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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHOPAL AND NEW DELHI

NATION > 02

Bengal V-C heckling case: Expelled student arrested...



HOLLYWOOD > 06

Sofia Vergara Looks Unrecognizable With Bright Blue Hair...



SPORTS > 07

Soon-to-be world No. 1 Swiatek crushes Osaka for Miami Open...



CONNECTIVITY WITH CENTRAL ASIA KEY PRIORITY FOR INDIA: KOVIND

President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday said that connectivity with the Central Asian countries remain a key priority for India, which is a member of both the International North-South Transport Corridor, and the Ashgabat Agreement.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday said that connectivity with the Central Asian countries remain a key priority for India, which is a member of both the International North-South Transport Corridor, and the Ashgabat Agreement.

Addressing the young diplomats of Turkmenistan at the Institute of International Relations in Ashgabat, he said: "We have taken steps to operationalise the Chabahar port in Iran which can provide a secure, viable and unhindered access to the sea for the Central Asian countries.

"While expanding connectivity, it is important to ensure that connectivity initiatives are consultative, transparent and participatory, with respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries. India stands ready to cooperate, invest and build connectivity in the region."

Kovind stressed that India's foreign policy has been constantly evolving since its Independence.

"India's emergence as one of the major economies of the world and the relevance of India's technological capabilities has shaped key global negotiations. India's partnerships with countries of the Global South have grown substantially while its relations with major powers have



deepened further," he said.

He emphasised that one of the key pillars of India's foreign policy in recent years have been the 'Neighbourhood First' policy.

"While 'Indo-Pacific' is a recent addition to the geopolitical lexicon, India's engagement with the Indo-Pacific region goes back several centuries. The dynamism and vitality of the region makes it a global economic centre. We stand for an open, balanced, rules-based and stable international trade regime in the Indo-Pacific," Kovind said.

According to the President, one of the focus areas of Indian foreign policy in the last few years have been the revitalisation of its historical ties with

the Central Asian countries, which are a part of our "extended neighbourhood."

"As developing countries, India and Central Asian countries share common perspectives and similar approaches. We face common challenges such as terrorism, extremism, radicalisation, drug trafficking etc. India has also strategic relations with most of the Central Asian countries," he said.

On the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the President said that India's position on this issue have been steadfast and consistent.

"We have emphasised that the current global order is anchored in international law, the UN Charter, and

respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of states. We are deeply concerned about the worsening humanitarian situation. We have called for immediate cessation of violence and hostilities and return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy. We have also provided humanitarian assistance to Ukraine," he said.

About how the UN remains the most universal and representative international organisation, he said: "At the core of India's call for reformed multilateralism lies the reform of the UN Security Council, to reflect the contemporary realities. In this context, India values the support of Turkmenistan for our permanent membership in a reformed and expanded UN Security Council."

Kovind said that as Turkmenistan marches ahead in the 'Era of people with Arkadag', India, as a longstanding friend, stands ready to partner with it to realise the collective dreams of the people. He expressed hope that his visit to Turkmenistan would impart a new momentum to further promote partnership between the two countries.

He also inaugurated an 'India Corner' at the Institute of International Relations on the occasion. The 'India Corner' is envisioned to create interest in India amongst the students of the Institute in organising India related activities.

Hand written Maoist posters appear in Kozhikode against CM

HAND WRITTEN POSTERS OF THE OUTLAWED MAOISTS HAVE APPEARED IN SEVERAL PARTS OF THAMARASSERY IN KOZHIKODE DISTRICT OF KERALA CRITICIZING CHIEF MINISTER PINARAYI VIJAYAN FOR THE MULTI-CRORE HIGH-SPEED K-RAIL SILVERLINE PROJECT.



Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Hand written posters of the outlawed Maoists have appeared in several parts of Thamarassery in Kozhikode district of Kerala criticizing Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for the multi-crore high-speed K-Rail Silverline project.

The posters said that the Chief Minister is taking the state to ruins through the Silverline project and hence has to be opposed. It said that the CPI-M government is following the economic and regressive policies of the Narendra Modi government at the Centre.

Kozhikode Rural Superintendent of Police, Dr Srinivas told IANS that the police were monitoring the situation and are conducting searches and questioning suspected people regarding the posters.

The anti-Maoist police squad, "Thunderbolt" has been pressed into service and they are conducting searches in adjoining forests for finding out those behind the posters.

The hand written posters written in A-4 size papers appeared in various parts of Thamarassery which is the border of Kozhikode and close to Wayanad district of Kerala which has an active

presence of Maoist groups. The outfit has also warned the state government of the consequences if it goes ahead with the project.

Kerala is witnessing strong agitations against the K-Rail project by Congress and the BJP with huge public participation. The CPI-M which is ruling the state is on the backfoot following the public ire and the Chief Minister is taking a bold posture that he would implement the project at any cost.

This is the first time since the agitation against the K-Rail project began that the Maoist groups have come in the picture against the government.

Sonia Gandhi to chair meet of CPP on Tuesday

Congress president Sonia Gandhi will chair parliamentary party meeting to be held on Tuesday. All MPs of both the houses will be present in the meeting.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress president Sonia Gandhi will chair parliamentary party meeting to be held on Tuesday. All MPs of both the houses will be present in the meeting.

The meeting is held normally once during the parliament session in which Sonia Gandhi focuses the way forward for the party during her speech.

This will be the first meeting after the Congress lost badly in five state elections and the party is trying to remain united as Sonia Gandhi has pitched herself to keep the flock together. The party has to face two crucial state elections this year -- Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat.

There are other rumblings in the party. Former Madhya Pradesh Congress President Arun Yadav is upset, while issues in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan have not been resolved

yet. The Gandhi family is reaching out to each one in the G-23 group, who have been demanding a drastic overhaul of the party's functioning, either personally or through an emissary.

The 'G-23' which met last month had issued a statement calling for the Congress organisation to be revamped and accountability of the people involved in the election process be fixed.

"We believe that the only way forward for the Congress is to adopt the model of collective and inclusive leadership and decision making at all levels... in order to oppose the BJP, it is necessary to strengthen the Congress party. We demand that the Congress party initiate a dialogue with like-minded forces to create a platform to pave the way for a credible alternative in 2024," the statement had said.

MHA directs states to set up training module to handle crimes in tribal areas

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has written to states with sizable numbers of tribal population, to set up a separate training module to handle crimes in tribal areas, sources in the government said.

The Ministry has asked the states to set up specialised training centres and at-least six to eight week training must be given to the police personnel before posting them in police stations in tribal areas.

"The state police officials who have been posted long in these areas should share their experiences in the training centres about the approaches to handle crimes in tribal areas whereas the training manual of the States may also be suitably amended so that the police officers are made aware of local traditions and customs particularly of the tribals and other vulnerable groups," the officials aware of these developments said.

The Ministry has also asked the state police training institutes to collaborate with the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA) Hyderabad and North East Police Academy (NEPA), Shillong, to coordinate specialised training programmes for their states including the study



of the cultural gap among the tribes, and include their aspirations and tradition as a part of the training curriculum of the police personnel.

The Union Home Ministry has also asked the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), SVPNPA, Hyderabad and North East Police Academy (NEPA), Shillong to prepare training modules for the state police to deal with crimes in tribal areas.

The government's move came after the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs submitted to the Parliament recently.

The Committee in its 237th Report, voiced its concerns about the interaction and handling of crimes in tribal areas by the State police forces.

Expressing displeasure over the functioning of the state police force in the tribal areas, the

Committee opined that a tribal accused should be treated in a tactical way honouring their customs and traditions.

"Therefore, remodelling, restructuring and reorienting of the syllabus of training should be based on local customs and traditions of the residents of the area as the handling of the tribals by the police sometimes creates a reaction and also encourages radical groups in the society", the parliamentary panel said in its observations.

The Parliamentary Committee also recommended that police personnel posted in the tribal belt should have regular interaction with the tribal leaders, NGO activists, non-State representatives like the lawyers, university professors along with scholars having specialization on tribal issues for better handling of the crimes in tribal areas.

VICE CHIEF LT GENERAL MANOJ PANDE ALL SET TO BECOME ARMY CHIEF

Army Vice Lieutenant General Manoj Pande is all set to become Chief of the Army Staff with incumbent Army Chief General M.M. Naravane, seen as the frontrunner for the Chief of Defence Staff's post, is due to retire by the end of this month.



New Delhi: Army Vice Lieutenant General Manoj Pande is all set to become Chief of the Army Staff with incumbent Army Chief General M.M. Naravane, seen as the frontrunner for the Chief of Defence Staff's post, is due to retire by the end of this month.

Lt Gen Pande will take over the reign as he is the senior most in the force after General Naravane.

In the meantime, Gen Naravane is the front runner for the post of Chief of Defence Staff after the passing of General Bipin Rawat in a helicopter crash December last year. General Rawat, his wife Madhulika and 12 armed personnel were killed in a chopper crash on December 8, 2021. Lt Gen Pande became the senior most after a few top officers retired in last three months. The incumbent Lt Gen Raj Shukla who was commanding Army's training command (ARTRAC) retired on March 31.

A few other senior most leaders had retired by January end. Lieutenant General CP Mohanty and Lt Gen YK Joshi retired on January 31.

This March end, there were also rejoining in the force. Lt Gen S.S. Mahal assumed command of ARTRAC at Shimla after Lt Gen Raj Shukla hung his boots.

Lt Gen C Banshi Ponnappa took charge of Adjutant General of the Army. Lt Gen JP Mathews took over as the General Officer Commanding Uttar Bharat area.

ARMY CHIEF VISITS SINGAPORE TO ENHANCE MILITARY TIES



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane is on three-day visit to Singapore to enhance military cooperation.

He has proceeded on Singapore visit from April 4 to April 6. During the visit, he will be meeting senior military and civilian leadership of the country.

On April 4, General Naravane will lay a wreath at

the Kranji War Memorial. The Army Chief is scheduled to call on the Minister of Defence, Chief of Singapore Army and other senior dignitaries where he will discuss avenues for enhancing India-Singapore defence relations.

He will also visit the Infantry Gunnery Tactical Simulation and Wargame Centre, Regional HADR Coordination Centre, Info Fusion Centre and the Changi Naval Base.

Last year in December, Gen Naravane went on a week-long visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia, the first ever trip by an army chief to both West Asian states to significantly boost security ties.

OVER 2,000 PARAMILITARY TROOPERS DIED ON DUTY IN LAST 3 YEARS

A total of 2,042 security personnel from across the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) died in the last three years in the line of duty, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A total of 2,042 security personnel from across the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) died in the last three years in the line of duty, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Giving the information in response to a Parliamentary Question, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai had said that these included 47 gazetted officers while the remaining 1,195 were non-gazetted personnel of the general duty cadre.

According to the data, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) lost six officers and 303 other ranks in 2019,

five officers and 283 other ranks in 2020 and seven officers and 346 other ranks in 2021.

The Border Security Force lost five officers and 190 other ranks in 2019, seven officers and 266 other ranks in 2020, and eight officers and 252 other ranks in 2021.

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police lost four officers and 92 other ranks in 2019, one officer and 100 other ranks in 2020 and two officers and 103 other ranks in 2021.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) saw 15 other ranks die in 2019, one officer and nine other ranks in 2020 and none in 2021 while the Assam Rifle lost two other ranks in 2019, five in 2020, and one

officer and five other ranks in 2021. The Sashastra Seema Bal lost five officials in 2019, 14 in 2020, and five in 2021.

Rai also informed that the Welfare and Rehabilitation Board for Central Armed Police Forces provides assistance to the dependents of the deceased personnel, including counseling for their employment.

The benefits admissible to next of kin of CAPFs and Assam Rifles personnel who sacrifice their lives in the line of duty, inter alia, includes the Central ex-gratia lump-sum compensation ranging from Rs 25 lakh to Rs 45 lakh, liberalised Family Pension under Central Civil

Services (Extra Ordinary Pension) Rules, 1939, all other normal service benefits such as Death-cum-Retirement Gratuity (DCRG), leave encashment, Central Government Employees Group Insurance Scheme (CGEGIS), and General Provident Fund.

The next of kin also gets ex-gratia and other type of financial assistance from Risk/Welfare/Benevolent Fund of the Force concerned in accordance with the norms of the Fund and a public contribution up to Rs 15 lakh through 'Bharat ke Veer' online portal.

Parents of married deceased personnel also get additional financial

assistance of Rs 10 lakh to from 'Bharat ke Veer' corpus while an "Operational Casualty Certificate" is issued, entitling them to certain benefits like air and rail travel fare concession and allotment of retail petroleum outlet.

There is compassionate appointment for eligible dependents in accordance with government rules while there are some quota for wards for admission to MBBS and BDS courses, and the Prime Minister's Scholarship Scheme - at the rate of Rs 3,000 per month for girls and Rs 2,500 per month for boys. The martyrs' family also get compensation/assistance from some states/Union Territories.



BENGAL V-C HECKLING CASE: EXPELLED STUDENT ARRESTED

► **GIASUDDIN MONDAL, THE EXPELLED STUDENT OF ALIAH UNIVERSITY, WHO HAD BEEN ACCUSED OF HECKLING AND ABUSING VICE CHANCELLOR MOHAMMAD ALI, WAS ARRESTED ON SUNDAY.**

Kolkata | Agencies

Giasuddin Mondal, the expelled student of Aliah University, who had been accused of heckling and abusing Vice Chancellor Mohammad Ali, was arrested on Sunday.

He was arrested in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal and his mobile phone was also seized. The police were trying to trace Mondal's associates who had accompanied him while he was seen humiliating the vice chancellor.

A video went viral on Saturday night in which Mondal was seen



abusing the vice chancellor in his chamber in the university campus.

Mondal, the former unit head of the students' wing of West Bengal's ruling party, Trinamool Congress, was recently expelled from the university. The vice chancellor has alleged that although he called up the local police station for assistance, the reply was negative. The university authorities have lodged a complaint with the local police on this count also. The event

evoked strong criticism from the different political and academic circles in the state. Even governor Jagdeep Dhankhar strongly described it as a grave insult upon the 'temple of education'. "The teacher is a guru and my heart bleeds," the Governor said. The BJP demanded immediate removal of Education Minister Bratya Basu. Finally on Sunday noon, the police arrested the accused from a rented accommodation in Salt Lake. Giasuddin Mondal, however, said he tendered an apology to a section of the media for his behaviour towards the vice chancellor. "As a student I should not have used those abuses and I apologise for that. I sought an appointment from him to discuss some alleged irregularities relating to admission for PhD in the university and went to his office. But he kept me waiting for around three hours and hence I went to his room to register my protest," Mondal said. Meanwhile, political mudslinging has started over the development. West Bengal BJP President party MP, Sukanta Majumdar said

such is the culture that has been unleashed by the student leaders of Trinamool Congress on the campuses. "The vice chancellor of Aliah University is a perfect gentleman and hence he did not react. Had I been there I would have slapped Mondal," Majumdar said. CPI-M central committee member and former leader of Left legislative party in West Bengal Assembly, Dr Sujjan Chakrabarty said that after the video went viral, the Trinamool Congress leadership might resort to some eyewitness on the expulsion of the accused student leader from the party. "But after some time, the same person will be back Congress with full power and authority," he said. Trinamool Congress state general secretary and the party spokesman, Kunal Ghosh claimed that the opposition parties were unnecessarily politicising the entire issue. "I have enquired that the accused person had already been expelled from the party and has no connection with the student's wing of Trinamool Congress anymore," he said.

Do not spoil peace in K'taka: Cong tells BJP

The Karnataka Congress unit came down heavily on the BJP government for raking up issues which spoil communal harmony and create law and order situation in the state.

Bengaluru | Agencies

The Karnataka Congress unit came down heavily on the BJP government for raking up issues which spoil communal harmony and create law and order situation in the state.

The Congress slammed the BJP after calls for exclusion of Muslim traders from temple premises and Hindu religious fairs and halal meat ban by right wing groups were made.

Holding a joint press conference, Opposition leader Siddaramaiah and State President DK Shivakumar slammed the government over the issue.

Shivakumar said that to divert the attention of youths in the state, a few things are being raked up unnecessarily. Siddaramaiah said that the practice of halal cut is existing since thousands of years. "Their tradition is theirs and our tradition is ours. They think that meat with blood is not good for health. Let them live with their faith," he explained. "Haven't we purchased meat prepared after



halal cut? We also sacrifice animals in religious fairs. Unnecessarily do not spoil the peace and harmony in the state and focus on real issues of people," Siddaramaiah demanded. Referring to ban on halal cut meat, he stated that the issues which do not concern the public should not be brought to the fore, he urged. "There is direct connection between law and order situation and the pace of development. Everyone should understand it. The Congress is protesting for pro-people issues. If peace, order and harmony prevail in the society, investors would come forward," he said. "If investment flows, youths would get employment. If you don't ensure law and order in the society and rake up one issue after another, then things will not work," he said.

4 LET ASSOCIATES ARRESTED IN J&K'S BANDIPORA

Four Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) associates were arrested on Sunday in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district where the security forces busted a terror module.

Srinagar | Agencies

Four Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) associates were arrested on Sunday in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district where the security forces busted a terror module.

"These terror associates were providing logistics and transportation to terrorists in the districts.

"On specific inputs, the security forces recovered one Chinese grenade in Ashtango village of Bandipora and arrested terror associates identified as Irfan Ahmad Bhat, Sajad Ahmad Mir and Irfan Ahmad Jan.

"During a 'Naka' (Checkpoint) at Rakh Hajin in Bandipora district, the security forces arrested one terror associate, Irfan Aziz and recovered one Chinese grenade from his possession.

"Irfan was in touch with Pak based terrorist,



Umer Lala.

"Irfan along with his Pak based terrorist were planning to create terror incidents in the Hajin area.

"In both these cases, police stations Bandipora and Hajin have taken cognisance of the crime", police sources said.

Settle in such way that you don't get uprooted in future: Mohan Bhagwat to Kashmiri Pandits

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday urged the Kashmiri Pandits to take a resolve to settle in their homeland in such a way that they don't get uprooted in the future.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday urged the Kashmiri Pandits to take a resolve to settle in their homeland in such a way that they don't get uprooted in the future. Bhagwat was virtually addressing the community on the occasion of



Navreh celebrations. He also talked about 'The Kashmir Files' movie and said that while presenting the plight of displaced Kashmiri Pandits, the film has shaken the nation also.

Bhagwat mentioned that Kashmiri Pandits were forced to leave the valley due to extremism and now it is time to return as Hindus and

BharatBhakt. "Now it is the time to return and settle back in our homeland next year on our terms. You don't have to resettle there, but you have to settle in such a way that you don't get uprooted again," he said. Pointing out that Kashmiri Pandits have borne the brunt of getting displaced from their home in their own

country for the last three four decades, Bhagwat said that one shouldn't accept defeat in this situation and face challenges. The RSS chief also said that now if anybody tries to force the Kashmiri Pandits to leave the valley they will have to face the consequences. Bhagwat also talked about 'The Kashmir Files' and said that the movie has showcased an unfortunate reality of Kashmiri Pandits.

"The Kashmir Files' portrayed the story of Kashmiri Pandits, some are in favour of the film while some are against it. But the common man of this country feels that the film has presented the devastating truth to the world. This film has not only presented the pain of displaced Kashmiris but shaken the nation as well," he said.

BSF DG REVIEWS SECURITY SCENARIO AT LOC IN J&K

Border Security Force (BSF) DG Pankaj Singh on Sunday reviewed the current security scenario at forward locations on the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Border Security Force (BSF) DG Pankaj Singh on Sunday reviewed the current security scenario at forward locations on the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

He also reviewed the status of synergy between the Army and the BSF, interacted with troops and was briefed by 53 Brigade Deputy Commandant about the prevailing operational scenario and preparations for the coming months.

Singh was also briefed about the BSF deployment in Machil sector and also interacted with troops and appreciated their professionalism, steely resolve to maintain the sanctity of the LoC.

The BSF DG expressed satisfaction on the operational preparedness of BSF and good synergy



between Army and BSF and was apprised about the hardships being faced by the troops while working on high altitude.

He appreciated the very fact that despite hardships, zeal and enthusiasm of BSF troops in performing their assigned task is very praiseworthy and the Force has been successfully holding the ground on LoC in all these years.

This is a critical time as the snow starts melting

in the coming week and the attempts of infiltration from the hostile neighbouring country is likely to increase in weeks to come, the officials in the security set up said.

They also said that with proper coordination with Army and BSF, the Indian security forces deployed at LoC will thwart any such endeavours from the neighbouring country.

The BSF DG had reviewed the security situation along the International Border and LoC on March 18, 2022. He also interacted with the BSF personnel in Jammu division and appreciated their efforts in maintaining the sanctity of the border.

He was briefed about the critical aspects of border security and domination on the IB and the LoC and the general security scenario in its 'Area of Responsibility', covering the deployment pattern of BSF battalions on the Jammu IB.

The Jammu Frontiers officials also briefed the DG about the security challenges ranging from underground tunnelling to attempts to smuggle narcotics and weapons by Pakistan-based elements. Singh also discussed the threat posed by the use of drones by Pakistan in abetting smuggling of weapons and narcotics into the Indian side, the officials had said.

India reports 1,096 new Covid cases, 81 deaths

India reported 1,096 new Covid cases in a span of 24 hours, a decline from the previous day's count of 1,260, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Affairs said on Sunday.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India reported 1,096 new Covid cases in a span of 24 hours, a decline from the previous day's count of 1,260, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Affairs said on Sunday.

A total of 81 Covid related deaths were also reported in the 24-hour period across the nation, taking the death toll to 5,21,345. Following a continuous downward trend, India's active caseload has further declined to 13,013, constituting 0.03 per cent of the country's total positive cases. A total of 1,447 patients have recovered in the last 24 hours and the cumulative tally of recovered patients since the beginning of the pandemic is now at

4,24,93,773. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.76 per cent. Also in the same period, a total of 4,65,904 tests were conducted across the country. India has so far conducted over 79.07 crore cumulative tests. There has been a sustained fall in the weekly and daily positivity rates too. Weekly positivity rate in the country currently stands at 0.23 per cent and the daily positivity rate is also reported to be 0.24 per cent. On the vaccination front, India's Covid-19 vaccination coverage has exceeded 184.66 crore as per provisional reports till 7 a.m. on Sunday morning. This has been achieved through 2,21,24,040 sessions. Over 1.85 crore adolescents have been administered with the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine since the beginning of vaccination drive for the 12 to 14 age group, said the ministry on Sunday morning. More than 15.62 crore balance and unutilised Covid vaccine doses are still available with the states and union territories to be administered, according to the health ministry as of Sunday morning.

BJP youth wing begins 'Bharat Darshan' programme for its workers

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With aim to introduce its workers to the country's cultural diversity and tradition, Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) has started 'Bharat Darshan Sushasan Yatra' for its ground level workers.

First batch of about 30 'mandal' and district level workers of the BJYM from North and Northeast are on a four-day tour to Karnataka. Next batch of the BJYM workers from other states of the country will likely visit Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and other states. Through the 'Bharat Darshan' programme, the BJYM workers are introduced to the country's cultural diversity, traditions and historical richness by experiential tours to different places. This will help the



BJYM cadres experience and understand the unity in diversity of our country. BJYM national president and Lok Sabha member, Tejasvi Surya said: "Bharat is much more than a geographical region. It is a fusion of emotions, cultures and millions of people with diverse traditions and sentiments. To serve the country in the true sense, it is very important to understand

and feel our country first." National media in-charge of BJYM, Amandeep Singh said that each group will consist of 15 to 30 BJYM workers from mandal and district level. "Regular visits of the BJYM workers at the ground level will be held and in every group new workers will get the opportunity to learn about the rich culture and heritage of the country," Singh said.

AIADMK, DMK lock horns over 10.5% Vanniyar reservation issue

Chennai | Agencies

The opposition AIADMK and ruling DMK have started blaming each other over the 10.5 per cent internal reservation to the powerful Vanniyar community within the Most Backward Classes reservation.

The reservation was passed by the previous AIADMK government under Edappadi K. Palaniswami just before the 2021 election notification came as the alliance partner PMK was relentlessly campaigning for a 10.5 per cent internal reservation for the Vanniyar community within the 20 per cent MBC reservation.

The DMK government that followed after the 2021 Assembly elections issued the orders for the internal reservation. However, the Madras High Court struck down the order and the Supreme Court

of India upheld the judgment of the Madras High Court.

After the internal reservation was struck down by the Supreme Court of India, the PMK leader Dr. S. Ramadoss came out and stated that the government's not providing proper data on the various communities was the reason for the courts striking down the internal reservation.

Former Chief Minister K. Palaniswami and then law minister and AIADMK leader, Cve Shanmughan said that it was the failure of the DMK government that led to the courts striking down the internal reservation. Senior leader of the DMK and Minister for Water Resources in Tamil Nadu, S. Duraimurugan said that the Palaniswami's government had brought in the legislation for the 10.5 per cent reservation to the Vanniyar community

purely for electoral gains just before the 2021 Assembly elections. He said that it was unfortunate for the AIADMK leader Palaniswami to state that the Supreme Court upheld the Madras High Court order quashing the 10.5 per cent reservation to the Vanniyar community as the failure of the DMK government to provide details. AIADMK leader and former Law Minister Cve Shanmughan, who had piloted the Bill for 10.5 per cent internal reservation for Vanniyars, also said that it was the failure of the DMK government to provide data to the courts to substantiate the reservation that led to the quashing of the reservation. Meanwhile, PMK leader, Dr. S. Ramadoss called upon Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to immediately intervene in the matter and to provide the relevant data on reservations for other

communities in the Most Backward Classes.

S. Duraimurugan while speaking to IANS said, "The AIADMK is frustrated after its ally PMK and its leader, Dr. S. Ramadoss approached the Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to support the reservation. The AIADMK is unable to digest this and is now blaming the DMK government and our Chief Minister." He said that the state government would take an appropriate decision acceptable to the Vanniyar community by consulting legal experts regarding the same. The DMK and AIADMK are locking horns over the internal reservation of Vanniyars blaming each other due to the fact that the community is powerful in North Tamil Nadu and antagonizing it would not be helpful in the long run for the Dravidian majors in Tamil politics.



At Mumbai Metro flag-off, Thackeray slams bullet train project

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Flagging off the two new Mumbai Metro corridors -- Line 2 and Line 7 -- Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday slammed the Centre for creating obstacles on projects related to Mumbai, and questioned the utility of the upcoming bullet train project.



"The first bullet train (for India) should have been started between Mumbai and Nagpur, not between Mumbai and Ahmedabad... Tell me, how is the bullet train between Mumbai-Ahmedabad going to be useful to you?" Thackeray asked.

While the Centre is eager for the bullet train project, it has taken over the land intended for the International Finance Centre in the prime Bandra Kurla Complex, he said of the pet project of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"If you have love for Mumbai then why don't you give us the Kanjurmar (salt-pan) lands for the Mumbai Metro Rail project? Railway land is not being transferred for the Dharavi redevelopment project, land is not being given to us for a pumping station," Thackeray said here.

Taking a swipe at the state Bharatiya Janata Party leader who accused him of claiming credit for the two new lines of Mumbai Metro, Thackeray retorted saying if they had so much concern for the city, then why are roadblocks being created for the state's important infrastructure projects.

Earlier, Thackeray flagged off two new Metro Line 2A and Line 7, both in the suburbs - on the auspicious occasion of Gudi Padwa, the Maharashtra New Year.

Present were Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, other Cabinet ministers of Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress, senior officials and other dignitaries.

The two new lines shall start operations daily 5 a.m.-11 p.m. from tomorrow

(Sunday) for commuters, with fares ranging from Rs 10-Rs 40 for the air-conditioned rides at speed of around 70-kmph, said MMRDA Commissioner SVR Srinivas.

Both fully elevated, Line 2A runs from Dahisar East to D.N. Nagar in Andheri West via the new Link Road, and Line 7 runs from Dahisar East to Andheri East via the Western Express Highway - are partially complete.

When fully completed, Line 7 will be 33.50 km long with 29 stations and Line 2A shall be 18 km long with 17 stations en route. Though the trains are equipped to operate with a driverless system, initially they will be operated by a contingent of around 60 male and female drivers.

The development came after nearly 11 months of trial runs on these 2 lines since May 2021.

It may be recalled that the city got the 11.50 km long Mumbai Metro One - its first and only so far - elevated line on June 8, 2014, linking Versova-Andheri-Ghatkopar in the east-west direction.

The Line 2A and Line 7 were sanctioned in October 2015 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone during the erstwhile Bharatiya Janata Party-led government of the (then) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis.

The entire corridors of the two new lines are expected to be ready in the next five-six months, officials said.

Oops! Raj Thackeray parrots BJP script at MNS rally, sparks political ire

A huge political row was ignited in the state on Sunday after Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) President Raj Thackeray's stinging direct attack on his estranged cousin and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, and attempt to stake a claim on Hindutva, at his large Gudi Padwa day rally, here late Saturday night.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A huge political row was ignited in the state on Sunday after Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) President Raj Thackeray's stinging direct attack on his estranged cousin and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, and attempt to stake a claim on Hindutva, at his large Gudi Padwa day rally, here late Saturday night.

In a Macaque-shaming somersault, Raj slammed Uddhav for not respecting the peoples' mandate in favour of Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party in the 2019 Assembly elections and choosing to ally with Nationalist Congress Party-Congress to head the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

"He has betrayed the peoples' verdict. He claims there was a closed-door understanding with Amit Shah to share the post of CM. Why he remembered it only after the elections," boomed Raj.

He also targeted Congress and NCP Presidents on various counts, blaming the latter for introducing divisive politics in the state after launching the NCP.

A strong critic of the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Raj's 2019 election meetings were an audio-visual treat as he barked 'Laav re te video' (Play that Video) and carried out a serial expose on the saffron party amidst thunderous applause, but managed to get only one MLA elected.

On Saturday, an apparently weary Raj urged the gathering of 'Hindus' "not to forget" his sermons, give an opportunity to the MNS to rule the state 2024 and help take it towards progress.

He also demanded that the MVA government should immediately ban loudspeakers at mosques or he would counter them by playing Hanuman



Chalisa at double volume near the mosques.

As expected, top MVA leaders starting with Sena MP Sanjay Raut, NCP chief Pawar, Deputy CM Ajit Pawar, Supriya Sule, Congress' Nana Patole, Ashok Chavan, Atul Londhe, ex-Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar and others clobbered Raj Thackeray for his unbridled remarks.

Surprisingly, Asaduddin Owaisi, President of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) - which recently sought an alliance with the MVA but was spurned - issued a gag order on his party from reacting to the MNS chief's comments.

Referring to the MNS head's flip-flops vis-a-vis

the BJP in the past, Pawar Sr knowingly said in Solapur that Raj is 'inconsistent', who says things and scoots for 3-4 months after that.

Raut charged Raj with being a 'megaphone' of the BJP who has cut his wisdom-teeth belatedly and wondered why he chose to raise the MVA government formation after two-and-half years.

Taking a swipe at Raj's infamous ED notice in August 2019 and his succulent grilling for over 9 hours by the agency sleuths, an amused Sule asked whether he got 'scared' of just one ED notice.

In a pointed comment, Congress' chief spokesperson Atul Londhe said Raj's politics started with a 'development agenda' and had now come full circle with Hindutva and communalism. "This shows his frustration at not being able to make a mark in politics for so long. He has to abuse other parties to show his own relevance," Londhe said.

Raut said if Raj feels Pawar was playing communal politics, then why did he keep going and falling at his feet in the past, and said instead of speaking about the good works done by the MVA, he had resorted to needless attacks.

NCP chief spokesperson Mahesh Tapase took a jibe pointing out how Raj's speeches have entertainment value, but are 'directionless', obstructing his supporters from creating a 'political space' for themselves, and others termed Raj as BJP's 'C Team'.

The MNS spokesperson Sandip Deshpande took strong umbrage at the barrage of criticism and calling Raj as the BJP's 'C Team', while party activists launched an agitation playing high-decibel Hanuman Chalisa on loudspeakers near a mosque in Ghatkopar, giving tense moments to the police on the first day of the holy month of Ramzan.

Something wrong somewhere: NCP leader on Sail's death in Aryan Khan case

After the death of Prabhakar Sail, a key witness in the Aryan Khan case, NCP leader Majeed Memon on Sunday raised suspicions about the incident.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

After the death of Prabhakar Sail, a key witness in the Aryan Khan case, NCP leader Majeed Memon on Sunday raised suspicions about the incident.

In a tweet he said, "A vital witness in Aryan Khan drug case dies suddenly creating suspicion about something wrong somewhere."

The Maharashtra government on Saturday ordered the police to probe his sudden demise.

After doubts were raised over the death of Sail -- a key 'panch witness' in the infamous Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) raids on the Cordelia Cruise ship last October, Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil directed the Mumbai Police to investigate. Sail, in his mid-40s, reportedly suffered a cardiac arrest at his home in Mahul, Chembur, according to his lawyer Tushar Khandare.

Terming it as a 'suspicious development', NCP chief spokesperson Mahesh Tapase demanded a Central

Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe.

BJP legislator Atul Bhatkalkar wondered whether Sail had meted a fate similar to the Thane businessman Mansukh Hiran, who was found murdered after the sensational case involving an SUV with 20 gelatin sticks was recovered near the home of industrialist Mukesh Ambani erupted in February 2021. Soon after the

October 2, 2021 raids aboard the cruiser, Sail had created a stir accusing then NCB Mumbai Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede of various irregularities, and hurled allegations of extortion from Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan whose son Aryan was among those detained and later arrested. Besides Aryan Khan, around 19 others were nabbed and two are

still in custody, while the NCB has been granted two months' extension to file its charge sheet in the Cordelia Cruise ship swoop case. Sail -- who was described as a personal bodyguard of another independent witness and a BJP activist K.P. Gosavi, had later made several shocking revelations that raised serious questions on the NCB raids and Wankhede.

Mumbai Police summon BJP Oppn Leader in bank fraud case

The Mumbai Police have issued summons to Bharatiya Janata Party's Leader of Opposition (Council) Pravin Darekar for investigations into the Mumbai District Central Cooperative Bank fraud case.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Police have issued summons to Bharatiya Janata Party's Leader of Opposition (Council) Pravin Darekar for investigations into the Mumbai District Central Cooperative Bank fraud case.

The MRA Marg Police Station has summoned Darekar in connection with a case registered on March 14 based on a complaint by Aam Aadmi Party state general secretary Dhananjay Shinde.

Shinde has alleged that the BJP leader has cheated the government and the MDCCB by impersonating as a labourer to contest the bank's elections as a Director in the labour category.

He further said that Darekar served the MDCCB Director and two terms as the Chairman, after which a probe was ordered by the Maharashtra Cooperative Department and he was disqualified in January 2022.

Shinde further stated that it was during Darekar's tenure that misappropriation of MDCCB's funds to the tune of Rs 2,000 crore allegedly took place and sought his resignation as Leader of Opposition.



Besides AAP, Shiv Sena leader Kishore Tiwari had filed a complaint against Darekar in September 2021 with Ghatkopar Police Station who had misdeclared his professional credentials in his election affidavits.

Darekar has consistently denied all the allegations levelled against him in the matter by Shinde and Tiwari, with the latter urging Union Minister for Cooperation Amit Shah to clarify the party's stand in the matter.

10 COACHES OF MUMBAI-JAYNAGAR ANTYODAYA EXPRESS DERAIL NEAR NASHIK

At least 10 coaches of the 11061 Lokmanya Tilak Terminus-Jaynagar Antyodaya Express derailed between Devlali and Lahavit stations near Nashik here on Sunday afternoon, officials said.



Nashik | Agencies

At least 10 coaches of the 11061 Lokmanya Tilak Terminus-Jaynagar Antyodaya Express derailed between Devlali and Lahavit stations near Nashik here on Sunday afternoon, officials said.

While two passengers have sustained some minor injuries, there are no fatalities in the accident that occurred around 3.10 p.m. The Central Railway (CR) has rushed an

accident relief train from Manmad and accident relief medical equipment from Bhusaval besides a medical van from Igatpuri to the accident site. CR Chief Spokesperson Shivaji Sutar said that part coaches with passengers are being moved towards the Nashik end and buses have been arranged for their convenience. Clarifying

certain media reports, Sutar said that "no death is reported" in the derailed train mishap, while the two injured passengers have been provided medical attention. The incident resulted in the regulation of schedules of at least five trains while the Mumbai-Hazrat Nizamuddin Rajdhani Express was diverted via Diva-Vasai corridor.

After two years, Mumbai's Ramzan Bazar to roll out red carpet, serve goodies to foodies!

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After an unprecedented 'shut-down' for two consecutive years (2020-2021) due to the Covid-induced restrictions, Mumbai's famed Ramzan food market in and around Mohammed Ali Road is all ready to buzz just like it did before in its around 250-year-old history.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government has lifted all the pandemic related curbs from this month, and the annual food market is set to manifest itself in full glory at Mohammed Ali Road, Minara Masjid, Bhandi Bazaar, and other bylanes, to whip up the favourite goodies for the foodies, from the first day of the holy Ramzan month of fasting on Sunday/Monday.

Local Congress MLA Amin Patel is the moving spirit behind the 'revival' of the food bazaar that is 'house-full' from sunset to sunrise, making it a memorable, adventurous culinary night-out for the thousands of patrons from Mumbai, other states and even foreigners for



the entire month. "This week, I met all the stakeholders, requested for strict hygiene and cleanliness, physical distancing, regular sanitising and twice day-time fogging of the entire region, adequate fire-safety norms and uninterrupted power supply... All the concerned departments will fully cooperate," Patel told IANS. For the past two Ramzans, the market was closed and deserted, the centuries old glitter and lights were missing as people crouched indoors during the first and second waves of the pandemic, unwilling to take chances. "We are ready to roll out the red carpet for our beloved patrons and food-lovers whose presence we

missed the past two years," said Abdullah Rehman Khan, owner of the decades-old landmark 'Mashaallah Cuisine', which nestles under the shadow of the 25-decade-old Minara Masjid, where the trend started in a small way. Electronics engineer Mohsin Shaikh -- who runs the 100-year old family business, 'Minara Paan Shop' -- is optimistic that the Ramzan food market reopening will signal the beginning of good days again for lakhs of families who depend on it for survival. "There will be the usual select, enticing, aromatic 400-plus non-vegetarian items, over 100 assorted desserts and beverages, employing more than 5,000 people, many more indirectly, all supporting their families back home, helping churn the economy in these tough times," said Shaikh, whose outlet is renowned for the 50-plus 'tobacco-free' yummy paan concoctions. "The overall theme is lip-smacking Mughlai cuisine, and we have specialised 'visiting' biryani chefs from Lucknow, nihari doyens of Delhi, tawa food experts from Bahraich

(UP), gravy masters, and more such food exponents," said Javed Makhdum of Bhopal, one such migratory maestro of non-veg food mixes. But local restaurateurs whisper how they don't really prefer to entertain these celeb entertainers who "disrupt the whole market ambience with their brief starry appearances", so now many bigwigs prefer to pick up parcels quietly in their dark-tinted glass vehicles, depart without fan-fare to enjoy their delicious fare elsewhere. At times, open-mouthed catering college students troop here on 'field assignments' or frowning professional chefs of top hotels/restaurants quietly visit, their critical eyes scouring the area as the hungry minions dare to devour streetside delicacies without a care. The food bazar has spawned many clones in Mumbai and other cities, but people like Khan swear that the 'ronak' (splendour) of the Mohammed Ali Road market surpasses that of the Ramzan mega-food congregations in Istanbul, Dubai, Cairo, Jakarta or Casablanca...!



EDITOR'S SPECS

ONE MORE NEW COVID VARIANT

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has issued a warning against a new mutant 'XE' variant of Omicron, that may be more transmissible than any strain of Covid-19 seen before. This new variant is a recombinant strain, meaning it is a mutant hybrid of the two previous versions of the Omicron variant, BA.1 and BA.2, which spread across the world when it first became a variant of concern, reports Express.co.uk. According to reports, the new variant is 10 per cent more transmissible than the BA.2 sub-variant, which is already the most contagious. As per the WHO, BA.2, which is a subvariant of the Omicron strain, is the most dominant strain of the virus, being 86 per cent of all sequenced cases attributed to it. While XE only accounts for a small fraction of the cases, its extremely high transmissibility could mean that it becomes the most dominant strain in the near future. The WHO has recently issued a report outlining their initial findings of this potentially new variant of concern. "The XE recombinant (BA.1-BA.2), was first detected in the UK on January 19 and less than 600 sequences have been reported and confirmed since," the report said. "Early day estimates indicate a community growth rate advantage of 10 percent as compared to BA.2, however, this finding requires further confirmation," it added. The global health body noted that until they can detect "significant differences in transmission and disease characteristics, including severity", XE will remain categorised as a part of the Omicron variant. "WHO continues to closely monitor and assess the public health risk associated with recombinant variants, alongside other SARS-CoV-2 variants, and will provide updates as further evidence becomes available," the report continued.

THERE'S CHANGE IN THE AIR HAPPENING IN KASHMIR

Deepika Bhan

Over the past few days, certain events in Kashmir have come as a surprise. Groups from the majority and minority communities, which had been torn apart following the Pakistan-supported terror being unleashed in the valley in 1989-90, are gradually trying to make a new beginning by putting the past behind them. These groups have been working silently and cautiously to remove mistrust and build confidence. Their first step was to hold a 'Navreh puja' followed by 'Navreh Milan' to celebrate the beginning of the Kashmiri New Year in Srinagar on April 2. The day, incidentally, was also the eve of the month of Ramzan. Atop the Hari Parbat hillock located in the heart of Srinagar, amid the chanting of hymns, tolling bells and the blowing of conch shells, the city looked as if it had travelled back in time by 32 years when the Mata Sharika Temple used to be thronged by Kashmiri Pandits on the occasion of 'Navreh'. Navreh meant a special puja at the temple, a simple place of worship that has stood there for ages overlooking the valley below. For the past 32 years, since Kashmiri Pandits were forced out, the temple bells had fallen silent, but on Saturday (April 2), the past came alive when hundreds of Kashmiri Pandits performed the worship together. What also came alive was Hindu-Muslim bonhomie, which is the true essence of Kashmiriyat, but had fallen apart as a result of the targeting of the minority community in the valley. Nearly seven

lakh Kashmiri Pandits were forced to flee the valley in 1990 and subsequent years after Pakistan-backed terrorists wreaked havoc. After more than three decades, the silence was broken and the two communities came together to celebrate the age-old festival. For the worshippers, it was a very emotional moment of having been able to do something fearlessly that they have yearned for in all these 32 years of displacement. Each one of them prayed for peace in the valley, their return and living together with the majority community as was the case three decades ago. Sharing their happiness and lending their support were the local Muslims. Under the banner of the J&K Peace Forum, they joined an inter-community Navreh Milan at the Sher-e-Kashmir Park in Srinagar, which has not seen anything like this in the past three decades. At the Milan, scenes of Hindu-Muslim bonhomie were seen. Local Kashmiri Muslims in good numbers participated in the celebrations and artistes from the community presented skits and songs. "Such an activity has not been seen in the valley after we left. It is really heartening to see the response," Satish Mahaldar, Chairman of the J&K Peace Forum, said after the Navreh Milan. He said the presence of the majority community during the festive occasion sent across a positive message to the Kashmiri Pandits, and added that common folk in the valley want to live peacefully and return to the pre-1990 years. The good turnout of local residents for the Navreh Milan has come as a surprise for many, but for the organisers, it was all about tapping the latent emotion that has got overwhelmed by the terror threat.



"Kashmiri Pandits have suffered, we have suffered. They belong to this place. They have to return," said Ali Mohammad, the Forum's general secretary. "The event was organised was not a political event. We are common people trying to get together again. It is an effort by the common people." The good number of Muslims who attended the event have sent out a positive message to the organisers. They said more such events needed to be done to bring the two communities together. "The more interaction happens, the better it will be for all. We have

to live together and for that, concrete steps need to be taken," Mahaldar said. The fact that terrorism continues to raise its ugly head, albeit occasionally, is proving to be the hurdle in the mass rehabilitation of the displaced Kashmiri Pandit community. Last year, a few targeted killings sent shock waves among the minorities in the valley and suddenly everything seemed to be falling apart all over again. Peace in the valley to be fragile and for Kashmiri

Pandits to permanently return to their homes, a lot needs to be done at the local level. The Navreh Milan should be an eye-opener for those who have supported the separatist agenda and created a wedge between the majority and the minority in Kashmir. The common Kashmiri, fed up with the continued violence in the valley, longs to go back to the pre-1990 era when people lived peacefully and cohesively.

international

IMRAN KHAN GUILTY OF 'HIGH TREASON': NAWAZ SHARIF

Islamabad | Agencies

Former Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Sunday said that Pak Prime Minister Imran Khan and all characters involved in the "conspiracy" against the nation are guilty of high treason and should be tried under Article 6 of the Constitution, media reports said. The former premier's remarks came after Pak President Arif Alvi approved the advice of Prime Minister Imran Khan to dissolve the National Assembly after a summary was sent by the premier in the wake of a no-trust move against him. "The President of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi, has approved the advice of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to dissolve the National Assembly under the Article 58 (1) read with Article 48(1) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," according to the short statement issued by the President's Secretariat. "Today, a man obsessed with power trampled the Constitution," Nawaz Sharif wrote



on his official Twitter handle. Nawaz, who is also the supreme leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), said that Imran Khan and all characters involved in the "conspiracy" against the nation are guilty of high treason and should be tried under Article 6 of the Constitution, xpress Tribune

reported. He warned that anyone involved in any wrongdoing with the country and desecration of the Constitution will be taken to task. National Assembly Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri had earlier dismissed the no-confidence motion submitted by the joint opposition, terming it "unconstitutional" under Article 5.

HUNGARY VOTES IN PARLIAMENTARY POLLS

Budapest: Hungarians went to the polls on Sunday to elect new members of the 199-seat Parliament, which could give incumbent Prime Minister Viktor Orban a fourth consecutive term. Some 7.8 million voters are eligible cast their votes until 7 p.m., reports Xinhua news agency. Preliminary results are expected towards Sunday evening. Polls predicted a narrow win for Orban's Fidesz party and its allied Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP). Orban, 58, had been in power between 1998 and 2002 and came to power again in 2010. At a final campaign rally on Friday, he mobilised his voters by promising them peace and calm in the shadow of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and called on his supporters to give an all-out effort on the election day. The opposition alliance held its event in central Budapest on Saturday. Peter Marki-Zay, the alliance's candidate for Prime Minister and currently the mayor of Hodmezovasarhely, said that his political formation was "at the gate of victory". Marki-Zay, a 49-year old father of seven, won the opposition primary elections held in October 2021.

Speaker's ruling cannot be challenged, says former Pakistan Minister

Islamabad | Agencies

Former Pakistan Minister Fawad Chaudhry said on Sunday that the Speaker's ruling, rejecting the no-confidence motion against the Imran Khan government, cannot be challenged. Earlier, the Supreme Court of Pakistan on Sunday took suo moto notice of dissolution of the National Assembly by the President, Dunya News reported. The apex court has formed a special bench to look into the matter. President Dr Arif Alvi had dissolved the National Assembly on the advice of Prime Minister Imran Khan after its Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri rejected the no-confidence motion submitted by the opposition, terming it against Article 5 of the Constitution. Opposition's hopes of ousting the premier were dashed after Suri's deci-



sion. Shortly after the session began, Chaudhry said that loyalty to the state was the basic duty of every citizen under Article 5. "On March 7, our official Ambassador was invited to a meeting attended by the representatives of other countries. The meeting was informed that a motion against PM Imran was being presented," he said. "We were told that relations with Pakistan were dependent on the success of the no-confidence motion. We were told that if the motion fails, then the upcoming path for Pakistan would be very difficult. This is an operation for a regime change by a foreign government," he alleged.

6 dead, 9 wounded in California shooting

Sacramento | Agencies

At least six people were killed and 9 others were wounded in a shooting in downtown Sacramento, the capital city of the US state of California, local police said on Sunday. "Officers located at least 15 shooting victims, including six who are deceased," the Police Department tweeted. Police closed several streets after the shooting happened early Sunday morning in Sacramento, Xinhua news agency reported. Gun violence has been on the rise across the United States in the past few years, a trend fueled by a confluence of factors, from the economic and social disruptions



caused by the Covid-19 pandemic to the unrest during the 2020 elections, as well as a surge in gun sales. More than 17,000 people have died or been injured due to gun violence in the country so far this year, during which time America has seen at least 110 mass shootings, according to a database run by the non-profit research group Gun Violence Archive.

SL OPPOSITION PARTIES AND PUBLIC DEFYING CURFEW TO PROTEST

Colombo | Agencies

Sri Lankan security forces, guarding capital Colombo, on Sunday blocked a protest march by Opposition leader and dozens of MPs to the main city square and dispersed several other public protests around the country held in defiance of the island-wide curfew imposed by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Opposition leader Sajith Premadasa, together with several MPs, marched up to the Independence Square in the heart of Colombo, chanting slogans like "Gota, go home". However, police and security had barricaded the entrance to the square from all sides and refused them entry. "The curfew is

illegal. There is no emergency situation to impose curfew. Do your duty to the people but not to one family," Premadasa told police and military who blocked him. Meanwhile, protests in several cities, including one by the University students in Kandy, was dispersed by police by firing teargas and water cannons. However, in Colombo suburbs, opposition Marxist party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna went ahead with a protest defying curfew and emergency law. Holding placards against the government, silent protests by public continued in front of their houses and along roads around the country. President Rajapaksa imposed emergency and 36-

hour long curfew from Saturday evening to thwart people getting on to the streets on Sunday against a month-long crisis without fuel, electricity, LP gas, medicine, and some basic food items. An island-wide protest was organised by apolitical masses, mainly youth via social media. Telecommunication Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL) to withdraw the ban imposed on social media purportedly on the advice of the Ministry of Defence. members of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's son Namal Rajapaksa had left the country for an undisclosed country, the media reported. On the other hand, ending 10 to 13 hour long power cuts continuing for days was

reduced to nearly 2 hours with the supply of 40,000 mt of fuel from India \$500 million credit line to purchase fuel. The PUCSL announced that the power cut could be reduced in the coming days. PUCSL Chairman Janaka Ratnayake told he has received written confirmation from the Power and the Energy Ministries that fuel stocks would be allocated for power generation. The PUCSL said Sri Lanka has received 12,000MT of diesel through the Indian Credit Line on Saturday and 6,000MT through Indian Oil Company (IOC). Another 12,000MT of diesel are expected to be supplied on April 5 and 6 and 25,000MT of furnace oil on April 6 and 7 through the Indian Credit Line.

RUSSIAN SOLDIERS BEING POISONED BY PASTRIES AND ALCOHOL IN UKRAINE

London: Russian troops near Kharkiv died after eating poisoned stuffed buns given to them as 'gifts' by Ukrainian citizens, a Ukrainian intelligence agency has claimed, the media reported. Two soldiers from the 3rd Motor Rifle Division died immediately after eating the delicacies served by the citizens of Izium, a post by the Main Intelligence Directorate of Ukraine announced. "after drinking poisoned alcohol given to them by civilians, Daily Mail reported. In the post, the agency said: "Ukrainians resist the occupiers by all available means. According to available information, local residents of the Izium district (Kharkiv region) 'treated' Russians from the 3rd Motorized Rifle Division of the Russian Federation with poisoned pies. "As a result, two occupiers died at once, another 28 were taken to the intensive care unit. Their current state is being clarified." "About 500 more servicemen of the 3rd Motorized Rifle Division of the Russian Federation are in hospitals due to severe alcohol poisoning of unknown origin." Russia has reportedly written the troops off as 'non-combat losses' as it begins to pivot its war effort to focus on fighting in the Donbas region of east Ukraine having failed to encircle Kyiv in the first six weeks of the war. The sabotage is the latest in a campaign of civilian warfare by Ukrainians seeking to defy Russian attempts to capture their cities.



SHIVRAJ'S REPLY TO UMA BHARTI ON ALCOHOL: 'IF BAN CAN STOP DRINKING ALCOHOL, THEN I SHOULD NOT TAKE A DAY'

► CHIEF MINISTER SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN'S OWN PARTY'S SENIOR LEADER AND FORMER CM UMA BHARTI HAS RAISED QUESTIONS ON THE LIQUOR POLICY OF SHIVRAJ'S GOVERNMENT. SHE CRITICIZED THE NEW LIQUOR POLICY THAT CAME INTO FORCE FROM APRIL 1.



Zafar Alam Khan | Bhopal
www.absoluteindianews.com

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's big statement has come to the fore in the midst of continuing politics on liquor prohibition and new liquor policy in the state.

Chouhan has said that if people stop drinking alcohol just by banning it, his government would not spend a day to ban. Chouhan gave this statement in Ujjain where he had come to participate in the pro-

gram organized on Gaurav Diwas. Addressing the people who came there, the Chief Minister said that 'intoxication is the root of destruction.' If I just go and believe that it will stop only by stopping alcohol, then I do not spend even a day, but it does not happen. Therefore, first we will create a drug-free society. Let the de-addiction campaign go on and you believe that as soon as people leave the drug, the shops will be closed automatically, don't you worry. Chouhan's statement has come at a time when his govern-

ment's liquor policy has been questioned by senior leader of his own party and former CM Uma Bharti. Although Shivraj did not take anyone's name, it is believed that he was giving this statement only in the context of Uma Bharti.

Uma Bharti had questioned the new liquor policy implemented from April 1, saying that 'Today we have implemented a new liquor policy in Madhya Pradesh, in this how people can be given more liquor, how can more liquor be served in the court-yards. has been fixed. She said that in

Madhya Pradesh, women are opposing the liquor policy, state units of the Bharatiya Janata Party of Chhattisgarh and Delhi have come out on the road in protest against similar liquor policy. I am with the women and daughters of Madhya Pradesh, I am also concerned for the sons who have become victims of alcoholism, I am also ashamed that we are earning revenue by playing on their honour and life. Earlier, Uma Bharti had entered a liquor shop in Bhopal and pelted stones on which there was a lot of controversy.

Rewa rape case: Two who helped Mahant flee arrested

THE AKHIL BHARATIYA BRAHMAN MAHASABHA'S NATIONAL PRESIDENT-SANJAY TRIPATHI AND HIS NEPHEW HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE SENSATIONAL RAPE CASE IN MADHYA PRADESH'S REWA IN WHICH MAHANT SITARAM DAS IS THE MAIN ACCUSED, TAKING THE NUMBER OF ARRESTS TO FIVE, POLICE SAID.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Akhil Bharatiya Brahman Mahasabha's national President-Sanjay Tripathi and his nephew have been arrested in connection with the sensational rape case in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa in which Mahant Sitaram Das is the main accused, taking the number of arrests to five, police said.

Charged with helping the accused Mahant escape after the crime on March 28, Tripathi and his nephew Anshul Mishra, both residents of Rewa, were arrested from Bhopal on Saturday and brought to Rewa where they produced before a local court

on Sunday.

Police said Tripathi had provided shelter to Das after he allegedly raped the minor and also helped him to escape Rewa in his own car. Das had escaped to neighbouring Sidhi district and tried to change his appearance by cutting his long hair. However, he was arrested from Singrauli district on March 29.

"During the interrogation, Sitaram Das told that after raping the minor girl, he had taken shelter in Tripathi's home. He also told that Tripathi has provided a car to run away from Rewa to Sidhi and then to Singrauli. We have arrested duo (Tripathi and Mishra) from Bhopal.

They were sent to jail. Further investigation in the matter is still underway," said a senior police officer.

Apart from Das and the duo, Rewa police have also arrested Vinod Pandey and Tauseef Khan.

"All the arrested are being interrogated... Some more people associated with this case are also likely to be arrested soon," a police officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told IANS, adding that the Chief Minister's Office is directly monitoring the case.

A minor girl was allegedly raped in Raj Niwas in Rewa district on March 28 and a complaint was lodged on March 29.

JUDGE KILLED IN ROAD ACCIDENT IN MP

► A JUDGE POSTED IN A DISTRICT COURT WAS KILLED WHILE HIS COLLEAGUE AND ONE OTHER WERE SERIOUSLY INJURED AFTER THE CAR IN WHICH THEY WERE TRAVELLING RAMMED INTO A TRACTOR-TROLLEY NEAR CHHATARPUR DISTRICT HEAD-QUARTERS IN MADHYA PRADESH.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A judge posted in a district court was killed while his colleague and one other were serious-

ly injured after the car in which they were travelling rammmed into a tractor-trolley near Chhatarpur district headquarters in Madhya Pradesh.

As per the police, driver of the speedily driven car lost control over the vehicle and it rammmed into a stationary tractor-trolley parked on the roadside on Sagar-Kanpur highway on Saturday.

One of the trio died on spot, while two others were critically injured, the police said. The deceased has been identified as Rishi Tiwari, a judicial magistrate posted in Chhatarpur district court.

"The seriously injured, identified as Ashish Mathoria, a judicial magistrate and his brother-in-law Ram Dinkar, have been admitted to hospital in

Gwalior district," a senior police official posted in Chhatarpur district said on Sunday.

Family of the deceased received the body on Sunday and the last rites were performed in Sidhi district. A family member of the deceased told IANS that Rishi was selected in Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) one-and-a-half-year back and recently posted as judicial magistrate in Chhatarpur district court. "Rishi along with his colleague Ashish Mathoria were going to Chhatarpur district headquarters for an official purpose as latter was transferred to Neemuch district recently. Rishi was sitting in the pillion seat while the car was driven by Mathoria's brother-in-law," the police official added.

EARTHEN LAMPS WILL BE LIT IN ORCHHA ON RAM NAVAMI

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has called upon citizens to participate in lighting up Ramraja's city Orchha (Niwari district) with lamps on Ram Navami on April 10. Chouhan said that citizens are invited to light the lamp on the occasion of Prakatya festival by being present at Bhagwan Shri Ramraja ji' durbar. People's enthusiasm is being demonstrated in Orchha on Ram Navami. Earlier, on the occasion of Mahashivratri in Ujjain, on March 1, citizens had made a record by lighting lamps in the Ghats of Kshipra and n their houses. Chouhan said that whatever work the citizens of Madhya Pradesh take part in, the results are always positive. Be it the implementation of development schemes or the question of prevention against the Corona pandemic or protecting people from it by facing it, the people of Madhya Pradesh have achieved success with determination. Similarly, the participation of the general public in festivals is an example of their enthusiasm.

Show-cause notices issued to around 1000 govt employees in Bhopal for having more than two children

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Reacting to the notice, a government teacher said that they are "scared and paranoid" and action should be taken against those whose appointment letter had the rule mentioned in it. A show-cause notice has been issued to government teachers and employees

seeking an answer for having more than two children in the Bhopal, said AK Modgil, DEO of Vidisha city. "We have issued show-cause notices to them. Many are now citing reasons like the rule was not mentioned in their appointment letter, the childbirth was not deliberate or they have given their third child," DEO AK Modgil said. He said, in 2000, the Madhya Pradesh government specified

that if any employee will have a third child born after January 26, 2001, then those employees will not be eligible for the job. The education department official said that the administration did not inform the employees about this rule.

"A circular issued by the Madhya Pradesh government in the year 2000 specified that if any government employee had a third child born after January 26, 2001, then they'll be ineligible for the government job they are posted at. Every appointment letter post-January 26, 2001, specified the rule," the DEO said. He also informed that an MLA, recently, sought information in Vidhan Sabha

on employees against whom the action was taken under this rule. "Recently an MLA sought information in Vidhan Sabha on

employees against whom the action was taken under this rule. We started collecting information and there are 1,000 teachers and employees who had three or more children," he stated.

Reacting to the notice, a government teacher said that they are "scared and paranoid" and action should be taken against those whose appointment letter had the rule mentioned in it. "A showcause notice was issued to us. We've intimated to the authorities that there's no mention of the rule in our appointment letter. We're scared and paranoid. Action should be taken only against those whose appointment letter had the rule mentioned in it," said Mohan Singh Kushwaha, Teacher.

Chief Minister will take part in Makhan Nagar's Gaurav Diwas programme

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will attend the Gaurav Diwas programme to be held at Makhan Nagar in Narmadapuram district on Monday, April 4. Various organizations will express their gratitude to the Chief Minister for renaming Babai Nagar as Makhan Nagar on the birth anniversary of Satyagrahi and freedom fighter Pt. Makhanlal Chaturvedi by Chief Minister Chouhan. Various development works will be dedicated and bhoomi-pujan will be performed in Makhan Nagar. Along with this, a Sankalp Patra has also been prepared for the planned development of the city.

Monday, April 4 is going to be historic for Makhan Nagar. On reaching Makhanagar on the birth anniversary of Pt. Makhanlal Chaturvedi, local citizens will express their gratitude to

Chief Minister in the Gaurav Diwas programme for naming Babai as Makhan Nagar. It may be noted here that name plates of Makhan Nagar have been put up in the city with wide public cooperation in offices, markets, banks, post offices, police stations and other public places.

On Pride Day, local citizens will also take a pledge to cooperate with social organizations in the efforts of city's development. Every family in Makhan Nagar has taken initiative to plant a tree, to work for water conservation, to make the city's Anganwadi centers and schools excellent with public cooperation, to celebrate the birth of daughters and to resolve for cleanliness. Citizens have been invited for Gaurav Diwas by giving yellow rice on April 2 and 3. Various organizations of the state have also expressed special gratitude to Chief Minister for changing Babai's name to Makhan Nagar. This decision

has been considered historical and memorable in the world of literature and journalism. Madhavrao Sapre Memorial Newspaper Museum and Research Institute, Tulsi Manas Pratishthan, Hindi Bhawan, Madhya Pradesh Writers Association has considered this decision taken by Chouhan in honour of dedicated writer and freedom fighter like Pandit Chaturvedi as a special example in the entire nation. Pt. Makhanlal Chaturvedi, the writer and freedom fighter, was born on April 4, 1889 in Babai, which will from now on be known as Makhan Nagar after Pt. Makhanlal Chaturvedi. Pt. Chaturvedi, the illustrious editor of 'Karmaveer' and 'Prabha', has been the immortal hero of the national poetic stream, 'Pushp ki Abhilasha'. In honor of Pt. Chaturvedi, the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi also came to Narmadapuram district and set an example by reaching

the birthplace of Pt. Chaturvedi. Pt. Chaturvedi was the victorious commander of the Jhanda Satyagraha. He was a unique writer. He repeatedly campaigned against the British rule. Because of this, he wreaked havoc for the British Empire. He actively participated in the non-cooperation movement of the year 1921-22 and also went to jail. His love of patriotism is apparent in his poetic works. He had authority over many languages. He was awarded the honorary degree of D Litt from Sagar University in the year 1959. Along with this, he was awarded the 'Sahitya Akademi' award for his poetry collection 'Himtarangini' in the year 1955 and the Padma Bhushan in the year 1963 from the Government of India. Pt. Chaturvedi died on January 30, 1968. The National University of Journalism and Communication has been established in Bhopal after Pt. Makhanlal Chaturvedi.

About 49 Lakh Rural Families Benefitted From Jal Jeevan Mission

Water Supply Schemes of About 31 Thousand Crores Approved So Far

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Under Jal Jeevan Mission, water has been provided to 48 lakh 69 thousand 475 rural families of the state through tap connections. The works of the mission in the state started in June 2020 and in the last 21 months, about 49 lakh families have been benefitted from the mission. Under the mission, the Centre and the state bear half the expenditure each for providing water through tap connections to each rural household. Chief Minister Shivraj

Singh Chouhan has recently declared Burhanpur district as a district having cent percent tap water in the Jal Mahotsav programme. Now the entire rural population of Burhanpur district is getting water through tap connections at their homes. In the mission, work is being done on various water supply schemes by Public Health Engineering Department and Jal Nigam to provide water through taps to every household of rural families. Water has been made available through tap connection to cent percent households of 4 thousand 258 villages of the state. Under the mission, availability of water has also been ensured in 69 thousand 842 schools and 40 thousand 626 Anganwadi centres operating in rural areas. Approvals worth Rs 30

thousand 668 crore have been issued by the Public Health Engineering Department of the state government on the proposals received for water supply schemes from the districts in the state. The works of water supply schemes are going on continuously during this period by including its state share in the amount received from the Centre. In the mission, 39.82 percent achievement has been made in the target of providing water to one crore 22 lakh families through tap connections. So far, 80 percent progress has been registered in one thousand 769 schemes, 90 percent in two thousand 147 schemes and more than 90 percent in three thousand 486 schemes in the works of water supply schemes being carried out in the state.

CM will release 'MP Good Governance and Development Report 2022' in New Delhi

► CENTRAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT MINISTERS, MPS AND AMBASSADORS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES WILL ALSO TAKE PART

► PROGRAMME WILL BE HELD AT INDIA HABITAT CENTRE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh government is going to release the first edition of its annual 'Madhya Pradesh Good Governance and Development Report (MPSDR) 2022' on April 4, 2022 at India Habitat Center in New Delhi. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will dedicate the report. Ministers of the Central and State governments, MPs of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha from Madhya Pradesh will be present in the programme. In addition, all IAS, IPS and IFS officers deputed to New Delhi, ambassadors from various countries, development partners and dignitaries from

UN agencies will also attend the event. The keynote speakers of the release programme will be R Balasubramaniam, Member (Human Resources), Capacity Building Commission, Government of India, Erik Solheim, Former Executive Director, UNEP and V Srinivas, Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India.

This report has been prepared by Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis (AGPA), Government of Madhya Pradesh. The report is the result of the intensive work done by the faculty at AGPA with the valuable inputs of subject-experts from reputed institutions of the country and support from various departments of the Government of Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh Good Governance and Development Report 2022 is the first of its kind document which brings out the unique governance practices of the state. This includes community affiliation and participation, strong policy measures, efficient delivery systems, evidence-based decision making and comprehensive monitoring. Madhya Pradesh Good Governance and Development Report 2022 is

a unique attempt to document the changes brought about in various sectors due to good governance and delineate the methodology of good governance, partnership of various stakeholders in it and ways to measure it. The report outlines the state of governance and the challenges it faces, especially in the context of policy reforms in selected sectors.

MPSDR 2022 consists of 12 chapters, categorized into five sections. In the chapters of the first section, the details of the features of good governance and the efforts made in this direction in the state in the last 15 years have been presented. This section presents a suggestive framework for monitoring and assessing good governance. This also includes chapters on Agriculture, Rural Development, Industry and Trade, Financial Inclusion and Biodiversity and Traditional Knowledge. In this report, there are discussions in separate chapters of AYUSH, urban development and science and technology innovation. The fourth section, 'Supervision and Evaluation', throws light on the basic indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this, the performance of other states, especially the state of Madhya Pradesh, has been compared with the per-

formance of the best performing states using social participation and multilevel crisis committees. The final section of the report suggests actionable points and policy recommendations for the growth and development of key sectors in the state. The comprehensive analysis and insights of the report will be useful for fulfilling the commitment of the state government towards the goal of good governance and self-reliant Madhya Pradesh. The 'School of Good Governance and Policy Analysis' was established in the year 2007 to promote good governance in the state. Now, this institute is well established and known as 'Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis'. The Institute acts as a think tank of the Government for the fulfilment of its aims and objectives of promoting good governance through quality research, policy analysis, impact assessment and periodical advice to the Government. To fulfill the objectives, the institute ensures active and meaningful participation of citizens, society and educational institutions of high repute. The Madhya Pradesh Good Governance and Development Report is an important step in the direction of promoting good governance in the state.

CM PLANTS AMLA SAPLING AT HIS RESIDENCE PREMISES

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a gooseberry plant at CM House premises today. Chouhan also performed Shramdaan. Amla is called Amrit Phal or Dhatriphal in Ayurveda. It is a treasure trove of priceless qualities. According to Ayurveda, Amla is a fruit with multiple benefits. Amla increases the immunity of the body. It is not only beneficial for skin and hair, but also works as a medicine for many diseases. Especially useful in boosting immunity, it treats diseases related to digestion and jaundice. It contains vitamins, minerals, and nutrients in abundance.



CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on his death anniversary by paying floral tributes at his portrait in the meeting hall of the CM House on Sunday. Chouhan has tweeted remembering the contribution of Chhatrapati Shivaji on his death anniversary. "When the spirits are high, even a mountain looks like a pile of mud. My humble tributes to the founder of Maratha Empire, a brave warrior, skilled administrator, great army hero Veer Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on his death anniversary. The story of his valour is a great source of inspiration for every Indian."





PANNED BY CRITICS, YET 'MORBIUS' TOPS NORTH AMERICAN BOX OFFICE

Los Angeles | Agencies

It may have been skewered by critics, not a common reception for a film adapted from Marvel comics, but still, Columbia Pictures' 'Morbius', starring Jared Leto, opened on top of the North American box office to a projected \$38 million to \$41 million from 4,268 locations.

That's a fairly moderate opening figure, according to 'Variety', for the latest entry into the Sony Pictures Universe of Marvel Characters (which includes Tom Hardy's two 'Venom' movies and the upcoming 'Kraven the Hunter'), but with a \$75 million production budget, 'Morbius' is a less imposing financial investment for Sony than the usual comic



book action spectacle.

The film, which was set for a July 2020 release, was hindered by numerous theatrical release delays due to Covid-19. "That schedule shuffling," notes Variety, "led to numerous marketing reboots that

made 'Morbius' a bit more costly."

The Marvel film was utterly ravaged by critics, notching up a dismal 17 per cent aggregate approval score on Rotten Tomatoes. Variety's film critic Owen Gleiberman called it "a movie in which it's clear that no one

ever sent the script back for a rewrite with the instructions, 'Please add a script.' As in: Add spice, add dialogue, add something so that the movie plays like more than a barely coloured-in diagram."

What's more, the film earned a Cinema Score rating of 'C+', indicating that 'Morbius' didn't leave much of an impression on general audiences.

Also inauspicious for 'Morbius' is the calendar month ahead, which will see a fair amount of competition emerge at multiplexes, including Universal's retro-action spectacle 'Ambulance', Paramount's speedy sequel 'Sonic the Hedgehog 2' and the 'Harry Potter' spin-off from Warner Bros., 'Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore'.

SOFIA VERGARA

LOOKS UNRECOGNIZABLE WITH BRIGHT BLUE HAIR



Blue hair, don't care! Sofia Vergara showed off her new blue locks in a mirror selfie along with a pink bikini.

Sofia Vergara, 49, has shocked the Internet with a drastic hair change! The Modern Family actress showed off her new, electric blue-colored locks in a mirror selfie. She wore a bright pink bikini top along with her hair. Not only did the opposing color help her new hair color pop but it also gave her whole look a fun, cotton candy colors effect. Take a look at her new blue hair below!

Prior to dying her hair blue, the Colombian actress had light brown, caramel-colored locks that she sometimes spruced up with some blonde highlights. We're not sure if the blue hair is here to stay or not. Maybe it's even an April Fools Joke! Regardless, Sofia has proved once again that she can pull off any look! Her blue hair isn't the only transformation Sofia has undergone recently. She went through a completely different kind of transformation for her upcoming Netflix series titled Griselda. She looked completely differ-

ent as her light brown hair was tousled in messy curls. She smoked a cigarette and wore a floral print dress in the on-set photos. She definitely looked different than her usual glammed-up self!

Netflix also gave viewers a taste of what they can expect from the series along with the pic from set. "Sofia Vergara stars as Griselda Blanco in a new limited series inspired by the Colombian businesswoman who created one of the most profitable cartels in history, which led to her being known as the 'Godmother,'" the official Twitter account penned of the upcoming series.

When she's not showing off one of her new looks, she's likely spending time with her husband Joe Manganiello. In February, the two were spotted out on the town on a date night. For the special occasion, she rocked a black bustier top along with some orange satin pants and a matching orange blazer. The two were spotted at the celebrity hot spot Craig's. Sofia and Joe have been married since 2015 and definitely still seemed to be going strong!

'THE DEVIL GOT AHOLD OF THAT CIRCUMSTANCE': DENZEL ON WILL SMITH

After consoling Will Smith following the infamous slap at the Oscars, two-time Oscar winner Denzel Washington has now spoken publicly about what happened at last Sunday's awards show, reports 'Variety'.



Los Angeles | Agencies

After consoling Will Smith following the infamous slap at the Oscars, two-time Oscar winner Denzel Washington has now spoken publicly about what happened at last Sunday's awards show, reports 'Variety'. Washington attended author and bishop T.D. Jake's leadership summit at Charlotte, North Carolina, on Saturday morning (U.S. Eastern Time) for a discussion about his career and faith, when Jakes asked him about what happened between Smith and Chris Rock at the Oscars.

"Well, there's a saying, 'When the devil ignores you, then you know you're doing something wrong.' The devil goes, 'Oh no, leave him alone, he's my favourite.' Conversely, when the devil comes at you, maybe it's because he's trying to do something right. And for whatever reason, the devil got ahold of that circumstance that night,"

Washington told Jakes on stage, according to 'Variety'. Washington was seen speaking to Smith, along with Tyler Perry and Smith's publicist, during the commercial breaks at the Oscars after Smith slapped Rock for making a joke about Jada Pinkett Smith. During his acceptance speech for best actor, Smith thanked Washington and said that Washington told him, "At your highest moment, be careful, that's when the devil comes for you." "Fortunately there were people there," Washington said on Saturday.

"Not just me, but others. Tyler Perry came immediately right over there with me. [Said] some prayers. I don't wanna say what we talked about, but for the grace of God go any of us. Who are we to condemn? I don't know all the ins and outs of the situation, but I know the only solution was prayer, the way I see it," he added.



OSCAR ISAAC ON HIS ROLE STEVEN GRANT IN 'MOON KNIGHT':

"HE IS UTTERLY SINCERE & HE SAYS WHAT HE SEES"

'Moon Knight' tells the story of the eponymous Marvel Studios anti-hero character.

Oscar Isaac, who is getting a positive response for his Marvel miniseries 'Moon Knight', spoke about playing two different characters in the series - Steven Grant, a guy suffering from dissociative identity disorder, and his alter ego, Marc Spector, who is a mercenary.

Separating Steven from Marc Spector, Oscar said, "Steven is utterly sincere, and he says what he sees. It's often really funny but it's not funny to him because he doesn't know he's being funny. There's a real social awkwardness to him. He doesn't have the social skills his alter Mark has. Steven is non-violent, he doesn't eat meat, and he cares about people and wants to connect." "Our job was to put a lens on the things that we found the most interesting or that had the most dramatic juice while taking the mental health aspect about it incredibly seriously. I really wanted to do a character study, a point of view experience, so you're not sitting back and just watching the story unfold, you are within the eyes of Steven and experiencing this thing that's happening to him. And it's quite terrifying," Oscar Isaac added. 'Moon Knight' tells the story of the eponymous Marvel Studios anti-hero character. The series is currently available to stream on Disney+ Hotstar in English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam.

Pete Davidson & Gunna Trade Verses About Loving Short Movies

Pete Davidson was joined by rapper Gunna for a new SNL rap song about preferring the shortest of movies. After a spring hiatus that felt far too long, 'Saturday Night Live' returned on Apr. 2 with comedian Jerrod Carmichael hosting and rapper Gunna as the musical guest, both taking the stage at Studio 6H for the first time. Though the sketches were strong and the laughs were plenty as Season 27 finally got back into the swing of things, nothing could top the return of Pete Davidson's rap skills, when he traded verses



with musical guest Gunna about

their preference for short movies

over long movies.

Everything got started when Pete came into view onscreen in trendy black rectangular sunglasses, bandana pants, and an expression that proved he was ready to drop some thoughts. Going on to rap about how shorter movies are much better than long ones, Pete and Gunna shouted out some of their favorite picks from Driving Miss Daisy to Austin Powers. The video also featured cast member Chris Redd and a surprise appearance from Simon Rex, the actor whose performance in Sean Baker's Red Rocket due rave

reviews and accolades this awards season.

Though Pete and Gunna's rap linkup certainly stood out above and beyond, the rest of SNL's grand return also proved to be a fun watch. From Jerrod's hilarious opening monologue to the long-overdue return of 'Weekend Update,' it was clear Jerrod, Gunna, and the whole cast had been more than ready to bring their funny business back onstage. Gunna performed two soulful songs from his new album in addition to dropping some lines for the hilarious sketch.

Blac Chyna revealed she's planning to 're-focus' her 'attention' on her trial against Kris Jenner and her daughters Kim, Khloe, and Kylie, after they 'killed' her #1 hit show 'back' in January 2017.

Blac Chyna, 33, is speaking out about her upcoming trial against the KarJenners, including Kris Jenner, Kim Kardashian, Khloe Kardashian, and Kylie Jenner, which she says 'starts in 13 days.' The former girlfriend of Rob Kardashian, with whom she shares her five-year-old daughter Dream, released a statement on Twitter on Apr. 2 that revealed her reasoning for the trial, which includes financial struggles and to show her two kids, including her son King Cairo, 9, how to "stand up for themselves."

"I plan to re-focus my attention on my trial against Kris Jenner and her daughters Kim, Khloe, and Kylie which starts in 13 days," her statement began.

"When they got my #1 hit show killed back in January 2017, that not only hurt me financially and emotionally, that hurt my beautiful KIDS."

"I'm taking them to court to stand up for my legal rights and to be an example to my kids that 'what's right is right, what's wrong is wrong.' And what they did was so wrong," she continued. "I am so thankful that a jury will finally listen to what really happened behind closed doors - the lies that were told and the damage that was done."

"At the end of the trial, I'm going to be able to proudly tell King and Dream that I did everything I could to right the wrong that was done to me," she went on before concluding with, "And that, in life, it is my hope that they will be able to stand up for themselves when it matters too." She also signed off on the statement using her real first name, Angela.

Chyna's Twitter statement comes just

Trial Against KarJenners Is To 'Proudly' Show Dream, 5, She's 'Righting The Wrong.' Blac Chyna



over a month after her attorney Lynne Ciani released a different statement about the lawsuit, which accuses the KarJenners of "defamation and intentional interference" of her and Rob's former reality show, Rob & Chyna. "Chyna and her attorney will now turn their full attention to the jury trial for defamation and intentional interference with contract against Kris Jenner, Kim Kardashian West, Khloé Kardashian and Kylie Jenner starting on April 15, 2022, in Los Angeles Superior Court," the statement, which was reported by PEOPLE, read. "Chyna will prove to the jury that all four defendants defamed her by falsely accusing her of physically abusing Rob and then

using that lie to get her No. 1 hit show, Rob & Chyna, cancelled by the E! Network and NBCUniversal."

The statement also revealed Chyna will also be suing Rob for "revenge porn" after he publicly shared NSFW pics of her after their split.

Before Chyna and her attorney's latest statements, Rob dismissed his own 2017 lawsuit against Chyna. The father of Dream was suing his ex for assault and battery, but said in a statement in Feb. that he was no longer pursuing legal action for the sake of his daughter.

My love for Dream far outweighs my desire to proceed with my claims against

her mother in a public trial," the statement read. "Now that the court has ruled that there is sufficient evidence to warrant a jury trial on my claim for assault, for our daughter's sake, I am dismissing the action and focusing on my co-parenting relationship with Chyna."

Rob also recently made headlines for responding to a social media post in which Chyna revealed she wasn't getting child support. "I pay 37k a year for my daughter's school. I handle every single medical expense. I pay for all her extracurricular activities. I have my daughter from Tuesday to Saturday. Why would I pay child support lol," he wrote.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Aimee Lou Wood



IPL 2022: CLINICAL PUNJAB KINGS OUTPLAY CHENNAI SUPER KINGS BY 54 RUNS

Mumbai | Agencies

Punjab Kings rode on a superb bowling performance to beat Chennai Super Kings by 54 runs in their IPL 2022 match at the Brabourne Stadium here on Sunday.

Punjab, after posting 180/8 in their 20 overs, rattled the four-time IPL winners with early wickets as debutant Vaibhav Arora claimed two while Kagiso Rabada, Odean Smith and Arshdeep Singh got a wicket apiece as CSK were reduced to 36/5 in the 8th over.

Shivam Dube struck a 30-ball 57 and former skipper MS Dhoni scored 23 but their efforts were too little and too late as Punjab Kings romped to their second win in the event.

Earlier, Punjab Kings scored 180/8 in their 20 overs thanks to a half-century by Liam Livingstone.

Livingstone lived a charmed life and capitalised on two dropped chances as he blasted 60 off 32 deliveries after Punjab had lost skipper Mayank Agarwal and Bhanuka Rajapaksa cheaply with only 14 runs on the board on being asked to bat first. The 28-year-old England batter added 95 runs for the third wicket with Shikhar



Dhawan (33) that put Punjab Kings on course for a big total but Chennai Super Kings reeled them and restricted them to 180/8, from 109/3 in the 10th over.

Brief scores:
Punjab Kings 180/8 in 20 overs (Liam Livingstone 60, Shikhar Dhawan 33; Chris Jordan 2/23, Dwaine Pretorius 2/30) beat Chennai Super Kings 126 all out in 18 overs (Shivam Dube 57, M.S Dhoni 23; Rahul Chahar 3/25, Vaibhav Arora 2/21, Liam Livingstone 2/25) by 54 runs.

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP WIN FINAL PIECE OF PUZZLE WHICH NEEDED TO HAPPEN: ALYSSA HEALY

Christchurch | Agencies

Australia wicketkeeper-batter Alyssa Healy believes that winning the Women's Cricket World Cup 2022 completes the final piece of the puzzle of her team's quest to be the best in the world.

Healy was the star of the final against England at a nearly fully-packed Hagley Oval, making a brilliant 170 runs from 138 balls laced with 26 fours as Australia posted a mammoth 356/5 and eventually won the final by 71 runs.

The seventh World Cup trophy also completes the redemption circle undertaken by Australia after they were shockingly knocked out by India in the semifinals of the 2017 edition at Derby.

"I don't think relief is the right word. I think it's just pride. I'm so proud of this group to be able to, I use the word reinvent, but whatever word you want to use, we came together as a squad and said: 'This is how we want to play our cricket from now on and we're going to be the best team in the world'," said Healy in the post-match virtual press conference.

"For all 15 people in our squad - and the girls outside the squad that have come in and contributed to be able to buy into that, which has been unbelievable. I think that's a culture created by the lady sitting next to me (captain Meg Lanning) and Rach (vice-captain Rachael Haynes) and Motty (head coach Matthew Mott)." "I'm just really proud of this group to have done what we've done over the last five years and I think the trophy in our hands is just the final little piece of the puzzle that needed to happen," added Healy,



adjudged 'Player of the Match' as well as 'Player of the Tournament'.

Healy's 170 was her second successive century in the tournament after 129 against West Indies in the semi-final. It was also her third big knock in ICC events, starting from a 39-ball 75 against India in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup final at Melbourne in March 2020. Healy attributed her stepping up to the big occasion to being brave with the bat, of which she is 'proud' about. "You've got to be brave to come out in situations like that to be able to play your game, you know that the opposition are going to come really hard at you, they want to take your wicket early, and you got to be brave and back your skills. So, personally I'm really proud of that. I still don't think I'm big game player. So tone that down. But I think you just got to be brave to be able to do it. So trying to be it." During her knock, Healy brought out the scoop thrice and fetched boundaries. Asked about unveiling the shot to rattle England, Healy remarked, "That was pretty cool."

Jr women's hockey nationals: Haryana beat Jharkhand 3-0, crowned champions



Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh) | Agencies

Haryana enhanced their reputation as the cradle of women's hockey in the country by emerging champions of the 12th Hockey India Junior Women's National Championship 2022 here on Sunday.

Hockey Haryana, the defending champions, retained their title by defeating Hockey Jharkhand 3-0 in the final.

Sakshi Rana (4', 60') scored two goals, while Kanika Siwach (45') scored the other goal for Hockey Haryana, who had last won the title at Simdega in March 2021.

Speaking about his team's victory, Hockey Haryana's coach Azad Singh Malik said, "We are very happy that we have won the competition, especially because we have won it for the

second consecutive time. We defeated Hockey Jharkhand in the final of this tournament last time as well. However, this time we have won by a bigger margin."

Azad Singh Malik further added, "The players in the team carried out short passes very well throughout the tournament which was the best aspect of the team's performance throughout the competition. This tournament holds high value for the players because if they do well here then they can move up the ranks in their career." Meanwhile, the Hockey Association of Odisha defeated Hockey Maharashtra 4-0 to clinch the third position in the event. Nikita Toppo (31', 41') scored a brace, while Munmuni Das (47') and Sumi Mundari (50') scored one goal each for the Hockey Association of Odisha.

INDIAN BOXER MINAKSHI BOWS OUT OF THAILAND OPEN

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian boxer Minakshi bowed out of Thailand open after a close defeat against local boxer Jutammas Jitpong in the 51kg first round bout in Phuket, Thailand on Sunday.

According to information received here, in the first round, both the boxers played from a distance and gauged each other's strategy before upping the ante in the second round, which saw a lot of clinching and exchange of punches.

The final round witnessed some fierce and attacking boxing between both the pugilists. Minakshi landed some clear punches but fell short in a hard-fought bout as the boxer from Thailand won by a 3-2 split verdict. In total, six Indian boxers - 5 women and one man, will be in action on Monday. In the women's section, Monika (48kg) will face two-time world championships medalist Josie Gabuco of Philippines in the opening round whereas Renu (54kg) will square off against U-22 European champion Sirine Charaabi of Italy.

The 2019 Asian Championships bronze medalist Manisha (57kg), who recently qualified for both the upcoming World Championships and Asian Games, will take on two-time



youth Asian champion Pornnip Buapra of Thailand.

Monika (63kg) will be up against Panpatchara Somnuek of Thailand. Bhagyabati Kachari will face Thailand's Pornnipa Chuttee on Monday. Meanwhile, Ashish kumar, who won the gold medal in the last

edition in the 75kg category, will open his campaign against Thailand's Aphisit Khanokhkruea in the 81kg quarter-finals. It will be Ashish's first international tournament since the Tokyo Olympics.

With participation of 130 boxers including 74 male and 56 females, the

tournament will witness high voltage competition in presence of top boxers from Asia, Europe, Oceania and Africa. In the last edition of the Thailand Open, held in 2019, the Indian contingent signed off with eight medals-one gold, four silver and three bronze.

91 days national coaching camp for 124 wrestlers in Sonapat, Lucknow

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Sports Authority of India's (SAI) Sonapat and Lucknow centres are organising a 91-day training camp for its Asian Games and Commonwealth Games bound wrestlers.

The camp, which started on April 1 and is set to continue till June 30, will see a total of 147 campers including 124 (Freestyle and Greco-Roman) wrestlers and 23 coaches and support staff.

While the 75 members of



the men's wrestling team will train at SAI Sonapat (Freestyle & Greco Roman), the 49 members of the Women's wrestling team will train at SAI Lucknow.

The camps will consist of athletes who recently won the

selection trials for the upcoming Asian Championship, winners of the Open National Ranking Tournament, and the medallists of last year's Senior Nationals. Some notable names that will be part of this camp are Olympic

medallists Ravi Kumar Dahiya, Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik, World Championships medallists Anshu Malik, and Vinesh Phogat. The government will bear the full cost of Rs 2.30 crore for the men's wrestling camp in SAI Sonapat and Rs 1.43 crore for the women's training camp in SAI Lucknow. This includes costs of Travel, Lodging, Boarding, Food, Sports Kits, Insurance, and Salaries of Coaches and Support staff amongst others.

Orleans Masters: Indian shuttler Mithun Manjunath settles for silver

Orleans (France) | Agencies

Indian shuttler Mithun Manjunath settled for a silver medal after losing to home favourite Toma Junior Popov in the men's singles final of the Orleans Masters 2022 badminton tournament here on Sunday.

Playing in his first BWF final, the 79th ranked Indian shuttler lost to the world No 32 Frenchman 11-21, 19-21 in 50 minutes at the Palais des Sports arena. This was also the first meeting between the two players. The 23-year-old Manjunath began the match cautiously as both players were tied at 6-all after early exchanges. However, Junior, the defending champion, used his reach to good effect and went into the break leading 11-6. From there on, it was one-way traffic as Indian failed to counter a series of smashes from the former junior



European champion to go 1-0 down. Manjunath tried to force Popov into playing longer rallies in the second game and the plan worked. A number of unforced errors by the Frenchman helped him take a 12-6 lead.

However, the French shuttler mounted a comeback with some sharp returns and successfully defended his BWF Super 100 crown. Up until the final,

Manjunath enjoyed a fine run in the tournament. The unseeded Indian stormed through five rounds which included a win against world No 22 Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus of Denmark in the round of 16, an olympics.com report said.

Manjunath emerged as India's best hope after B Sai Praneeth, the top seed at the tournament, crashed out early in the pre-quarters. The women's doubles pair of Ashwini Bhat K and Shikha Gautam were the only other Indian players to make it to the semi-finals at the Orleans Masters 2022.

Notably, the top Indian players like PV Sindhu, Saina Nehwal, Kidambi Srikanth and Lakshya Sen did not compete in the tournament. They are expected to be in action at the Korea Open BWF Super 500 event which begins on Tuesday.

SOON-TO-BE WORLD NO. 1 SWIATEK CRUSHES OSAKA FOR MIAMI OPEN TITLE

Miami | Agencies

Poland's 20-year-old tennis star Iga Swiatek bested Naomi Osaka of Japan 6-4, 6-0 in the Miami Open title clash to complete a 'Sunshine Double' in the prestigious WTA 1000 tournament on Sunday (IST).

This was Swiatek's 17th straight match win on the WTA Tour and her third consecutive WTA 1000 title with a straight-set win over the four-time Grand Slam champion.

On Monday, the Pole star will officially become the world No.1 for the first time in her career. She moves to that position following her commanding 1-hour and 17-minute victory.

"I just feel really satisfied and fulfilled and also proud of myself," Swiatek was quoted as saying by watennis.com. "I feel like I have got to celebrate, because I don't know how long I can keep up with this streak."

The former French Open champion also joins an exclusive club by becoming only the fourth woman to win the Sunshine Double -- titles at WTA 1000 Indian Wells and Miami in the same season. Germany's Steffi Graf (1994 and 1996), Belgium's Kim Clijsters (2005) and Belarusian Victoria Azarenka (2016), all former No.1 players, are the



others. Swiatek, 20, is the youngest woman to pull off this feat.

"I feel pretty privileged that I can be amongst those players, because I wouldn't even dream of it a few years ago," Swiatek said. "I knew it's going to be tough playing these two tournaments in a row. I realized at the end it's just another match and I took it step by step." Swiatek's career-best winning streak continues, with all of her past 17 wins coming at the first three WTA 1000 events of the season.

She swept the titles at WTA 1000 Doha, Indian Wells and now Miami, joining American great Serena Williams (2013 - Miami, Madrid, Rome, Toronto) and Caroline Wozniacki (2010 - Montreal, Tokyo, Beijing) as the only players to win three or more consecutive WTA 1000 titles in a single season. But Swiatek stands alone as the first player to win the first three WTA 1000 tournaments in a season. It was her fourth career WTA 1000 title and the sixth singles title overall.

Swiatek becomes the first player to win 17 consecutive matches on hard courts in a single calendar year since Williams won 20 straight between the Australian Open and Toronto in 2015.

"I learned a lot about myself, that I can keep going, and really I don't need to feel like 100 percent on points to win matches against great players," Swiatek said. "I can trust myself a little bit more right now. I really used that streak to have more confidence, and also the ranking."

"Playing against Naomi in a final was pretty exciting, and I knew that the world is going to watch, because it's a nice match just to follow," Swiatek said. "I wanted to give the best tennis I can so people actually can be satisfied. But on the other hand, just seeing that I can play that well against such a player is really satisfying."

Determined Espargaro fights to fourth on grid, career best Argentina GP qualifying

Argentina | Agencies

Pol Espargaro showed off this incredible determination here, recovering from a complicated and compacted day to fourth on the grid.

The 2011 Moto2 World Championship winner Stefan Bradl showed steady and constant progress over the day's running.

Delays in the arrival of some of the MotoGP freight from the previous round saw the Argentina GP compressed into a two-day event. 'Super Saturday' seeing the Repsol Honda Team complete Free Practice and Qualifying in the space of just a few hours. Two hour-long Free Practice sessions were followed by the usual Q1/Q2 format.

Pol Espargaro showed his experience as he was imme-



diately on the pace in Free Practice 1, ending the session in third place and two tenths shy of fellow Honda rider, and fastest in the morning, Takaaki Nakagami.

Later in the day he would his first fall of the 2022 season, coming off at Turn 1 during Free Practice 2, and leading to a difficult afternoon session which resulted in the #44 would having to fight through Q1. MotoGP's unique Saturday schedule in Argentina meant there was no Free Practice 3 to attempt

to further improve his time.

Working with just a single bike as a result of the crash, Espargaro would not be stopped in Q1 and ended the session as the fastest rider despite an incredible tank slapper down the main straight. Just a single run was all Espargaro had during Q2, but he and his team pulled a rabbit out of the hat to secure the head of the second row with a 1'38.165 - only 0.046s shy of the front row. A moment at Turn 1 on his fastest lap is what Espargaro feels cost him a top-three birth. Fourth place is Espargaro's best grid position at the Termas de Rio Hondo circuit, improving dramatically on his previous best of tenth in 2016. The Repsol Honda Team have won three of the six races held in Termas de Rio Hondo.



MRUNAL THAKUR: MY PARENTS AND CAT GIVE ME A SENSE OF BELONGING

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mrunal Thakur who recently appeared in the short film 'Jahaan' and is now gearing up for the feature 'Jersey' opposite Shahid Kapoor, says despite all the fame, success and multiple professional commitments, her only way to maintain her sanity is living with her parents and pet cat.

Starting her career with the television show 'MujhseKuchhKehti...Yeh Khamoshiyaan', the actress gained her visibility with films including - 'Love Sonia', 'Super 30', 'Ghost Stories', 'Toofan', 'Dhamaka'.

While the short film 'Jahaan' talks about belonging, asked about her sense of belonging as an artist, in conversation with IANS, Mrunal opens up.

Mrunal told IANS: "As artists, we are living with different characters because we are acting them on-screen. The process is quite overwhelming because we are getting into the skin of the character. Then a day comes when the filming gets over and we leave the character. At times that hurts too, emotionally, because sometimes a character impacts the actor."

She continued, "It might just sound insane...the only way to maintain sanity for me is to go back to my home, cutting off from that world. Now that I am doing good work, more than often I am asked why do I still live with my parents, far away from the city, instead of living independently."

"It is only my parents, sibling and my pet cat that gives me a true sense of belonging. I still love playing with my cats and my brother. I still am my father's daughter first, then a celebrity," Mrunal signed off.



Malaika Arora discharged from hospital a day after car accident

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Malaika Arora has been discharged from the hospital. The actress is back home and is recuperating. She returned home with her boyfriend Arjun Kapoor.

Malaika Arora was taken to the hospital in Panvel, near Mumbai, last evening after she met with an accident. The accident took place while she was returning from an event in Pune. What happened was a pile-up between three vehicles. A bus and two cars collided and one of them hit was Malaika's SUV.

Assistant police inspector Haresh Kalsekar from Khopoli police station told a news portal that they have received the registration number of all the three cars involved and that an FIR will be registered after investigating how the accident happened and who was at fault.

As per Apollo Hospital's statement on Saturday night, Malaika sustained no major injury and was kept under observation at the hospital. "Actor Malaika has minor injuries on her forehead; CT scan has turned out fine & she is currently okay. The actor will be kept under observation for the night & will be discharged in the morning tomorrow," the hospital statement read.

Yami Gautam's Instagram account 'hacked', actress releases official statement

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Yami Gautam, who is giving us major fashion goals these days, has suddenly disappeared from Instagram since two days. This left her fans wondering as to why is the actress not active on Instagram. Well, to clear the air, the actress has tweeted and informed netizens that she is not being able to access her Instagram account. Here is what her note read: "This is to inform you all that I've been unable to access my Instagram account since yesterday, it's probably hacked. We're trying to recover it as soon as possible. Meanwhile, if there is any unusual activity through my account, please be aware of it. Thank you!" Well, this isn't the first time, a celebrity's Instagram account has been hacked. Earlier in February, Nora Fatehi shared an official statement on Instagram and revealed that her account was apparently hacked. She also thanked the team on Instagram to help her revive the account.

For the unversed, Yami Gautam recently won out hearts with her stellar performance in A Thursday. The actress is gearing up for the release of Dasvi.



ANIL KAPOOR CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF 'BETA'

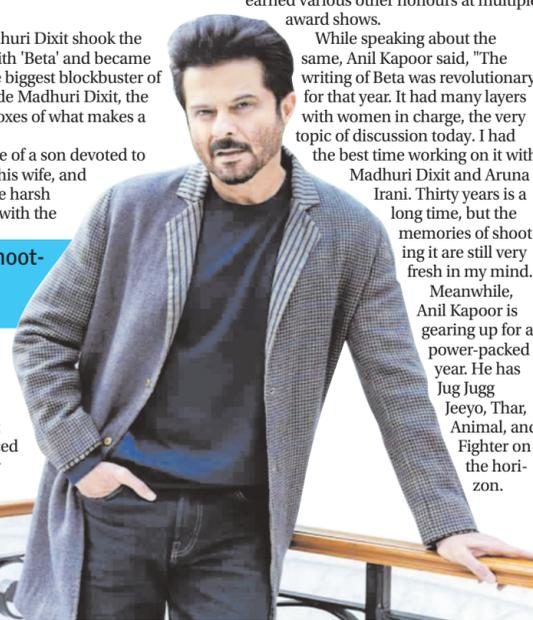
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Anil Kapoor and Madhuri Dixit shook the box office in 1992 with 'Beta' and became the force behind the biggest blockbuster of that year! Starring alongside Madhuri Dixit, the superstars ticked all the boxes of what makes a massive entertainer.

Anil Kapoor's innocence of a son devoted to a stepmother, his love for his wife, and the struggle to discover the harsh reality - all struck a chord with the

'The memories of shooting it are still very fresh in my mind'

audience across the nation, translating into a box office phenomenon and awards! The versatile star won the Filmfare Best Actor Award for his nuanced performance in the family drama. 'Beta' also



earned various other honours at multiple award shows.

While speaking about the same, Anil Kapoor said, "The writing of Beta was revolutionary for that year. It had many layers with women in charge, the very topic of discussion today. I had the best time working on it with Madhuri Dixit and Aruna Irani. Thirty years is a long time, but the memories of shooting it are still very fresh in my mind."

Meanwhile, Anil Kapoor is gearing up for a power-packed year. He has Jug Jugg Jeeyo, Thar, Animal, and Fighter on the horizon.

Kajal Pisal enjoys reunion with her co-stars after a year

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Kajal Pisal, who is currently essaying the role of Asha in TV show 'Sirf Tum' enjoys her reunion with her co-stars from the family show 'Durga - Mata ki Chhaya' which went off air in March last year. She says: "After almost a year it was a great time to see my friends like family. I met Avinash Mishra, Rakshanda Khan, Sailesh Gulabani, Simran Budharup and Angshuma Saikia. It was fun. Like when you shoot morning to night for a year long everyday, you connect so well and once the show goes off. It becomes a sweet memory and we get busy with our new lives. But to keep that special bonding alive; a reunion is a must." Kajal says she also misses her character Ketki Aneja. She adds: "Ketki will always be remembered close to my heart. The role was full of fashion and trend. I enjoyed getting ready for it with designer costumes, small hair cuts and it turned out to be very cool normally a television show focuses on. Even my friends, family and fans appreciated my look in it."



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Kangana Ranaut

First-ever international film festival begins in Manipur

Team Absolute | Imphal

The first edition of the 'Eikhoigi Imphal International Film Festival' began on Saturday at the Palace Auditorium of Manipur State Film Development Society (MSFDS), manifesting a new feather in the cap of Manipuri Cinema as it completes 50 years. The five-day non-competitive festival, supported by the Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry, is being organised as part of the year-long golden jubilee celebration of Manipuri Cinema.

Speaking as the Chief Guest at the inaugural ceremony of the festival, eminent Manipuri filmmaker, Aribam Syam Sharma emphatically pointed out that special finan-

cial assistance from the government is a must for success of the festival in its future editions.

Syam Sharma, who has been associated with Manipuri cinema since its inception, lamented that the government had always exuded indifferent attitude towards the growth of Manipuri cinema.

Nevertheless, he drew the attention of the government to make the Manipur State Film and Television Institute fully functional at the earliest to facilitate professionalism and production of good films in the northeastern state.

MSFDS Secretary, Sunzu Bachaspatimayum, while delivering the keynote address, stated that the festival

has been conceived to catalyse the amplification of motion picture storytelling in Manipur.

He further expressed joy over realising the dream of an international film festival where one experiences world cinema which slices life and intrinsic cultural and political experiences beyond one's boundaries and transpires invaluable knowledge.

Manipur government's Commissioner of Art and Culture Department, M. Joy stated that the Eikhoigi Imphal International Film Festival marks the new beginning for Manipuri cinema.

He also exuded confidence that the festival will fill up the void of a voracious cinematic culture in Manipur.

