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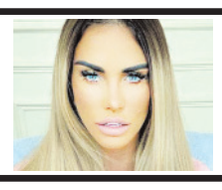

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DON'T FEAR, WORK FOR INDIA'S PROGRESS: BHAGWAT TELLS TO MUSLIMS

INDIANS ARE HINDU

Addressing an event -- 'Nation First, Nation Supreme' -- organized by the Pune-based Global Strategic Policy Foundation (GSPF), here late on Monday, the RSS Sarsanghchalak asserted that Hindus don't harbour animosity towards anyone, and the two communities should join hands for the country's development.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Wooing the minority community, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat has reiterated that Muslims have nothing to fear in India, and they must work unitedly with the majority community for the common goal of the country's progress.

"Hindus and Muslims in India have common ancestry... It is a well-known historical fact that Islam came to India along with the invaders, and this should not be concealed," Bhagwat urged.

He said that our beloved motherland and the rich heritage form the basis of integrity in the country, both have the same DNA and should strive together for the common good of the nation.

According to Bhagwat, Indians have always worked for the wellbeing of others, one and all, and the word 'Hindu' is synonymous with the country's rich heritage, the ancestors and its varied culture, and "in this this context, every Indian is a Hindu for us".

While the bonding and bonhomie are inevitable for the progress of the nation and the motherland, Bhagwat called upon the saner voices among the Muslims to speak out against the 'insanity' committed by some sections of the community, given the emerging geo-political developments in India's neighbourhood.

"They must firmly oppose the hardliners in the community. This could be a long drawn task that will have to be done with great care and efforts. It's like a tough, long test which we will have to pass. The quicker we begin, the lesser the damage to the society," Bhagwat pointed out.

> "In tune with our great culture, which accepts all diverse opinions, we commit that there won't be disrespect for other faiths, but, for that we will have to ensure and think of dominance of India and not that of a particular faith as has been happening through appeasement or vote-bank politics for many years."

Other speakers at the event included Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan and Vice-Chancellor of Kashmir Central University Lt. Gen. (Retd) Sayyad Ata Hussain, in the presence of GSPF President Anant Bhagwat, Secretary John Verghese and Coordinator Zafar Lari.

Third wave of COVID is already in Mumbai: Mayor

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Coining a new slogan, 'Mera Ghar, Mera Bappa' ahead of the festivities, Kishori Pednekar insisted people celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi at their houses and avoid large gatherings in view of the pandemic

Mumbai mayor Kishori Pednekar on Tuesday warned that the third wave of Covid-19 is not coming, it is already in the state, amid preparations for Ganesh Chaturthi.

Coining a new slogan, "Mera Ghar, Mera Bappa" ahead of the festivities, Pednekar insisted people celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi at their houses and avoid large gatherings in view of the pandemic.

Earlier, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray also appealed to political parties to immediately stop protests, meetings and other programmes to avoid large gatherings amid slight increase in the number of daily COVID-19 cases in the state.

"We can celebrate festivals later. Let us prioritise the lives and health of our citizens. The situation can go out of hand in view of the spike in daily cases," Thackeray said in a statement.

"Who would like to impose restrictions on festivals and religious programmes? But people's lives are important," he said. The chief minister said the upcoming festive days were crucial and challenging. The onus is on political parties to ensure things do not go out of control, he said.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra has reported 3,898 fresh cases of Covid-19 and 86 deaths due to the virus today. The fresh cases have pushed state's tally to 64,93,698 and death toll to 1,37,897. The state has so far registered 63,04,336 recoveries.

THIRD WAVE OF CORONA HITS NAGPUR, FRESH RESTRICTIONS TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON: MINISTER

Mumbai: 'Third wave of coronavirus has arrived in Nagpur, thus fresh restrictions will be reimposed in the city soon', said State Energy Minister Nitin Raut after holding a review meeting with senior administrative officers from various state departments. Speaking to reporters, Raut said that third wave, which was predicted to hit the country anytime in September-October, has reached here (Nagpur) as the city has logged COVID cases in double digits.

On being asked what kind of curbs can be imposed in the city, Raut asserted enhanced restrictions could include restaurants being allowed to remain open till 8pm instead of 10pm, shops and other establishments till 4pm and a complete shutdown on weekends, with only essential services being allowed to operate.

Taliban unveils new Afghan govt

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Taliban announced on Tuesday that Mullah Mohammad Hasan Akhund will be the leader of the new Afghanistan government. Taliban's chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said that Taliban co-founder Abdul Ghani Baradar will be the deputy leader. Sirajuddin Haqqani, the son of the founder of the Haqqani Network, designated as a terrorist organisation by the US, will be the new interior minister.

Akhund is presently the head of the Taliban's powerful decision-making body, Rehbari Shura or the leadership council. Akhund remained close to Sheikh Hibatullah Akhunzada for 20 years. He was the foreign minister before being made the deputy prime minister when Mullah Mohammad Rabbani Akhund was the prime minister, the report said. Similarly, the Taliban said that the name of another veteran leader, Sirajuddin Haqqani, head of the Haqqani Network, has been proposed for the federal interior minister's post, the report said.

Similarly, Mullah Yaqoob, the son of Taliban founder Mullah Mohammad Omar, has been approved as Afghanistan's defence minister. Yaqoob personally led the recent armed campaign and first started taking over the rural areas, including districts, and then decided to capture the provinces across the country.

TEMPLE LAND BELONGS TO DEITY NOT TO PRIEST: SC

New Delhi: A priest cannot be treated as Bhumiswami (owner of land) and the deity is the owner of the land attached to a temple, the Supreme Court has ruled. A bench of Justices Hemant Gupta and A S Bopanna said the "Pujari", or priest, only holds the land for the purpose of management of the property of the temple. "In the ownership column, the name of the deity alone is required to be mentioned, as the deity being a juristic person is the owner of the land. The occupation of the land is also by the deity which is carried out by the servant or the managers on behalf of the deity." It said that the name of the Collector as manager cannot be recorded in respect of property vested in the deity as the Collector cannot be a manager of all temples unless it is a temple vested with the State. The top court was hearing an appeal filed by Madhya Pradesh challenging an order of High Court which quashed two circulars issued by the state government under the MP Law Revenue Code, 1959 (Code).

Farmers reach Karnal secretariat, stage sit-in protest

Team Absolute | Karnal

After reaching Karnal's mini-secretariat, farmers have staged a dharna' (sit-in) protest in front of the district administration building, here on Tuesday. On their way to the secretariat, some protesters also removed a barricade obstructing their path.A heavy traffic jam was witnessed in Karnal due to farmers march towards the secretariat, which began after their meeting with the district officials ended inconclusively on Tuesday afternoon. The protesters were first stopped by the police at Namaste Chowk (intersection). It was only after a short discussion that the police allowed the demonstrators to move ahead. Political activist Yogendra Yadav claimed that he and Bhartiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait were briefly detained by the police.He, however, said that he is not happy with the way things are unfolding as he wanted the whole congregation and march to be conducted in a peaceful manner."This is not the way we wanted things to happen. We are ready to be arrested but we do not want any politics on this topic," he told media. This morning an 11-member farmers delegation from the kisan mahapanchyat presented a memorandum of their demands to the Karnal Deputy Commissioner at the mini secretariat this morning.

BKS TO PROTEST IN FAVOUR OF FARMERS TODAY

New Delhi: Demanding a law to ensure cost based remunerative price for farmers' produce, the RSS affiliate Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) will hold nationwide demonstrations on Wednesday (September 8).The BKS said that the government should give remunerative price to farmers or explain that their demand is wrong.The BKS national general secretary, Badrinarayan Chaudhari said, "Farmers do not get a remunerative price of their produce and the actual cost incurred is more than the Minimum Support Price (MSP) fixed by the government. We are demanding a cost based remunerative price for farmers as they are not getting it for their produce."

REPORT NOT GIVEN ATTENTION: PANEL MEMBER TO SC ON FARM LAWS

New Delhi: As farmer groups continue to protest against the three contentious farm laws, one of the members on the Supreme Court constituted committee on the farm laws has written to Chief Justice N.V. Ramana seeking release of the panel's report into public domain and sharing it with the government. Anil Ghanwat, president Shetkari Sanghatana, in a letter to the CJI said: "The report addressed all apprehensions of the farmers. I feel that the report has not been given any attention by the Supreme Court. I am humbly pleading the Supreme Court to kindly release the report for implementation of its recommendations for peaceful resolution of the stalemate to the farmers satisfaction at the earliest," said Ghanwat. The top court had suspended the implementation of the three farm laws and constituted a committee to report on these laws on January 12, this year.

Chhattisgarh CM's father jailed for hate speech

Team Absolute | Raipur

Nand Kumar Baghel (86), the father of Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, was on Tuesday sent to judicial custody till September 21 as he refused to seek bail in a local court where he was produced after being arrested on charges of making a hate speech.

Bhupesh Baghel has serious ideological differences with his father. The Chief Minister has made it clear on several occasions that he has highest regard for his father, but he disapproved his father's latest remarks and put it on record that nobody is above the law, including his father as well.

Nand Kumar Baghel faces charges under Sections 153-A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language) and 505(1)(b) (with intent to cause, or likely to cause, fear or alarm to public, or to any section of public whereby any person may be induced to commit offence against the state or against public tranquility) of the Indian Penal Code.

Covishield-like vax may help fight Nipah virus

- ***Nipah virus (NiV) is a highly pathogenic and re-emerging virus which causes sporadic but severe infections in humans.***
- ***Currently, no vaccines against NiV have been approved.***

LONDON | Agencies

A Covishield-like vaccine has been found successful in monkey trials against Nipah virus, according to an international team of researchers.

Last week, it claimed the life of a 12-year-old boy in Kerala amid the Covid surge. While all high-risk contacts of the deceased have tested negative, nearby states have been put on high alert for the disease. An outbreak of the virus in the state in 2018 killed 17 of the 18 confirmed with the virus.

Researchers from the University of Oxford, and the US National Institutes of Health investigated the efficacy of ChAdOx1 NiV in the eight African green monkeys. They published the results on the pre-print server bioRxiv, meaning it is yet to be peer-reviewed.

ChAdOx1 NiV is based on the same vector as ChAdOx1 nCoV-19, which has been approved for emergency use in over 60 countries worldwide and administered to 100 million people.

> "In contrast, vaccinated animals showed no signs of disease, and we were unable to detect infectious virus in all but one swab and all tissues."
> ***Researchers***

While one group of four monkeys were administered either two shots or a single shot of the ChadOx1NiV, the other group were injected with dummy protein (ChAdOx1 GFP), again vectored by ChAdOx1.All the eight were then or artificially infected with real Nipah virus, some given via the nose and others through the throat. A robust humoral and cellular response was detected starting 14 days post initial vaccination. These data suggest the vaccine may provide close to complete protective immunity in the monkeys, the researchers explained.

Case filed against 38 celebs for revealing a rape victim's identity

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

At that point in time, not just commoners, even the Indian celebrities had expressed their sadness over the matter and had taken to social media to show the same and some even revealed the name of the victim. And now, that has put them in legal trouble.

As per the latest reports, a case has been registered against 38 Indian celebrities including Ajay Devgn, Akshay Kumar, Salman Khan, Rakul Preet Singh, and others for revealing the identity of the rape victim on social media. The case is against 38 film celebrities from Tollywood and Bollywood.

As per the law, it is unethical to use the real name of rape victims in media or any public platform and now, a Delhi-based lawyer has filed the case. The case has been filed against Anupam Kher, Farhan Akhtar, Ajay Devgn, Akshay Kumar, Salman Khan, Maharaja Ravi Teja, Rakul Preet Singh, Allu Sirish, Charmme Kaur, and other celebs by lawyer Gaurav Gulati.

In 2019, a girl was brutally raped, killed, and burnt alive by four men in Hyderabad. The incident is still fresh in the minds of the people as it had created a lot of stir.

CBDT ALLOWS TAXPAYERS ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO FILE APPLICATION FOR TAX SETTLEMENT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In order to provide relief to the taxpayers, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has permitted filing of tax settlement applications for period upto January 31, by September 30.

It has been decided that such application can now be filed before the Interim Board for Settlement by taxpayers who have a pending case where filings could not be made earlier.

The CBDT has decided that relief will only be applicable to taxpayers who were eligible to file application for settlement on January 31, 2021 for the assessment years for which the application is sought to be filed (relevant assessment years). The taxpayers would also require to fulfill another condition that all their relevant assessment proceedings are pending as on the date of filing the application for settlement.

The Finance Act, 2021 has amended the provisions of the Income Tax Act, 1961 to, inter alia, provide that the Income Tax Settlement Commission (ITSC) shall cease to operate with effect from February 1, 2021. Further, it provided that no application for settlement can be filed on or after February 1, which was the date on which the Finance Bill, 2021 was laid before the Lok Sabha.

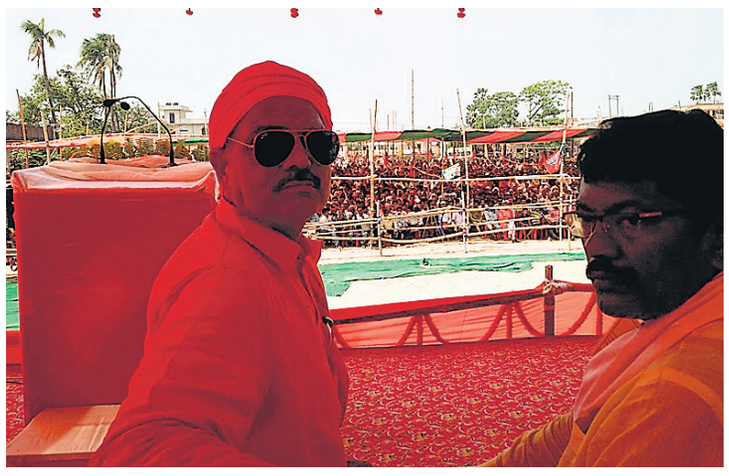
In order to dispose off the pending settlement applications, the government has constituted the Interim Board for Settlement. The taxpayers, in the pending cases, have the option to withdraw their applications within the specified time and intimate the Assessing Officer about such withdrawal.

It has been represented that a number of taxpayers were in advanced stages of filing their application for settlement before the ITSC as on February 1, 2021.

Further, some taxpayers have approached High Courts requesting that their applications for settlement may be accepted. In some cases, the courts have given interim relief and directed acceptance of applications of settlement even after February 1, 2021. As this has resulted in uncertainty and protracted litigation, the extension of dates for filing application is expected to address this issue.

Allow Hanuman Chalisa inside Bihar Assembly: BJP MLA

PATNA | Agencies



A day after BJP legislators chanted 'Jai Sri Ram', 'Har Har Mahadev' inside the Jharkhand Assembly to protest against the allocation of a separate room by the Speaker for offering Namaz during the Assembly session, a saffron party MLA in Bihar on Tuesday demanded that Hanuman Chalisa should be allowed in the Vidhan Sabha.Hari Bhushan Thakur, the BJP MLA from Bipsi in Madhubani district, said: "The move of the Jharkhand government promotes communalism in the society. It is a 'Tughlaqi Farman' of the Hemant Soren government. If he can allot special time for Namaz every Friday, the Speaker of the Bihar Vidhan Sabha should allow us to read Hanuman Chalisa inside the House," Thakur said.

On Monday, a BJP legislator in Jharkhand had said: "The Assembly will function only when the Speaker revokes his order to allocate a separate room for offering Namaz in the Assembly." The BJP legislators also sang bhajans on the Assembly campus before the session commenced. To protest against the Speaker's move, the BJP members in Jharkhand also demanded a separate room for reading Hanuman Chalisa.

Can't automatically assume death during surgery due to medical negligence: SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday held that in cases where the patient dies during surgery, "it cannot be automatically assumed that the medical professional was negligent".

A bench of Justices Hemant Gupta and A.S. Bopanna said: "It is clear that in every case where the treatment is not successful or the patient dies during surgery, it cannot be automatically assumed that the medical professional was negligent."

To indicate negligence, there should be material available on record or else appropriate medical evidence should be tendered, it held.

"The negligence alleged should be so glaring, in which event the principle of res ipsa loquitur could be made applicable, and not based on perception," the bench noted, while setting aside the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) order, which held a doctor guilty of medical negligence.

The top court's judgment came on an appeal challenging the NCDRC order, which also directed payment of Rs 17 lakh with interest at the rate of nine per cent per annum from the date of filing the complaint till the date of payment.

19 OF BIG RESERVOIRS' STORAGE LESS THAN 50% OF NORMAL

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Of the 130 large reservoir storages monitored by the Central Water Commission (CWC), 19 reservoirs have storage less than or equal to 50 per cent compared to average of last 10 years, data compiled till September 2 has shown.

Of the 130, there are 27 reservoirs that have storage less than or equal to 50 per cent with respect to last year, according to CWC data. Most worrisome storage position is for three major dams: Govind Sagar (Bhakra), Pong dam (Beas) and Sardar Sarovar. While Govind Sagar is 73 per cent, Pong Dam is 58 per cent of the normal storage levels. Sardar Sarovar reservoir has 65 per cent live storage compared to the average of last 10 years.

The overall storage position is less than the corresponding period of last year in the country as a whole and is also less than the average storage of last 10 years during the corresponding period. Till last week, the situation was better with storage levels on par or better compared to both last year's and average 10 years' data, CWC data has shown.The live storage available in these reservoirs is 111.691 BCM, which is 65 per cent of the total live storage capacity. However, last year at same time, it was 140.051 BCM and the average of last 10 years live storage was 119.026 BCM. Thus, the live storage is 80 per cent of the corresponding period of last year and 94 per cent of average of last ten years.These reservoirs cater to agriculture needs for rabi season and few of them are also used for hydropower generation. Precariously low levels with barely few days of rains due from southwest monsoon can prove problematic in rabi season.

India has had an overall 24 per cent deficit in August rainfall that pushed the total rainfall from June 1 till August 31 to 9 per cent less than normal.

TERROR MODULE BUSTED IN J&K'S POONCH, 3 HELD

Jammu: Three terror associates were apprehended after a terror module was busted in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said on Tuesday. A cache of arms and ammunition was also recovered, officials said. Police said in a joint search operation in Kirni area of Poonch, police and army apprehended local Jahangir Ali, and a search of his bag led to recovery of two pistols, four Chinese grenades, 100 pistol rounds, and four pistol magazines. "During investigation, it came to fore that accused was meant to hand over these to Basharat Khan of Surankote and Sheraz of Sangla Surankote," a police officer said, adding that these two were also later apprehended. "It has come to fore during investigation that the trio are associates of proscribed outfit JKGF and were given task to carry out terrorist activities in J&K, particularly in Poonch," police said. Police have lodged an FIR and investigation has been taken up.

BJP tames Yediyurappa, to plan his statewide yatra

BENGALURU | Agencies

In a clear cut message to former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, the BJP high command has conveyed the message that he can't take unilateral decisions anymore.

BJP state President Nalin Kumar Kateel on Monday announced that he will accompany Yediyurappa on his state tour after Ganesh Chaturthi.

"The tour programme will soon be fixed. We will face the next Assembly elections under the guidance of Yediyurappa and leadership of the Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai. The party will contest with team spirit," he maintained.

The statement by Nalinkumar Kateel has sparked debate in the state political circles. Yediyurappa has unilaterally announced that he will take up a statewide tour to strengthen the party base. His family has gifted him with Rs 1.3 crore luxury car after returning from Maldives for the purpose. He had also stated that his tour would begin from constituencies where BJP lost elections.

However, the statements by Yediyurappa did not go down well with party leaders as they felt the tour by Yediyurappa will affect the process of the new government's smooth take off. They also feared that it would make the party more dependent on him.

The party, knowing well of Yediyurappa's organisational skills and massive mass appeal even after stepping down as the chief minister, wants to utilise his strengths but it does not want any situation where he dictates terms to the party, sources in the BJP reveal.

GOVT BLIND TO STUDENTS' DISTRESS, POSTPONE NEET EXAM: RAHUL

New Delhi: After the court refused to interfere on dates of the NEET examination, former Congress President Rahul Gandhi came out openly in support of the aspirants.Rahul on Tuesday in a tweet said, "GOI is blind to students' distress. Postpone #NEET exam. Let them have a fair chance." As per reports, the Supreme Court on Monday dismissed petitions to defer NEET because this year's date clashed with other exams. The students said the NEET date clashed with other exams, including those for compartment exams for the CBSE students. The court said 16 lakh students will appear for NEET and it can't be deferred. The NEET (UG) 2021 will be held on September 12 across the country following Covid-19 protocols. The NEET examination was earlier scheduled to be held on August 1.

Serious security lapse as murder convict escapes from Kerala jail

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM | Agencies

In what's believed to be a serious security lapse, a murder convict jailed at the high profile Thiruvananthapuram Central Jail at Poojapura in the heart of the capital city, escaped on Tuesday morning.

The police have launched a manhunt to nab Jaffar Hussain, a resident of Tuticorin who has been jailed for a murder that took place here in 2005.

He was convicted in 2017 and since then he has been housed here.

What's serious is that on account of the Covid pandemic, while many inmates have been given parole, even with lower number of inmates and a good number of jail staff, Hussain managed to escape from the jail.

After he was found missing, the police managed to get some tips that he escaped on an auto rickshaw and he reached the main Central bus stand.

Despite the serious lapse in security, the police are confident that they will be able to nab the escapee soon.

ULFA-I keen to hold peace talks with government

Guwahati | New Delhi

The self-styled commander-in-chief of the outlawed outfit United Liberation Front of Asom (Independent), Paresh Baruah, on Tuesday indicated to hold talks with the government by stating that his group would not mind if Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma mediates in the possible peace talks with the Centre.

The ULFA-I chief said that the incumbent Chief Minister has the courage, sincerity and honesty to take forward the peace talks.

"He (Sarma) is capable. He knows our history and we have seen his courage. If the talks are not initiated, how can the 42-year-old problem be solved even though the issue is complicated," Baruah told Syed Zarir Hussain, the Chief Managing Editor of Assam's leading television channel, News Live.

The Assam Chief Minister said in New Delhi on Tuesday that informal process of talks with ULFA-I is going on and within the next two to three years, the problems would be resolved.Claiming that the talks are very essential, Baruah said that if talks are not initiated, how can the deadlock be broken? "Our doors for talks are always open," he said.

Stating that due to the wrong decisions of the previous chief ministers, they took up the arms struggle, Baruah appreciated Sarma's efforts on the ULFA-I issue.

MHA drops 20 names from list of Maoist affected districts

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid the weakening strength of the Maoists and substantial improvement in the security situation on the ground, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has removed 20 names from the list of 90 Maoist affected districts for the coverage of central funding under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme, sources in the security set up said.

Uttar Pradesh is out of the coverage of SRE as its three districts, Chandauli, Mirzapur and Sonebhadra, are no longer required for target interventions to contain these ultras, officials said.

They also said that the number of most-affected districts in terms of Maoist violence has also come down from 30 to 25. These districts account for 85 per cent of the violence incurred by the Maoists.

Under the SRE scheme, the Centre reimburses the bulk of the expenditure incurred by the Naxal-hit states, including ex-gratia payment to civilians and security personnel killed by the ultras, besides the expenses on mobility, logistics and communication and also for the ammunition used for operations against the ultras by the Central paramilitary and police forces.The MHA's move came after a detailed review with the stakeholders of the Naxal-hit states recently and now the number of districts covered under the SRE scheme has come down from 70 in 10 states from the earlier 90 in 11 states. The status of the most affected districts was last reviewed in 2018.The 70 districts to be covered by the SRE scheme include five districts in Andhra Pradesh -- East Godavari, Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and West Godavari, 10 districts in Bihar -- Aurangabad, Banka, Gaya, Jamui, Kaimur, Lakhisarai, Munger, Nawada, Rohtas and West Champaran.Similarly, Chhattisgarh has 14 districts namely Balrampur, Bastar, Bijapur, Dantewada, Dhamtari, Gariyaband, Kanker, Kondagaon, Mahasamand, Narayanpur, Rajnandgaon, Sukma, Kabirdham and Mungeli.

In Jharkhand, 16 districts are covered by the SRE scheme -- Bokaro, Chatra, Dhanbad, Dumka, East Singhbhum, Garhwa, Giridih, Gumla, Hazaribagh, Khunti, Latehar, Lohardaga, Palamu, Ranchi, Saraikela-Kharsawan and West Singhbhum.The three districts of Madhya Pradesh -- Balaghat, Mandla and Dindori -- and three districts of Kerala -- Malappuram, Palakkad and Wayanad -- are also covered under the SRE scheme.

Gadhchiroli and Gondia districts of Maharashtra, Jhargram district of West Bengal, and Bargarh, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Naupada, Rayagada and Sundergarh of Odisha come under the ambit of the SRC scheme.

88 oxygen plants start in the state: CM

- Oxygen production at 44 thousand 590 liters per minute begins
- All 190 plants will be operational by the month of September

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the deficiencies noticed in the health infrastructure in the second wave of Corona are being removed on priority basis. The most important among these deficiencies was medical oxygen. We had decided that whatever happens, now the people of the state will face no shortage of oxygen in the treatment in future. For this purpose, the work of setting up oxygen plants in the state was done on a war footing by running a campaign. Today out of 190 oxygen plants being set up in Madhya Pradesh, 88 plants have become functional. The oxygen capacity of these 88 plants is 45 thousand 890 liters per minute.

Chouhan said that during the second wave of corona, the shortage was overcome in Madhya Pradesh by bringing oxygen from other states. In this, oxygen was brought to the state through tankers by road along with Indian Army aircrafts, helicopters, rail. It was a very difficult situation. The dream of becoming self-reliant in the matter of medical oxygen with creative thinking and better planning, so that these situations do not have to be faced again, is taking shape today. Chief Minister informed that with the installation of oxygen plants in the health institutions of the state, now oxygen will be available to the patients without delay.

Chouhan said that now there will be no need to import oxygen as oxygen production has started in the state itself. It is our endeavour that oxygen plants should be set up at the tehsil level including all the district headquarters. Where oxygen plants are not installed, oxygen concentrators have been provided.

Chouhan said that with the cooperation of the Union Ministers including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the timely availability of oxygen to Madhya Pradesh continued. With this we were successful in saving a large number of lives in the second wave of corona in the state. Expressing gratitude to PM Modi, Chief Minister Chouhan said that out of 190 oxygen plants being set up in Madhya Pradesh, 102 plants are being set up with the cooperation of the Central Government. All 190 plants will start functioning by the end of September.

Chouhan said that with the combined efforts of everyone, the year 2021 will also be remembered for self-reliance in the production of oxygen in Madhya Pradesh. Establishment of 190 oxygen plants in the state today is a big achievement in itself.

Chouhan said that massive public cooperation has also been received in the campaign to set up oxygen plants in the state. Many companies, institutions along with voluntary organisations have come forward in this work and public representatives contributed from their discretionary funds and played a supporting role. Several organisations have also donated oxygen concentrators to health centres.

TRIBALS RANSACK MP POLICE STATION AFTER ARRESTED YOUTH DIES

Mob vandalises police station in MP's Khargone after death of tribal youth in jail.

Team Absolute | Khargone:

Hundreds of villagers stormed and ransacked a police station in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district on Tuesday morning, after a youth arrested on a theft charge, died.

As per reports, one of the 12 accused, arrested by the police in connection with a robbery incident in Khairkundi village under Biston police station area, died in jail on Monday evening.

Coming to know of the death, hundreds of tribals besieged the Biston police station, vandalised police vehicles, pelted stones, and threw furniture, making police personnel flee to save their lives. The villagers alleged that all accused persons were tortured and brutally beaten at the police station.

The situation was brought into control after police and the Sub-Divisional Magistrate reached the spot. The incident occurred at around 9:30-9:45 AM in the morning. The villagers reacted to the death of an accused arrested with 11 others for theft and robbery. The villagers and relatives of the deceased allege that police killed him. The truth will only be out after the medical report. Three policemen faced injuries during the incident. The situation is under control," said Satyandra Singh, SDM, Khargone.

The videos of the incident show villagers pelting stones and police firing teargas shells. Some police personnel are also said to have suffered injuries.

Former Chief Minister Kamal Nath said: "The government is bent on oppressing the tribals in Madhya Pradesh.

After Nemawar and Neemuch, now the news of the death of a tribal due to torture in Biston police station of Khargone district and the murder of a tribal girl student while going to school in Balaghat district, has come. I demand a high level inquiry into the incident and strict action against the culprits. I also demand all possible help to the families of the victims, they must get justice." Former state Congress President Arun Yadav also attacked the government, saying: "The MP Police is like Taliban. A tribal has died due to torture in police remand, the incident is sad and condemnable."

Sarang inspects Hamidia and Kamala Nehru Hospital

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Medical Education Minister Vishwas Kailash Sarang today inspected Hamidia and Kamala Nehru Hospital. He inspected all the arrangements there and gave necessary directions to those concerned.

Sarang met seriously injured 14-year-old girl resident of Misrod and enquired about her health from the doctors. After consultation with the doctors, instructions were given to refer the girl to Nagpur for proper treatment. Sarang congratulated the team of doctors, who performed the first kidney transplant at Hamidia Hospital. He held discussion with the team and learned about the health of both the donor and the patient. Sarang encouraged the team of doctors. He met and appreciated all the doctors and every member in their team. Due to the efforts of Dr. Saurabh Jain, Dr. Amit Jain and Dr. Himanshu Sharma, the first kidney transplant has been performed in a government hospital in the state.

During the inspection, Sarang directed that the cleanliness of the hospital should be maintained properly. For this department wise competition should also be organized. This cleanliness campaign should also be ranked weekly.

Sarang said that with a view to create a proper and cheerful environment for children in the child ward, cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse should be displayed on the walls for the entertainment of children.

Sarang informed that 150 children with seasonal disease are admitted in the hospital. He personally met them and inquired about their health from their family members. There is a provision of 200 beds in the hospital. Sarang instructed the concerned to keep an extra ventilator standby.

Sarang said that there should be no shortage of medicines and arrangements. In case of any need, they should inform the higher level and ensure smooth arrangements.

On seeing a three-day-old girl child going home from the hospital, the minister could not control his emotions. He cared Vedanshi, daughter of Akanksha-Sunil Soni, and gave an amount of Rs 500 and blessed her.

Sarang assured to include two new operation theatres in the new infrastructure on the demand of doctors and also asked the team of doctors to prepare and make available a brief description of the requirements as needed. He said that all possible efforts would be made for the arrangements.

Sarang directed to meet many patients on the demand of their families. He discussed about the patients with their families and got their problems resolved. During this, Dean Dr. Jitendra Shukla and Hamidia Superintendent Dr. Lokendra Dave were present.

POSITIVE THINKING AND SENSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MUST FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION: GOVERNOR

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that efforts to increase awareness among scheduled castes and tribes are necessary. Information regarding the welfare schemes of the government should be given in the gram sabhas. He said that positive thinking and sensitive behavior are necessary for effective implementation of beneficiary oriented schemes. The goal should be that not a single eligible person is deprived of the benefits of the scheme.

Governor Patel was addressing a meeting organized in connection with Scheduled Castes and Tribes at Raj Bhavan on Tuesday.

Patel said that it is necessary to pay special attention to the basic needs of the society in the development efforts of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. He said that arrangements should be made for training to upgrade skills of youth in the society, as per employment prospects in local industries and business. Efforts must be made to give priority to the local people in employment. He stressed on making efforts along with the participation of Gram Sabhas in the speedy disposal of pending cases under Forest Rights Act. Village elders should also be included in the Gram Sabha. Seeking information from the Forest Department about the plantation work done by them, he said that after getting the soil tested, sapling should be planted accordingly. Efforts should be made to plant bigger plants to increase the survival of the seedlings.

Referring to the bamboos of Orissa, he has also asked to explore the possibilities of their production in the state.

Principal Secretary Forest Ashok Barnwal informed about the activities of the department. He informed that the total forest area of the state has increased by 1,469 square kilometers during the year 2005 to 2019 according to an assessment of Forest Survey of India, Dehradun. Principal Secretary Tribal Welfare and Scheduled Castes Welfare Dr. Pallavi Jain Govil informed that an initiative has been started to provide employment in various works, related to tourism industry in coordination with the Tourism Department, by imparting training to the local youth.

Girls Paraded Naked During Ritual For Rain In Drought-Hit Village

Team Absolute | Damoh

At least six girls were paraded naked in a village in Damoh district by locals as part of a ritual which villagers believe will please the rain gods and bring relief from the drought-like situation, officials said today.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has sought a report from the Damoh district administration on the incident which happened on Sunday at Baniya village, about 50 km from the Damoh district headquarters, in the Bundelkhand region.

A district official said a response will be submitted to the NCPCR.

Damoh superintendent of police DR Teniwar said the police received the information that some young girls were paraded naked to appease the God of rains as part of a local practice and prevailing social evils.

"Police are investigating this incident. Action will be taken if it is found that girls were forced to go naked," he said, adding villagers believe that this practice may result in rain. According to religious beliefs, young girls are made to walk naked with a wooden shaft rested on their shoulders with a frog tied to it. Women accompanying these girls sing bhajans to praise the rain god, he said. Damoh collector S Krishna Chaitanya said the local administration will submit a report in this regard to the NCPCR. He said the parents of these girls are also involved in this incident and they will be made aware of such superstitious practices. The district collector said none of the villagers have complained about this "ritual." "In such cases, the administration can only make the villagers aware about the futility of such superstition and make them understand that such practices don't yield desired results," he said. Meanwhile, two videos of the incident have surfaced.

In one of the video clips, the girls (around five-years-old) without clothes are seen walking side-by-side with a wooden shaft resting on their shoulders with a frog tied to it. A group of women singing bhajans follows the procession.

In another video, some women can be heard saying that this ritual was being performed as the paddy crop is drying in the absence of rains.

"We believe that this will bring in rains," they can be heard telling the person who recorded the incident.

The women said they will collect raw food grain from villagers during this procession and then cook food for 'bhandara' (group feast) at a local temple.

CM EXTENDS BEST WISHES ON PRAKASH PARV

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has extended his best wishes on the occasion of Prakash Parv of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Chief Minister has tweeted that Shri Guru Granth Sahib teaches us about service, love and harmony while treading on the path of welfare for humanity. By imbibing their education, we should also make our highest contribution in the progress of society and upliftment of the world. It is noteworthy that Arjan Dev Ji, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, published the Guru Granth Sahib for the first time on this day in AD 1604.

CM plants coconut sapling

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a coconut sapling in the residence premises today. Coconut is considered auspicious and propitious in Indian culture. Coconut is also called shrifal. Coconut tree is known as 'Kalpavriksha'. Coconut and coconut oil are considered very useful in terms of health.

OLYMPIC HOCKEY PLAYER VIVEK SAGAR APPOINTED AS DSP

The Madhya Pradesh government has appointed Indian men's hockey team player hockey player Vivek Sagar as Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) in the state police.

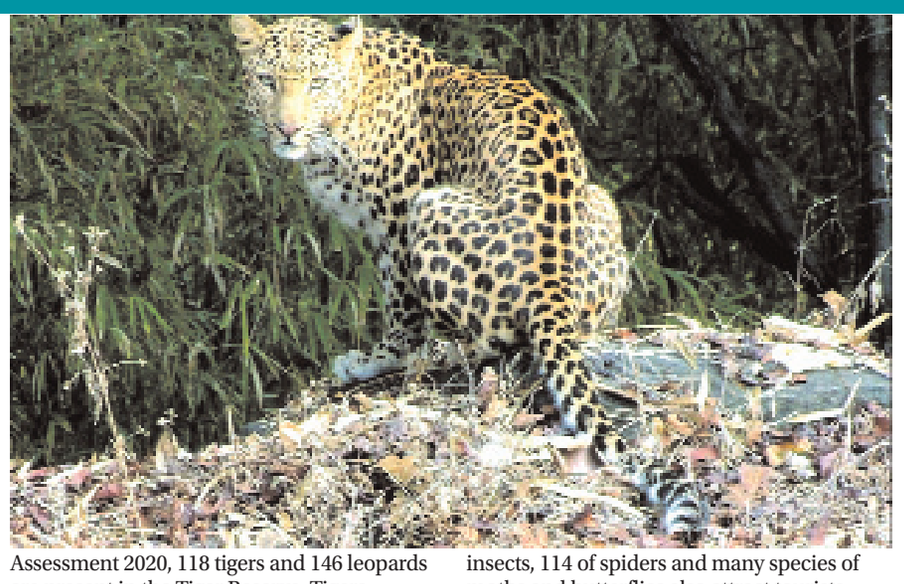
Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government has issued a letter appointing hockey player Vivek Sagar, who was part of the Indian squad that won the bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics, as Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) in the state police, an official said on Tuesday.

The appointment letter was issued on Monday evening as promised by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and approved by the state cabinet, Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Home, Rajesh Rajora said. Earlier this month, Chouhan had presented a cheque of Rs one crore to Sagar and announced his appointment as DSP and a house for his family wherever they wish, in the state. Sagar hails from Shivnagar Chandon village in Itarsi tehsil in the Hoshangabad district.

"Kanha National Park" is famous for abundance of wildlife and biological diversity

Team Absolute | Bhopal



Along with the domestic tourists, foreign tourists are getting attracted very quickly towards the national parks established in the state. One of them is Kanha National Park. This park is full of forest wealth, abundance of wildlife and biological diversity.

Kanha National Park is known for its unique and distinctive natural habitat. The entire forest area of Kanha still preserves the glorious past, due to which this park attracts domestic and foreign tourists.

Bordering Mandla and Balaghat districts, this park is known for its natural and environmental beauty. It is one of the largest national parks in the country in terms of area. Core Forest Division (National Park) and Buffer Zone Forest Division come under Kanha Tiger Reserve. The area of these two forest divisions is 940 and 1134 sq. km respectively. An area of 91 thousand 743 sq km in the national park is notified as Critical Tiger Habitat. Apart from this, there is a satellite mini Core-Fen Sanctuary, a wildlife sanctuary under the Tiger Reserve, which is spread over an area of 110.74 sq. km.

There are many wild animals including 118 tigers and 146 leopards

According to the Wildlife Census Assessment 2020, 118 tigers and 146 leopards are present in the Tiger Reserve. Tigers include 83 adults and 35 cubs. Apart from them, wild dog, hyena, jackal, wolf, bear, fox, wild cat, wild boar, gaur, chital, barasingha, sambar, Medak-Medki deer, chausingha, blue bull, mongoose, water dog (otter), porcupine, langur, monkey, wild species of peacocks are found. Along with this, about 43 species of mammals, 325 of birds, 39 of reptiles, 500 of insects, 114 of spiders and many species of moths and butterflies also attract tourists.

The nearest place for tourists to reach Kanha National Park by air is Jabalpur 100 km, Raipur 250 km and Nagpur 300 km. Similarly, the nearest railway stations are Nainpur, Gondia and Jabalpur. Khatia and Sarhi Gate of Mandla district can be reached from Nainpur. For the protection of wildlife, 962 people including Assistant Conservator of Forests, Forest Rangers, Deputy Forest Rangers, Foresters, Forest Guards, Permanent Personnel, Security or Committee Workers and Ex-Servicemen are posted in KTR. Apart from them, 162 men and 13 women play the role of guide in the reserve area.

National-international tourists visit "Kanha Tiger Reserve" regularly. It is generally open from October to June 30. Khatia, Kisli, Sarhi and Mukki are 4 gates to enter the National Park. Similarly, there are hotels of other big houses including Madhya Pradesh Tourism. In the year 2019-2020, 90 thousand 135 domestic, 13 thousand 875 foreign tourists visited the core zone and 13 thousand 928 domestic and 305 foreign tourists visited the buffer zone. In the year 2020-2021, more than 1.5 lakh domestic and 109 foreign tourists visited the core zone. 19 thousand 395 domestic and 6 foreign tourists visited the buffer zone. In the year 2020-21, a total of more than 1.5 lakh tourists came to the core zone and 19 thousand 401 tourists to the buffer zone.

Kanha Coffee Table Book was awarded the "India Tourism Award" for Park Management by the Government of India under the category 'Best Publication in English Language' in the year 2019. In the year 2020, the park has been rewarded by the state government for the excellent operation of the 'Anubhuti programme.'

EDITOR'S SPECS

RISE IN GLOBAL TEMPERATURE SHOULD BE STOPPED

With extreme weather events increasingly impacting countries across the world, the UN has underlined the importance of limiting temperature rise to the internationally agreed goal of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. "The entire planet is going through a season of fire and floods," primarily hurting fragile and vulnerable populations in rich and poor countries alike, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed told a high-level meeting on climate action said. Speaking to the Dialogue on Accelerating Adaptation Solutions Ahead of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), the annual UN climate conference, which will take place in Glasgow in November, the deputy UN chief noted already-visible impacts with a 1.2-degree rise. Countries and populations worldwide -- particularly those most vulnerable and least responsible for the climate crisis -- will experience even more devastating consequences. The effects will reverberate through economies, communities and ecosystems, erasing development gains, deepening poverty, increasing migration and exacerbating tensions. With "bold and decisive steps" towards a net-zero global economy by 2050, Mohammed said that the world could still limit global warming to within 1.5 degrees. Acting now is a question of climate justice. And we have the solutions, calling for a "massively scaled-up investment" in adaptation and resilience, and stressing the importance of simplifying rules and easing access for underprivileged countries, especially those in Africa. With less than 80 days to COP26, the deputy UN chief urged the participants to "act boldly now for people and planet before it's too late.

CRYPTO CHRISTIANS VYING FOR POLITICAL SHARE!

These days Punjab is in the news for all the wrong reasons that includes spat between two senior Congress leaders and spate of conversions of Hindus and Sikhs to Christianity.

Vinod Kumar Shukla

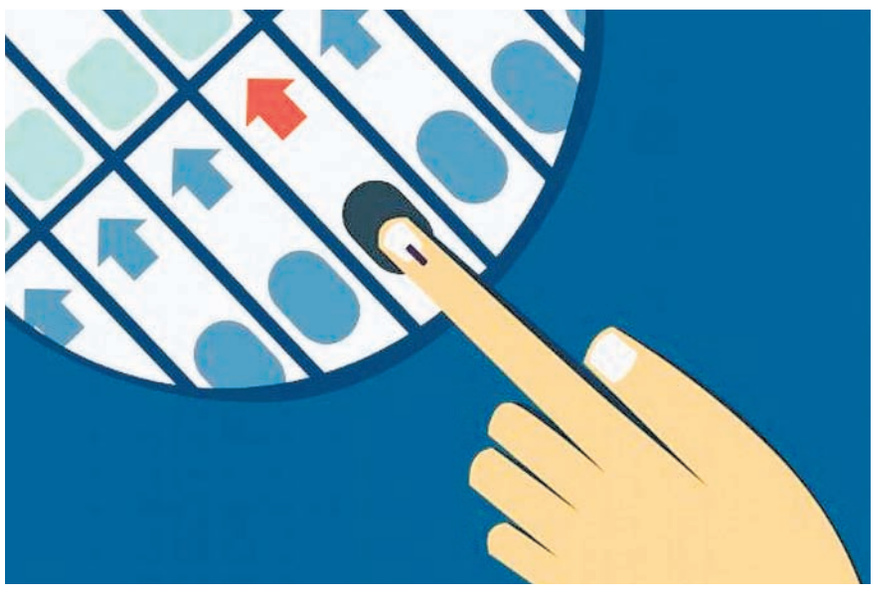
These days Punjab is in the news for all the wrong reasons that includes spat between two senior Congress leaders and spate of conversions of Hindus and Sikhs to Christianity. It is now visible in the state with a growing number of churches and an increasing population of Christians. But what is alarming is that this has become a national phenomenon so much so that the community too is now looking for political space by claiming to be 10-15 per cent population of Maseeh Samaj across the country.

Organisations like Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, RSS and Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram have not only been accusing Christian missionaries for converting innocent tribal and rural people by deceit but have been working to stop it and bring them back to Hindu fold. They have also been saying that the level of conversion is unimaginable. As per a rough estimate, there are 2.3 per cent Christian in the country with major concentration in North-East and Kerala. A big chunk of the North-East is converted into Christianity. But the way Christian community is vying for political space in Uttar Pradesh in the forthcoming Assembly elections by joining hands with Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party led by Shivpal Singh Yadav, the scenario seems to be different.

It appears that they penetrated the entire state. A convention of All India Maseeh Samaj was organised in Lucknow recently under the patronage of Shivpal Singh Yadav in which four pastors from every district of Uttar Pradesh were invited. Maseeh Samaj National Spokesperson Ashwini Mudgal claims that there are around 10-12 per cent followers of Maseeh Samaj in the country who are not necessarily Christians but they believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ. However, they are predominantly Christians. The community is accused by the VHP, RSS and other affiliate organisations that a certain section deliberately hides Christian identity to get reservation benefits. The moment a Dalit converts to Christianity or Islam, the benefit of reservation ceases to exist for them. So, Dalits and tribals stick to their SC/ST identity but their religion is changed for other purposes. Their identity on paper remains different but they practice Christianity. They are called crypto Christians. Going by the words of Mudgal, who also claims to be President of All India Brahmin Mahasabha, there is a big support base of Maseeh Samaj in UP. So much so that they are claiming to be the king maker in Uttar Pradesh in this election and will be instrumental in removing Yogi Adityanath in 2022 and the king of Delhi (read Narendra Modi) in 2024 by uniting Maseeh Samaj to vote against the BJP. Time has come to change the king as the Bible tells if the king fails to deliver justice, he must be changed and this is also the constitutional right of the people of the country, say people belonging to the movement. They want to make UP a model for change in the rest of the country. Maseeh Samaj doesn't protest against anything so there is no one to take forward their issues and demands. They want the first thing to be done is to scrap the Conversion Law.

It is claimed that prayer meetings are organized in every district, most of the towns and tehsils of UP, MP, Rajasthan, Punjab and many other parts of the country. So, the number of Maseeh Samaj is such that one cannot imagine. But the reality is that they stick to their old tactics as one can find posters in the remote areas with promises of curing diseases like diabetes, epilepsy and many other diseases by surrendering to Jesus Christ. So, lure, falsehood and deceit are continuing to befool people. Punjab has the maximum cases where claims of treatment of various diseases are done by mystical experiences. Christian missionaries are not only donning saffron cloths to look like Hindu saints, distributing Bibles with deceptive pictures and Christian religious teachers prefixing Swamy before their names to deceive people. They recite Kabir, Tulsi, Ved Mantra, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Sanskrit hymn to prove their points however most of the time they misquote them. They are also misquoting Swami Vivekananda to serve their purpose as per their needs.

But why are they quoting Hindu religious teachings and scholars to convert people into Christianity, because most of their prey are illiterate and fail to understand these tricks and fall into their trap. They also get away with the allegation of conversion and hide behind lampposts of public service. People are gradually brainwashed and first they will be asked to remove pictures of Hindu deities from their homes and then they are formally converted to Christianity to accomplish the task of evangelists. There is a pattern and journey from being Crypto Christians to complete Christians is executed like this. They initially call crypto Christians a faithful



(Vishwasi) who have faith in Jesus Christ by continuing to follow his/her original faith in certain cases.

The question is why any Graham Staines is required to come all the way from Australia to Odisha well equipped with foreign funds on one hand and Bible on the other hand. He came simply to convert innocent tribals and this has also cost lives of Swami Lakshmanand Saraswati and four of his disciples. Seven people were convicted in 2013 in Swami Lakshmananda assassination case and all of them were Christians and they were against him for bringing tribals back to Hinduism. A former Rajya Sabha MP of the Congress was also an accused in this case. But Maoists were accused of killing the saint. What issues Maoists could have with religious teachers? They always have had issues with the Government. Moreover, service doesn't require one to underline his/her religion. Actually, Christian missionaries failed to withstand Islamic onslaught in Kerala and some other parts of South India and Christans too are converted to Islam. North-East is getting peaceful and so they become jobless there forcing them to turn to north India. The recent violence along the borders of Assam and Mizoram has religious connotation with Christian evangelists to the core.

Right wing activists are accused of resorting to violence against conversion by allurement. But the Government has certain reasons and evidence that in 2017, it asked US Christian group Compassion International to stop its operations in India. A Chennai-based NGO Caruna Bal Vikas was booked by the CBI as the NGO was getting huge funds from abroad to convert people to Christianity. There is a long list of Christian groups that have lost their FCRA licenses.

There are around 2.78 crore Christian population in India but Maseeh Samaj claims that there are over 30 crore who are somehow part of the Maseeh Samaj ideology (Crypto Christian). There are many cities in Uttar Pradesh like Allahabad, Lucknow, Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Jaunpur, Gorakhpur and many others where they have a sizable number. Acharya Vikas Massey has founded an organization called Bharatiya Masih Samaj with his wife Deepti Bhatnagar, a Hindu convert, is its cofounder and are claiming their political right with the support of a Brahmin - Mr Mudgal. In a democratic set up, number matters and every religion is trying to increase its number by hook or by crook to be in the reckoning at the cost of Indic faiths.

(Author is freelance journalist based at Delhi. All the views expressed are personal.)

international

PAK REGAINS GLOBAL RELEVANCE WITH AFGHAN GOVT FORMATION

Peshawar | Agencies

Pakistan's role in the current developments in Afghanistan, where Afghan Taliban have ousted Ashraf Ghani government and also have ensured exit of all foreign troops, has been pivotal from the historical peace agreement in Doha between US and the Afghan Taliban to the current scenario.

While US President Joe Biden's administration has shown Pakistan a cold shoulder after the Doha agreement, refraining from having a single telephonic conversation with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, Islamabad has slowly and smartly regained its regional importance and global relevance in the upcoming future developments in Afghanistan and the major role players that are aligning and converging their strategies in the war-torn country.At the moment, Pakistan is in active consultation with countries including the US, the UK, the UAE, Turkey, Germany, Russia, China and others in planning, discussing and formulating a plan for the future development process, humanitarian aid through global entities and creating global legitimacy through government formation in Afghanistan.

Pakistan's historical ties with the Taliban since the Soviet war, have kept it extremely relevant and important to facilitate, compel and even influence the Taliban into table talks with the US.

Now with the Taliban government coming in place in Afghanistan and serious looming threats of a humanitarian crisis, health crisis, food crisis, water crisis inching closer, the insurgents have also been forced to call out for help to the international community.Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesperson for the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan (IEA), has called on the international community to help them with aid and supplies to tackle and manage the worsening humanitarian crisis in the country, which may soon turn into a widespread human disaster.As global donors and countries look towards ways to access Afghanistan with aid, Pakistan seems to be the best viable option as the land route from Pakistan to Afghanistan, through the Torkham border, has served as the cheapest route for long term consistent supplies in and out of Afghanistan.

Pakistan's Torkham border was the main route of NATO supplies for at least two decades.

Moreover, the recent visit by Faiz Hameed, the chief of Pakistan's top spy agency Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI), to Afghanistan, days before the announcement of the new government setup under Taliban, has also reaffirmed the existing close ties and symbolic relevance that the country holds with the Taliban.

Pakistan maintains that it wants stability in Afghanistan through an inclusive government formation.But for the western world, Pakistan has emerged as a king maker through active its secret but active manoeuvering and strategic gameplay in Afghanistan.

Taliban plan to announce inclusive caretaker govt in Afghanistan

Kabul | Agencies

Amid discussions and meetings to announce the new government in Afghanistan, which the Taliban say will be inclusive, the world is cautiously keeping an eye on the developing situation in the war-torn nation.The Taliban have said that they are planning and working towards an inclusive caretaker government in Afghanistan, which would include leaders from all the ethnicities and tribal backgrounds. As per Taliban sources, over a dozen names are under consideration to be made part of the new government. However, as a caretaker government is being formed, the duration of its stay in office is still not known. "The caretaker government will have an 'Amir ul Mominees' (supreme leader), who will lead the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan (IEA)," said a Taliban source.

For this purpose, a supreme leader council has been convened to finalise the ministers and the government.As per initial information, the ministries in the new government will include Internal security, Defence, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Information, Judiciary and Special assignment for Kabul AffairsThe ongoing discussions for the formation of the government started from Kandahar, which was followed by final contemplations that are underway in Kabul. Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, co-founder of the Taliban, and Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, son of Taliban founder Mullah Omar, are the key heads of the council and are expected to be the ones leading the new setup. Sources also revealed that introduction of new faces will be done in the new government, which would include sons of Tajiks and Uzbek tribal leaders.

On the other hand, the US has been pushing the Taliban to include names of former government leaders, including former President Hamid Karzai and former head of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation, Abdullah Abdullah, a demand that the Taliban have refused to cater to at the moment.As per details shared by sources in the Taliban, the new government will stand by its commitment made in the Doha agreement with the US to not allow its soil to be used to spread terrorism. The source also said that under the new Taliban government, women will be allowed to work in various sectors, including health and education.

The sources also revealed that special courts will be set up at the local levels to counter corruption and deliver speedy justice against the corrupt officials.

Palestine calls on Israel to present peace program

Ramallah | Agencies

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Ishtaye has called on the Israeli government to present a peace program for realising a "two-state solution" on 1967 borders.A plan proposed by Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett to restrict the conflict "is nothing more than throwing dust in the eyes of the international community", Ishtaye told the Palestinian cabinet here.

"We are confident that neither the United States nor Europe will buy Bennett's plan," Ishtaye said, adding that "reducing the conflict is a plan aimed at reducing the Palestinian land and repositioning the Israeli occupation in the Palestinian territories".Ishtaye referred to Bennett's plan reportedly revealed Friday at an off-the-record Zoom call with leaders from the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations."Steps to reduce tension with the Palestinians will be taken, although there is no political breakthrough," and "everyone realides that we do not expect a political breakthrough with the Palestinians in the near future," Bennett was quoted as saying by the Israeli media.Ishtaye told the weekly cabinet meeting that "reducing tension with the Palestinians is through the cessation of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and a timetable for ending the Israeli occupation".Israel occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which are claimed by the Palestinians, in the 1967 Middle East war and has controlled them ever since. The Jewish settlements are considered a violation of international law by most of the international community.

South Korea test-fires sub marine-launched ballistic missile

Seoul | Agencies

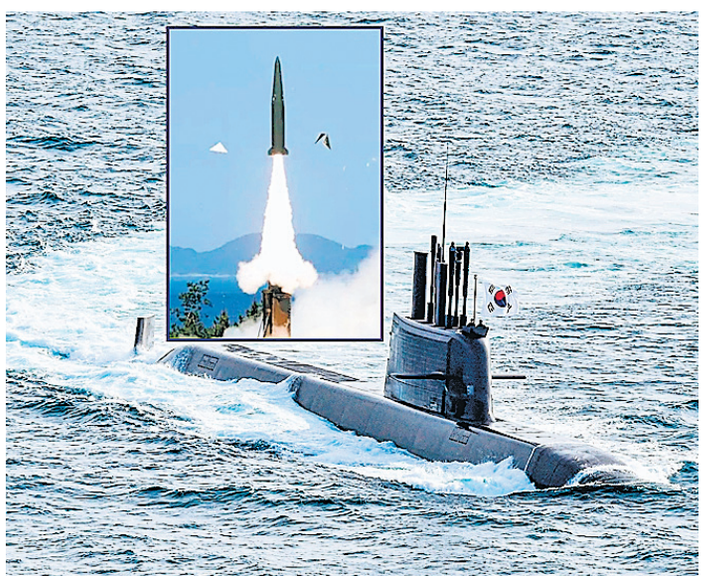
South Korea has successfully test-fired a homegrown submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), a military source announced on Tuesday.

The military source said that the state-run Agency for Defense Development (ADD) conducted its first underwater ejection test of the SLBM from a domestically-developed 3,000-ton submarine on September 1, reports Xinhua news agency.

The SLBM will be mass-produced and deployed after a couple of additional tests.

It will be mounted on the Dosan Ahn Chang-ho submarine with six vertical launch tubes that was put into commission on August 13.The SLBM was reportedly codenamed 'Hyunmoo 4-4' as it was developed based on the technology of the country's Hyunmoo-2B ballistic missile with a range of about 500 km.

It will fitted with conventional warheads.



The military staged a successful test of the SLBM from an underwater barge last month, before the submarine test-launch last week.

South Korea became the eighth country in the world to develop an SLBM after the US, Russia, Britain, France, India, China and North Korea.

EL SALVADOR 1ST COUNTRY TO ADOPT BITCOIN AS OFFICIAL CURRENCY

San Salvador | Agencies

El Salvador on Tuesday became the first country in the world to adopt bitcoin as an official currency. The central American nation announced that it plans to buy "a lot more" bitcoins soon. It purchased 200 tokens earlier and another 200 more recently, ahead of its rollout as a legal tender.

Ahead of the deadline to make bitcoin El Salvador's official currency, President Nayib Bukele tweeted that the government has about a large sum of the cryptocurrency. "El Salvador has just bought its first 200 coins," Bukele wrote. "Our brokers will be buying a lot more as the deadline approaches," he added. The country will accept payment in bitcoin alongside the US dollar, which has been El Salvador's official currency since 2001.

EI Salvador's decision to make Bitcoin a legal tender will boost financial inclusion in their country as the majority of the population does not have access to formal banking channels, according to Shivam Thakral, CEO of BuyUcoin.

"In India, our approach towards crypto is different. We don't see it as a legal tender but as an asset class. Indian investors have shown their faith in crypto even during the massive price fluctuations because they have an investment horizon of 2-3 years," Thakral said in a statement recently.

"We are eagerly waiting for CBDC (central bank digital currency) in India which will open up new avenues of growth for the digital asset industry," he added.

'Maharashtra on verge of 3rd wave'

State will pay a heavy price if the warning is not taken seriously, says CM Thackeray

Team Absolute | Mumbai

About 72 per cent of Maharashtra's active Covid cases are being reported from five districts. This includes Mumbai and Thane districts, which appeared in the top five for the first time in the last few weeks. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, on Monday, warned that the State will pay a heavy price if warnings about a possible third wave are ignored.

According to the State Health Department data (as of 4 pm on Monday), Pune, with 12,325 active cases, lead the chart of active cases, followed by Thane (7,273), Satara (6,603), Ahmednagar (5,701) and Mumbai (4,003).With 50,095 active cases, Maharashtra recorded a fatality rate of 2.12 per cent, with a recovery rate of 97.05 per cent.

"We all know how the second wave started. There was an acute shortage of oxygen, and the situation became critical not only in Maharashtra, but also in other parts of the country. Maharashtra, along with other States, is on the verge of the third wave of Covid. This wave has started knocking on the doors. The situation in the US is life-threatening. China is in the grip of Covid, and more than 30,000 new patients are being found daily in Kerala. This is a warning, and Maharashtra will pay a heavy price if we don't take this warning seriously," said CM Thackeray while speaking at a meeting of the Disaster Management in Mumbai."There is some rise in the number of Covid patients in Maharashtra. I request political parties and organisations to suspend all political programmes, meetings and marches, considering the experience of the last wave. Other programmes could be celebrated following Covid norms, but avoiding the third wave and priority to public health must not be compromised," he said.He added: "We can celebrate festivals next time, but every life is important. Covid is re-emerging. The coming days will be challenging, and if we don't want the situation to go out hands, political parties will have to take responsibilities."

Maha probe panel issues bailable warrant against ex-Mumbai top cop

The warrant was issued by retired judge KU Chandiwal, who is probing the March 20 letter written by Singh to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, levelling charges of corruption against former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, who was later forced to step down.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major development, an enquiry commission in Maharashtra on Tuesday issued a bailable arrest warrant against former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh, currently the Commandant-General of the state Home Guards, officials said here.

The warrant was issued by retired judge KU Chandiwal, who is probing the March 20 letter written by Singh to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, levelling charges of corruption against former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, who was later forced to step down.

The arrest warrant for Rs 50,000 has been issued against Singh for non-appearance before the probe commission for the enquiry, despite repeated summons served to him. Singh was also fined Rs 5,000 in June and Rs 25,000 twice in August.

Singh had deposited the amounts in the CM's Relief Fund. The

Commission has now posted the matter for further hearing on September 22.Singh, a 1988 batch IPS officer, is under the scrutiny of the Chandiwal enquiry commission appointed by the state government in March to probe the allegations of bribery and misuse of office levelled against Deshmukh, a senior Nationalist Congress Party leader and the then Home Minister.

Among other things, Singh has accused Deshmukh of allegedly fixing a monthly collection target of Rs 100 crore for dismissed cop Sachin Vaze.While skipping the Commission hearings, Singh had questioned the setting up of the panel since there is already a probe going on by the Central Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement Directorate in the matter.Deshmukh, 72, is currently under the radar of the central probe agencies which have raided his offices and homes in Nagpur and Mumbai in the past few months.

Probe Agency Being Used To Subdue Maharashtra Government: Sharad Pawar

Notably, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is conducting a probe into separate money laundering cases against former state home minister and Anil Deshmukh, NCP leader Eknath Khadse.

Team Absolute | Pune

NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday claimed the Enforcement Directorate's actions against various Maharashtra leaders were an attempt to encroach on the state government's rights and discourage political opponents.

Notably, the ED is conducting a probe into separate money laundering cases against former state home minister and Anil Deshmukh, NCP leader Eknath Khadse. The central agency last week also conducted raids at multiple premises in Maharashtra linked to Shiv Sena MP Bhavana Gawali in connection with a money laundering case.The NCP shares power with the Shiv Sena and Congress in Maharashtra.

Talking to reporters in Pune, Pawar said, "Never heard of so many ED's actions in Maharashtra in the past. One action is going on against (Eknath) Khadse, another against Anil Deshmukh, also against Bhawna Gawali. There is an attempt to encroach upon the state government's rights case and discourage the opponents by using these agencies as tools."To a question on the ED's raids at premises linked to Bhavana Gawali, Pawar said the issue is about educational institutions."When there are allegations against these kind of institutions, the complaints can be lodged before the charity commissioner. If not the charity commissioner, then there are state government agencies, but here directly the ED was involved," the former Union minister said.Asked about the possibility of a third COVID-19 wave, Mr Pawar said, "I have seen many events happening where the (COVID-19 prevention) protocols are not being followed."Pawar said since Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has asked political parties to immediately stop agitations, meetings and other events to avoid crowding, he will not attend programmes involving large gatherings.

"I will only attend programmes organised indoors with a limited number of people," he said.To a question on Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat's comments that Hindus and Muslims share the same ancestry, Pawar quipped, "This is an addition to my knowledge."Pawar also expressed reservations over the Reserve Bank of India's interference into the cooperative sector.

"The cooperative lenders spread the banking sector to the grass-root level. These banks help many people in case of financial needs. The merger and closure of cooperative banks is not only harmful for the cooperative sector, but also for the common people who have been benefiting from it," he said.While, earlier there was greater autonomy to select a cooperative bank's chairman, now these institutions will have to go to the RBI for it.

Pawar said "this has weakened the cooperative sector."

KANGANA APPEALS TO MAHA GOVT TO OPEN THEATRES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ahead of the release of her forthcoming film "Thalaivii", actress Kangana Ranaut has urged the Maharashtra government to allow theatres to open up and "save" the film industry from "dying".Kangana took to her Instagram Story to make the appeal. She said: "Cases in Maharashtra have declined requesting Maharashtra Government to #openupcinemas in Maharashtra and save the dying film industry and theatres business."On Tuesday morning, she penned another note on her Instagram Story.

"In Maharashtra, restaurants, hotels, offices, local trains everything is open but movie theatres are shut because of Covid, according to Maharashtra government Covid only and only exclusively spreads in the movie theatres.""Thalaivii", a biopic based on the life of late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and former actress J Jayalalithaa, will be released in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.It showcases the varied aspects of Jayalalithaa's life, tracing her journey as an actress at a young age to becoming the face of Tamil cinema, as well as the rise of the revolutionary leader who changed the course of the state's politics.

It is set to release in cinemas on September 10.

DABHOLKAR CASE:

COURT TO FRAME CHARGES AGAINST FIVE SANATAN SANSTHA ACTIVISTS

Team Absolute | Pune

A Pune special court on Tuesday ordered framing of charges against five members of the right-wing Sanatan Sanstha, and the main accused in the sensational killing of rationalist Dr Narendra Dabholkar eight years ago.

Dabholkar, 67, who spearheaded the country's anti-superstition movement under the banner of the Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti (MANS), was shot dead on August 20, 2013, by two unknown motorcycle-borne attackers while he was on a morning walk near the Omkareshwar Temple.

Special Judge S.R. Navandar of the Special UAPA Court said that the charges shall be framed against four of the five accused for murder and terror under the Indian Penal Code, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, besides the Arms Act.

Dr Virendrasingh Tawade, Sachin Andhure, Sharad Kalaskar, and Vikram Bhave will face charges for hatching conspiracy to murder, murder and under the provisions of the IPC and the UAPA.

The fifth accused, lawyer Sanjeev Punalekar will face charges of destroying of evidence, and the matter has been kept for further hearing on September 15, when the actual charges shall be framed, said Special Judge Navandar.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which took over the case from the Pune police in 2014, has filed a charge sheet long

back against the five accused.

After arresting ENT surgeon Tawade in June 2016, the CBI filed its charge sheet against him in September that year, contending he had masterminded the conspiracy to eliminate Dabholkar.

Two years later, in August 2018, the CBI nabbed two more Sanatan Sanstha activists Andhure and Kalaskar and the agency filed its supplementary charge sheet against them in February 2019, naming them as the duo who shot the rationalist.

In May 2019, the CBI arrested Mumbai lawyer Punalekar and his associate Bhave, both connected to the Sanatan Sanstha and filed its charge sheet against them in November 2019 in the same case.

While Punalekar was accused for having ordered the destruction of evidence like the firing weapons, the CBI said Bhave had conducted a recce of the murder spot where Dabholkar was killed, planned the escape route for the assailants and other aspects.

Tawade, Andhure and Kalaskar are in judicial custody in Pune, Kolhapur and Mumbai jails, respectively, while Punalekar and Bhave are on bail.

Maharashtra issues warning for Ganeshotsav celebrations, minister refers to Covid surge in Kerala during Onam

Mumbai: Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope has advised people in the state to strictly follow Covid-19 guidelines issued by the government in wake of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival, fearing a spike in infection in large gatherings as seen in other states.

"During Ganeshotsav celebrations, everyone should follow COVID-19 guidelines issued by the government. The gathering of crowds leads to an increase in the possibility of the spread of infection. This has been seen in other states.

"The number of patients has increased in Kerala due to the crowds during the Onam festival. In Maharashtra, there are 4 to 5 districts including Pune where the number of COVID-19 patients is high," Tope said on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar said the "third-wave of COVID19 is not coming, but is here." She advised people to observe the festival at their homes.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has already appealed to political parties to stop agitations, meetings and other programmes to avoid crowding. "We can celebrate festivals later. Let us prioritise the lives and health of our citizens. The situation can go out of hand in view of the spike in daily cases," Thackeray said.

Dr Shashank Joshi, member of Maharashtra Covid-19 task force also said, "As far as we are concerned, we are ready, but we cannot afford any complacency. With the festive season coming up we need to be conscious and careful. Even if you are fully vaccinated you need to follow covid appropriate behaviour. Ganesh festival is the largest festival in Mumbai and Maharashtra therefore we need to be careful because last year we saw that the largest spike occurred after Ganesh festival."

Maharashtra govt approves budget for outer ring road project for Pune

Team Absolute | Pune

In a major push to the development of the proposed 173.70-km outer ring road, which is meant to decongest traffic in Pune city, the Maharashtra government Monday gave administrative approval of Rs 26,831.24crore for the project and a concession agreement with the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), along the lines of the Hindu Hridaysamrat Balasaheb Thackeray Maharashtra Samruddhi Mahamarg.

The state Public Works Department issued a government resolution approving all four packages of the mega project.The first package includes development of 29.85 km of the road from Solu on Alandi-Markal Road to Soratwadi on Pune-Solapur Road at a cost of Rs 3,523.93 crore, which includes two interchanges, two railway overbridges, one viaduct, two river bridges and 37 underpasses.The second package for construction of 36.73 km of the road from Soratwadi on Pune-Solapur Road to Varve on Satara Road at a cost of Rs 4,495.45 crore includes three interchanges, six tunnels, 10 viaducts, one railway overbridge and two underpasses. The third package of 38.340 km from

The state Public Works Department issued a government resolution approving all four packages of the mega project.

Urse on Pune-Mumbai Expressway to Solu on Alandi-Markal Road at a cost of 6,635.86 crore includes four interchanges, one railway overbridge, two river bridges and 28 underpasses.

The fourth package for construction of 68.8 km road from Urse on Pune-Mumbai Expressway to Varve on Satara Road at a cost of Rs 12,176 crore includes six interchanges, eight tunnels, two viaducts, three river bridges and 56 underpasses.According to the state government, the mega project is needed to decongest roads by diverting traffic that was passing through Pune en route to other areas in the state. The existing roads in the city cannot be widened due to the dense urban area and the air as well as sound pollution in the city has crossed its higher limits.

The interstate and 'within state' traffic flow is very high in the city as three major national highways, Mumbai-Bangalore, Mumbai-Hyderabad-Vijayawada and Pune-Nashik, and new national highways, Pune-Pandharpur, Pune-Aurangabad and Pune-Mangaon, pass through the city.

The outer ring road was approved by the state government in 2015.

INCESSANT RAINFALL BATTERS PUNE, HEAVY RAIN ALERT SOUNDED FOR GHATS

Shivajinagar in Pune recorded 17.6 mm of rain on Monday. IMD forecasts a same spell on Tuesday and heavy downpour in the ghats.

Team Absolute | Pune

This monsoon season has varied in time range for different states throughout. Many cities have recorded heavy rain even after the retreat of the monsoon there. And similarly, the opposite, that is, dry spells were seen in many regions where it was the monsoon period compared to last year.

On Monday, Shivajinagar in Pune recorded 17.6 mm of rain till 11:30 pm. The IMD has forecasted a similar spell in the region for Tuesday. According to the IMD, ghats in the Pune region might experience heavy to hefty rain on Tuesday and Wednesday. The Pune city is also likely to experience moderate rains over the next two days, followed by light to mild spells on Thursday.

Till 8:30 pm on Monday, rainfall in Shivajinagar was between light to moderate, recording 3.5 mm of rain and 3.5 mm in Lohegaon. It was after that that the rain picked up its pace. From 8:30 pm till 11:30 pm, Shivajinagar district recorded another 14 mm.Anupam Kashyapi, head of the weather forecasting division, told the TOI that they had issued forecasts of overnight rain in the city and rainfall activity likely to continue in and around Pune on Tuesday. The Pune city had a moderate rain forecast, contrary to the ghats adjacent to the city where heavy rains were predicted.He added that there could be heavy rain in the region from time to time, causing problems while driving.He also claims that the monsoon is likely to be vigorous in Maharashtra for up to 72 hours, whereas Pune had overcast skies with 97% humidity.Pune: This monsoon season has varied in time range for different states throughout. Many cities have recorded heavy rain even after the retreat of the monsoon there. And similarly, the opposite, that is, dry spells were seen in many regions where it was the monsoon period compared to last year.

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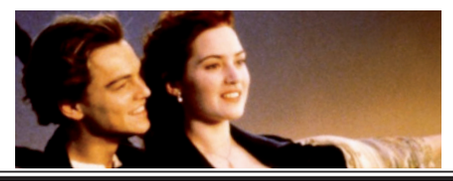


KATIE PRICE WANTS BABY THROUGH SURROGACY

Los Angeles | Agencies

Former glamour model and singer Katie Price, who is already a mother of five children, wants to have a baby via surrogacy and is determined to have as many as she can.

Katie has Harvey with Dwight Yorke, Junior and Princess with first husband Peter Andre and Jett and Bunny with third spouse Kieran Hayler.

Speaking to new! magazine, Price said: "I am always f***ing broody and I will have more. I can only have one because I've had caesareans, so I'd definitely use a surrogate until I've got no eggs left. I'll just keep going and going."

The reality TV star had earlier talked about her desire to have a baby with her fiancé Carl Woods and is adamant she will do "whatever it takes" in order to fall pregnant because her mother Amy is terminally ill, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She said: "We're going to call the baby Miracle. I'm doing this for my mum. She told me to have IVF so she can see us have kids. It will break my heart if she can't."

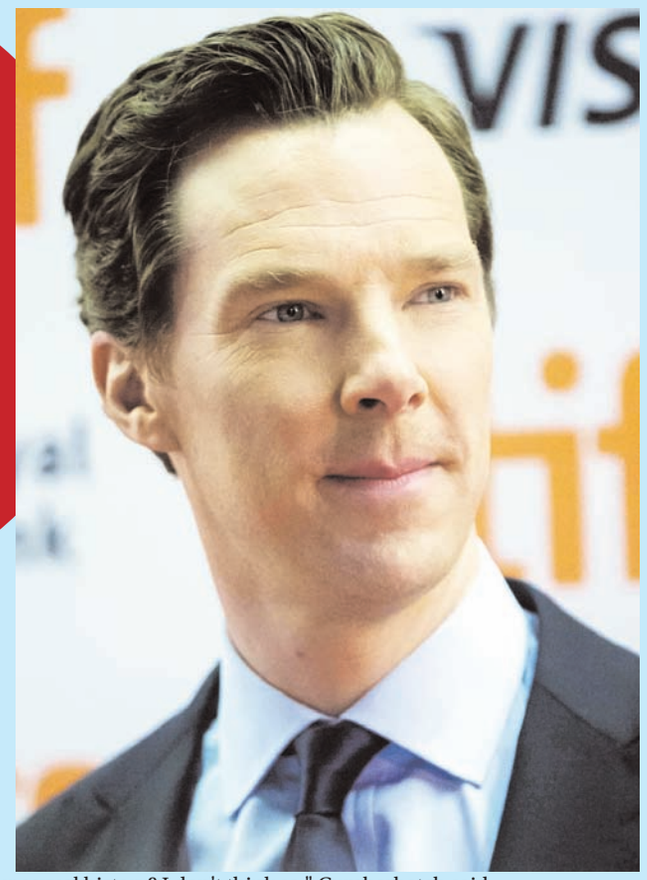
She thought she'd find it "easy" to get pregnant again as she and Woods have never used contraception.

She said: "It has not happened naturally, unfortunately. I thought it would be easy as I've never had to plan it before. It's always just happened. We have never been careful having sex from day one, as we knew we wanted to be together."

"But we really started properly trying in the Maldives in November. We've been planning it all on an app and having loads of sex on the three days I'm ovulating. We haven't been doing it every day as they say not to."

"We don't do it for three days ahead of ovulating, to make sure the sperm is stronger. We've tried everything. It's frustrating as I feel young but I'm not inside."

An actor's sexuality not relevant to a role: Benedict Cumberbatch



London | Agencies

English actor Benedict Cumberbatch has said that actors should not have to explain their sexual history before taking on a role. The 45-year-old actor said that he is "very sensitive" about representation and diversity in the movie industry but doesn't think his own sexual orientation should stop him taking on parts such as cattle rancher Phil in his new movie 'The Power of the Dog', reports female-first.co.uk.

"Is this a thing where our dance card has to be public? Do we have to explain all our private moments in our sexual history? I don't think so," Cumberbatch said.

In the movie, which is an adaptation of Thomas Savage's novel of the same name, Cumberbatch's character develops an unexpected chemistry with his brother's stepson Peter played by Kodi Smit-McPhee, 25, and was attracted to the role because he got to explore his character's "private" feelings.

"I feel very sensitive about representation, diversity, and inclusion. One of the appeals of the job was the idea that in this world, with this specific character, there was a lot that was private, hidden from view," he said at the Telluride Film Festival.

Co-star Kodi Smit-McPhee also opened up about being a heterosexual actor playing a gay character, saying his own sexuality didn't stop him from relating to his character.

'THERAPY IS 'A BEAUTIFUL THING''

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Zendaya would "recommend" therapy to anyone who can afford it as she calls it a "beautiful thing". "You know, there's nothing wrong with working on yourself and dealing with those things with someone who can help you, someone who can talk to you, who's not your mom or whatever. Who has no bias." The Hollywood star rose to fame as a child, starring on the Disney Channel sitcom 'Shake It Up'. She admits to refusing to have her first kiss on-screen as a teenager on the show, reports female-first.co.uk. Speaking to British Vogue magazine, Zendaya recalled: "I remember being on 'Shake It Up' and being like, 'I'm not gonna do this. I'm going to kiss him on the cheek because I haven't been kissed yet so I don't want the kiss to be on camera.'" The actress ultimately aspires to establish herself as a well-respected filmmaker and is eager to have black women at the centre of her movies. Speaking about her long-term ambitions in the industry, the 'Malcolm & Marie' star explained: "If I ever do become a filmmaker, I know that the leads of my films will always be black women. I gotta hurry up and figure out how to f****** become a director, man. I'm trying, I'm learning every day, I really am. There's so much I want to do."

"Of course I go to therapy. I mean, if anybody is able to possess the financial means to go to therapy, I would recommend they do that. I think it's a beautiful thing."?

Keith Urban has no 'negative opinion' on alcohol

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Keith Urban will mark 15 years of sobriety next month but said that his own addiction struggles don't mean he has a "negative opinion" about alcohol and would hate to think his audiences don't feel they can party at his shows.

Urban told Australia's Rolling Stone magazine: "I don't want people at my concert looking at the stage and thinking about sobriety. That would be the death of a gig for me. "The reason I don't really talk much about sobriety is it's a very personal thing and I don't want anyone thinking that I have a negative opinion of drugs or alcohol. I don't have any at all, none. I want people to come to my concert and do whatever the hell they want to do."

The 53-year-old singer, who has two daughters with wife Nicole Kidman, said it took him a long time to "recognise" he had a problem with alcohol because he didn't feel his dependency on alcohol was the same as his late father Robert's addiction, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Tom Hanks helped Karen Gillan through a crisis of confidence

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Karen Gillan said that she got through a crisis of confidence after Hollywood star Tom Hanks praised her work on 'The Circle'. 'The Circle' helped reassure her about her talents and put her back on the right path.Gillan told You magazine: "Every project I was doing was getting bigger and bigger in scale. I had always been totally fearless, and I suddenly found myself dealing with self-doubt."

She talked about how Hanks took her aside on set and said: "You're really good. Keep going", reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The 33-year-old actress added: "It was the sign I was looking for. To have someone you idolise say, actually, you're not terrible, was completely trippy. From that point, I worked on my acting and I completely rebuilt." Gillan is best known for her role in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) as Nebula but she said that she'd initially only signed on for eight days work on 'Guardians of the Galaxy' but producers liked her so much, they decided against killing off the character.

Jamie Lee Curtis reveals 'career high point'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Jamie Lee Curtis said shooting the last scene of the 2018 movie 'Halloween', in which she reprises her role as Laurie Strode, was one of the "high points" of her career. Asked what the high point of her career has been, Lee Curtis said: "When I was making the 2018 'Halloween', the last scene of the movie that I had to shoot was a moment where Laurie Strode is sitting alone in a pickup truck, watching Michael Myers headed to a supermax prison where he will spend the rest of his life." She added: "And she is seeing this person who has caused her 40 years of trauma being taken away. And the scene was just me alone in a truck. When we went to shoot it, it's just my little truck with about 14 cameras around it and cranes and lights and a crew." The actress said she was in her trailer preparing for her work, which was going to be "emotional, cathartic," reports femalefirst.co.uk. Lee Curtis said: "It was described as a moment where Laurie sort of replays the 40 years since this first occurred."

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Kristin Cavallari

US OPEN

DJOKOVIC, BERRETTINI, ZVEREV, HARRIS SECURES QF BERTH

New York | Agencies

World No. 1 Novak Djokovic of Serbia overcame a first-set disappointment to deny world No. 99 Jenson Brooksby a place in the US Open quarterfinal with a 1-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 victory over the American in two hours and 58 minutes at Flushing Meadows here.

Djokovic extended his unbeaten ATP head-to-head against Americans at their home Slam to 11-0 and his winning streak against Americans overall to 21. The Serb, who has won all three majors this year -- Australian Open, French Open and Wimbledon -- is just nine more sets away from completing the calendar-year Grand Slam.

In a rematch of the Wimbledon final, Djokovic will next meet sixth seed Matteo Berrettini of Italy. The Italian earlier defeated German qualifier Oscar Otte in four sets.

Sixth-seeded Matteo Berrettini of Italy was made to work hard at the US Open as he battled past qualifier Oscar Otte of Germany 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 to reach the quarterfinals at Flushing Meadows for a second time.

South Africa's Lloyd Harris gained revenge over Reilly Opelka of the US as he continued his strong run, overcoming the 22nd seed 6-7(6), 6-4, 6-1, 6-3 to reach his maiden major quarterfinal. The 24-year-old, who was competing in the fourth round at a Slam for the first time, fell to Opelka in a final-set tie-break in the third round in Toronto. The big-serving American went on

to reach his first ATP Masters 1000 final.

However, Harris fired 62 winners and won seven straight games as he rallied in New York, securing his victory after two hours and 31 minutes. The World No. 46 will face fourth seed Alexander Zverev in the last eight after the German moved past Italian Jannik Sinner 6-4, 6-4, 7-6(7).

Sakkari ends Andreescu's run, Bencic, Brit in quarters

New York: World No.18 Maria Sakkari of Greece ended 2019 US Open champion, Canada's Bianca Andreescu's 10-match unbeaten streak in New York in the latest finish of a women's singles match at the US Open, winning 6-7(2), 7-6(6), 6-3 to advance to her second major quarterfinal of the season. Sakkari will face No.4 Karolina Pliskova for a spot in her second Slam semifinal of the season. The two have split their two previous matches, which both came on the clay in Rome. Swiss tennis player Belinda Bencic's continues to be on a roll as after winning the Tokyo Olympic Games gold, she defeated Poland's seventh seed Iga Swiatek in the fourth round to book a place in the US Open quarterfinals.

Bencic will meet the winner of the match between teenage qualifier Emma Raducanu of the UK and the last home hope, unseeded Shelby Rogers.

Later, Eighteen-year-old Brit Emma Raducanu became just the third qualifier to reach the US Open women's singles quarterfinals in the Open Era after defeating Shelby Rogers of the US at the Arthur Ashe Stadium.

DURAND CUP: FC GOA START CAMPAIGN WITH 2-0 WIN

Kolkata | Agencies

Alberto Noguera Ripoll and Devendra Dhaku Murgaokar scored a goal each as FC Goa registered a hard-earned 2-0 victory over Army Green Football Team at the Vivekananda Yubabharati Krirangan (VYBK) here on Tuesday.

Noguera scored in the 35th minute and Murgaokar in 59th as the Guars started their campaign on a winning note.

The score-line of the match played on a rainy afternoon in Salt Lake doe'n't reflect the opportunities the Army Green team created - it rather shows how wasteful they were in front of the goal.The team in white and green almost caused a huge upset in the 15th minute, when a cross from Vikas Zanje took a wicked deflection and almost caught Goa keeper Naveen Kumar off-guard. Luckily for him, the woodwork saved his blushes.Juan Fe'rando's Goa side on the other hand was far more clinical when opportunities presented themselves. In the 35th minute, a beautiful through-ball fr'm Goa's Makan Winkle Chote put Alberto Noguera through on goal and the Spaniard slotted home past the onrushing Army keeper. In the 59th minute, Devendra made it 2-0 for the Gaurs after Romario Jesuraj had found him inside the box with a great delivery.It was one of those days for Army Green when they could have done everything they would have wanted to except for scoring. Ten minutes later, forward Lallawmkima had the best chance of the game when the ball landed at his feet following a comedy of errors inside the Goa box.

Deepti Sharma moves up one place in Women's T20I rankings

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India's Deepti Sharma has moved up one place to fourth among top all-rounders in the ICC Women's T20 International rankings.

New Zealand's Sophie Devine is the new joint top-ranked player among women all-rounders, sharing the No.1 spot with Natalie Sciver of England at 371 points. Scotland's Kathryn Bryce is third with 327 points.

Deepti is placed fourth at 321 rating points with Australia's Ellyse Perry (301) and Hayley Matthews (292) of West Indies following at fifth and sixth place. The change in their rankings is because West Indies all-rounder Stafanie Taylor dropped down three places to seventh.

Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu (265), Salma Khatun (261) of Bangladesh, and Nida Dar (258) of Pakistan are the others in the top-10.

Sophie showed her class in the third T20I against England at Hove, scoring 50 runs while also returning figures of 2/26. This has enabled her to jump up a spot and be the joint top-ranked all-rounder alongside England's Natalie Sciver.

Sophie also gained a place in the batting charts to jump up to No.5.

She has 689 points in the list that is led by India's Shafali Verma, who leads the batting rankings. Teammate Smriti Mandhana is placed third in the ICC Women's T20 International Rankings updated on Tuesday.

Shafali has a rating of 759 while Beth Mooney of Australia is at 744. Smriti has a rating of 716. The top-10 list includes two Indians, three Australians, two from New Zealand, and one each from South Africa, England, and West Indies.

England's Sophie Ecclestone leads the bowling chart with 778 points. Deepti Sharma is the best Indian at sixth place with 703 points while teammate Poonam Yadav is eighth with 670 points.

Despite missing medal at Games, women's hockey has bright future: Salima Tete

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian women's hockey team midfielder Salima Tete, who played an integral part in India's fine performance at the Tokyo Olympics, said on Tuesday that that even though the side couldn't finish on the podium, it had shown signs of a bright future.

India gave a tough fight to some of the top teams in the world at the Olympics and made history when they defeated three-time Olympic champions Australia 1-0 in the quarterfinal and played in their first-ever Olympic semifinal against Argentina."Our performance in Tokyo is slowly starting to sink in now. We were really dejected when we lost to Great Britain in the bronze medal match, but now we are seeing the positives from the tournament. We may not have won a medal, but we have certainly gained a lot of confidence from the way we played in Tokyo and it's definitely going to help us to grow as a team and produce much better results in the future," said the 19-year-old.Tete added that she feels blessed to have received the opportunity to play in an Olympic Games at a very young age.

Buttler, Leach recalled to England squad for fifth Test

London | Agencies

Wicketkeeper-batsman Jos Buttler and left-arm spinner Jack Leach have returned to England squad for the fifth and final Test against India to begin at Old Trafford in Manchester from September 10. Batsman Sam Billings, who was included in the fourth Test squad, has returned to play county cricket for Kent.

Buttler, who represents Lancashire and will be playing the fifth Test at his home ground at Old Trafford, had missed the fourth Test due to the birth of his second child. England lost the fourth Test by 157 runs as India took a 2-1 lead in the five-Test series. England need to win the final Test to level the series now.

IT'S DISAPPOINTING AND FRUSTRATING: ROOT

"It's disappointing and frustrating, especially turning up with the opportunity to go and win a Test match. To be bowled out is hard to take. But we'll look at how we responded from Lord's and the performance we put in at Headingley. We're going to look to do exactly the same at Old Trafford."

FIFA to analyse official reports after Brazil-Argentina match suspended

Rio de Janeiro | Agencies

World football governing body FIFA has said that it will analyse reports from match officials before deciding upon a course of action for the suspended World Cup qualifier between Brazil and Argentina.

Sunday's clash at Sao Paulo's Corinthians Arena was called off shortly after kick off when Brazilian health officials walked onto the pitch to object to the participation of three Argentine players for allegedly breaching COVID-19 protocols.

It was unclear if the match would be rescheduled or whether either team would be sanctioned with a forfeit.

"FIFA regrets the scenes preceding the suspension of the match between Brazil and Argentina for the CONMEBOL qualifiers of the FIFA 2022 World Cup which prevented millions of fans from enjoying a match between two of the most important football nations in the world," the statement read on Monday evening.

"The first match official reports have been sent to FIFA. This information will be analysed by the competent disciplinary bodies and a decision will be taken in due course."

Brazil's federal police opened a formal investigation into the case on Monday, Xinhua reports.

Whatever Virat touched turned to gold on final day: Nasser Hussain

The victory was through a remarkable turn-around for India as they had been bowled out for 191 in the first innings. But they managed to restrict England's first-innings lead to just 99 runs on a placid wicket. Kohli's men then ensured better batting in second innings. The top three batsmen shone and India, with contribution from middle and lower order took the total to 466 and set England a target of 368 to win. The former England skipper said that on Monday, every tweak and every bowling change which the Indian skipper effected went in his team's favour.

London | Agencies

Former England cricketer Nasser Hussain gave a huge compliment to Virat Kohli, whose team pulled off a sensational 157-run win against England in the fourth Test at The Oval, saying that the Indian skipper had his Midas Test and everything "Virat touched turned to gold on the decisive final day".

India pulled off the fourth-Test win against the hosts on Monday evening -- only their second-ever at The Oval and first at the venue after 1971 -- to take an unassailable 2-1 lead in the five-match series. This is also only the second time in history -- after 1986 -- that India have won two Tests on one tour of England. They had beaten England by 151 runs in the second Test at Lord's last month.

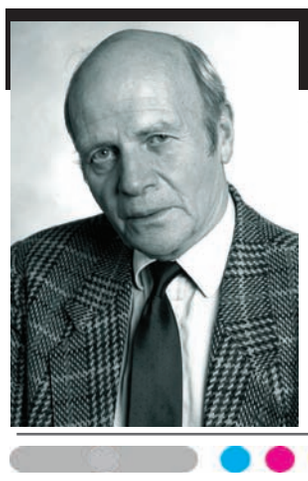
"I said at the start of the fifth day that it was going to be a big test of Virat Kohli's captaincy -- and he passed that test with flying colours. That Oval pitch offered very little for the seamers, and only a bit of rough for Ravindra Jadeja's left-arm spin. But somehow he (Kohli) manufactured 10 English wickets on the last day," Hussain said in his column for the Daily Mail on Tuesday.

"Every bowling change worked, and so did every tweak to the field. And when he (Kohli) took the second new ball after tea, it produced a wicket straightaway, with Umesh Yadav getting Craig Overton. One way or another, this was Kohli's Midas Test -- everything he touched turned to gold, and India are now one game away from a famous series victory, not long after beating Australia in their own backyard."

Hussain said that India hardly ever missed Ravichandran Ashwin, the top-ranked spinner in Test cricket in the fourth Test.

The former England player said that the Indian pacer altered his tactics and started bowling bouncers and yorkers to unnerve the England batsmen.

SA's John Watkins, oldest living cricketer, no more



Durban | Agencies

Former South Africa pace bowler John Watkins, the oldest living cricketer in the world, has passed away after contracting Covid-19, Cricket South Africa (CSA) has confirmed.

Watkins represented South Africa in 15 Test matches, making his debut against Australia in 1949 at Ellis Park in Johannesburg, making 36 runs and bowling both Australian captain Lindsay Hassett and star batsman, Neil Harvey, in the first innings. He remained a regular member of the team until his final Test match against England at Newlands in 1957.

He was an attacking middle-order batsman, an accurate medium-pacer and an excellent slip catcher.

The highlight of his career came in Melbourne in 1953 when he scored 92 (his highest Test score) and 50 batting at No. 3, helping South Africa secure a six-wicket victory to share the series after they had conceded 500 runs in Australia's first innings. In the five-match series he scored 408 runs and took 16 wickets, sharing the new ball in four of the matches.

ANIL KAPOOR: 'NAYAK' HAS CERTAINLY AGED WELL

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Anil Kapoor's film 'Nayak: The Real Hero' has clocked 20 years of its release on Tuesday. The actor says it is one of his movies that has certainly aged well. A political action film directed by S. Shankar and produced by A.M. Rathnam, the movie stars Anil Kapoor, Rani Mukherji, Amrish Puri, Paresh Rawal and Johnny Lever.

Anil said: "'Nayak' is one of my movies that has certainly aged well! As an actor, I'm thankful to Shankar for giving me the opportunity to explore my range as an action hero and believing in me."He added: "As I look back, it feels like yesterday that I was trying to balance myself on top of a bus for a fight sequence in the film. 'Nayak' will always remain close to my heart for its pure effort and I hope to soon be celebrating 20 more years of the movie."

In fun trivia about the film, Anil famously went bare body for the first time for an action scene in the film. It was Indian cinema's first action sequence to make use of computerised effects; 36 different cameras were used at the same time for a single frame.

Currently, the 64-year-old star is busy shooting for 'Jug Jugg Jeeyo', which also stars Varun Dhawan, Neetu Singh and Kiara Advani.

'The script needs to speak to me'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Yami Gautam has a slew of films lined up such as 'Bhoot Police', 'Lost', 'Dasvi' and 'A Thursday'.

Talking about her process before choosing a project, Yami said: "While reading a script, I always make sure to perceive it as a reader as well. If it can keep the audience inside me engaged, I know it will work on the screen."

She added: "As an actor, I never want to let go of the importance of judging a project basis its writing because you are as good as your script."

"I always make sure to remain true to myself while choosing a project." The newly-wed actress says the "script needs to speak" to her.

"Following the first instinct, you get after reading a script always works," added the actress, who is married to filmmaker Aditya Dhar.

Yami says she never wants to let go of the importance of judging a project based on its writing and that she always makes sure to remain true to herself while choosing a project.

Janhvi Kapoor escaped from paparazzi

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor and her best friend Namrata Purohit shared how they once escaped from the paparazzi and the ensuing car chase situation made it feel like a real like 'Fast and Furious' moment. Sharing a story of Janhvi hiding from the paparazzi, her close friend Namrata Purohit said, "There was this one time, for some reason she didn't want to get clicked at the gym. So, she told me 'Namo, you have to help me, they can't see me, they can't click me whatever.' So, we sent her car outside. I felt like a horrible person because those guys outside are actually sweet guys. But it was just like a situation that she needed to get out of that day. So, her car went the other way and the paps followed her, then she jumped into my car and we had gotten out and then we had like this whole chase going on. I felt like I was in a 'Fast and Furious' movie."

Janhvi added, "Because I wasn't supposed to be at the gym, I was supposed to be home, tired and sad. They were literally chasing us on bikes, and we were going around in her car and we had to stop at some dingy location and then I had to get back into my car. You know the amount of times I have hidden in the trunk of my car? So many times! There's always a blanket in my car.

I KNOW I DON'T HAVE A PLAYBACK SINGER'S VOICE: FARHAN AKHTAR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor-filmmaker Farhan Akhtar says that he is well aware of the fact that he does not have a conventional voice of a playback singer and that is why he does not do playback on film for other actors.Considering the fact that Farhan gets trolled on social media for his singing and for having a different voice texture, when asked about he deals with the criticism, he said, "I totally understand that one thing, which is that it is not a conventional playback singer's voice. In all fairness to these people (trollers), there is a certain quality of work and singing, that is associated with playback singing."My skill level or my tone is not in that area, it's not in the vicinity at all. That's why I don't sing for others, as I'm not a playback singer. When I feel that in my film if I will sing for my character, it will enhance the believability of my performance, so that's where it came from, I absolutely enjoyed it and I'm not apologetic at all."Farhan Akhtar will spill out more such confessions on the episode of QuPlay's 'Pinch' Season 2 in conversation with actor and filmmaker Arbaaz Khan, on September 8 on QuPlay's YouTube channel, ZEE5 and MyFm.

'Candy': Layered, moderately paced and engaging

FILM REVIEW

BY TROY RIBEIRO

(Streaming on Zee5)

Direction: Ashish R. Shukla

Cast: Richa Chadha, Ronit Bose Roy, Manu Rishi Chadha, Gopal Datt Tiwari, Riddhi Kumar, Nakul Roshan Sahdev and Mikhael Kantroo.

Duration: 35 minutes per episode (8 episodes in all)

Ratings: ***1/2

The series starts with the murder of Mehul Awasthi (Mihir Ahuja), a student of an elite boarding school, whose body was found hoisted on a tree in a forest after his attempt at amateur sleuthing to find the source of drugs a.k.a. 'Candy' supplied to his classmates.

Set in the hilly terrain of Rudrakund, 'Candy' is a layered and moderately paced whodunnit streaming on Voot.

Mehul's death, along with the disappearance of his classmate Kalki Rawat (Riddhi Kumar), opens a Pandora's box in the otherwise laidback town. Jayant Parekh (Ronit Bose Roy), their teacher and mentor, who had incidentally lost his daughter studying at the same school a few years ago, stirs up the proverbial hornet's nest to unravel the mystery.

The eight-episode series keeps you hooked with a killer on the prowl, drug traffickers, corrupt policemen, suspects driven by guilt and some by over-confidence and ambition, a child with Down's Syndrome, animal sacrifice to appease the gods, mob justice - baying for the blood of the suspect - and most of all, a "Massaand - Who the hell is a Massaand? A man, animal, or a demon".

Simple though it may seem, the moderately paced narrative has complex layers of characters, setting, plot and clues with organic complications and potential explanations.

On the action front, the 'murders' are quite gruesome but not off-putting. The drama is captivating throughout, except in the seventh episode, where the narrative drags a bit.

The ace cast delivers what is expected of them, no one moving away from his or her comfort zone. It is only Nakul Roshan Sahdev, despite being stereotypical with his braided hair and care-a-damn attitude, in a well-etched character as Vayu Ranaut, the brattish son of politician-businessman Mani Ranaut (Manu Rishi Chadha), who stands out among them.

Ronit Bose Roy, with his brooding disposition, plays the mourning father and protective teacher to perfection. He is ably supported by Anju Alva Naik as his wife Sonalika.

Richa Chadha as Ratna Sankhwar, the corrupt Deputy Superintendent of Police, who has her moment of redemption, is staid and perfunctory. Mikhael Kantroo, as the silent spectator and Nakul's close friend Luka, till a point is subtle but confidence personified.

Among the students, Aditya Nanda as Sanjay, Bodhitsattva Sharma as Imran, Abbas Ali Ghaznavi as John, Prasanna Bisht as Ritika Sahay, Ayesha Kadusar as Saiba and Shivangi Singh as Lina, are all spontaneous and endearing.

Overall, the series is plausible, well-staged and engaging.

Natasha Bharadwaj borrowed stethoscope for 'Mumbai Diaries 26/11'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Natasha Bharadwaj, who plays a resident doctor in the upcoming web series 'Mumbai Diaries 26/11', says as her mother is a doctor, she borrowed the lab coat and stethoscope of her mother for her role in the show.

Sharing how she bagged the role on the show, Natasha said, "I had auditioned for Mumbai Diaries 26/11 and when I was told the part, I knew that I want to do this because as an actor, I am greedy and this was a role that I did not want to let go.""So after I was shortlisted, I waited for almost a month and as I did not hear from them I thought I am not getting the part. Then one day, while I was driving, I got a call about the confirmation, and as soon as I reached home, I asked my mother to give me her lab coat and stethoscope and that's how I broke the news to her because she knew that I had auditioned for this role. It was heartwarming and overwhelming for both of us." 'Mumbai Diaries: 26/11' will release on September 9 and stream on Amazon Prime Video.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY

Deepika Padukone

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