

# absolute india

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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM NEW DELHI, MUMBAI AND BHOPAL

**NATION** > 02

**Sonia Gandhi accuses BJP of misusing probe agencies...**



**HOLLYWOOD** > 06

**Jason Momoa to star in history drama series 'Chief of War'...**



**SPORTS** > 07

**Lakshya Sen, Malvika Bansod advance to second round...**



**SC agrees to examine plea against electoral bond scheme soon**



**“The Electoral Bonds Scheme has opened the flood-gates to unlimited corporate donations to political parties and anonymous financing by Indian as well as foreign companies which can have serious repercussions on the Indian democracy.”**

The plea argued

## FUNDS TO BE NOTED

▶ The plea said the Finance Act of 2017 had introduced the use of electoral bonds which is exempt from disclosure under the Representation of Peoples Act, 1951, opening doors to unchecked, unknown funding to political parties. It argued that these amendments have removed the existing cap of 7.5 percent of net profit in the last 3 years on campaign donations by companies and have legalised anonymous donations.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear a plea against the laws allowing political parties' funding through the electoral bond scheme. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, representing the NGO Association for Democratic Reforms, submitted before a bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana that it is a critical issue, which requires urgent

hearing. He cited a news report where a Calcutta-based company paid Rs 40 crore through electoral bonds to ensure that no excise raids are conducted on it. The Chief Justice replied that it was not for Covid, then the court would have heard the matter. The bench, also comprising Justices Krishna Murari and Hima Kohli, assured Bhushan an early listing of the matter. In 2017, the

NGO had filed a plea alleging subversion of democracy through illicit and lack of transparency in the accounts of all political parties. The government notified the Electoral Bond Scheme on January 2, 2018. In March, last year, the NGO filed an interim application, in its pending petition, claiming there was a serious apprehension that any further sale of electoral bonds before the upcoming state

elections in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Assam, would further increase illegal and illicit funding of political parties through shell companies. The top court, in January last year, had declined to grant an interim stay on the 2018 Electoral Bonds Scheme. It had also sought replies from the Central government and the Election Commission on the NGO's plea.

**SC seeks Centre's response on plea against sections of Hindu Succession Act**

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Centre to file its response on a plea challenging the constitutional validity of Sections 15 and 16 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956. According to the plea, Section 15 gives priority to the heirs of the husband over the parents of the deceased, if a Hindu woman dies without making a will. The plea contended that since the husband is alive at the time of her death, he takes all her property, without leaving any share for her own mother or father. It added that this is because they come in the next order in comparison to the hierarchy of the Hindu man who dies intestate and whose mother is provided in the class 1 heir class. Section 15(2) provides source of acquisition of property as a basis to devolution of a property of a woman dies intestate-issues; whereas for man u/section 8 or 10 of HSA, 1956, no source-based devolution of a property is provided when he dies intestate. Further the property of a woman goes back to a source from whom she inherited the property such as father, husband, and father-in-law. However again it discriminates with the mother, as, even if a woman inherits from her mother, her father's heirs succeed to the property. Succession laws for Hindu women are governed by the Hindu Succession Act, 1956. Section 14 of this Act clarifies Hindu woman is absolute owner of her property. While Sections 15 and 16 give the rules of inheritance and the order of succession. The relevant provisions of this Act do not consider a Hindu woman to be an independent person capable of transferring her property to her blood relatives.

## Petrol, Diesel prices hiked again, up by nearly Rs 10 in 2 weeks

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Petrol and diesel prices were hiked again by 80 paise a litre each, taking the total increase in rates in the last two weeks to Rs 9.20 per litre. Petrol in Delhi will now cost Rs 104.61 per litre as against Rs 103.81 previously, while diesel rates have gone up from Rs 95.07 per litre to Rs 95.87, according to a price notification of state fuel retailers. Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending upon the

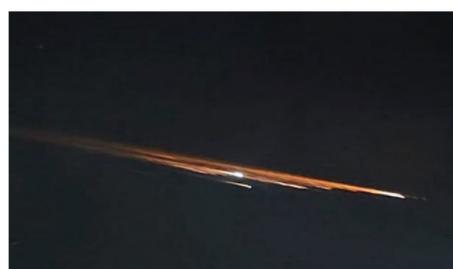


incidence of local taxation. This is the 13th increase in prices since the ending of a four-and-a-half-month long hiatus in rate revision on March 22. In all, petrol and diesel prices have gone up by Rs 9.20 per litre.

## ISRO likely to probe mystery objects' 'sky-fall' in Maharashtra's Chandrapur

CHANDRAPUR | Agencies

The ISRO is likely to send a team of experts to probe the reports of certain objects that allegedly fell from the sky here in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district last week, sparking shock and awe among the locals, officials said. Chandrapur Collector Ajay Gulhane told reporter that he had requested the ISRO to investigate the incident soon after it happened. However, the ISRO has still not confirmed whether it will send a probe team, he added. Social media posts attributed to ISRO said that inputs from various sources were received on the mysterious flashing lights seen in the sky during the evening of April 3 in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.



A object were recovered from a field in Pawanpar village. According to the district authorities, the two objects, a metal ring and a cylinder-like object, were found in two villages in Sindevali tehsil - the iron ring from Ladhbori and the cylinder-like object, measuring around 12-18 inches from Pawanpar - by the locals, around 7.30 p.m. on Sunday. There was wild speculation on social media whether they were meteors hurtling towards the Earth, or debris from rocket boosters that may have crashed after a launch, and that the objects had some foreign-language markings, but there was no confirmation or explanation by officials or experts as of now.

## Govt blocks 22 YouTube channels for spreading disinformation

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Tuesday blocked 22 YouTube channels, including 18 Indians for spreading disinformation related to the country's national security, foreign relations and public order. The ministry also blocked three Twitter accounts, one Facebook account and one new website. For first time 18 Indian YouTube news channels were blocked under IT Rules, 2021. In a statement, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said, "Utilizing the emergency powers under the IT Rules, 2021, has issued orders on 04.04.2022 for blocking of twenty-two (22)



YouTube based news channels, three (3) Twitter accounts, one (1) Facebook account, and one (1) news website." "The blocked YouTube channels had a cumulative viewership of over 260 crore, and were used to spread fake news, and coordinated disinformation over social media on subjects sensitive from the perspective of national security, India's foreign relations, and public order," the ministry said. This is the first time action has been taken against

the Indian YouTube based news publishers since the notification of the IT Rules, 2021 in February last year. Through the recent blocking order, 18 Indian and four (4) Pakistan-based YouTube news channels have been blocked. Analysis of contents shows that multiple YouTube channels were used to post fake news on various subjects such as the Indian Armed Forces, Jammu and Kashmir, etc. The ministry claimed that it was observed that a significant amount of false content published by the these Indian YouTube based channels related to the ongoing situation in Ukraine, and aimed at jeopardising India's foreign relations with other countries.

## NGO CALLS FOR BAN ON PUBG-BGMI

**New Delhi:** PRAHAR, a non-profit organisation, citing national interest, has called for ban on PUBG/BGMI app. The NGO in a letter to Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeiTY) has urged the government to ban the app under Section 69A of the IT Act "in the interest of India's sovereignty, integrity... and saving millions of unsuspecting players from falling prey into the Chinese trap". "It has been brought to our attention that the MeiTY, in a reply filed in a PIL in Telangana High Court said that PUBG and BGMI are not the same. However the ministry has not detailed any reasons or explanation for coming to this conclusion," it said. Krafton and PUBG India simultaneously authorised Hyunil Sohn to represent and defend the company in any proceedings that are filed or may be filed by or against the company in India. "If PUBG and BGMI are different, why is Krafton, the so-called publisher of 'BGMI' authorising Hyunil Sohn of PUBG India to represent the company?" PRAHAR said in the letter

## Congress MLA trapped own party Why is Cong asking its cadre to celebrate festival of one religion, asks Muslim MLA

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A Bhopal based Congress MLA Arif Masood has raised objections over a circular issued by the party office asking the cadres to celebrate the upcoming 'Ram Navami' and 'Hanuman Jayanti' and to recite the 'Hanuman Chalisa'. Masood, who is a prominent Muslim leader of the Congress in the city, said the party was setting a 'wrong precedent' by issuing such a circular. Masood asked why such directives were not issued for the Congress workers to celebrate Ramadan and the festivals of other faiths. Masood said that he has no objection to celebrating Ram Navami, Hanuman Jayanti or any other religious festival, but the



political party (Congress) which treats all religions equally should not issue a circular referring to one particular religion. Talking to reporter, Masood said, "I have questioned the circular issued by Congress to its leaders. I have no objection to celebrating any festival, be it related to any religion. But, being a political party, Congress should not have issued such a circular. We take along all the religions." He stated that the Congress has

always respected all religions equally since its inception and should not follow the BJP's ideology. "Issuing such a circular is the BJP's ideology where religions are treated differently. The Congress has always treated all religions equally and that is why people have faith in it. If we issue a circular to celebrate Ram Navami and Hanuman Jayanti then such a letter should also be issued about Ramadan and festivals of other faiths. This is not a good tradition for a political party," he added. A circular, issued on behalf of state Congress president Kamal Nath on April 2 asked the party leaders and workers to organise religious programmes on April 10 and April 16 to mark Ram Navami and Hanuman Jayanti, respectively.

## NO STATE HAS REPORTED DEATH DUE TO OXYGEN CRISIS: MOS HEALTH IN RS

**New Delhi:** Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Dr Bharati Pravin Pawar on Tuesday informed the Rajya Sabha that no state or Union Territory has confirmed any death due to oxygen shortage. Responding to a question of Congress Member Shaktisinh Gohil during the Question Hour, Dr Pawar said: "The Union Government has requested the states and UTs to furnish details on the matter. Of the total, 20 states and UTs have responded but none of them reported confirmed death due to oxygen shortage." Once the replies are received, it would be presented in the house, she added. Shaktisinh Gohil sought to know that when the government had promised Rs 4 lakh as compensation for Covid-19 deaths, why was the decision reversed hours after the announcement. He also wanted to know whether the money would be granted.

## Heat wave conditions to continue in northwest, west, central India: IMD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

▶ According to India Meteorological Department (IMD), day temperature in Bhopal on Tuesday recorded at 41.1 degree Celsius, four degrees above the normal, while night temperature was recorded at 20.1 degree Celsius. ▶ The maximum temperature in two major cities - Jabalpur and Gwalior - was also recorded at above 40 degree Celsius on Tuesday. The only areas where temperature on Tuesday was recorded below 40 degree Celsius were - Indore (39.9) and Pachmarhi (36.5). ▶ The highest temperature in the state was at 44 degree Celsius in Khargone district, followed by Khandwa at 43.5 degree Celsius and Rajgarh at 43.2 degree Celsius.

Heat wave conditions prevailed over most places in northwest, central and west India on Tuesday with Rajgarh in Madhya Pradesh recording the highest maximum temperature at 43.2 degrees Celsius. Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh and Wardha in Maharashtra recorded 43 degrees Celsius with temperature range of 41-43 degrees Celsius prevailing over west Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Vidarbha, few places over Gujarat, central Maharashtra, Marathwada, and at isolated places of east Rajasthan, south Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said heat wave conditions in most pockets with severe heat wave conditions in isolated pockets were observed over west Rajasthan, severe heat wave conditions in some pockets over Himachal Pradesh, heat wave to severe heat wave condition in some pockets over south Haryana



and Delhi and in isolated pockets over east Madhya Pradesh, and heat wave conditions in many pockets over east Rajasthan, in some pockets over west Madhya Pradesh and in isolated pockets over Jammu Division, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand. The heat wave spell is likely to continue over northwest India and Madhya Pradesh during next 5 days, the IMD forecast said.

## SCHOOL HOURS REDUCED IN BHOPAL

**Bhopal:** All government and private schools in Bhopal will run classes between 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. from Wednesday onward. A directive in this regard has been issued by the district collector on Tuesday. "At present, the temperature continues to rise, affecting the health of the students. The study time of all government and non-government schools operating under Bhopal district will be scheduled from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. The order will be implemented with immediate effect," read a circular issued by Bhopal district collector Avinash Lavania. Several schools in Bhopal and some other parts of the state have already reduced the school timing due to heatwave prevailing in the state.

## Bill to unify Delhi MCDs cleared by Parliament

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Bill to reunify the three existing Municipal Corporations of Delhi into one, as earlier, got Parliament's approval on Tuesday, with the Rajya Sabha's assent to the legislation. The Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2022, passed by the Lok Sabha on March 31, unifies the civic bodies "with an aim to provide greater transparency, improved governance and more efficient delivery of civic service for the people of Delhi". Replying to the debate on this Bill, Home Minister Amit Shah rejected the Opposition's claim that the Central government cannot bring this amendment and said that it was not against the federal structure as the National Capital Territory of Delhi is not a complete state. He also said that he want-



ed to clarify that Delhi has a status different from a Union Territory and there are separate provisions under the Constitution. Shah said the government had to bring this Bill because of the "step-motherly" treatment by the AAP government to the municipal corporations in Delhi and accused them of rejecting a number of proposals sent by the civic bodies in the past few years, which "severely affected" development. "This Bill has been brought under the provision of Article 249 AA of the Constitution and if someone will go through it, all confusions will be cleared at once," he said.



# SONIA GANDHI ACCUSES BJP OF MISUSING PROBE AGENCIES TO TARGET OPPOSITION

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday accused the BJP of playing divisive politics and misusing probe agencies to target the opposition parties.

"She was speaking at the Congress Parliamentary Party meeting. "The divisive and polarising agenda of the ruling party and its leaders has now become a regular feature of the political discourse in state after state."

"She said history -- not just ancient but also contemporary -- is being mischievously distorted and facts are maliciously invented to add fuel to the agenda. It is for everyone to stand up and confront these forces of 'hate and prejudice'."

"We will not allow them to damage the bonds of amity and harmony that have sustained and enriched our diverse society for centuries," she added.

The veteran leader accused the ruling establishment of continuously targeting the opposition, its leaders and workers. The full might of the state machinery is unleashed against



them. "Maximum governance to those in power clearly means spreading maximum fear and intimidation. Such blatant threats and tactics will neither frighten or silence us nor cow us down." She said.

Sonia alleged that the MSMEs are in the most precarious condition. There is no sign whatsoever that the commitments made to the farmers are going to be fulfilled in any significant manner. Prices of cooking gas and oil, petrol, diesel, fertilisers and

other essential commodities have risen to an unbearable limit -- and continue to rise.

"A few days back, our party launched a nationwide Mehngai-mukt Bharat campaign in which many of you took part. This must be sustained."

She praised the Congress-led UPA government's National Food Security Act and MGNREGA and alleged that though the minister concerned has denied it, inordinately delayed wage

payments however, continues to be a serious issue.

"In spite of repeated attempts, we have been unable to get the Government to agree to a discussion on the situation on our borders, a discussion that could only have deepened the sense of collective resolve. The value of non-alignment as a foundational principle of the nation's foreign policy that was criticised so much has now, I am glad to note, been rediscovered even though it may not be acknowledged as such," she added.

She expressed concern on the future of the thousands of students who have been evacuated from Ukraine. She charged the government with diluting the labour laws at a time of growing unemployment and livelihood insecurity. Interest rates on employee provident fund accumulations have been reduced considerably. "Public sector enterprises, the one important avenue for employment of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are being sold off under the fancy name 'asset monetisation'". This will be another disaster as demonetisation turned out to be," she said.

# Odisha police arrests 2nd wife of fake doctor, who married 18 women

BHUBANESWAR | Agencies

The second wife of a fake doctor was arrested by the Odisha police for helping the him in cheating his other wives, an official said here on Tuesday.

The fake doctor, Ramesh Chandra Swain, had married at least 18 women from different states and duped them with lakhs of rupees. He was arrested by Odisha police on February 14.

Swain, a matric fail, use to introduce himself as a doctor, a senior officer of Health Ministry and the Medical Council of India.

He had married to at least 18 middle-aged single women including lawyers, Delhi school teacher, police officer and doctor, and acquired their money before abandoning them. Swain married the women through various matrimonial sites.

During the investigation, the police found that the second wife had helped him in cheating other women, said Bhubaneswar DCP,



Umashankar Dash.

"Initially, we requested her to help the police in the investigation. However, she had not cooperated with the police and later remained at large. Our team first raided places like Prayagraj and Varanasi to catch her. However, she had already left the places," Dash said.

Following further investigation, the police were able to arrest the second wife, a medical practitioner, from Ranchi on Monday. She has been brought to

Bhubaneswar on transit remand for interrogation, the official added.

She helped the fake doctor in duping other women and was absconding since Swain's arrest, said the DCP.

The woman, identified as Kamala Tirky, was employed at Jamnagar in Gujarat.

Earlier, the police had arrested Swain's driver and another woman who claimed to be Swain's sister, on the charge of helping him to get married multiple times and duping the women of money.

# BJP, AAP supporters back meat 'ban', Congress voters against it

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Food choices and dietary habits too seem to have become a part of the polarised politics in the country.

The recent decision of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) to 'ban' the sale of non-vegetarian food during the nine days of Navratri festival has triggered a nationwide controversy over the issue.

An IANS-CVoter survey reveals interesting differences in responses from supporters of different political parties, though a surprising majority of the respondents seem to support the restrictions imposed on the sale of meat during the duration of the holy festival.

As many as 61 per cent of the respondents in the nationwide survey said they approved of the decision to restrict the sale of meat during Navratri, while a little



more than 28 per cent disagreed with the proposition. Just about 10 per cent of the respondents said they had no opinion on the matter.

The surprising revelation was that large sections of both BJP and AAP supporters seemed to approve the restrictions, while most Congress supporters were in disapproval. A narrow majority of respondents (50.5 per cent) also disagreed with the proposition that such bans and restrictions were not constitutional as they went

against free choice.

Similarly, close to 54 per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that the decision was intended to target the Muslim community, while close to 47 per cent of the Congress supporters felt the decision did target the Muslim community.

A large number of independent surveys over the years seem to suggest that a majority of Indians are non-vegetarian, though they do opt for restrictions during religious festivals.

# HARYANA ADOPTS RESOLUTION AGAINST PUNJAB'S CLAIM ON CHANDIGARH

Days after the Punjab assembly adopted a resolution to shift Chandigarh to the state, its neighbouring state Haryana on Tuesday too passed a similar resolution unanimously by urging the Centre not to take any step that would disturb the existing balance till all issues emanating from the reorganisation of Punjab are settled, besides reiterating its claim over joint state capital Chandigarh.

Chandigarh | Agencies

The House in Haryana also urged the Central government to take measures for the construction of the Sutlej Yamuna Link Canal (SYL) in compliance with the Supreme Court's directions.

Like Punjab, Haryana called a one-day special Assembly session that passed the resolution to stake claim for Chandigarh.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar moved the resolution in the assembly, asking the Centre not to take any steps until all concerns related to the Punjab Reorganisation Act were addressed.

The House also urged the Centre to prevail upon Punjab to withdraw its case and permit the Hansi Butana Canal to be able to carry waters to deficient areas of Haryana.

"This House notes with concern the resolution passed in the Legislative Assembly of Punjab on April 1, recommending that the mat-



ter for transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab be taken up with the central government," reads the resolution moved by the Chief Minister.

The resolution demanded that the central government should not take any steps that would disturb the existing balance between the two states

and maintain harmony till all the issues emanating from the reorganisation of Punjab are settled.

# Mosque loudspeakers won't be removed forcefully: K'taka CM seeks to allay fears

BENGALURU | Agencies

Reacting to the slew of developments in the state relating to religious matters, Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Tuesday said all are equal before the government and mosque loudspeakers will not be taken down forcefully.

"All steps would be taken to ensure peace by not letting any individual or organisation take law into their hands," he said.

He further stated that the ruling BJP has the blessings of the people. He said that he would deliver more pro-people programmes in the coming days and the crisis won't be solved by mere issuing of statements. "There are many things behind these developments. The orders were made in 2001, 2002. The ruling BJP has not passed any order. We will keep everything in mind and take decisions," he said referring to the ban on Muslim merchants in temples and



religious fairs and the use of loudspeakers in mosques.

Explaining about 'Azaan', Bommai said that there was already an order by the Apex Court in this regard. "There is also another order questioning why its orders are not being implemented. The limit of decibel is prescribed and there is an order to purchase a decibel meter.

"This is work which has to be done by taking everyone into confidence. It can't be done forcefully. At the ground level meetings are being conveyed by the police with the community leaders. It will be done in future also and action would be taken," he said.

Commenting on the cabinet expansion, Bommai maintained that the issue was likely to be discussed when he meets Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP President J.P. Nadda.

Reacting to the comment made by K.T. Ramarao, Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development of Telangana state regarding a call for an entrepreneur to pack his bags to Hyderabad in the backdrop of poor infrastructure in Bengaluru, Bommai said the tweet made by Telangana Minister Ramarao is laughable.

"People from all over the globe are coming to Bengaluru. More numbers of unicorns and startups are in Bengaluru," he said.

# THREE KILLED, 30 INJURED AS BUS OVERTURNS IN AYODHYA

Ayodhya: Three passengers have been killed and over 30 injured when a bus, they were travelling in, overturned on Tuesday near Mumtaz Nagar in Cantt Kotwali area of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh.

According to reports, the accident took place when the bus driver tried to overtake another vehicle and lost control. The bus, coming from Delhi, was on its way to Siddharth Nagar. The injured passengers have been admitted to district hospital.

The bodies have been kept in mortuary and their families have been informed. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has announced financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased. He has directed officials to ensure proper treatment and relief to the injured.

# Cherrapunji records highest rainfall in April since 2016

Team Absolute | New Delhi/ Guwahati

Continuing the spell of extremely heavy rainfall, Cherrapunji in Meghalaya recorded 434.2 mm rainfall on Tuesday, the highest for the month of April since 2016.

For the 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m., along with Cherrapunji's 434.2 mm, another station nearby Cherrapunji RKM recorded 256.8 mm while Mawsynram recorded 152.4 mm rainfall, the India Meteorological Department said.

IMD terms rainfall between 64.5 to 115.5 mm as "Heavy Rain", that between 115.6 to 204.4 mm as "Very Heavy Rain", and anything above 204.4 mm is qualified as "Extremely Heavy Rain".

Cherrapunji, Cherrapunji RKM, and Mawsynram stations in Meghalaya have received excessive rainfall since April 1 with all three stations recording more than 300 mm rains on April 2.

The IMD records have shown that Cherrapunji has received as much as



644.2 mm rainfall in the pre-monsoon season on April 16, 1990. In recent times, it was 420 mm on April 24, 2016 and 330 mm on April 27, 2017. The IMD has warned of isolated heavy rainfall over Meghalaya on Wednesday.

# Bank official sentenced to 7 year RI, over Rs 2 cr fine for fraud

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A Special CBI court in Bangalore has sentenced head cashier of a bank to seven years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 2.19 crore in connection with fraudulent exchange of demonetised currency with valid currency.

B. Dinesh, the then head cashier of State Bank of Mysore (presently SBI) Periyapatna Branch, fraudulently exchanged the demonetised currency with valid currency to the tune of Rs 2,18,46,300 in violation of the Union Government's Notification, and was sentenced to seven years rigorous imprisonment and Rs 2,19,35,000 fine, the CBI said on Tuesday.

He had altered the actual



denominations, figures written on the deposit slips submitted by the other customers of the bank for crediting the said amount to their respective accounts. Acting on a complaint, the

CBI lodged a case in 2016 and filed a chargesheet against the accused in 2017.

Noting that there are enough evidences against Dinesh, the court convicted him.

# Court denies bail to 8 accused of vandalising Delhi CM's residence

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A court here has dismissed the bail pleas of eight accused persons arrested for vandalising the residence of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's noting that prima facie it is clear that their fundamental right to peacefully protest is exceeded by them knowingly or intentionally.

Though the right to assemble and protest by political party is a fundamental right, it is subject to certain restrictions and not an uncontrolled one, Additional Sessions Judge Naveen Kumar Kashyap observed in Monday's order while denying bail to the accused.

The court also observed that the accused persons caused damage to the public property and injury to the police officials.

"... it is rightly stated by the police official concerned that investigation is at very initial stage and they are still investigating the other offences which are committed, if any... It is further stated that they are still awaiting reply



to the notice given to the concerned official of the CM house regarding the CCTV footage and the damage to the boom barrier. Further, even the period to seek police remand is not yet over. Therefore, having regard to the manner in which the present

offence is committed, the very initial stage of the investigation and the role assigned to the present accused persons, this Court is not inclined at this stage to grant them regular bail. With these observations these eight connected bail applications are dis-

posed of as dismissed," the order read.

As per the Delhi Police, the FIR was registered under sections 186 (Obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 353 (Assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 188 (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) and 332 (Voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty) of the IPC and under section 3 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act.

On March 30, around 70 people were detained for creating ruckus outside Kejriwal's residence during a protest that was spearheaded by the BJP's Yuva Morcha over the Chief Minister's recent remarks in the Assembly on 'The Kashmir Files' that were deemed as "against" the Kashmiri Pandit community among the saffron clans. Kejriwal was not present inside the residence at the time of the incident.



### CM CHOUHAN ADDRESSES BEFORE THE CABINET MEETING

## PRESENTING "MADHYA PRADESH GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2022" IN DELHI IS A BIG ACHIEVEMENT OF THE STATE: CM

- ▶ States Unemployment Rate is the lowest in the Country
- ▶ Ram Navami Will Be Celebrated With Grandeur and Full Enthusiasm in the State, Earthen Lamps Will Be Lit In All Ram Temples

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, while addressing the ministers before the meeting of the Cabinet, said that presenting the Madhya Pradesh Good Governance and Development Report 2022 in New Delhi is a big achievement of the state. Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country to submit such a report on good governance and development. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh was praised by the Union Ministers



and eminent personalities of the country's economic world for submitting the report. The meeting of the Council of Ministers under the chairmanship of Chief Minister began with the recitation of Vande Mataram.

Chouhan said that Gaurav Diwas is being celebrated with enthusiasm and fervour at various levels in the

state. The feeling of development of our village, city, welfare of the people there and participation of local people is being expressed through Gaurav Diwas.

Chouhan said that the festival of Ram Navami would be celebrated with enthusiasm in the state. Special events will be held in Chitrakoot and Orchha. Earthen

lamps will be lit in every Ram temple and Ram Navami will be celebrated with full grandeur and divinity. Chief Minister said that Mukhyamantri Udyami Kranti Yojana is being started today to connect the youths of the state with self-employment. He said that it is a matter of happiness that the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy has

told in its survey that the unemployment rate in the state is 1.4 percent, which is less than other states. The campaign to create employment opportunities in the state and support the youths in self-employment will continue. Chouhan said that in the last three months, 14 lakh people have been made self-employed by providing loans. It is the result of a coordinated effort. Udyam Kranti Yojana will prove to be a boon for the youths of the state.

Before the meeting of the Council of Ministers, a presentation was made on the Udyam Kranti Yojana, in which information was given about the purpose of the scheme, eligibility, eligible project, role of banks, types of financial assistance, process of application and approval etc. It was told in the presentation that the implementation of the scheme will be done through the online portal and it has been made mandatory for the bank to take a decision on the application within a maximum of 6 weeks.

## MP sizzles at 43 degrees Celsius, no respite from heatwave in next few days

Heatwave continued in Madhya Pradesh on Monday as the average temperature in several parts of the state either touched or crossed the 42 degrees Celsius-mark, forcing people to state indoors in the day time.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Heatwave continued in Madhya Pradesh on Monday as the average temperature in several parts of the state either touched or crossed the 42 degrees Celsius-mark, forcing people to state indoors in the day time.



The maximum temperature in places like Khajuraho, Narmadapuram, Rajgarh, Damoh, Khandwa, Khargone and Nawgaon touched the 43 degrees Celsius-mark on Monday, even as the heatwave continued in Chhindwara, Rewa, Sidhi, Guna, Rajgarh, Damoh, Sagar, Satna, Jabalpur, and Gwalior.

According to the Met department, the maximum temperature in the four major cities -- Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Gwalior -- was recorded at a little over 40 degrees Celsius.

The heatwave is being caused by dry winds blowing into the state from Rajasthan and Gujarat. Similar conditions are likely to continue over the next four days, said PK Saha, a meteorologist with IMD's Bhopal office.

On Sunday, the Met department had issued heatwave alert for places like Chhindwara, Chhatarpur, Damoh, Rajgarh, Dhar, Khandwa, Khargone, Guna, Gwalior, Narmadapuram, Ratlam, and Shajapur.

## Universities Should Cooperate In the Placement Efforts of Students : Governor

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that universities should cooperate in the placement efforts of the students. Effective monitoring of career counselling and planning related arrangements should be done. Patel was addressing the first meeting of the Governing Body of Pt. SN Shukla University at Raj Bhavan.

Governor Patel said that the art of living should be included in the education of the students. It is necessary to educate and inculcate the students with knowledge, skills as well as life values. Lectures on formal events may not yield the expected results. For this, continuous efforts should be made in the arrangements of the University. He called for a



comparative examination and uniformity of the statutory provisions and ordinances of Pt. SN Shukla University with those of traditional universities.

A four-member committee under the chairmanship of Vice-Chancellor Pt. SN Shukla was constituted un-

animously to examine the legislative provisions and ordinances of the university with those of traditional universities. The committee included Vice Chancellor Vikram University, Commissioner Higher Education, Registrar Barkatullah University and Registrar Pt. SN Shukla

University. Additional Chief Secretary Higher Education Shailendra Singh, Principal Secretary to Governor DP Ahuja, Finance Secretary Gyaneshwar Patil, Vice Chancellor of the University Mukesh Tiwari and other members of the Governing Body were present.

## Congress to fight 2023 MP polls under Kamal Nath's leadership

▶ Madhya Pradesh's former Chief Minister Kamal Nath will remain the state Congress President and the party will contest the 2023 Assembly elections under his leadership, it was unanimously decided at a party meeting on Monday evening.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh's former Chief Minister Kamal Nath will remain the state Congress President and the party will contest the 2023 Assembly elections under his leadership, it was unanimously decided at a party meeting on Monday evening.

Sources in the party said that during the two-hour-long meeting, Congress leaders discussed various issues and unanimously decided that they should hold such meetings at least twice in month, which all senior leaders should present. During the discussion, senior Congress leaders

expressed their views on how to take on Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led BJP government and sources said that the party has decided to continue its campaign to expose the state government, by highlighting corruption, unemployment, issues related with tribal community and inflation etc.

"Meeting ended with good note and all leaders have unanimously decided to follow Kamal Nath's instructions. The presence of all senior leaders under one roof is an ample proof that they are ready to take on the BJP in the next assembly polls," said a senior Congress leader, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The meeting, which held at Kamal Nath's residence at Shyamla Hills in Bhopal, was attended by senior party leaders including Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh, Suresh Pachouri, Arun Yadav, Ajay Singh, Kantilal Bhuria and more.

Apart from these senior leaders, Kamal Nath's cabinet colleagues during his 18-month-old government such as Tarun Bhanot, Priyabrata Singh, Kamleshwar Patel, Vijaylaxmi Sadhi, Lakhan Singh, Jitu Patwari, Sajjan Singh Verma, NP Prajapati and many others were also present in the meeting, sources told IANS.

It was after a long time all senior Congress leaders assembled for meeting.

## Make All Necessary Preparations for Kashi Vishwanath Pilgrimage: Thakur

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's ambitious scheme Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana is being restarted from April 19. Chief Minister Chouhan has resolved to carry forward the pilgrimage culture started by Adi Guru Shankaracharya. We all have to arrange for the pilgrims to make pilgrimage with love and affinity. This was stated by the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Religious Trust and Endowment Usha Thakur in the meeting for the smooth conduct of Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana in Mantralaya. Thakur directed the Collectors and in-charge officers of Sehore, Raisen, Vidisha, Sagar, Tikamgarh and Damoh districts through video conferencing to process the applications and bring the passengers to the station conveniently.

Thakur said that all the nodal officers should ensure prior preparations for the smooth conduct of the yatra. Passengers should not face any



inconvenience. Thakur directed that by giving wide publicity to the Yatra in all the districts, applications should be received by April 7. While scrutinizing the applications, keep in mind the assembly wise equal representation of the passengers. The selected applications should be sent to the concerned IRCTC official by April 12, so that the ID cards of the passengers can be received from IRCTC by the districts on time. The name, age, coach number and seat number of the passenger should be clearly mentioned in the ID card.

Thakur directed that the pilgrims should be presented with mementos at the end of the Yatra as a memory of

the journey. Put stickers with the name of the district on the railway coaches, so that it will be easy for the passengers to find the coach. Make provision of centralized sound system in the train. There should be bhajan mandlis in the train as well. These mandlis will keep the pilgrims connected with the God by praying in the morning and evening and performing bhajans during the day.

Thakur said that along with the pilgrims of Kashi Vishwanath pilgrimage, she herself would also participate in the Yatra. She has got the opportunity of receiving the blessings by serving the passengers. Thakur said that in this scheme, with the

blessings of elders, Chief Minister is known as Shraman Kumar. Take the Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana to the zenith of relevance, so that the honour of the state increases and the blessings of elders are received.

Thakur informed that the pilgrimage will start from Rani Kamlapati railway station on April 19 and will reach Banaras while stopping at Sagar. Pilgrims from Bhopal, Sehore, Raisen, Vidisha, Sagar, Tikamgarh and Damoh districts will participate in the teerth darshan yatra. The boarding of passengers of Sehore and Raisen districts will be at Bhopal (Rani Kamlapati) station and pilgrims from Sagar, Tikamgarh and Damoh districts will board the train at Sagar station. The work of bringing pilgrims from the districts to the station will be done by the district administration. Citizens of 60 years and above (02 years relaxation for women) will be able to apply for travel at their nearest tehsil, local body, district offices. The yatra will be conducted in an engaging and inspiring manner.

## Energy Literacy Will Reach the Masses

Team Absolute | Bhopal

New and Renewable Energy Minister Hardeep Singh Dang on Tuesday dedicated the Urja Saksharta Abhiyan Mobile App (USHA). Dang said that Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan while launching had given instructions to take energy literacy from door to door also through mobile app also. On the USHA Literacy Campaign on November 25, 2021. So far, about 56 thousand people of the state have joined the campaign through computers. Energy literacy will reach the maximum people through the app, which will directly benefit the progress of the state. Chairman Energy Development Corporation Girraj Dandotia and Managing Director Shri Karamveer Singh were also present.

Dang said that through the mobile app, people will be able to save unnecessary energy expenditure, get knowledge of traditional and alternative sources of energy and their impact on the environment, awareness about energy conservation and understanding of the effects and consequences of energy use. He said that the mobile app has been prepared in the Google Play Store. Energy literacy, energy conservation and green energy adoption have



become the need of the hour. It is the effort of the Department of New and Renewable Energy to produce at least 50 percent green energy of the total consumption. Dang hailed the continuous efforts made by the employees and officers of Urja Vikas Nigam to develop the app. Dang said that aware citizens who continuously reduce energy consumption would be honoured with a citation. Today, Ratna Mishra, Durga Bahadur and KL Gupta were honoured with citation. Chairman Girraj Dandotia said that apart from being harmful for the environment, carbon energy has also become a challenge for coal reserves. The effort of the corporation is to reduce the carbon energy by producing more and more green energy. Through the mobile app, the awareness of energy conservation, production and use will increase among the people. Executive Engineer Surendra Bajpai conducted the programme and Chief Engineer Bhuvnesh Patel acknowledged gratitude.

## CM WILL PERFORM BHOOMI-POOJAN OF GOBAR-DHAN PLANT AND DEDICATE SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will perform Bhoomi-Poojan of Gobardhan Plant and 6 Sewage Treatment Plants constructed in Amrut Mission and newly constructed bridge near JK Hospital on April 6 at 6 pm. The programme will be held at Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Nagar (Kolar) near JK Hospital.

A plant is being set up by the Municipal Corporation of Bhopal under the Swachh Bharat Mission for the production of Bio-CNG from 400 tonnes of wet waste and cow dung coming out of Bhopal city. Nearby villages will be connected with Gobardhan plant, so that organic manure will be available to the farmers.

The Bio CNG manufactured from this project will be available to about 250 city buses at Rs 5 less than the market rate. There will be reduction of one lakh 5 thousand tonnes of carbon emissions annually. The estimated cost of setting up the plant will be Rs 80 crore, which will be borne by the working agency only. The Municipal Corporation will also get a royalty of Rs.1 crore 66 lakh per annum.

Under the AMRUT scheme, 6 sewage treatment plants constructed with a cost of Rs 223 crore will be dedicated. The treatment plants constructed at Jamuniya Chheer, Behind Bansal Hospital, Neelbad, Sunkhedi, Maksi and Professor Colony, Bhopal will also be dedicated.

## India lost 39 tigers so far this year, MP tops with 14 deaths

■ Tiger state Madhya Pradesh has lost 14 tigers in the last four months in different wildlife habitats of the state, including four between April 1 to 4.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Tiger state Madhya Pradesh has lost 14 tigers in the last four months in different wildlife habitats of the state, including four between April 1 to 4.

Of the total tigers reported dead, 10 had lost their lives within the earmarked area of tiger reserves, while four were reported dead outside the area.

According to the National Tiger Conservation Authority's (NTCA) report, three tigers were reported dead in Pench Tiger Reserve, two each in Bandhavgarh, Sanjay Tiger Reserve, Kanha Tiger Reserve and one in Satpura Tiger Reserve. The



remaining four big cats were reported dead outside the wildlife habitat areas.

The NTCA report also suggests that of the 14 big cats lost between January 1 and April 4, six were female and three male, while the identity of five remained unknown.

Of the three tigers who died in the last four days, two were found dead in Satpura Tiger

Reserve (STR) in Narmadapuram (Hoshangabad) district and the third in Balaghat. A senior officer in STR said the carcass of a female cub, aged around 5-6 months, was spotted by a forest patrol in Mogra area of Pachmarhi range on Saturday. The officer said that there were multiple injuries on her body, suggesting a possible attack by an adult tiger.

Another tiger aged around eight years was found severely injured and gasping for breath. Wildlife vets tranquilised and took it for treatment, but it could not survive. "The tiger died in the cage while being taken for treatment."

"Both the tigers died due to territorial fights with another tiger," the officer said. The death count of tigers in Madhya Pradesh remained higher than other states despite the state government spending a handsome amount of money every year for conservation, security and monitoring. As per the state government report, around Rs 28.30 lakh was spent during 2018-19, while this amount was Rs 22.49 lakh in 2019-20. Similarly, the state government spent Rs 26.42

lakh and Rs 12.88 lakh in the financial years 2020-21 and 2021-22 respectively. The NTCA's data shows that overall, 39 tigers were reported dead across the country in the last four months. Madhya Pradesh, like in the previous years, led with 14 tiger deaths, followed by Maharashtra with 10, while Karnataka was at third place with 6 tiger deaths.

Ajay Dubey, a wildlife activist, said that due to the absence of accountability of the field officers, MP has been reporting the maximum number of deaths of tigers. He claimed that during the summer, the number of deaths of tigers or other wild animals witnessed a sharp increase due to various reasons.

"Due to extreme weather during the summer, patrolling by forest officers decreases. As during autumn, visibility in the forest increases many times more than other seasons due to the fall of leaves. Another reason is that during the summer wild animals would be found near water ponds which provides ample opportunity for poachers to target animals," Dube added.



EDITOR'S SPECS

For low carbon economy

The report of the Working Group III of the Sixth Assessment Cycle (AR6 WGIII), titled 'Mitigation of Climate Change', on Monday suggested scores of sector-wise options. The options were all given with net lifetime cost (of avoided greenhouse gas emissions) starting with costs lower than reference technology.

**Energy Sector:** Wind, solar, bioelectricity, hydropower, geothermal, nuclear, Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), Bioelectricity with CCS, reducing methane emissions from coal mining, and reducing methane emission from oil and gas sector. **Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU):** Carbon sequestration in agriculture, reduced conversion of forests and other ecosystems, ecosystem restoration, afforestation, reforestation, improved sustainable forest management, reduce food loss and food waste, shift to balanced, sustainable healthy diet. **Buildings:** Avoid demand for energy services, efficient lighting, appliances and equipment, new buildings with high energy performance, onsite renewable production and use, improvement of existing building stock, and enhanced use of wood products. **Transport:** Fuel-efficient light-duty vehicles, electric light duty vehicles, shift to public transportation, shift to bikes and e-bikes, fuel efficient heavy duty vehicles, electric heavy-duty vehicles, including buses, efficiency and optimisation in shipping, energy efficiency in aviation, and biofuels. **Industry:** Energy efficiency, material efficiency, enhanced recycling, fuel switching (electric, natural gas, bio-energy, hydrogen), feedstock de-carbonisation, carbon capture with utilisation (CCU) and CCS, cementitious material substitution, and reduction of non-CO2 emissions. The cost-calculations showed that the AFOLU and Industry are the two sectors that have the highest relative potentials and costs. The whole exercise is to keep emissions in check to restrict global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial era. The AR6 WGIII has warned of immediate actions offering solutions in the small window that is possible currently to avoid climate catastrophe.

INDIAN WOMEN FACED DEPRESSION, FOOD INSECURITY DURING COVID LOCKDOWNS

Though national lockdowns during Covid were potentially crucial to preventing the spread of the deadly infectious disease, these were associated with increased rates of depression and anxiety as well as food insecurity among women in India and other parts of the developing world, finds a research.

The study, led by researchers at the University of California San Diego in the US, found that women whose social position may make them more vulnerable - those with daughters and those living in female-headed households - experienced even larger declines in mental health as a result of lockdowns.

The team conducted telephonic surveys of 1,545 households across six states in Northern India, namely Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra, in August 2020, near the height of the first Covid-19 wave in India.

The findings, to be published in a forthcoming issue of the Journal of Economic Development, revealed that women reported a 38 per cent increase in depression, a 44 per cent increase in anxiety and a 73 per cent increase in exhaustion.

"Not having access to work and socialisa-



tion outside the home can be very detrimental for women's mental health in developing countries," said Gaurav Khanna, Assistant Professor of economics at the varsity's School of Global Policy and Strategy. The pandemic

resulted in dramatic losses of income for women. In the survey, roughly 25 per cent of households reduced the number of meals consumed, compared to a normal month. However, these declines primarily impacted

women because in many cultures throughout the developing world, women's food intake is the first to be limited when food is scarce.

"We found in our study, the consequences of lockdown policies are exacerbated for women. We hope policymakers in developing countries and beyond know what the implications are for these policies, especially for those in vulnerable positions because if there is another wave, communities could be faced with similar lockdowns," Khanna added.

The paper also outlines policy recommendations that could help address the mental and physical health consequences experienced by women during the pandemic.

For example, in certain parts of India, the government did distribute food to rural areas, which helped prevent malnutrition and food insecurity. Counselling and helpline services offered over-the-phone can also help address the pandemic's mental health impacts, the authors noted. The findings also have implications for women all over the world who experience lockdowns, they said. "We suspect the impact in the US on women and mothers in particular was also exacerbated," Khanna said. "When kids are not in school, or daycare, the burden usually falls on women because of traditional gender roles with child care.

With monsoons not far away, IMD woefully short of automatic weather stations

Nivedita Khandekar

Ahead of the monsoon season, when more observation stations can help monitor the weather better, almost half of the automatic weather stations (AWS) and automatic rain gauges (ARG) of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) have outlived, rendering them incapable.

The IMD is the dedicated government agency under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) that carries out extensive monitoring and detection of current weather, and predicts forthcoming weather events in the short, medium and long range. These warnings also include extreme weather events such as cyclones, floods, heavy snowfall etc.

Of the total 727 AWS and 1,382 ARGs, barely 550 are working, while the rest have outlived or have some other issues, as per the data from the official records.

The IMD continuously expands its infrastructure -- replacing obsolete AWS is part of

the process -- for meteorological observations, data exchange, monitoring and analysis, forecasting and warning services using contemporary technology.

For the same, the agency "uses a suite of quality observations from satellites, radars and conventional and automatic weather stations for monitoring of cyclones and prediction of weather," said an IMD scientist.

If the IMD is to be believed, it has been in the process of installing new AWS and ARGs across the country for about two years now, but it is facing procedural issues.

"The tendering was done last year and the vendor did supply almost everything. But a major problem came when in one of the regions, the vendor supplied GI Pipe instead



of the aluminum specified for the mast. In another region, a particular sensor did not conform to the specification. Issues such as these have hampered the process of installation of AWS/ARGs," said a senior scientist.

The absence of data or inaccurate data from almost half of the AWS/ARGs puts obvious limitations. The granularity in data offers better monitoring, especially in case of disasters. Several states have taken recourse to private agencies claiming that IMD has not been able to provide

them finer data alerts, say at tehsil or block levels. Disagreeing with the connection of large number of AWS/ARGs with forecast, former Director General (meteorology), Ranjan Kelkar, said, "More number of AWS or ARGs would help in better

monitoring, but the larger number does not necessarily help in medium, long and extended range forecast." The IMD generates forecasts at a 12 km grid globally and a 3 km grid over India/regional/mega city domains for its ensemble forecast models.

"If you are using a 10-km grid, what happens between the two points has no relevance to the model. The local observations help only for monitoring and not for forecasts in the medium or long range," Kelkar added.

When contacted, M Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, agreed that the AWS/ARGs are indeed running short of designated numbers.

"We have sorted out the procedural issues. Before monsoon, all AWS/ARGs would be installed," he told correspondent.

international

PAK SC SEEKS RECORDS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROCEEDINGS ON NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

Islamabad | Agencies

The Pakistan Supreme Court on Tuesday sought the record of National Assembly (NA) proceedings conducted on the no-confidence motion filed against Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The apex court issued the directives as it resumed its hearing on the legality of the ruling by NA Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri on the no-confidence resolution that took place on Sunday, reports Dawn news.

A five-member bench headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, and including Justices Ijazul Ahsan, Mohammad Ali Mazhar, Munib Akhtar and Jamal Khan Mandokhail, presided over the hearing.

On Monday, the CJP had remarked that the court would issue a "reasonable order on the issue", but the hearing was adjourned after Farooq H. Naek, the counsel of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and other oppo-



sition parties, presented his arguments.

At the outset of Tuesday's hearing, PPP Senator Raza Rabbani noted how, according to media reports the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had said it was not possible to hold general elections within three months. However, the ECP has

denied issuing any statement concerning elections. He also said that the court had to examine the extent of the "immunity" of parliamentary proceedings.

"Whatever has happened can only be termed as civilian martial law," he said. He maintained that Surf's ruling was "illegal", adding that it could

not be contradictory to the Constitution.

"The no-confidence motion can't be dismissed without voting on it," he said, citing Article 95 of the Constitution.

Rabbani also said that a deliberate attempt was made to construct a narrative against the no-trust move while a foreign conspiracy was also touted, Dawn reported.

He also maintained that it was wrong of Suri to term opposition lawmakers as traitors without providing any evidence. A no-confidence motion was also submitted against NA Speaker Asad Qaiser which limits the power of the speaker, he said, adding that assemblies could not be dissolved during the no-confidence process. He urged the court to dismiss the deputy speaker's ruling and to restore the NA, adding that the minutes of the National Security Committee and the 'threat letter' should also be presented.

PAK POLL PANEL DENIES REPORTS ON INABILITY TO HOLD ELECTIONS IN THREE MONTHS

Islamabad: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday denied there being any truth in reports of it being unable to hold fresh elections within three months, Express Tribune reported. According to the spokesperson of the ECP, the Commission has convened an emergency meeting on election preparations. "There is no truth in the reports that the next general elections cannot be held in three months," the spokesperson said, adding: "The Election Commission will fulfil its responsibility under the Constitution and the law. The meeting will review the preparation in the event of general elections." In a tweet, the Commission said, "It is necessary to clarify that the Election Commission of Pakistan has not issued any statement regarding the polls."

S Korean Cabinet passes bills to allow single people to adopt

Seoul | Agencies

The South Korean Cabinet on Tuesday approved bills to allow single people to adopt children, as the number of one-person households is sharply increasing.

The Justice Ministry revised the Civil Act and the Family Litigation Act, which currently stipulate only married couples can legally adopt, reports Yonhap News Agency. Under the revisions, single people can adopt if they are 25 or older and meet requirements to sufficiently guarantee the welfare of the children.

The Ministry said it will submit the amendments to the National Assembly on Friday for approval, while it also strengthened qualification reviews of would-be adoptive parents.

The revisions call on the family court to consider parenting time and the post-



adoption environment when reviewing applications, in addition to their capability and conditions to raise a child. In addition, an investigator will be sent to families applying for adoption to probe suitable conditions for raising a child.

"This change in the legal system reflects the rapid increase in the proportion of single-person households and the fundamental shift in the notion of family," the Ministry said. The single-member family has become the most common form of family arrangement in the country as an increasing number of people avoid or delay marriage and the population is fast aging.

FRANCE TO EXPEL RUSSIAN DIPLOMATS

Paris: The French Foreign Ministry said that the country has decided to expel "many" Russian diplomats, "whose activities are contrary to our security interests". The Ministry said in a statement that "the action is part of a European approach", reports Xinhua news agency. It however, gave no further details about the numbers. The development comes after French President Emmanuel Macron termed the killings in the Ukrainian city of Bucha as "unbearable".

Bucha, located about 60 km from Kiev, was liberated from Russian forces on April. The Mayor however announced that a mass grave of more than 300 bodies was found, which has led to widespread condemnation.

In a similar move on Monday, Germany also expelled a "significant number" of Russian diplomats, while Lithuania announced that it was expelling Moscow's envoy over Moscow's invasion of Kiev.

Sri Lankan ruling party loses majority in Parliament

Colombo | Agencies

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's ruling party, Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) on Tuesday lost its majority in Parliament as 42 MPs announced they would sit independently.

Among the 42 MPs, 14 are from Sri Lanka Freedom Party, 10 belong to constituent parties of the government, and 12 are SLPP MPs, among others, reports Xinhua news agency.

The ruling SLPP-led alliance won 146 seats in the 225-member Parliament in the 2020 general election.

Tuesday's development comes amid an ongoing turmoil in the island nation due to the country's worst ever economic crisis, triggering widespread anti-government protests. On Monday night, Rajapaksa had said that he will not resign, but was ready to hand over the government to whichever party holds 113 seats in Parliament.

On Monday, he held back-



to-back political meetings amidst public protests throughout the nation, calling on the President and government to resign, reports the Daily Mirror newspaper.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa, a former Defence Secretary in his brother Mahinda Rajapaksa's government, played a crucial role to end 26-year-long war against Tamil rebel Tigers.

At the 2019 Presidential election, he was elected President with a sweeping 2/3 majority with over 6.9 million votes. Lack of dollar reserves and depreciation forced economic crisis lead to severe shortages of fuel, LPG, electricity and essential food and people are demanding Rajapaksa to give up power immediately.

World Bank projects East Asia Pacific to grow 5% in 2022

Washington | Agencies

The developing East Asia and Pacific countries is projected to grow by 5 per cent in 2022 amid the resurgence of Covid-19 pandemic, tighter financial conditions and the Russia-Ukraine war, the World Bank said.

"Shocks emanating from the war in Ukraine and the sanctions on Russia are disrupting the supply of commodities, increasing financial stress, and dampening global growth," Xinhua news agency quoted the global lender as saying in its newly released East Asia and Pacific Economic Update. "Just as the economies of East Asia and the Pacific were recovering from the pandemic-induced shock, the war in Ukraine is weighing on growth momentum," said World Bank Vice President for East Asia and Pacific Manuela V. Ferro.

"The region's largely strong fundamentals and sound policies should help it weather these storms."



Surging US inflation could provoke faster-than-anticipated financial tightening, perhaps timely in the US but "too early" in many East Asia and Pacific countries where recovery is "incomplete", according to thereport. The risk of capital outflows, which could put pressure on some countries' currencies, could induce "premature" financial tightening. Overall economic growth in developing East Asia and Pacific countries is projected to slow to 5 per cent in 2022, 0.4 of a percentage point less than expected in October, the World Bank noted, adding that if global

conditions worsen and national policy responses are weak, growth in the region could slow to 4 per cent. To mitigate the risks and grasp the opportunities, the World Bank urged governments to enhance efficiency of fiscal policy for recovery and growth, and strengthen macroprudential policies to mitigate risks from global financial tightening.

It also called on policymakers to reform trade-related policies in goods and, especially, in still-protected services sectors to take advantage of shifts in the global trade landscape, and encourage diffusion of technology.

LEBANON'S DEPUTY PM DECLARES COUNTRY'S BANKRUPTCY

Beirut: Lebanon's Deputy Prime Minister Saade Chami has announced "the bankruptcy of the state and the Central Bank" of the cash-strapped nation. "The state has gone bankrupt as did the Central Bank of Lebanon, and the loss has occurred; we will seek to reduce losses for the people," Xinhua news agency quoted the Minister as saying. He added that the negotiations to sign a preliminary deal between Lebanon and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on a package to exit a deep financial crisis in the country are currently underway.

The talks covered the restructuring of the banking sector, an economic recovery plan, approval of the budget as well as a capital control draft bill, he noted.

Lebanon has been facing a major financial crisis amid a steep shortage of foreign currency. The country's financial experts accused commercial banks of depositing clients' foreign currency deposits at the Central Bank of Lebanon in return for high interest rates. Meanwhile, the central bank used the clients' deposits to stabilize the exchange rate of the Lebanese pound and finance the state's budget deficit, experts said.



AFTER MAHA'S SIT, ED ATTACHES SANJAY RAUT'S ASSETS IN MUMBAI & RAIGAD

Maha govt sets up SIT to probe corruption charges against ED

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In what is construed as a retaliation, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday swooped to attach assets belonging to Shiv Sena MP and Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut hours after the Maharashtra government set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe allegations of corruption against the central probe agency.

The ED said it has attached eight plots of land belonging to Raut and his family at Alibaug in Raigad district and a flat in a 32-storeyed building in Dadar east, Mumbai.

The shock attachments are part of the ED probe into the Rs 1,034-crore Patra Chawl land-scram case in which Raut's friend Pravin Raut was arrested and a charge sheet filed in the matter.

Reacting to the developments, Sanjay Raut said in New Delhi he was "not scared of even the father of ED" and would continue his exposure against the ED officers.

"I am a fighter and a Shiv Sainik... I am not scared of even the 'baap' (father) of the ED... They have attached my properties made out of



my hard-earned money," Raut declared. The fast-paced developments in the day came nearly two months after Sanjay Raut wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vice-President and Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu on February 28, leveling serious charges

against the ED and accusing the central agency of running an 'extortion racket' in Mumbai.

"We have set up an SIT to probe these allegations... It is headed by Additional Commissioner of Police (Additional COP) Viresh Prabhu. We will give them whatever time period

required for its investigations," said Walse-Patil, just hours prior to the ED action on the Sena MP.

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) President and Minister Jayant Patil said he was aghast at the goings on by the central agency and how it was targeting the Maha Vikas Aghadi leaders. Among other things, Raut had submitted a list of the ED officers who allegedly extorted money of crores of rupees with the help of one Jitendra Navlani under threats of framing them in various cases.

Earlier, the Mumbai Police Economic Offences Wing (EOW), monitored by a Deputy Commissioner of Police, was conducting the probe but now it has gone to the SIT.

On March 8, Raut had made a sensational expose before the media claiming how ED officials and Navlani - reportedly close to the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party - had taken huge sums of money illegally from various builders and corporates against investigation threats, and directly charged the central agency of acting like the 'ATM' of the BJP.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Hitting back hard, the Maharashtra government has set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe allegations of corruption leveled against the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil said here on Tuesday.

The development comes nearly two months after Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vice-President & Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu on February 28, levelling serious charges against the ED and accusing the central agency of running an 'extortion racket' in Mumbai.

"We have set up an SIT to probe these allegations... It is headed by Additional Commissioner of Police (Addl. CoP) Viresh Prabhu. We will give them whatever time period required for its investigations," said Walse-Patil.

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the SIT.

On March 8, Raut had made a sensational expose before the media claiming how ED officials and Navlani -- reportedly close to the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party -- had taken huge sums of money illegally from various builders and corporates against investigation of threats, and directly charged the central agency of acting like the 'ATM' of the BJP.

Later, Shiv Sena leader Arvind Bhosale lodged a police complaint, which initiated the probe, and now it will be further investigated by the SIT, with Raut warning of another big exposure into the ED's affairs.

Plastic ice-cream spoon swallowed by pup extricated by vets

Team Absolute | MPune

A 12-week-old pet dog, which suddenly fell ill last month, is now recovering after a team of veterinary surgeons successfully extricated a plastic ice-cream spoon she had accidentally swallowed, doctors said on Tuesday.

The Golden Retriever named Nora was rushed to the Pune Small Animal Clinic where Dr. Narendra Pardeshi examined the dog.

Nora's owners, the Shekhar family, said she was perfectly normal, playful and active till mid-March but later was unable to eat, and developed ulcers.

She underwent an x-ray which revealed the plastic spoon embedded in her stomach and Dr. Pardeshi performed a gastroscopy operation, removed the foreign object and Nora has fully recovered. "On admission in an emergency, the pup was weak, couldn't eat anything and had ulcers in the tummy. After conducting all tests, we performed the procedure on March 29 under anaesthesia," he said.

For the gastroscopy, the medics used a long flexible tube called gastroscope or endoscope, which has a mini-camera and light at the end to look inside the stomach. The plas-



tic spoon was located and then removed with the help of forceps passed through the gastro-scope, making it a non-invasive procedure lasting just 45 minutes, but saving the life of Nora. The now-relieved Shekhar family said that Nora has fully recovered to her usual bouncy self, doing all her activities and eating normally now. Dr. Pardeshi said that plastic is not digestible nor can it break down in the tummy, its sharp edges could get lodged in stomach or intestinal lining leading to inflammation or holes that could be life-threatening.

Bizmen held by ED for usurping properties

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday arrested two Maharashtra-based businessmen -- Satish Uke and Pradip Uke -- in a moneylaundering investigation pertaining to usurping of properties using-forged documents.

Team Absolute | New Delhi | Mumbai

According to an ED official, the accused were produced before the PMLA court in Mumbai and remanded to ED custody till Wednesday.

The ED official said that the money laundering case was lodged on the basis of two FIRs filed by Maharashtra Police against the accused.

The two FIRs were registered at Ajni Police station, Nagpur. The first was filed by one Mohammad Jaffar, nephew of Late Mohammad Samad who was owner of the land comprising five acres at Mouza Bokhara, Nagpur against Satish Uke and Pradip Uke.

Jaffar alleged in the complaint that the accused allegedly usurped his five acre land by creating fake documents. The second FIR was filed by one Shobharani Rajendra Nalode, secretary of Aishwari Sahakari Grih Nirman Sanstha against Satish Uke, Pradip Uke and others alleging that they have allegedly usurped her society's land comprising of 1.5 acres situated at Mouza Babulkhedha.

The ED initiated investigation under PMLA Act, and recorded several statements related to the cases.

"From the investigation conducted so far, it



became evident that both the accused had resorted to fraud and forgery and created fake POA (Power of Attorney) in the name of Chandrashekhar Namdevrao Matte and Khairunisa and usurped the lands from the original land owners illegally. The lands are still in illegal possession of the accused," said the ED official. The official said that they had also conducted a search operation on the

premises of the accused on March 31. During the search, incriminating documents related to forgery, digital evidences were seized.

Statements of both the accused were also recorded, following which, both the accused were placed under arrest for commission of offence under the provisions of Section 3 of PMLA Act.

Further investigation in the matter is on.

'It's a part of political vendetta and not democratic'

MAHARASHTRA MIN AADITYA THACKERAY AFTER ED ATTACHES SANJAY RAUT'S ASSETS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Hours after the Enforcement Directorate attached properties of Varsha Raut, wife of Shiv Sena's Sanjay Raut striking a political furore in Maharashtra, cabinet minister Aadiya Thackeray on Tuesday said it is a part of political vendetta.

"Whatever is happening is a part of political vendetta & not democratic,"



Aadiya Thackeray said.

Meanwhile, Sanjay Raut reacting on the ED action pointed out that the ED action came on a day when the Mumbai Police formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe allegations of extortion against the

central agency's officers.

Last month, the Rajya Sabha MP had alleged that some ED officers were running an extortion racket.

Raut said the ED's action is an act of vengeance and the agency's claim against him will fall flat.

The Shiv Sena leader also tweeted "Asatyamev Jayate" (lie has triumphed) after the action by the financial crimes probe agency.

The Rajya Sabha MP claimed he was being targeted by the BJP, a former ally of the Shiv Sena, as he did not support efforts to bring down the MVA government in Maharashtra.

"Your (the BJP) government could not be formed because of me. Now I am not supporting you in bringing down the government. This is an attempt to pressurise me, but I will now be cowed," he added.

The ED has attached eight land parcels in Alibaug in adjoining Raigad district and a flat in Mumbai's Dadar area linked to Raut and his family under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Man Beaten To Death On Suspicion Of Theft; One Held

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 42-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly beating to death a man suspected of theft in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Tuesday.

A 42-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly beating to death a man suspected of theft in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Tuesday. The incident took place in Khidkali area of the district on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, an official said. The victim Rajat Tiwari (45) had allegedly entered the accused Neelkant Patil's house around 2.30 am, when the latter attempted to nab him the victim started running and fell off the roof of the structure, he said. The accused caught hold of the victim, tied his legs with a rope and beat him to death, the official said. A case under section 302 (murder) of the IPC



has been registered with the Shil-Daighar police station against Patil, he added.

Sociology textbook 'hailing' dowry - Publisher yanks out all copies from market

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major development, the publishers of a college sociology textbook - which dwelt on the "boons" of the dowry system - on Tuesday said they have decided to withdraw the book from the market with immediate effect.

"We would like to inform that we have taken immediate steps to withdraw the (text)book from the market. We take such matters with utmost seriousness and shall continue to strengthen internal processes to avoid such incidences in future," Samina Khan, spokesperson for the New Delhi-based Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishers Pvt. Ltd, told reporter in an email.

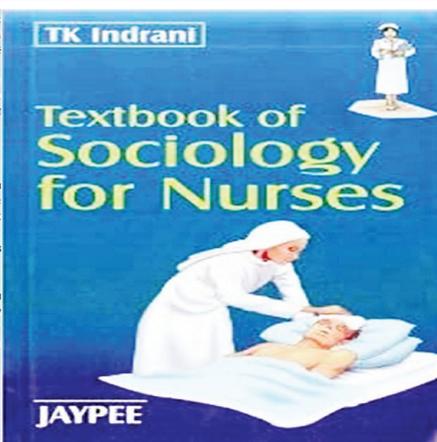
Jaypee Brothers are "a responsible publisher" and serving the medical community for more than five decades, she stressed. However, details of how many copies will be withdrawn and how they will be replaced are not provided.

The step comes as a huge climbdown as the publishers had told reporter, which highlighted the issue on Monday - that they would not revise the title, but delete the offensive sections in future editions of the textbook.

The "Textbook of Sociology for Nurses", penned by senior author T. K. Indrani propounded the theory that the much-abhorred system of dowry was actually good for society and argued that it helps parents of "ugly looking girls" to get them married off.

The "gems of social wisdom" are visible in its Chapter 6, Pg. 122, justifying how the main cause of accepting dowry by the groom's parents is that they have to, in turn, give dowry to their daughters and sisters (outgoing). "Naturally, they look to the (incoming) dowry of their sons to meet their obligations in finding husbands for their daughters," it claimed.

choice of selecting the mate is always result... of young boys who have high salaried jobs or p... in the profession. They become scarce commo... parents demand huge amount of money from the gi... her as their daughter-in-law. he most important cause of accepting dowry by the... is that they have to give dowry to their daugh... s. Naturally, they look to the dowry of their sons to... in finding husbands for their daughters. 's of Dowry are certain merits and advantages of dowry system: dowry is helpful in establishing new household. The... giving household items like cots, mattresses, televi... refrigerator, utensils, clothes and even vehicle are fou... arts of our India as dowry. he parental share of property. The girl receives a sh... parental property as dowry. pread of education among girls. Because of burden... any parents have started educating their girls. Whe... re educated or even employed, the demand of dow... ss. Thus it is an indirect advantage. gely looking girls can be married off with attractive d... ell or ugly looking boys.



The content sparked off a furore in various quarters besides a storm in the social media demanding stringent action against the author and the publishers from hawking such stuff.

Shiv Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi shot off a letter to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to "immediately stop the circulation" of the textbook, prescribed for second year B.Sc. students in Maharashtra and other states, and take it off the curriculum. "It is appalling how such derogato-

ry and problematic text remains in circulation and that a textbook elaborates the merits of dowry. It actually exists in our curriculum and is a shame for the nation and constitution," an aghast Chaturvedi said. She also appealed to the Union Minister to chuck out the textbook off the academic curriculum as well as circulation and review all existing textbooks by a panel of experts. The Indian Nursing Council (INC) also slammed the textbook for the "substandard, derogatory content" which is also against the prevailing laws of the land.

It made it clear that it only prescribed the syllabus for nursing programmes but did not endorse any author or publication, nor has allowed anybody to use its name for their publications.

Agitated academics in Mumbai like retired Prof. Mangal Gogte and former lecturer R. N. Desai had strongly castigated the textbook for "its poisonous ideas" and sought content quality checks plus prompt withdrawal of all copies from the Indian market.

The textbook also refers to how young boys earning high salaries or promising professional careers become "scarce commodities" and hence, their parents demand huge amounts of money from the girl's parents to accept her as their daughter-in-law. The author lists several "merits and advantages" of the dowry system, that is not only frowned upon and banned under the Indian laws, including "ugly-looking girls can be married off with attractive dowry with well or ugly-looking boys". Dowry helps (the young couple) in establishing their new household as the custom of giving things like cots, mattresses, television, fan, refrigerator, utensils, clothes and even vehicles are given by the girl to her husband in many parts of India, it said. In the form of dowry, the girl automatically gets her share in the parental property at the time of her marriage, is another contention.

The dowry system helps spread education among girls as due to the burden of dowry, many people have started educating their girls, it said. "When the girls are educated or even employed, the demand of dowry will be less. Thus, it is an indirect advantage," says the textbook. Incidentally, around 6 years ago, similar claims on the alleged 'goodness of dowry', featuring in HSC textbooks of Maharashtra had triggered a huge row.



**JLo's romantic comedy 'Shotgun Wedding' sold to Amazon Prime Video**

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Shotgun Wedding', a romantic comedy starring Jennifer Lopez and Josh Duhamel, is forgoing a traditional theatrical release and is instead heading to Amazon Prime Video. Lionsgate, which produced 'Shotgun Wedding' and intended to open the movie in theatres, sold US rights to the streamer, reports 'Variety'.

Prime Video previously acquired international rights for the amorous action-comedy in several key territories.

'Shotgun Wedding' was scheduled to hit the big screen on June 29, but it's now unclear when the film will land on Prime Video. Since release plans have not been finalised, sources say there's a chance the movie will be available in select cinemas on the same day as its digital debut.

Lionsgate's sale comes at a time when the domestic box office is still attempting to recover from COVID-19.

Sandra Bullock and Channing Tatum's jungle-set love story 'The Lost City' has managed to sell tickets, but that movie may be more of an anomaly.

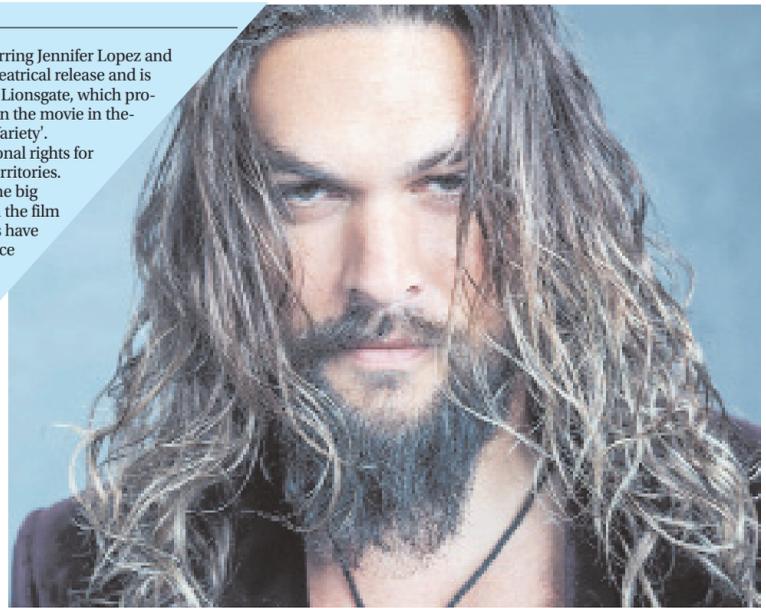
Earlier this year, Lopez's musical romantic comedy 'Marry Me' collected \$49 million at the global box office while playing simultaneously on NBCUniversal's streaming service Peacock.

According to insiders, Amazon proposed an irresistible offer to get the rights to 'Shotgun Wedding' from Lionsgate.

With a streaming service release, the company can avoid the scrutiny that comes with box-office reporting.

Jason Moore directed 'Shotgun Wedding', in which Lopez and Duhamel play partners who gather their families for a destination wedding. But as the couple begins to get cold feet, the entire wedding party is taken hostage.

The cast also includes Jennifer Coolidge, Sonia Braga, Cheech Marin, Selena Tan and Lenny Kravitz.



## JASON MOMOA TO STAR IN HISTORY DRAMA SERIES 'CHIEF OF WAR'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Jason Momoa is set to star in, write, and executive produce the drama series 'Chief of War' for streamer Apple. The series follows the story of the unification and colonisation of Hawaii from an indigenous point of view. Apple has given the show an eight-episode order, reports 'Variety'.

Momoa will write alongside Thomas Pa'a Sibbett. Both also serve as executive producers, as will Francis Lawrence, Peter Chernin, Jenno Topping, Erik Holmberg, and Doug Jung. Jung is also attached to serve as showrunner. Justin Chon is in negotiations to direct the first two episodes. Endeavor Content and Chernin Entertainment will produce.

'Chief of War' is now the second Apple series led by Momoa. He currently stars in 'See', about a post-apocalyptic future in which nearly all remaining humans have lost

their sense of sight.

The show aired its second season in 2021 and has already been renewed for a third.

This will also mark the first time Momoa, who is of Hawaiian descent, has written for television.

He previously co-wrote, directed, and starred in the film 'Road to Paloma', which was released in 2014. He and Pa'a Sibbett also co-wrote the story for the upcoming feature 'The Last Manhunt', with Momoa appearing on screen in a supporting role. Momoa starred in the feature 'Braven' in 2018, which was co-written by Pa'a Sibbett.

Momoa is known for his roles in shows like 'Game of Thrones', 'Frontier', and 'See' as well as for films like 'Aquaman' and 'Justice League', 'Dune', and 'The Bad Batch'.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Harrison Ford will be seen starring opposite Jason Segel in the comedy series 'Shrinking' for the

streamer Apple. The show was first announced in October 2021. Segel will write the series alongside 'Ted Lasso' co-creator Bill Lawrence and 'Ted Lasso' star, writer, and co-executive producer Brett Goldstein, reports 'Variety'. 'Shrinking' follows Jimmy (Segel), a grieving therapist who starts to break the rules and tell his clients exactly what he thinks. Ignoring his training and ethics, he finds himself making huge, tumultuous changes to people's lives, including his own.

Ford will play Dr Phil Rhodes, described as a down-to-earth, sharp as a tack "blue collar shrink," blunt but with an ever present twinkle.

Phil is a pioneer in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy who has built a successful practice over the years that he shares with his two young proteges, Jimmy and Gaby. Fiercely independent, Phil has recently been diagnosed with Parkinson's, which forces him out of his comfort zone as he grapples with intrusive friends, his estranged family and his legacy.

The role will mark Ford's first ever television starring role. The iconic actor is best known for starring in film franchises like 'Star Wars', 'Blade Runner', and 'Indiana Jones'. Segel, Lawrence, and Goldstein all serve as executive producers on 'Shrinking' in addition to writing. Lawrence executive produces via Doozer Productions, with Doozer's Jeff Ingold and Liza Katzer also executive producing alongside Neil Goldman. Warner Bros. Television, where Doozer is under an overall deal, is the studio.



## Japanese film director Sono Sion accused of sexual harassment

Los Angeles | Agencies

Self-proclaimed maverick Japanese film director Sono Sion, known for raunchy indie movies including 'Love Exposure' and 'Antiporno', has been accused of sexual harassment by several actresses in Japan's film industry. The accusations were published Monday by the Shukan Josei Prime entertainment news and gossip site, reports 'Variety'. In a lengthy article, several actresses made accusations against Sion under the protection of anonymity. According to the piece, Sion, now aged 60, boasted of making sexual advances to "most of (his) leading ladies." Sion's alleged predatory practices have been linked to his acting workshops. The filmmaker has yet to offer a public response to the allegations. However, his upcoming acting workshop has been cancelled. The Japanese film and TV industry has long harboured stories of sexual abuse and abuse of power by senior figures, but little of it comes to the surface in a public fashion. The #MeToo

movement that swept the English-speaking industries after the Harvey Weinstein scandal has not taken root in Japan, though some incidents are now coming to light.

## Jared Leto used wheelchair for bathroom breaks on 'Morbius' set

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Jared Leto used a wheelchair to go to the bathroom on the sets of the superhero film 'Morbius', which was released recently. Similar to his character in the movie, Leto initially used crutches on the set to maintain his character's physicality, reports 'Variety'.

As per 'Variety', however, the crutches made Leto's bathroom breaks a longer process than needed. Daniel Espinosa, the director of 'Morbius' told 'Uproxx' that a deal was made where Leto agreed to use a wheelchair for his bathroom breaks instead to quicken up the process.

He said, "Because I think that what Jared thinks, what Jared believes, is that somehow the pain of those movements, even when he was playing normal Michael Morbius, he needed, because he's been having this pain his whole life. Even though, as he's alive and strong, it has to be a difference. Hey, man, it's people's processes." He further said, "All of the actors believe in processes. And you, as director, you support whatever makes it as good as you can be. Almost all actors, in general, have their own reputation of being an interesting person (with) how they work with their characters. I think that all of them have these traits."



## AMY 'WASN'T ALLOWED' TO JOKE ABOUT ALEC BALDWIN SHOOTING INCIDENT AT OSCARS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Comedian and actress Amy Schumer performed a stand-up comedy set at Las Vegas' Mirage Theatre, where she continued to discuss Will Smith slapping Chris Rock at the 94th Academy Awards.

Schumer co-hosted the ceremony alongside Wanda Sykes and Regina Hall, reports 'Variety'. The comedian wrote on social media following the Oscars that she was "still triggered and traumatised" by Smith's slap. Schumer referred to Smith as "Ali" during her April 2 comedy set, a reference to Smith's performance as boxer Muhammed Ali. "I was kind of feeling myself and then all of a sudden Ali was making his way up," Schumer said (via The Hollywood Reporter).

"And it was just a fucking bum-

mer. All I can say is that it was really sad, and I think it says so much about toxic masculinity. It was really upsetting, but I think the best way to comfort ourselves would be for me to say the Oscar jokes that I wasn't allowed to say on TV."

Schumer then ran down some of the jokes that proved too controversial for the Oscars telecast, including bits about Joe Rogan and James Franco. One joke found Schumer addressing Alec Baldwin and the fatal shooting on the set of 'Rust'.

Schumer told the crowd ahead of the jokes, "I want to preface these Oscar jokes by saying that my lawyer said not to say these. Don't tell anybody and don't get mad at me."



## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Eiza Gonzalez



## IPL 2022

# RCB HUMBLE RR BY FOUR WICKETS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A crucial 67-run partnership between Dinesh Karthik and Shahbaz Ahmed helped Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Rajasthan Royals by four wickets in Match 13 of the IPL 2022 at the Wankhede Stadium, here on Tuesday. Karthik (44 not out off 23) and Shahbaz Ahmed (45 off 26) came together with RCB reduced to 87/5 in the 13th over. Their partnership propped up Royal Challengers to 154/6 as they successfully chased down Rajasthan Royal's 169/3, powered solely by a brilliant unbeaten 70 by Jos Buttler.

Karthik and Ahmed raised 67 runs off 33 balls to put RCB on course to four points with their second win in three games. Their heroics came after Buttler struck a superb unbeaten 70 to propel Rajasthan Royals to a below-par 169/3 in 20 overs against a disciplined Royal Challengers Bangalore attack.

Buttler, who scored a century against Mumbai Indians in their previous match, blasted four sixes in the last two overs of the innings as he remained unbeaten on 70 runs (42



balls, 6x6) and shared two vital partnerships -- an 83-run unfinished stand with Shimron Hetmyer (42 not out - 31 balls, 4x4, 6x2) for the fourth wicket and a 70-run partnership off 49 deliveries with Devdutt Padikkal (37 - 29

balls, 4x2, 6x2) -- which helped Rajasthan Royals set up RCB a target of 170 to chase. But in the end, Karthik and Shahbaz Ahmed ensured that RCB achieved that target with five deliveries to spare.

### Brief scores:

Rajasthan Royals 169/3 in 20 overs (Jos Buttler 70\*, Devdutt Padikkal 37, Shimron Hetmyer 42\*; Harshal Patel 1/18, David Willey 1/29) lost to Royal Challengers Bangalore 173/6 in 19.1 overs (Dinesh Karthik 44\*, Shahbaz Ahmed b Boult 45, Faf du Plessis 29; Yuzvendra Chahal 2/15, Trent Boult 2/34) by four wickets

## Korea Open badminton

# Lakshya Sen, Malvika Bansod advance to second round

Suncheon (South Korea) | Agencies

Indian shuttlers -- Lakshya Sen and Malvika Bansod advanced to the second round of the Korea Open Badminton Championships 2022 after registering hard-fought wins at Palma Stadium here on Tuesday.

The 20-year-old Sen, who clinched silver at All-England Open last month, came from behind to defeat South Korea's Choi Ji Hoon 14-21, 21-16, 21-18 in his first-round match of the BWF Super 500 event.

This was Lakshya's second win against the Korean in as many matches. The two youngsters had previously clashed at the world junior mixed team championships back in 2018.

The first game started off as a close affair with Lakshya, world No 9, and Choi tied at 14-all. However, the Indian lost the last seven points on the trot to concede the opener. Lakshya was more clinical of the two in the second game, though, and managed to stretch the match into a decider.

Tied at 18-all in the third game, Sen scored the next three points to seal the match in one hour and two minutes.



Sixth seed Indian will take on Indonesia's Shesar Hiren Rhustavito in the second round.

In the women's singles, Malvika Bansod beat China's Han Yue 20-22, 20, 21-10 to progress into the next round. The Indian shuttler failed to save four game points in the first game but made up in the next two games to win in 56 minutes. The 20-year-old Bansod will face the sixth seed Thai shuttler Pornpawee Chochuwong in the second round.

Earlier in the day, former Asian championships bronze medallist HS Prannoy lost to Malaysia's Cheam June Wei 17-21, 7-21 and made an early exit.

India's men's doubles pair of Krishna Prasad Garaga-Vishnuvardhan Panjala and Sumeeth Reddy-Navaneeth Bokka also lost their respective first-round matches. Garaga-Panjala went down to Indonesia's Yeremia Erich Yoche Yacob Rambitan-Pramudya Kusumawardana 14-21, 19-21 while Reddy-Bokka lost to Malaysia's Ong Yew Sin-Teo Ee Yi 14-21, 12-12.

Top Indian singles badminton players Kidambi Srikanth, PV Sindhu and the men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty will play their first-round matches on Wednesday.

# ARA FC defeat YWC 4-3, qualify for IWL 2022

Team Absolute | New Delhi

ARA FC continued their winning streak in the Hero IWL Qualifiers by defeating YWC by 4-3 in the final encounter at the Ambedkar stadium here on Tuesday. With this win, ARA FC qualified for the IWL which is set to be held in Bhubaneswar from April 15.

The side from Gujarat needed a win from the final match to secure the IWL berth. The result means that ARA FC maintain their winning streak in the qualifiers, having notched up nine points from three matches. Meanwhile, YWC did not amass any points in their last match having six points from three matches.

It did not take ARA too



long to reclaim their lead, as Anju netted a 68th minute goal. The match came to a frantic end, as Remi Thokchom of YWC scored for her side before Kiran finally made it 4-3 for the Gujarat club in the dying minutes to ensure ARA's victory and qualification to the IWL.

Earlier in the day, Guwahati City FC and Golazo FC played out a goalless draw at the Ambedkar Stadium, taking their respective points tallies to one each. Both the sides were out of contention for Hero IWL qualification prior to this game.

## WORLD NO. 2 MEDVEDEV COULD BE BANNED FROM PLAYING IN WIMBLEDON THIS YEAR

London: Wimbledon could ban Russian tennis player and current world No. 2 Daniil Medvedev from competing in the tournament this year over fears that a win could "boost" (President) Vladimir Putin's regime amid the invasion of Ukraine, according to a report in mirror.co.uk.

While Russian players are allowed to compete without flags or anthems in the wake of Russia's aggression in Ukraine, the report said that the All England Club could likely impose stricter measures on Russian tennis players, including Medvedev. The report added that the All England Club had been advised that its independent tournament status means it "could implement a ban on Russian players that fail to condemn the actions of Putin -- and not face legal repercussions". As with other tournaments on the tour, including the three other majors, which have remained neutral "due to fears they could be taken to court", Wimbledon can take stricter measures as the tournament "possesses a different status", the report added.



## Thailand Open

# Indian boxer Sumit advances to semifinals, Gaurav exits

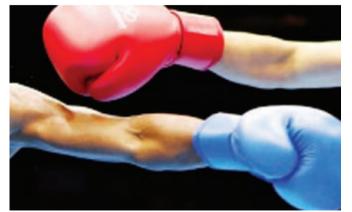
Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's Sumit put up a dominating performance to enter the semifinals while Gaurav Chauhan suffered a defeat at the 2022 Thailand Open International Boxing Tournament in Phuket on Tuesday.

Playing his first match after having received a bye in the opening round, Sumit looked in good touch throughout the match as he comfortably secured a 5-0 win over Kazakhstan's Timur Nurseitov in the men's 75kg Last-8 bout.

On the other hand, Gaurav (91kg) gave his all against another Kazakh opponent Aibek Oralbay, the 2018 Youth Olympics champion. However, his campaign ended with a 1-4 loss in the quarterfinals.

Sumit became the fourth Indian semifinalist at the on-going tournament, which has been witnessing high-voltage competition in presence of 130 top boxers, including 74 male and 56 females, from Asia, Europe, Oceania and Africa. Monika (48kg), Ashish Kumar



(81kg) and Manisha (57kg) are the other three Indians who have already progressed into the Last-4 stage. Six Indian pugilists will be seen in action on Wednesday. While Bhagyabati kachari (75kg), Amit Panghal (52kg) and Rohit Mor (57kg) will play in the quarter-finals, Govind Sahani (48), Varinder Singh (60kg) and Ashish Kumar (81kg) will fight for a place in the finals. 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.

# ALYSSA HEALY, NAT SCIVER THE NEW NO. 1 IS IN ICC ODI RANKINGS

Dubai | Agencies

Australian opener Alyssa Healy and England's Nat Sciver have moved to the top of the ICC ODI Rankings for batters and all-rounders respectively following their Women's World Cup final heroics at Christchurch, New Zealand recently.

The 32-year-old Healy has climbed to the top of the rankings for batters after her phenomenal 170 in the final, which Australia won by 71 runs to claim their seventh World Cup title. Healy's superb knock sent her soaring into the No.1 spot, ending South African opener Laura Wolvaardt's brief stay at the summit.

Healy smashed 509 runs -- including two hundreds and two half-centuries -- across her nine matches at the World Cup, and at an amazing strike rate of 103.66. The haul meant Healy finished just ahead of compatriot Rachael Haynes as the tournament's top scorer.

Four Australians remain in the top six in the latest ODI Rankings, with Beth Mooney, Meg Lanning and Haynes joining Healy among the world's top-ranked batters.

The latest rankings see a completely new-look top-10, with no single player remaining in the same spot after the



conclusion of the World Cup. Sciver's unbeaten 148 in England's unsuccessful reply in the final saw her jump into second in the batting rankings. The England star's brilliant effort also saw her claim the illustrious top spot in the all-rounder rankings, displacing Ellyse Perry. Sciver's century in

the final was her second of the tournament, with the English all-rounder scoring 436 runs at an average of 72.66 in her eight innings in New Zealand. The 29-year-old also picked up four wickets while returning economical figures through the World Cup with her medium pace bowling.

# Savita named captain for Pro League games v the Dutch; Rani among probables

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Goalkeeping stalwart Savita will continue to lead the Indian women's hockey team while Deep Grace Ekka will be her deputy for the FIH Pro League double-header against the world No. 1 side, the Netherlands, at the Kalinga Stadium here on April 8 and 9.

While the 22-member team list includes new faces in defender Mahima Choudhary and forward Aishwarya Rajesh Chavan, experienced striker Rani Rampal has been named in the probables after a long injury lay-off.

She has been out of action since the Tokyo Olympics last year where she led the team to a historic fourth-place finish.

The Indian team for the double-header features Rajani Etimaru as the sec-



ond goalkeeper, while Grace Ekka will be assisted in defence by Gurjit Kaur, Nikki Pradhan, Udit, Rashmita Minz and Suman Devi Thoudam.

Janneke Schopman expressed her disappointment at England's inability to tour India for the Pro League, she was hopeful that some of the news faces will do well in the matches

against the Dutch. The Indian women's team is currently fourth on the Pro League table, having played six matches so far. They have won three matches and added a point with a shootout win as well. Netherlands, on the other hand, have won five out of the six matches they have played and have gained an extra point from a shootout win.

### The squad:

Goalkeepers: Savita (captain), Rajani Etimaru; Defenders: Deep Grace Ekka, Gurjit Kaur, Nikki Pradhan, Udit, Rashmita Minz, Suman Devi Thoudam, Midfielders: Nisha, Sushila Chanu Pukhrambam, Jyoti, Navjot Kaur, Monika, Namita Toppo, Sonika, Neha, Mahima Choudhary; Forwards: Aishwarya Rajesh Chavan, Navneet Kaur, Rajwinder Kaur, Rani, Mariana Kujur.

# Alcaraz leapfrogs to second in ATP Race To Turin after Miami title triumph

Miami | Agencies

Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz's title triumph at the Miami Open -- an ATP 1000 event -- has seen the 18-year-old move up five spots to second in the ATP Race To Turin.

The ATP Race To Turin determines which eight players and doubles teams make it to the elite Nitto ATP Finals in Turin, which is tennis' grand finale. The Nitto ATP Finals this year will be held from November 13-20.

After last year's Miami Open, Alcaraz was 110th in the Race. But the Miami champion already has 1,950 points, thanks to his title on Monday (IST) along with an ATP 500 trophy at the Rio Open and a semifinal run at the BNP Paribas Open among other impressive results. He is 18-2 on the season and pursuing his first berth into the season finale in Turin.

Spanish stalwart and winner of 21



Grand Slams, Rafael Nadal, is currently leading the ATP Race To Turin with 3,350 points. The 35-year-old Nadal enjoyed the best start to a sea-

son of his career by winning his first 20 matches, which also included the Australian Open. Nadal has a 1,400-point lead over Alcaraz leading into

the clay-court season.

American Taylor Fritz, who ended Nadal's perfect start to 2022, is fourth in the Race with 1,520 points after winning his first Masters 1000 title at Indian Wells. Like Alcaraz, the American is also trying to qualify for the Nitto ATP Finals for the first time.

Russian tennis player and the current world No.2 Daniil Medvedev, who is recovering from a surgery on a hernia injury, is No.3 on the Race to Turin with 1,900 points.

The fifth-to-eighth spots in the Race currently belong to 2019 Nitto ATP Finals champion Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece (1,440), Felix Auger-Aliassime of Canada (1,420), Andrey Rublev of Russia (1,390) and Casper Ruud of Norway (1,020).

The top two Italians in the Race are ninth-placed Matteo Berrettini (945) and Jannik Sinner (800).

# Akhil Rabindra registers double podium finish at European GT4

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Akhil Rabindra, the 25-year-old Aston Martin Driver Academy product, has started his 2022 calendar on a positive note by securing a double podium finish in the season opener round of the European GT4 Series in Italy with his new team, Racing Spirit of Lemano.

According to information received here, Akhil, the only Asian to be racing at the European GT4 Championship this year, and his teammate Tom Canning finished both the races of Round 1 at the Imola Circuit, Italy, grabbing a P3 position in the Silver Cup category.

Akhil's Journey at the Imola circuit started on a positive note after he finished 4th overall in the qualifying race 2. Thereafter, Akhil and Canning made an impressive start to Race 1, as the 19th pair earned a P3 finish in the Silver Cup Race 1 after gaining a place due to the disqualification of 13th pair of P Chovet and J Scheier for technical infringement.

In Race 2 Akhil and Canning again grabbed



a P3 finish in the Silver Cup with their Aston Martin Vantage AMR GT4.

A happy Akhil commented post the podium celebrations, "It has been a good start to the 2022 season. I am in a new team this year and have a new teammate who is doing a great job and I look forward to carry forward this momentum to the next race in France."

Akhil will now move on to France, for Round 2 of GT 4 European Series at Paul Richard circuit from June 3-5.



## RICHA CHADHA WEIGHS IN ON WEIGHT LOSS!

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Richa Chadha stunned everyone with her recent weight loss pictures that she shared on her social media. Following the buzz, she spoke about her journey of weight loss and how more than anything weight loss was a means to achieve healthy living for her.

Taking to her Instagram, Richa had posted three images from her photoshoot as she wrote in the caption, "I love doing photo shoots where the photographer and I have a friendship, (like in this case), worldview in common, love for music, art... while shooting this particular one I felt like I was playing a character. Distinct from the films I do... but interesting still... we did some very disturbing feel stills also which will post later."

Thanking her team behind the photoshoot, she added in the caption, "Thanks @ashishchawlap photography @nehasinghmakeupofficial @bikanta PS - healthy weight loss means you don't lose muscle, like in my case the gluteus maximus is intact."

Talking about the reason behind the weight loss, Richa said, "For me weight loss was never something about wanting to shed kilos. It was about a healthier choice for me, myself and my body. I think I chose a path of wellness combined with the right approach to fitness and that is what I wanted to focus on and that is what has given me the results."

Richa is currently shooting for 'Fukrey 3' and will soon start shooting for Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 'Heera Mandi', followed by season 2 of 'The Great Indian Murder'.



## Ranbir-Alia to tie knot on 17th

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt's wedding is one of the most awaited ones. The reports of their April wedding have already been making headlines.

As per reports, the ceremony will start from 13th and completed on 17th with marriage. All these ceremonial events will be organized at the Kapoor's ancestral house, RK Home. The report further claims that the wedding will be attended by only close family members and friends. "Alia's grandfather N Razdan wanted to see her getting married to Ranbir. A hush-hush wedding has thus been planned for April 17 which will be a close-knit family affair. The ceremony will be held at RK Studios and nothing extravagant has been planned yet," a source said.

It is to be noted that Ranbir's parents, 'Rishi Kapoor and Neetu Kapoor' were also married at the same venue. Amid all this, Ranbir's bachelor's party guest list has been revealed. Ranbir is planning a bachelor's party at his home with some of his closest friends. The news portal claims that Arjun Kapoor, Aditya Roy Kapur, and Ayan Mukerji will be invited to the party. "Ranbir is extremely close to Arjun Kapoor, Aditya Roy Kapur and Ayan Mukerji. The actor is planning a bachelor's party at his place. It will be attended by his close buddies from the world of showbiz and his childhood friends. This is Ranbir's way of throwing an impromptu bachelor's party," the source cited by the portal claimed. However, it was just a couple of days back that Ranbir's uncle Randhir Kapoor denied the reports claiming RK House will be the wedding venue.



## Saiyami Kher is impressed with Ashwiny Iyer Tiwary

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Saiyami Kher recently wrapped up the shooting for Ashwiny Iyer Tiwary's web series 'Faadu'. It is a love story that also features Pavail Gulati and Abhilash Thapliyal. The web series was shot in Serbia, the Konkan region and Mumbai. Sharing her experience on the film, Saiyami said: "Working with Ashwiny maam was always on my wish list. I am emotional as we wrap this very special film. I have also made some 'Faadu' friends for life and can't wait to share this world with everyone." Apart from this, Saiyami Kher is a part of Tahira Kashyap's upcoming film 'Sharmaji Ki Beti' and R Balki's 'Ghoomer'. She will also be seen in the new season of 'Breathe: Into The Shadows' and 'Highway', a south film co-starring Anand Deverakonda.



## Kovid Mittal to feature in music video

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Kovid Mittal who was previously seen in 'Awaara Hoon' is excited to star in upcoming music video 'Labon Se Baarish'. It is sung by Yaser Desai.

He says: "I'm excited about my upcoming song 'Labon Se Baarish'. We will be heading to Bangalore and also later Goa for our shoots. I'm sure that my audience will enjoy watching me in this romantic song. The song is after-all written by popular lyricist Azeem Shirazi who also wrote 'Kabhi Jo Baadal Barse', starring Sunny Leone."

Mittal known for featuring in songs like 'Meri Jannat', 'Closed Eyes', 'Tanha' feels blessed that his previous song turned out to be a hit.

"I'm enjoying my growth in the music industry. My last song 'Awaara Hoon' was loved and praised. We had a hectic time and a lot of hard work while shooting. We had to shoot for 18 to 20 hours a day. You can see the exotic locations we have shot at. Like Honnavar, Mangalore beach, Chikmagalur hills, Kassala is a mini hill station and in terms of picturesque it is amazingly beautiful."

"Shifting the set was all together a big task. We have shown a 30 year love story in four minutes runtime. All I can say is that it took a lot of hard work and creativity to bring this song to reality in terms of story and emotional content."

## AISHWARYA RAJESH'S INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT RESTORED

Team Absolute | Chennai

Actress Aishwarya Rajesh, who has made a name for herself in both the Tamil and Telugu film industries, has announced that her Instagram account, which she feared had either been hacked or suspended, had been restored.

Taking to Twitter, the actress said, "Thank you Instagram for the swift response. My account has been reactivated."

The actress, on Monday, had appealed for help from those running the social media platform, after her account disappeared completely from the platform and her handle did not appear even when searched for it.

She then posted a message on Twitter about her Instagram handle to let her followers know what had happened.

On the work front, the actress has an interesting set of movies waiting to be released.

She will be seen in a number of films including actor Vishnu Vishal's much awaited action entertainer 'Mohandas' and the Tamil remake of the Malayalam hit film 'The Great Indian Kitchen'.



## Azma Fallah calls Mandana Karimi a 'flop heroine'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Lock Upp' contestants Azma Fallah and Mandana Karimi got into a heated argument with each other during a task. In fact, Azma called Mandana a 'flop heroine'. It all started when Mandana was resting and Azma poured water on her. An agitated Mandana retorted: "Who do you think you are?" Azma responded: "It's me, Azma" She also added: "Isliye tere ex-husband ne choda." (That is why your ex-husband left you)

Furthermore, during a cooking task, both blocks were given equal amounts of ingredients from which they have to make a dish, and the block that wins will have an advantage in the weekly task.

Meanwhile, Payal and Zeeshan Khan had a verbal spat and Zeeshan asked Kaaranvir to step in, "Kaaranvir bhai, bolo kuch!" (Say something "Kaaranvir" to which Payal got angry and said, "Wo show ka leader nahi hai!" (He is not the leader of the show). She also goes on to call Zeeshan "Namak Haram".

Payal was so upset that she yelled a lot at Mandana and even called her 'uneducated'. Kaaranvir was attempting to act as a mediator to appease everyone and reach a solution. As retaliation, Payal is labelled a 'bimbo' by Zeeshan during the task.

Azma, Zeeshan, and Ali also had a fight during the task where Zeeshan constantly called Azma a 'fraudster'. Eventually, biryani is cooked by the left block and Kesari biryani is prepared by the right block. The right block finally won the task.

