

absolute india

VOL. 9, ISSUE 248, BHOPAL | SUNDAY, JULY 21, 2024 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

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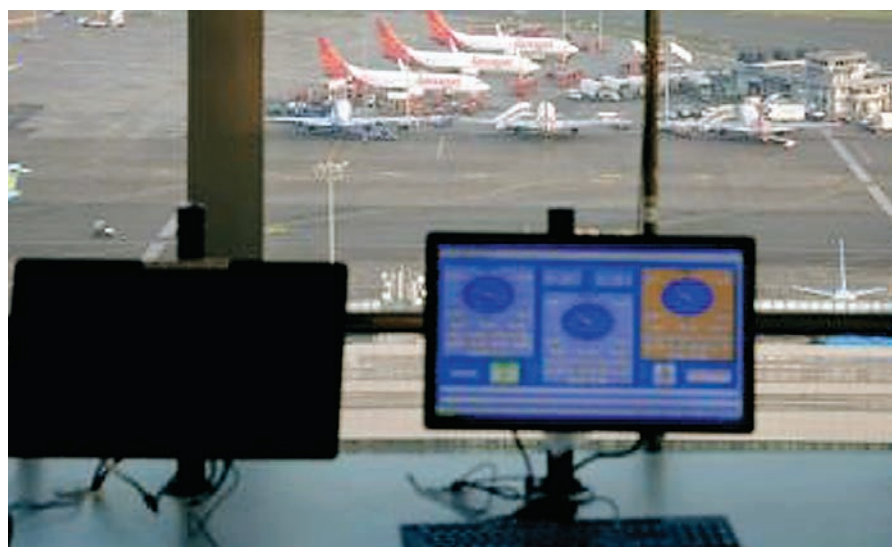
Haryana NEET centre with most top scorers' result differs in retest

DISPARITIES SURFACED

▶ AT OASIS PUBLIC SCHOOL, WHERE THE PRINCIPAL WAS ARRESTED IN THE PAPER LEAK CASE, 701 STUDENTS TOOK THE EXAM. THE HIGHEST SCORE HERE WAS BELOW 700, WITH SEVEN STUDENTS SCORING ABOVE 650, 23 ABOVE 600, AND 46 ABOVE 550.

▶ JALARAM INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL REPORTED THAT 1,838 STUDENTS APPEARED FOR NEET. THE HIGHEST SCORE WAS UNDER 700, WITH FIVE STUDENTS SCORING ABOVE 650, 14 ABOVE 600, AND 31 ABOVE 550.

▶ EXPERTS SUGGEST THAT THESE SCORES ARE WITHIN EXPECTED RANGES AND DO NOT INDICATE ANOMALIES. HOWEVER, CONTRASTING RESULTS FROM AN AHMEDABAD CENTRE, WHERE 12 OF 676 STUDENTS SCORED ABOVE 700, MAY RAISE QUESTIONS DURING THE SUPREME COURT HEARING ON MONDAY.



Court intervened, cancelling the grace marks that had been awarded and ordering 1,563 candidates to retake the exam. Of these, about 800 students appeared for the re-examination. The NTA announced the centre

and city-wise results following a Supreme Court order. The results, initially declared on June 5, were re-published to mask the identities of the aspirants. This measure aimed to determine whether candidates from alleged-

NTA ANNOUNCES CENTRE AND CITY-WISE RESULTS OF NEET-UG

New Delhi: The National Testing Agency (NTA) on July 20 announced the centre- and city-wise results for medical entrance exam NEET-UG, which is under the scanner over alleged irregularities. The results, which were initially announced on June 5, have been published in this format following an order of the Supreme Court, which is hearing several petitions about the alleged irregularities in the conduct of the exam, including paper leak.

The exam was conducted on May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 cities abroad, for more than 24 lakh candidates.

The Supreme Court will resume hearing the arguments on July 22 on a batch of pleas seeking cancellation, re-test and a court-monitored probe into the allegations of malpractice in the prestigious exam.

ly tainted centres scored disproportionately high marks compared to those from other centres.

The NEET-UG exam, held on May 5, took place across 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 international locations, accommodating over 24 lakh candidates. Allegations of irregularities, including a paper leak, have put the exam under intense scrutiny.

The Supreme Court is set to resume hearings on the matter on July 22, addressing multiple petitions seeking the cancellation of the exam, a re-test, and a court-monitored probe into the allegations of malpractice.

CBI ARRESTS MASTERMIND, 2 MBBS STUDENTS WHO ACTED AS 'SOLVERS'

New Delhi: The CBI on July 20 arrested one of the masterminds, a B.Tech graduate from NIT-Jamshedpur, in the NEET-UG paper leak case and two MBBS students who allegedly acted as "solvers", officials said.

With the fresh arrests, the total number of people held so far by the agency in six cases related to the alleged irregularities has now reached 21, they said.

Second-year MBBS student Kumar Mangalam Bishnoi and first-year student Deepender Sharma were present in Hazaribagh on May 5, the date of NEET UG examination, and were allegedly acting as "solvers" for the paper stolen by Pankaj Kumar, an engineer, who was arrested earlier, they said.

They said Sashikant Paswan alias Sashi alias Pasu, a B.Tech (Electrical) passout from the National Institute of Technology, Jamshedpur was acting in tandem with Kumar and Rockey, who was also arrested earlier.

Microsoft outage: CrowdStrike explains what exactly went wrong

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As millions of Windows computers were left crippled for hours, disrupting the services of airlines, banks, hospitals and stock exchanges worldwide, cyber-security platform CrowdStrike on Saturday tried to explain what actually went wrong at their end.

According to the company which provides third-party security updates to the Satya Nadella-run tech giant, on July 19, at 9.30 a.m. (India time), it released a sensor configuration update to Windows systems.

Sensor configuration updates are an ongoing part of the protection mechanisms of the Falcon platform. "This configuration update triggered a logic error resulting in a system crash and blue screen (BSOD)," said CrowdStrike.

In a technical blog, the company said the sensor configuration update that caused the system crash was remediated at around 10.57 a.m. "This issue is not the result of or related to a cyber-attack," it said.

Millions of customers running Falcon sensor for Windows version 7.11 and above that were online were impacted. "Systems running Falcon sensor for Windows 7.11 and above that downloaded the updated configuration from 9.30 a.m. to 10.57 a.m. -- were susceptible to a system crash," the company said. According to it, this is not a new process and the architecture has been in place since Falcon's inception. The update that occurred at 9.30 a.m. was

designed to target newly observed, malicious named pipes being used by common C2 frameworks in cyberattacks.

GLOBAL SERVICES SLOWLY RECOVERING

New Delhi: Businesses and services around the world are slowly recovering after a massive IT outage affected computer systems for hours on Thursday and Friday. Businesses, banks, hospitals and airlines were among the worst-hit after cyber-security firm CrowdStrike issued a faulty software update which affected Microsoft Windows. CrowdStrike's CEO apologised for the disruption and said a fix had been issued, but admitted it could be "some time" before all systems were back up and running.

While some airline services are beginning to return to normal after thousands of flights were cancelled, operators expect some delays and cancellations to persist through the weekend.

AIRPORT SYSTEMS WORKING NORMALLY

New Delhi: The Civil Aviation Ministry said on Saturday that airline systems across airports in India have resumed operations normally after a mega Microsoft Windows outage hit systems globally.

According to the Ministry, travel adjustments and refund processes are being taken care of, as it constantly monitors the situation at the airports.

Economic Survey to be tabled in Parliament on July 22

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will table the Economic Survey in Parliament on July 22, a day ahead of the Union Budget, which will be a report card on the economy and also the growth outlook ahead.

The survey gives a detailed account of the state of the economy, prospects and policy challenges. It is prepared by a team led by chief economic adviser V Anantha Nageswaran.

The Economic Survey provides statistical information and analysis on various sectors of the economy as well as data on employment, GDP growth, inflation, and the budget deficit.

India has retained its tag as the fastest-growing economy, and the economic survey will



be presented at a time when the IMF has just raised its economic growth forecast for the country for FY25 to 7 per cent from 6.8 per cent projected in April.

"The forecast for growth in India has also been revised upward, to 7 per cent, this year, with the change reflect-

ing carryover from upward revisions to growth in 2023 and improved prospects for private consumption, particularly in rural areas," the IMF said.

In June, the Reserve Bank of India revised the growth forecast to 7.2 from 7 per cent.

VEGETABLES ON FIRE: TOMATO RATES SOAR TO RS 100/KG IN DELHI

Agartala/Guwahati | Agencies

New Delhi: Tomato prices soared to Rs 100 per kg in retail markets of the national capital on Saturday as adverse weather conditions in various parts of the country continue to affect supplies of the essential kitchen staple.

Tomatoes are available at Rs 100 per kg at Mother Dairy's retail outlets, Safal, in the national capital.

According to the data compiled by the Department of Consumer Affairs, retail prices of tomatoes in Delhi are ruling at Rs 93 per kg on Saturday, July 20.

The all-India average price of tomatoes on July 20 is Rs 73.76 per kg as per the government data.

A senior official from the department had last week attributed the sharp rise in prices to disruption in supplies caused by extreme heat followed by spells of excess rainfall.

At Mother Dairy store in West Delhi, onions are being sold on Saturday at Rs 46.90 per kg, and potatoes at Rs 41.90 per kg. The government data shows, the rate of onions is Rs 50 per kg and potatoes Rs 40 per kg in the national capital.

Border with B'desh to remain open for 24 hrs to allow students, others stranded to enter India

Agartala/Guwahati | Agencies

The India-Bangladesh border would remain open for 24 hours to facilitate the students and other people of India and other countries to enter from the troubled neighbouring country, where the situation remains extremely volatile due to the protests on quota issue for the last three weeks.

A Border Security Force (BSF) spokesperson said that Tripura Frontier Inspector General (IG) of the force, Patel Piyush Purushottam Das, and other senior officials are in close contact with the Bangladesh Army, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Bangladesh Police to evacuate the India-bound students and other people.

Students of India and other countries who are studying in Bangladesh are returning to India as the students' agitation has now become violent in the neighbouring country.

According to BSF sources, over 600 students from India, Nepal, and Bhutan along with some stranded tourists from trouble torn Bangladesh



returned to India on Saturday through the checkpoints of Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya along the border with the neighbouring country.

Over 600 students, mostly Indian, returned to India on Friday through the Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya borders. "The students of India and other countries are mainly coming from Dhaka, Comilla and Brahmanbaria. The Indian students belong to northeastern states, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir," the BSF spokesman said.

Five Indian states -- West Bengal (2,216 km), Tripura (856 km), Meghalaya (443 km), Mizoram (318 km) and Assam (263 km) share a 4,096-km border with Bangladesh.

Officials from the state governments of northeastern states along with police and BSF officials are camping in the various checkpoints in Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya to receive the students and other people from Bangladesh.

Violence erupted in the country after protests by students demanding reforms in the quota system for government jobs.

The clashes between student demonstrators and police have killed at least 105 people so far.

Class 10 And 12 Students In Relief Camps Get Help From Manipur Scientists, Academicians

Imphal/New Delhi | Agencies

Over 120 students living in Manipur's relief camps and who - despite the difficult circumstances - passed Class 10 and 12 exams were honoured with awards by a group of scientists and academicians from the Meitei community.

Three students who scored the highest marks received the 'Community Resilient Educational Financial Support Award (CREFS Award)', while the rest received consolation prizes and certificates, the Pan-India Manipuri Meitei Scientists and Academicians Association (PIMMSAA) said in a statement.

Some of the students came with their parents from the relief camps, while others came on their own to the event venue at Manipur University's Department of Chemistry, the organisers said, adding the event also marked the first founding day of the PIMMSAA. "We wanted to encourage students living in relief camps to study well, to say that they are not alone. We will try our best to help them in every possible way, despite the difficult conditions since May last year," a PIMMSAA member said.



Class 10 student Pushparani Yumnam, and Class 12 students Mangsatbam Beberani Chanu and Waikhom Bikash Singh received the top three awards which included cash. All the students honoured by the PIMMSAA had fled from their homes in the foothills of districts such as Bishnupur and Tengnoupal when ethnic violence began in May 2023. Over 93 per cent students in Manipur had passed the Class 10 exam of the state board despite a difficult 2023-24 academic year due to the ethnic tensions. Many of the students are still in relief camps. The pass percentage this year was the high-

est in the last 10 years. More recently, it was 76 per cent in 2022, and 82.82 per cent in 2023.

PIMMSAA on its website says it is a volunteer group of multi-disciplinary scientists and academicians from the Meitei community who are creating projects for sustainable livelihood and development, among other activities.

Manipur University's former Department of Physics head Ngangkham Nimai Singh, and Department of Chemistry head Nongmaithem Rajen Singh were the chief guests; PIMMSAA general secretary Dr L Robindro and joint secretary Dr S Somarendro Singh were the key attendees from the group.

PIMMSAA says the CREFS Award is an initiative aimed at motivating students from the Meitei community living in relief camps and recognising their achievements, and encouraging them to pursue academic excellence despite huge challenges.

The ethnic violence between the valley-dominant Meitei community and nearly two dozen tribes known as Kukis - a term given by the British in colonial times - who are dominant in some hill areas of Manipur, has killed over 220 people and internally displaced nearly 50,000.

UPI Adding Up To 60 Lakh New Users Every Month, Global Adoption Surges

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The digital payment growth continues to surge and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is now adding up to 60 lakh new users every month.

The stupendous growth in UPI transactions has been fuelled by the RuPay credit card on UPI, and the launch of the service in foreign countries.

According to the latest National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) data, the number of transactions on the UPI platform went up 49 per cent year-on-year to 13.9 billion in June and the transaction value rose 36 per cent to Rs 20.1 trillion. Also, the average daily transaction count was 463 million and the average daily amount was 66,903



crore. According to Praveena Rai, chief operating officer of the NPCI, the market share of RuPay credit cards has risen to 10 per cent from just 1 per cent three years ago.

Speaking at a media event

in the national capital, she said that "Every month, UPI adds from 3 to 6 million users". UPI's success in India has led to global collaborations across several countries.



AMIT SHAH SOUNDS POLL BUGLE IN JHARKHAND, SLAMS 'MOST CORRUPT' SOREN GOVT

Ranchi | Agencies

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday launched the BJP's campaign for the upcoming Assembly elections in Jharkhand, calling for ousting the Hemant Soren government and bringing the BJP to power with a full majority.

Addressing BJP workers during the extended executive committee meeting at the Prabhat Tara ground in Ranchi, Amit Shah described the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-Congress-RJD government led by Hemant Soren as the "most corrupt in the country".

He also alleged that the Jharkhand government is embroiled in multiple scams, including a Rs 1,000 crore MGNREGA scam, a Rs 1,000 crore mining scam, and a Rs 300 crore land scam.

The Home Minister recalled that Rs 300 crore was recovered from the house of a Congress MP while Rs 30 crore was seized from the house of a personal assistant to a minister in Jharkhand. "But the Congress is planning to give ticket to the same minister whose PA was detained with Rs 30 crore and is currently in jail," the Home Minister said.



Holding Chief Minister Hemant Soren responsible for the 'Bangladeshi influx' into the state, Amit Shah said the JMM leader calls himself a tribal CM but instead of caring for the tribals, he is "protecting the intruders who, through land and love jihad, are looting their land". "The number of tribals in Jharkhand is decreasing continuous-

ly. Intruders are snatching away their rights. They are getting jobs instead, but Hemant Soren is only concerned about increasing his vote bank," Amit Shah said. He also promised that as soon as the BJP forms the government in Jharkhand, a white paper will be released to ensure that the tribal population does not shrink, and they get the actual benefits of reservation.

Highlighting the BJP's commitment to tribal welfare, he cited the elevation of Babulal Marandi as the state's first tribal Chief Minister, and Droupadi Murmu as the country's President.

He also claimed that the Narendra Modi government had done more for the tribals, Dalits, and backward classes than any previous government, including ensuring 27 per cent reservation for the OBCs and setting up a commission for the backward classes.

Shah also compared the BJP's development initiatives in Jharkhand with the Congress' alleged neglect of the state during its 10-year rule at the Centre, claiming that the BJP allocated Rs 3,84,000 crore for the state's development, compared to the Congress' Rs 84,000 crore.

The event was also addressed by Union Agriculture Minister and Jharkhand BJP election in-charge Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, Union Minister Annapurna Devi, Jharkhand BJP in-charge Lakshmi Kant Vajpayee, Union Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth, Jharkhand BJP President Babulal Marandi, former CM Arjun Munda, and leader of opposition Amar Kumar Bauri, among others.

Pune road rage: Motorist assaults woman with 2 kids on scooter

Pune | Agencies

In a brutal instance of road rage, a woman riding with two small kids on a scooter was assaulted here on Saturday by a motorist who was attempting to overtake her, the police said.

The incident occurred on the Pashan-Baner Link Road when an elderly motorist was speeding behind her for almost 2 km, desperately trying to overtake.

The woman, narrating the entire incident in a social media video, said that she moved to give him way when he suddenly sped in the front, took a left and blocked her two-wheeler.

He got down in an angry mood, rushed up to her, pulled her hair and hit her on the face, leaving her with a bleeding nose, even as a crowd gathered there.

The woman is identified as Jerlyn D'Silva, a digital content creator, and the man's identity is not yet known.

When contacted, an official of the Chaturshringi Police Station said that the



victim had been rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment while the motorist was detained pending the formal complaint formalities.

The incident sparked a furore on social media, coming exactly two months after a 17-year-old minor boy was involved in an alleged drunken hit-and-run accident in his Porsche car which left two persons dead.

Last Tuesday, the city was rocked by another drunken

driving incident when a politician's son, Saurabh Bandu Gaikwad, rammed his SUV into a poultry truck on the Mundhwa-Manjari Road, leaving the driver and his assistant grievously injured.

The son of a former Nationalist Congress Party (SP) municipal corporator, Bandu Gaikwad, Saurabh had fled from the spot in his Tata Harrier SUV, but was later traced and booked by the police.

Union Minister Jitin Prasada's car meets with accident in Pilibhit

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Minister of State (MoS) for Commerce and Industry, Jitin Prasada, had a close shave on Saturday after his car met with an accident in Uttar Pradesh's Pilibhit district.

According to reports, the car in which the Union Minister was travelling was hit by another vehicle of his cavalcade. The Minister's car reportedly got damaged in the collision. Fortunately, all are said to be safe barring minor injuries to one person.

The mishap happened when Jitin Prasada was on a tour to Pilibhit, his Lok Sabha constituency.

Following a brief stopover after the accident, the



Minister's convoy headed for its destination.

Jitin Prasada went to visit his Lok Sabha constituency to take stock of the relief efforts undertaken after floods wreaked havoc in the

district.

Days ago, at least six districts of Uttar Pradesh, including Pilibhit, got inundated with flood water after widespread rainfall in the state.

PUNE COURT EXTENDS MANORAMA KHEDKAR'S POLICE CUSTODY BY 2 DAYS

Pune | Agencies

Pune court on Saturday extended the police custody of Manorama D. Khedkar -- mother of the controversial IAS-Probationary Officer Puja M.D. Khedkar -- by another two days.

Manorama Khedkar, who was arrested from Mahad town in Raigad, was produced before the Paud Judicial Magistrate First Class Court which granted her police custody for two days, and the same has been extended by another two days till Monday.

Arguing for an extension of her police remand, the police informed the court about the progress in the case investigation and said that they needed to identify two other women involved in the matter.

Besides, the police need to probe the involvement of one person, Sandeep Khedkar, and another unknown person in the case pertaining to Manorama Khedkar brandishing and threatening some farmers in Mulshi region allegedly to



grab their land. Countering the police contentions, Manorama Khedkar's lawyer Vijay Jagtap said that the section pertaining to attempt to murder (Section 307) was not applicable to her as no bullet was fired, and hence she was entitled to bail.

Besides, all other charges against his client were bailable offences, and her husband Dilip K. Khedkar

has also been given interim pre-arrest bail. After listening to both sides, the Paud JMFC extended Manorama D. Khedkar's police remand by two more days.

In the last couple of days, the police have recovered the pistol she had allegedly used to threaten the farmers, and seized a car belonging to her.

It may be recalled that Manorama

D. Khedkar - the mother of IAS-PO Puja M.D. Khedkar - was booked after a July 2023 video showing her threatening some farmers surfaced last week on social media.

Amid a furore, Manorama D. Khedkar went 'missing' as also her husband, Dilip Khedkar, an ex-Maharashtra government officer, but she was tracked to a lodge in Mahad and arrested on Thursday.

However, Dilip Khedkar, who is still untraceable, had applied for and was granted an interim pre-arrest bail till July 25. Meanwhile, their daughter, IAS-PO Puja, who was expected to come from Washim to the Pune Police Commissionerate to record her statement on the harassment charges she had levelled against the Pune Collector, did not turn up despite being served two summonses, officials said.

Apart from the series of allegations, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Friday lodged criminal proceedings for fraud against her with the Delhi Police.

SCHOOL CHILDREN IN K'TAKA TO GET EGGS ALL SIX DAYS A WEEK

Bengaluru | Agencies

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced on Saturday that the students of government and government-aided schools will get eggs six days a week in partnership with Azim Premji Foundation.

Earlier, the state government was providing eggs for school children two days a week already. With the new arrangement, the students will now get eggs for all six days.

Siddaramaiah spoke while inaugurating a programme, in partnership with the Azim Premji Foundation, to provide free supplementary nutritious food six days a week to children in government and aided primary and secondary schools.

Quality food is essential for mental health and good education, said the Chief Minister. "Creating opportunities for good education for the children of the poor is our aspiration," he said.

"I have seen children come to school without breakfast and stay until noon without lunch. Hence, we decided to provide meals and eggs two days a week. The Azim Premji



Foundation has joined hands with the government in this noble cause to provide eggs and supplementary nutritious food to children four days a week," he said.

He called on school children to develop scientifically and intellectually, stating that only then can they become socially responsible.

"Creating opportunities for good education for the children of the poor is our aspiration. For this reason, we are providing uniforms, shoes, and socks, and opening more residential schools," he said.

Azim Premji Foundation on Saturday entered a Memorandum of

Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Karnataka to support the nutritional enrichment of the state government's mid-day meal program in government and government-aided schools for three years.

Eggs will be added to the mid-day meal for the 55 lakh students in these schools -- from Grade 1 to Grade 10 -- to provide nutritional enrichment. Eggs are laced with a wide range of essential nutritional content from proteins to minerals.

Currently the state government's mid-day meal program provides eggs on two days of the week to the

students. The Foundation's support will enable the provision of eggs on all six days of the school week, substantially enhancing the nutrition for students.

An alternative high nutrition supplement will be provided for those students who do not consume eggs because of cultural preferences.

This initiative is aimed to improve the nutritional status of school students and contribute to their physical and cognitive development. The Foundation works extensively across the country to help improve the quality and equity of the public (government) education system.

The Foundation will work closely with the Commissioner of School Education and Literacy (CSE) to implement mechanisms to ensure high-quality eggs are delivered to each child in the schools covered by the program.

Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa, Wipro Chairman Azim Premji couple, the government's Additional Chief Secretary L.K. Atheek Ahmed, Chief Minister's Political Secretary Naseer Ahmed, and Guarantee Implementation Committee Vice President Mehrooz were present.

Akhilesh Yadav to attend Trinamool's 'Martyrs Day' rally on July 21

Kolkata | Agencies

Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav will be attending Trinamool Congress' annual 'Martyrs Day' rally in Kolkata on Sunday.

Trinamool leader Kunal Ghosh said that on the invitation of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Akhilesh Yadav has agreed to attend the 'Martyrs Day' rally in Kolkata.

Trinamool Congress organises the 'Martyrs Day' programme every year as a tribute to the 13 people who were killed during a demonstration held by the West Bengal Youth Congress then led by Mamata Banerjee on July 21, 1993.

Besides Akhilesh Yadav, the Samajwadi Party leader and former party Rajya Sabha member Kiranmay Nanda will also attend the rally. Both the leaders will arrive at the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International



Airport in Kolkata on Sunday and will reach the rally venue at Esplanade in central Kolkata straight from the airport.

Nanda was the Fisheries Minister in the previous Left Front regime when his party had an understanding with the CPI(M)-led Left Front in West Bengal.

On Saturday, Mamata Banerjee issued a statement on her official X explaining

the relevance of July 21, 1993.

"21st July is a blood-soaked day in the history of Bengal. 13 lives were brutally taken away by the repressive regime of CPI-M on this day in 1993. I lost 13 of my co-fighters on this day in my battle against repression. 21st July is therefore an emotive milestone for us. 21st July is an integral part of Bengal's public culture today," her message read.

INDIA BLOC ORGANISES 'AAKROSH MARCH' IN PATNA

Patna | Agencies

The INDIA bloc, led by the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), organised a protest march called the 'Aakrosh March' in Patna against Nitish Kumar-led NDA government over poor law and order situation in the state on Saturday.

The leaders and workers from RJD, Congress, and left parties participated in the march while carrying posters, banners, and flags of their respective parties.

The protest was initiated in response to the rising crime incidents including the murder of Jitan Sahani, father of VIP chief Mukesh Sahani. For the opposition, the murder of Jitan Sahani has become a focal point for criticising the Nitish Kumar government. The march began at Income Tax Square and proceeded towards the district magistrate's office via Dak Bungalow Chowk.

Despite police barricades at Income Tax Square, the protestors broke through and reached Dak Bungalow Chowk, where heavy police barricades prevented their further progress, resulting in a scuffle between the supporters and the police.



Eventually, officials allowed one representative from each political party to proceed to the district magistrate's office, where they handed over a memorandum to Patna DM Chandrashekhar Singh. Akhilesh Singh, the state president of the Congress, criticised the state government's silence on the rising crime incidents. "The state government is silent on the rising crime incidents in Bihar. They are holding high-level meetings but the crime incidents are not stopping. We will seek answers during the upcoming monsoon session in the Assembly," he said. Ritu Jaiswal, the RJD leader who contested the Lok Sabha election from Sheohar, said, "When the father of a leading politician is not secure in Bihar, how can a common people be safe? Nitish Kumar has no right to sit on the chair of the Chief Minister."

INDIA'S GOODS EXPORTS TO TOP COUNTRIES RECORD DOUBLE DIGIT SURGE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's exports to the lucrative Western markets have recorded a strong double-digit growth in the April-June quarter of the current financial year reflecting the competitive strength of the economy.

The latest data compiled by the Commerce and Industry Ministry show that India's exports to the USA shot up by 10.4 per cent during the quarter, while in the case of The Netherlands, there was a 41.3 per cent surge and shipments to the United Kingdom rose by 21.9 per cent.

Exports to the affluent markets of Singapore and the United Arab Emirates also surged by as much as 26.55 per cent and 17.6 per cent respectively.

The US continued to remain India's largest export market, followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Netherlands.



The figures also show that India's exports to China contracted by 2.8 per cent while imports from the neighbouring country increased by

8.3 per cent increasing the trade deficit. India has now recorded positive growth in exports for three months in

a row despite geopolitical challenges such as the disruption in world trade due to the Houthi attacks on ships around the Red Sea region and the Russia-Ukraine war.

Looking ahead, the RBI has said that global economic activity appears to be strengthening across advanced economies and emerging market economies and global trade in goods and services is gathering momentum which augurs well for the Indian economy. India's goods and services exports increased by 5.4 per cent in June to \$65.47 billion while the cumulative overall growth of exports during the April-June quarter this year works out to a robust 8.4 per cent at \$200.33 billion.

"India's total exports in the first quarter of 2024-25 have crossed \$200 billion and, if this trend continues, we hope this fiscal year's exports cross \$800 billion," said Trade Secretary Sunil Barthwal, releasing the monthly trade figures this week.



JABALPUR TO HAVE ULTRA MODERN SKILL DEVELOPMENT CENTER FOR TEXTILE SECTOR: CM DR. YADAV

Manufacturing of tanks for army to be undertaken in MP. Rs. 600 crores in defense equipment manufacturing. Agreement signed between Ashok Leyland and Armored Vehicle Corporation. Groundbreaking ceremony of 67 industrial units. 12,000 persons to get jobs from new industrial units. Letters of intent handed over to upcoming units

▶ REPRESENTATIVES FROM VARIOUS INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING ADANI POWER, NETLINK, VAIDYANATH GROUP, DAVAT FOODS, VOLVO ASHER, A V N L, SWARAJ SHOOTING, LOHIA ENERGY, INFOSYS DUBAI, AND DALIT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (DCC), WERE PRESENT AMONG THE DIGNITARIES.



and states of the country participated in the Regional Industry Conclave. It is noteworthy that an Industry Conclave was held in Ujjain in March last year. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav laid the foundation stone for 29 industrial units and performed the groundbreaking ceremony for 38 industrial units, thus initiating a total

of 67 units. Representatives from many states joined the inauguration and groundbreaking ceremonies. Investments worth 1500 crores will be made. Similarly, employment will be given to 4500 people. Intent letters were handed over for the allocation of 340 acres of land. The IT, ITES, and ESDM Policy 2023 was launched.

AGREEMENT WITH ASHOK LEYLAND

An agreement worth Rs. 600 crores was signed between Ashok Leyland and Armored Vehicle Corporation Limited in the presence of Chief Minister Dr. Yadav. This is a new step in this sector. This is a significant investment in the defense production sector. It is also a commitment to promote development and innovation in the cooperation sector. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said Tanks will now be built for the army. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that through 16 industrial parks, investments worth Rs 6,000 crores have been made by small, medium, and micro industries. This has provided employment opportunities to 20,000 people. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that it is result of coordinated efforts that inauguration and groundbreaking ceremony of 67 industrial units is taking place. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that after Odisha, Madhya Pradesh is second in the mineral sector. Transparent processes of auctioning mines have been considered leading in the country. For this, the Government of India has also encouraged them. Diamond cutting will start in the state.

INDUSTRIALISTS INVITED TO MP

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav urged industrialists to come to Madhya Pradesh. Dr. Yadav said that the state has encouraging policies in the labor sector. In the last two to three years, employment opportunities have been increased through universities. There were only five medical colleges in the state, whose number is going to be 25. There is a dense forest area in the state. Opportunities will also be realized in this area. As many as 275 units are working in the pharmaceutical sector. There are 60 units in Pithampur alone. Pharmaceutical products are exported to more than 160 countries from. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that the state is focusing on food processing sector. Relief has been given to industries on water and electricity supply. Two mega food parks are coming up. Eight food parks are already operational. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav urged the MD of Volvo Eicher to start a research center in Madhya Pradesh. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav inaugurated an exhibition related to industrial development at the beginning of the inauguration session and reviewed the displayed pictures. A description of raw materials by various small industrial units and entrepreneurs under Jabalpur Haat was presented in the exhibition. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav launched the guidelines for the Madhya Pradesh IT, ITES, and ESDM Investment Promotion Policy 2023. Investors expressed confidence in Madhya Pradesh's leadership, foreseeing it as a leading state.

Congress' review meeting starts from the drawing room and ends on Twitter: BJP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A meeting of the Political Affairs Committee was held on Saturday at the State Congress office in Bhopal. On this, BJP spokesperson Neha Bagga taunted and said that Congress has been doing similar reviews for the last several decades.

Neha Bagga said, "The review meeting of Congress starts in the drawing room and ends on Twitter (X)." He advised Congress to move ahead with such a strategy.

On Jitu Patwari's statement that "the party will go to take oil", he said that instead the Congress party should make a competitive person the state president. He said that Congress spokesperson Alka Lamba is talking about hitting a woman worker of her own party with a shoe. Congress is far away from the organization, and this is the reason for its decline, its disappearance from the face of the earth.

Regarding Assam Chief Minister making Rahul Gandhi the brand ambassador of population control, Neha Bagga said that the working methodology of Rahul Gandhi and the Congress Party works to spread confusion. If Rahul



Gandhi takes up this responsibility then all the states will become aware and come forward.

In Madhya Pradesh too, when BJP MLA Ramesh Mendola wrote a letter to Chief Minister Mohan Yadav regarding installing name plates on shops on Kanwar Marg, BJP spokesperson said that the MLA has written a very beautiful letter. He said, "Congress, which is looking for appeasement in this mat-

ter, needs to look inside itself, because in the Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006, which was implemented in 2011, was there a process of Hindu-Muslim separation in it, was there any provision in it?" Was it a process to show down a religion?"

He said the entire process has been taken in a way "to remove fraud, promote healthy competition and I think every Indian should be proud of it".

Digvijaya Singh meets CM amid row over nursing college scam

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Veteran Congress leader Digvijaya Singh met Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday amid an ongoing row over alleged irregularities in nursing colleges in the state.

The former Chief Minister urged CM Yadav to take prompt action against those who destroyed the future of lakhs of nursing students.

The Congress has been relentlessly demanding the resignation of Minister Vishwas Sarang, who was the Medical Education Minister when the nursing college scam surfaced.

CM Yadav has said that already initiated action against the officials involved in the alleged irregularities and has assured that "the truth will come out after the CBI probe in this matter". However, the Congress has accused the BJP-led state government of shielding its



minister Sarang and some top officials associated with

the Medical Education Department.

PANEL OF IAS OFFICERS TO TACKLE STRAY DOG MENACE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government has appointed seven senior IAS officers to manage the escalating stray dog menace across the state. The stray dog crisis has become a significant concern, not only on the streets and in residential areas but also within government premises.

The Madhya Pradesh General Administration Department has issued an order forming a committee of 15 members, including IAS officers up to the level of Additional Chief Secretary.

Over 21,000 dog bite cases have been reported in Madhya Pradesh annually. In the past five years, stray dogs have killed five people including those who died from rabies.

In Bhopal alone, hospitals receive an average of 55 cases of dog bites daily. On July 1, Kunal from Lalghati in Bhopal, was mauled by a dog, requiring eight stitches. Five days later, 16-year-old Ravi Sahu was attacked by stray dogs while visiting a shrine in Raisen with his family. On July 9, a man in Sethani Ghat, Hoshangabad was attacked by stray



dogs, resulting in deep wounds on his leg.

While the government says the decision was driven by alarming data, the opposition claims it highlights governmental failures. "We have taken this decision after thoroughly examining our data. Our priority is to save lives, which is why we have formed this committee of officers," Animal husbandry minister

Lakhan Patel said.

But the situation on ground is dire. While the Bhopal Municipal Corporation's shelter home is overcrowded with stray dogs, dozens of people queue up every day in hospitals to get rabies injections.

Hospital data reveals alarming figures. In 2022, over 8,124 dog bite incidents were recorded and in 2023, the number almost doubled to

16,387. In the first five months of 2024, as many as 7,728 cases of dog bites have been reported.

However, organisations working for animal welfare have welcomed the decision. "This government step is commendable. These senior officials will make good decisions and solve the problems," Swati Gaurav, President, People for Animals, said.

Kendriya Vidyalyaya in Indore received bomb threat, security increased

Team Absolute | Indore



A school located in the IIT campus of Indore has received a bomb threat on August 15. This threatening email came on the official ID of the school principal on Friday evening.

The school principal received an email at 5:22 pm on Friday, in which there is a threat to bomb the school on August 15.

The incident took place at PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalyaya, IIT campus in Simrol. The name of Pakistani intelligence agency ISI is written in the email. Many abusive words were also used in the email. After this the school principal informed the police. After this there was a stir in the campus.

Simrol police have registered the case and started

investigation. Many abusive words have been written in this mail including a threat to bomb the school on 15th August. Police is investigating from all angles.

After receiving the mail, the security of the IIT campus has been increased. All students are being given entry only after showing their ID cards. Parents are not allowed inside Gate No. 2. Cyber team is also investigating the mail. The accused is also being identified.

Let us tell you that even before this, many schools of the country have received such mails. During investigation, someone's mischief is found. However, Indore Police has become alert after receiving the mail. As a precautionary measure, security has also been increased.

VIDEO OF WHISTLE BLOWER OF NURSING SCAM GONE VIRAL

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The video of Ravi Parmar, the whistle blower of the state's famous nursing scam, has gone viral. BJP state media in-charge Ashish Aggarwal retweeted the video on Facebook. In this, Digvijay Singh, Jitu Patwari and Umang Singhar have been targeted.

Wrote on "Watch this sting video of Ravi Parmar, the alleged 'whistle blower' of the nursing scam in PCC office of Congress, in which he has said that Sarang has become a victim of politics. He didn't earn any money like that. Many people come to me with audios and videos of AI (Artificial Intelligence) against Vishwas Sarang. They bring fake documents. Where did Sarang take the money? He became a victim of politics."

The post on a social media account registered in the name of Bhiku Mahatre has claimed that Ravi Parmar has made false allegations against Sarang at the behest of Congress leader Digvijay Singh.

In the video, Parmar is seen saying - 'All the money has been looted by the officials, Sarang has no hand in it. Sarang is trapped in a conspiracy and has become a victim of politics. Along with Congress, BJP leaders are also trying to settle it. So we will settle it. He harmed us. An FIR was lodged against us, why would we leave? Was after Raja Saheb. Now Raja Saheb has said that he will settle it. You fight. I am standing with you, so we will settle it. This video has been reposted by BJP's state media in-charge Ashish Aggarwal.

Now what could be more proof than that MP Congress has conspired to implicate cabinet minister Vishwas Sarang through forged documents. This

is a living example of nefarious conspiracies against BJP leaders sitting in the PCC office of Congress. It is said that truth can be troubled but not defeated. Today, the whistle blower Ravi Parmar himself, who wrote the screenplay at the behest of Digvijay Singh, is giving proof of this.

The Congressmen, who sought resignation on the plea of morality, should now seek a public apology from their conspiratorial leaders Digvijay Singh, Jitu Patwari and Umang Singhar. Jitu Patwari and Umang Singhar should immediately resign for misleading the people of Madhya Pradesh and wasting the valuable time of the Assembly through this fake scam.

Ravi Parmar called it a fraudulent video made through AI. He said - If pressure, influence and allurements did not work, now BJP is spreading lies by cyber

attack. I have been to jail for the fight of nursing students, I have been beaten, I was handcuffed and paraded around and a bond of Rs 50,000 was made, but they could not suppress my voice. Does BJP take responsibility for the authenticity of this video? If they are confident about the authenticity of the video then post it from their account.

I want to ask BJP leaders whether the account named Bhiku Mahatre is the official account of BJP. Do you take responsibility for its authenticity? If you trust the video then post it with your ID. Be prepared, I will follow the legal process and take legal action against anyone who tries to tarnish my fight. I have fought my entire battle on the basis of facts and strong papers only. The result of which is that today CBI officers are also in custody.



Congress Political Affairs Committee meeting, Congress will be aggressive on scams

Team Absolute | Bhopal



Many issues are being discussed in the meeting of the Political Affairs Committee of Congress. Now Congress will be more aggressive on scams, there has been a long discussion about this. Congress will be more aggressive in MP on various issues including nursing scam, irregularities in competitive examinations, NEET fraud etc. After Bhopal, protest movements will be conducted on these issues in all the districts of the state.

Many members of the committee including former CM Digvijay Singh, Congress state in-charge Bhanwar Jitendra Singh, PCC Chief Jitu Patwari, Leader of Opposition Umang Singhar, Kantilal Bhuria are present in this meeting. In the PAC meeting, former CM Kamal Nath and Rajya Sabha MP Vivek Tankha joined virtually and spoke.

After the defeat in the Lok Sabha elections, continuous

meetings are going on in the Congress. Today a meeting of the Political Affairs Committee is being held at the State Congress office in Bhopal. Congress co-in-charge CP Mittal, former leader of opposition Ajay Singh, Sajjan Singh Verma, Vikrant Bhuria, Bala Bachchan, Ashok Singh, Phool Singh Baraiya, Meenakshi Natarajna, Hina Kanvre, Kamleshwar Patel, Rajiv Singh, Dr. Vijayalakshmi Sadho, Priyavrat Singh were present in the meeting. Arif Masood, KP Singh, Siddharth Kushwaha joined.

On the instructions of PCC Chief Jitu Patwari, now the District Presidents of all the districts, Youth Congress, NSUI officials will meet the students embroiled in NEET and Nursing scam and submit a memorandum to the administrative officials along with them. Patwari has also written a letter to all the district heads in this regard.



EDITOR'S SPECS

AAP offers series of freebies in Haryana

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal, on Saturday, sounded the poll bugle in Haryana by launching "Kejriwal's guarantees" for the state under the helm of BJP for two consecutive terms. Accompanied by party MPs Sanjay Singh and Sandeep Pathak, and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Sunita Kejriwal launched guarantees of giving free electricity round the clock like Punjab and Delhi, employment to every youth, education to every child, free medical treatment, and Rs 1,000 per month to every woman above 18 years of age. The upcoming Assembly polls in Haryana will likely be in October. AAP's state unit chief Sushil Gupta said that the party is geared up to contest all 90 Assembly seats, fight the elections strongly and form a government. On Thursday, the AAP had announced that it will contest all the 90 Assembly seats in Haryana, where people want "bad-law" (change). AAP National Secretary Sandeep Pathak said that public dialogue for change was conducted by visiting about 6,500 villages and the voice of change "is coming from everywhere." The Punjab CM said that during the AAP leaders' visits to parts of Rohtak, Sonapat, and Jind in Haryana, people said that they wanted a change in the government. In the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections, AAP contested one seat in Haryana in alliance with the Congress as part of the INDIA bloc.

THE MICROSOFT WINDOWS 'GLITCH' IS ACTUALLY A WARNING FOR TODAY'S TECH

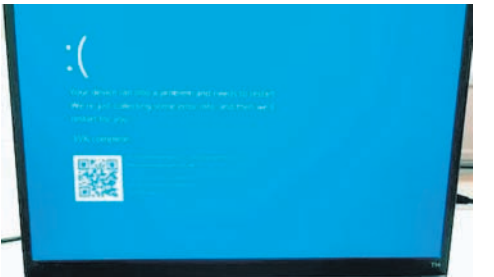
Pankaj Mishra

Imagine a scene from Neomancer: hackers breaking in, causing chaos with every keystroke. Now, flash back to this Friday. That sci-fi scenario? It's suddenly not so fictional. A botched software update has just thrown real life into disarray. Planes grounded, emergency lines jammed, and check-in counters swamped with long, snaking lines of frustrated travellers. The Microsoft outage has disrupted India's aviation sector. As major airlines like Vistara, IndiGo, SpiceJet, and Akasa Air scramble with systems down, passengers face the

brunt-endless lines, delayed flights, and a ticking clock. Even as airports like Delhi and Bengaluru report disruptions in up to 90% of flights, the response has been reactive, not proactive. This isn't a plot twist from Mr. Robot, where vigilantes manipulate the digital world for justice or chaos. This is our reality: the infrastructure teetering on the edge because of a glitch. As we stand in overcrowded terminals or seek urgent help to no avail, the dystopian futures of cyberpunk are already knocking on our door. Think about the price tag of such an outage. Airlines cancel thousands of flights, hospitals delay life-saving procedures, and emergency responders hit a wall. The immediate cost is

staggering, sure. But what about the long game? Lost trust, furious customers, and shaken investor confidence can balloon these costs to even more astronomical levels. How many millions - or billions - are we talking about here? Why aren't Microsoft or CrowdStrike held to the same stringent standards as those in more traditional sectors? A single faulty brake pad can trigger nationwide recalls in the automotive world. So why does the tech industry get a free pass when their mistakes can shut down our hospitals, ground our planes, and leave us stranded at check-in counters? It's ridiculous. When the digital infrastructure crumbles, the fallout is accepted as

part of the modern condition. And where's the backup plan? Our entire digital life hangs by the thread of a few lines of code with no strong fail-safe in sight. Why isn't there a robust Plan B when Plan A fails so spectacularly? Shouldn't there be mandatory, iron-clad redundancies for technologies that our lives depend on? Another tech glitch, and who's caught in the crossfire? The users, because we're over-reliant on platforms like Microsoft. They blame CrowdStrike, but that's not the point. Apple and Linux users dodged the bullet-why aren't we spreading our risks? It's high time we break up with single-system dependency. We need more than



apologies when tech systems fail disastrously. It's time for stringent regulations to hold tech giants like Microsoft and their partners accountable, just as any other sector crucial to public safety and welfare would be. Our reliance on these platforms is too critical to allow the 'single-system dependency' to continue unchecked. Let's push for diversity in our tech solutions to safeguard our digital - and physical - lives.

(Pankaj Mishra has been a journalist for over two decades and is the co-founder of FactorDaily. Views expressed are personal.)

A GUN AT A TRUMP RALLY WON'T STOP TRUMP FROM RALLYING FOR GUNS

Akshobh Giridharadas

Incendiary battle cries fill the air as two opposing camps get ready for a face-off. Both sides have their chants and are blowing their trumpets, and they see the other as antithetical to their beliefs. It's reminiscent of warring houses from Game of Thrones or Viking duels from days of yore. But this isn't a mediaeval tale, it's a modern-day spectacle. Welcome to an election year in the United States of America in 2024. America has long been a two-party system, but what we now have is a stark Manichean duopoly, driven by an ideological civil war. Each of the two warring parties believes that its own vision of America must be saved anyhow, and for that to happen, the other side must be vanquished at all costs. Former President Donald Trump's rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13 turned into a nightmare as a lone gunman, Thomas Matthew Crooks, a 20-year-old from Bethel Park, opened fire. It was a shot that was heard around the world.

At a time when many Democrats - one poll says 65% of registered Democrats - want Joe Biden to bite the bullet and make way for another candidate, Donald Trump took a literal bullet. Fortunately, no lasting damage was done to the former President as the bullet grazed his right ear. However, sadly, a rally attendee was killed and two others were critically injured. Biden, Vice-President Kamala Harris, and

former President Barack Obama, all passed on their concern for Trump's safety and unequivocal condemnation of the heinous attack - and rightly so. A deep sense of reflection ensued, and the American shibboleth acknowledged that this was not who they were. After all, in a robust democracy, the call is always for ballots over bullets. There is a lot to unpack here. History is a good teacher (even though in America, the phrase "it's history" may often be used dismissively). Most millennial Americans - and certainly Trump's newly anointed running mate, Ohio Senator J.D. Vance - weren't even born when Republican messiah Ronald Reagan survived an assassination attempt in 1981. Some of Reagan's predecessors, like Abraham Lincoln, James Garfield, William McKinley, and, of course, John F. Kennedy, weren't as lucky as him (it's another thing that Reagan probably wouldn't recognise the Republican Party and what it has become today). The Secret Service has come under fire (no pun intended) and is being castigated for its failure to secure the premises and prevent an active shooter from getting within striking range of a former President. Ironically, the Service was formed the same year as President Lincoln's assassination, but their primary duty back then wasn't protecting presidents, vice-presidents, former presidents, or presidential candidates. Instead, the Service was under the U.S. Treasury and tasked with eliminating counterfeiting, a problem that emerged from the ashes of the

Civil War. It was only after the assassination of McKinley in 1901 that the Secret Service was entrusted with the protection of Presidents. As CNN political commentator Van Jones pointed out, "It wasn't just Donald Trump who narrowly dodged a bullet, but America too". It wouldn't be wrong to think about the dangerous anarchy that could have unfolded had things gone south. We don't have to look too far either. In 2021, when Donald Trump refused to accept the electoral outcome and urged his supporters to "take back our country"? As Congress commenced an exercise to determine the peaceful transfer of power, an unruly pro-Trump mob stormed the Capitol, temporarily suspending the democratic process. Trump's supporters, who at one point had clamoured for a wall to be built to keep people out, wasted no time in climbing the walls of the Capitol. America's literal political and democratic edifice was breached and is now forever codified as the insurrection of January 6. Ironically, Trump's running mate on the ballot was once a 'Never Trumper' and had openly called him a threat to democracy. But flip-flopping is common in politics, especially when it's a ticket to the top on offer. Conspiracy theories abound, though the motive behind Crooks' action is not known yet. Crooks was a registered Republican, who used an AR-15 assault rifle that many have sought to ban and many from

the core Grand Old Party (GOP) base have continuously defended. The irony is that the GOP, which has long considered itself pro-life, has also been pro-guns. It's a party that has unequivocally backed gun ownership as a way of life, espousing guns, glory, and god-fearing Americans. The First Amendment protects free speech, press, assembly, and religion, while the Second Amendment allows most people in the United States to lock and load. Many political pundits have critiqued Trump for stoking a febrile and hostile environment and encouraging violent tendencies among his base. Trump himself has brazenly indicated intentions of governing with a vendetta and inflicting "revenge" on those who crossed him. The recently concluded Republican convention in Milwaukee was perhaps a sign of the GOP's post-Butler outlook. It was almost a dystopian MAGA gathering. The four-day convention had different MAGA themes for each day: Monday was "Make America Wealthy Once Again", Tuesday was "Make America Safe Once Again", Wednesday was "Make America Strong Once Again", and Thursday, the final day, was the cherry on the cake - "Make America Great Once Again".

(The views expressed are personal.)

international

WORLD COURT DECLARES ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE 'UNLAWFUL'

United Nations | Agencies

The World Court on Friday declared in a wide-ranging historic opinion that Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories is "unlawful" and said it should leave the area "rapidly". The Hague-based International Court of Justice, as it is formally known, said in its advisory opinion that all countries are "under an obligation" to not recognise Israel's take-over of the territories seized in the 1967 Six Day War and should not help it maintain the occupation. This amounts to an endorsement of the recognition of Palestine by 145 of the 193 members of the UN element and gives an impetus for others to follow suit. The opinion, sought by the General Assembly, also said that the UN and other international organisations should not recognise Israel's occupation either. It also said that Israel should stop building settlements in the occupied territories, withdraw the settlers who have moved there, and pay reparations for damages caused by it in the Palestinian territories. The court's opinion, historic in its sweeping range, comes as Israel is facing unprecedented international pressure following its



invasion of the Gaza Strip causing over 30,000 deaths, most of them of civilians in retribution for the Hamas terrorist attack from that area in which nearly 1,200 people were killed and about 250 taken hostages. Still pending before the court is a separate case brought by South Africa asking it to declare that Israel's actions in Gaza amount to genocide. The opinion delivered by the court's President, Nawaf Salam, cannot be enforced as it has no mechanism to ensure that its writs are carried out. The court said that the Assembly, which requested the opinion, and the Security Council should consider further action to end Israel's occupation.

Ultimately it will be up to the Security Council to enforce it, but the divided body will be unable to act because the US could veto any action. The powers that an occupying country exercises in the territory are based on the assumption that the takeover is a temporary measure caused by a military necessity and it does not transfer sovereignty to the occupier, according to the court. "The fact that an occupation is prolonged does not in itself change its legal status under international humanitarian law," it added. Palestine's Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki, who was in the Hague, hailed the opinion and said there should be no support for Israel's occupation. "No aid, no assistance, no complicity, no money, no arms, no trade," he said. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denounced the court's opinion as "false" and a distortion of history. Invoking the mandate in the Bible, a book followed by both Jews and Christians, he said: "The Jewish people are not conquerors in their own land - not in our eternal capital Jerusalem and not in the land of our ancestors in Judea and Samaria" - the biblical names for the occupied territories.

12 DEAD, 31 MISSING IN CHINA BRIDGE COLLAPSE

Beijing: At least 12 people were killed and 31 others injured after a highway bridge collapsed in north-west China's Shaanxi Province, local authorities said on Saturday. The bridge, located in Zhashui County in Shangluo City, partially collapsed around 8.40 p.m. on Friday due to a sudden downpour and flash floods, according to the provincial publicity department, Xinhua news agency reported. A total of 17 cars and eight trucks plunged into the Jinqian River below the bridge based on initial investigation. As of Saturday noon, rescue workers had recovered seven of them and found 12 people dead, with one person rescued, said the provincial Party committee. Thirty-one people remain unaccounted for, and search efforts are ongoing.

40 migrants killed after boat catches fire off Haiti

United Nations | Agencies

At least 40 migrants have died and several others were injured after a boat they were travelling in caught fire off northern Haiti, a UN spokesman has said, quoting the International Organization for Migration (IOM). "Two days ago, according to the Haitian National Office for Migration, the boat, carrying over 80 people, departed from Labadee en route to the Turks and Caicos Islands, a 250-kilometer journey," said Farhan Haq, the deputy spokesman for the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, at a daily briefing on Friday. At least 40 migrants have died, and several others were injured after their boat caught fire off Cap Haïtien in northern Haiti, he was quoted as saying by Xinhua news agency. Forty-one surviving migrants



were rescued by the Haitian Coast Guard and are currently receiving medical care, food, water, and psychosocial support provided by the IOM, in support of the national authorities, said the spokesman. Eleven migrants were taken to the nearest hospital for treatment, including burns, he added. This devastating event demonstrates the crucial need for safe and legal pathways for migration, said Gregoire Goodstein, the head of the IOM in Haiti. According to the IOM, more than 86,000 migrants have been forcibly returned to Haiti by neighbouring countries this year.

Africa faces shortage of 15 million teachers: African Union official

Accra | Agencies

Africa faces a deficit of 15 million in the supply of teachers, which hinders the continent's development, a senior African Union (AU) official said. Mohammed Belhocine, the AU commissioner for education, science, technology and innovation, made the remarks at a press briefing at the ongoing 45th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the AU in Accra, the Ghanaian capital, warning that this deficit has a negative impact on the continent's ability to meet its education and development aspirations, Xinhua news agency reported. The commissioner, therefore, called on the continent to take steps to bridge this gap to

achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in education by 2030 set by the United Nations. "This teacher deficit is huge, and we need strong efforts to bridge the gap and make the best use of what we are already investing in our educational systems," Belhocine said. Africa needs an investment of about \$90 billion to bridge the gap, improve infrastructure in education, and meet the SDGs on schedule, observed the commissioner. The situation in Africa is due to the diminishing social status of the teaching profession, according to Belhocine. "Today, it is more flamboyant to be a businessman than to be a teacher. This is what is creating the gap in the supply of teachers."

He urged the rebranding of the teaching profession to motivate more competent people to embrace the profession. "The other solution is to use digitalisation as a shortcut so that with digital infrastructure in place, one teacher can reach more children at the same time using the electronic platform and reduce the burden of the deficit," Belhocine said, adding that information and communications technology proficiency should be part of teacher training for this solution to succeed. He also called for global support for improving educational systems in Africa to achieve better outcomes, because the entire world might need to depend on African youth in the next 20 years due to the low population growth in other parts of the world.

AROUND 1000 INDIAN STUDENTS RETURN HOME FROM RIOT-HIT BANGLADESH

Dhaka | Agencies

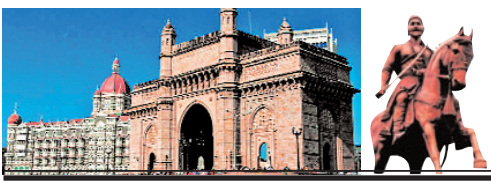
Around 1000 Indian students have returned to India through various land ports and regular flights out of Dhaka and Chittagong airports as the situation remains volatile in Bangladesh due to the ongoing student protests. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated on Saturday that it continues to coordinate with civil aviation, immigration, land ports and BSF authorities to ensure a smooth passage for Indian citizens. As many as 778 Indian students returned to India through various land ports while around 200 students have returned home by regular flight services through Dhaka and Chittagong airports. The High Commission of India in Dhaka and the Assistant High Commissions in Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Khulna have been assisting the return of Indian



nationals home following the recent developments in Bangladesh. The MEA detailed that, in coordination with the local authorities, measures are being taken by the High Commission and the Assistant High Commissions to facilitate safe travel to the border crossing points along the India

Bangladesh International Border. "The High Commission of India in Dhaka and our Assistant High Commissions are in regular touch with more than 4000 students remaining in various universities in Bangladesh and are providing necessary assistance. Students from Nepal and Bhutan have also been assisted with their crossing into

India on request," the MEA detailed. The High Commission and Assistant High Commissions are also in regular touch with Bangladesh authorities to ensure safety and security of Indian nationals and students. Security escorts have been arranged, where necessary, for their travel by road during repatriation through select land ports. At the same time, the High Commission in Dhaka is also coordinating with civil aviation authorities of Bangladesh and commercial airlines to ensure uninterrupted flight services to India from Dhaka and Chittagong, which can be used by our nationals to return to home. The MEA mentioned that the High Commission of India in Dhaka and the Assistant High Commissions of India in Bangladesh remain available for any assistance required by Indian nationals through the emergency contact numbers.



TORRENTIAL RAINS LASH MUMBAI, PARTS OF MAHA; SCHOOLS SHUT IN NAGPUR

Team Absolute | Mumbai/Nagpur

Heavy overnight rains lashed Mumbai, coastal Konkan and several parts of the state, leading to waterlogging and flooding in many parts hitting normal life, officials said here on Saturday.

The rains started around midnight with the downpour continuing with incessant downpours in the city and suburbs, plus a forecast of heavier rains during the day.

Waterlogging was reported in Dadar, Wadala, Parel, Kurla, Bhandup, Jogeshwari, Goregaon, Kandivali, Borivali and other places, while the Andheri subway was closed as it was flooded with 4-5 feet water, and pumps were deployed in subways at Dahisar, Kandivali, Malad, Santacruz, Khar and Mankhurd to throw out the flood waters.

While traffic was reported slow on the Eastern Express Highway, vehicles moved at a snail's pace on the Western Express Highway owing to flooding in parts of Kandivali, Malad and Goregaon.

The Western Railway reported nor-



mal services, but the Central Railway and its Harbour Line services were operational, although there were delays ranging from 10-15 minutes in some sections. In the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), heavy rains continued to pound parts of Palghar, Thane, and Raigad, disrupting traffic movements on many local

and inter-city roads, and a red alert has been sounded in Ratnagiri for Saturday. Lashed by heavy rains and waterlogging in many areas, schools were ordered to be shut in Nagpur, while Gadchiroli and Chandrapur were put on a red alert for Saturday. Meanwhile, in the past 12 hours (overnight) till Saturday 8 a.m.,

Mumbai recorded an average rainfall of 91 mm (city), western suburbs (93 mm) and eastern suburbs (87 mm), said the BMC.

The forecast for the day will be moderate to heavy rainfall in most of Mumbai with the possibility of very heavy in some places, as per the BMC.

Thackeray to grassroots cadre: Poll codes in 41 days, reach out to masses

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Cracking the whip, Shiv Sena (UBT) President and former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said on Saturday that the model code of conduct for the Maharashtra assembly elections in October is likely to be announced in 41 days and called upon the party's grassroots cadres to reach out to the masses at the village levels.

Speaking to the liaison heads of the party at various levels, Thackeray exhorted them to organise a 'Saffron Week' from August 4-11 all over the state and review the status and preparations of each Assembly constituency which must be submitted to the party headquarters in Mumbai. He also asked them to undertake reviews of various programmes and remain present in the Assembly segment for at least two days in a fortnight for the next three-four months till the elections are over.

Thackeray has directed all



the liaison heads of the party to undertake extensive tours of their respective regions along with other district and taluka level office-bearers, organise meetings right up to each Panchayat Samiti level, with the participation of the local party leaders/activists in those villages.

These liaison teams shall be expected to provide details of the party's local influence like, how many Shiv Sena (UBT) active members are present in each village, the number of new voters registered, villages where the party has no branches or a significant presence and when this would be rectified.

Earlier this week, the other Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA)

constituents Congress and Nationalist Congress (SP) also organised high-level meetings addressed by state-national leaders and initiated major efforts to reach out to the masses with the aim to oust the ruling MahaYuti government in the next elections.

Over the coming weeks, top MVA leaders including Congress state President Nana Patole, NCP (SP) President Sharad Pawar and Thackeray, besides other smaller allies, shall embark on state-wide pre-election tours to drum up support of the masses ahead of the polls as their teams hammer out the contentious seat-sharing formula.

Woman killed, 3 injured as portion of Mumbai building crashes

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A woman was killed and at least three others injured when portions of a balcony and slab of an old building crashed near Grant Road station, here on Saturday, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Disaster Control said.

The incident happened around 11 a.m. when a part of the balcony and slab portions of the second and third floor of the Rubinissa Manzil building collapsed and another part was hanging precariously.

At least seven or eight residents were stranded on the top floor of the four-storied building and the Mumbai Fire Brigade along with police, ambulances and civic staffers rushed to launch a rescue operation.

After around an hour, the body of one was retrieved



from the debris and the injured were rushed to the nearby Bhatia Hospital for treatment.

More persons are still feared to be trapped under the rubble and hectic efforts are underway to save them, said the BMC Disaster Control.

This is the current monsoon season's first major house crash tragedy as torrential rains clobbered Mumbai and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region in the past 72 hours, with heavy rains lashing the vicinity since Friday-Saturday midnight.

On Sonu Sood's Post About Kanwar Yatra Order, Kangana Ranaut's Rejoinder

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bharatiya Janata Party MP Kangana Ranaut has questioned actor Sonu Sood's stand on the Uttar Pradesh government's directive for food shops on the Kanwar Yatra route to display their owners' names.

After Sonu Sood's post stating that only "humanity" should be displayed on shop nameplates, BJP MP Kangana Ranaut questioned the actor's stand.

The debate stems from the Uttar Pradesh government order mandating the display of owners' names on shops and eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route.

Sonu Sood took to X to express his views on the matter, stating, "There should be only one name plate on every shop: 'HUMANITY'"

This statement received backlash from several social media users tag-



ging it as a critique of the government's directive.

Reacting to Sonu Sood's stance, Kangana Ranaut said, "Agree, Halal should be replaced with 'HUMANI-



TY."

Earlier, screenwriter Javed Akhtar also reacted to the ongoing controversy over the incident and strongly criticised the administration.

"Muzaffarnagar UP police has given instructions that on the route of a particular religious procession in near future all the shops restaurants n even vehicles should show the name of the owner prominently and clearly. Why? In Nazi Germany they used to make only a mark on particular shops and houses," Javed Akhtar posted on X. On Friday, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath mandated that food and beverage shops along Kanwar routes should display the name and identity of the operator/owner to maintain the sanctity of the pilgrims' faith.

Additionally, action will be taken against those selling halal-certified products. The move by the Uttar Pradesh government to enforce the use of ID Cards by all shops in the state that fall along the Kanwar Yatra route has resulted in a political slugfest between the BJP and the opposition.

Pistol That Puja Khedkar's Mother Waved At Farmers In Viral Video Seized

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Days after the mother of controversial probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar was arrested, Pune Police has seized a pistol and three bullets from her house, which she used to allegedly threaten some Maharashtra farmers.

Manorama Khedkar was arrested from Maharashtra's Raigad district on Thursday in connection with the viral video in which she is seen brandishing a firearm and threatening some villagers, reportedly over a land dispute.

Police have also seized the SUV seen in the viral video which has sparked public outrage.

Khedkar faces multiple charges, including attempt to murder.

The footage shows her in a heated exchange with a farmer, demanding to see land documents allegedly in her name. As tensions escalated, she waved the firearm threateningly before quickly concealing it upon noticing a camera



recording the encounter.

The video that has put Manorama Khedkar in trouble emerged amid the row surrounding her 34-year-old daughter Puja Khedkar.

The 2023-batch trainee IAS officer made headlines a few weeks ago when Pune collector Suhas Diwase wrote to Maharashtra Chief Secretary Sujata Saunik, flagging several demands that

she was not entitled to during her probation. This complaint set in motion a chain of events that led to shocking revelations. Questions were raised over how she cleared the tough selection process for UPSC. She was found to have availed of relaxation for physical disability and OBC candidacy, but allegations of her not being eligible for such relaxations surfaced. Her two-year train-

PUNE COUPLE FLUNG INTO AIR AFTER SPEEDING CAR HITS THEIR BIKE

Pune: A couple in Maharashtra had a miraculous escape after being hit by a speeding car on a busy highway, officials have said. The incident was recorded on a security camera in the area - the video of which has gone viral on social media.

Footage of the incident showed the speeding car ramming the couple's motorcycle from the back on the Ahmednagar-Kalyan highway in Pune on Thursday, following which they were flung into the air before hitting the ground.

The couple is being treated in the hospital and their condition is stated to be stable, the police said.

A case has been registered against the driver of the car and investigation is on, they said.

MVA is trying to discredit MahaYuti's welfare schemes: BJP

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former union minister and BJP leader Raosaheb Danve on Saturday reiterated that the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) is trying to discredit the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana and appealed to the eligible women to submit the registration forms directly through the government machinery.

"The MahaYuti government has taken many public welfare decisions during the monsoon session including Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana, free electricity up to 7.5 horsepower for agricultural pumps, compensation for the loss of farmers among others," Danve said.

He said that, however, MVA leaders are criticising these schemes and they are involved in discrediting



them.

He further alleged that MVA was taking credit for these schemes by displaying posters and banners in its constituencies. "So be aware of MVA's duplicitous role and apply for Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana through the government system itself and not hand it over to MVA activists," he urged the women.

Danve, who lost to Congress nominee Kailas Kale from Jalna constituency, expressed confidence that BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP will fight together as MahaYuti

(grand alliance) in the upcoming state Assembly election and win.

He said that the state BJP's core committee met on July 18 and 19 in Mumbai and held a review of all 288 assembly seats, adding that it was decided that MahaYuti together will contest the upcoming assembly poll.

He took a swipe at MVA saying that its three constituents Shiv Sena UBT, NCP SP and Congress are naming their respective leaders as the future Chief Minister.

"It seems that everyone is in a hurry to become the Chief Minister and the public is already seeing the cracks in the alliance. The division in the MVA was not new as it was visible following the controversy over the Sangli Lok Sabha seat. How can the voters trust the MVA when all is not well there?" he asked.

Ajit Pawar's NCP MLA meets NCP (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar

Team Absolute | Pune

Sparking political speculation, ruling MahaYuti ally Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)'s MLA from Junnar Atul V. Benke suddenly dropped in to meet Nationalist Congress Party (SP) President Sharad Pawar, here on Saturday.

After meeting Pawar Sr. in an atmosphere of bonhomie at the home of the NCP (SP) MP Amol Kolhe, Benke fueled further speculation by claiming that "anything is possible in politics" in the coming days ahead of the October state Assembly polls. "Anything can happen in politics... one cannot say. Sharad Pawar and Ajit Pawar may also come together before the upcoming elections..." said Benke, dropping broad hints of his possible future political moves. On his part, Sharad Pawar threw a characteristic spinner by saying that Benke had worked for the NCP (SP) in the last Lok Sabha elections, and the party would protect his interests. "Many people come to meet me. What's new in this? He is the son of my friend (the late legislator Vallabh Benke). If there's any politics in this it will be known at the appropri-



ate time," said Pawar with a grin.

However, Kolhe sought to downplay the development saying, "It was not a political meeting that nothing much should be read into it." Questioned about it, NCP President and Deputy CM Ajit said flatly, "If somebody goes to meet someone, what can we do."

He said that ahead of elections, many people keep going places to get a poll ticket, though the Benke-Sharad Pawar meeting succeeded in raising more than just eyebrows in political circles. The NCP (SP) state President Jayant Patil, Jitendra Awhad, Rohit R. Pawar and others have been indicating in the past few weeks that over a dozen MLAs from the ruling MahaYuti side are reportedly in contact with them to explore 'ghar-wapasi' options.

Sex racket busted in Navi Mumbai, eight women rescued

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Eight women were rescued after a sex racket was busted by the Navi Mumbai Police. An autorickshaw driver was arrested in connection with the racket, reported news agency citing official on Saturday.

As per the report, Yadav was arrested after police received a tip-off about a gang sending women to various lodges for prostitution after soliciting customers online, said inspector Prithviraj Ghorpade of the anti-human trafficking cell of Navi Mumbai police.

With the help of a decoy customer, they recently nabbed Yadav who used to ferry the women to hotels, the official said.

Upon questioning the auto driver, the police rescued one woman from a hotel room by



the police.

Based on her information, they rescued eight other women from a room at Shiravane in the Nerul area.

Additionally, police also arrested two men, identified as Vishnu, alias Vikaskumar Janki Yadav (28), and Indrajit Indradev Prasad (63) from there.

The suspected kingpin of the racket, Shambu Upadhyaya, is at large, the official said. An FIR has been registered under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at Turbhe police station.

CUET results delay leaves students in fix over admissions

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai students seeking admissions to central universities are in a fix as the delay in the Combined University Entrance Test (CUET) results continues. Faced with the uncertainty of awaiting results or securing spots in state or private universities, many students have chosen the latter.

Students are now taking chances and hoping to get a transfer to their preferred institutions with refunds once the CUET results are finally released. The paper leak allegations involving NEET-UG and UGC-NET, has delayed the announcement of CUET-UG results. CUET-UG, the single-window test for admissions to most undergraduate programmes



at 46 central universities, has cast a dark shadow over the admissions calendar.

Universities like Delhi University (DU), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) have announced delays in the academic calendar, pushing the start of first-semester classes by at least two weeks.



TAYLOR SWIFT'S STALKER GETS ARRESTED AT GERMANY



Los Angeles | Agencies

The 34-year-old has been very vocal about making sure everyone is safe at her shows, but we're sure she did not expect that both her boyfriend Travis Kelce and herself are the ones that were caught in a creepy situation.

According to the Associated Press Wednesday, July 17th, a 34-year-old American male whose name was not released who apparently stalked the "Love Story" singer—appeared at Veltins-Arena in Gelsenkirchen, Germany to attend the popstar's night one concert but was found detained due to previously making threats toward the couple online.

Though no harm was done he will remain in detention until Taylor wraps up all three nights in the city on Friday.

This unfortunate situation is not new to the singer. In the past she has been stalked outside of her home in New York.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Kylie Kelce is not pregnant nor is she staying silent over the false rumors that have circulated about her. In a new TikTok video shared by Jason Kelce's wife, she set the record straight about the speculation.

"Trigger warning: pregnancy loss," Kylie wrote under her Friday, July 19, clip. "I have been congratulated in person multiple times. I have been questioned by strangers. Most aggressively, I was DM'd by a random woman asking, 'Did you have a miscarriage?' Because one of the news outlets that said I was pregnant doubled back and claimed I hadn't announced it because I had a miscarriage."

In the video, Kylie spoke candidly to her followers about the situation, noting that she has noticed "a number of articles written about me since the middle of last football season stating that I am pregnant."

"I'm not," she said while shaking her head. "I cannot stand people writing such insensitive articles about such a sensitive topic. [It] really lights my fire."

Kylie Kelce Shuts Down False Pregnancy Rumors



ARMIE HAMMER DENIES ROBERT DOWNEY JR. PAID FOR HIS REHAB



Los Angeles | Agencies

maintained that all relationships were consensual.

Despite the fallout, Hammer shared with Morgan that some of his former Hollywood colleagues reached out, including Robert Downey Jr. However, when asked about reports that the 'Iron Man' star paid for his rehab, Hammer said, "No, he did not. He did not pay for me to go to rehab."

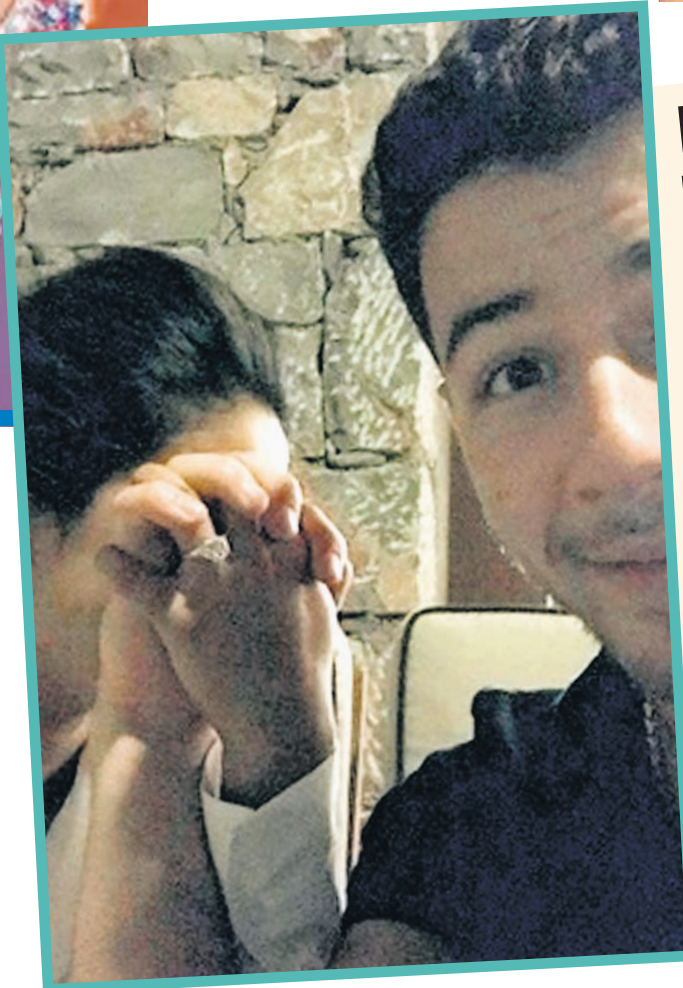
When prodded about whether Downey has been "supportive", Hammer was hesitant but eventually said: "I

would say that yes, he has." Morgan replied, "You don't seem convinced, because that was well reported. Is that really not the case?"

Hammer responded, "I don't want to bring anyone else into my situation. There are a number of people who have been extremely helpful, and I'm incredibly grateful."

Pushed further, Hammer said that Downey was helpful to him "in the way where (when) anyone in Hollywood who suffers from any sort of addiction issues -- whether it be alcohol or process addiction or drugs -- decides to get sober, that guy will find you, and he will help you. It's amazing."

Asked for the best advice Robert Downey Jr. gave him, Hammer said: "Sit down, shut up, everything is going to be okay."



NICK JONAS SHARES UNSEEN PICTURE FROM THE MOMENT HE PROPOSED PRIYANKA

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Nick Jonas took a nostalgic trip down memory lane by sharing an unseen picture from the moment he proposed to his wife, Priyanka Chopra Jonas.

On Saturday, the singer posted a throwback picture on his Instagram, capturing the moment he popped the question.

In the photo, Priyanka is seen hiding her face while flaunting her engagement ring, as Nick smiles into the camera.

Nick captioned the photo: "I asked the most amazing woman in the world to marry me 6 years ago today. Thank you for saying yes @priyankachopra."

Fans of the couple flooded the comments section with joyful remarks, often referring to Nick as "Jiju."

Priyanka reposted the picture on her Instagram stories, writing, "Cannot believe it's been 6 years since this day."

The couple tied the knot on December 1 and 2, 2018, in a grand celebration that honoured both Christian and Hindu traditions at Umaid Bhawan Palace in Jodhpur.

They hosted two wedding receptions, one in Delhi and another in Mumbai. They welcomed their daughter via surrogacy in January 2022.

CLINT EASTWOOD'S PARTNER CHRISTINA SANDERA DIES AT 61

Los Angeles | Agencies

Legendary actor-director Clint Eastwood's partner, Christina Sandera, has passed away at the age of 61. Christina was the companion of the 94-year-old actor for the past 10 years, reports Mirror.co.uk. Clint paid tribute to her in a statement, saying, "Christina was a lovely, caring woman, and I will miss her very much." A Warner Brothers spokesperson told The Hollywood Reporter that no further information will be released.

The private couple began dating shortly after Clint divorced his second wife, Dina, following almost



20 years of marriage.

According to Mirror.co.uk, Christina and Clint kept their relationship away from the spotlight. They reportedly first met when she was working as a hostess at his Mission Ranch Hotel and Restaurant in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California.

They started dating in 2014. Although the couple remained very private, Christina supported Clint at several premieres and awards shows. She made her red carpet debut with him at the Oscars in 2015, when his movie

'American Sniper' was up for six

gongs.

Clint is a father to eight children by six different women.

His first marriage was to manufacturing secretary-turned-fitness instructor Maggie Neville Johnson in 1953. While they were together, they had an "open relationship."

The affair resulted in his daughter, Laurie, being born. However, the mother put her up for adoption without Clint's knowledge. It wasn't until much later that he discovered she had been adopted by a couple in Seattle.

Angelina Jolie & Brad Pitt's Divorce Has 'Dragged on'

Los Angeles | Agencies

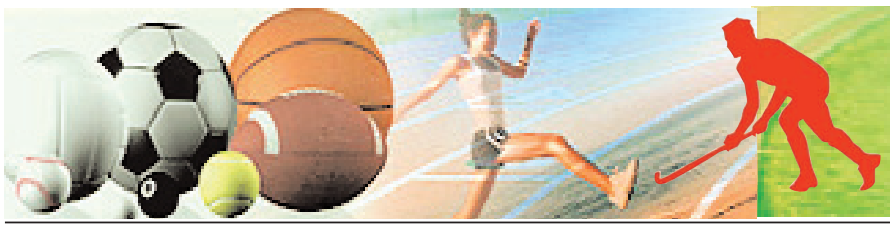


Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt's divorce has lasted almost a decade, but why? According to a new report, the 49-year-old actress and the 60-year-old actor's legal issues have "dragged on" because of "all the bitterness" between them. "All the bitterness is partly why the divorce has dragged on for so many years. Neither will let it go," a source told PEOPLE on Friday, July 19, adding that the couple's romance "turned nasty and it was not a good situation for anyone. ... You'd think they would be over it and just settle." The insider added that Brad and Angelina's "disagreements took over" in their marriage, while a separate source clarified to the publication that their "differences added up over time." "It's really sad for the children, but also the parents," the second insider told the outlet. "Divorce, especially one so high-profile, can be challenging for the whole family." Nevertheless, the parents — who share kids Maddox, Pax, Zahara, Shiloh, Knox and Vivienne together — "both care about the children," the second insider said.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Candice Swanepoel



Harbhajan questions Chahal, Abhishek's snub for Sri Lanka tour

New Delhi | Agencies

Former India spinner Harbhajan Singh has questioned spinner Yuzvendra Chahal and Abhishek Sharma's exclusion from Men in Blue's squad for the upcoming Sri Lanka tour.

Under new head coach Gautam Gambhir, India are scheduled to play three T20Is and three ODIs in Sri Lanka, starting on July 27. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Thursday named the squad for both formats and named Suryakumar Yadav as the new T20 skipper after Rohit Sharma's retirement from the format.

In the T20I squad, Abhishek Sharma's exclusion was the biggest talking point, he recently made his debut against Zimbabwe and also scored a ton in his second match. He didn't find any place in either squad while Chahal, who was part of the T20 World Cup, was also dropped for the Sri Lanka tour.

On the other hand, wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson was only named in the T20I squad and was not included in ODIs as Rishabh Pant earned a recall after making his comeback in



India colours in the T20 World Cup last month.

"Hard to understand why Yuzvendra Chahal, Sanju Samson

and Abhishek Sharma are not a part of the Indian team for Sri Lanka," Harbhajan wrote on X.

Also, India's main players returned

to T20Is after being rested for the Zimbabwe tour. Harshit Rana's addition to the ODI squad was one of the notable additions in the announcement. The 22-year-old Delhi pacer earned a maiden call-up and will join his former Kolkata Knight Riders mentor Gambhir in Sri Lanka. In IPL 2024, he bagged 19 scalps in 13 matches for KKR and finished as the second-highest wicket-taker for the franchise after Varun Chakaravarty's 21 dismissals.

India's T20I Squad: Suryakumar Yadav (C), Shubman Gill (VC), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rinku Singh, Riyan Parag, Rishabh Pant (WK), Sanju Samson (WK), Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Khaleel Ahmed, Mohd. Siraj.

India's ODI Squad: Rohit Sharma (C), Shubman Gill (VC), Virat Kohli, KL Rahul (WK), Rishabh Pant (WK), Shreyas Iyer, Shivam Dube, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd. Siraj, Washington Sundar, Arshdeep Singh, Riyan Parag, Axar Patel, Khaleel Ahmed, Harshit Rana.

The first T20I between India and Sri Lanka will be played in Pallekele on July 27.

New role brings lot of responsibility: Suryakumar

Mumbai | Agencies

Appointed captain of the Indian men's T20I team, middle-order batter Suryakumar Yadav has thanked fans and supporters for the outpouring of love and support and said the role brings a lot of responsibility, excitement and enthusiasm during the series against Sri Lanka.

The selectors had opted for Suryakumar Yadav, one of the best batters in the shortest format of the game in the world, as captain for the T20I series ahead of Hardik Pandya, who has led the side previously and was the vice-captain of the team in the recent World Cup. Rohit Sharma will lead the side in the ODIs with Shubman Gill being vice-captain of both squads.

"Thank you so much for outpouring love, support, and best wishes from you. Last few weeks have been nothing short of a dream and I am truly grateful. Playing for the country is the most spe-



"I will never be able to describe in words," said Surya in his post on Instagram.

"This new role brings with it, a lot of responsibility, excitement and enthusiasm. I hope to keep receiving your support and blessings.

All fame reaches God, God is great," said Suryakumar Yadav, who was one of the stars of India's triumph in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

Suryakumar Yadav has earlier led India in T20Is and Mumbai in domestic cricket.

Paris Olympics: India's archery coach to return home over denial of accreditation

New Delhi | Agencies

India's archery squad will be in the spotlight at the Paris Olympics as it aims to bring the country's maiden medal in the sport at the Games. However, according to reports, the preparations have hit a roadblock as the squad's Korean chief coach Baek Woong Ki has been denied accreditation to the tournament which means he will return to India with his flight being booked for Saturday evening.

"I have been preparing with the goal of helping India win a medal for the first time at the Paris Olympics. However, I believe that appointing a foreign coach but excluding (me) from the Olympic Games archery team is a big mistake by the IOA and a decision that does not follow the original plan and goals," he was quoted as saying by HT.



The Archery coach is highly regarded worldwide and was the head coach of the South Korean contingent that won a gold medal at the event in the 2012 London Olympics. Upon the latest events, Woong Ki is said to be highly upset with him even stating "I do not want to continue anymore. I just want to go back to South Korea."

"Paris Olympics is India's best chance to win a medal in archery. It is very unfortunate that I cannot be with the team right now. I can only send messages to the team and I have told them what they should be doing during the tournament. I hope the Indian archers win a medal at the Olympics. We have been training hard to win a medal but (at a very important stage (the Olympics)), I am not appointed coach," added Woong Ki.

Legacy of Rohit, Virat will be remembered for generations, says Arshdeep Singh

New Delhi | Agencies

India pacer Arshdeep Singh feels that the legacy left behind by Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli's T20I retirements will be remembered for generations. The duo ended their shortest format career with a T20 World Cup title win against South Africa in Barbados last month.

Arshdeep, who was part of the T20 World Cup-winning team, said their contributions in the batting department have always been an inspiration for cricketers across the world.

"Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have left an indelible mark on T20I cricket. Their contributions have been immense, and their legacy will be remembered for generations. Rohit bhai's explosive batting at the top and his sharp captaincy have set new benchmarks in the format. Virat bhai, with his consistent performances and relentless pursuit of excellence, has been a role model for cricketers around the world," Arshdeep told



IANS. "Their passion, dedication, and ability to perform under pressure have inspired many young cricketers, including myself. They have shown us what it takes to succeed at the highest level, and their records speak for themselves. Although they may not be playing T20Is anymore, their

influence and impact on the game will continue to guide and motivate us," he added.

Arshdeep is among the players who made their white-ball debut under Rohit's captaincy and played all their international cricket under his leadership. The 25-year-old lauded the opening batter for his tactical

pross and called him "bowler's captain", who gives freedom to his bowlers to express themselves on the field.

"Playing under Rohit Sharma's captaincy has been an incredible experience. Rohit bhai is definitely fully a bowler's captain. He allows every bowler full freedom of executing what they want to do on the field. He has a unique way of keeping the dressing room atmosphere light and positive, which really helps in high-pressure situations," the pacer said.

"What I like the most about his leadership is his calm demeanour on the field. He always backs his players, giving us the confidence to play our natural game. His strategic thinking and the way he read the game are truly inspiring, and I have learned a lot from him about handling different match scenarios," he added.

After being rested for the Zimbabwe T20Is, Arshdeep will travel to Sri Lanka to play in three T20Is and as many ODIs, starting on July 27.

'IT WAS BRUTAL': KAVEM HODGE ON FACING FIERCE BOWLING SPELL FROM WOOD

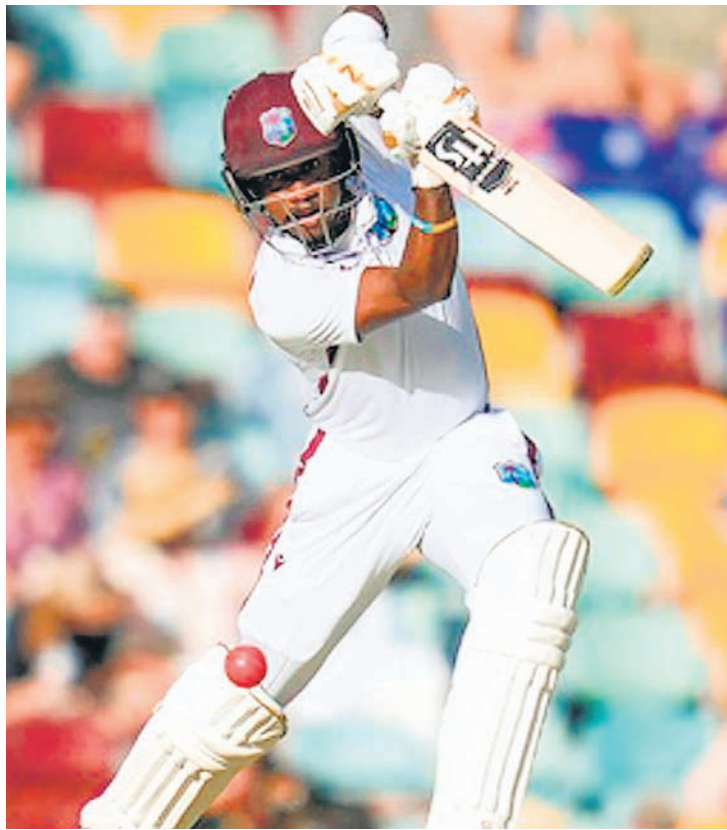
Nottingham | Agencies

The West Indies staged a remarkable fightback after a century from Kavem Hodge and a crucial 175-run partnership with Alick Athanaze in the second Test against England. This effort saw the West Indies mounting a strong reply of 351 for 5 at the end of Day 2 to England's imposing first-innings total of 416.

Responding to the challenge set by their skipper, Kraigg Brathwaite, who had called for an improved batting performance, Hodge and Athanaze rose to the occasion with grit and determination. Reflecting on their partnership at the end of the day, Hodge highlighted their long-standing synergy, developed while playing for the same franchise back home.

"We always bat good together, play for the same franchise back home, we've had a lot of big partnerships. He's more aggressive than I am, I'm more of an accumulator, so I tend to go under the radar and go about my business quietly. Always good to spend time with him at the wicket," Hodge said after the end of Day 2 play.

Playing in only his fourth Test match, Hodge was thrilled to achieve his maiden Test hundred. "It's a



dream come true, you play the game as a youngster, that's something that

you want to do, especially at the highest level - in England against England. I'm really happy and satisfied about it, especially also the position of the team, it's always good to help the team's cause," he shared, beaming with pride.

The highlight of Hodge's innings was his fierce battle against England's speedster Mark Wood, who relentlessly delivered bouncers at high speed. At one point, a bouncer struck Athanaze on the back of the helmet, causing concern for Hodge. "I flinched. I thought I was going to get hit before him but it didn't happen like that. But kudos to him that he bounced back well and was able to stand his ground and push on further." Reflecting on the intensity of the day, Hodge recounted a humorous exchange with Wood during his spell. "It was brutal. It's not every day you rock up and you face someone that's bowling more than 90mph every single ball. There was one point, I made a joke to him, I said: 'Hey, I have a wife and kids at home.' But I think that made the century a lot more satisfying. Test cricket is brutal, it's challenging, it's mentally draining. To experience that, facing guys like Mark Wood, it was tough but it was satisfying."

Golf: Vidhatri grabs maiden win as a pro in 9th leg of WPGT

Hosur | Agencies

Vidhatri Urs holed a hat trick of birdies early in the round to cruise to a 2-shot win in the ninth leg of the Women's Pro Golf Tour 2024 at the Clover Greens here on Friday. Vidhatri shot 1-under 70 for her third under-par round of the week after 68-69 on the first two days. She totalled 6-under 207 to complete a fine wire-to-wire win. This was Vidhatri's first win as a professional, though she has won on the Tour as an amateur in the past. Amateur Saanvi Somu (71) who bogeyed twice in the last three holes finished second, two shots at 209 behind Vidhatri. Experienced Gaurika Bishnoi shot even par 71 and was a further two shots behind at 2-under 211 for the sole third.

Vidhatri, who was third in her previous two starts as a professional, opened with two pars before finding three birdies on the trot to bolster her chances. Four pars from sixth to ninth saw her turn in 3-under.

Bogeys on the tenth and the 11th were blips, but she made amends for them as she birdied the 15th. She could then afford a bogey on the last hole as her playing partner Saanvi dropped shots on the 16th and the 18th. Vidhatri's 1-under 70 was one of the only two under-par rounds on the final day. Saanvi had two birdies on either side of the



course, but she also gave away a shot on the front nine and three more on the back nine for an even-par 71 which gave her the sole second place. Gaurika started with a bogey but two birdies on the third and the fifth saw her turn in 1-under. On the back nine, she dropped a shot on 12th and parred the rest. Three players Khushi Khanijau (70), Shweta Mansingh (71) and Sneha Singh (73) were tied for fourth at 1-over 214.

Amateur Mannat Brar (76) slipped in the final round and was seventh while Jahaanvie Walia (71) and Gourabi Bhowmick (74) were tied for ninth. Karishma Govind (74) was tenth.

Paris Olympics Countdown: After Rio, Tokyo debacle, shooters aim for bull's eye in France

New Delhi | Agencies

India's 21-member shooting squad is the second largest after athletics in the upcoming Paris Olympics. It is also India's largest-ever shooting contingent in the history of the Games, surpassing the previous best of 15 from Tokyo. As the number of shooters has increased in the squad, the expectations from them have also multiplied many folds after firing blanks and returning empty-handed from the last two Olympics despite putting up a record number of players.

In fact, India's last Olympic medal(s) in the sport came in the 2012 London Olympics when Vijay Kumar shot a silver in men's 25m rapid fire

pistol and Gagan Narang claimed a bronze medal in men's 10m air rifle. Narang is currently in Paris as India's Chef-de-Mission.

India's first Olympic medal in shooting was bagged by Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore when he claimed silver in men's double trap in the 2004 Athens Olympics. Since then the country has clinched three more medals in the sport including Abhinav Bindra's gold in men's 10m air rifle in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

This time, India may expect a better result in shooting and hope to continue the medal-winning trend which has been on hold since the last two Games. One main reason for optimism is that the shooters have undergone extensive training and participated in many competitions, win-



ning medals and setting records. According to Suma Shirur, head coach of the rifle team, the shooters have also worked on the mental aspect of the game through simulation and mental warm-up. India have earned a record 21 quota places for the quadrennial showpiece event. Manu Bhaker will be the only shooter to participate in more than one individual event -- the women's 10m air pistol and the women's 25m pistol. It will be her second Olympics after making her debut in the Games in Tokyo.

Along with eight individual rifle and pistol events offering a possible 16 medal opportunities, India will have a record six starts in the four individual shotgun events. Five mixed teams, two each for rifle and pistol and one for shotgun, will

also be competed in by India.

Apart from Manu, India's Olympic shooting team for Paris 2024 includes returning rifle shooters Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, Anjum Moudgil, and Elavenil Valarivan, alongside 11 debutants.

Sift Kaur Samra, the 50m rifle 3 positions gold medalist at the recent Asian Games, and 19-year-old Esha Singh, who won four medals at the Hangzhou Asian Games, joined the team. The pistol team features Manu, Esha Singh, and Rhythm Sangwan.

Notable omissions include Rudranksh Pathil, Divyansh Singh Panwar, and Ashi Chouksey. The 10m air pistol team includes Asian Games champions Sarabjot Singh and Arjun Singh Cheema.



I NEVER SAID 'NO' TO MY FATHER: RANBIR KAPOOR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Ranbir Kapoor, who smashed the box-office records with his last release 'Animal', is set to appear on Nikhil Kamath's podcast. The teaser of the upcoming episode of the podcast was unveiled on Saturday sending the fans of the actor in a frenzy given the actor isn't much in the public eye. Ranbir Kapoor will join the Zerodha co-founder Nikhil Kamath for an unfiltered discussion on navigating fame, the nuances of Bollywood, and his personal journey in the film industry. The promo shows Ranbir speaking about his father, the late actor Rishi Kapoor, as he said that he was a very short-tempered man but very good at heart. He said that he never saw the colour of his father's eyes as he always used to keep his head down while speaking to him. He also shared that he never said 'No' to his father. The podcast allows the viewers to explore insights, behind-the-scenes stories, and candid reflections from Ranbir as he shares his perspectives on stardom, challenges faced, and lessons learned along the way. This episode promises to be a deep dive into the mind of Ranbir Kapoor, offering listeners a unique glimpse into the life of an actor at the top of his game.

Simplicity of saree: 'Intrinsic to culture of femininity': Meenakshi Seshadri

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Renowned 90s actress Meenakshi Seshadri, celebrated for her grace and elegance, has recently posted a video highlighting the Indian concept of 'Shringaar', which she describes as 'intrinsic to the culture of femininity'.

The heartthrob of the 90s, Meenakshi, who is known for her films like 'Damini', 'Shahenshah' and others, took to her Instagram and shared a reel video showcasing herself in a stunning Kanjeevaram saree in red and white.

The 60-year-old actress paired the saree with a matching white blouse.

For the makeup, Meenakshi opted for nude brown glossy lips, kohlr-rimmed eyes, highlighted top points of the face, and rounded off the makeup with a small red bindi. Her hair was styled in a curly, messy bun, adorned with a gajra.

The 'Ghatak' actress accessorised the look with gold jankas, and red and gold bangles.

The video also shows her holding a ghungroo in her hands. In the caption, Meenakshi wrote: "From beginning of time, woman has been always captured in the image of beauty personified. Adorned decorated and embellished. In India Shringara is intrinsic to the culture of femininity." Talking further about the photoshoot, Meenakshi penned: "I had the opportunity of working with photographer, Thushal in my hometown, of Dallas US. He rejoices in the regal, joyous, elegant, seduc-



tive, and almost painting, like quality of photo art. For our shoot together we chose a very simple yet classic kanjeevaram saree. Pure pristine white with veldar red wavy lines strewn across the fabric."

She went on to say, "Right from the elaborate ringlet curls on my head transversing to the red Bindi perched between my eyebrows, And playing with the theme of bangles and bells the look aimed to celebrate beauty, a la Indian woman. For every dancer of classical dance from India, the ankle bells are sacrosanct and a pure blessing."

Meenakshi expressed pride in the country's diverse culture, saying: "I am so proud that India is rich in its heritage of textiles ranging from cotton to silks with varied hues, colors patterns, and designs." "When I look at the photographs, my eyes demurely reflecting the sheen of the silk I remember my mother with utmost fondness for she was the one who presented me with the Saari just before I got married. For each one of you women who have received beautiful gifts of the eternal saree from your mother, this is my gift to you," she concluded.

Genelia revealing the meaningful tattoo on her hand, expresses her love for Riteish, and two sons



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Genelia Deshmukh expressed her love for her husband, Riteish Deshmukh, and their two sons, Riaan and Rahyl, with henna tattoos. Genelia shared a candid picture of herself on Instagram stories, where she is seen looking away from the camera, revealing the meaningful tattoo on her hand.

The tattoo, which features three 'R's accompanied by a heartbeat line, symbolises her affection for her husband, Riteish, and their two sons, Riaan and Rahyl.

Genelia and Riteish tied the knot on February 3, 2012, after years of dating. They got married as per the traditional Marathi ceremony, followed by a Christian wedding the next day.

The couple's first son, Riaan, was born on November 25, 2014, and their second son, Rahyl, was born on June 1, 2016.

On the professional front, Genelia is preparing for her upcoming film 'Sitaare Zameen Par', which also stars Aamir Khan and Darshel Safary. She also has a Telugu movie titled 'Junior' in the pipeline.

Riteish was recently seen in the horror-comedy film 'Kakuda', where he plays a ghost hunter named Victor. The film, which also stars Sonakshi Sinha and Saqib Saleem, follows Victor as he assists Sonakshi and Saqib after Saqib encounters a troublesome ghost.



Alaya F

Sushmita says

SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN ACT OF SEX TO HER CHILDREN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sushmita Sen, who was last seen in the 3rd season of the streaming series 'Aarya', has shared that she didn't have to explain the act of sex to her children as a part of sex education.

Sushmita recently appeared on actress Rhea Chakraborty's 'Podcast', and discussed aspects of her life. The 'Aarya' star shared that the conversation she had with her girls about sex was very different from what the actress had with her mom. The conversation that Sushmita had with her mother was not very intimate, unlike the one she had with her daughters.

She told Rhea, "The act of sex, I didn't have to explain (to my daughters). They're already PhDs (sic), all of them are. My younger one is into biology. So, she will get into terminologies, and I'm like, Okay, can we please keep it very generic? We don't have to discuss the technicalities of it."

She went on to say that the only thing that she has repeatedly spoken to them about is, if somebody told them, "It's the right time or this is not the right thing," she was not interested in discussing that with her daughter because that's between them and their friends. "You figure that out, equate sex with respect in your life," the actress shared. "You can explore yourself



and your desires, there's no problem with that. But, in the end, it should not make you feel bad because that's important. And, don't do it out of peer pressure. You have to do it because you want that," she added.



TINA DATTA ENJOYS HER FANCY MALDIVES VACATION

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Tina Datta on Saturday shared a video of herself enjoying a vacation in the Maldives, giving fans major travel goals. Tina, who is known for her work in the show 'Uttaran', took to Instagram, where she has 4.7 million followers, and posted a reel video.

In the clip, Tina is seen wearing a blue monokini with an orange print.

The actress has her hair tied up in a bun and accessorised the look with black sunglasses.

The video shows her taking a dip in the pool and enjoying a floating breakfast.

She captioned the video: "Vibe check: Me, Sea, and the (infinite symbol) horizon #waterbaby #maldives."

Tina is on vacation in the Maldives with her mother, Madhumita Datta.

Born in Kolkata, Tina, who is an avid yoga and pilates enthusiast, made her debut at the age of five with the show 'Sister Nivedita'. She made her film debut as a child artist in the Bengali film 'Pita Maata Santan'.

Tina has appeared in Bengali films like 'Dus Number Bari', 'Chirodini Tumi Je Amar', and 'Sagarkanya'. She also featured in Rituparno Ghosh's film 'Chokher Bali', alongside Aishwarya Rai.