

# absolute india

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## Those Against Lord Ram Came 2nd, Arrogant Stopped At 240: Senior RSS Leader

# RIFT.....?

BJP National General Secretary Dushyant Gautam, reacting to the statement of senior Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh leader Indresh Kumar, has said that the Sangh is the parent organization of the BJP and whatever suggestions come to them, the party implements them. Dushyant Gautam further said that thinking is a process which continues continuously. Whenever the desired results are not achieved in elections, suggestions come from all sides. The party will consider the suggestions regarding the results of the Lok Sabha elections and will also analyze the election results.

Jaipur | Agencies

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) ideologue Indresh Kumar has said that the ruling party fell short of a majority as a feeling of arrogance had taken over and the INDIA bloc ended at Number 2 position for being anti-Ram.

Speaking at the 'Ramrath Ayodhya Yatra Darshan Poojan Samaroh' event in Kanota near Jaipur on Thursday, he said, "The party which did bhakti of Lord Ram and became arrogant was stopped at 240, however, it became the biggest party."

"And those who had no faith in Ram were stopped at 234," he said, referring to the INDIA bloc. He further said, "See the 'Vidhan' of Ram Rajya in democracy; those who did 'Bhakti' of Ram, but gradually turned arrogant, emerged as the biggest party, however,

the vote and the power that they should have been given was stopped by God due to arrogance." "Further, none amongst those who opposed Ram were given power. All of them together were made number two," he said.

### PEOPLE REJECTED YOGI-MODI, WILL SOON CALCULATE THE DEFEAT: OP RAJBHAR

Ballia: After losing the Ghosi Lok Sabha seat, Uttar Pradesh government cabinet minister and SubhaSP chief Om Prakash Rajbhar has blamed the defeat on BJP. While addressing his workers during the review meeting in Rasra, Ballia, he said that you people should also learn to speak. Our party leaders and workers honestly voted for whoever contested. The leaders of all the parties in the alliance do not know how to follow the coalition dharma, but we followed the coalition dharma honestly, the public has rejected CM Yogi and PM Modi. He said that now we will revolt completely, see further we will tell from the stage itself whether to vote for this or not to vote for that. We are also going to cure such people, who used to sit in the car and tell their people to vote here and not there. We have also identified such people. We have made a list of people from Pradhan to above and I have to remain a minister in the government for three years. I will account for each one.

This follows RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's statement a few days ago. Bhagwat said that a true 'sevak' should serve people without arrogance and maintain dignity.

### MAHAYUTI SUFFERED IN NASHIK, PUNE AND SOLAPUR OVER ONION ISSUE: AJIT PAWAR

Pune: Deputy Maharashtra Chief Minister and NCP president Ajit Pawar on Friday said that his party in particular, and the MahaYuti in general, suffered badly in the state's onion growing districts, namely Nashik, Pune, Ahmednagar and Solapur during the Lok Sabha elections due to the issues surrounding the 'layered edible bulb' raised by the opposition.

"It was informed to the Centre that a solution should be found to satisfy both the onion producers and consumers. However, due to lack of a satisfactory solution, the grand alliance suffered in Nashik, Pune, Ahmednagar and Solapur in the Lok Sabha elections," Ajit Pawar said.

"Many farmers in Jalgaon, Nashik, Pune, Ahmednagar and Solapur districts produce onions. After the onion issue flared up, there was displeasure among the onion growers. Therefore, we asked the Centre to find a solution that would satisfy both onion producers and consumers. However, due to lack of solution, the Grand Alliance lost seats," he said.



### RSS BECAME IRRELEVANT DUE TO REMAINING SILENT: CONGRESS

New Delhi: Reactions of the opposition have also started emerging on the statement of senior Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh leader Indresh Kumar. Responding to this, Congress said that RSS remained silent for a long time, due to which it itself has become irrelevant.

Pawan Kheda of Congress said that these seeds have been sown by RSS only. If you have sown acacia seeds, how will you get mango fruits from them? Congress says that Mohan Bhagwat ji's silence for 10 consecutive years has made him irrelevant.

## PM's mega outreach at G7, Meets Zelensky, Meloni, Macron and Pope

Bari (Italy) | Agencies

PM Narendra Modi is in Italy for the G7 Summit, where he is holding a series of key bilateral meetings with world leaders.

The summit is being held at the luxurious Borgo Egnazia resort in Italy's Apulia region. India has been invited to the G7 Summit as an Outreach country and this is PM Modi's first overseas visit since he took oath as Prime Minister for the third straight term.

The Prime Minister held bilateral meetings with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, French President Emmanuel Macron, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Pope Francis. He has met Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and is scheduled to hold talks with her.

PM Modi and the Pope shared a hug. The Prime Minister invited Pope Francis to visit India and said he admires his commitment to serving people and making the planet better.

After the meeting with Zelensky, Prime Minister



Modi said it was a productive one and that India is eager to further cement bilateral relations with Ukraine. On the war with Russia, the PM reiterated that India believes in a human-centric approach and that the way to peace is through dialogue and diplomacy.

In her opening address at the meeting of the G7 leaders, Meloni said southern Italy was chosen as the venue to send a strong message to the Global South. "It is no coincidence that we are hosting the summit in Apulia. We did this because Apulia is a region of southern Italy and the message we want to launch is that the G7, under the Italian presidency, wishes to strengthen its dialogue with the nations of the Global South," she said.

## The place where the feet of Ram and Krishna fell in Madhya Pradesh will become a pilgrimage site: CM Mohan Yadav

Betul | Agencies

These days 'Jal Ganga Augmentation Campaign' is being run in Madhya Pradesh for water conservation. Under this campaign, State Chief Minister Mohan Yadav reached Multai in Betul district on Friday. Where he inaugurated and performed Bhoomi Pujan of 108 development works costing about Rs 350 crore.

During this, he made a big announcement and said that the state government will make the places where the feet of Ram and Krishna have fallen in the state, as pilgrimage sites. CM Mohan Yadav said that the site of Tapti river will also be made a pilgrimage place. The Chief Minister laid special emphasis on water and environment conservation. Along with this, he appealed to the common people to discharge their responsibilities.

As soon as he took charge as the Chief Minister of the state, Mohan Yadav had



announced the implementation of various schemes. Along with this, he also laid emphasis on the development of religious places. In this series, after the end of the code of conduct applicable for the Lok Sabha elections, emphasis is once again being laid on development works in the state.

## 'Black Friday' at Kochi airport as people pay homage to victims of Kuwait fire tragedy

Kochi | Agencies

Kerala's Kochi airport has never witnessed such sombre scenes as were seen on Friday when bodies of those who died in a fire in Kuwait, arrived.

"On Friday, everyone at the airport was grieving and all had tears flowing. It's never happened before, so many dead bodies arriving at the same time. It is unbearable," said an airport official.

A top Airport Authority of India official said, "Since these bodies are treated as 'cargo', early morning we held a meeting of all stakeholders from the various departments. We decided to clear the bodies in about 15 to 20 minutes. Customs, emigration and health clearances



will be done quickly for all 45 bodies, and of these 31 will be handed over here. A special area was designated where the 31 bodies were kept for all to pay their homage. Ambulances are there to take each one to respective homes," said the top AAI official.

As the plane arrived, the airport was filled with wailing. Parents, children, spouses and other relatives were full of emotions.

## FRESH OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE IN MANIPUR

Jiribam (Manipur) | Agencies

In fresh violence in Manipur's trouble-torn Jiribam district, several houses in Borobekra subdivision were set afire by unknown persons early on Friday, police said. According to the police, a low-grade explosion was also reported from the area.

"Two makeshift houses in that area were razed by miscreants. Some abandoned makeshift houses and standalone homes were also burned down around 2.30 a.m. on Friday. The incident happened in the Bhutangkhali locality, the remotest part of the Borobekra subdivision," Superintendent of Police, Jiribam, Maharbam P.S., told IANReporter.

Nearly 1,000 people belonging to the Meitei community in villages like Lamtaikhunou, Madhupur, Loukoipung, etc. under the Borobekra subdivision have taken refuge in seven shelter camps in Jiribam town after the district witnessed violence since June 6 in the wake of the killing of 59-year-old farmer,



Soibam Saratkumar Singh.

On the other hand, around 600 Hmar-Kuki-Zomi tribal residents of Jiribam, which abuts Assam, have crossed the inter-state border and have taken shelter in the Cachar district of the neighbouring state.

Security has been bolstered in Jiribam with six companies of the CRPF, ten companies of the Assam Rifles, and the state Police and Village Defence Forces (VDF) deployed to maintain law and order in the area. The district administration has imposed Section 144 in the entire district.

### NEET ROW IN SUPREME COURT AS ASPIRANTS DEMAND CBI PROBE INTO IRREGULARITIES

New Delhi: The Supreme Court will hear petitions seeking a CBI probe into alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam NEET on July 8. The court has asked Centre to submit a response by then over allegations of question paper leak and other irregularities in the exam.

A huge row broke out after the National Testing Agency (NTA) awarded grace marks to some aspirants due to the a wrongly printed question, torn OMR sheets, or delay in the distribution of OMR sheets.

The Centre and the NTA had yesterday told the Supreme Court they had cancelled the grace marks given to 1,563 candidates who took the examination for admission to MBBS and other such courses.

They will have the option to either take a re-test or forgo the compensatory marks awarded to them for the loss of time, the Centre had said.

The examination was held on May 5 across 4,750 centres and around 24 lakh candidates appeared for it. The results were expected to be declared on June 14 but were announced on June 4, apparently because the evaluation of the answer sheets was completed earlier.

## 46 pc rural, 53 pc urban Indians used Ayush to prevent or treat ailments in last one year

▶ At least one member is aware of medicinal plants/home remedies/local health tradition/folk medicine in about 85 per cent of rural and 86 per cent of urban households, the survey findings showed.

▶ In rural India, about 95 per cent of males as well as females aged 15 years and above, have been found to be aware about Ayush while in urban India it has been around 96 per cent.

▶ Ayush stands for Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy - the six Indian systems of medicine.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

At least 46 per cent of rural and 53 per cent of urban residents have used Ayush system of medicines for prevention or treatment of ailments in the past 365 days, according to the first all-India survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). The findings showed that approximately 95 per cent of rural and 96 per cent of urban respondents are



aware of Ayush.

The survey covered 1,81,298 households, including 1,04,195 in rural areas and 77,103 in urban areas. The broad objectives of the survey were to collect information on awareness of people about the traditional system of healthcare;

uses of Ayush for prevention or treatment of ailments; and awareness of the households about home remedies, medicinal plants, and local health tradition/folk medicine.

"About 79 per cent of households in rural India and about 80 per cent of the households in urban India

have at least one member aware about medicinal plants and home medicines, while around 24 per cent of the households have at least one member aware about folk medicine or local health tradition in both rural and urban India," the findings showed.

## Pocso case: Karnataka HC directs police not to arrest Yediyurappa



Bengaluru | Agencies

Former Karnataka chief minister and senior BJP leader B.S.

Yediyurappa, who is facing arrest in connection with a Pocso case, got temporary relief on Friday as the High Court directed the police not to initiate arrest procedures against him.

The bench, headed by Justice Krishna S. Dixit, also directed Yediyurappa to appear before the court on Monday (June 17) without fail, as he had mentioned in his reply to the police.

Senior counsel C.V. Nagesh, who submitted arguments on Yediyurappa's behalf, said that the case was lodged in March, and that the BJP veteran had appeared for investigation after the first notice was served. After the issuance of the second notice, he had

sought time.

The counsel also submitted that the warrant was issued as an "act of vendetta" against Yediyurappa.

Meanwhile, the court mentioned that the investigation should not be conducted with the intention of making an arrest.

It also instructed the police to carry out investigation into the case and declined to pass orders on issuing a stay on the investigation and quashing of the case. The court adjourned the matter for two weeks.

A complaint was filed against Yediyurappa in March this year under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act. A woman has alleged that her daughter was harassed when they went to the former CM's residence to seek help.





# MANIPUR'S APEX NAGA BODY BARS CONGRESS MP, TWO OTHERS FROM PUBLIC PLATFORMS FOR 7 YEARS

Imphal | Agencies

In an unprecedented step, United Naga Council (UNC) -- the apex Naga body -- in Manipur, has barred Congress' Lok Sabha member elect Alfred Kanngam S. Arthur and two other candidates from public platforms and holding any position or leadership in the Naga society for seven years with "immediate effect".

The other two candidates are S. Kho John and Allyson Abonmai, who contested the recently held Lok Sabha election in Outer Manipur Lok Sabha constituency, reserved for the tribals, as Independents.

John and Abonmai secured third and fourth positions respectively, behind Congress' Arthur and Kachui Timthy Zimik of Naga People's Front (NPF).

Congress candidate Arthur defeated NPF's Zimik by a margin of 85,418 votes.

In a public notification, the UNC said it took action against the trio as they "purposely defied and failed to respect and honour to the position of the UNC in the recently concluded 18th Lok Sabha elections and their willful attempt to challenge the Naga peoples' position and its spirit of unity".

"... are hereby debarred from public platforms, and holding any position or leadership in the Naga society for a period of seven years with immediate effect," said the notification, signed by UNC's



Secretary, Information and Publicity, H. James Hau.

The influential Naga body also directed all the constituent units, subordinate and associate units of the UNC and Naga populace to uphold the resolution of the council and enforce accordingly, in their respective jurisdiction.

The UNC said that it had adopted the resolution in its 'Emergency Assembly' on May 29, seven days before the election results were announced on June 4.

Arthur and Zimik belong to the Tangkhul Naga community while John is a Poumai and Abonmai a Liangmai community among the Nagas. The UNC's notification has been widely criticised on social media platforms for not naming NPF's Zimik.

"The UNC's decision is not just undemocratic, it is counter productive. In a democratic society, people have the right to choose their leaders without coercion or intimidation," said a post on the social media.

NPF's Lorho S. Pfoze won the seat in 2019. The election in Outer Manipur parliamentary constituency, comprising 28 Assembly segments, was held in two phases on April 19 and April 26.

The Kuki-Zomi community did not put up any candidates in the polls in protest against the government's failure in dealing with the ongoing ethnic conflict while the campaign in the Outer Manipur seat was marked by violence and attacks on the Congress candidate, allegedly by Naga extremists. The Naga community has professed to remain neutral during the ethnic conflict between the Meiteis of the valley and the Kuki-Zomi of the hills. In view of over yearlong ethnic violence, campaigning for the two Lok Sabha seats in the state was significantly subdued this time.

## Actor Darshan case

# Accused offered Rs 1 cr to show heart attack as cause of death in post-mortem report

Bengaluru | Agencies

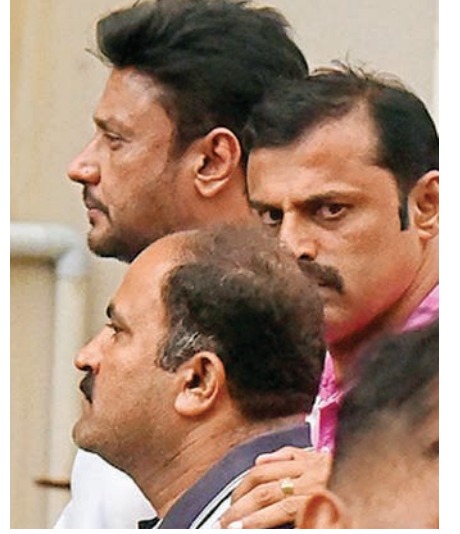
Startling facts have been emerging ever since the arrest of Kannada superstar Darshan and his associates in connection with the murder of a fan of the actor in Bengaluru recently.

According to the post-mortem report of Renukaswamy (33), the victim, the death occurred due to shock and haemorrhage caused by torture by the accused persons.

However, sources said the accused tried to manipulate the post-mortem report so that the murder charge against Darshan is dropped. The authorities who conducted the post-mortem reportedly told the police that they were offered Rs 1 crore to show that the death was caused by a heart attack.

Darshan, his co-star and partner Pavithra Gowda, and 14 others have been arrested on charges of murdering Renukaswamy, a resident of Chitradurga.

The probe revealed that Renukaswamy was a big fan of Darshan and had sent derogatory messages to Pavithra Gowda on social media. The victim was allegedly kidnapped, brought to Bengaluru, kept in a shed, and brutally tortured to death. The post-mortem report has now authenticated that Renukaswamy was brutally tortured before his death. It said there were 15 injury marks on the victim's body, including four fractures.



The report also said that the victim's head was smashed against a mini truck in the shed. The body bore injury marks on the head, abdomen, chest, and other parts.

One of the arrested accused, who has agreed to turn police approver, claimed that Darshan kicked Renukaswamy with full force in his private parts and smashed his head against the mini truck, sources said.

The sources also said that one of the accused even recorded the brutal act.

# Controversial Dera Sacha Sauda head seeks 21-day furlough

Chandigarh | Agencies

Controversial Dera Sacha Sauda head Gurmeet Ram Rahim on Friday approached the Punjab and Haryana High Court for a 21-day furlough to carry out "welfare activities" outside the jail.

The self-styled godman has pleaded that being the religious head of the institution where, once every two years in June, a Sewadar Shradhanjali Bhandara is organised to pay tribute to regular volunteers who spent their lives in social services and lost their lives in accidents, serious ailments, or otherwise, to pay condolences and to provide every possible help to their grieved families. "It is apt to point out here that so many welfare activities are to be undertaken by Dera Sacha Sauda headed by the large-scale tree plantation, drug de-addiction, and marriages of poor girls, etc, for which the motivational drive is required to be carried out by the applicant," pleaded Ram Rahim.

He has sought directions to consider and decide the application for furlough in accor-



dance with the law under the Haryana Good Conduct Prisoner (Temporary Release) Act 2022. On February 29, the High Court had directed the state not to entertain the dera chief's application for parole without taking permission from the court.

# Telangana recalls Telugu textbook, shunts two officials for faux pas

Hyderabad | Agencies

Taking a serious note of the blunder in school textbooks printed with a foreword mentioning K. Chandrasekhar Rao as the Chief Minister, the Congress government in Telangana on Friday cracked the whip on the officials responsible and recalled 24 lakh textbooks.

The government ordered the transfer of S. Srinivasa Chary, Director, Government Text Book Press, and M. Radha Reddy, Director, State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT).

While Chary was asked to take charge as Additional Director, Model Schools, Radha Reddy was directed to take charge of Assistant State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha.

G. Ramesh, Additional Director, School Education, was appointed as the SCERT Director. Telangana Residential Educational Institutions Society (TREIS) Secretary Ramana Kumar was given the responsibility of the Director of Text Book Press.

The School Education Department on Friday decided to recall Telugu textbooks for Classes 1 to 10. After noticing the faux pas, the officials had stopped the distribution of the textbooks. The department decided to remove the foreword. Since the other side of the page carrying the foreword has the national anthem printed on it, the department decided to paste the national anthem on the inner side of the cover page, thus covering the foreword.

24 lakh textbooks for the academic year 2024-25 with the foreword thanking 'Chief Minister' Chandrasekhar Rao and 'Education Minister' P. Sabitha Indra Reddy. The blunder was noticed when the distribution of books started on June 12, the first day of the new academic year and left the Congress government embarrassed.

The foreword, copied and printed from the earlier edition, thanked 'Chief Minister' Chandrasekhar Rao, Education Ministers and officials in the previous BRS governments for guidance and advice. Sabitha Indra Reddy, Kadiyam Srihari and Jagadish Reddy, who were all Education Ministers, were mentioned in the thanksgiving note. Sabitha Indra Reddy was Education Minister

between 2019 and 2023 while Kadiyam Srihari and Jagadish Reddy had earlier held the posts. It also mentioned the names of former Education Secretary Ranjeev R. Acharya, former School Education Directors M Jagadeshwar and T. Chiranjeevulu, and advisor to government K.V. Ramanachary.

The Congress party came to power in December 2023, ending the nearly 10-year-long rule of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS).

BRS leader and former Education Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy found fault with the Congress government's move to recall the textbooks, saying this would result in wasting public money. "What is wrong if the textbooks have the name of KCR," she asked.

# Record number of devotees pay obeisance at Kashmir's Mata Kheer Bhawani temple

Srinagar | Agencies

Hundreds of devotees from different parts of the country converged at Mata Kheer Bhawani temple shrine on Friday to celebrate the annual 'Mela' of the Hindu deity.

The worship of Mata Kheer Bhawani is universal among Kashmiri Pandits. The Kheer Bhawani temple shrine, dedicated to Maharagyna Bhagwati, was constructed over a spring which is believed to be sacred. The temple is associated with Goddess Ragyna Devi who is also worshipped as Raginya or Kheer Bhawani, an incarnation of goddess Durga.

Kheer Bhawani temple is also believed to be an icon of the Hindu-Muslim brotherhood of Kashmir. Local Muslims living around the temple complex serve milk in earthen pots to the Kashmiri Pandit devotees upon their arrival in Tullamulla town.

Since their migration from Kashmir in the 1990s, Kashmiri Pandits come from all over the country to pray and worship at this temple shrine.

Around 50,000 devotees marked their attendance on Friday at the temple shrine. This is the largest number of devotees here since the beginning of



violence in Kashmir in the 1990s.

Devotees were conveyed here by special escorted conveyances from Jammu. Arrangements for their lodging have been made by the government at the temple shrine complex as well as in the neighbouring Central University of Kashmir campus ground. The

administration had also made special arrangements for sanitation, safe drinking water, health-care and security for the devotees.

Some of the local Pandits who did not migrate out of the Valley, came to Tullamulla by their own modes of conveyance. The over 24 km-long road from Srinagar city to the temple shrine was dotted with security personnel to ensure safe movement of the devotees.

The colour of the sacred spring over which the deity's idol is kept bears special significance for the devotees. During peace times, the colour of the spring water is either white or pink, and in bad times, the colour turns black or muddy.

This year, the colour of the spring water is pink. Devotees believe that this foretells peace and prosperity ahead for the country.

&K Lt Governor, Manoj Sinha paid obeisance at the temple shrine on Friday, while former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah visited the temple earlier in the day.

The Lt Governor laid the foundation stone of Rupees four crore Yatri Niwas to be built inside the temple shrine complex.

# SC refuses to halt demolition of Pracheen Shiv Mandir near Yamuna floodplains

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to halt the demolition of a Pracheen Shiv Mandir situated at Geeta Colony close to the Yamuna floodplains.

A vacation bench of Justices Sanjay Kumar and Augustine George Masih upheld the May 29 judgment of the Delhi High Court refusing to quash the demolition order.

A bench of Justice Dharmesh Sharma of the high court granted Prachin Shiv Mandir Avam Akhadia Samiti 15 days time to remove the idols and other religious objects in the temple and ordered the petitioner society and its members to not cause any impediment or obstacles in the demolition process.

"There could be no iota of doubt that Lord Shiva would be happier if the Yamuna riverbed and the floodplains areas are cleared of all encroachments and unauthorised construction," the high court had said.

It added that the petitioner society has miserably failed to place on record any documents with regard to its title, right, or interest



in the subject land in question, and there is no proof on record of the temple in question having any historical significance. In its plea, the management society asserted that no formal notice or order was given and instead, the devotees were verbally apprised that their Pracheen Mandir would be demolished.

# 50 Shops Destroyed In Massive Chandni Chowk Fire

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Everything has turned to ashes - dreams, the shop and all its goods," said a trader whose shop was destroyed in the massive blaze in Delhi's Chandni Chowk that even brought down two buildings in the area.

His was among over 50 shops that were gutted in a fire that required 50 fire tenders and 200 on-the-ground personnel to be brought under control after a 12-hour effort.

The number of shops that were damaged by the fire could still go up and the losses made by the traders could be in crores.

The fire broke out in Chandni Chowk's Old Katra Marwadi Market on Thursday evening. There were no casualties.

It was 4.15 pm on Thursday when Narendra, 60, was having a regular call with one of his customers when he heard screaming.

"People were shouting about a fire. We already knew that our shop was in a narrow place. I immediately asked everyone in the shop to evacuate. Within a few minutes, everything was reduced to ash," he said.

The shops that were gutted sold sarees, dupattas and other combustible items, according to officials.

Delhi Fire Services chief Atul Garg said two buildings housing multiple shops, including the one where the fire started, collapsed due to the



blaze. Deepak Mahendru, president of Nai Sadak Traders Association, said that police and fire brigade teams are still keeping traders away from their shops as more buildings could still collapse.

"The fire started from shop number around 1580 or 1581, and within no time it engulfed the entire area. Fortunately, no one received any injuries, else it could have been drastic," he added.

Police have not allowed the shopkeepers to enter their shops as the fire department continues its operation. So a total estimate of the losses incurred has not been made by the traders.

According to the fire department, the fire erupted from a shop due to a short circuit in an air conditioner (AC) which spread to other shops. Due to the intensity of the fire, two buildings collapsed.

DFS officials said firefighters had to face several challenges in the operation. "Due to the (narrow) lanes, we had to extend our fire hose for more than 300 metres and had to add extra pressure," an official said.

The fire department also had to use water bowlers and robots to douse the flames. The official further said that there were no water sources nearby which added to the problem of refilling the water tanks.

The fire was brought under control at 4.30 am on Friday, which was followed by a cooling operation at the spot with the help of eight fire tenders.

## POLISH WOMAN ALLEGES RAPE IN HIMACHAL, ACCUSED ARRESTED

Dharamsala: A man was arrested on Friday for allegedly raping a Polish woman in Himachal Pradesh's McLeodganj, near here, police said.

The victim filed a complaint with the police a day earlier, alleging that she was raped.

Kangra's Assistant Superintendent of Police Hitesh Lakhnpal told the media the accused had been arrested after a case under Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code was registered against him. The medical test of the victim has confirmed rape, he said. The police recorded her statement before the judicial magistrate.

The victim, who had registered for a meditation course, was staying in McLeodganj for the past three weeks. She came in touch with the accused, who offered her rented accommodation.





# Sheena Bora's bones 'missing', CBI admits in Mumbai court

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a bizarre development, the CBI has told a special Mumbai court that the bones and mortal remains purportedly of Mumbai executive Sheena Bora recovered by Raigad police after her murder 12 years ago, are reportedly "missing" and untraceable. The revelation came up during the examination of a witness, Dr Zeba Khan, a forensic expert at the Sir J. J. Hospital here, who was the first person to confirm that the bones and other remains found were of a human being. With the help of a local policeman, the bones were recovered by the Pen police in Raigad from the spot where Bora's body was allegedly burnt and dumped in the deep forests near Gagode-Khurd village. Police said that Bora, an executive with Mumbai Metro, was allegedly eliminated by her mother, and her ex-husband in connivance with her driver on April 24, 2012, but the shocking killing came to light only around August 2015. At the court hearing on May 7, Public Prosecutor C.J. Nandode, appearing for the CBI, sought to show the bones that were



recovered, for identification by Dr Khan, but despite a diligent search, they could not be located. At the next hearing on Thursday, the CBI admitted that the two marked packets containing the evidence (bones) could not be traced, and the examination of the witness (Dr Khan) would continue without showing it to her, though it was crucial for the case. According to the prosecution, Bora's mother and former media baroness Indrani Mukerjea, along with her ex-husband Sanjeev Khanna and her driver Shyamvar Rai, had strangled her in a car on the night of April 24, 2012. Later that night, they took her body, concealed in a suitcase, down to Gagode-Khurd, burnt the bag, and dumped the remnants in the forest before returning home early the next morning. A month later, the burnt bones and remains were found by the local police, but the sensational murder case came to light only in August 2015, after the arrests of Rai, Indrani and later Khanna. Indrani was released on bail in May 2022, while Rai was released earlier after he agreed to become a prosecution witness in the case.

## Woman held for operating Thane sex racket; two rescued

Team Absolute | Thane

The police in Friday said a 34-year-old woman has been arrested for allegedly running a Thane sex racket from her apartment in Maharashtra's Thane district, reported news agency. Senior inspector Chetana Chowdhary said that based on a complaint, the Anti-Human Trafficking Cell (AHTC) conducted a raid in a residential building in Mumbra town on Wednesday, arrested the accused, and rescued two other women from the premises for running the Thane sex racket. A case under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act has been registered against the accused, she said.

## War Of Words Between BJP, Maharashtra Ally Over Article By RSS Leader

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The BJP and its ally in Maharashtra, the Nationalist Congress Party, seem to have hit a rocky road after their rivals, the INDIA alliance, won more Lok Sabha seats in the state. The two parties on Thursday engaged in a war of words over an article in Organiser, a weekly known to be close to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. The article had criticised the BJP for contesting the elections along with Ajit Pawar's NCP. According to reports, the BJP has launched an internal survey to assess if they should contest alone in the Assembly elections to be held later this year. In an article, a senior RSS leader questioned the BJP's move to enter an alliance with the Ajit Pawar-led NCP,



terming the move "ill-advised". "Why was this ill-advised step taken? BJP supporters were hurt because they had fought against this Congress ideology for years and were persecuted. In a single stroke, BJP reduced its brand value," RSS' Ratan Sharda wrote in the article. "Maharashtra is a prime example of unnecessary politicking and avoidable manipulations. Well-performing

parliamentarians were ignored to accommodate such late comers," it added. Rajya Sabha MP and senior NCP leader Praful Patel though said that the article shouldn't be seen as a sign that all is not well between the two allies. "An article in a weekly does not reflect the BJP's stance. It should not be interpreted in that manner," he said. However, NCP youth wing leader Sooraj Chavan lashed

out saying that when the BJP performs well, credit is given to the hard work of the RSS but a defeat is blamed on Ajit Pawar. Hitting back, BJP leader Pravin Darekar said, "The RSS is like a father figure to all of us. There is no need to make comments about the RSS. Sooraj Chavan should not have rushed to comment on the organisation. The BJP has not commented against the NCP. It would be better if such issues are discussed during NDA meetings." The first signs of discord between the two parties emerged when the NCP denied a Minister of State post in the new government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Ajit Pawar and Praful Patel both expressed a desire for a cabinet berth while rejecting the offer.

Team Absolute | Nashik

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested the 6th accused in an international cyber fraud and human trafficking case from Maharashtra's Nashik, an official said on Friday. Sudarshan Darade's arrest comes barely three weeks after the NIA nabbed five others on May 27 after carrying out swoops in multiple states. The accused are said to be allegedly involved in the huge racket of sending people to various foreign countries like Laos's Golden Triangle SEZ, on false lures of legal and lucrative jobs there, but forcing them to work in fake call centres indulging in illegal activities instead. The accused operated through elaborate crime syndicates controlled and oper-



ated by foreigners, linked with operatives in India, the UAE as well as contiguous South Asian countries of Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, etc. In the Nashik action, the NIA has seized several

incriminating materials, documents, digital devices, bank account details, etc., which are being scrutinised to unravel the entire conspiracy behind the human trafficking and cyber-fraud cases, said the official.

The case was first detected by the Mumbai Police but as its national and international ramifications emerged, the NIA took it over on May 13 after the preliminary probe indicated a nationwide nexus between the human traffickers and cyber fraudsters who were acting at the behest of the international syndicates. The NIA investigations reveal that all 6 arrested accused were working in close collusion with the traffickers operating across the international borders to illegally ferry Indian youth youngsters on promises of jobs in those countries. However, after reaching there, they were trapped into working in shady online activities like credit card fraud, investments in cryptocurrencies using fake apps, honey-trapping victims, etc. Further investigations are on.

## Consequences will be bad if process delays further, says CM Shinde's Shiv Sena leader

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Shirsat warned that if Maharashtra's cabinet expansion is delayed further, "consequences will be bad." The Eknath Shinde government, which took over in June 2022 after the fall of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) dispensation, has seen just two cabinet expansions so far. The first cabinet expansion took place in 2022, and the second in July 2023, when the Ajit Pawar-led NCP and eight other MLAs of the party had joined the Mahayuti



government comprising of the BJP, CM Shinde-led Shiv Sena and the Ajit Pawar-led NCP. Sanjay Shirsat is reportedly one of the contenders for a cabinet post. He said that the chief minister and deputy chief minister must state if there is going to be a cabinet expansion or not. "Everyone wants to become a minister, but no one says it. You cannot keep it stretching for long. The time has come to make a concrete decision. If the cabinet expansion is further delayed, the consequences will be bad," Shirsat said.

## Mumbai airport customs seizes 10.50 kg gold worth Rs 6.64 crore

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai airport customs has seized around 10.50 kg gold worth Rs 6.64 crore in different cases in the past several days, an official said. According to the Customs, during 11-13 June, 2024, Airport Commissionerate, Mumbai Customs Zone-III seized over 10.50 kg gold valued at Rs 6.64 crore across 15 cases.

It said, the gold was found concealed in various forms like gold dust in wax, crude jewellery, gold bars in an ingenious way inside the wheels of the trolley suitcase, under the seat of bus, on the body and in body. Five passengers were arrested in connection with the case. The Customs department said that five Indian nationals, travelling from Jeddah (04) and Dubai (01) to Mumbai were

intercepted and found carrying 24KT gold dust in wax having total net weight of 5,800 grams was found concealed in body. All the five passengers were arrested in the cases. "Four foreign nationals, travelling from Addis Ababa (02) and Nairobi (02) were intercepted and found carrying 1363.00 grams gold concealed in the right-side pocket of the burka and on the body of passenger," the Customs said.

## No day block on Sunday, WR to operate night jumbo block

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Western Railway (WR), in its Mumbai local train update, on Friday announced that there will be no day block on June 16 (Sunday) and it will operate a night block between Vasai Road and Bhayandar stations. In an official statement, the Western Railway, in its Mumbai local train update, said that to carry out maintenance work of tracks, signaling and overhead equipment, a jumbo block will be taken on UP and Down Fast lines from 11.30 pm to 4.45 am between Vasai Road and Bhayandar stations in the intervening night of June 15 and June 16. According to a press release issued by Vineet Abhishek, Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, during the block period, all Fast line trains will be operated on Slow line between Virar, Bhayandar and Borivali. The Western Railway said, "there will be no block in day time over Western Railway Suburban section on June 16 (Sunday)."



Meanwhile, the WR has installed dynamic digital display boards on the side panels of a local train's coaches to "enhance train travel experience of Mumbaikars". "This innovative feature will provide passengers with clear and immediate identification of the destination of the local train, which will ensure a more convenient and informed journey over the Mumbai Suburban network," said Vineet Abhishek, WR's new chief public relations officer, in a release on Thursday. Eight digital displays, four on each side, have been fitted on one rake to provide a "panoramic view of crucial travel information", he said.

The release said that the digital displays will show train destinations in English, Hindi, and Marathi, toggling at an interval of three seconds. Besides this, these displays will also show if the train is fast or slow and has 12 cars or 15 cars. Vineet Abhishek said the response from passengers has been positive and WR has planned to install the display boards on other rakes in the near future. WR operates more than 1,300 suburban services daily and around 30 lakh commuters travel on its network spread between Churghate in South Mumbai and Dahanu in Maharashtra's Palghar district.

## License plate error of Rolls-Royce which Maha CM & DyCMs rode rattles Singhania in Europe

Team Absolute | Mumbai

When the swanky new Mumbai Coastal Road (MCR) phase II was inaugurated on June 10, Raymond Group Chairman Gautam V. Singhania happily loaned his gleaming 94-year-old vintage Rolls-Royce 20/25 for the event. Impressed by the sparkling old beauty, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar, gave it an eye-ful and then plonked on its comfy seats for the short ride on the MCR -- blissfully unaware of a tiny error on its number plate. The jaunt in the car of a bygone era caught the eyes of the nation -- and some alert RTO officials and citizens, too -- who made a few discreet inquiries that allegedly threw up some unnerving details. After getting the tip, a Thane social worker Binu Varghese delved into the RR 20/25's antecedents with the help of RTO officials and discovered that the open-top car was probably plying 'illegally' on the roads. Among the shockers that emerged were: the enchanting RR's 'fitness' validity had expired in January 2024, taxes had not been paid from April 2022, Insurance expired in January



2023, and no PUC after September 2022! Further deep dive revealed that the RR's papers had not been transferred from Maharashtra to Telangana for over two years despite getting NOC, and its number plate (MH-04-JU-4733) actually belonged to some truck! "This means that the car was moving around illegally and even carried some top VVIPs. In case of any mishap, nothing could be done legally as the vehicle was like a 'laawaris' (orphan)," Varghese and the officials pointed out. Upon learning of the purported irregularities, IANS contacted the Raymond Group authorities, for a full

reality check on the ravishing RR that attained more fame than the MCR on June 10. Stunned by the claims, a company official informed Singhania -- currently in Europe -- of the purported details of his pet RR. An equally ruffled, Singhania admitted to his team that he was 'absolutely clueless' and asked the concerned persons in Thane to check and report. Company sources said that though it was late evening of (June 13), the garage manager and others rushed to the facility in Thane -- where Singhania's precious collection of beguiling beauties on wheels are parked safely. A thorough scrutiny of all the official records/papers/doc-

uments, plus a physical check of the car, unveiled the 'culprit' hidden in full public view -- and they all burst out in laughter. "There was absolutely no problem with the car's antecedents... All the documentation is in order and currently valid. The issue was merely a spelling error on its registration number plate," said an official. "Instead of a 'V', (MH-04-JV-4733) the number plate shows a 'U' (MH-04-JU-4733) -- and this would naturally throw up all wrong records of the vehicle," a senior aide of Singhania reverted to IANS late on Thursday. The number plate, probably painted by a semi-literate painter, had confused one alphabet -- and triggered the wild speculation. He added: "We thank all the concerned persons for bringing this mistake to our notice and preventing a lot of unnecessary hassles that could have cropped up. We have ordered a new number plate right now and it will be changed immediately." As the clouds of suspicion cleared and a brand new number plate adorned the grand old car, the relieved RTO officialdom, Varghese, plus the Raymond Group top brass breathed easy and retired peacefully at night...!





EDITOR'S SPECS

Major bureaucratic reshuffle on the cards in UP

A major bureaucratic reshuffle is on the cards this month in Uttar Pradesh. Several district magistrates and police chiefs who did not discharge their duties "honestly" during the recent Lok Sabha elections, will find their names on the transfer lists. Changes are also expected in the chief minister's secretariat since additional chief secretaries, S P Goyal and Devesh Chaturvedi, are set to proceed on central deputation. Three more IAS officers -- K V Pandian, Anil Dhingra and Kumar Ravikant Singh - have also been empanelled for central posting. Besides, UP chief secretary Durga Shankar Mishra's tenure is also due to end on June 30. Mishra has already received three extensions from the Centre and it is unlikely that he may get another one. A new chief secretary is, therefore, expected to take over in the coming weeks. The state cabinet, meanwhile, has already approved the new transfer policy for 2024-25 and an increase in the salaries of employees retiring on June 30 and December 31. Under this policy, Group A and B officers who have completed three years in the district and seven years in the division can be transferred. Transfers are also imminent because Uttar Pradesh will soon face Assembly by-elections on about a dozen seats and the administrative reshuffle has to be done before the model code of conduct comes into force.

Congress's New Dilemma: Will Rahul Agree to Be Leader of Opposition?

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya

Rahul Gandhi's dilly-dallying in accepting the Congress Working Committee's (CWC) June 8 unanimous decision asking him to be the leader of the opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha highlights a grievous chink in the armour of the grand old party: indecisiveness. Having been acknowledged as the face of the campaign that propelled Congress from 52 to 99 seats in Lok Sabha, Rahul ought to have promptly thanked the party for reposing faith in him and accepted the offer.

All that party general secretary K.C. Venugopal, a trusted aide of Rahul, said post the meeting was that after having heard the sentiments of the members, he would take a decision soon.

The position of LoP has existed in India's parliamentary system since the days of the Central Legislative Assembly in British India. Motilal Nehru held that position in 1923. During his tenure, he managed to delay legislation, including finance bills, of the Raj. Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi never held the position. Nehru was a three-term Prime Minister; Indira Gandhi lost power and also failed to get elected in 1977. Thus, during the Janata Party's rule, Yashwantrao Chavan and C.M. Stephen functioned as LoP.

For a leader to be formally recognised as LoP, a party in opposition requires a minimum of 10% of the total strength of the House. Until the Congress split in 1969, the Lok Sabha had no LoP. Ram Subhag Singh of the Congress (O) was accorded this recognition in 1969 when more than 10% of MPs joined the exodus against Indira Gandhi. However, the privilege of an LoP getting the status and facilities of a cabinet minister had to wait until 1977, when the Janata regime of Morarji Desai amended the rules.

Rajiv Gandhi was LoP in 1989-90; the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) L.K. Advani and Atal Bihari Vajpayee took turns as LoP between 1990 and 1996. P.V. Narasimha Rao served in that position for a fortnight during Vajpayee's short-lived premiership. Sharad Pawar was the Congress party's LoP for just over a year in 1998 before Sonia Gandhi took over the party's reins and also became LoP in the Lok Sabha (1999-2004). During the decade of Congress-led United Progressive Alliance rule (2004-2014), L.K. Advani and Sushma Swaraj were the LoPs in the Lok Sabha.

In the past decade, as no party has had a 10% share - the grand old party got 44 seats in



2014 and 52 in 2019 - the leader of the Congress in Parliament in 2014 (Mallikarjun Kharge) and 2019 (Adhir Ranjan Choudhury) were not accorded LoP status. However, for purposes of selecting key government positions, where the statute requires consultation with LoP, they were invited to selection meetings.

With Congress bouncing back with 99 seats (the strength has since grown to 101 with two independents, both Congress members before polls, joining the Congress in Parliament), the decade-long 'banishment' is now over, and the party is looking towards Rahul to be its face against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

If Rahul accepts the job, it will require his presence in Parliament for most days of a session. His attendance as an MP, both from Amethi and Wayanad, between 2004-2019, has not been too encouraging. He went on sojourns abroad when Parliament was in session, and his record in asking questions and participating in debates has been dismal.

During the 2024 Lok Sabha campaign, Rahul boasted about his knowledge of the government system as an insider for years. The real test awaits him now: to provide effective leadership to the 232 INDIA bloc MPs at a time when Narendra Modi heads a coalition of 293-member NDA.

It may be worthwhile to recall a note in the diary maintained by Indira Gandhi's de facto number two in her last dispensation as Prime Minister. The views of Pranab Mukherjee, who became the President of India, have been recorded in Sharmishtha Mukherjee's book, Pranab, My Father: "He [Rahul] has all the arrogance of his Nehru-Gandhi lineage without their political acumen... Maybe politics isn't his calling."

As LoP, Rahul will have to follow rules and procedures. Frequent absences from House proceedings will not go down well. LoP has to be cautious and responsible.

Apart from this dilemma, the Congress is facing another crunch in the Rajya Sabha. After Sonia became the party President in 1998, the Congress constitution was amended to provide that the party chief shall be the chairperson of the Congress in Parliament, even if he or she is not an MP. Sonia's election to the Lok Sabha in 1999 saw her occupying both posts for over two decades. Though she is no longer the Congress President or a Lok Sabha MP, being a Rajya Sabha MP, she has now been re-elected as chairperson of the Congress in Parliament. Thus, Mallikarjun Kharge, the party chief, will be the LoP in Rajya Sabha, with Sonia adorning the front benches of the Opposition.

If Rahul Gandhi indeed becomes the LoP, he may like to carry forward the parliamentary legacy of Feroze Gandhi, the original Rao Bareilly MP (1952, 1957), as well as dust the records of his great-great-grandfather, Motilal Nehru, who as the LoP could stall and delay legislation of the British Raj in 1923.

Parliament of India's first successful scambusting was done by Feroze Gandhi, which led to the resignation of the then-finance minister in February 1958. The then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, could not find fault with Feroze Gandhi's well-researched, articulated diatribe, which was carried out as per parliamentary rules and procedure. Precedents set in that debate endure in the form of the Speaker's rulings to date.

Will Rahul Gandhi, who has turned the fortunes of his party and nipped the talk of a 'Congress-mukt Bharat', measure up to the expectations expressed in the CWC's resolution? Or will he choose to shun responsibility once again - just as he had winked at Manmohan Singh's offer, supported by Pranab Mukherjee during the UPA regime, that he become a minister and gain administrative experience?

international

Talks with Ukraine if it withdraws troops from Donbas, other conflict areas: Putin

Moscow | Agencies

Days ahead of the Ukraine peace summit in Switzerland, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday said that his country was ready for talks with Ukraine, provided it completely withdraws its troops from the Donbas, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions. "As soon as Kiev declares that it is ready for such a decision and begins a real withdrawal of troops... and also officially announces that it has abandoned plans to join NATO, our side will immediately... receive an order to cease fire and begin negotiations," he said in an address to top Foreign Ministry officials, RT reported.



damentally recognised at the international level, followed by the removal of Western sanctions against Russia, he said. The Russian President termed the Swiss-hosted Ukraine peace summit scheduled for June 15 and 16 "nothing more than a trick, seeking to give the current government in Kiev some legitimacy", given Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky's presidential term expired last month after he cancelled this year's presidential election.

He disclosed that early in the Ukraine conflict, Moscow was, in principle, ready to let Kiev retain sovereignty over Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Regions, now made parts of Russia, on condition that it guaranteed the security of a land corridor to the Crimean Peninsula.

"Later, however, the residents of those two regions expressed the desire to join Russia, which was realised at referendums in the fall of 2022," he added.

He contended that the Ukraine war was not a conflict between the two culturally close nations, but rather the result of "aggressive" and "reckless"

Western policies that started long before February 2022.

President Putin termed all the West's statements about "decolonising" Russia were nothing but bids "to partition it along ethnic lines, after conducting six waves of NATO expansion closer to its borders".

He termed the Western decision to freeze Russian assets "theft" and vowed that it would not go unpunished. He further claimed that the move to transfer Russian money to Ukraine would shatter the global financial system and only tarnish the West's image among international investors.

Debunking Western claims that Russia could attack NATO countries as "utter nonsense", and geared at those seeking to instigate an arms race, he said that the main threat to Europe comes not from Russia, but rather from its "critical, ever-increasing and almost total dependence on the US" in military, political, technological, and ideological areas.

He said that his country and NATO have no choice other than to co-exist and work together as they are located on the same continent, and this reality will continue despite the current degradation of ties. It is time to start a serious debate on collective security in Europe and Asia, and the reduction of the military presence in both regions, President Putin urged.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was also present on the occasion.

Nearly 27,000 residents evacuated as heavy rainfall lashes China's Fujian



Fuzhou | Agencies

A total of 27,000 residents have been evacuated from China's Fujian province, which has been recording heavy rain for the past few days, according to local authorities.

During this period, more than 3,133 hectares of crops were damaged in Fujian, reports Xinhua news agency, citing the provincial flood control authorities.

From 8 a.m. on June 9 to 6 a.m. on June 14, 386 townships in 55 county-level areas

across Fujian recorded accumulative precipitation of more than 100 mm.

The highest precipitation was reported in Huangkeng Township of Nanping City, topping 581.8 mm, local meteorological authorities said.

After heavy downpours hit the province, local emergency repair staff, equipped with power-generating vehicles and electric power generators, have helped affected households in Nanping restore power supply.

Afghanistan seeks to establish political, economic ties with all countries: Caretaker govt



Kabul | Agencies

The Afghan caretaker government's Supreme Leader, Hibatullah Akhundzada, on Friday said that Afghanistan seeks to establish political and economic relations with all countries across the world.

"The Islamic Emirate seeks to establish political and economic relations with all countries within the framework of Sharia, particularly with Islamic countries, and has fulfilled its obligations in this regard," Akhundzada said in a congratulatory message for the upcoming annual Muslim festival of Eid al-

Adha.

Akhundzada noted that Afghanistan has faced severe challenges due to floods, rainstorms and other disasters, which have resulted in significant losses and hardships for Afghans, reports Xinhua news agency.

He also condemned the Israeli attacks on Muslims in Gaza. "We call on other countries to fulfil their obligations effectively to prevent these heinous crimes and brutal atrocities," the message read.

The country will celebrate Eid al-Adha on or around June 17, depending on moonighting.

Four killed in Nepal landslide

Kathmandu | Agencies

Four members of a family were killed in a landslide in Taplejung district in northeastern Nepal, a local official said on Friday.

A couple and their twin daughters died in Phaktanglung Rural Municipality after their house was buried in the debris on Thursday night, reports Xinhua news agency.

"All four were killed on the spot. Their bodies were



recovered on Friday morning," said Rajan Limbu,

Chairperson for the rural municipality. Limbu told

Xinhua that some 50 goats and dozens of chickens bred by the family also perished in the disaster. Monsoon clouds entered eastern Nepal on Monday and have brought heavy rainfall, according to the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology.

Rain-induced disasters are common in Nepal, and the Nepali authorities have estimated that over 1.8 million people could be affected this year.

Haj begins as Saudi Arabia expects 2 million pilgrims

Riyadh | Agencies

Muslims from around the world started the Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia on Friday, with authorities expecting 2 million people to gather this year amid sweltering heat.

After circling the Kaaba, a stone cube-shaped holy building inside the Grand Mosque in Mecca, pilgrims head to the nearby Mina Valley, where they will spend the night in a massive tent city.

On the second day, they head to Mount Arafat, around 20 kilometres east of Mecca, where they stay until sunset in what is considered



the peak of the Hajj pilgrimage.

As the temperature in and around Mecca is expected to

reach 43 degrees Celsius, authorities urged pilgrims to carry umbrellas to protect themselves during the rituals.

The Hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam, is a mandatory duty for all Muslims to make once in a lifetime - if they are physically capable of undertaking the journey to the birthplace of the prophet Mohammed and have the financial resources.

Men wear seamless white clothes, and women wear loose garments as they perform the same rituals in a demonstration of religious unity, equality and pursuit of spiritual renewal.

The pilgrimage takes place from the eighth to the 12th day of Dhu al-Hijjah, the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar.





## CM MOHAN YADAV ASKS OFFICIALS TO MAKE EFFORTS TO INCREASE REVENUE RECEIPTS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has asked officials to make all possible efforts to increase the revenue receipts from various sources. The Chief Minister, while reviewing the status of revenue receipts for the year 2024-25 on Thursday, told officials to adopt the best practices used by other states for collecting revenue receipts.

Chief Minister Yadav asserted that subject experts should be consulted and effective action plans must be suitably designed. "Maximum revenue receipts will help give impetus to development," he said.

Emphasising on need to increase vigilance in stamp and registration, the Chief Minister said that it should be ensured that there is not much difference between the actual value of the land and the rate at which the registration is being done. "Actions related to surprise inspection should be increased to prevent revenue loss in excise-related activities and to ensure the sale of goods as per rules," he said. The Chief Minister also directed officials that the lands of Revenue



and other departments should be identified to ensure that there is no encroachment on them and their use should be ensured according to the importance of such lands to

increase revenue receipts. "Drones and satellite surveys should be used to monitor whether mining activities take place in the designated area allotted for min-

ing," he said, adding that businesses should be encouraged in the mineral sector and a policy should be made to maximise mineral-based industries.

## Cong is ready to support CM Yadav's water conservation drive: Jitu Patwari

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Congress head Jitu Patwari said on Friday that the Opposition will support the state government's campaign for water conservation and cleanliness of drive for river Narmada.

Patwari's statement came amid a state-wide campaign for water conservation and Chief Minister Mohan Yadav himself leading this initiative aggressively from the front.

CM Yadav kicked-start the movement for conserving water bodies on June 5, and he has been taking this campaign trail in different parts of the state, aiming to involve maximum number of people in it.

The campaign named 'Jal Ganga Samvardhan Abhiyan' emphasises conserving the water bodies along with increasing the state's green cover as well as the cleanliness of rivers and ponds.

This campaign will conclude on June 16, according to the state government. In the process, CM Yadav, on Friday, will take this cam-



campaign to Betul and Chhindwara where he will address public gatherings as well. Commenting on it, Jitu Patwari said that a collective effort is required for this campaign, involving the local community and voluntary organisations.

"Being a responsible Opposition, MP Congress is fully prepared to support the government in any such

campaign, because I personally believe that our small steps together can bring about a big change," Patwari said on Friday.

Meanwhile, he also cautioned that if this campaign goes fully under the government machinery and without public participation, it is unlikely to achieve its real purpose as has happened in the past.

## Government gears up for reshuffling of school teachers

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government is gearing up for a major reshuffle of school teachers under the National Education Policy (NEP) in the new academic year.

Teachers in government-run schools who have been posted at a particular school for over 10-15 years will be transferred, state School Education Minister, Uday Pratap Singh said on Thursday.

The process was initiated last year, during Shivraj Singh Chouhan's regime, however, it was put on hold due to the Assembly elections. "Teachers who are serving at one particular school for over 10-15 years will be reshuffled soon. The reshuffling would be made keeping the student-teacher ratio in mind so that students do not get affected," Singh said. The minister said that the NEP is aimed at bringing each and every child to school and the state government is working on that direction. He said that the changes would be seen in the next few months. "MP's School Education Department is working for an overall reform in the system. Some revolu-



tionary changes would be introduced in the next few months," he added.

The minister further said that the department is developing a new portal to streamline the entire process and to ensure transparency. The new portal will also have a proper mechanism for the fee structure of private schools, he added. "The new portal is being developed in a manner that would help in monitoring the entire school education system, including the fee structure of private schools. Be it government or private schools, all would be connected with the new portal," he said.

## 4 DEAD, 20 INJURED AS TRACTOR CARRYING DEVOTEES OVERTURNS

Datia: Four persons, including two girls and as many women, were killed and 20 injured after a tractor-trolley carrying devotees to a temple overturned in Madhya Pradesh's Datia district in the early hours of Friday, police said.

The victims were on their way to the Ratangarh Mata shrine when the accident took place near Maitihana Pali around 4.30 am, a police official said.

The vehicle veered off the road and plunged 15 feet into a culvert. Two girls and two women lost their lives in the accident, the official said.

The cause of the incident is not yet known, Datia Superintendent of Police Virendra Mishra said, adding that an injured girl was referred to Gwalior for treatment and another was taken to Jhansi.

The other injured persons are being treated in the district, he added.

## IF VENDORS USE CHILDREN TO SELL GOODS, FILE AN FIR

► POOL FORMED FOR APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS IN CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE/JUVENILE JUSTICE BOARD. CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS PRIYANKA KANUNGO REVIEWED

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chairman of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Priyanka Kanungo on Friday reviewed with the officials of various departments in view of the effective implementation of the laws made for child rights in the Ministry. Kanungo said that almost at every intersection it is seen that small children are selling different types of items. Strict action should be taken on this. He said that if vendors use



children to sell goods, then FIR should be lodged.

Kanungo said that it has often been seen that small children are being made to beg at various intersections. Due to social conditions, economic deprivation and lack of resources, children of many families are found involved in various crimes. There is a provision for care and protection of children by identifying and recording them living on the streets and for their all-round development by connecting them to the mainstream. He said that such children, whose

age is less than 6 years, should be admitted to the nearest Anganwadis for nutrition and education. The action to link Ayushman Yojana for health check-up, consultation and medical treatment should be taken by the Health Department. Besides, assistance should be provided in connecting the family members with employment and small scale industries. Kanungo suggested creating a pool to fill the vacant posts of Child Welfare Committee and Juvenile Justice Board. He also talked about providing free coaching for medical entrance to after care children under Bal Ashirwad Yojana. Apart from this, instructions were also given to compulsorily submit the follow-up report of the children in after care. Kanungo directed officials of the School Education Department to provide POCOS training to teachers, mapping of madrasas and if such children do not attend school for 30 consecutive days, the concerned principal should compulsorily provide information to the nodal officer of the Labor Department.

## Subsidy of Rs 24 thousand 420 crore to provide relief in electricity bills to domestic and agricultural consumers

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In order to provide relief to the domestic and agricultural consumers of the state in the tariff rates applicable for the financial year 2024-25, like previous years, the state government has decided to give an estimated subsidy of Rs 24 thousand 420 crore 8 lakh to the power companies. Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar has said that this subsidy will be given in Atal Grih Jyoti Yojana, Atal Krishi Jyoti Yojana, Tariff Subsidy and Free Electricity Supply Scheme.

As per the decision of the state government, a subsidy of Rs 11 thousand 943 crore 98 lakh will be given in lieu of charging only Rs 750 per horse power per year from permanent agricultural consumers having capacity up to 10 horse power at flat rate. Similarly, in lieu of charging Rs 1500 per horse power per year at flat rate from permanent agricultural consumers with capacity more than 10 horse power, Rs 969 crore 31 lakh will be given to perma-



nent agricultural pump consumers with metered capacity up to 10 horse power, Rs 50 crore 63 lakh, Rs 3 crore 22 lakh for permanent agricultural pump with meter having capacity more than 10 horse

power, Rs 371 crore 49 lakh for temporary agricultural pump connection, permanent agricultural pump of up to 5 horse power for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes having land up to one hectare. 5009 crore 73 lakh rupees for providing free electricity to consumers, under Atal Grih Jyoti Yojana, 5866 rupees in lieu of providing electricity as per the bill to domestic consumers with monthly consumption up to 150 units, with a maximum of Rs 100 on the monthly consumption of the first 100 units. 26 lakh rupees, Under Atal Grih Jyoti Yojana, Rs 36 lakh will be given to the domestic consumers of Scheduled Castes and Tribes living below the poverty line in lieu of providing 30 units of electricity at the rate of only Rs 25 per month and an annual subsidy of Rs 36 lakh will be given to high pressure lift/group irrigation consumers. A provision has been made to give a subsidy of Rs 205 crore 10 lakh for exemption from minimum charges and 190 paise per unit rebate in energy charges.

## Tree plantation campaign in urban areas from July 15

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A massive plantation campaign will be conducted in all the urban areas of the state from July 15 to September 15. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has given instructions to promote plantation. For this purpose, a tree plantation campaign will run for two months in the urban area. One crore 75 lakh saplings will be planted in urban areas.

The state government has issued instructions to all the collectors from the Urban Development and Housing Department. Plantation cam-

paign will be conducted under the leadership of all the district collectors in collaboration with other departments. Instructions have been given to plant more and more trees during the rainy season. 15 lakh saplings each will be planted in Municipal Corporation Indore and Bhopal, 10 lakh each in Municipal Corporation Gwalior, Jabalpur, Ujjain and 5 lakh each in the remaining 11 Municipal Corporations. Similarly, one lakh saplings each will be planted in 17 municipalities with population of one lakh and more, 15-15 thousand saplings will

be planted in 82 municipalities with population less than one lakh and 10-10 thousand saplings will be planted in 298 municipal colonies.

The work of plantation by the urban bodies will be done in the urban body's own land reserved for green area, other government land and in the land reserved for green area in private colonies. Plantation in private colonies will be done with public cooperation. The plants will be supplied by the civic body from the nurseries of the urban body and the forest department and from locally available plants.

## Rs 15 crore cash seized from speculators in Ujjain

► 3000 BUNDLES AND CURRENCY OF 7 COUNTRIES FOUND. THE POLICE COUNTED ALL NIGHT AND THEN HAD TO ORDER A MACHINE

Team Absolute | Ujjain

Ujjain Police has raided a house and seized Rs 15 crore from bookies. There are 3000 bundles of Rs 500 notes each. Apart from this, 7 kg silver and foreign currency of 7 countries have also been seized.

The police kept counting notes throughout the night. Machines had to be installed to count the notes on Friday morning. Police have arrested 9 people. They are residents of MP, Rajasthan and Punjab. The main accused fled from the



spot.

During the raid at 19 Dreams, the team seized laptops, mobiles, TVs and other electronic devices. A note counting machine was also found with the accused. Foreign notes have also been seized by the police. It is being told that along with online gaming, betting was done on the T-20 World Cup matches going on in America.

Police have arrested these 9 accused 1. Rohit father Surjeet Singh (26), Railway Colony Neemuch MP. 2. Gaurav father Surajmal Jain (26) Kanchannagar Neemuch. 3. Mayur Jain father Vijay Jain (30),

Bagana Neemuch. 4. Akash Masihi father Ajay Masihi (26), Neemuch near Mission Hospital. 5. Harish father Rajmal Teli (36), Dak Bungalow Road Nimbahera Rajasthan. 6. Gurpreet Singh father Sardar Gurmil Singh (36), Mata Nagar Ludhiana Punjab. 7. Jaspreet alias Rubal father Harmandar Singh (30), 2730 Amarapura Ludhiana Punjab. 8. Satpreet Singh father Paramjit Singh (34), Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar Ludhiana Punjab. 9. Chetan Negi Father Late. Puranchand Negi (37), Sharabanagar Ludhiana Punjab.

## The Department of Orthopedics at AIIMS Bhopal Organizes Program for Clubfoot Awareness and Management Month

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Department of Orthopedics, AIIMS Bhopal inaugurated a program today, marking the commencement of Clubfoot Awareness and Management Month. Professor (Dr.) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, addressed the gathering, emphasizing the importance of early intervention to prevent disability caused by clubfoot. Clubfoot is a condition where a child's foot turns inward and downward, making walking difficult and impacting daily activities. Professor Singh highlighted that plaster treatment constitutes only 25% of the solution, while the remaining 75% involves ongoing care for clubfoot. He emphasized the need to dispel the stigma associated with this condition and raise awareness in society about the possibility of its treatment. Dr. Rehan-ul-Haq, Head of the Orthopedics Department at AIIMS Bhopal, sensitized parents of affected children about clubfoot. Children afflicted with clubfoot

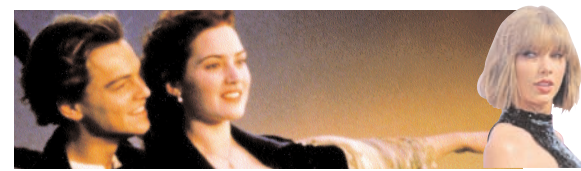


deformity inaugurated the awareness program by cutting a cake alongside Professor Dr. Ajai Singh. Cure India Foundation actively participated in this Clubfoot Awareness

and Management Month program. Some parents, whose children benefited from the Ponseti method, shared their thoughts and experiences. The event served as a plat-

form to educate parents and the community about clubfoot and its treatment options, fostering a supportive environment for affected children.





## Hailey Bieber Admits to Experiencing 'Lower Back Pain' Amid Pregnancy

Los Angeles | Agencies

There's just certain things about pregnancy that sneak up on you unexpectedly: cravings, aches, and pains. Hailey Bieber revealed that she's been experiencing lower back pains while she's expecting her first child in an Instagram post on Wednesday, June 12. The fashion icon shared a selfie of herself relaxing while dealing the pains. She still looked fabulous.

In the selfie, Hailey was getting some time in the sun, seated in a wooden chair. She had her hair tied back under a large set of headphones. She rocked a green half-zip sweater and black spandex shorts, where her baby bump could be seen subtly. "So who was gonna tell me about the lower back pain?" she wrote under the pic with a confused face emoji as well as two pregnant emojis.

Hailey was wearing a baby bump in a stunning white dress. The baby will be the first for both Justin and Hailey.

The new photo comes about a month after Hailey and her husband Justin Bieber publicly announced their pregnancy on Instagram back in May. The Rhode founder shared a montage and series of photos of the "Peaches" singer snapping photos of her while she showed off her baby bump in a stunning white dress. The baby will be the first for both Justin and Hailey.



## GERRY AND THERESA HAVE SETTLED THEIR DIVORCE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Gerry Turner and Theresa Nist are officially divorced. Two months after announcing their split on Good Morning America, the Golden Bachelor season 1 alums finalized their divorce in Indiana on Thursday, June 13. According to court documents obtained by Entertainment Tonight, Gerry, 72, and Theresa, 70, "lived together as husband and wife until April 12, 2024, at which time certain irreconcilable differences heretofore arisen between the parties culminated in their separation." That month, the former pair announced their separation on GMA, and they revealed that the reason was because of distance.

"Theresa and I have had a number of heart-to-heart conversations, and we've looked closely at our situation, our living situation and so forth, and we've kind of come to the conclusion mutually that it's probably time for us to dissolve our marriage," Gerry — who is from Indiana — explained. Theresa, for her part, lives in New Jersey.

Gerry added that he and Theresa are "dedicated" to their families, noting, "So, we look at these conversations, and we both think it's best for the happiness of each of us to live apart."

Later that week, Theresa took to Instagram with a positive mindset about her and Gerry's split. In her caption, the ABC personality encouraged her fans to "stay open to all experiences, opportunities and love that may come your way."

# Taylor Swift

Los Angeles | Agencies

Pop icon Taylor Swift's Eras Tour will not extend into its third calendar year with added dates in 2025. The singer-songwriter announced that her global trek will conclude with its currently scheduled final dates in North America in December of this year, reports 'Variety.'

Swift made this announcement during the 100th show of the tour on the first night of a weekend engagement in Liverpool.

"You know, this is actually the 100th show of the tour," she declared, a number already well-known to most Swifties in attendance. The singer acknowledged that reaching the triple-digit mark 15 months into the tour blows her mind. Quoted by 'Variety,' she said: "That doesn't feel like a real statistic to me, because this has definitely been the most exhausting, all-encompassing, but most joyful, most rewarding, most wonderful thing that has ever happened in my life." The singer noted that the reality of the tour ending was just beginning to sink in, even though she still has six months left.

Celebrating the 100th show, she said: "For me, this is the very first time I've ever acknowledged to myself and admitted that this tour is gonna end in December. Like, that's it." "And that feels like so far away from now. But then again, it feels like we just played our first show on this tour."

Because you have made this so much fun for us that we wanted to do a hundred shows, 150-something shows that we have on the whole tour," she added.



## ANNOUNCED THE 100TH SHOW OF THE TOUR ON THE FIRST NIGHT OF A WEEKEND

## Jennifer Lopez & Ben Affleck Attend His Son's Graduation Ceremony

Los Angeles | Agencies

Jennifer Lopez was seen with Ben Affleck at his son Samuel's graduation amid divorce rumors on Wednesday, June 12.

The 54-year-old singer, who was dressed in a cream long sleeved dress, heels, and topped off the look with a purse, and sunglasses, was seen walking solo into the ceremony, while the 51-year-old actor was snapped wearing a navy blue suit, walking in with his mother, Chris Anne Boldt.

Alongside the two was the Batman actor's ex-wife Jennifer

Garner — who shares Samuel, Violet, and Seraphina with Ben. Once the commencement was over, the whole crew went out to eat lunch at the Baltair Restaurant in Los Angeles.

The family outing comes shortly after speculation of J. Lo and the Gone Girl actor's marriage going downhill. Despite the two not being spotted together at The Met Gala and the "Jenny From The Block" artist's premiere for her film Atlas, the wedded couple have made some appearances, such as at Ben's daughter Violet's graduation party.



## HUNTER SCHAFFER JOINS MICHELLE YEOH IN 'BLADE RUNNER 2099' SERIES

Los Angeles: Actress Hunter Schafer, who is known for 'Euphoria' and 'The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes,' has been roped in to star opposite Michelle Yeoh in the upcoming 'Blade Runner 2099' TV series.

The show is a sequel to both the original 'Blade Runner' film and the follow-up film, 'Blade Runner 2049,' reports 'Variety.'

The storyline is being kept under wraps, and no details are available on Schafer's character, but sources have said that Yeoh will play a character named Olwen, described as a replicant near the end of her life.

As per 'Variety,' Ridley Scott, the mastermind behind the original 1982 sci-fi thriller 'Blade Runner,' first announced 'Blade Runner 2099' was in the works in November 2021, with Amazon revealing it was in development at the platform in February 2022.

Schafer made her acting debut playing Juliette opposite Zendaya's Rue in HBO's Emmy-nominated drama 'Euphoria,' and most recently appeared in Lionsgate's 'The Hunger Games' prequel 'The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes' as Tigris Snow. Up next, Schafer can be seen in A24's 'Mother Mary' opposite Anne Hathaway and Michaela Coel and in Yorgos Lanthimos' 'Kinds of Kindness' with Emma Stone and Jesse Plemons.



## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Lily Aldridge



## Anthony Mackie recollects being vomited upon by fan while taking a picture

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actor Anthony Mackie, known for 'Twisted Metal' and 'Captain America 4,' recounted a story about how a fan once vomited on him while seeking a photo. The actor shared the story with (understandably horrified) a group of actors, including Ricky Martin, John Goodman, Kelsey Grammer, Theo James, and Bowen Yang, reports 'Entertainment Weekly.'

Mackie told the actors gathered for The Hollywood Reporter's Comedy? Actor Emmy

Roundtable, "I was in Vancouver, shooting 'Altered Carbon', and I see this young lady across the bar. The way she was acting, I thought she had special needs. So I tell the bartender, 'Yo, tell her to come over and say hello'. She makes her way around the bar, and everybody in the restaurant's like, 'He's so nice.' As per 'Entertainment Weekly,' Mackie explained that the woman asked to take a picture with him, and he agreed as long as it was "discreet."

"So I take the picture, she looks at it, and she pukes from here all the way down to my shoes. This is after two dozen oysters, (and

a lobster." Mackie then told his fellow actors that the woman ran out of the restaurant. Luckily for him, a waiter swooped in to save the day. "(He) takes me back to the oyster wash-off, hoses me down on the (shucking table). They take my clothes. He goes across the street to T.J. Maxx and gets me some sweatpants and a graffiti T-shirt. I come back out, and this woman is like, 'I'm sorry, can I take a picture?'" At this point, Mackie clarified that it was a different woman who asked for this photo, not the one who vomited on him, but her comedic timing was perfect nonetheless.





# 'I haven't got to my peak yet', admits Neeraj Chopra

New Delhi | Agencies

Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra feels that he has not achieved his best result in the javelin throw despite winning multiple medals in the sport.

Indian star athlete exhibited the basics of throwing a javelin to Dinesh Karthik on JioCinema's 'Get Set Gold', where he also showed his personable side by discussing some of his off-court interests such as his hobbies, favourite movies, and the kind of music he listens to before competing.

Neeraj shared how his throw in the World Under-20 Championships 2016, is the only throw he has been satisfied with. To date, I am only satisfied with one throw of mine, which was 86.48 m in the World Under-20 Championships 2016. That was one throw where I felt it was a special, unique one, but I have not been satisfied with any throw since.

"I feel I haven't got to my peak yet; I have won gold and won a lot of competitions, but I still believe I have not reached my best and I am not satisfied with my throw yet," he said.

The 2023 World Champion opened up on his hobbies, including



a short-lived habit of shopping that led to a complicated overseas purchase.

"I have many hobbies. I like hanging out with my friends. I also liked shopping a lot, but now I shop less because it feels like a waste of money. We can spend that money elsewhere. I like collecting unique things. I once went past a shop in Germany that had unique art pieces. I liked a statue of a warrior sitting on

a horse, throwing a spear, more like throwing a javelin, so I bought it without even thinking. It was of 20kgs. Later, I thought, 'How will I take it to India?' Finally, a brother of mine managed it," said the javelin star. Neeraj also revealed how he spent his time during the Covid-19 lockdown watching various classic Hollywood movies.

"During the lockdown, I watched movies with the best IMDb ratings.

So, there was The Shawshank Redemption, Forrest Gump, Cast Away, A Beautiful Mind, and The Pianist. I recently watched a movie, Society of the Snow. I would like to tell everyone to watch it. It makes me feel like our lives are much better," he said.

He further shared the kind of music he listens to before competing. "I don't have a favourite playlist but during events, I mostly listen to loud music, like Imagine Dragons. Once I was competing in the Asian Games and I had listened to Shiv Tandav, it gave me goosebumps. I like (adrenaline-pumping music) because normally, I'm fine, but when I compete, I get very aggressive," Neeraj added.

The 26-year-old is among the best javelin throw athletes in the world right now, as the incumbent Olympic (Tokyo 2020) and World Champion (Budapest 2023).

He earned the silver medal at the 2022 World Championships in Eugene. He has also won the Asian Games Gold medal twice (2018 Jakarta, 2022 Hangzhou) and the Gold medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games (Gold Coast).

# T20 World Cup: Afghanistan seal Super 8 spot with win over PNG



Tarouba (Trinidad) | Agencies

Afghanistan have booked a spot in the T20 World Cup Super 8 stage, beating Papua New Guinea by seven wickets at the Brian Lara Cricket Stadium here on Friday (as per IST).

The result officially ends contender New Zealand's hopes of progressing past the group stage.

Papua New Guinea were 95 all out in 19.5 overs with wicketkeeper batter Kiplin Doriga top-scoring with 27. In response, Gulbadin Naib steered Afghanistan's chase after early setback to seal the win by 7 wickets, they scored 101 in 15.1 overs.

After asked to bat first, PNG lost skipper Assad Vala as Fazalhaq Farooqi who

affected the opportunistic runout. His impact quickly translated to the ball, picking up back-to-back wickets, dismissing Lega Siaka and Sese Bau, to commence the next over.

Naveen-ul-Haq joined the Farooqi party in the Powerplay as well, taking a pair of wickets that included the crucial scalp of Tony Ura (11 off 18). PNG were 30/5 at the six-over mark.

Chad Soper and Doriga went into rebuilding act, but things went from bad to worse just before drinks. The pair had a moment of miscommunication, leading to the second run out of the innings.

To start the 13th over, Norman Vanua suffered a cruel blow of misfortune as he scampered through for a quick single. Approaching

the crease, the corner of his bat dug into the pitch, caught agonisingly short of safety, reports ICC.

Afghanistan displayed ruthlessness in the field as PNG's suffered six run outs at the tournament, the most of any team. Farooqi finished with the figures of 16-3 off his four overs. He was named Player of the Match for his all-round efforts in the first innings.

Chasing 96, Afghanistan lost removing Afghan openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Rahmanullah Gurbaz inside the first three overs and finished the Powerplay at 39/2.

Despite losing a wicket in the ninth over, Afghanistan, led by Gulbadin, steadily moved towards victory. They were 59/3, ahead of the run-a-ball requirement at the halfway mark.

# Asian Team Squash: India men's team goes down to Pakistan in quarterfinals

Dalian (China) | Agencies

The India men's team lost to Pakistan 1-2 in the quarterfinals of the Asian Team Squash Championships here on Friday, while the women went down to South Korea 3-0 in their must-win final group A match to also go out of medal contention.

Velavan Senthilkumar recorded the day's lone Indian victory, beating Nasir Iqbal after Rahul Baitha lost to Md Asim Khan, but Noor Zaman clinched it for multiple-time champions Pakistan with a straight-game win over Suraj Kumar Chand.

The Indian teams will vie for classification spots. India results: Men (quarterfinals):



Pakistan bt India 2-1 (Md Asim Khan bt Rahul Baitha 11-3, 11-4, 11-9; Nasir Iqbal lost to Velavan Senthilkumar 5-11, 7-11, 6-11; Noor Zaman bt Suraj Kumar Chand 11-8, 11-8, 11-6). Women (Pool A league match): India lost to

South Korea 0-3 (Pooja Arthi Raghu lost to Hwayeong Eum 5-11, 5-11, 8-11; Rathika Suthanthira Seelan lost to Ming Yeong Heo 4-11, 12-10, 7-11, 6-11; Sunita Patel lost to Chaewon Song 12-10, 8-11, 14-12, 7-11, 7-11).

# MANIPULATING RUN RATE WOULD BE AGAINST SPIRIT OF CRICKET, : CUMMINS

Gros Islet (St Lucia) | Agencies

Australia fast-bowler Pat Cummins said his side has never talked about manipulating their run rate in their final Group B game against Scotland in order to knock out defending champions England from the Men's T20 World Cup, adding moves like that would be against the Spirit of Cricket.

England gave themselves a huge net run rate boost with an eight-wicket thrashing of Oman, thus lifting their NRR above Scotland. If they manage to beat Namibia in their last Group B match, then Scotland will have to beat Australia at St Lucia on June 16 to ensure England are out of the competition.

But with Josh Hazlewood commenting that it would be in the best interest of everyone to knock out England, Cummins insisted that his fellow pacer's comments weren't serious in nature. "I think when you go out and play you are trying your best every time and if you are not, that's probably against the spirit of cricket. Haven't really thought too deeply because it's never really popped up.



"I was speaking to Joshy, who had a bit of a joke about it the other day, and think it got taken a little bit out of context. We'll go there and just try and play Scotland who have had a really good tournament so far and will be tough." "It's (net run rate) something you kind of discuss as one of the quirks of the set-up but in terms of does it change the way we

play, absolutely not. I've never stepped into the field without the mindset of trying to take the game on and be aggressive, like the guys have so far," said Cummins to reporters.

Australia have already qualified for the Super Eights stage of the competition. "I don't think you can (go into a game not trying to win) - ever. You're playing an international game in the

middle of a World Cup." "You still want to try and have a good game and carry that on into the Super Eights. I've never stepped on to the field without the mindset of being aggressive, like the guys have so far," added Cummins.

With left-arm fast-bowler Mitchell Starc on track to be available for Scotland game after missing out on the Namibia clash due to calf soreness, there is an option for Australia to rotate their players. Cameron Green, Josh Inglis and Ashton Agar are yet to feature in the tournament before the Super Eights commence for Australia.

"I haven't spoken to the selectors or anyone, so I don't know what they're thinking. I know going into the start of the tournament, in a perfect world, we'd get a game into just about all the squad members. But I wouldn't be surprised (if some are rested). Once they have a look at the wicket and work out match-ups, if a couple of new guys come in. It's a bit of a luxury now in this first section of the tournament. I think once you get to the Super Eights I don't think there will be any rest.

# SHUBMAN, AVESH LIKELY TO RETURN HOME AFTER CANADA MATCH

New Delhi:

Indian team travelling reserves Shubman Gill and Avesh Khan will return from the ongoing T20 World Cup home after the match against Canada, according to report.

The duo travelled to Florida with the rest of the team as backups in case of any adversity. Gill and Avesh were part of the four-member travelling reserves along with Rinku Singh and Khaleel Ahmed.

It has been learnt that both Gill and Avesh's travels were only up to the US leg unless there were unexpected injuries to the players, according to Cricbuzz report.

Rohit Sharma-led side cruised to the Super Eight stage of the tournament after winning three consecutive matches in the group stage. In their last game of the US leg, India will take on Canada in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Saturday.

India outclassed Ireland, Pakistan and the USA to stay at the top of Group A in the tournament so far. The inclement weather conditions in Florida might play spoilsport to India's winning momentum as the side gears for the Caribbean leg of the tournament.

As per the report, Rinku and Khaleel will stay with the squad and travel to Bridgetown, Barbados, where India play their first Super Eight game on June 20. The other two Super Eight games are in Antigua on June 22 and in St Lucia on June 24.



# 'World Cup is about upsets', feels Yuvraj after NZ's exit from tournament

New York | Agencies

Former India star all-rounder Yuvraj Singh, who is an ambassador of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, said the mega event is about upsets and no team can be taken for granted. He added that the race to Super Eight is getting interesting with multiple teams holding a chance to qualify for the next stage.

In the ongoing edition of the T20 World Cup, there were a few upsets, notably the co-hosts USA defeating the 2009 champions Pakistan, and Afghanistan's impressive 84-run victory over New Zealand, who have bowed out of the competition.

On the other hand, Pakistan and defending champions England have slim chances of qualifying for the Super Eight stage.

Speaking on whether the current World Cup can cause upsets, Yuvraj shared, "A World Cup is about upsets. We have already seen a few upsets so far so no team can be taken for granted. The Super 8 is going to get interesting now and each team are in with a chance to qualify for the semis."

Highlighting the impact of the current conditions of the USA on the players, Yuvraj added "I don't think you need much experience for conditions. If you arrive early and adjust to the weather, the players have the required experience."

Meanwhile, former Australian all-rounder Daniel Christian also shared his thoughts about the World Cup being held in the United States. "I think it has been a bit of a slow start for a lot of the teams to see. Witnessing the current conditions, the teams present will need to make every effort to perform well," he said.

"Seeing how everyone is simultaneously adjusting to the game regarding if the ball will spin and if the slow balls will hold up, the environment is incredibly fascinating.

On the field, winning with a 200 or a 140 can't be guaranteed," remarked Daniel Yuvraj and Daniel play for New York Strikers, the international franchise which is a part of both the Abu Dhabi T10 and Legends Cricket Trophy.

During the Legends Cricket Trophy season 2 final, Yuvraj displayed flashes of his vintage stroke-making ability for his side to succeed.



# East Bengal sign ISL Golden Boot winner Dimitrios Diamantakos on 2-year deal



Kolkata | Agencies

Emami East Bengal FC has roped in Indian Super League (ISL) 2023-24 Golden Boot winner Dimitrios Diamantakos on a two-year contract, subject to completion of regulatory processes.

Diamantakos scored 13 goals for Kerala Blasters FC in last season's ISL. "Everyone knows that East Bengal has one of the greatest fan bases in Asia. I can't wait to play in front of them. I will do my best to help my team achieve our goals and bring joy to our supporters. See you in Kolkata!" said Diamantakos.

At the international level, Diamantakos has represented Greece's senior national team and was part of the Greek squad that finished runners-up in the 2012 UEFA

European U-19 Championship. Since joining Kerala Blasters in 2022, Diamantakos has so far played 44 matches on Indian soil, registering 28 goals and 7 assists across two seasons.

"Diamantakos' adaptation to India and the ISL has been remarkable and his inclusion will massively bolster our attack. We had a fruitful conversation with him, which convinced him to join us. He had offers from various clubs, but he believed in our project and chose to join Emami East Bengal," said Emami East Bengal FC Head Coach Carles Cuadrat.

The 31-year-old recorded the joint second highest goal contributions in Indian domestic football last season (20 in 20 games). Besides scoring 13 goals and providing 3 assists en route to winning the ISL Golden Boot,

Diamantakos also registered 3 goals and 1 assist in three Kalinga Super Cup games. In the 2022-23 ISL he earned the distinction of scoring in five consecutive matches.

Having risen through the youth ranks at Atromitis Piraeus and Olympiacos, Diamantakos represented several Greek sides during his formative professional years, including Panionios Athens, Aris Thessaloniki, Ergotelis FC and Olympiacos in two stints.

Later, between 2015 and 2020, he had a five-year-long spell in Germany which saw him play for Karlsruher SC, VfL Bochum and FC St. Pauli, before joining Croatia's Hajduk Split (2020-22) and Israel's FC Ashdod (on loan - 2022) in the subsequent years.





## Sara remembered late actor Sushant Singh Rajput on his fourth death anniversary



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Sara Ali Khan, who was recently seen in the streaming movie 'Ae Watan Mere Watan', remembered late actor Sushant Singh Rajput on his fourth death anniversary on Friday.

The actress took to the Stories section of her Instagram and shared a

throwback picture with Sushant, her co-star in 'Kedarnath' (2018).

In the picture, Sushant can be seen praying to god with folded hands with Sara seated next to him.

The actress did not write anything on the picture but added the song 'Namo Namu' from 'Kedarnath'.

Sara made her debut in 2018 with 'Kedarnath' opposite Sushant. The film, based on devastating floods in

Uttarakhand in 2013, follows the inter-faith love story between a wealthy Brahmin girl (Sara) and a Muslim boy (Sushant).

Sushant was found dead under mysterious circumstances at his Mumbai apartment on June 14, 2020, during the first Covid-induced lockdown. No suicide note was found on the site.



## Anup Jalota, Talat Aziz unspool fond memories of Pankaj Udhas

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Bhajan Samraat' Anup Jalota and Ghazal singer Talat Aziz recalled the fond memories of their friend Pankaj Udhas on the stage of the kids' singing reality show 'Superstar Singer 3'. In a new episode titled 'Ghazal Night', the young contestants showcased their singing prowess as they paid tribute to the ghazal samrat, Pankaj Udhas. The 14-year-old Laisel Rai from Mohali, Punjab, and captain Pawandeep Rajan won hearts with their rendition of the timeless ghazals 'Ghungroo Toot Gaye' and 'Chupke Sakhiyon Se'. Mesmerised by their singing, Anup complimented the duo, saying: "This cute little Laisel looks so much like a junior Neha Kakkar, and she has Neha's style in her singing; she performed so well with such clarity. Pawandeep and Laisel, you performed this ghazal so well. Keep it up."

Talat added: "This performance made me nostalgic, as this was one of the songs that Anup Jalota, Pankaj Udhas, and I performed together. This brought back such beautiful memories of those times when the three of us used to perform together. Those days were so beautiful, and I will always cherish them all my life." Host Haarsh Limbachiya further played a video of Pankaj, Anup, and Talat performing together, which left the latter two emotional. They also thanked everyone for reviving these treasured memories through the young talents' performances, which made for such a beautiful tribute to their friend, Pankaj Udhas. Pankaj Udhas passed away on February 26, 2024, due to a prolonged illness in Mumbai.



## ANKITA LOKHANDE REMEMBERS SUSHANT ; DROPS UNSEEN PIC OF ACTOR WITH HIS DOG FUDGE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Ankita Lokhande Jain remembered the late actor Sushant Singh Rajput (SSR) on his fourth death anniversary by sharing an unseen picture of the 'Kai Po Che!' star with his pet dog 'Fudge'.

Ankita was in a romantic relationship with her 'Pavitra Rishta' co-star, SSR, from 2010 until they parted ways in 2016.

On his death anniversary, Ankita took to Instagram stories and shared a picture of Sushant wearing a grey sleeveless T-shirt and shorts, standing behind his favourite furry friend 'Fudge', who is

sitting in front of him. The 'Manikamika: The Queen of Jhansi' actress did not write a caption for the post but added the tune of 'Heartbeat' by Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy from the movie 'Kal Ho Naa Ho'.

On June 14, 2020, Sushant was found dead at his residence in Bandra, Mumbai, reportedly having committed suicide. The dog was taken to Patna, Bihar, by the late actor's father and passed away three years after Sushant's death.

Actress Adah Sharma, known for 'The Kerala Story', now lives in Sushant's former residence in the Mont Blanc Apartments in Bandra, Mumbai.

On the personal front, Ankita is married to businessman Vicky Jain. The couple participated in the controversial reality show 'Bigg Boss 17.'



## DRASHTI DHAMI, NEERAJ KHEMKA EXPECTING HER FIRST BABY

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Actress Drashti Dhami, who is known for 'Jhalak

Dikhla Jaa', 'Pardes Mein Hai Mera Dil', and 'Duranga', is expecting her first baby with her husband, Neeraj Khemka.

On Friday, the actress took to her Instagram and shared a cute video announcing the baby's arrival in October. In the clip, the couple is seen holding their drinks while displaying a poster that reads, "Could be Pink, Could be Blue. All we know is that we are due! October 2024."

Drashti and Neeraj's family members also appear in the video, celebrating the big news. The actress captioned the post: "In a galaxy not so far away, a tiny rebel is joining our crazy tribe. Please send love, blessings, cash and french fries our way #BabyKOnBoard We can't wait for October 2024." Drashti and Neeraj tied the knot on February 21, 2015.

The actress was recently seen in the second season of her successful streaming show 'Duranga', which is inspired by the Korean show 'Flower of Evil'.

## Badshah reveals his conversation with spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravishankar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rapper Badshah, who appeared on the celebrity chat show 'The Great Indian Kapil Show', shared a conversation he had with the spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar during the Covid, revealing that the guru asked him to sing a song for them.

While the guests shared some fun anecdotes from their lives, Kapil recounted a hilarious incident involving himself and Badshah during the Covid-19. Kapil said: "I remember



this incident. It was during Covid. Everything was happening on Zoom calls. A common friend told us (me and Badshah) that Sri Sri Ravi Shankar ji would have a chat with us and we could ask him questions."

"Ravi Shankar ji told Badshah to sing one of his songs. So, he rapped for a long time. He heard it. Later, he said, 'Now, please sing it,' Kapil added.

Adding to this, Badshah said: "I performed the Independence Day rap so well. He was looking at me and then said, 'Now sing it for us'."



Sanam Shetty