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AMID PROPHECIES OF END-GAME FOR SENA, MVA STANDS UNITED

Making another effort to defuse the ongoing political crisis in Maharashtra, Shiv Sena MP and chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut made a conditional offer to the rebels about the party's readiness to "walk out" of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA). We are ready to walk out of the MVA, provided the rebels return to Mumbai within 24 hours and hold discussions with the Shiv Sena, Raut said, throwing yet another challenge to the group of revolvers led by Minister Eknath Shinde. He called upon the rebels' group to stop communicating on social media or phone messages or letters or statements sitting in Assam, and like "true Shiv Sainiks, show the guts to come to Mumbai".

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

As the Shiv Sena grappled with a potentially "life-threatening" rebellion in its ranks for the third day on Thursday, its Maha Vikas Aghadi allies - the Nationalist Congress Party and the Congress - threw their full weight behind embattled Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

Both the NCP and the Congress, while expressing confidence that the political fracas will die out soon, said they will remain with the MVA and Thackeray till the very end, and if the situation arose, would be prepared to sit in the opposition benches. On the side of the mutinous lawmakers camping in Guwahati, the torch-bearer, Shinde has been "elected" as the breakaway group's leader and authorised to take all decisions on their behalf.

FLOOR TEST WILL DECIDE WHO HAS MAJORITY: SHARAD PAWAR

"A floor test will decide who has majority. Everyone knows how the rebel Shiv Sena MLAs was taken to Gujarat and then Assam (both BJP-ruled). We don't have to take the names. Rebels will have to pay the price for their revolt when they face the electorate. The MVA government has already proved its majority. Those who call the 3-party experiment a failure are ignorant."



According to a video that emerged late this evening, Shinde is heard praising the BJP, terming it as a "national force which taught a lesson to Pakistan" and would take care of the rebels.

WE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT MVA: CONGRESS

"The Congress stands by the MVA as it is doing developmental work. We (the Congress) formed the MVA with the Shiv Sena and the NCP to stop the BJP (from coming to power). Our support to the MVA continues."



The sudden calamity that gripped it late on the night of June 20-21 has shaken the once aggressive Sena to the core amid gloomy prophecies that this could be "swan song" for the party plus the second and third generation Thackerays - CM Uddhav and his son Minister Aditya.

The party had earlier weathered similar disasters, though much less serious, with persons like Chhagan Bhujbaj, Narayan Rane, Sanjay Nirupam and even family member Raj Thackeray quitting at various points in the past 30 years.

However, the Sena not only weathered those departures which in retrospect proved to be mere dents, and the party marched ahead with confidence.

SHIVRAJ CHOUHAN'S DIG AT KAMAL NATH

"Now, Kamal Nath is off to Maharashtra. For what? To save the Maharashtra government. Isn't it amusing to see someone who failed to save his own government in Madhya Pradesh trying to rescue the one in Maharashtra? Congress never stops amazing us. Can this party ever do any good? It cannot as it is counting its last moment."



NATIONAL PARTY HAS ASSURED US ALL HELP: SHIV SENA REBEL EKNATH SHINDE

Mumbai: Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde, whose rebellion against the party has pushed the three-party Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government to the brink of collapse, said a "national party" has assured their revolt as "historic" and assured to provide all help to them.

In the video, Shinde is seen saying, "Our worries and happiness are the same. We are united and victory will be ours. There is a national party, a 'mahashakti'...you know they vanquished Pakistan. That party has said that we have taken a historic decision and assured to provide all help." Mr Shinde is currently camping with 37 rebel MLAs of the Sena and nine independents in Guwahati.

TEAM THACKERAY ASKS FOR DISQUALIFICATION OF 12 REBEL MLAS

New Delhi: The Shiv Sena is filing an appeal with the Maharashtra Assembly Deputy Speaker seeking disqualification of around 12 rebel MLAs, sources in the Maharashtra government's legal team said as the number of rebels camping out in Guwahati crawled over 40. Eknath Shinde has already reached the critical number of 37 required to split the Sena in the assembly without falling foul of the anti-defection law.

This reduces Uddhav Thackeray to a minority in the party founded and led for decades by his father, Bal Thackeray. The Maha Vikas Aghadi had earlier claimed that 17 MLAs from the rebel camp is likely to return to the fold.

SW Monsoon to cover entire India by July 6: IMD



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Southwest Monsoon - crucial for the kharif crop - is likely to cover the entire country by July 6 as against the normal date of July 8, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Thursday.

After an early start, the SW monsoon had been pushing late over south peninsular India and later also over central India in absence of favourable systems. As on date, the Northern Limit of Monsoon (NLM) continues to pass through Porbandar, Vadodara (both Gujarat), Shivpuri, Rewa (both Madhya Pradesh) and Churk (Uttar Pradesh), the IMD said.

The IMD normal says that the SW Monsoon normally covers the entire country by July 8. However, the Extended Range Forecast (ERF) released on Thursday evening said: "Southwest

Monsoon is likely to cover the entire country during the week June 30 till July 6." Asked about the exact date, a senior IMD meteorologist said that there is no date, and the ERF "is just a guidance product".

Asked about the monsoon's date with the national capital, he said: "At present, we are just monitoring various features and no such fixed date can be given."

Meanwhile, the ERF mentioned that the country as a whole received excess rainfall during the meteorological forecast week that ended on Wednesday. The weekly cumulative All India Rainfall departure from its long period average (LPA) was 45 per cent with weekly cumulative over northwest India as 120 per cent, over east and north-east India 77 per cent and south peninsular India at 29 per cent. However, for central India, it was minus 2 per cent.

PREZ POLL: YSRCP ANNOUNCES SUPPORT TO DRAUPADI MURMU

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh's ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) on Thursday announced its support to NDA candidate Draupadi Murmu in the Presidential election.

Hailing the nomination of the first tribal and also a woman for the post of the President, YSRCP declared its support to her. The Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a statement on Thursday night that Jagan Mohan Reddy will not be present during filing of nomination due to the State Cabinet meeting which was already scheduled.

YSRCP said for the first time in independent India's history nominating a tribal and also a woman is a good augur. "That's why the party is extending support to Draupadi Murmu contesting for the post of President of India," it said.

No entry of medium, heavy vehicles into Delhi from October 1

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi government on Thursday announced a ban on entry of medium and heavy vehicles in the city from October 1 to February 28 next year, to keep a check on pollution levels in this winter.

The Delhi government had also written on June 15 to its neighbouring states, including Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, urging them to allow only BS VI-compliant buses to enter the city from October 1 in order to help control air pollution. The letter written by Special Commissioner, Transport, O.P. Mishra said that the situation of air pollution in the national capital has attracted the attention of the Supreme Court and the CAQM (Commission of Air Quality Management in Delhi and NCR), both of which have issued directions for effective regulation of air pollution and vehicular pollution.



Every year, the capital city witnesses high levels of air pollution in the winter months from October due to a multitude of factors, including stubble burning and vehicular traffic leading to the breathing and other problems.

FORMER PUNJAB DGP DINKAR GUPTA NEW NIA CHIEF

New Delhi:

IPS officer and former Punjab Police chief Dinkar Gupta has been appointed as the Director General of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), an official statement said on Thursday.

A 1987 batch officer, Gupta succeeds Yogesh Chandra Modi and will head the premier security agency till March 31, 2024. Gupta, who was Punjab Police for two years and seven months, was currently posted as Chairman of the Punjab Police Housing Corporation. He had been seeking a posting at the Centre.



PM security breach in Punjab points at planning failure: Sources

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The committee probing the security breach of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in the last stages of collecting evidence. So far the probe is heading towards "planning failure" on PM Modi's visit to Punjab in January this year.

"The committee is collecting evidence from all stakeholders concerned and compiling it together. So far it appears to be a planning failure but we are still in the process of taking a final view," a senior government official said. The Supreme Court-appointed committee, headed by former Supreme Court judge



Justice Indu Malhotra, is probing if there was any criminal conspiracy in the incident and the role of Punjab Police officers is also under

probe. PM Modi's cavalcade was grounded on January 5, leaving him stranded for 20 minutes on a flyover about 30 km from Hussainiwala.

ED ATTACHES PROPERTIES WORTH RS 257 CRORE IN UNITECH CASE

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached movable and immovable assets worth Rs 257 crore based in Gurugram, Goa, Chennai and other places in connection with the money laundering case against Unitech Limited.

With this, the total value of various domestic and overseas assets attached in the case so far is Rs 1059.52 crore, which includes the assets of Carnostie Group, Shivalik Group, Trikar Group, CIG Realty Fund, Authentic Group, and the assets of shell and personal companies of Sanjay Chandra and Ajay Chandra -- ex-promoters of the Unitech Group. A senior ED official said that the attached properties include residential, commercial units, land parcels, demand drafts, equity shares and bank account balance. The properties are owned by CIG (Chandra Investment Group) Realty Fund and Authentic Group. The ED had registered a money laundering case against Unitech Group on June 6, 2018 following the Supreme Court order. The ED's case was based on Delhi Police's Economic Offences Wing's FIR against Unitech Limited.

'VT' ON INDIAN AIRCRAFT IS LEGACY OF BRITISH RAJ, NEED TO CHANGE: PIL IN DELHI HC

The registration is as per international laws and every aircraft must specify which country and airline it belongs to, using a unique alpha-numeric code, which is of five characters, that is in IndiGo's case, VT-IDV and for Jet, it is VT-JMV. In simple words, the call sign or the registration code is for the identification of the aircraft, it said.

The prefix 'VT' stands for 'Victorian Territory and Viceroy Territory', which is the nationality code that each aircraft registered in India is required to carry. The Code is generally seen just before the rear exit door and above the windows. All the domestic airlines have the prefix, which is followed by unique alphabets that define the aircraft and who it belongs to. For example, on IndiGo flights the registration VT is followed by IDV, i.e., VT-IDV, for Jet, it is VT-JMV, the plea stated.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been moved in the Delhi High Court seeking directions to the Centre to change the Call Sign 'VT' written on Indian aircraft stating it stands for 'Victorian Territory and Viceroy Territory', a legacy of the British Raj.

In the PIL, petitioner BJP leader and lawyer Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay stated that being a 'Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic', the Call Sign 'VT' is contrary to the Rule of Law, Right to Freedom and Right to Dignity of Indians guaranteed under Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution. It further said the prefix marks that the aircraft has been registered in the country and it is mandatory in all countries. The registration of the aircraft is required to



appear in its Certificate of Registration and an aircraft can only have one registration in one jurisdiction.

The PIL contended that Britain set the prefix 'VT' for India before the partition in 1929. The British set the code for all the colonies starting with V. However, countries like China, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka changed their codes later. While in India, the prefix has remained on the aircraft even after 93 years, which offends the right to dignity of citizens.

India logs 13,313 fresh Covid cases, 38 deaths

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India yet again witnessed a spike in Covid cases with 13,313 fresh infections being reported in the past 24 hours against the previous day's 12,249 count, the Union Health Ministry said on Thursday.

In the same period, 38 fatalities were recorded taking the nationwide toll to 5,24,941.

Meanwhile, the active caseload has risen to 83,990 cases, accounting for 0.19 per cent of the country's total positive cases.

The recovery of 10,972 patients in the last 24 hours took the cumulative tally to 4,27,36,027. Consequently, the recovery rate stands at 98.60 per cent.



Meanwhile, the Daily Positivity rate has slightly declined to 2.03 per cent, while the Weekly Positivity Rate currently stands at 2.81 per cent. Also in the same period, a total of 6,56,410 tests were conducted across the country, increasing the overall tally to over 85.94 crore. As of Thursday morning, the Covid-19 vaccination coverage exceeded 196.62 crore, achieved via 2,54,44,218 sessions.



TRINAMOOL STAGES PROTEST OUTSIDE HOTEL HOSTING REBEL SENA MLAS

GUWAHATI | Agencies

The Trinamool Congress workers led by the party's Assam unit president Ripun Bora on Thursday staged a protest here outside the Radisson Blu hotel where dissident Shiv Sena legislators along with their leader Eknath Shinde are staying.

The Trinamool Congress workers were protesting against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for "concentrating on toppling the Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra instead of focusing on the flood situation in the state".

The protesters raised slogans like "stop horse-trading" and alleged Sarma's involvement in "horse-trading".

"Many people are not getting food and drinking water in the Cachar region of Assam... over 50 lakh people of Assam are suffering due to flood but instead of providing them relief, the Chief Minister of Assam is busy toppling the Maharashtra government," Ripun Bora, a former Congress leader, said.

Police said the protests were held



MAHA CRISIS IS BJP'S PLOY TO GET NUMBERS FOR PREZ POLL: MAMATA BANERJEE

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday launched scathing attack against the BJP over the Maharashtra

political crisis and claimed that this is a deliberate ploy by the saffron camp to garner additional numbers in favour of its candidate for the

forthcoming Presidential poll. "The Presidential poll is round the corner. The BJP has approximately 1,00,00 less votes. So, they have

chosen this time to topple the Maharashtra government in an unethical manner and using money power," the Chief Minister said.

without prior permission. Later, the police detained the Trinamool Congress workers and leaders along

with Bora. Meanwhile, the National Students Union of India (NSUI) also reported-

ly held a protest outside the hotel. Heavy security has been deployed outside the five-star hotel.

Guj Cong in-charge says he knows who are going to quit party

Veraval (Gujarat) | Agencies

Congress in-charge for Gujarat Raghu Sharma said on Thursday that he knows who all are going to quit the party, as he accused the BJP of planning to lure two party leaders every month.

"I know who is going to quit the party. The BJP is planning to lure two leaders every month, and all those who are on BJP's list are leaders who can't win elections. I fail to understand what the BJP will do with such garbage," he said.

Sharma is in Somnath to address the party leaders of Saurashtra zone as part of the 'My booth, my pride' programme.

Speaking to mediapersons, Sharma said those who have weak network and have lost connection with the voters are leaving the party.

"Leaders having financial interests are joining the BJP. But BJP's actions can not demoralise the Congress cadre. The committed and die-hard party workers and leaders are still with the Congress and they will never quit the party," Sharma said.



He also said that the BJP has lost its ground in the state, as its image is tarnished, adding that it (BJP) is only good in event management.

The Congress is working on micro-level planning to conquer the ruling party in the Assembly polls, Sharma said, adding that the Congress is aiming to win 125 seats in the elections scheduled later this year.

Rahul's 'patience' remark citing Sachin Pilot sparks political speculations in Raj

Jaipur | Agencies

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's remark on Wednesday that "Congress party teaches patience", during which he referred to Sachin Pilot, has triggered fresh speculations over the party leadership in Rajasthan.

Sharing the experience of his recent ED grilling with the party workers at the AICC headquarters in Delhi on Wednesday, Rahul Gandhi said: "The ED officials asked me about the patience with which I answered their questions... I'm in Congress since 2004, patience is inculcated in us and every leader of the party understands this."

He then said: "Congress party teaches patience. I am working since 2004, Sachin Pilot is sitting here, Siddaramaiah ji is here."

Following the former Congress chief's remarks, party leaders in Rajasthan are speculating if there is a possibility of a major change in state politics.

As soon as the video of Rahul Gandhi's speech went viral, senior leaders holding plum posts started calling each other to discuss the status quo in Rajasthan.

A senior leader told reporter, "Why did Rahul



Gandhi make this comment at this point of time? It seems something big is cooking."

Another leader said that while the CM's chair seems stable as of now, as a big drama is unfolding in Maharashtra, Pilot can be again appointed as Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) chief.

In 2020, Pilot had rebelled against Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's leadership by heading to

Manesar along with 18 MLAs. Soon after, he was removed both as Rajasthan PCC chief and Deputy Chief Minister.

Since then, a cold war-like situation has existed between the two factions headed by Gehlot and Pilot.

In the three-and-a-half-year rule of the present Congress government, there have been many discussions of leadership change, but Gehlot has managed hold fort by keeping his MLAs together.

Meanwhile, Pilot has been busy visiting different places and meeting his followers.

When Congress MLAs were recently camping in Udaipur ahead of the Rajya Sabha polls, Pilot was seen touring the border cities of Rajasthan and Punjab, where he drew a large crowd.

Now Rahul Gandhi's statement has triggered fresh speculations as Pilot is a sitting MLA without any post since 2020.

Senior Congress leader and a staunch Pilot supporter, Sushil Asopa, tweeted, "Rahul Gandhi said that Sachin Pilot is sitting patiently. Pilot can be patient, but the people of Rajasthan can't remain patient as they wanted to see Pilot as Rajasthan CM in 2018."

Rujira Narula with son in lap faces ED grilling for five hrs

Kolkata | Agencies

Rujira Narula Banerjee, the wife of Trinamool Congress' national general secretary, Abhishek Banerjee, on Thursday faced a marathon six hour questioning by Enforcement Directorate (ED) sleuths holding her two-and-a-half year-old son Ayansh.

She is being questioned in connection with the coal smuggling scam in West Bengal, which as per the estimates is to the tune of Rs 1,300 crore.

According to ED sources, Rujira Narula Banerjee reached central government office (CGO) complex at around 11.10 a.m. holding



her son in her lap. She requested the investigating officials, who came from New Delhi on Thursday morning only, to allow her son to be present during the questioning session.

The ED officials allowed

that on humanitarian ground. The investigating officials, source said, gave her timely breaks in between in view of the fact that her son was with her.

Sources said that Rujira was questioned mainly on

two bank accounts, purportedly held by her, one in London and the another in Bangkok. She was specially questioned about the Bangkok-based bank account, where money was transferred by a Howrah-based chartered accountant, Neeraj Singh, who is currently absconding. The money transferred, according to ED sources, was from an India-based bank account after converting Indian rupee into Thai baht.

Apart from that she was also questioned about some mobile screenshots that the agency has recovered from the cellphones of other suspects in the coal smuggling scam.

MAN BURNT ALIVE IN DELHI'S FIRE

New Delhi: A man was charred to death after a major fire broke out at a shop in Pooth Kalan area of Rohini on Thursday afternoon.

According to the fire department, they got a call regarding the incident at around 4.44 p.m. Initially, four fire tenders were rushed to the spot. Later six more were sent to the site.

The fire fighters which were pressed into service took an hour to bring the fire under control. "We found a charred body. The fire was in the shop of the building which has two more floors. The cause of the fire is not yet known," said the fire official.

The body was sent to the nearby government hospital for the postmortem. Local police were informed to initiate further investigation.

Mandaviya holds review meet as Covid cases rise again

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Thursday chaired a meeting with the key experts and officials in view of an upsurge of Covid-19 cases in some states.

The meeting discussed the analysis of trend of Covid cases, daily and active cases, positivity and deaths, testing status along with state-wise weekly tests per million, RT-PCR share in weekly tests, genome sequencing, and vaccination status in the meeting.

Mandaviya stressed on the need to focus on districts reporting high case positivity and undertake adequate testing with higher proportion of RT-PCR and effective Covid-19 sur-



veillance to assess and control the spread of infection in a timely manner.

He directed the officials to continue to focus on surveillance and on whole genome sequencing to scan for any possible mutation. He also directed monitoring hospitalisations due to Covid-19. "As there are ade-

quate vaccine doses available, let there be no vaccine wastage while focusing on accelerating vaccination among the eligible and vulnerable groups," he told officials while exhorting them to increase pace of vaccination, including booster doses, in districts reporting high cases.

'Cong doesn't want Hindu gods', BJP hits back on textbook revision row

Bengaluru | Agencies

Adopting a defiant posture, the ruling BJP in Karnataka on Thursday hit back at the Congress saying the previous Congress governments changed the syllabus of the textbook to "please minorities".

Ever since opposition Congress and the JD(S) targeted the BJP over insulting Kuvempu, revered by Kannadigas especially by Vokkaliga community, in the revised syllabus, the ruling party tried to pay it back in their own coin.

Minister for Revenue, R. Ashok, a prominent Vokkaliga leader, slammed opposition parties over making hue and cry over the issue. Ashok said that Congress does not want Hindu gods, freedom fighters in syllabus and is

unnecessarily creating issues.

Addressing a press conference, Ashok said, State Congress president D.K. Shivakumar tore the draft of the revised syllabus having a lesson on Nadaprabu Kempe Gowda, the architect of the Bengaluru city. He should have torn the draft of old syllabus processed during the Congress government which did not have that lesson, he said.

"The Congress inserted their agenda, communist philosophies during the revision of textbooks. The Congress wanted to take out the word 'Hindu' from textbooks. To take out names of Lord Shri Ram and Lord Shiva from the syllabus, the Congress had formed a Textbook Revision Committee under the chairmanship of

Baraguru Ramachandrappa," Minister Ashok said.

"They got the textbook revised only to appease minorities. During the regime of the previous BJP government, there were 8 lessons of Rashtrakavi Kuvempu. The Congress had taken down 3," he stated.

"Siddaramaiah neglected the contributions of Mysuru Wadeyars and sensationalized Tipu Sultan in the textbooks. He clarified that lessons on the freedom fighter Bhagat Singh, social revolutionaries Narayan Guru and Periyar have not been dropped."

Former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda on Wednesday wrote to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai urging him to take back revised syllabus and continue with the old syllabus.

Moosewala's killing hatched to avenge murder of Middukhera: Punjab ADGP

Team Absolute | Chandigarh

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the sensational killing of famed Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, on Thursday said that jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, the main conspirator, confessed that the execution planning was hatched in August last year to avenge the murder of Vicky Middukhera.

Anti-Gangster Task Force chief Pramod Ban told the media here that 13 people have been arrested so far in the case with the first arrest on May 30, a day after the murder that was in retaliation of youth Akali leader Middukhera's murder.

Canada-based Goldy Brar, who is a member of Bishnoi gang, had claimed the responsibility of the murder. Ban said the shooters reached Mansa on May 25, the scene of crime close to Moosa village. "Some of the



weapons were provided to them on reaching Punjab." AK series assault rifles were used in the killing, he said.

"Today we have arrested Baldev, a.k.a. Nikku, who accompanied

Kekda (Sandeep Singh) in conducting recce for the crime. So far, 13 people have been arrested," Ban said.

Nikku along with Kekda conducted recce of the area, followed

Moosewala and gave signal to the waiting shooters, besides calling Goldy Brar and Sachin Bishnoi to give them real-time updates about the movements of the slain singer.

He said Bishnoi, who was brought to Punjab by the state police from Delhi last week for questioning, during interrogation has revealed that the planning for the murder started last year.

"He has confessed to hatching the conspiracy with Brar, Sachin Bishnoi (Thapan) and his younger brother Anmol. At least three recce were done prior to the murder. In January, another group of shooters had visited the Moosewala's place."

He said the motive behind the killing, as admitted by Bishnoi, was to avenge Middukhera's murder. "As per our investigation, Moosewala's hand in Middukhera's killing was not established. There was an assumption by the Lawrence gang about the role of Moosewala in his killing."



Students should get caste and domicile certificates in the school itself: CM Chouhan

► CAMPAIGN WILL BE RUN AT VILLAGE LEVEL TO UPLOAD NECESSARY DOCUMENTS. CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN REVIEWS SINGLE CITIZEN DATABASE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has directed to establish such a system in the state in which people do not have to make frequent visits to government offices for domicile and caste certificates and land related records. The Chief Minister has also instructed to ensure that caste and domicile certificates are given to eligible students in the school itself. Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing a review meeting on Single Citizen Database at the residence office.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that a campaign should be launched at the village level to upload the necessary documents of all the people. The Chief Minister said that information



of people of the state who have got the benefits of various government schemes and those who have not, should be made available on one platform. Also, a system should be developed to identify issues, shortcomings and problems faced by the beneficiaries in the implementation of the schemes using the latest technology. Science and Technology Minister Omprakash Sakhlecha, Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains,

Additional Chief Secretary General Administration Vinod Kumar, Principal Secretary Finance Manoj Govil, Principal Secretary Science & Technology Amit Rathore, Managing Director Madhya Pradesh State Electronics Development Corporation Nand Kumaram and other officials were present.

It was told that the basic objective of Single Citizen Database is to create a single citizen database by including

the databases of various departments in a holistic manner. E-KYC of registered citizens will be done through the campaign. With this, the benefits of various schemes availed by one Samagra member will easily be available. By enabling Samagra, services of various departments like registration of Ladli Laxmi Yojana, application for caste certificate etc. can be given. Aadhar reference number, caste and domicile certificate, details of land related information and class 10th and 12th marksheets are being added to the entire database with the aim of including the database of various departments in Samagra. So far mapping with Samagra has been completed with a total of about 48 lakh caste certificates.

In the meeting, discussion was held to ensure the use of Samagra in various beneficiary-oriented schemes, to create a single form to provide the benefits of various schemes, to give the right to provide services of various departments by a level competent officer and to develop the entire process of making marriage certificate on the Samagra portal.

DEPARTMENTS SHOULD REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PORTALS : CM CHOUHAN

Portals of same nature should be integrated for convenience of citizens. Chief Minister Chouhan took a meeting regarding Citizen Service Delivery Portal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that citizens have to use different portals for different services. All portals have different complexities. This adds to the problems of the citizens. Departments should work towards reducing the number of portals. Portals of the same nature should be integrated keeping in view the convenience of the citizens. Work towards creating a unified portal for various services by setting timelines should be done.

Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing a meeting related to Citizen Service Delivery Portal at his residence office. Science and Technology Minister Omprakash Sakhlecha, Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Additional Chief Secretary General Administration Vinod Kumar, Principal Secretary Finance Manoj Govil, Principal Secretary Science & Technology Amit Rathore, Managing Director Madhya Pradesh State Electronics Development Corporation Limited Nand Kumaram and other officials were present.

It was informed that the service for providing beneficiary oriented certificates for citizen service delivery would be brought under e-service portal or e-district portal. For Citizen based plans of departments of one sector, one type of portal will be developed for departments related to similar activities like agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries, cooperatives etc. Similarly, work will be done in the direction of making one portal for payment related schemes to the beneficiary and one portal for subsidy.

Bus fell into a ditch in Indore, 6 died



Team Absolute | Indore

A major road accident happened in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. The bus going from Indore to Burhanpur fell uncontrolledly at Bhairav Ghat and fell into a ditch. Six passengers have died in this accident, while more than 17 have been injured. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed grief over this accident. According to the information received from the police control room, the passenger bus going from Indore to Burhanpur fell into a ditch uncontrolledly at Bhairav Ghat in Simrol police station area. Six passengers have died in this acci-

dent, while more than 17 people have been injured. The bus fell into the ditch at a depth of about 50 meters.

According to the police, the bus that fell into the ditch had completely overturned and its wheels were towards the sky. There were about 50 passengers on the bus when the accident happened.

Expressing grief over this accident, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan tweeted, "Heartbreaking news of the untimely demise of many precious lives in a bus accident near Simrol, Indore. I pray to God to give place to the departed souls at his feet and speedy recovery of the injured.

CM CHOUHAN PAYS TRIBUTE TO DR. SHYAMA PRASAD MUKHERJEE ON HIS DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage to the great revolutionary, educationist, thinker Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee on his death anniversary.



CM Chouhan paid floral tributes by garlanding the portrait of Dr. Mukherjee in the auditorium at the residence office. Dr. Mukherjee was born on 6 July

1901 in Kolkata. He became the Vice Chancellor of Kolkata University at the young age of 33. He was a strong proponent of the notion that culturally we are all one. He entered politics with the aim of awakening the spirit of nationalism. He always considered Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of India. He passed away on June 23, 1953.

Campaigning for the first phase of Panchayat elections halts

Team Absolute | Bhopal

It is to be known that Panchayat elec-

The campaigning for the first phase of the three-tier panchayat elections being held in Madhya Pradesh halted at 3 pm on Thursday. Polling in this phase is to be held on June 25. According to the information given officially, the first phase of polling in the three-tier panchayat election will be held on June 25 from 7 am to 3 pm. In the first phase, in the Gram Panchayat areas where voting is to be held, public meeting now banned from 3 pm on 23rd June.

State Election Commission Secretary Rakesh Singh has informed that instructions have been given to keep liquor shops closed from 48 hours before the end of polling.



tions are to be held in the state in three phases, the first phase of polling is on June 25. In this phase, voting is to be held for 115 Janpad Panchayats, more than eight thousand seven hundred Gram Panchayats. The second phase of polling will be held on July 1 and the third phase will be held on July 6.

Admission in diploma engineering in polytechnic colleges will now be on the merit of Class 10th

Bhopal : In the academic session 2022-23, admission to diploma engineering courses conducted in polytechnic colleges of Madhya Pradesh will be done on the basis of merit of marks obtained in Class 10th examination of 10+2. Earlier, the Entrance Test (PPT) was conducted by the Professional Examination Board.



CM Chouhan plants saplings of Peepal, Cassia and Gular

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings on the occasion of the 18th foundation day of the daily newspaper. Chief Minister Chouhan planted Peepal, Cassia and Gular saplings in the Smart City

garden. **Importance of plants :** Peepal purifies the environment and has religious and Ayurvedic significance as well. Similarly, the bark and leaves of Cassia are used in making Ayurvedic medicines.

Saptaparni is an evergreen medicinal tree, which has great importance in Ayurveda. According to Ayurveda, Gular is helpful in the diagnosis of many diseases. It is also a much revered tree.

BJP in tribal colours, Shivraj and the state president performed dance

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, the BJP was completely seen in tribal color, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and BJP State President Vishnu Dutt Sharma along with the tribal people did not hesitate to dance in the same style with the tribal nutritionist.

The opportunity was to make Draupadi Murmu of the tribal society a candidate for the country's highest office of President. On Thursday, the state unit of BJP organized a grand program to express its gratitude to BJP President JP Nadda, Prime Minister Narendra Modi for making Draupadi Murmu the Presidential candidate. On this occasion, members of the tribal class performed dance and songs according to their art and culture. On this occasion, Chief Minister Chouhan and State President Sharma also danced fiercely.

On this occasion, Chief Minister Chouhan expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP and NDA leadership and said that after independence, for so many



years, Congress only exploited the tribal society for votes, never thought of their welfare. But a new revolution is taking place under the leadership of Modi ji. The BJP government is not only raising the tribal society through

development, but by giving it respect and proper place.

BJP State President Sharma said that it is an occasion of pride for all of us. Such a historic decision has never been taken before. For the first time

in the country, if any government did anything for the tribal brothers and sisters of the country, it would be self. It was Atalji's government, which created a separate tribal ministry. The Modi government has given due respect to the tribal people who fought the British at their own level in the Amrit Mahotsav of Independence.

Union Minister Faggan Singh Kulaste said that the selection of Draupadi Murmu ji as the country's highest post candidate is a historic decision.

Such a decision has not been taken in the country till date, which has been taken by the Bharatiya Janata Party under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Tribal dancers from all over the state also participated in the gratitude show organized by the Scheduled Tribes Morcha. Dancers dressed in traditional costumes welcomed the guests at the venue with traditional dances. Seeing the enthusiasm of these dancers, Chief Minister Chouhan and State President Sharma also danced fiercely on traditional musical instruments.

Relevance of life lies in living with the spirit of public welfare: Governor

Human beings have got special abilities to understand pain of others and help. Second convocation ceremony of LNCT University held

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that the meaning of life lies in living with the spirit of public welfare. Human beings have got a special ability to understand and cooperate with others. Along with this amazing power of communication, the ability to extend a helping hand has been given. He said that it is the responsibility of the educated section of the society to cooperate with the backward and deprived sections of the society and bring them into the mainstream of the society.

Governor Patel was addressing the second convocation of LNCT University. He inaugurated the programme by lighting the lamp. He awarded the gold medalists and Ph D recipients. The Governor honored cine actor Suman Talwar and social worker Sanjeev Kumar with honorary degrees. He felicitated social worker Raj Kishore Chaurasia.

Governor Patel said that for serv-



ice and cooperation, motivation is required and not means. Children from disadvantaged sections can be helped significantly in their education by cooperating through teaching them the subjects taught in the school. For this, there is no need of any means, only one hour is needed from the routine. The Governor said that the self-satisfaction that one would get from helping someone

would be incomparable and enjoyable. He said that doing work with responsibility is the basis of success. He expected the students to observe the convocation oath daily. Governor Shri Patel said that the sufferers should be treated sensitively. Emphasizing on being health conscious, doing yoga and taking care of diet, he said that the food which is easily digested should not be taken

and not the one that is good to taste.

The Chairman of Private University Regulatory Commission Bharat Sharan Singh said that Diksha (initiation) is the beginning of the education of life. The present era is of subject-specialization. Therefore, continuous acquisition of knowledge is necessary. Maharishi Dadhichi donated his body for the welfare of humanity. He exhorted the students to keep irrigating their roots with the knowledge and talent they gained. The Chancellor of the University JN Chouksey said that the meaning of life lies in becoming a good person. A good person is good and successful in every situation. He expected the students to always remember their parents and teachers. Always be grateful to them. Act on your inner voice. Always be ready to learn and listen and be true to yourself. Chancellor Prof. Anupam Chouksey expressed vote of thanks. Vice-Chancellor NK Thapak administered the convocation sermon and oath to the students.

कार्यालय नगर पालिका परिषद सारनी (म.प्र.)						
Phone & Fax No. 07146-256400		Email : cmosarani@mpurban.gov.in				
क्रमांक/ई देख/विद्युत/2022/493			:: द्वितीय ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना ::		सारनी, दिनांक 20.05.2022	
एतद् द्वारा समस्त 'अ' श्रेणी में पंजीकृत विद्युत कार्य संबंधित ठेकेदारों से नगर पालिका परिषद सारनी द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्यों की आनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। विस्तृत विवरण वेबसाइट http://mptenders.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है एवं निविदा में किसी भी प्रकार का संशोधन होने की स्थिति में संशोधन मात्र वेबसाइट पर ही प्रकाशित किया जावेगा न कि समाचार पत्र में। कार्य का संक्षिप्त विवरण निम्नानुसार है :-						
क्र.	ऑनलाईन टेण्डर नंबर	कार्य का नाम	अनुमानित लागत रु.	आई.एस. एस.आर का विवरण	अमानत राशि रु.	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य
01.	2022_UAD_209987_1	Electrification of Ward No-17 At Maharana Pratap Nagar Pathakheda	3103290.00 Without GST	MPMKVV Co.Ltd. 2021-22	23275/-	5000.00
02.	2022_UAD_209987_2	Electrification of Ward No-18 Pathakheda	4151589.00 Without GST	MPMKVV Co.Ltd. 2021-22	31140/-	5000.00
03.	2022_UAD_209987_3	Electrification of Ward No-19 Masjid Chouk Pathakheda	2659477.00 Without GST	MPMKVV Co.Ltd. 2021-22	19950/-	5000.00
04.	2022_UAD_209987_4	Electrification Of Ward No-20 At Pathakheda	1773884.00 Without GST	MPMKVV Co.Ltd. 2021-22	13304/-	2000.00

टीप :- निविदा के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी लोक निर्माण शाखा से प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

1. निविदा क्रय प्रारंभ तिथि	: 21.06.2022	17:30
2. निविदा (Bid Submission) प्रारंभ तिथि	: 22.06.2022	17:30
3. निविदा (Bid Submission) अंतिम तिथि	: 28.06.2022	17:30
4. तकनीकी निविदा खोलने की तिथि	: 30.06.2022	11:00

(श्रीमति आशा महेन्द्र भारती) अध्यक्ष
नगर पालिका परिषद, सारनी

(श्री भीम बहादुर थापा) उपाध्यक्ष
नगर पालिका परिषद, सारनी

(श्री सुखदेव यामनकर) सभापति
नगर पालिका परिषद, सारनी

(सी.के. मेश्राम)
मुख्य नगर पालिका अधिकारी
नगर पालिका परिषद, सारनी



EDITOR'S SPECS

Agnipath scheme is anti-youth!

Congress leaders and workers sat on a 'satyagrah' at Jantar Mantar here for the second consecutive day against the Agnipath scheme and ED's questioning of Rahul Gandhi as what party calls 'vendetta politics'. A delegation of the Congress will meet President Ram Nath Kovind in the evening. The party has also called its Parliamentary board meeting in which all MPs have been asked to attend. Congress leader Kanhaiya Kumar, lashed out at BJP leaders over the Agnipath scheme. He said, "First, make your children the beneficiary of this scheme. Minister's son becomes secretary in the BCCI and youth of the country will get only four years contractual job and then will become watchmen. If a child of a family gets a job in the army, their respect increases in the society. A job in the army is a question about the security of the country, do not make fun of it. Children of poor farmers and labourers go to the army. Agnipath scheme has been brought with an intention to push the youth into the fire. This scheme should be withdrawn immediately," he added. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel also joined the protest along with senior Congress leaders against the Agnipath scheme and ED's action against Rahul Gandhi. The Congress workers said that until the government withdraws this scheme, the demonstrations will continue. Heavy police force has been deployed at the railway stations to prevent any untoward incident. The opposition and the youths across the country have demanded withdrawal of the Agnipath scheme. Fierce protests have erupted in many states after the central government announced the Agnipath scheme. The demonstrations entered the fifth day on Monday. In the past four days, protesters have torched train coaches and damaged public properties in several areas.

'MARKET MUST COUNT ALL COSTS IN RUSSIAN OIL FLOW UPHEAVAL'

Paul Hickin

The West's boycott of Russian barrels will be the oil market's ultimate test. While it has an impressive record of adapting to unthinkable shifts in trade patterns, from self-imposed embargoes on US exports to sanctions on Iranian and Venezuelan crude, the stakes, and costs, have never been higher. The market is already doing what it does best in bringing new buyers and sellers together and boosting existing relationships, but at a magnitude rarely seen before.

Russian oil supply makes up some 13 per cent of total oil exports. The EU alone was importing about 2.3 million b/d of Russian crude before the war in Ukraine, which started on February 24. Europe is now weaning itself off Russian Urals and buying more crude from across the Atlantic and via the Middle East. Russia is now looking to Asia, with India emerging out of nowhere as a new top buyer of its heavily discounted crude, and lockdown-hit China is returning as a pivotal customer. The two Asian oil importers have now grown their share of Russian shipped crude to almost 30 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively, a



combined growth of more than 1 million b/d from pre-war levels. But the accounting ledger points to the extra ton-mile shipping costs and time involved bringing in barrels from further afield as even Brazil grades start to move up in popularity in Europe. These costs may be easily swallowed amid bumper refining margins, but European buyers are still at a competitive disadvantage to Asian refiners taking Urals, which could be at around a \$40/b discount to Dated Brent, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights assessments. The US' ability to throttle Iranian crude pro-

duction by excluding it from the international financial system wiped out around 1.5 million b/d in output, but even then Iran has managed to find ways to sell its crude. It's much easier to weaponise oil when prices are low than when Dated Brent remains well into triple digits and shows little sign of falling. The more supply is cut from the market, the more consumers get twitchy and pump prices become politicised, so should Russian supply eventually plummet, buyers may start to scramble. OPEC+ spare capacity is already down at dangerously low levels at a time when Libya output is volatile and US hurricane season is just around the corner. Russian seaborne exports are at three-year highs, but the difficulty comes in finding fungible grades should the market tighten further. Analysts point to the door opening to an Iran oil deal, hanging in the balance for more than a year, should the pressure get too much. The oil market may already be paying the extra costs of epochal changes in oil flows, but the eventual price could be much higher.

(Paul Hickin is Associate Editorial Director, S&P Global Commodity Insights.)

WILL ECB BE LATE(ST) TO JOIN THE CENTRAL BANKS' PARTY?

Sreejith Balasubramanian

European Central Bank (ECB)'s April meeting minutes and the blog post in May by its President seem to suggest an inflection point in the assessment of its appropriate monetary policy response. The April policy statement had earlier stressed on downside risks to growth from the war, muted wage increases, big difference between the economic (read demand) situation in the US and Euro Area, flexibility and gradualism in the conduct of monetary policy and its identified normalisation sequence of ending net asset purchases in Q3 followed by commencing rate hikes. It had nevertheless acknowledged near term upside risks to inflation and initial signs of inflation expectations edging above target. The minutes of this meeting, released later in May, revealed more hawkish discussions

on the policy path. This included the inconsistency of a highly accommodative monetary policy stance with high inflation and rising inflation expectations, criteria for rate hikes being already met, the need for asset purchases to end soon in Q3 and for rates to move soon to neutral. Broader price pressures in March, inflation expectations moving higher, hit to growth from the war being insufficient to meaningfully reduce medium-term inflation and other factors aiding inflation persistence (China's pandemic response, likely future wage pressures which need to be preempted, etc.) drove this. The overall policy balance seemed to have tilted towards a more hawkish path.

If there was any ambiguity regarding this, four days later, a rare blog post by the President of the ECB cleared this. It detailed the

combination of price shocks, including stimulus-driven demand, causing inflation to be broad and persistent and why pre-pandemic structural disinflationary pressures are unlikely to return as geopolitics drive supply chains and companies transition to green energy. Above target inflation expectations could thus prove sticky. For growth, accumulated savings and the labour market recovery are tailwinds but consumer confidence has dipped.

Overall, ending net asset purchases very early in Q3 (likely June), commencing rate hikes in July and exiting negative rates by end of Q3 was deemed fit. Gradualism (pace), but now only if appropriate, optionality (continuous assessment) and flexibility (reinvestment of maturing assets) continued to be part of the narrative. To meet the extant official forecast of 5.1 per cent y/y inflation in 2022, average inflation for the rest

of the year has to be 3.4 per cent, very low now given recent price pressures and outlook. Updated forecast this month will most likely be increased. The ECB now seems very likely to join global central banks' rate hike party. Rates could be hiked by 25bps each in July and September if it decides to exit negative rates by the end of Q3, but what will be the story beyond this? Consumer confidence indicators have already fallen very sharply since March. Households' expectation of their financial situation over the next one year has fallen very sharply while the European Commission's business climate indicator continues to ease. Will impact of supply shocks and rate hikes constrain growth enough to demand a slower pace of further hikes and/or a lower terminal



rate? Or will the ECB hike rates above neutral? The key will be whether slower growth manifests materially by then and reduce concerns of second-order passthrough of inflation. (Sreejith Balasubramanian is economist, Fund Management, IDFC AMC)

international

UKRAINE SET TO BE APPROVED AS EU CANDIDATE AT BRUSSELS SUMMIT

Brussels | Agencies

During a summit in Brussels on Thursday, Ukraine is set to be approved as an European Union (EU) candidate after the European Commission gave the go-ahead.

Just four days after Russia launched its invasion of Kiev on February 24, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had signed an official appeal to the EU asking for the accession of Ukraine via a new special procedure. And on June 11, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the bloc will finalise the assessment on granting Ukraine EU candidate status.

Von der Leyen had given the EU membership questionnaire to the Ukrainian President during her visit to Kiev in April.

The first part of the docu-



ment was submitted to the EU on April 18, while the second was delivered on May 9. Candidate status is the first official step towards EU membership and earlier this week, France had said that there was "total consensus" on Ukraine, the BBC reported.

However, observers say even with candidate status, it may take years, if not decades, for Ukraine to obtain EU membership. For example, the Western Balkan countries of Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro and

Serbia have been candidate countries for years; in some cases for over a decade.

Bosnia and Herzegovina applied for candidacy in 2016 but has still not succeeded. Vsevolod Chentsov, Ukraine's Ambassador to the EU, told the BBC on Wednesday night that granting the status would be a "psychological boost for Ukrainians".

"We do not accept the idea of the queue," he said, arguing Kiev's eagerness could set an example to other states. "Every state has its

road map, has its path. And if there is political will, if there is support of society (and) business operators to move forward to implement reform in a bold and fast way, why we should wait?" he told the BBC. Several EU states have agreed to back Ukraine's candidacy, provided conditions are attached before accession negotiations can begin, including judicial and anti-corruption reforms.

Chentsov has insisted some reforms can take place, even while the country is at war and not in control of its whole territory.

"We are not starting from scratch," he insists, pointing to work carried out since the EU and Ukraine signed an association agreement in 2014.

But it would be "logical" to carry out bigger reforms once the situation on the ground became more stable, he told the BBC.

Israel begins building wall in northern West Bank

Jerusalem:

Israel has begun building a 9-metre-tall wall to replace the old fence barrier in the northern occupied West Bank, said Israeli Defense Ministry, citing security reasons. The 45-kilometre-long wall will stretch from near the Palestinian village of Salem, east of Nablus city in the northern West Bank, to the north of Tulkarm city, the Ministry added on Wednesday in a statement.

"The security barrier will include a massive concrete wall, protection measures and other technological means," the Ministry said,

The project was approved by Israeli government in April amid a wave of deadly Palestinian attacks in Israeli cities, and a total of 360 million shekels (about \$104 million) were allocated for the construction, Xinhua news agency reported. The controversial fence barrier built about 20 years ago has been a key symbol of Israel's control over the West Bank, with Israel arguing it is necessary to prevent Palestinian attacks and the Palestinians charging it as a feature of racial segregation and the Israeli apartheid regime.



Kuwaiti crown prince dissolves parliament

Kuwait City | Agencies

Kuwaiti Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has dissolved the parliament of the country, calling for an early general election,

according to the official Kuwait TV. "We have decided, based on our constitutional right complying with the provision of Article 107, to dissolve the parliament and to call for general elections in the coming months, after preparing the necessary legal arrangements for that," he said on behalf of the Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah concerning the latest political developments in Kuwait.

An Amiri decree of the National Assembly dissolution is to be issued in the upcoming few months, he added. The Kuwaiti constitution is



untouchable and is the foundation of legitimacy in the pact between the leadership and the people to ensure Kuwait's security, stability and prosperity, he said, calling on the Kuwaiti people to elect a new house that could bear significant responsibility for maintaining state stability and accomplishing the citizens' hopes and aspirations, Xinhua news agency reported. He also called on the upcoming National Assembly and the government to cooperate, coordinate and pay great efforts toward realising the aspirations of the people.

Bulgarian govt ousted by no-confidence vote

Sofia | Agencies

Bulgaria's coalition government led by Kiril Petkov was ousted in a no-confidence vote in Parliament here.

In the 240-seat legislature, 123 deputies from the center-right GERB-UDF coalition (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria and Union of Democratic Forces), the centrist Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS), the ultranationalist Revival party and the populist There Is Such A People (ITN) party voted against Petkov's government, reports Xinhua news agency.

The motion required absolute majority support.



The no-confidence motion against the four-party coalition government was filed last on June 15 by GERB-UDF, the largest opposition force in Bulgaria's Parliament with 59 seats.

The move came just one week after the ITN leadership announced the party's exit from the ruling coalition.

Meanwhile, six of the 25 ITN lawmakers left the parliamentary group due to disagreement with this decision. They voted against the no-confidence motion.

Petkov's government was elected last December, backed by 134 MPs from Petkov's centrist We Continue the Change electoral alliance, the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) for Bulgaria, the centre-right Democratic Bulgaria electoral alliance and ITN.

This was the first successful no-confidence motion against a government in Bulgaria since the adoption of the country's Constitution in 1991.

Under the Constitution, Petkov shall hand in his government's resignation.

RECESSION IS CERTAINLY A POSSIBILITY, SAYS US FED CHIEF

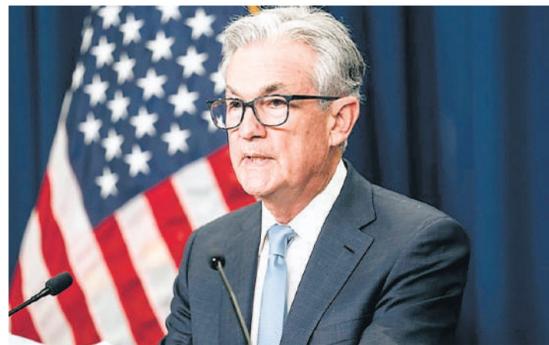
Washington | Agencies

US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said that the central bank is trying to bring inflation down without inflicting too much damage, but the Fed's aggressive rate hikes could tip the American economy into recession.

"We are strongly committed to bringing inflation back down, and we are moving expeditiously to do so," Powell told lawmakers at a hearing held by the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

"My colleagues and I are acutely aware that high inflation imposes significant hardship, especially on those least able to meet the higher costs of essentials like food, housing, and transportation," said the Fed chair, noting that the central bank is highly attentive to the risks of high inflation.

Over the 12 months ending in April, total personal consumption



expenditures (PCE) prices rose 6.3 per cent; excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core PCE prices rose 4.9 per cent, reports Xinhua news agency.

The consumer price index (CPI) skyrocketed 8.6 per cent in May from a year earlier.

With inflation well above the Fed's

longer-run goal of 2 per cent and an extremely tight labour market, the Fed raised the target range for the federal funds rate at each of the past three meetings.

Last week, it raised rates by 75 basis points, marking the sharpest rate hike since 1994.

Democratic Senator Elizabeth

Warren argued that aggressive rate hikes would do little to ease the supply shocks that have driven up the price of gas and food, but could lead to significant rise in layoffs.

"You know what's worse than high inflation and low unemployment? It's high inflation and a recession with millions of people out of work," Warren said when questioning Powell.

"And I hope you'll reconsider that as you drive this economy off a cliff." Powell, however, said that "we do think it's absolutely essential that we restore price stability, really for the benefit of the labor market as much as anything else."

When asked whether raising interest rates too much and too fast could tip the economy into a recession, the Fed chair said it's a possibility. "It's not our intended outcome at all, but it's certainly a possibility. We're not trying to provoke, and don't think that we will need to provoke a recession."



SHIV SENA ENGAGING WITH REBEL MLAS DIRECTLY, BUT NO HOPES OF RAPPROCHEMENT: SOURCES

Tata Nexon EV catches fire in Mumbai, probe on

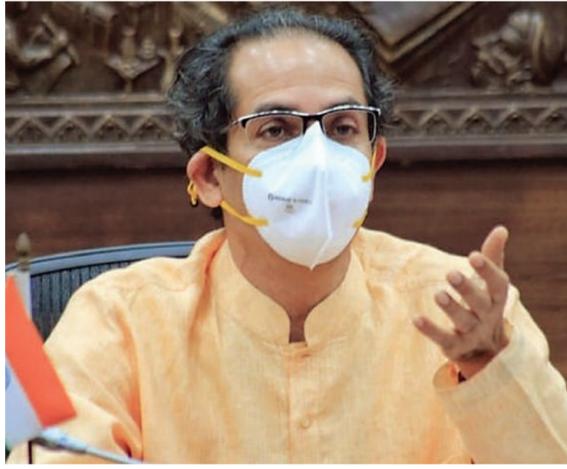
Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

After Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray vacated the official residence in Mumbai, Shiv Sena is now directly engaging with the rebel MLAs and talking to each of them through emissaries but with no hopes.

A senior functionary of the Sena said, "The magnitude of the rebellion is such that there are grim chances of survival, but we are engaging them and there are regular talks."

The Sena leader said the only hope is that the party thinks that many MLAs don't want to go into election, so if they are disqualified for violating the party line they have to seek re-election. If half the MLAs return, then the government could survive.

The Sena rebels are swelling, as the leader pointed out, who also added that no one could anticipate Shinde to do this as he was a trusted man of the top leadership.



Uddhav Thackeray late on Wednesday vacated his official residence 'Varsha' at Malabar Hill to return to his private home 'Matoshri'

in Bandra along with his family.

The move came hours after his emotional appeal to the rebel group of Shiv Sena MLAs, led by Minister Eknath Shinde, that he (Thackeray) was ready to quit both as a CM and as party President, provided the rebels meet him.

Thackeray -- who tested Covid-19 positive the previous morning -- also said that he had kept his resignation letter ready and any of the rebels could go and hand it over to the Governor.

On his part, Shinde responded by saying that the steps would have to be taken for Hindutva and reiterated his demand to break off with the Nationalist Congress Party and Congress to form the government with the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The crisis shows no sign of defusing despite efforts of the MVA allies, including the offer to quit by the Chief Minister or even his (Uddhav Thackeray) decision to vacate his official residence.

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

In a first such case involving an electric car in India, a Tata Nexon EV caught fire in Mumbai and the company was investigating the incident.

The EV car fire incident was reported from Vasai West (near Panchvati hotel) in Mumbai late on Wednesday, and the video of the Tata Nexon engulfed in fire went viral on social media.

The company said in a statement that "a detailed investigation is currently being conducted to ascertain the facts of this isolated incident". "We will share a detailed response thereafter. We remain committed to the safety of our vehicles and their users," it added.

Tata Nexon EV is the highest selling electric car in India



and at least 2,500-3,000 cars are being sold every month in the country. The company has so far sold over 30,000 Nexon EVs. According to the video, the owner of the car charged his Nexon EV with a normal slow charger installed at his office. After driving about 5 km towards his house, he heard some weird sounds from the car and saw flashes of warnings on the dashboard which alerted him to stop the vehicle and get out of the car, media reports said. Later, firefighters were seen

spraying water on the burning Nexon EV. "This is a first incident after more than 30,000 EVs have cumulatively covered over 100 million km across the country in nearly four years," said the company. Several electric two-wheelers have caught fires owing to battery explosions in the country, leading the government to launch a probe into the incidents involving EV makers such as Ola Electric, Pure EV, Jitendra EV Tech, Ather Energy and Okinawa.

2,479 new Covid cases in Mumbai, 50% higher

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai recorded 2,479 new COVID-19 cases - a 50 percent rise from 1,648 the previous day - and one death due to the infection in the last 24 hours. The city crossed the 2,000-mark after three days.

Mumbai has been reporting Covid cases in four digits since June 7.

Maharashtra is among the states witnessing an upsurge in Covid cases after witnessing a lull for months. The state reported 5218 new cases today with its capital city accounting for nearly half of it.

Ten states -- Maharashtra, Kerala, Delhi, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Gujarat - have over 1,000 active cases.

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya chaired a high-level review meeting with a team of experts over increasing cases of COVID-19 in the country. He stressed on the need to focus on districts reporting high case positivity and undertake adequate testing and effective surveillance to assess and control the



spread of infection in a timely manner. Mandaviya directed the officials to continue to focus on surveillance and on Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) to scan for any possible mutation. He also directed for monitoring hospitalizations due to the highly-contagious infection. India reported a surge in infections today with 13,313 new cases, and 38 deaths in a span of 24 hours, pushing the country's overall Covid numbers to 4,33,44,958 cases and 5,24,941 deaths.

NCB files draft charges against Rhea Chakraborty and her Brother

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In connection with a drug case connected to the death of Sushant Singh Rajput, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Wednesday filed draft charges against actress Rhea Chakraborty, her brother Showik, and others before a special court, reports. According to special public prosecutor Atul Sarpande, all of the accused continue to face charges that are listed in the charge sheet that was submitted to the court.

Rhea and Showik have been accused by the prosecution of using drugs, as well as of getting drugs for the deceased Bollywood actor and paying for them. On June 14, Sushant killed himself at his Mumbai home. According to Sarpande,



the court was going to file charges against each defendant. According to the news

agency, the court has stated that the charges would be framed only after the discharge

pleas are considered. Rhea and Showik were among the defendants who appeared before the court on Wednesday. The case was posted for hearing on July 12 by special judge V G Raghuvanshi, who hears matters involving the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. Rhea, her brother Showik Chakraborty, and a number of other people are also charged with drug usage, possession, and funding in the case. The majority of them are on bail. Rhea was questioned numerous times by the CBI, ED, and NCB after Sushant's death on suspicion of aiding suicide. In 2020, she was also imprisoned for about a month before the Bombay High Court granted her bail.

Bombay HC dismisses Rane's plea against BMC order on his Juhu bungalow

Team Absolute | Mumbai

On Thursday, the Bombay High Court dismissed the plea filed by Union minister Narayan Rane challenging the city civic body's order against his Juhu bungalow. The High Court dismissed the plea stating that it did not appear to be a case of political vendetta.

A bench led by Justice RD Dhanuka said Rane's plea, which had claimed political vendetta behind the civic body order, was "devoid of merits and deserved to be dismissed."

The bench also restrained the BMC from taking any coercive action against Rane, a BJP leader, vis-a-vis the Juhu bungalow for the same period of six weeks.

Rane approached the HC on Wednesday challenging the order passed by the BMC on April 7 rejecting his application for regularisation and retention of some portions of the bungalow, which, as per the civic body, were in breach of municipal and coast zone norms.



Aspi Chinoy, and advocate Joel Carlos submitted that Rane had made changes to open areas and converted them into usable, closed structures. "The total plot area is 2,209 square

metres. Rane has a lease for 1,187 of this 2,209. He was given FSI for 745 sq mts and he sought permission to build a property of 745 sq mts," Chinoy said.

"However, the FSI used up today is 2249 instead of 745," he told the court.

Advocate Sathe, however, argued that he had a right to claim extra FSI since he held the lease for 1,187 square metres of the plot.

He said the BMC rejected his application for regularisation because of the political rivalry between Rane and Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. "This (rejection) is complete nonsense. The BMC officer who rejected the retention and regularisation application did so because his brief from the higher-ups was to reject owing to political vendetta, particularly because of my (Rane's) tiff with the chief minister," advocate Sathe said.

"You (Rane) shouldn't be hounded. But you shouldn't get a special privilege to violate the law either just because you are a politician," Chinoy said.

The HC, however, said the BMC was right in not regularising Rane's additional construction and changes made at the bungalow.

Ransomware, IP & data theft top concerns for Indian pharma firms

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ransomware attacks and IP and data theft are the top cybersecurity concerns for pharma companies in India as they take the digital leap, a new report showed on Thursday.

The pandemic and a rising number of targeted attacks have prompted certain pharma companies to double their cybersecurity investments, according to the report by Deloitte India-Data Security Council of India (DSCI). "To be able to scale this digital vision and create trust globally, the pharma sector must recognise cybersecurity as a key lever, working towards bolstering security around data, operational technologies (OT), and across the supply chain," said Gaurav Shukla, Partner and Leader, Cyber, Deloitte India.

"This ability to utilise cybersecurity as a key enabler for business and digital transformation can help pharma



organisations make the transition from a leader to a trusted leader," Shukla added. For leading pharma companies, cybersecurity investments have increased by a minimum of 25 to 30 per cent between 2019 and 2021.

The pandemic and the rising number of targeted attacks have prompted certain pharma companies to double their cybersecurity investments over the past 18 months.

Furthermore, 70 per cent of the leading pharma companies highlighted their focus

on a zero-trust approach with the need for a clear roadmap over the next two years, around network, data, and access, the report mentioned.

"While production linked incentive (PLI) schemes and government support will encourage more niche manufacturers and research-led organisations, the focus on cybersecurity adoption and effectively managing cyber risks will enable business transformation and establish market leaders in this sector," said Rama Vedashree, CEO, DSCI.

MVA allies are in full support of Uddhav Thackeray amid crisis

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, whose Nationalist Congress Party is an ally of the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, has made it clear his party stands with Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in this hour of crisis. The Shiv Sena rebel group led by MLA Eknath Shinde has claimed it has 42 MLAs with them now, more than the 37 required to approach the Speaker for recognition as a faction, among other possible scenarios.

"We fully support Uddhav Thackeray ji. We will do everything to save the government," Mr Pawar told reporters this evening.

The Nationalist Congress Party, or NCP, led by Sharad Pawar and the Congress are monitoring what moves the



rebel MLAs - who are camping in a hotel in BJP-ruled Assam's Guwahati city - make today before working on a plan that could possibly save the Uddhav Thackeray government from disintegrating. The Congress has also said it will continue to support the Maha Vikas Aghadi, or MVA. "We (the Congress) formed the MVA with the Shiv Sena and the NCP to stop the BJP (from coming to power). Our support to the MVA continues," Maharashtra Minister and Congress leader Ashok Chavan told reporters after a meeting of party MLAs to discuss the crisis.

FROWNING AT CONGRESS 'LEAKAGE', SHIV SENA WHACKED BY A 'POLITICAL CLOUDBURST'!

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

Exactly a month ago (May 21), the Shiv Sena had expressed serious concerns over the badly "leaking" Congress with so many leaders deserting the party, and how the youth of India would lose confidence in the grand old party.

A month later, the Sena has been knocked down and practically washed out, by an unexpected "political cloudburst" that hit the saffron party last Monday (June 20-21) night, with a series of nightmarish developments in quick succession.

The Sena was rudely shaken, when it became clear by early Tuesday morning that a major storm in the form of a "MLAs' revolt" was raging and threatened to uproot the 30-month-old Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government of Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress. Ironically, on May 21, the Sena was distressed over the desertion by leaders like Sunil Jakhar and Hardik Patel in quick succession, preceded by Jyotiraditya Scindia and Jitin Prasada. "The Congress' condition is like a cloudburst. The problem is where to put the patch and seal it. The leaks started on the concluding day of the party's recent Chintan Shivir in Rajasthan," the sagely Sena had said.

Perhaps unknown to the Sena, it was around that time the group of rebels led by senior party leader and Minister Eknath Shinde were busy hatching their own little political deluge - with a flood of outgoing MLAs - that now threatens to sink the MVA.

Sena's anxiety for its ally came on a day when the



Congress observed the death anniversary of the late ex-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (May 21), and ironically, the "Hindutva" party's own countdown to a probable diminution started on the Summer Solstice Day (June 21). There is seething rage and helplessness at various levels in the Sena, how it failed to catch the signals of a rebellion brewing up right under its noses, why it could not plug the "leaks" in time after they were belatedly detected and finally culminated into a flash flood within barely 48 hours. There are reports that the State Intelligence Department (SID) and other agencies had sounded out drab warnings around March-April on the developments, but the MVA failed to take them seriously or react. Some Congress and NCP senior leaders were visibly irked over how such a large chunk of MLAs could "disappear" into the dark night of June 20-21 at a single shot, undetected

and unsuspected, and by the time the grim reality dawned on them the next morning, it was already "too late".

A Congress leader pointed out that the most shocking aspect was the "Sena MLAs quietly slipping off", taking advantage of the fracas witnessed during the MLCs polls results on Monday and the boisterous celebrations that followed.

One leader said that it has now surfaced how the MLAs sneaked out citing bland reasons like "going to the loo," "getting a headache," "not well," "upset tummy" etc, and vanished from the "party scene" altogether. A Congress leader even questioned how the MLAs' police escorts got no whiff of the murky goings-on, why they did not alert the police control or other authorities especially while crossing the district or state borders, and perhaps helped nip the rebellion in the bud.

The current status is the Sena is left with around 18 MLAs, the rebel group is claiming the support of around 40-plus MLAs, enough for a vertical split and joining any potential new dispensation that may materialise.

Barely 48 hours after the shock revolt, the Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray quietly vacated his official residence and shifted to his private home, amid speculation that he would rather quit - to save the party from a split and the government from a downfall.

Watching the party and government slipping out of the hands like sand, the Sena, along with NCP-Congress are making all-out efforts to salvage the situation or prepare to sit in the Opposition - a classic scenario of hoping for



Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Lil TJay shot multiple times in New Jersey

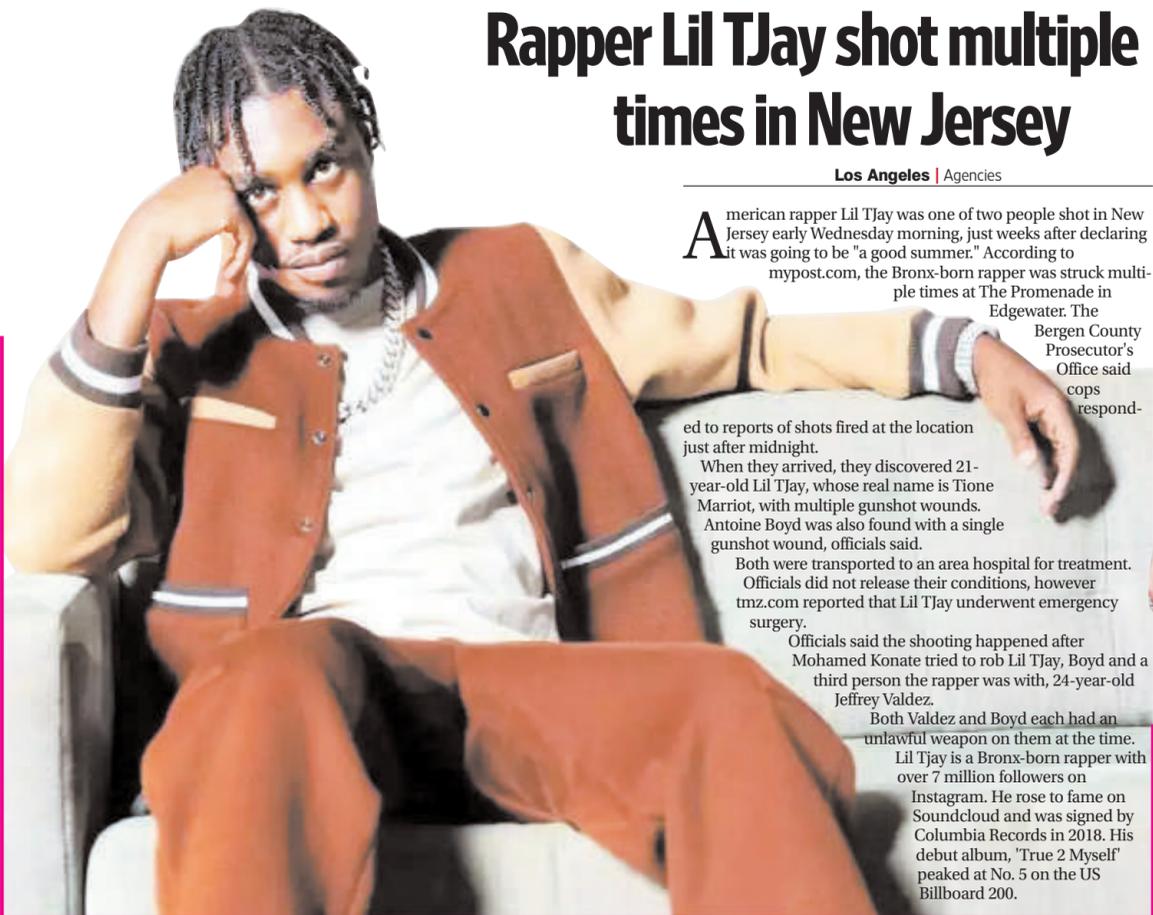
Los Angeles | Agencies

American rapper Lil TJay was one of two people shot in New Jersey early Wednesday morning, just weeks after declaring it was going to be "a good summer." According to mypost.com, the Bronx-born rapper was struck multiple times at The Promenade in Edgewater. The Bergen County Prosecutor's Office said cops responded to reports of shots fired at the location just after midnight.

When they arrived, they discovered 21-year-old Lil TJay, whose real name is Tione Marriot, with multiple gunshot wounds. Antoine Boyd was also found with a single gunshot wound, officials said. Both were transported to an area hospital for treatment. Officials did not release their conditions, however TMZ.com reported that Lil TJay underwent emergency surgery.

Officials said the shooting happened after Mohamed Konate tried to rob Lil TJay, Boyd and a third person the rapper was with, 24-year-old Jeffrey Valdez. Both Valdez and Boyd each had an unlawful weapon on them at the time. Lil TJay is a Bronx-born rapper with over 7 million followers on Instagram. He rose to fame on Soundcloud and was signed by Columbia Records in 2018. His debut album, "True 2 Myself" peaked at No. 5 on the US Billboard 200.

Lil TJay is a Bronx-born rapper with over 7 million followers on Instagram. He rose to fame on Soundcloud and was signed by Columbia Records in 2018. His debut album, "True 2 Myself" peaked at No. 5 on the US Billboard 200.



Actress Jessica Chastain turned down a fee for her surprise special role as former US President Donald Trump's politician sister, Maryanne Trump, in James Gray's 'Armageddon Time', but with one condition attached. The actress said, She agreed to play a small part in the Focus Features movie, but only if her involvement was never formally announced, reports 'Variety'.

This film is based on writer-director Gray's own childhood in the early 1980s at the Kew-Forest School in New York City, where Donald Trump also attended in his youth. Co-starring Anne Hathaway and Jeremy Strong as the film's young protagonist Paul's parents, and Anthony Hopkins as his grandfather, the film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival last month where Chastain's cameo surprised audiences, reports 'Variety'.

"When James reached out to me, I hadn't read anything yet, and I was like, 'yeah, I'll do it', because he told me it is his story. I love when someone wants to tell a personal story," said Chastain. "I committed to it way before. I actually did it for free. They sent me an offer and I said, 'No, no, put the money back into the movie.'"

"I'm just going to do it for free. The only thing I ask, the only thing I would like, is for it to be never announced that I am in this movie." Chastain plays a guest lecturer at a private school where Paul matriculates mid-film. Chastain explained that her reasoning for not being announced "Where I'm doing a one-day role somewhere and then it's, like, everywhere. At one point, I did one thing and I'm on a poster for a preview of this project. And then if a scene doesn't work in the movie, it looks ridiculous. "You can do

Jessica Chastain played Donald Trump's sister for free



Johnny Depp to tour with his band next summer



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Johnny Depp is headed to Europe for an overseas tour with his band Hollywood Vampires, which includes rock luminaries such as Joe Perry, Alice Cooper and Tommy Henriksen. According to 'Variety', the supergroup had previously cancelled a tour back in March because of pandemic-related obstacles. "We kept trying to make it happen, but unfortunately due to the uncertainty of Covid travel restrictions, it is just not possible," they wrote in a statement at the time.

Now, the group plans to reunite with fans in Germany and Luxembourg for a scheduled six shows. It will be quite a bit of a wait, however, as their first gig isn't until next June at the Rudolf Weber Arena in Oberhausen, Germany. Their last show will be on June 30 at Zitadelle in Mainz, Germany. Depp has been performing alongside Jeff Beck as a guest on his live shows -- which made headlines when the actor travelled to

Europe to begin performing with the legendary guitarist just prior to his trial verdict in a lawsuit against ex-wife Amber Heard.

Depp has since joined Beck again for a run of shows in Europe until the tour wraps up on July 25 in Paris. Beck and Depp have also collaborated on a new album, '18'.

They are releasing the joint project on July 15 with the set's first single, "This Is A Song For Miss Hedy Lamarr," having already been released. The song, written by Depp, pays homage to American film actress Lamarr (who died in 2000 at age 85). It is one of two songs written by Depp for the project, the other one being "Sad Motherfuckin' Parade." The original Depp-penned tracks are the outliers of '18', an album otherwise made up of cover songs, some of them sung by Depp, some in fully instrumental form. In a statement, Beck said that he was "blown away" with Depp when he first shared the "Hedy Lamarr" song, three years ago. "That song is one of the reasons I asked him to make an album with me," said Beck.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Benedict Cumberbatch has talked about playing various versions of his beloved character Doctor Strange in 'Doctor Strange In The Multiverse Of Madness'. He called it odd as stand-ins or a stunt doubles were used as "sort of markers". While playing different versions of Doctor Strange was exciting for Cumberbatch, he also admitted that it was challenging.

"I literally have one scene with another version of myself, a very crucial scene near the end, where we meet Sinister Strange, as we nicknamed him. It's complicated. It's hard. It's a very odd day at the office.

"You're working with somebody else's stand-in or a stunt double. And you're having to remember your performance even though you're using them as a sort of marker for where they are, where you were. It's very odd. But it's something through the post and everything else that we've managed to finesse and get right. And it's fun," said Cumberbatch. Directed by Sam Raimi, the film is a sequel to 2016's 'Doctor Strange', which introduced Cumberbatch as Stephen Strange aka Doctor Strange. In the film, Doctor Strange's new adventure begins when Cumberbatch meets America Chavez, a unique teenager who can open doorways from one universe to the other. 'Doctor Strange In The Multiverse Of Madness' is airing on Disney+ Hotstar in English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam.



Benedict on playing different versions of Doctor Strange

Austin Butler on 'Elvis': He is held up to a superhuman

Los Angeles | Agencies



Actor Austin Butler has talked about playing Elvis Presley, a man who has been immortalised in pop culture for decades, in the latest biopic 'Elvis'. He described the "King of Rock and Roll" as the wallpaper of society who was held up to a superhuman, God-like status. Butler mentioned that he had his dialect coach, movement coach for the role, but as an actor, how did he find his way into a man who has been immortalised in pop culture for decades and how did he find a way to make that his own? Butler said: "That was the big challenge from the get-go because, as you say, Elvis has been immortalised in that way. I often say he's become either the wallpaper of society." Meaning his image is ubiquitous, pretty much everywhere? To which, Butler replied: "Right, or he is held up to a superhuman, God-like status. Neither one of those things are very accessible as an actor, and neither one of them embodies the full complexity and nuance of a human being. And so, for me it was how do you find that?"

"It began with endless research and watching every documentary that I could find, watching anything I could find on YouTube, or audio recordings of interviews of his."

Elvis Presley's story can be told in any number of ways, but the director Baz Luhrmann chose to focus on the relationship between Elvis and Colonel Tom Parker, who also serves as the narrator. So are people getting Parker's version of the story. What did he think of Luhrmann's approach?

Butler replied: "I think Baz is such an incredible filmmaker and storyteller, and an amazing human being on top of all that. I have so much faith in him and I think the way that he has approached this is really brilliant and unconventional, and a really exciting way of approaching such an extraordinary life." "It was a joy to get to watch. And also to see how Baz's process evolved over the course of shooting, and still now in the editing, and how the story has continually taken new forms and been honed as the process has gone on."

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Euphoria' star Hunter Schafer has joined the cast of 'The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes'. According to 'Variety', she will appear opposite Tom Blyth and Rachel Zegler in the studio's attempt to recapture that old Panem magic.

Schafer will play Tigris Snow, the cousin and confidante of Coriolanus Snow (Blyth), who, 'Hunger Games' fans know, will one day mature into the autocratic ruler of the dystopian world of the books and films, a leader who has just a dollop of psychopathy to go along with his suave demeanor. 'The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes' debuts in theatres worldwide on November 17, 2023. It follows the Snow family, which has fallen from grace in a post-war Capitol. With the 10th annual Hunger Games fast approaching, Snow is assigned to mentor Lucy Gray Baird (Zegler), a girl tribute from the impoverished District 12. From there, things get gladiatorial and, Lionsgate dearly hopes, so gripping that its most successful franchise will be relaunched to sequel spawning effect.

According to 'Variety', the prequel will be directed by Francis Lawrence, who also helmed the franchise's 'Catching Fire', 'Mockingjay Part One' and 'Mockingjay Part Two'.

Hunter Schafer joins 'The Hunger Games' prequel



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Tessa Thompson



1st T20I

JEMIMAH, DEEPTI AND BOWLERS LEAD INDIA TO 34-RUN WIN OVER SRI LANKA

Dambulla | Agencies

A fine finishing effort from Jemimah Rodrigues (36 not out off 27) and Deepti Sharma (17 not out off 8) followed by a disciplined bowling performance helped India beat Sri Lanka by 34 runs in the first T20I and go 1-0 up in the three-match T20I series, here on Thursday.

Tight bowling effort led by the spinners helped India successfully defend a modest 138. Young all-rounder Kavisha Dilhari tried hard with her enterprising 47 not out but it wasn't sufficient for Sri Lanka to avoid the loss.

Chasing a modest target, Sri Lanka were off to a poor start as Deepti Sharma dismissed Vishmi Gunaratne just off her second ball in the second over of the innings. Harshitha Madavi and Chamari Athapaththu ensured there was no more damage in the Powerplay. But they couldn't make the best use of the fielding restrictions as Sri Lanka were only 25/1 at the end of six overs. In the end, Dilhari remained unbeaten on 47 but could not stop India from romping home by



34 runs after Sri Lanka were restricted to 104-5 in 20 overs.

Earlier, India won the toss and opted to bat first but their innings was less than ideal. The off-spinner was on a hat-trick after dismissing Smriti Mandhana and S Meghana before Harmanpreet Kaur negotiated the

hat-trick ball. The skipper struck a couple of boundaries to ensure that the Powerplay score looked good.

The boundaries continued to flow even after the fielding restrictions were lifted before Sri Lanka struck at the vital time to remove the dangerous Shafali Verma for 31. One

brought two for the hosts as Harmanpreet was trapped in front for 22. The wicket put a lid on the scoring as boundaries were hard to come by. Richa Ghosh and Jemimah Rodrigues did manage to reconstruct with a 23-run partnership that came at little less than run-a-ball.

India were 85/5 with five overs to go and needed to go big in the death overs. Pooja Vastrakar set the tone for the remaining overs with two boundaries off Ranasinghe. The next over also fetched two fours for India but Inoka Ranaweera had the last laugh with the wicket of Vastrakar.

India scored 53 runs in the final five overs to post a total of 138/6, which eventually turned out to be a winning score.

Brief scores:

India Women 138/6 in 20 overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 36 not out, Shafali Verma 31; Inoka Ranaweera 3/30, Oshadi Ranasinghe 2/22) beat Sri Lanka Women 104/5 in 20 overs (Kavisha Dilhari 47 not out; Radha Yadav 2/22, Deepti Sharma 1/9) by 34 runs.

FIH Pro League

Indian eves thrashes USA 4-0 to finish 3rd in debut season

Rotterdam (Netherlands) | Agencies

The Indian women's hockey team registered a comprehensive 4-0 win over the USA to secure third place in their debut FIH Hockey Pro League campaign in Rotterdam on Wednesday.

Experienced forward Vandana Katariya (39, 54') started with a brace, while Sonika (54') and Sangita Kumari (57') scored a goal each to help India sign off the prestigious league on a high note ahead of the FIH Women's Hockey World Cup 2022.

The Indian team got off the blocks quickly, with Sharmila Devi making a fantastic run inside the USA's circle in the opening minute, but her shot went wide of the goalpost. In just the next minute, the USA earned their first Penalty Corner of the match, however, Savita made an easy save to deny the USA an early goal advantage. India replied with



a brave foray, with Sharmila taking a shot just a few yards away from the goal, but the USA goalkeeper was successful in averting the danger.

The latter stage of the opening quarter saw some end-to-end action, with both teams trying to make spaces in each other's striking circles and showcasing good defending skills, thus ending the first half in a 0-0 stalemate.

India started the third quarter positively and earned

themselves a Penalty Corner in the 33rd minute of the match. Vandana, who successfully deflected the ball past the USA goalkeeper to give India a much-needed 1-0 lead. Vandana and Sonika each scored a goal in the 54th minute to make the scoreline 3-0. India added a fourth goal to their tally in the 57th minute through young forward Sangita. India sign off their debut FIH Hockey Pro League campaign with a massive 4-0 win.

FIFA rankings

INDIAN MEN'S TEAM JUMPS TWO PLACES TO 104

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian men's senior national football team reaped rewards after their stellar Asian Cup qualification as they advanced two places up from 106th to 104th in the latest FIFA world rankings released on Thursday.

The Indian women's senior national football team too earned fruition as they advanced three places up from 59th to 56th.

The Blue Tigers highlighted an excellent performance in the AFC Asian Cup qualifiers campaign, where they topped Group D in style by securing three out of three wins against Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Hong Kong.

The Sunil Chhetri-led team created history, as it was India's first-ever back-to-back qualification in the AFC Asian Cup, scheduled to be held in 2023. They are now



placed just below New Zealand (103rd), who recently lost their World Cup qualification spot to Costa Rica.

However, India's AFC ranking remains unchanged as they stand 19th, with Iran

leading the rankings in the first place.

The women's team, on the other hand, beat Egypt and Jordan 1-0 each earlier this year in international friendlies.

Ranji Trophy Final

YASH, SHUBHAM CARRY MP TO 123/1 AFTER SARFARAZ'S 134 LIFTS MUMBAI TO 374

Bengaluru | Agencies

Yash Dubey (44 not out) and Shubham Sharma (41 not out) added 76 runs off 147 balls for the second wicket as they carried Madhya Pradesh to 123/1 in 41 overs, trailing Mumbai by 251 runs at stumps on day two of the Ranji Trophy final at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Thursday.

After bowling out Mumbai for 374, with Sarfaraz Khan making a stunning 134, his fourth century of the season, Dubey and Himanshu Mantri stitched a stubborn opening stand of 47, keeping the fast bowlers at bay and after settling against them, Dubey welcomed left-arm spinner Shams Mulani with a boundary perfectly dissecting between mid-wicket and mid-on.

Then, it was Mantri's turn to take on Mulani, dancing down the pitch and hitting him for back-to-back sixes, followed by driving him through short cover. Post tea, Mantri was trapped in front of stumps by



pacers Tushar Deshpande. Shubham came out and began by striking boundaries thrice against Deshpande and Dhawal Kulkarni.

That set the tone for Sharma as well as Dubey to take boundaries on a regular basis despite Deshpande getting some help with movement off the seam and extra bounce, with Mulani often being taken to the cleaners by the duo. With both batters looking rock-solid and having faced 131 and 65 balls respectively, Madhya Pradesh will be fancying their

chances of taking an upper hand over Mumbai on day three.

Earlier, Sarfaraz's run-making juggernaut continued with a stunning 134 in guiding Mumbai to 374 in 127.4 overs. For Madhya Pradesh, Gaurav Yadav was the pick of the bowlers with 4/106 in 35.4 overs. After being watchful on day one, Sarfaraz continued to stand firm on day two and was rewarded for his perseverance with a stroke-filled 243-ball 134, laced with 13 fours and two sixes, lifting Mumbai from a tricky position to

a seemingly competitive score.

On his way to 134, Sarfaraz crossed the 900+ runs mark in a Ranji Trophy season for the second time after amassing 928 runs in 2019/20 season, becoming just the third batter after Ajay Sharma and Wasim Jaffer to do so. Resuming from 248/5 on day one, Mumbai lost Mulani on just the second ball of the day when Gaurav got one to jag back in and trap him plumb lbw. Sarfaraz first showed signs of shedding his cautious self when he sliced Gaurav over backward point for a boundary.

Sarfaraz's knock ended, where he rallied around with the lower-order batters to pull Mumbai out of a precarious situation.

Brief scores:

Mumbai 374 all out in 127.4 overs (Sarfaraz Khan 134, Yashasvi Jaiswal 78; Gaurav Yadav 4/106, Anubhav Agarwal 3/81) lead Madhya Pradesh 123/1 in 41 overs (Yash Dubey 44 not out, Shubham Sharma 41 not out; Tushar Deshpande 1/31) by 251 runs

World Swimming Championship

Canada's McIntosh breaks world junior record; U.S. bag women's 4x200m relay

Budapest (Hungary) | Agencies

Canada's Summer McIntosh set a new world junior record in the women's 200m butterfly race on the fifth day of the 19th FINA World Swimming Championships here.

The 15-year-old McIntosh touched the wall first in a time of two minutes and 5.20 seconds, breaking the previous world junior record of 2:05.79 she had set on Tuesday. American Hali Flickinger took second place in 2:06.08, followed by China's Olympic champion Zhang Yufei in 2:06.32.

In the men's 100m freestyle, the gold went to Romanian swimmer David



Popovici, who swam the distance in 47.58 seconds. The silver medal went to Frenchman Maxime Grosset who finished 47.64 while the bronze was won by Joshua Liendo Edwards of Canada, 47.71, who beat

China's Pan Zhanle by a split hair (47.79).

Canada's Kylie Masse won the women's 50m backstroke final in 27.31, surpassing Katharine Berkoff of the United States in 27.39 and France's Analia Pigree in

27.40, reports Xinhua.

In the men's 200m medley, a French-American battle was fought for the gold, which ended with a victory for France. Leon Marchand swam in 1:55.22, while Carson Foster clocked 1:55.71 for second place. The bronze medal went to Seto Daiya of Japan in 1:56.22.

The United States pocketed the gold medals in the women's 4x200m freestyle relay with a time of 7:41.45, a new championship record, followed closely by Australia in 7:43.86 and Canada in 7:44.76. Chinese swimmers missed the bronze by less than a second, as they came in fourth with a time of 7:45.72.

ASHWIN JOINS TEAM INDIA AHEAD OF EDGBASTON TEST AGAINST ENGLAND

Leicestershire: Premier spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who missed the flight to England after testing positive for Covid-19, on Thursday joined India's Test team here ahead of the much-anticipated rescheduled 5th Test against England to be held in Edgbaston from July 1 to 5. While there was no formal announcement by BCCI about Ashwin's arrival in England, the pictures shared by the board's official handle on Twitter ahead of Day 1 of the team's practice match against Leicestershire confirmed the development. In the picture, Ashwin can be seen in the team huddle along with other players at Leicestershire County Club Ground. The off-spinner had earlier failed to board the flight from Mumbai on June 16 along with other members because of a positive Covid-19 result. Jayant Yadav was kept as a standby but Ashwin recovered from the virus and has now joined the team.

Serena Williams' doubles campaign at Eastbourne ends due to Jabeur's injury

Eastbourne | Agencies

The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion Serena Williams has been forced to withdraw from the Rothesay International at Eastbourne due to an injury to her doubles partner Ons Jabeur.

A right knee injury to Jabeur, led to them withdrawing from the grass-court event in Eastbourne, the WTA said on Thursday.

There was no immediate news about the seriousness of Jabeur's injury.

Playing in her first event on tour since suffering an injury at last year's Wimbledon, the 40-year-old Serena has found a winning combination by pairing with singles World



No.3 Jabeur for the first time.

They were scheduled to play Magda Linette and Aleksandra Krunic in the semifinals after winning two matches so far in the event. The American and Tunisian partner made it through to the semifinals with a narrow win over Maria Bouzkova and Sara

Sorribes Tormo, before a more convincing quarter-final victory in straight sets against Shuko Aoyama and Chan Hao-ching.

Serena will now focus on Wimbledon where she has accepted a wild card into the women's singles in a bid to win a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title.

Maxwell added to Australia squad for Sri Lanka Tests after Head's injury

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell on Thursday was added to the Australia Test squad in Sri Lanka as an additional option after Travis Head suffered a minor hamstring injury.

Colombo | Agencies

Maxwell last played a Test match in September 2017, against Bangladesh in Chattogram. His inclusion comes in lieu of the injury suffered by Head, who will miss the final ODI against Sri Lanka after suffering a minor hamstring injury while fielding. Maxwell's inclusion comes after his impactful performances in the ODI series alongside his abilities to bat well against spin. The all-round-



er can also chip in with some handy overs with his off-spin, a skillset which will certainly come in handy on the turning track in Galle. Overall, Maxwell has played 7 Tests, scoring 339 runs with 1 century to his name.

The 33-year-old Maxwell hasn't played a Test for almost five years, but newly-appointed Australia coach Andrew McDonald recently indicated that the talented 33-year-old could make a return to five-day cricket.

CRISTIANO RONALDO COULD RETURN TO JUVENTUS: REPORTS

London | Agencies

Manchester United star footballer Cristiano Ronaldo is planning to return back to Juventus after an underwhelming season with Premier League club.

According to reports, Ronaldo's manager Jorge Mendes has already made a move and offered the 37-year-old striker's service to Juventus.

An AS.com report suggests that Ronaldo's manager has offered the footballer to the Italian giants. It has been learned that Juventus have not totally ruled out having star footballer in their side, although there is some doubt over whether they would be able to complete a deal.

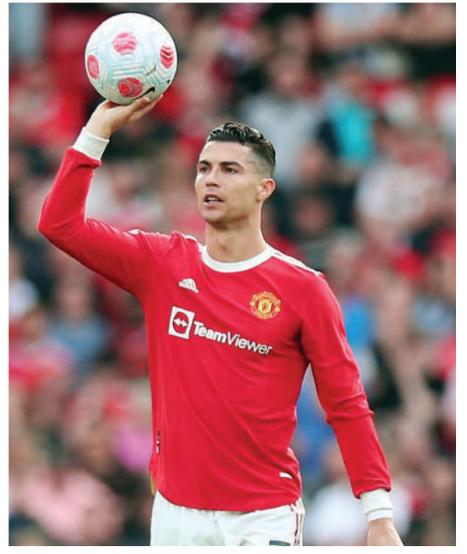
United have not won the

Premier League title since 2013 and last won a trophy in 2017. They finished last season in sixth place, having sacked Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and replaced him with interim boss Ralf Rangnick.

The new manager of the club, Erik ten Hag has been tasked with a tricky rebuilding job in his first summer at Old Trafford and will need to get to work on replacing some of the star names who will leave when their contracts expire on June 30.

Ronaldo is reportedly 'worried' about United's current approach in the transfer window, according to a report from AS.com.

Along with Ronaldo, Pogba, who was bought by the club for a record 89 million (\$112 million), could return to his former club Juventus.





Rashmika Mandanna turns vegan entrepreneur

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

Rashmika Mandanna, who became a national sensation after starring in 'Pushpa: The Rise', has begun her entrepreneurial journey the vegan way.

Vegan beauty and personal care brand Plum on Thursday said that actor Rashmika Mandanna has come on board as an investor and brand ambassador. This comes at a time when the brand aims to double its annual recurring revenue (ARR) over the next 12 months, with Rashmika's pan-India presence and fan base.

In just a short span of 6 years, Rashmika has not only emerged as one of the most bankable actresses in the Indian film industry, but also an influential name in the brand world, endorsing the top ones. With this, the actress has turned entrepreneur.

Apart from being a lucky mascot at the box office and one of the leading female stars of her generation, Rashmika is fast emerging as a savvy businesswoman too.

On the work front, Rashmika currently boasts of one of the strongest line-ups. She will be next seen in 'Pushpa 2' alongside Allu Arjun, 'Goodbye' opposite Amitabh Bachchan, 'Animal' opposite Ranbir Kapoor, 'Varisu' alongside Vijay Thalapaty and 'Mission Majnu' with Sidharth Malhotra.



Team Absolute | Hyderabad

A major Telugu film producer is said to have approached 'RRR' actors Ram Charan and Jr NTR about starting a restaurant with the 'RRR' brand and has suggested they partner with the film's director S.S. Rajamouli as well.

If everything goes according to plan, the trio might launch a restaurant with an 'RRR' motif. The sources also state that the cuisine will feature top chefs and that the entire decor will be planned to complement

Filmy Food: Now an 'RRR'-themed restaurant in the works!

the main plot of the film, in addition to offering deliciously real Indian cuisine. Pre-independence era fashion will likely also be

used for the staff's attire. After the release of 'RRR', Ram Charan and Jr NTR both became busier in their personal lives and began working on their respective careers. Therefore, it is not known whether they have agreed to work together on the 'RRR'-themed restaurant yet.

Vaani Kapoor calls Ranbir Kapoor her 'personal favourite'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Vaani Kapoor, who will be seen playing a performer in the upcoming film 'Shamshera', has praised her co-star Ranbir Kapoor, whom she called a special actor and her personal favourite.

Vaani says: "I play the character of Sona, the most sought after travelling performer of India in the 1800s. I have always chosen roles where my character pivots the script in a certain direction.

"I'm thankful to Karan Malhotra for seeing me in this role. He held my hand at every step of the way and guided me to bring Sona to life."

The film is set to release in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu on July 22. Directed by Karan Malhotra of 'Agneepath' fame, the film marks Ranbir's return to the cinemas after four years since the release of 'Sanju'.

About her character, Vaani reveals, "Sona has a strong willpower, she's confident, a go getter yet has her own emotional vulnerabilities. She's definitely one of the most refreshing characters I have played on screen. I'm amazed teaming up with Ranbir Kapoor - a powerhouse of talent. He's truly a very special actor and my personal favourite."



Sudhanshu Pandey: After 'Anupamaa', I realised how incredibly popular television can make you

New Delhi: Actor Sudhanshu Pandey, who is currently seen in 'Anupamaa', says that he had not imagined the kind of success and popularity TV could give before he became part of the show. "I had a lot of television offers in the last so many years and I would refuse almost all of them for various reasons. Finally, Rajan's offer came my way and he basically had to tell me only one line and I told him let's do it."

"The show had a fantastic story line. My character was absolutely brilliant and he didn't have to convince me much. He mentally prepared me for a long time before I got into this scenario of this daily show as it is a completely different world for me," Sudhanshu says. He adds: "I have a huge body of work behind me, including some 47-48 feature films in Hindi, some Tamil films and one Hollywood film. I was a part of 'A Band of Boys'. We were a rage during 2002-2005. We were probably one of the biggest ones." "We were seeing popularity on another level. After such a long time, becoming part of a this show, I realised how incredibly popular television can make you. Obviously, television has a different set of audiences. It's slightly different from the audiences of the OTT platforms or films. Daily shows have a very loyal and different audience."

"Stardom and fame that I got with this show is something that I had not imagined earlier. We are blessed that the show has

become so popular today and I can't thank God enough for the show and the kind of popularity I got after the show."

TV content has evolved with time, says the actor. "Television was initially women-centric and there is change in the content. But I think the content on Indian television is always going to be targeted at the masses and the middle-class audiences. As it has the largest audience and that's where the popularity comes from. So, the content has not changed too much or too far," he says.

In fact, content has become more meaningful, he says: "Definitely, television content has come a bit far from the saas-bahu shows that you used to be there earlier. Now, there is a lot more that television offers in terms of the character and the kind of relationship that you get to see on television." The actor says that TV content is now not just meant for women and targets the larger audience.

"Television shows have also evolved and it is no longer only meant for just women. It is definitely targeted at a larger audience. Like I said earlier, it is targeted at the middle class which is the largest class where we all belong. That is where the popularity comes from, that is where the money comes from and that's where advertising comes from."

"Everything is targeted there. Yes, I would say now the entertainment is for men as well as women equally," he says.

Jaya Prada teaches dance steps from song 'Mujhe Naulakha Mangade'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Veteran actress Jaya Prada will be seen teaching dance moves to contestant Samaira Mahajan on the song 'Mujhe Naulakha Mangade' from the superhit movie 'Sharaabi' that starred Jaya and Amitabh Bachchan, on 'Superstar Singer 2'.

Jaya says: "Samaira, I love you. I have no idea how you sang this song, as no one else can sing it the way Asha ji did. It's difficult as a child to sing this because of the music's high tempo, but I have heard that you write down songs as you rehearse them."

Jaya further shares that the way she writes down songs while rehearsing similar-



ly Jaya used to write down her dialogues.

"This is quite similar to how I used to write down my dialogues and rehearse it at home. This was the best performance given by you. Lata ji, Asha ji, and Bappi Da's songs have always been quite popular in my films and hold a special place for me in my life. Samaira, you sang this song beautifully. Hats off to you," she concludes.

Show judged by Alka Yagnik, Javed Ali and Himesh Reshammiya airs on Sony Entertainment Television.



Pankaj Tripathi starrer fails to strike the right chord



BY AAKRUTI BAGLA

Sherdil: The Pilibhit Saga

Directed by: Shrijit Mukherji
Starcast: Pankaj Tripathi, Sayani Gupta, Neeraj Kabi
Runtime: 135 minutes
Rating: 2.5/5

Based on a true occurrence that happened in India's Pilibhit Forest Reserve. It brings attention to the negative impacts of urbanisation, man-animal conflict, and poverty, which resulted in a strange habit in a community.

STORY

Sherdil is the story of a guy named Gangaram who is willing to give up his life and succumb to Tiger so that his villagers may afford a two-square dinner. He enters the trees one lovely day and waits for his end. In this quest, he meets Jim, a poacher played by Neeraj Kabi, and is drawn into a legal trap. What happens next is a chain of unparalleled occurrences.

REVIEW

Director Shrijit Mukherji works hard to bring this man's story to life, which many of us are unaware of. Based on his earlier work, such as Begum Jaan, one has great hopes for him. However,



Sherdil: The Pilibhit Saga suffers from amateur execution, which undermines the performance of an actor like Pankaj Tripathi. The film lacked the necessary emotional depth since it focused on Gangaram's solution of forcefully accepting to give his life rather than the challenges as a whole that they are willing to tackle.

The crowded storyline and shaky execution that such a sus-

penseful topic yielded had us all squirming in our seats.

The duration of 135 minutes gets a bit dragged and things seem half-baked and subplots are not comprehended well.

The film takes its sweet time to build up which makes the first half a boring watch. In the second half, there are some witty one-liners that manage to chuckle you up. But, it's the climax that is hard-hit-

ting.

Talking about other technical aspects of the film, Right from the eerie silence of the jungle to the flora and fauna, Tiyash Sen's camera work is top-notch and creates the perfect ambience which is required for the film. On the flip side, the film could have been much tighter if the editing scissors were a bit sharper. The background score takes the storyline forward convincingly. Among the songs, Aadmi Bhutiya hai has the potential to make it to the playlist. Rest are passable.

When it comes to performances, Pankaj Tripathi's bang-on act is the only saving grace in the film. The actor packs a punch in the second half with the way he mouths witty one-liners. Also, the way he pesters his wife or addresses villagers, his expressions are on-point.

Sayani Gupta as his wife has limited screen time and her act is passable. The actress is good only when it comes to portraying glamorous characters. Her scenes with Pankaj Tripathi lack the required spark. Also when she mouths the dialogues, she failed to get the accent right which in turn seemed like she is trying hard to rant.

Neeraj Kabi as the poacher too had a little to do. He could not gracefully take the story forward.

FINAL VERDICT

The film attempts to touch the audience's emotions but falls flat. If you are a die-hard Pankaj Tripathi fan, you will enjoy this film. Otherwise, because the picture lacks the capacity to draw audiences to theatres, putting it on OTT might be a good alternative.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Manushi Chhillar