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INTERIM ORDER TO CONTINUE, GYANVAPI MOSQUE SUIT TRANSFERRED TO DISTRICT JUDGE: SC

DATES TO BE CONTINUED!

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday transferred proceedings of the suit by Hindu parties seeking worshiping rights at Varanasi's Gyanvapi mosque to the district judge, while ordering its May 17 interim order to protect the 'Shivling', purportedly discovered during the survey, and free access to Muslims for 'namaz' should continue.

A bench, headed by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and comprising Justices Surya Kant and P.S. Narasimha, said the District Judge will decide the matter on priority.

The bench said taking in view of complexity of the issues involved in the suit and the sensitivity, the suit before Civil Judge, Senior Division, Varanasi should be tried before a senior and experienced judicial officer of the Uttar Pradesh Higher Judicial Service.

It said the May 17 interim order will remain operational for eight weeks, after the District Judge's decision in the matter, so as allow the aggrieved party to appeal against the decision.

The bench noted that the District Judge has an experience close to 30 years and would be able to handle the matter.

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, representing the Committee of Management, Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Varanasi, contended that the status quo of 500 years had already changed by sealing the premises and added that the status quo, which existed before, must continue.



The top court said its interim order on May 17 would balance the interests of contesting parties.

Ahmadi said there is a narrative being created and commission reports are being leaked selectively. "This is disturbing communal harmony. Don't look at this from the point of one suit alone. Look at the ramifications across the country," he added.

The top court also took a serious view on the leak of a report on the video survey of the mosque. "Only the trial court can open the report... there is a need to maintain calm on the ground and not allow nerves to be frayed with selective leaks."

As Ahmadi questioned the

appointment of Commissioner, as it was barred under the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, the bench said that there are various nuances of the Act which will fall for consideration.

"The ascertainment of religious character is not barred under the Act. The ascertainment of religious character of a place may not fall foul of Section 3 or 4 of the Act. These are matters where we will not hazard an opinion. We are in a dialogue."

The top court also directed the District Magistrate, Varanasi to make arrangements for 'wuzu' (ritual ablutions), for Muslims before offering namaz.

The top court has scheduled the

matter for further hearing in July.

The trial court's order for survey of the area by appointing court commissioners was questioned by the masjid committee, which moved the apex court challenging the Allahabad High Court's April 21 order. The high court had declined to intervene into the matter. The survey was conducted on May 14, 15 and 16.

The masjid committee contended that the suit is all about changing the character of a shrine which is a mosque, and this is not maintainable. However, the top court had cited that the suit filed before the Varanasi court was not title suit but one for injunction against worship at 'Shringar Gauri'.

Inflation is a serious concern for families

The retail inflation rate based on the consumer price index was at 7.79 per cent in April, while the wholesale rate of inflation was an even more daunting 15.2 per cent, as per the statistics released by the Reserve Bank of India.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A majority of Indian families are feeling the pinch of rising expenses due to inflation and seem convinced that growing expenses in the last one year are becoming difficult to manage, as per an IANS-CVoter survey.

This was revealed during an exclusive survey in the four states -- Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala -- and the Union Territory of Puducherry, where Assembly elections were held in 2021.

A series of questions and a diverse range of issues were asked to gauge public opinion on social, political and economic challenges confronting the country. That Indian families are deeply worried about rising expenses and inflation does not come as a surprise as latest government data confirms this.

In Tamil Nadu, almost two-third of the respondents said that they were finding it difficult to manage rising expenses. Another 22 per cent said that while expenses had indeed gone up, they were just about able to manage.

In neighbouring Kerala, about 62 of the respondents stated that they were finding it difficult to manage rising expenses while another 25 per cent were of the opinion that while expenses had gone up, they were still manageable.

The situation seems equally dire in other states too. In Assam, two out of three respondents stated that they were finding it very difficult to manage rising expenses while another 18 per cent claimed that while expenses had gone up, they were just about able to manage. West Bengal seems to be the most adversely affected of the states. As many as 74 per cent of the respondents claimed that they were finding it very difficult to manage grow-



"DON'T FEEL GUILTY": RAJNATH TO BJP WORKERS OVER RISING INFLATION

Pune: Stating that inflation has affected even rich countries like the United States, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said BJP workers should not have any "guilty conscious" about it.

Global supply chains were disrupted due to the Russia-Ukraine crisis, and import and export were affected, Singh said.

"In this situation, it is obvious that it will have impact on any country. You will be surprised to know that in US, which is the richest country, inflation is highest in the last 40 years. At least India is better off. We should not have a guilty conscious," he added.

ing expenses. Another 16 per cent stated that they found expenses rising but were able to manage. Indian families seem to be trapped in a vicious cycle of rising expenses even as incomes have either gone down or remained stagnant since the last one year, as per the survey.

Jet Airways to fly soon, DGCA allows operations

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Civil aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday granted the air operator certificate (AOC) to Jet Airways, bringing the grounded airline yet another step closer towards relaunching of its services.

The Naresh Goyal-founded airline operated its first commercial flight in May 1993 but had ceased operations in early 2019 due to some financial difficulties. Before this, Jet Airways flew to over 65 destinations in India and across the world with 124 narrow-body and wide-body aircraft.

Subsequently, Jet Airways underwent the corporate insolvency resolution process under the Indian Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and as per orders of the National Company Law Tribunal's Mumbai Bench.



The resolution plan for Jet Airways submitted by the Jalan Kalrock Consortium was approved. Earlier this month, the airline had conducted test flights to ensure its aircraft's safety. With the receipt of the air operator certificate, the Jalan Kalrock Consortium has fulfilled all the conditions precedent under their NCLT-approved Resolution Plan. The process concluded with the airline having successfully conducted a number of proving flights between May 15

and May 17, with key DGCA officials on board.

The revalidation of AOC enables Jet Airways to resume its scheduled commercial operations in India. This significant milestone also paves way for the comeback of the iconic airline in a new avatar with fresh funding, changed ownership, and new management. Jet Airways intends to recommence commercial operations in the next quarter of this year (July-September 2022).

DEPRESSION CROSSES OVER MYANMAR COAST, ANDAMANS TO SEE RAIN

New Delhi: After crossing the coast, the depression over south coastal Myanmar moved north-northeastwards with a speed of 14 kmph through the day bringing widespread rainfall in the region, ab IMD bulletin said. At 5.30 p.m., the system lay centred over south coastal Myanmar and adjoining northwest Thailand, about 70 km north-northeast of Mawlamyine (Myanmar), 170 km east of Yangon (Myanmar), and 160 km west-southwest of Thoen (Thailand).

Light to moderate rainfall is expected at most places with heavy rainfall at isolated places very likely over Andaman Islands during next 24 hours.

OLA, UBER GET NOTICE FOR UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES

The primary issues raised in the notice are deficiency in service which includes lack of proper response from customer support, driver refusing to take payment by online mode and insisting for cash only, higher amount charged despite going on the same route previously at a lesser charge, unprofessional driver behaviour and driver refusing to switch on AC when the consumer is promised AC ride on the app.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) on Friday issued notices to Ola and Uber for unfair trade practices and violation of consumer rights, slamming the ride-hailing platforms over lack of proper consumer grievance redressal mechanism, deficiency in service, unreasonable levy of cancellation charges and fairness of algorithm used to charge fares. As per the



data from the National Consumer Helpline (NCH), 2,482 grievances were registered by consumers against Ola and 770 grievances were registered against Uber in the month of April, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs said in a statement. Last week, the CCPA, under its Chief Commissioner Nidhi Khare, warned ride-hailing platforms like Uber and Ola to fix rising consumer complaints regarding ride cancellations, cancellation charges, random surge pricing, and long waiting times, or else face penal action. The

Department of Consumer Affairs, in a meeting with ride-hailing companies Ola, Uber, Rapido, Meru Cabs and Jugnoo, directed them to become convergence partner in the National Consumer Helpline, to enable better grievance redressal for consumers and also compliance with Consumer Protection Act, 2019 and E-commerce Rules. The notice mentioned unreasonable levy of cancellation charge wherein users are not shown the amount of time within which cancelling a ride is permitted.

► THE IT PROFESSIONALS IN INDIA ARE IN NEAR UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO THEIR COMPANY THAT THEY CAN BUILD AND RUN AI PROJECTS WHEREVER THEIR DATA RESIDES.

► MORE THAN 3 IN 4 IT PROFESSIONALS IN INDIA (78 PER CENT) SAID THAT AT LEAST A QUARTER OF THE WORKFORCE AT THEIR COMPANY REQUIRES ACCESS TO COMPANY DATA TO MAKE DECISIONS.

► A MAJORITY OF IT PROFESSIONALS IN INDIA (93 PER CENT) AGREED THAT BEING ABLE TO EXPLAIN HOW THEIR AI ARRIVED AT A DECISION IS IMPORTANT TO THEIR COMPANY.

Lack of strategy, skills biggest barriers for AI adoption in India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Seven out of 10 IT professionals in India think that the lack of a strategy is the largest barrier companies face in developing explainable and trustworthy artificial intelligence (AI), a new report said on Thursday.

Another greatest barrier to successful AI adoption is limited skills, expertise or knowledge (38 per cent) for organisations exploring or deploying AI in the country.

The report saw three trends clearly emerging in India.

First, automation use cases are at the forefront of AI adoption as businesses are using AI to stay competitive and operate more efficiently.

While 57 per cent of IT professionals in India said that their organisation has actively deployed AI in their business, over a quarter (27 per cent) indicate that their organisation is exploring the



use of AI. Over 50 per cent of IT professionals in India at companies exploring or deploying AI say their organisation plans to invest in research and development (56 per cent), building proprietary

AI solutions (54 per cent), and reskilling and workforce development (52 per cent) in the next year.

Globally, the AI adoption was up 4 percentage points compared with 2021.

CBI raids Lalu Prasad, family premises, RJD cries foul

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a latest development in connection with land-for-job scam, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has recovered a few incriminating documents from the premises belonging to former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad and his family members.

The CBI has conducted raids on Friday morning in connection with the matter at 16 locations. The probe agency has registered a case against Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Prasad, then Union Railway Minister, his wife Rabri Devi, two daughters, and 15 others. "During the period 2004-2009, Lalu Prasad had obtained pecuniary advantages in the form of transfer of landed property in the name of his family members in lieu of appoint-



ment of Substitutes in Group D Post in different Zones of Railways," the official said.

A number of residents of Patna -- themselves or through their family members sold and gifted their land in Patna in favour of the family members of Prasad -- a former Bihar Chief Minister, and a private company controlled by them.

"Whenever BJP realises that its government is shaking, political mobilisation is going on against them, then they try to create fear. But, neither we nor they (in a probable reference to Nitish Kumar's JD-U) or people of Bihar would be afraid of it."

Manoj Jha, RJD Leader



HIGH SEA DRUG BUST

DRI, COAST GUARD SEIZE 218 KG HEROIN OFF LAKSHWADEEP

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a joint operation titled "Khojbeen", the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence and the Indian Coast Guard maintained patient vigil on rough seas for over 10 days to bust an international drug syndicate and seized 128 kg heroin smuggled on two boats off the coast of Lakshadweep Islands, officials said on Friday.

Two boats "Prince" and "Little Jesus" have been seized and few persons have been detained.

The operation was launched by the DRI after it developed specific intelligence, over a period of several months, that two Indian boats would be sailing from the coast of Tamil Nadu and would receive narcotics in



huge quantity somewhere in the Arabian Sea. Accordingly, joint operation "Khojbeen" was launched on May 7.

Under the operation, Coast Guard ship Sujeet, with DRI

officials onboard, maintained a close watch near the country's Exclusive Economic Zone.

"After several days of continuous search and monitor-

ing amidst very rough seas, two boats 'Prince' and 'Little Jesus' were noticed moving towards India. Both the Indian boats were intercepted on May 18 off the coast of Lakshadweep Islands. On questioning some of the crew members in the boats confessed that they had received heroin in huge quantity on the high seas and that they had concealed it in both the boats. In view thereof, both the boats were escorted to Kochi for further proceedings," said a DRI official.

A thorough search of both the boats was carried out at the Coast Guard District Headquarters at Kochi, which resulted in recovery of 218 1-kg packets of heroin.

"The operation was meticulously planned and executed by the DRI and the ICG and entailed extensive sur-

veillance in the rough seas over a period of several days. Seized drug appears to be of high-grade heroin and its value in the international illicit market is estimated to be around Rs 1,526 crore," the official said.

In the recent past, both agencies have undertaken some significant anti-drug trafficking operations.

This is the fourth major drug bust by the DRI in the past one month. Earlier, it recovered 205.6 kg of heroin from a commercial import consignment of gypsum powder at the Kandla port on April 20, 396 kg of heroin-laced threads at Pipavav port on April 29, and 62 kg heroin at Air Cargo Complex, IGI New Delhi on May 10, totally valued at approximately Rs 2,500 crore in the international illicit market.

Consumer courts can impose cost on parties on adjournments: Govt

Team Absolute | New Delhi

To ensure speedy redressal of consumer complaints, the Department of Consumer Affairs on Friday asked Registrars and Presidents of national, state, and district Commissions not to grant adjournment for more than one month to ensure adhering to the timelines provided under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

In case of any delay in resolving the complaints beyond two months, due to adjournment requests, the Commission may consider imposing costs on parties, it said.

In his letter, Consumer Affairs Secretary, Rohit Kumar Singh emphasised on inexpensive, hassle-free and speedy justice to the consumers.

"Frequent and long adjournments not only denies a consumer his right to be heard and seek redressal, but also takes away the spirit of enactment which the legislature intended. Therefore, Consumer Commissions are requested to ensure that in no circumstance adjournment for a long period is provided. Further, in case of more than two requests of adjournment by either parties, Consumer Commissions may, as a measure of deterrence, impose costs on parties," he wrote.

Drawing attention of the Consumer Commissions on the procedure on admission of a complaint as provided under Section 38(7) of the Act, he said that every complaint is required to be disposed of as expeditiously as possible and endeavour shall be made to



decide the complaint within a period of three months from the date of receipt of notice by opposite party where the complaint does not require analysis or testing of commodities, and within five months if it requires analysis or testing of commodities.

Further, it said that the Act also stipulates that no adjournment shall ordinarily be granted by Consumer Commissions unless sufficient cause is shown and the reasons for grant of adjournment have been recorded in writing.

The Commissions are also empowered to make such orders as to the costs occasioned by the adjournment.

The Department has also written to the Chief Secretaries of all states/UTs and all Consumer Commissions laying stress on encouraging consumers to file their complaints through the e-daakhil portal.

We must fight dynasty politics to save democracy: Modi



Team Absolute | Jaipur

Virtually addressing a meeting of BJP's national office-bearers here, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday accused the Congress, without naming the party, of giving prominence to dynasty politics, which he termed as dangerous for democracy.

He said that the parties indulging in dynasty politics only want to take the country

backward, as their life begins with the family and ends with the family. During his over 40-minute speech, the Prime Minister urged the BJP leaders to add new members to the party whose family has not been in politics. "We have to give such people a chance in the BJP, so connect them with the party. We have to remember that only the BJP can restore the trust of those who have been deceived by family politics. Dynasty poli-

tics has given rise to corruption in the country. To save democracy, we have to fight against dynasty politics," Modi said. He added that those engaged in dynasty politics are acting against Mahatma Gandhi's vision.

"But even amid dynasty politics, the lotus has bloomed. After Independence, family politics has caused great damage to the country. Parties only took the name of Mahatma Gandhi, but their works were contrary to his vision.

"Gandhiji had called for self-reliance, but for years the country remained dependent on foreign countries. But today the country is moving on the path of self-reliance, and the BJP is responsible for this." The Prime Minister further said that politics of development should be encouraged.

Centre to begin Har Ghar Dastak 2.0 to accelerate Covid vax drive



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Underlining the urgent need for an intensive push to Covid vaccination across the country to accelerate the recent placid momentum, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan on Friday advised all states and union territories to plan for a two-month long 'Har Ghar Dastak' campaign 2.0, during June-July with detailed district, block and village levels plans, officials said.

The objective of the 'Har Ghar Dastak 2.0' Abhiyan is to vaccinate and saturate the eligible population groups for first, second and

precaution doses through door-to-door campaigns, with focused campaigns for old age homes, schools and colleges including the out of school children, prisons, brick kilns, etc.

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has flagged the concerns regarding the considerably slow pace of vaccination across states and UTs, and has urged them to significantly expedite the pace towards full vaccination coverage by saturating all eligible beneficiaries.

This was communicated to all states and UTs by Union Health Secretary as he reviewed the status of Covid vaccination with Health Secretaries and Mission Directors of states and UTs, through a video conference on Friday.

The sub-optimal coverage of persons aged below 60 years with precaution dose which renders them vulnerable, along with considerably slower speed of coverage in the 12-14 years cohort was pointed out in the meeting.

States and UTs were urged to undertake effective monitoring with micro-plans based on due-lists of all eligible beneficiaries.

TIMID & DOCILE RESPONSE TO CHINA WON'T DO: RAHUL

New Delhi: After reports of China building a bridge along the Indian frontier emerged, Rahul Gandhi on Friday accused the Centre of a "timid and docile" response.

Rahul said in a tweet, "China builds 1st bridge on Pangong, GOI: We are monitoring the situation. China builds 2nd bridge on Pangong, GOI: We are monitoring the situation. India's national security & territorial integrity is non-negotiable. A timid & docile response won't do. PM must defend the nation," he said.

The Congress has slammed the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for saying that the Defence Ministry will reply to this.

MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said on Thursday: "I have already said that the regular talks we have been having about LAC are ongoing. Chinese Foreign Minister also came and we had talks with him. We conveyed to him our expectations. You may recall that our External Affairs Minister (EAM) also explained how the conversation took place and the issues that were discussed."

Bagchi added that reports of a bridge is a military issue and he will not be able to comment on the matter.

"And as we have said, we believe the entire area is occupied. Ministry of Defence will be able to tell you better the details and its implications. But if there is anything else to share, we will tell you," he said.

"I think we have been pretty clear, and I think we will be saying the same thing repeatedly. We have had various rounds of conversations with the Chinese side, at different levels, diplomatic and military."

ARUNACHAL LANDSLIDES TOLL RISES TO EIGHT



Itanagar | Agencies

With the recovery of the body of a 35-year-old woman in Itanagar on Friday, the death toll in the different

landslides in Arunachal Pradesh has risen to eight, police said.

The body of Kusum Rai was retrieved from the debris behind the Punjabi Dhaba in the state capital following six days of hectic search by the National Disaster Response Force.

After the Sunday night landslides, the bodies of Nagen Barman, 50 and Tapas Rai, 15 were recovered and Rai was feared dead after her house was damaged by the landslide.

In another incident, two labourers of the Public Works Department were also killed after a landslide at Ganga-July Basti Road on Monday while they trying to rescue a motorcycle stuck in the debris.

The successive landslides also killed three more people in Kurung Kumey district on Tuesday while another is still missing.

Arunachal Pradesh witnessed heavy pre-monsoon rainfall for the past six days affecting around 4,000 people and at least 7.6 hectares of crop lands in 14 districts.

'One should quit with decency', Jignesh Mevani takes a dig at Hardik Patel

Ahmedabad | Agencies

Dalit leader and Independent MLA from Vadgam, Jignesh Mevani, came down hard on Patidar leader and former working president of the Congress, Hardik Patel, on Friday, saying that everyone has the right to switch parties, but one should quit with decency and not by hitting below the belt.

Hardik Patel, who had joined the Congress a little over three years ago, quit the party on Wednesday, and there are speculations that he might join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and contest the state elections scheduled later this year.

Mevani, who had pledged outside support to the Congress earlier, said that Hardik Patel had no right to level allegations against the Congress or its national leadership.



"The Congress made him the working president, perhaps the youngest ever, the party made him a star cam-

paigner, he was flying in choppers to campaign, he had direct access to the national leadership... What more a

party could give to a person," Mevani asked.

He also argued that if a leader's one demand is not met, it does not mean he should quit the party.

"He is just in his late 20s, and there's a long journey ahead of him. He must have quit the party under some pressure... Some 30-plus criminal cases are lodged against him, and it would not have been easy for him to withstand the pressure him," Mevani said.

The Dalit leader reminded Patel that the ruling party has not obliged either the Patidars or the socially and economically backward sections, because 14 Patidar youth sacrificed their lives, women were subject to police atrocity, Patidars' vehicles were targeted etc. Mevani also expressed surprise for the way Patel made a personal attack on Rahul Gandhi.

ASSAM FLOODS: 14 PEOPLE DEAD, OVER 8 LAKH AFFECTED

Guwahati: The flood situation in Assam further worsened on Friday, while the death of four more persons, including two children, took the toll to 14 in the current pre-monsoon floods and landslides and over 8 lakh people have been affected in 29 of the state's 34 districts, officials said. Assam State Disaster Management Authority officials said that the four deaths were reported from Cachar (2), Nagaon, and Lakhimpur districts.

The Army, the Assam Rifles, the National Disaster Response Force, and the State Disaster Response Force, along with the district administrations, are working round the clock to rescue the stranded people and to provide relief to the marooned citizens. According to an ASDMA report, 8,12,619 people, including 1,39,780 children, of 2,585 villages in 29 districts have been affected.

Doctor seeks memorial for youngest organ donor who saved 5 lives

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A six-year-old child who donated organs and saved the lives of five persons has become the youngest organ donor in the history of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here, senior AIIMS neurosurgeon Dr. Deepak Gupta told IANS, adding there must be some memorial and monument in her name to raise awareness about organ donation. The child, Roli Prajapati, was shot in her head after which she was rushed to the hospital. Soon, she went into coma, and then was referred to the AIIMS, Delhi. After some attempts to save the little girl, the doctors declared her brain dead. Gupta and his team counselled her parents for organ donation that could save other lives. Her parents become ready to donate their daughter's organs which eventually saved five lives. "Roli arrived at the hos-



pital on April 27. She had a gunshot wound and a bullet was lodged in her brain. She arrived at the hospital in an almost brain dead condition. So, we talked to the family members," said Gupta. She was operated on April 30. Lauding Roli's parents for donating

her organs, Gupta said this is the finest example of saving lives.

"Her name must be made memorable by constructing some memorial, park or anything to raise awareness on this serious issue of organ donation," he said.

29 PHONES EXAMINED, SUPREME COURT-APPOINTED PANEL TO SUBMIT PEGASUS PROBE REPORT BY MAY END

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court-appointed technical committee has informed the court that it would submit the Pegasus probe report by May end.

A bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana noted the supervising judge would have to examine the technical committee report. And, the former top court judge will need some time to examine recommendations of the technical committee, it added. The committee informed the top court that 29 mobile devices have been examined.

The top court extended the time as sought by the committee. It noted that the technical committee has examined some phones and have issued notices to others



to deposit before it. Final report is expected to be submitted in the top court in the middle of June.

The top court said that preferably the process by technical committee should be over in four weeks and the supervisory judge should be informed. The matter will be heard again in July.



CM CHOUHAN ASKS COLLECTORS TO ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION OF ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that no one should be spared grabbing money of the poor, so all district collectors should ensure implementation of 'zero tolerance policy' on corruption. On receiving complaints of corruption, delay tactics in work and money grabbing in development activities and implementation of public welfare schemes, the guilty officer-employee should be terminated from their jobs immediately. The Collectors have power to take action against the guilty. Contrary to this officers and employees performing in a better way, will be motivated and felicitated by organising programs at the district level. A system will be implemented to take action on complaints against officers and employees and laxity in work, and to incentivise them for their better performance. He said "I work till late in the night, and then from 6:30 in the morning I start communicating with the district officials. It is the yearning for the development of the state and for the welfare of the people, which is reflected in these activities."

Chouhan was reviewing the implementation of development schemes and public welfare programmes of Bhind district on Friday morning.

Chouhan, while reviewing the status of drinking water and water supply in Bhind district, said that the collectors should start addressing the problem of hard water in Gohad locality as a task. The state government will also extend all possible support to ensure soft water availability to Gohad area. By ensuring supply of 'soft water' in place of 'hard water' in Gohad area, the Bhind District Collector can leave an everlasting impression of his tenure among residents of Bhind. Chief Minister received information about the ongoing activities of Jal Jeevan Mission in the district and instructed officials



to expedite the work under the mission. It was informed in the meeting that out of 13 urban bodies of the district, water shortage is more in 3 urban bodies, for which water transportation arrangements are being made. Expressing concern over only 42.7 percent work being done in urban areas under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Chouhan said whatever problem is being faced in the implementation of the scheme, it should be resolved immediately. In urban areas, where there is a shortage of land, arrangement for multi-storey buildings should be made. Chief Minister expressed satisfaction over completion of 88 percent work under the Prime Minister's house in rural areas. It was informed in the meeting that 233 acres of land has been freed from mafia in the district. Chouhan said that providing housing to the poor is the priority of the state government. It should be ensured that there is no delay in allotment of houses in rural and urban areas. Chief Minister said that all the beneficiaries of 'Awas Plus' should be informed about

allotment of houses by sending letters on his behalf. Along with this, the information of the beneficiaries should also be put in the Panchayats. He reviewed the status of ration distribution in the district.

Chouhan said that it is necessary to encourage public participation in proper functioning of Anganwadis. In the "Adopt an Anganwadi" campaign, more and more people should be encouraged to adopt Anganwadis. Chief Minister said that with a view to encouraging public participation, he himself would go out with a hand cart in Bhopal to collect toys for the children of Anganwadi from the general public. In Bhind too, activities should be taken up to create an environment so that people become aware and contribute to Anganwadis. Chouhan said that Bhind is a district that carry object of human pursuit. Here, the local people have to come forward to set an example in the field of cleanliness. Chouhan directed to conduct special activities for cleanliness, tree-plantation and celebration of Gaurav Diwas. Chief Minister said that an action plan should be readied to establish the identity of Bhind's mustard oil across the country under "One District-One Product" scheme. Efforts should be made that the brand of oil should be established across the country on the basis of purity of mustard oil. Chouhan also apprised himself of the activities conducted for Sainik School in Bhind, CM Rise School.

Chouhan directed to impound vehicles engaged in illegal sand mining and inform the general public about the risks involved in celebratory gun firing and told the need to create an environment to discourage it. Regarding the law and order situation in the meeting, it was informed that the actions against illegal liquor, adulteration, illegal mining are going on continuously. Besides, action is also being taken on the celebratory gun firing that takes place in social family events.

OBC body calls for 'state bandh' on Saturday; Cong extends support



► DESPITE THE SUPREME COURT ALLOWING HOLDING OF LOCAL BODY POLLS ALONG WITH OBC RESERVATION IN MADHYA PRADESH, THE ISSUE HAS STOKED A MASSIVE ROW AFTER OBC MAHASABHA, AN ORGANISATION REPRESENTING THE OBC COMMUNITY, CALLED FOR A 'STATE BANDH' ON MAY 21 TO RAISE THE DEMAND FOR 27 PER CENT RESERVATION TO THE COMMUNITY.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Despite the Supreme Court allowing holding of local body polls along with OBC reservation in Madhya Pradesh, the issue has stoked a massive row after OBC Mahasabha, an organisation representing the OBC community, called for a 'state bandh' on May 21 to raise the demand for 27 per cent reservation to the community.

This protest came a day after the apex court permitted the state government to continue with the elections along with reservation for OBCs in local bodies in the state with a limit of total 50 per cent reservation in it.

The OBC Mahasabha expressed its displeasure with the SC order, saying that giving only 14 per cent reservation to the OBCs will be injustice to the community.

"The SC's order said the OBCs will get just 14 per cent reservation, whereas the quota should be provided as per the population of OBCs in the state -- which is 48 per cent. Therefore, we are going ahead with our call for bandh," said State President, OBC Mahasabha, Rakesh Singh Lodhi.

Sources told IANS that the call for a bandh came after a meeting of state and national level office-bearers of the Mahasabha was held after the SC order was pronounced.

While the OBC organisation said both the BJP and Congress had deceived the OBC community on the issue of reservation, the call for the bandh was given against the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh, sources said.

Meanwhile, the opposition Congress has extended its support for the bandh, saying that the OBC must get 27 per cent reservation in local body polls instead of just 14 per cent.

"The OBC Mahasabha has given a call for bandh in Madhya Pradesh on May 21 for demanding reservation. The Congress party fully supports it," said an official statement issued from the state Congress office on Thursday.

On Wednesday, the ruling BJP-led state government hailed the SC's order, saying it was a "historic day" for Madhya Pradesh, and claimed that the government took all possible measures to ensure reservation for the OBC community.

The opposition Congress also hailed the top court's ruling, but pointed out that it has capped the upper limit of reservation up to 50 per cent, due to which the OBC community will not be able to receive benefits of the 27 per cent quota.

POLICE ARREST MAN FOR INCITING VIOLENCE IN NEEMUCH

Day after violence erupted following an attempt by Hindu organisations to install an idol near a Muslim shrine in Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch district, the state police on Thursday arrested Ghulam Rasool Pathan, the head of the Muslim Intezamia Committee in the town, in connection with the case.

Bhopal: Day after violence erupted following an attempt by Hindu organisations to install an idol near a Muslim shrine in Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch district, the state police on Thursday arrested Ghulam Rasool Pathan, the head of the Muslim Intezamia Committee in the town, in connection with the case. The police claimed that Pathan has been arrested for his alleged provocative speech inciting communal tension

in the town. The police also claimed that Pathan was involved in polarising the Muslim youth for the last one year.

"On the day of communal tension, Pathan was not present on the spot but was directing people over phone. We have the call details," Neemuch SP Suraj Verma said, adding that he has recommended the district administration to invoke the stringent National Security Act (NSA) against him for his alleged provocative speeches.

On Sunday, a group of Hindu activists attempted to install an idol of Lord Hanuman near a Muslim shrine in Neemuch's Purani Kacheri area, which led to communal tension in the town. The district administration had seized the idol on Tuesday. A person was reportedly injured while private properties were damaged in the violence that occurred on Sunday.

CM to push hand-cart in Bhopal to collect toys for children

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will soon be spotted with a hand-cart (thela) on the streets of the state capital for a cause.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will soon be spotted with a hand-cart (thela) on the streets of the state capital for a cause.

To kick-start a campaign aimed at creating awareness for prevention of malnutrition among children, Chief Minister Chouhan would push a hand-cart on the roads requesting people and collecting toys for kids enrolled in Anganwadi centres.

He made the announcement while chairing a meeting of the officials on the issue. "Soon, I would be moving around with a thela in

Bhopal to collect toys for the children of Anganwadi kendra. The move would be a campaign to invite the people under Janbhagidari. This mission is to unite the people. I will fix a date for it soon," Chouhan said.

The Chief Minister said that getting the children out of malnutrition is not the responsibility of Anganwadi workers. "We all have to find out the causes of malnutrition among them. There should be awareness in society regarding it," he added.

Citing an example of initiative in his home town, Chouhan said he has requested the farmers of his village to donate food grains to

Aanganwadi centres and a lot of people came forward and donated. "The government's steps for making children recover from malnutrition and providing them paushtik aahar (nutrition) are different from the segment. We have to create awareness among the people regarding the root cause of malnutrition," he added.

During the meeting with officials, the Chief Minister also inquired about the status of adopting Anganwadi Kendra in the districts. The Chief Minister had earlier appealed people come forward to adopt Anganwadi centres as part of their social responsibility.

CM Chouhan Plants Neem and Peepal Saplings

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Neem and Peepal saplings along with Ashok Deshmukh, Payoj Joshi, Hemant Kapoor, Sunil Pandey, Akhilesh Aargal and Shashank Dubey of Vande Mataram Utsav Samiti in Smart City Garden on Friday.

Vande Mataram Utsav Samiti is a socio-family organization, which is involved in cleanliness and environment protection related activities along with social works for past 30 years. More than 1100 saplings have been planted by the members of the organization. Along with this, awareness about cleanliness is being brought among the citizens by running cleanliness campaigns on a continuous basis in areas like Bus Stop, Arera Colony, Bittan Market etc. Various social activities are carried out by the organiza-



tion throughout the year including book distribution in schools, tree plantation, construction of pyaas (water kiosks) in summer, health camps in poor settlements, distribution of warm clothes in poor settlements in winter, free kite distribution to children on Makar Sankranti festival etc. Safai Samman is also given by the committee

to Safai Mitras, Suraksha Samman to police security personnel and Swasthya Samman to health workers.

Among the saplings planted today, Peepal is a shady tree. It purifies the environment. It has religious and Ayurvedic significance. Rich in antibiotic elements, neem is known as the supreme medicine.

ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN ON DRINKING WATER PROBLEM SOON: CM

- Call center set up to solve handpump problems in Sidhi district
- Special arrangements made in Sidhi district for IIT and NEET exam coaching
- Marketing of carpets made in Sidhi should be done under brand name 'Sidhi'
- Instructions to ensure speedy action in CM Helpline cases
- CM Chouhan reviews public welfare schemes and development of Sidhi district at 6:30 am

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that there is maximum scarcity of drinking water during summer season. Immediate action should be ensured as soon as information about drinking water problem is received from urban and rural areas. Public representatives should also regularly



observe the actual status of operation of the tap-water scheme and provide all possible cooperation in their maintenance. If there is any technical problem in drinking water supply, then it should be solved immediately. Chouhan was virtually reviewing the public welfare schemes and development of Sidhi district from his residence office at 6:30 am.

Tribal Affairs and Scheduled Tribes Welfare Minister and in-charge of Sidhi district, Sushri Meena Singh also attended the meeting virtually from Umaria. Sidhi Collector Mujibur Rahman Khan and other officials also joined virtually. It was informed in

the meeting that the maintenance and operation of 21 thousand hand pumps of Sidhi district are being monitored through call centers.

Chouhan said that information about allocation of Pradhan Mantri Awas should be given to the concerned beneficiaries through letters issued by them. It is an effective medium of interaction and communication with the general public. Also, getting information about the inclusion of names in the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana directly from the letter also reduces the chances of corruption. This arrangement will improve transparency and quality in the

implementation of the scheme. It was informed in the meeting that in Sidhi district, 45 percent urban and 72 percent rural Pradhan Mantri Awas have been completed. Chief Minister directed to complete the work of Yojana at the earliest. During the review meeting, he expressed displeasure on receiving information about the delay in distribution of ration.

Chief Minister said that beautification should also be taken care of in the construction of Amrit Sarovars. Instructions were also given to make the district hospital a model. He also directed to market Sidhi carpets under the brand name of 'Sidhi' under the "Ek Zila-Ek Utpad" scheme and encourage public participation in the operation of Anganwadis. In the meeting, information about the innovations started with LN Institute Kota for coaching of IIT and NEET exam in Sidhi was given to students.

Chouhan said that by encouraging the activities of women self-help groups, it should be ensured that their income is Rs 10,000 per month. Giving instructions to ensure speedy action in the cases of CM Helpline, Chief Minister said that it is an effective means of good governance and justice.

CM ADDRESSES YOUTH ON CAREER DAY OF SAGE GROUP OF INSTITUTES

All support and guidance will be extended to youth inclined towards self-employment: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the youth of the state should move ahead in the field of self-employment besides making efforts to get employment, the state government will provide all possible guidance and support. Madhya Pradesh is the first in the country to start the implementation of start-up policy. Venture capital fund has been created in the state. In a recent programme held in Indore, Prime Minister Modi interacted with the youth of the state who set new records in the field of business and trade through start-ups. New industries are being established continuously in the state. There are immense opportunities of employment

for the youth, youth should move towards setting up their own enterprise by implementing new ideas. With this they will be able to create employment for themselves as well as generate opportunities for others. This entrepreneurship of youth will also be helpful in establishing Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh. Chouhan was addressing the youth on career-day organized by SAGE Group of Institutes at the campus of Sahara Bypass of SAGE University.

Chouhan said that institutions like TCS and Infosys have been invited to start their campuses in the state. The aim is that the youth of the state should get employment opportunities in the state after their studies. Ample employment opportunities are also being created from the IT parks being set up in



the state. The state government is continuously working towards building an Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh for an

Atmanirbhar Bharat. Chief Minister said that the entire world accepts the talent and intellect of

Indian youth. Indian youth have proved their competence in the best institutions of the world. India's prestige and influence have expanded in the world under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi. A prosperous, glorious, magnificent, strong and self-reliant India will be built only by the contribution of youth.

Expressing the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda, Chief Minister said that "man is a storehouse of infinite powers". It is essential to know yourself and your potential. Success is assured by setting a definite goal and making consistent efforts to achieve it. Mukhya Mantri Udyam Kranti Yojana has been started to provide loans to self-employed youth in the state, in which loan facility up to Rs 50 lakh is available.

It is guaranteed by the state government. A provision of three percent subsidy has also been made in the scheme for seven years on interest. Along with providing guidance to the youth for self-employment, land would also be made available if required. Chouhan said that there is a provision of financial assistance in the Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Srijan Yojana.

Chouhan said that Indian culture is ancient and great. To ensure that our life is purposeful, it is necessary to set your goals after careful thought and work with determination and hard work while setting a roadmap to achieve them. Chief Minister said that whatever you do, if you do it with full devotion, passion, honesty and dedication, then success is certain.



EDITOR'S SPECS

WHAT IS RAJBHAR UP TO?

Om Prakash Rajbhar, President of the Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP), is leaving his friends and foes guessing in Uttar Pradesh about his next political move. The maverick politician is hopping from one camp to another, leaving his friends in alliance parties apprehensive. While Rajbhar continues to swear his loyalty to the Samajwadi Party (SP), he has no qualms about meeting his 'friends' in the BJP. His recent meeting with state minister Daya Shankar Singh sparked off a major controversy but Rajbhar remained unfazed. The 'old' friend, according to sources, is maintaining his ties with Rajbhar and the two do not rule out 'possibilities' in the future. The relationship between Rajbhar and Akhilesh Yadav is also cooling off. Rajbhar tried to play peacemaker between Akhilesh and his estranged uncle Shiwpal recently but both the warring leaders gave him a cold shoulder. Sources said that Akhilesh has neither spoken about the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections nor the Presidential polls to Rajbhar which indicates the level of relationship between the allies. Political experts believe that the SBSP may have won six seats in alliance with the SP but his party's victory percentage decreased significantly compared to the last Assembly elections. In 2017, SBSP contested eight seats in alliance with BJP and won four seats. This time out of 18 seats, the party could win only six seats. Om Prakash Rajbhar's son Arvind Rajbhar also lost the election. The Rajbhar community comprises about 4 per cent of the population in Uttar Pradesh, with a significant presence in the state's eastern region. Om Prakash Rajbhar wields considerable influence among these voters, and it was due to their opposition that the BJP had to suffer losses in many districts of Purvanchal.

Yasin Malik: Friend or foe of Kashmir?

Amjad Ayub Mirza

The UK Minister of State for foreign Commonwealth & Development Affairs Lord Tariq Ahmed told the House of Lords (Upper House) in London that the British government was monitoring the trial of Yasin Malik (who once was the leader of the banned terrorist organisation Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front-JKLF) very closely. Why is it that the UK government is meddling in India's internal judicial affairs regarding Yasin Malik who has already accepted all charges brought up against him? Firstly, it was the British who orchestrated the attack on the independent state of Jammu and Kashmir on October 22, 1947. This attack was conducted by the Pakistan Army and mercenary tribal lashkars who were acting under the direct command of the then (British) Commander in Chief of the Pakistan Army, General Sir Walter Messervy (15 August, 1947 to 10 February 1948). The aim was to capture Jammu and Kashmir and forcefully annex it with the dominion of Pakistan. The purpose was to deny land access to India to Central Asia, most of which at the time was part of the now former Soviet Union. The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir Hari Singh signed an instrument of accession with India on October 26, 1947, making J&K an integral part of the newly established Republic of India. Only then the Indian troops began to arrive at Srinagar airport and push the invading Pakistan Army back. The scope of this article is too narrow for me to delve into the nitty gritty of why Jawaharlal Nehru approached the United Nations Security Council and asked for a

ceasefire agreement especially at a time when we were winning the war. However, it is important to understand that at the time the British were wary of the Soviet influence spreading into India and secondly, and perhaps more importantly, they wanted to control the trade route to Central Asia. Since the first Kashmir war (1947-1949) western parts of the Jammu province and parts of Kashmir like Muzaffarabad remain under the Pakistani occupation, a separatist movement was artificially created by the aid of the Pakistan military and its ace spy agency the Inter-Services-Agency (ISI) to provoke the Kashmiri Muslim population to rise in a popular revolt. This popular revolt never took place. Aman Ullah Khan, who was a protegee of the ISI, had created the Jammu Kashmir Liberation front in Birmingham, England on May 29, 1977. Therefore, the British connection in relation to the formation of an anti-India terrorist organisation cannot be ruled out. Right up to 1994 JKLF remained a 'militant' (read terrorist) organisation, which was allowed to setup its branches in every major town of the UK, and openly raise money for carrying out subversive activities in the Indian Kashmir. The JKLF has since its inception been involved in the planning and execution of hijackings, planting bombs and kidnappings. It was in the city of Birmingham that Indian diplomat Ravindra Mhatre was kidnapped and later murdered by the militant wing of the JKLF who were demanding the release of terrorist Maqbool Bhat from the Tihar Jail in Delhi. In 1990 the Pakistan Army decided to use the jihadists returning from Afghanistan for the 'Kashmir



Jihad'. It was at this point in history a deadly confrontation between the mujahideen and the JKLF goons kicked off. The aim was to gain and maintain political hegemony over 'Kashmir Jihad'. JKLF stood no chance during the fight against ISI backed and Afghan jihad battle hardened mujahideen who began target killing JKLF militants. It was at this point that Yasin Malik announced (1994) that JKLF would lay down the gun. Malik said that the JKLF would join the peaceful 'political' (read anti-India separatist) process. Charges against Yasin Malik include those under Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and include only those that have committed after 2017. When the charges were read out to Malik he told the court that he was not contesting the charges. Malik is charged with being a

member of a terrorist organisation, conspiracy to commit terrorism, raising funds for terrorist act of UAPA and Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 124-A (sedition) of the Indian Penal code. Malik is among the 18 people who are being tried under the above charges and Malik is not even the main accused. The main high profile offenders that have been charged with the above offences are the chief of Lashkar-e-Taiba Hafeez Saeed and the chief of Hizb ul Mujahideen Salahuddin, both of whom are responsible for conducting numerous terrorist acts in the Vale of Kashmir, including the January 19, 1990 genocide of the indigenous Kashmiri Pandits in which JKLF as an organisation and Yasin Malik as its head took part in the murder

and rape of Kashmiri men and women. Yasin Malik and the like of him are no friends of the people of Kashmir. They are criminals of the worst order and should be treated as such. It would be sensible of the foreign minister of the UK to look in his own back yard and worry about the thousands of jihadist of Pakistan origin who are busy converting the English boroughs and towns such as Newham, Tower Hamlets, Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester, Luton and many more into Islamic towns where Sharia Courts might soon supersede the British Crown Court. (Dr Amjad Ayub Mirza is an author and a human rights activist from Mirpur in PoJK. He currently

international

FUTURE OF PAK GOVT HANGS BY A THREAD AS DIFFERENCES EMERGE WITH 'POWERFUL QUARTERS'

New Delhi | Agencies

The future of the coalition government in Pakistan is hanging by a thread as serious differences seem to have emerged between the multi-party government and the countrys powerful stakeholders, Express Tribune reported. If the statements of several leaders of the coalition government, as well as the political experts, are something to go by, it is evident that the main point of contention is the duration of the incumbent government's tenure. The government is ready to take tough decisions but only on the condition that it will serve the remaining constitutional term in office without any hindrance or intrigues, Express Tribune reported. However, developments during the last couple of days suggest that the powerful quarters are now increasingly inclined towards holding early elections in the country -- a phenomenon that suddenly emerged, and embroiled the government and the powerful quarters in a dispute, the report said. The stalemate between the govern-



ment and stakeholders is not only becoming visible with every passing day, but also causing delays in the decision-making process of the government and, thus, affecting the economy and the country itself. It was because of this reason that the coalition government was reluctant to take tough economic decisions, including ending fuel subsidy which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has linked to the revival of the loan programme, the report said. The uncertainty coupled with former premier Imran Khan's

planned rally and sit-in in Islamabad has also pushed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to repeatedly postpone his address to the nation, where he is expected to present his economic plan. In fact, political analysts, while shedding light on the gravity of the situation, said that the Prime Minister could announce dissolution of assemblies instead of presenting the fiscal plan if not assured by the stakeholders that he would complete the remaining term. Keeping the current situation in view, the coalition partners of the rul-

ing party clearly conveyed to Shehbaz Sharif the other night that they would stand by the government if it takes tough economic decisions. On ending fuel subsidy, PML-N Vice-President Maryam Nawaz said that her father and three-time former premier Nawaz Sharif says that he would leave the government but would not burden people a clear hint that PML-N would prefer elections over a government standing on crutches. Another hint about the stalemate between Islamabad and Rawalpindi emerged when Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) Khursheed Shah clearly said that the coalition government is ready for the elections and they would be happy if the government is ended. "We would thank you for freeing us in just one month," he said. Political experts also believe that the Supreme Court's decision to bar the government from making postings and transfers is also an indication that the government would not have the luxury of time and free hand at decision making, including amending the NAB law, if it moves ahead with tough economic decisions, Express Tribune reported.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CONFIRMS PM NOMINEE HAN

Seoul | Agencies

The National Assembly confirmed Prime Minister nominee Han Duck-soo on Friday after the main opposition Democratic Party (DP) holding a majority in the parliament decided to approve the nomination. Han's nomination was approved in a 208-36 vote, 47 days after he was nominated by President Yoon Suk-yeol, Yonhap news agency reported. In South Korea, the prime minister is the only Cabinet post that requires parliamentary approval. The result came after the DP decided to confirm Han in a general meeting of its lawmakers amid concern that rejecting the nomination could backfire and hurt its chances in next month's local elections. The party had the ultimate say in confirming Han as the country's No. 2 official, as it holds 167 seats in the 300-seat National Assembly. The ruling People Power Party, meanwhile, has 109 seats. The DP has been mulling for weeks on whether to approve Han, with hardliners insisting the party should veto the nomination, because Yoon showed no willingness to cooperate with the opposition, as seen by the appointment of Justice Minister Han Dong-hoon. Despite the DP's strong objections, Yoon pressed ahead and appointed the justice minister Tuesday. The DP's confirmation hearing committee has declared Han as "unqualified," citing his post-retirement career at a law firm and other



suspected irregularities. But others in the DP claimed the party should endorse Han, since the rejection could backfire and undermine the DP's chances in the upcoming local elections, with criticism that the party is hindering the operation of the new government from the start. With the approval, Han will take the country's No. 2 job for the second time. The 72-year-old already served as the prime minister during the liberal Roh Moo-hyun administration from 2007 to 2008. During his confirmation hearing, Han said stabilising the economy for ordinary people's livelihoods will be his top priority. The parliamentary endorsement for Han is expected to provide much-needed momentum to the Yoon administration in dealing with the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula sparked by a series of provocations from North Korea.

AUSTRALIA POLLS: STAGE SET FOR TWO-WAY CONTEST

Canberra: Australia, which is going to polls on Saturday, is set to witness a two-way contest between Prime Minister and Liberal Party leader Scott Morrison and opposition Labor Party leader Anthony Albanese. Australian Parliament has two Houses -- House of Representatives (Lower House) and Senate (Upper House). The maximum term of House of Representatives is three years. Of the 151 seats, a party has to win at least 76 seats to capture power. A strong 17.2 million electorate are eligible to exercise their franchise in the polling which will begin at 8.00 a.m. and conclude at 6.00 p.m. Voting is mandatory and those who do not vote attract a fine of Aus \$20 (US \$14). The voters' concerns are inflation and climate change, among others, BBC reported. In the previous elections, the ruling Liberal-National coalition, comprising Liberal Party of Australia and National Party of Australia, had won 75 seats while the opposition Labor Party bagged 68 seats. Also up for polls are 40 of the 76 seats in the Senate. Earlier, Scott Morrison had slammed Anthony Albanese as a "loose unit" on the economy, to which the latter replied that the Australian economy was "crying for leadership and reform" but was getting neither from the current administration.

Iranian FM says agreement in Vienna talks within reach if US acts 'logically'

Tehran | Agencies

If the United States acts "logically," an agreement in the Vienna talks on the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal will be within reach, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said. Amir Abdollahian made the remarks on Thursday in a phone conversation with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, calling on the other sides in the Vienna talks to put forward their initiatives to this end, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry's website. He said Tehran is willing to reach a "good," "strong," and "lasting" agreement while



observing the Islamic Republic's red lines, Xinhua news agency reported. The senior diplomat also praised Russia for its positive stance and support for the achievement of an agree-

ment that is acceptable to Iran. Describing ties with Tehran as important, the Russian foreign minister, for his part, stressed that Moscow will continue its support and efforts to make sure that a fair agreement would be reached in Vienna that safeguards Iran's demands. In 2015, Iran signed the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with world powers, including the United States. However, former US President Donald Trump pulled Washington out of the pact in May 2018 and re-imposed sanctions on Iran, which prompted the latter to drop some of its nuclear commitments. Since April 2021, Iran and the remaining JCPOA parties have held several rounds of talks in Vienna to revive the deal.

RUSSIA CONTINUES TO EXPEL EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS

Moscow: Russia said Thursday that it is expelling five diplomats of the Portuguese Embassy in Moscow in a retaliatory move. The Russian Foreign Ministry summoned the Portuguese ambassador to Russia and protested against the expulsion of 10 Russian diplomats from Portugal, Xinhua news agency reported. The five Portuguese diplomats were declared "personae non gratae" and must leave Russia within 14 days. On the same day, Russia also demanded the Slovenian embassy in Moscow reduce its diplomatic staff by four people, about 40 per cent of the total number, within 10 days. The decision was taken in response to Ljubljana's move last month to reduce the size of the Russian embassy and the deterioration of its working conditions, the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. The ministry said it also decided to adjust the conditions for the functioning of the Slovenian diplomatic mission, without giving details. On April 5, Portugal and Slovenia announced their decisions to reduce the Russian embassy staff in Lisbon and Ljubljana respectively.





9 KILLED IN FIRE AFTER TANKER-TRUCK COLLISION IN CHANDRAPUR

Nine people were charred to death in a hazardous fire that broke out following a collision between a tanker & a truck near Maharashtra's Chandrapur. The accident occurred on Thursday around 10.30 pm on Chandrapur-Mul Road, a police officer said

Team Absolute | Chandrapur

In a tragic incident, as many as nine people were charred to death in a hazardous fire that broke out following a collision between a tanker and a truck on the outskirts of Chandrapur in Maharashtra. The police officer informed that the accident occurred on Thursday around 10.30 PM on Chandrapur-Mul Road following a collision between a diesel-laden tanker and a truck carrying wood on the outskirts of the city. Nine people were charred to death in a fire that broke out after a collision between a diesel-laden tanker and a truck carrying wood on the outskirts of Chandrapur city of Maharashtra, a police officer said on Friday.

The accident occurred on Thursday around 10.30 pm on Chandrapur-Mul Road, he said. "A tanker loaded with diesel collided with a truck transporting logs of wood close to Ajaypur

near Chandrapur city. After the accident, a fire broke out in which nine persons were charred to death on the spot," Chandrapur's Sub Divisional Police Officer, Sudhir Nandanwar, said.

Sources in the forest department said the fire brigade personnel reached Ajaypur about an hour after the accident and the blaze was brought under control a few hours later.

The bodies of the victims were later taken to Chandrapur hospital, Nandanwar said.

In the visuals going viral on social media a massive fire can be seen engulfing the tanker and the truck. Heavy smoke can be seen coming out at the site. Chandrapur's Sub Divisional Police Officer, Sudhir Nandanwar has informed, "A tanker loaded with diesel collided with a truck transporting logs of wood close to Ajaypur near Chandrapur city. After the accident, a fire broke out in which nine persons were charred to death on the spot."

Raj Thackeray puts off Ayodhya trip in political setback for MNS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a self-inflicted political blow, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena President Raj Thackeray on Friday morning tersely announced that he has temporarily "postponed" his proposed visit to Ayodhya on June 5.

He himself made the announcement via social media but didn't spell out any reasons for the move, leading to wild speculations in political circles.

MNS spokesperson Sandip Deshpande and party leader Bala Nandgaonkar were at a loss to explain what actually prompted the unexpected decision, but assured that Raj Thackeray will enlighten the people about it at his planned public rally in Pune on Sunday.

Adding to the MNS' awkwardness, ruling Maha Vikas allies' leaders like Shiv Sena's Tourism Minister Aditya Thackeray and state Congress President Nana Patole announced that their upcoming tours for 'darshan' of Ram Lalla would proceed as per schedule and their trips would be "non-political."

Taking a swipe at the MNS chief, Shiv Sena chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut said that he heard about it from the media, "but we would have supported him."

"There's a large number of Shiv Sainiks and Sena supporters in Ayodhya, and we would have supported him... He is being used by the Bharatiya Janata Party, but some people get delayed wisdom," he said.

Nationalist Congress Party spokesperson Clyde Crasto expressed hope that Raj Thackeray would now realise how he was



being exploited by the BJP politically. "They propped him to propagate their agenda and when their message was delivered, they have cut him down to size. He was used as a pawn and he allowed himself to be used to revive his failed political career," he claimed.

Congress General Secretary Sachin Sawant squarely blamed the BJP for Raj Thackeray's current predicament.

"First, the BJP pumped up air into him, but when it feared that the Hindutva vote-bank would be divided, they snipped him off," he said.

Sena MoS and spokesperson Kishore Tiwari alleged that the BJP-MNS and Rana couple were competing to prove whose Hindutva brand is the worst and

Raj Thackeray got trapped in their machinations.

"He had harassed North Indians and when the BJP felt this cannot continue as it would have repercussions (in the upcoming civic elections), they ejected him... Anyways, his planned Ayodhya trip was purely political as there people have nothing to do with religion or Hindutva," he added.

Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnis merely said: "Raj has postponed his visit now, but whenever he plans to go there, he will be given full support and nobody will touch him."

Raj Thackeray's abrupt decision came amid massive protests by certain BJP leaders and activists in Uttar Pradesh and

other northern states opposing his Ayodhya trip.

They have been vociferously demanding his unconditional apology for the treatment meted out to North Indians in the MNS agitation in 2008.

The anti-Raj Thackeray protests were spearheaded by Uttar Pradesh BJP MP Brijbhushan Sharan Singh who warned that unless he apologises, lakhs of his supporters would block his entry to Ayodhya.

Though Raj Thackeray has not revealed anything, there's speculation that the postponement may have been due to health reasons, but MNS leaders declined comments.

Back in Uttar Pradesh, Brijbhushan Sharan Singh dismissed the MNS claims of 'postponement due to illness' and asserted that Raj Thackeray has "cancelled" his trip, and vowed to continue his agitation till the MNS chief tenders an apology.

Earlier, apprehending threats, MNS' Nandgaonkar had called on Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil and demanded security for Raj Thackeray either from the state government or the Centre.

Simultaneously, he warned that "even if a hair of Raj was harmed, Maharashtra would burn", though preparations for the Ayodhya trip continued.

Since a month, Raj Thackeray has been in the limelight after he launched an agitation demanding removal of loudspeakers from all mosques in the state failing which his activists would blare Hanuman Chalisa at double-decibel levels.

Over 17 lakh tonnes of sugarcane still lying in farms across Maharashtra despite end of crushing season

The sugarcane crushing season in Maharashtra generally starts in October-November and continues till mid-April.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Around 17.5 lakh tonnes of sugarcane is still lying uncut in farms across Maharashtra although the crushing season has ended, but majority of this stock shall be crushed by the end of this month and over 30 sugar mills will remain functional till it is over, a top official said.

The sugarcane crushing season in Maharashtra generally starts in October-November and continues till mid-April.

Out of the 10 districts in Maharashtra that have topped the list of excess sugarcane stock this year, seven are from the Marathwada region, the official said.

"After good rains last year, the area under sugarcane cultivation in the state increased significantly. Even after the sugarcane crushing season has got over, the state still has around 17.5 lakh tonnes of sugarcane standing in farms, waiting to be crushed. Hence, crushing in some parts of the state may continue till the first week of June," he said.

Maharashtra sugar commissioner Shekhar Gaikwad said, "The quantum of sugarcane currently standing in the farms across the state is around 17.5 lakh tonnes. Most of this crop will be crushed by May 31. In some parts of Ahmednagar and Jalna districts, the crushing activity may continue till the first week of June." "So far, we have



succeeded in bringing 129 harvesters from other states and all are working in . Marathwada. In Jalna alone, 29 harvesters are working at present," he said.

The state had recorded sugarcane plantation on 11.42 lakh hectares in 2020-21, but this year (2021-22), the figure went up by 2.25 lakh hectares to 13.67 lakh hectares. The quantity of sugarcane crushed last year was 1,013.31 lakh tonnes, while this year (till May 16) 1,300.62 lakh tonnes of sugarcane was crushed

- an increase of 287.31 lakh tonnes, another official said. Over 30 sugar mills in the state may continue their operations till May end, he said.

"By May 15, out of the total 199 sugar mills in state, 126 mills have stopped their operations for the season. This figure may go up to 163 by May 25. The remaining 36 sugar mills may continue to work till the stock of sugarcane ends," the official said. The highest quantity of uncut sugarcane till May 16 is in Beed

at 4 lakh tonnes, followed by Jalna at 3.90 lakh tonnes, Ahmednagar 3 lakh tonnes, Latur 2.42 lakh tonnes, Osmanabad 2.38 lakh tonnes, Satara 1 lakh tonne, Nanded 63,000 tonnes, Nandurbar and Aurangabad 50,000 tonnes each and Parbhani 30,000 tonnes each, the official said, adding that planning for the 2022-23 sugarcane crushing shall start a little early.

"We are expecting the same area of sugarcane cultivation next year. But the plan is to commence the sugar mills 15 days earlier (by October 1) than usual with an additional force and crushing capacities of 6-7 more mills. The state has a capacity to crush 8 lakh tonnes of sugarcane per day now. It may go up by 25 thousand per day next year," sugar commissioner Gaikwad said. "The number of factories working for distillery production will reach to 50-60 in the next season. As a result, the ethanol diversion will also increase," he added.

AFTER 80 MONTHS' JAIL, MURDER-ACCUSED INDRANI MUKERJEA WALKS OUT ON BAIL

Nearly 80 months after she was arrested on murder charges - that too of her daughter, former media bigwig Indrani Mukerjea on Friday walked out of jail on bail granted by the Supreme Court.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Nearly 80 months after she was arrested on murder charges - that too of her daughter, former media bigwig Indrani Mukerjea on Friday walked out of jail on bail granted by the Supreme Court.

On stepping out of Byculla Womens Jail, Indrani - appearing relaxed, smart in a white salwar-suit, make-up and her grey locks well-coiffed - got into a waiting dark car along with a woman lawyer to be driven home.

Facing a volley of questions from the battery of media assembled there, she merely smiled and said: "Khula aasman dekha bahut khushi hui (I saw the open skies and felt very happy)" as the car sped off.

Indrani - the prime accused in the murder of her daughter Sheena Bora - added she was feeling better but



had not made any future plans after getting enlarged on bail.

The Supreme Court granted her bail of Rs 200,000 on Wednesday - 80 months after Mumbai Police arrested her on August 25, 2015 - after the judges observed that (6.5 years) is a long time.

GOVT BANS FISHING NEAR COAST FROM JUNE 1 TO JULY 31 IN VIEW OF MARINE BREEDING PERIOD

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government has imposed a ban on fishing between June 1 and July 31 as standard procedure to minimize the capture of marine life that comes near the shore for breeding. The decision was announced recently under the Maharashtra Marine Fishing Regulation Act 1981, which prohibits machined

fishing within 12 nautical miles from the state's coast.

"Every year, the Maharashtra government imposes such a ban, which if violated attracts a fine. Earlier, the fine amount was significantly low, which led to many trawler operators openly violating the ban. From June, a hefty fine amount will be levied on violators," an official from the state fisheries department.

"During June and July, the sea tends to be rough and is the breeding period for a lot of fish. Fishing during this period may affect the food chain adversely. Moreover, fishing in the seas at this time is also dangerous," he said. He said traditional fishermen whose boats do not have engines, or those who do not deploy mechanized nets are exempt from the ban, he added.

Internal friction within MVA comes to fore

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In nearly two years of ruling Maharashtra, the three-party coalition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government has been subject to various pressures from the opposition that would normally have disrupted the State's functioning. While the MVA has withstood these external pressures reasonably well, it seems to be having a rougher time with the pressures from within the coalition. When it was cobbled together in 2019 with the sole aim of keeping the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) out of power, the MVA was like the proverbial odd couple: the Shiv Sena teaming up with the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) raised many eyebrows. But the three have managed to steer the State through the worst it has seen in recent times. However, new factors are causing more friction and bringing old disagreements to the surface.

With local body elections around the corner and the Lok Sabha election just two years away, the individual ambitions of the three parties have come to the fore. The old hostility between the Congress and the breakaway NCP is clearly visible.

Nana Patole, the State Congress president, registered a complaint with the Congress high command that the NCP was "backstabbing" the MVA by helping the BJP in the State. He claimed that there was an under-

standing between MVA partners that the NCP was breaching.

In a release after meeting media persons in Nagpur, he said: "The NCP has backstabbed us by entering into an alliance with the BJP in the Bhandara and Gondia zilla parishad and panchayat samiti president elections. By doing this, the NCP has broken the written agreement between the MVA allies just to come to power in these elections. If this is not backstabbing, then what is it?"

Elaborating, he said: "[When] the three MVA allies decided to come together, a letter signed by myself, Jayant Patil of the NCP and Subhash Desai from the Shiv Sena was issued on January 30, 2022, by all the three parties. As per the MVA allies' decision, I kept in touch with Jayant Patil and Praful Patel from the NCP and discussed the alliance for the Bhandara and Gondia elections. The NCP kept us on the edge till the end and went with the BJP at the last minute and came to power. Jayant Patil has admitted that I had contacted him frequently. If he had said earlier that he wants to go with the BJP, we would not have had any problem, but the fact that he joined hands with the BJP by keeping us in the dark was not the right thing to do." The election results also showed that the BJP took control of the Gondia zilla parishad. For Patole this was a double blow, not only because



he is a Congressman but because it happened in his own constituency of Bhandara-Gondia. To add salt to the wounds, the NCP secured a vice president's post in the same election. Furthermore, Congress members have been complaining that the NCP keeps a tight hold over funds and discriminates in distributing them (the NCP's Ajit Pawar is the Finance Minister). The Congress has also been grumbling over the NCP poaching its party members. There are fears that the coalition's strength will be diluted if the Congress chooses to go it alone in the local body elections. There are indications that this will happen, with Congress leaders talking of re-establishing their connections at the grass-roots level. If it does happen the BJP will cer-

tainly be grateful for it. The NCP is also acting independently of the MVA. NCP chief Sharad Pawar has extended support to Sambhajiraje Chhatrapati, the scion of Kolhapur's erstwhile royal family, who has decided to contest as an independent in the upcoming Rajya Sabha election. The Shiv Sena and the Congress are yet to extend their support. Sambhajiraje is a direct descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji and enjoys electoral clout in the region as a result. In 2016 he had won the Rajya Sabha seat with BJP support. While it is unlikely that the Shiv Sena and Congress will not extend support, the fact that the NCP took the decision unilaterally will certainly rankle the MVA allies.

"CHALLAN WILL MEET HIM SOON:" MUMBAI POLICE ON MAN'S "CALL COPS" DARE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

It's never wise to break traffic rules. And if you have, make sure to not challenge the Mumbai Traffic Police. The traffic police department has sent this message out loud to travellers in the metropolis. When a Twitter user complained about a man riding a two-wheeler on the wrong side of the road, Mumbai Police was quick enough to note the post and replied, "If he (the offender) has called us, then we will have to meet him... Our challan will meet him soon."

As per the tweet, the man, who was sitting on a scooter with a child, even refused to give way to other vehicles. He was not even wearing a helmet. When he was asked to give way to other vehicles, the man mockingly told them, "Bulao police ko (Call the police)". "Such a mockery of the law. Nowadays no one fears nor respects Mumbai Police, Mumbai Traffic Police," the user said. Several people have praised the prompt action by Mumbai Traffic Police. "Do share the challan details - and ensure

The man, who was sitting on a scooter with a child, even refused to give way to other vehicles.

the person pays. Let's remind ourselves that if this guy isn't taught a lesson then he is giving the kid with him a very bad lesson of breaking rules and taking the law for granted -- poor child," said a user.

"That's called challan wala selfie as well as the new poster boy of a traffic violation," said another. But some also pointed out that the man appeared to be sitting on a parked vehicle, so it could be wrong to accuse him of violating the traffic safety laws.

One user, however, drew attention to the issue of people parking vehicles on the road without consideration for other travellers.

"Can you please have a look at the Shaikh Mistri Dargah Road starting from Wadala Bridge to Antop Hill Church? People have made the road a free parking area with a market," the user said.



Los Angeles | Agencies

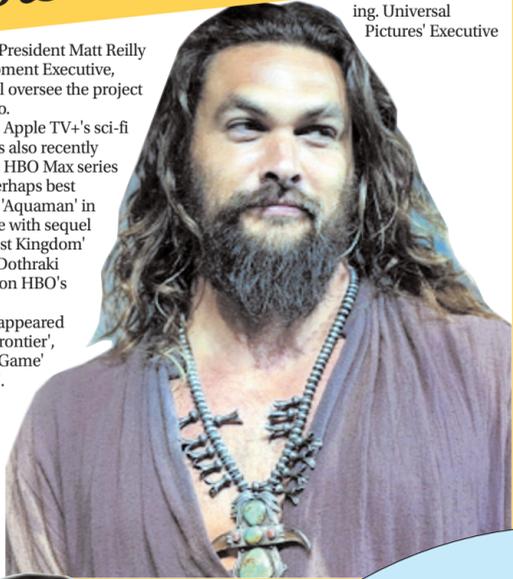
'Dune' star Jason Momoa has been signed to star in the action-comedy spec 'Shots! Shots! Shots!'. The film will be penned by Matt Mider and Kevin Burrows, with its plot currently under wraps, reports 'Deadline'. As per 'Deadline' the film, the rights of which have been acquired by Universal Pictures, is also yet to zero down on a director. Momoa and producing partner Jeff Fierson will produce alongside Rideback's Dan Lin and Jonathan Eirich, with Mider, Burrows and Rideback's Ryan Halprin exec produc-

Jason Momoa to star in 'Shots! Shots! Shots!'

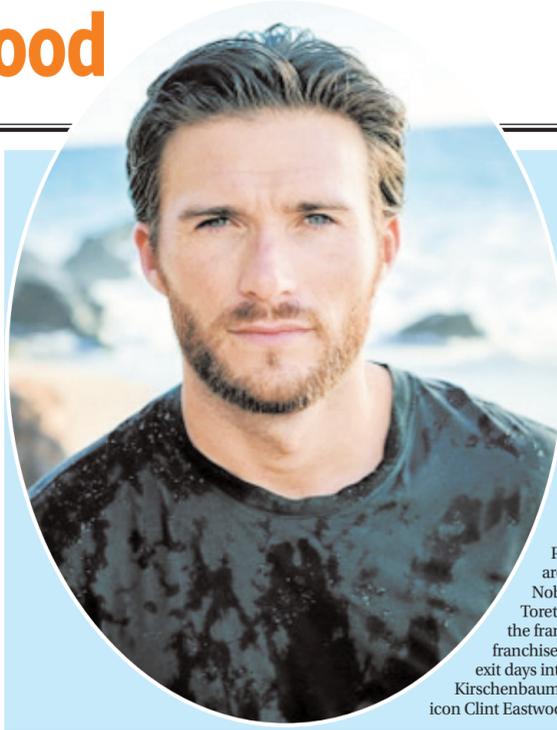
Vice President Matt Reilly and Creative Development Executive, Jacqueline Garrell will oversee the project on behalf of the studio.

Momoa, who leads Apple TV+'s sci-fi drama series 'See' was also recently seen in James Gunn's HBO Max series 'Peacemaker'. He's perhaps best known for his turn as 'Aquaman' in Warner Bros franchise with sequel 'Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom' as well as his turn as Dothraki chieftain Khal Drogo on HBO's 'Game of Thrones'.

The actor has also appeared on series including 'Frontier', 'The Red Road', 'The Game' and 'Stargate Atlantis'. He will also soon be seen in Francis Lawrence's adventure pic 'Slumberland', Christian Camargo's Western 'The Last Manhunt' and Universal's 'Fast X'.



ing, Universal Pictures' Executive



Scott Eastwood returns to 'Fate of the Furious' universe with 'Fast X'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Scott Eastwood, who starred in the 'Fate of the Furious' - the 2017 edition of the 'Fast & Furious' franchise, is set to return to the franchise as part of the cast of 'Fast X', reports 'Deadline'.

The actor joins an ensemble that also includes Vin Diesel, Michelle Rodriguez, Tyrese Gibson Jason Momoa, Charlize Theron, Brie Larson, Alan Ritchson, Nathalie Emmanuel, Michael Rooker, Daniela Melchior, Jordana Brewster, Sung Kang, Ludacris and Cardi B.

'Fast X' is the latest film in a globe-trotting action franchise from Universal Pictures which has grossed over \$6 billion worldwide. Details with regard to its plot are being kept under wraps. As per 'Deadline', Eastwood will reprise his role as Little Nobody, the right-hand man of Kurt Russell's Mr Nobody, who helped Dominic Toretto (played by Vin Diesel) track down the cyber-terrorist Cipher played by Theron in the franchise's eighth film, 'Fate of the Furious'. Whether Russell will also return to the franchise is not yet clear. Louis Leterrier is directing the upcoming film following Justin Lin's exit days into production, from Lin and Dan Mazeau's script. Diesel, Lin, Neal Moritz, Jeff Kirschenbaum and Samantha Vincetare are producing. Scott Eastwood is the son of Hollywood icon Clint Eastwood and he acted in his father's 2008 movie 'Gran Torino'.



Disney+ to bring all Marvel characters under one umbrella

Los Angeles | Agencies

A new 'Daredevil' series is in the works at Disney+, with Matt Corman and Chris Ord writing and executive producing the project, reports 'Variety'.

Corman and Ord most famously co-created the USA Network series 'Covert Affairs', which starred Piper Perabo and Christopher Gorham. The show aired for five seasons between 2010 and 2014. They most recently worked as executive producers and co-showrunners on the NBC drama shows 'The Enemy Within' and 'The Brave' as well as The CW series 'Containment'.

Fans have been clamoring for more Daredevil ever since the Netflix series was canceled in 2018 after three seasons. They were in for a long wait, however, as Variety reported in 2018 that the deal with Netflix included a clause that prevented any characters from the Marvel-Netflix shows from appearing in any non-Netflix projects for two years after cancellation.

As per 'Variety', the move came as Disney looked to bring its Marvel heroes under one umbrella, with multiple Marvel Cinematic Universe shows having since debuted on Disney+. 'Moon Knight' starring Oscar Isaac was the last such show to premiere, with a trailer for the 'She-Hulk' series starring Tatiana Maslany dropping earlier this week.

'Armageddon Time' get 5-minute ovation

Los Angeles | Agencies

The first screening of 'Armageddon Time' at the ongoing 75th Cannes Film Festival, drew a five-minute standing ovation, as James Gray returned to Cannes for the fifth time with what was a personal story inspired by his childhood during 1980s Queens, NY, and the premiere was nothing but emotional, with the pinnacle of the event being Gray's address to the audience. Gray said in his speech as he began to choke up, "This is very emotional - it's my story in a way and you guys shared it with me. We finished the film last Saturday in a complete panic. You are the very first people on Planet Earth to see it. I'm grateful to each and every one of you. I love you all, and I hope I come back here sometime because it is the church of cinema."

Anne Hathaway and Jeremy Strong, according to 'Deadline', appeared moved, as did the pic's younger stars Jaylin Webb and Banks Repeta, who were transfixed by the enormous and continued applause in the Palais Theatre. 'Armageddon Time' follows a young, artistic Jewish boy who comes up against challenges in public school and also befriends a rebellious classmate. Hathaway and Strong play the boy's working-class parents, while Anthony Hopkins is the wise, beloved, immigrant grandfather who steers the young adolescent on a proper path. The film is not dated yet, however, it would not come as a shock if Focus Features positioned the movie during awards season. That's similar to how it launched 'Loving' in Cannes in 2016, which went on to notch a Lead Actress Oscar nomination for Ruth Negga and also catapult her career.

'SQUID GAME' STAR LEE JUNG-JAE DEBUTS AS DIRECTOR WITH 'HUNT' AT CANNES

Cannes: 'Squid Game' star Lee Jung-jae made his directorial debut with the espionage action thriller 'Hunt', which premiered at the 75th Cannes Film Festival on Friday, reports Yonhap. At Grand Theatre Lumiere, the main venue of the world's most prestigious film festival, 'Hunt' was first shown as part of the non-competition Midnight Screening section and received a three-minute standing ovation. Lee, who also starred in the movie, and lead actor Jung Woo-sung stood together and thanked the audience, who clapped and cheered for the 131-minute film that depicts the intelligence war between South and North Korea during the military regime in the 1980s. "I wish everybody enjoyed the movie. Thank you, merci beaucoup!" Lee said after the screening. 'Hunt', according to Yonhap, is the story of two rival intelligence agents in South Korea, Pyong-ho (Lee) and Jung-do (Jung), who separately chase after a North Korean spy leaking top-secret information that could jeopardise national security. Finally, the two discover a plot to assassinate the South Korean president. 'Hunt' is also his first project following the global sensation 'Squid Game', which brought Lee a number of major acting prizes in the United States, including best lead actor at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. "I searched for a screenwriter and a director with a similar creative vision, but in the end I couldn't find one, so I took on the task of writing the screenplay myself," Jung said. "The element I focused on most was to establish convincing motivations for each character."



Deborah shares her excitement over making 'Obi-Wan Kenobi'

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Obi-Wan Kenobi' director Deborah Chow talks about the upcoming American TV miniseries featuring the Star Wars characters. Reprising his role as the iconic Jedi master, Ewan McGregor is set to headline the series along with Hayden Christensen, Moses Ingram, Joel Edgerton, Bonnie Pisces, Kumail Nanjiani, Indira Varma, Rupert Friend, O'Shea Jackson Jr, Sung Kang, Simone Kessell and Benny Safdie. Deborah, who directed the show, is also one of the executive producers. Deborah said: "I think the biggest thing for me that I really loved about the project, right from the beginning, is that it was character-driven. That was something that I found really, really exciting."

Deborah, who is a Canadian filmmaker, television director and screenwriter. Her two short films, 'Daypass' and 'The Hill' have won awards at various international film festivals. Chow admits that her experiences on 'The Mandalorian' set helped her in doing the show.



"I don't think I could have done this show if I hadn't done 'The Mandalorian' first, and there are a few reasons for that, just in terms of Star Wars. I learned so much from writer and director Dave Filoni and Jon Favreau. They really mentored me in that galaxy in terms of storytelling and understanding and the tone of how to do Star Wars. And the second part of it was the technology, and Stagecraft, which I loved," added Chow. The story is most deeply rooted in the events of 'Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith', where Obi-Wan Kenobi faced his greatest defeat - the downfall and corruption of his best friend and Jedi apprentice Anakin Skywalker, who turned to the dark side as evil Sith Lord Darth Vader. 'Obi-Wan Kenobi' will premiere on May 27 on Disney+ Hotstar and run for six episodes until June 22.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Maria pedraza





IPL 2022

RR beats CSK by five wickets

Jaiswal, Ashwin guide Rajasthan Royals to 5-wicket win over CSK, climb second spot in points table

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Yashasvi Jaiswal struck a well-controlled 59 and Ravichandran Ashwin blasted a 25-ball unbeaten 40 as Rajasthan Royals defeated Chennai Super Kings by five wickets in Match 68 of IPL 2022 and moved up to the second spot in the points table.

Chasing a modest 151 for victory, Rajasthan Royals faced a few anxious moments in the middle of the innings but in the end, Ashwin, along with Riyan Parag (10 not out) ensured that they reached 151/5 in 19.4 overs for their ninth win of this edition of IPL.

The victory took them to 18 points, the same as Lucknow Super Giants but they took second place with a better net run rate of 0.298 as compared to 0.251 of LSG.

CSK ended their campaign with eight points from 14 matches, opening a chance for Mumbai Indians to win their match against Delhi Capitals and push them down to the bottom place on net run rate.

Rajasthan Royals will have to thank Jaiswal, who struck 59 off 44 deliveries, hitting eight boundaries



and one six, and also Ashwin, who guided them home with a superb cameo of 49 not out off 23 balls, hitting two fours and three sixes.

Rajasthan Royals made a sedate start as they reached 52/1 in the

powerplay. They lost their top batter Jos Buttler for 2 in the second over. He added 51 runs with skipper Sanju Samson (15) as Royals raised hopes of reaching the target with a lot to spare.

Brief scores:

Chennai Super Kings 150/6 in 20 overs (Moeen Ali 93, M.S Dhoni 26; Obed McCoy 2/20, Yuzvendra Chahal 2/26), Rajasthan Royals 151/5 in 19.4 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 59, R Ashwin 40 not out; Prashant Solanki 2/20).

Jaiswal and Ashwin took the score past the 100 run mark before the opener departed, after a well-made 59 that included eight boundaries and one six, Jaiswal struck Mukesh Choudhary for fours off successive deliveries in the third over and also flicks him off his legs for a boundary in the fifth over.

With Rajasthan Royals down to 104/4, their hopes depended on Ashwin and Simron Hetmyer. But Ashwin held his nerve, and played some steady and some superb shots as he guided Rajasthan Royals home. Riyan Parag played able foil as he remained not out on 10 off 10 balls while Ashwin remained unbeaten on 40 runs.

THAILAND OPEN

SINDHU REACHES SEMIS WITH WIN OVER WORLD NO 1 YAMAGUCHI

Bangkok | Agencies

Double Olympic medalist PV Sindhu advanced to the women's singles semi-finals of the Thailand Open 2022 by knocking out world champion Akane Yamaguchi of Japan, here on Friday.

Sindhu, a former world champion, defeated the world No 1 Japanese shuttler 21-15, 20-22, 21-13 in the quarterfinals of the BWF Super 500 event at the Impact Arena.

In the first game, Sindhu and Yamaguchi matched the energy and were levelled at 14-all. The Indian ace won the next five points and went on to take a 1-0 lead in the match.

Sindhu continued the fast-paced approach and raced to an 11-5 lead in the second game break. However, the Indian shuttler, who had lost to Yamaguchi in the semi-finals of the Badminton Asia Championships last month from a similar position, ran out of steam and conceded the game.

Wary of another comeback



from the world champion, Sindhu upped the ante in the decider and went on to win the match convincingly. With this victory, Sindhu extended her head-to-head record over Akane Yamaguchi to 14-9.

World No 7 Sindhu will take on world No 4 and Tokyo 2020 champion Chen

Yu Fei of China in the semi-finals on Saturday.

Notably, Sindhu is the only Indian shuttler still in the running at the Thailand Open. Saina Nehwal and HS Prannoy crashed out from the earlier rounds while Kidambi Srikanth pulled out at the round of 16 stage.

M.S Dhoni confirms he will play IPL next year to bid farewell to CSK fans

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mahendra Singh Dhoni on Friday confirmed that he will participate in the Indian Premier League (IPL)'s 2023 season as he wants to bid farewell to the fans in Chennai and also travel to various places for away matches and thank his admirers for supporting him.

The Chennai Super Kings skipper, who will turn 41 in July this year, even did not rule out turning out in IPL 2024 too, saying 'you can't predict what will happen two years down the line'.

Dhoni confirmed about his availability for next year during toss for his team's final match in IPL 2022 against Rajasthan Royals at the Brabourne Stadium here on Friday.

Dhoni, who led Chennai Super Kings since the inception of the franchise in 2008 leading them to four IPL titles, relinquished captaincy just days before

the start of IPL 2022 but had to take over the reins from Ravindra Jadeja midway through this edition of IPL as the team struggled to perform.

Asked about the possibility of his returning to play IPL next year, the former India captain who had led India to world cup titles, said he will definitely be back and the reason was simple, he wants to play again in front of the fans in Chennai. "It's a simple reason: it will be unfair to not play in Chennai and say thank you. Mumbai is one place, where, as a team and as an individual, I have got a lot of love and affection. But it wouldn't be nice to the CSK fans. "And also, hopefully, next year there will be an opportunity where the teams will be traveling so it will be like (saying) thank you to all the different places where we will be playing games at different venues," said Dhoni. He then continued in the same vein and said 2023 may not be his last year in IPL.



World Hockey needs India and Pakistan to lead the sport, says Pakistan coach Siegfried Aikman

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Pakistan's chief coach Siegfried Aikman has said that world hockey needs India and Pakistan to lead in the sport. The 63-year-old Dutch coach, who traces his roots to the undivided India from where his ancestors moved to Suriname, added that India are doing well at the moment, but Pakistan need to revive their hockey.

India and Pakistan had dominated world hockey for decades till the 1970s

before they lost their prominent position after the 1980s. But India have clawed their way back and won the bronze medal in Tokyo Olympics last year and the men's team is currently ranked third in the world. Pakistan is ranked 18th in FIH Rankings. Speaking ahead of the start of the Men's Asia Cup, the newly-appointed Pakistan head coach Aikman said, "World Hockey needs India and Pakistan to lead in the sport. India are doing well at the moment. But we need to revive ourselves, and I am hopeful I

can do that here, and make Pakistan Hockey promising again. I want to develop a structure in the country where we can start building players at the grassroots so that in 10 years, we have a Pakistan team that can compete against the top teams."

The Asia Cup, set to begin in Jakarta on May 23, is a World Cup qualifier. India, Japan, Pakistan, and hosts Indonesia are placed in pool A while Malaysia, Korea, Oman, and Bangladesh are grouped in pool B.

Australia name cricket squad for CWG; to face India in opening fixture

Melbourne: Following their success in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2022 -- where they won a record seventh title -- Australia have named the same squad for the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham (July 28-August 8), as well as their T20I tri-series with Ireland and Pakistan (July 16-23). The tri-series at the Bready Cricket Club in Northern Ireland will provide an ideal preparation for Meg Lanning's side, under interim head coach Shelley Nitschke after Matthew Mott was appointed the England men's white-ball head coach. Australia will be the strong favourites to add to their ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2022 trophy, where they defeated defending champions England in the final in New Zealand earlier this year. Ellyse Perry, who is yet to fully recover from stress fractures in her lower back, has been included in the squad and is expected to play solely as a batter on the tour. Her availability to bowl will be "dependent on her progress in the coming weeks and on the medical advice" according to team physio, Kate Beerworth. Australia will take on India in their opening Commonwealth Games group fixture on July 29.

Don't know who's going to help if technology doesn't, says Hardik on Wade lbw saga



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amidst Gujarat Titans ending their league stage campaign in IPL 2022 with an eight-wicket loss to Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), wicketkeeper-batter Matthew Wade falling to a contentious lbw decision to off-spin from Glenn Maxwell has become a great matter of debate. In the sixth over of Gujarat's batting, Wade was trapped lbw for 16 while shuffling for a sweep against Maxwell. The left-hander was quick to review but UltraEdge showed no spike when the ball passed the bat despite the side angle showing a clear deviation in the trajectory of the ball, with the third umpire retaining the on-field decision.

It left Wade frustrated and shaking his head while going off the field, with Virat Kohli trying to console him. The top-order batter's frustration was visible in the dressing room, as he shouted, threw his helmet to the ground before repeatedly smashing his bat.

After the match ended, Gujarat skipper Hardik Pandya made his displeasure known against Wade's lbw dismissal. "I think it was slightly there (spike) in the ultra-edge. I don't know if from the big screen, it was not visible. Because you can't fault, if technology is not helping, then I don't know who's going to help," said the all-rounder in the post-match virtual press conference. Wade's angry outburst attracted a reprimand from the match referee as per the Level 1 offence under Article 2.5 of the IPL Code of Conduct. Finishing the league stage as table-toppers, Gujarat will now move to Kolkata to play Qualifier 1 on May 24.

I WANT TO WIN ASIA CUP AND T20 WORLD CUP FOR INDIA: VIRAT KOHLI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Star batter Virat Kohli has expressed his desire to help India win the Asia Cup and the T20 World Cup -- two major tournaments -- scheduled to be held this year.

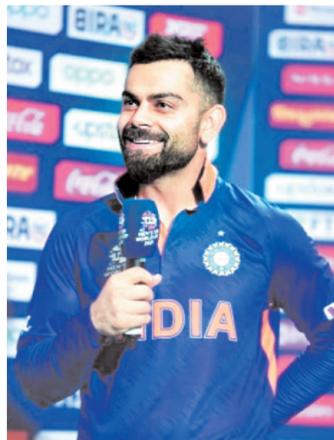
Former India and Royal Challengers Bangalore captain had last scored a hundred in any format in November 2019. He has also had a poor IPL 2022 season but the seasoned campaigner showed signs of returning to form with his brilliant knock (73 off 54 balls), which helped RCB beat Gujarat Titans by 8 wickets on Thursday.

"I want to win India the Asia Cup and the T20 World Cup, that's the motivation," Kohli told Star Sports.

"I have to move forward, maintain a balance, get some rest, some rejuvenation, once I'm in the mindset then there's no looking back, and [it's] great fun. My main aim is to help India win the Asia Cup and the World Cup and for that I am ready to do anything for the team," he added.

Many experts including former India coach Ravi Shastri had suggested to Kohli to take a break from cricket.

Acknowledging Shastri's and other former cricketers' concerns, Kohli hinted that he is



open to the idea of stepping away from the game. However, he believes that such a decision is not to be taken lightly and he will mull over it only once he has discussed the situation with the team management and India's head coach Rahul Dravid.

Rajani Etimarpu to lead India women's team in FIH Hockey 5s

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Goalkeeper Rajani Etimarpu will be the captain, while Mahima Choudhary will be her deputy in a nine-member Indian women's team for the inaugural edition of the FIH Hockey 5s to be held in Lausanne, Switzerland on June 4-5.

The team will play Uruguay, Poland, South Africa, and hosts Switzerland.

The team includes experienced goalkeeper Etimarpu, defenders Rashmita Minz, Ajmina Kujur. Midfielders Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Mahima Choudhary and Preeti have

been called up, while forwards Mariana Kujur, Mumtaz Khan, who were part of the U-18 team that played the Youth Olympics which was held in Hockey 5s format, and Rutaja Dadaso Pisal will also feature in the team.

Additionally, Suman Devi Thoudam and Rajwinder Kaur have been named as standbys.

Chief Coach Janneke Schopman, who will accompany the team, expressed confidence ahead of her first outing at the Hockey 5s event.

"I have never coached Hockey 5s in an official tournament so it will be interesting experience for me. We have

picked a team with variety. Plenty of young talent who proved themselves in the Junior World Cup and I am keen to see them play in this format combined with players from the Senior Core Group," stated Schopman.

TEAM

Goalkeeper: Rajani Etimarpu (Captain)
Defenders: Rashmita Minz, Ajmina Kujur.
Midfielders: Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Mahima Choudhary (Vice-Captain), Preeti.
Forwards: Mariana Kujur, Mumtaz Khan, Rutaja Dadaso Pisal.



Major League Cricket raises 120 million dollars in funding

Washington | Agencies

America's Major League Cricket has announced that they have secured 120 million dollars in funding from series A and A1 fundraising round, which includes some of the Silicon Valley bigwigs like Satya Nadella. According to MLC, the six-team franchise T20 competition sanctioned by USA Cricket, 44 million dollars has been secured after the closure of these investment rounds and an additional 76 million dollars will be secured over the next 12 months.

The Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella-led group has invested 16 million dollars in the central equity pool of the MLC enterprise along with Dallas-based Ross Perot Jr, a Texas billionaire, and his partner Anurag Jain.

It has been learnt that the Nadella group will obtain the rights to operate the Seattle franchise of the MLC while the Perot-led consortium will operate the Dallas MLC franchise, a Cricbuzz report said.

The list of other investors includes -- Anand Rajaraman and Venky Harinarayan (Founding Partners at Milliways Ventures and Rocketship VC), Sanjay Govil

(Founder and Chairman of Infinite Computer Solutions and CEO, Zyter), The Baheti Family (owners of YASH Technologies) and Tanweer Ahmed (CEO, PAK Foods, CEO, OUR Energy). Ahmed is also the owner of America's largest cricket complex (Prairie View Cricket Complex) located on the outskirts of Houston, housing five turf-wicket grounds on its premises.

The closure of these investment rounds is a major shot in the arm for this cricket 'start-up'. As part of their deal with USA Cricket, MLC is under obligation to deliver six world-class cricket stadiums. Notably, MLC is under exclusive negotiating agreements with respective city governments in the greater Seattle, Los Angeles, and San Francisco Bay area to construct multi-million-dollar cricket stadiums.

The procurement of funds in rounds A and A1 will add to the enterprise's financial muscle to materialise the deals presently under negotiations. MLC has already entered into a long-term lease for Airhogs Stadium near Dallas and is expected to start revamping the stadium for cricketing use this summer.



ELLI AVRRAM

A SWEDISH GIRL AND A BOLLYWOOD STAR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Elli AvrRam has always been the master of her own fate, making her way from Sweden to India on her own in pursuit of her great Bollywood goals.

Elli, who was recently asked to talk at TedXBITS in Goa, discussed how she went about attaining her ambition, her hardships, and how she cherished every step of the way, urging others to do the same. Said Elli, "There could be people in your life who could push you and give you some help but the rest is all you. That's the advice I'd give everyone with a dream out there, everyone who wants to achieve something in life." Adding that she said "When I came here, I adapted to the culture and the traditions, with a lot of love and respect...I would travel by train...I started modelling. I took ice-cold showers in the morning. I learnt to live with cockroaches and insects in a small apartment"

She continues that "I knew, that I was going for my dream in life...and that's the best feeling ever because I didn't want to grow and always think 'what if'. I was fierce and I said to myself I'm going to go for it." Elli also shared some intriguing details from her personal life and her upbringing, she said, "I grew up in a Greek Orthodox home, which meant even if I stepped out clubbing; my mother would accompany me or else I wasn't allowed to go out. So when I approached my father and nervously told him how I wanted to go to India and try my luck in Bollywood, he asked me a lot of questions and I was young and didn't have all the answers."

Elli AvrRam's funny attitude had the crowd in stitches as she encouraged them with her story.



MADHAVAN'S UPCOMING RECEIVES STANDING OVATION AT CANNES

Mumbai: R. Madhavan's directorial debut 'Rocketry: The Nambi Effect', which is India's official selection for its world premiere at the 75th edition of Cannes Film Festival, saw its grand premiere at the convention centre of Palais des Festivals. Madhavan and ISRO genius and space scientist Nambi Narayanan, on whom the film is based, walked the red carpet. The screening of the film was greeted with a thunderous applause as it received a standing ovation from the full-house for 10 minutes.

Responding to the appreciation that his film received at the film festival, actor-turned-director Madhavan said in a statement, "I'm overwhelmed and exhilarated. It's a surreal moment for all of us at Team 'Rocketry'. Humbled and grateful By God's grace. Thank you for all your love and support. Now to prepare for the release on July 1." It will be released in six languages worldwide, including Hindi, English, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada, on July 1.

Why Ayushman Khurrana has stopped composing songs

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Ayushman Khurrana is appearing on the 'The Kapil Sharma Show' for the promotion of his film 'Anek' along with Andrea Kevichusa and director Anubhav Sinha.

During the show, Ayushmann sang some of iconic songs like 'Naina Da Kya Kasoor', Kishore Kumar's song 'Humein Tumse Pyaar Kitna' and his song 'Paani Da'. On the question, why he is not so keen now on composing songs, he replied: "All my songs were composed during my college years, whether it be 'Paani Da Rang', 'Saddi Galli', 'Mitti Di Khushboo' which I composed with my friend Rochak." "These songs were all written when I was in college and are released now. Now I don't have the time to do so. I was doing theatre in college, and it was a whole-some exercise. We used to write our lines, our own stories for theatre," he added.



DHAKAD : A MISERABLE SAGA



BY SHACHI CHATURVEDI

Directed by: Razneesh Ghai
Written by: Chintan Gandhi (story) Razneesh Ghai (screenplay) Rajiv G. Menon (screenplay)
Runtime: 2 hours 10 minutes
Cast: Kangana Ranaut (Agent Agni), Arjun Rampal (Rudraveer), Sharib Hashmi and Divya Dutta (Rohini)
Rating: - 1 / 5

Agent Agni, a highly trained and lethal field agent, is tasked with gathering intelligence and eliminating Rudraveer, an international people and weaponry trafficker who has been operating under the radar for ten years.

STORY

Even though the film contains an action-packed segment in which the agent Agni is depicted combating crooks. The film also depicts Agni's early trauma, and it gradually reveals secrets as it progresses.

However, it lacks everything that makes a movie a success. There is nothing wrong with saying that this film is entirely about people killing each other. The film's writer attempted to preserve the suspense factor but failed horribly in making it engaging.

PERFORMANCE

Kangna, along with the rest of the actors, strove hard to provide a nice performance, but it didn't matter due to the uninteresting plot.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

There wasn't much in terms of technology, albeit the camera had a few issues in a few situations when we could see some unwanted pans.

The writing isn't that interesting. We didn't find anything interesting about this film. The songs were there to fill time and did not fit the narrative. The cinematography is good, and certain action sequences will send chills down your spine.

The film was predictable and had nothing worth viewing.

Overall, the picture never reaches the desired level of momentum. The film is, in fact, unwatchable.



Kanika and Gautam are set to begin a new chapter

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Kanika Kapoor and her lover Gautam are about to begin a new chapter in their lives. Before we see the big day, the singer has released photographs from their Mehendi ceremony. We are totally in love by this gorgeous pair. Kanika is adorned in a mint green lehenga with flowers in the photographs she posted on Instagram. She has shared some of her portrait photographs with her Instagram followers. Gautam, appears several times in her carousel post.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Nora Fatehi

BHOOL BHULAIYAA 2 : BLEND OF LAUGHS AND THRILLS



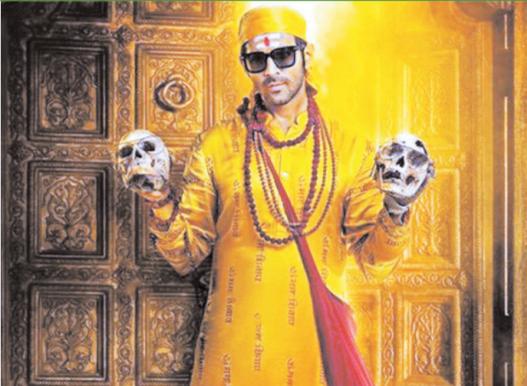
BY AAKRUTI BAGLA

Direction: 2hr 25min
Helmed by: Anees Bazmee
Cast: Kiara Advani, Tabu, Kartik Aaryan, Rajpal Yadav, Sanjay Mishra, Ashwini Kalsekar
Rating: - 3.5/5

Helmed by Anees Bazmee, Kartik Aaryan, Kiara Advani and Tabu's horror-comedy is a sequel to Akshay Kumar and Vidya Balan's 2007 film of the same name.

STORY

Bhool Bhulaiyaa begins on an eerie note introducing us to Manjulika being locked in room. Cut to Paths of Reet (Kiara Advani) and Ruhaan (Kartik Aaryan) crossing in a snowy region. In pursuit to get her sister married to the love of her life, Reet takes Ruhaan's help and pretends to be dead in front of her family. The two decide to stay at the haunted haveli from which the entire family fled



since Manjulika was locked in one of the rooms there. Ruhaan, presents himself as a tantric who can talk to dead people. The ball is completely in their court. However, one day, Manjulika's spirit gets released from the haveli's room. Who is she seeking vengeance from and why? The answer to this question lies in the rest of the film.

REVIEW

Anees Bazmee, who has managed to entertain us with his films like No Entry, Welcome, and Singh

is King among others, makes sure that the humour quotient is high in this one as well. But, he also concentrates on the horror aspects of the film. Even though, the horror is such that it won't scare the hell out of viewers. At the same time, it's not even amateur. A nice balance is maintained and that's definitely praiseworthy.

Special mention to the writers of the film who made sure Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 is an interesting watch. Aakash Kaushik's screenplay does justice to this storyline. The film

has a sprinkle of dull moments at a place or two, but that doesn't play a major spoilsport. Though predictable, the film manages to be engaging and entertaining. The climax specially, could have been we'll executed. It seemed a tad bit convenient, haphazard and lacked the punch that one is fed right from the start. Farhad Samji's dialogues are hilarious and provide laughter. But shockingly, at a few places, they fall flat.

Manu Anand's cinematography is good. He relies more on the atmospheric horror rather than jump scares which works in his favour. He whips up some intriguing visuals with his technical finesse.

However, editing by Bunty Nagi could have been tighter.

The first half concentrates more on gags and humour quotient with little on the horror front. The horror elements kicks in the second half.

Talking about the music, the songs just added to the runtime. While De taali and Hum Nashe main toh nahi are visually appealing, they fail to make it to the playlist. However, the male version of Ami je Tomar is highly disappointing. The title track during the end credit works well.

The background score has been effectively used to enhance the eerie and thrilling moments in the film.

Speaking of the performances, Tabu steals the show. Without revealing too much about her, all I can say is she truly knocked it out of the park. Kiara as Reet is a delight to watch.

Kartik, as usual shines with his great comic timing and pitch-perfect expressions. The actor pulls off comic parts with a certain ease, and here again, he flaunts his flair for comedy.

With Rajpal Yadav and Sanjay Mishra, never a moment on the screen with them goes without a laugh. Ashwini Kalsekar has done a fine job. She do falls flat at certain places.

Overall, the supporting cast, deliver what is expected.

Special mention to the chota packet, Bada dhamaka i.e. Samarth Chauhan as Potlu is bound to win a lot of hearts.

On an ending note to all horror-comedy genre movie lovers, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 is an unmissable treat which has a pinch of adequate horror and a whole lot of comedy to keep you crackling throughout.