilities on HRI symptoms, case identification, clinical management, emergency cooling, and surveillance reporting.



AFTER TWO DECADES, CHANDRABABU NAIDU BACK TO PLAYING KINGMAKER AT THE CENTRE

Amaravati | Agencies

Nara Chandrababu Naidu is back to playing the role he always relished - the kingmaker in national politics. After a gap of two decades, the seasoned politician is basking in the glory of media arc lights as support of his Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has become crucial for a third term in power for the BJP.

Five years after losing power to YSR Congress Party with a crushing defeat and facing the biggest crisis of his political career, Naidu rose like a phoenix.

The 74-year-old is now gearing up to play the kingmaker, a role which he missed in 2014 as the BJP had secured a comfortable majority on its own.

Set to become the chief minister for a fourth time following the landslide victory in Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections, the shrewd politician is also looking forward to playing a crucial role in the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre.



With 16 MPs, the TDP along with Janata Dal (United) are propping up the coalition government.

Known for his hard bargaining skills, the TDP chief is likely to push for some key ministerial berths and also Special Category Status (SCS) for his state as committed in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.

Political analysts say this role for Naidu may not have come at a better time as the cash-strapped state desperately needs the handholding by the Centre to put its finances back on rails; implement a plethora of poll promises made by the TDP; realise the unfinished goal of building Amaravati as the state capital and to

complete the Polavaram project, considered the lifeline of the state.

It's also crucial that with 135 seats in the 175-member state Assembly, Naidu is not dependent on his allies Jana Sena and BJP for the survival of his government in the state.

This will give him ample room to put pressure on the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government on state-specific issues. After the worst-ever electoral defeat in 2019, Naidu had lost relevance in national politics. Though he was subsequently eager to mend fences with the BJP, the latter was reluctant to trust him and re-open the doors which it had 'permanently' closed.

However, Jana Sena leader and actor Pawan Kalyan's alliance with the TDP and the changing political dynamics in Andhra Pradesh forced the BJP to join them at the last minute. Riding the anti-incumbency wave the alliance virtually decimated YSRCP, whose tally in the Assembly plummeted to 11 from a whopping 151.

Ajit Pawar camp scoffs at rumours of few party MLAs joining Sharad Pawar faction

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra NCP chief and newly-elected MP from Raigad, Sunil Tatkare, on Thursday scoffed at rumours that the few party legislators are in the middle of switching sides to the NCP (SP) led by Sharad Pawar.

"None of our legislators are planning to shift to the NCP (SP). On the other hand, some MLAs from the Sharad Pawar camp are in touch with the Congress," Tatkare claimed.

The clarification came after NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar claimed that about 12-13 NCP MLAs are in touch with the Sharad Pawar camp and might switch sides soon.

Sources in the NCP (SP) claimed that about 18-19 MLAs from the NCP have established communication with the Pawar faction, and are seriously considering



switching sides. This came in the wake of the Ajit Pawar-led NCP's debacle in the Lok Sabha polls after it won just one of the four seats it contested, against the eight seats bagged by the NCP (SP), which fielded candidates in 10 seats.

Earlier on Thursday, Ajit Pawar chaired a meeting of the party ministers to review NCP's performance in the general elections.

A senior NCP minister said, "It was a stock-taking meeting in which the shortcomings in carrying out poll management were discussed. It was decided that all the ministers will submit a report from their respective districts detailing what corrective measures should be taken to further strengthen the party network ahead of the Assembly elections scheduled later this year."

MP-elect Engineer Rashid moves court for interim bail

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Srinagar

Following his victory in Lok Sabha elections from J&K's Baramulla, former MLA Engineer Rashid on Thursday approached Delhi's Patiala House Courts for interim bail to take oath as a Member of Parliament.

After hearing the bail application, Additional Sessions Judge, Patiala House Courts, Chander Jeet Singh sought a response from the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on his interim bail application and fixed the next hearing for Friday.

Engineer Rashid, presently lodged in Delhi's Tihar Jail after he was detained in a terror funding case by the NIA



in 2019, defeated National Conference Vice President and J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah from

Baramulla by a margin of over 2 lakh votes. Sajad Gani Lone of the People's Conference finished third.

AIADMK blames TN BJP chief Annamalai for NDA's split, drubbing in Lok Sabha polls

Chennai | Agencies

AIADMK leader and former minister, SP Velumani has accused Tamil Nadu BJP President, K Annamalai of being the reason behind the split in the NDA in the state.

It may be recalled that AIADMK had broken its ties with the BJP in September 2023 following differences of opinion with K Annamalai.

In a statement on Thursday, the AIADMK leader, who is considered the right hand man of party General Secretary and former Chief Minister, Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS) said that if both the AIADMK and BJP had contested the Lok Sabha polls together, they would have won a minimum of 35 seats in Tamil Nadu.

The senior leader said that when Tamilisai Soundararajan and L



Murugan were state presidents of the BJP, there were no issues with the party. He added that it was Annamalai who spoiled the relationship between

the BJP and AIADMK.

It may be recalled that in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, both the AIADMK and the BJP drew a blank in

the state. In the past, the AIADMK won back Assembly elections in 2011 and 2016. In the 2021 Assembly elections, AIADMK received 33.29 per cent vote share and the present vote share of the party is around 23 per cent.

The party leader also said that in the 2021 Assembly elections, the BJP could win four Assembly seats as it was in an alliance with the AIADMK.

KR Krishnamoorthy, a Salem-based political analyst told reporter, "AIADMK leader SP Velumani's statement is correct. If the BJP and AIADMK had contested the polls together, then they could have won a large number of seats. It was immature of K Annamalai to snap ties with the AIADMK which is the second-largest Dravidian party in Tamil Nadu."

IIT Bombay ranks 118th, IIT Delhi at 150 in QS World University Rankings 2025

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) Bombay (118) -- and Delhi (150) have been ranked among the top 150 universities in the world, revealed the QS World University Rankings 2025.

Bombay has been ranked 118th globally, rising 31 places from 149th last year. The varsity got an overall score of 56.3 out of 100.

Out of a maximum of 100 points, the Institute scored the most in employer reputation (86.0), citation per faculty (79.1), academic reputation (58.5), employment outcome (64.5), and sustainability (52.5).

It also scored in faculty-student ratio (14.4), international faculty (4.3), international research network (52.3) and international students (1.3).

"It is for the first time ever since its participation that IIT Bombay has been ranked within the top 150 in QS rankings," said the institute.

Meanwhile, IIT Delhi ranked 150 by improving its position by 47



places from 197th rank last year.

"This is IIT Delhi's highest-ever QS World University Rank," the institute said.

The Institute ranked among the top 100 world universities in terms of employer reputation and featured among the top 150 universities in parameters like Citations per Faculty and academic reputation.

It also featured in the top 5 Indian institutions under parameters such as academic reputation, employer reputation, employment outcomes, and international research network.

IIT Delhi has surpassed 90 per cent of institutions in terms of rankings this year from a list of over 5,000 institutes evaluated by the QS.

The premier research institute also scored among the top 50 institutions in the world in the broader subject area of engineering and technology with a rank of 45, as per the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2024.

It was also ranked among the top 100 world institutions in eight specific subject areas.

"Special Category Status Demand For Bihar Fully Justified": Nitish Kumar Party MLA

Patna | Agencies

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U), which the BJP relies on heavily since losing majority in the Lok Sabha, has reiterated its demand for special category status (SCS) for the state.

Granting SCS to Bihar has been a long-pending demand of the JD(U) supremo. The Bihar cabinet, headed by Mr Kumar, had even passed a resolution last year requesting the Centre to grant SCS to the state.

The Centre had previously said it would not entertain demands for "special category status" from any state, in view of the 14th Finance Commission's recommendation. The SCS was introduced in 1969 to benefit certain backward states with hilly terrains, strategic international borders, and economic and infrastructural backwardness.

With 12 MPs, the JD(U) is the second biggest BJP ally after the Telugu Desam Party's 16 in the NDA. The backing of allies like the JD(U) and TDP is crucial for the BJP to form the government at the Centre, as the saffron party could not reach the majority mark on its own in the Lok Sabha elections.

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, senior JD(U) leader and Bihar minister Vijay Kumar Choudhary said, "The JD(U) is part of the NDA and will remain with it. But there are certain demands of the JD(U) related to



the financial condition and economy of Bihar that must be fulfilled by the Centre. Our demand for special category status for Bihar is fully justified and needs to be fulfilled. We stick to our demand for SCS for Bihar."

Justifying the Bihar government's demand for SCS, state parliamentary affairs minister Choudhary (who previously held the finance portfolio) told PTI on Thursday, "Bihar government has been demanding SCS for the state since 2011-12. Before that, a resolution in this regard was passed by both Houses of the Bihar legislature. Bihar is the most deserving state that needs special financial assistance from the Centre."

Delhi water crisis: SC directs Himachal Pradesh govt to release surplus water

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court has directed the Himachal Pradesh government to release surplus water on Friday so that it reaches the national capital "uninterruptedly" and is made available to the Delhiites for drinking purposes.

A bench headed by Justice P.K. Mishra said, "We direct that Himachal Pradesh shall release 137 cusecs of surplus water available with it on Friday so that the water reaches Hathni Kund barrage and reaches Delhi through Wazirabad. As and when surplus water is released with prior information by the state of Himachal Pradesh, the state of Haryana shall facilitate the flow of surplus water so released."

The bench, also comprising Justice K. V. Viswanathan, noted that Himachal Pradesh has no objection to releasing the surplus water available



with it. The apex court said that the Delhi government should adhere to the measures suggested by the Upper Yamuna River Board to prevent wastage of water since there is an acute shortage of drinking water in the national capital. Posting the matter for further hearing on June 10, it

ordered for filing of a status report and compliance affidavits in the meantime.

In an earlier hearing, the top court ordered the river board to convene an urgent meeting on June 5 to address the water crisis in the city, stressing that the problems of scarcity of water for the citizens of Delhi should be properly addressed.

In its petition filed before the apex court, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Delhi government demanded that neighbouring states be directed to release extra water for a month to address the extraordinary and excessive water demand of the city triggered by a surge in summer temperatures.

The Upper Yamuna River Board regulates the allocation of surface flow of the Yamuna amongst the states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi.

If Assembly polls are held today Akhilesh-led SP will form govt in UP: Shivpal Yadav

Lucknow | Agencies

Buoyed by the recent Lok Sabha election results that saw a resurgence of the Samajwadi Party (SP) in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and its emergence as the third-largest party in India, a senior SP leader said on Thursday that if the Assembly elections were held in the state now, the Akhilesh Yadav-led party would form the government.

Veteran SP leader Shivpal Yadav, while speaking to media persons asserted that the people of UP had given the SP a huge mandate.

Asked about his views on the SP's performance in the General Elections, Shivpal Yadav said, "The BJP government in Uttar Pradesh should resign on moral grounds as the Akhilesh Yadav-led INDIA bloc has done very well. If the Assembly elections are held today, INDIA bloc will form the government in UP."

On the INDIA bloc registering a win in Ayodhya, Shivpal Yadav said that those who have won from there are secular. "Maryada Purushottam Ram was always there in Ayodhya and he will remain there forever. The people of Ayodhya have chosen the real secular people. Lord Ram's sevak has won the poll in Ayodhya," he said.



"The INDIA bloc has wiped out the BJP in the Faizabad Mandal," Shivpal Yadav asserted.

On BSP supremo Mayawati's statement that she would think twice before giving tickets to people of the minority community, he said, "The way she kept on changing tickets, people sensed that she was hand in glove with the BJP. Moreover, she did not give the tickets for free."

On the question of the post of Leader of Opposition in the state lying vacant and who from the family would be named for the job as Akhilesh

Yadav and four other members of his family won from their respective seats, Shivpal Yadav said this would be decided by the party's leadership.

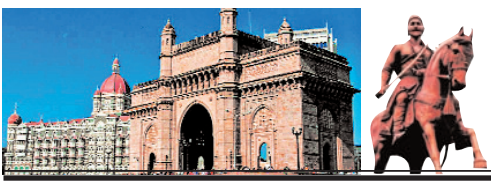
Asked how former UP Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav would focus on state and central politics, Shivpal Yadav said this was something that would again be decided by the SP leadership.

Shivpal Yadav, who is Mulayam Singh Yadav's brother said that the people of UP had opened up their hearts and given a major mandate to the SP and this was all due to the blessings of 'Netaji' who was being missed terribly.

The SP clinched 37 seats in UP to emerge as the third-largest party in the 18th Lok Sabha.

While the SP won 37 seats, the Congress also bagged six seats to restrict the BJP to 33 seats in UP. After the victory the SP chief had said that it was a victory of the "protectors of the Constitution."

Akhilesh had said, "Dear voters, you proved that no one's power nor anyone's deceit is greater than the power of the people. This time, the people have won not the rulers." "Thanking the people of UP and the country, SP spokesperson Fakhrul Hasan Chaand had said, "SP has become the third-largest party in the country, and the credit goes to the people of UP and the nation. We thank all the minorities, backward people, Dalits, and farmers."



With 8/10, Sharad Pawar is the best striker in Maha LS polls

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

The woefully truncated Nationalist Congress Party (SP) led by the indefatigable Sharad Pawar managed to put up the best show in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Maharashtra, surpassing all expectations.

As a Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) key ally, the NCP(SP) had fielded candidates in just 10 seats with the new symbol of a 'Trumpeter', in comparison to the Shiv Sena(UBT)'s 21 nominees and Congress' 17 contestants. Maharashtra has 48 Lok Sabha seats.

However, Pawar lived up to the old sobriquets pasted on him, like 'Chanakya' or 'Machiavelli' and trumped in eight of the 10 seats, besides losing one seat (Satara) narrowly owing to a similar symbol allotted to another candidate there.

Overall, the MVA gave a spectacular showing, bagging 30 of the 48 seats, relegating the ruling MahaYuti allies to a single digit each -- Shiv Sena (7), Bharatiya Janata Party (9), and Nationalist Congress Party (1).

There is also an independent elected from Sangli who is likely to support the MVA, which could up its tally to 31 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

Despite leading a broken party with a new name (NCP-SP), and unknown symbol ('Trumpeter') compared with his nephew and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar who walked away with the original name (NCP) and symbol (Clock), the smiling Sharad Pawar was unflinched.

Racing against time -- the original party had vertically split in July 2023 -- in just nine months, Sharad Pawar had the NCP(SP) baby ready for a devastating delivery vis-a-vis the NCP now with Ajit Pawar.

In the five seats (including one given to an ally) it fought, the NCP won a solitary seat -- Raigad, by state chief Sunil



Tatkare -- and the huge embarrassment was the loss of Sunetra Pawar, wife of Ajit Pawar in the Pawar clan's den of Baramati, bagged by her 'nanad' Supriya Sule for the fourth time.

The NCP(SP) got a handsome vote share (10.27 per cent) compared with the NCP's measly (3.60 per cent).

The outcome lived up to the claims of both 'broken-hearted' leaders -- Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray -- that though their parties were split and the majority of elected leaders along with the names/symbols were snatched (by Ajit Pawar and CM Eknath Shinde) -- "the ordinary masses and voters are with us".

The split shock generated immense sympathy to push the MahaYuti into a corner at the hustings, and it tumbled from a tally of 41 seats in 2019 to 17 in 2024.

Displaying the qualities of a wizened, experienced leader, only Sharad Pawar appeared cool and unperturbed after the NCP he founded 25 years ago cracked into two pieces.

As other worried leaders, including Supriya Sule, Dr Jitendra Awhad, and Jayant Patil wondered, Sharad Pawar had airily declared that he would build a strong new party after all the deadwood had drifted away.

A day after the LS results, his grand-nephew Rohit Pawar, MLA, revealed that around 18-19 MLAs from the Ajit

Pawar faction reportedly yearn to return to Bhisma Pitamaha's fold!

The developments were reminiscent of Sharad Pawar's famed rally of October 18, 2019, when he had addressed an LS by-election rally in the rain in Satara for his party nominee Shrinivas Patil and ensured the defeat of a Chhatrapati -- the royal blood Udayanraje P. Bhonsle, 13th direct descendent of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, and BJP candidate.

Interestingly, the same Chhatrapati Udayanraje P. Bhonsle has won this time from Satara trouncing the NCP(SP)'s Shashikant J. Shinde by a tin-thin margin (32,771 votes), which was allegedly owing to a similar symbol ('Trumpeter') which confused the voters and chipped off Shinde's share.

"He is the Man of Series. His name is Sharad Pawar", posted an elated NCP(SP) General Secretary Dr Jitendra Awhad post-results, reflecting the mood of many in Maharashtra.

The eight new MPs elected across regions are Supriya Sule (Baramati), Dr Amol Kolhe (Shirur), Nilesh Lanke (Ahmednagar), Bajrang Sonwane (Beed), Ranjitsinh Mohite-Patil (Madha), Bhaskar Bagare (Dindori), Amar Kale (Wardha) and Suresh Mhatra alias Balyamama (Bhiwandi).

At 83, the sprightly Sharad Pawar not only tended to the NCP(SP) home flock but also campaigned vigorously for the MVA-INDIA bloc candidates in the state and out of Maharashtra, contributing to many more victories.

Soon after the party split in 2023 when he promised to rebuild the party, a mediaperson asked him 'who could be the most reliable face of the party', and a grinning Sharad Pawar raised his right hand and declared: "Sharad Pawar...!".

Evoking much mirth then for his sense of humour, nine months later, a victorious Sharad Pawar winked and had the last laugh...!

After initial rage, SS (UBT) softens to embrace Sangli Independent LS winner

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Spelling relief for the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), the Shiv Sena (UBT) MP, Sanjay Raut, said on Thursday that his party welcomes the election of Vishal Prakashbapu Patil from Sangli Lok Sabha constituency.

In a perceived climbdown, Raut said that Vishal Patil has been elected to the LS with a big margin from Sangli and his party would "respect the mandate of the people."

Patil was a Congress hopeful for a ticket, but in the MVA seat-sharing arrangements, the constituency went to SS (UBT) which put up renowned wrestling champion Chandrarah S. Patil.

The SS (UBT) ignored desperate pleas and options offered by the Congress to allow Vishal Patil to contest, and the party remained adamant.

The Congress urged SS (UBT) to give up the claim on Sangli and instead contest the Mumbai North LS seat, but the suggestions fell on deaf ears.

Subsequently, the plucky Patil defied the Congress and MVA's appeals and threats, to contest as an Independent,



raising apprehensions of a split in the Opposition alliance.

However, Patil's confidence stood the test and he trounced the BJP's two-time sitting MP Sanjay (Kaka) R Patil, with a good margin of over 100,000 votes.

"The SS (UBT) had nothing personal against Vishal Patil... He hails from a respected political family. He has been elected with a big margin by the people of Sangli. We respect the mandate of the people and welcome his election," said Raut, indicating burial of the political hatchet.

Embracing Patil's triumph, he expressed hopes that the new Sangli MP would continue to support and work with the MVA as before, for the larger good of the people.

Patil is the grandson of the legendary ex-Chief Minister Vasantraodada Patil, son of former five-term MP Prakashbapu Patil and senior state leader Shailja Patil, while his younger brother Pratik P Patil was a two-time MP and Union minister in the UPA governments led by former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.

Two Scrubber Dryer Robots deployed for cleaning at Mumbai airport

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) here has deployed two state-of-the-art Scrubber Dryer Robots at the Terminal 2 with advanced features designed to optimise the cleaning process, an official said on Thursday.

The environment-friendly robots take up thorough cleaning without the need for constant human intervention and adapt cleaning modes depending on floor type and dirt levels.

Operated on long-lasting (eight hours) Li-Ion batteries that perform across a wide temperature range, the robots have visual and audio alerts for safety, advanced automotive-grade sensors to detect glass and sudden obstacles, comprehensive data analysis and reporting for optimal performance, an official said.

For seamless operations, the machine operators



undergo comprehensive training with the manufacturer and receive certification upon qualification which ensures that the robots are operated safely and efficiently.

For safety, the robots are equipped with a beacon with flashlight to alert nearby staff and passengers, speed control mechanisms to reduce speed during busy hours, and sensors on both sides to detect obstacles, and an emergency stop switch on each machine.

compared with traditional cleaning methods, the robots save over 50 per cent electricity, around 20 per cent water and reduced chemical consumption through dynamic cleaning processes.

Currently, CSMIA has deployed the two autonomous Scrubber Dryer Robots which can also be remotely operated, with plans to expand this technology next year.

Monsoon advances to Karnataka, Maharashtra & Telangana

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday said that the monsoon has further advanced into most parts of Karnataka and some more parts of Maharashtra, Telangana and coastal Andhra Pradesh.

According to the IMD, conditions are favourable for further advance of monsoon into remaining parts of Karnataka and coastal Andhra Pradesh, some more parts of Maharashtra (including Mumbai), Telangana, some parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha, and some more parts of the Arabian Sea and West Bengal during the next 3-4 days.

Rainfall is likely to increase in Maharashtra and coastal Karnataka with heavy to very heavy rainfall from June 8, the IMD said.

The IMD has also forecast that rainfall is likely to continue



in northwest India till June 7, and heatwave conditions are likely in isolated pockets in parts of eastern India, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh during the next five days.

Not going back to NDA: Uddhav Thackeray



Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

Rubbishing rumours, the Uddhav Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena has said that it is going to remain with the INDIA alliance and will not switch back to the NDA. Having won nine seats, the Shiv Sena (UBT) has emerged as the second-largest party in Maharashtra - tied with the BJP - and has also got a huge morale boost because the Eknath Shinde faction of the party has managed to garner only seven.

In a post on X on Thursday, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and Rajya Sabha MP Priyanka Chaturvedi took a dig at journalists who allegedly sided with the BJP and said they had predicted that the BJP would come back with a big majority once the results of the Lok Sabha elections are out. Since that didn't happen, Ms Chaturvedi said, they are now spreading rumours of her party leaving the INDIA alliance and returning to the NDA.

Referring to a popular meme, she posted, "Moye Moye. Ye na hoye (this won't happen). You can roye roye (you can cry).

After debacle, Ajit Pawar convenes 2 meetings to discuss roadmap for Maha Assembly polls

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In the wake of the party's drubbing in the Lok Sabha elections in Maharashtra, NCP chief Ajit Pawar has convened two meetings - one with party ministers and the another with its legislators on Thursday to review performance and discuss the ways forward ahead of the upcoming state Assembly elections slated for September-October. These meetings are crucial as the NCP has won only Raigad seat against the four it got during the seat-sharing agreement with BJP and Shiv Sena. Party has lost Baramati, Shirur and Osmanabad. These meetings are also significant as the party leaders, including legislator Amol Mitkari, have targeted its allies - the BJP and the Shinde faction - for not working hard for NCP nominees. Mitkari and several others have claimed that the "lack of proactive role" by the BJP and Shinde faction leaders and cadres marred the poll prospects of NCP nominees. Today's meetings are expected to discuss how to bridge the gap with allies and decide strategies to further strengthen ties and coopera-



tion at the grassroots level in the run-up to the Assembly elections.

These meetings will also discuss the roadmap for the Assembly elections in which the party hopes to get 80-90 seats.

Senior minister Chhagan Bhujbal at the recently held party meeting has urged Pawar to remind the promises made by the BJP to allot 80-90 seats during the Assembly elections to avoid last-minute confusion as was prevalent in the Lok Sabha

elections. Bhujbal further reminded that the BJP had made the promise of respecting allies when the NCP decided to join the MahaYuti government in July 2023.

What was disturbing for Pawar was his wife and party nominee Sunetra Pawar's defeat on his home turf Baramati against his estranged cousin and sitting MP Supriya Sule. Although it was a fight between two sisters-in-law, it was projected as a fight between Ajit Pawar

and Sharad Pawar. What has hurt Ajit the most was Supriya has succeeded in getting a higher margin in the Baramati Assembly segment from where Ajit was elected during the 2019 elections.

Further, the party faced a humiliating defeat in Osmanabad where it had to nominate former BJP leader Archana Pawar after her last-minute induction into the party fold. Patil, who is the daughter of BJP legislator Rana Jagjit Singh Patil, lost to Shiv Sena UBT nominee Omraje Nimbalkar.

Similarly, the party relied in Shirur on former MP Shivajirao Adhalrao who left the Shinde faction and joined the NCP. Adhalrao's nomination did not click with the voters as they voted for the sitting MP and NCP SP nominee Amol Kolhe.

NCP heaved a relief after the state party chief Sunil Tatkare's victory in Raigad district against Shiv Sena UBT nominee Anant Geete.

Tatkare, despite fearing backlash from Muslim and Kumbi voters, systematically ran his campaign approaching them with an assurance to scale up Raigad's development.

Police officers injured in a stone pelting incident in Powai

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A few police officers were injured in a stone pelting incident in Powai, during the BMC anti-encroachment drive in a slum on Thursday, an official said. A video surfaced showing people hurling stones at a police van and policemen, injuring them.

The civic official stated that the BMC halted the anti-encroachment drive shortly after the incident, which hap-

pened at around 1 pm. "Locals hurled stones at the policemen and the BMC team when an anti-encroachment drive was underway in Jai Bhavani Nagar of Powai," he said. A few police personnel, who were providing security to the civic staff, were injured in the stone-pelting, the official added.

A group of men and women are seen in the viral video clip of the stone-pelting incident throwing stones at BMC employees and police. Additionally, it depicts the police officers attempting to flee in an effort to avoid getting struck by stones.

Similarity in poll symbols led to NCP (SP)'s defeat in Satara: Jayant Patil



Team Absolute | Pune

Jayant Patil, the Maharashtra NCP (SP) chairman, said that the similarity between his party's election emblem and that of an independent candidate confused voters, resulting in the NCP (SP) candidate's defeat in the Satara Lok Sabha constituency.

Patil, speaking to the media on Wednesday, claimed that the Election Commission of India (ECI) purposely assigned similar emblems to independent candidates in order to split votes. He added that his party would bring up this issue with the ECI.

Following a split in Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party, the ECI allocated the poll symbol "man blowing turha" (a traditional trumpet) to the NCP (SP). On Tuesday, Udayanraje Bhonsle of the BJP defeated NCP (SP) candidate Shashikant Shinde by more than 32,000 votes in the Satara Lok Sabha seat. Independent candidate Sanjay Gade, who used the poll symbol "tutari" (trumpet), garnered 37,062 votes.

Patil pointed out that the NCP (SP) had earlier lodged a complaint with the ECI against a similar sign provided to an independent candidate in Baramati, their stronghold.

In the Marathi list of Satara candidates, the independent candidate's symbol was "tutari," whereas in the English list, it was "trumpet." The NCP (SP) candidate's symbol was characterised as "tutari wajanavar manooos" in Marathi and "man blowing turha" in English.

"Our symbol was 'man blowing tutari' but at the same time, the trumpet symbol was also given to independent candidates and it was called 'tutari' in the list. As a result, in all the constituencies where the NCP (SP) contested, a considerable number of votes went to candidates having the trumpet symbol," Patil claimed.

He pointed out that in constituencies like Dindori, Madha, and Beed, independent candidates with the trumpet symbol received substantial votes-over 1 lakh, 48,000, and 54,000 votes respectively-impacting the NCP (SP)'s performance in Lok Sabha Elections 2024.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Battleground Bengal: Did Congress-Left alliance facilitate BJP's victory on 2 seats?

At a time when it is believed that the Muslim electorate in West Bengal voted largely in favour of the Trinamool Congress in all the 29 Lok Sabha seats the party won in the state, there are two seats where the dent made by the Congress-Left Front alliance in the Muslim vote bank might have sealed the BJP's victory. In both the constituencies -- Maldaha Uttar in Malda district and Raiganj in North Dinajpur district -- the Muslims constitute a substantial percentage of the voting population. In Raiganj, BJP's Kartick Chandra Paul bagged 5,60,897 votes against the 4,92,700 votes managed by Trinamool's Krishna Kalyani. However, Paul's modest winning margin of 68,187 votes was facilitated to a great extent by the Left Front-supported Congress candidate Ali Imran Ramz a.k.a. Victor, who secured 2,63,272 votes. Similarly, in Maldaha Uttar, BJP's winning candidate Khagen Murmu secured 5,27,023 votes to defeat Trinamool's Prasun Banerjee, who got 4,49,315 votes. However, Murmu's winning margin of 77,708 votes was facilitated by the Left Front-supported Congress candidate Mostaque Alam, who secured 3,84,764 votes. On Tuesday evening, after the trends showed the Trinamool winning big in West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee told a section of the media that her party could have won a few more seats had the Congress and the CPI-M not extended clandestine support to the BJP. Although the Chief Minister did not name any particular constituency, the results in Raiganj and Maldaha Uttar make it clear as to which seats she hinted at.

NE regional parties post mixed performance in 2024 Lok Sabha polls

Sujit Chakraborty

Focusing on local and ethnic issues and the fight against corruption, two regional parties in northeast India, the Voice of the People Party (VOTPP) in Meghalaya and the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) in Mizoram picked up their first-ever Lok Sabha seats in the 2024 elections.

Some other regional parties, who are allied with the BJP - the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) and the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) in Assam, and the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) in Sikkim - secured one Lok Sabha seat each.

While the AGP has won Lok Sabha seats several times earlier, the UPPL, with its base in Bodoland areas of western Assam, will have representation in the Parliament for the first time. Five other regional parties -- All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) in Assam, the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) in Nagaland, the Mizo National Front (MNF) in Mizoram, the National People's Party (NPP) in Meghalaya, and the Naga People's Front (NPF) in Manipur - were not so lucky this time around. All won a seat each in the 2019 elections but lost now. In Meghalaya, the little-known VOTPP candidate Ricky Andrew J. Syngkon managed to snatch the Shillong parliamentary seat, defeating state Congress President and former Union Minister Vincent H. Pala, who has been winning the seat since 2009, by a margin of over 3.7 lakh



votes. The VOTPP was formed in December 2021 and won four seats in the February 2023 Assembly elections. The party contested 18 seats and got 5.36 per cent votes, but in the Lok Sabha elections, its vote percentage increased to 33.40 per cent. Syngkon, who is a PhD in Economics, secured 5,71,078 votes while Pala got 1,99,168.

Political analysts contend that the alliance between the NPP and BJP in the Christian-dominated Meghalaya was not accepted wholeheartedly by the people and this also helped the VOTPP to secure a record number of votes.

Meanwhile, in another shock, sitting MP and former Union Minister Agatha K. Sangma lost in the Sangma family's "carefully nurtured" Tura seat in Garo Hills to Congress candidate Saleng A. Sangma, who won by a huge margin of 1.55 lakh votes. Founded by former Union Minister, Lok Sabha Speaker and Chief Minister P. A. Sangma, the NPP, led now by his son, Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, with 26 MLAs, dominates the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance government and also has legislators in Arunachal Pradesh (5), Manipur (7) and Nagaland (5), would remain unrepresented in the Lok Sabha after several decades. In Mizoram, the ruling ZPM's candidate Richard Vanlalhmangaiha won the state's sole Lok Sabha seat, defeating MNF candidate K. Vanlalvena by over 68,000 votes. Headed by Chief Minister Lalduhoma, the ZPM, which was constituted in 2018, came to power in the November 2023 Assembly polls, crushing the MNE. In Nagaland, in a significant political development, Congress candidate S. Supongmeriem Jamir wrested the state's sole Lok Sabha seat from the ruling NDPP, which leads the eight-party Peoples' Democratic Alliance (PDA) government in the opposition-less state. The Congress does not have any members in the current Assembly nor in the previous one. In Manipur, the Congress wrested both Lok Sabha seats from the ruling BJP and its ally NPF, which has an organisational base in Manipur and Nagaland and five and two MLAs, respectively, in the states.

Congress' hopes of a revival in Andhra Pradesh dashed again

Team Absolute | Amaravati

The Congress' hopes of a revival in Andhra Pradesh were dashed as it drew a blank in the third successive election in the state, failing to win a single Assembly or Lok Sabha seat. A decade after it was wiped out due to people's anger over the bifurcation of united Andhra Pradesh, things have not changed for the party. The Congress leadership had hoped that the party would recover to make its presence felt in a few constituencies and even open up its account.

However, the national party once again found itself totally rejected by the state's people. The Congress polled just 1.72 per cent votes in the Assembly polls and 2.66 per cent votes in the Lok Sabha elections. In the 2014 elections, Congress had secured only 2.77 per cent votes. The vote share dropped further to 1.23 per cent in 2019. In a state, where politics is dominated by regional players, the national parties have no significant presence. Political analysts say the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) could secure eight Assembly and three Lok Sabha seats mainly due to its alliance with the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Jana Sena Party (JSP). In 2019 when the BJP had contested alone, it had drawn a blank with a vote share of 0.84 per cent. This time, the TDP-led alliance scripted a landslide win to wrest power from the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), he alliance, which also comprised the Jan Sena Party, bagged 164 seats in the 175-member Assembly and also won 21 out of 25 Lok Sabha seats. The Congress' hopes of a revival were based on the belief that the public anger may have dissipated. The



party leadership had appointed Y.S. Sharmila President of the party's state unit early this year with the hope that the daughter of former Chief Minister, the late Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy (YSR), could revive the party's fortunes.

Sharmila, sister of outgoing Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, brought some enthusiasm into the party by leading a

few protests on public issues. Claiming to be the real inheritor of YSR's political legacy, she directly took on her brother by targeting him for ignoring her after becoming the Chief Minister in 2019. By entering the fray as Congress from Kadapa Lok Sabha constituency, a YSR family stronghold, she challenged her brother, who had once again given a ticket to their cousin Y. S. Avinash Reddy. As Avinash Reddy was last year named as an accused by the CBI in the murder of former minister and their uncle Y. S. Vivekananda Reddy, Sharmila slammed her brother for shielding the murder accused.

Supported by Vivekananda Reddy's daughter Y.S. Sunitha Reddy, Sharmila appealed to people not to vote for Jagan Mohan Reddy and his party for allegedly promoting the politics of murder. Sharmila was expected to give a tough fight to Avinash Reddy but she finished a poor third. Avinash Reddy won the seat for a third consecutive time, with a majority of over 62,000 votes against his nearest rival C. Bhupesh Subbarami Reddy of the TDP. Sharmila polled 1.41 lakh votes, the highest by any Congress candidate in these elections. In almost all constituencies, Congress candidates finished the distant third. Former Union Ministers M.M. Pallam Raju, J.D. Seelam, and Chinta Mohan all faced crushing defeats once again.

international

Defector group sends leaflets to Pyongyang; no signs of N.Korea provocation detected

Seoul | Agencies

A North Korean defectors' group said on Thursday that it has sent about 10 large plastic balloons carrying propaganda leaflets against the North Korean regime across the border, raising concerns Pyongyang could resume sending trash-filled balloons.

Filled with 200,000 flyers criticising the regime, dollar bills and USB sticks loaded with K-pop and trot music, the balloons were floated from Pocheon, north of Seoul, early Thursday, according to Park Sang-hak, head of the Fighters for a Free North Korea (FFNK).

A military source confirmed that some of these balloons have flown into North Korea but said no signs of retaliatory action were



detected yet from the North Korean side, including any launch of ballistic missiles or release of balloons loaded with trash, Yonhap news agency reported.

The military is also closely monitoring North Korea for signs of provocations, a Joint Chiefs of Staff official said. A Unification Ministry offi-

cial said the Ministry is maintaining close communication with the relevant agencies and "doing its best to manage the situation".

Since last week, Pyongyang has sent nearly 1,000 balloons carrying trash to South Korea in what it called a "tit-for-tat" action against such anti-Pyongyang

leaflet campaigns.

After the South Korean government on Sunday warned of "unendurable" measures, including resuming loudspeaker broadcasting, the North Korea said it will temporarily halt dropping balloons across the border. North Korea, however, also warned it will send "a hundred times the amount of toilet paper and filth" of what the South Korea sends, raising concerns the reclusive country could start the waste-filled campaign again.

The FFKK has sent balloons carrying similar goods across the border although such acts are banned in South Korea under a law that was legislated during the previous administration to help reduce tensions in the border regions.

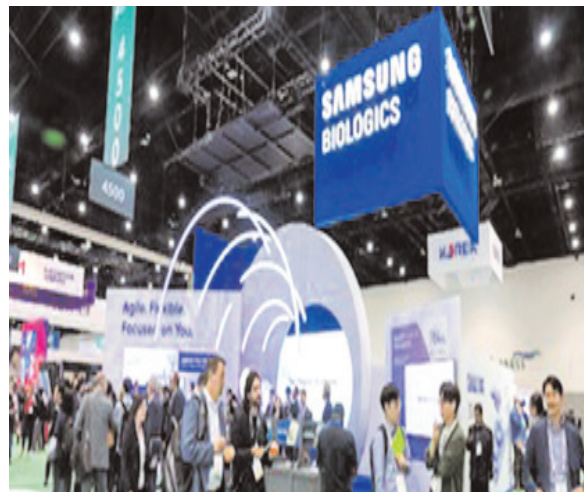
India, S.Korea, US, Japan, EU launch biopharmaceutical alliance

Seoul | Agencies

India, South Korea, the US, Japan, and the European Union (EU) on Thursday launched an alliance to put joint efforts to build a resilient supply chain in the biopharmaceutical sector.

The inaugural meeting of the Biopharmaceutical Alliance was held in San Diego during the Bio International Convention 2024, the world's largest biopharmaceutical exhibition, Yonhap news agency reported. Government officials and representatives from bio and pharmaceutical companies from the participating countries attended the meeting.

The participants emphasised the importance of a reliable and sustainable supply chain and agreed to coordinate the respective coun-



tries' bio policies, regulations, and research and development support measures.

They recognised the production of essential raw materials and ingredients is concentrated in a few countries and agreed to work together to build a detailed pharmaceutical supply chain map.

The alliance was launched in response to the drug supply shortages experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. South Korea and the US agreed to hold their dialogue on core emerging technologies in December, and expanded it to include Japan, India, and the EU, the report said.

Putin 'highly appreciates' S. Korea's position not to directly supply weapons to Ukraine

Moscow | Agencies

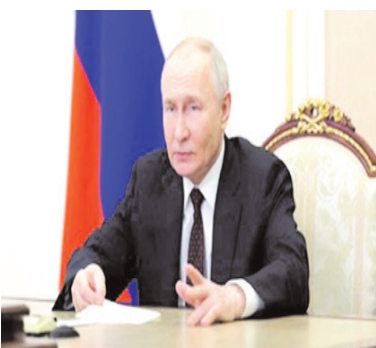
Russian President Vladimir Putin has said he "highly appreciates" South Korea's position not to directly supply weapons to Ukraine, and that Moscow is ready to restore relations with Seoul.

Putin made the remark on Wednesday during a meeting with representatives of international news agencies, which was held on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, Yonhap news agency reported.

The remark drew attention in that Putin, who began his fifth term as president last month, showed a positive attitude toward South Korea and openly talked about the possibility of improving relations with Seoul.

Relations between the two countries have chilled since Seoul joined a US-led move to impose sanctions against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine. Russia has since labelled South Korea as one of the "unfriendly" nations.

"Just like in our relations with Italy, we do not see any Russophobic stance when working with the South Korean government. Neither are there any



weapons supplies to the conflict zone. We highly appreciate that," Putin said.

Putin also said he is aware that the United States is approaching South Korea to look for weapons to send to Ukraine and he is watching the situation closely.

"Today, unfortunately, certain problems have been created in many areas of our cooperation, which is a pity ... But this is not our choice. It is the choice of the Korean leadership. The channel is open on our side, and we are ready," he said.

Putin also said that Moscow expects its relations with Seoul will preserve, at

least partially, to be restored to the previous depth in the future, according to Russia's Sputnik news agency.

On North Korea, Putin reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening relations with Pyongyang.

"As for relations with North Korea ... our neighbours, we will develop relations, whether someone likes it or not," he said.

Relations between Pyongyang and Moscow have significantly strengthened since September's summit between Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. Putin has been considering paying a reciprocal visit to the North.

Putin said the North Korean nuclear issue will be resolved when Pyongyang is no longer threatened.

"They are being threatened, and they respond. Without threats, I think, the nuclear issue will gradually be resolved. But they are facing threats all the time. What else can they do?" Putin said, according to TASS news agency.

Wednesday's meeting with international news agencies, organized by TASS, took place for the first time since 2021, when the meeting was held virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Washington | Agencies

An appeals court in Georgia halted criminal trial proceedings in former US President Donald Trump's 2020 election subversion case while it reviews appeals.

Trump and 18 others were indicted in August over alleged efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election in the southeastern US state.

Trump has pleaded not guilty and criticized the cases against him as part of a politically motivated attempt to keep him from recapturing the White House.

The order from the Georgia Court of Appeals was issued on Wednesday after the court earlier this week set a tentative October hearing date for the appeal, Xinhua news agency reported.

Trump and several co-defendants in the case have argued that Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis' relationship with then-special prosecutor Nathan Wade caused a conflict of interest.

Trump and some of his co-defendants in the sprawling racketeering case have been trying to get Willis disqualified from the case because of a romantic relationship she had with Wade, the special prosecutor she hired to help handle the case, reported CNN, adding that the defendants argued that Willis financially benefited from the relationship with Wade, who defence attorneys say covered several vacations for the pair.

CNN pointed out that the new order is the latest indication that a trial in the state-level



Georgia election subversion case will not occur before the 2024 presidential election.

Trump, the Republican Party's presumptive 2024 presidential nominee, has been indicted in four criminal cases -- two by the US Justice Department, and two by state prosecutors in New York and Georgia, separately. The Georgia case is the fourth criminal case brought against Trump.

The Georgia Court of Appeals' order came just days after Trump was found guilty in the first criminal trial of a former president in US history. Trump was convicted of felony crimes by a jury in New York last week on all 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in a bid to hide hush money payment to a porn star in 2016, shortly before the presidential election.

Death toll from fishing boat fire in Philippines rises to 6



Manila | Agencies

The death toll from the fire that broke out on a fishing boat in the central Philippines has risen to six, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said on Thursday. In a statement, the PCG said six bodies had been recovered and that six other people survived the accident, Xinhua news agency reported. Of the six survivors, one is in critical condition due to a third-degree burn. The boat caught fire around 8:25 p.m. local time on Wednesday in waters, nearly 1.5 nautical miles off the shoreline of Naga City in Cebu province. The PCG said that 12 people were on the boat, not 11 as reported earlier. The PCG added it is continuing investigation to determine the cause of the fire.



INDORE RESIDENTS LAUNCH MEGA CAMPAIGN TO SAVE TREES

▶ THE LOCALS OF MOG LINES AREA OF INDORE ARE NUMBERING EACH TREE AND RECORDING DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THEM. THIS ALSO INCLUDES CREATING A PASSBOOK TO DOCUMENT THE STATUS OF EVERY TREE, AIMING TO PREVENT UNNECESSARY DEFORESTATION.

▶ THE CAMPAIGN, WHICH WILL SPAN A WEEK, INVOLVES RESIDENTS PREPARING A COMPREHENSIVE RECORD TO PRESENT IN COURT. THEY ARE ALSO COMMITTED TO DOCUMENTING ANY TREE THAT IS FELLED DURING THIS PERIOD. THIS GRASSROOTS INITIATIVE IS DESIGNED TO ENSURE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE PROJECT'S EXECUTION.

▶ MORE THAN 50 RESIDENTS, INCLUDING WOMEN AND CHILDREN, HAVE ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE CAMPAIGN. THEY HAVE SHOWN THEIR COMMITMENT BY ATTACHING THEMSELVES TO THE TREES IN SYMBOLIC PROTEST. EACH TREE IS BEING MARKED WITH A BOARD DETAILING ITS SPECIES AND TRUNK CIRCUMFERENCE.

Team Absolute | Indore

A determined group of Indore residents have taken a stand against the indiscriminate cutting of trees by launching a campaign to preserve the area's green cover.

The MOG Lines area is undergoing significant redevelopment under the Smart City Project. The plan involves demolishing old quarter houses to make way for four high-rise buildings and a new market. This project aims to expand the central city's old and large markets, generating income for future municipal works. However, the leveling of land has necessitated the removal of numerous trees, sparking the current protest.

Rajendra Rathore, the Garden Committee incharge of the Municipal Corporation though has said that not all trees will be cut.

"Permission has been given to cut trees in MOG Lines for the Smart City Project. This is not a matter for the Nagar Nigam, but for the Smart City initiative. A plot has been sold to a firm by Smart City. The firm applied for permission to cut down 24 trees. Permission has been granted to relocate 15 trees and cut down 9 trees after paying the required fees. The permissions are in accordance with the rules for this private plot, which was sold by the Nagar Nigam. Under the Smart City project, every tree is being accounted for diligently. Our goal is to plant 5.1 million trees. Currently, the city has 9% greenery, and we aim to increase this to 25%", Rathore said.

As the week-long campaign progresses, residents hope their efforts will lead to a reconsideration of the current deforestation strategy and the adoption of more environmentally friendly



alternatives. Their ultimate goal is to balance urban development with ecological preservation, ensuring that Indore's future growth does not come at the expense of its natural heritage.

Ajay Chauhan, a local citizen said, "We should plant as many trees as possible. They should not be cut down; they should be preserved."

Dinesh Dawar, a MSc student said "Planting trees is essential. There is a significant water problem in a city like Indore.

If we plant more trees, we will benefit from increased oxygen."

Amit Shinde, local resident said "These trees are nearly a century old. The 1930 Gazetteer shows they are 80-100 years old. Our parents planted trees in front of their houses. Now, the administration is cutting them down mercilessly. Over 100 trees have already been cut."

TREE PLANTATION AROUND WATER SOURCES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED: CHIEF MINISTER DR. YADAV

Target to plant 5 crore 50 lakh saplings in Jal-Ganga Samvardhan Abhiyan. Chief Minister offers shramdaan in cleaning the Lower Lake of Bhopal. Urban bodies active in Jal-Ganga Samvardhan Abhiyan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has said that under the Jal Ganga Samvardhan Abhiyan (Campaign) started in the state on June 5, plantation should be encouraged along with the conservation and cleanliness of water sources. The target is to plant 5 crore 50 lakh saplings in the state. During the campaign, saplings will be planted in the entire state with public participation. Jal Ganga Samvardhan Abhiyan will continue even after Ganga Dashami, all local bodies will conduct campaign-related activities at their respective levels. After Hariyali Amavasya, intensive plantation activities will be conducted. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav, while appreciating the campaign being run with public participation by the Municipal Corporation Bhopal for cleaning the Lower Lake in Bhopal, said that water sports will be encouraged in the state. Along with Bhopal, water sports activities are also being conducted in Indore and Ujjain, we will aim to bring a



medal in the next Olympics. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav was addressing the gathering after offering shramdaan for cleaning the Lower Lake of Bhopal on the second day of the Jal Ganga Samvardhan Abhiyan being run for the conservation and revitalization of water sources. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that in Indian culture, rivers, mountains and earth are also considered as living things. Madhya Pradesh is the focal point of the rivers of the country. Rivers flowing in all directions originate from here. Giving concrete shape to the concept of Nadi Jodo Abhiyan of former Prime Minister late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided the state government and Uttar Pradesh government with Rs. 45 thousand crores each by approving the Ken-Betwa link project. With this project, Bundelkhand, the land of warriors, will get irrigation facilities and life there will be easier. Similarly, Prime Minister Modi has also approved the Parvati-Kalisindh-Chambal Link Project for which all the people of the state are grateful to him. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that Bhopal is a city with an integrated culture. In the last 60-70 years, people who came here from different parts of the country gave Bhopal the shape of a capital, and the streams coming from different parts merged here.

230 assembly level units of Youth Congress dissolved in Madhya Pradesh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the results of Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh, decisions have started among political parties. The first decision has come in the Youth Congress, where all the presidents and executive of the assembly units have been dissolved.

Youth Congress State President Mitendra Darshan Singh Yadav, taking a major decision in the organization, has dissolved all the 230 Assembly Presidents of Youth Congress along with their executive. This decision has been taken by him in view of the results of Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

Youth Congress President Yadav said that those who have shown activeness and effective performance in the door to door campaign run by the organization in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, if their activism continues in the future also, they can get another opportunity in the organization. Now such youth will get opportunities in the organization who are energetic, active, have enough time for the work of the organization and are also loyal. He further said that no hesitation will be shown in taking whatever decisions need to be taken to strengthen the organiza-



tion. If the organization realizes this in future, similar tough decisions can be taken in future also. The criteria for connecting the youth to the organization will be their loyalty, active role and their popularity on the field.

Let us tell you that earlier the Youth Congress President had held one-to-one discussions with officials from different parts of the state. Even at that time he had said that responsibility in the organization would be given on the basis of activism and not on the basis of anyone's recommendation. Congress has faced a crushing defeat in the recently held Lok Sabha elections in the state. Out of 29 Lok Sabha seats, Congress has not got success in even a single place.

Many MPs met Chief Minister Mohan Yadav in Bhopal before going to Delhi

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bharatiya Janata Party has created history in Madhya Pradesh by winning all 29 Lok Sabha seats. Many MPs reached Bhopal before going to Delhi and met Chief Minister Mohan Yadav.

After the huge success in the Lok Sabha elections in the state, the BJP organization and people associated with the government are elated. This is also because the claims the party had made before the elections proved true in the results. The most important is Kamal Nath's stronghold in Chhindwara, where BJP registered victory.

There is a meeting of all elected BJP MPs in New Delhi on Friday. Many elected MPs reached Bhopal before going to Delhi and met Chief Minister Mohan Yadav. Ujjain MP Anil Firojia, Bhopal MP Alok



Sharma, Hoshangabad MP Darshan Singh Chaudhary, Rajgarh MP Rodmal Nagar, Dhar MP Savitri Thakur met Chief Minister Mohan Yadav.

The Chief Minister fed sweets to all the elected MPs and also congratulated them. Earlier on Thursday, former Chief Minister and elected MP from Vidisha Shivraj Singh Chauhan had also met Chief Minister Mohan Yadav.

Party sources say that most of the MPs from the state will reach Delhi by late Thursday night and will participate in the meeting to be held on Friday. This time, BJP MPs have created a record of victory in the Lok Sabha elections. Along with this, the new faces fielded by the party have also given better results. This time in the Lok Sabha elections in the state, Bharatiya Janata Party has won all 29 seats.

United Malayalee Association announce the first ever Kerala Fest in Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

United Malayalee Association is immensely pleased to announce the first ever Kerala Fest in Bhopal, beginning on the 7th of June, 2024, at the Bittan Market Grounds. This three day cultural extravaganza marks a significant milestone for the Association as it celebrates its 40th anniversary by bringing in the rich cultural heritage of Kerala, fondly referred to as "God's Own Country," to the City of Lakes, Bhopal.

The festivities will kick off on Friday, June 7th at 5:30 pm and Cultural program from 7.15 pm promising an array of items that will mesmerize and engage the audience. The festival will showcase a variety of Kerala's Traditional and Classical performances, offering a unique opportunity to the people of Bhopal to experience the vibrant culture of Kerala. The event will feature an impressive line up of Kerala's centuries old Traditional folk dance



forms, constituting THEYYAM, MAY-OORA NRITHAM, ARJUNA NRITHAM, KUMMATTI, KARINKALI, ONATHAR, and VATTAMUDI. Each dance form represents a

different facet of Kerala's cultural history and traditions, ensuring a captivating visual feast to the audience.

One of the highlights of the Kerala Fest will be the demonstration of KALARIPPAYATTU, Kerala's ancient and internationally acclaimed Martial Art. Known for its acrobatic and complex movements and impressive techniques, KALARIPPAYATTU not only offers a thrilling performance but also serves as a testament to Kerala's rich martial traditions. In addition to folk dances and martial arts, the festival will feature classical dance performances such as Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, and Mohiniyattam, performed by leading Dance Groups from Bhopal. These classical dance forms, with its intricate choreography and expressive storytelling, will provide a deeper insight into India's classical art.

Kailash Vijayvargiya praised Rahul Gandhi

SAID- RAHUL GANDHI WALKS FROM VILLAGE TO VILLAGE; THE OPPOSITION BENEFITED FROM THIS

Team Absolute | Indore

State government minister and senior BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya has praised Rahul Gandhi. A video of him has surfaced. In which he is seen saying, "The mandate of the public should be accepted. Rahul ji has also worked so hard. Poor guy, let's go on foot from village to village. Even if their increases a little... the opposition should also be strong, we believe. Regarding the support received by India Alliance in UP, Kailash Vijayvargiya said that we will review it. Everyone has



worked hard for the clean sweep in Madhya Pradesh. I was given the charge of Chhindwara cluster, on which I have worked together with the workers. Kailash Vijayvargiya said that Rahul Gandhi has worked hard. The public mandate must be accepted.

NEET ASPIRANT COMMITS SUICIDE IN KOTA CONGRESS' ASSESSMENT GOES WRONG IN MP, SUFFERS HUMILIATING DEFEAT

Team Absolute | Jaipur/Bhopal

An 18-year-old medical aspirant committed suicide by jumping from the ninth floor of a building in Rajasthan's Kota, said police officials on Thursday.

The deceased was identified as Bagisha Tiwari, a resident of Madhya Pradesh who lived on the fifth floor of a multi-storey building with her mother and brother.

She committed suicide a day after the announcement of NEET results on June 4.

The officials said she was rushed to a private hospital but succumbed to her injuries an hour later.

Tiwari hailed from Rewa district in Madhya Pradesh and was preparing for the NEET exam in a coaching institute in Kota.

Her brother, a Class 12 student, is also preparing for the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE), said Circle Inspector at Jawahar Nagar Police Station, Harinarayan Sharma.

Bagisha's father Vinod Tiwari, an engineer in PWD in Rewa, reached Kota at 7 a.m. He said that Bagisha scored 320 out of 720 marks in NEET results.



"As she could not crack the exam, I assured her of getting her admitted to a private medical college. However, she said that she wanted to give one more try for the exam. I don't know why she took such a step," he said.

A video of this suicide surfaced on Thursday in which a girl is seen trying to stop Bagisha Tiwari.

"Further investigations are on," said Sharma. It is the tenth case of suspected suicide by a student in the country's coaching hub, Kota, since January this year.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

On May 20 when Madhya Pradesh Congress in-charge Bhanwar Jitendra Singh visited Bhopal, the state unit gave him inputs that they will win at least three to five Lok Sabha seats.

Singh reviewed the party's election preparations in the presence of senior leaders and the party's Lok Sabha candidates at party headquarters in the state and returned to Delhi on the same day with inputs received from the state unit.

Following the review meeting, Singh addressed a press conference in Bhopal and claimed to win at least five seats based on inputs received from the state unit.

The seats where the Congress was confident of winning were - Chhindwara, Rajgarh, Ratlam, and Satna. On the first three seats, Congress had fielded Kamal Nath's son Nakul Nath, Digvijay Singh and ex-Union Minister Kantilal Bhuria, respectively.

Congress was also expecting victory in the Morena Lok Sabha seat because of the internal rift within the BJP over the candidature. The party also expected a win in the Satna Lok Sabha seat.



However, when the results were announced on Tuesday (June 4) all the inputs received from the state unit were wrong as BJP swept Madhya Pradesh. Some of the Congress leaders gave varied reasons to IANS for their loss, however, most of them said that they did not get support from the top leadership.

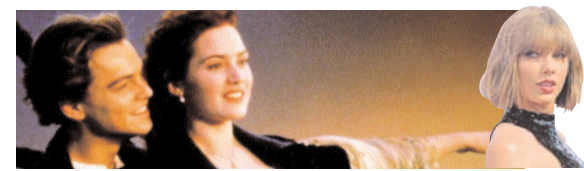
In Rewa Lok Sabha seat where a high anti-incumbency against BJP's sitting MP Janardan Mishra was assessed, Neelam Mishra (Congress

candidate) made multiple approaches to have a public rally addressed by the party's top brass - either Priyanka Gandhi or Rahul Gandhi but it was never materialised for some unknown reasons.

A Rewa-based Congress leader said, Neelam's husband, who is a Congress MLA, had visited Delhi thrice to get a public rally arranged hoping to rope in the party's top leadership. This attempt also failed to get the top brass on board for Madhya Pradesh. Neelam Mishra lost the election against Janardan Mishra with a margin of 1.93 lakh votes.

"We fought the elections against a well-organised BJP. The result could have been in our favour had we got support from the top leadership," said a Congress leader. Some Congress workers claimed lack of coordination between state leadership and district-level leaders is also one of the key reasons behind the humiliating defeat of the party.

"Until the Assembly elections, Jitu Patwari's politics was limited to Indore only. He could not convince voters. The cadre was completely shattered after the Assembly election loss. The new state head was more dependent on Central leadership. That is why we suffered a humiliating defeat in Madhya Pradesh," said a Congress leader.



Lady Gaga

Shuts Down Pregnancy Rumors

Los Angeles | Agencies

Lady Gaga set the record straight about pregnancy rumors in a recent TikTok video posted on Tuesday, June 4. "Not pregnant -- just down bad cryin at the gym," wrote the 38-year-old singer.

The TikTok video showcased Gaga - birth name Stefani Joanna Angelina Germanotta - up close to the lens with her winged eyeliner lip-syncing to the words of the video saying, "I don't have to find the aesthetic, I am the aesthetic. I mean, I'm sure there's somebody out here right now going into Pinterest just typing in all these adjectives to describe me."

In addition to audio, the caption contained a reference to Taylor Swift's "Down Bad" song from The Tortured Poets Department album. This led to the Eras Tour headliner to comment, "Can we all agree that its invasive & irresponsible to comment on a woman's body? Gaga doesn't owe anyone an explanation & neither does any woman."



I was really channeling my sister Kourtney: Kim Kardashian

Los Angeles | Agencies

Kim Kardashian had one inspiration in mind while getting into character for American Horror Story: Delicate: her sister Kourtney Kardashian. During Kim's Variety "Actors on Actors" interview with Chloë Sevigny, the reality TV star, 43, revealed how she approached the role of the devious publi-

cist Siobhan.

"It's funny 'cause I was really channeling my sister Kourtney and someone that I work with -- Tracy [Romulus] -- really closely," the SKIMS boss revealed in her interview, shared by Variety on Wednesday, June 5.

Kim also acknowledged the feedback that she got after AHS: Delicate premiered last year, which is that her performance reminded fans of her mother, Kris Jenner.

"Everyone, when it came out, they were like, 'That is Kris Jenner all the way,' and I was like, 'Well, I guess I had that prepa-

ration already, but it's not what I was thinking," Kim added. "But I so see it now." Elsewhere in her conversation with Chloë, the Kardashians star unveiled the "one preparation tip" that she received from an acting coach.

"That was the one preparation tip that I got from an acting coach, which was never bring your phone on set," Kim said.



Dakota Fanning reveals Tom Cruise has been gifting her shoes on every birthday since 2005

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Dakota Fanning shared that, despite Tom Cruise having given her a cell phone, when she was 11 on the set of their 2005 film 'War of the World', the Hollywood star

has continued to send shoes as birthday presents, which she has been receiving for the past 19 years.

"I turned 11 on 'War of the Worlds', when we worked together and he gave me my first cell phone for that birthday," Fanning said on

Kelly Clarkson's daytime talk show.

"It was a Motorola Razr...I didn't have anyone to call, but I wanted a Razr so bad. I must have been talking about it a lot because that's what he got me. It's such a great memory."

She added: "He always sends me the same thing every year," reports variety.com.

Fannings went on to reveal the reason.

"I loved shoes when I was little, and I started to be able to fit into really small adult shoes when I

was on the 'War of the Worlds' press tour, so I was really excited about them. So from that birthday on, he always sends me shoes."

To which, Clarkson said: "That's so random too, I love it. You must have a massive shoe collection brought to you by Tom Cruise!"

Michael Jordan 'excited' to share screen space with Will Smith

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Michael B. Jordan shared that the second instalment of 'I Am Legend 2' is still being written and is "really excited" to share screen space with Hollywood star Will Smith in the upcoming film.

The sequel to Will Smith's 2007 blockbuster was first announced in March 2022, with Smith set to return opposite new cast member Jordan.

"We're still working on the script and getting that up to par," Jordan told people.com.

"It doesn't have a release date or anything like that. I'm not sure exactly where we're going to be filming that one, but I'm really excited to get in front of the camera with him (Will

Jordan said that he had looked up to Smith for a long time.

"Being somebody that I've looked up to for a really long time, to be able to work with Will is something I'm really looking forward to. I'm really excited," said the actor, reports variety.com. Directed by Francis Lawrence, "I Am Legend" starred Smith as virologist

Robert Neville, the sole survivor in New York City of a man-made plague that transforms humans into bloodthirsty mutants. His mission to find a cure brings him into contact with other survivors.

Earlier this year, at a film festival, Smith had shared that 'I Am Legend 2' would utilise the 2007 movie's alternate ending in which his character lived.



Kanye West Responds to Sexual Harassment Lawsuit



Los Angeles | Agencies

Kanye "Ye" West has responded to the sexual harassment lawsuit filed against the rapper by his former assistant, Lauren Pisciotta. According to a statement obtained by NBC News, a legal representative for West, 46, called Pisciotta's lawsuit "baseless" and pointed out that the "Jesus Walks" artist plans to file a lawsuit against her.

"In response to these baseless allegations, Ye will be filing a lawsuit against Ms. Pisciotta, who actively pursued him sexually to coerce employment and other material benefits, then engaged in blackmail and extortion when her advances were reject-

ed," the rep's statement read. "It is evident that Ms. Pisciotta leveraged her association with Ye and his company, and her proximity to him, to seek material gains, clout, and employment through inappropriate means."

On Monday, June 3, Pisciotta filed a civil lawsuit against West for alleged sexual harassment, wrongful termination, breach of contract, perpetuating a hostile work environment, unlawful retaliation and emotional distress. Pisciotta worked for West from 2021 to 2022 as his executive assistant/personal assistant, according to the outlet. Pisciotta claimed that she had collaborated with the Grammy winner on his clothing line, Yeezy, and worked on his Donda album.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Ashley Graham



ISSF World Cup

SARABJOT OPENS INDIA'S ACCOUNT IN MUNICH WITH GOLD MEDAL

New Delhi | Agencies

Sarabjot Singh opened India's account at the ongoing International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol in Munich (Germany), with a gold medal in the men's 10m Air Pistol event. The 22-year-old Indian shot 242.7 in the eight-man final, leaving behind his nearest competitor Bu Shuaihang of China, by 0.2 points. Germany's Robin Walter won bronze.

Sarabjot had earlier on Wednesday shot a top score of 588 to qualify for the decider. The final had in its line-up among others, the reigning Chinese World Champion Bowen Zhang and four-time Olympian Yusuf Dikec of Turkey, besides Bu and Robin. The 22-year-old Indian shooter under the circumstances delivered a credible pillar-to-post victory for his second individual ISSF World Cup medal, after his breakthrough gold last year in Bhopal.

The young Indian was strongest off the blocks, shooting three high 10s off his first five single shots to take an early lead. His consistent shooting continued and he never gave up the lead until Walter caught up with him



at the end of the 14th single shot. A clutch 10.8 for his 15th looked to have settled the final as Walter wilted with an 8.6. After Zhang bowed out in

fifth, Walter upset four-time Olympian Yusuf Dikec of Turkey for bronze. Going into the final two shots, 1.4 points separated Sarabjot from Bu,

who was now enjoying the chase as pressure told on Sarabjot. In the end, the Indian shooter did well to hold on for a confidence-boosting win.

Warner surpasses Finch to become Australia's highest run-scorer in T20Is

Bridgetown (Barbados) | Agencies

Opener David Warner surpassed former captain Aaron Finch to become the most run-scorer for Australia in the T20Is.

Warner, playing his final T20 World Cup, achieved the feat in their opening match against Oman at Kensington Oval on Thursday (as per IST). He played a knock of 56 off 51 including six fours and a six to leapfrog his former batting partner.

In 104 matches for Australia, Warner has scored 3,155 runs at an average of 33.92. He also smashed 27 half-centuries and a century in the T20Is so far. On the other hand, Finch had accumulated 3120 runs in 103 matches including 19 fifties and two centuries.

In his gritty knock against Oman, he also stitched 102-run partnership with Marcus Stoinis, who slammed a quickfire 67* off 36 balls laced with six sixes and two fours, to steer the side to 164/5 in 20 overs.

Before Stoinis came to the crease, Australia were reeling



at 50/3 in 8.3 overs after losing captain Mitchell Marsh (14) and Glenn Maxwell (0) on consecutive balls.

All-rounder Maxwell is third on the list with 2,468 T20I runs in 107 matches for Australia while skipper Marsh is placed fifth with

1,446 runs in 55 matches behind former all-rounder Shane Watson's 1,462 runs tally.

After starting their campaign with a win, Australia will next take on reigning champion England at the same venue on June 8.

Djokovic undergoes successful knee surgery after French Open withdrawal

New Delhi | Agencies

Serbian tennis star Novak Djokovic has undergone successful knee surgery after pulling out of the French Open semifinal on Tuesday.

The 37-year-old updated on the injury that forced him to leave the clay-court Grand Slam midway. The 24-time Grand Slam champion aggravated his right knee injury during the fourth-round match against Francisco Cerundolo.

"In the past day, I had to make some tough decisions after sustaining a meniscus tear during my last match. I'm still processing it all but I am happy to update you that the surgery went well," Djokovic wrote on X.

"I am so appreciative of the team of doctors who have been by my side as well as the overwhelming support I have received from my fans."

Djokovic said he is hoping to return "as soon as possible" and is raring to play at



the highest level.

"I'm going to do my best to be healthy and fit to return to the court as soon as possible. My love for this sport is strong and the desire to compete at the highest level is what keeps me going. Idemooo," he added.

The recovery time for a meniscus tear usually takes at least three weeks which makes him doubtful for the

Wimbledon that starts on July 1. The seven-time Wimbledon champion had missed out on last year's title after losing to Spain's Carlos Alcaraz in the final.

Apart from the Wimbledon, the injury will also affect Djokovic's preparations for the Olympic Games, which start in Paris on July 26.

Govt clears foreign training camps for Vinesh Phogat, Arjun Cheema; competitions for Lovlina, Manika Batra

New Delhi | Agencies

The Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has approved multiple proposals from many sportspersons who are scheduled to participate in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. The sportspersons whose proposals have been approved include wrestler Vinesh Phogat, pistol shooter Arjun Cheema, paddler Manika Batra, and boxer Lovlina Borgohain.

Vinesh has sought financial assistance for a competition and training camp in Madrid, Spain followed by a training camp in Boulogne sur-Mer, France. She is set to compete in the Grand Prix, in Spain, in July before spending a week in training there before heading to Boulogne sur-Mer, France to train for 20 days ahead of the Olympic Games.

The MOC also approved overseas training camps for Indian pistol shooter Arjun Cheema, who sought assistance for 11-day training in Austria.

The Paris Paralympics-bound Javelin throwers Ajeet Singh and Sandeep Choudhary will respectively



train in the Leichtathletik Gemeinschaft Offenburg Centre and LAZ Zweibrücken EV Centre in Germany. Ajeet will train for 45 days under German coach Werner Daniel while Sandeep will train for 41 days under coach Uwe Hohn before the Paralympic Games. Para-Club and Discus Thrower Pranav Soorma's request for assistance under the

Target Olympics Podium Scheme (TOPS) to compete in the Para Athletics Championship in Krusevac, Serbia, and train for 10 days at the same location also secured the MOC's nod.

The MOC approved assistance to triple jumper Eldhose Paul to compete in the Meeting Nikaia in France, boxer Lovlina Borgohain to compete

in the Grand Prix-Czech Republic International Tournament, and table tennis players Sreeja Akula and Manika Batra to compete in multiple international tournaments.

Manika Batra's proposal for assistance towards the purchase of a DHS Table to train in India and Para-Athlete Bhagyashree Jadhav's proposal for assistance towards procurement of wheelchair and shot-put equipment were sanctioned.

MOC approved wrestler Antim Panghal's request for assistance towards the boarding and lodging of her coach during the UWW 2nd Ranking Series and the training camp at Olympic Training Centre, Tata, Hungary, and badminton players Rakshitha Sree and Anmol Kharab's request for assistance to compete in the Kaohsiung Masters (BWF super 100) event.

The meeting also approved the promotion of five TOPS Athletes to the Core Group from the Development Group. These are boxers Nishant Dev, Jaismine Lamboria, and Preeti Pawar as well as table tennis players Manav Thakkar and Archana Kamath.

T20 World Cup: New York pitches are 'bordering on dangerous', opines Andy Flower



New York | Agencies

Former England head coach Andy Flower has said pitches at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium are "bordering on dangerous" in the ongoing Men's T20 World Cup.

Flower's comments come after India beat Ireland by eight wickets, with the pitch and slow outfield coming under heavy scrutiny.

On Wednesday, India bowled Ireland out for just 96, with the drop-in pitch having excessive swing and variable bounce, which was uneven on various occasions in the game,

leading to batters like Rohit Sharma and Rishabh Pant suffering blows. On Monday, Sri Lanka were bowled out for 77, as South Africa won the match on a challenging pitch at the venue. "I've got to say that is not a good surface to play international cricket on. It is bordering on dangerous. We saw the ball bouncing from a length both ways, keeping low occasionally but in the main bouncing unusually high and striking people on the thumb, gloves, and helmet.

"It proved very, very tricky batting conditions for any side, led alone a smaller, cricketing nation like Ireland taking on

the giants of India," said Flower, the former Zimbabwe cricketer who's a leading coach in franchise T20 cricket, to ESPNcricinfo.

Former India batter Sanjay Manjrekar agreed with Flower's views and felt the issues with pitches at New York may not be solved easily. "They have a problem on their hands. Inherently, I think there is something wrong with the base of the surface. We've seen dangerous pitches before as well at the international level."

"It seems the cart has been put before the horse. With all the excitement of getting cricket in New York, the

most important thing, which is the pitch, isn't living up to the hype. But something's gone wrong with the preparations, where either the pitch has been under-prepared or something that is beyond their control." This seems more like something beyond their control where they put in a lot of work in trying to get the right surface in the Big Apple and all that," he concluded.

Ireland will be back at the venue to play Canada on Friday, followed by the Netherlands taking on South Africa on Saturday and the marquee India-Pakistan clash scheduled on Sunday.

FRENCH OPEN: BOPANNA/EBDEN LOSE TO ITALIAN PAIR, CRASH OUT IN SEMIS



Paris | Agencies

India's Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden crashed out of the French Open, losing to the Italian pair of Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori in a three-set semifinal at Court Simonne-Mathieu here on Thursday. Australian Open champions Bopanna/Ebden, the second seeds here, went down to Bolelli/Vavassori, seeded 11th in the tournament, 7-5, 2-6, 6-2 in the men's doubles encounter.

In the semifinal encounter, the 44-year-old Bopanna and 36-year-old Ebden got off to a good start but lost the first set. They earned a break in the fourth game and went ahead but the Italian pair responded with two breaks -- the second and decisive one in the 11th game with a forcing shot helping them take the first set in 48

minutes. Bopanna/Ebden started the second set on a positive note and raced to a 3-0 lead breaking their opponents' in the second game. They held on to all of their serves and took the contest into the decider with the second break in the eighth game.

While Bopanna seemed on song in the decider, Ebden took multiple medical timeouts and looked in discomfort. The Italian duo broke Ebden's service twice to seal their places in the final of the French Open. Bopanna and Ebden had reached the semifinals at the French Open on Wednesday, beating last year's finalists Sander Gille and Joran Vliegen of Belgium in three sets.

Bopanna/Ebden beat Gille/Vliegen 7-6(3), 5-7, 6-1. The Indo-Australian pair had lost to the Belgian pair, seeded 10th in this event, at Indian Wells earlier this season.

INDONESIA OPEN: LAKSHYA SAILS INTO QF; TREESA-GAYATRI PAIR BOWS OUT



Jakarta: Lakshya Sen continued his dominance in the Indonesian Open 2024 BWF Super 1000 event as he advanced to the men's singles quarterfinal on Thursday.

Lakshya defeated Japan's Kenta Nishimoto 21-9, 21-15 in the round of 16 here at Istora Senayan Sports Palace.

The Indian took the game under control right from the start, holding initial 4-0 lead. With a powerful cross-court smash and great placement at back court Lakshya pocketed the first game with ease and then dominated the second game too.

It was not an easy match for the Japanese as he looked clueless and continued making errors with drop shots on the net and looked completely ousted in the second game.

Lakshya will next play second seed Dane Anders Antonsen on Friday for place in the semifinal.

In the women's doubles, the duo of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand Pulella suffered a loss at the hands of top 10 ranked Japanese pair Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara.

The Indians put up a close close fight before losing 21-19, 19-21, 19-21 in the match that lasted for 75 minutes.



Anil Kapoor: People say I'm reverse ageing, but 'Bigg Boss' is timeless

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Anil Kapoor is confirmed to take over hosting duties from superstar Salman Khan for the third season of the controversial reality show "Bigg Boss OTT". He said that he is 'reverse ageing' but labels 'Bigg Boss' as "timeless".

Talking about being the host for the first time on "Bigg Boss", Anil said: "Bigg Boss OTT and I are a dream team! We're both young at heart; people often say - jok-

ingly - that I'm reverse ageing, but Bigg Boss is - seriously - timeless. It feels a bit like going back to school, trying something new and exciting."

He added that he will bring the same energy he has given to all his projects.

"I've always approached all my projects with sincerity and a commitment to hard work and I'm going to bring that same energy (times 10!) to Bigg Boss! Unscripted reality has something for everyone - laughter, drama, and surprising twists, and I can't wait to bring my own flavour to it," Anil said.



Sania Mirza talks about her winning streak against Martina Hingis

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The former Tennis player Sania Mirza, who appeared on the new episode of 'The Great Indian Kapil Show' (TGIKS) recalled about the record-breaking streak of wins in 2015-2016 where along with her partner, Martina Hingis (Swiss player), the duo won 44 matches straight.

The show is hosted by comedian Kapil Sharma, and the 11th episode brought a sporty streak with the 'Pride of India' -- a strong female panel this weekend.

Apart from Sania Mirza, the episode witnessed sporting legends like Saina Nehwal, Mary Kom and Sift Kaur Samra.

During the conversation, Sania shared: "I think all of the women sitting on this couch can understand this...when you hit a streak (winning back-to-back), athletes like to call it being 'In the zone'..."

Honestly, I think that's the best way I can describe what Martina and I had for those six months."

"We used to feel, we wouldn't lose when we stepped into the court. And this feeling is very rare for athletes to experience. I was so humbled and privileged that I was able to experience that," said Sania.

She added: "After starting in August 2015, we went on to lose our first match only after six months in 2016 -- March. So, for almost six to seven months, we forgot the feeling of losing."



NEHA KAKKAR DECLARES DEVANSRIYA K AND ATHARV BAKSHI TO BE 'MINI VERSIONS' OF SHREYA, ARIJIT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The super judge of 'Superstar Singer 3', Neha Kakkar called contestants Devansriya K and Atharv Bakshi, the 'mini versions' of singers Shreya Ghoshal and Arijit Singh, as they performed a heartwarming duet of the song 'Tum Kya Mile'. The new episode titled 'Musical Game Night' featured a unique twist wherein the teams of contestants and captains are swapped, introducing a fresh dynamic to the competition as they perform together.

The 13-year-old Devansriya from Kozhikode, Kerala, and 12-year-old Atharv captivated audiences with their rendition of the track 'Tum Kya Mile', from the film 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani'. The original track, which is sung by Arijit and Shreya, stars Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt in the lead roles. The film is directed by Karan Johar.

Their rendition earned them both a standing ovation from singer Neha Kakkar, as well as the team captains.

Speaking about the performance, Neha said: "When I heard that Devansriya and Atharv were going to sing together, I was excited to see these fine singers together. Today, after hearing them, I felt like mini versions of Shreya and Arijit were singing. It was an amazing performance, full of love, emotion, and incredible singing. God bless you all."

Captain Pawandeep Rajan added: "It was an outstanding performance. I call Atharv the perfect 'AB' because he strives for perfection, and I feel so proud that you're from my team. Atharv, you sang beautifully, and Devi, the way you delivered the composition was perfect. Great work, Arunika."

I am excited about the South Indian look : Divya Khosla

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress-filmmaker Divya Khosla is working on her dialect for her next maiden Telugu film "Hero Heeroine" and said that she has started taking Telugu classes to learn the language and is working on her dialect.

She added that she is also reading and watching a lot of South Indian movies to immerse herself in the culture.

Divya said: "As I continue promoting 'Savi', I'm also diving into preparations for my first Telugu film, 'Hero Heeroine'. I'm extremely excited about this project. It's a fantastic film where I will be seen in a glamorous avatar, with extensive preparations underway in Hyderabad."

The actress-filmmaker then shared what all she is doing to perfect her character in the film.

"I have already started my Telugu classes to learn the language and am working on my dialect. I'm also reading and watching a lot of South Indian movies to immerse myself in the culture, as it is integral to the film."

Divya says she is excited about the "South Indian" look.

"This collaboration is wonderful, and I am excited about the South Indian look and the vibrant movie world we're creating in 'Hero Heeroine'. It's truly a dream project that I am eagerly looking forward to," she concluded.



I HAVE AND WILL FOLLOW ALL THAT YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME SANJAY DUTT ON SUNIL DUTT'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt, is remembering his father Sunil Dutt on his birth anniversary on Thursday. The actor took to his Instagram on Thursday and shared throwback pictures of his father. The first picture shows Sunil Dutt with his kids reading a book. The second picture is of the late actor reading a letter.

Sanjay wrote in the caption: "Happy birthday dad, I miss you and love you, I have and will follow all that you have taught me, the values, and most of all to be a humble and a good human being who helps the needy, love you dad."

Sunil Dutt, who hailed from the Jhelum District of the Punjab Province of British India (now in Punjab, Pakistan), made his debut in Hindi cinema in 1955 with 'Railway Platform'. He rose to prominence with acclaimed films like 'Ek Hi Raasta' and 'Mother India'. He was honoured with Padma Shri in 1968 for his contribution to Indian cinema.

He married actress Nargis. They have three children: Sanjay Dutt, Namrata Dutt, and Priya Dutt. He passed away in May 2005.



Avneet Kaur