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PM Modi chairs high-level meeting, reviews India's security preparedness amid Ukraine crisis

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday chaired a high-level meeting to review India's security preparedness, and the prevailing global scenario in the context of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday chaired a high-level meeting to review India's security preparedness, and the prevailing global scenario in the context of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

The Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla, and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister PK Mishra attended the high-level meeting.

Prime Minister Modi has chaired several high-level meetings with senior Ministers of the cabinet and officials since Russia launched a military action against Ukraine on February 24 and India began a massive evacuation mission named 'Operation Ganga' to airlift stranded Indian nationals, including students.

So far, the government has brought back over 20,000 Indians from the war-torn country, through the neighbouring countries of Ukraine. On March 11, over 600 Indian students, stuck in northeast-

ern city Sumy, were airlifted to New Delhi using a humanitarian corridor provided by the Ukrainian authority.

These Indian students arrived here on Friday by three flights, including one Indian Air Force's C-17 globe master under the Operation Ganga. Sumy located in the north east part of Ukraine and close to the Russian border, came under heavy shelling and bombing by the Russian Army which began its military operation against Ukraine on February 24.

Nearly 700 Indian students were

stuck there as it was impossible to get them evacuated under the heavy bombing.

The governments of Russia and Ukraine announced a ceasefire and provided a humanitarian corridor on March 8 after Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin on March 7 requesting them to provide safe passage to evacuate the remaining Indian nationals stuck in the war-torn Ukraine.



Russia's latest missile strike miles away from Poland border draws conflict much closer to NATO

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Russia launched a deadly missile attack Sunday at a Ukrainian military base just miles away from the Polish border, drawing the conflict much closer to NATO territory than ever before, Politico reported.

Nine were dead and another 57 were injured in the attack which was carried out in the early morning and targeted the International Center for Peacekeeping and Security in northwestern Lviv, located just around 10 miles from the border with Poland, according to Ukraine's Defence Minister. "Russia has attacked the International Center for Peacekeeping & Security near Lviv. Foreign instructors work here. Information about the victims is being clarified," tweeted the minister, Oleksii Reznikov. "This is new terrorist attack on peace & security near the EU-NATO border. Action must be taken to stop this. Close the sky!" It remains unclear what nationalities are involved, or whether any foreigners were among the casualties. Photos from early February show US army instructors taking part in drills with at the base with Ukrainian

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service members, the BBC reported.

Regional Governor Maksym Kozmitsky said Russian planes fired around 30 rockets at the facility, though some were intercepted before they hit. UK minister Michael Gove called the attack "a significant escalation", saying: "We know that Vladimir Putin has no moral limits when it comes to the actions he's willing to take, and he's pushing the boundaries in military terms."

The assault came a day after Moscow threatened to take action against Western countries' continued supply of arms to Ukraine, Politico reported.

Four Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh members arrested in Bhopal

After hours long operation against suspected terrorists, the Madhya Pradesh police on Sunday claimed to have arrested four Bangladeshi nationals from two different locations in Bhopal.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

After hours long operation against suspected terrorists, the Madhya Pradesh police on Sunday claimed to have arrested four Bangladeshi nationals from two different locations in Bhopal.

Police said those arrested belong to the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), the terrorist group involved in the 2018 Bodh Gaya bombing. They have been identified as Fazhar Ali alias Mehmoos (32), Mohammad Aqeel alias Ahmed (24), Zahooruuddin alias Ibrahim (28) and Fazhar Zainul Abdeen alias Akram Al Hasan (25), police said in

an official statement on Sunday evening.

The operation was carried out jointly by Madhya Pradesh police and the central agencies in two locations in the state capital Bhopal. The operation was carried out maintaining complete secrecy and without informing the local police station. The operation was carried out around 3.30 a.m. to 4 a.m., however, the official announcement from the state police came in the evening.

They have been arrested from a building located near Fatima Mosque in Bhopal. Police said, apart from Bhopal, a search operation was also conducted in

Karond area, located in the outer circle of Bhopal.

"These terrorists were living as tenant in Bhopal and they were making a team of a remote-based sleeper cell to execute their terrorist activities in the future. On the basis of inputs, a search operation was carried out and four Bangladeshi nationals have been arrested," the state police said in an official statement.

During the search operation, police have recovered several incriminating materials, laptops, provocative materials from them. Apart from these, several mobile phones and laptops were also confiscated from their possession.

Second part of the Budget session 2022 resumes on Monday

The second part of the Budget session will resume on Monday and will last until April 8, 2022.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The second part of the Budget session will resume on Monday and will last until April 8, 2022.

The House will sit from 11 a.m. till 6 p.m. during the scheduled 19 sittings whereas it sat from 10 a.m. till 3 p.m. during the first part of the Budget session due to Covid-19 protocols during the first part of the Budget session.

The Rajya Sabha is likely to get over 64 hours to transact the legislative business besides taking up the issues of public importance during this part of the session.

The second part of the Budget session is resuming after a 30-day recess and during this the 'Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committees (DRSCs)' examined the Demands for Grants of various Ministries and Departments.

The Upper House will have four days for Private Member's Business and the hour long 'Zero Hour' and 'Question Hour' to continue as usual. During the last session, the 'Question Hour' was reduced to half an hour because of the reduced timing of the sitting.

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu is likely to give an account of the working during this recess of the DRSCs of Rajya Sabha in



the House on Monday.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is likely to make a statement in the Upper House on the evacuation of the Indian nationals from war torn country Ukraine under Operation Ganga. During the last session, the duration of the question hour was reduced to half an hour because of the reduced time of the sitting, now this will be of one hour along while the Zero Hour will be of usual one hour at the beginning of the sitting.

Four days have been allotted for the Private Member's Business on each Friday barring 18 March which is holiday on account of the festival. The first part of this budget session was concluded on February 11, 2022 with 10 sittings and the productivity of the House was 101.40 per cent.

SONIA GANDHI OFFERS TO 'STEP BACK' FROM TOP ROLE, CWC TURNS DOWN

Congress' interim chief Sonia Gandhi offered to "step back" from her role as the Congress Working Committee met on Sunday for an over five-hour-long discussion on the fall-out of the recent Assembly polls but the party's highest decision authority did not accept it.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress' interim chief Sonia Gandhi offered to "step back" from her role as the Congress Working Committee met on Sunday for an over five-hour-long discussion on the fall-out of the recent Assembly polls but the party's highest decision authority did not accept it.

Sources said she indicated that she may step back if the CWC wants but the CWC did not endorse it.

The CWC reposed faith in the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and every single member said that she should continue till organisational elections. Party chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala said: "The deliberations of the CWC is not open and many people spoke but the CWC statement is the final conclusion of the meeting." The discussion also centred on the strengthening of the party and it was decided to hold a brain storming session soon. All the state Incharges reported to the CWC about the results and CWC members analysed the outcome. "It was sincere discussion," said party General Secretary, Organisation, KC Venugopal. The party accepted the election results and resolved to fight the BJP under Sonia Gandhi's leadership.

MHA likely to review security situation in J&K following attacks

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is likely review the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of recent attacks on civilians and security personnel, sources said on Sunday.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is likely review the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of recent attacks on civilians and security personnel, sources said on Sunday. A CRPF jawan Mukhtar Ahmad, who was home on leave, was killed by terrorists in Shopian district on Sunday which was the fourth such attack on security personnel in the last three days.

Ahmad succumbed to his injuries on the way to a hospital. Shabir Ahmad Mir, a sarpanch, was shot dead by terrorists in Kulgam on Friday, while the sarpanch of Khanmoh Bashir Ahmad Bhat was killed two days prior on the outskirts of

Srinagar. On March 7, two civilians were killed and at least 35 people, including a police official, were injured in a grenade attack Amira Kadal, a busy Sunday street market in Srinagar. Security has been heightened across the union territory, particularly in the Kashmir Valley, while drones are also being used monitor forest areas. The sources said that the terrorists have been hiding in the forests after conducting the attacks.

Intelligence agencies have identified "some locations" near Srinagar and Baramulla district and a coordinated operation against these terrorists have already been planned in coordination with the Jammu and Kashmir Police's Special Operation Group (SOG).

According to the messages intercepted by the intelligence agencies, Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) are "annoyed" with the terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir for not doing "something big" and forcing them to execute a major terror attack on the security forces. Recently, the Jammu and Kashmir Police recovered a cache of weapons possibly dropped from a drone along the International Border in RS Pura sector. A massive search operation was carried by the SOG. The cache of weapons comprised two magazines, 70 cartridges, one pistol, three detonators, three remote-controlled IEDs, three bottles of explosives, a bundle of cortex wire, two timer IEDs and six grenades.

Yogi meets PM Modi, discusses new UP cabinet

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Caretaker Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath on Sunday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi after a historic victory in the state assembly elections.

Sources said that PM Modi and Adityanath discussed the assembly poll results and the formation of a new cabinet in Uttar Pradesh.

After the meeting which lasted over an hour, the Prime Minister tweeted, "Met Yogi Adityanath ji today. I congratulated him on the historic win in the UP elections. In the last 5 years, he has worked tirelessly to fulfil the aspirations of the people. I am sure that in the years to come, he will take the state to



greater heights of development."

Sources said that Yogi Adityanath extended an invitation to the Prime Minister for the swearing-in ceremony of the new BJP government in Uttar Pradesh.

Sources said that Prime Minister Modi and

Adityanath discussed the assembly polls result and the formation of a new cabinet in Uttar Pradesh.

Earlier Adityanath met Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu. He also met BJP national general secretary (organisation) BL Santhosh and discussed cabinet forma-

tion. Adityanath, however, termed the meeting with Santhosh a courtesy meet but sources claimed that formation of new cabinet was also discussed. Union Minister Sarbanand Sonowal was also present during Adityanath and Santhosh meeting.

Sources said that the key agenda in the meeting with the top BJP leadership is the formation of a new cabinet. "Social equation will play a crucial role in the formation of the new cabinet and it will be discussed with the central leadership along with finalizing the date of swearing in," a party insider said.

It has been learnt that a tentative list of probable ministers will be finalised after discussion with the central leadership.



INDIA WELL-PLACED TO BECOME GLOBAL LEADER IN YOGA, TRADITIONAL MEDICINE: SONOWAL

Union Ayush Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Sunday said that India is well positioned to become the global leader in yoga and traditional medicine.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Ayush Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Sunday said that India is well positioned to become the global leader in yoga and traditional medicine.

He said that as the World Health Organisation's Global Centre for Traditional Medicine is being established in India, it is incumbent upon the country, equipped with deep wisdom of yoga and traditional health practices, to lead the world on the path of peace, well-being, better and affordable health.

In his address at the inauguration of the Yoga Mahotsav 2022 to commemorate 100 days countdown to 8th International Day of Yoga 2022, he said: "The IDY 2022 will be the 8th edition of International Day of



Yoga organised by us. It is an opportunity to promote health, wellbeing and peace across the globe. The 100-day countdown formally marks the beginning of journey towards celebration of IDY-2022, which will be journey towards freedom from disease, stress and depression."

This year the International Day of Yoga 2022 campaign will focus on the theme '100 days, 100 cities and 100 organisations'. The event will demonstrate yoga at 75 iconic heritage and cultural sites on International Yoga Day on June 21. The Ayush Ministry will propagate

benefits of using WHO mYoga app, Namaste app, Y-break app for well being and maintaining good health.

Chief Ministers of Haryana and Sikkim, Manohar Lal Khattar, and Prem Singh Tamang, respectively, along with Union Labour and Employment and Environment Minister Bhubender Yadav along with Minister of State for Ayush Dr Munjpara Mahendrabhai and Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture Meenakshi Lekhi were also present at the inaugural event.

Khattar said: "Haryana is first state in India to establish Yoga Commission. We are in process of establishment an Ayush University in Kurukshetra at 100 acre area. We have also taken initiative to make it mandatory to make available an Ayush doctor in almost 2,000 Public Health Centres of Haryana."

'Antyodaya', 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' will decide way forward for govt: Vaishnav

Union Communications, Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Sunday said that 'Antyodaya' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' are philosophies that will decide the way forward for the Narendra Modi-led government.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Communications, Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Sunday said that 'Antyodaya' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' are philosophies that will decide the way forward for the Narendra Modi-led government. Elucidating on the

thought process for the government's policies and initiatives, he said that 'Antyodaya' and inclusive development is the first and foremost philosophy behind the decisions and initiatives of the government and with this thought, it wants to narrow down the digital divide in the country while 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' is the second dominant philosophy guiding the strategy and approach of the government. Addressing a seminar organised by the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT), he said that the 4G technology stack has been developed by Indian brains in 14 months at a fraction of costs compared to the other systems that have

been developed.

Highlighting the role of Indian institutions and scientists in development of 5G core, Vaishnav said that the government has started working on 6G technology so that India can take lead and can set the direction for the whole world. Noting that the unique character of telecommunications sector is because of the nature of spectrum which is indestructible and completely reusable, he said that this sector is highly capital intensive in nature, sensitivity to the technology changes and the strategic importance, which has become more relevant today as compared to the time when TRAI Act was formulated 25 years back.

He said that now the whole policy discourse is defined by the post-Covid scenario where digital technology has become more significant.

He also sought suggestions from members of Bar associations, judiciary, industry, media for making telecommunications sector a sunrise sector.

YOGI MEETS VICE PRESIDENT NAIDU

Days after historic victory of the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, caretaker chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday met Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Days after historic victory of the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, caretaker chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday met Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu.

Earlier in the day, Yogi Adityanath reached the national capital and is likely to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the top BJP leadership to discuss formation of his new cabinet in the state. Adityanath claimed that it was a courtesy meeting with the Vice President.

In a tweet, the official Twitter handle of the Vice President said, "Shri Yogi Adityanath called on the Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu at UPI-Rashtrapati Nivas today. "Bfore meeting with Vice President Naidu, the Uttar Pradesh acting Chief Minister met BJP national general secretary



(organisation) B.L. Santhosh and discussed cabinet formation. Adityanath, however, termed the meeting with Santhosh a courtesy meet but sources claimed that formation of a new cabinet was also discussed. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal was also present during the meeting. It is learnt that at 5 p.m., Yogi Adityanath is expected to meet Prime Minister Modi and BJP chief JP Nadda at 6 p.m. He will meet Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at 8 pm. Sources said the key agen-

da of the meeting is to discuss the new cabinet of Uttar Pradesh. "Date for swearing in is also discussed during the meeting with party leaders," sources said.

"Social equation will play a crucial role in the formation of the new cabinet and it will be discussed with the central leadership along with finalizing the date of swearing in," a party insider said. It is learnt that a tentative list of probable ministers has been finalised after discussion with the central leadership.

RSS emphasizes on creating more work opportunities in India

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has called for the need to promote more work opportunities to make the nation self-reliant.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has called for the need to promote more work opportunities to make the nation self-reliant.

The Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS) of the RSS, which ended on Sunday, passed a resolution urging all sections of the society to establish a healthy work culture based on eternal values catalysing the whole effort of promoting various types of work opportunities so that Bharat regains its rightful place on the world economic front.

The resolution emphasized that the entire society has to play a proac-



tive role in harnessing such work opportunities to mitigate the overall employment challenge. "The ABPS is of the opinion that thrust is to be given to Bharatiya economic model that is human centric, labour intensive, eco-friendly and lays stress on decentralization and equitable distribution of benefits and augments village economy, micro scale, small scale and agro based industries," it said.

The resolution suggested that the areas like rural employment, unorganized sector employment, employment to women and their overall participation in the economy need to be boosted. "Efforts are essential to adapt new technologies and soft skills appropriate to our societal conditions," it said. The resolution further stated that the ABPS feels that we, as a society, look for innovative ways to address the challenges of fast chang-

ing global economic and technological scenarios. Opportunities of employment and entrepreneurship with emerging digital economy and export possibilities should be keenly explored.

"We should engage ourselves in manpower training both pre and on job, research and technology innovations, motivation for startups and green technology ventures etc," it said.

The ABPS appreciates all the success stories which have been able to generate sustainable work opportunities for a large section of the society including weaker and deprived sections.

"Efforts to inculcate the spirit of 'Swadeshi and self-reliance' in the society would give the right impetus to the above initiatives," it said.

The ABPS calls upon the citizens to work on Bharat centric models of employment generation to strengthen the economy and achieve sustainable and holistic development.

UNCERTAINTY LOOMS OVER NEXT UTTARAKHAND CM

Uncertainty is still prevailing over the next Chief Minister of Uttarakhand after Pushkar Singh Dhami lost assembly elections. Days after the declaration of poll results, the BJP is still trying to find a suitable formula to select the new Chief Minister of the hill state.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Uncertainty is still prevailing over the next Chief Minister of Uttarakhand after Pushkar Singh Dhami lost assembly elections. Days after the declaration of poll results, the BJP is still trying to find a suitable formula to select the new Chief Minister of the hill state.

Sources said that despite winning two third majority, the BJP is in a peculiar situation after Dhami lost from Khatima as there are different



opinions within the party over giving him another chance, while some are supporting second chance for him, many are saying it will set a wrong precedent which party always opposed.

"A section in the party feels that making a leader Chief Minister who lost the polls will be against the BJP's practice and it must be avoided this time also. We have questioned West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee after she lost from Nandigram in last year's state assembly polls. In 2017, the party did not

make Prem Kumar Dhumal the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh after he lost the election," a party leader said. Another section in the party believes that Dhami should be given a chance for his hard work he put in to ensure BJP's victory. "After several rounds of informal consultation in the state capital, more meetings are likely to take place in the national capital. It is learnt that the key agenda of the meeting will be to decide criteria for selection of a new Chief Minister." Apart from the Dhami's fate, there are other issues like caste

and region to be addressed before finalizing the name of the new chief minister. The party leadership has to take a call on whether new chief minister will be from Garhwal or Kumaon and also whether he or she will be Thakur or Brahmin," a party insider said.

Another critical issue is to decide where the new Chief Minister is an MLA or from outside (non MLA). Several names have started doing the rounds in the Uttarakhand political circle. Some prominent ones are minister of state for defence Ajay Bhatt, former chief minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' and Rajya Sabha member Anil Baluni among non MLAs.

Among MLAs, names of Satpal Singh Maharaj and Dhan Singh Rawat are doing the rounds in political circles.

The BJP has retained power for a second term in Uttarakhand by winning 47 seats out of 70 but the incumbent chief minister Dhami lost the poll from Khatima.

Case against Hindu Yuva Vahini member over alleged 'hate speech'

Police in UP's Ghaziabad have registered an FIR against Hindu Yuva Vahini district President Ayush Tyagi over the latter's alleged inflammatory speech against the minority community.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Police in UP's Ghaziabad have registered an FIR against Hindu Yuva Vahini district President Ayush Tyagi over the latter's alleged inflammatory speech against the minority commu-

nity.

A police official told IANS that a case has been registered against the accused under sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race) and 505 (2) (public mischief) of the Indian Penal Code at Muradnagar police station.

The incident was reported the same day when the BJP returned to power in the Uttar Pradesh.

In a 59-second video, accessed by IANS, Tyagi, while addressing a gathering from a podium, could be heard asking people to tell 'them' to remove loudspeakers from the religious places otherwise Hindu Yuva Vahini will themselves remove it.

The police official said they themselves took cognizance of the video after it went viral on social media and other

platforms. The official confirmed that so far no arrests have been made in the case. Meanwhile, a complaint was also lodged at the Shaheen Bagh police station regarding the same alleged hate speech.

Complainant Aarfa Khanam, in her complaint, said that the remarks made by Tyagi have hurt the sentiments of the minority community. "I request the police department to take punitive action against the man who made such an inflammatory speech," she added.

A Delhi Police official said that, so far, no FIR has been registered as the alleged 'hate speech' was made in Ghaziabad.

"We are analysing the complaint and will take a decision after consulting the prosecution branch," the official said.

BJP's Rajen Singh sworn in as protom Speaker of Manipur Assembly

Senior BJP MLA Sorokhaibam Rajen Singh was sworn in as the protom Speaker of the Manipur Assembly on Sunday and will administer the oath of office and secrecy to the remaining 59 newly elected MLAs on Monday.

IMPHAL | Agencies

Senior BJP MLA Sorokhaibam Rajen Singh was sworn in as the protom Speaker of the Manipur Assembly on Sunday



and will administer the oath of office and secrecy to the remaining 59 newly elected MLAs on Monday.

At a simple ceremony at the Darbar Hall of the Raj Bhavan, Governor La Ganesan administered the oath to Singh who in the recent elections was elected from Lamsang assembly seat defeating National People's Party candidate Pukhrambam Sumati Devi by a margin of 400 votes.

Caretaker Chief Minister N Biren Singh, newly-elected MLAs Biswajit Singh, Y Khemchand Singh, and

Govindas Konhoujam, Chief Secretary Rajesh Kumar, Director General of Police P Doungel and other top officials attended the function.

The term of the outgoing Assembly is due to expire on March 19.

Biren Singh on Friday resigned from his post and the Governor asked him to continue in his office until the new government takes charge. There is no confirmation yet as to when the next Chief Minister would be chosen, or when the new BJP-led government would assume office. Before the elections, the BJP had informally declared that Singh will be the party's chief ministerial face and will head the next government.

TRIBAL PARTY'S MEGA RALLY ROCKS TRIPURA POLITICS

AGARTALA | Agencies

A mega rally in Agartala organised by the tribal based party TIPRA (Tiphra Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance) that has been demanding 'Greater Tripaland,' displayed their strength ahead of the next year's assembly elections in Tripura, causing a concern to the major political parties.

Though TIPRA's 'Greater Tripaland' demand remained vague across the cross section of the people as it has no provision in the Indian constitution, the slogan largely attracted the minority tribals, who constitute one third of Tripura's four million populations.

The demand for a 'Greater Tripaland' was raised few years back after the ruling BJP's ally Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT) got a massive support from the indigenous tribals when it ahead of the 2018

assembly elections vociferously demanded for "Tipland" which sought a separate state for the Tripura tribals upgrading the existing Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC).

The politically most important TTAADC has a jurisdiction on over two-thirds of Tripura's 10,491 sq km area and is home to over 12,16,000 people, of which around 84 per cent are tribals. Focusing on the "Tipland" issue the IPFT in the 2018 assembly polls secured eight of the 20 tribal reserve seats, which over the decades were the strongholds of the CPI-M. After the TIPRA, headed by Tripura's royal scion Pradyot Bikram Manikya Deb Barman, captured the politically powerful TTAADC in April last year, the political significance of the new party in the mixed populated Tripura has further reinforced.

Defeating the BJP and the CPI-M, the TIPRA scripted history in the

northeastern state by capturing the TTAADC, which is considered as a mini-legislative assembly of Tripura.

Political circles observed that Saturday's first mega rally of TIPRA was bigger than the BJP's public gathering on March 8 and CPI-M's mass rally on February 24.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah and CPI-M General secretary Sitaram Yechury, party's politburo members Prakash Karat and Manik Sarkar addressed the respective party's gatherings. TIPRA supreme Deb Barman on Saturday announced to put up candidates at least in 35 seats in the next Assembly election on its own, putting a big challenge to the BJP and the CPI-M.

The TIPRA leaders while explaining about their 'Greater Tripaland' demand said that under the concept they wanted to improve the socio-economic conditions of the backward tribals living in the northeastern

states of India, neighbouring Bangladesh, Myanmar and adjoining areas. The BJP, CPI-M and the Congress though strongly opposed the IPFT's "Tipland" demand, the political parties officially not saying anything against the 'Greater Tripaland' demand apprehending loss of tribals' support in the next elections.

CHANGE OF NAME

I SUMITRA KANDARI is legally wedded spouse of No. JC 730156Y SUB PAD-MENDRA SINGH presently residing at 14 rapid Ordnance Unit, C/O 56 APO, have changed my name from SUMITRA BISHT to SUMITRA KANDARI, and my DOB is 06/03/1979.



Maharashtra Phone tapping case:

FADNAVIS ACCUSES MVA GOVERNMENT OF MALICE IN ISSUING NOTICE TO HIM

SUMMON WAS NOT A NOTICE AS AN ACCUSED, SAYS STATE HOME MINISTER DILIP WALSE-PATIL

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Accusing the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government of attempting to pressurise him in connection with a case of illicit phone tapping, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Leader of the Opposition in the Maharashtra Assembly Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday claimed that the Mumbai Police were trying to make him a co-accused in the matter, even as the MVA said it was not acting vindictively against the BJP leader.

Fadnavis, a former Chief Minister of the State, attributed the ruling government's action of directing the Mumbai Police to issue a notice against him as a malicious response to the scams of the MVA government's Ministers that he had been uncovering, particularly that of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) Minister Nawab Malik's alleged links

with fugitive underworld don Dawood Ibrahim.

A large body of BJP workers protested against the "notice" issued to Fadnavis outside his Mumbai residence 'Sagar', where police security was beefed up. Even as the Mumbai Police team recorded Fadnavis' statement for nearly two hours, Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil said that the BJP had no need to "create a riot over the matter" and that the police had not sent Fadnavis a notice as "an accused in the case".

Walse-Patil further clarified that Fadnavis had been given a police questionnaire five-six times in the past year as to what his source of information was regarding a pen drive that had come into his possession in connection with the case and which he mentioned publicly, but that the BJP leader had not yet given



technical information missing from the Mumbai SID (State Intelligence Department) office. A case has been registered under the Indian Telegraph Act and Official Secrets Act against five unidentified persons in this regard and 24 witnesses have been examined. Since Fadnavis was the last witness, the police had gone to his house to record his statement to conclude the case and there is nothing in

his reply.

A case was registered under the Official Secrets Act at Mumbai's BKC Cyber Police Station last year against unidentified persons for allegedly illegally tapping phones and leaking confidential documents.

"This case [of illicit phone tapping] is now a year old and was registered on March 26, 2021. The complaint was regarding some sensitive material and information missing from the Mumbai SID (State Intelligence Department) office. A case has been registered under the Indian Telegraph Act and Official Secrets Act against five unidentified persons in this regard and 24 witnesses have been examined. Since Fadnavis was the last witness, the police had gone to his house to record his statement to conclude the case and there is nothing in

this," the State Home Minister said, stressing that the summons issued to Fadnavis was not a notice.

Questioning the timing of the notice during the ongoing Budget session of the State Assembly, Fadnavis retorted that there was a "big difference" in the police questionnaire that was sent to him previously by the Mumbai Police and the questions that were put to him today.

The BJP leader claimed that he had uncovered a massive transfer scam that was going on in Maharashtra in 2021 and had accordingly informed the Union Home Secretary, who was the competent authority in this case, without putting out sensitive documents in the public domain by giving it to the press. "The rattled MVA government then lodged a case as how sensitive documents leaked out of government departments [SID]. I naturally could not give documents to the MVA govt. as they were the ones who had been suppressing it for the last six months," Fadnavis said.

Casting himself as a whistle-blower who had blown the lid on the case, Fadnavis said that he had answered all questions put by the Mumbai Police and that it was unlikely that they would be bothering him again.

MAHARASHTRA GOVT ACCUSES BJP OF DOING POLITICS ON TRANSFER-POSTING CASE

Mumbai: Amid the row over the transfer-posting case, Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil on Sunday said the Opposition is doing politics on this matter.

"Opposition is doing politics on this case. Till now, 5-6 notices have been sent to Devendra Fadnavis. A case has been registered against five unknown persons. Statements of 24 people have been recorded so far and more will be recorded in the future," Patil told media-persons. "Devendra Fadnavis was not summoned but was sent a set of questions to answer. Today, a police team went to his residence as he did not answer those questions sent to him regarding the case," he added.

Earlier on Sunday, a team of Mumbai Cyber Police reached the residence of the Maharashtra Leader of Opposition and former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to record his statement in the transfer-posting case. On February 26 this year, Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil claimed that former Pune Police Commissioner Rashmi Shukla had tapped phones of political leaders like Nana Patole, Bachchu Kadu, Sanjay Kakade and Ashish Deshmukh.

In March 2021, Fadnavis raised questions about the transfer posting of the police department during a press conference. On the same day, Fadnavis met the Union Home Secretary of the Central Government and handed over some secret documents related to police transfer to the Union Home Secretary.

At present, the CBI is investigating this case. So far, former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh and former Mumbai Police Commissioner Paramvir Singh have been questioned in this case. Now the statement of Devendra Fadnavis has also been recorded.

Maharashtra govt to grant schools in places associated with eminent people

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO FRAMED A POLICY REGARDING SETTING UP STUDY CHAIRS IN THE NAME OF EMINENT SOCIAL REFORMERS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Giving a thrust to education, the Maharashtra government has decided to provide Rs 1 crore to every school in villages associated with eminent and legendary people.

These places are: Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's hometown Khanwadi in Purandar, Pune, Savitribai Phule's birthplace



Naigaon, Khandala, Satara, Rajarshi Shahu Maharaja's birthplace at Kagal, Kolhapur, the first schools where Bharat Ratna Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar took admission at Satara, Lokshahir Sahitya Ratna Annabhau Sathé's birthplace Vategaon, Valva, Sangli, birthplace of Maharshi Dhondo Keshav Karve, Murud, Ratnagiri, Sane Gururaj's birthplace Palgad, Dapoli, Ratnagiri, the birthplace of Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Mozari, Tivasa, Amravati, Sant Gadge Baba's

birthplace Shedgaon, Anjangaon Surji, Amravati, Krantisinha Nana Patil's hometown Yede Machindra, Valava, Sangli. Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who holds the Finance and Planning portfolios, announced the measures when he tabled the state Budget 2022-23 last week. The government has also framed a policy regarding setting up study chairs in the name of eminent social reformers and greatly respectable persons in the universities.

Case Against BJP MLA, Brother After Remarks On Sharad Pawar

NCP functionary Shrinivas alias Vyankatrao Suraj Chavan submitted to police some video clips in which the Rane brothers, sons of Union minister Narayan Rane, were purportedly seen making the remarks.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai Police on Sunday registered an FIR against Maharashtra BJP MLA Nitesh Rane and his brother Nilesh Rane for allegedly making remarks against NCP chief Sharad Pawar, an official said.

The case was registered at the Azad Maidan police station under various Indian Penal Code section, including 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 499 (defamation), 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot) based on a complaint of NCP functionary Shrinivas alias

Vyankatrao Suraj Chavan.

Chavan submitted to police some video clips in which the Rane brothers, sons of Union minister Narayan Rane, were purportedly seen making the remarks.

In his complaint, Chavan mentioned that Nitesh Rane, while talking to reporters last Wednesday, asked why Pawar had not taken the resignation of Maharashtra minister and NCP's chief spokesperson Nawab Malik even though he was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case.

According to the complainant, the

BJP MLA had alleged that Mr Pawar may also be an aid of fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim.

The same day, former MP Nilesh Rane also allegedly made similar comments on Twitter, Mr Chavan mentioned in his complaint.

Meanwhile, Nitesh Rane told reporters here on Sunday that, "We will tell the police what we have to if an offence has been registered. What is wrong in what we said? We sided with Hindutva. We have not tried to instigate a riot. If it is a mistake to side with Hindutva, then we will commit that mistake 100 times." He said Pawar had alleged that Malik is

being linked to Dawood Ibrahim because the minority affairs minister comes from Muslim community.

"So, I just questioned later whether (another) Maharashtra minister Anil Deshmukh was asked to resign because he is a Hindu? We just tried to reply to the issue Pawar saheb raised. Where is the question of instigating riots here?" he asked.

The BJP MLA said he is also of the firm view that there should be no Hindu-Muslim riots in the country. "But we, being Hindutvavadis, will not let Hindus face injustice," he added.

SEEPZ-SEZ HONOURS DISTINGUISHED WOMEN OF MUMBAI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

To show respect, appreciation and love for women, the Office of the Regional Development Commissioner, SEEPZ-SEZ, Andheri celebrated the indomitable spirit of womanhood through various programs on the occasion of International Women's Day on Tuesday, 8 March 2022. On this occasion, eminent women of Mumbai who made remarkable contributions in the economic, political-social and art world were honoured.

The program was started by lighting the lamp with garlanding on the idol of Maa Saraswati. Dr. Pramila Sharma, the stage operator, invited the Joint Development Commissioner Chandrapal Singh ji to honour the distinguished women guests with flowers and bouquets, along with the Vandana of Maa Saraswati and the lighting of the lamp. Businessman, Social Activist and Writer Dr. Manju Lodha, Entrepreneur and Political Strategist Shweta Shalini, Telefilm Producer-Script Writer Rekha Babbal,



TV Actress Pooja Dixit and Kalyani Deshpande, Founder and Owner of Kalyani Jewels & Co. was present. Official Language Consultant Suman Saraswat highlighted the importance of International Women's Day and told through a powerpoint presentation that this time the theme of International Women's Day 2022 is "Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow".

The Assistant Development Commissioner, Raju Kumar, while highlighting the importance of the

program and other aspects, said that slogan/slogan, painting and article competitions were organised on this occasion. Distinguished women guests motivating the women employees of SEEPZ-SEZ by mentioning their experiences and struggles. Joint Development Commissioner Chandrapal Singh honoured the distinguished women guests with shawls and mementos. On this occasion, citations were given to the women officers and employees for their excellent work in the office by the designat-

ed officer Anil Chaudhary. In addition, the winners of the competitions were rewarded by the designated officer RK Jain.

The special feature of this event was that under the leadership of Regional Development Commissioner Shyam Jagannathan ji, the entire process of the event was kept in the official language Hindi. There was a surprising response from the employees present in the program. Imran, an employee, said that people thought Hindi programs would be boring but everyone had a lot of fun. Many people said that now all programs should be in Hindi only. The reaction of Jayesh Ashar, who was present there, was such a dignified atmosphere that I felt that I was watching a film of Rajshree Productions. Pramila Sharma gave dignity to her operation with Sanskrit examples. Also, everyone was fascinated by the sparklers of humour. On this occasion Harshita Singh presented PPT on SEEPZ-SEZ and Tripti Dhurat on POSH Act 2013, a law related to harassment of women at workplace.

Sunny Leone finds it hard to balance work life and motherhood

SUNNY LEONE WHO IS QUITE OCCUPIED WITH HER UPCOMING PROJECTS AND ENJOYING THE SUCCESS OF HER LATEST WEB SERIES 'ANAMIKA', SAYS AS HER WORK PRESSURE IS INCREASING, FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT AND PARENTHOOD IS BECOMING TOUGHER FOR HER.



as an actress and she is planning for more such action-packed projects in the coming time, she mentioned how her three children have become so emotionally attached to her during the lockdown period that leaving them home for work gives her separation anxiety at times.

Sunny told IANS: "It is so hard for me to balance work life and motherhood especially because I am one of those moms who is involved in every daily activity of my children. Since the pandemic when they were growing up in last 2 years they have all their time with us, now every time when I and my husband go out for work, they would just feel so upset...sit on our lap and cuddle up saying, 'just play with us, don't go away'. When we heard those words coming from those cute voices, it breaks our heart really."

Sunny has three children - a daughter Nisha adopted in 2017, twin boys - Asher and

Noah via surrogacy in 2018.

Currently, she is working on south Indian films - 'Rangeela', 'Shero', 'Oh My Ghost'. She is also working on Hindi film 'Koka Kola', 'Helen' and making a special appearance in the film 'The Battle of Bhima Koregaon'.

Asked if she has any plan of going for acting class to have some formal training in acting and Sunny said, "With so much happening in my life, three children, two dogs, several projects - I really do not have time for that. Yes, it is true that formal training in any art form helps to develop your skill but I also believe that in acting, preparation and training depends on project by project. So I am quite comfortable to submit myself to the vision of my director."

'Anamika', a Vikram Bhatt directorial, also featuring - Rahul Dev, Samir Soni, Sonnalli Seygall, Shehzad Shaikh, Ayaz Khan - streams on MX Player.

'Selection rather than election,' Maha BJP MLA moves SC against Speaker election rules

A Maharashtra BJP MLA has moved the Supreme Court challenging the Legislative Assembly notification, which amended Rule 6 and Rule 7 of MLA rules, laying down the procedure for the election of Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Maharashtra BJP MLA has moved the Supreme Court challenging the Legislative Assembly notification, which amended Rule 6 and Rule 7 of MLA rules, laying down the procedure for the election of Speaker and Deputy

Speaker. The appeal has been filed by Girish Dattatraya Mahajan through advocate Abhikalp Pratap Singh. Mahajan moved the top court challenging the Bombay High Court, which through a judgment on March 9, dismissed his PIL. Mahajan's plea said: "Impugned Notification has arbitrarily and undemocratically changed the procedure of the election of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, the procedure is now a procedure of selection rather than election."

The petitioner sought a stay on the notification issued by the Maharashtra government on December 23, 2021.

The petitioner contended that the notification gives arbitrary power to the chief minister to himself decide and recommend the date for election of the Speaker of state

Assembly. However, as per the old rules the Governor fixed a date for the election of Speaker.

The plea said: "The calling of the election of the Speaker who is the head of the Assembly (and not the State Government/Ruling Party), is the discretion of the Governor. It is submitted that the Impugned Notification is in violation of Article 163(1) of the Constitution of India as the function under Rule 6 of the MLA Rules, i.e., to call for Election of the Speaker is a function on which he is not bound by the aid and advise of the Council of Ministers which is similar to the last part of the Article 163(1) of the Constitution." The plea said the election of the Speaker in a state Assembly directly impacts democracy and administration. It further contended that the Speaker has sev-

eral powers and duty for smooth running of such Assembly, however, if the Speaker himself is elected by undemocratic means then the free and fair functioning of the state Assembly can easily be hampered by the ruling party. The plea added that the selection of the Deputy Speaker with the method enumerated in notification would lead to favouritism and bias in the House. "The notification will allow selection of the Deputy Speaker instead of a free and fair election and the same is therefore in clear violation of the Article 178 of the Constitution of India, which states that that every Legislative Assembly of a state shall choose two members of the assembly to be respectively Speaker and Deputy Speaker thereof," added the plea.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sunny Leone who is quite occupied with her upcoming projects and enjoying the success of her latest web series 'Anamika', says as her work pressure is increasing, finding a balance between professional commitment and parenthood is becoming tougher for her.

While she believes that playing the title role in 'Anamika' has given her a chance to showcase her skill

2 KILLED, 23 INJURED AS VAN OVERTURNS

Palghar: Two persons were killed and 23 others injured after their van overturned in Maharashtra's Palghar district, police said. The accident took place around 5.30 pm on Saturday at Panchmarg in Tarapur town, an official at the district police control room said. The driver of the van, which was carrying some villagers, lost control over the wheels following which the vehicle overturned, he said. Two persons were killed. They were identified as Mukesh Singh (32), from Bhillwadi village, and Gayatri Maji (36), from Kurgaon, he said. Twenty three others were injured, including some of them seriously, the official said, adding that they were admitted to two private hospitals.



EDITOR'S SPECS

80% MUSLIMS VOTED FOR BJP IN UP

Despite general perception that Muslims were voting against it, the BJP has succeeded in getting at least eight per cent Muslim votes in a bipolar and highly polarised Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh. The CSDS-Lokniti has come out with its survey that of the 20 per cent Muslim votes, the Samajwadi Party secured around 79 per cent and at least eight per cent votes went to the BJP, which is an increase of one per cent over the 2017 Assembly elections. The survey indicates that the community is willing to support the BJP, but indicated that there needed to be "two-way traffic" and the BJP's posturing should translate into action. The main reason for this shift in the Muslim votes towards the BJP is that Muslims have benefited as much as Hindus from the various welfare schemes during the last five years in Uttar Pradesh. The study suggests that Muslims should explore the possibilities of opening up to the BJP. Supporting the non-BJP governments out of fear of the BJP bogey has not helped them as their socio-economic condition has gone from bad to worse over the decades. "The community's condition is worse than Dalits," the Sachar committee report had noted. According to a survey of 'Religion, Caste, Nationalism and Attitudes in India' by the US-based Pew Research Centre, around 20 per cent of Muslims voted for the Bharatiya Janata Party in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. "One out of five Muslims voted for BJP," the survey noted. A CSDS-Lokniti survey of 2019 had indicated 14 per cent support for the BJP. When CSDS posed a question to the community before the 2019 Lok Sabha election on whether they supported another term to the Modi government, 26 per cent said "yes", whereas 31 per cent of the Hindu respondents felt that the Modi government should not get another term.

AFTER THE FALL: IS IT THE END OF THE ROAD FOR CONG, OR THE TIME TO RESURRECT?

Deepika Bhan

The Assembly elections in the five states had one stunning outcome: the irretrievable downslide of the Congress. Sonia Gandhi and her two babies -- Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra -- need to comprehend the people's verdict and the moral of the story: It is the end of the road for them if they don't accept reality.

Out of the 690 seats whose fate was decided in the five states, the Congress could manage to win only 55. State-wise, of the 403 seats in Uttar Pradesh, Congress got two; in Punjab, where it was in the power, it won 18 out of 117; in Goa's 40-seater Assembly, Congress managed 11; out of Manipur's 60 seats, it had to be content with just five; and in Uttarakhand, it could manage only 19 out of 70.

On the vote share front, too, the share of the Congress is drastically down. In Uttar Pradesh, the Congress vote percentage is a dismal 2.33 against the BJP's 41.29; Manipur has given only 16.83 per cent to the Congress and 37.83 per cent to the BJP; in Goa, the Congress got 23.46 per cent and the BJP 33.31 per cent; in Punjab the Congress managed 22.98 per cent and the BJP 6.60 per cent. The only saving grace for the Congress is Uttarakhand, where it notched up a decent share of 37.91 per cent, against the BJP's 44.33 per cent.

These figures clearly show the state the Congress is in today and exposes the distrust and displeasure of the masses with the three. Talk to any random person on the road, Rahul Gandhi's name evokes dismissive laughter; worse, his actions and statements are perceived to be not serious. For many, he is a joker who is helping the BJP to create perceptions. His younger sister, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who was projected as the harbinger of a change in the difficult political terrain of Uttar Pradesh, has been rejected by the people of the state. The people valued Akhilesh Yadav more than her and gave him more seats and votes. The statistics clearly show that the people in Uttar Pradesh have more faith in Akhilesh than Priyanka.

The fact that the Congress vote share is down to just 2 per cent in the state after all the "hard work" and personal attention of Priyanka is a telling comment on her performance. In the last Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, Rahul lost the family bastion to Smriti Irani and this time Priyanka



could not retain any of the Assembly segments in another Congress bastion, Rae Bareilly, the Lok Sabha seat of Sonia Gandhi.

Punjab's overwhelming vote for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and eviction of the Congress only confirms the grave disconnect between the 'Grand Old Party' and the voters.

Having a huge number of followers on social media accounts is no guarantee of support from the masses. Rahul and Priyanka need to understand this. Together, they have 24.7 million followers on Twitter and lakhs like their Facebook posts, but when it comes to voting, even the followers don't seem to deliver. The electoral numbers that AAP, on the other hand, is notching up should be a serious cause of concern for the Sonia-Rahul-Priyanka triumvirate.

AAP is proving to be the real bulldozer in today's political landscape, crushing all other parties -- repeatedly in Delhi and now in Punjab. It is being viewed as the rising alternative to the BJP. Its performance in Punjab has further destroyed the myths that the Congress swears by, including the one that it is the only political party in the country that cares for the minorities.

In Delhi and in Punjab, the minorities rallied behind AAP as much as the majority community. This is what should shake up

Sonia-Rahul-Priyanka and their strategists.

The trio has challenges to confront from within the party. The G-23 leaders, upset with the poll results, met on March 11, a day after the verdict, and demanded a new Congress president as soon as possible.

One of the senior G-23 leaders, Ghulam Nabi Azad, said: "I am shocked, my heart is bleeding to see our defeat in state after state."

He said that he hoped the party leadership would take note of the weaknesses that the G-23 had been mentioning. Another party leader, Shashi Tharoor, has also called for leadership reform.

The Congress has been steadily losing elections since 2012 and along with its several leaders and workers have abandoned the ship. According to a media report, 177 MPs and MLAs have left Congress since 2014, besides a number of leaders. When Narendra Modi became Prime Minister in 2014, the Congress had nine states; the number has now shrunk to just two -- Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. Congress is staring at an existential crisis and will sink further if it does not act now.

In the past many of the leaders who could not find space for growth in the Congress, have proved their mettle out-

side -- Mamta Banerjee in West Bengal, K. Chandrashekar Rao in Telangana, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy in Andhra Pradesh, Himanta Biswa Sharma in Assam, and, of course, Sharad Pawar is firmly ensconced as the kingmaker of Maharashtra. The Congress did not value them and in due course they became successful challengers.

It is high time Sonia-Rahul-Priyanka rejig themselves, otherwise the Congress will get decimated. It is still not too late for them to give up the claim of being the sole guardians of the party and step aside to allow a new party president to work with a free hand, focusing on grassroots politics, attacking the government credibly on policies and decisions, and above all, stop taking personal swipes at Prime Minister Narendra Modi that go down well with the people.

In 1978, R.K. Laxman drew a memorable cartoon to describe the future of the Congress with the caption: "The real Congress will be so reduced in size through constant splits that a special device will be needed to see it." That was 44 years ago; today, the cryptic line reads like a prophecy, and is also the moral of the story.

international

PAK INDUCTS J-10C FIGHTER JETS FROM CHINA TO COUNTER INDIA'S RAFALE

Pakistan has inducted multi purpose J-10C fighter jets, acquired from China, into its Air Force to improve its combat capabilities.



Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan has inducted multi purpose J-10C fighter jets, acquired from China, into its Air Force to improve its combat capabilities. In a formal induction ceremony on Friday held at Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Base Minhas Kamra in Attock district of Punjab to induct the jet, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said any country would have to think twice before harbouring any aggression towards Pakistan, asserting that the armed

forces were well-equipped and trained to defeat any threat. His statement is a veiled reference about India's recent procurement of Rafale fighter jets from France. "Unfortunately, efforts are being made to create an imbalance in the region and

to address this, a big addition has been made today to our defence system," Khan said addressing the ceremony. He also stated that induction of J-10 C is a big movement for Pakistan after about 40 years when F-16 provided by the US were inducted into

the PAF. Khan thanked China for providing the aircraft in a short span of about eight months when it often takes years to acquire modern jets. The J-10C is a 4.5-generation medium-sized fighter jet and is more powerful than the China-Pakistan jointly developed lightweight fighter jet, the JF-17, currently being used by the PAF.

Pakistan had announced the display of the new jet on March 23 at the annual Defence Day Parade. J-10C is manufactured by Chengdu Aircraft Corporation (CAC) for the Chinese Air Force.

It can carry out air-to-air combat including strike missions. Pakistan had requested to buy the fighter jets as far back as 2006. The negotiations finally led to the purchase of 25 J-10C fighters.

SAUDI ARABIA EXECUTES 81 CONVICTS

Riyadh: Saudi Arabia's Interior Ministry announced the execution of 81 convicts on different charges, including terrorism, espionage and murder. The convictions also include targeting government personnel and vital economic sites, the killing of law enforcement officers and maiming their bodies, and planting land mines to target police vehicles, the Saudi Press Agency reported. The individuals were tried in Saudi courts, overseen by three separate stages for each individual, Xinhua news agency quoted the Ministry as saying. The accused were provided with the right to an attorney and were guaranteed their full rights under Saudi law during the judicial process, it added. The Ministry stressed that the kingdom would continue taking a strict and unwavering stance against terrorism and extremist ideologies that threaten the stability of the world.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards hit Mossad centres in Iraq with missiles

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) in a statement confirmed that it targeted the Israeli centres in Erbil with precision-guided missiles, Mehr News reported.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) in a statement confirmed that it targeted the Israeli centres in Erbil with precision-guided missiles, Mehr News reported.

Referring to the targeting of the Mossad training centres in Erbil by precision-guided missiles, the IRGC General Public Relations in a statement



stressed that the repetition of any evil act of the Zionists will face harsh, decisive and destructive responses. "Following the recent crimes of the Zionist regime and the previous announcement that the crimes and evil acts of this regime will not go unanswered, last night, the strategic centre for conspiracy and evil acts of the Zionists was targeted with precision-guided missiles of the IRGC." Iraqi media on early Sunday reported that Washington's new consulate building and two advanced training centres

run by the Zionist regime's spy agency, Mossad, in Erbil have been targeted in the missile attack, Mehr News reported. Earlier on Wednesday, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) vowed to avenge the martyrdom of two of its advisors at the hands of the Israeli regime during a recent attack on the countryside of the Syrian capital of Damascus. "Undoubtedly, the Zionist regime will pay the price of this atrocity," the IRGC's Public Relations Office said in a statement.

SRI LANKA TO HOLD ALL-PARTY CONFERENCE ON ECONOMIC SITUATION

An all-party conference in Sri Lanka will be held on March 23 to discuss the current economic situation in the South Asian country, local media reports said on Sunday citing the presidential secretariat.



Colombo | Agencies

An all-party conference in Sri Lanka will be held on March 23 to discuss the current economic situation in the South Asian country, local media reports said on Sunday citing the presidential secretariat. The conference will be presided over by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, and attended by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and figures from all political parties represented in Parliament, Xinhua news agency quoted the reports as saying.

The country has seen the national currency Sri Lankan rupee (LKR) devalued significantly against all major international currencies, in addition to fuel and gas shortages as well as daily electricity cuts. The state-owned Ceylon Petroleum Corporation on Friday increased the price of Octane 92 petrol by 77 LKR to 254 LKR per liter, that of Octane 95 petrol by 76 LKR to 283 LKR, and that of the auto diesel by 55 LKR to 176 LKR, according to the media reports.

UN urges for ending violence in Sudan, restoring stability in Darfur

The UN mission in Sudan has called on authorities to work to end violence across the country and restore stability in the conflict-hit Darfur region.

Khartoum | Agencies

The UN mission in Sudan has called on authorities to work to end violence across the country and restore stability in the conflict-hit Darfur region.

In a statement, the UN Integrated Transitional Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) expressed concerns over recent violent incidents in Darfur that claimed the lives of dozens of civilians, besides the death of two protesters in the capital Khartoum, reports Xinhua news agency.



"Over the past week, the UN has received reports of violent incidents in and around Jebel Moon in West Darfur. This has included the burning of villages and the unfortunate death of tens of Sudanese, representing another alarming sign of the increasing instability in Sudan," the statement said. The statement stressed that "violence must stop all over Sudan, and those responsible must be held accountable". Earlier, local media said tribal fighting took place on

March 10 at the Jebel Moon area in Sudan's West Darfur State, which resulted in the killing of 17 people. On the same day, the two protesters were killed during demonstrations in Khartoum, according to non-governmental organisations. Sudan has been suffering a political crisis after the general commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan declared a military coup on October 25, 2021 and dissolved the Sovereign Council and the government.

MOON LIKELY TO MEET PRESIDENT-ELECT THIS WEEK

Seoul: South Korean President Moon Jae-in is likely to meet with his successor-elect Yoon Suk-yeol this week, officials said on Sunday.

The two already spoke to each other by phone on March 10, a day after Yoon was elected, but are yet to meet face-to-face, reports Yonhap News Agency.

Since most previous Presidents have met with their successors within 10 days after the election, Cheong Wa Dae or the Presidential Office plans to follow the custom, officials said. If a meeting takes place, the two are expected to discuss various issues, including North Korea and the Covid-19 crisis.

On Saturday, National Security Adviser Suh Hoon briefed Yoon on pending security issues.

UN RECRUITING NEW SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR FOR N.KOREA HUMAN RIGHTS

The UN is recruiting a new special rapporteur for North Korea's human rights and plans to name the successor in June, it was announced on Sunday.

Seoul | Agencies

The UN is recruiting a new special rapporteur for North Korea's human rights and plans to name the successor in June, it was announced on Sunday.

The successful candidate will be announced at the 50th session of the UN Human Rights Council slated to kick off on June 13, Yonhap News Agency reported.

The new candidate, if selected, will replace Tomas Ojea Quintana, who has served in the position since 2016, and formally assume the post from August. The special rapporteur position was first created in 2004 to investigate and report to the UN Human Rights Council and General Assembly on the human rights situation in the reclus-



sive regime in light of international human rights law. The rapporteur can serve up to six years based on renewal on an annual basis. Quintana, an Argentine lawyer and human rights expert, succeeded Marzuki Darusman of Indonesia as the special rapporteur for North Korea in 2016.



MADHYA PRADESH WILL MAKE A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE EXPORT OF SPICES: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the growth rate of the state at 19.7 percent has been the highest in the country at current prices. Agriculture has contributed the most in this. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is constantly encouraging farmers to take more profitable crops along with traditional crops. Burhanpur has made a special place in the production of spice crops, where turmeric, ginger, coriander, onion are being produced in large quantities. Burhanpur is also a leader in banana, sugarcane and cotton. The economic empowerment of the farmer will be possible through diversification of crops. Chouhan was virtually addressing a national workshop organized for the production, processing and promotion of natural farming of spice crops in Burhanpur today from his residence office.



greatly increased. Madhya Pradesh is first in the country in the production of wheat. Burhanpur district is considered to be a cash cropping district. There is a need to encourage the cultivation of fruits, flowers and medicines here.

Chief Minister said that the country has been a name for centuries in the world in the production of spices. Spices have been going from India to many countries of the world, in which the southern states have been ahead. Now with the speed with which spices are being cultivated in Madhya Pradesh, surely the state including Burhanpur will

also make its special place in the export of spices. For this, it is necessary to focus on packaging, quality control, branding and marketing along with production using advanced technology. The government agency and agricultural experts will have to work in coordination with the farmers.

Chouhan said that it is the need of the hour to encourage natural farming. Human health is being affected by the increasing use of pesticides and fertilizers in agriculture. Natural farming can be encouraged by integrating animal husbandry and farming. The use of conventionally pre-

pared cow dung manure and pesticides made from cow urine are safe for crops. Chouhan said that I am sure that Burhanpur will establish its special place in natural farming along with the cultivation of spices.

Chief Minister said that a water panchayat will be organized in every gram panchayat of Burhanpur district on April 30 with the objective of ensuring tap water supply to every household under the Jal Jeevan Mission. Jal Mahotsav will also be held in every village of the district.

Public representatives and officials including MP Gyaneshwar Patil, former Minister Archana Chitnis participated in the workshop. In-charge of Burhanpur and Minister of Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Social Justice Prem Singh Patel participated virtually in the workshop. Experts from Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Indian Institute of Soil Science, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Agricultural Universities Gwalior and Jabalpur, Central Agricultural Engineering Institute Bhopal, Directorate of Onion and Garlic Research Pune, Spice Board Kerala and Indian Spices Research Center Kerala attended the programme.

Helicopter service will be started for tourist and religious destinations: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that nowadays Madhya Pradesh is being showered with gifts. Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has gifted new roads worth Rs 2200 crore to Madhya Pradesh. Today, Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has gifted Indore-Gondia-Hyderabad flight to the state. As per the resolve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Udaan scheme is being implemented in the country. The dream of the common man of the country is coming true. Many small and medium cities of the country are being connected by air travel. It is also matter of joy for Madhya Pradesh. With a boost to economic activities in the state, increased air connectivity will boost tourism and increase activities in places of religious importance.

the residence office. Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, Former Speaker of Lok Sabha Sumitra Mahajan, Water Resources Minister Tulsi Silawat, Culture and Tourism Minister Usha Thakur, MP Indore Shankar Lalwani, MLA Ramesh Mendola, MLA Malini Laxman Goud, public representatives and officials were present. Chouhan said that a glorious, magnificent, powerful, prosperous and enriched India is being built under the leadership of PM Modi. In Madhya Pradesh, Scindia has given many gifts to Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior and Jabalpur. Flights have started from Indore to Ahmedabad, Goa, Pune. Simultaneously, flights have been started from Bhopal to Pune, Jabalpur and Gwalior to Ahmedabad, Pune, Mumbai and from Jabalpur to Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad. The state is making steady progress in the field of aviation. The expansion of Gwalior airport has been ensured. Action is also going on for the expansion of Indore airport.

all the citizens of India with the efforts of PM Modi during the Russia -Ukraine war in adverse and difficult circumstances. Scindia has gone to Rumania and brought thousands of citizens of the country safely. Chief Minister said that speed is being given to connect small towns of the state by air travel. Consideration is being given to connect the important places from the point of view of tourism with air services and helicopter service. Helicopter service will be started from Khajuraho to Panna Tiger Reserve, Jabalpur to Kanha, Khajuraho to Orchha, Gwalior to Shivpuri and historical places of Morena, Indore to Maheshwar etc. Places of tourism and religious importance in the state will also be connected by air. Air connectivity is also necessary for investment in the state. Indore is the commercial capital of the state, efforts will continue to start international flights from here. Chouhan congratulated Fly Big Airlines for starting the Indore-Gondia-Hyderabad flight. MP Shankar Lalwani also addressed the programme.

Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing the launch programme of Indore-Gondia-Hyderabad flight virtually from

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS SHOULD COOPERATE IN CLEANLINESS ACTIVITIES: CM

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Kadamba and Cassia in Smart Garden. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, Seema Saxena, Suyash Kulshrestha and Sushma Kulshrestha of Lions Club also planted saplings. Chouhan said that voluntary organisations should cooperate especially in cleanliness activities. Lions Club has planted around 600 saplings in different areas of Bhopal like Bhadbhada Vishramghat, outside Chittor Complex, Laharpur Forest Park, Kaliyasot Dam etc. For polythene free Bhopal, distribution of cloth bags through the club and compost units are being constructed with the disposal of wet waste in the residential societies with the cooperation of Municipal Corporation. Kadamba, planted today, is famous in Ayurveda for its medicinal properties. Its flowers have special significance. The fragrant flowers of Kadamba are mentioned in ancient Vedas and compositions. The bark and leaves of Cassia are used in making Ayurvedic medicines.

CM EXPRESSED GRIEF OVER THE ROAD ACCIDENT



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan expressed grief over the road accident in Anuppur district on Rewa-Amarkantak road. Chouhan has prayed to God to give peace to the departed souls in the accident and strength to the bereaved family members to bear this immense loss. Chouhan has directed the administrative officers to make suitable arrangements for proper treatment of those injured in the accident. Chief Minister has wished speedy recovery of all the injured.

SBI ORGANIZES "SBI CYCLOTHON 2022"

State Bank of India is celebrating "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav." In this connection SBI has organized "SBI Cyclothon 2022." Staff members from SBI and other banks actively participated in this.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Guests of the occasion Binod Kumar Mishra, Chief General Manager, SBI Bhopal Circle, Nirupam Mehrotra, Chief General Manager, NABARD, Hemant Soni, Banking Ombudsman, Reserve Bank of India, Dhara Singh Nayak, Deputy General Manager, SLBC MP, General Managers of SBI Geeta Tripathi and Sundeeep Kumar Dutta flagged off the Cyclothon from the venue of the event Hotel Sayaji.

This Cyclothon was organized in 2 categories of 20 KM and 10 KM respectively. Mishra during his address emphasized on the importance of good health and daily routine exercise in the life which strengthens in



cycling. This also increases the reflex action of the mind. He insisted on organizing such events in future also.

Mishra presented the memento to the guests and felicitated all the winners. All other participants were also given medal and certificate of participation. Rajendra Pathak, Gajendra Nama and Anchal Rathie and Ravi Ramchandani were the winners of 20 KM category and Vaibhav Shukla, Matadin Verma and Ashish Tiwari were the winners of 10 KM category rank wise.

On the occasion Deputy General Manager and CDO U Dinesh Shanbhag and other Deputy General Managers and other Bank's officers and employees were present and graced the occasion.

BUNDELKHAND UNITES TO FIND SOLUTION TO ITS WATER CRISIS

BUNDELKHAND AND WATER SCARCITY HAVE BECOME SYNONYMOUS AND THE PROBLEM PEAKS WITH THE ONSET OF THE SUMMER SEASON. HOWEVER, FOR THE FIRST TIME, PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT WALKS OF LIFE, RELIGION AND POLITICS ARE UNITING TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS WITH THE FIRST STEP BEING THE CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN FOR THE MANDAKINI RIVER IN CHITRAKOOT.

Team Absolute | Chhatrapur/Chitrakoot

Bundelkhand and water scarcity have become synonymous and the problem peaks with the onset of the summer season. However, for the first time, people from different walks of life, religion and politics are uniting to resolve the crisis with the first step being the conservation campaign for the Mandakini river in Chitrakoot. Bundelkhand once used to be a wet area,



but with the passage of time, it is now identified with drought, poverty and migration, thanks to the poor management of water resources in the area and the apathy of the government and society.

Many schemes were introduced to resolve the water crisis, crores of rupees were allocated for it in the budgets but the ground situation continues to be the same. That's the reason the same pitiful sights are witnessed every year, though much effort has been made to paint a rosy picture on paper. Bundelkhand comprises seven districts -- Jhansi, Jalaun, Lalitpur, Mahoba,

Attitude of the Nation towards Sports Has Changed: Governor

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that the attitude towards sports has changed in the country. The idea that he who will play will thrive has been strengthened by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In the year 2010, when Shri Modi started the Khel Mahakumbh in Gujarat, 11 lakh players participated in it. In this year's Mahakumbh, this participation has increased to 55 lakhs. Governor said that it is the responsibility of the government as well as the society to promote sports. He also motivated the parents to be present in the events of the competitions for the encouragement of the players.

Patel was addressing the closing and award ceremony of 32nd National Canoe Sprint, 15th Para Canoe and First National Stand Up Paddling Competitions. Late Sanjeev Kumar Singh Memorial Competition was organised at Lower Lake Bhopal under the aegis of Kayaking Canoeing Association of the country and the state. Patel has said that the award ceremony is a celebration of the success of hard work and dedication for every sports person involved in this competition. Congratulations to the players who won the medals, those who did not get the medals even after hard work and dedication, they should not be disappointed because both in sports and in life not winning but having the wish to win is everything. He said that the attitude of parents and teachers towards sports has also changed. Now everyone is considering sports as helpful in the development of personality and talent. Diversity has increased rapidly in the field of sports. National winners of many sports are



making their mark at the international level.

Governor Patel asked all the players, coaches and sports officials involved in the competition to contribute in identifying and promoting talented players from different parts of the country. He said that organising sports competitions is an effective means of promoting sports and tourism. They also give opportunities to the players to practice, improve technique and boost the economic activities of the region. Patel expressed hope that more and more competitions would be organised in the state. Initially, the chairman of the organising committee, Director General Home Guard Pawan Jain told that the players have won 282 medals during the competition. He said that there is no dearth of talents in our country, the need is to identify and nurture them. The competition was organised with this intention. President of Kayaking Canoeing Association of India SM Hashmi informed that efforts are being made to provide better sports facilities in every state in collaboration with various organisations and institutions. Special emphasis has been laid by the association on preparing medal winning players for the Asian Games. Training camps are being organised at different places.

107 Van Dhan Kendras Established, Support Price of 32 Minor Forest Produce Declared

Team Absolute | Bhopal

To increase the income of the tribal brothers of Madhya Pradesh, unique action plans are being implemented as per the instructions of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Well-planned efforts are being made for the economic and skill up-gradation of forest dwellers engaged in the collection, storage, processing and marketing of non-nationalized minor forest produce.

Forest Minister Kunwar Vijay Shah informed that minimum support price of 32 minor forest produce species has been declared in the interest of forest dwellers. For the purchase of forest produce, 179 procurement centres and 47 godowns of minor forest produce have been built by the name of Apni Dukan. Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Vikas Yojana is proving to be a boon for the forest dwellers community. The Forest Minister said that in the first phase of this scheme, 107 Van Dhan Kendra clusters have been established in 19 district unions of the state. There

are 15 self-help groups in each cluster. Each self-help group will consist of 20 beneficiaries. At these centres, the primary processing, packaging and marketing of locally available forest produce, agricultural and horticultural produce, etc. will be done by the beneficiaries.

About 350 types of medicines are being manufactured and sold by the Minor Forest Produce Processing and Research Centre in the name of Vindhya Herbs brand. Apart from this, at present 27 Sanjeevani Ayurvedic Centres have been established in different districts of the state. Ayurveda physicians are giving consultations at these centres. Sanjeevani Ayurvedic Centres are running at Bhopal, Obedullaganj, Dewas, Jabalpur, Barwani, Khandwa, Omkareshwar, Burhanpur, Khargone, Rewa, South Sidhi, Satna, North Balaghat, West Chhindwara, East Chhindwara, Tikamgarh, North Panna, South Seoni, Hoshangabad, North Betul, Gwalior, South Sagar, Indore, New Delhi, Dindori, Chhatrapur and Anuppur.



Lili Reinhart had a director tell her to 'suck in her stomach'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Lili Reinhart has been praised after she shared that she "specifically decided to relinquish and release every muscle" in order to not "conceal the reality" of who she is for her new movie 'Everything Everywhere All At Once'. In an Instagram post of her in costume as her inspector alter ego Deirdre Beaubeirdra, the 63-year-old actress wrote in the caption: "In the world, there is an industry - a billion-dollar, trillion-

dollar industry - about hiding things. Concealers. Body-shapers. Fillers. Procedures. Clothing. Hair accessories. Hair products. Everything to conceal the reality of who we are."
"And my instruction to everybody was: I want there to be no concealing of anything. I've been sucking my stomach in since I was 11, when you start being conscious of boys and bodies, and the jeans are super tight."
"I very specifically decided to relinquish and release every muscle I had that I used to clench to hide the reality.

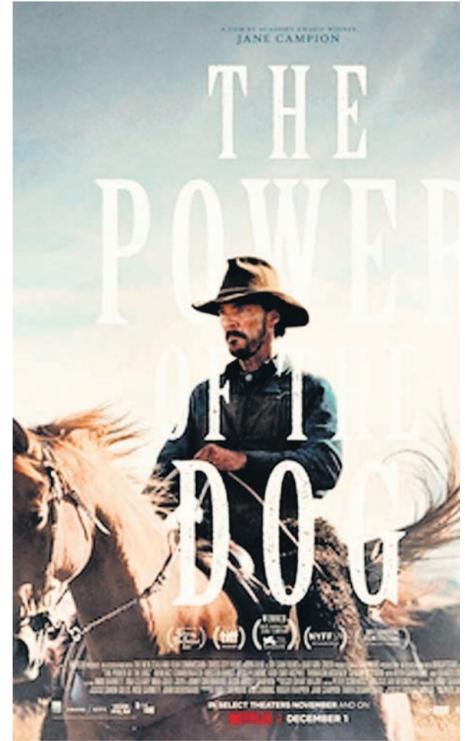
That was my goal. I have never felt more free creatively and physically."
"Riverdale" star was among the commentators and shared that she had once been told by a director to clench in her stomach.
She wrote on her Instagram Story: "A director once came up to me before a take and said 'suck in your stomach a bit.' Unfortunately, it's something I think about often when I'm filming a scene."
Thanking Jamie, she added: "Glad it's being talked about, thank you @curtisleejamie."

Los Angeles | Agencies

Streaming giant Netflix owned the Annie Awards on Saturday, picking up 20 of the 31 competitive trophies during the virtual show. The streamer's 'The Mitchells vs. the Machines' was named best animated feature, topping the film categories with eight wins while 'Arcane' ruled the TV side with nine, including best TV/media - general audience, reports variety.com.
Neon's animated documentary 'Flee', by Jonas Poher Rasmussen, was named best indie feature.
In addition to the top film award, 'Mitchells', from Sony Pictures Animation for Netflix, won awards for writing, FX, character design, production design, voice acting and editorial. The victory could give it an edge at the Academy Awards, with final Oscar voting set to start Thursday, reports variety.com.

"This team never settled for anything that wasn't original, bold or new and they broke the rules," said Christopher Miller, who produced the film along with his Lord Miller partner Phil Lord and Sony Pictures Animation's Kurt Albrecht.
"They threw out all the old formulas and never failed to amaze us." Lord added: "They created groundbreaking software. They invented a whole new art style, all this mixed media stuff to get inside of a teenager's head." The other wins for 'Arcane', a Riot Games and Fortiche Production for Netflix, were for direction, FX, character animation, character design, production design, storyboarding, voice acting and writing.

'MITCHELLS VS. THE MACHINES', 'ARCANE' DOMINATE 49TH ANNIE AWARDS



JANE CAMPION WINS DGA'S BEST FILM AWARD FOR 'THE POWER OF THE DOG'

Los Angeles | Agencies

New Zealander filmmaker Jane Campion made history at the DGA Awards on Saturday night (U.S. Pacific Time) by becoming the second consecutive woman -- and third in the 74-year history of the awards -- to win the top honour for the best theatrical feature film.
Campion won the award for Netflix's 'The Power of the Dog', reports 'Variety', adding that the win gives Campion even more of an edge in the Oscar race as this year's film awards season heads into the homestretch.
Campion won over Kenneth Branagh for 'Belfast', Paul Thomas Anderson for 'Licorice Pizza', Steven Spielberg for 'West Side Story' and Denis Villeneuve for 'Dune'.
"I care about women having voices, and I'm so excited about the next generation of filmmakers," Campion said.
She was presented the award by Chloé Zhao, who won the category last year for 'Nomadland', which went on to pick up the Best Film, Best Director and Best Actress Oscars.
Another highlight of the much-awaited evening was Spike Lee receiving the lifetime achievement award, which he celebrated with an epic 23-minute speech about his journey to filmmaking. Also, Joseph P. Reidy received the Frank Capra Achievement Award and Gerry Hood was given the Franklin J. Schaffner Achievement Award.
The Directors Guild of America's 74th annual DGA Awards returned to an in-person event on Saturday at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, with Judd Apatow on tap as host.
The ceremony, which went virtual in 2021, and is part of a busy weekend on the kudos gauntlet that also includes the BAFTA, Annie Awards and Critics Choice events.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian has posted a selection of loved-up snaps of her and comedian Pete Davidson, just over a

week after she was declared legally 'single' by a judge in California amid her divorce from rapper Kanye West. In the caption of the photo dump, the 41-year-old reality television personality wrote: "Whose car are we gonna take?!"
In one of the images, Davidson, who met Kim when she hosted SNL, the weekly NBC sketch show he stars on, is gazing into the reality star's eyes as she puckers up, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

KIM KARDASHIAN GOES INSTAGRAM OFFICIAL WITH BEAU PETE DAVIDSON

She said: "I have not filmed with him, and I'm not opposed to it. It's just not what he does. But if there was an event happening and he was there, he wouldn't tell the cameras to get away. I think I might film something really exciting coming, but it wouldn't be for this season. It wouldn't reach until next season." Kim reassured faithful viewers - who will now be following her and the rest of her famous family on their new Hulu reality series 'The Kardashians' - she will "always be honest and open".

'THE BATMAN' KEEPS GLIDING AS BOX-OFFICE LEADER IN SECOND WEEKEND



Los Angeles | Agencies

With no new major releases for the weekend, Warner Bros.' 'The Batman' has an easy path to repeating its top performance at the domestic box-office. The DC adaptation grossed an additional \$18.7 million on Friday from 4,417 locations, more than enough to maintain the No. 1 position on North American charts, reports variety.com.
That performance represents a 67 per cent drop-off from the film's \$57 million opening day, though that debut figure also includes \$21.6 million from Thursday preview screenings populated by eager fans. Looking solely at last Friday's numbers, 'The Batman' is showing a much more encouraging 47 per cent decline, reports variety.com.
Compared to other recent superhero releases, 'The Batman' is holding a little less mightily than its

peers. In their respective second Fridays, Disney's 'Eternals' dropped 63.2 per cent and 'Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings' fell 53.4 per cent, though both of those films represented properties new to moviegoers, thus being less likely to draw a front-loaded performance. When measured up against other WB films featuring the Caped Crusader is showing a stronger hold than 'The Dark Knight Rises' (a 77 per cent drop) and 'Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice' (an 82 per cent drop).

Amy Poehler: People 'medicate' with comedy

Los Angeles: Actress Amy Poehler thinks "Parks and Recreation" is still popular because people want to see something familiar and comforting during uncertain times.
The 50-year-old star believes the key to the enduring popularity of her sitcom "Parks and Recreation", which ended in 2015 after seven seasons, is that people want something familiar to watch during "scary and unsure" times, reports femalefirst.co.uk.
She told The Guardian newspaper: "I think - to get a little existential - when times are scary and unsure, we like to go back to things that we've seen before. Comedy especially is a way to medicate."
"A lot of people went back to shows that they knew would keep them happy, that they could watch with their family, and they knew how would end. And I think 'Parks and Rec' was lucky to be one of those."
When she's making decisions in her own life, Amy often considers what Leslie Knope, her character in the show, would do.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Amber Davies



Asian Youth & Junior Boxing

SIX INDIAN JUNIOR BOXERS CLINCH GOLD MEDALS

Six Indian junior boxers, led by Vini, Yakshika and Vidhi, registered contrasting wins to claim gold medals in their respective weight divisions at the 2022 ASBC Asian Youth & Junior Boxing Championships in Amman, Jordan, on Sunday.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Vini, the diminutive boxer from Hisar, was facing Karina Tokubay of Kazakhstan in the flyweight 50kg final. The Indian boxer started off well and won the first round convincingly before her opponent made a strong comeback in the second, which set the tone for a fierce decider that saw both the boxers exchange a lot of punches. Vini was scoring consistently and moving around the ring en route securing a 5-0 verdict in her favour.

Yakshika (52kg) displayed remarkable courage and temperament against Uzbekistan's Rakhima Bekniyazova to mount a comeback. The pugilist from Panipat absorbed a lot of punches in the first round and was trailing 0-5.

Yakshika came back strongly in the second round and counter-attacked brilliantly to level the scores. She continued her aggressive approach in the last round to complete the comeback and win 4-1. Vidhi notched up a comfortable 5-0 win against Aya Suwindeh of Jordan in the 57kg featherweight final. The



Indian boxer was in cruise control throughout the bout and forced the opponent to play at her terms. Playing at the distance, Vidhi was picking her punches smartly and moved around swiftly throughout the bout, without giving any chance to the local girl.

Defending Champion Nikita Chand (60kg) grabbed the yellow metal again as she dominated her bout against Uldana Taubay of Kazakhstan from the beginning which forced the referee to stop the contest in the third round.

Shrushti Sath (63kg) was up against Nursulu Suienal of Kazakhstan, who had no answer for the Indian boxer's reflexes and strong punches. Shrushti was relentlessly landing accurate punches in the second round and as a result of that, the referee stopped the contest in the second round. Rudrika (75kg) blanked Kazakhstan's Shuglya Nalibay 5-0 in a one-sided contest.

Earlier on Sunday, Mahi (46kg) and Palak (48kg) lost unanimously to Jasmin Tokhirova and Zilolakhon Yufova of Uzbekistan in their respec-

tive bouts. Supriya (54kg) lost against Uzbekistan's Uzukjamol Yunusova as the referee stopped the contest in the second round.

In the 81 kg final, Khushi went down fighting against Kazakhstan's Kuralay Yeginbaikyzy and lost 1-4. Nirjhara (+81kg) lost to Sobirakhon Shakhobidinova of Uzbekistan by RSC in the second round.

Later tonight, four Indian Junior boxers - Krish Pal (46kg), Ravi Saini (48kg), Yashwardhan Singh (60kg) and Rishab Singh (60kg) will be in action. With 21 medals in junior and 18 in the Youth section, the Indian contingent has secured 39 medals at the prestigious continental tournament where both the age groups of men and women-youth and junior-are being played together.

During the last edition of the tournament held in Dubai in 2021, India concluded their campaign with 39 medals including 14 gold.

The tournament has witnessed a strong competition after starting with 352 boxers from 21 countries including India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

PINK BALL TEST, DAY 2

Sri Lanka 28/1 at stumps, need 419 runs to beat India

Bengaluru | Agencies

Sri Lanka were 28/1 at stumps on Day 2 and needed 419 runs to beat India in the second and final Test (pink ball game) at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, here on Sunday.

Resuming their second innings from 199/5 after the dinner break, India added 104 more runs in the third session before declaring on 303-9 in the second innings and setting a target of 447 runs for Sri Lanka to win.

Shreyas Iyer top-scored for India 67 while Rishabh Pant brought up the fastest Test fifty by an Indian off just 28 balls. On the other hand, spinner Praveen Jayawickrama was Sri Lanka's highest wicket-taker with 4-78 while Lasith Embuldeniya picked three wickets (3/87).

Chasing a target of 447 runs to win, Sri Lanka got off to a poor start as they lost the wicket of Lahiru Thirimanne (0) in the very first over of the innings bowled by Jasprit Bumrah. However, Kusal Mendis (16 not out) and Dimuth Karunaratne (10 not out) played out the rest of the overs of the day and didn't let India pick any wicket further.

Earlier in the day, Sri Lanka could add only 23 runs more to their overnight score as Jasprit Bumrah took a historic five-for (5/24) to help India bowl out the visitors for 109



in their first innings. It was Sri Lanka's second-lowest total (109) in Tests against

India, with the previous being 82 all out in Chandigarh in 1990.

Brief scores

India 252 & 303-9 decl in 68.5 overs (Rishabh Pant 50, Shreyas Iyer 67; Rohit Sharma 46; Praveen Jayawickrama 4/78, Lasith Embuldeniya 3/87) vs Sri Lanka 109 & 28/1 in 7 overs (Kusal Mendis 16 not out, Dimuth Karunaratne 10 not out; Jasprit Bumrah

8TH FIFER FOR BUMRAH, EQUALS KAPIL DEV'S FEAT

Bengaluru: Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah returned with a fiery spell and bagged his eighth five-wicket haul to equal legendary Kapil Dev's feat in the longest format of the game on the second day of the second and final Test (pink ball game) at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, here on Sunday. It was Bumrah's maiden five-wicket haul at home and eighth overall, which is now the joint-most for an Indian seamer after 29 Tests alongside Dev. The pacer, who is just 29 Tests old, completed his eighth five-wicket haul by dismissing Niroshan Dickwella in the first session on Day 2. Only Kapil Dev has registered as many five-wicket hauls among Indian seamers at the same point in his career. Of Bumrah's eight five-wicket hauls two each have come in West Indies, England and South Africa and one apiece in Australia and India. His 5 for 24 is also the best figures recorded by an Indian seamer against Sri Lanka, surpassing Ishant's 5 for 54 in Colombo in 2015. The premier pacer has now taken his tally to 120 wickets in 29 Tests, which is the 18th most by an Indian bowler.

Wasteful Bayern share spoils with Hoffenheim in Bundesliga

Berlin | Agencies

Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich dropped points for the second time in a row after sharing the spoils with courageous Hoffenheim following a 1-1 draw at the 26th round here.

Both sides staged a lively start as Hoffenheim's Andrej Kramaric tested Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer in quick succession before Serge Gnabry's volley forced Hoffenheim custodian Oliver Baumann into action on Saturday night.

Bayern gained momentum as Gnabry rattled the woodwork in the 12th minute before Baumann had to defuse Thomas Muller's dangerous shot on target three minutes later. Elsewhere, in form Freiburg



underlined its UEFA Champions League ambitions after seeing off Wolfsburg 3-2 by courtesy on Vincenzo Grifo's first-half brace.

Sasa Kalajdzic's last-gasp 1-1 equalizer helped struggling Stuttgart to salvage a point from Union Berlin and Borussia Monchengladbach secured a vital 2-0 to increase Hertha Berlin's relegation worries.

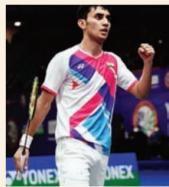
GERMAN OPEN, LAKSHYA SEN BEATS AXELSEN, STORMS INTO FINAL

Muelheim (Germany):

India's Lakshya Sen stormed into the men's singles final at the German Open 2022, stunning Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen in the semi-finals of the BWF World Tour Super 300 event here on Saturday.

Lakshya, the World Championship bronze medallist who was the only Indian shuttler in the fray in this event, came up with a brilliant performance to get the better of the World No 1 in a hard-fought battle that lasted for over an hour. The 20-year-old Indian beat Axelsen 21-13, 12-21, 22-20 to set up a summit clash with Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand, who defeated Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia 21-13, 21-12 in a one-sided encounter. This was world No. 12 Lakshya Sen's first-ever win against Denmark's Viktor Axelsen, the world No. 1 in the current badminton rankings.

Their four prior meetings, all within the period of the last two years, Lakshya had never beaten the Danish ace. All four matches ended in straight game victories to the Dane.



Women's World Cup: Australia thrash New Zealand by 141 runs

Wellington | Agencies

Six-time Women's World Cup champions Australia came up with another commanding performance, this time thrashing Trans-Tasman rivals New Zealand by 141 runs to go top on the points table at the Basin Reserve here on Sunday.

In one of the most one-sided victories in the ongoing ICC Women's World Cup, Australia bundled out the hosts for just 128 runs after setting a 270-run target for victory. Only the White Ferns' top-order batter Amy Satterthwaite (44 off 67 balls) could manage to go past 25, even as six of her team-mates fell in single digit.

It was a clinical performance from the Meg Lanning-led Australia as they successfully defended 269/8 by bowling their opponents out in the 31st over. There were strong contributions from nearly every member of Lanning's side,



with Ellyse Perry (68) and Tahlia McGrath (57) scoring valuable half-centuries and the returning Ashleigh Gardner (48 not out from just 18 balls) adding the finishing touches on a late Australian flurry with the bat.

But it was with the ball that the Australian really shone, as teenager Darcie Brown (3/22) ripped through the

New Zealand top-order and Amanda-Jade Wellington (2/34) and Gardner (2/15) put the polish on an impressive team performance.

The result sees Australia regain their place at the top of tournament standings with three wins from as many matches, while New Zealand drop to fourth and remain in a battle to reach the semi-finals. Earlier, Perry and McGrath put on 101 for the fifth wicket as Australia overcame the loss of three early wickets and an inspired Lea Tahuhu (3/52) to post a respectable total.

Brief scores :

Australia 269/8 in 50 overs (Rachael Haynes 30, Ellyse Perry 68, Beth Mooney 30, Tahlia McGrath 57, Ashleigh Gardner 48 not out; Lea Tahuhu 3/53) beat New Zealand 128 in 30.2 overs (Amy Satterthwaite 44; Darcie Brown 3/22, Ashleigh Gardner 2/15) by 141 runs.

West Indies' Bonner, Holder thwart England bowlers as Test ends in a draw

North Sound (Antigua) | Agencies

North Sound (Antigua): Nkrumah Bonner and tall all-rounder Jason Holder managed to keep the England bowlers at bay with unbeaten 38 and 37, respectively as the West Indies safely batted out the final day of the opening Test to take the match to a draw at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium here on Sunday (IST).

England's overnight batters Zak Crawley and Joe Root took the field on Day 5 with the intention to force a result. A rapid start to the day saw England add 132 in the morning session, with skipper Root reaching his 24th Test century.

England had resumed on 217/1 and immediately showed their intent as Crawley took the attack to the West Indies bowlers. A vicious yorker from Holder did the job on Crawley after his quick start, who walked off with 121 to his name, but new batter Dan Lawrence put the foot on the pedal right from the work go.



England's aggressive approach with the bat saw wickets fall quickly, with Lawrence (37), Root (109), Ben Stokes (13) and Ben Foakes (1) all sent back as five wickets fell in the space of 15 overs. But 132

runs came from the aggressive approach, and the declaration came 20 minutes before lunch with the score at 349/6, with Jonny Bairstow (15 not out) and Chris Woakes (18 not out) called back to the dressing room. And, with just five of the day's allocated deliveries remaining, Root opted to shake hands with the West Indies skipper at 147/4. Leach finished with figures of 3/57 from 30.1 overs, with Holder unbeaten on 37 from 101 deliveries and Bonner not out on 38 from 138 balls. The teams will play the second Test at the Kensington Oval in Barbados from March 16.

Brief scores :

England 311 and 349/6 decl (Zak Crawley 121, Joe Root 109, Dan Lawrence 37; Kemar Roach 2/53, Alzarri Joseph 3/78) drew with West Indies 375 and 147/4 (Kraigg Brathwaite 33, Nkrumah Bonner 38 not out, Jason Holder 37 not out; Jack Leach 3/57).

PANT SMASHES FASTEST TEST FIFTY BY AN INDIA BATTER

Adding another feather to his cap, Rishabh Pant on Sunday scripted history after hitting the fastest-ever half-century (50 off 28) by an Indian batter on the second day of the pink ball test. The wicket-keeper batter smashed seven boundaries and two sixes to reach the half-century mark in just 28 balls and break the legendary Kapil Dev's 40-year-old record.



WEST INDIES FINED FOR SLOW OVER-RATE AGAINST INDIA

Hamilton | Agencies

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Sunday fined the West Indies women's cricket team 40 per cent of their match fee for maintaining a slow over-rate against India in their Women's Cricket World Cup match at the Seddon Park on Saturday.

Shandre Fritz of the Emirates ICC International Panel of Match Referees imposed the sanction after Stafanie Taylor's side was ruled to be two overs short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration. In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate offences, players are



fined 20 per cent of their match fee for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time. Taylor pleaded

guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, "so there was no need for a formal hearing".



SHADOW BOXING IS MY MOST FAVOURITE THING IN THE WORLD: RITIKA SINGH

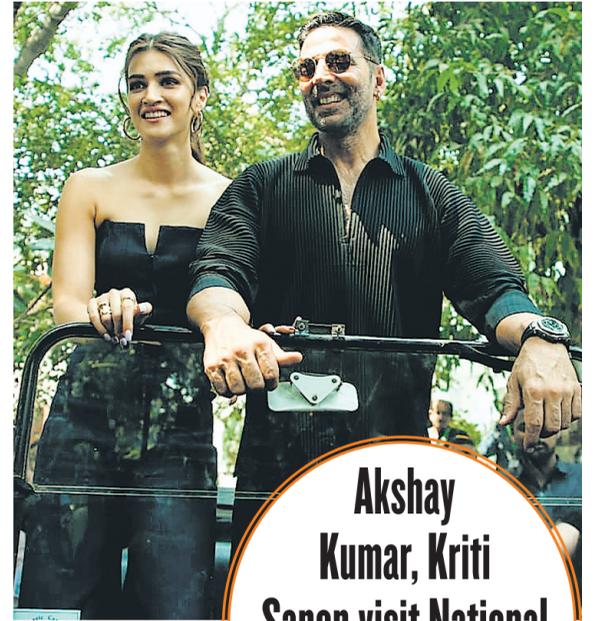
Team Absolute | Chennai

Actress Ritika Singh, who was a real-life boxer before turning an actress with Sudha Kongara's 'Irudhi Suttru' ('Saala Khadoos' in Hindi), says that "Shadow boxing is her most favourite thing in the world". Taking to Instagram on Sunday, the actress, who shot to limelight for her role as a boxer in 'Irudhi Suttru', which also featured Madhavan in the lead, posted a video of her training.

She then wrote, "Shadow boxing is my most favourite thing in the world! I don't even look at it as a workout, but it is an incredible one at that.

"No matter how many times you practice a combination or a kick or even a basic punch, it's never enough! You only keep getting better and start finding new ways to improve your skill set.

"Like the greatest Bruce Lee said, 'I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced 1 kick 10,000 times.'"



Akshay Kumar, Kriti Sanon visit National Museum of Indian Cinema

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar along with Kriti Sanon and the cast and crew of their upcoming film 'Bachchan Paandey' visited the National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC) on Sunday, as the museum reopens for the public post-pandemic.

As part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the National Museum of Indian Cinema displayed the vintage and the classic car club of India exhibition for the cast of the action-comedy feature film 'Bachchan Paandey'.

The reopening of the Museum happens in collaboration with The Vintage and Classic Car Club of India (VCCCI) which is conducting a vintage car exhibition at the museum premises. The director of the film 'Bachchan Paandey' - Farhad Samji, producer Sajid Nadiadwala along with Akshay Kumar, Kriti Sanon graced the occasion.

Talking on the occasion Neeraja Sekhar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, said "National Museum of Indian Cinema has been a dream project which was inaugurated by Honourable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji in 2019. Pandemic has kept museum-goers and cinema lovers away from NMIC for long. We now want to welcome people back here." The museum showcases the contributions of the legends across India, the equipment and interactive media keeps the visitors engrossed. The Museum shall continue to periodically upgrade and keep adding to the cinema world.

THE KASHMIR FILES DECLARED TAX-FREE IN MADHYA PRADESH

Aakruti Bagla | Mumbai

After Gujarat and Haryana, Vivek Agnihotri's 'The Kashmir Files' gets tax exemption in Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday declared the film 'The Kashmir Files' tax-free in the state, stating that the film needs to be watched by maximum people. He further said that the film is a heart-wrenching narration of the pain, suffering, struggle, and trauma faced by Kashmiri Hindus in the 1990s. "Movie #TheKashmirFiles is a heart-wrenching narration of the pain, suffering, struggle, and trauma faced by Kashmiri Hindus in the 90s," Chouhan wrote on his Twitter handle. "This needs to be watched by maximum people, hence we have decided to make it tax-free in the state of Madhya Pradesh," he stated. Vivek Agnihotri, who belongs from Madhya Pradesh, retweeted the CM's tweet and expressed his gratitude. "Both Pallavi Joshi and I are from Madhya Pradesh. And the kind of love and support that has come from MP for #TheKashmirFiles is overwhelming. Thanks a lot @ChouhanShivraj ji. You have always given priority to common people. You are a true Mama ji," he tweeted. Directed by Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri, the film has managed to impress the audience with its powerful content.



Model Mahi Goswami makes acting debut with series

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mahi Goswami who started her showbiz career as a fashion model is making her acting debut with upcoming series 'Gulam Begam Badshah'. She says: "I'm so blessed and excited to finally make my acting dream come true. I started as a model and after shooting with popular brands and celebrities. I was looking for such an opportunity. I feel actors enjoy more recognition compared to models. But yes I have always enjoyed modelling." Mahi, earlier won a beauty pageant says she will be playing a titular role.

"I'm playing a beautiful lead role in the series. She has many different emotions and shades. It's always fun to play such challenging roles. I'm sure after web I'll get more opportunities to be part of TV shows and movies too."

Ayesha Raza Mishra: Playing mom is okay if role is substantial

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ayesha Raza Mishra who has appeared in web series 'Sutliyan' says she does not mind playing the character of a mother or an elderly woman on-screen, as long as it is a substantial character as opposed to a token appearance.

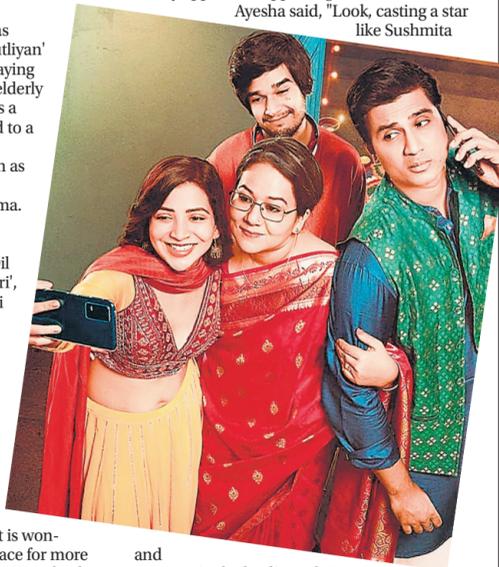
She was just 10 years old when as a student in her school she performed a mother for a stage drama. Since then, mostly in her acting career so far, she played mother on-screen in several films like 'Dil Dhadakne Do', 'Befikre', 'Madaari', 'Toilet: Ek Prem Katha', 'Veere Di Wedding', and 'Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl'.

Ayesha told reporter: "I think playing the character of a mother is never a problem for me. The problem is, in most of the stories, they are just supportive roles and not the lead, not author-backed. I have played characters that are small in length, yes people can still recall them but not lead. While it is wonderful to see OTT has created space for more female lead stories, I feel whether it is a lead or principal character, every female should be represented in a narrative with dignity and not just as furniture, that still happens."

Citing examples of 'Aranyak', 'Aarya', 'Human', Ayesha said that while watching actresses like Raveena Tandon, Sushmita Sen, Shefali Shah as lead is great, she addresses another issue with female actors who predomi-

nantly appear in supporting roles.

Ayesha said, "Look, casting a star like Sushmita



and Raveena in the leading role is very convenient and they have an audience for it. The audience would love to watch them on any platform, be it cinema or OTT. Shefali for instance is a great actress and an old friend of mine. I know how talented she is. Since she appeared in supporting characters in most of the films when she headlines a show like 'Human' I see a silver line there."

Sahil Khattar looks back on his days of struggle in the industry

Team Absolute | Mumbai



Actor Sahil Khattar feels that most of us want to be an actor at some point in life. The reason being this profession is not just creative but also brings in a lot of fame. Looking back at his journey, the YouTuber, RJ, host and actor shares that when he came to Mumbai for the first time he didn't care whether he was working in film, radio, digital etc. He was open to everything and slowly found his plan.

"I have always followed the trial and error method. My final goal is to write, produce and act, like Adam Sandler or Farhan Akhtar does, I have previously written for a couple of TV shows, events, digital shows and properties and now I am trying my hand at fiction writing and I am slowly walking towards that," he

says. Every day was a struggle, when Sahil started off. He lived in a chawl and there were days when he didn't even know where his next meal was coming from. He also walked many kilometers just to save Rs 10. "There were many rejections, but I still worked on my brand value and credibility and reached where I am today. I was a part of two top movies of 2021, '200 Halla Ho' and '83', and what better debut year can one ask for. I also had insecurities regarding my good looks." "Now people are warming up to the idea of bald actors as leads in India, in fact I'm playing the protagonist in a few projects, so I'm very happy. It's the high of being an actor that keeps me motivated. For me it's a totally different world, it's a dream world," says the actor. In the present scenario in spite of films, OTT and television opening many doors, there is a rise in competition and even unemployment. But, Sahil remains unperturbed.



Ankita Sharma