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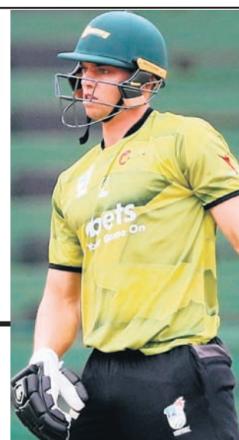
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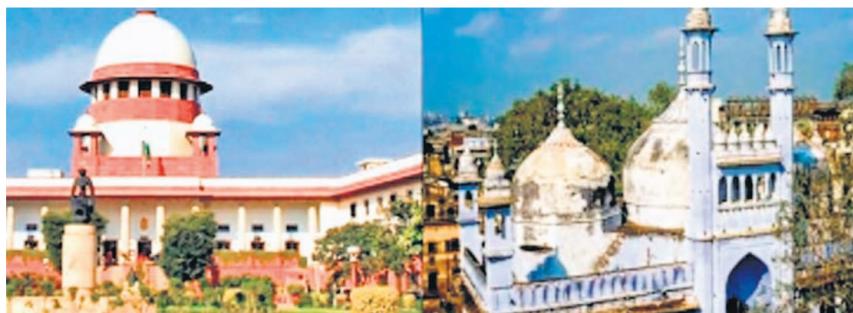
SUPREME COURT'S NOTICE ON GYANVAPI MOSQUE SURVEY

'PROTECT THE 'SHIVLING' FOUND, NAMAZ CAN BE OFFERED'

Hindus have already taken custody of Ayodhya. Now, Kashi has been taken into custody and Mathura will be taken into control tomorrow.

K.S. Eshwarappa, BJP leader, Karnataka

After the Gyanvapi mosque survey in Varanasi, a local court in Uttar Pradesh's Mathura has agreed to hear a similar plea, seeking videography of the Shahi Idgah mosque that lies adjacent to Krishna Janmabhoomi. According to the petition, the petitioners have claimed that the Shahi Idgah mosque was built after demolishing a part of the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi temple which was spread on 13.37 acre land.



VARANASI COURT REMOVES AJAY MISHRA AS ADVOCATE COMMISSIONER

Varanasi: The Varanasi court, hearing the Gyanvapi mosque survey matter, on Tuesday removed Ajay Mishra from the post of Advocate Commissioner, reportedly for leaking information about the video survey to the media.

Vishal Singh has been elevated to the post of Advocate Commissioner. Meanwhile, the court has granted two days' time to the advocate commissioner to file the report on the video survey.

INTERIM BAIL TO JITENDER TYAGI

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted interim bail for three months to Jitender Tyagi -- formerly known as Waseem Rizvi -- arrested in connection with hate speeches at the Hardiwar Dharam Sansad held in December last year, with the condition that he would not indulge in such speech and give a statement to any media.

The bench said such speeches spoil the atmosphere and queried the state government counsel whether further investigation was required, as charge sheet has already been filed in the matter.

NEW PETITION FOR DEMOLITION OF INTERNAL WALL

Varanasi: In a related development, the Hindu petitioners have filed a new petition in a Varanasi court, seeking demolition of a wall located between the 'Nandi'

statue and the 'Shivling' that they claim to have found during the video survey. The petitioners said that a wall and debris surrounding the 'shivling' should be

demolished and a fresh survey should be held to verify the facts. The wall is located on the eastern side of the mosque. The court has admitted the petition for hearing.

Gujarat ATS arrests four men wanted in 1993 Bombay serial blasts case

The arrested persons had Indian passports with the following names -- Javed Basha alias Qasim Saab, Syed Abbas Sharif alias Syed Abbas, Syed Yasin alias Abdul Rahman, and Mohammad Yusuf Ismail alias Sheikh Ismail Noor Mohammad. They had obtained these persons using fake address documents. As per the ATS, after their real identities were revealed, the police found that the four accused were allegedly involved in the 1993 serial bomb blasts.

Ahmedabad | Agencies

The Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) has arrested four persons for their alleged involvement in the Bombay serial bomb blasts, which killed 257 persons and injured over 700 others on March 12, 1993.

Based on a specific information about the presence of four suspicious persons in Ahmedabad, a team was formed under Deputy Superintendent of Police, Kanubhai Patel, which detained the four persons from the Sardarnagar area on the evening of May 12.

Initially, the four accused were booked for carrying forged Indian passports. The real identities of the accused persons were found to be Abu Bakar alias Abdul Gafoor (Javed Basha); Syed Qureshi alias Rahat Jan Qureshi (Syed Abbas Sharif); Mohammad Shoaib Qureshi alias Shoaib Bawa (Syed Yasin); and Mohammad Yusuf Ismail alias Yusuf Bhatka (Mohammad Yusuf Ismail).

Sources said that all the four persons were wanted for their alleged involvement in the 1993 serial blasts, and were on the run to this day.



They were all members of a smuggling gang run by Mohammad Ahmed Dosa alias Mohammad Dosa, and were involved in the smuggling of gold and silver in India in the 1980s and 1990s. The accused had gone to the Middle East in February 1993, a month before the blasts, and attended a meeting organised by Dawood Ibrahim, in which the latter instructed them to go to Pakistan for arms training.

Abu Bakr, Syed Qureshi, Mohammad Shoaib and Mohammad Yusuf had then gone to Pakistan, where they were trained in manufacturing of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), after which they returned to India. Abu Bakr also played a

role in disposing of another consignment of weapons that had arrived in Maharashtra by sea, just days after the serial blasts. In the aftermath of the blasts, these individuals used fake address documents to fraudulently obtain Indian passports with different names and identities and fled India. All four of them were declared guilty by the special TADA court in Mumbai, while the Interpol issued a Red Corner Notice in their name. As per sources, ATS officials will hand over the four accused to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is investigating the Mumbai serial blasts case, after their remand period is over.

After Delhi, Punjab farmers gather on Chandigarh borders over demands

Chandigarh | Agencies

As the year-long protest against the Centre's farm laws at the Delhi borders ended in November last year with the revoking of the three Central farm laws, hundreds of Punjab farmers on Tuesday gathered on the outskirts of the state capital demanding compensation of Rs 500 per quintal for those who suffered losses due to early onset of early summer. Their other prominent demands include minimum support price for the purchase of maize, basmati, and moong (pulses) that the government has assured, ending staggered paddy cultivation from June 18, and that prepaid electricity meters not be installed.

They threatened to break the barricades set up on borders on Wednesday to march to the Chief Minister's residence in Chandigarh if their demands are not met. In the morning, tempers of the protesting farmers ran high as Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann failed to meet leaders of 16-member Sanyukt Kisan Morcha over their demands and left for Delhi. They refused to meet government functionaries deputed by the Chief Minister's Office to hear their grievances. "This scorching heat



wave will not dampen the morale of farmers and they will not leave the protest sites at Chandigarh borders till their demands are fulfilled," a protester said. Farmer leaders said while the increasing heat wave is not posing a challenge as they have equipped themselves with all necessary facilities like coolers or provision of cold drinking water. Bharti Kisan Union (Sidhpur) state President Jagjit Singh Dallewal told the media that they have a charter of 15 demands that comprise to allow the farmers to carry out early paddy transplantation from June 10 instead of June 18 as decided by the government. He said though the minimum support price (MSP) on 23 crops was announced by the government, the farmers were getting it only on wheat and paddy.

WHEAT EXPORT BAN

Transporters facing Rs 3 cr daily losses in Guj city

Gandhidham (Gujarat) | Agencies

The Central government's decision to ban wheat exports has had a cascading effect on the transport and shipping business. In Kandla-Gandhidham, the transport industry is suffering a loss of Rs 3 crore a day, because more than 5,000 trucks are stranded with wheat, as there is no place to unload and exporters are not taking calls.

Not a single dry cargo godown is empty, because of which wheat for exports are lying in trucks and some 5,000 to 6,000 trucks are waiting outside the Kandla ports, in Gandhidham; if daily waiting charges are calculated, truck owners are facing a minimum Rs 3 crore loss, said Satvir Singh Lohan, Secretary of the Gandhidham Goods Transport Association. The tragedy of transporters is



that export parties have stopped taking calls of transporters, it has created a dilemma in the minds of transporters, whether they will pay for waiting charges or not, and if exporter does not call back goods who will pay for transport charges and what to do with wheat stock, questions Lohan. Meanwhile, The government has announced some relaxation to its recent order on restrictions

of wheat exports. It has now decided that wherever wheat consignments have been handed over to Customs for examination and have been registered into their systems on or prior to May 13, such consignments would be allowed to be exported. The government also allowed a wheat shipment headed for Egypt, which was already under loading at the Kandla port.

7 KILLED, OVER 2L HIT IN PRE-MONSOON FLOOD IN ASSAM

Guwahati: With two more people dead in Cachar district, the death toll rose to seven in the ongoing pre-monsoon floods and landslides in Assam, where over two lakh people so far have been affected in 24 districts, officials said on Tuesday.

Officials of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said that two people died in southern Assam's Cachar district during the past 24 hours while five had died earlier in landslides in Dima Hasao(4) and Lakhimpur(1) districts.

According to the officials, six people remained missing in Cachar district due to the floods and landslides. Unofficial report in Cachar district, however, said that four people, including a child and two middle aged men, were washed away in different rivers in the district. An ASDMA bulletin said that at least 2,02,385 people were affected and around 6,540 houses either partially and fully damaged in 811 villages under 24 districts.

Over 33,300 people took shelter in the 72 relief camps even as the district administrations have opened 27 relief distribution centres.

The worst affect districts include, Cachar, Dima Hasao, Hojai, Charaideo, Darrang, Dhemajai, Dibrugarh, Bajali, Baksa, Biswanath and Lakhimpur.

5G TECHNOLOGY TO CONTRIBUTE USD 450 BILLION TO INDIAN ECONOMY: MODI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said 5G technology will contribute US Dollar 450 billion to the Indian economy.

Underlining the role of the telecom sector in the progress of the country, he also said that by the end of this decade, the country will be able to launch 6G services of its own.

Addressing the silver jubilee celebrations of the



Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), Modi said: "It is estimated that in the coming time, 5G will contribute USD 450 bn to the Indian economy. This

will not only accelerate internet speed but also boost development and employment."

"By the end of this decade, we will be able to launch 6G services, our task force is working on it. Our efforts will help our startups to become global champions in the telecom sector and 5G technology," he said.

He launched a 5G Test Bed, developed by a multi-institutes collaborative project that included a eight institutes led by IIT Madras.

KSRTC'S LOW-FLOOR BUSES TO BE TURNED INTO CLASSROOMS IN KERALA

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

A considerable number of the loss-making state-run KSRTC buses in Kerala will not be scrapped as decided earlier, but turned into classrooms, State Transport Minister Antony Raju said here on Tuesday.

Several of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) buses, lying idle after the pandemic struck, are not in a condition to be put back on road.

There have been demands of using the buses more effectively than selling it as scraps, the minister said.

"Hence we decided to use the low-floor buses and convert them into classrooms. We felt let it be a new experience for kids," said Raju.

The request, he said, came from none other than State Education Minister V.Sivankutty himself and an instant nod was given.

First such classroom will become a reality in a state-run school in the capital city, which will be given two low-floor buses.

According to sources, there are around 400 buses of the KSRTC which are not road worthy and have to be scrapped. It remains to be seen, how many of these will now be turned into classrooms.





K'TAKA: BJP, CONG LOCK HORNS OVER ARMS TRAINING TO BAJRANG DAL ACTIVISTS

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

A controversy has erupted in Karnataka over arms training organised by Bajrang Dal for more than 100 participants at a programme in Madikeri district of the state.

The Opposition has slammed the organising of the militia kind of training camp whereas the ruling BJP leaders maintained that it is the regular training that is being given for self-defence to Bajrang Dal activists.

The training camp was organised from May 5 to 11 in the government school premises of Ponnampet town.

The participants also took part in a procession in the Ponnampet town on May 10.

The photos of the air gun training have gone viral on social media. The Opposition Congress raised the issue and demanded the arrest of BJP and RSS leaders. The Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) and Popular Front of India (PFI) have lodged a complaint in this regard and demanded police action against organising arms training programmes.

The Bajrang Dal, meanwhile, maintained that it had not violated the law and the Arms Act. Air guns and tridents do not come under the act. However, police stated that they are looking into the issue of use of air guns in the open.



Former speaker and BJP leader K.G. Bopaiah said on Tuesday that air gun training has been given in Ponnampet camp.

"No license is required for it. There is a need for gun training for self-defence. The training has been given

for a long time," he said.

He also defended the distribution of tridents to participants. "There is no prohibition under law for practicing self-defence with tridents. I don't want to comment on SDPI and PFI. They are against the interests of the nation, they should be banned."

BJP General Secretary and MLA C.T. Ravi claimed that the camp is a part of a self-defence course. "They were not trained in using AK-47 and

bombs. Every year, Bajrang Dal trains its activists for self-defence," he underlined.

Sri Ram Sena Founder Pramod Muthalik also defended the camp and said there was nothing wrong in giving training for self-defence.

Opposition party leader Siddaramaiah had stated that "by giving arms training in Madikeri to young members, Bajrang Dal has challenged the law of our land".

"Do we have a Home minister or Education minister in Karnataka? Is the government still alive?" Siddaramaiah questioned.

MLAs M.P. Appachu, K.G. Bopaiah and Suja Kushalappa participated in the Shaurya Prashikshana Varga event of Bajrang Dal. Do they have any commitment towards our Constitution?" Siddaramaiah asked.

"Arms training is against the law and the Home Minister should file a case against the leaders of Bajrang Dal and arrest them," he said.

Meanwhile, the police have started probe into the matter.

The police have sought a report from the Education Department on whether the school grounds could be used for such an event.

Modi lauds India's participation as 'Country of Honour' in Cannes Film Festival

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday expressed happiness at India's participation as 'Country of Honour' in the 75th edition of Cannes Film Festival in France.

In a message, he noted that India's participation comes at the momentous meeting of celebration of 75 years of India's Independence, 75th anniversary of Cannes Film Festival and 75 years of diplomatic relations between India and France.

Positioning India as the largest film producing country in the world, Modi said the multifariousness of our film sector is remarkable and a rich heritage and cultural diversity are our strengths.

India has a lot of stories to be told and the country truly possesses immense potential to become the content hub of the world, he added.

Ease of Doing Business in the film sector is on the radar of the government. Reiterating India's commitment to the same, Modi in his message said that from facilitating international film co-production to ensuring a single-window clearance mechanism for permissions for filming across the country, India offers seamless possibilities to filmmakers of the world.



He expressed happiness that a Satyajit Ray film has been restored for screening in the Cannes Classic Section as India celebrates the birth centenary of the maestro.

In one of the many firsts, startups from India will showcase their strengths to the cine-world. The Prime Minister expressed confidence that the India pavilion will display facets of Indian cinema and promote international partnerships and learning.

India will be the official Country of Honour at the upcoming 'Marche du Film', organised alongside the 75th edition of Cannes Film Festival, in France. The Country of Honour status ensures India's presence as Focus Country at the Opening Night of 'Marche du Film' being organised at the Majestic Beach with the spotlight on India, its cinema, its culture and heritage.

The Indian delegation is led by Union Minister Anurag Thakur and consists of film celebrities from across India.

International narcotic drugs syndicate busted, two held



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Special Cell of Delhi Police has busted an international narcotic drugs syndicate by arresting its two key members and recovering heroin valued at Rs 40 crore in the international market, an official said on Tuesday.

The accused were identified as Rakesh Kumar alias Rocky (37) and a Nigerian national named Obumuneme Nwachukwu (47).

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Jasmeet Singh said there was information with

the Southern range of Special Cell that an international narcotic drugs syndicate was being run by Delhi-based Nigerians in association with other members of the syndicate in the area of west Delhi.

It was further revealed that the members of this syndicate used to supply the consignment of drugs in Delhi, Haryana, Punjab etc.

"A police team was deputed to develop the information. During the exercise, some members of the syndicate were identified," the senior official

said. He said that a specific information was received on May 12 that accused Rakesh a.k.a. Rocky would arrive at Mukarba Chowk Bus Stand, G.T. Karnal Road in Delhi during the intervening night of May 12-13, and would go to Punjab for supplying the drugs.

Accordingly, the police constituted a raiding party that laid a trap and apprehended accused Rakesh with a bag in which 4 kg heroin was concealed. A case under relevant sections of NDPS act was subsequently registered against him and he was arrested.

NEWLY-MARRIED MAN SERIOUSLY INJURED AFTER WEDDING GIFT BLOWS UP

Navsari (Gujarat): A newly-married man and his nephew in Gujarat's Navsari district were seriously injured in a blast on Tuesday while recharging a toy gifted in marriage, purportedly by a former suitor of his new sister-in-law, reports said.

According to a local villager of Mindhabari village, Latesh Gavit got married just a day or two ago with a girl from Gangapur village in the Vansda taluka of Navsari district in south Gujarat. Relatives and friends had presented gifts to the couple at their wedding. On Tuesday morning, Gavit, with his nephew Jian, were unpacking gifts in presence of other family members at their residence. In one of the gift packets they found a rechargeable toy. A curious Gavit and his nephew attempted to recharge the toy, when the blast occurred, injuring both of them and leaving family members in shock.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall predicted over Kerala, K'taka, Northeast



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall over Kerala, Karnataka, Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh over the next three days. On Tuesday, between 8:30 am till 5:30 pm, rainfall/thundershowers were observed at most places over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Kerala & Mahe

and Andaman & Nicobar Islands; at many places over Assam and Meghalaya; at a few places over Jammu & Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry & Karaikal; and at isolated places over West Bengal, Sikkim, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

The IMD ascribed the reason to strong southwesterly winds from the Bay of Bengal to northeast

India and adjoining east India and an east-west trough from north-west Rajasthan to west Assam at lower tropospheric levels.

Thunderstorms were observed at many places over north interior Karnataka, at a few places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, west Rajasthan, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam and Meghalaya.

The IMD has further predicted that fairly widespread light/moderate rainfall is likely to continue over northeast India, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Scattered to fairly widespread rainfall is likely over Bihar, Gangetic West Bengal, south Peninsular India and Western Himalayan Region while for the rest of the country, it would be dry weather.

AIMIM TO GIVE A FIGHT TO CONGRESS IN GUJARAT

Ahmedabad: The All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen's (AIMIM) entry into Gujarat politics may not have a significant impact but it is definitely going to affect the Congress party.

Muslim community leaders fear that if the AIMIM puts up its candidates in Muslim dominated seats, their representative strength will fall further in the state assembly. Once there were at least eight Muslim MLAs in the state assembly. The number has fallen to three after the 2017 assembly elections.

AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi visited Gujarat on Sunday and Monday and addressed two public meetings, one in Ahmedabad and another in Chhapi in Vadgam taluka of Banaskantha district.

KANNADA ACTRESS DIES DURING FAT REMOVAL SURGERY, PARENTS ALLEGE NEGLIGENCE

Bengaluru | Agencies

In a shocking development, a 21-year-old Kannada small screen actress died while undergoing fat removal surgery in Bengaluru on Tuesday. According to police, she was undergoing surgery without knowledge of her parents. Chetana Raj is the young actress who succumbed during surgery. The parents are now alleging negligence on part of the surgeons. They are also saying that the surgery was conducted without proper equipment. Chetana Raj is a resident of Abbigere in Bengaluru. The hospital authorities are maintaining that the death occurred due to water getting deposited in her lungs during surgery. Chetana Raj had acted in popular serials 'Geetha', 'Doresani', 'Olavina Nildana'. She had also acted in 'Havyaami', a Kannada movie. Govinda Raj, father of Chetana Raj explained that his daughter was admitted



to the hospital at 8.30 am on Monday. By the time they got to know about it, the surgery had already started. By the evening, the lungs were filled with water or fat content and she had faced breathing problems. There were no proper facilities in the ICU, he said. Chetana Raj had asked them for permission to undergo fat surgery but the family had told her not to undergo the surgery. She had undergone surgery without family members' knowledge, he explained.

Amarnath pilgrims should have hassle free Darshan: Amit Shah

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday directed all stakeholders to ensure a hassle free Darshan during the upcoming Amarnath Yatra. Reviewing the preparedness for this annual pilgrimage at a meeting here, he directed that arrangements should be made for all essential facilities including movement, lodging, electricity, water, communication, and healthcare of the pilgrims.

Noting that this is resumption of the pilgrim-



age after the Covid-19 induced lockdowns, he said that adequate arrangements must be made to deal with the health-related issues of the pilgrims due to the high altitude. Shah has asked the telecom department to set

up a sufficient number of mobile towers on the Yatra route for better communication and dissemination of information. He ordered the deployment of equipment to open the route immediately in case of landslides.

The Home Minister instructed to have adequate numbers of oxygen cylinders and medical beds at altitudes above 6,000 feet and deploy ambulances and helicopters in case of any medical emergency.

Karti named in FIR, Rs 50 lakh bribe paid to help Chinese nationals: CBI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Tuesday said Karti Chidambaram has been named as an accused in an FIR lodged against the alleged issuance of visas to Chinese nationals by flouting rules.

The latest development comes amid the ongoing raids being conducted at 10 places in Chennai, Mumbai, Koppal (Karnataka), Jharsuguda (Odisha), Mansa (Punjab) and Delhi belonging to former Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram and his son Karti.

Talwandi Sabo Power Limited, a private firm based in Mansa, took the help of a middleman and allegedly paid Rs 50 lakh to get the visa issued for the Chinese nationals which would help it in completing a project before the deadline,



according to the CBI. Besides Karti Chidambaram, Chennai-based S.Bhaskararaman, who is said to be a close associate, has also been named as an

accused in the FIR. "The Mansa-based private firm was in the process of establishing a 1,980 MW thermal power plant and establishing of plant was out-

sourced to a Chinese Company. The project was running behind its schedule. In order to avoid penal actions for the delay, the said private company was trying to bring more and more Chinese persons, professionals for their site at Mansa and needed project visas over and above the ceiling imposed by Ministry of Home Affairs," a CBI official said.

The official said that for the said purpose, the representative of the private company approached a person based in Chennai through his close associate and thereafter they devised a back-door to defeat the purpose of ceiling (maximum of project visas permissible to the company's plant) by granting permission to reuse 263 vISAs allotted to the Chinese company's officials.

In pursuance of the same, the representative of the private company submitted a letter to the

Union Ministry of Home Affairs seeking approval to reuse the visas, which was approved within a month and permission was issued.

It has been alleged that the senior Chidambaram allegedly helped Chinese getting visas by flouting rules.

The raids started at 8 am and is still going on. The CBI is also recording the statements of the persons who are at the house of the Chidambarams.

Meanwhile, P. Chidambaram took to Twitter and criticised the raid.

"This morning, a CBI team searched my residence at Chennai and my official residence at Delhi. The team showed me a FIR in which I am not named as an accused. The search team found nothing and seized nothing. I may point out that the timing of the search is interesting."

RIGHT WING ACTIVISTS PROTEST DEMANDING RENAMING OF DELHI ROAD, 5 DETAINED

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Police on Tuesday detained five members of the Maharana Partap Sena for staging a protest

demanding the renaming of Shahjahan Road in the national capital to Bhagwan Parshuram Marg. According to the police, the right wing activists under the leadership of Rajvardhan Singh Parmar, President, Maharana Partap Sena, reached the Shahjahan Road holding placards and demanded to change the name of the road to Bhagwan Parshuram Marg. "However, the local police soon reached the spot and detained five protest-



ers," Deputy Commissioner of Police, Amrutha Guguloth, said. Several streets in Lutyens' Delhi are named after Mughal rulers, and right wing groups from time to time keep demanding to change their names. Earlier in the day, the members of Akhil Bhartiya Kshatriya Rajput Mahasangh met Satish Upadhyay, the Vice Chairman of New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), and urged him to rename Akbar Road as Maharana Pratap Road.



MP GOVT SUBMITS 2ND REPORT OF OBC COMMISSION TO SC

The Madhya Pradesh government on Tuesday submitted the second report of the Other Backward Classes Welfare Commission (OBC Commission) during the hearing on its plea for modification of the May 10 order of the Supreme Court.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government on Tuesday submitted the second report of the Other Backward Classes Welfare Commission (OBC Commission) during the hearing on its plea for modification of the May 10 order of the Supreme Court.

The state government told the apex court that the OBC Commission's report is in relation to the percentage of local body wise reservation and argued that the court should rely on this report. Meanwhile, the government also requested the apex court to allow it to issue notification for the reservation for OBCs on its basis.

The government has presented the 2011 population figures for giving OBC reservation. According to this, the total number of OBCs is reported to be 51 per cent of the population. The government believes that if OBCs



get reservation on this basis, then justice will be done to them.

During the hearing, advocate Shashank Ratnu, who appeared for the OBC Mahasabha, questioned the need for a triple test for providing reservation to OBCs. "Whether the triple test is even required or not in the light of the latest 102nd and 127th

constitutional amendments which have defined and identified the SEBCs (Socially and Economically Backward Classes)," Ratnu said.

Talking to IANS, Ratnu claimed that the court has taken cognizance of his question raised during the hearing. "Now the court will decide whether further triple tests will be

needed or not," he added.

After hearing all the parties, the apex court has fixed the matter for Wednesday.

The Madhya Pradesh Government has filed a petition for modification of the Supreme Court's May 10 order directing the State Election Commission to notify the programme for local body polls within two weeks.

The Supreme Court had ordered the State Election Commission on May 10 to conduct three-tier panchayat and urban body elections without OBC reservation. For modification in this order, the Madhya Pradesh government filed an application in the Supreme Court on May 12.

The apex court also stated that the election process cannot be delayed as it would result in creating a hiatus situation upon expiry of the five-year term and it is the constitutional obligation of the authorities to hold elections on time.

CM to Distribute Rights Records in Swamitva Yojana

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will distribute rights records to 3 lakh 70 thousand people of 27 districts under the Swamitva Yojana on Wednesday. Revenue Minister Govind Singh Rajput informed that in the state level programme in Rewa on Wednesday, physical distribution of rights-letters of their land to the people of 27 districts will be held. Rajput informed that so far rights records have been distributed to a total of 2 lakh 71 thousand beneficiaries in the state. On the completion of 20 years of public welfare and good governance, Prime Minister Narendra Modi physically distributed rights

records to 01 lakh 71 thousand beneficiaries in 3 thousand villages of 19 districts under this scheme in Harda district on October 6, 2021.

The Revenue Minister said that through the Survey of India, under the Swamitva Yojana, maps of the habitation areas in villages are being prepared through drones and on this basis rights records are being prepared through door-to-door survey. He said that the process of survey is being started in 52 districts of the state under the scheme. In the first phase, in the year 2020, 10 thousand villages of 10 districts were selected. In the second and third phases, work was started in about 30 thousand villages of total 30 districts. After this, the process of survey was started in

12 districts in the fourth phase. At present, 39 drones are being used for survey work, out of which the work has been completed in 27 districts. The Revenue Minister said that while making the survey rules simpler, electronic documents have been validated as the legal documents. Completing the survey work in time-limit, making the rights records transparent, the Patwaris can link the name of the plot holder with the plot on the spot with the implementation of the process through app and web. For the purpose of adopting this process, parties from other states have visited the state. Harda district has achieved the target of completing the survey work in 10 months.

MP LEADS IN PRODUCTION OF VARIOUS CROPS AT NATIONAL LEVEL: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that 11 districts of the state have been specially selected for tomato production under the 'Ek Zila-Ek Utpad' scheme. We can achieve Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal of doubling farmers income through diversification of agriculture. Activities in this direction are being conducted by the state government in consultation with agricultural scientists, processors, exporters. There is immense potential for the cultivation, processing and business of fruits, vegetables, spices, medicinal and aromatic crops along with tomato. Necessary training has also been arranged in this area. Chouhan was addressing the International Tomato Conclave-2022 organized by the Department of Horticulture and Food Processing in collaboration with the Netherlands Embassy at Hotel Amer Greens virtually from his residence office.



Chouhan said that along with the schemes run by the central government for the expansion of horticulture crops, schemes are being implemented for fruits, plantation, promotion of protected cultivation of commercial horticulture crops, promotion of mechanization for the development of horticulture, expansion of spice sector, development of food processing industries, Chief Minister's horticulture and food processing and cold storage infrastructure development for horticulture crops. Effective work is going on in the state to reduce the cost of agricultural production, to provide fair price for the produce to the farmer, to establish a better market system and to make agriculture a profitable business by providing adequate assistance to the farmer during natural calamities.

Chief Minister said that the society is facing health related issues due to increasing use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Now there is a need to adopt and encourage natural farming. Chouhan called upon the farmers to use natural farming in a part of their field. Chouhan said that there are 11 diverse agro-climatic zones in the state. Madhya Pradesh leads in the production of various crops at the national level. The state is first in the country in the production of oranges and coriander seeds. Also, Madhya Pradesh is among the leading states of the country in the production of guava, tomato, onion, cauliflower, green chilli, peas, garlic, lemon etc. Chief Minister said that he himself is a farmer and produces guava, pomegranate and mango. Chouhan informed that 766 tonnes of tomato was produced by him in an area of 9 acres. Diversification of agriculture is necessary to strengthen farmers economically.

Chouhan said that International Tomato Conclave-2022 would prove to be significant in increasing tomato crop and its export, storage, processing in the state. The state government will ensure 100 percent implementation of the strategy developed by the experts. Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar said that in order to increase the income of the farmers, a system will have to be made right from the production of crops to market. He said that Madhya Pradesh is a pioneer in horticulture and natural farming. Madhya Pradesh has made great progress in irrigation and agricultural production. The state is also moving ahead in the field of food processing. International Tomato Conclave is the need of the hour. Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Horticulture and Food Processing Bharat Singh Kushwaha virtually addressed the inaugural session of Tomato Conclave-2022. He said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, every area of horticulture is expanding in the state. Atmanirbhar farmers are moving ahead on the roadmap of Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh. He said that the decision to organize International Tomato Conclave-2022 was taken in September-2021. There are possibilities of development of horticulture crops in the state. In 11 districts of the state, farmers have prominently adopted tomato cultivation. Keeping this in mind, tomato has been taken under 'Ek Zila-Ek Utpad' in these districts. Madhya Pradesh will be identified as a horticulture hub. Farmers of the state will be benefited by the conclave. Minister of State for Horticulture Shri Kushwaha said that the suggestions received from the subject experts will be implemented in the conclave.

ADMISSION BEGINS IN TWO YEAR "CALLIGRAPHY AND GRAPHIC DESIGN" COURSE

Bhopal: Admission begins in the two-year course (year 2022-24 session) of "Calligraphy and Graphic Design" in the Urdu Academy of the Culture Department. Calligraphy and Graphic Design Centre has been established at Urdu Academy by Qaumi Council, Barai Farogh-e-Urdu Zaban, New Delhi. In the first year of the course, training in calligraphy and in the second year in graphic design will be given. Candidates seeking admission to the centre can take the form from the academy and submit it till June 26, 2022 at office hours. For admission, candidate must be at least matriculation pass or its equivalent Adib or Alim. They should have good knowledge of Urdu language and age should be between 15 and 35 years. Certificate of which is required. There is no fee for admission and training at the centre. Along with this, materials and books related to training will be given free of cost from the centre. Detailed description and application form can be obtained from Urdu Academy Office, Mulla Ramuji Sanskriti Bhawan, Banganga, Bhopal during office hours.

Issue the Names and Numbers of Officers Concerned With Drinking Water Supply

Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh Reviewed Bhopal Drinking Water Supply

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Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh reviewed the drinking water supply system of Bhopal on Tuesday. He said that along with the information about which water tank will supply water at what time, the names and mobile numbers of the officers and employees associated with the work should be made public. These officers-employees should pick up the phones of public representatives and citizens at the

earliest. Singh said that any lapse in drinking water supply will not be tolerated. He said that drinking water should be supplied daily in Neelbad, Goregaon and Suraj Nagar areas also. At present, water is being given in these areas on alternate days.

Commissioner Municipal Corporation Bhopal KVS Chaudhary Kolsani informed that the cement pipeline coming from Kolar Dam belongs to year 1990. It used to leak repeatedly due to pressure. A new steel pipeline has been laid in

AMRUT project, which is of 1650 MM with cement coating. The old pipeline was of 1500 mm of cement. He told that earlier the tank which was filled in 6 to 7 hours, now it is filling in 3 hours. Now water tanks will be filled on time in the areas of PGBT, Nariyal Kheda and Kazi Camp. Kolsani said that the problem of dirty water would end in a day or two.

Collector Bhopal Avinash Lavania and Additional Commissioner Municipal Corporation Riju Bafna were also present in the meeting.

Tribal couple, minor daughter murdered in Mandla

A tribal couple along with their 12-year-old daughter were found dead on the rooftop of their building in Madhya Pradesh's Mandla district. The incident occurred late on Monday. After getting information, a police team reached the spot and the bodies were sent for post-mortem.

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A tribal couple along with their 12-year-old daughter were found dead on the rooftop of their building in Madhya Pradesh's Mandla district. The incident occurred late on Monday. After getting information, a police team reached the spot and the bodies were sent for post-mortem.



As per the police, unidentified criminals killed the three when they were sleeping on the rooftop of their home.

The preliminary investigation revealed that the victims were attacked by a sharp weapon as their throats were cut. An FIR has been registered and police teams have begun a search operation for the culprits involved in the murders, said a police official. The deceased have been identified as Narmada Singh (62), his wife Sukarti Bai (57) and their daughter Kumari Mahima (12).

"The bodies have been sent for post-mortem and further investigation in

the matter is under way. Several police teams are in search of the criminals," said a police official in Mandla district.

Former Chief Minister and Congress Rajya Sabha MP Digiujaya Singh has raised questions about the state of law and order in Madhya Pradesh, stating that tribal people are being targeted.

"The law and order situation in the state is deteriorating day by day. Atrocities against tribals have risen in Madhya Pradesh. The state Home Minister should resign from his post if he can't handle the situation," Singh said, adding that, "even the Chief Minister does not have the courage to ask for his resignation."



CM EXPRESSES CONDOLENCES

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan reached Shujalpur residence of Minister of State for School Education (Independent Charge) and General Administration Inder Singh Parmar and expressed his condolences by paying floral tributes at the picture of his daughter-in-law Savita Parmar. Chouhan has prayed to God to grant peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family to bear the loss.

Chouhan along with MP VD Sharma and Organization General Secretary Hitanand Sharma also consoled the bereaved family by paying floral tributes. Villagers along with all family members and relatives including Vikram Singh Parmar were present. Chouhan, reached the residence of former BJP President of Shajapur district, in village Berchhadatar, Late Narendra Singh Bais, and expressed his condolences and consoled the family. The Chief Minister paid homage to Late Bhanupratap, grandson of former chairman of Urja Vikas Nigam Vijender Singh Sisodia in Shujalpur at the latter's residence. He also reached the residence of former Municipal President Sandeep Sanas in Shujalpur. Here he paid floral tributes at the portrait of Late Lakshman Rao Sanas and consoled the bereaved family.



CM Planted Banyan and Neem Saplings with Children

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Banyan and Neem saplings in the Smart City Park. Children of Shanti Nagar and Rajdev Colony, Manan, Lavya, Bhavesh and Saumya also planted saplings. Chouhan praised this initiative of the children and told them about the importance of banyan and neem. Members of the Welfare Society of the colony, Rakesh Grover, Amit Mishra and Jai Lalwani also participated in the plantation. Working continuously in the area of cleanliness and environment in the colony, the society is doing the work of segregating wet and dry waste from house to house and keeping the colony and surrounding areas clean. Citizens are made aware of cleanliness by conducting cleanliness campaigns from time to time. Along with planting saplings for environmental protection, citizens are motivated to plant saplings by the society. The banyan tree planted today is also called Vat Vriksha or Bad. Banyan has religious significance. Also, according to Ayurveda, the treatment of many diseases is possible with the banyan tree. Neem tree is very useful. Rich in antibiotic elements, neem is known as the supreme medicine.

Attempt to install Lord Hanuman's idol near Dargah sparks violence in Neemuch

A person suffered injuries as communal violence broke out after a group of people attempted to install Lord Hanuman's idol near a Muslim shrine in Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch district, police said on Tuesday.

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A person suffered injuries as communal violence broke out after a group of people attempted to install Lord Hanuman's idol near a Muslim shrine in Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch district, police said on Tuesday.

Private properties were also damaged in the incident, it said. Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure had to be clamped to stem the violence after a mob pelted stones and resorted to arson near Purani Kachehri area of Neemuch. Additional forces have been



deployed and people's movement is being monitored to ensure that the situation returns to normal, a police official said. Neemuch Superintendent of Police (SP) Suraj Kumar Verma said the violence occurred after a group of people reached

Dargah 9 (Muslim shrine) and tried to install Lord Hanuman's idol. This attempt incited heated arguments between the group which later turned into violence. Stones were pelted which prompted police to use teargas to disperse the stone-

pelting mob. People have been asked to stay at their homes till the situation gets back to normal. "A group of people tried to install the idol on a government land near the dargah which was opposed by the other group. A heated argument preceded the stone pelting," said the district police superintendent. As per the police, a person identified as Yousuf was injured in the violence and has been admitted in a government hospital. "Additional cops have been deployed in the area and we are monitoring the situation. No complaint was registered so far, but the police have started investigation into the matter," Verma added.

District Collector Mayank Agrawal said: "Section 144 was imposed and the situation is now under control."

Violence in Neemuch was the fourth such incident in Madhya Pradesh in the last two months and the state's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government has drawn flak over it.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Lucknow, Lakhanpur or Laxmanpuri

The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh is apparently back to its name changing spree. A tweet by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has sparked off speculations about the name of Lucknow, the state capital, being changed in the coming weeks. In the tweet welcoming Prime minister Narendra Modi to Lucknow on Monday evening, Yogi wrote: "Sheshavatar Bhagwan Laxman ki pawan nagri Lucknow mein aapka swagat aur abhinandan." This has led to a debate on social media about the name of Lucknow being changed to Laxmanpuri. A grand temple dedicated to Laxman is already being constructed in Lucknow. The temple will have statues of Laxman, his wife Urmila and there will also be statues of Shiva Parivar and Ram Darbar. An old age home will be a part of the temple complex, named after Urmila. A demand to change the name of Lucknow to Lakhanpuri or Laxmanpuri has been raised several times by BJP leaders. Lucknow already has several landmarks named after Laxman and these include Laxman Tila, Laxmanpuri and Laxman Park. The Yogi Adityanath government in its previous term, had changed the name of Allahabad to Prayagraj and Faizabad to Ayodhya. This led to a surge in demand for changing the names of several districts including Sultanpur to Kushbhawanpur, Aligarh to Harigarh, Mainpuri to Mayanpuri, Sambhal to Prithviraj Nagar or Kalki Nagar, Firozabad to Chandranagar and Deoband to Devrand. Meanwhile, officials said that they were not yet aware of any proposal to rename Lucknow or any other city.

FAULT LINES WIDENING AMONGST INDIAN MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Asad Mirza

Recent outreach activities by Muslim leaders across India relays very disturbing and hopeless signs, instead of formulating a strategy to unify the Indian Muslims, these leaders are hell bent on further dividing them in various denominations and groupings.

As per the reports based on first-person accounts and news circulating on various social media platforms, the Indian Muslims across the country are worried about their and their future generation's future in the country. The community as a whole is living under a siege mentality and is unable to fathom how to proceed further. One positive fallout of this stress is that now the common Indian Muslim is ready to come out on the streets and demands his rights and stand against the forceful establishment, in absence of any leadership.

This change amongst the common Indian Muslims started in 2019 after the finalisation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The protests, which started from Delhi's Shaheen Bagh, soon spread to many other cities. A novel feature of most of these protests was that Muslim women were at the forefront of these demonstrations.

More recently, after the bulldozer politics started in certain Indian states, Muslims in many cities came out once again against the establishment and stood in solidarity with one another.

However, one incongruous fact, which has emerged from these developments, is the absence of any Muslim leader, with an all-India appeal, leading these movements or even coming out in support of these people movements. This once again proves the point that after 1947 the Indian Muslims have been betrayed by their own leaders -- both religious and political.

The fact remains that the so-called religious leaders are busy in



amassing wealth in the name of the religion and expanding their personal empires. In addition, the social and political leaders pay lip-service to the Muslims' sentiments and just appear at the right moment to get their mug shots for the photos and videos, making sentimental not practical statements, whilst engaged in serving their political masters and enjoying their political and financial patronage.

However, a rather more worrying is the fact that recently some Muslim leaders have come out to speak against the establishment and its anti-Muslim policies, but in fact their main aim is not to vilify the establishment, but to vilify their religious opponents and divide the community on fissiparous tendencies.

Last week, one such conference was held in Hyderabad, Telangana. The main organisers and speakers at the conference looked more intent on creating divisions within the community, instead of offering any cohesive, forward looking and practical plan to counter the anti-Muslim narratives and operations.

The reports say that most of the speakers at the conference were

lost to the readers.

Another speaker spoke about the qualities and patterns of Khawariji terrorists, while exposing the double standards of Islamist preachers like Yusuf Qardawi, Hasan Al Banna, Syed Qutub and Abul-Ala Maududi. This too has no resonance in India, so far.

Now coming to another of these so-called 'Muslim' conferences, which took place in Mumbai on 12 May and was addressed by about 35 Muslim religious, social and political leaders. At the end of the day long conference they issued a statement, one point of which read: "The meeting of the Muslim Community leadership to organise at local levels and continuously review the situation at your respective cities. An organised approach towards such planned attacks on Muslims will be the best possible way to thwart the plans of the Fascist forces in a situation where unfortunately the state declines to do its duty of protecting the Minorities." The third one of these conferences is to be held in New Delhi on 21 May, organised by a consultative Muslim body and supported by a religious and socio-cultural organisation - which till a decade ago banned its members from participating in the democratic and parliamentary process of India and a fledgling political party and a religious denomination. And yet another one is scheduled to be held in New Delhi on 29 May under the banner of Muslims intellectuals (sic).

Coming back to the statement issued after the Mumbai conference, one can take heart from the sentiments expressed by the community's leaders who have recognised the efforts by the common Indian Muslims to come out against the tyrannical rulers and urged them to organise themselves. But in reality these common Muslims have been made and in future too will be made the sacrificial scapegoat again, whilst these so-called leaders remain ensconced in their luxurious homes with no threat either financial or physical looming over their heads.

I have written and spoken many times in the past that the Indian Muslims have to adopt not a reactive but a proactive strategy to counter any campaigns against them. To construct and manage such an apparatus, which keeps an eye on the planning of aggressors and plan a counter strategy, you have to be equipped with monitoring, research and media teams, within the constitutional framework of the country, to counter the opposition's efforts.

But alas none of our leaders is ready to adopt such an approach and the biggest irony is that even if the Indian Muslims agree to adopt such a strategy, then it will have to be led by the so-called religious leaders eschewing their religious denominational differences and act and behave as One monolith religion, as others view you, not as being Deobandi, Barelvi, Ahl-e Hadith etc.

Going by the past experiences, one is not very hopeful that they may be ready to do so. Instead like what happened at the Hyderabad conference, they are ready to further widen the gulf between different religious denominations and claim their superiority over one another.

(Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. He writes on Muslims, educational, international affairs, interfaith and current affairs)

international

Putin personally involved in Ukraine war 'at level of colonel or brigadier'

Kathmandu | Agencies

Russian President Vladimir Putin has become so personally involved in the Ukraine war that he is making operational and tactical decisions "at the level of a colonel or brigadier", according to western military sources. Putin is helping determine the movement of forces in the Donbas, where last week Russians suffered a bloody defeat as they tried on multiple occasions to cross a strategic river in the east of Ukraine, the Guardian quoted the sources as saying.

The sources added that Putin is still working closely with Gen Valery Gerasimov, the commander of the Russian armed forces, in contrast to claims made by Ukraine last week that the military chief had been sidelined.

"We think Putin and Gerasimov are involved in tactical decision making at a level we would normally expect to be taken by a colonel or a brigadier," one of the sources said, referring to the ongoing battle in the east of Ukraine. Moscow's forces have so far failed to achieve a breakthrough in the Donbas, where they have been mounting an offensive for a month that has failed several times to encircle the smaller Ukrainian forces.

No further detail to back up the statement



was provided, although it was implied the assessment about Putin's close personal involvement was based on intelligence that had been received, the Guardian reported.

Last week's failed attempt to cross the Siverskiy Donets river at Bilohorivka led to the destruction of more than 70 Russian vehicles, and the loss of at least one battalion's worth of equipment, according to estimates based on aerial photography of the battle site.

The defeat was so serious it led some Russian military bloggers to comment "on the incompetence of the Russian military to their hundreds of thousands of followers", according to the Institute for the Study of War, a rare sign of internal dissent.

PAKISTANI RUPEE FALLS TO YET ANOTHER HISTORIC LOW AGAINST US DOLLAR

Karachi | Agencies

The Pakistani rupee continued to tumble against the US dollar, breaching yet another important threshold of 196 in the interbank market to hit its weakest level on Tuesday, media reports said.

Maintaining its downturn for the eighth successive working day, the Pakistani rupee was being traded at Rs 195.74 against the greenback surpassing its last low, Geo News reported. A persistent delay in the receipt of the next tranche of \$1 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is mounting pressure on the rupee.

The situation is likely to remain uncertain for the local currency, Commodities Director Adnan Agar said as the local unit fell below 196-mark against the greenback during the trading session on Tuesday.

"If the government decides to remove subsidies on petroleum products, the rupee will bounce back," he said, adding that the local unit will remain within the range of 180-185.

Agar, however, added that if the government decided to dissolve the Assembly and move towards early elections, the situation for the already tumbling currency market will deteriorate. Since the beginning of this fiscal year (July 1, 2021) to date, the rupee has collectively dropped by a massive 24.24 per cent (or Rs 38.2) compared to the previous fiscal year's close at Rs 157.54.



Japan not considering new nuke plants despite energy security concerns

Tokyo | Agencies

Japan is not considering building any new nuclear power plants, despite concerns over the nation's energy security, Industry Ministry Koichi Hagiuda said on Tuesday.

"Taking into account the Ukraine crisis and concerns over a power supply crunch, we will make the most of what we have, including nuclear power," the Minister told a press briefing.

Hagiuda also said that along with new talent, resources will be directed at developing a new type of nuclear reactor, reports Xinhua news agency.

His remarks apparently run contrary to a recently released interim report on a clean energy strategy for achieving a carbon-neutral society, which focuses in part on rebooting Japan's nuclear power plants to bolster energy security.

Many of Japan's aged nuclear reactors, which have



been taken offline in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011 for safety inspections and updates, are approaching their 40-year operating limits.

Hence, debate has become more vociferous within the industrial sector as to the role of nuclear power in the future of Japan's energy mix. To this end, the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry asked the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy on Monday to elucidate the use of nuclear power in the government's energy strategy. The chamber of commerce called on the

industry ministry body to quickly resume operations of the long-idled reactors.

Of the country's 36 nuclear power plants, only 10 have been allowed to be rebooted after passing strict safety regulations following the Fukushima disaster.

Last year, the government's energy mix put forward included power produced by nuclear means to be limited to 20-22 per cent of the total in fiscal 2030, with new energy and renewables comprising 36-38 per cent, in line with the country's commitment to achieving a carbon-neutral society by 2050.

THAILAND'S ECONOMY CONTINUES TO RECOVER

Bangkok | Agencies

Thailand's economic recovery continued apace, with its gross domestic product (GDP) up 2.2 per cent year on year in the first quarter, official data showed on Tuesday.

The growth accelerated from a rise of 1.8 per cent registered in the previous quarter, according to data released by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC).

Seasonally adjusted, the country's economy climbed 1.1 per cent from the last quarter of 2021, Xinhua news agency quoted the NESDC as saying. The Council expected the country's GDP to expand in the range of 2.5 per cent-3.5 per cent from one year earlier in 2022, supported by the improvement of domestic demand and the tourism sector.

The Southeast Asian country's tourism revenue stood at 144 billion baht (\$4 billion) in the first quarter of 2022, expanding for the first time in 11 quarters by 63.8 per cent due to the relaxation of Covid-19 control measures, the progress of vaccine distribution and the government's tourism stimulus policy, the NESDC said.

Thailand's economy grew 1.6 per cent year on year in 2021, rebounding from a contraction of 6.2 per cent in 2020.

TURKEY THREATENS TO BLOCK FINLAND, SWEDEN NATO BIDS

Ankara | Agencies

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has restated his opposition to Finland and Sweden joining the NATO, just hours after they said they would seek membership of the military alliance amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

Addressing reporters on Monday, Erdogan said Turkey opposed the two Scandinavian countries' bids to join NATO, describing Sweden as a "hatchery" for terrorist organisations, reports the BBC. "Neither of these countries have a clear, open attitude towards terrorist organisation. How can we trust them?" he asked. Erdogan is angered by what he sees as their willingness to host Kurdish militants. Turkey accuses the two Nordic nations of harbouring members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a group it views as a terrorist organisation,



and followers of Fethullah Gulen, who Ankara accuses of orchestrating a 2016 coup attempt, the BBC reported.

All member states must agree that a new country can join NATO, therefore Sweden and Finland require Turkey's support in their bid to join the military alliance. Erdogan said Swedish and Finnish delega-

tions should not bother going to Ankara to convince it to approve their NATO bid. His government has also pledged to block applications from countries that have imposed sanctions on it.

Speaking in Parliament in Helsinki on Monday, Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto said he was surprised by Turkey's stance, but added that

his government was not interested in "bargaining" with Erdogan. Finland formally announced its bid to join NATO last week. It was joined by neighbour Sweden on May 14.

"NATO will strengthen Sweden, Sweden will strengthen NATO," Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson said at a briefing on Monday. She said a formal application could be handed within several days and would be synchronised with Finland. However, Andersson stressed that Sweden did not want permanent Nato bases or nuclear weapons on its territory. Norway, Denmark and Iceland, all NATO members, immediately said they were ready to support Sweden and Finland by all means necessary if they came under attack. The UK, also a NATO member, has already given security guarantees to Sweden and Finland to cover the transition period.

Coup attempt foiled in Mali

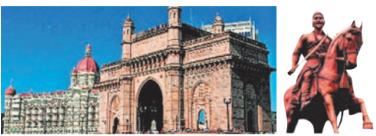
Bamako | Agencies

A coup attempted by "a small group of anti-progressive Malian officers and non-commissioned officers" earlier this month was foiled, a spokesperson for the West African country said. In a statement late Monday, the spokesperson, Colonel Abdoulaye Maiga, said the coup attempt took place on May 11-12, reports Xinhua news agency. "The militia were supported by a Western state. The attempt was foiled thanks to the vigilance and professionalism of the defence and security forces of Mali," Maiga said and also condemned with "the utmost rigor" the attempted coup while saying that all appropriate measures are being deployed. "Those arrested will be in the hands of justice," he, without mentioning the identity of the officers and non-commissioned officers involved.

After the coup on August 18, 2020, an 18-month political transition was launched in Mali on September 15, 2020, which expired on February 27 this year.

Since then, the transitional authorities have been negotiating an extension of this deadline with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

On April 21, the Malian transitional government announced the start of a 24-month transition process for organising free and transparent presidential elections.



SC directs Maharashtra state election commission to conduct local body polls in districts with less rainfall

MVA expects the dedicated commission will be able to complete the compilation of crucial empirical data of OBCs in next four months

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major relief to the Maha Vikas Aghadi government, the Supreme Court has put the ball in the Maharashtra State Election Commission's (SEC) court on conducting elections to the 20 municipal corporations, 25 zilla parishads and 210 nagar parishads after completion of the ongoing pre poll process. The apex court has asked the SEC to complete the pre poll process which is expected by July.

This means the elections to the urban bodies and local bodies are expected only in October and November. By this time, the Maha Vikas Aghadi government expects the compilation of crucial empirical data of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) which is one of the triple tests mandated by the apex court for the restoration of 27% political reservation to OBCs in urban and local bodies in the state. Already a special dedicated commission on OBCs headed by former chief secretary Jayant Banthia has launched region wise meetings and compilation of empirical data of OBCs.



MVA partners and opposition are of the firm view that the elections should not be held in the absence of the OBC quota which was scrapped by the apex court in the past. A veteran NCP minister and Samata Parishad founder Chhagan Bhujbal hinted that the civic and local body elections will be held in October-November. Supreme Court on Tuesday on a

special application filed by SEC observed that it can hold elections to local and civic bodies in districts from Marathwada and Vidarbha with less rainfall as it does not have to wait till October and November but in districts from Konkan region with high rainfall the polls can be held after the monsoon is over. Further, the apex court asked the SEC to complete the pre poll process

comprising ward formation, reservation for SC, ST and women and division of voter lists for 2,486 local bodies. A senior SEC officer told the Free Press Journal, "The apex court has asked to complete the process and decide the poll schedule taking into account region, district and local body wise monsoon situation." The SEC today submitted that it has already resumed the pre poll process which came to a halt on March 10 after the state government passed two laws taking away SEC's power of delimitation of wards and fixing of poll schedule.

The officer recalled that SEC in the special application filed on May 11 had said the process will be complete by July. Further, SEC had pleaded that it should be allowed to issue an election schedule in September, as conducting elections in July and August will not be possible as the administrative machinery will be busy with flood control, mitigation and disaster management works. Additionally, the SEC had pleaded that it be allowed to hold elections to the urban local bodies in October and for rural local bodies in November.

Congress-NCP spat over local body polls escalates rift within Maharashtra govt

The Congress-NCP spat over local body elections has widened the schism within Maharashtra's government.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Congress President Nana Patole is mincing no words while attacking its ally, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), for backstabbing them by joining hands with the BJP in a recent local body poll.

The BJP took power in Gondia Zilla parishad a week ago with the NCP's support. This unexpected move irritated Nana Patole because it took him out of his own stronghold in Vidarbha's Bhandara-Gondia constituency. Furthermore, the NCP was able to secure a vice presidential position for their candidate in the same local body. Other senior NCP leaders, including Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil, have stated that they will discuss the matter and make a decision to cover up the ugly spat between the leaders. Meanwhile, Congress



leader Balasaheb Thorat backed Nana Patole, stating that what happened in Gondia was wrong.

All MVA parties have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that must be followed. Otherwise, they should be aware that the state has a number of upcoming elections, said Balasaheb Thorat. Ajit Pawar, Deputy Chief Minister and NCP leader, dismissed the allegations, claiming that they were unimportant given his own history of jumping parties. A recent heated exchange of words between Congress and NCP leaders exposed the growing schism within the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

After returning from the Congress's Chintan Shivir in Jaipur, Nana Patole stated, "NCP is systematically trying

to wipe out Congress from the state by not allocating funds to our MLA's and ill-treating us. I have complained about the recent updates to our high command and they will reach some conclusion soon."

Ajit Pawar clarified: "What he wants to tell their high command is an internal matter. We don't need to be concerned about it. However, disagreements between government allies are unavoidable. We can at least have a discussion and work out our differences."

Pawar's remark about jumping parties didn't sit well with Patole. He retaliated, saying, "The entire country knows that I was never as desperate for power as he was. I openly resigned from the BJP due to differences and joined the Congress in broad daylight."

FIR lodged against Bharti Singh over old video in Punjab, she issues apology

Comedian Bharti Singh is in trouble as an FIR has been lodged against her in Amritsar, Punjab on Monday over an old video of her allegedly mocking men with beards.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Comedian Bharti Singh is in trouble as an FIR has been lodged against her in Amritsar, Punjab on Monday over an old video of her allegedly mocking men with beards. She was seen talking to actor Jasmin Bhasin on her comedy series 'Bharti Ka Show'. The FIR was registered on Monday night on the complaint of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, which alleged that she had hurt the sentiments of Sikhs. Bharti has been charged under Section 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings) of the Indian Penal Code.

In the old video, Bharti was seen saying: "Beard-moustache has many benefits; drink milk and put some of the beard in your mouth, it will taste nothing less than 'Seviyaan'." She also talked about men having lice in their beards. Sikh groups even protest-



ed against Bharti in Amritsar on Monday.

Talking to Instagram, Bharti posted a video in which she apologised and explained that she never meant to hurt any religious sentiments. "There's a video that's been going viral from the last 3 to 4 days claiming that I

have made fun of 'daadi mooch'. I have seen the video repeatedly and requested people to watch it too as I have not said anything against any religion or caste. I didn't mock any Punjabi or what problems happen when you keep 'daadi mooch'," she said. Bharti added, "I have not mentioned any religion or any caste in it. I was doing comedy with my friend. A lot of people keep beards and moustaches these days. But if people from any religion or caste have been hurt by my comments, I apologise to them with folded hands. I am a Punjabi myself, born in Amritsar. I am proud of being a Punjabi."

Shiv Sena to field two nominees for June 10 Rajya Sabha election

The party will renominate the sitting MP and chief spokesman Sanjay Raut while it proposes to contest another seat banking on its own excess votes and transfer of excess votes by ruling partners NCP and Congress

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a significant move, the Shiv Sena will field two candidates for the Rajya Sabha elections from Maharashtra. The party will renominate the sitting MP and chief spokesman Sanjay Raut while it proposes to contest another seat banking on its own excess votes and transfer of excess votes by ruling partners NCP and Congress. This was announced by Transport Minister Anil Parab who is close confidant of the CM Uddhav Thackeray. This clearly means that Shiv

Sena is not in a mood to extend support to Chhatrapati Sambhaji who has already declared to contest as an independent. He was nominated by the BJP in the upper house.

A senior Shiv Sena leader, who is close to the Chief Minister, told the Free Press Journal, "CM is determined to give candidature to a Shiv Sainik and not to an outsider. CM is banking on the party's excess votes and also transfer of excess votes by NCP and Congress." He further said that CM's decision is important as during the last Rajya Sabha elections, the Shiv Sena had transferred the excess votes to NCP nominee Fauzia Khan. "It was decided after the last Rajya Sabha elections, that the NCP and Congress will transfer excess votes to the Shiv Sena's second nominee," he added.

Another Shiv Sena minister said the Maha Vikas Aghadi government together expects to win four of the six seats from Maharashtra for which polling is slated for June 10. The BJP will win two seats. As per the present party wise

strength, the Maha Vikas Aghadi has support of 168 of the 288 legislators comprising Shiv Sena 55, NCP 53, Congress 44, other parties 8 and independents 8. Based on their individual strengths, Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress are confident of victory of one seat each with a quota of 42 required for the election of one seat.

In case of BJP with 106 legislators, it has the support of one legislator each of Jan Surajya and Rashtriya Samaj Paksha and five independents. Together, BJP has a strength of 113 legislators. With this BJP is confident of victory of two nominees. If BJP decides to field one more seat, then the MVA faces an acid test to keep its flock together as observers hint at horse trading. The election is necessary as the term of sitting six Rajya Sabha members will be over in July. They included Praful Patel (NCP), Sanjay Raut (Shiv Sena), P Chidambaram (Congress), Piyush Goyal and Vinay Sahasrabudhe and Vikas Mahatme (BJP).

HUSBAND, IN-LAWS ATTEMPT TO BURN WOMAN ALIVE



Beed: A man and his parents attempted to kill a woman by setting her on fire in the Beed district of Maharashtra. Police have registered a case against a husband and in-laws who tried to burn a woman alive in the Beed district of Maharashtra. The victim was identified as Pratiksha Rajgude and her husband as Ajay Rajgude. They are residents of Dimakhwadi in the Beed district. The man and his parents tried to kill the woman over dowry. The woman was taken to a hospital where she is undergoing treatment. A case has been registered at the Gevrai police station and further investigations are underway.

MOBILE SUBSCRIPTIONS WITNESSED SHARP SPIKE DURING COVID

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra has witnessed a significant beef up in the number of mobile phone connections in the state during COVID-19, owing to a rise in work from home, online classes, and digital payments, reported TOI. Mobile phone connections in the state saw a rise of 22 percent in the pandemic period as compared to non-COVID times according to the data released by the Maharashtra government.

A cursory government data suggests that the number of mobile connections swelled to 1,325.6 lakh crores in the FY 2020-21. Before the pandemic, that is FY 19-20, Maharashtra had 1,306.2 lakh active connections.

In the first nine months of FY 2021-22, the numbers swelled by 1,265.8 lakhs. The last fiscal year, that is FY 2020-21 reported average monthly connections of 110 lakhs. According to experts, this sudden jump in mobile connections in the past two years is attributed to work from home culture and online schooling and coaching of children, which required parents and children to have separate phones. Most of the parents reportedly shared their phones with the children during the initial phase considering it to be a temporary shift in working style. However, later, as the pandemic prolonged, they eventually arranged for a separate individual connection for the children. A lot of the parents shared that they have been and are still sceptical of handing mobile phones to their children but online education has compelled them to give in. The number of mobile phone connections were rising in FY 2016-17 by 12 percent. However, they went stagnant in the next few years, which was considered a saturation point for them. With the coming of the pandemic, it again rose to high levels.

CS visits Navi Mumbai, appreciates work done by NMMC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Manukumar Srivastava, the chief secretary of Maharashtra, visited Navi Mumbai city today and appreciated the beautification work done by Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC). He said, "as soon as we enter the city of Navi Mumbai, we can see the difference, especially the cleanliness."

After inspecting various projects in Navi Mumbai, Chief Secretary Srivastava met with officials at the NMMC headquarters. Municipal Commissioner Abhijeet Bangar gave information about the specific works of NMMC and the civic body's upcoming projects. Later, Srivastava also visited the newly developed Babasaheb Ambedkar Memorial in Airoli and praised the libraries and



verting the former dumping ground into an urban forest. The Chief Secretary appreciated the efforts of the Municipal Corporation for the conservation of the urban environment and the creation of a conducive environment for biodiversity through the implementation of the Miyavaki Project, a fast-growing tree in a short span of time. He also expressed satisfaction over the concept of making the project available through a CSR fund through Green Yatra at no cost to the corporation.

While inspecting the Miyawaki Urban Forest Project at Koparkhairane, he lauded the Corporation's innovative concept of con-

Maharashtra logs 266 new COVID-19 cases, 241 recoveries on May 17; zero deaths reported

Besides, zero COVID-19 deaths were reported in the day, taking the number of total fatalities to 1,47,855

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra on Tuesday, May 17, recorded 266 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the number of active cases to 1551. Besides, zero COVID-19 deaths were reported in the day, taking the number of total fatalities to 1,47,855.

241 patients were discharged in the day, taking the tally to 77,31,829. The recovery rate in the state is 98.10%. The case fatality rate in the state is 1.87%. The Mumbai circle that consists of MCGM, Thane, TMC, Navi Mumbai, KDMC, Ulhasnagar MC, Bhivandri Nijampur MC, Mira Bhayandar MC, Palghar, Vasai Virar MC, Raigad,



Panvel MC recorded 197 new cases. The Nashik circle that consists of Nashik, Nashik MC, Malegaon MC, Ahmednagar, Ahmednagar MC, Dhule, Dhule MC, Jalgaon, Jalgaon MC, Nandurbar reported 2 fresh COVID-19 cases.

The Pune circle that includes Pune, PMC, PCMC, Solapur, Solapur MC, Satara recorded 62 new cases. The Kolhapur circle that includes Kolhapur, Kolhapur MC, Sangli, Sangli MC, Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri reported 0 new cases. The Aurangabad circle

thath consists of Aurangabad, Aurangabad MC, Jalna, Hingoli, Parbhani, Parbhani MC reported 4 fresh cases. The Latur circle that consists of Latur, Latur MC, Osmanabad, Beed, Nanded, Nanded MC recorded 0 fresh cases. The Akola circle that includes Akola, Akola MC, Amaravati, Amaravati MC, Yavatmal, Buldhana, Washim recorded 1 fresh cases. Nagpur circle that includes Nagpur, Nagpur MC, Wardha, Bhandara, Gondia, Chandrapur, Chandrapur MC, Gadchiroli reported 0 fresh cases.

Maharashtra government announces Rs 200 per tonne incentive to sugar mills who kept crushing units on beyond May 1

The Maharashtra government's move came after it decided to aid farmers whose sugarcane plants are still in the fields in the backdrop of an increased production this year.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In the backdrop of the decision to increase the production of sugar to aid farmers whose produce are still in the fields, the Maharashtra government Tuesday announced an incentive of Rs 200 per tonne to sugar mills where crushing has taken place beyond May 1.

The sugar mills will be allowed to function till surplus sugarcane crushing is complete, said government officials. The area under sugarcane cultivation has increased this year by 2.25 lakh hectare. As a result, the production of sugarcane has also increased. The decision was taken by the state govern-



ment at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and attended by deputy chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat, Cooperation Minister

Balasaheb Patil, Agriculture Minister Dadasaheb Bhuse, Health Minister Rajesh Tope, Medical Education Minister Amit Deshmukh and other officers.

After the meeting, Patil said, "The additional incentive of Rs 200 per tonne will burden the state treasury by Rs 100 crore. It is expected that sugarcane crushing after May 1, 2022 might have been to the tune of 52 lakh tonne."

"Sugarcane which is being fetched from fields beyond 50 km for crushing will be given an added incentive of Rs 5 per km," Patil said. In the year 2021-22, the area under sugarcane cultivation was 13.67 lakh hectare. In 2020-21 area under sugarcane cultivation was 11.42 lakh hectare. Compared to last year, the area under sugarcane in this season saw an increase of 2.25 lakh hectare.

As per official records, at the end of May 16, 2022, almost 100 cooperative and 99 private mills, which together adds to 199 sugar mills, have finished 1,300 lakh tonne sugarcane crushing. The districts where sugarcane crushing is still incomplete include Beed, Jalna, Ahmednagar, Latur, Osmanabad.

MAN FALLS OFF PIPE TRYING TO COMMIT THEFT, DIES

The incident took place in Khambalpada area of Dombivli in Maharashtra on Monday night, a Tilak Nagar Police Station official said.

Thane:

One person died and his associate was seriously injured after they slipped and fell from

a metal pipe while trying to scale a building to allegedly commit theft, police in Dombivli area of Thane district said on Tuesday. The incident took place in Khambalpada area of Dombivli in Maharashtra on Monday night, a Tilak Nagar Police Station official said.

"Mohammad Bhatkar and Arfan Pinjari were spotted by the watchman of an unoccupied building where they had gone to commit theft. While coming down a metal pipe, both fell. Bhatkar died instantly and Pinjari is severely injured. A probe is underway," he said.



AMBER HEARD DENIES LEAVING POOP IN BED AS PRANK

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Amber Heard denied she left feces in a bed shared with actor-husband Johnny Depp near the end of their relationship, calling the scenario "distasteful". While testifying, the 36-year-old actress was asked about the instance when Depp said he was shown a photograph of "fecal matter on the bed" after Heard left with friends to go to Coachella back in April 2016, reports people.com.

Depp has testified that Heard "tried to blame it on the dogs" but he didn't believe the dropping that he observed in a photograph could have come from their small pets: "I lived with those dogs for many years. ... That did not come from a dog. It just didn't." He also referred to it as a "fecal delivery."

He said of his initial response, "I mean... I laughed. It was so outside. It was so bizarre and so grotesque that I could only laugh. So I did not go down there that day."

Starling Jenkins III, a longtime executive chauffeur and security guard for Depp who is still under his employ, previously said under oath in the trial that Heard told him the defecation was "a horrible practical joke gone wrong." During her time on the stand, Heard addressed the scenario, denying that it was an intentional prank and not recalling having a conversation at all with Jenkins about it. She testified that one of their dogs had "bowel control issues" and would often burrow in their beds, sometimes having accidents.

Sony Pictures Classics snaps up Cannes title 'All The People I'll Never Be'

Los Angeles | Agencies



In one of the first major deals of the Cannes market, Sony Pictures Classics has swooped on Un Certain Regard title 'All The People I'll Never Be'.

The distributor has picked up rights in North America, Latin America, the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand, reports 'Variety'. The film, which is written and directed by Davy Chou, will be re-titled as 'Return to Seoul'.

It premiered in the Un Certain Regard section at the Cannes Film Festival on Sunday.

The movie centers on 25-year-old Freddie, who impulsively returns to South Korea for the first time, where she was born before being adopted and raised in France. The headstrong young woman starts looking for her biological parents in a country she knows so little about, taking her life in new and unexpected directions. "I'm tremendously excited to work together with Sony Pictures Classics," said Chou. "They are home to so many great films. I'm looking forward to sharing 'Return to Seoul' with their audiences worldwide."

"Return to Seoul" is Chou's second feature film following 2016's 'Diamond Island'.

'Black Mirror' gets reboot in new form

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Black Mirror' is returning, albeit in a new shape and form of an anthology series, the casting for which is currently underway, reports 'Variety'.

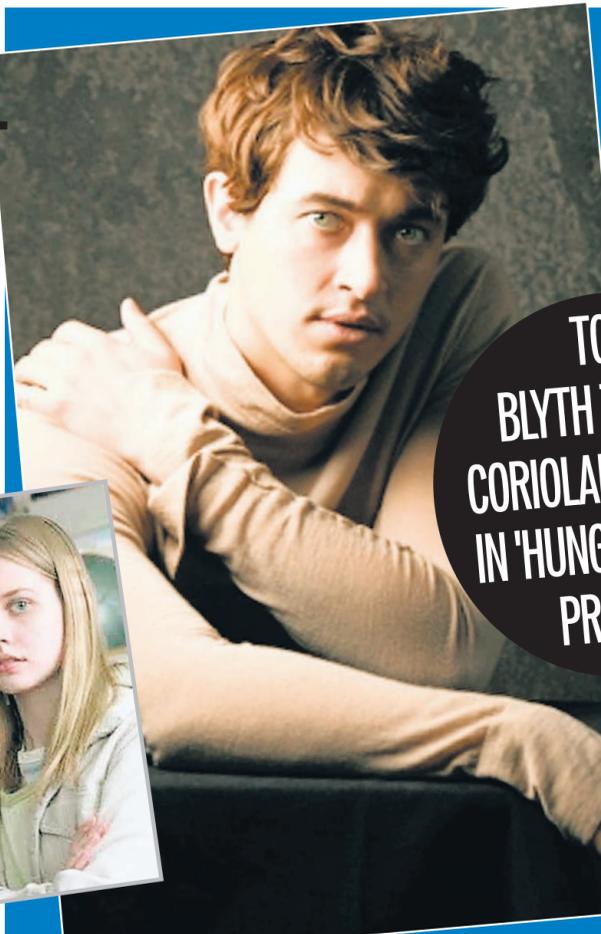
Three years after Season 5 of the dystopian drama premiered on Netflix in June 2019, as per sources, a new anthology series of 'Black Mirror' is shaping up and is in development at Netflix, which was recently rocked by subscriber loss.

While details about specific stories are being kept under wraps, 'Variety' has learnt that Season 6 will have more episodes than Season 5, which comprised just three instalments and starred Andrew Scott, Anthony Mackie, Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, Topher Grace and Miley Cyrus.

A source close to the production told 'Variety' that the latest season is more cinematic in scope, with each instalment being treated as an individual film. This is, of course, in line with recent seasons of 'Black Mirror', for which episodes usually exceeded 60 minutes and had incredibly high production values.

The new season of 'Black Mirror' is the first to emerge since creator Charlie Brooker and his creative partner Annabel Jones left their production company House of Tomorrow, which was backed by

Endemol Shine Group, in January 2020. It wasn't long before the pair set up shop under new production banner Broke and Bones, and Netflix quickly invested in the company through a mega deal in which it acquired parts of the business over a five-year period, for a sum that could reach \$100 million.



TOM BLYTH TO PLAY CORIOLANUS SNOW IN 'HUNGER GAMES' PREQUEL

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Tom Blyth, best known for 'Billy the Kid' and 'The Gilded Age', has been cast as young President Coriolanus Snow in 'The Hunger Games' prequel 'The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes'.

The movie is based on the 2020 book of the same name, which is set decades before the exploits of Katniss Everdeen in 'The Hunger Games', reports 'Variety'. That means the original franchise's beloved heroine, a role that propelled Jennifer Lawrence to superstardom, does not appear in 'The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes', which instead centers on the man (portrayed by Donald Sutherland in the first films) who eventually becomes the tyrannical leader of the dystopia known as Panem. The prequel story takes place as an 18-year-old Snow is chosen to be mentor during the 10th Hunger Games, a televised event in which teenagers are chosen via lottery to fight to the death.

Except for Blyth, the prequel cast has not been announced. Along with Snow, the other main character in the novel is his mentee Lucy Gray Baird, the female tribute from the impoverished District 12.

The first 'Hunger Games' films began as Katniss Everdeen volunteers as tribute to take her younger sister's place in the 74th annual Hunger Games. Along with Lawrence, the series featured Josh Hutcherson as Katniss's rival and then lover, Liam Hemsworth as Katniss's reliable bestie Gale Hawthorne, Woody Harrelson as former Hunger Games victor-turned-mentor Haymitch Abernathy, Elizabeth Banks as "May the odds be ever in your favor" orator Effie Trinket and Sutherland as President Coriolanus Snow.

Suzanne Collins' bestselling 'The Hunger Games' novel was first published in 2008 and spawned two sequels, which were later developed into four films. Those movies collectively generated \$3 billion at the global box office.

Newly-single Madonna suffers an intimate wardrobe malfunction



Los Angeles | Agencies

Madonna poked fun of her own intimate wardrobe malfunction on Instagram on Monday when she revealed a little too much in a social media snap.

The newly-single singer, was forced to place an emoji over her modesty as she required a little help pulling off her boots while wearing a bustier and fishnets.

The hitmaker added to her outfit with a pair of fishnet tights along with a green open shirt with a multi-coloured floral print, reports dailymail.co.uk.

The star, who recently split from Ahlamalik Williams, 28, added to her look with several silver necklaces while she let her blonde locks fall loose down her shoulders.

Madonna also shared a couple of snaps of herself alongside rapper Mykki Blanco as they posed together at an event.

It comes after the star recently slammed the backlash over her explicit nude NFT videos by arguing that she is just 'doing what women have been doing since the beginning of time'.

The music icon released a bizarre collection of NFT videos that feature graphic digital scans of her own vagina, as well as naked depictions of herself giving birth to trees, butterflies, and robotic centipedes.

The pop icon - who is no stranger to the shock factor - sparked confusion and even dismay on social media on Wednesday when she debuted the risqué NFT collection.



Miley Cyrus supports her 'fabulous' pal Pamela

Los Angeles | Agencies

She has earned strong reviews from critics and audience goes for her turn as Roxie Hart in Chicago. And Pamela Anderson got another rave review on Monday from her pal Miley Cyrus, who was joined at the Broadway production by her mother Tish Cyrus. Miley, who looked glamorous in a gold lace and leopard-print dress, snapped a photo after the performance with Pamela, who looked glamorous in a black single-shoulder dress. The trio were seen standing together, with Miley and Tish framing the Baywatch star. Pam paired her elegant dress with black open-toe heels and luscious blond curls cascading down her shoulders.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Leni Klum



IPL 2022

ROHIT, ISHAN, DAVID INNINGS IN VAIN AS SUNRISERS BEAT MUMBAI BY 3 RUNS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A superb opening stand by skipper Rohit Sharma (48) and Ishan Kishan (43) went in vain as Sunrisers Hyderabad, aided by 3/23 by Umran Malik and a couple of untimely run-outs, defeated Mumbai Indians by three runs in Match 65 of IPL 2022 at the Wankhede Stadium here on Tuesday.

Asked to bat first on a pitch that started slow but eased out a bit later in the evening, Sunrisers Hyderabad rode on a 44-ball 76 by Rahul Tripathi and his two 70-plus partnerships with Priyansh Garg (42) and Nicholas Pooran (38) to post a challenging 193/6 in 20 overs.

In reply, Mumbai Indians failed to capitalise on the 95-run opening stand by Sharma and Kishan and some lusty hitting by Tim David (46 off 18), who struck four massive sixes in one over by T Natarajan, to finish at 190/7, falling short by a narrow margin.

Sunrisers Hyderabad reeled in the rampaging Mumbai Indians in the middle-overs, sending back Daniel Sams (18), Tilak Varma (8), and Tristan Stubbs (run out for 2) during this period as Mumbai Indians from 95/1 in the 11th over, slumped to 144/5 in the 17th. Tim David struck four sixes off a wild over by Natarajan, which was stretched by two wides and conceded 26 runs in all.



But David was run out off the last ball of that over, going for a sharp single to retain the strike as Natarajan touches the ball onto the stumps at the non-strikers' end. With 19 needed off the last two overs, Bhuvneshwar Kumar bowled a wicket- maiden over, getting the wicket of Sanjay Yadav (0) as Mumbai's hopes ended in another defeat.

The win took SRH to 12 points from 13 matches, the same as Punjab Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders. They are in the eighth position, but still have a faint chance of making it to the top four if they win their remaining match and other results go in their favour as five teams separated by two points fight for the fourth playoff spot.

Briefscores :

Sunrisers Hyderabad 193/5 in 20 overs (Rahul Tripathi 76, Priyansh Garg 42, Nicholas Pooran 38; Ramandeep Singh 3/20, Jasprit Bumrah 1/32) beat Mumbai Indians 190/7 in 20 overs (Rohit Sharma 48, Ishan Kishan 43, Tim David 46; Umran Malik 3/23) by 3 runs.

SUHL JUNIOR WORLD CUP

India's women Pistol shooters make it five out of five wins

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's women pistol shooters have made it five golds out of five, after the trio of Manu Bhaker, Esha Singh and Rhythm Sangwan trounced the hosts 16-2 in the 25m Pistol Team final at the ISSF Junior World Cup in Suhl, Germany, on Tuesday. India also picked up a silver medal in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions (3P) Mixed Team competition when Pankaj Mukheja and Sift Kaur Samra went down 12-16 to Poland's Michal Chojnowski and Julia Piotrowska in the gold medal encounter.

India's medal tally has now swollen to 11 gold, 13 silver and four bronze medals. With India set to emerge champions, Italy lying second with four golds and with Shotgun events still left on the roster, will look to close down the gap at the top.

The Indian women's pistol



team reached the gold medal round, finishing second to the German trio of Michaela Boesel, Vanessa Seeger and Mia Fuchs in the second qualification stage. The Indians shot 431 to the Germans 437 out of a maximum possible 450. In the final though, India did not give the hosts a whiff of a chance and finished the match quite clinically in the end. Pankaj and Sift were fourth in the first qualification round and then second in the

second, to make it to the gold medal round in the 3P Mixed Team event. They did put up a fight, but the Polish pair finished stronger to win the second gold for their country in the competition.

Parinaaz Dhariwal has also made it through to the semi-final stage of the Junior Women's Skeet finishing fourth with a score of 109 in qualification. The medal matches are set for later on Tuesday.

Wrestler Satender punches referee during Commonwealth Games trials, gets life ban

New Delhi: In a bizarre incident, wrestler Satender punched a referee after losing his bout in the 125kg freestyle category during the Commonwealth Games selection trials, forcing the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) to impose a life ban on him, here on Tuesday. After losing his bout to opponent Mohit, Satender stormed across the mat to punch the referee in frustration. "WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who was present at the venue for the trials, took immediate action against Satender and suspended him for life," Vinod Tomar, assistant secretary of the WFI told Sports Tak. Due to Satender's intervention at the mat, the 57kg bout between Tokyo Olympics silver medalist Ravi Kumar Dahiya and Aman was also stopped for a brief period. Notably, the likes of Tokyo Olympic medalists Ravi Kumar Dahiya and Bajrang Punia were not handed direct entry to the Commonwealth Games and rather were asked to go through trials. The two stars were given byes to the semi-final stages of their respective weight categories.

BAVUMA TO LEAD SA ON INDIA'S T20 TOUR

Johannesburg: The Temba Bavuma-led South African T20 squad will make a return to international cricket for the first time since the ICC T20 World Cup in late 2021, when they take on India in a five-match series in India from June 9-19.

Tristan Stubbs, the 21-year-old wicketkeeper-batter, has received his maiden Proteas call-up ahead of the contest. The middle-order batter had impressed this past season while playing for the Gbets Warriors in the Cricket South Africa (CSA) T20 Challenge, scoring 293 runs in seven innings, at an average of 48.83 and a strike rate of 183.12, including 23 sixes. He was also part of the South Africa 'A' team to Zimbabwe before he was called up to the Mumbai Indians camp for the 2022 Indian Premier League (IPL). Other notable selections include the return of fast bowler, Anrich Nortje, who has been recovering from injury since December 2021, and batters, Reeza Hendricks and Heinrich Klaasen.



CHRIS GAYLE, AB DE VILLIERS INDUCTED INTO RCB'S HALL OF FAME



Mumbai: West Indies great Chris Gayle and South African legend AB de Villiers have been inducted into the Royal Challengers Bangalore's (RCB) Hall of Fame, with former franchise skipper Virat Kohli saying that it was a truly special occasion for him to be announcing their names.

Following a long association with RCB (2011-2017), Gayle moved to Punjab Kings in 2018, playing for them till 2021. But the charismatic West Indian batter decided to stay away from the mega auction ahead of the 2022 season, though he has declared his intention to play for either RCB or PBKS in the next season.

De Villiers quit all forms of cricket completely last year, with IPL 2021 being his last season for RCB. His association with the Bengaluru franchise dates back to 2011 when he came into the side after spending a few seasons with Delhi Daredevils (Delhi Capitals).

The ceremony, attended by Gayle and de Villiers virtually, saw a video montage take people back in time when the two players were at their menacing best.

"AB (de Villiers) has truly changed the game of cricket with his innovation, brilliance, and sportsmanship which truly defines the RCB Play Bold philosophy," said Kohli on Monday night. "It's truly special for me to be doing this for both of you. We saw videos of how you have changed the way the IPL has been played over the years. Two people who have had a huge impact in IPL being where it is today; and RCB being where it is today," added Kohli. D Villiers, who also joined the induction virtually, shared a heartfelt message with the RCB camp.

Juve held by Lazio in last home game for Chiellini and Dybala

Rome | Agencies

Juventus duo Giorgio Chiellini and Paulo Dybala said goodbye to the home fans at Allianz Stadium as the Bianconeri fumbled a 2-0 advantage to settle for a 2-2 draw with Lazio.

Captain Chiellini had announced his departure and hinted at a move to Major League Soccer despite having one year left on his contract, while Dybala will be a free agent in the summer after his negotiations with the club collapsed, and his future is still shrouded in doubt.

Juve had secured fourth place before Monday, so the game turned out to be a more emotional one. Chiellini was subbed off in the 17th minute, a special arrangement to salute his 17 consecutive seasons in the Juve jersey, with the veteran receiving a standing ovation from the crowd, Xinhua reports.

The home side raced into a 2-0 lead in the first half thanks to goals from Dusan Vlahovic and Alvaro Morata, but Lazio fought back through Alex Sandro's own



goal before Sergej Milinkovic-Savic scored the equaliser in the dying minutes. One point was enough for the Aquile to book a spot in next season's Europa League.

After the final whistle, Dybala, who spent seven years in Turin, burst into tears in the farewell ceremony.

Also on Monday, Sampdoria dominated Fiorentina 4-1.

Hangzhou 2022 Asian Para Games postponed due to Covid-19

Hangzhou (China): The Hangzhou 2022 Asian Para Games organising committee (HAPGOC) and the Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) on Tuesday announced the postponement of the 2022 Asian Para Games, originally scheduled to take place from October 9-15 this year. The announcement follows the decision taken by the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and the HAGOC, the games organising committee, to postpone the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games due to the size of the Games and the continuing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. "A taskforce comprising of the APC, the Chinese Paralympic Committee and HAPGOC will now work on rescheduling the Games to take place in 2023. A further announcement on this is expected in the near future," said a statement from the Asian Paralympic Committee. The emblem, slogan and year of the Games will remain unchanged.



ECB chief executive Tom Harrison steps down: Report

London | Agencies

England cricket's season of woes continues with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chief executive Tom Harrison stepping down from the post on Tuesday, Mail Online reported on Tuesday.

The report added that former England captain and current managing director of women's cricket, Clare Connor, will replace Harrison on an interim basis. The development comes after Rob Key took over as England men's cricket's managing director and the appointment of

all-rounder Ben Stokes as Test skipper after Joe Root stepped down following the Test series loss in the West Indies.

England have also appointed former New Zealand skipper and the current coach of Indian Premier League (IPL) side KKR, Brendon McCullum, as the Test team coach, while the announcement of the white-ball skipper is also expected soon.

Under Root, England were thrashed 0-4 in the five-match Ashes series Down Under, leading to Chris Silverwood stepping down as their chief coach. Harrison's seven-year stint will be best remembered for introducing The Hundred.

SR WOMEN'S HOCKEY NATIONALS

Odisha win title with 2-0 win over Karnataka

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Hockey Association of Odisha were crowned champions of the 12th Hockey India Senior Women's National Championship 2022 after a 2-0 victory over Hockey Karnataka in a thrilling final played here on Tuesday.

The final was a closely contested affair as both Hockey Karnataka and the Hockey Association of Odisha started well.

They created several goal-scoring opportunities throughout the match. However, solid defensive performances from both sides ensured that the match went into half-time with the two teams locked goal-less.

Punam Barla (34') opened the scoring in the match in the third quarter as the

Hockey Association of Odisha picked up the lead. Ashim Kanchan Barla (59') sealed the game with a late goal as the Hockey Association of Odisha beat Hockey Karnataka 2-0 to claim the Championship.

Expressing his delight after the title win, Hockey Association of Odisha head coach Edgar Joseph Mascarenhas said, "We did not take Hockey Karnataka lightly. Even though we missed a couple of chances, we played well and had a lot of ball possession which was our game plan. We dominated the ball in midfield. We scored a goal in the third quarter to put them under pressure and then we closed the game with a late goal."

He also went on to credit the senior players in the team for holding the team together in crucial situations.



CHAMPION

Shailesh Lodha to quit Tv show after 14 years

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashma' fame Shailesh Lodha a.k.a. Taarak Mehta has reportedly quit the show after being associated with it for almost 14 years. As per media reports, Shailesh has not been shooting for the show since last month and he is not keen on returning to the sitcom as he is not happy with the contract and feels that his dates are not being utilised properly. He is also quit-

ting the show as he is not able to explore other opportunities coming his way because of the show and he turned down many of them. But now he doesn't want to waste his time and say 'no' to any new offer coming his way. As per the reports, the production house is trying its best to convince him but seems like the actor has taken his decision and is not in a mood to change it.

First aired on July 28, 2008, 'Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashma' is one of the popular

sitcoms which deals with societal issues. It was one of the TV shows that tried to create awareness about the Covid pandemic by adapting it in its storyline.

It features Dilip Joshi, Shailesh Lodha, Amit Bhatt, Mandar Chandwadkar, Sonalika Joshi, Sunayana Fozdar, Munmun Dutta, and Tanuj Mahashabde, among others.

Recently, Gurucharan Singh and Neha Mehta have also quit the show. Now, Shailesh Lodha is also planning to do the same.



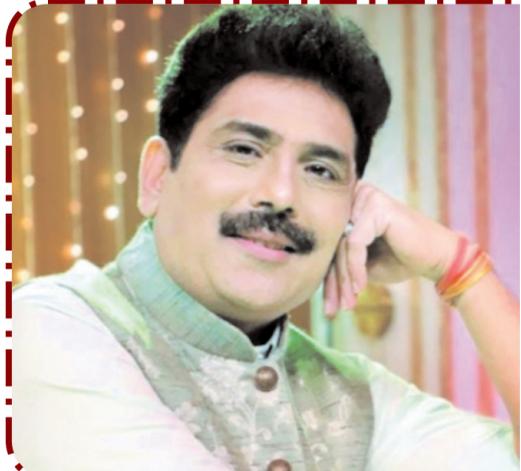
AISHWARYA RAI BACHCHAN BRUTALLY TROLLED OVER AARADHYA'S HAIRSTYLE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Aishwarya Rai Bachchan was spotted at the airport as she was leaving for Cannes 2022 along with her hubby and Abhishek Bachchan and her daughter Aaradhya Bachchan. While we cannot wait to see her uber glamorous look for Cannes this year, netizens have been slamming the former Miss World for keeping her daughter Aaradhya's hairstyle the same since her birth.

The netizens have even trolling the actress for holding her daughter tight always when she is along with

her to not changing her hairstyle. One user wrote, "Please change her hairstyle she is a grown-up girl now no more baby". Another user commented, "Why does ash always look like am holding too much I had enough always upset". "Why ash always look like am holding too much I had enough always upset, expressed one more user. One more user questioned, "Aaradhya heme-sha yahi hair style rakhi wali hai kya...". Another user asked if they will keep her hairstyle same till she gets married. We wonder why the netizens are concerned so much about her hairstyle.



Munawar Faruqi REVEALS his gf's reaction on closeness with Anjali Arora

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Munawar Faruqi is right now ruling millions of hearts. His stint in the reality show Lock Upp made him a household name and he won season 1 of the show. From revealing his dark secrets to his fake romance with contestant Anjali Arora, the standup comedian did everything possible to win Lock Upp. Fans even created a hashtag for them and started calling them Munjali (Munawar + Anjali). However, after Munawar came out of the show, he introduced the world to his real ladylove Nazila Sitashi and this broke the hearts of Munjali fans.

Recently, Munawar was questioned about his girlfriend Nazila's reaction to his and Anjali's fake love story, to which he revealed, "I know it must have not been easy for her to watch all that happened as I and Anjali were very close and she went through a lot of emotions, but in the end, she understood the game and supported me. Most importantly, she had complete trust in me."

When probed if he deliberately hid about his relationship with Nazila on the show, he said, "My love life was always private, and since I was on the show and she was outside it, it wasn't right for me to talk about it. I had to discuss it with her and then make a decision. Once I came out, I spoke to her and then revealed that I was in a relationship. It wasn't an intention to keep it a secret."

While talking about Nazila, she has created quite a stir ever since Munawar shared his picture with her. His fans are going gaga over her beauty. The lovebirds have even started making public appearances and on social media, they are sharing a lot of pictures. The couple had also gone for a movie dinner date and were clicked by the paparazzi. Munawar is right now encashing on his popularity in every possible way.



Farah Khan reveals she once had a crush on Chunky Panday

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Choreographer-director Farah Khan, who is the Friday Special host of the popular TV and OTT show 'The Khatra Khatra Show', recently revealed that she had a crush on young actress Ananya Panday's father Chunky Panday. For the Bharti Singh and Haarsh Limbichiyaa-led interactive comedy game show's finale episode, Farah invited Ananya to join the 'Khatra Khatra' brigade alongside other television celebrities. In a shocking confession during the episode, Farah admitted to Ananya

Panday about having a crush on her father.

In a rib-tickling banter, Farah Khan, who harboured a crush on Chunky during the 1990s, revealed that she befriended Chunky's wife Bhavana Panday, just to work with her husband and then-boyfriend Chunky Panday, in the film 'Housefull'.

Laughter ensued as she further told Ananya, "After working with him (Chunky), I am glad that nothing happened between us." Farah jokingly added, "I also thanked Bhavana for getting married to him!"

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan's ex-wife Sussanne Khan has shared a loved-up picture with her boyfriend Arslan Goni. Sussanne posted a cosy picture with her boyfriend Arslan from actress Sonal Chauhan's birthday bash in Goa. Sharing a picture with Arslan from their Goa trip, Sussanne wrote, "The Beach is not always a place.. sometimes it's is an incredible Feeling. #uninhibited #Thebeach #exploration #sacred-space." Arslan also shared pictures from Sonal's Goa birthday bash.

Arslan's brother and actor Aly Goni commented on the picture and wrote: "Hmmm good feeling." He added heart and smiling emojis to his comment. Sussanne Khan married Hrithik Roshan in 2000. They divorced in 2014 and have two sons together -- Hridhaan and Hrehaan.

SUSSANNE POSTS LOVED-UP PICTURE WITH BOY FRIEND ARSLAN GONI



URVASHI RAUTELA TO ATTEND CANNES FILM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Urvashi Rautela will be attending the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival this year for the poster launch of her Tamil debut film 'The Legend'. She will be seen at the Indian Pavilion section at Nice, which lies northwest of the city of Cannes on the French Riviera on the Mediterranean coast of France. The Indian Pavilion was inaugurated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in 2019. India is the Cannes Country of Honour this year in its 75th year of Independence. Urvashi was recently spotted at the Mumbai airport during her departure. She said in a statement, "I'm truly honoured to mark my debut and to be invited by one of the most prestigious film festivals in the world - Festival de Cannes - for the launch of my multi-lingual film 'The Legend'". "It's certainly the most important film festival to me and in terms of worldwide impact. Also for the first time in history India is named the official 'Country of Honour' at a time when India celebrates its 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', she added. On the work front, Urvashi will be making her big Hollywood debut along with '365 Days' actor Michele Morrone. The film, produced by Netflix and Tomasz Mandes, will be directed by '365 Days' director Barbara Bialowas.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Hina Khan