

absolute india

VOL. 6, ISSUE 326, BHOPAL | THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

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INDIA MAY NEED COVID BOOSTER BY MID-2022

Prof. Padmanaban, who is Chancellor of Central University of Tamil Nadu and a Padma Bhushan recipient, said that his opinion of a third dose is based on "scientific understanding".

Scientists at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) have not approved a booster dose yet in India. For India, a booster dose is not the central theme at the moment and getting two doses remains the major priority, media reports quoted ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava as saying.



tion of SARS-CoV-2 RNA or antigen in a respiratory specimen collected from a person more than 14 days after they have completed all recommended doses of an authorised Covid-19 vaccine.

Globally, many studies and scientists have claimed that two-doses of a Covid vaccine are sufficient for preventing infection, hospitalisation and death by SARS-CoV-2 virus.

However, the Delta Covid variant, which has now spread to more than 185 countries, as per the World Health Organisation, renewed the debate for Covid boosters. Israel,

which was one of the first countries to fully inoculate (two doses) the majority of its people, suffered badly due to the Delta variant. It again became one of the first countries to roll out a third dose for its citizens.

"As far as the variants are concerned, the Delta variant is not the end of the story. The larger question is -- do we have the vaccine for every variant being created? Perhaps not. Thus, I feel that by the middle of next year, India may need the third dose of vaccine," Padmanaban, the former Director of Indian Institute of Science, said at a weekly health show by the New-Delhi-based HEAL Foundation. While many countries, including the US, the UK, France, Germany, have rolled out of Covid booster, India is still weighing the need for it. Padmanaban said: "It is essentially a case of demand and supply. We are still not able to make

enough doses to vaccinate all above 18 years. We would need 1,500 mn doses (two jabs) for 75 crore population. We have only reached, perhaps, 25 per cent (two doses). If this population has to be vaccinated by December, we need to make at least 300 mn doses per month."

SPUTNIK LIGHT, AS BOOSTER JAB, 83% EFFECTIVE

Moscow: Russia's Sputnik Light vaccine, as a Covid booster shot, is over 83 per cent effective against infection and over 94 per cent against hospitalisation, according to a new study released on Wednesday. The one-shot vaccine, when administered alone, demonstrated 70 per cent efficacy against infection from the Delta variant of Covid during the first three months after vaccination. The vaccine was also found to be 75 per cent effective among people under the age of 60, said a statement from the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF, Russia's sovereign wealth fund) and the Gamaleya National Research Center of Epidemiology and Microbiology. In India, Sputnik Light will be produced by Pune-based Serum Institute of India.

Rachel V. Thomas | New Delhi

India may require the third dose of Covid vaccine by the middle of next year, said eminent scientist and biochemist Prof G. Padmanaban, as breakthrough cases even after full vaccination have been prevalent, even though mostly mild. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines a vaccine breakthrough infection as the detec-

"Nobody still has a clear answer to how long the protective antibodies will last, it has been variably estimated to be between six months and one year. If the virus has not weakened by itself, by that time, there is possibility for a re-infection. As scientists' understanding of cell-mediated protection (cellular immunity and humoral immunity) is still evolving in the case of Covid, "a third dose (sometime mid to late next year) by mix and match, also gives an opportunity to give a different vaccine against the variant.

UNDRR report flags low investment in disaster prevention



HUMAN-INDUCED CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTS MANY WEATHER AND CLIMATE EXTREMES IN EVERY REGION OF THE GLOBE, THE RECENT INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC) REPORT HAD FLAGGED, ADDING THAT MANY OF THE CHANGES IN CLIMATE OBSERVED ARE UNPRECEDENTED IN THOUSANDS, IF NOT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

THE COST BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN PREVENTION AND RESILIENCE HAVE BEEN DEMONSTRATED TIME AND TIME AGAIN, BUT FOR EVERY \$100 OF DISASTER RELATED ODA, ONLY 50 CENTS ARE INVESTED IN PROTECTING DEVELOPMENT FROM THE IMPACT OF DISASTERS.

OF THIS, \$5.5 BILLION WAS AIMED AT RISK REDUCTION MEASURES BEFORE DISASTERS STRIKE, COMPARED TO \$19.8 BILLION SPENT ON EMERGENCY/DISASTER RESPONSE AND \$7.7 BILLION FOR RECONSTRUCTION, RELIEF AND REHABILITATION.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

On International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction on

Wednesday, a latest report titled 'International Cooperation in Disaster Risk Reduction' prepared by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) has found that for every \$100 spent on development aid, only 50 cents are invested in protecting countries from the impact of disasters.

"Financing for disaster risk reduction makes up a small fraction of the overall investments in development aid. \$133 billion of disaster-related Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) has been made available between 2010 and 2019, which is 11 per cent of the overall aid (\$1.17 trillion)," the report said, highlighting the low levels of investments in disaster prevention and disaster risk reduction for the world's most vulnerable countries. It throws into stark relief how little investment there is in disaster risk reduction against a backdrop of major plane-

tary emergencies, including doubling of major disaster events over the last 20 years.

"Of the overall disaster-related ODA between 2010 and 2019, the \$5.5 billion spent on DRR accounts for just 0.5 per cent of the total amount spent on disaster-related aid," it said.

"This is an indication that we need to ramp up investment in disaster prevention if we are to cope with the exponential rise of disaster events in recent decades. Covid-19 has claimed almost five million lives, causing huge economic disruption.

"The required level of investment in reducing the risk of a disease outbreak of this magnitude was not made despite warnings that a pandemic was inevitable. Extreme weather events are more frequent and international support to developing countries bearing the brunt of these disasters is very low," said Ricardo Mena, Director, UNDRR.

Topmost local JeM terrorist killed in Kashmir encounter

SRINAGAR | Agencies

The topmost local terrorist of proscribed terror outfit JeM was killed in an encounter with security forces at Tral in Jammu and Kashmir's Awantipora district on Wednesday.

Besides providing logistic support to foreign terrorists of JeM, Shamus-ud-Din Sofi alias ShamSofi was involved in civilian killings and new recruitments, officials said.

Police said on a specific input generated by Awantipora police regarding presence of terrorists in Tilwani Mohalla Waggad area of Tral, a joint cordon and search operation was launched by police, army, and the CRPF in the said area. "During the search operation, as the presence of terrorists was ascertained, they were given repeated opportunities to surrender; instead they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was retaliated leading to an encounter. In the ensuing encounter, one terrorist was killed and his body was retrieved from the site of encounter," a police officer said.



The dead terrorist was identified as Sofi. Police said as per its records the killed terrorist was categorised and active since June 2019, figuring among the list of most wanted terrorists operating in the Kashmir Valley. He was also part of groups involved in several terror crime cases including attacks on security establishments and civilian atrocities to which several terror crime cases stands already registered against him.

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh admitted to AIIMS

New Delhi:

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences here on Wednesday evening with complaints of fever and weakness.

Singh has been admitted to the Cardio Tower of AIIMS Delhi. He is being treated by a team of doctors led by Nitish Nayak. He had developed fever two days ago and was feeling weak, following which he had to be rushed to the AIIMS. In April this year, the former Prime Minister had tested positive for Covid-19, and had to be admitted to AIIMS..



NCB accuses Aryan Khan and others of 'illicit drug trafficking'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a sensational claim, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Wednesday alleged that Aryan Khan, son of Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan, along with others, was prima facie involved in "illicit drug trafficking, procuring and distribution of contraband" banned under the NDPS Act.

The agency also accused Aryan Khan of being in touch with some persons abroad who could be part of an international illegal drug syndicate and it is continuing further investigations to unearth his links to contact the foreign agency through proper channels. The NCB's statement came during a hearing of the bail applications of Aryan Khan, Arbaaz Merchant, Mummun Dhamecha, MohakJaswal, Nupur Satija, Aachit Kumar, Shreyas Nair and AvinSahu before Special NDPS Judge V.V. Patil. Since the arguments remained incomplete, the matter will continue on Thursday afternoon, and Aryan Khan and the 7 others arrested remain in custody since October 2.

Khan's lawyers, senior advocates Amit Desai and Satish Maneshinde argued that Aryan Khan was



not present during the rave party raid on the cruise ship, had no cash to buy drugs, nor had any narcotics on him. The NCB's allegations came in its reply opposing the bail applications of Aryan Khan, Merchant, and Dhamecha. It said there is prima facie sufficient material evidence in the form of WhatsApp chats, photos, etc showing that Aryan Khan was an active link of the illegal drugs chain along with the other accused.

Repeated tremors force people to leave village in K'taka

Kalaburgi: Panicked by repeated earthquakes, people of Gadikeshwara village in Chincholi taluk of Kalaburgi district have started leaving the area fearing for their lives.

The villagers explained that they felt a mild earthquake on Tuesday as well three times and they do not want to take any chance. Opposition leader Siddaramaiah, who visited the village on Tuesday night, called up Revenue Minister R. Ashok from the spot and asked him to direct the District Commissioner to construct sheds and provide facilities for the people. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai convened an emergency meeting with the officers of Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC).

Already more than 50 per cent of people have left the village as they have been facing the problem for five years. Those who dared to stay back slept in the open fields with their children.

Tea and banana waste used to develop non-toxic activated carbon

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A team of scientists have used tea and banana waste to prepare non-toxic activated carbon, which, without any toxic agent, is useful for several purposes such as industrial pollution control, water purification, food and beverage processing, and odour removal.

An Indian patent has recently been granted for this newly-developed process that avoids usage of any toxic agent for synthesising activated carbon, thus making the product cost-effective as well as non-toxic.

The processing of tea generates a lot of waste, generally in the form of tea dust. This could be converted to useful substances. N.C. Talukdar, former Director, Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST), Guwahati, and Associate Professor Devasish Chowdhury used banana plant extract as an alternative activating agent for the preparation of activated carbon from tea wastes. The most-preferred banana for this is called 'BheemKol' in Assamese. BheemKol is an indigenous variety of bananas found only in Assam and parts of Northeast India. To



make khar, first, the peel of the banana is dried and then burnt to make an ash out of it. The ash is then crushed and made into a fine powder. Then using a clean cotton cloth, water is filtered through the ash powder, and the final solution is called khar. The natural khar which is extracted from banana is called 'kola khar'. The team from IASST, which is an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology, government of India, said, "The reason for the use of tea as a precursor for the synthesis of active carbon is that in tea structure, the carbon atoms are conjugated and having polyphenols bond. This makes the quality of activated carbon better compared to other carbon precursors."

Andhra temple decorated with Rs 5 crore currency notes

HYDERABAD | Agencies

A temple in Andhra Pradesh has been decorated with currency notes of over Rs 5 crore as part of the ongoing Dasara celebrations.

The deity at VasaviKanyakaParameswari temple in Nellore district has been decked up with currency notes worth Rs 5.16 crore.

Over 100 volunteers worked for several hours to decorate the temple with notes of the denominations of Rs 2,000, Rs 500, Rs 200, Rs 100, Rs 50, and Rs 10. The organisers adorned the deity with garlands and bouquets of origami flowers made from the currency notes of various denominations and colours. The currency notes of different colours have added to the beauty of the temple attracting devotees from various places. A large number of devotees worship the deity in the 'avata' of 'Dhanalakshmi',



the goddess of riches, during the navratri celebrations.

According to Nellore Urban Development Authority (NUDA) chairman and member of the temple committee ukkalaDwarakanath, the committee recently completed renovation works of the temple at a cost of Rs 11 crore. "Since this is the first celebration after the completion of the renovation works which took four years, the committee decided to decorate the deity with currency notes," he said. Members of the committee and devotees collected new currency notes and hired the services of artists to take up the unique decoration.



HAVE LAID INDIA'S FOUNDATION FOR NEXT 25 YRS WITH GATISHAKTI PLAN: PM



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Unveiling the GatiShakti National Master Plan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that the programme will boost India's self-confidence and make the country self-reliant (Atmanirbhar) as today, "we have laid the foundation for the next 25 years."

"This national master plan will give impetus to the 21st century India. It will boost the next generation infrastructure and multi model connectivity in the country while speeding up the national policy from planning to execution level," Modi said while inaugurating the GatiShakti National Master Plan and new exhibition complexes of the

India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) at Pragati Maidan on Wednesday afternoon. Modi said that his government has not only developed a work culture of completing the projects within the stipulated time, but is aiming to complete the projects ahead of time. "Earlier, we used to see 'work in progress' boards everywhere and people started to believe that it will never be completed. This has been changed now with our planning and well-introduced 'gati' in development projects," he said.

Claiming that infrastructure development has hardly been the priority of any political party in the past, the Prime Minister said, "However, quality infrastructure is a way to sustainable development which builds economy and generates employment." Modi cited the example of the Delhi Metro. "Before 2014, the metro was running on only about 250 km of track. Today, the metro has been expanded up to 700 km and work is going on, on 1,000 km new metro route," he added.

Modi pointed out that in the five years before 2014, only 60 panchayats could be connected with optical fibre. "However, in the last seven years, we have connected more than 1.5 lakh gram panchayats with optical fibre."

The Prime Minister alleged that taxpayers' money was wasted in the past due to delays and a lethargic approach to development work, which his government aspires to change.

Coal supplies to non-power sector plants may be kept suspended

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Even as supplies of coal are being ramped up at power plants, supplies to non-power sector plants may be kept suspended.

Southern Eastern Coalfields, a subsidiary of Coal India has finalised the supply matrix of coal rakes to critical power plants after a meeting held by the Coal Ministry. The power plants where coal rakes will be provided are Rajpura, HRVUNL, Kawai, Akaltara, Binjkote, DSPM, Pathad, Sabarmati, GSECL, Uchpanda, Annpur, Seoni, MPPGCL, Amrawati, Warora, Dhariwal, Tirora, NTPC, and Mahagenco. Since the supplies of SECL are yet to be normalised, the supply of coal will be done equitably to these power plants. "Supplies to non-power sector plants may be kept suspended till further information," the SECL said. Meanwhile, the Aluminium Association of India (AAI) has written to Coal India on the alarming situation for the industry due to critical coal shortage and urgency for immediate resumption of coal supplies for survival of domestic industry. Despite untiring efforts of the Coal Ministry and the CIL to support the industry, the current

acute coal crunch due to various factors which has created an immensely precarious situation, majorly for the highly power intensive industries like aluminium wherein coal accounts for 40 per cent of the production cost. Aluminium smelting requires uninterrupted quality power supply for production which can be met only through in-house CPPs which operate 24/7 and 365 days, and have signed FSA (Fuel Supply Agreement) with the CIL and its subsidiaries for assured long term coal supply. The recent decisions for stoppage of secured coal supplies and rakes for non-power sector is detrimental for aluminium industry and will jeopardize the sustainability as these continuous process-based plants are not designed for adhoc shut down and start of operations.

Any power outage/failure (2 hours or more) results in freezing of molten aluminium in the pots which will lead to shutting down of plant for at least 6 months rendering heavy losses and restart expenses, and once restarted, will take almost a year to get desired metal purity. Aluminium is a sector of strategic importance and an essential commodity for diversified sectors crucial for nation's economy. Huge invest-



ment of Rs 1.2 lakh crore (\$20 billion) have been made to double the domestic production capacity to 4.1 mtpa to cater to the country's increasing demand. The industry employs one million people and has developed 4000 SMEs in downstream sector.

"The entire industry has been brought to a standstill and left with no time to devise any mitigation plan to continue sustainable operations. The coal stocks of operational plants have depleted to alarmingly low critical stocks of 2-3 days, from the level as high as 15 days in the month of April, 21, and plants are forced to operate at

reduced power generation with huge risk of closure with threat of loss of huge employment and deterioration of MSMEs," the AAI said.

Moreover, the ongoing global aluminium shortage due to supply demand mismatch is also adding to the woes for industry with the current coal situation in India.

Adding to the plight of industry, the exponentially rise in coal prices have created a double whammy as the global coal prices have gone up exponentially and are on an upward trend while the ocean freight rates are also at all-time high.

ANOTHER ACCUSED IN LAKHIMPUR KHERI CASE SURRENDERS IN COURT

Lakhimpur Kheri: Ankit Das, one of the accused in the Lakhimpur incident in which four farmers were mowed down by an SUV on October 3, has surrendered in court on Wednesday.

The police had been conducting raids to arrest Ankit Das who is the nephew of former MP, late Akhilesh Das.

A notice had been pasted at his residence residential address in Lucknow.

According to reports, Ankit Das is a close friend of the main accused Ashish Mishra and the Fortuner in the convoy belonged to him. Ankit had earlier stated that he was not present there at the time of the incident.

Punjab opposes giving more powers to BSF

Chandigarh | Agencies

Slamming the Centre for amending Section 139 of the BSF Act to give the border and guarding force wider jurisdiction and terming it tantamount to an attack on federalism, Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhjinder Randhawa on Wednesday asked Union Home Minister Amit Shah to withdraw the decision. Opposition Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) described the decision as Central rule in the state through the back door.

In a statement, Randhawa, who also holds the Home portfolio, said "this illogical decision was absolutely against the spirit of the raising the border guarding forces, which were required to focus on the international border and act as the first line of defence".

He said policing in the hinterland is not the role of a border guarding force, rather it would weaken the capacity of the Border Security



Force (BSF) in discharging its primary duty of guarding the international border.

He said that he would personally call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union Home Minister to resolve this issue.

Meanwhile, the SAD described the move to hand over almost half of the state to the BSF as "the imposition of the President's rule through the back door in nearly half of Punjab".

Congress issues notice to two leaders for Sonia-Varun posters

Lucknow | Agencies

Two Congress leaders, who had put up posters in Prayagraj welcoming BJP leader Varun Gandhi, have been served show cause notices.

The posters showed Varun Gandhi and Congress interim President Sonia Gandhi and the slogan said, "Dukhbhare din beete re bhaiyya, Ab sukhaayo re (Days of miseries will end, good days are coming)."

The two leaders, Irshadullah and Baba Abhay Awasthi, have been asked to explain their conduct or face action.

The Congress workers in Uttar Pradesh have been rather excited over reports of Varun Gandhi's reported disenchantment with the BJP after he posted a series of tweets in support of the agitating farmers.

A senior party leader, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said, "It would



be wonderful if Varun Gandhi joins Congress and is made the chief ministerial candidate. The Congress will spring back to life within days. There will be no clash with his cousins because they are national leaders."

Varun Gandhi has already dismissed

rumours of his joining the Congress as 'baseless'.

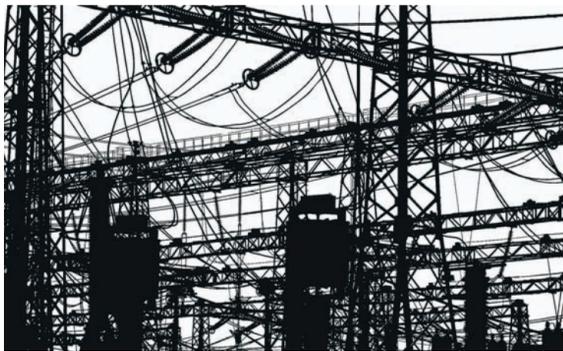
It may be recalled that both Maneka Gandhi and Varun Gandhi have not been included in the national executive of the BJP, which has led to speculations about their future in the party.

More than 10 hrs of power outage in many districts of Bihar

Patna: As the electricity generation was hit due to coal shortage in the country, its effect has started showing in Bihar with many districts facing more than 10 hours of power outage for the last few days.

According to an official, Bihar required 6,500 megawatt electricity but the state government managed to get only 4,700 megawatt. The contribution of the central government is 3,200 megawatt and the state government is purchasing the remaining 1,500 megawatt from the open market at the cost of Rs 20 per unit.

Such a situation arose after the Centre reduced power supply by more than 20 per cent. As a result many districts especially in North Bihar are not receiving adequate power supply.



Muzaffarpur district has the largest grid in North Bihar. The state government is using its feeders in rotation to

supply electricity to other districts. Saharsa district normally gets 50 megawatt but now due to reduced

power supply, it is receiving only 35 megawatt. Similarly, Madhepura is getting only 80 megawatt instead of 100 megawatt, Araria is getting 100 megawatt instead of 120 megawatt, Katihar is receiving 75 megawatt instead of 90 megawatt, Kishanganj is getting only 20 megawatt while its normal capacity is 60 megawatt, Purnea is getting 110 megawatt instead of 150 megawatt, Lakhisarai is getting 20 megawatt while its normal capacity is 25 megawatt, Khagaria is receiving 15 megawatt while its capacity is 40 megawatt, Munger is receiving 70 megawatt while its requirement is 90 megawatt.

Besides, districts like Banka, Bhojpur, Aurangabad, Buxar, Saran, Gopalganj, Jahanabad, Gaya and Arwal are also receiving 20 to 30 per cent less electricity supply.

UP MINISTER VISITS FAMILIES OF DEAD BJP WORKERS IN LAKHIMPUR KHERI

Lakhimpur Kheri | Agencies

Uttar Pradesh Minister Brajesh Pathak on Wednesday went to meet the families of Hariom and Shubham Mishra, the two BJP workers who had died in the October 3 violence in Lakhimpur Kheri.

Pathak is the first BJP leader to visit the families that had complained that no one from their party had bothered to visit them to offer condolences.

The minister spent time with the families, offered his condolences and assured them that he would take care of them in future too.

It may be recalled that



two BJP workers were allegedly killed in the violence that followed after an SUV mowed down farmers in the Tikunia village in Lakhimpur Kheri.

A driver and a journalist were also killed in the violence though the journalist's family claimed that he also had been mowed down by the SUV.

CBI SEEKS POLYGRAPH TEST OF ACCUSED IN MAHANT NARENDRA GIRI DEATH CASE

Prayagraj: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has moved an application before the chief judicial magistrate (CJM), Prayagraj, seeking polygraph test of Anand Giri, Adya Tiwari and his son Sandeep Tiwari -- the three accused in the mysterious death of Mahant Narendra Giri.



The application was moved on Tuesday and will be taken up by the CJM court on October 18.

The accused will be connected through video-conferencing to place their version before the court.

In its application, the CBI has sought permission for a polygraph test of the accused to know the truth with regard to investigations that are going on in connection with the said case.

Meanwhile, the counsel for the accused has also moved an application opposing the polygraph test.

Anand Giri, Adya Tiwari and Sandeep Tiwari are accused of abetting the suicide of Narendra Giri, the former president of Akhil Bhartiya Akhara Parishad (ABAP), whose body was found hanging from the ceiling of a room in the Baghambari Math on September 20.

In his alleged suicide note, the Mahant had charged the three accused of mental harassment.

Congress likely to tie up with Shivpal, other smaller parties in Uttar Pradesh

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After Congress leader Acharya Pramod's pictures with Shivpal Yadav went viral, a speculation is gaining ground that the Congress in Uttar Pradesh is trying to seek an alliance with smaller parties like the Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party ahead of the next year's Assembly polls. Shivpal Yadav, the estranged uncle of Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, has some influence in Itawa, Mainpuri, Sambhal belt where Yadavs are in sizeable numbers.

The Congress is also working to take on board the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD). Former Haryana Minister



Bhupinder Singh Hooda's son Deepender Hooda, who shares a good rapport with the Jat leaders in Uttar

Pradesh, has been roped in by the Congress to work on the Jat dominated areas. Though everyone is tight-

lipped over the issue, and sources say that the RLD is in talks with Samajwadi Party (SP).

Senior Congress leader Acharya Pramod Krishnam was seen accompanying Shivpal Singh Yadav, who embarked on his 'SamajikParivartan Yatra' on Tuesday from Mathura.

Acharya Pramod was seen sitting alongside Shivpal in his customised bus. He also felicitated the leader before starting his yatra. Congress leader Deepak Singh, MLC, said that after Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's efforts, the Congress has become a serious player in the state, and alliances with smaller parties are not a bad idea, "though", he says, "he did not know officially if the talks for alliance were happening or not.

Tie-up with the RLD can help the Congress strength-

en its presence in the Jat-dominated areas as these areas are the centre of farmers' agitation.

Priyanka Gandhi has been trying to be at the forefront at the farmers' agitation and she on Tuesday offered 'antimardas' to the farmers who were mowed down by an SUV in the Tikunia village on October 3.

Priyanka reached Lakhimpur Kheri where the post-death rituals of the deceased farmers were taking place.

A day earlier Priyanka led a 'Maun Vrat' in Lucknow in support of the demand for the dismissal of Union Minister Ajay Mishra Teni, whose son is accused of mowing down farmers with his SUV.



'STUDENTS DO NOT GET FRUSTRATED, BUILD PATHS, MOVE FORWARD, GOVERNMENT WILL COOPERATE'

Chief Minister Chouhan delivers inspiring address at Minto Hall, Civil services are a means of nation building, Sky is the limit student must soar high, Booklet 'Madhya Pradesh kipartibhaon ka parcham' released, Selected students feature in higher education department's film, Students selected in UPSC honoured

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that students can achieve the greatest success through hard work, self-confidence, concentration, strong will power and constant efforts. Students from Madhya Pradesh have proved this with their selection in the UPSC main examination in almost double the number this year. Madhya Pradesh government will provide all possible facilities for competitive examinations to students.

Chouhan, called upon the students to soar high. Sky is the limit. It is a matter of pride to be selected in an examination like UPSC, but selected students must work in such a manner that after joining the service they should always be remembered. They should have affection for the common man and also contribute immensely to the creation of the country and the state. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that civil services are not a means of making money, but a means of learning and serving the nation. Even today, many administrators are remembered for their actions. Civil services also become a medium of making history.

Chief Minister was addressing the 'Safaltake Mantra' programme at Minto Hall today. The programme started with Kanya Pujan. The highlight of the programme was that all the selected successful students were sitting on the dais.

Career should be chosen as per one's interest

Chief Minister Chouhan said that if every student chooses a career according to his ability and interest, the chances of success increase. Citing an example, Chief Minister Shri Chouhan



said that it would have been absurd if someone had requested Lata Mangeshkar ji, who specialises in suras, to seek a government job. She is unmatched in singing so she moved on in that field and was successful. The selected students of Madhya Pradesh should prove their selection by serving the nation with full capacity. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that PM Modi, has

considered the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, the Development Mahabhiyan, as a plan to bring the vision of self-reliance through will power and self-confidence. Madhya Pradesh will actively join the campaign.

Madhya Pradesh government initiates students welfare schemes

Chouhan said that the Madhya Pradesh gov-

ernment has formulated several schemes for career building of students. The Chief Minister has done the job of paying medical and engineering education through the Mukhya Mantri MedhaviVidyarthi Yojana as well as the fees of the students selected for IITs and IIMs. In addition, the students were made to pay the room rent under the

MukhyamantriVidyarthiGriha Yojana in case of non-availability of hostels.

Those who make efforts never lose

Chief Minister Chouhan said that Navratri festival is going on. This is a festival of Sadhana. Siddhi and Success come only through Sadhana. The message of this programme being held on Maha Ashtami today is that all students should prepare for competitive examinations with Sadhana and Tapasya. Chief Minister Chouhan said that those who make efforts never lose. Students of Madhya Pradesh have not only achieved personal success through their hard work but have also brought glory to the state. Till now, we used to say that Madhya Pradesh has rich forest wealth, mineral wealth, water wealth and public wealth. Now, we will also say that it is talent-rich. Many students prepared for the examination under adverse circumstances. Chief Minister Chouhan said that he was informed that students quit watching TV, web series and sports to achieve success in this examination. Many students did not forget their goal even after difficulties like ill-health of parents and financial difficulties. Self-confidence makes the path to success easier.

Book release

Chief Minister Chouhan released a booklet published by the Public Relations Department "Madhya Pradesh kipartibhaon ka parcham" (Achievements of the talents of Madhya Pradesh). A digital version of the booklet was also released. This booklet contains a pictorial introduction of the selected students in UPSC and a description of the success achieved.

BJP's constituency management plan for assembly seats not won since 2013

Shashi Bhushan | Bhopal

The BJP in Madhya Pradesh has implemented a 'special constituency management plan' for those assembly constituencies which the saffron party has frequently lost since 2013. There are around 35 such seats and the BJP has decided to pay special attention to these constituencies through its special management plan ahead of the next assembly election.

Party Madhya Pradesh in-charge P Murlidhar Rao told correspondent that a special plan has been formulated for around 35 assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh which the BJP has frequently lost since 2013. "In other words, these seats are difficult ones and to win these 35 seats we have started a special constituency management plan," Rao said.

Explaining the plan, Rao said that a separate team has been looking after party work to strengthen the



organization in these constituencies. An in-charge has been appointed and workers have been identified to take the fight ahead. The constituency management plan is part of the Bharatiya Janata Party's preparations for the assembly polls. "We have started preparing for the next assembly polls in 2023 and the 2024 general elections. We are working on territorial expansion of the party and focusing on increasing the vote share to 51 per cent. In the 2008 assembly polls, the BJP had got a 38 per cent vote share. In the

last assembly polls in 2018, our vote share increased to 41 percent and now we are targeting to get 51 percent in 2023," Rao said. From December, the BJP Madhya Pradesh unit is launching a 'vistarak' campaign in which over 20,000 workers of the party state unit will collectively work for two lakh hours among the people at the booth level for organizational expansion. "Each vistarak will work to strengthen the party at ground level by spending 10 hours per day for 10 days. In total 20,000 vistaraks will together work for two lakh hours for the party," Rao added.

The Madhya Pradesh assembly elections will be held in November-December 2023. Since 2003, the saffron party has been in power in the state, except for 15 months between December 2018 to March 2020 when Congress leader Kamal Nath was Chief Minister. In March 2020, Shivraj Singh Chouhan was again sworn as chief minister after the fall of the Kamal Nath led Congress government.

Ladli Laxmi festival today

Chief Minister Chouhan will address the Ladlis

Team Absolute | Bhopal

State level Ladli Laxmi Utsav is being organised in the state on Thursday, October 14. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will address the LadliLaxmis of the state at 3:00 pm at Minto Hall. Around 40 lakh LadliLaxmis and daughters will be connected virtually in the programme. Virtual programmes will be organised in every Anganwadi and Panchayat building of the state and girls will join. The programme will be broadcast live on the webcast link Doordarshan, All India Radio, Twitter of Public Relations, live on Facebook and on all social media and YouTube of the Department of Women and Child Development.

In the programme, Chouhan will make online transfer of 5 crore 99 lakh scholarships to 21 thousand 550 Ladlis of the state.

It is noteworthy that the Madhya Pradesh government is constantly striving for the bright future and healthy life of the girl child. Ladli Laxmi Yojana was launched in Madhya

Pradesh on 1st April 2007 with the objective of creating positive thinking among the public towards girl child birth, improving sex ratio, improving the educational status and health status of girls and laying the foundation for their good future. Since the inception of the scheme, 39.81 lakh girls across the state are getting benefitted by getting registered under Ladli Laxmi Yojana. Madhya Pradesh government is also moving towards making daughters self-reliant. All daughters of the state will become socially and economically empowered through Ladli Laxmi Yojana 2.0 Atma-nirbharLadli. The state government will provide an amount of 20 thousand to the girl students pursuing graduation and vocational courses after completing 2 years of education. Changes for betterment will also be made in the scheme by taking suggestions from the general public for Ladli Laxmi Yojana 2.0 Atma-nirbharLadli. Ladli Laxmi Utsav will also be organised once in a year in every district of the state.

CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN PLANTED SAPTAPARNI SAPLING



Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saptaparni sapling at Smart city Park in Shyamala Hills. Chief Minister Chouhan plants one sapling every day in order to fulfill his resolve. Saptaparni, an evergreen medicinal tree, has great importance in Ayurveda.

Farmers should get fertiliser easily, distribution should also be systematic: Chief Minister Chouhan

There is no shortage of manure fertiliser in the state, farmers also adopting alternative fertilisers

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that along with ensuring the availability of fertilisers to the farmers, systematic distribution is also necessary. There is no shortage of manure and fertilisers in the state. Despite this, the next system should be maintained better. In this regard, the Central Government has been requested to supply fertilisers and manure in sufficient quantity to the state.

While reviewing the fertiliser system for Rabi 2021-22 at his residence, Chief Minister Chouhan said that there will be no shortage of manure and



fertilisers for the farmers in the state. He directed the officers to inform the farmers about all the options of manure and fertilisers and regular monitoring of the available stock should be done. Farmers are adopting alternative fertilisers in the

state. Storage should be done on the basis of last year's sales. Chief Minister Chouhan said that it should be ensured that there is no unnecessary rationing anywhere, this creates a feeling that there could be problem of fertiliser in

future. The availability of fertiliser should also be publicized through social media.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that strict action should be taken against black marketing of fertilisers. Those found indulging in black marketing will not be spared. Chief Minister Chouhan directed to ensure that the teams involved in the works related to the distribution of fertilisers take precautions to prevent corona and the second dose of vaccine is administered to them. Additional Chief Secretary Agriculture and Cooperative AjiitKesari, Agriculture Production Commissioner Shri Shailendra Singh and other officers were present in the review meeting.

The status of all fertilisers of the district will be visible on the Collector Dashboard. The districts have been given guidance for this arrangement. Training module for collector login has been sent to all the districts. Instructions have been received from the Department of Fertilisers, Government of India for verification of top-20 urea buyers in Kharif 2021. Action is being taken to follow this in the state. The Government of India has expressed satisfaction over the arrangements being made in Madhya Pradesh.

Our country's history is full of tales of patriots : Governor Patel

Governor issues special cover on heroes and heroines of freedom



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel unveiled a special cover and VirupanMuhar issued by the Department of Posts on 6 unheard heroes of Madhya Pradesh on Philately Day at Raj Bhavan.

Governor Mangubhai Patel said that the history of our country is full of tales of the sacrifices of such patriots, who have given a new direction to the country. The society gets inspiration and encouragement by honouring such heroes and heroines. The future generation gets the determination and inspiration to serve the society, state and country. He appreciated the efforts of the Department of Posts to issue a special cover on the unheard heroes and heroines of the state. The

Governor inaugurated the programme by lighting the lamp. He unveiled a special cover of the Department of Posts on national heroes of the state including Tantya Bhil, Ganesh Prasad Varni, Hari Vishnu Kamath, Ratan Kumar Gupta, Sahodara Bai Rai and Radha Devi Azad.

Regarding the Amrit Mahotsav and special cover, Chief Post Master General Jitendra Gupta informed that postal stamps are issued by the Department of Posts to make a special occasion, person and event unforgettable. In case of non-issuance of tickets in special circumstances, special cover is issued. He said that a special cover has been issued to commemorate the contribution of the nation's heroes who contributed to the independence of the state.

Beware of non-financial institutions offering unusually cheap loans

Check the authenticity, the campaign will be conducted for the depositors

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Citizens have been urged to be careful and aware of non-financial institutions offering unusual returns or cheap loans. An appeal has been made to the common citizens to be aware of the registration of such institutions and to check their authenticity first. An awareness campaign will also be

conducted for the depositors of such institutions.

This information was given in the meeting of the State Level Coordination Committee regarding non-financial institutions under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Shri Iqbal Singh Bains here today. It was informed in the meeting that an awareness campaign would be started to protect the depositors of non-

financial institutions and companies from possible financial frauds.

District collectors and senior police officers have been instructed to ensure strict compliance of the provisions of the Madhya Pradesh Protection of Interests of Depositors Act and Banning of Unregulated Deposit Act in such institutions from time to time. In order to maintain mutual trust between the depositors

and the general public and the government, instructions have been given to continue the action by taking strict action against the guilty institutions. Apart from this, it was also discussed in the meeting to organise a training session or seminar on the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Act 2019 at the division level so that more and more people can become aware.



EDITOR'S SPECS

FUNDS FOR CLIMATE

Commonwealth Finance Ministers were urged to take action to change the current development finance architecture, enhance access to finance for countries vulnerable to climate change and address debt sustainability. The annual meeting focussed on post-pandemic recovery in Commonwealth nations and gave Commonwealth Finance Ministers an opportunity to consider the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change on economic growth trajectories, national debt vulnerabilities and to assess the effectiveness of global debt relief measures. Vulnerability should be the core basis for allocation of development finance not income status, especially for Small Island States. Small Island States have witnessed development gains being decimated in seconds due to catastrophic natural disasters. They are 'a special case' which require special treatment. There is an urgent need to reform the financial architecture; the reformed architecture should be inclusive and cognisant of inherent vulnerabilities. With many countries at risk of debt distress, it is important to carefully manage debt levels and return economies to sustainable growth. To support countries reduce debt and inform policy decisions the Commonwealth Secretariat introduced a new, complementary Debt Sustainability Analysis Toolkit that is expected to begin a phased roll-out in 2022. The UVI can play a major role in helping small states dealing with the wide array of challenges, which they have not created, but which they now face. With UN Climate talks COP26 only weeks away, the ministers also underscored the need for the \$100bn annual climate finance commitment to be delivered, more than 10 years after it was first made. Innovative financing tools such as debt-for-climate swaps and climate-resilient debt instruments were also on the CFMM agenda. The Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub is utilising such tools to address climate vulnerabilities and to ensure the availability of the development finance needed for true climate action.

STRATEGY BEYOND TALKATHON TO DEAL WITH CHINA-INDIA BORDER ISSUES

S.B. Asthana

Backdrop

The 13th round of Corps Commander level talks between India and China ending at an awkward note, was not a surprise to anyone analysing Chinese activities and signalling prior to the talks. The talks happened in the backdrop of recent incidents of intrusions by Chinese troops in the Baraboti sector of Uttarakhand, Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh, heavy concentration of troops and modern arsenal along LAC, exercises and building permanent structures in areas which China had encroached in April 2020, vacation of which was the main purpose of the talks. It was, therefore, amply evident that China was in no mood to concede anything and went through the talks for optics of ongoing talkathon. Post disengagement of troops in Eastern Ladakh from North and South of Pangong Tso, some disengagement in Gogra, no disengagement in other areas to include Depsang plains, Hot Spring, Demchok, and no de-escalation, was therefore, a forgone conclusion. The Chinese intention to coerce India to resume business as usual, sidelining border/LAC issue and not insist on further pull back was refuted by the India earlier when it conveyed that disengagement at all friction points leading to de-escalation, peace and tranquility on borders are prerequisites to progressing smooth bilateral ties. This rightful Indian stance to get back to pre-April 2020 positions stands adversely affected by Chinese obnoxious allegations of 'India pushing for unreasonable and unrealistic demands, which is creating difficulties in negotiations', which indirectly conveys no more pulling back. In the recent past almost 80 per cent of Chinese top leaders, including President Xi Jinping have visited Tibet/Xinjiang. Massive infrastructure development in terms of airstrips, rail, road network to border towns like Nyingchi, accommodation and other activities are worth monitoring for India to strategise its responses. **Aim and Strategies of China and India so far!** Chinese political aim was and continues to be China centric Asia and forcing Indian subordination, a necessity to achieve it. This aim could not be achieved despite prolonged

standoff in Ladakh so far, but will remain unchanged, even in future. Chinese strategic aim to control Eastern Ladakh was to provide depth to its National Highway G-219, Karakoram Pass, redraw Line of Actual Control (LAC) as per its perception (1959-60) and negotiate border on its terms thereafter. China can claim to have partially achieved it, with continued presence in extra kilometrage in Depsang plains, Hot Spring, Demchok areas, where disengagement hasn't taken place. Having developed its infrastructure in areas as per its perception of LAC, its aim to deny the same to India has not been so successful, as India continues to develop its infrastructure at unprecedented speed to catch up, in recent past. The Indian aim has been to get Chinese back to pre-standoff positions as of April 2020 in all friction points, not to concede unilateral change of LAC, and pursue talks towards its demarcation, hoping to lead to border resolution. With current disengagement, status quo stands achieved in areas north and south of Pangong Tso, albeit at the cost of losing the crucial leverage of giving up occupation of certain heights on Kailash range and north of Pangong Tso, prior to Chinese vacation of 'Other Areas'. Pursuing disengagement and de-escalation in remaining areas will be an uphill task due to shortage of levers, given Chinese past track record and recent activities. China marched in areas, where it was not supposed to be, junking all CBMs, as part of overall 'Incremental Encroachment Strategy', exploiting first mover advantage. China soon found itself handicapped by strong Indian response, resistance and resolve, with proactive actions resulting in newly created vulnerabilities to Maldo Garrison and its launch pad, South of Pangong Tso. Despite disengagement in Pangong Tso area, Chinese discomfort due to Indian dispositions in Sub Sector North including DBO, infrastructure development including DSDBO road, as a threat to crucial Tibet-Xinjiang-Pakistan connectivity remains. The Indian planners will find it difficult to explain why disengagement was not sequenced on 'first in and first out' basis?, meaning thereby, that India should have vacated Kailash Range heights only after China had vacated all the areas, where it advanced in Depsang plains, Gogra, Hot Spring and Demchok areas, since April 2020,

despite being pointed out by many strategic analysts. It is reasonable to believe that it has left India at a disadvantage, due to shortage of levers and no worthwhile saving in financial and human cost, as no de-escalation has taken place. Notwithstanding the political debates over the legacy of Depsang issue, it remains strategically important and a threat to DBO and DS-DBO Road; hence a concern for India. **What can India do other than talkathon?** Unlike all major powers, India does not have a National Security Strategy (NSS) in open domain to steer capacity building to take on China's challenge in a synergised manner. The classified part of NSS is kept secret by all countries and rightly so. The reactive actions of India over several decades indicate diplomacy driven 'Don't annoy China Approach', which has failed miserably as China gave no concession on displaying accommodation so far. Not calling out Xinjiang or Hong Kong by India did not prevent China from dragging India to UNSC on Kashmir issue or not progressing CPEC on Indian sovereign territory. In absence of not even stating our challenges, expecting different agencies to synergise in capacity building to take on Two-Front challenges seems far-fetched. India needs to formulate its NSS, prioritise its challenges and task required agencies to develop capacities. A change in mindset is required, from being reactive to proactive with additional offensive capability to demonstrate capacity to encroach into Chinese sensitive areas, in absence of which China has assumed no threat from India, with freedom to encroach anywhere, at will. Over a period the stands of China and India on stated positions on borders have hardened. The resolution has become extremely complex due to rising sentiments/nationalism in respective countries increasing the political cost of any compromise by either side. In light of no major breakthrough in 22nd round of China-India border talks, no worthwhile development on delineation, delimitation for demarcation of LAC is expected, which is otherwise necessary to prevent repeated standoffs. India's strategic goal should be to continue insisting on a formal delimitation and demarcation of the LAC, which is difficult but not impossible. Indian aim should be not to concede Chinese attempt to redraw LAC as

LAC-2020, because a temporary solution/side-lining main issue is a recipe for the next standoff, leading to LOC-ization of LAC further. The Chinese would like to keep the border unsettled, till the time the political cost of not settling it becomes higher than doing so for CCP, China. With no de-escalation by Chinese, India is and will continue to be ready for all contingencies with similar deployment along LAC, in coming months/years, including creating some more levers, if situation demands so. India must be prepared for 'Two Front War' as a worst case scenario, and continue capacity building in all domains, including maritime domain, where Chinese vulnerable sea lines of communications can be threatened. Besides ongoing infrastructure development along borders it is recommended that States/UT along LAC should allot concessional land to security forces like regional SCOUTS, ITBP, SSB, and families hailing from that area (on son of soil concept), ready to settle in villages so constructed, along own perception of LAC. This will improve inclusive growth, integration, besides proof of our claims on the border, to ward off Chinese design of developing hundreds of new villages along LAC. The best way to avoid a two front war is to convince both adversaries that India can fight it, backed by appropriate capacity building and intent to use all instruments of power. Strategic partnerships with like-minded democracies and collective naval posturing to create a multifront situation for China are efforts in the right direction. There is a need for an alternative supply chain, trade and technological ecosystem, independent of China for which some initial steps taken by Quad countries need to be pursued. India needs to develop its strategic culture with professional strategists, as diplomacy driven patch ups and talkathon hasn't worked so far. The overall strategic approach has to be proactive at tactical, operational as well as strategic level. (Maj Gen S.B. Asthana, SM, VSM (Veteran) is Chief Instructor, United Service Institution of India. The views expressed are personal)

international

Mexico's third wave of Covid shows signs of waning: Official



Mexico City | Agencies

Mexico's ongoing third wave of Covid-19 has shown signs of abating over the past 10 weeks. Undersecretary of Prevention and Health Promotion Hugo Lopez-Gatell said on Tuesday. According to the health official, indicators began this week with a 30 per cent decline, representing the "most sustained" drop registered since the onset of the pandemic here in late February 2020, Xinhua news agency reported.

"This decline, each week, has held steady by significant amounts," the official said at a press conference. For example, compared to the first week of January 2021, during the peak of the second wave, the current level of hospital occupancy is 78 per cent lower, Lopez-Gatell said. Only a quarter of intensive care unit hospital beds reserved for Covid-19 cases are occupied, he added. To date, Mexico has registered 3,725,242 cases of Covid-19 and 282,227 deaths from the disease.

Kamala Harris' latest social media goof up STEMs from Sinking Ship

Nikhila Natarajan | New York

Three weeks back, Kamala Harris' social media team made a mess of her meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. They snoozed for nearly a day before making the first tweet. This time, it is poor due diligence and inadequate authenticity in a 9-minute-NASA-backed video, where a content shop called "Sinking Ship" sneaked in paid actors to talk to Harris on STEM and space. "I love the idea of exploring the unknown. There's so much out there that we still have to learn. As the chair of the National Space Council, I'm eager to get our young people interested in STEM and space exploration. Watch 'Get Curious', Harris tweeted to her followers for a YouTube series called "Get Curious with Vice President Harris." Harris talked about her love of science, excitement over being able to see moon craters through a telescope and the importance of having big dreams. Her exaggerated animation and wide-eyed enthusiasm became a



point of ridicule. Overacting just might have passed. But the identity of the kids came out too. Call it Harris' bad luck, a child actor in the video told the networks that he submitted a monologue and was interviewed for the role. The internet erupted, wondering if Harris knew how to talk to 'real' children. Parallels were drawn with the HBO show, "Veep," on an incompetent vice president and the hapless political

team. It didn't help to have Democratic infighting, the stalling of major pieces of legislation in Congress, low jobs numbers, a chaotic Afghanistan withdrawal, all bringing Biden-Harris approval ratings to an all-time low. A White House official argued that the VP's office hadn't selected the children. Others in the Harris camp said the fact the children were actors explained why they performed better than the VP.

Putin calls for closer global cooperation on conserving biodiversity

Kunming (China) | Agencies

Russian President Vladimir Putin has called for closer international cooperation on preserving biodiversity and providing related support to developing countries. "It is certainly important that national priorities and specificities of each state be taken into account, and special attention be given to the needs of developing and least developed countries," Putin said on Tuesday in his speech via video at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, Xinhua news agency reported. The conference, known as COP15, kicked off on Monday in Kunming, the capital of southwest China's Yunnan Province. The first part of the meeting will last until Friday, with parallel activities featuring forums on topics including climate change and ecologi-



cal conservation. The second part of the meeting, which is expected to be held next year, will review and make a decision on the "post-2020 global biodiversity framework," a blueprint for biodiversity conservation for the next decade. "We fully support the idea of achieving closer international cooperation on all urgent issues of protecting flora and fauna as well as air and water resources," Putin said, underlining that "the sovereignty of states over their natural resources and economic activities" should be respected to this end. He expressed his appreciation to China for supporting efforts to enhance international cooperation on environmental matters.

5 killed in Somali suicide bombing



Mogadishu: At least five people were killed and six others injured in a suicide bombing in the Somali capital Mogadishu on Tuesday evening, police and witnesses said. A police officer who declined to be named told Xinhua news agency that a suicide bomber walked into a restaurant near the Fagah intersection and blew himself up, resulting in the death of five people and injuring several others. "We can confirm that five people died in the blast and six others got injured," he said. Witnesses said they heard a huge blast at Mogadishu's Fagah junction. "The blast was huge and I saw injured people being taken to the hospitals," said Abdirahman Mohamed, a witness.

Wildfire in southern California triggers evacuation orders

Los Angeles | Agencies

A fast-moving wildfire in southern California expanded to over 13,400 acres (54.23 square km) with 5 per cent containment by Tuesday, triggering evacuation orders and the closure of a major highway, according to Inciweb, an interstate incident information system. The Alisal Fire started Monday afternoon near the Alisal Reservoir, north of the US Highway 101 along coastal Santa Barbara County, Inciweb said, adding "the fire is burning in dense chaparral and grass and is being pushed by strong winds and growing at a rapid rate of speed." Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors has declared a local state of emergency for the Alisal Fire. Evacuation order and warnings have been issued and remained in place by Tuesday for the areas threatened by the fire, Xinhua news agency reported. Officials said more than 600 firefighting personnel are working to contain the blaze which is threatening at least 100 structures, including ranches, farms, homes, state campgrounds and railway



services. The Highway 101 was forced to close indefinitely in both directions by the fire. Officials said there is no estimated time for re-opening and guided vehicles to alternate routes. The railway

parallel to Highway 101 was also closed and impacting Amtrak train travel in both directions. Statewide, wildfires have burned over 2,487,000 acres (10,065 square km) and

destroyed or damaged more than 3,600 structures so far this year in California, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's latest updates.

25 bodies recovered from mass graves in Libya

Tripoli: Libyan authorities have recovered 25 unidentified bodies from five newly discovered mass graves in the city of Tarhuna. Located some 90 km south of the capital Tripoli, Tarhuna was once the eastern-based army's main military operation center during the war against the former UN-backed government in and around Tripoli, Xinhua news agency reported. One grave contained 10 bodies, the second contained 9, the third contained 4, and each of the remaining two graves contained one body, the General Authority for Research and Identification said, adding that a search is underway for more mass graves in the city. A week ago, 10 unidentified bodies were recovered from two mass graves in Tarhuna. Since the beginning of the search in Tarhuna in June 2020, many mass graves containing dozens of unidentified bodies have been discovered in the city. The former UN-backed government accused the rival eastern-based army of mass killings in Tarhuna.



CENTRAL PROBE AGENCIES MISUSED BY BJP TO TARGET POLITICAL RIVALS: SHARAD PAWAR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Slamming the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government at the Centre, Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar on Wednesday said it is "misusing the central probe agencies to target political opponents and now even the relatives of politicians".

"Central agencies like IT, CBI, ED, NCB are being used for political purposes. A new strategy and pattern seem to be emerging now targeting the relatives of political opponents," he said, in a reference to the ongoing Income Tax Department raids on his three nieces who are the sisters of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, and various entities linked to them.

Pawar wondered what their connection to politics is, since one of his nieces is in the publishing business, another is a doctor, and the third is a housewife.

Referring to the chain of events surrounding NCP leader and former Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, he asked "where is (former Mumbai



Police chief | Param Bir Singh" who made the allegations against him (Deshmukh) for which he had quit the ministry. "It is surprising Deshmukh's home

was raided for the fifth time on Tuesday. What is the purpose of raiding the same person's house so many times. The man who levelled accusations (Singh) is not to be found any-

where... the people must also understand this," Pawar remarked.

Touching on the Narcotics Control Bureau's Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede, Pawar said he tried to get some information on the IRS officer who was earlier posted at Mumbai airport.

"I have heard several stories... But I don't have the complete details, so I won't speak about it more now," he said, fueling speculation after the series of revelations made by NCP national spokesperson and Minister Nawab Malik last week pointing a needle of suspicion at the NCB.

He mentioned how the NCB had taken a person who is absconding from Pune police as its independent witness in the October 2 raids on a rave party on board the cruise ship in Mumbai port which sparked off a huge political row.

Questioning the NCB's credentials, Pawar said compared with the work of the central agency, the Anti-Narcotics Cell of Mumbai Police has seized much higher volumes of drugs as a state-level agency and without getting into any controversies

Fadnavis backs Rajnath's statement on Savarkar mercy petition

Team Absolute | Panaji

Maharashtra's Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Devendra Fadnavis said that Hindu Mahasabha leader Veer Savarkar helped in preparing mercy petitions for several people but wrote one for himself "only after insistence from others". "It is clear now because Swatantrata Veer Savarkar had prepared petitions of several people, but he did not prepare a petition of his own. He did it only when others insisted. It is a part of history," he told reporters at Dabolim international airport, when he was asked to react to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's statement that Savarkar had



written the mercy petition at Mahatma Gandhi's request.

Backing Rajnath Singh's statement, he said: "Swatantrata Veer Savarkar was in Cellular Jail through the longest and most difficult period. He is one of those few

who suffered 'kaala-pani' punishment. Therefore the controversies which are created about him are wrong."

Fadnavis is in Goa to review preparations for Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit on Thursday.

AIMIM activist, kin accused of rape, Bombay HC seeks police report

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court has directed the Mumbai Police and others to file a reply to a petition accusing an All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) activist and his two sons of rape.

A division bench of Justice Nitin Jamdar and Justice Sarang Kotwal on Tuesday gave the directions in a habeas corpus petition filed by lawyer Naveen Chomal claiming a minor girl hailing from West Bengal had been repeatedly sexually assaulted by the trio.

The matter has now been posted for further hearing on October 21, said Chomal.

In his petition, Chomal said the girl, who hails from West Bengal's Uttar Dinajpur district, has named AIMIM activist Jainuddin Chowdhary besides his sons Ramazan and Shamsullah, for allegedly sexually exploiting her. Despite repeated attempts by reporter, state AIMIM leaders including MP Syed Imtiaz Jaleel and MLA Waris Pathan, and the accused's lawyer were not available for comments in the matter.

Public Prosecutor Aruna Kamath said that the girl - who was present in the court - was



the wife of one of the accused and her statement has been recorded by the Mumbai Police.

According to Chomal's plea, the victim is 17 years old and had come to Mumbai harbouring dreams of becoming a model-actress but was allegedly trapped by the father-sons who abused and exploited her in the name of giving her modelling-film assignments.

THANKS TO FADNAVIS, I REMEMBERED I WAS 4-TIME CM, QUIPS SHARAD PAWAR

Mumbai: Veteran politician and Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar on Wednesday took a sharp swipe at Leader of Opposition in Assembly Devendra Fadnavis over his statement that he "still feels the Chief Minister" of Maharashtra. Addressing media persons, Pawar said if Fadnavis still considers himself as the Chief Minister, it only proves how deeply he is affected by his defeat two years ago and the Maha Vikas Aghadi, headed by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, taking office.

"Nevertheless, I congratulate Fadnavis because of him I remembered that I was the CM four times," the 81-year-old Pawar said with a mischievous glint in his eyes, amid laughter. Fadnavis' utterance on Tuesday evoked both mirth and sharp reactions from the ruling Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress leaders who advised the BJP to ensure "prompt medical attention" and get Fadnavis treated for shock, hallucinations, trauma and mental problems before its too late. Attempting damage control, this morning BJP state President Chandrakant Patil claimed that Fadnavis' statement was "misinterpreted".

RIL gets dragged into ZEE-Invesco tussle

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Reliance Industries, which got drawn into the ZEE-Invesco tussle by virtue of its February proposal to merge its media properties with Zee, said on Wednesday that it has never resorted to any hostile transactions and regretted being drawn into the dispute now.

The statement came a day after the ZEEEL board considered a note from the company's Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Punit Goenka, that talked about another merger deal being pushed by Invesco earlier in February that would have robbed shareholders of at least Rs 10,000 crore.

It now appears that the Invesco facilitated merger proposal was that of RIL, which was looking to merge its media properties with Zee.

"We regret our name being drawn into the dispute between Zee and Invesco. The reports in the media are not accurate," RIL said in a statement, giving the sequence of events that resulted in discussions between its representatives and Punit Goenka for a possible merger.

"In February/March 2021, Invesco had assisted Reliance in arranging discussions directly between our representatives and Punit Goenka, member of the founder family and Managing Director of Zee. We had made a broad proposal for merger of our media properties with Zee at fair valuations of Zee and all our properties. The valuations of Zee and our properties were arrived at based on the same parameters. The proposal sought to harness the strengths of all the merging entities and would have helped create substantial value for all,

including the shareholders of Zee," the RIL statement said.

Goenka in his board note had said that that the Company's management team had informed the board that in their considered view, the valuation attributed to the entities belonging to the Strategic Group could have been inflated by at least Rs 10,000 crore. This would mean that had the proposed deal been approved, the shareholders of the company would have suffered a loss of Rs 10,000 crore.

"Reliance always endeavours to continue with the existing management of the investee companies and reward them for their performance. Accordingly, the proposal included continuation of Mr Goenka as the Managing Director and issue of ESOPs to management, including Mr Goenka," the RIL statement said.

Won't repeat post-poll fiasco of 2017 in 2022 Goa polls: Chidambaram

Mumbai | Agencies

Panaji: The Congress in Goa has vowed not to repeat the 2017 post-poll fiasco, when, despite being the single largest party, its leadership delayed submission of a letter staking claim to form a government in the coastal state, resulting in the BJP hurriedly cobbling together an alliance to form its government.

Speaking at a party function Mapusa town late on Tuesday, former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, who is also the All India Congress Committee's senior observer for the Goa polls, also said that if and when the Congress crosses the magic figure of 21 in the 40-member state Assembly, the party would



write to the Governor within five minutes to stake claim to power.

"I assure you that once you get us a majority in Goa, a government will be

formed. The mistakes of 2017 will not happen. Instant decisions will be taken in Panaji. The moment we cross the magic number, the letter will be given to the Governor staking the claim of the Congress party to form the government and naming the Chief Minister," Chidambaram said at a party function in Mapusa in North Goa district.

"There need be no apprehension, no hesitation... I give you my word, the moment we cross the magic number, the government will be ours..." Chidambaram also said.

The former Union minister described the series of defections in the Goa Congress as a "sad chapter" in party history, which would not be repeated in the future.

BJP claims Fadnavis' statement misconstrued

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A day after Maharashtra Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis said he still feels he's the Chief Minister, the Bharatiya Janata Party claimed that his remarks were 'misinterpreted', here on Wednesday.

Talking to media-persons, BJP State President Chandrakant Patil attempted to straighten the record by claiming that "as usual, Fadnavis' statement was misconstrued".

"What Fadnavis actually meant was that wherever he goes as the Leader of Opposition, the people have the same expectations from him as when he was the CM," Patil said. He said that Fadnavis is constantly on the move, visiting people in flood hit areas, or rain-ravaged districts, the farmers and others who crowd around him and seek his help. To a pointed query whether it was possible that Fadnavis could return as the CM, Patil shot



back: "How can I say, I am not an astrologer!" Reminiscent of his 2019 pre-polls proclamation of 'Mee Punha Yaeen' (I will return) Fadnavis stated at an open function in Navi Mumbai that he still feels he's the state CM owing to the immense love and affection showered by the people of the state.

MGL raises PNG/CNG prices for second time in a week

Team Absolute | Mumbai

On the eve of Dussehra, the Maharashtra Gas Ltd (MGL) on Wednesday hiked the prices of domestic PNG and vehicular CNG - for the second time in a week, with effect from midnight (October 13/14).

The MGL announced a price increase of Rs 2.30/kg for Compressed Natural Gas and Rs 1.11/SCM for domestic Piped Natural Gas.

With this, the revised, all-inclusive final prices of CNG used by vehicles will go up from Rs 54.57/kg to Rs 57.54/kg (including taxes).

Similarly, the rates of domestic PNG in and around Mumbai will shoot up from Rs 32.67/SCM to Rs 33.93/SCM (Slab 1) and from Rs 38.27/SCM to Rs 39.53/SCM (Slab 2), respectively.

The fresh hike will hit around 1.60 million PNG consumers and over



800,000 CNG customers in and around Mumbai ahead of the festivals of Dussehra and Diwali.

The MGL has justified the hike on

grounds that from October 1, the Central government has increased the prices of domestically produced gas by a whopping 62 per cent.

Besides, re-gasified LNG prices are at historic high levels, and this combination led to a significant increase in the cost of gas being procured by MGL.

"Being a customer-focused company, the MGL has always tried to maintain price stability for its CNG and domestic PNG customers. However, since the increase in gas price is large, MGL has decided to progressively recover such increased gas cost," said the gas service provider.

The MGL assured that despite the upward revision, CNG offers a saving of about 64 per cent and 43 per cent compared with petrol-diesel, at current price levels, in Mumbai.

Similarly, MGL's domestic PNG offers 33 per cent saving in comparison to the current price of domestic LPG coupled with convenience, safety, reliability and environmental friendliness to consumers.

Goa independent MLA extends support to Trinamool

Panaji | Agencies

Goa's independent MLA Prasad Gaonkar on Wednesday extended his support to the Trinamool Congress, even as his brother Santosh and several other followers formally joined the West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee-led party.

Incidentally, Gaonkar who had extended support to the Congress in July this year, while Santosh Gaonkar had already formally joined the Opposition party in the same month.

Speaking to reporters at a press conference held near Panaji, Prasad Gaonkar said that the Congress had been unable to tap the anger against the ruling BJP, which was why he had chosen to align with the TMC.

"The Congress should have capitalised on the anger against the BJP, but they have been unable to do so. So, I am supporting TMC," Gaonkar said.

The independent MLA also said that a decision whether he would contest the 2022 state assembly polls on a TMC ticket would be taken after discussion with party leaders. Party sources said that Gaonkar was expected to formally join the TMC, after the culmination of the last session of the state assembly later this



month. In 2017, soon after poll results were declared Gaonkar had supported the Congress party, before the latter's bid to form government fell into disarray. Gaonkar had then switched his support to the ruling BJP, before withdrawing support from the government in October last year.



Jennifer Lawrence's comedy 'No Hard Feelings' lands at Sony Pictures

Los Angeles | Agencies

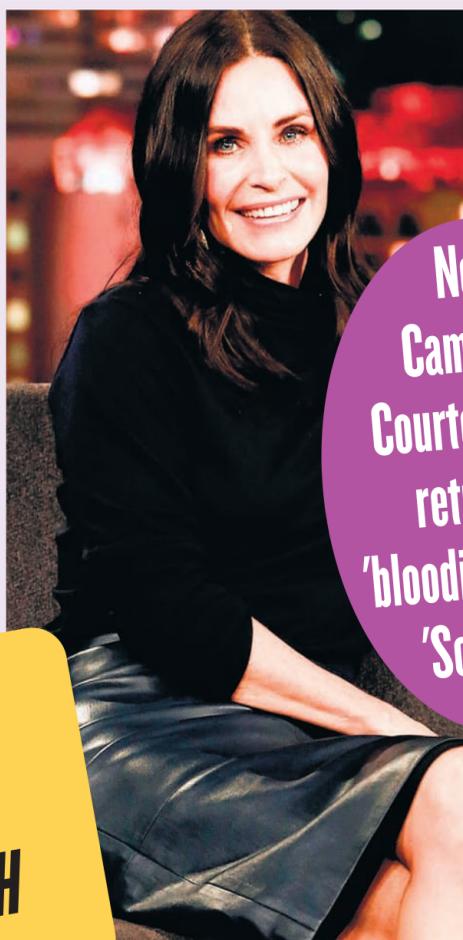
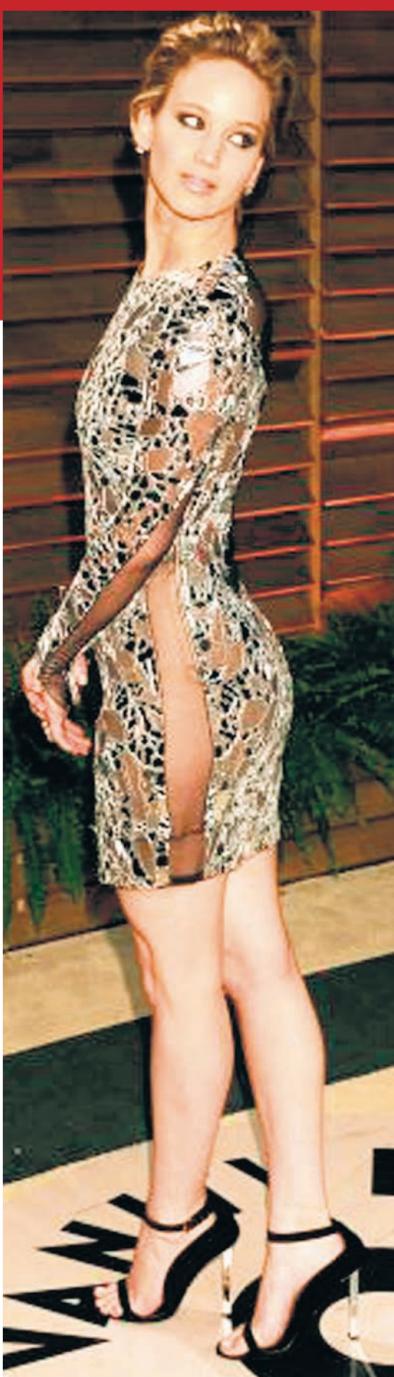
The rights for Hollywood star Jennifer Lawrence starrer R-rated comedy 'No Hard Feelings' has been acquired by Sony Pictures. Along with Lawrence, the film will be directed by Gene Stupnitsky, a writer and co-executive producer on NBC's 'The Office'. 'No Hard Feelings' will be Stupnitsky's follow-up to the 2019 coming-of-age ensemble comedy 'Good Boys', his feature-length directorial debut. Stupnitsky also serves as co-writer on 'No Hard Feelings', alongside John Phillips, reports variety.com. 'No Hard Feelings' is set in Montauk, New York, a hamlet on the east end of Long Island. The package is billed as an R-rated comedy in the vein of the 1983 Tom Cruise film 'Risky Business' and the 2011 Cameron Diaz vehicle 'A Bad

Teacher', which Stupnitsky served as an executive producer and writer on. The studio secured 'No Hard Feelings' with the intention of giving the completed film an exclusive theatrical release. The comedy is only the latest addition to Lawrence's slate of upcoming projects. After a hiatus from screen acting following the release of 2019's 'Dark Phoenix', Lawrence returns this year with Netflix's holiday comedy 'Don't Look Up', an ensemble comedy from aThe Big Short' director Adam McKay. Lawrence stars alongside Leonardo DiCaprio, Jonah Hill, Cate Blanchett, Meryl Streep and many others. On the horizon, Lawrence is set to star in the Paolo Sorrentino-directed 'Mob Girl' and play Theranos founder Elizabeth Holmes in 'Bad Blood', which will reunite the actress with director McKay.

Dean Cain slams 'bisexual' Superman

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Dean Cain, who played Superman in 'Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman' from 1993 to 1997, is unimpressed by the news that the superhero Clark Kent's son Jon Kent will be bisexual. He is not happy that Jon Kent will be depicted as being attracted to both men and women in the 'Superman: Son of Kal-El' comic and shared that writers are simply "bandwagoning" and haven't done anything particularly "brave", reports femalefirst.co.uk. Speaking on 'Fox & Friends', he said: "They said it's a bold new direction, I say they're bandwagoning. Robin just came out as bi. Who's really shocked about that one? The new Captain America is gay." Cain added: "My daughter in (the TV series) 'Supergirl', where I played the father, was gay. So I don't think it's bold or brave or some crazy new direction. If they had done this 20 years ago, perhaps that would be bold or brave." The actor insisted it would be more "brave" if Superman was depicted trying to tackle global "injustices" instead. He continued: "Brave would be having him fighting for the rights of gay people in Iran where they'll throw you off a building for the offense of being gay."

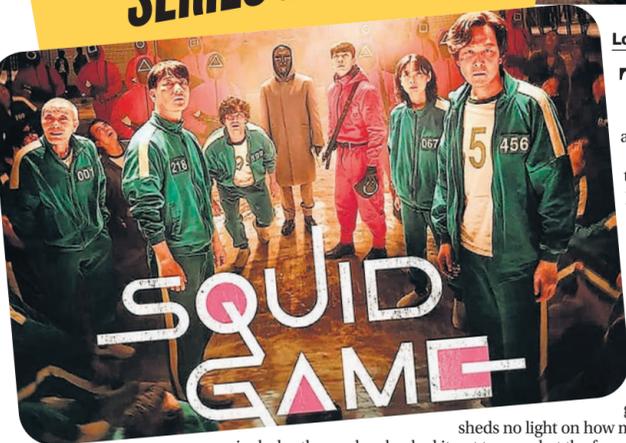


Neve Campbell, Courteney Cox return for 'bloodier' slasher 'Scream 5'

Los Angeles | Agencies

A trailer for the fifth installment of 'Scream' franchise has arrived, promising a new, bloody adventure with the beloved characters. Actors Neve Campbell's Sidney Prescott, Courteney Cox's Gale Weathers and David Arquette's Deputy Dewey Riley are back for the slasher, along with a new cast of characters, many of which will probably not make it to the end credits with a new Ghostface killer on the loose. The trailer begins with a scene mirroring Drew Barrymore's iconic opening to 1996's 'Scream', but this time Ghostface texts newcomer (Jenna Ortega) before disabling the alarm system, breaking into her house and presumably murdering her, reports variety.com. The original characters explain to the traumatised newbies that Ghostface always targets people related to the original cast. Sidney prepares for another bloody showdown with the killer, saying: "I've been through this a lot." In the trailer, Dewey tells Sidney over the phone: "It's happening. Three attacks so far. Do you have a gun?" To which Sidney replies: "I'm Sidney Prescott, of course I have a gun." New entrants to film include Jack Quaid, Melissa Barrera, Dylan Minnette, Mason Gooding, Kyle Gallner, Sonia Ammar, Mikey Madison, Jasmin Savoy Brown and Reggie Conquest. The original 'Scream' premiered in 1996 and was directed by the late Wes Craven. It starred Campbell as Sidney Prescott, a high schooler targeted by a masked killer named Ghostface who was obsessed with 1980s horror movies. Following its success, 'Scream' went on to have three more installments, each starring Campbell, Cox and Arquette and directed by Craven. After Craven's death in 2015, many including Campbell were left skeptical that the film would ever return. "I had been really apprehensive about doing another one," Campbell told Jamie Lee Curtis in Variety's special 'House of Horror' conversation. Campbell added: "People had asked in the past whether I would do another one without Wes or whether I would make another one. I always felt like it'd be too difficult to do it without Wes. He was the master of these films. He did such a beautiful job on them. We were a family." It was a note from directors Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett, who helmed 2019's horror-comedy 'Ready or Not', that changed her mind. Executive producer Kevin Williamson, who wrote the original 'Scream' also kept Craven in mind while approaching the new project. The new film's screenplay has been written by James Vanderbilt and Guy Busick, and it is being co-produced by Paramount Pictures and Spyglass Media Group, with Spyglass overseeing production. 'Scream' will hit theaters on January 14, 2022. 'Squid Game'

NETFLIX'S BIGGEST-EVER SERIES LAUNCH



Los Angeles | Agencies

The survival game series 'Squid Game' is officially the most popular TV show on its initial debut that Netflix has ever released, according to the streaming giant. The streaming platform said Tuesday that the ultraviolent Korean drama has been sampled by 111 million members since its September 17 premiere worldwide, over the span of just 25 days, reports variety.com. This means 'Squid Game' has been viewed by more people in its initial month of release than the previous number one holder, 'Bridgerton', which Netflix said had been selected to watch by 82 million households in the first 28 days of release. The proprietary metric that Netflix is using here is based on the number of accounts that picked a given title and streamed for at least 2 minutes. That sheds no light on how many people watched even one full episode and includes those who checked it out to see what the fuss was about before turning it off. The company more recently released, for the first time, a ranking of the top 10 most-viewed original shows and films by total hours viewed. Still, 'Squid Game' has captured gargantuan buzz and has consistently ranked as the number one series across the globe since it debuted, according to Netflix. Two weeks ago, Netflix co-CEO and content chief Ted Sarandos said the show had a very good chance of becoming the streamer's biggest show ever. "We did not see that coming, in terms of its global popularity," Sarandos said at Vox Media's Code Conference. In the show, 456 debt-saddled contestants are mysteriously brought together on an island off the South Korean peninsula to compete in children's games for a huge cash prize with literally life-and-death consequences. Series creator and director Hwang Dong-hyuk told Variety he first conceived the idea for 'Squid Game' in 2008 as a film. But Korean studios passed because of its violent themes, and he went on to create several hit films before being able to revisit the project about 10 years later.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



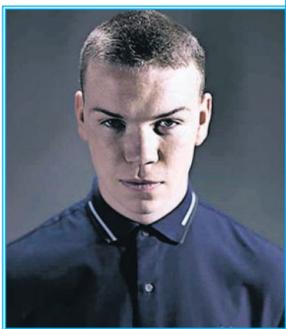
Roxy Horner

Will Poulter joins Marvel's 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Will Poulter will be seen playing the role of villain Adam Warlock in 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3', which writer-director James Gunn is set to start shooting later this year. "Welcome to the Guardians family, Will Poulter. He's an amazing actor and wonderful guy. See you in a couple weeks," Gunn posted to Twitter. The British-born Poulter made his feature debuts in 2007's 'Son of Rambow' and 2010's 'The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader'. However, he is mostly remembered

as the awkward teenage kid in 2013's 'We're the Millers', who is bitten by a tarantula. Poulter has also played standout roles in 'The Maze Runner' franchise and 2015's 'The Revenant' and he can currently be seen in the limited series 'Dopesick' on Hulu, reports variety.com. Gunn teased the introduction of Adam Warlock in one of the mid-credits teasers in 2017's 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2,' after Ayesha, leader of the Sovereign people, creates a being she names 'Adam', with the purpose of destroying the Guardians of the Galaxy. The character was first introduced in the late 1960s/early 1970s, created in a specialised cocoon to be, effectively, the perfect human. His powers - flight, super-strength, regeneration, energy manipulation - are comprehensive and rival the most powerful Marvel characters ever created.





IPL 2021 QUALIFIER 2:

KKR SURVIVE LATE SCARE TO BEAT DC BY 3 WICKETS, TO FACE CSK IN FINAL

Sharjah | Agencies

Riding on a brilliant fifty by Venkatesh Iyer (55 off 41), Kolkata Knight Riders overcome a dramatic collapse to beat Delhi Capitals by 3 wickets in a low-scoring Qualifier 2 of the IPL 2021 at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium, here on Wednesday.

KKR will now face the MS Dhoni-led Chennai Super Kings in the summit clash, which is scheduled to be played at Dubai International Stadium on Friday. This is KKR's first final since 2014.

Chasing a total of 136 runs for victory, openers Iyer and Shubman Gill gave Kolkata a solid start. The duo mixed caution with aggression and took KKR to 51/0 after 6 overs. Even after the powerplay, both the openers continued in the same vein, taking KKR to 76/0 in 10 overs.

Kagiso Rabada, finally gave Capitals a breakthrough as he dismissed Iyer. The youngster played a quickfire knock of 55 runs in 41 balls and stitched a 96-run opening stand with Gill. After Iyer's wicket, Nitish Rana joined Shubman Gill in the middle. But Rana couldn't do much and got out to Anrich Nortje after scoring 13 runs. In the next over, Gill also got out and things took a dramatic turn as KKR collapsed from 125 for 2 to 130 for 7.

But Rahul Tripathi held his nerve to hit a sixer and finish the game for KKR when six runs were required off 2 balls in the final over.

Earlier in the day, openers Prithvi Shaw and Shikhar Dhawan gave Delhi Capitals a solid start, scoring 32/0 after 4 overs. However, Kolkata



bounced back with the wicket of Shaw (18), who was dismissed by Varun. After Prithvi's wicket, Dhawan and Marcus Stoinis joined forces and looked to maintain the run-flow. But KKR bowlers didn't allow them to score freely by bowling hard length deliveries. As a result, Delhi were 65/1 at the halfway mark, lurching towards the average total.

The pressure was building on Stoinis, who was promoted in the batting order despite coming from an injury. In order to score freely, the all-rounder gave himself room to hit one through the off side but missed a quick and cross-seamed delivery, which crashed into the stumps. Stoinis (18) and Dhawan added 39-runs for the 2nd wicket partnership. From there on, Kolkata continued to strangle the batters further and Delhi kept on losing wickets at regular intervals. Dhawan, who scored 36 off 39,

was the first to go. He charged down the track, trying to slam Chakaravathy's delivery straight down the ground but the ball took the outside edge and Shikhar did well to cover ground quickly and take a diving catch. DC skipper Pant came to bat next and started his innings with a boundary. But he couldn't carry his knock longer and got out to Lockie Ferguson, leaving DC in trouble at 90/4 after 15.2 overs. After losing the wickets of Dhawan and Pant in quick succession, Delhi were in deep trouble and Shreyas Iyer and Shimron Hetmyer had the responsibility to bring their team back in the game. Hetmyer survived a close call on the individual score of 3 as he was caught brilliantly by Shubman Gill at long on off a Varun Chakaravathy delivery but it was called a no ball by the TV umpire.

After getting the life-line, the Windies cricketer hit a couple of sixes in the 18th over bowled by Ferguson. However, in the next over, Hetmyer (17) got run out. Iyer wanted to squeeze out a run but Venkatesh Iyer did well to throw the ball back on time to Dinesh Karthik and Hetmyer was well short of the crease. In the end, Shreyas Iyer hit a six and four in the last over of the innings and took Delhi Capitals to a total of 135/5 in 20 overs, which was not enough.

Brief scores

Delhi Capitals: 135-5 in 20 overs (Shikhar Dhawan 36, Shreyas Iyer 30*; Varun Chakaravathy (2/26) lost to Kolkata Knight Riders: 136-7 in 19.5 overs (Venkatesh Iyer 55, Shubman Gill 46; Kagiso Rabada 2/23).

JABEUR, KERBER IN INDIAN WELLS QUARTERS; LEYLAH FERNANDEZ EXITS

Indian Wells | Agencies

Tunisian star Ons Jabeur has boosted her chances of becoming the first Arab woman to qualify for the WTA Finals after making her first BNP Paribas Open quarterfinal here on Wednesday (IST), defeating Russian qualifier Anna Kalinskaya, 6-2, 6-2 in the fourth round.

No.12 seed Jabeur played a perfect match under the lights against Kalinskaya, hitting 32 winners to just 15 unforced errors, and going unbroken for the match. With her all-court game in full flow, Jabeur flummoxed the Russian, who had scored two big wins over Sara Sorribes Tormo of Spain and Viktorija Golubic of Switzerland to make her first WTA 1000 Round of 16. Leading by a set and a break and serving to consolidate at 6-2, 2-1 in the second set, Jabeur double-faulted at 30-all to give Kalinskaya a chance to get the set back on serve. But following that hiccup Jabeur went on to hold and, after fending off Kalinskaya's surge, the Tunisian secured the win after 1 hour and 18 minutes. Eyeing a spot in her first WTA 1000 semifinal, Jabeur will face a Anett Kontaveit of Estonia in the quarterfinals.



BCCI extends date for buying ITT for new IPL teams

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has further extend the date for purchasing the 'Invitation to Tender' (ITT) document for the two new Indian Premier League (IPL) teams -- which will be added from the 2022 season -- to October 20, 2021.

A BCCI statement said that interested parties can purchase the ITT document on receipt of payment of the "non-refundable tender fee of Rs 10 lakh plus any applicable Goods and Services Tax". All other terms contained in the Invitation document shall be applicable, said the BCCI. The IPL Governing Council had on August 31 this year announced the release of tender to "own and operate" two new IPL teams, which will compete in the 2022 edition of the lucrative tournament. Subsequently,



the date was extended to October 10 and now the date has been further extended by 10 days. "Interested parties are requested to email at ittp2021@bcci.tv to get further details for purchasing the ITT. The email requesting the ITT should have the subject line 'ITT for the Right to Own and Operate One of Two Proposed New IPL Teams'," said a BCCI statement. "Any interested party wishing to submit a bid is

required to purchase the ITT. However, only those satisfying the eligibility criteria set out in the ITT and subject to the other terms and conditions set out therein, shall be eligible to bid. It is clarified that merely purchasing this ITT does not entitle any person to bid," the statement added. "The BCCI reserves the right to cancel or amend the bidding process at any stage without providing any reason," said the statement.

Shardul Thakur replaces Axar Patel in India's T20 World Cup squad

Dubai | Agencies

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Wednesday announced that right-arm pacer Shardul Thakur and left-arm spin all-rounder Axar Patel will swap places in India's squad for the men's T20 World Cup in the UAE and Oman. It means that Thakur moves into Patel's place in the main squad while Patel takes Thakur's place in the stand-by players' list.

"The All-India Senior Selection Committee after a discussion with the team management has added Shardul Thakur to the main squad. All-rounder Axar Patel, who was part of the 15-member squad will now be on the list of stand-by players," said a release from the BCCI.

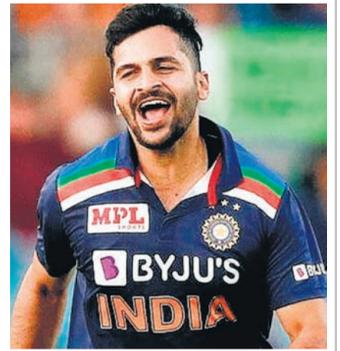
This is the only change made by the Indian team till now after announcing the 15-member squad and stand-by players on September 8. Thakur was last seen in T20Is against England in Ahmedabad in March this year. But this year has seen his emergence as a seam all-round option for India, especially in Test cricket.

Thakur was one of the main architects in India's 157-run win in the fourth Test against England at The Oval in September with half-centuries (57 and 60) in both innings apart from picking three wickets.

Thakur, currently playing for the Chennai Super Kings in IPL 2021, has been a key factor in his franchise reaching the final scheduled for Friday in Dubai.

Till now, Thakur has been the highest-wicket taker for Chennai in the tournament, taking 18 wickets from 15 matches at an economy rate of 8.75.

In the UAE leg of IPL 2021, Thakur has scalped 13 wickets in eight matches for



Chennai. The BCCI also announced that Avesh Khan, Umran Malik, Harshal Patel, Lukman Meriwala, Venkatesh Iyer, Karn Sharma, Shahbaz Ahmed and K. Gowtham will join the Indian team bubble in Dubai and assist the side in their preparation ahead of the men's T20 World Cup.

The men's T20 World Cup will take place in Oman and the UAE from October 17 to November 14. India will start its Super 12 campaign against Pakistan on October 24 in Dubai. India are in Group 2 alongside Pakistan, New Zealand, Afghanistan and two teams joining from Round 1.

India's squad: Virat Kohli (captain), Rohit Sharma (vice-captain), KL Rahul, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Rahul Chahar, Ravichandran Ashwin, Shardul Thakur, Varun Chakaravathy, Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Mohammad Shami.

GOLFERS ADITI, TVESA AND DIKSHA TO PLAY IN NEW YORK LEG OF ARAMCO SERIES

New York | Agencies

Indian golfers Aditi Ashok, Tvesa Malik and Diksha Dagar will compete at the third leg of the Aramco Series in New York beginning this week. Only Tvesa has played both earlier legs in London and in Spain, while Diksha was in the winning team in London and missed the event in Spain. Aditi, fourth at the Olympics, will be playing the Aramco Series for the first time this season. Tvesa has had numerous solid finishes this season, but Aramco Series events have not given her a good finish. Diksha Dagar was part of the winning team in London and was T-12 in the individual standings.

A stellar field includes



Olympic champion Nelly Korda with her sister Jessica, Lexi Thompson, Lizette Salas, Angel Yin, Alison Lee and Lindsey Weaver. Others including Danielle Kang, Cheyenne Woods and Natalie Gulbis will be getting a taste of the Series for the first time.

The top Europeans are

Catriona Matthew Emily Kristine Pedersen, Charley Hull, Anna Nordqvist, Sophia Popov, Bronte Law, Caroline Masson and Anne Van Dam.

The two individual winners from London (Marianne Skarpnord) and from Sotogrande, Spain (American Alison Lee) are also in the field.

INDIA SPINTER HIMA DAS TESTS COVID-19 POSITIVE



New Delhi | Agencies

An Indian athlete Hima Das on Wednesday revealed that she has tested COVID-19 positive but is stable in isolation. The 21-year old reported to the national camp at the National Institute of Sport (NIS) in Patiala recently and was set to resume her training following an injury

picked up at the Inter State Athletics Championships in June. However, she showed signs of mild exhaustion when she reached Patiala. "I would like to inform everyone that I have been tested positive for Covid-19. I am stable and at the moment in isolation. I look forward to utilising this time to recover and come back stronger than before," Das tweeted. "A gentle reminder for everyone to stay safe and wear masks." Hima last competed at the Inter-State meet, an Olympic qualifying event, where she picked up a hamstring injury in the 100m heats. As a result, she withdrew from the 100m finals and the 4x100m women's relay but opted to run the 200m finals. The sprinter also did not make the cut for 2020 Tokyo Olympics after missing the qualification mark. Hima holds the national record in women's 400m, women's 4x100m relay and the 4x400m mixed relay races.

Tsitsipas struggles on way to Indian Wells win; Berrettini ousted

Indian Wells | Agencies

Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece came back from a set and a break down to hold off former world No. 9 Fabio Fognini of Italy in the third round at the BNP Paribas Open on Wednesday (IST).

The world No. 3 Tsitsipas was rattled early on against the 30th seed, but worked his way back into the match for a 2-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory in two hours and four minutes. It set a fourth-round meeting with 22nd seed Alex de Minaur after the Australian's 6-4, 6-2 win against 15th seed Cristian Garin of Chile.

Tsitsipas extended his ATP head-to-head record against the Italian to 3-0 as he finished with 21 winners -- including 10 off the forehand -- and 28 unforced errors. Fognini clocked 32 winners -- 22 of those off his forehand -- but committed 32 unforced errors.

"Great comeback, honestly... I don't know what happened," Tsitsipas told



attpour.com. "I really wanted to get back in the match and it happened somehow.

"From (a set and a break down) I just took it point by point and it worked out pretty well. A good mindset and also a bit of patience helped as well. I found solutions in those tough moments and really felt like I had momentum."

Fognini set the tone early when he broke in the opening game and his sustained aggression had Tsitsipas unable to make any real inroads as the first set

wore on. The Italian withstood a break point as he closed out the set.

The crowd rallied behind the second seed Greek when he broke for the first time to draw level in the second set and it marked a switch in momentum as Fognini's error count grew. Tsitsipas carried the advantage to level the match at a set apiece and capitalised on a string of loose unforced errors from the Italian to land the crucial break for 3-2 in the deciding set and never looked back as he extended his tour-leading match wins this season to 53.

Taylor Fritz of the US earned his biggest win of the year, easing past Matteo Berrettini of Italy 6-4, 6-3 to reach the fourth round.

The California native, who was 2-6 in his past eight matches heading into Indian Wells, gained his first win against a top-10 opponent in 2021 and the seventh of his career in the 81-minute encounter.

Fan-inspired Indian team jersey unveiled ahead of T20 World Cup

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The fan-inspired jersey of the Indian cricket team was unveiled on Wednesday, ahead of the men's T20 World Cup in Oman and the UAE. The tournament will start from October 17 and end on November 14. The new jersey, named as the 'Billion Cheers Jersey', by official kit sponsors MPL Sports, comes in shades of prussian blue and royal blue. Sourav Ganguly, the BCCI President, expressed his happiness over the new jersey. "The Indian cricket team enjoys support not just in India but around the world, and there's no better



way to celebrate their excitement and energy than through this jersey. This will undoubtedly provide the team with the much-needed enthusiastic support in their quest to emerge as the T20 champions of the world. We are also pleased to see that MPL Sports continues to deliver merchandise that is widely affordable and accessible."

The jersey will be available in retail stores starting from Rs 1,799. Along with this, over ten variations, including a player edition jersey and Kohli's signature number 18 jersey, have been launched as well.

INDIA TO BEGIN AFC U-23 ASIAN CUP QUALIFICATION CAMPAIGN VS OMAN

New Delhi: The India U-23 national football team is set to embark on their qualification campaign for the AFC U-23 Asian Cup Uzbekistan 2022, after being drawn in Group E of the Qualifiers. India have been drawn alongside Oman, Kyrgyz Republic, and hosts UAE in Group E of the Qualifiers, with the matches set to be played between October 25-31 at the Fujairah Stadium, in Fujairah, UAE.

The India Colts are set to assemble in Bengaluru on October 17, before moving to the UAE on October 20 for their matches.

Uber Cup: India women lose 0-5 to Thailand in last group match



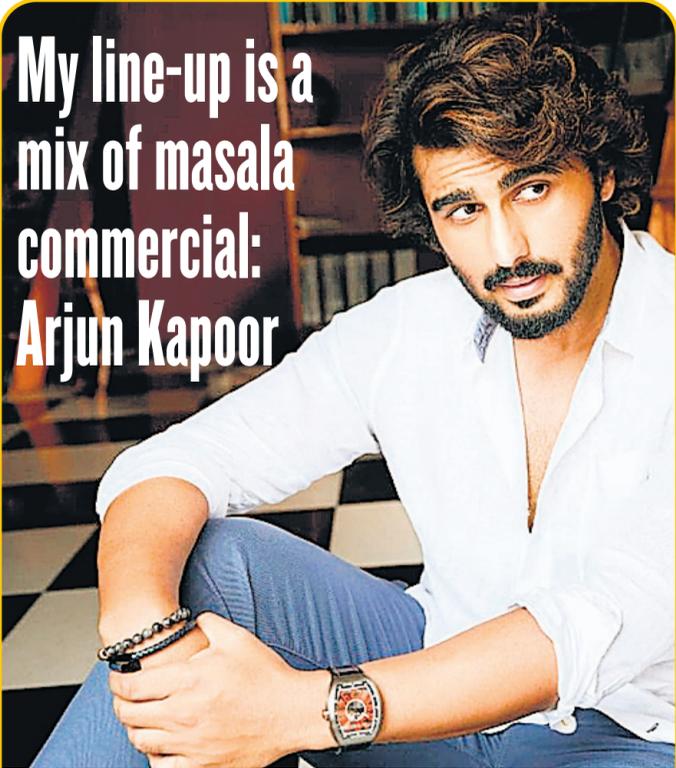
Aarhus: The Indian women's badminton team suffered a crushing 0-5 defeat against Thailand in their last group match of the Uber Cup at the Ceres Arena, here on Wednesday. The Indian team, without Saina Nehwal who has been sidelined to an injury, put

up a valiant fight before losing to fourth seed Thailand. It was the first loss for Indian women in the tournament after beating Spain (3-2) and Scotland (4-1). Having already sealed their place in the quarter-finals, the match against Thailand was to determine the table-topper in Group B of the competition. Starting the day, the 20-year-old Malvika Bansod lost 15-21 11-21 to world No 10 Pornpawee Chochuwong in their women's singles match. Then, the experienced doubles pairing of Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy went down fighting 16-21 12-21 to the duo of Jongkolphan Kittharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai. India's Aditi Bhatt was the only shuttler to take her match to three games. However, she lost 16-21 21-18 15-21 to world No 13 Busanan Ongbammrungphan. The win on the day helped Thailand seal the tie. Later, the duo of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand lost 17-21 16-21 to Puttita Supajirakul and Sapsiree Taerattanachai while Tasnim Mir lost her singles match to Supanida Katethong 19-21 15-21

Meanwhile, the Indian men's badminton team secured their place in the last eight of the Thomas Cup after beating Tahiti 5-0 on Tuesday. They will face defending champions China in their final Group C tie on Thursday.



My line-up is a mix of masala commercial: Arjun Kapoor



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Arjun Kapoor, who has three films - 'Ek Villain', 'Kuttey' and the recently announced 'The Lady Killer' lined up, is happy that filmmakers now are wanting to cast him in their 'eclectic vision'.

He says his upcoming work is a great mix of masala commercials and genre bending entertainers. Arjun is proud of his slate and credits the success of 'Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar' (SAFF) for changing the course of his career. He said: "Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar" has been a game-changer for my career. It presented me in a radical way which audiences had never seen before and I'm deeply thankful that they loved my performance in the film."

He added: "The success of 'SAFF' has opened several doors for me with filmmakers wanting to cast me in their eclectic vision. 'The Ladykiller' and 'Kuttey' are prime examples of how the industry is looking at me today and as an actor, I couldn't be more fortunate!"

Speaking about his next releases, Arjun is "excited" about his line-up.

"As it's a great mix of masala

commercial films like 'Ek Villain Returns' and also genre-bending entertainers like 'Kuttey' and 'The Lady Killer'. I have a few more announcements lined up and they are all equally diverse from a script point of view."

Arjun will be seen in Mohit Suri's 'Ek Villain Returns', Vishal Bhardwaj's son Aasmaan's debut directorial 'Kuttey' and Ajay Bahl's 'The Lady Killer'.



SAANAND VERMA ON BEING 'ANGOORI' IN 'BHABHI JI GHAR PAR HAI'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Saanand Verma, who plays 'Anokhelal Saxena', left everyone amazed when he recently got into the shoes of 'Angoori' on 'Bhabhi Ji Ghar Par Hai'. Talking about the sequence, the actor said: "In the show, some misunderstanding happened between 'Angoori' and her husband 'Manmohan Tiwari' and she has left him. Since 'Tiwari' had done a huge favour to me, I wanted to return the favour by being by his side in this time of need. Also, while staying with him I had to do something so that 'Angoori' and 'Tiwari' are back together once again."

"Actually, I was not supposed to imitate 'Angoori' fully, I had to maintain a balance so that it looks funny. It's an interesting track and I am sure the audience will love it," he added. 'Bhabhi Ji Ghar Par Hai' sees Shubhangi Atre in the role of 'Angoori', and Saanand revealed the actress was quite happy to see him in 'Angoori's' get up. "She was very happy and in fact she said that I am looking very pretty in the whole get up. Actually, Shubhangi had earlier played my role in the show, so now it was like a role reversal," he said. He also confessed that he just went with the flow and said: "Unlike films or OTT, on TV you don't get much time to prepare because on TV you are giving one episode daily, so you don't have the time to do a workshop or prepare. You need to just follow what's in front of you."



Team Absolute | Mumbai

With every passing day, 'Bigg Boss 15' is becoming more interesting with new gameplans and strategies by contestants and growing rivalries. Surviving the wild has tested the 'junglewaasis' like never before. They are now eager to get back into the house to live comfortably. After a long wait, 'Bigg Boss' has now given them a chance to do so as they take on a quirky task. As 'junglewaasis' break into teams for this task, they brace themselves to put their best foot forward. Meanwhile, Vishal Kotian finds an alternative to get back into the house. Knowing that Shamita Shetty is the 'Sanchalak' that decides which team has the upper hand, Vishal approaches her with his plan. He smartly convinces her that she would benefit from having him and his team in the house. As Shamita gives her decision in favour of Team Tiger, the opposing team senses foul play and begins arguing with her. Now that Shamita has taken this bold step, she will have to face the wrath of the 'junglewaasis' in the

Love lost, friendships broken inside the house

discomfort at Miesha expresses his openly talking about their relationship, assuming everyone is making fun of them. This upsets her as she asks him to shut up. Is this the end of their bittersweet romance?

'BIGG BOSS 15'

other team, who take her on with complete fury. On the other hand, another conflict begins between Jay Bhanushali and Karan Kundrra who have remained good friends so far this season. While Karan raises objections about Jay's swearing, the latter stands his ground. He argues with Karan. Karan, however, points out how Jay hasn't been in good form, unlike Pratik. In an unexpected twist, the tide seems to be turning for Pratik as Jay begins to lose his closest friends in the show. Only time will tell what will happen. Meanwhile, things aren't smooth in Ishaan and Miesha's lives, where an argument has erupted, threatening to compromise their relationship.

Kartik Aaryan literally on a roll with back to back announcements

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Kartik Aaryan rolling out titles of films as if flipping pages of a book. The announcement of 'Shehzada', his upcoming next, directed by Rohit Dhawan makes it the third film he is working on this year. The title is perfect fit for the actor's persona, supported by the tagline 'He Returns Home'.

Reuniting with his 'LuKa Chuppi' co-star, Kriti Sanon in this film, Kartik is set to fill in the big shoes of Allu Arjun who essayed the lead role in the original film, 'Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo'. One of the biggest hits of 2020, down south will now be recreated for the Hindi audiences. The actor had earlier also shared a dance video on the song 'Butta Bomma' from the film 'Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo' featuring Allu Arjun in his swagger. With the recent announcement of 'Shehzada', Kartik Aaryan has given his fans yet another boost of excitement and anticipation.

The film will also be starring Manisha Koirala and Paresh Rawal in supporting roles. This remake is going to be the most sought for simply owing it to the title, tag line, Kartik Aaryan's befitting portrayal. The film is speculated to go on floors soon and will be hitting screens on 4th November, 2022.

The actor has an envious line-up of films and is tirelessly adding more titles. He has films like 'Dhamaka', 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2', 'Freddy' and now 'Shehzada'.



Urfi Javed comes out in support of 'poor kid' Aryan Khan

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Urfi Javed of 'Bigg Boss OTT' fame has joined the clan of Bollywood actors and others who are supporting Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan. Aryan found himself in a soup after the NCB took him into custody as he was said to have attended a cruise party where drugs were being consumed.

Aryan is presently in custody and the case is being investigated.

Urfi says: "He'll probably take a lot of time to come out of this trauma. Even before the court's verdict people have started bashing him just because he is his father's son. Why don't we show equal outrage for rapes and murders? We are so quick in shaming actors even before the court's verdict. Why aren't we as quick when it comes to shaming rapists?" Urfi who is known for creating headlines for her airport looks and shows like 'Bade Bhaiyya Ki Dulhania', 'Meri Durga' and 'Bepannaah', shares her perspective on the same adding: "There are political leaders, religious gurus out there facing allegations of rape, still people worship them. And then there is this poor kid who hasn't harmed anyone but is being publicly bashed so much."



'SHOLAY' STUNTWOMAN SAYS SHE'D GIVE HER LIFE FOR 'BASANTI'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The first stuntwoman of Bollywood - Reshma Pathan - will be seen on the 'Shaandaar Shukravaar' episode of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 13'. As Hema Malini celebrates her 73rd birthday on October 16, there will be a surprise for her on the show.

Reshma Pathan, who essayed the role of Hema Malini's body-double for all the stunts in the iconic film 'Sholay', will be there as a surprise. She goes: "Arey O Basanti, Happy Birthday! Pehchana mujhe?" Reshma was the first stuntwoman in the industry and is popularly known as the 'Sholay Girl'. Bollywood star Hema Malini and 'Sholay' director Ramesh Sippy come on the hot-seat answering to questions of host and megastar Amitabh Bachchan. They will be celebrating 46 years of 'Sholay'. During the show the duo will be sharing interesting stories and behind-the-scenes moments of the film.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Nusrat Bharucha