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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM NEW DELHI, MUMBAI AND BHOPAL

NATION > 02

'Gandhi's India' turning into 'Godse's India': Mehbooba Mufti...



HOLLYWOOD > 06

Dave Bautista will headline M. Night Shyamalan movie ...



SPORTS > 07

De Kock, Nortje, Rabada to lead SA challenge against India...



FARMERS' PROTEST: GOVT SUBMITS WRITTEN ASSURANCE, SKM MAY TAKE FINAL CALL ON WED

TIME TO BIND UP!

▶ IT IS LEARNT THAT IN THE POINT-WISE WRITTEN ASSURANCE, THE CENTRE HAS SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER AND AGRICULTURE MINISTER HAVE ALREADY ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF A COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CENTRE, STATES, FARMER ORGANISATIONS, AND AGRICULTURE SCIENTISTS ON MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICE (MSP).

▶ IT WAS ALSO LEARNT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO ASSURED THE SKM THAT POLICE CASES FILED AGAINST THE FARMERS WILL BE WITHDRAWN AS SOON AS THE PROTEST ENDS.

“ We discussed the proposal received from the Union government. Some farmers felt that some more clarification was needed on some issues. We hope that we will receive a reply from the Centre. Government has put some conditions and we want unconditional assurance. ”

Yudhvir Singh, Farmers' leader



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Farmers' agitation on the borders of the national capital is likely to end soon as the Centre on Tuesday gave a written assurance on their demands. After a meeting in the evening, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), which is spear-heading the agitation, said that they will meet again on Wednesday as they have sought some clarifications from the government on its communication. "The SKM members will be part of the farmer representatives in the committee," the government conveyed to the SKM. "The Uttar Pradesh and Haryana governments have agreed to withdraw cases with the end of the protest. Departments related to the Government of India and the

Union Territory have agreed to withdraw cases as farmers end their protest," the Centre assured the farmers. On the question of compensation for farmers who died during the protest, sources said: "The Centre mentioned that the Punjab government has already announced Rs 5 lakh, to which Uttar Pradesh and Haryana have in principle agreed. About the demand for withdrawal of the draft electricity bill, the Centre said that the opinion of all the stakeholders will be taken into before tabling it in Parliament.

On the issue of penal action for burning stubble, the government assured the SKM that farmers will be freed from criminal liabilities on the issue. Farmers leader said that a proposal has been received on which a discussion was held on Tuesday.



New Delhi: Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday demanded compensation for families of the farmers who lost their lives during the protests against the

RAHUL GANDHI DEMANDS COMPENSATION FOR FAMILIES OF DEAD FARMERS

three farm laws which has now been withdrawn by the Central government. Raising the issue during the Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi further said that around 700 farmers died during the protests and requested the Centre to pay compensation and give government jobs to the family

members. "I want the farmers to be given their rights, they should be given compensation as well as jobs, the Punjab government has given Rs 5 lakh compensation for around 400 farmers and also provided jobs for 152 of them," he said. The Congress MP also claimed that he had a list of the names of the dead farmers

and will produce it in the House. "We have made another list of 70 farmers from Haryana which I will also lay in the House," he said. The government in its earlier reply to a question, said that it has not kept track of farmers who lost their lives in the agitation and hence the question of compensation does not arise.

OPPOSITION FRONT WITHOUT CONGRESS, IMPOSSIBLE: RAUT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut met with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi this evening and later said there cannot be any opposition front without the Congress - a big message aimed at Mamata Banerjee after her "What UPA" taunt. "There has to be only one opposition front against the BJP. An opposition front is not possible without the Congress. What is the point of two-three fronts? It will benefit the BJP," Raut told reporters.



Congress and the Shiv Sena, part of a coalition in Maharashtra, might be inching towards a wider understanding.

Asked whether opposition parties should sit together to discuss strategy versus the BJP for the 2024 national election, Raut said: "I have asked Rahul Gandhi to take the lead on that."

He added: "Who leads the front is something all parties have to sit and decide together."

On whether the Shiv Sena is attempting to broker peace between the Congress and Mamata Banerjee, he remarked: "Sharad Pawar Saab hai (we have NCP leader Sharad Pawar for that)."

The meeting took place amid signs that the

Congress sources suggest the Sena might back the party in the state elections early next year. Though the Sena has negligible presence in some of these states, like Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, the political symbolism of extending support to the Congress speaks to the surprising, newfound proximity of the two ideologically opposed parties who had struggled to come together in the first place. Two days ago, the Shiv Sena had strongly defended the Congress from Bengal Chief Minister's attacks.

Pushing the Congress out of national politics and creating an opposition grouping parallel to the UPA would only strengthen the BJP and "fascist" forces, the Sena editorial said.

JAYANT CHAUDHARY ANNOUNCES SP-RLD ALLIANCE

SP WILL OUST BJP IN UP: AKHILESH YADAV

Team Absolute | Meerut

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and said that SP will oust the saffron party from power in Uttar Pradesh in next year's Assembly polls.

During the 'Parivartan Sandesh' rally organised in Meerut, Akhilesh Yadav coined a new slogan -- 'Kisan ka inquilab hoga, 2022 mein badlav hoga'.

It was the first rally in which the Samajwadi Party and the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) shared the stage together. Both Akhilesh Yadav and Jayant Singh Chaudhary of the RLD arrived at the rally together.

While addressing the rally, Akhilesh Yadav slammed the BJP and said that this 'Parivartan Sandesh' is not just a rally, but the power of the people to drive out the BJP government from Uttar Pradesh.



The SP chief said that he has promised to give jobs to one crore youth. According to the SP's poll manifesto, farmers will get 1.5 times the price of potatoes and sugarcane within 14 days.

RLD chief Jayant Singh Chaudhary also took a jibe at the BJP government, saying, "I am announcing from this stage the alliance between SP-RLD. The double engine government of SP-RLD will come to power and take the state to new heights."

MODI ATTACKS ON SAMAJWADI PARTY

Gorakhpur: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday set the stage for the 2022 elections in Uttar Pradesh with a stinging attack on the Samajwadi Party, saying those donning red caps were "red alert" for the state. The red cap is a trademark of SP leaders and workers. The prime minister, who was in UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's bastion Gorakhpur to inaugurate three megaprojects - including an AIIMS and a major fertiliser plant - said: "Laal topi walon ko lal batti se matlab hai, lal topi

wale UP ke liye red alert hain aur khate ki ghanti hain (Those wearing red caps are only concerned with a red beacon and they are 'red alert' for Uttar Pradesh)." Adding to his attack on Akhilesh Yadav's party, PM Modi said they wanted power to fill up their pockets, give a free run to mafias, show mercy to terrorists and free them from jails. The prime minister's comments came on a day when Yadav joined hands with RLD in Meerut for the 2022 elections.

BURUNDI PRISON FIRE KILLS AT LEAST 38 IN GITEGA

Gitega: At least 38 people have died and scores more have been injured in a fire which tore through a prison in Burundi, BBC reported.

Vice-President Prosper Bazombanza told reporters the blaze hit an overcrowded facility in the capital Gitega, with at least 69 people seriously injured.

Images circulating online show a building engulfed in flames and piles of bodies, said to be of inmates in the jail.

"It is really catastrophic," one inmate told the BBC over the phone. "I'd say almost 90% of sleeping halls are burnt."

A journalist outside the prison told the BBC that nurses from Gitega hospital have entered the prison to help the victims, saying they are taking out the dead and wounded. The blaze started at around 04:00 local time (02:00 GMT).

UK, CANADA-RETURNEES TEST POSITIVE IN BHOPAL



Bhopal: Amid concerns over the Omicron variant, two persons who returned to Bhopal from the United Kingdom and Canada, respectively, tested positive for coronavirus infection on Tuesday, an official said.

Following the test results, the two men, aged 41 and 42, were isolated and their samples were sent for genome sequencing to ascertain if they are infected with the Omicron variant, the health official added.

On Monday, a 28-year-old German national tested positive for coronavirus infection at Jabalpur in Madhya

Pradesh. His sample was sent for genome sequencing, said district contact officer Dr D Mohanty. As he had attended a marriage ceremony here on Sunday evening, his contact history was also traced and samples of at least 50 people were collected for testing. The German national arrived in Bhopal on Sunday from New Delhi and tested negative in Rapid Antigen Test at the airport. But his RT-PCR test report came out positive the next day, officials said. So far no case of the Omicron variant has been found in Madhya Pradesh.

DRUGS WORTH OVER RS 508 CR SEIZED IN MANIPUR

Imphal: In the biggest ever drug haul in northeast India, the Assam Rifles and the police in Manipur have seized over 154 kg 'methamphetamine' tablets and more than 54 kg heroin worth over Rs 508 crore and arrested one Myanmar national, officials said on Tuesday. Vikramjit Singh, District Superintendent of Police, Tengnoupal, said that the Assam Rifles and the police in a joint operation seized heroin powder weighing 54.141 kg and methamphetamine tablets weighing 154.314 kg from a house at Sunrise Ground in Moreh town late on Monday evening. "The cost of the seized heroin powder is expected to be around Rs 108 crore and that of the methamphetamine (Crystal Meth) tablets around Rs 400 crore in the international market," he told the media. The district police chief said that the Assam Rifles and the police after lengthy planning arrested Monkhai, 19, a resident of Khampat in neighbouring Myanmar, on Monday afternoon.

To strengthen Navy, Indigenous VL-SRSAM test fired successfully

The missile has an operational range of 50 to 60 km and features mid course inertial guidance through fiber optic gyroscope and active radar homing in terminal phase.



Balalore | Agencies

India on Tuesday successfully flight tested the indigenously developed new Vertical Launch Short Range Surface-to-Air Missile (VL-SRSAM) from the coast off Balalore, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) official said. The quick reaction surface-to-air-missile missile developed by DRDO was test launched from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur at about 3.08 pm from a vertical launcher against an electronic target at a very low altitude.

The launch was conducted to validate integrated operation of all weapon system components including the vertical launcher unit with controller, canisterised flight vehicle, weapon control system and others required for future launches of the missile from Indian Naval ships.

The test launch was monitored by senior officials from the DRDO and Indian Navy, it said. The first trial was conducted on February 22, 2021 and Tuesday's flight test was a confirmatory trial to prove the consistent performance of the configuration and integrated operation, it said.

NASA PICKS ANIL MENON AMONG 10 NEW ASTRONAUTS FOR MOON MISSION

Washington: Indian-origin Anil Menon, a lieutenant colonel with the US Air Force and SpaceX's first flight surgeon, has been selected by NASA among the 10 new astronauts who could fly to the Moon someday. Born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Menon helped launch the Elon Musk-run SpaceX's first humans to space during the 'Demo-2' mission and built a medical organisation to support the human system during future missions. Prior to that, he served NASA as the crew flight surgeon for various expeditions taking astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS). Menon is an actively practicing emergency medicine physician with fellowship training in wilderness and aerospace medicine. The US space agency announced the selection of its newest class of astronauts late on Monday - six men and four women chosen from more than 12,000 people who applied to the space agency in March of 2020.



Wearing a mask could lower the risk by up to 225 times

▶ IT FOUND A 90 PER CENT CHANCE OF CATCHING COVID IF YOU STAND ACROSS FROM AN INFECTED PERSON FOR FIVE MINUTES AND NEITHER OF YOU WEAR A MASK, EVEN WITH A GAP OF 3 METRES.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Wearing a face mask is better than social distancing at preventing you from catching Covid, a study suggests, Daily Mail reported.

Researchers found that donning a covering could lower the risk by up to 225 times, compared to solely relying on a three-metre rule, the report said.

Masks have been mandated in almost every country in the world at some point in the pandemic but to their efficacy due to contradictory evidence. The latest research, by a team of German and US experts, is the latest to conclude that wearing a face covering offers 'enormously high' protection, the report said.

Experts from the universities of



Gottingen and Cornell who did the study said their finding 'makes social distancing less important'. It comes after a major review found that widespread mask use could cut infection rates by 50 per cent, double the amount from solely social distancing, the report added.



NORTHWEST INDIA TO GET COLDER BY 4 DEGREES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In its latest forecast on Tuesday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that there will be a gradual fall in the minimum temperatures by 2 to 4 degrees Celsius over most parts of northwest India, including Delhi, in the next four to five days.

A similar drop will also be recorded in the central and eastern part of the country.

"A fresh Western Disturbance seen as a trough roughly along longitude 62 degrees east to the north of latitude. Twenty-seven degrees north in lower and middle tropospheric levels. Under its influence, there is a possibility of rainfall or snowfall over Jammu- Kashmir-Ladakh- Gilgit- Baltistan- Muzaffarabad during December 7 to 9 and over Himachal Pradesh on December 8 and 9," the IMD said in a statement.

Besides, there will be scattered light to moderate rainfall over coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu



and Kerala on Thursday with isolated heavy falls over Tamil Nadu.

"Dense fog is very likely in isolated pockets over Northeast India during the next three days," the forecast mentioned.

Meanwhile, the national capital's maximum and minimum temperatures on Tuesday were pegged at 24 degrees and 11 degrees Celsius. Delhi on Monday recorded a minimum

temperature of 15 degrees Celsius -- six notches above the season's normal.

The minimum temperature on Sunday stood at 11.4 degrees Celsius, which was two notches above the normal.

Also, 0.8 mm rainfall was recorded at the Safdarjung Observatory in the 24-hour period ending at 8.30 a.m. on Monday, according to IMD data.

RAINFALL IN CHENNAI FOR NEXT 2 DAYS

Chennai: After a few days of dry weather, Chennai and surrounding districts are expected to receive light rains on Wednesday and Thursday. Rains continue to lash several parts of Tamil Nadu with Tiruchi district receiving heavy rain and an orange alert has been issued in the district.

The rainfall in Chennai and adjoining districts is owing to the consecutive weather activity triggered by the entry of steady easterly winds. Weathermen said that the city may not receive heavy rain like in November, but continuous rainfall is a possibility for the next few days. The Regional Centre of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast light rain over the next 48 hours and sky conditions may be partly cloudy.

Int'l passengers mandated to file self-declaration form on 'Air Suvidha' portal

Team Absolute | New Delhi

To ensure smooth passage of international travellers arriving in India, the Centre on Tuesday mandated contactless self-declaration by them on the 'Air Suvidha' portal.

The portal was launched in August 2020 and is used to ease international passenger arrival in India.

The portal aids passengers in providing their details of travel and final stay along with RTPCR and vaccination status, among other details.

"In today's time, this helps the state officials in contact tracing. The implementation of the Air Suvidha portal intends to provide hassle-free, queue free and convenient air travel to all international passengers arriving in India," the Ministry of Civil Aviation said in a statement.

"To ensure the necessary prevention of the Omicron variant of Covid-19, the exemption forms in the Air Suvidha portal have been discontinued, and filling of the details have been made compulsory for all international passengers arriving in India," it added. As per the statement, all



international passengers arriving in India are mandated to declare their current health status prior to boarding on the Air Suvidha portal along with the required documents.

"For immigration, the copy received in e-mail is essential on arrival in India and has to be verified at the 'APHO' counter," the statement said. According to the ministry, all applications from 'at risk' countries are marked with 'H' and 'red band', while others are marked 'green'.

"This helps in smooth on-arrival segregation and processing. The application also takes into account countries visited in the last 14 days to highlight 'at risk' applications. This field has also been made into multi-select dropdown option for standardisation. "For 'at risk' countries, passengers are advised to pre-book their test on arrival, and the links to the respective testing facilities are provided to the passengers on SDF submission," the ministry said.

Two die, over dozen ill in Bihar's Samastipur after consuming poisonous liquor

PATNA | Agencies

Days after three deaths in Bihar's Vaishali allegedly due to drinking poisonous liquor, two persons died and over one dozen fell seriously ill in the state's Samastipur district on Tuesday due to the same reason, as per their kin.

The deceased were part of a group who are participated in a liquor party during a marriage function in Balipur village under Baheri police station in the district on Monday evening.

Prabhat Kumar, one of the relatives of the deceased, told local media that his uncle and two brothers went to the marriage function on Monday evening.

"They consumed liquor along with more than 12



persons during the marriage party. The health of every person who have consumed liquor started deteriorating. We took them to a nearby private hospital where my uncle and one of my brothers died during the treatment. The condition of another brother is extremely serious," he said.

"There were number of people, mostly from the bridegroom's side, who had consumed liquor on Monday evening. They were battling for their lives in the hospitals," he added. Meanwhile, an official of Baheri police station said that teams were sent in the village and hospitals to take statement of the affected.

'GANDHI'S INDIA' TURNING INTO 'GODSE'S INDIA': MEHBOOBA MUFTI

New Delhi: Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and senior Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday slammed the Narendra Modi-led Central government, saying that "the India of Mahatma Gandhi is gradually turning into the India of Nathuram Godse".

The remarks were a reference to the conventional symbolism that's traditionally used to identify India -- the land of peace and tolerance for which Mahatma Gandhi stood -- in stark contrast with Nathuram Godse, the man who assassinated the Father of the Nation, and is generally associated with fundamentalism.

Interacting with reporters here, Mehbooba Mufti remembered former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, spoke on cricket, cricket matches and cricketers, and also India's defeat to Pakistan at the T20 World Cup, in the same breath.

Verdict in 29 days: Death penalty to rape and murder convict

GANDHINAGAR | Agencies

A Special POCSCO Court in Gujarat on Tuesday awarded death penalty to a person convicted of raping and murdering a two and a half year old girl child, officials said. Gujarat Home Minister Harsh Sanghavi said this is the third case pertaining to rape in which the court delivered the verdict swiftly -- in just 29 days.

"Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel in today's cabinet meeting congratulated the entire police department for doing a fabulous job. I also thank the judiciary for the verdict. This is the third such case wherein justice has been delivered in such a quick time, and it is a historic episode not only in Gujarat, but probably in the country," Sanghavi told reporters.

The incident had taken place in the busy Pandesara area of Surat. Special POCSCO court judge PS Kala has convicted Guddu Yadav, 35, after listening to arguments of both sides.

Yadav had on November 4, a night before Diwali, abducted the girl to a bushy area, and raped her before choking her to death.

He was nabbed two days later. The police had presented a 246-page chargesheet in just eight days after arresting the accused. The court trial was concluded in seven days.

The court handed out death penalty to the accused and also fined him Rs 20 lakh as a compensation to the family of the



girl. The court convicted the 35-year-old man who was charged for rape, murder, and abduction under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Modi warns BJP MPs

Bring change in your behaviour, otherwise change will happen

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a meeting of the BJP Parliamentary Party on Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked all the party MPs to regularly attend the Parliament sessions and actively participate in the legislative work. As per sources, the Prime Minister cautioned the MPs to 'bring a change in their behaviour as otherwise changes will happen'.

According to sources, while directing all the MPs to ensure their presence in the Parliament, he said, "It is not right to repeatedly tell the same thing to you like children...you bring a change in your behaviour, otherwise change will happen."



At the meeting, BJP National President J.P. Nadda asked all MPs to visit their respective constituencies

after the Winter Session and communicate with the district chiefs and mandal chiefs and call them for dis-

cussion over tea. Prime Minister Modi was quick to add that he will also invite the district presidents and divisional presidents for tea on December 14 when he will be visiting in Varanasi. Talking about the discussions held at the Parliamentary Party meeting, Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi said that the Prime Minister has told all the MPs to organise sports competitions, children fitness competitions and Surya Namaskar competitions.

Joshi added that Modi also directed them to remain in touch with the Padma awardees residing in their respective areas and to interact with them frequently.

1984 riots: Ex-Cong leader Sajjan Kumar charged with 2 murders

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi court has announced charges against former Congress leader Sajjan Kumar in the 1984 riots case, in connection with two murders in Delhi's Raj Nagar locality.

The court charged him with rioting, murder, and dacoity under sections 147, 149, 148, 302, 308, 323, 395, 397, 427, 436, 440 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in connection with the murder of Jaswanti Singh and Tarun Deep Singh.

The family of the duo had alleged that Sajjan Kumar



instigated a mob that led to burning alive of the two men besides setting afire their house on November 1, 1984.

As per the case in this regard registered at the Saraswati Vihar police station, Sajjan Kumar was identified by one eyewitness after showing his photograph.

Earlier in 1994, the case was closed as untraced and the SIT had opened it again, advocate Harpreet Singh Hora apprised.

The court has heard arguments from both sides and now the matter is listed on December 16 for formal framing of charges.

"This court is of the considered opinion that a prima facie case is made out against the accused for framing of charge against him for commission of the offences punishable under sections of 147/148/149 IPC as well as the offences punishable under 302/308/

I killed, seven injured as speeding Benz car causes chain accident

BENGALURU | Agencies

In a tragic incident, one person died and seven others injured when an overspeeding Benz car rammied into another car from behind, causing a chain accident in Bengaluru on Tuesday, police said.

The incident has taken place in the limits of Halasuru Traffic police station. The deceased was identified as Hari Mahanth from Assam and working at a pub since 10 years. He was travelling in the car which was hit.

The Benz car's driver Siveed was seriously injured in the incident and has been admitted to Manipal hospital. Other injured persons in the accident suffered minor injuries. According to police, the speeding Benz car had hit the car moving in front on a busy arterial road in Channasandra near Indiranagar 80 Feet Road. The impact was such that the



car that was hit, in its turn, rammied into two autos and a mini lorry. The two cars and autos were totally damaged in the incident.

The Benz car belonged to Nandita Choudary. Police have obtained the CCTV footage which clearly showed Benz car driver over-speeding.

IIT-Kanpur scholar wins Young Geospatial Scientist award

HYDERABAD | Agencies

Ropesh Goyal from IIT-Kanpur on Tuesday won the 'Young Geospatial Scientist' award in recognition of his unique contribution towards the development of the Indian Geoid Model and computation software.

Member of Space Commission, Government of India, and former ISRO Chairman A.S. Kiran Kumar presented the award to Goyal during the inaugural event of the DigiSmart India 2021 conference hosted by the Geospatial World here.

The 'Young Geospatial Scientist' award and a gold medal are presented every year since 2011 to a promising scientist below 35 years of age in



memory of Rachapudi Kamakshi, a strategic analyst with a strong inclination towards geography and geospatial studies.

The Rachapudi Kamakshi Memorial Trust is an organisation

founded to help and encourage students as well as young and talented individuals with great ideas and research work in the field of geospatial sciences.

Rachapudi Kamakshi (1981-

2010), who had keen interest in geomorphology, remote sensing and GIS, had done geography honours from B.R. Ambedkar College, Delhi University, and pursued M.B.A from I.I.P.M. Delhi before moving to the US in 2005.

There she completed double Masters from California Lutheran University. After working with Lockheed Martin for some time, she moved to Bank of America as a financial analyst and became a senior strategic analyst in a brief time of over one year. Positioning geospatial technologies as any technology that enables the creation, management, analysis and visualization of geospatial data, this year's edition of GeoSmart India 2021 conference is being held from December 7-9.

RS 17 LAKH STOLEN FROM ATM IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Amaravati: A gang of burglars looted Rs 17 lakh from an ATM in Andhra Pradesh's Kadapa town by using gas cutters, police said on Tuesday.

The incident occurred on the outskirts of the town on the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday. According to police, the burglary was committed at an ATM of State Bank of India (SBI) near the KSRM Engineering College.

The burglars used gas cutters to cut open the part of the ATM where cash is kept and decamped with the money. Police quoted the bank officials as saying that Rs 17 lakh cash was stolen.

Five burglars committed the crime after spraying the CCTV cameras with some liquids so that the visuals are not captured. They, then, broke open the machine with gas cutters and fled with the money.

Bank employees, who noticed the theft in the morning, informed the police. Deputy Superintendent of Police Venkat Shiva Reddy visited the scene of the offence. Police teams gathered clues and were trying to identify the offenders. The police official said they registered a case on a complaint given by the bank employees and took up the investigation.



STATES NEED TO BE 'SELF-RELIANT' FOR 'ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT': MP CM

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday said that if we have to make India 'Atmanirbhar', the states need to be 'self-reliant' first.

"Prime Minister Modi gave the mantra of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' during the Covid surge and my government prepared a roadmap for Madhya Pradesh to become self-reliant," he added.

Chouhan underlined four important pillars for a self-reliant state in his virtual address at the States Policy Conclave held in New Delhi on the 'Role of States in Making Atmanirbhar Bharat'. He said the four pillars -- infrastructure, good governance, health and education, and economy and employment -- need to be strengthened for a self-reliant state.

"Whenever we talk about the economy and employment, the first two pillars -- infrastructure and good governance -- hold more importance," Chouhan said. "We have developed Narmada expressway which is the life-line of the state," he added.

Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh is working towards two important goals of developing skills in youth to become



job creators instead of job seekers and the other is to develop Madhya Pradesh as a state for investment.

"I feel happy to inform you that even during the Covid-19 pandemic, our industrial units have seen a surge of 49 per cent from 2019 to 2021. A total of 67 per cent growth has been registered in the proposed investment during this period," he added. "Apart from the large-scale investment in the state, we are also focusing on the MSME," he said. "The Government of India has developed 13 clusters where the work is

underway. The state has come forward with the 'One District, One Product' initiative to focus on the medium- and small-scale industries," the Chief Minister added. He said, "We are working towards PM Modi's call for 'Vocal for Local'. To develop the state as a 'garment hub', we have made many changes in the Industrial Promotion Policy, 2014." The state has also issued the ethanol policy and we are working towards producing more than 200 crore litre of ethanol every year," Chouhan added.

Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister

Compensation per family increased for resettlement of villages from conserved forest areas

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, approval was given to increase the amount of compensation per family in the state scheme for rehabilitation of villages from the corridors of national parks/sanctuaries (conserved areas) and tiger reserves from Rs.10 lakh to Rs.15 lakh. An amount of Rs.75 crores has been approved for the next five years i.e. 2021-22 to 2025-26 for the Forest Department's "Compensation" scheme for the rehabilitation of the villages. Approval was also given to issue sanction of Rs 285 crore for a total of 4 years for the financial years 2022-23 to 2025-26

The Cabinet decided to allot 57,952 hectares of government land on zero interest and one rupee annual land rent, located in village Loharpur tehsil Murar, dis-



trict Gwalior, to Airports Authority of India, Gwalior for the expansion of the airport. The Cabinet approved the revised order regarding the service conditions for the appointment of Additional Chief Executive Officer in the organisational structure of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis under Public Service Management Department. An officer with administrative experience not below the level of Additional Secretary of the

Indian Administrative Service or a non-government person having work experience in the field of public policy, public administration and good governance at the national or international level can be appointed by the State Government at the post of Additional Chief Executive Officer in the Institute. In case of appointment of a non-government person, the Additional Chief Executive Officer appointed will get the facilities equivalent to the facilities available to the

Secretary level officer of the State Government.

The proposed amendment bill to rename "Chhindwara University, Chhindwara" as "Raja Shankar Shah University, Chhindwara" was approved by the Council of Ministers.

In order to ensure smooth conduct of the Gwalior Trade Fair, Gwalior, the Council of Ministers has given approval to Gwalior Trade Fair Authority (Amendment) Bill 2021 to replace the words "Commerce and Industry Department" with "Department of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises" in the Act "Gwalior Trade Fair Authority Act" administered by Department of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. The Department of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has been authorised to take all the steps to get this bill introduced in the Vidhan Sabha.

Bangle-seller who was beaten by mob gets bail after 107 days Mukundpur Tiger Safari is one of the picturesque places of Vindhya: Governor

After being thrashed by a mob in Indore and then spending 107 days in jail, bangle-seller Tasleem Ali was granted bail by the Indore bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on Tuesday.

Team Absolute | Indore

After being thrashed by a mob in Indore and then spending 107 days in jail, bangle-seller Tasleem Ali was granted bail by the Indore bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on Tuesday. He was arrested in an alleged Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act case in August

this year. In August, 25-year-old Tasleem Ali was thrashed by a mob of locals for allegedly having concealed his Muslim identity in order to sell bangles to Hindu women. A video of the attack went viral on social media.

In the video, several men can be seen beating the bangle-seller, throwing his wares on the ground and hurling epithets at him. Some of the attackers also snatched money from the victim.

Following outrage over the incident, the police registered a case against four individuals who could be seen beating him up in the video. All four of them are out on bail at present. Shortly after the case was filed, a complaint of sexual harassment was lodged against Tasleem Ali on behalf of the minor daughter of one of the four accused of thrashing him. It

was alleged that Tasleem Ali had inappropriately touched the young girl. He was then arrested.

The police also filed a case of forgery against him, on the complaint that he used a forged document to conceal his identity.

He was granted bail in the case on Tuesday. His advocate, Ehtesham Hashmi, while talking to Absolute India said it was a "victory of the constitution."

"Justice Sujoy Paul in his order sheet has observed that Tasleem was beaten by hooligans and then a cross FIR was registered after his complaint. There was deliberate attempt made by the prosecution to delay the bail process stating that his bail might tamper with evidence or he might escape as he hails from UP," the advocate added.

GOVERNOR MANGUBHAI PATEL HAS SAID THAT MUKUNDPUR TIGER SAFARI IS ONE OF THE PICTURESQUE PLACES OF VINDHYAS. THE WHITE TIGER IS THE GIFT OF REWA TO THE WORLD. MUKUNDPUR TIGER SAFARI FULLY BRINGS TO LIFE THIS HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENT.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Patel said this during his visit to Maharaja Martand Singh Judeo White Tiger Safari Mukundpur of Rewa district. The Governor first saw the Royal Bengal Tiger. Later he observed white tigers. Governor Patel observed the tiger safari bears, chital, sambar and other wild animals. He also went to Tiger Safari and saw white tigers living in the open. During the visit, former minister



and MLA Rewa Rajendra Shukla informed the Governor about the efforts to establish Mukundpur White Tiger Safari and the history of white tigers. Director of Tiger Safari, Sanjay Raikhere gave detailed information about the facilities and wildlife, available in Tiger Safari.

Governor Patel visited the Solar Power Plant located at Badwar. Information related to the establishment and development of Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Power Plant was presented by the officials in the auditorium of the plant. It was told that 750 MW of electricity is produced from the

solar power plant out of which 78 percent power is being given to the state of Madhya Pradesh and 22 percent to Delhi Metro. Its total cost is Rs 4500 crore. This plant is established in an area of 1672 hectares. This will give Madhya Pradesh a net profit of Rs 2026 crore in 25 years. Units of three private companies are set up to generate electricity in the Solar Power Plant.

Patel had a view of the solar plant from View Point. He described the establishment of solar power plant as a great achievement. The Governor also inquired about the labourers working in the Solar Power Plant. After this, the Governor inspected the tunnel under construction on the Rewa-Sidhi road. The construction work of the tunnel is in the final stages. With the completion of its construction, the movement between Rewa-Sidhi will become smooth and time and fuel will be saved. Collector Ilayaraja T, Superintendent of Police Navneet Bhasin, CEO of Energy Development Corporation and officers of Solar Power Plant were present during the visit.

5 ARRESTED FOR VANDALISING MISSIONARY SCHOOL

Team Absolute | Vidisha

Activists of right-wing organisations allegedly created a ruckus and indulged in vandalism at a missionary school in a town in Vidisha district. They claimed religious conversion of eight students, a charge denied by the educational institute, police said.

Police have registered a case of rioting against unidentified persons after the incident in the premises of Saint Joseph School in Ganjbasoda, some 48 kms from the district headquarters, under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC), Sub-Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Bharat Bhushan Sharma said.

The accused are being identified and further legal steps will be taken accordingly, he said.

Sharma said the school's property was damaged. Eyewitnesses said stones were also pelted at the school building during the ruckus.

However, state Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) office-bearer Nilesh Agrawal said that they had only organised a peaceful protest outside the school and later submitted a memorandum to the local administration, and denied any role of the outfit in the disturbance at the institute. "We have nothing to do with the alleged ruckus as our protest was peaceful after informing the local administration. Several organisations have been protesting since the past one week against the conversion and demanding an investigation. Poor students brought from other states are being converted," Agrawal

alleged. He said these organisations had been demanding an investigation into the alleged religious conversion. In a memorandum submitted to the local administration after the protest, the VHP, the Bajrang Dal, the Hindu Jagran Manch and other right-wing organisations accused the school management of converting eight students to Christianity. In the memorandum, these outfits accused the school management and the church associated with it of forcing students to not apply 'tilak' (a coloured mark) on the forehead and wear 'kalawa' (a sacred thread worn by Hindus on wrist).

It was also alleged students are forced to say prayers of Christianity. In a letter to the district collector on Sunday, the Saint Joseph Church, however,

denied all allegations of religious conversion and claimed rituals which were performed on eight Christian children were like 'Janeu Sanskar' in Hinduism (related to wearing a white, sacred thread) on October 30.

The church also called for an investigation to find out the truth. In the letter, the church accused some local YouTube channels of spreading false news of religious conversion and creating communal tension, and demanded penal action against them.

On the other hand, the school principal, in a separate letter to the SDOP, sought protection for staff members and students, saying exams are being conducted at present. The principal's letter also said pictures of alleged conversion being circulated in the media are not of the school premises.

Vigilance necessary to protect against third wave of Corona: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that there is a possibility of a third wave of corona virus. To prevent this, alertness and vigilance is necessary in the entire state. We have to face the corona virus by ensuring masks, social distancing and cent percent vaccination. It should be our endeavour that the situation of lockdown does not arise and the economy continues to run normally. In order to ensure that all the arrangements are in place to face the corona, all the ministers in charge should visit the districts of their charge this week and the hospitals of their areas

and mandatorily get the arrangements for oxygen plants, oxygen beds, oxygen pipelines etc checked.

Chouhan was addressing the ministers before the meeting of the Council of Ministers. The meeting of the Cabinet began with the recitation of Vande Mataram.

Chouhan said that the severity of infection is reduced by taking both the doses of vaccination. Therefore cent percent vaccination of all eligible persons in the state should be ensured by the end of December. For this, the ministers-in-charge should ensure to create an environment for special vaccination by working in a team spirit in the districts of their charge

and with the Crisis Management Committees of their areas.

Chouhan said that after the next cabinet meeting, a detailed review of the status of hospitals and activities aimed at creating an environment for vaccination would be done. With regard to the condition of the hospitals, if some corrective measures are to be taken, then a decision will also be taken in that regard. Chouhan said that a possible third wave of corona is likely to arrive in January. Therefore where Covid Care Centres have already been made, they should be allowed to continue and ensure smooth functioning of their arrangements.

Developing entrepreneurial qualities among youth of the state and making the state most attractive for investment is our top priority: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that we believe that the country will become self-reliant only when the states are self-reliant. A four-point based road map has been prepared for Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh. These 4 points are physical infrastructure, good governance, health and education, economy and employment. For this, better infrastructure and better connectivity is needed.

Chouhan said that the state government is making continuous efforts in this direction. Along with this, the implementation of Ease of Doing Business has been ensured in the state. It is our endeavour that investors do not get entangled in the web of rules in the state. Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh government has two main goals, firstly, to develop entrepreneurship qualities in the youth of Madhya Pradesh, so that they become job creators and not job seekers, secondly - to make Madhya Pradesh the most attractive state for investment. In order to ensure that investors get a congenial environment in the state, and do not face any problem, we have fixed the first half of every Monday for a one-to-one meet with the investors. Chouhan virtually participated in the State Policy Conclave - 2021 organized by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry at Hotel Le Meridien New Delhi.

Chouhan said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a visionary leader. Under his leadership, the process of building a glorious, prosperous, and strong India is going on. The

country is progressing continuously under the leadership of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister paved the way for turning opportunity into disaster in the difficult situation of struggle with Corona. Prime Minister Modi has given the mantra of building Atmanirbhar India. Moving in this direction, a roadmap was prepared for this Madhya Pradesh.

Chouhan said that Atal Expressway and Narmada Expressway are being constructed from east to west border of the state with the aim of providing better environment for investment to the investors in the state. Industrial centers and townships will be developed around the expressway. With the aim of providing skilled human resource in the state, a Global Skill Park is being built in collaboration with



Singapore. In order to provide educated and efficient human resource, arrangements have been made for CM Rise School in the state. The concept of 'Start Your Business in 30 Days' is being implemented. In this, permission will be given to set up industry in 30 days. The stipulated time-frame has been linked to the Public Service Delivery Guarantee. Madhya Pradesh is a state providing surplus electricity. There is no water, skill manpower and mandays loss in the

state. Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh is rich in water, forest and mineral wealth. Along with this, there is also ample biodiversity and abundant agricultural production available here. Mukhyamantri Udyam Kranti Yojana has been started for the development of entrepreneurship among the youth of the state. It is our endeavor to ensure that the youth of the state should establish their enterprises with the help of the state government and instead of getting employed, they should develop an employment generating capacity. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh is the pharma and garment hub of the country. Now we are working fast towards making the state a logistics hub. In the first phase of Bharatmala project, it has been decided to set up multi model logistic parks at Indore and Bhopal. Chouhan said that in the era of Covid, there has been 49 percent rise in industrial units in 2021 as compared to 2019. There has been an increase of 33 per cent in allotment of land to industries, 67 per cent in proposed investment and 39 per cent in employment. Madhya Pradesh is among the first 5 states to have taken advantage of additional loan due to successful implementation of Ease of Doing Business reforms. Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh has secured first position in the western region. This has provided additional financial resources of Rs 2,373 crore to the state. To accelerate industrial development, 'Dewas Investment Zone' and 'Ratlam Investment Zone' have been created. The industrial area is being developed in about 3,400 acres under Dewas investment area and about 4,500 acres under Ratlam investment area. The Medical Device Park has been approved by the Government of India in Mohasa-Babai Industrial Area of Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh. This is a big step forward in the field of medical devices.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Remote Work

Indian workers have the strongest preference for full-time remote work, 57 per cent compared to the global average of 37 per cent and the preference for hybrid work has grown slightly from 25 per cent in 2020 to 28 per cent in 2021, a new report revealed on Saturday. According to Atlassian Corporation, a leading provider of team collaboration and productivity software, a majority of Indian respondents are still nervous about a return to office; 79 per cent compared to the global average of 49 per cent. As per report, managers are struggling with 68 per cent of managers in India worrying that their work has become more transactional and less appealing over the past 12 months. Keeping up with change, 82 per cent recognised the increasing importance of remaining adaptable compared with the global average of 59 per cent. In addition, significant percentage of Indian workers upgraded their remote workspaces over the last year, with 71 per cent of workers noting improvements to their internet connection, 67 per cent improving workspace functionality and 63 per cent improving workspace comfort and ergonomics. Over the past 12 months, workers in India have had more success in adapting to long-term remote work compared to other countries surveyed. An area of major concern highlighted in the report was that 83 per cent of new recruits are feeling insecure about their job, which is the highest globally. Workers recruited within the last two years feel less secure in their roles yet feel a stronger sense of commitment than their colleagues with longer tenure.

NOTHING IS PERMANENT EXCEPT TEARS AND FEARS

Nirendra Dev

Things have come a full circle yet again. What has changed between 1995 and 2021? Over 26 years. This columnist was 25 then and a bachelor, and today - I am a father of a dotting daughter and on the wrong side of 50. The Nagas were waiting for a Christmas gift and peace and solution to the decade old insurgency issue. The Home Ministry mandarins said the peace talks initiated in 1997 during the tenure of I.K. Gujral as the Prime Minister has reached advanced stage. Instead, on December 4, three weeks before the Prince of Peace, Jesus birthday is celebrated, so many innocent Naga lives were lost. It may not be wrong to argue that insurgency and military operations more often work like a vicious cycle. Only on November 13, 2021, in Churachandpur areas of Manipur, Colonel Viplav Tripathi, his wife and their nine-year-old boy were killed in an ambush.

In less than a month's time, now violence visited Mon district in Nagaland. Four of those killed belonged to two families. Two brothers each. Thapwang and Langwang were sons of one Leiwang while Yeiwhang and Shomwang belonged to the family of another villager Chemwang. Why guns tend to have say? In the words of veteran Naga leader S.C. Jamir: "The state of Nagaland was born out of tears and blood and through much pain and travail." Things have not changed after decades of arson and killing. December 4, 2021 would go down as a Black Day when 'mistaken' identity has cost 15 Naga lives. It is worse the victims were innocuous native Konyak tribe coal miners. The merciless killing took place at the hands of security forces. "For decades now the Naga people have been demanding withdrawal of AFSPA but it continues. I fail to understand why it has continued even after peace negotiations between the Naga groups and the Government of India was initiated in 1997," says Y.Z. Oving of the Lotha Baptist Church in Dimapur. Standing in Lok Sabha, appearing pensive and embarrassed, Home Minister Amit Shah said that it was a case of "mistaken



identity". His plea was army had intelligence inputs of the movement of a militant group based out of Myanmar (NSCN-IYK) and when the pick up vehicle did not after it was signaled to do so, the security personnel opened fire killing six of the eight people on the spot. Others lost their lives later. In both the Houses of Parliament, Shah expressed "regrets" and extended condolences to the bereaved families. It is not for the first time such a bungled operation took place in the northeast. In Nagaland itself, another such 'Black Day' was March 5, 1995. Paradoxically, S.C. Jamir was the Chief Minister and the incumbent state Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio - was then a dutiful Congressman and a trusted lieutenant of Jamir. The incident had claimed eight lives, including few youngsters, when Rashtriya Rifles returning from election duty in the neighbouring state of Manipur went berserk in the southern part of Kohima mistaking a "tyre burst" to an ambush. This journalist was inside AIR, Kohima, newstrum that fateful day and made a miraculous escape. We were four in that room when bombs flew over the small tinny building we were in. I was accompanied by a Lotha Naga news reader, one Keralite AIR staffer and two Kuki gentlemen. We had taken shelter under a table. The fear of death had united four people from different socio-political and linguistic background. Needless to add, we were shiver-

ing. Did you get it right, "Dar sab ko lagta hain"... as that popular commercial ad goes. My aging parents had summoned me back home in West Bengal but native Nagas remained clueless for days not knowing what was stored in their fate in the name of combatting operation and retaliatory violence. Two journalists (non-Nagas) belonging to the PTI and UNI later had to leave/flee state capital Kohima permanently and the then Deputy Commissioner Kohima, L.V. Reddy was killed few days later. The journalists had to flee because they had reported that it was "reciprocation" action by the Rashtriya Rifles and Reddy's fault line was - he was quoted in the agency dispatches. One of the journalists later went missing mysteriously either from Sikkim or Kolkata. In my book "The Talking Guns: North East India", published in 2008, I had written: "The tension was palpable as reports suggested that Nagas would avenge this 'Indian insult' from non-Nagas and conflicting media reports only added fuel to fire." Come to circa 2021, my point is this gory episode should have been avoided. In today's social-media hyped world, how did forces and the personnel believe that their actions and misadventure would go unrecorded? The government is stating the obvious that a Military Court of Inquiry has been ordered and also an SIT probe would be conducted. The wrong doers ought to be punished in these

cases. Did the Rashtriya Rifles officers and soldiers were punished, one does not know. The episode has brought the debate on Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) back in the public fore. "The draconian law AFSPA legitimises killing on mere suspicion. It has once again prematurely ended so many precious lives. This incident is a reminder of what our older folk have faced in yester-years," laents Baptist Naga leader, Rev V Atsi Dolie. In July 2021, opposition leaders had penned a letter to President Ram Nath Kovind to take actions to withdraw some of the draconian and black laws. These include the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, (UAPA); section 124A on 'sedition' of the Indian Penal Code, a colonial-era legislation; the National Security Act (NSA) and the Public Safety Act (PSA) and Disturbed Area; and the AFSPA. The letter was written on the background of the death of Father Stan Swamy. However, those of us who have been tracking northeast has a different experience. In Manipur, during the stint of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, one Chief Minister had insisted that the Disturbed Areas Act and the AFSPA should be withdrawn. However, when a top general met him in Delhi and said, "we are withdrawing from Manipur as you desire", the said politician had shot back: "What will happen to the law and order situation then". The moral of the lesson is - nobody really has a short cut to the solution to some of these complex questions. The military treatment of the malady has been that the only language the ultras understand is hardcore counter-terrorism. The other side also plays havoc. Otherwise, what do they gain by planting bombs in a public cinema hall at Kohima. That explosion had left my senior journalist friend Lellie Legisie maimed. The state capital Kohima had no public cinema hall since then.

(Nirendra Dev is a New Delhi-based journalist. He is also author of books, 'The Talking Guns: North East India' and 'Modi to Moditva: An Uncensored Truth')

international

UNICEF LAUNCHES LARGEST EVER SINGLE-NATION APPEAL FOR AFGHANISTAN

Kabul | Agencies

The Unicef on Tuesday launched the largest-ever single-nation appeal for \$2 billion to respond to the humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. "Unicef launched its largest-ever single-country appeal today to urgently respond to the humanitarian needs of over 24 million people in Afghanistan, half of whom are children," the UN agency said in a statement. The agency added that its appeal will help to avert the imminent collapse of health, nutrition, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), education and other vital social services for children and families, reports Xinhua news agency. Since the August 15 takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban and the formation of the Taliban-led caretaker government on September 7, the country's humanitarian situation has worsened. The statement said that "the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate in Afghanistan, there are alarming disruptions in health and nutrition services, a disas-



trous food crisis, drought, outbreaks of measles, acute watery diarrhoea, polio and other preventable diseases, as well as the crippling onset of winter". Alice Akunga, Unicef Afghanistan Representative, was

quoted in the statement as saying that the current humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is dire especially for children. Winter has already set in, without additional funding the agency and its partners will be unable to

reach the children and families that are in urgent need, she said. "As families struggle to put nutritious food on the table and health systems are further strained, millions of Afghan children are at risk of starvation and death. Others struggle to access water and sanitation, are cut off from their schools and are at heightened risk of violence. As the desperation of families and children increases, Unicef is doing everything possible to save and protect children." Akunga added. The Unicef estimates that one in two Afghan children under five will be acutely malnourished in 2022 due to the food crisis and poor access to water, sanitation and hygiene services, according to the statement. "Unicef is strongly urging donors to support Afghanistan's children through its humanitarian appeal," added Akunga. UN agencies, aid group and a number of non-governmental organisations are racing against the time to deliver life-saving aid and supplies to crisis-hit Afghans ahead of winter.

Khartoum | Agencies

At least 48 people were killed in a tribal conflict in Sudan's West Darfur state, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) said in a statement. "Initial reports indicated that there have been 48 deaths from live ammunition and a large number of injuries, some critical, as a result of the bloody conflict in Kirainik area in West Darfur state," Xinhua news agency quoted the Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors as saying in the statement. In a separate report, the General Coordination for Refugees and Displaced People in Darfur, also an NGO, confirmed dozens of people were killed or wounded as a result of an attack by armed men in Kirainik. "Violence erupted in the area after armed militias killed and wounded a num-



ber of internally displaced people (IDPs), and burned the IDP camp and the market," it noted. Sudanese authorities have not released details on the number of fatalities or injured persons in those events. The Darfur region has been witnessing a civil war since 2003 during the rule of former President Omar al-Bashir, who was ousted in April 2019. The transitional government in Sudan sought to end the armed conflict in the region through an agreement reached on

October 3, 2020, but some armed groups have not yet signed the agreement. For years, efforts failed to end the tribal conflicts, which have become a nagging concern for the local population and the authorities of the troubled region. Many factors have contributed to the growing violence in Darfur including security disturbances and the tribes' access to weapons, while many parts of the region have no effective governance.

GUTERRES APPOINTS NEW SPECIAL ADVISER ON LIBYA

United Nations:

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has announced the appointment of Stephanie Williams of the US as his special adviser on Libya. Williams will lead good offices and mediation efforts and engagements with Libyan, regional and international stakeholders to pursue implementation of the three intra-Libyan dialogue tracks -- political, security and economic -- and support the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections in Libya. Xinhua news agency quoted Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for Guterres, as saying. The appointment came after the resignation of Special Envoy Jan Kubis last month, which created a leadership crisis at a crucial time for Libya as the country prepares for elections scheduled for December 24. Kubis tendered his resignation on November 17 and indicated his readiness to stay on as special envoy for a transitional period to ensure continuity. Kubis' resignation, effective as of December 10. Dujarric said that the special adviser is a new position and that she will be based in Tripoli instead of Geneva, where Special Envoy Kubis was based. She became acting special representative and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya in March 2020 following the sudden resignation of Ghassan Salame as special representative. She held the position till Kubis' appointment in January 2021. Williams served as deputy special representative on Libya between 2018 and March 2020.



JAPAN'S HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURES DROPPED 0.6% IN OCT

Tokyo | Agencies

Japan's household expenditures dropped a real year-on-year 0.6 per cent in October, down for the third straight month, due to a plunge in purchases of furniture and other household goods, government data revealed on Tuesday. The average consumption of households with at least two people, regarded as a key indicator of private consumption which accounts for more than half of Japan's gross domestic product, stood at 281,996 yen (\$2,500), according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. However, the speed of decrease on year slowed down from a month earlier as spending on dining out and travelling began to rebound after the Covid-19 state of emergency was completely lifted on



October 1, Xinhua news agency quoted a government official as saying. People were requested to refrain from going outside while restaurants and bars were asked to close earlier and not to serve alcohol during the

state of emergency. By component, outlays for household amenities and furniture declined 16.7 per cent from the previous year, as the government had handed out 100,000 yen per person in cash last year, which lifted purchases of such

items. Expenditures on culture and recreation fell 5.4 per cent, including domestic package tours and accommodation, as the "Go To Travel" subsidy program by the government last year had promoted the travel demand. Meanwhile, transportation expenses including air tickets and railway fares saw a 15.3 per cent rise as railway operator data revealed short-distance travel increased after the emergency was lifted, the official said. On a monthly basis, spending in October grew a seasonally adjusted 3.4 per cent from a month earlier, following a 5.0 per cent rise in September, increasing for the second successive month. Average monthly income of salaried households with two or more people in October gained a real year-on-year 0.4 per cent to 549,269 yen.

Algeria to host inclusive meeting for Palestinian factions

Algiers | Agencies

Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune announced that his country will host an inclusive meeting for all Palestinian factions. "After consultations with my brother (Palestinian President) Mahmoud Abbas, Algeria will soon host an inclusive meeting that would gather all Palestinian factions," Tebboune told reporters in Algiers. Algeria and Palestine are bound by strong relations, said Tebboune, stressing "the Algerian government and people support and defend the sacred Palestinian cause in all international and regional forums". He further pledged to allocate \$100 million to Palestine in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Arab League, as well as university scholarships for 300 Palestinian students. The Algerian head of



state indicated that the Palestinian issue will be on the top agenda of the forthcoming Arab League summit scheduled for next March in Algiers. He further urged to endorse the Arab Peace Initiative proposal adopted by the Arab League in 2002 at the Beirut Summit for a sustained resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Abbas started on Sunday a three-day visit to the North African nation. The two Presidents held private talks before being joined by members of the two delegations.



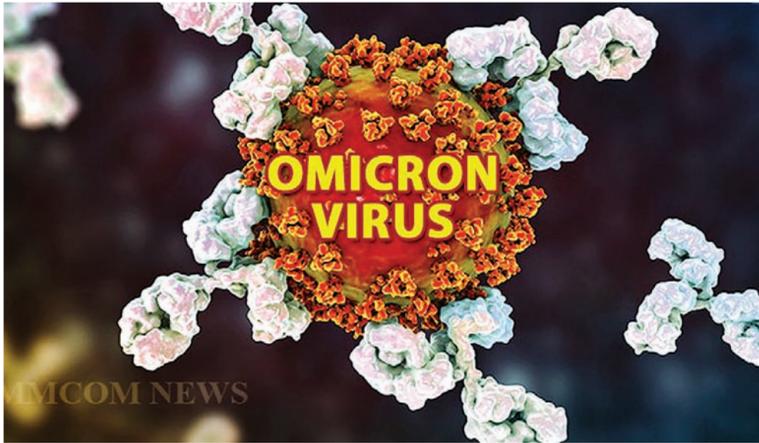
MAHA REPORTS OMICRON CASES FOR 3RD DAY RUNNING, TALLY NOW 10

Team Absolute | Mumbai

For the third consecutive day, Maharashtra reported cases of Covid-19 variant Omicron, with two more in Mumbai taking the state's tally to 10, health officials said on Monday. A 37-year-old man who arrived here from South Africa's Johannesburg on November 25 has tested positive and also his 36-year-old friend who landed in Mumbai from the US on the same day. Both patients have not shown symptoms and are admitted to the BMC's Seven Hills Hospital in Andheri east. The two patients have taken jabs of Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine. Additionally, five high-risk and 315 low-risk contacts of both the men have also been traced and further tracking is underway.

The development followed 7 persons testing Omicron positive on Sunday, including a Nigerian woman, 44, of Indian origin, and her two daughters arriving in Pune from Lagos, and a man coming here after a visit to Finland. Even the 45-year old brother of the 44-year old woman and his two children were infected and tested positive for Omicron, and all seven are under treatment at a hospital in Pimpri-Chinchwad.

The health authorities have traced another 13 close contacts of the three Nigerian women and surveillance of people arriving by flights from the



'high risk' or 'at risk' nations to Mumbai, Pune, and Nagpur has been intensified. On December 4, the state's first Omicron patient was confirmed in Thane when a 33-year-old man arrived from Capetown via Dubai and New Delhi to Mumbai, tested positive. He is undergoing treatment at a

Covid Centre in Kalyan-Dombivali. Of the total 34,700 passengers who arrived including 6,263 from the risk nations, 6,898 have undergone RT-PCR tests, and reports of 11 who tested positive have been sent for genomic sequencing, said the Health Department.

'Magnetic Maharashtra 2.0': State signs MoUs of Rs 5,051 crore

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Marking another achievement, the Maharashtra government has signed 12 MoUs worth around Rs 5,051 crore at the 8th 'Magnetic Maharashtra 2.0' investor summit, Industry Minister Subhash Desai said here on Tuesday.

This comes close on the heels of the recent Dubai Expo where the state government inked 26 MoUs for investments worth Rs 15,260 crore with a job creation potential of over 10,000 last month.

In the past couple of years, the state has signed 96 MoUs worth a total of over Rs. 1.88 lakh crore with a potential to create more than 3.34 lakh jobs, the Shiv Sena Minister added. At the signing ceremony, where Additional Chief Secretary, Industries, Baldev Singh was also present, Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation



(MIDC) CEO P. Anbalagan said that Tuesday's MoUs have a potential to generate at least 9,000 jobs for the state. Desai said that the state has been at the forefront of industrial development in the country for decades, by developing its infrastructure rapidly that has resulted in a flow of investments here even during the past couple of years of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Termed the 'Magnetic Maharashtra 2.0' initiative guided by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray as a "resounding success", Desai said: "Now it is imperative to carry the tremendous momentum and multiply efforts to strengthen employment opportunities via key investments here."

Thackeray Jr asks Centre to slash minimum vax age to 15

Team Absolute | Mumbai

With Maharashtra reporting 10 case of Omicron variant of Covid-19, state Tourism Minister Aditya Thackeray on Tuesday urged the Centre to slash the minimum vaccination age from 18 to 15 years.

In a letter to Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandviya, Thackeray Jr. has said that would keep students attending schools and colleges safe from the virus variant.

He also urged the Centre to permit a third booster dose to healthcare and frontline workers who are fully vaccinated.

Thackeray Jr. further asked the Centre to consider reducing the gap between two doses to cover a wider population within a shorter time span.

"If the gap between two doses is reduced to four weeks, just like for those applying to work or study abroad, the city will cover 100 per cent of its population with the second dose by mid-January 2022, without asking for more vaccines or altering its delivery schedule," he said.

"I have written to Health Minister Mansukh Mandviya, a few suggestions that have come from various interactions with doctors and those closely observing the



Covid situation, so that we can protect our citizens in the light of newly emerging variant," said the Minister later. His letter comes in the wake of Maharashtra reporting Omicron cases for the three consecutive days, including two in Mumbai, one in Thane, and seven in Pune, taking the state tally to 10. State health authorities have intensified surveillance of all passengers arriving at the 3 international airports in the state - Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur - from the 'high risk' or 'at risk' nations, besides random tests from people reaching from other countries. A total of 11 samples of patients who tested positive have been sent for genomic sequencing to ascertain their exact nature of infection.

Maha Congress jibe: Putin's 'governance model' already implemented in India

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Taking a dig at the ongoing visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Maharashtra Congress has said that the visiting dignitary's 'Governance Model' vis-a-vis the corporates is already functional in India.

In a statement, state Congress General Secretary Sachin Sawant said that under President Putin, the Russian businessmen have been following three 'cardinal rules' in that country. "These are: No donations to Opposition, No Criticism of Government and No support to Opposition... In India, these same conditions are being adhered to by the corporates," claimed Sawant in a series of tweets. Citing the latest Prudent Electoral Trust (PET) financials submitted to the Election Commission of India (ECI) last week, the Congress leader said that it has donated a staggering 95.64 per cent only to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies, while the rest -- a



paltry 4.36 per cent -- went to the Opposition kitty.

Elaborating, Sawant said of the total dole of Rs 245.70 crore in 2020-2021, the PET donated Rs 209 crore to BJP, and to its two allies -- Rs 25 crore for Janata Dal (United), headed by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, and Rs 1 crore to Lok Janshakti Party

led by Union Minister P.K. Paras, with the three parties cornering the lion's share of the corporate donations.

On the other hand, the country's main Opposition party, Indian National Congress got just Rs 2 crore, with a ditto amount for Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal. However, the Congress ally, both

in the UPA and in Maharashtra, Sharad Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party got Rs 5 crore, but its rival Aam Aadmi Party led by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal secured Rs 1.70 crore. "All other parties were ignored by the PET. In the past few years, corporate donations to Opposition parties dropped drastically but have gone up phenomenally for the ruling BJP and its allies," Sawant pointed out. He contended that the Electoral Bonds were devised with the intention to starve the Opposition parties of corporate fundings, but "when there's no level playing field, democracy can't be in a good shape." "The Modi Government's celebration of Constitution Day was a hypocritical act as it has itself undermined both Democracy and the Constitution," Sawant said sharply. Interestingly, others like Janata Nirvachak Electoral Trust, ABG Electoral Trust, Triumph Electoral Trust and New Democratic Electoral Trust have declared 'nil' contributions to any political party for the period 2020-2021.

MAHA CONG CHIEF RAISES QUESTION OVER CIVILIAN KILLINGS IN NAGALAND

Nagpur:

Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee chief Nana Patole on Monday raised questions over the firing by the Indian Army in Mon district in Nagaland in which 14 civilians were killed, and wanted clarification from the Central government whether the firing was from Chinese troops. "The Chinese have entered many areas in Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland and the government should tell the truth to the nation, whether the Chinese troops were behind the killings. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has time and again said that Chinese troops have occupied some areas in Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland," Patole told reporters here. Though the Army has ordered a probe into the incident, the government is duty bound to reveal the truth to the nation, Patole, a former Speaker of Maharashtra Assembly, added.



Money-laundering case: Maha Chief Secy Sitaram Kunte at Mumbai ED office

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Maharashtra Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte on Tuesday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in Mumbai to get his statement recorded in connection with the money-laundering case against former state Home Minister Anil Deshmukh.

ED had summoned him in the recent past too. Deshmukh is currently in judicial custody.

The elite probe agency is likely to quiz Kunte in connection with the transfer and postings of police officials



during the tenure of Deshmukh.

The ED case is based on the FIR lodged by the CBI in which they have accused Deshmukh for allegedly asking former Mumbai Police

official Sachin Waze to extort Rs 100 crore each month from eateries of Mumbai.

Rashmi Shukla, the then chief of State Intelligent department had tapped telephone calls exposing a big

nexus. A confidential report was then made by the department which is now with the probe agency too. This confidential report was first shared with then Director General of Police Subodh Jaiswal. Later this was shared with Kunte to decide future course of action after discussing with the Maharashtra chief minister. However, no action was taken on the report. Now ED will record the statement of Kunte. The Enforcement Directorate is investigating a money laundering case against Maharashtra's former Home Minister Anil Deshmukh.

CBI NABS CGST INSPECTOR IN MAHA'S PALGHAR FOR GRAFT

Palghar:

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested an Inspector of Central Good & Services Tax in Maharashtra's Palghar for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 10,000 from a complainant, an official said on Tuesday.

Acting on a complaint registered against Inspector Siddharth S. Kaushik, serving at Range V, Boisar - a small industrial town in north Maharashtra, the CBI sleuths laid a trap and nabbed him red-handed while accepting the bribe from the complainant.

The CBI said that the complainant had accused Kaushik of demanding a bribe of Rs 20,000 in return for not serving him notice and allowing a matter of non-filing of Service Tax Returns to rest.

Kaushik was produced before a special court in Palghar and has been remanded to two days' CBI custody, while further investigations are underway, said the official.

Chetna Jalan and Aparajita Sharma conferred for awards

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The 'Ravi Dave Smriti Samman', for remarkable contribution in the field of drama, given by Neelambar, the country's well-known literary-cultural organization, will be conferred to the country's famous dramatist, actress and dancer Chetna Jalan this year. Chetna Jalan received her formal training in Kathak from the famous Gurus of Lucknow Gharana namely, Pandit Ram Narayan Mishra, Pandit Birju Maharaj and Pandit Vijay Shankar. Chetna's mastery over Kathak and her understanding of other dance forms resulted in her selection as a jury member for the International Ballet Competition in Moscow during the years 1985 and 1987. Her dance performances have been critically acclaimed at home and abroad, and she was invited to teach dance at the Ustad



Ali Akbar Music College in San Francisco for a year. On December 18, she will be honoured her with the 'Ravi Dave Samman' award.

This year 'Ninad Samman', given by the Organization for Social contribution, will be conferred to Aparajita Sharma of Himoji fame. She was a Professor at one of the best colleges in the country, Miranda House College, Delhi. She was fond of painting since childhood. As

a result of this, in 2016 developed an 'App' in the virtual world in the form of picture language named Himoji, which was said to be the first emoji app in Devanagari script. Himoji gave a new way of expression to the virtual world of Hindi so that it would be able to laugh - cry - sing - twitter in its own language. She will be given this honor on December 18 during the literary festival 'Literaria 2021'.

PRESIDENT'S 'PILGRIMAGE' TO CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ'S RAIGAD FORT

Raigad | Agencies

Describing his visit to the imposing Raigad Fort as a "pilgrimage", President Ram Nath Kovind on Monday paid his respects to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaja's statue atop the mountain capital of the legendary Maratha warrior king. On the occasion, the President said he "considered himself fortunate for getting an opportunity to pay his respects" to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and the "visit is like a pilgrimage" - only the second by the country's head of state since Independence.

President Kovind recalled how under the able leadership of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the glory of the entire region increased and patriotic feelings were re-ignited. He said the character of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj has been described very effectively in the 19th century Sanskrit work "Shivraj-Vijayah" and called for the book to be translated into various Indian languages to enable people, particularly the younger generations, get acquainted with the great personality of the Marathi King. The President said Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's thinking was "futuristic", and he took many decisions of far-reaching impact with the help of his Council of Ministers known as "Ashta Pradhan", and also built the first modern navy of India. This is only the second visit by a President to the Raigad Fort, the previous being the then President Giani Zail Singh, who had come here in 1985 to unveil the Meghadambari which was erected on the royal palace Sambhajiraje, the 13th direct descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, and currently nominated Member of Rajya Sabha, to visit the historic fort. Located 820 metres (2,170 feet), it was earlier accessible by a gruelling single pathway climb of 1,737 steps, which could take several hours.

JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ TO FACE AS MANY AS 50 QUESTIONS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez will have to face as many as 50 questions in connection with a Prevention of Money Laundering case lodged against multimillionaire conman Suresh Chandrashekar. Jacqueline will record her statement as a witness. This will be another round of questioning.

Jacqueline was earlier stopped at Mumbai Airport by the authority concerned. She was quizzed at the Mumbai airport for hours and then set free.

On Monday, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) once again sent her a summons to join the ongoing probe. She will appear before the ED on Wednesday. The ED officials will record her statement at the MTNL office in Centre Delhi. The questioning can go for more than five hours.

An LOC (look out circular) was issued against the actress by the authority concerned at the request of the ED. The agency had doubts that she might flee the country and hence they had written a letter to the authority concerned.



On Sunday evening, she was about to catch a flight to come to Delhi when she was stopped at the Mumbai airport.

The ED had on Saturday filed a charge sheet under the PMLA Act naming a few Bollywood actors, including Jacqueline as witnesses. The court had taken cognisance of the charge sheet soon after it was filed and had asked the agency to supply the charge sheet copy to all the accused.

The next date in the charge sheet matter is December 13. The ED officials were tight-lipped over the matter.



Drake withdraws two Grammy nominations

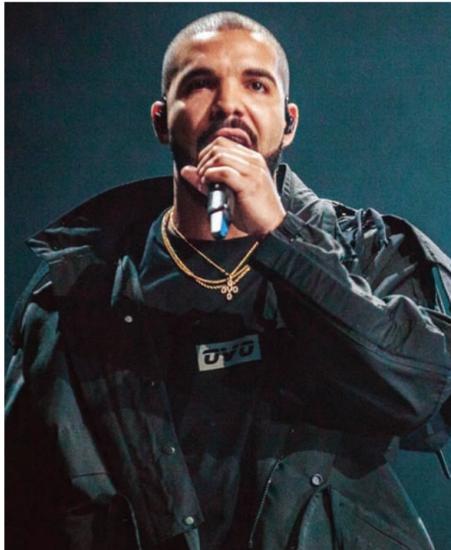
Los Angeles | Agencies

Drake has withdrawn his two 2022 Grammy nominations, a rep for the Recording Academy has confirmed to 'Variety'. Drake's rep did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Sources told 'Variety' the decision was made by Drake and his management and the Grammys honoured the request, although his motivation was unclear at the time of the publication of this news story.

Drake was one of five nominees for Best Rap Album, for 'Certified Lover Boy', and for Best Rap Performance, for his song 'Way 2 Sexy' (featuring Future and Young Thug).

Some have speculated that Drake's decision might



have something to do with him being named in lawsuits surrounding the tragedy at the Astroworld festival in Houston last month, where 10 people died when the crowd rampaged during headliner Travis Scott's set, which featured a guest appearance from Drake.

The rapper, though, is scheduled to perform with Kanye West at the 'Free Larry Hoover' benefit concert in Los Angeles on Thursday, so that explanation feels unlikely, according to 'Variety'.

Drake has had a long and at times contentious relationship with the Grammys. Just a year ago, he called for them to be replaced with "something new that we can build up over time and pass on to the generations to come", after it failed to recognise his peer and fellow Canadian artist, the Weeknd, in 2021.

'I had a ton of sex!'

Jennifer Lawrence jokes about how she spent her three-year hiatus from acting... before admitting her time off was filled with 'cooking and cleaning'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Jennifer Lawrence joked that she had a 'ton of sex' after taking a break from acting. The pregnant actress, 31, who is married to Cooke Maroney, appeared on The Late Show With Stephen Colbert on Monday to promote her new movie

Don't Look Up, where she was uncharacteristically candid and joked about her sex life. She was showcasing her bump in a fitted polka dot dress as she chatted about enjoying plenty of romps during her three year hiatus from the spotlight, before Stephen, 57, regaled her boozily last appearance on the show. Stephen asked: 'What did you do? Did you have fun? What did you do for the last three years?', before Jennifer gave a nod to her imminent arrival and baby-making by cradling her bump and joking: 'I just had a ton of sex'. He replied: 'Good for you. Good for you'. Jennifer swiftly corrected: 'I'm joking. Um, I cooked a little. The pandemic happened and then I cooked and I cleaned a lot'. Stephen asked if she took a permanent break from acting what her backup plan would be, to which she replied: 'I think I would be a really good housekeeper. No, I really do. I make a mess, but I'm really good at cleaning it up. I can attack a mess.' The Oscar-winning actress was on the CBS show promoting her new sci-fi black comedy Don't Look Up that also stars Leonardo DiCaprio, Jonah Hill, Mark Rylance, Meryl Streep, Cate Blanchett, Timothee Chalamet and Ariana Grande, reports dailymail.co.uk.



'HAWKEYE' IS A SUPERHUMAN SERIES: HAILEE STEINFELD

Los Angeles | Agencies

Marvel Studios' recently-released miniseries 'Hawkeye' might be a story of superhuman strength and fighting the outlaws in the post-Blip world but actress Hailee Steinfeld, who plays the lead character of Kate Bishop, Hawkeye's aide, suggests that at the heart of it, the series is quite human in nature. Commenting on how the series caters to the deep emotional bonding of a family, Hailee said, "As crazy and wild and surreal as this show might feel at times, it is very human. It feels very real, and it feels very raw. It's rooted in family."

Talking about the innate human nature of the miniseries' characters, the actress said, "They're all emotional beings going through life and trying to get through challenges that either they have to prove to themselves that they can get through on their own, or that they need somebody to get through it with. It's a very real and honest story at the end of the day."

'Hawkeye' is the first TV series in Phase Four of Marvel Studios' slate which extends from 2021 to 2023. The miniseries is directed for television by Rhys Thomas and Bert & Bertie, and features Jeremy Renner, Hailee Steinfeld, Vera Farmiga and Florence Pugh and is available to stream on Disney+ Hotstar.

Dave Bautista will headline M. Night Shyamalan movie

Los Angeles | Agencies

Dave Bautista is set to collaborate with director M. Night Shyamalan on the upcoming motion picture Knock at the Cabin. 'Another dream come true working with @MNightShyamalan!' Bautista, 52, tweeted in response to a Deadline report on the casting Monday.

Shyamalan, 51, is set to write, produce and direct the forthcoming motion picture, the outlet reported. The film is tentatively set to debut in theaters February 3, 2023.

The WWE alum's Hollywood breakout came playing the role of Drax in the Guardians of the Galaxy series, which he's reprised in movies like Avengers: Infinity War, Avengers: Endgame and the forthcoming Thor: Love and Thunder.

The Washington, D.C. native has worked in a number of high-profile roles in 2021, headlining Zack Snyder's Army of the Dead on Netflix, playing Beast Rabban Harkonnen in the Denis Villeneuve film Dune and appearing opposite Jason Momoa on the Apple TV+ series See, reports dailymail.co.uk.



Taylor Swift and two collaborators are removed from Grammy Album Of The Year nominee contention

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Recording Academy has withdrawn Taylor Swift, Jack Antonoff and Annie Clark (also known as St. Vincent) from contention as Grammy Album Of The Year nominees for their roles as songwriters on Olivia Rodrigo's Sour.

The trio were only credited as songwriters on Rodrigo's song Deja Vu when it was discovered that it had similarities to Swift's tune Cruel Summer, off her album Lover (2019).

It turns out, the Academy recognizes their contribution as songwriters of a so-called interpolation on the track, which according to its rules, eliminates them from contention for the award, as reported by The New York Times.

Swift, Antonoff and Clark were on the ballot when the Academy announced the nominations for the various categories in November.

But after recognizing the 'submission error' they have since been removed as of Sunday, although the changes don't affect Swift

and Antonoff's Album Of The Year nomination for her most recent release, Evermore.

While the Grammys typically recognizes most songwriters for Album Of The Year, that's not the case for writers of samples, or so-called 'interpolations', which refers to pieces of music recreated in a studio rather than lifted from an earlier recording, reports dailymail.co.uk.

Swift and Antonoff are also credited as songwriters, along with Rodrigo, on another Sour song, 1 Step Forward, 3 Steps Back, which has also been deemed to have interpolated Swift song, New Year's Day, off her studio album Reputation (2017).

The announcement of the trio being removed from Grammy contention, in connection with Rodrigo, comes after several other changes to the Grammy nominee list, which includes Linda Chorney being added as a Best American Roots Song nominee, and the removal of Marilyn Manson as a Best Rap Song nominee for Kanye West's Jail.



Christine Quinn





Six Tottenham players, two members of coaching staff found Covid-19 positive: Report

London | Agencies

Tottenham Hotspur have been hit by a Covid-19 outbreak ahead of Thursday's Europa League match against Rennes as up to six Tottenham first-team players and two members of backroom staff are believed to have tested positive.

Tottenham declined to comment when contacted by Sky Sports News. The 10-day period of self-isolation for anyone who tests positive means Tottenham's players hit by the outbreak are set to miss their next three games.

After facing Rennes, Antonio Conte's side returns to Premier League action with a trip to Brighton on Sunday, before they travel to Leicester City next Thursday and host Liverpool on December 19.

If more players test positive, Spurs



could seek talks with the Premier League for postponement of Sunday's match against Brighton. However, under UEFA's rules, Thursday's European fixture would only be in jeopardy if they have less than 13 players or no registered goalkeeper available.

It is yet to be established whether the club will contact the Premier League about Sunday's game, but a decision to postpone league matches can only be made by the competition board.

UEFA's guidelines state a match is only in jeopardy if a team has fewer than 13 players available, or no registered goalkeeper.

On Monday, the Premier League confirmed there had been 12 positive tests across two rounds of testing between November 29 and December 5.

Women's football nationals: Railways beat Mizoram to enter Final

Kozhikode | Agencies

Railways beat Mizoram 6-5 on penalties after they remained locked 1-1 at the end of extra time in the first semifinals of the Women's National Football Championship (NFC) at the EMS Corporation Stadium here on Tuesday.

free-kick but was fouled at the end.

Although both teams created equal goal-scoring opportunities, neither proved to be clinical in front of the goal and at the halfway point, both teams went into the tunnel on level pegging with the scoreline reading 0-0. It was a box-to-box affair after the changeover, as both teams tried to breach the opponent's goal more than once but eventually las' season's runners-up Railways took the lead midway through the second half.

They dominated the exchanges and fostered goal-scoring opportunities but lack of accuracy in front of goal saw a switch in momentum. Just when the referee was about to blow the final whistle towards the end of injury time, Mizoram made a stunning comeback via Siami's solo goal which led the match into extra time.

Both the sides tried and failed to make much headway in the 30 minutes of extra time, and the match headed into penalty shootout after 120 minutes of play.

Railways eventually emerged victorious in the shootout, after Grace Lalrampari and Vanlalhmangzual missed for Mizoram, while Suprava Samal was the only one to miss for Railways, thus the latter won the shootout by a 6-5 margin.

I think England will win the Ashes 2-1: Monty Panesar

London | Agencies

Former England spinner Monty Panesar believes that the Joe Root-led side is favourite to win the upcoming Ashes series against Australia. England are due to open their Ashes campaign against Australia on Wednesday morning, with the first Test to be played at the Gabba in Brisbane.

"I think if we get some sort of play (in the first Test), which at the moment we just don't know with the forecast, as it appears the first four days could be a washout, then a draw would be like a win for England." If they go to Adelaide for the pink (ball second) Test, I think that's where England have the upper hand. England probably need to win that Test



match to command their position on the tour and think that they are serious contenders to win this (series). I can see England winning the series, with the emergence of Ben Stokes being back in the team. Joe Root will want to taste that victory." "It's going to be a lot closer than you think, I think England will win the Ashes 2-1," Panesar added. Panesar further believes that all-rounder Ben Stokes can have a major effect on the series.

WILLIAMSON LIKELY TO BE OUT OF ACTION FOR TWO MONTHS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson has been ruled out for the next two months and is likely to miss much of the home International summer due to a recurring elbow injury. New Zealand coach Gary Stead said on Tuesday that Williamson's left elbow is giving him more trouble and the skipper is likely looking at eight or nine weeks out of action.

New Zealand will play two Tests series against Bangladesh starting from January 1 and then travel to Australia for three ODIs and a T20 from January 30-February 8. Williamson will probably miss out on the first Test against South Africa, starting from February 17, 2022. "I think surgery is unlikely. If we don't have to cut a tendon, our choice is not to do that. Kane's doing it tough, don't get me wrong. He loves playing for New Zealand, he hates the thought of missing any cricket, let alone Test cricket for New



Zealand," he added. Williamson -- who has been battling a persistent elbow injury over the past year which bothered him during the Twenty20 World

Cup last month -- was left out of the NZ XI for the second Test in Mumbai. He played the first Test of the two-test series in Kanpur.

De Kock, Nortje, Rabada to lead SA challenge against India

Cape Town | Agencies

Stalwarts Quinton de Kock, Anrich Nortje and Kagiso Rabada will be at the forefront of the South African challenge when India begin their three-Test series against the hosts at the SuperSport Park in Centurion on December 26.

The controversy over his pull-out minutes before South Africa's game against the West Indies in the T20 World Cup in the UAE notwithstanding, de Kock has been included in the Test side being led by Dean Elgar, with Temba Bavuma as his deputy.

De Kock was one of a number of South Africa players who had not been taking the knee ahead of recent internationals, including the team's



T20 World Cup tournament-opener against Australia, with some players kneeling, some raising a fist and some standing. Cricket South Africa had also issued a statement during the T20 World Cup saying that they had taken note of de Kock's "personal decision" not to take the knee in support of "Black Lives Matter".

On Tuesday, CSA, while announcing the 21-strong Test squad, said that the "National Selection Panel has gone with the same core group that successfully toured the West Indies in June of this year and have included three others." It said that Rabada, de Kock and Nortje would be returning to action besides the reintroduction of seamer, Duanne Olivier, who has returned to South Africa following a prolonged stint in the UK.

Djokovic celebrates 350th week atop the ATP Rankings

New York | Agencies

World No. 1 tennis player, Novak Djokovic, celebrated his 350th week atop the ATP Rankings, extending his record for the most weeks in the top spot, even as the Serbian set sights on Germany's women's tennis great Steffi Graf's record of 377 weeks at the top of the WTA rankings.

It was a historic season for the Serbian, who finished year-end No. 1 for the record-breaking seventh time, moving ahead of his idol, American legend Pete Sampras (six years).

On March 8, he broke a tie with Swiss ace Roger Federer (310 weeks) for the most weeks as world No. 1 since the inception of the ATP Rankings in 1973. Djokovic has not looked back since.

Djokovic, who is yet to confirm his participation at next year's first major -- the Australian Open --, finished 2021 with a 55-7



record, claiming major titles at the Australian Open, Roland Garros and Wimbledon, while also lifting trophies at the Belgrade Open and the Rolex Paris Masters.

His current stint as world No. 1 began nearly two years ago, on February 3, 2020.

US announces diplomatic boycott of Beijing Winter Olympics

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The US has announced a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics in China -- a move that has been heavily criticised by Beijing, BBC reported.

The White House said no official delegation would be sent to the Games because of concerns about China's human rights record, the report said. But it said US athletes could attend and would



have the government's full support. China called Washington's move a "self-directed political farce". "The US just wants to

politicise sports, create divisions and provoke confrontation," said a statement by the spokesperson of the Chinese Mission to the UN. "The success of the Games does not rely on the attendance of a handful of countries' government officials."

White House press secretary Jen Psaki confirmed the boycott on Monday, saying that the administration would not contribute to the "fanfare" of the Olympics, the report said.

2ND TEST, DAY 4: B'DESH 76/7 AT STUMPS AFTER PAK DECLARE 1ST INNINGS AT 300/4

Dhaka | Agencies

Bangladesh slipped to 76/7 at stumps on Day 4 of the second Test after Pakistan declared at 300/4 in their first innings, here on Tuesday. Bangladesh had a horror-filled Day Four in Dhaka as Sajid Khan, the young Pakistani spinner, ripped through the hosts' batting order and bagged six wickets.

After rain played spoilsport on two consecutive days, the start of day four also got delayed due to light showers and a wet outfield. However, the match resumed after almost an hour and a half's wait with Pakistan on



Brief scores
Pakistan 300/4 decl in 1st innings (Babar Azam 76, Azhar Ali 56; Tajul Islam 2-73) lead Bangladesh 76/7 in 1st innings (Sajid Khan 6-35) by 224 runs..

188/2, and Babar Azam and Azhar Ali were on 71 not out and 52 not out respectively. Despite having lost half their side, Shakib Al Hasan and Najmul Hossain Shanto continued to show intent and lived dangerously. The pair smashed three boundaries in a space of seven deliveries before Sajid trapped Shanto to register his maiden Test five-for. Mehidy Hasan Miraz was the seventh batter to make the long walk back, with Sajid cleaning him up for an eight-ball duck. With the light fading, the umpires decided to call stumps early with Bangladesh at 76/7, still 25 runs away from avoiding the follow-on.

ALL-INDIA POLICE HOCKEY KARNATAKA STATE POLICE SURVIVE A SCARE, DRAW 1-1 TO MAKE QUARTERS

Bengaluru | Agencies

Hosts Karnataka State Police held Uttar Pradesh Police to a 1-1 draw in a tense Pool D match to advance into the quarter-finals of the 70th All India Police Hockey Championships here on Tuesday. Playing in front of a boisterous home crowd, the Karnataka State Police created several chances in the attacking circle but could not convert. After a goalless three quarters, it was UP Police who scored the first goal of the match in the 49th minute through Arvind Gaund. Trailing 0-1, KSP did well to hold their nerves in the dying minutes of the match to score in the 54th minute. It was KSP captain NB Pradeep who struck a fine field goal that ensured they make it to the next round. On Wednesday, KSP will take on Jharkhand Police in the quarterfinal match. In another exciting match in Pool B, Punjab



Police rode on star striker Ramandeep Singh's double goal to beat BSF Jalandhar 5-1. An experienced Punjab side dominated the proceedings despite a

poor start having conceded an early goal by Hatinder Singh in the 2nd minute. After a minor setback, Punjab bounced back to stitch together a fine attack

to score in through Karanbir Singh (7'), Pawandeep Singh (8'), Kanwarjeet Singh (19'), and Ramandeep Singh (19' and 53'). Punjab Police will look to contin-

Quarter-Finals

Line-up:

CRPF Delhi Vs ITBP Jalandhar Punjab Police Vs CISF Delhi Odisha Police vs Tamil Nadu Police Karnataka State Police Vs Jharkhand Police

ue their fine form as they take on CISF Delhi. Meanwhile, Odisha Police beat Gujarat Police 11-0 in a one-sided match in Pool C. Goals were scored by Ashok Lakra (2', 36', 43', 47'), captain Anil Kullu (5'), Janerious Tirkay (16'), Sudhir Barla (19'), Sim'n Ba'la (32', 58') and Bij'y La'ra (45', 50'). Odisha Police will face off against Tamil Nadu Police. In another one-sided match, CRPF Jalandhar beat Madhya Pradesh Police 6-0 in their group A encounter. The goal scorers of the match were B'kash Kujur (5'), Md Mas'ullah Khan (7'), captain Ignacius Toppo (9'), Lovejeet Singh (11'), Rahul Sharma (21'), and Ishpreet Singh (37'). Although CRPF Jalandhar did well to win this match, they were unable to advance to the next round. In the first match of the day, Tamil Nadu Police will take on SSB in the women's match. This will be followed by the Quarterfinal matches.



ATRANGI RE LAUNCHES ITS MUSIC ALBUM WITH THE LEGEND, A. R. RAHMAN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Atrangi Re's music has been climbing up the music charts in the country since Chaka Chak made its debut! Today, Atrangi Re's Rait Zara Si, a romantic and soulful number, made its debut on the internet and has already become a crowd favourite. While Chaka Chak and Rait Zara Si have created quite a stir on the internet already, the stage is now set for the rest of the songs to make waves. Upping the ante on the excitement surrounding Atrangi

Re's music, the makers launched the film's album in a grand concert by music maestro A. R. Rahman. Set to release on 24th December exclusively on Disney+ Hotstar, the film promises to be a Christmas treat for the family audience! The live concert saw A. R. Rahman crooning to the best songs from the film. In the presence of the musical genius A. R. Rahman himself, the event was also attended by Akshay Kumar, Sara Ali Khan, Bhushan Kumar, Aanand L Rai and Irshad Kamil. The

interactive live concert saw fun on-stage moments between A. R. Rahman, Aanand L Rai, Irshad Kamil and the cast.

The music album of Atrangi Re is a coming-together of greats from the music industry. A soul-stirring composition by A. R. Rahman, with soulful lyrics by Irshad Kamil, the film's music gives us a local flavour of India and its energy - upbeat, quirky, full of zing, diverse, intense and really, really atrangi. Speaking about the music in the film, atrangi producer Bhushan Kumar said, "The music in the film celebrates India as we know it! It is a mind-blowing composition by A. R. Rahman and is a perfect example of north meets south. We hope you enjoy the music in the film!"

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Anyone who knows Lulia Vantur as a celebrity or a friend, surely knows that she is a talented host, anchor, actress, model & dancer all in one! Returning to her roots once again, we hear that Lulia is all set to host a docu-series titled Beyond The Stars. This web series is said to be focused on Salman Khan's life and his whirlwind journey of 33 years into the world of entertainment. One can say that Lulia is surely the right fit for this show since word is that she had lent the idea on documenting the superstars life! Lulia over the years has gained great popularity as a popular tv host in Romania and it was only but natural to go with the stunner as the host for the series as well. This stint from what we hear might fit her as a glove, considering the fact that she has had a successful career in Romania as a news anchor and tv presenter. The series is based on Salman Khan's illustrious life and career which promises to present an honest and fun account about him as a superstar off camera as well encapsulating his 33 years journey in the world of Bollywood.

The docu-series went on floors in October 2021 and we are very excited to see Lulia

LULIA VANTUR IS SAID TO HOST A DOCU-SERIES CALLED 'BEYOND THE STARS'



hosting the series.

Nawazuddin Siddiqui: Awards give me confidence to select my work



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Nawazuddin Siddiqui, who often represents India on the global stage with awards and recognitions, doesn't keep a close watch on the honours that come his way but they do serve an important function for him.

Talking about the same, the actor said, "I don't keep a tab on my recognition or awards but it definitely motivates me and helps to select the kind of films or characters that I choose to do. Awards and recognition gives me confidence to select my work."

Nawaz recently hit the headlines with his visit to International Emmy Awards as he was nominated in the Best Performance by an Actor category for his work in the Sudhir Mishra directorial 'Serious Men'. However, the actor lost to David Tennant, who walked away with the trophy for his performance in the drama miniseries 'Des'.

In the past, Nawaz has brought home many international accolades, as he is the only actor in the world to have 8 films officially selected and screened at the Cannes Film Festival.

His film 'Patang: The Kite', premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival and the Tribeca Film Festival, back in 2012.

His work in 'Raman Raghav 2.0' in 2016 won him the Fancine Malaga Award in Spain and in the Asia Pacific Screen Awards. In addition, he has also won the best supporting actor award at Asia Pacific Film Festival for 'The Lunchbox'.

Prabhas donates Rs 1 crore to Andhra CM Relief Fund for flood victims



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Actor Prabhas has donated a huge amount of Rs 1 crore to the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister's Relief Fund. After the recent floods which caused devastation in some areas of the state, the 'Baahubali' actor has donated the money.

Earlier, Prabhas, who is well-known for his generosity apart from his movies, had come forward to donate a whopping amount of Rs 4.5 crore to help the needy during Covid-19. Now

that the actor has made a huge donation in favour of flood-hit people in Andhra Pradesh, he is being praised for his generosity. The Telugu film industry has contributed significantly in the form of donations to help the flood victims. Actors Ram Charan, Mahesh Babu, Jr NTR, Allu Arjun, and others have donated a sizable amount of money.



Kajal Pisal: Fooling a woman emotionally and physically is a cowardly act

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Actress Kajal Pisal, who is currently seen in 'Sirf Tum', has talked about her character in the show and how it relates with the serious issues that women face in society. She says, "My character in the show is very interesting and promising. It has both positive and grey shades and lots of emotions that the audience will also have sympathy towards me. I play Asha, she falls in love with Vikrant Oberoi (Nimai Bali) who is a rich man. Unaware of him being married, I have a child with him."

Kajal also feels such women are later targeted by the society. "Fooling a woman using her emotionally and physically and having a child and not owning responsibility is a very cowardly act. If a man cannot stand for his actions he shouldn't be destroying someone's life for his needs. Life goes on but such trauma stays for life as they are later targeted by the society and even for the child it becomes a threat who suffers someone else's mistake."

Kajal is known for featuring in popular shows like 'Bade Achhe Lagte Hain', 'Saath Nibhaana Saathiya' and 'Naagin 5', among others.

I thought I'd crumble and die: Samantha

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu has at last opened up on her divorce from Akkineni Naga Chaitanya and the impact it had on her mental health. Not long ago, Tollywood's celebrated pair Naga Chaitanya and Samantha announced their divorce, sending shockwaves among their fans. Ever since the 'Majili' actress announced her separation from Naga Chaitanya, she has been mum on the issue.

Samantha said, "As soon as you accept the fact that you are going through, something, half of the healing is done. Accepting, vocalising, and fighting back is what I did."

Samantha said she felt like she would "crumble and die". But, as she realised that she is going to live her life, with all the issues, she appreciates herself for being such a strong woman. "I never knew I could pass this. I am proud of myself because I never knew I was this strong", the 'Shakuntalam' actress said.

Samantha also mentioned that her divorce from Chaitanya took a toll on her mental health. But she tried her ways to get better.

Samantha, on the work front, has been busy signing new ventures, and will soon be working on two multilingual projects, of which one is titled 'Yashodha'. Samantha promises that she will shut up her critics only with her hard work, nothing else.



Janhvi Kapoor