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'INDO-NEPAL TIES UNSHAKEABLE LIKE HIMALAYAS:' PM MODI

Addressing a Buddhist Conference in Lumbini, Modi said India and Nepal's ever-strengthening friendship and closeness will serve entire humanity

Lumbini | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said India and Nepal's ever-strengthening friendship and closeness will serve entire humanity "amid the kind of global situation that is emerging today." Modi, who is in the Himalayan nation at the invitation of his Nepalese counterpart Sher Bahadur Deuba on a day-long visit to Lumbini on the occasion of Buddha Purnima, said the relations between the two nations are "unshakeable like the Himalayas."

Addressing a Buddhist Conference in Lumbini, Modi said Buddha is the embodiment of the collective understanding of humanity."The growing and strengthening friendship between India and Nepal will work for the benefit of entire humanity amid the kind of global situation that is emerging today. The devotion to Lord Buddha binds us together and makes us members of one family," Modi said.Modi also said the energy of the place where Lord Buddha was born, gives a different feeling. "I was happy to see that the Mahabodhi sapling I had gifted in 2014 for this place, is now growing into a tree," he added. Modi, who attended the 2566th Buddha Jayanti Celebration at International Convention Center and Meditation Hall at Lumbini, was accompanied by Deuba and his spouse Arzu Rana Deuba. Several Nepalese ministers were among the other dignitaries present. Thanking Modi for visiting Lumbini, Deuba tweeted, "I believe your special pilgrimage to the Birthplace of Lord Buddha has further strengthened our friendship and cultural ties." Lumbini, located in the Terai plains of southern Nepal, is one of the holiest places of Buddhism, as Lord Buddha was born there.Modi visited the Maya Devi Temple as the first stop of his one-day visit to Lumbini, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said in a statement.The leaders also paid their respects at the Marker Stone inside the temple premises, which pinpoints the exact birth spot of Lord Buddha. They attended the pooja conducted as per Buddhist rituals, it said.

SC to hear challenge to survey Gyanvapi mosque

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court will on Tuesday hear a plea against the Allahabad High Court order which dismissed a petition challenging a Varanasi court's order to appoint an advocate as a court commissioner to inspect the Gyanvapi mosque complex. A bench comprising Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and P.S. Narasimha will hear the plea filed by Committee of Management Anjuman Intezamia Masajid Varanasi. On May 13, the apex court had declined to immediately stop the survey of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi, and agreed to list the matter. Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, representing the petitioner, mentioned a plea before the top court filed by the Committee seeking a stay on survey of complex. The plea challenged the validity of Allahabad High Court's April 21 order, which dismissed the plea against the civil court's order for the survey. Ahmadi mentioned the plea before a bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana. The bench said: "We don't know anything about the matter... We have no details. How can we pass the order?"

Ahmadi said "please grant status quo", and added that the mosque has been covered under Places of Worship Act.

The bench said: "Let me look at the papers, let me see..." A Varanasi court on a suit filed jointly by five Hindu women, last month ordered an inspection of the premises through advocate commissioner Ajai Kumar Mishra. The Allahabad High Court affirmed the civil court order.

The petitioners urged the court for year-long access to pray at a shrine behind the western wall of the mosque complex.

The women petitioners also want permission to pray to other "visible and invisible deities within the old temple complex".

On May 12, a Varanasi court ordered resumption of the video survey of the Gyanvapi mosque complex, including the basement and closed rooms.

The Muslim parties had objected to the survey. The court said the survey report should be submitted on May 17. The Varanasi court also declined to entertain the demand of Muslim parties to remove advocate commissioner Ajai Kumar Mishra, instead appointed two additional commissioners -- lawyers Vishal Singh and Ajay Pratap Singh -- to assist him.

SCO ANTI-TERROR MEET BEGINS IN DELHI

New Delhi: The meeting of the Regional Anti-Terror structure (RATS) began here on Monday with an eye on curbing terror activities.

Delegations from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) countries are participating in the meeting.

The RATS is a permanent anti-terror unit under the ambit of the SCO-based in Uzbekistan. The main aim is to promote cooperation among the member countries against terrorism.

SCO chairmanship is by rotation for a year between the member states. India is currently heading the executive council as the chairman. It is expected that discussion will be on the security situation in Afghanistan as the Taliban has used violence and it is feared that it could become a terror launch pad and drug smuggling hub, sources indicated.

Anti-terror teams from China, Pakistan, Russia and other Asian countries are participating in the meet from May 16 to 19.

CORBEVAX PRICE SLASHED TO RS 250 PER DOSE

Hyderabad | Agencies

Vaccine maker Biological E. Ltd (BE) on Monday announced that it has reduced the price of its Covid-19 vaccine corbevax, from Rs 840 to Rs 250 a dose inclusive of GST, for private Covid-19 vaccination centres.

For the end user, the price would be Rs 400 a dose, including taxes and administration charges.

The Hyderabad-based company said it has lowered the price of its vaccine with the aim of making it more affordable and help increase the reach to protect the maximum number of children against the virus.

The decision comes within weeks of Biological E. receiving Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) for children between 5 and 12 years of age. The previous private market price for the vaccine was Rs 990 per dose, including taxes and vaccine administration charges.

Corbrvax is also offered in a single-dose vial, making it more convenient for vaccine administration. It eliminates vaccine wastage, which is a major advantage for private hospitals.

The Corbevax vaccination slot can be booked through the Co-WIN app or the Co-WIN portal for children aged 12 to 17.

So far, 43.9 million doses of Corbevax have been administered to children across the country and Biological E. has supplied close to 100 million doses to the government.

Biological E., in collaboration with Texas Children's Hospital and Baylor College of Medicine, has developed a recombinant protein sub-unit vaccine for the novel coronavirus, Corbevax.

Prior to receiving EUA for vaccination, the company conducted Phase 2 and 3 multicentre clinical trials in 624 children aged 5-12 and 12-18.

LET TERROR MODULE BUSTED IN J&K'S BANDIPORA, 7 HELD

Srinagar | Agencies

A terror module of proscribed terror outfit LeT was busted in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora with the arrest of seven terrorists/terrorist associates, including a woman, police said on Monday.

Incriminating materials, including arms and ammunition, have also been recovered from their possession. Six vehicles including four two-wheelers have also been seized.

"During the course of investigation of cases regarding the recent Bandipora encounters, Bandipora police, along with other security forces, busted a terror module of proscribed terror outfit LeT by arresting an active Pakistan-trained terrorist, two hybrid terrorists and four terrorist associates," a police official said.

The Pakistan-trained terrorist has been identified as Arif Ajaz Shehri, son of Ajaz Ahmad alias Anfall, resident of Nadihal, who had gone to Pakistan on a valid visa in 2018 through Wagah Border and infiltrated back to this side after obtaining illegal arms training and started actively working with proscribed terror outfit LeT in Bandipora.

The two hybrid terrorists have been identified as Ajaz Ahmad Reshi, resident of Rampora, and Shariq Ahmad Lone, resident of Gundpora. They were tasked with carrying out attacks on police/security forces and other soft targets, particularly in Bandipora district." The four terrorist associates, who include a woman, have been identified as Riyaz Ahmad Mir alias Metha Shehri, resident of Plan Bandipora, Gh Mohammad Waza alias Gul Bab, resident of Tawheedabad Bagh, Maqsood Ahmad Malik, resident of Chittibandy Aragam, and Sheema Shafi Waza, resident of Tawheedabad Bagh.

"Preliminary investigation revealed that the arrested terrorist associates were involved in harbouring terrorists, providing logistics/material support including transportation of terrorist in the Bandipora district. The arrested female terrorist associate was also involved in providing wi-fi hotspot, accommodation and ferrying terrorists in Bandipora town," police said.

Arms and ammunition, including two pistols, three pistol magazines, 25 pistol rounds, and three hand grenades, were recovered from their possession. Besides, an Ecco Van bearing registration number JK15A-1528 which was being used in ferrying of terrorists from Bandipora to Nowgam, Pantha Chowk and Srinagar was also seized.Moreover, three two-wheelers, which were being used for doing reccee of police, security establishments, monitor movement of security forces, and ferry terrorists in Bandipora area, were also seized. Similarly, a Maruti-800 Car and a Pulsar bike were also seized.

Cases under the relevant sections of law have been registered and further investigation is going on.

More 'surgical strikes' in offing in Kashmir University

Srinagar | Agencies

Continuing its exercise to dismantle the 'intellectual infrastructure' created by the secessionists in Kashmir University, the J&K government is contemplating to ban the Kashmir University Teachers Association (KUTA).

An official revealed that KUTA is one of the half a dozen associations that had played an extremely important role in creating and sustaining the ideological-narrative framework necessary for a militant-secessionist network to thrive and succeed in Kashmir's case as part of a well-thought strategy designed by the hostile Pakistani intelligence agency ISI to eventually defeat the Indian state by turning its own instruments against itself and making the Indian state finance its own meltdown.

The secessionist 'infiltration' into this highest institution of learning in Kashmir has a three-decade long history.Valley's highest seat of learning remained under the de facto control of the secessionists who ensured their control by positioning 'loyalists' at vital positions in academia and administration.The radicalisation of the University was so complete that even admissions to various departments were done on recommendation of the secessionist leaders and militant commanders.

Shootouts between those who stood for 'independence' and those for merger with Pakistan were reported from within the campus during the mid 1990s.

Intelligence agencies, both Central and state, had mountain loads of inputs about the radicalisation of the University students.

As a senior intelligence officer put it, "Those were reports, but not all of them had actionable inputs and whenever we got actionable inputs, we acted."In layman terms, 'actionable input' meant the presence of a militant with weapons or presence of some communication network or any information about a wanted person hiding inside the campus.

Interestingly, even during the official functions where the chancellor (state Governor) and the vice chancellor would be present, no student would stand up in deference to the national anthem.The worst part of that story was that even some of the faculty members would also refuse to stand up when the national anthem was being played.The recent dismissal of professor Altaf Hussain Pandit of the University's chemistry department has proved that the intelligence agencies have been able to find what they call 'actionable evidence.'Pandit's dismissal could be the beginning of an operation clean up, the Lt Governor Manoj Sinha's government has decided to undertake in the University.Post abrogation of Article 370, two discreet analyses of academic and student activities in Kashmir University have been carried out, said top intelligence sources.These analyses have shown that "Three faculty members have been contaminated to an extent that requires immediate action."12 faculty members have been found contaminated to a lesser extent that needs a graded response.

"24 members of different faculties are contaminated to an even lesser extent who need counselling and observation," intelligence sources revealed.The intelligence reports have also suggested long term measures to carry out reforms to ensure a free academic atmosphere in the University and also an atmosphere for recruitments that is free from nepotism, corruption and favouritism.Presently, the intelligence agencies are carrying out analyses of the non-teaching staff.

What becomes clear from these intelligence reports is that in not a very distant future, the University would see more heads rolling to restore the academic excellence for which the University was once famous.

J&K LG meets Rajnath, seeks assistance of BRO for Amarnath Yatra

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday met Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh here, and discussed the road infrastructure for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra.

Sinha requested the Defence Minister for assistance of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to make the difficult stretches in the challenging terrain at high altitudes smooth which will ease the tracking up to the holy cave. "Met Hon'ble Raksha Mantri, Rajnath Singh Ji @rajnathsingh today and discussed road infrastructure for AmarnathJi Yatra and @BROindia assistance at difficult stretches in challenging terrain at high altitudes which will greatly ease the trek to the holy cave," the Office of LG, Jammu and Kashmir tweeted.

It was learnt that LG also requested the Defence Minister for setting up make-shift hospitals by the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) in least two places, and oxygen booths in the route to the holy cave.

Sinha will also be participating in the high-level meeting chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the preparedness of Amarnath Yatra on Tuesday in North Block.

Along with him, officials of the Jammu and Kashmir administration and police chief Dilbag Singh will be participating in the meeting wherein they will make a presentation of a 'blueprint' prepared for this 45-day long Yatra.

This annual pilgrimage is commencing from June 30 after a hiatus of two years and expecting a huge participation of the devotees this year.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has planned this annual pilgrimage on a grand scale with many new initiatives such as setting up of Tent Township on the line of Kumbh Mela and a huge and fool-proof security apparatus will be created with the help of Jammu and Kashmir Police, Central Armed Police Forces and the Indian Army.

CONG 'EXPOSES' BJP LEADERS WHO VISITED AURANGZEB GRAVE

With the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena and MP-MLA Rana couple hounding the Maha Vikas Aghadi government for action against AIMIM chief Akbaruddin Owaisi's visit to the Aurangzeb grave in Aurangzeb, the state Congress made a fresh expose here on Monday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

With the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena and MP-MLA Rana couple hounding the Maha Vikas Aghadi government for action against AIMIM chief Akbaruddin Owaisi's visit to the Aurangzeb grave in Aurangzeb, the state Congress made a fresh expose here on Monday.

Congress General Secretary Sachin Sawant has dug out old photos and videos of several BJP leaders who had visited the burial site of the late Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb at Khuldabad and raised uncomfortable questions.

"The BJP National Executive member and Spokesperson, and Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board President Darakshan Andrabi had gone to Aurangzeb's tomb during the Corona period," he said.

Similarly, Khalid Qureshi, the Vice-President of BJP's Minority Affairs also had gone there and in 2019, when current Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis was the BJP CM even AIMIM MP Asasuddin Owaisi went to pay homage there in 2019. "The tomb is under the jurisdiction of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). So why can't the Central government control, restrict or even ban entry to Aurangzeb's grave?" Sawant demanded.

He wondered why Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government doesn't initiate action against the Owaisis and even the BJP leaders who have gone to Aurangzeb's final resting place in Khuldabad.

Sawant slammed the BJP, MNS and the Independent MP Navneet Kaur-Rana and her MLA husband Ravi Rana for blaming the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government for the May 12 visit to the grave by Telangana MLA Akbaruddin Owaisi.

Some BJP and MNS activists threatened "to bury" Owaisi in a grave right next to Aurangzeb's and the Rana couple challenged Maharashtra Chief Minister to take strong action against Owaisi for his trip there which sparked off a major political row. Shiv Sena MoS Kishore Tiwari and other MVA leaders have dismissed the 'frivolous demands' from who they term as the BJP's Team B, C or D and said they should not divert from more serious issues like runaway inflation, high prices of fuel and gas, rising unemployment, etc and point at the developments in Sri Lanka.

BJP confident of continuing victory march in Gujarat after 'Chintan Baithak'

The BJP's victory march in Gujarat will continue and the party will set new records in the Assembly elections scheduled later this year, said Pradipsinh Vaghela, General secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Gujarat, as the two-day 'Chintan Baithak' of state level leaders concluded on Monday.

Ahmedabad | Agencies

The BJP's victory march in Gujarat will continue and the party will set new records in the Assembly elections scheduled later this year, said Pradipsinh Vaghela, General secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Gujarat, as the two-day 'Chintan Baithak' of state level leaders concluded on Monday.

Addressing mediapersons, Vaghela said that at the Chintan Baithak, senior party leaders analysed in detail the results of the recent civic and panchayat polls, and assessed the party's strength and weakness in every seat to chalk out a plan to further strengthen the BJP.

The government programmes were also discussed and it was found that people by and large are happy with the state government's schemes, as they have benefited all sections of people, said government spokesman and Education Minister Jitu Vaghani.

The people are happy with the BJP rule and they will continue to support the ruling party, he added.

Though the party has a strong network and substantial followers in the state, it has decided to reach out to each voter for which each and every party worker and leader will work shoulder to shoulder, said Vaghela.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP national General Secretary B.L. Santosh, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, Gujarat BJP chief C.R. Patil, among others, attended the two-day Chintan Baithak.

Sharjeel Imam seeks relief from Delhi HC after SC stays sedition law use

JNU scholar-activist Sharjeel Imam, who is behind the bars in connection with cases against him under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, has approached the Delhi High Court for relief following the historic Supreme Court verdict which put on hold the colonial-era penal provision of sedition.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

JNU scholar-activist Sharjeel Imam, who is behind the bars in connection with cases against him under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, has approached the Delhi High Court for relief following the historic Supreme Court verdict which put on hold the colonial-era penal provision of sedition.

In his fresh bail application, he said that since the top court has put sedition (Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code) in abeyance, his case has improved for the grant of bail.

He was seeking interim bail in the alleged inflammatory speeches delivered by him at Aligarh Muslim University and in the Jamia area in Delhi during the anti-CAA agitation in 2019 and 2020.

A division bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Rajnish Bhatnagar will hear his plea on Tuesday."The appellant has been incarcerated for nearly 28 months since January 28, 2020 whereas the maximum punishment for the offences -- not including 124-A IPC-- are punishable upto a maximum of 7 years of imprisonment," the plea read.JNU scholars and activists Imam, Umar Khalid are among the nearly a dozen of people involved in the alleged larger conspiracy case linked with the Delhi riots 2020, as per the Delhi Police. Imam and Khalid are facing charges in connection with the inflammatory speeches which are allegedly fuelled, as per the police, the riots broke out in the national capital in February 2020 as clashes between the anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) and pro-CAA protesters took a violent turn. The mayhem, which coincided with the then US President Donald Trump's maiden trip to India, saw more than 50 people lose their lives and while over 700 were injured.

CPI(M-L) wants Left unity in Bengal sans 'Left Front' tag

KOLKATA | Agencies

The Communist Party of India (Marxists-Leninist), which had provided a latent support to Trinamool Congress in the 2021 Assembly elections in West Bengal, now wants a bigger unity of all Left parties in the state but without the 'Left Front' tag.

CPI(M-L) national General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya told newspersons here on Monday that many Leftist forces were previously not part of the Left Front.

"But time has come for a bigger unity of the Left parties in West Bengal to counter the BJP's organisational growth in the state, as well as to resist the misrule of the ruling Trinamool Congress. But that bigger unity of Left parties in the state cannot happen with the 'Left Front' tag. We are ready to discuss what would be the new banner with the other Left parties, especially the CPI(M)," Bhattacharya said.He also said that in the 2021 Assembly elections, his party had given a call for 'No vote to BJP'.

"Although the people stopped the BJP from coming to power in West Bengal, the opposition space in the state Assembly has been occupied by the saffron party, while the seat tally of the Left parties was reduced to zero. So now we are calling for a bigger unity of all the Left parties in the state to stop BJP's growth and resist Trinamool Congress' atrocities at the same time," said Bhattacharya.

Bhattacharya has his own logic as to why the Left Front tag should be shed for achieving this bigger Left unity.

"The people of West Bengal associate the Left Front with the Left Front government that ruled the state for 34 years from 1977 to 2011. In the latter part of its rule, there were growing grievances among the people against the Left Front government, as a result of which it was voted out of power in 2011. So, we are against that Left Front banner," Bhattacharya said.

When contacted, CPI(M) politburo member and state secretary Md Salim told IANS that it is good that Bhattacharya is showing a positive gesture with regard to bigger unity of Left parties.

"Today only we had a meeting on this count where all the constituents of the Left Front as well as those outside the Left Front, including CPI(M-L), were present. Similarly, at the district level, similar meetings are being conducted which are being attended by parties outside the Left Front.

"Our stand is clear that in West Bengal, we want unity of all forces who are anti-BJP and anti-Trinamool. As regards to what will be the banner, discussions can continue," Salim said.

NCP SCREAMS OVER INFLATION, SMRITI REVELS IN 2019 AMETHI VICTORY!

Pune | Agencies

In a flash agitation, hundreds of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) activists staged a massive protest over inflation and fuel prices hike before Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani here on Monday.

The NCP workers sought to present a box of bangles to Irani as a reminder to her own anti-price hike agitation held during the tenure of then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.However, later an unruffled Irani, surrounded by her security, spoke nothing on inflation but seemed to gloat over her 2019 victory in Amethi trouncing the then Congress President Rahul Gandhi from his traditional stronghold.

"The Congress - and NCP, which has emerged from it - are still shocked at how an ordinary BJP worker like me gave an unprecedented defeat to a sitting Congress President and he had to run to another constituency," smiled Irani victoriously.Pune City NCP President Prashant Jagtap said that around 2014, when the price of gas cylinders went up by just Rs 5, Irani had sent bangles to Manmohan Singh.

"Today, under the BJP, the gas cylinder prices have shot up from some Rs 350 to over Rs 1,000 now, but Irani has nothing to say and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also silent at the sufferings of the masses," Jagtap said.The NCP men and women workers shouted angry slogans and carried boxes of bangles for Irani with a plea to hand them over to the Prime Minister to draw his attention at the peoples' sufferings, but were stopped by the Pune Police.

The activists chanted "Mahengai Ki Rani, Smriti Irani", "Smriti Bhabhi, Jawab do", etc against the Union Minister who had come to attend an event here."When the people voted for the BJP and Modi, they had great expectations that he would set things right. Now, people are regretting that decision," said a woman activist.

Jagtap said that each and every poor family in the country is reeling under the high inflation and runaway fuel prices, but the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi seem "least concerned" at their plight.

The Pune Police detained several scores of NCP men and women activists and rounded them off to local police stations even as Irani departed after completing her function this evening.

Not only Saha, ex-Congress leaders getting plum posts in BJP

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Manik Saha has become the third chief minister in the northeast after N Biren Singh of Manipur and Himanta Biswa Sarma of Assam who have had a long political innings in the Congress. The party claims that the BJP is now full of former Congress leaders and many have been given plum ministerial berths in the state and union governments. Saha, who had quit the Congress and joined the BJP in 2016, was appointed the BJP's state president in 2020. He had replaced Biplab Kumar Deb who ended the 25-year-old Communist rule in 2018. Similarly, Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh was in the Congress and a minister in the state government led by the Congress before joining the BJP.

In 2002, Singh was elected to the Manipur assembly as the Democratic Revolutionary People's Party candidate. Later he joined the Congress and was made a minister but quit in 2016.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta BIswa Sarma was one of the high profile ministers in the Tarun Gogoi government but a turf war between Gogoi and Sarma led to the exit of Sarma who later joined the BJP. He is being credited for the BJP's success in the entire northeast. The other high profile leaders in BJP governments are Jyotiraditya Scindia as Union Minister of Civil Aviation and Jitin Prasada as PWD minister in the UP government. Recently RPN Singh too left the Congress to join the BJP.

The Congress has witnessed an exodus in Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka also where scores of MLAs left to join the BJP which led to the fall of the Congress government in MP and a coalition government in Karnataka. Former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Vijay Bahuguna, ex-Foreign Minister S M Krishna, Uttarakhand minister Satpal Maharaj and most recently Amarinder Singh in Punjab and Sunil Jakhar are some other leaders who have deserted the Congress since it lost the polls in 2014.

KEJRIWAL TO HOLD MEETING OVER ANTI-ENCROACHMENT DRIVE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Arivind Kejriwal will on Monday to hold a meeting with Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs regarding the anti-encroachment drive in the national capital.

Delhi Chief Minister Arivind Kejriwal will on Monday to hold a meeting with Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs regarding the anti-encroachment drive in the national capital.

The meeting, which will begin at around 11 a.m., was initially scheduled for May 14 but it was cancelled due to the massive building fire in Mundka the previous day which claimed the lives of 27 people.

Monday's meeting will take place at Kejriwal's residence in Civil Lines.

"Everyone will share their ideas to counter the BJP. The BJP-controlled MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi) has launched the encroachment drive, which we have to stop to save the Delhiites. In the name of encroachment they are demolishing people's homes. AAP is standing with the common people of Delhi," said an AAP leader.

During the meeting, the AAP leaders will discuss a strong strategy against the BJP as well as the MCD.

Earlier, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia wrote a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah requesting him to stop the encroachment drive.

AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan was also placed under arrest during a demolition drive. He was later granted bail by the Saket Court.

Textbook repeat of Dec 1949 in Babri Masjid: Owaisi on Gyanvapi row

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid claims by the Hindu side of having discovered a Shivling in Gyanvapi mosque, AIMIM leader and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi has slammed a court order that directed to seal the place where the Shivling was discovered in the survey.

"This is a textbook repeat of December 1949 in Babri Masjid. This order itself changes the religious nature of the Masjid. This is a violation of 1991 Act. This was my apprehension and it has come true. Gyanvapi Masjid was, and will remain a Masjid till judgement day, Inshallah," Owaisi tweeted.

It was alleged that in 1949, idols were kept inside the disputed Babri Mosque. However, the court in its judgement has given the land to the Ram temple, and the construction is in full swing.

On Monday, the Hindu side advocates claimed that a 'Shivling' had been found inside the well. Lawyer Vishnu Jain said he would go to the civil court to seek its protection.

An advocate from the Hindu side, Madan Mohan Yadav, claimed that the 'Shivling' is Nandi faced.

Heavy security was deployed as the court-appointed committee reached the spot to conduct the survey on Monday.

Nearly 65 per cent of the exercise was completed on Sunday.

Another report would be submitted to the court on Tuesday.

On Sunday, the survey of the areas of the mosque which, according to lawyers Hari Shankar Jain and Vishnu Jain, used to be a part of the temple was done.

On the western wall of the Gyanvapi complex, the remains of Hindu temple demolition are visible and the pictures which are the "biggest proof", will be surveyed.

For this, the fourth lock was opened on Monday, while the first three rooms were opened during the survey on Saturday.

Gyanvapi Mosque, adjacent to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi, is currently facing a legal battle.

court in Varanasi has directed the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to probe the structure of the Gyanvapi Masjid.

The survey is to find out the truth behind the claims of the presence of Hindu symbols of worship in the mosque complex.

Five Delhi-based women -- Rakhi Singh, Laxmi Devi, Sita Sahu and others moved the court with their plea on April 18, 2021, seeking permission for daily prayers before the idols of Hindu deities on its outer walls.

They also sought to stop the opponents from causing any damage to the idols.

SAMBAL YOJANA IS A REMARKABLE SCHEME TO HELP WORKERS IN PROBLEMS: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the family of all workers will get the benefit of Sambal-2.0 scheme. This scheme is remarkable as it benefit the beneficiaries in critical situations throughout their lives. The scheme is a support of the poor. Whether it is a matter of extending financial support at the time of accident or illness, in case of death of a family member of a beneficiary's family, Sambal Yojana was launched to help workers through obstacles. The implementation of this scheme started in the year 2018. The previous government did not pay attention to the implementation of the scheme and withdrew it. The names of the beneficiaries were struck off from the lists. Many poor were deprived of its benefits. Now we have decided to implement it once again.

Chouhan transferred the amount under Sambal Yojana to families of labourers of all the districts of the state with a single click from his residence office. He also interacted with the families of the labourers. Chief Minister said that according to the philosophy of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay, Sambal Yojana is being implemented afresh with the aim of reaching the backmost person of the society.

Chouhan transferred Rs 551 crore 16 lakh to 25 thousand 982 labourer families of Sambal Yojana and Rs 22 crore 23 lakh to 1036 construction workers through a single click, thus transferring Rs 573 crore 39 lakh to the accounts of the beneficiaries in total 27 thousand 18 cases.

Chouhan said that the state government has launched a more beneficiary-oriented Sambal Yojana this time. Also, now the process of adding more beneficiaries to the scheme will also be started. Lakhs of tendu leaf pluckers of the state have also been included as unorganized labourers in the new registration process. Applications can be made through MP Online, Nagrik Suvidha and Lok Seva Kendras. In the Sambal-2.0 scheme, those workers who were declared ineligible earlier will also be able to apply afresh. After receiving the application, beneficiaries will be provided benefits through tracking at each level.

Chouhan said that Sambal 2.0 scheme also has the provision that if the beneficiary's application is canceled, he can make an appeal. An amount of Rs 4 lakh is given to the family in case of death in an accident under the Anugrah Sahayata Scheme to lakhs of labourers of the unorganized sector. Rs 2 lakh is provided in case of natural death. Similarly, Rs 2 lakh is provided in case of permanent disability and Rs one lakh for partial disability. An amount of Rs 5 thousand is given as funeral assistance. All those workers who do not get the benefit of social security like Provident Fund, Employees State Insurance Scheme, Gratuity etc are eligible for the scheme. If the beneficiary family has less than one hectare of agricultural land, beneficiary is not in government service and is not an income tax payer, he is eligible.

Chouhan said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken concrete steps for the welfare of street vendors. With his inspiration, focus is being made on economically weaker sections in Madhya Pradesh. Chouhan said that we see that today those doing small agricultural work are hardly able to make both ends meet. All our small vegetable vendors, labourers, tendu leaf pluckers , tea shop owners and members of organized and unorganized sector selling other items will be included in this scheme. All eligible beneficiaries will be linked to the scheme. The government stands with the labourers at the time of crisis. Madhya Pradesh has prioritized the welfare of labourers of the unorganized sector.

The portal which has been launched today will also give impetus to the scheme. Beneficiaries can now apply from the Lok Seva Kendras. There is no need for them to visit offices frequently, the names of all will be added to the beneficiary list of the scheme.

Kamal Nath questions use of EVMs in civic body polls

Former Chief Minister and Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath has once again raised questions over use of EVMs (Electronic Voting Machines) in the civic body polls. His remarks came when the state is gearing up for panchayats and local body polls after an order issued by the Supreme Court on May 10.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Chief Minister and Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath has once again raised questions over use of EVMs (Electronic Voting Machines) in the civic body polls. His remarks came when the state is gearing up for panchayats and local body polls after an order issued by the Supreme Court on May 10.

While addressing the press on the occasion of appointing new president of the state for NSUI (National Student Union of India)at the party headquarters, Kamal Nath said that when the EVMs are not being used in developed nations then why here. Ashutosh Chouksey was appointed as the president of the state for NSUI on Monday.

"BJP wins 300 seats with the help of EVMs. When elections are not being held with EVMs in Europe and America, then why is it being adopted here? Germany has amended the constitution itself to not conduct elections with EVMs. Now elections are being held there by ballot paper," the former CM added.

Following the SC's direction to conduct local body polls without OBC reservation, the State Election Commission (SEC) has started its preparation. The commission had held a meeting with collectors of all districts recently in which the election commissioner Basant Pratap Singh said that polling for urban civic bodies will be held through EVMs.

The commission has also reviewed the availability of EVMs in the state and asked the district administrations to do preparations accordingly and get ready for elections. As per the earlier statement, the SEC is likely to issue a notification to conduct elections by May 24. In its order last Tuesday, the apex court had asked SEC to issue notification within two weeks.

Polling for rural civic bodies will be held through paper ballots. The state election commissioner had asked the government to ensure sufficient supply of paper as it would be required in large quantities for Panchayat polls.

CM EXPRESSED GRIEF

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed grief over the untimely demise of 4 members of a family of Khargone in an accident on Ahmed Nagar Manmad Road in Maharashtra and the death of four people in a road accident in Betul district. Chouhan has prayed to God to grant peace to the departed souls and strength to the bereaved family members to bear the loss.

Chouhan has also directed the administrative officers of the respective districts to provide financial assistance to the affected families.

Goons create ruckus at Dalit's marriage function , pelt stones at police

- The attacks on the police in Madhya Pradesh continued with a fresh incident coming to light in Rajgarh district where stones were pelted on a police team on Sunday night.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The attacks on the police in Madhya Pradesh continued with a fresh incident coming to light in Rajgarh district where stones were pelted on a police team on Sunday night. As per the official reports, a Dalit family was taking a marriage party to the bride's home in Piplia Kala village in Rajgarh district on Sunday night. A group of local miscreants from the upper caste allegedly stopped the marriage party and also created a ruckus at the bride's home. The accused uprooted the wedding tent and when the police reached the village, they pelted stones at them forcing the police to fire tear gas shells. The administration then deployed a heavy police force in the village to control the situation.

Senior district police officials and the district collector reached the spot. They met the families and the marriage function was held amid tight security. "Instructions were given to the officials to take strict action against the anti-social elements," said Collector Harsh Dixit. This was the same village where Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had held a meeting with the villagers during which a tribal woman had fed plums like 'Shabari' to him. Meanwhile, on Saturday a police team was attacked in a village in Dhar district after which six people were arrested. Two cops were reportedly injured in the incident. On Friday night, three policemen were killed by poachers in Guna district, Gwalior-Chambal region, which led to a war of words between the BJP and the Congress in the state.

MP POLICE DIRECTED TO MONITOR MISSIONARY SCHOOLS OVER ALLEGED CONVERSIONS

- Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra on Monday said that the police have been directed to monitor missionary schools across the state over alleged conversion cases.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra on Monday said that the police have been directed to monitor missionary schools across the state over alleged conversion cases. Mishra's statement came a day after a case of alleged conversion came to light at the Christ Memorial School in Bhopal.

According to the police, a Hindu man and woman were converted within the school premises.

In response to the development, Mishra, who is also spokesperson of the state government, said: "An FIR was lodged immediately after the incident was reported on Sunday. Four people have been arrested in the case so far. Meanwhile, the intelligence department of the state police has been directed to keep a close watch on all missionary schools to monitor if such incidents are taking place."

Police in the state capital said that a Bhopal resident had complained about the alleged conversion in the school.

"A man identified as Rajesh Malviya, along with his 23-year-old daughter Riddika, was explaining to the people that Hinduism is bad and Christianity is good. The school director, Manes Mathews, fled before the police arrived. The police arrested the father-daughter duo, along with Kamani John of Gandhi Nagar and Paul Polis, a resident of Phanda. An FIR has been registered in the matter," the police said.

CM PLANTS NEEM AND BANYAN SAPLINGS

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today along with the members of DK Cottage Jan-Kalyan Samiti, Bawadiya Kalan planted Banyan and Neem saplings. Committee members Tarun Singh Chauhan, Rakesh Dubey, Umesh Thakur told that the committee is making efforts to stop the use of single use plastic and polythene. People are motivated in the area for cleanliness through wall-writings. Sanitation workers and domestic workers have been made aware about the disposal of waste. The banyan planted today is also called Vat Vriksh, Bargad or Bar. Apart from having religious importance of banyan, according to Ayurveda, it also helps cure many diseases. Neem is known as the supreme medicine rich in antibiotic elements.

International Tomato Conclave in Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Horticulture and Food Processing Department, in collaboration with Netherlands Embassy and Solidaridad is organizing the 'International Tomato Conclave-2022' for the first time on May 17 at 11 am at Hotel Amer Green, Bhopal, in view of the possibility of more work that can be done in the tomato sector. Internationally acclaimed scientists, exporters, processors, related to tomato sector etc. have been invited to the conclave, in which stalls are also being put up to provide information about the latest techniques regarding improved seeds, irrigation, storage, processing, branding, export etc.

Principal Secretary Horticulture E Ramesh Kumar said that Eleven prominent districts of the state including Ashok Nagar, Damoh, Jhabua, Katni, Raisen, Sagar, Satna, Shivpuri, Dalia, Singrauli and Anuppur have been selected in 'Ek Zila-Ek Utpad' under PM-FME scheme.

Apart from the expansion of tomato production area, special work is being done to increase its production, productivity and to promote exports and set up processing units in these districts. Investors showed interest for setting up 15 tomato based units last year. At present, 6 units have been established and grants-in-aid is being made available. Madhya Pradesh occupies a special place in the field of tomato production.

As much as 26 lakh 55 thousand metric tonne production is being made in about 90 thousand 971 hectares. It is necessary that due to the adaptability of the climate, the farmers of the state get more income from tomato production in a limited area. The purpose of this conclave is to make the producers aware of value addition for the possibilities of further increase in income.

CM Called On By Members of MP Wheel Chair Cricket Team

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Shivraj Singh Chouhan was called on by TN Cricket Academy Champion Madhya Pradesh Wheel Chair Cricket Team at his residence on Monday. Chouhan also had a look at the winning trophy. He greeted the players and office bearers of the team.

Madhya Pradesh Wheel Chair Cricket Team has won the champion trophy by defeating the team of Chhattisgarh in the competition. Chouhan was also invited by the founder of Madhya Pradesh Wheel Chair Cricket Team Jandel Singh Dhakad for the Late Madhavrao Scindia National Wheel Chair Cricket Championship to be held in Gwalior from May 27 to 31 in collaboration with Madhya Pradesh Wheel chair Association and GDSA.

Teams from 8 states of the country will participate in the championship. Captain Kabir Bhadauria, patron Sandeep Sharma and Yogendra Sharma Santa were also present during the meeting.

CM EXPRESS HIS CONDOLENCES

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan reached Poshia village on Monday to express his condolences on the untimely demise of Abhishek Bhuria, son of former MLA of Sardarpur area of Dhar district, Velsingh Bhuria. Chief Minister Chouhan consoled the bereaved family. Abhishek died untimely on May 6 in a road accident. Chouhan paid homage by offering flowers at Late Abhishek's photo and prayed for the peace of the departed soul. Chouhan prayed to God to give strength to Velsingh Bhuria and his family members to bear the loss. Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion Minister Rajvardhan Singh Dattigaon, Member of Parliament Chhatar Singh Darbar, Ranjana Baghel, Jaideep Patel, Nagar Singh Chouhan and public representatives were present.

NEIGHBOURHOOD FIRST POLICY IS ESTABLISHING CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES: CM

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led policy of Neighbourhood First is establishing cordial relations with neighbouring countries. The International Center for Buddhist Culture and Heritage is being set up in Nepal by the Government of India. This vision of PM Modi will enable all the pilgrims, tourists and devotees to gain knowledge and enjoy the essence of the spiritual forms of Buddhism. In his tweet, Chief Minister Chouhan said that 'Prime Minister Modi has explained the divine teachings and sayings of Lord Buddha as beautifully as they are. The great teachings and sayings of Lord Buddha will always show the world, the path of peace and welfare." Sanatan culture and the teachings of Lord Buddha will contribute towards bringing peace to humanity engulfed in the fire of materialism. This visit of Modi will further strengthen India-Nepal ties and ties of mutual cooperation."

Ensure smooth drinking water supply in Bhopal city: CM

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan directed Commissioner Municipal Corporation Bhopal VS Choudhary Kolsani to make necessary arrangements for smooth drinking water distribution in Bhopal city immediately. Clean drinking water should be provided as soon as the cleaning and repair work related to the pipeline is completed. Along with this, the information about drinking water arrangement and other alternative arrangements made for the citizens in the colonies through tankers should be given through the media. The common man should not have problem of drinking water. Chouhan directed to submit the action taken report to the Chief Minister's Office. Chouhan gave these instructions to the Municipal Corporation Commissioner during the plantation at Smart City park in Shyamala Hills this morning.

CM TO INAUGURATE MISSION NAGRODAY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will inaugurate Mission Nagroday on May 17 at 6 pm at Kushabhau Thakre International Convention Centre, Bhopal. In the programme, Chouhan will do Bhumi Pujan, dedicate various development works of worth more than 21 thousand crores, conduct Grih Pravesh and distribute funds to the beneficiaries through virtual medium with a single click. In the programme, Chouhan will also interact with the beneficiaries of government schemes. Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh and Minister of State OPS Bhadauria will also be present.

Chouhan will inaugurate schemes of worth Rs. 12 thousand 858 crore 71 lakh in Amrut-2.0 and Rs. 4 thousand 913 crore 74 lakh in Swachh Bharat Mission-2.0.

Chouhan will distribute benefits to one lakh 35 thousand beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban). Chief Minister Chouhan will conduct Grih Pravesh of the beneficiaries in 25 thousand houses of a total cost of 962 crore 50 lakh, distribution of instalments of Rs 750 crore to 80 thousand beneficiaries and bhoomi-pujan of 30 thousand houses of a total cost of 1155 crore. Also, in the programme, he will distribute Rs. 210 crore to one lakh 65 thousand beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Swa-Nidhi Yojana. Of these, 120 crore will be distributed to one lakh 20 thousand beneficiaries of the first phase and Rs 90 crore to 45 thousand beneficiaries of the second phase.

Chouhan will transfer an amount of Rs. 113 crore to 178 urban bodies for "Mukhyamantri Sanjeevani Clinic". Out of this, the amount will be given for construction of 611 new Mukhyamantri Sanjeevani Clinics and for upgradation of 134 already operating Sanjeevani Clinics and Civil Dispensaries.

Chief Minister will also do bhumi-pujan and inauguration of drinking water schemes costing Rs. 460 crore, works of Rs. 747 crore in Smart City Mission and other development works of worth Rs. 1264 crore in urban areas. The programme will be organised in every urban body. Public representatives and beneficiaries of various government schemes will be invited in the programme. Live telecast of the programme will also be done through cmevents.mp.gov.in and regional news channels and other means of social media.

EDITOR'S SPECS

BJP's 'Chintan' for Gujrat polls 2022

As Gujarat heads for Assembly elections later this year, and the Congress is busy preparing plans at the 'Chintan Shivir' in Udaipur and the AAP has launched Parivartan Yatra in the state, the ruling BJP kicked off its state-level 'Chintan Baithak' on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. Party sources said two to three major issues to be discussed thoroughly is the BJP's prospects on all the 182 seats, and what plans and strategies should be implemented to win a record-breaking number of seats in the upcoming elections. The second challenge likely to be discussed is how to counter issues like inflation, unemployment, and the image of the state government, which is badly damaged by paper leaks in competitive exams one after another. Though the BJP is publicly underplaying the Aam Aadmi Party's presence in the state, but takes it seriously in private. According to sources, party senior leaders believe that if the AAP's influence spreads in rural areas, it will not damage BJP, but if its influence increases in urban areas, it will be problematic for the BJP. To weaken the Congress further, the BJP is still going to lure a few more of its MLAs and leaders, and Hardik Patel is on the top of the list, said sources. If the last one works out, BJP leaders believe half the match is already won. The BJP has identified more than 40 seats, which it won in 2017 with a paper thin margin, and some seats which Congress never lost post 2002 riots and even when then Chief Minister Narendra Modi's charisma was at its peak. To win such seats, the party plans to either divide the Congress organisation vertically, or ensure more parties contest from such seats and divide anti-incumbency votes, which can benefit the ruling party.

INDIA-NEPAL EXTENDING HORIZONS TOWARDS A STRENGTHENED PARTNERSHIP

On the invitation of his Nepalese counterpart Sher Bahadur Deuba, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited to Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha, on Monday to mark the occasion of Buddha Purnima. This is the second summit-level interaction between the leaders in less than two months.

While in Lumbini, Modi and Deuba will laid the foundation stone for a Buddhist Vihar, being built with Indian assistance. We should note that Nepal is important for India in the context of its overall strategic interests in the region, and the leaders of the two countries have often noted the age-old "Roti Beti" relationship.

Modi's visit to Lumbini would follow a re-energisation of ties after Deuba's trip to India in April, when four agreements and a number of infrastructure projects were launched.

The four agreements are Nepal officially joining the International Solar Alliance; Indian technical assistance to Nepal's railway sector; cooperation in the field of petroleum sector; and exchange of expertise between Nepal Oil Corporation and Indian Oil Corporation.

During Deuba's visit, the two Prime Ministers discussed the unprecedented opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation in the energy sector. In this regard, a Joint Vision Statement on Power Sector cooperation that spells out the shared commitment as well as opportunities for win-win collaboration in power generation, transmission and trade was concluded.

They had also jointly inaugurated the 90-km-long 132 KVDC Solu Corridor Transmission line and substation built under the Line of Credit extended by India. Both sides agreed to expedite progress in the implementation of the Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project, beginning with early finalisation of the Detailed Project Report (DPR).

Nepal may also hold talks with India for the development of the West Seti Hydropower Project. Earlier, China was to develop this project. There is an increasing realisation among India and Nepal to expedite the process of energy and border connectivity cooperation. Also, in India's "Act East Policy" and "First neighbourhood policy", energy is a core component.

Nepal appreciated the fresh approvals granted to Nepal Electricity Authority for the export of substantial amount of power to India. Nepal further invited greater participation of Indian companies in its hydropower development projects. The progress made in 900 MW Arun-III hydro-electric project in Nepal was also noted.

India welcomed Nepal's decision to join the International Solar Alliance and became the 105th country to be a signatory to the Framework Agreement of the ISA.

Modi and Deuba had also inaugurated passenger rail services between Jaynagar in India and Kurtha in Nepal. The Hindu pilgrimage centre of Janakpur Dham, considered to be the birthplace of Ramayan's Sita, will be one of the main attractions of the Jaynagar-Kurtha section rail link between the two special neighbours. This link will be the first broad gauge passenger rail service in Nepal. The beginning of the Jayanagar-Kurtha rail line is a part of priority to trade and cross-border connectivity initiatives for a smooth, hassle-free exchange of people between the two countries. The link bis part of an overall strategy for improved border management, planned and integrated development of border areas and infrastructure in a selective and phased manner.

The Prime Ministers reviewed the progress in implementation of Indian projects in Nepal, including the cross-border rail-link projects connecting (a) Jayanagar-Kurtha-Bijalpur-Bardibas (b) Jogbani-Biratnagar (c) Raxaul-Kathmandu. India and Nepal are mulling at least five different cross-border railway lines. Nepal assured its full support in resolving bottlenecks and facilitating the time-bound completion of all India-assisted projects, including the National Police Academy at Kavrepalanchowk, the Integrated Check Posts at Nepalgunj and Bhairahawa and the projects under the Ramayana circuit.

The countries welcomed the recent conclusion of the G-to-G Agreement to facilitate the long term supply of fertilizers from India to Nepal and the renewal of the Five-Year General Supply Agreement for supply of petroleum products from India to Nepal.

Energy trade is mutually beneficial to both countries. The trade enables Nepal to sell the surplus energy it produces and opens up an opportunity for it to reduce the burgeoning trade deficit with India. It also ends Nepal's asymmetric dependence on India for energy. Nepal imports all fossil fuel energy from India. In the first six months of the current fiscal year 2021-22, Nepal imported around $1 billion worth of diesel, petrol, and liquefied petroleum gas. It is also important to highlight that in a historical cross-border supply, first transnational fuel pipeline connecting Motihari (India) to Amlekhgunj (later to be extended to Chitwan-Kathmandu) with $3.2 billion support extended by India is operationalised. It is estimated that Nepal can save over Rs 1 billion annually in transport cost. This is expected to generate additional revenue for the government, reduce technical loss, oil theft and road deterioration, would make oil supplies cleaner and cheaper. This pipeline is also expected to reduce the long queues of trucks carrying petroleum products at the Birgunj border. Nearly 1,500 trucks transporting petroleum products to Nepal daily.

India and Nepal also launched Indian RuPay card in Nepal which would open new vistas for cooperation in digital financial connectivity, and is expected to facilitate bilateral tourist flows as well as further strengthen people-to-people linkages between the two countries.

Further, Nepal requested India to provide three additional air connectivity from Mahendranagar, Nepalgunj and Janakpur, and also requested an agreement on near-border operation for the Chinese-constructed Gautam Buddha International Airport, Bhairahawa.

Nepal became an energy surplus country (during monsoon) from July 2021. As a result, it started selling 39 MW of electricity to India via the Indian Energy Exchange. However, there is an "unprecedented opportunity" to expand mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in the power sector. Nepal and India signed a Joint Vision Statement on Power Sector Cooperation in this context. The agreement highlights development of cross-border transmission infrastructure, and bi-directional power trade based on market demand. Based on this, India has allowed Nepal to export an additional 325 MW of electricity from July 2022.2

The Joint Vision Statement on Power Sector Cooperation, which was issued during Deuba's visit could also form a key stepping stone to sub-regional energy trade between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN).

Recently, India also announced its next Ambassador to Nepal, to take over after Vinay Kwatra assumed office as India's Foreign Secretary. He is an official with knowledge of regional dynamics, especially China, to head the mission in Nepal. Recently, Nepal has also appointed its new ambassador to India.

"Modi's talks with his Nepal counterpart Deuba in Lumbini, Nepal on May 16 will have a comprehensive agenda to further expand cooperation in multiple areas including hydropower, connectivity, trade and investment, Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra.

"Return visit in so close succession is a reflection of the closeness of our high-level exchanges as well as of the upward trajectory in our mutually beneficial partnership. The entire scope and landscape of the India-Nepal partnership is very wide and extensive."

It is hoped that Modi's visitwould be a value addition and an important chapter of India-Nepal partnership as it has reshaped high-level political engagement between the two countries. It has also brought normalcy to Nepal's geostrategic debate by bringing India back into the fold.

international

MODI, DEUBA LAY FOUNDATION STONE OF INDIA INT'L CENTRE

Kathmandu | Agencies

Visiting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepali counterpart Sher Bahadur Deuba on Monday jointly laid the foundation stone of the India International Centre for Buddhist Culture and Heritage in Lumbini.

Modi arrived in Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha and a Unesco World Heritage Site, earlier in the day and offered prayers at famous Maya Devi temple to mark the occasion of Buddha Purnima.

Along with Deuba, Modi also participated in the "Shilanyas" ceremony for the construction of the unique centre within the Lumbini Monastic Zone.

The centre is being built at the initiative of the International Buddhist Confederation, New Delhi.

The construction will be undertaken by the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), India, under the auspices of the Lumbini Development Trust with the financial support of the Union Ministry of Culture. The IBC is a Grantee Body under the Ministry. The centre will be the first eNet Zero Emission' building in Nepal. Later, Prime Minister Modi will also deliver an address at a Buddha Jayanti event organised by the Lumbini Development Trust.

PAK WILL TURN INTO SL IF IMRAN IS ARRESTED: EX-MINISTER

Islamabad: Pakistan's former Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed has warned that former Prime Minister Imran Khan is arrested, the country will turn into Sri Lanka which is currently undergoing its worst economic crisis.Rasheed said that the incumbent coalition government had become directionless and was unable to handle the situation, Geo News reported. "The government should call Nawaz Sharif back now."

Rasheed said that if Khan is arrested, the PTI has already devised a strategy to deal with the situation, adding that the country would plunge into a political crisis and would witness a Sri Lanka-like situation. Taking a jibe a the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), a coalition of parties that successfully toppled the PTI-led government through a motion of no-confidence, Rasheed said that Khan had become the nation's hero despite his ouster, Geo News reported. Later on, while addressing a rally in Faisalabad, Rasheed said that the country is soon going to become a defaulter, therefore, state institutions should intervene.

"Shehbaz Sharif, you should address the nation and declare whether you're going to go to the International Monetary Fund or not," he said, adding that the country has fallen short of $6 billion within a month.

Russia to strengthen border with Finland if NATO deploys weapons

Moscow | Agencies

Russia will strengthen its border with Finland if NATO's striking weapons are deployed in the neighbouring country amid the latter's intention to join the military alliance, a top official said in Moscow

"If NATO deploys offensive, striking weapons in Finland, in close proximity to us, we will strengthen our border and increase the presence of Russian troops on the border," Xinhua news agency quoted Viktor Bondarev, chairman of the Defence and Security Committee of the Federation Council, as saying late Sunday.He called Finland's intention to join NATO "disturbing" in a geopolitical sense.Earlier on Sunday, Finnish President Sauli Niinisto and the government's foreign policy committee took an official decision to start the process of the country's application to become a NATO member.

Addressing a joint press conference with Prime Minister Sanna Marin, President Niinisto described the day as historical as a new era is opening.He said the Finnish security is not "a zero-sum game", not directed against anyone.In a phone call initiated by Helsinki on Saturday, Niinisto informed Russian President Vladimir Putin of Finland's decision to seek NATO membership in the next few days.In response, Putin "stressed that abandoning the traditional policy of military neutrality would be a mistake, since there are no threats to Finland's security", adding that it may also have a negative impact on Moscow-Helsinki relations.

2 KILLED, 3 INJURED IN US HOUSTON FLEA MARKET SHOOTING

Houston: Two people were killed and three others critically injured in a shooting at a flea market in Houston, the largest city of the US state Texas, authorities said. The shooting allegedly took place on Sunday due to a fight among the five male victims, the Harris County Sheriff's Office said. The victims all appear to be in their early-to mid-20s and likely knew each other, officials said, noting they do not believe the shooting was random, Xinhua news agency reported.

No innocent bystanders were hurt although the flea market was very busy at Sunday afternoon when the shooting took place. Harris County Sheriff, Ed Gonzalez said it is estimated that there were "thousands" at the flea market when the gun shots were fired.

Two possible suspects were detained and a third was taken to a hospital, according to an ABC News report.

The Sheriff's office said at least two pistols have been recovered from the crime scene.

Finland, Sweden made a grave mistake: Russian Minister

Moscow | Agencies

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said that Finland and Sweden have "made a grave mistake" with their intentions to join the NATO military alliance.

He stressed that Russia would not put up with such a situation and that by doing so, the general level of military tension on the European continent will increase, RT reported.

"They should not have any illusions that we will simply put up with this, just like in Brussels, Washington and other NATO capitals. That is, the general level of military tension will increase, and there will be less predictability in this area. It is a pity that common sense is being sacrificed to some phantom ideas about what should be done in the current situation," Ryabkov was quoted as saying.

The Deputy Foreign Minister called the decision to expand the military alliance another grave mistake with "far-reaching consequences".

"What should I do? This is the level of those who make political decisions today in the respective countries."

Ryabkov's remarks came after Finnish President Sauli Niinisto and the government's foreign policy committee on Sunday took an official decision to start the process of the country's application to become a NATO member.

In a phone call initiated by Helsinki the previous day, Niinisto informed Russian President Vladimir Putin of Finland's decision to seek NATO membership in the next few days.

In response, Putin "stressed that abandoning the traditional policy of military neutrality would be a mistake, since there are no threats to Finland's security", adding that it may also have a negative impact on Moscow-Helsinki relations.

Finland shares a 1,300 km border with Russia.

Sweden has also indicated its intention to join the military alliance in the wake of Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, the BBC reported.

AFGHAN JOURNOS RESTRICTED FROM COVERING SECURITY INCIDENTS

Kabul | Agencies

Afghan journalists have claimed that the Taliban-led government has imposed restrictions on them from covering security incidents in the country.

Jawad Etimad, a journalist who works for an online media outlet, said he was arrested while covering a blast in Kabul city and spent two days in custody.

"They (Taliban) prevented me from making footage. They kicked and punched me, and then they arrested me," TOLO News quoted Etimad as saying.

Another journalist, Farogh Faiz said that whenever there is a security incident in an area, they go to cover it.

"But, unfortunately we are not being allowed cover the incidents," he said.

Meanwhile, the Afghanistan National Journalists Union said restrictions on access to information is not acceptable. "The media has the right to make footage. Whenever there are restrictions on access to information, it is a violation of the law of access to information," Masroor Lutfi, head of the media watchdog, was quoted as saying by TOLO News. According to the Reporters Without Borders, at least 50 media workers were arrested since the Taliban took over the country in August last year until February 2022.

In a report earlier this year, Human Rights Watch said that an estimated 80 per cent of women journalists across Afghanistan have lost their jobs or left the profession sinceAugust 2021, and hundreds of media outlets have closed.

NCP trying to 'weaken' Congress in Maharashtra; party's high command informed: Nana Patole

Congress and Nationalist Congress Party partnered with Shiv Sena in Maharashtra to come to power in 2019 after the state Assembly polls, after the Uddhav Thackeray-led party broke ties with BJP.

Team Absolute | Nagpur

Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole on Monday said he has informed the party high command of the Sharad Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party's alleged attempts to weaken the party in the state.

After the 2019 Maharashtra Assembly Elections, Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena severed relations with the BJP and formed the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government by teaming up with Congress and NCP.

In response to a question from reporters at Nagpur airport, Patole stated that it appears that the NCP has been trying to "weaken" the Congress in Maharashtra for the last two-and-a-half years.

Congress representatives of zilla parishads and other civic bodies don't receive enough funding to do development work, claimed Patole.

The Maharashtra Congress chief said 19 Congress corporators from

the Bhiwandi-Nizampur Municipal Corporation joined the NCP. Besides, the NCP joined forces with BJP earlier this month to elect the president of the Gondia Zilla Parishad, he added.Congress' high command was informed of all these matters during its recent 'Chintan Shivir' in Udaipur, Patole said.

Upon being asked if there had been a discussion within the 'Chintan Shivir' about the selection of the next Congress president, Patole responded that the party's internal elections have already begun.

The process to elect the Congress' national president will probably begin in August or September, he said, adding that party workers want Rahul Gandhi to become their leader.Congress is currently led by Sonia Gandhi.

On Sunday, senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis likened the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra to the Babri mosque, declaring he would not rest until the Shiv Sena-led dispensation is removed from power. When asked about Fadnavis' remarks, Patole replied that this government (MVA) is a democratic one and such remarks illustrate how greedy the opposition party has become for power."I don't want to say much, but using such jumlas and statements for a democratic government is not right," he said.

BJP MLA asks Maha CM details on 'monsoon readiness' plans for Mumbai

Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Nitesh Rane on Monday raised the issue of water-logging that plagues Mumbai during the monsoon and sought to know the monsoon preparedness made by the state government and BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Nitesh Rane on Monday raised the issue of water-logging that plagues Mumbai during the monsoon and sought to know the monsoon preparedness made by the state government and BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation.In a letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Nitesh Rane, the son of Union MSME Minister Narayan Rane, alleged that every year, the BMC makes claims of taking remedial measures, but nothing happens in the field.

As a result, many areas in the city are flooded and there are reports of people losing their loved ones due to water-logging, he said in his letter, sent ahead of the upcoming BMC elections.

"Shiv Sena, ruling the BMC for more than two decades now has no solution to offer to Mumbaikars who suffer from water-logging in the city during monsoons every year. You want to change the face of Mumbai by painting and beautification, but you ignore the main issues completely. This time, a good monsoon is forecast so one can imagine what is in store for Mumaikars," said Nitesh Rane.He brought to the notice of the CM about 386 'danger spots' in Mumbai which are tagged as flooding-prone, of which the sites fall in south central Mumbai's Matunga, Wadala, and Sion which create havoc if there is continuous rainfall.Nitesh Rane said that on an average there are 22 days when Mumbai will experience high tides in the Arabian Sea, and if it simultaneously rains heavily on those days, then the city could face havoc equivalent to the great floods of July 26, 2005 that submerged the country's commercial capital."Besides installing pumps at these flood-prone spots, what else have you done to provide relief to Mumbaikars," questioned the BJP MLA from Kankavli in Sindhudurg district.

He demanded from Thackeray whether the state and BMC have made any advance preparations to resolve these recurring issues and give permanent solutions, or would Mumbaikars have to again suffer and bear floods.

Meanwhile, a senior civic official said that all pre-monsoon works are proceeding at high speed since April and most of it is near completion, though certain chronic or low-lying areas continue to be at risk of water-logging or floods as in the past.

"Besides, in the past few years, the flooding problem is more noticeable owing to the ongoing work of Mumbai Metro lines at various locations, the upcoming Coastal Road Project in south Mumbai, and certain other road projects, but we are taking full counter-measures," said the officer, declining to be identified.

Maharashtra Election Commission Approves 236 Wards For BMC

Maharashtra Election Commission approves 236 wards for Mumbai's civic body BMC. The state election commission (SEC) has distributed the last rundown of ward limits for 236 electing wards in Mumbai after the Supreme Court directed it to schedule for local body decisions in two weeks or less.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As per the latest news Maharashtra Election Commission approves 236 wards for Mumbai's civic body BMC. The state election commission (SEC) has distributed the last rundown of ward limits for 236 electing wards in Mumbai after the Supreme Court directed it to schedule for local body decisions in two weeks or less. Last week, the SEC had asked 14 metropolitan enterprises, including the BMC, to give last warning on the new ward limits by May 17, after which the method involved with drawing reservation lottery and parting the electing roll into each ward will start. BMC

authorities said after a go-ahead from the SEC, the BMC will hold the lottery for reservation of wards, which incorporates half booking for ladies competitors, and furthermore plan elector records. Ideas and protests on them will likewise be welcomed. The BMC had gotten 816 public ideas and protests from residents and ideological groups on change in ward limits and expansion in nine electing wards from 227 to 236.

Maharashtra cumulative vaccination tally crosses 16.60 crore

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In the ongoing vaccination drive, Maharashtra on May 15 has inoculated 16,60,12,869 people.

As per the state government data, 7,14,47,776 individuals aged between 15 and 59 years received their first vaccine dose and 5,77,08,598 received their second dose and 1,66,501 received precaution dose since the inoculation drive for this age group began on May 1, 2021.Similarly, 1,33,61,677 individuals above 60 years have received the first vaccine dose while 1,12,48,453 received their second dose. 15,40,887 of them received their precaution dose.As many as 21,98,445 children in the age group of 12 to 14 years have received their first dose while 8,80,866 received their second dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

So far, 12,95,382 health care workers have been administered the first dose of the vaccine, while 11,90,970 of them have got their second dose. 3,77,880 health care workers have received their precaution dose so far.

Similarly, 21,49,640 front line workers in the state have till now received their first vaccine dose and of them, 20,02,227 got their second dose. 4,43,567 front line workers have received teir precaution dose so far.Meanwhile, Maharashtra on Sunday, May 15 recorded 255 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the number of active cases to 1,518. Besides, 1 COVID-19 death was reported in the day, taking the tally to 1,47,855.

175 patients were discharged in the day, taking the tally to 77,31,467. The recovery rate in the state is 98.11%. The case fatality rate in the state is 1.87%.Out of 8,05,59,971 laboratory samples 78,80,840 have been tested positive (09.78%) for COVID-19 until today.

The Mumbai circle that consists of MCGM, Thane, TMC, Navi Mumbai, KDMC, Ulhasnagar MC, Bhivandi Nijampur MC, Mira Bhayandar MC, Palghar, Vasai Virar MC, Raigad, Panvel MC recorded 191 new cases.The Nashik circle that consists of Nashik, Nashik MC, Malegaon MC, Ahmednagar, Ahmednagar MC, Dhule, Dhule MC, Jalgaon, Jalgaon MC, Nandurbar reported 7 fresh COVID-19 cases.

The Pune circle that includes Pune, PMC, PCMC, Solapur, Solapur MC, Satara recorded 43 new cases.

The Kolhapur circle that includes Kolhapur, Kolhapur MC, Sangli, Sangli MC, Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri reported 4 new case.The Aurangabad circle that consists of Aurangabad, Aurangabad MC, Jalna, Hingoli, Parbhani, Parbhani MC reported 0 fresh cases.The Latur circle that consists of Latur, Latur MC, Osmanabad, Beed, Nanded, Nanded MC recorded 2 fresh cases.The Akola circle that includes Akola, Akola MC, Amaravati, Amaravati MC, Yawatmal, Buldhana, Washim recorded 2 fresh cases. Nagpur circle that includes Nagpur, Nagpur MC, Wardha, Bhandara, Gondia, Chandrapur, Chandrapur MC, Gadchiroli --reported 6 fresh cases.

How Macro on iPhone 13 Pro helped Kolhapur techie click winning image

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Software engineer Prajwal Chougule from Kolhapur, Maharashtra who last month won Apple's 'Shot on iPhone Macro Challenge' for his stunning image showing dew drops on a spiders web, said on Monday that Macro on iPhone 13 Pro's Ultra-wide lens allowed him to achieve this feat.

Chougule's winning image is now live on a hoarding in Mumbai at a prominent location -- The Bandra Worli Sea Link.

"Macro is a very interesting yet equally challenging genre of photography. Apart from choosing a unique subject, I think the most essential aspects for making an excellent image are light, composition, a clean contrasting background, and patience," Chougule told IANS.

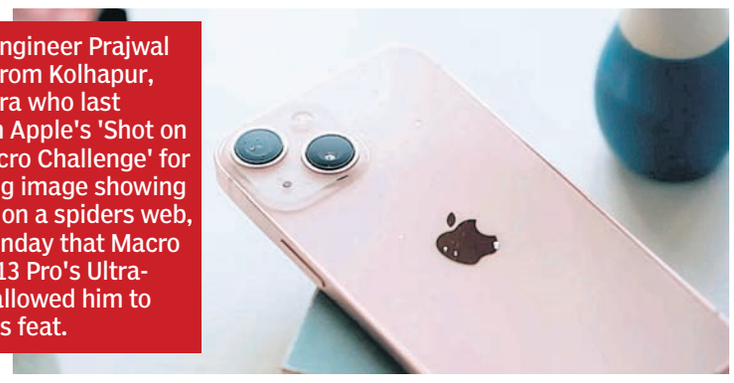
"Macro on iPhone 13 Pro's Ultra-wide lens allowed me to closely explore this dramatic world and witness a wide range of minuscule details in nature," he added.

This year, top 10 winners were from China, Hungary, India, Italy, Spain, Thailand, and the US -- highlighting the global and diverse community of iPhone photographers.

A panel of expert judges from the industry and Apple reviewed worldwide submissions and selected 10 winning photos.

Mumbai-based Apeksha Maker was one of the judges, who is co-founder of commercial photography firm titled 'The House Of Pixels'.

Software engineer Prajwal Chougule from Kolhapur, Maharashtra who last month won Apple's 'Shot on iPhone Macro Challenge' for his stunning image showing dew drops on a spiders web, said on Monday that Macro on iPhone 13 Pro's Ultra-wide lens allowed him to achieve this feat.



Prajwal started with street photography and then moved to a more minimalistic style, as he likes isolating his subject to avoid clutter.

"I am a nature lover and love going on early morning walks, with my iPhone 13 Pro. The 'golden hour' brings the best out of nature and is a photographer's delight," said Chougule.

"Dew drops on a spider's web caught my attention and I was fascinated how the dry spider silk formed a necklace, on which the dew glisten like pearls. It felt like a piece of art on nature's canvas," he added.

MAN ARRESTED FOR RAPING MINOR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Vasai police in Maharashtra arrested a 34-year-old man Sunday for allegedly kidnapping and raping a 11-year-old girl who had gone missing on Saturday, officers said. The accused was later produced in court. The girl had run away from home after a fight with her parents and was kidnapped by the man while she was on her way back home, they said. According to the police, the girl's parents approached them at 1.30 am on Sunday to register a missing complaint. They said she ran away on Saturday evening around 4 pm after being scolded. The girl reached the railway station and took a local train to Mumbai before deciding to return home, officers said. She took a local train back home from Dadar railway station and reached at 2 am on Sunday. At the station, the police said, she ran into the accused Arif Shaikh, 34, who took her to his residence and allegedly raped her, before leaving her on the road. The girl managed to reach home at 3.30 am. She then revealed her ordeal to a woman constable. Medical examination confirmed that the girl was sexually assaulted, a police officer said. Following this, four teams were formed to nab the accused and the officers traced the accused within 12 hours of the incident using CCTV footage, the police said.

An FIR has been registered against Shaikh, who is unmarried and works in a mutton shop, under sections 363 (kidnapping), 376A and 376B (rape) under the Indian Penal Code and sections 4 and 8 (sexual assault) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act, they added.

MUMBAI'S KANHERI CAVES TO COME ALIVE WITH 3D VIRTUAL TOURS

Mumbai: Mumbai's ancient centre of learning, the Kanheri Caves - located on hills deep inside the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Borivali - will now come alive with a 3D virtual tour of its sprawling monastic complex along with an Interpretation Centre. The newly-inaugurated Interpretation Centre will facilitate visitors' engagement by highlighting the outstanding features and uniqueness of the principal caves with the help of 11 illustrative panels.

The trail map of Kanheri Caves, situated on several hills around 1,550 feet tall, will help visitors save time and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is finalising a 3D virtual tour of the entire complex. Launching a host of tourist amenities here on Monday, Union Tourism Minister G. Kishan Reddy said Kanheri Caves are a part of our ancient heritage as they provide evidence of evolution and our past. "It's a privilege to inaugurate the works here on the occasion of Buddha Purnima today... Lord Buddha is relevant even today in addressing challenges such as conflict and climate change," he said.

Stressing on the PPP model for protesting, preserving and propagating the heritage treasures for the future, he said that Indian Oil Foundation is providing the upgraded tourist facilities - a pavilion, a custodian quarter, booking office, landscaping, etc, here in collaboration with the ASI.

80-HOUR REGIME: AJIT PAWAR, FADNAVIS 'KO GUSSA KYUN AATA HAI'

Thirty months after BJP's Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar suddenly took oath as Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister respectively, in the morning of November 23, 2019, that incident continues to haunt and embarrass them.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Thirty months after BJP's Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar suddenly took oath as Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister respectively, in the morning of November 23, 2019, that incident continues to haunt and embarrass them.Despite their best efforts to chase away the ghost of that clandestine swearing-in ceremony at Raj Bhavan that morning, it keeps popping up frequently in the most unexpected ways -- this time raked up by none other than Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray himself at his huge rally on May 14.

Replying to the Bharatiya Janata Party's criticism, Thackeray declared that he allied with the Congress (and NCP) openly, not in an 'early morning' oath-taking ceremony of the 80-hour-long two-man regime -- and his words pierced the target.Willy-nilly, the CM also hinted at the 'real secret' behind why the Central probe agencies like the CBI, ED, NCB, I-T and the NIA keep hounding only the Shiv Sena and Nationalist Congress Party leaders for over two years.The Shiv Sena President thundered saying if the BJP and MNS do not stop their vicious politics, hounding by the Central agencies, lodging false cases against the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government leaders or their families, then "we won't forgive or spare you".

"Tomorrow, they will go after Dawood (Ibrahim Kaskar) but if he joins them, he will be made a cabinet minister... If that (2-man govt) 'experiment' had succeeded, then people like Anil Dashmukh or Nawab Malik would have been in your good books," said Thackeray amid applause.As the MVA government trudges to the mid-way mark in its five year term, BJP's Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis continues to cry over the spilt milk, his 'birth-right' to power that he was unceremoniously deprived of after the 2019 Assembly elections.The Ajit Pawar-Fadnavis duo has been lampooned and ridiculed since that indiscretion in Raj Bhavan, sans any trappings, but with the drapes drawn tightly to keep off peeping-toms prying at the political hustle enacted that dawn when the groggy state was engaged in its morning ablutions.Once, displaying rare courage, Fadnavis confessed that "it should not have happened", and again hammered Thackeray for 'backstabbing BJP' to grab power with the help of the Congress-NCP.

Even the much-pilloried Ajit Pawar, painted as a 'black sheep', feebly tried to justify the swearing-in event, saying it was not in the early morning as speculated, but "at 8 a.m.", though later the NCP hugged him and rewarded him with the same post as Fadnavis did for 80 hours!Wily Uncle and NCP President Sharad Pawar also never missed an opportunity to take a swipe at the dawn ceremony in his characteristic style.In late-2020, when Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari published a coffee table book, Pawar wrote to him how everything was there in his coffee table book "except a particular swearing-in ceremony."

Congress state President Nana Patole also took a potshot saying Ajit Pawar was to "explain" it at an appropriate time, but has nothing till date."So much water has flowed under the bridge... We 3 parties are now working together, the government is running well... Why do you keep raising it repeatedly," an irked Ajit Pawar said of that 80-hour fling, Monday.There have been heated exchanges inside the Maharashtra legislature and outside with the MVA leaders laughing and leering at that morning venture while livid unrepentant BJP leaders shielding it.

NICOLA COUGHLAN REVEALS 'BRIDGERTON 3' WILL FOLLOW COLIN AND PENELOPE'S LOVE STORY

The duo's love story is the subject of the fourth book in Julia Quinn's Bridgerton series, Romancing Mister Bridgerton.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Irish actress and 'Bridgerton' star Nicola Coughlan recently made a huge revelation about the American period drama show, which is based on Julia Quinn's collection of novels.

Nicola, who plays Penelope Featherington and her alter ego Lady Whistledown, whose identity was revealed at the end of season 1, said that the upcoming season will follow her character Penelope Featherington and Colin Bridgerton (played by Luke Newton) as their friendship potentially blooms into something more all while balancing her double life as Lady Whistledown, reports 'Deadline'. The actress was speaking as a panellist at Netflix's FYSEE Space's opening night ATAS.

'Deadline' quoted Nicola as she said, "Like Lady Whistledown, I have been keeping a secret for quite some time and I can confirm to you all that season 3 is Colin and Penelope's love story," Coughlan said. "I have kept that secret since two weeks into season 2. This is the first time I am saying it here."

The duo's love story is the subject of the fourth book in Julia Quinn's Bridgerton series, Romancing Mister Bridgerton. The first two seasons of the Netflix TV series followed the first two novels in their original order, focusing on Daphne Bridgerton and Anthony Bridgerton, respectively, and their quests for love.

Shondaland and Netflix already had taken liberty by revealing Lady Whistedown's identity at the end of Season 1; in the books that does not happen until the fourth book which centers on Penelope.

'Deadline' had earlier revealed that Season 3 also will feature Hannah Dodd as Francesca Bridgerton, taking over the role from Ruby Stokes who left and is the lead of another Netflix series, Lockwood & Co. Casting of the new season is already underway.

The panel also included Bridgerton cast members Simone Ashley, Charithra Chandran, series creator executive producer and Season 1&2 showrunner Chris Van Dusen, costume designer Sophie Canale and composer Kris Bowers. It was moderated by actress and host Yvette Nicole Brown.

Britney Spears, fiance Sam Asghari lose their first baby due to miscarriage

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Britney Spears and her fiance Sam Asghari have lost their first baby due to miscarriage. The couple broke the sad news to their fans via Instagram. They announced their pregnancy loss to the world and shared that they'll continue 'trying to expand' their family.

"It is with our deepest sadness we have to announce that we have lost our miracle baby early in the pregnancy. This is a devastating time for any parent. Perhaps we should have waited to announce until we were further along. However we were overly excited to share the good news. Our love for each other is our strength. We will continue trying to expand our beautiful family. We are grateful for all of your support. We kindly ask for privacy during this difficult moment," read the statement from the couple. To this, Britney added, "We are grateful for what we have in the process of expanding our beautiful family. Thank you for your support."

Several Hollywood celebrities such as Paris Hilton, Andy Cohen, Gabrielle Union among others have shown their support for the two. "I'm so sorry for your loss sis. Always here for you. Sending you so much love. Love you lots B," Paris Hilton commented.

The singer had confirmed her pregnancy on April 11. "I lost so much weight to go on my Maui trip only to gain it back. I thought, 'Geez what happened to my stomach ???' My husband said, 'No you're food pregnant silly !!!' " she wrote in an Instagram post at that time. "So I got a pregnancy test and uhhhhh well I am having a baby."

After divulging that she has a bun in the oven, Spears announced that she's planning to take a long break from the music industry to focus on herself. When reflecting on her past dealings of "waiting and waiting in those dressing rooms with my dad" as a performer for 14 years, she wrote, "They've ruined the thrill of the business for me 100000% !!!"

"Let's make it a 10 year break !!" the pop star further exclaimed. "With a baby on the way, my thought this morning was, 'I'm so scared to make a mistake ? Will I be thoughtful enough ??? Will I be instinctive enough ???' "

Olivia, Jessie set to reunite for 'Wicked Little Letters'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oscar winning actress Olivia Colman and 'Chernobyl' star Jessie Buckley, who have worked together in the psychological drama 'The Lost Daughter' will be soon reuniting for the comedy film 'Wicked Little Letters', which will be a hot project at the Cannes market, and will be directed by Thea Sharrock, reports 'Deadline'.

As per 'Deadline', The project, which is based on a true story, will see the in-demand Brit and Irish actors play very different neighbours who come together to solve a mystery.

French powerhouse Studiocanal developed the project, is launching sales, and is producing with Graham Broadbent and Peter Czernin of Three Billboards Outside Ebbing Missouri and The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel outfit Blueprint and Colman's South Of The River Pictures.

Buckley will play the fiery Rose Gooding who has little in common with the pious Edith Swan played by Colman aside from them being neighbours in the seaside town of Littlehampton in the 1920s. One day, Edith and others in the town start receiving scandalous letters written with foul language as eccentric as it is obscene, and the finger of suspicion immediately falls on Rose.

As Rose stands to lose her freedom and the custody of her daughter, and outrageous letters continue to blight the town, police officer Gladys Moss begins to suspect something is amiss. Together with a group of resourceful women, Gladys endeavours to solve the mystery, liberate Rose, and catch the real culprit.

'Deadline' quoted Thea Sharrock as she said, "'Wicked Little Letters' is a divine comedy with a profoundly moving core. Hilarious, witty, joyous and based on a true story as relevant today as it was 100 years ago. Watching this film will be like hitting your funny bone; when the tears of pain and laughter are impossible to separate. Olivia Colman is hilarious, brilliant and brave." "In the part of Edith, she will continue to show her extraordinary dexterity as an actor with her unique ability to make us fall in love with her. In Jessie Buckley we have cast the actress everybody wants to see; her ferociously strong energy will explode the character of Rose onto our screens. Following The Lost Daughter our film reunites two of the world's most exciting, accessible, fun and wild actresses", she added. Colman will produce for South Of The River with Ed Sinclair. Studiocanal CEO Anna Marsh, EVP Global Production Ron Halpern and SVP Global Production Joe Naftalin are exec producers for the French studio.

Simu Liu does bhangra on 'Jalebi baby' with Tesher

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Shang-Chi and The Legend of The Ten Rings' star Simu Liu was seen doing bhangra on the popular number 'Jalebi baby' with singer Tesher on stage during an award show. Tesher shared a small clip on Instagram on Monday, where Liu was seen doing the Indian dance form dressed up in a classic black suit. The duo were very well coordinated. As soon as the two finished dancing, the Hollywood star said: "That's how we celebrate Asian heritage."

"Me and @simuliu brought bhangra to the MCU baby!!! Shoutout to the @thejunoawards awards for letting me perform and showcase south asian culture on the biggest music stage in Canada. I'm still shook!!! also NEW MUSIC NEXT MONTH BABYYYY," Tesher wrote.

The video which was put on Instagram early morning currently has 729,000 views and over 138,000 likes on the platform.

BMA 2022: OLIVIA,DRAKE TAKE HOME TOP HONOURS

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Billboard Music Awards returned to Las Vegas for its 2022 edition, delivering a star-studded evening in celebration of music's most chart-topping artists. According to 'Variety', before the awards ceremony aired, Billboard announced many of the night's winners, including Drake, who took home five awards for top artist, male artist, rap artist, rap male artist and rap album.

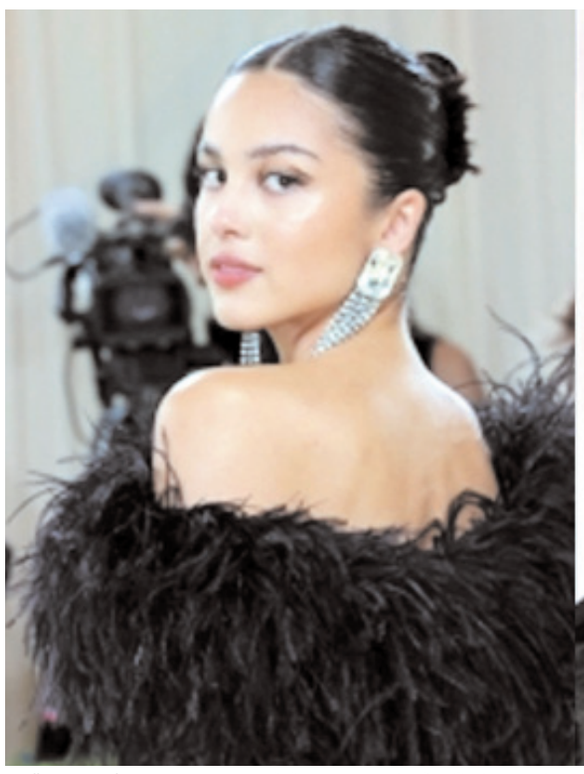
Olivia Rodrigo took home the most awards of the night with seven, including new artist, female artist, Hot 100 artist, streaming songs artist, radio songs artist, Billboard Global 200 artist and Billboard 200 album.

Meanwhile, Ye was honored with Christian artist, gospel artist, Christian album, gospel album Christian song and gospel song.

Sean "Diddy" Combs hosted the awards show, which featured performances from controversial figures Morgan Wallen and Travis Scott.

In an interview with Billboard prior to the ceremony, Diddy said that his mission for the night is to "uncancel the cancelled", reports 'Variety'.

"Travis went through a tragedy; Morgan (used the N-word) while talking to his boy. People make mistakes," Diddy said.



"Now we're moving on with love and respect for everybody that was hurt or affected. It's time to forgive."

The show also included performances from Bryson Tiller, Jack Harlow, Christian Combs, Teyana Taylor, Becky G, Burna Boy, Dan + Shay, Ed Sheeran, Elle King and Miranda Lambert, Florence + the Machine, Latto, Maxwell, Rauw Alejandro and Silk Sonic. Machine Gun Kelly dedicated his acoustic performance to his "wife" Megan Fox and their "unborn child". The Billboard Awards are data-driven, based on a combination of streaming strength, radio airplay, album and track sales, as well as social engagement.

BTS CREATES HISTORY AT BILLBOARD MUSIC AWARDS 2022

Los Angeles | Agencies

BTS aka Bangtan Boys has made history at the Billboard Music Awards 2022. They won three awards including Top Group-Duo, Top Song Sales Artist, Top Selling Song at the event. This makes it 12 BBMAs for them. They also broke the record held by Destiny's Child for 17 long years. The members have thanked ARMYs on social media. BTS aka Bangtan Sonyeondan skipped attending and performing at the event this time. They have their comeback on June 10, 2022. The new album Proof is an anthology with three new tracks. ARMYs flooded them with congratulations on social media.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Doja cat

IPL 2022:

Marsh, Thakur, spinners carry Delhi into top four with 17-run win over Punjab

Brief scores :
Delhi Capitals 159/7 (Mitchell Marsh 63, Sarfaraz Khan 32; Liam Livingstone 3/27, Arshdeep Singh 3/37) beat Punjab Kings 142/9 in 20 overs (Jitesh Sharma 44; Jonny Bairstow 28; Shardul Thakur 4/36, Axar Patel 2/14) by 17 runs

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mitchell Marsh scored a masterful 49-ball 63 while Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav shared four wickets between themselves and Shardul Thakur picked his career-best IPL figures of 4/36 as Delhi Capitals defeated Punjab Kings by 17 runs at the D.Y Patil Stadium on Monday.

After Marsh carried Delhi to 159/7, despite two three-wicket hauls for Arshdeep Singh and Liam Livingstone, Thakur, Axar and Kuldeep triggered a collapse on a slow and low pitch which saw Punjab lose six wickets before reaching the half-way mark of the chase. Though Jitesh Sharma tried his best with a 34-ball 44, Punjab could make only 142/9 in their 20 overs.

This marks Delhi winning two matches in a row for the first time in the tournament and doing the double on Punjab. With their tally in the points table on 14 points, Delhi have also managed to displace Royal Challengers Bangalore from fourth place on net run rate.

In pursuit of 159, Punjab hit five fours and a six in the first four overs. But Anrich Nortje responded by bouncing out Jonny Bairstow. Thakur opened the floodgates for Delhi when he removed Bhanuka Rajapaksa and then Shikhar Dhawan on the last ball of the powerplay. While Rajapaksa's cross-bat swipe went to backward point, Dhawan was cramped for room, giving a healthy edge behind to Pant.

Post-powerplay, Axar grabbed his 100th IPL wicket with a length ball around off-stump skidding into castle Mayank Agarwal through the gate. Livingstone danced down the pitch to dispatch Kuldeep over long-on. But he completely missed the googly and was easily stumped by Pant.

Kuldeep's wrong-un beat Harpreet Brar's inside edge on defence to bowl him through the gate while Rishi Dhawan missed his sweep on an arm-ball from Axar and the ball straightened after pitching to hit top of off-stump.

Jitesh, who earlier survived a run-out chance, waged a lone battle with the bat, swatting Nortje, Ahmed and Thakur for boundaries. Giving him good support was Rahul Chahar, who smacked Ahmed for a four and six. With 39 needed off 18 balls, Rovman Powell produced a moment of brilliance by leaping to his left and throwing the ball back to the field before losing his momentum backwards, saving five runs.

Earlier, David Warner taking strike at the last moment against Livingstone backfired spectacularly as he slashed hard at a length ball outside the off-stump, which bounced and held a little, taking a thick edge to backward point.

From there, Marsh and Lalit shared a 47-run stand off 38 balls for the third wicket. Arshdeep finally made amends by taking out Lalit with a slower bouncer which he ramped straight to backward point. Livingston came back in the 12th over to deceive Pant with a wide delivery, which the left-hander responded by dancing down the pitch, only to be stumped.

The wide outside off-stump fetched another wicket for Livingstone when Rovman Powell tried to clear long-on but the thick outer edge went to long-off. With Livingstone ending his spell, Marsh began to bring out his counter-attacking self, raising his fifty with a slap through the covers off Brar, followed by another four between long-on and deep mid-wicket.

Marsh slammed three boundaries off Arshdeep in the 18th over - two through leg-side and one bouncing past long-off. But his knock ended when his attempted pick-up shot was pouched by deep mid-wicket running in. Punjab gave away just ten runs in the last two overs to get momentum in their favour at the innings break, which was inadequate to seal a win.

BCCI announces squads for Women's T20 Challenge 2022

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Monday announced Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana and Deepti Sharma as captains of Supernovas, Trailblazers and Velocity respectively.

The three teams will compete in the upcoming Women's T20 Challenge to be played from May 23 to May 28 at Pune's MCA stadium.

The best of Indian women's cricket will combine with some of the leading stars from South Africa, England, West Indies and Australia. A total of twelve international players will compete in this year's Women's T20 Challenge.

The All-India Women's Selection Committee picked the three squads, each comprising a total of 16 members.

SUPERNOVAS

Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Taniya Bhatia (VC), Alana King, Ayush Soni, Chandu V, Deandra Dottin, Harleen Deol, Meghna Singh, Monica Patel, Muskan Malik, Pooja Vastrakar, Priya Punia, Rashi Kanojia, Sophie Ecclestone, Sune Luus, Mansi Joshi

Overseas player: Alana King, Deandra Dottin, Sophie Ecclestone, Sune Luus

TRAILBLAZERS

Smriti Mandhana (C), Poonam Yadav (VC), Arundhati Reddy, Hayley Matthews, Jemimah Rodrigues, Priyanka Priyadarshini, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Renuka Singh, Richa Ghosh, S. Meghana, Saiqa Ishaque, Salma Khatun, Sharmin Akter, Sophia Brown, Sujata Mallik, S.B.Pokharkar

Overseas player: Hayley Matthews, Salma Khatun, Sharmin Akter, Sophia Brown

VELOCITY

Deepti Sharma (C), Sneh Rana (VC), Shafali Verma, Ayabonga Khaka, K.P.Navgire, Kathryn Cross, Keerthi James, Laura Wolvaardt, Maya Sonawane, Natthakan Chantham, Radha Yadav, Aarti Kedar, Shivali Shinde, Simran Bahadur, Yastika Bhatia, Pranavi Chandra.

Overseas players: Ayabonga Khaka, Kathryn Cross, Laura Wolvaardt, Natthakan Chantham

SCHEDULE:

May 23 - 7:30 PM - Trailblazers vs Supernovas
May-24 - 3:30 PM - Supernovas vs Velocity
May-26 - 7:30 PM - Velocity vs Trailblazers
May-28 - 7:30 PM - Final

AC Milan on brink of Serie A title

Rome: AC Milan took a giant step towards the Serie A title, defeating Atalanta 2-0 to need just one point to win the league in their last home game of the season.

AC Milan went into the San Siro on Sunday night with a two-point advantage over second-placed Inter Milan, while Atalanta were still fighting for a spot in the European places. Milan's last victory against Atalanta on home turf was in 2014, followed by four draws and three defeats. AC Milan sealed the win 20 minutes later in sensational style, when Theo Hernandez started a move from his own half to surge forward and ride tackles before sending the ball to the bottom corner. Elsewhere, Inter Milan kept their Scudetto hopes alive as Matteo Darmian's opener and Lautaro Martinez's brace saw the Nerazzurri beat Cagliari 3-1.

The title winners will be decided in the final round as AC Milan visit Sassuolo, while Inter Milan host Sampdoria. One point would secure the Rossoneri their first Serie A title since 2011, due to their superior head-to-head record.

Napoli secured third place after crushing Genoa 3-0. Lorenzo Insigne, who is leaving for Toronto FC this summer, waved goodbye to Napoli fans in his last match at the Diego Armando Maradona Stadium, while Genoa follow Venezia to drop into Serie B after 15 years in the top flight. Also on Sunday, Sassuolo sailed away with a 3-1 victory over Bologna.

ALL THE PLAYERS HAVE GONE CRAZY, SLEPT WITH MEDALS AROUND THEIR NECKS, SAYS HS PRANNOY

Mumbai: When they left Indian shores for the Thomas and Uber Cup finals in Bangkok, none of the Indian men's team players had expected that they would win their maiden title.

They had expected to win a medal, probably bronze. But a gold medal was beyond their imagination, and that is the reason why the players went to bed late on Sunday night with medals still around their necks."We never thought we will win the Thomas Cup; we were thinking that we had a good chance of winning a medal but this is beyond our dreams," said HS Prannoy, who won two tie-deciding third singles matches in the quarterfinals and semifinals to propel the Indian team into the final against Indonesia.

"All the players have gone crazy since the win against Indonesia in the final. We had a huge celebratory dinner, spoke to friends and family and just enjoyed ourselves. Most of us slept Sunday night with medals around our necks, It's such a beautiful medal," said Prannoy during an online interaction with select journalists from Bangkok.

The 29-year-old from Kerala said, though they ran onto the court for wild celebrations after Kidambi Srikanth defeated Jonatan Christie in the second singles to seal India's 3-0 victory against Indonesia, the feeling and importance of the achievement only sunk in early on Monday morning.

SHIMRON HETMYER INDICATES HE IS BACK IN RAJASTHAN ROYALS CAMP

Mumbai: Rajasthan Royals' 25-year-old middle-order batter Shimron Hetmyer has probably returned after the birth of his first child in Guyana, and will likely be available for the franchise's remaining matches in IPL 2022.

Hetmyer had left the IPL bio-bubble for the West Indies on May 8 but the left-hander had indicated that he would return to again be part of the team's campaign.With the Sanju Samson-led Royals now currently second on the points table following their emphatic 24-run win against Lucknow Super Giants at the Brabourne Stadium on Sunday, Hetmyer would be a huge asset ahead of the team's last league game against Chennai Super Kings at Brabourne on May 20, and beyond. On Sunday, the Royals urged Hetmyer to return to the side, tweeting, "Gulaabi baalo wale Hettie, laut aao. Hetti bhai phone uthao Mazak nahin hai ab ye (Please return to the side Hetmyer. Pick up the phone; it's not a joke anymore)."

In response, Hetmyer replied, "Idhar hi hoon (I'm here only)," indicating he is back in the team hotel.

Before leaving for Guyana, Hetmyer had played a key role in the Royals overhauling a competitive 189-run total set by Punjab Kings at the Wankhede, winning the match by six wickets with two balls to spare. The West Indian was the more aggressive in his partnership with Devdutt Padikkal, striking an unbeaten 31 off 16 balls embellished with three boundaries and two sixes.

FRENCH LEAGUE

PSG star Mbappe wins best player award for 3rd time

Paris | Agencies

The Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) striker Kylian Mbappe won the French league's best player award for the third time in his career at the 30th UNFP awards ceremony here on Sunday.

The world champion has just been voted best player of the league again for the 2021-2022 season.

"I am very happy, I thank the whole club, my teammates, all those who work at the club, the staff, and of course the President. They helped me enormously to contribute to this third consecutive title. It is important to leave a mark, to always try to make history, and winning collective and individual titles is what counts for any football player. I have the chance to do it, so I am happy," Mbappe told official website of PSG.

Currently the league's top passer (17 assists) and top scorer (25 goals), he is just one match away from completing this double for the first time in French football history. He would also finish as top scorer in the French championship for the fourth consecutive season.

Gigio Donnarumma was voted best goalkeeper by his peers after his first season in the French top flight. Competing with Walter Benitez, Alban Lafont, Pau Lopez and Matz Sels, the young Italian keeper succeeded his team-mate Keylor Navas.

He had already been awarded the Yashin Trophy at the Ballon d'Or ceremony last November, with journalists celebrating him as the best goalkeeper in the world.

"I'm very happy to receive this trophy, and happy to celebrate with the team. I'm happy to be here in Paris, and I hope that next year we will be even better," the European champion told PSGTV.

Ajinkya Rahane to miss England Test after ruled out of IPL

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) opening batter Ajinkya Rahane has been ruled out of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2022 with a serious grade three hamstring injury, which will also keep him out of one-off Test against England in July.

Rahane sustained the injury while batting for Kolkata against Sunrisers Hyderabad at MCA Stadium in Pune on May 14 and didn't come out to field after making 28 runs off 24 balls when the two-time IPL Champions restricted Hyderabad to 123/8 to win by 54 runs, keeping themselves alive in the race for the playoffs.

"Rahane is set to exit the Kolkata Knight Riders bubble on Monday evening. Sources within the Board of Control for Cricket in India said he will be reporting at the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore where he may need more than four weeks of rehab," said a report by Cricbuzz.

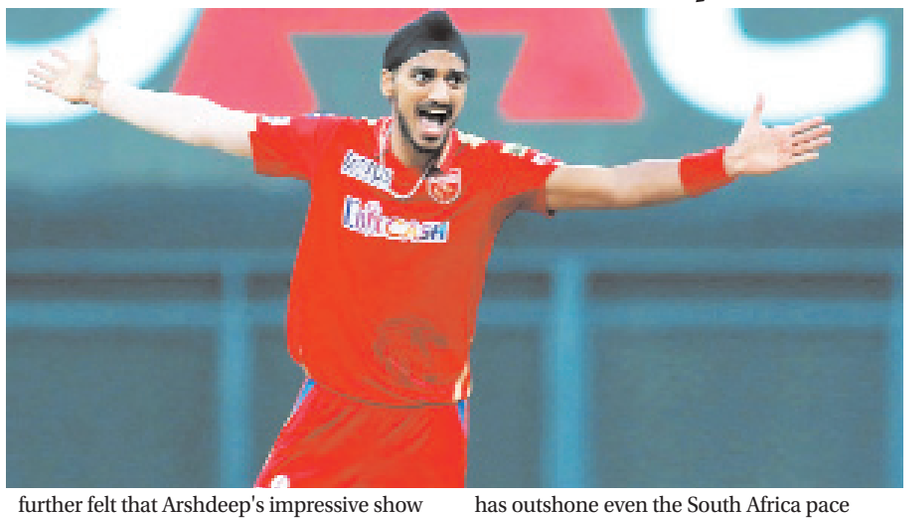
Rahane, who lost his vice-captaincy in the longest format of the game, was last seen in Test cricket action during India's three-match away series against South Africa in January.

He was then left out of the two-match home series against Sri Lanka in March alongside Cheteshwar Pujara as Hanuma Vihari and Shreyas Iyer were given a go.

In seven matches for Kolkata in IPL 2022 after being picked for INR 1 crores in the Mega Auction, Rahane could make just 133 runs at an average of 19 and strike-rate of 103.90. It was Rahane's commitment to continue batting despite being injured caught the eye of team mentor David Hussey and lauded the senior batter for his efforts to bat on.

Keeping Dhoni, Pandya silent in death overs speaks volumes about Arshdeep's talent: Pathan

Team Absolute | Navi Mumbai



Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan has lauded the skill and talent of Punjab Kings left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh for keeping big players like MS Dhoni and Hardik Pandya silent in the death overs, thus proving how special a cricketer the youngster is.

Arshdeep has been a revelation for Punjab in the death overs, possessing an economy rate of 7.14, the best amongst all bowlers in the tournament. "Arshdeep is a special player. He is young, confident and accurate. All these qualities distinguish him from the bowlers of his age. He's keeping big players like MS Dhoni, Hardik Pandya or someone else silent in the death overs and that speaks volumes about the kind of talent he possesses. His growth has been phenomenal," said Pathan on Cricket Live show on Star Sports. Pathan further felt that Arshdeep's impressive show has outshone even the South Africa pace spearhead Kagiso Rabada for the Punjab Kings in IPL 2022. "Despite the presence of a proven international pacer in Kagiso Rabada, an uncapped Indian seamer is getting the recognition proves how good a talent he is. He's going to be the next big thing for Punjab Kings." Lauding Arshdeep's confidence and fearlessness in pressure situations, former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh felt that the young pacer should get a chance to play for the national team soon.

Former Australia batting great Matthew Hayden showered praise on Arshdeep's death-bowling abilities, calling him 'the best young pacer of IPL 2022.' "Arshdeep Singh is the best at the moment in terms of bowling in this Punjab Kings bowling line-up and the best young pacer in this tournament. He's bowling those perfect lengths at the start and even during the death overs."

BIG B'S SAVAGE REPLY TO TROLLS CALLING HIM "BUDHHE"

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan recently had an unpleasant experience on social media as he was trolled for one of his posts where he wished everyone a very good morning at 11:26 a.m.

The 'Shahenshah' actor after putting up the post at 11:26 am, was mercilessly trolled by social media users in the comments section as they thought that Big B lost track of time in an inebriated state.

As the trolls took digs at him for waking up late. He replied personally to many of such comments and revealed that he had been working all night.

The megastar is an avid social media user and frequently shares his ideas with his admirers. On Sunday, Big B shared a post wishing his followers a very Good Morning.

While admirers flooded the comment section of Big B's post with warm wishes, other social media users mocked the actor for greeting a late good morning. One of the comments said, "Abey Buddhe dopahar ho gaye (Old guy, it's afternoon)."

However, Amitabh Bachchan fired back at the troller, saying he hoped no one ever called them a "buddha" when they get old. "I pray to God that no one abuses you when you get old," wrote the actor.

When another social media user joked that Amitabh Bachchan had hoped for sunrise 'a bit early,' the actor responded, "Thank you for your taunt. I was working till late hours, shooting got over early morning. Woke up late, so sent wishes right away. I apologise if you are hurt."

One netizen remarked that Amitabh Bachchan might have consumed local liquor late at night, causing him to wake up late. "I do not drink, make others drink Madhushala," the actor said in Hindi.

Amitabh Bachchan has claimed that he frequently receives notifications for his social media activities. The actor posted on his blog, "There are strict rules and regulations now by the GOI and the ASCI guidelines, I think that is who they are, who have now given ruling that Influencers - a new terminology for them that put up product pictures with a mention or product pictures, to state that they are the sponsors, promotors etc., or in partnership.. else it is becoming illegal .. so several posts of mine have been given notices that the change should be done ... else .. ... ya .. !!".

TRENDING SUMMER ANTHEM WITH 'COOL FOR THE SUMMER'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Popular names such as Tejasswi Prakash, Urvashi Rautela, Rashmi Desai and Avneet Kaur among many others have set the temperature soaring by creating fun reels on Instagram with the track 'Cool for the Summer', a song by international sensation Demi Lovato.

Winner and contestant of 'Big Boss 15' Tejasswi Prakash and Karan Kundra, actress Urvashi Rautela, famous TV actress Rashmi Desai among top influencers like Avneet Kaur, Surabhi Samriddhi, and Arhan Khan AKA Lucky Dancer have jumped onto this trend.

Lovato commented on these reels and expressed her admiration for this trend. 'Cool for the summer' is Lovato's sultry hit from 2015, but thanks to the hip-swaying dance challenge the audio has been trending on reels for more than two weeks and has crossed more than 600k creations on Instagram and has also charted on various streaming platforms.

Katrina Kaif pens love - filled note for hubby Vicky Kaushal

Team Absolute | Mumbai

On the occasion of Vicky Kashaul's birthday, wifey Katrina Kaif Pens down a sweet note with a picture of two enjoying their vacation in New York. While posting the picture Katrina wrote

"New York Wala Birthday My?

Simply put ... ...YOU MAKE EVERYTHING BETTER??"

Along with Katrina, Vicky's dad also wishes his puttar and gave his blessings to him. He shared a collage with Vicky's childhood picture and his recent photo. He captioned the post as, "Wish u a very Happy Birthday Puttar. Always love & blessings. Feeling blessed & proud to have a son like u. Rab Rakha." At the same occasion, Sunny Kaushal, his younger brother, posted a sweet yet amusing image to wish him. The actor posted an unseen snapshot from Vicky and Katrina Kaif's pre-wedding festivities, "Janamdin mubarak ho meri jaan," with a heart emoticon. His industry buddies and admirers flooded the post.

Along with his family members many of Vicky's industry friends have wished him a very happy birthday including Sara Ali Khan, Madhuri Dixit Nene, Neha Dhupia, Anushka Sharma among others.

Aamir's daughter Ira Khan replies to trolls

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Aamir Khan's daughter Ira Khan recently gave a befitting reply to the trolls after they criticised her for wearing a bikini around her father during her 25th birthday celebrations. Responding to the trolls, Ira Khan shared an array of new pictures from her birthday.

Sharing a special message for the trolls, she wrote that she is giving them new content in case they are done hating on her previous pictures. The new pictures show her enjoying pool time with her friends and her boyfriend Nupur Shikhare. She captioned the post, "If everyone is done hating and trolling my last birthday photo dump... here are some more! (sic)." The last picture showed her giving a peck on the cheek of the 'Dangal' actress Fatima Sana Shaikh as they clicked a selfie together. While a lot of people on the Internet flooded Ira's comments section raising questions on her choice of wearing a swimsuit in front of her father, playback singer Sona Mohapatra, who has sung 'Bedardi Raja' from Aamir's 2011 release 'Delhi Belly', came to Ira's defence. She hit back at trolls. Sona wrote, "All the people outraging about Ira Khan's choice of attire or linking it to what Aamir Khan said, did or didn't in the past please note; she is 25. A free, thinking, adult woman. Is exercising her choices. Doesn't need her dad's approval or yours. BUZZ off. #Patriachy #India."

KANGANA RANAUT CALLS STAR KIDS 'UBLE HUE ANDE'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

While talking about what makes south cinema more successful than Bollywood, Kangana said that the audience finds it difficult to connect with star kids because they study abroad, talk in English and watch Hollywood films. The way they have a connect with their audience, it is very strong. I wouldn't say fans, it's much more than that. With us what happens is that their (stars') kids go abroad to complete their studies. They talk in English, watch only Hollywood films. They eat only with knives and forks and talk differently. So, how will they connect? Dekhne me bhi ajeeb se aise lagte hai jaise uble hue ande (They even look weird like boiled eggs). Their entire look has changed so people cannot relate. I don't mean to troll anyone," Kangana told.

Tushar Kalia on his engagement with Triveni Barman

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Well-known dancer and choreographer Tushar Kalia took to his Instagram handle to announce his engagement with his lady love Triveni Barman.

Tushar, who had participated in dance reality show 'Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa' and was also the stage director of the reality show 'India's Got Talent', is now all set to be seen on 'Khatron Ke Khiladi 12'. He made his career as a choreographer in Bollywood with the movie 'Ae Dil Hai Mushkil'.

He shared two beautiful pictures with his fiance Triveni and wrote: "To new beginnings @trivenibarman Send us your love and blessings #engaged #gratitude". The couple looks adorable in traditional yellow outfits. Triveni also mentioned on her social media handle with a heart emoji : "You are the best thing that ever happened to me" Many of their fans and friends congratulated them. Filmmaker Karan Johar commented: "Badhaiyan!". Actress Sana Saeed also said: "Awwwwww congratulations". Actor Pulkit Samrat mentioned: "Congratulationsssssss!!!!!!!" and Filmmaker Shashank Khaitan also commented: "Congrats Bhai."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY

Sandeepa Dhar

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