

absolute india



VOL. 11, ISSUE 228, MUMBAI | SUNDAY, JUNE 30, 2024 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

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T20 World Cup: Rohit & Co. smash the jinx, crown finds its new prince

STANDUP FOR THE CHAMPIONS



Bridgetown (Barbados) | Agencies

South Africa needed 30 runs off 30 balls to win the 2024 Men's T20 World Cup. But Hardik Pandya's 3-20 and Jasprit Bumrah's 2-18 helped an unbeaten India to come back and clinch their second title in the shortest format with a seven-run win at the Kensington Oval on Saturday.

Talismanic batter Virat Kohli stepped up to end his lean run with a 59-ball 76 to help India post a competitive 176/7, the highest total in a Men's T20 World Cup final. His 72-run stand for the fourth wicket with Axar Patel, who made 47 off 31 balls, and a 57-run partnership with Shivam Dube, who hit a 16-ball 27, helped India go past 175-run mark, as they got 42 runs off the last three overs.

In reply, South Africa were very much in sight to chase down the total. But Hardik taking out Heinrich Klaasen propelled India to come back into the match and emerge victorious to end a long 11-year global trophy drought as they restricted South Africa to 169/8.

India now join West Indies and England as two-time winners of the Men's T20 World Cup, and give a winning farewell to head coach Rahul Dravid. With the ultimate glory achieved, it made way for emotional scenes - hugs, hand-

shakes and tears welling up in the Indian camp, with 'chak de india' and 'lehra do' blaring from the loudspeakers.

It also meant Virat Kohli signed off from playing T20s for India on a high with the World Cup trophy and the Player of the Match award in the final. When it mattered the most for India, Kohli stood up to be the hero of India's innings with his crucial knock laced with six fours and two sixes. Rohit Sharma got going with a cut and reverse-sweep fetching him consecutive deliveries off Keshav Maharaj. But Maharaj bounced back as he had Rohit sweeping aerially to square leg to fall for nine, followed by dismissing Rishabh Pant for a two-ball duck.

Axar brought up India's hundred in 13.1 overs

by hammering Rabada for a six down the ground. But a ball and wide later, South Africa produced a moment of magic when Kohli missed a delivery and the ball went behind to de Kock, who ran-out Axar, who turned back and ran slowly, with a direct hit and send him back for 47.

With Kohli still finding fielders and not getting timing to hit boundaries, Dube got in. Dube ended the 17th over with a slice past backward point for four.

Player of the Tournament Bumrah gave India the perfect start to their defence of 177 by casting Reeza Hendricks with an outswinger in the second over. Arshdeep Singh struck in the next over as Aiden Markram chased a wide

wobble-seam delivery and Pant dived to his right to complete the catch.

Stubbs missed the delivery and was bowled around his legs to be out for 31 as India broke the 58-run third-wicket stand in the ninth over.

Klaasen got his fifty in 23 balls, but the turning point of the match came when he nicked behind to Pant while chasing a wide delivery from Pandya to fall for 52 off 27 deliveries. With pressure building in, Bumrah came to castle Jansen through the gate to end his day with 2-

18. After Arshdeep gave away four runs in the 19th over, the equation came down to 16 needed off the last over. Miller went for a loft off Hardik, but it came off the toe-end and Suryakumar, at long-off, ran to lob the ball in the air and came back on the field to take the catch and have him out for 17-ball 21. Hardik had Rabada holing out in the deep as India held their nerve to win the title and spark jubilant plus emotional scenes in Barbados and at home.

FAREWELL TO 'THE WALL'

New Delhi: When Rahul Dravid coached India to an U-19 World Cup win in 2018 - guiding the likes of Shubman Gill and Arshdeep Singh - it seemed like it was a matter of time till he became the Head Coach of the senior India Men's cricket team. And so it proved to be. Now, as the curtains are drawn on the 2024 T20 World Cup, Rahul Dravid's two-and-a-half-year-long tenure comes to a close. Will he, nay should he, be remembered fondly for guiding India in a transitional phase despite the burning hunger for a major title?

Much like his predecessor Ravi Shastri, Rahul Dravid has possessed a dominant Indian team with very little ICC silverware to show for it. But should it define his legacy? By all stats and figures - and performances - Rahul Dravid's Team India has been the best team in the world. Team India have won 41 out of 56 ODIs, 48 out of 69 T20s, and lost just one Test series, winning five and drawing two. In all formats, India's form has been dominant and a cut above any other team on earth.

In 2023, India walked to the Asia Cup title. And in 2024, Dravid's India held the No. 1 spot in the teams' rankings in all three formats, an unprecedented first in Indian cricket history.

India Meteorological Department forecasts heavy rains in northwest India in next 5 days

GET READY TO BE WET

Isolated heavy rainfall is very likely over Delhi, Haryana Chandigarh, Punjab Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and East Rajasthan from June 29 to July 3; West Rajasthan on June 29, July 2 and 3; Chhattisgarh, Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha on June 29 and 30 and Bihar during June 30-July 2.

IMD also said that widespread moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms is very likely over Kerala, Karnataka, Konkan and Goa, Gujarat, Madhya Maharashtra; isolated to scattered light to moderate rainfall over Marathwada, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, Telangana, during the next five days.

Widespread light to moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall is also likely over Sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura during next five days.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

India Meteorological Department on Saturday forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall over Northwest India including Delhi & the Northeast states during the next 4-5 days.

IMD also said that the Southwest Monsoon has further advanced into the remaining parts of East Uttar Pradesh and some more parts of West

Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. The northern limit of the monsoon now passes through Jaisalmer, Churu in Rajasthan, Bhiwani, Delhi, Aligarh, Hardoi, Moradabad, Una (Western UP), Pathankot in Punjab and Jammu.

The weather office said conditions are favourable for further advance of southwest Monsoon into some more parts of West Rajasthan, Haryana-Chandigarh & Punjab and remaining parts of West Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu during the next 2-3 days.

The IMD bulletin has forecast widespread light to moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms, and lightning very likely over Northwest, Central and East India during the next five days.

The heavy rainfall is expected to lead to localised flooding of roads, water logging in low-lying areas and closure of underpasses mainly in urban areas.

Occasional reduction in visibility due to heavy rainfall and disruption of traffic in major cities due to water log-

Cars, Buses Swept Away By Strong Currents In Haridwar After Heavy Rain

Dehradun: As the monsoon arrived in Uttarakhand, so did the soaring river water levels engulfing and taking along everything that comes within its reach. After Haridwar was hit by heavy rainfall, many vehicles parked in a cremation ground were washed away by the strong currents of a seasonal river. In visuals from the spot, several cars and buses can be seen submerged in an overflowing seasonal river in Har ki Pauri. The strong currents swept away buses and eight cars parked in the cremation ground.

In a video, a cop can be issuing a warning to the pilgrims and locals to not go near the river. "The water levels in the river have risen suddenly after the rainfall. Everyone is requested to not go near the river," he said.



KEJRIWAL SENT TO JUDICIAL CUSTODY TILL JULY 12 IN CBI CASE



New Delhi: A city court on Saturday sent Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to 14-day judicial custody (till July 12) in connection with the corruption case linked to the liquor policy case.

Earlier in the day, vacation judge Sunena Sharma while reserving its order on CBI's application, remarked that upon the expiry of police remand, the court has no option but to send the accused to judicial custody.

On June 26, CM Kejriwal was sent to CBI custody for three days by Rouse Avenue Court on the agency's application seeking custody of the Aam Aadmi Party supremo for interrogation. Earlier that day, Kejriwal was formally arrested by the CBI when he was produced before vacation judge Amitabh Rawat. Permission was granted to the CBI to produce CM Kejriwal in the special court after he was questioned by the central agency in Tihar Jail earlier this week.

NTA announces new dates for June cycle UGC-NET, other exams

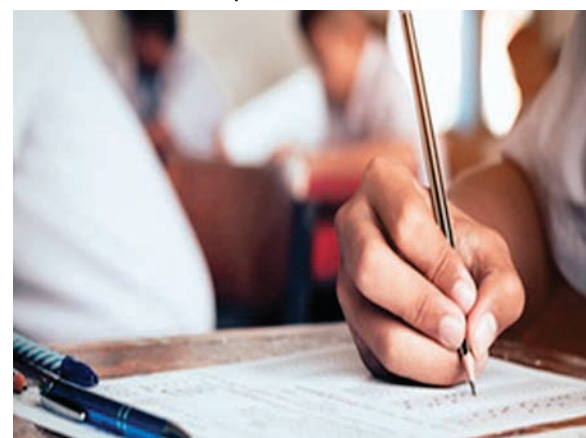
Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Friday announced fresh dates for the recently cancelled NCET, Joint CSIR-UGC NET, and UGC-NET June 2024 cycle examinations.

Earlier, citing unavoidable circumstances, the examinations were cancelled/postponed, leaving scores of tense aspirants waiting for new dates.

The June cycle UGC-NET exam was earlier held on June 18 but was cancelled the very next day.

In a notification issued on Friday night, the NTA announced that the NCET 2024 will be held on July 10; Joint CSIR-UGC NET on July



25-27; while the UGC-NET June 2024 cycle exam will be held between August 21 and September 4.

The NTA notification suggested the candidates visit its official website

www.nta.ac.in for further information.

It also said that the All India Ayush Post Graduate Entrance Test 2024 will be held as per its actual schedule on July 6.

Five soldiers killed during tank exercises in Ladakh

Srinagar | Agencies

Five Army soldiers were killed during a tank warfare exercise in the Ladakh region when the stream through which the tanks were passing suddenly got flooded.

Official sources told IANS from Leh town of Ladakh region that an exercise of tank warfare was going on in the Daulat Beg Oldi area near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on Friday.

A stream which was being crossed by the tanks during this exercise suddenly got flooded due to cloudburst in the higher reaches. "A tank was caught in the flashflood where-



in five soldiers got killed," sources said. The sources ruled out any sabotage in this accident. Those killed in this mishap include a Junior Commissioned Officer.



FRESH DATE FOR NEET-PG TO BE ANNOUNCED WITHIN 2 DAYS: EDUCATION MINISTER

Team Absolute | New Delhi

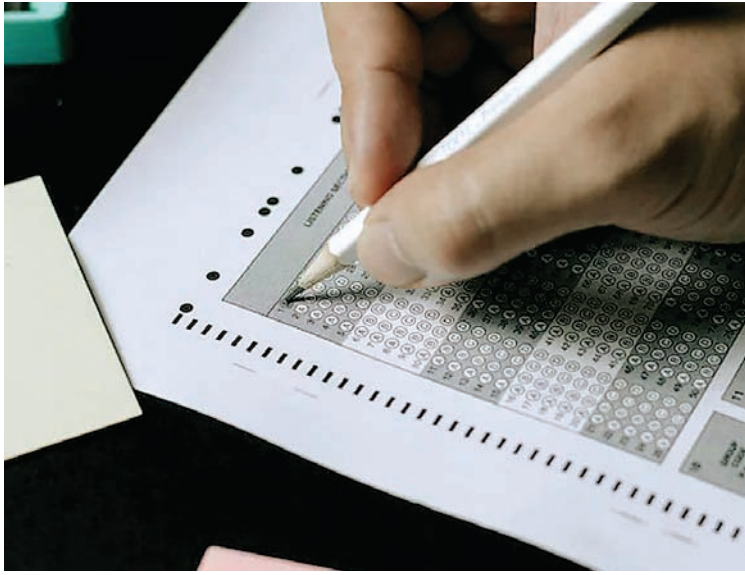
The new schedule for NEET-PG will be announced by the National Board of Examinations (NBE) within the next two days, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Saturday.

NEET-PG is among the exams cancelled last week as a pre-emptive measure amid a raging row over alleged irregularities in competitive tests.

"The date of National Eligibility cum Entrance Test, Post Graduate will be announced by the NBE in one or two days," Pradhan told reporters in Panchkula on the sidelines of Haryana BJP's extended state executive meeting.

The comments by Pradhan come a day after the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced revised dates for three exams which were cancelled.

The University Grants Commission-National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET) which was cancelled a day after being conducted on June 18 after the education ministry received inputs that the integrity of the exam



was compromised, will now be conducted from August 21 to September 4. Mr Pradhan had said the question paper was leaked on darknet and circulated on Telegram app. The matter is being probed by the CBI.

The UGC-NET is a test to determine the eligibility for the award of

Junior Research Fellowship, for appointment of assistant professors and admission to PhD courses.

In a shift from the earlier pattern, the exam was conducted in offline mode this year and on a single day.

However, the rescheduled exam will be conducted according to the earlier

pattern of Computer Based Test (CBT) spread across a fortnight.

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) UGC-NET, which was postponed as a preemptive measure amid the row over alleged irregularities in the conduct of exams, will now be held from July 25-July 27. The CSIR UGC-NET is accepted for PhD admissions in Chemical Sciences, Earth, Atmospheric, Ocean and Planetary Sciences, Life Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, and Physical Sciences.

The National Common Entrance Test (NCET) for admission to the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), which was postponed hours before its scheduled commencement on June 12, will now be conducted on July 10.

The test is held for select central and state universities or institutions, including IITs, NITs, RIEs, and government colleges. In the line of fire over the alleged irregularities in medical entrance examination NEET-UG and PhD entrance NET, the Centre had last week notified a panel to ensure transparent, smooth and fair conduct of examinations through the NTA.

'MahaYuti to contest Assembly polls under collective leadership of Shinde, Fadnavis and Pawar'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid verbal duel among MahaYuti partners over claims on seats for the upcoming Maharashtra Assembly elections, state unit NCP president Sunil Tatkare on Saturday said that the BJP, Shiv Sena and the NCP will contest the polls under the collective leadership of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and two Deputy Chief Ministers, Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar.

He also scoffed at the reports of the exclusion of the NCP from the MahaYuti, saying that BJP's top leadership, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and party's national president J.P. Nadda, have clarified that the NCP will be an integral part of the grand alliance in Maharashtra, and the seat sharing (discussions) among three parties will take place amicably. Tatkare, however, said that there is no hurry in declaring MahaYuti's CM



face after it comes to power again. "I have asked the party spokespersons not to make any public statement on seat sharing among MahaYuti partners as it will be done at the level of senior leaders of three parties. I have also directed party spokespersons and cadres to neglect any statement or video against NCP demanding the party be kept away from the

MahaYuti. "In fact, the bonhomie between the BJP and the NCP has increased, and it will further strengthen. Our national president, Ajit Pawar, is known for his administrative skills and command over the party. He will play a crucial role in the MahaYuti during the upcoming assembly elections," said Tatkare.

"Why After Polls": Union Minister's Theory As 5 Bihar Bridges Fall In 9 Days

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi is seeing a "conspiracy" in back-to-back bridge collapse incidents in Bihar.

"Why have bridges started to collapse only after the Lok Sabha elections?" he wondered as he spoke to reporters in Gaya.

"Why were such incidents not taking place 15 or 30 days before? Why have bridges started to collapse only after the Lok Sabha elections? Why are they collapsing now? Is there any conspiracy to defame the state government?" the minister said.

Five bridges - in Araria, Siwan, East Champaran, Kishanganj, and Madhubani districts - have collapsed across the state in the last nine days.

On Friday, an under-construction bridge collapsed in Bihar's Madhubani region. The 75-meter bridge was being built by the Rural Works Department of the Bihar government since 2021.

The Minister of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) also said that those involved in "wrongdoings" would be penalised.

"The state and central governments are closely monitoring such incidents. Those contractors or engineers involved in wrongdoings will be penalised," he said.

Manjhi also blamed "sub-standard material used by the contractors" for the incidents: "It is happening because of the sub-standard material being used by contractors. The state



government is taking action against such contractors. The state authorities are probing the matter as well. I also request them to probe the conspiracy angle."

The state government is receiving a lot of flak from the opposition because of the frequent bridge collapses. Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Assembly, Tejashwi Yadav, on Saturday mocked the Nitish Kumar government and said, "Due to the double power of the double-engine government in Bihar, only 5 bridges have collapsed in just 9 days." The Madhubani incident came just a day after another bridge fell in Kishanganj district.

The third incident of bridge collapse was in the Ghodasahan block of East Champaran on June 23. On June 22, the bridge built on the canal connecting Daraunda and Maharajganj blocks in Siwan collapsed. Earlier, a bridge worth Rs 12 crore on the Bakra river in the Sikti block of Araria district collapsed on June 18.

Separate administration only solution to ethnic crisis in Manipur: Apex tribal body

Imphal | Agencies

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), the apex body of the Kuki-Zomi-Hmar tribals in Manipur, on Saturday reiterated that a separate administration or Union Territory for the tribals is the only solution to the ethnic crisis in the northeastern state.

Referring to Friday's rally in Imphal organised by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), an umbrella body of civil society groups of the Meitei community, the ITLF said that peace in Manipur would only come when the total separation is officially acknowledged and formalised by the Central government.

"By granting us a separate administration in the shape of the Union Territory with a legislature under Article 239A, justice will then be served for the Kuki-Zomi communities," said Ginza Vualzong, senior leader and chief spokesman of the ITLF.

He said that the Meitei wanted Kuki-Zomi eliminated from Manipur, and "they have succeeded by driving us out of their territories". "We are now physically and demo-



graphically divided. Any remaining Kuki-Zo in the Meitei territories were slaughtered mercilessly by the Meitei. It is evident that Kuki-Zo and Meitei cannot coexist. We must be separate," the ITLF leader told the media.

The tribal organisation said that

the rally held on Friday in Imphal reflects the views and attitudes of the majority of the Meitei, who want to exterminate and slaughter every Kuki-Zo in Manipur. "It is obvious that the Kuki-Zo are not welcome in Manipur among the Meitei."

Meanwhile, thousands of people

including students, women, youths, elderly persons and village volunteers in Manipur participated in a rally in Imphal on Friday demanding territorial and administrative integrity of the state and strongly opposed the demand for division of the state.

OVER 1100 DEVOTEES PERFORM AMARNATH YATRA ON FIRST DAY

Srinagar | Agencies

Over 1100 devotees had 'Darshan' inside the Amarnath Cave shrine on the first day of the Yatra which started on Saturday.

Officials said that over 1100 devotees had Darshan inside the cave shrine at around 11 am today.

Batches of Yatris were seen off from the two base camps of Baltal and Nunwan (Pahalgam) by the concerned district development commissioners and other district-level senior officials in the morning towards the Cave shrine located 3888 metres above the sea-level in Kashmir Himalayas.

Tight security arrangements in addition to medical aid, food supplies, and resting areas along the route have been made on the two cave shrine routes from the Baltal and Pahalgam axis.

Locals in large numbers are helping the Yatris perform the holy pil-



grimage with better convenience.

The exhaustive security arrangements, other facilities made by the administration and the warm hospitality of the local people are the highlights of this annual Yatra each year.

Devotees returning after performing the Yatra said the ice stalagmite structure known as the holy 'Lingam' is fully formed inside the cave shrine this year.

Devotees believe that the ice sta-

lagmite structure represents the mythical powers of Lord Shiva.

Yatris use either the traditional 48 km long Pahalgam base camp which takes four days to reach the cave shrine or the shorter 14 km long Baltal route.

Yatris return to Baltal base camp the same day after performing the Yatra. Over 125 'Langars' (community kitchens) have been established along the two routes to the cave shrine and at the transit camps.

Over 7000 'Sevadars' (volunteers) are serving the Yatris at these Langars.

Helicopter services are also available for the pilgrims on both routes to reach the cave shrine.

This year, 3.50 lakh pilgrims have registered for the Yatra.

The 52-day long Yatra which started on Saturday and will end on August 19 coinciding with Raksha Bandhan and Shraavan Purnima festivals

Sanjay Jha appointed JD(U) working president, Nitish Kumar to remain party chief

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Janata Dal (United) on Saturday appointed its Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Kumar Jha as the party's working president.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar will continue to serve as JD(U) chief.

The decision was taken at the National Executive meeting of the party in New Delhi. Additionally, the party decided to push for Special Category Status for Bihar.

Bihar has been demanding special status from the Centre, a resolution that the state Cabinet passed in 2023 to overcome the economic and developmental disparities in the state.

The special status, if given, will increase Bihar's share of tax revenues from the Central government.

JD(U) contested the Lok Sabha elections as part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on 16 seats and secured a win on 12 in Bihar.

This victory might be leveraged by the party



leaders to secure the special status from the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre.

The leaders also discussed the recent Lok Sabha election results and the strategies for the upcoming state Assembly elections in the country. The meeting was chaired by CM Nitish Kumar and attended by all the party MPs and senior leaders.

NITISH KUMAR EXPANDS CABINET, 21 LEGISLATORS TAKE OATH AS MINISTERS

Patna: The Nitish Kumar-led government in Bihar on Friday expanded its Cabinet by inducting 21 legislators who were sworn-in as ministers here at a programme in Raj Bhavan.

Bihar Governor Rajendra Arlekar, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, two Deputy CMs Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, and other leaders were present at the swearing-in programme. Both parties -- Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Janata Dal-United (JD-U), have taken care of caste equations while naming ministers.

The Cabinet expansion took place after 46 days of the formation of the NDA government in Bihar.

Bouncer shot dead in Gurugram, incident caught on CCTV

Gurugram | Agencies

A 23-year-old bouncer was allegedly shot dead by assailants while he was returning home in Gurugram's Ullawas village.

The crime was captured on CCTV.

The incident occurred on Friday when Anuj was shot dead by assailants who disguised as delivery agents of an online food delivery platform.

Shocked by the incident, Anuj's family said he had no known enemies and raised concerns about the attackers' professional execution.

However, during the probe, it came to the fore that two cases were regis-



tered against Anuj at different police stations in Gurugram.

The police have registered a murder case

against unknown assailants and suspect that the reason behind the crime may be old enmity.

Demonetised notes with face value of Rs 75 lakh seized, four arrested

Surat | Agencies

Demonetised Rs 500 and 1,000 notes with a face value of Rs 75 lakh were seized from Surat in Gujarat, and four people were arrested in this connection.

Acting on intelligence input, Surat Police raided a residence in Bhimpore village and the arrests were made. Of the four people arrested in connection with the case, three hail from Surat while one resides in Navsari.

"The suspects - identified as Naresh Ranchhod Patel, Vineet Rajnikanth Desai, Mohammad Shadiq Mohammad Safi Sheikh, and Manish Rajput - are linked to the real estate sector, specifically engaged in land brokerage. This connection has raised suspicions about the potential misuse of the seized currency within the real estate domain,"

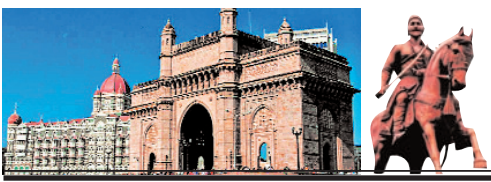


sources said.

"Authorities have initiated an investigation into the origins and intended usage of the demonetised currency. Questions loom over how these individuals acquired such a substantial amount of outlawed notes and the broader implications for financial crime in the region. It is an ongoing battle against organised crime and money laundering within the city limits," added sources.

On November 8, 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the demonetisation of high-denomination currency notes, a move aimed at curbing black money and corruption.

The decision, communicated via a late-night address on national television, also introduced new denominations of 500 and 2000 rupee notes, ushering in a period of economic reform amidst widespread public reaction.



Bulldozer operation to continue till cities become drugs free: Maha CM



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Saturday said that the government will continue with its bulldozer operations till all the cities in the state

become drug-free. "The bulldozer operation will continue till our cities become drug-free. Wherever drugs are being sold in the state, the peddlers will not be spared," Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said.

He said that action is being taken against those who sell drugs, those who keep drugs, as well as the hotels where drugs are sold and those who are responsible for ruining the lives of the young generation not only in Pune but also in other cities. "They (peddlers) will not be spared wherever drugs are being sold be it Thane, Nashik or other parts of the state. Police administration, district

collectors, and municipal commissioners are doing the work of uprooting drug cartels," the Chief Minister said. He said that it does not matter who is the supplier of drugs and no matter how big he is, he will not be spared. "We will not allow them to ruin our young generation. This bulldozing operation will continue," the Chief Minister said.

Pilgrimage scheme for senior citizens

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Saturday announced that the state government will soon launch a special pilgrimage scheme for senior citizens. Making an announcement regarding the same in the state Assembly, he said that the government will put in place necessary policies and regulations which will enable the senior citizens to visit pilgrimages. CM Shinde intervened during a discussion on the calling attention motion moved by Shiv Sena legislator Pratap Sarnaik. "Maharashtra is the land of saints. Many people visit the pilgrimage centres every year. Chief Minister's Tirtha Darshan Yojana will be launched to make it easier for senior citizens to visit pilgrimage sites. For this, a comprehensive policy will be prepared and its rules will be made. The scheme will be implemented by inviting online applications in a rotating manner," said the chief minister. CM Shinde said the MahaYuti government belongs to the common people, and in the additional budget presented on Friday, various provisions have been made for farmers, labourers, workers, women and youth.

7 killed as 2 cars collide on Nagpur-Mumbai Expressway in Jalna

Team Absolute | Jalna

At least seven persons were killed and another three passengers were injured critically when two private cars collided violently near Kadvanchi village in Jalna district, police said here on Saturday. The grisly accident took place after a Nagpur-Mumbai bound Ertiga car and a local Swift Desire vehicle suddenly came opposite each other and crashed near a petrol pump around 11.30 p.m., Jalna Police Control official Subhash Doiphode said. The victims in the Ertiga car were from a single family in the Malad east suburb of Mumbai, while antecedents of those who perished in the Swift are yet to be ascertained. They have been identified as: Faiyaz S. Mansuri, Altamesh S. Mansuri and Faizal S. Mansuri, all from Mumbai (Ertiga car passengers); while those who were killed in the (Swift car) are: Sandip M. Budhant, Pradeep L. Misal and Vilas S. Kayande, besides their driver from Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar identified as Chavan, and his condition is critical. "A team of the Jalna Taluka Police Station rushed there soon after and shifted the injured to the Civil Hospital and private hospitals here early this morning. The autopsies of the deceased victims are going on at the Civil Hospital and shall be handed over later



to the respective families," Doiphode told reporter. He said that as per preliminary reports of the investigations, the Swift car was reportedly coming on the Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Corridor (Nagpur-Mumbai Expressway) after refuelling at a local petrol station when it crashed into the Ertiga speeding towards Mumbai. People from nearby villages who rushed to render help told the local media that the severity of the crash resulted in both the vehicles getting crushed and the bodies of the bleeding and screaming victims strewn around several metres. The Jalna Taluka Police and highway police shall question the injured victims on the exact causes resulting in the major accident and further investigations are underway, said Doiphode.

Maha Oppn rakes fake driving licence 'scam' in Assembly; Speaker directs govt to act

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Opposition in Maharashtra on Saturday raised the alleged scam of Andheri Regional Transport Office issuing 76,000 dubious driving licences ostensibly without conducting proper driving tests on authorised vehicles in the state Assembly here.

Referring to the issue in detail, Congress' Leader of Opposition Vijay Wadettiwar and state unit chief Nana F. Patole alleged a massive scam of Rs 125 crore in the Andheri RTO which issued the said driving licences (DLs).

After the submissions by Patole and Wadettiwar, Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar directed the state government to take serious note of the matter and initiate appropriate action.

The matter came to light in the Maharashtra Accountant General Audit II during a test check of 1.04 lakh licences through the online data of SARATHI regarding the processing of applications for DLs after conducting the mandatory driving test of the applicants. The random audit brought out some shocking details -- of the 1.04 lakh licences scrutinised, 76,354 DLs, or nearly 75 per cent, were issued in 2023-2024 with suspect driving tests conducted on invalid vehicles.

The matter was first highlighted by IANS (June 28, 'Licence to kill? Mumbai RTO audit says 76K DLs issued on fake driving tests'), following a tip-off by social worker Binu Varghese, sparking a major debate in the social and political circles of the state.

Wadettiwar said it was shocking how thousands of DLs were issued on just two two-wheelers and two four-wheelers, pointing to an alleged scam as thou-



sands of rupees are charged per licence by the department that is handled directly by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

"The Andheri RTO issued 76,354 driving licences for cars, trucks, buses, and cranes on the basis of alleged tests taken on a two-wheeler...How is this possible," Wadettiwar asked.

Meanwhile, Patole said the state Cabinet has not been expanded and ministers are handling multiple portfolios to which they cannot pay attention. "It was shocking that this was going on in the department handled by the CM himself," he said.

"The matter raised by the Leader of Opposition is grave and should not be discarded... If a person has tested only for a two-wheeler and is issued a DL for a crane or a bus, the matter is indeed serious. This will lead to accidents and deaths, all because of corruption," Patole said.

Wadettiwar claimed that for each DL, Rs 30,000-40,000 changed hands and there could be a scam of over Rs 125 crore in the Andheri RTO alone, while there are 53 more RTOs all over Maharashtra.

He pointed out that many accidents take place daily on the roads, citing the figures of 2022 when there were over

33,000 road accidents in the state that claimed more than 15,000 lives, while 54 per cent of all road crashes involved two-wheelers and four-wheelers.

Wadettiwar also claimed that the government's attitude seems to be clear - "You pay us money, and take your licence", but nobody is bothered about the accidents on the roads and the loss of innocent lives.

The audit data showed details of how two two-wheelers and two cars were used repeatedly for conducting tests for different categories of vehicles, ranging from scooters to cranes, on which the 76,354 questionable DLs were issued.

While 41,093 DLs were issued on tests conducted on the two-wheelers, another 35,261 DLs were cleared on tests conducted on the four-wheelers, ostensibly with probable murky dealings.

The auditors concluded: "The licences for LMV were issued but the driving tests were carried out on two-wheelers (motorcycles). DLs were issued for the motorcycle/scooter category but driving tests were carried out on LMVs. The DLs were issued for the three-wheeler category but driving tests were carried out on motorcars or two-wheelers."

Pulling up the RTO, the auditors said that it was clear how, while processing the documents for conducting DL tests, neither the due procedures were followed nor the vehicle details were verified by the authorised RTO Inspectors.

"This creates doubts on whether the tests were conducted at all. The cases are only illustrative (only four vehicles test-checked by the audit) in nature and similar cases may be identified and intimated to audit," the auditors noted in the report.

Centre has taken serious note of NEET malpractices: Maha Dy CM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday said that the Central government has taken serious note of the malpractices pertaining to NEET.

"The Centre and the state government have taken serious note of the malpractices, action has been initiated by various agencies and the culprits have been arrested. The Centre has already notified the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, which aims to prevent unfair means in public examinations and common entrance tests held across the country," the Deputy Chief Minister said while addressing the state assembly after he intervened when



the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Vijay Wadettiwar, Congress legislator Nana Patole and other legislators raised the NEET issue. Wadettiwar in his submission said that the fate of students after the NEET paper leaks hangs in the balance. He made a strong case for strict measures to avoid malpractice. Patole

demanding that the state should bring in its legislation proposing strict action against those involved in paper leaks and related malpractices. The Deputy Chief Minister, in his response, assured the Assembly to consider Patole's suggestion. He said that the state government is committed to ensure that the students, who study day and night honestly and appear for the exams, are not harmed. "NEET should be conducted transparently and in a corruption-free manner," the Deputy Chief Minister said. He said that the state government had urged the Centre to hand over the responsibility of medical course entrance examination to the states. He added that the Centre has assured to decide after due consideration.

Maha budget sops misleading, with an eye on Assembly polls, says Oppn

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Opposition on Saturday shouted slogans at the entrance of the Vidhan Bhavan saying that the proposals in the Maharashtra budget presented by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar were simply eyewash and misleading, with an eye on the forthcoming Assembly elections.

The protest was led by Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Vijay Wadettiwar, who claimed that the state government had announced a slew of sops at a time when there was tremendous pressure on the state treasury.

He said that the budget proposals were made especially in the wake of the Mahayuti government's recent loss in the Lok Sabha elections.

Other legislators claimed that the government's announcements for women, farmers, and youth were made to woo them



after they voted against the Mahayuti in the General Elections. They termed the Mahayuti government as the "40 per cent commission government" and accused those in power of "looting the treasury."

Maha Budget 2024-2025 had leaked in advance: Sharad Pawar

Team Absolute | Kolhapur

President, Sharad Pawar, alleged on Saturday that the Maharashtra Budget 2024-2025 - presented by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in the legislature on June 28 - had leaked in advance, and the proposals were made with an eye on the forthcoming Assembly elections.

Speaking to media-persons here, Sharad Pawar said that a day before the state budget was tabled, there were many media reports on the kind of schemes/sops/projects that were expected from the ruling Mahayuti alliance government. "Schemes like free education for girls, the Rs 1,500 per month dole for poor women, the Rs 20,000 per procession going for the annual Pandharpur pilgrimage, and other details had become common knowledge before the proposals were tabled in the budget. This means that the budget secrecy was not maintained," said Sharad Pawar.

On the flood of freebies and sops, plus the grandiose proposals made by his nephew and NCP chief Ajit Pawar, the senior Pawar took a swipe saying "with just Rs 70 in the pocket, how will they be able to spend Rs



100." He said that the schemes announced by the Mahayuti government have little meaning.

Terming the state budget as 'election-oriented', he also expressed doubts on the electricity bill waiver proposal for farmers, asking "what is the financial condition of the power companies and unless their losses are compensated, it will be unviable."

"An impression is sought to be created that the budget is very good... But there are many things in the budget which seem impractical and are unlikely to be implemented," cautioned Sharad Pawar, on the lines of similar reactions by the Maha Vikas Aghadi allies Congress-Shiv Sena (UBT)-NCP(SP) leaders on Friday.

Referring to the prickly

question on the Opposition's 'CM-face' Sharad Pawar quipped that "the united MVA itself will be the face" in the October Assembly elections, and predicted a total sweep by the Opposition on the lines of the Lok Sabha 2024 polls.

"We (MVA-INDIA bloc) have bagged 31 of the 48 LS seats in the state... Prime Minister Narendra Modi held 18 rallies in the state and 14 of the NDA-Mahayuti candidates lost there. A similar picture will be visible in the Assembly elections. People have lost faith in the BJP," declared Sharad Pawar.

The NCP(SP) supremo started a two-day tour of the drought-hit areas of Kolhapur and surroundings accompanied by local leaders and farmers' representatives.

Teen takes water tanker for joyride, knocks down 2; owner, driver nabbed

Team Absolute | Pune

A 14-year-old boy allegedly took a water tanker for a short joyride, lost control and knocked down at least two women in the Kondhwa area of the city here on Saturday, a police official said.

The incident occurred around 7 a.m. when the boy climbed on to the driver's seat, started the tanker and went off for a ride, virtually unnoticed by many around. Barely had he gone a few metres when he lost control of the massive vehicle and hit a husband-wife on a scooter and a female jogger before grinding to a halt.

"We were informed of the incident by some people out on a morning walk and rushed a police team there. We have seized the water tanker, detained the boy and sent him to a juvenile home," Kondhwa Police Station Inspector Santosh Sonavane told reporter.

The tanker owner Mahendra Borate and the minor's father who is also the tanker driver Shabbir Pathan were also arrested and produced before a court on Saturday evening, Sonavane added.



The scooterist Santosh Dhume emerged unscathed but his wife Geeta, riding pillion, was flung a few feet away suffering injuries. The jogger, Sonia Rathod, was also hurt and both were taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Eyewitnesses claimed that the tanker owner Borate allegedly attempted to bribe the injured duo by promising to foot their medical expenses in return for not lodging a police complaint, but they refused.

The people in the vicinity with narrow roads and lanes, questioned why the tanker was left unattended with the ignition key and how the boy managed to climb up undetected, go for the joyride that led to two people being injured.

The incident comes 40 days after the high-profile Porsche hit-and-run case involving a 17-year-old boy in which two techies from Madhya Pradesh were killed on May 19, resulting in nationwide furore.

Tata Consumer gets Rs 171.83 crore tax demand from I-T department



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Tata Consumer Products Ltd on Saturday said it has received an income tax demand of Rs 171.83 crore for the assessment year 2019-20.

In a stock exchange filing, the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) major said the "demand is not maintainable and it is in the process of preferring an appeal and rectification against the said order".

"There is no immediate impact on the financials, operations or other activities of the company on account of the aforementioned order," said the Tata Group company.

In the filing, the company stated that it had received an "Assessment Order dated

June 27, 2024, under section 143(3) read with section 144C(13) of Income-tax Act, 1961, for the income tax return filed for the financial year 2019-20, wherein certain additions/ disallowances with respect to returned income, have been proposed by the assessing officer".

"The demand raised is Rs.171.83 crs (including interest)," it added.

The stock of the company closed at Rs 1,098, up 1.14 per cent on the BSE.

In the fourth quarter ended March 31, Tata Consumer Products' net profit dropped 19.3 per cent to Rs 217 crore. The company's revenue went up 8.5 per cent at Rs 3,927 crore during the quarter with a strong performance in the India business.



EDITOR'S SPECS

New institutes of pharma, medical technology

The Central government has earmarked Rs 700 crore to set up centres of excellence at the National Institutes of Pharmaceutical, Education & Research (NIPER) over the next five years to boost pharma and medical technology in the country. Of the Rs 700 crore, a sum of Rs 243 crore has been approved for 2024-25, according to a notice issued by the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers. There are currently seven NIPERs spanning seven states in the country -- Mohali (Punjab), Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Hajipur (Bihar), Hyderabad (Telangana), Kolkata (West Bengal), Guwahati (Assam) and Rae Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh). These will broadly focus on research ranging from medical device manufacturing, bulk drug R&D, phytopharmaceuticals, biological therapeutics, and antiviral and antibacterial drug discovery and development. In 2023, a Parliamentary Panel recommended the government allocate more funds for new initiatives, such as the establishment of the National Institute of Medical Devices Education and Research (NIMERs) and Indian Council of Research & Development and Innovation in Pharma-MedTech Sector (ICPMR). It was mentioned that the DoP had asked for Rs 1, 286 crore for FY24, of which Rs 560 crore was to set up NIPERs, and the remaining amount to be used for new initiatives under the NIPER scheme, such as NIMERs (Rs 200 crore), Centres of Excellence (Rs 233 crore), ICPMR (?50 crore), and Promotion of Research & Innovation in Pharmaceutical Sector (Rs 243.00 crore). Meanwhile, as per media reports, a production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for domestic production of Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) drugs -- used in the treatment of obesity and diabetes -- is also expected to be rolled out in India by 2026. It is important for the Indian population, with rising incidences of diabetes and obesity. The current formulations of GLP-1 drugs by the US' Novo Nordisk (Ozempic) and Eli Lilly (Zepbound) are unavailable in India.

Here's An Unlikely Combination: Narendra Modi and Billy Joel

Derek O'Brien

In the last ten years (2014-2024), Mr Modi has done all it takes to turn Parliament into a deep dark chamber. Early in 2024, after a long gap of 30 years, one of my fave singer-songwriters, the legendary Billy Joel, released a new song titled Turn the Lights Back On. That's the verdict after India Elections 2024. The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha must not be allowed to be turned into a deep, dark chamber. Turn the Lights Back On.

Introduce a fixed calendar for the three sessions of Parliament with a minimum of 100 days of sittings a year for each House. The number of sittings per year for Lok Sabha has reduced from an average of 121 days (1952-1970) to 70 days per year since 2000. In 2019, your columnist introduced a Private Member's Bill seeking a fixed calendar for Parliament sessions and a minimum number of sittings of 100 days.

Article 93 of the Constitution says that the Lok Sabha shall choose two members of the House as Speaker and Deputy Speaker as soon as the case may be. The 17th Lok Sabha did not have a Deputy Speaker for its entire five-year term. The Deputy Speaker is not subordinate to the Speaker. The Speaker has to tender his resignation to the Deputy Speaker if s/he chooses to do so. Traditionally, the Deputy Speaker is appointed from the Opposition. The Deputy Speaker should be appointed in this session itself.

Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy was adopted in 2014 to ensure public consultation for all legislation. In the 17th Lok Sabha, nine out of 10 bills introduced in Parliament have been marked by zero or incomplete consultations. Each Minister, while introducing a Bill, should lay a copy of the summary of the consultations.

In the 14th Lok Sabha, six out of 10 bills were sent to various committees for scrutiny; in the 15th Lok Sabha, it was seven out of 10. This figure fell in the 16th Lok Sabha to four out of 10. In the 17th Lok Sabha, about one out of five bills was sent for scrutiny. Abysmal. The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2002) recommended that all bills introduced in Parliament should first be examined by the relevant committee. Committees should also review the



implementation of laws passed by Parliament.

A joint constitutional committee from both Houses should be formed to review the constitutional validity of Constitution Amendment Bills before they are introduced.

Rule 267 gives Rajya Sabha MPs an opportunity to give a written notice to suspend regular business and seek an immediate discussion on an issue of national importance. It has been eight years since such a discussion has been permitted. At least one such notice should be admitted in each session.

The Prime Minister has not answered a single question on the floor of Parliament. His participation has been limited to monologues - speeches during Motion of Thanks, farewells, and special occasions. Narendra Modi needs to answer questions, take part in debates and discussions on national issues. (The UK Parliament has Prime Minister's Question Time every Wednesday where it is mandatory for the PM to answer.)

Following the Parliament security breach last year, the Committee on security in Parliament house complex should be reconstituted immediately, with the Deputy Speaker as the Chairperson.

A Parliamentary Committee on National Economy should be formed to produce annual reports on the state of the economy. The report should then be discussed in Parliament. The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2002) noted that there is no system for Parliamentary scrutiny of public borrowing. Since it affects future governments, beyond certain limits, borrowing proposals should also be reviewed by the Parliamentary Committee on National Economy.

Funds should be allocated to provide research support staff to committees to conduct public hearings, inquiries, and collect data. Currently, the secretariat

assists with scheduling meetings and taking notes. The quality of output will improve if each committee is assigned a team dedicated to research.

Please open the door
Nothing is different, we've been here before
Pacing these halls
Trying to talk over the silence
And pride sticks out its tongue
Laughs at the portrait that we've become
Stuck in a frame, unable to change
I was wrong
Did I wait too long
To turn the lights back on?
- Billy Joel, Turn the Lights Back On.
(Derek O'Brien, MP, leads the Trinamool Congress in the Rajya Sabha. Views expressed are personal.)

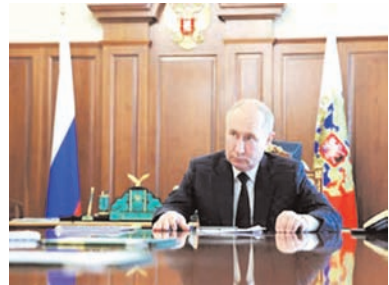
international

Putin says Russia needs to start production of INF strike systems

Moscow | Agencies

Russia needs to start the production of intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) strike systems in response to the actions of the US, Russian President Vladimir Putin said.

"In 2019, we announced that we would not produce these missiles, and we would not deploy them until the US completes the deployment of these systems in some regions of the world," Putin said on Friday at a meeting of the Russian Security Council as reported by Xinhua news agency.



However, the US now not only produces these missile systems, but has already brought them to Europe for military exercises, he added.

ary exercises, he added.

"Apparently, we need to start manufacturing these systems and then, based on the actual situation, make decisions about where, if necessary to ensure our safety, to deploy them," Putin stressed.

The US and the Soviet Union signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 1987, which prohibited possessing, developing and testing ground-based ballistic missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 km.

The US officially announced its withdrawal from the INF treaty in 2019.

Seven killed in Nepal landslides



Kathmandu | Agencies

Seven people were killed in two landslides in western Nepal on Saturday, local officials said.

Five members of one family died after their house was swept away in a landslide in Malika Rural Municipality of Gulmi District. Devi Ram Aryal, Chairman of the municipality, told Xinhua news agency that heavy rain triggered the fatal landslide,

and all the bodies had been recovered. In Phedikhola Rural Municipality of Syangja District, a mother and daughter were killed in a landslide, according to Indra Bahadur Rana, spokesperson for the district police, reports Xinhua news agency.

The monsoon season set in Nepal on June 10, and with fresh fatalities, the death toll in rain-related incidents has reached 34.

Record usage of X during US presidential debate: Elon Musk

New York | Agencies

Elon Musk on Saturday said his social media platform X saw record usage as US President Joe Biden and his challenger, former President Donald Trump, attended their first presidential debate on TV.

According to X, the minute-by-minute conversation, about the US presidential debate spiked by "19 times from the start of the broadcast to its peak 90 minutes in."

The company said the scale of the global conversation on X was staggering during the debate.

"We've tracked over 2 billion impressions with over 242 million video views and 2 million posts," said the social media platform.

The tech billionaire stated that there was a "record usage of X during the US presidential debate."

A user posted, "X was going crazy during the debate. X live streams during the debate also had huge audiences."



"Amazing result of allowing people to speak about it freely, without the ban hammer of the 'Censorship Complex' hovering over them," another X user commented.

Meanwhile, President Biden said he "did well" at the debate with ex-President Trump and dismissed the likelihood of him stepping aside, as being demanded by some Democrats disappointed by his performance.

"I think we did well," President Biden told a reporter. Many Democrats, however, were concerned President Biden may not be able to beat former President Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee.

No reason not to re-establish relations with Syria: Erdogan



Istanbul | Agencies

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said that there is no reason not to re-establish relations with Syria, according to media reports. "Just as we were together in the past in developing relations with Syria, we will act together in the same way," Erdogan told reporters after Friday prayers in Istanbul.

The Turkish leader was also quoted as saying that Turkey has no intention of meddling in Syria's internal affairs, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Because the Syrian people are a community with whom we have lived together as brotherly nations," he said.

Erdogan recalled that Turkey maintained vibrant relations with Syria in the

past, noting, "There is no doubt that such engagements could resume in the future."

On Wednesday, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said that his country remains open to initiatives regarding its relationship with Turkey.

After the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in March 2011, Turkey's relations with Syria have become significantly strained.

Ankara has aligned itself with several opposition groups against the Syrian government.

Since 2015, Turkey has launched several military operations in Syria, accusing the Syrian government of supporting the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, a Kurdish rebel group designated as a terrorist organisation by Turkey.

11 Palestinians killed in Israeli bombing in Rafah



Gaza | Agencies

At least 11 Palestinians were killed by an Israeli attack on tents housing displaced individuals in western Rafah, Gaza's southernmost city, Palestinian security and medical sources said.

The Israeli army fired artillery shells and bullets at the tents in the Al-Mawasi area, Xinhua news agency reported on Friday.

The shelling began on Thursday overnight following the advancement of Israeli tanks near the area, security sources told Xinhua.

The bombing operations led to a state of panic and fear among the displaced people, who left their tents and fled towards the areas in southwest of Khan Younis, according to local sources and eyewitnesses.

Medical sources told Xinhua that 11 Palestinians were killed and more than 40 others sustained varying injuries as a result of the bombing, all of whom were transferred to the hospital.

Al-Mawasi is an open sandy area on the seashore extending from the southwest of the city of Deir al-Balah in the centre of the Gaza Strip through western Khan Younis to the west of Rafah.

The area lacks infrastructure, sewage networks, electricity lines, communications networks, and the Internet, leading to difficult living conditions for the displaced individuals residing there.

UN Security Council urges enhanced efforts to protect civilians in armed conflict

United Nations | Agencies

The UN Security Council has adopted a presidential statement calling on member states to redouble efforts to strengthen the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Expressing concern about the reports of a dramatic increase in missing persons in armed conflict, the council unanimously adopted the presidential statement aimed at reversing the trend by advancing measures set out in a resolution adopted five years ago, Xinhua news agency reported on Friday.

In 2019, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2474 on persons missing as a result of armed conflict.

Noting that this year marks the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the 25th anniversary of its progressive consideration of "the protection of civilians in



armed conflict" as a thematic issue, the Security Council stressed "the enduring need" for the council and member states to redouble efforts to strengthen the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

It called on parties to armed conflict to "take all appropriate measures to actively search for persons reported missing, to enable the return of their remains, to account for persons reported missing without adverse distinction, and to put in place appropriate channels enabling response and communication with families on the search process," emphasising that "utmost attention" should be paid to cases of children

reported missing in armed conflict.

The council urged the parties to "collect, protect and manage all relevant data and documents on missing persons as a result of armed conflict," and called on states to take appropriate measures to "ensure thorough, prompt, impartial and effective investigations and the prosecution of offences linked to missing persons" under national and international law.

In the presidential statement, the Security Council also stressed the critical role of the International Committee of the Red Cross and its Central Tracing Agency in addressing the issue of missing persons, the need to include humanitarian elements in peace negotiations and agreements, and the role of truth, justice and accountability mechanisms in reconciliation and conflict resolution processes.



SHRI ANNA IS OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE - CHIEF MINISTER DR. MOHAN YADAV

▶ THE GOVERNMENT IS WORKING EQUALLY WITH FULL COMMITMENT IN ALL SECTORS. CHIEF MINISTER GREETED ANNADATA FARMERS AT "SHRI ANNA MAHOTSAV" AND FARMERS HONOR CEREMONY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, while greeting the farmers who donated food at the Shri Anna Mahotsav and Kisan Samman Ceremony under the Rani Durgavati Shri Anna Promotion Scheme, said that Shri Anna is our cultural heritage. Balaghat district has a special identity in the production of coarse grains. The history of Kodo here is more than 3 thousand years old. He said that the government is continuously working for the production and value addition of millet crops. He said that to encourage the farmers producing Kodo, the state government gives an additional grant of Rs 1,000 per quintal to the farmers. He said



that the government is working with full commitment for equal development in all areas of the state. The stream of development will continue to flow continuously in the state.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that the Central Government has announced to purchase Kodo at a support price of Rs 4290 this year. He said that due to the efforts of the gov-

ernment and the Millet Mission, the area of grain crops is continuously increasing. Earlier, Shree Anna was produced in 10 thousand hectares in Balaghat district, now in view of the interest of farmers towards Shree Anna, the target is to increase this area to 15200 hectares. Balaghat has a special role in the area of one lakh hectares in the country. To economi-

cally empower the farmers, Rs 25 thousand crore of Kisan Samman Nidhi is provided every year by the Central Government to 80 lakh farmers. At the same time, under the Mukhyamantri Kisan Kalyan Yojana, an amount of Rs 12 thousand 500 crore is directly transferred to the accounts of eligible farmers every year by the Madhya Pradesh government. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that as per the resolution of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we are moving towards increasing the income of farmers.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that along with providing food, farmers will also become electricity producers. By promoting solar energy, farmers will be motivated to produce electricity from solar energy. He said that remarkable work has been done towards conservation of water structures in Balaghat district. All these works will be documented.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav visited the exhibition based on millets at the beginning of Shri Anna Utsav and Kisan Samman Ceremony organized in the agricultural market. He also discussed with the farmers. He also praised the exhibition and encouraged the farmers.

28 Hawk jawans serving in Maoist-hit Balaghat get promoted

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Government of Madhya Pradesh gave out-of-turn promotion to 28 police personnel deployed in Maoist-hit regions in the state.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, who attended the annual award ceremony at the Police Ground in Balaghat on Sunday, honoured the cops with medals for their heroic efforts in fighting against Maoists.

Addressing the award ceremony, CM Yadav congratulated those who received the award and out-of-turn promotion. "For fighting bravely against Naxalites, soldiers and ex-soldiers have received promotion. Our forces are capable of fighting the enemies of the nation," he added.

CM Yadav also said that the Madhya Pradesh government has made a surrender policy, which has received positive results in reducing Maoist activities in the state.

Cops who got out-of-turn promotion are known as the 'Hawk Force' - the state's elite combat unit raised to take on



Maoist activities. The Hawk Force is placed under the command of the Anti-Naxal Wing and is largely deployed in three Maoist-hit districts.

Maoism in Madhya Pradesh has been curbed with the efforts of joint forces of the Centre and state in the past few years.

After the partition of the state in 2001, most of the affected districts went to Chhattisgarh. However, MP's three districts - Balaghat,

Mandla and Dindori - are recognised as Maoist-hit regions.

The state government has made a provision for out-of-turn promotion of those whose works are categorised as extraordinary efforts, serving in high-risk regions.

This out-of-turn promotion is given every year. Last year, 55 Hawk jawans were promoted for gunning down over a dozen Maoists.

Congress committee arrives in Bhopal to review LS poll debacle

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A three-member Congress committee on Saturday arrived in Bhopal on a two-day visit to review the recently concluded Lok Sabha poll debacle of the party.

The committee comprises Prithviraj Chawan, former Maharashtra Chief Minister; Saptagiri Shankar Ulka, former Odisha MP; and Jignesh Mewani, Gujarat MLA.

After a brief welcome ceremony by the state Congress unit at party headquarters in Bhopal, the committee started the process of one-to-one meetings with party leaders.

MP Congress Chief Jitu Patwari left the party headquarters soon after having a closed-door meeting with the committee.

The committee will also investigate the role of Jitu Patwari, especially after the Congress Indore candidate Akashay Kanti Bam withdrew his nomination papers at the last minute.

The high command has also tasked the committee to find out reasons why several party leaders, including some sitting MLAs, had switched to BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha election. Sources told reporter that the role of senior party leaders including two former



Chief Ministers Kamal Nath and Digvijaya Singh along with other senior Congress leaders like Ajay Singh (Rahul), Arun Yadav, Kamaleshwar Patel, and Kantilal Bhuria will also be investigated. The committee will visit different parts of the state and hold meetings with senior leaders, district heads and candidates of the Lok Sabha elections. The committee visit comes at a crucial time as a major reshuffle of Congress' state unit is on the cards, and the final report will hold significance. Congress lost all 29 Lok Sabha seats to the BJP in the state. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the party won only one seat and also suffered a humiliating defeat in the Assembly elections held in November last year.

World Vitiligo Day Observed at AIIMS Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

AIIMS Bhopal observed World Vitiligo Day with great enthusiasm and purpose today. The event aimed to raise awareness about vitiligo, a condition that causes the skin to lose its natural color, resulting in white patches.

Speaking as the chief guest, Professor (Dr) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, emphasized the importance of understanding and treating vitiligo. "Anyone can suffer from vitiligo, but the process of color change can be stopped and slowed down through treatment. The skin color can also return to a great extent," he stated. He also highlighted the mental stress patients face due to societal misconceptions about the condition. "We need to empower patients mentally as well. This disease changes the skin's color into spots, and the colorless areas usually grow larger over time. It is crucial to contact a doctor immediately when symptoms appear."

The Department of Dermatology at



AIIMS Bhopal organized the program in collaboration with the Department of Biochemistry and Community and Family Medicine. For the past month, a series of awareness activities took place in the regions of Bhojpur, Dhamdhusar, Bangrasia, and Chiklod. These activities included

street plays, poster-making, and patient counseling sessions to educate the public about vitiligo.

On the concluding day, patients and their families visiting AIIMS Bhopal were further informed about vitiligo through street plays. Additionally, a painting competition

was held, and the winning participants were awarded for their creativity and efforts. AIIMS Bhopal remains committed to spreading awareness and providing support to vitiligo patients, ensuring they receive the necessary treatment and mental empowerment.

Not necessary, the one who did not vote is not a Ram devotee: Uma Bharti

Team Absolute | Shivpuri

Former Chief Minister Uma Bharti said, 'It is not necessary that the one who does not vote for BJP is not a Ram devotee. Every Ram devotee will vote for BJP, we should not harbor such arrogance.'

Uma Bharti met BJP leaders in Shivpuri on Saturday while going from Gwalior to Bhopal. During this, he also discussed with the media. Uma expressed concern over the less number of seats BJP got in the Lok Sabha in UP. She said- Seats have definitely reduced in UP. The social system is different here. BJP will review. I will also give my vote.

Uma Bharti said, first we have to understand the mind of Hindu society. Hindu society does not integrate social system and religious system. On the other hand, there is Islamic society which runs by combining social system and religious system. He casts his vote accordingly. But Hindu society votes according to the social system. However, it is



not at all the case that the devotion to Ram of Hindus has reduced. He is a devotee of Ram, but for some reason he tries not to vote for BJP.

Uma Bharti said, it is not right to blame Modi-Yogi on the Lok Sabha election results in Uttar Pradesh. BJP had lost even after the demolition of Babri Masjid structure on 6 December. Despite this, we did not exclude Ram Lala temple in Ayodhya from our agenda. Ayodhya was there in every election. We never linked Ayodhya with votes, similarly now we are not linking Mathura-Kashi with votes.

On not getting 400 seats in the Lok Sabha elections, the former CM said, his wish was to exceed 500, but God does not fulfill every wish. In this election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called himself Pradhan Sevak. We all called ourselves Modi's family. Despite this, seats did not come as per the intention, BJP will review this. Because I'm not on the review team. Only National President Jagat Prasad Nadda will be able to explain the reason for getting 240 seats instead of 400.

Pandit Pradeep Mishra bowed down and apologized in Barsana

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After making controversial remarks on Radha Rani, Pandit Pradeep Mishra rubbed his nose and apologized on Saturday. Pandit Pradeep Mishra had reached Barsana on Saturday. Here he apologized by rubbing his nose in the temple of Radha Rani. After this he prostrated himself in the temple of Radha Rani. Due to continuous threats being received by Pandit Pradeep Mishra, tight security arrangements were made in the Radharani temple. After apologizing he said that I have reached here because of the love for the people of Braj.

A big decision was taken against Pandit Pradeep Mishra in the Mahapanchayat in Mathura. Angered by the statement given on Radha Rani, the saints and mahants had organized a mahapanchayat in Barsana Manmandir. It was decided that Pandit Pradeep Mishra would not be given entry in any temple of Braj. If Pandit Pradeep Mishra



comes to apologize, he will not be allowed entry without the permission of the saints and mahants. Pandit Pradeep Mishra had given a statement regarding Radha Rani. The saints of Braj and the devotees of Radha Rani are angry about this. Mahapanchayat was called to punish Pandit Pradeep Mishra. Saints and Mahants of Braj and religious leaders from other states also participated in it. After discussion, it was decided not to allow Pandit Pradeep Mishra entry into the temples of Braj.

Congress in Madhya Pradesh aiming to win Amarwara by-election after LS polls debacle

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After a disastrous performance in the Lok Sabha polls in Madhya Pradesh, the Congress has been preparing to put up a good show in a bid to win the Amarwara Assembly seat in the state's Chhindwara district where bypoll is scheduled to be held on July 10.

The by-election to Amarwara Assembly constituency was necessitated after sitting MLA Kamlesh Shah of Congress quit as a legislator and switched to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. On July 10, the seat will witness a direct contest between BJP's Kamlesh Shah and Congress' Dheeransha Inwati. According to sources in the



Madhya Pradesh Congress, former chief minister and party veteran Kamal Nath is expected to join the campaign for Inwati from July 2. Madhya Pradesh unit Congress head Jitu Patwari has already been leading the campaign in Amarwara. Former CM Digvijaya



Singh is also among the 40 star campaigners. According to political analysts, retaining the Amarwara Assembly seat will be a matter of prestige for both Jitu Patwari and Kamal Nath after the Congress lost all 29 Lok Sabha seats of Madhya Pradesh.

The poor and needy should get the benefit of cheap and quality medicines: Governor Patel

▶ NOW THE NAME OF TRANSPORT POSTS WILL BE ROAD SAFETY AND ENFORCEMENT POINT, MOBILE UNIT WILL INVESTIGATE.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The instructions to gradually close the transport checkpoints in the state and check through check points on Gujarat pattern have started being implemented. Keeping this in view, the Transport Department has named these transport posts as Road Safety and Enforcement Points and has sought the services of 211 Home Guards on deputation from the Home Department, who are falling short for security here. Regarding this, Additional Chief

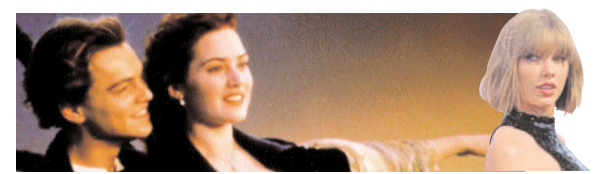


Secretary Transport has also written a letter to the Principal Secretary Home, while 135 computer operators and 45 computer supervisors will be called for outsourced services in the Transport Department through

Madhya Pradesh State Electronics Development Corporation or SEDMAP. Additional Chief Secretary Transport Department SN Mishra has said in a letter to the Home

Department that 45 Road Safety and Enforcement Points and 94 Road Safety and Enforcement Mobile Units will be established in place of the transport check posts operating on the inter-state border in the state. Its decision has been taken on the basis of the instructions of Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav.

In the first phase, the Transport Commissioner has identified 45 Road Safety and Enforcement Points in place of transport check posts and provided a district-wise list and asked to hand over the services of 211 home guards to be deployed here to the Transport Department. Therefore, in order to follow the instructions given by the Chief Minister during the review of the Transport Department, the services of Home Guards for these places should be immediately handed over to the Transport Commissioner so that the duty can be started after deployment at the check point.



JLo, Ben Affleck are 'focused on their separate lives'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood couple Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck, who are reportedly experiencing a rough patch, are "focused on their separate lives" this summer amid tensions in their marriage. A source close to Jennifer said that at the moment, the couple "don't have any summer plans together," reports People magazine. JLo recently returned to Los Angeles from her

trip to Europe.

The source said that the actress "enjoyed her trip to Europe" and that she "has more travel planned but is back in Los Angeles for now."

According to People, a source previously reported that the Academy Award-winning filmmaker moved all of his belongings out of the couple's Beverly Hills mansion before Jennifer returned from her European trip.

"Ben continues to live at the Brentwood rental. He's been there for about two months

now," another source said.

"He seems okay. He's been at his office every day and seems focused on work. He's also spending time with his kids."

On June 26, the couple reunited after the 'Atlas' actress returned from her trip and were photographed separately entering a building in West Hollywood where they both maintain offices.

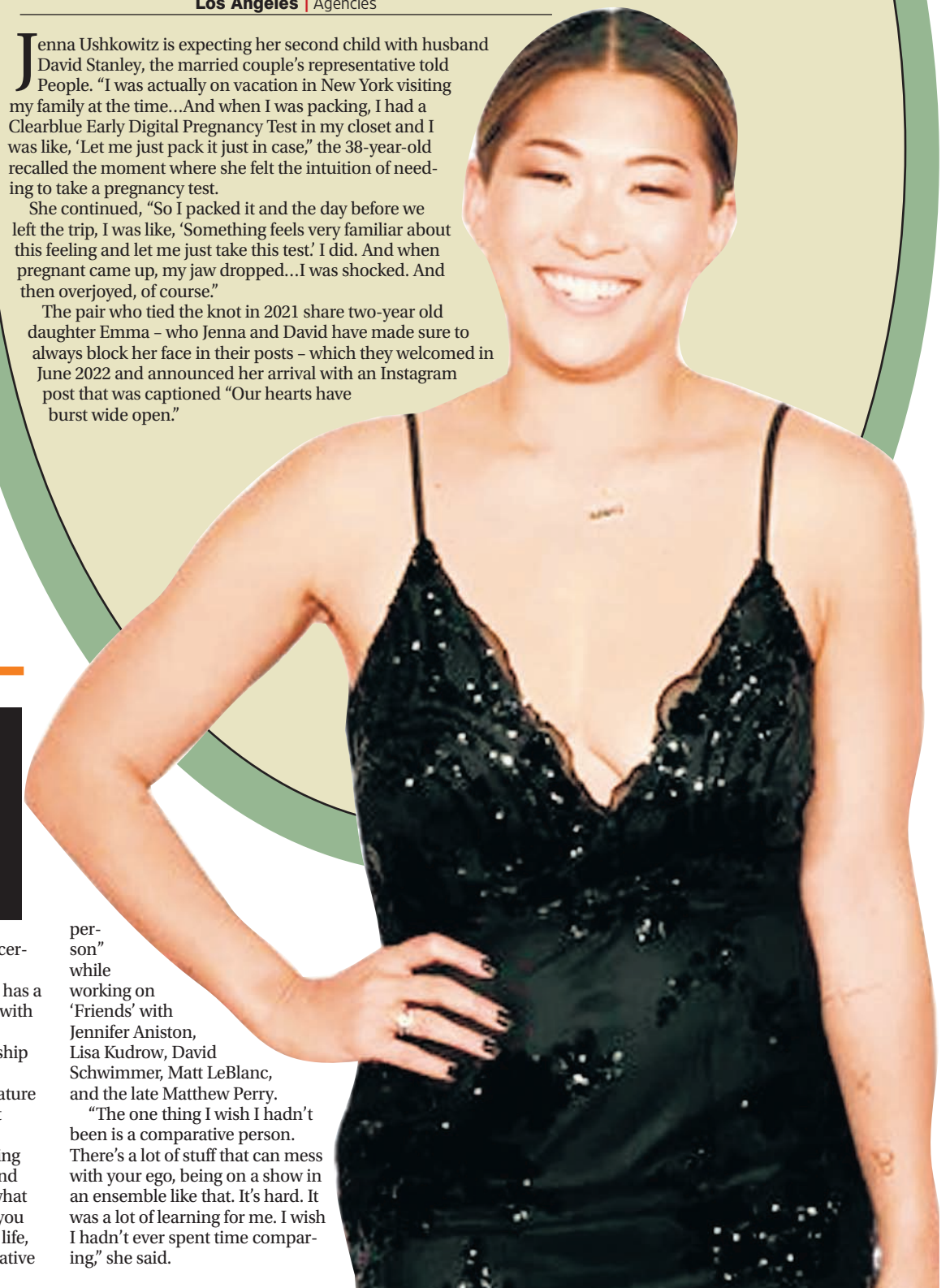
JENNA USHKOWITZ EXPECTING HER SECOND BABY

Los Angeles | Agencies

Jenna Ushkowitz is expecting her second child with husband David Stanley, the married couple's representative told People. "I was actually on vacation in New York visiting my family at the time... And when I was packing, I had a Clearblue Early Digital Pregnancy Test in my closet and I was like, 'Let me just pack it just in case,'" the 38-year-old recalled the moment where she felt the intuition of needing to take a pregnancy test.

She continued, "So I packed it and the day before we left the trip, I was like, 'Something feels very familiar about this feeling and let me just take this test.' I did. And when pregnant came up, my jaw dropped... I was shocked. And then overjoyed, of course."

The pair who tied the knot in 2021 share two-year old daughter Emma - who Jenna and David have made sure to always block her face in their posts - which they welcomed in June 2022 and announced her arrival with an Instagram post that was captioned "Our hearts have burst wide open."



THERE'S A LOT OF STUFF THAT CAN MESS WITH YOUR EGO : COURTNEY COX

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Courtney Cox, who turned 60 in June, is not upset about getting older and doesn't think time has changed her "one bit." "I'm fine with it. I love my life, and I love that I'm still working after all this time. I'm feeling very grateful... If anything, I'm probably more compassionate now," she told Britain's HELLO! magazine, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The actress said: "I speak my mind, but people who know me

can handle it. With me, you certainly get what you get."

The 'Scream' actress, who has a 20-year-old daughter, Coco, with her former husband David Arquette and is in a relationship with Snow Patrol's Johnny McDaid, feels her creative nature has helped her stay young at heart.

She explained, "Overcoming challenges, being creative, and thinking outside the box is what makes life exciting. It keeps you young." Looking back on her life, Cox regrets being a "comparative

person" while working on 'Friends' with Jennifer Aniston, Lisa Kudrow, David Schwimmer, Matt LeBlanc, and the late Matthew Perry.

"The one thing I wish I hadn't been is a comparative person. There's a lot of stuff that can mess with your ego, being on a show in an ensemble like that. It's hard. It was a lot of learning for me. I wish I hadn't ever spent time comparing," she said.



Will Smith drops new song 'You Can Make It'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor-rapper Will Smith has released new music with a completely fresh sound. The four-time Grammy-winning rapper and actor, 55, has been on a solo music hiatus since dropping his 2017 EDM track 'Get Lit', which came over a decade after his last studio album, 2005's 'Lost and Found', reports People magazine.

However, the 'Bad Boys: Ride or Die' star has returned with a brand-new offering titled 'You Can Make It'.

The uplifting single, backed by the Sunday Service Choir (of Kanye West's Jesus Is King fame) and assisted by Friday, finds Smith back in his rap bag as he shares an urgent message for listeners.

"You are in the smoke and the fire / Tight rope on the wires / I see you're broken and tired / And all your hope is expired," he raps on the track. "So many tests for the flesh / Exhausted, gasping to catch your breath / Walking through the valley of the shadow of death / and when you think you've got nothing left, keep going."

According to People, later in the song, the 'Summertime' rapper seems to turn his encouraging advice to himself, alluding to dealing with past personal battles -- like the infamous 2022 Oscar slap incident with Chris Rock -- with lyrics like, "Believe me, they tried to bleed Will Smith / In the rearview, I see adversity was the gift."

He adds, "Out of the madness, out of the maze / Out of the saddest into the rays / The darkest of nights turns into day / And



Miley Cyrus's 'heart lit up' looking at choir with elderly members singing

Los Angeles | Agencies

Popstar Miley Cyrus was left impressed by a choir group of elderly members singing her hit song 'Used To Be Young'. The 31-year-old singer commented on a recent clip posted by Pop Choir Australia on TikTok. The clip featured a large group of people, dressed in casual clothes, harmonising to the song. Several singers appeared to be elderly, with some using wheelchairs.

"You're all STILL beautiful! This video lit my heart up. A moment like this is why I wrote U2BY!" Cyrus wrote in the comments.

"Physical youth comes and goes, but the soul can stay young forever!! Love you all! Thanks for making my day."

According to its website, the choir is described as: "Pop Choir is the choir reimagined and is for everyone and anyone who loves to sing!" "A tired and overworked professional or a stressed-out parent, someone who loves to belt out their favourite tune in the car or shower, or the next Guy Sebastian. Pop Choir is singing fun for everyone and surprisingly cool!"

The choirs often perform at local community events after instructors teach them how to harmonise pop hits.

Miley has been dubbed the 'Teen Queen' of the 2000s. She was tagged as a teen idol at age 13 as the lead character in the series 'Hannah Montana'. Her solo career started with the US number-one pop rock album 'Meet Miley Cyrus' in 2007 and continued in 2008 with 'Breakout'.

'SABRINA THE TEENAGE WITCH' STAR MARTIN MULL PASSES AWAY AGED 80

Los Angeles | Agencies

American star and comedian Martin Mull, who has worked in shows such as 'Sabrina the Teenage Witch', 'Roseanne', and 'Clue', has passed away at the age of 80.

Martin died at his home after reportedly a "valiant fight against a long illness," his daughter, Maggie Mull, announced on social media.

In a tribute on Instagram, Maggie wrote that her father "was known for excelling at every creative discipline imaginable and for doing Red Roof Inn commercials." "He would find that joke funny," she added. "He was never not funny." Martin's first notable role



was in 1976, playing Garth Gimble on the soap opera spoof 'Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman', which led to two additional spin-off roles, including in the series 'Fernwood 2 Night'.

He then landed the role of army officer Colonel Mustard in the black-comedy film 'Clue', inspired by the board game of the same name, reports

BBC.com. He also voiced advertisements that his daughter mentioned in her tribute. On the small screen, the actor worked on 'Roseanne', where he played the titular character's boss, Leon Carp, and on 'Sabrina the Teenage Witch', where he played Principal Willard Kraft.

He also appeared on the critically acclaimed satirical sitcom 'Arrested Development', playing hapless private detective Gene Parmesan.

Martin made appearances in numerous television shows, such as 'The Simpsons', 'Family Guy', 'Law and Order: Special Victims Unit', 'The Golden Girls', and 'Two and a Half Men'.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Blanca



Know what my strengths are and back myself: Suryakumar

Bridgetown (Barbados) | Agencies

Ahead of facing South Africa in the 2024 Men's T20 World Cup final, India batter Suryakumar Yadav said he is aware of the strengths he has and is backing himself to come good in the side's quest to win the elusive trophy. In this tournament so far, Suryakumar has scored 196 runs in seven innings at an average of 32.66, including hitting crucial half-centuries against the USA and Afghanistan. With Kensington Oval having a short square boundary on one side, Suryakumar will be expected to make the most of it.

"Excited by my role. Have always enjoyed it. Wind direction plays a big role here. Know what my strengths are and back myself. Back of the mind, it feels really good to know I have a good record against South Africa but you have to start afresh on the day. (Conversations last night) Sleep well, stay fresh, stay hydrated," said Suryakumar in a pre-match chat with the broadcasters.

With India playing their third T20 World Cup final, Suryakumar admitted there is pressure of playing a big title clash. "Playing in the final is not easy. Easy to say it's just another game, there is pressure. But if there is no pressure, there is no fun."



Speaking on the Sky Sports Cricket broadcast feed, former England captain Nasser Hussain said he is expecting India to win the title clash and end their 11-year trophy drought.

"India's batting line-up. Their pace attack. Their spinners. They have every base covered. And a slight advantage is that they have played a game here in Barbados and South Africa haven't."

"South Africa have got that monkey off their back of losing seven semifinals and if the pressure can be off, then it shifts to India. India have not won a title for a very long time. For all their resources and the players they have, they feel it is about time to win it and all of India will be expecting them to win it."

Hussain also feels talismanic batter Virat Kohli should bat in his usual way. Kohli has amassed just 75 runs in eight innings as an opener alongside captain Rohit Sharma. "He can be the glue the other players bat around."

"He suffered from batting on that tough New York pitch, and he has been in the nets trying to get the rhythm of batting. If he bats for three or four overs that timing comes back. And, in the end, in a big game, under pressure, who will India want? Kohli."

Badminton Asia Junior Championships: India book quarterfinal berth with 3-2 win over Philippines



New Delhi | Agencies

India sealed their spot in the quarterfinals of the Badminton Asia Junior Mixed Team Championship with a 3-2 win over the Philippines in a Group C clash at Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on Saturday.

The Indian team, which had blanked Vietnam 5-0 in their tournament opener, made a couple of changes to their line-up for their second round match against the Philippines. Rounak Chauhan replacing Pranay Shettigar in boy's sin-

gles and K. Vennala combining with Shravani Walekar in girls' doubles.

Senior National Championships runners-up, Tanvi Sharma started India's march with a 21-9, 21-17 win over Fuentespina Christel Rei but Chauhan could not maintain the momentum after winning the opening game against Jamal Rahmat Pandi and lost 15-21, 21-18, 21-12. Vennala and Shravani then put India ahead once again as they defeated Hernandez Andrea and Pecious Libaton 23-21, 21-11

in 39 minutes. The boys' doubles combination of Arsh Mohammad and Sankar Sarawat then put the result beyond doubt with a 21-16, 21-14 win over Christian Dorega and John Lanza.

The mixed doubles pair of Bhargav Ram Arigela and K. Vennala lost the final rubber. India will now face hosts Indonesia to decide the group winner on Sunday. Indonesia are also through to the quarterfinal having beaten the Philippines 5-0 and Vietnam 4-1 in their two group matches.

Asian Junior Squash: Shiven claims U-15 title; Aadya emerges champion in U-13

Islamabad | Agencies

India's Shiven Agarwal and Aadya Budhia emerged as the boys' U-15 and girls' U-13 champions respectively in the 31st Asian Junior Individual Squash Championships which concluded here on Saturday.

Second-seeded Agarwal got the better of Malaysian top seed Muhammad Raziq Putra Mohd Fakhur Razi 11-7, 8-11, 11-5, 13-11 in the final, while second seed Aadya put it past fourth-seeded compatriot Goushika M 11-5, 11-5, 11-4.

Agarwal avenged his loss to Muhammad Raziq in the U-13 semifinal in 2022, while Aadya's medal was India's



first gold in the girls' U-13 category of the competition. India won two gold medals

in the championship after a gap of 12 years.

Formula 1: Verstappen pips Piastri, Norris to win Austrian Sprint race in Austria

Spielberg (Austria) | Agencies

Red Bull's Max Verstappen outperformed the McLarens of Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris to win the Sprint race at the Austrian Grand Prix on Saturday. Verstappen held the lead since the start before Norris soon closed in and briefly moved into P1 with a bold overtake, only for the reigning world champion to reclaim the position moments later in a squabble that enabled Piastri to pass his teammate.

Behind the top three drivers, who maintained that formation to the chequered flag despite some more moments of excitement, George Russell and Lewis Hamilton sandwiched Carlos Sainz, followed by the recovering Charles Leclerc and Sergio Perez.

Sainz got the jump on Russell with a fine move around the outside of Turn 4, as Hamilton held sixth over the fast-starting Leclerc, Perez, Kevin



Magnussen and Lance Stroll -- the Alpines of Esteban Ocon and Pierre Gasly dropping out of the top 10 places.

Having kept Piastri behind him, Norris went on the attack, lighting up the timesheets to close in on

Verstappen and, on Lap 5, bravely sent his car up the inside of the Red Bull at Turn 3, just about slowing it down at the apex to emerge with the lead.

But more excitement swiftly followed as Verstappen responded with

a lunge at Turn 4, where Norris' exit was compromised as Piastri managed to slip past his teammate, with Sainz, the two Mercedes drivers and Leclerc all watching on.

Talking about his performance after the Sprint, Verstappen said, "It was a good first lap, I would say, but then once the DRS opens it's very hard to get out of it - (it) took a few laps. A few exciting battles as well, but I think once we cleared the DRS then I could do a bit more of my own race and it looked all a bit better."

"You could see they [McLaren] have two cars that are pushing flat-out trying to do of course make it difficult for me, and we had to work for it in that race. A few things to think about where we could do better, for tomorrow especially. I think tomorrow is also going to be a longer race and harder on the tyres, so it's going to be quite interesting to see how that will evolve," he added.

Euro 2024: Julian Nagelsmann defends striker Havertz, says 'it's not always about scoring'

Dortmund | Agencies

Germany will be playing Denmark in their Round of 16 match at the Signal Iduna Park as the side will be hoping to reach the quarterfinals of a major tournament for the first time since the Euro 2016 when they were defeated by hosts France.

Much criticism has been revolving around striker Kai Havertz and his inclusion in the side as many are calling for the Arsenal forward to be replaced by Niclas Fullkrug, who has been a positive reinforcement from the bench.

Ahead of the highly anticipated game, German manager Julian Nagelsmann has shut down all talk regarding the striker's position, stating "Kai is an important player" in the team.

"He has a clear job in a lot of games, which goes hand in hand with



the fact that he doesn't have many ball actions because he should create space for others. Internally, Kai is

ranked significantly higher than in the public," said Nagelsmann to Sky Sports Germany.

Havertz scored and provided an assist in Germany's opening encounter against Scotland. Since then he has been unable to find the net in the remaining two Group Stage games. Niclas Fullkrug on the other hand was substituted onto the pitch against Switzerland and managed to score a late equaliser, sparking debate.

"For the striker, it's not always about scoring a goal. If you're substituted in and the opponent is already tired, you might have one or two more spaces. Kai is an important player for us," concluded the former Bayern Munich manager.

It seems as if Nagelsmann believes in Kai's ability and will be hoping to utilize him in the tournament ahead. The side will potentially face Spain in the quarterfinals of the tournament if both are to win their Round of 16 matchups.

PSG inform BARCA OF MAKING A RECORD 250MN EUROS BID FOR LAMINE YAMAL: REPORT

New Delhi | Agencies

Lamine Yamal has broken onto the scene at the 2024 European Championship in style. The 16-year-old winger has dazzled the football world and continues to impress at the Euro 2024, becoming the youngest player to ever provide an assist in the Euros and continues to be one of the key players for the Spanish side.

According to a report by Spanish outlet Mundo Deportivo, Paris Saint Germain is looking to break the bank to bring Kylian Mbappe's replacement to the team. It is said that PSG have already informed Barcelona of their intentions to try and sign Lamal and have brought a 250 Million Euros offer to the table.

PSG were reportedly after the young Spanish national in March as well and had offered 200 million Euros to Barcelona, a fact that was confirmed by Club President Joan Laporta who straight up rejected the offer saying he is 'untouchable' for other clubs.

The teenager is currently under contract with the Catalan club until 2026 but is said



to have already committed to signing a contract till 2031. According to his current contract, the release clause in Lamal's contract is close to a Billion Euros.

The price tag of 250 million Euros would shatter the current record transfer fees, the 222 Million Euros PSG paid to Barcelona for Neymar Jr's signature in 2017. However, it is highly unlikely that Barcelona cash in on their brightest asset as they believe him to be a top player for the future.

Hockey India announces 33-member group for national women's coaching camp

Bengaluru | Agencies

Hockey India, on Saturday, announced the 33-member Indian women's hockey team that will return to train in the national women's coaching camp from July 1 to August 31, in SAI Bengaluru. The Indian women's team went on a short break after concluding their FIH Hockey Pro League 2023/24 season in London and Antwerp.

The team, led by captain Salima Tete and vice-captain Navneet Kaur fought in close

matches against Argentina, Belgium, Germany, and Great Britain in the FIH Pro League, under the guidance of chief coach Harendra Singh, and showed glimpses of brilliance occasionally.

The shortlisted squad includes goalkeepers Savita, Bichu Devi Kharibam, Bansari Solanki, and Madhuri Kindo. The defenders picked for the core group are Nikki Pradhan, Udita, Ishika Chaudhary, Monika, Ropni Kumari, Mahima Choudhary, Jyoti Chhattri, and Preeti.

The midfielders selected are Salima Tete, Marina Lalramghaki, Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Neha, Jyoti, Edula Jyoti, Baljeet Kaur, Manisha Chauhan, Akshata Abaso Dhekalke, Ajmina Kujur.

Meanwhile, the forwards featured in the group are Sunelita Toppo, Mumtaz Khan, Lalremsiami, Sangita Kumari, Deepika, Sharmila Devi, Navneet Kaur, Deepika Soreng, Preeti Dubey, Vandana Katariya and Rutuja Dadaso Pisal. Chief coach Harendra Singh



commented on the progress of the team saying, "We recently travelled to Antwerp and London for the Europe leg of the Pro League, and while the results were not in our favour, we learned a lot as a team. On several occasions, we were leading, and we proactively searched and threatened to score while looking for an equalizer. These are good signs to have in the initial stages of a rebuild, and I am sure the Indian women's hockey team will be a force to be reckoned with in the future."



Amitabh Bachchan is 'original mass hero': Nagarjuna

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Veteran star Nagarjuna Akkineni has heaped praise on 'Kalki 2898 AD' and called megastar Amitabh Bachchan,

who plays the role of Ashwatthama in the film, the "original mass hero."

Nagarjuna took to X and praised filmmaker Nag Ashwin for blending "fiction with mythology and history so effortlessly."

"Congratulations to the team of Super duper #Kalki2898AD!! Naagi, you took us to another time and another place. entwining fiction with mythology and history so effortlessly!!" he wrote.

The actor then praised Amitabh, writing: "Amith Ji, the original mass hero... Sir, you are on fire."

Nagarjuna also expressed his desire to see more of superstar Kamal Haasan, who plays the role of Supreme Yashin, the proclaimed god of the Complex, and



mentioned his anticipation for the second instalment.

"Can't wait to see Kamalji in the sequel... did not get enough of him! Prabhas, you did it all over

again!!"

Regarding Deepika Padukone and the rest of the cast, he wrote: "Deepika ji, you look so ethereal and convincing as the divine

mother!! And the rest of the team. Ashwini Dutt Garu, dear Sweetie, and Swapna, God bless you! Indian cinema has done it again!!"

Wanted to explore comedy genre : Vicky Kaushal

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Vicky Kaushal has said the reason he agreed to do 'Bad Newz' is because he wanted to explore the comedy genre, something he hasn't done before.

Famous for portraying larger-than-life characters, Vicky departs from his norm in 'Bad Newz'.

The actor shared his experiences shooting for a comedy film, expressing a profound sense of familiarity and comfort despite venturing into uncharted territory.

Vicky said: "For me, shooting for this film was like being at home because Anand Tiwari and Karan Johar, the people with whom I was collaborating, had this feel-good thing going with them, plus the script was very good. The concept of the film, I found it to be new, and the kind of humour it has, though I haven't explored the comedy genre much as an actor."

Talking about Anand Tiwari, the film's director, Vicky said: "Apart from being a phenomenal actor, he is a brilliant director, especially when it comes to comedy. So, I was also feeling good surrendering to him."

Continuing on the theme, the actor said: "For me, it was also something new, and the kind of energy you need to showcase in scenes, I got it from the set. I was working with a family, which mattered because I hadn't done much before in the comedy genre and a lot of things were new for me. So, without thinking much, I surrendered to it."



DEEPIKA PADUKONE'S (LLL) FOUNDATION HAS ANNOUNCED A NEW PLATFORM FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Deepika Padukone's LiveLoveLaugh (LLL) foundation has announced a new platform for mental health conversations with the launch of 'Lecture Series Unplugged'.

This quarterly event aims to build awareness and sustain open discussions about mental health.

Deepika, Founder of LiveLoveLaugh, said: "Over the last decade, LLL has managed to successfully create a safe space for crucial mental health conversations. With 'Lecture Series Unplugged', LLL aims to reach a broader audience by offering relatable stories that can further strengthen our impact on individuals, communities, and society at large."

The series will spotlight prominent figures sharing their lived experiences and insights on success, failures, triumphs, and learnings.

"By featuring personal stories, we'd like to foster a sense of connection and hope and an understanding that mental health challenges are a common part of the human experience," said Shyam Bhat, psychiatrist and chairperson of LiveLoveLaugh.



Esha Gupta's Saturday morning is all about playing in water with her puppy

Team Absolute | Mumbai

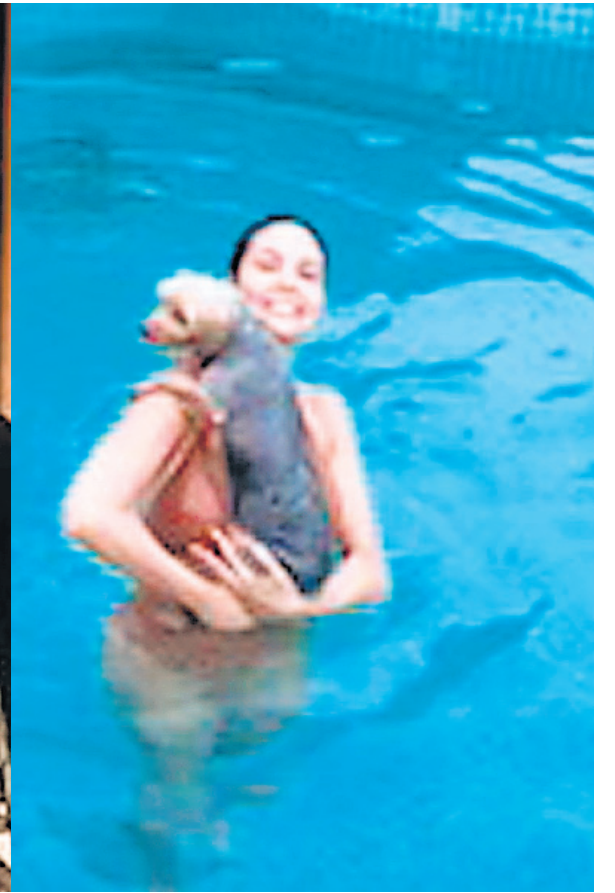
Actress and former beauty queen Esha Gupta spent a relaxed Saturday morning playing in the water with her four-legged friend. Esha took to her Instagram stories and shared a video of herself and her puppy enjoying the pool.

The clip shows her furry friend swimming to her, after which the actress cradles the pup and smiles at the camera. For her day in the pool, Esha kept it glamorously casual in an earthy-toned cutout monokini, accessorised with gold drop earrings.

Keeping it simple, Esha captioned the video: "Saturday Morning."

A few days ago, Esha, who often uses social media to update her fans about her day-to-day life, shared a black-and-white picture on Instagram.

In the mirror photograph, the actress flaunts her toned hour-glass figure, dressed in a black lace bralette and denim jeans.



ANUPAM KHER TAKES AUTO-RICKSHAW RIDE TO ENJOY 'BAARISH' IN MUMBAI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Veteran Bollywood star Anupam Kher opted to ditch the comfort of his luxurious car and took an auto-rickshaw ride to enjoy the monsoon in Mumbai.

On Saturday, Anupam shared a video on Instagram stories of him sitting in an autorickshaw.

The actor starts by showing the rainy surroundings before switching to selfie mode.

Anupam, dressed in casual wear, then starts singing: "Baarish, baarish." On the work front, Anupam is all set to return to directing films after two decades with his upcoming project, 'Tanvi the Great'. His last directorial was 'Om Jai Jagdish', released in 2002.

On his 69th birthday in March, the award-winning star announced his return to the director's chair with 'Tanvi the Great'. Oscar-winning music director M. M. Keeravani, who is known for his work on the acclaimed film 'RRR', has come on board for the film.



On his birthday, Anupam described the film as a "musical story of passion, courage, and innocence."

After announcing the film, Anupam revealed that several renowned names are attached to the project.

Japanese DOP Keiko Nakahara and lyricist Kausar Munir, known for her work in films like 'Ishaqzaade', 'Ek Tha Tiger', 'Bajranghi Bhaijaan', and the streaming series 'Rocket Boys', have come on board.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Nargis Fakhri treated her fans on Saturday with a motley of pictures, dazzling in a dress in shades of red, which she described as not just a colour but also a "mood."

Nargis took to Instagram and shared a gamut of pictures from a photoshoot, dressed in red.

In the first image, she is seen sitting and smiling at the camera, captioned with a red emoji.

The actress then shared a close-up image of herself, flaunting her perfect skin.

To complete her look, Nargis chose beach waves, natural makeup, and added a hint of gold with earrings.

"Ready to paint the town red," she captioned, adding two smiling emojis. In another close-up picture, she wrote: "Red is not just a colour. It's a mood."

Nargis made her debut in 2011 with the critically acclaimed blockbuster romantic drama 'Rockstar'. She was then seen playing a war correspondent in the political thriller 'Madras Cafe' in 2013. The following year, she worked in commercial hits such as 'Main Tera Hero' and 'Housefull 3'.

NARGIS FAKHRI DAZZLES IN RED, CALLS IT A 'MOOD' NOT JUST 'COLOUR'



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Mahlagha Jaberri