

# absolute india

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## CHANNI CHOSEN AS PUNJAB'S FIRST DALIT CM, TO TAKE OATH ON MONDAY

**▶ IN A TACTICAL MOVE TO RETAIN PUNJAB IN THE NEXT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN EARLY 2022, THE CONGRESS ON SUNDAY APPOINTED DALIT LEADER AND THREE CONSECUTIVE TERM LEGISLATOR CHARANJIT SINGH CHANNI AS THE NEXT CHIEF MINISTER, REPLACING VETERAN AMARINDER SINGH.**



CHANDIGARH | Agencies

After meeting Governor Banwarilal Purohit here to stake claim to form the next government, Channi, accompanied by state party President Navjot Singh Sidhu, told the media that he would take the oath as the Chief Minister on Monday at 11 am.

"We have presented our stance, unanimously supported by party MLAs, before the Governor," he added. Channi, 49, the legislator from

Chamkaur Sahib, is the first Dalit Chief Minister and the youngest to be at helm in the state. He belongs to the Ramdasia community.

With his appointment, the Congress is trying to woo the Dalit vote, comprising 32 per cent, ahead of the Assembly polls slated in March 2022.

Channi, a Cabinet minister in the present government, was leading from the front to demand the removal of Amarinder Singh as the government in his helm has failed to come as per the aspirations of the people

and even failed to implement the 2017 Assembly poll promises.

Outgoing Chief Minister Amarinder Singh was among the first to greet Channi when party General Secretary in charge of state Harish Rawat made the formal announcement on his appointment in the evening, ending day-long suspense over the new incumbent.

Amarinder Singh on Saturday stepped down as the Chief Minister by saying he "felt humiliated." "Congratulations to Shri Charanjit Singh Channi Ji for the new responsi-

bility. We must continue to fulfill the promises made to the people of Punjab. Their trust is of paramount importance," party leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted.

A day after he quit as Chief Minister after being humiliated by the party amid the Punjab Congress crisis, Amarinder Singh on Sunday expressed sorrow at having to cancel the scheduled disbursement of appointment letters to families of 150 farmers who had lost their lives in the ongoing agitation against the farm laws.

Amarinder Singh urged Channi to ensure that the state government continues to stand with the beleaguered farmers of Punjab, "who have sacrificed their lives in our collective fight for justice".

He made it clear that he would continue to support the farmers in their battle for survival and justice.

"Every Punjabi, in fact every Indian, is morally bound to stand with the farmers in their hour of despair," he said, asserting that even though he was no longer holding the state's reins, his heart remained with the farmers and their families and he would do everything in his power to ensure that they get their due.

## Booster shots necessary to beat Covid-19 virus: Dr Fauci

LONDON | Agencies

Booster shots of Covid-19 vaccines will soon become necessary for people to gain maximum protection against Covid-19, US top infectious disease expert Dr Anthony Fauci said on Sunday, after a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) panel rejected the broader use of the third dose among people aged 16 and above.

Pfizer made the proposal in a 52-page presentation to the US FDA, which included data from the recent Israeli study which showed that a booster dose of its Covid-19 vaccine can prevent both infections and severe illness in adults older than 60 shortly after the injection. It was also backed by President Joe Biden's administration. However, the panel has approved a booster shot of Pfizer's Covid vaccine to people aged 65 and above.

"I believe it's going to turn out that the proper regimen, at least for an mRNA vaccine such as Pfizer's, is the two original doses, the prime, followed in three to four weeks by a boost, followed several months later by a third shot," Fauci, Director of National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases was quoted as saying by the Telegraph. "I'm favourably disposed to boosters based on the waning of immunity, as we're seeing very, very clearly in the data in the US and even more dramatic data from our Israeli colleagues. "There is some indication of waning in the UK, which is the reason the UK has or will soon be vaccinating people 50 years of age and older, as well as healthcare providers and those who are immunocompro-



mised," he noted. The Pfizer study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, showed that about 12 days after the booster dose, the rate of infection was eleven-fold lower and of severe disease nearly twenty-fold lower in those who received a booster compared with those who had received only two doses. Similarly, Moderna has also claimed that protection from its mRNA vaccine against Covid-19 can last only for about six months, pitching a strong case for booster shots.

While many countries like Israel, the UAE, Russia, France, Germany and Italy have already proceeded with the booster doses, several scientists, including the World Health Organisation, have called against the third Covid shot. In a recent review published in The Lancet, an international group of scientists argued that vaccine efficacy against severe Covid is so high, even for the delta variant, that booster doses for the general population are "not appropriate" at this stage in the pandemic.

## MP govt to start doorstep delivery of rations in 89 tribal blocks: CM

**Madhya Pradesh government has also decided to celebrate 'Tribal Gaurav Diwas' on November 15 every year. Union Home Minister Amit Shah was also present at the event.**

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has announced that the state government will start doorstep delivery of rations in 89 tribal blocks from November 1, the foundation day of Madhya Pradesh.

"Tribals won't need to visit ration shops by leaving their work. Vehicles owned by tribals will be hired for the distribution work," the chief minister said on Saturday while addressing the 'Gaurav Diwas' programme in Jabalpur to honour tribal leaders who participated in the Independence movement.

Madhya Pradesh government has also decided to celebrate 'Tribal Gaurav Diwas' on November 15 every year. Union Home Minister Amit Shah was also present at the event. Lauding the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) work towards the welfare and development of tribals, the Madhya Pradesh CM said the work for the development of tribals has only been done by the BJP government.

"When Atal Bihari Vajpayee became the prime minister, he was the first person to form a different ministry for tribals."

Chauhan attacked Congress saying during



its government in the state, the scholarship for the tribal students was Rs 200-300 per month which was later increased to Rs 1100 per month by the BJP regime.

"Even if a tribal student get enrolled into reputational colleges/universities, we decided that the government would pay the fees even if it costs Rs 15-20 lakh," ANI quoted the Madhya Pradesh CM as saying.

The government will celebrate the martyrdom of tribal leader Shankar Shah and his son Raghunath Shah on September 18 every year, he added.

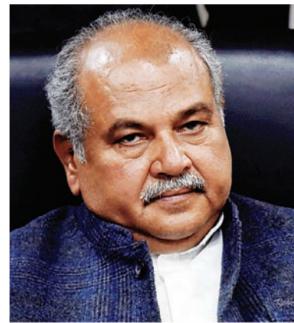
### BJP QUESTIONS SONIA-RAHUL OVER CAPTAINS' ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SIDHU

New Delhi: After Captain Amarinder Singh opened a front against his own party's state president Navjot Singh Sidhu, accusing him of having links with Pakistan, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday sought clarifications from Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi on the issue. Former Union Minister and BJP leader Prakash Javadekar launched a scathing attack on the Congress, saying that Amarinder Singh had made very serious allegations against Navjot Singh Sidhu by calling him anti-national.

Linking the issue with national security, Javadekar questioned the silence of Congress interim national president Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and asked whether the Congress would take note of these allegations. He said that the Congress should come clear on these allegations. After resigning as the Chief Minister of Punjab on Saturday, Amarinder Singh had lashed out at Navjot Singh Sidhu over his Pakistan connection.

## India's emphasis on re-introducing traditional food: Agri Minister

**India's Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Sunday said the government has emphasised on re-introducing traditional food items including millets, other nutritious cereals, fruits and vegetables, fish, dairy, and organic products in the diet of the people.**



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The production of these food items has been phenomenal in India in recent years and India is becoming a destination country for healthy food items," he said while virtually addressing the second day's session of the G-20 Agriculture Ministers' meeting.

The theme of the session was "Working together to achieve the Zero Hunger goal: Successful projects implemented by the Ministries of Agriculture", a release from the Agriculture Ministry said. Reminding that the United Nations has accepted the proposal of the Indian government and declared the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets, he appealed to the nations to support the celebration to promote nutrition and

sustainable agriculture.

Tomar stated that the agriculture sector in India has achieved great success after Independence, and had remained unaffected even during the Covid pandemic. He said that the various initiatives of the government to keep the Agri-market dynamic along with the agri-input supply chain during Covid have helped the sector record better performance. "During the year 2020-2021, along with increase in the production of food grains, there has been a significant increase in exports," he said.

Stating that bio-fortified varieties are the source of staple diet rich in micronutrients, Tomar said: "They are being promoted to remove malnutrition. Seventeen such varieties of different

crops have been developed and released for cultivation. The Government of India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken steps to increase the optimal use of water resources, create infrastructure for irrigation, conserve soil fertility with balanced use of fertilisers and provide connectivity from farms to markets."

He said that India is fully aware of its commitments on the issues of climate change and several steps have been taken to make agriculture sustainable. The 'Per Drop More Crop' scheme for irrigation and 'Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana' for organic farming is being successfully implemented, as well as the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana to provide insurance cover for the farmers. India will share best practices and build capacities of other developing countries, he said, reiterating India's resolve to continue working together to achieve the 'Poverty Reduction' and 'Zero Hunger Goal' and to cooperate in R&D and exchange of best practices to enhance productivity.

Tomar was leading a four-member Indian delegation to the G20 Ministerial meeting - held in hybrid mode in view of the pandemic - comprising Additional Secretary, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Dr Abhilash Likhi and Joint Secretary, Alaknanda Dayal, the release added.

## Kolkata safest city among metros: NCRB report

Team Absolute | Kolkata

With the crime rate per one lakh population dipping down below 110 and recording the lowest number of serious crimes like rape and murder, Kolkata is considered to be the safest among the metropolitan cities in the country, as per the latest report by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

According to the latest report published by the NCRB, Delhi recorded the highest cognizable offences with a crime rate of 1,506.9 per one lakh population followed by Chennai that recorded a rate of 1,016.4. When the other two metropolitan cities like Mumbai and Bengaluru recorded a rate of 272.4 and 234.9, Kolkata has a crime rate of 109.9 in cognizable offences. Not only among the metros but the city recorded the lowest crime rate among the 19 major cities of the country.

In overall crime rate, the city has fared much better than the other metros of the country. While in Chennai the overall crime rate -- 1,937.1 -- in Delhi it is 1,608.6, the crime rate in Kolkata is only 129.5. The other two metros -- Mumbai



and Bengaluru have recorded the overall crime rate of 318.6 and 401.9 respectively. The overall crime rate of the city is also the best among the 19 major cities that has been taken into account by the NCRB.

The report also stated that the number of crimes committed in Kolkata has gone down compared to figures of 2018 and 2019. In 2018, about 21,481 crimes were committed across the city whereas the figure stood at 19,638 in 2019 and 18,277 in 2020.

In case of murders, Kolkata recorded only 53 cases whereas Delhi recorded 461 cases -- the highest among all the cities followed by Bengaluru (179 cases), Chennai

(150 cases) and Mumbai (148 cases). Kozhikode with only 5 cases and Kochi with 9 cases are the two only cities -- both in Kerala -- that recorded less than 10 cases in the year. As far as crimes against women are concerned the city also performed better than other major cities of the country. Compared to the other metropolitan cities, the crime rate against women in Kolkata is also less and stands at 29.5. In terms of crimes against women, Lucknow is the most unsafe city for women with a rate of 190.7 per lakh population. The report of crime against women in Lucknow is 2,636 against only 13.8 lakh population. In 2020, only 2001

complaints were received regarding crimes against women in Kolkata against a population of 67.9 lakh. The rate of crimes against women in Delhi is 129.1 per cent. In 2020, across Delhi, 9,782 complaints were registered against 75.8 lakh population, stated the report.

The rate of deaths due to negligence in road accidents is also much lower in Kolkata compared to other cities. In 2020, the number of cases registered for death due to negligence in road accidents stood at 204. About 218 people died in such accidents. The percentage of fatal road accidents due to negligence is 1.4 per cent which is the lowest among all metropolitan cities. The report also reflects that in 2020 no hit-and-run cases happened in Kolkata.

Comparing the figures, Delhi is the highest in terms of the number of fatal accidents due to negligence with 1,130 cases with 1,156 victims. In terms of fatal road accidents due to negligence, Jaipur is the most unsafe city with 16.5 per cent of such cases. The highest number of hit-and-run cases among the metropolitan cities is recorded in Delhi with 514 cases where 519 people died.

## MAHARASHTRA CUMULATIVE VACCINATION TALLY CROSSES 7.32 CRORE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the ongoing vaccination drive, Maharashtra on September 18 has vaccinated 13,87,333 in 5,088 sessions.

According to data released by the government, Maharashtra, as of 7 am on September 19, inoculated 7,32,96,176 people. As per the state government data, 2,62,38,405 individuals aged between 18 and 44 years received their first vaccine dose and 46,94,525 received their second dose since the inoculation drive for this age group began on May 1.

So far, 12,93,211 health care workers have been administered the first dose of the vaccine, while 10,51,638 of them have got their second dose.

Similarly, 21,42,872 front-line workers in the state have till now received their first vaccine dose and of them, 16,74,292 got their second dose.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra on Saturday reported 3,391 new coronavirus cases and 80 fatalities, a health official



said. It took the state's infection tally to 65,18,502 and death toll to 1,38,469, he added.

As many as 3,841 patients were discharged from hospitals, taking the count of recovered cases to 63,28,561. There are 47,919 active cases in the state now.

The state has 2,83,445 people in home quarantine and another 1,812 in institutional quarantine. Maharashtra's COVID-19 recovery rate stands at 97.09 per cent, while the fatality rate is 2.12 per cent. The cumulative number of

coronavirus tests conducted in the state climbed to 5,68,74,491 after 1,65,363 samples were tested during the day.

Mumbai reported 478 new cases and six deaths as per the state data, taking the total of cases detected in the city to 7,37,678 and death toll to 16,048.

Coronavirus figures of Maharashtra are as follows: Total cases - 65,18,502; New cases 3,391; Death toll 1,38,469; Total recoveries 63,28,561; Active cases 47,919; Total tests 5,68,74,491.



# BJP EXPELS 3 DELHI COUNCILLORS ON CHARGES OF CORRUPTION

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Taking strict action against complaints of corruption in BJP ruled municipal corporations, Delhi unit president Adesh Gupta expelled three councillors from the party for six years, saying that some more will face the music in future if found guilty of financial irregularities.

Gupta told IANS that there will be zero tolerance against corruption and more councillors will face the music for their involvement in corrupt practices. "In coming weeks, strict action will be taken against more councillors and municipal officials," Gupta said.

Earlier in the day, the BJP had expelled three councillors -- Rajni Babloo Pandey (New Ashok Nagar) and Puja Madaan (Mukherjee Nagar) and Sanjay Thakur (Said-



ul-Ajaib) from the party for six years.

In August last year, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had alleged that the brother-in-law of ruling BJP's councillor of New Ashok Nagar, Rajni Pandey extorted money from

people constructing their houses in the area. Earlier this year, AAP had further alleged that Sanjay Thakur is in nexus with builders and forcibly asks for money from others.

A saffron party leader said that

the BJP state leadership has received several complaints against Puja Madaan.

Gupta said that despite repeated warnings these councillors failed to mend their ways which forces him to take action. "After complaints were received against them, we got it cross checked and verified from our sources. We also warned them to correct their corrupt behaviour but they did not follow the instructions. They are expelled from the party for six years with immediate effect," Gupta said. Gupta explained that the BJP works on a zero tolerance policy and corruption won't be tolerated at any cost. "All councillors should do public service with sincerity and honesty. If there is any laxity on this account or any corruption is detected, strict action will be taken," Gupta warned.

# With Dalit CM in Punjab, Congress aims at UP and Uttarakhand

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After the surprise announcement of the name of Charanjit Singh Channi, a Dalit leader, for the Chief Minister's post in Punjab, the Congress looks at the larger aim of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh which are also going to polls early next year.

Rahul Gandhi, after the announcement of the new Chief Minister's name, congratulated Channi, saying: "Congratulations to Shri Charanjit Singh Channi Ji for the new responsibility. We must continue to fulfill the promises made to the people of Punjab. Their trust is of paramount importance."

Channi, who was also a bitter critic of outgoing Chief Minister Amarinder Singh,

has been appointed to tap not only around 32 per cent Dalit votes in the state but also in neighbouring Uttarakhand and UP which go to polls early next year along with Punjab.

After a Dalit CM in Punjab, the Congress is eyeing gains in Uttarakhand but it is unlikely that the party will get much traction in UP as Mayawati is a formidable force in the state and non-Jatav Dalits have mostly aligned with the BJP.

Sources say that Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa's name was proposed by majority of MLAs but Rahul Gandhi decided in favour of Channi who was the leader of opposition for a brief period during the previous Akali government.

Apart from other names, Congress wanted even former

Union Minister Ambika Soni to become the Chief Minister but she refused. However, she emerged as the main trouble shooter in the Punjab episode in the aftermath of the resignation of Amarinder Singh. Soni held late night meetings with party chief Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi at least twice and has some role in the appointment of the new Chief Minister. It was her statement in favour of a Sikh Chief Minister that went against the top choice, Sunil Jakhar.

Sensing Soni could be the Chief Minister, the state leaders made a consensus that the Chief Minister should be among the MLAs, and hence Randhawa's and Channi's names emerged but Rahul Gandhi who has special focus on Dalit leadership decided in favour of Channi.

# Senior Cong leaders miffed with Amarinder Singh's removal

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Senior Congress leaders, some of them from the G-23, are miffed with the way the leadership scripted the exit of Amarinder Singh from Punjab.

Sources in the G-23 said that the Congress "sent three hangman -- a former Chief Minister, who lost on two seats, a Delhi leader, who has been scoring zero in the consecutive elections and a person, who does not match the stature of the chief minister (Amarinder Singh, who got 80 seats in the Assembly of 117)." The majority of the disgruntled leaders have reached out to the outgoing chief minister and expressed solidarity with him but at the

same time have restrained themselves from speaking out publicly.

Amarinder Singh has not bowed down and has remained defiant since the Congress called the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting on Friday midnight without informing the Chief Minister, who was the CLP leader before resigning on Saturday. Sources said the Congress did not anticipate the defiance of Amarinder Singh and thought that he will attend the CLP and will follow the AICC script, but he resigned ahead of the CLP and did not attend the meeting. And he pointed guns, dubbing Navjot Sidhu as anti-national, dangerous, unstable, incompetent and a

security threat to the state and the country, Amarinder Singh also said that he will fight any move to make the Punjab Congress president the chief minister "tooth and nail."

Making it clear that he had no intention of quitting politics, Amarinder Singh said there was no question of supporting Sidhu, who was clearly mixed up with Pakistan and a danger as well as a disaster for Punjab and the country.

"I cannot allow such a man to destroy us, I will continue to fight the issues that are bad for his state and its people," said the outgoing Chief Minister, lashing out at Sidhu for his close alliance with the leadership across the border.

# Bengal Gov attacks Mamata over State Finance Commission

KOLKATA | Agencies

After a silence of nearly two months, West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar continued his tirade, accusing the state government of constitutional impropriety alleging that the State Finance Commission (SFC) is not only continuing even after five years but has not made any recommendations to the governor so far.

In a tweet, Dhankhar wrote, "State Finance Commission (SFC) @MamataOfficial under Articles 243-I & 243V, is required to make recommendations to the Governor that are to be laid before the Legislature of the State. What a collapse of constitutional mechanism, since 2014 not a single recommendation to Governor".

"SFC under the constitution is for five years. Fourth SFC @MamataOfficial continued beyond, in violation of the Constitution. Chairman and Members are liable to return salary and perks to State and all expenses need to be recovered from concerned as public money cannot be squandered," the governor added. The governor further said, "Recommendations to Governor are for principles that should govern the distribution between State and Panchayats/Municipalities of net proceeds of taxes, duties, tolls & fees leviable



@MamataOfficial, which may be divided and allocated between State and Panchayats/Municipalities."

Referring to the constitution, Dhankhar said, "The Governor of a State shall, as soon as may be within one year from the commencement of the Constitution (Seventy third Amendment) Act, 1992, and thereafter at the expiration of every fifth year, constitute a Finance Commission to review the financial position of the Panchayats and to make recommendations to the Governor".

"The Commission shall determine their procedure and shall have such powers in the performance of their functions as the Legislature of the State may, by law, confer on them. The Governor shall cause every recommendation made by the Commission under this article together with an explanatory memorandum as to the action taken thereon to be laid before the Legislature of the State," the governor referred.

The fourth finance commission was set up by the Mamata Banerjee government in 2013. When asked about the allegation raised by the commission, a senior official of the state finance department said, "There were three part-time members of the commission. They used to get sitting fees for their meetings. The other members have not received any money after submitting their report in February 2016. No new SFC has been formed yet".

# K'taka circular against bureaucrats holding press conferences

After the poignant verbal attack on Indian Administrative Service (IAS) personnel in the legislative Assembly, the Karnataka government has issued a circular imposing a ban on holding press conferences and issuing statements by the bureaucrats. The order was issued on Saturday.

Bengaluru | Agencies

The move of the government has upset the IAS officers and it is yet to be seen how the IAS Officers Association will respond to the decision.

The circular said that 'it has come

to the notice of the government that government officers are indulging in issuing undesirable statements through press notes. These developments will have a wrongful impact on the administration system in the state and they will also embarrass the government'. The government has considered these developments seriously and imposed a ban on issuing undesirable statements through press conferences and press notes, they are only allowed to carry out reliable and official duties only, the circular said.

The circular warned that, if any government official is found to air his views and opinions on any platforms against the government damaging the image and embarrassing the government, serious disciplinary action will be initiated against them.

However, the government officers are allowed to speak to the media to disseminate official information.

They are not allowed to air their grievances through the media, the circular noted. The circular has been issued in the backdrop of a public spat between JD(S) MLA and former minister Sa.Ra. Mahesh and IAS officer Rohini Sindhoori two months ago. After the development, the state government headed by then Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa had transferred her to the Muzrai department from the post of District Commissioner of Mysuru.

The issue was raised in the legislative Assembly session by Sa.Ra. Mahesh, who charged without taking a name, said that officers should be tamed. "They are minting money here and amassing wealth in Andhra Pradesh. After retirement, they will contest against us in the polls," he charged. He also said that IAS officers shall not be allotted bungalows and they should be given smaller houses as the public won't go and

meet them at their residences.

Former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy supported his party leader and stated on the floor of the House that he had observed the development closely. "Whenever there is an issue, the Chief Secretary summons junior officers to Bengaluru. We have seen how Chief Secretary himself went to Mysuru to sort out the issue. This is not the system," he said. Kumaraswamy was joined by Revenue Minister R. Ashok who stated that a few officers were indulging in stunts and they need to be tamed. Scores of legislators demanded that action should be taken against bureaucrats in this regard. However, sources in the IAS officers maintained that they are upset with the government's decision and it is unfair to attack the whole IAS fraternity for the fault of few officers.

# Crisis in DU, teachers want UGC to takeover 12 colleges

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The future of 12 colleges, which are fully funded by the Delhi government, remains uncertain. Due to the delay in salaries and other irregularities, the UGC is being asked to takeover these colleges. Not only this, the term of the Governing Council in 28 colleges ended this month. But even after the last date passed, the governing body has not even suggested the names of the members.

The university teachers are once again in a tussle with the Delhi government. There is a delay in giving grants to 12 colleges which are 100 per cent funded by the state government. Teachers say that the grant is insufficient. They now want the UGC to intervene and do justice to the students and teachers. The colleges whose demand for takeover has been made from UGC include Bhimrao Ambedkar College, Maharaja Agrasen College, Maharishi Valmiki College, Indira Gandhi Sports College,

Aditi Mahavidyalaya, Sister Nivedita, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College, Bhaskaracharya College of Applied Science and Keshav Mahavidyalaya in Delhi. DUTA President Rajib Ray said that the issue of all these 12 colleges has been raised with the UGC. There is a constant crisis regarding the salary of teachers in these colleges. All these 12 colleges are 100 per cent funded by the Delhi Government. Now a demand has been made that the UGC takes over all these 12 colleges. The teachers' union of Delhi University officially has put this demand before the UGC, said Ray.

According to Ray, the DUTA officials have met UGC officials in this regard. UGC Secretary Professor Rajnish Jain and Financial Advisor P.K. Thakur were also present in the meeting. The problem is not limited to these 12 colleges only. The term of the governing body of the 28 colleges funded by the Delhi government ended on September 13. The Delhi government has not finalised the names of the members of the governing body.

# Congress leaning 'Left' to recruit young talent?

Speculation is rife in the Congress over the induction of CPI leader and former JNU President Kanhaiya Kumar into the party. Another leader who is expected to join is Jignesh Mevani, MLA in Gujarat, as Congress leaders indicate that this is not the first time that Left leaders will be joining the party.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress is buoyed by these young leaders after the exit of some people who were perceived to be close to former Congress President Rahul Gandhi, starting with Jyotiraditya Scindia and Jitin Prasada who joined the BJP. The latest is Sushmita Dev who joined the TMC and was women wing President of the party. She has now been nominated to the Upper House of Parliament.

The Congress has a long list of Left student leaders who joined the party, including former JNUSU President Shakil Ahmed Khan who was in the SFI and joined the party in 1998. He is now a second time Congress MLA from Bihar and AICC secretary. Shakil Ahmed Khan said, "when I joined Congress it was to fight communalism as the BJP government was in power and only the Congress could fight the BJP at the national level and the party has a legacy and commitment towards secularism." He hailed Rahul Gandhi for taking on the BJP despite all the odds.

Before him late DP Tripathi was in the Congress and was a close aide of Rajiv Gandhi though he later left for the NCP. B. L. Bairwa was another leader who joined from the JNUSU left wing student organization.

Syed Naseer Hussain who is a MP in the Upper House was JNUSU President in 1999-2000. Most recently Sandeep Singh joined the Congress and is working closely with Priyanka Gandhi Vadra while Mohit Pandey is also working in Uttar Pradesh and is likely to contest the UP assembly polls. Both Singh and Pandey have been President of Student Unions from left wing student organizations but switched to the Congress for a better political future.



Congress leaders said on condition of anonymity that the party too has talent and they should be promoted rather than looking to other parties. A leader cited the examples of Anand Sharma, Manish Tewari, Randeep Surjewala, KC Venugopal, Ramesh Chennithala and Ajay Maken who had come from student politics to the Congress. Many present and former Chief Ministers are from the same background but are being ignored in the party, he said.

Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi while addressing the party's social media volunteers virtually on July 16 said that the party only needs courageous people, and not those who are afraid of the BJP.

Bahut sare log Congress ke bahar hai jo dar nahi rahein hain, unko andar lao. Jo hamare yahan dar rahein hain, unko bahar nikalo (There are many outside the party who are not scared. Bring them into the Congress. Remove those from the party who are scared)," he had said.

Sources said that talks with Kanhaiya Kumar and Independent MLA Jignesh Mevani from Gujarat are in the final stages but nothing has been finalised yet. The sources said the Congress wants to rope in these two leaders ahead of the assembly polls and particularly Mevani before the Gujarat polls for their oratory and crowd pulling capabilities. Mevani is an independent MLA in Gujarat and had won the election with Congress support.

While the Congress is in search of talent in the JNU, its principal rival BJP has at least two senior ministers in the Union Government from the same campus -- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.



# BJP RAKING UP 'OUTSIDER' CARD WITH EYE ON UTTAR PRADESH ASSEMBLY, MUMBAI CIVIC POLLS: RAUT

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday hit out at the BJP for opposing Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray's directive to state police to keep a record of migrants coming here from other states, claiming the BJP was raking up the 'outsider' card with an eye on the Uttar Pradesh assembly and Mumbai civic elections due next year.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Raut in his weekly column 'Rokhthok' in the Sena mouthpiece 'Saamana' said Thackeray (during a law and order review meeting with top police officials on September 13) did not name any particular state while referring to migrants, "but the BJP declared that the CM meant North Indians." "This is nothing but an attempt to create divisiveness, and cases should be filed against such people," said the Rajya Sabha member, who is the executive editor of 'Saamana'. Mumbai is home to Bengali, Odiya, Assamese, Tamil, Teluguspeaking



people, and the city's Matunga and Dharavi areas are dominated by South Indians. They never call themselves outsiders, he said. Raut said Bengalis hold Durga Puja celebrations at the Shivaji Park around the same time as the Shiv Sena's Dussehra rally, and Bengalis never fear and call themselves outsiders. He further said the Tamil,

Telugu people and Muslims celebrate their festivals here, and Gujaratis, Marwaris, Jains have become an integral part of Mumbai's life. Then whom does the BJP consider as outsiders? Raut asked. "The country may be one, but maintaining law and order is a state subject. It is the job of the state government to take action. Without

understanding what Thackeray meant, the BJP raked up the outsiders and migrant card with an eye on the UP and Mumbai civic polls," he said. He said "if the 'BJP's love is for outsiders who help in terrorist activities, atrocities against women and make life miserable for the 'sons-of-the-soil', it is not right."

Raut, whose party shares power with the NCP and Congress in Maharashtra, said no one considers the rich as outsiders. Only those who migrate in search of livelihood are called outsiders and this is sad, he added.

Those playing the 'outsider' politics in Maharashtra should learn a lesson from the West Bengal Assembly election results where (Trinamool Congress head) Mamata Banerjee used the Bengali pride to defeat Modi-Shah, the Sena's chief spokesperson said.

Raut said Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrakant Patil asked why only outsiders were being blamed and whether Marathi people do not commit crime.

"This shows the deep-rooted hatred the BJP has for Marathi people," the Sena leader claimed.

"The answer to Patil's question is, why is the ED after the Shiv Sena and NCP leaders, are BJP leaders clean?" he sought to know.

# Aide of Dawood Ibrahim's brother held in Mumbai for terror plot

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad late Friday arrested gangster Dawood Ibrahim's brother Anees's aide Zakir Hussain Shaikh (52) from Behram Baug in Jogeshwari.

Shaikh, with the arrested terror accused Jaan Mohammed alias Sameer Kalia, was planning to carry out attacks in the country. The arrest follows the Delhi police busting a terror module last week, in which Dharavi resident Kalia was one of the six accused.

Shaikh had been arrested along with five others by the Mumbai crime branch in 2001 for plotting to assassinate BJP leader LK Advani and carry out serial blasts in the city at the behest of the Chhota Shakeel gang. They were later acquitted due to lack of evidence. Shaikh's elder brother Sagir was shown as mastermind in that case, but he was never caught as he fled to Dubai and later moved to Karachi.

Sources said after Kalia's arrest, Shaikh sensed trouble and sent his wife and children to a relative's home, and he himself was trying to find a safe house in Mumbra when ATS picked him up.

Fearing Delhi cops may net Shaikh, ATS nabbed him Zakir Shaikh was produced before a metropolitan magistrate's court and remanded in police custody till Monday. Police claimed to have found some material, including mobile phones and SIM card, which he allegedly used to talk to Kalia. Sources said Shaikh was Kalia's handler and it was he who was coordinating and arranged



Kalia's tripabroad. Shaikh was also reportedly providing finances to Kalia, who used to drive a cab for a living. ATS said Shaikh was coordinating with someone abroad with the code name 'Anthony' and officials were trying to find out who 'Anthony' is. Embarrassed by Delhi police's action, the state ATS had on Thursday clarified that Kalia was on their radar and they were collecting information about his communication with Anees Ibrahim and his visit to Bahrain to kill another gangster, Ali Budesah. Apprehending that Delhi police may take Shaikh into custody, the ATS arrested him. The state ATS had earlier said that the Mumbai police had an old, 20-year-old case registered against Kalia. That case was registered with the Pydhonie police station over his alleged involvement in a firing incident. Another case was registered in 2010. The Delhi police had said on Tuesday that Kalia was tasked by a Pakistan-based person connected with underworld operatives hiding in the country to ensure the smooth delivery of IEDs, weapons and grenades to different entities in India.

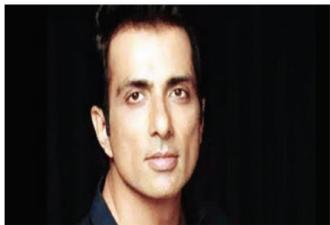
# Sonu Sood's infrastructure company involved in bogus billing: I-T department

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Income Tax department had last week conducted searches at around 28 premises connected with actor Sonu Sood.

The searches were conducted in Mumbai, Lucknow, Kanpur, Jaipur, Delhi and Gurgaon and I-T officials recovered incriminating evidence pertaining to tax evasion. They also seized Rs 1.8 crore in cash and kept 11 lockers under prohibitory order. Sood was unavailable for comment over the phone.

The I-T press note stated, "Investigations so far have revealed the use of twenty such entries, the providers of which, on examination, have accepted on oath to have given bogus accommodation entries. They have accepted to have issued cheques in lieu of cash. There have been instances where professional receipts have been camouflaged as loans in the books of accounts for the purpose of evasion of tax. It has also been revealed that these bogus loans have been used for making investments and acquiring properties." The I-T press note stated that the infrastructure company was involved in bogus billing of subcontracting expenses and siphoning off funds. It said, "Evidence of such bogus contracts found so far are to the tune of over Rs 65 crore. Further, it has been unearthed that the infrastructure company has entered into a dubious circular transaction to the tune of Rs 175 crore with an infra-



structure company based in Jaipur. Further investigations are being carried out to establish the full extent of tax evasion." Recently, Sood was in the news after his meeting with Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, where he was declared brand ambassador of the AAP government's 'Desh ke mentors' programme for guiding students in making career choices. During the lockdown, Sood had helped migrants reach their native places by arranging transportation and food. After the I-T Department initiated its searches on Wednesday, Kejriwal came out in his support, tweeting that there are many difficulties on the path of truth, but it always wins.

"With Sonu Sood ji, there are prayers of lakhs of families of India who got his support in difficult times," he wrote.

The Shiv Sena also came out in support of Sood and linked the I-T searches with the actor's decision to become brand ambassador for the Delhi government.

# Delhi-Mumbai Expressway to fetch Rs 1,000 to 1,500 crore revenues every month: Gadkari

Team Absolute | New Delhi

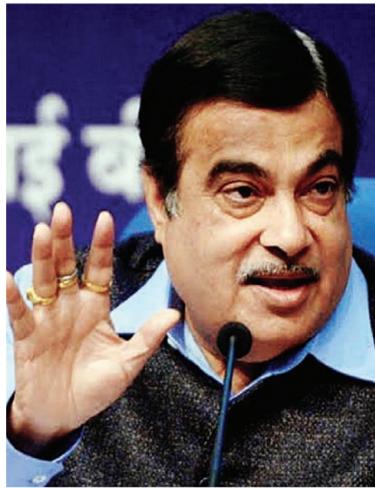
The Centre will get toll revenues worth Rs 1,000 to 1,500 crore every month once the much-awaited becomes operational in 2023, Union minister said on Sunday and described state-owned NHAI as a "gold mine" for generating income.

Steering the ambitious drive to expand the country's road infrastructure for the past seven years, a confident also asserted that National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will rake in annual toll income to the tune of Rs 1.40

lakh crore in the next five years from the current level of Rs 40,000 crore. Gadkari, who just completed a whirlwind tour to assess the progress of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway that will pass through four states apart from the national capital, said the national highways infrastructure is a world-class success story. "Once the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is completed and opened the public, we will get at least Rs 1,000-1,500 crore as toll revenues every month," he said.

The Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is likely to be completed by March 2023 and is being built as part of the first phase of the 'Bharatmala Pariyojna.'

The eight-lane expressway, covering Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, is expected to halve the commute time between



the national capital and the country's financial hub from nearly 24 hours to 12 hours. Against the backdrop of concerns being flagged about NHAI being saddled with high level of debt,

the Union Road Transport and Highways Minister pointed out that the nodal agency has received 'AAA' rating and all its road projects are productive.

'AAA' is one of the highest credit ratings and indicate robust financial position. "NHAI was not in a debt trap, and it will never be in debt trap in future. It is a gold mine, and is on strong footing... in the next five years, NHAI's toll income will rise to Rs 1.40 lakh crore per year from current toll income of Rs 40,000 crore," Gadkari noted. In March, the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture had expressed its displeasure over a whopping Rs 97,115 crore debt servicing liability on NHAI.

Recently, the minister informed that total borrowings of NHAI increased to Rs 3,06,704 crore at the end of March this year from Rs 74,742 crore in March 2017.

While noting that investments in the infrastructure sector will create employment and accelerate the country's economic growth, Gadkari said, "We (NHAI and the ministry) are working on projects worth lakhs of crores." When the economy is on a decline, "then economists tell us that there is a need to increase investments in infrastructure", he added. The country's economy has been adversely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and is slowly on the recovery path.

# Maharashtra demands for its share of Rs 50,000 crore from excise, cess levied on fuel

The cash-strapped Maharashtra government has demanded its share of more than Rs 50,000 crore from the additional excise duty as well as the agriculture and road cess levied by the Central government on diesel and petrol.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The cash-strapped Maharashtra government has demanded its share of more than Rs 50,000 crore from the additional excise duty as well as the agriculture and road cess levied by the Central government on diesel and petrol.

The demand was raised during the Maharashtra government's meeting with the Niti Aayog earlier



this week. The basic price of petrol in Maharashtra is Rs 40.97 per litre, on which Centre levies excise duty and cess of Rs 32.90, while state government imposes Rs 30.28 as value-added taxes (VAT) on every litre, taking the price to more than Rs 107 a litre that includes the petrol pump's commission of Rs 3.86.

Similarly, diesel's base price is Rs 41.79 per litre, on which the Central excise and cess of Rs 31.80 is added along with Rs 21.28 as state government's VAT and Rs 2.58 as petrol pump's commission. Out of the excise and cess on the fuel, the basic excise is just Rs 1.40 and Rs 1.80 a litre on petrol and diesel, respectively, while the remaining is additional excise and agriculture-road cess levied by the Centre over the past four years.

"The state governments gets share only in the basic excise, which is a little over 1% of the taxes collected by the Centre. The total excise duty and cess collected from Maharashtra by the Centre in 2020-

21 was Rs 46,464 crore including Rs 32,432 crore from diesel and Rs 14,032 crore from petrol. Against this amount, the Centre gave us Rs 383 crore and Rs 138 crore for diesel and petrol in devolution of taxes," said an official from the finance department. The state government's debt is estimated to rise to more than Rs 6.15 lakh crore. The state's dues against the compensation for the losses of Goods and Services Tax (GST) from the Centre have crossed ₹30,000 crore. The Central government has increased the additional excise duty and road-agriculture tax in the past few years by keeping the divisible component (sharing with the states) as low as around 1%. The excise and cess on fuel have been increased multi-fold in the past few years. The Central government's collection from the excise duty and cess in 2020-21 was more than Rs 3.3 lakh crore, of which Maharashtra's contribution was 11.65% and 11.25% for diesel and petrol respectively.

"The devolution of the additional excise and road-agriculture cess on the fuel to states should be in the spirit of cooperative federalism," the state government said.

Manoj Saunik, additional chief secretary, finance, said, "This has been demanded by all the states, but the Centre is not agreeing to devolve the collection. States get very meagre amount of the collection." The state has also requested the Centre to continue the GST compensation for three to five years more to make up for the losses Maharashtra has suffered because of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. The five-year period during which the Centre has been compensating the states for their losses due to the roll out of the GST regime from July 1, 2017, is ending on June 30 next year.

"The end of the compensation will result in revenue deficit of Rs 50,000 crore to the state exchequer. It would be difficult to cope with the gap, unless the transition period of the five years in increased further by three to five years," the state has said. Another official from the finance department said, "Out of Rs 46,464 crore collected from Maharashtra in the form of central duty and cess in 2020-21, only Rs 521 crore were devolved back to the state which is little over 1%. Its expected to go over Rs 50,000 crore in 2021-22. When the cess is collected in the name of agriculture and road development, the state has every right over the collection and we expect it to increase it to at least 3%. Instead of bringing petrol and diesel under GST, the Centre should first reduce the excise duty and the cess which will help in bringing down the prices signifi-

# Another Person Arrested In Maharashtra Linked To Delhi Terror Module Case

The man, whose identity was not revealed by the ATS, was arrested from Mumbra town in neighbouring Thane district on Saturday night, said an ATS official.

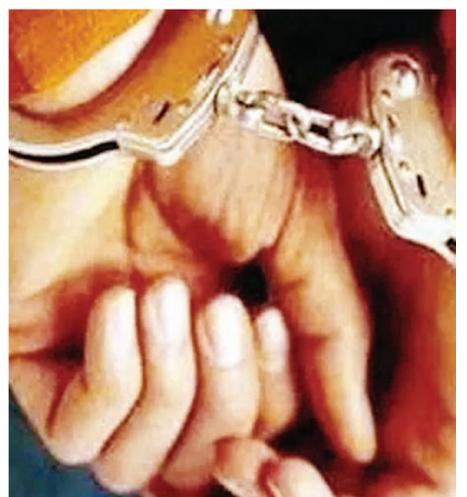
Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad has arrested one more person in connection with the Pakistan-supported terror module busted by Delhi Police recently, an ATS official said on Sunday.

The man, whose identity was not revealed by the ATS, was arrested from Mumbra town in neighbouring Thane district on Saturday night after information received about him from Zakir Hussain Shaikh (45), an accused who was arrested by the ATS from Jogeshwari in Mumbai on Friday, he said. Based on information revealed by Shaikh, the state ATS conducted multiple raids and arrested the man from Mumbra, the official said, adding that they were probing his role into the terror module.

The Delhi Police's Special Cell on Tuesday busted a "terror module" with the arrest of six men, including two terrorists trained by Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI.

The module was allegedly planning to carry out blasts across the country. Jan Mohammad



Shaikh, one of the six suspects, is a resident of Dharavi in Mumbai. Zakir Shaikh, whose name cropped up during the interrogation of arrested suspects, was in touch with Jan Mohammed Shaikh, sources earlier said. A separate FIR under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act was registered against Zakir Shaikh in Mumbai. The ATS told a Mumbai court on Saturday that Zakir Shaikh was arrested in connection with a

criminal conspiracy to carry out terror attacks using explosives in Maharashtra and elsewhere. He was in touch with one "Anthony" from a "neighbouring country", and the ATS wanted to find out who was this person and what was his role in the conspiracy, it had said. The court on Saturday sent Zakir Shaikh in the ATS custody till September 20.



## EDITOR'S SPECS

## Kohli is crucial to Team India's world conquest

Be what it may, if the decision would help him retrace the steps to his batting pinnacle, it could turn out to be a masterstroke. In his quest for batting liberation, Virat Kohli has renounced a part of his workload. Post the T20 World Cup in November, he would no longer lead his country in the shortest format. The decision, on the apparent, smacks of his dogged desire to become the batting colossus that he has been for a chunk of his glittering career. In the past couple of century-less years, his longest drought without a century, Kohli's batting prowess had diminished, not immensely but incrementally. Now that he's 33, on the brink of entering the final stretch of his career, he wants to be what he was and what he always wanted to be. The best batsman across formats, and he perhaps sees leadership duties as a hindrance to it.

But the puzzle, since he mentioned workload as the main contributor to his decision, remains whether quitting T20I captaincy would indeed reduce his burden. Had he quit the format altogether, shed white-ball captaincy, stepped down as captain of his IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore, it would have strengthened the argument that he wants to give all he has to Test cricket in the coming years. As it is now, it's unlikely that his workload could be reduced considerably. For, after the World Cup, international T20 games would fizzle out of relevance, continue to be as inconsequential as it had been before, fixtures that are forgotten as soon as the match is over, until the next World Cup. Besides, it's the least frequently played format in a tour. Be what it may, if the decision would help him retrace the steps to his batting pinnacle, it could turn out to be a masterstroke. For, there could be as good leaders as Kohli, like Sharma, or K L Rahul in this format, or new leaders could be groomed, but there are few better batsmen than Kohli not just in his country but in the world. To launch the world conquest, India needed a liberated, unburdened Kohli, Kohli the batsman at his absolute peak.

# LIMITS TO POWER: TALIBAN IN KABUL, JAILBREAK IN ISRAEL

What could possibly be common between the Taliban brandishing their weapons in Kabul and Palestinians twirling their spoons (yes, teaspoons) with a flourish? Well, the latter were celebrating because six Palestinian prisoners had pulled off a seemingly impossible escape from the high security Gilboa prison in Northern Israel. Clearly an embarrassment for a state which flaunts national security as a marketable commodity. The spoon has become an emblem because the six used it as an implement to dig a hole in the toilet attached to their cell.

The prisoners, according to Israeli authorities, were affiliated with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. According to the Times of Israel, the leader of the group, Zakaria Zubeidi, was "a former commander in Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade." That Zubeidi and three others (at the time of writing) have been arrested is a separate chapter. Kabul and Gilboa establish without any shadow of a doubt a reality all too common in history: limits to power. In this instance, the US globally and its ally Israel, regionally -- particularly considering its stalemate with Arab militias like Hezbollah.

Massive intelligence failure attended both the events. True, a jailbreak cannot be compared with the reconquest of a country but that is not the way Palestinians see it. The Times of Israel reports: "The escape is considered a highly symbolic success for the terror groups. It is being celebrated with 'euphoria' among Palestinians."

The Taliban, likewise, in the initial flush are folk heroes in Afghanistan and beyond having done a David on Goliath. To bring out the irony in sharp focus on the US debacle in Afghanistan, recall the January 29, 2002, State of the Union address by President George W Bush. The President sketched in bold colours the 'Axis of Evil'. Ironies upon ironies attend that speech. Bush welcomes Hamid Karzai as "leader of liberated Afghanistan." Karzai is now under house arrest. Bush gloats "Terrorists who once occupied Afghanistan now occupy cells at Guantanamo Bay." There is a disconcerting update on this too. Not only have the Taliban returned to power in Kabul, at least five in the new Kabul power structure were released from Guantanamo Bay in 2015.

What does all this portend? Is a phase of Imperialism coming full circle? One cannot expect US President Joe Biden to say it in quite that language, but what else does one make of



his promise to end "never ending" wars. American youth, who are now 20 years of age, have never seen "America at peace." Suicide rate among military veterans as high as 18 per day? Biden clearly abhors this data.

The problem, of course is, that Biden is only the President, not the system. Even so he is proceeding with some sense of the consensus he has forged around him. For him to declassify the secret FBI report which reveals the connection of Saudi Nationals to 9/11, indicates a sharp departure from past practice. Remember the days of George W Bush and his buddy Saudi Ambassador Bandar bin Sultan, or Bandar Bush as he was called because of his chumminess with the President? Those days seem like ancient history, days when Israel and Saudi Arabia were equally sacrosanct. Both had to be protected from bad copy. And now even military protection is being withdrawn. In recent weeks the US removed its most advanced missile defense system, and Patriot batteries from the Kingdom which faces attacks from, say, Houthis in Yemen. Troop reductions from Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan have also been confirmed by the Pentagon. Departure from Afghanistan will remain vivid in our minds for years. Despite these stories every American strategist will tell you "the Middle East is not being abandoned." There is that 'over the hori-

zon' capability which includes updated drones. British premier Boris Johnson calls it "outside-in" ability.

Israel, which is busy adjusting to limits on its power as a concept, must place in its calculus the US distancing itself from the Arab theatre. Yes, support for Israel in the US remains durable -- Jewish control of banks, media, institutes of learning, election, finance. What is not so well known is what Noam Chomsky describes as much the most powerful support for Israel -- Christian Zionism. Former Israeli Ambassador in the US, Ron Derner, has urged Israel to prioritise maintaining the support of the American evangelical Christian. It must be assiduously wooed. "People must understand that the backbone of support for Israel in the US is the evangelical Christian." The quote is from The Palestinian Policy Network, Al-Shabaka. Israel can breathe easy because there is no indication of Biden distancing himself from this line of thinking.

US thinning out from the region will accentuate popular perception of Israel's exclusive support base inside the US. As Israel rolls its eyes around to size up the neighbourhood for subtle adjustments, it will find to its chagrin, Iran undiminished. Houthis in

Yemen, Hashd al Shaabi in Iraq, Hezbollah in Lebanon, groups supportive of President Assad in Syria and increasing reports of Iranian role in Afghanistan, initiated by the late Quds Commander, Qasem Soleimani -- all of these enhance Iran's position in the region. The cookie in Afghanistan having crumbled the way it has, Iran's role in this theatre may in the future be of interest to the US.

The launch of AUJUS (Australia, UK and US), an idea borrowed conceptually from ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand and US) against the Soviet Union, shows the urgency Biden accords to what Barack Obama called 'pivot to Asia'. The pivot was of much greater saliency. West Asia, though still important, had placed a disproportionate demand on Washington's attention. The nuclear deal conferred on Tehran the kind of legitimacy that was to have enabled it to balance power in the region. This would be in concert with Saudi Arabia, Israel, Egypt, Turkey. The regional balance of power would then require less day-to-day attention, freeing Washington to pay greater attention to the pivot. That appears to be the route on Biden's GPS."a

## international

## UNHCR URGES INT'L COMMUNITY TO CONTINUE ENGAGING WITH TALIBAN

Islamabad | Agencies

Visiting UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Filippo Grandi said here that the international community should continue engaging with the Afghan Taliban.

Addressing a press briefing in Islamabad, the top official said the UNHCR is engaging with the interim Taliban administration in Afghanistan on humanitarian matters, urging the world to do the same, reports Xinhua news agency.

"Taliban expressed the wish that humanitarian assistance be rolled out as quickly as possible to the country, because, indeed, and we saw it by ourselves, conditions are very difficult."

He said Afghanistan has been in need of financial assistance and as the time is passing by "the situation is pretty desperate, everything is needed. Food, medicines, shelter,



and other first necessities of life are needed".

He said if the UNHCR is adequately supported and resourced, it will be able to scale up humanitarian assistance.

"It is important that the interna-

tional community finds the necessary direction (and) the necessary ways to ensure the functioning of Afghanistan.

"If there is a collapse of public services, for example, like health, or education, and if the state ceases to

function, this will provoke a crisis that is much bigger than humanitarian," Grandi added.

Talking about the new wave of internally displaced people in Afghanistan, he said that about half a million people have been displaced by conflict recently due to fighting in their areas. However, there is no influx of refugees to neighbouring countries including Pakistan.

He lauded Pakistan for facilitating the humanitarian operations in Afghanistan, saying that during his visit to Afghanistan, he received some relief trucks from Pakistan.

"This is very important, whether it is Pakistani donation, but also international donations coming through here, we will need to use Pakistan to fly people in and out, as usual, Pakistan will play a very important role of support to the humanitarian operations inside Afghanistan. I'm very grateful for that."

## 9 killed after passenger boat overturns in China

A total of 17 rescue teams and 50 boats have been dispatched to join the search and rescue operation, and an investigation into the cause of the accident is underway.

Beijing | Agencies

At least nine people were killed and six others missing after a passenger boat overturned in a river in China's Guizhou province, local authorities confirmed on Sunday.

The accident took place at 4.50 p.m. on Saturday in Zangke River, reports Xinhua news agency.

The ship, which had a capacity of 40 people, was overloaded when the accident happened.

Authorities are yet to con-



firm the exact number of passengers who were on board.

As of Sunday, 40 people were rescued from the river, with 31 in non-life-threatening conditions, and nine died after being rescued. Most of the passengers were stu-

dents, according to the authorities.

A total of 17 rescue teams and 50 boats have been dispatched to join the search and rescue operation, and an investigation into the cause of the accident is underway.

## Australian Minister resigns after accepting anonymous donation

Canberra | Agencies

Australian Minister for Industry, Science and Technology Christian Porter on Sunday resigned after accepting an anonymous donation to fund personal legal fees.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced on Sunday afternoon that Porter has stepped down from the Ministry effective immediately, reports Xinhua news agency.

It comes five days after Porter revealed that he accepted a donation from a blind trust known as the "Legal Services Trust" to cover part of his legal fees in a discontinued defamation case against a journalist.

Morrison had sought advice from his department over whether the anonymous donation breached ministerial standards but said on Sunday that Porter, who previously served as the attorney-

general, had made the decision to quit himself.

"He has this afternoon taken the appropriate course of action to uphold those standards by tendering his resignation as a minister this afternoon, and I have accepted his resignation," he told reporters. "All members, when they become ministers, understand that when they sign on and become a member of the cabinet and take on the role in the government's executive. All of my ministers seek to uphold the standards at all times," said Morrison. Earlier on Sunday, Finance Minister Simon Birmingham described the donation to Porter as "an unusual one." Porter's resignation brought an end to his six-year career as a government minister. In a three-page resignation letter he said he "ultimately decided" to resign rather than try to break the confidentiality of the donors behind the trust.

## G20 Agriculture Ministers commit to better ensure sustainable food systems

Rome | Agencies

Ministers for Agriculture from the G20 nations have committed to shift their sector policies to better ensure sustainability and security of food systems in the world.

After a two-day summit in central Florence, Italy, the Ministers approved a final statement made of 21 points, mostly focused on "identifying and overcoming the major hurdles to meeting the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals provided by the 2030 Agenda)", reports Xinhua news agency.

"We recognise the need to identify paths for sustainable and resilient food systems and to find appropriate institutional, collaborative, and financial frameworks for their implementation, to overcome short and long-term challenges," they stated.

The G20 also stressed their commitment to "take urgent actions to address the causes and impacts of climate change", while protecting and restoring ecosystems and their biodiversity.

Italy holds the G20 rotating presidency this year.



At the final press conference after the summit, Italian Agriculture Minister Stefano Patuanelli urged all the group's members to pursue policies able to "permanently reverse the course", regardless if they were unpopular in the short term, or would not produce immediate benefits. Now (after Florence's commitments), the next engagement is set in Indonesia next year; if we do nothing in the meantime, the planet will not be waiting for us," Patuanelli said.

aking the role from Italy next year, Indonesia will host the next G20 summit

in Bali.

In the first day of the Florence meeting, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Director-General Qu Dongyu as well launched an appeal for the G20 countries to step up their efforts in addressing the long-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Qu reiterated that agri-food systems were "key to reducing inequalities, especially in rural areas".

He praised the G20's role in mitigating the pandemic's impact on the sector over the past 18 months, but also pointed out that many challenges would persist.

He said the pandemic has "expanded existing inequalities", citing the International Monetary Fund's estimation that the per capita income loss for emerging and developing countries has been two and a half times the proportion of those in advanced economies.

The pandemic has also increased food insecurity, Qu said, citing the FAO's assessment that food insecurity has risen from 8.4 per cent to around 9.9 per cent of the world's population.

## Raisi says 'new chapter' emerging in Iran-Tajikistan ties

Dushanbe | Agencies

A new chapter is emerging in the relations between Iran and Tajikistan, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said at a joint press conference with his Tajik counterpart Emomali Rahmon here.

At the conference on Saturday, Raisi described the cooperation agreements signed during the visit to Dushanbe as an evidence of the two countries' will to broaden relations, reports Xinhua news agency.

"What is more important than the written agreements is the two countries' will and decision to develop relations in various fields," he was quoted as saying by Iran's Tasnim news agency.

Emphasising that the two countries have great potentials for cooperation, Raisi stressed the use of all capacities to develop relations in political, economic, trade and cultural

areas. There are good grounds for developing economic and trade ties with Tajikistan in the Iranian ports of Chabahar and Bandar Abbas, he pointed out. Meanwhile, Raisi said that the two sides share closer views on Afghanistan.

"The foreigners could not solve the problems for the people of Afghanistan, and we do not accept the continuing presence and role of foreigners in the country," he noted.

We believe that the Afghan issue should be resolved by the Afghans themselves. Dialogue among Afghans should take place," said the Iranian President, adding that "the government to be established in Afghanistan should be an inclusive government".

For his part, Rahmon mentioned Iran as a friend of Tajikistan and underlined the importance of deepening the bilateral relations.



# TRIBALS HAVE FIRST RIGHT ON GOVERNMENT TREASURY: CM

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that development of Madhya Pradesh is possible only when the tribals of the state join the mainstream of society. The state government has geared up to protect the education, health, livelihood development and constitutional rights of the tribals. The tribals have the first right on the government treasury and we are determined to open the treasury of both money and opportunity to them.



**Team Absolute | Bhopal**  
Chouhan said that the budget has been raised from time to time for the overall development of the tribals. In the year 2003-04, the budget of the Tribal Affairs Department was Rs 746.60 crores, which was increased to Rs 8085.99 crores in the year 2020-21. In this way the budget of this category was increased by 948 percent.

Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh has the largest tribal population in the country. Here tribals comprise one fifth of the total population. For the all-round development of tribal brethren, educational, economic, social and employment related schemes are being run by the state government for the people of dif-

ferent age groups. Chouhan said that we will bring revolution in tribal education and will leave no stone unturned in providing the benefits of new education policy given by the Prime Minister to the tribal children and youth. Decision has been taken to initiate online smart classes from Class VIII and IX for students to improve the foundation of NEET and JEE. We will also make the curriculum as per present day requirement. At least 4 people from each gram panchayat will be trained as rural engineers on various subjects like agricultural equipment skills, IT services, building related skills, organic farming for economic advancement through skill development.

Ashrams, hostels, schools, girls education complexes are being run all over the state. Akanksha and Civil Services Promotion Scheme is being operated for the training of competitive examinations. Along with reservation in self-employment schemes, centers are being run for skill development.

Chouhan said that Eklavya Adarsh Residential School, Gurukulam Vidyalaya, Special Backward Tribe Residential Schools along with girls campuses with minimum literacy are being run for the educational development of tribal students. Residential schools are being run in Guna, Jabalpur and Sheopor to educate students of 3 special backward tribes of the state including Baiga, Bharia and

Sahariya. A food grant of Rs one thousand per month is also being given to the women heads of these special backward tribe families to save them from malnutrition. There is UPSC coaching for tribal students in which a maximum amount of Rs 4 lakh 40 thousand per student is being given for 18 months. Scholarships are also given by the government to tribal students to pursue education abroad. Eight sports complexes have also been set up for boys and girls in different districts.

Chief Minister said that the Vanvasis have the right over Jal (water), Jungle and Zameen (Land). We re-examined canceled forest rights pattas and re-approved more than 34 thousand of these. The government will never allow minor forest produce to be sold non profitably. Last year the support price of 32 minor forest produce was fixed. The government also procured minor forest produce at support prices. He said that Sickle Cell Mission would be started from November 15 in all 89 tribal development blocks of the state. Under this, door-to-door identification would be conducted to identify people with sickle cell traits in their blood and treated.

Chouhan said that the Scheduled Tribes Moneylenders Regulation 1972 has now been made more effective in Madhya Pradesh. The registration fee has been increased for those engaged in money lending business in tribal areas. The rates of interest charged by moneylenders have also now been controlled. The moneylenders who charge interest more than the prescribed rate will be punished severely.

## Four children drown during Ganesh immersion in Bhind

The incident occurred at the pond of Vankhadeshwar Mahadev temple in Mehgaon. Those who died are identified as Prashant, Abhishek, Sachin and Harshit.

**Team Absolute | Bhopal**

Four children died while taking a bath in the pond on the occasion of Ganesh immersion in Mehgaon, Bhind district on Sunday evening, the police said.

The incident occurred at the pond of Vankhadeshwar Mahadev temple in Mehgaon. Those who died are identified as Prashant, Abhishek, Sachin and Harshit.

According to the residents, Prashant and Abhishek, sons of sarpanch Raju of Dhanauli village, had gone to the pond of Vankhadeshwar Mahadev temple in Mehgaon for Ganesh immersion. After the immersion people present there drove them away from the pond then they returned to their home.

Later, the children again went there with his two other friends Sachin and Harshit who lived near their house to take bath.

Rescue swimmer Karu

Choudhary said that as soon as he got the information, he rushed to the spot. Two boys were trapped in the mud when he took out of the pond. After that he took out another two boys who were drowning in the pond, Choudhary added.

After the rescue, the local people took all the children to Mehgaon Hospital where the doctor declared them dead.

After the incident, Sub Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Rajesh Rathore said that people have expressed the possibility of more children being in the pond, in view of which the in-charge of the police station is searching the pond and a rescue team has also been called from Bhind.

Nonetheless, the major reason for this accident is said to be the negligence of the Mehgaon police. It is because no security arrangements were made on the banks of the pond despite having a festival of Ganesh immersion, the local said.

## A Sainik is the pride of the nation: Governor

**Team Absolute | Bhopal**

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that Sainiks are the pride of the nation. People should take inspiration from them to serve and commit themselves to the nation. He said that Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav should be celebrated as a Jan Utsav. He said that the border forces should popularize the tales of unknown heroes, heroines who laid down their lives for the freedom of the country among the different parts of the country, languages, class and communities.

Patel was addressing the launching programme of the cycle rally of Sashastra Seema Bal at Shaurya Smarak on Sunday. The cycle rally starting from Shaurya Memorial Bhopal will end at Rajghat, Delhi.

Patel said that our country was a symbol of knowledge



and prosperity. Here we had centers of knowledge like Nalanda and Takshashila from where people from all over the world used to come to acquire knowledge. It was so rich that rivers of milk and curd would flow. There were such brave fighters here whose example was given in the world of valor. The British, who came to trade, took advantage of the mutual jealousy, division and dis-

crimination among the people and grabbed power by dividing them. He said that we have attained freedom after much struggle. The young generation should be acquainted with the sacrifices made for this Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. He lauded the military forces engaged in the security and service of the nation for organizing the Independence Festival programmes. Director of

Sashastra Seema Bal Academy, Rajinder Kumar Bhumla told in his welcome address that the cycle rally will be completed on October 2 at Rajghat after traveling about 865 kms. He gave information regarding the formation of Sashastra Seema Bal. He said that training is imparted to the officers from Assistant Commandant to Deputy Inspector General level by the Training Academy located at Bhopal.

Governor Patel flagged off the cycle rally. On arrival at the Shaurya Memorial, the Governor was given a salute by the Guard of Honour of the Sashastra Seema Bal. A memento was presented by Sashastra Seema Bal. Inspector General of Indo-Tibetan-Border Police Sanjeev Raina, officers of Sashastra Seema Bal, their family members were also present.

## CM PLANTS SAPTAPARNI SAPLING



**Bhopal:** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a Saptaparni sapling at Smart Park in front of State Archaeological Museum located in Shyamla Hills. Saptaparni is an evergreen medicinal tree, which has great importance in Ayurveda. This medicinal plant is used in the manufacture of various medicines. It is used to remove debility, heal open wounds and treat jaundice and malaria. Saptaparni (Alstonia scholaris) is an evergreen tree.

## Dr. Mishra was the ideal and inspirational personality of the medical world: Chouhan

**Team Absolute | Bhopal**

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan attended the tribute meeting of late Dr. NP Mishra at Manas Bhawan this evening. On this occasion, he garlanded the photo of late Dr. NP Mishra and said that Dr. Mishra was the ideal and inspirational personality of the medical world. We will always be indebted to him. Madhya Pradesh will also remember his contribution. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that the road in front of Dr. Mishra's residence at Civil Lines would be named as Dr. NP Mishra Marg.

Chouhan said that Dr. Mishra has always given the message of service in the medical world while teaching and explaining the nuances to the junior doctors. Without him this field would be incomplete. He was a studious person. Reading books, assimilating them and then telling junior doctors, was his speciality. He has disciples abroad as well. Dr. Mishra fulfilled the responsibility of treatment very well even in adverse circumstances. When there was no room for even a thousand patients in the hospitals, he provided better treatment to ten thousand patients without panicking. Be it the circumstances after the



Gas Tragedy or the Corona period, he always guided the medical world. He has prepared many doctors, who are doing the work of treating various diseases efficiently.

Chouhan said that for the last one and a half year, he used to have discussions with Dr. Mishra on various aspects related to Corona. Important suggestions were received from him. Dr. Mishra was always engrossed in his work while being the Head of the Department, Dean etc. in the Medical College. Even after retirement, he used to take the work of treating patients very seriously. He also had the ability to convince the relatives of the patients. Used to encourage new doctors. He was amazing, he did the work of treating patients till the last stage of his life. The last day also saw the patients who had come full of confidence.

## CM PAYS COURTESY VISIT TO GOVERNOR



**Bhopal:** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid a courtesy visit to Governor Mangubhai Patel at Raj Bhavan today. Chief Minister felicitated Governor Patel by presenting him with a bouquet.

## CM PRAYS FOR HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY OF THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE



**Bhopal:** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, on the occasion of Anant Chaturdashi, immersed the idol of Lord Shri Ganesh in the water tank at his residence. Chief Minister prayed for the happiness and prosperity of the people of the state. His wife Sadhna Singh, son Kunal Singh and officers-employees of the residence office, security staff participated in the short walk up to the water tank constructed near the number six gate of the residence complex. Devotional songs of Lord Ganesh were performed at CM House with reverence, devotion and gaiety. Chouhan along with close relatives attended the Chal Samaroha singing 'Ganpati Bappa Moriya Agle Baras Tu Jaldi Aa...' and other songs in praise of Lord Ganesh. The idol immersion ended with distribution of prasad to the devotees.

## CM Chouhan will dedicate 103 Anganwadi buildings and 10 thousand poshan vaticas

**The State Government is celebrating 20 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's welfare and Suraj as a step towards fulfilling the resolve of self-reliant India. In the same sequence, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will dedicate the buildings of 103 newly constructed Anganwadi centres in 32 districts of the state and 10 thousand poshan vaticas (nutrition gardens) of 52 districts through video conferencing in a programme to be organised in Khandwa district on September 21.**

**Team Absolute | Bhopal**

Chouhan will also provide nutrition rights information sheets to the mothers of 10 thousand children who have come under normal nutritional level from severe malnutrition in 22 districts. In the programme, Chouhan will distribute maternity assistance to 25 thousand pregnant and lactating mothers under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana. Chouhan will also distribute scholarship to about 75 thousand 961 girls of class 6th, 9th, 11th and class 12th under Ladli Laxmi Yojana.

In the state, 84 thousand 465 Anganwadi centres and 12 thousand 670 mini Anganwadi centres are operating under the Women and Child Development Department. In this, 8 thousand 903 Anganwadi centres are operating in urban areas, 24004 in tribal areas and 51 thousand 558 Anganwadi centres are operating in rural areas.

In the present circumstances, availability of vegetables and fruits in rural and urban areas is a challenge especially for the economically weaker families. Efforts are being made by the Women and Child Development Department that in such circumstances, nutrition gar-

dens should be established by planting easily grown fruits and vegetables at the level of government institutions and families in need. Under the Poshan Abhiyan by the Government of India, instructions have been given to promote diversity at the local level by developing nutrition gardens "Nutri Garden" in local families, communities, Anganwadi centres and other government buildings in the state. Its main motto is "Eat what you plant - plant what you eat". Under this, about 42 thousand nutrition gardens have been developed in Anganwadi centres operating in government buildings and rented buildings in the state. Besides, 21 thousand nutrition gardens have been prepared in the houses of Anganwadi workers and other places of the villages. A total of 63 thousand nutrition gardens have been created through Anganwadi centres across the state. In the first week of Nutrition Month (September is celebrated as Poshan Maah every year), more than 10 thousand nutrition gardens were developed and more than 3 lakh saplings were planted. Seed kits have been provided to 66 Anganwadi centres by the Ministry of Agriculture & Horticulture,

Government of India, through post offices.

Nutrition information sheets will be provided to the mothers of 10 thousand children of the state in the programme 20 years of Jan Kalyan and Suraj. These children have improved from a category of more severe malnourished to a normal nutritional level. For institutional and community based treatment and nutritional management of severely malnourished children in the state, Integrated Nutrition Management Programme is being implemented for moderate and very severe malnourished children from September 2020.

Madhya Pradesh ranks first at the national level in the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana. Under this, Rs. 1055.01 crore has been paid to about 24.54 lakh beneficiaries since the inception of the scheme. The main objective of the scheme is to provide cash incentives to pregnant women in the form of partial compensation for loss of wages, so that they can get adequate rest before and after the delivery of the first child. Under the scheme, an amount of Rs. 5 thousand is provided to the beneficiary in 3 instalments.

## Congress not to field candidate for RS by-poll; BJP's Murugan likely to be elected unopposed

The vacancy emerged in Madhya Pradesh after the then Union minister Thaawarchand Gehlot resigned following his appointment as Karnataka governor in July this year.

**Team Absolute | Bhopal**

Union minister L. Murugan is likely to be elected unopposed in the Rajya Sabha by-poll from Madhya Pradesh next month as the main opposition Congress has decided not to field its candidate.

The BJP on Saturday announced Murugan's name for the by-poll will be held on October 4.

The vacancy emerged in Madhya Pradesh after the then Union minister Thaawarchand Gehlot resigned following his appointment as Karnataka governor in July this year.

State Congress spokesman Bhupendra Gupta while talking to this correspondent said, "We are not going to field a candidate. MP party chief and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Kamal Nathji has decided not to field any candidate for the RS by-poll in the state."

A senior state BJP leader expressed confidence that Murugan would have a comfortable entry to the Rajya Sabha.

Before Murugan's name was announced, the name of BJP Scheduled Caste Morcha's national president Lal Singh Arya, as well as of senior party leaders Kailash Vijaywargiya and Uma Bharti were doing the rounds for the seat in the Upper House of



Parliament, according to party insiders.

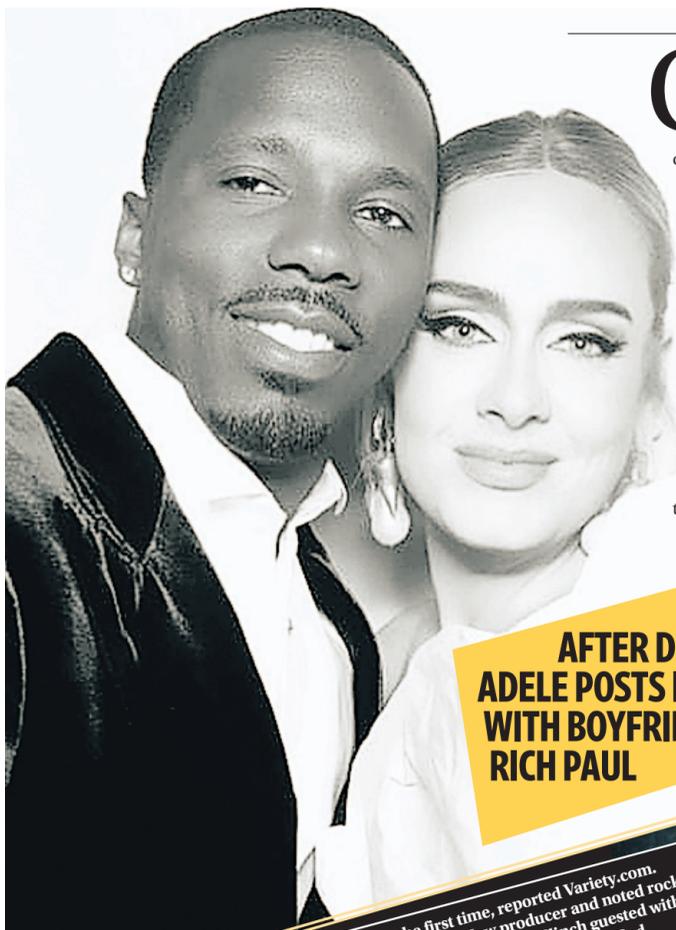
In the 230-seat MP Assembly, the BJP has 125 MLAs, while the Congress has 95.

Besides, two seats are held by the Bahujan Samaj Party, one by the Samajwadi Party and there are four Independents, while three seats are lying vacant out of the 11 Rajya Sabha seats in the state, the BJP currently has seven and the Congress three.

Right now, the BJP Rajya Sabha members from the state are M J Akbar, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Dharmendra Pradhan, Ajay Pratap Singh, Kailash Soni, Sumer Singh Solanki and Sampatiya Uike.

The Congress's members to the Upper House of Parliament from the state are Digvijaya Singh, Vivek Tankha and Rajmani Patel.

As per the Election Commission, the last date of filing nominations for the Rajya Sabha bypoll is September 22, and last date of withdrawal of nomination is September 27.



**IN A FIRST AFTER DIVORCE, ADELE POSTS INSTA PIC WITH BOYFRIEND RICH PAUL**

London | Agencies

**G**rammy-winning singer Adele made her relationship with sports agent Rich Paul Instagram-official by posting a picture of them together for the first time on Sunday.

The couple confirmed their relationship in August.

The black and white picture was taken on the red carpet of an event. The singer has kept her relationship with Rich low-key so far.

She captioned the image with just a heart emoticon.

Adele finalised her divorced with Simon Konecki earlier this year. The two share the custody of their son Angelo.

New York | Agencies

**P**earl Jam's first live show in more than three years was an eventful one on Saturday at the Sea.Hear.Now festival beachside in Asbury Park, N.J., reports Variety.com. The group debuted six songs from its 2020 album 'Gigaton' and welcomed new touring member Josh Klinghoffer into the fold. "We're happy we could make it and I think we're all gonna make it together," said frontman Eddie Vedder to a 30,000-strong Sea.Hear.Now Festival crowd. Pearl Jam opened the 20-song set with three new songs in a row, 'Dance of the Clairvoyants', 'Quick Escape', and 'Seven O'Clock'.

Klinghoffer's presence was quickly felt here, as he contributed guitar and backing vocals throughout. The best of the rest was 'Never Destination', a spritely rocker that served as a great segue into the classic 'Even Flow'. Drummer Matt Cameron's 'Take the Long Way' and the surging, Vedder-penned 'Superblood Wolfmoon' were also played

for the first time, reported Variety.com. Sea.Hear.Now producer and noted rock photographer Danny Clinch guested with the band on harmonica during 'Red Mosquito'. Clinch has worked closely with Pearl Jam and Bruce Springsteen over the years and has long been a champion of Asbury Park's music and culture. His local festival, Transparent Clinch, hosted a festival pop-up featuring stripped-down performances and original artwork from festival acts. Pearl Jam performed 'Elderly Woman Behind the Counter in a Small Town', 'Given to Fly', 'State of Love and Trust', 'Better Man' and 'Porch' summoning vintage rock 'n' roll energy.

One of the key bands in the grunge movement of the early 1990s, Pearl Jam's members often shunned popular music industry practices such as making music videos or participating in interviews.

Pearl Jam outdid many of their contemporaries from the early 1990s, and are considered one of the most influential bands of the decade, being dubbed as the most popular American rock & roll band of the '90s.

**Pearl Jam's first live show in three years at Sea. Hear. Now. fest**



**Dua Lipa, Megan Thee Stallion's 28-city tour to begin in Feb 2022**

New York | Agencies

**D**ua Lipa recently announced the dates for her 28-city North American 'Future Nostalgia' tour featuring support from Megan Thee Stallion, Caroline Polachek and Lola Zouai, reports Billboard.com. The arena outing in support of the singer's album of the same name is slated to start on February 9 at FTX Arena in Miami, and feature Dua's first-ever headlining shows at New York's Madison Square Garden and Los Angeles' Forum.

"I'm so thrilled to tour again and see my angels in person! How amazing that we all get to dance and celebrate together once again," the singer said in a statement announcing the road trip, which will also hit Atlanta, Boston, Toronto, Minneapolis, Dallas, Las Vegas and Seattle before winding down at the Rogers Arena in Vancouver, on April 1. "When I was writing Future Nostalgia, I imagined the songs being played in clubs on nights out with your mates. I'm so excited that this fantasy is finally coming true. I can't wait to experience these songs with you together live!"

Lipa released her second studio album, 'Future Nostalgia' in 2020 which received critical acclaim. It earned six Grammy nominations including Album of the Year, Record of the Year and Song of the Year and became her first UK number-one album. The album helped Lipa win British Female Solo Artist and British Album of the Year at the 2021 Brit Awards.



**Mindy Kaling: Reese Witherspoon is such a great source of parenting advice**

Los Angeles | Agencies

**A**ctress Mindy Kaling, who is a mother of two children -- Katherine and Spencer -- has praised her close friend and actress Reese Witherspoon for teaching her the importance of "making time" for herself so she can be a better parent to her kids. She said: "Reese Witherspoon is always such a great source of parenting advice because she is so playful and fun and incredibly busy. She has three kids, but also this really full-time career. She acts, she runs this company, she's a producer and everything too."

"She's a person who always gives me great advice, and I think she's the one that has taught me the importance of making time for myself so that I could be a good parent for my kids."

She also heaped praise on Witherspoon for her "incredibly smart" investment choices, reports femalefirst.co.uk. Speaking to People magazine, she added: "The other thing about Reese is that she's just incredibly smart about investing, that's something that people might not know, but she loves to invest. And she's really smart and make sure their futures are secure... She's just so good at that kind of thing."

Kaling recently said she loved being pregnant with her son during the Covid-19 pandemic last year, because it meant she was able to hide from the public.



**Olivia Rodrigo plays at her 'first show' at 'iHeartRadio music' fest**

New York | Agencies

**O**livia Rodrigo played her first real concert on Saturday, an experience that she described from a Las Vegas stage as "surreal," reports Billboard.com. Rodrigo reached many milestones very early in her career with a No. 1 debut album and a smash hit in her breakthrough single 'Drivers License', to start but it wasn't until this weekend that she played her first real concert.

"This is a really special day for me because this is sort of like my first show," she told the crowd from the fest's daytime stage on Saturday. "I'm just so grateful that you guys are here with me experiencing this. Thank you so much."

Though Rodrigo has performed for a live

audience during one-off televised events, like her appearance at last week's VMAs, the 2021 iHeartRadio Music Festival had the singer delivering a more substantial five-song set in support of *Sour*.

"Speaking of firsts, this is the first song I put out," she said, sitting at the piano to begin 'Drivers License'. As she played her hit, she encouraged the audience where some fans were spotted in Olivia Rodrigo and *Sour* tees to join in, though she didn't have to. They were already singing along before she could say "let me hear ya."

She began the concert with her album opener, the high energy 'Brutal', and then 'Jealousy, Jealousy'.

Seemingly overcome with emotion over the experience, Rodrigo gushed, "You guys are just like the best crowd ever. This is

**BILLIE EILISH GOES EMOTIONAL ON 'THE DREW BARRYMORE SHOW'**

New York | Agencies

**S**inger Billie Eilish opened up about a personal moment in a virtual appearance on 'The Drew Barrymore Show', reports Billboard.com.

She told Barrymore, she had tears in her eyes after she re-watched her documentary 'Billie Eilish: The World's a Little Blurry'.

"I've always been very, very strong-willed and honest, which I think is a blessing and a curse, but the funny thing is that the older I've gotten, the less confident I've gotten," Eilish admitted in the interview with Barrymore, who was paying compliments to her work ethic and vision.

"And it kind of made me, like... I rewatched the doc a few weeks ago. And it made me cry because I was thinking how free-spirited I was and how open-minded I was."

"The media just like tears it away from you," said Eilish. "It's not fun right now."

The conversation with Eilish, whose concert film 'Happier Than Ever: A Love Letter to Los Angeles' premiered on Disney+ in early September and whose documentary was released on Apple TV+ earlier this year, then shifted over to the artist's relationship with fans.

"One moment I was a fan, and then suddenly I was looked at as this like, higher up," she said. "Even when I was 14. And it was so weird because I was like, 'I'm not even anyone. I just make music and these kids that I feel like I already know -- suddenly like, 'Oh they're Billie's fans, and then there's Billie.' So that's why it was so weird to me." 'Billie Eilish: The World's a Little Blurry' is a 2021 American documentary film directed by R. J. Cutler and centered around singer-songwriter Billie Eilish. The film reveals the behind-the-scenes creation process of Eilish's debut studio album 'When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?' with the title referencing a lyric from the album track 'Bury a Friend'. The film was released in select theaters and on Apple TV+ on February 26, 2021.



**ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY**



Ruth Wilson



## CHENNAI BOWLERS PUT UP STRONG SHOW TO BEAT MUMBAI BY 20 RUNS

Dubai | Agencies

Chennai Super Kings rode on a strong show by the bowlers to hand a 20-run defeat to defending champions Mumbai Indians in the first match of UAE leg of IPL 2021. The win now puts Chennai on top of the points table with 12 points from eight matches. This is just the second time Chennai won a match in the IPL after losing four wickets in the power-play.

Mumbai's chase started on a good note with Quinton de Kock collecting two boundaries off Josh Hazlewood in the second over. Though Ruturaj Gaikwad dropped him on six, de Kock couldn't make most of the reprieve, trapped in front of stumps by a Deepak Chahar incoming delivery.

Hazlewood came in for more thrashing as debutant Anmolpreet Singh carted him for three stylish boundaries in the next over. But Singh's promising stay at the crease was brought to an end by a



knuckleball from Chahar rattling his off-stump.

Suryakumar Yadav tried to loft on the up but mistimed off bottom of the bat off Shardul Thakur. The catch was comfortably snapped by Faf du Plessis running from mid-off. Ishan Kishan threw his hands

at a slower outside off delivery from Dwayne Bravo, only to hit straight to Suresh Raina at cover.

Kieron Pollard and Saurabh Tiwary thumped some boundaries in their 29-run partnership. But Hazlewood struck Pollard past the flick on the back pad with a sharp

inswinger that stayed low. In the next over, Krunal Pandya went for a non-existent single and tried to come back with a desperate dive but fell short of crease.

Tiwary, dropped at 41, kept Mumbai in the hunt as Thakur conceded 15 runs off the 19th over, including a six by Adam Milne. With 24 needed off the final over, Milne swung straight to deep mid-wicket in the final over off Bravo.

Tiwary brought up a hard-fought half-century. But Bravo took the wicket of Rahul Chahar on the next ball to hand Mumbai their first loss in the UAE leg of the IPL 2021. Mumbai will rue the lack of big partnerships as Chennai put on the choke.

### Briefscores (Day 4, Stumps)

Chennai Super Kings 156/6 in 20 overs (Ruturaj Gaikwad 88 not out, Ravindra Jadeja 26, Adam Milne 2/21, Jasprit Bumrah 2/33) beat Mumbai Indians 136/8 in 20 overs (Saurabh Tiwary 50 not out, Quinton de Kock 17, Dwayne Bravo 3/25, Deepak Chahar 2/19) by 20 runs.

## TT players Siddhesh-Mudit and Snehit-Sudhanshu bag bronze medals in Kazakhstan



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian TT pairs of Siddhesh Pande and Mudit Dani, and Fidel R Snehit and Sudhanshu Grover ended their campaign with mens doubles bronze medals at the 2021 ITTF Kazakhstan International Open in Karaganda.

Both the pairs displayed a great show throughout the tournament before suffering defeats in their respective semifinals. Maharashtra duo

Mudit and Siddhesh suffered a 0-3 loss against the Saudi Arabian pair of Ali Alkhadrawi and Abdulaziz Bu Shulaybi. In the second men's doubles last-4 clash, Snehit and Sudhanshu too went down fighting 2-3 against tough Kazakh pair of Alan Kurmangaliyev and Kirill Gerassimenko.

The Hyderabad paddler Snehit was equally impressive in the singles category as he entered the final after defeating Pavel Platonov of

Belarus 4-1 comfortably in the semifinal. The world No. 405 Indian will take on world No. 46 Kirill Gerassimenko of Kazakhstan in the gold medal match. The pair of Kaushani Nath and Prapti Sen too stormed into the women's doubles final as they outclassed the Uzbek duo of Kamila Khalikova and Mekhrinis Norkulova 3-1 in the last-4 match. They will now face Valeria Kotyur and Valeria Shcherbatykh of Russia in the final.

## Vaughan suggests moving England's Pak series to UAE

London | Agencies

Former England captain Michael Vaughan has suggested a way to salvage England's upcoming tour of Pakistan, which looks in doubt after the New Zealand men's team abandoned a white-ball tour of the Asian country citing security concerns.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is under pressure not to send its men's and women's teams to Pakistan and has asked its security experts for a report. Vaughan said a good way to salvage the series would be to move it to the UAE "if it's deemed unsafe to travel".

"It would seem sensible to me to try and move England's Pakistan games to the UAE rather than cancel



the tour if it's deemed unsafe to travel... Hopefully, the games for the Men's and Women's teams can take place rather than a full cancellation," Vaughan tweeted on Sunday.

For years, Pakistan have played their home matches in the UAE, which has become a home away from

home for its players after international teams refused to travel to the country following the terrorist attack on the Sri Lanka team in 2009.

But it is to be seen whether the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will agree to take their games back to UAE after having hosted some international teams at home.

## India win silver in Asian U18 Girls' Rugby Sevens Championship

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India on Sunday won a silver medal in the Asia Rugby U18 Girls Rugby Sevens Championship 2021, losing 21-17 to the United Arab Emirates in a well-fought final held at Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

In the final, Nandini top-scored for India with seven points while Aditi Kumari and Tarulata Nair contributed five points each to the Indian score. Both teams scored three tries each. For UAE, Carmela Morralla scored nine points while Hannah Lear added seven, and Lara Botha contributed five. India had reached the final by beating Kazakhstan 24-7 in the semi-final with Sapna Kumari top-scoring with 10 points including two tries. Tarulata Naik scored nine points while Arti Kumari added five points.

In the two-day tournament that had five teams -- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, UAE, India, and hosts Uzbekistan -- and played in an all-play-all round-robin format, India started with a 12-10 defeat to Kazakhstan on Saturday. The girls



came back strongly to blank Kyrgyzstan 63-0 with Vaishnavi Dattatray Patil scoring 15 points from three tries and defeated hosts Uzbekistan 20-5. On Sunday, they lost to UAE girls 20-12, thus finishing third in the five-team league and qualifying for the semi-finals. Speaking on the occasion, Rahul Bose, actor, director, philanthropist, and a board member of Rugby India, said, "This is a great moment for Indian Rugby. Both teams (UAE and India) scored three tries in the final. No disgrace losing

like that!" "For our U18 girls' team to perform as well as they did is all the more remarkable because they were 15 years old when the pandemic struck. They have never played a National tournament, leave alone an international championship. For them to come so far is a testament to their skill, grit, and fire to make their country proud. Our thanks to the coaching and support staff. Only rugby players know how important they are in this sport. This is a new day for Indian Rugby. We go onward

and upward from here," Bose was quoted as saying in a release by Rugby India.

Vikram Ahuja, President, Rugby India said, "Heartiest congratulations to our U18 Girls team, their performance has been sensational - they displayed courage, skill, and mental toughness far beyond their years. This is the first step in a series of measures that Rugby India has taken and will continue to undertake to build all our teams into internationally competitive opponents. Our deepest thanks to the coaches, support staff, and all our sponsors & partners for their commitment and kind support towards enabling the team to achieve this milestone." The team was trained by coaches from South Africa (N'mely Hendrik 'Naas' Botha (South Africa Rugby Legend & four-time World Rugby Player of the Year), Ludwiche Van Deventer (Rugby Sevens Specialist), along with Indian Women's Rugby Team captain Vahbbi Bharucha, mentor and official physiotherapist for the under-18 girls' rugby team.

## VICE PRESIDENT VENKAIAH NAIDU FELICITATES PARALYMPIANS

Team Absolute | Gurugram

Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu and the Haryana government on Sunday felicitated Haryana's medallists and participants in Tokyo Paralympics 2020.

Various dignitaries, including Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and Sports Minister Sandeep Singh, were present on the occasion at an event held at Northcap University in Gurugram.

During the ceremony, gold medalist in shooting Manish Narwal, and in Javelin Sumit Arun were given prize money of Rs 6 crore each.

Similarly, Yogesh Kathuniya, silver medalist in the discus throw, got Rs 4 crore, Singhraj Adhana silver and bronze medalist in men's shooting category got Rs 4 crore and Rs 2.5 crore and Archery bronze medallist Harvinder Singh was given an amount of Rs 2.5 crore.

In addition, Tarun Dhillon, Navdeep Singh (who finished 4th) and Vinod Kumar, (who missed the bronze medal due to technical reasons), were given Rs 50 lakh each. Similarly, Rs 15 lakh each was distributed as an incentive to the participating players -- Aruna Tanwar, Deepak Saini, Rahul Jakhar, Jaideep Deswal, Ranjit Bhati, Rampal, Dharambir Nain, Amit Kumar Saroha, Tekchand, Arvind Malik and Ekta Bhayan.

The Vice President and the Chief Minister distributed the prize money of more than Rs 27 crore among 19 medallists and participants of Haryana in the Tokyo Paralympics.

Praising the Haryana Government for supporting and promoting the sportspersons in the state, the Vice President said that Haryana has performed phenomenally and the contribution of such a small state in the medal tally is unbelievable.

"Having got an opportunity to hon-

our these talented sportspersons of Tokyo Paralympics 2020, I feel honoured," said Naidu.

He said that the performance of Team India in this year's Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics has been excellent. The country has won the maximum number of 19 medals in various sports, which include 5 gold medals, 8 silver medals, and 6 bronze medals. A total of 6 medals have been won by 5 players from Haryana, which includes 2 Gold, 2 Silver and 2 Bronze medals.

"Achieving such a historical success in sports is not very easy. It is the continuous practice, dedication, and hard work a player puts in during the process which makes them achieve the planned goal," he added.

Congratulating the players for their sterling performance, Chief Minister Manohar Lal said that for the first time, the state government has decided to give Rs 50 lakh each to the play-

ers who finished fourth in the Olympics and Paralympics.

"The coaches, who groom the medallists, also deserve the reward. Therefore, the state government has decided that in the Olympics and Paralympics, Rs 20 lakh will be given to the coach of the gold medallist, Rs 15 lakh to the coach of the silver medallist and Rs 12.50 lakh to the coach of the bronze medallist," Khattar said.

He said that Paralympic Bhawan is being constructed on 6 acres in Faridabad. The government will develop it as a Paralympic Sports Center with a hostel facility.

Speaking on this occasion, Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra said that these sportspersons have achieved such a big milestone despite facing hard challenges in their lives. The entire nation is extending its respect and honour to their dedication and hard work.

## Champions Gokulam Kerala and Army Red through to Durand quarters

Team Absolute | Kolkata

Defending Champions Gokulam Kerala FC and the Army Red Football Team advanced from Group D, reaching the quarter-finals of the 130th Durand Cup in contrasting styles on Sunday. The Army Red team thus became the second Services team after Army Green to make it through to the tournament's knockout stages. The simultaneous final group fixtures were a picture in contrast. While the game between Army Red and ISL side Hyderabad FC at the Vivekananda Yubabharati Kirirangan (VYBK) was tight and cagey, it rained goals at the Kalyani Stadium where Assam Rifles and Gokulam Kerala squared off.

Gokulam beat Assam Rifles 7-2 while Army Red beat Hyderabad FC by an odd goal in three. The Malabarians showed no mercy and raced to an emphatic 4-1 lead by half-time. Nigerian striker Chisom Elvis Chikataru gave Gokulam the lead in the very first minute. Goan forward Beneston Pictcon Barretto notched a brace in the first half while Rahim Osumanu also added to the tally.

In the second half, Chikataru added a double to his name to complete his hat-trick, the first of the 130th Durand Cup. Substitute Sourav also joined the action and nicked a goal for himself in the 61st minute. Assam Rifles scored twice through Soibam Rongr Singh 36' and Samtjil Rabha 63' but

that was nothing more than a consolation. Liton shines in Army Red win in the other game at the VYBK. Liton Shil of Army Red scored a brace and was the star of the match. Koustav Dutta scored the only goal for Hyderabad FC. The first half was very eventful with both teams playing equally well. Liton Shil broke the deadlock in the 32nd minute but Hyderabad's Koustav Dutta did well to score the equaliser, just two minutes later.

There were quite a few chances created but after that but it remained 1-1 at half-time. Army Red played a very attacking game in the second half and Liton Shil did well to score the winning goal for the Reds, taking his team through to the quarter-finals.

## I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY THE NEXT FRONTIER IS AN IPL: ELLYSE PERRY

Mackay | Agencies

Australia all-rounder Ellyse Perry believes that the women's Indian Premier League (IPL) is the next frontier in competitions for women's cricket all around the world. She has called upon the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to pull the trigger for organising a women's IPL after the success of the women's Big Bash League (WBBL) and The Hundred.

The second leg of IPL 2021 resumes in the UAE on Sunday. Since its inception in 2008, the IPL has become the most extravagant T20 league in the world. But the women's version of the league has been confined to three editions of an exhibition tournament named "Women's T20 Challenge" since 2018. This year's edition has been postponed due to Covid-19 with no decision on re-scheduled dates though BCCI President Sourav Ganguly once



mentioned about having seven to eight teams in the women's league.

"I know there's been a lot of dabbling with it in terms of exhibition IPL matches for women. So, at some point it's about pulling the trigger and putting together a full competition and hopefully that's not too far off. I'm sure the Indian girls would absolutely love that to be the case," Ellyse was quoted as saying by The Sydney Morning Herald on Sunday.

"It's been wonderful having a number of them playing in the WBBL over the last few years. At this stage it's looking like

they'll be involved again this year, so reciprocally it'd be wonderful to be involved in a competition over there. The IPL takes precedence in men's cricket and I think it's got the capacity to be just as big in many ways in the women's game," added Ellyse.

Australian players participated in women's T20 Challenge in 2018, before missing out on the 2019 and 2020 editions. Indian players have been present in the WBBL and took part in The Hundred this year when many Australians pulled out. The 30-year-old Ellyse mentioned that starting cricket leagues for women brings wonderful opportunities in terms of business, entertainment and growing the sport in the world.

"I actually think it is even more so an encouragement for other boards to seriously look at introducing professional women's T20 competitions, par-

ticularly the BCCI and a full IPL for women. Because there is a wonderful opportunity there and it's increasingly becoming a great commercial opportunity for cricket boards to bring in a women's side of the competition," she said. "Not just from a spectacle or entertainment point of view, but also because growing the game in your country and getting more young girls playing cricket and being involved is so important to the viability of the sport in the future. So, to me that's the role that those competitions play and it's really wonderful to see how much time and support and investment Cricket Australia have put into the WBBL and also the ECB with The Hundred and before that the Super League. The more we can have these competitions spring up around the world, I think it's fair to say the next frontier is an IPL," concluded Ellyse.



## AAMIR KHAN TAKES PART IN 'GREEN INDIA CHALLENGE'

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Popular actor Aamir Khan on Sunday participated in the 'Green India Challenge' by planting saplings in Hyderabad.

The actor, currently on a visit to Hyderabad, participated in the Green India Challenge at the old airport at Begumpet.

The lead actor of 'Lal Singh Chaddha' with his co-star Naga chaitanya and Rajya Sabha MP Joginapally Santosh Kumar

planted the saplings.

Aamir Khan appreciated the efforts of Santosh Kumar in taking forward the Green India Challenge and appealed to people to come forward for actively participating in the plantation.

The actor said he has seen many challenges but Green India Challenge has become key driver for improving greenery.

Green India Challenge representatives Ram Mohan and Raghava were also present at the event.

Launched by Santosh Kumar in 2018, the

Green India Challenge has seen participation by many leading politicians and celebrities.

Celebrities like Amitabh Bacchan, Sachin Tendulkar, Sanjay Dutt, Ajay Devgn, Shruti Haasan, Shradha Kapoor, Chiranjeevi, Nagarjuna, Prabhas, Krishna, Pawan Kalyan, Mahesh Babu, Rajamouli, Samanta, Pulella Gopichand, P.V. Sindhu, Saina Nehwal and Sania Mirza have participated in the challenge till now.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress Radhika Madan, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming romantic film 'Shiddat', has talked about her own love life. She says she does not love in instalments. Speaking to IANS in a candid chat, Radhika said: "Mujhe hamesha Shiddat wala pyaar hi hota hai (I always get into serious love). It is either zero or hundred. There is no in between.

She added: "Kishton wala pyaar mere main hai hi nahi. Naap tol ke main pyaar kar hi nahi sakti. (I never fall in love in instalments.)"

Radhika started her career in acting with television show 'Meri Aashiqui Tum Se Hi' in 2014. She then made a transition to the big screen in 2018 with 'Pataakha'. Her performances in the Irrfan Khan-starrer 'Angrezi Medium' and web series 'Ray' were praised by the audience and critics alike.

The 26-year-old actress aims to grow with every character she plays on screen.

"I just try to play the character with full honesty and I just try to give my 200 per cent into every character. I just want to give my all to every character," she said.

However, upping her own game with each performance gets challenging, agrees Radhika.

Radhika said: "It also gets exciting because if I stay in my comfort zone and do what I have done already... then I'll just be in my comfort zone and then I will stop growing. I just want to grow till the end of my life and that is what drives me."

"You learn different things in different phases of your life and I like to put those learnings in my characters as well. I want to get deeper with every character and I hope to do that," she added.

The film stars Sunny Kaushal, Radhika Madan, Mohit Raina and Diana Pentz. It will stream on Disney+ Hotstar from October 1.

Radhika Madan on her love life: I never love in instalments



## LARA DUTTA: I'M HAVING MORE FUN NOW THAN I DID IN MY 20S AS AN ACTOR

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Lara Dutta Bhupathi has been in the Hindi film industry for 18 years and she says she is having more fun now than she did in her 20s as an actor.

Talking to IANS about her almost two decade-long journey in Bollywood, Lara said: "I am very content with what my journey has been like. I have seen all phases and angles of the industry. I came in from being a Miss Universe to having an opportunity to work in a film like 'Andaaz'." Having success from right at the start and just having the opportunity to work with some of the best names in the industry...it's been incredible to have that kind of a repertoire.

She is grateful to the filmmakers she has got a chance to work with.

"I found my genres that I preferred quite early in my career and comedy really worked for me." The 43-year-old actress feels she found success in the comedy genre with films such as 'No Entry', 'Bhaagam Bhaag' and 'Partner' among many others.

She says it has "been tremendously fulfill-

ing". Lara, who is married to tennis player Mahesh Bhupathi, is thankful that the industry gave her the opportunity to pause when she needed to when she had her daughter.

The actress is also happy about women of all age groups getting meaty roles in Bollywood.

"I love the fact that today I am in my early 40s and you can come back. There is no stopping women today. The parts that are written and the opportunities that are available are just incredible and when I look at actors Neena Gupta and all of them are like rocking it in their 50s and early 60s," she said.

Lara is having more fun now in her career than she did 20 years ago.

"It brings me so much excitement that I know at the end of the day things will keep getting better with every decade that I enter into." "I am having so much fun in my 40s. I am actually having more fun now than I did in my 20s as an actor because I am doing the kind of roles that I am excited about, I am playing actors that are closer to my age and I am playing characters that are older than I am," she said.



Actor Vijay fans to contest TN local body polls

Team Absolute | Chennai

Tamil Superstar Vijay's fans association, Vijay Makkal Manram has decided to field candidates in the upcoming local body elections to be held on October 6 and October 9 in nine districts.

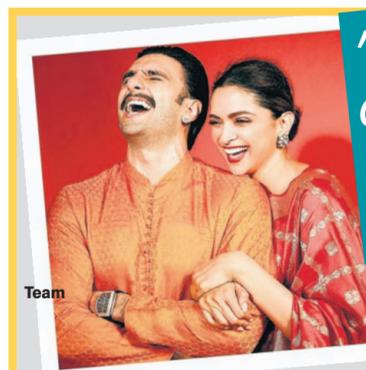
Sources in the Vijay fan association told IANS that the actor has given them consent to contest the polls, but would not participate in the campaign. The flag of the association and Vijay's photos would be used extensively during the campaign.

In the 2021 Assembly elections, Vijay's father and actor director, S. Chandrashekar had floated a political party in the name of Vijay fans association and had announced contesting the elections. However, Vijay openly came out against his father's move and said

that he is against contesting the elections and that he would not have anything to do with the same.

Now, after his fan's association announcing contesting the polls, there is clear indication that Vijay, the young superstar has thrown his hat in the ring.

C. Rajeev of the Centre for Policy and Development Studies, a think tank and a political observer, told IANS, "Vijay's fans contesting the elections is a clear indicator that Vijay in the near future will take a call in contesting polls. With Super megastar Rajinikanth announcing that he won't enter politics, Vijay's fans making this announcement will be an interesting turn in the politics of Tamil Nadu, which has always supported actors entering politics."



'Queen' Deepika crashes Ranveer Singh's chat with fans

Team

Absolute | Mumbai

Ranveer Singh treated his fans to a chat session. However, it was hilariously crashed by his actress-wife, Deepika Padukone, who wanted to know when the live wire star was reaching home. During the Instagram chat on Saturday night, a slew of other celebrities too chose to be a part of the 'Ask me anything' session and sent in their own comments and questions, including Arjun Kapoor and Tiger Shroff. Deepika dropped in a question: "When are you coming home?" To which, Ranveer replied: "Khana garam kar lo baby, main abhi buss

ponch hi raha hoon (Warm up the food, baby, I am just about to reach) adding a kiss emoji. A social media user asked the 'Gully Boy' actor: "One word for ur wify."

He said: "Queen". Ranveer and

Deepika keep sharing loved-up comments on social media for each other. Last week, Deepika shared a picture of Ranveer sleeping. "My Morning View! @ranveersingh (click emoji) - Yours Truly," Deepika wrote alongside it. Ranveer's close friend and 'Gunday' co-actor Arjun Kapoor asked him: "How are you so sexy baba?"

"Aap ki training (All your training) @arjunkapoor," replied Ranveer.

Tiger Shroff called Ranveer a "beaastt".

Ranveer and Deepika will soon be seen sharing screen space in filmmaker Kabir Khan's sports biography '83', based on India's win at the World Cup in 1983 under the captaincy of Kapil Dev.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Maera Mishra