

# absolute india



VOL. 9, ISSUE 237, MUMBAI | WEDNESDAY, JUNE 08, 2022 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHOPAL AND NEW DELHI

## NATION > 02

Mamata accuses BJP of supporting separatist group...



## HOLLYWOOD > 06

Maria Bakalova joins 'Guardians of the Galaxy 3'...



## SPORTS > 07

Nations League: Croatia score late to hold France 1-1 ...

### MAJORITY OF INDIANS WANTS TV CHANNELS TO TONE DOWN DIVISIVE RHETORIC

# STOP IT, RIGHT NOW

There are so many news TV channels in so many Indian languages that they are in a constant race to attract a more or less fixed base of viewers who also have the option of watching entertainment shows, movies and sports apart from OTT platforms. This race has prompted many news TV channels to focus more on controversial and politically and ideologically divisive issues to attract more and more eyeballs.

- ▶ WHILE MORE THAN 78 PER CENT OF OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS FELT TV CHANNELS MUST SHUN DIVISIVE SHOWS AND DEBATES, MORE THAN 75 PER CENT OF NDA SUPPORTERS FELT THE SAME.
- ▶ THE YOUTH WERE MORE INCLINED TO SUPPORT THIS SENTIMENT WITH 80 PER CENT OF RESPONDENTS BETWEEN THE AGE OF 18 AND 24 YEARS SAYING TV CHANNELS NEED TO AVOID AIRING DIVISIVE DEBATES WHILE 71 PER CENT OF THOSE ABOVE 55 YEARS FELT THE SAME.
- ▶ SURVEYS HAVE CONSISTENTLY SHOWN THAT ORDINARY INDIANS ARE MORE CONCERNED WITH BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUES LIKE UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION.
- ▶ BY IGNORING THEM, SOME TV CHANNELS COULD BE LOSING VIEWERS IN THE LONG RUN IN THEIR QUEST FOR SHORT TERM TRP GAINS.



### OFFENSIVE RELIGIOUS REMARKS ARE NOT APPRECIATED

New Delhi: The controversy generated by the remarks made by former BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma has not only created a global firestorm, but also reignited the debate within India on people deliberately denigrating other religions and religious practices in the name of free speech. An overwhelming majority of Indians think that people should avoid making comments that hurt the religious sentiments of any community. This was revealed in a survey to gauge the sentiments of ordinary Indians on the issue. A big majority of more than 84 per cent respondents overall said that people should not make offensive remarks while just about 16 per cent were of the opinion that free speech should be allowed even if it is offensive.

More than 85 per cent agreed with the contention while about 83 per cent of NDA supporters shared the same sentiment. About 89 per cent of upper caste Hindus supported the convention and 85 per cent of respondents belonging to the Muslim community shared the sentiment.

### MAJORITY BACK BJP'S MOVE TO SUSPEND NUPUR SHARMA

New Delhi: The BJP suspended its national spokesperson Nupur Sharma from the primary membership of the party. Another spokesperson and leader Naveen Jindal was expelled from the party. A huge majority of ordinary Indians back the BJP's decision. As a matter of fact, almost 72 per cent of NDA supporters backed this move while more than 79 per cent of opposition supporters shared the same sentiment. Overall, 76 per cent or more than 3 out of every four respondent backed the BJP's decision. Even female respondents were not very supportive of Nupur Sharma.

### GUTERRES ENCOURAGES RESPECT FOR ALL RELIGIONS

United Nations: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres strongly encourages respect for all religions, his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric has said regarding reports of two former BJP spokespersons making controversial statements about Prophet Muhammad. "We strongly encourage respect and tolerance for all religions," Dujarric said on Monday responding to a Pakistan media reporter's question about what he termed the "blasphemous" statements. The spokesperson said: "We've seen stories, (but) I haven't seen the remarks themselves."

## World Bank cuts India's 2022-23 growth to 7.5%

Arul Louis | United Nations

Against the backdrop of a global economic deceleration from the fallout of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the World Bank has cut India's growth prospects to 7.5 per cent for the current fiscal year -- but the nation will still retain its position as the world's fastest-growing economy.



The Bank's Global Prospects Report reduced India's growth by 0.5 per cent from the 8 per cent forecast made in April when the impact of the Ukraine conflict was just beginning to be felt, and 1.2 per cent from the 8.7 per cent forecast in January. It estimated India's growth in the last fiscal year at 8.7 per cent. For the global economy as a whole, the report cut the growth rate by 1.2 per cent -- from the 4.1 per cent forecast in January to 2.9 per cent. World Bank President David Malpass issued a stern warning that the world faces

the risk of stagflation -- a situation of economic stagnation accompanied by high inflation. "Even if a global recession is averted, the pain of stagflation could persist for several years unless major supply increases are set in motion," he said. The Bank attributed the growth forecast cut for India to "headwinds from rising inflation, supply chain disruptions, and geopolitical tensions offsetting buoyancy in the recovery of services consumption from the pandemic". "Rising inflationary pressures led to an unscheduled policy interest rate hike

in May," it added. On the other hand, it said, "Growth will also be supported by both private and public fixed investment, buoyed by government incentives and reforms to improve the business climate." The Bank forecast India's growth rate in the next fiscal year to moderate to 7.1 per cent, although it will be 0.3 per cent higher than the projection in January. The Bank's latest growth forecast for India is higher than the 6.4 per cent forecast by the United Nations last month.

## Minor scribbles name of rapist on hand before dying

Team Absolute | Prayagraj

A minor rape victim, who had scribbled the name of her rapist on her hand and feet, before attempting suicide, died on Tuesday at a hospital in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh. She was battling for life at Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital for the last four days. The minor student had also written on the palm - "Kalim is responsible for my

death". According to reports, the accused had made a video while raping the girl and was blackmailing her. He threatened to make the video public if the girl did not agree to his demands for a physical relationship. The mother has said in the report that he was physically abusing the girl for the last two years. Distraught, the girl hanged herself on June 4.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Debates on these channels often leads to unsavoury controversies, like the one recently generated by a former BJP spokesperson during a prime time TV debate. Provoked by insulting remarks against Lord Shiva, she allegedly made offensive remarks against the Prophet of Islam. This not only triggered a global

controversy but also led to her suspension from the party. However, many Indians seem to be of the opinion that it is high time news TV channels stopped airing shows and debates that promote or lead to more communal polarisation. This was revealed during a nationwide survey conducted by CVoter on behalf of IANS to gauge the mood of ordinary Indians on the issue. Overall, 77 per cent of the respondents felt TV channels should stop airing communally polarising shows while 23 per cent were of the opinion that it was all right for TV channels to do the same. There was remarkable consensus among Indians that cut across political divides.

### HIZBUL TERRORIST STAYED IN B'LRU MOSQUE, GAVE SPEECHES

Bengaluru: The probe in the activities of Talib Hussain, the arrested Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist, has revealed that he had lived in a mosque here under a different name for three years and delivered provocative speeches. Sources said that he lived in the state capital under the name of Talik after allegedly eloping with the wife of a policeman from Jammu and Kashmir. Sources also said that he stayed in a mosque at Okalipuram in Bengaluru and delivered lectures. However, the mosque authorities have refused this allegation and stated that they had only given him shelter. The management of the mosque have told the police that they knew he came from Jammu and Kashmir. The matter is being investigated now.

## Rules for CDS appointment amended to provide wider pool of candidates

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The rules for appointment to the post of the Chief of Defence Staff, vacant since the demise of General Bipin Rawat, have been amended to make army officers of the rank of Lt General and above, and their equivalents in the Navy and the Air Force, serving or retired, eligible for the role, so long they have not crossed a particular age.

A government notification, issued by the Defence Ministry, says the Central Government, in exercise of powers conferred by the appropriate sections of the the Army Act, 1950, the Navy Act, 1957 and the Air Force



Act, 1950, makes the following rules further to amend the existing rules of the three services, and they will come into force on the date of their publication in the official gazette. It also says that "provided

that the Central Government may, if considered necessary, in public interest, so to do, extend the service of the Chief of Defence Staff for such period as it may deem necessary subject to a maximum age of sixty-five years".

## No salary, no food for my kids': Guinness record holder seeks govt's help to get wages

Chetan Sharma | New Delhi

Jawaharlal Nehru University's computer operator Vinod Kumar Chaudhary, who holds 10 Guinness World Records, on Tuesday urged the government to help him get his salary cleared which has been irregular for the past one year.

Speaking to correspondent, Vinod said that he works with JNU's School of Environmental Sciences as a Computer Operator (third party) and is struggling with his salary problem for one year.

"I have been a third-party employee with JNU's School of Environmental Sciences as Computer Operator since 2012. For the past year, the irregular salary issue has disturbed my

life. I have not got my salary for April and May yet. I have no money to feed my kids at home. I don't know what to do," said an emotional Vinod. However, a senior JNU official denied the allegations, saying that the university administration has cleared the salaries of all the employees.

The 42-year-old Vinod holds the record for the fastest typing speed with the nose, which he achieved in 2014. Apart from this, he also holds the record of typing the fastest with his eyes closed and typing with wood in his mouth. Vinod's last record has been of touching a tennis ball with his hand for the most number of times in a minute. He also runs a computer centre for poor and differently-abled children at his home.

## AS COVID CASES RISE AGAIN, EXPERTS ADVICE TO BE ON GUARD

New Delhi: India has seen sudden rise in the Covid cases following spike in two states -- Maharashtra and Kerala in the last few days. The national Covid tally crossed 4,000-mark after nearly 3 months.

India recorded 4,270 Covid cases on Sunday and the tally rose to 4,518 cases on Monday. However, the cases marginally declined to 3,714 on Tuesday. In the last 24 hours, total 1,194 more active Covid cases have been reported and the total number of active cases stands at 26,974 in the country. With the new rising cases, the Covid positivity rate has also jumped to 1.21 per cent in the country. The maximum number of cases has been reported from three states - Kerala, Maharashtra and Delhi. In the last 24 hours, 1,383 cases have been reported in Kerala, 1,036 in Maharashtra and 247 in Delhi. In total, over 70 per cent of the total Covid infections have been reported from these three states only. However, the infections appear to be mild, so hospitalisation and fatalities are low.

## Cheetahs from South Africa may arrive in two months



Africa in two months, top Environment Ministry officials said.

Cheetahs have been extinct in India for at least the last seven decades. Bringing cheetahs from Africa had been on the cards for many years but it was only last year that operations started for preparing the ground for it.

All the cheetahs coming from South Africa would be sent to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.

If all goes well, at least 5-6 cheetahs will reach India in August. This would be the first batch of the total 32-40 cheetahs planned to be brought in phases. The project was planned and launched in 2010.

The cheetah was declared extinct in India in 1952; currently there are no cheetahs in any National Park or Wildlife Sanctuary in India. The cheetah is the only large carnivore to have become extinct in Independent India.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Before the Namibian cheetahs land in India, about five to six of these big cats are likely to come from South

## India Ranks Lowest Among 180 Countries In Environmental Performance Index

"India, with increasingly dangerous air quality and rapidly rising greenhouse gas emissions, falls to the bottom of rankings for the first time," the report read.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India has been placed at the bottom on a list of 180 countries judged for their environmental performances by US-based institutions. Denmark topped the 2022 Environmental Performance Index (EPI) published recently by the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and the Center for International Earth Science Information Network, Columbia University, followed by the UK and Finland, which earned high scores for slashing greenhouse gas emissions in recent years. The EPI provides a data-driven summary of the state of sustainability around the world.



Using 40 performance indicators across 11 issue categories, the EPI ranks 180 countries on climate change performance, environmental health and ecosystem vitality. These indicators provide a gauge at a national scale of how close the countries are to established environmental policy targets. The lowest scores go to India (18.9), Myanmar (19.4), Vietnam (20.1), Bangladesh (23.1) and Pakistan (24.6). Most low-scoring countries are those that have prioritised economic growth over sustainability, or those that are struggling with civil unrest and other crises. China is placed 161st, with an overall EPI score of 28.4.



# SWAPNA SURESH NAMES KERALA CM, HIS WIFE IN GOLD SMUGGLING CASE

Kochi | Agencies

Kerala gold smuggling case accused Swapna Suresh, who had promised to make more revelations about the case, on Tuesday directly named Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, his wife, daughter, two top aides to Vijayan and one Cabinet minister in connection with the case.

She said she has given a statement under Section 164 of the CrPC naming the Chief Minister, his wife Kamala Vijayan, daughter Veena Vijayan, former State Chief Secretary Nalini Netto, Additional Private Secretary to Kerala Chief Minister C.M. Raveendran and former Kerala Education Minister and current legislator K.T. Jaleel. After giving her statement before a local magistrate in Kochi on Monday, Swapna had said she will speak to the media on Tuesday. "I have been advised by the court to show restraint while I speak and hence I am not able to speak everything about the gold smuggling case. It all began in 2016 when Vijayan first went to the UAE. Then M. Sivasankar (former Kerala Principal Secretary to Vijayan and



top IAS official) had asked me to make all arrangements for his visit in the UAE and I did it through our UAE Consulate in Kerala," she said.

"The next day, I get a call from Sivasankar saying that Vijayan has forgotten a bag and it should be immediately sent to him. At the Consulate office, there is a scanner and when we scanned the bag, it was filled with money," Swapna added.

She further said that on many occasions, a biriyani vessel was transported from the house of the UAE Consulate General in India to the residence of the Kerala Chief Minister.

"This has happened on several occasions and it has been found out

that it contained metal-like objects. This was done under instructions from Sivasankar," Swapna added. She said she made the same revelations to the various central probe agencies but this was being told to the media for the first time.

On Monday, she had told the media that she testified before a magistrate that she fears a threat to her life and other things about the case pertaining to the unaccounted money that was recovered from her bank locker, as well as of other accused in the case.

Reacting to Swapna's statement, Sivasankar said the former's allegations against him are frivolous while Nalini Netto refused to comment on

the allegations levelled against her.

Swapna alleged that it was Sivasankar "who destroyed her life" and "all what she knew, he also knew". She also pointed out that he had told her that he will take voluntary retirement and settle down with her in the UAE.

## SWAPNA'S REVELATION IS BASELESS: VIJAYAN

In a statement issued here by Vijayan, said all these allegations had been dismissed by the people when it first surfaced and will do the same now also.

"The revelation made by an accused which has re-surfaced again due to vested interests has already been dismissed by the people here, earlier. This fresh attempt is a concerted one to destabilise a firm government which is relentlessly working for the good of the people. We are certain that the people who know everything will dismiss this as it did in the past," said Vijayan.

# ED finds Rs 2.85 cr cash, gold during raids linked to Satyendar Jain

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), which conducted raids at multiple locations belonging to Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain and his associates including relatives, said on Tuesday that it has found cash of around Rs 2.85 crore, apart from 133 gold coins weighing 1.80 kg.

Jain, 57, was arrested on May 30 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and he is in ED custody till June 9.

The ED said that it conducted a search operation on June 6, 2022 at the premises of Jain, his wife and accomplices who had either directly or indirectly assisted him or participated in the processes of money laundering.

"We conducted raids at the premises belonging to Ankush Jain, Vaibhav Jain, Naveen Jain and Siddharth Jain, the Directors of Ram Prakash Jewellers Pvt Ltd, GS Matharoo, Chairman of Lala Sher Singh Jivan Vigyan Trust which runs Prudence Group of Schools, Yogesh Kumar Jain, Director in Ram Prakash Jewellers Pvt Ltd, father-in-law of Ankush Jain and Lala Sher Singh Jivan Vigyan Trust," the ED official said. The ED had learnt in the investigation that one associate of Lala Sher Singh Jivan Vigyan Trust had provided accommodation entries for transfer of land from company owned by Jain to family members of accomplices in order to alienate the property and to frustrate the process of confiscation.



During the search, various incriminating documents and digital records were seized. The cash amounting to Rs 2.85 crore and 133 gold coins weighing 1.80 kg in total from unexplained source were found in the said premises and were seized, the ED said.

# Mamata accuses BJP of supporting separatist group KLO

KOLKATA | Agencies

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, on Tuesday launched a scathing attack against the BJP alleging that the saffron party had been indirectly patronizing separatist group, Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), to create tension in north Bengal and separate the region from the state.

Incidentally, Mamata Banerjee's attack came just a day after a message from KLO was released asking the Chief Minister not to dare to step into the territories of the proposed Kamtapur state.

"Some leaders are threatening to kill me if I resist attempts to separate north Bengal from the state. If you have the courage, point your guns towards me. I know how to blunt your weapons," the Chief Minister said while addressing a public rally in Alipurduar district in north Bengal on Tuesday afternoon.

The Chief Minister also alleged that there is a direct connection between BJP and the separatist groups in North Bengal. "With elections approaching, the BJP is fanning the demands of separate statehood... sometimes seeking Gorkhaland, and at other



times a separate state of North Bengal. I am ready to give my blood but will never allow the division of the state," Banerjee said, addressing a party meeting in Alipurduar.

# TERRORIST KILLED IN ENCOUNTER AT SHOPIAN IN J&K IDENTIFIED

**Srinagar:** The terrorist killed in the encounter with the security forces at Aloora area in South Kashmir's Shopian district has been identified, officials said on Tuesday.

"Killed terrorist identified as Nadeem Ahmad Rather alias Kamran of Kulgam, linked with proscribed terror outfit HM. He was involved in several terror crimes including killing of Kulpora Panch and recruitment of youth into terror ranks," Jammu and Kashmir Police quoting Inspector General Police Kashmir zone Vijay Kumar tweeted. This is a second encounter in Kashmir in a single day. Earlier on Tuesday two LeT terrorists were killed in an encounter between terrorists and security forces at Chaktaras Kandi area in North Kashmir's Kupwara district.

# SW MONSOON PROGRESSING SLOWLY THIS YEAR

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Against the normal progress when it reaches Maharashtra at this time, the crucial for agriculture South West Monsoon on Tuesday had further advanced over more parts of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, and the southwest and west-central Bay of Bengal.

The SW monsoon onset over Kerala had happened on May 29 amid heavy rainfall but soon after, however, just after two days, the rainfall slowed down along with the speed with which the monsoon progressed further.

In the normal course, as on June 7, the SW Monsoon covers all four southern states and touched Maharashtra, especially the Konkan coastal areas and large parts of western Maharashtra.

This year, the SW Monsoon has covered Kerala, approximately 75 per cent of Tamil Nadu and about half of Karnataka. On the eastern side, it has covered the entire northeast, which,



the IMD said, is progressing at normal pace.

According to an IMD scientist, the northern limit of SW monsoon has not touched Goa and Maharashtra but also has not touched Andhra Pradesh.

As per data from the IMD, even when the SW monsoon has entirely covered Kerala, the rainfall from June 1 till now shows a departure of negative 48 per cent as the rainfall totaled to just 62.8 mm as against the normal of 120.6 mm.

# Rape of three more minor girls come to light in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD | Agencies

Three more incidents of rape of minor girls have come to light in Hyderabad even as the police investigation continued in the May 28 gang-rape of a 17-year-old girl by five persons in a car.

Since the sensational case of sexual assault in posh Jubilee Hills came to light, a total of five more cases have been reported. Two of these crimes were reported from the old city on Sunday.

In one of the latest reported incidents, police arrested five accused for sexually exploiting a minor girl in the name of friendship. Police also arrested owners of two lodges, where the accused exploited her.

Karkhana police clarified that it was not a gang-rape but the accused exploited the girl in different days in two lodges. The accused include two juveniles.

A case was registered at Karkhana



police station on May 30 on a complaint by the victim's father. According to police, the accused developed friendship with the class 10 student over social media. They allegedly took some photographs of the victim in a compromising position and continued blackmailing her.

In two other cases, two minor orphan girls were sexually assaulted by youngsters who had developed friendship with them. Both the victims were students of a junior college in the city.

The incidents occurred in April but came to light after the warden of

the girls' hostel learnt about it and lodged a complaint with the police.

Two cases were registered under zero FIR at Humayun Nagar police station and later transferred to Ramgopalpet and Rajendra Nagar police stations. The accused were booked under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

One of the victims was sexually assaulted by one Suresh in a car on Necklace Road abutting Hussain Sagar in the heart of the city. The 23-year-old accused sexually assaulted the victim by calling her for a birthday party of a friend.

In the second incident, the victim was lured and raped by a minor boy at a theatre at a shopping mall in Attapur area. The accused allegedly took the victim out of the theatre in the middle of a show and sexually assaulted her on the same premises.

Police apprehended the juvenile and sent him to an observation home.

# PLEA IN SC BY 80-YEAR-OLD SEEKING RS 510 CR COMPENSATION FOR PROPERTY FROM UP

Team Absolute | New Delhi

An 80-year-old man has moved the Supreme Court seeking compensation of Rs 510 crore from the Uttar Pradesh government in connection with a waqf property.

The man, who claims to be legal heir of the property which was acquired by the state government, has challenged the Allahabad High Court passed on April 19 this year and also the Fatehpur District Magistrate's order, which declined to grant him the compensation.

The petitioner Alim Akhtar claimed that the compensation was due according to the provisions of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land



Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.

The plea, filed through advocate Omprakash Parihar, said: "The petitioner is surviving legal heir, 80-year-old, had rightfully claimed the compensation of Rs 510 crore which was denied by the District Magistrate, Fatehpur and hence the reliefs under the

above writ petition ought to have been granted to the petitioner."

The plea contended that the high court order is blatantly erroneous as the issue involved before it was in respect of Waqf Alal Aulad property i.e. the property which continue to belong to the descendants for all time to come.

# Subhash Chandra seeks Pilot's support for RS polls, refused

JAIPUR | Agencies

Confident of winning the June 10 Rajya Sabha polls from Rajasthan, BJP-backed Independent candidate Subhash Chandra on Tuesday sought support from Congress leader and former Deputy CM Sachin Pilot, stating that if the latter missed the opportunity now, he will not be able to become the Chief Minister till 2028.

"Sachin Pilot is a hard-working person and a big opportunity has come his way now. If this opportunity is missed today, he will not be able to become the Chief Minister till 2028," Chandra said at a press conference here on Tuesday.

Chandra also claimed that he was a good friend of Sachin Pilot's father, the late



Rajesh Pilot. Meanwhile, Pilot was quick to react to Chandra's proposal, saying, "Some advice to the 'independent' candidate from Rajasthan -- best to bow out of the con-

test before the voting on Jan 10. It's better to lean towards humility rather than humiliation. Unfortunately, politics is not like making TV series where you pick and choose who does what!"

# 8 HELD FOR PROVIDING LOGISTIC SUPPORT IN KILLING MOOSEWALA

CHANDIGARH | Agencies

The Punjab Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested at least eight persons for providing logistic support, conducting recee and harbouring shooters for the killing of Punjabi singer Shubhdeep Singh, popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala, on May 29.

Moosewala, who left his house at around 4.30 p.m. along with Gurwinder Singh (neighbour) and Gurpreet Singh (cousin) was shot dead by unidentified people. He was driving his Mahindra Thar vehicle.

Those arrested have been identified as Sandeep Singh, alias Kekda of Sirsa, Haryana; Manpreet Singh, alias Manna of Talwandi Sabo, Bathinda; Manpreet Bhatt of Dhaipai, Faridkot; Saraj Mintu of Dode Kalsia village, Amritsar; Prabhdeep Sidhu, alias Pabbi of Takhat-Mall, Haryana; Monu Dagar of Rewli village in Sonapat, Haryana; Pawan Bishnoi and Naseeb, both residents of Fatehabad, Haryana.

The police have also identified four shooters involved in the crime,



an official statement said.

Divulging the roles of the arrested people, ADGP (Anti-Gangster Task Force) Pramod Ban said Sandeep, alias Kekda, on the directions of Goldy Brar and Sachin Thapan, had kept tab on the singer's movements by impersonating himself as his fan. Kekda also clicked selfies with the

singer, when the latter was leaving from his home minutes before his murder, he added.

"Kekda has shared all the inputs like the singer was not accompanied by his security personnel, number of occupants, vehicle details with shooters and handlers operating from abroad," Ban said.

He said Manpreet Manna had provided a Toyota Corolla car to Manpreet Bahu, who further delivered the car to two persons -- suspected to be the shooters, on the directions of Saraj Mintu, who is a close aide of Goldy Brar and Sachin Thapan.

The ADGP said the fifth accused, Prabhdeep Sidhu, alias Pabbi, had provided shelter to two associates of Goldy Brar, who came from Haryana in January and also got conducted recee of Moosewala's home and surrounding areas through them, while Monu Dagar had provided two shooters and helped assembling the team of shooters to carry out this murder the directions of Goldy Brar.

Ban said Pawan Bishnoi and Naseeb had handed over Bolero vehicle to shooters and also provided them hideout.

He said the Special Investigation Team headed by IGP Jaskaran Singh has been working strategically and cohesive efforts are being made to arrest the identified shooters and other accused persons involved in the crime.



SALMAN KHAN 'DEATH THREAT': BISHNOI GANG'S ROLE UNDER SCANNER

THE MUMBAI POLICE SUSPECT THE POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF THE LAWRENCE BISHNOI GANG IN THE DEATH THREAT TO BOLLYWOOD MEGASTAR SALMAN KHAN AND HIS FATHER, WRITER SALIM KHAN, OFFICIAL SOURCES SAID HERE ON TUESDAY.



Bishnoi on his suspected involvement in the threats to the Khan family, especially since he had earlier vowed to kill Salman Khan after the actor was accused in the Black Buck poaching case of 1998 in Rajasthan. In the current case, police said that Salim Khan, 87, was handed over an unsigned, hand-written threat letter by one unknown person on a bench where he normally rests after jogging at the Bandra Bandstand promenade, around 7.30 a.m. on Sunday. It was addressed to him and his son Salman and facing something amiss, they immediately alerted their security to inform the police. Taking serious cognisance, the Bandra police have lodged a first information report against unknown persons for issuing the death threats and launched their probe even as the Mumbai Police Crime Branch also started its own investigations. The threat letter ends with a couple of initials including 'L.B.' which the police suspect refers to 'Lawrence Bishnoi' though the latter is understood to have denied any connection to the incident to the Delhi Police.

have beefed up security at the Khans' residence in Galaxy Apartments, Bandra West since Sunday while Joint Commissioner of Police Vishwas Nangre-Patil met Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil to brief him on the case. Nangre-Patil is understood to have briefed the Minister on the probe status including suspicion that the potential attackers may have conducted a discreet recon of the Khans' local movements and their residence. A Mumbai Police team is likely to leave for New Delhi to question

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Police suspect the possible involvement of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang in the death threat to Bollywood megastar Salman Khan and his father, writer Salim Khan, official sources said here on Tuesday. As a precaution, Mumbai Police

LAWRENCE BISHNOI QUESTIONED OVER THREAT LETTER TO SALMAN KHAN

New Delhi: Jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi was questioned by the Delhi Police over a threat letter that was recently received by Bollywood megastar Salman Khan and his father, writer Salim Khan, official sources said on Tuesday. According to the sources, Bishnoi has denied any involvement in the said death threat and maintained that he has no hand in it. Bishnoi was questioned by the Special Cell as he had previously, a few years back, vowed to kill Salman Khan for the latter's alleged involvement in the infamous black buck poaching case. The Mumbai Police said that Salim Khan, 87, was handed over an unsigned, hand-written threat letter on Sunday morning around 7.30 a.m. by an unknown person on a bench where he normally rests after jogging at the Bandra Bandstand promenade, and it was addressed to him and his son Salman. The letter is signed off with some initials which the police are probing and also attempting to unravel if they are linked to any past incidents targeting Salman Khan. The police are also scouring CCTV footage of the area for clues and questioning locals for further leads on the threat letter.

Maharashtra MLA aspires to achieve own carbon neutrality

Amid efforts by multiple agencies to combat climate change, there is one public representative from Maharashtra who has taken on this responsibility at a personal level.

Team Absolute | Mumbai Amid efforts by multiple agencies to combat climate change, there is one public representative from Maharashtra who has taken on this responsibility at a personal level. Congress MLA Dhiraj Deshmukh says that he is not only making himself carbon neutral, but has also appointed a carbon officer and an auditor to map his carbon footprint at the micro and macro levels. The 42-year-old MLA from Latur (Rural) says he is seeking to become India's first carbon neutral, sustainability-conscious politician. Deshmukh, who has been working to address water scarcity faced by Latur's farmers and has undertaken tree plantation drives in his constituency, said: "It is time to put the planet before ourselves, because finally the only worthy legacy we can leave for our children and for the coming generations is a healthy planet." "As a father, as a citizen of this planet and as a leader, it is my duty to lead by example and to reduce my own carbon footprint. I have appointed an auditor to map my carbon footprint so that even

if I occasionally fall short of the sustainability standards during travel or in any other way, I am aware of it and can give back to the earth somehow. I know, as a human being, there will be failures. I will possibly find plastic bottles at meetings I am invited to or in other public places, but at least I will consciously regulate my own consumption patterns," Deshmukh said. Noting that the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a roadmap for the developed and developing economies to balance their growth with their responsibilities, he said: "Even as individuals, we can all aspire for a carbon neutral and eco-sensitive life. "Whether we do it by car pooling, conserving water, recycling waste, or by supporting local and indigenous farming practices is up to us. I am going to measure every micro and macro decision for its carbon quotient with the help of India's 'Recycle Man', Binish Desai. We are also working on a broader blueprint that goes beyond me to include rural sustainability as a central focus in Latur. I hope to lead my constituents with sustainable policies in all aspects."

Mumbaikars are the most forgetful cab riders...

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Over the last year, objects including phones, speakers/headphones, wallets and bags are on the list of items left in cabs across India. Utility items such as groceries, thermos/water bottles and phone chargers come next on the list. Besides leaving the usual behind, Indians also forget unique things such as Ghewar (an Indian sweet dish), flutes, Aadhaar cards, Dumbbells, cricket bats, and spike guards, and college certificates! Uber released its 2022 edition of the Lost and Found Index, which is a snapshot of the most frequently forgotten items, the most forgetful cities, as well as the days of the week and

times of the year when riders tend to be most forgetful. It's no surprise then that fast-paced Mumbai bagged the top spot as the most forgetful city in the country for the second time in a row, while Delhi NCR and Lucknow were not far behind. Backed by rider insights and gigabytes of data, the Lost and Found Index aims to educate riders in a fun yet informative manner about Uber's in-app options available to them at the tap of a button, in case they lose or forget something during their trip. Nitish Bhushan, Director, Central Operations, said, "We get that losing an item can be stressful, but when you Uber, you always have the

option to trace so that you can attempt retrieving your belongings. This annual survey is a fun and informative way of reminding our riders how easy it is to raise a retrieval request for a lost item in-app." The Phone/camera, Laptop, Backpack, Wallet, Speaker, Clothing, Groceries Cash/Water Bottle & Headphones. While the four cities where riders forget the most are Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Lucknow and Kolkata in that order. And the financial year ending seems to take a toll on everyone as the top five most forgetful days in the year all fall in the end of March and lazy afternoons is when one is most likely to forget items as per the Uber Lost and Found Index India 2022.

NOW, THACKERAY TO THUNDER IN AURANGABAD ON WEDNESDAY

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will address a mega rally in Aurangabad on Wednesday where he's expected to give 'reply' to his critics on Shiv Sena's Hindutva credentials and other major issues, a party official said here on Monday.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will address a mega rally in Aurangabad on Wednesday where he's expected to give 'reply' to his critics on Shiv Sena's Hindutva credentials and other major issues, a party official said here on Monday. Thackeray's rally comes just a couple of days before the June 10 elections for six Rajya Sabha seats followed by the June 20 polls for 10 seats in the Maharashtra Legislative

Council. In these indirect elections, the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance of Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress is pitted against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with high stakes on both sides. The CM's rally also comes a few weeks after his estranged cousin and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena President Raj Thackeray addressed a public meeting in Aurangabad. Raj Thackeray had recently muddied the state's political scenario with a shrill campaign demanding a complete ban on 'azan' blared over loud-

speakers in mosques and threats to counter it with 'Hanuman Chalisa'. Aurangabad was in the news last month for visits by top AIMIM leaders -- Asaduddin Owaisi and his brother Akbaruddin Owaisi -- with the latter creating a huge row by visiting the grave of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. Even BJP Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnis had addressed a meeting in Aurangabad and had slammed the MVA government on various issues. The Shiv Sena has been under fire from the MNS and the BJP for not

implementing the proposal to rechristen Aurangabad as 'Sambhajinagar', though local party strongman Chandrakant Khaire indicated this week that "all formalities for the re-naming have been completed". However, no Sena or MVA leaders are willing to speculate whether there could be any concrete development in this regard at Wednesday's rally. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj was the son of great Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, and was killed at the behest of Emperor Aurangzeb, after whom Aurangabad has been named. While the Congress is opposed to the renaming move, the NCP has adopted a neutral stance, arguing that it should be as per the wishes of the local populace. The AIMIM is vehemently against the proposal. Thackeray's rally will also be politically significant for more reasons as Aurangabad is among the dozen-odd major civic bodies in the state which will go to the polls next month onwards along with Mumbai, Thane, Navi Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur etc.

Maha launches project for poor-performing talukas of Vidarbha

THE GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA HAS LAUNCHED A YEAR-LONG HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX PROJECT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE POOR-PERFORMING TALUKAS OF VIDARBHA REGION.



Team Absolute | New Delhi/Nagpur:

The government of Maharashtra has launched a year-long Human Development Index project to improve the quality of life in the poor-performing talukas of Vidarbha region. The Human Development

Commissionerate (HDC) has partnered with Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation (BRLF) for the project that will run till April 30, 2023 and focus on proper monitoring and effective implementation of the existing schemes for the education and health of the HDC department, a statement said on Monday. It will also enable deeper engagement with the poor

community in a cluster approach to planning and implementing smart, innovative best-suited livelihood interventions. "The project's overall goal is to improve the Human Development Index of 25,000 poor households in the first phase - 10,000 new and 15,000 in the Tribal Development department project - residing in Yavatmal,

Gadchiroli and Gondia districts of Vidarbha," the statement said. The project would be implemented in a phased manner; the first phase would end on April 30, 2023. After its completion, a joint review will be conducted, and based on the project's outputs and outcomes, the decision will be taken for two years, which will start from May 1, 2023 and go on till April 30, 2025. The project is expected to improve the living standards and well-being of 25,000 poor households; improve the well-being of women and adolescent girls by addressing the gender-based inequities; ensure effective implementation of the ongoing health and education schemes; and provide technical support to the HDC for the implementation of livelihood interventions, especially in agriculture, non-timber forest produce (NTFP), and natural resource management, the statement said.

LEOPARD SNEAKS UP ON PET DOG

Pankaj Garg, Deputy Conservator of Forest, Nashik said, "We appeal to the people of Mung sare village to remain indoors at night as leopard activity has increased in this area. People must remain alert."

Team Absolute | Nashik

A leopard entered a residential area in a village in Nashik, Maharashtra, and attacked a pet dog. A video of harrowing incident, the entirety of which was captured on a CCTV camera, has over 20,000 views on Twitter. In the video, a black dog wearing a red collar is seen sitting on a low wall. A few seconds later, a leopard appears into frame. While the leopard initially backs off, it runs back and attacks the dog. After a brief tussle, the leopard leaves with the dog in its jaws. Speaking to news agency, ANI, Pankaj Garg, Deputy Conservator of Forest,

Nashik said, "We appeal to the people of Mung sare village to remain indoors at night as leopard activity has increased in this area. People must remain alert." Replying to the video, a Twitter user asked, "Why do they keep their pet dogs outside when they know that a leopard could attack." Another user said, "That's food for leopard. That's how nature works, as gross as it may seem." Instances of leopards entering residential areas is not uncommon in Nashik. In January this year, a leopard was rescued from a residential area of Nashik city in an operation that lasted eight hours. One person was attacked in the incident.

MAHARASHTRA HSC RESULT 2022: CLASS 12TH BOARD RESULTS ON JUNE 8

Mumbai: Maharashtra HSC Board Result 2022: Maharashtra Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education will announce the Class 12th board results on June 8, 2022 at around 1 PM The Maharashtra Board HSC result 2022 will be available online at its official website -- mahresult.nic.in. Taking to Twitter Maharashtra Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad said, "Result of Higher Secondary Certificate (E. 12th) examination conducted by Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education in March-April 2022 as per the working procedure of the Board. Will be announced online." It is notable that the Maharashtra board exams were conducted between March 4 and April 7, 2022.

Maha RS polls: To avoid 'hijackings', all parties herding, hiding prized MLAs!

With barely 72 hours left for the seat-edge suspenser Rajya Sabha elections in Maharashtra on June 10, all parties have resorted to herding and hiding their legislators to prevent possible 'political hijacking' by the opposite side, here on Tuesday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

With barely 72 hours left for the seat-edge suspenser Rajya Sabha elections in Maharashtra on June 10, all parties have resorted to herding and hiding their legislators to prevent possible 'political hijacking' by the opposite side, here on Tuesday. As it became clear that the smaller parties and independents hold the proverbial key to the final outcome for both the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi and Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party, each side hurled full-throated allegations of 'poaching' and 'horse-trading' at each other, adding to the excite-

ment of the usually bland indirect elections. Not willing to take any chances, the MVA allies - Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress -- and the BJP, have ordered their valuable MLAs to "pack up their bags" and come to Mumbai for a 'retreat' till the RS elections, which may even extend till the June 20 Legislative Council polls. They are being hosted in luxurious ambience of deluxe hotels or resorts as the top leaders on both sides wrack their brains to ensure the victory of their respective candidates. The chief battle will be for the 'sixth seat' for which the Shiv Sena candidate Sanjay Pawar will be locking horns with the BJP nominee Dhananjay Mahadik -- both party veterans from Kolhapur. The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly with 288-members comprises the electoral college and each candidate requires 42 votes to notch a win in the Upper House of Parliament. This time, with the presence of the seventh candidate put up by the BJP despite the changed permutations and combinations post-October 2019 assembly elections, the elections have become a cliff-hanger. Given the current numbers com-

manded by both sides -- the MVA and the BJP -- the latter needs around 12 votes to ensure a smooth sail for Mahadik. Barring that, the MVA allies can easily get their one candidate elected while the BJP can get 2 elected with their respective present strength. This time, the Sena has put up Sanjay Pawar for the 'sixth seat' which is contested by BJP's Mahadik, where the smaller parties and independents could play a crucial role. The MVA leaders have already accused the BJP of bulldozing tactics with "money-power" and "threats" of Big Brothers like ED, IT, CBI, etc. waiting to "lasso" the "gullible ones." Top MVA leaders, declining to be quoted, claim that given the numbers game, "the BJP is fighting a losing battle" just to keep its central leaders in good humour, while the BJP side winks and contends that "surprises cannot be ruled out," as the clock ticks away for the E-Day on Friday. Sena's Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut -- who is also one of the contestants -- slammed the BJP for criticising the party's move to herd all its legislators, while a confident Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anil Parab assured that "all those who

supported us in 2019 are still with us", hinting at victory for Sanjay Pawar. State NCP President Jayant Patil and Congress President Nana Patole on Tuesday reiterated that the MVA will win the 4 RS seats it is contesting and foil the BJP's plans to grab a third seat though it lacks the numbers. Congress and NCP Chief Spokespersons Atul Londhe and Mahesh Tapase, respectively, made it clear that the "BJP's horse-trading market" will be a flop as the three parties and all their supporters are fully united to give a challenge to the BJP. "We came to power in 2019 and since then we have contested and won all elections together. The BJP has made innumerable efforts to topple the MVA, but failed miserably each time, so they keep issuing fresh dates and deadlines," Tapase pointed out. The four parties are now busy holding classes for their respective legislators and supporting independents or smaller parties' MLAs on the RS election process to avoid confusion in the crucial preferential votes, the importance of the 'Party Whip', etc.





EDITOR'S SPECS

### Criminals in India upgrading their weapons

The murder of acclaimed Punjabi singer Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu, popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala, has shocked probe agencies as the weapon used was an AN-94 Russian Assault rifle. This is the first time that the AN-94 has been used in a gang war as criminals would earlier carry out killings and encounters with AK-47s. The AN-94 is a Russian-made assault rifle, whose initials stand for 'Automat Nikonova' 1994 model. Intelligence agencies and police are of the view that such sophisticated weapons are also being supplied to other state-based gangsters. They also doubt the involvement of an international racket. The AK-47 culture started with Mumbai's notorious D-Company led by underworld don Dawood Ibrahim in 1988. In 1991, a shootout took place between the police and criminals of the Maya Dolas gang at the Lokhandwala Complex in which the latter were armed with the AK-47. Several years later, the AK-47 culture reached Uttar Pradesh. Shri Prakash Shukla, an Indian gangster and contract killer active during the 1990s, used the AK-47. Shukla had threatened to kill BJP leader Kalyan Singh. In 1997, BJP leader Brahm Dutt Dwivedi was killed by gangster Sanjeev Maheshwari using an AK-47. On November 29, 2005, BJP MLA from Ghazipur Krishnanand Rai was killed by Munna Bajrangji, who also used an AK-47. In 2016, BJP leader Brijpal Tewatia was shot dead by car borne assailants using an AK-47. In Western Uttar Pradesh, a number of gangsters are using AK-47. The gangs who used to have this sophisticated weapons are Sundar Bhati and Randeep Bhati gang of Noida; Anil Dujana Gang; Vicky Tyagi of Muzaffarnagar; Sunil Rathi of Baghpat-Uttrakhnad; and the Narender Fauji Gang. In Delhi, an AK-47 was recovered from former MLA Rambir Shokeen who was allegedly supporting his nephew Neeraj Bawana, a dreaded gangster.

# PUNJAB IN THE GRIND OF A SUPERFICIAL KHALISTAN

Kavya Dubey

When Khalistan flags were found fastened at the entrance of Himachal Pradesh Assembly complex in Dharamshala earlier in May, the state police promptly sealed the borders and beefed up security. The Police was quick to book Canada-based Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) chief Gurpatwant Singh Pannun under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, essentially an anti-terror law. SFJ is a proscribed outfit which with its strong virtual influence, is known for radicalising people, raking up bygone sentiments and reviving the movement for Khalistan.

Shortly after this episode, a Pakistan-crafted rocket-propelled grenade attack was made at the Punjab Police Intelligence headquarters in Mohali. A security alarm was sure to go off in the wake of these events, and more that followed.

A common understanding is that these occurrences gravely point to the efforts of pro-Khalistan elements to provoke disturbance and unrest in India, thereby creating a concern for India's security. But, "There's broader governance and political thinking," said A.S.Dulat, former Chief of both Intelligence Bureau and Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), while in conversation with IANS. "There is no security solution to everything," he says.

Dulat recounts that "There wasn't too much Khalistan even when Punjab was disturbed in the early 1980s, and remains so after Blue Star. This is only a fringe element those who believed in Khalistan," he asserts, reiterating that "Security doesn't have all the answers."

As far as the den of Khalistan movement goes, the state of Punjab is the epicentre of the possibility of this revived threat. But to what extent is this a genuine threat? Dulat says that "Punjab is a sensitive state and it needs to be handled sensitively. You can't take Punjab for granted," emphasising the importance of the border state. "Khalistan is not what worries me, but you can't run Punjab from Delhi." It came as a shock when popular Punjabi singer and Congress leader, Sidhu Moosewala was shot dead recently, just a day after his security cover was withdrawn. After his murder was acknowledged as an outcome of local inter-gang rivalry, Canada-based SFJ chief Pannun issued a threat letter at Punjabi singers telling them to support the Khalistan movement. The letter read: "Death is imminent" and that it is time to support the "Khalistan Referendum" for the liberation of Punjab from India.



Pro-Khalistan elements operating in Canada are no secret. The "local" Punjabi gangs have their bases in Canada primarily and such is the reach of their inter-gang rivalries. The criminal gang members have dozens and scores of cases against them in India while they reside in Canada and elsewhere abroad.

The gangs are organised and networked overseas with terrorist intentions to threaten and exhort money from businessmen based in Punjab. Larger groups like Khalistan Liberation Force and Khalistan Tiger Force are also known to have carried out targeted killings and contributed to communal unrest in Punjab. Anti-India sentiments are known to be harboured in Canada and Khalistani groups such as SFJ contribute significantly to stoke the revival of pro-Khalistan sentiments.

For a movement that petered out in the 1980s and almost became a thing of the past, one might question the purpose of raking up Khalistan in present times. Might the splinter of Khalistan have any bearing on the larger canvas of nationalism?

A retired IPS officer who has served in various policing functions including counter-insurgency and security matters in different capacities, on condition of anonymity, told IANS that "Promoting a perception of rising pro-Khalistani sentiment is seen as a way, by some political parties opposed to AAP, to accuse that party of ineptitude in maintaining law and order and in ensuring the securi-

ty and integrity of a border state like Punjab. Whether it is capable in this regard or not is a matter yet to be seen."

Going beyond the local political dimension, he explains further that Pakistan "Obviously sees this as a situation that its ISI can exploit to its advantage, and there is no doubt that it will use every resource at its disposal to fish in troubled waters and create problems for India."

On December 23, 2021, a bomb explosion at a Ludhiana court claimed one life and injured six. Investigation revealed that this attack was planned and executed at the behest of ISI. Deployment of local gangsters as an instrument to perpetrate disturbance in Indian territory, and particularly in Punjab, is a tactic that cannot be ignored.

"Pakistan has always used every opportunity to harm India's interests. Hence it is a given that it will encourage and exploit any pro-Khalistani sentiment, however nascent, and use all covert and overt means to stoke it," said the retired officer.

Pakistan has a square state policy to "bleed India with a thousand cuts", but despite its economic struggles at the moment and its preoccupation with Kashmir, the possibility of its greater involvement in stoking anti-India sentiments by way of Khalistan cannot be ruled out.

However, given that Pakistan is more than capable of disturbing India by means of ter-

ror funding or terror tactics or outright acts of terror, it is unlikely to create a Kashmir-like situation in Punjab. This is because of a very crucial difference between these two regions—the faith of people in the Indian system which is conspicuously absent in Kashmir.

Although there are attempts to radicalise the youth from both these regions, the new generation Sikhs in the 1980s were disillusioned with the notion of a separate Khalistan state and moved on from this dangerous political fantasy in time; but in Kashmir, the radicalisation of youth is far more deeply rooted and disenchantment for them seems still a long way away.

There is also a possibility of China contributing to the fomentation of Khalistan-like trouble to keep India engaged with internal unrest so as to divert its focus from other crucial concerns like the northern frontier and even the new ventures in the Indo-Pacific.

However, in the light of Moosewala's assassination and connecting the dots to furthering the militant cause of Khalistan and deploying local gangsters in this regard, Dulat says that it is a "wake-up call". Denying outrightly that the so-called Khalistan movement has any political value, he says that "it has a nuisance value, and if you don't understand Punjab, then this nuisance could become a bigger nuisance."

## international

## Cambodia becomes Covid free

Phnom Penh | Agencies

Cambodia on Tuesday became free of Covid-19 after the last patient recovered, the Health Ministry said in a statement.

Since the last 31 days, there were no new cases reported in the country, Xinhua news agency quoted the statement as saying.

Since the pandemic began in January 2020, the Southeast Asian nation has registered a total of 136,262 confirmed cases with 133,206 recoveries and 3,056 deaths.

Ministry spokeswoman Or Vandine attributed the country's success in controlling the pandemic to the government's right leadership and the effectiveness of Covid-19 vaccines.

"Prime Minister Hun Sen made the right and timely decision to provide free Covid-19 vaccines to all eligible Cambodians and foreign-



ers living in the country," she told reporters.

"Vaccines are the most powerful tool to protect lives against Covid-19, reducing infections and deaths."

Over 15 million people, or 94 per cent of its 16 million population, have received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine, the Ministry said, adding that of them, 14.3 million, or 89.4 per cent, have been fully inoculated with two shots. Also, some 9.25

million, or 58 per cent, have got a third dose, and 2.58 million, or 16 per cent, received a fourth shot.

Cambodia will begin offering a fifth dose to priority groups from Thursday onwards.

Buoyed by its high inoculation rates, Cambodia has resumed all socioeconomic activities and reopened its borders to fully vaccinated travellers without quarantine since November last year.

## IN A FIRST, PAKISTAN RUPEE SLUMPS TO 205 THRESHOLD

Karachi | Agencies

The Pakistani rupee on Tuesday broke all records against the US dollar after shedding 4 PKR in the open market as it surpassed the 205 threshold for the first time in history, according to data from the Forex Association of Pakistan.

The currency continued its downward slide against the US dollar, dropping to an all time low of 202.75 PKR in the interbank market during intraday trade on the rising demand for the greenback due to import payments, Geo News reported.

The local currency extended its decline as the demand for the rupee is higher compared to its supply due to import demand which has increased because of oil payments.

Tahir Abbas, an analyst from the Arif Habib Limited brokerage firm, said the Pakistani currency is under pressure due to pending oil payments and rising oil prices in the international market, Geo News reported.

"The plunge came on the back of a mammoth import bill and widened the current account



deficit," he said.

The analyst added that the market is keeping a close eye on the developments regarding the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme, which is expected to be revived after the announcement of the budget as

the government is taking all possible steps to meet the conditions laid forth by the Fund.

The last time the PKR had breached the 202 mark was on May 26, when there was higher uncertainty over the revival of the IMF

loan programme than now.

The recent bearish spell began after the government hiked the price of petroleum products by a major 60 PKR per litre as a result of removing subsidies, one of the main demands of the money lender.

## UN TO PROVIDE \$48MN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SL AMID CRISIS

Colombo | Agencies

Amid the ongoing disastrous financial crisis with severe food, power and fuel shortages in Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe told Parliament on Tuesday that the UN has planned to provide humanitarian assistance of around \$48 million over a four-month period to the island nation's food, agriculture and health sectors.

In his address, Wickremesinghe informed Parliament that the UN has arranged for a worldwide public appeal on Thursday seeking support to provide humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka.

The Prime Minister further informed that he spoke with officials from the UN, Food and Agriculture Organization, World Food Program (FP), UN Development Program and the World Health Organization.

"Many representatives of these international organisations and other countries have agreed to support our country during this difficult time," he told parliament.

He noted that a WFP study found that 73 per cent families in Sri Lanka have reduced their diet and food intake in the wake of the crisis which is the worst since the country gained independence from the British in 1948.

In his address, Wickremesinghe against thanked India for assisting Sri Lanka and urged the Parliamentary Committee on Public Finance to conduct an inquiry into the suspension of valuable projects granted by New Delhi and Tokyo for unknown reasons.

"Japan and India had agreed to supply us with two LNG power plants. The CEB (Ceylon Electricity Board) stopped those two projects without any justifiable reason. Japan had agreed to provide about \$3 billion worth of projects to our country by 2019. All of these projects were put on hold for no reason," the Prime Minister said.

"Despite this, India offered to help us in the face of the growing crisis. We express our respect and gratitude to them during this difficult time," he said and highlighted New Delhi's financial assistance worth

over \$3 billion since January to provide essential items, including food, fuel, cooking gas and medicines.

Wickremesinghe also stressed the need to rebuild ties with Asia's three major powers India, China and Japan with whom relationships have been strained due to wrong political decision making.

"India, China and Japan are leading the list of countries that provide us with loans and assistance. Relations with these countries, which have always been strong, are now broken. Those relationships need to be rebuilt."

Wickremesinghe also urged the International Monetary Fund to hold a conference to help unite Sri Lanka's lending partners.

"We call on holding such a conference under the leadership of India, China and Japan will be a great strength to our country. China and Japan have different credit approaches. It is our hope that some consensus on lending approaches can be reached through such a conference," he said.

Due to the financial crisis, Sri

Lanka's transportation sector has been badly affected due to the shortage of fuel, leading to weeks-long queues for petrol, diesel and kerosene oil triggering public protests.

Stating that "the next three weeks will be a tough time for fuel and gas supply," the Prime Minister appealed to the people to limit unessential travel.

Wickremesinghe, who plans to present a revised interim budget, said Sri Lanka needs \$6 billion to keep the country afloat for the next six months, adding that \$5 billion is required to ensure day-to-day living and another \$1 billion to strengthen the Sri Lankan rupee.

Followed by the Covid-19 pandemic, Sri Lanka is facing the toughest financial crisis in the post-independence era mainly due to dollar crunch lead by excessive money printing, ban on chemical fertiliser leading to a food crisis and excessive loans taken for a number of white elephant projects. Last month, the crisis forced Sri Lanka to default on its debt for the first time in its history.

## Israeli govt fails to pass bill to renew settler law

Tel Aviv | Agencies

Israel's ruling coalition government has failed to pass a bill extending legal protections to Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank.

The coalition, made up of eight parties with diverse ideologies, including pro-settler nationalists and Dovish parties, could not gain the majority needed to approve the bill which extends the emergency regulations with which Israel applies Israeli law to settlers, reports Xinhua news agency.

It was rejected with 58 lawmakers voting against it and 52 in favour.

Two members of the coalition voted against the bill -- Mazen Ghanem with

the Muslim Ra'am party and Ghaida Rinawie Zoabi with the liberal Meretz party.

They condemned the regulations as enabling an unfair legal system under which Israelis and Palestinians are subject to two separate sets of laws in the same occupied territory. The opposition, which includes mainly right-wing parties that support the settlements, also voted against the bill, in an attempt to bring down the coalition.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, leader of the pro-settler party of Yamina, was seen leaving hastily the floor of the Knesset, or Parliament, right after the vote.

"This bill will pass. If not today then tomorrow, if not

tomorrow then the day after tomorrow," he told local media on Monday night.

"This government goes on." Israel has used emergency regulations that applied Israeli law to some 500,000 Jewish settlers who live in the occupied territory.

The emergency regulations, first enacted in 1967, the year in which Israel captured the West Bank in a war, will expire at the end of June unless the government passes a law to extend them.

If the regulations expire, settlers would not get social benefits, while the government, the police and other government agencies will lose their authority in the West Bank.



## TRIBAL GIRL AND MAN IN CHHINDWARA PARADED WITH GARLANDS OF SHOES

A minor girl and a man were paraded with garlands of shoes around their necks as "punishment" for eloping. The incident was reported at a village in Chhindwara district, around 130 km from the state capital Bhopal.

Saturday, however it came to light after the local police were informed on Monday. As per the police, "this unlawful act was done on the direction of a tribal social panchayat". Both the girl and the man belong to a tribal community, and the girl was accused of eloping with a man, who is her maternal uncle. Tribal panchayat ordered that both the girl and the man should be punished and therefore they were paraded with garlands of shoes and abused. They were paraded on the streets of the village in the presence of family members and relatives. The police on the complaint of the minor girl had booked nine persons including - Motilal Karveti, Dadubhai Inwati, Saddhu Ahke and others, in connection to the incident. Motilal is the maternal grandfather of the girl and was among those who passed a "verdict" against the girl.

local man who is a distant relative of the village and the court called it an "immoral act". The courtiers insulted and abused the two and later pronounced a verdict that both of them should be paraded in the village with garland of shoes around their neck.

The girl had left to Nagpur around 20 days ago to find work in Nagpur and returned on June 2. During the same period the man - Basanta Dhiku, had also "disappeared", prompting locals to assume that the two had an affair and fled together.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Vivek Agrawal told reporters that the police have taken a serious note of the incident and a case was registered against eight identified persons and others under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Juvenile Justice Act.

Meanwhile, the Madhya Pradesh Human Rights Commission (MPHRC) has sought a report about the incident from the Chhindwara SP within three weeks.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A minor girl and a man were paraded with garlands of shoes around their necks as "punishment" for eloping. The incident was reported at a village in Chhindwara district, around 130 km from the state capital Bhopal.

A group of people in Ambajhiri village under the Mohkhed police station paraded the girl and the man on the street and beaten them up, justifying their act as "punishment for eloping", police said on Monday.

The incident occurred on

## Homes and schools of poor will be built on land free from mafia: big decision of Shivraj cabinet

THE MADHYA PRADESH CABINET ON TUESDAY APPROVED SEVERAL IMPORTANT DECISIONS. THE SHIVRAJ GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED THAT THE HOUSES OF THE POOR WILL BE BUILT ON THE LANDS THAT HAVE BEEN FREED FROM ENCRACHERS, MAFIA AND OPPRESSORS.



financial assistance to the landless priests has also been increased.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh cabinet on Tuesday approved several important decisions. The government has decided that the houses of the poor will be built on the lands that have been freed from encroachers, mafia and oppressors. Schools will also be opened on these lands. Along with this, the

After the cabinet meeting, Home Minister Narottam Mishra said that the land which has been freed from the oppressors, land mafia and encroachers, it has been decided to give the land to the poor for housing, anganwadi and schools. The Shivraj cabinet has taken this decision at a time when the government has intensified the campaign against the land mafia in recent times. After the success of the bulldozer model

in UP, the Shivraj government has also adopted it. The Shivraj government has approved a proposal to increase the honorarium of various categories of priests/servants of government-maintained temples. Approval has been given to increase the amount to 5 thousand for those who are landless priests. Priests having land up to 5 acres will now get Rs 2500 instead of Rs 2100. The amount received by priests having land from 5 acres to 10 acres has been increased from Rs 1560 to Rs 2000. The cabinet has approved the proposal to take 500 hectares of land under the land pooling scheme with the consent of the farmers in the Indore-Pithampur investment area. The cabinet has decided to give plots to multi-product companies in the Acharpura industrial area of Bhopal. In this, priority will be given to women entrepreneurs for setting up industries. Shivraj cabinet has given permission to set up 330 MW solar power project in Datia district.

## Miscreants in Gwalior rob Rs 1 crore in broad daylight

AS SOON AS THEY ENTERED THE HOUSE, THEY THREATENED SHWETA ON GUN-POINT AND TOOK ALL THE FAMILY MEMBERS HOSTAGE AND ROBBED 60,000 CASH KEPT IN THE VAULT OF THE HOUSE AND GOLD AND SILVER JEWELRY WORTH ABOUT 15 LAKHS.

Team Absolute | Gwalior

Few masked miscreants robbed a professor on gunpoint in Panchsheel Nagar of Gola Ka Mandir police station area in Gwalior. Professor Shishir Tiwari lived by wife Shweta Dixit, his daughter and his mother in Panchsheel Nagar. According to the CCTV footage, six bike-borne miscreants entered the house. The miscreants told his wife Shweta that they were sent by her husband professor Shishir Dixit, and entered the house.

As soon as they entered the house, they threatened Shweta on gunpoint and took all the family members hostage and robbed 60,000 cash kept in the vault of the house and gold and silver jewelry worth about 15 lakhs. Professor's wife Shweta Dixit told that the miscreants kept on creating ruckus in their house for about 20 minutes, and easily escaped after the incident. FSL team is investigating on the spot. The miscreants will be caught soon, said Amit Sanghi, SP Gwalior.

## JOIN THE ENERGY LITERACY CAMPAIGN, BE A PARTNER IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Bhopal: You can also join the Energy Literacy Campaign. Joining the campaign is totally free. Register through web portal www.usha.mp.gov.in and mobile app UShA. The mobile app UShA can be downloaded from the Google Play Store. The participants will be able to appear in an examination in the form of multiple choice questions through online mode according to their convenience. Presently 12 course modules are in vogue. Based on the answers, participants are given a three-tier online energy literacy certificate. It is noteworthy that to deal with the effects of global warming and climate change, energy literacy campaign is being conducted in the state. In the campaign, people are made aware about the expenditure and wastage of energy, information about traditional and alternative sources of energy and their impact on the environment, energy conservation and management. Along with establishing a meaningful dialogue about energy and energy use, participants develop the ability to make decisions for its efficient use based on an understanding of the effects and consequences of energy use.

## CM PLANTED PEEPAL, NEEM AND KARANJ SAPLINGS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Neem, Peepal and Karanj saplings in Smart Garden. The Chief Minister was accompanied by Aditya Tiwari of Indore who represented India in Ironman World Championship, the world's toughest race in America, and Harshit Rajput, Roshni Rai, Priyanka Mehta and Sachin Katakwar of MIC Organisation also planted saplings.

Aditya Tiwari is studying in America. Ironman 2022, the world's toughest race, consists of swimming 4 km, cycling 180 km and running 40 km in continuity. Tiwari completed this challenge in 12 hours 25 minutes by participating in the championship at St George's on May 7, 2022.

MIC Organisation is active in activities like cleanliness, health, providing food to the needy and blood donation.

The Peepal tree planted today is a shady tree. It purifies the environment. It has religious and Ayurvedic significance. Neem, abounding in antibi-



otic elements, is known as medicine. Karanj plant is considered important in Ayurvedic medicine. Karanj plant is also used in religious works.

## 49 third gender candidates in fray for Sarpanch post in Panchayat polls

ABOUT 2 LAKH CANDIDATES IN TOTAL HAVE FILED NOMINATIONS TILL THE LAST DATE OF FILING FOR THE FIRST PHASE OF THE THREE-TIER PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS IN MADHYA PRADESH. AS MANY AS 49 CANDIDATES OF THE THIRD GENDER HAVE FILED NOMINATIONS FOR THE POST OF SARPANCH AND ONE FOR DISTRICT PANCHAYAT MEMBER.

stone by becoming the first third gender politician from India in 1998 when they were looked down upon and often bullied in the social scene. About 25 years later, out of the 8662 candidates who filed their nominations for the Sarpanch post in Panchayat polls in Madhya Pradesh, 49 candidates are reported to be third gender candidates.

About 2 lakh candidates in total have filed nominations till the last date of filing for the first phase of the three-tier panchayat elections in Madhya Pradesh. The process of filing nomination forms had started on May 30.

Scrutiny of nomination papers for the Panchayat elections will be held on June 7. The last date for the withdrawal of candidature is June 10. Election symbols will also be allotted on the same day.

As many as 49 candidates of the third gender have filed nominations for

the post of sarpanch and one for district panchayat member.

Voting for the first phase will be held on June 25, for the second phase on July 1 and for the third phase on July 8 from 7 am to 3 pm in all places. Declaration of election results for Panch-Sarpanch and Janpad Panchayat member is expected on July 14 and for Zilla Panchayat member on July 15.

A total of 1,94,259 candidates have filed nominations till the last day of nomination, reported Dainik Bhaskar.

The situation of transgender persons in India especially rural areas leave much to be desired as they are often bullied and ostracised from society. Having said that, India's first transgender politician was also from Madhya Pradesh. In 1998, Shabnam Mausi Bano was elected an MLA from Sohagpur constituency in Madhya Pradesh.

## Tiger sneaks out of enclosure at Van Vihar National Park, triggers panic

Panic gripped Bhopal's after a four-year-old male tiger - 'Shaurya' - sneaked out of its enclosure at the rescue centre and went missing on Tuesday morning.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Acting on information, Van Vihar officials safely evacuated around 60-70 tourists present in the park and closed entry for the tourists at both the gates.

Four teams were formed to search for the missing tiger and within an hour it was located resting in the Barasingha (Swamp Deer) enclosure around 500 metres away. Van Vihar

officials reached the spot on getting information and tranquilised the tiger in an hour

It was rushed back to the tiger cage where it was given an antidote. The tiger was shifted back to its housing at the rescue centre. Nobody was harmed during the rescue operation.

The park officials have ordered a probe into the matter and prima facie the negligence of the zoo keeper and three helpers was being investigated. Van Vihar assistant director Ashok Kumar Jain said information was received around 10am on Tuesday that a four-year-old male tiger 'Shaurya' ran away from its enclosure at the rescue centre into the open. Acting on information, the park officials safely evacuated around 60-70 tourists present in the park within 15 minutes.

The entry of tourists from both the gates of the park was closed immediately. Jain said that four separate teams were formed to search for the missing tiger. Around an hour later, a team, including forest guard harmanand Gaire and others

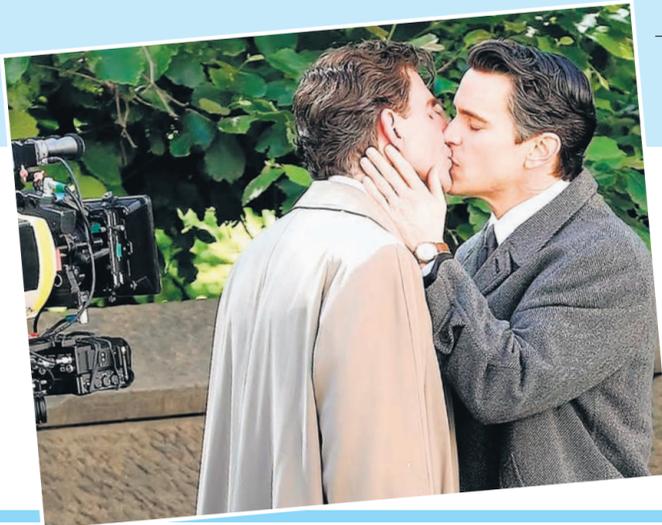
spotted 'Shaurya' resting in the shade of trees on the edge of the Barasingha enclosure. The spot was around 500 metres away from its enclosure.

Immediately all the teams were directed to reach the spot by their vehicles. The teams surrounded the spot so that the tiger may not run away outside the park in any condition. Subsequently, wildlife expert Dr Atul Gupta tranquilised the tiger and when it fell unconscious it was rushed to the tiger cage where it was given an antidote. Later, it was shifted back to the tiger housing at the rescue centre. Jain said that fortunately, the tiger was found and nobody was harmed in the operation which lasted for more than two hours. Prima facie a probe has been

ordered to investigate the negligence of the zoo keeper and three helping staff members. It was suspected that due to the negligence of the zoo keeper, the gate of the tiger enclosure opened and the tiger sneaked out. Jain said that Shaurya was rescued from Harda forest area in critical condition on January 13, 2021 and brought to Van Vihar for treatment. When it recovered completely after around two months it was released into its natural habitat at Satpura Tiger Reserve on March 9, 2021. However, it damaged its canine teeth at the Satpura Tiger Reserve and was rescued again on June 16, 2021 and was brought back to Van Vihar. Since then it has been kept in the enclosure at the rescue centre at the park.



# Bradley Cooper, Matt Bomer spotted kissing on 'Maestro' set



Los Angeles | Agencies

**H**ollywood stars Bradley Cooper and Matthew Bomer have been caught on camera locking lips during the filming of the Leonard Bernstein biopic 'Maestro'. The Oscar-nominated actor and the Golden Globe-winning star were re-enacting a romantic scene for the upcoming movie on the streets of New York City. They were pictured sharing a tender smooch in front of camera, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Cooper, who portrays the legendary Broadway composer, donned a beige trench coat over a white dress shirt and black trousers with a green polka dot bowtie.

Bomer, meanwhile, sported a dark red-and-blue tie and black slacks under a gray wool jacket. Both of them had their hair slicked back with gel to match the 1950s style.

'Maestro', which is also directed by the 'A Star Is Born' helmer, appears to capture Bernstein's life at different stages, including in old age. The 47-year-old actor was previously featured sporting white hair to portray old Bernstein in first-look photos shared in late May. 'White Collar' alum Bomer is said to portray a clarinet player with whom Bernstein had a brief romance.

The movie also stars Carey Mulligan as Bernstein's wife, Jeremy Strong as art critic John Gruen, Maya Hawke as Bernstein's writer and filmmaker daughter Jamie Bernstein, and Sarah Silverman as Bernstein's sister Shirley.



Priyanka Chopra Jonas poses with two HW stars

Paris | Agencies

**I**ndian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas was all smiles as she shared a picture posing with Hollywood star Anne Hathaway and girl K-pop super-band Blackpink's Lisa.

Priyanka took to Instagram, where she shared a picture with the two stars. She is seen dressed in a shimmering brown outfit with a plunging neckline for the event held in Paris. Hathaway and Lisa, on the other hand, chose bright yellow outfits.

Priyanka captioned the image: "And then there was us... girls just wanna have fun! @bulgari @lalalalisa\_m @annehathaway."

In other news, the Indian actress welcomed her first child with her American pop star husband Nick Jonas via surrogacy earlier this year. The couple has named their baby girl Malti Marie. On the work front, Priyanka will next be seen in Farhan Akhtar's 'Jee Le Zaraa'. She is also a part of upcoming web series 'Citadel'.

## From chicken tikka to tandoori king prawns: Depp spent over \$62,000 on Indian feast to celebrate trial win

London | Agencies

**H**ollywood star Johnny Depp spent over \$62,000 or Rs 48.22 lakh for a special celebratory curry dinner with his friends on Sunday evening in Birmingham, England. Depp indulged in a feast of "authentic Indian cuisine," cocktails and rose champagne at the Varanasi restaurant, which serves "heavenly recipes and soothing ambience," according to its website, reports nypost.com. Depp was hanging out with his musician friend and collaborator Jeff Beck and 20 other people in their party at what's billed as "Birmingham's largest Indian restaurant." Depp and his entourage had arrived to the trendy eatery by 7 p.m. and posed for photos with fans, the Daily Mail reported. Mohammed Hussain, operations director of Varanasi, told the outlet: "We had a call out of the blue on Sunday afternoon saying that Johnny Depp wanted to come to eat with a group of people." "I was shocked, and at first, I thought it might have been a wind up (joke). But then his security team arrived (and) checked out the restaurant, and we let them have the whole place because we were concerned that he might be bothered by other diners," he continued. Hussain described how the chefs prepared a feast for the 'Pirates of the Caribbean' star that included delicacies such as shish kebabs, chicken tikka, paneer tikka masala, lamb karahi and tandoori king prawns. The executive also shed some light on the evening, noting that Depp was a "very lovely, down-to-earth bloke."



## 'DEADPOOL 3' WRITER ASSURES FANS IT WON'T BE 'DISNEY-FIED'

Los Angeles | Agencies

**W**riters Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick are writing the third installment of the 'Deadpool' franchise and Reese has assured fans that the script is not going to be "Disney-fied." The upcoming third installment of the 'Deadpool' franchise will be the first made under Disney, which acquired Fox in 2019, after Fox found immense success with two R-rated 'Deadpool' movies (both of which earned more than \$780 million worldwide).

Fans have wondered how a Disney-backed 'Deadpool' will look, and whether or not the studio's family friendly brand will sanitize the raunchy and rude 'Deadpool' tone.

"It's these (Disney) people and these people do things their way," Reese recently told The Playlist, reports 'Variety'.

When asked if the 'Deadpool' franchise will remain rated R with the upcoming third movie, Reese responded: "Oh, absolutely. They're not gonna mess with the tone. I mean, I'd never say never, I guess there's an outside chance, but we've always been told it can be R (rated) and we're proceeding as if it's R. We would like it to be R, we always have, so I don't think that'll change." The 'Deadpool' movies are the top-grossing 'X-Men' films of all time, each earning over \$780 million worldwide. The first two films, which debuted in 2016 and 2018, respectively, were released by 20th Century Fox before Disney acquired that studio.

'Deadpool 3' currently does not have a release date.



## Maria Bakalova joins 'Guardians of the Galaxy 3'

Los Angeles | Agencies

**'B**orat' star Maria Bakalova has joined the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The Bulgarian actor has been cast in 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3', starring Chris Pratt as Star-Lord, Zoe Saldana as Gamora, Vin Diesel as Groot and Dave Bautista as Drax the Destroyer, reports 'Variety'.

It's unclear who Bakalova will play in the film, which is scheduled to release in theatres on May 5, 2023. James Gunn wrote and directed the third and final installment in the 'Guardians of the Galaxy' trilogy, which wrapped production in May. Plot details for the extraterrestrial film -- a sequel to 2014's 'Guardians of the Galaxy' and 2017's 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2' -- have been kept under wraps, per Marvel tradition.

The upcoming movie is the 32nd entry in Disney's Marvel Cinematic Universe.

"Yes yes yes, okay, I guess I should be surprised it took you guys this long to get this one." (Maria Bakalova) is incredible," Gunn wrote Monday morning on Twitter. Along with Bakalova, Will Poulter is also joining the cast as Adam Warlock. Bradley Cooper, Karen Gillan, Pom Klementieff, Elizabeth Debicki, Sean Gunn and Sylvester Stallone round out the call sheet.

Bakalova's first big role after 'Borat Subsequent Moviefilm' was playing a hotel clerk in Judd Apatow's meta pandemic comedy 'The Bubble', which recently debuted on Netflix.

Her upcoming credits also include slasher film 'Bodies Bodies Bodies' and rom-com 'The Honeymoon'.

## 'Ted Lasso' Season 3 being written as the final season: Brett Goldstein

Los Angeles | Agencies

**B**rett Goldstein, who serves as a writer on 'Ted Lasso' and stars as Roy Kent, has said that the show's third season is being written as its last.

"We are writing it like that," he told Sunday Times when asked if Season 3 would be the end, reports 'Variety'.

"It was planned as three. Spoiler alert -- everyone dies."

Goldstein's comments are consistent with what other members of the 'Ted Lasso' crew have said in the past.

Speaking to Entertainment Weekly in 2021, co-creator and star Jason Sudeikis also expressed that he saw the show ending after three seasons, though he hinted that he may be open

to take it further if others had ideas and the opportunity presented itself.

"The story that I know is the one that I wanted to tell, and so that's the one we're telling with the help of numerous people in front of and behind the camera, so it's by no means me typing every key stroke and saying every word," he said.

"It's nowhere near like that. But the story that's being told -- that three-season arc -- is one that I see, know, and understood. I'm glad that they are willing to pay for those three seasons. As far as what happens after that, who knows? I don't know."

'Ted Lasso' was developed by Sudeikis, Bill Lawrence, Brendan Hunt and Joe Kelly based on a character Sudeikis originally played in ads for NBC Sports.

The series debuted in August 2020 and quickly became a flagship series drawing a larger audience to Apple TV+, which had launched less than a year earlier.

Season 2 premiered in July 2021.

Season 3 is currently in production and is set to premiere later in 2022.



## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Megan Fox



## KIYG 2021

# ANDAMAN'S CELESTINA WINS THIRD GOLD, EQUALS HER OWN RECORD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Andaman and Nicobar Islands' Celestina Chelobroy equalled her own record in the Khelo India Youth Games, pedalling away to her third gold medal in cycling at the IG Velodrome here on Tuesday.

The 19-year-old, another fully-rounded cyclist from the Union Territory's much vaunted cycling nursery, had collected her first two



gold medals, the Team Sprint (with Tina Maya) and Individual Sprint 200m events, on Monday itself. She rounded up her tally on Day

2 of the event, clinching the keirin 1500m gold, to match her own 2020 Khelo Games exploits.

Celestina's haul is even more commendable as she was in doubt for this edition, with a shoulder injury forcing her to take a break from cycling. Her display of raw talent in the 2018 National Championships made National coach RK Sharma rope her into the National Academy in Delhi.

## Shuttler Unnati beats Tasnim Mir in nail-biter to win title

**Panchkula:** Rising badminton star Unnati Hooda came back from the brink to clinch the girls' singles crown, beating Tasnim Mir in a nail-biting final in the Khelo India Youth Games here on Tuesday. Unnati came back from losing the first game to beat the former World Junior No. 1 Tasnim, winning 9-21, 23-21, 21-12 in 47 enthralling minutes.

Fourteen-year-old Unnati, the youngest Indian girl to make it to the Uber Cup team, looked down and out against former World Junior No. 1 Tasnim Mir after losing the opening game 9-21 and trailing 11-18 in the second.

**Devika Sihag bagged the bronze medal.**

Maharashtra's Darshan Pujari clinched the badminton boys' singles gold, beating S. Ritvik Sanjeevi of Tamil Nadu 21-15, 22-20 to lift the title. Saneeth D.S bagged the bronze medal.



# Ranji Trophy: Suved Parkar gets into record books with double ton on first-class debut

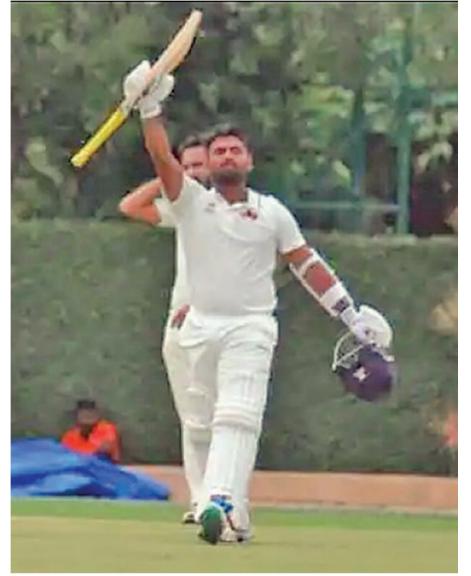
Bengaluru | Agencies

Young Mumbai batter Suved Parkar on Tuesday made it to the record books, becoming the 12th Indian batter to score a double hundred on their first-class debut during the Ranji Trophy match against Uttarakhand.

Parkar, who was batting on 104 at stumps on Monday, completed his double century as he helped Mumbai cross 600 runs on the second day of the five-day match being played at the Alur Cricket Ground.

Parkar was standing in for the injured Ajinkya Rahane in the Ranji Trophy quarter-final. Parkar achieved the milestone in the second session on Day 2, driving left-arm spinner Swapnil Singh for a single to long-off. The 21-year-old crossed the milestone off 375 balls, hitting 17 fours and three sixes.

He thus became the second batter from Mumbai and the 12th Indian batter overall. He is the 23rd batter from all over the world to score a



double century on his first-class debut. With Sarfaraz Khan hitting 153 and Parkar batting on 240, Mumbai,

electing to bat after winning the toss, were 632/7 in 165 overs in their first innings at the time of writing this story.

# Nations League: Croatia score late to hold France 1-1

Paris | Agencies

Substitute Andrej Kramaric converted a late penalty as Croatia denied France three points with a 1-1 draw in their UEFA Nations League Group A1 match in Split, while former European champions Denmark defeated Austria 2-1 and Kazakhstan overcame Slovakia 1-0 in the other matches.

Going into the match, both Croatia and France were reeling from defeats in their previous matches and that produced a cagey opening to the game. However, with France coach Didier Deschamps making 10 changes following his team's loss to Denmark, it was no surprise that it was the hosts who ultimately carved out the first real opportunity. Denmark made it two wins out of two in the UEFA Nations League as Jens



Stryger curled in a classy late winner to earn his side victory in Austria. Having secured impressive victories on Matchday 1, both sides looked in a confident mood during an opening period scant on chances in Vienna. Denmark almost regained the lead when Christian Eriksen hit the post via Pentz's fingertips with a spectacular long-range effort, and Arnautovic also had a shot denied by the woodwork three minutes

later. There was no such frustration for Jens Stryger, who curled a superb winner beyond Pentz from distance with six minutes remaining to send Denmark three points above their opponents at the top of Group A1. Among other matches, Iceland were held 1-1 by Albania, Latvia beat Liechtenstein 1-0, Belarus held Azerbaijan 0-0 as did Andorra who played out a goalless draw with Moldova.

# It would be pathetic to suggest Root and I had a fallout: Stuart Broad

London | Agencies

England seam bowler Stuart Broad has dismissed speculation that he and former skipper Joe Root had strained relations following the quick being omitted from the squad for the three-Test away series in the Caribbean.

Both Broad and bowling partner James Anderson were dropped from the Caribbean tour after England's dismal performance in the Ashes in Australia, which the Root-led side lost 0-4. While Broad had no role to play in the Ashes debacle as he was not part of the playing XI in two of the five Tests, and in the remaining three he had useful contributions (he also took a five-for in the drawn fourth Test at Sydney), the pace stalwart paid the price for England's below-par batting performance.

There was speculation of fallout after Broad was dropped, but the



pace stalwart said Root and he "are great friends". "Joe and I are great friends. I can't

fall out with someone because they don't pick me in a team, that would be a bit pathetic," Broad was quoted

as saying by Sky Sports on Tuesday.

Broad, Anderson and Root were part of the Ben Stokes-led side that won the opening Test against New Zealand at Lord's to take a 1-0 lead in the three-game series. The second Test will be played at Trent Bridge from June 10.

"Joe and I spoke at length when he stood down as captain and I said to him how much he's meant to me as a captain, and what a privilege it was playing under him," Broad added.

"I told him I hope he really enjoys the next few years. All that pressure has gone now. He's already a legend of the game, so he can just go out there and enjoy it. Joe and I are great friends. And I've always been someone who can distinguish between business and pleasure.

"I can't fall out with someone because they don't pick me in a team; that would be a bit pathetic," added Broad.

# South Africa refuse to play ODIs in Australia in January to accommodate domestic T20 league

Melbourne | Agencies

South Africa's upcoming tour of Australia in December-January will be curtailed as the visitors have sought the ODI matches to be rescheduled because the organisers of the country's domestic T20 tournament have refused to allow players to remain in Australia following the conclusion of the Test series, a report in an Australian publication has claimed.

The report also claimed that the launch of the new UAE T20 league, to be played in January 2023, has further crunched the calendar into which the Big Bash League is attempting to revamp itself with a better quality offering



than was seen in recent seasons. That has left Cricket Australia (CA) in a spot of bother looking for dates in an already crowded season. "With both the South African and UAE leagues to be heavily backed by money flowing

out of India, including numerous owners of IPL clubs, there is a serious danger of the BBL being swamped by a tidal wave of cash for players to appear in shorter tournaments," said the report in The Age newspaper.

## UNWISE TO EXPECT EVERYONE TO BE AVAILABLE ALL THE TIME: RAHUL DRAVID

New Delhi | Agencies

India head coach Rahul Dravid on Tuesday said that it would be unfair to expect every player to be available all the time.

David's comments come after regular captain Rohit Sharma, senior batter Virat Kohli and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah were rested from the upcoming five-match T20I series against South Africa, starting from Thursday. "Rohit Sharma is our all-format player. It would be unwise to expect everyone to be available all the time. There are times where we've to rest our big players," said Dravid in a press conference.



# Pakistan veteran Sidra Ameen makes big gains in ODI batter rankings

Dubai | Agencies

Pakistan veteran Sidra Ameen has capped off a superb series with the bat against Sri Lanka by making a massive jump up the latest Women's ODI Batting Rankings, released on Tuesday by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Sidra was the big mover courtesy her 218 runs at an average of 72.66 during the three-game ODI series against Sri Lanka.

She jumped a massive 19 places to be ranked 35th overall on the batter rankings, with the 30-year-old making a big gain thanks to a century and half-century in Karachi.

It caps off a remarkable start to the year for Sidra, who became the first Pakistani woman to score a century in the history of the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup when she scored 104 against Bangladesh in New Zealand in March.



# 2nd ODI: Afghanistan beat Zimbabwe by 8-wickets, take 2-0 lead in series

Harare | Agencies

Ibrahim Zadran and Rahmat Shah raised a record 195-run partnership for the second wicket to help Afghanistan to a comprehensive eight-wicket win against host Zimbabwe in the second ODI here.

After restricting Zimbabwe to 228 all out in 50 overs, Afghanistan rode on the record second-wicket partnership between Zadran, who struck his maiden ODI century on way to 120 not out, and Shah (88) to reach 229/2 in 44.3 overs.

The win gave Afghanistan an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series and also helped them consolidate their position in the top half of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League (CWCSL) table.

With 10 more CWCSL points, Afghanistan moved up to 90 points. While they are still at No.3 on the table, they are just five points



behind the No.2 England. A clean sweep in the series will see them leapfrog England to the second position and just 20 points behind first-ranked Bangladesh. With 10 losses in 14 games now, Zimbabwe continue languishing at the 13th spot, just above the Netherlands.

### Brief scores:

Zimbabwe 228 all out in 50 overs (Innocent Kaia 63, Ryan Burl 51 not out, Sikandar Raza 40; Fareed Ahmad 3-56, Mohammad Nabi 2-31, Rashid Khan 2-56) lost to Afghanistan 229/2 in 44.3 overs (Ibrahim Zadran 120 not out, Rahmat Shah 88; Donald Tiripano 1/32).

## Asian Cup qualifiers Confident India look to begin campaign on winning note

Kolkata | Agencies

As the 'City of Joy' Kolkata gears up to host the Indian team in their first match of the Asian Cup Qualifiers Group D matches, head coach Igor Stimac said that the "passion from the stands will add an extra strength to the players".

India will be squaring off against Cambodia in the first match of the Asian Cup Qualifiers on Wednesday at the VYBK in Kolkata. Speaking at the pre-match press conference, Stimac stated, "We are expecting the fans to come in numbers, to support the national team in the best way possible. Our intent is to press from the start, play at high pressure, and at a high intensity. We need to control the game, and I have to say we are ready for that. We have nothing to hide." Star defender Sandesh Jhingan felt, "Qualifying for the Asian Cup should be a norm for Indian football. The mentality needs to be that India will be at the Asian Cup." "I joined the team a bit late. But when I came in, I could gauge the improvement in the squad. The improve-



ment among players individually was there to see. We are motivated. We know the potential of this batch, and we need to start delivering," he maintained.

India begin their campaign against Cambodia at the VYBK on Wednesday (June 8, 2022) at 8.30pm, and the match will be telecast live on the Star Sports Network. "For me as a coach, it is not important who scores. But it's important that we score. We need to accept that our recent oppositions - Bahrain, Belarus, and Jordan - were technically better than us. But we had our chances, and failed to capitalise on them," Igor quipped.

# Learn from Hockey India and ensure statutes are compliant with local laws, FIH CEO tells NSFs

Mumbai | Agencies

Hockey India is currently under the rule of a Committee of Administrators (COA) on the orders of the Delhi High Court because of an alleged violation of the National Sports Code, and the international hockey federation (FIH) has said it is an example for other national associations to make sure their statutes are compliant with local laws.

Though Hockey India is under the rule of CoA, FIH's chief executive officer Thierry Weil feels the court's intervention does not affect its trust in India's national association.

The Delhi High Court ruling came on a petition filed by former India player Aslam Sher Khan, who had challenged Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president Narinder Batra's appointment as a life member of Hockey India. The High Court held that His



appointment of Batra, who is also the FIH president and in a sense Thierry Weil's boss, as its life member and Elena Norman as CEO were illegal, and thus the administrative setup of Hockey India was erroneous or illegal.

Asked what he thinks of the current situation with Hockey India, Thierry Weil said other associations should learn from this. "It's 100 per cent clear that every National Association has to make sure that its statutes are compliant with the sports

code of the local authorities. Therefore, if this is not the case for Hockey India at the moment, then this has to happen," FIH CEO Thierry Weil said in an exclusive interview with FIH.Hockey.

"However, this situation does not affect FIH's full trust in Hockey India. Indeed, Hockey India has been and continues to be a key actor of the development of our sport, not only in the country but also for the world, as an outstanding organiser of numerous FIH events," said Weil. The FIH's stand on the issue of appointment of CoA sounds a bit strange as international federations usually do not tolerate any kind of interference by local authorities in the functioning of its affiliated national sports associations.

It has led to the disqualification of many national bodies from participation in international events over interference in governance at the national level.



## Anushka and Malaika come out in support of Arjun Kapoor

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Arjun Kapoor's journey from being fat to fab is something looked upon. The actor has worked hard to get in shape and that is palpable as he keeps sharing videos and pictures of his workout session. Recently, a social media user commented on Arjun's picture and body-shamed him. He also claimed that the actor can never get in shape. He also went on to tell that he is a rich boy with no mentality.

The actor was quick enough to notice the comment and came out with a befitting reply. He pointed out the misconception of a healthy body and wrote, "So according to people like u(you) being in shape is just having cuts on ur(your) body... the shift in mentality the ability to show up and push hard to smile thru (through) a session to eat clean to be disciplined in adversity to make each session count and improve ur actual health and strength and posture and ability to push isn't the point of working out right???" The actor further wrote, "We should all just look like ur Display picture... that's a sad way of looking at fitness..." And where the mentality is concerned I can stand up to criticism and reply face to face I don't hide behind a pic of a torso."

Arjun's rumoured gf Malaika Arora came out in his support and lauded his efforts. She urged the actor to not trolls and criticism to dull his shine. His close friend Anushka Sharma also reshared the story and praised Arjun Kapoor for his befitting reply.



## Karan Johar reveals he's a big Sai Pallavi fan

Bollywood bigwig Karan Johar took to Twitter to share the recently-released theatrical trailer of Rana Daggubati and Sai Pallavi-starrer 'Virata Parvam'. The excited Bollywood filmmaker announced that he is a huge fan of actress Sai Pallavi, as he shared the trailer of the actress. Praising Rana-Sai Pallavi's 'Virata Parvam' trailer, he wrote, "This looks fantastic Rana!!!!" he tweeted. "I'm excited to see it! Intensely raw and enthralling!!! You're fantastic! I'm also a big Sai Pallavi fan!"

Sai Pallavi has been hailed as one of the most accomplished actresses of her generation, and the trailer for 'Virata Parvam' demonstrates her versatility in the role.

'Virata Parvam' will be released on June 17 and is directed by Venu Udgula. This film features Naveen Chandra, Nivetha Pethuraj, Eeswari Rao, Priyamani, and others in important roles. The film's music is composed by Suresh Bobbili.



## Nayanthara-Vignesh Shivan wedding

Chennai | Agencies

Arrangements for the wedding of director Vignesh Shivan with actress Nayanthara are on in full swing, even as invitations to a select set of guests have been sent out.

The wedding of the celebrity couple, who have been dating each other for some time now, is to take place on June 9 at a popular resort in Mahabalipuram. Sources close to the couple say that the wedding is to take place in the presence of only close family and friends from the industry and that special arrangements have been put in place to ensure security.

The sources say, "Security has been really tightened at the venue. Guests, who have been invited, will be getting a special code before the wedding. Guests will be allowed to enter the wedding venue after showing code." A dress code for the wedding has also been specified. The dress code specified in the invitation is Ethnic pastels. A Sangeet ceremony is to take place on Wednesday before the wedding on Thursday morning. "The couple had recently met Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin to invite him to their wedding. The sources say actors Rajinikanth and Ajith too are among those who have been invited to the event.



## Zaheer Iqbal and Sonakshi Sinha make their relationship official?

Mumbai: Bollywood actors Zaheer Iqbal and Sonakshi Sinha have been in the news for a long time now due to the rumours about them being together. Though the duo has remained mum about the same, their social media PDA speaks volumes of their bond.

In a belated birthday post for Sonakshi Sinha, Zaheer shared a couple of videos and a picture of the two of them on his social media handle and wrote "Happy Birthday Sonzzz, Thank You for not killing me, I Love You. Here's to a lot more food, lights, love and laughter. P.s - This video sums up the entire time we've known each other." In the shared video, we can see Sonakshi being her goofy self as she relishes a burger. Reacting to the post, Sonakshi wrote, "Thaaankkkk uuu ... love uuu ... now I'm coming to kill unuuuuuuu" As soon as he shared the post, their friends and colleagues like Tara

Sutaria, Rohan Shrestha, Varun Sharma and others dropped heart emojis in the comment section.

If reports are to be believed, the two might tie the knot by the end of this year.



## EKTA LAUNCHES ETHNIC WEAR LINE ON BIRTHDAY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Tczarina Ektaa Kapoor on her 47th birthday on Tuesday launched her ethnic wear line under the banner EK with entertainment commerce platform Roposo.

Made with 100 per cent cotton, EK's three collections Charbagh, Siyahi and Kairi include products like kurtas, bottoms, and dupattas. They embody EK's ethos of creating products that bring a sense of emotional wellness and positive energy to users. Like other EK products, its clothing line is crafted by local Indian artisans, in a way that blends traditional Indian craftsmanship with modern design elements. The Charbagh collection features beautiful floral and nature-themed prints representing serenity. The Siyahi print, the Indigo collection, brings joy and the Kairi collection has raw mango-themed prints evoking relaxation. Speaking about the new launch, Ektaa said: "I am extremely thrilled to be growing EK - a brand I have co-created with Roposo - with the launch of our new apparel line. I am truly grateful for the success that EK has seen so far." "Some of EK's products, such as copper bottles, ran out of stock within the first month of their launch, and I was elated to see that one of the evil eye necklaces from the EK jewelry collection became a huge hit, especially after my friend and television star Karan Kundra gifted it to Tejaswi Prakash. I hope that consumers will extend the same love to our apparel line as well."



## APARSHAKTI KHURANA ALL SET TO RELEASE TWO MUSIC VIDEOS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor-singer Aparshakti Khurana, who released two tracks 'Balle Ni Balle' and 'Choti Choti Gal' earlier this year, is now all set to drop two more music videos.

The actor says, "For me personally, singing and enjoying music is something I love as much as making and watching movies. I love to jam during my free time and love updating my playlists with new music whenever I have time."

He added: "Honestly it's a blessing for me to be part of such varied projects and I get to pursue such varied formats including digital, movies, my music, music videos - for an artist like me who loves to entertain."

"My last two tracks which were both different from each other have gotten so much love, and now I'm already ready with two more tracks which are soon upcoming. I'm looking forward to these releases to give everyone a music year!"

On the acting front, Aparshakti will next be seen in 'Dhokha: Around D Corner', opposite Khushali Kumar. Followed by spy thriller 'Berlin' and Vikramaditya Motwane's period drama amazon original series



## JANHIT MEIN JARI: A LIGHT-HEARTED TAKE ON A HEAVY DISCUSSION

FILM REVIEW

BY SHACHI CHATURVEDI

### The Power (on Zee Plex)

Direction: JAI BASANTU SINGH

Cast: Nushratt Bharuccha; Vijay Raaz; Anud Singh Dhaka; Tinnu Anand; Paritosh Tripathi.

Runtime: 2 hrs 26 mins

Ratings: 3/5

### Synopsis

A lighthearted film emphasises the significance of condoms and addresses the social stigma associated with their usage.

### Story

In Orcha, Madhya Pradesh, Manokamna Tripathi works as a sales agent for a local condom maker. A sad turn of circumstances forces Manokamna to devote herself more personally and responsibly than ever before in her career. Will she finally find her family, steeped in traditional and orthodox views, by her side, or will she have to paddle through alone? The answer to this question has a significant role in the plot.

### Review

The film dealt with a worthy issue that has to be addressed in society, but as viewers, there is nothing particularly outstand-



ing or novel. When it came to the plot, the film was very predictable. The punch lines were good and were chosen to keep the film's tone light.

In terms of the actors' performances in the part, Nushratt performed a good job and was fairly subtle throughout the film. Anud Dhaka, the male lead, did a terrific job in the first half of the picture, but in the second half, his acting took a turn and got a touch over the line. To be precise the actor in the supporting role played a very important role to keep the audiences intact.

Vijay Raaz represents the patriarchal voice in a strict household setting. He not only picks the accent properly, but also clings to the character throughout its voyage. Tinnu Anand and a handful of other supporting artists did an excellent job as well, and a bit more of them have been

loved. Their talk, particularly that of Manokamna's co-sisters on the terrace, breaks up the monotony of the story. The punchlines are delivered with impeccable timing and flair.

There is nothing much when it comes to technicalities. All-inclusive It was entirely predictable, except for the notion. Everything about the film was slow and dull. The film's soundtrack has the ability to shine as well. Though there is sufficient opportunity for it during the film, the songs on the record do not compel you to press the replay button. Overall, Jai Basantu Singh makes a convincing Bollywood debut as a filmmaker, but he has a long way to go as the captain of the ship.

This is a fun picture with a strong message that might have been packaged and delivered much better.

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Keerthy Suresh