

# The Times Newsday

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## Lok Sabha Elections 2024

### You Will Have Five PMs In 5 Years If Cong-Led INDIA Bloc Wins Polls, Says Modi

**Kolhapur:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday targeted the years if voted to power. Addressing a rally at Kolhapur in western Maharashtra, Modi said the opposition bloc cannot even reach a three-digit figure or 'at the doorstep of forming a government, but has plans to have one prime minister every year if they get a chance'.



Modi said the Congress wants to extend the 'Karnataka model wherein Muslims were inducted in the 27 per cent quota for OBCs', in the entire country. (Contd On Page 2)

tate the post of the chief minister by handing it to the deputy chief minister after 2.5 years. They had this arrangement in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan as well," he said. Modi said the Congress wants to extend the 'Karnataka model wherein Muslims were inducted in the 27 per cent quota for OBCs', in the entire country. (Contd On Page 2)

### Modi's 'Factory Of Lies' Won't Work Forever: Kharge On BJP's Claims About Cong Manifesto

**Barpeta:** Rejecting BJP's claims that Congress manifesto resembled that of Muslim League, party president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday asserted that "Modi's factory of lies" won't work forever.

Addressing an election rally at Kayakuchi in Barpeta district of Assam, he said unemployment was a big problem in the country and that 65 per cent of educated youths

have no jobs. Kharge also alleged that the BJP was looting the country's wealth and handing it over to the rich.

He said that while party leader Rahul Gandhi led the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' crisscrossing the country, Modi was working for 'Bharat todo' or dividing the nation.

"Prime Minister Modi is attacking the Congress as he is scared of it," he claimed.—PTI



### 'Not A Single Rupee Was Traced Back To AAP': Kejriwal To SC In Excise Policy Case

**New Delhi:** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal utilising them in the Goa election campaign. "Not



filed his response to the Directorate of Enforcement's (ED) affidavit in the Supreme Court on Saturday and said that there exists "no proof or material" demonstrating that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) received funds or advanced kickbacks from the South group, let alone

was given. There exists no proof or material demonstrating that the AAP received funds or advanced kickbacks from the South group, let alone utilised them in the Goa election campaign. Not a single Rupee was traced back to the AAP, and the allegations put forth in this regard are devoid of any tangible evidence, rendering them vague, baseless without any corroboration," the affidavit stated.

Recently, ED had filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court opposing Delhi Chief Kejriwal's plea against his arrest. Filing his rejoinder on ED's affidavit, Kejriwal said that the central agency is abusing its power of arrest in the middle of the general election.

He said that the mode, manner and timing of his arrest just before the schedule (Contd On Pg 2)

### Delhi HC Slams Kejriwal For Putting Personal Interest Over National Interest

**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court on Friday came down heavily on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) over the non-supply of textbooks to 2 lakh students.

The bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan also comprising Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora showed displeasure with the Aam Aadmi Party-led MCD and said the Delhi Chief Minister has put personal interest over national interest by not resigning despite his arrest. Justice Manmohan also said that the Delhi government is least bothered about students not going to school, not having textbooks and the disturbance in their studies.

Court also slammed urban development Minister of Delhi Saurabh Bharadwaj and he has turned a blind eye to the plight of students. "This is arrogance of power at its highest," added the court. The court was hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) for whom Advocate Ashok Aggarwal appeared, informing the Court that students studying in MCD School have not been provided with books, notebooks, writing material, uniforms, etc. On the last date of the hearing the bench also said there cannot be a vacuum in the absence of a standing committee, and in such a situation, the Delhi government should delegate financial power to another appropriate authority. The court later directed the MCD commissioner to decide about the disbursement of funds for the same in "two working days."—ANI

### 'Abki Baar 400 Paar' Echoes As Massive Crowd Gathers At Modi-Yogi's Roadshow In UP's Bareilly

**Bareilly:** A massive assembly gathered along the streets of Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly on Friday evening, fervently participating in the grand rally led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The BJP stalwarts were rallying support for the Lok Sabha candidate from Bareilly, Chhatrapal Singh Gangwar.



The rally commenced from the Swayamvar Banquet Hall in Rajendra Nagar, traversing through Shivaji Chowk to the DD Puram intersection at Shaheed Chowk.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath urged the public to elect Chhatrapal Singh Gangwar from Bareilly and send him to the House. Responding to their rallying call, the voters of Bareilly resounded (Contd On Page 2)

### Congress Leader Kunal Choudhary Calls BJP 'Farzi Party'

**Bhopal:** A former MLA of the Congress Party MSP of Rs 2700 per quintal on wheat, in-



creasing amount to Rs 3000 a month of Ladli Bahan Yojana, proving LPG cylinder at the rate of Rs 450, a house under awas yojana was talked about and employment for the youth. Every section was deceived, the Congress leader said.

He added, "Today the result of it (fake promises) is that the feelings of women towards them (BJP) have ended. In Madhya Pradesh, more than 11 per cent women reduced their votes to make the fake party sit at home." Besides, he further slammed the saffron party over its new joining committee and calling it a fake joining team. "They (BJP) have also formed a fake joining team. If 200 people join the saffron party, then it will announce that 5000 people have taken the membership," Choudhary (Contd On P2)

### '140 Students In Single Class, No Books, Uniforms': Adv Ashok On 'Reality' Of Delhi Schools

**New Delhi:** A day after Delhi High Court slammed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) over the non-supply of textbooks in Government schools, advocate and petitioner Ashok Aggarwal who raised the issue stated that the portrayal of schools run by the AAP in its advertisements is clearly different from the actual conditions on the ground.

According to Aggarwal, despite claims of running world-class institutions, the reality in Delhi schools is vastly different. He described overcrowded classrooms with up to 140 students in a single class and inadequate facilities such as the lack of water supply.



"The Delhi government deserved to be lashed out. The advertisements conducted by them show that they run world-class institutions, however, the reality is entirely different. I have seen several schools of the Delhi government and of MCD; I saw 140 students in one class in Delhi...so as three sections sitting together in one class...no water facility and the same condition I witnessed in MCD schools as well," Aggarwal said.

Aggarwal claimed that around 8 lakh students study under the MCD and none of them have received textbooks, notebooks and uniforms. "The issue is that 8 lakh students study at MCD, under the Right to Education Act, students are entitled to receive textbooks, notebooks, writing materials and uniforms. Out of 8 lakh, not even a single student has received any of it. Similarly, 10 lakh students from standard 1 to 8 who come under the Right to Education Act, are under the Delhi government. They have now received notebooks after the High Court lambasted them (Delhi government and MCD), however, none of the students have got books," he said.

### 1,500 Sikhs Join BJP Ahead Of LS Polls In Delhi, Punjab

**New Delhi:** In a significant development, 1,500 members from the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, along with Singh Sabha and other Sikh organisations, joined BJP on Saturday, just weeks ahead of Lok Sabha elections in Delhi and Punjab. At a grand ceremony held at the party's central office in New Delhi, BJP's National General Secretary Tarun Chugh, National Secretary Manjinder Singh Sirsa, and Delhi Pradesh President Virendra Sachdeva conferred party membership to seven members of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee.



Addressing the event after the joining of Sikh members, BJP National development of Delhi and Punjab. If someone has worked genuinely for the Sikh community, it is PM Modi, said the BJP National President, adding: "PM Modi has been in charge of Punjab for a long time, and hence he shares a special bond with them." (Contd On Page 2)

### Firing Outside Salman's Residence Mumbai Police Invoke MCOCA Against Bishnoi, Other Accused

**Mumbai:** The Mumbai superstar Salman Khan's Bandra residence. Mumbai Crime Branch officials said that the police have identified gangster Lawrence Bishnoi as the leader of the gang and have added sections of MCOCA in the FIR. "All accused have been booked under Sections 3(1)(2), 3(1)(3), and 3(1)(4) of MCOCA," they said. Mumbai Crime Police have arrested both the shooters, identified as Sagar Pal and Vicky



Gupta. Two arms suppliers, identified as Sonu Subhash Chander and Anuj Thapan, were also arrested by the police on Friday. Meanwhile, a lookout notice has been issued against Anmol Bishnoi, the younger brother of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, in connection with the case. On April 14, two men came on a motorcycle, fired four rounds outside the Galaxy Apartments, where the actor resides, around 5 am, and fled. (Contd On Page 2)

### 2 CRPF Personnel Killed In Attack By Armed Group In Manipur

**Imphal:** Two Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel, including a Sub Inspector, were killed and two others have been injured after armed groups attacked a camp of security forces in Manipur's Bishnupur district early on Saturday, police said. A police official said that a suspected Kuki armed group opened fire and threw bombs towards a Meitei village at



Narayansena under Moirang police station and one of the bombs exploded inside the outpost of 128-battalion CRPF at Narayansena, injuring four personnel.

Sub Inspector N. Sarkar and Head Constable Arup Saini succumbed to their injuries later, and Inspector Jadav Das and constable Aftab Hussain with splinter wounds were taken to a nearby hospital.

The official said that additional security forces have been rushed to the areas and a massive search operation is underway to find out the perpetrators of the attack.—IANS

# Govt Allows Export Of 99,150 Tonnes Of Onion To 6 Countries

**New Delhi:** The government has allowed the export of 99,150 metric tonnes of onion to six countries — Bangladesh, UAE, Bhutan, Bahrain, Mauritius and Sri Lanka, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs said on Saturday.

A ban has been imposed on onion export to ensure adequate domestic availability and keep prices in check as the output of both the Kharif and Rabi crops in 2023-24 are estimated to be lower as compared to the previous year and demand has increased in the international market.

The National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL), the agency for export of onion to these countries, sourced the domestic onions to be exported through e-platform at L1 prices and supplied to the agencies nominated by the government of the destination country at the negotiated rate on 100 per cent advance payment basis, according to the Food

Ministry statement. The offer rate of NCEL to the buyers takes into account the prevail-

some European countries. Being purely export-oriented, the production cost of the white onion is

port the procurement, storage and farmers registration to begin the procurement of any store-worthy onion.



A high-level team of the Department of Consumer Affairs, NCCF and NAFED had visited Nashik and Ahmednagar Districts of Maharashtra during April 11-13, 2024 to create awareness among the farmers, FPOs/FPCs and PACs about the procure-

ing prices in the destination market and also international and domestic markets. The quotas allocated for export to the six countries are being supplied as per the requisition made. As the largest producer of onion in the country, Maharashtra is the major supplier of onions sourced by NCEL for export.

The government had also allowed the export of 2,000 metric tonnes (MT) of white onion cultivated especially for export markets in Middle-East and

higher than other onions due to higher seed cost, adoption of good agricultural practice (GAP) and compliance to strict maximum residue limits (MRL) requirements.

The procurement target for onion buffer out of Rabi-2024 under the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) of the Department of Consumer Affairs has been fixed at 5 lakh tonnes this year. The Central Agencies, viz., NCCF and NAFED are tying up local agencies such as FPOs/FPCs/PACs to sup-

port the procurement, storage and farmers registration to begin the procurement of any store-worthy onion. A high-level team of the Department of Consumer Affairs, NCCF and NAFED had visited Nashik and Ahmednagar Districts of Maharashtra during April 11-13, 2024 to create awareness among the farmers, FPOs/FPCs and PACs about the procure-

ment of 5 LMT of onion for PSF buffer. In order to reduce the storage loss of onions, the Department of Consumer Affairs decided to enhance the quantum of stocks to be irradiated and cold stored from 1,200 MT last year to over 5,000 MT this year, with technical support from BARC, Mumbai. The pilot of onion irradiation and cold storage taken up last year has been found to have resulted in the reduction of storage loss to less than 10 per cent.—IANS

## Leading IT Firms In India Lost Close To 70k Employees In Last Fiscal Year

**New Delhi:** Amid the muted revenue growth in the Indian IT services sector due to global macroeconomic headwinds, leading IT companies saw a drop of nearly 70,000 employees in the last fiscal year (FY24).

Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Wipro and Tech Mahindra, among others, lost maximum employees in FY24.

While Infosys saw its employee headcount drop by 25,994, the headcount at TCS went down by 13,249, in FY24.

IT bellwether Wipro saw its employee strength fall by 6,180 in the fourth quarter (Q4) of FY24.

When it comes to the full year, the IT services major witnessed its headcount decline by 24,516.

Tech Mahindra had a total headcount of 145,455 in FY24, down 795 (on-quarter) and 6,945 (full year).

Among the leading IT services companies, HCLTech was an exception which had a total headcount of 227,481 in the last fiscal year, with a net addition of 1,537 employees.

According to a latest Crisil Ratings report, the IT services sector in the country is likely to see a second successive year of muted revenue growth, at 5-7 per cent in FY25. As revenue growth remained subdued, IT service companies pulled back on the



addition of fresh talent, resulting in headcount reductions by 4 per cent (on-year) in December 2023.

Aditya Jhaver, Director, CRISIL Ratings, said that the slowdown in technology spending will continue this fiscal year, weighing on the revenue growth of IT service providers.

"Revenue from BFSI and retail segments will continue to be a drag with subdued growth of 4-5 per cent while manufacturing and healthcare will grow at a healthy 9-10 per cent," he noted.—IANS

## Foreign e-Commerce Players Circumventing Rules To Capture Indian Market: CAIT

**New Delhi:** Foreign e-commerce players like Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart are circumventing rules and laws in their relentless pursuit of capturing the Indian market, often resorting to unethical business practices, Praveen Khandelwal, Secretary General, Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) and a BJP candidate for Lok Sabha, said on Saturday.

Reacting to a TV media report that the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has found alleged irregularities in its probe against e-commerce companies like Amazon and Flipkart and their links with mobile manufacturers, Khandelwal told IANS that this "nexus" between e-commerce giants and mobile companies "undermines the country's broader interests."

Amazon or Flipkart did not immediately comment on the report. "For years, we have been highlighting the persistent problem of foreign e-commerce companies circumventing rules and laws in their relentless pursuit of capturing the Indian market, often resorting to unethical business practices," said Khandelwal, BJP candidate from Chandni Chowk Lok Sabha constituency in the Capital.

He said that this "intricate web" involves collaboration between e-commerce and mobile companies, which undermines the country's broader interests and "threatens the livelihoods of small traders."

In February this year, the retail traders' body had written to the CCI, seeking urgent steps in the Delhi Vyapar Mahasangh case involving the anti-competitive practices of Amazon and Flipkart.

In a letter to the CCI Chairperson Ravneet Kaur, the CAIT said the market regulator "must attach utmost priority to the case and pass final penalty order and direction to Flipkart and Amazon to stop their illegal activities, as the outcome of the case has a serious bearing on the survival of lakhs of retailers and their families." "These foreign entities have indulged in monopolisation of sales of mobile phones through exclusive launch," the CAIT letter had alleged.

Khandelwal told IANS that it is imperative that decisive action be taken against these companies now.

"Once the general elections are concluded and if elected as an MP, I am committed to advocating for addressing this issue," he added.—IANS



# Delhi HC Directs DGCA To Deregister All Go First Aircraft

**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court on Friday directed aviation watchdog, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), to process, within five working days, the deregistration applications for aircraft leased by grounded airline Go First, which is undergoing insolvency proceedings.

Justice Tara Vistata Ganju also declined the Resolution Professional's plea to keep the order in abeyance for a week.

The court also rejected the DGCA's communications from May 2023, which had put lessors' deregistration applications on hold due to Go First entering a moratorium. As per the court's directive, the RP must provide updated maintenance details to the lessors and is barred from accessing the aircraft henceforth.

Besides SpiceJet Chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh, and Busy Bee Airways Private Ltd, Sky One, an aviation company headquartered in Sharjah, had also submitted the bid for GoFirst. However, bidding results are yet to be declared.

Following the court directions, Skyone Chairman Jaideep Mirchandani claimed that as far as their bid for Go First is concerned, the de-registration does not alter their plans for the Indian aviation industry.

"If our bid goes through, Sky One can bring in its own assets to run and revive the airline as we are experienced lessors," he said.

Earlier, the high court had asked the RP of Go First to file an affida-

vit in response to a lessor's plea seeking contempt action, alleging that the RP had not complied with the court's order to allow inspection and maintenance of the aircraft.

In October last year, the court allowed aircraft lessors to engage security personnel round-the-clock to safeguard their aircraft parked at rest for several months.

In an interim order on July 5, 2023, the court permitted the lessors to inspect their aircraft at

against the RP, claiming that the aircraft were not being properly maintained, required documents were not provided, and court-directed inspections were being denied.

Several other lessors had also raised similar issues during the hearing.

On May 26 last year, aircraft lessors - Pembroke Aircraft Leasing 11 Ltd, SMBC Aviation Capital Ltd, Accipiter Investments Aircraft 2 Ltd and EOS Aviation 12 (Ireland) Ltd - had moved the

2023". The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal on May 22, 2023, upheld the NCLT's May 10 order for insolvency proceedings against Go First in a setback to efforts of its lessors to repossess their aircraft and asked the lessors to file an appeal before the NCLT.

On lessors' petitions citing the refusal of their pleas for deregistration of their aircraft, the DGCA had told the high court that it was due to a tech-



least twice a month and carry out maintenance.

Justice Ganju, in October, had asked Go First's RP to share documents regarding the maintenance of aircraft, engines and airframes with its lessors. She had said that court orders must be followed in letter and spirit, warning that further orders might be necessary if compliance is not achieved.

Lessor, DAE (SY 22) 13 Ireland Designated Activity Company, had filed a petition seeking contempt proceedings

high court seeking deregistration of their planes by the DGCA to take them back from the airline. The low-cost airline first stopped flying on May 3, 2023. The airline had approached the National Company Law Tribunal "due to the ever-increasing number of failing engines supplied by Pratt & Whitney's International Aero Engines, which has resulted in Go First having to ground 25 aircraft (equivalent to approximately 50 per cent of its Airbus A320neo aircraft fleet) as of May 1,

nical glitch on its portal that the applications of several aircraft lessors were shown as 'rejected'. It had said it was not processing such requests after a moratorium on financial obligations and transfer of assets of the crisis-hit airline post insolvency resolution proceedings.

The lessors had said it is "illegitimate" of the DGCA to deny deregistration, contending that Go First has no right to use their aircraft as the leases concerning them have been terminated.—IANS

# IIFL Samasta Finance Adds Three Members To Its Board

**New Delhi:** IIFL Samasta Finance, one of India's

largest non-banking microfinance companies (NBFC-MFI), has announced the appointment of three members to its Board of Directors.



This strategic move reflects the company's commitment to further strengthen its governance structure and drive continued growth and innovation in the microfinance sector. The three members include the Co-promoter of IIFL Group, R. Venkataraman, former Chairman of NABARD, Dr. Govinda Rajulu Chintala, and former Managing Director of Equifax Credit Information Services, Kalengada Mandanna Nanaiah.

R. Venkataraman joined as an Additional Director (non-executive), while Govinda Chintala and Kalengada Nanaiah joined as Additional Directors (non-executive and independent). The Board will now consist of six members. Commenting on his appointments, Govinda Chintala said, "I am glad to join this exceptional team as we celebrate our company's impressive financial year results. Looking forward to contributing to our continued success."

Govinda Chintala has more than 20 years of experience as Director of Boards of various financial, insurance, and microfinance institutions.

He was the Chairman of NABARD till July

31, 2022. As the Chairman, he spearheaded pivotal initiatives including the sanctioning of landmark projects and forging strategic partnerships. These endeavours encompassed the establishment of the Long-term Irrigation Fund and Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), support for infrastructure projects, assistance for computerisation of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), implementation of Special Packages, and facilitation of healthcare infrastructure under RIDF/NIDA. Additionally, he played a key role in providing Rural Infrastructure Assistance to States (RIAS).

Commenting on his appointment, Kalengada Nanaiah said, "I had the opportunity to work with the microfinance industry during my tenure as CEO of Equifax India and I understand the needs and challenges of the industry. I am pleased to be joining the Board of a rapidly growing organisation like IIFL Samasta and I look forward to contributing to the strategic vision and development of IIFL Samasta in the coming years."

Kalengada Nanaiah has more than 20 years of experience as Director of Boards of various financial, insurance, and microfinance institutions.

for providing leadership and oversight for the credit bureau in India. He has extensive experience, expertise, and insight in the financial services sector, particularly in the realms of data, technology, and analytics.

Additionally, he serves as a visiting faculty at the College of Supervisors, Reserve Bank of India. With a deep commitment to microfinance, Kalengada Nanaiah has been recognised with awards for his dedication to fostering workplace diversity. R. Venkataraman is the Co-promoter of IIFL Group and Chairman of IIFL Securities. He has been contributing immensely to the establishment of various businesses and spearheading key initiatives of the IIFL Group over the past 25 years.

He previously held senior managerial positions in ICICI Limited, including ICICI Securities Limited, the investment banking joint venture with J.P. Morgan of the US and Barclays -

BZW. He also worked with GE Capital Services India Limited in its private equity division.

Commenting on the appointments, Venkatesh N., Managing Director of IIFL Samasta, said, "We are delighted to have G.R. Chintala, K.M. Nanaiah, and R. Venkataraman as our esteemed members of the Board of Directors. Their wealth of knowledge and insights will be instrumental in propelling our ongoing pursuit of innovation, delivering unparalleled value to our customers, and realising our ambitious objectives."

The newly appointed members bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the board, enhancing IIFL Samasta's ability to navigate challenges and capitalise on emerging opportunities.

Their diverse backgrounds and proven records of success will complement the existing Board members' skills and contribute to the company's strategic vision and long-term success.—IANS

## ICICI Bank Posts 17 Per Cent Rise In Q4 Net Profit At Rs 10,707Cr; Declares Dividend Of Rs 10 Per Share

**Mumbai:** The country's second-largest private sector lender ICICI Bank, on Saturday reported a 17.38 per cent increase in net profit to Rs 10,707 crore for the January-March quarter of the financial year 2023-24, compared to the corresponding figure of Rs 9,122 crore in the same quarter a year ago. The bank has recommended a dividend of Rs 10 per share.

ICICI Bank recorded an 8 per cent increase in net interest income (NII) at Rs 19,093 crore for the quarter compared to Rs 17,667 crore reported in the same quarter of 2022-23. The bank also recorded an improvement in its asset quality with gross non-performing assets (NPA) dropping to 2.16 per cent of total loans from 2.81 per cent in the same quarter last year. The net NPA for the quarter fell to 0.42 per cent from 0.48 per cent in the previous year.—IANS



A tribal man sells vegetables grown with traditional 'jhum' farming, at a roadside stall, in Khowai district.

## 'A Lot Has Changed, From Tech To My Hair', Pichai On Completing Two Decades In Google

**New Delhi:** On completing 20 years at the company, Alphabet and Google Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sundar Pichai said that a lot has changed since then such as the technology, the number of people using their products, and his hair.

Pichai, who joined the tech giant in 2004 as a product manager, took to Instagram to share a small, heartwarming note on completing two decades in the company.

"April 26, 2004, was my first day at Google. A lot has changed since then - technology, the number of people who use our products... my hair," he wrote. However, he mentioned that what hasn't changed for him is the "thrill I get from working at this amazing company". "20 years in, I'm still feeling lucky," Pichai



said. His post drew a lot of comments from users, congratulating him for completing 20 years at Google. "Two decades of dedication, twenty years of triumphs, and a legacy of excellence," a user wrote. "I cannot decide which achievement is greater, 20 years in all the technological improvements you've brought or the fact that you haven't gone bald after 20 years in tech," wrote another jokingly. At Google, Pichai managed product management and innovation aspects for several products such as Chrome and Chrome OS. He also played an important part in the development of Google Drive. In August 2015, he was appointed the CEO of Google, and in 2019, he took charge as the CEO of Alphabet, the tech giant's parent company. —IANS

## COP28 President Urges Governments To 'Think Bigger, Act Bolder' On National Climate Plans

**Berlin (Germany):** Speaking in the High-Level Segment of the annual Petersberg Climate Dialogue, attended by Chancellor Olaf Scholz, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan and a number of Climate and Foreign Affairs Ministers, Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and COP28 President, urged governments to "think bigger, act bolder" on national climate plans.

The COP28 President highlighted how the UAE Consensus has emerged as the defining point of reference for global climate ambition and sustainable development since its inception in Dubai last year.

"The UAE Consensus represents a historic milestone in climate diplomacy precisely because it achieved cross-sectoral breakthroughs across the entire climate agenda," Al Jaber declared. "Together, we set a clear pathway for the energy transition, backed by the science, and focused on the north star of 1.5," Al Jaber continued, "We locked in the first-ever global renewable energy targets. We achieved firsts for nature, setting a 2030 deadline to end deforestation. We made breakthroughs in finance, ending a 30-year deadlock on loss and damage, and beginning to fill a fund that is critical for climate justice. We also included under-recognised sectors like food and health in the COP agenda for the first time. And we did all this against a backdrop of geopolitical tensions, proving that multilateralism still works and that unity can overcome polarisation. In short, we sent a message of hope, optimism and inclusivity that could not be more important today."

The COP28 President said that governments should set out economy-wide emission reduction plans and produce "well-funded" national adaptation plans to protect nature and transform food systems.

"My message to governments is simple think bigger, act bolder," Dr. Al Jaber told delegates. "Send a clear message early with your next NDC that puts green infrastructure at the centre of your development plans." The COP28 President also advocated for "smart policies that push industries to step up and incentivise the private sector to invest," adding "we are talking about a system-wide transformation that represents the biggest opportunity for socio-economic development since the first industrial revolution. Simply put, the world will be a better place after this transformation. But it will not happen without significant investment and a level up in climate finance."

Al Jaber highlighted four key investment pri-

groundbreaking initiative aims to enhance continuity between COP 28, COP29 and COP30 and drive implementation of the UAE Consensus - is pushing governments to be "more ambitious" in their next round of Nationally Determined Con-

tributions (NDCs), Dr. Al Jaber said. He said that governments should set out economy-wide emission reduction plans and produce "well-funded" national adaptation plans to protect nature and transform food systems.



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Al Jaber highlighted four key investment pri-

orities: infrastructure, technology, people, and the Global South. On infrastructure, the world needs to invest at least USD 6 trillion to meet the 2030 target of 11 terawatts of renewable energy capacity, Al Jaber stated, with a "similar level of investment" in outdated or nonexistent energy grids, especially in developing countries.

Artificial intelligence "can be a game-changer" by multiplying efficiencies and helping to solve the intermittency challenges posed by renewables, the President said, adding that it could also minimise water usage. "The faster we apply AI across energy and water-intensive sectors, the faster its benefits can be scaled," he declared.

All countries should also invest in their people, developing new skills for the new green economy, while Dr. Al Jaber reiterated the need to increase investment in the Global South. "Right now, over 120 developing countries attract less than 15 per cent of global clean tech investment," he said. "Multilateral Development Banks must make finance more available, accessible and affordable."

Al Jaber said the energy transition would take time and "will happen at different paces in different places, and we cannot unplug the current energy

system until the new one is built." It must also be just, equitable and responsible, in line with the targets set out in the UAE Consensus.

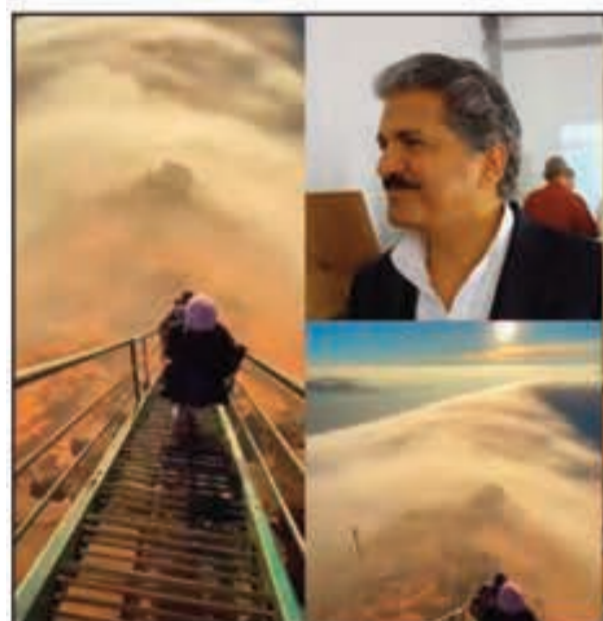
During the Climate Dialogue, the COP28 President's Troika also hosted a Majlis, a form of meeting rooted in longstanding Emirati traditions, to discuss the energy transition. Representing the first session of the Troika Ambition Series, in the event titled 'Majlis: Roadmap Mission to 1.5C - Enabling Energy Transition Outcomes from the UAE Consensus' Al Jaber spoke alongside Mukhtar Babayev, COP29 President-Designate and Marina Silva, Environment Minister for Brazil, host of COP30. Together, the Troika are working across the UN system to push for more ambitious, early and UAE Consensus-aligned NDCs.

The format and spirit of the Majlis, bringing people together on an equal footing, had "helped break the deadlock" at COP28, Al Jaber said, adding that "we want to use the same format and the same spirit of the Majlis to have an honest, transparent and practical dialogue around the energy transition."

Al Jaber asked participants to have a frank conversation about how to address the urgency of the climate situation, while "maintaining energy security and economic prosperity."

He also said it was important the energy transition "leads to opportunity for all and holds back emissions, not progress." Alongside these engagements, the COP28 President met directly with Azerbaijan's President Aliyev, Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and France's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Europe, Stephane Sejourne. —ANI

## We Need Time In Life To Stop & Smell The Roses: Anand Mahindra



**New Delhi:** Sharing a video showing scenic views from Kalsubai Peak (a mountain in Maharashtra), Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra on Saturday said that one should definitely take the time out of their busy schedule to enjoy or appreciate the beauty of life.

"This is Mt. Kalsubai in Maharashtra near Igatpuri, near our engine factory. I've been to Igatpuri several times but never heard about this place & its beauty. Let alone visiting it," Mahindra wrote in a post on X. Appreciating the beauty of the mountain, he said, "We definitely need to take time in life to stop & smell the roses".

Kalsubai is the high-

est point in Maharashtra.

Since being shared, the post has been viewed more than 130K times. Reacting to his post, several users also appreciated the beauty of Kalsubai Peak. "Standing tall at an elevation of 1,646 metres (5,400 feet), Mt. Kalsubai, the highest peak in Maharashtra, is truly a jewel of the Sahyadri range. Its grandeur is a testament to the beauty of nature," a user wrote.

"It's amazing how many beautiful places are waiting to be discovered right in our backyard," another user said.

One more user mentioned, "Kalsubai trek is the best trek near Mumbai with a dream destination for any traveller or fellow trekkers". —IANS

## WhatsApp's New Filter Option Will Let Users Get List Of Their Favourites From Chats Tab

**New Delhi:** Meta-owned WhatsApp is reportedly testing a new feature that will offer users a dedicated "filter" to quickly get a list of their favourites from the chats tab on Android.

According to WABetaInfo, the feature is set for release in a future update of the app. With this new chat filter, users will get to easily access and prioritise specific conversations with their favourite contacts and groups.

As per the report, this new tool will let users mark specific contacts and groups as favourites, making it easier to prioritise important chats and access those they engage with most often. This feature is presently under development and it will be available in a future update of the app, the report added.

Meanwhile, WhatsApp is reportedly working on a new feature that will let users react quickly to status updates on Android. With the 'quick reaction feature for status updates', users will be able to quickly add a reaction to status updates, allowing them to express their appreciation for the posted content with ease.

These reactions will occur on the status screen, rather than within the conversation thread. —IANS



## Dozens Of Tornadoes Wreak Havoc In US

**Washington:** Dozens of tornadoes tore across the US Midwest and flattened entire neighbourhoods, authorities have not reported any deaths so far.

"We've been very fortunate with very few injuries," Omaha Police Chief Todd Schmaderer told reporters during a press briefing late Friday.

Photos and videos showed buildings reduced to rubble. While there have been injuries, authorities have not reported any deaths so far. "We've been very fortunate with very few injuries," Omaha Police Chief Todd Schmaderer told reporters during a press briefing late Friday.

Another tornado reportedly crossed the Missouri River into the neighbouring state of Iowa to the east of Nebraska, where it caused severe damage in the small community of Minden, among others.

At least 60 tornadoes and cyclones have been reported from five different states on Friday, according to CNN.

The National Weather Service said it expects possible more bad weather later on Saturday, including "very large hail, damaging winds, and multiple strong tornadoes."

While tornadoes are common in some parts of the US, experts say the rise of natural disasters, including storms, floods and forest fires, is also due to climate change. —IANS



"It seems like our warning systems in the city of Omaha have been very effective." Thousands of households were left without electricity in the wake of the storms.

In Lancaster County, to the south-west of Omaha, some 70 people were rescued from an industrial building that had collapsed in the storm, according to media reports.

Another tornado reportedly crossed the Missouri River into the neighbouring state of

## Just 55% Water In Reservoirs In TN's Drought-Prone Districts; Farmers Asked To Switch Crops



**Chennai:** With most of the reservoirs in the drought-prone districts of Vellore, Ranipet, Thirupathur and Tiruvannamalai left with only 55 per cent of water, farmers have been advised to shift to crops that require less water.

Sources in the Tamil Nadu water resources department told IANS that the 55 per cent of water that is remaining in the major reservoirs of the region will not be used for agriculture and it will only be used for domestic consumption.

The weather department has already said that the temperature in these districts would touch 44 degrees Celsius in days to come.

At present the temperatures in these districts are anywhere between 38 to 42 degrees Celsius.

Extreme heatwave conditions have led to the drying up of Palar River which is one of the main sources of water in this region.

The Tamil Nadu agriculture department has advised farmers to cultivate crops like maize, ragi, groundnuts, wheat and pulses like green gram and urad as these crops require less water.

These crops, according to the Tamil Nadu agriculture department officials, will also give higher returns to the farmers.

In Tamil Nadu the crops traditionally being cultivated by farmers are sugar cane, paddy and banana which require large quantities of water.

K Ramaswamy, a sugar cane farmer in Tirupattur, told IANS, "The agriculture department has already asked us to switch from sugar cane and paddy farming to maize, wheat and ragi cultivation as there is extreme shortage of water in the region. We are however yet to decide on this even though the department has informed us of the benefits of switching over to the new crops."

The farmers have also been advised to switch to drip irrigation techniques for water conservation. —IANS

## Generative AI To Transform Legal Tech Market With Automation



**New Delhi:** Generative AI (GenAI) has tremendous potential for bringing more automation to the global legal technology sector that is likely to reach \$50 billion (in value) by 2027, albeit with some riders.

According to Gartner, there has been key growth in technology adoption for spend management, e-billing, contract lifecycle management, legal matter management and legal document management.

Incorporating GenAI into these applications will only accelerate purchasing and adoption, said the report. Chris Audet, Chief of Research for legal, risk and compliance leaders' practice, said that the widespread availability of consumer tools such as OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Bard, will quickly increase the number of established legal technology use cases. According to the report, lawyers also need to understand the limitations and risks of using GenAI as well as its potential. It is essential to check the output of GenAI. It is not a suitable technology at this stage to complete tasks without review, the report advised.

"As various business functions pursue automation, legal leaders may find themselves facing some tough questions from senior leadership if they haven't evaluated its potential in the legal department," Audet noted.

According to the report, new technologies can fundamentally change the way legal organisations perform business and GenAI has the potential to help. —IANS



A cruise ship, right, and a cargo ship, left, are seen though the haze caused by dust in the southern coastal city of Larnaca, in the southeast Mediterranean island of Cyprus. —AP

# 'Hypocrisy Of Modi Sarkar Knows No Bounds': Jairam Ramesh Targets Govt Over Move On 2G Case Verdict

New Delhi: With the BJP-led government seeking modification of the Supreme Court's earlier verdict in the 2G spectrum allocation case, Congress on Saturday accused it of hypocrisy, saying that the BJP had termed the 2G spectrum allocation during the UPA government as "scam" and now wants to follow the same route of administrative allocation in some cases. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the BJP was contradicting its own stance.

"The hypocrisy of the Modi Sarkar and Bhrasht Janata Party knows no bounds. During Dr. Manmohan Singh's tenure, they tried to all who would listen that the administrative allocation of 2G spectrum was a 'scam'. Now, they are arguing the opposite - they have gone to the Supreme Court for permission to give away spectrum to whoever they want, without an auction," Jairam Ramesh posted on X. He alleged that the government was handing over public resources to PM's crony capitalist

friends and even "satellite spectrum has been handed over in exchange for electoral bonds".

"Of course, this Modi Regime has already been handing over public resources to the PM's crony capitalist friends - airports have been handed over to one company, coal mines have been given away in fraudulent auctions, and even satellite spectrum has been handed over in exchange for Rs 150 crore in electoral bonds. In total, they have already

handed out Rs. 4 lakh crores worth of public resources to their corporate donors," the Congress leader alleged. He expressed confidence that the BJP-led government will be voted out in the Lok Sabha elections.

"On June 4, India's voters will show this party of organised loot the door. The INDIA Government will launch a JPC on the Adani Mega Scam, and investigate these other corrupt practices - including the #PayPM scam in which

the PM amassed Rs 8,200 crore through his well-documented 'Chaar Raaste' of collecting funds - 1. Pre-paid Bribes: Chanda Do, Dhanda Lo 2. Post-paid Bribes: Theka Lo, Ghoos do 3. Post-raid Bribes: Hafia Vasooli 4. Farzi Companies," Ramesh said.

The Centre in its plea earlier this week in the Supreme Court has sought modification of the 2012 verdict as it wanted to grant second-generation spectrum licences in some cases.

On February 2, 2012, the top court quashed 2G spectrum licence allocations to various firms during A Raja's tenure as telecom minister in January 2008. The court had also held that the State was duty-bound to adopt the auction route while transferring natural resources of the country.

Earlier on December 21, 2017, the Special Court acquitted Raja, Kanimozhi and others in a 2G spectrum allocation case. CBI has challenged the order in the Delhi High Court.—ANI



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav being felicitated during a public meeting for Lok Sabha elections, in Gwalior.

## Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah Thanks Supreme Court For Ordering Release Of Drought Relief Assistance

Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah thanked the Supreme Court on Friday for ordering the release of over Rs 34 lakh crore drought relief assistance from the Union Government for the 2023 Karnataka drought.

He added that it was perhaps the first time in the history of India that a state was driven to the Supreme Court to get its rights enforced. "After persistent efforts and an appeal to the Supreme Court, we've secured Rs 34,98.82 crore in drought relief from the Union Government. I wish to thank the Hon. Supreme Court. This is perhaps the first time in the history of India that a state was driven to the Supreme Court to get its rights enforced. It's regrettable that we had to wait since September 2023 for a response," Siddaramaiah said in a post on X.

The Karnataka Chief Minister, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the monetary assistance, stating that the Karnataka government had requested Rs. 18,000

crore but received only Rs. 3,498.98 crore. The National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) set coupled with sluggish progress of SWM during June resulted in Malnad districts and North Interior Karnataka districts with large agriculture land recording large deficit rainfall," said the plea. After strictly adhering to the procedure outlined in the Manual for Drought Management-2020, Karnataka notified 223 out of 236 taluks as drought-affected. Cumulatively for the Kharif 2023 season, the agriculture and horticulture crop loss have been reported in more than 48 lakh hectares with the estimated loss (cost of cultivation) of Rs 35,162 crore, the plea further said. The State Government has sought Rs 18,171.44 crore under National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), through three Drought Relief Memorandum submitted in September-November 2023 i.e. Rs.4663.12 crore towards crop loss input subsidy, Rs. 12577.9 crore towards gratuitous relief to families whose livelihood has been seriously affected due to drought, Rs.566.78 crore for addressing shortage of drinking water relief then and Rs.363.68 crore towards cattle care. Crops have failed, reduced water availability has affected domestic, agricultural, and industrial-hydel energy water supply, the plea added.—ANI

The plea said that Karnataka is reeling under a severe drought, affecting the lives of its citizens. "For the Kharif 2023 season as a whole, after fulfilling all the indicators of the Manual for Drought Management 2020, a total of 223 out of 236 taluks are declared drought-affected during Kharif 2023, with 196 taluks categorised as severely affected and the remaining 27 categorized as moderately affected. The Southwest Monsoon (SWM) set in over the coast of Karnataka on June 10, 2023, as against the normal onset of June 5. The SWM gradually advanced thereafter and covered the entire state on June 24, as against the normal coverage date of June 15. The delayed on-



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during a public meeting for Lok Sabha elections, in Asansol.

## Landslide Damages Roads And Houses In J-K's Ramban

Ramban: Pernote village, located approximately six kilometres from Ramban town in Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing heavy damage to roads, houses and power towers due to continuous landslides.

The affected villagers have been shifted to Panchayat Ghar and other places and the administration is taking care of them. Medical facilities and food has also been provided by the administration to the affected villagers. The administration is on high alert and is monitoring the situation.

While speaking to ANI, Varunjeet Charak, ADC Ramban, said, "Around 50-55 families have been affected. And all the houses within one kilometre of range have been damaged. Some are fully damaged, while some are partially damaged. The families have been rescued."

Varunjeet Charak also informed about the teams that were working on the rescue operation. "The teams of NDRF, SDRF, and the local NGOs were also here for the rescue operation," he said.

The ADC further said that three power towers have been destroyed, and the agricultural ac-

tivities also been disturbed. "The administration reached here at night only and we rescued the people. We had made temporary tents for the families to stay but due to heavy rains, the tents have been damaged and we will shift them to other places," Charak added.

Charak also said that only the experts of the Geology department can answer as to why this particular area is going through landslides. He said, "We have requested their team (experts) to come here and do their study."

Meanwhile, J&K Pradesh Congress President Vikar Rasool on the destruction in the Ramban district due to landslides blamed the government. "The government has not done anything, they give four cloth tents and four pots later, and no one asks about my request," Rasool added, "Request to the district administration to... shift them (affected families)

to a place so that they can get two, four or four rooms... Their rehabilitation should be arranged. The tent of cloth does nothing..."

On Friday, due to the sinking of land for about one km at the Ramban-Gool road, about 30 houses were damaged in Pernote village, the authorities had said.

"Since yesterday evening, small cracks have been developing in the roads. A road of length 1000-1200 metres is impacted. The slide is going on continuously. The road has subsided 10-12 metres in some places. The restoration has not yet started because the movement is still going on," SK Gautam, Officer Commanding in General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF), had told ANI.

"The landslide began yesterday evening some five km away from Ramban. The roads have been damaged. Around 30-40 houses in the nearby areas are also affected. We have deployed teams and they are conducting surveys. We have evacuated those who have lost their homes," Ramban ADC Roshan Lal had told ANI.

Villagers had said that crops have also been damaged due to the land sinks.—ANI



## Lok Sabha Elections 2024: Owaisi Holds Door-To-Door Campaign

Hyderabad: AIMIM Chief Asaduddin Owaisi today held a door-to-door campaign days ahead of polling for the Lok Sabha Election 2024 in Hyderabad.

Owaisi is an AIMIM LS candidate from Hyderabad constituency and has represented the constituency four times in Lok Sabha.

Voting for all 17 seats in Telangana will take place on May 13 in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

Owaisi said on Friday that the BJP Hyderabad candidates' gesture to shoot an arrow purportedly in the direction of a mosque was an "attempt to destroy the peace" of the Hyderabad.

"The BJP candidate is shooting an arrow towards a mosque. What is the message being given to us? That was not an arrow towards the mosque but efforts to destroy the peace of Hyderabad," Owaisi said while addressing a public meeting.

The Hyderabad Lok Sabha constituency comprises seven assembly segments--Bahadurpura, Chandrayangutta, Charminar, Goshamahhal, Karwan, Malakpet and Yakatpura.

All assembly seats, except Goshamahhal, are presently held by the AIMIM. BJP has fielded Madhavi Latha from the Hyderabad constituency.

Since 1984, candidates from the Owaisi family or those supported by them, have been elected from Hyderabad, with Owaisi currently serving as the Lok Sabha member from the prestigious seat.

Polling for 17 parliamentary constituencies in Telangana will be held on May 13. In the 2019 general election, Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) won nine seats, Bharatiya Janata Party four, Congress three and AIMIM one seat. The voting for the first two phases have been completed so far.

The next round of voting will be held on May 7. Lok Sabha polls are being held across seven phases till June 1 and votes will be counted on June 4.—ANI



## 'Only Heat Wave'

Soumitra Bose

New Delhi ( "Only Heat Wave"...No Poll Wave, No Election Wave, No Ballot Wave, No Polling Wave, No Electioneering Wave, No Campaigning Wave, No Swaying Wave, No "Craze"-Wave, No Polling Wave...All only run-of-the-mill sort-of-perfunctory-"do"-that-is-now-seemingly-'Of What Use Really'. Thus, no wave unlike in 1970s,

1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and onward as of now...2024: Not at all spirited, enthusiastic, exuberant, exhilarating but boring, dispirited, no-logic, no-excitement-inducing, only-depression-inducing, to say or put frankly. Then what wave ? Only Heat Wave, that is, -Ve, dispirited, unenthusiastic, unencouraging, self-containing, etc. etc but not at all, any encouraging wave-prone...No cheerio at all. Waves are past, if at all

that too, that is. People today are not prepared to be carried away by waves which according to them are lies, deceit, cheat, falsification, chicanery prone, they are not meant to be fulfilled as they are only meant to garner votes, it is now 100% clear. Thus, because, that is clear, it is also clear that there is no wave unlike ever before. Only heat wave of the weather is there, no other wave...QED.





Bochum's Kevin Stöger celebrates scoring during the Bundesliga soccer match between VfL Bochum and TSG 1899 Hoffenheim at Vonovia Ruhrstadion, Bochum, Germany.

## La Liga: From One Big Match To Another: EL Gran Derbi Awaits

Madrid: The Spanish La Liga awaits another big match this weekend as

momentum after the El Clásico win against Barcelona.



Sevilla host traditional rivals Real Betis in one of the most exciting games of the season -- El Gran Derbi. Real Betis and Sevilla FC will lock horns in a hard-fought match as one team battles for a place in Europe and the other seeks to put any chance of getting drawn into the relegation dog-fight to bed.

Real Betis come out on top on aerial duels and crosses, while Sevilla FC top the stats for passes in the attacking zone, in the first third and for overall passes completed.

While Sevilla and Real Betis will face off in El Gran Derbi, table toppers Real Madrid will hope to ride the winning

As Real Madrid won the match, Jude Bellingham proved he is always decisive in El Clásico.

As occurred in the reverse fixture, Bellingham won the game with a great goal in the dying minutes. Although given his position, fans were expecting a playmaker, his main task has been scoring goals, so much so that he is now the second-highest scorer in the league.

However, he remains instrumental when it comes to creating goalscoring chances and is the La Liga player with the most passes in the final third. He also makes the podium on high-im-

and do so most successfully. He is one of the standout players in the entire competition.

As they go into another week of action, Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti practically has the league title in his pocket.

There has been little to criticise in Real Madrid's play throughout these 32 matches. At this juncture in La Liga, Los Blancos have established themselves as the leading team in link-up play and passing.

They are the side who make the most passes in the final third and they make these passes most effectively, with a passing accuracy of 86%. If we

focus on their total passes, we can also see that they are the most effective units overall. All of these figures, and many more, reflect a system which has allowed Real Madrid to score the most goals and virtually wrap up the La Liga title.

Isco is still unstoppable

Not even injury has managed to dent the performance levels of a player who remains the cornerstone of his team and a leading player in La Liga.

Isco has created the most high-impact actions in the entire division -- in other words, actions which create a goalscoring opportunity for his team. These can be passes, beating a player or carries which lead to a chance on goal. Since Isco has rediscovered himself at Real Betis, the balance has returned to the team.

As illustrated by his spells on the sidelines, the team perform better when he is on the field of play.

Successful long passes

These comprise passes of over 30 metres with which the passer successfully reaches a receiving teammate. Teams who generate more long, vertical passes are capable of playing a more direct game. Sevilla FC are the team that plays the second-most long passes in La Liga. — IANS

## Premier League: Three Massive Games This Weekend To Help Decide Title

London: Three decisive matches this weekend --

quarterfinals, with the club surrounded by

one of them the biggest derby in London -- will go a long way toward deciding this season's Premier League title, and perhaps also the scramble to avoid relegation. The first game is on Saturday lunchtime when Jurgen Klopp's tired Liverpool side travels to face West Ham at the London Stadium.

Liverpool travel to east London after a derby defeat to Everton on Wednesday dealt a massive blow to their title hopes, leaving them third in the table, two points behind Manchester City and three behind Arsenal, with City having a game in hand. Klopp's side again lacked energy at Goodison Park, and with less than 72 hours to prepare, it's hard to see how it can recover physically against a side that is going to look to test it from set pieces -- as Everton did.

The good news for Liverpool is that West Ham are also exhausted after their run to the Europa League

rumours that Julen Lopetegui is being lined up to replace David Moyes as coach at the end of the season.

The other two decisive games are on Sunday, with league leaders Arsenal crossing north London to play traditional rivals Tottenham in a key game for both sides.

Arsenal's impressive demolition of Chelsea on Wednesday means they have a one-point lead over Manchester City, but City have a game in hand. Mikel Arteta's side must hold its nerve against a rival that also needs a win. Tottenham sit fifth in the table, six points behind Aston Villa, but with two games in hand and three points are vital if they want to stay in the race to qualify for next season's Champions League. Spurs haven't played since

April 13 when they lost 4-0 to Newcastle, and at this stage of the season, it's hard to know if that break will allow tired legs to recover or break their rhythm.

Manchester City purged to a 4-0 win away to Brighton on Thursday night, with Phil Foden and Kevin de Bruyne in outstanding form, and they visit struggling Nottingham Forest on Sunday. Forest's defeat to Everton last weekend left them a point above Luton Town and Luton could move two points above Nuno Espirito Santo's side if they win away to mid-table Wolverhampton on Saturday afternoon.

If Luton lose on Saturday, that could lift some pressure from Forest against Pep Guardiola's side, who has Erling Haaland as their only fitness doubt, but the way Manchester City demolished Brighton suggests they are hitting top form at the right moment.

Aston Villa will move nine points clear of Tottenham if they beat a chaotic Chelsea on Saturday. Unai Emery ex-

tended his contract with the club for another season in the week, while Chelsea suffered a 5-0 humiliation away to Arsenal and need to show a reaction of some kind.

Chelsea have the firepower to hurt Villa on a good day, but the Villa pair of Ollie Watkins and Leon Bailey are much more effective in front of goal. Elsewhere, Newcastle United should keep up the pressure on a top-six finish and could confirm Sheffield United's return to the Championship on Saturday.

Manchester United are currently sixth but have been wildly erratic in recent games and Burnley must see their visit to Old Trafford as a chance to overtake Luton in their survival bid. Everton are almost safe after consecutive wins, while Brentford's five-game unbeaten run has also moved them closer to assuring top-flight survival. Finally, Fulham and Crystal Palace, Bournemouth and Brighton play two mid-table derbies with little at stake other than pride. — IANS

## Bairstow's Unbeaten 108, Shashank's 68 Not Out Help PBKS Complete Highest Successful Chase In T20s

Kolkata: Jonny Bairstow slammed an unbeaten 108 while Shashank Singh shone with 68 not out as Punjab Kings completed a record chase of 262 to secure an eight-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders in an absolute run-fest in Match 42 of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 witnessed by 55,767 fans at the Eden Gardens on Friday.

After openers Phil Salt and Sunil Narine slammed rollicking half-centuries while sharing an opening partnership of 138 runs in 10.2 overs to propel KKR to a mammoth 261/6, Prabhsimran Singh laid the foundation with a quick fifty, before Bairstow and Shashank dished out sensational knocks as PBKS now own the record for highest successful chase in T20 history. For Bairstow, this was a much-needed second IPL century, with his 108 coming off 48 balls and aided by eight fours and nine sixes after being dropped due to poor form. Friday's knock boosts his chances of entering England's squad for the T20 World Cup.

Shashank's whirlwind 68 not out came off 28 balls, laced with two fours and eight sixes. Amidst the carnage, Sunil Narine was still at his economical best, with figures of 1-24. The win now takes PBKS to eighth place in the points table.

With the ball coming nicely on the bat, PBKS hit a whopping 24 sixes in their chase, the most maximums coming in an IPL innings. Overall, 42 sixes were hit in the match, which is the most maximums hit in a men's T20 match.

Chasing 262, Bairstow got off the mark by mistiming a drive off Dushmantha Chameera in the opening over. Impact player Prabhsimran Singh flicked and upper-cut

Harshit Rana for a brace of sixes in the second over, before taking two fours and as many sixes off Chameera in the next over.

The introduction of Anukul Roy and Sunil Narine didn't do much to stop the boundary flow as Prabhsimran got his fifty in just 18 balls with a swept six. Bairstow hit three fours and two sixes against Anukul Roy in the

collectively to complete a mammoth chase with eight balls to spare.

Earlier, Salt made 75, while Narine slammed 71 as the duo were also helped by PBKS dropping their three catches collectively in the first seven overs to smash the bowlers to all parts of the park. After the duo fell, Andre Russell, Shreyas Iyer and Venkatesh Iyer brought out the big hits to take

slammed two fours and six on the last three balls of the fourth over. The duo hit three more boundaries before Salt had a reprieve in the last over of power-play as KKR signed off from the phase with 76/0.

After that, Salt was given another life when Rabada dropped a chance off Rahul Chahar, making it the third time PBKS shelled a chance. Narine reverse-swept, drove and sliced for his boundaries to reach his fifty in only 23 balls before Salt swivelled and lapped off Rabada for four and six respectively.

Salt would get a 25-ball fifty, his third half-century of the season, by dispatching Chahar through extra cover for four, as KKR reached 137/0 at the halfway mark. PBKS finally held on to a catch as Narine holed out to long-on off Curran, falling for 71 off just 32 balls. Two overs later, Salt was castled by Curran for a 37-ball 75.

Russell clubbed two fours and as many sixes in his 12-ball 24, before hooking to square leg off Arshdeep. Shreyas pulled, drove, flicked and sliced to hit Curran for four and three sixes in his 10-ball 28, before giving a catch to deep third man off Arshdeep in the 19th over. Venkatesh, Rinku Singh and Ramandeep Singh hit some boundaries at the end to take KKR past 260, which was insufficient to stop PBKS from hunting it down with ridiculous ease.

Brief scores: Kolkata Knight Riders 261/6 in 20 overs (Phil Salt 75, Sunil Narine 71; Arshdeep Singh 2-45; Rahul Chahar 1-33) lost to Punjab Kings 262/2 in 18.4 overs (Jonny Bairstow 108 not out; Shashank Singh 68 not out; Sunil Narine 1-24) by eight wickets. — IANS



last over of Power-play, before Prabhsimran was run out on the final ball as PBKS ended the phase at 93/1.

But Bairstow continued to unleash carnage on KKR's bowlers, getting his fifty off 23 balls by slogging Varun Chakravarthy over long-off for six on the fifth ball of the ninth over. From overs 10-13, Bairstow blasted seven boundaries, despite losing Rilee Rossouw to Narine.

Shashank came in to hit two sixes and a four, followed by Bairstow reaching his century in just 45 balls off Harshit Rana. Shashank then carted Chameera for three sixes, before hitting two more maximums and a four off Harshit to get his fifty. He and Bairstow hit three more boundaries

KKR past 260, with the help of 22 fours and 18 sixes. Salt and Narine's 138-run stand is the second-highest opening partnership by any KKR pair in IPL history behind the unbeaten 184-run partnership between Chris Lynn and Gautam Gambhir against Gujarat Lions on April 7, 2017.

Pushed into batting first, Narine began by driving a juicy half-volley from Sam Curran for four. He then hit Arshdeep Singh for a six and four before being dropped by Harpreet Brar off Harshal Patel in the third over. Salt joined the boundary-hitting party with a four sandwiched between two sixes.

The carnage continued as Salt drove Kagiso Rabada through the line for four before Narine

## China Ready To Cooperate With WADA In Regular Compliance Review After 'Doping' Row

Beijing: The China Anti-Doping Agency

assistance where needed," it said. A total



(CHINADA) will actively cooperate with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in the coming regular compliance review and provide assistance where needed, it said here on Friday.

WADA decided to send a compliance audit team to China to assess the current state of its anti-doping program as part of the Agency's regular compliance monitoring program at its Executive Committee (ExCo) meeting on Thursday in Montreal, Canada.

"The audit is part of WADA's regular compliance monitoring program to ensure compliance with the Code," CHINADA said in a statement. "Previous compliance reviews of such kind also took place in 2017 through a compliance audit and in 2022 through a Code Compliance Questionnaire (CCQ), where we got professional guidance from WADA to further improve our work."

"CHINADA will actively cooperate with the coming audit by WADA, and provide

thoroughly, it accepted CHINADA's conclusion that "the athletes would be held to have no fault or negligence."

"Since its establishment in 2007, CHINADA has been carrying out its work in strict accordance with the Code and International Standards with a 'Zero Tolerance' attitude towards doping," CHINADA said.

"In the trimetazidine (TMZ) contamination cases in swimming in 2021, CHINADA, rigorously and objectively, initiated a thorough and comprehensive investigation immediately with scientific methods.

After WADA's Science Department and external legal counsel reviewed this case

ments, expert opinions and other evidence, including the prolonged and intensive testing records and analysis results of the athletes involved, it was finally decided that the Adverse Analytical Findings (AAFs) for TMZ were an isolated mass incident caused by athletes' unknowing consumption of food contaminated with TMZ when they were participating in the event."

WADA also announced after its ExCo meeting that it will invite Swiss independent prosecutor Eric Cottier to review its handling of the no-fault contamination case involving 23 swimmers from China in 2021.

CHINADA called WADA's decision "a clear demonstration of fairness, openness and transparency." — IANS



Dallas Mavericks' P.J. Washington, drives to the basket past Los Angeles Clippers' Paul George (13) as Kawhi Leonard (2) helps defend during the second half of Game 2 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series in Dallas.

## People With Rare Longevity Mutations May Also Be Protected Against Cardiovascular Disease: Study

**New Delhi:** A recent study suggests that people with a rare condition known as growth hormone receptor deficiency (GHRD), also called Laron syndrome, may have better cardiovascular health.

GHRD, which is defined by the body's inability to use its growth hormone and leads to stunted development, has been linked in mice to a 40 per cent increase in longevity and decreased risk of numerous age-related disorders. However, the risk of cardiovascular illness in individuals with GHRD has remained unknown until now, leading to suspicion that this rodent longevity mutation may potentially raise cardiovascular disease risk in humans.

HT launches Crick-it, a one stop destination to catch Cricket, anytime, anywhere. Explore now!

The study, appearing in *Med*, is the latest product of an international collaboration spanning nearly 20 years between Valter Longo, professor of gerontology at the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, and endocrinologist Jaime

Guevara-Aguirre of the Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador. Over the past two de-



ades, Longo, Guevara-Aguirre and colleagues have examined the health and aging of people with the gene mutation that causes GHRD. This rare mutation - found in just 400 to 500 people worldwide - was identified in a group of Ecuadorians whose ancestors had fled Spain during the Inquisition more than three centuries ago. The mutation leaves them with ineffective growth hormone receptors and results in a type of dwarfism.

The team's previous research has indicated that while GHRD/Laron syndrome reduces growth, it also appears to reduce the risk of several age-related

diseases. Although the Ecuadorians with GHRD have a higher rate of obesity, they have a very low

blood pressure compared to the control group. They also had smaller heart dimensions and similar pulse wave velocity - a measure of stiffness in the arteries - but had lower carotid artery thickness compared to control subjects. Despite elevated low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or "bad cholesterol," levels, GHRD subjects showed a trend for lower carotid artery atherosclerotic plaques compared to controls (7 per cent vs 36 per cent).

"These findings suggest that individuals with GHRD have normal or improved levels of cardiovascular disease risk factors compared to their relatives," said Longo, senior author of the new study. "Although the population tested is small, together with studies in mice and other organisms this human data provide valuable insights into the health effects of growth hormone receptor deficiency and suggest that drugs or dietary interventions that cause similar effects could reduce disease incidence and possibly extend longevity." —ANI

GHRD subjects displayed lower blood sugar, insulin resistance, and

risk of cancer and Type 2 diabetes. They also appear to have healthier brains and better performance on tests of cognition and memory.

For the current study, the research team examined cardiovascular function, damage, and risk factors in GHRD subjects and their relatives. Researchers conducted two phases of measurements in Los Angeles and Ecuador, involving a total of 51 individuals, with 24 diagnosed with GHRD and 27 relatives without GHRD serving as controls. The team's previous research has indicated that while GHRD/Laron syndrome reduces growth, it also appears to reduce the risk of several age-related

## This Approach Shows Significant Potential For Treating A Common Form Of IBS

**New Delhi:** Researchers have found a new approach which holds great promise to treat a common form of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).

This approach which includes personalised 'cocktails' of antibiotics, probiotics and prebiotics was found to improve symptoms in almost all patients who were included in the study published in the journal *European Society Of Clinical Microbiology And Infectious Diseases*.

As per lead researcher Professor Maurizio Sanguinetti, "The research shows that about 10-30 per cent of individuals who experience acute gastroenteritis develop Post-infection IBS. Symptoms like diarrhoea, constipation, bloating and abdominal pain can last for months or even years after the initial infection."

Post-infection IBS (PI-IBS) is a form of irritable bowel syndrome that occurs after gastroenteritis or food poisoning.

To investigate the potential of this approach, the researchers performed a study on 13 PI-IBS pa-

tients (8 males and 5 females; mean age, 31 years) who were treated with targeted gut-microbiota therapy.

Nine patients (69.2 per cent) had diarrhoea-dominant IBS (IBS-D), while four (30.8 per cent) had constipation-dominant IBS (IBS-C).

Bloating and stomach pain were reported in

69.2 per cent (9/13) and 76.9 per cent (10/13) of patients, respectively.

Based on their results, researchers then designed a personalised therapy for each patient with the goal of rebalancing their gut microbiota. The therapies con-



sisted of short courses of the antibiotics rifaximin (9/13, 69 per cent of pa-

tients) or paromomycin (4/13, 31 per cent) to reduce levels of potentially harmful bacteria, followed by prebiotics or postbiotics to improve the numbers of protective bacteria and contest with the harmful bacteria for space and resources. Twelve weeks after starting treatment, 93 per cent of patients improved their symptoms, and 38.5 per cent attained overall remission, the study noted. "A precision medicine approach, in which testing and careful analysis of the gut microbiota allows the development of personalised treatments holds great promise in the treatment of PI-IBS," Sanguinetti said. —IANS

## Tripura Zoo Beats Heatwave, Protects Animals With Fruit Feasts And Ice Blocks

**Agartala (Tripura):** To protect inmates from the severe heatwave conditions, authorities at Tripura's Sepahijala Zoological Park have implemented several measures, including feeding the animals seasonal fruits like watermelons and oral rehydration solutions mixture.

The seasonal fruits provided include watermelons, cucumbers, and gourds to help the animals stay hydrated and cool. In addition to providing hydrating fruits, the zoo authorities are also using ice cubes and cold-water splashes as a direct method to reduce heat stress among the animals.

These efforts are complemented by the administration of Oral Rehydration Solutions (ORS) and other substances aimed at preventing dehydration, ensuring that the animals receive the necessary care to maintain their health during this challenging period. Moreover, the zoo

staff diligently changes water levels at various enclosures frequently to ensure fresh and cool water is always available to the



animals, further aiding in their ability to cope with the heat.

Officials said that these measures are a part of their efforts to protect animals from heatwaves as the region grapples with increasingly harsh weather conditions.

"We have already prepared ourselves. In this hot summer, all the herbivores and omnivores

are fed seasonal fruits like watermelons, etc. All the carnivores are provided with ice blocks in their resting areas," Dr Keshab



Debnath of the zoological park said.

"Cold water is being sprinkled regularly, along with the feeding of Oral Rehydration Solutions mixture to beat the heat. Though the animals get affected in these heatwave conditions, we are making all possible efforts to maintain their comfort and safety," he added. —ANI

## S Korea Medical Crisis: New Head Of Doctors' Association Vows War

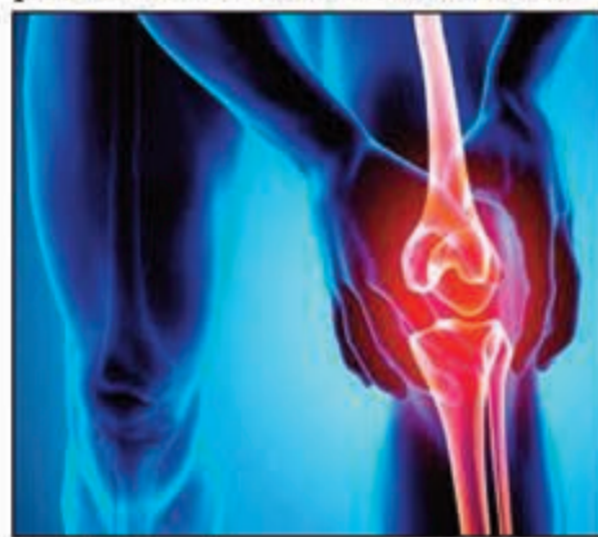
**Seoul:** The new head of the doctors' association vowed on Saturday to wage an all-out war against the government in case of any disadvantage to medical professors considering taking weekly breaks in support of the ongoing walkout by junior doctors. Lim Hyun-taek, the president-elect of the Korean Medical Association (KMA), is known for his hawkish stance in the ongoing stalemate with the government regarding an increase in the medical school enrollment quota.

"The Ministry of Health and Welfare's treatment of professors as criminals and its intimidation are deeply infuriating," said the KMA's transition team for Lim in a press release, adding that 140,000 doctors and medical students will launch an all-out war if the professors are mistreated.

Lim has come under police scrutiny after the Ministry of Health and Welfare filed a complaint alleging he violated medical law by inciting collective action by trainee doctors opposed to the government's plan to sharply increase medical school admissions, reports Yonhap news agency.

The country's 13,000 trainee doctors have been on strike, resigning 'en masse' since February 20, protesting the government's decision to significantly increase the medical school enrollment quota. In solidarity with medical interns and residents, medical professors at major general hospitals nationwide have joined the movement. In an attempt to break the stalemate with the doctors, the government last week accepted a request from the chiefs of six national universities for flexibility in expanding the medical school enrollment quota. —IANS

## Early Detection Of 'Osteoarthritis' May Allow Therapy That Improves Joint Health: Researchers



**San Francisco:** Researchers have said that early detection of "knee osteoarthritis" could provide an opportunity to arrest the disease process and restore joint health. This comes after a team of researchers from the US-based Duke University Medical Centre successfully predicted knee osteoarthritis via a blood test at least eight years before tell-tale signs of the disease appeared on X-rays.

In a study published in the journal *Science Advances*, the researchers validated the accuracy of the blood test that identifies key biomarkers of osteoarthritis.

They showed that it predicted the develop-

ment of the disease, as well as its progression.

As per the study's senior author Virginia Byers Kraus, a professor at Duke University School of Medicine, the blood test shows that "it's possible to detect this disease much earlier than our current diagnostics permit". Osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis, affecting an estimated 35 million adults in the US. While there is currently no cure, the potential new therapies may solve it by identifying it early and slowing its progression before it becomes too late, the study mentioned.

Researchers studied a large database in the UK and analysed the serum of 200 white women.

Half of the women had been diagnosed with knee osteoarthritis, while the other half did not have the disease. The two groups were matched by body mass index and age.

They identified a few biomarkers in the blood test that successfully distinguished the women with knee osteoarthritis from those without it. These biomarkers detected molecular signals of osteoarthritis up to eight years before many of the women were diagnosed with the disease through X-ray tests.

According to Kraus, this is significant because it gives additional evidence that there are abnormalities in the joint that may be recognised by blood biomarkers long before X-rays can indicate osteoarthritis. —IANS

## V P Jagdeep Dhankar Visits Bharat Biotech Facility

**Hyderabad:** Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday visited Bharat Biotech, which is focused on innovation, research & development, and large-scale manufacturing facilities for vaccines.

Accompanied by Telangana Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan, the Vice President went around the company's premises at Genome Valley.

Dr. Krishna Ella, Executive Chairman of Bharat Biotech and Suchitra Ella, Co-Founder and Managing Director of Bharat Biotech, welcomed the Vice President.

V-P Dhankhar was briefed in detail about the manufacturing facility, the intricate processes involved in vaccine production, and the company's initiatives to develop new molecules and

vaccine candidates to fight neglected diseases that affect the developing world, specifically focused on malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, and chikungunya.

The Vice President, who began his tour by planting a medicinal sapling, admired Bharat Biotech's dedication and resilience during unprecedented challenges.

"I am at a place where people are driven with a passion for research, development, and concern for society. Bharat Biotech has not only helped the nation fight the pandemic by developing indigenous vaccines but also contributed immensely in digital penetration," he said and called for greater collaboration between industry, academia and support to back more research

in all sectors. Dr. Krishna Ella thanked the Vice President for recognising Bharat Biotech's dedication and reaffirmed the company's continued commitment to developing novel vaccines, contributing to national self-reliance goals, and shaping a healthier future. The Vice President was also taken on a virtual tour, offering a glimpse into the inner workings of the production facility. From the state-of-the-art equipment to precise quality control measures, the virtual tour provided a fascinating insight into the meticulous process involved in researching and developing each vaccine dose rolled out from the facility, such as the Rotavirus Vaccine, Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine and Hepatitis Vaccine. —IANS



People cover themselves for protection against the scorching sun on a hot summer day, in Kolkata. —PTI

## Healthify Cuts Around 27% Workforce In Restructuring Exercise

**New Delhi:** Homegrown health tech startup Healthify (formerly Healthifyme) has laid off around 27 per cent of its workforce, or about 150 employees, in a restructuring exercise, a media report said on Saturday.

Employees from sales and product teams were impacted the most by the job cuts that happened earlier this week, Inc42 reported, citing sources.

"In the next 3-4 months, our India business will turn EBITDA profitable and this restructuring was an unfortunate but important step in line with achieving this. We also have to make sure we have enough resource allocation for the global expansion," Healthify co-founder and CEO Tushar Vashist was quoted as saying.

In addition, the startup said that it will



provide the affected employees "robust support during this transition, including comprehensive severance packages, extended insurance coverage, and job placement assistance".

According to the report, the impacted workers have been offered two months' salary as severance pay, extended insurance coverage, accelerated stock vesting period in some cases, and leave

cash encashment.

In 2021, the health tech startup cut around 150 jobs from various teams, including SME (subject matter expert), quality analytics, product and marketing.

Founded in 2012, Healthify's health and fitness app uses artificial intelligence (AI) to track diet habits, fitness, and weight, as well as provide coaching services. —IANS

## Nearly 23% Of Canadian Population Reported Food Insecurity In 2022

**Ottawa:** Approximately 8.7 million people, or 22.9 per cent of Canada's population, lived in households that reported some form of food insecurity in 2022, Statistics Canada has said.

This is an increase of just under 1.8 million from the previous year when the rate was 18.4 per cent, the national statistical agency was quoted as saying on Friday by Xinhua news agency.

The proportion of those who were marginally food insecure remained relatively stable, at 6 per cent, while the proportions of those who were moderately and severely food insecure both increased to reach nearly 17 per cent.

According to the agency, people in one-parent families and unattached non-seniors remained at a particularly high risk of food insecurity. People in non-senior couples and couples with children had somewhat lower rates, though all were higher than the rates for people in senior families or unattached seniors.

The food insecurity data were collected from January to June 2023. Food insecurity is inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints, and refers to the 12-month period prior to the interview, the agency said.

Meanwhile, 9.9 per cent of the population, approximately 3.8 million Canadians, lived below the poverty line in 2022, up from 7.4 per cent in 2021, Statistics Canada said. —IANS

## Discussed China's 'Dangerous Actions' In South China Sea: Antony Blinken

Beijing: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said that he discussed China's "dangerous actions" in the South China Sea, including against routine Philippine maintenance operations, and maritime operations near the Second Thomas Shoal, adding that US defence commitments to the Philippines remain "ironclad."

Speaking to reporters in Beijing, he said, "In today's meetings, I discussed the PRC's dangerous actions in the South China Sea, including against routine Philippine maintenance operations, maritime operations near the Second Thomas Shoal."

"Freedom of navigation and commerce in these waterways is not only critical to the Philippines, but to the US and to every other nation in the Indo-Pacific and indeed around the world. That is why so many nations have expressed concern about the PRC maritime maneuvers. I made clear that while the US will continue to work to de-escalate tensions, our defence commitments to the Philippines remain ironclad," he added.

During his meeting with Chinese leaders, Blinken raised concerns about the cases of American citizens, who are wrongfully detained and those who are subject to exit bans. He raised concerns about erosions of Hong Kong's autonomy, democratic institutions and transnational repression, ongoing human rights abuses in Xinjiang and Tibet and individual human rights cases.

Antony Blinken said, "I raised the cases of American citizens who are wrongfully detained and those who are subject to exit bans. President Biden and I will not rest until they are back with their families, where they belong. I also raised concerns about erosions of Hong Kong's autonomy, and democratic institutions as well as transnational repression, ongoing human rights abuses in Xinjiang and Tibet, and a number of individual human rights cases. We spoke about press freedom and access."

"I appreciate that the PRC granted short-term visas to a number of the

foreign journalists who are here so that they could cover this visit. In my meetings, I encourage my PRC counterparts to fulfill the commitment that they made in 2021 to provide equal access to our two countries' media organisations. The United States will continue to insist on reciprocity on this issue just as we do for our businesses, cross-cultural exchanges, and many other areas," he added.



He stated, "We also discussed a range of regional and global crises where China can play a constructive role. I encouraged China to use its influence to discourage Iran and its proxies from expanding the conflict in the Middle East and to press Pyongyang to end his dangerous behaviour and engage in dialogue."

Blinken reiterated serious concerns of the US about China providing components that are powering Russia's war against Ukraine. He noted that China is the top supplier of machine tools, micro-electronics, and nitrocellulose which is critical to making munitions and rocket propellants that Moscow is using to ramp up its defence industrial base.

Blinken said, "Even as we seek to deepen cooperation where our interests align, the United States is very clear-eyed about the challenges posed by the PRC and about our competing visions for the future. America will always defend our core interests and values. In my discussions today, I reiterated our serious concern about the PRC providing components that are powering Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine."

"China is the top supplier of machine tools, microelectronics, nitrocellulose - which is critical to making munitions and rocket propellants, and other dual-use items that Moscow is using to ramp up its defence industrial base, a defence industrial

base that is churning out rockets, drones, tanks, and other weapons that President Putin is using to invade a sovereign country, to demolish its power grid and other civilian infrastructure, to kill innocent children, women, and men. Russia would struggle to sustain its assault on Ukraine without China's support," he added.

Blinken noted that fuelling Russia's defence industrial base threatens Ukrainian as well as European security.

He stated, "In my meetings with NATO Allies earlier this month and with our G7 partners just last week, I heard that same message: fuelling Russia's defence industrial base not only threatens Ukrainian security; it threatens European security."

"Beijing cannot achieve better relations with Europe while supporting the greatest threat to European security since the end of the Cold War. As we've told China for some time, ensuring transatlantic security is a core U.S. interest. In our discussions today, I made clear that if China does not address this problem, we will," he added.

Earlier in the day, Blinken held a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The meeting followed Blinken's over-five-hour-long meeting with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing.

The top US diplomat also met with China's Minister of Security Wang Xiaohong, who serves as the country's police chief.

During the meeting, Blinken and Wang Xiaohong reviewed the implementation of commitments made by the two leaders at the Woodside Summit in November 2023, including progress on bilateral cooperation to combat global illicit drug manufacturing and trafficking.

Blinken stressed the need for continued, sustained, and increased progress on counternarcotics cooperation. He also raised concerns regarding China's human rights abuses both within and beyond the borders.

In a statement, US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said, "Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken met today with PRC State Councillor and Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong. They reviewed implementation of commitments made by the two leaders at the Woodside Summit in November 2023, including progress on bilateral cooperation to combat global illicit drug manufacturing and trafficking."

"The Secretary stressed the need for continued, sustained, and increased progress on counternarcotics cooperation. The Secretary raised a range of concerns regarding PRC human rights issues, both within and beyond the PRC's borders. The two sides reaffirmed the importance of maintaining open channels of communication to responsibly manage competition and to discuss key issues in the relationship," he added. —ANI

sons: China and the United States should be partners rather than rivals; help each other succeed rather than hurt each other; seek common ground and reserve differences rather than engage in vicious competition; and honour words with

## 'China Is Willing To Cooperate, But...': President Xi Tells Secretary Blinken

Beijing: China is willing to cooperate with the United States, but the cooperation should be a "two-way street", Chinese President Xi Jinping told US Secretary of State Antony Blinken during the meeting in Beijing on Friday.



Stating that the multiplicity and complexity of the challenges globally require the US and China to work together, President Xi affirmed that Beijing and Washington should be partners rather than rivals.

"China is willing to cooperate, but cooperation should be a two-way street. China is not afraid of competition, but competition should be about progressing together instead of playing a zero-sum game. China is committed to non-alliance, and the US should not create small blocs. While each side can have its friends and partners, it should not target, oppose or harm the other," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

China welcomes a confident, open, prosperous and thriving US, and hopes the US will also look at China's development in a positive light, it added.

"Over the past 45 years, the relationship has gone through wind and rain, and the two sides can draw a few important lessons: China and the United States should be partners rather than rivals; help each other succeed rather than hurt each other; seek common ground and reserve differences rather than engage in vicious competition; and honour words with

## US To 'Move Immediately' Patriot Missiles To Ukraine In USD 6 Bn Aid Package

Washington DC: United States has announced an additional aid of USD 6 billion to Ukraine, which will enable for procurement of weapons, including critical interceptors Patriot and NASAMS (National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System) air defence systems, the US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said on Saturday.

The additional commitment of USD 6 billion through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) will allow for the procurement of new capabilities for Ukraine from US industry, Austin said.

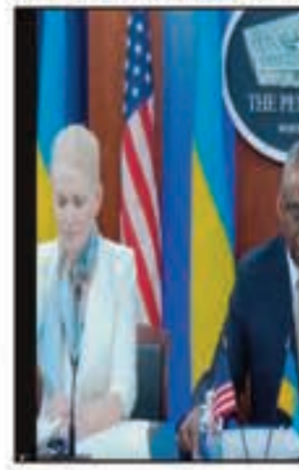
"This is the largest security assistance package that we've committed to date," Austin told a news conference at the Pentagon, adding that the US would "move immediately" to get the supplies to Ukraine.

The USAI aid package also includes counter-drone systems and support equipment; significant amounts of artillery ammunition and air-to-ground munitions; and maintenance and sustainment support. The USD 6 billion is part of a USD 60 billion aid package signed into law by US President Joe Biden on Wednesday, which also includes USD1 billion in more immediate aid, Austin said.

The Department of Defence (DoD) announced that the "historic new security assistance package" will address Ukraine's ongoing battlefield needs and demonstrate unwavering US support for Ukraine.

Austin and Air Force

General Charles Q Brown Jr, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, addressed the press conference following a virtual meeting of the 21st Ukraine Defence



Contact Group which saw the participation of Ukrainian Minister of Defence Umerov and General Syrskiy.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the start of the virtual meeting and sought more air defence systems to be sent to Kyiv to help protest against Russian strikes.

Austin said that he had convened the Ukraine Defence Contact Group for the first time at Ramstein Air Base exactly two years ago. The group comprising some 50 members of allies and partners from around the world, marshals military assistance for Ukraine.

Contact group members have committed more than USD 95 billion in security assistance to Ukraine, the US Defence Secretary said.

"Over the past two years, the members of this Contact Group have committed more than 70 mid-to long range air-defence

systems, along with thousands of missiles. We've provided more than 3,000 armoured vehicles, including more than 800 main battle tanks. We've



given Ukraine tens of thousands of anti-tank missiles. This year, more than a squadron of donated F-16s will start to arrive in Ukraine, along with pilots and maintainers trained by members of this Contact Group," Austin said as per a Pentagon readout of the remarks made by Austin at the opening of the 21st Ukraine Defence Contact Group.

The US Defence Secretary noted Czech Republic's "extraordinary initiative" to procure thousands of artillery shells from third countries for Ukraine. "And the UK has announced its largest single package of equipment ever, worth approximately USD 620 million. Or consider Germany's bold announcement that it will donate another Patriot system to Ukraine," he said. "Ukraine is in dire need of more air-defence systems. And it urgently needs more interceptors. That's going to be a huge

priority for us all today. Ukraine also needs more artillery and armour to defend its citizens and reclaim its stolen territory," Austin said.

Responding to a reporter's query Austin said, "I would point out that it's not just Patriot, that you know, they need. They need other types of systems and interceptors, as well. And so I would caution us all in terms of making Patriot the silver bullet. I would say that it's going to be the integrated air and missile defence, as we've said so many times before, that really turns the tide. And so there are other capabilities that they need that -- that we really pushed hard to get, and we may be able to the Ukrainians a bit faster."

## Brazil: At Least 10 Killed In Fire At Homeless Shelter In Porto Alegre



Brasilia (Brazil): At least 10 people were killed in a fire that broke out at a defunct hotel being used as a makeshift homeless shelter in Porto Alegre city of Brazil, Al Jazeera reported, citing officials.

Emergency workers on Friday confirmed 10 victims at the Garoa Floresta, which was functioning without proper authorisation, Al Jazeera reported, citing the fire department for Rio Grande do Sul state.

According to officials, the fire erupted at around 2 am (local time). It took firefighters around three hours to contain the fire.

In the statement, the fire department said, "Forensic experts are at the scene to identify the victims and investigate the cause of the fire."

In a statement posted on X, Porto Alegre Mayor Sebastiao Melo stated that multiple injured people were rescued and rushed to the hospital. However, he did not reveal the number of people who were taken to the hospital. Local media reports claimed that 11 people were injured due to the fire incident, some in serious condition.

Images shared by Brazilian media outlets showed the building engulfed in flames as firefighters tried to control the fire.

Speaking to local newspaper Zero Hora, Marcelo Wagner Schelech said, "I only had time to put on my flip-flops and run. My sister, who lived on the third floor, ended up being burned to death," Al Jazeera reported.

Rio Grande do Sul Governor Eduardo Leite has committed to carry out an investigation into the incident. In a post on X, Eduardo Leite stated, "The fire department dispatched five trucks and dozens of firefighters to fight the flames." "We will continue working on the aftermath of this tragedy and the investigation of the causes. My condolences to the victims' families," he added.

Brazilian lawmaker Matheus Gomes accused the city government of funding the homeless shelter despite the shelter facing reports of non-compliance with rules "for years".

Taking to X, Gomes stated, "There needs to be an investigation not only into the fire, but the entire chronicle of this tragedy foretold." The building is part of the Garoa group, which has at least 10 small hotels in Porto Alegre. —ANI

## Federal Government Proposed To Impose Tax On Solar Panel Users

Islamabad: The federal government is considering a proposal put forth by the Central Power Purchasing

Shehbaz Sharif for final authorization.

Following the prime minister's endorsement,



Agency to levy tax on individuals using solar panels for residential or commercial purposes, ARY News reported.

According to the sources, the CPPA has proposed a tax of Pakistani currency (PKR) 2,000 per kilowatt on residential and commercial consumers installing 12 kilowatts or more.

According to ARY News, the CPPA's proposal initially sent to the Ministry of Energy (Power Division) for approval, has now been forwarded to Prime Minister

shift fans installed in the prisoner barracks to solar technology. Zardari said the work to shift Karachi Central Jail, Women's Jail and Landhi Jail on solar power has already been initiated, while in the second phase jails of Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Badin, Sanghar, Khairpur, Ghotki, Jacobabad, Sukkur will be shifted to the solar technology.

Meanwhile, the government employees of major institutions staged protests at Karachi Port on Friday.

The strike caused a backlog in import and export traffic since containers were left at the port, with no clearance in place, according to ARY News.

As per details, the strike was conducted by Pakistan Standard and Quality Control officers and employees at the Karachi Port.

The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) former vice president claimed that the employees started the walkout because bonuses and incentives were being withheld. —ANI

consumers opting for 12-kilowatt solar panels will incur a tax of PKR 24,000. Simultaneously, the federal government is assessing the pricing of solar panels, and considering suggestions to lower their costs, as per ARY News. Earlier, on Friday, Sindh Minister for Jails Ali Hasan Zardari announced plans to transition prisons across the province to solar energy.

As per the details, 200 to 600KV solar kits would be installed in the jails across the province to

# Hayden Labels Bairstow's Unbeaten 108 As 'One Of The Great Innings' Of T20 History

**Kolkata:** Former Australia cricketer Matthew Hayden heaped praise on Punjab Kings' extraordinary batting and called it a 'perfect chase' after the Kings set the record of highest successful chase against Kolkata Knight Riders at Eden Gardens.

After openers Phil Salt and Sunil Narine slammed rollicking half-centuries while sharing an opening partnership of 138 runs in 10.2 overs to propel KKR to a mammoth 261/6, Prabhsimran Singh laid the foundation with a quick fifty, before Bairstow and Shashank dished out sensational knocks as PBKS now own the record for highest successful chase in T20 history. "Yeah, it had to be the perfect run chase and it was," said Hayden on Star Sports Cricket Live. "I mean inside that power play they were extraordinary. They absolutely roasted anyone that came across them apart from Narine. It was a beacon of hope for just cutting short this enormous run chase."

"But reality is these batters are getting so good at hitting balls. It is a batting thon this IPL. And we are seeing some



extraordinary scenes, tonight who would have lineup after a stint on the sidelines, took center Bengaluru and SRH in Bengaluru last week.

"One of the great things that Jonny Bairstow said there is that 'it was an important way that we had to start.' I mean we were working out before that his first game in T20 cricket was back in 2010. And he also had mentioned as well that the calmness at the crease. To be calm when you know you've got to break a record. In the history of IPL cricket, to win and still to have that presence. They're almost like forces batters into an absolute no-loss situation. They just go out with clarity. With definition. And they just have to do it." "That calmness is such a unique element under pressure. And we've seen that delivered a few times, haven't we, this IPL. So we're seeing something very special here. And we have all these great conversations in the green room here as we're waiting. And our four bowlers, they've got the brunt of why it is under pressure they're not executing this IPL like we've seen," he added.—IANS

ever thought that we were going to witness something as grand as what we saw here. From Jonny Bairstow who hasn't been at this tournament of any kind of note this IPL, and he has arrived with a terrific hundred."

Riding on the back of Jonny Bairstow's unbeaten 108 and Shashank Singh's unbeaten 68, Kings chased down the biggest total of T20 history on Friday. The stage was set at the iconic Eden Gardens, where Punjab Kings embarked on an audacious chase of 262 runs. Jonny Bairstow, returning to the Kings'

stage with a breathtaking display batting as he bludgeoned an unbeaten 108 off just 48 deliveries.

Shashank Singh thrust into the spotlight at No. 4, embraced the challenge with gusto, smashing an unbeaten 68 off 28 balls to cement his status as one of the season's standout performers.

Friday's fixture also produced the most sixes (42) in a T20 match. It surpassed the 38 hits by Sunrisers Hyderabad and Mumbai Indians in Hyderabad last month and by Royal Challengers

# Alejandra Rodriguez Makes History As The First 60-Year-Old Miss Universe Buenos Aires

**Washington:** Alejandra Rodriguez, a 60-year-old lawyer and journalist hailing from La Plata, Argentina, has etched her name in history by clinching the coveted title of Miss Universe Buenos Aires.

This remarkable feat marks a paradigm shift in the realm of beauty pageants, as Rodriguez becomes the first contestant of her age bracket to secure the esteemed crown, reported People magazine.

Defying conventional beauty norms, Rodriguez emerged triumphant among 34 competitors spanning a wide age range from 18 to 73.

Her victory not only symbolizes personal accomplishment but also embodies a broader message of inclusivity and diversity within the beauty pageant circuit.

"I am thrilled to be representing this new paradigm in beauty pageants because we are inaugurating a new stage in which women are not only physical beauty but another set of values," Rodriguez said, according to a statement obtained by



People magazine. Her win underscores further accolades.

Should she emerge victorious, she will advance to compete for the illustrious Miss Universe title slated for September, marking a significant milestone in her journey.

Rodriguez's ascent to prominence coincides with a pivotal decision by

the Miss Universe Organization in September 2023 to eliminate age restrictions for contestants.

This progressive move has opened doors for women of all ages to participate, ushering in a new era of inclusivity and representation within the pageant community.

Undeterred by age constraints, Rodriguez remains steadfast in her determination to vie for the crown of Miss Universe Argentina 2024.

Reflecting on her journey, she remarked, "I think the judges saw my confidence and my passion to represent the women of my generation."

In tandem with Rodriguez's groundbreaking achievement, other women are also making waves in the pageant arena, transcending age barriers to vie for coveted titles.

Haidy Cruz, aged 47, is set to represent the Dominican Republic in the upcoming 2024 pageant, slated to take place in Mexico City later this year, People magazine reported.—ANI

# Boxing: Aryan, Jitesh Give India A Winning Start In ASBC Asian U-22 & Youth Championships

**Astana:** Youth boxers Aryan (51kg) and Jitesh (54kg) started India's challenge on a winning note on the opening day of the ASBC Asian U22 & Youth Boxing Championships 2024 here on Saturday.

Both Aryan and Jitesh put up dominating performances throughout their bouts to clinch identical 5-0 victories against Jo Hyeon Woo of South Korea and Chen Yu Chen of Chinese Taipei, respectively.

Other Indian pugilists Jatin (57 kg), Sagar Jakkhar (60 kg) and Yashwardhan Singh (63.5 kg) will be in action in the youth category later on Saturday. However, Jadumani Singh M. (51 kg), Akash Gorkha (60 kg), Ajay Kumar (63.5 kg) and Ankush (71 kg) will begin India's campaign in the U-22 category on Sunday.

The Asian Games bronze medalist Preeti (54 kg), who has already qualified for the Paris Olympics, will kickstart her challenge on Tuesday against Uzbekistan's Uktamova Nigina in the women's U-22 category.

The Boxing Federation of India has fielded a 50-member Indian squad for the ongoing prestigious tournament, which has been witnessing high-voltage action with the presence of 390-plus boxers from more than 24 countries, fighting for the medals across 25 weight categories. The finals for the youth and U-22 categories will be played on May 6 and 7 respectively.—IANS

# Delhi Capital's Fraser McGurk Continues Scorching Run, Creates IPL Batting Records

**New Delhi:** Australia and Delhi Capitals (DC) T20 giants Sunil Narine and Andre Russell to have top spot here too as 84 of his 87 runs during his iconic knock against Punjab back in 2014, came through fours and sixes, which makes it 96.55 runs via fours and sixes.

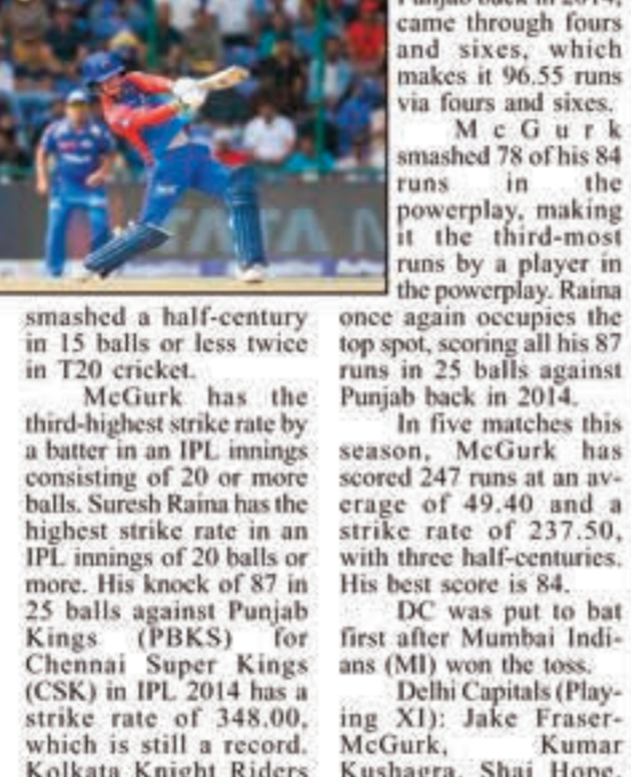
McGurk smashed 78 of his 84 runs in the powerplay, making it the third-most runs by a player in the powerplay. Raina once again occupies the top spot, scoring all his 87 runs in 25 balls against Punjab back in 2014.

In five matches this season, McGurk has scored 247 runs at an average of 49.40 and a strike rate of 237.50, with three half-centuries. His best score is 84.

DC was put to bat first after Mumbai Indians (MI) won the toss.

Delhi Capitals (Playing XI): Jake Fraser-McGurk, Kumar Kushagra, Shai Hope, Rishabh Pant(w/c), Tristan Stubbs, Abhishek Porel, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Lizaad Williams, Mukesh Kumar, Khaleel Ahmed

Mumbai Indians (Playing XI): Rohit Sharma, Ishan Kishan(w), Tilak Varma, Nehal Wadhwa, Hardik Pandya(c), Tim David, Mohammad Nabi, Piyush Chawla, Luke Wood, Jasprit Bumrah, Nuwan Thushara.—ANI



smashed a half-century in 15 balls or less twice in T20 cricket.

McGurk has the third-highest strike rate by a batter in an IPL innings consisting of 20 or more balls. Suresh Raina has the highest strike rate in an IPL innings of 20 balls or more. His knock of 87 in 25 balls against Punjab Kings (PBKS) for Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in IPL 2014 has a strike rate of 348.00, which is still a record.

Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) batter Yusuf Pathan scored 72 in 22 balls against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in IPL 2014, with a strike rate of 327.27. Eighty of 84 runs scored by McGurk came through fours and sixes, which means 95.23 percent of his runs came through boundaries, making it the fourth-highest percentage of runs through boundaries in an IPL innings (50 or more runs). Raina occupies the

# Emma Stone Wants To Drop Her Stage Name, Here's Why

**Washington:** In a recent revelation, Oscar-winning star Emma Stone has expressed her desire to revert to her birth name, Emily.

Best known for her captivating performances in films like 'La La Land' and 'The Help,' Stone, whose real name is Emily Jean Stone, shared her longing to embrace her original identity once again, E! News reported.

The catalyst behind this aspiration lies in Stone's past encounter with the Screen Actors Guild (SAG), where she was compelled to adopt the moniker 'Emma Stone' due to another actor already registered as 'Emily Stone.' Reflecting on this bureaucratic necessity, Stone conveyed her fondness for the simplicity of being called Emily, stating, "That would be so nice. I would like to be Emily."

Despite her widely recognized stage name, there are already circles in Hollywood where Stone is referred to as Emily, particularly among those she has formed personal connections with. Recalling a moment of revelation a couple of years ago, the 'Cruella' actor disclosed her inclination to reclaim her authentic name, citing instances where colleagues have honoured her preference. Notably, Stone recently received



credit under her full birth name, Emily Jean Stone, for her contribution to a reported. Despite the playful association with her childhood idol, Stone emphasized that her decision to adopt the name Emma was not solely inspired by her admiration for Baby Spice.

Nevertheless, the convergence of childhood whims and practical considerations ultimately led to the emergence of Emma Stone as a household name in the entertainment industry.—ANI

# Anne Hathaway Provides Update On Development Of 'The Princess Diaries 3'

**Washington:** Anne Hathaway recently shared updates on the progress of 'The Princess Diaries 3', indicating that while developments are underway, there is still nothing concrete to announce.

In the interview obtained by Variety, Hathaway expressed optimism about the project, stating, "We're in a good place. That's all I can say. There's nothing to announce yet. But we're in a good place." This statement comes as a reassurance to fans eagerly awaiting news about the long-anticipated sequel to the beloved franchise.

While Hathaway's return as Mia Thermopolis seems imminent, she also



sceptical about its feasibility in today's digital age, emphasizing the significant changes in technology since the original film's release.

Regarding 'The Princess Diaries 3,' Hathaway's enthusiasm is palpable, but the absence of Julie Andrews, who portrayed the queen in the series, poses a challenge. Andrews previously expressed doubts about returning to the franchise due to the passage of time and the logistical difficulties of aligning schedules, as per Variety. Despite this, Hathaway remains hopeful about involving Andrews in some capacity, suggesting innovative solutions like utilizing green screens to accommodate the legendary actress. Disney's confirmation of the sequel's development came in November 2022, with Aadrta Mukerji attached as the screenwriter.

The original films, directed by the late Garry Marshall and based on Meg Cabot's novels, were commercial successes, garnering widespread acclaim and solidifying Hathaway's status as a leading female actor. As fans eagerly await further updates, Hathaway's interview offers a glimpse into the ongoing efforts to bring 'The Princess Diaries 3' to fruition.—ANI

# All To Play For In Bhopal As Olympic Selection Trials 1&2 Conclude

**New Delhi:** The first-ever Olympic Selection Trials (OST) 1&2 in Rifle/Pistol concluded at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting range here with the final day throwing up four new winners in the air events. Arjun Singh Cheema won the first final (men's 10M Air Pistol OST T2) of the day, followed by Esha Singh (women's 10M Air Pistol OST T2), Divyansh Singh Panwar (men's 10M Air Rifle OST T2) and finally Elavenil Valarivan, who won the women's 10M Air Rifle OST T2 final in a cliff-hanger.

None of the 37 shooters who have qualified for the OSTs are yet sure of their Paris Olympic tickets and the final two trials in Bhopal next month, are sure to be exciting, with all to play for.



Air Pistol OST T2 Finals Arjun Singh Cheema won the men's 10M Air Pistol OST T2 final with a score of 244.6. Ravinder continued his good showing in the trials, coming in second with 242.4, while Varun Tomar was third. Qualification topper Sarabjot Singh was fourth while Naveen was the lowest-ranked finalist. In the women's Air Pistol, Esha Singh extended an excellent trial run overall, winning the OST T2 final in convincing fashion. She was a whole point ahead

of second-finishing Rhythm Sangwan, after the first series of five-single shots.

She kept getting stronger as the match progressed to finish with a final tally of 244.9, 3.1 ahead of Rhythm. Palak came in third to pick up the final podium points as Surbhi Rao and Manu Bhaker were fourth and fifth respectively.

Air Rifle OST T2 Finals The men's 10M Air Rifle final was a gripping contest where fortunes initially swung wildly, and the lead changed with almost every shot at one stage. But Divyansh it was in the end who clinched it from Sri Karthik Sabari Raj with an effort of 251.9. T1 winner Arjun Babuta was third, while Sandeep

Singh and Rudranksh Patil took fourth and fifth respectively.

The most thrilling match of the day, however, was saved for the end, where five of India's best women's air rifle shooters went hammer and tongs against each other in the 24-shot match-up.

Things were so close that after the first two five-shot series, there was a difference of 0.4 between the fifth-ranked shooter and the leader. The trend continued and heading into the 18th shot, the first elimination stage of these finals, only 0.7 separated the leader from the fifth-ranked shooter.

Olympian Elavenil then used all her experience and some fantastic shots to pull through. Ramita warded off Tilottama Sen in a shoot-off to come in second, just 0.5 afloat of Ela's winning score of 251.5.—IANS

# Jyohti Vennam Wins Individual Title, Becomes Second Indian To Win Treble In A WC Stage

**Shanghai:** Jyohti Surekha Vennam won the gold medal in the women's individual compound category after beating Andrea Becerra 146(9\*)-146(9) of Mexico to win her third gold at World Archery on Saturday.

She became only the second Indian archer after Deepika Kumari (S3, 2021) to win three gold medals at a single World Cup Stage. Previously she had won gold medals in compound mixed and women's compound team. She also became the third compound female archer after Sara Lopez (S2, 2016) & Sarah Sonnichsen (S2, 2017) to win treble (three medals in a single season). Jyohti also booked her ticket to the Archery World Cup Final in Tlaxcala.—IANS