

absolute india

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for Goa polls: Mahua Moitra...Kristen Stewart: 'Twilight' needed my
chemistry with Robert Pattinson...India beat New Zealand by five
wickets, take 1-0 series lead...

THE SUPREME COURT PULLED UP THE GOVERNMENT AND BUREAUCRACY FOR NOT DOING ENOUGH TO CURB AIR POLLUTION

'Big cars, bureaucratic inertia, blaming farmers'

The Chief Justice pointed out that according to an IIT Kanpur study stubble burning and firecrackers are not main contributors for pollution.

TOP COURT ALSO NOTED:

► "BUREAUCRACY DEVELOPED PARALYSIS...ALL THESE THINGS WE HAVE TO SAY -- HOW TO USE SPRINKLERS, HOW TO STOP VEHICLES...THEY DO NOT WANT TO TAKE ANY DECISION"

► "DELHI SAYS NO POINT IN BANNING VEHICLES OR INTRODUCING WFH (WORK-FROM-HOME) IF NOT IMPLEMENTED IN NEIGHBOURING STATES..WE THOUGHT THE COMMISSION (AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION) WILL GIVE US STEPS TO STOP THIS, WHO WILL ENCOURAGE THEM TO STOP THIS?"

► "THERE ARE SEVERAL GOVERNMENT LOCALITIES (IN THE VICINITY OF GOVERNMENT OFFICES), CAN'T THEY TRAVEL IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT?"

People sitting in 5-star and 7-star facilities in Delhi keep accusing the farmers (contribute four per cent and 30 or 40 per cent to pollution). If you have a scientific alternative (a resolution)...let us look at it, rather than blaming farmers..."

DEBATES ON TV ARE CREATING MORE POLLUTION: SC DURING AIR POLLUTION HEARING

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed its dissatisfaction with the content of debates on television, on court connected matters, and said that TV debates are causing more air pollution than anything else. The bench, however, made it clear that it has not been misled. The bench said: "We were not misled at all. You said 10 per cent but it was pointed out in the affidavit that it was 30 to 40 per cent (in the annexure)... These kinds of criticisms keep happening. Our conscience is clear and we work for public interest... Debates on TV are creating more pollution than everyone else...Everyone has their own agenda."

**EMERGENCY MEASURES APPLICABLE WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT**

- Work from home for 50 per cent staff for both government and private offices
- Shutting down six of the 11 thermal power plants in 300 km radius of Delhi
- Ban on construction activity till November 21 with exemptions
- All schools, colleges and educational institutions to hold online classes only
- No entry of trucks in Delhi till November 21, except those carrying essential goods
- No diesel or petrol vehicles more than 15 years to run on Delhi roads
- Deploying anti-smog guns
- Water sprinklers and augmentation of dust suppressants thrice a day
- Penalty on persons/organisations stacking construction and demolition waste on roads, roadsides
- And a total ban on DG sets

RETD JUDGE TO MONITOR LAKHIMPUR KHERI CASE

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday said it is concerned about guaranteeing an impartial and fair investigation, as it appointed justice Rakesh Kumar Jain, a former judge of Punjab and Haryana High Court, to monitor the Lakhimpur Kheri violence probe. The top court also reconstituted the SIT investigating the incident and appointed IPS officer S.B. Shiradkar as its head.

The bench, also expressed its disapproval of the slow pace, manner and outcome of the investigation conducted so far, as well as the composition of the SIT charged with investigating the

matter. The bench said it is appointing justice Jain, to monitor the ongoing investigation so as to ensure transparency, fairness and absolute impartiality in the outcome of the investigation in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, which is to be conducted in a time-bound manner.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday slammed the Centre and state governments for their inability to present a crystal-clear way forward to combat the menace of air pollution in the national capital.

A bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana and comprising Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and Surya Kant, after hearing submissions of counsel of the Delhi government and Central government, said it needs clear answers on steps to curb air pollution in the capital, which has become a yearly phenomenon for the past several years.

The bench said the bureaucracy has gone into inertia and they don't

want to do anything. The bench emphasized that somebody has to take responsibility and everything cannot be done through judicial order. It pointed out that firecrackers were burnt in Delhi despite a ban. It further noted that according to the government report vehicles are the main cause, but gas guzzlers, hi-fi cars run on Delhi roads, and also questioned the implementation of policy of removal of 10-15-year-old vehicles from the Delhi roads. The top court asked the Centre and state governments to implement letter and spirit the decisions taken in the emergency meeting held on Tuesday to curb air pollution in Delhi. The top court has scheduled the matter for further hearing next Wednesday.

7 ARRESTED IN CBI CRACKDOWN ON ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested seven people in the on-going investigation of the cases related to alleged online child sexual abuse and exploitation.

The CBI said the accused were arrested from various places including Delhi, Dhenkanal (Odisha), Noida (UP), Jhansi (UP) and Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh). All the seven accused have been identified as Raman Gautam and Sathyender Mittal, both residents of Delhi, Surendra Kumar Naik, resident of Dhenkanal, Odisha, Purushottam Jha, resident of Delhi, Nishant Jain, resident of Noida, Uttar Pradesh, Jitendra Kumar, resident of Jhansi, Uttar

Pradesh and T. Mohan Krishna, resident of Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh. The premier probe agency, in a major crackdown on Tuesday, raided 76 locations across the country in 14 States and Union Territories over the menace of online child abuse. The agency had registered 23 separate cases on November 14, against a total 83 accused. According to the FIR, there was information that 31 members of the aforementioned group were sharing CSEM content in connivance with each other. As per the initial information collected, there were more than 50 groups having over 5,000 offenders sharing child sexual abuse material. Many of these groups also had the involvement of foreign nationals.

PARAM BIR SINGH DECLARED AS 'PROCLAIMED ABSCONDER'

Mumbai: In a major development, a magistrate's court in Mumbai on Wednesday declared former city Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh as a 'Proclaimed Absconder' in an extortion case lodged against him. The development follows an application filed by the Mumbai Police seeking a declaration to the effect with regard to Singh, who is 'untraceable' since several months now.

Allowing the police plea, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate S.B. Bhajpe passed the order against Singh.

Earlier, courts in Mumbai and Thane had issued non-bailable warrants against the ex-Mumbai top cop, presently designated as Director-General, Maharashtra Home Guards.

10 dists shiver below 10 degrees in Rajasthan

Team Absolute | Jaipur

The desert state of Rajasthan has started feeling the winter chill due to snowfall in the hilly areas of the northern part of the country. Surprisingly, the hill stations in Himachal Pradesh are warmer than a few desert cities.

On Tuesday night, Fatehpur area in Sikar registered a temperature of 2.8 degrees Celsius against the popular hill station Shimla in Himachal Pradesh which had a temperature of 7 degrees Celsius. This area was the coldest in Rajasthan.

Even Udaipur division has clouds hovering around due to which the mercury dipped bringing the winter chill around.

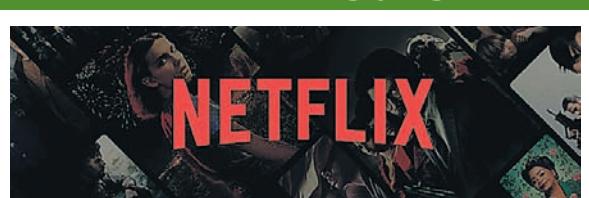


On Tuesday night, Sikar was coldest with 5.2 degrees Celsius, followed by Bhilwara - 7.2 degrees; Pilani - 7.9; Chittaurgarh - 7.6; Churu - 6.5; Sawai Madhopur - 9.9 degrees, while Nagaur recorded 9.5 degrees Celsius.

Netflix reveals viewing figures

Team Absolute | New Delhi

'Squid Game' has emerged as Netflix's most-watched TV show or film ever after the streaming service rolled out a new website on Wednesday measuring viewing figures in a bid to provide greater transparency, the Daily Mail reported. Fourteen years of secrecy have come to an end with the launch of the metrics website, Netflix Top 10, which shows Netflix's most popular TV shows and films, both globally and in more than 90 individual countries, the report said. Netflix was founded in 1997 by Reed Hastings and Marc Randolph



in California. Netflix initially both sold and rented DVDs by mail, but the sales were eliminated within a year to focus on the DVD rental business. In 2007, Netflix had introduced streaming media and video on demand. Netflix has traditionally been reluctant to release its viewing figures since it began streaming in 2007. Netflix subscribers have been eager to see full viewing figures over the



- THE "NO NEW COAL" AND FINANCE PLEDGES WILL LIKELY RESULT IN CANCELLATION OF 88 GW OF NEW COAL. FURTHER, 165 GW OF NEW COAL COULD STILL GO AHEAD BUT ARE CALLED INTO QUESTION BY CARBON TARGETS ANNOUNCED IN THE RUN-UP TO COP26 OR AT COP26. ONLY 56 GW OF NEW COAL PROJECTS REMAIN UNAFFECTED.
- THE GLOBAL COAL POWER PLANT FLEET STANDS AT ABOUT 2,060 GW OF INSTALLED CAPACITY. OF THIS, AN ADDITIONAL 290 GW NOW HAS A CLOSE-BY DATE AS A DIRECT RESULT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PLEDGES MADE IN THE RUN-UP TO AND AT COP26.
- ALTOGETHER, 550 GW OR 26 PER CENT OF EXISTING COAL IS ALREADY SCHEDULED TO RETIRE. OF THE TOTAL 550 GW, 280 GW HAVE A 1.5 C COMPATIBLE PHASE-OUT DATE.

Glasgow impacts 80% of global coal pipeline: Analysis

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Announcements and pledges made at the just concluded

Glasgow climate summit (COP26) will directly impact 80 per cent of planned coal-fired power plants around the world, an analysis said on Wednesday.

With several net zero pledges announced, 95 per cent of the existing global coal power fleet is committed to carbon neutrality. The Glasgow climate summit has had a significant impact on existing and new coal power across the world. Coal is the single largest contributor to carbon emissions.

Globally, the amount of planned coal power stands at around 300 GW. Eighty per cent of this is impacted by 'no new coal' pledges, 'finance pledges' and 'net zero'

COP26: COUPLE TRIES TO ENTER RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN, HELD

New Delhi: A couple allegedly tried to enter the Rashtrapati Bhavan, official sources said here on Wednesday. According to sources, the incident happened on Monday night, when a couple which was possibly under the influence of liquor, tried to barge in the President's House through one of the entrance gates.

When the couple were trying to enter, they were stopped and overpowered by the security personnel present there.

Later, the Delhi Police arrested the duo and registered an FIR against them under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code.



PRIYANKA ASKS WOMEN TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES

Team Absolute | Chitrakoot (UP)

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday asked the women to start fending for themselves.

"Suno Draupadi, shastha utha lo. Ab Govind na aayenge. Kab tak aas lagaogi tum, bike hukhbaron se. Kaisi Raksha maang rahi ho, Dushasan ke darbaron se. (Listen Draupadi, take up arms because now Govind will not come. How long will you wait for justice from newspapers that are already sold. What kind of protection are you seeking from Dushasan's court)," she said.

She said that this time, the talk of giving 40 per cent tickets to women in Assembly elections is just a beginning. "I want half the population of women to contest 50 per cent seats in the 2024 elections. The mobile will help in your safety and the scooty will help you in your studies. All journeys will be free for women in the government buses and 40 per cent provision already exists for women in government posts," she said.

Priyanka Gandhi targeted the BJP government and said that a minister's



son crushed the farmers in Lakhimpur but the government helped him.

"At the same time, the ASHA sisters have been beaten up badly by the administration for raising their demands. When you are being exploited continuously and you are being tortured, then if you ask for your rights from those who beat you, you will never get it. You have to fight

for your rights. If the government is not doing anything for you, then why should it be carried forward?" she asked.

Priyanka, on Wednesday, was interacting with a group of about 5000 women at Ramghat on the banks of the Mandakini river and heard their problems.

The women, including Aanganwadi workers, Asha workers, lawyers and members of self-help

groups spoke about their problems at home and at work and appreciated the reservation announced for women by the Congress.

Priyanka Gandhi assured them that the Congress would stand by them and help them in every possible way to solve their problems.

The programme that focused on the 'Ladki hoon, lad sakti hoon' slogan, saw women from all strata of society -- mainly low-income groups -- listening attentively to the Congress leader's programmes for women empowerment.

Priyanka Gandhi also offered prayers at the famous Matgajendra Shiv temple in Chitrakoot.

A special stage had been constructed on a boat for Priyanka Gandhi but the Congress leader chose to sit with the women during the interaction.

Political analysts feel that the selection of Chitrakoot as the venue for a dialogue with women was a carefully curated move as Ramghat area of the district is, perhaps, one of the only other places to be close to the life of Lord Ram who has played a key role in drawing the political canvas of UP in recent decades.

Trinamool to have CM face ready for Goa polls: Mahua Moitra

Team Absolute | Panaji

The Trinamool Congress will have a chief ministerial face ready when the party goes to the polls in Goa in early 2022, the West Bengal-based party's Goa in-charge Mahua Moitra said on Wednesday.

The Trinamool Lok Sabha MP also did not rule out the party fielding a woman as its chief ministerial candidate for the coastal state, adding that despite its forward-looking aura, Goa is still stuck in patriarchal norms where women are not to be found in decision-making positions, especially in the legislature.

"By the time the elections come around, we will have a chief ministerial face. We will go to the polls, saying this is our Chief Minister," Moitra told a press conference here.

When asked about the possibility of a woman being fielded as the party's CM face for Goa, Moitra said: "But of course, if we find the right candidate."



She also said that gender should not play a role in such decisions.

"The Trinamool does not think of a CM as a woman or a man. This is something I think even the media and

you should question. When you look at a man, do you say 'excuse me Sir, how do you feel as a man Chief Minister'. Then why are you asking a woman? People ask me, 'how are you a woman politician'. I say 'I am a politician'. Do you ask a man, 'are you a man politician'." Moitra said.

Crisis in J&K Cong as Azad loyalists resign

PATNA | Agencies



New Delhi: Tension brewed in Jammu and Kashmir Congress on Wednesday after former Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad's loyalists resigned from the party posts expressing "displeasure" over the functioning of the state Congress.

According to sources, some of the leaders -- G.M. Saroori, Wigar Rasool Wani, J.K. Sharma, M.L. Sharma, Naresh Gupta, Ghulam Nabi Monga, Subash Gupta, Amin Bhat and Anwar Bhat have sent their resignations to party president Sonia Gandhi and state in-charge Rajni Patil.

Sources close to Saroori said that there has been a long pending demand to change the incumbent Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president Ghulam Ahmad Mir.

The state leaders are miffed with Mir's style of functioning and his continuation in the post despite he and son losing

the Lok Sabha and the District Development Council elections.

As per the sources, the resentment is also against the party's top leadership for neglecting the deterioration of the party in the union territory. The resignation letter reads, "Scorpions have captured and hijacked the functioning of the state Congress."

Mir is yet to respond to messages on the latest developments in the party.

The Congress is already battling rifts in major states and the new political development in Jammu and Kashmir will add to its problems.

African national held with heroin worth Rs 5 crore

New Delhi: An African national was nabbed with 513 grams of heroin worth Rs 5 crore in the international market from the national capital, a police official said on Wednesday.

According to the official, a tip-off was received at the Anti Narcotics Cell Dwarka that an African national is supplying the contraband in the jurisdiction of Mohan Garden police station in Dwarka district.

After this, senior officials constituted a team of four policemen to nab the accused identified as Namid Ilias Akabueze, a native of Nigeria.

On Tuesday, as per the information received, at around 1.25 p.m. the police team reached Chhath Puja Park, near Ganda Nala Najafgarh in the city.

"After a few minutes a team of Anti-Narcotics Cell/CAIF Dwarka apprehended that African national," the official said.

He said that the accused was searched in the presence of ACP, Najafgarh Dwarka and due procedure was followed as described in the NDPS act.

The police arrested the accused under section 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

Team Absolute | Srinagar

An organisation of migrant Kashmiri Pandits on Wednesday termed the Hyderpora encounter in J&K's Srinagar district "homicide" and demanded a probe into the incident. According to Satish Mahaldar, chairman of Reconciliation, Return and Rehabilitation of migrant Kashmiri Pandits: "The Hyderpora incident seems to be a clear cut case of homicide."

"Murder is the unjustified killing of one human by another with malice aforethought. The families of two of the four killed in the Monday gunfight have categorically disputed the police version," he claimed.

Terrorism, he stated, clearly has a very real and direct impact on human rights, with devastating consequences on the right to life, liberty and physical integrity of the victims.

Not just this, terrorism also undermines civil society, jeopardises peace and security, and threatens social and economic development of Kashmir, Mahaldar said, adding that all these have had a real impact on the human rights of each and every Kashmiri irrespective of their religion. "The ultimate aim of criminal law is protection of the right to personal liberty

against invasion by others - protection of the weak against the lawless perpetrators," he said.

The Hyderpora incident, he opined, appears to be a case of utter selfishness, greed and intolerance that led to the deprivation of life, liberty and property of other citizens requiring the state to step in for protection of the citizens' rights.

"If men were angels no gov-

ernment would be necessary", the leader said, adding that it is the primary function of the government to protect the basic rights to life and property.

The state has to give protection to persons against lawlessness, disorderly behaviour, violent acts and fraudulent deeds of others. Liberty cannot exist without protection of the basic rights of the citizens by the Government.

Tripura violence: SC grants protection from arrest to journalist, others booked under UAPA

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued notice to the Tripura government on a plea against its decision to invoke the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) against two lawyers, and a journalist.

A bench of Chief Justice N.V. Ramana and Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and Surya Kant said: "Issue notice. No coercive steps..."

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, representing the petitioners, submitted that the FIR was lodged against them after the advocates went for a "fact finding" job in connection with the violence in the state.

The bench decided to seek



response from the state, but declined for now, the request by Bhushan to tag the matter with a pending plea against constitutional validity of the provisions of the UAPA.

On November 11, the Supreme Court agreed to hear a plea challenging the Tripura Police's decision to invoke the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) against several lawyers, activists and journalist Shyam Meera Singh.

Initially, the top court asked advocate Prashant Bhushan, representing the petitioners, to move the concerned high court in the matter, but later agreed to hear the matter.

The members who joined the BJP include Ravi Shankar Singh Pappu, C.P. Chand, Rama Nirjan and Narendra Bhati.

4 SP VIDHAN PARISHAD MEMBERS JOIN BJP

Lucknow | Agencies

Four Vidhan Parishad members belonging to the Samajwadi Party, on Wednesday, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party.



All four MLAs were elected from the local bodies group and their term ends in March 2022. The legislators were welcomed into the party by UP BJP president Swatantra Dev Singh at the party office in the presence of two deputy Chief Ministers Dinesh Sharma and Keshav Maurya.

The members who joined the BJP include Ravi Shankar Singh Pappu, C.P. Chand, Rama Nirjan and Narendra Bhati.

BJP sources said that the remaining leaders would join the party at a later date.

Teenager shot dead by jilted lover in UP

Bareilly | Agencies

A 19-year-old girl was shot dead, allegedly

by her former boyfriend, while she was

on her way home with her elder brother

The accused, identified as Rajneesh, went to the same school as the girl.

The victim's brother told police that they

were returning home after shopping in the Fatehganj East area on Tuesday, when Rajneesh came before the bike and knocked the brother-sister duo off the bike on the road.

Then, he dragged his sister by the hair, tore her clothes and shot her five times at point blank range. The injured man said the attack was over even before he could pick himself up and save his sister.

Rohit Singh Sajwan, Bareilly Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), said while police teams were searching for Rajneesh, he walked into the SSP office, later on Tuesday afternoon, and surrendered along with the murder weapon.

He said he killed the girl because she did not keep her promise of marrying him.

Some villagers claimed the girl broke off ties with Rajneesh after her parents came to know about their relationship and did not approve of it. They fixed her marriage elsewhere and she was ready to follow her parents' wishes.

Six teenagers drown in Telangana's Manair river

Hyderabad | Agencies

Rescue workers on Wednesday pulled out the body of a sixth teenager from the Manair river in Telangana's Sircilla town.

Six boys drowned on Monday when they went for a bath in the river. While bodies of five boys were retrieved on Monday and Tuesday, the search was on for Singam Manoj (16).

A team of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), which rushed from Hyderabad, could not trace the body of Manoj till late Tuesday.

The team resumed the search on Wednesday morning and was successful in tracing the body.

The boys, aged between 13 and



16, had gone for a bath in a check dam on the river. The check dam had breached due to heavy rains in September and the boys apparently thought the waters to be shallow due

to the breach. However, the water level proved to be deeper than they anticipated. None of the boys knew swimming.

Local officials said due to the breach, sand from the check dam had washed away, leaving a deep ditch. This was where the boys drowned.

According to police, a group of nine students from Zilla Parishad High School had gone for a bath. While two sat on the river bank, the other seven went into the water. Only one of them managed to get out as he had not waded too deep.

The body of Kolipaka Ganesh (15) was found the same day while bodies of Teegala Ajay (14), Konga Rakesh (15), Jadala Venkata Sai (14) Konga Rakesh (15) and Sriram

Kranthi Kumar (14) were recovered on Tuesday.

They all belonged to the families of workers. The tragedy plunged the families into gloom.

Industry and Information Technology Minister K.T. Rama Rao, who is a member of Assembly from Sircilla, expressed shock over the incident.

He had directed officials to send Disaster Response Force teams from Hyderabad for the rescue operations.

The Minister assured that the government would look after the families of the victims.

He urged the public to be cautious while venturing into water bodies in Sircilla as most of them were overflowing.

COVID RESTRICTIONS COMPLETELY LIFTED IN MADHYA PRADESH

"All the social, political, sports, entertainment, cultural and religious gatherings will be allowed to take place with full capacity," said the CM.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government on Wednesday decided to lift all Covid restrictions in the state following reduction in cases. Now, gathering for all activities- social, political, religious will be allowed at full capacity. Restaurants, cinema halls, theatres, sports activities etc would also be allowed to function at 100 per cent capacity.

Similarly, the state government has announced to allow schools, colleges, coaching centres, hostels to operate at 100 per cent capacity. Swimming pools, public transports, Yoga events too will have no curbs.

Business activities like, restaurants, eateries, hotels, weekly and daily markets will now be allowed to function at full capacity.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the decision after the state recorded just 78 active COVID-19 cases. "People can invite any number of guests in marriage and other functions. There would also be no restriction for gathering at funerals," Chouhan said. The announcement was made after the current situation of the Covid pandemic was reviewed in a meeting of cabinet ministers with senior officials.

Chouhan said the state has reported five new Covid cases in the last 24 hours, while the tally of active cases stand at 78.

Chouhan further said that night curfew will be lifted on Wednesday adding that cinema halls, malls, swimming pools,



gyms, yoga centers, restaurants, clubs, schools, colleges, hostels, coaching classes will be able to operate with 100 per cent capacity.

"Observing that the Covid situation is under control, we have decided to ease all restrictions imposed to curb Covid pandemic in the state. However, it has to be ensured that Covid appropriate behaviour is followed in all the institutions, markets and offices. I would urge people to co-operate with medical staff when they visit their homes for Covid sample testing," Chouhan added during a post-meeting press briefing.

Meanwhile, Chouhan also informed that over 91 per cent eligible people in the state have received their first dose of Covid vaccine, whereas, more than 50 per cent (at current 47 per cent) are yet to get their second dose.

Chief Minister Chouhan gave these instructions while reviewing the situation of Covid in the state at Mantralaya

on Wednesday. Chouhan said that a long period has been spent amid restrictions. The decision to lift the restrictions has been taken after deliberating on the overall situation.

Chouhan said that vaccination is useful and the only way for prevention from Covid. This is an effective solution. Everyone should get both doses of the vaccine. Social organizations, crisis management groups, local administration as well as every citizen have to ensure that everyone understands the importance of this important health protection cycle and sees that everyone including us, should get both doses of the vaccine compulsorily.

It was informed in the meeting that the first dose of vaccine has been administered to 91.6 percent of the eligible people in the state. The percentage of those who took the second dose is 47.3. 25-30 positive cases are being reported daily.

MP govt reduces VAT on ATF to 4% from 25%

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government has decided to reduce the Value Added Tax (VAT) on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) to four per cent at Bhopal and Indore airports. The move is aimed to enhance air connectivity which will help bring down airfares. As per a senior official at Bhopal's Raja Bhoj airport, currently, VAT on ATF was 25 per cent at both Bhopal and Indore airports.

The decision to slash VAT on ATF was taken in a cabinet meeting held on Tuesday, though it was announced by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday.

"Happy to share that after giving relief to the people on petrol and diesel, my govt have decided to reduce VAT on ATF to 4 per cent at Bhopal and Indore. This decision will encourage airlines to increase their frequencies and add new routes from MP," Chouhan said in his official Twitter handle.

The VAT on ATF at three other airports in the states - Gwalior, Jabalpur and Khajuraho at 4 per cent, in the same line, the state government has decided to rationalise at Bhopal and Indore too by reducing it from 25 per cent to 4 per cent, the government said in an official communication on Wednesday. Sources said the move came following Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia's recommendation. Scindia had earlier written to Shivraj Singh Chouhan demanding that VAT on ATF in Madhya Pradesh be reduced to a uniform 4 per cent to attract more flights to his home state.

MP family faces Panchayat's ire for refusing to give land for temple

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Panchayat has told victim family to put turbans at their feet, cut off beard, drink cow urine and keep panchayat members' shoes on their head for atonement."

ban at their feet, shave off his beard, drink cow urine and put the panchayat members' shoes on his head for atonement." The complainant further added that in the wake of social boycott, his family is facing a lot of hardships. "We have been barred from meeting people in the village. One of my brothers has died of cardiac arrest due to this social stigma," he said.

Ghoshi told the district collector that his parents had donated a piece of land for construction of a temple, but the gram panchayat is demanding more for the extension of the temple.

When the family refused to part with the land, the villagers held a gram sabha and announced to boycott the family.

Ghoshi complained that there was a wedding in his family recently, people from his community refused to attend the function, citing the panchayat's instructions.

Guna district collector Frank Nobel said, "A complaint was received during a public hearing and an order has been issued to conduct inquiry in the matter."



Power consumers should take advantage of Samadhan Yojana: Energy Minister

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Energy Minister Pradyumna Singh Tomar has informed that "Samadhan Yojana" has been implemented with the objective of providing relief to the consumers in the payment of deferred amount of surcharge and principal dues of the bills of up to August 31, 2020 of domestic electricity consumers with a combined load of up to one kilowatt. Tomar has urged the consumers to avail the benefits of the scheme by choosing any one option out of the 2 options available in the scheme. Consumers will be able to apply for the benefit of this scheme by December 15,

2021 in the format prescribed by the distribution company. It is noteworthy that in view of the difficulties being faced by the low income domestic electricity consumers in payment of electricity bills due to the outbreak of Corona epidemic, the recovery of principal arrears and surcharge till 31 August 2020 for the bills of the domestic consumers with a combined load of up to one kilowatt was postponed.

Two options have been provided to the consumers for payment of deferred amount in the Samadhan Yojana. In the first option, on payment of 60 percent of the deferred principal amount in lumpsum, 100 percent of the subsidy will be given to the distri-

bution company. Energy Minister Tomar has directed the distribution companies to ensure that all the applications received in the scheme till the last date of December 15, should be resolved within 30 days. If the electricity consumer

does not submit the application till the last date of the scheme, the bills of the coming month will be issued by including the amount deferred by the distribution company. He has also given instructions to give wide publicity to the scheme.



Kamal Nath calls tribal leaders for meeting on November 24

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Congress Chief and former party's MLAs and other leaders of Schedule Tribes (ST) for a meeting in the state capital on November 24 to chalk out strategy for the upcoming panchayat elections.

"All leaders and workers of all 89 tribal dominated blocks of 22 districts will be present in the meeting in view of party's preparation for upcoming gram panchayat elections in the state," a party spokesperson said.

in the state. In September too, the Congress had organised an event to bring all tribal leaders and workers on one stage.

The State Election Commission has already issued instructions to Panchayat and Rural Development Department to prepare for elections, which will be held in three phases from December 20 to January 3.

On the other hand, the BJP-led state government on Wednesday kicked off scheme - 'Ration Apake Gram' in 89 tribal-dominated areas in the state.



CM planted Paras Peepal and Karanj saplings in Smart Garden

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Paras Peepal and Karanj saplings in Smart Garden along with the officials of Water Aid India organisation today. Chouhan also offered Shrardhaan and got information about the upkeep of other plants. The office bearers of the organisation Jitendra Parmar, Taqeer Ahmed and Amar Prakash told Chief Minister that their organisation is a national level non-government organisation. The organisation mainly works in the field of water and sanitation and is striving to ensure drinking water and sanitation in Madhya Pradesh for the last 20 years. It is working on improving access to water and sanitation in 15 habitations and 14 schools in the Bhopal city and community based decentralized drinking water facility in 10 habitations. It is also conducting community, department level training and capacity building in relation to water source maintenance and water quality. The organisation is trying to create awareness on water conservation in four government schools. More



Various entertaining competitions will be held in Nimar

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Principal Secretary Culture and Tourism Sheo Shekhar Shukla said that various entertaining competitions would be organised along with cultural presentations in the Nimar Utsav. Cultural presentations and various activities will be organised every day from 7 pm in Nimar Utsav to be held from November 19 to 21 at Devi Ahilya Ghat, Maheshwar in Khargone district. The Nimar festival will have art and culture lovers as well as engaging activities for all age groups. The event is

being organised under the joint aegis of Directorate of Culture, Tribal Folk Arts and Dialect Development Academy, South Central Zone Cultural Centre, Nagpur and District Archaeological Tourism and Culture Council, Khargone. Shukla said that in the Nimar Utsav this year, handloom walk is being organised by the Tourism Department for tourists on November 20 and 21 from 10 am to 12 noon. In the handloom walk, tourists will visit the weavers village with the help of local guides. This will increase the income of the local weavers as well as

provide interesting information to the tourists about the art of weaving. Shri Shukla has cordially invited all the citizens to the Nimar festival. Admission to the presentations will be free for all. In Nimar Utsav, on November 19, there will be a rally in the School of Excellence from 8 am, Kabaddi competition for boys group from 9 am and Rangoli competition, boat decoration competition and martial arts demo from 2 pm at Devi Ahilya Ghat. On the same day Durga dance drama in Gangaur and Kathak style will be presented by Kishore Hampali and colleagues of

Mahajan and companions of Barwah and Padmashri Malini Awasthi of Lucknow will present Awadhī singing. Similarly, on the second day on November 20, there will be a wrestling competition in the boys and girls category from 10 am in the School of Excellence. After that Mehndi competition will be held at Devi Ahilya Ghat from 12 noon, Malkham demo at Navra Saudi Ghat and Kayaking demo at Devi Ahilya Ghat from 6:30 pm. In the evening of the same day Ganga Jamuna-Saraswati based Triveni dance drama will be presented by Kishore Hampali and colleagues of

Nagpur and Jaya Nritya Natika in Bundeli and contemporary dance forms will be presented by Yogendra Singh Rajput and colleagues of Bhopal. This will be followed by devotional singing Prajakta Modak of Indore and her companions. On the last day of Nimar Utsav, on November 21, at 9 am, a Kabaddi competition of girls category will be organised in the School of Excellence and 50m Kayaking competition will be organised at Devi Ahilya Ghat from 10 am. On the same day, from 7 pm in the evening, Manjunani Hatvalne and colleagues of

Adhya Nritya Natika Bhopal will perform in Bharat-Natyam style. After this, a Kavi Sammelan (poets meet) will be held, in which Surendra Sharma of Delhi, Jagdish Solanki of Kota, Devvrat Bajpai of Lucknow, Kirti Kale of Delhi, Sandeep Sharma of Dhar, Jagdish Joshi of Gogawala, Harish Dubey of Maheshwar, Virendra Choure of Pandhara, Deepak Pagare of Sanawad, Narendra Joshi of Khargone, Vijay Sharma of Khalghat and Brijesh Badole of Khargone will give performance of their compositions.

Water Resources Minister calls on CM

Water Resources Minister Tulsiram Silawat apprised Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan with information about departmental activities

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was called on by Water Resources Minister Tulsiram Silawat on Wednesday at his residence. Silawat informed the Chief Minister about the schemes and development works being undertaken by the department. He said that instructions have been given to identify two ponds each in all districts of the state from the point of view of water conservation in the reservoirs of the state. These ponds will be renovated, beautified and deepened. Silawat informed that a massive plantation campaign will also be launched in all the districts of the state for water conservation, for restoration of ponds and for environmental improvement. This work will begin from Indore district. Work will be started by taking at least two ponds of each district as a pilot project after discussing with the concerned District Collectors of all the districts and the CEOs of District Panchayat. All the work will be done with MNREGA and Water Resources Department through public participation.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Facebook is still risky!

Despite announcing changes to its advertising rules for children in July this year, Facebook (now called Meta) is still tracking and harvesting children's personal data to fuel their advertising delivery system, a new research has shown. The only difference is that the kids' targeting by Facebook is 'optimised' by a highly-trained artificial intelligence (AI) 'Delivery System', according to a new report by non-profits Fairplay, Global Action Plan and Reset Australia. On July 27, Facebook announced changes to its advertising rules for children, claiming to have 'heard from youth advocates' about these concerns. This precautionary approach meant "that previously available targeting options, like those based on interests or on their activity on other apps and websites, will no longer be available to the advertisers". The researchers said that they are calling on Facebook to go on record to correct its claims, and end surveillance advertising for children and teens across all its platforms. One estimate suggests that by the time a child turns 13, advertisers already hold over 72 million data points about him/her, and the surveillance advertising industry for children is worth in excess of \$1 billion. Facebook has faced strong international criticism for its surveillance advertising practices for children. Earlier this year, youth advocates in Australia and the US had outlined that Facebook's targeting processes allowed advertisers to target children interested in alcohol, gambling and weight loss. Facebook-owned Instagram had said last month that it would soon roll out two new tools to safeguard teenagers from harmful content, after whistleblower Frances Haugen testified before the US Congress that Instagram can have a negative effect on the mental health of teenagers. The researchers stressed that Facebook's ad delivery system continues to harvest teen data, for the sole purpose of serving them surveillance advertising, with all the associated concerns.

absolute edit

SEEDS OF HOPE AND TRUST

HERE IS HOW INDIA CAN BEND THE ARC OF HUNGER, OPTOPOLITICS IN AFGHANISTAN

Robinder Nath Sachdev & Dr. Anand Kumar Agnihotri

The title of this column today is inspired by the title of a piece that your author wrote way back in 2007, when the US-India civil nuclear deal was being negotiated. Therein I had argued that the US-India nuclear deal was not only about energy -- but that rather it was more a deal about "Atoms of Peace and Trust" between the United States and India.

Once the deal was done, there was a quantum jump in mutual trust between the two countries - and it marks a historic milestone of a hockey-stick curve upswing in US-India relations. Now, we are in 2021, and I invite you dear reader, to join me in a 5-minute read below, and let us sow seeds of hope and trust between India and Afghanistan.

The children and people of Afghanistan are in midst of harshest conditions of hunger. According to reports, 95 per cent of the people in Afghanistan do not have enough food, and more than half of Afghanistan's 39 million people are "marching to starvation". With winter approaching, this onslaught will exact a cruel toll of human life in Afghanistan.

The world community must do its utmost to alleviate this hunger. While it is separately tackling the wider socio-economic-politico-security challenges of Afghanistan. It is laudable that the Indian government, recognizing the gravity of the humanitarian crisis, and in empathy and sympathy with the children and people of a proud and war-torn nation, has offered to immediately donate 50,000 tonnes of wheat-grains to Afghanistan.

Seeds of hope and trust In above backdrop, the think tank Imagindia Institute, and the Lemonade Party, a global motivational movement with a motto to make lemonade when life gives you lemons, are urging that India could execute a masterstroke of innovation in food security for

Afghanistan -- by doing just a tad little more than what it is already planning.

The suggestion is, India must add a block of 1,000 tonnes of "Seeds of Hope and Trust", in addition to the 50,000 tonnes of wheat-grains that will be sent to Afghanistan. This extra 1,000 tonnes would be wheat-seeds that our Afghan brothers and sisters can sow, and keep reaping the benefits for several years. Let us unpack the nuances and value of such a gift, below.

A gift that keeps giving -- seeds of hope and trust While the 50,000 tonnes of wheat-grains from India that reach Afghanistan will be consumed within weeks or months, the additional 1,000 tonnes of the seeds of hope and trust will be a gift to the Afghan people that will keep producing about 30,000 tonnes of wheat-grains, year on year.

Within 9 months of sowing, under Afghan conditions, the 1,000 tonnes of the wheat-seeds will produce a first crop of about 30,000 tonnes of wheat-grains. Out of these 30,000 tonnes, 1,000 tonnes would be kept aside as wheat-seeds to sow the next crop, and the balance 29,000 tonnes can be consumed.

This cycle can be repeated every year, and will provide 29,000 tonnes of wheat-grains per year, for the next 4 years at least. The returns will be manifold for both Afghanistan and India.

1. Will add to the food security of Afghanistan, on a year-on-year sustainable basis. 2. India will earn ongoing goodwill of Afghan people, every year, at harvest time.

3. and, will bring worldwide respect for India's innovation in agricultural practices and diplomacy to solve challenges of world hunger.

Talk of a gift that keeps giving! Also, reminds of the old adage -- don't just give fish, but teach how to fish. Here below is how this can be

done, and done well. The calculus of wheat in Afghanistan

The Lemonade Party has done research to evaluate the technical pragmatism of our call to send seeds of hope and trust to Afghanistan, as a piggy-back to the donation of wheat-grains.

Your column of today, has discussed with some of the world's top experts in agriculture, soil sciences, wheat varieties, and with field experiences in Afghanistan, to arrive at a conclusion that should be able deliver on the promise as set out in this column.

India does already have some wheat-seed varieties that could be suitable for the rugged environs of Afghanistan, including a variety that has been specifically developed for the highland, cold regions of Afghanistan. Therefore, we have identified a most appropriate seed variety for this initiative of seeds of hope and trust. As compared to India, where one crop of wheat is harvested in about 6 months (and in balance 6 months of the year, 2-3 other crops are harvested from the same farmland), in Afghanistan the wheat crop cycle takes about 9 months (and in balance 3 months of the year farmers may, or may not, grow some local, seasonal produce). In highland cold regions of Afghanistan, wheat is sown in the months of October-November, and it remains under snow till February. The buried seedlings start growing once the snow melts, and the crop is harvested in April to June.

In usual Indian conditions, one kilogram of wheat-seeds produce about 55 kg of wheat-grains. Accounting for Afghanistan conditions, and highland cold regions, the yield of the wheat-seeds chosen for this exercise is expected to be about 30 kilograms of wheat-grains, for every kilogram of wheat-seeds. Thus, 1,000 tonnes of the wheat-seeds would yield about 30,000 tonnes of wheat-grains, every year in Afghanistan.

Another reason for low produc-



tivity in Afghanistan, other than soil conditions, is that they use very little fertilizers in farming on account of non-availability, and many fertilizer chemicals are banned there.

Fertilizer chemicals are banned because these can be used to make explosives, IEDs, and such. In absence of fertilizers, crops in Afghanistan yield a low productivity. Thus, a recap - as mentioned earlier, the 1,000 tonnes of wheat-seeds will produce a crop of 30,000 tonnes of wheat-grains every year in Afghanistan. Out of the 30,000 tonnes produced, 1,000 tonnes would be kept aside every year, to be used as seeds for the next sowing season. Therefore, 29,000 tonnes of wheat-grains will be available for consumption, every year. Delivering a caravan of seeds of hope and trust to Afghanistan. India has donated wheat-grains to Afghanistan in past years also -- but that was via the cumbersome sea-route. Last year, India donated 75,000 tonnes of wheat-grains which were sent via the sea route from Kandla port in India to the Chabahar port in Iran, and then trucking from Chabahar to the Iran-Afghan border in the remote south-east province of Nimroz in Afghanistan. However, this time round, India is proposing to instead deliver the shipment of 50,000 tonnes of wheat-grains via the shorter land route, a mere 650 km to

Afghanistan border from the Attari-Wagah border, via Pakistan.

Permissions from Pakistan to send this humanitarian aid to Afghanistan are of course key to implement the delivery. Given the state of India-Pakistan relations, Pakistan has been trying to ignore, stone-wall this delivery. However, a range of diplomatic and geopolitical efforts are at play, and given the humanitarian urgency there is a decent chance that Pakistan will acquiesce -- with some usual conditions of international customs, and cross-border travel. Last week, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, in talks with Taliban leaders in Islamabad, is reported to have told them that if they request for the Indian shipment to be allowed to transit Pakistan, then Pakistan may consider to help its Afghan neighbours. Now, to carry these 50,000 tonnes, it would need about 5,000 trucks (say, more or less) to start rolling their wheels from Attari-Wagah, travel across Pakistan, and reach Afghanistan. An extra 1,000 tonnes of seeds of hope and trust, will mean only an additional 100 trucks, that could easily be part of this caravan. Thus, instead of 5,000 trucks, it shall be 5,100 trucks. With a massive exercise planned out with 5,000 trucks -- what is an additional 100 trucks?

It is time for India to send seeds of hope and trust to Afghanistan

international

UAE to purchase S Korean

M-SAM missiles in \$3.5bn deal

Seoul|Agencies

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has said it plans to purchase South Korean-made mid-range surface-to-air missiles in a deal likely to reach US\$3.5 billion. The UAE's Ministry of Defense tweeted on Tuesday that it plans to acquire the missile, known as M-SAM. It did not elaborate further. An official at South Korea's Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) called the UAE's announcement "positive" but noted negotiations have yet to be finalized, Yonhap news agency reported. "We still need to see how negotiations on the details will proceed," a DAPA official said on condition of

anonymity. The M-SAM system, called "Cheongung II," is a core element of South Korea's multi-layered anti-missile program. Cheongung means heaven's bow in Korean. Employing the "hit-to-kill" technology, the missile is designed to intercept hostile missiles coming in at altitudes below 40 kilometers. The state-run Agency for Defense Development launched the project to develop the M-SAM in 2012. The missile passed a suitability evaluation for field operations in 2017, and its mass-production began the following year. A series of local defense firms, including LIG Nex1 and Hanwha Systems, have participated in the manufacturing of the missile.

FM Chung calls for cooperation among S.

Korea, China, Japan to overcome 'differences'

Seoul|Agencies

South Korea's Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong on Wednesday called for steadfast trilateral cooperation among Seoul, Beijing and Tokyo to overcome "differences", amid lingering tensions among the countries over historical, territorial and geopolitical issues. Chung made the remarks during a meeting with senior officials of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS), a Seoul-based organization launched in 2011 to promote cooperation among South Korea, China and Japan, Yonhap news agency reported.

"The three countries are



another, and there could be differences on specific issues," Chung told the officials, including TCS Secretary-General OU Boqian. "Given that they share similar cultural backgrounds, the countries will

be able to overcome differences through steadfast cooperation and move forward toward co-prosperity," the minister added.

Chung also stressed that the post-pandemic period will call for greater cooperation among

nations, while voicing hope that next year's Winter Olympics in Beijing would serve as an opportunity for the three countries to enhance cooperation.

The TCS secretary general called for Seoul's continued support for the secretariat's efforts to become a "symbol of institutionalized cooperation in Northeast Asia."

Wednesday's meeting comes amid continued rows between Seoul and Tokyo over trade and historical issues, while Seoul is striving to map out a strategy to steer clear of geopolitical tensions caused by an intensifying Sino-US rivalry.

sure cannot help improve our relations," he said.

The Afghan economy after the Taliban's takeover in mid-August has suffered from the US freezing of over \$9 billion in assets belonging to the Afghan central bank as well as a halt in funds by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Xinhua news agency reported.

"It is necessary for both sides to take positive steps in order to build trust," Muttaqi said.

Afghanistan is concerned that with no change in the current situation, the Afghan people will face greater difficulties and the country will become a source of mass migration in the region and the world, which will create more humanitarian and economic problems for the world, he noted.

Senior S Korean, US diplomats discuss N. Korea, end-of-war declaration

Seoul|Agencies

South Korea's vice foreign minister held talks with his US counterpart and discussed ways to bring North Korea back to dialogue, including the possible declaration of a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War, Seoul's foreign ministry said on Wednesday.

During the 60-minute talks in Washington DC on Tuesday, South Korea's First Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-kun and US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman also discussed the alliance and other issues of common interest, including Covid-19 vaccines and the global supply chain crisis, according to the ministry, Yonhap news agency reported.

"The vice ministers assessed seamless communications and coordination under way at all levels on ways to make progress in the Korea peace process, including the end-of-war declaration, and agreed to continue consultations on practical measures to bring North Korea to the dialogue table,"



declaration, if issued, will help restart denuclearization negotiations with North Korea, which have stalled since 2019. It is running out of time, with the election to pick Moon's successor slated for March next year.

Concerns have persisted that the allies may have divergent views, or even a rift, on the matter. US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan earlier publicly that the two sides may differ "on the precise sequence or timing or conditions for different steps" for the declaration. On Thursday, South Korea's top diplomat Chung Eui-

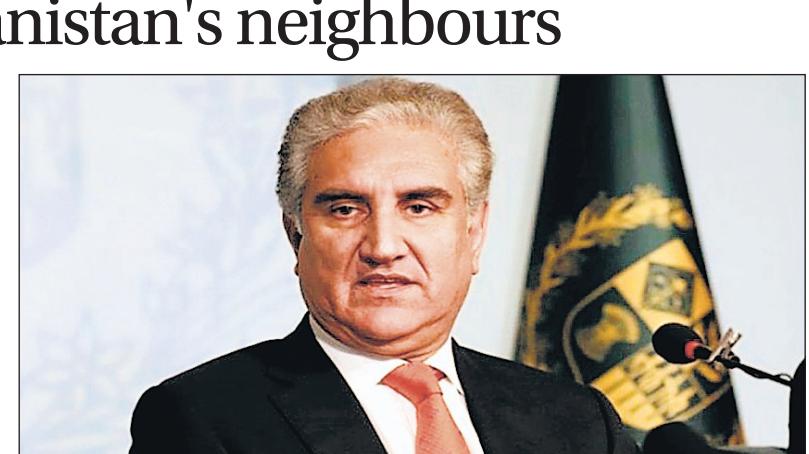
Pak to invite Afghan Taliban to ministerial meet of Afghanistan's neighbours

Islamabad|Agencies

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that Islamabad will be inviting the Afghan Taliban to be part of the upcoming third ministerial meeting of Afghanistan's neighbours. Qureshi said "Afghanistan's interim government will also be invited to the next meeting of Afghanistan's neighbours", as part of the country's new formulated mechanism to keep constructive engagement with Afghanistan.

The ministerial meeting of Afghanistan's neighbours comprises China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Russia. The inclusion of Afghanistan is part of Islamabad's strategy of active consultation and work towards formulation of a plan that should ensure an all-inclusive setup, which should be acceptable by the global community and would attract global recognition for the Afghan government in Afghanistan. This is the first time that Afghan Taliban interim government will be invited to the meeting. The previous two meetings, inaugural held in Islamabad on September 8 and second hosted by Iran on October 27, did not extend invitation to the Afghan Taliban because the interim Afghan Taliban setup lacked global recognition.

However, extending invitation for the third meeting at a time when no country has recognised the Taliban government setup in Afghanistan, certainly has raised eyebrows. During the second meeting, a joint communiqué called on the international community to remain positively engaged with Afghanistan and develop a long-term roadmap to advance the agenda of political engagement, economic integration and regional connectivity. As per details, the third meeting will be hosted by China, which is likely to be held early next year. The Afghan Taliban maintain that de facto recognition of the Taliban was already there. Afghan interim foreign minister Muttaqi, during his visit to Islamabad, hoped that de jure acceptance would also happen soon. Pakistan's foreign minister Qureshi said that the world will have to accept the reality that "war in Afghanistan has ended and the Taliban are in power". Pakistan has maintained and urged the international community to opt for the policy of consistent and positive engagement with the Taliban. Pakistan has also called on the Afghan Taliban government to work towards addressing pivotal concerns of the international community to seek early recognition.





Mumbai court accepts plea to declare ex-top cop Param Bir Singh as 'Proclaimed Absconder'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a significant development, a magistrate's court in Mumbai on Wednesday accepted a plea move by the Mumbai Police to declare ex-city Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh as a 'Proclaimed Absconder' for his alleged involvement in an extortion case lodged against him.

The development follows an application filed by the Mumbai Police seeking a declaration to this effect with regard to Singh, who is 'untraceable' since several months now.

Allowing the police plea, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate S.B. Bhajipale passed the order against Singh.

Earlier, courts in Mumbai and Thane had issued non-bailable warrants against the ex-Mumbai top cop, presently designated as Director-General, Maharashtra Home Guards.

Besides Singh, the police had sought a similar declaration against two other co-accused in the same case -- suspended policeman Riyaz Bhati and Vinay alias

Bablu Singh.

The three had been accused in a case filed based on a complaint lodged by Mumbai hotelier Bimal Agarwal against the trio, besides dismissed cop Sachin Vaze, in an extortion case.

Agarwal had alleged in his complaint that

Singh and Vaze had extorted cash and valuables worth Rs 11 lakh from him for not 'raiding' his restaurant in January 2020 and March 2021.

Showing the NBWs against Singh to Bhajipale, advocate Shekhar Jagtap, appearing for the Mumbai Police, said that

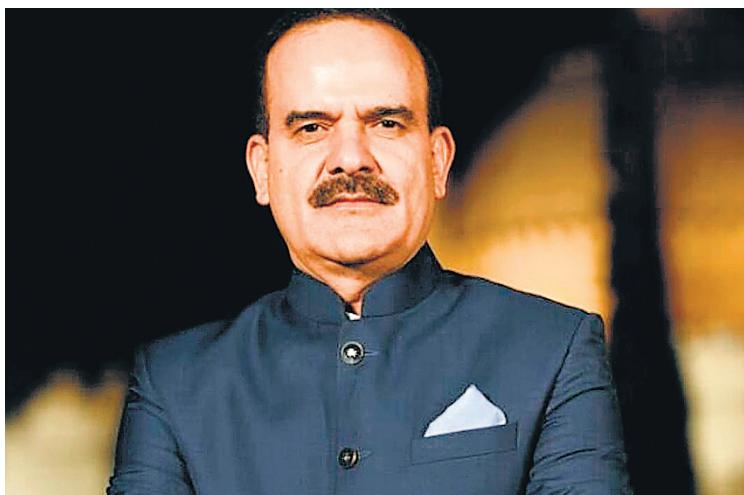
the police had deputed teams to execute the warrants at the last known addresses of the accused trio.

However, they failed to trace them and also learnt that the accused have not visited their homes since the case was lodged against them, and their present whereabouts are not known.

There have been allegations from various politicians that Singh may have sneaked out of the country to evade action planned by the Mumbai Police against him in various cases.

The police sought that the missing trio be declared as 'absconders' under the CrPC Section 82, which was allowed by Bhajipale.

However, BJP's Leader of Opposition in Maharashtra, Pravin Darekar, dismissed the development, saying that the state government should concentrate on the burning issue of state transport (ST) strike. Well-known criminal lawyer Ujjwal Nikam said that with this, the police can initiate the formalities for serving the 30-day notice and then attach the movable and immovable assets of the accused.



Judge Hearing Money Laundering Case Against Anil Deshmukh Transferred

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai: Special judge HS Satbhai, who was hearing the applications of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for remand of former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh in a money laundering case and other cases pertaining to MPs and MLAs, has been transferred to Yavatmal district by the Bombay High Court with immediate effect.

He had been hearing cases pertaining to MPs and MLAs since July this year at the sessions court in Mumbai.

On Monday, judge Satbhai had remanded Deshmukh in 14-day judicial custody.

Besides Deshmukh's case, judge Satbhai was also hearing a case against Maharashtra minister Chhagan

Bhujbal in connection with the alleged Maharashtra Sadan scam and discharged the latter.



Deshmukh was arrested on November 1 by the ED under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

In a notification issued on Monday, the Bombay High Court said it was pleased to transfer and post H S Satbhai, Judge, City Civil Court and

Additional Sessions Judge, Mumbai as District Judge - 2 and Additional Sessions Judge, Kelapur, district Yavatmal with immediate effect.

Yavatmal district in east Maharashtra is located 685 km away from Mumbai. Judge Satbhai recently discharged Bhujbal and others in the Maharashtra Sadan case, observing that there was no "substantial material" to suggest that he and his family received any kind of "illegal gratification" in the contract for constructing new Maharashtra Sadan in Delhi.

Judge Satbhai was also hearing the pre-arrest bail plea of former Shiv Sena MP Anand Adsul in a case pertaining to an alleged scam in a cooperative bank. He was also hearing the alleged Pune land deal case involving former Maharashtra minister Eknath Khadse, an NCP leader.

Maha Cyber gets 36 SM posts on Tripura violence deleted

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Cyber, a nodal agency for cyber security and investigation for the state, has asked different social media platforms to delete at least 36 "offensive" posts found circulating in the wake of alleged communal incidents in Tripura, an official said on Wednesday.

Last week, various places in Amravati, Nanded, Malegaon (Nashik), Washim and Yavatmal in Maharashtra had witnessed stone-pelting during rallies taken out by some organisations protesting the violence in Tripura. "Maharashtra Cyber was constantly monitoring the social media platforms to avoid untoward incidents after the violence in Amravati, Nashik rural, Nanded, Yavatmal and

Washim. The cyber wing has identified at least 36 offensive posts on social media platforms, most of them on Twitter," the official said.

At least 25 such objectionable posts were found on Twitter, six on Facebook and five on Instagram. They were found posted on the platforms between November 12 and 15, he said.

"In those posts, the users had spread misinformation, which could have posed problems in terms of the law and order situation," the official said, adding that in some posts, videos and photos of violence were shared, which could hurt the sentiments of some community. "Taking cognisance of those posts, Maharashtra Cyber sent letters to the concerned social media platforms, asking them to delete the posts.



Accordingly, some posts have been deleted, while others will be removed soon," he said. On November 12, stone-pelting was witnessed in Amravati, Malegaon and some other cities in Maharashtra during rallies taken out by Muslim organisations protesting against the violence in Tripura. On November 13, a mob hurled stones at shops in Amravati's Rajkamal Chowk area during a bandh (shut-down) called by the BJP, prompting the police to impose curfew. Recently, Tripura witnessed incidents of arson, looting and violence after reports emerged from Bangladesh that the Hindu minorities there had been attacked during 'Durga Puja'.

Maha Cong seeking legal view on Kangana's remarks

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Congress is seeking a legal opinion on recent comments made by Kangana Ranaut and a party leader had already requested the police to register a complaint against her, Maharashtra party unit president Nana Patole said on Wednesday and dubbed the Bollywood actor's



remarks 'anti-national'.

Speaking to reporters Mumbai, Patole said Congress will take a firm stand against such 'coordinated' attacks.

Days after her India's independence in 1947 was 'bheekh' remarks triggered a row, Ranaut on Tuesday claimed Subhas Chandra Bose and Bhagat Singh got no support from Mahatma Gandhi and went on to mock his mantra of ahimsa by saying that offering another cheek gets you 'bheekh' not freedom.

She had described India's Independence as 'bheekh', or alms, and declared that freedom came in 2014 when the Narendra Modi-led government came to power.

In a series of posts on Instagram, Ranaut this time targeted Mahatma Gandhi and said 'choose your heroes wisely'.

"There are some Hindi film actors who are given some awards and being used to distort the historical facts. We are seeking a legal opinion on the

matter. Once we arrive at a decision, the party will take its next firm stand regarding such coordinated attacks," Patole said when asked about comments made by Ranaut.

He said Congress leader Naseem Khan, a former minister, has already requested the police to file a complaint against Ranaut.

Patole said such distortion of facts is an 'anti-national act' but the ruling dispensation is encouraging such comments.

Speaking on the violence that had erupted in Amaravati, Malegaon and Nanded cities in Maharashtra last week, Patole alleged the BJP is playing a communal card in Maharashtra to polarise voters ahead of Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls.

"The police investigation will bring out the truth behind such incidents," he said.

The Congress is one of the constituents in the Shiv Sena-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra.

CBI nabs armymen, IAF official in Pune for graft

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has nabbed two army havaldars and an Indian Air Force civilian official, all based in Pune, in separate cases of alleged corruption, officials said on Wednesday.

According to a complaint lodged with the CBI, the two army officials of the Southern Command in Pune had informed the complainant that he was selected for the post of MTS in the examination conducted by the Army Ordnance Corps, Pune.

The complainant even received a call letter asking him to join the Ordnance Factory, Wardha, by November 19.

Under the pretext of carrying out his early joining formalities, the accused duo -- Susant Nahak and Naveen -- took away the original call letter from the complainant and allegedly demanded a bribe

of Rs 2.50 lakh for its return. They finally agreed for an amount of Rs 50,000, of which Rs 30,000 was transferred through PhonePay to the account of one of the accused. Later, they came to the complainant seeking the remaining of Rs 20,000, but in the process walked into the trap laid by the CBI.

In the second case, the CBI nabbed a civilian officer, Suryakant Sangale, of IAF Pune, for allegedly demanding a bribe of Rs 50,000 and accepting Rs 4,000 as the first instalment from a complainant in return for his transfer to another location.

Later, the CBI raided the premises of the three accused and collected other incriminating evidence and documents.

A special CBI court remanded army havaldars Nahak and Naveen to 5-day and IAF official Sangale to 2-day CBI custody. Further investigations are underway.

Prasar Bharati moving towards direct-to-mobile broadcasting

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Stating that Prasar Bharati had entered into a collaboration with IIT-Kanpur, where a pilot project was underway to work out the feasibility of direct-to-mobile broadcasting, Prasar Bharati CEO Shashi Shekhar Vempati said on Wednesday that if this effort was successful, smartphones would be able to receive broadcast content in the near future.

Speaking at the 10th CII Big Picture Summit, which is being live-streamed online, Vempati said in his keynote address, "In the event of a high-viewership event such as the IPL, there is no reason why millions of users need to receive that content on a unicast mode through the Internet. If this works, all of that content can be delivered directly on broadcast frequencies to the people on their smartphones or smart TVs."

The CEO pointed out that digitisation was one of the key changes that had taken place over the last three or four years since he had joined the public broadcaster.

"Practically every Doordarshan channel and All India Radio station now has a digital presence spanning multiple platforms, be it YouTube for

livestreaming or on social media to engage with the audience," he said, and added that the Prasar Bharati app, which has 200-plus radio streams, was one of a kind in the world, for, irrespective of where one was in the world, one could listen to one's hometown radio station.

CII organises the Big Picture Summit every year to discuss opportunities and address challenges. This year's theme is: 'Scaling New Heights of Content, Creativity and Innovation'.

The summit's primary objective is to discuss global trends and opportunities, macroeconomic turbulences leading to a softening of revenues, understanding domestic consumer preferences, and the growing focus on local opportunities for a global audience.



An official said that earlier, the BEST had launched special limited hour tourism services to see some of the iconic landmarks of Mumbai which are illuminated. Recently, it has re-launched the open-deck BEST services for tourists in specified locations in south Mumbai with services operated from Gateway of India at 5, 6.30 and 8 p.m. daily, and ticket rates of Rs 150 for upper and Rs 75 for lower deck seats. Varade said that Ho-Ho Mumbai Tourism would be drastically different from the regular city tourist buses of private players. "In Ho-Ho, the tourists can get off at any spot en route, go around as much as they want and hop onto the next service to go to the next destination, on the same ticket," Varade explained.

Actors Like Salman Khan Should Encourage Muslims For Covid Vaccination: Mumbai Mayor

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Expressing concerns over "religious apprehensions among Muslims" on COVID-19 vaccination, Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar on Wednesday hoped that celebrities like Salman Khan will help raise awareness among Muslims to get vaccinated. "Whenever vaccination happened there were religious apprehensions in Muslims, which delayed it slightly. Hoping that Muslims will take jabs and actors like Salman Khan should encourage them," said Mumbai Mayor on the issue of the Muslim community not in favour of getting vaccinated against COVID-19.

Earlier today, Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope had said that the state government is in talks with religious leaders and celebrities like Salman Khan to raise awareness on COVID-19 vaccination.

While speaking to an agency, Tope said, "In order to get more people vaccinated, we will be getting religious leaders, celebrities to cre-

ate awareness on vaccination. We are also in talks to bring onboard celebrities like Salman Khan for the awareness drive."



As many as 10,41,16,963 COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in Maharashtra, wherein 6,98,15,228 people were administered the first dose of the vaccine, as per the data of the Union Health Ministry. India's COVID-19 vaccination coverage has exceeded 113.68 crore (1,13,68,79,685) as per provisional reports till 7 am today.



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LADY GAGA PREPARED TO ENTER 'HOUSE OF GUCCI'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-actress Lady Gaga has talked about how she prepared for her role of Patrizia Reggiani in the upcoming film 'House Of Gucci'.

Talking about her preparation, Gaga said: "I spent a lot of time reading about (Patrizia Reggiani), and watching interviews that she gave. I have also watched interviews about her. But I tried not to read anything, or watch anything

that had too much of an opinion, because I really wanted to create my own."

Revealing more about the process of becoming the character, she added: "I really had to build her youth. I believe she was a real woman who fell in love. She not only loved Maurizio, but she loved what he meant to her and the way he empowered her within the family business."

"And when that was taken from her, I believe that she reacted in a way that most women don't, most women don't have their husbands murdered. And, yet I think in that system, with the sort of systemic oppression that she experienced, this happened because she was simply too hurt."

Based on the book 'The House of Gucci: A Sensational Story of Murder, Madness, Glamour, and Greed' by Sara Gay Forden, the film follows the ambitious Patrizia Reggiani as she romances Maurizio Gucci (Adam Driver), and marries her way into the dynastic Italian luxury label.



HARRY STYLES:

MOVIES ARE WHERE I FEEL MOST OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Former One Direction star Harry Styles has opened up about how he wanted to "challenge" himself by venturing into acting.

Styles landed his big-screen debut in Christopher Nolan's 2017 war epic 'Dunkirk', and has since gone on to land roles in psychological thriller 'Don't Worry Darling' and the romantic-drama 'My Policeman', while he has a cameo in Marvel's 'Eternals'.

The 27-year-old singer-and-actor has said that he wanted to "challenge" himself to something different from music, and he's "learned so much" from his experiences on set, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Speaking to the winter 2021 issue of Dazed, he said: "I like to challenge myself and do something different and movies are definitely where I feel most out of my comfort zone. I'm coming from music where I don't think anyone really knows how it works, but I am somewhat in my comfort zone!"

Styles added: "But in movies, when I show up, I'm the new guy. I haven't been (an actor) for a long time and that's really cool, I feel like I've learned so much and life is about learning."

The 'Watermelon Sugar' hitmaker is only briefly in 'Eternals' at the end in a post-credits scene, but he's "so grateful" to have been able to work with director Chloe Zhao.



'Spider-Man: No Way Home' latest trailer brings all villains back

Los Angeles | Agencies

The makers of the much talked about film 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' have dropped a new trailer featuring all the villains from its universe.

The trailer starts from where the previous installment 'Spider-Man: Far From Home' had ended as his identity as Spider-Man is revealed at the end of 2019 film.

Peter Parker seeks the help of Doctor Strange played by Benedict Cumberbatch. But his indecision instead opens the multiverse and unleashes a suite of villains from previous 'Spider-Man' franchises, including Willem Dafoe's Green Goblin from 2002's 'Spider-Man'.

Alfred Molina's Otto Octavius from 'Spider-Man 2', Thomas Haden Church's Sandman from 'Spider-Man 3', Rhys Ifans' the Lizard from 'The Amazing Spider-Man' and Jamie Foxx's Electro from 2014's 'The Amazing Spider-Man 2', reports variety.com.

The presence of so many bad guys from previous franchises of 'Spider-Man' has led expectations that the actors who previously played the character such as Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield to show up as well.

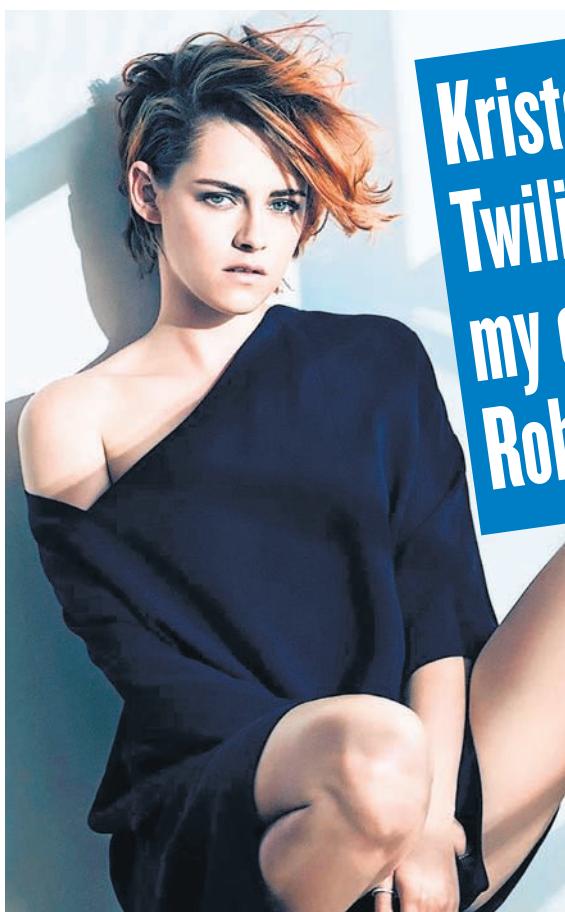
However, the trailer confirmed

that Doc Ock does not consider Holland to be Peter Parker, Maguire and Garfield were nowhere to be seen.

The Tom Holland and Zendaya starrer will also have appearances from Benedict Cumberbatch as Doctor Strange, Jacob Batalon as

Ned Leeds and Marisa Tomei as Aunt May.

Sony Pictures Entertainment India releases 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' in English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu, in cinemas, December 17.



Kristen Stewart: 'Twilight' needed my chemistry with Robert Pattinson

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Kristen Stewart thinks she and actor Robert Pattinson's romance was what the 'Twilight Saga' "needed".

The former couple started dating shortly after 'Twilight', the first film in the series premiered in 2009, and went on to star in another four movies in the franchise, and

although the actress is now engaged to

girlfriend Dylan Meyer.

Stewart said: "(Robert had an) intellectual approach that was combined with 'I don't give a ... about this, but I'm going to make this sing.' And I was, like, 'Ugh, same.' And, whatever, we were young and stupid and, not to say that we made it so much better, but that's what it needed, and that's what anybody playing those parts needed to feel."

The 31-year-old star knew immediately after meeting Pattinson that he was the right person to play vampire Edward Cullen opposite her as Bella Swan, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She told the New Yorker magazine: "It was so clear who worked."

Stewart is working on her movie debut as a director with the adaptation of Lidia Yukavitch's memoir 'The Chronology of Water' and her screenwriter fiancee has been reading drafts of the script.

CHADWICK BOSEMAN'S 'BLACK PANTHER' CHARACTER WON'T BE RECAST BY MARVEL

Los Angeles | Agencies

Late Hollywood star Chadwick Boseman's King T'Challa/Black Panther will never be recast by Marvel following his tragic death, the studio's VP of Development Nate Moore has confirmed.

Moore told The Ringer-verse Podcast: "I'm being quite honest, you will not see T'Challa in the MCU."

Moore revealed that he had discussed potential casting decisions

with Ryan Coogler,

who is returning to direct

'Black Panther: Wakanda Forever',

but the pair ultimately decided

that they "couldn't do it"

without

Boseman,

reports femalefirst.co.uk.

He shared:

"We have to figure

out how to move this franchise on without that character. Because I think we all feel so much of T'Challa in the MCU on the screen... is tied to Chadwick's performance."

"The challenge for 'Black Panther: Wakanda Forever' is telling a story without T'Challa."

Chadwick passed away at the age of 43 in August 2020 after a cancer battle and Coogler previously confirmed that he would have wanted his 'Black Panther' co-stars to press ahead with the story following his tragic death.

The 35-year-old filmmaker said: "You've got to keep going when you lose loved ones. I know Chad wouldn't have wanted us to stop."

Dolph Lundgren to make documentary about himself

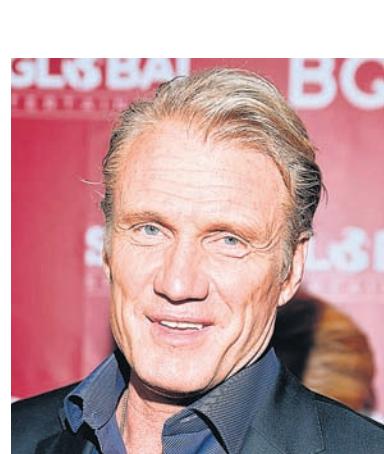
Los Angeles | Agencies

Dolph Lundgren will be the executive producer of 'Dolph', a documentary film about the Swedish actor's own life, chronicling his rise to becoming one of Hollywood's most treasured action stars. Lundgren is most well known among movie watchers for his turns as the Soviet boxer Ivan Drago in 'Rocky IV' and 'Creed II' and his performance as He-Man in 1987's 'Masters of the Universe'. The actor has accrued an impressive catalog of screen credits over his 36-year career, including the 'Expendables' franchise, the 'Universal Soldier' series and 1989's 'The Punisher',

reports variety.com. On the horizon, Lundgren will reprise his 'Aquaman' role as King Nereus in the sequel 'Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom'. "I feel like now is the perfect time to produce this documentary about my life story, because I've now come full circle in a way," Lundgren said in a statement.

He added: "There have been some tough times that I've been through, and I've had to pay a price to get where I am now. This film isn't a celebration of my known successes, rather an examination of a man's journey to truly find himself and the happiness he desires."

"I want audiences to really get to know me, and maybe my story will help



someone understand what they too might have to endure to get to that certain place in their life. Our message is that the journey can be tough, but if you keep going, everyone has a chance to eventually get to their destination."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Salma Hayek


**1ST
T20I**

INDIA BEAT NEW ZEALAND BY FIVE WICKETS, TAKE 1-0 SERIES LEAD

Team Absolute | Jaipur

Outstanding knocks from Rohit Sharma (48), Suryakumar Yadav (62) and Rishabh Pant (17*) guided India to a five-wicket win over New Zealand in a thrilling first T20I, taking 1-0 lead in the three-match series at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium here on Wednesday. Earlier, fantastic half-centuries by Martin Guptill (70 off 42) and Mark Chapman (63 off 50) powered New Zealand to 164-6 in 20 overs. And while chasing a competitive total, openers Rohit and KL Rahul got India off to a flying start. The duo played some beautiful shots and took India to 50/0 in 5 overs. Mitchell Santner gave New Zealand the first breakthrough in the 6th over by removing Rahul, who didn't find the timing and was caught at square leg. Thereafter, Suryakumar Yadav who came in at number three joined forces with his skipper to add another 59 runs for the second wicket. Both Suryakumar and Rohit looked in great touch and it seemed that they would finish the game for India but that didn't happen.

Rohit was dismissed by his



Mumbai teammate Trent Boult in the 14th over while Surya, who went on to hit his third T20I fifty, got out at a time when India were cruising at 144 for 3 in the 17th over. His dismissal gave New Zealand a glimmer of hope and they managed to bring the equation between runs required and balls left to within touching distance. Things got too close for comfort in the final three overs with 21 runs needed off 18 balls for India as Shreyas Iyer and debutant Venkatesh Iyer got out for 5 and 4, respectively. But, Rishabh Pant (17 not out off 17

balls) held his nerve and managed to get the team over the line, with 2 balls to spare.

Earlier, batting first, New Zealand were off to a bad start as they lost the wicket of Daryl Mitchell in the first over. An outstanding in-swinger from Bhuvneshwar Kumar found the gap between Mitchell's bat and pad before crashing into the stumps. With ten overs to go, Guptill shifted gears and targeted Mohammed Siraj, scoring 16 runs in his over. In the next over, Chapman scored his impressive half-century by slamming Axar Patel's full-toss for a huge six over deep square. Deepak Chahar was hit for 10 runs as Chapman and Guptill brought their 100-run partnership, taking Black Caps to 106/1 after 13 overs.

Brief scores
New Zealand: 164/6 in 20 overs (Martin Guptill 70, Mark Chapman 63; Ravichandran Ashwin (2/23) lost to India 166/5 in 19.4 overs (Suryakumar Yadav 62, Rohit Sharma 48; Trent Boult (2/31)

2022 FIFA WORLD CUP QUALIFIER

Bergwijn stunner leads Netherlands to World Cup qualification

The Hague | Agencies

The Netherlands qualified for the 2022 FIFA World Cup after a 2-0 win over Norway in Rotterdam. It was D-day for both teams in De Kuip stadium on Tuesday night. The Netherlands would be certain of World Cup qualification with a win and a draw would normally also be sufficient with a superior goal difference compared to Turkey. Without injured star striker Erling Haaland, Norway needed a win and had to hope for Turkey to drop points at Montenegro. The Netherlands could have already qualified on November 13 against Montenegro, but the "Oranje" squandered a 2-0 lead in Podgorica in the final minutes of that match. It was the first setback for head coach Louis van Gaal since he successfully took over from Frank de Boer after a disappointing Euro 2020. In an empty stadium without spectators due to newly enforced COVID-19 measures, the home team had most ball possession but failed to create many openings in the tight Norwegian defence. The Netherlands qualified for the

World Cup for the 11th time in history and for the first time since 2014. The Dutch were three-time finalists at the 1974, 1978 and 2010 World Cups and finished third in 2014. In other match played at San Juan (Argentina), Argentina and Brazil maintained their unbeaten records in South America's 2022



BOLIVIA SINK URUGUAY TO KEEP WORLD CUP HOPES FLICKERING

La Paz: Juan Arce scored two goals and set up another as Bolivia kept alive their hopes of qualifying for their first FIFA World Cup in almost 30 years with a 3-0 home victory over Uruguay here. Arce opened the scoring in the rarefied air of La Paz, situated 3,600 meters above sea level, with a long-range effort that curled past teammate Marcelo Moreno before slipping through the gloves of goalkeeper Fernando Muslera and rebounding in off the far post. Moreno doubled the lead with a towering header following Arce's corner on the stroke of halftime. The top four teams in the South American group will automatically qualify for football's showpiece tournament in Qatar next year while the fifth-ranked side will advance to an intercontinental playoff.



Argentina's central-western city of San Juan. In another match at Santiago, Pervis Estupinan and Moises Caicedo scored goals in each half as Ecuador edged closer to clinching a place at next year's World Cup with a 2-0 victory over 10-man Chile.

ASIAN ARCHERY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Indian men's compound team wins bronze medal

Dhaka | Agencies

The Indian men's team of compound archers clinched the bronze medal at Asian Archery Championships 2021 after beating Bangladesh, here on Wednesday.

The trio of Abhishek Verma, Rishabh Yadav and Aman Saini got the better of host nation's squad of Mohammad Ashikuzzaman, Nawaz Rakib and Sohel Rana, beating them 235-223. This was India's first podium finish at the ongoing continental event held at the Bangladesh Army Stadium.

Meanwhile, Jyothi Vennam, Abhishek Verma and Mohit have also reached the individual semis, which takes place on Thursday.

India's recurve teams are also in the fray to win gold, with both men's and women's teams reaching their respective finals. On the other hand, the mixed recurve team will contest for the bronze medal. All recurve matches will take place on Friday.

Srikanth, Dhruv-Sikki advance to second round of Indonesia Masters

Bali | Agencies

Ace Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth entered the second round of the men's singles event at the Indonesia Masters 2021 badminton tournament after beating France's Christo Popov, here on Wednesday.

Former world No 1 Srikanth beat Popov 21-18, 15-21, 21-16 in an hour and 15-minute long opening match.

He will now face the winner between Asian Games and Thomas Cup champion Jonatan Christie of Indonesia or Thailand's Sitthikom Thammasin.

In the mixed doubles, the Indian pair of Dhruv Kapila and N Sikki Reddy pulled off an upset as they beat second seeds and home favourites Praveen Jordan and Melati Oktavianti 21-11, 22-20.

The impressive Indian duo played some aggressive badminton to register a convincing victory in just 30 minutes and will now face the pair of Supak Jomkoh and Supissara Paewsampran of Thailand in the next round.



Meanwhile, the 2014 Commonwealth Games champion Parupalli Kashyap crashed out of the Indonesia Masters after losing 10-21 19-21 to Denmark's Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus.

Earlier, two-time Olympic medallists P V Sindhu and Lakshya Sen had reached the second round on Tuesday.

ICC APPOINTS WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW CRICKET IN AFGHANISTAN

Dubai: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday announced the appointment of a working group to review cricketing activities in Afghanistan and the status of the Afghanistan Cricket Board in light of the recent governmental changes in the country. The group comprises ICC deputy chairman Imran Khwaja, who will be the chairman of the working group.

The group includes Cricket Ireland chairman Ross McCollum, Cricket South Africa chair Lawson Naaidoo and Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Ramiz Raja and will report back to the Board over the coming months. Since the Taliban took over the country on August 15, many questions had been raised about the functioning of cricket, especially women's cricket. Cricket Australia (CA) had to postpone the men's Test between Australia and Afghanistan in Hobart due to lack of clarity on women's cricketers being allowed to play in the country.

Ganguly appointed chair of ICC Men's cricket committee

Dubai | Agencies



league over a two-year period with a final between the top two teams at the conclusion. Following the expansion of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup to a 14-team event in the next cycle (2027), the Board has accepted a recommendation from the Chief Executives' Committee (CEC) that the primary avenue for qualification for the event is based on rankings at a pre-determined cutoff date with the 10 highest-ranked teams on the Men's ODI Rankings qualifying automatically, and the remainder being determined via a global qualifier. The Board has approved first-class status and List A classification being applied to women's cricket to align with the men's game and applied retrospectively.

MAJOR GAINS FOR AUSSIES IN LATEST ICC RANKINGS; NO INDIAN BOWLER IN TOP-10

Dubai | Agencies

Australian spinner Adam Zampa made major gains in the ICC Player Rankings for bowlers, climbing up two spots to break into the top-three following his performance at the ICC T20 World Cup in the UAE.

Australian cricketers, after an enthralling finish to the T20 World Cup where they emerged champions, spearhead the rankings with Zampa, where

Josh Hazlewood, and Mitchell Marsh making significant gains.

Zampa has gone past fellow wrist-spinners Adil Rashid of England and Afghanistan's Rashid Khan with figures of 1/26 in the final against New Zealand and 1/22 in the semifinal versus Pakistan, finishing the tournament as the second-highest wicket-taker with 13 scalps. The list is led by Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga, followed by Tabraiz Shamsi of

South Africa, while no Indian bowler figures in the top-10.

Hazlewood proved a vital cog in Australia's successful T20 World Cup campaign as he brought forth an immaculate display of bowling with the new ball while also taking up the challenge to bowl at the death. Hazlewood snared three wickets while conceding 16 runs in the final, ending as Australia's leading fast bowler with 11 wickets, which took him to fifth on the charts.



I have got nothing to prove to anyone: Khawaja

Brisbane | Agencies

Australia batter Usman Khawaja reacted to his selection in the 2021/22 Ashes, saying that he has got nothing to prove to anyone. He added that his main focus will be on doing his best for the team on the field. Khawaja was recalled for the upcoming Ashes squad after making his last Test appearance during the 2019 Ashes at Headingley.

"I've been on both sides of the spectrum: I've been in the Australian team, I've been dropped, I've had contracts, I haven't had contracts. I guess when you're a bit younger you hold onto those things more tightly. I've got nothing to prove to anyone - not to myself, not to anyone else. I'm going out there to do the best I can for any



team I'm in," Khawaja was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au on Wednesday. "I know I won't be able to play cricket forever, so I'm enjoying playing whatever level I'm playing. People will probably say, 'He's talking crap', but it's true - I'm really just enjoying my cricket and my mindset won't change. I'm a big believer in fate; whatever is meant to happen, will happen," added Khawaja, who has played 44 Tests for Australia.

MEDVEDEV SECURES ATP FINALS' SEMIS BERTH

Turin | Agencies

Defending champion Daniil Medvedev of Russia secured a hard-fought 6-3, 6-7(3), 7-6(6) victory over Germany's Alexander Zverev at the Nitto ATP Finals to qualify for the semifinals as he moved to 2-0 in 'Red Group' action here.

The US Open champion this year and the current world No. 2, who had defeated Hubert Hurkacz of Poland in his opening game, backed that up against Zverev as he slammed the ball with consistent depth and recovered from a slump in the second set to win after two hours and 35 minutes on Tuesday night.

The Russian, who edged Dominic Thiem of Austria to win the elite year-end title last year, has secured top spot in Red Group after Italy's Matteo Berrettini



withdrew due to injury. Medvedev leads Zverev 6-5 in their ATP head-to-head, having won his past five matches against the world No. 3, including victories in Australia and Paris this year. The pair also met in the round-robin stage at the season finale in 2020, with Medvedev triumphing 6-3, 6-4.

Zverev, who has captured



five tour-level trophies this season, is now 1-1 in Red Group play and faces Hurkacz in his final round-robin match.

Italian Jannik Sinner gave fans plenty to cheer for, as he dropped just four games in his winning ATP Finals debut against Poland's Hurkacz. Sinner, the first alternate, replaced his injured countryman

KONTAVEIT TO CLASH WITH MUGURUZA IN WTA FINALS

Guadalajara (Mexico): World No. 8 Anett Kontaveit of Estonia continued her blazing form at the WTA Finals Guadalajara overcoming No. 4 seed from Greece Maria Sakkari 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 to advance to the final and set up a title clash with former world No. 1 Garbine Muguruza of Spain in the elite year-end tournament.

The 25-year-old Kontaveit is now a perfect 7-0 in semifinals this year and finds herself on the verge of a third consecutive title and fifth overall, which will tie her with world No. 1 Ashleigh Barty of Australia for the most this season.

The final will be a rematch of the final round-robin encounter in the 'Teotihuacan group', which Muguruza won 6-4, 6-4 to snap Kontaveit's 12-match winning streak. The Spaniard leads the head-to-head 3-2. This is the first time since the 2016 WTA Finals that the finalists came from the same group. That year, Slovak Dominika Cibulkova defeated Germany's Angelique Kerber after losing to the German in group play.

Berrettini after he withdrew from the tournament due to an abdominal injury. The 20-year-old, who became the fourth Italian to play singles at the Nitto ATP Finals in the event's 52-year history, won 6-2, 6-2.



BULL TO RELEASE IN CINEMAS WORLDWIDE ON 7TH APRIL 2023

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bhushan Kumar, Amar Butala and Garima Mehta's much anticipated grand scale action extravaganza, Bull with Shahid Kapoor will open in theatres on 7th April 2023. Le Good Friday weekend. The film directed by debutant director Aditya Nimbalkar, is set in the 1980's and is inspired by real-life events. This the first co-production between T-Series and Guilty By Association.

Bhushan Kumar, Managing Director, T-Series shares, "Bull

is an ambitious project and one of the biggest action movies coming out of T-Series stable, we continue to reassure audience's long standing romance with the silver screen with this release. It is a Shahid Kapoor film tailor made to be viewed at your nearest theatre."

Amar Butala, Producer, Guilty By Association (GBA) says, "Bull marks the beginning of our association with Bhushan Kumar ji and Shahid who will be seen in a new action avatar in the film. We hope to deliver a big screen extravaganza packed with adrenaline so it truly is a Good

Friday at the box office."

Garima Mehta, Producer, Guilty By Association (GBA) adds, "Bull is inspired by the valour of our men in uniform. It is sure to enthrall and inspire all at the same time".

Bull is presented by Gulshan Kumar and T-Series, is a Guilty By Association production with story by Parvez Shaikh and Aseem Arora and directed by Aditya Nimbalkar. Produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Amar Butala and Garima Mehta. The film is slated to hit the floors in early 2022.

Ananya begins the shoot of Liger in Vegas, shares this picture with Mike Tyson

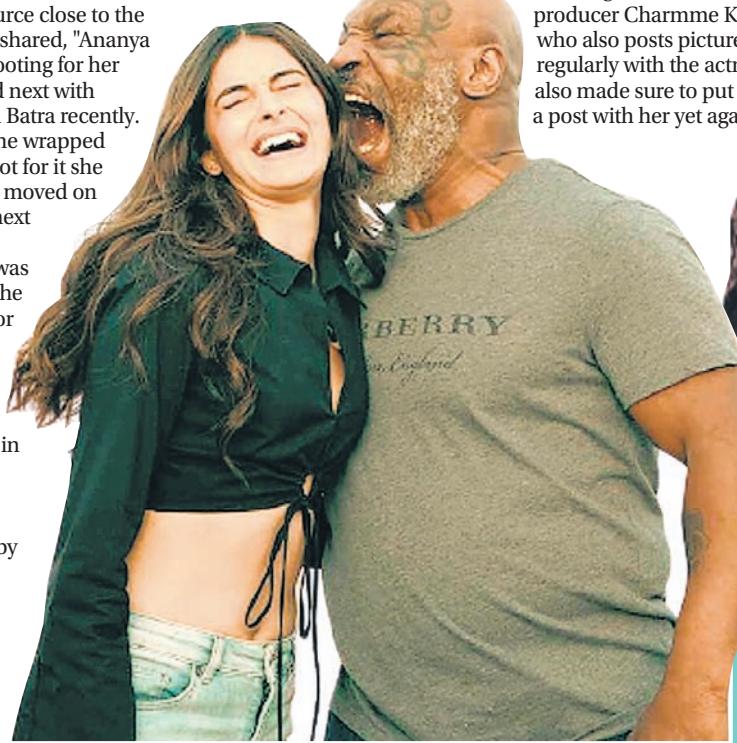
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ananya Panday has had a work laden year. The actress has moved set to set to wrap up commitments. Ananya and Vijay shot for a song from their upcoming film, Liger, in Mumbai earlier this year and the actress has currently started shooting for her film Liger and is having fun on the sets.

A source close to the actress shared, "Ananya was shooting for her untitled next with Shakun Batra recently. Once she wrapped the shoot for it she quickly moved on to her next project which was Liger. The shoot for Liger is currently happening in the US where she is joined by

Vijay Deverkonda and Mike Tyson and she is expected to be there for 2 weeks. The shoot schedule consists of high octane action based scenes."

Ananya is never to far from action and is always making sure of keeping her fans posted with everything happening in her life and so it was only natural that the actor gave a glimpse of her life on Liger sets and the producer Charmme Kaur who also posts pictures regularly with the actress also made sure to put up a post with her yet again.



LOVE FOR SAREES STARTED WITH MY JOURNEY IN CINEMA: BHUMI PEDNEKAR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Bhumi Pednekar has talked about her love for wearing sarees in films. She credits it to her journey in Hindi cinema.

Bhumi said: "I find it a big compliment if people find me pretty in a saree! I love wearing one whenever I get a chance and thankfully I have been able to wear quite a few of them in my movies! I'm glad people are loving another saree avatar of mine."

She added: "My look in 'Pati Patni Aur Woh' (PPAW) got a lot of love, I am sure this one will too. Both the characters are extremely different and that's exciting."

The actress said that her "love for sarees started with my journey in cinema and more because my audience loves me in them."

She said: "In PPAW, the response was overwhelming and after they have loved my look in 'Govinda Naam Mera', I have got convinced that sarees on me are loved by audiences and my fans."

In 'Govinda Naam Mera', Bhumi has been paired opposite Vicky Kaushal. The film that releases on June 10, 2022, also stars Kiara Advani as the 'naughty girlfriend' of Vicky.

Yash Raj Films to dish out Rs 100 crore for its first OTT venture

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Production power house Yash Raj Films's head honcho Aditya Chopra is shelling out Rs 100 crore for the first project for a four hero staffer.

A source said: "YRF is making its intent clear about their digital venture by shelling out 100 crore for their project. They want to produce the best content and they want to be the leaders while doing that."

"They want to create a paradigm shift for content in India and this first project will be a testimony to their belief to make clutter-breaking projects."

The source added: "Of course, YRF would want to start very big and with

a bang. They are the leaders of the game in the Indian film business and they would naturally want to be the best when they explore the digital landscape."

The informer shared that YRF wants to mount this project in a way that it becomes the talk of the nation.

"It will be a four-hero project, something that the digital space has never seen before!" added the source.

"This project could start as early as December this year. YRF has quietly cast this project and the pre-production is almost over. Everyone is very tight-lipped about what this project is. YRF will announce the project soon."

On November 12, it was announced that filmmaker Aditya

Chopra has grand plans to reshape the digital content market as it stands today and is earmarking Rs 500 crore for YRF's OTT arm that will be called YRF Entertainment.



Rani cons Sabyasachi Mukherjee in 'Bunty Aur Babli 2'

Team

Absolute | Mumbai

Rani Mukerji has completely gotten into the skin of her character in 'Bunty Aur Babli 2' so much that her character traits are spilling over outside of the frame. She essays the character of Vimmy in the film, who is the 'Fashion Queen of Fursatgun'. The true blue fashionista of a small town, designs her own clothes under her fashion label 'V' - the starting initial for her character's name. Her character is a huge fan of top Indian couturier Sabyasachi Mukherjee but that's not it, Vimmy goes a step further as she outrightly plagiarises the ace designer's creations and passes them off as her own! Her brand logo bears a 'V' with a cat on it and Sabyasachi's logo has a tiger - the big cat!

While it may look like the actress has conned her designer friend, there's another side to the story; Sabyasachi is in-charge of Rani's costume design in the film which means that he has not just added depth to the film's narrative with the smart move but has also made a pop-culture reference at the same time.

SIKANDAR KHER OPENS UP ON HIS POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA CONVERSATIONS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sikandar Kher, who was most recently seen in Rohit Shetty's 'Sooryavanshi', has aced the social media niche of heartfelt human interactive sessions through his unscripted and freewheeling conversations. Be it his homage to the veteran actor Dilip Kumar, his fun banter with Abhishek Bachchan or family conversations with his parents, the sessions have widely resonated with people on social media and continue to amass a fan following. When asked about the essence of these conversations, the actor said, "You know, there's an age old saying. Nothing beats honesty. These sessions are just that. Honest, heartfelt interactions. I think that's what struck a chord with the audience."

The age of the Internet is often called the fourth industrial revolution as the digital medium has opened up a lot of avenues for telling stories, churning content on an industrial scale and presenting unprecedented opportunities to content creators. It's not surprising that offbeat forms of content are on an upward curve. The actor further explained that the audience are willing to explore different forms of visual creative art which tell stories sans the classical way of scripted conversations. He said, "As actors we are always running scripted lines and being politically correct. There was none of that here. Just me being raw. I think the audience connected with the unabashedness of it all."

On the work front, Sikandar will be again seen in the Milan Luthria directorial 'Tadap' which marks the debut of Ahan Shetty and also stars Tara Sutaria.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Shivani Singh