

absolute india

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INDIA ISSUES REVISED TRAVEL ADVISORY, NEGATIVE RT-PCR REPORT MUST

BE POSITIVE

The fresh travel advisory says that fully-vaccinated travellers coming from a country with which India has arrangements for mutual acceptance of WHO approved Covid-19 vaccines shall be allowed to leave the airport after producing a negative RT-PCR test report, and will not have to undergo home quarantine and testing. The revised guidelines will come into the effects from October 25.

THE GUIDELINES SAY THAT THE TRAVELLERS FROM COUNTRIES, EXCLUDING THOSE COUNTRIES AT RISK, WILL BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE AIRPORT AND SHALL SELF-MONITOR THEIR HEALTH FOR 14 DAYS' POST ARRIVAL. THIS IS APPLICABLE TO TRAVELLERS FROM ALL COUNTRIES INCLUDING COUNTRIES WITH WHICH INDIA HAS RECIPROCAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR MUTUAL ACCEPTANCE OF WHO APPROVED COVID-19 VACCINES.

THE LIST OF COUNTRIES FROM WHERE TRAVELLERS WOULD NEED TO FOLLOW ADDITIONAL MEASURES ON ARRIVAL IN INDIA INCLUDE SOUTH AFRICA, BRAZIL, BANGLADESH, BOTSWANA, CHINA, MAURITIUS, NEW ZEALAND, ZIMBABWE AND COUNTRIES IN EUROPE INCLUDING THE UK.



mutual recognition of nationally or WHO recognised Covid-19 vaccines with 11 countries - the UK, France, Germany, Nepal, Belarus, Lebanon, Armenia, Ukraine, Belgium, Hungary, and Serbia. Travellers from these countries who are fully vaccinated and have passed 15 days since completion of vaccination, shall be allowed to leave the airport and have to monitor their health for 14 days post arrival, according to the revised guidelines. They will have to submit a self-declaration form on the online Air Suvidha portal before their scheduled travel and upload a negative Covid-19 RT-PCR report, conducted within 72 hours prior to the journey. The travelers will also have to submit a declaration with respect to authenticity of the report. Travellers from the countries with which India does not have a mutual agreement have to take extra measures like submission of

"The global trajectory of Covid-19 pandemic continues to decline with certain regional variations. In view of increasing vaccination coverage across the globe and the changing nature of the pandemic, the existing guidelines for international arrivals in India have been reviewed."

The Government of India

INDIA DOESN'T NEED COVID BOOSTER DOSE IMMEDIATELY

As India is set to reach the milestone of vaccinating 100 crore people, the country is currently focused on providing both the doses to all of its adult population and the need for a third or a booster dose does not appear to be an "immediate" one, health experts said on Wednesday. "The need for booster dose in India is probably not immediate, especially when we still have a considerable population unvaccinated and vaccine availability is not far in excess of the immediate requirement," Dr. Veena P. Menon, Professor, Department of Clinical Virology, Amrita School of Medicine said.

sample for post-arrival Covid test at the point of arrival, home quarantine for seven days, re-test on the eighth day of arrival in India and if negative, further self-monitoring of their health for next seven days, irrespective of their Covid-19 vaccination status.

Centre aims to vaccinate entire adult population by 2021-end: Minister

"Great responsibility lies on us to achieve the dream of affordable, accessible, safe and modern healthcare in India. The Government of India has launched various nationwide programmes for prevention, control and eradication of communicable and non-communicable diseases and improvement of maternal and child health."



Team Absolute | New Delhi

India on Wednesday issued a revised travel advisory for international visitors, making a negative RT-PCR test report must for all. India has agreements for

Dragging your feet, can't be unending story

Supreme Court pulls up UP govt on Lakhimpur Kheri violence

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Supreme Court on Wednesday pulled up the Uttar Pradesh government for delay in recording statements of witnesses before a judicial magistrate in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case, where eight persons were killed, and also told the state government to dispel the impression that it is dragging its feet in the matter.

Senior advocate Harish Salve, representing the Uttar Pradesh



government, submitted that a report on the incident has been filed in a sealed cover. The bench replied, "No, that was not required and we have just received it now...we waited till 1 a.m. last night for any filing. But we received nothing".

The bench added

that the court never said anything about the sealed cover. Salve informed the bench that four out of 44 witnesses in the matter have recorded their statements under section 164 (before a judicial magistrate), and 10 accused have been arrested so far.

COURT ROOM LIVE

Salve said there are two crimes: one where the car was driven into farmers and the other one was in connection with the lynching.

The bench: "Why haven't other witnesses recorded their statements?"

Salve: "It is going on and added that out of the ten accused, four were in police custody."

The bench: "What happened to the other six accused. You did not seek custody so they were sent to judicial custody. What is the situation in this case?"

Salve: "The statements of other witnesses were being recorded, but the courts were shut."

The bench: "Criminal courts closed for Dussehra vacation?"

The chief justice observed, "This should not be an unending story, this is all we want".

Salve sought time in the matter. After hearing arguments, the bench posted the matter for further hearing on October 26.

2 TERRORISTS KILLED IN J&K GUNFIGHT

Srinagar: Two terrorists were killed in an ongoing encounter with the security forces in the Dragad area of South Kashmir's Shopian district on Wednesday, officials said.

"Two unidentified terrorists killed. Search going on," police said.

Earlier, the gunfight took place after a joint team of the police and the army cordoned off the area and launched a search operation on the basis of specific information about the presence of terrorists.

As the security forces zeroed in on the spot where the terrorists were hiding they came under a heavy volume of fire that triggered the encounter.

'Bottleneck affecting investigation'

CBI TOLD SC ON STATES WITHDRAWING CONSENT FOR PROBE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The CBI has told the Supreme Court that various state governments' decision to withdraw general consent for a CBI probe is proving detrimental not only for the investigation, but also for prosecution of cases. CBI Director S.K. Jaiswal, in an affidavit, has informed the Supreme Court that eight state governments -- West Bengal, Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram -- have withdrawn the general consent.

"Now, taking specific consent again on case-to-case basis is time-consuming and at times may be detrimental to timely and prompt investigation," he said in the affidavit. According to the affidavit, the CBI has sent over 150 requests to governments of Maharashtra, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Kerala, and Mizoram during the period 2018-June 2021 for grant of specific consent for investigation of cases in the territory of these states. These requests were made for investigating trap cases, disproportionate assets cases, cases relating to allegation of cheating, forgery, misappropriation and loss of foreign exchange, and also bank fraud cases.

The affidavit added that delay caused in taking up cases by the CBI, at times, leads to destruction or dissipation of evidence, which



is detrimental not only for the investigation but also for subsequent prosecution of cases. It said the matter of investigation taken by the CBI either on the reference of the state government or on the direction of the constitutional courts, and more often it results in a significant time lapse between the actual commission of offence and the date on which the investigation is taken up by it.

On September 3, a bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul decided to examine, within the ambit of investigation and prosecution, the CBI's success rate and performance leading a case to its logical conclusion.

Priyanka Gandhi allowed to go to Agra after brief detention

Lucknow | Agencies

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has been detained by Lucknow Police at the Lucknow Expressway while she was travelling to Agra to meet the family of a Dalit man who died in police custody. Her car was stopped at the first toll plaza on the Lucknow-Agra Expressway.

The police spokesman said that the Congress leader was stopped as she did not have the requisite permissions. She is being taken to police lines.

Later, she was released and allowed to proceed. After she was stopped, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra tweeted: "What is the government so afraid of? Arun Valmiki died in police custody. His family is seeking justice. I want to visit that family. What is the Uttar Pradesh government afraid of? Why am I being stopped? Today is Lord Valmiki Jayanti... Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke big on Buddha but this is attacking his message."

Earlier on Wednesday, Arun Valmiki, a 'safai karamchari', who had been arrested in connection with the theft of Rs 25 lakh from the police strong room, died after his health deteriorated during interrogation.

Priyanka was heading to meet Arun Valmiki's family.



THE SELFIE ROW

New Delhi: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is apparently so annoyed with policewomen who posed for selfies with Priyanka Gandhi Vadra that he is contemplating action against them, the Congress leader said on Friday, offering to be punished instead.

"I am hearing that Yogi ji is so hurt with this picture that he wants to take action against these police-women. If it is a crime to take pictures with me, then I should be the one who is punished for it. It does not suit the government to spoil the career of these hardworking and loyal police-women," she tweeted in Hindi.

MUSLIM MARRIAGE DOESN'T NEGATE MAINTENANCE: KARNATAKA HC

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

The Karnataka high court has rejected a man's plea and came to rescue his exwife, who has been battling for enforcement of the trial court's maintenance decree for the past decade by saying, "A Muslim marriage is not a sacrament, (and) does not repel certain rights and obligations arising from its dissolution."

Contracting another marriage after pronouncing talaq upon his first wife, a Muslim man cannot say he has to maintain the new wife and their child, and cite the same as a ground for not discharging maintenance, Justice Krishna S Dixit said. The petitioner, Ezazur Rehman, had pleaded that he could not pay maintenance to his ex-wife, Saira Banu, as he had remarried and had to provide for his wife and



their child. The judge said Rehman ought to have known his responsibility towards his ex-wife, who does not have anything to fall back on. The responsibility of paying maintenance arises from his own act of talaq, and prior to marrying another woman, the court said.

WEATHER CONDITION WORSENS IN NORTH BENGAL

THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL LANDSLIDES IN DHOTRE, MANEVANJAN, RIMBIK, GOK AND BIJANBARI AREAS, WHILE THE BRIDGE OVER BALASAN RIVER CONNECTING SILIGURI WITH MATIGARA, BAGDOGRA, NAXALBARI AND KHORIBARI HAS BEEN CLOSED AFTER CRACKS WERE DETECTED ON IT.

TOY TRAIN SERVICES HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE BATASIA LOOP ON THE HILL CART ROAD IN DARJEELING. LANDSLIDE REPAIR WORK IS GOING ON ON A WAR FOOTING.

Team Absolute | Kolkata

Incessant rains followed by landslides leading to closure of several roads and the toy train in Darjeeling have left many tourists who went to the region during Durga Puja vacation stranded. The situation in Darjeeling is worse because the National Highway 55 that connects Darjeeling with Siliguri has been blocked due to a landslide. While



traffic movement has been suspended on this highway, small cars are allowed to ply on the alternative Rohini Road. The situation in Jalpaiguri has also deteriorated after the increase of water-level in Teesta river because of incessant rains. Many families have been rendered homeless. The Vivekananda and Sarada rural areas adjacent to Jalpaiguri are submerged. The village of Sukant Nagar on the banks of Teesta has also been flooded.

The administration has issued a red alert for the protected areas of the Teesta river due to rising water levels. The administration claimed that it has

KERALA FLOODS: 42 DEAD, SIX STILL MISSING

Thiruvananthapuram: The heavy rains which hit Kerala last week and the consequent floods have left 42 people dead and six people are missing, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on Wednesday. "The IMD prediction is that starting Wednesday till October 24, heavy rains are expected. Extra caution has to be maintained by all and the authorities are also fully geared to face the situation," he told media persons after a cabinet meeting. The worst-affected districts on account of the rains and floods are Kottayam, Idukki, and Pathanamthitta.

rescued 350 marooned people so far.

According to the met department, the rain is likely to continue in North Bengal for another couple of days. Apart from Darjeeling, heavy to very heavy rainfall is predicted in Alipurduar and North and South Dinajpur districts in the next 24 hours. The rain is likely to decrease from Thursday onwards.



MODI INAUGURATES KUSHINAGAR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

KUSHINAGA | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday inaugurated the Kushinagar International Airport and said that this was a 'manifestation of decades of aspirations and efforts'.

The first flight from Sri Lanka touched down at the Kushinagar airport on Wednesday morning, bringing a high-level delegation that comprised ministers and Buddhist monks.

"This was my commitment and we have fulfilled it. We lay special emphasis on linking Buddhist destinations, improving hospitality facilities and ensuring the comfort of tourists. This airport will not only serve tourists from India but also Buddhists from across the world, including Sri Lanka, Thailand, Korea, Japan, Cambodia and other countries," he said.

The Prime Minister pointed out that other Buddhist destinations like Lumbini, Sarnath and Bodhi Gaya were at a short distance from



Kushinagar which added to the importance of the Buddhist circuit. He said India had expanded its connectivity by increasing the

number of airports and in the coming years, India would have 200 more airports. "Flight academies are also being

set up and our drone policy will benefit agriculture, health and other sectors, including disaster management.

Earlier, Union Minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia, while welcoming the guests, said that flights from Kushinagar would soon begin for Mumbai and Kolkata and other destinations.

He said that 54 crore Buddhists across the globe would benefit with this airport becoming functional.

Built at a cost of Rs 260 crore and spread over 3,600 square metres, the airport is crucial for religious tourism as Kushinagar is the place where Lord Buddha attained 'Mahaparinirvana'. It is one of the four prominent Buddhist circuits. The airport will also serve nearby districts of Uttar Pradesh as well as Bihar.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that Kushinagar was the ninth airport in the state and 11 more were nearing completion.

Govt to release song to celebrate 100cr vaccination mark

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As India is set to achieve the target of 100 crore vaccination dose, the Health Ministry has planned several events to mark the occasion. The milestone is expected to be achieved on Thursday.

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will release a song and an audio visual film to celebrate the landmark milestone of administering 100 crore Covid-19 vaccine doses.

According to an official press release, Mandaviya will release the film and song at the Red Fort in the national capital.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Union Health Minister said in a tweet that 99 crore vaccine doses were administered across the country as of Wednesday.

He said: "We are at 99 crore. Go for it India... continue to rapidly march towards our milestone of 100 crore Covid-19 vaccinations."

In another tweet, Mandaviya appealed to those



not vaccinated yet to get the vaccine and be the part of historical moment.

He said: "To be a part of this golden opportunity, I appeal to the countrymen that those who are yet to be vaccinated should contribute to this historic golden vaccination journey of India by

getting vaccinated immediately."

India has administered over 99.70 crore vaccine doses so far under the country's vaccination drive.

India needs another 25 lakh vaccine jabs to achieve the 100 crore vaccination mark.

9 arrested for gang rape of two minor girls in Jharkhand

RANCHI | Agencies

Nine persons accused of raping two minor sisters have been arrested in Bishnupur block of Gumla district by the police, while one accused committed suicide by hanging.

The gang rape took place when the two sisters were returning after visiting the Dussehra fair with their brother on Friday evening (October 15). Ten youths intercepted them and passed lewd comments. The accused then beat up the brother, took both the girls to a nearby forest and took turns to rape them. A case of gang rape was registered on Saturday after which police raided a house where one of the accused hanged himself fearing arrest. On Tuesday, seven accused were arrested by the police when they reached the house of a lawyer in Gumla. Gumla police said that the seven accused were preparing to surrender in the court, but the police arrested them as



soon as the lawyer left the house. Two accused had already been arrested by the police. In another incident, an FIR was lodged on Sunday by a deaf-mute woman alleging gang rape by two home guards posted at Mehrma block office in Godda district of Jharkhand. She told the police through sign language that she had gone to the block office to graze her goat, when the two home guards raped her. Police have arrested both the accused.

Amarinder's exit will not affect the party: Congress

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress leaders on Wednesday said the exit of senior party leader and former Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh -- who announced forming a new party -- will not affect the prospects of the Congress.

The issue was up for deliberation on Wednesday during the meeting between the party leaders and former Congress president Rahul Gandhi and Congress' Punjab in-charge Harish Rawat.

The Congress is currently preparing an estimation of the number of leaders who are likely to quit.

However, sources say that people close to Singh are unlikely to quit the party.

The Congress leaders are watching his moves ahead of the new party formation and sources say that all the Congress members have distanced themselves after he worked out a "patch up formula" with the BJP.



Congress' Punjab in-charge Harish Rawat said "his decision will not make any difference to Congress".

"The party's performance will depend on the work of the new chief minister (Charanjit Singh Channi), and he is doing well," Rawat added.

Talking about Amarinder Singh, the former Uttarakhand chief minister said "it seems that he has killed the secular Amarinder within him... and how can he forgive the BJP for keeping the farmers on Delhi borders since the last one year."

The Punjab unit has been asked to keep an eye on the movements of the rebels and to pacify them ahead of the elections and dissuade them from joining the former Chief Minister.

Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa said "we have no fear... if Amarinder goes with the BJP, there must be some pressure on him." Amarinder Singh on Tuesday said that he would soon announce the launch of his own political party to serve the interests of the people, including the farmers who have been fighting for their rights for almost a year now. He said that he is hopeful of a seat-sharing arrangement with the BJP for next year's Assembly elections in the state, if the farmers' issues are resolved in their interest.

In a series of tweets, his media advisor Raveen Thukral quoted Amarinder Singh as saying: "The battle for Punjab's future is on. Will soon announce the launch of my own political party to serve the interests of Punjab and its people, including our farmers who've been fighting for their survival for over a year."

"Where is the promised peace, development?": Farooq Abdullah questions BJP

JAMMU | Agencies

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on the BJP over the targeted killings in Kashmir and said it should give an answer to the people over the claims of restoration of peace in the valley.

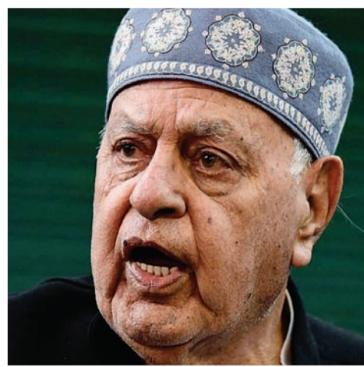
He also said that the National Conference was never a pro-Pakistan party and always worked for the betterment of all, irrespective of their caste, creed and religion.

"They (BJP) used to say after abrogation of Article 370 (in August 2019) that they have restored peace in J&K... Where is the promised peace and development? Give answers to the people," Mr Abdullah said addressing party workers in Ramban district.

Eleven civilians, including two teachers, a pharmacy owner and five non-local labourers, were killed in targeted attacks by terrorists in different parts of the Kashmir valley this month.

Without naming the BJP or the central government, the former chief minister said the recent killings have shattered all the claims made in the aftermath of the August 5, 2019, development.

"They are talking about 'Ram Rajya' but the fact is that they do not know anything about it. In 'Ram Rajya', there is no discrimination and all the people



whether Muslims, Hindus, Sikh or Christians are treated equally," he said. Referring to the statement of former prime minister AB Vajpayee "you can change friends but not neighbours", Abdullah said friendship between India and Pakistan holds the key to peace in the region. However, he said the National Conference has never been a pro-Pakistan party.

RUPEE SURGE BY 47 PAISE AGAINST DOLLAR

New Delhi: The rupee on Wednesday surged by 47 paise to close at a nearly two-week high of 74.88 against the US dollar on easing global crude oil prices and rising appetite for riskier assets. Heavy losses in the domestic equity markets, however, put some pressure on the rupee, forex dealers said. "Indian rupee gained the most among emerging market currencies, boosted by lower crude oil prices and dollar demand while market is expecting foreign fund inflows from scheduled QIPs and IPOs in coming weeks. "A rally in Chinese yuan, which placed near four months high against dollar, also supported regional currencies," Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, said. Oil prices eased by 0.83 per cent to USD 84.37 per barrel after reports that the Chinese government was planning steps to rein in high coal prices and improve supplies.

High oil prices had stoked fears of inflationary pressures and high forex outflows from India which weighed on the rupee last week.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened strong at 75.10 over its previous close of 75.35 against the greenback. Later, the local unit surged to settle at 74.88, the highest level since October 7.

Connaught Place should be no-hawking zone: Delhi HC

New Delhi: Coming down heavily on the lackadaisical attitude of Delhi Police and the New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) in removing illegal encroachments by street vendors in Connaught Place, the Delhi High Court has sought status reports about the steps they have taken in the issue.

A Division Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeeet Singh has also asked the authorities to display permanent boards in Rajiv Chowk and Indira Chowk area mentioning that CP is a no-hawking/illegal vending zone. Criticizing the NDMC for failing their obligations 'on the ground', the Court said it is not satisfied with the mere paper exercise that the civic body claims to have



undertaken. "In our view, such an exercise is merely undertaken to shun responsibility by the officers and pass the buck on," the bench said. The Court's response came after seeing photographs, in which it was seen scores and scores of hawkers and vendors who are occupying public spaces on the pavements meant for pedestrian use. The bench

was hearing a petition by shop owners in the area seeking directions to ensure that illegal hawking, squatting, and vending activities be removed permanently.

Large areas have been occupied by them to display their goods and wares which they are vending. Large congregations of crowds can be seen around these vends; the court observed.

NIRBHAYA'S LAWYER TO TAKE UP BUSINESSMAN'S MURDER CASE

Kanpur: Seema Samridhi, the lawyer who fought for justice in the Nirbhaya case and is also fighting the case of the Hathras rape and murder victim, will now take up the Manish Gupta murder case. Manish Gupta, a businessman, was allegedly killed during a police raid in a Gorakhpur hotel last month and six policemen have been arrested in the matter.

Seema said that she will fight the case of Manish Gupta without taking any fees. She said the wife of the deceased Manish had requested her for help. She said she will try to get the case transferred to Delhi since the Uttar Pradesh Police personnel are involved in the matter.

Meanwhile, Meenakshi Gupta, widow of the slain businessman, said that despite the state government's recommendation, the CBI has not yet started investigations.

"Now I am preparing to file a petition in the Supreme Court. I do not want to get the investigation done by the Lucknow unit of CBI. In the petition, I will ask for investigation by the Delhi unit of CBI," she told reporters.

Meenakshi also said that she has no complaint against the SIT which is presently probing the case.



Fuel rates hiked again, petrol at Rs 106.19 a litre in Delhi

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices on Wednesday rallied to their highest ever levels across the country, as fuel rates were hiked again by 35 paise a litre after a two-day pause.

The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level of Rs 106.19 a litre and Rs 112.11 per litre in Mumbai, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. In Mumbai, diesel now comes for Rs 102.89 a litre; while in Delhi, it costs Rs 94.92 a litre.

The fuel prices remained static on Monday and Tuesday, but had risen for four straight days by 35 paise per litre each before (October 13-16). There was no change in rates on October 12 and 13.

Diesel prices have increased on 20 out of the last 26 days taking up its retail price by Rs 6.30 per litre in Delhi.

With diesel prices rising sharply, the fuel is now available at over Rs 100 a litre in several parts of the country. This dubious distinction was earlier available to petrol that had crossed Rs 100 a litre-mark across the country a few months earlier.

Petrol prices had maintained stability since September 5, but the oil companies finally raised the pump prices last week and this week gave a spurt in the product



prices lately. Petrol prices have also risen on 17 of the previous 22 days taking up its pump price by Rs 5 per litre.

Crude prices have been on a surge rising over a three-year high level of over \$ 85 a barrel now. It had softened a bit falling

below \$ 85 a barrel now. Since September 5, when both petrol and diesel prices were revised, the prices of both in the international market was higher by around \$9-10 per barrel as compared to average prices during August.

43 MAOISTS SURRENDER IN CHHATTISGARH'S SUKMA

Sukma: A total of 43 Maoists, including nine women cadres, surrendered before the police in Chhattisgarh's worst Maoist-hit Sukma district on Wednesday, an officer said. The 43 cadres belonging to ten villages of the Sukma district turned themselves in before senior police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officials in Sukma town citing disappointment with "inhuman" and "hollow" Maoist ideology, Sukma senior police officer Sunil Sharma said.

Podiami Lakshman, a militia commander carrying a reward of ₹ 1 lakh on his head, was among those who surrendered before the police.

The remaining Maoists were active as members of the militia and Dandakaranya Adivasi Kisan Mazdoor Sanghan (DAKMS), Krantikari Mahila Adivasi Sangthan (KAMS), Chetna Natya Mandli (CNM) - all the frontal wings of Maoists, in different areas of the south Bastar, he said.

The senior officer said the surrendered Maoists were also "impressed" by the district police's rehabilitation drive for Maoists called 'Puna Narkom' (a term coined in local Gondi dialect which means New Dawn).

The surrendered Maoists will be provided with facilities as per the Surrender and Rehabilitation Policy of the Chhattisgarh government.

With the latest surrender, a total of 176 Maoists have so far quit the



CONGRESS & BJP WOO DALITS BY OBSERVING VALMIKI JAYANTI FOR BY-POLLS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Days ahead of polling for four by-polls in Madhya Pradesh, both the BJP and Congress are observing Valmiki Jayanti in the state on Wednesday, in an apparent effort to woo the Dalits.

The mainstream political rivals have already pitched hard in favour of 27% OBC quota, a matter which is pending before the state high court and tribals.

Bharatiya Janata Party state head VD Sharam attended an event organised at the BJP headquarters in Bhopal on Wednesday and also took part in Sundar Kand recital on the occasion at the party office. Sharma performed Valmiki puja and a shobha yatra was also taken out of the BJP office. The party has also organised events in slum localities to mark the occasion.

The Congress, too, was up to the mark and organised an event to mark the Valmiki Jayanti. MPCC president Kamal Nath released a calendar dedicated to Adikavi Valmiki in an event organised at his residence in Bhopal. Nath has also ordered events at block and district level in the state and party's head office in Bhopal saw an



event dedicated to Maharshi Valmiki in the afternoon. Since the caste voters have a noticeable presence in Khandwa, Prithvipur and Jobat, these numbers are decisive in Raigaon - an assembly constituency in Satna district which was held by BJP's Jugal Kishore Bagri who died of Covid-19 early this year. Bagri, a scheduled caste community, is the dominant factor in the region alongside Harijan and Kori communities. The BJP and the Congress have vehemently backed 27% OBC quota as the matter is pending with the state high court.

The Shivraj Chouhan government had even announced implementation of the hiked quota in recruitments and admissions cases which are not pending with the HC.

The Congress, led by Kamal Nath, slammed the Shivraj government for botched up handling of the matter had made top lawyers appear for the quota in the HC.

Moreover, the Jobat assembly seat which falls in Alirajpur district being a tribal dominated region, the BJP and Congress making all out efforts to woo voters. Ahead of polls, the BJP

had announced plans to celebrate valour of tribal heroes and CM Shivraj had made battery of announcements in the region and on Tuesday, the state cabinet announced free ration distribution in 89 tribal blocks of the state barring those which are going to polls. The Congress, however, has cried foul, saying it is done to influence the voters. PCC chief Kamal Nath, too, is reminding tribal voters of his farm loan waiver scheme, plan to facelift their sacred places and his government's move to end irregular money lending system in the state, particularly in the tribal regions.

Mounting another attack on the BJP, Nath on Wednesday tweeted that BJP leaders are busy in Kanya Pujan and two kids have died of malnutrition in the state within a week. He also accused the BJP of serving bundles of lies before the public.

VD Sharma, the BJP state president claimed that it was nothing political as Valmiki Jayanti was being celebrated across the state and not only in areas going to bypolls. On Nath's charges levelled in his tweet, Sharma said that none listens and believes deceitful things said by Nath. He added that the party celebrates Valmiki Jayanti every year.

Heavy rains affect farmers, damage crops, govt assures help

Heavy rains have severely impacted farmers in Madhya Pradesh and caused widespread damage to their crops. The state government has, however, assured all possible help to overcome the loss to life and property.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Farmers living in many parts of the state are not able to buy fertilizers these days as the rains caused heavy losses in many parts of the state.

The Congress party has sought the state government's help to compensate for the damage caused by the rains. Farmer leader Dinesh Gurjar alleged that the prices of fertilizers, seeds, electricity etc have become expensive in the state. While the state government supporting mafias.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said crops have been damaged due to rains at several places in the state. Necessary relief will be provided to the farmers affected by the rain for which instructions have been issued to carry out a survey. After the assessment, the affected victims will be provided necessary financial assistance.



Farmers will be provided the benefit of PM Fasal Bima Yojana for which necessary arrangements will be made. The state government is standing firmly with the farmers to overcome this situation and is a 'pro-farmer' government.

State Farmers Welfare and Agriculture Development Minister, Kamal Patel has told the farmers that they need not be worried under any circumstances. "There is a pro-

farmer government in the state. The problems faced by farmers is the responsibility of the state government, Patel added.

The Minister has said all Collectors have been directed to immediately start conducting a survey to assess the damage caused by rains as well as to assess the damage caused to standing, and harvested crops and crops kept in barns due to unseasonal rains.

Mukul Wasnik to visit MP from Oct 23 to 26 for bypolls

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress national general secretary and party's Madhya Pradesh in-charge Mukul Wasnik will take a whirlwind tour of constituencies from October 23 to 26, to campaign for the October 30 bypolls to Khandwa Lok Sabha seat and assembly constituencies of Prithvipur, Raigaon and Jobat.

Congress general administration in charge Rajiv Singh said, Wasnik is scheduled to fly from the national capital for Indore, and later to Jobat where he will address a rally. Party's state in-charge will visit Khargone in the evening.

On October 24, Wasnik is expected to participate in an election meeting in Khandwa.

The next day the leader is likely to campaign in Prithvipur. Before flying back to Delhi, the Congress' state in-charge is expected to



address a rally in Raigaon on October 26. Counting of votes will take place on November 2.

Cong MLA's rape accused son gets 48 hrs to surrender

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra on Wednesday warned Congress MLA's son, who is accused in a rape case, to surrender before the Indore Police within next 48 hours or else an exemplary action would be taken against him.

Mishra said he has directed Indore Police to increase the reward from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 against the accused Karan Morwal, who has been evading his arrest for more than six months.

Meanwhile, the Minister warned Karan's father Murli Morwal, who is a Congress MLA from Badnagar in the Ujjain district, to take his son to the police station or else be ready to face the consequences.

"I have directed the Indore Inspector General of Police to increase the reward against absconding Karan Morwal from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 and instructed to take an exemplary action if he fails to surrender within next 48 hours. I would request his



father (MLA Murli Morwal) to take his son to the police station as soon as possible or else be ready

to face police action," Mishra said while speaking to the media in Bhopal on Wednesday.

Indore police on Tuesday questioned the younger son of Murli Morwal in connection with the rape case. A case was registered against Karan on April 2 on the complaint of a woman leader who alleged that he had raped her under the pretext of marriage.

On Tuesday, police conducted a raid in search of Karan on a tip-off, however, he was not present there.

Subsequently, MLA Murli Morwal reached the Palasia police station and held secret talks with some officials.

As soon as he came out of the police station, mediapersons questioned the Congress MLA about his absconding son but he said he didn't want to say anything through the media on the issue. However, a senior police official has told the press that the MLA has assured officials that his son Karan Morwal will present himself before the police soon.

Sahil Ahirwar from Chattarpur, becomes the second Crorepati of KBC - 13

Team Absolute | Bhopal

19 year old Sahil Aditya Ahirwar who aspires to become an IAS officer someday has proven that hard work and dedication are the most important ingredients of success.

Sony Entertainment Television's distinguished show Kaun Banega Crorepati, in its 13th season found its second Crorepati in Sahil weeks after Himani Bundela.

Sahil Ahirwar, during his first year of college used to bunk lectures, enjoy with friends, watch films and pass his time away in his college canteen. The next two years, Sahil dedicated his time to studies making him a rank holder. His biggest inspiration has been his father who works as a Security guard in Noida and has studied until 10th Standard only. With carefully dissected answers, Sahil Aditya Ahirwar achieves the 1 crore mark on the show. Moving forward in the game, he will be seen attempting the jackpot question for 7 crore rupees. Will he make the cut?



Watch his journey unfold on 21st and 22nd October at 9pm only on Sony entertainment Television

Speaking about the same, Sahil Aditya Ahirwar shares, "Making it till the hotseat has been a dream, really. Being in the same room as Mr. Bachchan is a privilege. The journey hasn't been easy but I've put in a lot of hard-work and dedication. I'd like to specially thank Navodya Vidyalaya for helping me with all the challenges that came my way. My dad works as a security guard and winning the title of a 'Crorepati' means a lot to me and my family. With this money, I want to buy a house for my mother, a cricket set for my younger brother and help myself study and become an IAS officer someday soon. Through this platform, I'd like to reach out to millions of people like me to say this that no dream is small, all you need to do is put in your best efforts to realize it. Thank you Kaun Banega Crorepati for taking me a step closer to my dreams."

Two farmers killed in poll-bound Prithvipur

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Two farmers were allegedly killed by unidentified assailants in Prithvipur area in Niwari district of Madhya Pradesh.

According to local police, the incident occurred on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday when the farmers were asleep at a farm to protect their crops.

Prithvipur is one of the three Assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh where bypolls are scheduled to be held on October 30. The shocking incident came just 10 days ahead of the bypolls.

The Police told reporter that the incident took place in Ladwari Khas village,

which is nearly 25 km away from district headquarters.

"Two farmers were killed by unidentified persons by slitting their throats when they were sleeping at a farm to protect their crops. The reason behind the murder is yet to be known as the matter is still under investigation," said Niwari Additional Superintendent of Police, Surendrapal Singh Dabar.

The deceased farmers have been identified as Suri Kevat (50) and Kashi Kevat (40). "A case of murder was registered at Prithvipur police station against unidentified persons and efforts are on to nab the assailants," Dabar told reporter. The campaigning for upcoming bypolls in

Prithvipur is in full swing and both the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the opposition Congress are leaving no stone unturned to gain the support of people.

Madhya Pradesh Congress Chief and former Chief Minister, Kamal Nath held an election rally in Prithvipur on Monday during which he accused the BJP-led state government of influencing Congress candidate.

Recently, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had held a public rally in poll-bound Prithvipur.

Shishupal Singh Yadav is BJP's candidate for Prithvipur Assembly constituency while Nitendra Singh is contesting on a Congress ticket.

CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN PLANTS CHAMPA SAPLING



Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted a Champa sapling in the State Hangar Complex. Chief Minister Chouhan plants saplings every day according to his resolve. Champa tree is usually planted to enhance the beauty of homes, public areas and gardens. It can be easily planted from cuttings. Champa tree grows to about 15 to 25 feet.

Constant maintenance of power lines and equipment being done: Energy Minister

Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar has informed that standard perating procedure has been implemented for the maintenance of power lines and equipments. Earlier maintenance of lines and equipment was done twice a year, which has now been made a continuous process.

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In this, different equipment and lines are being maintained throughout the year. Due to this technical disruptions have reduced. A special module has been created to review this process.

Apart from infrastructure development for quality power supply to the consumers, standard operating procedure has been prescribed for regular maintenance to reduce power disruption.

Grievances of electricity consumers are being resolved over telephone from junior engineer to principal secretary level and also by the Energy Minister himself and feedback on the department's functioning is being taken. Prompt action is being taken while taking cognizance of complaints received from newspapers and social media.



Centralized call centers have been strengthened for speedy redressal of com-

plaints related to electricity supply in urban and rural areas. All the 48.45 lakh complaints

received during the period April, 2020 to September, 2021 have been resolved. The average time taken for redressal of complaints, which was one hour 31 minutes last year, has been reduced to one hour and 16 minutes. During the period between April, 2020 and September, 2021, 53 thousand 830 complaints have been resolved on the spot at distribution center/zone wise total 7556 camps organized for the redressal of complaints related to wrong bills of consumers.

Arrangement of meter reading of all non-agricultural consumers with connected load of more than 10 KW has been made through AMR or MRI without manual intervention. This will enable flawless readings and accurate billing of such consumers. Efforts are being made to eliminate the billing being done on the basis of estimated consumption in all district headquarters.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Pollution harming next generation

Rising air pollutants are causing still-birth and premature death of newborn among women living in polluted ambience, said an expert. He said that exposure to high levels of PM2.5 causes premature death among newborns even 1 to 2 weeks after birth, and sometimes causes premature birth too. Medical professional said these are some indirect impacts of air pollution on the human body, which need serious attention. Talking about the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, he mentioned that air pollutants add to the respiratory problems of the patients as their lungs are already affected by the Covid infection. The particles get stuck at the lung alveoli where the lungs and the blood exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide during the process of breathing and start inflammatory reactions that cause breathing problems. Air pollution does not contribute only to respiratory problems, but it also has long-term health effects which include heart disease, lung cancer, brain stroke and many more. A Professor AIIMS, said that air pollution has many ill-effects and cannot be confined to only lungs and respiratory problems, adding that those suffering from respiratory illness are the prime victims. If someone is suffering from asthma or allergic bronchitis, they may feel more problems due to air pollution. In the Covid scenario, those diagnosed with severe Covid infection have hypersensitive lungs and the air pollutants may create more problems for them, like running nose, extreme cough and eye allergy. Over 85 per cent deaths in India are linked to non-communicable diseases, said Salve, adding that air pollution causes 0.52 per cent more deaths among males in Delhi during winter.

FINDING TRUTH IN THE HAYSTACK OF PROMISES!

Ashish Kaul

The roar of the wind is making me anxious. There is something in the air that makes me restless. I know what it is. It's Kashmir! Kashmir ensanguined with bloodstains, be it of Kashmiri Pandits or of teachers singing 'Jana Gana Mana'. Kashmir, saluting the bravery and martyrdom of our soldiers and often defeating the cruel intentions of terrorists to disrupt its peace.

The scarlet luster of the Valley has never gone, but now it's the blood that falls, not chinar leaves. Voices can be heard against this bloodshed, showing empathy and seeking justice for the victims, playing politics over the death of non-Kashmiris.

Just like there is no control over price hike and inflation, despite various claims, there are still over 150 cases of infiltration reported in the Valley amid the news of peace being established here. Stone pelting may have stopped, but firings are on a surge. Once again, target killings are making a buzz in the streets.

Terrorists are waiting for the right moment. It may not be as heinous as 1990s, but it is true and must be taken care of. While the event-loving government is celebrating the revocation of Article 370, it requires immediate action.

A dream of 'New Kashmir' has been promised. People believe that now the government has finally made it come true. Now jobs, business, profit, identity, security etc. will be given to every individual Kashmiri. Even those who had to leave their motherland could come back and relocate. The people who call them also make claims that everything is fine and peaceful.

Then it is promised that when they return, the government will not let them lack anything, they will get jobs, their lost homes and they will be welcomed with open hands. And all this is happening only because Article 370 has been removed.

Is it real? Is the government really doing justice to the world's most educated Kashmiri Pandit community? They have been given fourth-class jobs and that too with a 'compulsory' clause that forces them to serve in Kashmir only.

Those who themselves cannot stand in Srinagar without security, with what confidence are they not only calling back the Kashmiri Pandits, but also claiming employment arrangements for them in the interior areas of Kashmir?

Is there a single politician who can move freely around in the Valley sans security? Even with a cloud of commandos, the politi-



cians can't admit the role of local onground terrorists in Kashmir. Therefore, forcing aboriginals to return and serve is like a Hobson's choice. First and foremost, there should be arrangement for the security of Kashmiri Pandits. Why doesn't the government create a Kashmiri Pandit regiment on the lines of Dogra and Madras regiments and then make them serve in the Valley? A common Kashmiri Pandit will protect the country and himself and will also earn his livelihood.

I have said this before too, Article 370 was a peculiar irony for Jammu and Kashmir which had projected the Muslim society as a vilian, and on the other hand blocked the way for the development of areas like Jammu, Poonch, Rajouri, Kishtwar, Ladakh. What has been promised by abrogating Article 370, will that really happen? Will the root problem of Kashmir be solved? Will Jhelum be called Vitasta again? Will Kashmiri Pandits be able to live peacefully in their streets again? Will every displaced who has lived 700 years in the shadow of Islamic terror be able to roam in Kashmir with the tricolour in his hand?

It is a strange delusion and misogyny that the abrogation of Article 370 will give the Kashmiri Brahmins their abandoned land and roof and end terrorism in the Valley. The religious demographic of entire Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has changed. Today, the Jammu region, Poonch, Rajouri, Ladakh -- almost the whole area -- account for 50 per cent Muslim population. Wherever you see, you will find close to 50 per cent Muslims. The presence of the Gujar and Bakarwal communities settled on the land across the Tawi river is neither officially acknowledged by the government, nor the administration.

But you cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that their presence also changes the demographics.

The day is not far when the indigenous Kashmiri Pandits and the Muslim community of Jammu will together oppose the abrogation of Article 370. And Kashmiri Hindus, who are celebrating the withdrawal of Article 370, will see their identity getting crushed right here.

Don't know what makes the governments go to contemplation camps as soon as 'Kashmir' is disturbed. Worrying lines are visible on everyone's forehead, but on the ground no one is seen doing anything except the army. The problem is that unless the government accepts that the Kashmir problem is a religious one, the hopes of a solution are blurred. Because not recognising the problem even after recognising is the real problem.

The second thing is that if the government considers Kashmiri Pandits a part of the problem, why are they not part of the solution? Why does everything remain as a ritual?

Only a Kashmiri can cure terror in Kashmir, no government. Together, Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Muslims can travel to the destination of peace. Kashmiri Muslims should also now understand that their existence is incomplete without Kashmiri Pandits. The path of return of Kashmiri Hindus with or without Article 370 originates from the heart of Kashmiri Muslims.

If Kashmiriyat is to be kept alive, the Muslims living in the Valley must understand that religious terrorism evicted Kashmiri Pandits from their own land in 1989. Had

the common Kashmiri Muslims stood with the Pandits and protested then, they would have saved Kashmir from the fire of terrorism. Now if they can openly welcome their Kashmiri Pandit brothers and sisters, considering and correcting the mistake, then and only then real peace will be restored.

Like Abhimanyu, the hero of my book 'Refugee Camp', I also firmly believe that peace in any society can be brought only by the people of that society, neither the government nor the police can play any big role in it.

The hype around abrogation of Article 370 is far from reality. It needs to be seen in the future what benefits Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh will get from this. For now, the removal of this one section will neither revoke terrorism, nor guarantee peace for the Kashmiri Pandits. It is for the Kashmiris themselves to decide whether they want terrorism or Kashmiriyat and peace co-existing with Kashmiri Pandits.

There is no doubt that these days Kashmir, which is stained with the blood of Hindus, Sikhs and non-Kashmiri citizens, can walk the path of peace not on the basis of symbolic events and festivals, but only on mutual reconciliation, understanding and discussion. Until then, keep singing this iconic Bollywood song, 'Kasme waade pyaar wafa sab, baat hai baton ka kya...'

(Ashish Kaul is a senior mediaperson and doctoral research scholar. Three of his books on Kashmir have been bestsellers. The views expressed are personal)

international

N.KOREAN MISSILE LAUNCH UNDERSCORES 'URGENT' NEED FOR DIALOGUE: WHITE HOUSE

Washington | Agencies

The US remains ready to engage with North Korea anytime and anywhere, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki has said, adding that North Korea's missile tests underscored the urgent need to engage with the reclusive state.

North Korea fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile on Tuesday, marking its eighth missile test so far this year, Yonhap news agency reported.

"These launches also underscore the urgent need for dialogue and diplomacy. Our offer remains to meet anywhere, anytime without preconditions," the White House Press Secretary told a daily press briefing.

"We call on the DPRK to



refrain from further provocations and engage in sustained and substantive dialogue," she added, referring to North Korea by its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The State Department earlier condemned the latest

North Korean missile test, calling it a "violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions."

North Korea remains unresponsive to US overtures. It has also stayed away from talks with the US since early 2019. Psaki reaffirmed the

US' commitment to working with its allies while also reiterating US commitment to the defence of South Korea and Japan.

"Our commitment to the defence of the Republic of Korea and Japan remains ironclad," said Psaki, referring to South Korea by its official name.

Her remarks came after US Special Representative for North Korea, Sung Kim met trilaterally with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts in Washington earlier in the day.

"So we remain prepared to engage in diplomacy with the North Korea, and also, of course, to work closely with our allies and partners on addressing this as it proceeds," the White House press secretary said.

US WILL NOT UNFREEZE AFGHAN FOREIGN ASSETS



New Delhi: The US is still holding its previous stance on the Taliban and said that they will not release nearly ten billion dollars of Afghanistan now frozen in the US banks, Khaama Press reported. US's deputy minister of Finance Wally Adeyemo said that it is important to keep pressure on the Taliban, but added that the people of Afghanistan should not be harmed. Adeyemo said that new means must be sought in order to provide Afghan people with humanitarian aid. We will not let the Taliban access the money in an ongoing situation.

Putin not to attend COP26 climate summit

Moscow | Agencies

Russian President Vladimir Putin will not attend the COP26 climate summit at Glasgow in Scotland, the Kremlin said on Wednesday.

No reason was given for the decision not to attend, but a Kremlin spokesperson said climate change was an "important" priority for Russia, the BBC reported.

"Unfortunately, Putin will not fly to Glasgow," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, adding that climate change was "one of our foreign policy's most important priorities".

COP26 takes place in Scotland's largest city from October 31 to November 12.

Russia's decision is seen as a blow to efforts to get leaders to negotiate a new deal to stall rising global temperatures.

Putin has not commented on the official announcement but speaking at an international energy forum in Moscow on October 13, the Russian leader cited the coronavirus



pandemic as a factor in his decision to travel.

"I am not sure yet if I will attend (COP26) in person, but I will certainly take part in it," he added. Chinese President Xi Jinping is also unlikely to attend, though Chinese officials have reportedly not entirely ruled out a change of plans.

13 killed in Damascus army bus explosion



Damascus: At least 13 people were killed and three others wounded in a bomb attack on an army bus in central Damascus on Wednesday, state news agency SANA reported. People heard the sound of a powerful explosion early Wednesday, which appeared later to be roadside bombs targeting a military passenger bus passing near the President Bridge in the heart of the Syrian capital, Xinhua news agency reported. Following the explosion, a bomb squad found a third explosive device and dismantled it, it added. Meanwhile, the state news agency posted photos of a charred passenger bus with military personnel around it checking the situation. The President Bridge is a very busy area in Damascus where the main transportation station, which connects the capital through dozens of buses, mini buses and mini vans, is located.

48 died, 31 missing in Nepal's flood and landslides

Kathmandu | Agencies

At least 48 people have died and 31 others went missing in Nepal's flood and landslides triggered by incessant rains from Sunday, Nepal's Ministry of Home Affairs said.

Similarly, thousands of farmers across the country have lost their crops to rains this year. Destruction of the paddy crop is a major setback for Nepal's overall economy. Paddy alone contributes around 7 per cent to the national gross domestic product and is the major income source for more than half of the population.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has called an emergency Cabinet meeting on Wednesday afternoon to discuss the situation created by the rain, floods, and landslides. As many as 11 districts of the country reported deaths and missing people, according to the Home Ministry.

Some bridges collapsed and highways were obstructed. Some cities and airports are inundated and in some districts, some human settlements were submerged under the floods. Local authorities have shifted some settlements to safe places in some districts to save people from the flood and landslides.

Several districts of the country have been hit hard by the unexpected autumn rain. According to Nepali Airlines officials, at least 100 domestic flights scheduled for an operation to and from the capital, Kathmandu were suspended on Wednesday owing to bad weather conditions. This is the highest number of flight suspensions



recorded in a single day in recent times as air carriers could not operate services to various hilly as well as plain areas due to incessant rains

and bad weather conditions.

The Home Ministry said that 31 people are still missing in landslides and floods in several parts

of the country and search and rescue operation is underway.

The sudden and extreme rainfall in the third week of October, has left experts wondering and worried-how climate change is impacting the economy and livelihoods of the people.

Nepal's economic well-being is intimately linked with the rainy season. Water from the skies is the lifeblood of Nepal's Rs 4.26 trillion economy which is farm-dependent, as nearly two-thirds of the farmlands are rain-fed. A large part of the country gets nearly 80 per cent of its annual rainfall during the four months-June to September. Given the above-normal rainfall this year, Nepal was expecting a bumper harvest.

Paddy is transplanted in Nepal in June and harvested in October. But the rain this time in the third week of October is set to spell disaster.

Political parties leaders have called on the government to provide relief and compensate the farmers affected by the rain, floods, and landslide.

Experts had warned of extreme weather events when Nepal received above-normal rainfall in June, the month monsoon entered the country. Nepali authorities, however, failed to forewarn farmers of possible rains in October, the month paddy is harvested. The monsoon usually lasts until September 23 in Nepal.

Days after the monsoon clouds arrived, torrential rains started wreaking havoc across the country, unleashing floods and landslides and the rains have not stopped yet.



NO BAIL FOR ARYAN KHAN, 2 OTHERS, TO MOVE BOMBAY HC ON THURSDAY

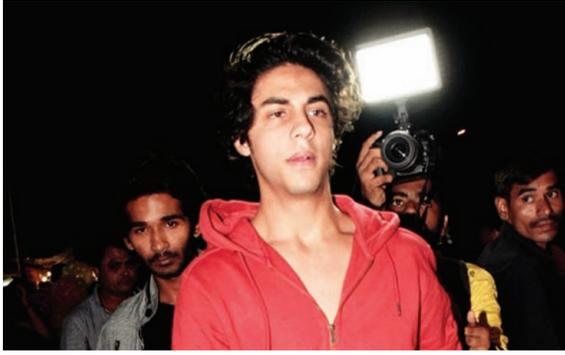
In a massive jolt to Aryan Khan, a special NDPS court in Mumbai on Wednesday rejected the bail plea of the son of Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan in the case related to the raid on a rave party aboard a cruise ship on October 2.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Special NDPS Judge V.V. Patil also declined the bail applications of Arbaaz Merchant and Mumnu Dhamecha, the two others accused in the drug case lodged by Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).

"Bail applications 2571/21, 2576/21 and 2583/21 stand rejected. Accordingly, bail applications are disposed off," Patil said this afternoon, though a detailed order is awaited.

Shortly thereafter, Aryan Khan's lawyers, senior advocate Amit Desai and Satish Maneshinde rushed to the Bombay High Court to mention



the matter before Justice N.W. Sambre, but the court hours had ended, and now, the matter is likely to come up on Thursday.

Nationalist Congress Party national spokesperson and Maharashtra Minister Nwab Malik and Shiv Sena leader Kishore Tiwari have again flayed the NCB and claimed the case will not stand the scrutiny of the higher courts. Aryan Khan, Merchant and Dhamecha, along

with five others were detained on October 2, and placed under arrest on October 3 after the NCB raided the luxury ship preparing to sail on a Mumbai-Goa cruise. Initially, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate R.M. Nerlikar had sent them to a day's custody which was later extended till October 7, and later sent to judicial custody for 14 days, and transferred the case to the Special NDPS court.

Later, their lawyers moved the special court for bail which was rejected after several days of hearing in which the NCB's counsel, Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh vehemently opposed bail for the accused. Among other things, the NDPS accused Aryan Khan of being a regular consumer of drugs, dealing in narcotics and the case having international links, etc as evident from his WhatsApp chats. The NCB's contentions were strongly countered by his lawyers, especially since no drugs were recovered from him and the lawyers of the other co-accused also strongly pleaded for bail.

Singh, however, argued that at least five out of the 20 arrested are drug peddlers and are somehow linked with the other co-accused which the NCB is trying to unearth.

Besides Khan, Merchant and Dhamecha, the others arrested on October 3 include Nupur Satija, Ishmeet Singh Chadha, Mohak Jaswal, Gomit Chopra, and Vikrant Chhoker, and later in swoops another 12 persons were nabbed in con-

Mafiosi Suresh Pujari nabbed in the Philippines, extradition to India soon

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Read absconding gangster Suresh Pujari, who was active in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region areas, has been nabbed in the Philippines, official sources said here on Tuesday.

He was taken into custody at least four days ago by the Paranaque local police's Fugitive Search Unit in southern Manila metropolitan region.

The Philippines authorities have informed the Indian government about the developments and the latter is preparing to get him extradited here to face the law. Soon after Pujari escaped from the country, the Mumbai Police had shared a detailed dossier on him with the Centre a few years ago, said officials.

A former close associate of mafioso Ravi Pujari - who was arrested in west Africa's Senegal in early 2019 and later brought to India, Suresh Pujari had fallen out with him over territorial differ-



ences. Along with a few other ruffians, he launched his independent mafia operations in the early 2000s, with activities in parts of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane regions.

Living in Asalpa area of Ghatkopar suburb in north-east Mumbai, he managed to slip out of India in 2007 even as an InterPol notice was issued for him and the Maharashtra Police was closely monitoring his movements in different countries.

He faces at least 10 major cases of extortion, threats to

murder, killings, etc in Mumbai and more offences elsewhere in the MMR region, other cities and the Mumbai Police CID, the CBI and the FBI were on the lookout for him in the past nearly 15 years.

Going by aliases like Suresh Pai, he and his associates had allegedly made extortion-cum-threat calls to several top builders, contractors, and glamour world celebs in the early 2000s, organised or ordered gangland killings, etc.

Shiv Sena's ill MP skips ED hearing, seeks fortnight's time

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Yavatmal-Washim Shiv Sena MP Bhavana Gawali skipped a hearing by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on grounds of ill health, here on Wednesday.

Instead a team of her lawyers went to the ED and submitted a letter seeking another 15 days' time to enable the MP to appear before the central probe agency.

Political sources said that Gawali - who was first summoned on October 4, but did not attend the ED office owing to prior commitments - is suffering from chicken-pox and has sought more time to go and answer the ED's queries.

The ED is probing allegations of money-laundering indulged by Gawali and her associates for criminal conspiracy to fraudulently convert a trust into a private company.

Later, the ED arrested one of aides Saeed Khan, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, and wants to quiz Gawali about her links with him and certain misappropriation of funds amounting to around Rs 25 crore. While denying the allegations



against her, Gawali has accused the ED of targeting her solely because she belongs to a state party, Shiv Sena. The ED entered the picture after the Risod Police in Washim registered a complaint of cheating and criminal breach of trust against various persons including the trustees, and later the ED carried out multiple raids at her premises in Yavatmal, Washim and Mumbai.

STONE-PELTING IN OSMANABAD OVER SOCIAL MEDIA POST

Mumbai: A mob of over 150 people allegedly pelted stones on vehicles and hoardings on a road in Maharashtra's Osmanabad city to express their anger over an objectionable post against Mughal emperor Aurangzeb on Facebook, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place around 10.30 pm on Tuesday in Vijay Chowk area and four policemen were injured while trying to stop the violent mob, they said.

"The mob vandalised a hoarding, a police vehicle and an auto-rickshaw in Vijay Chowk area. Four policemen, including an officer, were injured while they were trying to stop the mob," police said.

A case was registered against 43 people, who were named, and 150 to 170 unidentified protesters under various IPC Sections, including 307 (attempt to murder), 333 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt to deter public servant from his duty) public service, 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, another official said.

India on the cusp of a virtuous cycle: Morgan Stanley

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A virtuous cycle, supported by strong capex and productivity, is taking off in India, a Morgan Stanley research report said on Wednesday.

Strong rates of growth, coupled with benign macro stability risks, set a positive backdrop for the ratio of corporate profits to GDP to rise. This cycle will be unlike the past decade and more like 2003-07, the report said. It said that for India, capex and productivity growth will take the lead as key drivers of growth in the current cycle, just as they did in 2003-07. This will allow strong rates of growth while keeping the macro stability risks at bay.

What is working for India this time around is that policymakers are making concerted efforts to improve the business environ-



ment, incentivise corporate activity, and attract manufacturing investment. Led by manufacturing, capex to GDP ratios are rising 6 percentage points (ppt) from FY21 to FY26, the report said. "This is a clear inflection in India's macro environment. Rising capex ratios will significantly lift employment prospects and boost income and consumption growth, creating a virtuous cycle. The effective utilisation of both factors of production will unlock India's structural positives, allowing it to generate robust economic and corporate

profit growth," the report said. Morgan Stanley now expects India's GDP growth to average 7 per cent in FY23-26. Also, India would enter a new profit cycle, which may result in earnings compounding at 20-25 per cent per annum for the next four years. "We think that India's economy is well-positioned and ready for a takeoff in this cycle, given the global macro backdrop as well as supportive policy reforms," the report said. However, the risks to this positive sentiment remains, but more from external factors than domestic and cyclical rather than structural in nature. For instance, a sharper rise in US core inflation above 2.5 per cent per annum, driven by wage growth, could lead to a disruptive pace of Fed rate hikes and in turn spillover to a tightening of financial conditions in India.

NPCI Tokenisation system will support RuPay cards

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In line with the recently issued guidelines by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to secure customers' financial data, National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) on Wednesday launched NPCI Tokenisation system (NTS) to support tokenisation of RuPay cards as an alternative to storing card details with merchants.

The NTS will further enhance the safety of customers and provide a seamless shopping experience to consumers.

"We are confident that NPCI Tokenisation System (NTS) for tokenization of RuPay cards will instil further trust in the millions of RuPay cardholders to carry out their day-to-day transactions securely," Kunal Kalawatia, Chief of Products, National Payments Corporation of India, said in a statement.

"We believe that this unique Card-on-File (CoF) Tokenisation solution will not only safeguard customers' confidential data but will also further strengthen the overall digital pay-



ments environment," Kalawatia added. Based on the set of guidelines that have been mandated by the RBI, sensitive cus-

tomers information is to be stored in the form of an encrypted 'token' to help secure transactions.

These tokens then allow payments to be processed without disclosing the customer details or allowing the payment intermediaries to store customer data that could breach security and privacy.

NPCI's Token Reference On File (TROF) service will help millions of RuPay cardholders, maintain the security of their financial data. The card details of the customers will be completely safe & secure at the RuPay Network Secure vault.

With NTS, acquiring banks, aggregators, merchants and others can get themselves certified with NPCI and can play the role of Token Requestor to help save the Token reference number (Token Reference On File) against all card numbers saved.

Recently, digital payments firm Visa launched CoF tokenisation services in India. Visa's card tokenisation service is currently available with ecommerce platforms such as Grofers, Bigbasket and MakeMyTrip.

Heroin worth Rs 21.70 Crores seized from Sion, woman arrested

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC) of the Mumbai Police arrested a 53-year-old woman supplier of drugs and seized 7.2 kg heroin worth Rs 21.70 crore from her possession in Sion Koliwada area, an official said on Wednesday.

The ANC sleuths nabbed the alleged drug supplier, identified as Amina Hamza Shaikh alias Lali, a resident of suburban Mankhud, on Tuesday night, he said. The seized heroin was meant to be distributed to other drug suppliers operating in Mumbai and to Lali's customers, the official said, adding the ANC has launched the search to nab Lali's contacts.

Lali was previously arrested by the Worli and Ghatkopar units of the ANC for her alleged role in supplying banned drugs in 2015 and 2018, he said.

"Officials of the Ghatkopar unit of the ANC acted on specific information that Lali was smuggling a huge quantity of heroin following which a trap was laid in Sion Koliwada and she was arrested with drugs," said DCP (ANC) Datta Nalawade.

An FIR was registered under sections 8 (c) and 21 (c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS), he said.

The accused told the police that she had procured the drugs from two smugglers from Naugama village in Rajasthan.

Former Goa Dy CM Dayanand Narvekar joins AAP ahead of polls

Team Absolute | Panaji

Former Speaker of the Goa legislative assembly and deputy Chief Minister Dayanand Narvekar joined the Aam Aadmi Party in Goa on Tuesday.

"The AAP has a structure in place in Goa and they have done exemplary work in the national capital," Narvekar told reporters after his formal induction in the party.

Narvekar, a former Congress leader, served as the Speaker of the state assembly from 1985-89, while he was also deputy Chief Minister in a subsequent Congress-led alliance regime in the mid 2000s, which was led by Chief Minister Digambar Kamat.

Interestingly, party sources said that Narvekar's entry into the AAP has sparked internal debate in the party rank in the coastal state considering the fact over the former Deputy Chief Minister's tainted past.

Narvekar, as the head of the Goa Cricket Association, was arrested in a 2001 scam involving printing of counterfeit tickets for a One Day International match in South Goa's Fatroda stadium between India and Australia.

While charges have been framed against Narvekar and other officials of the



Association, the case is currently ongoing in a local trial court.

As Speaker, Narvekar has also had to battle accusations of molestation by a junior staffer, but the former Congress politician successfully contested the allegations to come out unscathed. "As local office bearers we are disappointed with the move to induct Narvekar, we are considering a move to put in a strong protest to our party higher ups," an AAP office bearer said on condition of anonymity.

MAHA REPORTS 1,825 NEW COVID-19 CASES; 21 DIE, 2,879 RECOVER

Mumbai: Maharashtra reported 1,825 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday and a much higher recovery figure at 2,879, while 21 more patients succumbed to the infection, a health department official said. A dozen districts, out of the total 36, did not report any new cases of the respiratory disease. With the additions of new cases, up nearly 190 from a day ago, and fresh fatalities, down more than half from the previous day, the state's infection tally shot up to 65,96,645, while the death toll rose to 1,39,886, he said. On Tuesday, Maharashtra had reported 1,638 coronavirus positive cases and 49 deaths.

The official said with 2,879 patients discharged from hospitals in the last 24 hours, the number of recovered cases increased to 64,27,426.

Former Mumbai CP Param Bir Singh not traceable: Maha govt to HC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The whereabouts of former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh were not known, the Maharashtra government on Wednesday told the Bombay high court.

"He isn't traceable. In these circumstances, we do not want to continue our earlier statement where the government said it would not take any coercive action against him," Khambata said.

Param Bir Singh's counsel Mahesh Jethmalani said he had not been declared as an absconder yet. "In this case, he was summoned twice and both the times he responded," Jethmalani said.

The high court was hearing a petition filed by the senior IPS officer seeking to quash the FIR lodged against him under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and relevant IPC sections on a complaint filed by police inspector Bhimrao Ghadge.

The judges adjourned the hearing to next week.



Ghadge, presently posted in Akola district, has levelled allegations of corruption against Singh and some other officers when Singh was Thane police commissioner.

Singh pressured him to drop the names of some persons from a case

and when he refused, he was framed up in false cases, Ghadge claimed.

The FIR was registered under the Atrocities Act as the complainant belongs to an SC community, as well as for extortion and some other Indian Penal Code offences.

Singh's lawyer claimed that the FIR was a backlash over Singh's allegations of corruption against former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh.

The IPS officer is also facing at least four extortion cases in Thane and Mumbai. He was transferred from the post of Mumbai police commissioner in March after the arrest of police officer (now dismissed) Sachin Waze in the case of an SUV with explosives found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence and the murder of businessman Mansukh Hirani.

Singh then accused Deshmukh of asking Waze to collect Rs 100 crore every month from bars and restaurants in Mumbai. The Nationalist Congress Party leader, who denied the allegation, soon stepped down as minister and is facing Central Bureau of Investigation probe.



Sylvester Stallone bows out of 'Expendables' franchise

Hollywood star Sylvester Stallone has confirmed that he has filmed his last-ever scenes in the 'Expendables' franchise, and he is now "passing the baton" over to actor Jason Statham and his "capable hands".

He wrote: "EXPENDABLES finale for me Today is my last day of filming a Heading home. So they go." Stallone said in a video: "I just finished a very successful stunt and it's time to be moving on. I'm enjoying it, but it's always bittersweet when something you've been attached to I guess since 12 years. I'm ready to pass the baton on to Jason and his capable hands."

Stallone admitted he loves providing "the human touch" and "escapism" in his movies, as well as plenty of action, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

He added: "The greatest thing is being able to provide films (and) entertainment (where) maybe there's a little message in there, because what I try to convey in my successful films is the human touch."

"Not so much the action; the action is self-evident. But it's just relating to the audience in a way that they can identify with whatever the mission is, with the characters at hand. Just providing escapism, and hopefully there's a little something extra in there."

Stallone signed off the clip by admitting he was "getting ready to accept the next challenge".

'The Expendables 4' will see Statham, Stallone, Dolph Lundgren and Randy Couture joined by the likes of Megan Fox, 50 Cent, and Andy Garcia.

'IT'S 'VERY DIFFICULT TO BE A WOMAN'

London | Agencies

There are definitely sometimes where mentally, I'm not in a place where I want to be exposed or interact with the world. I think style is a closer reflection of your mood than some people realise, and because of that, it changes constantly. "Like I change multiple times a day sometimes, don't you? That's my best advice for anyone: wear what makes you feel good and do not worry about what other people say you look like," reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The actress acknowledges that it's easier said than done. She told Elle.com: "Obviously, that's a really tricky thing for me as well, because I have body

Actress Megan Fox says it is hard to be a woman and has encouraged other women to wear whatever makes them "feel good" and not to worry about the opinions of other people.

dysmorphia, so I see myself differently than how other people see me anyway.

"And bottom line is, it's very difficult to be a woman!" She added: "And I've finally let myself acknowledge that it's hard to be a woman! It's really difficult, right? We are our own worst enemies sometimes, and so my best advice is just to embrace it, and know you have the freedom to express yourself however feels good to you."

"Know that, and then give yourself permission to do so." On the other hand, Megan explained that her body just isn't suited to wearing certain things. The 'Transformers' star said: "People do not realise how small I am. So I'm either in clothes that are really well-fitted or I just get overwhelmed by fabric, which happens very easily. So if I know I'm going to be photographed, I do tend to pick things with a very close fit. I would love to put on a pair of parachute pants, but it just doesn't work on my body! It wasn't exactly a choice to only wear tight clothes or cutouts."



'John Wick' prequel series adds five to cast including Mishel Prada

Los Angeles | Agencies

The 'John Wick' prequel series 'The Continental' is rounding out its main cast with new additions.

Mishel Prada will play KD, with Hubert Point Du-Jour, Jessica Allain and Ben Robson has been cast as Frankie.

They join previously announced series lead Colin Woodell as well as cast member Mel Gibson, reports variety.com.

'The Continental' will explore the origin behind the titular hotel-for-assassins through the eyes and actions of Winston Scott (Woodell), who is dragged into the Hell-scape of a 1975 New York City to face a past he thought he'd left behind.

Winston charts a deadly course through New York's mysterious underworld in a harrowing attempt to seize the iconic hotel, which serves as the meeting point for the world's most dangerous criminals. In the films, Scott is played by Ian McShane.

'The Continental', which will air as a three-episode event series, is from writers and executive producers Greg Coolidge and Kirk Ward, who also serve as showrunners.

Chad Stahelski, Derek Kolstad, David Leitch, Shawn Simmons, Paul Wernick, and Rhett Reese all serve as executive producers with Basil Iwanyk and Erica Lee of Thunder Road Pictures also executive producing.

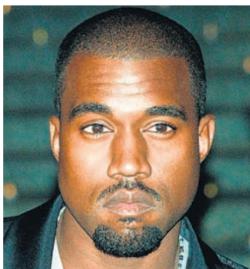


KANYE WEST OFFICIALLY CHANGES NAME TO YE

Los Angeles: Rapper Kanye West, born as Kanye Omari West, has legally changed his name to Ye.

After filing paperwork to change his name, the rapper will be now legally known as "Ye", reports edition.cnn.com. Judge Michelle Williams granted the change on Monday in a California courthouse, after the rapper filed a petition to change his name in August, documents seen by CNN confirm. The musician hinted at the change as far back as 2018, when he released his studio album 'Ye', and then several months later tweeted: "the being formally known as Kanye West. I am YE."

Back in 2019, West suggested he might legally change his name to "Christian Genius Billionaire Kanye West" for a little bit. The rapper's name change is just one of several recent big shifts in his life: His wife, Kim Kardashian, filed for divorce back in February after the pair, who share four young children, had reportedly been living apart for some time. The musician also released his highly anticipated album "Donda" in August. It debuted at the top of Billboard's Top 200 albums chart, making him only the seventh artist to have 10 number 1 albums, according to Billboard.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Gwyneth Paltrow, who has Apple, 17, and Moses, 15, with her former-husband Chris Martin, is happy for their teachers to take the lead when it comes to educating her children about sex.

She said, "I try always to be neutral on the topic. I think my generation got a lot of messages around sex that made us feel bad about it."

"I try to just be curious, and teenagers are never going to want to talk to their parents about sex, ever, so I sort of follow their lead and luckily, in middle school they had a very thorough sex education, so the school handled the kind of birds and the bees parts, and then I am there for any questions, but the questions are pretty minimal."

Despite this, Paltrow wants her children to stay "really close to (their) own truth" in their love lives, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The actress told 'Entertainment Tonight': "I think the main thing that nobody ever tells you, is you have to stay really close to your own truth and you have to stay really in integrity with that truth, because when you are in a relationship and you are not being your full self, you are sublimating things or you are white knuckling through something, and I think it can be pretty damaging to how you feel about yourself. "I will always just encourage my children to really listen to themselves, listen to their instincts, listen to if something you know feels right, and to act from that place."

'John Wick' prequel series adds five to cast including Mishel Prada

Washington DC | Agencies

The 'John Wick' prequel series 'The Continental' is rounding out its main cast with new additions. Mishel Prada will play KD, with Hubert Point Du-Jour, Jessica Allain and Ben Robson has been cast as Frankie. They join previously announced series lead Colin Woodell as well as cast member Mel Gibson, reports variety.com.

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Gwyneth Paltrow's children won't want to talk to her about sex



Addison Rae





2021 T20 WORLD CUP

INDIA THRASH AUSTRALIA BY 9 WICKETS IN WARM-UP GAME

Dubai | Agencies

Team India produced a clinical performance with both bat and ball as they thrashed Australia by 9 wickets in their second warm-up game, ahead of the Super 12 stage of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021, here on Wednesday.

Indian bowlers, especially spinners, picked crucial wickets at regular intervals and restricted Australia to 152/5 in 20 overs.

Chasing 153 for victory, openers gave India a brisk start with KL Rahul once again being the aggressor. Against the spinners, Rahul looked at absolute ease as he smashed Agar and Zampa down the ground for two sixes and a four. Rohit, at the other end, was happy to play second fiddle.

Rahul eventually fell to Ashton Agar, trying to clear the boundary once again only to find David Warner in the deep. By the time Rahul was out, Sharma had got his eye in and took over the mettle of run-scoring. He brought up his half-century with a wonderful cut off Marcus Stoinis.

Suryakumar Yadav, who came to bat at Number 3, too got some valuable runs to boost his confidence ahead of India's Super 12 opener



against Pakistan. Both, Rohit and Suryakumar made batting look easy as they hit a flurry of boundaries.

When India needed 26 off 30, Rohit decided to retire himself out to give Hardik Pandya some much-needed

game time and it was eventually him who sealed the game with a straight six, with 13 balls remaining.

Earlier in the day, Australia skipper Aaron Finch chose to bat first against the Rohit Sharma-led Indian team. India chose to start with spin at one end and reaped instant rewards as Ashwin sent David Warner and Mitchell Marsh back to the pavilion off consecutive balls.

Ravindra Jadeja scalped Aaron Finch off his first ball after which Steve Smith and Glenn Maxwell have steadied the ship as Australia go into the drinks break at 57/3. Just when it looked like Maxwell was getting in the groove, Rahul Chahar got the better of him with the googly.

Steve Smith soon brought up a well-made half-century after smashing Shardul Thakur for three consecutive fours. Stoinis's unbeaten 25-ball 41 helped Australia post 152/5 at the end of 20.

Brief scores :

Australia 152/5 (Steve Smith 57, Marcus Stoinis 41; Ravichandran Ashwin 2-8) vs India 153/2 (Rohit Sharma 60, KL Rahul 39; Ashton Agar 1-14).

Hasaranga, Nissanka and bowlers secure dominant win for Sri Lanka

Abu Dhabi | Agencies

Wanindu Hasaranga (71 off 47 balls) and Pethum Nissanka (61 off 47 balls) staged a wonderful counter-attack to take Sri Lanka to 171/7 in 20 overs against Ireland in a Group A match of Round 1 in the ICC men's T20 World Cup at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium here on Wednesday.

Hasaranga and Nissanka had a partnership of 123 for the fourth wicket, rescuing Sri Lanka after being 8/3 in the first 10 balls of the match. Skipper Dasun Shanaka's cameo of 21 off just 11 balls in the back end of the innings took Sri Lanka past the 170-run mark. For Ireland, Josh Little was the pick of the six bowlers, finishing with career-best figures of 4/23.

Their counter-attack coupled with exquisite shots rattled Ireland, who resorted to bowling wider lines and got dispatched for runs. Hasaranga brought up his



maiden T20I half-century with 38 balls with a brace off Craig Young in the 13th over. Nissanka brought up his half-century in the 16th over. But on the very next ball, a visibly exhausted Hasaranga sliced to short third man off Mark Adair.

Though Bhanuka Rajapaksa and Chamika Karunaratne fell cheaply, Nissanka struck two more boundaries before toe-ending behind to the keeper to

become Little's fourth scalp of the day. Dasun Shanaka then struck a six and four on the last two balls of the innings to take Sri Lanka beyond 170.

Brief scores

Sri Lanka 171/7 in 20 overs (Wanindu Hasaranga 71, Pethum Nissanka 61, Josh Little 4/23, Mark Adair 2/35) against Ireland.

Wiese's fifty powers Namibia to 6-wicket win over Netherlands

Abu Dhabi | Agencies

David Wiese's unbeaten fifty (66 not out off 40 balls) powered Namibia to a six-wicket win over Netherlands in the 7th match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 at Sheikh Zayed Stadium, here on Wednesday.

Opener Max O'Dowd's second half-century of the tournament helped Netherlands post 164/4 in 20 overs.

Chasing a challenging target for victory, Namibia had a good start, scoring 41-1 in the powerplay. However, the loss of three wickets in the first 10 overs with 68 on the board has left the middle order with plenty to do.

From there on, David Wiese, Gerhard Erasmus (32 off 22) and JJ Smit (14 not out off 8) played vital knocks and led Namibia to six wickets win over Netherlands.

This was the first win of the tournament for Namibia while Netherlands' campaign is in tatters after two losses in as many games.



Brief scores

Netherlands: 164/4 in 20 overs (Max O'Dowd 70 off 56, Ackermann 35 off 32; Jan Frylinck 2/36) lost to Namibia 166-4 in 19 Overs (David Wiese 66 not out off 40), Gerhard Erasmus 32 off 22; Fred Klaassen 1/14).

UCL: Griezmann the hero and villain as Atletico lose to Liverpool

Madrid | Agencies

Atletico Madrid striker Antoine Griezmann had a night he is unlikely to forget in a long time as his side lost 3-2 at home to Liverpool in their Uefa Champions League (UCL) tie. The Frenchman scored two goals at the Wanda Metropolitano stadium to bring his side back from 2-0 down, but then saw a red card that played a big part in their loss.

Griezmann probably didn't have malice in mind when he challenged for the ball with Liverpool striker Roberto Firmino early in the second half, but his high foot in the Brazilian's face left the referee with little option other than to send him off, in what was the decisive moment in an exciting game.

It was 2-0 just five minutes later when Naby Keita latched onto Felipe's poor clearance to volley past



Jan Oblak in the Atletico goal to seemingly put Liverpool on track to a comfortable win, Xinhua reports. That changed in the 20th minute when Griezmann put the finishing

touch to a move that started with Thomas Lemar, before Koke sent a low ball into the Liverpool area for the Frenchman to prod home from close range.

In Amsterdam, Ajax crushed Borussia Dortmund 4-0 to take the lead in the Champions League Group C with three wins in as many matches. In a sold-out Johan Cruyff Arena, Ajax took the lead through an own goal by Dortmund captain Marco Reus, who deflected Dusan Tadic's free-kick into the net.

After Daley Blind doubled the scoring, Ajax continued to dominate the German side and kept on creating chances.

Ajax could have scored even more, but the 4-0 victory sees the Amsterdam side record their biggest European win against a German side since 1973 when they beat Bayern Munich by the same scoreline, while Dortmund suffered their biggest ever Champions League defeat.

Ajax now lead Group C with nine points, ahead of Dortmund on six points, Sporting CP with three points and Besiktas with zero.

DJOKOVIC MIGHT SKIP AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Sydney | Agencies

Even as world No.1 tennis player, Novak Djokovic of Serbia, is refusing to reveal his Covid-19 vaccine status, casting doubt over Australian Open participation next year, the state of Victoria has said that no athlete who has not been fully vaccinated will be allowed to participate in major events, which includes the Australian Open in January 2022. Federal Immigration Minister Alex Hawke on Wednesday confirmed the state's ruling during an interview with ABC News. "The government, in establishing its borders, has said that you'll need to be double vaccinated to visit Australia," said Hawke. "That's a universal application, not just to tennis players. I mean that every visitor to Australia will need to be double vaccinated." Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews has remained firm that exemptions would not be made for anyone.



Australia pacer Pattinson retires from international cricket

Melbourne | Agencies

Australia pacer James Pattinson has announced his retirement from international cricket ahead of the 2021/22 Ashes starting in December.

The 31-year-old, who made his international debut in 2011, appeared in 21 Tests, 15 ODIs and 4 T20Is, taking 81, 16 and 3 wickets respectively in an injury-ravaged career.

Pattinson, though, has said that he will continue to play domestic cricket apart from helping in development of young pacers and offered a hint on playing County Cricket in England.

"Leading into pre-season I really wanted to give the Ashes a crack but in the end I haven't had the preparation I



would have liked heading into the coming season. If I was to be part of the Ashes I would need to do myself and my teammates justice. I didn't want to be in a position of battling with my body

when you need to be 100 per cent fit and ready to go at any time. That would not be fair to myself or the team," said Pattinson in a statement.

Pattinson last played Test cricket in 2020 against New Zealand in January 2020 while his last white-ball match came in 2015. He played in a tour match against India last year but didn't take part in the Test series due to rib injury caused by falling at his home.

Earlier, he had expressed his desire to be a part of the Ashes. But a delay in domestic season due to COVID-19 lockdown in Victoria followed by an injury in the intra-squad practice match meant that Pattinson had to make the decision of stepping away from international cricket.

AFC U-23 Asian Cup Qualifiers India to begin against Oman

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian football team head coach Igor Stimac said on Wednesday that having a bunch of Under-23 players, who have also played for the senior national team, will give his side a fighting chance in the AFC U-23 Asian Cup Qualifiers in Dubai.

The 23-member India Under-23 squad departed from Bengaluru for Dubai on Wednesday morning to take part in the Qualifiers following a two-day training session. India, who have been clubbed with Oman, UAE and Kyrgyz Republic in Group E, begin their campaign against Oman on October 24.



"Every country has talented youngsters, and U-23 players who are already playing at the senior level for their respective countries, and so do we. But we need to find the balance in this team," said Stimac, who recently returned with the India senior team from the Maldives, after his boys won the SAFF Championship title defeating Nepal.

Jr Hockey World Cup India men in easy group, to start off against France

Mumbai | Agencies

Defending champions India have been placed in an easy four-team Pool B along with Canada, France, and Poland -- a replacement for England who withdrew citing Covid-19 issues -- in the FIH Men's Junior World Cup to be held at Bhubaneswar from November 24 to December 5.

India will open their campaign against France on November 24 and will take on Canada the next day. The hosts will wind up their schedule in the preliminary league phase with a match against Poland on November 27.

The 16 teams in the fray have been divided into four groups of four teams each with Pool A comprising Belgium, South Africa, Malaysia, and Chile; Pool B has India, Canada, France, and Poland



while Pool C is made up of the Netherlands, Spain, South Korea, and the United States. Pool D comprises Germany, Argentina, Pakistan, and Egypt.

The top two teams from each pool will qualify for the knockout

quarterfinals which will be held on December 1. The semifinals will be played on December 3 and the final on December 5. The matches in Bhubaneswar will be played at the Kalinga Stadium and As of now the Odisha government seems inclined

to allow 30 percent spectators in the stadium.

In the FIH Hockey Women's Junior World Cup in South Africa, starting on December 5 at Potchefstroom, India are in Pool C along with Argentina, Japan, and Russia. Pool A comprises the Netherlands, South Korea, Ireland, and Zimbabwe while Pool B is made up of England, Belgium, Canada, and Uruguay. Pool D comprises Germany, Spain, the United States, and hosts South Africa.

The Indian junior women's team will open its campaign against Russia on December 6.

The top two teams from each pool will qualify for the quarterfinals which will be held on December 12 while the semifinals will be played on December 14 and the final on December 16.

Akeal Hosein replaces Fabian Allen in West Indies side

Dubai | Agencies

Left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein has been approved as a replacement for all-rounder Fabian Allen in the West Indies squad for the ICC T20 World Cup, currently underway in the UAE and Oman.

Hosein, who has played nine ODIs and six T20Is, was named as a replacement after Allen was ruled out due to an ankle injury. "Hosein was a reserve as per the allowance for teams to travel with extra players in view of COVID-19 quarantine requirements. The Event Technical Committee of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 has approved Hosein as a replacement," ICC said in a statement on Wednesday. The replacement for Hosein in the reserves list will be the uncapped Gudakesh Motie.

The replacement of a player requires the approval of the Event Technical Committee before the replacement player can be officially added to the squad.





Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress Sanya Malhotra agrees that sex is still a taboo subject in India however she feels with the help of cinema and other platforms things are changing. Sanya features in the show 'Sasural Wonder Phool' on Audible. It also stars Varun Sharma. The show is a romantic comedy, where Sanya's character 'Ashima' gets married to a sex therapist played by Varun, who runs a sex clinic with his entire family. Talking about the subject of sex, Sanya told reporter: "Definitely a taboo. But with films, with cinema, with other platforms I think things are changing, and according to me, I think, I believe that there is a demand for such stories that's the reason the creators are willing to create shows like 'Sasural Wonder Phool'." She added: "I'm hoping with this show and we are able to change a few things

SANYA MALHOTRA TALKS ABOUT SEX

maybe

inspire people to be more comfortable when they're talking about sex or sex-related issues. I honestly feel that my character in 'Sasural Wonder Phool', which is Ashima, reflects our society wonderfully, you know she's a prude, she's not so comfortable talking about sex." "And when she gets to know that her in-laws and her husband run a sex clinic, it's a complete shocker for her."

The 'Dangal' actress hopes that the audiences connect with her character's journey. Sanya said: "But then, obviously, it's also a learning experience for her that it's so natural, it's so natural to talk about it too. So I hope that the audience connects to her and her journey from not being so comfortable talking about sex to maybe okay, or...whether she's the same, whether she changes or not." This is the first time Sanya has tried her hands in audio storytelling.

KATRINA KAIF'S ETHNIC LOOK IS A TREAT FOR SORE EYES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the audience prepares for the Rohit Shetty directorial 'Sooryavanshi', Katrina Kaif has been running pillar to post with regards to the promotions of the film. However, the fans have no complaints as the string of promotions continues to bring us Katrina's most dazzling looks.

The actress recently took to Instagram to share a few pictures of herself from the promotion streak where she attended Colors' show 'The Big Picture' with her 'Sooryavanshi' director Rohit Shetty. She captioned the image as, "??vibes for #bigpicture #sooryavanshiintheatres." "The Big Picture" host Ranveer Singh was quick to react with a comment on the actress's post. He wrote, "What a blast k! ??? thank you for coming and making it such a special episode! (sic)". Katrina embraced a Sabyasachi Mukherjee creation, a burnt orange coloured saree with an embellished blouse having a heavy sequin embroidered torso and floral sleeves. Complementing her attire were the emerald and stone adorned drop earrings and, her open and tresses. She kept the accessories to a bare minimum in order to draw the attention towards her clothing. Katrina's sartorial choices have always caught the attention of both her fans and the fashion enthusiasts, it's safe to say that the actress is an absolute head turner.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

ANUSHA DANDEKAR DENIES RUMOURS ABOUT HER JOINING 'BIGG BOSS 15'



Actress, VJ and singer Anusha Dandekar is making headlines after her new post that she shared on social media about her participation in 'Bigg Boss 15'.

There was a rumour going around on her entry on the show and being the ex-girlfriend of Karan Kundra, people were expecting more twists in the show. But Anusha has recently nullified all such stories and requested everyone to stop making such assumptions.

At the end of her long post, she clarifies on not being part of the show. She wrote: "So again this is my life, my happy place. And for the love of God please stop this nonsense about me going on 'Bigg Boss' to fill some page in an article, to stir up some more drama, which I'm not even a part of. I told you my truth, every quote or picture I post now is not about my past, it's about MY growth! This is about ME! Stop undermining my achievements as a self-made woman. I am the Boss of my own life, I don't need to be in any house to prove it. So sleep easy the people that are so unhealthily obsessed with it. Thank you to all of you, who just let me live and spread happiness."



BREATHE INTO THE SHADOWS

Abhishek Bachchan, Amit Sadh to face off in new season of 'Breathe'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The new season of mystery thriller 'Breathe: Into The Shadows' will have actors Abhishek Bachchan and Amit Sadh locking horns. It is directed by Mayank Sharma. The principal photography of the Amazon Original series has begun. Created and Produced by Abundantia Entertainment, the new season brings the face off between Abhishek and Amit to a climax while adding a new dimension to the story with the addition of Naveen Kasturia to the lead cast. The new season has commenced production in New Delhi and Mumbai. The show is scheduled to launch in 2022. Aparna Purohit, Head of Originals, Prime Video India said: "Given the popularity and sheer anticipation around 'Breathe: Into The Shadows', a new season was imminent. As the plot intensifies and new characters infuse raw energy into the narrative, the stakes and the thrill go higher this season." "The announcement of the new season of this award-winning franchise, reiterates our commitment to develop and showcase the most authentic and compelling stories from India that will transcend all geographic boundaries."

Vikram Malhotra, founder and Chief Executive Officer, Abundantia Entertainment added: "With Mayank at the helm once again and backed by a strong team of writers, this season will see a host of new characters amp up the drama anchored in a strong emotional core. We're excited to kick-start another enthralling season."



New York | Agencies

Singing sisters Sukriti Kakkar and Prakriti Kakkar have rendered absolute magic to many melodies turning them into dreamy affairs with their ethereal voices. And now, the twins have made it to the famed New York Times Square billboard. The appearance comes as a part of an initiative that supports equity for women in music on the global canvas.

The two took to Instagram to share the news with their fans. They captioned the post, "YA GIRLS MADE IT TO A BILLBOARD IN TimesSquare???? This day will always be remembered. #SuPrainNY ?? Thank you @spotify and @spotifyindia for making this possible! Big love to our @vyrlooriginals fam and @bandbaaja????" Sukriti and Prakriti's rendezvous with international acclaim happened earlier this year when the sisters collaborated with global musical sensation Dua Lipa. Their track, the Hindi remix version of 'Levitating' with Dua Lipa turned out to be an absolute blockbuster and topped the charts for several months.

Continuing the streak of international fame, the singing twins featured on the most coveted billboard. They featured alongside names such as Vladivoina La Chia, Maria Jose Llergo making them the only Indians to be a part of this list which comes across as a huge honour not just to both of them but also for the country and the Indian music fraternity.

SUKRITI, PRAKRITI KAKKAR LIGHT UP ICONIC TIMES SQUARE BILLBOARD!

Sonu Sood on hosting NatGeo series 'It Happens Only in India'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Sonu Sood is all set for a new series titled 'It Happens Only in India'. Hosted by him, this 10-part series will take viewers into the lesser-known and well-researched narratives from across the length and breadth of India. Sonu Sood will be seen presenting some fascinating stories from different corners of the country from modern to mystic, people to places, myths to natural wonders, talented innovators, astounding mega structures to the latest in-space technology that are all distinctly Indian. It will help the viewers to understand India in a better way. Sonu said: "No matter how much you learn about India, you can't know enough. The country's diversity has tons of incredible stories that are yet to be revealed and this show will take viewers on a fascinating journey; bringing them closer to the incredible culture, nature, heritage and marvels of our nation and make them proud to be a citizen of this country. I am really happy that I got to be a part of this journey." 'It Happens Only in India' will start from October 26 at 8 p.m. on National Geographic.



Manushi Chhillar