

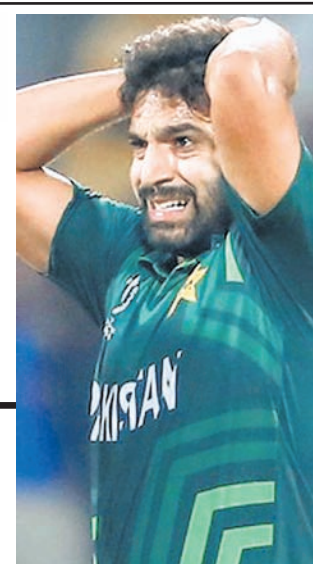
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PM Modi invited to form govt, oath ceremony on June 9 at 7.15 p.m.

FOR NEW EXAMINATION

Team Absolute | New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to form the next government at the Centre.

A statement from Rashtrapati Bhavan said: "President Droupadi Murmu has appointed Narendra Modi to the office of Prime Minister of India and also sought the names of persons who will be appointed as his Council of Ministers and take oath."

PM-elect Narendra Modi is slated to take oath as Prime Minister along with his Council of Ministers for the third time at 7.15 p.m. on Sunday.

"The President will administer the oath of office and secrecy to the Prime Minister and



other members of the Union Council of Ministers at 7.15 p.m. on June 9, 2024," the statement read. Earlier on Friday, a delegation of NDA allies, led by the BJP President, called on President Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan and handed over a letter of support.

At the NDA meet on Friday, PM Narendra Modi was elected as the leader of the Lower House, BJP and the NDA Parliamentary party. In the 543-member Lok Sabha, the

BJP-led NDA enjoys a comfortable majority with 293 seats. The TDP with its 16 MPs and JD-U with 12 MPs comprise important constituents of the NDA alliance. PM Modi, after meeting President Droupadi Murmu, also spoke to the media and said: "NDA allies chose me as their leader and also informed the President about their support. The President called me and appointed me PM-designate. I told the President that Sunday

evening will be convenient for the oath ceremony."

Likening the 18th Lok Sabha to the 'youthful energy and zeal for doing something', he said that the Modi 3.0 will work with full vitality and seek to accomplish tasks in a fixed time-frame and also thanked the voters for giving a third term to the BJP-led NDA.

"In 2014, I was new to the PM office. After having worked for 10 years, I have enough experience and in this term, we will hit the ground running. Our experience of 10 years will enable us to take off development work quickly after assuming office," PM Modi said.

NDA MEANS NAIDU-NITISH DEPENDENT ALLIANCE

New Delhi: The Congress, buoyed over its performance in the just-concluded Lok Sabha polls, launched a bitter attack on the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on Friday and described it as 'Naidu Dependent Alliance or Nitish dependent Alliance'.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera, addressing the media, said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is so rattled by the election results that it has started abusing the Ayodhya residents over the poll defeat in the constituency.

"The people of Maharashtra gave the BJP a drubbing and so was the case in Ayodhya. It couldn't win a single seat in Ayodhya and the adjoining areas and hence it is abusing the people of Ayodhya out of vengeance," Khera said.

"NDA means Naidu dependent alliance, NDA means Nitish dependent alliance," said Khera, taunting the BJP as well as Modi 3.0.

Congress' vociferous attack on the BJP comes on the back of PM-elect Narendra Modi's new slogan for the NDA, which he described as 'New India, Developed India and Aspirational India'.

Khera further accused the Modi dispensation of insulting and denigrating the historical and iconic figures of Mahatma Gandhi, Bhim Rao Ambedkar.

18TH LOK SABHA WILL CONQUER NEW FRONTIERS: NARENDRA MODI

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that India will continue to develop in every sector at an even faster pace than during the previous two terms of the BJP-led NDA government.

"The NDA government has been given a chance to serve the country for the third time. I am grateful to my countrymen, and I assure you that India will continue to develop in every sector at an even faster pace than during our previous two terms," said PM Modi after meeting President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Friday. He also asserted that the 18th Lok Sabha will be full of energy and have the resolve to conquer new frontiers.

"This is the first election after Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. It is an important juncture as we move ahead at a great speed to fulfil the goals en route 2047 when we celebrate 100 years of the country's Independence," said PM Modi. The Prime Minister also said that the NDA 3.0 will work with fresh energy and a wider vision towards finishing the tasks and achieving the goals in a fixed time period.

INVESTORS GAIN RS 28 LAKH CRORE IN JUST 3 TRADING SESSIONS AS PM MODI SET TO BEGIN 3RD TERM

Mumbai: As Prime Minister Narendra Modi was elected as leader of the NDA Parliamentary party amid the RBI's monetary policy announcements, the Indian indices on Friday recovered from losses it suffered before the election results, giving investors Rs 28 lakh crore back in just three trading sessions, from over Rs 30 lakh crore loss they had suffered. The Sensex and Nifty surged more than 2 per cent over positive domestic cues to reach fresh peaks, as investors gained around Rs 7 lakh crore in a single trading session on Friday, with the BSE market cap touching Rs 423 lakh crore.

While the Sensex closed at 76,693 points, or 1,618 points up, the Nifty reached 23,290 (468 points up) at the day's closing.

RBI KEEPS REPO RATE UNCHANGED AT 6.5 PC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The RBI left the key interest rates unchanged in its monetary policy review on Friday as it continues to maintain a balance between economic growth and keeping inflation in check.

The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting decided to stick to the current 6.5 per cent repo rate with a 4:2 majority vote, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said after the meeting.

The RBI Governor said, "The pattern of world crisis continues, but India is headed for a sustained high growth based on its demographics, productivity and the right government policies in place. However, at the same time, we need to be vig-



ilant in the backdrop of an unsettled global environment."

The RBI had last changed rates in February 2023, when the repo rate was hiked to 6.5 per cent. The RBI raised rates by 2.5 per cent between May 2022 and February 2023 after which they have been kept on hold to support economic growth despite inflationary pressures in the past.

The repo rate is the interest rate at which the RBI gives short term loans to banks to enable them to meet their liquidity requirements. This

in turn has an impact on the cost of loans that the banks extend to the corporate entities and consumers.

A cut in interest rate results in more investment and consumption expenditure which spurs economic growth. However, the increased expenditure also pushes up the inflation rate as the aggregate demand for goods and services goes up.

The country's annual retail inflation eased to 4.83 per cent in April, but is still above the RBI's medium-term target rate of 4 per cent. The fact that the economy has clocked a robust growth rate of 8.2 per cent for 2023-24 leaves the RBI with headroom to put off an interest rate cut until inflation comes down to its targeted level, according to economists.

Chandrababu Naidu to take oath as Andhra Pradesh CM on June 12

Amaravati: Telugu Desam Party (TDP) President N. Chandrababu Naidu will take oath as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in Vijayawada on June 12, the party announced on Friday.

Naidu will take oath at 11.27 a.m., the auspicious time decided by his advisors. The swearing-in ceremony will be held near Kesarapalli IT Park close to the Gannavaram Airport in Vijayawada. Governor S. Abdul Nazeer will administer the oath of office and secrecy to him. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his Cabinet colleagues, chief ministers of various states, leaders of BJP and other NDA partners will attend the ceremony.

NHAI plans to roll out Global Satellite-based toll system for barrier-free for highway users

Team Absolute | New Delhi

To provide a seamless and barrier-free tolling experience to National Highway users and enhance efficiency and transparency of toll operations, NHAI has invited global expression of interest (EOI) from innovative companies to develop and implement a Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS)-based electronic toll collection system in India, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said on Friday.

NHAI plans to implement the GNSS-based Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) system within the existing FASTag ecosystem, initially using a hybrid model where both RFID-based ETC and GNSS-based ETC will operate simultaneously.

Dedicated GNSS lanes will be available at toll plazas, allowing vehicles using the GNSS-based ETC to pass



through freely.

As GNSS-based ETC becomes more widespread, all lanes will eventually be converted to GNSS lanes.

To leverage the advanced satellite technology, the EOI aims to identify experienced and capable companies that can deliver a robust, scalable, and efficient Toll Charger Software, which will serve as the backbone for the implementation of Global Navigation Satellite

System (GNSS) based Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) in India.

The EOI also includes a complete plan of implementation and invites suggestions on the same.

Interested companies can email their interest at tenders@ihmcl.com by 3 p.m. till July 22. Implementation of GNSS-based Electronic Toll Collection in India will facilitate smooth movement of vehicles along the National Highways and is envisaged to provide many benefits to highway users such as barrier less free-flow tolling leading to a hassle-free riding experience and distance-based tolling where users will pay only for the stretch they have travelled on a National Highway.

The GNSS-based Electronic Toll Collection will also result in more efficient toll collection as it helps to plug leakages and check toll evaders, the official statement added.

ENVIRONMENTAL TECH FUNDING INCREASED IN INDIA IN LAST FIVE YEARS: REPORT

▶ WHILE FUNDING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL TECH INCREASED FROM EUROPE AND INDIA, CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE US SAW A DECLINE FROM 60 PER CENT IN 2018 TO 40 PER CENT IN 2023.

▶ INDIA IS ALSO SEEING A SIGNIFICANT RISE IN STARTUPS FOR SOLAR ENERGY TECHNOLOGY, HYDROGEN PRODUCTION AND STORAGE, AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES, AMONG OTHERS, THE REPORT SAID.

▶ FURTHER, THE REPORT NOTED THAT FUNDING RECEIVED IN GEO-GREEN SCORECARDS IN INDIA IS \$6.55 BILLION, WITH 2024 HAVING RECEIVED \$372 MILLION TO DATE.

▶ THE TOTAL NUMBER OF UNICORNS AND SOONICORNS TO DATE IN INDIA STANDS AT 1 AND 26 RESPECTIVELY, IT SAID.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India has seen an increase in environmental tech funding in the last five years, according to a report on Friday.

The report by Tracxn, a leading market intelligence platform, comes in light of World Environment Day. It highlights key trends and emerging areas that are poised to make a significant impact in the fight against climate change. The report showed that carbon capture (\$42 million+) and offset and solar energy technology (\$161 million+) have attracted the most funding in the last 5 years.

"India's funding jumped from \$225 million in 2018 to \$1.5 billion in 2023, marking a compounded annual growth rate of 140 per cent," the report said.

There has also been a lot of funding for Indian startups tackling drought resilience through wastewater management. "Over \$35 million worth of funding has been made to date, which is significantly more than its annual investment each year over the past five years," said the report. "The landscape of Environment Tech startups is evolving, with shifts in funding and innovation patterns



across regions and sectors. As the world grapples with climate change, the role of startups in developing sustainable solutions is more critical than ever," the report said.

Amit Shah Rejects Devendra Fadnavis's Offer To Resign, Asks Him To Continue

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid reports of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis standing firm on his decision to resign, taking responsibility for the NDA's poor performance in the state, Home Minister Amit Shah has spoken to him and asked him to continue his work in the government.

Fadnavis, a former chief minister, is part of the Maharashtra government with the Eknath Shinde faction of the Shiv Sena and the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). The undivided Shiv Sena and the BJP had won 41 of the state's

48 between them in 2019, but the new coalition - called the Mahayuti in Maharashtra - managed to get only 17 this time.

Fadnavis had offered to resign on Wednesday, a day after the counting of votes, and several BJP leaders have spoken to him since. The deputy chief minister then met Shah at his residence where, sources said, the home minister asked him to continue working for the Maharashtra government and also prepare a plan for revitalising the BJP in the state. Assembly elections in Maharashtra are likely to be held around October this year.



NDA MEET UNDERLINES MESSAGE OF UNITY AND VISION BEYOND 2029

Team Absolute | New Delhi

On Friday noon, Prime Minister Narendra Modi walked inside the Central Hall of the old Parliament House, amid cheers, clapping and thumping of desks, straight to a decorated corner near the podium to bow before the original copy of India's Constitution and lift it for a few moments to touch it to his forehead.

The symbolism or the messaging of it couldn't have been missed - for PM Modi, it was "Samvidhan Sarvopari (Constitution supreme)", particularly when his political rivals in the run-up to the elections tried to weave a rather fictional narrative that if re-elected, the Modi government would change the constitution and scrap reservation for marginalised classes.

The significance of the venue, chosen for the special occasion - for the election of PM Modi as leader of the 293-member strong pre-poll alliance NDA, their unanimous choice to be the Prime Minister for the third consecutive time - as mentioned by Home Minister Amit Shah was noteworthy.

The Constituent Assembly sat here to draft the Constitution. Also, it sent another message that the old Parliament House was not abandoned by the ruling dispensation, and its historicity and dignity shall be



maintained.

The nation, which was hooked to the live proceedings of the occasion, was keenly watching to see whether there was a sense of unity and purpose among the PM Modi-led NDA.

It was all positive - their body language, the cordiality, the bonhomie, the speeches made by the top leaders of the ruling alliance on how they worked together to reach this momentous occasion, creating history after 62 years when an incumbent Prime Minister for two terms is all set to take the oath of office for the third straight term and what the road ahead is. It should be noted that the friendliness, the connect seen on the podium between Prime Minister Modi and two NDA partners, N. Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister-

designate of Andhra Pradesh and TDP chief, and Nitish Kumar, the Bihar Chief Minister and JD-U chief, was not new-found and certainly not for the camera. They share a long-standing relationship, over two and a half decades old. There had been some hiccups but now they are back in one fold, back as colleagues, friends and peers, as they say, all's well that ends well.

The mutual appreciation and vision for the future, not just for the next five years but as both Naidu and Nitish said, beyond 2029 flowed freely. PM Modi asserted that in the next 10 years, the NDA government will write fresh chapters of good governance.

PM Modi made particular mention of how NDA had remained intact for

the last two and half decades. It had seen many seasons including three full terms in power at the centre and was now poised to take yet another historic leap forward.

Nitish Kumar, then as leader of the Samata Party, was part of the original NDA coalition that was built by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, L.K. Advani, George Fernandes of Samata Party, Parkash Singh Badal of Akali Dal, and Balasaheb Thackeray of Shiv Sena in 1998. Modi was then the youngest national General Secretary of the BJP and had a backroom role to play in stitching the alliance.

Chandrababu Naidu became part of the NDA in 1999. He remained Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and his party nominee G.M.C. Balayogi was named as Speaker of Lok Sabha and the TDP extended outside support to the Vajpayee government. In 2001 when Modi became Chief Minister of Gujarat, Nitish Kumar was Railway Minister and they worked closely on various projects. As chief ministers of two NDA-ruled states, Modi and Naidu shared another kind of equation.

Over two decades later, they have come to share yet another kind of close equation. PM Modi said: "NDA stands stronger and more united than ever before." The NDA, according to him, was an alliance committed to the 'Nation First' philosophy.

After LS polls success, Congress sets its sights on Maharashtra Assembly polls in October



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Buoyed by its performance in the recent Lok Sabha elections, the Maharashtra Congress on Friday exhorted all its workers to now focus on the Assembly polls due in October.

Party General Secretary Ramesh Chennithala, state Congress President Nana Patole, Working President M. Arif Naseem Khan and other top central and state leaders felicitated all the 14 LS winners at a function in the party headquarters.

"The party activists worked hard and unitedly for the LS, took the organisation and its ideals to every corner in the state that enabled Congress to win 14 of the 17 seats it contested. We have to continue this momentum and fight the Assembly elections with the same vigour," Chennithala said. He expressed confidence that the Maha Vikas Aghadi

allies - the Congress, the Shiv Sena-UBT, and the Nationalist Congress Party-SP will fight the Assembly elections unitedly and return to power in Maharashtra this year.

Chennithala admitted that coalition politics is not easy but the MVA became strong with constant dialogue among the allies that helped them perform with flying colours, bagging 31 of the 48 LS seats, compared with 17 to the ruling MahaYuti alliance.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed 18 rallies in Maharashtra, indulged in divisive politics and propaganda, but the people have rejected it and bestowed overwhelming confidence in the MVA," he said.

Patole said that Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra and Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra proved to be game-changer in the LS polls in the country in the battle to save the country's constitution and democracy,

besides the Congress' Five Guarantees that earned the people's confidence.

"With the guidance of the top leadership like Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, the Congress earned the support of people across the board, from all castes and religions. The Congress will not betray the faith reposed by the people and continue to work for the welfare of the masses," he said.

Khan said that the state is currently in the grip of a severe drought with people having no drinking water or fodder for their cattle, but the state government has 'run away' from the scene. The party has suggested that all the newly-elected MPs should tour the drought-hit regions in their constituencies, interact with the people and farmers, question the government and push for remedial measures.

K'taka CM demands probe into NEET 'irregularities', questions credibility of results

Bengaluru | Agencies

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday demanded a probe by the authorities into the alleged irregularities in the National Eligibility and Entrance Test (NEET).

In a media release, CM Siddaramaiah slammed the central government, stating that the entire country suspects huge illegalities in connection with the NEET results. Without bothering to answer the 24 lakh youths who took the exam and their parents, the central government and the National Testing Agency (NTA) are all set to destroy their future.

"Sixty seven candidates scored 720 marks out of 720 in the NEET exam, achieving 100 percent marks.



Compared to the number of toppers in earlier years, this year's result raises doubts. In 2019 and 2020, only one candidate each scored full marks; in 2021, three; in 2022, one; and in 2023, two.

"This year, 67 toppers have emerged. In the backdrop of negative marking, it is doubtful that such a number of students could score 100 percent marks. The Narendra Modi government must clarify whether this development

is coincidental or a new experiment," CM Siddaramaiah questioned.

He maintained that among the 67 toppers, 44 candidates achieved top scores due to grace marks. When such a number of students become toppers, questions are raised about the marking process and the credibility of the examination system.

What is surprising is that the toppers with registration numbers from 62 to 69 are from the same examination centre in Faridabad, Haryana. Among them, six scored 720 out of 720 marks, and the other two candidates obtained 718 and 719 marks. The irregularities are strikingly visible, and the authorities have turned a blind eye, the CM stated.

DELHI COURT RESERVES MEDHA PATKAR'S SENTENCING FOR JULY 1

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Friday reserved its order on sentencing Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) activist Medha Patkar, who has been convicted in a defamation case filed by Delhi Lieutenant Governor (L-G) V.K. Saxena, for July 1.

Metropolitan Magistrate Raghav Sharma of the Saket Courts reserved the order after considering a victim impact report (VIR) submitted by the Delhi Legal Services Authority (DLA).

The VIR is prepared post-conviction to evaluate the extent of loss suffered by the victim, which assists in determining the appropriate sentence for the convict.

At the last hearing, the parties concluded their arguments in the matter of sentencing.

Kangana Ranaut slapgate: Case filed against CISF constable in Punjab

Chandigarh | Agencies

Day after Bollywood actress and newly-elected BJP MP Kangana Ranaut was allegedly

slapped by a CISF constable at the Chandigarh Airport, an FIR was registered against the accused constable, Kulwinder Kaur, in Punjab on Friday in connection with the case.

Kaur has been booked under Sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), and 341 (wrongful restraint) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). However, no arrest has been made so far.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) constable



ble was initially detained and later suspended after Kangana on Thursday told the CISF officials on her arrival at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi that she was slapped and

abused by a woman constable at the Chandigarh Airport before she boarded the flight to Delhi.

"I was hit on the face, abused. I am safe but concerned about terrorism in

Punjab," Ranaut said in a video uploaded on her X handle with the caption, "Shocking rise in terror and violence in Punjab."

Terminating the incident as unfortunate and not in good taste, Punjab BJP President Sunil Jakhar said on Friday that any form of violence as a means to express dissent is unacceptable and needs condemnation.

Meanwhile, farmer unions the SKM (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee have announced their support for the suspended CISF constable, claiming that Kangana had called Kulwinder "Khalistan Kaur".

RAHUL GANDHI GETS BAIL IN DEFAMATION CASE

Bengaluru | Agencies

A court here on Friday granted bail to senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case filed by Karnataka BJP MLC Keshav Prasad.

Gandhi appeared before the 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) court.

Former MP and Dy CM D.K. Shivakumar's brother D.K. Suresh had given surety of property worth Rs 75 lakh to Rahul Gandhi. The court has adjourned the matter till July 30. The advocates and Congress party workers had swarmed the



court premises to welcome Rahul Gandhi.

After the court proceedings, the Congress party workers raised slogans in favour of Rahul Gandhi. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Dy CM Shivakumar left the court premises in the same car. Rahul Gandhi, who seemed to be in a happy mood, waved at party workers from the vehicle.

The defamation case alleges that the Congress engaged in propaganda by publishing full-page advertisements accusing the previous BJP government in Karnataka of charging 40 per cent commission for handling government projects.

Curfew clamped in Manipur's two districts after massive protests erupt

Imphal | Agencies

Curfew was imposed in Manipur's Jiribam and Tamenglong districts, adjoining Assam, for an indefinite period after protests erupted over the killing of a 59-year-old man by suspected 'armed attackers', officials said on Friday.

A Manipur police official in Imphal said that the situation remained tense but under control on Friday after local people organised massive protests following the recovery of the body of Soibam Saratkumar Singh at Jiribam on Thursday night with injuries and several cut marks. After setting some



abandoned structures on fire, local people staged massive protests. A section of protesters demanded the return of their licenced firearms in Jiribam. The weapons were deposited in the wake of recent Lok Sabha elections.

Police resorted to a lathi charge to disperse the mob.

A joint control room comprising officials of Assam Rifles, Central Reserve Police Force, and Manipur Police has been set up in the Jiribam district for effective, smooth and fast flow of communication for controlling the situation and to bring back normalcy at the earliest.

Two ships separated by 30 years being worked upon by GRSE simultaneously

Kolkata | Agencies

One of them is past her prime, but with a lot of steam still left in her before she finally calls it quits. The other is a youngster, raring to break free and make a name for herself.

This is the tale of two ships, berthed next to each other at the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd in Kolkata.

One of them is INS Sagardhwani, a Marine Acoustic Research Vessel built and delivered to the Indian Navy by the GRSE in 1994. She is back to her birthplace for a well-deserved refit. The other is INS Nirdeshak, a Survey Vessel (Large) at an advanced completion stage. Seldom does it happen that two ships of a similar class, though generations apart, get worked upon together at a shipyard.

The INS Sagardhwani's



enviable career graph speaks volumes about GRSE's ship-building capabilities even 30 years ago.

In her first 23 years of service, the INS Sagardhwani completed 200 scientific missions that helped ocean scientists develop indigenous, state-of-the-art underwater sensors for the Indian Navy.

In 2017, she was feted by the Navy for this as a special event.

On October 11, 2023, even while nearing the age of 30, she set out on the two-

month-long Sagar Maitri Mission IV, retracing the path of INS Kistna, which participated in the International Indian Ocean Expedition between 1962 and 1965.

Over the next 60 days, INS Sagardhwani sailed extensively in the northern Arabian Sea and initiated collaborative research with Oman, enabling Indian scientists to cooperate and build strong working relationships with their Indian Ocean Region counterparts studying the oceans.

Bihar's Nagi & Nakti bird sanctuaries added to Ramsar list, India's wetlands rise to 82

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India has added two bird sanctuaries from Bihar -- Nagi and Nakti -- to the 'Ramsar Sites' list, taking the tally to 82, according to a top official.

The newest 'Wetlands of International Importance', both man-made reservoirs situated in the Jhajha forest range of Jamui District in Bihar, were added to Ramsar Sites as part of World Environment Day, observed annually on June 5.

The two catchments feature dry deciduous forests surrounded by hills. "On #WorldEnvironmentDay Nagi & Nakti bird sanctuaries in #Jamui district of #Bihar have been declared as Wetlands of International importance -Ramsar Sites. This will help in our bird conservation efforts," Bandana Preyashi, the Secretary of the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (DEFCC) of Bihar, said in a



post on X.

With the two sites, India now equals China in terms of Ramsar Sites. Both countries have 82 recognised waterlogged ecosystems in the country. The UK with 175 has the highest number of such sites, followed by Mexico (144), Nakti bird sanctuary (Site no. 2546 on the

'Ramsar List') was developed primarily for irrigation through the construction of Nakti Dam and was designated as a bird sanctuary in 1984. It has provided a habitat for over 150 species of birds, mammals, fish, aquatic plants, reptiles and amphibians. The list also includes globally threatened species -- Indian ele-

phant (Elephas maximus indicus) and native catfish (Wallago attu).

It also hosts over 20,000 birds congregating during winter months, including one of the largest congregations of red-crested pochard (Netta rufina) on the Indo-Gangetic plain. Nagi Bird Sanctuary (Site no. 2545) was created following the construction of a dam on the Nagi River.

It was recognised locally as a bird sanctuary in 1984, and internationally as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) by BirdLife International.

Threatened migratory species at the Site include the critically endangered Baer's pochard (Aythya baeri) and the endangered steppe eagle (Aquila nipalensis).

The wetland provides habitat for over 75 bird species, 33 fish, and 12 aquatic plants and hosts one of the largest congregations of bar-headed goose (Anser indicus) on the Indo-Gangetic plain.



Maha Cong sends 4 women MPs to Lok Sabha, BJP 2, NCP(SP) 1

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra Congress has sent the highest, four, women MPs to the Lok Sabha followed by two from the BJP and one from the NCP(SP). It's a far cry from the proposed 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures or the Parliament, and the 2024 Lok Sabha election tally has come down by one - from 8 women elected in the 2019 LS polls - from the total 48 in the state. A total of 17 women were fielded by the ruling Mahayuti of Shiv Sena-BJP-NCP and the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi of Congress-Shiv Sena (UBT)-NCP(SP). The Congress' show was the most impressive with 13 MPs elected, including 4, making it the single-largest party in the state, rebounding from two MPs (2014) and lone MP (2019). The Congress' women MPs are Praniti Sushilkumar



Shinde (Solapur-SC), Professor Varsha Gaikwad (Mumbai North Central), Pratibha Dhanorkar (Chandrapur) - all of whom are also sitting Congress MLAs - besides, Shobha Bachhav (Dhule). Women MPs elected from the BJP are Smita Wagh (Jalgaon) and Raksha N Khadse (Raver); and NCP (SP)'s Working President Supriya Sule (Baramati) - the last two being sitting MPs. In six LS seats, the women

winners vanquished their male challengers from different parties barring Baramati which saw a rare 'nanad' (Supriya Sule) versus 'bhahbi' (Sunetra Ajit Pawar) high-profile tussle from the Pawar clan. The SS(UBT) had fielded some women candidates but they lost out to the Mahayuti nominees, while a few sitting female MPs were dropped like Shiv Sena's Bhawana Gawali (Yavatmal-Washim), and BJP's Poonam Mahajan

(Mumbai North Central) and Dr. Pritam Munde (Beed) who was replaced by her sister Pankaja Munde who was trounced. Interestingly, in Osmanabad, Sunetra Ajit Pawar's half-brother Padamsinh Patil's daughter-in-law Archana R Patil - the wife of BJP MLA Rana Jagjitsinh Patil - lost out to her cousin brother-in-law and SS(UBT)'s sitting MP Omprakash P Raje Nimbalkar. Though the BJP's women MPs won on two seats, it also got a rude shock in Dindori (ST) where its sitting Union Minister Dr Bharti Pawar lost, as also Dr. Heena Gavai lost her bid for a hat-trick in Nandurbar. Meanwhile, all over India, 74 women were elected to the Lok Sabha, a tad lower than the figure of 78 in 2019, with highest 11 from West Bengal and seven each from Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.

4 medical students from Jalgaon drown in Russian river

Quaid Najmi | Jalgaon

Four medical students from Jalgaon studying at the Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University in Russia drowned while attempting to rescue another student in the Volkhov river there, Indian and Russian authorities said on Friday. The university is located in Veliky Novgorod city of Russia and the incident happened there on June 6 (Thursday). The victims were identified as -- Harshal A. Desale, siblings Jishan A. Pinjari, Jia P. Pinjari and Malik Gulamgous Mohammed Yakub -- all aged between 19-21. According to a report submitted to the Indian Ambassador in Russia, Vinay Kumar, by the University's Acting Rector Yury V. Daneykin, who quoted the local authorised agencies, five Indian students were taking a walk on the river-



front that evening during their free time from studies. Though details are not clear, one student, identified as Nisha B. Sonawane, apparently slipped and fell into the river, and the others rushed in an attempt to rescue her. Luckily, she survived but her four colleagues perished in the gruesome tragedy that has shaken the university authorities

and the Indian student fraternity in Russia. Jalgaon Collector Ayush Prasad said that upon learning of the tragedy, the university authorities called up and broke the devastating news to the concerned families, most of them living here. The MEA said on Friday that the Indian Consulate in St. Petersburg is in constant

contact with the university and local authorities to provide all possible assistance and two bodies have been recovered so far. Prasad said that though the Jalgaon Collectorate has no direct role to play in the matter, it has conveyed the bereaved families' desire to bring back the mortal remains of their children back home for the last rites.

After debacle in LS polls, NCP to increase outreach with Muslims, Dalits, Marathas

Team Absolute | Mumbai

NCP legislators at a meeting chaired by party chief Ajit Pawar on Thursday were told to step up outreach with the Muslim and Dalit communities and also increase communication with the politically influential Maratha community in the run-up to the state Assembly elections. The instructions came following the party's debacle in the just concluded Lok Sabha elections. The legislators were also asked to take the farming community into confidence on the issues relating to onion, soybean, and cotton, which impacted the poll prospects of the MahaYuti (the BJP-NCP-Sena alliance) in the general elections. The NCP won one seat while the MahaYuti bagged 17 seats against the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA)'s 30. A senior party functionary said, "The legislators shared the factors that went against NCP nominees and also against the MahaYuti candidates. The anti-incumbency against sitting MPs and also against the Central government was one of the major factors. This apart, the MahaYuti nominees



were hit badly due to the narrative set by the Opposition that the Constitution will be changed if BJP voted to power for the third time. Muslims, Dalits and tribals voted against the NCP and the MahaYuti in general. The protests over Maratha and OBC reservations created a divide between the two which went against the MahaYuti. The legislators pressed the need for corrective steps to avoid further damage in the Assembly polls." The legislators suggested that the state government needs to roll out schemes with hefty financial

allocation to help the Maratha, Dalit and Muslim communities apart from allaying their fears about the change in the Constitution. Meanwhile, at least six MLAs were absent from the meeting. However, the party claimed that all MLAs had informed the leadership about the reasons for their absence from the meeting. The meeting was held amid speculations that a set of MLAs planning to switch to Sharad Pawar's NCP. The meeting lasted for more than three hours as all MLAs were asked to explain their experiences of the recently held Lok Sabha elections and plans for the upcoming Assembly elections. MLAs who were absent from the meeting include Sunil Tingre, Rajendra Shingne, Anna Bansode, Babandada Shinde, Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal and Minister Dharmarao Atram. According to party spokesperson Umesh Patil, Shinde and Atram were ill while Shingne and Bansode had conveyed their inability to attend the meeting due to prior commitments. Zirwal is presently in Russia on an official tour. Tingre, who chose to not come in front of the media, was discussed during the Pune hit-and-run case.

ECI relaxes MCC except in graduates & teachers' constituencies in Maharashtra

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The MahaYuti government in Maharashtra on Thursday hailed the Election Commission's notification to lift the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) in the state except in the Graduates and Teachers' constituencies where biennial elections to the Legislative Council are slated for June 26. The ECI's notification released on Thursday has given a major relief to the state government, which is striving to effectively tackle the drought situation in various parts of Maharashtra. The notification came hours after the state Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde reviewed the water scarcity issue and pressed for the lifting of



MCC. The state government had earlier urged the ECI to relax the MCC after the five-phase polling in Maharashtra ended on May 20. However, the ECI rejected the state government's plea, saying the MCC will remain in place till the publication of the notification for the formation of the new Lok Sabha. The office of the state Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) had said that a scrutiny committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary to recommend to the Election Commission the cases in which it is necessary to take action for exemption from the MCC on an urgent basis during this period.

Porsche Crash: 2 Doctors, Hospital staffer, middleman sent to 14-day judicial custody

Team Absolute | Pune

A Pune court on Friday remanded two doctors and a staffer of Sassoon General Hospital as well as one more person in 14-day judicial custody in connection with the May 19 Porsche crash case. Two IT professionals hailing from Madhya Pradesh were killed after their motorcycle was hit by a speeding Porsche car allegedly driven by a drunk minor boy in the early hours that day in Kalyani Nagar here. Dr Ajay Taware, Dr Shrihari Halnor and Atul Ghatkamble, all attached to Sassoon General Hospital, and Amar Gaikwad were produced in the court of district additional sessions judge VR Kachare, who remanded them in judicial custody for 14 days. Taware, Halnor and Ghatkamble are accused of conspiring with the juvenile's parents to replace blood samples meant for tests

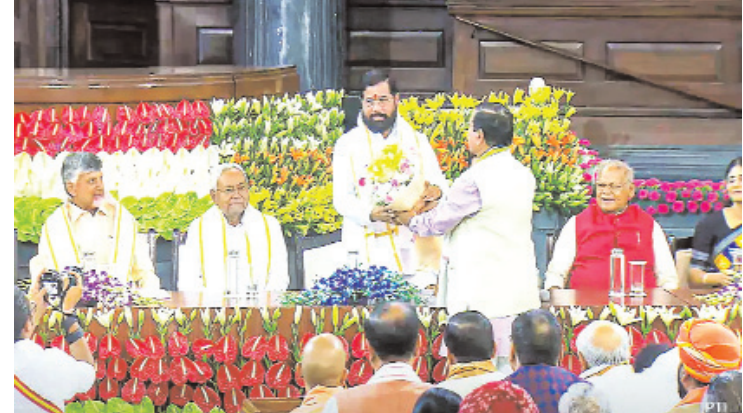


to detect alcohol consumption. Gaikwad worked as the middleman between the accused doctors and the juvenile's father, as per police. Investigating officer (IO) Sunil Tambe told court the police custody of Gaikwad and another alleged middleman Ashpak Makandar was ending on June 10 but the magisterial custody remand (MCR) of Gaikwad was being sought since some crucial information regarding his role was being generated.

No Break Up: Eknath Shinde's assurance to BJP

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

Short of a majority for the first time since Narendra Modi became Prime Minister in 2014, the BJP got strong assurances of support from its allies at an NDA meeting on Friday. Backing a proposal to make Modi the Prime Minister again, Eknath Shinde, Maharashtra chief minister and head of the fourth-largest party in the NDA this time, said the Shiv Sena's bond with the party was a strong one and would not break easily. The Shiv Sena chief used a line from a popular advertisement and said, "Yeh Fevicol ka jod hai, tootega nahin (this is a Fevicol bond, it's not going to break)". For the uninitiated, Fevicol is one of India's leading adhesive brands and ran a series of popular advertise-



ments on its strong adhesion properties. One of the ads showed two pieces of wood stuck with Fevicol getting the better of a few people and even an elephant tugging at them. Addressing the NDA meeting after senior BJP leaders and some alliance members extended their support to PM Modi, Shinde said in Hindi, "Today is a historic and golden day."

(Senior BJP leader) Rajnath Singh has proposed making Prime Minister Narendra Modi the head of the NDA parliamentary party and, as a party that follows (Shiv Sena founder) Bal Thackeray's ideals, we support this fully. "In the past 10 years, PM Modi has contributed to the development of this country and ensured that India's stature has risen globally. The economy has also been strengthened. No matter how many rumours or false narratives the opposition spreads, they have been rejected by the people and PM Modi has been accepted... What I will say about the Shiv Sena is that the party and the BJP share a common ideology and the alliance, which was formed by Bal Thackeray, is a Fevicol bond and will not break," he added.

Congress May Hit 100 In Lok Sabha With Maharashtra Rebel's Return

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

The Congress, which vastly improved its performance but stopped short of a century in Lok Sabha results announced on Tuesday, has added one more MP to its tally. Vishal Patil, a Congress rebel who won as an independent candidate from Maharashtra, extended support to the party on Thursday. The Congress won 99 seats in the election. "With Vishal Patil's support, the Congress' strength will go up to 100 in Lok Sabha," Congress MLA Vishwajit Kadam, who had fought for him within the party, said. The grandson of former Maharashtra chief minister Vasantdada Patil, Vishal Patil won the Lok Sabha election from the Sangli seat, defeating the BJP's Sanjaykaka Patil. He had rebelled and contested as an independent after the Sangli parliamentary seat was assigned to the Shiv Sena-UBT in the seat-sharing arrangement among



the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) partners. In a post on X, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge said, "Welcoming the support of elected MP from Sangli, Shri Vishal Patil (@patilvishalp) to the Congress party". The Uddhav Thackeray Sena faction's move to announce its own candidate even before a seat pact had caused some friction in the Maharashtra opposition alliance. The Congress had repeatedly appealed to the Sena to reconsider its decision. Vishal Patil and Vishwajit Kadam met Kharge and Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi yesterday, and the independent MP handed over his letter of support to the party.

Monsoon likely to reach Mumbai by June 9-10

Team Absolute | Mumbai

On Thursday, the monsoon marked its arrival in Maharashtra by moving into the southern Konkan region, according to the DDG of the Mumbai Regional Meteorological Centre. "The monsoon rains arrived in Maharashtra on June 6 by entering from the southern Konkan region and it will advance up to Ratnagiri and Solapur by the morning of the day," the DDG of the Regional Meteorological Centre of Mumbai told media. Addressing the question about monsoon arrival in Mumbai, the official stated, "The next four days are quite favourable for the advancement of the monsoon in Maharashtra and it is expected to arrive in Mumbai by June 9-June 10." Telangana witnessed early monsoon and will have good rainfall compared to the previous year, said Hyderabad Meteorological Centre on Thursday. Sravani, a scientist at Hyderabad Meteorological Centre, said that the monsoons have already hit Southern India from May 30 starting from Kerala. It is moving very fast towards Maharashtra. Telangana has received a good amount of rainfall in the last two days. On Wednesday morning, however, a number of Mumbai neighbourhoods,



including Dadar, Chembur, Kandiwali, Goregaon, Borivali, etc., were battered by intense pre-monsoon rains. The premonsoon showers brought much-needed relief from the heat for the people of the city. According to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), Dadar and Kandivli received about 4 millimetres of rain on Wednesday. Meanwhile, areas of Chembur and Gandhi Market in Matunga experienced waterlogging due to the heavy rains. The India Meteorological Department (IMD), in its latest Mumbai weather update, has predicted a partly cloudy sky with light rainfall and thundershower for Mumbai on Monday. The weather department has forecast a partly cloudy sky with the possibility of light rain and thundershower in Mumbai and its suburbs on Friday. Amid the expected arrival of monsoon, a high tide of about 4.67 metres is expected to hit Mumbai at 12.50 pm today, stated Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). The civic body also said that a low tide of about 1.75 metres is expected at 6.55 pm today. The minimum temperature in the city is likely to be recorded at 29 degrees Celsius and the maximum temperature is expected to settle at 35 degrees Celsius. Last month, Mumbai witnessed unseasonal rain with gusty winds during which a hoarding collapsed in the Ghatkopar area, claiming several lives.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Now, Congress focus in Kerala

With the ruling Left Democratic Front virtually wiped out in the Lok Sabha polls again the session of the Kerala Assembly, beginning on Monday, is expected to be stormy as the Congress-led opposition will train its guns on Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on a host of issues. Vijayan had led a state-wide bus ride along with his entire cabinet to kick-start the campaign but the results showed that he was unable to improve upon the 2019 tally of one seat, while the BJP also opened its account in the state for the first time. What was even more damaging for Vijayan was the CPI-M's dismal performance in its strongholds of north Kerala like Kasargod, Kannur, Kozhikode, and Palakkad. Popular CPI-M leader and former Health Minister K.K. Shailaja was beaten by young Congress legislator Shafi Parambil, while another sitting CPI-M lawmaker V. Joy suffered defeat - by less than 700 votes. However, the Congress-led opposition is getting ready with a list of the corrupt dealings of the Vijayan government which includes the bar scam, the ongoing probe against his daughter's IT firm by the ED, the SFIO and the Income Tax departments, the K-Fon (Kerala Fibre-Optic Network) and AI cameras installation, in which a relative of Vijayan has got the contract. Adding to Vijayan's woes is that various courts in the state are looking into these issues. Moreover, CPI veteran C. Divakaran on Thursday fired the first salvo, complaining things are going worse for the ruling Left and demanding a change in leadership. Vijayan now appears to be on the back foot and with the Congress' aggressive attack, it remains to be seen how the Left allies will come to his support as he passes through one of his worst times.

Challenges and opportunities before Modi government

Lalit Garg

The results of the 18th Lok Sabha elections shown up with different scenarios, even if the Bharatiya Janata Party did not get the absolute majority, even if the India Alliance stood as a challenge, still Narendra Modi, becoming the Prime Minister of India for the third time, is moving ahead with more strength, determination and will to build a new and strong India than in the first two terms. BJP may have suffered a loss in terms of seats, but it emerged as the largest party for the third consecutive time. The party has surprised everyone with its excellent performance in Odisha and Telangana. In Odisha, not only in the Lok Sabha, the party also broke the 24-year-old dominance of the Biju Janata Dal in the Assembly.

In the 60-member assembly elections of Arunachal Pradesh, BJP has succeeded in forming the government on the strength of 54 percent votes and a massive majority of 46 seats. At the same time, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh remain the strongholds of BJP, while Modi is still the biggest and dominant leader in the country's politics. He will continue to give the nation new wings of development with his surprising and unique decisions. BJP should review and ponder over the reasons for getting fewer seats and accept the reasons for its defeat with ease and generosity and should remove the mistakes that led to fewer seats.

The role of the Election Commission in conducting this election in a planned and effective manner was commendable. Even though the India Alliance had tarnished the country and democratic processes by questioning the impartiality of EVMs and the Election Commission, the election results have not only shattered such misleading statements and myths, but have also restored the vibrant, pluralistic, secular and healthy democratic image of India. The left-jihadi-communist political group that blindly opposes Prime Minister Modi has left no stone unturned in its nonsense blabbering and anti-national conspiracy.

Despite this, the election results have been satisfactory in many ways for the constituent parties of the India Alliance. This election has become the harbinger of new life for the Congress. Anyway, for an ideal democracy, it is necessary to have a strong opposition; this is what gives beauty to democracy. Indian voters have given the message to the India Alliance to play the opposition role effectively.



This time the election results have also raised many questions in front of many political parties. The courts decide who will stay in jail. But Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had handed over the right to the voters to stay in or out of jail, the result of which was that AAP's account was not even opened in Delhi ruled by him, while his party failed to repeat the miracle of Assembly Elections-2022 in Punjab and won only 3 out of 13 seats.

Who is Sharad Pawar's political heir and whose is the real Shiv Sena? Are Maya and Mamta still powerful? This election started with many such questions. Some of these have been answered and some are still pending. The kinds of results that have come have also raised doubts whether economic reforms will continue in the country? Will the country continue to move on the path of development? What will happen to policy stability? Perhaps due to this doubt, there was a huge fall in the stock market. But these questions were answered to a large extent in the speech given by Narendra Modi at the first BJP headquarters and in the meeting with the alliance parties, due to which the stock market also gained momentum and enthusiasm was generated among the workers of BJP and the alliance parties. The country is once again entering the era of coalition governments. Now it is a reality that in view of the current mandate, forming a coalition government has become a compulsion for the BJP. Certainly, there is a big difference between running a government with allies with an absolute majority and running a government with allies in minority. The question is being raised whether the BJP, which has taken big deci-

sions in the interest of the country in two terms with an absolute majority, will be able to feel comfortable in ruling under the pressure of coalition partners? But there is no doubt that the government under the leadership of Modi will move forward with strength and will give shape to its resolutions and plans. A coalition government is going to be formed for the first time at the central level in the country after 2009. In the past, Narasimha Rao and Atal Bihari Vajpayee have also run coalition governments efficiently and have also taken forward the reforms.

Manmohan Singh has also run a coalition government for ten years, but it cannot be ignored how he had to bow down to undue pressure from allies many times. Atal Bihari Vajpayee also struggled with the challenges of a coalition government. But Modi's circumstances are different. He is a master of politics and Amit Shah is a player of political manipulation. Considering this, it is believed that the BJP and the NDA government led by it will be able to do their work successfully. Not only the government, but the major issues of the BJP will also be implemented. Whenever the BJP faces situations of undue political pressure, the government will find a meaningful way out. Anyway, the BJP is not far from the majority figure, so it is expected that it will be much easier for it to run the government with other allies including Telugu Desam Party, Janata Dal-U, Shiv Sena. Even after this, Prime Minister Modi will be running a coalition government for the first time.

Although he is aware of the ways of running such a government due to working under the

coalition government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, running such a government will be a new experience for him. But he is aware of the efficient running of the activities of the organization while holding many posts in the BJP organization. Facing pressures from within the country and abroad, he has made India a power. When the world is facing an economic crisis, India's economy is moving towards becoming the third economy of the world. His running of the coalition government will certainly give a new dimension to his leadership ability and political skill of taking everyone along. He has a political vision and skill to solve the country's problems amidst challenges.

Coalition governments have some positive aspects as well as some negative aspects. The leader of coalition governments has to work in coordination with the constituent parties. The problem arises when the constituent parties start making unreasonable demands or try to bargain or start doing politics of pressure to fulfill their narrow interests. To deal with these situations, the Modi government is already making efforts to include other independent MPs and other political parties in its fold. The allies should worry about the political and economic interests of their states instead of unreasonable demands and pressure, but while doing so, they should not lose sight of national interests. They should also ensure that the coalition government runs smoothly. Certainly, Modi government is facing challenging situations, just like 'Pandavas' faced complex situations in Mahabharata war. Today, there is appeasement instead of Drona, corruption instead of Kripacharya, terrorism instead of Ashwatthama, ambition and immorality instead of Duryodhan, internal and global conspiracy instead of Shakuni, all kinds of disruptive forces instead of nationalism - linguistic, regional, casteism, communalism, selfishness etc. and fundamentalism instead of Karma. Along with this, there are extremely complex problems of inflation, unemployment, discontent etc. and now India is trapped in them. Still, the light in the form of Narendra Modi will become more powerful in his new innings and break all these 'Chakravayuh' of India. Playing the most successful innings of his political life, he will once again show the negative and anti-national forces their place.

international

Consensus, not sign of diplomatic heft: Pakistan elected to UNSC from Asian group, will form axis with China

Arul Louis | United Nations

Pakistan was elected to the Security Council on Thursday as a non-permanent member, allowing it to act in concert with China on matters like terrorism, but the result was not a sign of its diplomatic heft as it was the consensus candidate of the Asia Pacific Group, based mostly on routine subregional rotation. Elected by 182 votes in the 193-member General Assembly, it will take over one of the two Asian seats to be vacated by Japan in January for a two-year term. There were five abstentions in the secret ballot and three countries stayed away. With the endorsement of the Asia Pacific group Pakistan did not face any opposition.

This will be the eighth time Islamabad will be on the Council.

After the election, Pakistan's Permanent Representative Munir Akram avoided the media at the entrance to the General Assembly, not participating in the traditional news conferences by newly elected countries where representatives of the other four nations spoke.

With Japan retiring, there is a subtle change in the balance at the polarised Council where a triumvirate of China,



Russia and Pakistan will emerge on many issues.

Islamabad's place in the Council will give it a grandiose soapbox to amplify its campaign on Kashmir, which it has been bringing up even on unrelated matters. It will also not have to rely solely on China to protect terrorists like Sajid Mir, the mastermind of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, who are backed by it, at the Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee which acts by consensus.

The candidates for election to the other four seats allocated regionally had the consensus backing of their groups and won without opposition.

Denmark and Greece were elected from the Western Europe and Others group, Panama from the Latin American and Caribbean group, and Somalia from the Africa group.

Five of the ten non-permanent seats on the 15-member Council come up for election every year and when the candidates endorsed by their group are not challenged the elections are only a formality. Islamic nations will have two representatives, Pakistan and Somalia, on the Council next year while there is only one currently.

When Algeria retires at the end of this year, there will be no Arab state on the Council, which is sharply divided on Middle Eastern issues, notably Gaza and Israel.

Pakistan had announced its intent to seek its eighth term on the Council when India announced its candidacy for the 2020 election for the 2021-22 term. After heavy canvassing, Islamabad got the backing of about 20 countries as diverse as China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon and Singapore in the Asia group. A group meeting in June last endorsed Islamabad's candidature. The Asia Pacific group's 53 members are very diverse with members stretching from tiny Nauru in the Pacific to Cyprus towards the edge of Europe, with Central Asia, the Gulf, and Lebanon in between.

France to supply Mirage warplanes to Ukraine, says Macron

Paris | Agencies

France will supply Mirage warplanes to Ukraine and train their soldiers, French President Emmanuel Macron has said in an interview with French media. "We will launch a new cooperation and transfer Mirage 2000-5s," Macron said on Thursday evening. The French leader also promised to train a whole Ukrainian battalion of 4,500 troops, to be deployed on the battlefield, Xinhua news agency reported.

He said the delivery of French fighter jets "is not a factor of escalation" and promised "these weapons will not be used to bomb civilians". Additionally, Macron didn't exclude the possibility of sending military instructors to Ukraine.

"There should be no taboo on this subject," he said in the interview. Mirage 2000 is a French multi-role, single-engine, fourth-generation jet



fighter, manufactured by Dassault Aviation.

At the end of February, Macron suggested European nations should send troops to Ukraine during a meeting in Paris but many other European countries, including Germany, Britain, Spain, and Italy, voiced their disagreement.

Following Macron's remarks in February, Russia warned a direct conflict between NATO and Russia would be inevitable if the alliance sends troops

to Ukraine.

Earlier on Thursday, Macron led a ceremony held at Omaha Beach in Normandy, northern France, to mark the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

According to a live broadcast by French media BFMTV, some 20 heads of state and government, including US President Joe Biden and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, participated in the event.

En route to France for the ceremony, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters on Tuesday that the US will maintain its policy of not sending military advisors to Ukraine.

The Normandy landings along the French coast on June 6, 1944, marked an important turning point in World War II, paving the way to the Allied's victory against Nazi Germany.

Europe is no longer a continent of peace: Zelensky in Paris

Paris | Agencies

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday told the French parliament that Europe was a continent at war and that Russia would not stop its aggression at the borders of his country.

"We live in a time when Europe is no longer a continent of peace, unfortunately," Zelensky said in an address to French lawmakers.

"Again, Europe's cities are being destroyed, and villages are burned," he said of Russia's bombing of Ukraine. He also decried the abduction of Ukrainian children in occupied territories.

"This is against Ukraine now. But this can be aimed at other



countries tomorrow, and we already see clearly the direction of the aggression - the Baltic countries, Poland, the Balkans," he said.

"The Russian regime does not see any limits, and even Europe is no longer enough," Zelensky said, pointing to Russian military actions in Syria and

Moscow's growing footprint in the Sahel region of Africa.

Zelensky said Russian President Vladimir Putin was also trying to "weaken" countries through food and energy insecurity.

He said the world has been too "afraid" to forcefully respond to Putin.

4 killed in landslide in Indonesia



Jakarta | Agencies

Four members of a family, including a woman and two children, were killed after a landslide hit their house in the Indonesian province of East Nusa Tenggara on Friday, an official said.

According to preliminary reports, the disaster occurred at South Rewaranga village in the Ende region at around 5:30 a.m. local time when the family was asleep.

Head of Ende Police, Sudarmin Syafrudin, told local media that the family lived in a 12 sq mt single-storey house near a 10-metre cliff, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Heavy rain lashed the area when the landslide occurred. The disaster came at dawn while they were still asleep," Syafrudin said.

Berlin/Islamabad | Agencies

Afghanistan's Taliban rulers said on Friday that they are open to cooperating with the German government on the deportation of Afghan criminals back to the country.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Thursday that he wanted to see the swift deportation of criminals back to countries deemed unsafe by the government in Berlin, including Afghanistan and Syria.

The initiative comes after outrage was triggered by the recent killing of a police officer by an Afghan national in Germany. The attack took place at a rally held by an anti-Islam group in the western city of Mannheim.

"Such criminals should be deported - even if they come from Syria and Afghanistan," Scholz told the Bundestag or the lower house of the Parliament.

Kabul responded on Friday to the German leader's remarks.



"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan calls upon the German authorities to address through normal consular engagement and an appropriate mechanism based on bilateral agreement," Taliban Foreign Ministry spokesman Abdul Kahar Balchi posted on X.

Germany has not sent any one back to Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover in August 2021. Even before that, the agreement was that only men - especially criminals and those deemed terrorist threats - would be

forcibly returned due to the difficult security situation. Critics warn against talks with the Taliban, who are currently internationally isolated.

According to Thomas Ruttig, the co-founder of the Afghanistan Analysts Network, the Taliban could benefit from deportations by using them as an opportunity to cooperate with a Western state, which could be seen as a boost to their reputation.

The German refugee advocacy group Pro Asyl has condemned Scholz's initiative.

"International law clearly prohibits any deportations to Afghanistan and Syria," Pro Asyl's managing director Karl Kopp told the Augsburg Allgemeine newspaper in remarks published on Friday.

Kopp described Scholz's proposed plans as unlawful because "both countries are known for their use of torture and inhuman punishments."

A diversion via Afghanistan's neighbouring countries, such as Pakistan, is also currently being considered by the German government.

However, the Taliban reject this possibility. Extraditions to third countries would be a violation of current conventions, the Foreign Ministry spokesman emphasised in his statement.

So far, no country has officially recognised the Taliban government. Western states demand that human rights, and especially women's rights, be respected in the country before recognition is granted.



OUT OF 311 CANDIDATES, 369 LOSE SECURITY DEPOSITS IN MADHYA PRADESH

Team Absolute | Bhopal

With the BJP sweeping the Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh by winning all 29 seats in the state, including the Congress citadel of Chhindwara, as many as 311 out of the total 369 candidates in the fray lost their security deposits, officials said on Friday.

This comes to more than 84 per cent of the candidates losing their deposit that ranged from Rs 12,500 to Rs 25,000 each, an official said.

With all 29 seats under its belt, the BJP became the first political party to achieve such a feat after 40 years in Madhya Pradesh. The victory margin of the BJP ranged between 1 lakh to 5 lakh votes in 26 constituencies, while it stood under 1 lakh in Bhind, Gwalior, and Morena constituencies.

The BJP received 59.3 per cent vote share, up by around 1.3 per cent as compared to the 2019 poll results.

Fifty-eight of the total 369 candidates, including all 29 nominees of the BJP, 27 of the Congress and two of



Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) did not lose their deposit, Madhya Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan told PTI over phone.

Though the Congress' vote share dipped by 2.1 per cent this time, none of its candidates lost their

deposit. Its vote share came down to 32.4 per cent from 34.5 per cent in 2019.

According to another EC official, a candidate has to secure one-sixth of the total valid votes cast in the constituency. The most spectacular vic-

tory was registered by BJP's sitting MP from Indore, Shankar Lalwani, who bagged the seat by the potentially highest-ever margin of 11,75,092 votes.

Congress did not contest the Indore seat after its candidate Akshay Kanti Bam crossed over to the BJP. All other 13 candidates lost their deposit in Indore. BSP candidate Lakshman Solanki pocketed 51,659 votes and ranked second in Indore, but he lost his deposit.

Candidates from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Classes have to keep Rs 12,500 as security deposit, while those belonging to the general category have to pay Rs 25,000, the EC official said. It is hard to work out the total amount of the forfeited security deposit, he said.

Two BSP candidates - Narayan Tripathi from Satna and Ramesh Garg from Morena - were able to save their deposits. Tripathi polled more than 1.85 lakh votes, while Garg garnered more than 1.79 lakh votes.

Country's largest ethane cracker project cum petrochemical complex at Ashta

► CHIEF MINISTER DR. YADAV APPROVED THE PROJECT OF GAIL (INDIA) LIMITED. THERE WILL BE AN INVESTMENT OF RS 60 THOUSAND

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav approved the country's largest ethane cracker project to be set up by GAIL (India) Limited in Ashta tehsil of Sehore district. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav expressed hope that this project will provide employment to the local people and promote industrialization of the state. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav directed for immediate action on allotment of land required for the project. It is noteworthy that this



project, to be built in Ashta tehsil of Sehore district with an investment of about Rs 60 thousand crore, will be the largest ethane cracker project in the country. A green field petrochemical complex is also proposed in this project. Under this, petrochemicals like LLDPE, HDPE, MEG and Propylene will be produced. This project will provide

employment to 15,000 persons during the construction period and approximately 5,600 persons during the operation period. A township of 70 hectares is also proposed in the project. The groundbreaking ceremony of the project is likely to begin by February and commercial production is likely to begin in the financial year 2030-31.

Ruckus in Congress

Ajay Singh raised questions on Digvijay-Kamal Nath, demanded resignation of Jitu Patwari

Team Absolute | Bhopal

This time Congress has been wiped out in the Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh. BJP has won all 29 seats in the state including Chhindwara. After the defeat, discord has come to the fore among Congress leaders. Congress leader Ajay Singh Rahul on Thursday targeted senior leaders Kamal Nath and Digvijay Singh as well as state president Jitu Patwari.

Former leader of opposition Ajay Singh said, I demand a high-level review of the tenure of state party president Jitu Patwari. Not only did the party face a humiliating defeat, but a large number of leaders and workers left the party. For this, the steps taken to prevent him from leaving the party should also be discussed. He demanded that



the reasons for the party's defeat in the elections should be found out.

Ajay Singh is the son of former Chief Minister and former Union Minister late Arjun Singh. Ajay said, Congress workers are demoralized and disappointed,

which is not good for the future of the party. He further asked why veteran party leaders Kamal Nath and Digvijay Singh did not come out of their home areas? The leadership should find out who campaigned during the elections.

MPPSC: Topper Raisen's Ankita said, when she used to get high marks in school, her mother would get her copy rechecked

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Out of the top 10 rankers of Madhya Pradesh, 7 are girls. These include Ankit Pathkar, daughter of Raisen city, who has secured first position in the state by securing 942 marks out of 1575. With this result, these candidates of the state will get appointments on many posts including 24 Deputy Collector, 13 DSP, District Registration Assistant, Commercial Tax Officer, Labor Officer, Municipality Officer.

There is an atmosphere of happiness in the family of Ankit Pathkar, who has topped the MPPSC examination. Ankita is the youngest daughter of the family. He has three elder sisters and also a younger brother. Father runs a general store while mother is a teacher. Ankita had prepared for her MPPSC by staying in Bhopal and at home. He has given credit for his success to his family and teachers.

Ankita said, I am the youngest in the house. The family members



used to say that I have become the fifth girl, but my mother did not let me lack anything. He is a government servant and I have been getting a lot of support from my sisters also. When I was in school and I got good marks, my mother used to ask the teacher to check the copy again, she wondered how he got such marks. Today when I have topped in MPPSC, the whole family is very happy. Those students who leave studies midway out of fear and accept defeat, such students should not give up.

BROTHER AND SISTER TOGETHER BECAME DEPUTY COLLECTOR, SISTER NAIB TEHSILDAR, BROTHER LEFT TCS JOB

Ujjain: In Ujjain, a brother and sister passed the Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission examination together and both were selected for the post of Deputy Collector. Sister got 14th rank and brother got 21st rank. Sister Rajnandani Thakur is currently Naib Tehsildar and brother Arjun Singh Thakur left TCS job for MP Public Service Commission exam. Prof. posted in Engineering College. Dr. YS Thakur's son Arjun Singh Thakur and daughter Rajnandani Singh Thakur appeared for the Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission examination. Both were selected in MP PSC.



Bhopal Man Arrested For 'Dream Girl' Inspired Swindle On Social Media

THE MAN MANIPULATED HIS VOICE TO SOUND LIKE A WOMAN'S AND SEDUCED HIS VICTIMS INTO FORKING OVER

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a case that mirrors the plot of the Ayushmann Khurrana starrer 'Dream Girl', a 22-year-old man has been arrested in Bhopal for swindling numerous people by pretending to be a woman online. Ashu Mehra, a.k.a. Ajay or Chhotu Mehra, allegedly manipulated his voice to sound like a woman's and seduced his victims into forking over money.

Ajay was caught after one of his victims, Aman Namdev, filed a police complaint on Tuesday, June 4. Namdev told the police that he had befriended a woman named Shivani Raghuvanshi on Instagram. Though they had never met in person, Shivani had pressured Namdev to marry her. When he refused, she threatened to commit suicide, according to the complaint. Shortly after, a man named Ashu Mehra, claiming to be Shivani's "Guru bhai (brother)", approached Namdev with the news



that Shivani had attempted suicide and needed money for treatment. Out of fear, Namdev told the police, he transferred Rs 70,000 to Ashu.

On investigating the complaint, the police found that Ashu Mehra was behind the scam. He reportedly confessed that he was inspired by the

movie 'Dream Girl,' in which the protagonist secured a job by speaking in a woman's voice. Ashu allegedly created several fake social media profiles under female names on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Using these profiles, he would initiate conversations with men, eventually pressuring them and extorting money by fabricating emergencies such as suicide attempts.

Ashu allegedly got to dozens of victims, amassing a tidy sum that he used to indulge himself.

The police are investigating the full extent of Ashu's operations and identifying more potential victims who may have been cheated.

The case once again highlights the dangers of social media scams and the ease with which users can be exploited for financial gain. The police warned that people must exercise caution and verify the authenticity of online acquaintances before making financial transactions.

NEET scam in Haryana like Patwari scam in Madhya Pradesh: Arun Yadav

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former President of Madhya Pradesh unit of Congress and former Union Minister Arun Yadav has attacked the results of NEET. He has said that the NEET scam in Haryana has happened on the lines of the Patwari scam in Madhya Pradesh.

The results of NEET, the examination conducted for admission to medical colleges across the country, have been declared. Former Union Minister Arun Yadav has raised questions regarding these results and has written on X, the way there was a scam in the Patwari recruitment examination of Madhya Pradesh, toppers were released from the examination center of Gwalior, now the same pattern of scam has taken place in the NEET examination. According to reports, more than 5 children from the same examination center in



Haryana have topped. The government should investigate the irregularities in the NEET exam and punish the culprits. Former minister Yadav has also shared the result list of the National Testing Agency on his blog and has specifically highlighted the numbers who have appeared in the merit list after appearing for the exam from the same center. It may be noted that a case

of scam had also come to light in the Patwari recruitment examination in Madhya Pradesh, in which many children from a center in Gwalior had topped. This college belongs to a leader and there was a lot of uproar in the state politics regarding Patwari recruitment.

At present, in the politics of Madhya Pradesh, every possible effort is being made by the Congress to corner the ruling party BJP in the name of scam. Recently there has been a nursing scam in the state, which is being investigated by the CBI. During this investigation, the nexus between college operators and CBI officials has also been exposed and even two inspectors have been arrested. Not only this, scam has also come to light in B.Ed College. Meanwhile, Congress has got an opportunity to launch a major attack on BJP through the alleged irregularities in Haryana.

A four-member sub-committee of the Council of Ministers was constituted under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister Shukla

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The state government has constituted a four-member Council of Ministers sub-committee under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister Public Health and Medical Education Rajendra Shukla to consider and give suggestions on various aspects of the hearing operation plan in all the districts of the state. The committee includes Urban Development and Housing, Parliamentary Affairs Department Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya, Panchayat and Rural Development and Labor Department Minister Prahlad Singh Patel, Sports and Youth Welfare, Cooperation Department Minister Vishwas Sarang, Additional Chief Secretary, Public



Health and Medical Education Department will be the secretary of this committee. It is noteworthy that the plan prepared by the Public Health and Medical Education Department to operate hearing vehicles in all the districts of the state has been approved by the Council of Ministers on March 11, 2024. The committee will consider all aspects of the scheme and give its suggestions.

AIIMS Bhopal Performs About 400 Brain Tumor Surgeries Annually

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In recognition of World Brain Tumor Day, AIIMS Bhopal highlights the critical importance of early detection and public awareness to combat the growing incidence of brain tumors. Professor (Dr) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, emphasized that identifying brain tumors in their early stages significantly improves treatment outcomes and provides quicker relief for patients.

"By raising awareness and dispelling misconceptions, we can ensure that patients receive better support and integration into society," stated Dr. Singh. "Every year, approximately 28,000 people in India are diagnosed with brain tumors, and at AIIMS Bhopal, we perform brain tumor surgeries on about 400 patients annually."



Dr. Sumit Raj, Additional Professor in the Department of Neuro Surgery at AIIMS Bhopal, explained the types of brain tumors: "Tumors can be benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous). Benign tumors consist of normal cells, while malignant tumors are composed of abnormal cells that grow uncontrollably. Brain tumors develop from abnormal cells forming in any part of the brain. While the exact cause remains unidentified, prolonged exposure to radiation is believed to be a significant risk factor. Brain cancer is the

second most common cause of cancer in children."

Highlighting the theme for this year's World Brain Tumor Day, "Brain Health and Prevention," AIIMS Bhopal is dedicated to educating the public about the symptoms and early signs of brain tumors. Dr. Singh remarked, "Our goal is to enable more people to recognize the early symptoms and seek timely treatment, which can be life-saving."

AIIMS Bhopal urges the community to take proactive steps towards brain health by being informed about the disease. Early symptoms can include persistent headaches, nausea, vomiting, blurred vision, balance issues, and cognitive or personality changes. Awareness campaigns and educational programs will be held to disseminate this crucial information.

The name of the new Chief Secretary will be decided by September, the search for the new DGP also intensifies

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the Lok Sabha elections, now CM Dr. Mohan Yadav is preparing to make major changes in the bureaucracy soon. Preliminary preparations have been done. DGP Sudhir Saxena's two years have completed in March 2024, so he can be replaced immediately. Two options are being discussed regarding Chief Secretary Veera Rana. Veera Rana will be replaced before the completion of the 6 month extension (till September 2024) or the new CS will be appointed as OSD first. In both cases, new CS will be available before September. Mohd. is among the main contenders for CS. Suleman, Dr. Rajesh Rajoura and SN Mishra. The name of



Anurag Jain posted at the center is also prominent. Possibilities of Union Cabinet, Defense or Home Secretary are open for Jain. He will have to take a decision to come to Madhya Pradesh. CM will also have to take initiative. Union Cabinet, Home Secretary are currently on extension.

Appointment of 1 ACS or PS is possible in CMO. These include the names of Rajesh Rajoura (if he does not become CS yet), Ashok Varnwal, Manu Srivastava, Anupam Rajan, Shivshekhar Shukla, E Ramesh Kumar, Sanjay Shukla, Nikunj Srivastava.

Why Khloe Kardashian Hasn't Dated in Two Years

Los Angeles | Agencies

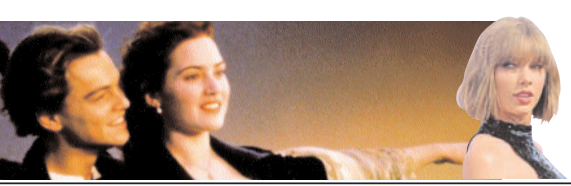
Khloé Kardashian isn't rushing back into the dating pool, she clarified during the latest episode of *The Kardashians*. While speaking with Scott Disick in the Thursday, June 6, episode, the 39-year-old mom of two made it loud and clear that she doesn't want to date yet.

"Everyone has been really judgy about how I spend my time because I'm not dating," Khloé said during a confessional, before referring to her last relationships with ex Tristan Thompson. "I stopped dating Tristan when Tatum was in utero. Two and a half years is not that crazy!"

While noting, "This is life, we all gotta grow up and move on," in her confessional, the *Good American* founder doubled down on her reasoning while discussing it with Scott, 41.

"I don't want to," she told Scott. "Once I'm done with the kids at 9 [p.m.], I have limited time. I have to be up at 4:30 [a.m.], 9 p.m. to 4:30 a.m. - that's my time. I'm not sharing it with a man. I'm not sharing my TV. I'm not sharing my bed."

"I have no idea how you're supposed to date when you have kids," she explained. "Because I'm not bringing you to my home where my kids are, and I'm not going to your home where you're gonna chop me up in your basement and kill me. And I'm also not going to a public restaurant or space where people can take pictures and you're gonna be another notch on my belt in the public's eye. I don't f**king think so!"



American Idol's Mandisa's Cause of Death Revealed

Los Angeles | Agencies

Late singer-songwriter Mandisa's cause of death has been revealed, according to a new autopsy report released on Wednesday, June 5. Per PEOPLE, Mandisa died from "complications of class III obesity." The outlet further reported that she was found dead on April 18 in her home and "was last known alive approximately three weeks" beforehand.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, class III obesity was formerly known as "morbid obesity." It is a chronic condition when a person has a body mass index of 40 or higher or 35 or higher along with obesity-related health issues. Class III obesity can lead to heart disease and other conditions but is manageable.

On April 19, Mandisa's family confirmed her death to the outlet in a statement.

"We can confirm that yesterday Mandisa was found in her home deceased," they wrote in the statement. "At this time we do not know the cause of death or any further details. We ask for your prayers for her family and close knit circle of friends during this incredibly difficult time."

Los Angeles | Agencies

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian, who is a mother of four children, seemed to have had a breakdown after hiding in the bathroom from her kids during a work call. In an episode of *The Kardashians*, Kim had a tough time balancing her work with caring for her children Psalm, Chicago, Saint and North, whom she has with her former husband and rapper Kanye West, reports people.com. While going for her jury duty, Kim speaks about how chaotic her household was that day.

"Oh my God. No, what I wanted to say was that I had a Zoom interview at the house with all my kids there banging on the door, just screaming. And I was literally hiding in a bathroom with the door locked. And I was just like, 'I can't believe this. I mean, I can believe it.'"

"I'm open to anything at this point because I can't live like this. I ran out of patience and that's what my superpower was, being calm and patient," she added. She then says that she wants to try to be more strict like her sister Khloe Kardashian.

"Sometimes it gets just a little intense. I want to be more strict like Khloe but I don't know why I have a hard time just saying, 'No is no.' I think I also don't want to deal with the whining and the tears of not getting their way."

"They know when to come and when to throw the little, you know, start with the tears so that I like, 'Stop, stop. Sure. Take your iPad, you know, just stop,'" Kim revealed.

"I just have to be like, 'I don't care if you're gonna throw a tantrum in front of everyone. The answer is no.'"

Kim then shared that parenting often takes an emotional toll on her. "Managing four kids in a household when they're like, not getting along and they all want different things. And I'm only one person," Kim shared.

"This always shuts them up. I always say, 'Okay guys, do you want me to just cut myself in half or in fours and a part will go with you, a part would go with you,' and they look at me like, 'No, don't ever do that!'"

"And I'm like, 'Well, that's the only option if you all want me at the exact same time, you've got to chill. I'll put everyone to bed at a different time. We have to space this out,'" she said.



KIM KARDASHIAN HAS BREAKDOWN AFTER HIDING FROM KIDS DURING WORK CALL



JENNIFER ANISTON NEVER IMAGINED 'FRIENDS' WOULD BE SUCH A HUGE SUCCESS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Jennifer Aniston, who found international fame as Rachel Green in *'Friends'*, said that she "never thought" the sitcom would become such a huge success and still be popular 30 years on from its debut.

Speaking during an interview at Variety's *'Actors on Actors'* series, Aniston said: "The fact that it's had this long, wonderful life and it still means a lot to people is one of the greatest gifts I think all five of us -- all six of us -- we never could imagine."

Aniston starred alongside names such as Lisa Kudrow, Courteney Cox, Matt LeBlanc, David Schwimmer, and the late Matthew Perry, who passed away in October 2023 at the age of 54, in the show.

"And we see each other. I talked on FaceTime with Court (Cox) last night for an hour, and Lisa and the boys, and we just have a really -- it's a family forever."

'Friends' ran for 10 seasons from 1994 until 2004, and Aniston reminisced about that on the day the first episode premiered, she and Perry went to play a prank on Kudrow, who was getting her hair coloured in a nearby salon, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She said: "Matthew Perry and I were having lunch somewhere, and we knew Lisa (Kudrow) was getting her hair coloured. 'So we ran into the hair salon, and I snuck up -- she was in the sink -- and I took the nozzle from the guy that was supposed to be doing it and just started washing her hair. It definitely flew out of control, and that was unfortunate. But the excitement we had, it feels like yesterday.'"

ANYTHING I REALLY WANT TO DO, THEN I'LL DO IT. I DON'T CARE THAT I'M FAMOUS : DOLLY PARTON



Los Angeles | Agencies

Country music icon Dolly Parton shared that one of the few things that would make her "pull way back" would be if her husband "needed" her.

Parton has been married to Carl Thomas Dean since 1966, has released almost 50 studio albums since beginning her career in the late 1960s and has starred in a string of movies.

Asked if she has any plans to retire, Parton told *'Entertainment Tonight'*: "Not today. Maybe someday I may have to. I've always said

that if my husband was in ill health or needed me, I would most definitely pull way back."

Her comments come days after the *'Jolene'* hitmaker said that she doesn't really "care" about being world-famous.

"Anything I really want to do, then I'll do it. I don't care that I'm famous."

She was asked what "scares" her in life and admitted that she finds it difficult to live in a world where some people are "nuts and crazy" while the population has to figure out how to navigate that, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"It scares me that people are not better to one another and that we have to live in a world where people are nuts and crazy and you have to try to figure out how you're going to manoeuvre all around that."

Parton also shared that had she not "made it" in showbiz, she would've followed a career in beauty.

She said: "Had I not been in showbusiness, if I hadn't made it, I probably would have been a beautician because I still would've had all that hair and makeup."

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Barbara Palvin





T20 WORLD CUP

US cricketer accuses Pakistan's Haris Rauf of ball tampering

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan's disastrous start to the T20 World Cup 2024 has left the squad red-faced and under severe criticism as the team suffered a shocking defeat to the United States. While the wounds of the defeat are still fresh, a new accusation has come to light in which a USA player has accused Pakistani speedster Haris Rauf of ball tampering during the match on Thursday.

Rusty Theron, a player of the US cricket team, has alleged that Rauf attempted to tamper with the ball with his fingernails during the match played at the Grand Prairie Stadium in Dallas, calling on the International Cricket Council (ICC) to take immediate notice and initiate an investigation into the matter.

"ICC - Are we just going to pretend Pakistan isn't scratching the hell out of this freshly changed ball? Reversing the ball that's just been changed 2 over ago? You can literally see Haris Rauf running his thumbnail over the ball at the top of his mark," Theron wrote on X.

The accusations by Theron are sensitive in nature and come in the



wake of a thrilling match that stretched into the Super Over and resulted in a sensational victory for the US team.

But what is concerning in the accusation is that it not only tarnished the reputation of the Pakistan cricket team but also brings back forgettable

memories, in which, many top players have been caught trying to tamper and rough up the cricket ball to reverse it.

The latest accusation, if proven right, would be a major setback for the team and the ace bowler Rauf, who has recently made his return to the team.

After a shocking start to their T20 World Cup campaign, skipper Babar Azam said his squad carried with it a tendency to underestimate smaller and less established teams, conceding that the team performed way below its standards.

"Whenever you come into any tournament, you always do the best preparation. But you can say it's a kind of mindset, when you come up against a team like this, you relax a little. You take things a little lightly. If you do not execute your plans against any team, then whatever team it is, it will beat you. I believe that we are not up to the mark in executing," said Babar.

"We are doing well in preparation, but in the match, we are not executing our plans as a team. We are not playing good in all three departments," he added.

SHOOTING: SIFT KAUR SAMRA WINS BRONZE AS MUNICH WORLD CUP CONCLUDES

New Delhi | Agencies

Women's 50m rifle 3-positions (3P) specialist Sift Kaur Samra won a bronze medal on the concluding day of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol in Munich, as India ended the competition with two medals.

Sarabjot Singh had won gold in the Men's 10m Air Pistol on Thursday. Sift shot 452.9, to give up silver by an agonizing 0.1 to China's Han Jiayu, the reigning Air Rifle Women's World Champion. World No. 1 Seonaid McIntosh of Great Britain won gold with a score of 466.7.

As yet another classy field took to the shooting lanes at the Munich Olympic Shooting range, a fault in Danish Olympian Ibsen Rekke Maeng's electronic target system resulted in a slight delay in finishing the kneeling position of the women's 3P final. While Seonaid had already taken a good lead at the end of it, Sift was down at seventh.

As the Briton powered ahead after the second Prone position, ahead by almost three from second-placed Chinese Zhang Qiongyue at that stage, Sift



clawed up to fifth with an above-average round. A brilliant second five-shot series in the last Standing position then brought her up to the joint bronze medal position tied with China's Han Jiayu, the reigning world champion in women's 10m Air Rifle.

Sift was now in her element and after the 43rd shot of the 45-shot final, she had climbed up to second but eventually had to settle for bronze by the narrowest of margins.

The Men's 3P final had no less quality as experienced Serbian and two-time Olympian Milutin Stefanovic, top rifle-shooter Istvan Peni of Hungary, world-record holder Yukun Liu of China, the in-form Jiri Privratsky of the Czechia and

world championship bronze medalist Jon-Hermann Hegg of Norway, all lined-up among others.

The gold in the end went to the second Norwegian in the field, Ole Martin Halvorsen (464.3) who beat Peni by 0.2 in an up-and-down final. Hegg took bronze with 449.9.

India's Aishwarya Tomar never really recovered from a slow start to the final and was the first to exit the final in eighth place with a score of 408.9 after 40 shots.

He was fourth after the first Kneeling position, before going down to eighth after Prone and then an 8.9 for his 39th shot and ninth in Standing, really came at the wrong time.

Neeraj Chopra congratulates Sunil Chhetri on 'amazing international career'

New Delhi | Agencies

Olympic gold medallist javelin thrower praised Indian football team captain Sunil Chhetri, who bid adieu to football in the FIFA World Cup Qualifier against Kuwait, on his illustrious international career.

Chopra shared a special post on social media saying that Chhetri has waved the flag of India high.

"Aapne humara jhanda bahut uuncha lehraya (you have waved the tri-colour high) @chhetrisunil11 bhai. Congratulations on an amazing international career!" Chopra wrote on X accompanied with a picture of an emotional Chhetri receiving a guard of honour from his teammates.

India were held goalless by Kuwait at home in Chhetri's



farewell game, a second-round Group A match of the FIFA World Cup 2026 AFC qualifier here at the Salt Lake Stadium, leaving them to beat Qatar in a must-win away game on June 11.

The game against Kuwait was the 39-year-old's 151st and final game of a storied

national career.

Chhetri bid adieu to his glittering career as the third-highest international goal scorer with 94 international goals in 151 matches behind Argentine star Lionel Messi (106 in 180 matches) and Portugal great Cristiano Ronaldo (128 in 205 matches).

T20 World Cup: 'Pakistan didn't play well in all three departments', says Babar after shock loss to USA

Dallas | Agencies

Following Pakistan's shock loss to the co-hosts USA in the Super Over in their opening match of the T20 World Cup on Thursday, captain Babar Azam admitted that his team did not perform optimally in all three departments of the game.

Pakistan struggled early, losing three wickets to stand at 30 for 3 by the end of the powerplay. Babar Azam and Shadab Khan then stabilized the innings with a 72-run partnership off 48 balls. Despite their efforts the USA restricted Pakistan to 159/7, then matched the score and went on to win in the Super Over to create a major upset.

According to Babar, Pakistan were off the mark in the Powerplay, slow through the middle overs and disappointing at the death with the bat. Then with the ball they didn't execute early plans with pace on, and failed to take wickets with spin through the middle overs.

"To be honest, whenever you lose a game, you are always upset. We did not play well in all three departments. For six overs, I think we did not capitalise properly, but later on, after the 10th over we got momentum, but



again we lost too many wickets and then your momentum is gone. So, I think as a batting unit we need to step it up in the middle and in the end," Babar said after the match.

Babar top-scored with 44 from 43 balls on the day, helping his side rebuild after a loss of three wickets in the Powerplay. He admitted that losing back-to-back wickets was the turning point of the game.

"The first six overs, the ball was holding and was swinging. But later on, I didn't feel it was a different wick-

et. It settled down a bit. Because of the early start - the matches are starting at 10.30 am - the fast bowlers will get a little help. There was some juice in the pitch early morning. So, they utilised that and executed their plan. It was difficult in the beginning, but we covered it.

"I think when we lost the wickets back-to-back, that was the turning point. But as a professional, you have to step up against such a team in the batting... in the middle order. This condition is not an excuse...they

played well, but I think we played badly," he added.

The USA struck a boundary off the final ball of the regular overs to take the match to a Super Over, where Mohammad Amir leaked 18 runs, with wides and a string of overthrows seeing Pakistan concede a number of needless extras.

The Pakistan captain credited USA's batters Aaron Jones and Harmeet Singh for their aggressive running between the wickets. "He (Amir) is an experienced bowler, he knows how to bowl and we are just trying to field the ball. But I think the US batsmen were a bit smart, when the ball was coming to the keeper he was running. So, I think that was a plus point for the batters in the Super Over."

Pakistan will next play arch-rivals India in New York on Sunday. And Babar said that the death-over strategy with the ball for that crunch match will not change despite their loss against USA.

"The plan is simple: We try to hit yorkers and we are not changing any plans because the ball is reversing and our bowlers are very accurate, so our play will not be any different," he concluded.

Surya Sagar becomes first Indian to win a golden ticket to World League of Fighters

Bangkok | Agencies

In an event marked by high-octane action, Indian Muay Thai star Surya Sagar emerged victorious as the first Indian contestant to secure the coveted golden ticket for the World League of Fighters.

The qualifying UAE event was held at the prestigious Lumpinee Stadium in Bangkok on June 1, drawing a host of talented fighters from India and around the world. The event featured five main combat matches for the evening including participants of the cruiserweight, featherweight, middleweight, welterweight, and the female featherweight category.

Among the accomplished participation of many Indian fighters, Surya Sagar's triumph was notable as it was the first golden ticket to be achieved by an Indian, demonstrating incredible strength and willpower. In addition to offering a fitting backdrop for the intense battles, Surya's feat brought attention to the growing stature and proficiency of Indian fighters in the global arena.

Speaking about Surya Sagar's headlining victory, Rajesh Banga, Chairman of World League of Fighters said, "Surya Sagar's performance was nothing short of spectacular. His commitment to the game and his skill in the ring embodies the essence of the World League of Fighters event. His advancement and his national representation on such a distinguished platform fills us with great pride."

In addition, Ukrainian fighter Anatoli Shponarskyi triumphed over Azerbaijan's Rauf Gerayzade earning a



golden ticket to the main event in November further exhilarating the exciting evening.

Dana Begzhonova of Russia won the golden ticket in the female featherweight division by outlasting Alba Morral of Spain with excellent technique and stamina. Santanfah Sitsongpeenong of Thailand defeated Mahabbat Humbatov of Azerbaijan in the middleweight division with a strong performance earning him a golden ticket. The evening also featured a unique prestige fight supported by UAE Warriors and Palm Sports. In the main event, Kazakhstan's Ali Kabdulla faced Armenia's Martin Mezhlumyan with Kabdulla coming out on top.

President WBC Muaythai, Colonel Thanapol Bhakdibhumi, added "Excitement for the first-ever event in the United Arab Emirates is high thanks

to these bouts which have raised the bar for excellence. I am sure these athletes will keep pushing the boundaries of Muay Thai and making it a more popular sport worldwide. The level of competition we have witnessed tonight is truly exceptional."

World League of Fighters and the World Boxing Council Muaythai collaborated to transform the sport and increase its popularity worldwide. For the first time, 16 of the top Muay Thai fighters in the world, both male and female, will compete in a franchise-based league-style tournament presented by Combat Sports World.

To win the coveted WLF WBC Title Belt in the United Arab Emirates, the well-known international combat sports stars will be split up into four franchises and will be pitted against one another in a round-robin format.

SHAHEEN AFRIDI, GUDAKESH MOTIE AND LORCAN TUCKER NOMINATED FOR ICC MEN'S PLAYER OF THE MONTH AWARD

New Delhi | Agencies

Shaheen Shah Afridi, Gudakesh Motie and Lorcan Tucker have been nominated for the ICC Men's Player of the Month Award for May 2024. The trio are currently turning out for Pakistan, West Indies, and Ireland respectively in the ongoing Men's T20 World Cup in the Caribbean and the USA.

Afridi, Pakistan's left-arm fast-bowling spearhead, is nominated for the second successive month after another spell of blistering performances. He took 10 wickets in his five T20I contests during the month, which included three consecutive three-wicket hauls. Spells of 3-49 and 3-14 against Ireland helped Pakistan overturn a series deficit to win over Ireland in Dublin before the 24-year-old followed up with 3-36 against England in Birmingham, which ended in a losing cause. The three-time nominee has never won a Men's Player of the Month Award but has a strong case to claim his maiden prize. Motie, the West Indies left-arm spinner, enjoyed plenty of success in the home series against South Africa in May, taking eight wickets across three matches at an average of 8.50, as the hosts sealed a statement 3-0 victory in



Jamaica before embarking on the Men's T20 World Cup.

Motie took 3-25 in the opening contest to restrict the tourists' chase and he backed that performance up with another impressive spell of 3-2 to stifle the middle order in the second fixture. Another two wickets in the final match turned the tide in favour of the hosts once more and allowed Motie, 29, to claim the Player of the Series accolade.

Meanwhile, Tucker aims to become the first Ireland winner of the Men's Player of the Month award since Harry Tector in May 2023 and finds himself in the nomination thanks to explosive run-scoring feats last month.

Tucker top-scored for Ireland in the second and third matches against Pakistan with successive quickfire scores of 51 and 73, and carried that momentum into the tri-series against Scotland and Netherlands, hitting 40 and 55 as Ireland sealed confidence-boosting wins ahead of their ICC Men's T20 World Cup campaign.

Norway Chess: Pragganandhaa, Vaishali lose; Carlsen, Tingjie register crucial wins in Rd-9

Stavanger (Norway): As the Norway Chess inches towards a thrilling conclusion, the stakes have never been higher. All classical games of Round 9 in the prestigious Norway Chess main event ended in a draw, going into an Armageddon tie-breaker to determine a match winner. India's Pragganandhaa R went down in Armageddon against Fabiano Caruana. The Indian teenager is having an outside chance of winning the title. He will have to beat Hikaru Nakamura in a must-win final round and hope the local hero Magnus Carlsen loses his game against Caruana.

The five-time World Champion Carlsen extended his lead with an Armageddon win over Alireza Firouzja in Round 9. This means that a win in the final round for Carlsen would guarantee him winning the tournament outright.

Nakamura, who lost against the reigning World Champion Ding Liren in Armageddon, will need to win the last game with Black against Pragganandhaa to have a shot at winning the tournament.

Meanwhile, in the women's tournament, the only classical win of the day came from the Lei Tingjie vs. Vaishali R game. The Chinese GM earned a decisive victory with the white pieces in 30 moves and has significantly increased her chances of winning the tournament in the final round.

The Women's World Champion Ju Wenjun defeated Koneru Humpy in Armageddon to lead the competition by 1.5 points, while Anna Muzychuk registered a tie-break win over Pia Cramling.

With the tournament reaching its final round, only 1.5 points separate Wenjun, Tingjie and Muzychuk at the top of the table in the women's tournament as the inaugural edition of the Norway Chess 2024 Women's Tournament is set for a thrilling finish.





My life became robotic and monotonous : Kartik Aaryan

Team

Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Kartik Aaryan, who has undergone a major transformation to play India's first Paralympics gold medalist Murlikant Petkar in the upcoming sports drama, shared that the entire process was terrible, and his life became robotic and monotonous. For Kartik, transforming physically for Kabir Khan's directorial biopic took a lot of time.

Kartik talked about why he chose this as his first biopic, whether the transformation was exhausting, and more. The actor, who is known for his work in 'Pyaar Ka PUNCHAMA', said, "In terms of physicality, it took a lot of time. At that time, I did 'FREDDY' and started the shoot of 'SATYAPREM KI KATHA', so there was no requirement of physicality there. So it was my habit-- I was a big foodie, I was eating anything and everything without any restrictions." But the character of Sattu from 'SATYAPREM KI KATHA' was different from playing a character like Murlikant sir, as it is a real-life story -- his achievements, goals, dreams. This was very new for me. Second was dialect. He had Marathi dialect, along with his thought process. For all these things, Kabir sir helped me as he had spent time with Murlisir," said Kartik. Kartik shared that he used to just blindly follow Kabir Khan. "I followed him like a student. And I would like to say that it is 'before Chandu' and 'after Chandu' for me. It's so much of a change that this film has brought into me and in my life," he said.

Whether the transformation took a toll on him mentally, Kartik shared, "This entire process was terrible in a way. As I said I am a big foodie, so for me, not to have food-- mujhe jab tak roti, rice, khane ke baad meetha... ye saari cheezein chahiye... mere saare shauk sab hata diye gaye the. My sleeping pattern was so bad before this. So when we started this, I had to get a proper eight hours of deep sleep." He continued saying, "I started counting calories, burning calories, so there was an automatic shift... my life became robotic and monotonous. Because I used to eat the same food - the meal that was decided. For 1.5 to 2 years, I used to have soup at night and sleep and had no social life. I used to go to my home, gym, swimming pool, and then return to my home."

MARY KOM SHARES HER CHILDHOOD STORY WITH KAPIL



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Indian women athletes -- Mary Kom, Saina Nehwal and Sania Mirza have opened up about their inspiration, and revealed inspiring tales about their sports journey in the new episode of the comedy chat show 'The Great Indian Kapil Show'.

The 11th episode witnessed the 'Pride of India' -- Mary, Saina, Sift Kaur Samra and Sania. When asked by show host Kapil Sharma who was Sania Mirza's idol, she replied, "I always wanted to be a Tennis player. Back then Steffi Graf was my favourite and I aspired to play and be like her."

During the candid conversation, the Indian Olympic boxer Mary Kom talked about her childhood days, sharing, "I was always enthusiastic about sports. Just like Sania, looking at Steffi Graf, even I liked lawn Tennis a lot as a kid. I wanted to play it once."

"However, I come from a poor family and couldn't afford anything. I really wanted to play lawn tennis in my childhood but I did not have anyone to guide me. But, still, I played sports at my school and in my village with mostly boys. I used to play football and marbles and used to challenge the boys," added Mary.

Continuing the conversation, when Kapil asked how Saina chose Badminton, she said: "Well, I didn't choose badminton. Badminton chose me. Had I not moved to Hyderabad, I wouldn't have got the opportunity. Hyderabad made me into a badminton player and I am happy that I became one. And today, everyone wants to become a badminton or tennis player, and that's because of us."

"RAISE YOUR RACKET!!! ONWARDS TO THE CONTINUED MADNESS!!" LARA DUTTA'S BIRTHDAY WISH FOR MAHESH

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former Miss Universe and actress Lara Dutta on Friday wished her husband and Grand Slam champion Mahesh Bhupathi on his 50th birthday, saying "onwards to the continued madness".

Lara, who featured in Akshay Kumar-starrer action thriller 'Bell Bottom', took to Instagram, where she has 1.4 million followers, and shared a series of unseen pictures with the former Tennis player.

The first snap shows Lara wearing a white and orange floral bikini, with minimal makeup and tied her hair in a top bun. She accessorised the look with funky orange sunglasses and gold hoop earrings.

On the other hand, Mahesh is donning a black and blue printed shirt. The couple is standing close to each other while they pose for the lenses.

The rest of the two photos show the duo posing with their loved ones, while they are on a vacation. Lara penned a sweet birthday note, saying, "Raise your racket!!! Onwards to the continued madness!"

Actress Celina Jaitley commented, "Happy



birthday Biyara Hubby". Lara married Mahesh in February 2011 in Mumbai. The couple have a daughter named Saira. Lara was last featured in the war drama web series 'Ranneeti: Balakot & Beyond'. It stars Ashutosh Rana, Ashish Vidyarthi, Jimmy Shergill and Prasanna in pivotal roles.

Our girl is here Thank u for all the good wishes for the mama and the baby : Varun Dhawan



Team Absolute | Mumbai

New daddy and actor Varun Dhawan on Friday took his newborn daughter and wife Natasha Dalal home from the Hinduja hospital in Mumbai. A video shows Varun, who is dressed in a mustard coloured T-shirt paired with brown pants paired with sunglasses, cradling

his baby girl in his arms as he makes his way to his car from the hospital. Natasha is seen walking behind. The couple went straight into the car. It was on June 3, when Varun and Natasha welcomed their first bundle of joy. Varun took to Instagram on June 4, to make the announcement of the arrival of his first child.

Varun shared on Instagram an e-card featuring his beagle Joey hold-

ing a placard that read, "Welcome Lil' Sis... June 3, 2024." He captioned it: "Our girl is here. Thank u for all the good wishes for the mama and the baby. Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare."

Varun and Natasha announced that they were expecting their first-born in February along with a maternity photoshoot.

18th Mumbai International Film Festival opens on June 15

Team Absolute | Mumbai

At a time when young Indian documentary filmmakers, notably Payal Kapadia, Shaunaq Sen, Sushmit Ghosh and Rintu Thomas, are winning international accolades, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) has announced that the 18th edition of the Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) will be held from June 15 to 21.

Established in 1980, MIFF is South Asia's oldest running showcase of documentary, short fiction and animation films. The highlight of this year's event, organised, as always, by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), will be the first-ever DOC Film Bazaar, or a marketplace for documentary filmmakers to make contacts with potential sponsors and collaborators.

The international jury, according to a communique issued by the ministry, will include eminent film personalities from across the world, such as Keiko Bang, Barthelemy Fougere, Audrius Stonys, Bharat Bala and Manas Choudhary.

The jury will award the 'Golden Conch' for the best documentary film, the 'Silver



Conch' for the best international short fiction film and best animation film, and the 'Prasad Award' for the most innovative/experimental film.

The national jury for the festival includes Adele Seelmann-Eggebert, Dr Bobby Sarma Baruah, Apoorva Bakshi, Munjal Shroff and Anna Henckel-Donnersmarck. The jury members will select the best among the Indian submissions in the documentary, short film, animation, debut film and student film categories.

An award will also be given to the best short film on the theme of 'India in Amrit Kaal'.

MIB Secretary Sanjay Jaju said that while venue for the festival will be the Films

Division-NFDC Complex, Mumbai, MIFF screenings will also be held in Delhi (Siri Fort Auditorium), Chennai (Tagore Film Centre), Pune (NFAI Auditorium) and Kolkata (Satyajit Ray FTI Auditorium).

MIFF has received a record number of submissions -- 1,018 films in 65 languages from 38 nations for the competition sections.

The annual festival will also present packages of award-winning shorts from the Oscars and the Berlinale, and also host eight world, six international, 17 Asian and 15 Indian premieres.

The opening film of the festival will be 'Billy & Molly: An Otter Love Story'. And it will close with the film that wins the Golden Conch.



Rasha Thadani