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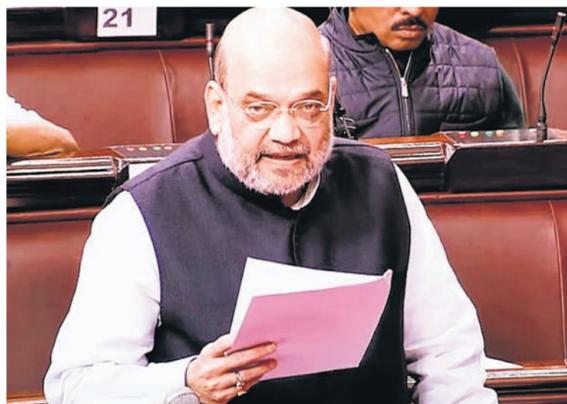
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Manchester City the new Premier League leaders; Chelsea lose...

Centre keeping close watch on evolving situation in Nagaland: Shah in RS

“The Government of India sincerely regrets this unfortunate incident in Nagaland and expresses its deepest condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives.”

Amit Shah, Home Minister



THE INCIDENT, AS PER THE REPORT

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said that Centre has been keeping a close watch on the evolving situation in Nagaland and necessary measures are being taken to ensure peace and tranquility in Mon district, following the widespread violence after a "mistaken" army raid, leaving 14 civilians and one soldier dead, while the state authorities, as precautionary measures, have promulgated prohibitory orders in the affected areas.

Making a statement in the Rajya Sabha on the incident, Shah informed the house that an FIR was registered regarding the incident in Tizit police station and considering the complexity of the case, it has been transferred to the State Crime Police

Narrating the incident Shah said that based on inputs received by the Indian Army about movement of the insurgents near Tiru village in Tizit area of Mon district, a team of 21 para-commandos said an ambush in the evening. During the ambush, a vehicle approached the location and it was signalled to stop. However, the vehicle tried to flee, following which the vehicle, suspected of carrying insurgents, was fired upon resulting in the killing of six out of eight persons travelling in the vehicle. However, it turned out

to be a case of mistaken identity, the Home Minister stated. Following the firing incident, the local villagers surrounded the Army team, burnt two vehicles, and assaulted them resulting in death of one security force personnel and injuries to several others. "To disperse the crowd, SFs opened fire which resulted in the killing of seven more civilians and injuring some others. The local administration and police have tried to defuse the situation, which remains tense but under control," Shah added.

Station (SCPS) and a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been

constituted and directed to complete the investigation within one month.

NAGALAND CM SEEKS REPEAL OF AFSPA

"We have been asking the government to repeal the AFSPA from the entire country. This is a draconian law. There are so many acts and provisions to deal with the insurgency. India is a great democratic nation. Such an act and its misuse damage the image of the country."



Noting that the situation on the ground is still critical but under control, he further said that on receipt of the incident, he immediately got in touch with the Governor and the Chief Minister. The situation was reviewed in detail to ensure that normalcy is restored at the earliest.

The headquarters of the Army's 3 Corps has also released a press statement wherein they have deeply regretted the incident and its aftermath which resulted in the unfortunate killing of innocent civilians and it further mentioned that the cause of the unfortunate loss of lives is being investigated at the highest level and appropriate action will be taken as per law.

INDIA INKS 4 DEALS WITH RUSSIA, INCLUDING PURCHASE OF OVER 6L AK-203 RIFLES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India and Russia inked four agreements on Monday, including a contract for procurement of over six lakh AK-203 assault rifles.

The decision was taken during the meeting of the inter-governmental commission on military and military-technical cooperation in the national capital, which was chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Russian counterpart General Sergey Shoigu. In his opening remarks, Singh termed Russia as India's long-standing, special and privileged strategic partner, adding that the relations between the two countries are time-tested and based on common interests in multilateralism, global peace and prosperity, mutual understanding and trust, etc.

Singh appreciated Russia's strong support for India and stressed that the close cooperation is not targeted against another country. He expressed hope that this cooperation will bring peace, prosperity and stability in the region, adding that defence cooperation is one of the most important pillars of bilateral partnership. He described the first-ever India-Russia 2+2 ministerial dialogue as a special initiative taken by the leaders of the two countries, which signals the higher relevance and necessity for cooperation between the two nations. At the end of the meeting, both



“Our meeting today will strengthen our special and privileged strategic partnership. The initiatives that we take today will further increase the scope of our cooperation to new areas.”

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister, India

“The relations between our nations are growing and I am looking into the future.”

Vladimir Putin, President, Russia

countries signed four agreements, contracts and protocols.

MODI, PUTIN DISCUSS BILATERAL TIES, AFGHANISTAN SITUATION

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin met in New Delhi on Monday during the 21st annual India-Russia summit and discussed the emerging security challenges facing the region. Modi, who hosted Putin at the Hyderabad House in the national capital, said the Covid-19 pandemic could not dent the relationship between both the nations and the ties

continue to strengthen between the two countries. Putin said that Russia perceives India as a great power, a friendly nation, and a time-tested friend. Putin also expressed concern over the situation in Afghanistan, and termed "fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and organised crime" as the key challenges on which both the countries will have to cooperate.

SC ASKS LAW COMMISSION TO CONSIDER SUGGESTIONS 'DOWRY REQUIRES FRESH LOOK'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday observed that persistence of the social evil like dowry requires a much larger consideration and asked the law commission to consider suggestions in a plea.

The bench, told the petitioners and others, the law commission can look at the suggestions on strengthening the dowry prohibition law -- to make it more effective -- instead of the court issuing notice in the matter. Biju pointed out that educated people give so much jewellery and gold to the children, and the children of daily wagers are suffering. The bench said it agrees that the issue raised in the plea is an important one, which



requires sensitization of everybody. The bench said: "we are of the view that it may be appropriate if the law commission of India considers the issue in all its perspectives. The petitioner is at liberty to submit a note of research on all relevant aspects for the benefit of the

law commission on which further steps to consider the scope for legislative reforms may be duly considered". The top court was hearing a plea by two social activists and a lawyer practising in the Supreme Court seeking certain concrete directions to curb the social evil of dowry.

85% OF ELIGIBLE POPULATION GIVEN FIRST COVID VACCINE DOSE: MANDAVIYA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

New Delhi: Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday said that 85 per cent of India's eligible adult population has received the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine.

"Another Day, Another Milestone. 85% of the eligible population inoculated with the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine. With PM Narendra Modi ji's mantra of 'Sabka Prayas', India is marching ahead strongly in the fight against Covid-19," he said in a tweet.

Meanwhile, over 50 per cent of India's eligible adult population has also been vaccinated with both doses.

India's Covid-19 vaccination coverage has exceeded 127.93 crore as per provisional reports on Monday morning. A total of 24,55,911 vaccine doses have been administered through 1,32,86,429 sessions in the last 24 hours, said the Health Ministry on Monday.

3RD WAVE MAY HIT INDIA BY FEB 22

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With Omicron, the new variant of SARS-CoV2, the third wave of coronavirus could hit the peak by February with cases likely to be reaching up to 1-1.5 lakh a day in the country, but it will be milder than the second wave, Manindra Agarwal, IIT scientist involved in the mathematical projection of trajectory of COVID-19, said. He said in the new forecast, the new Omicron variant has been factored in. He, however, said a close eye is being kept on cases in South Africa where many cases of this variant have been recorded. He said a fresh set of data on the virus and hospitalisations would help in getting a more solid picture. "It looks like although the new variant has shown high transmissibility, its severity is not like the one seen in the Delta variant," Agarwal said. He said as observed during the spread of delta, a mild lockdown (night curfew, restrictions on crowding) can bring down beta substantially. That will significantly



reduce the peak value, he added.

The Department of Science and Technology (DST) backed Sutra-model had earlier said the third wave of coronavirus could hit the country by October if a new variant, more virulent and transmissible than the Delta, emerges. However, till November end, there was no new variant. It had then revised its forecast to November.

On November 26, the World Health Organisation (WHO) named the Covid-19 virus variant detected in South Africa and some other countries as Omicron.

130 STUDENTS FROM CLASS 1 TO 10 TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID IN K'TAKA

Dakshina Kannada : As many 130 children studying in Class 1 to 10 in schools across Karnataka have tested positive for Covid-19 so far, according to the latest statistics released by the office of the Commissioner of Public Instruction on Monday. The maximum of 92 cases are reported from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya residential school in Chikkamagalur. Meanwhile, seven students have tested positive for Covid in Chamarajanagar district and 11 in Kodagu district, bordering Kerala. Only two students have tested positive for Covid in Bengaluru. Meanwhile, a private nursing college in Mangaluru has been sealed down following nine students testing positive on Monday.

Social media fanning fires between Hindu and Muslim communities

▶ THIS WAS REVEALED BY A NATIONWIDE POLL CONDUCTED BY IANS-CVOTER WITH A SAMPLE SIZE OF 1942 USING RANDOM SAMPLING ON DECEMBER 5, ONE DAY BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEMOLITION OF BABRI MASJID ON DECEMBER 6, 1992.

▶ CLOSE TO HALF THE RESPONDENTS SURVEYED, 48.2 PER CENT TO BE PRECISE FELT THAT SOCIAL MEDIA HAD INCREASED THE GULF BETWEEN THE COMMUNITIES TO A LARGE EXTENT.

▶ ABOUT 23 PER CENT OF THE RESPONDENTS FELT THAT SOCIAL MEDIA HAD INCREASED THE GULF TO SOME EXTENT.

▶ IN EFFECT, MORE THAN 71 PER CENT INDIANS HOLD SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RECENT FRICTION BETWEEN THE TWO COMMUNITIES.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A large majority of Indians seem convinced that social media is responsible for the increased gulf between the Hindu and Muslim communities in the country.

In contrast, 28.6 per cent were of the opinion that social media had no role to play in this phenomenon. If you look at political divides, 40.7 per cent of NDA voters felt social media was responsible to a large extent while 53.6 per cent of opposition voters felt the same. Social media platforms have come under increased scrutiny of late for their alleged role in spreading misinformation,



fake news, abusive and defamatory content and direct incitement to violence. It has become routine for state and local level administrations to temporarily ban access to

social media platforms in areas that report tension and fears of violence. A parliamentary committee has recently submitted a set of recommendations to regulate social media

platforms. One major recommendation is to treat them as publishers while the other is to form a regulatory body on the lines of Press Council of India to regulate their activities.

2020 DELHI RIOTS: FIRST CONVICTION HANDED DOWN

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In the first conviction in the riots that broke out in northeastern Delhi in February 2020, a Delhi court on Monday convicted a 25-year-old man on various charges, including ransacking and setting afire an elderly woman's house.

According to the case, it was alleged that on February 25, 2020, a mob of rioters, numbering around 150 to 200, attacked the 73-year-old woman's house when her family was not present at the house and looted all the domestic articles. The mob even took away their buffalo, as per the complaint.

On the woman's statement, a case under various sections of the IPC, including 147, 148 (rioting, armed with a deadly weapon), 149 (unlawful assembly for crime), 436 (mischievous by fire or any explosive substance),



457 (house-breaking by night), 392 (punishment for robbery), 452 (house-trespass), and 188 (disobedience to an order lawfully promulgated by a public servant) was registered.

During the course of the investigation, accused Dinesh alias Michal of Bhagirathi Vihar in Gokulpuri in Delhi was arrested on June 8, 2020.

After the investigation, a case file was submitted in court and after the trial, the court has convicted the

accused. The riots broke out in northeast Delhi in February 2020 after clashes between anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) and pro-CAA protesters took a violent turn. The time of the mayhem coincided with then US President Donald Trump's maiden trip to India.

Over 50 people had died in the riots. Several posts had then gone viral on social media, mainly on Facebook, adding fuel to the fire.



PRESIDENT KOVIND TO VISIT BANGLADESH FOR 50TH VICTORY DAY CELEBRATIONS

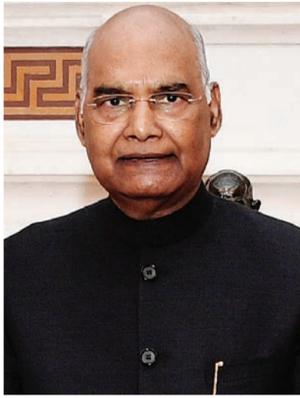
Team Absolute | New Delhi

President Ram Nath Kovind will be on a two day state visit to Bangladesh from December 15 to December 17 to attend the country's 50th Victory Day celebrations.

During the visit, he will hold a delegation-level meeting with his Bangladeshi counterpart Abdul Hamid.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen will also call on him.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had paid a state visit to Bangladesh from March 26 to 27, 2021 to join the celebrations of the Golden Jubilee of the independence of Bangladesh, the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 50 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Bangladesh.



Bangladesh is a major pillar of India's Neighbourhood First Policy. India and

Bangladesh share progressive, comprehensive and substantial cooperation in diverse areas ranging from security, border management and defence, water resources, trade, transport and connectivity, health, culture and people-to-people ties, energy and power to development partnership and sub-regional cooperation, an official statement said.

Both countries have closely cooperated in addressing challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The upcoming visit of the President on this historic occasion is a reflection of the high priority that both countries attach to the bilateral relationship. It also reaffirms the shared desire of both countries to further consolidate and strengthen the multifaceted and irreversible partnership, based on historical and cultural ties, mutual trust and understanding, the statement said.

FLOOD ALERT ISSUED IN TN DISTRICT

Chennai: A flood alert has been issued for people living on the banks of the Korayar and Ariyar rivers in Tamil Nadu by Tiruchirappalli district collector, S. Sivarasu, on Monday as heavy rains lashed Manapparai and other catchment areas of the rivers. Sivarasu also directed the people to safeguard their livestock, especially in the rural areas.

Weather department officials said that Manapparai town and suburbs have recorded 274 mm rainfall on Monday till 9 a.m. The heavy rain that has been lashing Tiruchirappalli and surrounding areas for the past few days has resulted in water-logging in the city and flooding of many residential areas.

Kerala HC again lashes out at woman cop's rude behaviour towards girl

KOCHI | Agencies

For the third time in the past two weeks, the Kerala High Court on Monday hauled up a 'Pink Police' official of the state police for her callous behaviour towards an eight-year-old girl and her father whom she accused of stealing her mobile phone and shamed publicly.

Losing its cool, the court wanted to find out what has the state government done for the young girl and asked counsel to come with its reply on December 15.

Slamming the woman police official, it asked if she too doesn't have children and wanted to know if there were any cases registered on this

incident by other agencies.

It also pulled up the state police chief for trying its best to protect the 'khaki', saying that "this is being seen more often these days" and asking if "one can do anything when khaki is worn as an uniform".

The court was subsequently informed that the woman police official has profusely apologised to the young girl and her family for her acts and she too is a mother of three children and is the breadwinner of her family.

The court, while appreciating this, told that if it has to be accepted or not is left to the young girl and the family.

It also pointed out that the court will continue asking questions and justice has to

be given to the aggrieved.

Reacting to the apology being rendered, the young girl's father said they are deeply hurt. "Starting from the next day of this incident, we knocked on all doors starting from the higher police officials, state police chief and the Chief Minister, but we did not get any justice from anywhere and that is how we decided to move the court and here, we got justice. Now let the court decide as we are not accepting the apology from the woman police official," said the girl's father Jayachandran.

The girl had approached the High Court seeking Rs 5 million as compensation for the ordeal she was made to undergo.

Lok Sabha passes Bill to amend pharma education and research law

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Lok Sabha on Monday passed the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill 2021, which amends the 1998 law to provide for a Council to coordinate activities among the institutes and also ensure development of pharmaceutical education and research standards.

Replying to the debate, Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said that a total 24 members participated and everyone gave good suggestions.

He also said that today there are 8,500 stores, and more than 600 types of medicines and 56 medical equipment are being sold in them.

Responding to the query by Leader of Congress Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and other members who raised the matter of India's dependence for Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (APIs) on other nations, Mandaviya also said that the government released a Rs 14,000-crore PLI-1 scheme for the manufacturing of 51 APIs. He also said that the government has decided to make four Pharma parks with the investment of Rs

1,000 crore each for API manufacturing units.

On the amendments, Mandaviya said the National Council will act as the advisory panel for the Boards of Governors of all NIPERs.

Replying to some members who raised the point that the government erased the representation of SC and ST members in the Boards of Governors, he said that this was not true, but since the government has reduced the number of Board members for each institute from 23 to 12, therefore, the SC and ST members will be moved to the Council.

ARMED FORCES FACE SHORTAGE OF 9,362 OFFICERS, 1,13,193 PERSONNEL

▶ THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ON MONDAY SAID THAT THE ARMED FORCES FACE A SHORTAGE OF 9,362 OFFICERS AND 1,13,193 PERSONNEL.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In the Indian Army, 7,476 posts of officers and 97,177 posts of junior commissioned officers and other ranks are vacant. In the Indian Air Force, a total 621 officers and 4,850 junior commissioned officers and other ranks are vacant. In the Indian Navy, 1,265 officers and 11,166 junior commis-



sioned officers and other ranks' posts are vacant.

Minister of State (Defence) Ajay Bhatt in a written reply to BJP's Rakesh Sinha in Rajya Sabha said the government has taken a number of measures to reduce the shortages.

These include sustained image projection, participation in career fairs and exhibitions and publicity campaigns to create awareness among the youth on the advantages of taking up a challenging and satisfying career in the Armed Forces.

To encourage the youth to join the Armed Forces, motivational lectures are regularly organised in schools, colleges, other educational institutes and National Cadet Corps (NCC) camps.

Former Guj Congress MP Sagar Rayka joins BJP

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Congress MP from Gujarat, Sagar Rayka on Monday joined BJP. Earlier in the day, former president of Telangana Employees Association Ch Vittal also joined BJP at party headquarters here.

Former Congress member of Rajya Sabha from Gujarat, Rayka joined the BJP in presence of party national general secretary Tarun Chugh, Lok Sabha member and Gujarat BJP general secretary Vinod Chavda. Vittal joined



the BJP in presence of union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Chugh, party Telangana unit chief Bandi Sanjay and its chief national spokesperson Anil Baluni.

MASTERMIND OF PIRATED NCERT TEXTBOOKS RACKET HELD IN DELHI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The mastermind of the pirated NCERT textbooks racket has been arrested, nearly three months after huge quantities of finished and semi-finished books were recovered during a raid in the national capital, Delhi Police officials said on Monday.

The accused was identified as Abhishek Sachdeva. According to the official, information was received that a publication unit involved in printing pirated NCERT books is operating in trans-Yamuna area and the poor quality pirated books are being supplied in market at cheaper rates, causing huge revenue loss to NCERT.

"The offset unit was publishing pirated NCERT books of different subjects for Class 6 to 12," the police said. Subsequently, a police team was constituted and to act upon the information, and the NCERT Director was also approached for providing assistance to unearth the entire



nexus.

A raid was conducted along with the NCERT's vigilance officer and production officer on the publishing unit on September 18, where the entire setup was unearthed.

During the course of investigation, the owner of the printing press identified as Manoj Jain, a resident of Shahdara was arrested. He disclosed that he was printing the said books on behalf of accused Sachdeva who had supplied the paper and material to him for printing the books.

During interrogation, he disclosed that the printing material used in these books was procured by his late father and that he planned and used to sell these books online to customers. The police have recovered 80,000 (approx.) printed sheets of paper from which 12,000 pirated books can be prepared, 166 metallic plates used for printing infringing copies of the books, two latest offset printing machines, 5,000 pirated NCERT books, and paper with NCERT watermark which was being used for printing the pirated books.

PUNJAB CM BATS FOR OPENING BORDER TRADE WITH PAKISTAN

Amritsar | Agencies

In a bid to boost the state's economy, Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Channi on Monday announced that he would soon write to the Centre besides seeking appointment with the Union Home Minister for opening trade with Pakistan.

In his address during the 15th Edition of the Punjab International Trade Expo (PITEX) here, he said that if the trade could be carried by the sea route, then why it is not permitted through land route as it would propel enormous opportunities of economic prosperity.

According to the major demand of the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Channi said the foundation stone of a convention centre for PITEX spread over 10 acres would be laid within a week to enable the organisation to carry out diverse range of activities to promote trade and industry in the region in a big way.



He also said a digital single window system would be put in place shortly to ensure all kinds of requisite permissions from a unified platform to the

industrialists in a seamless manner.

"This move would also enable them to apply for permissions from their homes to almost removing the user interface with the officials thus increasing transparency." Listing the achievements of his government, Channi said the state government has withdrawn 40,000 VAT-related cases registered against the traders, abolishing the institutional tax, and made the Right to Business Act of 2020 applicable.

Citing the huge potential of Amritsar in religious tourism, Channi expressed satisfaction that Punjab has been ranked number one in terms of infrastructure development in tourism. He also lauded the PITEX for its service in offering a big platform to the businessmen of the state, especially the region, and ensuring presence of five countries viz. Iran, Egypt, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Thailand in the expo. On the occasion, state Congress President Navjot Sidhu also underlined the significance of the cross-border trade.

Tejashwi Yadav slams Nitish for failure on liquor ban in Bihar

PATNA | Agencies

After JD(U) MLA Gopal Mandal accused his own party MP Ajay Mandal of involvement in the liquor trade and opium farming, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav slammed the Nitish Kumar government for failing to successfully implement the liquor ban in Bihar.

Tejashwi Yadav said that the RJD had been highlighting the "wrongdoings" of the ruling party leaders, but now Gopal Mandal has accused his own party MP of indulging in the liquor trade. It is a regular feature of the



Nitish Kumar government where leaders of their own parties are trading barbs.

"On Sunday, three persons died due to poisonous liquor consumption in Vaishali and several others have fallen ill. A JD(U) MLA said that the party MP is selling liquor; a BJP leader said that Nitish Kumar is saving liquor mafia

leaders of his own party, BJP

state president Sanjay Jaiswal claimed that state police is involved in liquor smuggling, JD(U) minister said that the officers do not listen to legislators and BJP MLA Gyanendra Singh Gyanu said that all BJP ministers are corrupt," Tejashwi tweeted in Hindi. The RJD leader added that there is complete anarchy in the bureaucracy, health and education departments, infrastructure is completely destroyed, law and order has no value, common people cannot get their work done without giving bribe in blocks and police stations.

Gangsters posing as cops extort over Rs 1 Cr from dozen victims

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi Police crime branch have busted a 'sextortion' racket in the national capital, which duped dozens of people and extorted more than Rs one crore from them.

Police officials said that the gang of six members, including two women, began its activities just before the first lockdown in 2020. The main member, the kingpin of the racket, identified as Neeraj of Haryana's Bahadurgarh, was apprehended by the police near PVR Cinema, Sector-14, Prashant Vihar, Rohini.

"The accused used to create a Facebook profile in the name of a girl and sent 'friend requests' to their targets. After confirmation of the request, they chatted with their victims, through Facebook messenger, pretending to be a girl. Once they obtained the mobile phone number of the victim they sent obscene content to lure him," police said, adding that after this the female-member of



the gang made a video call to further entice the victim. The gang used to extract complete details from the target to assess his paying capacity. Once they were convinced about the financial back-

ground of the target, the female-member of the gang would invite the victim to a pre-decided place and indulge in a sexual activity. Now hooked, when the victim arrived for the second rendezvous, the other members of the gang barged into the room posing as policemen," the official informed. The victim was led to believe that the police has raided the place. The gang members then posing as 'policemen' threatened the victim of exposure and extorted money from him. This way the gang committed sextortion from more than a dozen victims in the past one and a half years. They have extorted Rs 5 - 10 lakh from each victim, based on his paying capacity, the police said.

Additional Commissioner of Police, Dheeraj Kumar, said that efforts were being made to trace other victims and to arrest the remaining gang members. "Concerned police station has been informed accordingly. Further investigation is in progress," he said.

Public Notice

Notice is hereby given to the public that Mr. Ishwar Das Peswani S/O Late Mr. Kamannal Peswani, Mr. Mahesh Kumar S/O Mr. Ishwardas & Wife / Mother Mrs. Janki Devi Peswani W/O Mr. Ishwar Das Peswani owns double story house No. New A-22/6, comprising of plot area 900.00 sq.ft., situated at Bairagarh, Bhopal. That, after death of Mrs. Janki Devi Peswani W/O Mr. Ishwar Das Peswani, Mr. Ishwar Das Peswani S/O Late Mr. Kamannal Peswani, Mr. Mahesh Kumar S/O Mr. Ishwardas & Mrs. Bhumika Peswani W/O Mr. Mahesh Kumar, all R/O House No. New A-22/27, Community Hall Road, Near Overtake Exclusive, Bairagarh, Bhopal, intends to mortgage the aforesaid property towards taking the loan from my client IDFC First Bank Limited, Bhopal. Any person, organization, bank, or financial institution, govt. or non-govt. departments etc. or any other legal heirs and successors of Late Mrs. Janki Devi Peswani W/O Mr. Ishwar Das Peswani have any charges or claims, if any whatsoever shall lodge their claim or objection together with documentary proof to the undersigned "Fifteen Days" from the date of publication of this notice failing which it would be deemed that there is no claim, charge, or encumbrance whatsoever on the said property and any subsequent claim or objections shall be of no avail and will be deemed to have been waived. In case of no objections received, my client IDFC First Bank Ltd. Shall mortgage the aforesaid property and extend loan to Mr. Ishwar Das Peswani S/O Late Mr. Kamannal Peswani, Mr. Mahesh Kumar S/O Mr. Ishwardas & Mrs. Bhumika Peswani W/O Mr. Mahesh Kumar and in future my client shall bear no responsibility.

Rajeev Chimote Advocate
Office : Flat No. T-7, Plot No. 28-A, Third Floor, Raja Parisar, Zone-II, M.P. Nagar, Bhopal. 0755-4078500, 9827232096



EC to MP Govt:

SHIFT OFFICERS WORKING FOR OVER 3 YRS IN POLL BOUND PANCHAYATS

► IN AN OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION, THE COMMISSION HAS ASKED THE DEPARTMENTS TO SHIFT THE SDMS, TEHSILDARS, NAIB TEHSILDARS, REVENUE INSPECTORS, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENTS OF POLICE, SUB-INSPECTORS, ASSISTANT ASIS AND PANCHAYAT SECRETARIES WHO HAVE BEEN POSTED IN POLL BOUND AREAS FOR THREE OR MORE THAN THREE YEARS WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT.

Team Absolute | Bhopal
The State Election Commission has directed the Home and Revenue Departments of the Madhya Pradesh government to shift those officers who have been posted in poll bound panchayats for more than three years. The commission has sought action-taken reports from both the departments. The step has been taken to conduct fair elections to be held between January 6 and February 16, 2022. In an official communication, the commission has asked the departments to shift the SDMs, Tehsildars, Naib Tehsildars, Revenue Inspectors, Deputy Superintendents of Police, Sub-Inspectors, Assistant ASIs and Panchayat Secretaries who have been posted in poll bound areas for three or more than three years with immediate effect. The commission has also instructed that new construction work will not be permitted in Panchayats as

the model code of conduct has come into effect. The state government has also been asked to strictly monitor and share reports with the commission. The state election commission last Friday announced the dates for the panchayat elections which will be held in three phases. Polling for 859 posts in district panchayats across 52 districts, 6,727 posts in 313 Janpad Panchayats, Sarpanches of 22,581 village panchayats and 3,62,754 posts of Panch members will be held. In the first phase, 6,283 village panchayats and 85 Janpad Panchayats across nine districts will go to the polls on January 6. The elections for 110 Janpad Panchayats and 8,015 village Panchayats across seven districts will be conducted in the second phase on January 28. The third phase of the polling for 8,397 village panchayats and 118 Janpad panchayats across 36 districts will be held on February 16.

Chouhan chairs review meeting of Smart City Mission

Priority must be given to utility and public convenience instead of beautification in smart city construction: Chief Minister

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the priority of the works in Smart City Mission will be decided in consultation with the public representatives and residents of the city and construction works will be carried out accordingly as per the need of the public and the priority of the city. Utility and public convenience in smart city construction will be made a priority in place of beautification. There will be no fresh tenders and the works not been started yet will be reviewed. Frugal and proper utilization of funds will be ensured. Chouhan said that he himself would interact with the public representatives of the seven smart cities namely Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur, Ujjain, Gwalior, Sagar and Satna. Chief Minister said that in the year 2019, the works done in Smart City Mission, their justification, tender process, expenditure amount and irregularities will be investigated. It was informed in the meeting that 587 schemes are operating in the state with an amount of Rs.6 thousand 600 crore. Chouhan said that he himself would review the schemes being run



in all the seven cities point-wise. Chouhan was addressing the review meeting of Smart City Mission at Mantralaya.

Chouhan said that the aim of the state government is to give a new vision to urban development. Along with big cities, the planning of medium and small towns should also be done according to the practical needs of the future. Chief Minister said that the use of financial resources of Smart City Mission should not be limited to smart cities only. Its financial resources should be ensured for the development of the entire city. There should be no problem in transferring funds from Smart City to

Municipal Corporation or other agencies for basic works. The Smart Cities Mission is to be made the engine of growth of cities. The resources available in the mission should be used for the infrastructure development of the entire city, it should not be limited to beautification only.

Chouhan expressed displeasure over the cameras lying dysfunctional in Bhopal and the slow progress of under construction Lakha Banjara Talab of Sagar. He said that better coordination should be ensured with various agencies related to urban management including Smart City Mission, Municipal Corporation and Police. Chouhan said that effective

operation of startup incubation centers should be ensured. Necessary cooperation should be taken from industrial and technical institutions to develop the concept of startups to develop entrepreneurship among the youth. It was informed that Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur have been taken up in the first phase of Smart City Mission plan in January 2016, Ujjain, Gwalior in the second phase from September 2016 and Sagar and Satna from June 2017 in the third phase. In these seven smart cities 34.8 percent of the state's urban population resides. Area-based development in the mission includes major infrastructure works like solid waste management and transfer stations, water supply, flyovers and bridges, parks, gardens, sports complexes, energy efficient lighting, restoration in archaeological heritage conservation, lake development, bio-methanization plants, work related to multi-level parking and non-motorized transport is being done. Under Pan City, activities like Integrated Command and Control Center, Intelligent Traffic Management, Startup Incubation Center, Smart Class Room, Smart Pole are being conducted for the entire city.

Students should make their mark in society as Justice Loving, knowledgeable and ideal citizens: Governor

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Convocation ceremony is an occasion for resolution of life's objectives. Every student should set a goal of life and follow the rules and behave properly. They should make a mark in the society as Justice Loving, knowledgeable and ideal citizens. Governor and Chancellor Mangubhai Patel was addressing the students as chief guest at the 9th convocation of Avdesh Pratap Singh University, Rewa on Monday. He said that when the purpose of our life and the interest of the nation are the same, only then life will become meaningful.

Governor Patel said that it has been written in the ancient texts that a person becomes superior by his actions and knowledge, and not by birth. Teachers play an important role in making students good citizens. He said that a new education policy has been implemented in the state. The new policy enables students to choose different subjects according to their interest. He said that the students should make tribals aware and motivate them to diagnose diseases like sickle cell. Higher Education Minister Mohan Yadav said that



many students of Avdesh Pratap Singh University have created a special place in education and many other fields. The university has implemented the new education policy promptly. He said that even during the difficult times of Corona crisis, studies and examinations have been conducted in the university. Yadav congratulated the students for bringing laurels to themselves and the country with their intellectual abilities. Mukund Kanihtkar of Bhartiya Shikshak Mandal said that the joy of victory is attained only after competition and struggle. He said that only when the purpose of our life becomes clear, does our life become meaningful. Patel and Yadav conferred degrees on 80 successful students of the University.

DRUNK COP DRIVES INTO PEOPLE, INJURING 2

Khargone: A police inspector has been charged for allegedly running over people last night in an inebriated state and injuring two in Khargone district, an official said on Monday. Inspector Antim Pawar has been charged under the Indian Penal Code for "rash driving on public road" and "any rash or negligent act to endanger human life." Khargone Superintendent of Police Siddharth Choudhary said. A medical examination has confirmed he was under the influence of alcohol, the SP informed. As per eyewitnesses, several people ran for cover as the out-of-control SUV of Antim Pawar, in uniform at the time, hit people in different places of the city.

95 foreign visitors missing, authorities in MP on toes amid Omicron threat

As per the official data, around 400 people have arrived in the state's commercial capital Indore, from November 1 till date, of which 95 could not have been traced. They came to Indore from the United States, the UK, Norway, Sweden, while some came via Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Goa.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Amid looming threat of the new coronavirus variant Omicron, the government authorities in Madhya Pradesh seem to be scrambling to trace visitors coming from overseas countries. As per the official data, around 400 people have arrived in the state's commercial capital Indore, from



November 1 till date, of which 95 could not have been traced. They came to Indore from the United States, the UK, Norway, Sweden, while some came via Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Goa. Authorities in Indore, who are trying to trace them for mandatory Covid test, have called for an emergency meeting with the officials to suggest ways for tracing them. Similarly in Bhopal, the authorities have been put on high alert even as RT-PCR tests are being conducted at the railway station and at the Airport. As per an authority of Bhopal's Raja Bhoj airport, on an average 1,500 people come to the city via air services from different parts of the country.

"Every passenger travelling to Bhopal has to go through RT-PCR test. Even those coming from foreign countries are not coming directly to Bhopal but via New Delhi, Mumbai or some other states. We are ensuring that not a single passenger coming at Raja Bhoj airport should face any difficulty during mandatory Covid-19 procedure and that adequate teams have been deployed for that," said Anil Vikram, a senior official at Raja Bhoj airport.

Though the new variant of Covid-19 - Omicron, is officially yet to be reported in the state, its emergence in some neighbouring states like Maharashtra and Rajasthan has put the Madhya Pradesh government on extra vigil at border areas. However, the state government has not put any restrictions on people traveling to Madhya Pradesh from adjoining states where - Omicron variants have been detected.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will review the Covid-19 situation in the state later on Monday.

MP Cong leader withdraws resignation within 24 hrs after tendering it

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Noori Khan, a Congress leader and a prominent woman face of the party's minority wing in Madhya Pradesh, on Monday withdrew her resignation within 24 hours after she tendered the same.

Sharing a photograph with veteran Congress leader and the state party head Kamal Nath on her twitter handle, she said she has withdrawn her resignation after having a long discussion with the party president (Kamal Nath). "I have put all my points before Kamal Nath and having faith in his leadership (Nath), I have now withdrawn my resignation," Khan said. Khan tendered her resignation late on



Sunday evening alleging that the state Congress leadership is ignoring party's minority workers and is not giving

them deserving posts in the party's local teams merely because they belong to the minority community. "Talents are not given a chance in the party just because they belong to the minority community. This is not just a political allegation, it is a fact. Estimate how many presidents in district Congress committees are from minority groups," Khan had said, referring to the party's recent re-shuffling in districts and other party local bodies in the state. "In other state also, there is no president from the minority class. I myself feel that I work hard and with dedication and just because I belong to a particular class, I am not put in a responsible post in the party," Khan had alleged.

TRIBAL BROTHERS AND SISTERS LIVING IN FOREST AREAS ARE HISTORICALLY BACKWARD: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the tribal brothers and sisters living in forest areas are historically backward. They have been left behind in the race for development, as well as too many legal restrictions are on them. The State Government is committed to improving the standard of living of the tribal brothers and sisters living in the forest areas and to empower them economically, socially

and educationally. Chouhan was addressing a meeting on Community Forest Management at Mantralaya. Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Principal Secretary Forest Ashok Varnwal, Principal Secretary Finance Manoj Govil and other officers were present. In the meeting, discussions were held on the formation of Community Forest Management Committee, its empowerment, rights to be delegated to Community Forest Management Committee etc.

The role of tribal brothers and sisters in forest management, economic empowerment from forest produce, use of knowledge and traditions of tribal community in maintaining biodiversity, legally providing firewood and wood poles of daily need to the forest dependent community, formation of Forest Management Committee and representation of Scheduled Tribes and the women in it were also discussed in the meeting. Rights of forest committees to carry out develop-

ment works, implementation of micro-management plans of forest areas, participation of forest committees in the amount received from tourism in national parks and sanctuaries, recommendation of forest committees regarding conservation of endangered species, the right of committees to conduct activities under CSR and to take services of voluntary organisations or experts for capacity development etc. were also discussed in the meeting.

CM PAID FLORAL TRIBUTES AT THE STATUE OF DR. AMBEDKAR



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday paid floral tributes to the Ambedkar statue at Board Office Square on Mahaparinirvan Diwas of Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar. Medical Education Minister Shri Vishwas Kailash Sarang was also present on the occasion.

Chouhan while bowing at the feet of Babasaheb Ambedkar said that Baba Saheb was rich in amazing talent. He is the architect of the Constitution of India. He was a social reformer, great educationist, a supporter of social harmony. He fought relentlessly to change the lives of the poor, Dalits and downtrodden. Chief Minister Chouhan said that we salute the Constitution. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made many schemes for the upliftment of those who have been left behind in the race of development, those who are behind all and at the bottom. The Madhya Pradesh government is also involved in the welfare and upliftment of all by making welfare schemes.

CM planted Karanj and Peepal saplings in Smart Garden

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday planted saplings in Smart Garden along with Naresh Motwani, Anita Barchhe and Bhumika Barchhe of the organisation Nirman-Parivartan ki Ore. Chouhan planted saplings of Peepal and Karanj. Chief Minister plants saplings every day as per his resolve. Chouhan plants saplings every day with various social organisations, voluntary organisations and people active in the field of environmental protection with the aim of encouraging social participation in the activities of environmental protection. "Nirman Parivartan ki Ore" organisation is working for the last 4 years in the direction of moral, educational development of economically weaker children. Free study centre is being run by



the organisation in Mandwa locality of Nehru Nagar. 105 children are getting free education in the centre. Seven children have been awarded in theatre at the national level. This year a girl child Bhumika Barchhe has been admitted from JEE to RGPV University, Bhopal. Anita Barchhe, Bhumika Barchhe of the organisation presented

a painting on cleanliness to the Chouhan with the title "Apnaye ye char R - Banayen Bhopal ko Gulzar." The painting gives the message to Refuse to stop the use of polythene, Reduce and Reuse for economical use of water and its reuse, and Recycle to use various materials again. The Karanj sapling planted today is con-

sidered important in Ayurvedic medicine. Karanj sapling is also used in religious works. Peepal is a shady tree, it purifies the environment. It also has religious and Ayurvedic significance. According to natural science, Peepal tree releases oxygen day and night, which is important for our environment.

REVIEW CONTINUOUSLY FOR THE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES: CHOUHAN

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the schemes run by various agencies should be continuously reviewed for the planned development of the cities. Agencies engaged in various works of development of cities should carry out the works of public welfare in coordination with each other. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan was addressing the seventh meeting of the Board of Directors of Madhya Pradesh Urban Development Company at Mantralaya on Monday. Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh and Minister of State for Urban Development and Housing OPS Bhaduria were present.

Chouhan said that the ongoing works of sewerage scheme and water supply schemes in various cities should be completed in time. It was informed that last year with the help of World Bank under Madhya Pradesh Urban Development Project, Sevadha water supply scheme of Datia district and sewerage scheme of Shahdol district were approved. Along with this, approval has also been given this year regarding the supply of treated water based on Chambal River for Morena city area.

Information about the implementation of the decisions of the last meeting of the Board of Directors was given in the meeting. It was also agreed to increase the share capital of the company constituted in Madhya Pradesh Urban Infrastructure Fund to Rs 20 crore instead of Rs 10 crore. Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Principal Secretary Urban Development Manish Singh, Principal Secretary Finance Manoj Govil, Commissioner Urban Development Nikunj Shivastava and other officers were present in the meeting.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Covid could be more lethal

While the Covid-19 crisis is not over yet with the new super mutant Omicron spreading to 38 countries, the next pandemic could be even more lethal, said the creator of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine Professor Sarah Gilbert. Gilbert cautioned that it is increasingly obvious that "this pandemic is not done with us", and vaccines could also prove to be less effective against the Omicron variant, the BBC reported. Gilbert, a professor of vaccinology at the University of Oxford whose team developed the Covid vaccine now used in 170 countries, said the scientific advances made and knowledge gained in research fighting against the coronavirus must not be lost. She also stressed on the need for more funding on pandemic preparedness. "This will not be the last time a virus threatens our lives and our livelihoods. The truth is, the next one could be worse. It could be more contagious, or more lethal, or both," Gilbert was quoted as saying. We cannot allow a situation where we have gone through all we have gone through, and then find that the enormous economic losses we have sustained mean that there is still no funding for pandemic preparedness. The advances we have made, and the knowledge we have gained, must not be lost. So far it is known that the Omicron variant's spike protein contained mutations known to increase the transmissibility of the virus. But there are additional changes that may mean antibodies induced by the vaccines, or by infection with other variants, may be less effective at preventing infection with Omicron. Moreover, Omicron is said to appear less dangerous than previous variants like Delta, which has claimed more than 5 million lives, so far. However, Gilbert said reduced protection against infection and mild disease would not necessarily mean reduced protection against severe illness and death.

PUTIN VISITING INDIA: IS IT STRATEGIC BALANCING?

Major General S.B. Asthana

With heated exchanges between the US and Russia due to heavy concentration of troops in Ukraine border scheduled for talks between both, Russias growing dependency on China due to sanctions from West, and Indian tilt towards the US with inclusion in Quad, the visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to India on December 6, appears to be viewed differently by different world players. Even in domestic debates, the public anger due to Chinese intrusion in Ladakh and growing partnership of Russia and China, indicates that the visit is sensitive in context of international geopolitical scenario; hence will require a delicate strategic balancing including text of joint statement, if issued at the end of the visit. Notwithstanding the above, the visit is a scheduled 21st India-Russia Annual Summit, which couldnt take place earlier due to coronavirus pandemic, there are many justified reasons to continue with 'Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty (1971)' matured into 'Strategic Partnership (2000)', which has stood the test of time till date, even during ongoing rough relations between China and India.

Why Russia Matters to India Despite Chinese Embrace?

Despite Indian effort for Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence manufacturing and SIPRI indicating significant 33 per cent decrease in import of military hardware by India in recent years, it remains heavily dependent on Russian technology, maintenance, procurement of hardware and spares. For many decades Russians have been collaborating with India in its indigenous manufacturing programs and were amenable to transfer of technology, which India was finding difficult to get from others. It includes some major systems like nuclear-powered submarines, warships/frigates, nuclear reactors, space programmes and flagship projects like Brahmos.

The impending visit, besides deal to commence indigenous manufacturing of AK 203 Kalashnikov rifles, may see some forward movement in collaboration in manufacturing



(including transfer of technology of very short range air defence missile systems (VSHORADS), twin engine helicopters to replace Cheetah and Chetak, upgradation of inventory of MIG-29 and Sukhoi aircrafts. S-400 Triumf surface-to-air missile system which India had signed in 2018 for \$5.43 billion is a done deal, and the threat of CAATSA is unlikely to have any impact on delivery schedule. It was chosen because it was most suitable to Indian requirement at that point of time. There are also speculations of approximately ten agreements to be signed between the two countries, which could include reciprocal exchange of logistics Agreement and 10-year military technical agreement, besides Two plus Two dialogue to strengthen existing strategic partnership. While the US may be amenable to a waiver on CAATSA for S-400, in view of common China challenge, but further deals may create some new friction points in strengthening of Indo-US relations.

On strategic context, Russia continues to be a favourable P5 member in UN and continues to support India in various multilateral organisations like the UN, SCO, BRICS on crucial issues. It's a technological powerhouse, with one of the largest producer of military hardware, producing rugged equipment suited for variety of terrain, where

Indian forces operate. While its nearness to China, its discomfort with Indian embrace to Quad, growing Indo-US partnership, and hardware sale to Pakistan, forces some of the opinion makers in India to suggest divorcing Russia in favour of US, but such opinions are marred by impracticality, ignorance of Indian hardware dependency on Russia and its track record of reliability of its partnership with India. In its revised Military Strategy document Russia continues to name India as its partner along with China, and has not delayed/defaulted on any hardware support to India, even during standoff with China. The interest of both countries also coincide regarding concerns on export of terror after Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan and resultant humanitarian crisis, which will certainly be a subject of discussion and may find some mention in joint statement.

Reality of Sino-Russian Embrace

The much publicised Sino-Russian embrace by Chinese media and Russian acceptance to go along has been due to economic compulsions due to increasing sanctions from West, common adversary US branding both as competitors in security strategy documents. Objectively an expansionist, aggressive China seeking Sino-centric world order does suit Russia as well, which is looking for multilateral world order. Chinese BRI has already side-lined Eurasian dream, its technological theft like alleged hypersonic technology proliferation and increasing border claims in previously settled border with Tajikistan are not to Russian liking. Russia has made no commitment to back China's misadventure in South China Sea/Himalayas and China has also not made any commitment on Ukraine borders. Reiterating India as a strategic partner may be Moscow's message to US and Beijing both. It is however, impractical to expect Russia criticising China or Pakistan or India discussing Ukraine issue during this visit, due to peculiar geo-political equations, and Russians need for strategic and economic balancing.

Strategic Balancing by India

India and US have commonality of Interest in most

issues including tackling China, which has pushed India to become an important global strategic partner of US, by its aggressive designs. There is congruence of interests in most global issues between US and India in the current geo-strategic equation. India stands with US and Quad in context of Indo-Pacific and facing China challenge. India continues to do its best to respond to sensitivities and concerns of the US, at times risking some of its old relationships like Iran. To accommodate US interest India reduced import of oil from Iran, bearing a cost disadvantage, as Iran oil was being imported in Rupee terms, in crude form and attuned to existing refineries in India. India doesn't seem to be repeating the same mistake with Russians, who haven't done anything bilaterally which demands a divorce in mutual relationship. Moreover, military capacity building of India also adds to collective strength of Quad, which is in collective interest.

Lately India is trying to be self-reliant, as well as diversifying procurement from various countries to include US, France, Israel. In last decade the defence procurement from Russia has gradually reduced from over 65 percent approximately to nearly 49 percent and correspondingly increased in favour of the US, Israel and France. There is a noticeable upward trend in purchase of US military hardware, as the year 2020 alone saw a purchase \$3.4 billion worth of US military equipment, indicating enough accommodation by India. In a buyers' market US has competitors to include Russia, Israel and France, and every country will make sovereign choice to pick the best deal including India. India has also made modest beginning in exporting Rs 38,000 crore worth of military equipment, as a step towards self-reliance, seeking support of all the partners.

(Major General S.B.Asthana is a strategic and security analyst, a veteran Infantry General. He is the Chief Instructor, United Service Institution of India. The views expressed are personal)

international

Suu Kyi sentenced to 4 years in prison

Nay Py Taw: Agencies

Aung San Suu Kyi, the former de facto leader of Myanmar who was ousted during the February 1 military coup, was on Monday sentenced to four years in prison after she was "found guilty on charges of inciting dissent and breaking Covid rules under a natural disasters law", the media reported. According to the BBC, Monday's sentencing was the "first in a series of verdicts that could jail her for life". The 76-year-old former State Councillor faces a total of 11 charges, such as violating the Official Secrets Act. She has denied them all. Following the coup which toppled her National League for Democracy (NLD) government, Suu Kyi has been under house arrest in an undisclosed location.



Meanwhile, ousted President Win Myint was also sentenced to jail on Monday for four years under the same charges. The coup was staged after the military alleged massive voting fraud in the November 2020 general elections, which saw the NLD win a majority of seats in both houses of Parliament. The party also won an absolute majority in the 2015 general elections and had been running the government since 2016.

The five-year term of the elected government was expected to end in March 2021. After Suu Kyi and Win Myint were detained along with other NLD officials on February 1, the state power of Myanmar was transferred to Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services Sen-Gen Min Aung Hlaing after the declaration of an emergency. The military takeover triggered widespread demonstrations and Myanmar's military has cracked down on pro-democracy protesters, activists and journalists, according to rights groups.

Suu Kyi is one of more than 10,600 people to have been arrested by the junta since February, and at least 1,303 others killed in the demonstrations, according to the monitoring group Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

S KOREAN PRESIDENT'S APPROVAL RATING RISES TO 40.5%: POLL

Seoul: Agencies

South Korean President Moon Jae-in's approval rating rose 1.0 percentage point to 40.5 per cent last week, a new poll revealed on Monday. The negative assessment on Moon's conduct of state affairs fell 0.1 percentage point to 56.8 per cent, according to the Realmeter survey. Support for Moon's ruling Democratic Party shed 0.1 percentage point over the week to 33.1 per cent last week, reports Xinhua news agency. The main conservative opposition People Power Party garnered 39.4 per cent of support last week, up 0.1 percentage point from the previous week. The minor centre-right People's Party gained 6.9 per cent of approval score, followed by the minor centre-left Open Democratic Party with 5.5 per cent and the minor progres-



sive Justice Party with 3.8 per cent. As for the approval rating of presidential candidates, support for the Democratic Party's Lee Jae-myung added 0.6 percentage points over the week to 37.5 per cent last week. Support for the People Power Party's Yoon Suk-yeol declined 2.3 percentage points to 44.0 per cent last week. The country's presidential election is scheduled for March 9, 2022.

Japanese govt submits extra budget to Parliament for economic package

Tokyo: Agencies

The Japanese government on Monday submitted to Parliament a draft extra budget for fiscal 2021 worth a record 36 trillion yen (\$320 billion) to partially finance its latest economic package. The budget is expected to be approved by the Diet in an extraordinary parliamentary session which began on Monday afternoon and will run through December 21, report Xinhua news agency.

With the record budget, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's administration aims to boost the country's economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and prepare for a possible resurgence in the future amid increasing concerns over the Omicron variant. The first supplementary budget for the current fiscal year through March requires new national bond issuance worth 22.1 trillion yen.

Of the extra budget, 31.6 trillion yen will be allocated for the newly compiled stimulus plan, which entails a record 55.7 trillion yen in fiscal spending. The policy package is worth about 78.9 trillion yen when private funds are included. Among the planned outlays, 18.6 trillion yen will be used for measures to fight the virus and relax the economic impact of the pandemic, including 2.0 trillion yen assistance for medical institutions to secure more beds for Covid-19 patients. In addition, 1.3 tril-



lion yen is set aside to further promote the government's Covid-19 vaccine roll-outs, including 601.9 billion yen for procurement of treatment drugs. Moreover, 1.2 trillion yen will be allocated for a key measure in the stimulus package, which plans to offer 100,000 yen for children aged 18 or younger in households where the primary earner's annual income is less than 9.6 million yen. To restart the "Go To Travel" program, a government subsidized amount of 268.5 billion yen will be used to promote domestic tourism. The program was suspended nationwide last December due to a resurgence of the Covid-19 infections. Since payments for allowances to furloughed workers have been swelling, the government will use 1.7 trillion yen to increase funds for its unemployment insurance system. It will also allocate 1.4 trillion yen for a separate cash handout scheme of 100,000 yen to be provided to low-income households.

Seoul to step up monitoring fake news on N Korea

Seoul: Agencies

The South Korean government will beef up efforts to monitor fake news on North Korea that "distort the policy environment" for inter-Korean relations, officials said here on Monday. On December 3, the National Assembly approved a 1.5 trillion won (\$1.27 billion) budget for the Unification Ministry handling inter-Korean affairs next year, including 200 million won to launch the new monitoring program, reports Yonhap News Agency. The program was suggested following "needs for a more systematic monitoring due to the frequent spread of



false, fabricated information on North Korea on new media platforms which led to various negative consequences, including the distortion of policy environment", Ministry spokesperson Lee Jong-joo told a press briefing. The Ministry will consult with experts to come up with a detailed plan on the new initiative, including who will be entrusted to carry out the business, as well as the scope and method of the monitoring activities, she said. The move is the latest in a series of efforts by the Ministry to prevent the spread of groundless rumours on the North, following last year's launch of a "fake news response" section on its website.

PORTUGUESE PREZ DISSOLVES PARLIAMENT, CALLS FOR ELECTIONS

Lisbon: Agencies

Lisbon: Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has signed a decree that formalises the dissolution of Parliament and calling for early legislative elections for January 30, 2022. According to the Portuguese Constitution, during the period in which Parliament is dissolved, the legislative power will be represented by a "Standing Commission of the Assembly of the Republic", reports Xinhua news agency. This provisional body is composed of the President of Parliament, the vice-presidents, and deputies appointed by all the parties, according to their respective parliamentary representation.

This is the eighth dissolution of the Portuguese parliament since April 25, 1974, when the Portuguese Republic was instituted following the "Carnation Revolution" that implanted democracy in the country. Rebelo de Sousa decided to dissolve the parliament after the State Budget for 2022 was rejected, in a vote held on October 27.

Oppn favoured by Australian voters to win next election: Poll

Canberra: Agencies

A new poll has revealed that Australia's main opposition Labor Party is the favourite among voters to win the next federal election. The latest News poll, which was published on Sunday night, found that 47 per cent of voters expect Labor to form a government following the election, which is due to be held by May 2022, compared to 37 per cent who expect the governing Coalition to remain in power, reports Xinhua news agency.

However, the margin is closer than that in the lead-up to the 2019 election, when 55 per cent of voters tipped a Labor victory only for the Coalition to pull off a major upset and win a third term in the government. According to the poll Labor still leads the Coalition 53-47 on a two-party preferred basis.

The poll indicated that preference deals with independents, who could have a major impact on the election



result with 13 per cent of respondents saying they intend to cast their first preference votes for minor parties. Prime Minister Scott Morrison continues to lead Labor leader Anthony Albanese as the voters' preferred Prime Minister, with 45 per cent choosing the incumbent compared to 36 per cent for Albanese. The most significant change since the last poll in mid-November was in the leaders' satisfaction rating. For the first time since March 2020, Albanese leads Morrison in net satisfaction, which is measured by subtracting the portion of voters dissatisfied with their performance from those who are satisfied.



Maharashtra local body polls:

SC PUTS ON HOLD ELECTION TO 27% OBC SEATS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court has put on hold election for 27 per cent seats reserved for OBC candidates in Maharashtra local body polls. The election process for other seats are to continue as scheduled, the apex court said.

The SC ruling overrides the state government's ordinance for reserving the seats for OBC candidates.

Making a strong observation directed at the state government, the SC said "Your political compulsion cannot be a ground to undermine our verdict." The Maharashtra government had passed an ordinance providing for the OBC quota in rural local body polls by amending the state's gram panchayat law. The quota had been quashed by the SC in March. The ordinance allowed for the OBC quota in rural bodies with the rider



that once combined with the SC and ST reservations, the combined quota will not cross the 50% limit. Also, the OBC quota will not cross 27% of the seats, in keeping with the existing state legislation. Notably, a bench comprising Justices AM Khanwilkar and CT Ravikumar passed the order in writ petitions filed challenging the Maharashtra Ordinance which introduced 27% OBC quota in the local body elections and the consequent notifications issued by the State Election Commission to give effect to

the same. The bench observed that the 27% OBC Quota could not have been implemented without setting up a commission and without collecting data regarding inadequacy of representation local government wise. "Without setting up of commission to collect data local government wise, it is not open to the State Election Commission to provide for reservation of OBC category. That is the 1st step which ought to have been done", the bench observed in the order.

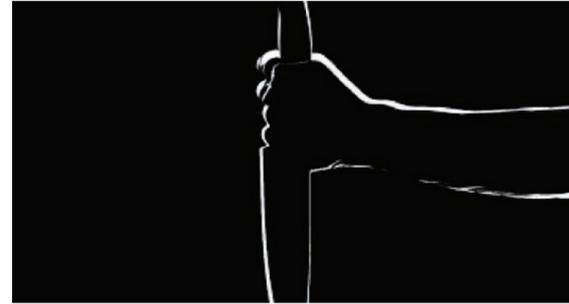
Team Absolute | Aurangabad

In a grisly instance of "honour killing", a 18-year-old youth, and his 40-year-old mother, were arrested in Maharashtra's Aurangabad after he allegedly chopped off his pregnant sister's head with a sickle, the duo clicked selfies with the corpse and shared them with friends, officials said on Monday.

The incident happened on Sunday afternoon in Goygaon village in Vajapur tehsil of Aurangabad, said a member of the investigating team, Police Patil (PP) Suryakant R. Mote.

Soon after committing the ghastly murder, accused Sanket S. Mote, 18, along with his mother Shobha S. Mote, 40, calmly went to the police station and gave themselves up, and even confessed to their crime, that has left the state shaken.

PP Mote said primary investigations point to a case of "honour killing" as the accused and his mother were enraged after his daughter Kishori, alias Kirti, 19, and her boyfriend Ajay S. Thore, both



living in the same village, had eloped on June 21. After getting married six months ago at Alandi, Pune, the young couple returned to the village a few days ago. The girl's family was deadly against the relationship and the subsequent wedding as Thore, who is a farmer, allegedly had a dubious reputation. Upon learning of their return, the mother-son duo went to meet Kirti - who was around 3 months pregnant - at her husband's home, spoke cordially and hinted at

a rapprochement, following which Kirti went to the kitchen to prepare tea and snacks for them. With a macabre plan in their mind, the mother-son followed her into the kitchen, where Shobha Mote grabbed her daughter's legs and pinned her down, while son Sanket whipped out a sickle and beheaded her. Later, the mother-son clicked selfies which they sent to friends and others, before throwing Kirti's head outside the house. From there, they went to the police station, sur-

rendered themselves and admitted to the crime, said PP Mote, though it is not known if the victim was alone at home at that time.

In Goygaon, sometime later, horrified neighbours saw the woman's head lying outside the home and the headless body lying inside in a pool of blood and alerted PP Mote and other officials. PP Mote said, that as per the probe, the victim's husband and complainant in the case, Thore, is said to be a history-sheeter with some cases lodged against him in Vajapur Police Station, and he was allegedly harassing and assaulting his wife Kirti. The police teams have seized the mobiles of the mother-son, retrieved the pictures and videos for further investigations, and the duo has been produced before a Vajapur Magistrate Court for remand. Meanwhile, Kirti's autopsy was completed early on Monday and her funeral was performed this morning in the presence of her grieving father, Sanjay Mote, a few relatives from her husband's side, and some neighbours, said PP Mote.

SC hints at CBI probe against Param Bir Singh, not by Mumbai Police

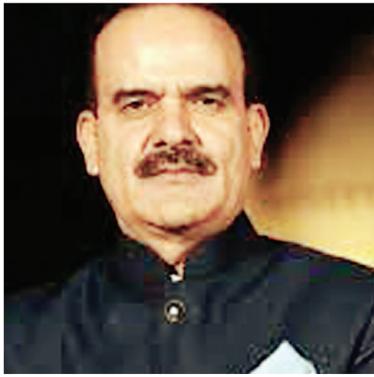
Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday restrained the Maharashtra Police from filing charge sheet in all the FIRs registered against former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh, but allowed the investigation to proceed. The top court observed that prima facie it is of the view that the probe against Singh should be done by another agency and not by the state police.

A bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and comprising Justice MM Sundresh sought CBI's view in connection with taking up the investigation in the FIRs registered by the Maharashtra Police against Singh over allegations of misconduct and corruption.

Senior advocate Puneet Bali, representing Singh, contended that the Maharashtra government and the DGP have filed responses, but the CBI is yet to file a response. The bench queried Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that could the CBI take up this matter as it is already looking into the other aspects?

Mehta orally submitted 'there is no issue at all'. In a written response, the Maharashtra government has told the top court that there is no need



for a CBI probe into the cases as these are service matters and Singh is also not a whistleblower.

Senior advocate Darius Kambatta, representing the Maharashtra government, submitted that Singh's petition is not maintainable as it was a service dispute against departmental enquiries,

which should be contested before the Central Administrative Tribunal. Justice Kaul observed "Prima facie we find this difficult to accept...but since the matter has been assigned already to the CBI, why can't this be also entrusted with them?"

The bench further orally observed that it is only concerned with the likelihood of bias. Bali submitted to the bench that the Maharashtra government was acting with "mala fides" against his client.

The top court directed the state police to continue its probe, but restrained it from filing a charge sheet in the matter.

The bench said: "Since the petitioner has joined the investigation, let the probe continue but no challan be issued." It also directed the CBI to file its affidavit within a week and scheduled the matter for further hearing on January 11. The top court had earlier granted protection from arrest to Singh which will continue.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by Singh against the September 16 judgement of the Bombay High Court, which dismissed his writ petition challenging the two inquiries ordered by the state home ministry for allegedly violating service rules and corruption charges as non-maintainable.

NIA seeks urgent SC hearing of plea challenging bail to Sudha Bharadwaj

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday urged the Supreme Court to urgently list its petition challenging the Bombay High Court, which granted default bail to activist Sudha Bharadwaj in the Bhima Koregaon case.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta mentioned the NIA's petition before a bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana. Mehta submitted the order granting default bail which will come into effect on Wednesday, saying: "So I have to succeed or lose tomorrow. Defects are cleared. The petition is numbered." The bench said it will

look into the matter.

On December 1, the Bombay High Court granted bail to Bharadwaj in the Bhima Koregaon caste violence case. However, it refused to entertain bail pleas of the eight other accused - Rona Wilson, Varavara Rao, Sudhir Dhawale, Surendra Gadling, Shoma Sen, Mahesh Raut, Vernon Gonsalves and Arun Ferreira.

All the accused are lodged at the Talaja Central Jail. A division bench comprising Justices SS Shinde and N.J. Jamadar directed that Bharadwaj should be produced before the Special NIA Court on Wednesday which will impose the bail conditions and finalise her release.

It had noted that a special court designated under the NIA Act already existed in Pune, as a result, the sessions judge had no jurisdiction to extend the detention beyond the stipulated 90 days.

Bharadwaj is the first among the 16 activists arrested in the case to be granted default bail. Earlier, another accused P. Varavara Rao was granted bail on medical grounds, while accused Fr. Stan Lourduwamy passed away in custody in July after a prolonged illness.

Hailing from Chhattisgarh, Bharadwaj, 60, has been in jail since August 2018 after her arrest from New Delhi by the Pune Police which was probing the twin case.

Cops' unusual speed in Param Bir case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Umpteen complaints of extortion and corruption were lodged against former police commissioner Param Bir Singh, but it was for the first time that the sleuths took serious note of a complaint filed by a leading businessman against him. Crime branch officials realized that if the case is not taken to a logical end, then they will have to pay a heavy price as the political leadership was monitoring it.

The crime branch set a new record when it filed the chargesheet. While the offence was registered against Singh on August 21, the charge-sheet was filed on Saturday, in less than four months. It involved recording statements of 62 witnesses and analysis of 68 audio clips of conversation between dismissed police official Sachin Waze and the businessman. The conversation established how Waze was operating the extortion racket with the blessings of Singh. Waze used to summon bar and restaurant owners and demand money. He had spelt out the sharing formula between him and Singh.

In the past, many complaints were filed against Singh across Mumbai, Thane and Kalyan, but owing to his political links not

even a routine inquiry was conducted and most of the complaints were closed. In certain cases, the complainants were harassed and forced to step back. No police station entertained a complaint against Singh and Waze, who had mastered the art of terrorizing complainants. Had the police administration taken serious note of the activities of Singh in the past, then the present situation could have been avoided. For CM Uddhav Thackeray, it was a major setback when the NDA government refused extension to chief secretary Sitaram Kunte, who retired on November 30.

Notwithstanding an informal protest lodged by a section of bureaucrats with the NCP leadership, the MVA government submitted a proposal for a brief extension for Kunte. It was found that the NDA government approved the proposal for the extension of the Andhra chief secretary, but rejected Kunte's proposal. Bureaucrats had expressed the view that granting of extension to outgoing chief secretaries should be done away with as it results in injustice to the next-in-line bureaucrat. A former chief secretary felt that as a rule, it should be ensured that only that IAS officer should be appointed CS who has at least two years for retirement, as then only there will be stability and continuity in administration.

MSRTC employees' strike enters 40th day; bus services resume at 78 depots

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Employees of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) continued their strike for the 40th day on Monday, even as the bus operations resumed in 78 out of total 250 depots across the state, officials said. On Sunday, the corporation operated the highest 1,700, out of its fleet of nearly 16,000 vehicles, since the strike intensified after the Diwali festival last month, a spokesperson of the MSRTC said.

A large number of the MSRTC employees have refused to relent, and are firm on their demand for the merger of the loss-making corporation with the state government.

They went on the strike from October 28, and intensified it last month. Since most of the bus depots are shut, passengers have been facing a touch time. "The bus operations



have resumed so far in 78 out of 250 depots," the MSRTC spokesperson said. The state-owned corporation has

so far suspended 9,625 permanent employees and terminated the services of 1,990 daily wage workers follow-

ing the strike, as per MSRTC officials.

Despite repeated appeals and warnings by Maharashtra Transport Minister Anil Parab, who is the MSRTC's chairman, a large number of employees are continuing the strike and many of them have protested outside the depots and bus stands of the corporation.

According to union sources, the MSRTC has transferred several employees since last week. As a result, the attendance at many depots has improved and bus operations at some more depots are likely to resume.

The MSRTC is one of the biggest public transport bodies in the country with a fleet of around 16,000 buses and 93,000 employees.

The corporation used to ferry nearly 65 lakh passengers per day before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic last year.

Amid Omicron alert, Maharashtra short of kits for early detection

▶ THE TEST DETECTS THE ABSENCE OF THE S-GENE, WHICH IS AN INDICATOR OF THE PRESENCE OF THIS VARIANT IN A COVID POSITIVE PATIENT. FORMALLY KNOWN AS THE S-GENE TARGET FAILURE (SGTF) TEST, THIS PROXY TEST CAN BE USED FOR EARLY DETECTION.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

With Omicron making its presence felt in Maharashtra, the state government has asked districts to procure the S-gene test, which enables quick detection of the variant. However, apart from Mumbai and Pune, no other district in the state has these test kits.

The test detects the absence of the S-gene, which is an indicator of the presence of this variant in a Covid positive patient. Formally known as the S-gene Target Failure (SGTF) test, this proxy test can be used for early detection.

On November 30, state Additional Chief Secretary Pradeep Vyas wrote to the districts to run the SGTF test for "efficient detection for Omicron" and instructed that specimens with SGTF should be prioritised for genomic sequencing and confirmation of Omicron. "Use of SGTF approach may lead to faster detection rate," he instructed. Out of the 36 districts in



Maharashtra, only two districts Pune and Mumbai have the kits to run a check on S-gene. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has procured around 1,200 kits to run SGTF tests. BMC is also partnering with private hospitals to bifurcate SGTF testing in an anticipated third wave. "To avoid delay in identification of Omicron, we have procured the kits which are being used in KEM hospital. We have already run 5-6 SGTF tests at the hospital. We have also double checked its results to reconfirm the efficiency of the kits," said Suresh Kakani, Additional Commissioner, BMC. But neighbouring Kalyan-Dombivli Municipal Corporation (KDMC), where the

first case in Maharashtra was detected in a marine engineer who returned from South Africa on November 24, does not have any kits. The 33-year-old's swab sample was the first to be sent for genome sequencing for the variant. It was sent to Kasturba Gandhi Hospital, which took four days to provide the result. The genome sequencing reports of over 22 suspected Omicron patients in Maharashtra are awaited, said a state health official. Dr Vyas said that the directive was given suggesting conducting the SGTF test when necessary. "SGTF test is one presumptive test, it can reduce the numbers sent for genomic sequencing. It has utility in certain situations and

circumstances." In the districts, the government-provided RT-PCR kits detect only the E, N and RdRp genes, not S-gene. "Although we have got the directives, we don't have the kits to run SGTF tests. We are sending samples for genome sequencing," said Hingoli Collector Jitendra Papalkar.

In April this year, the state had tied up with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB) for genome sequencing, where they send 100 samples from each district every month. But it is a time-consuming affair. So, BMC started its own genome sequencing facility in Kasturba Hospital in August.

Dr Prashant Thakare said that considering the high transmission rate of Omicron, the labs would get overwhelmed in case of a possible third wave. In such a situation, it would require prioritising of samples through SGTF tests.

"Generally, it takes five days to run sequencing on prioritised samples and 15 days on general samples. To channelise the testing, all districts should first run SGTF tests on suspected Omicron patients. If their report gives a red flag, then these samples should be sent on priority for genome sequencing," he said. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka governments have already started the procurement process of the kits to its labs. Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said that with the identification of the first Omicron patient in the state, his department is planning to procure the kits for districts. "If the variant spreads to a large population, it will put a huge pressure on genome sequencing labs. To avoid such a situation, we are in discussion to distribute the kits among districts, especially the ones with high populations."



KYLIE, TRAVIS SCOTT ARE STILL A COUPLE, CONFIRMS KHLOE KARDASHIAN

Los Angeles | Agencies

Reality TV personality Khloe Kardashian has put rumours about make-up mogul Kylie Jenner and rapper Travis Scott (II)'s split to rest. Khloe confirmed that her younger sister and the rapper are a couple despite W Magazine's claims, reports aceshowbiz.com. "Wow i don't know why this magazine would write this but they are very much a couple," Khloe wrote on her Instagram. Her response came after the article leaked on Sunday, December 5 and stated that they're "not actually a couple." Many social media users also reacted to Khloe's comment. One wrote: "She worried about the wrong things .. girl about to be a whole step mom and she worried about her sister's problems." Another threw a shade at her saying: "Like her and Trick Thompson?" As for the leaked piece, the author of the article wrote that Kylie and Travis, who are expecting their second child together, aren't actually together. "Travis and Kylie seemed very comfortable under the sheets, but even though they will soon have two children together -- their daughter, Stormi, is 3 -- they are not a couple, and haven't been in two years. They're the modern family!" the author reportedly stated.



Tom Holland to play Fred Astaire in upcoming biopic

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Spider-Man' star Tom Holland will portray legendary actor, dancer and singer Fred Astaire in an upcoming biopic for Sony. According to sources, deals for the project are still being finalised, reports deadline.com. Astaire's career spanned 76 years before his death in 1987 from pneumonia. He got his start in the industry early working with his siblings in vaudeville before setting his sights on Broadway and London's West End before making it big in Tinseltown. He most famously starred in 'Dancing Lady' with Joan Crawford, 'Easter Parade' with Judy Garland, and 'Funny Face' with Audrey Hepburn. The actor too confirmed the news to the media while promoting his upcoming film 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' in London. Oscar-nominated producer Amy Pascal first mentioned her eye was on Holland for the role of the legendary dancer, singer, and choreographer in a November profile of Holland in GQ. The Sony biopic is not to be confused with Amazon and Automatik's 'Fred & Ginger' starring another 'Billy Elliot' alum, Jamie Bell as Astaire, and Margaret Qualley in the role of Ginger Rogers. 'Fred & Ginger' dives into the love story of the dance partners both on and off-screen. Deadline revealed exclusively last December. Holland made his debut on the West End stage in 'Billy Elliot The Music' in 2008. He first portrayed the lead character's friend, Michael Caffrey, before taking on the lead role until 2010.

TAYLOR SWIFT, ST. VINCENT DROPPED AS GRAMMY NOMINEES FOR OLIVIA RODRIGO'S 'SOUL' INTERPOLATION

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singers Taylor Swift and St. Vincent's names have been dropped as Grammy nominees for Olivia Rodrigo's 'Sour' interpolation. Swift was originally listed as a nominee for Rodrigo's album due to an interpolation on the latter artist's album, but the Recording Academy has now updated its list of nominees and excluded several names that previously were listed, reports variety.com. Also no longer nominated for being part of Rodrigo's 'Sour' song-writing team in the nominations list are St. Vincent and Jack

Antonoff.

Those two and Swift together wrote 'Cruel Summer', a song from the 'Lover' album, which Rodrigo and her camp credited as an interpolation in the hit 'Deja Vu', even though it bore only the most modest similarity to the Swift album track. In removing the nominations on Sunday, the Recording Academy said that its policy is not to include the writers of interpolated songs in nominations, and that it did so in the case of Rodrigo only because of a submission that incorrectly named Swift, Clark and Antonoff as full co-writers. "During the submission process, the Academy received credits from the label for the track 'Deja Vu'," the Academy said in a statement. "Last week, we received the correct credits from the label that recognise Annie



Clark, Jack Antonoff and Taylor Swift as songwriters of an interpolation on the track 'Deja Vu'. In keeping with current Grammy guidelines, as songwriters of an interpolated track, Clark, Antonoff and Swift are not nominees in the album of the year category for 'Sour'. "That doesn't mean that any of the three are now shut out in the Grammy nominations. As the Academy's statement goes on to point out: "Antonoff and Swift are nominated in the category for Swift's album, 'Evermore'." St. Vincent doesn't appear in the album of the year category, but is nominated for best alternative album for her 2021 release, 'Daddy's Home'.

'THE BOYS' ANIMATED SPIN-OFF SERIES 'DIABOLICAL' ANNOUNCED

Los Angeles | Agencies

An eight-episode pickup of 'Diabolical', an animated anthology series set in the same universe as the hit superhero show 'The Boys' has been announced by Amazon Prime Video. The production was confirmed through a video message featuring actor Karl Urban, who portrays Billy Butcher in 'The Boys', released during one of Amazon Prime Video's Comic-Con Experience 2021 virtual panels, reports variety.com. "There is no question that you guys are the greatest fans in the world," Urban stated in the announcement. "As a special way of saying thank you to you, we've got a little surprise for you which is going to drop early next year... (Producers Eric Kripke, Seth Rogan and Evan Goldberg) have asked a few of their celebrity mates to cook up eight deliciously unique, twisted, animated episodes set in the world of 'The Boys'." 'Diabolical' features a slew of writing talent from across the entertainment industry, with episodes featuring stories by Awkwafina, Garth Ennis, Eliot and Ilana Glazer, Simon Racioppa, Justin Roiland and Ben Bayouth, Andy Samberg and Aisha Tyler. Rogan and Goldberg also serve as writers. "Surprise! We're almost finished with eight episodes of our animated series, aDiabolical," executive producer Eric Kripke said in a statement. "We gathered together some incredible creators and we gave them one rule... just kidding, there's no rules. They blew the doors off it, delivering eight completely unexpected, funny, shocking, gory, moist, emotional episodes. You think 'The Boys' is nuts? Wait till you see this."



Cardi B yells at nightclub doorman after Black women not allowed in

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Cardi B has stood up for fellow Black women as she was seen screaming at a nightclub doorman after her fans told her that the club didn't allow Black women inside. In a video that has been circulating on social media, the 'WAP' hitmaker could be seen arriving at the club with her partner Offset, reports aceshowbiz.com. As she said hello to the fans while walking in, the fans started telling her that the bouncers were not allowing Black women into the club. They accused the doorman of only letting white women into the event. The fans also claimed they were even blocked from purchasing a table. Defending her fans, the 29-year-old rapper began yelling at the doorman, saying: "Let the black women in." The security later responded that they would let the fans in after they let her in first. One Instagram user, who seemed familiar with the place, commented: "E11even is extremely racist! This will soon come to light!!!" Another user said: "I don't get begging from hearing the clip. More like...inquiry the reason behind the blatant disrespect of not allowing a certain group of ppl in. Don't get 'why' confused with 'how'." "Stop going to places where you and your money is not appreciated," another wrote. A separate person penned: "@iamcardib please stand with these women and stop supporting clubs you visit and know that (they) do this. Your influence is powerful." The same night, Cardi B also attended the Maxim party at Art Basel. As she was seen hitting all the party spots around the city, she took to her Twitter account to write, "I can't believe I went to 4 parties in one night."



Scarlett Johansson



2ND CRICKET TEST MATCH

INDIA THRASH NEW ZEALAND BY 372 RUNS, WIN SERIES 1-0

▶ THIS IS INDIA'S BIGGEST WIN BY RUN MARGIN, BETTERING THE 337-RUN VICTORY REGISTERED AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA AT THE FERDINANDS KOTLA IN NEW DELHI IN DECEMBER 2015.

▶ THIS WAS ALSO THE SEVENTH TIME THAT INDIA HAVE WON A TEST MATCH BY 300 OR MORE RUNS.

▶ MAYANK AGARWAL, WHO SCORED A FANTASTIC 150 IN THE FIRST INNINGS AND FOLLOWED IT UP WITH 62 IN THE SECOND, WAS ADJUDGED THE 'PLAYER OF THE MATCH' WHILE RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN WAS DECLARED THE 'PLAYER OF THE SERIES' FOR HIS VITAL CONTRIBUTION OF 70 RUNS



World Test Championship 2021/23 standings. The Indian spinners had reduced New Zealand to 140/5 in their second innings at stumps on the third day and they wrapped up victory in 43 minutes on the fourth morning, bundling out New Zealand for 167 runs in 56.3 overs to record a smashing win. With New Zealand, who were shot out for 62 in their first innings, struggling at 140/5 in their second knock, India did not give the

Black Caps any chances of a fightback as they just took 11.3 overs to settle the issue. Off-spinner Jayant Yadav came up with a devastating spell as he claimed four wickets for 19 runs on Monday morning, getting the ball to turn sharply and extracting bounce. R Ashwin claimed the other remaining wicket, getting Henry Nicholls out for 44. Nicholls was Ashwin's 300th victim at home and he is now the second most successful

INDIA RECLAIM TOP SPOT IN ICC TEST RANKINGS

Mumbai: After registering an emphatic 372-run victory against defending World Test champions New Zealand at the Wankhede Stadium here on Monday, India reclaimed the top spot in the ICC Test rankings. The victory in Mumbai also meant that India registered their 14th consecutive series win at home and 11th straight under Virat Kohli's leadership. With the home series win, India bagged 12 points and climbed to number one position in the World Test Championship 2021/23 standings. Now India have 124 points and are ahead of New Zealand who have 121 rating points. December 8, are in third position with 108 points, while England are in fourth position, just one point behind Australia.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India thrashed New Zealand by 372 runs in the second Test at the Wankhede Stadium here to record their biggest victory by run margin and win the two-Test series 1-0. With this win, India also bagged 12 points in the

Russia defeat Croatia to clinch Davis Cup title



Madrid | Agencies

World No. 2 Daniil Medvedev once again came up with breath-taking tennis as he guided the Russian Tennis Federation to the Davis Cup Finals title against Croatia here. The US Open champion this year did not drop a set at the tournament, overcoming Marin Cilic 7-6(7), 6-2 in 89 minutes to secure victory for the Russian Tennis Federation. Medvedev was strong on serve, firing eight aces and winning 87 per cent (34/39) of points behind his first delivery. It is the third time the Russian Tennis Federation has won the Davis Cup, also triumphing in 2002 and 2006. "It feels amazing," Medvedev said in his on-court interview on Sunday night.

"I am more happy for the team than myself. We have an amazing team with an amazing atmosphere and I am just happy to be able to be part of this team to win the points we needed. It was an amazing two weeks. I am really happy," Medvedev was quoted as saying by atp-tour.com. Earlier, Andrey Rublev had set the wheels in motion, downing Borna Gojo 6-4, 7-6(5) to give the Russian Tennis Federation a 1-0 lead. The 24-year-old did not face a break point and hit 18 winners to win after one hour and 33 minutes. "It was super tough," Rublev said. "There was a lot of pressure on me. Borna was playing unbelievably for the past two weeks. He has beaten some amazing players and was amazing today. I will enjoy the moment."

INDIAN TEAM PRESENTS AUTOGRAPHED JERSEY TO 10-WICKET MAN AJAZ PATEL

Mumbai: New Zealand spinner Ajaz Patel, who took all 10 India wickets in the first innings of the second Test at the Wankhede Stadium here, was in for a surprise when the Mumbai-born player was presented a jersey signed by the entire India squad for his achievement, at the conclusion of the match on Monday. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) posted images on social media showing India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin presenting the jersey to Patel, who became only the third player in Test cricket history to take all 10 wickets in an innings after Englishman Jim Laker and India's Anil Kumble.



Hamilton wins wild Saudi GP to set up F1 title showdown

Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) | Agencies

Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton beat Red Bull's Max Verstappen in a truly chaotic Formula 1 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix, which was restarted twice and in which the two title rivals collided with each other once again in the 2021 season. In one of the most dramatic races in living memory, Hamilton and Verstappen went wheel to wheel on several occasions at the Jeddah Corniche street circuit, with the Briton crashing into the back of the Dutchman at one point after a misunderstanding over yielding a position. The two drivers are now level on points in the drivers' championship, setting the stage for a winner-takes-all



season finale in Abu Dhabi next weekend. Starting first and second on the grid, Hamilton and teammate Valtteri Bottas led away from Verstappen and looked comfortable at the front until their progress was halted on lap 10 after Mick Schumacher lost control of his Haas and slammed into the barrier, Xinhua reports. With the safety car immediately deployed, Hamilton and Bottas both came in for new tyres while Verstappen elected to stay put, putting him in the lead but needing

to make a pit stop at a later point. However, lady luck smiled on Verstappen and Red Bull when the race was then red-flagged on lap 13 in order to allow for lengthier repairs to be made to the barriers. Under F1 rules, drivers are able to change their tyres under red flag conditions, essentially giving Verstappen and others a free pit stop and ensuring that the Dutchman would line up for the standing restart on pole position, ahead of Hamilton and Bottas.

Manchester City the new Premier League leaders; Chelsea lose to West Ham

London | Agencies

Manchester City are the new leaders, while Liverpool moved into second place after winning their respective matches in the Premier League this weekend, while Chelsea lost 2-3 in a thrilling game to West Ham United. Manchester City's 3-1 win over Watford was rarely in doubt in a game they controlled ruthlessly, with Raheem Sterling opening the scoring in the fourth minute and Bernardo Silva doubling the lead just after the half-hour, late on Sunday evening. Silva added a third in the 63rd minute to assure the points before Cucho Hernandez scored a consolation for the hosts. Newcastle United claimed their first win of the season after a bad mistake from Burnley keeper Nick Pope allowed Callum Wilson to score the only goal of the game at St James' Park, Xinhua reports. Divock Origi doesn't score many goals for Liverpool but they tend to be important, such as the 94th-minute winner that gave his side a 1-0 win in a tight game against Wolves, where Jorgen Klopp's men did enough to deserve all three points. A freak goal when Arthur Masuka's cross fooled Chelsea keeper Edouard Mendy condemned Thomas Tuchel's men to their



second league defeat of the campaign away to West Ham. West Ham showed resilience to twice come back from behind with Manuel Lazini's penalty cancelling out Thiago Silva's opener for the visitors and the impressive Jarrod Bowen leveling again after Mason Mount had put Chelsea back in front just before the break. Ralf Rangnick got off to a winning start at Manchester United thanks to Fred's 77th-minute goal, which he curled in from the edge of the penalty area after being set up by Mason Greenwood. The goal came two minutes after Jordan Ayew missed a great chance for visiting Crystal Palace and overall United failed to impress. Goals from Lucas Moura, Davinson Sanchez and Son Hueng-Min gave

Tottenham their most convincing win since Bruno Conte was named as first-team coach. Moura's early strike was just what Tottenham needed against a Norwich City side that had traveled to North London on the back of a three-game unbeaten run. Patrick Bamford came back from injury after 11 games out with a 95th-minute goal to save a point for Leeds United in a 2-2 draw at home to Brentford. Tyler Roberts had put Leeds ahead in the 27th minute only for goals from Shandon Baptiste and Sergi Canos to overturn the score and Brentford looked set for all three points until Bamford's late finish. Ezri Konsa Ngoye scored twice as Aston Villa came back after conceding an early goal to Leicester City to give Steven Gerard his third win in four matches as Aston coach. Harvey Barnes put Leicester ahead in the 14th minute, but Konsa got a touch on Emi Buendia's header just three minutes later to beat Kasper Schmeichel and his powerful header from a corner in the 54th minute was enough to win the game for the home side. Brighton rode their luck before Neal Maupay scored a ninth-minute equalizer away to Southampton, who had led through Amando Broja's 29th-minute strike and missed enough chances to have won easily.

CISF DELHI, ITBP JALANDHAR CONTINUE GOOD SHOW AT 70TH ALL INDIA POLICE HOCKEY

Bengaluru | Agencies

Dec 6 (IANS) On day five of the prestigious 70th All India Police Hockey Championships being hosted by the Karnataka State Police here at the Bangalore Hockey Stadium, CISF Delhi, ITBP Jalandhar, Manipur Police and Jharkhand Police registered big wins in their respective group stage matches for men, on Monday.

In the women's category, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) clinically demolished Maharashtra State Police's defence to defeat them 11-0 in their pool B match. While Anjika (26', 48', 58') scored a hat-trick of goals, the others who contributed to SSB score-line were Albina Tirkey



(3'), Manisha (4'), Ranjita Minj (9', 51'), Anjika Preeti (27', 53'), Mukta Mundu (52') and Darshana Rani (56'). Meanwhile, the CISF Delhi men's team continued their fine form in the tournament as they registered yet another convincing victory in their pool G match. They defeated Jammu & Kashmir Police 8-3 to keep their quarterfinal hopes alive. Niraj Yadav (23', 33') and Abhash Sharma (28', 40') scored a fine double each while Anjel Minz (16'). Skipper Harpreet Singh (17'), Adnan Wasim (41') and Ashoka Kumar Soni (47') contributed to the CISF Delhi's big-margin win. For Jammu & Kashmir Police, Jaspreet Singh (45', 56') scored twice and Karnjeet Singh (53') pocketed a goal.

Chappell wants Root to bat No.3 in The Ashes

Sydney | Agencies

Former Australia captain Ian Chappell has suggested England skipper Joe Root to bat at number three during the upcoming Ashes considering his good run of form in Test cricket this year. Root has been the top run-scorer in Test cricket in 2021, amassing 1455 runs from 23 innings at an average of 66.13 while coming at number four. Overall, Root averages 53.37 at number four, as compared to 38.66 at number three. Root averages 38 in Australia with six half-centuries, compared to 50.12 with 23 centuries and 50 half-centuries in his overall Test career. The 78-year-old further took a swipe at



Root's captaincy, saying that he would be heavily dependent on inputs from all-rounder Ben Stokes.

Perth ruled out as Ashes venue; CA to choose replacement soon

Sydney | Agencies

Crickets Australia (CA) on Monday concluded that the fifth and final Ashes Test, earlier scheduled to be held in Perth from January 14, cannot be played there due to the strict quarantine rules in Western Australia (WA), and that a replacement venue will be announced in due course ricket Australia tweeted its disappointment on Monday saying, "While every effort was made to ensure the fifth Vodafone #Ashes Test match could be staged in Perth, it is unfortunately not possible to align the respective priorities of the WA Government, CA and WA Cricket. We'll provide an update on the replacement venue in due course."



Rahi reigns supreme in Women's 25M Pistol with hat-trick of National wins

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Reigning Asian Games champion Rahi Sarnobat stamped her authority over the Women's 25M Pistol event, winning her third successive Nationals on the concluding day of the 64th National Shooting Championship competitions at the Karni Singh Shooting Range, here on Monday. Maharashtra's Rahi shot a solid 37 in a top draw final to see off young and in-form challengers to her crown. 14-year old Namya Kapoor of Delhi, recently crowned Junior World Champion in the event, won silver



with 31 and reigning Youth Olympic Games and 10M Air Pistol National Champion Manu Bhaker of Haryana, claimed bronze with 27-hits. In

Bhopal where the Rifle Nationals are taking place, Shriyanka Sadangi of Odisha won her first Women's 50M Rifle 3 Positions (3P) national crown,

finishing the 45-shot eight-woman final with a score of 454.9 points. Madhya Pradesh's Mansi Kathait won silver with 453.5 while West Bengal's Ayushi Podder won bronze with 440.9. Namya did win the Junior Women's 25M Pistol competition, getting the better of Manu 5-4 in a shoot-off. Esha Singh settled for bronze. In the Junior Women's 3P, Nishchal of Haryana won the gold with a new finals record score of 452.9. Madhya Pradesh's Ashi Chouksey was second with 450.9 while Sift Kaur Samra of Punjab won bronze with 440.7.



TEAM 'SHEHZADA' KICKSTARTS THE FILM'S NIGHT SHOOT SCHEDULE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The shoot of 'Shehzada' starring Kartik Aaryan, Kriti Sanon, Manisha Koirala and Paresh Rawal is in full swing.

A few days back, Kriti Sanon joined the film's cast in Delhi for shooting the major parts of the film. Now, the crew has commenced the night schedule

where team 'Shehzada' including producers Bhushan Kumar and Aman Gill, filmmaker Rohit Dhawan, and stars Kartik Aaryan and Kriti Sanon, was spotted together.

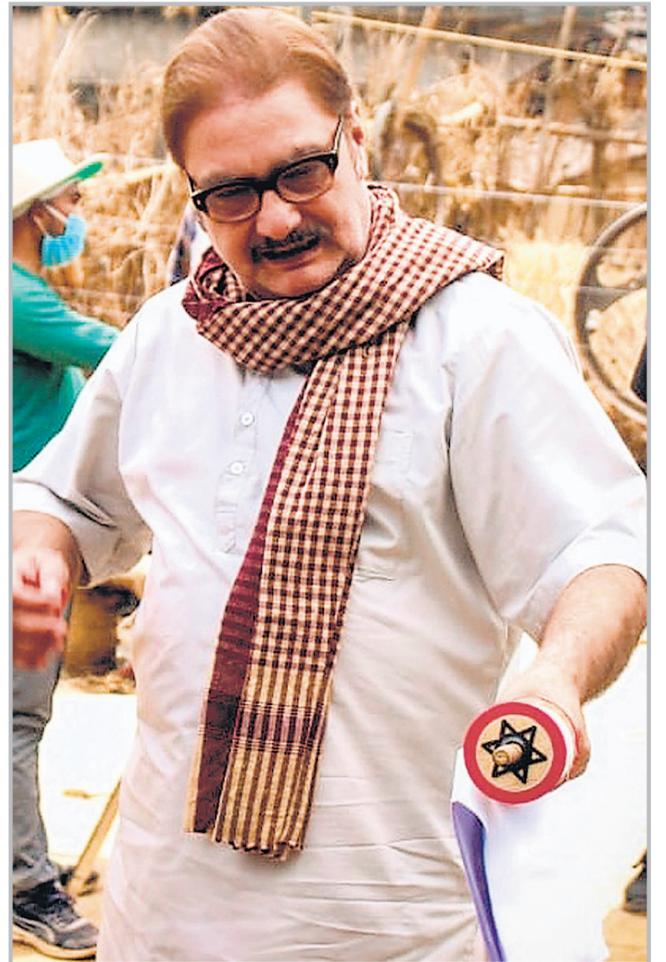
Talking about the night schedule, producer Bhushan Kumar said, "We have finally kickstarted the night schedule of 'Shehzada'. We will be shooting for a song sequence that plays a pivotal role in the narrative.

The entire team is really excited about the same."

In a similar vein, Aman Gill said, "We are excited to start shooting the first song of the film in Delhi after extensively shooting the talkie portions here. Our director Rohit Dhawan has planned to showcase the grandeur and character of the city in many visuals being picturised on the foot tapping songs composed by Pritam."

The entire team has been shooting in extreme weather conditions owing to the severe cold in Delhi. After 'Jersey', 'Shehzada' will mark Aman Gill's second full-fledged production.

The film, directed by Rohit Dhawan and produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Allu Arvind, S. Radha Krishna and Aman Gill, is set to release in November, 2022.



Vinay Pathak-starrer 'Bhagwan Bharose' slated for winter 2022 release

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Award-winning filmmaker Shiladitya Bora's upcoming film 'Bhagwan Bharose', starring Vinay Pathak, is in its final post-production stage and has been locked for a 2022 release.

Vinay Pathak said: "Bhagwan Bharose' is a sweet and special story, and I've been fortunate enough to be a part of Shiladitya's first directorial venture. May this be the start of his long illustrious cinema journey. I can't wait for the film to get completed and hit the screens."

Co-Produced by Sri Lankan Auteur filmmaker Prasanna Vithanage along with Platoon One Films, Lighthouse

Innoventures and Sri Sathya Sai Arts, the Hindi film is a tender coming-of-age drama, with screenplay by Sudhakar Nilmani and Mohit Chauhan.

Introducing two talented young finds Satendra Soni and Sparsh Suman, the film features an ensemble cast led by acclaimed actors Vinay Pathak, Masumeh Makhija, Manu Rishi Chadha, Shrikant Verma, Sawan Tank, and Krishna Singh Bisht.

Masumeh Makhija added: "Bhagwan Bharose' is a film that explores very hard-hitting themes and has immense relevance in contemporary India. This is a project made with true passion and that passion is visible in every aspect of the film."



'KatVic' wedding: In a sweet gesture, Vicky sends food packets to paparazzi

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid the hullabaloo of his wedding with Katrina Kaif, Vicky Kaushal's sweet gesture for the paparazzi has won the Internet. The actor sent out food packets prepared by his chef for the mediapersons stationed outside his house.

Paparazzi account Viral Bhayani shared a video of the food that was neatly packed in containers. The wedding festivities began last night with a function at Vicky's home for which Katrina and her mom reached Vicky's place.

Katrina was dressed in a white saree for the function. The car that Vicky earlier put at his mother-in-law's disposal was seen with Sham Kaushal as he stepped out for some work in Mumbai's Lokhandwala area.

Wedding bells will soon be ringing for Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif as the two are expected to reach the venue by Monday evening. The wedding will take place at the plush heritage property of Six Senses Fort Barwara Hotel with 120 guests attending the wedding, all of whom will be required to undergo mandatory RT-PCR tests.

'ISS MOD SE JAATE HAIN' DEALS WITH WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: ANITA HASSANANDANI

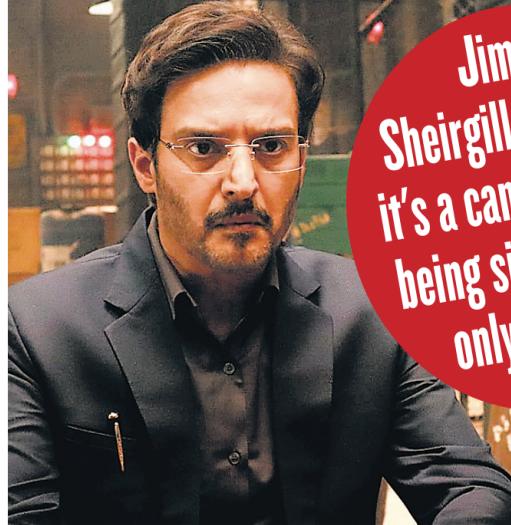
Ila Sankrityayan | New Delhi

Popular TV actress Anita Hassanandani talks about the new show 'Iss Mod Se Jaate Hain' and how it deals with the issue of gender equality and women empowerment in the society.

The daily soap 'Iss Mod Se Jaate Hain' is all about the life of a couple and how due to the rigid mentality of society, problems arise when the wife is more successful than the husband. It features Akshita Mudgal and Hitesh Bharadwaj in lead roles. Both of them are seen playing IAS aspirants.



While sharing about the concept of this show, Anita says: "Well, I love the concept because it's very important to spread awareness in the rural areas about equality. A woman can manage her household chores along with managing her career." She comments on the factors behind gender disparity and her take on it. "We all know in rural areas when a girl child is born, they are not provided with the kind of education that is required. In fact, they either drop out or are not allowed to study and mostly take for granted that they'll have to take care of the house as and when they grow up. So, I feel if this can be changed, a lot of things will fall in place." Anita adds about being a working woman and if she faced similar problems in the industry and the way she deals with it. She says that the television industry is slightly different because the kind of shows they do are more women-centric. "So, in our industry I really don't think women get sidelined, in fact at times the female actor is likely to get paid more because their roles are very crucial in the television shows. I think the film industry has also progressed and now we are all at the same level, so the television and film industry has been treating us equally is what I feel." The actress further shares that the narrative of this show is different from other daily soaps as according to her it is quite progressive.



Jimmy Sheirgill: Whether it's a cameo or lead, being sincere is my only constant

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Making his debut in 1996 with a small yet substantial part in Gulzar's directorial

'Maachis', Jimmy Sheirgill is complimented as a 'fine actor' by the critics with a tag of being 'underutilised'. That is until the web series 'Your Honor' happened in which he is the face of the show.

Post the release of its second season now that the actor is receiving praise for his portrayal of Bishan Khosla, in conversation with reporter, Jimmy shared what keeps him going. Earlier, the actor was appreciated for his acting in films like 'Mohabbatein', 'Mere Yaar Ki Shaadi Hai', 'Tanu Weds Manu', 'Lage Raho Munnabhai', and 'Haasil', among others.

Jimmy told IANS: "I know more than often I heard it from critics and fans that I should be seen more often and they say that I am 'underutilised'. Look, when it comes to the choices of projects that I have done, even though the story is the main factor, many times I did a film also because of friendship. At times, after hearing the story I found a character more interesting than the hero of the film because 'Mujhe tera character zyada pasand hai'." "It is true that the character I played in 'Your Honor' is really well appreciated because the show overall worked. But very honestly speaking, whether it is a cameo or a lead role in a film or in a web series, my sincerity is the only constant as an actor for all these years."

'Lehra Do' unfurls the sheer joy of epic '83' World Cup campaign

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The first song from the highly-anticipated Ranveer Singh-starrer '83' titled 'Lehra Do' has been released.

The patriotic track starts off with the Indian cricket team getting battered by the perilous bowling attack of the West Indies, before Arijit Singh's hair raising vocals swiftly make their way to the listeners' hearts.

The song composed by Pritam with lyrics penned by Kausar Munir, traces the journey of the Indian team's lowest point to their rise in the 1983 World Cup when the team left the entire world shell-shocked with their grit, endurance and iron-clad will to win as they turned the tournament on its head. '83'



directed by Kabir Khan, revolves around India's his-

toric 1983 World Cup win, and will see Ranveer Singh playing

the role of then India captain, the legendary Kapil Dev.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Esshanya Maheshwari