

# absolute india

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**NATION** >02  
PM Modi redefined India's attitude against terrorism...



**HOLLYWOOD** > 06  
Sigourney Weaver's 'The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart' starts filming...



**SPORTS** > 07  
Babar's fifty, Asif's blitz power Pakistan to 5-wicket win...

## NATIONWIDE ROLLOUT OF PCV WILL REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY BY 60%: MANDAVIYA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Friday said the nationwide rollout of Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) will reduce the child mortality rate by 60 per cent. Launching the PCV, under the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) as a part of Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav, Mandaviya said pneumonia is a leading cause of death among children under 5 years, globally



and in India. "In India, around 16 per cent of deaths in children occur due to pneumonia. The nationwide rollout of PCV will reduce child mortality by around 60 per cent," he stated. He also released communication and awareness packages on PCV to create widespread mass awareness. These communication packages will be shared with all States/UTs for further adaptation and utilisation.

Highlighting the importance of healthy children in any country's growth, productivity and development, Mandaviya said: "Children are the future of our country and it is our responsibility to provide them a healthy life. Mission Indradhanush which was launched by the Honourable Prime Minister is one such endeavour in this regard." He said that Prime Minister Modi's vision of 'Sabko vaccine, muft vaccine' has ensured that the eligible population gets access to COVID-19 vaccines across the country. While releasing the communication package for the vaccine, Mandaviya exhorted that creating awareness regarding the vaccine is a vital component. The objective of the vaccine is to save the lives of our children and this would be possible if we run a successful awareness campaign across the country. Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) is one of the largest public health programmes targeting close to 26.7 million newborns and 29 million pregnant women annually.

## PM NARENDRA MODI MEETS TOP EU LEADERS AHEAD OF G20 MEET

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Rome

A day ahead of the G20 Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday kickstarted his official engagements in Rome with "a productive interaction" with European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Modi reached Rome on Friday morning where he will join other G20 leaders in discussions on global economic and health recovery from the pandemic, sustainable development, and climate change in the first in-person summit of the G20 since the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020.

His first official engagement was with the top leaders of the European Commission. Soon after the meeting was over, he tweeted: "We had wide ranging talks on deepening the India-EU friendship, particularly in areas such as trade, commerce, culture and environment."

Stating that India has a key role to play in the green transition, Michel said: "We discussed global health and fighting the pandemic, the strong EU-India Strategic



Partnership, the situation in Afghanistan and the Indo-Pacific."

Leyen tweeted: "Our EU-India strategic agenda is on the right track. We agreed that our trade negotiators will start to work. We'll deepen our cooperation on climate, including on innovation and technology."

Looking forward to cooperating in the Indo-Pacific EU Global Gateway, she said. The PMO handle said: "The leaders discussed ways to enhance economic as well as people-to-people linkages aimed at creating a better planet."

Modi paid floral tributes at the bust of Mahatma

Gandhi and also met members of the Indian community that extended a warm welcome to him with sloganing and placard displays.

Earlier in the morning here, the Prime Minister was received by senior Italian officials and the Indian Ambassador in Italy, a release from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in New Delhi.

Modi is on a visit to Rome and the Vatican City from Friday till October 31 at the invitation of Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi.

On the sidelines of the G20 Summit, Modi will also

be meeting with leaders of other partner countries and review the progress in bilateral relations.

The G20 began a consultation forum between Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of the world's major economies. Following the 2008 economic crisis, it became a forum between heads of state and government, aimed at improving coordination on the main global issues.

During his visit to Italy, Modi will also visit the Vatican City, to call on Pope Francis and meet Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin.

## DRDO, IAF SUCCESSFULLY FLIGHT-TEST LONG-RANGE BOMB

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Air Force jointly flight-tested an indigenously-developed long-range bomb successfully from an aerial platform on Friday.



"The long-range bomb, after release from the IAF fighter aircraft, guided to a land-based target at a long range with accuracy within specified limits," the DRDO said in a statement. All the mission objectives were successfully met, it said. The flight of the bomb and the performance was monitored by a number of range sensors including the Electro Optical Tracking System (EOTS), telemetry, and radar deployed by the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur in Odisha. The long-range bomb has been designed and developed by Research Centre Imarat (RCI), a DRDO laboratory located at Hyderabad, in coordination with other DRDO laboratories. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has appreciated the DRDO and the IAF and other teams associated with successful flight trial and stated that this will prove to be a force multiplier for the Indian armed forces.

DRDO Chairman, G Satheesh Reddy, in his message to the teams, said that successful flight test of the long-range bomb has marked an important milestone in indigenous development of this class of systems.

Two days ago, India successfully tested nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile Agni-5 that can hit its target at a range of 5,000 km on Wednesday from the APJ Abdul Kalam Island. The missile, which uses a three-stage solid fuelled engine, is capable of striking targets at ranges up to 5,000 kilometres with a very high degree of accuracy," said the Defence Ministry in a statement.

The successful test of Agni-5 is in line with India's stated policy to have 'credible minimum deterrence' that underpins the commitment to 'No First Use.'

The Agni-V has been developed by the DRDO and Bharat Dynamics Ltd and weighs close to 50,000 kg.

## China abruptly restricts use of BeiDou along borders with India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has abruptly restricted the use of its navigation system, BeiDou along borders with India fearing their movement might be tracked. Sources said the change in Chinese stance happened the moment India increased its surveillance mechanism along the Line of Actual Control. China, lately, has been making attempts of transgression in Indian territory. Taking note of all these, the India Army enhanced surveillance both close to the LAC as well as in the depth areas by synergizing efforts of all surveillance equipment right from the strategic level till the tactical level where soldiers actually deployed.



As surveillance increased, Intelligence agencies stated, a decrease in activation of BeiDou terminals all along the Northern Borders in the last one month was observed.

Sources said that PLA is now using it only to send confirmations that they have reached their desired locations. "It may be a deliberate attempt by the PLA to hide its important activities or preparations across Northern Borders," the source said.

The system was launched on June 23, 2020 finally ending a project that went on for two decades. BDS, stated to be rivaling US' GPS, is the fourth global satellite navigation system in the world. Other systems are Russia's GLONASS and the European Union's Galileo.

India too is developing its own navigational system called the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), with an operational name of NAVIC.

China wants to end the US-based GPS hegemony and push for its own developed navigation system first in the Asian region. To do so, China has established a monitoring station at its Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) for monitoring and assessing the BeiDou Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS).

Now China is pushing the use of BeiDou in many countries as part of their ambitious Belt and Road Initiative.

Currently, BeiDou covers nearly 30 countries including Pakistan, Egypt and Indonesia.

## INDIA EXTENDS BAN ON INT'L COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS TILL NOV 30

*In the notification, the Directorate General of Central Aviation (DGCA), however, said: "This restriction shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by the DGCA."*

**New Delhi:** To deal with the ongoing Covid pandemic, India's civil aviation regulator on Friday extended the ban on scheduled international commercial flights till November 30. In the notification, the Directorate General of Central Aviation (DGCA), however, said: "This restriction shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by the DGCA."

It also said that scheduled international flights might be allowed on selected routes on a case to case basis.

The Central government had banned the operation of international flights on March 23 last year to contain and control the spread of Covid-19. Flight restrictions, however, were later eased under air bubble arrangement with certain countries. At present, India has formed air bubble pacts with about 28 countries.

The country had been operating Vande Bharat flights to many countries over the last one year to evacuate stranded Indians.

## Tripura HC seeks report on communal incidents, Assam alerts authorities

Agartala/Guwahati | Agencies

The Tripura High Court on Friday directed the state government to file a detailed report by November 10 on the incidents, if any, involving the religious minorities while the Assam government has sounded an alert and asked the district officials to closely monitor the situation in view of the attacks on minorities in Bangladesh. Hearing a suo-moto Public Interest Litigation, the High Court division bench comprising Chief Justice Indrajit Mahanty and Justice Subhashish Talapatra, directed the Tripura government to give a detailed report on the incidents, if any, and the action taken against the social media posts and fake messages.

A court official said that Tripura Advocate General Siddhartha Shankar Dey told the court that adequate security arrangements were made in the religious places especially those belonging to the minorities and cases registered against the fake social media posts.

Police said that there have been some stray incidents in Tripura since last week after the communal violence in Bangladesh. According to police, some "unidentified people" burnt three shops belonging to



the minorities, forcing the north Tripura district authorities to promulgate prohibitory orders under section 144 of the CrPC in Panisagar and Dharmanagar subdivisions on Tuesday as a precautionary measure. Other steps, including providing permanent and mobile patrolling security to the religious places were also taken in and around 150 mixed population places and religious institutions," a police official told IANS on condition of anonymity.

Inspector General of Police (Law and Order), Saurabh Tripathi said that anti-national and mischievous elements on Twitter and Facebook are spreading fake news and rumours. The videos and photos that are being uploaded have no connection with the Panisagar incident. No fire incident took

place at any mosque, said the IGP, adding that cases were registered against rumour mongers.

The opposition CPI-M, Congress and the Trinamool Congress accused the ruling BJP of supporting right-wing organisations to gain political mileage in the civic polls to be held on November 25 and the Assembly elections in 2023. The BJP, however, rubbished the allegations levelled by the opposition parties.

In Guwahati, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the state government has alerted all the Deputy Commissioners and the Superintendents of Police of 34 districts and asked them to undertake additional surveillance in the backdrop of the communal violence in Bangladesh.

## BLACKLIST COLLEGES WHERE KASHMIRI STUDENTS ARE HARASSED: J&K STUDENTS' BODY

**Srinagar:** Jammu and Kashmir students association said on Friday that it has prepared a list of colleges in the country in which Kashmiri students are unnecessarily harassed. Nasir Khuehami, spokesman of the students association told IANS, "We have prepared a list of colleges outside J&K where Kashmiri students are unnecessarily intimidated, harassed and subjected to mental and physical torture whenever there is a political or sports event nationally or internationally. We have demanded that these colleges be blacklisted. The students who go to other states of the country do so for serious studies and not just to pass time there. They have nothing to do with politics. Those trying to give political or religious colour to the local students studying in colleges outside J&K are vested interests who are damaging the fabric of our country." He also said, "We are coordinating with the state governments in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Karnataka and Uttarakhand where Kashmiri students are studying presently. We have prepared full list of such Colleges and will forward it to the government to blacklist all those colleges who spread bigotry, hate & harassed Kashmiri Students unnecessarily and fail to give them protection & ensure their Safety", the association said on his Twitter handle.

## Delhi HC asks Twitter to remove objectionable content related to Hindu Goddess

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Friday told Twitter to respect the people's sentiments as it is doing business for the public at large while directing the microblogging site to remove certain objectionable material related to a Hindu Goddess from its platform.

Division Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh was hearing a plea seeking to delete objectionable tweets and content with regard to Hindu Gods and Goddesses. "You are doing business for the public at large, their sentiments shall be given due importance," the court said, suggesting the tech giant remove the content as it did to an objectionable tweet by



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. Further hearing in the matter is listed for November 30. The court was hearing a petition filed by lawyer Aditya Singh Deshwal against highly objectionable posts about Hindu Goddess Maa Kali put by a Twitter user @AtheistRepublic. The petition filed through advocates Ashok Kashyap,

Ridhima Gaur and Deepa Malik, said, "the said objectionable posts have shaken the collective conscience of the followers and practitioners of Hinduism."

In order to expose the identity of culprits behind these objectionable posts, the plea sought direction to preserve all the electronic evidence associated with the

Twitter user @AtheistRepublic and @cfvictoriabc. It also sought directions to Delhi Police to take cognisance of the complaint made by the petitioner with immediate effect. The plea contended that Twitter user @AtheistRepublic has put filthy and degrading content about every religion.

The petitioner has sought direction to the Centre, being the appropriate government under Information Technology Act, 2000, to issue directions to Respondent Twitter Communication India Private Limited and Twitter Inc to immediately remove the objectionable content posted by Twitter user @AtheistRepublic and permanently suspend his Twitter account.

## Will not tolerate injustice to farmers: Varun Gandhi

**Pilibhit:** BJP MP Varun Gandhi has once again made it clear that he will not tolerate any injustice done to farmers.

Varun has posted his video interacting with some officials and farmers. He can be heard warning the officials that if there is any corruption or irregularity in paddy procurement, he will not approach the government but will go to court directly. He said that he will depute one representative at every procurement centre who will record the proceedings. "At every procurement centre in the state, there is crippling corruption which is completely out in the open. Farmers' grains are forcibly rejected after which they sell their produce out of desperation to middlemen. The administration takes a cut," he said. He alleged that the nexus between officials and middlemen is forcing farmers to sell their grains at a much lower price. He said that farmers will continue to be exploited in mandis as long as there is no legal guarantee for MSP. Varun Gandhi has been continuously supporting the farmers and their issues and has reportedly incurred the wrath of his party.





## DELHI POLICE REMOVING BARRICADES AT TIKRI, GHAZIPUR BORDERS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a big relief to commuters, the Delhi Police have started removing barricades along the Tikri and Ghazipur borders, 11 months after these were installed to stop the farmers from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh entering the national capital.

After starting the action at the Tikri border on Thursday, the police reached the Ghazipur border on Friday morning to remove the barricades there also. Besides, Delhi Police personnel were seen removing the concrete wall and sharp nails, which were part of the barricading. Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) Uttar Pradesh unit president Rajveer Singh Jadaun told IANS: "We have not closed any road, Delhi Police have put up barricades and are now removing them." "As soon as the road is cleared, we will leave for the national capital as going there is our first right," he said. The Supreme Court, in its recent order, said that farmers have



the right to protest against the Centre's farm laws, but they cannot block roads indefinitely. After the Apex Court's remarks, the farmers had started clearing a part of the road at the Ghazipur border on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway. On Thursday, while speaking to IANS, a senior Delhi Police official said: "There is no traffic

movement at Tikri border as it is still closed. We have just removed a few obstacles, the rest are still there." Delhi Police removed the concrete and cement barricades with the help of JCB machines.

It is expected that in the next two to three days, barricades will be totally removed and roads will be cleared for traffic. Recently, the Haryana

government officials inspected the border and reviewed whether the roads were closed by the Delhi Police or protesters.

Thousands of farmers have been protesting at the Delhi borders for the past 11 months demanding the repeal of the three agricultural farm laws, which they dub as "black laws".

### 'WITH WHAT AUTHORITY?': RAJ HC QUESTIONS GOVT ON INTERNET BAN

Jaipur: The Rajasthan High Court on Friday questioned the state government on whether field officials can ban internet during competitive exams. It sought a response from the government on the powers of the Divisional Commissioners to issue orders for internet suspension for examinations. A division bench of Justice MM Srivastava and Justice Farzand Ali, while hearing the petitions challenging the net ban, asked the government on what authority had the Divisional Commissioner issued orders for suspending internet, as in the rules, this power is with the Home Secretary. Advocate General MS Singhvi, appearing on behalf of the state government, sought time from the court for a reply and the court posted the matter for November 23. Advocate Neeraj Yadav and others have challenged the orders of the Divisional Commissioners to close the net due to competitive examinations. In their petitions, they said that under the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services Public Emergency and Public Safety Rules 2017, internet ban can be done in view of emergency and public safety whereas examinations are a continuous process that are held throughout the year and hence, do not fall in both the categories. Earlier, in the Anuradha Bhasin vs Union of India case, the Supreme Court has said that the internet cannot be suspended unnecessarily, said the petitioner's advocate Yarth Gupta adding that the apex court agreed that suspending internet services is a violation of Article 19(1)(a) and (g) of the Constitution and is completely unconstitutional.

### Delhi's top cop on removing barricades at protest sites

## Our priority is to restore traffic: Delhi Police

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Special Commissioner of Police, Law and Order, Dependra Pathak, on Friday reached Ghazipur border and inspected the removal of barricades for restoration of traffic.

During the visit, he said: "This is an initiative of Delhi Police and we want to restore traffic on the highway. We are in touch with the protesters."

Responding to whether the protesting farmers will be asked to leave, Pathak said: "The issue will be resolved through deliberations."

Reacting to farmers' claim to proceed towards the national capital once the traffic is restored, the Special Commissioner of Police said:

"Whenever such a situation arises, we will deal with it in a professional manner."

Delhi Police are removing the concrete and cement barricades with the help of JCB machines.

On Thursday, the Delhi Police started removing barricades along the Tikri border (Delhi-Haryana).

The removal of barricades will facilitate commuters of Ghaziabad, Noida and Delhi. Due to closure of the high-



way, commuters were forced to travel for longer hours.

In view of the new situation, the number of police personnel have been increased at the points where the farmers have been sitting in protest for the past 11 months.

Thousands of farmers have been protesting at the Delhi borders demanding the repeal of the three agricultural farm laws, which they dub as "black laws". The Supreme Court, in its recent order, had said that farmers have the right to protest against the Centre's farm laws, but they cannot block roads indefinitely.

## Priyanka Gandhi meets family of dead farmer in Lalitpur

LALITPUR | Agencies

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday met the family of a farmer who died allegedly due to distress over the non-availability of fertilizer.

Fifty-five-year-old Bhogilal Pal of Nayagaon died of a cardiac arrest while standing in queue outside a fertilizer shop. He had reportedly been waiting for his turn to purchase fertilizer for two days.

Priyanka Gandhi visited Pal's home and interacted with the family members.

The Congress General Secretary spent around 40 minutes and assured the family that she would not



only raise the issue at appropriate forum but would also help in whichever way she could. She also met other farmers who told her about their problems. They said that they were facing a debt burden too. The Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh has been facing an acute fertilizer crisis in recent weeks.

The shortage turning deadly after desperate farm-

ers died while trying to get their hands on bags of fertilizers. Earlier while leaving for Lalitpur, Priyanka Gandhi interacted with railway porters at the Lucknow railway station. The porters appraised her of the challenges they are facing and the economic blow they suffered due to the state government's negligence during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Firecrackers ban in Delhi: Plea in HC seeks urgent hearing

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A plea was filed in the Delhi High Court on Friday seeking an urgent hearing against Delhi government's decision to completely ban the sale and use of firecrackers in the national capital ahead of Diwali.

Advocate Gautam Jha mentioned the matter before the Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and sought an urgent hearing in the matter as Diwali is approaching.

On Thursday, the matter got adjourned for December 13, as the main counsel was not present at the time. "We are not allowing or declining. Give the detail of the case number, we will see later in the day," the Chief Justice said.

Earlier, the court took note of the submission of the respondent that the related matter is already examined by the Supreme Court. In their plea, Rahul Sawariya and Tanveer through Advocates Gautam Jha, Pankaj Kumar



and Shweta Jha also sought direction from the respondent to consider Graded Regulations instead of a complete ban on firecrackers during the festival of Diwali.

"The decision to ban all forms of firecrackers prior to about 1.5 months of Diwali is arbitrary and unreasonable," the petition contended. It claimed that the decision to ban

the use of firecrackers one and a half months prior to Diwali is also excessive. "The action of the Respondent must be no more intrusive than is necessary to meet an important public purpose. No doubt Article 25 of the Constitution is subject to Article 21 and it is not contested by the petitioner, however, it is submitted by the petitioner that the extent of the interference of the Respondent by its decision/order is not proportionate to the ultimate aim and objective that is to curb the pollution in the NCT of Delhi," read the petition.

According to the petition, the National Clean Air Programme, under the Ministry of Environment and Forest and Climate Change, presented a report on the issue of air pollution, and the findings and data presented in the report will be relied upon by the petitioner to demonstrate that bursting of firecrackers is not among the 'major' source of pollution in Delhi and NCR.

## Several detained in Gurugram for protesting against 'namaz'

GURUGRAM | Agencies

The Gurugram police detained several members of Hindu outfits for disrupting Muslims offering 'namaz' (prayers) from the Sector-12 area in Gurugram on Friday.

The protesters were shouting slogans of 'Jai Shree Ram' and carrying pamphlets against 'namaz'.

Around 500 police personnel were deployed at five spots where Muslims offer 'namaz' in the city on Friday as a precautionary measure following threats of disruption by right wing Hindu groups if prayers are offered in the open.

The five designated prayer sites include DLF Phase-3, Sector 12A, Sector 14, Sector 56 and Sector 47.

In 2018, the district administration designated 37 sites in the city for Muslims to offer Friday prayers following which there were protests by Hindu groups.

This was the fourth consecutive week when Hindu outfits again started staging protests against Friday



prayers.

Earlier, the group had disrupted one of the sites in Sector 47.

Residents and locals had joined the protest, chanting Hindu prayers at the time of 'namaz' on consecutive Fridays over the past two weeks.

Apart from this, on October 26, Hindu groups, under the banner of Sanyukt Hindu Sangharsh Samiti, submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner Gurugram stating that they would not tolerate Friday prayers in the open.

However, officials claimed that they are prepared to tackle any issue and no one will be allowed to disturb the law and order situation across the district.

A senior police official said that they have deployed several police personnel to maintain law and order at all sensitive spots.

"We have elaborate security arrangements and a senior police officer will patrol sensitive areas who will ensure safety and security of people offering 'namaz'," he said.

Haji Shehzad Khan, chairman of the Muslim Ekta Manch, said, "We are following all necessary directions given by the local administration. We don't want to disturb the law and order situation, but if they (Hindu groups) target us, we will not sit silent." A furniture shop owner Mehmoond Khan filed a written complaint in Sector 14 police station that on last Friday, residents and some other people staged a protest against 'namaz' in an open area.

## Delhi HC to hear plea related to PM CARES Fund

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Friday agreed to hear plea related to the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES Fund) on November 18.

The matter was earlier scheduled for November 30.

A bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh allowed early hearing of the petitions filed by Samyak Gangwal, who sought to declare the PM CARES Fund a "State" under the Constitution and to restrain it from using Prime Minister of India or Prime Minister including its abbreviations in its name, and on its website.

The petitioner also sought to prevent the PM CARES Fund from using the State

Emblem of India on its website, Trust Deed other official/unofficial communications and advertisements.

In response to the petition, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) submitted before the court that the PM CARES Fund comprises of voluntary donations made by individuals and institutions and is not a part of business or function of the central government in any manner. Furthermore, it is not a part of any government scheme or business of the central government and being a public trust, it is also not subject to audit of Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

According to the Centre's submissions, PM CARES Fund is not a "public authority" under the ambit of Section 2(h) of the RTI Act, further clarifying that no government

money is credited in the PM CARES Fund and only unconditional and voluntary contributions are accepted under PM CARES Fund." It reiterated that the Trust's fund is not a fund of the Government of India and the amount does not go in the Consolidated Fund of India," said an affidavit filed by the PMO. The affidavit added that to ensure transparency, the audited report is put on the official website of the Trust along with the details of utilisation of funds received by the Trust. The Centre further said that the Trust functions on the principles of transparency and public good in larger public interest like any other charitable trust and, therefore, cannot have any objection in uploading all its resolutions on its website to ensure transparency.

## PM Modi redefined India's attitude against terrorism: Rajnath Singh

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has redefined and redesigned India's attitude against terrorism.

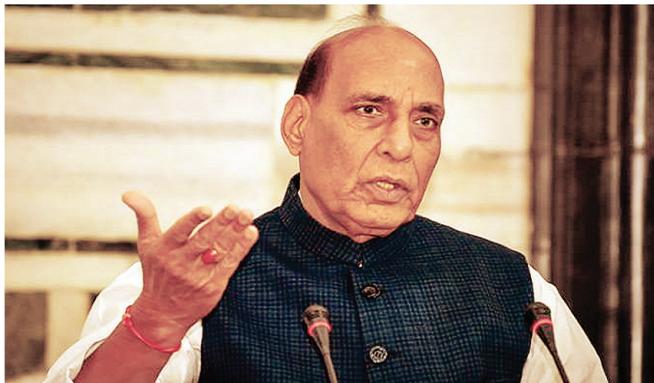
India today is a powerful country respected by strong nations and India has never encroached on a single inch of land of another country's territory nor attacked any country, he said at the valedictory session of National Conference on 'Delivering Democracy: Reviewing Two Decades of Narendra Modi as Head of Government' organised by Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini at India International Centre.

About India's fight against terrorism, Rajnath Singh said: "Prime Minister Modi has redesigned and redefined India's attitude against terrorism... while previous governments took a soft stand towards terror acts. We never discuss cricket matches with Pakistan. Action will be taken either inside or across the border as per the requirements. We did surgical strikes and airstrikes. Prime Minister Modi delivered what he promised. There is a major paradigm shift in internal and border security because of

his decision making powers."

Referring to the Pokhran nuclear test during the Atal Bihar Vajpayee government, Singh said: "In 1960, the Jana Sangh had passed a resolution for conducting a nuclear test and Atal ji did it. Yesterday, India successfully tested Agni-V, it is not to scare anyone. Only a powerful country is respected by strong nations and India has never encroached on a single inch of land in anyone's territory nor attacked any country. We believe in Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family)," he said.

About Prime Minister's 'Aatmnirbhar Bharat', he said: "Earlier India was the biggest importer of defence equipment in the world.



Today, we are among the top 25 exporters of defence equipment in the world. In the next few years, we will soon achieve the target of Rs 3,500 crore defence export. It all happened because of PM Narendra Modi."

Citing the abrogation of Article 370, he said,

accepted this crisis of credibility as a challenge and overcame it.

"You might have felt that in independent India, the biggest challenge before politics and politicians has been a crisis of credibility. Due to the difference between words and deeds of

"People used to ask when it will be abrogated or will it remain only in our manifesto? Once I discussed the issue with him (Modi), I realised that the government is moving in the right direction. Many people claimed that it would be impossible to do and Kashmir would burn, however, the Modi government proved everyone wrong."

Rajnath Singh claimed that Prime Minister Modi is the only leader after Mahatma Gandhi with a deep understanding of Indian society and its psychology as both have spiritual backgrounds.

Calling the crisis of credibility in politics and politicians, the Defence Minister said that he

politicians, people's trust in them lessened gradually but Modi showed that there is no difference between his words and deeds. And established his credibility among people," he said. "He is a case study of effective leadership and governance. The life and work done by Prime Minister Modi should be taught as a case study in management schools," he said.

Singh requested people to do unbiased analysis of Prime Minister Modi's work and said, "His only agenda is nation building and lok Kalyan (public welfare). No one can question the intention and integrity of Prime Minister Modi. He is 24 carat gold and in his long political career as head of government for 20 years he has not faced a single allegation of corruption."

"Changing the old perception that politicians should not stand with industrialists, Prime Minister Modi took bold initiatives to back them as industry leaders in nation building. He organised 'Vibrant Gujarat' when other Chief Ministers including me had not imagined about it. In the last seven and a half years, India's ranking has improved in ease of doing business," he said.



FARMER ENDS LIFE AS HE COULD NOT BUY FERTILISER FOR CROP

Yadav's family told the police that he has been waiting to procure fertiliser for the last several days and fed up with unending wait, he (Yadav) consumed poison in the morning, a police official said.

Team Absolute | Bhopal A 45-year-old farmer allegedly committed suicide on Friday as he could not purchase fertiliser for his crop in Ashok Nagar, which is hit by DAP paucity. The farmer consumed poison in Ashok Nagar district after failing to procure Diammonium Phosphate (DAP) fertiliser for his crop. Yadav's family told the police that he has been waiting to procure fertiliser for the last several days and fed up with unending wait, he (Yadav) consumed poison in the morning, a police official

said. Madhya Pradesh is facing an acute crisis of DAP fertiliser with all the 3,400 cooperative societies across the state running out of stock. In fact, farmers in several districts in the state have launched protest and blocked roads in Bind, Morena, Ashok Nagar, Satna, among others. Farmers in several districts have been standing in long queues outside cooperative societies waiting to procure fertilisers. The opposition Congress has attacked the Shivraj

Singh Chauhan government alleging that the Chief Minister was busy in election campaign for the upcoming Assembly polls, while the farmers in the state need fertiliser. Responding to the Congress' allegation, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan on Thursday said that the crisis of fertiliser would soon be over. "DAP is brought from outside the country and the crisis occurred due to delay in its procurement. Farmers will be provided the fertiliser soon," Singh had said.

Centre assured to provide fertiliser to MP soon: Shivraj

"Today, I have directed official to set up a monitoring committee which will assure that fertilisers are being provided to all districts in the state. Also, those found involved in black marketing of fertilisers will be booked under National Security Act (NSA)," Chouhan said after meeting with couple of Cabinet ministers and officials.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday said adequate stock of fertilisers will be available for farmers in the state by October 30. The Chief Minister said that the Centre has assured that the state will be provided adequate stock of fertilisers. Chouhan said that he has spoken to Union Minister of Chemical and Fertilisers, Mansukh Mandaviya on this issue. "I am in constant touch



with Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and he has assured that adequate stock of fertilisers will be provided to Madhya Pradesh by October 30," Chouhan said. Chouhan has said that farmers should rest assured, we are doing our level best to make arrangements of fertilizers and we are also getting full cooperation of the Government of India in this. No need to worry, just be patient this is my request. Yesterday, I had informed the farmers that by October 31, 31 rakes would be

delivered in the state. Now instead of 31, 32 rakes are coming in the state. I am in constant touch with the Government of India. There has been an acute shortage of fertilisers in Madhya Pradesh and farmers have started protesting against it. The Chief Minister also chaired an emergency meeting regarding the matter and has directed to set up a monitoring committee to look after alleged black marketing of fertilisers in the state. "Today, I have directed official to

set up a monitoring committee which will assure that fertilisers are being provided to all districts in the state. Also, those found involved in black marketing of fertilisers will be booked under National Security Act (NSA)," Chouhan said after meeting with couple of Cabinet ministers and officials. Chouhan said that the supply of fertilizers and equitable distribution of fertilizers in the districts should be continuously monitored by a control room. Those who are buying more fertilizers than necessary, should be kept under watch. Collectors should make people aware about the supply of fertilizers and the arrangements being made by the state government at their level. Earlier in the day, a 45-year-old farmer died after consuming poison in Ashok Nagar district allegedly after failing to purchase fertiliser. Also, the opposition Congress has found an opportunity to attack on the Shivraj government accusing it of failing to provide fertilisers to the farmers. "I would request farmers in Madhya Pradesh to have patience for one or two days more. They all will be provided adequate quantity of fertilisers," Chouhan added.

Sambal Yojana is very humane: CM

The aim of the scheme is that life of families remains easy in every situation and livelihood continues. The scheme assures that the government stands with you in every crisis. CM Chouhan transfers Rs 170 crores to 7 thousand 700 Sambal beneficiaries with a single click. There is a ray of hope for those living in inhuman conditions.



and their livelihood keeps running. This scheme gives the assurance that the government stands with the beneficiaries at all times. Under the Sambal Yojana, an amount of Rs 170 crore ex-gratia was transferred to the accounts of Sambal beneficiaries through a single click in 7 thousand 700 cases by Chief Minister Chouhan. Chief Minister said that if the beneficiary dies in an accident, the state government will give an assistance of Rs 4 lakh to the family. There is a provision to give an amount of Rs

2 lakh in case of normal death. Under the scheme, there is a provision of providing assistance of Rs. 5 thousand for performing last rites. Today, an amount of Rs two lakh each has been deposited in the accounts of 06 thousand 900 beneficiaries on normal deaths. In 800 cases of death due to unfortunate accident, an amount of Rs 4 lakh per person has been released. This amount will help people to run their family properly. Chouhan said that those who are no more cannot be brought back, but the state government can provide sup-

port to those who have become destitute after their departure. This assistance has been issued with the same spirit. Chouhan said that many families live in small houses in rural areas. It is difficult to live in small houses as it does not accommodate many people. Therefore, arrangements will be made for independent plots in rural areas of the state, for every such family, who do not have a place to live. Instructions have been issued for the Mukhya Mantri Awasiya Bhu-Adhikar Yojana. It is a ray of hope for those who are forced to live in inhuman conditions due to lack of space. This scheme will fulfill the dream of the people to own a piece of land where they can reside with their families. Chouhan said that so far an amount of Rs 1306 crore 86 lakh has been released in 01 lakh 53 thousand 935 cases under Sambal Yojana. Mukhyamantri Jan-Kalyan Sambal Yojana has been started from April 1, 2018. There is also a provision to provide assistance of Rs one lakh on partial permanent disability and Rs two lakh on permanent disability to the Sambal beneficiary and his family members in the scheme.

Patel interacted with Raj Bhavan security staff Security is an important and challenging responsibility: Governor Insensitive life is purposeless: Patel

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that life without feelings is meaningless. Man has been bestowed with special powers by nature. He has been given wisdom so that he can act by understanding what is right and wrong. He said that strict action should be taken against the criminal elements, besides sensitive and sympathetic treatment towards the innocent and the victim is also essential. Patel was interacting with the police and security forces personnel deployed in Raj Bhavan security at the Golden Jubilee Auditorium of Raj Bhavan on Friday. Principal Secretary to Governor DP Ahuja was also present. Patel said that security is an important and challenging responsibility. For this, it is necessary to have high level of technical, professional knowledge as well as physical and mental alertness. Appreciating the efforts being made by the security force of Raj Bhavan, he said that events should be organised to share with colleagues the experiences of security work. This improves the quality of work even more. He also asked for the contin-



uation of regular yoga, sports, entertainment activities and mutual dialogue activities. He assured cooperation in meeting the needs and requirements of the security forces. The Governor also extended Diwali greetings in advance. In the dialogue, personal security officer constable Dharmaraj Pandey and 35th Battalion Armed Force sub-inspector Santosh expressed their views. The welcome address was given by Agam Jain, assistant to the Governor. The vote of thanks was given by security officer Inderjit Singh Chavda. Officers of Raj Bhavan, Security Corps and personnel of 35th Battalion Armed Force, Gwalior were present in the program.

MP HC asks Centre to submit compliance report on Bhopal gas tragedy

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has directed the Centre to submit a point-wise compliance report on the recommendations of the monitoring committee in the Bhopal Gas Tragedy case. A division bench headed by newly appointed Chief Justice Ravi Vijay Kumar Malimath and Justice Vijay Kumar Shukla, has asked the government to submit detailed action taken reports in the matter by November 30. The Court's direction came after the Centre recently submitted a report to the court, however, the Court was not satisfied with the report. Advocate representing the monitoring committee told IANS that it has recommended the Centre and State government to appoint doctors and other medical staff and



also to provide some medical equipment for treatments of the gas tragedy survivors. "Among the several recommendations in the matter, one was to provide doctors and other medical staff for treatment of survivors. Centre has submitted that it has sanctioned to appoint doctors but it was not a complete report and therefore, the Court has asked the Centre to submit a point-wise compliances in the case," said an advocate represent-

ing the monitoring committee. It was the first time Chief Justice Ravi Vinay Kumar Malimath was hearing the Bhopal Gas Tragedy case after taking charge last week. Earlier in 2012, Bhopal Gas Peeth Mahila Udyog Sangthan along with others had filed a petition in the Supreme Court following which the apex Court had then issued 20 directions regarding the treatment and rehabilitation of Bhopal Gas victims.

Kins of election officers who die on duty due to Covid in MP reach HC

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Around six months are over since the by-poll in Damoh Assembly constituency were conducted, but trouble of the relatives of government employees, who died on duty due to Covid-19 is yet to come to an end. On Friday, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed before Madhya High Court alleging that over 100 government employees serving in elections duty were died due to Covid infection but they have not received any kind of financial aid from the government. The petition was filed on behalf of Jaya Thakur and the families of government employees, claiming that about 100 on duty government employees died of Covid, of which 66 were teachers. The petitioners alleged that the state government did not provide them financial assistance despite their beloved died due to Covid during the election duty and have sought the Court's intervention in the matter. The Court accepted the plea and scheduled the hearing on November 18. "All the facts mentioned in PIL are based on the reports by the district education and health departments. Despite the fact that around 100 government employees died of Covid during the election duty, their families were not compensated. That's why we all have appealed to the High Court to intervene in the matter," said Dr Jaya Thakur, one of the petitioner in the



case. The by-poll in Damoh Assembly constituency was held in April this year when the second wave of Covid pandemic was at its peak. The by-election was conducted because the then Damoh MLA (Congress) Rahul Lodhi had resigned from his post to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). However, the Congress had won by-elections by a margin of 14,537 votes against the BJP candidate. The controversy in the matter was first erupted in May after Damoh District administration had received 24 applications demanding compensation, claiming their beloved died of Covid during the election duty.

National Unity Day will be celebrated on October 31

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will administer the oath of national unity at Shaurya Smarak National Unity Day will be celebrated on October 31 in the state. In the state-level programme, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will administer the oath of national unity to everyone at Shaurya Smarak at 10 am. According to the schedule, Chief Minister Chouhan will first pay homage to the martyrs after reaching the Shaurya Smarak at 10 am and will offer flowers on the statue of Bharat Mata. After this, the Chief Minister will welcome the motorcycle rally. Chouhan will administer the oath of national unity to all those present in the open air theatre. The programme will conclude with the playing of the National Anthem by the Police Band. A motor cycle rally will be taken out from police station Talaiya to Moti Masjid intersection at 5 pm on National Unity Day. The rally will be accompanied by a march past by the police force.

CM WILL HOLD TRIBAL PRIDE DIALOGUE IN TRIBAL MUSEUM

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will hold tribal pride dialogue on October 30 at 10 am at Tribal Museum, Bhopal. Eminent personalities, artists and representatives of various organisations will participate in the programme. On the occasion of Amrit Mahotsav of Independence, a presentation of dance and music performance will be given, showcasing the tribal culture. There will also be a detailed discussion on tribal social leadership, social struggle, achievement and future action plan. The programme will be telecast live on DD MP, cmevents.mp.gov.in and social media. CM Chouhan's address on 7 crore vaccination Chief Minister Chouhan will address on Saturday at 12 noon from NHM office, Bhopal, on the administration of 7 crore vaccine doses in corona vaccination in the state. It is noteworthy that on October 29, the figure of corona vaccination in Madhya Pradesh has crossed 7 crores. The programme will be telecast on various platforms of webcast and social media.

Special campaign for Corona vaccination will start from November 15

STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO 100 PC VACCINATION BY DECEMBER 31 AWARENESS CAMPAIGN WILL BE LAUNCHED FOR VACCINATION SCHOOL CHILDREN WILL MOTIVATE PARENTS FOR VACCINATION CALL CENTERS TO MONITOR PEOPLE WHO ARE CARELESS IN GETTING SECOND DOSE OF VACCINE CM CHOUHAN INSTRUCTS TO CONTINUE INTENSIVE CORONA TESTING PROCESS



December 31 in the entire state. Chouhan said that special arrangements for Corona testing and vaccination should be ensured in the upcoming events in the state. Chief Minister Chouhan was reviewing the situation of Corona in the state. Home Minister Narottam Mishra, Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Additional Chief Secretary Health Mohammad Suleman and other officers were present in the meeting organized at his residence. Chouhan said that Corona is under control in the state, yet there is need for constant awareness.

A special campaign will be run by the state government on awareness for Corona appropriate behaviour and vaccination. Vaccination is necessary to save the lives of the people of the state. Intensive campaign will be conducted to make people aware. School and college children will also be involved in the campaign so that parents can be motivated too for vaccination. Instructions have been given to call those who have not got the second dose, from the call centre. Chief Minister instructed that the process of testing should continue. Intensive testing should

be continued in districts like Bhopal, Indore, where cases of Corona are relatively frequent. It was informed that 58 thousand RTPCR tests are being conducted daily in the state. There are only 09 Corona cases in the state today. The total above 18 population in the state is 05 crore 49 lakh 50 thousand, out of which 04 crore 98 lakh 50 thousand have got the first dose and 02 crore people have got the second dose. In this way 91 percent of the first dose and 36 percent of the eligible population have got the second dose. Three districts of the state namely Bhopal, Indore and Agar have registered 100 percent vaccinations of first dose. In Chhindwara, 97 percent and in Umaria 95 percent of the first dose vaccination has been done. The percentage is between 90 and 95 percent in 23 districts. In 17 districts it is between 85 to 90 percent and in Dewas, Alirajpur, Panna, Khargone, Sidhi and Bind the percentage of first dose vaccination is between 80 and 85 percent. In the second dose, 59 percent population in Bhopal and Indore. In Bhopal, 70 percent and in Indore 50 percent of the eligible population are such, who have got the first dose but their second dose of vaccine is still pending.



EDITOR'S SPECS

**Amit Shah's first visit to J&K since abrogation of Article 370 pointed to persisting disconnect**

On his first visit to Jammu & Kashmir after the abolition of the state's special status and its bifurcation into two Union territories, Union Home Minister Amit Shah packed in several "outreach" events. But these events, and the visit, on the whole, have raised more questions about the government's long-term plan for the former state. Throughout the three days, it was the extent of a seeming disconnect that was on show. "I have come here to forge a friendship with the youth of Kashmir. Join hands with Modiji and the government of India and become partners in the journey to take Kashmir forward," said Shah. But friendship can hardly be forged or forced in a climate where the state wields repressive laws and mass arrests, and takes away the people's right to the internet. Shah asked those whose "partnership" he sought to swallow the deprivations and the heavyhanded exercise of state power as "bitter pills" that had saved lives. But the slapping of cases under the draconian UAPA on students in a medical college for allegedly waving Pakistan flags after its cricket victory is yet another example of a response from the ruling establishment that is only likely to deepen the cynicism on the ground.

The several security reviews that Shah presided over during the visit were testimony to the challenges in Kashmir, belying his and other ministers' assertions that "terrorism ended" on August 5, 2019. Stone-pelting may have disappeared and there may be fewer "encounters" now, but militants continue to be recruited, and have changed their methods. The civilian killings in the Valley this month by pistol-wielding "hybrid" militants and the long stand by militants in the border district of Poonch in Jammu are indicators that can be ignored only at the nation's peril.

# NAGA PEACE TALKS, EX-BABUS AND ROADBLOCK

To state that the Naga peace talks have hit a roadblock over the issue of Naga flag and a separate constitution is actually a half truth. If these twin issues today can derail the basic peace process that began in 1997, it may not be erroneous to suggest that the peace negotiations never took place all these years. The peace talks were kicked off during the tenure of I.K. Gujral as the Prime Minister. The United Front-II under Gujral, a suave former foreign minister himself, in the backdrop of U.F-1 under HD Deve Gowda, was on a weak turf. But the most precious episode of 'peace efforts' with ultras took place during this regime heralding much optimism among various stakeholders. Most important players were aware of the various complexities in Naga peace parleys as this was unlike the Mizo talks in the mid-1980s.

The Vajpayee government, which soon succeeded the Gujral regime, appointed Swaraj Kaushal as peace interlocutor in 1998. Kaushal, husband of the late BJP leader Sushma Swaraj, had handled the Mizo talks and was also Mizoram Governor later. The NSCN(IM) had issues with Kaushal and initially, it said the peace interlocutor was trying to resolve the Naga issue using 'Mizoram prism'. Well, things became difficult for Swaraj Kaushal and despite Sushma being a blue-eyed girl of both Atal Bihari Vajpayee and I.K. Advani, Kaushal gave up the assignment. Since then, the Government of India under Vajpayee, Manmohan Singh and now Prime Minister Narendra Modi has banked on former central government officials. A retired IAS officer and former Union Home Secretary, K. Padmanabhaiah was the second negotiator. He gave indulgence to the militant groups and talks happened across the globe including a few well known South East Asian hubs. In 2000-01, the Vajpayee government had toyed with the idea of putting in former Lok Sabha Speaker, P.A. Sangma, as the peace negotiator. This was objected to by Sangma's fellow Congress colleague Tarun Gogoi, who said no active politician from the Northeast should be given such a role. Sangma was furious with both Vajpayee and Tarun Gogoi. Nothing much has happened in terms of details about the parleys since then.

The then Nagaland Chief Minister SC Jamir knew well the machinations of his Naga brethren and hence he kept insisting with Advani and others that the 'agenda' of talks should be made public. The veteran Congressman had reportedly entrusted GK Pillai, then joint secretary in the Home ministry, to pass on the requisite question and information to Advani. But Jamir's voice was ignored perhaps deliberately; and also because Jamir was a trusted Congressman. He also never enjoyed any positive vibes with NSCN(IM) general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah.

Had the agenda been 'made public' in the 1990s or even in the new millennium, we would not have had headlines screaming in October 2021 that the Naga peace talks have hit a roadblock due to twin issues of flag and constitution (Yehzabo). Even then, these twin issues were hanging fire but the babus (especially the retired club) did not brief the political leadership well and things went on. It was a virtual status quo in talks since 1997; and today it is circa 2021. Except for the issue of 'unity or bringing all contiguous Naga areas under one administrative umbrella' nothing much was perhaps discussed in a concrete manner.

After Padmanabhaiah, the Manmohan Singh government tried RS Pandey as the negotiator. A former state chief secretary and Nagaland being his state cadre, it was presumed that his approach would be different. On this front, sources say, Pandey often faced a handicap as then PM Manmohan Singh hesitated to give 'political clearance'. In between the Manmohan Singh-led UPA-2 lost popularity over corruption issues and lowly its credibility. Pandey resigned in the run-up to the 2014 general elections and suddenly appeared along with Sunil Shastri and another former babu, RK Singh one afternoon and joined the BJP. R. K. Singh, the IAS officer who arrested Advani in 1990, is now Union Power Minister. Under Modi, right from the beginning it was NSA Ajit Doval show vis-a-vis Naga talks. Rajnath Singh as Home Minister did not interfere much. R. N. Ravi, a friend of Doval, was made the new interlocutor. The NSCN (IM) never trusted Ravi but as the PMO put its

foot down, talks went on. In between Doval and Ravi -- both from Intelligence background -- worked on other fronts and other Naga groups. The Naga

National Political Group (NNPG), a conglomerate of seven Naga groups operating in Nagaland, came forward and said they were keen to ink a peace deal to ensure 'end of violence and arson' in Naga hills.

Ravi worked hard with the NSCN (IM) also and on August 3, 2015, he signed a Framework Agreement with none other than Muivah himself. The maverick Muivah had no option as his chairman Isak Chishi Swu was hospitalised in a serious condition. Subsequently, Ravi worked with the NNPG and on Nov 17, 2017, another pact titled 'Agreed Position or Preamble' was signed between the NNPG and the Government of India. The NNPG led by N. Kitovi Zhimomi is now ready to ink the peace pact. It has made it clear that they understand Prime Minister Narendra Modi's stance vis-a-vis flag and a separate constitution.

Another group led by Niki Sumi too has come forward showing keenness to embrace peace and development. In fact, in a recent statement after meeting with new interlocutor AK Mishra, it pledged to go by the "aspirations and wishes of the Naga people". But the latest salvo from the NSCN(IM) does not augur well for the

peace process. "...the talks failed to live up to all the hype as the Government of India continues to indulge in political escapism" on the very issues that are holding up the road to the Naga solution, the NSCN (IM) has said in a statement on Oct 23, 2021.

The negativity could have serious implications. Firstly, the Government of India may have to take a call to go ahead with some agreements with other groups -- NNPG and the Niki Sumi-led faction. In such a situation, there could be negative and violent fallout in more ways than one. Moreover, the NSCN(IM) has a strong presence in Manipur as the Tankhul Naga tribe (of Muivah himself) has a sizable presence in some pockets of Manipur. This Northeastern state goes to the polls along with Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Goa in February-March. The Meitei Manipuris, the

majority population in Manipur, have been always cautious that in no way the state's boundary should be affected. Violence in Naga inhabited hilly regions in Manipur would again hamper smooth conduct of elections in the state. Now, what is the future road map? Are we heading towards the doctrine of 'Promissory estoppel'? This term in jurisprudence means that the government of the day is 'stopped or can be prevented' from going back on its promises. Even the NSCN(IM) says that the Nagas do not have faith in the Government of India's promises. "The Nagas cannot be carried away by the 'post solution narrative' which is just a well laid trap," says NSCN(IM).

As someone who has been covering governance under various dispensations, I cannot vouch that New Delhi has kept all its promises either to the Nagas or to the other sections of people. But under the given circumstances, allowing one or more Naga groups to go back to the jungle will not be advisable.

The Congress party has already said that, "The Naga peace talks have suffered a serious setback due to the ham-handed approach of the Modi government". Well, not many common Nagas will disagree with this allegation, but the same Naga people also know that the Congress party lost a golden opportunity between 2004 and 2014 when they were in power.

On the other hand, as a practical solution or a road map, one can suggest that the Modi Government should prepare a draft agreement for Nagaland and Naga people; and announce all its economic packages and other policy announcements. It can perhaps also express regret if not tender an apology for all 'past mistakes' and failing to keep 'old promises' made in the 1960 Statehood agreement to the Nagas.

The 'New India' as PM Modi keeps mentioning, can give a solemn assurance that it will not commit any breach of faith. Time to create a new set of 'gentleman's promises' and time to pledge to honour those. The Naga hills are crying for peace.

## international

# BIDEN TO DISCUSS IRAN WITH EUROPEAN LEADERS IN ROME

Washington | Agencies

US President Joe Biden will discuss the Iran nuclear issue with European leaders on Saturday on the sidelines of the 16th G20 Summit in Rome, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said.

Sullivan told reporters aboard Air Force One en route to Rome that Biden will meet with the leaders of Germany, France, and the UK "to touch base on where things stand right now with respect to trying to resume negotiations for a return to the JCPOA", referring to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, reports Xinhua news agency.

The discussion will be an opportunity to coordinate on a joint negotiating position and understand Iran's



progress on its nuclear program, he said. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister and nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani

said on Wednesday that Tehran has agreed to resume negotiations over the nuclear deal before the end of November. The US and Iranian officials began indirect talks in Vienna this April to restore the 2015 nuclear agreement, but their disagreements remained significant after six rounds of negotiations, which have been interrupted due to Iran's government transition. To pressure Tehran, the Biden administration has recently reiterated the window for negotiations on a return to the JCPOA will not be open forever and warned of turning to other options if diplomacy fails. The US withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 when Donald Trump was in office, and imposed sanctions on Iran.

In response, Iran has gradually stopped implementing parts of its commitments to the deal since May 2019.

# Palestinian Prez urges Israel to start new political track

Ramallah: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has called on Israel to start a new political track based on the two-state solution, and implement the steps of trust-building between the two sides. Abbas made the remarks during a meeting with his Swiss counterpart Guy Parmelin at his office in the West Bank city of Ramallah, according to the official Palestinian news agency Wafa. "We are extending our hands to the Israelis to start implementing the steps of trust-building and then start a political track based on the principle of the two-state solution," Xinhua news agency quoted Abbas as saying. He affirmed that the Palestinian side will not resort to violence at all "because it is not the policy of the Palestinian people", adding that the Palestinian people can't keep living under the Israeli occupation forever. Meanwhile, Abbas warned that the Palestinian leadership has other options to go for in case Israel rejects to start a new political track based on the two-state solution.

# NZ to establish 'Ministry for Disabled People'

Washington | Agencies

New Zealand will establish a 'Ministry for Disabled People' in July 2022 and introduce a bill to make the country more accessible, a Minister said here on Friday.

In a statement, Minister for Disability Issues Carmel Sepuloni said the new Ministry will join up all of the supports and services available to the differently abled people and replace a fragmented system where there is no single agency responsible for driving improved overall outcomes, Xinhua news agency. The government is also accelerating efforts to make New Zealand more accessible by introducing a new accessibility framework, backed by legislation and a new Accessibility Governance Board. The Governance Board will be led by and represent disabled people and communities, Sepuloni said. "The disabled community's voices will be embedded at all levels of



decision-making, from the formation and running of the ministry, to the development of accessibility legislation," she said. The Ministry of Social Development will host the new Ministry for Disabled People, and will ensure the new addition will have access to existing shared services and knowledge to help it hit the ground running, Sepuloni said. "This is the beginning of a true partnership between the disability community and government," she added. According to local media statistics, one in four New Zealanders is differently abled.

# Facebook directed to pay \$257 per victim over personal data breach

Seoul | Agencies

The South Korean state watchdog on personal information protection on

Friday recommended the operator of Facebook to pay 300,000 won (\$256.70) in compensation to each of 181 users demanding damages for the provision of their personal information to third parties without consent. The recommendation to Meta Platforms was made by the Personal Information Protection Commission (PIPC)'s dispute mediation panel in charge of settling a dispute between the operator and Korean users of Facebook over the platform's breach of users' personal data.

The state watchdog in November concluded that Facebook passed personal data of at least 3.3 million of its total 18 million Korean users to third parties without the users' consent between May 2012 and June 2018.

The leaked data included the lists of the users' Facebook friends. The global platform giant was fined 6.7 billion won for the privacy law violations at that time, reports Yonhap news agency. In response, a group of local Facebook users collectively filed for a damage relief process with the PIPC in April, seeking financial compensation and the disclosure of information on which personal data were leaked and to whom, from the operator of Facebook. Proposing an arbitration deal, PIPC recommended Meta pay the 300,000 won in financial compensation to each of the 181 users who joined the collection action and give them access to the information they requested. The dispute mediation panel said that over 10,000 third-party app developers gained access to personal information of local Facebook users, with the users not being informed or having given consent.

# G20 leaders converge in Rome amid tight security

Rome | Agencies

The 16th G20 Summit, the first in-person gathering of leaders of the biggest economies since the onset of the pandemic early last year, will begin from Saturday in Italy's capital city amid tight security measures and with a packed agenda.

The summit will be preceded by a G20 Joint Finance and Health Ministers' meeting, which will also be hosted by Rome on Friday, reports Xinhua news agency.

According to Italy, holder of the G20 Presidency since December 1, 2020, the Summit's agenda will cover the most pressing global health and economic issues related to the coronavirus pandemic.

These would include the need for the most developed economies to boost their efforts to ensure the fair and equitable global distribution of Covid-19 vaccines, especially to low-income countries. Earlier this month, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres launched an appeal for some \$8 billion to speed up vaccination.

The plan unveiled by the World Health Organization (WHO) aims at immunizing 70 per cent of the planet's population by mid-2022.

The G20 leaders are also expected to discuss



climate change, digital transformation and sustainable innovation, along with such issues as the situation in Afghanistan, on which Italy called an extraordinary G20 meeting earlier in October. Since the G20 Summit is scheduled to take place just before the opening of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland (October 31-November 12), the leaders in Rome are expected to discuss a common strategy in coping with climate

change. The G20 countries have yet to agree on whether they should commit to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by around mid-century and also on the timing of the related decarbonization process.

Security will be tight in and around Rome's La Nuvoletta Convention Centre in the EUR district, which will host the G20 Summit. Rome's airspace has been closed from Thursday to November 1, although the city's Fiumicino and Ciampino airports will be allowed to operate.

The Italian capital's police ranks will be bolstered by 500 extra officers, and Carabinieri (military police) and special units will be deployed across the city to ensure security. Set up in 1999, the G20 serves as a main forum for international cooperation on financial and economic issues. It comprises 19 countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, India, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Turkey, the UK, the US, plus the European Union.

Together, the G20 members represent almost two-thirds of the planet's population and accounted for some 80 per cent of global gross domestic product and over 75 per cent of global trade in 2020.

# S Africa to set up vax sites near voting stations

Johannesburg: The South African government will set up vaccination sites in the vicinity of at least 1,000 voting stations to inoculate people against Covid-19 during the November 1 local government elections, Minister of Health Joe Phaahla announced on Friday. The sites will be set up outside the area demarcated strictly for voting so that they don't interfere with the voting, he said during a virtual briefing on the country's Covid-19 vaccination roll-out. "We hope that this arrangement will offer convenience in that people will have travelled from their homes and they can achieve both their vote and vaccination in one trip," Phaahla said. "We welcome the fact that political parties have no problem with this arrangement." The government will partner with the private sector to offer free rides to health workers and to award best performing teams of health workers with food vouchers, Xinhua news agency quoted the Minister as saying. Phaahla also announced a 26 million rand (\$1 million) pilot scheme to reward 260,000 people over the age of 60 who receive their first jab in November. Each of them will get a 100 rand supermarket voucher. As of Friday, total hospitalised Covid patients were 3,939, down from 6,173 on the same day last month, while new cases have fallen by 22.



# 'NO FRIDAY RELEASE': ARYAN STUCK IN JAIL AS LAWYERS STUCK IN TRAFFIC JAM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Contrary to expectations, superstar Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan is expected to spend another night in the Arthur Road Central Jail as his bail orders could not reach the prison authorities by the stipulated time of 5.30 pm on Friday.

Though his legal team led by advocate Satish Maneshinde had rushed from the Bombay High Court to the jail, a mere 8 kms away, they were reportedly stuck in the massive evening and weekend traffic jams en route.

Even Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh who left from his Bandra bungalow in a small motorcade to pick up Aryan from jail, returned home mid-way, though close family friend and ex-actress Juhi Chawla managed to complete the formalities for standing surety.

The court has accepted Juhi a co-star of SRK in many films as the surety in Aryan's bail and she signed the relevant papers and executed the bail bond before the court officials, said Maneshinde earlier.

"I am happy that Aryan will return home very soon," Juhi, sporting a monogrammed black face-mask with a 'J' (Juhi), told media persons briefly outside the court.

However, since the bail papers failed to reach the jail authorities on time,



now Aryan may be released only on Saturday morning after all the formalities are completed.

Thousands of fans had lined up the roads from Bandra to Chinchpokli, hoping to catch a glimpse of both SRK and Aryan, but dispersed disappointed after it became clear that the latter would not step out of jail on Friday.

Bombay High Court Justice NW Sambre granted bail to Aryan and two others - Arbaaz Merchant and Munmun Dhamecha - on Thursday evening, but the bail order verdict was issued on Friday afternoon, after which their legal teams initiated the remaining formalities.

Soon after the bail verdict was pro-

nounced Thursday, SRK reportedly shed tears of joy, and later met his entire legal defence team which had been fighting for Aryan's release for the past four weeks.

The happy-go-lucky Aryan - who left home on October 2 for a fun-filled Mumbai-Goa cruise voyage, totally oblivious of what was in store was suddenly detained after the NCB swoop, formally arrested the following day and has been in custody since then.

On Thursday, the bail verdict was received with cheers and bursting of fire-crackers by fans near his 'Mannat' home, and today, the bungalow was being specially illuminated and decked with flowers to welcome him.

# SRK goes to receive son, Juhi Chawla stands surety

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh left in a small motorcade along with aides and security personnel to pick up son Aryan from the Arthur Road Central Jail, while close family friend and ex-actress Juhi Chawla will be the bail surety.

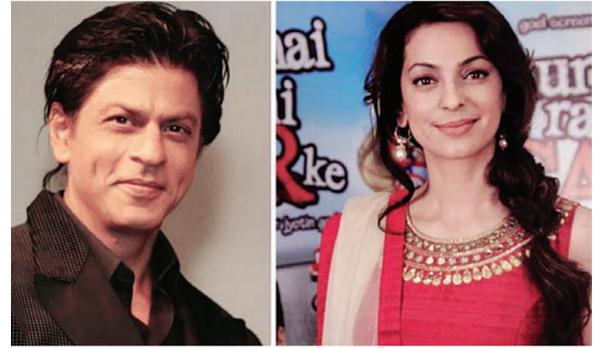
The court has accepted Juhi a co-star of SRK in many films as the surety in Aryan's bail and she signed the relevant papers and executed the bail bond before the court officials, said lawyer Satish Maneshinde.

He said that the court formalities are being completed and now the bail papers will be sent directly to the jail authorities which would process them before Aryan is released.

Simultaneously, SRK proceeded from his Bandra home to the ARJ to welcome Aryan, expected to step out after an hour or so later this evening.

This was SRK's second trip to the jail - earlier he had gone on October 21 for a 10-minute morale-booster tete-a-tete with Aryan inside the jail ahead of his bail plea in the Bombay High Court.

Prior to that, the superstar was allowed once to meet his son in the



Narcotics Control Bureau lockup, where Aryan had broken down, but SRK has maintained a dignified silence throughout the ordeal.

Justice NW Sambre granted bail to Aryan and two others - Arbaaz Merchant and Munmun Dhamecha - on Thursday evening, but the bail orders were received only on Friday, paving the way for the trio to return home.

Soon after the bail verdict was pronounced Thursday, SRK reportedly

shed tears of joy, and later met his entire legal defence team which had been fighting for Aryan's release for the past four weeks.

The happy-go-lucky Aryan - who left home on October 2 for a fun-filled Mumbai-Goa cruise voyage, totally oblivious of what was in store was suddenly detained after the NCB swoop, arrested the following day and has been in custody since then - making it a total of 28 days that he slept away from his 'Mannat' bedroom.

## Bombay HC grants bail to Aryan Khan on Rs 1 lakh bond, conditions

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court has allowed a bail to Aryan Khan, the son of Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan, at a Rs 1 lakh bond, as per the orders issued on Friday.

Justice NW Sambre, who granted bail to Khan, Arbaaz Merchant and Munmun Dhamecha on Thursday, has asked them to furnish one or more surety and not leave Mumbai or India without the permission of the Narcotics Control Bureau investigating officer.

They have been asked not to indulge in similar activities, not make



any public statements about the case, attend the NCB office every Friday between 11 am-2 pm and also go there as and when called.

The court has also directed them not to indulge in influencing witnesses in any manner, attempt to delay the trial and attend court on all dates in the order, which will pave the way for the release of the trio later on Friday.

Justice Sambre had on Thursday evening granted bail to the three youngsters nabbed in the NCB swoop on a cruise ship party on October 2, and the detailed orders were set for Friday.

## Cruise party: Nawab Malik demands arrest of Fashion TV chief

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Nationalist Congress Party Minister Nawab Malik on Friday demanded the arrest of Fashion TV India head Kashif Khan, the 'bearded man' whom he identifies as the chief organiser of the cruiser party raided by the Narcotics Control Bureau on October 2.

"I have spoken of the 'bearded man' aboard the Cordelia cruise ship, who was dancing with a girl... He is Kashif Khan, the India chief of Fashion TV channel, who was present on the Mumbai-Goa cruise," Malik told media persons, continuing his exposure series on the NCB Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede. He alleged that Khan runs drugs, sex and porn rackets and is "a close



friend of Wankhede", and sought to know why the NCB local chief let him (Khan) off the hook though he was the organiser of the alleged rave party. "We have also come to know... rather, the NCB has said that they were planning the raids for around a month. During the course of this one month of planning and investigations, was the NCB unaware as to who has actually organised the (rave) party?", Malik asked.

Responding briefly, Wankhede trashed Malik's charges saying: "Its an absolute lie... the law will take its own course."

Malik shared the videos of Khan dancing in that party which was raided by the NCB and among the persons arrested were Aryan Khan, son of Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan. Aryan, along with his friends Arbaaz Merchant and Munmun Dhamecha were granted bail on Thursday by Bombay High Court and are awaiting release from the jail anytime. Two others secured bail from the Special NDPS Court earlier this week, and another 15 are still in custody in the same case in which Wankhede is under the scanner of the NCB and the Mumbai Police.

## Power company blames Maha BJP leader of flouting deal, Rs 170 Cr loss

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a shocking development, a private sector power major of Mumbai has accused a prominent state Bharatiya Janata Party leader and a sugar baron hailing from a well-known political clan, of allegedly violating a business agreement that has resulted in a loss of around Rs 170 crore to the company in the past over six years.

The company is Pravara Renewable Energy Lt. (PREL) part of the Mumbai-based Gammon India Ltd conglomerate - which had set up a 32-MW power generation plant at the Padmashri Dr. Vitthalrao Vikhe-Patil Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana, (PDVVPSSK/Karkhana) in Ahmednagar, helmed by senior BJP leader Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil.

Incidentally, he is a grandson of the legendary Vitthalrao Vikhe-Patil who founded Asia's first cooperative sugar mill; a son of former Union Minister the late Balasaheb Vikhe-Patil and the

uncle of (Ms.) Nila Ashok Vikhe-Patil, who is the high-profile Political Advisor to Sweden Prime Minister's Office.

Last week, the PREL filed for Arbitration Proceedings before the Bombay High Court, and later plan to file a petition seeking justice and compensation for its huge losses -- estimated at around Rs 170 crore, besides approaching higher political authorities for redressal, officials said.

When contacted, Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil declined to comment on the matter on grounds that it is before the consideration of the courts.

"Since the matter is already sub-judice, it's not proper for us to comment on it... Whatever allegations are made by them, we shall reply and present our stand before the court... Let the arbitrators decide on the issues raised," the Karkhana Chairman Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil told IANS. The Ahmednagar plant was set up on a BOOT (build, own, operate, transfer) basis with a 28-year period of concession, including three

years for construction, according to Mineel Mali, Director, AJR Infra and Tolling Ltd., the PREL's promoter.

As per the agreement, the PREL set up a state-of-the-art power generation facility -- the biggest of its kind in the state which can use multiple fuels, including green fuels like bagasse, biogas, cane trash, rice bran, etc., or fossil fuels like coal.

As part of the understanding the Karkhana had agreed to supply a certain quantity of bagasse every year to enable the PREL generate electricity for the sugar factory's consumption and also for sale to the MSEB.

However, in the past over six years, the Karkhana has defaulted by its failure to provide the PREL with over 5.70-lakh tonnes bagasse, Mali contended. This in turn, caused a massive reduction in the power plant's electricity generation and its production fell short of a whopping 2.56-lakh MW, worth around Rs 170-crore in the past six years, causing huge stress.

All efforts to convince the Karkhana top brass to provide the bagasse or

other fuel to help the company recover its losses have failed to elicit response compelling them to go for Arbitration proceedings, claimed the company.

Hoping to settle the issue amicably, the PREL Director SK Vats in August 2021 shot off a strong letter to the Karkhana's then Managing Director, (the late) T.R. Dhone, demanding suitable "compensation" for its gross losses of over Rs 170-crore.

The PREL officials have charged the Karkhana of resorting to 'strong-arm tactics and intimidation' to drive away their staff and allegedly grab the full-fledged functional power plant set up at the company's expense, but Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil declined to comment on this too.

The company top brass explained that given the current power crisis scenario owing to coal shortages, if the Karkhana cooperates it can contribute to resolving the peoples' problems by using the green fuels in the PREL plant which has immense environmental benefits.

# Will expose nexus between Wankhede and BJP leaders in winter session: Malik

Wankhede is in the eye of a political storm following allegations of extortion in the high-profile cruise drugs case. The officer is facing the departmental vigilance probe.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Continuing his tirade against NCB's Mumbai zonal director Sameer Wankhede, NCP spokesperson and Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik on Friday said he would expose some BJP leaders and their alleged connection with the officer in the winter session of the state Legislature to be held in December.

Referring to his own "Picture is not over yet" tweet that he had posted on Thursday after Aryan Khan, son of actor Shah Rukh Khan, was granted bail by the Bombay High Court in the drugs-on-cruise case, Malik said the picture will end with Wankhede losing his job and facing legal action for forging documents and securing a job that was meant for an SC candidate.

Malik has levelled a slew of allegations against Wankhede, who led the raid on a cruise ship off Mumbai coast earlier this month, in which Aryan Khan was arrested. Talking to reporters on Friday, Malik said, "I am going to expose some BJP leaders and their connections with NCB officer Sameer Wankhede in the winter session starting from December 7. It will be a stormy session and once those names are out, the BJP leaders will not be able to show their face in public." He alleged that Fashion TV head Kashif Khan had organised the alleged drugs party on the Cordelia cruise ship.

Malik claimed, "Kashif Khan is notorious for distribution of drugs, for running sex and pornography racket and had posted the advertisement of Cordelia drug party on social media. Despite that the intelligent officers of the NCB did not call him for any inquiry or probe." "One NCB official even told me that whenever they tried to take action against Kashif Khan, Sameer Wankhede opposed them. It is a murky business and more such cases will surface in the coming days," the Minister said.



On his tweet, Malik said that he and Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut will have to complete this "picture" just like the famous scriptwriter duo of Salim-Javed, who wrote scripts of several blockbuster movies in Hindi in the 1970s.

When asked about how this picture is going to end, Malik said, "The picture will be over with Sameer Wankhede losing his job and facing legal action for forging documents to get recruited via reserved quota for SC category. He was born in a Muslim family, but he forged his birth certificate to get this job." As per Malik's claim,

Wankhede was born as a Muslim, but forged documents, including a caste certificate, to show that he belonged to the Hindu SC category to get a job under quota after clearing the UPSC examination.

Speaking about his "picture" tweet further, he said, "Sanjay Raut has said that he would take care of the post-interval script. But going by the information coming out, it looks like we both will have to complete the picture like Salim-Javed." Earlier, referring to Malik's tweet, Raut told reporters, "Malik has shown you the picture till interval. Rest of the part will be completed by me." Raut also said that Sameer Wankhede's wife Kranti Redkar has no business in this controversy surrounding the her husband.

"This is the case between NCB officials and the arrested persons. There will be no injustice to anyone," he said. On Thursday, Redkar had written a letter to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, seeking justice in the wake of the "attack on her family and her personal life".

In her letter to the CM, the NCB officer's wife had said, "Being a Marathi person, I expect some justice from your side as my personal life is unnecessarily being dragged into a controversy. Had late Balasaheb Thackeray (father of Uddhav Thackeray) been alive today, he would not have tolerated such personal attack on a woman's dignity." Talking about it, Raut said, "The ED, CBI and other agencies are harassing Marathi people more important. False cases are being filed against Marathi people merely to defame the state." "The crime (in drugs party case has taken place here in Maharashtra; thus the investigation will take place here itself," Raut said.

Wankhede is in the eye of a political storm following allegations of extortion in the high-profile cruise drugs case. The officer is facing the departmental vigilance probe.

### COVID-19:

## Maharashtra records 1,338 new cases, 36 deaths, 1,584 recoveries on Friday



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra on Friday, October 29, recorded 1,338 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the number of active cases to 18,465. Besides, 36 COVID-19 deaths were reported in the day, taking the number of total fatalities to 1,40,170. 1,584 patients were discharged in the day, taking the tally to 64,47,038. The recovery rate in the state is 97.55%. The case fatality rate in the state is 2.12%.

Currently, 1,68,338 people are in home quarantine and 908 people are in institutional quarantine.

The Mumbai circle-- which consists of MCGM, Thane, TMC, Navi Mumbai, KDMC, Ulhasnagar MC, Bhivandi Nijampur MC, Mira Bhayandar MC, Palghar, Vasai Virar MC, Raigad, Panvel MC recorded 638 new cases. The Nashik circle which consists of Nashik, Nashik MC, Malegaon MC, Ahmednagar, Ahmednagar MC, Dhule,

Dhule MC, Jalgaon, Jalgaon MC, Nandurbar reported 251 fresh COVID-19 cases.

The Pune circle which includes Pune, PMC, PCMC, Solapur, Solapur MC, Satara recorded 305 new cases.

The Kolhapur circle which includes Kolhapur, Kolhapur MC, Sangli, Sangli MC, Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri reported 61 new cases.

The Aurangabad circle which consists of Aurangabad, Aurangabad MC, Jalna, Hingoli, Parbhani, Parbhani MC reported 28 fresh cases. The Latur circle which consists of Latur, Latur MC, Osmanabad, Beed, Nanded, Nanded MC recorded 37 fresh cases. The Akola circle which includes Akola, Akola MC, Amaravati, Amaravati MC, Yawatmal, Buldhana, Washim recorded 10 fresh cases. Nagpur circle which includes Nagpur, Nagpur MC, Wardha, Bhandara, Gondia, Chandrapur, Chandrapur MC, Gadchiroli reported 8 fresh cases.





## Kit Harrington expects 'Game of Thrones' prequel to be a 'hard' watch

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Kit Harrington thinks it will be "hard" to watch the 'Game of Thrones' prequel because he still feels so attached to the fantasy world.

The 34-year-old actor became a household name playing Jon Snow in the drama series and he still feels a huge "emotional connection" to the fantasy world, so he said he is expecting it to be emotional when he tunes in to watch 'House of the Dragon' when it hits screens next year, reports variety.com.

Asked how he's feeling about watching the prequel, he said: "Do you know what, probably quite a lot of emotions. I'm looking forward to it. It's my good friend Miguel (Sapochnik) who's show-running it, I've got a friend Matt (Smith) in it, so I'm looking forward to it but it's gonna be hard. I've got a huge emotional connection to that piece, to that story, to that world."

Harrington will be seen next in 'Eternals', in which he has reunited with his 'Game of Thrones' on-screen bro-

ther, Richard Madden, and he quipped his pal was stunned to see him the first time he walked on set.

Speaking to Jamie Theakston and Amanda Holden on Heart Breakfast, he said: "Yeah he can't get rid of me. He couldn't believe it when I turned up on set. He was like 'What the hell are you doing here?'"

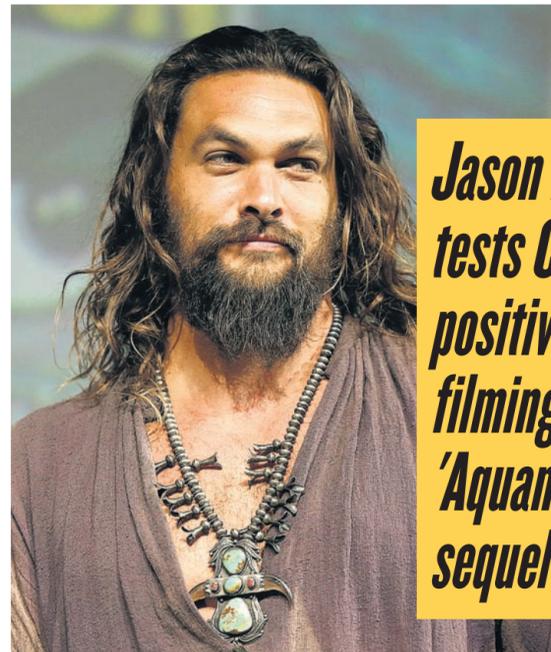
Meanwhile, Kit, who spent time in rehab after 'Game of Thrones' ended, welcomed a son with wife Rose Leslie in February and recently said he has never been happier.

He said: "I have a child and my relationship is brilliant, I'm a very, very happy, content, sober man."

However, the British actor said he is exhausted as he has taken over parenting responsibilities while Rose is filming a new project in New York.

He said: "Like, honestly, my back is wrecked. I go to the gym quite a bit, but there's something about having a child that is the most physically draining thing. I don't know how (single parents) do it."

"Because it's more exhausting than everything I did on 'Game of Thrones.'"



## Jason Momoa tests Covid positive while filming 'Aquaman' sequel

New York | Agencies

Actor Jason Momoa has been filming the superhero film 'Aquaman' sequel in the UK, but insiders have shared that he is now isolating after testing positive for Covid-19 and movie chiefs are hoping to stop any further outbreaks on set with the project running to a tight schedule. A source told The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column that "Jason is fine luckily and is now isolating after getting a positive test. But it's a real headache for the film's bosses, who are now worrying about having to delay their tight filming schedule".

"Of course the safety of everyone working on the film is the most important thing and everyone is tested regularly. They are hoping

this is a one-off and that they can work around Jason and continue filming on the production." Everyone is wishing him a speedy recovery and they're looking forward to having him back on set," the source added.

The DC Extended Universe (DCEU) movie is being shot at Leavesden Studios in Hertfordshire and Jason recently revealed that filming had been a lot more physically demanding than before, reports femalefirst.co.uk. The 'Game of Thrones' star said: "I'm getting old. I messed up my eyes. I just got something in it that kind of cut it up, and then I've got to get surgery, I have a hernia, I've got ribs out. I'm just - getting beat up."

"I just kind of give it. I love my job and I get a little too excited, then the age thing, you know, I'm an ageing superhero right now."

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Friends' star Matthew Perry is set to release an autobiography in late 2022, as he said he feels it's time for him to tell his own story "directly from the horse's mouth".

The actor has said he's getting ready to release his very own memoir, as he said he feels it's time for him to tell his own story "directly from the horse's mouth", reports femalefirst.co.uk.

He told People magazine: "There has been so much written about me by others in the past. I thought it was time people heard it directly from the horse's mouth. In this case, the horse's mouth being me."

According to deadline.com reported that Perry had signed a seven-figure deal with Flatiron Books, a division of Macmillan, for the upcoming memoir.

The publication doesn't yet have a title, and it will be released late next year.

Megan Lynch, the publisher of Flatiron Books, will edit the autobiography, and told Deadline: "We need humour, we need catharsis, and we need to agree on something-and Matthew's extraordinary story, told in his inimitable voice, is that thing. Matthew's book has unrivalled potential to bring people together, which feels especially galvanizing right now, a time of isolation and division."

It's not yet known how much of Perry's life will be covered in his own book, but earlier this year he reunited with his 'Friends' co-stars -- Courteney Cox, Jennifer Aniston, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc, and David Schwimmer -- for a long-awaited special on HBO Max.

The special revealed a number of behind-the-scenes secrets from their time on the show and showed the actors reminiscing about being a part of the hit series. Speaking before the special aired, Matthew spoke about the lasting legacy of the show, saying: "It was a character-driven funny, not timely funny. They didn't make timely jokes. They didn't make jokes about O.J. Simpson. They made character-driven jokes about people -- and people are going to come back time and time again and watch that."

## 'ETERNALS' ACTOR HARISH PATEL DECODES STAR CULTURE IN HOLLYWOOD, BOLLYWOOD



Veteran Indian actor Harish Patel got a chance to work with some of the finest names in Hollywood such as Angelina Jolie, Kumail Nanjiani and Gemma Chan among many others in the upcoming superhero film 'Eternals' and he cannot believe his stars! The 68-year-old, who has worked in Bollywood films such as 'Mohra', 'Pyaar Toh Hona Hi Tha', Kanti Shah's cult film 'Gunda' and 'Zubeidaa', has talked about the difference he has seen in the star culture on international sets as compared to Bollywood.

Harish, in a conversation with IANS, said: "There is no star here (internationally). They are just so simple, grounded and humble. They are just thorough professionals."

"They don't have it in their heads that 'I am a star', which I feel is there (in Bollywood) in some stars have it in their head that 'I am a star, I am a big star'. It seems with their entry only. The way they come on the sets."

Harish plays a manager, Kumail Nanjiani's character is a Bollywood star and a superhero named Kingo in Marvel's upcoming film. The Indian actor says that the Pakistan-origin actor-comedian nailed the style of Hindi film stars in 'Eternals'.

"Kumail Nanjiani has portrayed that very well in 'Eternals'. The Bollywood star which shows on his face...the way he has nailed it is amazing. Kumail is an amazing actor," he added. 'Eternals', directed by Chloe Zhao, who won this year's Best Director Oscar for 'Nomadland', is the 25th movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe and is releasing on November 5.

In the film, Harish has shared screen space with all Hollywood personalities apart from Salma Hayek and Kit Harrington.

"I am almost with everyone in the scenes. Unfortunately, I do not have a scene with Salma Hayek and Kit Harrington. I am with everyone else," he said.

So, how was it working with Angelina? "When we work that time it doesn't strike how big a person you are sharing screen space with. These people are so grounded and humble. They don't even have it in their head that they are such big people. We all helped each other while working."

He credits Zhao for briefing and helping him.

"And when you have a director like Chloe Zhao, who has explained everything to you in the beginning then you don't have to take any kind of tension or stress. It reflects in the film."

The actor still pinches himself to believe his luck.

"I suddenly joined this big and amazing film and I still cannot believe it."

However, he did face a little hiccup. Harish came out Covid positive days before the premiere of 'Eternals'.

"I did so much hard work and Disney Studios called me to the USA and just a day before going I was Covid positive. I am good now but I got very upset. But when I heard the reactions about the film, Covid and my sadness just faded away." 'Eternals' follows a group of heroes from beyond the stars who have protected the Earth since the dawn of man. When monstrous creatures called the Deviants, long thought lost to history, mysteriously return, the 'Eternals' are forced to reunite in order to defend humanity once again. The film is produced by Kevin Feige and Nate Moore. It will release on November 5.

## Matthew Perry to release autobiography next year



## Sigourney Weaver's 'The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart' starts filming in Australia

Los Angeles | Agencies

Sigourney Weaver-starring series 'The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart' has begun filming in Australia.

Produced by Amazon Prime Video, Made Up Stories and Endeavor Content, it will be presented as an Amazon original in 2022, reports variety.com.

The series is based on the best-selling novel of the same title by Australian author Holly Ringland and was adapted for the screen by Sarah Lambert, who is also

the series' showrunner. All seven episodes will be directed by Glendyn Ivin.

The story involves a nine-year-old girl who loses both her parents in a mysterious fire and is sent to live with her grandmother, played by Weaver, on a flower farm. There she learns dark secrets about herself and her family. The narrative uses native wildflowers and plants to depict the inexpressible. It spans decades as Alice grows from a child into a woman.

Filming is set to take place in Sydney, regional New South Wales and the Northern Territory.

The production will involve an extensive Australian cast, including Asher Keddie, Leah Purcell, Alycia Debnam-Carey, Frankie Adams, Alexander England, Charlie Vickers, and Tilda Cobham-Hervey.

Alyla Browne plays the young version of the titular Alice Hart. Executive producers Jodi Matterson, Bruna Papandrea and Steve Hutensky called the project "a courageous tale of female resilience, perfectly embodied by the legendary Sigourney Weaver".

Weaver also takes an executive production credit.

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Kylie Jenner



## T20 World Cup

# WEST INDIES STAY ALIVE WITH 3-RUN WIN OVER BANGLADESH

Sharjah | Agencies

West Indies bowling attack successfully defended 143 to edge Bangladesh by three runs, recording their first win of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in a Group 1 match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium here on Friday.

After West Indies rode on some lusty hitting by Nicholas Pooran (40) and Roston Chase (39) to put together 142/7, which looked like a par score for this track, Bangladesh were restricted to 139/5 in 20 overs thanks to some disciplined bowling by the winners.

Chasing 143, Bangladesh lost both openers Shakib Al Hasan and Mohammad Naim in successive overs of the power-play. While Shakib, opening for the first time in T20Is, chipped to mid-on after a leading-edge off Andre Russell, Naim chopped on to his stumps off Jason Holder.

Soumya Sarkar and Litton Das stitched a stand of 31 runs for the third wicket. But Akeal Hosein forced



a leading-edge off Sarkar, pounced by a diving Chris Gayle at short third man. Mushfiqur Rahim fell cheaply, bringing out the scoop against Ravi Rampaul but missed the slower delivery, which hit the stumps.

Das along with Mahmudullah kept the scoreboard ticking to bring the equation to 30 runs off the last three

overs. Dwayne Bravo was hit for a six by Mahmudullah in the 19th over but took out Das, holing out to long-on, on the final ball of the over. Andre Russell defended 13 in the final over, nailing his yorkers despite misfields and dropped catch to keep West Indies alive in the tournament.

### Briefscores:

West Indies 142/7 in 20 overs (Nicholas Pooran 40, Roston Chase 39, Shoriful Islam 2/20, Mahedi Hasan 2/27) against Bangladesh 139/5 in 20 overs (Litton Das 44, Mahmudullah 31 not out, Jason Holder 1/22, Akeal Hosein 1/24) by three runs

# Babar's fifty, Asif's blitz power Pakistan to 5-wicket win over Afghanistan

Dubai | Agencies

Captain Babar Azam's fighting fifty (51 off 47) and Asif Ali's cameo (25 off 7) powered Pakistan to a convincing five-wicket win over Afghanistan in a super 12 match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, here on Friday.

With this, Pakistan completed a hat-trick of wins in the ongoing T20 World Cup and they are at the top of the points table in Group 2.

Riding on fighting knocks by Mohammad Nabi (35 off 32) and Gulbadin Naib (35 off 25), Afghanistan posted a total of 147/6 in 20 overs. Apart from Nabi and Naib, Najibullah Zadran (22) and Karim Janat (15) also made important contributions with the bat for Afghanistan.

Chasing the challenging target for victory, Pakistan in the 3rd over lost the wickets of Mohammad Rizwan, who failed to clear the ropes, holing out to Naveen-ul-Haq at deep square.

Walking in at No. 3, Fakhar Zaman (30) released the pressure inside the powerplay. He



launched into Nabi after playing out just four balls, smashing the skipper for a four and a six against the spin. The left-hander also punished Naveen for bowling on his pads, swiping it past short fine for a four as Pakistan finished the powerplay on 38/1.

Babar, at the other end, did not look his best by his own lofty standards, bringing up his first boundary only in the ninth over, but did manage to hit a couple more to the ropes thereafter. The pair brought up their 50-run partnership as Pakistan went into the drinks breaks needing 76 from the last 10 overs. It took Afghanistan 10 overs to bring Rashid Khan on and he immediately had the batters in all sorts of trouble, inducing five false shots in his opening over, including an LBW decision that was even-

tually overturned by DRS in Pakistan's favour. Afghanistan finally broke the partnership between Fakhar and Babar, with Nabi trapping the former in front of the stumps. Rashid finally struck in his third over to remove Mohammad Hafeez and wheeled away in celebration of his 100th T20I wicket. The wrist-spinner reached the milestone in just his 53rd game, thus becoming the fastest player to get to the mark in Men's T20Is. In his final over, Rashid proved to be expensive with Shoaib Malik sending a half-tracker over the ropes. However, it ended well for Afghanistan despite a dropped chance, as Rashid cleaned up Babar, who had just brought up his half-century, with a wonderful googly. Naveen-ul-Haq made up for the dropped catch by bowling a brilliant 18th over, giving away just two runs, and also snaring the wicket of the experienced Malik. Needing 24 off the last two overs, it was once again Ali who came to Pakistan's rescue at the end, smashing four sixes to seal the win for Pakistan in 19 overs with five wickets in hand.

# World Boxing C'ship: Sanjeet, Akash advance into pre-quarters

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Reigning Asian champion Sanjeet stormed into pre-quarterfinals after defeating Russia's Andrei Tsotskii in a second round match of the 92kg weight class at the 2021 AIBA Men's Boxing Championships in Belgrade, Serbia on Friday.

India's Akash Kumar also advanced into the pre-quarter-finals after he received a walkover in the 54kg opening round match against Salah Ibrahim of Germany.

In the closely-contested initial two rounds, both boxers went after each other and traded some heavy blows. However, the boxer from Rohtak, who defeated Rio Olympics silver medalist Vassily Levit to clinch the Asian Championships title earlier this year, kept his cool and not only showed a good defence technique but also struck sharp punches, according to information received here on Friday. The 24-year-old Indian produced a well-composed performance in the final round to win the bout by a 4-1 decision.

On Saturday, four Indians will be in action - Govind Sahani will fight against Georgia's



Sakhil Alakhverdovi in the pre-quarterfinals match while Shiva Thapa (63.5kg), Sumit (75kg), and Sachin Kumar (80kg) will play their respective Round-of-32 matches.

Earlier, during the matches played late on Thursday night, youngsters Rohit Mor (57kg) and Akash Sangwan continued their impressive run in the tournament and registered dominant victories in their respective round-of-32 matches. While 20-year-old debutant Rohit outclassed Alen Rahmic of Bosnia and Herzegovina by a unanimous margin in the featherweight category, Akash recorded a confident 4-1 victory against German pugilist Daniel Krotter in the 67kg category.

# National aquatics: Srihari, Sajan impress with new national records

Bengaluru | Agencies

Olympians Srihari Nataraj and Sajan Prakash came up with impressive performances on the final day, setting national records on Friday even as Team Karnataka emerged the overall champions at the 74th Senior National Aquatic Championships with 36 medals -- 17 gold, 10 silver, 9 bronze.

This is Karnataka's 30th overall championship title at the Senior Nationals. Maharashtra finished second with a total of 21 medals and Delhi finished third with nine medals.

But the dominant forces in the pool on the final day continued to be Nataraj, Prakash, and juniors swimmers Shoaan Ganguly and Ridhima Veerendrakumar.

In the 200m freestyle, which was the most-anticipated race of the day, Srihari Nataraj clinched the gold with a new meet of 1:49.78 seconds. He eclipsed Sajan Prakash's record of 1:50.35 clocked in 2018. Delhi Kushagra Rawat, who has three gold medals with three national records to



his name in this meet, finished second in 1:52.24 seconds and Tanish George Mathew of Karnataka finished third with a time of 1:52.34 seconds, according to information provided by the Swimming Federation of India.

"This was one race I was looking forward to because Kushagra was swimming too and he has been in

good form. I've worked quite hard for my freestyle events more than backstroke actually and it feels good to have won the race and also bettered the national record," said Nataraj, who also won gold in the 200m backstroke with a time of 2:04.20 seconds.

In the 100m butterfly, two-time Olympian Sajan Prakash, represent-

ing Kerala Police, sank his own record of 53.46 seconds to win gold. He clocked 53.24 seconds to rewrite the record while Mihir Ambre from Maharashtra finished second with a time of 54.93 seconds and Adhithya D of TNSA finished third clocking 55.72 seconds.

Junior swimmers, Shoaan Ganguly and Ridhima Veerendrakumar continued to impress as they won gold in their respective events. Ganguly won the 400m medley with a time of 4:30.52 seconds, missing Rehan Poncha's 12-year-old record by a whisker. Poncha's record stands at 4:30.13 seconds. Siva S finished second with a time of 4:36.38 seconds.

In the 200m backstroke, 17-year-old Ridhima clinched the gold beating Olympian Maana Patel who was pushed to fourth place in this event. Ridhima clocked 2:21.58 seconds to finish ahead of Soubhriti Mondal of Bengal (2:24.85) and Shruing Rajesh Bandekar of Goa (2:28.27). Maana missed a podium finish as she touched behind Bandekar with a time of 2:28.96 seconds.

# India can rise to the occasion despite loss to Pak, gruelling schedule

Los Angeles | Agencies

There is a lot of hope and hype around the World Cup. Rightly so; it is the pinnacle of all competitions. The India team is always a team to beat and most talked about as title contenders. The consistency of this Indian team in all formats has titled them with this reputation.

Despite not having a great start to the T20 world cup where they have played the lone match vs Pakistan so far, no opposition in their group would like to take them lightly.

Over the past few years, the Indian team has shown its resilience and ability to bounce back. The challenge for them this time though is huge as they look to dig into their energy reserves and hit a rhythm that can lift the team once more.

While watching the India-Pakistan match at the Dubai stadium that evening, I just felt that the Indian team looked a bit jaded. A couple of days later, I shared the same thought with my colleagues and realised that I was not the only one bearing the feeling. The Indian players due to the postponement of



the IPL had a month off in May. They travelled to England in June for the World Test Championship final and remained in England to play the competitive Test series. They then flew directly to UAE to compete in the remainder of the IPL season.

The level of competitiveness of the tournament and the change in climate would have surely added heat to their routines. I landed in Dubai in the middle of September and it was hot. An outdoor run had to be limited to the minimum time.

The IPL concluded a couple of days prior to the start of the ICC qualifiers. While 8 different teams participated in the qualifiers, the Indian team started

with their warm up matches prior to the actual competition during that period.

It might sound strange but even if you travel with families and live in luxury, the pressure of the competition is always surrounding you at all times. Plus leading a life in a bubble; a bio secure environment. Yes, this word (bio secure) has become synonymous with sports since last year, the pandemic year.

It means that the players/the group involved in the activity are isolated from those outside the bubble world. So, you are physically meeting and interacting with only those people who are within that bubble. Safety is paramount. But the isolation due to restrictions can set you in a zone/space of yourself. Some days are good while some are different but it is in that space all by yourself. It does take a toll on the mind and body. The freshness is absent. The fair argument will always be that everyone knows of the scenarios prior to signing up. Everyone knows the drill and has agreed to abide by them. Yes, but irrespective of how good the decoration of flowers is in the hall, there is no substitute to being in the garden with fresh flowers.

# French Open: PV Sindhu enters semis; Lakshya Sen bows out

Paris | Agencies

ACE Indian shuttler PV Sindhu cruised into the semi-finals of the French Open 2021 after defeating Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan, here on Friday.

The two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu will take on world No 15 Sayaka Takahashi of Japan for a place in the final on Saturday.

In the quarter-final against world No 13 Busanan Ongbamrungphan, the third-seeded Sindhu breezed through the first game in just 16 minutes. The Thai upped her challenge in the second game, but Sindhu replied strongly to wrap up the match by 21-14, 21-14 in 38



minutes. However, the world's No 10 pair of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy lost their quarter-final contest against Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik of Malaysia. The Indian duo put up a spirited performance against the fourth seeds and even won the first game but the Malaysians

fought back in the next two to win the match 21-18, 18-21, 17-21. Meanwhile, India's lone remaining representative in the men's singles, Lakshya Sen's campaign ended in the quarter-finals too after he lost 17-21, 15-21 to Heo Kwanghee of South Korea.

# U-23 Asian Cup qualifiers: India in do-or-die clash with Kyrgyz Republic

Dubai | Agencies

India take on the Kyrgyz Republic in a do-or-die last league match in the AFC U-23 Asia Cup qualifiers on Sunday, with high hopes of qualifying for the finals. India will not only have to win their match but also hope that result of the other match in Group E too is in their favour.

Having beaten Oman 2-1 and lost to hosts United Arab Emirates (UAE) because of a late penalty. As India had won and lost one match, so did the Kyrgyz Republic (beat UAE, lost to Oman). Igor Stimac's side are in an interesting situation as all four teams in the group have the same number of points, have scored, and even conceded the same number of goals.

With India taking on the Kyrgyz Republic and UAE meeting Oman in the last set of league matches, all four teams have a chance of qualifying and all types of permutations and combinations are possible. The group topper will clinch a direct berth to the finals in Uzbekistan next year. If India beat the Kyrgyz Republic, they move to six points but Stimac's side will top the group only if Oman draw or beat UAE. If Oman win, India will top the table on basis of their victory in their head-to-head encounter. If UAE win, India will finish second and everything will then depend on results in the other nine groups so that they make it as one of the four best second-placed teams. If UAE win, India would finish second in the pool.

With all such scenarios possible, coach Stimac was understandably insisting on his boys to ignore the previous matches and concentrate on the job ahead -- the



next 90 minutes.

"We need to balance the next 90 minutes. We need to be excited, but not over-excited. Such matches need a player to give 101 percent, and at the same time such matches demand that a player needs to be patient," Rahim Ali quipped. "Every player first needs to take up responsibility individually, and that will transpire to the entire squad."

Stimac has been the tireless trier going to every extent to stitch, mend, educate and enlighten. At the practice sessions, he dummies the feints points to the vacant spaces, and lays it down with the outstep of his foot - the ball glides through the green to evade the marker to get delivered to the unmarked one.

"We showed good team spirit in the last two games and played together as one. That is going to be important for the next game as well. Playing as a team is very important and that is what makes executing game plans a lot easier for players," Akash Mishra added. "We need to stay positive, and give our best."

Considering the tight situation in the group, Stimac said it is a very interesting situation. "It's a very interesting situation in the group wherein the situation is extremely tight. Teams are quite different, but then again very similar in regards to what someone can do on the pitch. Everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses," Stimac was quoted as saying by the AIFF media team. "We came into this qualifying group as underdogs against higher-ranked countries. But despite that, we've managed to put ourselves in a position to qualify for the U23 Asian Cup. A win would almost seal our berth in the Asian Cup and that is what we are aiming for. We know it won't be easy against the Kyrgyz Republic, but we've shown we can beat an 'team on our day,' midfielder Lalengmawia, fondly referred to as 'puia,' explained. "To qualify from such a tough group would be a good achievement for us. We will give it our all." The team management, and the boys, however, are not going into the calculations. For them, the permutations and combinations can wait.



Team Absolute | Bengaluru

**K**annada film star Puneeth Rajkumar, son of Kannada cinema legend Rajkumar, was known for his simplicity and humility.

'KGF' star Yash recently stated that, "one has special place for people who treat you well when you are nothing." The statement was made with reference to Puneeth Rajkumar. The directors who worked with him remember him as always simple and easily approachable with a warm personality. Puneeth had also congratulated Yash for becoming an all-India star and gave him a warm hug.

Puneeth

promptly wished his elder brother all the luck for his new movie 'Bhajarangi 2' in his last tweet on Friday morning. If one looks at his social media accounts they will see Puneeth's congratulatory messages for beginners and achievers.

He also pledged his eyes for donation. Dr Bhujanga Shetty, Director Narayana Nethralaya, who collected the eyes of Puneeth, remembers that he received a call from his elder brother Raghavendra Rajkumar to collect his eyes.

"Many people pledge their eyes and their family forget at the time of death. But, Puneeth's family is different. His father, legend of Kannada film industry Dr Rajkumar always reminded me to take his eyes when he passed away. Later, the family reminded me when his wife Parvathamma Rajkumar breathed her last. Today (Friday) again I got a call from his family to collect eyes within no time," he explained.

"Puneeth's is a family of commitment. His eyes will be transplanted to two persons by tomor-

were supported through his 'Shakthidhama' organisation. But, never ever did Puneeth speak about his philanthropic activities.

Puneeth had completed his cine journey as an artiste for 45 years as he entered the film industry as a toddler. He has acted in 13 films as a child artiste. As a child artiste he won the National award for 'Bettada Hoovu' in 1985. He won best child artiste award for his acting in 'Chalisuva Modagalu' and 'Eradu Kanasu'.

He made his debut as a full-fledged hero with 'Appu' in 2002. Since then, he had acted in 29 movies. His latest release was 'Yuvaratna' which hit theatres in April earlier this year. His last movie was 'James'. His documentary made by filmmaker Amoghavarsha of 'Wild Karnataka' fame shot underwater was all set to release on November 1.

He won two state awards for best actor and won five FilmFare awards. He started his production house Puneeth Rajkumar Films in 2019 and

produced movies of Danish Sait and others. He was a successful television presenter for Kannada version of 'Kaun Banega

## YOUTH ICON PUNEETH WON EVERYONE'S HEARTS WITH HIS SIMPLICITY

row," he says. Pawan Wodeyar, one of the directors who worked with him, says more than an actor, producer and superstar, he appealed to him as a loveable person.

Puneeth had donated Rs 50 lakh to the Karnataka government during Covid crisis. Puneeth was supporting 16 old age homes and 19 'goshalas'. Thousands of girl students

Cronepati'. Puneeth, fondly called 'Appu' was christened as 'Power star' by fans. Puneeth made it a point to spend one whole month with his family. He sang, shook a leg for them on their special occasions. The film industry which bounced back to life after Covid lockdown has suddenly come under a pall of gloom with the demise of one of its superstars.

## "I want to reciprocate the love I've received from fans and audiences by doing good films": Suriya

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**E**very time, everyone's favourite Suriya comes onscreen, he mesmerises and grabs the audience's attention with his mere presence. Now with 'Jai Bhim', his upcoming courtroom drama hardly four days away from a global premiere on Prime Video, Suriya is all set to steal millions of hearts once again. Entertaining us with his power packed and versatile performances for over two decades, the actor is eager to give back all the love that he has received from his well-wishers and fans all across the world.

While talking about how 'Jai Bhim' was one of the most challenging films of his career, Suriya said, "It's been close to 24 years that I have been working in the industry. We have seen a lot of highs and lows, but my fans and movie lovers have always stood by me. They've really had a lot of trust and they have put in a lot of belief in me. This trust that they have placed upon me has built a beautiful relationship between me and them. I only want to give back this love by doing good films."

Adding further to the experience of working in 'Jai Bhim' and his role as Advocate Chandru, Suriya added, "This film is not in my comfort zone. It does not fall into the layout or pattern or sketch that any of my previous films were. The whole pattern, storytelling, or the actors involved, the emotions in it, will be a little intense. It's just not entertainment, but it will definitely move and impact you. The recall factor after watching this film, I'm sure will be remembered for a long time. It is definitely a huge responsibility but a good one to take on. I just want to deliver better films for my audience."

'Jai Bhim' is a thought-provoking story based on true events that happened in the 1990s in Tamil Nadu. It is written and directed by Tha. Se. Gnanavel and features popular actor Suriya in the lead along with Prakash Raj, Rao Ramesh, Rajisha Vijayan, Manikandan, and Lijo Mol Jose in pivotal roles. 'Jai Bhim' has been produced by Jyotika and Suriya under the banner of 2D Entertainment. Co-produced by Rajsekar Karpoorasundarapandian, 'Jai Bhim' has music by Sean Rolden. The team behind this film also includes DOP SR Kadhir, Editor Philominraj, and Art Director Kadhir.



## PRIYANKA: ADDING THE 'POWER' TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT, BOTH ON AND OFF-SCREEN!

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**I**t is a well-known fact that Priyanka Chopra Jonas is a flagbearer of women empowerment, in her real as well as reel life. The global superstar has, in the past, made headlines for her powerful statements inspiring millions of women a countless number of times.

She has not only talked the talk but also walked the walk by supporting girl child education and being vocal about gender equality, women's rights and the gender pay gap. So, it comes as no surprise that it was Priyanka Chopra that started the trend of female-centric movies with 'Fashion' thirteen years ago. Courtesy PeeCee, there has been no looking back for the industry ever since. Whether it was 'Dirty Picture', 'Mary Kom', 'Kahaani', 'Lipstick Under My Burkha', 'English Vinglish', 'Margarita With A Straw' or 'Queen', Bollywood has opened doors for more stories revolving around female protagonists. Priyanka Chopra has always created opportunities for more women to share the stage together through her films.

In 'Dil Dhadakne Do', the international powerhouse empowered more women to be seen on the big screen together. The movie featured as many female stars as it did male actors. Priyanka Chopra was seen alongside female co-stars like Anushka Sharma, Ridhima Sud, Shefali Shah, Zarina Wahab, Khushi Dubey, Ayesha Raza, Khushi Dubey and Dolly Minhas.

Now, Priyanka Chopra Jonas is gearing up to take us for a fun road trip with her



upcoming film 'Jee Le Zaraa', which will once again see female superstars helming the movie.



Naseeruddin, Adhyayan & Shernavaz all set to star in the drama-adventure film, 'Rannchhod'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**T**he powerhouse of talent Naseeruddin Shah and the young and dynamic Adhyayan Suman have released the teaser of their film 'Rannchhod' leaving us with goosebumps.

The adventure-drama film's teaser features the enigmatic voice of Naseeruddin Shah narrating an iconic dialogue from the movie. Featuring the young and fresh talent, Adhyayan Suman and Shernavaz Jijina, the film is all set to go on floors soon and this motion poster is enough to leave you on the edge of your seats! 'Rannchhod' traces the journey of a young and talented man with great ambitions who embarks on an emo-

tional yet tumultuous journey to save his family from financial debt.

Speaking on the film, the legendary actor Naseeruddin Shah quotes "Rannchhod is an intriguing story and has piqued my interest right from when I read scene 1 of the script. The film focuses on adventure and drama with a family angle to it which will leave you on the edge of your seats. Working with Balraj Irani and Bukeliya Entertainments and young and fresh talent like Adhyayan Suman and Shernavaz is going to be an interesting journey I can't wait to embark on. Rahul too is a young dynamic mind with a vision like no other and will help to translate the emotions, intensity and message of the film onto the big screen impeccably!"

Adding to this further, Adhyayan Suman says "Every actor has that one film that changes his career! 'Rannchhod' is that film! A supremely well-written film by my debutant director Rahul! I can't wait to start filming with Naseer Saab a co-star every actor dreams of working with!" to which his co-star Shernavaz Jijina adds "Very rarely you come across a script that holds you by the edge of your seat, 'Rannchhod' is one such script. The character of Radha has many layers and all different to one another and that is the best part of it. The team is very creative and energetic to be apart of such a team is always fun and last but not the least to share screen space with Naseer sir

is every actor's dream. This one is definitely going to be special for me can't wait for it to get on floors!"

The dynamic producer Balraj Irani quotes "The script of the film 'Rannchhod' is awesome along with the perfect cast of Naseeruddin ji, Adhyayan and Shernavaz. The zestful young director Rahul is coming up with a unique vision, which I am sure would be really exciting to watch."

'Rannchhod' is presented by Bukeliya Entertainments Pvt Ltd & Majestic Entertainment in association with Karjani Creations and stars Naseeruddin Shah, Adhyayan Suman & Shernavaz Jijina. Produced by Balraj Irani & Abhishek Bukeliya the film is written and directed by Rahul S. Karjani.

## OTT release of Mohanlal's 'Marakkur' runs into rough weather



**T**he OTT release of Malayalam superstar Mohanlal's blockbuster film 'Marakkur: Lion of the Arabian Sea', directed by ace filmmaker Priyadarshan, has hit a roadblock as Kerala Minister for Films Saji Cherian insisted that films should be released in theatres.

Cherian said that the OTT aspect was thought of when the movie halls were closed and the government is of the firm view that films should first be released in theatres and he expects the same with 'Marakkur'.

On Wednesday movie halls in Kerala finally started screening films after a gap of six months and with stringent Covid guidelines allowing only 50 per cent of the total seating capacity, which is a dampener for producers and theatre owners.

'Marakkur' producer Antony Perumbavoor first broke the news that the makers are exploring all options including a possible OTT release and they have now practically closed the deal for releasing it on Prime Video.

This decision has irked the theatre owners in the state who are passing through bad

times and they fear if a blockbuster film like 'Marakkur' goes on OTT, then they will be in trouble. According to a source, Perumbavoor wanted a minimum guarantee from theatre owners but the amount that Perumbavoor is asking is very high.

This film has cost Perumbavoor a staggering Rs 85 crore and hence he is unwilling to come down and with now Cherian also battling for a theatrical release, it remains to be seen, what's in store.

At the recent National Film Awards, 'Marakkur' was selected as the Best Feature Film for 2019. The film tells the tale of Kunjali Marakkur, the famous naval chief of the Zamorin of Calicut, often known for organising the first naval defence of the Indian coast.

Mohanlal, known for his flexibility and adaptability to any character, plays the key role of Marakkur.

The star cast includes thespian Madhu, Manju Warrior, actors from south India and Bollywood besides four British actors and one Chinese actor. SA top producer said there are 90 Malayalam films and an additional 50 English, Tamil and Hindi films all waiting for release and with a few films that were released through the OTT platforms during the Covid period fetching reasonable profits, all eyes are on how the government is going to tackle the issue as many families are dependent on movie halls for their livelihood.

## WITNESS THE STORY OF SHER SINGH RANA - THE MAN WHO BROUGHT BACK THE REMAINS OF PRITHVIRAJ CHAUHAN - DIRECTED BY SHREE NARRAYAN SINGH

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**V**inod Bhanushali announces his next - a biopic on the life of Sher Singh Rana - directed by Shree Narayan Singh. His first association with director Shree Narayan Singh will shed light on the life of the man who created a stir in India for various reasons when he was just a young man.

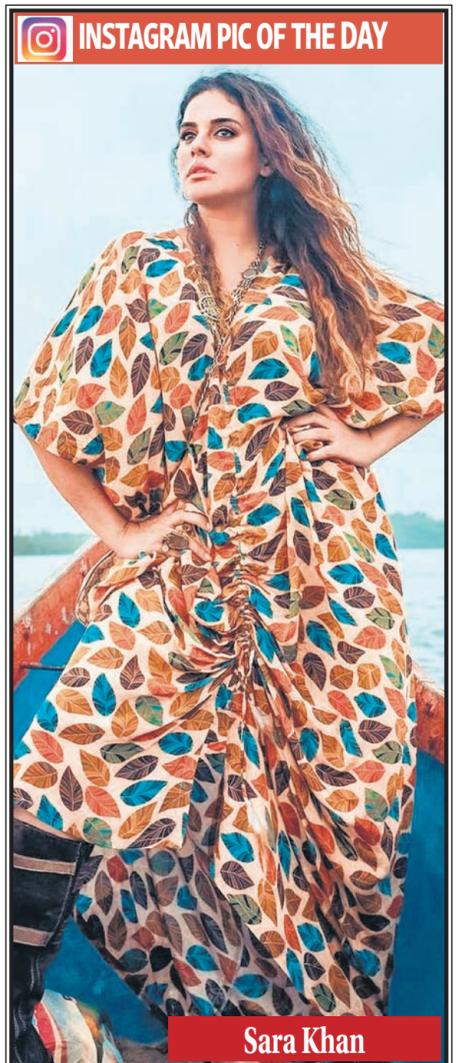
Sher Singh Rana, a staunch Rajput, became a worldwide name when he brought back the remains of the 11th century ruler of the Chauhan Dynasty, Prithviraj Chauhan, from Kandahar, Afghanistan. Rana brought the feeling of pride to his Rajput community by being the only man who brought back a great ruler's relics. Before this when he was a prisoner of Tihar Jail, Sher Singh Rana was the second man after Charles Sobhraj, who escaped this high-security jail not with violence but with mind tactics.

Speaking about choosing to bring the life of Sher Singh Rana on screen, director Shree Narayan Singh says, "When I read Sher Singh Rana, I was intrigued to meet him and know his journey and his experience. He is a man who went through various ups and downs in his life and it was quite an adventure when we

hear about his anecdotes. One can't overlook the fact of how he brought pride to his community when he defied the Taliban and brought back the remains of one of our greatest ruler - Prithviraj Chauhan - from Afghanistan. I was really curious to know him more and I am sure the audience will have the same intrigue once they see his story on the big screen."

Talking about choosing a real-life story as his new production, Vinod Bhanushali says, "Sher Singh Rana has led an eventful life. It was his courage, his willpower to fight for his community and how single-handedly he did things that brought pride to Rajputs that I found interesting. Director Shree Narayan Singh is known for telling interesting stories that also address real issues like Toilet: Ek Prem Katha and I think he will bring the nuances of Sher Singh Rana's life very well on screen." The makers will soon announce the cast and plan to start shooting next year.

The biopic on Sher Singh Rana is produced by Vinod Bhanushali, Kamlesh Bhanushali, Vishal Gurmani, Vishal Tyagi, Mohammed Imran Khan and co-produced by Jui Parekh Mehta under the banners of Bhanushali Studios Limited and Matargashti Films.



Sara Khan