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Why this new Covid strain 'B.1.1.529' is more lethal than Delta

THE REASON

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the world reopens after 18-20 months of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns, a new variant of the coronavirus -- called B.1.1.529 -- has been identified in South Africa that has left the scientific community worried, as they fear that this new strain could fuel outbreaks in several countries and cripple health systems once again.

Over 100 cases have been detected in South Africa, where the new strain is slowly becoming the dominant one. Here are five things you should know about this deadly super Covid variant that has forced a number of countries, including the UK, Israel, Italy and Singapore, to restrict travel from South Africa and other countries in the region.



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UP ISSUES ALERT OVER 'BOTSWANA' VARIANT

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh government has sounded an alert against the new variant of Covid-19 virus, which has been reported in Botswana (three cases), South Africa (six cases) and Hong Kong (one case). An official note on the matter issued by additional chief secretary, health and family welfare, said that the Covid-19 variant B.1.1.529 (commonly being referred to as 'Botswana' variant) is reported to have significantly high number of mutations and thus has a serious public health implication for the country in view of the recently relaxed visa restrictions and opening up of international travel. Citing recommendations from the Union health ministry, the officials dubbed the variant as a major threat to public health in the state and advised screening of all international travellers for the pandemic virus. In addition to this, the health officials have been asked to undertake regular genome sequencing of the samples collected from the foreign returnees. Meanwhile, the health officials also urged people of the state to adhere to the Covid-19 prevention protocol and get vaccinated at the earliest.

Global travel bans increase over fear of new Covid variant

London: Amid warnings over a new coronavirus variant, a number of countries, including the UK, Israel, Italy and Singapore have moved to restrict travel from South Africa and other countries in the region.

In the past, governments have taken days, weeks or months to issue travel restrictions in response to new variants. The New York Times reported on Friday. This time, restrictions came within hours after the South African authorities identified a concerning new coronavirus variant with mutations -- and hours before health officials from the country were scheduled to discuss the variant with the World Health Organisation (WHO), it added. The UK and Israel announced bans on flights from South Africa and several neighbouring countries on Thursday, citing the threat of the new variant. The UK's flight ban applies to six countries -- South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and Zimbabwe -- and begins on Friday.

1. According to South African health officials, the 'B.1.1.529' variant has many more mutations than scientists expected, especially after a severe third wave, which was driven by the Delta variant. Many of the mutations are of concern for immune evasion and transmissibility.
2. B.1.1.529 carries a high number of mutations in its spike protein, which plays a key role in the virus' entry into cells in the human body. The B.1.1.529 variant has 50 mutations overall, including more than 30 on the spike protein alone which is the target of most current Covid vaccines.
3. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has said it will take a few weeks to understand the impact of the new variant. Scientists have said it is the most heavily mutated version yet, which means vaccines, which were designed using the original strain from Wuhan in China, may not be as effective. The WHO has called a meeting to discuss B.1.1.529 and decide if it will be officially designated a variant of concern.
4. First identified in South Africa this week, the strain has spread to nearby countries, including Botswana. Israel has identified a case of a Covid-19 variant with a large number of mutations "in a person who returned from Malawi". Two cases have been detected in Hong Kong. India has called for rigorous screening of passengers from South Africa, Botswana, and Hong Kong.
5. There are still speculations floating around the variant's origin. According to Francois Balloux, Director of the London-based UCL Genetics Institute, the new strain "likely evolved during a chronic infection of an immunocompromised person, possibly in an untreated HIV/AIDS patient".

Snapchat, Tiktok may up depression in adults

NEW YORK | Agencies

Using social media platforms including Snapchat, Facebook or TikTok is likely to be associated with a greater likelihood of a subsequent increase in depressive symptoms, finds a new study.

The researchers, including Roy H. Perlis from Harvard Medical School, Boston, found that in adjusted regression models Snapchat, Facebook and TikTok use at first survey were significantly associated with a greater risk of increase in self-reported depressive symptoms.

"In this survey study, 5,395 individuals with minimal depressive symptoms on initial survey who reported use of Snapchat, Facebook or TikTok were more likely to report increased levels of depressive symptoms on a later survey," the researchers said. "These results suggest that certain social media use preceded worsening of depressive symptoms," they added. For the study, published in the journal JAMA Network Open, the team included data from 13 waves of a non-probability internet survey conducted approximately monthly between May 2020 and May 2021 among individuals aged 18 years and older in the US.

Data was analysed in July and August 2021. Logistic regression was applied without reweighting, with a 5 point or greater increase in 9-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) score as outcome and participant sociodemographic features, baseline PHQ-9 and use of each social media platform as independent



variables. They were asked, "Do you ever use any of the following social media sites or apps?" such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, TikTok, Twitter, Snapchat and YouTube. They were asked to identify any sources of Covid-19 related news they consumed in the past 24 hours, which they used as a proxy for news sources more generally while examining web-based vs television-based news separately; several social supports available "to talk to if you had a problem, felt sad, or depressed"; and face-to-face meetings with non-household members in the prior 24 hours. Among survey respondents who did not report depressive symptoms initially, social media use was associated with a greater likelihood of a subsequent increase in depressive symptoms after adjustment for sociodemographic features and news sources, the team said.

Tomatoes May Get Cheaper From Dec: Government

Team Absolute | New Delhi

All India average retail tomato price, which has shot up by 63 per cent to ₹ 67 per kg over the last year due to unseasonal rains, are likely to soften from December with the arrival of fresh crop from northern states, the government said on Friday.

In the case of onions, retail prices have substantially subsided below to the level that prevailed in 2020 and also 2019, it said. "Tomato arrivals from north Indian states will start from the beginning of December



itself, which will add to availability and lead to fall in prices. In December, arrival is expected to be at par with last year," the Food and Consumer Affairs Ministry said in a statement.

Arrivals in November this year were only 19.62 lakh tonne compared to 21.32 lakh tonne in the year-ago

period, it said. Explaining the reasons for the spike in tomato prices, the ministry said retail tomato prices have risen from September-end due to unseasonal rains in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh which led to crop damage and delay in arrival from these states.

Delayed arrivals from north Indian states were followed by heavy rains in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka, which disrupted the supply and also resulted in crop damage, it said in a statement.

Judges facing sponsored, synchronised, malicious physical, social media attacks: CJI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Chief Justice of India NV. Ramana on Friday said that an area of grave concern for the judiciary now is the increasing attacks on judges, which includes physical attacks and also in the media, particularly social media, and law enforcement agencies need to deal with such malicious attacks effectively.

In his address at the Constitution Day celebration organised by the Supreme Court registry at the Vigyan Bhawan, he said: "An area of grave concern for the judiciary is the increasing attacks on judges. Physical attacks on judicial officers are on the rise. Then, there are attacks on the judiciary in the media, particularly social media. These attacks appear to be sponsored and synchronised. The law enforcing agencies, particularly the Central agencies, need to deal with such malicious attacks effectively.

The Governments are expected to create a secure environment so that the judges and judicial officers can function fearlessly." The CJI also said that his experience as a legal professional in different roles is what prompted him to call for "Indianisation of the Judiciary". "The judicial system, as it exists in our country today, is essentially still colonial in nature. It takes no account of the social realities or the local conditions. The procedures followed, the language of arguments and judgments, and the high costs involved are all contributing to alienating the common man from the judicial system. People should feel confident in approaching the courts," he added. He emphasised that only when litigants get a chance to directly participate, their faith in the process and outcome will be reinforced.



Wedding day shocker: Thief flees with jewellery worth Rs 2cr

Jaipur: The euphoria around destination wedding of a Maharashtra-based family took an unexpected and tense turn after a man -- who "introduced himself as a member" of the bride's family -- ran away with jewellery worth Rs 2 crore, from a five-star hotel here, leaving the bride's family shocked on her wedding day (Friday).

The bride's family had booked over 40 rooms at a five-star hotel here. However, in their absence, an unknown person came to the hotel, introduced himself as a "family member" and collected the key from the lobby. He eventually managed to enter one of the rooms from where he stole the jewellery, and ran away. The bride's family had come from Maharashtra to Jaipur on Thursday for their daughter's wedding. After checking in at the hotel at around 11 a.m. on Thursday, the family and the guests went to a garden on Sirsi Road for a Sangeet ceremony in the night. The police have started an investigation into the matter.



Farmers' gatherings across India marks one year of Samyukt Kisan Morcha agitation

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Assemblies, rallies, marches, and chakka jams, etc across various states were held to mark the one-year completion of the farmers' agitation that prompted the government to withdraw the three contentious farm bills.

Along with the nationwide protests held in solidarity with the trade unions, not only organisations of students and youth, women, civil society, and other unions came together in the support of the farmers, but numerous international organisations lent their support and solidarity to the movement by holding events outside India too, a release from the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) said.

SKM is the consortium of 40-odd farmers' organisations that spearheaded the farmers' agitation since last one year when the Parliament had passed those three laws vehemently opposed by the farmers.

"On November 26, 2021 our struggle



completes one year. This day marks 12 long months of the farmers' struggle, with numerous victories, which seemed unlikely, and even impossible, but were achieved with a will and determination to continue to fight for the unfulfilled demands of the farmers. The farm movement stands as a testimony to the

will of the common people to fight against an unrelenting government, and for a long time, will be remembered as an example of peaceful satyagraha inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian freedom movement," the statement said. "The day was marked with programmes at the Delhi morchas, state capitals and the district headquarters. Various trade unions, student and youth organisations, women's organisations, civil society organisations, and other unions came together in support of the nation's annadatas," it said, adding, "Large assemblies were held at Singhu, Tikri, Ghazipur and Shahjahanpur morchas, which were attended by SKM leaders." Lakhs of farmers came together in support of the farm movement at the programs held in various states such as Karnataka, West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, Telangana, Odisha among other states.

Women's Participation In Polls Has Exceeded: EC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian democracy has covered a remarkable distance since the first Lok Sabha polls and today seven decades and 17 general elections later, women's participation in exercising franchise has exceeded that of men, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra said on Friday. He also said that democracy and democratic institutions flourish when all groups of people are fully represented.

Addressing an international webinar on 'Enhancing Electoral Participation of Women, Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens', Mr Chandra narrated how the Election Commission made special efforts to enhance the participation on women, people with disabilities,



senior citizens and transgender. In most countries and territories, voting rights were granted to women in a piecemeal manner, he observed. The United States took 144 years to give equal voting rights to women, he

pointed out. In India, women got the right to vote the year the country got Independence. This does not obliterate the fact that many Indian women campaigned for equal right to vote. This does not obliterate the fact

that many Indian women campaigned for equal right to vote. The Indian suffragette movement gathered momentum with the participation of more and more women in the freedom struggle, he said.

HEAVY RAINS IN TN FOR NEXT 4-5 DAYS: IMD

CHENNAI | Agencies

Tamil Nadu witnessed heavy to very heavy rainfall on Friday, leaving areas in several districts inundated.

As many as 21 districts have declared holidays for educational institutions.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has warned of further heavy rains in several parts of the state including Chennai for the next 4-5 days.

The IMD predicted that a cyclonic circulation lies over the Comorin area and adjoining Sri Lanka coasts, and strong northeasterly winds are prevailing over Tamil Nadu coast and south coastal Andhra Pradesh at lower levels, and under their influence,



heavy rain will be lashing Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and south Andhra Pradesh and Lakshadweep for the next 4-5 days. Squally wind, around 60kmph, is likely over Comorin area, Gulf of Mannar and along and off South Tamil Nadu coast and adjoining Southwest Bay of Bengal on Friday

and Saturday. Weather Department also warned that heavy to very heavy rainfall is expected in Chennai and Nagapattinam districts as well as in delta districts of the state. The IMD also predicted that the entire Tamil Nadu coast will get heavy rains.



HOW CAN THE PARTIES WHICH HAVE LOST THEIR DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER PROTECT DEMOCRACY: NARENDRA MODI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday hit out at the opposition parties and said that 'how can the parties which have lost their democratic character protect democracy'.

Prime Minister Modi was speaking at the Constitution Day celebrations in the Central Hall of Parliament, which was boycotted by 14 opposition parties, including the Congress.

Pointing out that the country is heading towards a crisis, he said, "In the form of family-based parties, India is heading towards a kind of a crisis, which is a matter of concern for the people devoted to the Constitution, a matter of concern for those who believe in democracy."

"More than one person from a family joining the party on the basis of merit does not make the party dynastic. Problems arise when a party is run by the same family, generation after generation," the Prime Minister said.



The Prime Minister lamented that the spirit of the Constitution has also been hurt, every section of the Constitution has also been hurt, when political parties lose their democratic character.

"How can the parties, which have lost their democratic character, protect democracy," he asked.

The Prime Minister also warned against the tendency of forgetting and glorifying convicted corrupt people. "While giving an opportunity to reform we should refrain from glorifying such people in public life," he said.

The Prime Minister also paid homage to the far-sighted great personalities like Babasaheb Ambedkar, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Mahatma Gandhi and all those who made sacrifices during the Freedom Struggle.

He mentioned that today is the day to salute this House, under the leadership of such stalwarts, after much churning and discussion, the nectar of our Constitution emerged.

3 days before retiring, Asthana gets notice from SC on appointment as Delhi Police chief

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday issued notice to the Centre and Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana on a plea challenging his appointment, just three days before his retirement.

A bench headed by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said: "Issue notice".

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, representing the NGO Centre for Public Interest Litigation, sought an early date in the hearing of the matter. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, represented the Centre, and senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, represented Asthana, before the bench.

The NGO filed a special leave petition challenging the Delhi High Court ruling, stating that there was no irregularity in Asthana's appointment as the Delhi Police Commissioner. After a brief hearing, the top court gave two weeks to parties to file counter affidavits in the matter. On October 12, the bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh said: "In view of the aforesaid concept of judgements, expounding the principle of contemporanea expositio, we do not find



any irregularity, illegality or infirmity in the action of Respondent No 1 (Centre) in appointing Respondent No 2 (Asthana), following the procedure followed for nearly over a decade." The high court also ruled that the Centre has power, jurisdiction and authority to make inter-cadre deputation of officers in public interest and the Supreme Court's judgements in Prakash Singh case on appointment of police heads would not apply to the union territories. The court junked the petition against Asthana's appointment as the Commissioner of Delhi Police on July 27, just before his superannuation on July 31. "We see no reason to interfere in the decision of granting inter-cadre deputation to Respondent No 2," it noted, in its 77-page judgment.

Friday Namaz offered at Gurugram ground amid 'disruptions'

GURUGRAM | Agencies

More than 50 people belonging to the Islamic faith performed the Friday Namaz at a ground here despite disruption attempts by some Hindu groups. As a mark of protest against the Friday prayers, members of the Hindu groups performed "Hawan" and "Aarti" on the same ground.

Many members of Hindu organisations had gathered at the ground in Sector-37, at around 11 a.m., and performed "Hawan" and "Aarti". They also raised slogans such as "Jai Shri Ram", read the "Hanuman Chalisa" and sang Bhajans.

A heavy police deployment was made to avoid any un-



ward incident. Policemen in plainclothes were also present at the site to assess the situation. Hazi Shahad Khan, Chairman, Muslim Ekta Manch, who performed Namaz, told IANS: "Sector 37 site was one of the designated sites for Namaz and since 18-20 years, Muslims are per-

forming Friday Namaz here and there were no disruptions... but for the last one month, few people of Hindu organisations are trying to continuously disrupt Friday prayers which will not be tolerated. We will soon approach the authorities against this."

FOUR SCHOOL STUDENTS DROWNED IN ODISHA, BODIES RECOVERED

Bhubaneswar: Bodies of all four school students who drowned in the Mahanadi river in Odisha's Cuttack have been recovered, police said on Friday. The deceased were identified as Chandan Behera, Ajinkya Bahalia, Subham Sethi, and Om Prakash Behera, all aged 13 to 14. According to locals, the four went to the river on Thursday afternoon on two cycles. In the evening, people saw that the cycles lying abandoned on the river bank near Bhadimul ghat, and raised an alarm. A search operation was then launched to trace the boys, who were classmates. While one body was recovered last evening, the bodies of three others were recovered on Friday by fire services personnel. All the four belonged to Potapokhari in the Nayabazar area under Chauhaganj Police station of Cuttack city.

Priyanka meets bereaved family in UP, assures support

PRAYAGRAJ | Agencies

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday met the family members of Phool Chand Pasi, who, along with his wife, daughter and son, had been slain on Thursday.

The family members told Priyanka Gandhi that the police were delaying action in the matter, adding that some influential people of the village were behind the gruesome crime.

Later, talking to mediapersons, Priyanka said that the incident was yet another example of the deplorable law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh.

"The poor and the weaker sections of society are being victimised under this government, and today is



Constitution Day. In this fight for justice, me and my party will stand by the family and support them in whichever way we can," she said.

Delhi's air quality again falls to 'very poor' category

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After a day of recording satisfactory to moderate level of PM 2.5 and PM 10 pollutants in the air, Delhi-NCR on Friday registered an overall Air Quality Index (AQI) of 380 with both the pollutants again falling to the 'very poor' category, according to System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR) estimates.

"The air quality over Delhi-NCT is likely to remain in the upper end of 'Very Poor' category on November 26 and may reach in the lower end of 'Severe' category. Mostly calm or slow winds during night are unfavourable for effective dispersion of pollutants. The air quality is likely to improve marginally but remain in the upper end of 'Very Poor' category on November 27 and November 28," bulletin issued by Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi (Ministry of Earth Sciences) read.

The air quality is likely to remain in the 'very poor' category. Gradual improvement is likely from November 27 till November 30 and PM2.5 is to be the predominant pollutant.



An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', then 401 and between 500 is considered 'severe'. The predominant surface wind is likely to be coming from the Southeast/East direction of Delhi with wind speed of 6 kmph, mainly clear sky and shallow fog in the morn-

ing on November 27. The predominant surface wind is likely to be coming from variable directions of Delhi with wind speed of 6 kmph, mainly clear sky and shallow fog in the morning on November 28. Winds are likely to be relatively strong during November 29 and 30," the bulletin added. India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicted a main-

ly clear sky with a misty morning on Friday. The maximum temperature for the day has been pegged at 28 degrees Celsius and minimum at 11 degree Celsius. On Thursday, the maximum temperature was recorded at 27.8 degrees Celsius and minimum at 11 degrees Celsius. The relative humidity at 8.30 a.m. was recorded at 95 per cent.

Will not roll back liquor ban in Bihar: Nitish Kumar

PATNA | Agencies

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Friday asserted that the liquor ban will continue in the state and there is no question of rolling back prohibition.

Addressing a gathering at the "Nasha Mukti Diwas" programme in Gyan Bhavan here, Nitish Kumar said: "The Liquor Prohibition Law was imposed in Bihar in 2016 on women's demand. We had initially imposed a partial ban only in rural areas but as women of urban areas also demanded the same, we imposed a complete liquor ban." He pointed out that the decision was taken after an all-party meeting. Hence, those who are pointing fingers at the decision should also remind themselves of that meeting.

On the occasion, 3.5 lakh government and private sec-



tor employees took an oath not to consume liquor for the rest of their lives.

The Chief Minister justified the police action in public places, especially Patna

police entering the rooms of brides in marriage halls.

"Police will check any place in the state where liquor consumption could be possible," he said.

COP SHOT AT BY MISCREANTS IN NOIDA

Noida: Two miscreants opened fire at a police officer in Greater Noida on Friday afternoon.

The policeman suffered injuries below his knee and was admitted to the Yatharth Hospital in Greater Noida, where his condition is stated to be stable.

The incident occurred when Ankur Chaudhary, posted as the in-charge of Bilaspur police station in Greater Noida, was out on routine inspection in his area.

When the police team was patrolling the area, they spotted two bike-borne criminals and signalled them to stop, but the miscreants did not pay heed to their calls.

As they tried to flee, the police team began chasing them. "Shortly after the chase began, the miscreants opened fire, wounding the said policeman below the knee," a police officer said.

"He is out of danger now," he added. The police have initiated a combing operation in the area to nab the miscreants.

Illegal firm run by Chinese nationals busted in B'loru, 2 held

BENGALURU | Agencies

Karnataka police have busted a racket allegedly run by Chinese nationals, who gave loans at exorbitant rates and harassed and humiliated the customers for 'violation' of laws, Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime), Sandeep Patil, said on Friday.

The investigation revealed that these Chinese nationals opened bank accounts in the name of Indian nationals, carried out fraudulent transactions and transferred crores of rupees from these accounts to China.

The arrested persons have been identified as Kamaraj More (25), an HR executive, and Darshan Chouhan (21), a team lead. A hunt is on to nab the Chinese nationals, who ran the racket in the name of Licorise Technology Pvt Ltd, located at Marathahalli in Bengaluru.

According to the police, the financial firm allegedly run by the Chinese nationals gave loans to the public and later harassed them by charging exorbitant processing fees and interests.

The accused allegedly insulted the borrowers by sharing their loan details with their friends.

The office was raided on Wednesday, and further investiga-



tions revealed that Chinese nationals were running the firm, which had developed money lending mobile applications such as 'Cash Master' and 'Krazy Rupees'.

The firm had entered into an agreement with non-banking finance companies and was lending money to people through the apps.

They charged an exorbitant pro-

cessing fee and once the loan was disbursed, the staff started making phone and internet calls to the borrowers, pestering them to pay the interest on a weekly basis at exorbitant rates.

The Chinese nationals had also collected documents such as Aadhaar and PAN cards from the staff and had registered 5-6 companies in their names.

As many as 52 companies were registered and accounts were opened in private banks. The interest paid by the borrowers was credited to these accounts. As per the preliminary investigation, crores of rupees have been sent to China through online transfers from these accounts, the police added.

To draw investments to the bogus companies, the accused had allegedly targeted north Indians and had lured them with higher returns.

"Even these investments were transferred to their bank accounts. While two persons have been arrested and 83 computers seized, efforts are on to nab the absconding Chinese nationals," the police said.

A case has been registered at the Marathahalli police station under the relevant sections of the law.

Assam to give financial aid for inter-caste marriage



GUWAHATI | Agencies

To promote social harmony, the Assam government will give financial assistance under an inter-caste marriage scheme to undertake a business or income generation venture, officials said on Friday.

An official of the Welfare of Scheduled Castes Department said that under the recently launched inter-caste marriage scheme, Rs 10,000 to Rs 5 lakh would be given to undertake any kind of business or to start any income generation project.

According to the official, the beneficiary of the scheme

has to be married between April 2019 and March 2021 and the annual income of the couple should not exceed Rs 5 lakh.

Another condition for being a beneficiary of the scheme is that one spouse must belong to the Scheduled Caste and the other to a general caste.

He said that on many occasions, it was witnessed that families reject inter-caste marriages leading to numerous problems, including suicides. This scheme would encourage a sense of harmony, positive mindset and societal balance in the state, he added.



World's latest technology will be used in new plants

NOW MADHYA PRADESH WILL LEAD IN SOLAR ENERGY STORAGE: CM

Every person should become aware for saving electricity

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Madhya Pradesh will set an example for other states by working speedily in the field of conventional and non-conventional power generation. The work of generating electricity from the sun will be taken up in the form of a campaign. An awareness campaign will be paced up so that all citizens encourage the use of electricity generated from saving power and alternative energy sources. Chouhan said that the foundation stone of three new solar power generation units has been laid in the state on November 25. Solar power parks with a total capacity of 1500 MW will start functioning soon.

Chouhan said that the target is to begin power generation from the three plants for which bhoomi-pujan was performed recently in the state from March 2023. Efforts will be made to achieve this target before March 2023. These units of 550 MW in Agar district, 450 MW in Shajapur district and 500 MW in Neemuch district will be helpful in changing the scenario of solar power generation. It may be mentioned that 5300 MW of solar power is being generated



daily in the state. The electricity produced in Madhya Pradesh is also used for Delhi metro rail. Chouhan said that new technology is being used in power generation in Madhya Pradesh. A solar park which will also make electricity storage possible is being set up in Chhatarpur. Till now, it was not possible to make 100 percent use of the generated electricity due to lack of proper arrangement for storage of electricity. A new solar power plant is also being set up in Morena. Along with this, the initiative of setting up a floating plant on water at Omkareshwar in Madhya Pradesh will give a distinct identity to the state in this area. Chouhan said that Prime Minister Modi has provided Panchamrit to the

world. One of the Amrit in this Panchamrit is that of environment and energy conservation. His resolve is that by the year 2030, there should be a reduction in carbon emissions by 45 percent in the country. Madhya Pradesh will actively participate in fulfilling this goal. Chief Minister said that the target is to bring down the carbon emissions to zero. Currently, the initial target is to cut emissions by one billion tonnes by 2030. The target is zero carbon emissions by the year 2070. Madhya Pradesh will not lag behind in discharging its responsibility. Team Madhya Pradesh will work with total dedication in the work of national interest to reduce carbon emissions. To save the environment, the use of solar energy and renewable energy will be increased. Chouhan said that economical use of electricity in every residence and office is being ensured. Regular activities will be conducted under the Urja Saksharta Abhiyan. School children are being given the responsibility of brand ambassadors to spread the message of saving electricity in every household. Chief Minister informed that saving of electricity is being ensured at the Chief Minister's residence. Every person has to be aware so that there is no unnecessary wastage of electricity.

Demands and expectations of tribal society will be considered positively: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the state government is committed for the social, educational and economic empowerment of the tribal society. Tribal brothers and sisters are contributing in the reconstruction of the country. After seriously considering the demands and aspirations of the tribal brothers and sisters, positive steps will be taken. Chouhan was meeting the representatives of tribal organisations at his residence.

The representatives of tribal organisations thanked Chief Minister Chouhan for recommending the renaming of Jannayak Tantiya Bhil railway station. Along with this, they conveyed their gratitude to Chief Minister Chouhan for the announcement to rename the primary health centre Manpur and Bhanwarkuan intersection of Khandwa Road in Indore after Jannayak Tantiya Mama Bhil and renovating the temple of Jannayak Tantiya Bhil's tomb at Patalpani and naming under construction ISBT bus stand in Indore as Jannayak Tantiya Bhil Bus



Stand.

Tribal organisations requested Chief Minister to establish Tribal Gaurav Kendra in Mhow. In this, a request was made to display the introduction to life of Tantiya Mama Bhil through painting, audio-video mediums and also requested to display a photo exhibition of all the great men, revolutionaries, national heroes of the tribal community and their traditions, customs, costumes, culture, artwork, musical instruments, weapons and armaments.

Tribal organisations also requested for establishment of Tribal Research Chair in Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya Indore and Tribal Research and Training Institute for tribal area of Malwa. This institute will provide research and training facility on the subjects of forest conservation, forest produce and its value addition, marketing etc. The organizations requested that these activities would pave the way for economic upliftment along with social empowerment of the tribes.

BJP's working committee meeting gets underway in Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The working committee meeting of the Madhya Pradesh BJP unit got underway on Friday to work out modalities for the panchayat elections and 2023 Assembly polls in the state.

On November 24-25, national joint general secretary (organisation) Shiv Prakash and party state in-charge Muralidhar Rao held one-on-ones with BJP MLAs to review works carried out in each Assembly.

Presided over by state in-charge Muralidhar Rao and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the meeting will have Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, State minister for Jal Shakti Prahlad Patel, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, state co-in-charge Pankaja Munde, National Secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, Faggan Singh Kulaste and others in atten-

dance.

According to party sources, the meeting which got underway at 12 p.m. at Minto Hall, started with the address of state generation secretary (organisation) Suhash Bhagat.

Bhagat is also expected to talk about training schedule for party workers in all the districts.

The meeting will also deliberate on political issues, vaccination status and tribal issues for which the party had recently organized mega "Tribal Pride Day", the sources said. Starting December 1, the state unit will start a week-long meeting with district level party leaders and workers.

"Training sessions in each district are scheduled between December 1 and December 6, during which district level leaders and workers will be taught about party's preparation for Assembly polls," a senior party leader said.

CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO DR. GOUR ON HIS ANNIVERSARY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage to Dr. Harisingh Gour on his birth anniversary. Chouhan garlanded his portrait in the auditorium at his residence.

Dr. Harisingh Gour was the founder of Sagar University, educationist, eminent legal scholar, jurist, social reformer, litterateur, great donor and patriot. He was one of the best educationists of the twentieth century. Dr. Gour was the Vice Chancellor of Delhi University and Nagpur University. He was also the Deputy Chairman of the Constituent Assembly of India, a member of the Simon Commission and a Fellow of the Royal Society for Literature.

Dr. Gour had established Sagar University in Sagar on July 18, 1946. He was the founder, vice-chancellor of this university, but remained determined to develop and save the university till the last time of his life (25 December 1949). His dream was to that Sagar University may be recognised like Cambridge and Oxford.

Dr. Harisingh Gour is such a unique university in Sagar which was estab-



lished with the contribution of an educationist. Dr. Harisingh Gour was born on November 26, 1870 in Sagar district. He got his middle education in first class from Sagar's Government High School. Dr. Harisingh Gour composed two poetry collections in his student days, The Stepping Westward and Other

Poems and Raymond Time. For this work, he was awarded the Gold Medal by the well-known Royal Society of Literature. The foreword of Gour Saheb's book titled "Spirit of Buddhism" in the year 1929 was written by the renowned poet Rabindra Nath Tagore.

Electricity department engineers want government to pay advance subsidy

"As per the provisions of the Electricity Act 2003 and State Government Regulations 2007, the state is duty-bound to reimburse the subsidy amount in advance to the discoms," MPVMS general secretary VKS Parihar said.

Yojna to the three state-owned and cash-strapped power distribution companies or discoms. The organisation, the only representative body of electricity engineers in the state, has written a letter to Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan demanding his intervention for releasing in advance the quantum of subsidy announced under Samadhan Yojna to the state-run discoms two days ago, MPVMS general secretary VKS Parihar said on Friday.

The MP government owes Rs 27000 crore to the discoms as subsidy payment, he added.

"As per the provisions of the Electricity Act 2003 and State Government Regulations 2007, the state is duty-bound to reimburse the subsidy amount in advance to the discoms," Parihar said.

The current practice is that the power consumers availing the benefit of a scheme have to pay a portion of the actual bill amount. So the discoms bear the burden of waivers, he said.

The losses that the three discoms are reeling under are more than Rs 30,000 crore due to different reasons, like non payment of subsidy amount to them by the state government. Every year, the price of electricity is going up in MP as the discoms were petitioning the MP Electricity Regulatory Commission (MPERC) for power hike to run their show, president of NGO Nagrik Upbhokta Margdarshak Manch, P G Naipandey, said.

Consumers in MP are getting very costly electricity due to freebies next to Maharashtra in India, he added.

Chouhan has announced the Samadhan Yojna earlier this month, as part of which people under the Below Poverty Line (BPL) were being given 40 per cent waiver in clearing the power dues of the coronavirus period. Besides, the state government has also written off the surcharge (fine) under the scheme for delayed payment, an official said.

The w.iver has been announced ahead of the yet-to-be announced urban civic body elections the next year.

Meanwhile, according to experts in the power sector, the Centre is planning to frame rules to give the discoms free hand to charge actual bill amount from the consumers getting benefit under any scheme and later transfer the subsidy amount in the accounts of consumers.

Two of five of a family die in attempt to suicide

Two of them including a minor girl died during treatment, said police. The family also poisoned their dog before taking the step.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Five members of a family tried to end their lives by consuming poison in Anand Nagar area on Thursday night. Two of five of a family die in attempt to suicide. Two of them including a minor girl died during treatment, said police.

The family also poisoned their dog before taking the step. Five members of a family tried to end their lives by consuming poison in Anand

Nagar area on Thursday night. Two of them including a minor girl died during treatment, said police. The family also poisoned their dog before taking the step.

The family left a suicide note found written on a wall of their house where they accused a woman Babli Dubey and her daughter Rani, of mounting pressure on them for money.

Prima facie it appears that the family was debt ridden, said the police.

According to the police, Sanjeev Joshi of Anand Nagar was lived by his wife, two daughters and his mother. In-charge Piplani police station Ajay Nayar said Joshi worked at an automobile

shop. Joshi's wife Archana had borrowed some money from Babli Dubey.

The family also had borrowed money from others and they were under debt.

At around 11 pm, a neighbour of the family informed police about the mass suicide attempt. All of the victims were rushed to hospital where Sanjeev's 16 year old daughter Purvi and his mother Nandini 68 died.

Sanjeev's daughter Grishma and wife are undergoing treatment, said the cop.

He said they had forwarded message of their suicide to their contacts and Whatsapp group and their neighbours.

CM PLANTED SAPLING IN MINTO HALL



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a Kanji sapling in the Minto Hall premises today. Chouhan is planting saplings every day as per his resolve. In order to encourage active participation of the society in the activities of environmental protection, social organisations, voluntary organisations and general public are being constantly motivated by Chouhan. The kanji plant also has environmental and medicinal value.

To remove social inequality, we all have to take a pledge to come forward on the path of duty: Parmar

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the program on Constitution Day on 26th November in Mantralaya, Chief Guest, Minister of State, General Administration and School Education (Independent Charge) Inder Singh Parmar greeted everyone on the Constitution Day. He thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking the initiative to celebrate Constitution Day across the country. Minister of State Shri Parmar said that Prime Minister Modi had decided to celebrate Constitution Day across the country from November 26, 2015.

Parmar said that the Constitution of India was adopted on 26 November 1949. The two words of the object of the constitution, enacted and surrendered are its essence. Minister of State Shri Parmar said that the Constitution has not been handed down or imposed, but we have all surrendered it. Throwing light on the life struggle of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar, Parmar said that Dr. Ambedkar has shown not only the right but also the path of duty by



making the constitution accepting the essence of Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam and adopting the epoch-making change.

Parmar said that there is a need for society

wide impact of the basic element of the objective. He said that in order to build a new society and a new India, we all have to take a pledge to ensure our participation on the path

of duty by stopping encroachment on each other's rights. This year the country is celebrating the Amrit Mahotsav of freedom and the struggle and sacrifice for the country is being remembered. He said that Babasaheb Ambedkar gave love for the motherland and inspired to become a patriot.

Additional Chief Secretary General Administration Vinod Kumar said that it is a good tradition to celebrate Constitution Day. Indian constitution is the most unique constitution in the world. Additional Chief Secretary JN Consotia called the Preamble the soul of the Indian Constitution and spoke of brotherhood for the development of the society.

Parmar administered the oath of Preamble to the Constitution to the gathering. On this occasion, Parmar was presented with a copy of the Constitution, books related to the destruction of the caste system and Babasaheb's philosophy. Ministerial employee Ghanashyam Bhakoriyaa conducted the program. Officers and employees of the ministry were present in the program.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Cong, AAP are non players for BJP in UP polls!

Even as the opposition parties like the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party rollout sops after sops for the upcoming Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, the ruling BJP in the state is not responding to their promises and is confident of its own agenda. The Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party are making tall promises even before releasing their manifestos officially. The Congress leads the list by promising 40 per cent reservation in tickets to women, smartphones and electric scooty to girl students, three free gas cylinders every year to women, free bus travel for women, Rs 1000 pension for widows, Rs 10,000 for anganwadi and ASHA workers, and 75 schools named after women warriors. The Aam Aadmi Party, on the other hand, is trying to make inroads into the middle class vote base by promising free electricity up to 300 units and massive upgradation of educational and health facilities on their Delhi model. The Yogi Adityanath government has conveniently turned a blind eye to the promises made by two parties. According to BJP, these parties are promising because neither of them are even in the race to form the next government. They are far away from the majority figure and non-players in the political arena. The BJP is confident that the work done by the Modi and Yogi governments, along with a liberal topping of Hindutva, will take it comfortably beyond the majority mark. Interestingly, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has constantly refused to respond to the demands raised by Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Whether it was the demand for removal of district magistrate after the Hathras incident or a CBI inquiry into the custodial death of a Dalit or withdrawal of cases against anti-CAA protesters -- the BJP government has refused to accept any demand of the Congress.

UNLIMITED FREEBIES THREAT TO DEMOCRACY

Lalit Garg

In view of the upcoming assembly elections in Punjab, Aam Aadmi Party leader and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is putting all his might, making many announcements to cherish the voters, these days one such announcement remains the subject of discussion in which he announced It has been said that if his party forms the government, then every month Rs 1,000 will be deposited in the account of all women above 18 years of age in the state. Elderly women will get this amount in addition to old age pension. He may have linked this scheme with women empowerment, but it is a public-popular announcement that directly tempts the women of Punjab to vote in his favour.

Arvind Kejriwal, who has tried his luck in Indian politics by sounding the bugle against corruption, has become famous by distributing charities and announcing free facilities. By the way, the culture of distributing freebies is increasing in every party. In a democracy, such absurd and exaggerated declarations and assurances pollute politics, which is not only fatal but also indicates a great anomaly. Any ruling party is given the responsibility not to loot the hard earned money of the people, but to use it in public interest and developmental works. Only by discharging this responsibility properly, any ruling party or its leader can remain capable of power.

This announcement of Kejriwal raises many questions. Does such a declaration constitute any kind of fundamental development? Isn't this a violation of the basic spirit of democracy? Is such a declaration expected in a prosperous province like Punjab? How many such women are really in need of such an amount? The question is also why the 18-year limits? Why should girls in the age group of one to 18 years be discriminated against in any public welfare scheme? Because they don't have the right to vote? How long will the trend of distributing such unnecessary rewards in election manifestos last? It has become necessary to find answers to these questions because forgetting development, all political parties are now engaged in dis-



tributing such rewards and cultivating free culture.

What kind of democratic framework is being created in which parties have gone beyond their limits to make populist promises, it cannot be said in any way in public interest. Unaccountable populist announcements and unfulfilled assurances may bring immediate benefits to the parties, but are also likely to adversely affect the long-term social and economic condition of the country. This has led to the crippling of development plans and the mentality of freebies has started spreading among the people. The question is, how can political parties and politicians be so irresponsible and selfish under the influence of power?

The question is whether public resources should be made available to anyone absolutely free of cost? Do governments have the right to spend public money as they please? When governments are not in a financially comfortable position. This trend is not only motivated by political gain, but also covers institutional failure, and cannot be confined to a single party or government. Some governments, by running a campaign, spend crores of rupees of the hard earned money of the common man in telling how they have made the country shine. The educated unemployed considered this kind of bigotry and free culture as an insult. Many times governments do not have enough

resources to save their people from calamities like lack of people, hunger, unemployment, pollution. But when they do not have money to solve these basic public problems, how do they distribute the facilities for free? Why do crores and billions of rupees are spent in their promotion?

In South India, especially from Tamil Nadu, this free distribution tradition now dominates almost the entire nation. Keeping the economy and the financial condition of the state at bay, almost all the parties and governments have distributed or promised to distribute from ornaments, laptops, mangal sutras, TVs, smartphones to rice, milk, ghee. This is the height of freebies. Free medicine, free test, almost free ration, free education, free marriage, free land lease, free house building money, child birth money, no child birth (sterilization), free school food, free Electricity Rs 200 a month, free pilgrimage, free water. Everything is free from birth till death. There is a competition to distribute freebies, then why would anyone work? How will the country develop with the culture of free distribution? From the last ten years to the next twenty years, such a whole generation is being created or our leaders are creating a generation which will completely depend on free culture. If you ask them to work, they will abuse and say, what is the government doing? The limits of irony and inconsistency are being crossed. No party gives these freebies and donations from its own funds. They use taxpayers' money. We are creating 'parasites not citizens'. How long will the taxpayer minority of the country take care of the majority society for free? When this economic equation will spread, then this free culture generation will be twenty thirty years old. One who has never eaten hard-earned bread in life, he will always eat it for free. If not found, this generation will become Naxalite, become extremist, but will not be able to work. What kind of society are they creating? What kind of anomalous politics is this? There is a need to think seriously.

Certainly the poor women of Punjab will benefit from such a scheme, but the question is, are all the poor women in

Punjab? Then what is Kejriwal trying to convey by providing such assistance to rich and prosperous women? As the promise of free electricity and 20 thousand litres of water to every family in Delhi every month up to 200 units has stalled the development of Delhi? Roads are broken; no new development plan has come out. Despite such conditions, the Aam Aadmi Party has achieved resounding success in two consecutive elections. But he has also started such a tradition that inspired by it, political parties of those states have started competing to promise free facilities to a ridiculous level, which are economically counted diseased states. In the present era, the spark of lust for power has been ignited so much, politics are crippling the people and the system is going on for the taste of power. The primary responsibilities of social reform, employment, creation of new enterprises, promotion of agriculture, revival of rural life have been absent from the books of political parties, all political parties have gathered in the effort to make their hands yellow without applying mehndi. Instead of saving the public from the addiction of freebies, they are trying to straighten their political desires by catching them. In a democracy, making people negative, lazy, greedy, indolent, lunge, is it an example of political doers? Has your own interest and selfishness become omnipresent? In fact, through free means, we will give birth to a society which will be dependent and dormant without becoming productive and this will have a direct impact on both the ecology and progress of the country. The question arises that how long will we continue to support this immoral politics? The first responsibility to curb this is on us people. In a healthy and ideal democracy, the first responsibility of governments is to implement such schemes, which can lead to all-round development. The author is Writer, Journalist, Columnist based at Delhi. The views expressed are the in views expressed are personal.

international

43 people dead, 46 villages burned, looted in Darfur

Khartoum | Agencies

At least 43 people were killed and 46 villages were burned and looted during a conflict between Arab nomads and farmers from the Misseriya



Jebel tribe in West Darfur's Jebel Moon locality, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Sudan (OCHA) said.

According to the OCHA, the conflict broke out on November 17, reports Xinhua news agency. Initial reports indicate that at least 43 people have been killed, 46 villages have been burned and looted, and an unknown number of people were injured due to ongoing fighting.

"Several people are reportedly missing, including children," the Office noted. Sudan's Darfur region has witnessed a civil war

since 2003 during the rule of former President Omar al-Bashir, who was ousted on April 11, 2019. The transitional government in Sudan sought to end the armed conflict in the Darfur region through an agreement reached on October 3, 2020, but some armed groups are yet to sign the agreement.

An estimated 66,500 people live in Jebel Moon locality, and more than 43,000 are people in need of humanitarian assistance, according

to the 2021 Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview. Over 13,300 people of Jebel Moon are in crisis and above levels of food security between October and December 2021, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report. Security allowing, an inter-agency assessment will take place between November 29 and December 2 to determine the needs and type of response required, the OCHA added.

MACRON, DRAGHI MEET TO DISCUSS TREATY AIMED AT BOOSTING EU TIES

Rome | Agencies

French President Emmanuel Macron and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi met to work toward finalising the 'Quirinale Treaty'. Italian officials have said the Treaty will not only strengthen ties



between the two long-time allies, but also more widely in the European Union (EU), reports Xinhua news agency.

The Rome bilateral talks focused on several main areas: strengthening the EU, commitment to the Mediterranean and Africa, the transition toward the digital economy, better environmental policies, security, culture and education, economic and industrial cooperation, cooperation on space exploration.

More details about the Treaty were expected to be released Friday. Relations between Italy and France have sometimes been tense in recent years, after clashes on migration and Libya.

Ethiopian govt urges US to stop spreading false information

Addis Ababa | Agencies

The Ethiopian government has urged the US and some organisations to stop spreading false information regarding the country's current situation.



The Ethiopian government has warned the US Embassy in Addis Ababa and other organisations against their continued practice of spreading false information, state media quoted Minister of Communication Service, Kebede Desisa as saying. This came a day after the US Embassy in Ethiopia issued a caution to its citizens residing in Ethiopia over possible terror attacks in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, Xinhua news agency reported. Earlier, the US government repeatedly warned its citizens to leave the east African country over the expanding conflict there.

The conflict, which erupted in November 2020 in Ethiopia's northernmost Tigray region between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian National Defense Forces, has over the past months spread across neighbouring Amhara and Afar regions as forces loyal to the TPLF have advanced southward. This prompted huge

popular mobilisation in the regions as well as other states in the country to fight back the TPLF's expansion. Earlier in December, the Ethiopian House of Representatives ratified a six-month state of emergency rule to contain the TPLF's advancement and ensure the country's peace and security.

Soaring prices prompt concerns amid currency drop in Turkey

Istanbul | Agencies

Turkish citizens are having increasing difficulties coping with the rising prices of almost every item amid high inflation and the national currency depreciation. Turkish currency lira has lost about 40 per cent of its value this year against the US dollar, while the annual inflation hit almost 20 per cent in October. The currency tumbled to a fresh historic low against the greenback on Tuesday, and one dollar was traded at 13.50 liras. Grocery stores, shops and supermarkets in Turkey's biggest city Istanbul have been continuously reflecting the losing value of the lira to the prices, partly with psychological motives, Xinhua news agency reported. "The other day, I walked in a store that sells underwear products. The price of one pair of underpants went up to 50 liras (\$4) from 25 in less than two weeks," Filiz Ertekin, a 77-year-old retired Istanbul

resident living in the Asian side Kadikoy district, told Xinhua. The seller said she should not delay her purchase and that the price of the same product would be even more expensive next week. "Turkey is experiencing a problem of changing the price tags due to the increase in costs mostly brought about by the increase in gasoline prices," Mustafa Sonmez, an economy writer, told Xinhua. Turkey raised the gasoline prices on Wednesday midnight for over 1lira per litre. In Sonmez's view, some parts of the price increases are "psychological" as everyone is trying to protect themselves. "It's a chain reaction with sellers trying to boost the price of good-and services used in everyday life by saying that the price of everything is increasing somehow," he said. Meanwhile, some quotas have been imposed on the sales of some products, such as sunflower seed oil, sugar and Turkish coffee.

Iranian diplomat urges US to lift sanctions in effective manner

Tehran | Agencies

A senior Iranian diplomat urged the US to lift sanctions in an "effective and verifiable manner", as the remaining parties to the

2015 nuclear deal are preparing to attend a meeting on the revival of the accord next week. Mohammad Reza Ghaebi, the acting head of Iran's mission in Vienna, said that in order to end the current deadlock over the implementation of the 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive

Plan of Action (JCPOA), the US government should "stop violating its obligations under the agreement without any delay and precondition", reports Xinhua news agency. Making the remarks before the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Ghaebi cited "the US violations of the agreement" and "the European countries' unwillingness to clearly condemn the .S illegal withdrawal



from the JCPOA and the re-imposition of sanctions against Iran" as the root causes for the current impasse regarding the the historic agreement. Referring to the upcoming Vienna nuclear meeting, he noted "it is important that the outcome of these efforts ensures that all sanctions will be lifted in an effective and verifiable manner". It is "not reasonable" to

expect more forbearance from Iran as long as the sanctions remain in place, he stressed. The US government under former President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 agreement in May 2018 and unilaterally reimposed sanctions on Iran. In response, Iran gradually stopped implementing parts of its commitments to the deal in May 019.

Kabul says to resume Taliban-US talks in Doha

Kabul | Agencies

Taliban spokesman, Zabilullah Mujahid has said talks



between Taliban and the US would resume in Qatar's capital Doha. "The officials of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan would resume talks and continue the talks with US representatives in line with the Doha agreement and the talks could be helpful," Afghanistan state-run media agency quoted Mujahid as saying. The talks would help renew commitments, remove concerns and efforts would continue for the release of Afghanistan's frozen money, he added. In the meantime, Afghanistan Foreign Ministry spokesman Abdul Qahar Balkhi said a ranking Kabul delegation led by acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi will stay in Doha from November 27 to 29 to talk with the US delegation, Xinhua news agency reported. Matters pertaining mutual interests, including releasing frozen assets, humanitarian assistance, reopening the US embassy in Afghanistan, would be discussed in the talks, local media reported.



BJP WILL RETURN TO POWER IN MAHARASHTRA BY MARCH: RANE

MVA leaders dismissed Narayan Rane's predictions as baseless even as the Union Minister said he can't divulge more details on the matter at the moment

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Union Minister for MSMEs Narayan Rane on Friday predicted that the BJP will return to power in Maharashtra by March next year. Rane, who is in Rajasthan on a two-day official visit, said he can't reveal more on the matter at the moment.



expectations... In such a scenario, the return of BJP is evident. Whether the government will fall or some parties will break away from the coalition is part of details which cannot be discussed," he said.

"Maharashtra will see a change. It will happen in March," the senior BJP leader said. "The strategy has to be kept under wraps. It cannot be made public. It will not go well with our top leadership if all details are out. Moreover, if things become public, it may delay the process of change in the state," he explained. "The Chief Minister is unwell and hospitalised. At such a time, I wouldn't like to take his name. There is clear instruction from our state party president Chandrakant Patil not to speak against the Maharashtra CM," he said. "The Maha Vikas Aghadi government, which is a coalition of three parties, Congress, NCP and Shiv Sena, has failed. It has not lived up to people's

Rane's remarks have invited sharp criticism from MVA leaders. Congress president Nana Patole said, "We have been hearing such predictions for the

last two years. But now it is clear that BJP leaders are lying. There is no substance in their prediction. The MVA government is strong and will complete its full five-year tenure."

NCP minister and spokesperson Nawab Malik dismissed Rane's remarks as baseless. "After the MVA was voted to power, we often saw Opposition leader Devendra Fadnis speaking with assertion on the change of guard in Maharashtra. He realised it is not going to happen, so he is quiet. Then we saw state BJP chief Chandrakant Patil stating the same, but nothing happened. He seems to be frustrated and tired. So Rane has come to the forefront, announcing the change of guard in the state. But it is just wishful thinking. In reality, there is no way the BJP can replace the MVA in the near future," he said. Transport Minister and Shiv Sena leader Anil Parab too ridiculed Rane's statement. "I don't take these predictions seriously. Rane is speaking without any substance," he said.

MGL HIKES GAS PRICES FOR 3RD TIME IN SIX WEEKS



Mumbai: For the third time in barely six weeks, the Mahanagar Gas Ltd has hiked the prices of CNG and PNG with effect from Friday midnight (November 26/27), an official said.

The basic prices of CNG is increased by Rs 3.06/kg and domestic PNG by Rs 2.26/SCM, in a single slab. The fresh hike - in just six weeks after October 14 - will hit the budgets of around 1.60 million PNG consumers and over 800,000 CNG customers using gas-powered vehicles.

Permissible action will be taken against Param Bir Singh: Patil

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Days after Supreme Court granted former Mumbai Police commissioner Param Bir Singh interim protection from arrest, Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil on Friday said that permissible action will be taken against him as per the police services rules.



"Permissible action will be taken as per the police service rules. Further decisions will be taken after speaking to the chief mibiuster," said Patil.

Meanwhile, the Thane police commissioner has formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe an extortion case registered against former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh, said police.

A Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) level officer is investigating the case.

Former Mumbai police commissioner also submitted his statement regarding a complaint registered against him by Sonu Jalan at

a police station in Thane. Singh had also filed an application for the cancellation of a court proclamation order against him in Esplanade Magistrate's court, which declared him "absconding."

The court will hear the matter on November 29.

Singh, who has been declared "absconding" by a Mumbai court, had arrived at Crime Branch unit 11 office in Kandivali to join the investigation of the Goregaon extortion case.

Six cases of corruption and extortion were filed against Singh after he wrote a letter to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray levelling corruption and misconduct against the then Home Minister and senior NCP leader Anil Deshmukh. Singh, a 1988-batch IPS officer, was removed from the post of Mumbai Police Commissioner on March 17 and was made the General Commander of Maharashtra State Home Guard after he levelled allegations against Deshmukh.

Maha BJP corporator joins Cong, to take on rich BJP ex-minister in MLC polls

Team Absolute | Nagpur

The December 10 contest for Member of Legislative Council (MLC) from local bodies constituency in Nagpur has grown interesting with the Congress-led alliance springing a surprise by fielding a four-term BJP corporator with a RSS background against the BJP candidate.



Bhoyar to ditch them and join Congress has taken the Sangh Parivar by surprise.

The BJP nominee is Chandrashekar Bawankule, who rose from a party worker to Energy Minister in the Devendra Fadnis government, while his assets saw a phenomenal growth of 375 per cent since 2014. In 2014, his affidavit, filed with his nomination, showed his assets amounted to Rs 7,60,240, including moveable assets of Rs 66,27,740, but they have now risen to Rs 37,73,96,296 in 2021, according to his affidavit filed along with nomination papers. Ravindra 'Chotu' Bhoyar, a staunch swayamsevak for over three decades, a four-term BJP Corporator and former Deputy Mayor, is the Congress candidate.

On the last day of withdrawal on Friday, Congress dummy candidate Praful Guddhe Patil and Independent candidate Suresh Revatkar withdrew their nominations while another Independent Umesh Deshmukh remained in the fray, leaving Bawankule and Bhoyar as the main contenders. The move by

Bawankule, who was denied an Assembly ticket at the eleventh hour in the 2019 polls, is eyeing a comeback to the legislature. Close to both Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Fadnis, Bawankule is an OBC face and even though rejected ticket has been on forefront on OBC reservation. Belonging to a dedicated RSS family, Bhoyar is a practising homeopath while his maternal uncle Dr Vilas Dangre is close to RSS hierarchy. He was reportedly annoyed with BJP leadership over lack of opportunity for growth in the cadre. His total assets are valued at over Rs 4 crore. Maharashtra Congress leaders including state chief Nana Patole, and Ministers Sunil Kedar and Nitin Raut are understood to have played a key role in convincing Bhoyar to switch over to the Congress.

26/11 13TH ANNIV: MUMBAI PAYS HOMAGE TO BRAVEHEARTS, VICTIMS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai on Friday remembered the bravehearts and victims felled by bullets and others who saved lives on the 13th anniversary of the dastardly terror strikes by ten Pakistani terrorists who paralysed the city on November 26-29 2008.

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari led the state by solemnly laying wreaths at the Martyrs' Memorial erected inside the Mumbai Police Commissionerate premises near Crawford Market in south Mumbai.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, currently convalescing, saluted those who lost their lives during the terror strikes and expressed his gratitude to those who fought the terrorists, terming the attack "a cowardly act".

He recalled the services of the police and security forces and the people of Mumbai for warding off the assault on the country's commercial capital and recovering from its effects.

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil, Tourism Minister, Director-General



of Police Sanjay Pandey, Police Commissioner Hemant Nagrale and other dignitaries also paid their respects at the martyrs' memorial.

A large number of police personnel turned up to pay homage to their colleagues who lost their lives while

fighting the terrorists who struck at key locations in south Mumbai, with special memories for Tukaram G. Omble who sacrificed his life while pinning down Ajmal Amir Kasab, the sole terrorist nabbed alive in the early hours of November 27, 2008.

The still-grieving family members, relatives of the martyrs and several bravehearts, as also ordinary people paid homage to the departed souls with folded hands, bowed heads, lighting candles, offering flowers or wreaths, at the Martyrs' Memorial and other locations in the city.

They included the widows, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers or sisters, who stepped up to the memorial and offered their own personal tributes with flowers or tears for their departed near and beloved ones.

Similar in memoriams were held at some of the worst-hit targets like the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Hotel Taj Mahal Palace, Hotel Oberoi, the Chabad House, the Cama Hospital, and the Leopold Cafe, which bore the brunt of attackers leaving around 175 dead and over 300 injured.

The traditional and social media featured several remembrance ads, glowing and touching tributes and messages of the 60-hours that shook the world before the security forces won over the terrorists - eliminating 9 and taking one (Kasab) alive - to face the Indian law in an unprecedented 'open trial'.

Nagpur deprived of Winter Session; shifts to Mumbai

Team Absolute | Nagpur

The much awaited annual political affair for the people of Vidarbha, the staging of Winter Session of Maharashtra Legislature which was scheduled to be held in the first week in December, has been finally shifted to state capital, Mumbai, commencing from December 22 to 29.



merger of Bombay State, Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad State in

1953, was bestowed upon the honour of holding one session of newly creat-

The state cabinet took the decision on Thursday in Mumbai after days of uncertainty.

The second capital of Maharashtra, Nagpur, which lost the status of Capital of then Madhya Pradesh after the formation of Maharashtra with

ed Maharashtra state every year.

A historic Nagpur Agreement was signed on September 28, 1953 by the then leaders and protagonist of Vidarbha who had submitted their engaged in war of words with the State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) headed by Justice Fazal Ali which suggested an alternative of giving importance to Nagpur and Vidarbha region and holding Assembly Session here.

Won't make public statements against Wankhede family till Dec 9: Nawab Malik to HC

A division bench of Justice S J Kathawalla and Justice M N Jadhav posted the hearing for December 9 on the appeal by Dhyandev challenging the single-judge bench order, which had refused to grant an interim injunction against Malik.



Dhyandev Wankhede challenging the single-judge bench order that had refused to grant an interim injunction against Malik.

On November 22, a single-judge bench of Justice Madhav J Jamdar had refused to grant a blanket injunction restraining Malik but directed him to conduct "reasonable verification" of facts before posting any material on social media or speaking with the media against Sameer Wankhede and his family. The appeal filed through advocate Diwakar Rai had sought that while the court in its order observed Malik's posts on his social media handles "are actuated by malice or personal animosity" since the minister's son-in-law was arrested by the NCB, Malik ought to have been restrained from making further comments.

Senior advocate Birendra Saraf for Wankhede on Thursday said that "mudslinging by Malik was unjustified and that social media handles have become a platform for firing loose cannons where any person can comment anything". Saraf said that Malik continues to make objectionable tweets and has not spared anyone from the Wankhede family including his client's daughter and deceased wife.

Advocate Karl Tamboly for Malik said the minister had produced additional documents before the single-judge bench only after the court had said that there were interpolations in Sameer's alleged birth certificate tweeted by him.

After the bench asked if Malik had filed a complaint about the issue pertaining to the caste certificate, Tamboly responded in the negative and said a vigilance

"Then why have you tweeted all this? This is for media publicity, media attention he (Malik) wants everyday. More so after his son-in-law was arrested. There is a forum for caste validity.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra cabinet minister and NCP leader Nawab Malik on Thursday assured the Bombay High Court that he will not tweet or make public statements against Dhyandev Wankhede, father of NCB Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede, and his family members "directly or indirectly through any means of publicity" till the next hearing in the case. Following this, a division bench of Justices S J Kathawalla and M N Jadhav posted the hearing for December 9 on an appeal by

National Family Health Survey:

'95% of births in Maharashtra in 5 years took place at a health facility'

► INSTITUTIONAL BIRTHS ARE MORE COMMON AMONG WOMEN WHO HAVE RECEIVED AN ANTENATAL CHECK, WOMEN WITH 12 OR MORE YEARS OF SCHOOLING, WOMEN WHO ARE HAVING THEIR FIRST BIRTH, AND URBAN WOMEN, ACCORDING TO THE SURVEY.



in health facilities, mostly public facilities, in Maharashtra was seven per cent higher than the national rate of 88.6 per cent.

The percentage of births in a health facility in the state has increased by 5 per cent in the last five years, from 90 per cent in 2015-16 to 95 per cent in 2019-20. Institutional births are more common among women who have received an antenatal check, women with 12 or more years of schooling, women who are having their first birth, and

urban women, according to the survey.

Among the 36 districts in the state, almost all saw an uptick in the number of births in a health facility. In Sindhudurg, Bhandara, Nagpur, Chandrapur and Mumbai, 100 per cent of all births were in a health facility while in 18 other districts, the percentage of births in a health facility was higher than the state average of 95 per cent.

The most remarkable difference was observed in the district of

Nandurbar, where the percentage of children born in a health facility jumped from 56 per cent in 2015-16 to 76 per cent in 2019-20.

The NFHS-5 fieldwork for Maharashtra was conducted from June 19, 2019, to December 30, 2019, by the Indian Institute of Health Management Research and TRIOs Development Support Ltd. Information was gathered from 31,643 households, and from among 33,755 women and 5,497 men. However, not all survey results showed a positive trend in the state, especially in home births. The use of a clean blade to cut the umbilical cord for home births, as recommended, saw a dip from 94 per cent to 87 per cent in 2019-20. The use of disposable delivery kits remained stagnant, at 44 per cent, between 2015 and 2020.

Data showed that 81 per cent of home births followed the recommendation that the baby be immediately wiped dry and then wrapped without being bathed first, which was 4 per cent less than 2015-16.



'Shakespeare in Love' star Simon Callow boards heist film

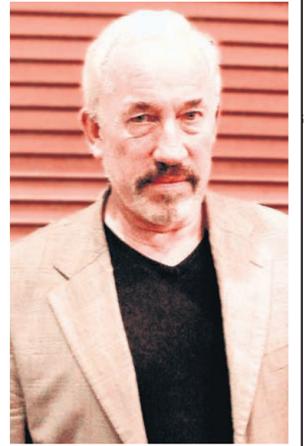
Los Angeles | Agencies

'Shakespeare in Love' star Simon Callow has joined the cast of indie heist movie called 'The Pay Day'.

According to variety.com, Callow, who has also appeared in fare as varied as 'The Witcher', 'Four Weddings and a Funeral' and 'The Phantom of the Opera', will play an eccentric crime boss in the upcoming film caper.

He was most recently seen in 'Hawkeye' on Disney Plus as Armand III.

The film tells the story of a down-on-her-luck IT technician played by Kyla Frye who is tapped by crime boss Callow to steal millions of dollars' worth of data in a sophisticated hack.



The plan goes awry when she is thwarted by con artist Sam Benjamin.

Joining Callow are Ellen Thomas, Vincent Jerome, Marcus Onilude, Rae Lim, Farrel Jo Hegarty, Miles Mitchell, Kara-Dee Rai, Jacob Anderton, Frankie Clarence and Dominic Ryan.

The feature was written by Frye and Benjamin and produced by Praxima, Graceless Productions and Fryeday Entertainment.

Principal photography was recently completed in London and the film is now in post-production with the producers looking to take it to market.

Billy Porter feels 'spiritual' after growing up in the church

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Billy Porter thinks of himself as "spiritual" after becoming unsure about his belief in God following his upbringing around the church.

The 52-year-old actor told the 'Table Manners' podcast with Jessie and Lennie Ware: "I don't know. I don't know. That hurts my mother's feelings. I know it hurts her feelings. It hurts her heart so much. And I don't know. I don't know," reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"I do believe in something in something, I do believe in a higher power. I don't know any more if that is simply out of habit. Because I don't know anything else.

"And I'm afraid to not believe in something. Because, like my grandmother said, if you don't believe in something, you'll fall for anything. You gotta believe in something, or you'll fall for anything," he added.

Porter labelled himself and his wedding five years ago to eyewear entrepreneur Adam Smith as "spiritual" instead of religious.



DON'T EAT TURKEY AT THANKSGIVING: BILLIE EILISH

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Bad Guy' hitmaker Billie Eilish has urged people not to eat turkey this Thanksgiving, as she would rather people try out a vegetarian alternative. She wrote on Instagram: "turkeys are some of the most gentle creatures in the world. and 46 million of them are killed every Thanksgiving. I know it's hard to change traditions but just keep it in mind :) (sic)" Earlier this month, Eilish joined other celebrities such as Joaquin Phoenix, Ricky Gervais, Dave Bautista, and Margaret Cho in signing a petition requesting President Joe Biden allow this year's pardoned turkey to stay at Farm Sanctuary, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

There, animals can "live out their lives in peace and safety," the petition stated. Farm Sanctuary said in a letter: "As we approach the holiday season - meant to be a time of gratitude and goodwill - we hope you'll accept our offer to provide sanctuary and the best life possible for pardoned turkeys." The singer also shared her recipe for vegan and gluten-free peanut butter chocolate chip cookies with fans on Instagram shortly before the holiday season kicked off.

She captioned a video tutorial: "These cookies are fully vegan and GF and AMAZING. The flour is literally just oats blended up and they work perfectly." Meanwhile, the 'Happier Than Ever' singer recently called for "urgent action" to save the planet amid a "critical decade for our planet".

Los Angeles | Agencies

Canadian actor Seth Rogen has come under fire after seemingly normalising crimes in Los Angeles. The actor-writer came under fire after he dismissed some-

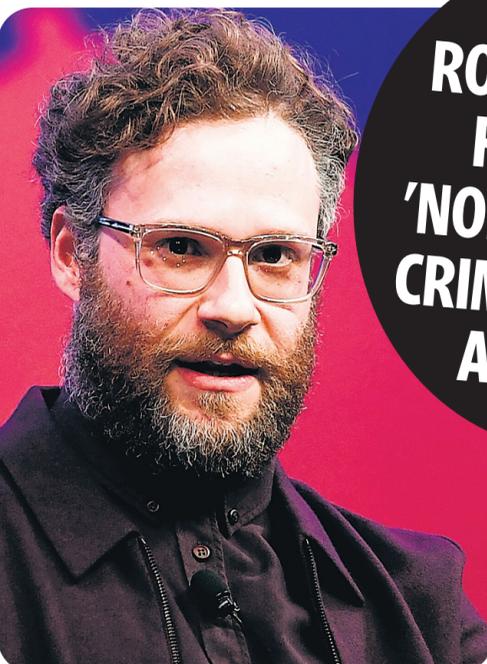
one's complaint about having been robbed in Los Angeles while defending the city, reports aceshowbiz.com.

On Wednesday, November 24, YouTube personality Casey Neistat tweeted: "so our cars got robbed this morning because Los Angeles is a crime riddled 3rd world s**thole of a city."

He then expressed gratitude towards the L.A. Police Department for arresting the criminal and retrieving all the stolen belongings, "but tremendous appreciation to the hard-working officers at the @LAPDWestLA who not only arrested the motherfucker but they got all of our stolen goods back."

Replying to the tweet, Rogen wrote: "Dude I've lived here for over 20 years. You're nuts haha." He also disagreed with the notion that L.A. "is a crime riddled 3rd world s**thole of a city," declaring, "It's lovely here. Don't leave anything valuable in it. It's called living in a big city."

The 39-year-old then reiterated his earlier statement as saying: "Also it sucks your s**t was stolen but LA is not some s**thole city. As far as big cities go it has a lot going for it."



SETH ROGEN FACES FLAK FOR 'NORMALISING CRIMES' IN LOS ANGELES

Mariah Carey adapting memoir into TV series

Her memoir read: "By the time I was a toddler, I had developed the instincts to sense when violence was coming. As though I was smelling rain, I could tell when adult screaming had reached a certain pitch and velocity that meant I should take cover."

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Mariah Carey is making a television show with 'Empire' showrunner Lee Daniels, who produced her 2009 movie 'Precious'. The 'All I Want For Christmas is You' hitmaker is planning to bring her life story to television through an eight-part series, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The singer, who released 'The Meaning of Mariah Carey' last year, shared an update with Z100 with host Garrett Vogel, who asked if she would ever consider doing a musical. Carey said: "We did the book, and we are getting it together. I'm working with my friend Lee Daniels. And we are talking about the adaptation of my book. I would rather do that than why we wrote the book first. Broadway is a great thing, I just want to do something."

However, she said a musical was less likely, noting the project was "probably" going to be a television show.

She added: "Lee is probably going to hear this and kill me but it's probably going to be an eight-part series. The 'Without You' singer emphasised the importance of the show being "gritty, grimy, beautiful, specular and real".

'THERE IS MORE TO EXPLORE'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Zendaya told fans that they can expect to see a lot more of her in 'Dune: Part Two'. The 25-year-old star featured in the sci-fi flick as Chani but some viewers were left disappointed by her lack of screen time in the movie, although Zendaya insists that 'there's so much more to explore' in the sequel - which is slated for release in 2023.

Asked what fans can expect in the upcoming project, Zendaya told Deadline: "Well, I can be there for longer, which is cool." She added, "I want to grow with the characters I play, and with the people that I get to learn from. Anybody who has read the books knows there's so much more to explore and deal with."

"The Spider-Man: No Way Home actress revealed that there were benefits at not featuring much in the first Dune film as it gave her a chance to see the blockbuster from a fresh perspective.

ZENDAYA PROMISES SHE WILL HAVE A BIGGER ROLE IN THE DUNE SEQUEL... AFTER FANS WERE UPSET SHE WAS BARELY SEEN IN FIRST FILM



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Megan Barton Hanson



INDIA V NEW ZEALAND 1ST CRICKET TEST MATCH

SOUTHEE AND OPENERS HELP NZ SIT ON TOP AT END OF DAY TWO

Kanpur | Agencies

Shreyas Iyer struck a hundred on debut to prop up India but a five-wicket haul by Tim Southee followed by half-centuries by openers Will Young and Tom Latham helped New Zealand sit on top at the end of day two of the first Test at the Green Park Stadium here on Friday. After India were bowled out for 345, New Zealand were 129/0 in 57 overs at stumps, trailing the hosts by 216 runs.

When India resumed the day at 258/4, many wouldn't have given a chance to Southee becoming the wrecker-in-chief, especially after he had walked off the field in the second session on Day One due to a groin complaint. But Southee shined in a magnificent bowling display of 11 overs to steal the thunder from Iyer's maiden Test hundred.

Southee broke the 121-run stand between Iyer and



Jadeja as the latter chopped onto his stumps with no feet movement, departing without adding to his overnight score. Iyer, on the other hand, began where he left off on Day One, caressing two boundaries off Kyle Jamieson's first over of the day.

Iyer continued to do well against Jamieson, getting boundaries through a thick edge between slip and wide gully fielder followed by an elegant cover drive. Southee continued to run through the Indian batting order, as Wriddhiman Saha nicked behind to keeper Tom Blundell in the 93rd over. Ravichandran Ashwin stalled his rhythm briefly by taking consecutive boundaries off him. Post drinks break, Southee had his third wicket of the day as Iyer chipped a drive away from the body to cover. He then completed his second five-wicket haul in India by getting one to seam away from Axar Patel, drawing him into a poke and nicked behind to the keeper. Ashwin continued his counter-attack, taking a boundary each off Southee and Jamieson. He, along with Umesh Yadav, ensured that India didn't lose any more wickets before lunch. After skittling out India for a total below 350, Young started to get a move on by striking two boundaries off Yadav in two overs. Post drinks break, the ball did a lot for the Indian spinners but not enough to get a breakthrough. Ashwin had Latham caught behind in the 56th over but the opener got to reverse the decision on inside edge. By the time stumps were drawn, New Zealand made it their day, thanks to their openers' abilities to soak the pressure and be rock-solid along with Southee outplaying the Indian batters through his mastery of swing.

Briefscores

India 345 all out in 111.1 overs (Shreyas Iyer 105, Shubman Gill 52, Ravindra Jadeja 50, Tim Southee 5/69, Kyle Jamieson 3/85) against New Zealand 129/0 in 57 overs (Will Young 75 not out, Tom Latham 50 not out)

Iyer scores maiden Test century on debut

Shreyas Iyer scored his maiden Test century on debut during the second day of the first Test against New Zealand at Green Park Stadium here on Friday. Iyer reached the milestone with two runs through point off pacer Kyle Jamieson. Before Iyer, his fellow Mumbaier Prithvi Shaw was the last India batter to register a century on Test debut in 2018, scoring 134 against West Indies in Rajkot. Iyer reached his Test century in 157 balls, including 12 fours and two sixes, adding 25 runs to his overnight score of 75 off 138 balls. Iyer is the second Indian batter after Gundappa Viswanath (against Australia in 1969) to score a Test hundred on debut in Kanpur.



World TT C'ships

Sathiyar-Manika, Sharath-Archana move to round of 16 in mixed doubles

Houston | Agencies

India's mixed doubles pairs, Sathiyar Gnanasekaran-Manika Batra and Sharath Kamal-Archana Kamath advanced to the round of 16 at the 2021 World Table Tennis Championships Finals, here on Friday.

Kamal and Archana came from behind to register victory against Egyptian duo of Dina Meshref and Omar Assar 3-2 (9-11, 2-11, 11-5, 11-9, 11-4) to set up a final 16 clash against Fran'e's Jia Nan Yuan and Emmanuel Lebeson.

The Indian duo had earlier beaten the Algerian team of Sami Kherouf and Katia Kessaci in the first round.

On the other hand, Sathiyar and Manika, who had got a first-round bye, beat Puerto Rico's Adriana Diaz and Brian Afanador 3-1 (11-6, 3-11, 11-7, 11-0) in the round of 32. They will now face the Sino-American pair of Kanak Jha and Wang Manyu next.

Meanwhile, Tokyo Olympian Manika Batra and Archana Kamath also secured a comfortable victory in the women's doubles. They beat Belgium's Margo Degraef and Nathalie Marchetti 3-0 (11-4, 11-7, 11-6) in the round of 32. However, G Sathiyar lost 3-4 (9-11, 11-7, 15-13, 3-11, 11-4, 9-11, 7-11) to the 2018



Commonwealth Games silver medalist Quadri Aruna of Nigeria' in the men's singles. With Sathiyar's loss, India's singles campaign at the tournament came to an end.

Sathiyar Gnanasekaran and Sharath Kamal also exited the men's doubles after a 1-3 (9-11, 11-9, 11-13, 7-11) loss to the Swedish pair of Truls Moregardh and Anton Kallberg in the second round. The Indian duo got a bye in the first round.

Manisha Kalyan becomes first Indian woman footballer to score against Brazil

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The 19-year-old Manisha Kalyan, a winger for the Senior Women's National Team, became the first Indian to score a goal against any Senior National Brazil side. India went down 1-6 to Brazil in the opening game of the Women's International football tournament on Friday, but Manisha who scored the first goal for the team in the eighth minute registered her name in the records book.

Manisha, upon receiving a cushioned header from fellow forward Pyari Xaxa close to the halfway line, fired a left-footer into the bottom corner of Brazil's goal post. However, it was the only moment that India could cherish for a long time.

"It was a dream come true for me to play against Brazil and to score against them was the icing on the cake," said Manisha, who, after the match, was seen posing for pictures with Brazil's legendary midfielder Formiga Mota, who was felicitated by all parties present at the Arena da Amazonia after the game, as she hung up her boots.



Indonesia Open

Sindhu beats Yujin, sets up semifinal clash against Intanon

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Ac Indian shuttler PV Sindhu defeated South Korea's Sim Yujin 14-21, 21-19, 21-14 in a one-hour-and-six-minute match to enter the semifinals at the Indonesia Open in Bali on Friday. Sindhu will go up against Thailand's Ratchanok Intanon, the world No. 8, in the last-four clash.

Intanon eased past Japan's Asuka Takahashi 21-17, 21-12 in the quarterfinal. This will be Sindhu's third successive semifinal appearance after the French Open and Indonesia Masters.

Yujin was quick off the blocks as she won the first game 21-14 in 17 minutes. Sindhu recovered in the second game and raced to a 14-7 lead but a resilient Yujin almost clawed back and ensured a tight finish. Sindhu eventually took it 21-19 to level the scores.

The decider saw the two shuttlers go neck-and-neck in the opening exchanges and the score was tied at



11 apiece just after the midway break. Sindhu, however, managed to find extra gear from there on and dominated the rest of the game, and settled the match. After a tough opening

encounter against Japanese shuttler Aya Ohori in her opening clash, Sindhu had dispatched Germany's Yvonne Li in her second-round match to make it to the quarters

Leverkusen down resilient Celtic to book last-16 in UEFA Europa League

Berlin | Agencies

Andrich's brace helped Bayer Leverkusen progress into the round of the last-16 after overpowering Celtic Glasgow 3-2 in UEFA Europa League here.

The "Werkself" took the reins on home soil from the kick-off and caught a perfect start as Andrich headed home a corner kick from Florian Wirtz with 16 minutes played. Celtic responded well but couldn't produce goal-scoring opportunities whereas the hosts ceased their offensive actions.

Leverkusen's passiveness got punished in the closing



stages of the first half as goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky, who had nothing to do until then, was penalised for a foul play on Kyogo Furuhashi by the video assistant referee in the 40th

minute. Leverkusen remained dominant in the closing stages but for all that Hradecky had to be on guard to defuse David Turnbull's dangerous effort in the dying seconds of

the game. With one round to spare, Bayer Leverkusen top Group G with 13 points followed by Betis (10 points), Celtic (6 points) and Ferencvaros (0 points).

Jr Hockey World Cup: India meet Poland with quarters spot on the line

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

India take on Poland in the last match in Pool B on Saturday in the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's Junior World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium here with victory sealing them a place in the quarter-finals.

Both India and Poland are on three points from two matches, the Indians ahead on goal difference. France are on top of the standings with six points from two matches and are virtually assured of their place in the quarters. They take on Canada in an earlier match on Saturday.

India had lost 4-5 to France in their opening match but came back strongly to hand Canada a 13-1 defeat in their two preliminary league matches so far. Poland had defeated Canada 1-0 in their first match and lost to France 1-7 on Thursday.



Jr Women's World Cup: England withdraw due to new Covid variant

Mumbai: The new variant of the Novel Coronavirus claimed its first victim in sport with England pulling out of the FIH Junior Women's World Cup starting in December in South Africa. The England squad was due to travel this coming Sunday, with the event scheduled for December 5-16 in Potchefstroom but had to withdraw after the United Kingdom government put South Africa in the travel red list, which carries with it significant government guidelines and restrictions on travel, along with a period of quarantine on arrival back in the UK, England Hockey said on Friday. Meanwhile, the Junior Women's World Cup in South Africa looks in doubt as there are reports that a few other European countries are also considering withdrawing from the event considering the situation in South Africa, where the new variant, which is more virulent, has emerged.

Golf: Teen star Jahanvi grabs fourth win of the year

Hyderabad | Agencies

Teen star Jahanvi Bakshi completed superb back-to-back wins as she rallied from a one-shot deficit to register her fourth success in 2021 by taking the 13th Leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour at the Boulder Hills Golf & Country Club, here on Friday. Seher Atwal, who shared the overnight lead with Amandeep Drall, needed a birdie on the 18th to get into a play-off with Jahanvi, but she managed only a par. Meanwhile, Vani Kapoor, playing alongside Jahanvi, had a chance to go join the latter, but instead, she bogeyed the Par-5 18th and fell one behind.

Jahanvi (69) totalled 7-under 209, while Seher (71) was 6-under 210. Vani Kapoor (70) and Amandeep Drall (72) were tied third on the final day, which began with the promise of a thriller but in the end, Jahanvi, despite her young age, kept her nerves and grabbed a



memorable win.

Pranavi Urs shot 70 and was sole fifth, while Jahanvi's sister Hitaashee (73), who was level with her, had two bogeys on the back nine. That cost her a lot and she ended sixth. Jahanvi, who began the week with an even-par 72, had a 68 on

the second day. In the final round, she birdied fifth and seventh, both of which were Par-5s, and turned in 2-under. On the back nine, she dropped a shot on Par-5 14th but made up on the next with a birdie on 15th. She parred the last three holes, including the 18th.

COVID WATCH: CSA, BCCI IN TOUCH AHEAD OF NEXT MONTH'S SERIES, INDIA A TOUR TO GO ON

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Ahead of India's series against Proteas next month, Cricket South Africa (CSA) on Friday said that they are monitoring the situation in different parts of their country and will keep the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) informed about the development, amid the fears over the spread of a new variant of Covid-19 in the nation.

The new Covid-19 variant has been causing panic the world over and it also made its presence felt in South Africa this week. The fourth wave of the pandemic is also expected to peak in South Africa in the next few weeks and will coincide with the packed summer cricket schedule.

The Indian men's cricket team, which refused to play a Test in Manchester earlier this year because of Covid-19-related fears, are due to play three Tests, three ODIs, and four T20Is from mid-December across four venues - Johannesburg, Centurion, Paarl, and Cape Town.



The cases are on the rise in the northern part of the country and few venues for the Test series could become vulnerable to the spread of the new variant.

"We are in contact with the BCCI and there is no prejudice to the Indian tour to South Africa at this stage. We will, of course, continue to monitor developments regarding the spread of the virus and keep the BCCI informed. As CSA we remain committed to ensuring that all visiting teams and Proteas players are afforded a safe environment to play cricket," Lawson Naidoo, the head of CSA, told Cricbuzz on Friday evening.

Notably, the Indian men's 'A' team is also currently in South Africa, playing the first four-day game in Bloemfontein which ended in a draw today. The team is scheduled to play two more four-day games which start on November 29 and December 6. The visiting team, currently based in Bloemfontein, has had a series of meetings with the CSA officials and the local medical team and has decided to complete the three-match series.



Nushratt Bharuccha: Happy for the screening of her solo lead film, Chhorii at IFFI 2021

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Nushratt Bharuccha is all geared up for the release of her first solo lead film, Chhorii, releasing on 26th November. The film is today being screened at the prestigious International Film festival of India 2021 in Goa, for which the actress jetted off from Mumbai with the director of the film, Vishal Furia. Taking to her social media, Nushratt shared a picture with Vishal from Goa. On the picture, she wrote, "@furia_vishal Wohoo!! Here we go!!" Nushratt was spotted today at the airport looking uber cool. She donned upon a pink and white tie die shirt paired with white pants. Horror drama, Chhorii will see Nushratt shouldering a film all by herself, where she plays the role of a pregnant woman trying to protect herself and her child from evil spirits.

RANVEER SINGH ALL PUMPED UP TO SHOWCASE 'GREATEST STORY, GLORY' WITH '83'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood power couple Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone on Friday shared a glimpse of India's "greatest story" as they unveiled the teaser of their upcoming film '83'.

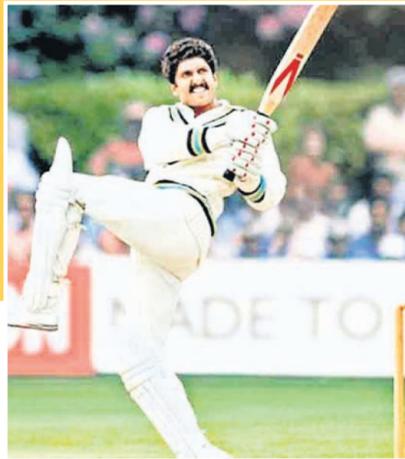
The 59-second teaser opens up in a cricket stadium, with a match getting into a big turning point. There is an intense match between team India and West Indies. The iconic ground seems to be the Lords Cricket Ground where India won its first World Cup and made history.

The teaser ends with actor

Ranveer Singh, who plays the role of former Indian cricket captain Kapil Dev, waiting to catch the ball.

"The greatest Story. The greatest Glory. 83 RELEASING IN CINEMAS ON 24TH DEC, 2021, in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. Teaser out now. Trailer out on 30th Nov.#ThisIs83," Ranveer wrote as the caption.

Also starring are Tahir Raj Bhasin, Jiiva, Saqib Saleem, Jatin Sarna, Chirag Patil, Dinker Sharma, Nishant Dahiya, Harrrdy Sandhu, Sahil Khattar, Ammy Virk, Addinath Kothare, Dhairya Karwa,



R Badree and Pankaj Tripathi.

Deepika will be seen playing Romi, Kapil Dev's wife in the movie. She too shared the teaser and wrote: "The story behind India's greatest victory! a83 RELEASING IN CINEMAS ON 24TH DECEMBER, 2021! In Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam! Trailer out on 30th November, 2021."

Directed by Kabir Khan, the film revolves around India's historic 1983 World Cup win.



Abhishek feels proud, compared to Big B

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Abhishek Bachchan shares how he feels when people compare him with his father Amitabh Bachchan on the singing reality show 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa'. He also requests contestant Rajshree Bag to sing a track 'Bahon Mein Chale Aao' featuring his mother Jaya Bachchan.

Abhishek said after looking at the performance of Rajshree, who is often compared with Lata Mangeshkar on the show, that she reminds him of being compared with his father.

"Rajshree, whenever I have got the chance to watch the show, I've seen people compare you to Lata didi. It actually reminded me about how people compare me with my father and ask me how I feel about it."

According to him Amitabh Bachchan is a great actor in the industry and this is what he says to everyone making these comparisons. "My answer to them is that there's no greater actor in this film industry than Amitabh Bachchan and if I'm being compared to him, I am sure I must have done something good."

Anushka reacts to PC roasting Nick Jonas: How good are you at this

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma had the best reaction to Indian actress Priyanka Chopra's roasting her American pop-singer Nick Jonas and his brothers Joe and Kevin. Anushka took to her Instagram stories and heaped praises on Priyanka. Anushka re-shared a post by her 'Dil Dhadakne Do' co-actor and applauded her. The 'Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi' actress wrote: "How good are you in this @priyankachopra!"

In the short clip, Priyanka is heard saying: "Hi everyone. I'm honoured and so thrilled actually and tickled to be here tonight to roast my husband, Nick Jonas, and his brothers whose names I can never remember. I'm from India a country rich in culture, music and entertainment. So clearly, the Jonas brothers didn't make it over there." She then went on to joke about the age gap between her and Nick.

BIGG BOSS 15



Simba Nagpal proclaims Shamita Shetty to be in the top 3

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The supremacy of Shamita Shetty in Bigg Boss 15 continues! While counted amongst the top five contestants of the year, the actress has been ruling the space ever since she entered the house.

While we fans love the way Shamita Shetty conducts herself in the house, Another addition to the list is the former contestant Simba Nagpal. During his interviews after the eviction, he has proclaimed the actress to be in the top three. Simba Nagpal got candid about Shamita Shetty and said she is one of the most authentic people in the house. In a similar vein, the actor confessed that Tejaswi Prakash is fake and does many things for the camera.

Simba Nagpal said, "Shamita is way more real than Teja! As far as Shamita is concerned, she is a mature woman, and she is as real as she could be on camera. She is not faking anything. But at the same time, if I talk about Teja, she is showcasing a different version of herself."

SAMANTHA JOINS 'ARRANGEMENTS OF LOVE' CAST

► SAMANTHA PLAYS A STRONG MINDED AND FUNNY FORCE OF NATURE 27-YEAR-OLD, WHO RUNS HER OWN DETECTIVE AGENCY AND BECOMES PART OF THE SEARCH.

► SHE IS A PROGRESSIVE BISEXUAL TAMIL WOMAN, WITH ULTRA-TRADITIONAL PARENTS, WHO WANT HER TO HAVE AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE. AS MUCH AS SHE WANTS TO PLEASE HER PARENTS SHE ALSO WANTS TO BE ABLE TO MAKE HER OWN LIFE CHOICES.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

South star Samantha Ruth Prabhu has boarded the cast of feature film 'Arrangements of Love'.

The film is to be directed by BAFTA-winning Welsh director Philip John, whose credits include 'Downton Abbey' and 'The Good Karma Hospital', reports variety.com.

The film is produced by Sunitha Tati's Indian outfit Guru Films, whose 'Oh! Baby', the 2019 Telugu-language adaptation of 2014 Korean film 'Miss Granny', was a commercial success. 'Oh! Baby' starred Samantha.

Active in both the Telugu and Telugu language industries, Samantha's credits include S.S. Rajamouli's 'Eega', 'Super Deluxe', 'Janatha Garage' and 'Mersala'. Samir Sarkar, of Singapore's Magic Hour Films, has joined the project as executive producer.

Sarkar previously produced Rotterdam winner 'Nasir', 'Jonaki' and Kolkata winner 'The False Eye'.

'Arrangements of Love' is an adaptation of the bestselling 2004 novel of the same title by Indian author Timeri N. Murari by John and British Sri Lankan actor Nimmi Harasgama, who played the female lead in Deepa Mehta's 'Funny Boy' and is a series regular on

'The Good Karma Hospital'.

It follows a Welsh-Indian man on his quest to find his estranged father with an impromptu visit to his homeland.

Samantha told Variety, "I am excited to work with Philip John, whose projects I have closely followed for many years, being a big fan of 'Downton Abbey.' I am looking forward to collaborating with Sunitha once again and I hope for only more success than we previously had with 'Oh! Baby.' My role is a complex character and it will be both a challenge and an opportunity for me to play it. I cannot wait to get on set."

The film is expected to commence shooting in August, 2022.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Maryam Zakaria