

# absolute india

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**NATION** >02  
Shah chairs MHA's meeting on coastal security...



**HOLLYWOOD** > 06  
'Sex and the City' revival will address race in storylines...



**SPORTS** > 07  
Bowlers, Warner shine in Australia's 7-wicket win over...



## BJP NOT GOING ANYWHERE, PROBLEM IS WITH RAHUL: PRASHANT KISHORE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Political strategist Prashant Kishore has said that the Bharatiya Janata Party 'is not going anywhere for many decades and the problem with Rahul Gandhi is that he thinks that the BJP will be overthrown by people.' Kishore said this in Goa on Wednesday and a clip of his Q and A session has been shared in social media. The statement comes at a time when the Trinamool is spreading itself outside Bengal, and is also a proof that the talks of Kishore's entry into the Congress have ended.

He said that the BJP will be at the centre of Indian politics for years, it wins or loses, much like the Congress in the first 40 years after Independence.

"BJP is going to be the centre of Indian polity, whether



they win, whether they lose, like it was for the first 40 years for Congress. BJP is going nowhere. Once you secure 30 per cent plus votes at the national level you are not going away in a hurry. So do not ever get into this trap that people are getting angry and they will throw away (Prime Minister Narendra)

Modi," he said. "Maybe they will throw away Modi, but BJP is not going anywhere. They are going to be here, they are to fight it out for the next many decades. It is not going in a hurry," Kishore answered when asked.

He added: "Unless you examine, understand and

take cognizance of strength, you will never be able to put a counter to defeat him (BJP & Modi's strength)". He said the problem with Rahul Gandhi is he does not realise this but thinks people will overthrow the BJP.

Earlier, he had said that the Congress party's fortunes in Uttar Pradesh, which goes to the polls next year, would not be revived despite all the "hype" generated around the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, and the subsequent arrest of party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

"People looking for a quick, spontaneous revival of GOP led opposition based on #LakhimpurKheri incident are setting themselves up for a big disappointment. Unfortunately there are no quick fix solutions to the deep-rooted problems and structural weakness of GOP," Kishore, who played an instrumental role in propelling

Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress back to power in the West Bengal Assembly polls held in March-April this year, wrote on Twitter.

The remarks have come amid "strong speculation" that Kishore would join the Congress and the party was deliberating on the issues raised by him.

Even as no one in the party is averse to the idea of Kishore joining the Congress, the party leaders have said that he should not be given sweeping powers regarding elections.

The Congress is preparing for the upcoming Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh along with a few other states which are going to polls next year. In the politically crucial north Indian state, the Congress is pitted against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party.

## Centre extends Covid containment measures till November 30

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Centre on Thursday extended the Covid-19 containment measures till November 30. The order issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs and signed by the Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla said, "In exercise of the powers, conferred under Section 10(2)(1) of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, the Union Home Secretary undersigned hereby directs that the Order of the Ministry of Home Affairs of even number, dated 28 September, 2021, to ensure compliance with the Prompt & Effective Containment Measures for COVID-19, as conveyed vide Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) dated 21 September, 2021, will remain in force up to the 30 November, 2021." In a letter written to all Chief Secretaries of the States and union territories (UTs), Bhalla said that the existing protocols for curbing the spread of Covid-19 will continue till November 30.

Referring to the daily cases and overall number of patients in the country were declining steadily but there were localised spread of virus in a few states, Bhalla further said that Covid appropriate behaviour during the festive seasons must be adhered to as the this pandemic continues to be a pub-



lic health challenge in the country.

He also asked the states to speed up the vaccination and also inoculation of the second dose to the eligible persons.

The Home Secretary also said that there should be a continued focus on the fivefold strategies Test-Track-Treat-Vaccination and adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour to safely navigate through the festive season to avoid the possibility of surge in Covid cases and also to check the positivity rates, status of the availability of ICU beds in the hospitals under their jurisdiction.

A total of 16,156 new cases were reported on October 28 as per the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare while the number of the new cases remained below 20,000 for the consecutive 20th day. During this period 17,095 new recoveries have been reported and 733 deaths.

## 2022 to be celebrated as friendship year for India, ASEAN: Modi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday announced that 2022 will be celebrated as the friendship year for India and ASEAN countries as both have completed 30 years of partnership.

The event will coincide with India's celebrations of the 75th year of Independence from the colonial regime, he added.

While participating in the 18th edition of India-ASEAN Summit, Modi said, "India is committed to deepen its relations with the next presidency, Cambodia and country-coordinator Singapore."

"History is witness to the fact that India and ASEAN have had relations for thousands of years. India-ASEAN relations are reflected in everything, including



in our shared values, traditions, languages, scriptures, architecture, culture, food, the Prime Minister noted.

Speaking about the Covid pandemic which engulfed the whole world, he further said that the Covid period was also a test of India-ASEAN friendship. "Our mutual ties in the Covid time will keep strengthening our corporations in future and form a base for goodwill between our people," Modi added.

He further said that the

unity and centrality of ASEAN has always been a priority for India and history has witnessed the fact that "we have had ties since thousands of years," he said.

The Prime Minister also said that India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) and ASEAN's Outlook for the Indo-Pacific are the framework for their shared vision and mutual cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

During the Summit, the head of the member states will review the progress of India and ASEAN Strategic Partnerships which was signed in 2012. They will also review the progress achieved in the sectors like Covid-19, health, trade and investment, connectivity, education among others, the officials of India's Ministry of External Affairs said.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Israeli Ambassador Naor Gilon on Thursday said that the Pegasus snooping issue is India's internal matter.

The NSO is a private company and it has a licence to sell its software to the government entities only, he added.

Gilon said: "This is an internal issue of India and I can't speak beyond this point. This is the only main requirement that... under the requirements, they cannot sell it to non-governmental actors."

Responding to a query if the Indian government will contact them, he said that he has no idea whether the Indian government has contacted them or not.

Referring to the explosion that took place last year near the Israeli embassy in Delhi, he said that the perpetrators are yet to be nabbed; however, the investigating agencies of both the countries are cooperating



with each other.

"We are thankful to the government of India for providing security to all embassy personnel," Gilon said.

Talking about the newly-formed quad with Israel, India, the US and UAE, the Ambassador said it is totally an economic forum based on mutual cooperation among the participant



dren should not suffer there", he commented.

Saying that Israel is a technologically sound country but it cannot go for industrial manufacturing, the partnership between India and Israel can work better for industrial productions.

Sharing the details of the recently-concluded visit of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, he said that the visit was most successful in terms of bilateral relations.

Jaishankar met all important Ministers of the Israel government and also met the Indian Diaspora, the Indian Jews who have recently settled there.

"It was a very warm visit, very friendly which I think emphasised on the strategic partnership declared during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Israel. I think that the visit was in the spotlight of 30 years of diplomatic relations which we are going to celebrate on January 29 next year," Gilon added.

## Delta subvariant A.Y 4.2 now present in 42 countries: WHO

GENEVA | Agencies

More than 26,000 cases of the Delta Covid subvariant AY.4.2, considered up to 15 per cent more transmissible than the original Delta, has been reported from 42 countries, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

AY.4.2 is a newly-designated Pango lineage within Delta Variant of Concern, which has three additional mutations, including two in the spike protein: A222V and Y145H.

A total of 17 samples of AY.4.2 variant of the Covid-19 virus have also been identified in India. As per data available on GISAIID, it includes seven in Andhra Pradesh, four in Kerala, two each in Telangana and Karnataka, and one each in Maharashtra and Jammu and Kashmir.

GISAIID, which stands for Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data, is an open-access database.

"An increase in AY.4.2 sequence submissions has been observed since July 2021, and as of October 25, over 26,000 AY.4.2 sequences have been uploaded to GISAIID from 42 countries, the WHO said in its latest weekly epidemiological update.



The majority (93 per cent) of these sequences were reported from the UK, where a gradual increase in the proportional contribution of AY.4.2 has been observed; accounting for an estimated 5.9 per cent of overall Delta cases reported in the week beginning October 3, the WHO said.

The global health body said that it "continues to monitor and assess SARS-CoV-2 variants, including the AY lineages within Delta VOC".

The report added that further studies assessing if AY.4.2 is more contagious or deadlier are

already underway. "Epidemiological and laboratory studies are ongoing to assess if AY.4.2 confers any additional phenotypic impacts (e.g. a change in transmissibility or a decrease in the ability of antibodies to block the virus)," the WHO mentioned.

A "gradual increase" in the proportion of AY.4.2 Covid cases has been observed in Britain, with the new variant making up for about 10 per cent of all new cases, compared to just 5 per cent last month.

A separate genome sequencing report of the National Centre

for Disease Control report has detected seven cases of AY.4.2 in Indore. The NCDC report said that this sub-lineage AY.4 had caused the surge in Covid cases in Indore in September.

Other countries seeing AY.4.2 cases include Poland, Germany and the Netherlands.

According to the latest surveillance data, AY.4.2 makes up about 16 per cent of all Covid cases in Poland, Daily Mail reported.

Scientists say it is still 'unclear' if AY.4.2 is actually more transmissible because too little is known about its mutations.

However, Professor Francois Balloux, a geneticist and Covid commentator at University College London who was among the first to raise concerns about AY.4.2 last week, said the slower rise was 'still compatible' with a 10 per cent transmission advantage.

Professor Jeffrey Barrett, who heads up Covid surveillance at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, said the data was "consistent with a small, but real, growth advantage vs other Delta".

While AY.4.2 is not officially named, it could soon be called the 'Nu' variant under the Greek alphabetical system for naming new strains of the Covid virus.

## Not against particular festival, celebration: SC says follow cracker ban order strictly

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Ahead of Diwali, the Supreme Court on Thursday said the firecracker ban order needs to be strictly followed.

A bench headed by Justice MR Shah emphasized that it is not against any particular festival, but it is also essential to protect the right to life. The bench also comprising Justice A. S. Bopanna said: "We do not want to come in the way of enjoyment, but for enjoyment one cannot play with the fundamental right of others."

The bench added the authorities entrusted with the task to implement orders must show more responsibility. It clarified that it has not put a 100 per cent ban on firecrackers and all crackers were not banned, but celebration with firecrackers made from banned material should not be permitted.

The bench observed, "Can we say that enjoyment can be done at the cost of other's lives? Today also we can see that crackers are being sold in the market".

It added that last time it had emphasized that there should be some accountability on behalf of those who had to implement the



order. The bench said: "We want full implementation of our orders. We are not against a particular community".

It further added that the court wants to send a strong message that it is there for the protection of fundamental rights of citizens.

The bench said it is not against any particular festival and also not against celebration, but it cannot permit anybody to play with the right to life of others in the guise of celebration.

"We have to enforce the previ-

ous orders", added the bench. A counsel in the matter mentioned about the ban of crackers in Delhi. The bench replied, "We know what people of Delhi are suffering...We want implementation of the court's orders".

The hearing in the matter will continue on Friday.

The top court is hearing a plea in the firecrackers case, where it has sought reply from firecracker manufacturers, on a CBI preliminary enquiry report claiming manufacturers were using banned barium chemicals.



## BENGAL LAW MINISTER MOLOY GHATAK QUIZZED BY ED IN DELHI

Kolkata | Agencies

West Bengal Law Minister Moly Ghatak who earlier skipped two interrogations regarding his alleged involvement in the multi crore coal smuggling case appeared before the Enforcement Directorate on Thursday in Delhi. Ghatak was interrogated by the probe agency for over more than four hours.

Though Ghatak was unavailable for comments but sources close to the law minister confirmed that Ghatak went to ED, Delhi office on Thursday at 11.30 a.m. and he was handed over a questionnaire concerning his connection in the case. ED officials said that he was asked to write all the replies in his own hand.

The ED officials wanted to know that being the MLA of the constituency, whether he was aware of the coal-smuggling going on there and if he was aware whether he had taken any steps or informed the police or higher authorities regarding this.

The ED officials admitted that



Ghatak's name cropped up during interrogation of several accused in this case and there was also allegation about financial transactions. Ghatak was also asked regarding this.

Earlier Ghatak skipped two interrogations and had even asked the ED officials to come to Kolkata and interrogate him. He was last summoned on September 13 when the minister in a mail sent to ED office had said that as there were bypolls in the state, he was preoccupied with the election work and he will not be able to appear before the probe agency. Earlier he was asked to appear before the agency on September 2 when he avoided the interrogation citing health issues. At that time the

Minister also said that as he is stationed in Kolkata and ED has an office in the city, the officers can come down to Kolkata and record his statement. The minister also said that he was ready to cooperate with the probe agency to the best of his knowledge.

The case, under criminal sections of the (PMLA), was filed by the ED after studying a November, 2020 FIR of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) that alleged a multi-crore coal pilferage scam related to the Eastern Coalfields Ltd mines in the state's Kunustoria and Kajora areas in and around Asansol. Local state operative Anup Majhi alias Lala is alleged to be the prime suspect in the case.

The ED had earlier claimed that Ghatak was a beneficiary of funds obtained from this illegal trade. According to ED sources, the investigators have spoken to more than one person in this connection, collected information and recorded their statements. The name of Ghatak has come up on several occasions during these interrogations. Apart from the ED, the CBI is also investigating the coal scam.

## Ex-CAG Vinod Rai apologises to Sanjay Nirupam

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former CAG Vinod Rai on Thursday apologised to Congress leader Sanjay Nirupam in a defamation case filed by the later.

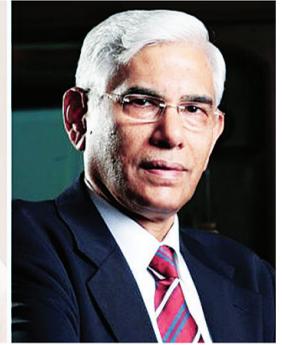
The case was being heard in the Patiala House court in Delhi. Sanjay Nirupam said, "Finally former CAG Vinod Rai tendered an unconditional apology to me in a defamation case filed by me in MM Court, Patiala house, New Delhi today. He must apologize to the nation now for all his forged reports about 2G and Coal block allocations done by the UPA Govt."

The case pertains to a book which was written by Vinod Rai in 2015 and during its publicity allegedly had said that when he was investigating the coal block alloca-



tion, Congress leader Sanjay Nirupam had met him and told him not to mention Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's name.

The Congress leader said it was totally false and first he asked him to withdraw his comment, but when he did not do so, he filed a case in the Patiala House Court.



In his affidavit, Rai said, "That I understand the pain and agony my statement had caused to Shri Sanjay Nirupam, his family and well wishers, I offer my unconditional apology."

He said, "I had inadvertently and wrongly mentioned the name Sanjay Nirupam as one of the MPs

who had pressured me to keep the then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's name out of CAG report on 2G spectrum during the meeting of PAC and JPC."

He said Nirupam's name was factually incorrect.

In 2017, a special CBI court had acquitted all the 18 accused, including A. Raja and K. Kanimozhi, in the 2G

spectrum allocation case. The scam came to light almost seven years ago when the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in a report held then Telecom Minister A. Raja responsible for causing the state exchequer a loss of Rs 1,76,379 crore by allocating 2G spectrum licences at throwaway prices.

## Thane Court issues non-bailable warrant against Param Bir Singh

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major embarrassment, Thane Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on Thursday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against controversial IPS officer, Param Bir Singh, in an extortion complaint.

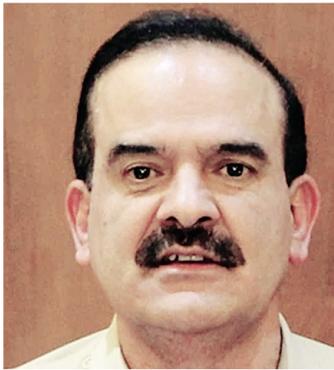
The CJM RJ Tambe ordered the Senior Police Inspector of Thanenagar Police Station to arrest the accused (Singh) and produce him before the court.

Simultaneously, the Mumbai Police have filed an application in the Mumbai Sessions Court seeking a non-bailable arrest warrant against Singh, and the court will hear the matter on Friday.

There is speculation in some circles that Singh absent from his duty as the Commandant-General of Maharashtra Home Guards since May may have fled the country.

The former high-profile Commissioner of Police, Mumbai, Singh stoked a massive political row when he dropped a letter bomb hurling corruption charges against the then home minister Anil Deshmukh, after he was transferred from his post.

Since then, he faces several cases of corruption, extortion, misuse of office in Mumbai



and Thane -- both cities where he served as CoP.

In the past few months Singh repeatedly failed to appear before the Maharashtra Government's Justice (retired) K.U. Chandiwai Commission of enquiry set up to probe the charges against him.

## SHAH CHAIRS MHA'S MEETING ON COASTAL SECURITY

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday chaired a meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs on coastal security. Addressing the meeting, he said that for the first time all the islands of the country have been surveyed and many important decisions are being taken on the basis of reports received in this regard.

"Many ministries and agencies have a role in ensuring coastal security and by establishing mutual coordination amongst them, coastal security will be further strengthened after a meeting with stakeholders very soon under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said. Noting that, the Ministry has been seriously assessing the challenges being faced in coastal security, he said the suggestions given in the meeting, the appropriate and adequate steps would be taken to make coastal security impenetrable along with the states. He said that as per the guidelines of PM Modi, the Department of Border Management under the MHA has been working over the last few years in the direction of further strengthening of coastal security and more can be done with suggestions received from all. The Members of the committee present in the meeting also suggested the formation of a separate Coastal Police Cadre in all the states and monitoring of islands and coastal areas with the help of technology.



## B'desh Navy Chief meets India's Western Naval Command head

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Bangladesh Navy Chief Admiral M Shaheen Iqbal visited Mumbai naval base on Thursday and held interaction with Western Naval Command Chief Vice Admiral R. Hari Kumar to enhance and strengthen jointmanship.

The Bangladesh Navy Chief is in India from October 22 to October 29 and it coincides with the golden jubilee celebration of the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, Indian Navy said in a statement.

The two Admirals discussed various issues pertaining to enhancing and strengthening jointmanship, interoperability, training, anti-terrorism collaboration

and overall bilateral co-operation as part of the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two nations.

India and Bangladesh are bound by a common history, culture and language. The co-operation between the two nations in the War of 1971 is still rejoiced with great pride and fondness by peoples of both nations.

Admiral Hari Kumar brought out during the exchange that India is proud to have contributed to the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 and that as a nation, India has immense respect for the role played and sacrifices made by the people of Bangladesh in the war.

He also said that Indians

are participating enthusiastically in many commemorative events of the golden jubilee of Bangladesh liberation. Admiral Hari Kumar also assured visiting Bangladesh Navy Chief Admiral M. Shaheen Iqbal that all assistance required for the successful conduct of the International Fleet Review by Bangladesh in 2022 will be extended.

Admiral Iqbal, being an alumni of the ASW School in Kochi, was also highly appreciative of the training cooperation between the two navies and pointed out how personnel of the two navies often cross-train with each other in courses such as Special Ops, Diving, Aviation Tech and others.

## 'CAN'T HOLD UP RESULTS OF 16 LAKH STUDENTS', SC PAVES WAY FOR DECLARATION OF NEET RESULTS 2021

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the Bombay High Court's order to reconduct the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for two candidates, paving the way for the declaration of results of over 16 lakh students who took the exam.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) had moved the top court stating that the results were being delayed due to the high court's order.

A bench headed by Justice L. Nageswara Rao said: "We cannot hold up the results of 16 lakh students."

The bench told the petitioner's counsel "stay and notice. We will decide what happens to the two students upon reopening (after Diwali vacation). In the meanwhile, we issue notice and file a

counter".

The bench noted that Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, has said whatever confusion is there, it will be rectified.

"You are talking about your clients but not considering the lakhs of students who are waiting for the results," the bench told the petitioner's counsel.

In its plea, the NTA had challenged the Bombay High Court order to hold the NEET again for the two candidates from Solapur, who alleged that their test booklet and OMR sheet got mixed up at the examination centre before the beginning of the test. The NTA had contended in the apex court that due to the high court order, the declaration of the results of over 16 lakh students was being delayed.

## Religious places of minorities in Tripura get police protection

Agartala | Agencies

After a few stray incidents, security has been beefed up in different parts of Tripura while police protection was provided to the religious places of the minorities including all mosques in different districts, police said on Wednesday.

An official of the North Tripura district administration told IANS on Wednesday night that as a precautionary measures, prohibitory orders under Section 144 was promulgated in Panisagar and Dharmanagar sub-divisions following stray incidents including stone pelting in two areas.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and its sister bodies have organised protest rallies in different parts of Tripura including capital Agartala protesting against communal violence in Bangladesh and urging the government in Dhaka to protect the lives and properties of the minorities and their religious institutions in that country.

A police official said that security personnel were deployed in the mixed populated areas, in and around big mosques and regular police patrolling are being conducted in other sensitive places.

The Tripura police in a series of tweets said that certain persons by using fake social media IDs are spreading fake



news and rumours in Tripura. "It is informed that the law and order situation in the state is absolutely normal. We request people of all communities not to support and subscribe to such fake IDs and do not spread such fake pictures. We have already registered cases and legal action will be taken against all those spreading fake news and communally sensitive rumours," the police tweets said.

Tripura State Jamiat Ulama, a branch of all-India organi-

sation Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind urged the state government to protect Islamic beliefs, identity, heritage and places of worship and provide police protection to all mosques in Tripura. "The government has taken steps to maintain peace and harmony in Tripura," Tripura Jamiat Ulama President Mufti Tayebur Rahman said.

Police spokesman Subrata Chakraborty said that Superintendent of Police of all eight districts have been asked to provide security to mosques and organise regular patrolling in vulnerable and mixed populated areas.

Besides the VHP, the ruling BJP, opposition CPI-M, Congress, Trinamool Congress and other parties and organisations including intellectuals separately condemned the communal violence in Bangladesh and met the officials of Agartala based Bangladesh Assistant High Commission and submitted memoranda addressing the government of the neighbouring country. In view of the violence, a film festival of the Bangladesh government in Agartala, which was scheduled to commence on October 21, has been postponed "due to unavoidable circumstances". "In the proposed film festival, 34 films, mostly on 'Mukti Yuddha' (1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh), were planned to be screened from October 21 to 23 in the Rabindra Satabarshiki Auditorium," an official told IANS.

## Andhra cabinet to push centre for caste census

Amaravati | Agencies

The Andhra Pradesh cabinet has decided to request the central government to conduct a caste-based census. The cabinet, headed by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, met on Thursday and took a slew of decisions.

Briefing the media after the cabinet meeting, information and public relations minister Purni Venkatramaiah a.k.a. Nani said the cabinet has authorized the backward castes welfare minister to place a resolution in the state Assembly for requesting Government of India to take up caste census of backward classes during the general census of 2021.

Venkatramaiah said that the cabinet has approved the cre-

ation of 1,285 posts in Medical Health and Family Welfare department, 560 pharmacist posts in YSR Urban clinics and 2,190 additional posts including teaching faculty, staff nurses and paramedical staff under Directorate of Medical Education aggregating 4,035 new posts in Health Department. The Minister said the state government had an aim of filling 41,000 vacancies in Medical Health department and has filled up 26,917 posts in last two and half years, and the remaining posts will be filled soon.

The government has decided to enter into an agreement with Solar Energy Corporation of India to procure 700 MW power at a tariff of Rs 2.49 per unit for 25 years, to supply nine hour day time free power to the farming

community on a sustainable basis.

The cabinet also cleared allotment of 130 acres of land to Adani Enterprises in Madhurawada, Vishakhapatnam for setting up a data center park, business park, skill university and recreation center, with an estimated investment of 14,634 crore and committed employment of 24,990 jobs.

The state cabinet has also approved amendments to the Cinematography Act 1965, to pave the way for the online ticketing platform managed by AP State Film, Television & Theater Development Corporation for issuing of cinema tickets, he said.

Tourism projects that received cabinet clearance on Thursday include projects at Shilparamam,

and Taj Varun Beach in Vishakhapatnam, and Hyatt Palace in Vijayawada. It was also decided to give incentives to these projects, under the tourism policy. Thursday's cabinet meeting also approved the formation of Economically Weaker Section (EWS) Welfare Department - a new department to implement welfare schemes for poor people belonging to the forward castes. The cabinet also approved formation of welfare corporations for the Jain and Sikh communities in the state.

The cabinet has decided to organise YSR Life Time Achievement and YSR Achievement Awards function on November 1 every year to coincide with Formation Day celebrations of Andhra Pradesh state.

## BJP to highlight Modi govt's initiatives to get Muslim votes

Team Absolute | New Delhi

To win over support of Muslim voters in the upcoming assembly elections in five states, the BJP plans to focus its campaign on initiatives taken by the Narendra Modi Government for better 'Talim' (education) and 'Tijarat' (business) for the community during last seven years.

To highlight the Modi government's initiatives under talim and tijarat, BJP minority morcha will be launching a nationwide campaign from November with special focus on poll bound Uttar Pradesh where Muslims constitute around 20 per cent of total electorate.

BJP minority morcha national president Jamal Siddiqui told IANS that the Modi government worked to educate and economic empowerment of Muslims and the party will highlight these initiatives through its special campaign 'talim' and 'tijarat.'

"Through 'karyashala' (workshop), our workers will tell the minority about the Modi government's commitment to uplift and empower them. The workshops will be held in every district. Our workers will explain to them about schemes to get benefits of better talim and ways to start new tijarat for economic empowerment," Siddiqui said.

As per plan a training workshop will be



held at national level in which workers of minority morcha will be explained about various schemes of the Modi government and ways to avail it. Trained workers will travel across Uttar Pradesh and other poll bound states of Punjab, Goa, Manipur and Uttarakhand where assembly polls will be held early next year. Later on similar workshops will be held in the rest of the country. Workshops will be held at district level and state level. "Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi will address the state level workshop," Siddiqui said. Along with BJP minority morcha workers senior party leaders including union ministers, ministers in state government, members of parliament and MLAs will participate in reach out programmes. The saffron party is also trying to secure a minimum of 5,000 Muslims or minority votes in each assembly constituency of Uttar Pradesh.



# WON'T ARREST SAMEER WANKHEDE WITHOUT GIVING PRIOR NOTICE: MAHARASHTRA GOVT TO BOMBAY HC

Sameer Wankhede is in the eye of a political storm following allegations of extortion in the high-profile cruise drugs case in which actor Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan was arrested. The officer is facing the departmental vigilance probe.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government told the Bombay High Court on Thursday that it will not arrest NCB's zonal director Sameer Wankhede without giving him a prior notice of three working days, in connection with the allegations of extortion and corruption levelled against him.

Wankhede had approached the Bombay High Court seeking transfer of the Mumbai Police investigation into complaints of alleged extortion against NCB officers including him to CBI. Wankhede had sought interim protection from arrest. He also sought direction from the HC that all FIRs filed or proposed to be filed against him for extortion or corruption be investigated by the NIA or CBI and not the Maharashtra government.

The Public Prosecutor representing the Maharashtra government told a division bench of Justice Nitin M Jamdar and Justice Sarang V Kotwal that a notice of three working days will be given to Wankhede before arrest. The court said that this statement made by the Public prosecutor



will suffice for this petition and disposed of the same. "Needless to state we have not commented on merits of case," the high court said.

Wankhede's lawyer claimed that he has realised "design in the posts against him" and did not take names consciously to keep the majesty of law. "There is a vigilance probe ordered against me and the state is

going beyond its duty despite I being a central government officer probing the case. I will cooperate with the NCB, but now the state has formed an SIT. I am personally attacked by the state and my apprehension is that they will arrest me any day and therefore, interim protection is needed." Sameer Wankhede is in the eye of a political storm following allega-

tions of extortion in the high-profile cruise drugs case in which actor Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan was arrested. The officer is facing the departmental vigilance probe.

The NCB has ordered a vigilance inquiry into the allegations made by a witness, Prabhakar Sail, in the cruise drugs case of an extortion bid of Rs 25 crore by some agency officials, including Wankhede, to let off Aryan Khan. Meanwhile, the NCB official has denied any wrong-doing.

On Wednesday, the NCB's Deputy Director General (DDG)-northern region, Gyaneshwar Singh had said they have started recording the statement of the agency's Mumbai zonal director Sameer Wankhede in connection with the departmental vigilance probe into allegations of extortion in the drugs-on-cruise case.

Wankhede had earlier on Sunday wrote to Mumbai Police commissioner Hemant Nagrale, seeking protection from likely legal action "being planned" against him by unknown persons to falsely frame him concerning an alleged vigilance-related issue.

# Police arrest absconder NCB witness Kiran Gosavi

Pune: Agencies

In a key breakthrough, the Anti Extortion Cell (AEC) of Pune Police arrested absconder Kiran P. Gosavi, the prime 'Panch-Witness' of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in the October 2 cruise party raids who is wanted in several fraud and cheating cases by Maharashtra Police, here on Thursday.

Gosavi, who had sneaked into hiding for nearly a fortnight, was picked up from a lodge in Katraj, brought to the police headquarters and later placed under arrest, Pune Commissioner of Police Amitabh Gupta told media-persons.

"Let me make it clear. We have arrested him, he has not surrendered," Gupta said of Gosavi, whose selfie with Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan, had gone viral after the NCB swooped on the cruiser.

According to the police, from tech-intel it came to light that Gosavi was moving and hiding in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Jalgaon, Lucknow, Hyderabad and other places in the country, with police teams hot on his chase.



missing for the past nearly three weeks when his name first surfaced in the cruise party raids row.

He was detained and taken to the Pune Police headquarters where he is kept in a police lockup prior to completing the post-arrest formalities, and questioned by a team headed by a Pune Deputy Commissioner of Police.

Gosavi, with cases lodged against him in Mumbai, Thane and Pune had sneaked out of the state reportedly moving to various states after his name blew up in the NCB raids case.

Facing a lookout notice, just two days ago he created a midnight drama in Lucknow by announcing his surrender before the Mandiaon Police (Uttar Pradesh), but the move was aborted at the last minute. Official sources say that his attempts to surrender reportedly failed before the police in at least two states, both ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party, and finally he managed to reach Maharashtra where the AEC caught up with him on Thursday morning.

"At times, he used an alias of 'Sachin Patil' and stayed in various places. He is saying many things. Let's not get into details at this stage," Gupta added. When pointed out that Gosavi had been offering to surrender for many days, Gupta asked: "He has been saying so, but did he (surrender)?" The accused, nabbed in an old case registered in 2018, has been claiming to be a private detective, into an export-import business, dealing in electronic gadgets, etc, but Pune Police said all this would be investigated.

Earlier, hunted by the special teams of Pune Police, the AEC cornered Gosavi on the outskirts of the city around 3.30 a.m. on Thursday morning after he was reported

# 2nd time in 4 days, NCB's Sameer Wankhede seeks court 'protection'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

For the second time in four days, Sameer Wankhede, the embattled Zonal Director of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) moved the court seeking protection from possible arrest here on Thursday.

Rushing to the Bombay High Court on Thursday, a division bench comprising Justice Nitin Jamdar and Justice SV. Kotwal granted him partial relief after an assurance from the Mumbai Police.

"I am personally attacked by the state... My apprehension is they will arrest me. I want interim protection in the form of no coercive action," Wankhede appealed to the division bench. Simultaneously, through

his lawyer Atul Nanda, he prayed for transferring the alleged extortion and other investigations against him from Maharashtra to any other impartial central agency like the CBI or NIA.

The Mumbai Police's Public Prosecutor Aruna Pai assured that Wankhede would be given three working days' notice before his arrest, after which the court disposed off Wankhede's plea.

Last Monday, Wankhede and the NCB had approached the Special NDPS Court seeking directions not to take cognisance of a 'Panch-Witness' Prabhakar Sail's sensational allegations of extortion and other issues pertaining to the October 2 swoop on a rave party on board a luxury ship. A day before on Sunday,

Wankhede wrote to the Mumbai Police Commissioner Hemant Nagrale asking for help from possible legal action against him. Nationalist Congress Party Minister Nawab Malik, who has made a serial exposure on Wankhede, said: "It's ironic that the officer who had arrested and jailed all these people for so many days is now running around scared of being arrested himself and approaching the courts for relief..."

Senior Shiv Sena leader Kishore Tiwari, accorded an MoS status, wryly commented that the "NCB-BJP alliance" is now exposed and said those who have fabricated the drugs case should be prepared to face the consequences of their malafide actions.

# Wankhede family was Muslim: Sameer's ex-in-law's bombshell

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Wankhede family was Muslim, performed 'namaz' and 'Ramadan fasts' and were known to the family of Sameer's former wife Shabana Quraishi almost four years before marriage, revealed the latter's father Zahid Quraishi, here on Thursday.

Speaking to hordes of mediapersons, Quraishi the ex-father-in-law of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede said that the two families had "excellent relations" prior to his (Sameer's) wedding with his daughter.

"The marriage took place before they were Muslims... Otherwise it would not have materialised... They were good Muslims, performing 'namaz' and 'Ramadan rozas' also," Dr. Quraishi asserted, dropping a bombshell.

Shabana Quraishi was acquainted with Sameer Wankhede over three years before their engagement and got married some 10 months post-betrothal, and later they had a child out of the wedlock. The new disclosures come a day after the Wankhede family members vehemently denied that they were Muslims and asserted that they were Hindus.

In a climbdown of sorts following the furore,



Sameer Wankhede's father Dyaneshwar Wankhede said that his late wife addressed him by a pet name of 'Dawood', while his wife Kranti Redkar-Wankhede said he (Sameer) married in a Muslim ceremony as per the desires of his deceased mother. Nationalist Congress Party Minister Nawab Malik reiterated that the issue he had raised was not about Wankhede's religion, but his forged caste-papers on the basis of which he secured a Central government job in the IRS. "I

challenge them to prove me wrong... I shall quit my Ministerial post immediately... I dare them to drag me to any court of law and I shall ensure that all my charges are true with evidence," said Malik grimly, after his series of exposures on Sameer Wankhede's role in the NCB kicked up a huge political dust-storm. The Muslim priest Maulana Muzammil Ahmed, who performed the 'nikaah' (marriage) of Sameer Wankhede-Dr. Shabana Quraishi in Andheri west, on Wednesday confirmed that the bridegroom was a Muslim and his father's name was Dawood. "The bride was a Muslim, the bridegroom was also Muslim, their parents were Muslims... Otherwise I would not have performed it (nikaah)," Maulana Ahmed told media persons.

The row over Sameer Wankhede's religious credentials erupted after Malik on Wednesday posted his 'nikaah-nama' with his signature and the December 7, 2006 wedding pix of the couple in Muslim attire, and how he had allegedly forged his caste certificate later to get a reserved category government job.

However, the Wankhede family has rubbished all the allegations and some Bharatiya Janata Party activists have demanded his sacking from the state cabinet for misusing his official position.

# Maha Police nab 2 most wanted Maoists disguised as civilians

Gadchiroli | Agencies

Marking another achievement, the Gadchiroli police have nabbed two most wanted Maoists -- carrying a reward of Rs 2,00,000 each -- disguised as civilians, during a covert operation, an official said here on Thursday.

They are Muda Masa Zohi, 32 and Mainu Dorpeti, who were participating as civilians during a rally of local villagers opposing the Surjagad Mining Project, said Superintendent of Police Ankit Goyal.

While Zohi is an Action Team Member, Dorpeti is a Jan Militia activist and both have serious cases lodged against them.

Following reliable intel that a group of Maoists masquerading as villagers



may infiltrate the rally on October 26, the Gadchiroli police deployed its own force members in plainclothes to detect them.

After successfully identifying them from the crowds, the covert police teams guided by the top officers like Somay Munde, Sameer Shaikh, Anuj

Tare, managed to trap and arrest them, said Goyal.

As per his records, Zohi was directly involved in the bloody encounters at Zarewada (February 27, 2019), Bodmeta (March 15, 2020), Koparshi (March 4, 2021) and other serious offences.

Dorpeti was personally linked with the brutal killing of one villager Somaji C. Sadmek on the Hedri-Surjagad Road on September 19 (2021), attacks on a security post in Gatta on May 11 and other major crimes.

Considering their series of violent acts and other offences, the Maharashtra Police had announced a reward of Rs two Lakh each on their heads, Goyal added.

# Ranveer lauds NCERT's move to introduce school texts in sign language

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Ranveer Singh, who has been lobbying with authorities to declare Indian Sign Language (ISL) as the country's 23rd official language, and signed a petition in support of the cause, has lauded the steps taken by India to make textbooks and other educational material accessible for deaf children in sign language.

Ranveer's independent record label, InClnk, which he has launched with Navzar Erane, has released multiple sign language music videos. In September, the 'Gully Boy' star

released two sign language videos to increase awareness about ISL.

He also lauded the MoU signed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) with the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) to assist deaf children in Classes 1 to V with educational material in sign language.

In a statement, Ranveer said that it was "a huge step forward in a truly inclusive society". He added that "inclusivity leads to accessibility" and that he was "hopeful of what is to come in 2022" because the

country's leaders are "identifying with this movement". The availability of NCERT textbooks in ISL will ensure hearing-impaired children can now access educational resources and they will be a useful resource for teachers, teacher educators, parents and the hearing-impaired community. "The National Education Policy 2020 is a progressive move that is much needed by the deaf community and the nation and I commend this big step. This is an important start to equalise the playing field for the 70 lakh-plus citizens of the deaf community," Ranveer said.

# As Aryan Khan gets bail at last, Bollywood comes out in full support

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan has been granted bail by the Bombay High Court in a drug probe case which was levelled against him by the NCB. Although the full court order with reasons and bail conditions will be released by the court on Friday, the support for SRK and his son started pouring in from all corners.

Members of the fraternity took to social media to lend their support to Aryan and rejoiced at the serving of justice by the court.

Director Sanjay Gupta was the first to share his thoughts as he tweeted, "I'm very happy that Aryan Khan has gotten bail but also very upset with a system that kept a young man behind bars for more than 25 days for something he never did. That has to change!!! God bless you and be strong Aryan Khan."

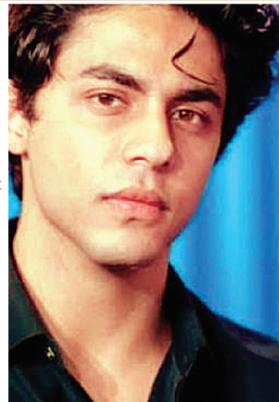
Ranvir Shorey followed by tweeting, "Der hai, andher nahi. #justice." "Scam 1992" director Hansal Mehta took a dig at NCB as he posted, "I want to have a blast tonight!" Sonu Sood wrote in Hindi, "When time serves jus-

ice, it doesn't call for witnesses."

Ram Gopal Varma, who is known for his unconventional and witty remarks, said, "So if it just took Mukul Rohatgi's argument to get bail for Aryan, does it mean his earlier lawyers were so incompetent that he had to spend so many days in jail needlessly?"

Actor R Madhavan tweeted, "Thank God. As a father I am so relieved. May all good and positive things happen."

Mika Singh also shared his feelings as he tweeted, "Congratulations to #AryanKhan and to the other accused for getting bail. I'm so happy that it was finally granted, bro @iamsrk Bhagwan



ke ghar mein der hai andher nahi'. You have contributed hugely to the fraternity. God bless both you and your family."

Aryan Khan had been detained on October 2 from a cruise ship in Mumbai when a team of Narcotics Control Bureau boarded the cruise disguised as

# After 27 days, Aryan, Arbaaz and Munmun prepare to go home on bail

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major relief, the Bombay High Court on Thursday granted bail to Aryan Khan, Arbaaz Merchant and Munmun Dhamecha who were nabbed in the cruise ship rave party raided by

the Narcotics Control Bureau. While granting a conditional bail to the trio, Justice N.V. Sambre passed the operative order and the detailed order is expected on Friday.

Accordingly, the trio of Khan, Merchant and Dhamecha will not step out of the jails till the court's orders are received, said a defence lawyer.

The bail verdict came after over 9 hours of hearing spread over three afternoons at the packed hall of the high court given the unprecedented public interest in the goings-on.

"The high court has granted bail to Aryan, Arbaaz and Munmun," said a victorious Mukul Rohatgi, the former Attorney General of India, who

represented the son of Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan in the critical final three days of arguments. The advocate-on-record for Aryan, Satish Maneshinde, glanced upwards and briefly commented: "God is great". Rohatgi declined further com-

ments till the detailed bail order is received, which will be sent to the Arthur Road Central Jail to process before they actually step out of their barred enclosures. Nationalist Congress Party Minister Nawab Malik welcomed the bail order and said that they should have been granted bail on the very first day of their arrest. "The NCB has concocted a totally false case... They kept changing their stance to deny bail to the accused. It's a 'farziwada' which will not stand the scrutiny of the courts," Malik asserted. The NCP leader, who has been making serial exposures on the NCB Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede, said: "It's ironic that the officer who had jailed these people for so many days is not running scared of being jailed and approaching the courts for relief."

The accused trio -- along with five others -- were detained on October 2 when the NCB swooped on the alleged rave party aboard the Cordelia Cruise ship. The following day (October 3) they were formally arrested and have been away from their homes for the past 27 days as their case grabbed national attention.



## EDITOR'S SPECS

## Indian cricket team disappoints by not standing up for Mohammad Shami,

**V**irat Kohli has a social media following that the country's political parties would be envious of. Other cricketers in India's World T20 squad are also A-listed influencers. But when their long-time mate, Mohammad Shami, an India regular in charge of a new ball for close to a decade, was targeted and abused, and his faith was invoked after the loss to Pakistan, those eagerly followed timelines remained silent. The team that gets into a tight huddle before every game, a reassuring picture of solidarity in a diverse nation, didn't form the same ring of support for Shami. Hours before, however, the images of Kohli and his teammates congratulating Pakistani players sent out a heart-warming signal - that sportsmanship and grace could be found in defeat; that an India-Pakistan cricket match did not have to be overshadowed by bitter enmity. Surely, then, a statement from the team would also have been an eloquent rebuttal to those who saw in Shami only his faith.

In the polarised world of social media, debate usually means extremists on either side hijacking the discourse. Add to this the potent mix of cricket, India, Pakistan and majority vs minority, and it's not difficult to see why many may see silence as a preferred option. But India's sporting icons, from Neeraj Chopra to Virat Kohli, can send out the much-needed message of inclusion to the young. But a player doesn't deserve civility based on the runs he concedes in the game. And this was a day when India was thrashed by 10 wickets, openers Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul went for single digits, finishers Ravinder Jadeja and Hardik Pandya failed to fire at the end and the world's top bowler Jasprit Bumrah was blunted by Pakistan's sauntering openers. It was not difficult to see why the digital mob had targeted Shami.

# Glasgow Climate Change Summit

The upcoming Glasgow Summit will prove whether the global leaders are ready to put the entire mankind to peril or whether sagaciously they'll work out a roadmap to counter climate change effectively and wisely.

A UN-sponsored marathon conference to tackle the global climate crisis is due to begin in the British city of Glasgow, the coming Sunday (October 31) and will continue till November 12. The world leaders will meet in the so-called last-ditch effort to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius this century, besides considering plans to how to stop burning fossil fuels, stabilise global temperatures and share money to adapt to increasingly extreme weather.

The global leaders signed up the Paris Agreement in 2015 - with a supposedly non-binding target to keep warming well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial temperatures, and ideally 1.5 degrees Celsius - yet most of the participating countries continue to burn fossil fuels and chop down trees at rates incompatible with that goal.

With the effects of climate change visible in both rich and poor countries alike, the leaders are meeting for what analysts expect to be the most meaningful conference since that pledge. Climate change has shot up the political agenda amid deadly weather extremes and mass public protest, and leaders of several polluting countries have pledged to decarbonise their economies by the middle of the century.

Summit's agenda  
The world leaders got to choose how fast their country will cut emissions Under the Paris Agreement, besides agreeing to update their action plans for doing so every five years. But in reality just weeks before the summit, big emitters like China, India and Saudi Arabia are yet to submit new plans.

Reportedly the UK, which is co-hosting the summit with Italy, has pressured countries to submit new plans and is pushing for concrete deals that would help reach those targets. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has called on world leaders to deliver bold commitments on "coal, cars, cash and trees."

The UK is pushing for a treaty that would "consign coal to history" and has proposed a deadline of 2040 to stop selling combustion engine cars. It also wants to put more money into stopping deforestation.

According to the UN Climate Change Framework Convention (UNFCCC) COP26 will work towards four goals: Secure global net-zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees Celsius within reach, adapt to protect com-



## UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE UK 2021

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

munities and natural habitats, mobilise assured finance to help developing and under-developed countries to attain emission cuts, and work together to deliver to form a list of detailed rules that will help fulfil the Paris Agreement.

On the really big question of keeping the 1.5 degree Celsius temperature threshold within reach, the likelihood is that a significant gap will remain even after Glasgow. Under the terms of the Paris Agreement, those countries that have used fossil fuels the most over the past two centuries - the US and from Europe - accept they will make the bigger cuts in the short term. The larger developing nations that are now the biggest source of carbon dioxide - chiefly China - accept they will make the bigger cuts in the longer term.

The environmentalist and experts say that we can very easily understand the colossal and disastrous results of the climate change, if we can observe the following four weather changes, which have been caused by the increasing global temperature due to the emission of CO2 and other poisonous gases like methane into the atmosphere: Hotter and longer heat waves, more persistent droughts, more fuel for wildfires, and more extreme rainfall events are the resultant climate change vagaries.

Meanwhile, an interesting report by the US intelligence agency's assessment of climate change has come out and as per the report,

India and Pakistan are among the 11 highly vulnerable countries in terms of their ability to prepare for as well as respond to the environmental and social impact of climate change. The first-ever US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on the issue of climate change has been published, and it adds that India along with China will be crucial in determining the trajectory at which there is a rise in global temperatures. On the other hand, the report has downplayed the role that the Western world has played in the problem of climate change. Further the report has warned that the possibility of geopolitical tensions and the risk to US national security are present due to global warming in the run up to 2040.

Expectations from the summit  
In another development before the summit, India has said that it will raise the topic of compensation to developing nations for the losses caused by climate disasters. The Indian environment ministry said that India stands with other low-income and developing nations on the matter and the compensation clause will be negotiated at the upcoming climate summit. India has reiterated that the countries responsible for climate change should finance what they have committed to and make technology available at an affordable cost. It is also confirmed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will put forward the Indian stand at the summit

Meanwhile, reports say that Jennifer Morgan, the executive director of Greenpeace International has warned against efforts by countries and corporations at the forthcoming talks in Glasgow to "green wash" their on-going pollution of the planet.

By doing so, governments would "give that kind of hope and confidence to their people that they got this and that they're willing to do things that their corporate interests don't want them to do", she added.

Morgan pointed to leaked documents showing how countries such as Australia, Brazil and Saudi Arabia are apparently trying to water down an upcoming UN science panel report on global warming as evidence of the way in which some governments' public support for climate action is undermined by their efforts behind closed doors.

Documents obtained by Greenpeace indicate how those countries wanted the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to remove references to the need to shut down coal-fired power stations, reduce meat consumption and focus on actual emissions cuts rather than ways to capture carbon already released into the atmosphere.

Various outcomes of the Glasgow Summit in view of the non-adherence to the goals of the Paris Agreement are being predicted. Yet, barring a complete collapse in the talks, there are likely to be a range of tangible outcomes. It's expected that more countries will announce they are moving away from using coal for energy, and more nations may probably sign up to curb methane emissions.

There is only a moral pressure to improve your offer, and a degree of embarrassment if a country doesn't step up to the mark. Glasgow will reveal whether this approach actually works.

As Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasena has put it succinctly and wisely in a recent speech, tackling climate requires a great deal of fortitude, imagination, hope and leadership. If western leaders listen, engage and act decisively on what science demands of them, there is still time to make COP26 the success it desperately needs to be.

## international

## UK SAYS FRANCE'S PLANNED SANCTIONS OVER FISHING 'DISAPPOINTING, DISPROPORTIONATE'

London | Agencies

A UK government spokesperson said that France's threats are "disappointing and disproportionate" as France is preparing sanctions against Britain over post-Brexit fishing rights.

Media reports said some French sanctions could come into effect from November 2 unless enough progress is made in its post-Brexit fishing row with Britain, reports Xinhua news agency.

France has complained that only half of the licenses needed were given to French fishing boats to operate in British territorial waters.

"France's threats are disappointing and disproportion-



ate, and not what we would expect from a close ally and partner," the British government spokesperson said in a statement. "The measures being threatened do not appear to be compatible with the trade and cooperation agreement (TCA) and wider

international law, and, if carried through, will be met with an appropriate and calibrated response. We will be relaying our concerns to the EU Commission and French government," the spokesperson said.

"As we have had no formal

communication from the French Government on this matter we will be seeking urgent clarification of their plans. We will consider what further action is necessary in that light," Britain's Brexit Minister David Frost said on Twitter.

Tension over fishing rights emerged between Britain and France in May after the British Channel island of Jersey's government introduced a new licensing system requiring French boats to show they have a history of fishing in Jersey's waters to obtain permits for operation in the area.

It led to both sides dispatching navy vessels to monitor the situation in Jersey's waters.

## Moon leaves for Italy for meeting with Pope Francis, G20 on Europe swing

Seoul | Agencies

South Korean President Moon Jae-in left for Italy on Thursday for a meeting with Pope Francis and a G20 summit with other global leaders expected to focus on tackling the climate crisis and helping the world end the Covid-19 pandemic.

The meeting with the Pope, set for Friday at the Vatican, is expected to focus on efforts to promote peace on the Korean Peninsula and resolve pending global issues, such as the pandemic, poverty and climate change, presidential officials said.

A possible papal visit to North Korea is expected to come up during the meeting as the pope has previously expressed a willingness to visit the North as part of efforts to promote peace on the divided



peninsula, Yonhap News Agency reported citing the officials as saying.

On Saturday and Sunday, Moon plans to attend the G20 summit to discuss with other world leaders ways to tackle the climate crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as how to foster the global economic recovery.

The pandemic and the climate crisis are expected to dominate the G20 summit, as Covid-19 is still undermining a fragile global economic recovery.

After Italy, Moon will visit Glasgow, Scotland, to attend the COP26, a UN climate summit, on November 1 and 2.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be high on the agenda at the UN climate talks, where Moon will deliver a keynote speech.

Earlier this month, Moon finalised a decision for South Korea to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent from the 2018 levels by 2030, sharply raising its previous goal as part of efforts to curb the pace of climate change.

Moon also confirmed South Korea will achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, as the nation started tackling the challenge of responding to climate change and attaining sustainable growth simultaneously. South Korea's decision to reduce emissions will be reported to the COP26 talks, officials said.

## S KOREAN DEF MIN HOLDS TALKS WITH US NAVY CHIEF

Seoul | South Korean Defence Minister Suh Wook held talks with the visiting US Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro here on Thursday during which they discussed security on the Korean Peninsula, the bilateral alliance and other issues.

According to the Defence Ministry, talks between Suh and Secretary Del Toro came as Seoul and Washington seek to ensure their defence readiness, following a recent series of North Korean missile launches, and advance joint efforts to resume dialogue with Pyongyang, reports Yonhap News Agency. During the meeting, Del Toro expressed expectation that the U.S. and South Korea will closely work together to ensure stability and prosperity in Northeast Asia and maintain the international order in the Indo-Pacific region, the Ministry said.

The Secretary also voiced hope that close cooperation between the Navies and Marine Corps of the two countries will help further develop the alliance.

Suh used the meeting to congratulate Del Toro on his inauguration in August and again express Seoul's appreciation for Washington's support for its mission earlier this year to evacuate nearly 400 Afghan co-workers and family members to South Korea. Del Toro was in Seoul as part of his first overseas trip since he took office. The trip includes visits to Japan and other parts of the Indo-Pacific region.



## US Senator unveils proposal to impose new tax targeting billionaires

Washington | Agencies

A US Democratic Senator has unveiled a proposal to impose a new tax targeting around 700 billionaires to help pay for President Joe Biden's economic agenda amid opposition from moderate members of the party.

The proposal, released by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Ron Wyden, would apply to US taxpayers with more than \$1 billion in assets or more than \$100 million in income for three consecutive years, reports Xinhua news agency.

"The Billionaires Income Tax would ensure billionaires pay tax every year, just like working Americans. No working person in America thinks it's right that they pay their taxes and billionaires don't," Wyden said in a statement.

"For too long billionaires have played by a different set of rules that allow them to cheat the system and pay nothing in taxes. Congress now has the historic opportunity to fix that," echoed Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren.

The billionaires income tax would target roughly 700 taxpayers and raise hundreds of billions of dollars, ensuring the wealthiest people in the country pay their fair share toward historic investments in child care, paid leave, and addressing the climate crisis, according to a summary of the proposal.



However, key Democrats have voiced concerns about the proposal.

"I don't like the connotation that we're targeting different people," Joe Manchin, a moderate Democratic senator from West Virginia, told reporters on Wednesday. Richard Neal, the Democratic chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, also said that there isn't support for the billionaires tax to get it through Congress.

Opposition to the billionaires tax in the House and Senate just a few hours after it was introduced, and after the White House said Biden backed the

plan, illustrates how far Democrats are from completing work on the centrepiece of their domestic agenda, according to Bloomberg News.

Democrats and the White House are hoping to reach an agreement on a framework for Biden's social spending plan before the president leaves for Europe at the end of the week.

"We still have some time. The President would like a bill before he leaves for Europe," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said on Wednesday at a press briefing.

## EU top court fines Poland amid legal row

Brussels | Agencies

The top court of the European Union (EU) has fined Poland 1 million euros (\$1.16 million) per day for ignoring a ruling of the bloc that called for the suspension of the country's Supreme Court disciplinary chamber.

The decision by the Court of Justice of the EU (ECJ) is the latest episode of a clash between Poland and the EU institutions over the rule of law, reports Xinhua news agency.

The European Commission had requested the financial penalty until the Polish government acts to improve the functioning of the Polish Supreme Court and suspends new laws deemed to undermine judicial independence.

The bone of contention is the Disciplinary Chamber of the Supreme Court, which has the power to discipline judges. Some Polish judges view the chamber as a tool to pressure judges to rule in favour of the governing authorities.

In July, the ECJ ordered



the suspension of the disciplinary chamber as an interim measure until a final decision on the matter.

However, this was ignored, so the European Commission filed yet another application for financial penalties to be imposed on Poland.

In its decision, the ECJ's vice president said that the dismantling of the chamber of judges "is necessary to avoid serious and irreparable harm to the legal order of the European Union and, consequently, to the rights which individuals derive from EU law and the values on which the Union is founded, in particular, that of the rule of law."

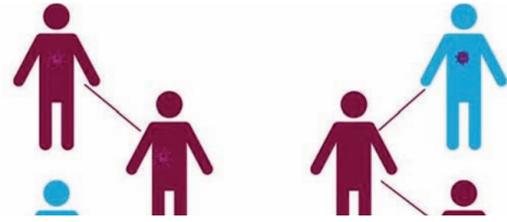


# CORONA SPREADING TANTACLES ONCE AGAIN IN STATE

The outbreak of corona virus is increasing in Madhya Pradesh. According to the Health Department, 20 new corona positive patients have been found here in the last 24 hours. The number of corona active patients in Bhopal has increased to 36 at present. After 4 months, once again new patients have started getting here in contact tracing.

Zafar Alam Khan | Bhopal  
www.absoluteindianews.com

The number of corona patients in Madhya Pradesh seems to be increasing once again. 20 new corona positive patients have been found during last 24 hours in the state. Of these, 9 patients have received both doses of the corona vaccine. On Tuesday, the maximum number of 11 patients was found in Bhopal, that was followed by 8 infected patients found in Indore and 1 in Dhar. In Indore, 2 children have also been infected with corona. Apart from this, one person has also died from Corona in Vidisha. At present, the number of corona active patients has increased to 36 in Bhopal alone. After 4 months, once again new patients are being found in contact tracing. In the last 5 days, the maximum number of 19 patients have been found in the Govindpura Industrial Area circle of the capital. A day earlier, 27 cases of corona



were found in Madhya Pradesh. In Indore, AY-4 variant was found in genome sequencing of corona patients. Doctors have described this variant as more infectious than Delta. In the Vardhman Green City of the capital Bhopal, 5 members of the same family were found to be corona positive. The Health Department has told that their neighbours are also positive. Here also in the contact tracing, the report of two people came positive. One of the positive patients is a 30-year-old woman. This woman has received both doses of the corona vaccine, whereas the

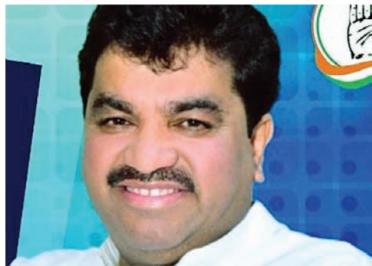
report of a 58-year-old male getting one dose is also positive. According to the information, reports of 8 people were found positive in Indore on Tuesday. A 2-year-old child is also included in these positive patients. Let me tell you, even a day earlier, a child was found infected with the corona virus here. At the same time, out of these 8 patients, one is from Jaipur and the other is from Bhopal. According to the Health Department, out of 8 patients found in Indore, except a 2-year-old child, the remaining 7 people have received both doses of the vaccine. According to the

Health Department, more than 100 positive patients were found in the state recently. 104 patients were found in 8 days. Maximum 36 were found in Bhopal, 28 in Indore, 14 in Dhar, 7 in Narsinghpur, 6 in Hoshangabad, 5 in Sagar, 2-2 infected in Jabalpur and Chhindwara. Apart from this, there have been 1-1 cases in Singrauli, Neemuch, Ratlam, Rajgarh. Let us tell you, so far 7 lakh 92 thousand 794 infected have been found in the state. Of these, 7 lakh 82 thousand 162 have been cured so far. 10 thousand 524 people have lost their lives due to Corona. Right now the recovery rate is more than 98%. On the increasing cases of corona, Bhopal Collector Avinash Lavania has said that these cases are more visible in big cities in the state. There are many people among the infected people who are travelling. Therefore it is an appeal to all to be alert. The goal of our team is to do maximum vaccination, so that the severity of corona can be reduced.

## MP HC notice to Cong MLA for 'misusing' govt land

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh High Court on Thursday issued notices to Congress MLA Sanjay Shukla and two others in a land misappropriation case. The notices were served on a plea alleging that three persons, including Sanjay Shukla, misappropriated land worth Rs 2,000 crore. Petitioner Rupesh Sharma, a resident of Indore, told the court that Shukla, along with Mahesh Sharma and Amit Sharma, took over government land meant for the poor, destitute and labourers.



The council representing the petitioner on Thursday told the media that the three accused were allotted government land for developing a housing unit for the poor under the urban housing scheme of the state government. But they used the land for their own interest, instead of developing a housing unit for the poor. Shukla is the MLA from Indore 1 Assembly constituency. "A complaint was filed in the Madhya Pradesh Lokayukta in 2018, which was ignored. Following which, a petition was filed before the High Court in the same year," the petitioner's advocate said.

## Farmers should not worry, fertilizers will be made available: CM

- 32 additional rakes will reach at different places in the state by October 30
- CM Shri Chouhan holds telephonic discussion with Union Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister Mandaviya
- Instructions for strict action on black marketing of fertilizer
- Appeal to use NPK and super phosphate



quantity of manure will be provided from time to time. 32 additional rakes will reach various places in the state by October 30. This urea will be made available to the farmers. Discussion has been held with the Government of India for supply of fertilizers in November. We will definitely get manure as per the requirement of the state. Chouhan was reviewing the status of fertilizers in the state at residence. Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Agriculture Production Commissioner Shailendra Singh, Additional Chief Secretary Agriculture Ajit Kesari and other officers were present in the meeting. Chouhan said that by the end of

October last year, 3 lakh 48 thousand metric tonnes of urea had been lifted by the farmers. This year 3 lakh 18 thousand metric tonnes have been lifted. The remaining quantity will also be made available by the end of this month i.e. by October 31. Last year till the end of October, 2 lakh 78 thousand metric tonnes of DAP was purchased by the farmer. This year, 2 lakh 31 thousand metric tonnes of DAP have been purchased by farmers and the remaining quantity is also being made available. Chouhan said that NPK is also available in adequate quantity. Chief Minister appealed to the farmers to use NPK and super phosphate also if need arises. Chouhan directed that there should be no black marketing of fertilizers in the districts under any circumstances and justified distribution system should be ensured. Chief Minister had a telephonic discussion with Union Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister Mansukh Mandaviya regarding supply of fertilizers in the state.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that availability of DAP, Urea, NPK will be ensured as per requirement of the state, farmers should not worry. He told farmers to shed the mindset of manure shortage and not to worry, required

## 3 KILLED AS AMBULANCE COLLIDES WITH TRUCK

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bhopal: Three people, including a pregnant woman, were killed after an ambulance called 'Janani Express' under the state government, collided with a stationary truck early Thursday morning. According to police, the ambulance, en-route to Jabalpur from Katni carrying four patients and their associates, rammied into a parked truck on a highway. While three people Sipahi Lal (22), Puniya Bai (25) and ambulance driver Dhanu Yadav (18) died on spot, three more injured were rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment, police said. The injured Lalman Rawat (40), Rajkumar (29) and Rekha Bai (28) all of a family are stated to be critical. Police said around 1.30 a.m., they received information regarding the accident and rushed to the spot. "Eyewitnesses said the speeding ambulance rammied into the truck parked on the road side," police said.

## CM pays tribute to SN Subbarao

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid tributes to Gandhian Padma-Shri SN Subbarao on the latter's demise. In a message to the media at his residence, Chouhan said that revered Bhai ji is no more. He devoted his entire life to social service and fought for the freedom of the country. He was a true follower of Mahatma Gandhi. Till his last breath he continued to serve the weaker section relentlessly. He left no stone unturned to serve the tribals in particular. Revered Subbarao Bhai ji had inspired 654 dacoits to lay down their weapons in front of Gandhiji's portrait and surrender on April 14, 1972 in Chambal region that echoed with the terror of dacoits then. Late Jayaprakash Narayan and Prabha Devi were also present on the occasion. Getting the dacoits who were synonymous with terror to take up the path of non-violence from violence and making them surrender in itself speaks volumes of Dr. Subbarao's influence and personality.

Chouhan said that Subbarao used to work selflessly and left his mark wherever he went. He made relentless efforts all his life to instil a sense of patriotism among the youth. Chief Minister recalled that revered Bhai ji had also participated in the Narmada Seva Yatra. Chouhan said that the last rites of Subbarao would be performed at Jaura with full state honors. I pay obeisance to such a person who served people. Chouhan said that due to ill health, I am unable to attend the funeral. The Madhya Pradesh government will always try to further his thoughts and works. Chief Minister Chouhan has prayed to God to grant peace to the departed soul.



## Benefit maximum youth in Mudra Yojana Gram Sabhas should be vibrant

- Give wide publicity to the scheme through all media
- Industries Commissioner gave instructions to all DICs

of employment, which gives impetus to the economic activities of the area and leads to the development of the area. For the fulfilment of this objective, Narahari has directed the District Collectors and other concerned officers to benefit maximum number of beneficiaries through Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana. It is noteworthy that Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana is a popular and comprehensive self-employment scheme of the Central Government. In which loans ranging from 50 thousand to 10 lakh rupees are given to people for manufacturing, trading and service activities for income from non-corporate business. Under this scheme, Mudra loans are given by commercial banks, RRBs, MFIs, NBFCs and small finance banks. Instructions have been given to benefit maximum beneficiaries by giving maximum publicity to the

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana. In which cases of Mudra loan will be prepared in the credit outreach programmes by the banks at the district, block level from October 16 to November 15. Banners, hoardings of information about Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana will be displayed in all major district, block level offices. So that more and more people can take advantage of this scheme. For the promotion of Mudra Yojana, at least one awareness camp will be organised every month at the district and block level by the Lead District Manager in coordination with the banks. Wide publicity will be given to this scheme through traditional media and social media. By broadcasting the success stories of the beneficiaries of this scheme through social media, other beneficiaries will be motivated for self-employment.

- Take the resolutions according to the needs of the villages and fulfil them
- Workshop of Panchayat representatives of 6 states organised in "Sabki Yojana - Sabka Vikas" Jan-abhiyan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

It is necessary for the villages to be vibrant for their sustainable and inclusive development. The Central Government along with all the state governments has taken initiative in this regard. Plans are being prepared for the development of every village, janpad and district panchayat. We have to achieve the goal of sustainable development set by the United Nations. While making their development plan, the Gram Panchayats should take a resolution as to what works they want to do in their villages. Also review the fulfillment of the resolutions taken last year. Implement schemes of various government departments and monitor works done by Gram Panchayats in Gram Sabhas. Sunil Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, today said this through video conferencing in a two-day workshop of offi-



cers of Panchayat and Rural Development and other related departments of 6 states including Madhya Pradesh in the "Sabki Yojana-Sabka Vikas" Jan-abhiyan for the year 2021-22. The workshop has been organised by the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj and National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Hyderabad at Academy of Administration, Bhopal. Sunil Kumar said that officers of various departments should mandatorily attend the Gram Sabhas and give proper presentation of the implementation of departmental schemes. Since last October 2, 14 thousand Gram Sabhas have been organised in the country, in which the attendance of the officials was not satisfactory. Only 42% of the gram sabhas were attended by the offi-

cers of the Agriculture Department. A letter is also being written to the state governments in this regard. E-Gram Swaraj Portal has been started by the Government of India. On this, information about various schemes of the government is being recorded in a brief form. In the workshop, training manual regarding the participatory village development planning process prepared by the Madhya Pradesh Panchayat and Rural Development Department was released and a short film related to the Gram Panchayat Development Plan was also screened. In the inaugural session, Ministry of Panchayati Raj Government of India Joint Secretary Rekha Yadav, NIRDPR Hyderabad Associate Professor Kathiresan, Director Panchayat Alok Kumar Singh were present.

## CM PLANTS COCONUT SAPLING



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a coconut sapling in the residence premises on Thursday. Coconut is a perennial and a monocot plant. Coconut is considered auspicious and providential in Indian culture. Therefore it is used in worship rituals and auspicious works. It is also very useful for health. Coconut water contains a good amount of electrolytes, which removes fatigue and weakness and gives freshness. Coconut is rich in potassium.

State government will provide free plots to families who do not have a plot of land. Leading a dignified life with minimum basic facilities is the right of every family. With the acquisition of plot, it will be easy to get loans from government schemes and banks



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the State Government has taken a historic decision and decided that such houses in which more than one family lives (family means husband, wife and children) and if they do not have any plot of land to live in then the government will provide them free plots. This will also open the way for the construction of houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and the benefits of other schemes will be also available. Chouhan said that the one who has taken birth on this earth has the right that at least a piece of land should be in his name to live in, on which he could build a house and live with his family. This is a historic decision in favour of the poor. In a message issued to the media at his residence, Chief Minister Chouhan said that under the Mukhyamantri Awasia Bhu-adhikar Yojna, the state government has

issued guidelines for allotment of plots on Abadi (populated) land in rural areas. Chouhan said that this scheme has been implemented with the objective of ensuring that every family has the right to a dignified life with minimum basic necessities. On getting the residential plot, it will help in getting loans from government schemes and banks. Mukhyamantri Awasia Bhu-adhikar Yojna has been started by the State Government to provide residential plots to the eligible families on the Abadi land in each Gram Panchayat in the rural areas. In the scheme, the District Collector has been empowered with respect to the availability of Abadi land. The maximum area of the plot for allotment will be 60 square metre. Family means husband and wife and their unmarried sons and daughters. Only those applicant families will be eligible to apply who are residents of the respective village. For getting residential plot, application has to be submitted online through SAARA portal. The village wise list of eli-

gible families under the scheme will be published for the purpose of inviting objections and suggestions from the concerned villagers, whose time period will not be less than ten days. The information will be pasted in public places like Chaupal, Gudi, Chavadi etc. and in Gram Panchayat offices. Eligible applicants will be given land ownership rights in the joint names of husband and wife on the basis of availability. No premium will be payable for allotment of plot. The applications received and accepted cases will be monitored by the Commissioner of Revenue. Families who have a house to live independently or have more than 5 acres of land or the family is not eligible to get ration from the Public Distribution System (PDS) shop or if any member of the family is an income tax payer or any member of the family is in government service or the name of the applicant is not registered in the voter list prevailing on January 1, 2021 in the village where he wants residential plot, will not be eligible under the scheme.



## 'it was nice' that 'The Crown' existed while preparing for 'Spencer': Kristen Stewart

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Kristen Stewart wants people to know that 'Spencer', where she stars as Princess Diana, is not a biopic or documentary. It is a fictional take on what happened when Diana decided during a family Christmas that she wanted out of her marriage to Prince Charles. "We're not trying to educate anyone, we're not trying to solve anything," Stewart told Variety at the film's Los Angeles premiere. "We're also not trying to like figure out whether or not we should have a monarchy. It's what did it feel like to be her, think about what those nights were like, think about what those meals

were like. 'It's the moments in between... They could have done the dinners and opening presents and the photo ops, but they didn't. They did getting dressed, cleaning up dirty dishes, and you know, crumpled up wrapping paper, I just think that's such an interesting way to tell the story that everyone thinks they know so well."

Stewart had four months to prepare before filming began.

"The script doesn't profess to know anything, it doesn't cover any black-and-white detail," Stewart said.

"But I read everything. And somehow, in a sort of abstract way, the script substantiated everything I learned in detail. So it was really nice that 'The Crown' existed. And it was really nice that we've had all these documentaries and this evolved relationship with what hap-

pened." Writer and director Pablo Larrain said during the interview that the idea of casting Stewart came about because both women faced immense fame and unparalleled media scrutiny. Stewart trained with dialect coach William Conacher, who also worked with Emma Corrin for 'The Crown' and with Naomi Watts when she played the titular role in 2013's 'Diana'. Stewart says she wasn't sure if she got Diana's voice correctly until "probably the first day I had to put it on camera". She was nervous.

"Pablo had to come up to me and like, tug the leash a bit. I think I wanted to put everything I learned about her condensed in a moment in the first few lines that I said on screen or on the first day of shooting and he was like, 'Kristen you got it. You have to trust that you've been

spending months and you have this beautiful coach and you've learned everything, so now child a little bit!'" Stewart remembered. "I was like 'OK, OK, OK, I've got this'. I would say on the second day we were we were sprinting."

Of knowing that Prince William and Harry are probably aware of the film, Stewart said: "We loved this person. We were curious about this person. We leaned all the way in. We played make-believe and hypotheticals to the extent that we do as filmmakers. "She absolutely, I can say unequivocally, believed in bridging gaps and that human connection being the sort of driving force of her life. I would like to think, obviously because we made this movie, that she would appreciate the fact that we were still talking about her in the most beautiful way."



## 'SEX AND THE CITY' REVIVAL WILL ADDRESS RACE IN STORYLINES

New York | Agencies

Actors Nicole Ari Parker, Sara Ramirez, Sarita Choudhury and Karen Pittman are joining the cast of the 'Sex and the City' revival, but the reboot will also tackle issues around race. "I'm excited to be a part of something that's different for them," Ari Parker told variety.com. "We can talk about the elephant in the room that there were no fully fleshed-out characters of colour, but now here's the four of us. We're real people, and they've been great to work with, and some of our (storylines) deal with race and deal with real experiences. It's New York City." The series, of course, will bring back some of its signature glamour as well. "We're grown-a\*\* women, so we know how to keep it sexy," she said, adding: "It's piping hot."

## Pattinson teases 'The Batman' premiere surprise at fundraiser

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Robert Pattinson co-hosted the 15th annual Go Gala event supporting the Go Campaign alongside fellow Go Global ambassadors Ewan McGregor, Lily Collins and the organisation's founder and CEO Scott Fifer. The livestream fundraiser marked the organisation's second consecutive year going virtual after the pandemic derailed plans to invite guests to the gala. Instead,

Pattinson, Collins and Fifer emceed from Cornerstone Plaza in Los Angeles, which 'The Batman' star relished.

"It's far less awkward than being alone and broadcasting virtually," Pattinson told Variety.

"But of course, nothing compares to hosting the gala in person with everyone together in the same room."

Since 2015, the actor has served as a global ambassador for the organization - which supports grassroots projects that bring direct relief to children in need of education and vocational training,

medical care, enrichment programs, and basic human rights. And at the end of the virtual fundraiser, Pattinson surprised Go Campaign supporters with a special treat. On December 14, via 'The Batman' and the Go Campaign social channels, Pattinson will reveal how one lucky winner (and a guest) can win a trip to the premiere of the superhero movie in early 2022. The actor got to work negotiating behind the scenes and surprised the Go Campaign team with what he'd been cooking up just days before the event. "Can you imagine our reaction?" Fifer exclaims.

"We cannot wait!" Though Pattinson may be suiting up as a superhero for the first time in 'The Batman', the folks behind the Go Campaign have always considered the actor to be pretty heroic. Fifer shared that Pattinson's fans have raised \$260,000 for the organisation's causes, including funds which have been used to build a school for girls in Cambodia.

Fifer added: "Rob rallies his incredible network of friends to support us and make big things happen for kids around the world."

For example, Pattinson brought Collins to her first gala in 2016 and recruited Sia to perform during this year's livestream.

"Even with the best laid plans, it's always a mad rush just before the gala - everyone's so busy, but luckily great friends pull through at clutch moments," Pattinson says of playing talent booker, in addition to co-host.

"So, thank you Sia and The Chandeliers again for that." The line-up for the 2021 Go Gala event, which was free to all and is available to replay on gogala.org, also featured special performances from Jewel, MILCK and Levi Evans.

Fifer added that event publicist Chet Mehta's PR team brought in Jewel and MILCK, while Levi Evans is the son of longtime GO supporters Morleigh Steinberg and U2's The Edge.

McGregor, appearing virtually, beaming in from the Virginia location of his next project, employed his partner Mary Elizabeth Winstead for a special acoustic performance of 'If I Needed You'.

Kaitlin Olson and Glenn Howerton made a special appearance, while the organization's newly appointed Board of Changemakers - young Hollywood actors dedicated to using their platforms for good, including Minka Kelly, Brandon Flynn, Max Carver, Alex MacNicoll, Torrance Coombs, Abigail Cowen and Geraldine Viswanathan - also lent their voices to the cause. The Go Campaign team targeted a fundraising goal of \$1 million, with all the money raised going to support global pandemic relief efforts, racial justice initiatives for youth in the US and education for at-risk children in Africa and Latin America and for girls in Afghanistan.

Nearly 6,000 people from across the globe tuned into Saturday night's livestream event via YouTube or Twitter.

The distance certainly didn't stop the audience from participating. Through live donations made during the gala, and more in the days since, the Go Campaign is halfway to their goal, raising more than \$550,000 to date. "I was amazed at how quickly we were able to raise money once (event sponsor) Beachbody Foundation announced that they'd match up to \$100K, if we could raise it in the next 30 minutes," Fifer recalls.

"We raised it in 14 minutes." Pattinson was equally impressed by the virtual engagement, adding that "one of the benefits of doing it live online was being able to actually see the reach vs. at the gala when everyone is in the same room."

"The most moving part of every Go Gala for

me is seeing people around LA - and around the world now that this is the second virtual gala - come together to support Go Campaign and the children that Go supports," he continues.

"I am always amazed by the generosity, dedication, and passion of the donors."

For Fifer and his team of just 10 people, the success of the Go Gala mirrors the evolution of the organisation.

"What started with one small orphanage in Tanzania has grown to global impact," Fifer says, marveling over the progress. "I started this organization to help a group of 20 orphans in Kilimanjaro and, over the past 15 years, we have improved the lives of over 188,000 children. We work in 37 countries with 174 local heroes, and we've had 520 projects."

Pattinson finds the organisation's growth to be "galvanising".

"Everyone has always been tremendously focused and driven to enact meaningful change," he says of the Go Campaign team (made up of only 10 full-time employees).

"It's inspiring to see the number of projects and scale of their achievements increase exponentially each year. The energy grows with each new project that they are able to green light."

Supporters can help Go Campaign reach their \$1 million goal by donating or bidding on items from the silent auction, which is open until October 30, like a virtual martini making class from event sponsor K&S. "It's a vodka."

## Didn't check rounds before handing gun to Alec Baldwin: David Halls

Los Angeles | Agencies

David Halls, the first assistant director on 'Rust', has admitted to investigators that he should have checked a weapon for live rounds before giving it to veteran star Alec Baldwin, according to a search warrant affidavit. Baldwin fired the weapon while rehearsing a scene on October 21 at the Bonanza Creek Ranch near Santa Fe, striking cinematographer Halyna Hutchins and the director, Joel Souza, reports variety.com.

Hutchins was airlifted to a hospital in Albuquerque, where she died.

Detectives had earlier disclosed that Halls declared the weapon was a "cold gun", before giving it to Baldwin, meaning it did not contain live rounds.

The affidavit filed on Wednesday includes new details from Halls' interview with detectives, as well as details from an interview with Hannah Gutierrez Reed, the armorer on the film.

"David advised when Hannah showed him the firearm before continuing rehearsal, he could only remember seeing three rounds," the affidavit states.

"He advised he should have checked all of them, but didn't, and couldn't recall if she spun the drum."

Gutierrez Reed told investigators that live ammunition was not used on the set. However, Sheriff Adan Mendoza told reporters on Wednesday that multiple live rounds were possibly recovered from the scene, in addition to the one that killed Hutchins and lodged in Souza's shoulder.

Gutierrez Reed also stated that the guns were kept secure in a safe in the prop truck during lunch, and that only a few people had access to the safe.

She said that after lunch, Sarah Zachry, the film's property master, got

the firearms out of the truck and gave them to her.

"When Affiant asked about live ammo on set, Hannah responded no live-ammo is ever kept on set," the affidavit states.

Gutierrez Reed had checked the "dummy" rounds earlier in the day, to ensure they were not acehot" rounds, according to her interview.

She told deputies that the ammunition was kept on a cart during lunch, where it was not secured. Halls was also asked about safety practices with weapons on set.

"I check the barrel for obstructions, most of the time there's no live fire, she (Hannah) opens the hatch and spins the drum, and I say 'cold gun on set'," he told investigators.

He added that he was not sure whether she spun the drum in this instance. Investigators obtained the warrant in order to conduct a search of the prop truck. Mary Carmack-Altviwes, the local district attorney, said at a press conference on Wednesday that it is too soon to say whether charges will be filed.

"If the facts and the evidence and law support charges, then I will initiate prosecution at that time," Carmack-Altviwes said. "I am a prosecutor that was elected in part because I do not make rash decisions and I do not rush to judgment."

The film crew was shooting a scene inside a church building on the ranch. According to earlier affidavits, Baldwin



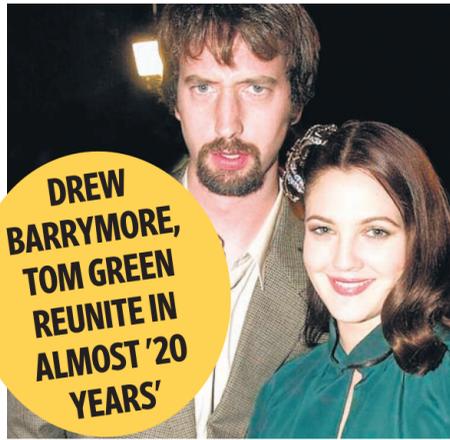
was practicing cross-drawing the firearm while seated in a church pew, and was demonstrating how he would point it toward the camera, when it went off.

Souza told investigators that he heard a loud pop, and that Hutchins then grabbed her midsection and stumbled backwards, before being helped to the ground. Souza also noted that he was bleeding from the shoulder.

The affidavit filed on Wednesday states that in the aftermath, Halls retrieved the gun from the pew.

"After the gun was fired, David Halls picked up the firearm from a pew inside the church, and took it to the Armorer," the document states.

"Hannah then was told to 'open' the gun so he could see what was inside. David advised he could only remember seeing at least four 'dummy' casings with the hole on the side, and one without the hole. He advised this round did not have the acap' on it and was just the casing. David advised the incident was not a deliberate act." Gutierrez Reed gave the gun to deputies once they arrived on the scene



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Drew Barrymore, who was married to actor Tom Green from July 2001 to October 2002, came together for her daytime talk show this week which was the first time they'd spoken in almost over 15 years.

Appearing on 'The Drew Barrymore Show' and reflecting on their reunion, he said: "It's sort of a little bit like an out-of-body experience. It's very nice to see you. It does feel weird though. Not weird in a bad way. Weird in a good way."

"I actually think this is a nice way of reconnecting, it takes a little bit of the pressure off."

Barrymore replied: "Well, I respect and love you." Green responded: "I love you, too." The two exes looked back on their relationship, and the 'Santa Clarita Diet' actress couldn't believe it's been two decades since they first got together in 2000, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She said: "When you say it's 20 years, sometimes it's the blink of an eye and sometimes you're like, 'Oh my God, we've lived so much in these last 20 years'."

"You've had a whole life and I've had a whole life and it's just really nice to come together and check-in and talk about it. I think the world of you. I celebrate you and I always have and I always will." The 'Never Been Kissed' star later remarried as she tied the knot with Will Kopelman in 2012, and while they split four years later they co-parent their two daughters.

Green said he wasn't surprised he didn't get an invite to their nuptials. He said: "(It) makes sense to me. Honestly, I think it makes sense to probably not go to an ex's wedding."

Barrymore agreed with her former husband, as she added: "I think so, too."



Suki Waterhouse



## T20 World Cup

# BOWLERS, WARNER SHINE IN AUSTRALIA'S 7-WICKET WIN OVER SRI LANKA

Dubai | Agencies

Showing signs of returning back to form, David Warner (65 off 42) smashed a quickfire fifty after a fine performance by bowlers as Australia registered a convincing 7-wicket win over Sri Lanka in a Super 12 match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, here on Thursday.

This was Australia's second win in a row and they are now placed second in the Group 1 table with four points, only behind England who are ahead on net run rate.

Riding on some fighting knocks by Kusal Perera (35), Charith Asalanka (35) and Bhanuka Rajapaksa (33), Sri Lanka posted 154/6 in 20 overs. Mitchell Starc (2/27), Pat Cummins (2/34) and Adam Zampa (2/12) were the wicket-takers for Australia.

Chasing a fighting target for victory, openers Aaron Finch and David Warner gave Australia a flying start, scoring 63 in the Powerplay, the highest in the tournament so far.

However, Wanindu Hasaranga brought Sri Lanka back into the game with twin strikes after the fielding restrictions were lifted, dismissing Finch and Glenn Maxwell in his two



successive overs. Hasaranga cramped Finch (37) for room with the googly, who chopped a cut onto his own stumps. In his next over, Maxwell (5), who was promoted up the order to keep the momentum going, holed out in the deep to a good running catch on the boundary by Avishka Fernando. Warner, who was under some pressure to find his form, ensured that the two quick wickets did not derail Australia's chase, finding boundaries regularly en route to his fifty. By the time Shanaka dis-

missed Warner in the 15th over, the asking rate was down to 5 runs per over.

Marcus Stoinis (16) and Steven Smith (28) batted sensibly and made sure that Australia don't lose any wickets further. Stoinis, in particular, smoked two fours and a six to finish things off in style as Australia secured a convincing win over Sri Lanka.

Earlier, batting first, Sri Lanka lost the wicket of Pathum Nissanka (7) in the third over of the innings. Nissanka tried to take the aerial route but failed

to time the ball well and David Warner took a comfortable catch at the mid-off, leaving Sri Lanka to 15/1 after 2.3 overs. Despite losing the first wicket early, Charith Asalanka took the attack to the Australia bowlers in the powerplay. On the other hand, Kusal Perera played second fiddle as Sri Lanka scored 53-1 after 6 overs.

Both Asalanka and Perera were going strong until Adam Zampa broke the stand in the 10th over. Asalanka (35), who was enjoying in the middle, got out to the googly of Zampa. In the next over, Starc dismissed Perera (35) on a perfect yorker. Thereafter, Sri Lanka lost a few more wickets, Avishka Fernando (4), Wanindu Hasaranga (4), in quick succession and were in deep trouble at 94-5, with almost eight overs still left.

However, Rajapaksa played a smart cameo (33 off 26) and ensured that Sri Lanka finished with a respectable total of 154-6 in 20 overs.

### Brief scores :

Sri Lanka: 154/6 in 20 overs (Kusal Perera 35, Charith Asalanka 35; Adam Zampa 2/12) lost to Australia: 155/3 in 17 Overs (David Warner 65, Aaron Finch 37; Wanindu Hasaranga 2/22).

# Fenesta Open Nationals: Vaidehi, Zeel Desai move into semifinals

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Second seed Vaidehi Chaudhari was put through the wringer by Akanksha Nitture in the quarter-finals of the Fenesta Open tennis championship on Thursday. At the end of an energy-sapping marathon contest, Vaidehi won 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 for her passage into the last four stage at the DLTA facility.

By far, the seedings have held well in the women's draw. It was in the fitness of the championship there was one match where both the players teased, tormented and tested each other. In the end, Vaidehi showed better skills and fitness to pull through.

"It was a tough day today for me, I have played against her twice. This was a great match which was a tough one. I played good and pulled through," said Vaidehi.

Top seed Zeel Desai, woman in form Sharmada Balu and Samhitha Sai Chamarthi completed the semi-final line-up. Zeel Desai beat Rashmikaa



Shrivalli Bhamidpaty, the fifth seed 7-6 (4), 6-1. "It was a good game. In the first set, (Rashmikaa) was playing really a big game. Her serve and forehands were strong, so sometimes I had to play defensive and win the points with a defensive approach. Overall, I am happy and looking forward to Friday's match," said Zeel.

In another quarter-final, Samhitha Sai Chamarthi, the fourth seed, was too good against Vanshita Pathania and won 6-4, 6-0. "It was really great, I was down 0-4 and she played tremendous tennis in the first set. After that, I took 12 games in a row to beat her. I appreciate the way she played today and I also played really aggressive after that," said Samhitha. Qualifier Sharmada Balu continued her fairytale run

through the second week for a straight-sets win against Reshma Maruri. "I feel really good. I think I played some good tennis today and I'm happy to be playing the semi-finals. I am looking forward to the match tomorrow," said Sharmada. In the men's section, Nikki K Poonacha, the top seed, cruised past Prithvi Sekhar 6-4, 6-2. In other matches, Nitin Kumar Sinha, the third seed, beat Prajwal S D Dev 6-4, 6-4; Paras Dahiya shut out Rishi Reddy 7-6 (6), 6-3 and Digvijay Pratap Singh outslugged Siddharth Vishwakarma 7-5, 6-7 (3), 6-3. "It was a pretty tough match. I lost to Siddharth in the last few matches so I knew this one was going to be a tough fight."

### Brief scores

Scotland: 109/8 in 20 overs (Michael Leask 44, Chris Greaves 25, Ruben Truempelmann 3/17, Jan Frylinck 2/10) lost to Namibia: 115/6 in 19.1 overs (JJ Smit 32 not out, Craig Williams 23, Michael Leask 2/12, Bradley Wheel 1/14) by four wickets.

# Narender enters pre-quarters at Men's World Boxing

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's Narender extended his winning run at the 2021 AIBA Men's Boxing Championships in Belgrade, Serbia to enter pre-quarterfinals in the super heavy-weight category in Belgrade, Serbia on Thursday. Narender defeated Sierra Leone's Mohamed Kende in the round-of-32 match.

Both the boxers started the game with cautious approach and maintained the distance during the early part of the bout. However, the 26-year-old Indian hit some timely punches and took charge of the game. Having tilted the momentum to his side, Narender started the final round aggressively and landed some heavy blows which unsettled the opponent as the referees had to stop the contest and declare Narender winner.

Later on Thursday, Rohit Mor (57kg) and Akash Sangwan (67kg) will be in action as they will look to make their way into the Last-16 stage at the prestigious tournament, which has been witnessing strong competition in presence of 650 top boxers from more than 100 countries playing across 13 weight cate-



gories. While Rohit, who hails from Delhi, will take on Alen Rahmic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the featherweight category, Akash will square off against German pugilist Daniel Krotter.

In the matches played late on Wednesday night, Govind Sahani registered an impressive 3-2 victory against Ecuador's Ortiz Arias in an intensely-fought 48kg opening round match. However, Lakshya Chahar (86kg) and Varinder Singh (60kg) ended their campaigns in the opening round.

## Delighted Namibia hoping for more success

Abu Dhabi: Namibia were expectedly nervous as they lined up for their first Super 12 match against Scotland in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. But at the end of the match, the players were over the moon as the team registered a morale-boosting victory against Scotland.

Namibia skipper Gerhard Erasmus said his players were delighted for getting another World Cup win after having come through the first round with two wins.

"Delighted to get another World Cup win, we were emotional coming from the first group and we managed to put in another good performance. We'll be taking some good momentum and energy into the other games," Erasmus said after the match.

# IPL 2022 auction: Old teams can retain 4 players; Lucknow, Ahmedabad can get 3 early picks

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian Premier League (IPL) 2022 will see the eight existing franchises being allowed to retain a maximum of four players. Whereas, the two new teams -- Lucknow and Ahmedabad -- will be able to acquire three players from the rest of the player pool ahead of the auction, a report said.

However, the official date for the IPL 2022 auction is yet to be announced by the Indian cricket board (BCCI).

According to ESPNcricinfo, these rules were clarified by the IPL in informal discussions this week with the franchises. "The purse for the IPL



2022 auction is likely to be Rs 90 crore (USD 12 million approx), it was Rs 85 crore in the 2021 auction. In the 2018

mega auction, the teams had Rs 80 crore, of which they could spend a maximum of Rs 33 crore on retained play-

ers, the teams were then allowed to buy back five players through a combination of retention and two right-to-match (RTM) cards. "There will be no RTM cards next year. The franchises will be able to apply two different combinations while picking the four players they want to retain: three Indians and one overseas, or two Indians and two overseas," the report further read. Retention will ultimately be the player's choice, as he can decide to go back into the auction pool or a change in franchise, even if his current team wants to retain him. The deadline for retaining players is likely to be the end of November, it added.

# 2022 Women's Asian Cup: Hosts India drawn with China, Chinese Taipei and Iran

Kuala Lumpur | Agencies

The Indian senior women's national football team were on Thursday handed a tough draw at the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup as they were clubbed alongside eight-time champions China, two-time winners Chinese Taipei and Iran.

India, ranked 57th in the FIFA charts, are the third-highest ranked side in the group behind China (17th) and Chinese Taipei (40th) and ahead of Iran (72nd).

The draw ceremony was held at the Asian Football Confederations (AFC) headquarters in the Malaysian capital on Thursday. Notably, India is scheduled to host the tournament from January 20 to February 6 at venues in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, and Pune.

"It is an exciting group. We respect all our opponents as all of them are strong teams who have qualified for the AFC Asian Cup India 2022. But we are ready to play any team," India's head coach Thomas Dennerby said after the draw.

"I don't consider any particular match as a key one. All three matches are key matches for us in the

group stage. We need to do our job over 90 minutes every time we enter the field," the coach maintained.

Host India began their campaign against Iran on January 20, 2022, followed by matches against Chinese Taipei on January 23, 2022, and China on January 26. The Indian team has been camping in Jamshepur with logistical and infrastructural aid from the government of Jharkhand since September. In the midst of the camp, the team had also gone on an exposure tour to UAE, Bahrain and Sweden, where they played against international teams like UAE, Tunisia, Bahrain and Chinese Taipei. The side has also played two friendlies against Swedish Damallsvenskan (Tier 1) clubs Hammarby IF and Djurgarden IF. "The AFC Women's Asian Cup is the premier flagship tournament for women's football in our continent, and I'm proud and happy that India is going to be the host for the 2022 edition," said All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel. "I thank the AFC, AIFF and the Local Organising Committee (LOC) for jointly working together to bring a fantastic tournament not only for the fans in India, but

also for all of the Asian continent. The AFC had recently come and inspected all the facilities in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, and Pune. We are looking forward to welcoming all the 12 teams to our beautiful country, and I am confident they will be satisfied with the facilities, and hospitality," he added. The AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 will add further drama and excitement with the leading five teams earning direct tickets to the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand. The next best two teams from the Playoff matches will also represent Asia at the Inter-Confederation Playoff matches.

Asian Football Confederation (AFC) general secretary Dato Windsor John said: "The AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 promises to be another great celebration throughout the continent. Together with the All India Football Federation and the Local Organising Committee, we are confident of staging a remarkable tournament that will leave a legacy for many years to come." "I must congratulate the teams who have qualified and will line up along with the top three teams from the last edition and our hosts India," he added.

# World Boxing: Deepak, Sumit and Narender maintain India's winning run

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Extending India's winning momentum at the AIBA World Boxing Championships, Deepak Bhoria, Sumit and Narender started their campaign with commanding victories on the second day of the competition in Belgrade, Serbia.

Up against one of the strong contenders for the title, Azat Usenaliev of Kyrgyzstan, Deepak produced a flawless show in the 51kg opening round match. Despite some resistance from the Asian champion Usenaliev, the 24-year-old Indian managed to secure victory by unanimous margin. Sumit too was equally



dominant during his 75kg opening-round match against Jamaican boxer O'Neill Damon as he notched up an easy 5-0 win. On the other hand, Narender faced some stiff challenge from his Polish opponent Oskar Safaryan in the +92kg bout. However the Indian recorded a convincing 4-1 win. This came after seasoned boxer Shiva Thapa's 5-0 victory against Kenya's Victor Nyadera in the 63.5kg

round-of-64 match which set the tone for India on Day 2 of the event which has been witnessing strong competition in presence of 650 top boxers from more than 100 countries playing across 13 weight categories. Four Indian boxers will begin their challenge on the third day of the championships on Wednesday. Nishant Dev will be up against Hungary's Laszlo Kozak in the light middleweight category, while Varinder Singh will take on Karen Tonakanyan of Armenia in the 60kg bout. Govind Sahani (48kg) and Lakshya Chahar (86kg) are the other two Indians who will be seen in action tonight.

# T20 WC: It's do-or-die for West Indies, says Pooran on Bangladesh match

Sharjah | Agencies

West Indies batter Nicholas Pooran believes that his team's Group 1 match in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup against Bangladesh on Friday is a do-or-die one. He added that the mood in the West Indies camp is upbeat, despite having lost both matches to England and South Africa in the tournament.

"It's just another game of cricket. Anyone can win. But as you said, it's a do-or-die game for us. And we believe that we're going to be successful tomorrow. And again, I can't emphasise enough how important it is to perform our roles. Once we do that, then everything can take care of itself," said Pooran in the pre-match press conference on Thursday.

"The mood in the camp is still good. The guys are generally, think we were hit by losing those two games. And we have only ourselves to blame. But the mood is still good. We know



what we have to do and everyone is up for the challenge," added Pooran.

Pooran was of the opinion that West Indies and Bangladesh, placed sixth and fifth in the group standings, are on the same boat as far as losses are concerned ahead of the match in Sharjah. "I think Bangladesh, after losing two games, they're in the situation with us as well. So, I think it's going to be a good challenge for us tomorrow. We need to get that victory. And being in Sharjah as well, we know Bangladesh has a lot of spinners as well. It's definitely going to be a good challenge for us as well. And it's how bad we actually want it."

Pooran feels that the time is ripe for West Indies to bounce back in the tournament. "I definitely think it's a good opportunity for us to bounce back. We're not sure how Sharjah is going to play tomorrow. But our focus is not on the small boundaries, to be honest. We just want to execute our skills. And once we can do that, then the results can take care of

itself." "We can't really say it's short boundaries and we're going to hit 6s. And we want to be aggressive as a team. We can't really say that. Only when we go tomorrow and we assess the pitch, the conditions there, then we can actually try to put a game plan into place as quick as possible and try to get a really good score."

Pooran concluded by saying that West Indies have accepted that the batting hasn't been up to the mark after registering scores of 55 and 143 in both matches. "I think that was just the intent. We know we can be back up. First two games we didn't show much intent but we know we are much better than that as a team."

"If you can accept that we weren't good on the first two games, I think as batsmen, as a team, we already accepted that we didn't come to the party. And we're looking forward to moving forward and hopefully we can do much better."



# Will push aside everything to work with Suri: John Abraham



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor John Abraham has wrapped up shooting for the upcoming film 'Ek Villain Returns'. This is the second time he has collaborated with Mohit Suri and said that he would push aside everything to

work with the filmmaker again.

John said: "Shooting for 'Ek Villain Returns' has been a seamless experience. This is the first time since my debut film, in which coincidentally Mohit Suri was the first AD and now he's the director, that I have come back to the same school of filmmaking. Mohit didn't need to tell me

much. He would tell me a word and I would get it."



"I am a guy who hates night shoots and rain. But in this film, I enjoyed doing everything. There were no complaints. Everything felt too good to be true. I will push aside everything to work with Mohit again."

The action hero called a "beautiful experience" working on the sets of 'Ek Villain Returns'. "We have got a great film out. I am

so proud of it and this I say without even seeing a single frame of it. Congratulations to all of us. The team has been fantastic, production and direction teams have been very good. If I may say so, we have a super hit on our hands."

In a similar vein, Suri added: "From being an assistant on John's first film to now directing him in 'Ek Villain Returns', it has been a long destined dream which has come true. I was destined to work with him since my first movie. John and I've both started our careers in the same company and I always wanted to work with him and finally, I did get that opportunity. I've had a great experience on and off the set while working with him on 'Ek Villain Returns'."

The film also stars Arjun Kapoor, Disha Patani and Tara Sutaria. 'Ek Villain Returns' will release on July 8, 2022. The movie is directed by Mohit Suri and jointly produced by T-Series and Balaji Telefilms.

## HIMESH RELEASES SONG FROM HIT ALBUM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After back to back 20 blockbuster hits in a row which have garnered more than 700 million views and 230 million audio streams in 3 months the bonafide rockstar Himesh Reshammiya releases his 21st song Maujood Hai!

The song is from the much loved album Himesh Ke Dil Se and sung by none other than Sawai Bhatt whom he has collaborated with for the 3rd time after two sensational songs, Sanseinn and O Sajnaa.



These tracks which have clocked in 65 million views and 24 million views respectively in a mere two months putting Himesh Reshammiya on the global charts with aplomb! Himesh has launched several newcomers in the past and this time his protegee Sawai Bhatt is all set to wow us with Maujood Hai. Talking about his recent song Himesh said, "I am happy that Sawai is singing with such emotion and nail-

ing the brief time and again. This is why he has been chosen for the 3rd time with Maujood Hai composed and written by me. He did not make it to the Indian Idol finals but his ethnic voice has a divine connect and both his previous tracks Sanseinn and O Sajnaa have been huge hits garnering 90 million views and 15 million audio streams on both the songs combined." Himesh Reshammiya's recent winning streak has surely got the hearts of music lovers from across the world and Maujood Hai, which releases today will further solidify his position as the top musician of our country!

## SUMIT BHARDWAJ MAKES A COMEBACK WITH 'SASURAL SIMAR KA 2'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The romance between Simar and Aarav in COLORS' 'Sasural Simar Ka 2' is in full swing in the ongoing plot. Both are in love and happy in their marriage. However, the show will witness a major twist in the story with the entry of a new character played by Sumit Bhardwaj. Sumit will essay the role of a passionate music composer named Samar Khanna. He gets hired by Aarav, who wants Simar to have her music album. Having worked with major artists at the top-most level, this composer is not entirely confident about Simar's potential but decides to do the job and collaborates with her. Viewers will see Samar Khanna (Sumit Bhardwaj) bring in some unexpected twists in Simar's life.

Sumit Bhardwaj opened up about playing this character: "After the monotony of quarantine, I wanted to focus on the brighter side of things for my viewers and fans. Since I missed being on screen and couldn't wait to return to work, I chose this fun-loving and cheerful character in this fantastic show for a comeback. It will give me and my skills a new dynamic as I explore an enhanced version of myself. Samar Khanna's character is very relatable, and I will do justice to it. I'm also looking forward to connecting with the audiences again and engaging them with the solid, convincing personality of Samar Khanna, hoping to make it an unforgettable one."



## MAHESH MANJREKAR: SOMEWHERE IN MY MIND I KNEW I'LL SURVIVE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker-actor Mahesh Manjrekar did not let cancer stop him from making his directorial 'Antim: The Final Truth' starring Salman Khan and Aayush Sharma. He had accepted his fate and says that somewhere in the back of his mind he knew he will "survive".

The 63-year-old cancer crusader was diagnosed with the deadly disease during the making of the film.

In a heart-to-heart chat with IANS, Manjrekar said: "I don't know why I just accepted it. Somewhere I never thought it was cancer I thought it was overactive bladder because they have the same symptoms. I was the under the impression (of that). I was taking medicine for an overactive bladder for more than a year. Then it was not going."

Manjrekar, who is known for making acclaimed films such as 'Vaastav: The Reality' and National Award-winning movie 'Astitra', said that chemotherapy sessions, which he took during the shoot, did not affect him as he was prepared "mentally". "When I went to the hospital for a cystoscopy so before the results were out somewhere in the back of my mind I knew I kind of had the diagnosis in me. I was prepared for it. So, it was not too much of a problem



and by God's grace when I went through the chemotherapy sessions it didn't affect me as badly as it affects a lot of people maybe because mentally I was prepared for it and it did not come as a shock to me."

Manjrekar had a positive outlook and said: "I was prepared for it... I said I would get through it."

Shooting a big film with a vast set up and battling the disease did not take a toll on Manjrekar.

"Because I was prepared mentally... The chemotherapy was happening every 15 days... Some how I was fine

with the chemotherapy."

He added: "It was after the first cycle I started losing hair and what I did was when I started losing hair I just shaved... because I was like 'let me not go through the trauma of looking into the mirror and see' and I did not give it much thought and I decided that I would finish the shoot and then go for surgery because it needed a lot of time for recovery." "Somewhere in the back of my mind I knew I will survive."

'Antim: The Final Truth' will be released in theatres worldwide on November 26.

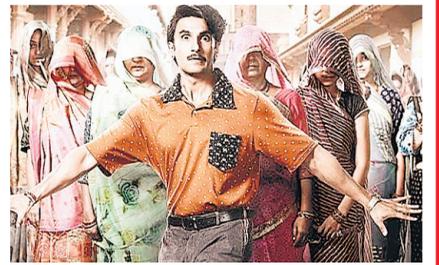
## PRIME VIDEO EXCLUSIVE STREAMING DESTINATION FOR YASH RAJ FILMS

In a strengthening of a historically strong collaboration with the celebrated studio, Prime Video becomes the exclusive worldwide streaming destination for Yash Raj Films' next four massive theatrical releases-Bunty Aur Babli 2, Prithviraj, Jayeshbhai Jordaar, and Shamsheera.

MUMBAI-28 October, 2021-Prime Video India today announced an exclusive

licensing deal with India's biggest production house Yash Raj Films (YRF) that will make the steaming service the home to the studio's four massively mounted upcoming theatrical releases. As part of this deal, Prime Video will have exclusive global streaming rights to these four most anticipated titles under the Yash Raj Films banner. Doubling down on its commitment to offer seamless access to the best movies to viewers from the safety and convenience of their homes, Prime Video will stream these titles just four weeks after their theatrical release.

The high-octane content slate includes films across genres-including much-awaited heist comedy Bunty Aur Babli 2 starring Saif Ali Khan, Rani Mukerji, Siddhant Chaturvedi, and the gorgeous debutant Sharvati; Ranbir Kapoor, Vaani Kapoor and Sanjay Dutt's mega-action entertainer Shamsheera; historical action spectacle Prithviraj based on the life of fearless King Prithviraj Chauhan starring Akshay Kumar, Sanjay Dutt, Manushi Chhillar and Sonu Sood; Ranveer Singh's big ticket family entertainer with a powerful social message Jayeshbhai Jordaar. "At Prime Video, we are intently focused on bringing the biggest & the best entertainment to our customers and this partnership with Yash Raj Films is the perfect demonstration of that commitment," said Gaurav Gandhi, country head, Prime Video India. "The deal further strengthens the long-standing and ever-growing relationship between Prime Video and Yash Raj Films, with the former already housing some of the YRF classics-including Darr, Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, Silsila, Chandni, Dil To Pagal Hai, and many more. And recently, the world-wide digital premieres of titles such as Thugs of Hindostan, War, Mardaani, and more have garnered much appreciation and love from the audiences. Akshaye Widhani, Senior Vice President, Yash Raj Films, added: "In Prime Video, we have found a partner that not only shares our vision of offering engaging cinematic experiences, but also provides global distribution to the best stories from the Indian entertainment ecosystem. We are excited to ink this exclusive streaming deal with Prime Video, which will enable our upcoming titles to travel beyond geographies and add further value to Prime Video's stellar content library." Prime Video in India has a large cata-



logue of Hindi movies for their viewers to enjoy, with content tie-ups with most of the top production houses in Bollywood. The video on-demand service offers its viewers access to unlimited video streaming, with a wide selection of local language movies, U.S. TV shows, and more, as it continues to add new and exclusive content, including original Indian TV shows.

The titles will premiere on Prime Video just four weeks after their theatrical launch, in more than 240 countries and territories worldwide. Prime Video offers incredible value with unlimited streaming of the latest and exclusive movies, TV shows, stand-up comedy, Amazon Originals, ad-free music listening through Amazon Prime Music, free fast delivery on India's largest selection of products, early access to top deals, unlimited reading with Prime Reading, and mobile gaming content with Prime Gaming, all available with the Prime membership. Customers can also watch Amazon's large catalogue of quality content by subscribing to Prime Video Mobile Edition. Prime Video Mobile Edition is a single-user, mobile-only plan currently available for Airtel Prepaid customers. These big YRF titles will join the thousands of TV shows and movies from Hollywood and Bollywood in the Prime Video catalogue. These include Indian-produced Amazon Original series One Mic Stand, Mirzapur Season 1 & 2, The Family Man, Mumbai Diaries 26/11, Breathe: Into The Shadows, Bandish Bandits, Paatal Lok, The Forgotten Army - Azaadi Ke Liye, Sons of the Soil: Jaipur Pink Panthers, Four More Shots Please, Indian films such as Sardar Udham, Sherni, Toofaan, Gulabo Sitabo, Durgamati, Chhalaang, Shakuntala Devi, Ponnagal Vandham, French Biryani, Law, Sufiyum Sujatayum, Penguin, Nishabdham, Maara, V, CU Soon, Soorarai Potru, Bheema Sena Nala Maharaja, Drishyam 2, Halal Love Story, Middle Class Melodies, Putham Pudhu Kaalai, Unpaused, among others, and award-winning and critically acclaimed global Amazon Originals like Borat Subsequent Moviefilm, The Tomorrow War, Coming 2 America, Without Remorse, Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan, The Boys, Hunters, Fleabag, and The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel. All this is available at no extra cost for Amazon Prime members. The service includes titles in Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Punjabi, and Bengali.

## Vidyut joins hands with Panorama Studios for third collaboration



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Action star Vidyut Jammwal will be seen collaborating with Panorama films for the third time after 'Khuda Haafiz' and its conclusion 'Khuda Haafiz Chapter II Agni Pariksha', the portions of which are currently being shot. Talking about the yet-untitled third collaboration, Vidyut said: "It is reassuring to be working with like-minded people. The viewers are in for a surprise."

While the wheels for the creation of the untitled film have been set in motion, the producers at Panorama Studios will reveal its details soon. Founder and MD, Panorama Studios, Kumar Mangat Pathak added: "We have a history of two films with Vidyut - one ('Khuda Haafiz') received unprecedented views on OTT and the other ('Khuda Haafiz Chapter II Agni Pariksha') has stirred a lot of excitement ahead of its release. It is great to be reuniting with India's action star for the third time for a very special film. It is a tale compelling enough to bring the audience to the theatres." Details related to the upcoming will be shared soon.

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Simran Kaur