

# absolute india

VOL. 9, ISSUE 26, MUMBAI | TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2021 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHOPAL AND NEW DELHI

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## CBI, ED have proof of Rafael Jet deal payoffs, says French portal

# SERIOUS ALLEGATION

French plane-maker Dassault paid at least 7.5 million euros (nearly Rs 650 million) in bribes to a middleman to help secure the sale of 36 Rafale fighter jets to India and Indian agencies failed to investigate it despite the presence of documents, French portal Mediapart has alleged in a new report. The online journal has been investigating allegations of corruption in the Rs 59,000 crore Rafale deal.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Mediapart has published alleged false invoices that it says enabled Dassault to pay secret commissions to alleged middleman Sushen Gupta. "Despite the existence of these documents, the Indian federal police has decided not to pursue the affair and has not begun an investigation," the portal says. According to its report, the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate have had proof since October 2018 that Dassault paid kickbacks to Sushen Gupta to secure the sale of Rafale jets. The evidence, says the report, is present in confidential documents that surfaced in another corruption case being investigated by the two agencies - the scandal involving the supply of VVIP choppers by AgustaWestland. Mediapart's investigation on "Rafale papers" triggered a judicial investigation in France in July into allegations of corruption, influence peddling and favouritism. Sushen Gupta is accused of



receiving bribes from AgustaWestland through a shell company registered in Mauritius, Interstellar Technologies. The Mauritian authorities agreed to send documents related to the company to the CBI and Enforcement Directorate, to facilitate investigations. The documents were sent to the CBI on October 11, 2018, just a week after the agency received an official complaint alleging corruption in the Rafale deal. "However, the CBI decided not to open an investigation, even though just seven days after that corruption complaint was filed it received infor-

mation proving that secret commissions had indeed been paid," Mediapart said. According to the portal, this is when they discovered that Sushen Gupta also acted as an intermediary for Dassault over the Rafale deal. The report says Gupta's Interstellar Technologies "received at least 7.5 million euros from the French aviation firm between 2007 and 2012, thanks to IT contracts that were clearly overbilled, and from which most of the money was discreetly sent to Mauritius using a system of alleged false invoices. Some of these invoices even got the name of the French company wrong, referring to "Dassault" Aviation. Mediapart says the Mauritian documents cover the period of the bid process that was eventually won by Dassault (2007 - 2012), when the Congress was in power. "Whereas the complaint filed on October 4, 2018, targets suspicious activity that took place from 2015, when the deal was being finalised on the authority of the current BJP Prime Minister Narendra Modi," says the site.

### 'Indian agencies not interested in probe'

- ▶ THE INVOICES AND BANK STATEMENTS OBTAINED BY THE CBI SHOW THAT SUSHEN GUPTA'S SHELL COMPANY RECEIVED 914,488 EUROS BETWEEN 2002 AND 2006. DASSAULT AND THE ALLEGED MIDDLEMAN SOON SET UP A NEW AND EVEN MORE OPAQUE FINANCIAL ROUTE TO CHANNEL PAYMENTS. THE AVIATION COMPANY STARTED BUYING OVERBILLED IT SERVICES THROUGH THE SINGAPORE-BASED COMPANY INTERDEV, WHICH WAS PORTRAYED AS THE "SYSTEM INTEGRATOR FOR DASSAULT IN ASIA", SAYS MEDIAPART, ADDING THAT IT WAS SIMPLY A SHELL COMPANY WITHOUT ANY REAL ACTIVITY, AND WAS MANAGED BY A FRONT MAN FOR THE GUPTA FAMILY, CURRENTLY BELIEVED TO BE IN SOUTH AFRICA.
- ▶ IN ONE DOCUMENT OBTAINED BY THE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE, SUSHEN GUPTA SUGGESTED THAT HE HAD HANDED OVER MONEY TO SOME OFFICIALS ON DASSAULT'S BEHALF. "THE RISK IS TAKEN, YOU HAVE AN AGENT WE HAVE PAID. NOW MAKE SURE IT IS LEGAL CLEAN AND DEFENDABLE. [...] NO MONEY NO DECISIONS [...] PEOPLE SITTING IN OFFICE ASKING FOR MONEY. [...] THOSE PEOPLE WILL, IF WE DON'T PAY, PUT US IN JAIL," THE MIDDLEMAN WROTE IN THE SEPTEMBER 2012 NOTE, ACCORDING TO MEDIAPART.
- ▶ OTHER DOCUMENTS RECEIVED BY THE CBI AND ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE SHOW THAT IN 2015, DURING THE FINAL NEGOTIATIONS OF THE RAFALE CONTRACT, SUSHEN GUPTA GOT HOLD OF CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS FROM THE DEFENCE MINISTRY DETAILING THE STANCE OF THE INDIAN NEGOTIATORS, ESPECIALLY HOW THEY CALCULATED THE PRICE OF THE AIRCRAFT. DASSAULT HAS REFUSED TO COMMENT ON THESE DOCUMENTS, SAYS MEDIAPART.

## Massive fire in Kamla Nehru Hospital

▶ CHILDREN'S WARD OF MADHYA PRADESH CAPITAL BHOPAL'S KAMLA NEHRU HOSPITAL IN ON MONDAY, 8 NOVEMBER CAUGHT FIRE. ABOUT FIFTY CHILDREN ADMITTED IN THE HOSPITAL ARE STUCK UP IN THE HOSPITAL.



Zafar Alam Khan | Bhopal  
[www.absolutediaindianews.com](http://www.absolutediaindianews.com)

Children's ward of Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal's Kamla Nehru Hospital caught fire earlier tonight. Many children are reportedly stuck in the building. Rescue operations are presently underway. Medical education minister Vishwas Sarang and Bhopal Madhya MLA Arif Masood have also reached the spot. The team of doctors has been called to the hospital. Fire brigade employee Arif said that because of the heavy smoke, it is difficult to douse the fire. Eight fire brigades from Fatehgarh, Bairagarh, Pul Bogda and other fire stations have reached the spot. The fire at third floor of the hospital could not be controlled till filing of this report. Due to fire power supply of the hospital also collapsed for over three hours causing concern for the lives of fifty children admitted in the hospital.

in the incident. The cause of the fire could not be ascertained. Fire brigade team and police have rushed to the spot and started the rescue operation. On getting the information Minister Vishwas Sarang, Bhopal Central MLA Arif Masood and DIG Irshad Wali have also reached the spot. The team of doctors has been called to the hospital. Fire brigade employee Arif said that because of the heavy smoke, it is difficult to douse the fire. Eight fire brigades from Fatehgarh, Bairagarh, Pul Bogda and other fire stations have reached the spot. The fire at third floor of the hospital could not be controlled till filing of this report. Due to fire power supply of the hospital also collapsed for over three hours causing concern for the lives of fifty children admitted in the hospital.

## Meghalaya Guv Satya Pal Malik attacks Centre on farmers' protest

Jaipur | Agencies

Meghalaya Governor Satya Pal Malik launched a scathing attack on the Central government, saying leaders in Delhi send condolence messages even when a dog dies, but are not bothered about the "death of 600 farmers" protesting against the farm laws. Speaking in a programme organised by Teja Foundation in Jaipur's Birla Auditorium on Sunday, he said: "Till date, such a big movement has never happened. 600 people have been martyred in the farmers' movement so far. When an animal dies, there comes a condolence message



from the leaders of Delhi. 600 of our farmers were martyred, but no message came

"The day they (government) tell me that they have a problem, I will not even wait for a minute to resign. From the very first day, I have spoken for the farmers. I was prepared to leave and join the farmers' protest."

from Delhi." "Leaders in Delhi had sent condolence message for five-seven people who died in a fire in the hospital in Maharashtra," Malik said in a programme in Jaipur. The Governor said that the movement is also making an impact on the country's armed forces as farmers' sons are employed there. He also said that no minister visits villages of western Uttar Pradesh even at a time when there is any sorrow or suffering. "What's the use of leaders ruling in Delhi," he commented.

## Civilian shot dead by militants in Srinagar

Srinagar: A salesman was shot dead by militants in Srinagar city on Monday evening, police said.

Police said the incident took place in Bohri Kadal area of old Srinagar city. "Militants fired at Mohammad Ibrahim Khan in Bohri Kadal area of Srinagar. He was from Bandipora and working as a salesman in Srinagar. He was shifted to hospital, but he succumbed to critical bullet injuries," a police officer said. The area was surrounded for searches after the incident.

## 'Important matter in public interest': SC on model builder-buyer agreement

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday said a model builder-buyer agreement is an important matter in public interest, which is required in the real estate sector, and sought Centre's reply in the matter. A bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and A.S. Bopanna told Additional Solicitor General K.M. Nataraj: "Government has the power to make a model builder-buyer agreement under RERA. Please look into it and file your reply by November 22." It added that a group of home buyers has come to the top court seeking such model agreement and told the law officer that it is not an adversarial matter. The bench also asked the petitioner-in-person advocate Ashwini Upadhyay to prepare a short note on the issue and share it with the Centre's counsel along with the petition. "This is an important issue on the protection of buyers", it said, adding that "often (this issue) is put on back foot by clauses in agreements



made by builders". The bench noted that a uniform builder-buyer agreement is required to be framed by the Centre to protect the interests of lakhs of home buyers. It observed the plea raises the grievance that in the absence of model agreement, flat purchasers are left at the mercy of developers regarding the terms and conditions.

## Centre finalises Zydus Cadila vax price

New Delhi: The Centre has finalised the pricing for ZyCoV-D Covid vaccine with manufacturer Zydus Cadilla, at Rs 265 per dose and the needle-free applicator will cost Rs 93 per dose excluding GST. ZyCoV-D is world's first DNA plasmid vaccine against the Covid-19 virus. It is also the first COVID-19 vaccine which is needle-free and administered using an applicator to ensure painless intradermal vaccine delivery which also leads to a significant reduction in any kind of major side effects. It has also placed an order of one crore vaccine doses for world's first plasmid DNA vaccine.

## PLA conducts multiple drills in western plateau after India's exercise: Report

- ▶ An artillery regiment affiliated to the PLA Xinjiang Military Command recently conducted a comprehensive, cross-day-and-night exercise in a high-altitude region, involving live-fire shooting of PCL-181 155mm self-propelled howitzers and PHL-11 122mm multiple rocket launchers, as the drill tested the troop's fire strike efficiency and combat capabilities under the harsh cold in plateau regions, the China Central Television reported on Saturday.
- ▶ In another recent event, held deep in a plateau region at an elevation of 5,100 meters, the PLA Xinjiang Military Command organised a joint fire strike confrontation drill, as PHL-03 300mm multiple rocket launchers and China's latest multiple rocket launchers capable of firing 370mm rockets teamed up with reconnaissance drones and artillery radars to launch precision strikes on the enemy, China Central Television reported on Wednesday.
- ▶ JH-7 fighter bombers affiliated with the PLA Western Theater Command Air Force also joined the exercise, which trained joint aerial combat, electronic countermeasures and land-based air defense, the Global Times report said, noting that the drill practiced the weapons and equipment's performances and the coordination between the Army and the Air Force.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has revealed that it conducted multiple drills in its western plateau over the past week. This comes after the Indian military launched a major exercise along the borders with China at the start of the month, Global Times reported. "Chinese experts said on Monday that the response displays the PLA's capabilities in safeguarding national sovereignty and security as it faces India's provocations," the report said. Deep in the heart of Zangnan in the southern part of Southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region (Tibet), at an elevation of more than 4,000 metres, a combined arms brigade affiliated with the PLA

Xizang Military Command recently conducted an assault training in mountainous areas, China Central Television had reported on November 2. Advanced PLA main battle equipment, including Type 15 light tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, self-propelled howitzers and auxiliary vehicles, took part in the drill, which tested the troop's physical fitness, skills and comprehensive combat capabilities in complicated terrains and under oxygen-lacking, freezing environment, China Central Television said. China aims to manage and control the China-India border issues through talks so both sides can resolve divergences and avoid conflicts, Song Zhongping, a Chinese military expert and TV commentator told the Global Times on Monday.

## CRPF jawan opened fire on sleeping colleagues in Chhattisgarh's Sukma

Raipur | Agencies

Four CRPF personnel were killed and seven others injured after their colleague opened fire at them while they were sleeping in a camp in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Monday. The accused jawan has been identified as Ritesh Ranjan. As per the official statement, "In the preliminary investigation it has emerged that Ritesh Ranjan (accused CRPF jawan) after getting ready for duty, randomly opened fire on other personnel sleeping in the barrack." However, the exact reason behind this incident is yet to be ascertained, an official statement from Sukma district police said. Three of four Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel killed in the firing hail from Bihar, and one from

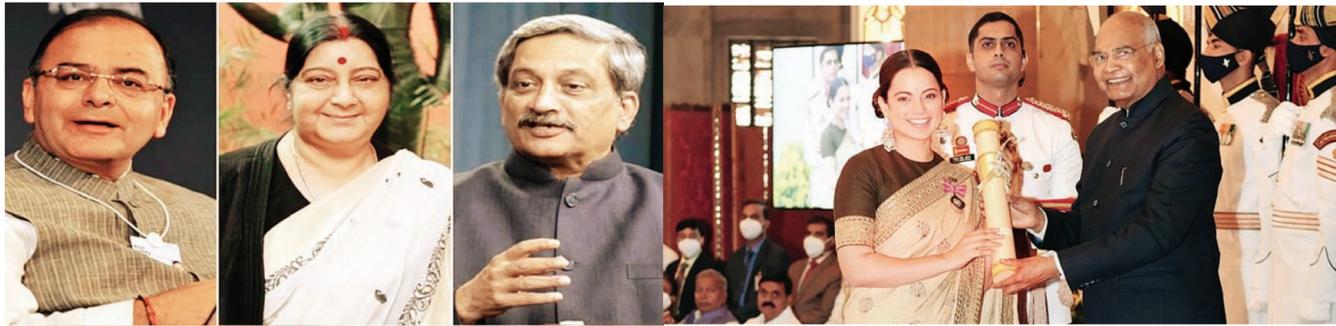


West Bengal. They have been identified as Dhanji, Rajib Mondal, Rajmani Yadav and Dharmendra Kumar. "Regret to inform that in a fratricide case CT/GD F.No. 1100110058 Ritesh Ranjan has opened fire on Company personnel in C/50 Lingalipalli under PS Maraiguda in early hours at about 3.15 A.M and in the incident 07 personnel were injured and immediately rushed to Bhadrachalam area hospital for first aid," the CRPF said in a statement. Sources told IANS that a team of senior CRPF officials, Inspector General (IG) Bastar

along with Sukma district collector have reached the spot and further investigation was underway. The incident occurred around 3.30 a.m. at a camp of CRPF's 50th battalion deployed in Lingampalli village of Sukma, around 400 km from the state capital Raipur. Meanwhile, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has expressed grief over the unfortunate incident. He (Baghel) has asked the police officers to take all necessary measures to ensure that such incidents do not recur, the chief minister's office said in a statement.



# PADMA AWARDS PRESENTED TO PT CHHANNULAL MISHRA, SUSHMA SWARAJ, KANGANA



Team Absolute | New Delhi

President Ram Nath Kovind on Monday presented four Padma Vibhushans, including to classical singer Pandit Chhannulal Mishra, eight Padma Bhushans, and 61 Padma Shri awards for 2020.

The awards were presented at the Civil Investiture Ceremony-I held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, a communique said.

Among the dignitaries present on the occasion were Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Apart from Mishra, Padma Vibhushan awards were presented posthumously to former Union Ministers George Fernandes, Arun Jaitley, and Sushma Swaraj.

The Padma Bhushan awardees included Bangladeshi diplomat Syed Muazzem Ali (posthumous), spiritual leader Mumtaz Ali, architect Balkrishna Doshi, former Nagaland Chief Minister and Goa Governor S.C. Jamir, environmental activist Dr Anil Prakash Joshi, former civil servant Neelakanta Ramakrishna Madhava Menon, entrepreneur Indian American Dr Jagadish

N. Sheth, and sportsperson P.V. Sindhu.

The Padma Shri awardees were: Dance exponent Shashadhar Acharya (art), plastic surgeon Dr Yogi Aeron (medicine), Surya Foundation Chairperson Jaiprakash Agrawal (trade and industry), educationist Kazi Masum Akhtar (literature and education), Air Marshal Padma Bandopadhyay (retired), 'One Rupee Doctor' Dr Sushovan Banerjee, Santhali author and adivasi researcher Dr Damayanti Beshra (literature and education), Himmataram Bhambhu (social work), Gandhian and social worker Gafurbhai M. Bilakhia (trade and industry); Sufi singer Madan Singh Chauhan (art), Kathak dancer Dr Purushottam Dadheech (art), Sri Lankan linguist, Prof Indra Dassanayake (posthumous) (literature and art), former football team captain, Oinam Bembem Devi (sports), Brazilian Lia Diskin (social work); NIMHANS, Bengaluru, Director Prof B. Nanjundiah Gandagdar (medicine), Dr Raman Gangakhedkar (science and engineering), Bharat Goenka (trade and industry), and Harekala Hajabba (social work). The Padma Shri awardees also included Sadri folk dancer Madhu Mansuri Hasmukh (art), historian Dr

Meenakshi Jain (literature and education), litterateur Dr Shanti Jain (art), disability activist Bimal Kumar Jain (social work), educationist Sudhir Kumar Jain (science and engineering), one of the oldest Sanskrit dailies editor, Vidushi K.S. Jayalakshmi (for literature and education - journalism), editor, printer of one of the oldest Sanskrit dailies, K.V. Sampathkumar (posthumous) (literature and education - journalism), actor Sarita Joshi (art), Dr Ravi Kannan R (medicine), singer Adnan Sami (art), Indian-American economist Sriprakash Kothari (literature and education), botanist Kattungal Subramaniam Manilal (science and engineering), Beenapani Mohanty (arts), Dr Arunoday Mondal (medicine), library movement activist Sathyanarayanan Mundayar (social work), terracotta sculptor, V.K. Munusamy (art), Hindi language scholar N. Chandrasekharan Nair (arts) and oldest working journalist from Mizoram Lalbiakhang Pachau (literature and education - journalism).

The President also awarded Padma Shri to puppetry artists M. Pankajashkhi (arts), Prof Jogendra Nath Phukan (for literature and education), scientists Prof T. Pradeep

(science and engineering), Radhamohan (posthumous) (agriculture), farming activists Kumari Sabarmatee (agriculture), Olympian Taarundeep Rai (sports), S. Ramakrishnan (social work), actor Kangana Ranaut (art), hockey captain Rani (sports), artist Yadla Gopal Rao (for art), educationist Shahabuddin Rathod (literature and education), farming innovator Chinthala Venkat Reddy (agriculture), fish farmer Bata Krishna Sahoo (animal husbandry), teacher Trinity Saioo (agriculture), philanthropist Vijay Sankeshwar (trade and industry), and 'Elephant Man of India' Dr Kushal Konwar Sarma (medicine).

Other recipients are women's rights activist Mehboob Gous Sayed alias Sayedbhaji (social work), artist Shyam Sunder Sharma (art), ENT surgeon Dr Sandra Desa Souza (medicine), Nadhaswaram exponent Kaleeshabu Mahaboob (for arts), Nadhaswaram expert Sheikh Mahaboob Subhani (art), literary activist Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi (literature and education), founder of Gandhi Ashram at Bali, Agus Indra Udayana (social work), and activist Sundaram Verma (social work).

## IMD forecasts heavy rainfall in southern states



Team Absolute | New Delhi

A cyclonic circulation over Bay of Bengal that is likely to turn into a low pressure area and further turn into a Depression is set to bring in heavy spells of rain over the rain-battered Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Kerala during next five days, India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Monday.

Isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely over Tamil Nadu on Tuesday and heavy to very heavy rain at few places with isolated extremely heavy rainfall are very likely on November 10 and 11. Heavy to very heavy rain with extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places are also likely over south Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the same period.

Under its influence, widespread light to moderate rainfall is very likely over Kerala, south Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu during next five days.

Squally weather (speed reaching 40-50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph) over southwest & adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal and along and off south Andhra Pradesh-Tamil Nadu coasts and Gulf of Mannar during next four days, the IMD forecast said, adding, fishermen are advised not to venture into these areas.

Meanwhile, the Depression over east-central Arabian Sea moved west-northwestwards with a speed of 8 kmph lay centred at 8.30 a.m. of Monday about 840 kms west-southwest of Mumbai (Maharashtra) & 800 kms west-southwest of Panjim (Goa).

Meanwhile, Heavy rains continued to lash Puducherry on Monday under the influence of cyclonic circulation in the Bay of Bengal, and the Union Territory government has declared a holiday for schools and colleges on Tuesday also. Several homes were destroyed in the rains and water logging and the opposition leader, R. Siva demanded the government to sanction immediate relief to all those affected.

## SC ALLOWS OCI CANDIDATES TO APPEAR IN NEET COUNSELLING FOR UG, PG

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday allowed all eligible Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) candidates to participate in general category NEET counselling for medical courses, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

A bench of Justices S.A. Nazeer and Krishna Murari, in its order, said: "The applicants and all other eligible candidates who are similarly situated are permitted to appear in the counselling in the general on par with Indian Citizens to pursue MBBS/BDS courses and other undergraduate/postgraduate courses in approved/recognised Medical/Dental & other Colleges/Institutes."

The bench told Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati that the National Testing Agency and the authorities associated with counselling are required to implement its order. The top court told the Centre's counsel if the notification were to be issued 8 or 9 months ago, then it would not have passed the order.

## Chhath: Experts urge people to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Health experts on Monday urged people to follow all the Covid-appropriate behaviours during 'Chhath', saying that though the contagion is ebbing, it is not over yet.

The advice comes at a time when the authorities are busy with last-minute preparations with the commencement of the four-day festival on Monday.

N.K. Arora, a key member of India's Covid-19 task force, said the pandemic is not over, as some states still have a high percentage of active cases. People need to adopt the Covid-appropriate behaviours during the Chhath festival, he suggested.

Arora insisted that those who have taken the first/second dose of vaccine should also follow all the Covid related protocols.

Incorporate the habit of maintaining the prescribed distance, use masks and wash hands regularly to



keep the environment safe from Covid infection, Arora suggested.

"The country has achieved a significant milestone of 100 crore vaccinations in less than 10 months. The vaccine self-sufficiency has helped us most in reaching this stage. As we are a vaccine manufacturing nation, we have been able to provide the vaccines to the larger population in far-flung areas." The strategy of the

government and the hard work of healthcare staff can only fetch the desired result if we follow the Covid appropriate behaviours in the coming few months," said Arora, who is also the President of AIIMS Patna and Deoghar. Surekha Kishore, Executive Director, AIIMS Gorakhpur, said that the decreasing trends of daily caseload does not mean that the pandemic is over.

## Winter Session of Parliament to begin Nov 29, end on Dec 23

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Winter Session of the Parliament will commence from November 29 and will end on December 23, the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) meeting, chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, decided on Monday.

Like previous session, the sitting of both Houses - the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha - will be held simultaneously in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines and Members of the both Houses are expected to follow social distancing norms.

There would be about 20 sittings of each House and the government is likely to introduce Bills to facilitate privatisation of public sector banks which was announced



in the General Budget this year. This session will likely be stormy as the Opposition will corner the government on the issue of inflation, civilians' killing in Jammu and Kashmir and also the Lakhimpur Kheri incident. The farmers' agitation against

the three farm laws may also be raised. The proceedings of the Parliament's Monsoon Session was marred by the Opposition's ruckus on various issues including snooping by Pegasus, inflation, and farmers' protests.

## Man held for sexually abusing 3 infants in Gujarat

Gandhinagar | Agencies

A man has been arrested for sexually abusing three infants and killing one of them, the police said on Monday.

Acting on complaints lodged by the family members of a three-year-old and a five-year-old girl, Gandhinagar police formed 12 teams to nab the culprit.

Based on surveillance and CCTV footages from the surrounding areas, the police identified the suspect and nabbed him. The arrested person has been identified as Vijay Popatji Thakor, a resident of Rancharda village in Kalol.

During investigation, the accused broke down and confessed to have committed the crime. Thakor also told the police that he had killed one of the three victims and



threw her body near a canal. On reaching the said place, the police found the body and sent it for post-mortem. The post-mortem findings revealed that the accused had sexually abused her, damaged her private parts and then strangled the child to death.

## FOUR OF KERALA FAMILY DEAD; 3 FOUND WITH INJURIES, 1 HANGING

Thiruvananthapuram: In a suspected case of murder, three of a family near Kottarakara, about 70 km from here, was found murdered with multiple injuries and the person alleged to have carried out the gory act, was found hanging, according to authorities on Monday.

The victims were identified as Rajendra, who was found hanging, and his wife Anitha, their son Adithya and daughter Amritha.

A police team soon arrived and cordoned off the house and a team of forensic experts also have started their work.

The shocked neighbours of Rajendran, who was an auto driver, have said they did not have any knowledge if there were any issues in the family.

## Liquor ban in Bihar was imposed with Oppn's consent: Nitish

Patna | Agencies

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said on Monday that the liquor ban in the state was imposed in April 2016 with the consent of Opposition leaders, who are now politicising the issue.

"All the Opposition parties along with the MLCs had passed a resolution based on complaints lodged by women following which a large number of people quit drinking. Some are still addicted to liquor and stringent action will be taken against them," he told reporters after the weekly 'Janta Darbar'.

"Those who gave their consent to the move then are the ones doing politics over it now," the Chief Minister said.



"Further decisions would be taken during the assessment meeting on November 16. Efforts are on to create awareness against liquor and officials have been directed to take adequate measures in their respective jurisdictions," Nitish Kumar said.

"Strong action has been initiated against people involved in spurious liquor rackets," he added.

Meanwhile, Bihar police have arrested 195 persons, including Guddu Kumar who was involved in supplying spurious liquor in Gopalganj which claimed 10 lives. Around 15 others lost their eyesight in the incident. The sleuths of the special branch also seized Rs 7.5 lakh from his possession.

## Those who made you migrate, have themselves migrated now: Yogi

SHAMLI (UP) | Agencies

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited Kairana in Shamli district on Monday and assured the people that under his regime, those who had forced the people to migrate in 2016, have themselves migrated out of the state.

The Chief Minister laid the foundation stones of a Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) battalion camp, and also for other projects during his visit.

He met a group of people who had left Kairana in 2016 and later returned. This was his first visit to the town after becoming the Chief Minister in 2017.

"Between 2014 and 2016, several Hindu families in Kairana had migrated due to threats of extortion



from another community. However, in my regime, those who forced you to leave Kairana, have now left the place because they know that they will have to pay dearly for their misdeeds," he said.

The National Human Rights Commission had issued a notice to the then Uttar Pradesh government, led by Akhilesh Yadav, regarding the migration from Kairana. The exodus of Hindu families from Kairana was a big issue in the 2017 Assembly elections. The Chief Minister's meeting with these families ahead of the assembly elections scheduled early next year assumes political significance.

Yogi Adityanath also listed the various welfare schemes of the centre and state government that are designed to benefit the poor.

## Youth Cong protest on 5th anniversary of demonetisation

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Youth Congress on Monday protested outside the Reserve Bank of India in the national capital against the Union government's five-year-old move to demonetise higher denomination currency notes, saying the exercise has battered the economy.

Youth Congress chief Srinivas B.V. and other workers, who reached outside the RBI to stage demonstration, were stopped and detained at the Mandir Marg police station. Srinivas said:



"Demonetisation imposed by the Prime Minister five years ago slowed down the country's economy. The Prime Minister's decision of demonetisation proved to be a catastrophe rather than

a masterstroke. The claim of checking terrorism with demonetisation turned out to be a 'jumla'. Demonetisation pushed the country into recession." Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed to have eliminated fake currency notes just to justify his decision of demonetisation, the Youth Congress leader alleged.

"Demonetisation neither ended corruption, nor terrorism was contained. Demonetisation imposed by the Prime Minister has not been able to fulfil any of its targets," the Youth Congress leader claimed.



NAWAB MALIK ASKS IF SAMEER WANKHEDE'S 'SISTER-IN-LAW IS IN DRUGS BUSINESS'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Firing another missile, Nationalist Congress Party Minister Nawab Malik on Monday demanded to know whether Narcotics Control Bureau Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede's sister-in-law is in the drug business.

In a series of tweets along with 'proof', Malik said that one Harshada Dinanath Redkar is listed as 'respondent and advocate' in a 2008 case registered under the NDPS Act, in a Pune Court.

She is reportedly the sister of Marathi actress Kranti Dinanath Redkar, the second wife of Wankhede.

"Sameer Dawood Wankhede, is your sister-in-law Harshada Dinanath Redkar involved in the drug business? You must answer because her case is pending before the Pune Court. Here is the proof," Malik asked pointedly.

However, Wankhede brushed aside the latest allegations saying he had not entered the government service when the case was lodged in January 2008, and besides, he had married Kranti Redkar in 2017 and was not involved in any way with the case. Posting screenshots of the e-court as the evidence, Malik asked Wankhede to explain who that woman is and what does the NCB officer have to do with her. Following Malik's allegation, social media posts



claimed that the woman -- said to be from Goregaon suburb in Mumbai -- was previously arrested in a case and jailed in Pune, again in 2008 in another case along with two other accused, and has now allegedly changed her identity.

The development came a day after Malik's sensational charge that an alleged 'quarter' in the NCB led by Wankhede had "trapped and abducted" Aryan Khan for ransom, and they are

part of a 'private army' engaged in luring high-profile people and extorting money from them. In a related development, Wankhede's father Dnyande Wankhede has filed a defamation case against Malik in the Bombay High Court, seeking permanent orders to debar the NCP leader, his party members and others from targeting or tarnishing the (Wankhede) family's reputation in any manner.

Yes, I was invited for cruiser party: Aslam Shaikh

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Confirming the revelations by Nationalist Congress Party Minister Nawab Malik, his Congress colleague and Mumbai Guardian Minister Aslam Shaikh on Monday said he was also invited for the Cordelia Cruise party which was busted on October 2 by the Narcotics Control Bureau Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede.

"One Kashif Khan had invited me to the party... I don't know him and as far as I know we never spoke on the phone. That invite was like many others I get daily... Since I had no plan to go, I did not inquire further and the matter ended there," Shaikh said.

Presently, two agencies NCB and Mumbai Police are currently probing the entire issue and the truth would come out soon, the minister told mediapersons.

However, Shaikh said that the manner in which Malik has been making revelations almost daily, it is now clear that there's a systematic conspiracy to "malign the Maha Vikas Aghadi" government in Maharashtra.

On the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party's allegations, Shaikh pointed out that they habitually hurl unsubstantiated charges at their rivals to derive political mileage.

"What happened during the death of Sushant Singh Rajput? The BJP went all out to target the MVA government, ministers and leaders, till the Bihar elections (October - November 2020). After the elections were over, even the Rajput controversy abruptly ended and nobody talked about it..." Shaikh pointed out. He also targeted some BJP leaders and certain news outlets of making direct accusations of murder against MVA leaders and ministers, even though the probe agencies have yet to give their conclusion whether it was suicide or homicide.

"Even now, the whole national and even international



media is focussing on this case, but nobody is talking about the huge drugs consignment of over Rs 20,000-crore seized from a container at Mundra Port in Gujarat," said Shaikh sharply.

The Congress minister's statements came a day after Malik revealed that the cruise ship party organisers had invited Shaikh and other prominent or high-profile personalities as part of an alleged conspiracy by Wankhede's so-called 'private army' to "trap and extort crores of rupees" from them.

The NCP's National Spokesperson went on to say that an alleged 'quarter' in the NCB led by Wankhede along with some members of the 'private army' had "trapped and abducted" Aryan Khan for collecting a big ransom, and said more facts will emerge from the investigations.

Wankhede defamation suit: Bombay HC asks Malik to file reply

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Monday directed Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik to file his reply in a Rs 1.25 crore defamation suit filed by Dnyande Wankhede, the father of Narcotics Control Bureau's Mumbai Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede.

Justice MJ Jamdar has now posted the matter for further hearing on interim relief to Wednesday (November 10) after Malik's lawyer Atul Damle declined to give an undertaking the minister would not post comments or address the media.

Contending that Malik was posting something almost every day, Wankhede's lawyer Arshad Shaikh, while stating a reply was necessary, sought interim relief whereby the minister would keep quiet on his client for the next few days.

Among other things, Wankhede has sought a permanent stay restraining Malik, his Nationalist Congress Party members and all others from publishing, writing, speaking to the media in any manner defamatory material pertaining to the Wankhede family.



He also sought deletion of articles, interviews, tweets, in electronic and social media against him and his family which are "torturous and defamatory in nature."

Wankhede also demanded Rs. 1.25 crore in damages from Malik for the "irreparable loss, damage, harm, prejudice to the name, character, reputation and societal image" of his family. The defamation suit came last week after Malik made a series of sensational exposes and allegations against Sameer Wankhede and his family members for the past over a month in the wake of alleged rave party raids aboard the Cordelia Cruise on

Jan Dhan accounts are also helping to curb crime : Report

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) has not only helped to broaden the scope of financial inclusion providing banking services to the remotest corner of the country, but it has also enabled an environment that has reduced the incidence of crime.

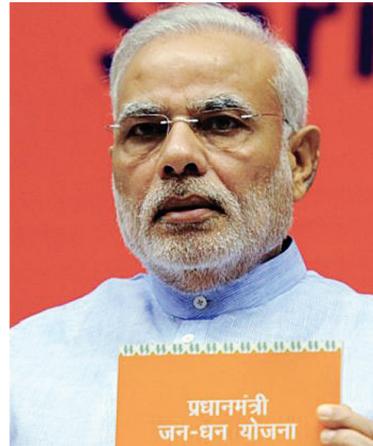
According to an SBI Ecowrap report, states with higher PMJDY accounts balances have seen a perceptible decline in crime.

"We also observed that there is both statistically significant and economically meaningful drop in consumption of intoxicants such as alcohol and tobacco products in states where more PMJDY accounts are opened," the report said.

In India, over the years crimes have been increasing. In 2020, a total of 66 lakh cognizable crimes comprising 42.5 lakh IPC crimes and 23.4 Special & Local Laws (SLL) crimes were registered, with an increase of 30 per cent in registration of cases over 2018.

Crime rate registered per lakh population has increased marginally from 383.5 in 2018 (385.5 in 2019) to 487.8 in 2020. Crimes against women and children have increased by 7.3 per cent in 2018 and 4.5 per cent in 2019, however, there is a decline of 8.3 per cent in 2020.

To see the impact of Jan Dhan accounts on



crimes, SBI Ecowrap report looked at the state wise data accounts level data of PMJDY both a No of accounts' and 'Balance' and mapped with the state a number of total crimes' from 2016 to 2020. As crime data is available till 2020, it took

into account 37 states and UTs and 5-years data (2016-2020) to build a panel data model. The estimated results indicate that with the rise in the number of PMJDY accounts and balance in these accounts leads to a significant fall in crime.

"This could be because of Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) Trinity which has helped in better channelising the government subsidies and helped in curbing the unproductive expenditure such as alcohol and tobacco expenses in rural areas," the report said.

It also said that India has stolen a march in financial inclusion with the initiation of PMJDY accounts since 2014, enabled by a robust digital infrastructure and also careful recalibration of bank branches and thereby using the BC (banking correspondent) model judiciously for furthering financial inclusion.

Such financial inclusion has also been enabled by use of digital payments as between 2015 and 2020, mobile and internet banking transactions per 1,000 adults have increased to 13,615 in 2019 from 183 in 2015. The number of bank branches per 1,00,000 adults rose to 14.7 in 2020 from 13.6 in 2015, which is higher than Germany, China and South Africa, SBI Ecowrap said.

Freight rates perk up some more, but diesel singes margins

Team Absolute | Mumbai

With the monsoon withdrawing, consumption recovering, and infrastructure activity picking up, freight rates saw a sequential recovery in October. However, with diesel prices ruling high after a scorching run-up, the overall profitability of transporters remains below levels seen in the closing quarter of last fiscal, ratings agency CRISIL has said in a report.

CRISIFrex or pan-India CRISIL freight index captures changes in freight rates on a sequential basis. What makes it first-of-its-kind in India is that it also tracks the free cash flows, or FCF (pre-EMI) of transporters on an ongoing basis. Higher FCF would typically lead to higher demand for commercial vehicles.

Over the past 2-3 years, the domestic road freight transportation industry ran into many speed-breakers. The axle load norms caused a discernible drop in fleet utilisation levels in fiscal 2019, while the BS-VI norms led to a 10-15 per cent increase in the prices of new trucks in fiscal 2020. Then came the Covid-19 pandemic and the sharp economic contraction.

In the first quarter of fiscal 2021, fleet utilisation rates plunged with most consumption and demand centres locked down. A sequential recovery was visible with a gradual reopening of the



economy over the next three quarters. Amid all this, freight demand recovery was sporadic across segments; FMCG/FM CD recovered faster than discretionary segments such as readymade garments/textiles, and other consumer durables. Even within states, recovery varied based on the pandemic caseload and unlocking levels, the report said: In such scenarios, transporters, logistics service providers, original equipment manufacturers and financiers need to know the predicament of freight use, taxonomised by sectors, routes, applications and platforms.

CRISIL, which has been tracking freight rates and operator cash flows (pre-EMI) across 32 key routes in India on a bi-monthly basis since October 2020, will now deliver the data signals every month. FreightSigns finds consumer essen-

tials such as agri-products and FMCG/FMCD are the most resilient and stable segments driving the trucking industry, even in the current context. In fact, many large fleet operators (35+ tonne GVW) have shifted focus from bulk commodities to lighter applications in the past 2 years. Two, the industry is showing signs of improvement in terms of the freight in dex and EMI serviceability across route-commodity combinations despite a jump in diesel prices. That's because freight rates increased relatively higher compared with the increase in diesel prices over June-October 2021.

Furthermore, utilisation in terms of the average monthly running or the number of trips done has also improved across most of the 159 route-commodity combinations tracked by CRISIL. However, despite improvement in the index in October 2021 to 122 (similar to February 2021 levels), the FCF still continues to be at a level (17 per cent) comparable with October 2020. This is one of the key reasons that financiers are still not comfortable in funding small fleet operators.

By the third quarter of fiscal 2021, freight rates for cement, steel and auto-carriers had materially improved. The first two segments benefited from the government's infra push, while increase in demand for passenger vehicles fuelled by preference for personal mobility boosted auto-carriers.

Fresh threat: Mumbai Police beef up security at Mukesh Ambani's home

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid a potential fresh threat, the Mumbai Police on Monday beefed up security for the family of industrialist Mukesh Ambani at his residence Antilia in south Mumbai, official sources said.

The move came after a taxi driver alerted the Mumbai Police after overhearing two suspicious persons who were reportedly collecting certain information on Antilia.

The police have detained the taxi driver to record his statement, prepare a sketch of the two 'mysterious' persons, and scouring the CCTV footage of the route on which they commuted.

Road blocks have been erected at various strategic locations in Mumbai to help



track the two unknown persons, who were reportedly carrying a couple of bags, as per the taxi driver's statement, though the police declined to share further details. Simultaneously, security has been further tightened with a dog squad, a Rapid Action Force team and more personnel outside Antilia, the residence of the Reliance Industries Ltd Chairman and his family.

Official sources hinted that after making preliminary enquiries, Mumbai Police are likely to issue a formal statement in the sensitive matter. Antilia was previously targeted on February 25 when an abandoned SUV with 20 gelatin sticks and a threat note was found near the building, sending the police into a tizzy besides kicking off a national uproar sparking global concerns.

Strict Covid-19 protocols in place for U-16 boys' hockey tournament in Pune

Team Absolute | Pune

Temperature checks, compulsory hand sanitizer channels at hostels, pitch-side and dining areas, RTPCR tests, and quarantine cells -- these are some of the measures being taken by the organisers of the 5th SNBP All-India Hockey Tournament (Boys' Under-16), to be played here from Tuesday.

In all 24 teams will feature in the fifth edition of the event -- the only prize-money hockey tournament conducted for Under-16s in the country. The tournament, recognised by Hockey India, will be held at the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex, Mhalunge-Balewadi, from Nov 9-15.

With this being the first invitational tournament for the under-16 age group after the Covid-19 relaxation in the state, the S.E. Society's SNBP Group of Institutes, the organisers, have made arrangements according to the SOPs issued by Hockey India and the guidelines set by the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC).

"We have received permission and Covid-19 guidelines from the Pune Municipal Corporation as well as Hockey India and accordingly we are going to follow all protocols and will be thoroughly equipped with the same," Firoz Shaikh, Tournament Convenor, told IANS.

The organisers have tied up with a local hospital to main-



tain both on and off-the-field precautionary measures. The participants will be checked for temperature and, likewise, put through a compulsory hand sanitizer channel set up at hostels, pitch side, and at the dining area. They have also put up flex everywhere in the hostel campus and ground area.

The organisers have also tied up with a diagnostic lab to conduct RTPCR tests and have also kept two rooms reserved as quarantine cells.

"It is very unfortunate that the pandemic was a setback to one and all. Sports generally across the world, including

India, took a big hit. We are glad that we are back to do our bit for the national sport, which we are committed to and will continue as our passion," said Dr. Vrishali Bhosale, Organising Chairman & President of SNBP Group.

Despite spending money on fulfilling the SOPs and Covid-19 protocol, the organisers have also enhanced the total prize fund this year and the winning team will take home a cheque of Rs 1 lakh.

The total prize fund of the event, which also includes a state-level women's hockey tournament, will be Rs 2.80 lakh -- an increase of Rs 1.35 over the previous edition. On the field, the team to watch will be the Odisha Naval Tata Hockey, who recently finished runners-up at the 1st Hockey India Sub Junior Men Academy National Championship 2021 at Bhopal. Amritsar-based Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), a semifinalist at Bhopal and a runner-up of the 4th SNBP tournament, will also be seen in action. The 24 teams, drawn from 13 states including Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Kerala, and Orissa, have been divided into eight groups, with each group comprising three teams that will play on a round-robin basis. The group topper from each group will qualify for the knockout quarter-finals. The semifinals will be held on November 14 and the final on the next day.



EDITOR'S SPECS

J&K: Back on tourism

*Jammu and Kashmir is all set to become tourism capital of India as the denizens of the newly carved out Union Territory are determined to foil the nefarious designs of militants to disrupt the process of peace, prosperity and development in the region. The Pakistan sponsored ultras last month made a desperate attempt to push back Kashmir into uncertainty and chaos by turning the gun towards members of minority communities, including the non-local labourers. The militants killed eleven civilians within a few days and made an attempt to drive out minorities and tourists from Kashmir. But the counter offensive launched by the security forces left 15 militants dead and restored the sense of security within a few days. The unfortunate civilian killings in Kashmir led to some sort of panic in the initial days and there were apprehensions that the tourism industry may take a hit, but situation returned to normal within a few days. Hotel bookings witnessed a few cancellations but the buzz came back within no time. At present Kashmir is gearing up for winter tourism, famous resorts, Gulmarg in North Kashmir and Pahalgam in South Kashmir are packed with tourists and more are likely to arrive in the coming months to enjoy the winter in the Valley. People associated with the tourism industry in Kashmir are busy making future plans as they have sniffed that the Valley is set to witness bumper tourism season in the winter. Many hotels in Kashmir are full and the advance bookings are an indication that many tourists have planned to celebrate Christmas and New Year in Kashmir. In 2020, the early snowfall in Kashmir had led to a high influx of tourists into the Valley. Thousands of visitors from different parts of the country had visited Gulmarg to celebrate natural Christmas amidst snowfall. This year also upper reaches of the Valley have received early snowfall and it has multiplied the hotel bookings.*

The 'Good', the 'Bad' and the 'Deobandi' Taliban

Asad Mirza

While an effort to classify the Taliban into good and bad is rather easy, the underlying reasons to classify them as Deobandi becomes a little tough and illogical.

The seizure of Afghan capital, Kabul by the Taliban and their declaration to declare Afghanistan an Islamic Emirate has again raised the spectre of The Good, The Bad and The Deobandi Taliban.

**The Good and Bad Taliban**  
I believe the distinction between the good and the bad Taliban, was first made by Shah Mahmood Qureshi during his first tenure as the Pakistani Foreign Minister from 2008-2011. Interpreting his statement led to the fact that Pakistan believed that the Taliban aligned to Pakistan were the good Taliban and those opposed to its policies and intervention in Afghanistan are bad Taliban.

The western media took the categorisation a step forward and even American politicians like Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton used the phrase to divide the Taliban into two different categories.

While delving into the psyche of the 'good' and the 'bad' Taliban let's be clear that the Taliban is not a monolithic organisation, it has various factions and tribal and clannish rivalries. In the background of the traditional Afghan society we have to understand that the smallest functioning unit is the village and the local village headman or the local Imam holds sway over the vast multitude of uneducated Afghans, thus the message which they get from the local leader is the final order for them, added to their loyalty to the local militia or the Taliban unit. In addition, the local commanders wield a lot of clout and power. Moreover, when the uneducated rural folks are handed the latest automatic weapons, they become another power unit of their own, with no link to the tag with which they were attached.

More recently, before the American withdrawal from Afghanistan, the chief of the US Central Command General Kenneth F. McKenzie called the Taliban "very pragmatic and very business like". This sounded more like 'good' Taliban, as they were eager to gain legitimacy before the US withdrawal and were putting out their best behaviour.

This shift is happening in the Taliban ranks too, and as per the rules set by the west and Pakistan, the factions who align with them will be the 'good' Taliban. And those who are still committed to the old or stubborn Taliban are termed as 'bad' Taliban.

**The Deobandi Taliban**  
But perhaps the most damaging sobriquet



attached to Taliban is describing them as Deobandi. It shows that the people who describe them so have no clue about the great Indian seminary of Darul Uloom, Deoband and the role, which it played in tempering the Muslims sentiments on secular lines in addition to its immense contributions to the freedom struggle of India.

Barbara Daly Metcalf, an expert on the history of South Asia, especially the colonial period and the history of the Muslim population of India and Pakistan, in her book "Islamic Revival in British India, Deoband 1860-1900" (February 2002) describes Deoband at the turn of the millennium emerging into public consciousness because of the association of the leadership of the Afghan Taliban regime with the Deobandi Ulema of Pakistan.

She is of the view that many of the Taliban, whose very name described them as madrasa 'students', had studied in Deobandi seminaries in the Pakistan frontier provinces when, from the 1980s on, millions of Afghans had settled as refugees in that area. And based on this fact collectively calling all Taliban as Deobandi Taliban and casting aspersions on the Indian Deoband seminary is complete ignorance of Islam in the sub-continent.

The surge in the number of madrasas coincided with the influx of some three million Afghan refugees, for whose boys these madrasas provided the only available education. One school in particular, the Madrasa Haqqaniya, in Akora Khatak near Peshawar, trained many of the top Taliban leaders. These sometime students were shaped by

many of the amended Deobandi reformist causes, all of which were further encouraged with Wahabi interpretation by Arab volunteers in Afghanistan.

These causes included rigorous concern with fulfilling rituals related to daily prayers and reciting the Holy Quran; opposition to custom laden ceremonies such as weddings and pilgrimage to shrines, along with practices associated with the Barelvi and Shi'a minority; and a focus on seclusion of women as a central symbol of a morally ordered society. Theirs was, according to political analyst Ahmed Rashid, 'an extreme form of Deobandism', which was being preached by Pakistani Islamic parties in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan.

None of the Deobandi movements has a theoretical stance in relation to political life. They either expediently embrace the political culture of their time and place, or withdraw from politics completely. As happened in India after independence in 1947, when the leaders of Darul Uloom withdrew from the political scene completely and confined them to Deoband. Barbara further asserts that the Deobandi madrasas on the Pakistani frontier closed periodically to allow their students to support Taliban efforts. But the historical pattern launched by the Deobandi Ulema, had treated political life on a primarily secular basis, typically, de facto if not de jure, identifying religion with the private sphere, and in that sphere fostering Islamic teachings and interpretations that have proven widely influential.

British historian and academic specialising on the history of South Asia and Islam, Francis Robinson, in an essay on the first edition of Barbara's book, described the Deobandi movement as "the most constructive and most important Islamic movement of the (19th) century".

He further says that aside from Deoband's enduring influence, it exemplifies a pattern represented in general terms in a range of Islamic movements outside South Asia as well-of cultural renewal on the one hand and political adaptability on the other.

We also need to be aware of the fact that the Pakistani madrasas, which were described as Deobandi, essentially followed the curriculum prescribed by the Indian Darul Uloom. Further some of the founders of these madrasas might have studied at the Darul Uloom, but they had no umbilical link with their alma mater, and just based on the fact that they followed a particular syllabus they were described as Deobandi, though in fact the psyche and practice of their leaders were completely different from the teachings of the Deobandi. Thus, it would be a misnomer to call the Taliban as 'Deobandi' Taliban.

*(Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. He writes on Muslims, educational, international affairs, inter-faith and current affairs. Views expressed are personal)*

international

APEC region's economy to grow by 6% in 2021

Washington | Agencies

The economy of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region is expected to grow by 6 per cent in 2021 and will settle at 4.9 per cent in 2022 in anticipation of the unwinding of fiscal and monetary support measures, a new report on economic trends revealed on Tuesday.

According to the latest APEC Regional Trends Analysis (ARTA), the Asia-Pacific expanded by 8 per cent during the first half of 2021, following a 3.7 per cent contraction in the first half of 2020. However, growth among member economies continues to diverge and uncertainties remain substantial, Xinhua news agency reported on Monday.

Growth in the volume and value of merchandise trade accelerated by double-digits in the first half of this year thanks to the combined effect of a low comparison point following a substantial economic contraction a year ago and a rebound in economic activity. Trade in Covid-19-associated goods such as pharmaceuticals, telecommunications equipment and computers continued to be strong.

However, the analysis also saw a steep decline in greenfield investments to the APEC region, which plunged to the lowest level in almost 20 years. This is particularly concerning given the crucial role they play in boosting infrastructure development and productivity as well as improving domestic technology and skills.

Another concerning development is the rising inflation. The region recorded a higher inflation rate of 2.6 per cent in the first nine months of 2021, after



averaging 1.5 per cent in 2020. The analysis points out the risk of an upward trend in inflation to economic recovery if left unaddressed. "APEC, along with the global economy, is in uncharted territory, where recovery is underway even amid an ongoing pandemic," said Denis Hew, Director of the APEC Policy Support Unit, which produced the report. "There are many hard-earned lessons from the pandemic, central to which is that economic, trade and health policies are intertwined - and that good policies matter." "Unequal access to vaccines needs to be addressed urgently to avoid a two-track recovery," Hew added. "APEC economies should also think ahead toward facilitating a gradual and steady economic reopening to revive viable sectors such as trav-

el and tourism, reinvigorate manufacturing industries and herald the emergence of new jobs, markets and businesses that could prove more sustainable as well as profitable." The report also addressed the existential threat of climate change for the region and humanity as a whole, as it will affect APEC economies' financial systems, supply chains and consumer behaviour. "Addressing climate change is the realm not only of scientists, but of policymakers who can change the incentive structures and the rules," said Emmanuel San Andres, an analyst at the APEC Policy Support Unit who co-wrote the report. "Climate change disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations, including the poor and indigenous peoples, even as they contribute the least to it."

S African oppn says won't form coalitions with ruling party

Johannesburg | Agencies

South Africa's opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) said that it will not form coalitions with the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party to govern over a quarter of municipalities across the country.

DA will not enter into any coalition agreement with the ANC and the third largest party Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), party leader John Steenhuisen virtually briefed media after the country's local government elections.

His remarks came in response to the possibility of forming coalitions with other political parties in a total of 66 municipalities where no party achieved a majority in November 1 elections, reports Xinhua news agency.

Steenhuisen said his party has reached out to smaller parties including ActionSA, the Freedom Front Plus, the ACDP and several others and



"put draft coalition agreements on the table".

According to the Independent Electoral

Commission, the ANC gained over 46 per cent of the vote, followed by DA with about 21.8 per cent.

Global campaign to change trajectory of fashion industry

Glasgow | Agencies

Earthday.org on Monday formally launched its new campaign

"Fashion for the Earth" dedicated to changing the trajectory of the fashion industry and educating the public on sustainable fashion.

Sustainable fashion refers to a clothing supply chain that is ecologically and socially responsible. It says the topic of sustainable fashion has been noticeably absent from the ongoing the UN climate action discussions (COP26), even though the fashion industry is responsible for 10 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions. Corporations, governments as well as every day individuals around the world have a role to play in

the solution. From making personal changes to advocating for and legislating better, more sustainable fashion practices, to educating others about the issue, there must be commitments at all levels. Earth Day, which began in 1970 as a grassroots movement, led to the passage of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act and the Endangered Species Act. Today, EARTHDAY.ORG will act to avert the impact of an industry that squanders the earth's finite resources, destroys soil, contaminates fresh water with hazardous chemicals, and pollutes the atmosphere with carbon and the oceans with microplastics. All for the sake of profits and with little mind to the

consequences, the fast fashion industry takes a devastating toll on the labour force and the natural world.

To address the psychology and the pattern of overconsumption of clothing requires education. The new Fashion for the Earth website contains numerous educational resources and materials, including a fashion footprint calculator, sustainable fashion quiz, and additional information on the environmental impact of the fashion industry. In the coming months, Earthday.org will host additional Earth Day Live digital events to highlight both fashion designers as well as industry insiders using their influence to change standards in materials and manufacturing.

Guterres strongly condemns assassination attempt against Iraqi PM

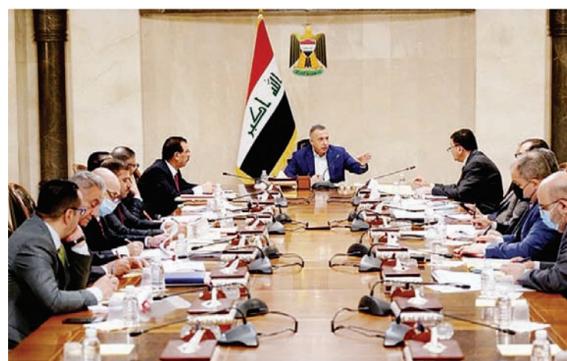
United Nations | Agencies

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has strongly condemned the foiled assassination attempt against Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi.

Through a statement attributable to his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric, the UN chief called for the perpetrators of this crime to be held accountable, and urged Iraqis to exercise utmost restraint and reject violence and attempts to destabilise Iraq, reports Xinhua news agency.

The Secretary-General "urges all political actors to uphold the constitutional order and resolve differences through peaceful and inclusive dialogue", the statement added.

Al-Kadhimi escaped the attempt on his life after an explosive-laden drone struck his residence in Baghdad's heavily-fortified Green



Zone early Sunday morning.

According to reports, the exploding drone caused damage to the residence and several of the Prime Minister's security guards were

injured in the attack.

In his latest statement, Kadhimi said that he has identified the perpetrators and "we will pursue those who committed the crime. We know them

well, and we will reveal their identities". These perpetrators are the same who killed Nibras Farman, an Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) officer, and they will be brought to justice, the Prime Minister said late Sunday without giving further details.

The assassination attempt came amid protests by followers of political parties rejecting October's election results. On November 5, the protests escalated into a clash with the security forces at the entrances of the Green Zone, which led to the killing of two protesters and the wounding of dozens of security members and protesters. In the Parliamentary elections on October 10, the Sadrist Movement, led by prominent Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, took the lead with more than 70 seats, while the al-Fatah (Conquest) Coalition garnered 17 seats compared with 47 in the 2018 polls.



# ADEQUATE AVAILABILITY OF FERTILIZERS IN THE STATE: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that there is sufficient availability of Urea, DAP, NPK and single super phosphate fertilizer in the state. Rakes are also being sent continuously by the Government of India. Fertilizer will be made available to all the farmers as per the requirement. Chouhan said that it should be ensured that maximum number of PEX and private retailer points remain operational in the district. It should be ensured that fertilizers are delivered every month at the retailer points as per the sale of the previous year. Fertilizers should be provided to farmers through societies, so that the double lock of Market does not get crowded. All sale should be made through POS. Chief Minister was reviewing the fertilizer arrangement in the state for Rabi 2021-22 in Mantralaya. Agriculture Minister Kamal Patel virtually attended the meeting. Chouhan said that fertilizers



should not be sold to non-farmers and it is necessary to control black marketing. NSA will be imposed and strictest action will be taken against the person found indulging in activities like black marketing. Chouhan

said that it is necessary to promote NPK and SSP. The information related to this should be disseminated among the farmers at the local level through agricultural scientists and Krishi Vigyan Kendras. For this,

locally active farmers' WhatsApp groups, other social media and electronic media should be used.

Chouhan expressed displeasure over the mismanagement in distribution of fertilizers in Damoh, Chhatarpur, Guna, Bina. Chief Minister said that we are in constant touch with the Centre. The state is getting enough rakes of fertilizers.

Chouhan said that the district collectors should be in live contact with the farmers at every level and assure them that there is no shortage of manure. Manure will be available to everyone as per requirement. Chief Minister Chouhan also took information from the collectors of Sagar, Shivpuri and Agar-Malwa regarding the availability and distribution system of fertilizers.

It was informed in the meeting that, Urea, DAP, NPK and SSP have been made available as per the average requirement of the month of November. NPK and SSP have recorded more sale in October 2021 as compared to October 2020.

# Bhopal Gas Tragedy Activist Abdul Jabbar, Awarded Padma Shri Posthumously

The Bhopal gas tragedy had claimed the lives of more than 15,000 people after the deadly methyl iso cyanate (MIC) gas leaked from the Union Carbide India Limited pesticide plant on the intervening night of December 2 and 3, 1984.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Abdul Jabbar, a crusader for the Bhopal gas tragedy victims, has been conferred with Padma Shri posthumously. Jabbar waged a relentless war over three decades to help the victims of the Bhopal gas tragedy receive medical and economic rehabilitation to the scores of the victim.

Lovingly known as 'Jabbarbhai' among the locals, Jabbar lost most of his life in poverty with his wife and three young children in a one-room hut with a shared toilet until his death on November 14, 2019. He was offered help from many politicians, corporate friends, government, but he declined all of them to stay close to the victims and help them fight for justice. Jabbarbhai did everything from lodging complaints against crooked officials to arranging bed and medication and ensuring economic stability for the gas tragedy survivors.

Jabbar formed Bhopal Gas Peedith Mahila Udyog Sangathan (BGPMSU). An organization that helped the victims become econom-

ically self-reliant. The process to make them self-reliant includes imparting skills through whatever meagre resources were available in the organization. Once the beneficiaries were equipped with the skills, Jabbar helped pool in orders for tailoring, bag making and traditional unique Bhopali batua from big shop owners. Despite the meagre resources at hand, he never flinched from filing a judicial petition through public-spirited lawyers, seeking relief for the victims, medical care, more compensation, cleaning of toxic waste dumped in the premises of Union Carbide factory since the intervening night of December 2-3, 1984, leading street agitations, joining similar people's movements, helping riot victims, opposing demolition drives, planting samplings, protesting against the construction of buildings, hotels close to the lakes, as per reports in The Hindu. "I hope Bhopal, its people and others will never forget his work and contribution in rebuilding the life of gas victims," Jabbar's wife Saira Bano said.

# TIGER FOUND DEAD IN BANDHAVGARH

The carcass of the big cat, around four to five years old, was spotted by a patrol team of forest officials near Bamor village under Pataur core area of the reserve.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

A tiger was found dead in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) in Umaria district, an official said on Monday. The carcass of the big cat, around four to five years old, was spotted by a patrol team of forest officials near Bamor village under Pataur core area of the reserve.

Though the exact reason behind the tiger's death has not been ascertained yet, the officials in BTR suspected the reason to be a territorial fight with another tiger.

"During the probe by the dog squad, the evidence of presence of a tiger, a tigress and two cubs was found within 500 metres of the spot. Probably, there was a territorial fight between the big cats," Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve Deputy Director, Lavit Bharti, said. Bharti added that villagers of nearby

area have advised not to venture in the nearby forest area. "An alert has been issued and people have been advised to be careful while venturing out in the area to avoid any untoward incident," he said.

After an autopsy, the carcass was disposed of as per the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) guidelines and the viscera was sent to a laboratory for examination, the official added. As per the All-India Tiger

Estimated Report in 2018, Madhya Pradesh has a total of 526 tigers, highest in any state across the country.

The state also has a number of tiger reserves, including Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Pench, Satpura, and Panna. As per the report, more than 30 tigers moved out of the Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR) in recent years to find a new territory. Last week, a tiger named Heera was killed in PTR area in Santa district.

# Mahila Samanwaya Delegation met Chief Minister

Report presented on the status of domestic working women in Madhya Pradesh  
Pure worship material kit made by self-help group also presented

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A delegation of Mahila Samanwaya met Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at his residence on Monday and presented a report on the condition of domestic working women in Madhya Pradesh. The report shows women's education, their physical and mental health, diet, happiness, socio-economic status, role in decision making and their status in the family. The report will help in formulating new policies to improve the lives of domestic working women and their status in society. A copy of the study on the status of domestic working women in Madhya Pradesh completed under the guidance of Nivedita Sharma, survey coordinator of Drishti Stree Adhyayan Prabodhan Kendra, and "Study on Evil Custom Related to Women in Madhya Pradesh with Special Reference to Malwa Region" completed under the leadership of Project Director Manisha Kotheekar was presented to Chouhan. Mahila Samanwaya also presented Chouhan the pure worship material kits manufactured by the self-help group under the guidance of Swami Vivekanand University, Sagar and Shiksha Sanskriti Uththan Nyas, New Delhi. Quarterly



Fashion Designing Training Centre is run by Mahila Samanwaya for self-employment and self-reliance of women. In this, 110 women have set up their own enterprises after getting training. Along with this, the Self-Help Group is also active in the manufacture of bovine-derived materials. In the delegation Coordinator of Central India Province, Shashi Thakur, Central Region Coordinator Shobha Pathankar, All India Co-Coordinator Meenakshi Vishwe, Mahakaushal Region Coordinator Mamata Singh, Madhya Pradesh President of Bharatiya Stree Shakti Sangathan Kiran Sharma and Nivedita Sharma were present.

# CORRECTION FORTNIGHT FOR RECTIFICATION OF REVENUE RECORDS IN MP

Bhopal: On the initiative of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Correction Fortnight is being observed on priority basis in the state from November 1 to 15 to remove errors in the revenue records. The objective of this campaign is to make rectifications in the records with utmost seriousness in the entire state simultaneously to remove the problems faced by the general public off and on due to the variations in the revenue records. So far 33 lakh 6 thousand 664 records have been corrected for various types of errors in the fortnight. Due to the errors in the records, the land owners were not getting the benefits of various schemes of the government.

Revenue and Transport Minister Govind Singh Rajput said that there was no uniformity in the revenue records due to the use of local words.

# Man kills wife after she makes him wait for towel after bath

A 50-year-old man allegedly killed his wife on Saturday evening after she made him wait for a towel after his bath.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A 50-year-old man in Madhya Pradesh allegedly killed his wife in a fit of rage when she told him to wait for a towel he had asked for after taking bath, police said on Monday.

According to the police, the incident took place in Hiraspur village in Kiranpur police station limits of Balaghat district. The accused, Rajkumar Bahe, a daily wage employee of the forest department, asked his wife, 45-year-old Pushpa Bai, to give him a towel after tak-

ing a bath, Kiranpur police station's inspector Rajendra Kumar Baria said, quoting a complaint filed by her family members. His wife told him to wait for sometime as she was washing utensils.

This angered the man, who then repeatedly hit his wife's head with a shovel, and she died on the spot. The woman died on the spot, he said, adding that the accused also threatened his 23-year-old daughter when she tried to stop him. The body was handed over to the family members on Sunday after post-mortem. The accused was arrested on Sunday and a case was registered against him on charge of murder and other relevant provisions, the official said.

# CM PLANTS KARANJ SAPLING WITH ANKUR MITRAS IN SMART UDYAN



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a sapling of Karanj in Smart Udyan on Monday. On this occasion, Ankur Mitras of Bhopal, Sunil Dubey, Deepak Upadhyay and Deepchand accompanied him. Chief Minister Chouhan plants saplings every day in the order of his resolve. On the instructions of Chouhan, Ankur Abhiyan is being conducted by the state government with the aim of encouraging the general public to plant saplings. In Bhopal, Sunil Dubey, who is active in this campaign, is encouraging plantation at his level in Suruchi Nagar area, Deepak Upadhyay in BHEL area and Deepchand in Kokta Transport Nagar area. Karanja has important uses in medicine. Its species include karanj, katkaranj and chirbilva.

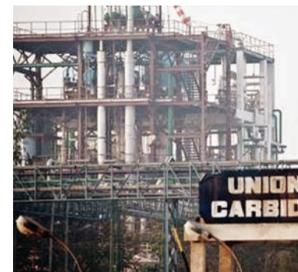
# Questions raised over MP govt's plan to build memorial for Bhopal gas tragedy

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A group of activists, which has launched a month-long campaign to highlight the grievances of the victims of the Bhopal gas tragedy, has raised questions over the state government's proposal to build a memorial at the site of the Union Carbide plant.

The Bhopal gas tragedy occurred in December 1984 at the Union Carbide India Limited's pesticide plant in Bhopal. It is considered among the world's worst industrial disasters.

The activists associated with different NGOs have termed the state government's proposal to build a memorial at the site of the plant as "a well planned cover-up" of Dow Chemical Company, which purchased Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) in 2001, 17 years after the disaster. "Why is the state government planning to put concrete on land contaminated with chemicals that



retain toxicity for over 100 years," an activist asked on Sunday.

Rashida Bee, the head of Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Stationery Karmchhari Sangathan, told IANS that since 1990, as many as 17 reports, including those prepared by the top research agencies of the Central government, have confirmed the presence of pesticides, heavy metals and poisonous chemicals

in high concentrations till 3 km away from the abandoned factory site.

"Instead of excavating and removing thousands of tonnes of hazardous waste that is the cause for the ongoing contamination of Bhopal's groundwater, the state government is planning to cover the contaminated land with concrete," Rashid said. Elaborating more on contamination of groundwater in the city, activist Rachna Dhingra claimed that research agencies in their reports have confirmed high concentration of six persistent organic pollutants in the city's groundwater. The NGOs claimed that chemicals and heavy metals found by different agencies are known to damage the brain, liver, lungs and kidney, besides causing cancer and other diseases. The NGOs have launched a month-long campaign 'Bhopal disaster: 37 years' and are raising one question related to the gas tragedy every day.

# CM reviews Covid vaccination

# It is a matter of shame not to get the second vaccine of Covid: CM

- Second dose of Covid Vaccine to all eligible persons by 25th December
- Every person coming for government works including ration shops should be questioned in relation to second dose
- Intervention is necessary for cent percent vaccination
- Vaccination mega campaign on 10th, 17th and 24th November and 1st December

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that it should be ensured that cent percent eligible people get second dose of corona vaccine by December 25 in the state.

Identify those who have not got the second dose and ensure their vaccination within the given time-frame. Chouhan said that not getting vaccinated is not only a danger to oneself but also playing with the lives of family members and acquaintances. Chief Minister said that this feeling has to be developed among the people of the state that if we do not get immunization done, we are shying away from our big responsibility and it is a matter of shame.

Chouhan said that along with awareness for vaccination, a Toka-Toki (intervention) campaign will also have to be run. Inquiry must be made from every person taking government benefits and coming for government works regarding administration of second dose. All the departments of the state government, including the police, should play an active role in this campaign. Chief Minister was addressing the review meeting of Covid Vaccination at Mantralaya. The commissioners and collectors of all the districts participated virtually.

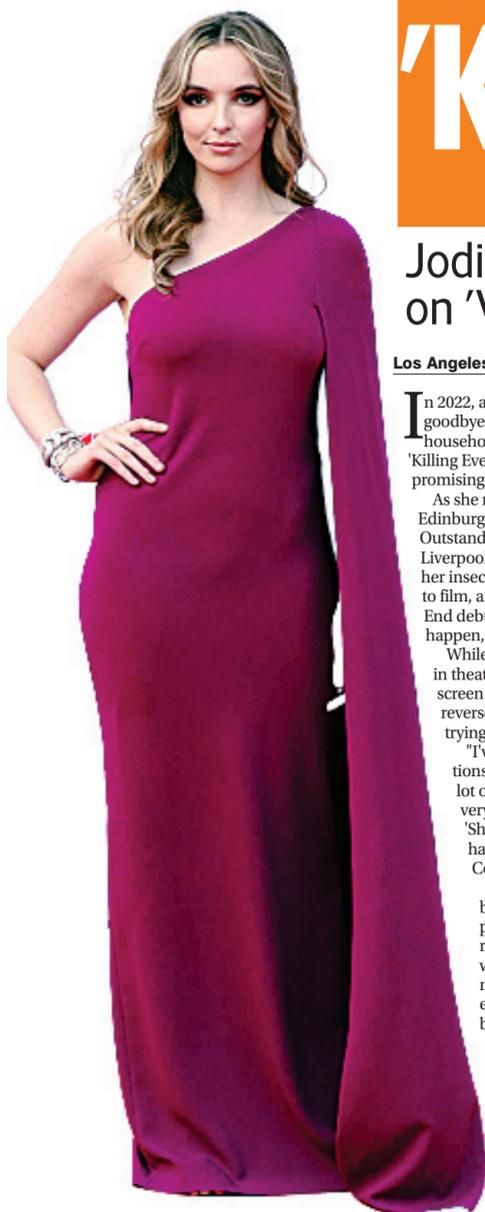
Chouhan directed that every district collector should complete the vaccination by December 25 after fixing the target of each day for applying the second dose of corona. After seeing the presentation, Chief Minister said that achievements have been made in vaccination in the districts which have worked in a planned manner. Mega vaccination campaigns will be conducted in the state on 10th, 17th and 24th November and 1st December. He said that district-wise intensive review of the status of vaccination would be done again on December 17.

Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains said that vaccination campaign should not be considered as a formality. Mere issuing of instructions



is not enough. Every point of implementation of the instructions will be reviewed by the state government. Additional Chief Secretary Health Mohammad Suleman directed that all departments should ensure cent percent vaccination of their employees and their families. Survey of every house should be done in urban and rural areas. Families whose eligible members have not been cent percent immunized, those households should be identified. Take the help of NCC, Scout-Guide and "Main Hoon Volunteer" campaigns should be conducted at every level. Crisis Management Committee and public representatives should be associated with vaccination activities at village, block and district level. Create an environment for vaccination by running innovative campaigns of information, education and communication. Instructions were given in the meeting that all

departments should ensure cent percent vaccination of all teachers, Anganwadi workers, self-help groups and members of MGNREGA, Panchayat Secretary, Employment Assistants, Patwari's, Kotwar's, ration shop operators and members of Forest Committees, Forest Department employees etc. and their families. School education, higher education, technical education departments should conduct awareness campaigns for vaccination through their teachers, professors and students. Provide necessary support in vaccination of Anganwadi workers, pregnant and lactating women. Families which have a tendency to avoid vaccination should be identified and motivated for vaccination. The field staff of the Agriculture Department should cooperate with the Health Department in vaccination. Along with this, the Industries and Public Works Department were instructed to ensure vaccination of all the workers engaged in various industries and construction works.



# 'KILLING EVE'

## Jodie Comer on closing the chapter on 'Villanelle'

Los Angeles | Agencies

In 2022, actress Jodie Comer will say goodbye to the TV role that made her a household name - Villanelle - in 'Killing Eve' and forge ahead with a promising film career and theatre debut.

As she receives Variety and the Edinburgh TV Festival's 2021 Outstanding Achievement Award, the Liverpool-born actor says she's parking her insecurities about moving from TV to film, and looking ahead to a West End debut she never thought would happen, reports variety.com.

While most British actors start out in theatre before graduating to the screen sector, Comer's done it in reverse - though it wasn't for lack of trying.

"I've done a lot of theater auditions throughout the years and a lot of the feedback was often very, very positive, but it was always, 'She's not theatre trained. She hasn't gone to drama school,'" Comer tells Variety.

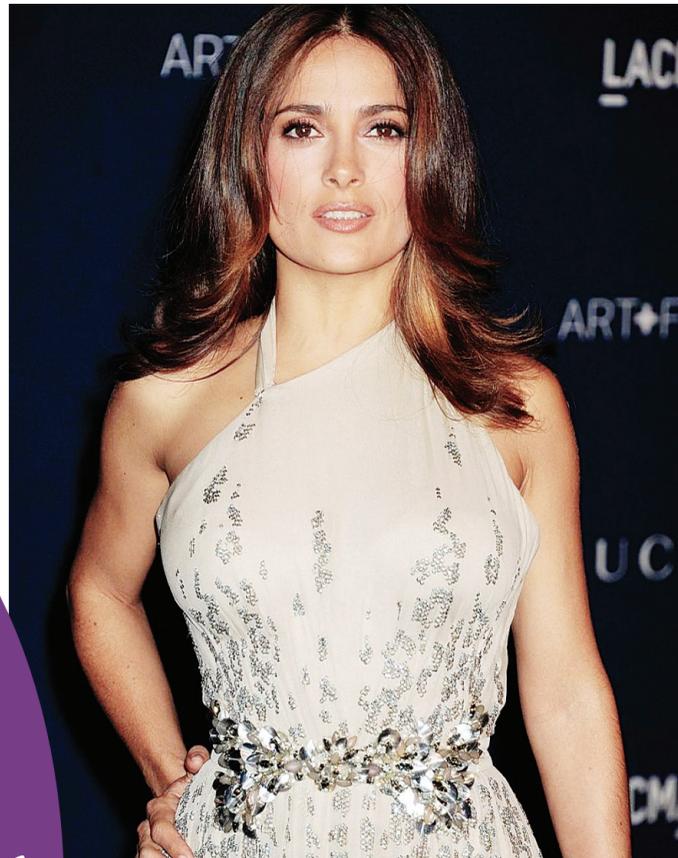
"I used to get quite defeated by that, and then I got to a point where I was like, 'The right thing will come along with a director who believes in me, and who wants to do that extra work - whatever needs to be done.'"

In some ways, she has her deliciously cruel and comedic Russian assassin Villanelle to thank.

The role earned her Emmy and BAFTA awards in 2019, and has allowed people to see her "in many, many different lights."

Comer is clear, however, that Season 4 next year will definitely be the end of the road for 'Killing Eve'.

# Salma Hayek confirms 'multiple movie deals' with Marvel following 'Eternals'



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Salma Hayek has signed up with Marvel for "multiple" movies.

The 55-year-old actress, who makes her Marvel Cinematic Universe debut as Ajak in 'Eternals', has confirmed she could reprise the role in future blockbusters, but said there's no guarantee, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Appearing on Smallzy's 'Celebrity Small Talk', Salma said: "I did sign multiple movie deals... That doesn't mean they're going to put me in it."

The Oscar nominee is having to get used to the franchise's top secret way of working, and she said it can be "so extreme" keeping everything under wraps.

She added: "Nothing I could have anticipated, it was kind of funny. It's so extreme, but at the beginning I was like, 'What?' But then it was kind of fun, it was kind of fun being part of this society

that you have to protect so fiercely."

Hayek has also learned to cope with Marvel's passionate fanbase even though they "terrified" her at first as she tried to wrap her head around the whole situation. "Oh yes! They terrified me at the beginning," she laughed.

"They did, because when we went to Comic Con, I've never been a theatre that had so many people inside, and they were so passionate about being there, getting all the new details, anything they could get on the future of the Marvel Universe." However, she said her main focus was not leaving anyone disappointed, especially knowing how her character had been changed from the source material.

She explained: "They are so loyal and so passionate, and it makes you think, 'Oh boy, I hope I don't disappoint them!' Especially because I was a man in the comics, so I confess I was a little nervous. I wanted them to be happy, you know?"

# Richard Madden

## loved 'Eternals' challenge of playing a '1000 year old'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Richard Madden, who plays the superhero Ikaris in 'The Eternals' who is actually over 20,000 years old in the comic books, says he loved the opportunity to take on a very different character.

He told HeyUGuys.com: "In this piece, the lure for me I found was, 'Do you want to play someone that's five, seven thousand years old?'"

"As an actor, you never really get to do that. Not a lot of characters are seven thousand years old - I'm sure there's some vampires out there that are, but oftentimes we don't get to play characters that old."

"So that for me - rather than kind of thinking of it as a Marvel piece -

was, 'OK, how do I play a character, how do I bring joy to a screen to someone who's seen everything and done everything a million times?'"

The 35-year-old Scottish star also loved the opportunity to see Camden in a whole new light as the cast filmed on location in the area, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

He added: "That bridge, which we have walked across many times - me and Gemma and Kit, together - I got to fly above it. So, I got to have this different vantage point on Camden. I thought, 'I'm never gonna see Camden like this again'."



## Vin Diesel invites Dwayne Johnson to return for 'Fast And Furious' finale after feud

Los Angeles | Agencies

Action star Vin Diesel is hoping to end the feud between him and Hollywood star Dwayne Johnson.

Taking to his social media platform, the Dominic Toretto depicter in 'Fast and Furious' publicly invited his co-star to return for the action movie franchise finale, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Diesel posted a photo of his and Johnson's characters, Dominic Toretto and Luke Hobbs, on his Instagram page.

Along with the photo, he wrote: "My little brother Dwayne... the time has come. The world awaits the finale of Fast 10. As you know, my children refer to you as Uncle Dwayne in my house. There is not a holiday that goes by that they and you don't send well wishes... but the time has come."

"Legacy awaits. I told you years ago that I was going to fulfill my promise to Pablo," Vin continued.

He added: "I swore that we would reach and manifest the best Fast in the finale that is 10!"

Diesel went on to admit that he wrote his open letter "out of love."

The "Guardians of the Galaxy" star then asked the 49-year-old actor to "show up."

He stressed: "Do not leave the franchise idle you have a very important role to play. Hobbs can't be played by no other. I hope that you rise to the occasion and fulfill your destiny."

The beef between the actors reportedly began in 2016 when Johnson called a few of his male 'Fast and Furious' co-stars 'candy a\*\*es' and 'unprofessional' via Instagram.

It was later revealed he was talking about Diesel. A source also claimed that the two definitely clashed on set during filming.

In a recent Vanity Fair interview, Johnson himself admitted to regretting his past action, noting that he could have handled the situation better.



## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Abbie Holborn

## Loving Embrace



Los Angeles | Agencies

Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez could not keep their hands off each other as they packed on the PDA before boarding a private flight out of Los Angeles.

As they shared a passionate kiss wrapped in each other's arms, the happy couple gazed lovingly into each other's eyes on Saturday afternoon. While the 52-year-old superstar's pilot waited for them to end

their steamy makeout session, JLo looked completely smitten as she held on to Affleck. The mother-of-two sported a \$720 shearling coat with gold buttons, ripped jeans, black leather handbag and tan UGG boots. She accessorized with a pair of silver hoop earrings and light brown hair in loose waves. Meanwhile, the two-time Oscar winner wore a cozy black fleece over a blue polo shirt, reports daily.co.ok.

## 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' to release in India on Dec 17

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Tom Holland and Zendaya starrer 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' is all set to hit the Indian big screen on December 17.

The film will also have appearances from Benedict Cumberbatch as Doctor Strange, Jacob Batalon as Ned Leeds and Marisa Tomei as Aunt May.

Holland's version of Peter Parker made its debut in 'Captain America: Civil War' and went on to feature in two solo movies and two 'Avengers' films.

The poster of the film was unveiled on Monday. It shares a glimpse of William Dafoe's Green Goblin in the background. Meanwhile, Dr. Otto Octavius also known as Doc Ock's mechanical arms, Electro's lightning, and sand from Sandman can also be seen.



Sony Pictures Entertainment India is releasing 'Spiderman: No Way

Home' in English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.



## T20 World Cup

# ROHIT, RAHUL FIFTIES STEER INDIA TO NINE-WICKET WIN OVER NAMIBIA

Dubai | Agencies

Clinical half-centuries from Rohit Sharma (56 off 37 balls) and KL Rahul (54 not out off 36 balls) steered India to a nine-wicket win over Namibia in their final Super 12 match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup at the Dubai International Stadium here on Monday. After restricting Namibia to 132/8 in 20 overs, India chased down the target with 28 balls remaining.

India blasted 54 runs in the Power-play, 39 of those coming from Sharma's bat. He had luck on his side, with his one-handed pull put down by Michale van Lingen at fine leg and rolled to the boundary rope for four in the opening over. That drop proved to be costly as Sharma took a four and six off David Wiese followed by another four off Rubel Truempelmann. Rahul joined the party with a short-arm jab-pull off Wiese over deep mid-wicket in the fourth over.

Post Power-play, Sharma continued his strong show, taking two bound-



aries before reaching his second half-century of the tournament in the eighth over. Jan Frylinck broke the opening partnership at 86 as Sharma skied a cross-bat slog to keeper Zane Green. After Sharma's dismissal, Rahul was at his elegant best with wristy flick and clean lofted boundaries, with a loft over extra cover and scoop over fine leg standing out as India inched closer to the target. Rahul reached his third half-century of the tournament with a single to long-on before finishing off the chase with a four through long-off.

### Brief scores

Namibia 132/8 in 20 overs (David Wiese 26, Stephan Baard 21, Ravindra Jadeja 3/16, Ravichandran Ashwin 3/20) lost to India (Rohit Sharma 56, KL Rahul 54 not out, Jan Frylinck 1/19) by nine wickets  
Michael Leask 2/12, Bradley Wheel 1/14) by four wickets.

## What can we say if players prioritise IPL over country: Kapil Dev

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Legendary all-rounder Kapil Dev has urged the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to plan the schedule of the game better and said that players must also learn to differentiate and prioritise between the IPL and playing for the nation.

His comments come after India were knocked out of the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup, which is the first occasion since 2012 when the team has taken an exit in the group stage of an ICC competition.

On Sunday, India's bowling coach Bharat Arun had said that the workload could have had a toll on the players. To this, Kapil Dev said that Indian players should have had a break after the second leg of IPL 2021 before they headed to the T20 World Cup.

"When players prioritise IPL over playing for the country, what can we say. Players



should take pride in playing for their nation. I don't know their financial conditions so can't say much," Kapil Dev told ABP News.

"But I feel that first in line should be the country's team and then franchises. I'm not saying do not play cricket there (IPL), but the responsibility is now on the BCCI to plan its cricket better. To not repeat the mistakes we committed in this tournament is the biggest learning for us,"

he said.

Kapil further added that the Indian cricket board should start planning to groom players for the upcoming major events.

"It's time to look at the future. You should start planning right away. It's not that since the World Cup is over, the Indian team's entire cricket is too. Go and plan. I just feel that there should have been some gap between the IPL and the World Cup."

## West Ham beat Liverpool to climb to third, Tottenham held to goalless draw by Everton



London | Agencies

West Ham United moved up to third in the Premier League, overtaking Liverpool after a thrilling 3-2 win over Jurgen Klopp's side here.

West Ham's effectiveness from set-pieces was decisive as Liverpool keeper Alisson punched a fourth-minute corner into his own net when under pressure

late on Sunday evening.

Pablo Fornals put West Ham 2-1 ahead from a set-piece after Trent Alexander Arnold had also equalised for Liverpool from a free-kick and Kurt Zouma header put David Moyes's men 3-1 up from a corner with 15 minutes left to play. Divock Origi set up a grandstand finish with his 83rd-minute goal for Liverpool and Sadio Mane missed a chance to make it 3-3 in injury time as

West Ham held on for a deserved three points. Bruno Conte's first league game in charge at Tottenham ended in a 0-0 draw away to Everton, who ended with 10 men after Mason Holgate's injury-time red card for a bad foul on Ben Davis, Xinhua reports. Everton thought they had a 63rd-minute penalty after Hugo Lloris's challenge on Richardson, but it was overturned by the VAR and Conte will be worried his side didn't manage a single shot between the posts all game. Emile Smith-Rowe's first-half strike made it three wins in three games for Arsenal after their 1-0 win at home to Watford. Martin Odegaard saw a goal ruled out for offside and Watford's attempts at a fightback were ended when Juraj Kucka was sent off in the penultimate minute.

Leeds United and Leicester City drew 1-1 in a game where both of the goals came in a two-minute spell with Rafinha opening the scoring for Leeds in the 26th minute only for Harvey Barnes to equalize in the 28th minute.

Ademola Lookman had what would have been the winning goal for Leicester ruled out for a tight offside midway through the second half.

## PAK, ENG, HAVE LOOKED THE MOST COMPLETE SIDE SO FAR: HUSSAIN



Former England captain Nasser Hussain feels that Pakistan, along with England, have been the most complete side in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. He added that UAE has been a second home for the Babar Azam-led side, pointing towards Pakistan being unbeaten in 16 straight T20Is in the gulf country. "Pakistan -- along with England -- have looked the most complete side so far, with the opening combination of Mohammad Rizwan and Babar Azam really firing and then Asif Ali finishing the innings for them. Yesterday's defeat of Scotland was their 16th win in succession in the UAE so it really is like a second home for them," wrote Hussain in his column for Daily Mail on Monday.

## Djokovic beats Medvedev; captures sixth Paris Masters title

Paris | Agencies

A day after he broke the tie with American legend Pete Sampras for the most number of year-end world No.1 finishes on the ATP Rankings, Serbian star Novak Djokovic recorded his fifth title of the year in Paris, taking sweet revenge over Russian Daniil Medvedev, defeating the world No.2 and defending champion 4-6, 6-3, 6-3 here.

Djokovic, who had rallied to defeat Poland's Hubert Hurkacz in the Paris Masters semifinals to clinch a record seventh year-end world No.1 finish on Saturday (November 6), avenged his US Open final loss to Medvedev for a record-breaking 37th ATP Masters 1000 crown in 2 hours and 15 minutes.

It was the 14th time this season that Djokovic rallied to victory from a set down to capture his sixth Paris Masters title. It was also the first Paris Masters final to feature the top-two players on the ATP Rankings since 1990.

Djokovic said that he studied the footage of the US Open loss to Medvedev to understand where he had gone wrong against the Russian at Flushing Meadows. Djokovic was on course for a calendar Grand Slam before he was derailed by world No. 2



Medvedev in the final.

Djokovic also broke his tie with Spain's Rafael Nadal with whom he shared the record for the most number of Masters 1000 titles at 36 before the Serb won his 37th title on Sunday evening.

The two players now take their rivalry to Turin where they play the elite Nitto ATP Finals, to be held November 14-21.

## Verstappen dominates F1 Mexico City GP; Hamilton distant second

Mexico City | Agencies

Red Bull's Max Verstappen took a big step towards the 2021 Formula One World Championship with a dominant win in the Mexico City Grand Prix, with title rival Lewis Hamilton a distant second.

Starting third on the grid, Verstappen used the long run down to the first corner to slipstream past the Mercedes duo of Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas to take the lead, as pole man Bottas fell to the back after being tagged by Daniel Ricciardo's McLaren on Monday morning (IST).

Behind Verstappen, Hamilton only just held onto second ahead of the Dutchman's teammate Sergio Perez, whose every move at his home race was cheered to the echo by a partisan crowd. AlphaTauri's Pierre Gasly had a quietly excellent run to fourth, ahead of the Ferraris of Carlos Sainz and Charles Leclerc. Sebastian Vettel took seventh for Aston



Martin, with Alfa Romeo's Kimi Raikkonen equalling his best finish of the year with eighth. Fernando Alonso finished ninth for Alpine, and McLaren's Lando Norris rounded out the top-10. Verstappen's win puts him on 312.5 points, 19 ahead of Hamilton with just four races of the season left. Bottas stays third on 185 points.

## Australia to tour Pakistan for Tests, ODIs, one-off T20I next year

Lahore | Agencies

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday announced that Australia will commence their maiden tour of Pakistan since 1998, when they play three Tests, three ODIs and one T20I in March-April next year.

The Tests will take place in Karachi (March 3-7), Rawalpindi (March 12-16) and Lahore (March 21-25), while Lahore will be the venue for the four white-ball matches to be played from March 29 to April 5.

The Tests will be played as part of the ICC World Test Championship, while the ODIs will be connected to the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League -- a 13-team event from which the seven highest-placed sides and the hosts, India, will qualify directly for the event proper in 2023.



PCB Chairman Ramiz Raja, who played eight Tests and 18 ODIs against Australia, said in a statement on Monday that, "I am delighted to

welcome Australia to Pakistan. From a personal point of view, it pleases me no end that we'll be engaged in a three-Test match series, connoisseurs delight. Cricket Australia Chief Executive Nick Hockley said, "Cricket Australia is excited about the prospect of touring Pakistan next year for what will be a highly anticipated series in a country so incredibly passionate about the game and their national team.

Australia last toured Pakistan in 1998/99 when Mark Taylor led them to a 1-0 series victory -- their first since Richie Benaud's side defeated Fazal Mahmood's team 2-0 in the 1959-60 series. Between the two series, Pakistan hosted Australia in 1964-65 (drew 0-0), 1979-80 (won 1-0), 1982-83 (won 3-0), 1988-89 (won 1-0) and 1994-95 (won 1-0).

## Deandra Dottin smashes ton, scripts big West Indies win over Pakistan

Karachi | Agencies

A fine century by 'Player of the Match' Deandra Dottin helped West Indies Women to a 45-run win over Pakistan Women in the first ODI at the National Stadium here on Monday.

The West Indies opener smashed 132 off 146 balls, including 18 fours and two sixes, after Pakistan's stand-in skipper Sidra Nawaz opted to bowl after winning the toss. This was Dottin's best score in the format.

Dottin added 119 runs for the third wicket with Hayley Matthews, who scored 57 off 67, as their partnership set the platform for the tourists to post 253 for eight before Shemaine Campbelle scored a quick 23 off 20.

Dottin's century and the eventual Pakistan defeat eclipsed Anam Amin's maiden five-wicket haul. The left-arm spinner returned 5/35 with two of her 10 overs being maiden. Anam accounted



### Brief scores:

West Indies Women 253/8 in 50 overs (Deandra Dottin 132, Hayley Matthews 57, Shemaine Campbelle 23; Anam Amin 5/35, Fatima Sana 2/65)  
Pakistan Women 208/9 in 50 overs (Aliya Riaz 46, Iram Javed 40, Muneeba Ali 28, Kainat Imtiaz 24, Sidra Nawaz 23; Hayley Mathews 3/31, Shakera Selman 2/35).

## Roy ruled out due to injury, Vince named as replacement

Dubai | Agencies

England opener Jason Roy has been ruled out of the remainder of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. Roy had sustained a calf injury while running for a single in the fifth over of England's chase of 190 and retired hurt on 20 in their 10-run defeat to South Africa in its last Super 12 match in Sharjah on Saturday. Roy limped off the field, aided by an England support staff member, and was unable to put any weight on his left leg.

After scans on Sunday confirmed a tear on Roy's calf, it is a big blow for England ahead of their semi-final against New Zealand in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday.

James Vince, who was included as a travelling



reserve, will replace Roy in England's squad. The Event Technical Committee of the tournament has approved of Vince being Roy's replacement. Roy is the second player after left-arm pacer Tymal Mills to be ruled out of the mega event for England.



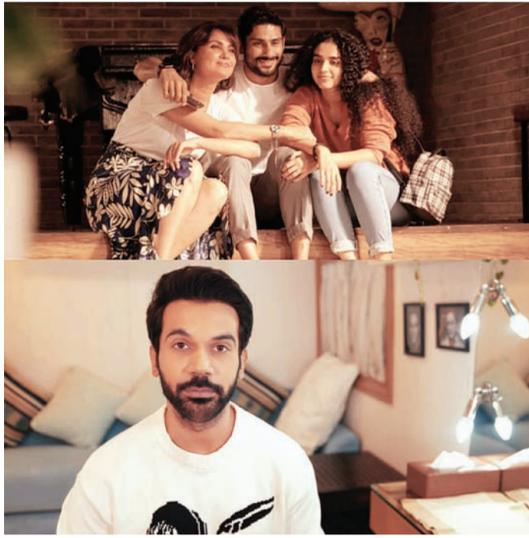
# HICCUPS AND HOOKUPS'

Rajkumar Rao unveils the title of Lionsgate Play's First Indian original, the show will stream on the platform from 26th November

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**H**iccups and Hookups,' Lionsgate Play's First Indian original show's title and host of characters were introduced to the viewers by none other than Rajkumar Rao in a new video which hit the airwaves. If you are wondering why him, then the answer lies in the fact that, there is no better way to give a sneak peek of the new Rao family in town than by an established and popular Rao like Rajkumar. He had taken the onus on himself to delineate the spunky, unabashed, bold and irreverent members of this new household upon himself.

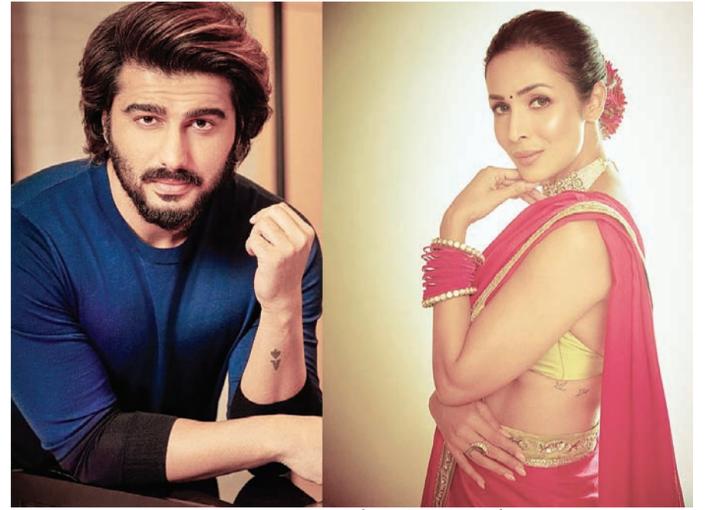
In the innovative video for the show, the actor is clearly seen calling the new Rao's in town 'shocking and not rocking'. He refers to Lara Dutta's character as a 'modern stree' who is confused about her dating options. Prateik Babbar is introduced as the guy who considers himself to be the



'Newton of Relationships' as he believes dating is a game of Snakes and Ladders. Shinnova who plays the teenage daughter of Lara Dutta's character in the show, according to Rajkumar, considers herself the 'Queen of Relationships.' But eventually she ends up getting caught in situations that go against her.

Talking about his association, Rajkumar Rao adds in a jocular vein, "All three characters that I introduce have a mind of their own. They are full of sass combined with a lot of spunk. They have been on my mind as they go about living their life to the fullest without any filters. And yes, it looks like, it's time for a Rao like me to 'Ghabrao' because this new set of Raos are clearly going to keep me on my toes with their adventures."

Directed by Kunal Kohli 'Hiccups and Hookups' is set in an urban context and is India's first bold and progressive show about a family which doesn't believe in filters or boundaries.



## Arjun Kapoor 'happy' when Malaika laughs at his 'nonsense'

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**A**ctor Arjun Kapoor has said that his ladylove Malaika Arora makes him 'happy by laughing at "nonsense"'. Arjun posted a candid picture taken by a paparazzi on his Instagram. In the image, Arjun is seen flashing a big smile while chatting with Malaika, whose back is towards the camera in the picture.

"When she laughs at my nonsense, She

makes me happy...@malaikaaroraofficial Thank you @ak\_paps for this picture," Arjun wrote.

Going by Arjun's caption, it seems that he had just cracked a joke which made Malaika laugh, making the actor very happy. The picture was taken when the two were attending a Diwali function. On the work front, Arjun currently has three films lined up -- 'Ek Villain Returns', 'Kuttye' and 'The Lady Killer'.



## 'Roadies 18' is all set to take off to South Africa

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**T**he 18th edition of the youth based reality show 'Roadies' is once again going international as it will be shot in the picturesque locales of South Africa. Amidst the discussions on multiple locations like Dubai, Bahrain and Russia, the channel has confirmed the final location as South Africa for this season. This is the first time Roadies will go international and ride across the South African terrain. The Roadies troop will hit the road and create a pitstop at 10 different locations. Deborah Polycarp, Head - MTV Content Originals, Viacom 18 said: "The very spirit of Roadies lies in adventure and newness. To up the ante this time around as Roadies turns 18, we thought why not rewrite the very definition of adventure for the fans! Making Roadies all the more exciting, this time, we are racing to glory on the roads of South Africa to create some historic moments that will get our adrenaline pumping for years to come. "The fans have a lot of surprises to look forward to and we can't wait to unfold them as we go along in this journey. The only thing I would want to tell all the Roadies fans right now is, let the race begin in South Africa." The shoot for Season 18 on 'Roadies' is expected to start mid-December and will soon air on MTV India.

## SAMANTHA INVITED AS SPEAKER AT IFFI, SET FOR HINDI DEBUT

Hyderabad | Agencies

**A**ctress Samantha Ruth Prabhu has been invited to speak at the International Film Festival of India in Goa from November 20-28.

The organisers have also roped in director Aruna Raje, actor John Edathattil, and director Vivek Agnihotri as speakers at IFFI. Manoj Bajpayee too is among the speakers. Samantha, who allured the audience with her performance in 'The Family Man 2' web series, is apparently invited to speak at the Film Festival as well. Samantha is the first south Indian actress to be invited as a speaker at IFFI. As there are rumours of Samantha's Bollywood debut, folks are expecting Samantha to be a part of the festival, so as to create her space. There is talk that Samantha would soon sign her maiden Hindi film under Tapsee Pannu's home production. But, there is no official confirmation about the project from both sides. Meanwhile, Samantha has zeroed two multilingual projects, one of the two projects is touted to be a romantic fantasy, while the other is a thriller. Samantha's appearance in Gunasekhar's mythological film 'Shaakuntalam' is under post-production.



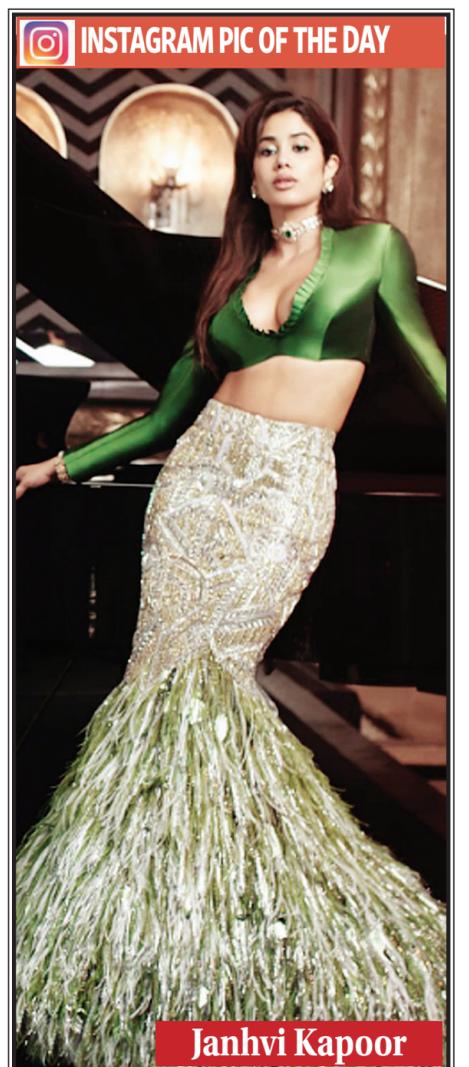
## Vicky-Katrina finally say 'we do' at Diwali-day 'roka' ceremony

The rumours of Vicky Kaushal dating Katrina Kaif have been doing the rounds for quite some time. Both the actors have been denying the stories, but now, it looks like the air will be cleared once and all, for the good of both.

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**S**ources close to the actors have said that the two had a very private 'roka' ceremony during Diwali. It took place at the home of filmmaker Kabir Khan. Katrina considers Kabir to be like her brother, which may be the reason why she chose to have the ceremony at his place in a

close-knit affair that did not extend beyond immediate members of the two families. Katrina is reported to have been joined by her mother Suzanne Turquoise and sister Isabelle Kaif, Vicky's side was completed by his mother Veena Kaushal, his father, the renowned action director Sham Kaushal, and the actor's brother Sunny.



## Biopic announced on life of legendary dancer Sitara Devi

**Sitara Devi is one of the iconic artistes of India. A recipient of several awards, including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Padma Shri and Kalidas Samman among others, she revived the Indian classical dance form of Kathak and gave it a new dimension.**

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**A**biopic on the legendary dancer has now been confirmed on her 101st birth anniversary.

Producer Raj C. Anand of Raj Anand Movies made an announcement as he said, "We are very happy and excited to bring the story of Sitara Devi to life to the big screen. We believe that her story will make a compelling watch and we would ensure that the film turns out to be as fascinating as her real-life used to be." Ranjit Barot, the celebrated musician and drummer, who is the son of Sitara Devi, has taken the onus of guiding the project's



research team by helping them with deep insights into his mother's life basis which the story will be designed. Talking about the project, Ranjit said, "I am excited that a film is to be made on my mother's life. When Raj Anand (producer) came to me with the idea of making a film on her, I realised it is coming from a very genuine space of enthusiasm and admiration towards my mother who was an iconic artiste. We intend to bring to the screen the untold story of her life through this endeavour."

The research work on the life of the renowned artiste has already begun as a part of pre-production, the makers will soon announce the cast and director. Born on November 8, 1920, Sitara Devi was not just an eminent artiste but also a strong woman, who strengthened t