







## GOVT COMMITTED TO EMPOWERING WOMEN: CM MOHAN YADAV

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that the government is committed to empowering women. He expressed gratitude to beloved sisters for their affection. The Chief Minister said that the month of Sawan is the biggest festival for sisters as Raksha Bandhan occurs in Sawan. To add colors of happiness to the festival, Rs 250 in addition to Rs 1250 will be deposited in the accounts of Ladli Behnas on August 10.

Dr. Yadav participated in the thanksgiving program organized for the Ladli Behnas at Chitrangi in Singrauli district on the occasion of the Raksha Bandhan and Shrawan Utsav.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that industries are being established intending to increase employment opportunities and women will be given employment on a priority basis. The Chief Minister said that under the Ujjwala scheme of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, free gas connections will be given to women. Ujjwala scheme beneficiaries and Ladli Behnas in the state will get the facility of gas refill for Rs 450.

Minister of State for Panchayat and Rural Development Smt. Radha Singh and Behnas tied Rakhi to Chief



Minister Dr. Yadav. The Chief Minister sat on the ground for the Rakhi tying ritual. A 101-foot-long Rakhi was tied to the Chief Minister by Ladli Behnas from Singrauli district.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that Singrauli district is a far-flung district but it will be at the forefront in development. The Chief Minister announced the construction of a 50-bed hospital at Bargawa for Rs 15 crore. He announced the electrification of halmets of Chitrangi for Rs 50

crore under CSR head. He also announced that very soon air travel facility will begin from Singrauli for three days a week. He said that even the poorest of the poor would get the facility of an air ambulance. Saving the life of people is most important for us. Ayushman card holders will get this facility free of cost. The Chief Minister said that a Mining College will be inaugurated soon in Singrauli.

Minister of State for Panchayat and Rural Development, Smt. Radha Singh expressed gratitude to Chief

## We need to learn respecting the natural resources : Shri Patel

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Minister for Rural Development Shri Prahlad Patel has underlined the need to return to original roots saying that it is a joint responsibility to give back to the society and the mother Nature what we received. We need to learn respecting the natural resources and human labour. Shri Patel was addressing a one-day discussion on "Flourishing Rural Madhya Pradesh" organized at the initiative of Transforming Rural India (TRI) at MANIT here today.

Patel noted that there is increasing organic pressure on livelihood resources and natural resources. He mentioned that it is urgent to be extremely conscious about water, which is a life-sustaining element. To save lives, it is essential to save water. Instead of focusing on recycling, we need to promote its reutilisation.

Shri Patel said that women entrepreneurs associated with self-help groups are involved in millet production and the preparation of millet-based food products. He pointed out the need to focus



on the social security of womens' self-help groups. He appreciated Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for promoting millets as "ShriAnna", marketing its use worldwide. Millets are health improving, eliminating hunger, and contributing produce to economic prosperity. Shri Patel said that there are significant opportunities for food processing in Madhya Pradesh. He noted that food habits change at a distance of every 50 to 100 kilometers in India,

which creates possibilities for establishing food processing units. He also emphasized that needs of human society are increasing putting tremendous pressure on resources.

Shri K.K. Shukla, Director of Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology Bhopal, TRI State Lead Aliva Das, Senior Coordinator Shri Rajesh Singh, and Senior Consultant TRI Shri Shehzad Khan were present.

## Mentally Challenged Woman Raped in Hospital Campus

Team Absolute | Jabalpur

A 24-year-old mentally challenged woman was allegedly raped on the campus of a government medical college and hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur district on Tuesday, police said.

A 22-year-old man has been arrested in connection with the incident on the campus of NSCB Medical College and Hospital, Garha police station in-charge Nilesh Dohare said.

The action was taken based on a complaint lodged by activists of Moksha Sanstha, a social organisation, he said.

The woman was staying in a shelter home at the medical college and hospital for the last one-and-a-half-month, Ashish Thakur, founder of Moksha Sanstha, .

Activists found out about the assault and rushed to the spot in the early hours of the day and took the woman to the police station, he said.



## Tiger cub dies during treatment in van Vihar

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The cub died on Tuesday as it was not consuming food ever since the rescue, the official of Van Vihar National Park said. The deceased tiger cub was among the two injured cubs that were rescued and transported from the Midghat section near Budhni in...

The cubs were being given treatment by the doctors of Van Vihar in consultation with other experts, they said. The other injured tiger cub's health condition is also critical. The cub is eating food in small quantities and is undergoing treatment.

The other injured tiger cub's health condition is also critical. The cub is eating food in small quantities and is undergoing treatment. The



cub is under constant observation, they said. But the rear part of the tiger cub's body is not working.

The deceased tiger cub was among the two injured cubs that were rescued and

transported from the Midghat section near Budhni in Sehore district to Bhopal in a special single-coach AC train run by the West Central Railway (WCR) on July 17.

## ALARMING RISE IN TIGER DEATHS IN MADHYA PRADESH

Alarming cases of tiger deaths and hunting incidents in Madhya Pradesh's Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve and its surrounding forest divisions have been reported by a top official.

A report by the forest department based on an order by in-charge Principal Conservator of Forests Shubh Ranjan Sen in March this year sheds light on a concerning surge in tiger deaths in the state.

The report uncovered shocking details of negligence and procedural lapses in handling tiger cases, raising serious concerns about the state of wildlife conservation in the region. Known as the 'Tiger State', Madhya Pradesh is home to some of the highest concentrations of tigers in the country. The order by Mr Sen, which led to the report, had highlighted severe negligence in handling tiger cases, prompting the formation of a special committee to investigate tiger deaths from 2021 to 2023. The members of the three-people committee to look into tiger deaths were Indian Forest Service officer Ritesh Sonfia, Chairman, Principal Officer State Tiger Strike Force; Dr Kajal Jaiswal, Assistant Professor, School of Wildlife Forensics and Health, Jabalpur, and Archana Joshi, Advocate and Wildlife Officer, Katni.

## LADLI BEHNAS TO GET RAKHI GIFTS ON 10TH AUGUST: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, while inaugurating the Ladli Behna Utsav in Chitrakoot, announced that on August 10, Ladli Behnas will get Rs 1250 through a single click and an additional Rs 250 will be given as a Raksha Bandhan gift. He said that the Raksha Bandhan will be celebrated on 19th August. But it will be celebrated throughout the month of Sawan. Festivals are being organized in every district to receive blessings of Behnas.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that sisters shower their affection on brothers. Today sisters have given me the joy by tying a huge Rakhi. He said that the festivals connect us. The whole world is amazed to see the festivals of India. Our sages started the tradition of festivals thousands of



years ago to maintain love and harmony in society. Ladli Behnas handed over a 30-foot-long Rakhi to the Chief Minister in the program. The Behnas also presented 'Aabhaar Sneh

Pati', which was written in Bagheli dialect, to the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that Chitrakoot is the holy place of Lord Ram and Nanaji Deshmukh. The land

of Chitrakoot is irrigated with the tears of love arising from the sacred union of Lord Ram and his great devotee Bharat. Continuous efforts are being made for the all-round development of Chitrakoot. As per the ideals of Nanaji and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, the benefits of government schemes are being given to the deprived and the backmost person for development. Ladli Behna Yojana beneficiaries and women having Ujjwala gas connections from Ujjwala Yojana will be given at Rs 450 for refilling their gas cylinders. Continuous efforts are being made for over all development of the state. Regional Investors Conclave will be organized in Rewa soon. With this, investors will get the opportunity to invest in large quantities in this entire region and the regional youth will get employment opportunities.

## Mother, Sister Jump Into Narmada To Save Teen All 3 Drown

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A teenager, his mother and sister drowned in the Narmada river after he started sinking and the other two jumped in to save him in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district on Wednesday, police said.

The victims were taking a dip in the river at the Peshwa Ghat in the temple town of Maheshwar when they drowned in the afternoon, Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Tarunendra Singh said.

Vikram Singh Rajput (18) went deep into the water while taking a bath and started drowning. His mother



Urmila (44) and sister Mohini (25) jumped in to save him

but all three drowned, the police official said.

## Chitrakoot is A Unique Blend of Sanatan Culture and Human Civilization: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav stated that Lord Shri Ram spent his exile in Chitrakoot, a place where a unique blend of human civilization and Indian Sanatan culture can be observed. The exploration of establishing a Geo Park on this sacred land has begun, which is expected to create employment and development opportunities, thereby promoting social and economic growth in the area. Dr. Yadav was inaugurating a three-day workshop for the potential establishment of a UNESCO Global Geo Park in Chitrakoot, held on Thursday at the Vivekananda Auditorium in the Udyamita Parisar.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav acknowledged UNESCO's efforts to explore the possibility of establishing Geo Parks in 195 countries, expressing gratitude to UNESCO representatives for considering Chitrakoot's sacred land for this initiative. He highlighted Bharat Ratna Nanaji Deshmukh's role in igniting the spirit of self-reliance in the region, which is one of the most underdeveloped areas. The Pragati Deendayal Research Institute has made significant contributions to social and economic development, as well as in employment, animal husbandry, and agriculture. Dr. Yadav emphasized that Chitrakoot is unique in the state, with the potential to realize all possibilities. He



stated that establishing a Geo Park in Chitrakoot would protect the area's ancient heritage and priceless Indian culture. During the event, Dr. Yadav also released a booklet about the Chitrakoot UNESCO Geo Park initiative.

On this occasion, the representative of UNESCO, while apprising about the purpose of establishing the Geo Park, said that there is a need to preserve our natural wealth.

The objective of Geo Park is to explore its geological and cultural heritage and make it more effective. There is no Geo Park in India yet. Due to the presence of an ancient history of human life in Chitrakoot, the Tapo Bhoomi of Lord Shri Ram, there is great potential for a Geo Park here.

Among those who were present on the occasion were Assembly Speaker Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister of State for Urban Development and Housing Smt. Pratima Bagri, MP Shri Ganesh Singh, MP Morena Shri Shivmangal Singh Tomar, MLA Shri Surendra Singh Gaharwar, Organization Secretary of DRI Shri Abhay Mahajan, Padmashri Shri Umashankar Pandey, Shri Uttam Banerjee, Program in-charge Dr. Mahendra Singh, Shri Mukesh Pandey, Vice Chancellor Shri A.K. Singh, Shri Bharat Mishra along with public representatives and citizens.



EDITOR'S SPECS

## Celebrating a decade of freedom

In the heart of India, close to Mathura's cobbled lanes and bustling markets stands a sanctuary of hope and resilience, which gave a new lease of life to Raju the elephant. At the Elephant Hospital near Mathura, Raju has become a global symbol of survival, inspiring change and transforming the landscape of elephant welfare in the country. Celebrating a decade of freedom, Raju, now a majestic 60-year-old, symbolises the journey from suffering to sanctuary. His story of exploitation sparked a revolution in how elephants are treated in India. Rescued in 2014, when nearly 70 elephants still endured the harsh realities of circus life, Raju's resilience paved the way for a brighter future. Today, elephants are no longer coerced into performing in circuses. Just a few years ago, the streets of Delhi echoed with the presence of elephants, rented out for weddings and processions. Fast forward to 2019, and these sights became a thing of the past, thanks to the profound impact of individuals like Raju. By 2019, the last of these elephants, Jasmine, was brought to Wildlife SOS, symbolising a significant shift in the capital's approach to these gentle giants. Raju's rescue shone a harsh light on the grim reality of tourist rides and the accompanying abuse. This revelation strengthened the Wildlife SOS campaign, 'Refuse To Ride', which continues to advocate against such cruelty. Raju's story is not just about one elephant's journey from pain to peace; it is a testament to the resilience of all elephants and the unyielding spirit of those who fight for their freedom.

# Pocketbook Constitution: The Optics Of Parliament's Most-Loved Book

Sumit Baudh

A few legislators these days, especially those from opposition parties, are increasingly seen holding a small book in their hands. It's a pocketbook version of the Constitution of India, with a red cover and a black spine. The symbolism of these optics is intended to show their allegiance to the Constitution, as also their political opposition to the ruling alliance.

The optics emerged in response to the ruling political party's ambitious call to secure an unprecedented "400 paar" [more than 400 seats] majority in the Parliament - a majority that the Opposition alleged would have made amending the Constitution easier for the ruling alliance. Opposition leaders even declared a threat to the Constitution as they sloganised "samvidhan khate mein hai" [the Constitution is in danger].

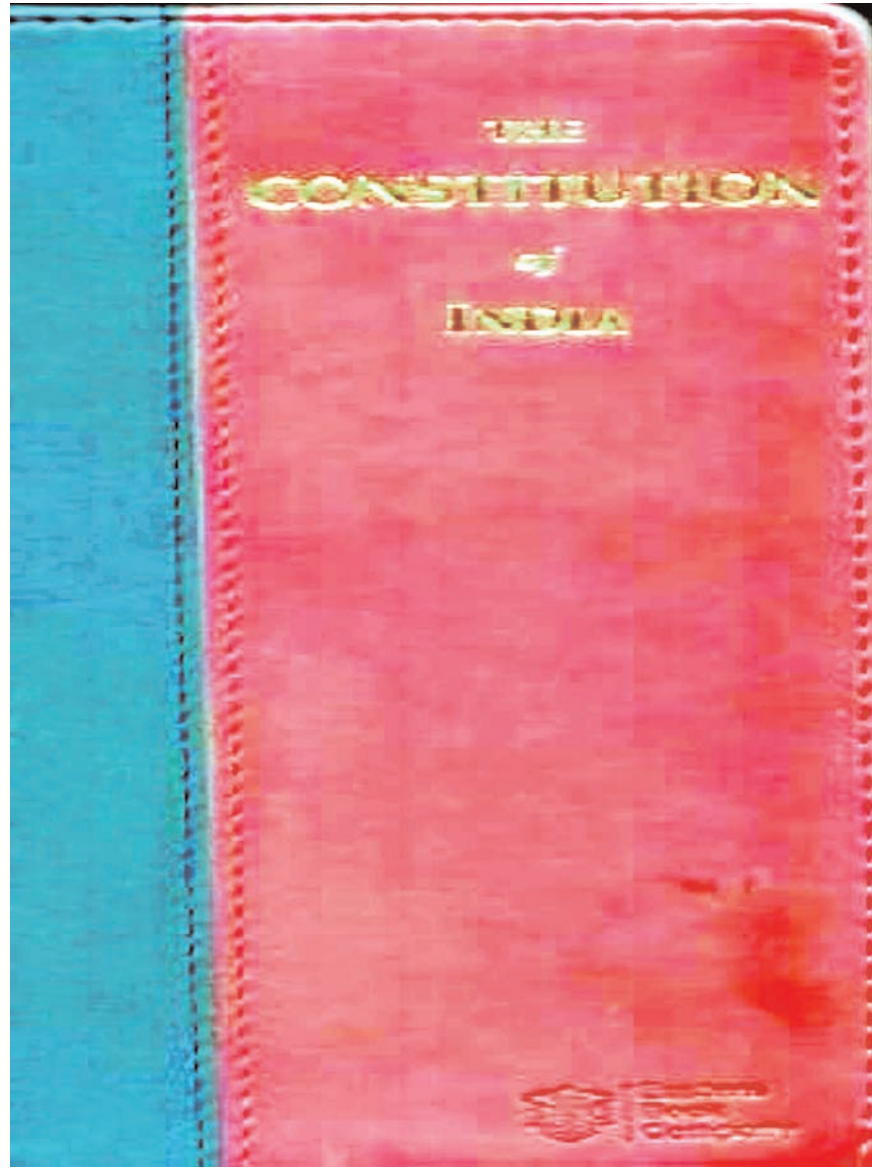
This year's electoral outcome has gone on to make the pocketbook Constitution a common sight in India's Parliamentary democracy. The core messaging of this optics is to uphold the protection of minorities and caste-based affirmative action /reservations in India.

In a famous 1949 speech, Dr B.R. Ambedkar, chairperson of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India, posed the question: If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? He said, "In politics, Bhakti or hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship."

Dr Ambedkar also said, "We must not be content with mere political democracy." He predicted that an emerging India of the time would have political equality (that is, universal adult franchise, one-person-one-vote), but deep and pervasive social inequality (that is, some people's lives would be more valuable than the others'). Dr Ambedkar famously called this "a life of contradictions".

The life of contradictions has endured for over seven decades, and it calls for a deep reflection on our societal and political structures. In his 1949 speech, Dr Ambedkar spoke about resolving the contradiction. How can an impending life of contradictions be averted?

"We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy," he said.



"What does social democracy mean?" Dr. Ambedkar posed this question in that speech, and explained, "It means a way of life which recognises liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life."

"What does fraternity mean?" Dr Ambedkar asked himself, and explained, "It is the principle which gives unity and solidarity to social life. [...] In India there are castes. The castes

are anti-national. In the first place because they bring about separation in social life."

Caste is a fundamental unit of inequality in India. It continues to be a site of Constitutional remediation. The pre-election rhetoric of a "Constitution-under-threat" perhaps delivered its message most effectively to Dalit, Adivasi, and

Bahujan voters, who are directly affected by caste-based inequalities. The optics of the pocketbook Constitution have outlasted electoral campaigning by now. Many politicians are seen with this pocketbook in their hands.

It's a gimmick. It's intended to attract attention. The Constitution of India is famously lengthy; it is, in fact, one of the longest-written constitutions in the world. The optics of a pocketbook Constitution in anyone's hands does not imply they have read it or are interested in wading through this lengthy text. Yet, the optics have given an unprecedented tangible form to the Constitution. It has popularised the ideas of Constitutionalism.

It is the practice of establishing, adhering to, and respecting a system of constitutional governance. It's an abstract idea that affects everyone and rarely presents itself in tangible form - in popular cultures and imaginations. Movies like Article 15 (2019) have generated the optics, amplified the text of Article 15, and popularised the idea of non-discrimination. The iconography of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar with the Constitution in his hand - a larger-sized book - is also common in Dalit sub-cultures. Printed copies of this poster (16"x 12") are commonly sold at roadside stalls in India, especially on Ambedkar Jayanti.

There's nothing to begrudge the optics. However, it has become a sore point among the ruling political parties in the Parliament of India because of perhaps the implied perception that they are anti-constitutional somehow. The remark of the Speaker of Lok Sabha at Shashi Tharoor's salutation to the Constitution ("Jai Samvidhan") is perhaps an example of this political soreness.

The optics, nonetheless, are good for spreading aspirational ideals of constitutionalism in popular cultures and imaginations. Even if it is momentary and the politicians discard the ideals when they do not favour them, this moment will endure in the collective memories and consciousness of a rising social democracy in India. Jai Samvidhan. Jai Bhim.

(Prof. Dr. Sumit Baudh teaches Constitutional Law, among other courses, at O.P. Jindal Global University. Views expressed are personal.)

## international

## World leaders congratulate Keir Starmer on 'historic' UK election win

London | Agencies  
Several top world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Friday congratulated Keir Starmer as he gets ready to become the 58th Prime Minister of Britain following the Labour Party's resounding victory in the general election. Starmer has been credited with pulling the Labour Party out of the political wilderness by ending 14 years of the Conservative Party's governance. "Heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Keir Starmer on the remarkable victory in the UK general elections. I look forward to our positive and constructive collaboration to further strengthen the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in all areas, fostering mutual growth and prosperity," PM Modi said in his message posted on X. French President Emmanuel Macron congratulated Starmer on his election victory and emphasised maintaining close bilateral relations between the two neighbouring countries. "Congratulations, Sir Keir Starmer, on your victory. Pleased with our first discussion. We will continue the work begun with the UK for our bilateral cooperation, for peace and security in Europe, for the climate, and for AI," he said in a post on X. Israeli President Isaac Herzog also congratulated Starmer while at the same time expressing his "deepest appreciation and gratitude" to outgoing MP Rishi Sunak for "his leadership and for standing with the Israeli people", especially during the "most difficult period". "I send my warmest congratulations to Keir Starmer. As he prepares to enter Downing Street as Prime Minister, I look forward to working together with him and his new government to bring our hostages home, to



build a better future for the region, and to deepen the close friendship between Israel and the United Kingdom," Herzog said. Congratulating Starmer, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen wrote: "Congratulations Keir Starmer on your electoral victory. I look forward to working with you in a constructive partnership to address common challenges and strengthen European security." European Council President Charles Michel also congratulated Starmer in a post on X.

"The European Union and the UK are crucial partners, cooperating in all areas of mutual interest for our citizens. I look forward to working with you and your government in this new cycle for the UK," said Michel, adding that he is looking forward to seeing Starmer at the European Political Community meeting on common challenges. Simon Harris, Prime Minister of Ireland, highlighted the close relationship with the UK, calling it "deep and consequential". "I look forward to it going from strength to strength," he said while stressing the need to work closely to bring about a "major reset" of Anglo-Irish relations.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also extended his best wishes

to Starmer on his election win. Stressing the close bilateral relations between the two countries, Zelensky said, "Ukraine and the United Kingdom have been and will continue to be reliable allies through thick and thin. We will continue to defend and advance our common values of life, freedom, and a rules-based international order."

"I wish the incoming government every success both in domestic affairs and in solidifying the UK's leadership on the world stage. I look forward to working closely together on strengthening the Ukraine-UK partnership and restoring international peace and security," he added. He also thanked Rishi Sunak for maintaining close ties between the two nations. "I am grateful to my good friend Rishi Sunak for the UK government's steadfast support under his leadership. Challenger tanks, Storm Shadow missiles, F-16 training for our pilots, and the first bilateral security cooperation agreement are just a few of our shared achievements that Ukraine will never forget. Thank you, Rishi," Zelensky said in another post on X. New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, too, extended his wishes in a post on X.

"Congratulations, Keir Starmer, on your election victory. New Zealand and the UK are great friends and can do so much more together. I look forward to working on every opportunity together as Prime Minister," he wrote.

Congratulating Starmer, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese wrote, "Congratulations to my friend and new UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer on his resounding election victory - I look forward to working constructively with the incoming Labour Party Government."

## 89 migrants found dead at sea off Mauritania



Nouakchott | Agencies  
Mauritanian coast guards recovered the bodies of 89 illegal migrants near N'Diogo, southwestern Mauritania, local media has reported.

The migrants were aboard a large traditional fishing boat that was stranded off the Atlantic Ocean, four kilometres from the town of

N'Diogo, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the Mauritanian News Agency. Nine people, including a five-year-old girl, were rescued by the Mauritanian coast guard, the report said. The boat, which left the Senegalese-Gambia border six days ago towards Europe, had 170 migrants on board, the report quoted survivors as saying.

## Russia ready to start production of medium-range missiles in response to US actions: Putin



Astana | Agencies  
Russia is ready to start producing short- and medium-range missiles in response to US actions, Russian President Vladimir Putin has said. "I said that in connection with the withdrawal of the United States from the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty and the announcement that they start production, we also consider that we have the right to begin research, development, and production (of these missiles) in the future," Putin told reporters on Thursday after the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Astana. Russia is carrying out such research and development and is ready to start production, he said, adding that Moscow can act in a similar way in case US short-and medium-range missiles are deployed in any region of the world, Xinhua news agency reported. The US and the Soviet Union signed the INF treaty in 1987, which prohibited possessing, developing and testing ground-launched missiles with a range of 500-5,500 km. In 2019, the US officially announced its withdrawal from the INF treaty.

## Gas leak affects dozens of workers at Kuala Lumpur airport

Kuala Lumpur | Agencies  
A gas leak at an aircraft engineering facility in Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur International Airport affected 39 people, authorities said on Friday. The leak occurred at the aircraft engineering facility separate from the passenger terminals and affected staff from several companies working in the area, the Selangor State Fire Department said



in a statement on Thursday. Those exposed to the gas complained

of dizziness, with 14 of them sent to the air disaster unit to receive treatment, while one was hospitalised, it said, adding that there was no wider risk to public safety, Xinhua news agency reported.

The chemical was later identified as methyl mercaptan, added to liquefied petroleum gas as an odorant, coming from an unused tank at the facility, the Fire Department said.

## Hurricane Beryl strengthens to Category 3, heading for Mexico's coast

Mexico City | Agencies  
Hurricane Beryl strengthened to a Category 3 storm and is heading towards Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, a tourism hotspot in the country, after leaving a trail of destruction across the eastern Caribbean.

"Data from the Air Force reconnaissance aircraft indicate that Beryl has strengthened to a Category 3 hurricane with maximum winds of 115 mph (185 km/h)," the US National Hurricane Center said in an advisory on Thursday night. Beryl was downgraded to Category 2 earlier in the day, Xinhua news agency reported.

Beryl was expected to bring heavy rain and winds to the Yucatan Peninsula, a major tourism destination that includes the Mayan pyramids and resorts, and to restrengthen in the Gulf of Mexico to make a second strike on the country.

On Thursday, Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador urged people to move to higher ground, shelters, or homes of friends and family in



other places.

He wrote on social media that Hurricane Beryl's trajectory indicates that it will enter through Tulum, a town on Mexico's Caribbean coastline. "Do not hesitate; materials can be recovered. The most important thing is life."

So far, the hurricane has killed several

people in the Caribbean, including three in Grenada, which comprises a central island and several smaller surrounding islands.

Meanwhile, at least two people died, and five are missing in Venezuela due to the storm, which impacted 25,000 people.



## 'MARATHI MULGA' SWAPNIL GIVES MAHA 2ND OLYMPIC MEDAL IN 72 YEARS

Team Absolute | Kolhapur (Maharashtra)

There couldn't have been a better pre-birthday gift for himself and the country as shooter Swapnil Kusale clinched the bronze in men's 50m rifle 3 positions final at the Paris Olympics on Thursday -- scripting history by bagging only the second Olympic medal for Maharashtra after a long gap of 72 years.

Ranked 12th in the world, Swapnil earned the honour just five days before his 29th birthday on August 6, making it a personal double-whammy.

As the news flashed on television on Thursday afternoon, Kolhapur erupted in joy, as his proud parents - schoolteacher Suresh Kusale and Sarpanch Anita Kusale - along with his brother and other relatives cheered with tears of happiness, brimming over with emotions.

The Kusales' humble dwelling at Kambalwadi village became the epicentre for the celebrations with many youngsters and kids seen dancing, cheering, and clapping to express their admiration for 'Aapla Swapnil' (our Swapnil), their illustrious hero.

The legendary Khashaba Dadasaheb Jadhav (1926-1984) from Satara secured Independent India's first individual Olympic medal by winning the bronze in freestyle wrestling at the Helsinki Olympics in 1952. Swapnil's thorny journey to abrupt stardom is punctuated with lots of perspiration, shedding silent tears, quietly gulping disappointments, and confronting financial or other challenges at various levels for the past nearly 15 years since he developed a passion for shooting, with a cool, never-say-die attitude.

"Swapnil was always dedicated and hard-working... He was absolutely focused on his ultimate goal. He never bothered about holidays or festivals or such diversions. This (bronze) is the reward for all his silent struggles and sacrifices for the past so many years," said his proud father Suresh Kusale, fighting back the flood of joy welling up in his eyes.



"Right from his childhood, he had that spark and passion for sports... He was extremely self-disciplined and achieved this with the blessings of Lord Pandurang. We are very happy for him and the laurels he has brought to the country," said proud mom Anita Kusale.

His elderly grandmother also flashed a grin with a large red tilak/bindi on her forehead and thick spectacles which emitted her thrill at her grandson's feat. "He has exceeded all our expectations...", she said.

## NCP-SP leader Jitendra Awhad's car attacked

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a shocker, activists of the Swarajya Sanghatana attacked the vehicle in which Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) National Secretary Jitendra Awhad was travelling on Thursday evening.

At least three activists were captured on videos shouting slogans of 'Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Ki Jai' and 'Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj Ki Jai', pelted stones and rained blows with sticks on the SUV's glass windows, near the Eastern Freeway while he was proceeding to his hometown Thane.

Later, Swarajya Sanghatana general secretary Dhananjay Jadhav claimed responsibility for the attack and demanded that Awhad should apologise for his recent utterances to Yuvraj Sambhaji Chhatrapati - the 13th direct descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Recounting the ordeal, a composed Awhad said that he was reading in the SUV and at one point when it slowed down, some persons pounced on it. His driver said that someone had pelted a stone and one of the glass windows was shattered.

The driver skillfully sped and negotiated the vehicle through the traffic before halting some distance ahead to examine the damage, though the perpetrators had disappeared by then.

NCP-SP President Sharad Pawar, Working President Supriya Sule and other opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi leaders have strongly condemned the attack, while Awhad's supporters organised spontaneous road-blocks in Thane, the hometown of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

After the July 14 communal flare-up that rocked the Vishalgad Fort in Kolhapur, Awhad had strongly criticised Yuvraj - who is the founder of the Swarajya Sanghatana - for allegedly inciting the crowds.



Among other things, Awhad had said that Yuvraj's blood should be checked as with his alleged utterances, he could not be the descendant of the legendary Maratha warrior king, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (1630-1680), and sowing communal discord among communities in residing near Vishalgad Fort and the Gajapur village, etc.

This had enraged the supporters of Yuvraj Sambhaji Chhatrapati - whose father is the Kolhapur Congress MP Chhatrapati Shrimant Shahu Maharaj - who accused Awhad of disrespect to the 'throne' and sought an apology.

Playing Awhad, Jadhav asked "why did you run away so scared; if you have the courage, come and face us instead of puffing your chest before television cameras".

Awhad maintained his stance and reiterated that whatever Yuvraj did (in July) was wrong as his actions were inconsistent with the Maratha warrior king's ideals, and claimed that even his (Yuvraj's) father, Chhatrapati Shrimant Shahu Maharaj, had disapproved it.

The targeting of Awhad is billed as a fallout of the procession led by the Yuvraj last month, with a few thousand Shiv-bhaktis, to protest against illegal construction there, but it escalated the tensions and led to rioting there.

Later, the Bombay High Court intervened and halted the demolitions in view of the ongoing monsoon season and the people of Gajapur village, which bore the brunt of the rioting, called off their protests.

## Govt's policies have potential to strengthen rupee: Piyush Goyal

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said that the government's efforts to boost semiconductor manufacturing, domestic shipping and a reduction in imports of oilseeds, rubber and pulses have the potential to strengthen the rupee vis-a-vis the US dollar.

The Union Minister was speaking at an ASSOCHAM event for the launch of a book titled "Bharat@100: Envisioning Tomorrow's Economic Powerhouse" written by former Chief Economic Advisor K.V. Subramanian.

The book predicts that India can achieve a \$55 trillion economy by 2047 if the nation sustains an 8 per cent annual growth rate.

Piyush Goyal pointed out that the steps taken by the government towards achieving self-sufficiency in defence, a stronger currency



and macroeconomic fundamentals will help India become a developed nation.

He said that a stable economy will push India to be among the top 3 economies of the world and the Centre will ensure a better quality of life to the last man at the bottom of the pyramid in the next five years.

The Union Minister said the government is focused on efforts to replace the oil economy with electric mobility and making quality the fulcrum in manufacturing.

He said that India is at the same sweet spot today as China was

between 2000-2020 when they grew at 8 per cent based on a stable economy and low inflation.

"Our political and social problems will eventually reduce, our economy will grow faster, and we can replicate China's growth story," Piyush Goyal said.

Speaking on ethical wealth creation and the need for private investment, he lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to recognise the contribution of wealth creators in the private sector and businesses.

"PM Modi values wealth creators for their role in job creation and for providing goods and services for the citizens," Piyush Goyal remarked.

He further stated that PM Modi's speech at the CII post-budget conference brought to the fore the importance of manufacturing to India's growth story and the need for stable policies to make India a developed nation by 2047.

## Historic day for Indian stock market, Nifty closes above 25,000 for first time

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Indian frontline indices closed at a record high on Thursday due to positive sentiment in the market.

At closing, Sensex ended at 81,867, up 126 points or 0.15 per cent and Nifty was up 59 points or 0.24 per cent at 25,010. It was the first time in the Indian stock market history that the Nifty closed above 25,000.

In morning trade, both main indices, Sensex and Nifty, made a new lifetime high of 82,129 and 25,078 respectively.

However, selling was seen in the smallcap and midcap stocks. The Nifty Midcap 100 index closed at 58,490, down 500 points or 0.85 per cent, and the Nifty smallcap 100 index closed at 18,949, down 187 points or 0.98 per cent.

In the Sensex pack, Power Grid, NTPC, HDFC Bank, Nestle, Maruti Suzuki, Reliance, Bharti Airtel, JSW Steel and UltraTech Cement were the top gainers. M&M, Tata Steel, Bajaj



Finserv, SBI, L&amp;T and Tata Motors were the top losers. Mandar Bhojane, Equity Research Analyst at Choice Broking said, "Nifty has hit the 25,000 mark for the first time, reaching a high of 25,078.30 before experiencing sharp selling at these all-time high levels. The 24,950 level is expected to act as

immediate support." "Every dip presents a buying opportunity, especially near the 24,800 and 24,600 levels. The market is anticipated to remain strongly bullish above 24,400 levels," he added.

The India VIX, reflecting market volatility, dipped by 2.42 per cent to close at 12.9300.

## MUMBAI GOT 78.40 PC DRINKING WATER STOCKS IN JULY: BMC



Mumbai: Starting August on a happy note, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) announced that in July's bountiful rains, Mumbai has got 78.40 per cent drinking water stocks, here on Thursday. The month had opened with the BMC staring gloomily at the rock-bottom levels - barely 5 per cent - and anxiously glancing at the skies, waiting for the monsoon to settle down, after a sluggish start.

Today, the civic body said that the seven freshwater lakes supplying potable water have notched up an average of more than three-fourths of the annual water requirements of the country's commercial capital.

The reservoirs: Upper Vaitarna (current level 600.01 metres/full supply level 603.51 m.); Middle Vaitarna (279.47 m./285.0 m.); Modak Sagar (163.15 m./163.15 m. overflowing); Tansa (128.57 m./128.63 m.); Bhatsa (135.63 m./142.07); Vihar (80.25 m./80.12 m. overflowing); and Tulsi (138.20 m./13.17 m. overflowing).

The current levels of all the lakes compare quite favourably with the past couple of years as of July 31: 12.85, 25.1 million litres (2022), 11,07,181 ml (2023), and 11,34,736 ml (2024).

An official said that with roughly another five to seven weeks of monsoon still left to cover up the balance, the drinking water supply till monsoon 2025 is expected to be comfortable without the spectre of water cuts.



## Maharashtra hails Olympic medalist Swapnil Kusale; announces Rs 1 crore reward

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Top leaders of Maharashtra lauded Kolhapur shooter Swapnil S. Kusale's historic feat of bagging a second Olympic Bronze Medal for the state after a gap of 72 years, and announced a Rs 1 crore reward for him, here on Thursday.

The ruling MahaYuti allies Shiv Sena, Bharatiya Janata Party, Nationalist Congress Party and opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi partners Congress, Nationalist Congress Party (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders, besides other prominent personalities have hailed Swapnil's achievement. Leading the state in felicitating Swapnil, the newly-appointed Maharashtra Governor C. P. Radhakrishnan warmly congratulated him for bagging the Bronze Medal in the 50 metres Rifle 3 position at the ongoing Paris Olympics-2024. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said this a step forward for a son of Maharashtra

who has done India proud and highlighted the country's position on the global sports map in shooting. He also announced a prize of Rs 1 crore for Swapnil, and interacted with the Kusale family on video-conference at their home in Kambalwadi village in Kolhapur.

Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis said that with Swapnil's exemplary performance, Indian shooters continue with their impressive performance at the Olympic games, and lauded him for his hard work that brought glory to the country and made Maharashtra immensely proud. Deputy CM Ajit Pawar said that Kolhapur boy Swapnil has brought glory to the entire country and expressed hope that he would 'continue to shine and keep making the country proud'. NCP (SP) Working President Supriya Sule greeted Swapnil for bagging the shooting Bronze Medal, and said "we are proud of you!"

Her colleague and NCP (SP) General Secretary Jitendra Awhad said that thanks to

Swapnil, the country got its third Olympic medal this year and delighted the nation and the people. Congress state President Nana Patole lauded Swapnil, who grew up in the soil of Kolhapur and brought honours for the whole country by bagging a Bronze Medal in shooting, at the Paris Olympics. Kolhapur Congress MP, Chhatrapati Shrimant Shahu Maharaj (1874-1922), Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aditya Thackeray hailed Swapnil's amazing performance at his debut in the Olympic games, and by becoming the first Indian to win a medal in this shooting category. Besides the political leaders, the social media and groups were flooded with congratulatory messages from celebs to industrialists to commoners, while hundreds of people in Swapnil's native village in Kolhapur broke out into celebrations.

## BCCI mourn passing of former India cricketer Anshuman Gaekwad

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) expressed deep sorrow over the passing of Anshuman Gaekwad, a former Indian cricketer and coach, who succumbed to cancer in Vadodra on Wednesday aged 71. A stalwart of Indian cricket, Gaekwad's international career spanned over a decade, featuring in 40 Test matches and 15 ODIs. His resilience was most notably displayed during his gutsy 81 in Jamaica in 1976, where he faced a hostile West Indies pace attack on a treacherous pitch. Another highlight of his career was his

marathon 201 against Pakistan in Jalandhar in 1983, where he batted for an incredible 671 minutes.

In domestic cricket, Gaekwad's record was equally impressive. He amassed over 12,000 runs in more than 200 first-class matches, including 34 centuries and 47 fifties. His contributions to Indian cricket extended beyond his playing days, as he took on various roles, including head coach of the national team, selector, and administrator.

Appointed as India's head coach in 1997, Gaekwad led the team through a period of significant achievements. Under his guidance, India won a



memorable tri-nation tournament in Sharjah in 1998 and witnessed Anil Kumble's historic 10-wicket haul

against Pakistan in New Delhi in 1999. His strategic insight and calm demeanor earned him immense respect from players and peers alike.

In recognition of his five-decade-long association with cricket, the BCCI honoured Gaekwad with the prestigious C. K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award in 2018.

BCCI president Roger Binny paid tribute, saying, "Anshuman Gaekwad's passing is a great loss for Indian cricket. His dedication, resilience, and love for the game were unparalleled. He was not just a cricketer but a mentor and a friend to many. The cricketing community will

miss him dearly, and his contributions will always be remembered. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and loved ones as they cope with this loss," said in a statement released on Thursday.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah said, "The passing of Anshuman Gaekwad is a profound loss for the cricketing community. A true servant of Indian cricket, he will be remembered for his courage, wisdom, and dedication to the sport. His contribution to the game has been significant, and he leaves behind a lasting legacy. My thoughts are with his family and friends during this difficult time."



# Lisa Kudrow recalls how Matt LeBlanc helped her ease anxiety

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Lisa Kudrow recalled how her 'Friends' co-star Matt LeBlanc helped her ease some anxiety about her portrayal of Phoebe Buffay during the sitcom's early days. During an appearance on Sirius XM's Where Everybody Knows Your Name, Kudrow said that it took her "if not a year and a half, maybe two seasons, before I felt like I had Phoebe down."

"The things she said were so outrageously illogical that in order for me to justify them, you know, I felt like 'Oof!' she recalled.

"It just took a lot of work to figure out, 'All right, how is it possible that I think this is true or a good idea or a reasonable thing to say?'"

Kudrow went on to explain that she put in real "acting work" into her character but it wasn't until she was into her second or third season that she felt that something was off, reports people.com.

"I'm like, 'something's wrong,' 'cause I'm not doing the work I was doing," she said.

"I'm slacking off. I'm being lazy and I was getting really mad at myself, and LeBlanc came. He said, 'What's going on with you?' I said, 'I'm being lazy. I'm not doing the work that I did first season, the second season. I'm not doing the work I did for Phoebe, so it can't be good.'"

"And he went, 'No, you know who the character is now. You don't need to do the work you did. You got it,' and I went, 'What? Oh,'" she added.

The host noted how with LeBlanc's help she was finally able to feel "relaxed."

"That was enough," Kudrow said.

"It's sort of like someone shook me 'cause I was getting hysterical. I wasn't literally getting hysterical, but you know like if you're getting hysterical, someone slaps you back. You're like, 'Oh, thanks. That's what I needed.'"



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress-singer Selena Gomez has shared throwback pictures with her baby sister Gracie Teefey, saying that she will always protect her.

Gomez took to Instagram to share throwback images with her sibling.

In the first couple of photos, Gomez is seen flaunting blonde hair embraced by Gracie as a young child. The siblings sat together on the floor in what appeared to be a dressing room. "There's nothing like a little sister and the bond you have," Gomez wrote in the caption. "I will forever protect you, help guide you, and love you through every single moment in life baby girl," she added.

In some other images, Gomez is seen smiling as she looks down at Gracie hugging her leg while standing together in the same room, people.com reported.

Gracie is the daughter of Mandy Teefey and Gomez's stepfather Brian Teefey. The siblings remain close despite the 20-year age gap, and Gomez regularly shares loving messages for Gracie on social media.

In other news, Gomez recently opened up about her feelings about the time in her life when she was photographed by the paparazzi and was dating American popstar Justin Bieber.

A clip of Bieber's song 'Company' was shared with the caption: "I know and so do you that at the time she would never have gotten engaged to Benny (Blanco) (when) she was in her IT GIRL era."

The text over the video also said Gomez's former self "would never date Benny Blanco". Hitting back at the claim, she said: "Kinda makes me laugh because I was so depressed back then lol!"

I will always protect you', Selena Gomez posts for younger sister

## SANDRA BULLOCK IS ALL SET TO 'GET BACK' AFTER TWO-YEAR BREAK

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Sandra Bullock is all set to "get back in the game" in Hollywood after taking a two-year hiatus for her family including her two children and care for her late partner Bryan Randall who passed away last year at the age of 57.

Randall passed away following a short battle with ALS, a fatal motor neuron disease that causes progressive degeneration of nerve cells in the spinal cord and brain.

"She is gradually reemerging into public life. She's excited about what the future holds. She's ready to get back in the game," a source told this week's edition of US Weekly.

Another source added that the 'Speed' star had endured one of the "hardest times" of her life following the death of her partner and that she needed time off, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The source said: "Sandra needed the break to be with her family and Bryan."

Bullock had previously shared that Randall was the "love of her life" while talking about her lack of urgency to get married during a 2021 appearance on 'Red Table Talk' with Jada Pinkett-Smith.

At the time, she said: "We share two beautiful children — three children, his older daughter (Skylar, 30). It's the best thing ever. I don't need a paper to be a devoted partner... I don't need to be told to weather a storm with a good man. He's the example that I would want my children to have."



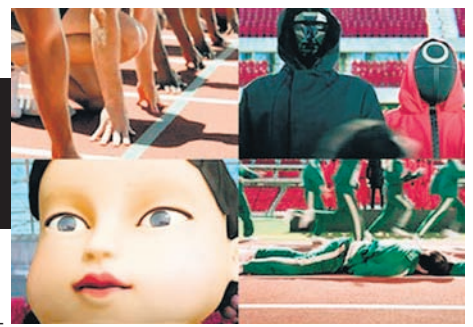
## 'Squid Game' renewed for final season

Los Angeles | Agencies

The superhit streaming series 'Squid Game' is set to return with season 2, and finally, it has a premiere date. Season 2 will drop on December 26, while the third season will premiere in 2025. The premiere date and final season announcement were made through a video.

As per Variety, the series creator, director, and executive producer Hwang Dong-hyuk posted a letter to fans in which he wrote in part: "I am thrilled to see the seed that was planted in creating a new Squid Game grow and bear fruit through the end of this story." As previously announced, Lee Jung-jae will return to star alongside fellow

returning cast members Lee Byung-hun, Wi Ha-jun, and Gong Yoo. New cast members include Yim Si-wan, Kang Ha-neul, Park Gyu-young, Lee Jin-uk, Park Sung-hoon, Yang Dong-geun, Kang Ae-sim, Lee David, Choi Seung-hyun, Roh Jae-won, Jo Yu-ri, and Won Ji-an.



## Jisoo from Blackpink to feature in Korean zombie series

Seoul | Agencies

Jisoo, who is the member of all girls K-pop group Blackpink is all set to star as the lead of the cast of upcoming zombie thriller series "Newtopia". The series features two lovers navigating a zombie-infested Seoul. The man, portrayed by Park Jung-min, initially encounters a zombie outbreak during his mandatory military service. His girlfriend, played by Jisoo is an engineer with a new job who is waiting for his release.

Separately, the pair criss-cross the city and fight off zombie attacks as they try to reunite.

The series marks the directing debut of Yoon Sung-hyun, who is known for his 2011 film "Bleak Night" and the action-thriller "Time to Hunt", reports variety.com.

Jisoo has had multiple cameo roles in Korean TV series and a major role in 2020 period action-comedy series "Snowdrop". She had a small role in "Dr Cheon and the Lost Talisman" and is reported to be a part of the "Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint", a multi-part film adaptation of a hit webtoon. Blackpink last year renewed their group contract with YG Entertainment. But the band members did not. Rose moved to The Black Label, while the other three established independent labels, and all are now off doing solo projects.



## MATT DAMON OPENED UP ABOUT HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH CASEY AFFLECK AND BEN AFFLECK



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood stars Matt Damon and Casey Affleck attended the New York premiere of 'The Instigators', where Matt Damon opened up about his friendship with Casey Affleck and his brother Ben Affleck. The Affleck brothers and Matt Damon have been friends for more than 25 years since the latter and Ben co-wrote 'Good Will Hunting'.

Matt Damon said that after all these years, there are no surprises with the two siblings.

He told People: "They're consistently great. They're consistently incredible partners to work with. And no, there aren't really, usually, any surprises." While the three collaborators will "get in creative arguments", Damon noted: "Those are healthy, and we know each other well enough that our feelings don't really get involved and our egos don't get involved. So it's a pretty healthy working relationship with both of them." As per People, Damon and Casey, returned to their hometown of Boston to shoot the film in 2023. However, the project almost didn't come to fruition until Casey enlisted help from Damon's wife, Luciana Barroso, Damon confirmed. Casey asked Barroso, 48, to get Damon to read 'The Instigators' script.

Damon noted that Barroso also served as a producer on the film, adding that "like Casey and like Ben" he "just trusts her taste."

"So when they say something, when they dig their heels in on something — any of them do — I pay attention," he admitted. "We all have blind spots creatively or otherwise. And, when I see somebody that I agree with so much feeling strongly about something, I look really carefully at it."

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Anny Hathaway

# Swapnil Kusale wins bronze in Men's 50m Rifle 3P event

Chateauroux | Agencies

Swapnil Kusale won the bronze medal in the Men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions event at the Paris Olympics, here on Thursday. He also became the first Indian shooter to bag a medal in this event at the quadrennial extravaganza. Kusale scored a total of 451.4 points in the eight-man final for a third-place podium finish. Liu Yukun of China clinched the gold with a total of 463.6. Ukraine's Serhiy Kulish scored 461.3 and claimed the silver medal. Overall, this is India's third medal at the Paris Olympics. Earlier, Manu Bhaker won two bronze medals in the women's 10m Air Pistol and 10m Air Pistol Mixed team event with Sarabjot Singh. After the end of the kneeling and prone rounds, Kusale was ranked fifth with a score of 310.1. In the standing



position, an elimination round, the Indian was consistently placed in the top four and eventually sealed a bronze medal finish. The 28-year-old Kusale, who is Asian Games gold medallist in the team event, was the first-ever Indian to qualify for the final of the men's 50m rifle 3 position. Swapnil finished seventh in the qualification round on Wednesday with a score of 590-38X. The top eight of the 44 shooters competing in the qualifying round made it to the final. Asian Games silver medalist Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar finished 11th and missed out on the final. In the qualifications, Swapnil scored a total of 590, including 38 inner 10s, from three positions. The 28-year-old Indian shooter scored 198 from kneeling, 197 from prone and 195 from standing positions.

# Injured Pathirana, Madushanka to miss ODI series against India

Colombo | Agencies

Sri Lanka pacers Matheesha Pathirana and Dilshan Madushanka have been ruled out of the three-match home ODI series against India after sustaining injuries. Uncapped right-arm pacers Mohamed Shiraz and Eshan Malinga have been called up as replacements for the two fast bowlers. "Madushanka suffered a left hamstring injury (Grade 2) during fielding at a practice session. Pathirana has suffered a mild sprain on his right shoulder while diving to take a catch during the third T20I match vs. India", Sri Lanka Cricket said in a statement. In addition Kusal Janith Perera, Pramod Madushan and Jeffrey Vandarsay have been added to the squad as standby. Meanwhile, Dushmantha Chameera and Nuwan



Thushara, who missed the T20I leg due to sickness and injury, would also miss the ODI series. Dushmantha was ruled out of the T20I series due to bronchitis and a respiratory infection, while Thushara fractured his thumb during training ahead of the series. Sri Lanka ODI squad: Charith Asalanka (c), Pathum Nissanka, Avishka Fernando, Kusal Mendis, Sadeera

Samarawickrama, Kamindu Mendis, Janith Liyanage, Nishan Madushka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Dunith Wellalage, Chamika Karunaratne, Akila Dananjaya, Mohamed Shiraz, Maheesh Theekshana, Asitha Fernando, Eshan Malinga Standby players: Kusal Janith Perera, Pramod Madushan, Jeffrey Vandarsay

# Paris Olympics: Lakshya Sen stormed into the quarterfinals

Paris | Agencies

Shuttler Lakshya Sen stormed into the quarterfinals of the men's singles event at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games with a commanding straight games victory over compatriot H.S. Prannoy. The all-Indian clash at the La Chapelle Arena on Thursday saw Sen dominate from start to finish, winning 21-12, 21-6 in just 39 minutes. The 22-year-old Sen secured the opening game in 21 minutes. The second game was even more one-sided, as Sen's aggressive play overwhelmed Prannoy, who struggled to find answers to his younger opponent's relentless attacks. Sen clinched the second game with a resounding 21-6 score, sealing his place in the last eight. In the first game, Lakshya opened a 5-1 lead and though Prannoy reduced the margin to 5-7, Sen won four points in a row to widen the gap to 10-5. Another four-point burst from 14-9 put the shuttler from Uttarakhand now training in Bengaluru, firmly on course to winning the first game. In the second game, Sen surged to a 6-1 lead and extended it to 8-2. He won five points in a row and was soon leading 14-3 and went on to win the match rather easily. Next up for Sen is a quarterfinal showdown with 12th-seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei. Chou advanced to the quarterfinals by



defeating Japan's Kodai Naraoka in the Round of 16. Meanwhile, in the men's doubles event, the Indian pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty bowed out of the competition in the quarterfinals. The duo faced a tough challenge against the World No.3 Malaysian pair of Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik. Despite a strong start, winning the first game 21-13, the Indian duo could not maintain their momentum. Chia and Soh fought back to take the second game 21-14 and sealed their victory with a 21-16 score in the deciding game. Later in the day, all eyes will be on PV Sindhu as she takes on China's He Bing Jiao in the women's singles round of 16.

# Praggnanandhaa, Nodirbeck, Arjun named among Superstar Men for Global Chess League season 2

London | Agencies

The Global Chess League, a joint venture between FIDE and Tech Mahindra, on Wednesday announced its star-studded list of men players for the second season, scheduled to be held from October 3 to 12 at Friends House in London. Joining the ranks of Magnus Carlsen, Hikaru Nakamura, and Viswanathan Anand in the second season are returning Superstars, including World No. 4 Arjun Erigaisi, World No. 6 Nodirbek Abdusattorov, World No. 8 Praggnanandhaa R, and World No. 10 Wei Yi. Praggnanandhaa, who stole the limelight in the prodigy round of the first season and was awarded Player of the Tournament for his exceptional performance, will compete in the Superstar men's category. Making the competition even more compelling, Vidit Gujrathi, Jan-Krzysztof Duda, Richard Rapport, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, Teimour Radjabov, Alexander Grischuk, Parham Maghsoodloo, and Vladislav Artemiev will also be a part of the 12-member list of Superstar men players for the second season.



Praggnanandhaa, who has had a memorable year in the world of chess, said, "I am thrilled to be back for the second season of the Global Chess League. The inaugural season was a remarkable learning experi-

ence as I got to play alongside Magnus Carlsen and other top players. I am looking forward to an exciting season with my team in this unique televised chess event. I am sure chess fans will be captivated by

this exciting team chess format." Former FIDE World Rapid Champion, Nodirbek Abdusattorov, added, "The roster of players is incredibly strong, and the format challenges players and teams alike. I am looking forward to another memorable outing with my team in the Global Chess League." Sameer Pathak, CEO of the Global Chess League, said, "We are delighted to announce the list of Superstar men players for the upcoming season. These elite players are poised to deliver thrilling and unforgettable games for their teams in the league's innovative format that incentivizes risk-taking. We are confident that these players will deliver a remarkable chess spectacle in London." The first-of-its-kind franchise-based league features a total of six teams consisting of six players - one Icon player, two Superstar male players, two Superstar female players, and one prodigy in each team. In the tournament, each team will play a total of 10 matches in a double round-robin format, with the winner of each match being decided in a best-of-six board scoring system.

# Was lucky to have a few conversations with him, says Rohit on Gaekwad's demise

Colombo | Agencies

The cricketing fraternity in India is in mourning following the demise of former India cricketer and head coach Anshuman Gaekwad on Wednesday night, and captain Rohit Sharma paid his tribute to him, adding that it was his good fortune to have a few conversations with him. Gaekwad played 40 Tests and 15 ODIs for India from 1975 to 1987, and went on to be a selector, as well as be the side's head coach from October 1997 to September 1999. He then returned as coach of India in 2000 Champions Trophy on BCCI's request, where they lost to New Zealand in the final. "I was absolutely devastated to hear that news. I was lucky to have a few conversations with him during

the BCCI awards, and on a personal note as well. When I was playing Ranji Trophy, he was there and I had a chance to speak to him when he had a few things to talk about my game as well, which was overwhelming for me because he was such a great cricketer for us." "It's always nice when you learn from your seniors, understand how cricket was played back in the day, how tough it was and then to pass on his experiences on cricket and what his visions are about cricket. For me to understand that was a great learning at that point." "Condolences to his family, it's not a good time when you lose your loved ones, it's always tough. I was lucky that I had a few chances to meet him and talk to him on a personal level," said Rohit on the eve of the first ODI against Sri Lanka in Colombo.

Gaekwad, 71, was suffering from blood cancer, and travelled to King's College Hospital in London for his further treatment, before returning to his hometown Vadodara in June. He passed away at the Bhailal Amin General Hospital around 10 pm on Wednesday night. The BCCI had released INR 1 crore to support Gaekwad's treatment, following pleas from various former cricketers. Roger Binny, the former India player currently serving as BCCI President, was present at Gaekwad's last rites in Vadodara on Thursday afternoon alongside ex-players Kiran More and Nayan Mongia. Gaekwad was honoured with CK



Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award in 2018, and also served as a member of the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) alongside Kapil Dev and Shantha Rangaswamy. He served as President of the Indian Cricketers Association (ICA) till his demise and even represented the body in the BCCI Apex Council from 2019-2022.

# NEEDS TO BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE TEAM, SAYS DHONI ON HIS IPL FUTURE WITH CSK

New Delhi | Agencies

With rules around IPL 2025 player regulations and retention scheme in the process of being firmed up, MS Dhoni has said he would wait and see how the rules are before deciding on his IPL future with Chennai Super Kings (CSK). "There is a lot of time for it. We have to see what decision they take on player retention etc. Right now, the ball is not in our court. So, once the rules and regulations get formalised, I will take a call, but needs to be in the best interest of the team," said Dhoni at a promotional event in Hyderabad. Questions on Dhoni's future at the IPL have been a huge source of discussion, especially after CSK made Rituraj Gaikwad captain for IPL 2024, where they finished at fifth place in the tournament and failed to qualify for the playoffs. As of now, all ten IPL teams are not on the same page for the mega auction rules, ranging from player retention to the Impact Player rule. After a meeting with all franchise owners' in Mumbai on Wednesday evening,

BCCI secretary Jay Shah said there was constructive dialogue with the IPL team owners on a variety of subjects, and the recommendations will be taken to the IPL Governing Council further deliberation and evaluation. Dhoni, who captained India to 2007 T20 World Cup and 2011 ODI World Cup triumphs, picked Jasprit Bumrah as his favourite bowler from the Indian team. Bumrah was the Player of the Tournament in India's T20 World Cup triumph in June, picking 15 wickets from eight matches at an economy rate of 4.17. "It's easy to pick my favourite bowler because Bumrah is there. It's difficult to pick a batsman because we have many good batsmen. But that doesn't mean bowlers aren't good," he said. In terms of batters, Dhoni didn't pick a favourite. "It's difficult to pick one among batters as whenever I see batting, he looks the best. But when I see someone else he also looks great. But as long as Team India is winning, I don't want to pick a batter (as my favourite). I hope they will keep scoring runs for the team," he concluded.

## PARIS OLYMPICS

# Reigning champs Belgium overcome India 2-1 in men's hockey

Paris | Agencies

Reigning champions Belgium prevailed over India 2-1 in a high-octane Pool B clash in the men's hockey competition in the Olympic Games at the Yves-du-Manoir Stadium here on Thursday. While Abhishek (18') scored the lone goal for India, Thibaut Stockbroeckx (33') and John-John Dohmen (44') struck for Belgium, who won the gold medal in the Tokyo after beating India in the semifinals. India are currently third in the standings, with seven points from two wins, one draw and one loss while Belgium lead the Pool B standings with 12 points from four wins and Australia are second with nine points from four matches. Though both India and Belgium have already made the cut for the quarterfinals, which will start on August 4, their clash on Thursday was thrilling as it



lived up to the billing with on-par performance from hooter to hooter. The play began with India holding better ball possession in the opening quarter and building their game patiently, looking to create space and wade through the Belgian defence. The experienced India goalie PR Sreejesh was outstanding this quarter to keep the Belgians from scoring via PC in the 8th minute. This was the only real chance this quarter for a goal as Abhishek's effort in the 9th minute was unsuccessful. However, following the 1st quarter break Abhishek returned with an intent to score and this time he was on target when he surprised Arthur de Sloover with an interception, dribbled into the D and launched a powerful shot past Vincent Vanasch. It was a resounding field goal, Abhishek's first at the Olympic Games. Only seconds earlier, Abhishek

had assisted Vivek with a neat turn through the centre of the field to open play in the frontline. Vivek, making a foray from the left of the circle, took a tomahawk but missed by inches. Abhishek's goal put India in command. The following minutes saw Belgium come up with incredible chances, one through a PC but Hendrickx was once again stopped by Sreejesh. The Indian stalwart was kept busy in the post as Belgium continued to attack, this time Sloover took a shot from the centre of the circle which was padded away by Sreejesh - ensuring India stayed in the lead. Meanwhile, India also had an opportunity to double their lead in the 25th minute when they earned their first penalty corner. Though Amit Rohidas's shot found the net, the goal was ruled out due to dangerous play.

Trailing by a goal at half-time, the Red Lions returned for the third quarter with a vengeance. They were quick to level the score in the 33rd minute when Sloover came up with brilliant stick work to enter the circle from the left to assist Van Aubel who played it across the face of the goal with Stockbroeckx giving it a final tap-in and equalised 1-1. They extended the lead in the 44th minute despite the heroics of Sreejesh who had saved the first attempt but a goal-mouth melee with three Indian defenders and two Belgium attackers eventually ended up in a goal, thanks to John-John Dohmen. Ahead by 2-1, the fourth quarter began with Belgium shifting gears in their attack. Though India played on par with Abhishek making another attempt on goal in the 51st minute, Vanasch was on hand to save it.





# Amitabh Bachchan drops childhood photo of his school time

Team Absolute | Mumbai

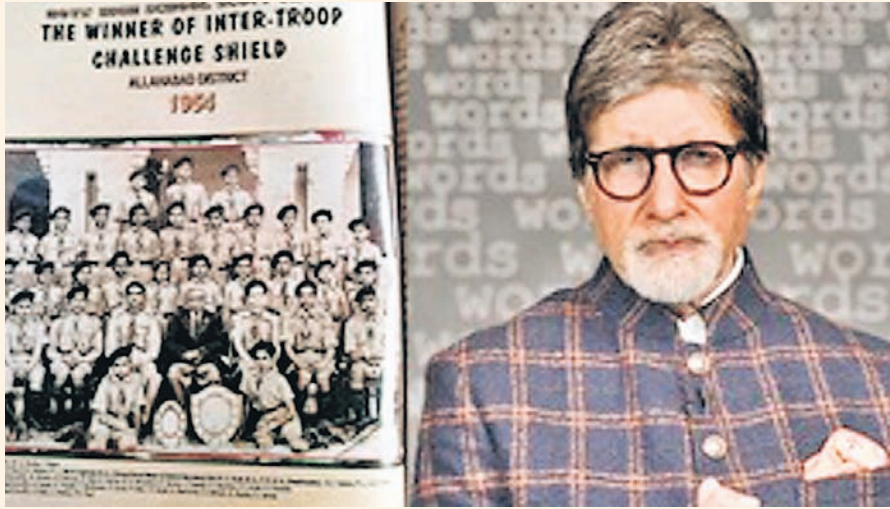
**B**ollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan took a stroll down the memory lane and shared a throwback picture of his school time and the scout troop.

Big B took to Instagram, where he has 37.5 million followers, and shared a group school photo, which has "Boys High School Scout Troop... The winner of inter troop challenge shield... Allahabad District 1954."

He has captioned the post as: "Those good ol' days of Boy Scouts... the special scarfs... the badge... the special salute... Baden Powell its Founder... and how many of those learnings still being practised..."

With a cinematic career spanning over five decades, Big B has essayed roles in more than 200 films, and is hailed as the 'Shahenshah of Bollywood'.

Hailing from Allahabad,



Uttar Pradesh, Amitabh was born to the Hindi poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan and his wife, the social activist Teji Bachchan.

He has been a part of hit movies like -- 'Deewaar', 'Sholay', 'Kabhi Kabhie', 'Hera Pheri', 'Amar Akbar Anthony', 'Parvarish', 'Kasme Vaade', 'Trishul', 'Don', 'Muqaddar Ka Sikandar', 'Suhaag',

'Dostana', 'Naseeb', 'Laawaris', 'Namak Halaal', 'Coolie', 'Sharaabi', 'Mard', 'Namak Haraam', 'Majboor', 'Mili', 'Chupke Chupke', 'Kaala Patthar', 'Shaan', 'Yaarana', 'Kaalida', 'Shahenshah' and 'Agneepath'.

Big B took a break from acting in the 1990s, and then marked his return in 2000 with 'Mohabbatein'.

# A peek into Huma Qureshi's 'love story' with croissants

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**ctress Huma Qureshi, who is currently enjoying her vacation in France, shared a peek into her "love story" with croissants. Huma recently celebrated her 38th birthday in Europe with her 'best family', which includes her brother Saqib and actors Rajkumar Rao and his wife Patralekhaa. On Thursday, she took to Instagram, where Huma has 3.8 million followers, and dropped a string of photos, enjoying croissants in France. The photos show Huma wearing a black tank top and accessorised her look with a cap. She is seen eating a croissant in a French cafe. There is also a picture of Huma, donning a white sleeveless top and basking in the sun.

There is also a snap of some colourful drinks and accessories. The last photo shows Huma in a white and green floral co-ord set. The post is captioned: "Croissant love story part deux #french #summer #love." Huma was last seen in the biopic 'Tarla', which is based on Indian chef and cookbook author Tarla Dalal.



# Kartik Aaryan reveals why director Anees Bazmee wielded a sword



Team Absolute | Mumbai

**K**artik Aaryan has shared why filmmaker Anees Bazmee wielded a sword at the Bollywood actor, and the reason is hilarious. Kartik took to his Instagram stories, where he shared a monochrome picture of Bazmee sitting while holding a sword.

Sharing the reason why Bazmee is holding the weapon, Kartik hilariously wrote: "When I say 15 ghante ho gaye sir ghar jane do. @aneesbazmee."

Kartik has often shared glimpses from the sets of the upcoming film, which also stars Triptii Dimri and Vidya Balan. In May, the 'Chandu Champion' star shared a video from 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3' sets with Rajpal Yadav grooving to the song 'Satyanaas' from the sports drama film directed by Kabir Khan. Details about the film are still under wraps.

# SUDHAA CHANDRAN STEPS INTO MEENA KUMARI'S SHOES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**ctress Sudhaa Chandran, who is also Bharatanatyam dancer, stepped into the shoes of late veteran actress Meena Kumari as she grooved to the number 'Andaz Mera Mastana' from the 1960 film 'Dil Apna Preet Parai'.

Sudhaa took to Instagram, where she shared a dancing video from the comfort of her home, dressed in a gold and navy blue Indian wear, as she danced to the number originally sung by late legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar.

"An opportunity never to be missed," she wrote.



Directed by Kishore Sahu, 'Dil Apna Preet Parai' also stars Raaj Kumar and Nadira. The film revolves around a hard-working surgeon who gets forced into marrying one of the daughters of a family friend.

Recently, Sudhaa had shared another dance video on the song "Udein Jab Jab Zulfen Teri" from the 1957 film 'Naya Daur', a social drama directed by B. R. Chopra. It stars legendary icons Dilip Kumar, Vyjayanthimala, Ajit, and Jeevan.

The 58-year-old actress wrote: "Before an event in Indore Insta reel toh banta hai boss."



Team Absolute | Mumbai

**G**lobal star Priyanka Chopra has shared insights into her life, giving a cute glimpse of her little bundle of joy, Malti Marie, making 'roti'. Priyanka, who has 91.7 million followers, has shared a string of photos in which she can be seen flaunting her bruises as she is shooting for the movie 'Bluff'. She is donning a beige coloured crop top, and black biker shorts. Priyanka is wearing pads on her knees. The second photo shows Malti wearing a cute green outfit and making 'roti'.

There is also a video of Priyanka's mother Madhu Chopra making ladyfinger vegetable.

A snippet shows Priyanka singing with Malti at their residence. The last photo is a selfie of Priyanka, where she is flaunting her long curls. The post is captioned as: "Lately. 1: partial padding for stunts. Takes forever to get into costume. Sorry, ADS 2: m making roti @maltimarie 3: miss ercell from cayman \* is one of my inspirations for the #thebluff 'God has

**Priyanka Chopra has shared insights into her life Malti Marie's 'roti making' skill**



given me this day to use that will...I'm exchanging a day of my life for it... So I shall not forget the price I paid for it."

She further said: "4: coming back home after a really hard day at work, to a home cooked meal by my mom, and on this instant, my girl, Anjula and my team was such a blessing and exactly what I need to recuperate and go and do it again tomorrow. @khushboobajpai06@tylerwincott15@oysterlily5: Moana, Malti and Mama."

"6: main chefs in the kitchen @anjula\_acharia @drmadhuakhourichopra 7: long days, sometimes you just need to recharge onset in between shots 8: the Olympics 2024 baby, go team India!! and also the best athletes from all around the world. I love the Olympics. 9: just me on another day at work. Boring." Priyanka concluded.

# Kay Kay Menon : Re-lived time when social media was not a thing

**Mumbai:** As the makers of 'Shekhar Home' dropped the trailer on Thursday, actor Kay Kay Menon said that the upcoming detective drama series helped him relive memories of the time when "social media was not even a thing".

Kay Kay said: "Shekhar's character took me back to the good old days. I re-lived the memories of the time when social media was not even a thing."

The actor added that after reading the script and analysing the role, he was drawn to the complexity of unravelling mysteries. "The series isn't just about solving crimes -- it's also about exploring human nature in all its aspects -- from love and loyalty to betrayal and deceit. Playing Shekhar was a pure delight. I'm excited to bring Shekhar to all of you," he said. Rasika said that working on 'Shekhar Home' has been a fun journey.

"It was a delight to collaborate with talented actors like Kay Kay Menon and Ranvir Shorey. And to be directed by Rohan Sippy. My character, Iraboty, is a force to reckon with -- a strong, determined woman driven by the quest for justice."

Delving more about her character, she added: "She has a compelling journey and the dynamic between Shekhar and Iraboty adds a layer of intrigue. Their bond, evolving through shared challenges and discoveries, gives a glimpse of a partnership that goes beyond solving the case."

Kirti said that the series is one of those rare scripts that grab hold of you from the very first read. "It seamlessly blends mystery with humour, creating a narrative that resonates across a wide spectrum of audiences. From the moment I stepped onto the set, I knew this was going to be a special journey, and my character is an interesting one," she added.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Nidhhi Agerwal