

absolute india



VOL. 9, ISSUE 245, MUMBAI | THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 2022 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHOPAL AND NEW DELHI

NATION > 02

Polio virus detected in gutter water of Kolkata...



HOLLYWOOD > 06

Amber Heard not axed from 'Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom'...



SPORTS > 07

2nd Test, Day 5 Bairstow's incredible ton leads England...

Congress intensifies protest over Rahul Gandhi's ED questioning

BJP Bridged Congress' Differences

Rahul Gandhi reached the Enforcement Directorate office for the third consecutive day for questioning after which the party workers, accompanied by senior leaders, staged a protest outside the ED office. Former Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Harish Rawat was detained and pushed to police vehicle. Congress staged nationwide protest against questioning their leader.

SONIA, RAHUL AND PRIYANKA NOT LISTED AS SHAREHOLDERS OF ASSOCIATED JOURNALS

▶ IT IS INTRIGUING TO NOTE THAT THE CURRENT CONGRESS TOP LEADERSHIP AND GANDHI FAMILY MEMBERS -- SONIA, RAHUL AND PRIYANKA -- ARE NOT LISTED AS SHAREHOLDERS OF ASSOCIATED JOURNALS.

▶ HOWEVER, YOUNG INDIAN IS THE LARGEST SHAREHOLDER OF ASSOCIATED JOURNALS AND SONIA AND RAHUL ARE DIRECTORS OF THAT COMPANY. THE OTHER DIRECTORS LISTED ARE MALLIKARJUN KHARGE, PAWAN BANSAL, SUMAN DUBEY AND SAM PITRODA WHO ARE ALL ALSO SHAREHOLDERS IN ASSOCIATED JOURNALS.

▶ NEHRU FAMILY NAMES, INCLUDING INDIRA NEHRU GANDHI, FERDINAND GANDHI, VIJAYLAKSHMI PANDIT ARE LISTED AS SHAREHOLDERS OF ASSOCIATED JOURNALS WHICH IS UNDER THE SCRUTINY OF THE INVESTIGATING AGENCIES.

▶ AMONG THE OTHER SHAREHOLDERS LISTED ARE CONGRESS STALWARTS RAFI AHMED KIDWAI, PURUSHOTTAM DAS TANDON, RAJNI PATEL, JITENDRA PRASAD, MALLIKARJUN KHARGE, PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL. OTHERS INCLUDE PRAKASH NARAIN SAPRU, S. VENKITARAMANAN, KESORAM COTTON MILLS, ABID HUSSAIN.

▶ JYOTSNNA SURI AND THE LATE LALIT SURI HOLD 50,000 SHARES EACH OF ASSOCIATED JOURNALS WHICH BRINGS OUT THE NATIONAL HERALD OF THE CONGRESS PARTY.

▶ THE YOUNG INDIAN IS THE LARGEST SHAREHOLDER OF ASSOCIATED JOURNALS. HARBANS LAL MALHOTRA AND SONS HOLDS 16,000 SHARES WHILE RAMESHWAR THAKUR IS SHOWN TO HOLD 26,510 SHARES.

▶ SCINDIA INVESTMENT, MOHAN MEAKIN HOLD 5,000 SHARES EACH. OTHERS INCLUDE A MIX OF CONGRESS LEADERS PAST AND PRESENT OR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN CLOSE TO THE GANDHI FAMILY.

▶ SOME OF THE SHAREHOLDERS INCLUDE DR K.N. KATJU, VIJAY DARDA, SUSHMITA DEV, MANICKAM TAGORE, SYED SIBTAY RAZI, SUMAN DUBEY, SAM PITRODA, OSCAR FERNANDES, MOTILAL VORA, J.B. DADACHANDJI, H.Y. SHARADA PRASAD, GHULAM NABI AZAD, SUCHETA KRIPALANI, SHEILA DIKSHIT AMONG OTHERS.

▶ PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL IS CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF ASSOCIATED JOURNALS.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Hundreds of Congress workers continued to stage protests at different locations in the national capital over their leader Rahul Gandhi being summoned by the Enforcement Directorate for the third consecutive day on Wednesday.

The sloganeering and massive protest began soon after Gandhi reached the ED office located at the Abdul Kalam road in the city. There was heavy police deployment in and around the Congress headquarters and the Enforcement Directorate office.

The police personnel in heavy numbers, along with paramilitary force and rapid action force teams were deployed at several points to avoid any untoward incident. As a precautionary measure, the police were forced to detain several party workers, including women. The police could be seen picking up the Congress workers who were sitting in front of the barricades and bundled them in their vehicle. Agitated party workers also burnt two tires outside the ED office to register the protest against the police action to stifle their voice. The party leaders alleged that the police are not allowing them to even protest against the government and are continuously harassing them.

RAHUL GANDHI GETS A DAY'S REST

New Delhi: After being grilled by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for three consecutive days in connection with the National Herald case, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will not be questioned by the agency on Thursday. An ED source said the agency will question Rahul Gandhi again on Friday. "He has been given a day's rest," the source said. Sonia Gandhi, who is presently admitted to the hospital for Covid related health issues, has also been summoned on June 23 in the same case.

Sachin Pilot detained outside Congress office

New Delhi: Congress leader Sachin Pilot was detained on Wednesday while he was trying to enter the Congress office as the police has cordoned off the area and only limited people are being allowed inside. Sachin Pilot who was sent to Narela police station said, "its bad sign for democracy as leaders and workers are not allowed to visit their party offices."

Congress leaders who are protesting over the questioning of Rahul Gandhi by the Enforcement Directorate have alleged that they were not allowed to go to the Congress headquarters at 24 Akbar Road here and many MPs claim that they were not even permitted to leave their house.

CONG LEADER ISSUES NOTICES TO SHAH, SITHARAMAN, RIJJU CITING 'POLITICAL VENDETTA'

New Delhi: Congress leader and senior lawyer Vivek Tankha on Wednesday issued notices to Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Law Minister Kiren Rijju for using the Enforcement Directorate as a 'tool of political vendetta,' amid the ongoing interrogation of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi by the probe agency for the third consecutive day. In the notices issued on behalf of the legal cell of the All India Congress Committee, Tankha urged the government to desist from illegal disclosure of information by the ED pertaining to Rahul Gandhi. The notice contended that the case that has been foisted is utterly hopeless and has no basis in law. It stated that the ongoing probe in connection with the Associated Journals Ltd. began in 2013/14 on a complaint by Subramanian Swamy, a person well known for his animosity towards the Gandhis.

BJP THROTTLING DEMOCRACY: CHHATTISGARH CM

"What kind of democracy is this? Where workers cannot go to their party office and the leader cannot meet his workers. The whole country is witnessing the prevailing situation, this type of situation never occurred before. The Central government is misusing the central agencies to suppress the opposition parties. BJP will have to pay for this."

CHILDREN BORN OUTSIDE WEDLOCK ARE ELIGIBLE TO GET FAMILY PROPERTY: SC



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Setting aside a Kerala High Court order, the Supreme Court has ruled that the illegitimate children of a couple living together for a long time without getting married can have a share of the family property.

The apex court was dealing with a plea filed against the high court order that denied the property share claim of an alleged illegitimate child citing the parents of the plaintiff did not engage in marriage.

However, observing that the couple was living together for a long time, the top court noted that their relationship is as good as marriage.

"It is well settled that if a man and a woman live together for long years as husband and wife, there would be a presumption in favour of wedlock. Such a presumption could be drawn under Section 114 of the Evidence Act. Although the presumption is rebuttable, a heavy burden lies on him who seeks to deprive the relationship

of legal origin to prove that no marriage took place," it said.

It also said that the couple Damodaranand Chiruthakutty was cohabiting for a long time. According to the plaintiffs, Damodaran married Chiruthakutty was cohabiting for a long time. The first plaintiff Krishnan was born in the year 1942.

"The documents produced by the plaintiffs were in existence long before the controversy arose between the parties. These documents, coupled with the evidence would show the long duration of cohabitation between Damodaran and Chiruthakutty as husband and wife," stated the order passed by the bench of Justices S. Abdul Nazeer and Vikram Nath.

The court also referred to its earlier order in which it was stated that "Law leans in favour of legitimacy and frowns upon the bastardy."

Several online platforms down for Indian users as Cloudflare suffers outage

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Several online platforms like Shopify, Discord, Acko, GitLab and others went down for users in India on Wednesday as digital infrastructure services provider Cloudflare suffered an outage.

Cloudflare said in a system status update that it was suffering from "Network Performance Issues in the India region," and "continuing to work on a fix for this issue".

It later said that the "issue has been identified and a fix is being implemented". "Cloudflare is investigating issues with network performance in the India region. Impacted customers may experience an increase in 5xx errors," the company informed. Several customers in India faced 'HTTP 504' error-based service outage, especially for long-running queries. The outage also affected SaaS platform



OSlash, Flitpay and other platforms that run their operations on Cloudflare network.

According to website outage detector DownDetector, several users also reported issues accessing Udemy, Canva and Zerodha.

On Wednesday, Cloudflare said it detected a Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack on one of its clients.

ARMY TO SKILL AGNIVEERS AS PER THEIR TALENT: LT GEN BHINDER

Jaipur: Terming the newly-announced 'Agnipath' scheme as a great opportunity for the youth, Lieutenant General Amardeep Singh Bhinder, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, South Western Command, said on Wednesday that the army will skill the candidates depending on their qualification and talent. Also, after four years, while 25 per cent candidates will be absorbed in the army on merit basis, the remaining 75 per cent who go back to the society will be given skill certificates so that they get government or private jobs on the basis of their skills," Lt Gen Bhinder said while addressing a press conference here. The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved the Agnipath recruitment scheme for Indian youth to serve in the armed forces. Soldiers recruited under the scheme will be inducted into the armed forces as 'Agniveers'.

CABINET APPROVES AUCTION OF 5G SPECTRUM

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the Telecom department's proposal to conduct a spectrum auction through which spectrum will be assigned to the successful bidders for providing 5G services to public and enterprises.

A total of 72097.85 MHz of spectrum with a validity period of 20 years will be put to auction to be held by the end of July, 2022. It is expected that the Mid and High band spectrum will be utilised by Telecom Service Providers to roll-out of 5G technology-based services capable of providing speed and capacities which would be about 10 times higher than what is possible through the current 4G services.



The Cabinet announced various progressive options with regard to the spectrum to be acquired by bidders through the forthcoming spectrum auction for facilitating ease of doing

business. For the first time ever, there is no mandatory requirement to make upfront payment by the successful bidders. Payments for spectrum can be made in 20 equal annual installments to be paid in advance at the beginning of each year.

Spectrum is an integral and necessary part of the entire 5G ecosystem. The upcoming 5G services have the potential to create new age businesses, generate additional revenue for enterprises and provide employment arising from the deployment of innovative use-cases and technologies.

Eighty crore subscribers have access to broadband today compared to ten crore subscribers in 2014.

Covaxin booster enhances vaccine effectiveness against Delta, Omicron variants: ICMR study

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has found in a study that a Covaxin booster dose enhances the vaccine effectiveness against the Delta variant infection and gives protection against the Omicron variants BA.1.1 and BA.2. The protective efficacy of Covaxin following the second and third dose immunisations were compared against the Delta variant and also studied the efficacy of Covaxin against Omicron variants in a Syrian hamster model in the study. The ICMR scientists also studied the antibody response, clinical



observations, viral load reduction and lung disease severity after virus challenge.

"Protective response in terms of the reduction in lung viral load and lung lesions were observed in both the 2 doses as well as 3 doses Covaxin immunised group when compared to placebo group following the Delta variant challenge," the ICMR study said.

Presidential poll: Opposition decide to field joint candidate

▶ The Election Commission on Wednesday issued the notification for 16th Presidential election, scheduled to be held on July 18.

▶ As per the notification, the nominations can be filed till June 29 and the scrutiny of the papers will be held on June 30. The last date for withdrawing from the electoral fray is July 2. The counting will take place on July 21.

▶ As per a source, 11 candidates filed the nomination for the country's top constitutional post after the notification was issued. However, one nomination was rejected due to incomplete documents, the source said.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The opposition parties on Wednesday decided to field a joint candidate in the Presidential polls next months.

A meeting of opposition leaders, called by Trinamool Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata

Banerjee, was held here on building consensus on zeroing in on a joint opposition candidate. In the meeting, a resolution was passed to field a common candidate in the next Presidential poll.

In the forthcoming Presidential election which is being held on the 75th anniversary of India's independence, we have decided to field a common candidate who can truly serve as custodian of the Constitution and stop the Modi government from doing further damage to Indian democracy and India's social fabric," it said. Banerjee said all important political parties sent their representatives and several senior leaders attended the meeting. An opposition leader present in the meeting said that the Trinamool supremo proposed the name of NCP chief Pawar and everyone agreed. "But Pawar refused and said he will be active in politics till his death." It is learnt that opposition leaders will meet again on June 21 to finalise the candidate.

RAJNATH REACHES OUT TO MAMATA, OTHER LEADERS

New Delhi: Ahead of next month's Presidential election, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has spoken to several leaders from opposition parties, including West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, as well as NDA partners. Sources said that the BJP-led NDA government is trying to build consensus with the opposition to avoid an election. Sources said that Rajnath Singh has also spoken to Congress's Mallikarjun Kharge, Odisha Chief Minister and BJD chief Naveen Patnaik, and Samajwadi Party's Akhilesh Yadav and Nitish Kumar.



VIJAYAN SOUGHT HELP FROM SHARJAH RULERS FOR DAUGHTER'S IT BUSINESS: SWAPNA SURESH

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM | Agencies

Gold smuggling case accused Swapna Suresh, in an affidavit filed before the Kerala High Court and which came out in the public domain on Wednesday, alleged that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan sought help from the visiting Sharjah ruler in September 2017 for his daughter's bid to open an IT business in the emirate.

This came out a day after Swapna Suresh, retorting to Vijayan's claim that he doesn't know her, had on Tuesday said: "Very soon, through you (media), I will remind him on my presence at the Cliff House (official residence of Vijayan) discussing things in the presence of his wife Kamala, their daughter Veena, and their son and taking decisions. If he has forgotten that, then I will remind him."

One reason why the contents of the affidavit surfaced on Wednesday was because the office of Vijayan, in



the morning, had released a video of a press conference of Vijayan, wherein he says that Swapna Suresh had come to the Cliff House, along with the UAE Consul General on a few occasions as she was the secretary and was working at the Consulate here and it was an official visit. The revelations came to counter this video and to keep her promise that she will remind Vijayan that he knows her very well as they have had discussions on various issues and decisions were taken.

Swapna Suresh, in her affidavit filed in 2021 before the Customs, had

given all these information with regards to Vijayan and his family members' involvement.

In this now explosive revelation, which has now become public, she said the Sharjah ruler was in the state to receive a D.Lit from the University of Kerala and on September 26, 2017, a meeting took place on this topic at Vijayan's official residence, and present on the occasion, were his two top high ranking officials including Nalini Netto and M. Sivasankar.

Swapna Suresh also alleged that later Vijayan also had a word with

the Sharjah IT Minister to ensure his daughter is able to open an IT business, and that she herself took up this issue with the high-ranking Sharjah officials.

With regards to another allegation that she had made in her confession statement given before a magistrate earlier this month, which has created a huge protests in the state by the Congress and BJP demanding Vijayan's resignation, on the smuggling of 'metals' in biryani vessels taken from the residence of the UAE Consul General here to Vijayan's house, she points out that when this took place, the Consul General was worried, till it reached Vijayan's house.

She states that this is all there in the chat messages between Sivasankar and here.

She goes on to point out that she resisted the attempt of Vijayan's wife to present jewels to the Sharjah royal family as such a practise is not there among them.

2 LeT terrorists, including bank manager's killer, gunned down in J&K

SRINAGAR | Agencies

Two terrorists of proscribed terror outfit LeT, including the killer of bank manager Vijay Kumar, were eliminated in a joint security forces operation in Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian district on Wednesday, police said.

Police said acting on specific information regarding presence of terrorists in village Kanji Ullar area of Shopian, a joint cordon and search operation was launched by police, the army and, the CRPF.

During the search operation, as the joint party approached towards the suspected spot, the hiding terrorists fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was retaliated effectively, leading to an encounter.

"In the ensuing encounter, two terrorists were killed

and their bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter. They have been identified as Jan Mohd Lone, resident of Braripora Shopian, and Tufail Nazir Ganie, resident of Ramnagri Shopian," police said.

As per police records, both the killed terrorists were linked with LeT and were part of groups involved in several terror crime cases including attacks on police/security forces and civilian atrocities.

Interacting with media, IGP, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar revealed that Lone was involved in recent killing of bank manager Vijay Kumar in Kulgam on June 2.

He also revealed that Lone was earlier working as OGW of LeT's district commander Adil Ramzan and he killed the bank manager on the direction of said LeT commander. After this terror crimem, he actively joined

terror ranks.

"Since then we have been tracking him. It's pertinent to mention here that one of the killed terrorist Tufail Nazir had earlier escaped from two encounters at Chaki Samad area of Kulgam on April 9 and Khur-Batpora area of Kulgam on April 11," he said.

Arms and ammunition, including an AK-47 rifle and a pistol were recovered from the site of encounter. All the recovered materials have been taken into case records for further investigation and to probe their complicity in other terror crimes.

The IGP congratulated the joint teams for carrying out the anti-terrorist operation in professional manner without any collateral damage. He also appreciated the efforts of police to track down and neutralise the terrorist involved in the recent killing of the bank manager.

Daily Covid tally in Delhi crosses 1000-mark for second day



With 909 patients recovering in the last 24 hours, the total number of recoveries has gone up to 18,86,039. The number of patients being treated in home isolation stands at 2,108.

With the new Covid cases, the total caseload of the city has jumped to 19,15,905 while the death toll continues at 26,223.

The number of Covid containment zones stands at 190 in the city. A total of 19,622 new tests - 13,367 RT-PCR and 6,255 Rapid Antigen - were conducted in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 3,87,96,682 while 23,613 vaccines were administered - 2,351 first dose, 7,057 second dose and 14,205 precaution dose. The total number of cumulative beneficiaries vaccinated so far stands at 3,45,52,588 according to the health bulletin.

in the city in the last 24 hrs, as per the Delhi government health bulletin.

Meanwhile, the Covid positivity rate has jumped to 7.01 per cent while the number of active cases has also risen to 3,643 in the capital city.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi on Wednesday reported 1375 Covid cases in a single-day rise, against 1,118 infections recorded on Tuesday.

However, no Covid-related death has been reported

ANUPAM KHER PERFORMS 'SHRADDH' FOR KASHMIRI PANDITS KILLED IN 1990



Varanasi: Bollywood actor Anupam Kher on Wednesday performed 'shradh' ceremony here for Kashmiri Pandits killed in the 1990 massacre in the Valley.

The actor performed 'tripindi shradh' for the peace of the departed souls. The ritualistic ceremony was carried out amid chanting of mantras. The event was organised by Brahma Sena and was held at Pichash Mochan Teerth in Kashi.

Anupam Kher has raised the issue of Kashmiri Pandits several times. His performance in the recent film, 'The Kashmir Files', has earned him critical acclaim.

Polio virus detected in gutter water of Kolkata

KOLKATA | Agencies

Eight years after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared India as polio-free country, germs of the polio virus have been detected from the gutter waters in a pocket in Kolkata. However, so far there has been no report of any child being affected by the virus.

It was way back in 2011, a polio-affected victim was detected in in Howrah district, close to Kolkata. According to the state public health department sources, the virus was detected from the gutter waters in the congested Metiabruz area that comes under Number 15 borough of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation. "The authorities conduct regular tests of gutter waters in different pockets in Kolkata and recently the germs of polio virus have been detected from the gutter waters in the Metiabruz area. An emergency meeting was conducted in Kolkata soon after that which



was attended by Eastern Indian representatives of the WHO. It was decided to conduct a thorough surveillance in the area to identify whether there is any child with immune-deficiency syndromes. At the same time, stress will be given

on arrest of open defecation and vaccination," a senior officer of the health department said. Similarly, all the state-run medical colleges and hospitals have been instructed to conduct stool tests of all immunodeficient children admitted there.

Prophet remarks row: SC to hear plea against UP demolitions today

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court will on Thursday hear the plea by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind seeking appropriate direction from the Uttar Pradesh government to ensure that no further demolitions are carried out without following due process of law.

In the plea, moved against the backdrop of the ongoing row over comments on the Prophet and subsequent demolition drives, the Jamiat Ulama sought directions to initiate action against those officials concerned responsible for the houses allegedly demolished in violation of the rule of law and the municipal laws enacted by the state.

The plea stated that the present situation is more alarming as the Supreme Court had already ordered a stay of demolitions that were being carried out as a punitive measure in northwest Delhi in similar circumstances. "It is a violation of the orders of the Supreme



Court", it read.

Incidents of violence and slogan-shouting were reported from Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj and Saharanpur on

Friday (June 10) after prayers when people began protesting against former BJP spokespersons' remarks on the Prophet.

MAKE PARENTS' SIGNATURE MANDATORY IN ALL LOVE MARRIAGES: PATIDARS

Ahmedabad: Gujarat's Patidars have decided to ask the state government to increase marriage age from 18 to 21 for women and also make the parent's signature mandatory in all love marriages. The office-bearers of around 12 to 15 Patidar community associations met on Wednesday at the Vishwa Umiya Dham Jaspur centre here to discuss issues pertaining to their community. Vishwa Umiya Dham president R.P. Patel said, "We have decided to ask the state government to raise the marriageable age for girls, so it has been decided to request the state government to increase girl's the marriage age from 18 to 21. In relation to love marriages, we want the state government to make necessary changes in the Marriage Act.

My son will contest upcoming K'taka assembly polls: Yediyurappa

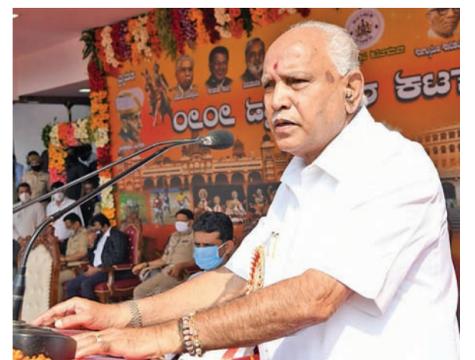
TUMAKURU | Agencies

Refuting rumours that the BJP is sidelining his son B.Y. Vijayendra, former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa stated here on Wednesday that Vijayendra would contest the upcoming state assembly polls.

"However, the constituency from which he will contest is not decided yet. The party will decide on the responsibilities to be given to leaders," Yediyurappa said.

"The statewide tour has begun, our aim is to win 140 assembly seats in the assembly elections of 2023 and bring the BJP to power. I will visit every district in the state and interact with party workers," he informed.

He said, "All sections of the people would be taken along. Many leaders are



ready to join the BJP. The party would welcome those who can strengthen the party. Many have already joined."

This is the second time Yediyurappa gave a public statement on his son fighting the assembly elections.

Vijayendra, presently holding the post of party vice president, was denied a ticket to contest the MLC polls recently. Earlier, the party had refused him a ticket to contest the assembly elections from Varuna constituency in 2018.

Woman gang-raped in Bihar's Madhepura



Patna | Agencies

A married woman aged around 30 has been allegedly gang-raped by five men in Bihar's Madhepura district, an official said on Tuesday.

The incident happened on Monday night in Rajpur village.

The woman was alone in the house when she was violated. Her husband, said to be mentally-challenged, was not present.

In the complaint to the police, the victim claimed she was sleeping when five persons suddenly came to her house, and held her captive. After covering and tying her mouth with a cloth, the

men took turns to rape her, and eventually, she lost consciousness. Later, all the men fled the spot.

"When I gathered consciousness on Tuesday morning, I approached some women in the neighbouring houses. With their help, I informed the police about the incident," she said.

The woman has been admitted to Madhepura Sadar hospital for treatment.

Meanwhile, the police have recorded the victim's statement. "During medical examination, the doctors confirmed that she was raped. We are taking action on the basis of the statement given," an investigating officer said.

Overall warming to increase, number of heavy rainfall days to increase in NE: study

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bengaluru

A study about climate change projections for the northeast Indian states on Wednesday indicated an overall warming of both summer and winter minimum temperatures, an increase in the number of rainy days, and an increase in the number of heavy rainfall events across almost all the districts of the region.

These are the findings of "District-Level Changes in Climate: Historical Climate and Climate Change Projections for the North-Eastern States of India" by the Centre for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), a Bengaluru-based think tank.

The study projects changes in temperature and rainfall patterns in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura over the next three decades (from 2021 till 2050) and compares it to the historical period (from 1990 to 2019).

It analysed two representative scenarios: first at moderate emissions, what in technical terms is called as RCP 4.5, and second, for high emissions (RCP 8.5). There are four RCPs, the Representative Concentration Pathways, each of which is a greenhouse gas concentration trajectory adopted by the



Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), used for climate modelling in IPCC reports.

Stating that historically (1990-2019), temperature and rainfall have increased, and rainfall variability is high across all the northeastern states, the important findings from the study includes that there is an overall warming of both summer and winter minimum temperatures, an increase in the number of rainy days (more than 2.5

mm rainfall per day), and an increase in the number of heavy rainfall events across almost all the districts of the north-eastern states.

It also found out that the summer maximum and the winter minimum temperatures are projected to increase by 1 degree Celsius to 1.5 degrees Celsius under the RCP 4.5 scenario and 1 degree Celsius to 2 degrees Celsius under the RCP 8.5 scenario. The winter minimum temperature is

projected to increase largely by 1 degree Celsius to 1.5 degrees Celsius under the RCP 4.5 scenario and 1 degree Celsius to 2 degrees Celsius under the RCP 8.5 scenario in a majority of the districts of north-east India.

The study also said that the number of rainy days is projected to increase in the 2030s in all the northeastern states compared to the historical period. The increase is by 1 to 24 days under the RCP 4.5 scenario, with the maximum increase projected in Sikkim and a minimum increase projected in Assam. The increase is by 1 to 22 days under the RCP 8.5 scenario, with the maximum increase projected in Sikkim.

An increase in high-intensity (51-100 mm per day) and very high-intensity (more than 100 mm per day) rainfall events are projected in the 2030s across all the districts of northeast India compared to the historical period.

It also showed a decline in rainfall deficient years projected in the 2030s across almost all the districts of north-east India compared to the historical period. The decline in rainfall deficient years is by 1 to 4 years out of 30 years under the RCP 4.5 scenario and 1 to 5 years under the RCP 8.5 scenario in the various districts of north-east India.



ED GRILLS RAHUL-MAHA CONG SAYS 'BJP'S COUNTDOWN HAS BEGUN'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Against the backdrop of the ongoing 3-days long interrogation of Congress MP Rahul Gandhi by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), and the police entering the AICC headquarters in Delhi, the Maharashtra Congress said that "the countdown has begun" for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, here on Wednesday.

State Congress President Nana Patole said that the so-called probe against Rahul is being carried out "at the behest of the Central government", and the Congress is not scared of such repressive tactics.

"The action is clearly out of vendetta for the political demise of the Gandhi family. Now, the Delhi Police in tandem with the BJP has carried out atrocities on Congress leaders, MPs and office-bearers in Delhi," said Patole.

He said the Congress which had successfully fought to oust the British Empire and secured Independence for the country, and "now the BJP's countdown has started," while addressing mediapersons.

Terming the situation in the country "very grim", Patole said the BJP has unleashed attacks on Congress Chief Ministers, Ministers and MPs who had

gone to New Delhi for taking part in the 'satyagraha', and many were assaulted.

"The present government at the Centre is worse than the British rulers, but we are not afraid as the Congress had succeeded in forcing the powerful Britishers to leave the country," Patole thundered.

The Congress chief pointed out how, regardless of the threats to his life, Rahul Gandhi has been relentlessly raising burning questions concerning the masses to the Centre.

"But the Centre has no replies to the issues raised by Rahul Gandhi and hence the government is resorting to such actions to muzzle his voice... but the party will not keep quiet," affirmed Patole. Intensifying protests against the Centre, the Maharashtra Congress will hold an agitation outside Raj Bhavan here on Thursday, and in all districts on Friday to highlight the repressive tactics of the BJP regime, said PWD Minister Ashok Chavan, who was present along with other senior leaders.

"The state of the country is currently worse than even the Emergency, the Centre has crossed all limits and barged inside the Congress headquarters, beat up Congress leaders and even mediapersons, prohibitory orders have been imposed. We call upon the courts to take cognisance how Section

144 can be applied in any office," demanded Chavan.

Congress Legislature Party Leader and Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat said that the series of recent actions prove that the BJP government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "scared of Rahul Gandhi" as he has voicing the nation's concerns on the economy, unemployment, inflation and the anti-people policies of the Centre.

"We are firmly behind Rahul Gandhi and under his leadership, the party shall fight this tyranny of the BJP," said Thorat.

Other top leaders present were School Education Minister Prof. Varsha Gaikwad, Medical Education Minister Amit Deshmukh, Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Vijay Vadettiwar, State Working Presidents Chandrakant Handore, Naseem Khan, General Secretary Devanand Pawar, Women Congress State President Sandhya Savvalakhe, State General Secretary Devanand Pawar, etc.

Later, all the Congress leaders joined by hundreds of other activists, staged a noisy demonstration near the Regal Cinema to protest the interrogation of ED by Rahul Gandhi and the Delhi Police action at the AICC headquarters and the excesses of the BJP government.

Aaditya Thackeray feels 'spiritually enhanced' after darshan of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya

Lucknow/Mumbai | Agencies

Maharashtra Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray on Wednesday took a solemn 'darshan' of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya as part of his visit to the holy town.

Sporting a sparkling saffron 'kurta' and an auspicious yellow shawl with Hindu verses printed on it, Thackeray Jr. knelt on the floor at the Ram Lalla site and offered prayers there.

He was accompanied by Shiv Sena MP and chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut and PWD Minister Eknath Shinde, several other party leaders and office-bearers from Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

Later, in a media interaction, Aaditya Thackeray termed his experiences at the different venues in Ayodhya including Hanuman Temple darshan, as 'divine and spiritually exhilarating'.

"With a large number of devotees coming here from Maharashtra, we are making efforts to construct a 'Maharashtra Sadan' here for their lodging-boarding," said Aaditya Thackeray.

After the Ram Lalla darshan, Thackeray Jr. went and viewed the work on the upcoming grand Lord Ram Temple and then was offered a 'mahaprashad' by various priests and holy men.

On Wednesday evening, he is scheduled to perform the 'Saryu Aarti' as the final engagement of his day-long Ayodhya visit.

Earlier on Wednesday, a large num-



ber of Shiva Sainiks accorded a warm and enthusiastic welcome to Thackeray Jr, many carrying the party flags or banners and raising full-throated cries of 'Jai Shri Ram', to which he reciprocated.

"Ayodhya is a place of faith for all... it's linked to Lord Ram. I have come here several times in the past few years in 2018, and 2019. I am looking forward to my visit. My current visit is only for seeking darshan and blessings of Ram Lalla, there is no politics behind it," said Aditya, the son of Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

Hundreds of Sena activists from Maharashtra and also Uttar Pradesh are accompanying Thackeray Jr. who left Lucknow and reached Ayodhya on Wednesday afternoon with a long

motorcade, in the high-profile and keenly watched the visit.

The trip followed a preparatory tour by Raut, Minister Shinde and others here on June 6, besides coordinating with the Uttar Pradesh Shiv Sena leaders. Raut, who had camped here since Tuesday, reiterated that the Sena has a long association with Ayodhya, since the struggle for the temple started and even later. "We have immense faith in Lord Ram and our leaders or workers regularly come here. Praying at the Ram Lalla temple fills us with a divine energy," said Raut.

Earlier, Uddhav Thackeray had come to Ayodhya when he was not holding any office, and later paid a visit after becoming the Chief Minister.

3 boys drown, 1 rescued at Juhu Beach

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The maximum city recorded its first monsoon tragedy when three young boys drowned at the famed Juhu Beach and one was rescued by the Mumbai Fire Brigade, the BMC Disaster Control said here on Wednesday.

The incident happened around 5 p.m. on Tuesday when the four friends had gone to frolic in the Arabian Sea waters, behind the J.W. Marriott Hotel on Juhu Beach.

They were reportedly swept away by strong waves or caught in the underwater

currents in the choppy sea, and locals raised an alarm, according to eyewitnesses.

They informed the police and fire brigade which rushed there and later, along with Indian Coast Guard, Indian Navy divers, launched a massive search and rescue operation for the missing boys. Late on Tuesday night, the rescuers managed to save one of the boys - Abhishek Sharma, 18, who was unharmed.

Continuing the search, early on Wednesday (June 15), the rescuers fished out the bodies of Kaustubh Gupta, 18, Prathamesh Gupta, 16 and Manohar

Singh, 20, from the Arabian Sea, said the BMC.

Their bodies have been sent for autopsies and also informed their families -- all were residents of Chembur-Vashi Naka area in north-east Mumbai.

Meanwhile, to prepare for any such eventualities as monsoon improves over the city, the Mumbai Fire Brigade and BMC will deploy its own and private life-guards on all beaches and install warning signs at dangerous spots on the western sea-front, besides keeping ready surfboards, rescue boats and jet-skis for emergencies.

AMID RISING COVID CASES, KIDS BACK IN SCHOOL AFTER SUMMER BREAK

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid rising Covid-19 cases in Maharashtra, children across the state returned to schools on Wednesday, with great excitement and a bit of trepidation.

"I have asked my daughter to wear a face mask at all times and use sanitiser whenever possible. The school has assured us that it will take care of precautions but it is important that children also act responsibly," said Madhuri Gadwe, after dropping her child off at Suvvidya School in Borivali.

In Mumbai, in several schools, teachers greeted parents at the gates as they came to drop their wards. While in some schools, flowers were given to children, in others, activities were held to celebrate the students' return to school after a long summer break.

"As we get back to school, let us continue to learn with fun but also



take care to be safe. Here's wishing all of you a great academic year ahead," Maharashtra School Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad tweeted on Wednesday. Last week, the Maharashtra education department had issued guidelines asking schools to ensure that teaching and non-

teaching staff were fully vaccinated, including the precaution dose, and to encourage vaccination among children above 12 years of age. There is no face mask mandate yet. "The excitement among students was expected as this is full-fledged reopening of schools after two-years

of school closure due to the pandemic. Even though schools opened earlier, there were several restrictions and many children whose parents had migrated were still away from the city. Now, all are back to school," said Jitendra Mahajan, a teacher and house master at Hansraj Morarji Public School in Andheri.

While teachers are hoping that the excitement and morale continues to remain high, many expressed the fear that it would be difficult to ensure any form of social distancing on campus. "There are no pandemic-related restrictions this time. Earlier, the education minister had shared that there will be a new set of SOPs (standard operating procedures) issued for schools. But there is no announcement yet. Some parents were already worried on day one that school started amid the rising number of Covid cases," a teacher said, requesting anonymity.

MBBS grads can no longer skip rural service by paying fine

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The rural service bond after MBBS degree will no longer have the penalty escape-route. All students taking admission to government medical colleges or on government reservation seats in private colleges will have to mandatorily complete their one-year rural service bond, which they could skip until now by paying the fine.

Maharashtra's Medical Education department issued a Government Resolution (GR) on Tuesday stating that this decision will be applicable for all those taking admission to MBBS from the academic year 2022-23. This rural service bond, also called the 'social responsibility service', will be in addition to the existing 12-month compulsory internship for all MBBS students which is in hospitals attached to their respective medical colleges. However, after this, dif-



ferent hospitals or health centres from rural areas will be allotted MBBS students for whom mandatory rural service will be applicable.

MBBS students at government and civic run medical colleges have to sign a bond to serve in rural areas of Maharashtra for a year, after obtain-

ing the degree. Students failing to do so have to pay a fine which was Rs 5lakh from academic year 2004-05 to 2007-08 but increased to Rs 10 lakh thereafter. "The provision of completing MBBS education from government and civic-run institutes, without completing the social responsibility

service by paying a penalty, is henceforth being cancelled," the GR states.

As explained in the GR, the government spends a considerable amount of money on students' education in government and civic-run medical colleges in comparison to which the fees charged at these institutes are very less. This expenditure comes from the tax collected from the public and the rural-service bond is a form of social responsibility for the medical students. "It has been observed that after completing MBBS several students skip the rural-service bond by paying the fine. However, at the background of Covid-19 pandemic exigency of additional medical force has come to the fore following which the state was mulling over making the rural-service bond mandatory," the GR further states, justifying the need to cancel the penalty clause from the mandatory rural service.

STEEP RISE IN DAILY COVID CASES IN MAHARASHTRA; 4 MORE PATIENTS OF BA.5 VARIANT FOUND

Maharashtra reported over 4,000 Covid cases on June 15, 2022

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the COVID surge continues in Maharashtra, the state recorded 4,024 fresh coronavirus cases on Wednesday. According to the latest report of BJ Medical College, Pune, four patients were found to be infected with BA.5 variant in the state.

These patients are residents of Mumbai, Thane, Navi Mumbai and Pune. All these patients are women in the age group of 19 to 36 years. Whole Genome Sequencing of three patients have been done at the National Institute of Virology, Pune and one at BJ Medical College, Pune.

Two more Covid patients succumbed in the last 24

hours, the health bulletin stated. The Covid Case fatality rate in Maharashtra is 1.86 per cent. According to the bulletin, 3028 patients were discharged today taking the total recoveries to 77,52,304. The recovery rate currently stands at 97.89 per cent. Out of 8,14,28,221 laboratory samples 79,19,442 have been tested positive (09.73 per cent) for COVID-19 until June 15. According to the Union health ministry, India's active caseload currently stands at 53,637 and the active cases now constitute 0.12 per cent of the country's total positive cases. The country's recovery rate stands at 98.66 per cent. 5,718 patients have recovered in the last 24 hours and the cumulative tally of

recovered patients (since the beginning of the pandemic) is now at 4,26,67,088, the Union health ministry bulletin released at 8 am on July 15 said. Weekly positivity rate in the country currently stands at 2.35 per cent and the daily positivity rate is reported to be 2.00 per cent. More than 193.53 crore (1,93,53,58,865) vaccine doses have been provided to States/UTs so far through Govt. of India (free of cost channel) and through direct state procurement category, while over 13.40 crore (13,40,04,935) balance and unutilised COVID vaccine doses are still available with the states/UTs to be administered, the health ministry informed.

Kanjurmarg land:

RELIEF FOR MAHARASHTRA AS HC QUASHES CONSENT DECREE OBTAINED BY ADARSH WATER PARKS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court Wednesday granted relief to Maharashtra government, which has said the private firm Adarsh Water Parks and Resorts Private Limited had fraudulently obtained consent order in October 2020 claiming development rights over 6,000 acres of land in Kanjurmarg, including 102-acre land for Metro car shed. The bench quashed and set aside the consent decree obtained by the firm from another HC bench on October 28, 2020.

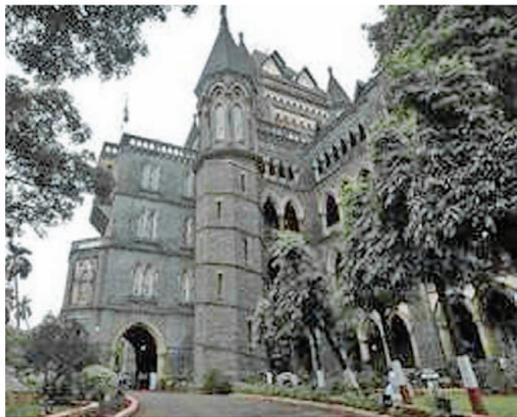
"The consent decree is the product of fraud," a single-judge bench of Justice Anil K Menon held in his order. Justice Menon, however, clarified that it has not ascertained claims by the Centre, state, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and other parties, and each of them has the right to adopt appropriate proceedings for their claims.

"This is getting murkier and murkier... The court (in October, 2020) was deprived of the benefit of any further enquiry except statements made by advocates appearing for the parties. Given obvious difficulties of virtual hearing during the pandemic, the court accepted that the matter was settled between them. There was a larger responsibility cast on advocates to disclose all facts," the bench held.

"The court was not apprised of facts. Suppression of all these facts has led the court to pass a decree. Thus, undeniably a fraud was made by virtue of consent terms. In these circumstances, I am not in position to accept submissions by

the respondents that this court is powerless. Consent decree is a product of fraud. There is more than meets the eye. I have no doubt in mind that fraud was played on the court itself," it added.

The judge went on to note, "The opposition to the plea by the private firm was merely that there was no fraud. I must disagree. The manner in which the facts were suppressed and the fact that the ex-directors of the firm signed consent terms, it smacks of suppression of true facts and no attempt was made to make the government party to the case." The state government, in its interim application filed in March this year, had claimed that over 1,800 acres of the disputed land belonged to it and the private firm did not have



The judge, while disposing of the suit, had noted that the parties in the case had reached a settlement and accepted the consent terms.

After it came to know about the consent decree, the state government, through advocate Himanshu Takke, in March

this year filed an interim application in suit against Adarsh Water Parks, challenging the acceptance of consent terms pertaining to land parcels belonging to it.

The state had claimed that over 1,800 acres of the disputed land belonged to it and Adarsh Water Parks did not have any right to it. The BMC, in a recent affidavit filed in support of the state's plea, has stated that it has in its possession certain land parcels in Kanjurmarg, including 118.41 hectares for Kanjurmarg dumping ground for solid waste, and the Adarsh Water Parks cannot stake claim over it.

The Union Government's salt commissioner and defence estates office had filed affidavits before the HC claiming their ownership over 1,600 and 220 acre in Kanjurmarg, respectively, including the 102 acre designated by the Maharashtra government for a Metro car shed.

The Shiv Sena-led Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, soon after coming to power in 2019, had scrapped the proposed Metro car shed at Aarey and sought the 102-acre of salt pan land in Kanjurmarg to build the shed and an interchange station for three metro lines.

In a setback to the state government on December 16, 2020, the High Court, while hearing the central government's plea through its salt commissioner laying claim to the land, stayed the order of the collector which transferred 102-acre plot of Kanjurmarg salt pan land to the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA). The stay was extended from time to time.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Rajya Sabha has lost its meaning!

When the Constitution of independent India was being drafted, the founding fathers of modern India as a Republic were of the firm opinion that a body like the Rajya Sabha or the house of elders was an important requirement for the smooth functioning of Indian democracy. Instead of being directly elected like Lok Sabha MPs, Rajya Sabha members were to be elected by MLAs and MLCs with voting powers in state legislatures. The logic was that many luminaries who were not meant for the rough and tumble of direct electoral politics could benefit the nation as Rajya Sabha members with their wisdom and experience. It did work out well in the early decades of the Republic. However, it has been observed for a long time that Rajya Sabha candidates were being selected not on merit but because of loyalties to a party or its leaders. Worse, many money bags and new rich with no interest in policies somehow managed to get into the Rajya Sabha. Even worse, Rajya Sabha elections have become like a free for all circus where legislators face allegations of bribery and corruption to secure their vote. This has been witnessed time and again, including the latest round of elections to the Rajya Sabha. CVoter conducted a nationwide survey to find out what ordinary Indians thought of the functioning of the Rajya Sabha and its utility for Indian democracy. Overall, two out of every three respondents were of the opinion that the Rajya Sabha has lost its meaning and should be disbanded. In what appears to be initially surprising, 69 per cent of opposition supporters were of the opinion that the Rajya Sabha should be disbanded, while 63 per cent of NDA supporters shared the same sentiment.

Amjad Ayub Mirza

Curfew has been imposed and the Army has been called in to conduct a flag march in Bhaderwah town of Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district over attempts by some elements to create communal tension,' reported a local news outlet on June 9, 2022.

The same day the same news agency reported that a record number of tourists had visited Kashmir in recent months. To be exact a total of 8 million tourists have come to Kashmir since January 2022 breaking a 20-year record! This is more than 50,000 tourists a day.

No wonder they are calling it the 'golden period of tourism' in Kashmir.

Now consider this. Indian Border Security Force fired upon a suspected Pakistani drone flying at an altitude of about 300 meters along the International Border in Jammu district in the early hours of Thursday.

In recent days' Pakistani terror outfits have been trying hard to smuggle weapons, ammunition and explosives through drones. Several Kashmiri Pandits and nationalist Muslims and an artist have been targeted and killed by jihadi individuals sponsored by outfits such as the LeT.

The Amranath Yatra is about to begin and will last for two months. The valley is enjoying peace and quiet. Pakistan has failed to instigate an uprising or even any significant protest on communal basis in Kashmir since 2019. Then, we have the Nupur Sharma scandal that was engineered by a guy called Zubair. 10 days after the actual debate that took place on an Indian English TV channel the Muslim clergy and religious demagogues began trolling her on social media and an allegedly pre-planned riot was let loose in

DEAL WITH RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE WITH AN IRON FIST



Kanpur. Pakistan calls in the Indian ambassador in Islamabad and registers a protest on the comments about Prophet Muhammed made by BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma. Three Muslim countries with close ties to Pakistan issue statements in condemnation of the so-called blasphemous comments made by Sharma. And all hell breaks out in Kashmir resulting in a curfew in Kashmir.

Ever since the abrogation of the Article 370 and 35A on August 5, 2019, Pakistan and its 'political ambassadors' in Kashmir have predicted a blood bath that never took place. The people of Kashmir have enjoyed freedom to go around their daily business without the fear of stone pelting or getting caught up in cross fire between the terrorists and the security forces.

A frustrated Pakistani military establishment had negotiated a

ceasefire with India at the Line of Control (LoC) on February 25, 2021. Now, we know that it was done to relieve the Pakistan Army of extra engagement at the LoC to concentrate on Afghanistan. After all the Doha negotiations that took place in December 2020 were a maneuver on Pakistan's part to bring the Taliban back into power. Hence, attaining peace was not the motive behind the Doha talks.

On August 15, the Taliban entered Kabul and since then 10,000 terrorist jihadist have been transported from the battle fronts in Afghanistan to Pakistani occupied Jammu Kashmir. Three months ago in Rawalakot in PoJK in a press conference Freedom Brigade 313 was launched with a target of recruiting another 10,000 jihadists to fight alongside the Pakistan Army in Kashmir.

Launch pads were reactivated in

Titrinote, Neelum and Muzaffarabad in the PoJK. And then came the spring offensive. Regular attempts of infiltration into Kashmir were revived and so was the strategy to use transport drones to smuggle weapons, ammunition and sticky bombs as well as narcotics. This was followed by the target killings of Kashmiri Pandits and Nationalist Muslims.

Now, comments made by Nupur Sharma during a TV debate with a Muslim cleric is being systematically exploited to generate communal violence in Kashmir and in India. The strategy to execute the genocide of the Hindus is not new to us as it goes back at least 8 centuries when the Arabs invaded Sindh and killed the Hindu Raja Dahir.

In 1947 in Jammu and Kashmir districts of

Muzaffarabad, Baramulla, Poonch and Mirpur around 100,000 Hindu and Sikh natives were killed. In 1990 the Kashmiri Pandits faced another spell of genocide and exodus.

From Afghanistan to Bangladesh persecution of the Hindu is common knowledge. In India in 11 out of 28 states and Union Territories the Hindu is in minority. The onslaught of Jihad in the name of Ghazwa-e-Hind has to be brought to a halt. Terror is being generated in order to instill fear in the Hindu population. This should not be tolerated any longer. And the way to achieve this is to deal with religious intolerance with an iron fist.

(Dr Amjad Ayub Mirza is an author and a human rights activist from Mirpur in PoJK. He currently lives in exile in the UK.)

international

GERMANY'S DAILY COVID INFECTIONS TOP 100,000 AGAIN

Berlin | Agencies

Germany recorded more than 1,00,000 new Covid-19 infections within one day for the first time since April, media reported.

Germany's national seven-day rate per 100,000 inhabitants more than doubled during the last week to around 447, the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) for infectious diseases said on Tuesday. In March, the incidence peaked at around 1,700 as a result of the Omicron wave. "A summer wave was to be expected," said Minister of Health Karl Lauterbach on Twitter.

"Voluntary wearing of masks indoors and a fourth vaccination are the best antidotes."

Most Covid restrictions in



Germany have been relaxed. It is one of the last countries in the European Union to drop restrictions for entering from an EU member state

for the summer months, Xinhua news agency reported. This comes at a time when the two more contagious Omicron subvariants

BA.5 and BA.4 are on the rise. Within a week, the share of BA.5 in Germany doubled to 10 per cent, according to the RKI's latest weekly report.

"In all likelihood, these two sublines will spread more widely, so that there may also be an overall increase in the number of infections and a renewed increase in infection pressure on vulnerable groups of people as early as summer," the RKI warned.

Lauterbach is planning for a renewed Covid-19 vaccination campaign in preparation for "all eventualities" in the fall. The country is to spend 830 million euros (867.5 million US dollars) in the procurement of a new COVID-19 vaccine that protects against different variants of the virus.

5,48,000 PEOPLE AFFECTED BY HEAVY RAIN IN CHINA'S JIANGXI



Beijing: Heavy rain since Sunday affected a total of 548,000 people in east China's Jiangxi province, the provincial flood control headquarters said.

From Sunday to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, the heavy rain also forced the relocation of 113,000 people, said the headquarters, adding the downpour caused a direct economic loss of about 500 million yuan (74.4 million US dollars), Xinhua news agency reported. Although the rain came to an end on Wednesday, local meteorological department said further rainstorms are expected to hit parts of the province next week.

Spain bakes in worst June heatwave in 20 years

Madrid | Agencies

Spain is currently in the middle of the worst June heatwave in the last 20 years, with all but two of the country's 17 Autonomous Communities on alert for extremely high temperatures.

Parts of southern Spain, such as the regions of Andalusia and Extremadura, are experiencing temperatures of over 40 degrees centigrade, with Cordoba registering temperatures of 43 centigrade and 41 degrees registered in Badajoz, Xinhua news agency reported.

In the capital Madrid, thermometers reached well over 35 degrees, with conditions expected to remain until the start of the weekend.

"It is not normal to have such an extreme heatwave at this time of the year," said Ruben del Campo, the spokesperson for the Spanish



Meteorological Agency (AEMET). "It is the most intense heatwave in mid-June in the last 20 years," he added, with AEMET warning against the "extreme" risk of wildfires caused by temperatures 7-12 degrees above average for the time of year.

The "early, record-breaking heatwave, coming on top of another heatwave less than

a month ago is extraordinarily worrying," Minister for Ecological Transition Teresa Ribera said after the cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

Parts of Spain have registered the highest temperatures since the start of the century and one of the driest winters on record, which has left Spain's reservoirs at worrying low levels.

Guterres calls for end to violence stemming from religious differences in India



United Nations | Agencies

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has reiterated his call to stop any violence stemming from religious differences in India.

His Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Tuesday that Guterres "is for the full respect of religion, for calling against any sort of hate speech or incitement and, of course, a halt to any sort of violence, especially one based on perceived religious differences and hatred."

He was replying to a journalist's question at his daily briefing on "the high tension" in India following the controversial statements about the Muslim Prophet Mohammed by two former BJP officials.

Nupur Sharma, who was a BJP spokesperson, has been suspended by the party's leadership, and the party's Delhi unit media head Naveen Jindal has been expelled. Police in several cities have registered cases against Sharma charging her with "hurting religious sentiments".

Ukraine crisis threatens 2023 grain harvest, says top FAO economist

Rome | Agencies

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has affected access to food on a global level and could deal a blow to the crop harvest in 2023, which is a "major concern" of the Rome-based United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the agency's chief economist has said.

Maximo Torero told Xinhua in a recent online interview that this year, global access to food is hampered by the rocketing prices.

"In March, we had the biggest peak in the FAO's food price index," he said, adding that although the monthly index declined slightly in April and May, cereal prices continue to increase. The main reason behind the price increase, Torero said, is that Russia and



Ukraine are key exporters of cereals, including maize and wheat. The FAO said that the two countries produced around 30 percent of the global wheat supply in 2021, Xinhua news agency reported. As a result of the surge in prices, "consumers and espe-

cially vulnerable countries are facing significant challenges to be able to procure the amount of food that they need today," he said. Access to fertilisers is another major concern, and this is especially true for the 2022-2023 season, Torero said. Russia is the

world's top exporter of nitrogenous fertilizers, the second leading supplier of potassium fertilizers, and the third of phosphorous fertilizers. Now "fertilizers are not flowing at the velocity they are supposed to flow," he said.

Two policemen killed after fire exchange with suspect in Los Angeles



Los Angeles | Agencies

Two police officers were shot to death while investigating a possible stabbing case in El Monte, a city in Los Angeles County, and the suspect died at the scene.

The two officers from the El Monte Police Department were immediately fired upon when they arrived at the Siesta Inn in El Monte, east of Los Angeles, around local time 4:45 p.m. (2345 GMT), said Ben Lowry, El Monte Interim police chief, on Tuesday evening, Xinhua

news agency reported.

The two officers, a 22-year veteran and a rookie with less than a year in office, were not identified. They confronted the suspect, and there were two exchanges of gunfire, one inside a motel room and a second in the motel parking lot, according to Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Homicide Bureau.

The killings came just one day after a California Highway Patrol officer was shot and critically wounded during a traffic stop in the Studio City area of Los Angeles.



OVER 50 NURSES IN BHOPAL ACCUSE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Over 50 nurses at the state-run Hamidia Hospital in Bhopal have accused its medical superintendent of sexual harassment.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Over 50 nurses at the state-run Hamidia Hospital in Bhopal have accused its medical superintendent of sexual harassment.

The nurses wrote to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan accusing medical superintendent Deepak Maravi of indecent behaviour, especially during the night shifts, and demanded action in the matter.

Taking note of the allegations levelled by the nurses of the biggest state-run hospital in Madhya Pradesh, the government has ordered an inquiry into the matter.

State Medical Education Minister Vishvas Sarang confirmed with mediapersons that a complaint has



been received against Deepak Maravi following which a probe has been ordered.

"The probe will be conducted by divisional commissioner Gulshan

Bamra," Sarang said.

Meanwhile, the Madhya Pradesh Human Rights Commission (MPHRC) has served a notice to the Commissioner (Health) of the state

government seeking a reply within 10 days.

The opposition has also raised this issue and demanded an inquiry into the matter.

State Congress chief and former Chief Minister Kamal Nath said, "An incident of indecent behaviour with 50 nurses in Bhopal's prestigious Hamidia Hospital has come to light. This is a very serious matter related to the safety of women at the workplace."

Citing the recent incident in Bhopal wherein the face of a woman was slashed for standing up to eve-teasers, Kamal Nath said, "Madhya Pradesh tops the country when it comes to crimes against women and minor girls. Even little girls are not safe. Is it good governance? Is this good law and order?"



Governor Shri Patel unveils the statue of Indias Iron Man

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel unveiled the statue of India's first Home Minister Sardar Vallabh bhai Patel at the state installed in Sandipani Auditorium and paid floral tributes. He inaugurated the newly built self-propelled fountain installed in front of the auditorium by pressing

DP Ahuja, Raj Bhavan Secretariat, Public Works Department officers were present. Patel respectfully reminisced Iron Man Sardar Vallabh bhai Patel at the state installed in Sandipani Auditorium and paid floral tributes. He inaugurated the newly built self-propelled fountain installed in front of the auditorium by pressing

the button. The Governor reviewed the work done to give a multipurpose look to the Sandipani auditorium and the newly established art gallery in the corridor and gave necessary directives for their upkeep. He also observed the upgradation works of the auditorium, e-library and seminar room in Sandipani auditorium.

VIDEO SHOWS 2-YR-OLD THRASHED BY NANNY IN

In a shocking incident, a nanny was found torturing and physically assaulting a two-year-old child in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur. A chilling video of the incident surfaced on social media, showing the hired caretaker assaulting the toddler.



under Section 307 (attempt to murder) of the IPC.

As per the police, the child's father is an engineer with the state Electricity Department and his mother is a district court employee. The working parents had employed a woman to take care their child in their absence but they found that the child was getting weak day by day and even tortured. They came to know about it after they installed a CCTV camera in their house.

A senior police official said that the engineer lives with his wife, mother, father, and a mentally ill sister. "The mother takes care of the father and the sister. Rajni was hired to take care of the child. But a

few weeks ago, the boy fell ill. The doctor said there was an infection in the intestine and the boy is weak."

The couple sacked the caretaker but she allegedly started blackmailing them saying that she will implicate them in a false case. She later returned to look after the child but the couple had installed cameras. She was seen beating the child, pushing him, and eating his food in the CCTV footage.

Later the family filed a police complaint against the woman on the basis of the CCTV footage. Police said the woman was arrested and was produced before a local court on Tuesday and sent to judicial custody.

APPLICATIONS INVITED FOR ALLOCATION AND AMENDMENT OF GPF

Bhopal: Office of the Principal Accountant General - Accounts and Entitlements Gwalior has requested such government officers-employees of prior to January 1, 2005 to apply who have not been allotted General Provident Fund Account Number.

Such officers-employees can send the application for allotment of account number and correction in the account after getting it verified from their department and send it to the office's WhatsApp number 8827409410 with complete details.

Details related to their General Provident Fund can be obtained by the government officer-employee by registering login on the office's website <https://www.smswebservice-madhyapradesh2.cag.gov.in>.

CM EXPRESSES GRIEF

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has condoled the death of two students and a teacher who drowned in Narmada river while taking selfie at New Bhedaghat in Jabalpur.

Chouhan has prayed to God to grant peace to the departed souls and strength to the bereaved family members to bear this loss.

Now, Uma Bharti throws cow dung at liquor shop in MP

Continuing her agitation against the liquor shops in Madhya Pradesh, former Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Uma Bharti threw cow dung at a liquor shop in Orchha town in Niwari district.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Continuing her agitation against the liquor shops in Madhya Pradesh, former Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Uma Bharti threw cow dung at a liquor shop in Orchha town in Niwari district.

Bharti has been demanding total prohibition in the state for quite some time. Earlier, she threw stones at a liquor shop in Bhopal and recently she also sat in protest in front of a liquor shop in the state capital. However, this is the first time she has expressed her anger outside Bhopal.

Bharti had earlier warned that

she will take her agitation against liquor and use of drugs across the state. Bharti in a tweet claimed the shop was not approved for the spot where it was located, and that it was a crime to open such an outlet in the holy town of Orchha.

However, police maintained that the liquor shop was located at the place where it was sanctioned. A video surfaced on social media which showed Bharti throwing cow dung at the liquor shop on Tuesday evening in Orchha.

She was furious to see a liquor shop in the religious town which is famous for the Ram Raja temple, located 330 km from the state capital Bhopal. In the video clip, Bharti was heard telling the per-

son shooting the video, "See, I have thrown the cow dung and not pelted stones," she said.

In a series of tweets on Tuesday night, Bharti said, "The shop, located at the main entrance of Orchha, is not approved for its current location, but for a distant village. The people and our organisation members staged protests against it continuously."

In another tweet, she said people submitted memorandums to the government and repeatedly appealed to the administration to remove this shop.

"By all means, the people's reaction against this shop cannot be termed a crime, because opening a shop here (at a religious place) is a bigger crime," she said. Bharti said she got information that this shop remained open even when five lakh lamps were lit on Ram Navami (in April this year) under the 'Deepotsav' programme organised in Orchha, which she said is considered as holy as Ayodhya. "That's why I have sprinkled some cow dung from a holy cowshed on the liquor store," she said.

WORLD AIR DAY CONTINUOUS MONITORING OF AMBIENT AIR IS BEING DONE IN STATE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Instruments for continuous monitoring of ambient air have been installed by Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board at 10 places- Indore, Bhopal, Jabalpur, Gwalior, Katni, Pithampur, Mandideep, Singrauli, Ujjain and Dewas. The ambient air quality results obtained continuously have also been linked to the portal of the Board. Measurement of fixed pollutants is done by Continuous Ambient Air Quality Measurement instruments (CAAQMS). This helps in controlling pollution by doing remedial work as required in time.

Arrangements have been made to uniformly bring the continuous monitoring data of the Central Server software industries prepared by the Board on the central platform. With this, real time data of all industries can be analysed. Along with this, information can also be obtained about the industries not following the prescribed criteria, nature and trend of data, reliability of data etc. This convenient resource has been made available to all the field officers of the Board, unit heads and concerned officers-employees to monitor the industries in their area. The App- EnvAlert has been upgraded by the Environment Monitoring Centre for providing information to the general public and continuous information about the quality of the ambient air. Through the app, the general public can view the results of CAAQMS established in various locations as well as industries. Common people can use this environment app for any kind of complaint related to environment.

SP's MP unit expels its lone MLA for joining BJP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Hours after the lone Samajwadi Party (SP) MLA in Madhya Pradesh, Rajesh Shukla, joined the BJP on Tuesday, the SP's state leadership expelled him from the party's primary membership.

The Madhya Pradesh unit of SP said that it will also appeal to the state Assembly to terminate Shukla's membership. The state leadership also said that it will discuss the issue with SP's national President Akhilesh Yadav.

SP's Madhya Pradesh unit chief Ramayan Patel, while responding to Shukla jumping the ship to BJP, accused the BJP of using money power to lure MLAs from opposition camps into its fold. "Rajesh Shukla has been expelled from SP's primary membership for indulging in



anti-party activities and joining hands with the BJP. We will also take action against him after discussing the matter with our top leadership," Patel said.

Earlier on Tuesday, Shukla along with a Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLA and an Independent legislator joined the BJP in Bhopal in the presence of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

Shukla was elected from the Bijawar Assembly constituency in Chhatrapur district. With his switch to the

safron party, SP no longer has any legislator in the 230-member Madhya Pradesh Assembly. The two other legislators who joined the safron camp on Tuesday are Sanjeev Kushwaha (BSP) from Bhind and Rana Vikram Singh, an Independent MLA from Susner. The trio joining the BJP becomes significant as the move came just a month ahead of the Presidential elections scheduled on July 18. The BJP presently has 127 legislators in the state Assembly.

Shivraj Chouhan Can Announce Bridge Even On Non-Existent River: Kamal Nath

Congress's Kamal Nath called Shivraj Singh Chouhan "master of announcements" and said no one can compete with him on this front.

Team Absolute | Indore

In a dig, Congress leader Kamal Nath on Wednesday dubbed Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan a "master of announcements" who can even promise the construction of a bridge on a non-existing river.

Addressing a rally for the upcoming Madhya Pradesh local body elections in Indore, the MP Congress president claimed Mr Chouhan had made 20,000 announcements in the last 18 years.

"Shivraj Singh Chouhan is a master of announcements. No one can compete with him on this front. He can even announce to construct

a bridge at a place where no river exists," Mr Nath said. The former chief minister alleged that corruption has become a part of the (administrative) system in Madhya Pradesh which has become a roadblock in attracting industrial investments.

Corruption also leads to the rise in unemployment in the state, he said.

"Investment comes only when investors have faith in the government system. It will not come by visiting a temple or a mosque nor will it (such visit) create new employment opportunities," Nath said.

He appealed to voters not to get swayed by the ruling BJP and instead support the "truth" for their better future.

Altogether, the elections to 347 municipal bodies in MP will be held in two phases.

The first phase of polling for 133 local bodies will be held on July 6. 214 municipalities will go to the polls on July 13.

Nath was addressing a rally organised by Congress' mayoral candidate for Indore and local MLA Sanjay Shukla.

Shukla will square off with ruling BJP's nominee Pushyamitra Bhargava, who has resigned as the Additional Advocate General of Madhya Pradesh, in the Mayoral contest for Indore.

This is the maiden election of Mr Bhargava who has been associated with the RSS and Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP).

One member of district panchayat, 157 members of Janpad and 636 sarpanch elected unopposed

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the withdrawal of nominations in the three-tier panchayat elections, one of Zila Panchayat, 157 members of Janpad Panchayat and Sarpanch of 636 panchayats have been elected unopposed. Shri Hira Singh has been elected unopposed from Ward No. 4 of District Panchayat Sagar.

Two members in Karahal Janpad Panchayat, 4 in Morena, one in Ambah, 2 in Jaora, one in Pahargarh, one in Bhind, one in Lahar, two in Mihona, one in Murar, one in Bhandar, one in Shivpuri, one in Karera, two in Bamori, 3 in Chachoda, one in Raghoghar, one in Aron, one in Ashoknagar, one in Ishagarh, 5 in Sagar, 2 in Rahatgarh, one in Jaisinagar, 2 in Rehli, 7 in Deori, 2 in Banda, one in Shahgarh, 4 in Khurai, one in Malthon, one in Lavkushnagar, one in Patharia, one in Patera, one in Pawai, one in Jaithari, one in Pali, one in Dhimarkheda,

one in Rithi, one in Vijayraghavgarh, one in Sihora one in Patan, two in Shehpura, 4 in Mandla, one in Kirmapur, one in Katangi, one in Lalbarra, one in Seoni, one in Barghat, one in Lakhnadaun, one in Narsinghpur, 6 in Gotegeon, 5 in Kareli, 2 in Saikheda, one in Babai Chichli, one in Chanwarpatha, one in Chicholi, 3 in Ghora Dongri, one in Multai, one in Amla, one in Bhimpur, 6 in Harda, one in Narmadapuram, 4 in Makhnanagar, one in Bankhedi, one in Seoni Malwa, one in Sanchi, 3 in Silwani, 6 in Bari, 3 in Udaipur, one in Basoda, one in Kurwai, one in Phanda, 6 in Budhni, one in Nasrullaganj, one in Moman Barodia, one in Dewas, one in Bagli, one in Chegaon Makhnan, 3 in Pandhana, 3 in Khalwa, two in Goganwa, one in Pati, one in Thikri, one in Alirajpur, one in Rama, one in Dhar, one in Dharampuri, one in Nisarpur, two in Sanwer, one in Ujjain and one member in Niwari have been elected unopposed.

For the post of Sarpanch, 3 in Bhopal district, 2 in Sheopur, 8 in Morena, 7 in Bhind, 7 in Gwalior, 2 in Datia, 16 in Shivpuri, 10 in Guna, 9 in Ashoknagar, 46 in Sagar, one in Tikamgarh, 2 in Chhatrapur, 10 in Damoh, 7 in Panna, 2 in Satna, 4 in Rewa, 2 in Sidhi, 3 in Singrauli, 4 in Shahdol, one in Anuppur, 2 in Umaria, 5 in Katni, 34 in Jabalpur, 2 in Dindori, 16 in Balaghat, 35 in Seoni, 24 in Narsinghpur, 31 in Chhindwara, 10 in Betul, 35 in Harda, 54 in Narmadapuram, 37 in Raisen, 17 in Vidisha, 33 in Sehore, 11 in Rajgarh, 8 in Agar-Malwa, 7 in Shajapur, 19 in Dewas, 10 in Khandwa, 5 in Burhanpur, 12 in Khargone, 4 in Badwani, 5 in Alirapur, 2 in Jhabua, 20 in Dhar, 16 in Indore, 11 in Ujjain, 12 in Ratlam, 5 in Mandsaur and 8 in Neemuchhave elected unopposed.

It may be mentioned here that elections are being held for 875 Zila Panchayat members, 6771 Janpad Panchayat members,

There will be 4 colour ballot papers for Panchayat elections

Commissioner State Election Commission Basant Pratap Singh has informed that 4 colours are prescribed for the ballot papers of three tier Panchayat elections. There will be white ballot paper for the post of Panch, blue for Sarpanch, yellow for Janpad Panchayat member and pink colour for District Panchayat member. It is noteworthy that Panchayat Election-2022 will be conducted through ballot paper and ballot box. Panchayat elections will be held in 3 phases.

22921 posts of Sarpanch and 3 lakh 63 thousand 726 posts for Panch.

CM PLANTED MANGO SAPLING

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday planted a mango sapling in the residence premises as part of his resolve to plant saplings every day and offered Shramdaan.

Apart from being a delicious fruit, mango is also beneficial for health. Both raw and ripe mangoes have their own importance. Consumption of pana of raw mango i.e. Amiya or Carie protects the body from many diseases that are common during the summer season. Raw mango also protects against intestinal infections. Liver problems are also cured by its consumption. With the onset of summer, there is often a risk of luo or heat stroke. Raw mango is very effective in protecting from heatstroke. It also helps in fulfilling the deficiency of water in the body. It is necessary to have a strong immune system to combat bodily diseases. Raw mango is very beneficial for the immune system of our body. If we look from the spiritual point of view, mango leaf has a special significance in every worship and installation of the Kalash (vase), the naturally dried mango wood and leaves, when used for Havan-yagna rituals, prove to be very helpful in fulfilling the purpose.





Kim Kardashian faces flak for ruining iconic Marilyn Monroe outfit

Los Angeles | Agencies

Reality star Kim Kardashian is facing the heat of public ire as photos showing alleged damage to the iconic Marilyn Monroe dress that the former sported at the Met Gala on May 2 have gone viral on the Internet, reports 'Variety'. Kardashian struck a deal with 'Ripley's Believe It or Not' to wear the gold "Happy Birthday" dress, which has been valued at nearly \$5 million, to the star-studded fashion event. According to 'Variety', the decision was met with pushback, initially because of Kardashian's comments about losing weight for the event.

Professional conservators at the time also spoke out, saying it was ill-advised to wear any clothing item with so much history, no matter the reason or the person. "I'm frustrated because it sets back what is considered professional treatment for historic costume," one conservator told the 'L.A. Times'.

'Variety' further states that the new photos and videos of the dress were taken by creative director Chad Michael Christian Morrisette, who has a history of assisting in the archiving of the dress, at Ripley's Hollywood, where the dress is currently housed. Morrisette wrote on Instagram, "This dress is a piece of my life and my heart. To see what @kimkardashian did in the damaging of it is heartbreaking," adding the hashtags #national-treasure, #howdareyou, #ego, #greed and #thief.

The Marilyn Monroe Collection accompanied its posts about the dress with a number of quotes about the decision to let Kardashian wear it, including from Amanda Joiner, vice president of licensing and publishing at Ripley Entertainment.



'Top Gun: Maverick' is unstoppable, jets past \$400 million mark in US

Los Angeles | Agencies

The jet engines of Tom Cruise's charm and the nostalgia quotient seem to be working at full blast as Hollywood's recent release 'Top Gun: Maverick' has attained the Mach 10, soaring past \$400 million at the US domestic box office, making it the highest-grossing movie of the year in the US.

With \$401.8 million in North American ticket sales, Tom Cruise's patriotic blockbuster has surpassed 'Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness' (\$398 million) to claim the No. 1 spot.

According to 'Variety', it's only the second movie in pandemic times to cross \$400 million stateside, 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' being the first. While the film may have clear skies in June, heavy turbulence is expected for the Tom Cruise-starrer in July as 'Maverick' will have to fight off heavyweights like 'Thor: Love and Thunder' (July 8), 'Minions: The Rise of Gru' (July 1) to keep the domestic crown through 2022.

'Variety' further states that internationally, the sequel to 1986's 'Top Gun' has earned \$362 million, taking its global total to a massive \$783.8 million. Even by pre-COVID standards, 'Maverick' is smashing box office expectations. Since ticket sales have stayed strong in recent weeks, industry analysts believe the film will at least cross \$900 million by the end of its theatrical run and could even surpass the coveted \$1 billion mark.



box office expectations. Since ticket sales have stayed strong in recent weeks, industry analysts believe the film will at least cross \$900 million by the end of its theatrical run and could even surpass the coveted \$1 billion mark.

AMBER HEARD NOT AXED FROM 'AQUAMAN AND THE LOST KINGDOM'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Amber Heard has not been fired from her role as Mera in 'Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom', contrary to a report that had gone viral saying that the actress had been axed, says 'Variety'. A spokesperson for Heard said in a statement to 'Variety', "The rumour mill continues as it has from day one -- inaccurate, insensitive and slightly insane."

Heard previously played the key role of Mera in the first 'Aquaman', a 2018 superhero film based on a DC Comics character of the same name, as well as appearing in 'Justice League' and the reconfigured 'Zack Snyder's Justice League'. Heard's star power, to quote 'Variety', has been muddied in recent months as a result of a very public defamation trial, in which her ex-husband Johnny Depp sued her for a 2018 'Washington Post' column, which 'The Pirates of the Caribbean' said had implied that he was physically abusive to her. The verdict left Heard ordered to pay Depp \$10 million in compensatory damages and \$350,000 in punitive damages, given that the jury decided his reputation and career had been damaged as a result of the publication.



Bradley Cooper admits getting 'addicted to cocaine' in his 20s

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Bradley Cooper got candid about his past and revealed that he was addicted to cocaine in his 20s because he was "totally depressed". When appearing on Amazon Music and Wondery's 'Smartless' podcast, the 'A Star Is Born' actor-filmmaker said that he was "addicted to cocaine" in his 20s because he "was totally depressed", reports aceshowbiz.com.

When making the confession in the Monday, June 13 episode of the podcast, the 47-year-old told co-hosts Jason Bateman, Will Arnett and Sean Hayes that he felt "so lost" at that time, adding that he had severed his Achilles tendon and "got fired-slash-quit 'Alias'".

He said he didn't realise that he was destroying himself until Will reminded him of his behaviour.

Noting that he used to have "zero self-esteem," Cooper said he used "mean humour" to deflect from his own insecurities though it was "really hurting people's feelings." Bradley said he reached the turning point in July 2004 after Will told him he was being a "real a**hole" when they attending a party together. "That was the first time I ever realized I had a problem with drugs and alcohol," the ex-boyfriend of Irina Shayk shared, recalling Will confronting him about his actions.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Streaming giant Netflix has greenlit 'Squid Game: The Challenge', a reality competition series based on the hit 2021 South Korean drama. The news came from Bela Bajarra,

Netflix announces 'Squid Game: The Challenge' reality series with open casting call

Netflix's head of global TV, at the Banff World Media Festival on Tuesday, reports 'Variety'. According to Netflix, 'Squid Game: The Challenge' will be "the biggest reality competition series ever," hosting the largest cast and offering the largest lump sum cash prize in reality television history as 456 players compete for \$4.56 million.

According to 'Variety', contestants will go through a series of games inspired by the original show, plus new additions, which are all intended to test their strategies, alliances and character as others are eliminated around them. Recruitment for the series is currently open to English-language speakers from anywhere in the world. "Squid Game took the world by storm with Director Hwang's captivating story and iconic imagery. We're grateful for his support as we turn the fictional world into reality in this massive competition and social experiment," said Brandon Riegg, Netflix's vice president of unscripted and documentary Series.



BTS are going their separate ways on a 'temporary hiatus'



Seoul | Agencies

K-Pop sensations BTS broke down in tears as they revealed plans to pursue solo careers and "grow", but pledged to return "someday". Septet Jin, 29, Suga, 29, J-

Hope, 28, RM, 27, V, 26, Jimin, 26, and Jungkook, 24, broke the news to their armies of fans during their annual FESTA dinner which celebrated the hugely popular band's nine years together, reports femalefirst.co.uk. RM said it was time for them to work on

their own, adding: "I always thought

that BTS was different from other groups, but the problem with K-pop and the whole idol system is that they don't give you time to mature. "You have to keep producing music and keep doing something." J-Hope added: "I think we should spend some time apart to learn how to be one again. I hope you don't see this as a negative thing, and see it as a healthy plan. I think BTS will become stronger that way." Suga exclaimed: "It's not like we're disbanding!"

Jimin said: "We can't help but think of our fans no matter what, we want to be the kind of artists that are remembered by our fans."

"I think now we're starting to think about what kind of artists we each want to be remembered by our fans."

"I think that's why we're going through a rough patch right now, we're trying to find our identity and that's an exhausting and long process." V insisted they were not splitting and vowed the band's "synergy will be like no other" when they regroup.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Bela Thorn



BCCI TO HAVE WOMEN'S IPL FROM 2023, SAYS SOURAV GANGULY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Sourav Ganguly has said the roaring success of the IPL Media Rights e-auction (2023-27) was an indicator of the extremely strong foundation the sport of cricket has in the country, adding that the numbers should be the "biggest motivation for all the young players".

The richest cricket board in the world got richer when it sold the IPL Media Rights for an astronomical sum of Rs 48,390.32 crore, but Ganguly said that the sport was not about money but talent. "The game has never been just about money, it is about talent. The IPL e-auction just showed how strong the game is in our country. The numbers should be the biggest motivation for all the young players to take their



ability and Team India to the highest level," said Ganguly in a statement on BCCI.

"IPL's growth story and its phenomenal rise in the sporting world is a result of people's immense faith and belief in the BCCI leadership and its workforce to keep on delivering under all adversities. I am sure with the constant support of everyone in the eco-system we will be able to take brand IPL to new heights on the global sports

stage," added Ganguly.

The successful bidders will now acquire the Media Rights from IPL Season 2023 to IPL Season 2027 for a cumulative figure of Rs 48,390.32 crore, subject to execution of documentation and completion of formalities as required by BCCI.

BCCI secretary, Jay Shah said the latest round of auction had catapulted the IPL into the big league of global sport.

ROOT RECLAIMS TOP POSITION IN ICC TEST PLAYER RANKINGS

Dubai: England batter Joe Root is back at the top of the ICC Men's Test Player Rankings after smashing a second successive century in the ongoing ICC World Test Championship series against New Zealand.



Root, who had reached within striking distance of Marnus Labuschagne after the first Test, has wrestled back the top spot from the Australia batter, whom he now leads by five rating points. Root is on 897 points after his knock of 176 in the first innings of the Nottingham Test, 20 less than his highest of 917 points, according to ICC. Root first grabbed number one position in August 2015 and was last at the top in December 2021 before Labuschagne leapfrogged him. Root has been No.1 in Tests for 163 days so far. Steve Smith (1,506 days), Virat Kohli (469 days) and Kane Williamson (245 days) are the others to have had substantial vigils at the top in recent years.

Paavo Nurmi Games

Neeraj Chopra sets new national record, bags silver medal

Turku (Finland) | Agencies

Tokyo Olympics champion Neeraj Chopra made an impressive return to competitive action as he broke his own national record to win the men's javelin throw silver medal at the 2022 Paavo Nurmi Games, here.

The 24-year old Chopra on Tuesday registered a best throw of 89.30m, a new personal best and national record, to finish behind Finland's Oliver Helander, who won gold with a personal best throw of 89.83m.

Reigning world champion and 2022 season's world leader Anderson Peters of Grenada claimed the bronze with 86.60m. The meet in Finland was Neeraj's first competition since winning the historic gold medal at Tokyo 2020 in August last year.

"Very nice competition, and I



am very happy for my personal best and national record. Oliver (Helander) had very good technique today. I tried maybe too much, because that was my first competition of this season. I will compete next in Kuortane after four days," Chopra said. The 24-year-old Indian made a

statement of intent with his opening throw, measuring an impressive 86.92m. He then recorded 89.30m in his second attempt, bettering his own previous personal best and national record of 88.07m, set at the Indian Grand Prix 3 in March last year.

2nd Test, Day 5

Bairstow's incredible ton leads England to thrilling 5-wicket win over NZ

Nottingham | Agencies

An incredible hundred from Jonny Bairstow (136) led England to a sensational five-wicket win over New Zealand on Day 5 of the second Test and helped them take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three match-series, here on Tuesday.

Chasing a target of 298 runs for victory, England needed 160 in the final session and Jonny Bairstow along with Ben Stokes played sensational counter-attacking innings to take England home in the second Test with plenty of time to spare. The win takes England's point percentage to 25 in the World Test Championship table as they continue to distance themselves from the

bottom place. Defending champions New Zealand, meanwhile, point percentage slips to 29.17 and are just a spot above England.

Earlier in the day, England had to work hard to pick up the last three wickets of New Zealand's innings after Daryl Mitchell and co showed great resistance. The hosts' approach from the get-go in their chase was to go for the win and although there was a small blip in the middle, they counter-attacked brilliantly to script an improbable win. Starting with an overnight lead of 238 runs and with three wickets left in the bank, the task ahead was clear as daylight for the visitors -- add as many runs to the score as possible. And they managed to

achieve just that with Daryl Mitchell being the rock and the tail batting around him.

Ben Stokes finished the game off in style with a boundary -- almost a carbon copy of his shot at Headingley in 2019 against Australia -- as England romped home by five wickets to seal the series 2-0.

Brief scores:

New Zealand 553 (Daryl Mitchell 190, Tom Blundell 106; James Anderson 3-62) & 284 (Daryl Mitchell 62 not out, Will Young 56; Stuart Broad 3-70) lost to England 539 (Joe Root 176, Ollie Pope 145; Trent Boult 5-106) & 299/5 (Jonny Bairstow 136, Ben Stokes 75 not out; Trent Boult 3-94) by 5 wickets.



Costa Rica edge New Zealand to clinch final World Cup 2022 spot

Doha | Agencies

Costa Rica will join Germany, Spain, Japan in the Group E of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar after beating New Zealand on Joel Campbell's sole goal at the last match of the extended qualifying campaign in Doha on Tuesday.

New Zealand remained unfazed and responded well with 16 minutes gone as Costa Rica's custodian Keylor Navas had to be on guard twice to deny Chris Wood's attempt with the outside of the boot.

New Zealand however remained active and kept Costa Rica's defence busy as



Clayton Lewis's promising shot forced Navas into action with 76 minutes into the clash. Costa Rica's defence stood firm though and protected their narrow lead to the final whistle.

With the crucial victory, Costa Rica secure their sixth World Cup participation while New Zealand failed to qualify for the tournament after 1982 and 2010.

Relentless Germany upset Italy in UEFA Nations League



Berlin | Agencies

Germany jumped to the second place in Group E after crushing hapless Italy 5-2 courtesy of Timo Werner's second-half brace in the fourth

round of the Nations League.

Both sides started motivated on Tuesday night and exchanged attacks in the opening stages as Germany's Leroy Sane came close with a long-range

attempt before Italy's Giacomo Raspadori tested Manuel Neuer with a dangerous shot at the other end of the pitch. The Germans controlled the proceedings but Antonio Rudiger nor Sane was able to double the advantage despite promising chances. Xinhua reports Italy showed a sign of life and scored their consolation goal through Wilfried Gnonto, who poked home a parry from Neuer to make it 5-1 in the 78th minute. The visitors gained momentum and reduced the arrears to 5-2 in the dying seconds of the game when Alessandro Bastoni headed home Federico Dimarco's corner kick.

Hungary sit atop the standings in Group 3 with 7 points, followed by Germany, Italy and England.

FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup Bhubaneswar to host India's group stage matches



Team Absolute | New Delhi

FIFA and Local Organising Committee (LOC) of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2022 on Wednesday announced the schedule for the biennial youth tournament as Bhubaneswar is set to host India's group stage matches from October 11, while Goa has been awarded both semifinals.

Meanwhile, the showpiece game is set to be played in Navi Mumbai on October 30. The schedule further revealed that the 24 group stage games will conclude on October 18 and the matches will be shared among all three host states - Odisha, Goa and Maharashtra. The quarterfinal round of games will be held on 21st and 22nd October following which the semis will be held on October 26. The Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar will see hosts India compete in all three group stage games on October 11, 14 and 17. Meanwhile, the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai and the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Fatorda, Goa will equally share the four quarterfinal games.

Would be great to play AFC Asian Cup in front of fans at home: Sunil

Kolkata | Agencies

A near-capacity crowd at the iconic Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata witnessed the Indian football team qualify for the 2023 AFC Asian Cup in style, beating Hong Kong 4-0 on Tuesday.

Skipper Sunil Chhetri expressed his desire to play the Asian Cup on home soil after being impressed by the spectators who turned up to support the Indian team braving the thunderstorm. "The kind of form we are in, we would have loved to play at home. The way the fans are coming up and supporting us in numbers, it would be great to play here," said Chhetri after India secured a second-straight qualification to the Asian Cup for the first time in history.

India defeated Cambodia and Afghanistan before securing



ing a convincing win over Hong Kong in Group D of the third round of the Asian Cup qualifiers. All matches were played

at the Salt Lake Stadium, where India were playing at home for the first time in more than two years.

HARDIK PANDYA NAMED INDIA CAPTAIN FOR T20I SERIES AGAINST IRELAND

Mumbai: BCCI on Wednesday appointed allrounder Hardik Pandya as the captain of the Indian cricket team for the T20I series against Ireland.

Pandya, who led Gujarat Titans to the IPL 2022 title, will captain India in absence of regular skipper Rohit Sharma. The 35-year-old Sharma along with Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah, M Shami, Rishabh Pant and others will be in England for the rescheduled 5th Test, when another Indian squad will play T20Is in Ireland.

The 17-member squad for the series against Ireland, also have a place for Rahul Tripathi, who has done consistently well in IPL. Sanju Samson has also been recalled to the side after being neglected for the series against South Africa.

India will play two T20Is on June 26th and 28th in Dublin.

India's T20I squad: Hardik Pandya (Captain), Bhuvneshwar Kumar (vice-captain), Ishan Kishan, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Sanju Samson, Suryakumar Yadav, Venkatesh Iyer, Deepak Hooda, Rahul Tripathi, Dinesh Karthik (wicket-keeper), Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Ravi Bishnoi, Harshal Patel, Avesh Khan, Arshdeep Singh, Umran Malik

Ranji Trophy Semifinals

Bengal reduce deficit against MP, Mumbai put UP in a spot of bother

Bengaluru | Agencies

Manoj Tiwary and Shahbaz Ahmed's crucial innings helped Bengal reduce the deficit against Madhya Pradesh while pacers Dhawal Kulkarni and Tushar Deshpande took a wicket each to leave Uttar Pradesh in a spot of bother on Day 2 of their Ranji Trophy semifinal matches, here on Wednesday.

Tiwary (84 not out) and Shahbaz (72 not out) shared a vital unbeaten stand of 143 and took Bengal to 197/5 at stumps on Day 2 after. Though their stand reduced the deficit, Bengal are still trailing by 144 runs against Madhya Pradesh. The day began with MP on 271 for 5, but Shahbaz (3/86) and Mukesh Kumar (4/66) combined to bowl out the opposition for 341. Himanshu Mantri top-scored for MP with 165.

In reply, Bengal found themselves in deep trouble at 54 for 5. Kumar Kartikeya picked a couple of wickets, with Saransh Jain and Puneet Datey picking the rest. From there on, Tiwary and Shahbaz joined forces to bring Bengal back in the game. The duo would look to build on the already substantial stand and gain the vital first innings lead on Thursday.

Mumbai v Uttar Pradesh

Meanwhile, the pace duo of Dhawal Kulkarni and Tushar Deshpande took a wicket each for



Mumbai to leave Uttar Pradesh in a spot of bother at 25 for 2, still behind by 368 runs in the other semi-final.

Yashasvi Jaiswal (100) and Hardik Tamore (115) had set the platform for Mumbai on opening day. The start of Day 2 was delayed due to

wet outfield.

When play finally resumed, Shams Mulani and Tamore looked to play with a degree of caution early on. However, as the day progressed, Tamore played a few aggressive shots against the likes of Ankit Rajpoot, Shivam Mavi and Saurabh Kumar. Eventually, Mulani fell for a well-measured fifty, with Karan Sharma taking his wicket. Tamore then stitched another crucial stand of 40 with Tanush Kotian before the latter was dismissed by Saurabh. Thereafter, Mumbai had a mini collapse as they could add only seven more runs before being cleaned up for 393.

Karan, the UP skipper, finished with a four-for while the left-arm spinner Saurabh snared three wickets. However, UP couldn't build on the momentum and lost the wickets of both Samarth Singh and Priyam Garg before close of play.

Brief Scores:

Mumbai v Uttar Pradesh: Mumbai 393 (Hardik Tamore 115 not out, Yashasvi Jaiswal 100; Karan Sharma 4-46) lead Uttar Pradesh 25/2 (Tushar Deshpande 1-10) by 368 runs

Bengal v Madhya Pradesh: Madhya Pradesh 341 (Himanshu Mantri 165, Akshat Raghuvanshi 63; Mukesh Kumar 4-66) lead Bengal 197/5 (Manoj Tiwary 84*, Shahbaz Ahmed 72*; Puneet Datey 2-34) by 144 runs



Malaika Arora

URNS AUTHOR WITH BOOK ON NUTRITION AND WELLNESS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Malaika Arora needs no introduction in Bollywood. Her flawless beauty and fitness helped her to establish herself as a diva in the glamorous world of B-town. The way she maintains herself is a commendable thing in itself.

Touted as a fitness enthusiast, she has always preached about the benefits of yoga and balanced diet.

Being an avid social media user, the actress often shares posts related to fitness and encourages her audience to invest in a healthy lifestyle. The fitness icon is now all set to turn a new leaf in her life as she turns author with her debut book on nutrition.

This book will offer readers a deep dive into her healthy eating routine. It will cover some key elements of food and nutrition like the relationship between eating right and overall well-being, the challenges associated with food deprivation; the process of mastering discipline in eating with a guide on how to marry your nutrition plan with your fitness goals.

Talking about the book, Malaika Arora says, "My goal has always been to facilitate ideas around health and wellness. The book will help us share our insights with people at large. I personally believe in the comprehensive well-being of our body. Concentrating on just one, does not support the other. So the idea is to promote good health inside out and we have barely scratched the surface as of now."

On the work front, the actress was last seen in the reality show India's Best Dancer Season 2.

Saiyami Kher and Abhishek Bachchan's first look from R.Balki's film out

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The first look of Abhishek Bachchan and Saiyami Kher's upcoming film, Ghoomer, was unveiled on June 15. The first look still features the actress in an intense expression, standing next to Abhishek Bachchan.

The film helmed by R Balki, also stars Shabana Azmi in a significant role. In Ghoomer, Saiyami is playing the role of a cricketer and the Dasvi actor will be seen as a coach.

Sharing the first look on her social media handle, Saiyami wrote, "A project with some of the nicest people I've met. That let me play a sport that I love. That let me

play one of the most challenging roles I've played thus far; both emotionally & physically. It feels too good to be true. And I hope to continue playing even more. Ghoomer (sic)."

Interestingly, Saiyami has even played cricket at the school level for Maharashtra. The actress even made it to the national team selection, but she opted for badminton state championships instead.

On the work front, Saiyami Kher is also a part of Tahira Kashyap's upcoming movie 'Sharmaji Ki Beti' and Ashwiny Iyer Tiwary's 'Faadu'. Abhishek, on the other hand, was last seen in Dasvi. He has Housefull 5 in the pipeline.



Sacchin Shroff talks about finding a brother in Bobby Deol

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Sacchin Shroff, who is seen in the television show 'Ghum Hai Kisikey Pyaar Mein', has talked about finding a brother in Bollywood actor Bobby Deol while shooting for the web series 'Aashram 3'.

Sacchin who essays the role of politician Hukum Singh, said: "I will always have memories of my shoot experience with Bobby Deol. I still remember the first day when I met him, he was one of the sweetest people to invite me to join him for dinner and I remember we communicated for hours and that's how the ice broke and post that there has been no looking back. He is like an older brother to me on dates."

Sacchin, also known for featuring in shows like 'Balika Vadhu', 'Tumhari Paakhi', 'Paramavatar Shri Krishna' among others, feels the series has helped him find a beautiful bond with amazing individuals.

He continues, "In fact even during Covid-19 pandemic times we would speak everyday on calls and the entire actor gang of the series was very well connected during the lockdown. Apart from him Chandan (Roy Sanyal) who is the funniest guy. I would say that he's totally different and opposite from his role."

"Darshan (Kumar) is the super disciplined guy who will teach you to be focused about the diet plans and fitness. Tushar (Pandey) is again somebody who can crack jokes anytime."

Saira Banu breaks down on receiving an award on behalf of her Late Husband Dilip Kumar



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Veteran actor Dilip Kumar, widely known as the "Tragedy King" was one of the finest and greatest actors that we have in Hindi cinema. In July, last year, he died due to prolonged illness at the age of 98.

On Tuesday, at an event, the late actor was conferred with the Bharat Ratna Dr Ambedkar Award. Veteran actress and his wife Saira Banu received the prestigious award from Union Minister Ramdas Athawale on behalf of her late husband.

A video of the veteran actress breaking down in tears is doing rounds on the internet. Talking to the press at the event, Saira said that she feels Dilip is still close to her and watching everything. Saira said, "It should happen because Dilip Sahab has been the 'Kohinoor' for Hindustan. So 'Kohinoor' should definitely receive a Bharat Ratna." She repeated, "He's still here. He is not in my memories, I believe it's the truth that he is here with me at every step, because this is how I will be able to live my life. He is with me, will always be here as my pillar of support- my Kohinoor." For the unversed, late actor Dilip Kumar was known as the Tragedy King due to the portrayal of a broken lover in several films through the 1950s, including the Bimal Roy classic, Devdas in 1955. He was also considered as one of the greatest actors in the history of Hindi cinema, as he holds the Guinness World Record for winning maximum awards by an Indian actor.



RADHIKA APTE RETURNS TO MARATHI ROOTS

Mumbai: A viral video clip that is floating around on social media indicates that actress Radhika Apte is returning to her Marathi roots with the film 'Medium Spicy'. The film stars Lalit Prabhakar, Sai Tamhankar and Parna Pethe. The leaked clip shows that Lalit and Radhika are sitting and chatting in a hotel. What happened next creates a mystery in the minds of the audience. According to source close to the development, it is because director Mohit Takalkar, a well-known playwright and Radhika have previously worked together in Marathi plays. Earlier Radhika has appeared in Marathi film 'Gho Mala Asla Hava', 'Tukaram', and 'Postcard' which were released in 2014. 'Medium Spicy' would be her return to Marathi cinema after eight years.

Aamir Khan's 'Lagaan' to be adapted as a West End show in UK?



Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Lagaan: Once Upon A Time' has completed 21 years of its release in Hindi cinema on Wednesday and now the Aamir Khan-starrer is set to be adapted as a Broadway show in the UK, reports say. According to a source: "Several leading producers from the UK have requested for the rights from Aamir Khan Productions and a final decision will be made soon regarding the West End Theatre".

The West End Theatre is the equivalent to the Broadway show which is one of the biggest and most popular theatres worldwide.

The source added: "Aamir Khan's team is yet to make a final decision about it. The makers have different plans which include doing a worldwide tour of the show that will feature a completely original cast".

'Lagaan' is a tale set in 1893 during the late Victorian period of India's colonial British Raj. The film is directed by Ashutosh Gowariker and is produced by Aamir Khan Productions. On the work front, Aamir is gearing up for the release of 'Laal Singh Chaddha' on August 11.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Kriti Kharbanda