

absolute india



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NATION > 02
Chandrababu Naidu takes oath as Andhra Pradesh CM, turns...



HOLYWOOD > 06
Miley Cyrus steps out for a special sushi date ...



SPORTS > 07
ICC Rankings: Mohammad Nabi topples Shakib Al Hasan as...

India most-represented nation in Times Higher Education Impact Ranking 2024

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India is the world's number one best-represented nation in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024, said Phil Baty, the British magazine's Chief Global Affairs Officer, on Wednesday.

In a post on X, Baty shared the development and also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for leading this successful internationalisation drive.

"India is the world's number one best-represented nation in the @timeshigher Education Impact Rankings 2024. Over 100 universities are ranked, up from just 13 in 2019, thanks to the remarkably successful internationalisation drive spearheaded by @narendramodi," he wrote.

There were a total of 2,152 institutions ranked from 125 countries, and the nation with the most participation was India with 105 institutions.

This year's results showed that some university systems are emerging as leaders when it comes to particular Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Meanwhile, President of QS University Rankings Nunzio Quacquarelli has praised India for leading all G20 countries in the QS subject rankings performance growth this year.

In the latest subject rankings, Indian higher education institutions have improved their rankings in the STEM subjects, Biological Sciences, and Business Studies.

As mentioned in the report, the NEP largely drove the positive changes in higher education in the country.



INDIA RANKS 129TH ON GLOBAL GENDER GAP INDEX, ICELAND LEADS THE WORLD

- Within South Asia, India was ranked fifth after Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, while Pakistan was ranked last.
- India figured among the economies with the lowest levels of economic parity, alongside Bangladesh, Sudan, Iran, Pakistan, and Morocco. All of them registered less than 30 per cent gender parity in estimated earned income.
- With a population of over 140 crore, India has closed 64.1 per cent of its gender gap in 2024 and the decline of two places from 127th last year, mainly happened due to small declines in 'Educational Attainment' and 'Political Empowerment,' parameters, while 'Economic Participation' and 'Opportunity' scores slightly improved.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

India has slipped two places on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap index to 129th place, while Iceland retained its top position in the rankings published.

Globally, Sudan was ranked last on the index of 146 countries, while Pakistan slipped three places to 145th. However, India showed the

best gender parity in terms of enrolment in secondary education, while it scored well on political empowerment of women at 65th rank globally.

With regard to parity in the number of years with female/male heads of state for the last 50 years, India was ranked 10th.

The WEF said India's economic parity score has trended upwards for the past four years.

In the Political Empowerment subindex, India scored within the top-10 on the head-of-state indicator, but its scores for women's representation at the federal level, in ministerial positions (6.9 per cent) and in Parliament (17.2 per cent), remain relatively low, it added.

The WEF said the world has closed 68.5 per cent of the gender gap, but at the current pace it will take another 134 years -- equivalent to five generations -- to achieve full gender parity.

Since last year, the gender gap has closed by 0.1 percentage points.

"Despite some bright spots, the slow and incremental gains highlighted in this year's Global Gender Gap Report underscore the urgent need for a renewed global commitment to achieving gender parity, particularly in economic and political spheres," WEF Managing Director Saadia Zahidi said.

"We cannot wait until 2158 for parity. The time for decisive action is now," she added.

Iceland was followed by Finland, Norway, New Zealand and Sweden in the top five.

The UK was ranked 14th, while the USA was at 43rd place.

NCP bats for reservation for Muslim community in education in Maharashtra

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After a dismal performance in the Lok Sabha elections, the Ajit Pawar-led NCP on Wednesday strongly supported reservation for the Muslim community in education in Maharashtra.

This is a fresh attempt by the NCP, which won just one of the four Lok Sabha seats it contested, to step up its outreach with the Muslim community and garner their votes in the forthcoming Assembly elections slated for September-October this year.

The NCP is a part of the Mahayuti government and the party plans to make a pitch with the BJP and Shiv Sena for providing educational quota to the Muslim community, which along with Dalits and Tribals voted against the Mahayuti.

They feared that their existence would come into jeopardy if the Constitution was changed by the BJP after crossing the 400-seat mark and forming the government at the Centre. The NCP will have to make a hard bargain



with big brother BJP which did not take the initiative during its rule for the implementation of reservation in educational institutions upheld by the Bombay High Court.

Maharashtra NCP chief spokesman Umesh Patil said, "We stand firm on our position that the Muslim community should get reservation in education in the state."

"The Bombay High Court accepted the decision taken by the Congress-NCP government of giving 5 per cent educational reservation to the Muslim community. However, later, the issue was pushed behind."

However, newly-elected MP from Raigad, Sunil Tatkare said, "We held a meeting of the party's Minority Cell yesterday and have heard their side. Another meeting will be held on this issue. After that we will declare our position on it." The NCP's move is crucial after party legislators at their meeting with Ajit Pawar last week submitted that the party lost heavily in Osmanabad, Baramati and Shirur after Muslim voters by and large voted for the Maha Vikas Aghadi candidates. They further pointed out that the Mahayuti in general was hit after Muslims, Dalits and Tribals polled against its candidates fearing loss in their reservation after change in the Constitution.

Two terrorists, CRPF trooper killed in 20-hour long operation in J&K's Kathua



Mumbai | Agencies

Two terrorists and a CRPF trooper were killed in the operation against hiding terrorists in J&K's Kathua district, ADGP, Jammu Zone, Anand Jain said, adding that the encounter started on Tuesday evening and lasted till Wednesday afternoon.

"Initially one terrorist was killed yesterday (Tuesday) and one more has been killed today (Wednesday). We also lost a CRPF jawan in the gunfight as well. The slain were part of a newly infiltrated group. We have not called off the operation as there may be some more terrorists hiding in the area," he said.

The CRPF trooper, who succumbed to his injuries in a hospital, was identified as Constable Kabir Dass of the 121 Bn.

According to Jain, there were two terrorists, who entered the village and asked for water from some houses.

"As soon as the information was received, the teams of the SHO and the SDPO reached the spot and one of the terrorists was killed in the exchange of fire."

Jain said that grenades, IEDs, a US-made M4 carbine and other war-like stores were recovered from the slain terrorists.

The recoveries also included three magazines containing 30 rounds, one magazine containing 24 rounds, 75 rounds in a separate polythene bag, three live grenades, Rs 1 lakh in currency notes of Rs 500 denomination, eatables including Pakistan-made chocolates, dry chenna and chapatis, Pakistan-made medicines and pain killer injections, two packs of A4 battery cells, and one handset with an antenna.

Meanwhile, two senior police officers escaped unhurt after hiding terrorists opened fire on their vehicles in the Hiranagar area.

RAHUL GANDHI HINTS AT RELINQUISHING WAYANAD



Wayanad (Kerala): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who is in Kerala on Wednesday, admitted that he was in a dilemma as to which Lok Sabha constituency he should relinquish -- Wayanad or Rae Bareilly -- but then in Wayanad, dropped enough hints that he will be dropping the Kerala seat.

State BJP chief K. Surendran, who had contested against Gandhi and finished a distant third, termed Gandhi's indication "cheating". Meanwhile, advertisement boards have come up in Wayanad which welcome Gandhi's sister and party General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi to contest the by-election.

Gandhi, who arrived at the Kozhikode airport in the morning, drove to Edavana in the Malappuram district which is part of his constituency. He was given a rousing welcome and in his first public meeting, he said he was in a dilemma about Wayanad and Rae Bareilly.

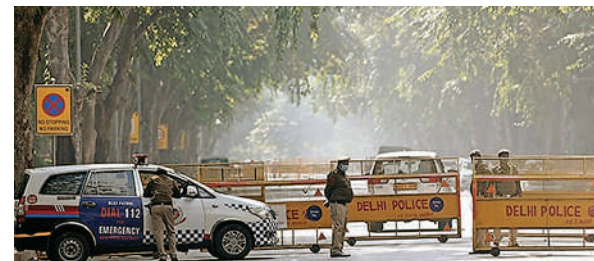
SEVERAL DELHI MUSEUMS, HEALTH INSTITUTIONS GET HOAX BOMB THREAT EMAILS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Several museums, including the National Museum and Rail Museum, and two mental health institutes -- IHBAS (Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences) and VIMHANS (Vidyasagar Institute of Mental Health, Neuro and Allied Sciences) -- have received bomb threat e-mails, officials said on Wednesday.

The officials said that nothing suspicious was found in the searches and later the calls were declared hoax.

The e-mails were received by the National Museum in Kartavya Path, Rail Museum in Chanakyapuri and Gandhi Museum in Daryaganj and several others stating that the bomb was planted in their premises, they said. Two medical facilities -- IHBAS located in Shahdara and Vimhans Hospital in Lajpat Nagar -- have also received the threat e-mails containing the same contents, the officials said. An officer said that after receiving



the calls and information about these e-mails, the installations were checked by the bomb detection team, bomb disposal squad, fire officials and local police but nothing suspicious was recovered from any of the places. Over the past one month, bomb threat emails have been received by many establishments, including schools and hospitals in the national capital.

SHIVRAJ CHOUHAN TAKES UP 100-DAY ACTION PLAN FOR AGRICULTURE SECTOR



New Delhi: Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday held a detailed discussion with senior officials on the 100-day action plan of the ministry.

Agriculture Minister Chouhan told the officials that they should focus their entire attention on farmer-oriented works so that work can be done speedily as per the sankalp (resolution) of the Prime Minister, the ministry said in a statement.

He said that the availability of quality fertilizers, seeds and other inputs to farmers should be ensured on a priority basis. The Agriculture Minister asserted that the farmers should not face any problem in this regard and special care should be taken on this.

Most Indians believe technology, including AI, will accelerate economic growth: Report

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Most Indians (89 per cent) believe technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), is a key enabler in integrating traditionally excluded populations into the economy, a new report showed on Wednesday.

According to PC and printer major HP, 76 per cent of global business and government leaders believe AI will help drive progress towards sustainability and social impact goals.

"We know technology can be a great equaliser and a powerful tool to drive progress. Yet, to truly narrow the digital divide in our rapidly evolving

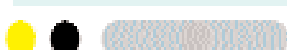


world, we must also equip individuals with the skills to use technology," said Michele Malejki, HP Global Head of Social Impact, and Director, HP Foundation.

HP said it will soon integrate AI training into its HP LIFE programme to promote the responsible and effective use of AI. These AI trainings will be offered free of cost under the Digital Business Skills initiative globally, including in India.

HP will also introduce next-gen AI PCs in India, a new category of powerful PCs for work and creation.

Additionally, HP is expanding its goal to enroll 27.5 lakh users in the HP LIFE free skill-building programme by 2030. The HP Foundation runs this programme.





CHANDRABABU NAIDU TAKES OATH AS ANDHRA PRADESH CM, TURNS EMOTIONAL

Vijayawada | Agencies

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) president Nara Chandrababu Naidu turned emotional after taking oath as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh here on Wednesday.

Naidu hugged Prime Minister Narendra Modi soon after being sworn in by Governor S. Abdul Nazeer in the presence of a galaxy of political leaders and celebrities at a ceremony attended by lakhs of people.

Amid loud cheers from the audience, the 74-year-old took the oath of office and secrecy in Telugu. The Prime Minister presented him with a bouquet to congratulate him.

Naidu was visibly emotional as he hugged PM Modi and returned to his chair next to his wife Bhuvanewari.

In 2021, Naidu walked out of the Assembly after his wife was allegedly insulted by some MLAs of the YSR Congress Party and vowed to return only after taking oath as the Chief Minister.

After taking oath as a minister, Jana Sena leader Pawan Kalyan went up to his elder brother megastar Chiranjeevi and touched his feet.

Chandrababu Naidu's son Nara Lokesh was the next to take oath as the minister. Lokesh, the TDP general secretary, took the blessings of his father, Prime Minister Modi and the Governor. A total of 24 ministers of the National Democratic Alliance



(NDA) took oath at the ceremony held at Kesaraipalli IT Park near Gannavaram Airport. The ministers include three from Jana Sena and one from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

TDP's Andhra Pradesh unit president K. Achanaidu and Jana Sena political affairs committee chairman Nandendla Manohar were among the key ministers.

MOHAN CHARAN MAJHI TAKES OATH AS CM AS BJP MAKES DEBUT IN ODISHA

Bhubaneswar: Mohan Charan Majhi took oath as the Chief Minister of Odisha on Wednesday in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and many other Central Ministers, including Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, and party President J.P. Nadda, among other dignitaries.

Apart from Majhi, two Deputy CMs also took the oath of office -- Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo and Pravati Parida -- during a grand ceremony at the Janata Maidan in state capital Bhubaneswar.

Naveen Patnaik, who was the Chief Minister of Odisha for 24 years before the BJD lost power to the BJP, was also present on the stage, and extended his greetings and good wishes to the new government. Notably, this is the first time the BJP came to power in the eastern state by unseating the dominant Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in the Assembly polls. The Chief Ministers of many BJP-ruled states also attended the swearing-in ceremony. Earlier in the day, Mohan Majhi paid tributes to many eminent personalities of the state. He also visited outgoing CM Naveen Patnaik at his residence and invited him to the swearing-in ceremony.

Amaravati farmers end four-year-long protest as Naidu govt sworn-in

Amaravati | Agencies

With the formation of the Chandrababu Naidu-led government in Andhra Pradesh, farmers of Amaravati on Wednesday called off their four-year-long protest against three capitals move of the previous YSR Congress government.

Hours after Naidu and his Council of Ministers took oath at a ceremony at Vijayawada, the farmers removed their protest camps in villages.

The farmers, including women, had been protesting for 1,631 days, demanding the YSR Congress government to develop Amaravati as the sole capital.

The protest started in December 2019 after Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy announced that his government would develop three state capitals, reversing the decision of the previous TDP government to develop Amaravati as the only state



capital.

The Jagan Mohan Reddy government planned to develop Visakhapatnam as the administrative capital, Kurnool as the judicial capital, and keep Amaravati only as a legislative capital.

The farmers of 29 villages, who had given 33,000 acres of their land under a land pooling system when the

TDP was in power, came out on the streets. They had been continuing the protest in different forms.

The Amaravati Parirakshana Samithi (APS), which was spearheading the movement against three capitals, undertook two padyatras during the last two years to mobilise public support for their demand.

Farooq Abdullah bats for talks with Pak amid terror attacks; gets sharp reply from J&K BJP chief

Team Absolute | New Delhi

National Conference (NC) President and former Jammu and Kashmir CM Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday advocated for talks with Pakistan amidst a series of terror attacks in the Jammu region in the past three days.

"These terrorists are coming from across the border. The problem can't be solved by military action, the only solution is to engage in talks with the neighbouring nation. Unless that happens, terrorism will keep rearing its ugly head," Abdullah told reporters in Srinagar.

BJP's J&K unit president Ravinder Raina took strong exception to Abdullah's advocacy for talks and said that it is highly regrettable



that the NC leader is seeking dialogue with a nation that has bled India multiple times.

"Instead of denouncing Pakistan, showing it the mirror, (and) shaming the country for its cowardly acts of terror, the NC leader is advocating for talks with the terror-sponsoring nation," Raina said. "Farooq Abdullah should stop pitching for talks with Pakistan as the latter

always worked to infiltrate terrorists in the Indian territory for killing innocent citizens," he added. He further asserted that Pakistan will be taught a lesson in the same language that it understands. Abdullah also told reporters that unless the government realizes that talks are the only solution to bloodshed and "unless dialogue begins, such tragedies will continue to happen".

The BJP leader berated the NC chief for "evoking sympathy" towards Pakistan while "belittling" the security forces' ability to neutralize acts of terror emanating from Pakistan.

He said that Abdullah should first explain to people whether Pakistan was behind the bloodshed in Jammu and Kashmir.

Cong accuses Centre of bias in funds' disbursement to Maha compared to other states

Mumbai | Agencies

The Maharashtra Congress has accused the Centre of 'discrimination' in the allocation of central funds to the state compared with other states, here on Wednesday.

Congress state President Nana Patole said that Maharashtra accounts for the highest share of collection to the Centre by way of GST and other taxes, but when it comes to ploughing back to the state, the government displays bias towards this state.

"After the new NDA government took office, the Centre has distributed funds to states out of which Maharashtra has been allocated only around Rs 8,000 crore. In contrast, other Bharatiya Janata Party ruled states, or its allies have been allocated the lion's share," said Patole.

Patole mentioned how Uttar Pradesh has been given the maximum Rs 25,000 crore, Madhya Pradesh Rs 10,970 crore, besides Bihar, led by NDA ally and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar getting Rs 14,000 crore, compared with just Rs 8,000 crore for



Maharashtra. "The BJP at the Centre has consistently discriminated against Maharashtra when it comes to funds allocations. Even other states ruled by the Opposition parties have been given small amounts, like Congress-headed Karnataka got Rs 5,000 crore, and Aam Aadmi Party-helmed Delhi getting Rs 2,525 crore. However, NDA ally Andhra Pradesh headed by CM Chandrababu Naidu was

given Rs 5,622 crore," Patole pointed out.

He reiterated that the money belongs to the common taxpayers and is intended for use for development activities for the masses but the BJP regime is deliberately giving step-motherly treatment to the opposition-ruled states. Patole said that Maharashtra faced a similar predicament when the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi government headed by ex-CM Uddhav Thackeray was in power (2019-2022) here. Slamming the MahaYuti government, Patole said that Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar "lack the courage to demand more funds as deserved from the centre", and are content with whatever is doled out, which is against the interests of the people of Maharashtra.

He warned that the people of the state are observing this and will take note of such injustice meted out by the BJP by teaching them a lesson in the upcoming October state Assembly elections, akin to the drubbing given in the recent Lok Sabha polls.

PM MODI TO LEAVE FOR ITALY ON THURSDAY TO ATTEND G7 SUMMIT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In what would be his first overseas visit after assuming office for the third consecutive term, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be travelling to Italy on Thursday to attend the Group of Seven (G7) Summit being held in Puglia from June 13-15.

PM Modi will be attending the G7 Summit's Outreach Sessions on Friday at the invitation of Italy's Prime Minister Georgia Meloni.

"The visit will provide PM Modi an opportunity to engage with other world leaders present at the G7 Summit on issues of importance to India, as also to the Global South," said Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra.

This will be the 11th time that India will be taking part in the G7 Summit and Prime Minister Modi's fifth consecutive participation.

The outreach sessions, where PM Modi is going to participate along with leaders of other invited countries, are expected to focus on Artificial Intelligence, energy, Africa and the Mediterranean.

"India's regular participation at the G7 Summit clearly points to increasing recognition and contribution of the efforts that India has been consistently making in trying to resolve global challenges, including those of peace, security, development and environment preservation," said Kwatra.



Prime Minister Modi is also expected to hold a series of bilateral meetings with several leaders on the sidelines of the event.

The Foreign Secretary stated that India will also be participating at the Ukraine 'Peace Summit' being held in Switzerland, later this week.

"India will be participating in the Peace Summit at an appropriate level. That consideration is currently going on in the system and as and when we have a decision on the representative from India who will be participating, we will be happy to share," said the top diplomat.

Akhilesh Yadav, Awadhesh Prasad resign from UP Assembly seats

Lucknow | Agencies

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday formally forwarded his resignation from the Karhal Assembly seat in Uttar Pradesh to Speaker Satish Mahana.

Akhilesh Yadav, who won the recent Lok Sabha elections from UP's Kannauj, also held the Karhal assembly seat. In the Lok Sabha polls, Akhilesh secured his family's stronghold Kannauj by garnering 6,42,292 votes, surpassing the incumbent BJP MP Subrat Pathak by a margin exceeding 1 lakh votes.

Samajwadi Party MLA Awadhesh Prasad also tendered his resignation from the Assembly after being



elected as a Lok Sabha MP from Faizabad.

In the recently-concluded Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party clinched 37 seats, while the BJP won 33 seats. The

Congress won six seats, two seats went to the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), while the Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) and Apna Dal (Soneylal) bagged one seat each.

Eight of a family die as sand-laden truck overturns in UP's Hardoi

Hardoi | Agencies

Eight members of a family died while one was seriously injured after a truck carrying sand overturned and fell on them in Uttar Pradesh's Hardoi district.

The accident happened late on Tuesday night.

An entire family living by the roadside got buried under the sand that was spilled over after the truck overturned.

By the time the sand and truck were removed, and the people buried under it were taken out, eight people including four children had died.

M.P. Singh, District Magistrate, Hardoi said, "The truck was en route to Hardoi after mining sand from the banks of Ganga. Due to excess sand, it overturned at the turn and this accident took place. After getting information about the incident, the police

reached the spot and somehow retrieved the people buried under the truck, but everyone except a girl had died".

"At first, no one realised for a long time, but then it was known that one of Balla's family lived there. Immediately the police were informed and the work of removing the sand was started. When the truck was removed by a JCB machine and the sand was cleared, Balla, 45, his wife Mundi, 42, daughter Sunaina, 5, daughter Lalla, 4, daughter Buddha, 4, besides his son-in-law Karan, 25, his wife Hero, 22, and their son Komal, 5, had died while daughter Bittu, 4, was injured. All the dead bodies have been sent for post-mortem and the truck driver has been arrested," the District Magistrate said.

He further said that the officials were examining the cause of the accident.

HAVE YOU TAKEN ACTION AGAINST TANKER MAFIA, SC ASKS DELHI GOVT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday came down heavily on the Delhi government for not acting against tanker mafias in the city and cautioned that it would ask the Delhi Police for action to mitigate the water crisis in the national capital.

"If water is coming from Himachal Pradesh, where is the water going in Delhi? Have you taken any action or measures against these tanker mafias? There are reports that tanker mafias are working in Delhi and water is engulfed by them and you are not taking any action. If you are not taking any action, we will hand it over to Delhi Police to crackdown on tanker mafias," a vacation bench presided over by Justice P.K. Mishra told the Delhi government. The Bench, also comprising Justice P.B. Varale, wondered how the water is supplied through tankers to the common public when pipelines are dry and empty.

"If this water crisis is a recurring problem every summer, what measures have you taken to control the loss of water coming from Yamuna? File an affidavit containing action taken from May-June, 2023 to April 2024 to prevent loss of water. Any FIR against any tanker mafia or illegal transportation of water?" it asked.

In response, the counsel representing the Delhi government said that Delhi Jal Board (DJB) is supplying water through tankers and



most of the visuals reported in media are related to water supply by DJB tankers in lower economic households.

"We will file all the material by today itself. There are multiple actions, including massive disconnection. We will be more than happy to have the police take action," added the city government's counsel.

During the hearing, the apex court also questioned the state of Himachal Pradesh for making a "false" statement that it has excess

water in reservoirs.

It asked the Advocate General representing Himachal Pradesh, "If you are already releasing it, why was it not made known to the Upper Yamuna River Board? The other day, your Additional Advocate General said that this document (pertaining to 137 cusecs surplus water) was produced before the Board. Why are false statements made in the top court?" Posting the matter for hearing on June 13, the SC asked the Delhi government to file

an affidavit regarding the prevention of loss of water and allowed other parties to file additional affidavits if they so desired.

In the previous hearing, the top court came down heavily on the city government for taking the court proceedings for granted and turned furious after it was pointed out that the respondents (Union, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh governments) could not have e-filed the status reports/compliance affidavits in terms of the order of the apex court due to non-curing of defects by the Delhi government's side.

"We will dismiss this petition. On the last date also, this was pointed out but you did not remove the defects. You do not take court proceedings for granted, however important your case may be!" the SC had said.

The Supreme Court had directed the Himachal Pradesh government to release surplus water on June 7 so that it reaches the national capital "uninterruptedly" and is made available to the Delhiites for drinking purposes. "We direct that Himachal Pradesh shall release 137 cusecs of surplus water available with it on Friday so that the water reaches Hathni Kund barrage and reaches Delhi through Wazirabad. As and when surplus water is released with prior information by the state of Himachal Pradesh, the state of Haryana shall facilitate the flow of surplus water so released," it had ordered on June 6.



"BJP Had To Face Defeat": Sharad Pawar on Ayodhya result

Team Absolute | Pune

NCP (SP) leader Sharad Pawar on Tuesday said the people of Ayodhya have demonstrated how to correct the "politics of temple" by defeating the BJP's candidate in the Uttar Pradesh town in recent Lok Sabha elections. Speaking at a traders' meet in Baramati, Pawar highlighted that while the BJP had secured more than 300 seats five years ago, this time their count dropped to 240, well short of majority. "The result shows that their 60 seats got reduced, and in this reduction, Uttar Pradesh is a key state as the people there gave a different kind of verdict," he said. Pawar said he had anticipated that Ram temple would be the election agenda and the ruling party would get votes, but the people of our country are quite wise. "When they realised that votes were being sought in the name of the temple, they decided to take a different stand and the BJP had to face defeat," the veteran politician said.



In a major upset in the Faizabad parliamentary constituency, where the temple town of Ayodhya is situated, Samajwadi Party candidate Awadhesh Prasad defeated sitting BJP MP Lallu Singh by a margin of 54,567 votes in recent elections. Pawar, a key member of the INDIA bloc, said the Opposition was apprehensive about the temple being used as an election agenda, but people took a different stand. "As we were scared of the temple

being used as the election agenda to seek votes, the people of Ayodhya showed how to correct the 'politics of temple' (by defeating the BJP candidate)," the former Union minister said. He asserted that democracy in India is intact, not because of politics but due to the "collective conscience" of the people. "For the last 10 years, those in power have taken extreme stands, but the people have brought them back

to the ground. Narendra Modi did form the government, but not on his own but by taking help of Chandrababu Naidu (TDP) and Nitish Kumar (JDU)," Pawar said. He added that when the government is run with the help of others, one cannot ignore the 'adjustment' (samanjasya), and that kind of situation has prevailed in the country. Pawar has been taking potshots at Modi after the Lok Sabha election results showed that the BJP fell short of securing a majority on its own and relies on NDA allies. A day before, Pawar wondered whether PM Modi, who took oath as the prime minister for a third consecutive term, had the mandate to lead the country. In a swipe at PM Modi who had dubbed Pawar a "bhakti aatma" (wandering soul) during the poll campaign, the NCP (SP) chief said, "It is good since the soul is eternal and this soul will not spare you." In Maharashtra, Pawar-led NCP won 8 out of 10 Lok Sabha constituencies it had contested, recording the highest strike rate in the state.

Uddhav Thackeray tears into PM Modi after Mohan Bhagwat's remarks on Manipur

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday asked whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi would be visiting Manipur after Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat decried the ongoing violence in the northeastern state. In a press conference in Mumbai, the former Maharashtra Chief Minister also sought to know what difference the abrogation of Article 370 made in Jammu and Kashmir and questioned PM Modi over the loss of lives in the union territory in the wake of the Reasi terror attack. Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, said, "Lives are being lost. Who is responsible for the terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir?" RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, on Monday, had expressed concern over peace eluding Manipur a year on since the violence first broke out in the northeastern state and urged that the situation in the violence-hit state must be prioritised, the report stated. Speaking to reporters, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray said, "Will Prime Minister Modi visit Manipur after RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's remarks? I am concerned about the future of the country and not about the future of the NDA government." Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray



also refuted claims of differences in the opposition alliance Maha Vikas Aghadi over candidates for the upcoming state legislative council polls. Shiv Sena (UBT), Nationalist Congress Party (SP) and Congress are part of the MVA. "There is no difference," Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray asserted. Reportedly, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray admitted that there was a "loose connection" in the discussion between the MVA partners and stated that he was not present after the Lok Sabha Elections 2024. During this time, all parties declared their candidates, and nominations had to be submitted within the specified time frame, he said. The deadline for filing nominations was June 7. Voting will take place on June 26 and results will be announced on July 1.

Massive fire breaks out in Dombivali chemical company, second in 3 weeks

Team Absolute | Thane

A deafening explosion followed by a massive fire ripped through a public limited chemical company located in the MIDC in Dombivali town in Maharashtra on Wednesday, officials said. This is the second such disaster in three weeks. According to Dombivali Fire Brigade Control, there are no immediate reports of casualties, but a massive fire-fighting operation has been launched by multiple teams. According to the Dombivali Fire Control, the fire broke out around 10 am in the Indo Amines Ltd, which manufactures multiple chemicals, at the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) complex Phase II, surrounded by thickly populated residential localities



and a school. "Immediately we rushed at least seven fire tenders and launched fire-fighting opera-

tions, plus dispatched medical teams. We are waiting for details on whether any persons are trapped inside the factory," said the official. Eyewitnesses said that there were at least two massive blasts followed by a huge blaze with clouds of thick black smoke emanating that was visible for several kilometres. The Indo Amines Ltd is situated barely 300 metres away from the site of the disaster that struck Amudan Chemicals Pvt Ltd with multiple explosions-cum-blaze on May 23, claiming over a dozen lives and more than 60 injured. "Many people panicked and were reminded of the similar blast that took place here three weeks ago... Some shopkeepers downed shutters and scared residents ran out to the streets," an eyewitness said.

Senior official of CR publishes book of public Relations in Indian Railways

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Dr. Ashok Kumar Singh, Senior Public Relations officer of Central Railway, has published a book on Public Relations in Indian Railways. The book "Jan Sampark Aur Hindi" was released by State Governor Ramesh Bais in the Raj Bhavan premises on Tuesday, 11 June 2024. On the occasion of the release of the book, author Dr. Ashok Kumar Singh, Senior Public Relations Officer, Central Railway said that "This is not just a book but a summary of the service I have given to Indian Railways. This book will be very beneficial for researchers and PR professionals and will bring a new revolution in the field of public relations." The book-launch was attended by Central Railway's



Chief Public Relations Officer Dr. Swapnil Nila, Deputy Chief Public Relations Officer Anil Kumar Jain, Public Relations Officer Michael Manuel Raj and publisher Shri Ramkumar. this book, he has described what is public relations, its origin, concept, form, scope and utility and its goals and policies. The book gives an analysis of the use

and importance of public relations and Hindi in Indian Railways before independence and after independence. It also presents a detailed information about the history of Indian Railways as well as the use of modern technology on Indian Railways. Along with this, the author has also spoken of way in which social media has contributed in the devel-

opment of Indian Railways. "His book titled 'Jan Sampark Aur Hindi' will undoubtedly be a wonderful and very useful book. This book will prove to be a boon not only for the employees working in the Public Relations and Hindi Department but also for the researchers," said an official statement by Central Railways.

For 300 Crore property, woman allegedly got father-in-law killed, paid 1 crore

Team Absolute | Nagpur

The investigation into an 82-year-old man's death in a hit-and-run in Nagpur has uncovered a grisly murder conspiracy allegedly hatched by his daughter-in-law for family property worth Rs 300 crore. Archana Manish Puttewar, assistant director in the town planning department, was arrested last week, over a fortnight after her father-in-law Purushottam Puttewar was run over by a car. A police officer told news agency that Puttewar hired people for the hit and spent about Rs 1 crore. "She gave funds to the accused to purchase a used car to knock down her father-in-law. This was done to make the mur-



der look like an accident. It is apparently to gain control of his property of Rs 300 crore," the officer said. The officer added that the 53-year-old woman allegedly plotted the murder with her husband's driver Bagde and two other accused, Neeraj Nimje



and Sachin Dharmik. Police have charged them with murder and other sections under the IPC and Motor Vehicles Act. Two cars, gold jewellery and mobile phones have been seized. The police's investigation has found that on the day of the incident,

Purushottam Puttewar had gone to the hospital to meet his wife Shakuntala, who was recovering after a surgery. On his way back, the hired car ran him over. His son and Archana's husband Manish is a doctor. The investigation into the murder case, meanwhile, has also found gross irregularities in Ms Puttewar's work in the town planning department. There were multiple complaints, but no action was taken owing to her political connections, the probe has found. She is accused of violating norms and clearing illegal layouts. Her arrest and the serious charge of plotting a family member's murder may also prompt a deeper investigation into alleged irregularities in her work.

Man kills son by stuffing paper ball in mouth, choking him

Team Absolute | Thane

A 59-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly killing his nine-year-old son by stuffing a paper ball into his mouth and choking him in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said today. The accused was inebriated at the time of the incident which took place on the intervening night of Monday-Tuesday, they said, adding the exact reason behind the crime was not yet known. The man and his wife had been living separately following domes-

tic quarrels and the boy was staying with his mother, an official from the police control room said. The boy went missing from his mother's house on Monday and the family members launched a search for him. The minor was found dead near his father's house at around 8 am on Tuesday, the official said. After being alerted, police reached the spot and they found a paper ball stuffed in the boy's mouth and blood oozing out of his nose, he said. An investigation suggest-

ed the man resorted to excessive alcohol consumption after his wife started living separately, the official said. He consumed liquor on the intervening night of Monday-Tuesday and allegedly stuffed a ball, made from torn notebook papers, into the boy's mouth resulting in his death by choking, he said. Following a complaint by a relative of the boy, the accused was arrested on Tuesday night and booked under Indian Penal Code section 302 (murder), the official said.

Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange receives IV fluids as protest enters 5th day

Team Absolute | Jalna

Activist Manoj Jarange, whose indefinite fast over the Maratha reservation issue entered its fifth day on Wednesday, began receiving IV fluids after a Maharashtra minister guaranteed him that the matter would be handled. Jarange's newest protest began on Saturday in his home hamlet of Antarwali Sarati in Jalna district. Despite his deteriorating condition, he initially refused IV fluids. However, he threatened to quit taking them if the government did not act quickly. As per the report, Sandipan Bhumre, the newly elected Shiv Sena MP from Aurangabad, visited Jarange on Tuesday to express his



support and address his demands. Jarange has advocated for the execution of a draft notification recognising Kunbis as "sage soyare" (blood relatives) of Marathas, as well as legislation identifying Kunbis as Marathas. Kunbis, an agrarian group, are classified as Other Backward Classes (OBC). Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange is requesting that all Marathas be awarded Kunbi certificates, which would make them eligi-

Doctor Who Switched Pune Porsche Teen's Samples Ran 'Blood Cleaning' Racket: Sources

Team Absolute | Pune

Another layer of murkiness has been added to the Pune Porsche accident case, in which an allegedly inebriated 17-year-old boy rammed into and killed two techies on a bike, with police sources revealing that the doctor who helped switch the accused's blood samples had provided the same 'service' to several other people through a network of brokers. Dr Ajay Tawade, the head of Sassoon Hospital's Forensic Medical Department, who has been arrested in the case and is in judicial custody, is one of the doctors who had allegedly switched the minor's blood samples with those of his mother to ensure that no alcohol was found in the final report. Sources in the Pune Crime Branch told a channel that their investigation has revealed that this was not the first time Dr Tawade had done something like that. Whenever there were high-profile cases of drunk drivers running over and killing people, the doctor's brokers,



spread across Pune and four other districts in Western Maharashtra, would get in touch with the families and offer to switch their blood samples with clean ones so that the accused could get away with a milder charge. "The brokers would demand lakhs for the service, usually above Rs 5 lakh, and the money would be funnelled to Dr Tawade, with them keeping a cut," said a source, adding that this had been going on since the doctor took over the foren-



sic department nearly two years ago. Tawade has faced serious allegations earlier as well. He had been accused in drug cases and a kidney transplant racket, and had allegedly been elevated to the post of the forensic department head at the recommendation of an MLA and a minister. Last month, Vinayak Kale, the dean of Sassoon Hospital, had said Maharashtra Medical Education Minister Hasan Mushrif and MLA Sunil Tingre - both

from the Ajit Pawar faction of the NCP - had written a letter and asked for Dr Tawade to be made the head of the department. Mr Kale was sent on compulsory leave soon after making the statement. MLA Tingre was also accused of visiting the Yerwada police station after the Porsche crash and pressuring officials to go easy on the case. The accident had taken place around 2.15 am on May 19, when the 17-year-old, who had been drinking with his friends in two pubs in Pune to celebrate his Class 12 results, knocked down the two 24-year-old IT professionals in the Kalyani Nagar area. He was driving a Rs 2.5-crore Porsche at over 150 kmph. Aneesh Awadhya, who was riding the bike, was sent flying and hit a parked car, while Ashwini Koshta - who was riding pillion - was flung 20 feet into the air. Both of them died on the spot. At 17 years and 8 months old, the teenager was four months short of the legal age for driving and more than seven years shy of Maharashtra's legal age for drinking.



EDITOR'S SPECS

BJP resolves to regain lost ground in UP through by-elections

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Uttar Pradesh has decided to regain lost ground by winning the 10 assembly seats where by-elections are to be held in the coming months. These seats are those that will be vacated due to the resignations of those legislators who have been elected to the Lok Sabha in the just concluded elections. The seats that will fall vacant are Karhal in Mainpuri (Akhilesh Yadav), Awadhesh Prasad (Ayodhya), Lalji Varma (Ambedkar Nagar), Zia-ur-Rehman Barq (Moradabad). All these seats are held by the Samajwadi Party. The seats where by-elections will be held and are presently held by BJP include Anoop Valmiki (Aligarh), Atul Garg (Ghaziabad), Parveen Patel (Phulpur) and Vinod Kumar Bind (Mirzapur). By-elections will also be held in the Meerapur assembly seat since the MLA from here, Chandan Chauhan has been elected to Lok Sabha on RLD symbol. UP minister Jitin Prasad, who won from the Pilibhit seat, was a member of the Legislative Council and he has sent his resignation. By-elections will also be held for his seat in the Upper House. They include Manoj Pandey (Raebareli), Rakesh Pandey (Ambedkar Nagar), Abhay Singh (Faizabad), Rakesh Pratap Singh (Amethi), Vinod Chaturvedi (Jalaun), Puja Pal (Kaushambhi). The Samajwadi Party which recorded a win with 37 seats in the Lok Sabha elections, is in no mood to forgive these rebel MLAs. SP President Akhilesh Yadav has made it clear that action will be initiated against them 'soon'. If the SP moves disqualification petition against these rebel MLAs and the Speaker disqualifies them, by-elections will be held on their six seats as well. The Samajwadi spokesman, on the other hand, said, that the voters had already taught the rebel MLAs a lesson and the SP had won in their respective constituencies.

Will India Become A Formal US Ally Under Modi 3.0?

Syed Zubair Ahmed

Retaining Dr. S. Jaishankar as foreign minister clearly signals continuity in India's foreign policy goals under Modi 3.0. But could Prime Minister Narendra Modi's success in the foreign policy arena perish at the altar of coalition politics? Collective wisdom suggests that despite a reduced mandate, India's foreign policy pursuit under Modi 3.0 is unlikely to be affected. There is unanimity among politicians and pundits that the Modi government's mantra of 'strategic consensus' and pursuit of multilateralism will continue to drive India towards becoming a global force as well as the world's third-largest economy (after the US and China) by 2027. The general consensus appears to be that Modi's foreign policy has already catapulted India onto the global stage. His actions have so far reflected a nuanced approach to maintaining an independent foreign policy that is in India's national interest. India may not yet be a great power, but is an emerging great power, as American political scientist John Mearsheimer recently suggested. In Modi's third term, India will certainly strive to go beyond an emerging great power status. If the new reality of a coalition government is unlikely to undermine Modi's foreign policy goals, will it be smooth sailing for him from now onwards? During Modi's last term, India had faced all kinds of pressure to become a formal US ally. But he commendably dodged President Joe Biden's charm offensive. Biden extended Modi a state visit, laced with a hero's welcome at the White House. It was one of the best moments of Modi's long political career, but instead of treating it as a personal triumph (remember he was denied entry by the US for years following the Gujarat violence in 2002), he saw it as a recognition for a rising India. The Modi-Jaishankar partnership has stood firm on avoiding strict alliances with any major power. Instead, the duo has tried to balance relations among competing global powers, which can be observed in India's interactions with the US, Russia and China, as well as its balancing act between Israel and Middle Eastern countries. In the coming years, the challenges are going to become even bigger for the Modi government because the rise of China and a resurgent Russia are expected to continue to undermine the US-dominated liberal global order. The war in Ukraine has



dragged on with no end in sight, and it is thus that the US is desperate to bring powers like India into its orbit of influence. If India were to become a formal US ally, it would be a huge shot in the arm for President Biden. On the other hand, it's obvious that President Putin would not like to lose an old, trusted friend in India, which relies heavily on him for its defence and energy needs. Many academics, policymakers and analysts in the US continue to forcefully argue that becoming a formal US ally is more beneficial for India and that it'll help it achieve its goal of becoming a great global power. Many in India also believe it's in the country's national interest to join hands with the most powerful country on the planet. So, if it is indeed in India's national interest, why not? After all, India and the US are already part of the Quad grouping, along with Japan and Australia. No doubt the argument in favour of an India-US alliance is very powerful and loaded with benefits. India is faced with China's growing economic and military ambitions. So, could Modi feel compelled to enter a comprehensive agreement with the US and get more rewarding economic cooperation and an umbrella security protection against any future Chinese aggression? Given the recent incidents of border skirmishes and the fact that China is an immediate neighbour, India faces a bigger security threat from China than any other of its neighbours. Therefore, ostensibly, it makes sense to come under the US security cover. The supporters of such an argument say that India needs investments, technology, and semiconductor chips for its industries. It also needs advanced weapons for its military. They believe the US can also help India become a permanent

member of the UN Security Council. Most of all, they say that both countries share democratic values. They say if India were to become a US ally, it stands to gain much more from the alliance than the US does. Many also argue the alliance could be on the lines of NATO. The security relationship between the US and the European Union is anchored in NATO, established in 1949 to protect Europe against the Communist Soviet Union. This military alliance not only ensures the defence of Europe but also fosters a close political relationship between the US and EU member states. In return, the EU countries support US positions in global affairs. That's why the EU supported the American invasion of Iraq and they supported Israel without questioning much of its action in Gaza. In effect, many EU member countries have to exercise with caution their independent foreign policy, especially over an issue in which the US has a strategic interest. They have to toe the American line. Those who are not in favour of India becoming a US ally say that if India goes that way, it will have to sacrifice its foreign policy autonomy, and that is non-negotiable for the Modi-Jaishankar duo. For instance, if India had been a US ally in 2003, it would have had to make a hard choice between supporting the US invasion of Iraq and standing firm in solidarity with an old Arab friend. The Philippines and Thailand are US allies in East Asia. But has that helped them ally their China concerns? South Korea is an American ally, but its citizens spend sleepless nights whenever tensions with North Korea escalate. Ultimately, India collaborates fully with the US when it

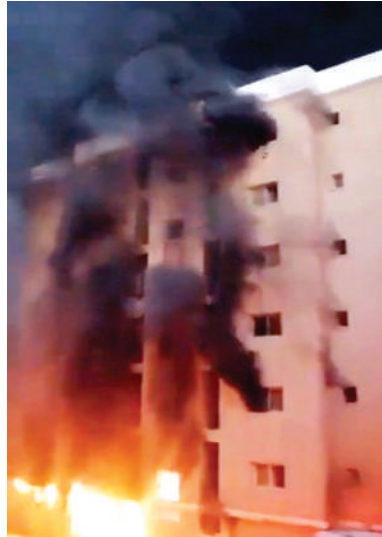
comes to managing China's rapid rise as a global power. But here again, India's policy on China is primarily based on its own ground reality. The Galwan Valley clash has severely strained relations between India and China even though bilateral trade continues to boom. Again, Russia has been India's all-weather friend and often does not appear to be wanting anything in return for its deep commitment to India. The US and other Western powers are wary of India's close ties with Russia. They have repeatedly asked India to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Talking about Modi's Gulf policy, his engagements with the Gulf countries and West Asia have been a big success. On the Israel-Gaza issue, one expects India's strategic autonomy to continue. India's ties with Israel have grown stronger under Modi, with increased cooperation in defence, technology, and agriculture. They will become even stronger in the near future. Simultaneously, India has maintained strong ties with Arab countries, particularly in the Gulf, which are crucial for energy security and the large Indian expatriate population. The West views India's balancing act positively, recognising the strategic importance of maintaining relations with both Israel and the Arab world. This balance is seen as a testament to India's diplomatic finesse. Some policymakers believe that if India truly harbours the ambition of becoming a global power, it cannot remain a mute spectator in times of big global crises. For example, when the US under President Trump lost the trust of the Palestinians as a neutral mediator, some argued that it was an opportunity for India to offer its mediation and try to bring the Palestinians and Israel onto the negotiating table. After all, India enjoys immense goodwill among both the Israelis and the Palestinians. They now give the example of China, which successfully brought together sworn enemies Saudi Arabia and Iran and earned the right to be a serious mediator. It is possible we may see a more assertive foreign policy in Modi's third term, in which India's stance on big global issues will be better articulated. But to expect India to mediate between warring parties may still be a step too far.

(The views expressed are personal)

international

More than 40 killed in fire in Kuwait

Kuwait City | Agencies
More than 35 people died when a fire broke out in a building housing workers in Kuwait early on Wednesday, officials said. At least 35 bodies were still inside the building after the fire was put out, head of the criminal evidence department at the Interior Ministry, Major General Eid al-Owailhan, said. The Health Ministry said at least 43 people have been transferred to hospitals for treatment and four have died. Search teams continue to inspect the building to look for other victims and investigations are ongoing into the reason behind the fire. Local media said the fire broke out in a six-floor building overcrowded with workers in al-Mangaf area, south of the capital. Meanwhile, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Wednesday expressed deep shock over the tragic fire incident in Kuwait city which has resulted in dozens of deaths, including of many



Indian nationals. "Deeply shocked by the news of the fire incident in Kuwait city. There are reportedly over 40 deaths and over 50 have been hospitalised. Our

Ambassador has gone to the camp. We are awaiting further information," Jaishankar posted on X. "Deepest condolences to the families of those who tragically lost their lives. Wish early and full recovery to those who have been injured. Our Embassy will render the fullest assistance to all concerned in this regard," he added. The Indian Embassy in Kuwait has also put out an emergency helpline number in connection with the tragedy, confirming that it involved Indian workers. "All concerned are requested to connect over this helpline for updates. The Embassy remains committed to render all possible assistance," it said. Meanwhile, Kuwait's Ministry of Health also released a statement Wednesday afternoon. "The Ministry of Health has so far dealt with 43 cases through the accident departments in a number of hospitals, in a building fire incident in Mangaf, of which 4 cases arrived dead," it said.

US to provide another Patriot system to Ukraine: Report

Washington | Agencies
US President Joe Biden is planning to make another Patriot air defence system available to Ukraine to fend off Russian aerial attacks, the media reported, citing unnamed US government sources. Biden took the decision following several high-level meetings last week, the New York Times reported on Tuesday. John Kirby, the Communications Director of the US National Security Council, did not confirm the report when asked about it. According to the New York Times, the system in question is in Poland and could be deployed to the front line in Ukraine within days. If confirmed it would be the second US-made Patriot system provided to Kiev by Washington. Biden gave the go-ahead for the first system nearly 18 months ago when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky travelled to the US for the first time following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine to address the US



Congress. The US has also been supplying Ukraine with Patriot missiles. The Patriot is considered one of the most advanced air defence missile systems in modern warfare. It can be used to combat enemy aircraft, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles. The defence missiles can hit targets at a distance of around 100 km at altitudes of up to 30 km. Germany has also provided Ukraine with two such systems and pledged to send another one. Zelensky, who was in Berlin on Tuesday to attend a conference for the reconstruction of Ukraine, also paid a visit to Ukrainian soldiers currently being trained in Germany to use the Patriot.

Raging wildfire forces residents to evacuate in Cyprus



Nicosia | Agencies
A total of three villages have been evacuated as wildfires raged out of control engulfing homes and animals, in Cyprus' Paphos district, local media reported. Psathi was the first village to be evacuated before Choulou and Lemona were evacuated later on Tuesday, Xinhua news agency reported. Fire brigade spokesman Andreas Kettis said on Tuesday that the government's Pysros plan has been activated, with a ministerial team convening at the Joint Rescue and Coordination Centre to coordinate the firefighting efforts. Ground forces and aerial vehicles are currently deployed at the scene, he noted. Efforts are also being made by the government to secure support from Jordan, Israel, Greece and the European Union, he added. The fire brigade has said the fire started in an area of dry grass and low vegetation, though its exact cause is yet to be determined.

49 migrants dead, 140 missing in shipwreck off Yemeni coast: IOM

Aden (Yemen) | Agencies
The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has said that at least 49 migrants have drowned and 140 others remained missing after their overloaded boat capsized off the coast of Yemen. The organisation said on Tuesday that the vessel overturned in the waters off the shores of Yemen's Shabwa province on Monday, marking one of the deadliest incidents along the treacherous migration route from the Horn of Africa to Yemen, Xinhua news agency reported. It said that among the victims were 31 women and six children fleeing conflict, drought, and economic woes in their home countries. "The tragedy is another reminder of the urgent need to work together to address irregular migration challenges," said Mohammedali Abunajela, an IOM spokesperson.



The boat departed from Somalia's port city of Bossaso early Sunday, carrying 115 Somalis and 145 Ethiopians, including 90 women. Despite perilous journeys, thousands continue to transit through Yemen, hoping to reach Saudi Arabia and other Gulf nations. Search and rescue efforts by local authorities were hampered by a shortage of patrol boats and recent conflict in the area. Community members, including fishermen, played a vital role in recovering bodies and assisting survivors, according to the IOM. So far, a total of 71 survivors have been rescued, with eight requiring hospitalisation for further medical treatment. The IOM has mobilised medical teams and psychologists to provide emergency care and mental health support. Since 2014, the IOM has recorded nearly 1,900 migrant deaths along the migration corridor from East Africa to Yemen, which is commonly known as the "Eastern Route".

Blinken 'hopeful' on Gaza ceasefire after Hamas signals acceptance

Jerusalem | Agencies
US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said that Hamas' welcoming of a United Nations resolution that backs a proposal for a ceasefire in the Gaza conflict was a "hopeful sign". Blinken, currently on a visit to the Middle East to sell the ceasefire deal, made the remarks after Sami Abu Zuhri, a senior Hamas spokesman, said on Tuesday that the movement accepted the ceasefire proposal, according to a report by Israel's state-owned Kan TV news. Earlier on Monday, Hamas



announced in a statement sent via Telegram that it "welcomes" the UN Security Council resolution supporting a ceasefire in Gaza, a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces, and a swap of Palestinian prisoners for hostages held in Gaza. Yet Blinken expressed his anticipation for Hamas leaders in Gaza to provide a clear confirmation of their stance on the proposal, Xinhua

news agency reported. "That's what counts, and that's what we still lack," he said. He met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday night and said that the latter had "reaffirmed his commitment" to the ceasefire proposal. Blinken met with Israeli officials on Monday and Tuesday after talks with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi in Cairo on Monday, as the Israeli hostage rescue operation, which killed more than 200 Palestinians, clouded the prospects for the ceasefire agreement.



CHHINDWARA SOLDIER MARTYRED IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR, CM AND KAMAL NATH EXPRESSED GRIEF

Team Absolute | Chhindwara/Bhopal

Kabir Das, a resident of Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh, was martyred in an encounter with terrorists in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday night. State Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and former Chief Minister Kamal Nath have expressed grief over the martyrdom of the CRPF jawan.

It is reported that there was an encounter between security forces and terrorists on Tuesday night in Hiranagar area of Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir. Kabir Das, a resident of Chhindwara district and CRPF jawan, was seriously injured in this encounter. He died on Wednesday morning.

State Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has expressed grief over the martyrdom of CRPF jawan Kabir Das and wrote on Twitter, "Late last night,



terrorists carried out a dastardly attack in Jammu and Kashmir. In this terrorist attack, one of our CRPF jawans was martyred and some Sad

news has been received that our brave soldiers have killed a terrorist in retaliation. He further said, "I pray to Baba Mahakal to place the soul of the martyred soldier at His feet and to give full recovery to the injured soldiers soon." Expressing grief over the martyrdom of Chhindwara jawan, former Chief Minister Kamal Nath said, CRPF jawan Kabir Das, resident of Pulpudoh, Chhindwara, was martyred in yesterday's terrorist attack in Kathua, Jammu and Kashmir. We are proud of the brave son of Chhindwara who sacrificed his life to protect Mother India. May God rest his soul and give strength to his family to bear this loss. The entire Chhindwara family is with him in this hour of grief. According to the information received, the body of martyr Kabir Das will be brought to Nagpur by a special plane on Thursday. The last rites will be held in his home village.

Unique demonstration of women to save greenery in Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, protest has started against the alleged attempt to cut 29 thousand trees for the construction of houses for ministers and MLAs. Women staged a protest regarding this and registered their protest by clinging to trees.

Actually, a proposal to build new bungalows for MLAs and ministers in the capital is pending. Bungalows are proposed in Tulsi Nagar and Shivaji Nagar and it is feared that a large number of trees will be cut for the construction of bungalows. The local people are angry about this matter and have embarked on the path of agitation.

Local people staged a protest at bus stop number five. Women also participated in this. These women expressed their protest by clinging to the tree.

The women who took part in the protest said that when the poor can be settled outside the city, then why cannot bungalows be built for ministers and MLAs on the outskirts of the city.



Former leader of opposition and MLA Ajay Singh was the first to raise this issue and alleged that only the Chief Minister's approval was left for the plan to cut trees. He had opposed this and also warned the government.

Former minister and Congress leader P.C. Sharma says that the government is going to build bungalows for ministers and MLAs. For this, about 50 thousand trees have to be cut. Shivaji Nagar and Tulsi Nagar, where trees are planned to be cut, are the greenest areas of the capital. If the government's plan is successful, the temperature in Bhopal will cross 50 degrees Celsius.

2 Die, over 80 taken ill due to cholera outbreak in Bhind

Team Absolute | Bhind

At least two elderly people died and over 80 persons fell ill due to an outbreak of cholera in Madhya Pradesh's Bhind district, a health official said on Wednesday.

The outbreak occurred in ward number 5, 6 and 7 of Phoop town in the district due to water contamination.

Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO, Bhind) D K Sharma told a news agency, "Due to infection in water, some cases of cholera outbreak were reported after which some patients were admitted to the district hospital and some of them were treated at the local community health centre. Till now, a total of 84 people have been affected, and most of these patients have recovered and returned home. Currently, there are six patients admitted to the hospital. Two patients were referred to Gwalior who have recovered



and returned."

"Till now, two elderly people have died in the outbreak while a girl died two days ago and she died due to fever. She had vomited once and was having a fever," CMHO added. He further said that the Nagar Palika had closed the drinking water supply queue as of now and water was being supplied through other means. "The entire house in the affected area has been surveyed, amedicines and chlorine tablets have been given to them. People

have been told to drink water only after boiling it. Apart from this, the Nagar Palika has been instructed to remove water contamination wherever it is happening," he added. "It seems to happen only due to contaminated water, and once the sample is tested, things will become clear," CMHO Sharma said. "Arrangements of ambulances have been made, the team of doctors has also been increased and we are keeping a close eye on the matter," he added.

WOMAN SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR KILLING MOTHER-IN-LAW BY STABBING HER OVER 95 TIMES

Rewa: A court in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district has sentenced a 24-year-old woman to death for murdering her mother-in-law in 2022 by stabbing her more than 95 times. Rewa district's fourth additional sessions judge Padma Jatav convicted Kanchan Kol for killing her 50-year-old mother-in-law Saroj Kol, additional public prosecutor Vikas Dwivedi said. Kanchan, a resident of Atrala village under Mangawa police station limits, was accused of stabbing her mother-in-law with a sickle for over 95 times on July 12, 2022 following a domestic strife, he said. The victim was alone in the house at that time. Her son later informed the police and took her to a hospital, where doctors declared her dead, Dwivedi said. The public prosecutor said that victim Saroj Kol's husband Valmik Kol was also named as a co-accused in the case on the charge of inciting her, but was acquitted in the absence of evidence.

Rats on rampage in Gwalior Government Hospital

Team Absolute | Gwalior

A video has surfaced on social media showing rats roaming purportedly in a ward of a government-run hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior city, prompting the authorities to order an effective pest control at the medical facility.

The opposition Congress in Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday shared the video on its X handle, claiming there were "more rats than patients" at the Kamla Raja Hospital in Gwalior, and criticised the government over the condition of health facilities in the state.

Some social media users have shared the video showing rats roaming around, claiming it to be a ward of the Kamla Raja Hospital, a woman and children's medical facility under the government's Gajra Raja Medical College in Gwalior.

The medical college dean, RKS Dhakad, told reporters on Tuesday that he has come to know of the video and has directed the hospital superintendent to take necessary steps to control the problem of rats.

Pest control takes place in the wards but the hospital authorities have been asked to make it more effective so that



such a situation does not arise in future, he said. Such things should not happen in a hospital where patients are present, Dhakad said.

The Congress while sharing the video on X said, "Look at the condition of Madhya Pradesh's health system. There

are more rats roaming than patients in Gwalior's Kamla Raja Hospital, strict vigil has to be maintained to protect patients and newborns from rats. Madhya Pradesh is at the mercy of God. Parchiwale chief minister is registering attendance in durbar."

AIIMS Bhopal Hosts Successful Health Camp in Rapadiya Village

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Under the visionary leadership of Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, the Department of AYUSH organized a highly successful health camp in Rapadiya village on 11.06.2024, delivering vital health services to the community. The camp was attended by Medical Officer Dr. Ranjana Pandey and Yoga Instructor Chanchal Suryavanshi from AYUSH, providing a comprehensive range of health consultations and distributing free medicine to patients. The camp's objective was to enhance public health awareness and offer holistic health solutions.

Recognizing the growing importance of yoga in preventive healthcare, Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh emphasized the necessity of making yoga accessible to everyone. "By integrating yoga training into health camps,



we can prevent numerous diseases and promote overall well-being," said Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh. In alignment with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's

vision, the initiative underscores the global benefits of adopting yoga. The AYUSH Department has also launched common yoga protocol practice sessions, running from June 1st, 7 am to 8 am daily, culminating in the celebration of International Yoga Day. The health camp saw enthusiastic participation from individuals of all ages, including many suffering from chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, anxiety, and high blood pressure. Attendees benefited from personalized yoga consultation sessions, health consultations, and free distribution of medicines. The event has received widespread acclaim for its effectiveness, reach, and significant contribution to community health and well-being. The AYUSH Department's commitment to providing accessible health services through such initiatives continues to positively impact public health.

Massive fire breaks out in pesticide factory in Vidisha

Team Absolute | Vidisha

A fire broke out in a pesticide factory located in Vidisha district of Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday morning. Due to the chemical substances present in the factory premises, the fire took a serious form within a short time. Fire engines are engaged in extinguishing the fire.

According to the information received, a sudden fire broke out in this pesticide factory located in the industrial area this morning. Within no time the fire became huge. Chemical substances were kept in many drums in the factory premises, due to which the fire spread rapidly.

Along with the operation to extinguish the fire, drums of chemicals were removed



by breaking the boundary wall of the factory so that the fire does not spread there.

Four fire brigade vehicles are engaged in extinguishing the fire. Help of water tankers is also being taken. Apart from Vidisha, fire engines from Sanchi, Ganjbasoda and Raisen have reached the spot. This pesticide factory is said to be owned by a BJP

leader. It is noteworthy that recently a fire broke out in a plastic pipe manufacturing factory in Pithampur industrial area of Dhar district. Due to the large amount of plastic material in the factory premises, the fire had taken a huge form and it took several hours to extinguish it. There was huge loss in this fire.

Complete the formalities for recruitment on the posts approved by the Council of Ministers soon: Deputy Chief Minister Shukla

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla reviewed various subjects of Health and Medical Education Department at Mantralaya Vallabh Bhawan. The Deputy Chief Minister gave instructions to complete all the formalities on priority for filling 46 thousand 491 departmental posts and 607 specialist medical posts approved by the Council of Ministers.

Shukla expressed anger over the delay in shifting of Hamidia Cath Lab. The Deputy Chief Minister said that the work of Cath Lab is related to critical health service delivery. Negligence and administrative indifference in this work is unacceptable. He instructed that the process of shifting the cath lab should be completed within one



month. The Deputy Chief Minister instructed the departmental officers to take the process of technical and administrative approval on priority. He said that the cath lab shifting work would be regularly reviewed and responsibility would be fixed for unnecessary delays.

Shukla reviewed the construction work of 1 thousand 770 health infrastructures

sanctioned without buildings in the state. These include construction works of sub health centres, primary health centers and community health centers etc. The Deputy Chief Minister directed that along with infrastructure development, availability of equipment, manpower etc. should also be ensured on time so that the delivery of health services can start soon.

The promise of giving 3 thousand rupees to 'Ladli Behna' is incomplete: Jitu Patwari

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress state president Jitu Patwari has taken a dig at the decisions taken in the first meeting of Madhya Pradesh's Mohan Yadav cabinet after the Lok Sabha elections. He has said that during the assembly elections, a promise of giving three thousand rupees per month to the beloved sisters ('Ladli Behna') was made, which is incomplete.

Congress state president Jitu Patwari, referring to Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's video, wrote on social media, "Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, the 'favor' you are doing to the dear sisters by releasing the video has no meaning, because votes The promises made in the elections are still unfulfilled. By raising many election slogans like BJP's trust, Shivraj's guarantee, the sisters were kept under the illusion that they will be given Rs



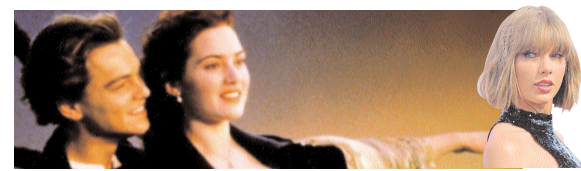
3000 per month as soon as they get power. Even after six months, your government is still lying and avoiding fulfilling its promises!"

Congress state president Jitu Patwari accused the BJP of not fulfilling the promises made and said, why

are lakhs of dear sisters of Madhya Pradesh being insulted? What you are citing and repeating as pride should be the biggest matter of nationwide shame for the BJP. This should also be the biggest example of political lies. Secondly, the amount you are giving

is not a favor, it is the right of the beloved sisters, because it was on the basis of this lie that BJP saved its looted power.

Congress State President has demanded that the beloved sisters be given three thousand rupees each and advised that it would be better to immediately start paying the amount of three thousand rupees per month to the beloved sisters ('Ladli Behna') and the balance of the last 6 months should also be transferred to their accounts. It may be noted that assembly elections were held in the state in December 2023. Before this election, the then Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had launched the Ladli Bahna Yojana and had promised to give women starting from Rs 1,000 per month to Rs 3,000 per month. At present the state government is giving Rs 1250 per month under Ladli Bahna Yojana.



Jennifer Lopez & Ben Affleck Are Reportedly Selling Their Home



Los Angeles | Agencies

Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck's marital status continues to make headlines. According to a new report, the spouses — who have been married since 2022

— are selling their Los Angeles home. Over the weekend, the duo reportedly visited their house in Beverly Hills for several hours.

Per pictures published by Page Six on Monday, June 10, Ben, 51, was seen leaving the

home on June 9, while Jennifer, 54, was inside the house with her husband for four hours. However, the property has not formally been listed on the market at the time of publication.

Last month, rumors swirled that the Argo actor and the

Selena actress were living apart. Additionally, multiple outlets reported that they were having marital issues. However, neither Ben nor Jennifer has publicly confirmed or denied the speculation.

Miley Cyrus steps out for a special sushi date

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Miley Cyrus and her beau Maxx Morando are going strong. Recently, the couple stepped out for a date night in West Hollywood.

The two appeared to be in great spirits while out on a date to enjoy an oriental meal, reports People magazine.

A source said: "Max and Miley were on a date night eating sushi at Jinpachi in West Hollywood and were really cute. They seem happy together. They were also friendly with everyone around them, talking to strangers about how good the food was and how it's one of their favourite spots. She's just cool all around."

In February, a source told People that the couple is living together and Miley, 31, is "very happy with him."

"Miley has changed a lot in the past couple of years. She seems more calm and harmonious. Everyone loves Maxx," the source added. "He's a great guy. She is very happy with him. He's private and doesn't like being in the press. It's been good for her."

The singer and Morando were first linked in 2021 when they were photographed holding hands backstage and dancing to music at her NBC special, Miley's New Year's Eve Party. Since then, public sightings have been minimal — though she gave him a sweet shout-out as she took home record of the year for 'Flowers' at the 66th annual Grammy Awards in February.



BILLY RAY CYRUS FILES FOR DIVORCE



Los Angeles | Agencies

Billy Ray Cyrus and Fierrose's flame has burned out. The 62-year-old country music singer filed for divorce from his 35-year-old wife earlier this week following seven months of marriage, citing "irreconcilable differences" and "inappropriate marital conduct," according to a new report.

Per court documents obtained by E! News, Billy Ray also requested an annulment on the grounds that "consent to marriage was obtained by fraud." His official date of separation from Fierrose was listed as May 22, the outlet reported. Although it's still unclear what happened between the spouses, they haven't shared photos of one another to social media since April.

That month, Fierrose called her husband her "best friend" and celebrated six months of marriage by sharing photos from their wedding.

"6 months ago I married this man," she wrote alongside pictures of her and Billy Ray on April 12. "Life isn't always easy... but it sure helps when your husband's also your best friend. Thank you Lord!"

The "Achy Breaky Heart" hitmaker and the "New Day" artist tied the knot in October 2023 in an intimate wedding ceremony. They shared photos from the event to their respective Instagram pages, with Billy Ray gushing, "Long live love," in a caption.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Disgraced actor Kevin Spacey, who has been accused of sexual assault on many counts, has revealed that his house has been foreclosed on as he owes "many millions" of dollars in legal fees from his sexual misconduct trials. The actor said on 'Piers Morgan

Kevin Spacey owes millions in legal fees, but he insists he has no money

Uncensored' that he no longer has a permanent home and barely has any money left to his name, reports Variety.

He said: "It's funny you ask that question because this week, where I have been living in Baltimore is being foreclosed on. My house is being sold at auction, so I have to go back to Baltimore and put my things in storage."

The actor said that he is not sure where he is going to live now. He has been in Baltimore since he started shooting 'House of Cards' there.

"I moved there in 2012. This (house) has been my home since 2016. I can't pay the bills that I owe," he added.

When asked if he is facing bankruptcy, he said: "There's been a couple of times

when I thought I was going to file but we've managed to dodge it, at least as of today."

As per Variety, since claims of Spacey's alleged sexual assaults and inappropriate behaviour first arose in the wake of the #MeToo movement in 2017, several legal cases were brought against the two-time Oscar winner.

In 2022, a jury in New York concluded that he did not molest actor Anthony Rapp, who had accused him of sexual assault in the early 1980s when Rapp was 14. The next year, a UK court found Spacey not guilty of nine charges of sexual assault from four complainants. Several other charges and lawsuits have been dropped. Spacey has denied all the allegations.

KEVIN JONAS REVEALS HE HAS CANCER

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Kevin Jonas has skin cancer. The 'Leave Before You Love Me' singer took to his social media to reveal that he had surgery to remove skin cancer. He captioned a clip of himself at a medical facility before and after the procedure: "Friendly reminder to get your moles checked," reports People magazine.

As the video begins, Jonas is seen laying down for the selfie video. "So today I am getting a basal cell carcinoma removed from my head," he said while positioning the camera closer to the exact location of the skin abnormality.

"Yes, that is an actual little skin cancer guys that started to grow, and now I have to get surgery to remove it," he added.

According to Mayo Clinic, "Basal cell carcinoma is a type of skin cancer" that "begins in the basal cells — a type of cell within the skin that produces new skin cells as old ones die."

The medical organisation added that it "often appears as a slightly transparent bump on the skin, though it can take other forms." "So here we go," the 'Camp Rock' alum said before the video switched to a clip of him after the basal cell carcinoma was removed. As per People, Jonas showed himself lifting the gauze that covered his fresh scar, but he made sure to block out the graphic image with an emoji.

"Alright, I'm all done," he continued, this time sitting in a vehicle with his seatbelt on. "Now it's time to heal, heading home." Before ending his video, the 'Burnin' Up' hitmaker left his fans with a final request. "Make sure to get those moles checked, people!" The Jonas Brothers are currently on a break from touring. Their last date was April 30 in Cancun, Mexico.



Celine Dion Says she went from 2 mg to fatal 90 mg of Valium during health struggles

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Celine Dion looked back at her health journey through a lens of gratitude after managing undiagnosed stiff-person syndrome symptoms for 17 years.

The music superstar opened up about the symptoms that began manifesting in the mid-2000s, including muscle spasms, difficulty breathing and singing, reports People magazine.

She spoke about her "crisis" episodes during which her entire body locked up which caused pain. The first time she felt a spasm nearly 20 years ago, she was in Germany on tour.

She told People: "I had breakfast, and I suddenly started to feel a spasm. My vocal exercise made it worse."

The singer is set to give fans an in-depth look at her fight against stiff-person syndrome in an emotional new documentary, 'I Am: Celine Dion'.

As per People, the singer tried remedies ranging from steam showers to over-the-counter medications and made appointments with ear, nose and throat physicians and ophthalmologists, all of which were unfruitful.

As her symptoms intensified, the 'My Heart Will Go On' singer, beloved for her vocal precision and inimitable stage presence, was advised to take prescription medications, including muscle relaxants like Valium.

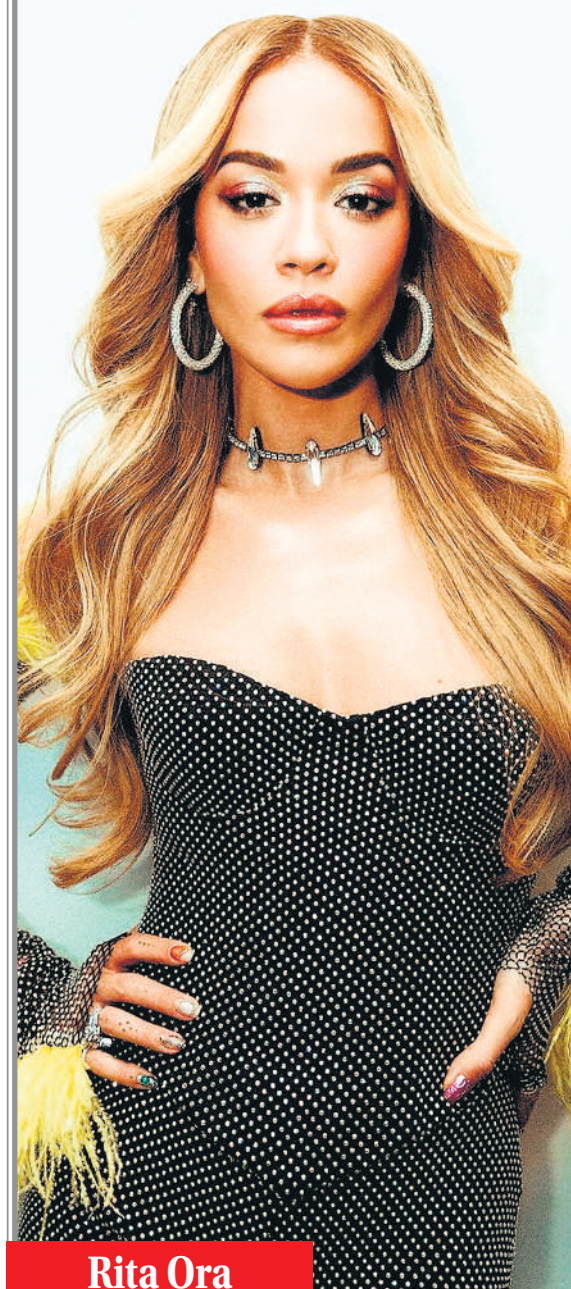
"We started with two milligrams to see if it would help, and then 2.5, and then three, and 15 and 50," she said noting the medication began wearing off so quickly that at one point she took 90 milligrams of Valium to power through a performance.

"It could have been fatal. I did not question the level because I don't know medicine. I thought it was going to be okay. It worked for a few days, for a few weeks, and then it doesn't work anymore," she said.

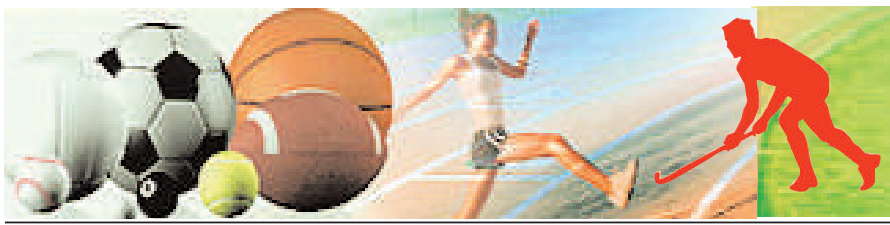
"I did not understand that I could have gone to bed and stopped breathing. And you learn — you learn through your mistakes." Currently, the singer is "very, very happy and fortunate" that she's able to share her learnings with others.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Rita Ora



ICC Rankings: Mohammad Nabi topples Shakib Al Hasan as No. 1 T20I all-rounder

Dubai | Agencies

Afghanistan's unbeaten start to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup has reshaped the ICC Men's T20I All-Rounder Rankings, with veteran star Mohammad Nabi leading the charge as the No. 1 all-rounder in the latest ICC T20I rankings.

Nabi's two-wicket haul against New Zealand in Guyana catapulted him to the No. 1 spot on the T20I all-rounder list. Climbing two places, Nabi displaced previous top-ranked Shakib Al Hasan, who tumbled to fifth place amid a significant reshuffling. Australia's Marcus Stoinis also capitalised on the shake-up, jumping three spots to secure second place.

Rahmanullah Gurbaz, the dynamic opener, is making headlines as the leading run-scorer in the T20 World Cup with 156 runs from two innings. His explosive form has elevated him eight places to a career-high 12th on



the T20I batters' rankings. Meanwhile, India's Suryakumar Yadav maintains a commanding lead, with other notable movements including Pakistan's Babar Azam climbing to third, England's Jos Buttler moving to fifth, and Australia's Travis Head entering the top 10.

Afghanistan's prowess is also reflected in the bowling rankings. The ever-impressive Rashid Khan has moved up four spots to third, while Fazalhaq Farooqi's stellar performances have seen him rise six places to a shared fourth position with South Africa's Anrich Nortje, who also ascended four rungs.

Not to be outdone, Bangladesh's bowlers too made significant strides as Mustafizur Rahman leapt 10 spots to 13th, Taskin Ahmed is up eight places to 19th, and Rishad Hossain has surged 24 places to 30th, following commendable performances against Sri Lanka and South Africa.

SHARDUL THAKUR UNDERGOES SUCCESSFUL FOOT SURGERY IN LONDON

New Delhi | Agencies

India's bowling all-rounder Shardul Thakur has undergone a successful foot surgery in London. The surgery, which took place in London, was necessitated by a foot injury he sustained during the 2019 Indian Premier League (IPL) season.

In a social media post on 'Instagram' Thakur shared his post-surgery photograph and wrote in the caption, "Operated successfully."

During his debut Test against the West Indies, Thakur sustained a groin injury, and a hamstring issue kept him out of the iconic Lord's Test against England in 2021. Earlier this year, an ankle injury during the South Africa tour forced him to miss a crucial Ranji Trophy clash against Kerala.

Despite these setbacks, Thakur made a strong return to India's premier first-class tournament, the Ranji Trophy, and asked for the BCCI to provide longer breaks in the schedule to ensure players have adequate recovery and preparation time.

The IPL 2024 season was a tough one for Thakur. In nine matches, he managed to take only five wickets, with an economy rate of 9.76 and an average of 61.80, far below his usual standards. His most challenging game came in a must-win match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, where he recorded figures of 2/61 from four overs. Despite taking the key wickets of Rajat Patidar and Glenn Maxwell, Thakur's expensive spell marked the second-worst figures by a Chennai Super



Kings bowler in IPL history, second only to Lungi Ngidi's 0/62.

Thakur's last appearance for the Indian team was in December 2023 during a Test against South Africa at Centurion. It was a difficult match for him, as he finished with figures of 1/101 in an innings defeat by 32 runs.

Despite this, Thakur's resilience and determination shone through in the Ranji Trophy, where he was instrumental in Mumbai's victorious campaign. He scored 255 runs and took 12 wickets in five games, earning the Player of the Match award in the semi-final against Tamil Nadu with a stunning century and four-wicket haul.

Tennis: Nadal, Alcaraz to team up in doubles for Spain at Paris Olympics

Madrid | Agencies

The Spaniards Carlos Alcaraz and Rafael Nadal are set to join forces as doubles partners at the upcoming Olympic Games in Paris, to be held on the storied clay courts of Roland Garros.

Carlos Alcaraz, the 21-year-old prodigy who recently captured his third Grand Slam title at the French Open, will be back at the site of his latest triumph with a burgeoning legacy and the confidence of a champion. On the other side, Rafael Nadal's return, with clay court dominance and an unparalleled record of 14 French Open titles and 22 major wins overall, at the Roland Garros is always met with reverence.

Nadal's participation was uncertain earlier this year due to a series of injuries, but his tenacity saw him return to the clay courts in April, determined to give one last memorable performance.

David Ferrer, Spain's national team coach and a



former top player himself, couldn't contain his excitement as he confirmed the dream pairing. "One pair, which I think everyone knows and was hoping for, is Carlos Alcaraz and Rafael Nadal," Ferrer announced. "Rafa and Carlos will be playing together in Paris."

Nadal won his first and

only Olympic gold medal in singles at the Beijing Games in 2008, a crowning achievement in his illustrious career. Now, with the Paris Games potentially marking his swan song, the opportunity to mentor and compete alongside Alcaraz adds a layer of significance to his participation.

FIFA WC Qualifiers: India lose out on qualification dreams with controversial 1-2 loss against Qatar

Doha | Agencies

Indian football fans were again left seething in frustration as the side fell against Asian Champions Qatar despite taking the lead in the first half. The scoreline ended 2-1 in favour of the home side at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in a game surrounded by controversy.

In their first game without former skipper Sunil Chhetri, Gurpreet Sandhu started the game with the captain's armband and came agonisingly close to leading the team to their first-ever trip to the third round of the FIFA WC Qualifiers. The loss also means that India will not receive automatic qualification to the AFC Asian Cup 2027.

Qatar started the game on the front foot and almost took the lead through a well-worked corner which was saved by the vigilant skipper in goal. Mahtab Singh rescued the side in the opening minutes as Qatari forward Alrawi was in an excellent position to score but a brilliant block by the defender led to a goal-line clearance.

Despite a rocky start India grew into the game and came close to scoring on multiple occasions with Manvir Singh, Rahim Ali, and Lallianzuala Chhangte coming close to opening the scoring. The break-



through came in the 37th minute through a brilliant pass by Brandon Fernandes who found Chhangte inside the box which the 27-year-old slotted into the back of the net.

Controversy broke out during the 75th minute as Yousef Aymen scored a goal despite the ball having clearly rolled out of the pitch in the build-up. The Indian players and captain

Sandhu all pleaded with the referee, but the absence of VAR led to the goal standing which meant the game remained tied. All hopes ended for India as the side lost all momentum and ended up conceding the second goal in the 85th minute through a brilliant finish by Alrawi from outside the box. Kuwait won their fixture against Afghanistan (1-0), securing

their progress to the next round. It was a brilliant turnaround by the side that started the day from the bottom of the table.

It is back to the drawing board for India who will have to take the result with a pinch of salt. A new era of the sport awaits the team, one without Sunil Chhetri and hopefully one with more moments to celebrate.

FORMER PLAYER, ACE FOOTBALL COACH TK CHATHUNNI DIES AT 79



Kochi: T.K. Chathunni, a renowned former footballer from Kerala, known for his coaching prowess, passed away at a private hospital on Wednesday at the age of 79 following a battle with cancer.

In his days as a player he represented the country and Services. He has played for Kerala and Goa in Santosh Trophy. After his retirement, Chathunni entered into the coaching arena.

In his coaching stint, he coached the Kerala team besides several major clubs in the country, including Mohan Bagan, FC Kochin and Dempo Goa.

The highlight of his coaching career was promoting talented players like I.M. Vijayan and several others.

"I owe everything to him as it was he who made me Vijayan the footballer," said Vijayan.

T20 World Cup: 'Vastly experienced' Jadeja will win matches for India, says Mhambrey

New York | Agencies

India bowling coach Paras Mhambrey has backed 'vastly experienced' Ravindra Jadeja to come good in the Men's T20 World Cup, saying that the left-arm spin all-rounder will be winning matches for the team later in the competition.

In the ongoing tournament, Jadeja is yet to pick a wicket with the ball and was dismissed for a golden duck by Mohammed Amir in India's thrilling six-run win over Pakistan at New York on June 9.

With Axar chipping in with valuable all-round contributions in India's win over Pakistan and in-form Kuldeep Yadav waiting in the ranks to be in the playing eleven, Jadeja is on a sticky wicket in terms of his position in the side. "I think it's a team game, right? It's going to be 11 guys. You really don't expect all of them coming into form. It's going to be performed every game that will happen. For me, I personally feel whatever conversations Rahul (Dravid, head coach) and Vicky (Vikram Rathour, batting coach) are having around, I've been pretty happy with it. You expect a one-odd game out there. But it's a long tournament."

"For someone like Jadeja, who's so vastly experienced, he just needs a game out there to just get his root and feel around. We know that the skills and experience he has, he's going to go ahead and win you games. So that confidence we have in not only Jadeja, but honestly with someone like (Shivam) Dube and others as well."

"You can have one odd game and people will have conversations saying you are being given a game, and you're going to have that one bad game. That's fine, but the team will back you and that's what is important in a tournament like this," said Mhambrey ahead



of India's clash against USA on Wednesday night. With Kuldeep yet to get a game in the tournament due to seam-friendly nature of New York drop-in pitches, Mhambrey said the left-arm wrist spinner understands that him being not in the playing eleven is down to team balance. "It will depend on the opponents and surface. With Axar also, if you look at the IPL, he's bowled very well. I think that's an advantage that we have out here for us. In terms of the performance and the rhythm, in terms of the confidence, he's up there."

"Dropping a seamer and playing a spinner (does happen by) looking at the conditions, but also the other thing that Axar does is, he gives you that depth as well in terms of the batting, which was pretty evident in the last game." "Because we had to promote someone like him, we had to take a chance. He played a very critical role for the team, got those runs at that stage, because the ball was challenging at that situation - seaming and swinging," he said.

Asked if India will always have their number eight position based on the batting returns, Mhambrey stated, "I don't think so. I think it's (the) surface. It's purely on the opponents, purely on the surface. If you feel, maybe on a surface, you need one extra bowler. We

will go with that combination."

Mhambrey has also been pleased with the pitches becoming better to play on now at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium. "The pitches have looked a bit better now, but the first 1-2 games, there was odd bounce." "As a batter, it's hard to go through with your shots when that happens. Sure, it's challenging, but the bowlers are finally getting some help and that's good too. We saw what happened during the IPL, big, big scores, so this sort of events it out a bit."

The bowling coach signed off by lavishing praise on USA left-arm fast-bowler Saurabh Netravalkar, who previously represented India in the 2010 Men's U19 World Cup and also played domestic cricket for Mumbai.

"Extremely happy for him. I remember Saurabh playing a couple of games for Mumbai and in practice sessions. So, prior to my time, I watched a couple of Ranji Trophy games that he's played. It must be a tough decision, like it's not easy to leave something like that and make that step out to USA."

"But I'm so happy that he's taken that step, and he's been successful. For others who are around, he gives hope by saying that if things don't really work out here, there are other options too. But it's still an option - if someone like Saurabh can make it, why can't others do it? So, in terms of giving others hope, it's great. "I'm very happy the way he's gone about it. I also heard he works for Oracle right and it's tough. I don't think it's pure professional but he's a semi-professional cricketer who's working as well. We heard of the stories of players in older generation who used to work, and then practice, play, and go to work again. It's similar with him, which is not easy, but it's great that he's managing and I'm very happy about it," he said.

HAVE TO BE AT OUR BEST TO BEAT A WORLD-CLASS INDIAN TEAM, SAYS SOUTH AFRICA SKIPPER

Bengaluru | Agencies

South Africa skipper Laura Wolvaardt insisted her team will have to be at their best if they are to beat a 'world-class' Indian team in the upcoming multi-format series, ahead of their warm-up match against Board's President XI on Thursday. South Africa will begin their tour of India with three ODIs at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on June 16, 19 and 23, followed by a one-off Test and three T20Is at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. The last time South Africa toured India; they won the five-match ODI series 4-1 in March 2021.

"We've had a couple of good tours before this where we sort of tried different combinations. In the T20Is against Sri Lanka, we definitely gave a bunch of youngsters some opportunity to try and put up their hand. If everyone is healthy and fit, we'll be looking to play our best 11. We won't be experimenting too much or taking this Indian side too lightly."

"They're a world-class side and we're going to have to be at our best to beat them. So, trying to get everyone settled into their roles before the T20 World Cup is pretty important as well, with it being some of our last cricket that we're going to be playing before then," said Laura in a pre-series press conference.

The tour to India is South Africa's last international assignment before the Women's T20 World Cup happens in Bangladesh from October 3-20. The three ODIs hold huge importance as they carry ICC Women's Championship points, where South Africa are placed in the third spot and are in line for automatic qualification for the 2025 Women's ODI World Cup in India.

"There's a lot that we're focusing on at the moment, obviously, with the ODIs having points up for grabs, the T20Is being in prep for the World Cup and then the Test match being pretty special too. We've tried to sort of cover everything and there isn't really one that's massively more important than the other. So, we'd like to do well all around and there isn't any format that we're taking light-

ly," added Laura. Asked what South Africa are aiming to achieve from the lone warm-up game, Laura remarked, "Warm-up games are always a tricky one. You don't want to do too well and get overconfident. But you always don't want to do too bad and start on the back foot. But I think tomorrow is mainly about conditions for us."

"We're lucky to be playing on the ground where our games will be as well. That doesn't happen too often for a warm-up game. So conditions will be crucial to see how much it turns and bounces. It'll be more about that and making sure that the whole squad sort of gets a chance on the conditions and has a look of it."

"They obviously have world-class players. So we've done a lot of sort of homework and discussion on that. So, hopefully, we have our plans sorted out by the first game. When I was here, it was a very nice wicket to bat on. So I'm not sure if it'll be similar at this time of year."

Last year in November, Laura was confirmed as South Africa's full-time captain after taking the job on a temporary basis. Quizzed about the impact of leading South Africa as a batter and human being, Laura admitted there has been a lot to learn for her. Importantly, the trip to India is South Africa's first series post the departure of long-serving coach Hilton Moreeng, who left after more than 11 years in charge. For now, Dillon du Preez is the interim coach.

"It's obviously been a bit different for us. Hilton was on every single tour for the past 11 years. So to not have him here is a bit weird. But luckily Dillon was in the setup and the environment for about four or five years. So nothing has really changed too much from sort of an operational point of view."

"We still try to keep things as much the same as before, just so that it's not completely new and fresh. But then at the same time, the new additions that we have in the group have brought a lot of outside energy and some outside knowledge as well. So it's been good and I've really enjoyed the new, fresh people," concluded Laura.



Content is the king, writers are the emperors : Karan Johar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker-producer Karan Johar, has called writers the soul of a film. Karan Johar said, "If content is the king, writers are the emperors." The film industry functions because a writer pens a

script and takes it to the makers. If the writer is the director of the film that he or she has written, it's a glorious combination. The foundation of any movie is the story... A story has to work for all departments to function properly.

"Kill" is dubbed as the most violent film from India, taking over the reins from Anurag Kashyap, who is known for his use of gut-squirming violence in his films.

Karan said violence in cinema demands to be looked upon as an art form, adding that films that use violence as a tool belong to a specific genre and have a very niche audience with a palette for such content.

He also spoke about the huge cost incurred by the producers because of the superstars in the industry.

"Trust me, entourage costs are the least of the worries for the producers. The real trouble is the cost of a superstar. Sometimes a producer caves into their demands just because he or she wants to make that film.

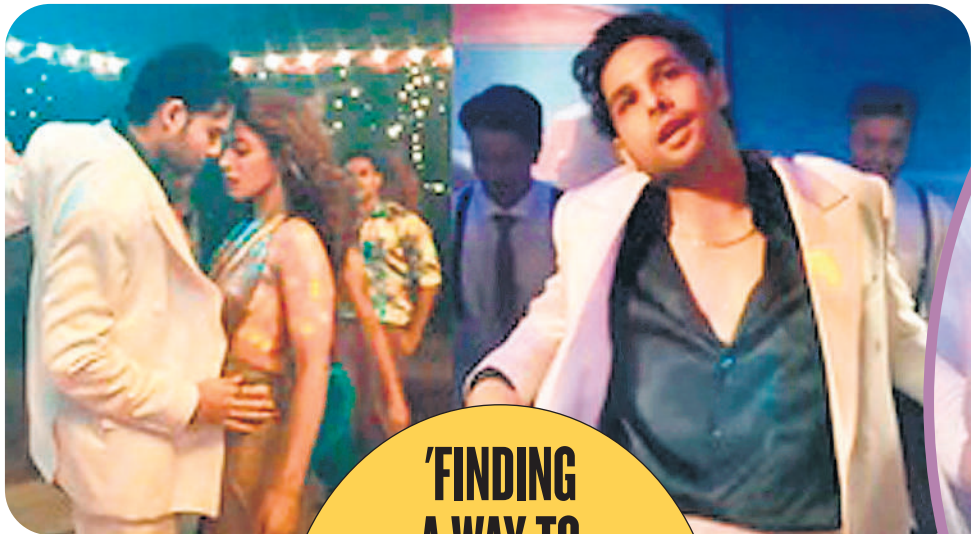
"But many times it becomes practically impossible to accommodate that cost. There can be a break up of sorts on the cost of actors or they can take profits in slabs as per the performance of the film, but many stars need to reconsider their costs because a lot of them are not in touch with reality," Karan told the media.



Rajkummar Rao, Patralekha seek Lord Shiva's blessings at Kashi

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Rajkummar Rao, who has been receiving a lot of positive response to his films 'Srikanth' and 'Mr & Mrs Mahi', is in Varanasi shooting for his upcoming film. The actor, on Wednesday, visited Kashi Vishwanath temple there, along with his wife Patralekha Paul. The couple sought blessings of Lord Shiva. They also observed the beauty of the temple. The pooja on their behalf was done by priest Sachin Pandey. The actor also clicked selfies with fans at the temple. Rajkummar earlier visited Varanasi during the promotions of 'Mr and Mrs Mahi' along with his co-star Janhvi Kapoor. The two performed Ganga Aarti at the Dashashwamedh Ghat.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Siddhant Chaturvedi, who unveiled his new track titled 'Ittefaq' on Wednesday, shared how he has always been finding a way to express himself through singing and songwriting, alongside acting and dance.

The two-minute 48-second song is sung by Siddhant and Savera and is infused with infectious melody and stunning visuals. Siddhant has also written the song's catchy lyrics. Talking about the song, Siddhant, who was last seen in the movie 'Kho Gaye Hum Kahan' shared: "Music has always been a huge passion for me. For a long time, I've

'FINDING A WAY TO EXPRESS MYSELF THROUGH SINGING': SIDDHANT CHATURVEDI

been finding a way to express myself through singing and songwriting alongside acting and dance."

"Ittefaq' feels like the perfect amalgamation of all these passions. I poured my heart into the creation of this song, and I'm thrilled to finally share it with the world," added Siddhant.

The music video, directed by Arjun Varain Singh, showcases a whole new side of Siddhant. He takes centre stage with impressive dance moves choreographed by Ankan Sen and Sahil M Khan.

The music video stars actress Wamiqa Gabbi, alongside Siddhant and their chemistry is undeniable. The music composers of the song are OAFF and Savera.



SONAKSHI-ZAHEER WEDDING: COUPLE WILL HAVE A REGISTERED COURT MARRIAGE ON JUNE 23

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha is all set to get married to beau Zaheer Iqbal. The couple will have a registered court marriage on June 23.

As per media reports, the invitations have been sent on the couple's behalf to their dear ones. However, the invitation doesn't detail any elaborate wedding ceremony. There's going to be just a celebration of their union as per the itinerary.

Earlier, it was revealed that the dress code for the wedding is formal and festive with the celebrations happening at Bastian - At The Top restaurant in the Dadar area of Mumbai. The couple has been reported living together for a year. They reportedly met at a party hosted by Bollywood superstar Salman Khan, and soon hit it off with growing companionship and chemistry.

Both Sonakshi and Zaheer started their journey in cinema with Salman Khan Productions. While Sonakshi made her debut in 2010 with 'Dabangg', Zaheer made his foray with the 2019 film 'Notebook'.

Earlier, Zaheer wished Sonakshi on her birthday through a heartwarming post on Instagram as she spent her special day working on a romantic thriller directed by Karan Rawal.

Pilates allows 'foodie' Sherleen Dutt to stay fit

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sherleen Dutt is a self-confessed foodie, but she doesn't let that get in her way in maintaining her physique.

Sherleen, who is making her Bollywood debut with 'Koi Jaaye Toh Le Aaye', said: "As a big-time foodie, I don't believe in restrictive diets. Instead, I focus on a balanced approach. I enjoy all my favorite foods but in moderation. And I ensure my meals are rich in proteins, healthy fats, and fibers, and include plenty of vegetables and fruits."

"Balancing my love for food with a commitment to fitness, both physical and mental, has been essential for my well-being. Pilates has been a wonderful addition to my routine, allowing me to stay fit while enjoying the food I love," said Sherleen, who has been a part of projects like 'KINK', 'Honey Trap Squad', and others.

For Sherleen, mental fitness is also equally important. "It's the foundation of overall health. To maintain mental fitness, I meditate for at least 10 minutes once a day to stay calm and centred," she said. To unwind, Sherleen spends time with family and friends -- "Cooking, eating my favourite foods, and watching my favourite films help me unwind and stay happy".

Talking about fitness and diet tips, Sherleen said: "Two tips that have really helped me are -- drinking plenty of water throughout the day keeps me energised and aids digestion. And consistency is the key. Even on busy days, I make sure to fit in some form of physical activity, whether it's a short Pilates session or a brisk walk."



Kriti Kharbanda marks 15 years in cinema, shares unheard story

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Kriti Kharbanda, who is known for 'Shaadi Mein Zaroor Aana', 'Karwaan', 'Housefull 4' and others, has completed 15 years in cinema. On Wednesday, the actress took to her Instagram and penned a long note looking back at her journey.

She also shared an interesting story from the time when her Kannada film 'Googly' released.

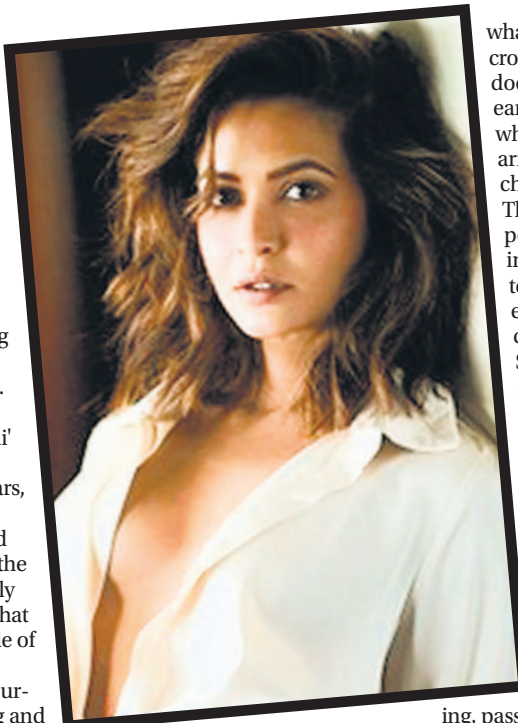
The actress, who made her debut with the Telugu film 'Boni' in 2009, began her note as she wrote: "I've spent the last 15 years, pretty much the majority of my life, being an actor. What started out as a hobby, as a way to pay the bills and being recognised slowly grew into a passion! A passion that I didn't even know existed inside of me."

She shared that during her journey, she grew as a human being and as an actor. Her deeper understanding of the business along the way brought more fascination with regard to the film industry for her.

He further mentioned: "Today as I mark 15 years of being an actor, I want to share a story with you. I used to run a boutique with my mum since my teenage years. We used to shop, design and spend a lot of time picking up fabrics and what not. So a few days after the release of my Kannada movie, 'Googly' we were out in a mall."

When the actress entered the store everything was fine. As she exited she realised there were hundreds of people outside the store.

"I looked up and noticed people standing around the aisle and staring down at me. I didn't quite understand



what was happening till the crowd started chanting 'doctree doctree: I couldn't believe my ears and my eyes! I was so overwhelmed, that I held my dad's arm and said, 'parking main chalo pa, we need to leave'. That was the day I realised the power of cinema and our industry. I went from being a teenager, to an actor and eventually into a star all so quickly, I was afraid to blink. Soon after this, life changed," she continued.

In these 15 years, the actress has worked with some of the biggest stars of Indian cinema like Pawan Kalyan, Yash and others. She made her foray into Bollywood with 'Raaz: The Reboot'.

The actress shared: "Today I want to take this opportunity to thank me. The younger, naive, trusting, passionate, brave me. I'm here

because of her today, because she could have given up. I know she wanted to when things got hard, but she didn't. She kept going. And I want to thank me for today. I'm so proud of the person I've become and I wouldn't change a thing about me."

"A big thank you to everyone who's been a part of this incredible journey. My family, my siblings, my husband and my friends, but most of all, the people who offered me work and believed in my talent, and the fans who kept me going with their love for me. Thank you for trusting me with entertaining you. Thank you for watching my movies and thank you for believing in me. Lots of love #kritikharbanda #15yearsofkritikharbanda", she concluded.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Neha Malik