

# absolute india

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## YASIN MALIK SENTENCED TO LIFE IN TERROR FUNDING CASE

# TO CURB TERRORISM

Malik had pleaded guilty in the matter earlier. In the previous hearing, he told the court that he was not contesting the charges levelled against him, including section 16 (terrorist act), 17 (raising funds for the terrorist act), 18 (conspiracy to commit terrorist act), and 20 (being member of a terrorist gang or organisation) of the UAPA and sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 124-A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

**K**ashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik, who has been convicted in connection with a 2017 terror funding case, was sentenced to life on Wednesday by a special NIA court here. Special Judge Praveen Singh pronounced the verdict under relevant sections of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act which will be concurrent and it will run till life. The quantum of punishment for the offences in the terror funding case, was pronounced amid tight security at the Patiala House Courts. During the course of the



## PAK FUNDING SCALED VIOLENCE IN THE VALLEY: NIA COURT

**HAD THERE BEEN NO FUNDING FROM PAKISTAN, VIOLENCE AT THIS SCALE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN COMMITTED IN THE KASHMIR VALLEY.**

**THESE FUNDS WERE USED TO CREATE UNREST WHERE UNDER THE GUISE OF PUBLIC PROTESTS, PAID TERROR ACTIVITIES OF STONE-PELTING AND ARSON ON A MASS SCALE WERE COMMITTED, THE COURT SAID IN THE ORDER.**

**BETRAYING GOOD INTENTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT, HE TOOK A DIFFERENT PATH TO ORCHESTRATE VIOLENCE IN THE GUISE OF POLITICAL STRUGGLE.**

**THE CONVICT CLAIMS THAT HE FOLLOWED THE GANDHIAN PRINCIPLE OF NONVIOLENCE AND SPEAR-HEADED A PEACEFUL NONVIOLENT STRUGGLE. HOWEVER THE EVIDENCE ON THE BASIS OF WHICH CHARGES WERE FRAMED AND TO WHICH THE CONVICT HAS PLEADED GUILTY SPEAKS OTHERWISE.**

**IT ALSO SAID THAT THAT WITH SUCH FUNDING FOR THE CONVICT TO CONSPIRE TO COMMIT THESE ACTS AND TO PAY THE PERPETRATORS, THE VIOLENCE AND MAYHEM, AT THIS SCALE, COULD NOT HAVE BEEN COMMITTED.**

ence in 28 years, if Indian Intelligence proves this, then I will also retire from politics. I will accept the hanging... with seven Prime Ministers, I have worked," he told the court. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) told the court during the hearing that the

accused is responsible for the Kashmiri Pandits' exodus from the Valley. The Central probe agency also argued for the death sentence for Malik. On the other hand, the amicus curiae sought life imprisonment as a minimum punishment in the case.

## TEXAS SHOOTING: 21 DEAD, INCLUDING 19 PRIMARY SCHOOL KIDS IN

# Wednesday Horror



**Robb Elementary School teaches second, third and fourth grade students, aged between seven to 10-years-old.**

**US Border Patrol official who was nearby when the shooting began rushed into the school and shot and killed the gunman, who was behind a barricade.**

**Two border agents were reportedly shot in an exchange with the gunman. One agent was shot in the head, officials say, adding that both were now in a stable condition in hospital.**

opened fire at Robb Elementary School in the city of Uvalde before he was killed by law enforcement, officials said. Investigators say the suspect was armed with a handgun, an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle and high-capacity magazines. The teenager is suspected of shooting his grandmother at the start of the rampage, the BBC news reported. Local media report say that he may have been a high school student in the area. Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Chief of Police, Pete Arredondo said the shooting began at 11:32 a.m. on Tuesday, and that the investigators believe the attacker "did act alone during this heinous crime". Texas Governor Greg Abbott said the shooter, whom he named as Salvador Ramos, abandoned a vehicle before entering the school to "horribly, incomprehensibly" open fire. One of the adults killed was a teacher, who has been named in US media as Eva Mireles. Her page on the school district's

website said she has a daughter in college and loved running and hiking. Just under 500 people are enrolled in the predominantly Hispanic school nearly 85 miles (135km) west of the city of San Antonio. Border Patrol is a federal agency that guards US ports of entry. Uvalde, which is fewer than 80 miles from the border with Mexico, is home to a Border Patrol station. According to CBS News, the attacker was wearing body armour as he carried out the attack. Another 18-year-old who is suspected of attacking a grocery store in Buffalo, New York, on May 14 was also wearing body armour and carrying a semi-automatic rifle -- both of which are commercially available in the US. A 66-year-old woman and a 10-year-old girl were in a critical condition at a hospital in San Antonio, University Health hospital officials say. On Monday, an FBI report found that "active shooter" rampage attacks have doubled since the coronavirus began in 2020.

## MOBILE INTERNET SUSPENDED IN KASHMIR VALLEY AFTER MALIK SENTENCING

**Srinagar:** Mobile internet services were suspended in the Kashmir Valley on Wednesday although there has been no official word on it. Fixed line broadband internet services, however, remained functional. Heavy deployment of security forces has been made around all places seen as sensitive from the law and order situation including Srinagar's Maisuma locality where Malik's home is situated. Deployment has also been strengthened in other parts of the Valley in order to maintain law and order. Except for an incident of stone pelting in Maisuma area, the situation generally remained peaceful in Srinagar city and elsewhere.

hearing, Malik said: "I will not beg for anything. The case is before this court and I leave it on the court to decide it." "If I have been involved in any terrorist activity or vio-

# Kapil Sibal files nomination for RS as independent, quit Congress

"I have filed nomination as an independent candidate. I have always wanted to be an independent voice in the country. On May 16, I resigned from the Congress Party."



Kapil Sibal

Team Absolute | Lucknow

**S**enior leader and former minister Kapil Sibal on Wednesday filed the nomination for Rajya Sabha as independent with Samajwadi Party's support in the presence of party chief Akhilesh Yadav.

Both Akhilesh Yadav and Kapil Sibal indicated that Sibal has not joined the Samajwadi Party. Sibal is known to have close ties with the Yadav family as a senior advocate. Notably, the veteran leader was a Union Minister in UPA government and off-late was very critical of

Rahul Gandhi and the functioning of the party. Three parties, including RJD and JMM, were inclined to support him but he chose SP.

In 2016, Sibal was elected to the Rajya Sabha from UP as Congress candidate supported by the then ruling Samajwadi Party but now, since the Congress has only two MLAs in the state Assembly, is not in a position to elect anybody. While Sibal is legally involved in court cases of JMM and Samajwadi Party leaders in various high courts and the Supreme Court, so it is being speculated that the parties may favour his candidature.

## Congress, TMC slammed Sibal

**Kolkata:** Leaders of Congress and West Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress, otherwise at loggerheads on almost all issues, on Wednesday adopted the same line of criticism in slamming senior Congress leader and former Union minister filing nomination for Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh as independent with the Samajwadi Party's support. Congress leader in Lok Sabha and party state unit President, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said, "His current term in the Rajya Sabha will end shortly and there is no hope for his re-nomination. So, he made such a decision. Least said about him his better." Trinamool leader and three-time MP, Saugata Ray, especially at a time when his party and Samajwadi Party is going a honeymoon phase on various issues reacted, "I am quite saddened over this action of Sibal. I am not happy with the news of Sibal switching his political camp. He had enjoyed several key posts in Congress, including important Union ministerial chairs. Actually, he has risen from the grassroots level and hence he just served his own interest."

## BIHAR GOVERNOR MEETS PM AMID SPECULATIONS IN STATE

Patna/New Delhi | Agencies

**A**mid speculation of a change of government in the state, Bihar Governor Phagu Chauhan went to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Wednesday to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Sources said that Chauhan and Modi discussed the current political situation of Bihar. When Chauhan came out from the South Block, he did not interact with the media persons. Sources have said that the PMO had called the Governor to understand the current political situation of the state. In Bihar, there is a speculation that Chief Minister Nitish Kumar might break his Janata Dal-United's alliance with the BJP and join hands with the Rashtriya Janata Dal to form the government in Bihar. RJD President Lalu Prasad Yadav is also



coming to Bihar and Nitish Kumar on Monday reportedly directed his MLAs to not to leave Patna for 72 hours. JD-U leaders have, however, clarified that the MLAs would be needed during the nomination of the Rajya Sabha candidate. The political relation between JD-U and BJP is sour at the moment. Sources have said that Nitish Kumar has already decided to break the alliance with the BJP in Bihar and its announcement could come any time. The Bihar Governor's meeting with the PM is also an indication of tense situation between the BJP and the JD-U in the state.

## J&K: JAISH GROUP ELIMINATED IN BARAMULLA OPERATION

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir police along with the Army have neutralised three



foreign terrorists of proscribed terror outfit JeM in Kreeri area of Baramulla on Wednesday, an official said, adding one police personnel was also killed while fighting the terrorists. Police said acting on information, regarding movement of terrorists in Kreeri area of Baramulla, joint special checkpoints were established at many places including near Sharakwara-Najibhat crossing in Kreeri area by the police and the army. The bodies of all the killed terrorists linked with proscribed terror outfit JeM were retrieved from the site and they have been identified as Ali Bhai, Hanief Bhai and Shah Wali all the residents of Pakistan. Incriminating materials, huge cache of arms and ammunition and IEDs including three AK-47 rifles, 15 AK-47 magazines, 344 AK-rounds, five Chinese grenades, three IEDs have been recovered from the site of the encounter.

## INDIA SEES RISE IN COVID COUNT, LOGS 2,124 FRESH CASES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

**I**ndia reported 2,124 fresh Covid cases in the past 24 hours, a rise of 449 against previous day's 1,675 count, the Union Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

In the same period, 17 Covid deaths were reported taking the nationwide toll to 5,24,507.

The active caseload stands at 14,971 cases, accounting for 0.03 per cent of the country's total positive cases.

The recovery of 1,977 patients in the last 24 hours took the cumulative tally to 4,26,02,714. Consequently, the recovery rate stands at 98.75

per cent. Meanwhile, India's Daily Positivity rate has slightly risen to 0.46 per cent, while the Weekly Positivity Rate currently stands at 0.49 per cent. Also in the same period, a total of 4,58,924 tests were conducted across the country, increasing the overall to 84.79 crore. As of Wednesday morning, India's Covid-19 vaccination coverage exceeded 192.67 crore, achieved via 2,43,14,249 sessions. Over 3.31 crore adolescents have been administered with a first dose of Covid-19 jab since the beginning of vaccination drive for this age bracket.

# Lahaul, Spiti snowfall in May uncommon occurrence though recent exceptions: IMD

**The high hills of the state receive snowfall generally from October till April. The latest round of snowfall in Lahaul-Spiti has affected vehicular traffic moment on Manali-Leh highway too. Kaza town in Spiti valley too was covered with snow.**

**Starting from May 21, the snowfall increased in intensity-Koksar area of Lahaul and Spiti in Himachal Pradesh received fresh snowfall on May 24 while Gondla was also wrapped under a blanket of snow with 10 cm snowfall. Local media reports also mentioned that Churdhar peak received snowfall in May after six decades.**

**The fresh snowfall has brought relief for the state that had witnessed a heat wave earlier last month along with the plains of northwest India and suffered snowmelt, especially from the mountain tops.**

Nivedita Khandekar | New Delhi

**T**he latest Western Disturbance that brought relief to the parched north-west Indian plains, also brought in snowfall for the high altitude areas of Lahaul and Spiti in Himachal Pradesh, an uncommon phenomenon for May but something that replenished some of the snowmelt lost due to heat wave earlier last month. Earlier on May 20, while issuing the forecast for the wet spell from May 21 till May 24, India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Meteorological Centre,

Shimla had said: "Under the influence of the active Western Disturbance, light to moderate thunderstorm/ rain/snowfall (high hills) accompanied with strong winds, lightning and hailstorm (wind speed exceeding 50 kmph at time) are very likely from that afternoon itself." Explained Surender Paul, who heads IMD's Meteorological Centre at Shimla, said: "Snowfall in May in Lahaul Spiti is an uncommon occurrence. And yet, there are reports of snowfall in Keylong, Hansa, Gondla in recent past years viz 2020 and 2021 too." IMD data available from

January 2017 onwards has shown that Gondla had received 5 cm snowfall on May 7, 2020, on May 6, 2021 it was 5 cm again, while on May 7, 2021, it was a whopping 30 cm snowfall. For Hansa, data available from November 2010 onwards showed that it received 10 cm snowfall on May 20, 2021 and 2.5 cm on May 24, 2021. For Keylong, data available from September 2008 onwards showed that it received 7 cm snowfall on May 6, 2009, 1 cm each on May 10 and May 11, 2009, 3 cm on May 6, 2013, 7 cm on May 1, 2015, and 3 cm on May 26, 2015, the IMD data showed.



# BYPOLLS FOR 3 PARLIAMENTARY, 7 ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES ON JUNE 23

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Election Commission will conduct by-polls for three Parliamentary constituencies and seven Assembly constituencies in five states and Delhi on June 23 and the counting of votes will be held on June 26.

These by-elections will be held for Sangrur Parliamentary constituency in Punjab, and Rampur and Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh while the Assembly constituencies are Agartala, Town, Bordiwala, Surma (SC), and Jubrajnagar in Tripura, Atmakur in Andhra Pradesh, Rajinder Nagar in Delhi and Madar in Jharkhand.

According to the Commission's order, the date of notification of polls will be May 30, last date of nomination is June 6, the scrutiny will be held the next day, the last date for withdrawal of the candidature is June 9.

"The Model Code of Conduct shall come into force with immediate effect in the district(s) in which the



whole or any part of the Parliamentary/Assembly constituency going for election is included, subject to partial modification as issued vide Commission's instruction No. 437/6/INST/2016-CCS, dated June 29, 2017."

The EC also said that the pub-

lished Electoral Rolls for the aforesaid Assembly Constituencies with reference January 1, 2022 will be used for these elections.

The poll panel has decided to use EVMs and VVPATs in the bye-elections in all the polling stations. Adequate numbers of EVMs and

VVPATs have been made available and all steps have been taken to ensure that the polls are conducted smoothly with the help of these machines.

The Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) shall be the main document of identification of a voter, however, Aadhar or MNREGA job cards, pass-books with photograph issued by Bank/Post Office, Health Insurance Smart Card issued under the scheme of Ministry of Labour, Driving License, PAN Card, Smart Card issued by the RGI under NPR, Indian Passport, Pension document with photograph, Service Identity Cards with photograph issued to employees by Central/state govt./PSUs/Public Limited Companies, and official identity cards issued to MPs/MLAs/MLCs can also be used for identification.

Covid-19 guidelines issued by competent authorities will be strictly followed and social distancing and use of mask, sanitisers, thermal scanning, face shield, hand gloves, etc., as per Covid-19 protocol, will have to be complied with.

# YSRCP suspends legislator arrested for ex-driver's murder

Amaravati | Agencies

Andhra Pradesh's ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) on Wednesday suspended Member of Legislative Council (MLC) Anantha Uday Bhaskar from the party in the wake of his arrest for the murder of his former driver.

According to a statement from the party office, the MLC has been suspended on the direction of Chief Minister and party President Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

The suspension came two days after police arrested Anantha Babu, as the MLC is popularly known. The same day he was produced before a magistrate in Kakinada, who sent him to 14 days judicial custody.

The legislator told police in his statement that he is responsible for the death of driver Subrahmanyam. He pushed the deceased during an argument resulting in his fall and death on the night of May 19.

The MLC also told police inflicted injuries on Subrahmanyam's body to present it as a death in a road accident. However, the driver's family refused to believe his version and lodged a complaint with the police.

As per the statement given by the MLC before the police, Subrahmanyam was in an inebriated condition and he pulled him up for not giving up bad habits.

The MLC who had taken Subrahmanyam near the former's house thrashed him for continuing the bad habits. This angered the



driver, who questioned him. Enraged over the driver questioning him, the MLC held him by the neck and pushed. Subrahmanyam fell down and sustained head injuries. When the driver tried to hit back, the MLC pushed him again and this time the driver received grievous head injury. The MLC told police that he gave water to Subrahmanyam but a few minutes after taking a sip, he was unresponsive. The legislator then thought of showing the incident as a road accident. He carried the body in the car to a dumping yard, where he inflicted injuries on the body with sticks.

The MLC later carried the body to Subrahmanyam's house and told his family members that he died in a road accident. After seeing the nature of injuries on the body, they refused to believe his version. There was an argument between them and the MLC subsequently left the place, leaving behind the body in his car.

# Hry workers to soon get healthcare facilities of civil hospitals

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The workers in Haryana will soon be eligible to avail treatment facilities at the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) hospitals in the state, officials said on Wednesday.

According to an official, an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) will be signed between the state Health Department and Employees' State Insurance Corporation in order to provide healthcare facilities of civil hospitals to the workers of Haryana.

In this regard, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar held a meeting with Union Minister for Labour and Employment Bhupender Yadav.

While interacting with the mediapersons,



the Union Minister praised the Haryana government for the proper implementation of labour welfare schemes.

In addition to the 500 bedded ESI Hospital that will be set up in Gurugram,

Khattar apprised that 100-bedded five ESI Hospitals will also be set up in other cities.

Apart from the ESI hospitals, setting up a Nursing College and ESI Dispensaries were also discussed in Wednesday's meeting.

Sunil Barthwal, Secretary at Union Ministry of Labor and Employment and Haryana Chief Minister's PS, V. Umashankar participated in the meeting.

# Six killed as tourist bus from WB overturns in Kalinga ghat of Odisha

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

At least six tourists from West Bengal were killed and more than 40 injured when the bus, in which they were travelling, met with an accident on Kalinga ghat in Odisha's Ganjam district, police said on Wednesday.

The bus was heading towards Visakhapatnam after the tourists from Udaynarayanpur area in Howrah district of West Bengal visited Daringbadi in Kandhamal district. Over 70 persons were onboard in the bus.

The bus driver claimed that the mishap occurred late on Tuesday night due to brake failure.

"We left Daringbadi at around 7.30



p.m. and had our dinner before the Kalinga ghat. While coming down from the ghat, suddenly the brake failed and I alerted the passengers. After hitting several electric poles, the bus overturned," said the driver, who also sustained injury in the accident. Soon after receiving the informa-

tion, local police teams and fire service personnel rushed to the spot and started the rescue operation. The rescue operation continued till Wednesday morning, the police said.

As per latest report, the deceased were identified as -- Supriya Denre, Sanjeet Patra, Rima Denre, Mausumi Denra, Barnali Manna and Swapan Gushait.

The injured were admitted to a local hospital at Bhanjanagar for treatment. Among them, 15 were shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur due to their critical health condition.

"The patients have been admitted in surgery and orthopaedic departments. Excluding one woman who got

head injury, the health condition of others is stable till now. A dedicated team of doctors are treating the patients," said an official of MKCG Medical College.

Meanwhile, State Transport Minister Padmanabha Behera said he has ordered a probe into the bus mishap. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik mourned the deaths and prayed for the recovery of injured tourists. "We have seen in the past also that buses from other states met with accidents in the Kalinga ghat as the drivers don't have experience driving buses in such a long ghat area. So, we will issue an advisory to buses coming from other states to choose alternative routes," Behera said.

# 46 HELD FOR VIOLENCE, ADDITIONAL FORCES RUSHED TO ANDHRA TOWN

Amalapuram | Agencies

The police in Amalapuram town of Andhra Pradesh have arrested 46 people in connection with Tuesday's large-scale violence in which houses of a minister and MLA were set afire, a senior official said on Wednesday. Police tightened the security with the deployment of additional forces called from various districts to prevent further flare-up amid reports of more groups planning protests in support of the government proposal to rename Konaseema district as Dr B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district.

District headquarter Amalapuram was rocked by mob violence during the protest called by Konaseema Sadhana Samithi (KSS) on Tuesday to oppose renaming of the district.

The protesters indulged in violence at several places, pelting stones on police and setting fire to vehicles. They also torched the houses of state minister PViswaroop and Member of Legislative Assembly Satish. Dozens of people including policemen were injured in the violence.

Amid reports that the groups, which favour



renaming of the district, are planning counter protests, additional forces were rushed to the violence-hit town to beef up security. Police have imposed prohibitory orders under section 144 of CrPC, banning meetings and rallies.

Buses coming to the town have been cancelled. Police were keeping a tight vigil on the roads leading to the town to prevent any possible protests. The mobile phone service, which was snapped to stop further spread of the violence on Tuesday, was yet to be fully restored. Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG), Eluru range, Pala Raju told the local media that the police have so far registered six cases and picked up 46 persons. "We have identified many persons involved in yesterday's incidents with the help of CCTV footage and also the video recordings by the media and special branch. The process of rounding up them is on and we hope to complete it today," the DIG said. Hundreds of youth had participated in the protest called by the KSS on Tuesday. While police allowed a delegation to meet the district collector and submit the representation, a large number of protesters took to the streets and resorted to violence.

# Prostitution racket busted in Delhi's Rohini

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi police busted a sex racket in the national capital and arrested 4 people including three women in this connection, an official said on Wednesday.

The accused were identified as Ajay (37), who was running the racket, and three women -- Sangita (27), Murni Khatun (26), and Simran (27).

DCP (Rohini) Pranav Tayal said that the police received information at 6.30 p.m. on Tuesday about a brothel being run at a house in Sanjay Nagar, Sector 2, Rohini. "A police constable who was in civilian clothes was deployed as a decoy customer and was given Rs 2000 in 4 notes of Rs 500 denomination," the DCP said, adding that he negotiated the deal. On confirmation about the racket, a raid was conducted where all the accused were nabbed. The police then registered a



case under Sections 3, 4, and 5 of Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act and arrested all the four accused. Further investigation is in progress and the past criminal antecedents of the accused persons are being verified, the official added.

# Uniform Civil Code will be implemented one or other day: K'taka Minister

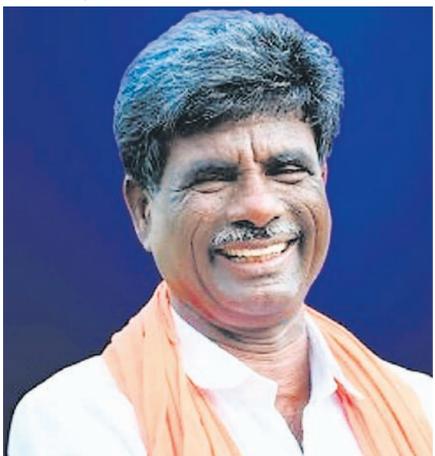
Koppal | Agencies

Minister for Social Welfare Kota Shrinivas Poojari said on Wednesday that the controversial Uniform Civil Code will be implemented in the country one or the other day.

"The BJP is committed to bringing the Uniform Civil Code and it is going to implement it. It was the BJP, which had terminated Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Poojari further stated that everyone witnessed the grand foundation laying ceremony for Lord Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. "Now, the temple is being built there. BJP has fulfilled all the promises. Whatever is being said is being translated into work," he added.

Saying that the BJP would implement the Uniform Civil Code, he said, "It is the BJP's stand that law should be equal to all citizens." "Presently the punish-



ment is given equally for criminal acts without any communal or religious prejudice. Likewise, there should be equal treatment to offenders with regard to civil issues," the minister said, adding, "This is the objective behind the implementation

of the Uniform Civil Code."

"Article 44 of the constitution enumerates that it is the duty of the government to implement uniform civil laws in the country whether the state or Central government," he said.

# UP: 4 KILLED IN SUV-TRUCK COLLISION

Barabanki: Four persons were killed when an SUV collided with a truck in this district of Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday morning.

Two sheep were also killed in the accident that took place when the SUV jumped over a divider and collided with an oncoming truck. The impact of the collision was such that a JCB had to be called to extricate the bodies. According to reports, the driver of the Tavera SUV, going from Ayodhya to Lucknow, apparently dozed off, when two sheep appeared on the road. In an effort to save the animals, he first hit the divider and then the truck coming from opposite direction. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem.

Additional Superintendent of Police Manoj Kumar Pandey said that the deceased were residents of Lucknow.

The deceased have been identified as: Haider Ali, Shafiq, Amir and Anees, while the truck driver is absconding.

# Burglars strike Goa house, leave with 'I love you' message



Panaji | Agencies

Burglars struck a house in Goa, stealing Rs 1.5 lakh cash, gold and silver ornaments and left an 'I Love You' message on the victim's TV set, police said on Wednesday. Police said the burglars broke into the bungalow after gaining entry by cutting open a bathroom grill, when the family had gone out for a function. The incident came to light on Tuesday at 1 p.m. when the family

returned home. After alerting the police, a dog squad and a fingerprint expert were pressed into service to obtain clues.

As per the complaint lodged by Asib Xec, the family members were celebrating his brother's marriage and on the day of the incident they were attending the reception party. After coming home they saw the bungalow was ransacked. The burglars had decamped with valuables and had left an 'I love you' message on the TV screen.

# HOURS AFTER LAUNCH, E-BUS BREAKS DOWN ON THE WAY IN DELHI

New Delhi: Just few hours after the launch of 150 electric buses in Delhi, one of the buses broke down mid way near Rohini Depot because of high vehicle temperature beyond the specified limit, DTC said on Wednesday.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal flagged off 150 new electric buses from Indraprastha Depot on Tuesday. However, one of them broke down after the temperature of the vehicle rose beyond the specified limit. The DTC, however, said the bus stopped because of an in-built security feature and was put back on the road within two hours after a team attended to it.



# WITH JUNAID'S ARREST, MAHA ATS BUSTS 'SOCIAL MEDIA MODULE' OF LET

With the arrest of Junaid Mohammed, the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) may have cracked what is billed as a 'Social Media Module' of the extremist outfit, Lashkar-e-Taiba, official sources said here on Wednesday.



Team Absolute | Pune With the arrest of Junaid Mohammed, the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) may have cracked what is billed as a 'Social Media Module' of the extremist outfit, Lashkar-e-Taiba, official sources said here on Wednesday.

Junaid was allegedly following instructions of his handlers from J&K. Three of the handlers have been identified but named as 'absconders' in the ATS the complaint. Hailing from Buldhana district's Khangaon town, Junaid was nabbed from Dapodi in Pune after his name cropped up in a terror funding case probed by the ATS.

calised youngsters, zeroed in on certain key words in their descriptions, would personally converse with them through a messenger and then took them into the LeT family. Many of the youths were sent for terror training to different locations, some have already been arrested and at least one was killed in an encounter. Junaid was allegedly following instructions of his handlers from J&K. Three of the handlers have been identified but named as 'absconders' in the ATS the complaint.

# Left parties observe 'anti-inflation week'



The Left parties in Maharashtra started 'Week Against Price Rise & Unemployment' from Wednesday to highlight the plight of the masses reeling under the runaway inflation, an organiser said here.

Team Absolute | Mumbai The Left parties in Maharashtra started 'Week Against Price Rise & Unemployment' from Wednesday to highlight the plight of the masses reeling under the runaway inflation, an organiser said here. "The policies of the Bharatiya Janata Party government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi are leading to unbearable price rise and simultaneously unemployment. Instead of concentrating on these burning issues, the RSS, BJP and the Sangh Parivar are diverting attention to cross communal polarisation," said All India Kisan Sabha President Dr. Ashok Dhawale.

The decision to observe May 25-31 as a 'Week Against Price Rise & Unemployment' was taken on May 23 at an online meeting of leaders from all the Left and other like-minded parties in the state, said a party official. "We shall hold large united protests at the district and tehsil levels on these issues. The Left Parties are also intensely dissatisfied at the very nominal decrease in petrol-diesel prices announced last week by the Centre which would ensure little or no relief," said the official. Among the parties joining the weeklong agitation include CPI-M's Dhawale, Uday Narkar, SK Rege, CPI's Tukaram Bhasme, Prakash Reddy, Prof. Ram Baheti, Subhash Lande, PWP's Rajendra Korde, Lal Nishan Party's Bhimrao Bansode, Rajendra Bawake, CPI(M-L)'s Shyam Gohil and Ajit Patil.

## 2 SAUDI NATIONALS HELD AT MUMBAI AIRPORT WITH US DOLLARS WORTH RS 5.6 CR

New Delhi: The customs official at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai, detained two Saudi nationals and recovered 7,24,700 US Dollars worth Rs 5.6 crore from them, a senior customs official said on Wednesday. He said that on May 24, at around 1 p.m. during pre-embarkation Security Check (PESC) through X-BIS machine at International Security Hold Area (SHA) of Terminal-2, CSMI Airport, CISF personnel detected high volume of foreign currency (US Dollars) from the hand baggages of two passengers. The passengers were later identified as Ahmed Mohamed Ismail Haraza and Essam Ali Omer Mohamed (both Sudanese national). They were supposed to travel to Addis Ababa by flight no ET-611. The matter was immediately informed to Customs officials. Thereafter, the passengers were allowed to proceed towards the departure Immigration counter and were kept under close watch through physical and electronic measures. Later, Custom officials detained both the passengers at departure Immigration counter and recovered 7,24,700 US Dollars worth Rs 5.6 crore from their hand baggages.

## 2 hardcore Maoists with Rs 12L reward, surrender

Team Absolute | Nagpur Two dreaded Maoists, including a woman with a combined bounty of Rs 12 lakh on their heads laid down arms before the Gadchiroli Superintendent of Police Ankit Goyal, an official said here on Wednesday. They are: Suman R Mattami, 34, alias Madhuri alias Bhuri, and Sitaram B. Atram, 63, alias Ramsing, with both having a reward of Rs 6 lakhs each for their scalps. Madhuri was recruited in 2002 as a Maoist at the tender age of 14 with the Kasansur Local Organisation Squad (LOS) where she worked for 10 years, then joined the Bhamragad LOS and for the past 10 years was a Permili Area Committee Member. She was directly involved with four murders, 21 encounter killings, seven cases of arson, five other offences and was among the most wanted Maoists in the region. Ramsing was recruited as a Aheri LOS Member in 2005 and worked with several dalams, including as a Deputy Commander, and was last the Area Committee Member



and male colleagues running away during encounters with security forces leaving the women to handle the show. Justifying his decision to lay down arms, Ramsing said that senior Maoists usurp all the monies that are collected through extortion rackets, the rebels exploit tribal youths, the Reds are fast losing support among the masses, married Maoists are not allowed to live independently, seniors order the junior cadres to kill civilians merely on suspicion of being an 'informant', and life in the jungles was very tough without security or even medical help available in emergencies. Superintendent of Police (SP) Ankit Goyal said that now the surrendered duo will get the benefit of all government schemes to help Madhuri and Ramsing lead a normal life in the social mainstream. In the past 30 months, at least 49 hardcore Maoists with crores of rupees rewards have given themselves up and are leading normal lives, and Goyal appealed to more wayward Maoists and misguided youths to surrender and join the social-national mainstream.

## HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH TO WATCH 'PRITHVIRAJ' ON JUNE 1

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will be watching Akshay Kumar's historical epic 'Prithviraj' which is based on the life and valour of the fearless and mighty king Prithviraj Chauhan, on June 1.

Team Absolute | Mumbai Union Home Minister Amit Shah will be watching Akshay Kumar's historical epic 'Prithviraj' which is based on the life and valour of the fearless and mighty king Prithviraj Chauhan, on June 1. Confirming the news, the director of the film Chandraprakash Dwivedi said, "Yes, this is accurate information. It is our honour that the Honourable Home Minister of our country, Shri Amit Shah ji is going to witness the epic saga on the glorious life of one of Bharatmata's bravest sons, Samrat Prithviraj Chauhan, who sacrificed his life for the country." In the film Akshay Kumar will be seen essaying the role of the legendary warrior king Prithviraj Chauhan, who fought valiantly to protect India's freedom from the merciless invader Muhammad of Ghor. Dwivedi, who is best known for directing the TV epic 'Chanakya' and the critically acclaimed film 'Pinjar', has directed the film under the banner of Yash Raj Films as its first historical film. The film is set to release theatrically on June 3 in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.

## Big B unveils Mumbai Joint Commissioner's book on 26/11 attacks

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan shared a picture where he unveiled Mumbai Joint Commissioner Vishwas Patil's book on the 26/11 attacks.



Team Absolute | Mumbai Megastar Amitabh Bachchan shared a picture where he unveiled Mumbai Joint Commissioner Vishwas Patil's book on the 26/11 attacks. He shared the picture on Instagram, where the two personalities can be seen smiling at the camera. Amitabh and Patil are seen holding the book 'Head Held

High' as they posed for the camera. Alongside the image, Amitabh wrote: "An Officer and a Gentleman... but... When duty calls a fierce policeman to fight and defend the City... 26/11... 'Head Held High' by Vishwas Nangre Patil... Keeping motto of the Police alive & pertinent... To protect Good and to

## SHARAD PAWAR SEEKS A CASTE-BASED NATIONAL CENSUS FOR QUOTAS

Team Absolute | Mumbai Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar has demanded a 'caste-based' national census to determine quotas for various groups and ensure social equality, here on Wednesday. "Nobody is asking anything for free, but everybody should get what is rightfully due to them. There is no alternative but to conduct a 'caste-based' Census," said Pawar, addressing a conclave of the NCP-OBC Cell. He pointed out that the SC/ST had got the benefit of the reservations granted to them by the Constitution and similar concessions must be extended even to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). However, to provide such reservations, the government must ascertain the exact OBC population which can be known by a 'caste-based' Census, and based on these figures, justice



can be done to the community, the 81-year-old NCP supremo said. Slamming the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for blaming the Maha Vikas Aghadi government on the issue of OBCs quotas, Pawar said they were in power in Maharashtra for five years and ruling in Delhi since 2014, so "were you sleeping till now".

He added that irrespective of what the BJP people say there is no hope for the OBCs getting justice from them, and even Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has spoken on the need for a 'caste-based' Census, but the Centre's mindset is different on it. Pawar reiterated that the MVA -- comprising Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress -- will go for the upcoming civic polls only after the OBCs reservations issue is resolved to ensure that they get their share in the decision-making process. Pawar's comments came as the state prepares for the local bodies elections amid demands to restore the OBC quotas after the Supreme Court rejected the Maharashtra State Backward Classes Commission's Interim Report recommending restoration of 27 per cent reservations for OBCs. Recalling that a senior RSS leader Bhaiyajji Joshi was opposed to a

'caste-based' census as it could send a wrong signal to society, Pawar countered by asking what is wrong if the correct picture emerges, and said that NCP will launch awareness about it for ensuring justice to the OBCs. Other prominent speakers included Ministers Jayant Patil, Chhagan Bhujaal, Dhananjay Munde, Dr. Jitendra Awhad, MP Supriya Sule, the Cell's state President Ishwar Balbudhe and others. The meet concluded with a series of resolutions adopted including urging the Centre to conduct a 'Caste-Based Census', the Maharashtra government should provide a loan of Rs 25 lakhs from the OBC Corporation to the highly educated unemployed OBC youths, setting up hostels for OBC students in cities like Mumbai, Pune with a 1,000-capacity and the Centre should provide major funds for this.

# Mystery deepens over who paid for Axis Fund Manager's Lamby

The Axis Mutual Fund had a combined corpus of Rs 2.59 lakh crore as of end of March 2022 and was the seventh largest mutual fund in terms of AUM (assets under management) in the company. As recently as November 21, 2021 the fund had reassigned various schemes to different fund managers. Some of the schemes were managed jointly by Viresh Joshi and Deepak Agarwal.

Joshi and Deepak Agarwal. They were jointly responsible in some of the schemes, individually responsible and also paired with others in different schemes. Viresh Joshi also doubled up as the chief dealer and thus had access to much more information than the other fund managers. Sometime in February 22, there were murmurs within the mutual fund industry of some of the fund managers in Axis, having income substantially higher than their disclosed sources of income. Mutual fund industry is a highly organised and regulated industry where bank accounts, equity holdings and also trading accounts have to be disclosed upfront. Further any dealings with equity have to be done in a designated manner and are allowed not only with prior permission but also with a designated broker only. While the matter as publicly disclosed was investigated from February 22, it is surprising that it took over three months to come to the conclusion and the two managers mentioned above to be dismissed. What is really surprising and shocking is that there

are less than 1,000 Lamborghinis in the country as of now. To find out in whose names they are registered for any agency would take a matter of hours or in case it is stretched to maybe a couple of days. This is the total number of cars sold since inception. For the police to find out from the registration plate the beneficiary of the car is a piece of cake. I would not like to discuss the salaries that are paid to fund managers, but suffice to say that it doesn't allow the luxury of buying a car where the street price is Rs 350 lakh to Rs 500 lakh or thereabouts. I am sure this kind of emoluments may not be available to even CIOs of mutual funds. One could be sure that the car would not have been purchased in the name of the fund manager who has been sacked or any of his family member's name. It has to be in the name of a person who has been accommodative and facilitated the deal for the fund manager. What could be the benefit for the facilitator? It has to be linked to the activities of the fund manager who was also a dealer. Details of trades to be execut-

ed were leaked so that illegal gains could be made by the fund manager/dealer and also the person/entity who facilitated the car usage. Large amounts have been involved and they would have moved through bank accounts not disclosed. A close scrutiny would yield results and details for all these activities quite easily. While the MD and CEO of Axis Bank, Amitabh Chaudhry has stated on record that no one will be spared, until investigation is over, all senior people in Axis Mutual Fund above the two fund managers must be put under surveillance. This kind of serious lapses cannot happen without the active participation and connivance of the top. What has happened is serious and cannot be condoned. All ill-gotten wealth, which is discovered, must be confiscated and returned to the rightful beneficiaries who in this case would be the unit holders of various mutual fund schemes run by these two fund managers. It is of paramount importance that investigation is done at the highest level and on top priority as time is of essence in such cases.

## NOW, HELMET COMPULSORY FOR PILLION-RIDERS IN MUMBAI

The Mumbai Police on Wednesday decreed that wearing helmets would be compulsory for pillion riders of two-wheelers and warned of strict action against violators.



Team Absolute | Mumbai The Mumbai Police on Wednesday decreed that wearing helmets would be compulsory for pillion riders of two-wheelers and warned of strict action against violators. In a notification, the Mumbai Police Traffic Department said the rule will be effective after 15 days after which the traffic police will crack the whip against those flouting the new rules. According to the notification issued by Deputy Commissioner of Police Raj Tilak Roshan, it has been

observed that most two-wheeler riders and even the pillion riders in Mumbai do not wear helmets and violate the traffic department norms and provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act. Presently, such offenders attract a fine of Rs 500 for riders without helmets and suspension of their driving license for up to three months or both under the Act. After two weeks, the same penalty shall be imposed even on the pillion riders not wearing a helmet, warned the fresh notification issued Wednesday.



EDITOR'S SPECS

## Congress losing its Knights

**K**apil Sibal is the fifth high profile exit from the Congress this year as he parted ways with the party and filed his Rajya Sabha nomination as independent candidate with Samajwadi Party backing from the state of Uttar Pradesh. Prior to Sibal, former Punjab Congress Chief Sunil Jakhar had left the party only to join the BJP. Sibal, however, did not comment on the Congress after he quit but said that it was not an easy decision to take. It ended the three decade long relationship with the party. Former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar and ex Union Minister R.P.N. Singh too parted ways with the Congress and lately Hardik Patel, the Gujarat Congress working president, too left the party. Sunil Jakhar after joining the BJP had said that it was not easy to break 50 years of relationship with the Congress. Gujarat Patidar leader Hardik Patel too has hit out at the party on hindutva issue and alleged that the Congress party is working to hurt the sentiments of the people. It always tries to damage the faith of Hindu religion. Former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar was upset with the party leadership and parted ways saying, "I was feeling uncomfortable, helpless and ignored for the last many months and I understood that now I am not needed in the party." Similarly, R.P.N. Singh quit the Congress ahead of UP polls and joined the BJP. Several others bade adieu to the party including Punjab ex-Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, Jitin Prasada last year who were once considered close to Gandhis.

# YASIN MALIK MUST PAY FOR THE GENOCIDE HE MASTERMINDED

Deepika Bhan

**C**oming down the stairs of Delhi's Rouse Avenue courts after being convicted for terror crimes, Yasin Malik wanted to speak to waiting mediapersons, but was not allowed to do so by the posse of policemen surrounding him.



All that Malik could mutter was, "Will they allow..." and the policemen said, "Chalo chalo (move one)". With his head bent, Malik went down the stairs walking meekly, wearing a pair of jeans, kurta and chappals.

An image far removed from the 1980s and 1990s, when he was considered one of the leading terrorists in Kashmir, wielded guns, kidnapping and killing many, before turning into a so-called 'Gandhian' in the mid-90s and taking to terror funding, violent protests, stone pelting, mass bandhs, and drawing more young people towards his sinister beliefs.

Malik, head of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), has a cruel and calculating brain behind that perpetual anguished face.

### Why did he plead guilty?

The Delhi court on May 19 convicted Malik, who pleaded guilty to all the charges brought against him, including those under the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), in a terror funding case. The court will hear the arguments on the quantum of sentence on May 25.

Malik had told the court that he was not contesting the charges levelled against him under Sections 16 (terrorist act), 17 (raising funds for terrorist act), 18 (conspiracy to commit terrorist act) and 20 (being

a member of a terrorist gang or organisation) of the UAPA and Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 124-A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code.

The judge asked Malik whether he wanted to "rethink over his plea", but he (Malik) stated that he had taken a "well thought out decision" and had even met twice the amicus curiae, who explained the consequences of his decision.

His pleading guilty may have come as a surprise for many, but his "well thought out decision" was a calculated move on his part. Pleading guilty was for owning up to the "fight for separate J&K" as he wants to go down as a man fighting for a "cause".

By accepting all the charges, Malik wants to convey a message to his followers, sponsors and friends - that he is not guilty of actions that are crimes according to the law, because for him, they are acts committed in the course of a "freedom struggle". This is to reinforce his separatist ideology.

By pleading guilty, he wants to fix himself in the category of Maqbool Bhatt and Afzal Guru and be the "hero" who challenged the might of the Indian security system. Malik's "guilty, my honour" is a ploy to induce "martyrhood" in the popular narrative he hopes to create.

### Crimes against Kashmiri Pandits

As the court convicted him in ter-

ror funding cases, Kashmiri Pandits raised questions about the crimes he has committed against the minority community.

The Pandits have time and again accused Malik of being involved in violent crimes against members of their community. They hold him responsible for their genocide and mass exodus from the valley.

In March 2019, the Centre banned Yasin Malik's JKLF under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA). The then Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba had said that the murders of Kashmiri Pandits by the JKLF in 1989 triggered their exodus from the Valley. "Yasin Malik was the mastermind behind the purging of Kashmiri Pandits and is responsible for their genocide," Gauba said.

From late 1980s, Malik, along with other members of the JKLF, have been accused of heinous crimes such as targeted killings, kidnappings, gang rape, assaults, arson and loot to drive the Hindus out of the Valley. Newspapers carried advertisements threatening the Hindus to leave or face the consequences. Posters were pasted outside the houses of Kashmiri Pandits threatening them with death.

After conviction in terror funding case, the Kashmiri Pandits are demanding that Malik be tried for genocide. They say he was one among those who executed the purge of more than seven lakh members of the community.

Malik has opposed the rehabilitation plan for the displaced Kashmiri

Pandits. In April 2015, when the Centre was proposing that composite townships be built for migrant Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu and Kashmir, he said he would not allow these townships and oppose them tooth and nail.

### Faking Gandhian ideals

In the early 1990s, Malik announced that he has shunned militancy and will follow Gandhi's non-violent path. Yasin's change of heart got him connected to prominent human rights activists in and out of the country. He was now the most sought-after Kashmiri separatist who would sit in special TV programmes and meet the high and mighty of the political establishment.

But each time he was given a pedestal, he went full throttle on his separatist agenda, without being questioned. Malik changed his strategy from being a gun-toting terrorist to a thinker, strategist and philosopher. His interviews on the BBC and other international forums catapulted him to that league.

Perhaps the Gandhian posturing was meant to fool the governments and avoid punishment. The violent streak never left him. Even as he was trying to portray himself as a man of peace, he was deeply involved in organising violence in the valley, whether stone pelting or the burning down of schools.

The court that convicted him noted: "... the stone-pelting incidents in Jammu & Kashmir were not a 'law and order' issue, rather these incidents were the outcome of the conspiracy hatched by the Hurriyat leaders and terrorists, including Yasin Malik and others.

The investigation has established that the Pakistani agencies, Pakistan-

based terrorist organizations, secessionist groups and their allied parties had entered into a well-devised conspiracy and adopted the strategy of terrorist attacks on Indian security forces and instigate general public to resort to heavy violence, thus creating a surcharged atmosphere conducive for the propagation of their secessionist ideology."

### Make Yasin a Case for Justice

Malik's conviction in the terror funding case is too little and too late. To set the course right and provide justice to the victims, the government needs to investigate him thoroughly to build a strong case for the judiciary to punish him accordingly.

He was also accused of the murder of four Indian Air Force officers in January 1990. Sqn Ldr Ravi Khanna was one of the four who were killed by Malik and his associates as they were waiting to board a bus from the Sant Nagar crossing in Srinagar.

Nothing has happened in the case so far. So also for the Kashmiri Pandits who were forced out and still are not able to return.

Malik, along with others, helped create a hostile atmosphere in the valley. His deeds should be exposed to the world, especially to the youth of Kashmir. He should be tried and punished for his many crimes and along with him all those who helped him in carrying out Pakistan-sponsored activities.

Yasin Malik is an evil incarnate, accountable to the thousands of Kashmiri families who have suffered because of the game he and his ilk have been playing with Pakistan.

## international

# INDIA JOINS US-LED COALITION TO CLEAN UP CARBON-INTENSIVE INDUSTRY

Davos | Agencies

**I**ndia has joined the US-led First Movers Coalition, a flagship public-private partnership to clean up the most carbon-intensive industry sectors, from heavy industry to long distance transport.

The coalition on Wednesday announced a major expansion to more than 50 corporate members worth about \$8.5 trillion and a total of nine leading governments, including the US, covering over 40 per cent of global GDP.

US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry made the announcement alongside Bill Gates, founder of Breakthrough Energy, at a press briefing hosted by the World Economic Forum.

In addition to the US government, the coalition welcomed India, Japan, and Sweden to the steering board, as well as Denmark, Italy, Norway, Singapore and the UK as government partners.



These government partners will invite companies from their countries to join the coalition and will pursue public policies to commercialise the green technologies corporate members commit to purchasing.

Led by the World Economic Forum and the US government, the First Movers Coalition targets sectors including aluminium, aviation, chemicals, concrete, shipping, steel and trucking, which are responsible for 30 per cent of global emissions -

a proportion expected to rise to over 50 per cent by mid-century without urgent progress on clean technology innovations.

For these sectors to decarbonise at the speed needed to keep the planet on a 1.5-degree pathway, they require low-carbon technologies that are not yet competitive with current carbon-intensive solutions but must reach commercial scale by 2030 to achieve net-zero emissions globally by 2050.

To jump-start the market,

the coalition's members commit to purchasing -- out of their total industrial materials and long-distance transport spending -- a percentage from suppliers using near-zero or zero-carbon solutions, despite the premium cost.

If enough global companies commit a certain percentage of their future purchasing to clean technologies in this decade, this will create a market tipping point that will accelerate their affordability and drive long-term, net-zero transformation across industrial value chains. The coalition is launching two new sectors: carbon dioxide removal and aluminium, which join the four existing sectoral pledges (aviation, shipping, steel and trucking) launched at COP26.

Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry, said: "India has been at the forefront of climate change actions. The idea of LIFE -- 'Lifestyle For Environment' -- as highlighted by Prime

Minister Narendra Modi and the call for a global mass movement on sustainable lifestyles, is very critical for combating climate change."

"India has also taken global leadership with initiatives like the International Solar Alliance, One Sun One World One Grid, and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. We believe that the need of the hour is to strengthen technological innovation so as to have cost-effective climate technologies on a larger scale.

"The First Movers Coalition has a huge role to play in this and to achieve our climate goals."

US Special Presidential Envoy Kerry said the purchasing commitments made by the First Movers Coalition represent the highest-leverage climate action that companies can take because creating the early markets to scale advanced technologies materially reduces the whole world's emissions -- not just any company's own footprint.

# IMRAN SAYS 'NO QUESTION' OF ANY DEAL WITH GOVT AS POLITICAL DRAMA CONTINUES

Islamabad | Agencies

**A**fter several hours of political drama and chaos across Pakistan in the wake of PTI's much-anticipated 'Azadi March', the federal government and PTI have both refuted claims of striking an agreement, the media reported.

Following the directions of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, the two sides engaged in dialogue, however, no breakthrough was reported between the two. According to Geo News, the talks between the government and PTI continued for two-and-a-half hours, Geo News reported.

Pakistan Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mairiyum Aurangzeb confirmed that no agreement has been reached between the federal government and PTI. She said news of negotiations and an agreement between the government and PTI is "baseless".

Political tensions are at an all-time high in Pakistan with all eyes on Islamabad as the city braced itself for the arrival of PTI workers and leaders heading towards the federal capital for the party's Azadi March despite the government's instructions not to.

So far, the day has been filled with political drama. Lahore turned into a battleground as



multiple scuffles took place between the police and PTI marchers as the latter tried to wriggle out of the barricades placed on their way, Geo News reported.

Law enforcement was on high alert and the government has given instructions to take "all possible measures" to stop the PTI's 'Azadi March'.

PTI Chairman Imran Khan is leading the march, which he has said will be the "biggest" in Pakistan's political history, while Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah will address the public shortly over the ongoing situation.

In order to restrain Lahore's rally from entering Islamabad, the police tried to arrest former energy minister and senior PTI leader Hammad Azhar; however, party workers managed to save him.

# S Korea to launch homegrown space rocket on June 15 in 2nd attempt

Seoul | Agencies

**S**outh Korea on Wednesday set June 15 as the second launch date of its homegrown space rocket Nuri, eight months after the first launch failed to put a dummy satellite into orbit. Nuri, also known as KSLV-II, is set to lift off from the Naro Space Center in the country's southern coastal village of Goheung between 3 pm and 5 pm, though the exact time will be determined on that day, the Ministry of Science and ICT said.

The ministry set the period between June 16 and June 23 as the launch window after holding a meeting of its launch management committee with the state-run Korea Aerospace Research Institute in Goheung, reports Yonhap news agency.

In October, Nuri successfully flew to a target altitude of 700 kilometers but failed to put

a dummy satellite into orbit as its third-stage engine burned out earlier than expected.

South Korea announced in February it will make a second attempt to launch Nuri in mid-June and had tentatively set June 15 as the launch date. The three-stage space rocket, which weighs 200 tons and measures 47.2 meters in height, is currently being assembled at Naro Space Center.

KARI completed combining the first and second stages of the rocket on May 12. Full assembly is expected to be completed in the coming weeks.

Unlike the October launch, which carried a single dummy satellite, Nuri this time will be loaded with a 180-kilogram performance verification satellite to test the rocket's capabilities and four separate cube satellites developed by four universities for academic research purposes.

# UN GIVES HIGHEST PEACEKEEPING AWARD TO CHAD CAPTAIN KILLED IN MALI

United Nations | Agencies

**C**aptain Abdelrazakh Hamit Bahar of Chad, who was killed as a peacekeeper in Mali, is honoured with the United Nations' highest award for valour for his courage, a UN spokesman said.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will present the honour at a ceremony to his family on Thursday, the International Day of UN Peacekeepers, said the UN chief's Spokesman Stephane Dujarric on Tuesday.

It is only the second time the UN Security Council-authorized Captain Mbaye Diagne Medal for Exceptional Courage has been awarded, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Abdelrazakh made the ultimate sacrifice in the pursuit of peace," said



UnderSecretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix.

"We mourn his loss alongside his family, colleagues and the nation of Chad. His selfless service serves to inspire us all and we are proud to honour him."

Abdelrazakh's willingness to risk his own life to save others exemplifies the courage and dedication of the

more than 1 million peacekeepers who have served on the frontlines of conflict since 1948, Lacroix said.

It also highlights the increasing danger peacekeepers face as they carry out their vital work in some of the world's most challenging environments.

Abdelrazakh served in the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali, known as MINUSMA, as the Deputy Commander of the Chadian Special Forces Company beginning in January 2021, the Spokesman said.

He was deployed at the Aguelhok Super Camp in northeast Mali when attacked by an armed terrorist group attempting to seize the base and its outposts.

"Abdelrazakh led a bold counterattack to defend the camp, protect the

lives of his colleagues and prevent any civilian casualties," Dujarric said.

"While attempting to secure the perimeter, Captain Abdelrazakh noticed armed assailants entering a house near the camp. Determined to ensure that they did not harm colleagues and the civilian population, he single-handedly led an operation to clear and secure the house. In doing so, Captain Abdelrazakh was shot and killed."

The medal was named in honour of Captain Mbaye Diagne. He saved hundreds of lives while serving as a UN peacekeeper in Rwanda in 1994 before being killed in action.

The award was established in 2014 by the Security Council as an official award to recognise uniformed and civilian peacekeepers who demonstrate exceptional courage.



# Goods collection for Anganwadis, wonderful experiment of public participation: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the state has been facing the challenge of malnutrition since years. Continuous efforts are also being made in this direction. But I believe that without the cooperation of the society, malnutrition cannot be removed in the state. Pride Day celebration was started at many places in the state, in which people also contributed materials for Anganwadi. I myself went out on the streets of Bhopal on May 24 to collect material for Anganwadis. Ten trucks of material and cheques worth Rs 2 crore were presented on behalf of the public in a total journey of 800 meters. Many people took a pledge to take the responsibility of Anganwadis. This has been a wonderful experiment of public participation. Everyone is ready to cooperate in social work and raising the standard of living of the people. We have to give people's participation the form of a campaign in public welfare schemes and development activities. Farmers should give food grains, people should contribute in the activities of Anganwadis on their birthdays, anniversaries and in the memory of their family members. Jan Abhiyan Parishad, Deendayal Antyodaya Samiti and social organizations should be interlinked. It is my belief that with public participation, malnutrition can be removed from the state in a year.



development activities, public welfare schemes and law and order situation in Raisen and Narsinghpur districts at 6:30 am on Wednesday.

Chouhan reviewed the status of drinking water supply, ration distribution, ongoing works under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, health management, operation of Anganwadis, Amrit Sarovar Yojna and law and order situation in both the districts and ongoing activities to free land from criminals and mafia. Chouhan also sought information of the innovations launched in districts, activities being conducted in Ek Zila-Ek Utpad, works conducted to encourage women self-help groups and the

arrangement made for Ladli Laxmi's guidance and career counseling.

Chouhan said that it is necessary to maintain social harmony, brotherhood and equanimity in the society. We have to be on guard against those who spread hatred and incite communities against each other. It is necessary that the local body elections to be held in the state should be held in a harmonious atmosphere. Districts should decide that in some panchayats, representatives should be elected unanimously. All the eligible residents of such uniform Panchayats will be given cent percent benefits of poor welfare schemes.

Chouhan directed to take strict action against those who engage in corruption in the schemes of rural development and public welfare including Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and irregularities in distribution of ration and to remove them from service if required. He said that the state government has zero tolerance policy towards corruption. The culprits should be punished in such a way that they become an example and think twice before committing such irregularities in welfare schemes and ration distribution to the poor. Those who steal ration should be sent to jail. Chouhan said that the names of needy people should be added after deleting the names of families who are not taking ration. Chief Minister said that Amrit Sarovar is a sarovar of patriotism. Flag hoisting programmes will be held on August 15 and January 26 here. These lakes should be developed well.



## Involve ASHA Workers in the Screening of Sickle Cell Anaemia : Governor

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that obtaining numbers of sickle cell carriers and patients is the primary requirement for sickle cell anaemia disease management. ASHA workers should be trained and involved in the screening work for giving speed to and expansion of work. The sickle cell carrier or the relatives of the patients found in the screening camps of Anganwadis, schools, hostels and colleges should be investigated. Governor Patel was reviewing the Madhya Pradesh State Haemoglobinopathy Mission at Raj Bhavan.

Patel said that the management of sickle cell anaemia is an act of service to humanity. Every person involved in this should act with personal responsibility. The results of the service done with sensitivity and intelligence are always pleasant and joyful. Referring to the context of the sensitivity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the Chief

Minister of Gujarat, he said that on the information of the death of the lions, he himself immediately reached the spot for review. The Governor expected the officers to act with the same sensitivity. He said that the goal of the work should always be kept big. This speeds up the work. Better results are obtained. He stressed the need for initiatives to incorporate Ayurveda and other traditional systems of medicine in the treatment efforts of sickle cell anaemia. He said that the medicinal utility of Giloy has been recognised for the public in the Covid epidemic. There are many such herbs in Ayurveda and there are people who know about them. There is a need to compile the information regarding them with authenticity.

Patel received information about the arrangements related to disease, prevention and management in the mission. He was told that there are institutional arrangements for the diagnosis and treatment of sickle cell

anaemia at the district level. For screening, a screening camp is organised after public awareness by setting up a chaupal in the village. Action plan has been prepared for 14 districts of the state on the basis of prevalence of disease for screening work in the second phase by the mission. Dhar, Barwani, Chhindwara, Khargone, Betul, Mandla, Shahdol, Dindori, Singrauli, Jabalpur, Anuppur, Sidhi, Khandwa and Umaria districts will be included in the second phase. The action plan includes publicity and disease awareness, training of health staff regarding screening and treatment management in relation to sickle cell anaemia, screening and confirmation test of pregnant mothers and children up to 18 years, entry of digital health records in sickle cell anaemia portal, activities of genetic counselling and behaviour change, distribution of genetic cards, treatment of patients and safe blood transfusion and management, if required, etc. will be done.

## PERFORMANCE GUARANTEE REDUCED TO 1 LAKH FROM 5 LAKH UNDER KUSUM-A



Team Absolute | Bhopal

New and Renewable Energy Minister Hardeep Singh Dang disclosed that Performance guarantee has been reduced to Rs 1 lakh per MW from Rs 5 lakh under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Uthaan Mahaabhiyan (KUSUM-A). He apprised about this at Urja Bhawan while delivering Letter of Award to 71 farmers of KUSUM-A. Exchange of Power Purchase Agreement also took place between 6 developers and Madhya Pradesh Power Management company during the programme. Chairman Urja Vikas Nigam Girraj Dandotiya, Principal

Secretary New and Renewable Energy Sanjay Dubey, Managing Director Karamveer Singh along with farmers nominated under KUSUM-A scheme, Developers, Bank Officers and representatives of related companies were present as well.

Dang said work for installing solar pumps on land of the farmers where electricity is not available easily work under Mukhya Mantri Solar Pump scheme will be initiated as a priority. Goal has been set to install solar pumps on 50 thousand farmer's land. With this beneficiary farmers will get electricity for up to 8 hrs which will not only lead to lesser

expense on electricity and diesel but will also enable them to conduct other activities flawlessly.

While congratulating the officers and employees of the department, Dang said that it is due to your hard labor we were able to accomplish the dream of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to double the income of farmers while ensuring environment conservation. Dang said that KUSUM scheme will enable farmers to become entrepreneur which will result in doubling their income.

Urja Vikas Nigam Chairman Girraj Dandotiya said that the State's farmer is going to become a provider of energy along with food. Principal Secretary Dubey appealed to the farmers to get good quality panels and inverters, which would ensure production of good energy uninterruptedly. He assured the farmers of monthly payment and technical support from the department for production of energy.

### CM PLANTS NEEM AND BANYAN SAPLINGS

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Neem and Banyan saplings in the Smart City Garden along with members of Annashesh Foundation, Shreya Jain, Kirti Rajput, Ruchi Samundra, Abhishek Sahu and Pranshu Rai. The foundation is engaged in activities like providing food to needy people, sanitation, tree plantation and helping children in need for past three years. They have their centers in Jabalpur, Sanchi, Ujjain, Rewa and Bhopal. They were devoted to help the needy during the tough times of Corona pandemic. The banyan tree planted today is locally known as "Vat Vriksha or Bad". It has religious significance and is utilized in Ayurveda. Neem, enriched with its antibiotic properties is known for its super medicinal qualities.

## CM moves out on street to encourage people to adopt Anganwadi centres

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday moved on Bhopal's streets with a flower-decked handcart to collect toys and books for children. The move was part of a campaign to encourage people to adopt Anganwadi centres.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday moved on Bhopal's streets with a flower-decked handcart to collect toys and books for children. The move was part of a campaign to encourage people for adopting Anganwadi centres. The campaign received wide acknowledgment and appreciation from the personalities from different sections, including Bollywood actor Akhaya Kumar, poet Kumar Vishwas, Swami Avdeshananda and the Nobel Laureate and Bachpan Bachao Andolans Kailash Satyarthi.

Accompanied by his cabinet colleague and the state medical education minister Vishwv Sarang and some BJP MLAs, Chouhan made his way through Ashoka Garden locality, where a large number of people, including children with piggy banks, gathered with books, toys and other items as donations for the initiative.

On May 20, Chouhan had announced that he will kick-start a campaign aimed at creating awareness for prevention of malnutrition among children. "I am going out on Bhopal streets with a handcart to collect toys for the children of

Anganwadi, and create awareness about malnutrition among children. It is a mission to connect people to work. Why should our children remain malnourished? It is not the duty of the Anganwadi worker alone to make them free from malnutrition. There should be awareness in society."

Chouhan's campaign also received wide appreciation on social media. Actor Akshay Kumar in support of the mission tweeted, "I will be very happy if I can do anything for the Anganwadi kids. It's a wonderful cause and I wish more power to you." Poet Kumar Vishwas also supported the move stating on social media that he will donate a few of his self-written children-literature and other necessary books for the kids.

However, the state Congress criticised the campaign calling it a well planned "drama" by Chouhan to divert attention of people from the real issues in the state. "Shivraj Singh Chouhan never does anything that he is supposed to do. Whenever there is time to do anything, or to fulfil responsibilities, he instead indulges in making an event-drama," said the state Congress president Kamal Nath.

## Sadhu assaulted, hair chopped off in Khandwa; accused arrested

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A man has been arrested for assaulting a sadhu and forcefully cutting his hair in Madhya Pradesh's Khandwa district, State Home Minister Narottam Mishra said here on Wednesday.

Minister Mishra condemned the incident saying that those insulting Sadhus should be taught a tough lesson.

In a video doing rounds on social media, a man can be seen dragging a sadhu to a hair salon in a busy market in Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh and cut his hair.

After verifying the authenticity of the viral video, district police said that the incident took place in the tribal zone of Patajan village of the district. The man



assaulting the sadhu has been identified as Praveen Gaur, a hotelier.

"Police have taken quick action after verifying viral video and the accused has been arrested. I have directed police to take strict action against the accused so that no one could dare to do such a thing further in the state, Mishra said.

According to police, the incident took place on Sunday. However, the action

came after a video of the incident surfaced on social media on Tuesday. Police claimed that the incident occurred after an altercation broke out between the sadhu and the accused.

Suddenly, Praveen Gaur became furious and started abusing the sadhu. He then dragged the sadhu to a nearby hair salon, picked up a pair of scissors and chopped off his 'jata' (hair).

Police said that no complaint was registered by the sadhu and he was not present in the city after the incident. "We are looking for the sadhu so that a formal case can be registered based on his complaint," Khalwa police station in-charge Parasram Dabar said.

He further informed that based on the video, a case has been registered against the accused.

## SC, ST GIRLS BARRED FROM PLAYING VOLLEYBALL IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL

Principal abused, assaulted us, students tell Women Commission. 11 complaints on CM Helpline ignored. Principal Vinod Chaudhary denies charges.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The girl students of a government school in Vidisha have not been playing volleyball on its playground for past one month.

The girls, some of whom have participated in state and national-level tournaments, said that principal did not allow them to use school playground. They said Vinod Chaudhary who took charge as school principal a year back dissuaded them from playing. For past one month, they are not allowed to enter the playground. The girls, most of whom

belong to SC, ST, are students of Government Maharani Laxmi Bai Girls' Higher Secondary School, Vidisha. They told Free Press that their complaints to the District Education Officer have fallen on deaf ears. The school conducts classes from 6-12.

On April 28, when they were practising on the ground, principal Vinod Chaudhary and a teacher BS Tomar told them "to get lost". When they argued, they were threatened that they would be rusticated from school. They were also told that their limbs would be broken. When they reached playground again, they were shooed away. The girls met District Education Officer on April 29 who asked them to follow their principal's instructions. "We told him that we have been playing for the past 10 years and had participated in state and national tournaments. But he did not relent," a girl said.

The girls, in a written complaint sub-

mitted to the State Commission for Women on Tuesday, said that on May 1, when they were trying to convince the principal to allow them to use playground, he lost temper and slapped one of the players and misbehaved with their coach.

They have also lodged complaints with State Child Commission and the local police station. They said that they lodged complaints 11 times on CM Helpline but no action was taken.

We have received a written complaint from girl students. We will be forwarding it to the district collector for further action, said Shivkumar Sharma, secretary, MP State Commission for Women. The complaint is false. There is no question of stopping girls of our school from playing on the ground. But outsider girls come to play on the ground. This cannot be allowed, said Vinod Chaudhary, principal, Govt MLB Girls' School, Vidisha.

## Efforts to restore peace in MP's riot-hit Khargone continue

One-and-a-half months after communal violence broke out in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district that left one dead and many injured, efforts to restore peace and harmony in the riot-hit area by the district administration and the police continue.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

One-and-a-half months after communal violence broke out in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district that left one dead and many injured, efforts to restore peace and harmony in the riot-hit area by the district administration and the police continue. Although, no incident was reported after April 10, the district administration and police have kept a close watch in this area. Section 144 was re-imposed on May 12 in the district as a preventive measure and will remain till July 10, as per the earlier notification of the district administration.

"Section 144 has been re-imposed in Khargone district as a preventive measure and no processions, Jagarans, and shobha yatras will be allowed in the district till July 10," said an order issued by



the district administration on May 12.

In a step to restore peace and harmony

the two communities living together for the past several decades, newly appointed Collector Kumar Purushottam and the Superintendent of Police (SP) Dharamveer Yadav reached out to people in their locality. The officials met the residents to rebuild trust among the people.

The officials had detailed conversations with the residents, ensuring them that no such incident would be repeated and the culprits will be given strict punishment. This visit was held on Monday night when the Collector and the SP went to Bhatwadi locality of Khargone city.

"We have come here to assure that we will not let any violence happen now. You (residents) need not be worried and help us bring peace and harmony in your locality. Those who have done this will be taught a tough lesson," said Purushottam,

during an interaction with the locals.

In an administrative reshuffle on May 15, previous Khargone SP Siddharth Choudhary and Collector Anugraha P were transferred. Choudhary has been transferred to police headquarters, Bhopal as AIG, while Anugraha P is now OSD, MP Bhawan, New Delhi.

Ravi Joshi, MLA (Congress) from Khargone city, talking to IANS said, "The situation is peaceful in the city now. District administration and police are making all efforts to rebuild-confidence among the people. It is the responsibility of people also to maintain peace and harmony with neighbours and help change the bad image of this historic city."

Communal violence broke out in Khargone city on April 10 after a group of miscreants pelted stones at a Ram Navami procession.



Dakota Johnson reveals she wants to start directing movies as studios are 'too afraid' to work with 'honest and bold filmmakers'



# 'Want Director's Shoes'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Fifty Shades Of Grey star Dakota Johnson dished Tuesday that she is mulling the prospect of directing an upcoming project. The 32-year-old dropped the bombshell during a panel chat at Variety's Entertainment Marketing Summit at NeueHouse Los Angeles. Dakota, who was onstage to discuss her production company TeaTime Pictures, revealed that she may take the helm of one of its scripts as she gets 'jealous' at the thought of another director assuming control. Katie O'Connell, a partner at TeaTime pictures, spilled: "There's a script from a writer that is one of those things where we could have taken it out and pitched it. But it felt like the cooler way to do this, and more resonant way, was just to film it." Sitting with Dakota for the panel discussion moderated by Jenelle Riley, Katie shared: "We were sitting around this table in her house talking about: "You should direct it!" She began the company three years ago with Ro Donnelly, who used to be a development executive at Netflix.



'FBI' finale gets pulled off following Texas school shooting

Los Angeles | Agencies

The tragic school shooting in Uvalde, Texas on Tuesday has led to the pulling of the season finale of 'FBI'. The episode titled 'Prodigal Son' hits close to the news given that it involves the team preventing a school shooting, reports 'Deadline'. The official synopsis of the fourth-season finale accessed by 'Deadline', written by showrunner Rick Eid and directed by Alex Chapple reads, "As the team investigates a deadly robbery that garnered a cache of automatic weapons for the killers, they discover one of the perps is a classmate of Jubal's son, who is reluctant to cooperate with the case." In its place, the television network CBS will air the rerun of the season's 12th episode, which originally aired in February. 'Deadline' further states that as of now, the network is just pulling the original 'FBI', rather than 'FBI: Most Wanted' or 'FBI: International', which also have their season finales tonight. 'FBI' follows a New York-based unit of special agents who bring to bear all their talents, intellect and technical expertise on major cases in order to keep New York and the country safe.



## Cannes celebrates 75th anniversary with 120 global film personalities

Los Angeles | Agencies

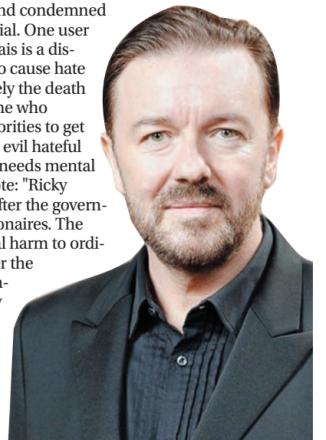
The Cannes Film Festival celebrated its 75th anniversary with a group of no less than 120 stars and filmmakers from all over the world, including Jake Gyllenhaal, Paolo Sorrentino, Isabelle Huppert, Diane Kruger, Guillermo del Toro, Jacques Audiard, Melanie Laurent, Gael Garcia Bernal and Nicolas Winding Refn. Some of them, notably del Toro, took part in a symposium earlier Tuesday to discuss the new challenges that cinema is facing today, reports 'Variety'. The roster of talents on the ground at the gala ceremony also included the bevy of stars and filmmakers presenting films at this year's festival, including Kristen Stewart, Lea Seydoux, Viggo Mortensen and David

Cannes general delegate Thierry Fremaux and president Pierre Lescure took turns calling each guest to join them on stage with a thunder of applause. The guests posed for a Cannes family portrait, and Garcia Bernal then took the microphone and sang "Ella" by Jose Alfredo Jimenez with del Toro. Fremaux opened the ceremony saying a few words about the resilience of cinema and the importance of Cannes in promoting the moviegoing experience. "Cinema is not dead! Cinema is alive and will never die," said Fremaux, stirring cheers and applause. Lescure, for whom this year marks the last edition as Cannes president, received the first standing ovation of the evening and made a speech talking about the legacy of the film festival. Former Warner Bros. top executive Iris Knobloch will soon succeed him as festival president. The ceremony was followed by the world premiere of Louis Garrel's "L'innocente" in which he stars opposite Roschdy Zem and a lavish dinner prepared by Christian Sinicropi, the chef of the Palme d'Or restaurant, at the Marche Forville in Cannes' old town.

## Ricky Gervais stand-up act 'SuperNature' under fire

Los Angeles | Agencies

English comedian Ricky Gervais' recent stand-up special has been drawing a lot of flak because of its hurtful transphobic jokes, according to 'Variety'. Four minutes into the special, Gervais dives into material about the trans community that seems to be calculated to draw controversy. The Netflix stand-up special, titled 'SuperNature', starts off with Ricky saying, "Oh, women! Not all women, I mean the old-fashioned ones. The old-fashioned women, the ones with wombs. Those f\*\*\*ng dinosaurs. A few minutes later, reports 'Variety', when discussing Kevin Hart removing himself from hosting the Oscars in 2018 for past homophobic tweets, Gervais continued joking about the trans community. Several netizens, according to 'Variety', took to Twitter to express their dissatisfaction over the stand-up special and condemned Ricky for his material. One user wrote: "Ricky Gervais is a disgrace, he is going to cause hate crime and ultimately the death of trans folk. Anyone who needs to vilify minorities to get a laugh is the most evil hateful soul and seriously needs mental help." Another wrote: "Ricky Gervais could go after the governments, banks, billionaires. The ones causing actual harm to ordinary people all over the world on an unfathomable scale every single day. But he goes after trans people instead. Yeah Ricky, son, you speak your truth to power. Coward."



## CELESTE O'CONNOR JOINS 'MADAME WEB'

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Ghostbusters: Afterlife' actress Celeste O'Connor has been cast in 'Madame Web', an upcoming installment in Sony's Universe of Marvel Characters. O'Connor's role has not been announced. They will appear in the comic-book adventure alongside Dakota Johnson, who is playing the title character, as well as Sydney Sweeney of 'Euphoria' fame, reports 'Variety'. The movie will serve as an origin story for Madame Web, a clairvoyant whose psychic abilities allow her to see within the spider world itself. In the Marvel comics, Madame Web is a paralysed, elderly woman with myasthenia gravis, a chronic autoimmune disorder requiring her to connect to a life support system resembling a spider web. Her supernatural abilities prove to be greatly beneficial to Spider-Man and his fellow arachnid allies, like Spider-Woman. Given her condition, though, she's never battled villains herself. S.J. Clarkson, a Marvel alum through a Jessica Jones' and 'The Defenders', is directing 'Madame Web'. 'Madame Web' is Sony's first modern comic book adaptation to feature a woman in the headlining role. It is one of several Spider-Man related spinoffs in Sony's pipeline, including 'Kraven the Hunter', featuring Aaron Taylor-Johnson and Ariana DeBose.



## Warner Bros. considered replacing Amber Heard in 'Aquaman 2'

Los Angeles | Agencies

The president of DC Films testified Tuesday that the studio considered replacing actress Amber Heard for 'Aquaman 2' out of concern that she lacked chemistry with star Jason Momoa. Heard was ultimately cast in the sequel, but her lawyers have argued that she nearly lost the job and could not renegotiate for more money due to the backlash over her domestic abuse allegations against Johnny Depp, reports 'Variety'. Heard is seeking \$100 million in a defamation counterclaim against Depp. Walter Hamada, the head of Warner Bros.' DC unit, was the first witness called by Depp's side as they begin their rebuttal of Heard's counterclaim in court. Appearing by video deposition, Hamada testified that the abuse allegations played no role in casting decisions in 'Aquaman 2'. However, he said the studio did delay picking up its option for several weeks as it considered whether to recast the role of Mera, who was Aquaman's love interest in the first film. "They didn't have a lot of chemistry together," Hamada said. "Editorially they were able to make that relationship work in the first movie, but there was a concern that it took a lot of effort to get there." Hamada said that the

chemistry was created in post-production, using "movie magic, including the film's score. He said it is not uncommon for two leads to lack chemistry. "You know it when you see it, and the chemistry wasn't there," he said. Heard was paid \$1 million for the first 'Aquaman', and \$2 million for the sequel.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Gisele Bündchen



### IPL 2022, ELIMINATOR

## RCB BEAT LSG BY 14 RUNS, TO MEET RR IN QUALIFIER 2

Kolkata | Agencies

Rajat Patidar produced a knock for the ages, slamming a 49-ball century while Josh Hazlewood picked three wickets in powering Royal Challengers Bangalore to Qualifier 2 of IPL 2022, defeating Lucknow Super Giants by 14 runs in the Eliminator at the Eden Gardens on Wednesday. After rain delayed proceedings by an hour and ten minutes, Patidar slammed 12 boundaries and seven sixes for scoring an unbeaten 112 off just 54 balls, taking Lucknow's bowling attack to cleaners. Patidar was brutal in the last five overs, which brought a whopping 84 runs with Dinesh Karthik provided finishing fireworks in an unconquered 37 as Bangalore posted a mammoth 207/4. In reply, Lucknow were kept in the hunt, thanks to a 96-run stand between KL Rahul (79 off 58 balls) and Deepak Hooda (45 off 26 balls). But with Hazlewood making three strikes and Harshal Patel conceding just 1/25 in his four overs apart from superb fielding display, Lucknow could make only 193/6. The win means that Bangalore will face Rajasthan Royals in Qualifier 2 at Ahmedabad on Friday.



### Brief scores :

Royal Challengers Bangalore 207/4 in 20 overs (Rajat Patidar 112 not out, Dinesh Karthik 37 not out; Mohsin Khan 1/25, Krunal Pandya 1/39) beat Lucknow Super Giants (KL Rahul 79, Deepak Hooda 45; Josh Hazlewood 3/43, Harshal Patel 1/16)

with a nonchalant flick for six off Mohammed Siraj. But on the very next ball, Siraj had the last laugh as de Kock mistimed loft to mid-on. Manan Vohra survived a stumping chance and hit Hazlewood for consecutive boundaries, but the pacer rushed the right-hander on the pull and diving midwicket caught the catch. Rahul opened up by taking two sixes and a boundary off Siraj in the final over of power-play. With Deepak Hooda playing some shots and fetching boundaries, Lucknow were kept in the hunt. But Bangalore succeeded in containing the run-flow and with some sharp fielding, especially from Wanindu Hasaranga on the third ball of tenth over, they were able to have a good grip on the proceedings.

With 99 needed off last seven overs, Rahul cleared his front leg to smack Hazlewood for six over deep midwicket to bring up his half-century in 43 balls. Hooda also hit Hazlewood for a six over long-on before clubbing Hasaranga for a brace of sixes over the same region. But the leg-spinner had the last laugh, going past Hooda's attempted slog-sweep to rattle the stumps. Marcus Stoinis ended the over by slog-sweeping Hasaranga over wide long-on for third six of the over. In the leg-spinner's next over, Rahul shuffled across to slog-sweep Hasaranga for a six over fine leg followed by another sweep for a boundary through the same region.

### ICC TEST RANKINGS

## Liton, Mathews move up; Kohli, Rohit, Ashwin maintain top-10 positions

Dubai | Agencies

Bangladesh batter Liton Das and Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews made valuable gains after fine performances in the drawn first match of their ICC World Test Championship series while Indian players maintained their top-10 positions in the latest ICC Men's Test Player Rankings, released on Wednesday.

The first Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka that ended in a stalemate saw both sides score heavily in the three innings. The game saw three hundreds and five fifties scored, which reflected in the ICC Player Rankings.

However, there were no changes in the top 10 across departments. As a result, India captain Rohit Sharma and his predecessor Virat Kohli remained static at eighth and 10th place respectively in the batting list. On the other hand, Ravichandran Ashwin and Jasprit Bumrah are at second and third spot in bowling



chart while Ravindra Jadeja also remained on top of the all-rounders' table. Meanwhile, wicketkeeper-batter Liton has moved up three places to 17th position after notching 88 in Bangladesh's only innings, while Mathews's knock of 199

rankings update after scoring centuries that took Bangladesh to a total of 465. Mushfiqur, who notched 105, is up four places to 25th, while Tamim has gained six places to reach 27th position following his innings of 133.

Sri Lanka middle-order batters Kusal Mendis (up four places to 49th) and Dinesh Chandimal (up six places to 53rd) have also gained following useful knocks in both innings, an ICC statement said.

In the rankings for bowlers, Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan has inched up one place to 29th after finishing with four wickets in the match, while off-spinner Nayeem Hasan's career-best figures of six for 105 in the first innings see him progress nine places to 53rd. Sri Lanka medium-fast bowler Kasun Rajitha has moved from 75th to 61st after taking four wickets and Asitha Fernando is now in the top 100 of the list led by Australia captain Pat Cummins.



## RAJIV SETHU, SENTHIL KUMAR SET TO PARTICIPATE IN ASIA ROAD RACING CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

Sepang, (Malaysia): India's Rajiv Sethu and Senthil Kumar will compete against 16 Asian riders from 6 countries -- Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam -- in Asia Production 250cc (AP250) class at the Asia Road Racing Championship 2022, here this weekend. After the inaugural round in Thailand in March 2022, Asia's toughest motorsports racing championship has now reached the Sepang International Circuit in Malaysia. Honda Racing India team led by Rajiv Sethu and Senthil Kumar are all set for Round 2 of Asia Road Racing Championship 2022. Leading the ARRC charge in Asia Production (AP250) class is the experienced Rajiv Sethu for whom 2022 is his 4th season in ARRC. It was at Sepang that Rajiv recorded the best ever finish by an Indian rider in AP250 class of ARRC at 11th spot in his 2019 outing. All charged up to show his prowess at Sepang, Rajiv enters the round with 8 points already in his kitty.

## UK GOVT APPROVES PROPOSED TAKEOVER OF PREMIER LEAGUE GIANTS CHELSEA BY CONSORTIUM



London: The UK government has given its nod for the proposed takeover of Premier League giants Chelsea by the Todd Boehly consortium for 4.25 billion pounds.

Chelsea's Russian owner Roman Abramovich, under whom the club won five Premier League and two UEFA Champions League titles, had in February given the "stewardship and care" of the club to a charitable foundation in the

wake of Russia's aggression in Ukraine. In March, Abramovich said he planned to sell the club. The Russian owner was left with little choice as a week later, he was sanctioned by the UK government for his links with President Vladimir Putin.

On Tuesday, the government approved the 4.25 billion pound takeover of Chelsea by a consortium led by LA Dodgers co-owner Todd Boehly, according to BBC.

Earlier, the proposed takeover by the Todd Boehly/Clearlake consortium was approved by the Premier League Board, which sent the proposal for approval of the UK government.

"Late last night the UK government reached a position where we could issue a licence that permits the sale of Chelsea," a government spokesperson said in a statement on Wednesday, BBC reported.

"Following the sanctioning of Roman Abramovich (in March), the government has worked hard to ensure Chelsea has been able to continue to play football. But we have always been clear that the long-term future of the club could only be secured under a new owner," the statement said, The UK government will ensure that Abramovich does not receive any of the proceeds from the sale and that the money is donated to charity.

### 2nd Test, Day 3

Dhaka | Agencies

Angelo Mathews (58 not out) and Dhananjaya de Silva (58) scored fifties and helped Sri Lanka close down on the first-innings deficit against Bangladesh on rain-curtailed Day 3 of the second Test, here on Wednesday.

The 102-run sixth-wicket partnership between Mathews and de Silva helped the visitors recover after two quick wickets in the morning session, before De Silva was dismissed by Shakib in the final hour of the day. Sri Lanka were 282 for 5 at stumps, trailing by 83 runs with Dinesh Chandimal (10) and Angelo Mathews unbeaten at the crease.

## MATHEWS, DHANANJAYA HELP SRI LANKA REDUCE DEFICIT AGAINST BANGLADESH

Earlier in the day, night-watchman Kasun Rajitha was outfoxed by a delivery from Ebadot Hossain for 0. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka skipper Dimuth Karunaratne had just started to look comfortable at the crease when Shakib bowled him on 80.

The centurion from the first Test Angelo Mathews and new batter De Silva then steadied the ship and added 46 runs before the lunch break. Rain interrupted the morning session, and Sri Lanka, still trailing by 155 runs, went for lunch at 210/4 just five balls ahead of the scheduled break.

The rain came down heavily and washed off the entire afternoon session, forcing the break to be extended until tea

time. The rain kept the players away for almost four hours before it resumed in the evening session.

Post the long break, Mathews and De Silva picked up from where they had left off. They started cautiously, rotated the strike before gaining the confidence to play their strokes. Bangladesh soon availed the new ball, which helped the batters to find boundaries, and in the 87th over De Silva reached his half-century with a four.

With a six-over-long off, Mathews too brought up his fifty, continuing his fine form in the series. Bangladesh finally broke the century partnership when De Silva on 58 edged one off Shakib to the

wicketkeeper. Bangladesh captain Mominul Haq deployed pacer Ebadot Hossain immediately after the wicket, who welcomed new batter Dinesh Chandimal with a flurry of short deliveries. But Chandimal held his ground and made sure the visitors did not lose any more wickets as play was finally called off due to bad light.

To make up for the lost time on Day 3, the game is scheduled to resume half an hour early on Day 4.

### Brief scores :

Bangladesh 365 lead Sri Lanka 282/5 (Karunaratne 80, de Silva 58, Mathews 58 not out; Shakib 3-59, Ebadot 2-78) by 83 runs



## Narinder Batra not to contest for IOA president post

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian Olympic Association chief Narinder Batra on Wednesday announced that he will "not run for a further term" as president of the IOA.

"At a time when world hockey is going through an essential development phase, with the promotion of Hockey5s, the creation of a new competition this year - the FIH Hockey Nations Cup - and the launch of fan-engaging platforms and activities, my role as President of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) requires more time for all these activities.



"Consequently, I've decided to not run for a further term as President of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA)," Batra said in a statement. "I feel that the time has come for me to leave this role to

someone coming with a fresh mind and new ideas to take Indian sports to much greater heights and also go all out to work to get the 2036 Summer Olympics in India.

"It's been a privilege and a tremendous honour to serve in my capacity as President of IOA throughout my term. I've been guided by one goal only: the good and the betterment of Indian sport," he wrote.

### FRENCH OPEN

## Sasnovich beats Raducanu, Kerber holds off Jacquemot

Paris | Agencies

Aleksandra Sasnovich scored her second win over the US Open champion Emma Raducanu in the past eight months, taking out the No.12 seed 3-6, 6-1, 6-1 in 2 hours and 4 minutes in the second round of Roland Garros here on Wednesday.

The 28-year-old will next face Angelique Kerber of Germany for the second time in as many weeks after the No.21 seed held off wildcard Elsa Jacquemot 6-1, 7-6(2).

Sasnovich had previously defeated Raducanu 6-2, 6-4 in the second round of Indian Wells last October - Raducanu's first match after winning the US Open as a qualifier.

The 28-year-old had fallen at this stage of Roland Garros on four previous occasions, but put on a dazzling display of shotmaking to reach the third round for the first time.

The former World No.1 extended her



winning streak to seven matches, though will be relieved to have come through in 2 hours and 4 minutes after withstanding a valiant comeback

attempt from 19-year-old Jacquemot in the second set.

Kerber had successfully smothered the Frenchwoman's game to take a 6-1, 2-0 lead, keeping a lid on Jacquemot's intermittently impressive shotmaking with greater focus in tight moments. At this point, five games had gone to at least two deuces, and Kerber had won them all.

Elsewhere, a battle of former Roland Garros semifinalists saw No.15 seed Victoria Azarenka overcome Andrea Petkovic 6-1, 7-6(3) in 1 hour and 48 minutes, twice coming from a break down in the second set. She will next meet the surging No.23 seed Jill Teichmann, who continued her stellar clay swing by defeating qualifier Olga Danilovic 6-4, 6-1 in 78 minutes.

Swiss left-hander Teichmann is coming off a Madrid semifinal and Rome quarterfinal that have bumped her to a career high of No.24, but this marked the first time in 11 attempts that she has reached the third round of a major.

## Netherlands, PNG, Scotland, Thailand, USA granted women's ODI status by ICC

Dubai | Agencies

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday announced that the Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, Scotland, Thailand and the USA have been given women's ODI status with immediate effect as part of the revamped Women's Cricket World Cup qualification pathway.

The ODI performances of these teams will determine their ODI rankings and count towards qualification for the 2025 Cricket World Cup. Apart from this, the ICC also announced the third edition of the ICC Women's Championship (IWC), which kicks off with Pakistan's home series against Sri Lanka in Karachi from June 1.

"Increasing the number of teams



in the ICC Women's Championship and awarding ODI status to five

additional teams will help us to accelerate the growth of the

women's game. More teams playing more regularly creates a more competitive environment as we saw at the recent ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in New Zealand," said ICC Chief Executive Geoff Allardice in a statement.

The IWC has now been expanded to ten teams from eight as part of cricket's governing body making a commitment to accelerate the growth of the women's game.

Bangladesh and Ireland will make their debuts in the competition, which provides a direct qualification pathway to the 2025 ICC Women's Cricket World Cup.

The ten teams will play eight three-match series each during the 2022-25 cycle, comprising four home series and four away series which have been mutually agreed

by the participating teams, providing a regular calendar of top-quality competitive cricket for fans around the world to enjoy in between ICC events.

For example, India will play ODI series against New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland and West Indies at home while they will travel to England, Australia, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in the same period to play away 50-over series.

The hosts plus the five top placed teams, will get direct entry to the 2025 Women's Cricket World Cup. The remaining two teams will be identified through a global qualifier comprising six teams - the remaining four teams from the IWC plus two others who will be selected according to the Women's ODI Team Rankings.



## ALIA BHATT'S

## UPCOMING VENTURE TO STREAM ON AN OTT PLATFORM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**D**arlings, starring Alia Bhatt, has had fans ecstatic since its announcement. This is the actress's second collaboration with Shah Rukh Khan, but this time he will be behind the camera as a producer. This will be Alia's first film as a producer alongside SRK.

Alia Bhatt took to Instagram to share a hilarious video with Shefali Shah, Vijay Varma, and Roshan Mathew. Alia opens the video by sitting on a couch and talking on the phone. She is about to answer, 'Darlings is coming on...' when she is asked if her film Darlings would be available on an OTT channel. The same thing happened to Shefali, Vijay, and Matthew, who can be seen evading the topic in their own hilarious way. Alia captioned the video, "Hey, darlings. I want to tell you something big but the network is not good here. Hello..hello?"

Darlings is described as a dark comedy about a mother-daughter relationship. Shefali Shah will play Alia Bhatt's mother in the film, which also stars Vijay Varma and Roshan Mathew in significant roles. Darlings is directed by Jasmeet K Reen, while the soundtrack is composed by Vishal Bharadwaj.

Aside from Darlings, Alia Bhatt's other films include Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani with Ranveer Singh, Brahmastra with Ranbir Kapoor, and Bhansali's Bajju Bawra with Ranveer again. She is also rumoured to be in negotiations with Kortala Siva for Jr. NTR's forthcoming Pan Indian feature, while formal confirmation from the makers is awaited.



**Tiger Shroff completes shoot in Ladakh for his upcoming**

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**ction star Tiger Shroff has wrapped up the Ladakh schedule of his upcoming film 'Ganapath' where he will be seen opposite Kriti Sanon. The action thriller is being helmed by Vikas Bahl of 'Queen' fame. Taking to his social media, the actor shared a picture from the sets of the film in Leh, Ladakh. He wrote in the caption, "Just wrapped the most challenging schedule of my life... can't wait for you guys to see what's coming #ganapath (sic)." Tiger has shot for a challenging set of actions in the Ladakh schedule which requires a certain kind of physic and training. Post this schedule wrap, he will start preparing for 'Rambo' and then he will get into 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan', the latter two-hero film will bring Akshay Kumar and Tiger together for the first time on screen.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**D**hakkad, starring Kangana Ranaut, was released on May 20, 2022. Kangana Ranaut took on the role of Agent Agni, who opposes Arjun Rampal's antagonist character Rudraveer in the film.

Kangana Ranaut is seen undertaking some difficult daredevil exploits with weapons in the flick. Dhaakad received a lukewarm reception at the box office and failed to draw large crowds to the theatres.

It competed with the horror comedy picture Bhoor Bhuliyaa 2 starring Kartik Aaryan and Kiara Advani, which is a standalone sequel to the 2007 film of the same name starring Akshay Kumar and Vidya Balan. According to reports, the Kangana Ranaut starrer is substituted with Bhoor Bhuliyaa 2 because to a lack of interest in numerous theatres.



**KANGANA RANAUT LOSSES THE BOX OFFICE BATTLE TO KARTIK AARYAN**



## Actors or actresses don't decide their roles, they play what they get: Prakash Jha

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**O**n 24 May Press conference for the Ashram cast was held, as the release of the third chapter approaches. A surprise screening of the first episode of Season 3 was scheduled for the media. Following that, a Q/A session was scheduled. Ashram's plot centres on a preacher named Baba Nirala (Bobby Deol), whose followers (primarily from the poorer parts of society) have complete faith in him and would do anything he asks of them. However, Baba Nirala is a conman turned godman who assures that his worshippers give their fortune to him and remain permanently wedded to the ashram.

During the interaction, Anupriya was asked if there is a specific reason why she is not

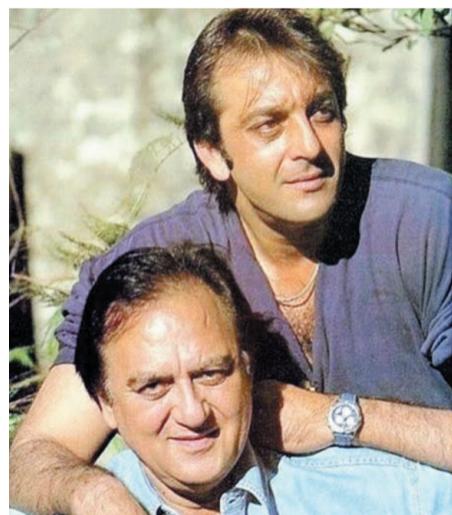


receiving the lead roles. Prashant Jha, the director, responded, "Actors and actresses don't choose their parts; they play what they get." Later in the conversation, the actors discussed their encounters with babas and whether or not they ever believed in them.

Anupriya discussed how patriarchy still persists in our nation and how women are oppressed, which they sometimes accept and adapt to. Living life on her own terms is essential to her.

When asked about the threats to the series, director Prakash Jha stated that he has always dreaded them, but he finally realised that there would always be someone to drag you down.

Season 3 will be available on an OTT platform beginning June 3 for the uninitiated. Following the huge success of the previous two seasons, the producers have high hopes for this season as well.



## Sanjay Dutt remembers father Sunil Dutt on his death anniversary

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**S**unil Dutt, one of Bollywood's biggest stars, had breathed his last on May 25, 2005. On the occasion of his 17th death anniversary, his son Sanjay Dutt penned a heartfelt note reminiscing his father. Sharing a picture with his father, he captioned, "Through thick and thin, you were always there to guide and protect me. You were my strength, inspiration and support in every need... the best a son could ask for. You will always be in my heart Dad, I miss you!" Sanjay Dutt has recently stunned everyone with his daredevil Villian avatar Adheera in KGF chapter 2 which has got him huge commendations from the audience and the critics. Talking about Sanjay Dutt's exciting lineups he has Shamsheera, Ghudchadi, and Prithviraj. Apart from that, he has signed up for some more interesting projects and the official announcements are expected soon. For the unversed, Sunil Dutt had died of a heart attack at the age of 74. He has acted in several films including the classic Mother India, Gumraah, Waqt, Humraaz, Khandaan, Milan, Reshma Aur Shera, etc.

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Divya Khosla Kumar

## 'Love Prevails Over All'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**F**ilmmaker Hansal Mehta has tied the knot with his longtime partner Safeena Husain. On Wednesday, he took to his official Instagram account and shares the news with fans. Hansal Mehta also shared a series of pictures from their wedding ceremony where they are seen signing the documents.

For the wedding day, Hansal opted for a brown blazer and a T-shirt, while Safeena opted for a pink sarwar suit.

Sharing the clicks, Hansal wrote, "So after 17 years, two children, watching our sons growing up and chasing our respective dreams we decided to get hitched. As always in life this was also impromptu and unplanned. Our vows however were truthful and but for this little ceremony



they would never have been said. Ultimately love prevails over all else. And it has..."

Talking about his ladylove Safeena Hussain, she is a

social worker and the founder of a non-profit organization called Educate Girls. She is the daughter of late actor Yusuf Hussain.