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Curbing terror, infiltration and drugs Modi has turned NE into 'Ashtalakshmi:' Amit Shah

UNION HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH ON TUESDAY SAID THAT THE NORTHEASTERN REGION WAS ONCE KNOWN FOR INSURGENCY, INFILTRATION, BLOCKADES, DRUGS MENACE AND CORRUPTION, BUT PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI WITH AMBITIOUS DEVELOPMENT MISSIONS TURNED THE EIGHT STATES OF THE REGION INTO "ASHTALAKSHMI".

Team Absolute | Agartala

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said that the northeastern region was once known for insurgency, infiltration, blockades, drugs menace and corruption, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi with ambitious development missions turned the eight states of the region into "Ashtalakshmi".

Shah said that the Prime Minister with his growth mission for the northeastern region developed infrastructure, connectivity and boosted organic farming besides investing crores of rupees.

Addressing a public meeting in Agartala on the completion of four years of the BJP led government in Tripura, the Home Minister without naming the previous Left Front government said that earlier there was militancy, infiltration, bandhs and corruption and today, Modi Ji has taken Tripura on the path of a new development era.

He said: "For 25 years, Tripura had suffered a lot under communist rule. Today under PM Modi and Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb, Tripura is known for peace and progress. Tripura, which was earlier plagued by violence, corruption and illegal drug trade, is today moving towards becoming self-reliant."

Shah said that the government after several years of uncertainty has been providing a settlement to 37,000 Reang tribal migrants from Mizoram in Tripura. Also, after an agreement all the cadres of the militant outfit, National Liberation Front of Tripura, surrendered and joined the mainstream.

"Under the leadership of Chief Minister Deb, the drug menace was curbed in Tripura and the state will be made a new hub of trade and business making it a drugs free state. The double engine government has increased the per capita income of the people of Tripura to Rs 1.30 lakh in just four years and farmers' income reached Rs 11,000 per month from Rs 6,500."He claimed that during the erstwhile Left government over 39 BJP workers and functionaries were killed.

To develop the National Highways, Rs 7,000 crores are being invested in Tripura and six express trains have linked the state with many big states of the country, he added.

Referring to the surgical strike in Pakistan, the Home Minister said that Prime Minister Modi in a befitting retaliation through this daring action showed the world that India is capable of hitting back at the terrorists.

Mentioning the repeal of Article 370, Shah said that development is not possible where violence, drugs and other adverse activities take place.He urged the people to give a chance to the BJP to run the government in Tripura for another five years to make the state a model state in the country. Elections to the 60-seat Tripura assembly will be held early next year.Tripura Chief Minister Deb and other leaders also spoke at the meeting, organised at the Vivekananda stadium here.

AQIS trying to enter NE states including Assam through Bangladeshi jihadis: Report

The intelligence agencies have flagged the presence of the modules of terror group Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) in Assam and neighbouring states through Bangladeshi jihadis.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The intelligence agencies have flagged the presence of the modules of terror group Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) in Assam and neighbouring states through Bangladeshi jihadis.

According to sources, quoting the intelligence inputs, the AQIS is trying to establish itself firmly in the northeastern states with the help of a few terror groups in Bangladesh and this needs to be checked by the states' police.The inputs suggested a particular religious group which is actively involved in helping Bangladeshi nationals to sneak into India through the states on the Bangladesh border.The sources in the security set up said that the Centre has shared the intelligence inputs with the northeastern states and asked them to ramp up the identification of such elements.

The officials in the security set up added that despite the support of Al Qaeda founder Ayman al-Zawahiri and the Islamic State of Syria and Iraq (ISIS), the AQIS could not establish itself in India barring a few Kashmiris who were sympathizers of the AQIS but that was limited to raising their banners during the anti-government protests in 2016-17.These terror elements need to be identified and neutralized at the earliest, the officials added.Recent arrests made by the Assam police had five people, including a Bangladeshi national who is linked to an important Bangladeshi jihadist organization affiliated to the AQIS.

The sources revealed that the arrested Bangladeshi national has disclosed his links with the terror outfits in Bangladesh. They said that he illegally entered India and worked as a teacher in Dhakliyapara mosque under Hauli police station of Barpeta district in Assam.

On Sunday, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that several jihadi terror modules are active in Assam and the state police is working to bust them.

Due to the strict anti-terror policy of the Sheikh Hasina led Bangladesh government, the AQIS could not establish itself there despite the support of local terror outfits.

KASHMIRI YOUTH BEING LURED TO HURL GRENADES AT BUSY PLACES: LT GEN PANDEY

Lt. General D.P. Pandey, General officer commanding (GoC) of Army's Srinagar headquartered 15 corps said on Tuesday that youths are being lured to hurl grenades at busy places as militants have failed to carry out big strikes against the security forces.

Team Absolute | Srinagar

Lt. General D.P. Pandey, General officer commanding (GoC) of Army's Srinagar headquartered 15 corps said on Tuesday that youths are being lured to hurl grenades at busy places as militants have failed to carry out big strikes against the security forces.

The GOC said that the women of Kashmir have started coming on the forefront who otherwise were pushed to the wall in the past and this development will help prevent boys from treading the wrong path.

He was talking to reporters on the sidelines of a function organised on the eve of International Women's Day.

He said since militants are not able to carry out big strikes against the security forces now, young men are being lured to lob grenades at busy public places as seen the other day in the city where an elderly man and a young girl lost their lives.

"We believe society has a great role to play in preventing such incidents. Women were pushed to the wall and kept confined to four walls of the house. Now that they are out, we are sure they will help prevent young boys from choosing the wrong path," he said.

About the situation on the Line of Control (LoC), Lt. General Pandey said since past one year there is peace along the LoC as children are going to school and the people are carrying out agricultural activities without fear.

'Let counting go on': SC on plea for VVPAT verification at more polling stations

The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to grant urgent listing of a plea seeking direction to increase randomly selected polling stations for the purpose of mandatory verification of Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) paper slips from 5 to 25 in each Assembly constituency.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to grant urgent listing of a plea seeking direction to increase randomly selected polling stations for the purpose of mandatory verification of Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) paper slips from 5 to 25 in each Assembly constituency.

The vote counting for Assembly elections held in five states is scheduled on March 10.

A bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana told the petitioner's counsel, the court is not willing to issue directions at the last minute as the counting of votes for recently-held Assembly polls is the day after Wednesday.

"Let counting go on as per established practice, procedures and law," noted the bench. also comprising Justices A.S. Bopanna and Hima Kohli, as it heard a plea by social activist Rakesh Kumar seeking urgent listing of the petition.

Senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing the Election Commission, submitted before the bench that the plea is not maintainable, as officials are already following the 2019 judgment of the top court in connection with VVPAT verification. The bench said what could it do at the last minute and the EC is already following the top court judgment. It further added that the petition could be considered in the regular course only.The plea said when the candidates or their agents become aware of the outcome of the election during the last round of counting reports, they do not wait for the counting of VVPAT paper slips of the 5 randomly selected polling stations as per the guidelines biased by this court in Chandrababu Naidu case (2019).

"Therefore, the counting must be done prior to the vote counting for ensuring complete sanctity of the vote counting process. This will also ensure that if there is any discrepancy between the counting in EVM and the VVPATs, the counting of the VVPAT slips shall prevail as per the guidelines laid down," it added.

The plea sought strict compliance with the top court direction in N. Chandrababu Naidu case, where guidelines were issued for mandatory verification of VVPAT slips, out of five randomly selected polling stations, after completing the final round of counting votes recorded in EVMs.

Earlier, during the day the top court had agreed to hear the plea after senior advocate Meenakshi Arora mentioned it before a bench headed by the Chief Justice.

Will ensure no fuel shortage in country: Hardeep Singh Puri

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid speculation that petrol prices will increase after the Assembly elections in five states, Union Petroleum & Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday said that it will be ensured that the country does not face a fuel shortage.Addressing a press conference here, Puri reminded how the Congress party had deregulated petroleum prices during its reign. Recently, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had attacked the government over the issue, saying, "Get petrol tanks filled immediately. Modi government's offer is about to end."Puri said civic elections are scheduled to be held in many states of the country in October.From March 1, prices of commercial LPG cylinder rose by Rs 105. The hike in the prices of commercial cylinders is adversely affecting hotel and restaurant owners. A commercial LPG cylinder weighing 19 kg, which earlier cost Rs 1,907, is now selling at Rs 2,012.

Speculation is rife that after the elections in the five states are over, prices of domestic LPG, diesel and petrol may witness an increase.As per recently released reports, after the completion of the poll process, petrol and diesel prices, which have remained unchanged since Diwali, may be increased by Rs 15 to Rs 22 per litre.The price of crude oil in the international market has reached $117 per barrel. According to experts, if the Russia-Ukraine war continues, then crude oil prices could reach $ 185 per barrel.

May create problems in extradition of other fugitives: SC to CBI in Abu Salem case

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Union home secretary to file an affidavit, whether the Centre is committed to adhere to the assurance given by the then deputy Prime Minister LK Advani to Portugal authorities, to not incarcerate gangster Abu Salem for more than 25 years while seeking his extradition.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Union home secretary to file an affidavit, whether the Centre is committed to adhere to the assurance given by the then deputy Prime Minister LK Advani to Portugal authorities, to not incarcerate gangster Abu Salem for more than 25 years while seeking his extradition.

A bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and MM Sundresh said the Centre has to make its stand clear on the issue.

The bench emphasized that not abiding by the assurance made to the Portugal authorities, could have wider ramifications and it may create problems while seeking extradition of fugitives from other countries. The top court said it is not happy with the CBI's reply in the matter and sought a response from the home secretary in three weeks.The CBI, in its affidavit, has told the top court that an Indian court is not bound by the assurance given in 2002 by the then deputy prime minister to the courts in Portugal that gangster Abu Salem would not be imprisoned beyond 25 years after his extradition to India.Advocate Rishi Malhotra, representing Salem, argued before the bench that as per the principle of reciprocity in Portugal the courts cannot award a sentence for more than 25 years. He added that based on the principle of reciprocity, the Government of India had given a solemn sovereign assurance to the Portugal courts that in case Salem is permitted to be extradited back to India, he will not be given punishment for more than 25 years.

The CBI's affidavit said: "The solemn sovereign assurance given by the then Deputy Prime Minister of India cannot be construed as a guarantee/ undertaking to assure that no court in India would award the punishment provided by Indian laws in force to the accused Abu Salem."

The CBI said that Salem's argument that imprisonment term cannot extend 25 years as per the assurance given is legally unsustainable. "This court while deciding criminal appeal...filed by Abu Salem Abdul Qayyum Ansari has held that both India and Portugal are two sovereign unequivocal terms, the verdict by the constitutional court of Portugal is not binding on this court but only has persuasive value," added the affidavit.On February 2, the top court asked the Centre and the prosecuting agency to make their stand clear on the applicability of the solemn sovereign assurance given by the then deputy Prime Minister to Portugal.

Salem had cited these assurances given by the Indian authorities before the courts in Portugal in 2002 and 2005 that he will not get death penalty or a jail term beyond 25 years. He was brought to India in 2005 and sentenced to life imprisonment for his role in the 1993 Mumbai blasts.

K'TAKA SETS UP 'HUMAN MILK BANK' ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

To cater to the needs of newborn babies who can not be fed by mothers, the Karnataka government has dedicated 'Human (breast) Milk Banks' established in the state at four district headquarters, including Bengaluru, on Tuesday coinciding with the International Women's Day.

The facility was till date available at private hospitals only.While inaugurating 'Amruthdhare Human Milk Bank' and high risk pregnancy building on the premises of the Vani Vilas Hospital, Health Minister K. Sudhakar appealed that the mothers should come forward for breast milk donation, which will save the lives of infants.

"Breast milk is an elixir to kids. No child should be devoid of mother's milk. Few kids unfortunately won't be able to get breast milk because of the death of their mother or various reasons. To cater to those kids, breast milk banks have been opened at four district headquarters including Mysuru, Belagavi and Bengaluru, he stated.Mother's milk contains protein, saline, fat, sarcophagus and increases immunity. The breast milk will be collected from donor mothers using equipment, it will pasteurised and then freezed. It could be stored for six months.Till now, 27 litres of breast milk has been collected. Among this, 21 litres has already been given to 90 children, he stated.

BENGAL GETS WOMAN FINANCE MINISTER AFTER CABINET REJIG

In a minor reshuffle of the state cabinet, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday reallocated the responsibilities of ministers like Chandrima Bhattacharya and Firhad Hakim, sending a strong signal that leaders who work for the party will be rewarded.

Kolkata | Agencies

In a minor reshuffle of the state cabinet, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday reallocated the responsibilities of ministers like Chandrima Bhattacharya and Firhad Hakim, sending a strong signal that leaders who work for the party will be rewarded. Bhattacharya, who was handling the responsibility of finance as Minister of State after Amit Mitra decided not to contest the elections, has now been given independent charge of the crucial minstry. Till now, Banerjee had kept the portfolio to herself. On the other hand, Hakim, who was given the responsibility of the transport department, has been brought back to the urban development department. Hakim was in-charge of the department since Banerjee came to power in 2011, but after last year's elections and following 'One Man One Post' theory, he was given the responsibility of the transport department. Hakim, who is considered close to Banerjee, has not only been named the Mayor of Kolkata Municipal Corporation, but has also been brought back to the urban development ministry.

TN: 10 sentenced to life imprisonment for Dalit youth's murder

A special court in Madurai on Tuesday sentenced 10 persons, including the first accused named Yuvaraj, to life imprisonment for the murder of a Dalit youth named Gokulraj in Namakkal in 2015.

Chennai | Agencies

A special court in Madurai on Tuesday sentenced 10 persons, including the first accused named Yuvaraj, to life imprisonment for the murder of a Dalit youth named Gokulraj in Namakkal in 2015.District judge Sampath Kumar ordered that all the accused should serve life imprisonment until death.

Yuvaraj, who is the founder of a caste outfit named Dheeran Chinnamalai Gounder Peravai, was awarded triple life imprisonment to be served concurrently.

The prime accused, Yuvaraj's driver Arun, and fellow accused S. Kumar alias Sivakumar, R. Sathishkumar, S. Raghu, D. Ranjith and D. Selvaraj have been awarded double life imprisonment.

Three other accused -- Giridhar, S. Chandrashekharan and M. Prabhu -- were awarded single life imprisonment.

According to the prosecution, Gokulraj, a Dalit youth from Omalur in Salem district, who was an engineering student, was kidnapped by a gang led by Yuvaraj on June 23, 2015, after he was seen speaking to a girl belonging to Gounder community at a temple in Tiruchengode. The next day his body was found on a railway track.

There were 17 accused in the case and the court acquitted seven while awarding life imprisonment to the remaining 10 men. The mother of Gokulraj, Chitra, broke down in the court and pleaded that the accused be given the highest punishment that could be awarded.

The special public prosecutor, Bhavani S. Mohan, during his closing arguments urged the court to award the highest punishment to the accused citing the brutality involved in the killing of Gokulraj.

All the convicts broke down in the courtroom on hearing the judgment.

HC denies interim relief to Delhi Transport Minister on defamation case against BJP MLA

The Delhi High Court has refused to entertain a plea by Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot, who sought temporary injunction in a case related to low floor bus scam allegations levelled by MLA and BJP MLA Vijender Gupta.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court has refused to entertain a plea by Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot, who sought temporary injunction in a case related to low floor bus scam allegations levelled by MLA and BJP MLA Vijender Gupta. A bench of Justice Asha Menon, in an order passed on Monday, said no case for grant of interim injunction to restrain the defendant (Gupta) from tweeting or publishing his views or to take down or archive the existing tweets, is made-out. .

In the order, the court said: "It cannot be overlooked that both, the plaintiff as well as the defendant, are public figures and members of the Legislative Assembly. There is a right vested in the Opposition to question the government on its actions, as the Executive is subject to the Legislature under the Constitution. This is key to the maintenance of the balance of power between the two wings of the state."

"While assessing whether the tweets contain a misrepresentation of the facts causing damage to the reputation of the plaintiff, one factor has to be also kept in mind namely, that the defendant claims that there is material in the public domain relating to the tendering for the purchase of the buses as also the AMCs from previous years, which were clouded and which were not taken through and that therefore, the decisions taken by the Government in 2020-21 had to be closely monitored. It was on his public demand that the Minutes of the current tendering process were uploaded. The Committee Report was also in the public domain. Thus, it is clear that defendant seeks to justify his tweets on the basis of public records." the order read.

Gahlot, in his complaint, had alleged that Gupta with "malafide purposes and to gain political mileage, has leveled defamatory, scandalous, mischievous, false and scurrilous allegations on the complainant both verbal as well as in writing on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook through his account." The Minister had also mentioned in his complaint that after getting the charge of the transport ministry in the Delhi government, he took the initiative for inducting around 1,500 new buses since 2017 for the welfare of the people.

27 INJURED IN VIOLENCE OUTSIDE NTPC PLANT IN JHARKHAND

At least 27 persons were injured at Tandwa in Chatra district of Jharkhand after a violent clash broke out between the district police and the locals protesting since the last 14 months against the construction of a National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) plant.

Chatra | Ranchi

At least 27 persons were injured at Tandwa in Chatra district of Jharkhand after a violent clash broke out between the district police and the locals protesting since the last 14 months against the construction of a National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) plant.

An angry mob burnt more than a dozen trucks and two-wheelers outside the NTPC plant on Monday.Senior police and district administrative officers of North Chotanagpur division immediately rushed to the site. On Tuesday, several MLAs created a ruckus in the Jharkhand assembly over the incident, after which the state government swung into action by launching an investigation into the incident within 24 hours.People living in the area, whose properties have been taken away for setting up this plant, have been holding protests for the last two decades raising demands such as financial compensation, rehabilitation and jobs. There have been several incidents of violence between the locals and the NTPC management, police and local administration. Despite agreement on several demands, this matter has not been resolved till date. For the last 14 months, a large group of displaced locals have been holding

protests outside the NTPC plant. On Monday evening, a tanker loaded with chemicalsreached the NTPC plant which was stopped by people protesting outside the plant. When the police tried to disperse the mob, the latter started pelting stones at the police. The police reacted by resorting to a lathicharge and fired tear gas shells at the angry mob The angry protestors set ablaze eight NTPC vehicles, including a dozen vehicles outside the thermal power plant. The protestors also attacked the offices and site of the outsourced company engaged in the construction work of the plant and vandalised private property as well. Of the 27 injured persons, seven are reportedly in critical condition and the doctors have referred them to Ranchi for further treatment after giving first aid. The NTPC and the firms working for it have suffered heavy losses to the tune of several crores of rupees. The tents installed at the protest site were removed with the help of JCB machines. After receiving information about the incident, Deputy Inspector General of Police (Hazaribagh range), Narendra Kumar Singh, Chatra Deputy Commissioner Anjali Yadav, Chatra Superintendent of Police Rakesh Ranjan, Chatra Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Avinash Kumar and Tandwa SDPO Shambhu Singh reached the site along with a police team. The Jharkhand Assembly held a heated discussion over this incident. Congress MLAs Amba Prasad and Bandhu Tirkey, All Jharkhand Students Union-party leader Sudesh Mahto and Bharatiya Janata Party's C.P. Singh raised the matter on the floor of the Assembly. opposition MLAs said the people displaced due to the construction of NTPC plant are being lathicharged and killed by the district administration which is unfortunate. On getting no response from the state government over the incident, opposition MLAs continued to create a ruckus Later, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Alamgir Alam on behalf of the state government said appropriate action would be taken after investigating the matter within 24 hours.

Cong sends 3 observers to Manipur to oversee post-poll scenario

Amid speculation of a hung Assembly in Manipur, the Congress has dispatched three observers to the state to oversee the post-poll scenario.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid speculation of a hung Assembly in Manipur, the Congress has dispatched three observers to the state to oversee the post-poll scenario.

In 2017, the party even after being the single-largest party, had failed to form the government in Manipur.

The party has assigned T.S. Singhdeo, senior minister in the Chhattisgarh government, Vincent Pala and Mukul Wasnik.

The Congress has asked all its observers and party in-charges to keep tab on all its newly elected MLAs and inform the central leadership about the same on the counting day on March 10. This is being done to keep its flock together, said sources. Karnataka Congress President D.K. hivakumar has been sent to Goa to monitor and strategise there. Sources in the Congress said that he is going to camp in Goa for three days to ensure that the age-old party, which missed a chance to form the government by a whisker in the last Assembly elections, does not commit the same mistakes again. Shivakumar is going to stay put in Goa till the new government is formed, sources added. Apart from the senior observers, the party has also another set of leaders in states where the party is anticipating a close contest or hung Assembly. P. Chidambaram is a senior observer of Goa, Jairam Ramesh in Manipur, Mohan Prakash in Uttarakhand, Bhupesh Baghel in Uttar Pradesh and Ajay Maken is in Punjab. The party in-charges have also been asked to remain in the respective states from March 10. Sources say that the Congress wants to protect its MLAs from being poached and is likely to shift them after March 10. The Congress fears poaching as happened in 2017 when despite emerging as a single largest party in Goa and Manipur, the party could not form the Congress is anticipating a similar kind of poaching in all the four states and in Uttar Pradesh also which might witness a hung Assembly, sources said.

Battle for UP: We fought hard, says Priyanka Gandhi

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said, on Tuesday, that her party fought the electoral battle hard. "We fought as hard as we could. We will wait and see the results," she said.

Lucknow | Agencies

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said, on Tuesday, that her party fought the electoral battle hard. "We fought as hard as we could. We will wait and see the results," she said.

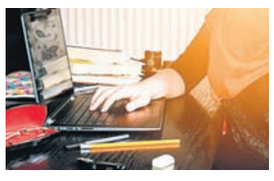
Priyanka, who reached Lucknow on Tuesday to lead a march under the party's 'Ladki Hoon, Lad Sakti Hoon' campaign in Uttar Pradesh, said, "Today's march is to celebrate our 159 women candidates. I think it is a big thing that all of them fought, and on International Women's Day we should celebrate them."

Priyanka led the all-women march form 1090 crossing to National Botanical Garden crossing.

The exit polls have predicted a comfortable majority for the BJP in UP while the Congress remains at the periphery with most polls giving it a single digit tally.

The exit polls were released on Monday evening after the seventh and last phase of the election in Uttar Pradesh.

MUSLIM PROFESSIONALS TO MENTOR GIRLS IN UP



Lucknow Muslim women professionals, in a novel initiative, will now mentor girls from socially weaker sections with 'Rising Beyond the Ceiling' (RBTC) launching its free mentorship programme on the International Women's Day. RBTC is a group of 100 Muslim women honourees at national-level and 100 at state-level. These women will now mentor girls on professional, educational, emotional, and financial matters. "Why is a Muslim woman considered illiterate if she is wearing burqa or naqaab? If provided an opportunity, she can achieve anything she desires. This is an opportunity we will provide to young girls from socially weaker sections," said Sabiha Ahmad, RBTC Uttar Pradesh coordinator and UP Sunni Waqf Board member. the Muslim women but is also contributing to nation building. "Bringing women from different areas of work, such as the women in uniform, in academics, arts, journalism and others, for mentoring helps in building self-confidence in young girls and gives wings to their aspirations," she said. "Regardless of religion, any girl with the aspiration to work in any field can get in touch with the organisation to seek whatever help is required. The mentorship is free of cost, and we have started inviting submissions for it apart from the current mentees being guided already," she added.

BSF's 36 women bikers begin their drive from Delhi to Kanyakumari

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Tuesday flagged off its all women daredevil motorcycle team to Kanyakumari on International Women's Day.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Tuesday flagged off its all women daredevil motorcycle team to Kanyakumari on International Women's Day.

BSF Seema Bhawani Shaurya Expedition "Empowerment Ride - 2022", an organisational mission for empowering women, was flagged off from India Gate by the BSF Wives Welfare Association (BWWA) President Nupur Singh. The BSF women troopers are also known as Seema Bhawani.

Organised in association with Royal Enfield, 36 members of BSF Seema Bhawani All-Women Daredevil Motorcycle Team led by Inspector Himanshu Sirohi embarked on a gruveling 5,280 km ride traversing through major cities all the way to Kanyakumari and onward to Chennai spreading the message of Women Empowerment across the nation. This expedition is to travel through the length and breadth of the country, covering historical landmarks beginning from India Gate in Delhi leading to the Wagah Attari Border in Punjab and Statue of Unity in Gujarat before finally culminating at Royal Enfield's India Technical Centre in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. "The expedition will pass through Chandigarh, Amritsar, Attari, Bikaner, Jaipur, Udaipur, Gandhinagar, Kevadia, Nasik, Solapur, Hyderabad, Anantapur, Bengaluru and Kanyakumari before reaching its final destination in Chennai on March 28," the BSF said. The team will also be interacting with school children, NCC volunteers and youth, various riding communities and audiences with an intent to sensitise and bring forth an awareness about the capabilities of women while emphasising freedom from bias, stereotypes and discrimination. This expedition also aims to forge positive visibility of women, so as to encourage young girls and women across the country in stepping up for taking on major roles in shaping the future of the nation as well as to join the ranks of BSF.

INDIA RECORDS 3,993 NEW COVID CASES, LOWEST IN 662 DAYS

New Delhi: India reported 3,993 daily Covid cases, the lowest spike in the last 662 days and a total of 108 deaths in a span of 24 hours, the Union health ministry said on Tuesday morning. With the addition of new deaths, the toll has reached 5,15,210 in the country. India reported 4,362 fresh Covid cases, 66 deaths on Monday and a day earlier (on Sunday) the country had logged 5,476 new infections and 158 deaths. The active Covid cases have further reduced to 49,948 which constitute 0.12 per cent of the country's total positive cases, as per the ministry report. The recovery of 8,055 patients in the last 24 hours has increased the cumulative tally to 4,24,06,150. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.68 per cent, said the Union Health Ministry on Tuesday. India has so far conducted over 77.43 crore cumulative tests. Meanwhile, the weekly positivity rate has further come down to 0.68 per cent while the daily positivity rate has sharply reduced to 0.46 per cent. With the administration of over 21.34 lakhs Covid vaccine doses in the last 24 hours, India's inoculation coverage has reached 179.13 crore as of Tuesday morning. This has been achieved through 2,08,07,099 sessions. More than 15.49 crore balance and unutilised Covid vaccine doses are still available with the states and union territories to be administered, according to the health ministry as of Tuesday morning.

MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT TO UNVEIL NEW WOMEN'S POLICY

Chief Minister Thackeray said MVA government is committed to the welfare of women by implementing schemes for them

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on March 8 said his government is committed to ensure that the schemes for women's uplift reach the targetted beneficiaries and said the new women's empowerment policy will be unveiled soon. Greeting women on the occasion of International Women's Day at an event in Mumbai, Mr. Thackeray said women are not just confined to the kitchen and child-rearing, but have gone beyond these duties to be equal to men in all spheres.

"As political leaders, it is our duty to see how we can help and support women," the Chief Minister said. "Laws, facilities and health infrastructure for women need to be adequate and awareness needs to be created about them," he said. Mr. Thackeray further said that the new women's empowerment policy will soon be unveiled and the MVA government is committed to the welfare of women by implementing schemes for them.

"Women have all the abilities, but only need opportunities. Women police personnel, anganwadi workers, health workers, doctors and nurses worked hard during the COVID-19 pandemic," he said. The State government has reduced the working hours for women police officials to eight hours, the Chief Minister said.

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut terms ED an 'extortionist' and BJP's 'ATM'

We don't need to go to Shimla anymore as we're witnessing similar weather here only. So people of Nashik should stay here and avoid travelling during Covid-19 pandemic

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Making a sensational allegation, the Shiv Sena on Tuesday said that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is running extortion rackets in Maharashtra and West Bengal and has become the 'ATM' of the BJP, with activist Kirit Somaiya acting as their 'collection agent'.

"The maximum operations of the ED and Income Tax Department are in Maharashtra and West Bengal. Today, a series of ITD raids are being carried out in Maharashtra," said Shiv Sena Chief Spokesperson and MP Sanjay Raut.

The ED-ITD have carried out 14 operations in Maharashtra and 7 in West Bengal with the sole design of instilling fear and toppling the two states' governments, he told a media conference.

Flanked by Mumbai South Sena MP Arvind Sawant, Raut said in the past few years, the ED has zeroed in on around 100 top builders and corporate houses to 'extort' hundreds of crores of rupees from them, with Somaiya acting as their conduit.

He claimed that one Jitendra Chandralal Navlani, who is a director in 7 companies is acting as the keeper of the ill-gotten wealth and 'benami properties' of ED officials and BJP leaders.

"The ED started 'investigating' these builders and corporate houses, but soon afterwards large sums of monies were transferred from various targeted persons to Navlani's seven companies. Who is he and what are his connections with the BJP leaders? Will the ED-ITD take action against him, as they keep doing against us?" demanded Raut.

He listed the names of the chemicals giant United Phosphorus Ltd, the mega-engineering company Larsen & Toubro, K. Raheja Pvt Ltd, DHFL, builder Avinash Bhosale, IndiaBulls, HDIL, Omkar Realty, Wadhwa Realty, Inorbit Malls, DB Realty, Panorama Studios, Pallazio Hotels, Gaylord Co Ltd, Monsher Fire Protection Systems Pvt Ltd, Nerka Chemicals, and others who allegedly coughed out monies to Navlani's various companies.

He said after these 'bribe' monies were transferred, the ED went slow, did not arrest, weaken case or exonerated the accused, but where the public pressure was huge or backlash from courts was expected, they made some arrests, but took care that their families were protected and all their assets were not seized to broker a deal later, with persons like Somaiya.

Dismissing outright the allegations against him, Somaiya told mediapersons that he has no connections with Navlani or any of the other persons mentioned by Raut and denied that he is an 'agent' for the ED, but vowed to continue his crusade against the Maha Vikas Aghadi government.

Raut reiterated that on February 28, he had submitted a detailed 13-page complaint to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Rajya Sabha Chairman and Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, and is awaiting action.

The Sena MP said he has also given around 50 names to the ED-ITD with thousands of documentary evidence, but till date no action has been taken on it, and said that those tasked with prevention of money-laundering have themselves become money-launderers.

He charged the ED with doing the government's bidding to threaten, intimidate, fix political opponents and dissenters and in turn, the ED officers run their massive extortion rackets of crores of rupees which are laundered or held through fronts and mules like Navlani, Farid Sama and many others.

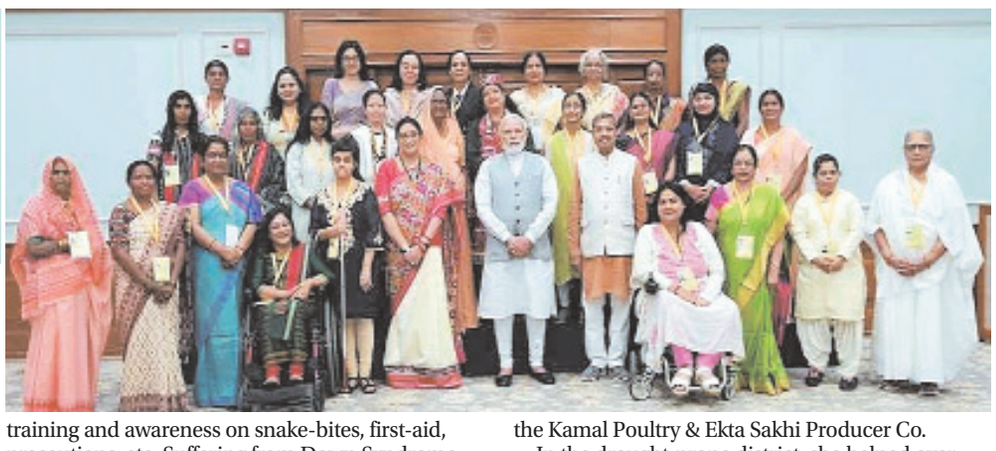
"There are many names and many particulars which will shock the conscience," Raut wrote to the PM.

"Today, our Sena leader Arvind Bhosale has submitted a detailed complaint on these matters to the Mumbai Police which will soon start its probe. Somaiya, his son Neil Somaiya will definitely go to jail, besides other officials," Raut declared.

'SNAKE-WOMAN' AMONG 'NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR' AWARDEES

Three women from Maharashtra have been honoured with the prestigious 'Nari Shakti Puraskar' of the Centre's Ministry of Women & Child Development for the year 2020-2021, to mark the International Women's Day, officials said here on Tuesday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai



Three women from Maharashtra have been honoured with the prestigious 'Nari Shakti Puraskar' of the Centre's Ministry of Women & Child Development for the year 2020-2021, to mark the International Women's Day, officials said here on Tuesday.

They include the famous 'snake-woman' from Buldhana, Vanita J. Borade, specially-abled Kathak danseuse from Pune Saylee N. Agavane and a poultry farmer from Osmanabad Kamal Kumbhar.

Known as the 'First woman snake-rescuer of India,' Borade, 47, launched the NGO, Soyre Vanchare Multipurpose Foundation for protecting nature, wild-life and a pollution-free environment.

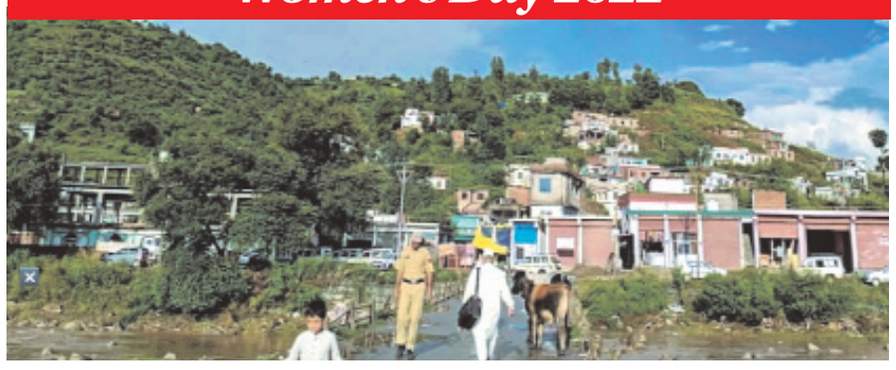
Over the past few years, she has caught, rescued over 50,000 snakes and released them into their natural habitat, earning laurels, besides conducting training and awareness on snake-bites, first-aid, precautions, etc. Suffering from Down Syndrome failed to discourage Agavane from pursuing her passion of Kathak and she has performed in over 100 programmes in India and globally, bagging the bronze medal at the Global Olympiad Dance Competition. She launched the Saylee's Dance Classes and trained more than 50 specially-abled children in dancing to make them face society with confidence despite all odds.

Daughter of a labourer, Kumbhar walked out of a failed marriage and in 1998, turned a woman entrepreneur in the field of animal husbandry, founding the Kamal Poultry & Ekta Sakhi Producer Co.

In the drought-prone district, she helped over 3,000 women become self-dependent, provided solar energy to 3,000 homes and helped 5,000 women start their own micro-businesses to become self-reliant.

"These women have not allowed any form of discrimination or disadvantage to come in the way of their pursuit to accomplish excellence and have thus shown incredible resilience and perseverance," said Union Minister for Women & Child Welfare Smriti Irani, congratulating all the Nari Shakti Puraskar awardees.

Women's Day 2022



Women Own Every House In This Small Maharashtra Village

As the world celebrates International Women's Day, the nameplate of every house in Bakapur, located about 20 km from Aurangabad, brings pride to its residents, as it displays the names of women as the owners or co-owners of their residences.

Team Absolute | Aurangabad

Bakapur is a tiny Maharashtra village of about 2,000 residents, but is garnering lot of praise for promoting gender equality as every house there is owned by a woman.

This has been made possible through a special provision made by the village panchayat in 2008.

As the world celebrates Women's Day on Tuesday, the nameplate of every house in Bakapur, located about 20 km from Aurangabad, brings a sense of pride to its residents, as it displays the names of women as the owners or co-owners of their residences.

Not a single house in this village is owned by a single man alone, as a woman from the family has to be the co-owner, according to the gram panchayat records.

Bakapur's sarpanch (village head) Kavita Salve said, "The women in my village have got a say in household matters with this decision." Sudamrao Palaskar was the village sarpanch when this decision was taken in 2008.

"Based on some previous experiences, it was then decided to make a woman from every family the owner of her residence. We had seven members in the gram panchayat that time. Not a single member voted against this proposal. The decision brought about a sense of security in every village household, and also for the future of the children," Palaskar said.

"The nameplate of every house in Bakapur has the woman owner's name on it. It is a routine practice here," she proudly said.

Salve, who has been living in Bakapur for 21 years, said earlier, there was a fear here that men could sell the houses without the consent of their families.

"This would have affected the families financially. But, the decision to make a woman owner of the house gave an authority and a sense of security to the women here. Now, they play a key role in financial matters related to the house," the sarpanch said.

Deputy sarpanch Ajij Shah said earlier, some men, involved in various addictions, had tried to sell their houses.

"But, the decision to give house ownership to a woman from the family has led to households being run smoothly. Even if a person wants to buy a house in Bakapur, he has to purchase it jointly with a woman from his family," Shah said.

Wanted in 37 cases, Mumbai gangster held by K'taka Police

The Karnataka Police have arrested one of the most wanted Mumbai gangsters, Iliyas Abdul Asif a.k.a Bhackana, in an early morning operation here on Tuesday.

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

The Karnataka Police have arrested one of the most wanted Mumbai gangsters, Iliyas Abdul Asif a.k.a Bhackana, in an early morning operation here on Tuesday.

According to police, the accused was wanted by the Mumbai Police in 37 serious crimes -- murder, attempt to murder, extortion, robbery and drug cases.

The team headed by Bengaluru Rural Superintendent of Police (SP) Vamsi Krishna, Additional SP Lakshmi Ganesh and Anekal Deputy SP M. Mallesh got information about the accused person staying in a private restaurant following which a special operation was conducted.

At the time of the arrest, the accused was holding a loaded gun, but the team managed to overpower him. The police have recovered four live bullets, one pistol, 15 SIM cards and six mobiles from the accused person.

The accused was also wanted in a case of assault on businessman Sikandar Raju Luladia with an iron rod at his office in Mumbai.

The accused was in hiding in Karnataka after the Mumbai Police intensified search for him in the city and other parts of Maharashtra.

I-T DEPTT SWOOPS ON LEADERS CLOSE TO SHIV SENA

The Income Tax Department raided prominent leaders close to the ruling Shiv Sena and its youth wing Yuva Sena -- hours before party MP Sanjay Raut was preparing to make an 'expose' against the Enforcement Directorate (ED), here on Tuesday.

Mumbai: The Income Tax Department raided prominent leaders close to the ruling Shiv Sena and its youth wing Yuva Sena -- hours before party MP Sanjay Raut was preparing to make an 'expose' against the Enforcement Directorate (ED), here on Tuesday.

The ITD swooped on the homes and offices of Rahul Kanal, a Trustee of Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi, a confidante of Tourism Minister Aditya Thackeray, and Sadanand Kadam, the brother of senior Shiv Sena leader Ramdas Kadam, Sanjay Kadam and a government official, among others.

Minister Aditya Thackeray slammed the I-T Department's action terming it as misuse of central probe agencies, but vowed the Shiv Sena would not be cowed by such tactics. The latest I-T Department action came after the February 25 raids on Shiv Sena Corporator Yeshwant Jadhav and others in connection with alleged tax evasion on income worth over Rs 130 crore.

END-USER SPENDING ON SECURITY, RISK MANAGEMENT TO REACH $2.6 BN IN INDIA

As hybrid working becomes a new normal, the end-user spending on security and risk management in India is forecast to reach $2.6 billion in 2022, an increase of 9.4 per cent from 2021, a Gartner report said on Tuesday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As hybrid working becomes a new normal, the end-user spending on security and risk management in India is forecast to reach $2.6 billion in 2022, an increase of 9.4 per cent from 2021, a Gartner report said on Tuesday.

The end-user organisations in India often engage with security service providers to meet their cybersecurity objectives.

As a result, spending on security services is forecast to total $1 billion in 2022, the highest among all segments, followed by spending on network security equipment and infrastructure protection.

"Hybrid or remote working is the new normal in 2022. Some organisations have even shifted to a virtual-first approach following the learnings from 2020," said Prateek Bhajanka, senior principal research analyst at Gartner. Cybersecurity will continue to be top priority for Indian CIOs this year. Nearly 64 per cent said they will increase their spending on technologies related to cyber and information security in 2022, higher than the global average of 57 per cent.

"Covid-19 was a pivotal moment in the way organisations approached risk or prepared for disruptions. Now, security leaders are putting risk management at the centre of their security and business strategies," said Bhajanka. In 2022, Indian security and risk management leaders will need to revisit their approach to network security with a focus on technologies such as zero trust network access (ZTNA) for context-based security.

"They need to envision the future of network security in the cloud," Bhajanka noted.

Justice PD Naik recuses from Maharashtra Sadan scam case

A new bench will hear the plea in Maharashtra Sadan scam case after Bombay High Court Justice PD Naik recused himself from the case.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

For the third time, a petition filed by an accused in the Maharashtra Sadan scam will go to an alternate bench of the Bombay High Court after Justice PD Naik recused himself from the case.

KS Chamankar Enterprises was appointed as a developer and PS Chamankar and Associates was the architect of a new Maharashtra Sadan (guest house of the state) in Delhi when allegations of kickbacks in contracts awarded by NCP MLA Chhagan Bhujbal were levelled and cases were registered.

Deepak Deshpande who worked as Secretary in Public Works Department of the Maharashtra government had sought discharge from the Mumbai Special Judge on the grounds that there was no material to support the allegation of conspiracy, forgery and cheating against him. He also submitted that the offences had been falsely alleged against him. He claimed to have acted in a bonafide manner in compliance with the instructions of his superiors. Bhujbal at that time was the PWD minister.

However, the Sessions Court rejected his plea by observing that "being the superior officer, it was Deshpande's duty to correct the mistake, if any, in the submissions made in the feasibility report before placing the same before the committee of ministers. It was not expected of him to blindly rely on the submissions of his subordinate officers in the report."

It was against this that Deshpande had approached the high court. His plea was first heard by Justice Sandeep Shinde who recused from hearing this case on September 23, 2021. Later the plea went before Justice Revati Mohite Dere. Justice Mohite Dere heard it couple of times before recusing from the case on February 1, 2022.

Then plea came up for hearing before Justice Prakash Naik on February 22 and then on March 8. Advocate Vijay Hiremath representing activist Anjali Damania told the bench that they are intervening against Deshpande's plea, and they have also filed an appeal against the discharge of Maharashtra cabinet minister Chaggan Bhujbal from the case. Hiremath said, "the petitions are connected so they should be tagged together."

However, before proceeding any further, Justice Naik said, "I want to see names of accused. This Chamankar is an accused in the case? I had appeared as a lawyer for him." With this, Justice Naik returned the files and said, "Not before me."

An FIR was filed against Bhujbal and others by the state ACB and then by the ED. It was claimed that certain contract in question was given to Chamankar Developers for the construction of Maharashtra Sadan in Delhi, a new Regional Transport Office (RTO) building in Andheri and a state guest house in Malabar Hill.

The agencies claimed that the contracts were given to the firm without following proper rules in return for kickbacks to firms and trusts controlled by the Bhujbal family. However, the trial court discharged Bhujbals. The petitions will now be placed before an alternate bench.

EDITOR'S SPECS

BJP is confident to retain power in UP

With the end of polling for assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is confident of forming the government for the second term in a row. The seven-phase Uttar Pradesh assembly polls ended on Monday with polling in 54 assembly constituencies in nine districts. Elections to 403 member Uttar Pradesh assembly were held in seven phases between February 10 and March 7. Counting of votes will take place on March 10. Uttar Pradesh BJP spokesperson Harish Chandra Srivastava said that the party will comfortably form the government in the state. "BJP will form the government in the state for the second time with a comfortable and huge margin in Uttar Pradesh. People are electing the BJP government for the works done in the last five years for the overall development of Uttar Pradesh," Srivastava. A senior Uttar Pradesh BJP functionary claims that the BJP will form the government by winning 240 to 270 assembly seats. Another BJP functionary claimed that free ration, DBT schemes of the Narendra Modi government has helped the party in elections. "The beneficiaries of different government schemes are ensuring our victory. Along with the beneficiaries, better law and order, infrastructure development and social welfare measures will help us in winning the assembly polls with a thumping majority," he claimed. The BJP, however, is still trying to find out the mood of silent voters. "Silent voters always play a decisive role in any election and this time also they have kept guessing all the political parties. We are winning the election but silent voters hold the key for any victory or defeat of political parties. If they have also voted in our favour then the numbers will go up," he said.

'SUPOSHAN SANGINIS': SHEROES CHANGING THE RURAL WOMEN'S WORLD

Kavita Sardana

Men and women are often differentiated based on "gender role" and the tasks assigned to them. The question is who has defined these roles and assigns these tasks? And are they still valid? Are we confining our present potential just to uphold age-old societal constructs? Other biological and anatomical differences aside, both genders have one brain and one heart to function. Also, if we see the letters 'W' & 'M', both are reverse forms of each other. Today we present some women's stories who have dismissed the so-called gender specific roles and taken the lead to bring a significant change.

1. Busting Superstitions and Myths: SS Mousumi, 30 years - A Changemaker in Chawklapur Village, Haldia, West Bengal

Belonging to a conservative joint family and being a mother of a four-year-old child, Mousumi's urge to do something for her community was rather repressed.

She kept herself busy at home and was very particular about cultivating the right eating habits, personal hygiene and childcare practices. Her family maintained good health, but things were different outside.

She could observe many pregnant women falling prey to superstitions. Due to age-old beliefs, pregnant women were prohibited from consuming dairy, certain fruits, vegetables, oil. It is also difficult to convince them to opt for institutional delivery and immunization. On becoming a 'SuPoshan Sangini', she was determined to bridge the knowledge gap. Initially, she struggled with the Antenatal Care registrations, caseload of malnourished children (13 SAM and 21 MAM), reluctance towards consumption of IFA tablets and much more. She kept demonstrating the benefits of all the right practices through multiple aids, discussion, and cooking demonstrations. She visits 10-12 houses daily and engages the men too through family counselling. This has built up the capacities of women and a trend towards behaviour change.As per data source from VHSNDs, pregnancy registrations are 100 per cent, 0 per cent Severe acute malnourished children and only 4 per cent Moderate acute malnourished children, out of 125 children in the village.2. From Dependent to Dependable: SS ChandraPrabha Ahirwar, 28 years - A Changemaker in Mohangiri slum, Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh

In a small town like Vidisha where women are not allowed to work, Adani Foundation trained ten women to become SuPoshan Sangini. Chandraprabha Ahirwar is one of them. Before joining the project, she was better known as 'Bahu' of her area. She always had health issues, that kept her dependent on in-law's pension for medical expenses.

To add to their woes, her husband was unemployed for most of the year. On meeting two Sanginis, she was motivated to step out and earn for herself. On getting trained as a Sangini, she took charge of her health first.

Now there was no looking back. In the past two years, she has conducted baseline survey of 896 households, universal anthropometry of 265 children and HB Screening of 890 adolescent girls. She confidently supports ICDS workers and spreads awareness on importance of good nutritional status. She ensures maximum participation of beneficiaries at the village level events and her efforts are well appreciated by the ICDS staff.

Chandraprabha transformed from being a hesitant person to a people's person.

3. No Age for Education: SS Mamina Pradhan, 34 years - A Changemaker in Rabindra Nagar village, Dosinga GP, Odisha

It was a sad moment when Mamina's husband left her with the younger son and forcibly took the elder one to another village. While going through what she believed was a "cursed" life for more than 2 years, something changed upon seeing a Sangini's presence in her vicinity. Her brother persuaded her to join project SuPoshan - after all, she was a matriculate - she hesitantly gave in. However, Mamina was skeptical about getting acceptance of the village community.

With monthly SuPoshan trainings and subsequent activities, she earned a new identity. She went back to studying - she cleared class 12th exams and then through a distance education program, she became a graduate. She did this alongside her duties as a Sangini.This further motivated her to do a pathology training course in 2021. Today she is working in the pathology laboratory of her own village while supervising her son's schooling. She knows that education holds the key to independence and is setting a strong example in her community, especially for young girls.

4. A Change Within to Bring Change Around: SS Sanju Devi, 35 years - A Changemaker in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

Sanju's dream was to become a teacher or trainer, but she was married off at 17 years of age, soon after finishing class 12th. Her life now revolved around family responsibilities and there was chance of studying any further.

She gave birth to two children in consecutive years. In an ugly turn of events, her husband, who was alcoholic and unemployed for most time of the year, threw her out of the family. She took shelter at her maternal home but realized soon that she needed to find work. Around the same time, she got the opportunity to become a Suposhan Sangini.

The field exposure and learnings added abundant confidence to her personality, enough to motivate other young women who were struggling with similar issues. She actively participated in trainings on public health, nutrition and childcare.

Seeing her determination and progress, her husband got motivated to find employment. Being the decision maker of her family, she is integrating education, healthy food and a better standard of living. With her learnings and experience as part of the SuPoshan project, she has recently been appointed as an ASHA worker, and feels like she is living her dream.5. Going Above and Beyond: SS Sampa Ghorai Das, 30 years - A Changemaker in Kismat Shivram Nagar, Haldia, West Bengal.Sampa took an initiative to stir the conversation about menstrual hygiene for adolescent girls, addressing the socio-cultural constraints around it. After a few focussed group discussions, she realized that counselling was not going to be enough.

There were several social determinants causing poor menstrual hygiene practices, one of them being unavailability of sanitary napkins in the local shop. Sampa decided to arrange for a stock of sanitary napkins at her home as a personal initiative.

Now without any hesitation, the girls could approach her to buy sanitary napkins. The Sangini acted as a facilitator, going beyond her stipulated duties, and without any monetary benefit. As of now, 230 adolescent girls in the village are using sanitary napkins. This has also created a safe space for talking about various menstrual hygiene related issues.

6. Dietary Adequacy at Doorstep: SS Hemlata Bairagi, 46 years - A Changemaker in Gudha and Bishan Pura, Bundi, Rajasthan.

On becoming a SuPoshan Sangini, life took a complete turn for Hemlata. After being indoors for many years, stepping out was difficult due to domestic pressures. But there were eight people to be fed in the family and somebody had to step out. Her village was divided in four Faliyasa and she was assigned the farthest one - the one which was often left unattended even by the Aanganwadi worker.

With her routine of household survey, screening of children, family counselling and other project activities, she supported the Anganwadi worker in terms of updating data and identifying children requiring attention. As the project promotes growing a Poshan vatika, she first developed one at her house.

She grew all seasonal vegetables, herbs & fruits. Seeing the produce, she was excited to incorporate all that into her cooking using her three years of training. She started a movement of sorts in that faliya.

All women were encouraged to grow vegetables at the open backyard. Within months the barren, unused land was prepared for cultivation. Household dietary diversity improved as Hemlata demonstrated nutritious recipes, especially at the households of pregnant women and adolescent girls.

7. The Empowered as an Empowerer: SS Suchitra Majhi, 28 years - A Changemaker in Baincha and Dhanakuta villages in Karanjmal, Bhadrak district, Odisha.

The family of Suchitra, a SuPoshan Sangini snice three years, had to bear many losses in their farming activities due to climatic disturbances. Feed six people was very challenging and so, she expressed interest towards other CSR activities of the Adani Foundation.

Under the aegis of Foundation's Sustainable Livelihood Development initiatives and Odisha Livelihood Mission, she motivated 80 village women to create a Producer's Group for Mushroom farming and snack making. This group was trained, and this marked the beginning of self-reliance. These women could earn up to INR 3,000 to 4,000 per month. Suchitra was instrumental in dealing with the resistance the women faced from their own family. She actively works towards village development work and is an example for many other women to push their boundaries with faith in one's own abilities. According to village PRI members and many village women, Suchitra is the first contact person at her village when any problem or crisis occurs. It is no wonder that she is known as the "Super Sangini" of the village.

international

IRAN SAYS FEW DIFFERENCES REMAIN TO BE SETTLED IN VIENNA TALKS

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh on Monday said that the remaining differences between Iran and the West in the Vienna talks are "less than the number of fingers on one hand".

Tehran | Agencies

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh on Monday said that the remaining differences between Iran and the West in the Vienna talks are "less than the number of fingers on one hand".

"If the US approach is reasonable, the quick agreement is available," he made the remarks in his weekly press conference, stressing that Iran will never accept or adhere to a deadline for negotiations, Xinhua news agency reported.

Regarding the likelihood of direct talks with the US, Khatibzadeh said that "we make decisions based on US behaviour, not on vague messages or without knowing what the outcome will be".

"Asking for a direct negotiation only makes sense if we know the reason for the meeting," he said, adding that "so far, we have not seen any change in the behaviour of the US, and the maximum pressure on the Iranian people has continued."

Referring to the recent cooperation agreements reached between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the spokesman said that the trip of the IAEA director-general to Iran was within a technical framework, and within the format of Vienna talks.

Iran had answered the questions of the agency, but it was necessary to answer these questions again within a technical framework and within a certain period, he said.

"There is a direct link between the closure of these questions and the (possible) agreement in Vienna talks," he pointed out.

Talks between Iran and the world powers in the Austrian capital of Vienna over the revival of the Iranian nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), have reached the climax, with the parties expected to make few political decisions for a new accord.

Iran signed the JCPOA with world powers in July 2015. However, former US President Donald Trump pulled Washington out of the agreement in May 2018 and re-imposed unilateral sanctions on Iran, which prompted the latter to drop some of its nuclear commitments one year later and advance its halted nuclear programmes. Since April 2021, eight rounds of talks have been held in Austria's capital Vienna between Iran and the remaining JCPOA parties, namely Britain, China, France, Russia plus Germany, with the US indirectly involved in the talks, to revive the landmark deal.

Chinese FM says Taiwan will eventually return to 'embracing the motherland'

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that Taiwan is an integral part of China and will eventually return "to the arms of the motherland".

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that Taiwan is an integral part of China and will eventually return "to the arms of the motherland".

"Taiwan will eventually return to the arms of the motherland," he said at a press conference.

He recalled that some forces in the US, in order to contain China, encourage those who advocate Taiwan independence, thereby challenging the "one China" principle, RT reported.

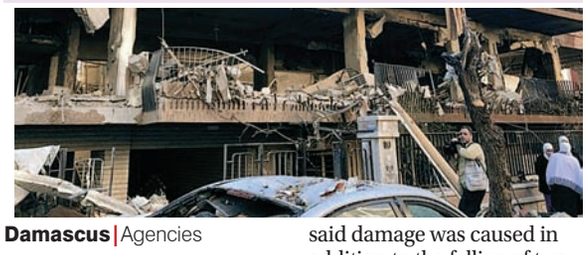
"Attempts to use Taiwan to contain China are doomed to failure," RIA Novosti quoted the Minister as saying.

Wang also said that China will firmly defend national sovereignty against the backdrop of increasing US pressure and is ready to take all possible measures to this end.

In February, China decided to take countermeasures against the US over arms sales to Taiwan that would target Lockheed Martin and Raytheon Technologies.

Two civilians killed in Israeli attack on Damascus

Two civilians were killed by an Israeli missile attack against Syrian military sites in the capital Damascus on Monday, the state news agency SANA said in a report.



Damascus | Agencies

Two civilians were killed by an Israeli missile attack against Syrian military sites in the capital Damascus on Monday, the state news agency SANA said in a report. Citing a military source, the report said the Israeli attack was carried out from over the Lebanese capital Beirut and triggered the Syrian air defenses, which intercepted most of the Israeli missiles. The report gave no further details but said damage was caused in addition to the falling of two civilians, Xinhua news agency reported. The Israeli side has not commented on the development either. On February 23, three soldiers were killed by a similar attack in Damascus. in the southern province of Quneitra, causing damage. On February 16, Israel carried out a similar missile strike targeting points south of the capital Damascus, which resulted in some material damage but no casualties.

AFTER AFGHANISTAN, IS-K SETS FOOT IN PAKISTAN

The recent devastating suicide bombing, targeted at a Shia Muslim mosque in Peshawar has marked the re-emergence of the dreaded Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) terror group in Pakistan.

Peshawar | Agencies

The recent devastating suicide bombing, targeted at a Shia Muslim mosque in Peshawar has marked the re-emergence of the dreaded Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) terror group in Pakistan.

The IS-K claimed responsibility for the attack in which a suicide bomber blew himself up after entering into the mosque during Friday prayers, claiming lives of at least 63 and injuring over 200. It also claimed the terror attack just outside Kabul airport during the evacuation process of foreign forces was underway after the Taliban takeover, as well as many others on mosques and other places in Afghanistan, becoming the biggest opposition to the incumbent regime. Pakistan had been on consultation with the Afghan Taliban and working towards a joint strategy to counter terror threats from organisations operating along the two countries' border.

The attack in Peshawar comes at a time when the country's Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) killed an IS-K commander named Bilal Khan, during a police encounter on January 19 this year. It is believed that the commander's killing activated many sleeper cells, associated with the terror group, who planned to respond with a major suicide attacks.

It is believed that Bilal Khan, who was a member of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), joined the IS in 2015, pledging allegiance to Abu Bakar Al-Baghdadi, the group's slain leader.

Experts believe that intelligence-based operations by Pakistani security agencies against terror elements, including the IS-K, have not only increased targeted attacks, but supporters of the Afghan Taliban have also come under deadly attacks in Peshawar. The emergence of the IS-K in the heart of Peshawar raises major concerns and a new set of challenges for the Pakistani authorities, as neighbouring Afghanistan conducts search operations in various parts, looking to neutralise the militants. Some reports also indicate that many IS-K militants have already fled Afghanistan and entered Pakistan, while sleeper cells of the group have also been activated. It is because of this reason that a major surge of terror attacks is being witnessed in Pakistan. While negotiations with the TTP remains on the agenda of the Pakistani government, it is feared that disagreements among the TTP militants, as well as a deal with Islamabad, may push them towards joining the IS-K.

Denmark to hold referendum on joining EU's common defence policy

Denmark will hold a referendum on June 1 on whether to join the European Union (EU)'s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said.

Copenhagen | Agencies

Denmark will hold a referendum on June 1 on whether to join the European Union (EU)'s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said.

The referendum is part of a new political agreement on defence reached by leaders of the Liberal Party, the Conservative People's Party, the Radical Left and the Socialist People's Party, reports Xinhua news agency. In addition, Denmark aims to meet NATO countries' target defence spending of 2 per cent of GDP by 2033, with efforts starting to be made in 2024, according to the agreement. The CSDP offers a framework for cooperation between member states, within which the bloc can conduct operational missions "with the aim of peace-keeping and strengthening international security in third countries by relying on civil and military assets provided by EU member states."

CM CHOUHAN ANNOUNCES WOMEN CENTRIC SCHEMES

On International Women's Day on Tuesday, both the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the opposition Congress organised programmes to celebrate the occasion. Leaders of both the political parties claimed to have launched beneficiary schemes for women.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

On International Women's Day on Tuesday, both the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the opposition Congress organised programmes to celebrate the occasion. Leaders of both the political parties claimed to have launched beneficiary schemes for women.

The BJP government in Madhya Pradesh celebrated the occasion at a mega event organised in Dewas district, which was attended by the national president of the party JP Nadda, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, state BJP president V D Sharma and several cabinet ministers, including Yashodhara Raje Scindia and many prominent state BJP leaders.

On this occasion, the government announced that from now on only women associated with the 'Aajeevika Mission' will be making school uniforms. Also, the nutritional food given to children in Anganwadi centres will be prepared by the Federation of Self Help Groups.

JP Nadda, who was the chief guest at the programme, praised Shivraj Singh Chouhan for implementing several women centric schemes in the state in the past one decade of his government.

Addressing the gathering of women and party leaders and workers, Nadda said, "Madhya Pradesh was the first to reserve 50 per cent seats in the local body elections. The MP government has reserved 50 per cent seats for girls in teacher posts, 33 per cent seats in general jobs and 30 per cent in police jobs. I congratulate Shivraj Singh Chouhan for taking steps for empowerment of women in the state with several beneficiary schemes. NDA governments are always committed to women empowerment."

The state Congress also organised a programme at the party office in Bhopal. Members of the women's wing of the party hailing from different districts of the state arrived at the party office to attend the programme which was chaired by former chief minister and state Congress president Kamal Nath.

Nath also interacted with women journalists over tea and discussed the current political scenario, women's upliftment and issues of the country and the state.

MP Assembly session adjourned for the day

The Budget session of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly was adjourned on the second day on Tuesday within one hour after paying homage to several leaders and eminent persons, especially legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar who died on February 6.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Budget session of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly was adjourned on the second day on Tuesday within one hour after paying homage to several leaders and eminent persons, especially legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar who died on February 6.Speaker Girish Gautam adjourned the session without even allowing a single question asked by the MLAs of all parties till Wednesday. However, there was a ruckus outside the House, due to Congress MLA Jitu Patwari's presence in the Assembly on Tuesday after he boycotted the Governor's address on Monday.Patwari, who is the MLA from Rau constituency in Indore district, not only attended the session but also justified his decision to boycott the Governor's address. Talking to the media, he said, "As the matter is about boycotting the Governor's address, it has happened as many as 13 times when the Governor and President's address have been boycotted at different times before I did it on Monday. On January 29, 2021, 18 parties had unanimously boycotted the President's address in Parliament." Patwari finally put an end to speculation about discord within the Congress and the relentless attacks from the BJP leaders on the Congress due to the MLA's decision to boycott the Governor's address.

"Whatever I said on Monday was outside the Assembly. Now on Tuesday, I am saying that I would follow my leader's (Kamal Nath) instructions. Whatever our leader would direct, I would obey him and together we would expose the BJP," the Congress MLA added.Barely hours before the first day of the Budget session for the financial year 2022-23 began on Monday, Patwari announced his boycott of the Governor's address in the Assembly. State Congress President and Opposition leader, Kamal Nath clarified that his party does not agree with Patwari's decision. Nath said that he was not aware of Patwari's announcement of boycotting the Governor's address.

BJP president Nadda arrives in Indore

BJP national president Jagat Prasad Nadda on Tuesday reached Madhya Pradesh's Indore where he is scheduled to participate in a series of events, including a high-level meeting with party leaders.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

BJP national president Jagat Prasad Nadda on Tuesday reached Madhya Pradesh's Indore where he is scheduled to participate in a series of events, including a high-level meeting with party leaders. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and state BJP president VD Sharma, along with several other party leaders, welcomed Nadda at the airport.

Nadda, along with Chouhan and other state BJP leaders, drove to Devas district in an open jeep rally.

A packed convoy of the BJP leaders and workers followed him with usual chanting of party's slogans. Nadda, who is scheduled to hold a high-level meeting with state BJP leaders, will participate in an event organised by the state government on the occasion of International Women's Day.

As per the state BJP office, Nadda, along with chief minister Chouhan, will transfer credit linkage distribution and national food plant to Swayam Sahayta Samukh in Devas. He will address members of the self-help-group (SHGs). BJP leaders in Bhopal told IANS that before meeting the party leaders, Nadda will visit state organisation general secretary Suhas Bhagat's residence to condole the death of his mother.

A meeting with party leaders is scheduled to take place in the evening at party office in Indore, said a state BJP spokesperson.

According to the party's sources, Nadda will have one-on-one discussion with some senior leaders and Morcha (wing) presidents along with state committee members.

Universities Should Prepare Curriculum for Silent Platform

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that universities should prepare curriculum for more and more silent platforms, which will equip the students with the necessary skills and knowledge. Possibilities of employment-self-employment should also be explored in online courses for Divyang students. He said that employment, business based, skill enhancement courses should be prepared in consultation with industrialists and employers to make them according to the needs of science, technology, academia and industry.

Patel was addressing online from Raj Bhavan the inaugural session of the workshop organised by Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University on the preparation of NAAC.

Patel has said that the interest of all the students is the first priority of the educational institutions. It is also their responsibility that education should be easy, accessible, least costly and free from bondage. Distance education is an effective means of increasing access to low-cost quality education in a vast land area like Madhya Pradesh. The relevance of education lies in being useful in life along with knowledge, culture. Present time is of rapid change of knowledge and technology, in which continuous updation is necessary for the relevance of degree. With this intention, arrangements for multi entry, multi exit have been made in the new education policy. It is necessary that the work of increasing the availability and access of quality education should be done with the right policy and intention.

Governor said that the work of inclusive development is being done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji with everyone's trust, everyone's cooperation and everyone's efforts. In the new education policy, he has given the opportunity to the youth to become capable according to the fast changing world through bond free education. For the policy to be successful, educational institutions and universities have to become centres of knowledge generation and transmission. Let the educational institutions be the launch pads for the students to enable them to touch the infinite heights of life. He expressed hope that the workshop would be successful in making the outlook of participants positive and make them capable and active in implementing the new education policy on various dimensions of student interest and comprehensive development of educational institutions as per the seven parameters of NAAC. It will become a platform for efforts to provide accessible, quality, employment oriented and meaningful education in underprivileged and remote areas.

STATE GOVERNMENTS MISSION IS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings in Smart Garden on International Women's Day today along with members of Nari Shakti, Additional Director General of Police, Women Security Pragya Richa Srivastava and women security personnel. Chouhan planted saplings of Karanj and Moulshree. Preeti Vats of Nari Shakti Sanstha, Bhagwati Shamsheria, Ruby Gupta and social worker Sushri Neha Bagga also participated in the plantation.

Nari Shakti Sanstha is associated with environment and other social works for the last ten years. The organisation has planted about 2200 saplings in the residential and slum areas for environmental protection. The organisation provides books, ration, old clothes, medicines and footwear etc. to the slum localities. Besides, it also helps poor children to get admission in government schools and colleges. The organisation has also been particularly active with the Municipal Corporation in the construction of Rani Padmavati Park in Kalpana Nagar.

Chouhan, in discussion with media representatives after planting saplings, extended best wishes to all the women of the state on International Women's Day. He said that no nation or society can become strong without women empowerment. Mother, sister and daughter have been at the top in India since very ancient times. Beti Bachao Abhiyan under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, Pradhan Mantri awas in the name of women, free LPG connections, free ration, toilets in every house and implementation of many schemes for the education of daughters continue. These schemes have made significant achievements in

women empowerment.

Chouhan said that the State Government has made many schemes for women empowerment. Many campaigns for social, economic and political empowerment of women in the state through Ladli Laxmi Yojana, distribution of free cycles and textbooks for education to daughters, Gaon Ki Beti Yojana, Pratibha Kiran Yojana and Mukhyamantri Kanya Vivah Yojana are being conducted. Chief Minister said that I am proud to say that Madhya Pradesh was the first state which gave 50% reservation in elections to sisters for political empowerment. As a result women were elected and provided strong leadership in the local bodies. Women public representatives set new dimensions of development. Fifty percent reservation has been given in the recruitment of teachers for economic empowerment. With the revolutionary decision of the state government, 30% of the recruitment in the police force will be of women. It is a matter of happiness that today only daughters have taken responsibility of my security. Daughters are working with full capacity to fix law and order. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that 33% reservation will be given to women even in general government recruitments.

Chouhan said that for the economic and social empowerment of women, the state government has decided to empower women self-help groups. As many as 40 lakh sisters from Aajeevika Mission are doing different businesses and different works by joining self-help groups. There is a special provision of one percent exemption on stamp duty in case the property is in the name of woman in the purchase of properties. The result of this is that last year alone about 2 lakh 54 thousand registries have been done in the name of women, this has helped in the economic empowerment of women.

WOMEN TOOK CHARGE OF CHIEF MINISTER'S SECURITY ON INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Women police officers and employees took over the responsibility of security of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on International Women's Day on March 8. ACP Kotwali Bittu Sharma was in-charge of Chouhan's carcade. Reserved Inspector Irshad Ali drove the vehicle of Chief Minister. Cyber Cell Inspector Renu Murab commanded the pilot vehicle. Archana Tiwari, Sub-Inspector of Misrod police station, took over the responsibility of VIP shadow today.

In the carcade, the responsibility of warner was on the sub-inspector of Hanumanganj police station, Kanchan Rajput and the sub-inspector of Habibganj police station, Sunita Bhalrai, and the responsibility of the pilot was with the sub-inspector of Bajaria police station, Bhavna Sharma. Akanksha Sharma, sub-inspector of Kamla Nagar Police Station, Kanchan Rajput, inspector of STF, Gausia Siddiqui, sub-inspector of Chuna Bhatti Police Station, Riddhi Sharma, sub-inspector of Habibganj Police Station, Sandhya Shukla, sub-inspector of Shahpura Police Station, Yogita Jain, sub-inspector of Ashoka Garden Police Station, Kalpana Gurjar, sub-inspector of Shahjahanabad police station were also posted under the security of Chief Minister. Along with this, sub-inspector Manju, sub-inspector Monica Abrio, sub-inspector Komal Gupta, sub-inspector Megha Gohia, sub-inspector Megha Udeniya also performed important responsibilities.

It is noteworthy that in-charge of carcade ACP Kotwali Bittu Sharma has been an international level Judo player. She has participated in more than 25 international competitions and received 15 international medals. Similarly, Smt. Irshad Ali, who drove Chief Minister Chouhan's vehicle, has played an important role in the traffic management of Bhopal. Renu Murab has been in the UN Peacekeeping Mission and CBI and Archana Tiwari, who fulfilled the responsibility of the first shadow, is in-charge of Urja Mahila Desk at Misrod Police Station.

Safety of women is the top priority of the state government: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the safety of women is the top priority of the state government for which it is running many campaigns. We have zero tolerance towards crimes against women. The state assembly was the first in the country to make a law to directly hang those for subjecting women to brutality.

Chouhan was addressing the distribution function of 100 two wheelers to the Urja Mahila desks of police stations of remote areas of the state on International Women's Day. Chouhan flagged off the rally of two wheelers from Smart Udyan to the Urja Mahila Desks. Chouhan also dedicated three short documentaries based on true events to connect the society with the 'Asli Hero Abhiyan' being run for women's safety.

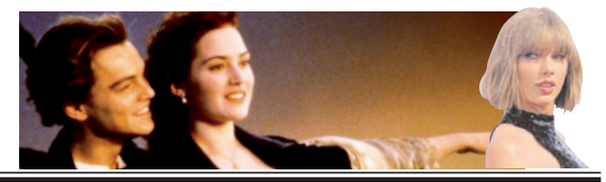
Greeting the women of the state on International Women's Day, Chief Minister Chouhan said that it was our decision to ensure 30 percent of recruitment in the police force of women. It is a matter of pride that women are fulfilling this responsibility of protection with utmost seriousness. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been a strong advocate of women empowerment. Many schemes have been launched in this direction. Chouhan said that women police stations have been established in the state. Women help desks have been set up. In addition, Urja Mahila Help Desk has been set up. Women Help Desks have been set up in police stations to enable women to register FIRs without any hesitation. This responsibility is being fulfilled by female police personnel. Chouhan said that two wheelers are being provided to Urja Mahila Help Desks for this purpose only if there is any information related to crime against women the victim can get registered her complaint without any hesitation. Urja Mahila Help Desks have been set up in 700 police stations in the state. Two wheelers are being provided to 100 desks out of them. Vehicles will be provided to the remaining 600 women help desks in two phases. The state government will leave no stone unturned for the safety of women.

Director General of Police Sudhir Kumar Saxena said that safety of women has been on top priority of Chief Minister. Under his direction and guidance, many innovations have taken place in the state, including establishment of women police stations in every district, establishment of energy women desks in 700 police stations, establishment of crèches in police units, establishment of 1090 women helplines, launch of Operation Muskaan to locate missing minor boys and girls and Operation Helping Hand. Along with this, honoring Asli Heros for commendable work done by the general public for safety of women and pre-litigation online help has been started for women. Skill upgradation and capacity building activities of police personnel are also being conducted for safety of women. Additional Director General of Police Women Security Smt. Pragya Richa Srivastava also spoke on the occasion.

Chouhan dedicated three short documentaries based on true incidents of Bhopal, Sagar and Vidisha and focused on women's safety. Asli Hero of Bhopal Manoj Gaikwad, is an auto driver. He got suspicious when a 13-year-old girl travelling alone from Mandsaur asked about a train to Delhi. Gaikwad informed this to constable Sunil Rathore posted at ISBT post. This saved the girl child from being trafficked in the name of getting a job in Haryana.

The real hero in the second short film is Shribai, a resident of Aapchand in Sagar district who on sensing something suspicious about a 22-year-old woman who had fled fearing excesses, raised an alarm, causing the accused to flee. Showing courage and humanity, Shribai gave shelter to the victim in her house and registered the crime by informing the Kotwar and Sarpanch.

The real hero in the third short film is Arti Sharma of Vidisha district. When a girl told her about being physically harassed by her family, Smt. Arti Sharma raised her voice against it although in the process she had to face opposition of the whole family. Smt. Sharma registered a crime against the family members at the women's police station in Vidisha district. Following this incident, Smt. Sharma was abandoned by her husband as well but she continued to support the victim and inspired her to stand up for truth.



LILLY SINGH TO STAR IN 'MUPPETS' SERIES ABOUT ELECTRIC MAYHEM BAND

Los Angeles | Agencies

Indian-Canadian comedian Lilly Singh will be seen starring in a new series about the beloved Muppets musical group The Electric Mayhem Band.

Disney Plus has ordered a new series about the beloved Muppets musical group The Electric Mayhem Band, Variety has learned.

The series, titled "The Muppets Mayhem" will follow the the band as they try to record their first ever album. Lilly will star as Nora, the human junior A&R executive tasked with managing The Electric Mayhem band. The band consists of Dr. Teeth on vocals and keyboards, Animal on drums, Floyd Pepper on vocals and bass, Janice on vocals and lead guitar, Zoot on saxophone, and Lips on trumpet.

'The Goldbergs' creator Adam F. Goldberg developed the series along with Bill Barretta ('The Muppets', 'Muppets Haunted Mansion') and Jeff Yorkes based on characters created by Jim Henson. Goldberg and Barretta also executive produce, with Yorkes co-executive producing.

Michael Bostick and Kris Eber also executive produce along with David Lightbody of 'The Muppets' Studio and Leigh Slaughter. ABC Signature and The Muppets Studio will produce.

"The Muppets are renowned for quality, creativity and unrivaled, fun storytelling for the whole family," said Ayo Davis, president of Disney Branded Television.

"We are thrilled to have Adam, Bill and Jeff at the helm to bring all of these iconic and great new characters to life in fresh and dynamic ways."

Lilly first rose to prominence for her YouTube channel, which currently has nearly 15 million subscribers. She also hosted the NBC late-night series 'A Little Late with Lilly Singh', which ran for two seasons.

As an actress, she most recently starred in Season 2 of "Dollface" at Hulu and has previously appeared on shows like 'The Simpsons', 'Medical Police', and the HBO TV movie version of 'Fahrenheit 451'.

In film, she has appeared in projects like 'Bad Moms' and starred in and executive produced the documentary 'A Trip to Unicorn Island', which documented her 27-city world tour.

This is the latest Muppets project to be set up at Disney Plus. The streamer previously released the Halloween special 'Muppets Haunted Mansion' in October 2021, while the short-form series 'Muppets Now' was released in July 2020. Adam Horowtiz, Edward Kitsis, and Josh Gad were originally meant to create a new Muppets series set just after the events of the film "The Muppets Take Manhattan" but that show was scrapped before being ordered to series.

Leonardo DiCaprio donates $10 million to support Ukraine

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio has donated $10 million to support Ukraine, which is fighting against Russia.

DiCaprio also has a personal motive. The actor's maternal grandmother, Helene Indenbirken, was born in Odessa as Jelena Stepanovna Smirnova, reports polishnews.co.uk.

In 1917, she emigrated from there with her parents to Germany, where DiCaprio's mother was born.

Raised mainly by his mother DiCaprio, he was also very close to his grandmother, who was a supporter of his career from the beginning.

His grandmother, who died in 2008 at the age of 93, almost until the end appeared with her grandson and daughter at the premieres of his films, which is reminiscent of the American industry media on the occasion of generous support for Ukraine.

DiCaprio allocated as much as USD 10 million to support Ukraine and did not plan to announce it to the whole world. The information was announced by the International Visegrad Fund -- a project of the Visegrad Group aimed at financial support for international initiatives. Following him, the American media repeated it.

Six-time Oscar-nominated actor and producer, winner of a gold statuette for his role in Alejandro Gonzalez Inarrit's 'Revenant', he has been writing "actor and ecologist" in the profession column for years.

The artist has long been involved in initiatives devoted to combating the climate catastrophe.

Already in 1998, as a 25-year-old, he founded the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation with his family, supporting "sustainable development around the world".

'The Batman' goes even higher with $134 mn debut at US box-office

Los Angeles | Agencies

'The Batman' landed a bigger opening weekend than Warner Bros., the studio behind the comic book adventure, initially expected. The newest superhero epic, starring Robert Pattinson as an exceptionally moody Caped Crusader, collected $134 million in North American theatres over the weekend, above Sunday's estimates of $128.5 million. Those ticket sales rank as the best opening of 2022, as well as only the second pandemic-era movie to cross the $100 million mark in a single weekend following aSpider-Man: No Way Home', reports variety.com. The reason behind the 4 percent bump in Monday's final tally is because aThe Batman' had a better-than-expected turnout on Sunday, bringing in $34.1 million. That's more than some pandemic-era releases managed to earn in their entire theatrical runs. The movie pulled in $57 million on Friday -- which includes fan events from Tuesday and Wednesday -- and added another $43.2 million on Saturday. Without much competition until Sony's own comic book adaptation 'Morbius' hits theatres on April 1, "The Batman" should continue to fly high over domestic box office charts. Internationally, 'The Batman' captured $124 million from 74 overseas market, pushing its global tally to $258 million.

'Gotham Knights' makers cast Fallon Smythe, Tyler DiChiara

Los Angeles | Agencies

The 'Gotham Knights' pilot at The CW has cast both Fallon Smythe and Tyler DiChiara as series regulars.

According to variety.com, Smythe and DiChiara are the first announced castings for the pilot, which is based on characters created for DC by Bob Kane with Bill Finger. The one-hour drama takes place in in the wake of Bruce Wayne's murder.

His rebellious adopted son forges an unlikely alliance with the children of Batman's enemies when they are all framed for killing the Caped Crusader. And as the city's most wanted criminals, this renegade band of misfits must fight to clear their names. But in a Gotham with no Dark Knight to protect it, the city descends into the most dangerous it's ever been.

However, hope comes from the most unexpected of places as this team of mismatched fugitives will become its next generation of saviours known as the Gotham Knights.

Smythe stars as Harper Row. Described as streetwise, acerbic and often underestimated, the blue-haired bisexual is a gifted engineer who can fix anything. But what Harper wants most of all is to repair the broken lives of her and her brother, Cullen, the only person she trusts.

DiChiara stars as Cullen Row. After years of hiding his true self from an abusive parent, the transgender teen is tired of being polite and agreeable. Clever and adept at reading human nature, Cullen is ready to fight his own battles.

'God of War' TV series adaptation eyed by Prime Video

Los Angeles | Agencies

PlayStation's flagship action-adventure franchise 'God of War' is heading to television as Prime Video is in negotiations for a live-action TV series based on the hugely popular ancient mythology-themed game, sources said.

According to deadline.com, the series adaptation comes from The Expanse creators/executive producers Mark Fergus and Hawk Ostby and 'The Wheel of Time' executive producer/showrunner Rafe Judkins as well as Sony Pictures Television and PlayStation Productions, which collaborate on all TV series based on PlayStation games.

This would mark the latest big deal for a TV series based on a popular video game title in a red-hot streaming marketplace for gaming IP.

Peacock just landed another SPT/PlayStation property, Twisted Metal, with a series order and Anthony Mackie starring. HBO has coming up the high-profile PlayStation game-based series 'The Last of Us', starring Pedro Pascal and Bella Ramsey. Netflix has a Resident Evil TV series in the works, while Paramount+ is about to debut 'Halo'.

Amazon Studios has been particularly aggressive in the arena. It has Killer Film's upcoming TV series 'Fallout', starring Walton Goggins; it is developing a Mass Effect series adaptation; and just closed a first-look deal with dj2 Entertainment to develop TV series based on gaming IP. The 'God of War' franchise from Sony's Santa Monica Studio spans a total of seven games across four PlayStation consoles. The action game series launched in 2005 on the PlayStation 2, with the first 'God of War'.

Nicole Kidman misses Oscar nominees' luncheon due to torn hamstring

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Nicole Kidman may be nominated for her fifth Oscar for her work in 'Being the Ricardos', but she wasn't at the annual nominees luncheon.

Variety revealed that Kidman is at home under doctors' orders, recovering from a torn hamstring.

She was filming the upcoming Amazon series 'Expats' in Los Angeles when the pre-existing injury flared up.

The show is continuing to shoot this week but will temporarily pause while producers figure out when they can resume and if they need to shoot around Kidman until her return, according to an Amazon representative. 'Expats', based on Janice Y. K. Lee's best selling 2016 novel 'The Expatriates' and directed by Lulu Wang, focuses on a group of three expatriate women living in Hong Kong. It is produced by Kidman's Blossom Films. 'Expats' also stars Sarayu Blue as Hilary Starr, Jack Huston as David Starr, Brian Tee as Clarke and Ji-young Yoo as Mercy. The series is executive produced by Wang, Kidman, Daniele Melia, Theresa Park, Per Saari, Stan Wlodkowski and Alice Bell.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Carrie Underwood

ICC launches '100 per cent Cricket Year of Women's Cricket' on Women's Day

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Tuesday launched the '100 per cent Cricket Year of Women's Cricket' campaign to coincide with the International Women's Day in order to further promote gender equality and empower women and girls through cricket.

Dubai | Agencies

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Tuesday launched the '100 per cent Cricket Year of Women's Cricket' campaign to coincide with the International Women's Day in order to further promote gender equality and empower women and girls through cricket.

The global governing body for the sport said in a statement on Tuesday that, "The 100 per cent Cricket Year of Women's Cricket campaign has been introduced to help drive transformative change and be part of accelerating the growth of the game."

Using the #IDeclare hashtag, the ICC is urging cricket fans worldwide to show what they can do to "further promote gender equality and further empower women and girls through cricket".

ICC CEO Geoff Allardice said he was 'proud' of the initiative.

"Cricket has the incredible power and reach to raise awareness and effect change and we're proud to partner with UNICEF as part of 100 per cent Cricket Year of Women's Cricket to #IDeclare our commitment to empowering women and girls through cricket," said Allardice. "We are committed to gender equity and using the platform of our sport to promote equal opportunities for girls and boys is a great way of doing this. We will also focus all of our Cricket 4 Good efforts on this too, ensuring we're giving as many women and girls the chance to grow through our game."

Cricket stars currently competing at the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in New Zealand got behind the new campaign, with India captain Mithali Raj one of the first to show her support.

#IDeclare -- "I declare that I will scout and train as many young girls as possible to take up this wonderful sport," Mithali said. Pakistan Captain Bismah Maroof and Bangladesh seamer Jahanara Alam followed suit shortly after.

#IDeclare -- "I declare I will encourage my daughter to play cricket," Maroof said. #IDeclare -- "I declare I will work hard cricket to set an example not only for Bangladeshi girls but also all over the world," Alam added.

Women's World Cup: Healy's quick-fire 72, King's incisive bowling help Australia thrash Pakistan

- *Australia opener Alyssa Healy struck a breezy 72, while Alana King bowled a miserly spell in which she also took two wickets as the six-time champions defeated Pakistan Women by seven wickets with 92 balls to spare in the ICC Women's World Cup at the Bay Oval here on Tuesday.*

Mount Maunganui | Agencies

Australia opener Alyssa Healy struck a breezy 72, while Alana King bowled a miserly spell in which she also took two wickets as the six-time champions defeated Pakistan Women by seven wickets with 92 balls to spare in the ICC Women's World Cup at the Bay Oval here on Tuesday.

This was Pakistan's second humiliating loss after their 107-run defeat to India, while the Meg Lanning-led Australia have kept their slate clean with two-in-two wins in the tournament. Australia had defeated defending champions England by 12 runs in a high-scoring opening game.

Chasing a modest 191, Australia openers Healy and Rachael Haynes went at a decent rate, punishing the bad deliveries to lay the foundation for the side. They were helped by some patchy fielding from Pakistan, as both the openers got a second life with their catches being dropped.

Aliya Riaz put down Healy at mid-wicket, spilling a simple catch off the bowling of Anam Amin in the sixth over. Haynes was also let off in the following over with Nida Dar missing a sitter off her own bowling.

Pakistan finally got a breakthrough in the 11th over as Haynes was dismissed by Nashra Sundhu for 34. Haynes went down the track to clear the fielder at mid-wicket but failed to do so, with skipper Bismah Maroof taking an easy catch. Lanning walked out and then sewed a partnership with Healy, with Australia edging closer to victory. Healy brought up the 14th half-century of her career in 55 deliveries as the pair looked untroubled by the rival team bowlers.

There was a glimmer of hope for Pakistan though, as Lanning perished against Omaima Sohail in the 22nd over. Attempting a cut against a tossed up delivery, Lanning chopped the ball onto her stumps to walk back for 35. Ellyse Perry then joined Healy at the crease, with the experienced pair hoping to get Australia over the line. At the halfway stage in the innings, Australia were 142/2, needing another 49 runs for a win. Healy finally departed for 72 in the 28th over, with Omaima Sohail picking up her second scalp. Perry (26 not out) and Beth Mooney (23 not out) ensured that there were no further hiccups for the tournament favourites, as Australia chased down the target with 92 deliveries remaining. The loss means Pakistan's search for their first win since the 2009 edition of the tournament continues. Earlier, Australia won the toss and opted to bowl. Bismah Maroof (78 not out) and Aliya Riaz (53) paced Pakistan with a 99-run stand for the fifth wicket to help their side score of 190/6. Seamers Megan Schutt (1/43) and Ellyse Perry (1/27) picked up a wicket each during their opening spell and spinners Alana King (2/24) and Amanda-Jade Wellington (1/25) got in on the act to reduce Pakistan to 44/4 after 13 overs. Maroof and Riaz then played with extreme caution to put together a memorable stand.

Brief scores

Brief scores: Pakistan Women 190/6 in 50 overs (Bismah Maroof 78 not out, Aliya Riaz 53; Alana King 2/24) lost to Australia Women 193/3 in 34.4 overs (Alyssa Healy 72, Rachael Haynes 34, Meg Lanning 35) by seven wickets.

Sindhu, Srikanth enter the second round of 2022 German Open

Former world champion PV Sindhu and World championships silver medallist Kidambi Srikanth advanced to the second round of the German Open 2022 Super 300 badminton tournament after winning their respective opening round matches, here on Tuesday.

Mulheim (Germany) | Agencies

Former world champion PV Sindhu and World championships silver medallist Kidambi Srikanth advanced to the second round of the German Open 2022 Super 300 badminton tournament after winning their respective opening round matches, here on Tuesday.

Sindhu registered a dominating 21-8, 21-7 win over Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan to enter the second round. With this win, she extended her head-to-head record against the Thai shuttler to 15-1.

The two-time Olympic medallist Sindhu started the match swinging and raced to an 11-4 lead at the first break. She upped the ante after the restart and sealed the first game convincingly. World No 11 Ongbamrungphan tried to keep the Indian ace in check in the second game but Sindhu was in fine touch and went on to pocket the match in straight games.

The 26-year old Sindhu will next face the winner of the match between unseeded shuttlers Zhang Yiman of China and Beatriz Corrales of Spain. If Sindhu wins her next round, she could run into the current world No 1 and Tokyo Olympic silver-medallist Tai Tzu-Ying in the quarter-finals.

Tai had defeated PV Sindhu in the semi-finals of the Tokyo Olympics and she has a strong 14-5 head-to-head record against the Indian shuttler. Meanwhile, Kidambi Srikanth, India's only seeded badminton player in men's singles at the German Open, overcame a stiff challenge from world No 39 Brice Leverdez of France in the opening round.

The Indian, ranked world No 11 and seeded eighth at the tournament, defeated his French opponent 21-10, 13-21, 21-7.

However, in the mixed doubles, India's Sai Pratheek and N Sikki Reddy crashed out after losing to the Thai team of Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai, the top seeds, 19-21, 8-21. Later in the day, Saina Nehwal will open her campaign against Clara Azurmendi of Spain.

Formula 1 confirms race at Italy's Imola circuit until 2025

Italy's Imola circuit will remain on the Formula One calendar until 2025, racing Chief Stefano Domenicali confirmed on Monday. This follows two successful Grands Prix in Imola during the pandemic and the inclusion of the race in the 2022 championship.

London | Agencies

Italy's Imola circuit will remain on the Formula One calendar until 2025, racing Chief Stefano Domenicali confirmed on Monday. This follows two successful Grands Prix in Imola during the pandemic and the inclusion of the race in the 2022 championship.

Imola first hosted the Italian Grand Prix in 1980 but subsequently became the San Marino Grand Prix venue from 1981-2006. The circuit returned as a Formula 1 venue for the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix in 2020.

Stefano Domenicali, president and CEO of Formula 1, said, "I am delighted that we will be continuing our excellent partnership with Imola for the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix until 2025. The circuit is iconic and has been part of the history of our sport and they have done an incredible job of hosting two races during the pandemic. It is a proud moment for our Italian fans to host two races and for all our fans around the world to see this fantastic circuit on the calendar for the future.

"I want to thank everyone involved in making this happen and the work of the Emilia-Romagna Region, in particular the President of the Automobile Club of Italy, Angelo Sticchi Damiani, President of Emilia-Romagna, Stefano Bonaccini, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the City of Imola. We are all looking forward to being back in Imola in April to thrill our fans."

Tennis: Bengaluru to host ITF Open from March 14

India's Mukund Sasikumar, who has five ITF Futures titles to his credit, leads the field with players from Australia, Czech Republic, Germany and England in the fray in the US $15,000 prize money SKME ITF Open, a part of the International Tennis Federation's World Tennis Tour, which will be played here from March 14 to 20.

Bengaluru | Agencies

India's Mukund Sasikumar, who has five ITF Futures titles to his credit, leads the field with players from Australia, Czech Republic, Germany and England in the fray in the US $15,000 prize money SKME ITF Open, a part of the International Tennis Federation's World Tennis Tour, which will be played here from March 14 to 20. The event which comes close on the heels of KSLTA hosting the twin-legged Bengaluru Open ATP Challenger which concluded last month will have the foreign challenge in the form of Austrian Lukas Krainer, Dominik Palan of the Czech Republic, German Robert Strombachs and Englishman Julian Cash.

Winner of the Bengaluru Open 2 doubles title Arjun Kadhe, Sidharth Rawat, Manish Sureshkumar, Niki Poonacha and Nitin Kumar Sinha will be other Indians to watch. "KSLTA is proud to host a fourth international event in as many months post the Covid pandemic break. KSLTA, through the international events, plans to support the players from India and Karnataka to play with home advantage and opportunities to earn valuable world ranking points. I am thankful to Sri Kumaraswamy Mineral Exports Private Limited for coming on board as the title sponsor," said Maheshwar Rao, Hon. Secretary, KSLTA, in a press release on Monday. The week-long event is sandwiched between two other ITF 15K events scheduled in India -- Bhopal and New Delhi -- and thus promises a good international field while giving more opportunities for the home-grown players.

The main draw will be a Round of 32 with 18 of them getting a direct entry including two special exemptions, two junior exemptions, four wild cards and eight qualifiers. The qualifying draw will also be a Round of 32 with 26 direct entries and six wild cards. The qualifying rounds will be held on the 13th and 14th of March while the main event begins on March 15. "We are happy that competitive tennis is back on a full scale after a two-year break. After having hosted three international events, we are all geared up to host the fourth event. We have a very strong field comprising some of the best top players from India and abroad," said Peter Vijay Kumar, Tournament Director. "This event should act as an ideal platform, especially for Indian men's tennis players, to improve their ranking," he added.

Asian Youth & Junior Boxing: Mahi, Palak and two more Indians enter final

- *Mahi Siwach and Palak Zambre alongside two more Indian junior girls registered sensational victories and entered finals in the 2022 ASBC Asian Youth & Junior Boxing Championships in Amman, Jordan, on Tuesday.*

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Mahi Siwach and Palak Zambre alongside two more Indian junior girls registered sensational victories and entered finals in the 2022 ASBC Asian Youth & Junior Boxing Championships in Amman, Jordan, on Tuesday.

Vini (50kg) and Yakshika (52kg) were the other two pugilists to make their way into the finals on the seventh day of the competition.

Beginning the day's proceedings for India, Mahi looked solid in her attack during the 46kg semi-final against Jordan's Sadeen Alramhi. Her powerful punches were enough to unsettle the local boxer as Mahi continued with her aggressive approach before the referees stopped the contest in the third round.

Next in action, Palak was equally dominant during her 48kg semi-final bout as she outpunched Kazakhstan's Gaukhar Zarden by a unanimous margin without breaking a sweat.

Vini and Yakshita further extended the country's winning momentum and marched into the finals with comfortable victories. While Vini (50kg) defeated Iraq's Dalya Al-Sammarraie by RSC verdict, Yakshika blanked Ka'akhstan's Shakhnaz Tairzhanova 5-0.

Later on Tuesday, defending champion Nikita Chand (60kg) along with six more Indian junior girls will fight for a place in the final.

The Indian contingent has secured 21 medals in the junior section at the prestigious continental event where both the age groups of men and women-youth and junior-are being played together.

Among girls, 11 boxers have confirmed medals with semi-finals berths while Nirjhara Bana (+80kg) will play directly in the final. On the other hand, nine boxers have entered the Last-4 stage in the junior boys' category. On Monday night, the country's youth men boxers Vanshaj (63.5kg) and Anand Yadav (54kg) marched into the semi-finals with identical 5-0 wins in their respective quarter-finals bouts. Last edition's silver medallist Vanshaj 'nocked out Iran's Mohammad Parsi to secure his second successive medal while Anand bl'nked Tajikistan's Buzurgmekhr Iksanov. Meanwhile, it was heartbreak for Ayush (57kg), Rudra Pratap Singh (60kg) and Anjani Kumar Mummana (67kg) who ended their campaigns with quarter-finals losses at the tournament which has been witnessing strong competition in presence of 352 boxers from 21 countries including India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The finals will be played on March 13 and 14.

Female actors speak on gender equality, relevance of Women's Day for them

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In order to celebrate womanhood along with asserting the importance of gender equality, March 8 is celebrated as International Women's Day every year, and this year the theme is #BreakTheBias.

Female protagonists of TV shows share their views on gender biases and the importance of celebrating womanhood.

'Woh To Hai Albelaa' actress Hiba Nawab shares: "I believe that even though we are living in a male dominant society, a girl can achieve anything if she is determined. I started my journey at a very young age. I come from a small town Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, so this journey was very difficult one for me as a girl, but here the biggest role is of the parents as grown-ups and someone we look up to."

Hiba further adds: "TV is a medium which is also considered as a women oriented platform, which increases our responsibility because the characters we play are seen by the people of all age groups. So it is our duty to always support and promote the right beliefs through our characters."

Vidisha Srivastava, essaying Anita Bhabi's role in 'Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai' believes in gender equality and how women representation has changed so far in different fields.

"Gender Inequality is a social issue. We cannot have a free and equal society until women enjoy equal rights as men. It is a basic human right, and we all are entitled to it. Over the years, there have been drastic changes with better representation of women in politics, more economic opportunities, and better healthcare across the world. But still, in many regions, women continue to face unfair treatment, which needs to be addressed," she shares.

On the other hand, Disha Parmar of 'Bade Acche Lagte Hain 2' thinks it's a great time to be a woman because one has finally got the world listening and taking note of your hard-work and accomplishments.

"In all fields, women everyday are shattering glass-ceilings! Women have got the inherent patience and perseverance to succeed. We just need to really believe in ourselves. While I have tasted success, I believe I have a lot more to do and prove," says the actress.

While Sushmita Mukherjee from 'Dosti Anokhi' says that everyday is women's day.

"Women should be celebrated everyday for pushing boundaries, challenging stereotypes, acknowledging her strength. Every woman has the ability to multitask," she concludes.

Sonakshi Sinha: No truth to rumours of non-bailable warrant against me

Team Absolute | Mumbai

For the past few days, there were rumors floating around with regards to a non-bailable warrant issued against 'Dabangg' actress Sonakshi Sinha. Now the actress has quashed the rumours as she gave out an official statement.

Taking to her Instagram, Sonakshi shared a long note as she wrote as to how there's no truth to the claims of the warrant, "There have been rumours of a non-bailable warrant issued against me floating in the media, without any verification from any authorities since a few days now. This is pure fiction and the work of a rogue individual trying to harass me."

She made an appeal to the media and urged the fraternity to refrain from falling prey to false claims, "I request all media houses, journalists and news reporters not to carry this fake news as it is playing into this individual's agenda to gain publicity."

The actress reasoned that the intentions of the person behind these rumours is to extort money by attacking her reputation, "This man is purely trying to gain some publicity and extort money from me by attacking my reputation which I have very proudly built over the years, by planting these malicious articles in the media. Kindly do not participate in this harassment charade."

With the matter being subjudice before the court of law, Sonkashi decided to approach it in the best way possible as per the directive from her legal team.

She said, "This matter is subjudice before the Muradabad court and has been stayed by the Allahabad High Court. My legal team will be taking all the necessary action against him for contempt of court."

"This will be my only comment on this matter until the Muradabad court has passed its verdict, so please do not approach me for the same. I am home and I can assure you there are no warrants issued against me," Sonakshi concluded.

WE ALL MOVE FORWARD THE DAY WE SUPPORT A FELLOW WOMAN: SAKSHI AGGARWAL

Chennai | Agencies

'Bigg Boss Tamil' contestant and actress Sakshi Aggarwal on Tuesday said that women need to help each other grow without letting anyone tell them that women need to bring each other down.

Sharing her Women's Day wishes on Instagram, the actress said, "My sister, showed me an Arabic quote recently - it translated to, 'I am not free as long as there is another woman who is not free, even if our handcuffs are different.'

"And here I feel is where we all can mess up - even though we are united by our struggles, we are divided by our identities and we reinforce it without realising the same.

"The day we choose to support a fellow woman because she is a woman and for who she is, irrespective of her past, is the day we will all move forward. I hope in the future we can be kinder to each other, and help each other grow without letting anyone tell us that women need to bring each other down."

Malavika Mohanan hints at getting on board for Prabhas's next

Hyderabad | Agencies

Malavika Mohanan will play the leading lady opposite Prabhas in his next biggie. Hinting at the same, the actress has reacted to the news.

In her latest interaction with Tamil media, the Malayalam actress almost confirmed her collaboration with Prabhas in his next. "For a while now, talks about my possible collaboration for a Telugu project have been making rounds. I am on board for this really big Telugu movie. I cannot reveal anything at this point in time, but the project will commence soon," Malavika Mohanan said.

It is almost confirmed that Prabhas and Maruthi's forthcoming project, which is tentatively titled 'Raja Deluxe' will get on the floors soon.

The makers will soon make an official announcement regarding the same.

'Uppena' fame Krithi Shetty will play another important role in the movie as well. It is reported that 'Raja Deluxe' will be produced by 'RRR' producer, DVV Danayya.

JACQUELINE WANTS PEOPLE TO WORK FOR BETTER FEMALE EDUCATION

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Jacqueline Fernandez, who will be soon seen in the upcoming action-comedy 'Bachchhan Paandey', has urged people in the social sphere to collaborate and work towards improving the level of education for women.

Sharing her thoughts on the occasion of the International Women's Day, the actress said, "The most important thing that people can actually do is to collaborate in improving the world of education for women."Urging people to step forward and work in the right direction, the actress further said, "It would be great if people in that field come forward and be volunteers, help empower the children and women through education and what more they can do to improve their life which would make a huge difference. Jacqueline also met the young girls of Municipal School and spoke with them on the subject of women empowerment and independence in an engaging way. She also shared a glimpse of her interaction with the young girls at the school. For any progressive society, it's imperative that women get ample space to express themselves. "We, as a nation, will prosper only when women are given the right to speak up for themselves and their beliefs, and when nations and organisations work to ensure that every woman is given the same opportunities to grow and progress," she added. On the work front, Jacqueline will also be seen in 'Ram Setu', 'Kick 2', 'Cirkus' and 'Attack Part 1'.

ARYANN ARORA WANTS TO PLAY ROLES HIGHLIGHTING SOCIAL ISSUES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Aryann Arora known for featuring in shows like 'Pyaar Tune Kya Kiya' and 'Chhoti Sardaarrni' wants to play roles which highlights social issues.

He says: "As an actor I aim to play characters which are highly significant to the story and also highlights social issues.I believe such shows educate society while entertaining them. So I always want to be part of such shows, and play important characters. I want to grow as an actor playing more challenging and promising roles."

Aryann, who is currently seen playing the role of an army officer in supernatural fiction series 'Naagin 6' looks forward to play a lead role soon.

He adds: "I'm enjoying and learning while playing important characters in the show. Audience enjoys watching me and shares their love and greetings with me time and again on my social media. They motivate me to perform my best. I'm sure in coming time with my hard work and efforts I'll definitely get the opportunity to play titular characters."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY

Charlie Chauhan

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