









यायावरी भोजपुरी महोत्सव में सिर चढ़कर बोली वेब सीरीज 'पंचायत' के कलाकार अशोक पाठक की लोकप्रियता

# चुनौटिया भुलाता बहुत है ना भैया... पर बर्जी तालियां



**GORAKHPUR:**  
गोरखपुर के गोकुल अतिथि भवन में आयोजित यायावरी भोजपुरी महोत्सव का छठा सत्र बेहद खास रहा। इस दौरान 'पंचायत' वेब सीरीज फेम अशोक पाठक मुख्य आकर्षण के केंद्र रहे। कार्यक्रम के दौरान अंतिम सत्र को संबोधित करते हुए उन्होंने लोगों की मांग पर पंचायत के अलग-अलग वेब सीरीज में अपने चर्चित डायलॉग लोगों को सुनाए। पंचायत वेब सीरीज के दौरान सर्वाधिक वायरल हुआ उनका डायलॉग 'चुनौटिया भुलाता बहुत है ना भैया...' पर दर्शकों ने खूब तालियां बजाईं। इसके अलावा पंचायत-3 में सचिवालय का ताला खोलने के लिए सचिव को हथौड़ी देने से संबंधित उनके डायलॉग ने भी जमकर तालियां बटोरीं।

**साझा की अपनी जीवन यात्रा की यादें**  
कार्यक्रम के दौरान पूछे गए सवाल के जवाब में अशोक पाठक ने बताया कि उनका बिहार और हरियाणा से एक समान लगाव है। दोनों ही राज्यों का उन पर समान अधिकार है। उन्होंने अपने करियर के बारे में बताते हुए पंजाबी फिल्मों में किए गए अभिनय के बारे में विस्तार से प्रकाश डाला। इसके अलावा अपने पठान पाठक की यात्रा के बारे में भी बताया।

**हिंदी उच्चारण के कारण नहीं मिली थी नौकरी**  
घर-घर ओटीटी चैनलों के जरिए लोगों के दिलों में अलग जगह बनाने वाले अशोक पाठक का जीवन काफी संघर्षमय रहा है। बातचीत के दौरान उन्होंने इससे संबंधित कई बातें काफी सहज तरीके से साझा कीं। यह भी जिक्र किया कि कैसे उन्हें अपने करियर की पहली नौकरी के साक्षात्कार में हिंदी का शुद्ध उच्चारण न कर पाने के कारण छोट दिया गया था। उन्होंने कहा कि वह पढ़ाई में कभी बहुत बेहतर नहीं थे।

**दादाजी बजाते थे ढोलक, खुद बनना चाहता था गायक**  
अपने पारिवारिक पृष्ठभूमि के बारे में पूछे गए सवाल का जवाब देते हुए अशोक पाठक ने बताया कि उनके दादाजी बहुत अच्छा ढोलक बजाते

थे। वह (अशोक पाठक) गायकी के क्षेत्र में अपना करियर बनाना चाहते थे। लेकिन आगे चलकर उन्हें पता चला कि उनकी आवाज उतनी अच्छी नहीं है। इसके बाद उन्होंने अभिनय के क्षेत्र में कदम रखा।

**मनोज बाजपेई और पंकज त्रिपाठी के बारे में यह कहा**  
फिल्मी दुनिया में भोजपुरी से लेकर हिंदी फिल्मों और तमाम वेब सीरीज में बिहार के कलाकार अपनी अभिनय कला का लोहा मनवा रहे हैं। अशोक पाठक ने अपने सत्र के दौरान बातचीत में मनोज बाजपेई और पंकज त्रिपाठी की जमकर तारीफ की। अलग-अलग फिल्मों में दोनों अभिनेताओं के अभिनय को उन्होंने आदर्श बताया।

**बॉलीवुड को समर्पित रहा छठा सत्र**  
यायावरी भोजपुरी महोत्सव 2024 के छठे सत्र का विषय 'भोजपुरिया खाद से फलत-फुलात बॉलीवुड' रहा। इसमें डॉ. एम के पांडेय ने 'पंचायत' फेम अशोक पाठक से बातचीत की। इस दौरान फिल्म इंडस्ट्री में भोजपुरी अभिनेताओं और कलाकारों की उपस्थिति को लेकर विस्तार से चर्चा की गई।

**भोजपुरी के पहले साइंस फिक्शन का प्रदर्शन**  
इस महोत्सव में यह बात भी उभरकर आई कि भोजपुरी फिल्म इंडस्ट्री केवल नाच-गाने और धूम-धड़ाम तक सीमित नहीं है। अब इस भाषा में तकनीक का प्रयोग कर फिल्में बन रही हैं जो रियलिटी के करीब लगती हैं। इस महोत्सव के सातवें सत्र में भोजपुरी की पहली साइंस फिक्शन फिल्म द्दामद्विहू का प्रदर्शन किया गया। इस फिल्म को खूब सराहा गया।

**सांस्कृतिक पारंपरिक कार्यक्रमों के नाम रहा अंतिम सत्र**  
महोत्सव का अंतिम सत्र सांस्कृतिक संध्या को समर्पित रहा। इस दौरान मंच पर भोजपुरी की पारंपरिक कला के दर्शन हुए। इसमें राकेश कुमार का लौंडा डांस, सिसोदिया सिस्टर्स, शालिनी दुबे, आदित्य राजन और अनन्या सिंह का गायन आकर्षण के केंद्र रहे। महोत्सव के आयोजन समन्वयक गौरव मणि त्रिपाठी ने बताया कि महोत्सव में आए लोगों ने हमें खूब स्नेह एवं प्रेम दिया।





## Keep your friends close, enemies closer

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi has staked claim to becoming Prime Minister again, his third consecutive term, equalling Jawaharlal Nehru's record; allies Chandrababu Naidu, Nitish Kumar, Eknath Shinde and Chirag Paswan have welcomed him warmly on behalf of a renewed NDA coalition; and in Punjab as well as Jammu & Kashmir, Sarabjeet Singh Khalsa, Amritpal Singh and Engineer Rashid 'Langate' have won their seats — the last two are still imprisoned under the NSA and UAPA, respectively. All three very different messages from this election potpourri can only be underlined by a fourth, a post-poll rumour — Sonia Gandhi, it seems, has spoken to both Naidu and Nitish about potential support; speculation is rife in New Delhi that INDIA may be willing to offer the top job to either in case they are willing to switch coalitions.

That is unlikely to happen because INDIA simply doesn't have the numbers. Modi is surely on his way to becoming PM again. But if the press knows that Sonia is reaching out to the same men who are gifting Modi expensive silk Kanjeevaram shawls within hours of them speaking to her, the intelligence agencies — and therefore, Modi and Amit Shah — know too. The knowledge will keep them alert. Keep your friends close, for sure, but keep your enemies closer — both Chanakya and Machiavelli will be needed in large doses as the thrice-anointed PM negotiates the coming months in power.

Naidu, especially, will hope to moderate Modi's penchant for polarising rhetoric — the question is whether he and his Stanford-educated son, Nara Lokesh (whose statement "there's no place for arrogance in the government" has been like a pleasing monsoon shower for many across the land) will be able to withstand the enormous power wielded by Modi and Shah. The Naidus & Others may soon find that the exercise of power cuts both ways: They have already been told that they cannot have one of the four top jobs — in defence, external affairs, finance and home ministries — or even the post of Speaker in Parliament. They may find themselves with no choice but to acquiesce if they want the Centre to release a generous financial package for their beloved Andhra Pradesh, or Bihar, as the case may be for Nitish. Nor are the Prime Minister and his men — there are unlikely to be many women in the Cabinet, what with both Nirmala Sitharaman and Smriti Irani gone — likely to relinquish their control over the media, notwithstanding Sudhir Chaudhary's latest finding on Aaj Tak that a large section of India's Hindus didn't particularly care for Hindutva, which is why the BJP lost so many seats in this election. The question is: Will Modi and Naidu quietly agree to carve out their respective spheres of influence — Andhra Pradesh for Naidu and the rest of the (non-BJP-ruled) country for Modi — or will Naidu allow his views on sensitive matters, like religious equality before the Constitution as manifested in the Places of Worship Act of 1991, to inform his pact with the PM? We saw how in recent months, the UP administration swiftly allowed the installation of idols in the Gyanvapi mosque and how the high court quickly fell in line. Will Naidu shut his eyes and turn his gaze away when this matter comes up again and the tension, thick and palpable, returns to the PM's constituency? Guess we will know soon enough. If Naidu believes his priority is to groom his son to take over the state, he may not have much time for twinges of conscience on national issues — in fact, the PM may be happy if the TDP leader is consumed with his self-styled Republic of Andhra Pradesh and doesn't retain much of an attention span for leftover matters the BJP promised to bring to fruition in its manifesto, such as the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code across the country. It is this potential see-saw for influence at the heart of the NDA coalition that could characterise the coming months and years. Naturally, an emboldened Opposition will attempt to accentuate this tension — equally, the government may be fully prepared for Parliament sessions to be washed out to allow the Opposition to exhaust itself in the sound and fury of debate, discussion and sound bites, while it exercises power outside.

## Election results show the political class has let Punjab down

The SAD's decline is bad news for the state, as it creates a vacuum, allowing for the rise of hitherto dormant radical, secessionist forces.

THE 2024 parliamentary elections in Punjab were exceptional in many respects. The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the BJP went solo in all 13 seats in the state, necessitated by their break-up in 2020. It was an election to test whether the state would finally respond to the 'national constituency' phenomenon sought to be created by the saffron party across the states in the past decade. It was based on issues like cultural nationalism, national security, the exalted place of the country in the world order, India being the fifth-largest economy, welfare guarantees and Modi's leadership. This was yet another opportunity for the SAD — the oldest regional party in India and one that has always claimed to represent the Sikh community's political interests — to check the steep slide in its electoral fortunes. And if the slide were to continue, what would be the implications for the Sikh-majority state? At a time when there has been a large-scale ideological shift to right-wing conservatism, visible in the surge of cultural nationalism in north, central and western India, would Punjab remain immune to it, despite having a sizeable Hindu population? Was there an unmistakable sign of the revival of radicalism in the Sikh community, already indicated by the unexpected win of Simranjit Singh Mann in the 2022 Sangrur bypoll and the Amritpal Singh episode? The election was also seen as a mid-term assessment of the performance of the AAP government, which has a brute majority of 92 in the 117-member House. The poll was yet another test of the farmers' power in state politics. The question was whether the agrarian distress was going to be an issue that would have a significant electoral impact, especially for the BJP and the Akali Dal. Going by the verdict, it is obvious that Punjab's 'exceptionalism' continues in many ways. For one, local issues and candidates continued to determine the electoral choices in the state, even though it was a General Election. The Modi factor did not work in Punjab. BJP candidates and state leaders — many among them turncoats — continued to face protests by farmers — a repeat of the 2022 Assembly elections.

Though the party polled an impressive 18.56 per cent of the vote share, it could not win even a single seat. This time, the BJP was the runner-up in Gurdaspur, Ludhiana and Jalandhar, which all have a significant Hindu presence.

As far as the AAP government's dismal performance is concerned, it was evident that the party banked upon its populist schemes to mobilise voters and not on the basis of its record of the fulfilment of its promises of eradicating drugs, corruption and all kinds of mafias, from sand to liquor. It did not help that the party has been making these promises since it made its debut in the 2014 elections, when it won four seats in Punjab. It also hardly helped the party that some of its top leaders have been in jail or are facing trials/criminal charges. The fact that AAP contested 22 seats in India but could only win three



(all in Punjab) is little solace for the party.

The Congress managed to win seven seats with a 26.3 per cent vote share, slightly higher than AAP's 26.02 per cent. It obviously benefited from the plurality voting system. The party's decision to not have an alliance with AAP despite being part of the INDIA coalition did help it, as it got the anti-incumbency votes cast against the AAP government. Rahul Gandhi's frequent visits to the Golden Temple and his nationwide appeal against majoritarianism helped endear the Congress to the Sikh masses. The steady decline of the Akali Dal, the Panthic party that shaped the politics of the state, continued as it managed to get only 13.42 per cent vote share, down from 27.76 per cent in the 2019 election. The lone win from the Badal family seat of Bathinda is not going to erase the question mark about Sukhbir Badal's leadership. Once a cadre-based ideologically oriented party, the SAD's decline is bad news for the state, as it creates a vacuum, allowing for the rise of hitherto dormant radical, secessionist forces.

The victories of Amritpal Singh and Sarabjeet Singh Khalsa, the independent candidates from the Khadoor Sahib and Faridkot constituencies, respectively, with impressive margins, are a worrying development. Both

have been identified with separatism. Their wins are a grim reminder of a segment of the Sikh electorate still harbouring the wounded psyche, a result of decades-old unfulfilled demands and the unfortunate events that occurred in the dark days of militancy. Also, their wins can be attributed to the growing alienation of people — especially the youth, who have been rendered unemployable because of the dismal state of the education sector — from traditional parties.

The exodus of industries and the agrarian crisis mean very few job opportunities for the youth, and hence the large-scale migration of human capital is happening, emptying the villages. There is also growing demographic anxiety as the exodus of the youth coincides with an influx of the Hindu migrant working class. People in the state are consumed by the fear of ruination of its agriculture-based economy, as the Green Revolution had run its course long ago. The landed peasantry, once dubbed 'rich farmers', are now at the receiving end, as successive governments at the Centre — under the spell of the corporate sector — have focused on the service and manufacturing sectors. Here again, industries have been migrating to neighbouring states. The political class has let Punjab down.

## Child food poverty

Despite strides, nutritional inequity worrisome

A recent Unicef report highlights a grim reality: over 180 million children under five globally live in severe food poverty, an alarming crisis that affects one out of four kids in this age group. This stark statistic underscores the urgent need for concerted efforts to address malnutrition and ensure the wellbeing of future generations. Even as India marches towards rivalling the top economies of the world, the report is a sobering reminder that the country figures among the 20 that account for 65 per cent of the children living in severe food poverty. Unicef's guidelines emphasise the need for children to consume a diverse diet from at least five out of eight food groups daily. Yet, millions of children worldwide, including 64 million in South Asia, fail to meet this standard, leading to severe nutritional deficiencies and long-term developmental impacts. However, amidst this dismal scenario, there is a beacon of hope in India as the country has reduced the gap in severe child food poverty between poorer and wealthier households over the past decade by at least



five percentage points, highlighting strides made towards nutritional equity. This progress is a testament to the

impact of targeted government policies, community-driven initiatives and partnerships aimed at improving access to nutritious food for the most vulnerable children. But India cannot be complacent; a lot remains to be done.

The global food system, criticised for promoting cheap, high-calorie and nutrient-poor foods, exacerbates the crisis. To combat this, governments and international partners must prioritise the reduction of child food poverty, ensuring that nutritious and diverse foods are accessible and affordable. Health systems should deliver essential nutrition services and social protection systems must be responsive to the dietary needs of vulnerable families. Investments in sustainable solutions are vital to ensure that every child, regardless of his or her socio-economic background, has the opportunity to thrive.

## Govt must be proactive in tackling security challenges

Though the Modi government has laid emphasis on indigenisation of military hardware, much needs to be done to achieve atmanirbharta.

A new government is set to take charge under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi, who is beginning his third term as the Prime Minister. Thus, continuity and consistency in major governmental policies can be expected. However, with a coalition at the helm, some transformational decisions may take a back seat. Much serious work awaits the government. Apart from the criticalities that need to be speedily addressed, the emerging security challenges across various domains will also have to be confronted.

That India faces two adversarial nuclear-armed neighbours, China and Pakistan, working both independently and collusively, has to be factored in. India's strategic challenges extend in the west from the Strait of Hormuz, running southwards along the eastern coast of Africa to the Malacca Strait in the east, also spanning the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. The Indo-Pacific region, increasingly becoming an area of strategic contestation between the US and China, also impacts India as it is one of the major players in this realm. India has land borders exceeding 15,000 sq km, which it shares with seven nations. India also has a 7,683-km coastline and an exclusive economic zone of over 2 million sq km. Internal security challenges do emerge once in a while in J&K and some of our restive northeastern states, while a fading Naxal/Maoist insurgency still persists. China's continuing belligerence towards India and its unending 'salami-slicing' tactics in the border regions are of major security concern for us. Thus, overall, India has to ensure its territorial and economic sovereignty. Since Independence, India has witnessed major conflicts in 1947-48, 1962, 1965, 1971 and the Kargil War in 1999, apart from battling many internal security upheavals, including insurgency in the North-East and, countering terrorism emanating from Pakistan. Despite all these kinetic conflagrations, India has not yet promulgated a National Security Doctrine (NSD). Since the past many years, national security has



moved far beyond military activities, prosecution of war or managing internal security problems. Today, national security embraces non-military dimensions, including terrorism, economic security, energy security, food security, environmental security and cybersecurity. National security responsibilities span more than the charter of the Ministry of Defence, calling for a "whole-of-government approach". Most powerful nations of the world have enunciated their NSD, which lays down their priorities in a variety of fields. Though the major strategic mission objectives will be military-oriented, the NSD will comprehensively lay down prioritisation in various fields of governance and protection of national interests, apart from synergising the nation's geopolitical, military, diplomatic, financial and technological strengths. Accordingly, the new

government must lay emphasis on the formulation of the NSD with alacrity. Another important defence reform which the newly elected government should bring to fruition is the long-awaited integrated theatre commands (ITCs) edifice for synergising the operational capabilities of the three Services. Notwithstanding the differences over its implementation by the Services, a way has to be found to get "more bang for the buck". The government should institute a committee of serving officers, renowned veterans and civilian experts to suggest the composition, charter and geographical responsibilities of the ITCs. As is universally known, India holds the dubious record of being the world's largest importer of arms, ammunition and military platforms. Though the Modi government has laid emphasis on indigenisation of military hardware, much

still requires to be done to achieve atmanirbharta (self-reliance in production of military equipment). The government must give a major fillip to manufacturing as per our defence requirements, synergising the work of the Defence Research and Development Organisation, public sector ordnance factories and the technologically adept private sector. Foreign manufacturers of repute should also be encouraged to shift some of their production units to India — genuine public-private sector cooperation will be of great assistance to meet Indian defence's burgeoning needs. The Navy's requirements to ensure the security and independence of our sea lanes need to be met by adequate capital budget funds. Work must commence on the demand for a third aircraft carrier and additional submarine capability. Simultaneously, the strategic Andaman and Nicobar Command must be strengthened to safeguard India's interests in the Indian Ocean and keep China's misplaced maritime ambitions in check. One area where the government will have to arrange funds is for the Indian Air Force's long-pending requirement of 114 fighters as its present holdings are precariously down to unacceptable levels. Importantly, the government must oversee the three Services collectively, analysing the lessons from the ongoing Russian-Ukraine war and the Israeli-Hamas conflict. These conflicts have put to rest many traditional concepts which were being practised by many armed forces across the world. Besides the nuances of artificial intelligence and information warfare, the employment of drones, air defence systems, missiles, tanks and infantry combat vehicles need to be looked at afresh. The government should remember that it takes time to improve defence capabilities, and procrastination in defence matters will only be at the nation's peril. The need to strengthen all the constituents of Comprehensive National Power should be the guiding principles in our march forward to deservingly take a seat at the global high table.

## Massive Cost Overrun: 448 Infra Projects Exceed Budget By Rs 5.55 Lakh Cr In April

**NEW DELHI.** As many as 448 infrastructure projects, each entailing an investment of Rs 150 crore or above, were hit by a cost overrun of more than Rs 5.55 lakh crore in April 2024, according to an official report. According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), which monitors infrastructure projects worth Rs 150 crore and above, out of 1,838 projects, 448 reported cost overruns and 792 projects were delayed. Extension of the 1,838 projects was Rs 27,64,246.50 crore, and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be Rs 33,19,601.84 crore, which reflects an overall cost overrun of over Rs 5,55,355.34 (20.09 per cent of original cost), the ministry's latest report for April 2024 showed. According to the report, the expenditure incurred on these projects till April 2024 is Rs 1,692,997.5 crore, which is 51 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects. However, the number of delayed projects decreased to 514 if the delay is calculated on the basis of the latest schedule of completion, it added. Of the 792 delayed projects, 220 have overall delays in the range of 1-12 months, 192 have been delayed for 13-24 months, 259 projects for 25-60 months, and 121 projects for more than 60 months. The average time overrun in these 792 delayed projects is 35.4 months.

Reasons for time overrun, as reported by various project implementing agencies, include land acquisition, environmental clearance, financial issues, contractual/internal issues, manpower shortage and litigation issues.

## GSTN rolls out form for tobacco producers

**NEW DELHI.** The GST Network (GSTN) has rolled out a form for manufacturers of pan masala and tobacco products to report inputs and outputs procured with tax authorities to check evasion. This new form GST SRM-II came within a month of GSTN rolling out form GST SRM-I for registering machines of such manufacturers. Moore Singhi executive director Rajat Mohan said the newly available Form GST SRM-II requires detailed monthly reporting of inputs and outputs.

Taxpayers are advised to familiarise themselves with the details and instructions provided in these forms to ensure seamless compliance and avoid potential penalties, he added. In January, CBIC announced introduction of a new registration and monthly return filing procedure to improve Goods and Services Tax compliance for manufacturers of pan masala and tobacco products effective April 1. The date was later extended to May 15. The move to overhaul the registration, record-keeping, and monthly filing of such businesses was aimed at improving GST compliance for manufacturers of pan masala and tobacco products.

## Form 26AS Discrepancy: Here's What To Do If TDS Data Is Mismatched



**NEW DELHI.** TDS stands for Tax Deducted at Source. It's a mechanism implemented by the government to collect income tax right at the time the income is generated, instead of waiting for the taxpayer to file their return.

The purpose of TDS is to ensure a regular flow of tax revenue to the government and prevent tax evasion. The TDS deducted is credited to the payee's income tax account and can be claimed against their final tax liability while filing the income tax return. Form 26AS acts as a consolidated statement that links TDS deducted at source to your income tax information.

Part A of Form 26AS captures details of all TDS deducted from your income throughout the financial year. This includes information like: Verification and Filing: By comparing the TDS information in form 26AS with your TDS certificates (form 16 for salaried individuals and form 16A for non-salaried individuals), you can verify if the deducted TDS has been deposited correctly by the deductor.

Discrepancies In Actual TDS and TDS Credit As Per Form 26AS

Everyone who deducts tax at source must provide the Income Tax Department with the details of the tax they have deducted. These details include the name and Permanent Account Number (PAN) of the deductee, the amount of tax deducted, the amount paid to the deductee, the date the TDS was credited to the government, and other relevant information. Often, there can be disparities between the actual TDS amount and the TDS credit shown in Form 26AS. The TDS credit displayed in Form 26AS might be lower than the actual TDS amount. This can occur due to various reasons such as the deductor failing to furnish TDS details to the Income Tax Department, or deducting tax under an incorrect PAN, among others. What To Do If TDS Is Not Reflected In 26AS?

According to the information available on the official website of the Income Tax Department, in such a case the deductee should approach the deductor and request them to take the necessary steps to rectify the discrepancy due to the above reasons.

The Income-tax Department updates the TDS details in Form 26AS based on details provided by the person deducting the tax (i.e., the deductor), hence, if there is any default on the part of the deductor like non-furnishing of TDS details (i.e., TDS return) to the Income-tax Department, deducting the tax in incorrect PAN, etc. then form 26AS will not reflect the actual TDS. In such a case, the taxpayer may not be able to claim the credit of the correct TDS.

# Akasa Air well on path to profitability; to launch more international flights: Co-Founder Aditya Ghosh

**NEW DELHI.** Akasa Air is well on the path to profitability and will fly to more international destinations, including in South Asia and Southeast Asia, according to its Co-Founder Aditya Ghosh. In less than two years of taking to the skies, Akasa Air has a fleet of 24 planes and has more than 4,000 employees. In an interview to PTI in the national capital, Ghosh, who has donned multiple and diverse roles during his career, said that airlines are becoming more of a consumption story in India. "We will increasingly see it as consumer-focused businesses where the learnings which are there from e-commerce companies will help us address the needs and behaviour of consumers better in the transportation business," he said. Among other roles, he had served as IndiGo's President and Whole Time Director for ten years till 2018. When a customer-focused and employee-centric organisation is being built, it is also important to build a financially sustainable business, Ghosh

said and emphasised that Akasa Air is well on the path to profitability. "I think at Akasa we are on track to profitability. We are steadfastly focused on it. We have seen greater operational reliability, best on time, lowest customer complaints, highest load factors, lowest cancellations. The airline currently has a fleet of 24 narrow-body Boeing 737 MAX planes." "We have started flying to Doha, announced flights to Jeddah, we are going to go to more destinations in the Middle East. We will ultimately go to South Asia and Southeast Asia as well, and at the same time, go to Tier 2, 3 and 4 cities in India because there is so much potential there," Ghosh said. The airline will start flights to Jeddah from July 15. It also has traffic rights for Kuwait and Riyadh. On whether Akasa Air could have wide-body planes in its fleet, Ghosh said the business model that has consistently done well is the one which stays focused on one type of



fleet. With a single type of fleet, he said there will be high asset utilisation and costs are within control but that does not mean there is no market for large full-service carriers. "At Akasa, we are very focused on textbook style, Roger Federer, Rahul Dravid style, boringly consistent. Do the basics, do them right, do them consistently," he noted. More than 200 aircraft are expected to join the airline's fleet over the next 8 years. It has placed a firm order for 226 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft. While stressing that

there is enough space for well-run airlines, Ghosh said he thinks Indian aviation is poised at a place where the growth and success of an airline is not predicated on the failure of someone else.

At a personal level, Ghosh started off as a lawyer and then got involved in the airline business. He is on the boards of The ePlane Company, OYO, Ras Al Khaimah International Airport and GreenCell Mobility, among other roles. Ghosh has made investments through his venture Homage Ventures.

He has funded various companies, including indigenous coffee roaster Blue Tokai and healthy food products maker Wolsum Foods. "I am on a journey in pursuit of excellence and that excellence is not just in the businesses that I am involved in, personally, I am a slightly better person than I was yesterday," he remarked.

## New GSTN Form Mandates Detailed Reporting for Tobacco Manufacturers, Check Details Here

**NEW DELHI.** The GST Network (GSTN) has rolled out a special form for manufacturers of pan masala and tobacco products to report inputs and outputs procured with tax authorities to check evasion.

This new form GST SRM-II came within a month of GSTN rolling out form GST SRM-I for registering machines of such manufacturers. "The second form namely Form GST SRM-II is also available on the portal. Taxpayers dealing in the manufacture of Pan Masala and Tobacco products can now report the details of inputs and outputs procured and consumed for the relevant month," GSTN said in an update to its taxpayers on June 7.

Moore Singhi Executive Director Rajat Mohan said the newly available Form GST SRM-II requires detailed monthly reporting of inputs and outputs. "This form aims to enhance transparency and accountability in the

manufacturing process of Pan Masala and Tobacco products. Taxpayers must meticulously document their procurement and consumption of inputs to avoid any discrepancies and ensure accurate tax filings," Mohan



said. Taxpayers are advised to familiarise themselves with the details and instructions provided in these forms to ensure seamless compliance and avoid any potential penalties, he

added. In January, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) announced the introduction of a new registration and monthly return filing procedure to improve GST compliance for manufacturers of pan masala and tobacco products effective April 1. The date was later extended to May 15. The move to overhaul the registration, record-keeping, and monthly filing of such businesses was aimed at improving GST compliance for manufacturers of pan masala and tobacco products.

The GST law was also amended via Finance Bill 2024 to say that manufacturers of pan masala, gutkha and similar tobacco products will have to pay a penalty of up to Rs 1 lakh, if they fail to register their packing machinery with GST authorities with effect from April 1.

## Domestic open access solar capacity addition doubles to 1.8 GW in Jan-Mar: Mercom

**NEW DELHI.** Open access solar installations rose two-fold in India to 1.8 gigawatts during January-March this year supported by several factors, including reduced module cost, US-based Mercom Capital has said. Solar power through open access is an arrangement where a power producer establishes a solar power plant to supply green energy to consumers.

India added over 1.8 gigawatts (GW) of solar open access capacity in the first quarter of the calendar year of 2024, posting a two-fold increase from 909.3 megawatts (MW) in Q4 2023, the report titled 'Mercom India Solar Open Access Market' said.

As of March 2024, the cumulative installed solar open access capacity stood at 14.3 GW. Solar open access developers benefited from lower Chinese module prices and the suspension of the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM)



order for projects commissioned through March 2024

Additionally, lower power purchase agreement (PPA) prices, due to reduced project costs, further incentivized consumers to adopt solar open access.

"Demand for green energy open access, especially solar, has been mounting, driven by the financial savings and initiatives to add renewable energy in

the power procurement mix.

"An additional push comes from the corporates leading climate change mitigation strategies. If not for the regulatory restrictions, green energy open access could be the driving force that helps India meet its non-fossil fuel targets," said Priya Sanjay, Managing Director at Mercom India.

In Q1 2024, Rajasthan led solar open access capacity additions, accounting for almost 28 per cent followed by Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra with 21 per cent and 12 per cent of capacity additions, respectively.

The pipeline of solar open access projects under development and in the pre-construction phase was over 18 GW as of March 2024. Almost 74 per cent of pipeline projects were in Karnataka, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh.

## Tax on hybrids should be merit-based: Toyota Motor

**NEW DELHI.** Amid growing popularity of hybrid vehicles in India, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) said the final call taken by the GST Council regarding tax relief on hybrid cars should be "merit-based" rather than the current system where taxes on four-wheelers are determined by body and engine size. he manufacturer of Innova Hycross and Hyryder models said they are doing their best to bring down prices of hybrids in India. "It is up to the GST Council to take a call on GST rate on hybrids... What we are saying is that policies and taxation should be aligned towards the national goals (i.e becoming self-energy reliant and reducing carbon emission) and enabling consumers to make a better choice in terms of technology meeting those national goals," said Vikram Gulati, country head and executive vice-president, Toyota Kirloskar Motor.

Currently, India levies a GST of 28% on vehicles powered by internal combustion engines, including hybrids, and 5% on electric vehicles. However, with the inclusion of cess, the tax on hybrid vehicles is about 43%

Carmakers such as Honda, Toyota and Maruti Suzuki have been lobbying that taxes on hybrids should be brought down as they will play an important role in the

decarbonisation process. However, carmakers such as Tata Motors and Mahindra & Mahindra have opposed a rate cut on hybrids highlighting that the entire focus of the industry should remain transition towards EVs.

Now that the general elections in India are over, all eyes are on Cabinet formation and the government's road map for the auto industry. Carmakers like MSIL and Toyota would be hoping that their call on hybrids is discussed in the next GST Council meet. Earlier, outgoing Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said he had requested finance ministry to reduce the GST on hybrid cars to 12%. If this request is considered, prices of popular hybrid vehicles may see a price cut of Rs 2-4 lakh, bringing them on a par with petrol-powered models. For the time being, TKM said they are doing their best to bring down the prices of hybrids.

Advertisements "We are trying to localise as much as we can. The key component in hybrid powertrains, the e-drive, is now made in India. It is the first plant outside of Japan in Asia and only the fourth plant worldwide. We are upskilling our



workers to align with the technological shift. All these efforts should help us to become more competitive," said Gulati. Toyota Technical Training Institute (TTTI) last month started accepting applications for its 2024-2025 programmes to provide free training to academically inclined students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in Karnataka. The institute is increasing its intake to 1,200 students, including 600 females to promote gender diversity.

Meanwhile, TKM on Friday inaugurated its First Company Owned Toyota Used Car Outlet (TUCO) in New Delhi, the second in India, under brand name of "Toyota U-Trust".

"With the Indian used car market projected to grow at a CAGR of 8% and currently being 1.3 times the size of the new car market, the sector holds significant growth potential. Our recent expansion of Toyota Company Owned Outlet in Delhi and plans for more outlets across key cities underscore TKM's strategy to create a seamless, transparent, and reliable used car market for our customers, emphasizing quality and safety-focused refurbishment," said Takashi Takamiya, Vice President at TKM.

What is Hybrid Car? A hybrid uses more than one means of energy, combining a petrol or diesel engine with an electric motor, and the two systems work with each other. This allows the car to burn less gasoline, achieving better fuel efficiency. Carmakers such as Honda, Toyota and Maruti Suzuki have been lobbying that taxes on hybrids should be brought down as they will play an important role in the decarbonisation process.



# BJP's seat loss analysis: Dalit perception, angry party workers among key factors

**New Delhi:** After facing a significant reduction in its tally in the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls, the BJP leaders have started an in-depth analysis of the party's performance. According to sources, the leaders have found that the party's failure to manage the delicate caste equations, lack of coordination between the government and the organisation in the BJP-ruled states, and anger among the local candidates were some of the issues that led to the decrease of the saffron party votes in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Haryana.

Local party workers were angry about being neglected by their state's government and the decision to field incumbent MPs, the post-poll analysis highlighted.

The poor performance was unpredictable because the BJP is either the majority power in these states or in power as a member of the ruling alliance. BJP leaders also estimate that not only did the non-Yadav OBC vote bank slip away, but Dalit votes also shifted in favour of the INDIA bloc in the northern states, sources said.

The Opposition's campaign on the lines that BJP will change the Constitution if it comes to power weighed heavily on the party, and the saffron side's failure to not counter it effectively also led to the slipping away of the Dalit votes, BJP leaders believe. The defection of Khatik and Khurmi votes among non-Yadav OBCs dented the ambitious '400 paar' target. The near absence of the Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) resulted in the shifting of the Dalit votes towards the Congress-Samajwadi Party alliance in Uttar Pradesh.

The lack of involvement of RSS workers also hurt the BJP in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the analysis showed. In North India, the BJP suffered significant losses in Haryana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and especially in Uttar Pradesh in the 2024 polls as compared to 2019. In Uttar Pradesh, the INDIA bloc won 43 seats of the state's 80 seats and, the BJP managed to secure victory on 33 seats only. In 2019, the BJP had won 62 of the 80 seats, and ally Apna Dal (Soneylal) had bagged two.



In Rajasthan, where the BJP won 24 of the 25 seats in 2019, with the Hanuman Beniwal-led Rashtriya Loktantrik Party winning the Nagaur seat, the saffron side this time only won 10 seats. The Congress, on the other hand, learnt from its mistakes and bagged eight seats. Its three allies -- the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Bharatiya Adivasi Party, and Beniwal's RLP -- have won one seat each.

In Maharashtra also, the results for the ruling

Mahayuti alliance -- comprising Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, Ajit Pawar's NCP and the BJP -- were disappointing as it managed to win only 17 seats. On the other hand, the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), plagued by splits in two parties, punched above its weight to bag 30 seats. In Haryana, where the BJP had won all 10 seats in 2019, it lost in five constituencies this time.

## WHAT WORKED FOR BJP

The post-poll analysis showed that the four

states that saved the BJP from sinking below 200 were Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, and Karnataka.

In Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, the BJP analysis showed that its grassroots organisation worked strongly. In Karnataka too, despite a Congress government being in power, the BJP performed well there. The party's decision to give leadership to the BS Yediyurappa faction also worked in its favour. Trusting Yediyurappa after the assembly election results and forming an alliance with the Janata Dal (Secular) was beneficial for the BJP.

The BJP secured a resounding victory in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Karnataka by clinching 17 out of the 28 seats. Its ally JD(S) also won two seats. In Odisha, the BJP's decision not to form an alliance with Naveen Patnaik proved to be correct. The BJP achieved a historic victory in the Lok Sabha polls in the eastern state, securing an unprecedented 20 out of 21 seats, a significant improvement from their previous tally of eight seats in 2019.

## UP minor sexually assaulted by school principal, attempts to die by suicide

**New Delhi:** A minor girl, who was allegedly raped by her school principal, attempted suicide by jumping in front of a train on Saturday, the police said. The incident took place in Uttar Pradesh's Kaushambi district. Following the tragedy, the district hospital admitted her in serious condition. The school principal, identified as Devendra Kumar Mishra, allegedly raped a minor student at her home. The video of the incident, circulated on social media on June 6, 2024, shows the principal engaging in inappropriate behaviour towards the student.

It is believed that the girl tried to kill herself after an obscene video of the school principal in an objectionable condition went viral on social media.

The police arrested the youth who allegedly circulated the video on social media. As the police arrived to nab the youth, he attempted to flee. Following that, he sustained injuries, for which he was taken to a hospital. After the video went viral, the family members of the rape survivor filed a complaint at the Kokhraj Police Station. Plunging into action, the police registered a case against the accused principal and began to look out for him on the same day. Meanwhile, after receiving the news that the rape survivor had attempted suicide, ADG Bhanu Bhaskar and IG Prem Kumar Gautam visited the district hospital and met the minor and her relatives. The accused principal is absconding since a rape case has been registered against him. The police are still searching for him. Speaking with the media, ADG Bhanu Bhaskar assured that the accused would be apprehended soon.

## Chirag Paswan, Whose Party Scored 5/5 In Bihar Battle, May Become Minister

**New Delhi:** Chirag Paswan, whose party LJP (Ram Vilas) stunned in this election by winning all the five Lok Sabha seats it contested as part of the NDA alliance in Bihar, is set to become a minister in the third Narendra Modi government, sources have said.

Mr Paswan, it is learnt, received a call from BJP chief JP Nadda ahead of Prime Minister Modi's swearing-in this evening. NDA leaders will shortly gather at the Prime Minister's residence for tea. Chirag Paswan, sources said, had been offered ministerial posts in the first and second Narendra Modi governments, too, but the LJP had then decided that his father and party chief Ram Vilas Paswan should take up the post.

Mr Paswan has been elected from Bihar's Hajipur seat, which his father won a record nine times. This election has been a key milestone in Chirag Paswan's political journey that started under the guidance of his stalwart father. Ram Vilas Paswan's death in 2020 set off a family feud, as both Chirag Paswan and his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras claimed the veteran's political legacy. The face-off split the party into two factions. The BJP then sided with Pashupati Paras and Chirag Paswan's struggle began. He launched the Bihar First, Bihari First campaign to connect with the people of Bihar, but continued to support the NDA. The efforts did not go unnoticed.

Ahead of the 2024 general election, the BJP decided that Chirag Paswan is their best bet to secure Paswan votes in a state where caste plays a key factor in polls. The plan worked. And the BJP falling short of majority has strengthened the position of allies like Chirag Paswan, whose support is critical for the survival of the coalition government. Speaking to NDTV in an exclusive interview, Chirag Paswan has said the "last couple of years were very difficult". "I lost my father, my party, symbol. We were contesting this election on a new party name, a new symbol. To get people used to a new symbol was a difficult task. But God has been very kind and the people of my state, their belief in me was overwhelming," he said.

Asked if he hopes to get a ministerial berth in Modi 3.0, the 41-year-old had replied, "That's the Prime Minister's prerogative and least of my concerns."

## Massive rise in farmers' vote for INDIA bloc, Slip in NDA

**New Delhi:** The recently-concluded elections defied most exit polls as the NDA alliance won only 293 seats against the projected 330+. One of the reasons for this jolt has been the switch in farmers' support from the ruling alliance to its Opposition, the INDIA Bloc. The Axis My India post-poll survey offers an in-depth analysis of voter inclinations during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

This survey delves into the voting behavior among farmers and farm laborers, examining the fluctuations in support for major political parties and their allies over the course of two significant electoral cycles. According to the survey, in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, farmers favoured the Bharatiya Janata Party. Back then, 39 out of every 100 voters chose the party while only 19 out of 100 voters opted for the Indian

National Congress. However, in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, the BJP's support decreased slightly to 37 out of 100 voters among farmers, while the Congress experienced a marginal increase to 21 votes. The Congress' major support base came from its allies which saw a surge in farmers' vote share increase from only 10 per cent in 2019 to an impressive 21 per cent in this election.

## INDIA BLOC GAINS AT THE EXPENSE OF REGIONAL PARTIES

Similarly, among farm labourers, the BJP secured 32 per cent vote share in 2019 and its allies got 7 per cent. The Congress got 19 per cent and its allies secured 7 per cent. Forward to the recent 2024 Lok Sabha election, the BJP maintained its lead with 31 per cent vote share among farm laborers and its allies too saw a jump to 11 per

cent. However, the Congress and its allies saw a more impressive rise to 24 per cent and 17 per cent vote share.

The biggest loss in both categories was to other parties, which include major regional parties in the states. These are BSP in Uttar Pradesh, YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh, AIADMK and DMDK in Tamil Nadu, SAD in Punjab, and the BJD in Odisha. In 2019, while 23 out of 100 farmers had voted for such parties, the number fell to just 13 in 2024. A bigger decline was seen in the vote share of farm labourers.

The vote share of this category for regional parties had been 35 per cent in the previous election but fell by a drastic 18 percentage point to only 17 per cent. This means the farm labourers support base for regional parties was just half now compared to 2019.

## All set at Rashtrapati Bhavan: Red carpet rolled out for 9,000 guests, heads of State

**New Delhi:** Red carpets, chairs with leather upholstery, water fridges and mist fans -- the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan is all set for the grand swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister-designate Narendra Modi and his Council of Ministers Sunday, which will be attended by around 9,000 guests, including heads of State. The 2-hour-long function starts at 7.15 pm. Heads of states from neighbouring countries and the Indian Ocean region, who have been invited as distinguished guests, will be seated in the front rows. The seven foreign leaders are President of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe; President of Maldives Mohamed Muizzu; Vice-President of Seychelles Ahmed Afif; Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina; Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Kumar

Jugnauth; Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', and Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay.

Since there were complaints regarding unavailability of cold water during the 2019 swearing-in ceremony, rows of water fridges and mist fans have been installed this time keeping in mind the heatwave. The guests are supposed to remain seated for around four hours due to security protocol and VIP arrivals.

Each distinguished guest will be accompanied by ministerial colleagues and family members, who will be accorded a prime place as per protocol. The leaders will also attend a special banquet which will be hosted by President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan later in the

evening.

Cabinet ministers, who will also be sworn in after the PM, will also be seated on priority. Senior BJP, NDA leaders and diplomats from various countries, who have been invited, will witness the event from the front rows.

Interestingly, there are likely to be several special invitees, including shramjeevis who have contributed to the construction of the New Parliament Building or other prime projects. Surekha Yadav, the first woman loco pilot of the Vande Bharat Express is among the 10 loco pilots invited for the ceremony. According to sources, representatives of the transgender community and beneficiaries of various central government's welfare schemes are also likely to attend the event.

## Delhi Minister Atishi seeks emergency meet with Lt Governor over water crisis

**Delhi Minister Atishi has requested an emergency meeting with Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena to address the city's worsening water crisis due to Haryana's reduced release of water from the Munak Canal.**

**New Delhi:** Delhi Minister Atishi on Sunday said she has sought time for an emergency meeting from Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena, to apprise him of the water crisis in the national capital. In an X post, Atishi said, "Have sought time from the Hon'ble Delhi Lieutenant Governor for an emergency meeting, to apprise him of the inadequate water being released by Haryana from the Munak Canal." "Delhi is supposed to receive 1050 cusecs of water from the Munak Canal via the CLC

and DSB sub-canal. However, this has reduced to 840 cusecs. 7 Water Treatment Plants are dependent on this water. If the amount of water does not increase today, then the water situation across Delhi will worsen in 1-2 days," she added.

"Hon'ble Delhi Lieutenant Governor is the representative of the Central Govt. Will be requesting him to intervene and resolve the situation," Atishi tweeted. This comes a day after Atishi alleged Haryana was not releasing to Delhi its share of 1,050 cusecs of water through the Munak canal.

Addressing a press conference, Atishi said during the summer, when Haryana releases 1,050 cusecs of water, Delhi receives about 990 cusecs. However, in the past one week, Delhi has been getting less water. It received 924 cusecs on June 1, 884 cusecs on June 4, 856 cusecs on June 6, and 840 cusecs on June 7. During every summer, there is a loss of around 59 to 60 cusecs of water due to evaporation.

If 840 cusecs of water is reaching Delhi, it means Haryana is not releasing water in the Munak canal," she said. Delhi has been grappling with a water shortage, with Atishi blaming Haryana for not



releasing Yamuna water to the city.

The problem has become acute in some areas such as Chanakyapuri, where residents were seen climbing on top of a tanker with pipes to get their share of water. The acute shortage has become an "existential problem" in Delhi, the Supreme Court observed on Thursday and directed the Himachal Pradesh

government to release 137 cusecs of surplus water to the national capital and Haryana to facilitate its flow.

The top court also said there should be no politics over water. Atishi said if water at the carrier-lined channel and the Delhi sub-branch -- two sub-canal of the Munak canal -- stay at this level, then all of Delhi will face a shortage in the coming two days.

Early on Saturday, Atishi visited the two sub-canal of the Munak canal in Bawana. According to an agreement between Haryana and Delhi, Haryana has to release 1,050 cusecs of water daily for the national capital through the Munak canal, she said. Right now, there is a problem in some parts of Delhi but if the water coming from the Munak canal falls, if Haryana does not release the right amount of water, then the situation will become even more serious and there will be shortages in all parts of the city, Atishi claimed.

## Why lawyers can't be sued in consumer courts

**New Delhi:** Justice Dipak Misra in 2017 said that nobility, sanctity and ethicality of the 'profession' has to be kept uppermost in the mind of an advocate. The Supreme Court in the matter of Bar of Indian Lawyers delivered a path-breaking judgment on May 14, 2024. The bench comprising Justices Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mithal held that lawyers cannot be sued in consumer courts. This ruling will have far-reaching implications for the legal profession. The fundamental issue before the court was: should the members of the legal profession be covered under the consumer protection laws? This further raises the issue, whether the Parliament intended to include the legal profession or the other professions within the purview of Consumer Protection Act, 1986, as re-enacted in 2019? The apex court has made it clear that professionals cannot be called businessmen or traders nor clients or patients be called consumers. The terms 'business' or 'trade' have 'commercial' connotation.

On the other hand, the term 'profession' involves learning or science. The nature of work of a professional is also skilled and specialised one. Most of the work of the professional is mental. Therefore, the success would depend upon many other factors beyond a man's control.

Renowned American legal scholar Roscoe Pound has explained profession. Historically, there are three ideas involved in a profession. Organisation, learning and the spirit of public service. The remaining idea, that of earning a livelihood is incidental. When the lawyers do well professionally, they make a good living. Consequently, the top court has held that the professionals cannot be treated equally or at par with the businessman or a trader or a service provider of products or goods as contemplated in the Consumer Protection Act. The next question is, whether the legal profession is different from other professions? It is recognised in a catena of decisions that the legal profession cannot be equated with any other traditional profession. It is not commercial in nature. It is essentially service oriented. In fact, it is a noble profession. An advocate owes his duty not only to his client but also to the court as well as the opposite side. It needs to be understood that what the advocates do, affects not only an individual but the entire administration of justice.

There is a need to take into consideration certain other aspects which clearly distinguish the legal profession from other professions. The lawyers frequently navigate through complex legal landscapes shaped by diverse factors. The lawyers often face ambiguity and uncertainty in their work. The lawyers on both sides employ strategies to bring results in favour of their clients. The results are dependent upon the decisions of judges. Thus, the lawyer is controlled.

## NEWS BOX

## Kate Middleton, battling cancer, apologises for missing parade rehearsal

**London.** Kate, the Princess of Wales, apologized for missing Saturday's final rehearsal before the Trooping the Color parade in honor of the king's birthday.

Kate, who is the honorary colonel of the Irish Guards, wished the regiment good luck as she recovers from cancer. "Being your colonel remains a great honor and I am very sorry that I'm unable to take the salute at this year's Colonel's Review," she wrote in the letter shared by the Irish Guards on the social media platform X. "Please pass my apologies to the whole regiment, however I do hope that I am able to represent you all once again very soon." The review is a dress rehearsal for the annual military parade held each June to mark the monarch's official birthday. King Charles III will oversee the ceremony June 15. It's still unclear if Kate will attend the ceremony next weekend. She's undergone chemotherapy treatment for an unspecified type of cancer she announced in March after speculation proliferated on social media about her wellbeing because she had not been seen in public for several months. She has revealed few details about her illness, which was discovered after what she described as major abdominal surgery. The king is also undergoing treatment for cancer but has eased back into public duties. He attended commemorations this week for the 80th anniversary of D-Day, the invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe on June 6, 1944. Trooping the Color is a 260-year-old tradition in which troops in full dress uniform parade past the king with their ceremonial flag, also known as their "color." Charles is likely to travel to the event by carriage with Queen Camilla and is expected to watch the ceremony seated on a dais, rather than on horseback as he did last year. Some 8,000 people watched Saturday as the Irish Guards in their bright red tunics and bearskin caps marched in formation at Horse Guards Parade in central London. A military band played the national anthem and 240 horses marched as part of the exercise that also featured the regiment's mascot, an Irish wolfhound known as Seamus, draped in a red cape as he was led across the square by his handler.

The event on a sunny but cool day was much different from last year when at least three guardsmen fainted in scorching heat. The Irish Guards said on X that they were touched by the letter from Kate and wished her well in her recovery. Kate succeeded her husband, Prince William, as colonel of the regiment in 2022 after he was named colonel of the Welsh Guards.

## Canada reacts to posters of Indira Gandhi's killing: 'Violence not acceptable'

**Vancouver.** Promotion of violence is never acceptable in Canada, a minister has said after posters depicting the assassination of India's former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi were reportedly put up by Khalistan supporters in Vancouver. An Indian-origin Canadian lawmaker also expressed concern over the issue, saying by doing so, the Khalistan supporters are trying to instill fear of violence in Hindu Canadians. "This week, there were reports of imagery depicting the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in Vancouver," Dominic A LeBlanc, the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs said on X. The promotion of violence is never acceptable in Canada," he said.

Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards in 1984. Meanwhile, Indo-Canadian lawmaker Chandra Arya, who represents the electoral district of Nepean in the House of Commons of Canada, said: "Khalistan supporters in Vancouver with posters of Hindu Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi's body with bullet holes with her bodyguards turned assassins holding their guns, are again attempting to instill fear of violence in Hindu-Canadians." This is a continuation of threats with a similar float in Brampton a couple of years back and a few months back (Gurpatwant Singh) Pannun of Sikhs for Justice asking Hindus to go back to India," Arya, the lawmaker from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's party said. Pannun is one of the main leaders of the Khalistan movement and the legal advisor and spokesperson for Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), which aims to promote the idea of a separate Sikh state.

Arya called on law enforcement agencies in Canada to take immediate action. "With picture of guns readily being used to convey the message may lead to something real if this is left to continue unchallenged."

## Attacks in Russian-occupied Ukrainian regions leave 28 dead, says Moscow-appointed officials

**KYIV.** Russia-installed officials in the partially occupied Ukrainian regions of Kherson and Luhansk said Ukrainian attacks left at least 28 people dead as Russia and Ukraine continued to exchange drone attacks overnight on Saturday.

A Ukrainian attack on Friday at the small town of Sadove in the Kherson region killed 22 and wounded 15 people, Moscow-appointed governor Vladimir Saldo said. Russian state news agency Tass cited Saldo as saying that Ukrainian forces first struck the town with a French-made guided bomb, then attacked again with a U.S.-supplied HIMARS missile. He said Ukrainian forces had "deliberately made a repeat strike to create greater numbers of casualties" when "residents of nearby houses ran out to help the injured." Officials declared Saturday a day of mourning in Luhansk, and public events will be similarly cancelled on Sunday and Monday in Kherson. Further east, Leonid Pasechnik, the Russia-installed governor in Ukraine's partially occupied Luhansk region, said Saturday that two more bodies had been pulled from the rubble following Friday's Ukrainian missile attack on the regional capital, also called Luhansk. Russian state news agency Interfax cited regional authorities as saying this brought the death toll to six. Pasechnik also said 60 people were wounded in the attack. Ukraine did not comment on either assault. Ukraine launched a barrage of drones across Russian territory overnight Friday, Russia's Defense Ministry said on Saturday. Twenty-five drones were reportedly destroyed over Russia's southern Kuban and Astrakhan regions, the western Tula region, and the Moscow-annexed Crimean peninsula.

## North Korea resumes flying balloons across border in likely bid to drop trash

**Seoul** North Korea resumed flying balloons on Saturday in a likely attempt to drop trash on South Korea again, South Korea's military said, two days after Seoul activists floated their own balloons to scatter propaganda leaflets in the North. Animosity between the two Koreas has risen recently because North Korea launched hundreds of balloons carrying manure and trash toward South Korea in protest of previous South Korean civilian leafletting campaigns. In response, South Korea suspended a tension-easing agreement with North Korea to restore front-line military activities. Saturday's balloon launches by North Korea were the third of their kind since May 28. It wasn't immediately known if any of the North Korean balloons had landed on South Korean territory across the rivals' tense border. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said that North Korean balloons likely carrying trash were moving in an eastward direction but they could eventually fly toward the south because

the wind direction was forecast to change later. The Joint Chiefs of Staff advised the public to beware of falling objects and not to touch balloons found on the ground but report them to police or military authorities. After the North's two rounds of balloon activities, South Korean authorities discovered about 1,000 balloons which were tied to vinyl bags containing manure, cigarette butts, scraps of cloth, waste batteries and waste papers. Some were popped and scattered on roads, residential areas and schools. No highly dangerous materials were found and no major damage has been reported. The North's vice defense minister, Kim Kang Il, later said his country would stop the balloon campaign but threatened to resume it if South Korean activists sent leaflets again.

In defiance of the warning, a South Korean civilian group led by North Korean defector Park Sang-hak, said it launched 10 balloons from a border town on Thursday carrying 200,000 anti-North



Korean leaflets, USB sticks with K-pop songs and South Korean dramas, and \$1 U.S. bills. South Korean media reported another activist group also flew balloons with 200,000 propaganda leaflets toward North Korea on Friday.

South Korean officials called the North Korean trash balloon launches and other recent provocations as "absurd, irrational" and vowed strong retaliation. South Korea's suspension of the 2018 military agreement with North Korea would allow it to restart live-fire military drills and anti-Pyongyang propaganda broadcasts at border areas, actions that

are certain to anger North Korea and prompt it to take its own retaliatory military steps. North Korea is extremely sensitive to South Korean civilian leafletting campaigns and front-line propaganda broadcasts as it forbids access to foreign news for most of its 26 million people. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is a third generation of his family to rule North Korea with an iron fist since 1948. Experts say North Korea's balloon campaign is also meant to cause a divide in South Korea over its conservative government's tough approach on North Korea. Liberal lawmakers, some civic groups and front-line residents in South Korea have called on the government to urge leafletting activists to stop flying balloons to avoid unnecessary clashes with North Korea. But government officials haven't made such an appeal in line with last year's constitutional court ruling that struck down a law criminalizing an anti-North Korea leafletting as a violation of free speech.

## Missing Indonesian woman found dead inside 16 feet-long python after 3 days

**World** An Indonesian woman, who was reportedly missing, has been found dead inside the belly of a snake after it swallowed her whole in central Indonesia, a local official told news agency AFP on Saturday. 45-year-old Farida was found inside the reticulated python by her husband and residents of Kalempong village in South Sulawesi province on Friday. She went missing on Thursday night and didn't return home. Following that, a search operation was launched, village chief Suardi Rosi told AFP. Her husband "found her belongings, which made him suspicious. The villagers then searched the area. They soon spotted a python with a large belly," said Suardi.

"They agreed to cut open the python's stomach. As soon as they did, Farida's head was immediately visible," he added. She was found fully clothed inside the python's belly.

Instances like these are rare, yet in Indonesia, there have been several fatalities in recent years after pythons



swallowed whole individuals. Last year, residents of inanggea district in Southeast Sulawesi encountered an eight-meter python, which they killed as it was strangling and devouring a farmer in the village. In 2018, a 54-year-old woman was discovered dead



within a seven-meter python in Muna town, also located in Southeast Sulawesi. And in the preceding year, a farmer from West Sulawesi vanished, only to be later found consumed alive by a four-meter python on a palm oil plantation.

## US military says first humanitarian aid reaches Gaza via newly repaired pier

**Washington.** The first aid from an American-built pier arrived in Gaza on Saturday since storm damage required repairs to the project, the U.S. military said, relaunching an effort to bring supplies to Palestinians by sea that had been plagued with problems.

The pier constructed by the U.S. military was operational for only about a week before it was blown apart in high winds and heavy seas on May 25. A damaged section was reconnected to the beach in Gaza on Friday after being repaired at an Israeli port. About 1.1 million pounds (492 metric tons) of humanitarian aid was delivered to Gaza through the pier on Saturday, U.S. Central Command said in a statement. It reiterated that no U.S. military personnel went ashore in Gaza. The U.S. Agency for International Development works with the U.N. World Food Program and their humanitarian partners in Gaza to distribute food and other aid coming

from the U.S.-operated pier. The deliveries came the same day that



Israel mounted a heavy air and ground assault that rescued four hostages, who had been taken by Hamas during the Oct. 7 attack that launched the war in Gaza. At least 210 Palestinians, including children, were killed, a Gaza health official said. Pushing back against social media claims, U.S. Central Command said in a tweet that neither the pier nor any of its equipment, personnel or other assets

were used in the Israeli operation. It noted that Israel used an area south of the pier "to safely return hostages." "The temporary pier on the coast of Gaza was put in place for one purpose only, to help move additional, urgently needed lifesaving assistance into Gaza," the U.S. military said. USAID said in a separate statement that no humanitarian workers were involved in the Israeli operation.

"Humanitarian aid workers in Gaza are operating in extremely difficult and insecure conditions and must be protected," the agency said by email. "Aid workers operate under the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence." The movement of aid through the pier brings back online one way to get desperately needed food and other emergency supplies to Palestinians trapped by the eight-month-old Israel-Hamas war.

## Florida authorities issue shark warning along beaches after 3 people attacked

**Authorities are warning of shark dangers this weekend along Florida's Gulf Coast, where three people were hurt in two separate shark attacks.**

**UPDATED** Authorities are using boats to patrol the ocean and warning swimmers about sharks this weekend along Florida's Gulf Coast, where a woman and two teenage girls were hurt in two separate shark attacks on Friday. The attacks off beaches in the Florida Panhandle led authorities to temporarily close several beaches to swimmers on Friday. Beaches were reopened Saturday, with flags warning of high hazards. "All I can say is that these incidents are very rare," said Demian Chapman, a scientist and director of the Center for Shark Research at the Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium in Sarasota, Florida. "It's even more rare to have two events in one day involving three people," he told The Associated Press on Saturday. "That's astronomically low odds of that happening." In Walton County, the sheriff's office, fire department and the state's wildlife agency were working together to patrol the water with boats and the shore with vehicles, the South Walton Fire District said in an update Saturday. Both of Friday's attacks happened in Walton County. Please swim carefully

today, respect the Gulf, stay hydrated, and look out for your loved ones," the fire department said on social media. Red and purple flags were being used Saturday to warn swimmers of the dangers. "Purple Flags indicate the presence of dangerous marine life and single red flags indicate high hazard conditions," the Bay County Sheriff's Office said in a social media post on Saturday. Small fish are traveling in schools near the shore this time of year, which might have been a contributing factor in the attacks, the Bay County Sheriff's Office said.

The first attack happened Friday afternoon when a woman was bitten by a shark near WaterSound Beach, the Walton County Sheriff's Office said. She had critical injuries on her midsection and arm, and part of her arm had to be amputated, South Walton Fire Chief Ryan Crawford said at a news briefing. She was flown to a trauma center. Less than two hours later, firefighters responded to another beach about 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) east of the first attack "following multiple reports of a teenager injured by a shark," the sheriff's office said. Two teenage girls



were in waist-deep water with a group of friends when they were attacked, the South Walton Fire District said. "When lifeguards and deputies arrived on scene, they found one of the females had significant injuries to the upper leg and one hand," fire officials said in an update. She was flown to a trauma center. The other teen had what officials described as minor injuries on one of her feet. The two teenagers are from Mountain Brook, Alabama, a suburb of Birmingham, Mountain Brook City Manager Sam Gaston told the news site AI.com.

There's no way of knowing whether it was one shark or two separate ones involved in Friday's attacks, but there are more sharks

## Joe Biden's asylum ban saw drop in migrant arrests at US-Mexico border

**Washington.** The number of migrants caught illegally crossing the U.S.-Mexico border dropped on Friday, a senior U.S. border official told Reuters, saying it signaled a restrictive new Biden administration policy was deterring some illegal immigration.

U.S. Border Patrol arrested around 3,100 people crossing illegally, down roughly 20% from the days before, the official said, requesting anonymity to discuss preliminary figures.

"It's still too early to say this is a definitive trend," the official said. "But I think it is indicative of some possible early success." Immigration has emerged as a top issue for Americans in the months before Nov. 5 elections that will decide control of the White House and Congress. President Joe Biden, a Democrat seeking another term, faces Republican Donald Trump - an immigration hardliner - in a rematch of the 2020 contest. Biden took office in 2021 pledging to reverse many of Trump's restrictive immigration



policies but has toughened his stance in the face of record migrant arrests at the border. Biden implemented a sweeping policy on Wednesday that generally bars migrants who illegally cross the U.S.-Mexico border from claiming asylum. The asylum ban has exceptions for unaccompanied minors, people who face serious medical or safety threats, and victims of trafficking. The new policy aims to maximize the number of migrants placed in "expedited removal," a fast-track deportation process. Since Wednesday, more than 2,000 people per day were put in expedited removal, more than double the previous rate, the U.S. official said. Questions still remain about whether border crossings will stay low enough to process people quickly and whether U.S. authorities have the capacity to meet their goals.

The American Civil Liberties Union has vowed to sue to halt the measure, which resembles Trump-era curbs on asylum.



## NEWS BOX

## WI captain Rovman Powell admits being 'flat' in World Cup opener after Uganda win

New Delhi .West Indies (WI) captain Rovman Powell has admitted that his team was flat in their opening game against Papua New Guinea (PNG) after their clinical 134-run win against Uganda on June 9. Notably, in their opening fixture, the hosts restricted PNG to 136/8 in their allotted 20 overs. However, in reply, they lost the plot midway through the innings losing six wickets for 97 runs in 16 overs and took 19 overs to chase down the target. Reflecting on their performance in the first game, the West Indies skipper admitted that the team was flat as they were playing at home and the pressure got to them. However, after their win against Uganda, he said that they're now at 70-80% but the journey gets tougher ahead.

We talk about improving 10-15% every match. Last game, we were flat so we just wanted to improve as a team. When you are playing at home, the pressure can sometimes get to you. So, a little bit of rust (in the first match). We started off at 60%, now up to 70-80% and from here, it gets tougher," said Powell in the post-match presentation.

Further speaking ahead, Powell hailed left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein for his match-winning five-wicket haul against Uganda. He also said that the team is focused on playing good cricket.

**That is why he is the No.3 ranked bowler in the world: Hosein**

"He (Akeal Hosein) has been fantastic, that is why he is the No.3 ranked bowler in the world. He has done it against Full-Member nations as well, and we expect him to do it against teams that are just coming into international cricket. It is just for us to continue to play good cricket. We have played good cricket for the last 12 months or so. It gets tougher from here but we understand conditions and cricket is not easy in the Caribbean. Since West Indies have come to Guyana, the support has been fantastic," he added. Meanwhile, West Indies registered their second consecutive win of the tournament beating Uganda by a massive 134 runs at Providence Stadium, Guyana.

After opting to bat first, the hosts posted a good score of 173/5 in their allotted 20 overs with Johnson Charles top-scoring with 44\* (42). In reply, Uganda were bundled out for the joint-lowest score in the T20 World Cup history of 39 as Hosein picked up 5/11 in four overs. His figures are also the best ever by a West Indian bowler in the T20 World Cup.

## Pulling out of the IPL was the best thing for me ahead of World Cup: Adam Zampa

New Delhi. Star Australia wrist-spinner Adam Zampa has said that pulling out of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 was the best thing for him ahead of the ongoing T20 World Cup 2024. Zampa bowled a brilliant spell of 2/28 in four overs against England during Match 17 on Saturday, June 8 at Kensington Oval, Bridgetown, Barbados.

Courtesy of his spell, Australia managed to beat England by 36 runs to register their second consecutive win of the tournament. Following his match-winning show, the wrist spinner revealed that pulling out of the IPL was the best thing for him as he had some niggles. "Yeah, obviously made that decision a little while ago to pull out of the IPL and I thought it was the best thing for me moving forward into this World Cup. I was tired, I had some niggles and I'm a family man as well, so trying to put them first over work sometimes is pretty important," said Zampa in the post-match press conference.

Further speaking ahead, the 32-year-old said that he had to put in a little bit of extra work ahead of the event to get his body ready.

"So, yeah, I actually am a bit of a slow starter and I put in a little bit of extra work. My body feels great and just did that bit of extra work. Maybe a bit more bowling than I usually would before a tournament like this. And then the practice games and everything just feels nice at the moment. And yeah, I think it's, I am a little bit of a slow starter, but this feels like a rare occasion where I've started how I want to," he added.

**Zampa dismissed both England openers**

Coming back to the Australia vs England game, after being put in to bat first, Australia posted a massive score of 201/7 in their allotted 20 overs with valuable contributions from David Warner (39 off 16), Mitchell Marsh (35 off 25) and Travis Head (34 off 18). In reply, England got off to a brilliant start with openers Jos Buttler (42 off 28) and Philip Salt (37 off 23) adding 73 runs for the first wicket off 43 balls. However, Zampa brought Australia back in the game by dismissing both of them. After their dismissals, the defending champions lost the plot and could only reach 165/6 in their 20 overs. England will next take on Oman on June 13 while Australia will lock horns with Namibia on June 12.

# Waqar Younis feels New York pitch will provide even contest between India and Pakistan

**Former Pakistan fast bowler Waqar Younis said that the tricky pitch at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium will provide an even contest between India and Pakistan.**

New Delhi .Former Pakistan fast bowler Waqar Younis said that the lively pitch at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York will provide an even contest between India and Pakistan. The two teams will take on each other in Match 19 of the T20 World Cup 2024 on Sunday, June 9 at Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, New York. The match is an eagerly anticipated contest in the entire cricketing fraternity as both sides have given several blockbuster encounters in



their rich cricketing history. Ahead of the all-important, clash several experts have weighed in their opinion regarding who will come out on top in the crucial fixture. Giving his prediction for the game, Waqar said that the pitch in New York will present an even contest between the two teams.

"My heart says Pakistan but from what I've seen so far in this tournament the pitch in

New York is very much for the faster bowlers. So, it evens it out a little bit just purely because of the surface in New York," said Waqar Younis on Star Sports.

Notably, the unpredictability of the New York surface has come to light after India's opening game against Ireland where the surface offered uneven bounce. Several Indian batters were injured during the

fixture after being hit on their elbows as they failed to judge the bounce of the wicket.

Following the incident, the International Cricket Council (ICC) also released a statement addressing the issue and stated that they're working to improve the quality of the surface. A day ahead of the India vs Pakistan, India captain Rohit Sharma was hit once again during his practice session which once again brought the unpredictability of the pitch out in the open.

**I will give 60% to India and 40% to Pakistan: Wasim Akram**

Meanwhile, another former Pakistan fast bowler Wasim Akram also gave his opinion and said that India is a better team heading into the game but didn't rule out the possibility of the balance tilting quickly with one good spell or an innings. "If we look at India's form, India generally is a better team. Better team in a way that they're favourites heading into that game. I will give 60% to India and 40% to Pakistan. But, it's T20I, one good innings, one good spell, the game can change quickly. I think everybody is looking forward to the game of the tournament," said Akram.

## Puja Tomar creates history, becomes first Indian to win in UFC

**India's Puja Tomar created history on June 8, Saturday as she won her debut fight in the UFC. Puja became the first Indian to win in the UFC.**

New Delhi. Puja Tomar made history as the first Indian to win a fight in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), defeating Brazil's Rayanne dos Santos at UFC Louisville 2024. Hailing from Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, Puja had already broken new ground last year by becoming the first Indian woman to secure a UFC contract. In her debut fight in the women's strawweight division, she triumphed by split decision with scores of 30-27, 27-30, and 29-28. The match was a closely contested bout where both fighters showcased their strengths. Puja dominated the first round with powerful body kicks



that landed cleanly on dos Santos. The Indian fighter had Dos Santos thinking twice about advancing in the fight in the first round. The second round saw dos Santos taking the upper hand, constantly advancing and forcing Puja to counter while moving backwards. This round saw the Brazilian decide to adopt the same method as the Indian star and go for kicks more. She was successful in it as both women went at it. The final round was intense and evenly matched, but Puja's decisive push kick knockdown secured her

the victory.

Speaking after her win, Puja dedicated the moment to the Indian fighters and MMA fans. The 'Cyclone' claimed that before her win, everyone thought the Indian fighters didn't have the right to be on a stage like the UFC. Puja said that she wanted to show that Indian fighters aren't losers. "I want to show the world that Indian fighters are not losers. We are going all the way up! We are not going to stop! We'll become a UFC champion soon! This win is not my win, it's for all Indian fans and all Indian fighters. I walked out to my Indian song with the Indian flag, and I felt so proud. I had goosebumps. Inside (the Octagon), there was no pressure, I just thought, 'I have to win'. I took two or three punches, but I'm OK. I'm going to improve myself and I'm going all the way up," said Puja. Puja follows in the footsteps of Bharat Kandare and Anshul Jubli, who both fought in the UFC but did not win their debut matches.

## India vs Pakistan, T20 World Cup: Will New York be good host to cricket's crown jewel?

New Delhi. It is nearly time for the 13th chapter of one of the fiercest rivalries in T20I cricket. India vs Pakistan will take center stage, this time in New York, one of the most popular centers for baseball and basketball. Unfamiliar territory and uncertainty over the conditions add more intrigue to the high-profile contest as the International Cricket Council brings the crown jewel of cricket to the biggest sports market in the world. Gone are the days when the two neighbouring countries came to a standstill to watch India and Pakistan cricket teams battle for bragging rights and more. Despite not meeting in bilateral series since the 2012-13 season due to geopolitical issues, India and Pakistan have faced each other at least once a year since 2014 in ICC or continental tournaments (Asia Cup). The widening gulf in class between the two sides has also taken a bit of sheen away. However, the battle between the blue and th green shirts is still ICC's cash cow. While the global football governing body built the

makeshift Stadium 974 in Qatar for the FIFA World Cup in 2022, the ICC tried its hand at creating the cricket venue in suburban Nassau County, located to the east of New York City. The 34,000-seater on the outskirts of the Big Apple has been



assembled at a site which was a public park until December 2023. The Nassau County Cricket Stadium is expected to be packed to the rafters with tight security arrangements in the heart of the United States for the clash on Sunday, June 9.

**WHEN AND WHERE WILL THE INDIA VS PAKISTAN MATCH BE PLAYED?**

The India vs Pakistan T20 World Cup fixture will be played at the Nassau County Cricket Stadium in New York on Sunday, June 9. The Group A match will begin at 10:30 am local time and 8 pm IST. Yes, it's a morning start in the USA and both teams have had to adapt to the change in timings for their matches in the USA.

**WHY INDIA VS PAKISTAN IN NEW YORK?**

The ICC, in its bid to popularise the sport in the USA, made sure three venues in New York, Dallas and Florida co-hosted 16 out of the 55-match tournament with the other six venues in the Caribbean. Despite having hurriedly arranged a cricket venue that is facing flak for the nature of pitches and practice facilities in the city, New York is expected to be buzzing on the matchday. At least, the two countries' fans are expected to turn up in numbers and deliver the first sold-out crowd at the Nassau County Cricket Stadium.

## T20 World Cup: India middle-order face litmus test against Pakistan in New York

New Delhi. As cricket fans all across the world gear up for the high-value clash between India and Pakistan in the 2024 T20 World Cup on June 9, the Indian middle-order batters will also face their first real challenge against the likes of Shaheen Afridi and Mohammed Amir. While India will take the field at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, New York with an edge of confidence after their comfortable win over Ireland in their tournament opener, it is safe to say that the fixture hardly posed any challenge for the batters.

Only defending 97 runs, the Irish bowlers could hardly flicker the likes of Rohit Sharma and Rishabh Pant, who played a more than enough part in taking India over the mark with their strong 69-run partnership. However, many have ignored how the Indian middle-order has so far not shown any consistent signs of stability, be it in their warm-up game against Bangladesh or the Ireland win.

**WARY START FOR SURYA, DUBE**

In their T20 World Cup opener, the likes of Virat Kohli and Suryaumar Yadav failed to fire after getting dismissed for 1 and 2 runs respectively, highlighting a skim shadow of concern. Coming to the Bangladesh game, the likes of Shivam Dube and Sanju Samson showed a lacklustre touch with the bat in their 1 off 6 balls and 14 off 16 balls knocks respectively. On what has been a very unpredictable pitch in New York, India will need to field an eleven which can actually handle the pace prowess of the likes of Afridi, Amir and Naseem Shah.

**UNDECIDED PLAYING XI**

Despite the win against Ireland, it still doesn't close the doors for skipper Rohit Sharma and coach Rahul Dravid to tweak a few things in their playing eleven for the Pakistan game. The first match saw Yashasvi Jaiswal, one of



the more consistent opening partners of Rohit Sharma in recent times, get dropped from the playing XI alongside Sanju Samson, who did get a nod in the warm-up game. Rather, it was Kohli who opened the batting with Rohit and faced a big deadlock at the very start. Whereas we saw Pant come in at 3, who has shown the most consistent performance with the bat in both the India games. These string of good scores has only extended Pant's good batting form since his

return to competitive cricket in the IPL 2024.

**DIMINISHING IPL 2024 FORM**

Most of the players in the India squad did not have the best of fate till the far end of IPL 2024, which had only raised concern for the impending T20 World Cup. Specifically, none of the players were a part of this season's final between KKR and SRH, and had majorly left for the team camp in the USA on May 25.

While the players who did feature in the previous stages, like Dube, Samson Ravindra Jadeja, had all shown poor form at the latter end of the tournament. While Dube had started off his IPL 2024 season with a promising performance with the bat, he could only manage 46 runs in his last 5 games in the tournament. On the other hand, Ravindra Jadeja managed a total of 110 runs in his own last 5 games, but his touch lacked that sheer aggressiveness and was more slow-paced.



got to be confident, keep our heads up and look forward to the next one and keep puffing our chest out and play some really good cricket, which we know we're capable of.

**We were outplayed by Australia**

Australia ended up defeating England by 36 runs with the batters chipping in with some entertaining cameo. This was followed up by some inspired bowling from Adam Zampa and Pat Cummins as England failed to capitalise on the momentum given by Buttler and Phil Salt.

The England skipper admitted his side was outplayed by Australia and they deserved the win in the end. Buttler felt that Australia played with the right intent and put England under pressure. "Not too far. I think, yeah, we were outplayed by Australia. They fully deserved the win today. I think there's a little bit of things we want to tidy up. But, yeah, look, they played well with intent right at the start, put us under a lot of pressure. I thought we fought back relatively well. But I thought their bowling performance was excellent I think especially those middle overs I think we got off to a really good start but the way they controlled those middle overs made it tough to hit boundaries I thought they bowled very well to defend the score," said Buttler.



# Aishwarya Arjun

And Umapathy Ramaiah Wedding: UNSEEN Glimpses From Haldi, Reception Out



Actors Aishwarya Arjun, daughter of South Action King Arjun Sarja and former actress Niveditha Arjun, along with Umapathy Ramaiah, son of celebrated actor-turned-director Thambi Ramaiah, began their pre-wedding festivities in Chennai on June 7, 2024. The celebrations kicked off with a Haldi ceremony, held as a close-knit event at Aishwarya's home. She wore a simple white kurta, and the decor followed a vibrant yellow theme titled 'Cover Me in Sunshine,' creating a perfect backdrop for the traditional customs.

Following the Haldi, the couple hosted an intimate Mehendi ceremony at Aishwarya's residence in Chennai. Aishwarya looked stunning in a vibrant yellow Anamika Khanna outfit, complementing the traditional decor themed 'The Sky Turned Pink,' which featured a dreamy setup complete with special Agra chaat. As Aishwarya prepares for her Telugu film debut and Umapathy plans his second directorial movie, their pre-wedding celebrations are brimming with the excitement of new beginnings. The anticipation surrounding their wedding ceremonies is high. Amid this, it is being reported that the reception will be held on June 14. Pinkvilla obtained a part of the invite. As per the invite, the wedding reception will take place on June 14 at the Leela Palace in Chennai. It is scheduled to begin at 6:30 pm. Arjun Sarja and his wife, former actress Niveditha Arjun extended their warm wishes via the invite. The couple met on the reality show 'Survivor,' where Arjun Sarja was the host. They instantly clicked, leading to their engagement in October last year. Their love story is a beautiful narrative of two creative souls coming together, both supporting each other's dreams and ambitions.

Aishwarya Arjun debuted in 2013 with the action-comedy film Pattathu Yaanai, co-starring Vishal and Santhanam. Despite several subsequent appearances, she struggled to make a lasting impact on the audience. Another notable film was Prema Baraha, directed by her father Arjun Sarja and produced by her mother Niveditha Arjun. Released in both Tamil and Kannada in 2018, the bi-lingual film achieved commercial success in Karnataka, while the Tamil version saw average box office performance.

Anushka Sharma, Virat Kohli Spotted With Daughter Vamika At New York Hotel



Anushka Sharma is currently enjoying her motherhood phase. She welcomed her second son in February this year. And since then she has been spotted less. Well, recently a video has surfaced online in which she has been spotted with her daughter Vamika and hubby Virat Kohli at a New York hotel. The video has gone viral and giving fans a rare glimpse of their private lives. In the viral clip, Anushka, and Virat are seen holding Vamika's hand and walking. As soon as the video was shared, fans reacted. One of the fans wrote, "Vamika long hair she grown up so fast." Another wrote, "Awwwww the way she is walking by holding hands of Virushka!! Our Little Baby Is All Grown Upppp"

The power couple was recently spotted enjoying the city's vibrant atmosphere. Virat, who is gearing up for the T20 World Cup with the Indian cricket team, is taking out a bit of time in between his practice sessions to relax with his wife Anushka and kids Akaay and Vamika. In a new photo that's going viral online, Virat looks dapper in a blue shirt, while Anushka keeps it chic in a classic white tee and black pants. The duo, who were earlier seen at the airport in a viral photo, seem to be relishing their time together before Virat's cricketer commitments take centerstage.

Meanwhile, another unseen photo of Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma from the airport as Virat left for T20 World Cup 2024 is going viral on Reddit. In the photo, Anushka wears a simple, black tee with ice-blue denims, whereas Virat is seen in a white tee paired with a beige shirt and black trousers and a beige, sporty cap. Fans are wondering if Anushka, too, joined him for the T20 World Cup is New York. As soon as the photo was shared on Reddit, fans thronged the comments section. Two weeks back, Bollywood star Anushka Sharma and her cricketer husband, Virat Kohli, surprised paparazzi with gift hampers to thank them for respecting their privacy. The couple, who recently welcomed their son, had requested the paparazzi to avoid taking pictures of their children. In appreciation of their cooperation, Anushka and Virat sent them thoughtful gift baskets.

Remember Bindu Nanubhai Desai From 1971 Film Kati Patang? A Look At Actress' Journey



Bindu Nanubhai Desai is a former Indian actress who ruled Bollywood in the 1970s. She appeared in over 160 films throughout her four-decade career, earning seven Filmfare Award nominations. Bindu started her acting career with the 1962 film Anpadh, which starred Balraj Sahni, Dharmendra, Mala Sinha and Shashikala in the lead roles. After this, she starred in popular films like Ittefaq and Do Raaste. But she came into the limelight for her role as Shabnam in Kati Patang 1970 and for her films opposite Prem Chopra. With her charisma and charm, the actress had become the queen of the glam world. Bindu has worked with stars like Amitabh Bachchan, Rajesh Khanna, Anupam Kher and Jeetendra. According to reports, she came to showbiz to become a lead actress, but the industry made her a villain. In the 1990s, she started taking the role of a negative mother-in-law in every film. The actress who gained recognition from Rajesh Khanna and Asha Parekh's film Kati Patang was known for her negative roles as well as her amazing dance in her time. She also received immense appreciation for playing villainous roles.

Kati Patang was a musical drama film produced and directed by Shakti Samanta. The film was a box-office success. After this, Bindu Nanubhai Desai never looked back and has worked in many hit films in her career. It includes Do Raaste, Dastaan, Abhimaan, Imtihan, and Arjun Pandit, to name a few.

In the later stages of her career, she made fewer on-screen appearances, like the ones in Shola Aur Shabnam and Aankhen, which highlighted her comic side, and was followed by other light and funny performances in Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!, Main Hoon Na, and Om Shanti Om. Talking about her personal life, Bindu had fallen in love with her neighbour, Champaklal Zhaveri, at the young age of 15. The two got married when Bindu was just 18 years old.

# Mehreen Pirzada

Is Sizzling Hot In Her Green Dress And Sarong Skirt

Actress Mehreen Pirzada is one of the prominent faces in the Telugu film industry. She has shown her impeccable acting skills in films like Pattas, Ardab Mutiyaran and F3: Fun and Frustration. Besides her stupendous acting prowess, Mehreen also drops stunning snippets of her glamorous photoshoots, shelling out major fashion goals to her fans. Recently, the 28-year-old actress enthralled us once again with her photos of green dress on Instagram which she paired with a sarong skirt. Mehreen exuded hotness as she flaunted her toned legs against the backdrop of a serene beach in Belize. She left her tresses open and opted for glowy makeup and minimal accessories, i.e.- bangle and earrings as well. She also shared photos of the alluring sunset at the beach and wrote in the caption, "Missing Belizean". The 28-year-old actress added the song Somewhere Only We Know by Rhianna.

Social media users were left drooling over her pictures and showered the comment section with heart and fire emoticons. Not only the Western, but the Ardab Mutiyaran actress also knows how to ace the Indian outfit as well. In the series of pictures on Instagram, she can be seen draped in a dreamy white, translucent saree, with a subtle touch of pink hue. Looking every bit royal, Mehreen paired her outfit with a heavily embroidered, stone-encrusted pinkish-white blouse. The Telugu actress accessorised her divine avatar with a delicate gold, heart-shaped necklace, a diamond ring, a dainty bangle and a small-studded, shiny pair of floral earrings. "Gulab aise hi nahi gulab hota hai. Yeh ada kaaton mein palne ke baad aati hai.", the caption of the photos read.



On the professional front, Mehreen last acted in the film Spark: LIFE which garnered mixed reviews from the audience. Directed by Vikranth Reddy, this film starred an ensemble cast of actors Rukshar Dhillon, Guru Somasundaram, Vennela Kishore and others. Critics pointed out the poor acting prowess of Vikranth Reddy and the storyline of the film, which appears to have been lifted from the plots of other films. Deaf Frog Productions produced this pan-India film.

