

NATION > 02
Emergency, CAA, women empowerment and more in Prez...



HOLLYWOOD > 06
Isabelle Huppert to be feted with French Lumiere Award ...



SPORTS > 07
Tennis : Andy Murray to take last-minute call on Wimbledon...



NDA LIKELY TO KEEP DEPUTY SPEAKER POST, ANNOUNCEMENT SOON

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The post of the Deputy Speaker post, vacant in the second term of the Narendra Modi government, will be filled again. But in a break from tradition, the incumbent is likely to be from the NDA and not the Opposition, sources have indicated, making it clear that the government versus Opposition acrimony is likely to escalate. An announcement is likely soon, sources said.

Sources said the government is likely to take a hard line after the "breakdown of trust" with the Opposition during the dialogue yesterday over the Speaker post. But there is also the question of keeping allies like Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar happy. Both had their eyes on the Speaker post as insurance for any split in their parties. But the BJP had refused to relent.

There is speculation that this time, the post might go to Me Naidu's Telugu Desam Party. TDP's GMC Balayogi was the Speaker when the NDA under Atal Bihari Vajpayee was in power and there is expectation that the post can now go to his son Harish Balayogi.

While a peace offering to the TDP might keep NDA's internal harmony intact, it could bode trouble from



another direction, by making the new muscular, combative Opposition extremely unhappy.

The Opposition, failing to get the spot of the Pro Tem Speaker had been angling for the Deputy Speaker post, which traditionally goes to it. But with the government brushing off its demands and its claim, they had forced a last-minute contest on the Speaker post.

The loss was a given, in view of the government's numerical strength. But the Opposition insisted that it was out to send a message.

The Lok Sabha Speaker is the final

arbiter of the voice of the people, the Congress asserted. Its new Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi pointedly said that he was "confident" that the Speaker would "allow us to speak, to represent the voice of the people".

"The idea that you can run the House efficiently by silencing the voice of the Opposition is a non-democratic idea," he added. "This election has shown that the people of India expect the Opposition to defend the constitution... we are confident that by allowing Opposition to speak, you will do your duty of defending the Constitution of

India," he said.

On Wednesday, the government, while seeking consensus for their Speaker candidate Om Birla, made it clear that they were not considering a Deputy Speaker post, or the Opposition's claim to it, for the moment.

This irked the Opposition, which fielded K Suresh - their seniormost parliamentarian and one they thought would be the obvious choice for the Pro Tem Speaker -- against Om Birla.

Describing the morning's events, Rahul Gandhi had said: "Rajnath Singh called (Congress chief) Mallikarjun Kharge and asked him to extend support... entire Opposition said we will support but convention is Deputy Speaker should be from our side. Rajnath Singh said he would call back... but he has not yet... PM is asking for cooperation but our leader is getting insulted."

In the first term of the NDA government, the Deputy Speaker was then ally AIADMK's M Thambidurai.

On Tuesday, Congress leader K Suresh said, "They (the BJP) denied (the post) to us in the last two terms of the Lok Sabha, saying that you are not the recognised Opposition. Now, we are recognised as the Opposition. Deputy Speaker post is our right, but they are not ready to give us."

'No love lost for BJP', says Uddhav Thackeray on lift ride with Devendra Fadnavis

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) president and ex-Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday categorically declared that his 'lift-ride' with MahaYuti ally and Bharatiya Janata Party's Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis was a "sheer coincidence" and nothing more.

Reacting to the wildfire political speculation and flutter in Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) circles, Thackeray cited a popular Bollywood song from the film 'Jab Jab Phool Khile' (1965), and said: "... na, na karte pyar tumhi se kar baithe'...nothing like that is going to happen with the BJP... you can rest assured."

On political suspicions about why the 'elevator meeting' and what transpired in the closed metal box with several BJP leaders around him, Thackeray jocularly shot back: "It is said that walls have ears... so henceforth, any secret conversations must be held only in lifts!"



About BJP Minister Chandrakant Patil - who 'dropped' in for a surprise meeting at the SS (UBT) office in the legislature building -- when journalists questioned as to who winked at whom -- Thackeray dismissed the query with a retort: "... from tomorrow, I shall sport goggles."

The Parliamentary Affairs and Higher Education Minister Patil presented a large packet of milk chocolate to Thackeray, while

Leader of the Opposition (Council) Ambadas Danve whipped out a box of 'pedas' (milk-sweetmeat) and offered it to the visitor, saying "this is for our victory in the Lok Sabha elections" amid much laughter and bonhomie.

Later, Thackeray took potshots at Patil saying that, like the free higher education for girls, the BJP Minister (Patil) should stop doling out 'free chocolates' as the people of the state are tired of the MahaYuti government.

'Step Down, Make Way For DK Shivakumar,' Vokkaliga Seer Urges Siddaramaiah

Bengaluru | Agencies

Vokkaliga seer publicly urged Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to step down and make way for his deputy DK Shivakumar amid a power tussle within the ruling Congress in the state.

The seer's appeal came amid a growing demand within the Siddaramaiah cabinet to have three more Deputy Chief Ministers from the Veerashaiva-Lingayat, the SC-ST, and the minority communities.

Vishwa Vokkaliga Mahasamastana Math seer Kumara Chandrashekaranatha Swamiji raised the pitch for Dk Shivakumar at the Kempegowda Jayanti event in Bengaluru to commemorate the birth anniversary of the city's founder in the presence of Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar on stage.

Karnataka Deputy Chief



Minister D.K. Shivakumar said that he would abide by whatever decision the Congress high command takes amid the buzz over a possible change in the Chief Minister's chair in the southern state.

Speaking to reporters in Delhi, Shivakumar said, "Some people are over-enthusiastic. But we should not take them seriously. The

party's decision will be final." Meanwhile, Reacting to the remarks, CM Siddaramaiah said the party high command will decide on the position of Chief Minister.

"The Swamiji cannot decide on this. It is for the high command to decide, and what decision it takes will be followed," the Chief Minister said.

Rohit Sharma's Smashing Reply To Pakistan Great Inzamam-ul-Haq On Ball-Tampering

Guiana | Agencies

Ahead of the India vs England T20 World Cup semi-final, a very strong accusation from Pakistan great Inzamam ul Haq went viral. On his target was Indian cricket team pace bowler Arshdeep Singh and the former Pakistan captain claimed that Arshdeep Singh was getting reverse swing due to some 'serious work' on the ball. Indirectly, he meant that Arshdeep was unfairly tampering the ball, which is a punishable offence by the ICC.

Speaking to a Pakistani news channel, Inzamam accused Arshdeep and the Indian side of working on the ball, which helped the lanky pacer generate a reverse swing in his second spell.

"When Arshdeep was bowling the 15th over, it was reverse swinging. Is that too early with the new ball? This means the ball was ready by the 12th-13th over, it was capable of reversing. It was reverse-swinging in the 15th. Umpires need to keep their eyes



open," Inzamam told the news channel.

Inzamam further stated that, "If Pakistan bowlers did this, there

would have been hue and cry. We know how to reverse it really well. If Arshdeep can reverse it in the 15th, there's been some serious work done on the ball.

"If Bumrah does it (you can understand), his action is like that. When others with a specific action or speed do it, it means the ball has been prepared in a special way," added Inzamam.

Rohit was asked about Inzamam's comment in the pre-match media interaction here and he dismissed it, advising the former batter to have an open mind.

"Abhi kya jawab du iska mein bhai (what answer should I give, brother). Wickets are so dry (here) as you are playing in a sunny weather. All teams are getting reverse (swing). Sometimes dimaag ko kholina zaroori hai (Need to open your mind). You need to understand what the conditions are. This is not Australia or England. That's what I will say," Rohit said, when asked to respond to Inzamam's observation.

Another NEET Aspirant Dies By Suicide In Kota, 12th Such Case This Year

Kota | Agencies

A 17-year-old medical aspirant allegedly died by suicide in his rented accommodation in Rajasthan's Kota, police said on Thursday.

This is the twelfth case of suspected suicide by a coaching student in Kota since January. The number of student suicides in Kota stood at 26 in 2023.

Bihar native Hrishit Kumar Agrawal, a student of Class 12, was preparing for NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) at a coaching institute here, Dadabari Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Shambhu Dayal said.

He lived in a rented room in a building in Chota Chaurahin Dadabari area where some other coaching students also resided, he said.

At around 1 pm on Thursday, the other students informed police after the student did not open his door when they knocked, he said.

When a police team broke open the door, they found him inside his room, he said.

No suicide note was recovered from Hrishit Agarwal's room, the police official said.

The body was in a decomposing state. It is suspected that he died by suicide sometime on Wednesday, he said.

He was preparing for the medical college entrance exam and taking coaching for the same in Kota for the last two years, Dadabari circle inspector Naresh Kumar Meena said, adding that the boy's parents have been informed.

The body has been sent to MBS hospital for a post-mortem, which will be conducted after the arrival of his parents, he said.

On June 16, another Bihar native, Ayush Jaiswal (17) died by suicide inside his PG room in Kota. He was preparing for the IIT-JEE competitive exam.

An 18-year-old NEET aspirant, Bagisha Tiwari, allegedly died by suicide in the coaching hub, a day after the National Testing Agency (NTA) declared the NEET-UG results, in which she scored 320 out of 720 marks.

IN A FIRST, CR INSTALLS 10-MWP FLOATING SOLAR POWER PLANT IN NASHIK LAKE

Mumbai: In a first for the Indian Railways, the Central Railway (CR) has installed a floating solar power plant of 10MWp capacity in the Igatpuri Lake in Nashik, an official said here on Thursday.

Stepping towards its ultimate goal of zero carbon emission by 2030, the CR has already commissioned 12.05 MWp (MegaWatt peak) solar plants on railway stations' rooftops and buildings, adding 4 MWp last year. "This has resulted in a saving of Rs 4.62 crore in 2023-2024, plus saving carbon footprints of around 6.95 tons. We plan to install additional 7 MWp solar power plants in the current year," said a CR spokesperson.

Besides 61 MW solar energy, the CR is already tapping 56.4 MW wind energy, and it has signed PPA's to utilize 325 MW solar and wind energy on a 24-hour basis.

This year, the spokesperson added that an additional 180 MW solar and 50 MW wind-power are likely to flow in, and these initiatives are equivalent to saving 2.50 lakh trees. The CR's current monthly power consumption is 236.92 million units for traction work and 9.7 million units for other non-traction works. After the commissioning of the above sources of renewables, the CR expects that 70 per cent of its traction energy will be green.

Sengol row: SP MP calls it 'raja ka danda', BJP hits back



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Samajwadi Party Lok Sabha MP R K Chaudhary on Wednesday in a letter to Speaker Om Birla, said 'Sengol' means 'Rajdanda' and it must be replaced by a copy of the constitution.

Calling the 'Sengol' a 'Rajdanda', Chaudhary said, "The sceptre was used by the monarchs to resolve any issues of the citizens but now we have democracy and follow the Constitution." "The adoption of the Constitution marked the beginning of democracy in the country, and

the Constitution is its symbol. The BJP government in its last term installed 'sengol' next to the Speaker's chair. Sengol is a Tamil word that means sceptre. Rajdanda also means the king's stick. We have become independent after the age of kings. Now, every man and woman who is an eligible voter chooses the government to run this country. So will the country run by Constitution or by a king's stick?" he told news agency. The former Uttar Pradesh minister demanded that the 'sengol' be replaced by a copy of the Constitution to "save democracy".

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, meanwhile slammed the remark of an SP MP on the traditional sceptre 'Sengol', calling it "disgraceful".

Adityanath said the remarks revealed the ignorance of the Samajwadi Party (SP) leaders and demonstrated their lack of respect for Indian history and culture. "Sengol is India's pride and PM Modi has bestowed upon it the highest honour in the Parliament," he added in a post on X.

"Samajwadi Party has no respect for Indian history and culture."

OPPOSITION TO RAISE NEET IN PARLIAMENT TODAY, GOVT SAYS "READY"

New Delhi: Student protests escalating across the country over alleged irregularities in medical entrance exam NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) and other competitive exams, the Opposition has said it would raise the issue in parliament tomorrow. The idea is to corner the government, even though the day is dedicated to a discussion on the Motion of Thanks to President's address to parliament. Projecting confidence, sources told NDTV that the government is ready to answer any questions on the matter even if it comes up during the debate.

Every possible action has been taken on the NEET issue, from starting a Central Bureau of Investigation probe to forming a special committee to look into it, government sources said. The committee report is expected soon. Also, the stringent rules against cheating and paper leak coming into effect in this session, strong action will be taken against the culprits and foundation would be laid for a robust education system, they said.

In case the matter comes up tomorrow, education minister Dharmendra Pradhan will respond to it, sources said. Pradhan was booed by the Opposition over the NEET row when he took oath in parliament on Monday. The massive row over NEET also came up in President Droupadi Murmu's address to the joint session of parliament today. The government, President Murmu said, is "committed to a fair investigation".



EMERGENCY, CAA, WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND MORE IN PREZ MURMU'S SPEECH

Team Absolute | New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu addressed the joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament on Thursday, her first in the third term of the Narendra Modi government and spoke on a host of issues, including Emergency and the safeguards of the Constitution, Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), EVM transparency, Northeast, women empowerment and more.

She highlighted the government's initiatives and achievements in various sectors and also spoke on various burning issues before the nation.

President Murmu said that the people of the country reposed faith in the Modi government for the third term and therefore it is a stamp of approval for the government's mission of service and good governance undertaken in the past 10 years.

"It is a mandate that the work of making India a developed nation continues uninterrupted and India attains its goals," she stated.

She said that the resolve to Reform, Perform and Transform has made India the fastest-growing economy in the world.

"In 10 years, India has risen to become the 5th largest economy from being the 11th ranked economy. From 2021 to 2024, India has grown at an average rate of 8 per cent annually. This has been made possible due to reforms and major decisions undertaken in the national interest in the last 10 years. Today, India alone is contributing 15 per cent of the global growth," she



President pointed out.

Reiterating the government's charge that the Emergency was the 'darkest period' of democracy, President Murmu said, "The imposition of Emergency on 25th June, 1975 had left the entire country outraged. However, the country emerged victorious over such unconstitutional forces as the traditions of the republic lie at the core of India." She also congratulated the MPs on their fresh term in Parliament and also congratulated the Election Commission for conducting the world's largest democratic exercise.

President Murmu said, "This was the largest election in the world. About 64 crore voters performed their duty with enthusiasm and zeal. Women cast their votes in huge numbers this time also. A very heartening aspect of this election emerged from Jammu and Kashmir. The Kashmir Valley broke all records of voter turnout of many decades.

"In the last four decades, we had witnessed low voter turnout amidst shutdowns and strikes in Kashmir. But this time the Kashmir Valley has given a befitting reply to every such element

within the country and outside. For the first time, the home voting facility was made available in this Lok Sabha Election," she added, highlighting the changes after Article 370 abrogation.

Wishing a better future for the families who have been granted citizenship under CAA, "The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita will come into force in the country from the first of July. The government has started granting citizenship to refugees under the CAA. It has ensured a dignified life to many families who have suffered due to Partition."

President Murmu cautioned the citizens against attempts to undermine the credibility of democracy and said, "We all remember those times when ballot papers were snatched and looted. To ensure the sanctity of the electoral process, it was decided to use EVMs. The EVM has passed every test, from the Supreme Court to the people's court, in the last few decades."

Talking about women empowerment initiatives under the Modi government, President Murmu highlighted, "During the last 10 years, majority of the four crore PM Awas houses have been allotted to women beneficiaries. At the very start of the third term of my government, approval for the construction of three crore new houses has been accorded. Most of these houses will be allotted to women beneficiaries."

She also made mention of various schemes directed at women's emancipation and said that they would go a long way in empowering the women force.

"Over the last 10 years, 10 crore women have been mobilised into Self Help Groups. A comprehensive campaign has been launched to make three crore women Lakhpati Didis," she said.

"The NAMO Drone Didi Scheme is contributing towards achieving this goal. Under this Scheme, women belonging to thousands of Self Help Groups are being provided with drones and also being trained as Drone Pilots," she added.

Speaking about the Krishi Sakhi Initiative, she said that over 30,000 women belonging to Self Help Groups have been provided with Krishi Sakhi Certificates. Krishi Sakhis are being trained in modern agricultural practices so that they can help farmers in further modernization of Agriculture. President Murmu in her joint address also highlighted the government's efforts to build all-weather connectivity to the Northeast and also its focus on developing the region as a hub of Made in India chips.

"The government is working to make this region a strategic gateway under its Act East Policy. Connectivity of all kinds is being expanded in the Northeast. Development works are being taken up in every field including education, health, tourism and employment. A semiconductor plant is being established in Assam at a cost of Rs 27,000 crore," President Murmu said.

In a message to all parties to work together, she said, "When India becomes the third largest economy, you will also be partners in this achievement. When we celebrate the hundredth anniversary of Independence in 2047 as a devel-

L-G Saxena orders dissolution of Delhi Dialogue and Development Commission; AAP protests

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In yet another setback for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Delhi, Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena on Thursday temporarily dissolved the Delhi Dialogue and Development Commission (DDCD), claiming that the state-funded body was reduced to accommodating "favoured individuals and unelected friends" to extend monetary benefits to them.

While ordering the dissolution of the DDCD, L-G Saxena said that it failed to serve its purpose and was now catering to "people with specific political leanings", providing financial benefits and extending patronage to select individuals.

"The Commission was created to serve as a policy think-tank manned by domain experts, on the lines of the Planning Commission/NITI Aayog, to provide inputs of governance. It was not meant to accommodate favoured individuals, unelected friends, or politically partisan people," L-G Saxena said.

He also pointed out that these positions were honorary but in the past few years, they were blatantly converted into positions of perk and power.

The L-G also claimed that there was no



work allocation among the members of DDCD, and the latter has become a place for fanning "nepotism and favouritism".

He also slammed the AAP administration for "arbitrary" appointments in the DDCD and termed the disbursement of hefty salaries every month as "patently illegal".

The dissolution of DDCD drew protests from AAP, along expected lines.

Heavy Rain In Delhi Affects Traffic, Waterlogging Reported In Many Areas

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Rains in the national capital on Thursday morning caused traffic congestion and waterlogging in several parts of the city.

Commuters at many places in Delhi faced inconvenience as traffic police received several calls for waterlogging issues, traffic congestions and fallen trees.

Traffic was very heavy from the Akshardham area to Ghazipur meat market due to waterlogging and vehicles were seen crawling on the stretch.

Similarly, the traffic was also heavy on the Akshardham-Sarai Kale Khan road.

Avadesh Mehra, a resident of Ghaziabad, said that it took him around one hour to reach his home.

"The traffic was very heavy on the stretch from near Akshardham towards UP. There was waterlogging near the Ghazipur meat market



roundabout. It took me an hour to pass the stretch and reach my home. The condition of traffic was very bad," Mehra said. Akshita Sharma, who works at a firm in central Delhi, said that the traffic was very heavy from near the toll gate on NH-48. "I commute via my car

from Old Gurgaon to central Delhi. It took me around one and a half hour to reach my office. Today due to the rains, traffic remained heavy from the toll gate on NH-48 till Dhaura Kuan. It took me over two hours to reach my office," Sharma said. People took to social

media platforms to share the traffic-related problems face by them.

Commuters said that there was a heavy traffic on the airport route from Raja Garden marble market till Naraina, from Meera Bagh/Vikasपुरi flyover towards Peeragarhi, and on the Mahipalpur-Gurgaon route.

Nishant Yaduvanshi, a resident of Bhopura in Ghaziabad, said, "I was going to Patparganj to see an ailing relative. However, the traffic condition was very pathetic from Anand Vihar to Ghazipur roundabout." Police said they received calls of waterlogging from near Mayapuri flyover, Jhandewalan temple, Peeragarhi Chowk, Paschim Vihar, Punjabi Bagh etc. Traffic related calls were received from Anand Vihar to Ghazipur, Shahdara, Dilshad Garden etc, they said.

Two trees fell in Mandir Marg and Mayur Vihar Phase-1 areas, they added.

PIL IN SC AGAINST IMPLEMENTATION OF THREE NEW CRIMINAL LAWS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been filed before the Supreme Court against the implementation of the new criminal laws abolishing the colonial era IPC, CrPC and Evidence Act.

It may be recalled that the top court in May this year had refused to entertain a similar PIL saying that the plea was liable to be dismissed.

The fresh plea, filed through advocate Sanjeev Malhotra, seeks directions to immediately constitute an expert committee to assess, identify the viability of the three criminal laws namely, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA).

It said, "The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita retains most offences from the Indian Penal Code, 1860. It adds community service as a form of pun-



ishment. Sedition is no longer an offence. Instead, there is a new offence for acts endangering the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita adds terrorism as an offence."

The PIL said that the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, allows up to 15 days of police custody, which can be authorised in parts during the initial 40 or 60 days of the 60 or 90 days' period of judicial custody.

Further, the plea said that there remains irregularity in the passing of laws in the Parliament as many members of Parliament were suspended with very less people participating in the passing of the three Bills.

It referred to the speech made by former Chief Justice of India, NV Ramana expressing his concern regarding enacting laws without debate in the Parliament as it leaves ambiguity in legislation and leads to a

Nifty hits 24,000 for the first time, Sensex at record high

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Indian frontline indices again touched an all-time high on Thursday as strong buying was seen in IT stocks.

Sensex and Nifty made an all-time high of 79,240 and 24,036 respectively. This is the first time that nifty crossed the 24,000 mark and Sensex exceeded the 79,000 level.

At 12:55 p.m., Sensex was up 418 points or 0.53 per cent at 79,092, and Nifty was up 135 points or 0.53 per cent at 24,004.

Among the sectors, buying is seen in IT, oil and gas, and FMCG while, PSU bank, auto, pharma, and media are top laggards.

According to the experts, "The market will remain bullish in the near-term despite the valuation concerns, and the ongoing momentum has the potential to take the Sensex to 80,000 levels."

"A healthy trend in the market is that now the up move is being led by fundamentally strong largecaps in sectors like banking and



telecom," they added.

In Sensex pack, Ultratech cement, Wipro, JSW steel, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, NTPC, TCS, and Kotak Mahindra are top gainers. However, L&T, Maruti Suzuki, Sun Pharma, IndusInd Bank, and Bajaj Finance are top losers.

First batch of Amarnath Yatra pilgrims to reach Kashmir today

Jammu: First batch of Amarnath Yatra pilgrims will be flagged off for Kashmir on Friday from here as this year's Yatra begins on June 29.



Yatris have already started arriving at the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu from where they will leave in escorted convoys for north Kashmir Baltal and south Kashmir Anantnag base camps. Authorities said the first batch of Yatris will leave Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas at 4 a.m. Friday in an escorted convoy for the Valley and they will have 'Darshan' on Saturday.

Hundreds of CAPFs have been deputed on Yatra duties for securing the nearly 300 km long Jammu-Srinagar national highway.

More CAPF teams are guarding the 85 km long Srinagar-Baltal base Camp Road and also the Qazigund-Pahalgam base Camp Road. Authorities have set up

Yatra transit camps at Manigam in Ganderbal district on the Srinagar-Baltal route and another at Mir Bazar on the Qazigund-Pahalgam route.

A total of 3.50 lakh Yatris have so far registered for this year's Amarnath Yatra. And, 125 'Langars' (Community Kitchens) have been set up along the two routes to the Cave Shrine. Over 7,000 Sevadars will be serving the Yatris at these Langars.

Helicopter services are also available for the pilgrims on both Pahalgam and Baltal routes. This year, 38 mountain rescue teams drawn from NDRF, SDRF, local police, BSF and the CRPF have been deputed for the Yatra.

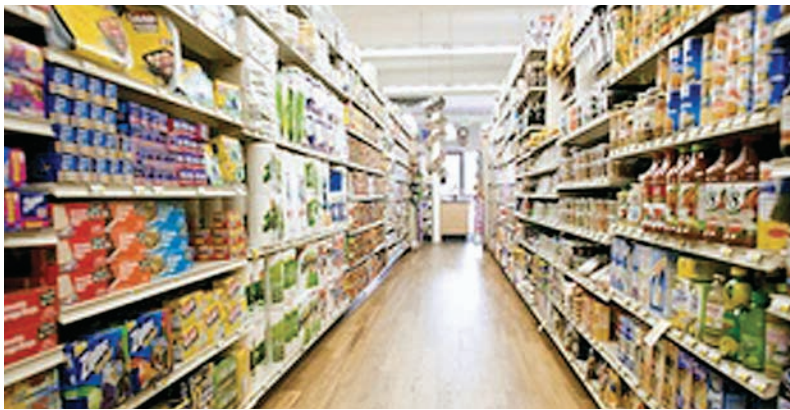
India's FMCG sector poised to clock 7 to 9 pc growth rate in 2024: Report

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) sector is expected to post a growth rate of 7-9 per cent in 2024 on the back of government initiatives to stimulate consumption and create more jobs, according to a report.

"Looking ahead, the FMCG sector in India is poised for sustained growth, with forecasts indicating a 7 to 9 per cent expansion in 2024," a report from ICICI Lombard General Insurance said.

The FMCG industry now has a burgeoning economic footprint, which exceeds Rs 9.1 trillion and has a key role in driving India's economic growth and employment generation, the report states. The online sales channel for FMCG is also increasing and has been valued at Rs 1.7 trillion. Segments such as D2C reflect a rapid digital transformation and evolving consumer purchase behaviour. "Such digitalisation trends underscored the industry's adaptability to changing market dynamics and its proactive approach towards catering to digitally savvy consumers," the report states.



The FMCG industry was struggling after the pandemic and the rural sector was having successive degrowth for some quarters.

However, the industry navigated through showcasing resilience and adaptability amidst evolving consumer trends and witnessed a notable upswing in volume and value growth in the second half of 2023.

The third quarter of 2023 witnessed an impressive 8.6 per cent volume growth nationwide, with rural markets

contributing a significant 6.4 per cent growth rate, signalling a favourable consumption environment, the report said.

Key governmental initiatives such as the Gati Shakti and Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 played instrumental roles in fortifying the FMCG sector's foundation and fostering long-term growth.

Based on these factors, "the corporate risk index for the FMCG sector decreased from 68 to 66," the report added.

Karnataka Police submit charge sheet against former CM Yediyurappa in Pocco case

Bengaluru | Agencies

The Karnataka Police's CID, which is probing the POCO case against veteran BJP leader and former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, submitted a charge sheet against him in the special fast track court here on Thursday.

As per the charge sheet, Yediyurappa, in collusion with the other three accused, had been charged under the Pocco Act and IPC's sections 354(A) (sexual harassment), 204 (destroying document or electronic record) and 214 (offering bribe to another person to make them conceal an offence).

The other accused face charges who colluding with Yediyurappa to hush up the case under IPC's sections 204 and 214.

The charge sheet mentions that the complainant had gone to meet Yediyurappa at his resi-



dence on Feb 2 this year to seek his help regarding the sexual assault against her 17-year-old daughter. Yediyurappa, holding the wrist of the girl, took her into a room in his residence, locked it, and sexually harassed her by putting his hand into her bra and pressing her chest, it said.

However, it mentions that the girl resisted and came out of the room. Afterwards, the BJP leader had refused to help them.



THE PEOPLE OF OUR FAMILY HAVE FINALLY ARRIVED: CM DR. YADAV

► PRIME MINISTER MODI'S INITIATIVE REMINDS US OF OUR UNDIVIDED INDIA. CHIEF MINISTER DR. YADAV GAVE THE INDIAN CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE TO THE CAA APPLICANTS. THREE INDIVIDUALS GRANTED CITIZENSHIP FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE STATE UNDER THE 2019 CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that our family members have returned, coming back to their homeland to preserve their religion. We will welcome all those who gain citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). It is fortunate that the new generation is becoming part of Madhya Pradesh, and they will have the same rights as other citizens. They are welcome in Madhya Pradesh, and the state government will provide all possible

assistance. These individuals will be proud to be residents of Madhya Pradesh. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav made these remarks while discussing the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019, after granting Indian Citizenship Certificates to the first three applicants in the state at Mantralaya. Dr. Yadav presented citizenship certificates to Rakhi Das, Sameer Melwani, and Sanjana Melwani.

India Shows Generosity with

Implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that we are fortunate that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has tried to resolve an issue and restore such a relationship which reminds us of a united India. Before the year 1947, it was decided by the then government that we would protect the minorities in our respective countries. On this trust, many of our Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian brothers

and sisters stayed in those places that were earlier a part of India. Contrary to expectations, our people faced a lack of security in those countries and had to suffer many hardships. Prime Minister Modi has shown generosity by implementing the Citizenship Amendment Act. It is a matter of joy for us that our people are coming to our country.

Eligibility for granting citizenship in CAA

After the implementation of these rules under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019, citizenship has been granted to three people for the first time in Madhya Pradesh. Section 6B has been added to the Citizenship Act 1955 to provide citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (CAA). To be granted citizenship under CAA, the migrant must belong to any one of the communities out of the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian communities, the migrant must be a citizen of any one of the countries Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan and the migrants must have entered India on or before December 31, 2014. Applications under CAA are filed online on the website <https://indiancitizenshiponline.nic.in/> or through the mobile application, CAA-2019.

12 lakh saplings will be planted in Bhopal on the birth anniversary of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee



Team Absolute | Bhopal

On July 6, on the birth anniversary of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, 12 lakh saplings will be planted in Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav held a meeting with public representatives on Thursday regarding this event.

To protect the environment and increase greenery in the state, a campaign is being run in the name of a tree mother. Under this campaign, Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav held a meeting with the public representatives of Bhopal in the Ministry regarding the program to be held in Bhopal.

In this meeting, Chief Minister Yadav said, there will be extensive plantation of green plants in the capital Bhopal. On July 6, the birth anniversary of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, 12 lakh saplings will be planted in one day. People will be connected to the tree plantation campaign. 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign is being implemented in the entire state. Under this, this program is being organized in the capital. In the meeting organized under the Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam campaign, Chief Minister Dr. Yadav directed to organize a program with huge public participation at one place and said that detailed

preparations should be made for tree planting. All the public representatives having connections with Bhopal were present in the meeting, which included Minister Vishwas Sarang, Minister and MLA Krishna Gaur, Bhopal Mayor Malti Rai, Rameshwar Sharma, Bhagwan Das Sabnani and Vishnu Khatri. Let it be known that Chief Minister Yadav has pledged to plant five and a half crore saplings in the state. Preparations are underway to plant 51 lakh saplings in Indore. Chief Minister Yadav has also invited Union Home Minister Amit Shah to participate in the Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam campaign.

Madhya Pradesh government is taking loan to repay loan interest: Kamal Nath

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Senior Congress leader and former Chief Minister Kamal Nath has made a big attack on the increasing debt of Madhya Pradesh government.

Kamal Nath on Thursday alleged that the state government is taking loan even to pay the interest on the loan. He said that the Madhya Pradesh government is going to take a loan of Rs 88,450 crore for the financial year 2024-25. Madhya Pradesh already has a debt of more than three and a half lakh crores.

After the current proposed loan, Madhya Pradesh will have a debt of about Rs 4.38 lakh crore. The condition of



the debt-ridden Madhya Pradesh government has become such that now they have to take loan even to pay the interest on the loan. This is the result of wrong economic policies and immature decisions.

Senior Congress leader Kamal Nath alleges that the BJP government of Madhya Pradesh is continuously engaged in taking loans, giv-

ing contracts and collecting commission and the debt burden on the public keeps increasing.

While giving suggestion to the Chief Minister of the state, Dr. Mohan Yadav, he said that instead of burdening the people of the state with more debt, he should take initiative towards repaying the existing debt of the state and making Madhya Pradesh debt free.

It may be noted that the monsoon session of the state assembly is starting from July 1. In this session, Congress is working on a strategy to corner the BJP government. Under this, all the Congress leaders have intensified their attacks on the government.

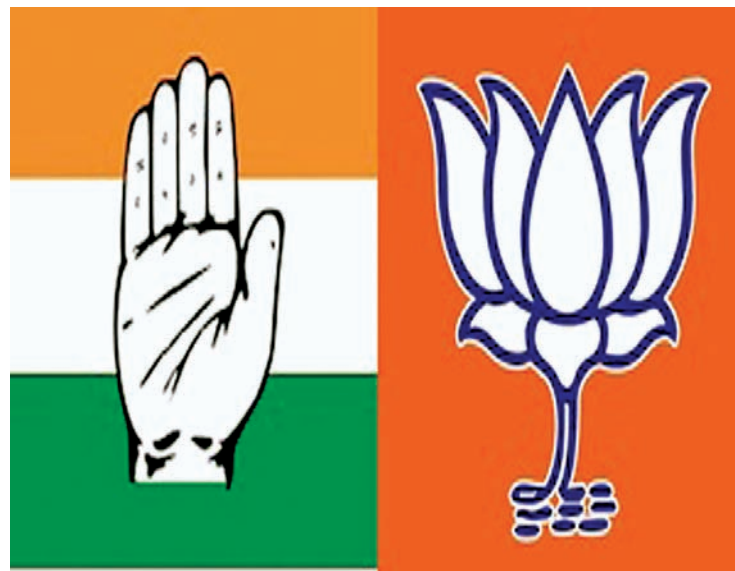
Triangular contest in Amarwada by-election

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh, politics has started heating up regarding the assembly by-elections. Voting is to be held on Amarwada assembly seat of Chhindwara district on July 10. The contest here is triangular, which is likely to be interesting.

A total of 9 candidates are left in the fray after the process of withdrawal of nominations for Amarwada Assembly constituency. Seven candidates have withdrawn their nomination. The main contest here is between Kamlesh Shah of BJP, Dheeran Shah of Congress and Dev Raven Bhilavi candidate of Gondwana Gantantra Party.

Kamlesh Shah, the MLA from Amarwada, reserved for Scheduled Tribe category, had left Congress and joined BJP. Due to this, by-elections are being held here.



While Kamlesh Shah belongs to the royal family, the Congress candidate

is a member of the family of the religious place Aanchal Darbar here.

Apart from this, Gondwana Republic Party also has its influence in this region. Amarwada is considered a stronghold of Congress. In the elections held so far in Amarwada, BJP has been able to register victory only twice, whereas Congress has won from here 11 times.

In the recently held Lok Sabha elections, BJP won Chhindwara, known as the stronghold of Congress leader Kamal Nath. Not only this, a big lead was also achieved in Amarwada.

Political analysts believe that the by-election of Amarwada assembly constituency is very important politically. This is because this area has been the stronghold of Congress and former Chief Minister Kamal Nath. The victory and defeat of this by-election will be considered very important politically. This is sure to have an impact on the politics of the entire state.

Teacher suspended for reaching school drunk and misbehaving

Team Absolute | Bhopal

District Education Officer Arvind Jain has suspended primary teacher Ramlal Ahirwar, posted in primary school Jamnapur Parasia, Deori Sagar, for reaching school under the influence of alcohol and misbehaving with students and parents.

The news was published in the print and social media editions of Sagar that Ramlal Ahirwar, posted in primary school Jamnapur Parasia, development block Deori district Sagar, reached the school under the influence of alcohol, misbehaved with the students and parents and started rolling on the bags of the students of the institution. As soon as the news of



the teacher's actions came to light, parents also reached the institution. When the parents talked to him, the teacher was in a state of intoxication

and was not in a position to say anything. The children were also beaten up by the teacher while under the influence of alcohol.

MINOR DAUGHTER CAN DONATE HER LIVER TO SICK FATHER

Indore: Finally, after date after date, in a sensitive and emotional case, the Indore bench of the High Court, while giving its verdict, allowed the ailing father to donate his liver to his minor daughter. Today at 10.30 am, Indore Bench of High Court has given order in this matter. There is a possibility that the doctors can surgically transplant the daughter's liver to the ailing father today itself. According to the petitioner's lawyer Nilesh Manore, the hearing was held in the Indore bench of the High Court at 10.30 am on Thursday. In this, Justice Vishal Mishra of Gwalior Bench conducted a virtual hearing and gave permission. According to Advocate Manore, the court gave permission on the basis of the order and report of June 20 and 24. In this, the report of the Medical Board of MYH, the report of the Dean of MGM Medical College and the report of the Bhopal Commissioner have been made the basis.

AIIMS Bhopal Ascends to Second Place in India Today's Best Emerging College Rankings

Team Absolute | Bhopal

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Bhopal is proud to announce its remarkable achievement in the latest India Today rankings. Under the able guidance of Prof. Dr. Ajai Singh, Executive Director, AIIMS Bhopal has secured the second position in the prestigious list of Best Emerging Colleges, a testament to its commitment to excellence in medical education and research.

In a significant leap, AIIMS Bhopal has improved its overall ranking, climbing from the 20th position in 2023 to the 16th position in 2024. This notable advancement underscores the institute's unwavering dedication to enhancing its academic standards, research output, and student facilities.

Furthermore, AIIMS Bhopal has achieved another milestone by securing the third position among the Highest Scoring Colleges established in and



after the year 2000. This accolade highlights the institution's rapid growth and its ability to compete with well-established counterparts, further solidifying its reputation as a leading medical college in India.

Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, expressed his delight at the institution's achievements: "We are thrilled with our

improved ranking and recognition as one of the best emerging colleges. This success reflects the hard work and dedication of our faculty, staff, and students. We remain committed to our mission of providing world-class medical education and fostering groundbreaking research." The Director thanked the Secretary, Joint Secretary, Union Ministry of Health and all others for

their support in this achievement. The significant rise in AIIMS Bhopal's rankings is a result of strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing academic programs, expanding research opportunities, and investing in state-of-the-art infrastructure. The institute's focus on interdisciplinary research, collaborations with international institutions, and community outreach programs have also contributed to its success.

AIIMS Bhopal continues to attract top-tier faculty and students from across the country, fostering an environment of academic excellence and innovation. The institution's emphasis on holistic development, cutting-edge technology, and comprehensive healthcare education ensures that its graduates are well-equipped to meet the evolving challenges of the medical field.

As AIIMS Bhopal celebrates this achievement, it remains committed to its vision of becoming a global leader in medical education and research.

MAKING BIRTH CERTIFICATE MANDATORY

Facility to make birth certificate online will be available on new portal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

By the Birth-Death Registration Amendment Act 2023, birth certificate of every child will be mandatory from August 11, 2023, which will be necessary for the child's school admission, Aadhar card, PAN card, passport, driving license etc. Birth certificate will be the legal document of place and date of birth.

On the basis of Amended Act-2023, Registrar General of India and Madhya Pradesh. Under the direction of the Chief Registrar, a new portal has been developed for making birth and death certificates. From this portal, common people will be able to apply online directly and receive the certificate on their e-mail. This portal is user friendly and very simple. The data given by the applicant on the portal will also remain safe on the portal.

Joint Director and District Registrar (Birth and Death) US Patharia conducted detailed training for all Registrars, Sub-Registrar and Government and Non-Government hospitals



of Bhopal June UNDP. The meeting room was held in Vindhyaachal Bhawan.

The training included the Birth Death Registration Amendment Act 2023 and the newly developed CRS. Detailed information was received on the portal by all the registrars, sub-registrars and trainees from government and non-government hospitals and all the questions were also resolved. The necessity of death certificate was also discussed in the training programme.

RESULTS OF RE-EXAMINATIONS OF CLASS 5TH AND 8TH WILL BE DECLARED ON JUNE 28.

Bhopal: The result of the board pattern re-examinations of class 5th and 8th conducted by the School Education Department will be declared on Friday, June 28, 2024.

The examination result will be released by the State Education Center Bhopal on the examination portal on June 28 at 4 pm. After this, students, parents and teachers can check the said results on the web portal of State Education Center <https://www.rskmp.in/BoardExam/Result24/StudentResult.aspx> by entering their roll number. On this portal, teachers and institution heads will also be able to see the student-wise results of their school.

The board examinations of class V and VIII were conducted from June 3 to 8. In these, more than 1 lakh 31 thousand students of class 5th and 1 lakh 63 thousand students of class 8th from government, non-government schools and registered madrassas of the state participated. A total of 322 centers were created for the evaluation of answer sheets of these students, where online entry of marks has been recorded on the portal by more than 28 thousand evaluators.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Indian MSMEs to create 2 lakh new jobs by 2025

The Indian micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector employs about 1.2 crore people, and by 2025, the industry is expected to generate over two lakhs new jobs, a report showed on Thursday. The new job opportunities will span across the services sectors and manufacturing sectors, both across urban and rural India, according to the report by NLB Services, a global technology and digital talent solutions provider. Notably, many emerging industries under the MSME umbrella like e-commerce, logistics, and supply-chain are also expected to witness a surge in new employment. "Home to 633.9 lakh enterprises, India has the strongest growing cohort of micro, small and medium enterprises, generating mass-scale employment across India, especially in tier 2 and 3 regions," said Sachin Alug, CEO, NLB Services. Today, small businesses which comprise 96 per cent of industrial units are the second largest employment generator in the country. Overall the MSME ecosystem contributes to over 33 per cent of the GDP, driving 62 per cent of the employment on the domestic front. "However, the average contribution of MSMEs in employment generation across other emerging economies stands at 77 per cent, indicating untapped potential that can be explored in India," Alug added. Driven by the surge in digitisation and the post-pandemic shift in the workforce, MSMEs will witness an increased demand for roles in construction, manufacturing, transportation, and supply-chain, etc. The majority of the new roles will emerge across states like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana, said the report. Women-led enterprises stand at 20.44 per cent of micro-businesses, 5.26 per cent of small businesses, and 2.77 per cent of medium businesses. Compared to male-owned MSMEs, women-led MSMEs have registered better growth in income, said the report.

The Big Fat Indian Wedding Has Become Too Big For Comfort

Bharti Mishra Nath

At \$130 billion (Rs 10.7 lakh crore), the Indian wedding industry is second only to the food and grocery market in the country. A recent report by Jefferies, an investment firm, shows that the Indian wedding market is twice the size of that of the US (\$70 billion, and only a tad less than China's (\$170 billion). An average Indian spends about \$15,000, or Rs 12 lakh, per wedding. For perspective, that's three times the annual household income of Rs 4 lakh for an average Indian family, and around five times the per capita GDP of \$2,900. And yet, none of these statistics is as ironic as this: Indians on average spend almost twice as much on weddings than on education. According to Jefferies, the usual 18 years of education in India come up to only around Rs 6 lakh. Weddings are an important part of Indian culture. Parents start saving up for it soon after children are born, and, if it's a girl child, they save more aggressively. Narayanan Ramaswamy, Partner & Head, Education and Skill Development Practice, KPMG in India, says about the Jefferies report: "Aggregate numbers and averages could be misleading. Indian weddings are much more than a mere marriage of two individuals. It's a social event. Hence can't be compared, as a category, with western wedding expenses -



which is usually very symbolic." However, he adds, "A few uber-opulent weddings could skew the overall wedding expenses at the national level." "Earlier, wedding celebrations were not this glamorous as they are now, though dowry was openly prevalent in the society," says Dr Channamma Kambara, Assistant Professor, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru. Clothes, jewellery, furniture, expensive gifts, multiple grand events spread across days, elaborate food menus, and mammoth guest lists, all of this and much more add to the cost of weddings in India. Luxury weddings, which cost around 20-30 lakh, involve even more expenditures. Understandably, due to its sheer size and scale, the Indian marriage market is an

important growth driver for various formal and informal sectors, including apparel, jewellery, catering, travel, decoration, and so on. Notably, wedding jewellery accounts for 25% of the total expenditure in a wedding, followed by catering at 20%, and events at 15%. As for those who prefer and can afford 'destination' weddings, these general trends have no limit or meaning. "Apart from Bollywood, the growing appeal of 'elite' and glamorous weddings has become a cause of great stress for parents. Many - especially brides' families - end up spending way beyond their means, leading to high indebtedness," says Dr Kambara. Despite the country's rapid economic growth and increasing prosperity, education still remains a blind spot. Students still lack

access to quality education, most curricula are outdated, and funding is less than adequate. India spends just about 3-3.5% of its GDP on education. The US on the other hand spends 5%, while Canada, Japan and Germany respectively set aside around 5.5%, 3.6% and 4.8% of their GDPs for education. It also needs to be noted that these developed nations have much higher GDPs and much smaller populations than India's, for which experts recommend an education budget of around 6% of the GDP. Girls suffer the most in this sorry state of affairs. Gender prejudices and orthodox ideas continue to be the biggest deterrents to their education, in addition to poverty and inadequate educational opportunities. In many cases, even when some parents have been willing to educate daughters, it's with the intention of getting them married off to a well-paid man. Thus, for women ultimately, marriage remains the all-governing consideration. "Education is something one expects the government to take care of, whereas weddings are an individual expense. So naturally, when it comes to personal expenses, weddings would be higher," says Mr. Ramaswamy. All in all, it's great news that the wedding market is one of the key drivers of India's economy, but there has to be equal or more investment in education, both by the government and the people.

Study explores biggest risk factor for future dementia cases

Risks posed to heart health may increase future dementia cases, more than smoking, finds a new study on Thursday. A combination of genetic and environmental factors, including high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, education, and smoking are major risk factors for dementia. Researchers from the University College London (UCL) explored how the prevalence of these risk factors changed over time. The team analysed 27 papers, involving people with dementia globally with data collected between 1947 and 2015, and the latest paper published in 2020. The results, published in The Lancet Public Health, showed that having less education and smoking had become less common over time and was associated with a decline in rates of dementia. Rates of obesity and diabetes have increased over time, as



has their contribution to dementia risk. Hypertension emerged as the greatest dementia risk factor in most studies. "Cardiovascular risk factors may have contributed more to dementia risk over time, so these deserve more targeted action for future dementia prevention efforts," said lead author Naaheed Mukadam from UCL Psychiatry. Mukadam noted that education levels "have increased over time in many higher-income countries, meaning that this has become a less important dementia risk factor". Levels of "smoking have also declined in Europe and the US as it has become less socially acceptable and more expensive," the researchers said.

international

South Korea warns Russia after Moscow's warning against potential arms supply to Ukraine

Seoul|Agencies Russia should not make a mistake that could hurt its relations with South Korea in an "irreversible" way, a Seoul official warned on Thursday, in a tit-for-tat exchange of words after Moscow warned against Seoul hinting at potential arms support to Ukraine. The comment from Seoul's Foreign Ministry came a day after Maria Zakharova, a spokeswoman at the Russian Foreign Ministry, warned South Korea not to take rash steps that could bring about an irreversible outcome for the bilateral relations, Yonhap news agency reported. Zakharova's comments came in response to the remarks by South Korea's National Security Adviser Chang Ho-jin that South Korea could consider supplying weapons to Kiev, depending on Moscow's actions in the follow-up to the treaty it signed with North Korea on pledging mutual defence. "We warn that Russia should not make a mistake that could lead to irreversible consequences in South Korea-



either of them is put under armed attack. South Korea has expressed grave concerns over the growing military cooperation between Russia and North Korea in violation of UN resolutions, urging Moscow to act responsibly and cut off such military ties with Pyongyang. Seoul's Foreign Ministry said South Korean Ambassador to Russia Lee Dohoon had a meeting with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko in Moscow on Wednesday (local time) and heard Moscow's position on the new partnership treaty with North Korea. In the meeting, Lee stressed that any cooperation that would help North Korea's arms buildup poses serious threats to security in the region, and called for Russia's clear explanation of its actions. Russia voiced regrets over South Korea's reaction to Putin's visit to Pyongyang, reiterating that its cooperation with North Korea is not directed at Seoul and the treaty is defensive, according to Seoul's Foreign Ministry.

Russia relations," Ministry spokesperson Lim Soo-suk said in a regular press briefing. "Additionally, we hope that the Russian side will move away from relying on North Korea and act appropriately as a permanent member of the UN Security Council," Lim added. Tensions have heightened after Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un declared an upgrade of their countries' relationship after talks in Pyongyang last week. The new treaty commits them to providing mutual military assistance in case

Bolivia coup attempt fails, army general arrested



La Paz|Agencies Armoured vehicles and troops of the Bolivian Armed Forces pulled back from the presidential palace in La Paz on Wednesday evening, hours after an attempted coup. Bolivian police arrested rebel military commander General Juan Jose Zuniga, who led the failed coup attempt. Bolivian President Luis Arce condemned the coup attempt and called on citizens to mobilise and defend democracy. He also named a new army commander who ordered troops to withdraw. Earlier, soldiers marched

on Plaza Murillo, a square outside the seat of government, led by General Zuniga, and forced their way into the old government headquarters, Palacio Quemado. The presence of armed troops generated a strong response from citizens, who gathered in the streets surrounding Plaza Murillo, the epicentre of Bolivia's political power, to denounce the military move. Representatives of social organisations in different parts of the country also demonstrated in defence of democracy, joining the President's call to protect the constitutional order.

Russia considers changes to its nuclear doctrine: Deputy FM

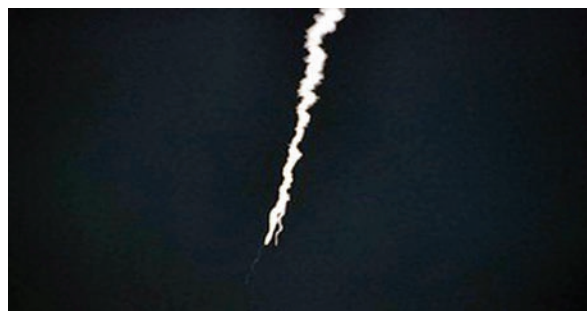


Moscow|Agencies Changes may be made to the Russian nuclear doctrine in light of the Ukraine war, local media reported on Thursday, citing Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov. Ryabkov said that "further clarifications" would probably be made to the doctrine to reflect the experience from the Ukrainian war "when the classic old interpretation of

nuclear deterrence did not work properly," RIA Novosti reported. Russia is ready to do everything to ensure its security, and "Western provocateurs" must understand this, Ryabkov added as reported by Xinhua news agency report. He also noted, however, that everything must be done to prevent a slide into the use of nuclear weapons.

N. Korea says successfully conducted multiple warhead missile capability test

Seoul|Agencies North Korea has successfully conducted a missile test aimed at securing multiple warhead capability, state media reported on Thursday, contradicting South Korea's assessment that the test is believed to have ended in failure. During the test conducted on Wednesday, North Korea's Missile Administration "successfully conducted the separation and guidance control test of individual mobile warheads", the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said. North Korea said the test was "aimed at securing the MIRV capability", referring to multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle technology, which allows a single ballistic missile to deliver multiple warheads to different targets. The announcement contradicts South Korea's assess-



ment that the missile exploded in the air, Yonhap news agency reported. On Wednesday, South Korea said that the missile was launched from an area in or around Pyongyang at around 5:30 a.m. but exploded over the East Sea after flying some 250 km. However, North Korea said the test "used the first-stage engine of an intermediate-range solid-fuel ballistic missile within a 170-200 kilometre radius". The separated mobile war-

heads were guided correctly to three target coordinates, the KCNA said. The effectiveness of a decoy separated from the missile was also verified by anti-air radar, it added. The test was overseen by Pak Jong-chon, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), and Kim Jong-sik, first vice department director of the WPK Central Committee, the KCNA said. The officials emphasised

that enhancing "the MIRV capability is a very important defence technological task and a top priority of the WPK Central Committee," the KCNA reported, suggesting it might also be a top priority for North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. Developing MIRV technology was included in North Korea's five-year development plan, which was unveiled during the eighth congress of the WPK in January 2021. North Korea claimed that "the test is part of the administration's normal activities," the KCNA said. This is the first time North Korea has publicly disclosed that it conducted a missile test to secure multiple warhead capability. South Korea, the US and Japan condemned North Korea's ballistic missile launch as a violation of UN Security Council resolutions.

ASEAN countries vow to strengthen cooperation to tackle transnational crime

Vientiane|Agencies The member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) pledged to toughen their stance against transnational crime, with closer cooperation being emphasised during the 24th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC). According to the Lao Security News report on Thursday, the 24th SOMTC and its related meetings began in Lao capital Vientiane on Wednesday. The meeting will devise policies, plans, and projects and coordinate the implementation of work involved in the fight against transnational crime in the ASEAN region, Xinhua news agency reported. During the meeting, delegates will share views and assess the situation and trends of transnational crime in the



region and the world. In the future, more information will be shared between ASEAN member countries concerning transnational crime, while the capacity of law enforcement officers will be enhanced. ASEAN nations will

strengthen their cooperation in this field, and source more technical assistance and funding from partner countries and international organisations to enhance the bloc's capacity to combat transnational crime.



Maha Economic Survey estimates public debt at Rs 7,11,278 crore

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra's public debt is estimated at Rs 7,11,278 crore in 2023-24 against Rs 6,29,235 crore in 2022-23, a rise of 13 per cent.

As per the Economic Survey 2023-24 presented in the Maharashtra Assembly on Thursday by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, though the public debt has increased to 17.6 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) against 16.5 per cent, it is well within the prescribed limits of 25 per cent of GSDP as per the Medium Term Fiscal Policy. The public debt refers to the accumulated outstanding loans and other liabilities of the state.

Further, the state's outgo towards interest payment increased to Rs 48,578 crore against Rs 41,689 crore during the same period, a rise of 16.52 per cent.

The state's revenue receipts are estimated at Rs 4,86,116 crore against Rs 4,05,678 crore. Of the 4,86,116 crore, the state's tax revenue is estimated at Rs 3,96,052 crore compris-



ing Rs 3,26,398 crore from its taxes and Rs 69,654 crore due to share in central states.

The non-tax revenue, including central grants, is estimated at Rs 90,064 crore. Actual revenue receipts (RE) during 2023-24 up to February were Rs 3,73,924 crore (76.9 per cent of RE).

The state's revenue expenditure is estimated at Rs 5,05,647 crore against Rs 4,07,614 crore. Actual revenue expenditure during 2023-24 up to February was Rs 3,35,761 crore (66.4 per cent of RE). The revenue deficit is likely to be Rs 19,532 crore against Rs 1,936 crore.

As per 2023-24 (RE), the share of capital receipts in total receipts is 25.9 per cent and the share of capital expenditure in total expenditure is 23.0 per cent.

The percentage of fiscal deficit to GSDP is 2.8 per cent, revenue deficit to GSDP is 0.5 per cent.

The total anticipated expenditure for annual schemes 2023-24 is Rs 2,31,651 crore, of which Rs 20,188 crore is on the district annual schemes.

Maharashtra govt decides to handover NEET investigations to CBI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra government on Thursday decided to handover the investigation of all matters related to NEET case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the officials said, according to a news agency.

The CBI has made first arrests in the NEET-UG paper leak case, taking into custody two persons from Patna, officials said Thursday.

The suspects identified as Manish Kumar and Ashutosh Kumar allegedly provided safe premises to the aspirants before the examination where they were given leaked papers and answer keys, the officials said.

The CBI has registered six FIRs in the NEET paper leak case.

The NEET-UG is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH



and other related courses in government and private institutions across the country.

Meanwhile, the Opposition members staged a protest on the premises of the Maharashtra Vidhan Bhavan as the monsoon session of the Maharashtra legislature commenced in Mumbai on Thursday.

The protesters, belonging to the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) comprising the Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress and NCP (SP), raised slogans against the government over the issues related to farmers and the NEET exam.

Several allegations of irregularities have been made in the medical entrance examination, the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) or NEET, conducted by the National Testing Agency in May.

Sitting on the state legislature complex's stairs, the opposition members in Maharashtra raised slogans holding placards in their hands.

The first CBI FIR was registered on Sunday, a day after the ministry announced it would hand over the probe into the alleged irregularities in the conduct of the exam to the central agency.

This year's examination was conducted on May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 abroad. Over 23 lakh candidates appeared for the test, the news agency reported on Thursday.

The demand for a CBI probe was raised by a section of protesting students.

Eyebrows up as BJP leaders hobnob with Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Thackeray, others

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Political eyebrows shot up as some senior Bharatiya Janata Party leaders were seen rubbing shoulders and displaying bonhomie with their arch-rival Shiv Sena (UBT)'s top leaders, on the first day of the last session of the current Maharashtra Legislature Session, here on Thursday.

Legislators and media persons went into a frenzy as ex-Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray waited for a lift at the Vidhan Bhavan and suddenly, the ruling MahaYuti ally and BJP Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis reached there.

When the lift stopped for them, a couple of persons in it were asked to step out and Fadnavis was seen beckoning Thackeray to join him, even as others like Pravin Darekar and Minister Chandrakant



Patil were already present inside (the lift).

A smiling Thackeray obliged and went up - in a cloud of speculation - from the ground floor to the upper floor where the Assembly is situated. But after alighting, both walked away in opposite directions.

Later, when media persons mobbed and quizzed

Thackeray for a bite, he airily replied that it was just a coincidence and nothing more.

In another development, Patil dropped in to meet Thackeray, Leader of Opposition (Council) Ambadas Danve, ex-minister Anil Parab and others at the SS (UBT) office.

An atmosphere of cheerful camaraderie seemed to pre-

vail there, and a grinning Patil even distributed chocolates and conveyed his "advance" wishes to Parab who contested the just-concluded MLC elections, the result of which is expected on Monday (July 1), while Thackeray asked the BJP visitor to "maintain cordial relations always."

However, MahaYuti ally Shiv Sena leader Bharat Gogavale sought to downplay the developments, and ruled out the possibility of any talks opening between the BJP-SS (UBT), while his colleague Sanjay Shirsat said Thackeray-Fadnavis may have "winked" at each other.

Rejecting all political and media speculation, SS (UBT) MLA Vaibhav Naik termed it as "mere coincidence and nothing else" that Thackeray and Fadnavis happened to travel in the legislature building lift.

Advanced neurosurgery helps treat Mumbai woman with severe bilateral facial pain

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A team of Mumbai doctors have successfully treated a 56-year-old woman with Bilateral Trigeminal Neuralgia, the first in India to suffer from severe facial pain on both sides of the face, via an advanced neurosurgery.

"Primary Bilateral Trigeminal Neuralgia is extremely rare, with an incidence ranging from 0.6 to 5.9 per cent. To date, only about 24 cases have been reported in the English medical literature, with none from India. This case marks the first reported instance in India where Bilateral MicroVascular Decompression (MVD) was performed, resulting in complete pain relief," said Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre, in a statement on Thursday.

The patient, Kiran Awasthi, a housewife hailing from Maharashtra was presented to the doctors at Jaslok with a five-year history of severe, shock-like pain on both sides of her face, endured excruciating episodes that lasted several minutes and was triggered by everyday activities such as talking, eating, brushing her teeth, and even exposure to a cool breeze. Despite various medical



treatments, she found no relief because the disease was not diagnosed. The excruciating pain made it difficult to perform basic household duties to the extent that it led to the development of suicidal thoughts. In October 2023, an MRI scan revealed vascular loops compressing her trigeminal nerves (fifth cranial nerve) on both sides, diagnosing her case as Bilateral Primary Trigeminal Neuralgia. "Bilateral Trigeminal Neuralgia is often described as one of

the most painful conditions a person can experience. This rare case was accurately diagnosed and hence treated with precision with Bilateral MicroVascular Decompression, the first in India. Seeing our patient regain her quality of life after five years and live pain-free is the greatest reward," said Raghvendra Ramdasi, Neurosurgeon at Jaslok Hospital.

While medications such as Carbamazepine, Gabapentin, Lamotrigine, and Topiramate can offer relief, MicroVascular Decompression (MVD) remains the gold standard treatment. The surgical procedure involves placing a Teflon sponge between the nerve and the compressing vessel.

Kiran was initially operated on the more severe left side, followed by the right side a week later.

"Post-surgery, the patient experienced complete pain relief, significantly improving her quality of life. Six months later, she continues to live pain-free, able to resume normal activities without fear of pain attacks," the doctor said.

Thanking the doctor for "gifting a new life", Kiran said she was "brought from the doors of death. I was about to commit suicide as the pain was unbearable".

Maharashtra retains top spot for FDI inflows

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Despite stiff competition from various states, including Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha, Maharashtra has retained its top position in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows in the country, according to the State Economic Survey 2023-24.

The Economic Survey was presented by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in the Assembly on Thursday.

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had recently said that as per the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade report during 2023-24, the FDI equity inflow in



Maharashtra was Rs 1,25,101 crore as compared to Rs 1,18,422 crore in 2022-23.

Since the adoption of the liberalisation policy in August 1991 up to December 2023 all 22,937 industrial projects with an investment of Rs 18,38,445 crore were approved in the state.

The total number of MSMEs registered on the Udyam registration portal up to January 9, 2024, was 33.07 lakh (32.05 lakh micro, 0.91 lakh small and 0.11 lakh medium) with 123.39 lakh total employment.

During 2022-23, exports from Maharashtra contributed 16 per cent to the total exports from India. As of March 2024, the state has the highest share (19 per cent) in startups recognised by the Union government at the national level.

Sanjay Raut bats for Uddhav Thackeray as MVA's next 'CM face'

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

In an unexpected development, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut has indicated that the former chief minister and party President, Uddhav Thackeray should be projected as the next CM of Maharashtra for the upcoming Assembly elections. Speaking to media persons, he said that it would be a risky proposition to contest the Assembly elections without a 'CM face', creating consternation among the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies like Congress and Nationalist Congress Party (SP). Raut pointed out that it was owing to Thackeray's leadership that the MVA gave a good



performance in the last Lok Sabha elections -- bagging 31 out of 48 seats here -- broadly implying that the SS (UBT) chief could be the 'CM face' for the October 2024 Assembly polls. "It will be dangerous to face the elections without a known CM face. Maharashtra has witnessed the good work done by Thackeray as the MVA CM (2019-2022), followed by excellent performance in the 2024 LS elections. The MVA must give a CM face to the

people," said Raut. Earlier, some MVA leaders had indicated that the three parties -- plus their other smaller allies -- would contest the elections first and then decide on who will be the CM. However, Raut's abrupt statement has created confusion among the MVA -- coming on the first day of the state legislature session which started in Mumbai -- with the alliance leaders stunned.

Incidentally, this will be the last session of the current 14th Assembly whose term is due to expire in October when the next state elections are likely to be held, giving anxious moments to both the ruling and opposition sides, as they prepare for the upcoming polls.

On first day of Maha Assembly session, Oppn MVA protests outside House

Team Absolute | Mumbai

On the first day of the last session of the current Assembly, the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) protested on the steps of the Maharashtra Legislature here on Thursday.

The MVA legislators comprising Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and Nationalist Congress Party (SP) gathered outside the House carrying posters and banners and raised slogans targeting the ruling MahaYuti government of Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party-Nationalist Congress Party.

Leaders of Opposition (Assembly) Vijay Wadettiwar and (Council) Ambadas Danve, and a majority of the MVA legislators vociferously



demanding immediate relief to the farmers by way of a complete loan waiver, taking steps to tackle the drought-like situation with monsoon playing truant and provision of food, water and fodder to the tillers. They shouted slo-

gans like "40 per cent government, Hai Hai", "Ministers sukhi, Farmers dukhi" and others slamming the MahaYuti, and said that they will not rest till farmers' loans are fully written off. Buoyed by its sterling per-

formance in the recent Lok Sabha 2024 elections when the MVA partners jointly bagged 31 of the 48 LS seats, the aggressive allies planned to corner the government on various major issues.

These include the deteriorating law and order situation in the wake of the Pune Porsche car crash and the CET exam scam, the NEET-UG paper leakage tentacles spread to Maharashtra and other scams.

This will be the last session of the current 14th Assembly whose term is due to expire in October when the next state elections are likely to be held, giving anxious moments to both the ruling and opposition sides, as they prepare for the upcoming polls.

Mumbai Man Receives Call From Flipkart 6 Years After Placing Order

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A Mumbai man who placed an order on Flipkart six years ago recently received a call from the e-commerce platform to discuss the same. Ahsan Kharbai ordered a pair of Sparx slippers in May 2018 but never received them. After the long delay, Flipkart customer support recently reached out to him, leaving him amused. He shared his strange experience on X with a screenshot of his order history. He had ordered a pair of Sparx Slippers worth Rs 485 on May 16, 2018. According to the order details, the slippers were shipped three days later, on May 19, and the delivery date was May 20. However, the order still



shows as undelivered. Kharbai said the slippers never arrived, and the app always showed they were "arriving today". Even now, the status remains the same, he told Hindustan Times. "After 6 yrs @Flipkart

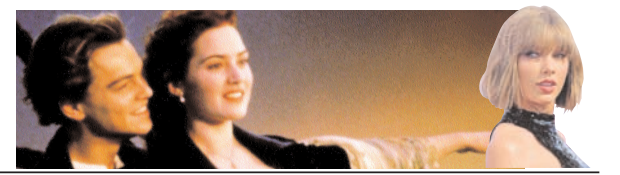
called me for this order asking me what issue I was facing," he wrote on X.

"Maybe you opened Flipkart from Internet Explorer," a user joked.

Another user chimed in with a similar experience,

saying their order had been stuck in the "out for delivery" status since 2015. Kharbai explained the order was a cash-on-delivery transaction, hence he did not pursue the matter further. There was no option to cancel the order on the app, he said, adding he wanted the order closed because it was the first item he saw in the Flipkart order section. He explained he had clicked on the order a day before while going through the list of orders, which probably led to Flipkart contacting him the next day.

The customer care representative asked if he had received any call from the logistics team, and then apologised for the issue, saying they were "very sorry for this sir".



Paris Hilton

CLAIMS SHE WAS SEXUALLY ABUSED

Los Angeles | Agencies

Paris Hilton shared her experiences being sexually abused and forcibly medicated while she attended the Provo Canyon School during her testimony in front of Congress on Wednesday, June 26. The Simple Life alum, 43, was testifying about the abuse that children and teens suffer as part of America's welfare system, and she spoke about how her heart breaks for foster kids and adopted children in the programs.

Before shedding a light on the larger issue, Paris shared her own account of the "harm that is caused by being placed in youth residential treatment facilities," per Page Six. As she's done in the past, she recalled being forcibly transported to the facility, and then she opened up about the abuse inside. "I was force-fed medications and sexually abused by the staff," she told the lawmakers. "I was violently restrained and dragged down hallways, stripped naked and thrown into solitary confinement."

The "Stars are Blind" singer explained that her parents were "deceived" by the school, and she spoke about the need for reform to protect children who don't have parents who check in on their kids in these facilities, which has led to tragedies, including the recent death of a youth in one of the schools. "As a mom, these stories break my heart," she said. "The treatment these kids have had to endure is criminal. ... I will not stop until America's youth is safe."



Isabelle Huppert to be feted with French Lumiere Award

Los Angeles | Agencies

Veteran French actor Isabelle Huppert is all set to receive the Lumiere Award in the city of Lyon in October.

The Lumiere Award honours a leading figure in the world of cinema and his/her entire body of work. Created by Cannes chief Thierry Fremaux, the Lumiere Film Festival celebrates classic and contemporary cinema each fall, variety.com reported.

Former recipients of the honour include Tim Burton, Jane Campion, Martin Scorsese, Quentin Tarantino, Clint Eastwood, Francis Ford Coppola, Ken Loach, Catherine Deneuve, Jane Fonda, Pedro Almodovar, Milos Forman, the Dardenne brothers, and Wong Kar-wai, among others.

Huppert called the honour a "magnificent prize."



"It's a great honour for me to receive the Lumiere Award. It's a magnificent prize, and so is the festival. It's an award that bears the name of the inventors of cinema! Receiving it fills me with joy and pride," said Huppert.

An acclaimed actress who films an average of two to three films a year, Huppert has earned global recognition for her work over more than five decades.

She won her first major award in 1978 at Cannes with 'Violette', the first of eight films she did with French New Wave icon Claude Chabrol.

The 71-year-old star is famous for playing complex women unafraid to challenge conventions.

In 2001, her role as a sexually repressed piano instructor who enters into a sado-masochistic relationship with one of her pupils in Michael Haneke's 'The Piano Teacher' won her best actress honour at Cannes.

'THE BODYGUARD' ACTOR BILL COBBS PASSES AWAY AGED 90

Los Angeles | Agencies

Renowned film and TV actor Bill Cobbs, known for his roles in films such as 'Night At The Museum', 'Brother From Another Planet', 'Oz The Great And Powerful', and TV shows like 'The Sopranos', passed away at the age of 90, surrounded by his family.

The actor passed away on June 25 due to natural causes at his home in the Inland Empire, California. His family confirmed his death on social media platforms, including Facebook and Deadline.com.

"We are saddened to share the passing of Bill Cobbs," wrote his brother, Thomas G. Cobbs.

He added: "On Tuesday, June 25, Bill passed away peacefully at his home in California. A beloved partner, big brother, uncle, surrogate parent, godfather, and friend, Bill recently and happily celebrated his 90th birthday surrounded by cherished loved ones."

"As a family, we are comforted knowing Bill has found peace and eternal rest with his Heavenly Father. We ask for your prayers and encouragement during this time."

Bill Cobbs was born in 1934 in Cleveland, Ohio. He



kick-started his acting career with stage companies and made his feature film debut in 1974 with a small part in 'The Taking of Pelham One Two Three'.

On his way to becoming an instantly recognisable character actor, Cobbs had roles throughout the 1980s in various films. In 1987, he became a series regular on 'The Slap Maxwell Story', a short-lived but well-regarded sitcom starring Dabney Coleman, who passed away in May. The 1990s saw Cobbs maintain a busy schedule with one-off TV appearances and film roles. In 1992, he was featured in the hit Whitney Houston-Kevin Costner film 'The Bodyguard', and in 1996, he played Medgar Evers' older brother, Charles Evers, in Rob Reiner's 'Ghosts of Mississippi'. Other TV credits include 'The Sopranos', 'JAG', 'The Drew Carey Show', 'One Tree Hill', 'Star Trek: Enterprise', 'Yes, Dear', 'Go On', 'The West Wing', 'NYPD Blue', 'Lost', 'Army Wives', 'The Glades', 'The Bay', and many others.

In 2020, he guest-starred in the two-part series finale of 'Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.'. That same year, he won a Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Limited Performance in a Daytime Program for his role on the kids' show 'Dino Dana'.



MARILYN MONROE'S BRENTWOOD HOUSE SAVED FROM DEMOLITION AFTER BEING DECLARED A LANDMARK

Los Angeles | Agencies

Late Hollywood icon Marilyn Monroe's home in Brentwood, Los Angeles, has been approved as a historical cultural monument by the Los Angeles City Council, a designation that is intended to help protect the landmark from demolition.

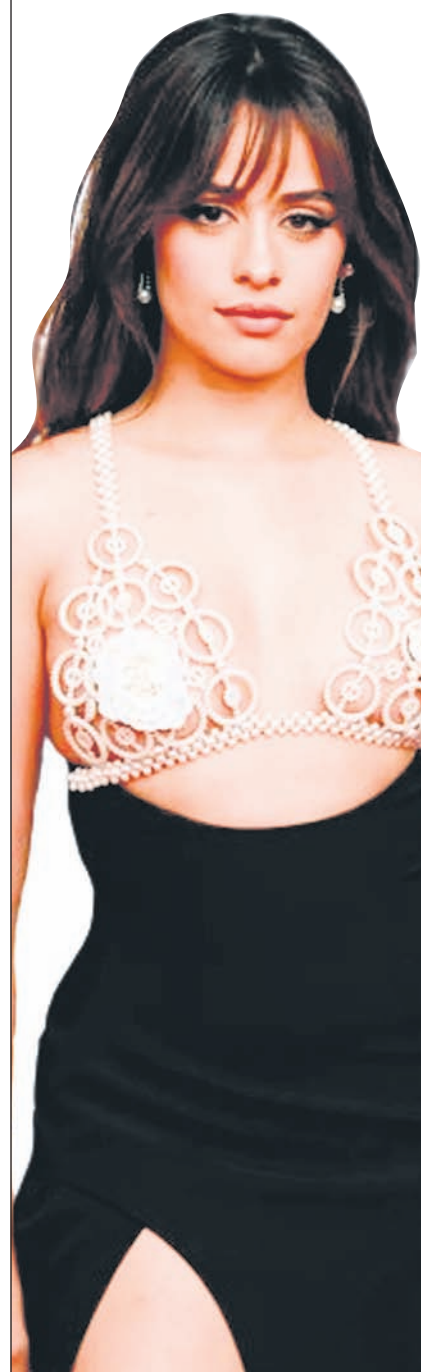
The Los Angeles Conservancy took to X and wrote: "The Marilyn Monroe Residence in Brentwood is now a Historic-Cultural Monument! Today, L.A. City Council unanimously approved the nomination for Marilyn Monroe's final home. Thanks to all who voiced their support, and a HUGE thanks to Councilwoman Traci Park and team!" Monroe, known for her "blonde bombshell" roles, lived in the 1929 four-bedroom Spanish Colonial-style house for approximately six months before she died there of a reported overdose in 1962. The L.A. Conservancy's proposal for landmark status noted that the house was "the first place she sought out and bought for herself and on her own while actively working in 1962," reports Variety.com. Owners Brinah Milstein and her husband, reality TV producer Roy Bank, purchased the house in 2023 for \$8.35 million and planned to demolish it to expand their property next door. They waged a year-

long battle to stop the historical designation, which they said would lead to more nuisance visitors. The owners have sued the city, accusing officials of "back-room machinations," and the case is due to get a trial date on August 13.

In the suit, the owners said that the home has been substantially altered and that no evidence remains from Monroe's time there, thus contending that it does not meet the criteria for a historic cultural monument. They also noted that several neighbourhood groups and the Monroe estate did not support the historic designation.

Despite the opposition, the council's vote was 12 to 0 in favor of adding the house to the list of properties of historical significance. The decision was supported by the City Council's land use management subcommittee and the Cultural Heritage Commission.

While the designation doesn't completely prevent a property from being demolished, it subjects it to a stringent review process if demolition is proposed. Ahead of the vote, L.A. City Council member Traci Park said: "We have an opportunity to do something today that should've been done 60 years ago. There's no other person or place in the city of Los Angeles as iconic as Marilyn Monroe and her Brentwood home."



I DON'T WANT THIS COUPLE THING TO BE MY NEW IDENTITY': CAMILA CABELLO

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Camila Cabello opened up about how she didn't want her high-profile romance with former boyfriend and singer Shawn Mendes to define her.

Speaking about her 2019 track 'Senorita', she told Complex magazine: "I think there's always a worry when a song becomes so massive that it's going to be bigger than you."

"I obviously love that they were so massive and successful. But it does get people attached to you in a certain light. I was in a really public relationship, and as a woman, you're like, 'I don't want this couple thing to be my new identity.'"

The singer recently shared that her reunion with Mendes didn't "feel right," reports female-first.co.uk.

The two briefly reconciled in 2023 after their relationship ended two years earlier.

Reflecting on why it didn't work a second time around, she said: "You're just kind of like, it's not a fit, it doesn't feel right. And I think, luckily, I was in a place in my life where it took me less time to realise that. It took us both less time to be like, 'This doesn't feel right, and we don't need to try so hard to make it work. It's all good.'"

Cabello had some kind words for her former love, tagging him as "such a good person."

"I will always care about him and love him. He's such a good person, and I'm lucky because some people have exes that are awful, and he is not. He's a really kind, good person," she added.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Sara Sampaio



India's Santhosh wins his second World Series of Poker title prize money of Rs 45 crore

New Delhi | Agencies

Indian Poker maestro Santhosh Suvarna scripted history by winning his second bracelet in the World Series of Poker (WSOP) and taking home a record prize money of over Rs 45 crore. He ran an eventful 3-day feat at the WSOP where he battled with the best poker players from across the world, emerging as a winner of the prestigious event.

Suvarna is a successful businessman from Bangalore and a recognised Poker player in the Indian and International Poker circuits. He used to initially compete in tournaments in India.

Santhosh's win in the 'Super High Roller' event has placed him in the current top 100 in the all-time money list in the world.

His triumph in the World Series of Poker will inspire and encourage players from across India to make a mark on the world Poker map.

Poker is a recognised mind sport and leading Poker platforms like PokerBaazi are working towards building a multi-faceted Poker ecosystem in India. The company in



the last few years has made notable contributions by releasing content and educational material to help players build strategic gameplay in addition to furthering a Poker tournament culture in India.

"I believe that Indian Poker is entering its Golden period and

Santhosh's win has confirmed this belief. In the last few years we have seen an uptick in Indian players participating in coveted global Poker tournaments and wins like these reiterate that India is set to dominate the world Poker circuits. Congratulations to him for making

India proud," said Navkiran Singh, founder & CEO of Baazi Games. They have launched marquee IPs like National Poker Series India, the country's most prestigious Poker event and G.O.A.T., the single biggest tournament with the largest prize money in India.

Tennis : Andy Murray to take last-minute call on Wimbledon participation

New Delhi | Agencies

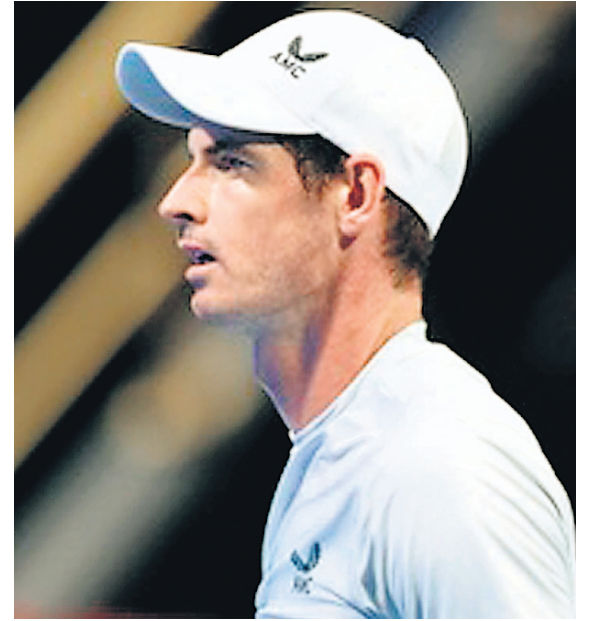
British tennis legend Andy Murray will decide on his participation in Wimbledon "as late as possible" after undergoing back surgery last week. The two-time Wimbledon champion has returned to training but is in doubt over his chances at the grass-court Grand Slam tournament that starts next week.

Murray said he will not play the singles as of now.

"I'm going to wait until the last minute to see if I'm going to be able to play and I've earned that right to do that. This is not clear-cut whether I am 100% going to be ready to play or there is a 0% chance that I can play. That is the situation," Murray said.

"I would say it's probably more likely that I'm not able to play singles right now," he added.

The 37-year-old, who withdrew from the Queen's Club last week because of back pain, had desired to play in the singles and doubles in his farewell appearance at Wimbledon.



Murray's name is still in the running for Friday's men's singles draw. The doubles draw is scheduled on the same day with the event beginning on Wednesday. Murray could play later in the week, which would allow him more time to recover.

"Maybe it's my ego getting in the way but I feel that I

deserve the opportunity to give it until the very last moment to make that decision," said Murray.

"It's complicated, and it's made more complicated because I want to play at Wimbledon one more time. I want to have that opportunity to play in the tournament," he added.

London to host the second edition of Global Chess League



Chennai | Agencies

The second edition of the Global Chess League will be held in London from October 3 to 12, said the International Chess Federation or FIDE on Thursday.

The 10-day, one-of-a-kind chess league featuring top players, will take place at Friends House, located in the heart of central London. The first edition was held in Dubai in 2023.

It will feature top players from around the world, including reigning world champions and rising stars, competing in a unique team

format that emphasizes strategy, collaboration, and high-stakes play.

The Global Chess League is a joint initiative between FIDE and the Indian information technology company Tech Mahindra. The league aims to unite the world's top chess players in one of the most historic cities.

In the tournament, the players will compete in a unique joint team format consisting of six players, including two top women chess players and a prodigy player per team.

Each team will play a total of 10 matches in a double round-robin format, with the

winner of each match being decided in a best-of-six board scoring system, FIDE said.

"After a fantastic response to the inaugural season we are excited to continue our mission of expanding the reach of chess worldwide and drawing in new experiences for chess fans. Tech Mahindra's commitment to usher in a new era in the modern chess ecosystem is commendable, and we are confident that the second edition of the league will provide the right platform and push needed to further elevate the sport," said FIDE president Arkady Dvorkovich.

It always hurts when you lose games like this, says Trott on Afghanistan's exit

Tarouba (Trinidad) | Agencies

After Afghanistan's incredible run in the 2024 Men's T20 World Cup ended in a heavy nine-wicket defeat in the first semi-final to South Africa, head coach Jonathan Trott said the side is hurting over the manner in which it lost the game.

At the Brian Lara Cricket Stadium in Trinidad, Afghanistan were bowled out for just 56 in 11.5 overs after electing to bat first. In reply, South Africa chased down the total in 8.5 overs to enter the title clash at Barbados on Sunday, where they will face either India or defending champions England.

"Whenever you lose a game like this, it's always going to hurt, and it should hurt because we put so much into it. The sacrifices made by the players, coaching staff, management, officials all that sort of stuff. It hurts at the moment."

"We arrived to the ground in high spirits ready to take on a strong South African side and make sure we gave a good account of ourselves, and I feel like we haven't done that today. That's the most disappointing thing," said Trott in the post-match press conference.

At the same time, he felt Afghanistan's performances in the tournament, where they beat sides like New Zealand, Australia and Bangladesh to enter the semi-finals for the first time. "I'm very proud of



the guys; this one performance doesn't necessarily define the tournament."

"But it also gives us an indication of where we need to work on and what we need to get better at. If we're going to be competitive more consistently, and who we can rely on with the bat and who's going to get us over the line, certainly if we have to chase."

Asked what gaps were to be filled in making Afghanistan a better T20I unit, Trott threw light on having more stable batters in their line-up, citing their over-dependability on openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran in this competition.

"We need to get more batters in who are going to score runs and be more consistent like the openers have been and give us a chance in games.

So that's the project for going forward. Certainly, in all formats as well, 50-over white-ball cricket as well, getting middle-order batters and top-order batters like we have at the (top) with Ibrahim and Gurbaz."

"So that's the focus for now. We've got to find batters who can bat in the middle order in T20 cricket. I have an idea of who they are and the players that are going to be doing that. So, we'll be working really hard in the short term to get those players in playing T20 cricket and ODI cricket," he added.

Trott admitted the quick turnaround in Afghanistan playing a thrilling Super Eight stage game against Bangladesh to turning out in the semi-final against South Africa was less than ideal but didn't use that

as an excuse for them going down in the semifinals.

"Obviously playing the last group game and then playing the first semi-final with travel yesterday and getting here and not really having a day off isn't ideal. But we knew the schedule, so that's not an excuse as such."

"When you go on in World Cups or tournaments, you can't have everything your own way, and you've got to fight and play against the odds which you've done at times and very proud of that but no, it's not the reason why we didn't win today."

"We only got back to the hotel at 3 am, and then we had to leave (for Trinidad) at 8 am. We didn't get much sleep, so the guys were obviously very tired and had a lot to process really emotionally and physically. So all new territory for the guys and it all plays its part in a way, but we were overplayed today. The guys will hopefully learn from this experience."

"We've gone one better than the previous 50-over World Cup in November, and it's just about taking it step by step, and hopefully we learn from today, the batters certainly (about) what it takes to play international cricket and play against a bowling side like South Africa on a pitch that's perhaps not conducive to high scoring, finding ways of winning games. And we've found ways of winning games, we just couldn't find a way today," he concluded.

T20 WORLD CUP: DON'T WANT THIS TYPE OF PITCH AT ANY GAME, SAYS MOODY ON SEMIS STRIP

Tarouba (Trinidad) | Agencies

Former Australia cricketer Tom Moody gave a huge thumbs-down to the pitch at the Brian Lara Cricket Stadium in Trinidad used for the first semi-final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 between South Africa and Afghanistan, saying the surface was not fit to host any cricket match.

The pitch offered huge lateral movement for fast bowlers and also offered excessive inconsistent bounce, as some balls flew off the surface, while others stayed really low. Amidst challenging conditions, South Africa were at their fiery best to bowl out Afghanistan for just 56 and chased down the total in 8.5 overs to seal their spot in the final at Barbados on Sunday.

"I don't think you'd want to see it in any game, to be honest with you. You want a fair contest between bat and ball and I'm not advocating that we need to have surfaces that you need 200+ runs. But you need a consistent bounce, that is the most important thing. Any batter would hold their hands up and say, that is the most important thing."

"If you've got one ball that's hitting the toe of your bat or one that you feel like you're going to punch with your gloves at the same length, that is a very difficult challenge to combat. If you've got sideways movement or swing or spin, that's a different challenge, but at least there's some sort of consistency and you can come up with some sort of strategy and method to combat that and I don't think it was good enough."

"I actually covered two games in Trinidad at the Brian Lara Cricket

Academy and the surface was pretty similar. You see this sort of crazy paving, if I could put it that way, where a lot of dense grass was gathered around those cracks and you could just tell that was the thing that promoted the inconsistency of bounce. So therefore, it'll be something that they'll reflect on, if not reflecting on already and thinking, well, we've got this wrong," said Moody on ESPNcricinfo's TimeOut show.

Similar views were echoed by former Zimbabwe batter Andy Flower. "You saw some interesting visual shots from above the square and a couple of the commentators referenced this being a brand-new pitch and perhaps they could have used a pitch that had been used previously and therefore you knew that it could use a certain type of bounce."

"That's certainly something more consistent and predictable, but those shots showed that crazy paving-type effect and that those blocks and the cracks around those blocks produced this wild variance in bounce. And as a batter, you're trying to predict where the ball is going to be. You want to meet it somewhere near the middle of the bat at least."

"And on this pitch, it was almost impossible to do that on any consistent basis at all. I thought it was actually a lit-



tle bit dangerous. A couple of balls flew off a length around sort of shoulder, neck, chin height of the South African quicks and one of them flew over Quinton de Kock, the keeper's head and gloves for four byes, and I was pleased that no one got hurt."

Flower also felt the pitch at Trinidad reminded them of how tough pitches were during the New York leg of the competition, where South Africa won three matches.

"We saw a little bit of a similar pitch in New York in the early part of the competition, which wasn't good enough for international quality quicks. And then we saw it again today and it produced a complete mismatch."

Euro 2024: Ronaldo should not have started in the first place, says Hutchison

New Delhi: In a dramatic turn of events, Georgia sent shockwaves across the footballing world by defeating heavyweights Portugal to qualify for the UEFA Euro 2024 Round of 16. Cristiano Ronaldo, the top assist provider (7) and top goalscorer (14) in the history of the tournament was left fuming at the final whistle.

Former Liverpool player Don Hutchison made a bold claim about the Portuguese legend during the Football Extra show.

"The game was a dead-rubber for Portugal. Despite the loss, they would have secured first place in the group stage. Resting Ronaldo could have rejuvenated him for the knockout stage, where he would likely have made a bigger impact. Now, he is frustrated and also on a yellow card," explained Hutchison, who is a Euro 2024 expert panellist on Sony Sports.

"By keeping Ronaldo on the bench, coach Roberto Martinez could've tested his squad depth. If the scoreline had turned upside down, Ronaldo could then have been introduced as a super sub which would have favoured a bit for Portugal. Now, the concern is that Ronaldo has played three consecutive games without rest, and Portugal could face France in the quarter-finals of the tournament," he continued.

Euro 2024 Round of 16 matches kick off on Saturday, June 29 at 9:30 PM IST, with Switzerland facing the reigning champions Italy. Catch all the live action from the 'biggest football tournament of the year' UEFA Euro 2024 only on Sony Sports Network.

FIH Pro League: Germany women qualify for Hockey World Cup 2026



Amsterdam (Netherlands) | Agencies

With a win against Great Britain in the FIH Hockey Pro League match here on Thursday, the Germany women's team qualified for the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 to be held in Belgium and the Netherlands.

At the start of the 2023/24 season of the FIH Hockey Pro League, a new incentive was added to the event, with the title winners in each section bagging a direct qualification to the respective FIH Hockey World Cups in 2026. As per the rules, in the event of Belgium or Netherlands winning either of the men's or women's titles, the team finishing in the highest position behind them would take their place in qualifying for the World Cup.

Netherlands women have been in sublime form all season in the FIH Hockey Pro League and sealed their second consecutive and fourth overall title in front of their home fans, with a 4-0 win against Germany on

June 22. As the hosts, Netherlands had already secured qualification for the upcoming World Cup, therefore the team finishing in second place in the Pro League would instead inherit the direct qualification spot in hockey's showpiece quadrennial event.

Germany, with their win over Great Britain today climbed to second place in the women's FIH Hockey Pro League points table, going past Argentina, who completed their 2023/24 campaign earlier this month.

While Germany and Argentina are level on 34 points, with Germany having a game in hand, the Danas are guaranteed to finish above Leonas, given the first tiebreaker for teams level on points is the number of outright wins.

Argentina concluded their campaign with 10 wins in their 16 matches, while Germany have won 11 of their 15 matches so far this season, to assure themselves of a second-place finish and a spot in the FIH Hockey World Cup Belgium and Netherlands 2026.



BALANCING HORROR AND COMEDY IS A DELICATE TASK : RITEISH DESHMUKH

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Riteish Deshmukh, who is all geared up for the release of his upcoming supernatural comedy 'Kakuda', shared that mixing comedy with horror increases the challenges, and balancing these elements so that one doesn't overshadow the other is a delicate task.

If there is a challenge in mixing horror and comedy genres, Riteish shared: "Kakuda" is my first horror comedy film, and it has been an exciting journey. Mixing comedy with horror increases the challenges. Both genres require precise timing, but in very different ways. Comedy relies on punchlines and quick wit, while horror depends on building tension and delivering scares."

"Balancing these elements so one doesn't overshadow the other is a delicate task. However, that's what makes it so much fun and exciting. It's about finding the right moments to inject humour without losing the essence of horror, and vice versa," said the 'Bluffmaster' actor.

Speaking about his character Victor in the film, the 'Heyy Babyy' star said: "Ghost hunters are often shown in a very typical manner in films. However, in 'Kakuda', my character is quite different. Instead of the usual serious, intense ghost hunter, my character has a quirky, humorous side. His approach is unconventional; he is quirky and funny."

"Aditya Sarpotdar has directed this character in a very interesting way that will definitely entertain the audience. It was refreshing to play a ghost hunter who doesn't fit the typical mold and brings a lot of fun to the story," he commented.

How much does working on OTT keep you away from box office pressure?

Riteish said: "Whether it's an OTT platform like ZEE5 or a theatrical release, I always give my full commitment to the story. Working on an OTT platform does provide some freedom from the immense pressure of box office numbers, allowing you to focus more on storytelling and performance. This shift allows actors and filmmakers to take more creative risks and explore diverse narratives, knowing that the content will reach a wide audience who can enjoy it at their convenience."

I DIDN'T WANT TO ACCEPT ARMAAN'S SECOND MARRIAGE INITIALLY : PAYAL MALIK

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In the upcoming episode of 'Bigg Boss OTT 3', Payal Malik will be seen venting to journalist Deepak Chaurasia about her husband Armaan Malik's second marriage.

With the first week over in the controversial reality show, contestants are beginning to warm up to each other.

While having a conversation about her husband Armaan's second marriage with Chaurasia, Payal said: "I didn't want to accept Armaan's second marriage initially. I was at the venue, and I remember leaving because I didn't feel good about it."

She told her fellow housemate that she left her husband and their home with their son Cheeku for a year.

"I left the house with my son Cheeku and stayed away for almost a year. It was a very bad phase for me; I even had thoughts of self-harm. Later, I decided to be strong, accept the situation, and go back," she said. Payal explained that she thought about her son before returning to Armaan.

"I also thought of my child, as otherwise he would have been left without one parent."

Sharing her side of the story, Kritika Malik, Armaan's second wife, said: "We had a vacation planned initially, which got cancelled, and then Payal called me to stay at her house. We were already best friends."

She added: "I stayed in her house for a week and then bonded with Armaan. He proposed to me for marriage, and I couldn't understand what was happening. I was in love with him, and so we got married."

Varun Dhawan performed 'jolting' stunts by himself



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Varun Dhawan has performed all the "jolting" stunts himself with acute execution in the upcoming film 'Baby John', according to a source. A source said: "The movie marks a collaboration with top makers committed to delivering the ultimate action entertainer with 'Baby John' this Christmas. The stunts, almost all of which are performed by Varun himself, will jolt you with their sheer magnitude and precise execution."

The source shared that the magnificence of the film makes 'Baby John' a spectacle to watch. "The grandeur of the action set pieces surely makes it one of the biggest action entertainers of the year," the source added.

On the personal front, Varun welcomed his first child on June 3 with his wife, Natasha Dalal.

In a post on social media, he shared, "Our girl is here."

Varun officially announced the birth of his daughter on Instagram, along with a picture of his beagle Joey holding a placard that read, "Welcome Lil' Sis... June 3, 2024."

Meet The Real Champion who inspired me to achieve the impossible : Kartik Aryan

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood heartthrob Kartik Aryan said "Actor banna safal ho gaya" as he recalled meeting India's first Paralympic gold medalist Murlikant Petkar.

Kartik took to Instagram where he shared a video of him meeting Petkar while shooting a swimming sequence for the biopic, saying the 79-year-old Paralympian insisted on taking the stairs. Kartik said he was over the moon when Petkar told him "Ek dum mere jaisa kar rahe ho", adding that Petkar even shared anecdotes about the medals he was wearing.

In the caption, Kartik wrote: "Couldn't have imagined a non-swimmer like myself swimming without the use of legs... Meet The Real Champion who inspired me to achieve the impossible @murlikantpetkar Firstly, Thank you for being you and being a living inspiration present amidst us Sir." Kartik also said that at first, he did not believe that the story of 'Chandu Champion' could be true. "Your story was



important for everyone to know - to make everyone believe in themselves. When Kabir sir narrated 'Chandu Champion' for the first time, I didn't believe that this could be a true story. 'Aapne ek zindagi mein, anek zindagiyan jo jee hain' (sic)," he wrote.

The 33-year-old star added that it was an "incredible experience" working on Petkar's life.

"From not being able to believe your

story in the first place to living your extraordinary life for almost two years, it's been an incredible experience and utmost honour. My life has changed ever since you entered my life. I have never received so much love and appreciation for my work before, as I'm getting for Chandu Champion. It's overwhelming!" the actor said. He added: "Really fortunate that I got the opportunity to meet you and relive some unbelievable, magical and inspiring moments of your life. Actor banna safal ho gaya."

Objects in the mirror are closer than they appear : Kamal Haasan

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Veteran star Kamal Haasan and his co-actor Siddharth are closer than they appear, going by the post he has shared on social media.

Kamal took to Instagram and shared a photo taken aboard an aircraft.

In the image, Kamal is seen smiling at Siddharth, who is seated opposite him, with Siddharth's reflection visible in a mirror.

For the caption, Kamal, who is fondly known as Ulaganayagan by his fans, wrote: "Objects in the mirror are closer than they appear!" and tagged Siddharth in the post.

Kamal Haasan began his career as a child artiste at the age of six. He has been a part of the acting world for over five decades and has worked in multiple languages, including Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, and Hindi. The actor, who is known for acclaimed movies such as 'Sadma', 'Ek Duuje Ke Liye', and 'Saagar', has several films lined up for release. The acclaimed star, who loves being called an 'Indian' actor, also has 'Indian 2', a vigilante action film directed by S. Shankar, in the pipeline. It is a sequel to his 1996 movie 'Indian', and Kamal will reprise his role as Senapathy, an ageing freedom fighter turned vigilante who fights against corruption.



I HAVE RUN TWO FULL MARATHONS AND 20-ODD HALF MARATHONS: SAIYAMI KHER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Renowned actress and fitness enthusiast Saiyami Kher says the monsoon does not hinder her fitness regime as she continues training for the Ironman race. "I have always been into sports. I have run two full marathons and 20-odd half marathons, so Ironman was my next goal. For me, endurance sports make me mentally fit, so it's my way to clear my mind," said Saiyami. Living in Mumbai, where the monsoon season can be unpredictable

and intense, Saiyami remains undeterred. "I live in Mumbai, and it's monsoon season, but I obviously can't stop regardless of the weather conditions, because I'm three months from race day. Weather is not a hurdle, I actually love running and swimming in the rain. Empty streets with the rain lashing down!" she stressed.

Saiyami's training regimen includes a combination of indoor and outdoor exercises. She uses indoor facilities for strength training and cycling while still braving the rain for her running sessions.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Nidhi Bhanushali