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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI

NATION > 02

Nitish Kumar's dream project 80% failed, says Bihar...



HOLLYWOOD > 06

Will Smith 'unlocked' childhood pain to make him a better actor...



SPORTS > 07

French Open Medvedev breezes past Bagnis on return...



CLIMATE CHANGE MADE DEVASTATING EARLY HEAT IN INDIA, PAKISTAN '30 TIMES MORE LIKELY'

Greenery Needed Desperately

Scientists from India, Pakistan, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, New Zealand, Denmark, the USA and the UK collaborated to assess to what extent human-induced climate change altered the likelihood and intensity of the heatwave in this attribution study that follows a study by the UK Met Office, which in turn, had looked at the likelihood of April/May temperatures in India and Pakistan breaking their 2010 record.



CONDITIONS FAVOUR FURTHER ADVANCE OF SW MONSOON: IMD

► LARGE PARTS OF SOUTH ASIA - ESPECIALLY NORTHWEST INDIA AND SOUTHEAST PAKISTAN - HAD EXPERIENCED UNUSUALLY EARLY AND LONG-RUNNING HEATWAVE SPELLS BEGINNING IN EARLY MARCH. MARCH WAS THE HOTTEST IN INDIA SINCE RECORD KEEPING BEGAN 122 YEARS AGO, WITH PAKISTAN ALSO SEEING RECORD TEMPERATURES.

► THE 2022 HEATWAVE IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE LED TO AT LEAST 90 DEATHS ACROSS INDIA AND PAKISTAN, A FIRST ATTRIBUTION STUDY THAT LOOKS SPECIFICALLY AT THE RECENT SPELLS OF HEATWAVES ACROSS NORTHWEST INDIA AND SOUTHEAST PAKISTAN AND QUANTIFIES THE INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

“The long-running heatwave in India and Pakistan, which has caused widespread human suffering and hit global wheat supplies, was about 30 times more likely to happen because of human-caused climate change. With future global warming, heatwaves like this will become even more common and hotter. At the global mean temperature scenario of plus 2 degrees Celsius, such a heat wave would become an additional factor of 2-20 more likely and 0.5-1.5 degrees Celsius hotter compared to 2022.”

Climate Scientists

Team Absolute | New Delhi

An attribution study that looks specifically at the recent spells of heatwaves across northwest India and southeast Pakistan and quanti-

fies the influence of climate change said on Monday that this long-running heat wave spell is 30 times more likely to happen because of anthropogenic reasons. March was extremely dry, with 62 per cent less than normal

New Delhi: In what can be termed as a countdown to the onset of southwest monsoon over Kerala, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday said conditions are favourable for its further advance during the next 48 hours. Earlier, the IMD had announced the onset date of southwest (SW) Monsoon over Kerala on May 27 with a model error margin of plus/minus four days, ahead of the regular date of June 1. Currently the northern limit lies to the south of Sri Lanka.

“Conditions are favourable for further advance of Southwest Monsoon over some parts of southwest Arabian Sea, some more parts of southeast Arabian Sea, Maldives & Comorin area, south & east-central Bay of Bengal and some parts of northeast Bay of Bengal during the next 48 hours,” the IMD said.

rainfall reported over Pakistan and 71 per cent below normal over India, making the conditions favourable for local heating from the land surface. The heatwaves continued over the month of April and reached its preliminary peak towards the end of the month. The 2022 heatwaves have trig-

gered an extreme Glacial Lake Outburst Flood in northern Pakistan and forest fires in India. The heat reduced India's wheat crop yields while a shortage of coal led to power outages that limited access to cooling, compounding health impacts and forcing millions of people to use coping mechanisms.

PUNJAB MINISTER SACKED ON CORRUPTION CHARGES, ARRESTED



Chandigarh | Agencies

Punjab Health Minister Vijay Singla was sacked from the Cabinet of the two-month old Bhagwant Mann government on Tuesday and arrested shortly afterwards on corruption charges.

The Chief Minister said the minister was involved in corruption cases and he had proof of that.

Reiterating his government's firm commitment to make Punjab a corruption-free state, he said Singla was dismissed for seeking one per cent commission in department headed by him.

The Chief Minister categorically said he had dismissed Singla from his Cabinet and asked the police to register case against him. He said since the case was only in his knowledge, so he could have easily buried it or ignored it. However, Mann said after taking oath at sacred soil of Khatkar Kalan, he had vowed to make Punjab corruption-free and this is a historic step towards this cause.

Mann said the message is loud and clear that corrupt practices will not be allowed in the state. He unequivocally said his predecessors had been shielding the corrupt and

“My government is having zero tolerance towards corruption and no one, whosoever affluent he may be, will be allowed to continue such malpractices.”

Bhagwant Mann, CM, Punjab

then saying that they knew about corruption being done by their ministers.

However, Mann said such practices would not be tolerated in Punjab now. He said that Singla has admitted his crime and now the law will take its own course.

First-time legislator Singla, 52, a dentist by profession, won from Mansa. He defeated popular Punjabi singer and Congress candidate Shubhdeep Singh, also called Sidhu Moosewala, by a margin of 63,323 votes, the highest winning margin in the election. As per the affidavit submitted by him at the time of filing his nomination, Singla has Rs 6.48 crore of assets and Rs 27 lakh as liabilities.

NHA ANNOUNCES REVAMPED MOBILE APPLICATION TO MANAGE HEALTH RECORDS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Health Authority (NHA) under its flagship scheme Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) on Tuesday announced the launch of a revamped Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) mobile application.

The ABHA mobile application enables individuals to create an ABHA digital address with an easy to remember username that can be linked with the 14 digit randomly generated ABHA number. The mobile application also allows users to link their health records created at an ABDM compliant health facility and view them on their smartphones. The application also allows self-uploading



of physical health records in the ABDM compliant health lockers along with sharing of digital health records such as diagnostic reports, prescriptions, CoWIN vaccination certificate etc. after the consent of an individual through the ABDM network. In addition to this, ABHA has new functionalities such as edit profile, link and unlink ABHA number (14 digits) with ABHA address. Other functionalities such as Login via face authentication, fingerprint, biometric and ability to scan QR code at the counter of the ABDM compliant facility for express registration shall also be released soon, the NHA said in a statement.

Deity at Qutub Minar survived for last 800 years without worship: Delhi court

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi court on Tuesday observed that the deity at the Qutub Minar Complex has survived for 800 years without any worship, and “let it survive in that way”. The oral remark of Additional District Judge Nikhil Chopra of Saket Court was during the hearing of an appeal challenging the rejection of a suit alleging that the Quwwat-ul-Islam Masjid situated within the Qutub Minar complex in Mehrauli was built in place of a temple complex. The appellant



alleged that 27 Hindu and Jain temples were desecrated and damaged in 1198 under the rule of Slave Dynasty Emperor Qutub-Din-Aibak raising the construction of the said mosque in place of those temples, seeking restoration of the worship place. During the course of the hearing, petitioner's counsel, advocate Harishankar Jain argued that if the deity survives, the right to worship also survives.

HINDU SCULPTURES EXIST, BUT WORSHIP AGAINST THE LAW: ASI

New Delhi: Opposing a plea seeking restoration of Hindu and Jain temples and deities at the Qutub Minar complex, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on Tuesday stated that though there was existence of Hindu sculptures inside the premises, worshipping inside the centrally-protected monument would be contrary to existing laws.

Fundamental rights cannot be availed in violation of any status of the land, the archaeological body clarified in an affidavit. “The basic principle of protection/conservation is not to allow starting of any new practice in a monument declared and notified as a protected one under the Act. Revival of worship is not allowed wherever it is not practiced at the time of protection of a monument,” it said. “It will be contrary to the provisions of the AMASR Act, 1958 (Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act) to agree to the contention of the respondents or any other person claiming a fundamental right to worship in this centrally protected monument,” it said in the affidavit.

DGCA WARNS AIRLINES AGAINST OFFERING UNSERVICEABLE SEATS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Civil aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Tuesday warned airlines against offering unserviceable seats to passengers on their domestic and international flights.

“This is to inform that it has come to notice of the DGCA that some of the scheduled carriers are offering unserviceable seats on their scheduled international/domestic operations,” it said in a statement, adding that it was not only causing inconvenience to the travellers but also

inviting a serious safety concern.

As per Sub Rule (2) of Rule 53 of The Aircraft Rule 1937, all materials including aircraft seats shall conform to approved design specifications.

The installation of any part failing to meet the intended design requirements, degrades the requirements of airworthiness, said the statement.

The regulator thereby advised airlines to not book passengers beyond the serviceable seats, meeting the approved design specification available in the aircraft, released for scheduled services.

AI to make roads in India safer to drive

► THE PROJECT, ‘INTELLIGENT SOLUTIONS FOR ROAD SAFETY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING’ (IRASTE), WILL IDENTIFY POTENTIAL ACCIDENT-CAUSING SCENARIOS WHILE DRIVING A VEHICLE AND ALERT DRIVERS ABOUT THE SAME WITH THE HELP OF THE ADVANCED DRIVER ASSISTANCE SYSTEM (ADAS).

► IT WILL ALSO IDENTIFY ‘GREY SPOTS’, I.E., BY DATA ANALYSIS AND MOBILITY ANALYSIS BY CONTINUOUSLY MONITORING DYNAMIC RISKS ON THE ENTIRE ROAD NETWORK. GREY SPOTS ARE LOCATIONS ON ROADS, WHICH LEFT UN-ADRESSED, COULD BECOME BLACK SPOTS (LOCATIONS WITH FATAL ACCIDENTS). THE SYSTEM ALSO CONDUCTS CONTINUOUS MONITORING OF ROADS AND DESIGNS ENGINEERING FIXES TO CORRECT EXISTING ROAD BLACK SPOTS FOR PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVED ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE.

Team Absolute | Nagpur

Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered solutions, such as collision alert system, may soon make roads in India safer to drive. A unique AI approach that uses the predictive power of AI to identify risks on the road, and a collision alert system to communicate timely alerts to drivers, is being implemented here with an objective of resulting in a significant reduction of accidents. The iRASTE project is under the I-Hub Foundation, IIIT Hyderabad, and a Technology Innovation Hub (TIH) set up in the technology vertical - Data Banks & Data Services - supported by the Department of Science and



Technology (DST) under its National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber Physical Systems (NM-ICPS) along with INAI (Applied AI Research Institute). The project consortium includes CSIR-CRRI, and Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC), with Mahindra and Intel

as the industry partners. The Hub is working to coordinate, integrate, and amplify basic and applied research in broad data-driven technologies as well as its dissemination and translation across the country. Currently, talks are on with the Telangana government to

adopt the technology in a fleet of buses that ply on highways. There are further plans to extend the scope of iRASTE to Goa and Gujarat as well.

I-Hub Foundation has also used techniques ranging from machine learning, computer vision and computational sensing for several other data-driven technological solutions in the mobility sector. “One such solution is the India Driving Dataset (IDD), a dataset for road scene understanding in unstructured environments captured from Indian roads, which stands out by deviating from the worldwide assumptions of well-delineated infrastructure such as lanes, limited traffic participants, low variation in object,” the official said.



Ease of Doing Business for MSME stands at 67, service sector faces more problems

Team Absolute | Mathura

New Delhi: The overall Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises' Ease of Doing Business (MSME EODB) stands at 64 points out of 100, of which EODB for manufacturing sector MSMEs was higher compared to the service sector, a study released on Tuesday said.

The 'Ease of Doing Business for MSMEs in India: Percolating EODB Reforms at Factory Level' study, was carried out by the Research Bureau of the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) in collaboration with Department of Commerce, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi. It was released by Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

The study is based on pan India stratified random sample survey of MSMEs from manufacturing and services sectors, through a structured questionnaire on 25 parameters of EODB. The survey was conducted for the period 2021 and responses of 5,254 MSMEs were received.



"The survey results revealed that the overall MSME EODB stands at 64, of which EODB for manufacturing sector MSMEs stands at 67 and EODB for service sector MSMEs stands at 61," the report said.

The five top scoring parameters for ease of doing business of MSMEs include adoption of digitisation, availability of information on busi-

ness procedures and compliances, processes and procedures for starting a business, adequate power supply availability, and process of tax registration and tax compliance.

On the other hand, the least scoring parameters were government support for marketing, reduction in time taken to obtain credit and reduction in the overall costs of doing

business.

The five top scoring parameters for ease of doing business of manufacturing sector MSMEs include adoption of digitisation, availability of information on business procedures & compliances, adequate power supply availability, process of tax registration and tax compliance and availability of Infrastructure (internet, telecom and other utility), the report said.

"The least scoring parameters were government support for marketing, reduction in time taken to obtain credit, and reduction in cost of power," it added.

According to the survey, the top scoring parameters for ease of doing business of service sector MSMEs include availability of information on business procedures & compliances, processes and procedures for starting a business, regulatory environment, dissolution of business and adoption of digitisation. The least scoring parameters were reduction in cost of compliance, reduction in time taken to obtain credit, and reduction in the overall costs of doing business.

Nitish Kumar's dream project 80% failed, says Bihar Assembly Speaker

Team Absolute | Patna

Amid souring relations between ruling allies Janata Dal-United and Bharatiya Janata Party, Bihar Assembly Speaker Vijay Kumar Sinha on Tuesday said that 80 per cent of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's dream project "Har Ghar Nal Ka Jal" programme has failed in the state.

Visiting his home district Lakhisarai, he said: "We have received reports that 80 per cent of households where 'Har Ghar Nal Ka Jal' were facilitated in the state, these arrangements are either partially completed or shut. In some places, it required repair work. Issues related to installation of water tanks, and pipelines also appeared before us. The overall situation is extremely bad."

"Har Ghar Nal Ka Jal" is a pet project of Nitish Kumar. It comes under "Saat Nishchay Yojana" (Seven Point Programme) of the state government with an idea to provide water to every household in rural and urban areas. Sinha, who is of the BJP, also asserted that the law and order situation is also at the lowest level in Bihar.

"The state government is used to transferring SPs, DSPs and other officers from one place to another. Such moves will not address the law and order situation in Bihar. It needs to break the mindset of the people. The honest officers are getting sidelined and corrupt officers are deployed on the key areas of the ground. I will personally talk to the DGP and Chief Secretary to avoid giving protection to



them," he said.

Sinha's statement came at a time when the political relation between the BJP and the JD-U is not looking good.

It would be interesting to see how the JD-U reacts to it. There is an impression arising that BJP top leadership deliberately asked Sinha to raise these points and attack Nitish Kumar, and the state wing of BJP is not leaving any chances to target the CM.

There is speculation that Nitish Kumar may utilise the issue to break the alliance and form the government with the help of the RJD. However, JD-U national President Rajiv Ranjan Singh, who is popularly known as Lalan Singh, said that the relation with the BJP is normal so far.

Congress trying to damage Hindu religion: Hardik Patel

Ahmedabad | Agencies

Hardik Patel, who recently quit the Congress, hit out at the party leadership on Tuesday for their alleged "hatred towards Hindus and Lord Ram".

Patel's remarks followed the statement of a former working president of the Congress, Bharat Singh Solanki.

Addressing an OBC meeting in Ahmedabad, Solanki said, "The BJP has always used Lord Ram's name for political gains... It has played with the sentiments of lakhs of Hindus. With great respect, people had donated for the Ram Shila in the late eighties for the construction of Ram Temple, but they never bothered to take care of Ram



Shila... It was found that dogs used to pee on the Ram Shila in Ayodhya."

In a series of tweets, Hardik Patel said: "I had said earlier also that the Congress party works to hurt the sentiments of the people, it is always trying to damage the faith of Hindu religion.

"I want to ask the Congress and its leaders as in what enmity do you have with Lord Shri Ram? Why hate Hindus so much? After centuries, a temple of Lord Shri Ram is being built in Ayodhya, yet the leaders of Congress keep making statements against Lord Shri Ram." Alleging that the Congress has always hurt the Hindu faith, he questioned the party and its leaders as to why they are against Lord Ram.

Violence in Andhra town over renaming district after Ambedkar

Amaravati | Agencies

Dozens of people including police personnel were injured as violence broke out in Andhra Pradesh's Amalapuram town on Tuesday during the protest by a group against the government's move to rename Konaseema district as Dr B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district.

Protesters opposing the proposal to rename the district also attacked the residence of state minister P. Viswaroop, torched few vehicles and resorted to stone pelting, triggering tension in the town.

A mob set a couple of vehicles afire at the minister's house and also ransacked the office. The minister's family members escaped unhurt as the police had shifted



them to a safe place.

Hundreds of youth participated in the protest called by Konaseema Sadhana Samithi (KSS). Raising slogans against the government's decision, they gathered at the Clock Tower.

The home minister claimed that the decision was taken at the request of the people.

The Konaseema district was carved out from East Godavari with

Amalapuram as its headquarters.

It was one of the 13 districts created on April 4, taking the total number of districts in the state to 26.

The government had named some of the districts after prominent personalities like freedom fighter Alluri Sitarama Raju, former chief minister and TDP founder Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, who was popular as NTR. Similarly, two new districts were named after saint composer Tallapaka Annamacharya (Annamayya) and Satya Sai Baba (Sri Satya Sai).

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government headed by Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had come under criticism from Dalit groups and others for not naming a district after Ambedkar.

SEVEN KILLED, SEVERAL INJURED IN TWO ASSAM ROAD ACCIDENTS

Guwahati: At least seven people were killed and several others injured in two separate road accidents in Assam on Tuesday, officials said. Police said that at least five people were crushed to death while three others were injured after a speeding truck hit them in Darrang district, while two people were killed and several others were injured at Hatibondha in Kaliabor in Nagaon district. Police said that the Darrang accident took place at Sipahjar College Chowk area on National Highway-15 while the victims were out on a morning walk.

The injured people were shifted to Gauhati Medical College and Hospital.

According to police, the truck lost control and ran over the pedestrians before hitting a tree. Both its driver and helper fled the spot after the accident. In Nagaon, the accident occurred when an auto-rickshaw and a goods carrier collided head-on.

GYANVAPI CASE NOW POSTED FOR THURSDAY

Varanasi | Agencies

The hearing in the Varanasi Gyanvapi Mosque case will now be held from Thursday.

In accordance with the Supreme Court's orders, the court will take up the Muslim side's application on the maintainability of the suit under order 7, rule 11.

The process of hearing in the case will start on Thursday (May 26), with the 'maintainability' issue coming first. The court also ordered the two sides to file affidavits with their objections to the survey report within a week.

The mosque committee says that filming at the mosque violates a 1991 law that prevents the alteration of the character of any place of worship in the country. It wanted the 'maintainability' case to be heard first, which



the court has agreed to.

The Supreme Court had asked the Varanasi court to decide on priority whether the survey at the Gyanvapi mosque and the petition that led to the survey was 'maintainable' or not.

"I told the court that it is a mandate of the Supreme Court that our application saying the case is not maintainable should be heard first. I read out my application and also the Supreme Court order. The opposing counsel said he needed more documents and time to file objections to our application, but I said the maintainability must be decided first," said Abhay Nath Yadav, a lawyer for the Mosque committee.

The court also said that both the sides be given copies of the video survey and one week's time to file their objections, if any.

Fake currency printing factory unearthed in Ghaziabad

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Crime Branch of Delhi Police has unearthed a factory in Ghaziabad where Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) were being printed and arrested three people in this connection, an official said on Tuesday.

The three accused were identified as Ashish Jain, Rajpal alias Raju, and Azeem Ahmed. Deputy Commissioner of Police Amit Goel said inputs were received about a syndicate of Counterfeit currency racketeers operating clandestinely and circulating Counterfeit Currency Notes in Delhi and NCR.

Accordingly, a strategy was chalked out to bust this racket. On May 19, a tip-off was received that one person named Ashish will come near Ist Pushta, New Usmanpur to supply Counterfeit Currency. Subsequently, a police team was constituted which laid a trap and apprehended the accused counterfeit. On his cursory search, FICN worth Rs 1.5 lakh



was recovered. On the instance of accused Ashish, his associate Rajpal was apprehended and on his instance FICN of Rs 3.13 lakh, 50 Uncut printed FICN sheet (30 sheet from office & 20 sheets from i10 Car, containing print of 15 FICN on each sheet) total worth FICN of Rs 3.75 lakh, one Scanner, three CPU used in developing/processing the FICN recovered from his office located at Tronica City, Ghaziabad. The third accused Azeem was apprehended from his factory located at Tronica City.

8 KILLED, 25 INJURED IN K'TAKA ROAD ACCIDENT



Hubballi | Agencies

Eight people were killed and 25 others injured following a head-on collision between a truck and a bus in Karnataka's Hubballi-Dharwad district on Tuesday. The accident occurred at 12.45 a.m. in the outskirts of Hubballi near Tarihal on the Pune-Bengaluru National Highway, police said. Of the eight victims who were travelling in the bus, six died on the spot and two succumbed to injuries at the hospital.

Authorities have stated that the death toll might increase as many of the injured, who have been admitted

to the KIMS hospital in Hubballi, are critical.

The deceased were identified as Babasa Chougale (59), Nagaraj Achar (56), Ataula Khan (40), Mastan, Mohammad Dayan Baig (17), Akshay Davar (28), Akeef (40) and Afaaq (41).

Police explained that most of the victims were travelling to Bengaluru from Kolhapur in Maharashtra.

Hubballi-Dharwad Commissioner Labhu Ram has visited the spot.

According to the police, the bus belonged to National Travels owned by a Congress politician in Karnataka. Preliminary investigations stated that the accident had taken place due to the alleged negligence of bus driver while overtaking a tractor. Hubballi KIMS director Dr. Ramalingappa said the condition of 5-6 injured persons are critical. The persons who escaped with minor injuries were returning to Maharashtra, he said.

BJP plans to make inroad among backward Muslims

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With an objective to increase its presence among minorities, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is planning to reach out to backward Muslims in a bigger way.

The BJP is also planning to identify individuals among the backward Muslim community for leadership role in the party and government as a trust building measures to draw maximum benefits in the upcoming assembly polls and ultimately general elections 2024.

The saffron party believes that the most of the votes its gets are from the backward Muslim communities who are also beneficiaries of many welfare schemes of the union and party ruled state governments.

A senior party leader told reporter that in recent Uttar Pradesh assembly polls, the BJP had got around five to seven per cent Muslim votes and majority of them belong to backward castes of the community.

"During recent Uttar Pradesh assembly polls backward Muslim communities who are benefitted from PM Awas Yojna,



PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana which provided free ration, Ujjwala Yojana and others schemes had voted for the BJP. These Muslims, especially the backward, are openly supporting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and now we are planning to further consolidate their support by reaching out to backward Muslims across the country," he said.

The BJP feels that winning support of

new vote bank ahead of next general election will further strengthen party position in 2024 polls.

"For next Lok Sabha polls, we are planning get more than 50 per cent vote share and it can be achieved only by increasing party acceptance among new communities. Backward Muslims in one of such community," another party leader said.

According to the party estimates, there

is around 85 per cent backward Muslim population across the country.

Another functionary of the BJP said that given the large population, which holds the key in electoral politics, the party is also planning to groom young new faces and hand over leadership roles to leaders from backward or Pasmanda Muslims.

The functionary added that the top leadership is aware of the matter and may soon start working on it and appropriate representation to backward class people will be given in future.

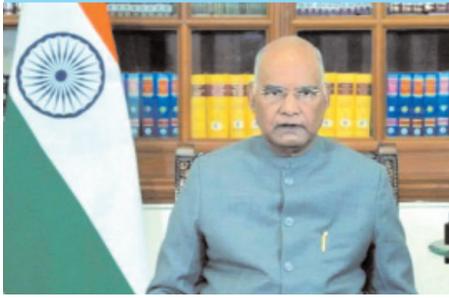
"Appointment of Danish Azad Ansari as minister in second term of Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh is part of party's plans to give leadership role to backward Muslim. More leaders from backward Muslim communities will be given different leadership role in different position in future," he said.

Another party leader said that like other backward communities in Hindu, which is turning out to be a major vote-bank, the BJP is now focusing on backward communities of Muslim to expand its reach ahead of the next parliamentary election.



PRESIDENT RAM NATH KOVIND TO VISIT MP FROM MAY 27-29

President Ram Nath Kovind will visit Madhya Pradesh from May 27-29 during which he will attend several programmes in different parts of the state, officials said here on Tuesday.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

President Ram Nath Kovind will visit Madhya Pradesh from May 27-29 during which he will attend several programmes in different parts of the state, officials said here on Tuesday.

On his arrival in Bhopal on May 27, the President will be welcomed by Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel and the

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the officials said.

The next day, he will take part in the foundation stone laying ceremony of new health institutions.

On May 29, President Kovind will address participants at the All-India Ayurveda Conference in Ujjain's Kalidas Academy.

According to the officials, Kovind is also scheduled to visit Mahakaleshwar temple in Ujjain after which he will

leave for New Delhi via Indore.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister chaired a meeting to review the preparations for the proposed visit.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Director General of Police Sudhir Saxena, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Rajesh Rajora, ACS (Health) Mohammed Suleiman, among other senior state officials.

Develop Amrit Sarovar as Desh Bhakti Kendra: CM



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the review on implementation of public welfare schemes should be conducted regularly. The minister in charge should be apprised about the progress of works in the review meeting every month. Chouhan said that the Amrit Sarovars being built in the year "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" should be made a place of inspiration for patriotism. The work of creating an environment of social harmony should be done by the administration in the districts. There should be communication with all classes. There should be no incidents of caste hatred and religious conversion. Criminal elements should be strictly controlled. Incidents of illegal liquor sale, gambling, betting, theft and other crimes should be checked at any cost. Realize the possibilities of development through public participation.

Chouhan was reviewing the schemes run in Mandasaur and Jabhua districts through video conferencing from his residence on Tuesday morning. Chouhan congratulated Collector Mandasaur for good progress under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana in the district and Jabhua Collector for the special efforts made in the field of Amrit Sarovar construction, literacy and education, improvement in sex ratio and women's health in the district.

Chouhan reviewed the status of drinking water arrangements in Mandasaur district and inquired about the operation of drinking water projects. Collector Mandasaur said that the drinking water situation is satisfactory and there is no serious crisis anywhere. Restriction on digging of new bores is in full swing. Work on 192 projects is in progress in the district.

Chouhan said that tap-water schemes should be reviewed where they are not doing well and operated smoothly. Tap-water schemes should prove better for the future. The money being spent in the schemes is public money and should be used properly. The officials should sit and discuss with the public representatives, so that better plans can be made for the future. Referring to the Jalabhishek campaign, the Chief Minister said that public cooperation must be sought in this campaign. People should be educated for water conservation. Otherwise, we will have to face increased water crisis in future.

Referring to the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Rural, the Chief Minister directed to



provide benefits of the scheme to all the eligible beneficiaries. The Collector informed that in the first phase of the scheme, 39 thousand houses were approved in the district, the construction of which has been completed. A total of 98 percent of the target has been achieved. Progress in urban areas is low and only 56 per cent of the houses have been completed. The Chief Minister said that the works of the scheme should be completed expeditiously in the urban areas. Chief Minister said that ineligible people should not be added in the list of beneficiaries of the scheme. If some ineligible people have been added, action should be taken against them. The Chief Minister congratulated the Collector for the good progress of the scheme in the rural areas. He said that Mandasaur district can be made ideal. It was informed in the meeting that the first instalment of the sanctioned amount has been released to the beneficiaries in Awas Plus in the district. The Chief Minister told to make a list of genuine beneficiaries in the scheme. Also attempts must be made to ensure that raw material is made available simultaneously for those whose houses are being built. In this direction Mandasaur should be made a model district.

Chouhan instructed to make 'Anna Utsav' on 7th of every month for distribution of ration. He also congratulated Mandasaur for better arrangement in distribution of food grains. Regarding the Amrit Sarovar Yojana, the Chief Minister said that the Sarovar should be made in such a way that it also becomes a place of inspiration for the village. Flag hoisting should be organized here on August 15 and 26th January. Let us make such an effort that the Amrit Sarovar built in the district should become a model. People should also be involved in the construction of Amrit Sarovar. The Chief Minister said that unless the mind of the public is not involved in any scheme or public work, the expected success is not achieved. Even industrialists can be involved in the work of making Amrit Sarovar. In the "Ek Zila - Ek Utpad" scheme, it was told that garlic has been selected in Mandasaur district. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that we have this opportunity to export garlic in the country and abroad. Best efforts must be made to market it. Efforts must be made to ensure that the garlic brand of Mandasaur becomes famous. Garlic processing should be promoted through modern method.

MP CONG TO PREPARE 'AROP PATRA' AGAINST SHIVRAJ SINGH-LED BJP GOVT

THE OPPOSITION CONGRESS IN MADHYA PRADESH WILL BRING OUT AN 'AROP PATRA' (CHARGE SHEET) AGAINST THE SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN-LED BJP GOVERNMENT, WHICH WILL BE SUBMITTED IN THE STATE ASSEMBLY, SOURCES SAID ON TUESDAY.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The opposition Congress in Madhya Pradesh will bring out an 'arop patra' (charge sheet) against the Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led BJP government, which will be submitted in the state Assembly, sources said on Tuesday.

A decision to this effect was taken during a meeting chaired by former Chief Minister and the state Congress president Kamal Nath at his residence on Monday, the sources told IANS. The party has appointed senior Congress leader and former leader of opposition Ajay Singh (Rahul) to prepare a long list of 'arop patra' with facts related to various issues and the projects initiated by the Chouhan government.

Speaking to IANS, the veteran Congress MLA who was recently appointed as the leader of opposition (LoP) Dr Govind Singh said that 'arop patra' will comprise of various issues including corrup-

tion, Vyapam, atrocities against the tribals, crime against women etc. "Once the 'arop patra' is prepared, I will present it before the Assembly. A long list would be prepared to expose the BJP government," Singh said. The party will also take 'arop patra' against the BJP government to the people in the state.

Notably, the MP Congress, led by Kamal Nath, has been targeting the Shivraj Singh-led BJP government at various fronts. Law and order situation of the state, especially after repeated communal violence and lynching of tribals, unemployment, Vyapam and from the last few weeks, the Congress has been targeting the state BJP leadership on OBC reservation issue.

On Tuesday, Kamal Nath accused the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government of being involved in corruption. "Whenever any election comes, BJP leaders, including the Chief Minister go out to break false coconuts and

make false announcements and a flood of foundation stones comes. Once again crores of false dreams are being shown from the empty treasury. This kind of game is played before every election and the rest of the time the government is engaged in events, events, self-propaganda, corruption, scams," Nath said.

Responding to it, senior BJP spokesperson Pankaj Chaturvedi said the Congress should prepare 'arop patra' against Kamal Nath and the former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, who made false promises to the people during the last Assembly elections. "The duo had made several big promises in the 2018 Assembly polls and people trusted them, but after the government was formed, all fake promises blew away with the wind. The Congress should first prepare a list of promises it made and how many of them were fulfilled during the 18 months of the government," Chaturvedi told IANS.



CM Plants Neem and Peepal Saplings

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Neem and Peepal saplings in Smart Garden on Tuesday along with the members of Bharat Youth Forum. Outstanding badminton player Priyanshu Rajawat, Dhar (represented in Thomas Cup), Gauranshi Sharma, Bhopal (Deaf Olympic Brazil) and Dhananjay Dubey, Gwalior (Deaf Olympic Turkey) also planted saplings with CM Shri Chouhan along with members of Gur Sarvshri Shivam Dwivedi, Madhusudan Rai, Lokendra Gurj, Paras Bajpai and Shri Vinayak Tiwari.

With social service record of 3 years, the organization does plantation in the capital, conducts blood donation, health awareness programmes, distribution of winter clothes to needy people, organizes dialogues for health and cleanliness among children and also undertakes plantation on auspicious occasions. So far numerous fruitful and shady plants have been planted at countless location. Simultaneously, people are made aware of Shramdan Abhiyan (voluntary labour campaign) for cleanliness and 'Sakora Abhiyan' for food and water to birds in the summer season. The organization also conducts discussions on various topics from time to time including "Youth Parliament" and "National Education Policy" to induce leadership potential.

Peepal sapling planted today is a shady tree. It purifies the environment. It has religious and Ayurvedic significance. Neem is known for its rich in antibiotic elements and as the supreme medicinal qualities.

Lawyers in Bhopal stage protest against attack on colleague

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A large number of advocates on Tuesday staged a protest against the attack on one of their colleges, who was assaulted by three bike-borne miscreants on Monday night. The protesters blocked the movement of commuters for hours at a busy square in Bhopal. The protesters blocked the carriageway connecting MP Nagar to Jahangirabad and another towards the Vidhan Sabha. They were demanding the arrest of the accused who had attacked advocate Deepak Sharma with a sharp edged weapons when he was returning home on Monday night. Though the police had arrested two out of the three accused who had attacked Sharma, they were released on bail on Tuesday, much to the dismay of Sharma's colleagues.

Subsequently, a large number of advocates practising at the Bhopal district court staged a protest to press their demand to arrest the accused again and to impose stringent charges against them. Meanwhile, the protesting advocates were seen beating up the commuters trying to cross the road near the protest site. A group of women advocates were seen thrashing a woman commuter, while some junior advocates were seen beating a man during the protest. The lawyers called off their protest warning that if the accused are not arrested within 24 hours, they will stage another protest. Sharma had received injuries on his abdomen and was admitted to a hospital for treatment on Monday night. Anand Tiwari, a junior advocate practising at the Bhopal district court, told IANS that Sharma has been discharged from the hospital on Tuesday. PC Kothari, president of Bhopal district bar association, said, "No one has been beaten up. Some people tried to cross the blocked road and the protesting lawyers tried to stop them."

Bankers Should Make Every Effort to Increase the Credit Deposit Ratio in the State: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that bankers should make every effort to increase the credit deposit ratio in the state. More and more attention should be given to sanctioning of loan by expanding the branches of banks in tribal dominated districts.

Chouhan was presiding over the 182nd meeting of the State Level Bankers Committee at the residence office on Tuesday.

Chouhan said that the beneficiaries should be benefited by sanctioning maximum loan cases under Mukhyamantri Udyam Kranti Yojna. The distribution of approved cases under the Pradhan Mantri Swa-Nidhi Yojana should be done in time. Chief Minister said that private sectors bank should sanction the cases of PM Swa-Nidhi Yojana by discharging their social responsibility. Under the Chief Minister Rural Street Vendor Scheme, the distribution process should be done according to the approved cases. He expressed displeasure over the slow progress made by HDFC Bank in the National Rural Livelihoods Mission scheme for achieving lesser targets. The Chief



Minister expressed satisfaction over the progress of Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana. He said that do work speedily for the empowerment of women. To achieve the annual target, every month's target should be fixed.

Chouhan expressed satisfaction over the progress of National Urban Livelihoods Mission scheme. He stressed on increasing the progress of KCC animal husbandry and fisheries. This is very important for doubling the income of farmers and improving the

condition of fish farmers. He directed to boost the progress of Prime Minister Micro Food Enterprises Upgradation Scheme. The Chief Minister said that this is an important scheme of the Government of India. Work on this seriously with full attention. Instructions were given to increase the recovery percentage of NPAs in the self-employment schemes. He said that the progress of social security schemes should be increased. Chouhan said that bankers should work

fast in Madhya Pradesh Startup Policy and Implementation Plan-2022. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is giving a lot of emphasis on startups. Make sure that the Madhya Pradesh Startup Policy is well implemented and move forward rapidly. Provide maximum employment to the youth. Swift India Automated E-Stamping was discussed in the meeting. Chief Minister talked about starting its use.

Chouhan said that every effort should be made to achieve the set targets. Madhya Pradesh is moving from a developing state to a developed state, so pay attention seriously to the CD ratio. He said that a big step should be taken in the direction of women empowerment. Approve as many loans as possible to grow the groups. Focus on employment generation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and weaker sections. Employment Day will be celebrated every month in the state. Provide employment by setting a target for every month. Provide employment to unemployed educated youth by fulfilling the targets of ambitious schemes. Make every effort to increase entrepreneurship among the weaker sections. He directed to organise Employment Day on 30th May.

Uma Bharti: Ayodhya, Kashi, Mathura a matter of faith for Hindus, like Mecca-Medina is for Muslims

There is no fight for Kashi and Mathura because a fight is when there is equal share between two sides. These places (Ayodhya, Mathura and Kashi) are the centre stage for millions of Hindus' faith, like Makka-Madina for Muslims and the Vatican City for Christians, said former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Uma Bharti in an exclusive interview with IANS.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

There is no fight for Kashi and Mathura because a fight is when there is equal share between two sides. These places (Ayodhya, Mathura and Kashi) are the centre stage for millions of Hindus' faith, like Makka-Madina for Muslims and the Vatican City for Christians, said former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Uma Bharti in an exclusive interview with IANS.

Bharti, who was among the BJP leaders who led the Ram Janmabhoomi movement of the 1990s in Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh) and never hesitated in claiming that she was one of those who carried out the demolition of the Babri Masjid, spoke with IANS on the ongoing controversy over Varanasi's Gyanvapi Masjid and some similar issues which

have erupted in Madhya Pradesh too. Bharti said like in Ayodhya's Ram Janmabhoomi issue in the 1990s, she has a direct involvement with Kashi's Gyanvapi. "I was in Parliament in 1991 and had mentioned not to leave Kashi and Mathura unresolved, it's all on record, so luckily I am associated with the Gyanvapi issue also," she said.

Bharti asserted that there has always been an expectation of liberalism from Hindus despite the fact their (Hindus) places of worship were destroyed. "I accept that goodwill is a need of the society, but it will be possible only when both sides will have the same thought. On one side Hindus' places of worship are destroyed and on the other side you expect liberalism from Hindus. How can it be possible," she added. She said Ayodhya, Mathura and Kashi



have never been important shrines for Muslims like Makka-Madina or some others, they were just ordinary places for them to pray. But for Hindus, these places were always the centre stage of their belief. "It is their wrong (Muslim) tenacity to make claim on these places. It is a well planned process to blame the Hindu community for creating animosity in society. These issues should be

resolved to maintain the goodwill in the society," she added.

When asked that a similar controversy has erupted in Madhya Pradesh after some Hindu unions questioned Bhopal's Jama Masjid and demanded a survey of Dhara's Bhojshala, Bharti said, "There is no controversy in Dhara's Bhojshala. It has two parts. On one side, Hindus perform puja on the premises every Tuesday, while Muslims offer namaz in the complex on Fridays. There is only conflict of arrangement when Vagdevi (Saraswati) puja and namaz time come together."

She stated that the idol of Goddess Saraswati will be brought from the museum in London and re-established within the Bhojshala complex. "Idgah is situated outside and Hindus pray for Goddess Saraswati's place inside the

Bhojshala premises. If they (Muslims) make any kind of claim on it, they are wrong," she said.

Speaking on Bhopal's Jama Masjid issue, Bharti justified the Sanskriti Bachao Manch (a Hindu wing) claim that Chowk Bazar's Jama Masjid (Bhopal) was built in the 19th century on a Shiva temple.

"I am not commenting on any individual's claim or any survey but it is a fact that Nandi Baba is looking toward there (mosque side) only and I don't think I should explain why Nandi's statue is present at the gate of each Shiva temple. I believe that today's Muslim youth is educated and they understand that social and cultural unity is needed in society. Today's educated Muslim youth also understand that religious faith is very personal."



EDITOR'S SPECS

Make your Kid adventurous

Children who spend more time playing adventurously may have lower symptoms of anxiety and depression, finds a new study. The study, published in *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, indicates that children, aged 5-11, who spent more time playing outside had fewer "internalising problems", characterised as anxiety and depression. Those children were also more positive during the first lockdown. "We are more concerned than ever about children's mental health, and our findings highlight that we might be able to help protect children's mental health by ensuring they have plentiful opportunities for adventurous play," said researcher Helen Dodd from the University of Exeter, who led the study. "This is really positive because play is free, instinctive and rewarding for children, available to everyone, and does not require special skills. We now urgently need to invest in and protect natural spaces, well-designed parks and adventure playgrounds, to support the mental health of our children," Dodd added. The researchers said that the study sought to test theories that adventurous play offers learning opportunities that help build resilience in children, thereby helping to prevent mental health problems. For the study, the research team surveyed nearly 2,500 parents of children aged 5-11 years. Parents completed questions about their child's play, their general mental health (pre-Covid) and their mood during the first Covid-19 lockdown. The research was carried out with two groups of parents, a group of 427 parents living in Northern Ireland and a nationally representative group of 1,919 parents living in the UK.

HOW MUCH AND HOW OFTEN SHOULD COURTS ADJUDICATE MATTERS OF RELIGIOUS FERVOUR?

Asad Mirza

In the old city of Jerusalem, there lies a 187-foot long Western Wall, built by Herod on the western flank of the Temple Mount. Whilst the wall was considered Muslim property as an integral part of the Haram esh-Sharif and waqf property, the right of Jews to prayer and pilgrimage co-existed.

The Western Wall has been fraught with severe skirmishes between communities and though the Western Wall is carved in stone, the fate of its worshippers is not, and is writ with an unease that has come to be seen largely in religiously zealous places such as in India.

The present dispute pertains to the land where Gyanvapi mosque is situated in Varanasi and has been witness to several proceedings in courts since 1991. In 1991, a suit was filed by devotees of the Kashi Vishwanath temple near which the Gyanvapi mosque is situated alleging that the mosque was built after a Lord Vishweshwar's temple was destroyed by Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

The proceedings in the 1991 suit have been stayed by the Allahabad High Court. An opinion to this would be will this order not operate as res' over the ending litigation; meaning that when a litigation has been decided and kept in abeyance all consequential suits arising out of the same cause of action should be brought to a halt and decided in accordance with the earlier pending litigation in order to avoid multiplicity of proceedings.

However, recently another suit was filed in 2021 by female devotees and worshippers of Lord Shiva, practicing the vedic sanatana hindu dharma before Civil Senior Judge, Varanasi seeking "restoration of performance of rituals at principal seat of an ancient temple" at the Gyanvapi mosque area.

The dispute has now reached the apex court after multiple orders having been passed by both the civil court in Varanasi and the Allahabad High Court since 1991 on pleas by both the Hindu devotees and Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Varanasi, the Masjid Committee and others.

The Varanasi court had ordered an inspection of the premises on petitions moved by five Hindu women asking for year-long access to pray at a Hindu shrine behind the western wall of the Gyanvapi mosque complex in Varanasi, which is currently open for prayers once a year.



Be that as it may, the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Varanasi, has sought leave of the Supreme Court that it's application under Order 7 Rule 11 should be heard first by the civil judge, and then only should the case be proceeded with, including the unfolding of the commission's findings. To countenance the same, the plaintiffs have stated that to address the very cause of action in the case it is imperative that the commission's reports be attended to at first.

This has indeed led to a legal quagmire, and more in particular, encompassing the civil body of law, in the instant case.

But the Supreme Court on May 20, 2022, has put it to rest and has ordered that the application filed by the Committee of Management Anjuman Intezamia Masjid under Order 7 Rule 11 CPC for rejection of the suit as being barred in law, shall be decided on priority by the district judge. So, the question therefore is whether the Gyanvapi mosque does conceal in its premises a "shiv ling" as alleged by the plaintiffs or for that matter can the civil court in view of the estoppel envisaged by the Places of Worship Act, 1991, view the matter at all.

The significance of the Places of Worship Act, 1991, cannot be undermined. A legislature that has been in the fore in preserving the secular fabric of our nation has been the

Places of Worship Act, 1991, which only accommodates the Babri masjid case as an exception to its covenant. The Act itself which is under challenge before the apex court, is the torch bearer of the secular ethos of our Constitution.

The constitutional bench of the Supreme Court in the Babri masjid title suit, while observing on the importance of the Places of Worship Act, 1991, stated that "The Places of Worship Act imposes a non-derogable obligation towards enforcing our commitment to secularism under the Indian Constitution."

The recent dismissal of the plea by the Allahabad High Court seeking the constitution of a fact-finding committee to research on the "real history" behind Taj Mahal, is again a crusade in point. The petitioner had also sought a direction to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to open the sealed doors of over 20 rooms inside the Taj Mahal premises so that the alleged controversy pertaining to the "history of Taj Mahal" can be put to rest. However, the plea couldn't see the light of the day, unlike the Gyanvapi or the time-tested Babri masjid case.

The difference between them being that the Taj case was a writ petition and the suitability of using the same to elicit facts is less of a draw in law than using a suit in

arriving at facts, and being the traditional device of Indian courts in drawing evidence.

So, if tombs are to be unearthed, then it better be by way of a suit, as laid down by precedence in Indian courts, not that it essentially draws out skeletons from a closet, even if there are none, but at least because it stirs the imagination of the larger rhetoric of the prevailing public opinion. What is worrisome is that matters of religious fervour are being adjudicated liberally in courts of law, where forensics ought to have been the rational way forward.

The question, therefore, that is now posed for our understanding is whether the plaintiffs' prayer for the restoration of the performance of rituals at the principal seat of an ancient temple in the Gyanvapi mosque holds any water, and whether the courts are competent to tread these holy waters keeping in mind that only recently have they come out of the troubled waters of the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi case.

(Adeel Ahmed is an advocate-on-record in the Supreme Court of India. The views expressed are personal)

international

PAK GOVT DECIDES TO BLOCK IMRAN KHAN'S LONG MARCH

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan government has taken a bold decision to stop the long march of ousted premier Imran Khan and decided to launch a crackdown against the members of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) throughout the country in a bid to stop them from marching towards the capital Islamabad.

Police authorities have started raiding houses of senior members of the PTI in the major cities of Pakistan and have already taken into custody over 600 supporters of PTI, who were gearing up to join Imran Khan's long march towards Islamabad.

In raids across the country, especially in the Punjab province, the police arrested PTI supporters, while forcing senior members of the party to go into hiding.

Police authorities maintain that the arrests are being made under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO), under which anyone can be taken into custody for a period of at least 90 days. As per reliable sources, a list of at least 350 senior members of PTI has been prepared and has been forwarded to the relevant security quarters to initiate raids under MPO.



"The list has been forwarded to relevant police stations by the CCPO office and respective DSPs have been told to monitor the crackdown," revealed a source. Some of the senior members of PTI whose houses have been raided include Babar Awan, Hammad Azhar, Firdous Ahsiq Awan, Ali Naveed Bhatti, Jamshed Iqbal Cheema, Malik Nadeem Abbas, Yasir Gillani, Mian Aslam Iqbal, Saadia Sohail, Ijaz Chaudhry, Akram Usman, Aqil Siddiqui, Amir Riaz, Mohammad

Haider and others.

On the other hand, the provincial government of Punjab province has decided to impose Section 144 across the province and call in Pakistan Rangers to ensure security of the provincial capital Lahore.

The federal government has also decided to ensure that all measures are taken to secure the capital, especially its Red Zone, where President's house, Prime Minister's house, Supreme Court, Ministry of Interior,

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PTV head-quarters and the Diplomatic Enclave are located. Section 144 has been imposed in and around the red zone, which as per rule bars gathering of over four persons. The federal government has also decided to call in the services of Pakistan Army to ensure security of the Red Zone citing fears of escalation in security situation because of Imran Khan's long march. "We will not allow Imran Khan's long march to attack the state and make lives of people difficult. His political party was asked by the Islamabad High Court to submit an affidavit assuring that they will remain peaceful and will not move any further from the Srinagar Highway in Islamabad, the venue of the protest. But they refused. This confirms the intent of Imran Khan and his march," said Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah.

While the government has rejected Imran Khan's demand and also his call for the anti-government long march, Imran Khan has said that he will not stop at anything and will launch his long march from Peshawar towards Islamabad on Wednesday, and vows to not leave until his demand of early elections is met.

UNGA RESOLUTION CALLS FOR EFFORTS TO MITIGATE FOOD SECURITY CRISIS

United Nations | Agencies

The UN General Assembly has adopted a resolution that calls for international efforts to mitigate the current food security crisis.

The resolution calls on the international community to urgently support countries affected by the food security crisis through coordinated actions, including the provision of emergency food supplies, food programmes, financial support, and increased and diversified agricultural production, reports Xinhua news agency.

It calls for the promotion of a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization.

The resolution calls on the international community, including the G7 and G20, to place global food security at the top of their agendas and to support multilateral efforts in finding affordable solutions to the crisis.

It calls on member states and other relevant stakeholders to keep food and agricultural supply chains functioning, to support farmers, including small-scale and family farmers, with technical means and assistance that enable them to produce their crops and livestock sustainably, and to refrain from hoarding food and commodities.

It stresses the need to keep trade channels and markets open for the movement of food, fuel, fertilizer and other agricultural inputs and outputs, and notes the importance of



working toward eliminating all forms of protectionism. It also stresses the need to keep fuel prices affordable to limit the volatility of essential food prices, and calls on countries not to hoard energy commodities.

The resolution calls on international financial institutions to find urgent, affordable and timely solutions to support developing countries, in particular, those highly indebted, in responding to the food security crisis, through, but not limited to, facilitating, access to debt relief, concessional finance and grants.

It calls on member states, the UN humanitarian and development organisations and other relevant actors to urgently and effectively respond to, prevent and prepare for rising global food insecurity affecting millions of people.

It also calls on member states to heed the urgent UN humanitarian appeal to assist countries facing armed conflict, drought, starvation and famine with emergency aid and urgent funding.

Russia to deepen economic ties with China as West takes a dictatorial stance

Moscow | Agencies

Moscow expects increased economic cooperation with China as the West takes a more dictatorial stance in global affairs, said Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Russia intends to build relations with independent countries and will decide how to deal with the West if and when it comes to its senses, he added, RT reported.

"Now that the West is taking the position of a dictator, our economic ties with China will grow even faster," Lavrov told students at the Primakov School, an elite Moscow educational institution named after one of his predecessors. Evgeny Primakov served as foreign minister from 1996-98 and after that as prime minister.

"In addition to direct income to the treasury, this will give us the opportunity to imple-

ment plans for the development of the Far East and Eastern Siberia," Lavrov said.

"The majority of projects with China are concentrated there. This is an opportunity for us to realize our potential in the field of high technology, including nuclear energy, but also in a number of other areas," he added.

If and when the West comes to its senses and wants to offer something in terms of resuming relations, Russia will "seriously consider whether we will need it or not," the foreign minister told the high-schoolers, RT reported. Moscow isn't just implementing a strategy of import substitution in response to anti-Russian sanctions, but "must stop in any way being dependent on the supply of anything from the West" and rely on its own capabilities and those countries that have "proven their reliability" and act independently, Lavrov explained.

AZERBAIJAN, ARMENIA READY FOR BORDER DELIMITATION

Baku | Agencies

Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev has signed a decree to establish the country's state commission for the delimitation of border with Armenia.

Published on the president's official website, the decree says that the commission is chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev, reports Xinhua news agency. It includes senior officials of 22 agencies, including Deputy Prime Minister of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, several deputy ministers and deputy chiefs of state serv-



ices, heads of several local executive authorities, and a department head at the Presidential Administration.

Meanwhile, in a similar move, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Monday signed a decree on the establishment of a commission on border demarca-

tion and border security between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which is chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan. The establishment of the commissions by the two rival countries came a day after President of the European Council Charles Michel hosted Aliyev

and Pashinyan for a third trilateral meeting in Brussels since last December. In a press statement following the meeting, Michel announced that the two countries had agreed to initiate the border delimitation process with the establishment of border commissions.

Armenia and Azerbaijan have been at loggerheads over the mountainous region of Nagorno-Karabakh since 1988. Peace talks have been held since 1994, when a ceasefire was agreed, but there have been sporadic minor clashes since then. A new round of armed conflict broke out along the

contact line on September 27, 2020, before Russia brokered a ceasefire on November 9, 2020.

On November 26, 2021, Aliyev and Pashinyan met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Sochi, Russia, where they agreed on creating mechanisms for demarcation and delimitation of the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

During their previous meeting in April, Aliyev and Pashinyan launched a peace treaty process mediated by the European Union, and they agreed to establish border commissions to work on the border delimitation issue.

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Maharashtra ATS arrests youth from Pune over 'contact with terror operatives' in J&K

Officers said Junaid Mohammed, who hails from the state's Buldhana district, allegedly received money for terror-related activities.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Pune unit of the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) on Tuesday morning arrested a man from Dapodi area who is allegedly in contact with terror operatives from Jammu and Kashmir through phone messenger groups and is also alleged to have received money for terror-related activities, officers said. He was produced in court and remanded in police custody till June 3.

Junaid Mohammed, who is in his early 20s and hails from Khamgaon town in the state's Buldhana district. He has been staying with relatives in Dapodi and works at the shop of a scrap dealer, they said. An ATS officer said, "The suspect has been in contact with alleged terror operatives from Jammu and Kashmir through phone messenger groups. We are also looking at the

possibility of some of the contacts being from Pakistan. He has changed his cell phone number several times to try to go undetected and remain in these groups. He was part of several terror-related discussions that were held in the groups. Probe has also revealed that he had received an amount of Rs 10,000 from alleged terror operatives." At 3 pm on Tuesday, Junaid was

produced before a court in Pune. The prosecution told the court that as per the primary probe, the suspect has been in contact with Kashmir-based operatives of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). Seeking 10 days' police custody of Junaid, the prosecution lawyer said that he received two transfers of Rs 5,000 each from suspected terror operatives.

The ATS, in its remand application, claimed that Junaid is involved funding and recruitment for the banned LeT. The ATS has said that it is probing whether Junaid has done some of sensitive locations including places of religious significance, vital installations and defence establishments in the country, as suggested in the preliminary probe.

Addressing the investigation officer, the court said that the probe in the case is expected to be thorough and in-depth. "The court is hereby granting police custody till June 3," it said. The investigating officer told the court that for further probe, the ATS will take Junaid to Kashmir, a place which he had visited six times in the last two years.

Former MLA Narendra Mehta, wife file pre-arrest bail plea in DA case

Mehta's assets are at least Rs 8.25 crore more than his known sources of income when he was corporator and MLA between January 2006 and August 2015.



Team Absolute | Thane

Former Mira Bhayander MLA Narendra Mehta and his wife have approached a Thane court for pre-arrest bail after the Maharashtra Anti Corruption Bureau last week filed a disproportionate assets case. As per the complaint filed by the Thane unit of the ACB at Navghar police station, Mehta's assets are at least Rs 8.25 crore more than his known sources of income when he was corporator and MLA between January 2006 and August 2015. The ACB complaint has named Mehta's wife Suman as an alleged abettor. In the pre-arrest bail application, in which the Mehta couple has claimed they have

good standing in the area and are also into social work, came up before the Special Judge (ACB) RR Kakani on Monday. Judge Kakani, after hearing the applicant, sought the replies of the police and ACB on the pre-arrest bail application and fixed the next date of hearing on May 30. The Mehta couple's application states they have been falsely implicated in the case, and that the probe agency made no attempt to record their statement or verify their income tax returns (ITR). The court did not pass any order on the couple's prayer for interim protection, said District Government Pleader Sanjay Londe who appeared for the prosecution.

CBI gets 7 days custody of four 1993 Bombay blast accused

The CBI has taken custody of four persons allegedly involved in the 1993 Bombay serial blasts, after they were apprehended held by Gujarat's Anti-Terrorist Squad on May 12 - nearly three decades after the March 12, 1993 terror outrage which left 257 died and over 700 others injured.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The CBI has taken custody of four persons allegedly involved in the 1993 Bombay serial blasts, after they were apprehended held by Gujarat's Anti-Terrorist Squad on May 12 - nearly three decades after the March 12, 1993 terror outrage which left 257 died and over 700 others injured. A source told IANS that a Mumbai court has given the probe agency seven days custody of the four, identified as Abu Bakar alias Abdul Gafoor, Syed Qureshi alias Rahat Jan Qureshi, Mohammad Shoaib Qureshi alias Shoaib Bawa, and Mohammad Yusuf Ismail alias Yusuf Bhatka for its investigation. The source said that all the four accused were from Mumbai, but on their passports their addresses were shown as Mira Road (Maharashtra), two from Bengaluru, and one from Tamil Nadu. The Gujarat ATS had been working on secret information, which they developed further. Acting a tip-off 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 Sardarmagar area on the evening of May 12. Initially, the four accused were booked for carrying forged Indian passports. 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. However, they were later identified as Abu Bakar (Basha), Syed Qureshi (Abbas Sharif), Shoaib Qureshi (Syed Yasin), and Yusuf Ismail (Yusuf Ismail). Additional Director General of Police, Gujarat ATS, Amit Vishwakarma had said on May 12 that all the four accused were booked under Passport Act, as they were accused of obtaining passports on the basis of forged documents and fake information, so as to flee the country. The Gujarat ATS had duly informed the CBI regarding their arrest and had shared all its information, adding that they would be handed over to the agency after their remand ends.

SEBI should probe deeper in front running by Lamby man as nexus emerges

Front running by people with knowledge is a common thing and there have been many such cases in the stock market concerning the same. When this is done by someone as influential as a fund manager and he is asked to disgorge illegal gains, it hurts even more.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Front running by people with knowledge is a common thing and there have been many such cases in the stock market concerning the same. When this is done by someone as influential as a fund manager and he is asked to disgorge illegal gains, it hurts even more. This is because while the disgorgement is of gains made by the individual, the disgorged funds are deposited in the coffers of the regulator, not the unit holders of the scheme where the fund manager was managing business. It is these people who have been wronged and money made of them.



Two fund managers of Axis Mutual Fund were sacked/terminated by the management of Axis after investigating them for roughly three months. Market grapevine says that one of the two fund managers came into public limelight because he drove a fancy top-end car from Lamborghini. This car is apparently not in the fund manager's name for obvious reasons. It is in the name of an NBFC which is into leasing or lending against cars. Whether they

have other such cars in their portfolio remains unknown. This NBFC is floated by a leading stock broking firm. The question that comes to mind is, what was the relationship of the fund manager with this broking outfit? Was it just a normal borrower-lender relationship or went beyond that? If so, was a trading account in the names of the beneficiaries of the fund manager maintained here? If so, was this company/entity a partner in crime or only a

facilitator? There are so many questions which remain unanswered at this point of time. It becomes the duty of Axis Bank and its key functionaries to clear all these doubts before the matter picks up steam and leads to a cascading nature. The buck cannot stop with just two fund managers being involved, there have to be more heads which need to roll. For the uninitiated, the word insider trading means "the illegal practice of trading on the stock exchange to one's own advantage through having access to confidential information". Front running means "the practice by market-makers of dealing on advance information provided by their brokers and investment analysts, before their clients have been given the information". While the words are intertwined, they have a lot of similarities and differences. The fund managers indulged in front running by leaking information on their trades to associates for personal benefit. It was time SEBI took strict action and started reimbursing the money collected through disgorgement to the benefit of unit holders of respective schemes as they are the people who have been cheated.

MAHARASHTRA SIGNS 23 DEALS WORTH 30,000 CRORE AT DAVOS FORUM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra delegation at the World Economic Forum in Davos has announced the signing of 23 MoUs worth 30,000 crore. Of these, over 55% of investments are Foreign Direct Investments from countries such as Singapore, Indonesia, the US, and Japan. Maharashtra is participating as a part of team India at WEF, Davos, showcasing the state's role in building the \$5 trillion economy for India. This includes investment in diverse sectors including pharmaceuticals and medical devices, IT, data centres, textiles, food processing, packaging, paper & pulp, steel, etc. "A total of USD 4 Billion (Rs 30,379 crore) in investments was signed at the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) ceremony held in the Maharashtra pavilion at Davos. These investments will potentially generate more than 66,000 jobs," a media release from the state government said. "A great success for Magnetic Maharashtra 2.0 program today at @WEF #Davos2022. A total of 23 MoUs worth USD 4 Bn (INR 30k cr) were signed which will generate 66k jobs in Maharashtra @CMOMaharashtra, @midc_CEO, Cabinet Minister Aadiya Thackeray said in a tweet. The state's delegation is being led by Minister of Environment & Climate Change Aadiya Thackeray, Minister of Industries Subhash Desai, and Minister of Energy Dr Nitin Raut. Maharashtra had launched the Magnetic Maharashtra 2.0 program for attracting investments in the state. So far, in the 9 editions of the MM 2.0 initiative under the leadership of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, the state has been able to attract 1.89 lakh crore in new investments in addition to



an FDI of more than INR 2 lakh crore - the highest in India. The Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation is executing the 10th edition of Magnetic Maharashtra 2.0 at the World Economic Forum. "Today @WEF @Davos the state government signed 23 MoUs with various companies with investments worth 30,379 crore. These investments will potentially generate more than 66000 jobs. The MoUs were signed in the presence of ministers @AUThackeray & @NitinRaut_INC," Industries Minister Subhash Desai said. The World Economic Forum is a yearly event, which serves as a melting pot of ideas and many important global partnerships are forged during the week-long event. The state delegation is holding a series of high-powered meetings with CEOs of Fortune 500 companies to mobilise huge investments in Maharashtra. Some of the key investors that the state met include Suntory, a global beverage company that is leading efforts in sustainable packaging, and UPL, a multinational major in chemicals which is investing in 250

acres of land in the Raigad district of the state. The state also signed an MoU with the Global Plastic Action Partnership ("GPAP") and initiated the Maharashtra Plastic Action Partnership (Maharashtra PAP), which will serve as a roadmap for sustainable development in the state. Maharashtra was the first state to ban single-use plastic in 2018 and has been at the forefront of sustainable development with aggressive policies and action plans to balance development and climate change. "In an insightful session at the Forum Initiative briefing with @PlasticImpact Executive Director, Kristin Hughes, elaborated on the policy changes and business partnerships on a global scale for stringent plastic action measures, in this hour of climate emergency," Aadiya Thackeray said in a tweet. "It was great meeting @alanjope CEO, @Unilever. Discussed various CSR projects that Unilever is undertaking in the low income areas of Mumbai and the amazing impact has on sustainability & improving lives," Thackeray added.

MAHARASHTRA NON-AGRI UNIVERSITIES EXAMS TO BE HELD OFFLINE, SAYS EDUCATION MINISTER

According to Samant, students must understand that exams had earlier been cancelled and later also conducted online in the wake of the COVID-19 wave.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Higher and Technical Education Minister Uday Samant said that the upcoming examinations of non-agriculture universities in the state will be held offline, as decided by vice-

chancellors of such institutions. The announcement has been made on Tuesday, May 24, 2022. According to Samant, students must understand that exams had earlier been cancelled and later also conducted online in the wake of the COVID-19 wave.

"If we keep conducting the exams online, it would raise a question mark on whether the industry would accept such students. Hence, the examinations will now be conducted as per directions of the universities and in the offline mode," the minister said. The minister was replying to a query on some students demanding exams through the online mode. On April 2, 2022, the Maharashtra government had lifted all COVID-19-related restrictions, including the wearing of face masks in public places.

'Tarikh pe tarikh': 2 Mumbai rail staffers acquitted in theft case - after 36 years!

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In an instance proving 'justice delayed is justice denied', two Western Railway ex-employees - charged for a minor theft of rail property, have been finally proved innocent and acquitted - after a staggering 36 years. The duo is Javer Bachubhai Merchant of Jogeshwari in Mumbai, and Gajadhar Prasad Verma of Uttar Pradesh, said their lawyer Mahendra D. Jain. Metropolitan Magistrate JC Dhengale of 36th Court, Mumbai Central, pronounced the verdict as "acquitted" for the duo on March 30 - and it also became a long-awaited 'birthday gift' for Merchant, who was born that day in 1947. Way back on March 3, 1986, they were caught and booked for allegedly stealing some copper cables and wooden plans from the Western Railway's Mahalaxmi Depot, along with three others - Arun F. Parikh, Sachin P. Parikh, and Ramesh Ramakant Kadale. They were arrested by the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and charged under the Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1966, with the relevant sections providing for a maximum sen-

tence of 5 years if proved guilty, said their advocate. In the early stage of the trial, the two Parikhs pleaded guilty and were convicted with a one month jail term while Kadale was discharged from the case. Merchant and Verma pleaded 'not guilty' and were prepared to stand for trial, which started with the initial hiccups and delays. At the time of the incident in which they got willy-nilly trapped, Merchant was a Chief Traction Foreman and Verma was a truck driver, and had secured bail post-arrest. Citing reasons for the delays, Jain said some accused had applied for discharge and only one got it, besides other big and small aspects that led to the postponements and "tarikh pe tarikh" with the legal cycle finally ending after 36 years. At present, both the aged ex-WR employees - Merchant, 75, and Verma, 72 - are living in Mumbai, and somehow managed to survive all these years under the scar of the accusations from which they are finally relieved. "It's a truly sad thing that the case reached its logical conclusion after 36 years, and reflects on the stark reality of

how pendency of cases can affect innocents, ruin their lives, shatter their families and suffer the social trauma of being an 'accused' they are not," Jain told IANS. Even after so many years, there's a hanging sword with the possibility of the prosecution going in for appeal against the Magistrate's verdict within the 6-month period, which could add to the woes of Merchant and Verma, especially for the latter whose health has deteriorated badly and he can barely move without support. "The prosecution has not been able to prove that the copper cable which was recovered from the godown of Cable Sales Aid, Deonar and the wooden planks recovered from Room No. 524, Building No. 27, Samata Nagar, Kandivali, was railway property. The prosecution has also failed to prove that the property was stolen by the accused (Merchant and Verma)," Magistrate Dhengale said in his order. Jain says that this could probably be one of the longest such trials in recent times involving a small case with mild charges, though some other complicated matters with multiple accused in very serious cases have gone on much longer.



Bruce Springsteen, 'E Street' band announce 2023 tour

Los Angeles | Agencies

The stage is set as Bruce Springsteen and his backing band 'E Street' are returning to perform in three legs of their tour the dates of which will be announced soon.

The 2023 tour will start with US arena in February, followed by European stadium shows kicking off on April 28 in Barcelona, with a second North American tour leg starting in August.

Springsteen said in a statement accessed by 'Variety', "After six years, I'm looking forward to seeing our great and loyal fans next year. And I'm looking forward to once again sharing the stage with the

legendary E Street."

The planned European stops are Barcelona, Dublin, Paris, Ferrara, Rome, Amsterdam, Landgraaf, Zurich, DAsseldorf, Gothenburg, Oslo, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Vienna, Munich and Monza. Additional cities and shows in the UK and Belgium will be announced at a later date.

The 2023 dates will mark the first live shows for Springsteen and the E Street Band since the conclusion of their 14-month, worldwide "The River" tour in Australia in February of 2017. The group last played publicly on 'Saturday Night Live' in December of 2020, where they performed two songs from their most recent studio album, 'Letter to You'.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Will Smith has revealed he "unlocked" his childhood trauma when he was writing his autobiography and it's helped him become a better actor.

The 'Independence Day' star put pen to paper to tell his life story in his book 'Will' which detailed his difficult early years growing up in Philadelphia and witnessing domestic violence at home when his father beat his mother, femalefirst.co.uk.

In a new interview on David Letterman's Netflix series 'My Next Guest Needs No Introduction', Will said his traumatic childhood prompted him to put on a cheery public persona.

He explained: "When I showed up, I wanted people to feel good and be happy. Because I found that when my household was that way, I felt safe."

The 'Men in Black' star went on to reveal he felt that combing over his past helped him improve as an actor.

He added: "My



WILL SMITH 'UNLOCKED' CHILDHOOD PAIN TO MAKE HIM A BETTER ACTOR

experiences and my life, and the writing of this book have unlocked a part of me, as an actor, that is like nothing I've ever experienced. "Life is so exciting to me right now because I can reach people differently than I've ever been able to reach people, largely because of my pain. I'm really ready to dive into my art in a way that I think will be, hopefully, fulfilling for me and helpful for the human family." The interview was recorded prior to the 2022 Academy Awards in February when Smith stormed onstage and slapped host Chris Rock after the comedian made a joke about his wife Jada Pinkett Smith. Will went on to win the Best Actor Oscar for his performance in 'King Richard', but later resigned from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts Sciences and was handed a 10-year ban.

Los Angeles | Agencies

An entertainment industry expert has testified that Hollywood actress Amber Heard lost \$45 million to \$50 million in endorsements and TV and film income over claims that she faked domestic violence allegations against former husband and star Johnny Depp.

Heard's team called the expert, Kathryn Arnold, as well as a psychiatrist and an orthopedic surgeon as the defamation trial began its sixth and final week. Heard's lawyers were also expected to call Depp to the stand on Monday, but they ultimately decided they did not need his testimony, reports 'Variety'.

Depp previously testified over four days in April. Heard's side is seeking to prove that she suffered a severe career setback after Depp's lawyer, Adam Waldman, accused her of perpetrating an "abuse hoax" in 2020. Arnold testified that Heard cannot find work in major studio projects because of the volume of online vitriol she continues to face.

"In the industry, they like her work," Arnold said. "But they can't work with her right now."

Arnold compared Heard's earnings to a series of other "comparable" actors -- Jason Momoa, Ana de Armas, Gal Gadot, Zendaya and Chris Pine -- to draw conclusions about what her career trajectory could have looked like, were it not for Waldman's statements.

Heard earned \$1 million for her role as Mera in 'Aquaman', which grossed \$1 billion in 2018, and \$2 million for 'Aquaman 2', due out next year.

Heard has claimed she had to "fight" to stay in the sequel, and has said that her role was significantly cut down. Arnold testified that Heard should have been able to renegotiate her 'Aquaman 2' salary for \$4 million or more, but could not because she had no leverage.

On cross-examination, Depp's attorney Wayne Dennison took issue with several of the comps, suggesting that the actors are more famous than Heard. In quizzing her about other actors, Dennison got Arnold to reveal that she does not know who Patrick Wilson is.

Dennison noted that the damage to Heard's career might have been due to negative press tied to the 2020 defamation trial in the UK. Dennison also argued that Depp is not responsible for the negative social media campaign targeting Heard.

Amber lost \$50mn due to Depp 'abuse hoax' claims, says expert

Depp's team is expected to call their own witnesses on Tuesday and Wednesday to rebut Heard's claim.

They are also expected to play a deposition from Walter Hamada, the president of DC Films, who is expected to state that Heard did not suffer setbacks in the course of her casting in the sequel to 'Aquaman'.

Depp sued Heard for \$50 million in 2019, alleging that she defamed him when she described herself as a "public figure representing domestic abuse" in a Washington Post op-ed.

Heard filed a defamation counterclaim after Waldman accused her of perpetrating a "hoax".

Much of the trial has focused on often horrific allegations of violence, as well as



Depp's drug and alcohol use. Depp has accused Heard of throwing a vodka bottle at him at a house in Australia, severing the tip of his right finger. Heard's team called Richard Moore, an orthopedic surgeon, who testified that the injury was not consistent with Depp's account of it. Heard has said that he likely severed it when he smashed a phone, and Moore testified that it would also have been consistent with pinching it in an accordion-style door.

Famed director David Paul slams conservative US politics

Los Angeles | Agencies

In David Cronenberg's latest genre twister 'Crimes of the Future', Viggo Mortensen and Lea Seydoux play partners who are performance artists, engrossed in performing surgery for public nightclub spectacles.

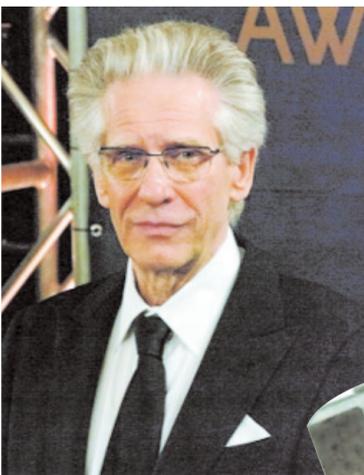
They're enthralled with the freedom they can take on each other's bodies. All of this in a governing society that's not too fond of it.

Cronenberg acknowledged at the Cannes Film Festival press conference that the movie "addresses, though not in overtly political way, the question of who owns whose body," reports 'Deadline'.

"I did write it 20 years ago, but you can feel that this was coming, this kind of oppressive ownership and control," said the filmmaker about how issues of rights over one's body against ruling governments hasn't gone away. "It's a constant in history: There's some sort of government that wants to control its population and means once again, body is reality." That control then leads to the government having sway over "speaking, your brain". "In Canada, and I have said this recently, we think everyone in the U.S. is completely insane, I think the U.S. has gone completely bananas, and I can't believe what the elected officials are saying, not just about Roe v Wade, so it is strange times," said Cronenberg about the right-leaning political attitudes stateside. "We talk about Putin and the invasion of Ukraine, but then south of the border in Canada we feel the vibrations that are weirdly similar," the filmmaker said. "The movie is not overtly political. But to me, all art is political or innately political. It is an expression of culture, context and intellect, of a very specific language, so in that sense it's political, whether the creator of the work is conscious of it or not."

The press conference moderator asked about the notion of climate change in the film, specifically pointing out the boy who eats a plastic pail at the onset of the movie.

Consider it intentional on behalf of the 'Crash' filmmaker and a nod to the burgeoning use of microplastics in the globe. Cronenberg mentioned how stopping the Earth's production of plastics is challenging. How about we embrace plastics as food? "(It would) solve the problem of famine," he said. "It's a Jonathan Swift, modest proposal, satirical suggestion, but at the same time there's some reality," Cronenberg conceded.



Thor trailer reveals Christian Bale as Gorr the God Butcher

Los Angeles | Agencies

The trailer of Chris Hemsworth-starrer 'Thor: Love and Thunder' dropped during Game 4 of the NBA Eastern Conference Finals, revealing a first look at Christian Bale as the film's villain Gorr the God Butcher.

According to 'Variety', the Taika Waititi-directed Marvel film is the sequel to 2017's 'Thor: Ragnarok' and marks Thor's return to the Marvel Cinematic Universe following 'Avengers: Endgame' in 2019.

Starring Chris Hemsworth in the title role, it also features Tessa Thompson as Valkyrie, Chris Pratt as Star-Lord, Waititi as Korg and Natalie Portman as Jane Foster, in her first appearance in the MCU since 2013's 'Thor: The Dark World'.

Following the

fall of Asgard and the events of

'Endgame', Thor attempts to find inner

peace, but is hindered by the threat of Gorr extinguishing the gods.

Thor enlists the help of Korg, Valkyrie and Foster in his mission and teams up with the Guardians of the Galaxy, which includes the fan-favorite Rocket Raccoon voiced by Bradley Cooper, in addition to Pom Klementieff, Dave Bautista, Vin Diesel and Karen Gillan reprising their roles.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Phoebe Dynevor



IPL 2022, QUALIFIER 1

Gujarat Titans beat Rajasthan Royals by 7 wickets to reach final

Kolkata | Agencies

Gujarat Titans produced a clinical all-round performance to thrash Rajasthan Royals by seven wickets in Qualifier 1 of the IPL 2022 to reach the final of the tournament in their debut season at iconic Eden Gardens, here on Tuesday.

A fighting fifty by Jos Buttler (89 off 56) and Sanju Samson's attacking knock (47 off 26) powered Rajasthan Royals to 188/6 in 20 overs. Apart from Buttler and Samson, Devdutt Padikkal (28 off 20) also made a valuable contribution with the bat for Rajasthan, after being invited to bat first.

Despite Hetmyer's wicket in the 19th over, Buttler continued his assault by smashing the ball all over the park. Overall, the last 4 overs produced 60 runs as Rajasthan Royals finished with 188-6 on the board.

On the other hand, Hardik Pandya (1/14), Ravishrinivasan Sai Kishore (1/43), Mohammed Shami (1/43) and Yash Dayal (1/46) were the wicket-takers for Gujarat Titans.

In reply, Shubman Gill (35 off 21) Matthew Wade (35 off 30) played solid knocks and kept Gujarat alive in the run chase. However, once they got out,



Gujarat were in some sort of trouble.

But David Miller (68 not out off 38) and skipper Hardik Pandya (40 not out off 27) batted sensibly and stitched an unbeaten partnership of 106 runs. Prasidh Krishna came to bowl the last over for Rajasthan Royals and Miller hit three consecutive sixes smashed over the legside and along with Hardik, he led Gujarat to an impressive 7-wicket win with three balls to spare.

Trent Boult (1/38) and Obed McCoy (1/40) were the only wicket-takers for Gujarat.

Brief scores:

Rajasthan Royals 188/6 in 20 Overs (Jos Buttler 89, Sanju Samson 47; Hardik Pandya 1/14) lost to Gujarat Titans 191/3 in 19.3 Overs (David Miller 68 not out, Hardik Pandya 40 not out; Trent Boult 1/38) by 7 wickets

WOMEN'S T20

SHAFALI, WOLVAARDT LEAD VELOCITY TO 7-WICKET WIN OVER SUPERNOVAS

Team Absolute | Pune

Fantastic fifties by Shafali Verma (51 off 33) and Laura Wolvaardt (51 off 35) led Velocity to seven-wicket win over Supernovas in the second game of the Women's T20 Challenge 2022 at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium, here on Tuesday.

Chasing a target of 151 runs, Shafali played a solid start at the top while Wolvaardt finished off the chase with ease. Put into bat first, Supernovas were off to a horrible start as they slipped to 18 for 3 in the opening four overs. Priya Punia fell to Kate Cross, who also accounted for Harleen Deol while



Brief scores:

Supernovas 150/5 in 20 overs (Harmanpreet Kaur 71; Kate Cross 2-24) lost to Velocity 151/3 in 18.2 overs (Laura Wolvaardt 51 not out, Shafali Verma 51) by seven wickets.

Deandra Dottin too failed to get going and was the third to fall on the bowling of Deepti Sharma as Supernovas were left on shaky ground.

However, Taniya Bhatia (36 off 32) and Harmanpreet Kaur (71 off 51) stuck together to score 82 off 63 and put the innings back on track. Supernovas were 29 for 3 at the end of the powerplay but the pair picked up pace and helped them reach 60 for 3 at the halfway mark. They got their 50-run partnership in the 12th over and looked set to launch from

there. However, Bhatia was run out in the 15th over. Kaur then went on to strike 4, 6 and 4 against Sneha Rana in the 18th over before falling to Radha Yadav in the next over. Sune Luus ended with 20 off 14 and helped Supernovas post 150-5 in 20 overs. In reply, Velocity opener Natthakan Chantham fell to the star from the previous match - Pooja Vastrakar - in the second over. But, Yastika Bhatia and Shafali didn't let

Supernovas make any more inroads. A 63-run stand that came in just 35 balls transferred the pressure back on the bowling side as Shafali took apart the bowlers.

Between overs 6 and 10, Velocity made 22 and lost two wickets to slip to 82 for 3. But, Laura Wolvaardt and Deepti Sharma didn't press the panic button and took Velocity over the victory line in 18.2 overs with a 71-run stand.

I WILL DEFINITELY BE AROUND THE IPL NEXT YEAR, CONFIRMS AB DE VILLIERS

Mumbai: Former South Africa great and Royal Challengers Bangalore Hall of Famer AB de Villiers has confirmed that he will be back with the franchise for next year's Indian Premier League edition. De Villiers, who quit all forms of cricket a few months back and did not participate in IPL 2022 in which RCB will play their Eliminator match on Wednesday, said he was not yet sure in what capacity he will return. "I will definitely be around the IPL next year. I would love to return to my second hometown," de Villiers told VUSport.



"I will be around RCB next year, I am missing it, don't know in which capacity but I would like to visit my second home which is Chinnaswamy stadium -- I am looking forward to it," said de Villiers, who was included in RCB Hall of Fame a few days back along with West Indies' Chris Gayle.

De Villiers, considered by many as one of the greatest white-ball cricketers with 9,577 runs in 228 One-day International matches, is the first South African batter to score a double century in Tests when he blasted 217 against India in April 2008.

ASIA CUP HOCKEY

JAPAN BEAT INDIA 5-2 IN POOL GAME

Jakarta | Agencies

Agritty Japan handed the defending champions India their first loss of the Hero Asia Cup here Tuesday.

With Japan trouncing India 5-2 in their pool A clash, India will now need to beat hosts Indonesia by a big margin and expect a favourable result in the Pakistan-Japan game on Thursday to stay in contention for a place in the Super 4s.

Goals by Kosei Kawabe (40th, 56th), Ken Nagayoshi (24th), Ryoma Ooka (49th) and Koji Yamasaki (54th) ensured Japan clinched their second win of the tournament while India's goals came from Pawan Rajbhar (45th) and Uttam Singh (50th) both from field efforts.

India had earlier drawn 1-1 against arch-rivals Pakistan in their opening pool match on Monday while Japan began their campaign with a strong 9-0 win against hosts Indonesia.

On Tuesday, Japan were by far a better side on display as they put pressure on the young Indian team right from the start. They mounted relentless attacks, put pressure on the Indian defence and



gave little room for counter-attacks, which is India's forte.

While both teams had played out a goalless first quarter, Japan pumped one in the 24th minute through a PC awarded following India's infringement in defence. Even though it was an even play after the 10-minute half-time break, India gave away too many chances to Japan. Kawabe's goal in the 40th minute doubled their lead.

But India made a surge in the 45th

minute through Rajbhar's goal, however, conceded one in the 49th minute through Ooka. Japan's 3-1 lead was reduced to 2-3 when Uttam Singh scored a swift field goal in the 50th minute springing hope in the Indian dugout. But defensive lapses allowed a flurry of goals by Yamazaki (54?) and Kawabe (56?) in the final few minutes that put Japan in a formidable position to win. India will play Indonesia in their last pool match on Thursday.

FRENCH OPEN

MEDVEDEV BREEZES PAST BAGNIS ON RETURN FROM INJURY

Paris: World No.2 Daniil Medvedev breezed past Argentine Facundo Bagnis 6-2, 6-2, 6-2 for a hassle-free opening round at the French Open here on Tuesday. Medvedev has a shot at returning to the top of the men's singles rankings, replacing Novak Djokovic, if results go his way at Roland Garros this fortnight. However, he does not have a great record at the French Open barring a quarterfinal run last year. And on top of it, he has just returned from an injury break. The 26-year-old returned from a two-month break to recover from hernia surgery last week in Geneva and looked comfortable on Tuesday during his one-hour 38-minute victory over world No.103 Bagnis. Although an immediate exchange of breaks at the start suggested a potentially intriguing encounter, it proved to be smooth sailing for the 26-year-old Medvedev against the World No. 103 Bagnis, according to a report on the ATP website.



CHESSABLE MASTERS

PRAGGNANANDHAA BEATS WEI YI, TO MEET GIRI IN SEMIS

Mumbai: India's teenage chess sensation Rameshbabu Pragnanandhaa has stormed into the semifinals of the Chessable Masters Final, beating China's Wei Yi in the knock-out quarter-finals of the online chess series. Two days after beating world champion Magnus Carlsen in a rapid game for the second time this year, the 16-year-old Pragg overcame a spirited comeback from Wei Yi to win 2.5-1.5. Pragg now meets Dutch Super Grandmaster Anish Giri in the last-four stage. The red-hot Dutchman knocked out Norway's No.2 Aryan Tari with a game to spare as he went 18 unbeaten in the event so far. The other semi-final in Leg 4 of the Champions Chess Tour is an equally mouth-watering prospect with world No.1 Carlsen up against world No.2 Ding Liren of China. Giri's match was one of three left on the brink of a quick conclusion after just two games. Giri, Ding and the 16-year-old Pragg all took 2-0 leads leaving them needing just a draw in the third to go through.



HERTHA BEAT HAMBURG IN PLAYOFFS TO RETAIN BUNDESLIGA STATUS

Berlin | Agencies

Hertha Berlin remain in the Bundesliga after beating second division Hamburg S.V. 2-0 (2-1 on aggregate) thanks to goals from Dedryck Boyata and Marvin Plattenhardt in the second leg of the playoffs on Monday. The visitors from Germany's capital needed to overturn a 1-0 deficit from the first leg, and they made a fairy-tale start to the second leg as Plattenhardt's corner found Boyata, who restored parity in both games from the central position. HSV were shocked and couldn't respond while Hertha continued strongly, as Lucas Tousart unleashed a dangerous effort to test Hamburg goalkeeper Daniel Heuer Fernandes at the half-hour mark.

Hertha remained the more active team, but Tousart couldn't control Ishak Belfodil's good build-up work five minutes before the break.



After the restart, Hamburg took control, knowing that a goal could book them a berth

in the first division, reports Xinhua. The hosts came out with all guns blazing as

Ludovik Reis and Moritz Heyer forced Hertha custodian Oliver Christensen into action in quick succession. Hertha were a menace on counterattacks and almost stunned Hamburg, but Fernandes was equal to Plattenhardt's near-post attempt in the 54th minute.

Plattenhardt remained in the thick of things and flabbergasted the hosts at the hour mark after curling a free-kick over Fernandes into the far post to double the lead.

Hamburg needed a goal to force the game into extra time, but HSV lacked accuracy in the final third. Meanwhile, Hertha almost killed the game in the 74th minute but Tousart couldn't beat Fernandes in a one-on-one situation. The hosts increased the pressure in the closing stages but Hertha's defense stood firm and protected their lead until the final whistle to ensure another season in Germany's top flight.

2ND TEST, DAY 2

Sri Lankan openers put game in balance after Mushfiqur's 175*



Dhaka: Sri Lanka openers Dimuth Karunaratne (70 not out) and Oshada Fernando (57) struck half-centuries to help Sri Lanka end the second day on 143 for 2 in the second Test against Bangladesh, here on Tuesday. Sri Lanka are still trailing by 222 runs with Karunaratne and nightwatchman Kasun Rajitha (0) unbeaten at stumps on Day 2. After finishing their first innings at 365 courtesy Mushfiqur Rahim's unbeaten 175, Bangladesh struggled to

pick wickets early on as Sri Lankan openers put up a 94-run opening stand. However, Ebadot Hossain and Shakib Al Hasan scalped the wickets of Oshada Fernando and Kasun Mendis respectively, helping Bangladesh put up a fight-back late in the final session.

Earlier in the opening session of Day 2, Sri Lankan pacers kept the set batters Litton Das and Mushfiqur Rahim under check. Kasun Rajitha removed Liton Das on 141, who could only add six runs to his overnight score. The right-hander succumbed to an offside-off delivery off Rajitha, edging it straight to the hands of the slip fielder. The pacer secured his maiden five-for later in the same

over by dismissing Mossadek Hossain for a duck. After two quick wickets, Mushfiqur Rahim steadied the ship with a crucial 49-run partnership with Taijul Islam. Mushfiqur shifted gears and started attacking the spinners en route to his 150. With Sri Lanka just a wicket away from bowling out Bangladesh, the umpires decided to extend the session by half an hour. Mushfiqur in the last half hour avoided singles and kept strike to himself as Bangladesh went for lunch at 361/9. In reply, Sri Lankan openers got off to a good start in their first innings, scoring 84 runs in the afternoon session without losing a wicket. Sri Lanka finished the day at 143/2.

Brief scores:

Bangladesh 365 (Mushfiqur Rahim 175 not out, Liton Das 141; Kasun Rajitha 5-64) lead Sri Lanka 143/2 (Dimuth Karunaratne 70 not out) by 222 runs.

BFI, SAI FELICITATE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS MEDALLISTS NIKHAT, PARVEEN AND MANISHA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) and Sports Authority of India (SAI) on Tuesday felicitated all three medal winners of the 12th IBA Women's World Boxing Championships at the Indira Gandhi Stadium here, which was also attended by Sports minister Anurag Thakur.

With one gold and two bronze medals from the prestigious tournament, the Indian team secured third position in the team rankings with 23 points after Turkey (48 points) and Ireland (23 points) who finished first and second respectively.

While speaking at the felicitation ceremony, Anurag Thakur congratulated the



medal winners and said that we must celebrate current achievements but always keep aiming for the next championship. Only Mary Kom (2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2018)-the six-time

champion, Sarita Devi (2006), Jenny RL (2006) and Lekha KC (2006) had won World Championships' titles for India before Nikhat. In what was celebrated as the 20th anniversary of the

Women's World Championships, the Indian team added three medals in Istanbul to take its overall tally to 39-the third highest after Russia's 60 and China's 50 medals.

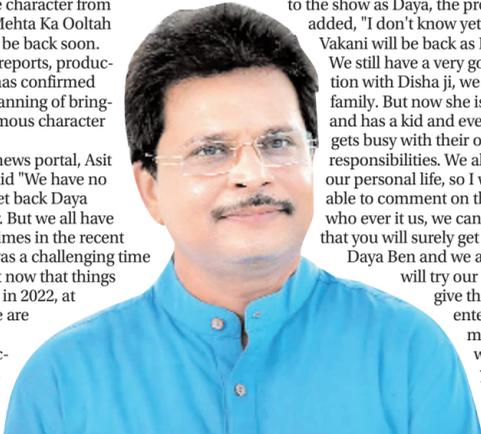
Daya Ben's character to be back in the popular comedy sitcom

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Good news for Daya Ben's fans! Your favourite character from Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah will be back soon.

As per news reports, producer Asit Kumar has confirmed that they are planning of bringing back the famous character of Daya.

Talking to a news portal, Asit Kumar Modi said "We have no reason to not get back Daya Ben's character. But we all have faced difficult times in the recent past. 2020-21 was a challenging time for all of us. But now that things have got better, in 2022, at a good time, we are going to bring back the character of Daya Ben and audience's will



once again get to see the entertainment of Jethalal and Daya Bhabhi."

When asked if Disha Vakani will return to the show as Daya, the producer added, "I don't know yet if Disha Vakani will be back as Daya Ben. We still have a very good relation with Disha ji, we are like a family. But now she is married and has a kid and everyone gets busy with their own responsibilities. We all have our personal life, so I won't be able to comment on that. But who ever it is, we can assure that you will surely get to see Daya Ben and we as a team will try our best to give the same entertainment that we gave you before."



Adhyayan Suman Nepotism did not help me

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Adhyayan Suman, who is gearing up for the much awaited third season of 'Aashram', shared that although he is an industry insider, things have not worked for him as one would have thought given the debate surrounding nepotism.

He maintained that the ultimate power lies with the audience and no amount of money spent on publicity or campaigns can really shape the career of an actor or an actress if the audience is not willing to see them and their work. Speaking at a media event, the actor shared, "Nepotism hasn't ever worked in my favour. What will work or who will work solely depends on the audience. The debate around nepotism has always been futile." Giving a recent example, the actor said, "Today, Kartik Aaryan receives as much love for 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2' as Alia Bhatt receives for 'Gangubai Kathiwardi'. Talent and content rules supreme in this age."

KARAN JOHAR TO HOST A GRAND BIRTHDAY BASH

Team Absolute | Mumbai

One of the most adored and sought-after filmmakers of the Hindi film industry, Karan Johar will be ringing in his 50th birthday on May 25.

Karan Johar has wowed the audience with his masterpieces over the past many years.

As per reports, to celebrate the special occasion, the filmmaker will be hosting a star-studded birthday bash. He would be hosting a grand bash at Yash Raj Studios. While the theme of the party is black and bling, the entire setup of the bash will be designed by Amrita Mahal, who has worked on creating the sets of films like Kalank, Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani, Brahmastra, and Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani.

Talking about the guest list, all the top names from the film industry are expected to celebrate the big day with Karan Johar. On the work front, Karan Johar will be donning the hat of director after a hiatus of 5 years. The director will be helming Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani.



Mohit Malik wishes to see his son as daredevil

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Mohit Malik is all set to unleash his adventurous side with the next instalment of 'Khatron Ke Khiladi 12'. The actor will be flying to Cape Town in June to start filming for the show.

While Mohit is all set to be part of an action-based reality show, his wish for his baby boy Ekbir is that he grows up to not fear anything.

"I want Ekbir to be a daredevil when he grows up. I want my son to not be afraid of anything. Fear holds people back. And I don't want that for my son. I wish to see him grow up to be fearless and kind and experiment with life, just like I get to do everyday," Mohit reveals.

He will soon be seen playing a cop in the cyber-crime based web series 'Cybervaar'.

Mohit will be seen re-uniting with his friend Sanaya Irani in his OTT debut. He has also been taking swimming lessons and hitting the gym to prepare himself for 'KKK12'.



Nawazuddin awarded for Excellence in Cinema

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Recognised for his versatility, actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui's talent is no stranger to awards at national and international film events. With the world of entertainment focused on the Cannes right now, Nawazuddin has been making his presence felt at the French Riviera too.

Nawazuddin has received an award for Excellence in Cinema at the prestigious French Riviera Film Festival from the hands of two-time Emmy award winner American

actor and producer Vincent De Paul. It was one of the biggest moments in the star's life as it adds more credibility to his work.

This is not the first time that Nawazuddin has brought accolades back

home. Previously, the actor was chosen as one of the delegates to receive awards on behalf of the nation at the Cannes Film Festival.

SAMANTHA, VIJAY INJURED DURING SHOOT IN KASHMIR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

South stars Samantha and Vijay Deverakonda were shooting for their upcoming project in Kashmir when their vehicle fell into deep water and they have reportedly sustained injuries due to the accident. According to media reports, the two were immediately taken to a hospital and were helped with first-aid care. According to a report, the stars while filming an action-packed scene got severely hurt, therefore the shooting had to be paused for a few hours. The incident took place over the weekend. On Sunday, both Samantha and Vijay continued filming, this time at Dal Lake in Srinagar but both complained of backaches during the shoot.



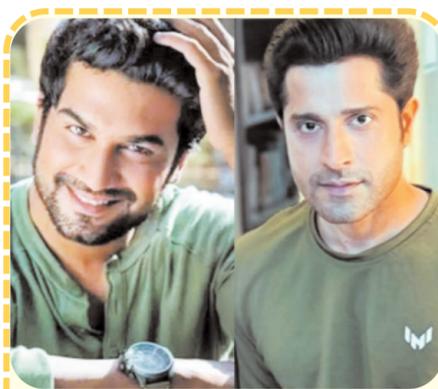
Charu reveals how much Sushmita dotes on her daughter Ziana

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Charu Asopa who has done shows like Mere Angne Main, Akbar Birbal and others is now enjoying motherhood. Rajeev Sen and she welcomed home a baby girl, Ziana in November 2021, bollywoodlife.com. The lady says that motherhood was a learning experience and joyous ride. Charu Asopa, Rajeev Sen and Ziana were present at the party held at Sushmita Sen's home to celebrate 28 years of bringing home the Miss Universe crown. She told us, "It was a wonderful party. We had such wonderful conversations. Sushmita Didi totally dotes on Ziana. She tells us that she is going to totally spoil our baby, and disciplining is only meant for us (laughs). She says she just wants to snuggle and cuddle up with Ziana. In Bengali, she calls it 'Chotkano'. She pampers her like anything."

Charu Asopa is planning to make a comeback. The actress said, "I am looking at doing something in the OTT space. I have done many TV shows. Today, people want good content which the digital space is providing in ample measure. I am reading a few scripts and in talks so hopefully something should materialise soon. My blog and YouTube channel also keeps me busy." The actress said she is into Pilates and Zumba. "I started working out soon after my delivery. My doctor told me it was fine. I do Pilates and Zumba regularly. I manage to take out one hour for self care," she said.

She said that her in-laws absolutely doted on Ziana. "We went to Kolkata for a few days. Ziana was constantly with her grandfather. He calls her Didibhai. In fact, he had a full itinerary planned where he took her to meet all his friends. It was too cute. I feel kids should spend time with grandparents. They get to learn so much. Ziana is loved and how," said Charu.



PRACHEEN SAYS HE'S FOUND A BROTHER IN SHARAD KELKAR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

On Brother's Day, actor Pracheen Chauhan, who was previously seen in TV show 'Shaadi Mubarak', reveals about finding a brother in co-actor Sharad Kelkar.

He says: "I'm really lucky to have Sharad around me as a brother. This is one among the best relationships I made being part of this showbiz industry over the years. In fact his wife Keerti (Gaekwad Kelkar) and I acted opposite each other for a TV show 'Sindoor Tere Naam Ka' and Sharad was also part of this show. I met him on the sets for the first time. And now we three are like a family."

Pracheen continues and shares that he is fond of Sharad and finds a lot of inspiration from him.

He adds: "Sharad and Keerti have showered me with so much love, affection and care over the years. They have literally pampered me like a kid and I'm so grateful to have them in my life. They are so much of inspiration for me. Sharad has been the true definition of 'A friend in need is a friend indeed' He has stood by me like a rock in the most difficult times of my life. I can proudly say he is a brother to me now and I'm very fond of him. He's a gem of a person." Pracheen is also known for featuring in shows 'Kyun Hota Hai Pyarr', 'Kasautii Zindagii Kay', and 'Kutumb' among others.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Tamannaah Bhatia