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Violent protests at Secunderabad station, Youth died in police firing

FIRST CLAIM OF 'AGNIPATH'

► South Central Railway (SCR) suspended all train services on the route as a precautionary measure. More than 70 trains were cancelled.

► One of the biggest railway stations in the country, Secunderabad was rocked by violence as the protesters went on rampage, setting afire trains or damaging them and vandalising the station.

► One person was killed and four others were injured when police opened fire to control the protesters, who were pelting stones and targeting railway property. The protesters also dumped various goods being transported by a train on railway track and set them afire.

► In view of massive violence by those protesting against new 'Agnipath' recruitment scheme for defence forces, the Bihar government on Friday has cut internet and mobile services in 12 affected districts for 48 hours.

► The East Central Railway (ECR) cancelled 164 trains on Friday.

► As many as 100-150 youths protesting against the 'Agnipath' scheme were booked by the Gurugram Police for blocking the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway at Bilaspur Chowk.



HYDERABAD | Agencies

After more than nine hours and large-scale violence, police Friday evening cleared anti-'Agnipath' protesters from Secunderabad railway station.

The Railway, Hyderabad city police and Rapid Action Force (RAF) rounded up dozens of youth who had refused to leave the station

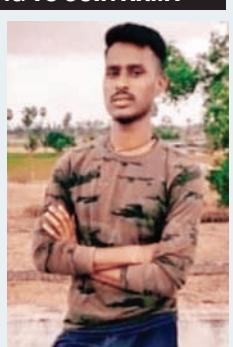
till their demands for scrapping new armed forces recruitment policy 'Agnipath' and for conduct of pending exams for army recruitment were met.

Several youths ran away after police started the arrests. Hundreds of policemen, however, remained deployed at the station to prevent protesters from re-entering the premises.

Earlier, top officials of railway and law and

YOUTH KILLED IN SECUNDERABAD FIRING WAS PREPARING TO JOIN ARMY

Hyderabad: The youth who died in police firing at the Secunderabad railway station during the protest against new armed forces recruitment policy 'Agnipath' was preparing to join the army. Son of a farmer, D. Rakesh, 22, hailed from Dabbeerpet village of Warangal district of Telangana. Rakesh, who was in his final year of graduation in Hanamkonda, was selected for army recruitment six months ago and was preparing for the written exam. He is survived by his parents, a brother and a sister. His sister is said to be working in the army. Rakesh was one of the youth who had reached Secunderabad railway station Friday morning from various parts of Telangana to stage the protest against the new scheme, which they believe will dash their hopes of joining the army.



order police held talks with the youth to convince them to call off the protest. They offered to take a delegation to Army recruitment authorities for talks but the protesting youth were insisting that Army recruitment officials come to the station for the talks.

According to eye-witnesses, more than 1,000 youth began the protest around 9 a.m. with a sit-in near the railway station. They were raising slogans against the Central government and demanding scrapping of 'Agnipath'. Soon they started attacking buses of the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC).

The protesters then entered the railway station and began damaging the property. Railway police personnel deployed at the station were outnumbered by the protesters. Soon the violence spread to various platforms and the passengers ran out for safety.

Personnel of the Railway Protection Force, the Government Railway Police, the Hyderabad city police and Rapid Action Force (RAF) rushed to the station to bring the situation under control.

Recruitment to begin soon: Defence Minister

Agnipath is a golden opportunity for the youth to join the defence system and serve the country. The government has increased the age limit for the recruitment of Agniveers from 21 years to 23 years this time. This one time relaxation has been given. This will entitle a lot of youth to become Agniveers. I appeal to the youth that the process of recruitment in the army is going to start in few days. They must start their preparation for it."



in the FIR.

A senior CBI official said that initially a Preliminary Enquiry was registered in the matter. The CBI learnt during the inquiry that Muriate of Potash (MOP), a restricted item, could be exported only with the prior permission of the government.

Indian Potash Limited (IPL) supplies the imported Muriate of Potash (MOP) to farmers through its authorised dealers at subsidised rates and claims the subsidy from the government.

It was also found that the MOP was allegedly exported in the guise of Feldspar Powder, industrial salt to overseas buyers.

I protested against ED questioning Rahul, why is my brother being targeted: Raj CM

I had sought time from CBI and ED as well as from Income Tax chief for a meeting on June 13. However, the case was registered on June 15 and raids were conducted on June 17. What is the approach? This is beyond comprehension. I joined the protest against the ED questioning Rahul Gandhi, so why is my brother being targeted? He has nothing to do with politics. No member of my family is in politics. It is beyond comprehension that first ED and now CBI reached his place. Even the general public does not like it. The more people you harass, the more backlash there will be for them."

Another Pure EV e-scooter catches fire, this time in Gujarat

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the electric vehicle (EV) industry awaits new government quality-centric guidelines, another e-scooter belonging to Pure EV went into flames in Gujarat.

The fire incident occurred at a house in Suvnidhith Society in Patan district on Thursday when the Pure EV's E-Pluto 7G e-scooter was being charged, as seen in a video that went viral on social media. In the video, one can see the scooter in flames and the charger that is still plugged in the e-scooter. No casualties were reported.

This was the fifth incident of fire related to Pure Energy's electric scooters.

Pure EV was yet to release a statement about the cause



of the fire.

To date, four other Pure EV e-scooters caught fire, the fourth one being reported last month from Hyderabad.

Pure EV had recalled 2,000 electric scooters in April.

As fires and explosions in electric two-wheelers continue unabated, the government

is all set to introduce EV battery standards (BIS standards) for EV two-wheelers that will be expanded to four-wheelers at a later stage.

The BIS standards for EV batteries will look into "size, connectors, specification and minimum quality of cells, the battery's capacity".

OPPOSITION MEET TO PICK PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ON JUNE 21

New Delhi: The opposition parties will meet on June 21 to discuss the candidate for the Presidential election. The meeting will be chaired by NCP chief Sharad Pawar.

Sources say that 17 parties will attend the meeting. The parties have to arrive at a consensus on the candidate's name after Sharad Pawar declined to contest. The opposition parties had on Wednesday decided to field a joint candidate in the Presidential polls next month.

The meeting of opposition leaders, called by Trinamool Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, was held here for building a consensus on a joint opposition candidate.

In the meeting, a resolution was passed to field a common candidate.

BA.4, BA.5 Omicron strains may drive new global Covid wave

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Several countries including India, the UK, US, and Australia are seeing an uptick in Covid cases majorly driven by Omicron sub-variants BA.4, BA.5, according to media reports.

The more transmissible sub-variants, that emerged in South Africa early this year, are added to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) monitoring list, while Europe has designated them as variants of concern.

BA.5 is enroute to become dominant in most European countries including the UK and Portugal. The US and Australia are also seeing rising numbers of infections caused by the two new sub-variants.

In India, sequenced data from Maharashtra, Telangana and Tamil Nadu has confirmed the presence



of the sub-strains of Omicron.

BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron are not thought to be any more lethal than other types of Covid. But the two new variants are thought to spread more quickly than BA.2, which itself was more contagious than the original Omicron.

Several studies have also shown that BA.4 and BA.5 are more transmissible and also have the ability to avoid immunity induced by both previous Covid infection and vaccination.

India's Wettest Place

Shillong: As monsoon rain lashes Northeast region wreaking havoc and killing people, Mawsynram and Sohra in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district are in a competition to be the wettest place in the country receiving record rainfall in the last 24 hours, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials said Friday. Located on opposite cliffs, the gorges of which face the plains of Bangladesh, Sohra (earlier Cherrapunji) recorded a massive 972 mm of rainfall in 24 hours ending 8:30 am on Friday while Mawsynram, on the other hand, received 1,003.6 mm of rainfall during the same period, the highest rainfall for a day, the IMD officials said. Sohra's record for June 17 is the third highest rainfall recorded since June 16, 1995 -- which was 1,563.3 mm.

The highest rainfall was last recorded on June 7, 1966 with 945.4 mm for Mawsynram and during that year, the town gauged 4 days of record rainfall - all above 700 mm in 24 hours.

1 in 8 people globally live with mental disorder: WHO

GENEVA | Agencies

About one in eight people in the world live with a mental disorder, said the World Health Organisation (WHO) in a landmark report released on Friday calling for urgent action on transforming mental healthcare.

Even before the pandemic, in 2019, the number of people living with a mental disorder was nearly a billion, including 14 per cent of the world's adolescents, a number that has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic in the last two years. In the first year of the pandemic alone, the rates of the already-common conditions such as depression and anxiety went up by more than 25 per cent. The WHO report revealed that on average, countries dedicate less than 2 per cent of their healthcare budgets to mental health. As a result, just a small fraction of people in need get access to effective, affordable and quality mental health care. The report urges mental health decision makers and advocates to step up commitment and action to change attitudes, actions and



approaches to mental health, its determinants and mental health care. "Everyone's life touches someone with a mental health condition. Investment into mental health is an investment into a better life and future for all," said WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in a statement. The report also called to end stigma, discrimination and human rights violations against people with mental health conditions, with 20 countries still criminalising attempted suicide.

Bhim Sena chief announces Rs 1 cr reward for severing Nupur Sharma's tongue, arrested

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Bhim Sena chief Nawab Satpal Tanwar was arrested by the Delhi police for his remarks against suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma, an official said on Friday. A video of Tanwar had gone viral on social media in which he had announced a reward of Rs 1 crore for any person who severs her tongue.

"One social media entity i.e. Nawab Satpal Tanwar, who claimed to be the chief of Bhim Sena, having multiple Twitter handles and Facebook profiles, posted a video in which he announced a bounty of Rs 1 crore for a derogatory act against Ms. Nupur Sharma and was trying to fuel communal disharmony," said Delhi Police spokesperson



The Special Cell of the Delhi Police registered an FIR against Tanwar and a manhunt was launched to trace him. "Since the registration of FIR, Nawab Satpal Tanwar was trying to hide in different parts of North India in Punjab, UP and Haryana," the official said. However, on Thursday, Tanwar was arrested from Gurugram in Haryana. "He claimed to have some medical issues for which he was medically examined and has been sent to judicial custody," Nalwa said.



BIS ISSUES STANDARDS FOR ALTERNATIVE PRODUCTS DUE TO SINGLE USE PLASTIC BAN

Team Absolute |New Delhi

Ahead of the total ban on single use plastic (SUP) from July 1, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has issued fresh standards for plastics that would be applicable for products to be used as alternatives.

Plastic straws, polythene bags, plastic sticks for candy or ice creams, polystyrene (thermocol) for decoration, plastic cups, glasses and cutlery items, plastic sticks for ear buds, for balloons, wrapping films for sweet boxes or cigarettes and even PVC banners of less than 100 microns, all such and many other things that are literally used only for one time and then find its way into the dust bins, littered on roads and ultimately end up either

on landfill or pollute water bodies.

During a recent event, Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav had said that approximately 3.5 million tonnes of plastic waste is generated across India annually.

A ministry official, on Friday, said: "The notification by the BIS, under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, will help manufacturers of products to determine ultimate aerobic biodegradability of plastic materials and thereby enable them to replace their existing practices for upgraded standards."

The July 1 ban is applicable not just for the manufacturer, but also for importers, those stocking it, or those into distribution, and also

for those who sell it and ultimately, the consumer who uses it.

"The Central Pollution Control Board is in talks with all the state boards for effective implementation and most important, to raise awareness about the July 1 ban amongst the common public," said a top officer from the Environment Ministry.

Asked if the notification has come a tad late - given the fact that the ban is less than 20 days ahead - the officer said that such notifications are issued after a whole lot of trials (for the substances for which standards are specified) and stakeholder consultations. "It means that the process was initiated much earlier and all the stakeholders are on board."

There were no details available as yet of the quake in Afghanistan and its impact on human life, livestock and property.

MILD TREMORS FELT IN DELHI DUE TO QUAKE IN AFGHANISTAN

Team Absolute |New Delhi

New Delhi: Mild tremors were felt in parts of Delhi-NCR and northwest India due to a 5.2 magnitude quake in Afghanistan on Friday afternoon.

Official seismology data showed a "5.2 magnitude quake, 85 kms south-east of Fayzabad in Afghanistan at 2.52 pm IST at a depth of 260 kms."

The earthquake occurred at a depth of 260 kms in the Afghan town, about 1,100-odd kilometres north-west of Delhi.

"Its depth is possibly the reason why the tremors felt in the national capital were so mild that hardly any one registered it," said an official from the National Centre for Seismology.

Earlier, the Delhi High Court had sought the response of the Central

SC suggests transfer of conman Chandrashekhar from Tihar on his 'life threat' plea



Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on a plea moved by Chandrashekhar alleging that the Tihar prison authorities have extorted around Rs 12.5 crore from him in the last two years.

Chandrashekhar moved the apex court seeking his transfer from Tihar to another prison, saying that since he has levelled allegations against jail officials, he faces a threat to his life.

Covaxin safe for children aged 2-18 years, says Bharat Biotech

Team Absolute |New Delhi

Hyderabad-based vaccine manufacturer Bharat Biotech on Friday announced that its whole-virion inactivated Covid vaccine Covaxin has proven to be safe, well-tolerated and highly immunogenic in paediatric subjects in phase II/III study.

"The study has been accepted and published in Lancet Infectious diseases, peer reviewed high impact factor journal," said Bharat Biotech in a statement.

The vaccine manufacturer had conducted the phase II/III open-label and multicentre study to evaluate the safety, reactogenicity and immunogenicity of Covaxin in healthy



children and adolescents in 2-18 years of age group. "The clinical trial conducted in the paediatric population between June 2021 and September 2021 has shown safety, less reactogenic, and robust immunogenicity," Bharat

Biotech said. The data was submitted to the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) during October 2021 and received a nod for emergency use in children aged 6-18 years.

KYC update fraud: Three cyber criminals held from Gujarat, Jharkhand

Team Absolute |New Delhi

Three cyber criminals, who used to cheat people on the pretext of updating their bank KYC, were arrested by the Delhi Police from Gujarat's Surat and Jharkhand's Giridih, an official said on Friday.

The accused were identified as Pravesh Mishra, Brijesh Kumar, and Kailash Kumar Mandal.

Deputy Commissioner of Police, Shahdara, R. Sathiyasundaram said a case was registered on the complaint of a person in which he alleged that he received an SMS message containing some link from an unknown mobile number on his phone on March 11, asking him to update his PAN number immediately or his HDFC net banking will be blocked.

The complainant clicked on that link and thereafter told the OTP to the accused person/caller from unknown mobile number and a total of Rs 10 lakh were deducted



in two tranches i.e Rs 4,99,990 and Rs 4,99,990.

Based on the complaint, the police registered an FIR under Section 420 of the IPC against unknown people and set up a team to solve the case.

The team of Cyber Cell analysed the details of the accused's mobile number, bank accounts and Facebook details, and came

to know that the accused withdrew the cash amount from different places. The team also analysed the transaction details of the victim's account and found that the cheated amount had been transferred directly into two credit cards of IDFC and SBI Bank which were both found registered in the name of accused Mishra.

RAIN BRINGS RESPITE TO DELHI FROM HEAT, AIR QUALITY IMPROVES

Intermittent rain in the national capital on Friday brought down the temperature by 3.5 degree Celsius, giving much needed relief to the residents of the city.

Team Absolute |New Delhi

In the past 9 hours, from 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., a total of 11.9 mm of rainfall was recorded at the Safdarjung observatory due to which the city recorded a maximum temperature of 36.7 degree Celsius, 3.5 degrees less compared to the previous day.

The maximum temperature at other areas was Ayanagar and Lodhi Road 37.2 degrees, Palam 37.6, Ridge 36.2, Jafarpur 37.4, Mungeshpur 36.3, Najafgarh 39, Pitampura 37.3, and Salwan Public School 34.3 degree Celsius.

As per IMD update at 8.30 p.m., the city was having a relative humidity of 87 per cent and the wind was blowing in the south-southeasterly direction at a speed of 7.5 Km per hour.

Meanwhile, due to the rain spell, the air quality in the national capital has drastically improved.

According to the System of Air



Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR), the Air Quality Index (AQI) in the city was 96 for PM10 and 30 for PM2.5. Delhi has 36 monitoring stations that accu-

rately record the levels of both particulate matters.

Usually, the air quality is categorised as 'good' when the AQI is between 0 to 50; 'satisfactory'

between 51-100; 'moderate' between 101-200; 'poor' between 201-300; 'very poor' between 301-400; 'severe' between 401-500; and 'hazardous' at over 500.

Rajiv Gandhi case: Madras HC refuses to order release of convicts Nalini, LON

Delhi | Agencies

The Madras High Court on Friday refused to direct the Tamil Nadu government to release Nalini and Ravichandran, who were convicted in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, without the Governor's assent.

The order was passed by the first bench of the High Court comprising Chief Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandari and Justice N. Mala dismissing the pleas moved by Nalini and Ravichandran.

While passing the order, the bench said that the high court does not enjoy special powers that the Supreme Court has under Article 142 of the constitution.

Nalini and Ravichandran in their pray before the High Court said that they were justified in seeking the relief as Supreme Court has categorically said that the gover-



nor is bound by the recommendations of the state cabinet in Perarivalan case, who was released by the Supreme Court on May 18, 2022.

The petitioners said that they were seeking a direction to the state government to release them without waiting for the assent of the Tamil Nadu governor.

Toddler allegedly sold for Rs 5L by parents; rescued by DCW, Delhi Police

New Delhi: An eight month old infant allegedly sold by his own parents for Rs 5 lakh was rescued by the joint efforts of the Delhi Police and the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW).

Later, the parents of the baby said their child was missing and after not receiving the entire money they approached the DCW.

According to information given by the child's parents, they had agreed to take Rs five lakh in exchange for the child, of which Rs 20,000 was paid immediately and the remaining amount was promised later to them. However, seven months after the baby's parents were promised the money, the remaining amount was not paid to them following which the child's mother approached the DCW hoping that the remaining money will be paid to them.

After registering a case in the matter, the child sold from a village in Gurugram was finally rescued and the Delhi Police immediately took the child's mother, including eight other persons, into custody, who were involved in child trafficking and selling of children.

The police is in search of the child's father, who is absconding since the incident came to light.



Centre asks states to expedite completion of projects under ECRP-II

Team Absolute |New Delhi

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan on Friday chaired a virtual meeting with all states and Union Territories to review the physical and financial progress under the National Health Mission (NHM), Emergency COVID Response Package (ECRP)-II, Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-AHIM), 15th Finance Commission grants and the Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PM-NDP).

The Centre asked the states and UTs to complete all activities under the ECRP-II scheme by December 31 this year. The states were also advised that instead of seeking the approval of the Union Health Ministry, State Health Societies (SHS) have been authorised to accord the remaining approvals of activities under ECRP-II.

Highlighting the need to expedite the utilisation of funds released under the ECRP-II package, the states were informed that 100 per cent Central share amount has been released to the states.

The Union Health Secretary highlighted that for ensuring implementa-



tion of programmes and initiatives, allocated government resources under the National Health Mission must be expedited and utilised efficiently. He urged the states to provide necessary documentation and utilisation certificates corresponding to fund utilisation and ensure refund of the unused amount.

The states were also urged to map these transfers on the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) portal.

The ministry said that to develop

capacities of health systems and institutions across the continuum of care at all levels -- primary, secondary, tertiary -- and to prepare health systems in responding effectively to the current and future pandemics, disasters, Rs. 64,180 crore for the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26 has been allocated under PM-AHIM.

Given the emphasis on utilisation of these funds for capital expenditure, the states and UTs were requested to expedite proposals and MoUs to be sent to the Union Health Ministry under PM-AHIM to enable the ministry to release funds on time for the states. To ensure mapping of the physical and financial progress, the states were requested to identify physical facilities and complete the mapping exercise on the NHM-Progress Monitoring System (PMS) portal at the earliest.

To expand the coverage of the Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP) across the country, the states were asked in the meeting to cover all districts by the Haemodialysis programme and promote the peritoneal dialysis programme alongside, as it is less restrictive for the patients and requires less technical demand from institutions.

'AGNIPATH' SCHEME SHIVRAJ ANNOUNCES PREFERENCE FOR 'AGNIVEERS' IN POLICE

Cong takes a dig at Centre

Besides violent protests by several hundreds of youth in Madhya Pradesh, a political slugfest also started over the Centre's 'Agnipath' scheme.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Besides violent protests by several hundreds of youth in Madhya Pradesh, a political slugfest also started over the Centre's 'Agnipath' scheme.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the 'Agniveers' (beneficiaries of the Agnipath scheme) would be given



"special" priority in the state police services.

Chouhan's obvious support was akin to that of Uttar Pradesh's Chief Minister Yogi Aditya. "After serving in the Armed Forces, Agniveers

will be given priority in state police services," the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister announced.

Not only Chouhan but the entire state unit of the BJP stood in support of the Centre's Agnipath scheme with their own views of nationalism and dedication to serve the nation.

On the other side, the Congress attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying that the government will now use a temporary army to protect the nation.

Former Chief Minister Kamal Nath took a dig at the Modi government, calling it 'short term' thinking and planning to protect the country. "Will now the country be protected with such a temporary approach? Real nationalism is coming out

now," Nath wrote on his official twitter handle.

Digvijaya Singh claimed that the police personnel in Gujarat are also recruited on a temporary basis. Singh made this remark replying to a tweet of Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi. "Do you know that police recruitment in Gujarat is also done on contract? It is not permanent," Digvijaya wrote.

To counter the Congress party, some state BJP leaders and workers accused the Opposition of trying to divert attention from the National Herald case, adding that the Congress is "misleading the youth."

A massive protest broke out in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior district on Thursday where more than 1000 youth took to the street and vandalised private and public properties to mark their protest against the Centre's Agnipath scheme.

CHIEF MINISTER PLANTED SAPLINGS WITH JOURNALISTS AND SOCIAL ACTIVISTS

CAMPAIGN FOR MISSION GREEN CITY COMMENDABLE : CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Peepal, Neem and Kachnar saplings in Smart Garden along with News-24 TV channel's Madhya Pradesh-Chhattisgarh Chairman Narmi Jain and other associates. Chouhan said that the campaign for Mission Green City launched by the channel is commendable. He congratulated and extended best wishes for the success of the campaign. CM Chouhan said that the initiative to plant saplings in this campaign along with the daughters is amazing. This will give a new dimension to plantation. Our daughters are admirable. We all have to make efforts to give them full cooperation.

Chief Minister said that saplings should also be planted on the birthdays and marriage anniversaries of the family members. Let us resolve that together we will make a better Earth. The work that the society and the media are doing together for the coming generations is commendable. Along with the Chief Minister, Karthik



Naik of the Iranicalas Institute and his colleagues, students of Journalism University and other TV journalists also planted saplings. The short film on cleanliness made by the organisation has been rewarded by the Municipal Corporation Bhopal with the first prize. Chief Minister Chouhan was also presented with pictures made by two girls and special congratulatory letters outlining CM Chouhan's concern for environment. The Chief Minister appreciated the institution's love for environment. Chouhan said that a special picture has been prepared and sent to him by daughters Pooja and them Kachnar is one.

Poonam, in which the message "Save Tree" is printed. Now small children are also joining this campaign. I appeal to keep up this awareness and work together to protect the environment.

Enriched with the antibiotic elements, the neem planted today is known as the supreme medicine. Peepal is a shady tree. It purifies the environment. It has religious and Ayurvedic significance. Kachnar is a beautiful flowering tree. Small or medium height trees of Kachnar are found everywhere in India. Nature has made many plants and trees full of medicinal properties, among them Kachnar is one.

MPEB DGM caught red handed for taking bribe

■ Superintendent of Police (SP), Manu Vyas told Free Press that the action was taken following a complaint filed by a contractor Shiv Shankar Pandey, resident of MACT locality.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The special police establishment (SPE) Lokayukta caught Deputy General Manager of Madhya Pradesh Electricity Board (MPEB), Chandbad Bhopal for taking a bribe of Rs 20,000 on Friday, an official said. Superintendent of Police (SP), Manu Vyas told

Free Press that the action was taken following a complaint filed by a contractor Shiv Shankar Pandey, resident of MACT locality.

Upadhyaya was demanding the bribe of Rs 25,000 to pass the file. The deal was, however, finalised at Rs 20,000.

Acting on the complaint, the police formed a trap wing after the verification of the complaint. The team includes inspector VK Singh, inspector Mayuri Gour and seven others.

On Friday, Pandey reached the office to hand over the bribe amount to the DGM. As soon as Pandey gave the amount to DGM Upadhyaya, the team rushed to the spot and caught him red handed.

The team also seized various documents and files which were kept pending for the signature from the spot.

MAGISTERIAL POWERS TO OFFICERS OF OTHER SERVICE ALSO FOR ELECTIONS

Bhopal: Powers of Special Executive Magistrates has been granted by the Department of Law and Legislative Affairs to officers of other services also in addition to the officers of the revenue service cadre to work as Sector Magistrates to conduct the three-tier panchayat general election-2022. A proposal was sent by the districts to confer the powers of the Special Executive Magistrate to the officers of other services.

SCRUTINY OF NOMINATION PAPERS ON JUNE 20

Bhopal: Scrutiny of nomination papers in Urban Bodies Election-2022 will be held on June 20 from 10:30 am. The candidate, the election agent of the candidate (if any), any one proposer of the candidate and any other person authorised in writing by the candidate may remain present during the scrutiny.

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on June 26

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Competitions like wall-painting, rangoli etc., street plays, marathon run, rally against drug de-addiction and human chain building, lectures of subject-experts and responsible persons who have freed themselves from drug addiction/alcoholism, oath taking by general public against drug addiction, plays and songs by cultural kala mandalis etc. will be organized on International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on June 26. Oath

will also be administered to the general public for drug de-addiction through banners, posters and pamphlets.

Guidelines have been issued by the state government to all the Collectors, Superintendents of Police, Chief Executive Officers and officers of Social Justice and Disabled Welfare Department. The programmes will be held in strict compliance with the model code of conduct for urban body and panchayat elections.

Commissioner Social Justice and Disabled Welfare

E Ramesh Kumar has said that the purpose of celebrating the day is to empower those influences, from which a society free of drugs and substances can be built. Participation of health and family welfare, school education, higher education, medical education, women and child development, urban administration and development, panchayat and rural development, police, prison, sports and youth welfare departments and non-government organizations will be ensured in the programmes.

- Instructions to take action to send fraudsters to jail
- Process continue after irregularities found in 27 hospitals
- CM Chouhan reviews Ayushman Bharat Scheme

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that any kind of fraud in the Ayushman Bharat scheme will not be tolerated. Better work must be done in the plan, so that patients do not face any inconvenience in getting treatment. He said that action should be taken to send those who commit fraud in the scheme to jail. Chouhan was taking a review meeting of Ayushman Bharat Scheme at his residence office. Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Prabhuram Choudhary, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Manish Rastogi, Director National Health Mission Priyanka Das and officials were present. Additional Chief Secretary Health Mohammad Suleman attended the meeting virtually.

Chouhan said that fraud in Ayushman Bharat scheme is intolerable. We will not allow scams in the scheme. This is a betrayal of patients and the government. Along with the arrest of scammers, their other activities must also be investigated. The Chief Minister

Bharat Scheme at his residence office. Chief Minister Chouhan has said that any kind of fraud will not be tolerated in the Ayushman Bharat scheme. Work better in the plan, so that patients do not face any inconvenience in getting treatment. He said that action should be taken to send those who commit fraud in the scheme to jail. Chouhan was taking a review meeting of Ayushman Bharat Scheme at his residence office. Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Prabhuram Choudhary, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Manish Rastogi, Director National Health Mission Priyanka Das and officials were present. Additional Chief Secretary Health Mohammad Suleman attended the meeting virtually.

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MP to organise yoga events at 75 historical places on June 21

The Madhya Pradesh government will organise yoga events at 75 historical places across the state on June 21 to mark the International Day of Yoga.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government will organise yoga events at 75 historical places across the state on June 21 to mark the International Day of Yoga.



Ground in Bhopal on June 21, said: "All the state ministers should participate in the programmes, as well as youth and social organisations."

The Chief Minister also sought information about preparations from the collectors of Gwalior, Raisen, Chhatarpur and Anuppur districts, virtually attended Friday's meeting.

Chouhan, who will attend a yoga event at the Lal Parade

arrangements would be made to broadcast the message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Chouhan at all the venues in the state.

As per the step-by-step programme issued by the Centre, all the participants will have to be present from 6 a.m.

Chouhan's message will be broadcast at 6.30 a.m., followed by that of the Prime Minister.

Yoga sessions will begin at 7 a.m.

Services of 6 Trains Disrupted Amid Protests Against Agnipath Scheme In Indore

Team Absolute | Indore

Hundreds of youths on Friday demonstrated against the Centre's new military recruitment policy, 'Agnipath' at the Indore railway station forcing cancellation of several trains. Agitators barged into the Laxmi Bai railway station, raised slogans opposing the new policy and indulged in stone pelting. Heavy security forces were deployed in nearby railway stations, including Ratlam, Shajapur, Ujjain. The agitation here started a day after it rocked Gwalior on Thursday. Panic gripped the city for almost three-four hours. Private and public properties were damaged and tyres burnt on the railway track. Two FIRs - one in Railway police and another at local police station have been registered and identification of youth that damaged properties during the protest in Gwalior is underway.

Madhya Pradesh stares at petrol, diesel crisis as firms cut supply

A petrol and diesel crisis looms large in Madhya Pradesh, as some prominent oil marketing companies have cut supplies to petrol pumps across the state, including Bhopal.

Bhopal: A petrol and diesel crisis looms large in Madhya Pradesh, as some prominent oil marketing companies have cut supplies to petrol pumps across the state, including Bhopal. According to sources, out of the around 4,900 petrol pumps in the state, about 1,000 pumps, particularly those in remote areas, have either gone dry or have just three to four days stock (particularly of diesel) left. "Many petrol pumps have dried out or are on the verge of it due to reduced supplies. We already suffer losses during the monsoon, which is about to begin. This will add to our woes," MP Petrol Pumps Dealers Association head Ajay Singh said. According to industry sources, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Uttarakhand and Haryana could also be facing a similar situation, as the oil marketing companies stare at huge under-recoveries as they find it tough to incur Rs 28 per litre loss on diesel and Rs 16 per litre loss on petrol.

Agitators barged into the Laxmi Bai railway station, raised slogans opposing the new policy and indulged in stone pelting.

Earlier on Thursday, the Union Cabinet had approved the 'Agnipath' recruitment scheme for Indian youth to serve in the Armed Forces. The youth selected under this scheme will be known as 'Agniveers'. Under the Agnipath recruitment scheme, Agniveers would be recruited only for four-year tenures in all the cadre - Army, Air force, Navy without pension benefits. 25 per cent of the recruits every year will be retained in the forces while the rest 75 per cent will be sent back to civilian life after comple-

CM ACCOMPANIES NOMINATION FILING

Suman Sharma files nomination for Gwalior Mayor, Tomar-Scindia conveyed message of unity

Ex-Congress district chief Ruchi Gupta quits, to be AAP mayoral candidate

Team Absolute | Gwalior

Faction ridden BJP in Gwalior exhibited a united face as party candidate Suman Sharma filed nomination for the mayoral poll in the city on Friday.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan made it a point to let things happen on Friday under his watchful eyes and also ensured that all the senior leaders were present on the occasion. The party also tried portraying the filing of nomination as an occasion to show unity and might.

To add, the party made union ministers Narendra Singh Tomar and Jyoti Raditya Scindia sit on either side of Sharma so that a message of absolute unity is conveyed to the voters.

Besides, party chief VD Sharma who also hails to the region (Morena) also made his presence felt.

The leaders first reached Manshapurn Hanuman temple and after seeking blessings, turned to Collectorate for filing of nomination.

"We are not Congress party

where common worker gets no respect. Setting aside seniority and repute, we have assigned ticket to common worker like Suman Sharma," Chouhan said while speaking to the media after filing of nomination. We had decided that MLAs won't be fielded as mayors as this offers everything to a single family. We have taken to the field with issues of development and ground realities, said Chouhan.

The BJP is leaving no stone unturned to turn things in favour of Sharma as she is pitted against Shobha Sikarwar, wife of Congress muscleman MLA Satish Sikarwar who had left the BJP to join Congress party in year 2018 and had won. To add, Dr Devendra Sharma, the Congress district head in Gwalior had opposed Shobha's selection but MPCC chief Kamal Nath gave the name a clean chit.

To add, Chouhan's taunt was also seemed aimed at exit of Ruchi Gupta from the Congress party on Friday. Gupta after being overlooked for mayoral post, quit the party and joined Aam Aadmi Party which has announced her as mayoral candidate.

Why the bigwigs of the BJP did not go to other corporations during filing of nominations, she told the media adding she will contest with full force riding on the public faith and support. Gupta had been the former district head of the party. To add, Gupta was at odds with district head Devendra Sharma and local leader Rashmi Panwar. She decided to call it quits as she was overlooked for mayoral post.

Fraud will not be tolerated in Ayushman Bharat scheme: CM

- Instructions to take action to send fraudsters to jail
- Process continue after irregularities found in 27 hospitals
- CM Chouhan reviews Ayushman Bharat Scheme

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that any kind of fraud in the Ayushman Bharat scheme will not be tolerated. Better work must be done in the plan, so that patients do not face any inconvenience in getting treatment. He said that action should be taken to send those who commit fraud in the scheme to jail. Chouhan was taking a review meeting of Ayushman Bharat Scheme at his residence office. Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Prabhuram Choudhary, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Manish Rastogi, Director National Health Mission Priyanka Das and officials were present. Additional Chief Secretary Health Mohammad Suleman attended the meeting virtually.

Chouhan said that fraud in Ayushman Bharat scheme is intolerable. We will not allow scams in the scheme. This is a betrayal of patients and the government. Along with the arrest of scammers, their other activities must also be investigated. The Chief Minister

said that private hospitals should be checked by the Health Department by forming a team. Mukhya Mantri Svechhanadan amount will not be given to hospitals found suspicious. Call centers must remain active. Make enquiries from patients, whether they have been admitted or not. Shortcomings have come to the fore in 27 hospitals of the state, on which strict action should be taken and this should not happen in future.

Director National Health Mission, Priyanka Das said that a surprise inspection was conducted for the treatment quality of patients admitted in the affiliated hospitals in Ayushman. The number of hospitalized patients was checked. It was being checked whether the audit inspection team is not taking extra amount from the patients. It was checked whether the treatment has been provided by the hospitals according to the disease and whether the amount of the same treatment has been claimed from the government or not.

It was told that the quality care in the treatment was also tested. It was found during investigation that fake documents were submitted on the portal by some hospitals by admitting fake patients. In the implementation of all such cases, the state government FIR and appropriate legal action was taken by the inspection team. Action is being taken to disconnect all such hospitals which are misusing the scheme. Three times additional fine is being imposed in cases where patients are not given free treatment and additional amount is being demanded from them. The work of checking the hospitals will continue on a regular basis. Feedback is being taken from patients during and after treatment. After examining the cases in 12 districts, micro-examination and audit of 84 suspect hospitals has been undertaken by Ayushman Bharat Yojana, Madhya Pradesh, in which initial investigation has shown irregularities in 27 hospitals. Action is being taken on these.

EDITOR'S SPECS

Lok Sabha polls: A do-or-die battle for SP

The two Lok Sabha by-elections in Uttar Pradesh in Rampur and Azamgarh is a litmus test for the Samajwadi Party that faces the challenge of holding on to its number two position in the state. Surprisingly, with just five days left for the two by-elections where polling will be held on June 23, neither Akhilesh Yadav nor Mayawati have yet campaigned for their candidates. The Azamgarh seat was vacated by Akhilesh Yadav who chose to retain his Assembly seat in March this year. His cousin and former MP Dharmendra Yadav is contesting the seat. The Samajwadi Party has the highest stakes in these by-elections since both, Azamgarh and Rampur were held by SP. The Bahujan Samaj Party is playing a spoiler for SP in Azamgarh where it has fielded Guddu Jamali, a popular local leader who is likely to wean away Muslim votes. Azamgarh has a sizeable Yadav and Muslim population and any dent in these vote banks could upset the apple cart for SP. Samajwadi Party's Maharashtra unit president Abu Asim Azmi is leading the party's campaign in Muslim-dominated areas of the district. Besides, the BJP has fielded Bhojpuri star Dinesh Lal Yadav Nirahua who had lost to Akhilesh in 2019 in Azamgarh. The BJP campaign is supported by the presence of other Bhojpuri stars, including Manoj Tiwari, a BJP MP, and Akhilesh's absence is now emerging as a major factor in the constituency. The outcome of the election now depends on how well the BSP candidate performs. The more Muslim votes he pulls out will make it easier for the BJP to find a foothold in the SP bastion. The BSP has not fielded any candidate in Rampur. Interestingly, the Congress is not participating in the by-elections this time.

absolute edit**Temple Tale: When Lord Shiva won a game of chess, and a wife!****Venkatachari Jagannathan**

Not many people know that Lord Shiva once played chess and married a princess! And that there is a Lord Shiva shrine called Chathuranga Vallabha Nathar Temple at Poovanur village in Tamil Nadu's Tiruvarur district.

"Win a game of chess against my daughter and win her hand," was the way King Vasudevan in Tamil Nadu held 'Swayamvar' for his princess aeons ago, as per mythology. As per temple history, King

Vasudevan did not have a child for a long time. When he and his queen visited Tirunelveli and prayed for a child, Lord Shiva granted their wish.

When the King and Queen took a dip in the Tamiraparani river, they saw a conch floating towards them. When the King picked up the conch it turned into a girl child. The child was none other than Lord Shiva's wife Parvathi.

Lord Shiva also sent one of the seven divine mothers as the nurse

of the child who was named Rajarajeswari. Over the years, she became an expert in chess.

While there were many suitors, none of them could beat her in a game of chess. When the King along with his daughter and Queen came to Poovanur, Lord Shiva, disguised as a 'Siddhar' (saint), won the princess' hand by defeating her in a game of chess. The King honoured his promise and then Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvathi revealed their



identity and blessed them all.

As Lord Shiva bested Goddess Parvathi in a game of chess, the temple deity is called 'Chathuranga Vallabha Nathar'. "It is a nice and calm temple. I had been to that temple a couple of years back," retired journalist V. Srinivasan told

correspondent. The temple with an interesting history is not crowded and the priest lives nearby, Srinivasan said. Interestingly, there are many chess champion couples in India. However, it is not known whether the chess couples fell in love after playing against each other.

FROM DEV ANAND TO DHARMENDRA, HEMANT KUMAR WAS THE VOICE OF HIS TIME**Vikas Datta**

Interested in music from his early years, a young Bengali completed his primary education with great difficulty and dropped out of college after Calcutta AIR took him on board as a singer. He spent most of his salary on getting a harmonium and on honing his musical abilities, especially Rabindra Sangeet.

Bengali cinema and then the Hindi films industry beckoned, but the path was not easy for Hemant Kumar Mukhopadhyay, or Hemant Kumar, as he is better known to the legions of his fans, was born on June 16 in Benares in 1920.

The rare combination of a gifted musical composer, who wove in classical music strains, and a playback singer with a soothing mellifluous voice, he recorded his first (Bengali) song in as early as 1940 and his first Hindi song a couple of years later. Yet it was only "Anand Math" (1952) that brought him national fame, both for his music, and then his renditions of "Vande Mataram" and "Jai Jagdish Hare, Jai Jagdish Hare" in this classic. This also seemed like a flash in the pan as his next two films flopped.

It was "Nagni" (1954), with its hypnotically compelling music, especially that snake-charmer melody on an earthen 'been' that cemented his place in Hindi cinema.

Yet, Hemant Kumar was fated to stay in the spotlight for just the next decade and half in both his avatars and from the 1970s, his brand of music and his gentle voice failed to attract the attention it once got and he gradually faded from the scene. He figured in the news a few years before his death in 1989 -- after a concert

tour in Dhaka, when he rejected the Padma Shri announced for him, saying "it had come too late". As noted, Hemant Kumar belonged to that rare breed of both top-notch music composer and playback singer -- a status he only shared with the incomparable S.D. Burman. The senior Burman's songs, however, were more situational, but Hemant Kumar sang for almost all the top heroes of his time, from Dev Anand to Dharmendra.

On his birth anniversary, let us look at some of his most unforgettable songs.

"Yaad kiya dil ne kahan ho tum" - Few love songs in Bollywood sound so fresh and natural as this one, picturised on Dev Anand and Usha Kiran in "Patita" (1953). Hemant Kumar's sonorous voice melded perfectly with Lata Mangeshkar, while Shankar-Jaikishan wielded the baton and Hasrat Jaipuri provided the lyrics.

"Nain so nain naahii milao" - There was always a dream-like quality to Hemant Kumar's voice and it is markedly evident in this duet with Lata in V. Shantaram's "Jhanak Jhanak Paayal Baaje" (1955). Classical dancer Gopi Krishna and Sandhya were the performers, Vasant Desai the music composer and Hasrat Jaipuri provided the lyrics.

"Main gareebon ka dil main machali saba": Little is known about "Aab-e-Hayat" (1955), though it seems to be another one of the Arabian Nights-type escapade that were

Bollywood staples for years, but this song stays in public memory. Picturised on Premnath, it was scored by Sardar Malik and Hasrat Jaipuri was again responsible for the lyrics. "Jane woh kaise log the jinkhe pyar ko pyar mila": This song of existential angst, and a resigned acceptance to the vicissitudes of life and fortune, has to be

the among the greatest of Bollywood tracks and Hemant Kumar did it full justice. Note the slight and nearly indiscernible break he takes while repeating "Bichhad gaya ... bichhad gaya har saathi dekar / Pal do pal kaa saath / Kisko fursat hai jo thame deewaanon ka haath", and then the slight change of tone while going on with "Humko apna saaya tak aqsar bezar mila". The film was Guru Dutt's "Pyasa" (1957), S.D. Burman the music composer and the magician Sahir Ludhianvi the lyricist.

"Hai apna dil to awara, na jaane kis pe aayega": It was always difficult to capture that natural nonchalance that Dev Anand exhibited in his on-screen persona in song, but Hemant Kumar nailed it in this breezy number from "Solva Saal" (1958). The enthralling music was of S.D. Burman at his best and Majrooh Sultanpuri was masterly with the lyrics. "Zara nazron se kah do ji nishana chuk na jaye": Hemant Kumar turned director with "Bees Saal Baad" (1962), loosely adapted from Sherlock Holmes' "The Hound of Baskervilles", with the necessary Indian ingredients thrown in. Appreciated in its heyday, it proves to have gapping plot holes when you see it now, but the songs are still a saving grace. "Kahin deep jale kahin dil" is still among the spookiest tunes of Indian cinema, but Hemant Kumar showed his playful side with this song, and with "Beqaar karke hame yun na jaiye", picturised on Biswajit. He scored the music; the ever-dependable Shakeel Badayuni penned the lyrics. "Ganga aayee kahaan se": "Kabuliwala" (1961), based on Rabindranath Tagore's eponymous short story, and Balraj Sahni in yet another of his masterly performances, holds a

unique position in Hindi film music. It has just three songs -- but each is by a master. "A mere pyare vatan" by Manna Dey is the best-known, and the exuberant "Ya Kurban" by Mohammad Rafi and chorus, captures the ethos, but it is this sombre reflective piece by Hemant Kumar that also deserves more space. Salil Choudhary provided the music and Gulzar the lyrics. "Na tum harnen jaano, na ham turnhe jaanen": Hemant Kumar came up trumps again for Dev Anand in this remarkable song from "Baat Ek Raat Ki" (1962), where our hero begins with a softly-hummed phrase of love over a sleeping Waheeda Rehman, before breaking into a full-throated song. Hemant Kumar was also the music composer and Majrooh Sultanpuri the lyricist.

"Chhupa lo yun dil mein pyar mera": "Mamta" (1966), featuring Ashok Kumar and Suchitra Sen, stands out for its songs, especially "Rahen naa rahen ham, mahka karenge", but it is this Hemant-Lata duet which stands by itself, especially for the dream-like vista Hemant Kumar's voice evokes. Roshan (grandfather of Hrithik) was the composer and Majrooh the lyricist.

"Tum pukaar lo, tumhara intezar hai": This song from "Khamoshi" (1969), for which he provided music for as well, was perhaps Hemant Kumar's swan song. With lyrics by Gulzar, it sees Dharmendra showing a sensitive side and our singer's enunciation, notably in the transition from "Jaage rahenge aur kitni raat ham ... Muktsar si baat hai tum se pyar hai".

international**UK HOME SECY APPROVES JULIAN ASSANGE'S EXTRADITION TO THE US**

London: UK's Home Secretary Priti Patel has approved WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's extradition to the US, noting that the courts found that the measure would not be "incompatible with his human rights", reports said on Friday.

Patel also noted while in the US, "he will be treated appropriately", the BBC reported. Assange, wanted by the US over documents relating to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars leaked in 2010 and 2011 and as per it, "broke the law and endangered lives", has 14 days to appeal the decision.

The Australian is being held at Belmarsh prison in London after mounting a lengthy battle to avoid being extradited. Responding to the Home Secretary's order, WikiLeaks confirmed that it would appeal her decision.

S KOREAN ECONOMY FEARED TO LOSE STEAM AMID EXTERNAL UNCERTAINTY**Seoul | Agencies**

The South Korean economy is at the risk of losing steam as deteriorating external economic conditions are feared to dent investment and export growth amid high inflation, the Finance Ministry said on Friday.

Market volatility and global economic downside risks further expanded due to the Federal Reserve's accelerating monetary tightening and global supply chain disruptions, Yonhap News Agency quoted the Ministry as saying in its monthly economic assessment report, called the Green Book.

"Amid a continued buildup in price pressure, there are concerns about the economic slowdown due to sluggish investment and the weak recovery of

exports," the report said.

The government presented a bleaker assessment than the previous month amid growing concerns about stagflation, a mix of slowing growth and high inflation.

Inflationary pressure has rapidly built up amid soaring oil and commodity prices, caused by the protracted war between Russia and Ukraine, and the recovery in demand.

South Korea's consumer prices jumped 5.4 per cent on-year in May, the fastest rise in almost 14 years and a pickup from a 4.8 per cent spike in April. Exports, the main driver of economic growth, rose 21.3 per cent on-year in May, extending their gains to the 19th month. But high fuel costs drove up the country's import costs, resulting in a trade deficit for the second straight month.

The government report showed sales at department stores and card spending grew at a faster pace in May than the previous month amid relaxed virus curbs. Card spending rose 16.4 per cent on-year last month, marking the 16th straight month of gains. The reading accelerated from a 13.8 per cent on-year increase in April.

Sales at department stores increased 20.8 per cent on-year in May, higher than a 15.6 per cent rise in April. But domestic sales of autos dropped 5.4 per cent, extending their falls into the third month.

The government lowered its 2022 economic growth outlook to 2.6 per cent from its December 2021 estimate of 3.1 per cent, while sharply raising this year's inflation outlook to a 14-year high of 4.7 per cent from 2.2 per cent.

WTO MEMBERS AGREE ON KEY ISSUES AT MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Geneva: Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) have agreed on key issues such as pandemic response, TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) waiver related to Covid-19, food security, World Food Programme Food Purchases Exemption, fishery subsidies, e-commerce and WTO reforms.

The agreement came as the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) concluded on Friday at the WTO headquarters in Geneva, reports Xinhua news agency.

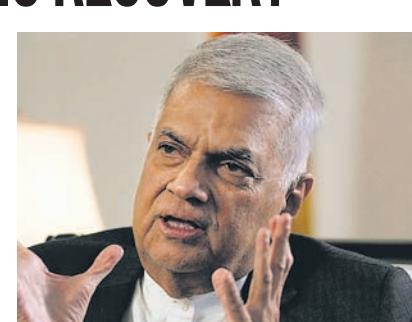
These multilateral outcomes are achieved in the form of ministerial declaration and ministerial decision.

WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said that she is "delighted" and "excited" about the outcomes of the MC12, which proves that "WTO can deliver multilateral outcomes".

Through the joint efforts of all WTO members, the MC12 has made breakthroughs on a number of key issues, demonstrating that the multilateral trading system can play a key role in addressing global challenges, she said.

The Ministerial Conference, which is attended by trade ministers and other senior officials from the organization's 164 members, is the WTO's highest decision-making body, and is generally held every two years.

The MC12, which opened Sunday, was extended by a day, in order to facilitate outcomes on the main issues under discussion.

SRI LANKAN PM TO PRESENT ROADMAP FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY**Colombo | Agencies**

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe is to present a roadmap on overcoming the current economic crisis to Parliament soon, local media reported on Friday.

Wickremesinghe said the roadmap will be completed after taking proposals and suggestions from MPs who he met on Thursday night to discuss the crisis which is the worst since the country gained freedom in 1948, reports Xinhua news agency.

He said that the drafting of the roadmap has already been commenced.

Also on Thursday night, Secretary to the Ministry of Finance Mahinda Siriswardana gave a presentation to the parliamentarians on the short and medium-term strategies of the government to overcome the crisis.

The country is facing extreme fuel shortages, soaring food prices and a lack of medicines. The country's state-owned fuel distributor Ceylon Petroleum Corporation said it only has 5,000 metric tonnes of petrol and thus only 500 metric tonnes will be released to gas stations each day.

A recent World Food Programme survey revealed that around two thirds of Sri Lankan households have been forced to reduce their food intake due to the crisis, the BBC report-

36.5MN KIDS DISPLACED WORLDWIDE, HIGHEST SINCE WWII: UNICEF

Geneva: An unprecedented 36.5 million children were displaced by conflict, violence and other crises by the end of 2021, the highest number since World War II, the Unicef said in a report published on Friday.

The figure, which increased by 2.2 million in 2021, includes 13.7 million child refugees and asylum-seekers and nearly 22.8 million internally displaced due to conflict and violence, Xinhua news agency quoted the report as saying.

Children displaced by climate and environmental shocks and disasters, and those displaced in 2022, including the Russia-Ukraine war, were not included in the report.

The record number is a direct result of cascading crises, including "acute and protracted conflicts such as in Afghanistan, and fragility in countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Yemen -- all exacerbated by the destructive impacts of climate change", it said.

Unicef Executive Director Catherine Russell said she hopes the alarming number will move governments to prevent children from being displaced and ensure the access of those displaced to education, protection and other critical services. Only half of all refugee children are enrolled in primary schools, while less than a quarter of refugee adolescents are in secondary schools, as a record number of displaced and refugee children are in need of support and services like healthcare, education and protection, according to the report.

Authorities in the Australia's New South Wales (NSW) have been granted emergency powers as a "precautionary measure" to ensure the stability of the state's exhausted energy grid.

NSW Treasurer and Energy Minister Matt Kean was granted the powers during an emergency meeting on Thursday night, which will allow him to direct the state's private coal companies to operate and add supply to the electricity grid, reports Xinhua news agency.

Since the beginning of June, a cold snap across Australia's eastern states and the faulty operation of a large number of coal plants have seen gas and energy prices spike and threatened energy shortages and blackouts. The crisis has further unfolded this week as the national energy regulator, the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), made the unprecedented move to suspend the National Electricity Market for the first time ever.

"In the current situation suspending the market is the best way to ensure a reliable supply of electricity for Australian homes and businesses," said AEMO CEO Daniel Westerman while making the announcement.

This meant that power generation companies were barred from selling electricity on the open market and were required to feed the grid directly, with any shortfalls to be reimbursed by the government. Furthermore, state governments have been urging citizens to reduce their power usage where



safe to do so, especially during peak hours between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m.

While conditions have since stabilised the AEMO has warned that it was "too early to say when the market will resume normal operations."

CEO of peak industry body for electricity and natural gas, the Australian Energy Council (AEC), Sarah McNamara, said on Friday coal plants were progressively coming back online and expected the market to soon stabilise. "After a period of re-stabilisation, the AEC expects the market to be able to successfully restart without the price cap in place," said McNamara. "The Australian Energy Council emphasises that this has been an extremely challenging time for all involved in the energy sector, including generators."



DISUNITY WITHIN MVA? CAN'T SPARE ANY VOTES FOR CONGRESS IN MLC POLLS, SAYS SHIV SENA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the battle for the MLC polls heated up and the MVA government redrafted its strategy after its humiliating setback in the Rajya Sabha polls, the Shiv Sena on Thursday said that it doesn't have any spare votes for the Congress and that the grand old party will have to fight its own battle to get its second MLC candidate elected.

This points to a lack of cohesion within the MVA parties ahead of the June 20 poll.

Meanwhile, MLAs from across parties, including BJP, will again check into five-star hotels over the weekend and vote on Monday, reports

Chaitanya Marpakkwar. For the MLC polls on June 20, 11 candidates have been fielded for 10 seats. BJP has put up 5 candidates, while Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress have fielded two each. Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut said the Sena will win 2 seats, and the NCP will also manage two seats since it only needs 2-4 extra votes. However, the Congress will need a larger number of votes.

"The Congress has fielded two candidates, and one will get elected. For the second seat, they will have to sit and figure out the arithmetic. I don't know anything about it," Raut said.

"It is obvious that the independents have votes and they will play a key role. We don't

have any votes to give to the Congress," he added. Each candidate needs a quota of 27 votes to win. There is a fight for the 10th seat between Congress's Bhai Jagtap and BJP's Prasad Lad. BJP's win for the sixth seat in the Rajya Sabha polls had come as a shock to the MVA. Despite adequate numbers, the Sena nominee lost to BJP owing to lack of planning and coordination among MVA constituents. "There were certain errors in allotment of voters; also, a section of our supporters resorted to cross-voting. After the RS elections, we have redrafted our plan," a Congress leader said.

While BJP will have the psychological advantage in the MLC polls, both Congress

For 2nd time, no relief for NCP MLAs Deshmukh, Malik to vote

The Bombay High Court on Friday declined permission for the temporary release of Minister Nawab Malik and former state Minister Anil Deshmukh to vote for the upcoming June 20 elections to the Maharashtra Legislative Council. This is the second time this month that the duo -- both MLAs -- will not be allowed to cast their vote, first in the June 10 Rajya Sabha elections and now for the MLC polls.

Justice NJ Jamdar passed the orders in an interim bail plea filed by Deshmukh and a plea by Malik only seeking relief to enable him cast his vote under a police escort.

Both leaders are from the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ally Nationalist Congress Party. Deshmukh was arrested on November 2, 2021, and Malik was nabbed on February 23 this year under various cases of alleged corruption and money laundering by the Enforcement

Directorate (ED). After hearing the strong arguments put forth by the lawyers of Deshmukh and Malik -- Senior Advocate Amit Desai and Senior Advocate Vikram Chaudhary -- and the Additional Solicitor-General (ASG) Anil Singh appearing on behalf of the ED, Justice Jamdar declined the pleas of the duo to vote in the MLCs polls on Monday (June 20). Among other things, ASG Singh argued that the Representation of Peoples Act, Section 62 (5), has prohibited a person in jail from voting in an election. The Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress have expressed strong displeasure over the verdict terming it as a blow to the democratic process, while the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party has welcomed the ruling.

MAHARASHTRA SSC RESULT 2022: MSBSHSE CLASS 10 RESULT DECLARED, 96.94% PASS

Mumbai: The Maharashtra State Board of Secondary & Higher Secondary Education announced the much-awaited result of the class 10th examination on Friday. Candidates can access the Maharashtra SSC result 2022 link at 1 pm. The overall passing percentage of class 10 students in the state this year was 96.94 per cent.

The results were announced after Maharashtra's School Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad verified the result date and time on her official Twitter profile. Around 16 lakh students have appeared for the examination this year. Last year the Maharashtra Board Class 10 result was released on July 16, 2021. Around 122 students in the state have scored 100 per cent marks. In the Latur division, most of the students have secured got 100 per cent marks. The departmental statistics of the students who got 100 per cent marks are as follows Pune 5, Aurangabad 18,

Kolhapur 18, Amravati 8, Nashik 1, Latur 70 and Konkan 1. This year Konkan division has scored the highest passing percentage of 99.27 per cent in the class 10th examination. Nashik division is at the bottom with 95.90 per cent.

This year, the board conducted the Maharashtra SSC 10th board exam 2022 from March 15 to April 4, 2022. The examination was held in two shifts: the first from 10.30 a.m. to 12.45 p.m., and the second from 3 p.m. to 5.15 p.m. This year's test for Class 10 received around 20 lakh students.

In a related development, a Mumbai Police team reached New Delhi to serve a summon to Nupur Sharma to appear before the Pydhonie police station here in connection with a complaint lodged by Raza Academy, an NGO.

In a letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, state Congress Working President Naseem Khan said that the comments of Sharma and Jindal have created strong resentment among Muslims all over the country.

"The state government should take note of this outrage and form a special team of senior police officers to arrest Sharma and Jindal and initiate stern legal action against them," said Khan.

The letter has also been sent to Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil, and Congress legislative party leader and Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat, among others. Khan pointed out that

the Muslim community has staged demonstrations in Mumbai and many other cities and districts while at least 20 complaints have been lodged against the duo by the police in the state.

"However, so far, they have not been arrested and the anger of the Muslims is increasing. We demand immediate action by Maharashtra Police in the matter," said Khan, a former minister.

Over the past few weeks, the Sharma-Jindal duo has been booked by various police stations in Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Nashik, Beed, Aurangabad etc., both individually or jointly, and they have been summoned to appear before the concerned police stations and reply to the charges. However, they are reportedly 'not available' to receive the summons though Mumbai Police declined to comment if they are 'missing' or 'untraceable.'

Maharashtra Man, Son Arrested For Repeatedly Raping 14-Year-Old Relative

Team Absolute | Thane

Police have arrested a man and his son from a village in Thane district of Maharashtra for allegedly repeatedly raping his 14-year-old niece, whom he had brought from Uttar Pradesh to take care of his pregnant daughter-in-law, an official said on Friday.

The minor was 52-year-old, his son is 22, the official of Bhiwandi taluka police station said.

"The accused man had brought the girl, who is his niece, from Uttar Pradesh over a month back to take care of his pregnant daughter-in-law and to help her. However, both the accused sexually assaulted the girl on several occasions at their house," an official said on Friday.

"Fed up with the sexual abuse, the girl finally mustered courage and narrated her ordeal to the neighbours, who immediately took her to the police. Based on the complaint lodged by the victim, an offence was registered," the official said.

The minor was later admitted to a government hospital for treatment, police said. The accused duo was arrested on Wednesday evening, and presented in a local court on Thursday, which remanded them in police custody for a week.

An offence was registered against them under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Nupur Sharma, untraceable: Maharashtra govt

Sources in the Maharashtra Home Department said suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma is untraceable.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma who made comments on the Prophet, which led to global outrage, is untraceable, sources in the Maharashtra Home Department said, adding that the Mumbai Police has been looking for her in Delhi for the last four days.

Mumbai Police's Pydhonie police station has registered an FIR against Nupur Sharma and sources in the Home Department said the police have enough evidence to place Sharma under arrest.

Other than Mumbai police, there are cases registered with the Thane Police Commissionerate against Nupur Sharma for her comments on Prophet Muhammad.

According to sources, Nupur Sharma was earlier summoned on her email. Now a police team has been sent to give her a physical copy of the same.

Mumbai Police had registered a

case against Sharma on the complaint of the Raza Academy.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil was asked about Delhi Police not cooperating in executing summons to Nupur Sharma. He said, "It's true."

Maharashtra police's attempts are on and Delhi Police should also co-operate."

Towards the end of May, Nupur Sharma, then a spokesperson for the ruling BJP, had made a comment on Prophet Muhammad during a TV debate, sparking a massive outrage globally. As the clip from the debate went viral, at least 14 nations, including Qatar, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, slammed India over the comments.

The BJP, in an attempt to control the damage, suspended Nupur Sharma and Naveen Jindal from the party. Jindal had said that he had tweeted asking those attacking and insulting Hindu deities and it was not aimed at hurting any religious sentiments.

► **EARLIER A 24-YEAR-OLD ABVP ACTIVIST WAS ARRESTED IN TAMIL NADU FOR SHARING A FB POST IN SUPPORT OF SHARMA. IN MAHARASHTRA'S THANE DISTRICT AN ENGINEERING STUDENT NAMED SAAD ASHFAQ ANSARI WAS ARRESTED FOR SHARING A SOCIAL MEDIA POST IN SUPPORT OF NUPUR SHARMA.**

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra Police on Thursday registered a case against Nisar Sayyad, Nouhid, Wasim Pathan, Altaf Shaikh, and six other unidentified persons for assaulting a 26-year-old person named Narendra Sriram in Solapur. Shriram was brutally assaulted by the accused after he shared a message on social media in support of ex-BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma.

According to the reports, Narendra Sriram on June 11 had changed his WhatsApp status story to support Nupur Sharma who has been criticized globally for her alleged 'blasphemous' remarks. Some of his WhatsApp friends responded furiously to the story and abused him for extending support to Sharma. In an attempt to resolve the matter, Shriram apologized for his actions.



As the matter seemed resolved, Shriram's friends June 13 caught him near his house and assaulted him. The Police stated that Shriram managed to save himself by running away from the spot. Later he complained against Nisar Sayyad, Nouhid, Wasim Pathan, Altaf Shaikh, and six other unidentified persons who had abused and assaulted him. The Police registered an FIR against the accused and arrested three of them in the case.

It is important to note that this is not the first case where a person has suffered for supporting an ex-BJP spokesperson. Earlier a 24-year-old ABVP activist was arrested for sharing a FB post in support of Sharma. Karthi Thandamuthur who had shared Nupur Sharma's video on Facebook and had captioned it, "I'll repeat this every day...Nupur Sharma only repeated what's written...what wrong did she say?"

The Tamil Nadu Police arrested Karthi and charged him for promoting religious enmity. The Police booked him under section 153A of the Indian Penal Code and section 67 of the Information Technology Act.

Also, a similar incident was reported in Maharashtra's Thane district where Saad Ashfaq Ansari, an engineering student had extended his support to Sharma. In an Instagram story, Ashfaq had written, "A 50-year-old man marrying a 6-9-year-old kid is clear child abuse. And I don't know how you people support this. Will you give your 6-year-old daughter to a 50-year-old man? (think about it.)"

Saad, for his Instagram story, was assaulted and abused by a Muslim mob and was later arrested by the Bhiwandi police amid the ongoing blasphemy row. Police also arrested him for his extended support to Nupur Sharma by referring to her as a 'brave lady.'

Several FIRs have been registered against Nupur Sharma for her remarks against Prophet Muhammad. Recently, the Bhiwandi Police and also the Kolkata Police have issued summons against Sharma to question her. Mumbai police have also summoned her asking her to appear on June 25. Similarly, Mumbai police in Thane have also asked her to appear on June 22.

MVA launches all-out attack on Centre over 'Agnipath'

The ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi on Friday slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the Centre for its 'Agnipath' scheme which has triggered tension and inflammatory protests in many parts of the country.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi on Friday slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the Centre for its 'Agnipath' scheme which has triggered tension and inflammatory protests in many parts of the country.

As reports of anti-Agnipath agitations pour in from different states, the MVA allies' sharp reactions ranged from "teasing the unemployed youth" to "BJP is anti-army" to "a Jumla-path" on the people of the country.

State Congress President Nana Patole said the BJP at the Centre has imposed yet another 'mindless and arbitrary' decision on the country like many others in the past.

"Only 4 years' service in the armed forces under the cut name of 'Agnipath' means that the youth of the country face a bleak future. Then, these young boys and girls will again be rendered jobless. The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is making a mockery of the people and deceiving the youth and the jobless of India," said Patole.

Nationalist Congress Party chief spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said under the BJP rule, the country is witnessing its highest-ever unemployment ratio and the Centre is not serious about finding a long-term solution for the millions of jobless youth.

"The new Agnipath scheme envisages unemployed youths of the country to join the Indian Armed Forces for a short service tenure of four years, and then fails to safeguard the long-term service prospects of these hopeful young men and women. The scheme lacks imagination and direction, and this is evident from the massive protests that have erupted all over the country," said Tapase.

Shiv Sena spokesperson Manisha Kayande termed Agnipath as yet another instance of how the government of

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is 'anti-army' though our brave soldiers are always prepared to sacrifice their lives for the nation. First there was the controversial policy of OROP which was opposed by the armed forces also, and now the Agnipath. Till now the youth could serve for 16 years and then if found physically fit, their tenure could be extended. But Agnipath will completely dilute it," said Kayande.

Slamming the scheme, she said "the 56-inch chest is nothing but a hype of 'Modi and BJP', and now they are even acting against the interests of the courageous soldiers who secure our borders from enemies."

"The Agnipath scheme is clearly an injustice on the young people who are the future of the country. We demand that this scheme should be immediately withdrawn," demanded Kayande.

Tapase said while earlier Modi had promised 'One Rank One Pension', under Agnipath, there will be 'No Rank, No Pension' or even gratuity for the youth who take up the 4-year jobs in the armed forces.

"Under such a scenario, how and where will the youth learn new skills to get them proper jobs after leaving the armed forces, and even the private sector will not accept them with full pay scales and the dignity they deserve,"

pointed out Tapase.

Congress chief spokesperson Atul Londhe said that presently, there are 62,29,000 vacancies in the Central Government, out of which 2,55,000 are in the Indian Army.

"The decision to recruit only 46,000 of them was made with great fanfare. After six months training and then 3.5 years in the job, those opting will get barely Rs 30,000-Rs 40,000 salary, no job security and no future provisions. The BJP government is gambling with the careers of our youths and Agnipath must be rolled back," said Londhe.

The trio of Patole, Tapase and Kayande raised the question of "what happened to Modi's tall promises of two crore jobs every year" made during the 2014 elections, and sought details of exactly how many work opportunities were created in the past 8 years of the BJP rule.

"It was nothing but an election gimmick and now even Agnipath is attracting massive protests by the disillusioned youth all over the country," added Kayande.

"Our valiant soldiers do not care about their lives while guarding the borders of the country. They don't concern themselves about any party or group and messing around with them is like 'compromising' with the nation's security," warned Patole.

BEYONCE'S 'RENAISSANCE' ALBUM TO FEATURE DANCE AND COUNTRY TRACKS



Los Angeles | Agencies

Say My Name' hitmaker Beyoncé recently announced and set the release date of her forthcoming sixth solo album, 'Renaissance' as July 29.

The said album will feature dance and country-leaning tracks, reports 'Variety'.

The album will also see contribu-

tions from hit songwriter Ryan Tedder, who co-wrote her 2008 hit 'Halo' as well as hits for Adele, Taylor Swift, the Jonas Bros, and his own group, 'OneRepublic'.

In addition, Raphael Saadiq is also involved in the project. He has crafted hits for Mary J. Blige, D'Angelo, Stevie Wonder, John Legend and Andra Day as well as his own excellent solo albums, and executive-pro-

duced 'A Seat at the Table', Beyoncé's sister Solange's widely praised 2016 album.

According to 'Variety', it was unclear whether the country songs will appear as a separate album, or as part of the first edition of 'Renaissance'.

Country is not new terrain for Beyoncé: 'Daddy Lessons', from 2016's 'Lemonade', is heavy

on twang and was even covered by the Chicks (then known as the Dixie Chicks). 'Variety' further states that it may well be possible that Beyoncé could drop a new song on Friday in honor of Juneteenth, as she did with her 'Black Parade' single in 2020.

Beyoncé has released four albums since her blockbuster 2016 outing 'Lemonade' although none of them are full Beyoncé solo albums.

Kit Harington attached to Jon Snow 'Game of Thrones' spinoff series

Los Angeles | Agencies

Game of Thrones' spinoff series based around Jon Snow is in early development.

According to 'Variety', actor Kit Harington is attached to reprise his role as the fan-favourite hero in the live-action show, which would take place after the events of 'Game of Thrones' -- potentially opening up what many thought was an iron-clad ending to the wildly popular series.

In the final season of 'Game of Thrones', Snow realised his true identity and that he could be an heir to the Iron Throne.

The series concluded with his exile from Westeros as he rides into the Haunted Forest with Ghost and the Wildlings to begin a new life, reports 'Variety'. Since the potential Jon

Snow sequel series would take place after the final season of 'Game of Thrones', it's possible that familiar characters -- such as his half-siblings Arya Stark (Maisie Williams) and Sansa Stark (Sophie Turner) -- could show their faces.

HBO's upcoming spinoff 'House of the Dragon', which is set 200 years before the original series, premieres on Aug. 21. Other 'Game of Thrones' spinoffs in development include 'Tales of Dunk and Egg', '10,000 Ships', '9 Voyages', 'Flea Bottom' and an animated series. Harington was nominated for two Emmys, in supporting actor and lead actor in a drama series, during his time on 'Game of Thrones'.



Ana de Armas stuns as Marilyn Monroe in 'Blonde' trailer



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Ana de Armas took everyone by surprise as she looked every-inch as Hollywood icon Marilyn Monroe in the latest 'Blonde' trailer.

Netflix has debuted the first evocative footage from

Andrew Dominik's 'Blonde'. The movie, based on the bestselling novel by Joyce Carol Oates, is notable for its NC-17 rating, reports 'Variety'.

The supporting cast includes Bobby Cannavale, Adrien Brody, Julianne Nicholson, Xavier Samuel

and Evan Williams.

The official 'Blonde' synopsis from Netflix reads: "(The film) boldly reimagines the life of one of Hollywood's most enduring icons, Marilyn Monroe. From her volatile childhood as Norma Jeane, through her rise to stardom and romantic entanglements,

'Blonde' blurs the lines of fact and fiction to explore the widening split between her public and private selves."

"Andrew's ambitions were very clear from the start -- to present a version of Marilyn Monroe's life through her lens," de Armas recently told Netflix Queue.

Drake releases seventh studio album 'Honestly, Nevermind'

Los Angeles | Agencies

As a follow-up to last year's 'Certified Lover Boy', Drake has released his seventh studio album titled 'Honestly, Nevermind'. Earlier, the rapper made the announcement for the album through his Instagram.

Kanye West was quick to like the post which has hip-hop fans reeling at who the album might possibly feature, reports 'Variety'.

He had also invited Drake to appear alongside him at his 'Free Larry Hoover' Benefit Concert in December of last year. The new LP includes 14 songs. Earlier, Drake had released the album's track list, revealing it was executive produced by Noah '40' Shebib, Oliver El-Khatib, Noel Cadastre and Black Coffee.

Drake's 'Certified Lover Boy', released in



September of 2021, featured some heavy-hitting collaborations from Lil Wayne, Kid Cudi, Future, Young Thug, Rick Ross and 21 Savage, amongst others.

According to 'Variety', the LP shot to No. 1 on the Billboard charts and was a standout with the viral tracks 'I'm Too Sexy' featuring Young Thug and Future and the 21 Savage and Project Pat-featuring 'Knife Talk'.

News of 'Honestly, Nevermind' comes on the heels of another highly anticipated album announcement as Beyoncé will be releasing 'Act I' of her next album 'Renaissance' on July 29.



Daryl McCormack, Emma Thompson designed their own sex scenes for 'Good Luck to You, Leo Grande'

while also slowly taking off pieces of their clothing.

Daryl told 'Variety' during conversation, "I remember at one point the three of us standing butt naked in the room, and Emma just went, 'I feel we're all being held by something bigger here. It really feels like we are meant to somehow tell this

bodies, with regards to our sexuality, with regards to all of that, within ourselves and do some

justice to this film", he added.

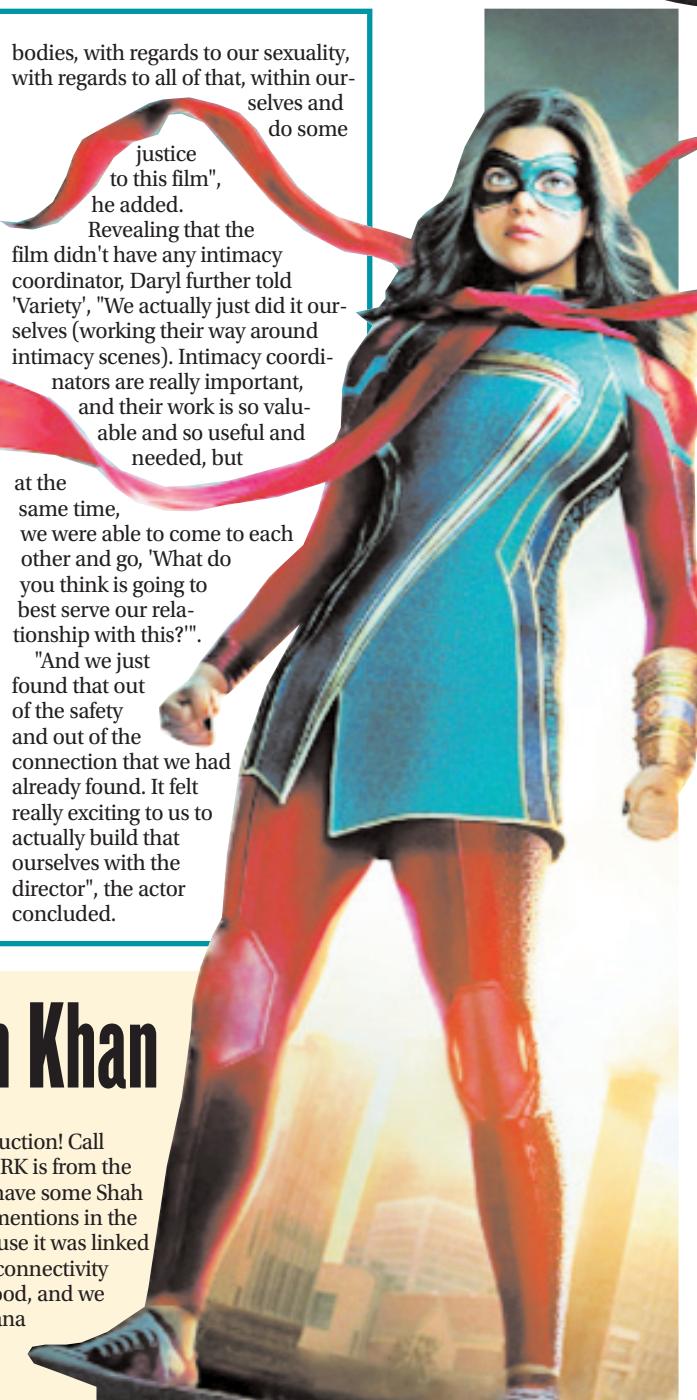
Revealing that the film didn't have any intimacy coordinator, Daryl further told 'Variety', "We actually just did it ourselves (working their way around intimacy scenes). Intimacy coordinators are really important, and their work is so valuable and so useful and needed, but

at the same time, we were able to come to each other and go, 'What do you think is going to best serve our relationship with this?'".

"And we just found that out of the safety and out of the connection that we had already found. It felt really exciting to us to actually build that ourselves with the director", the actor concluded.

According to 'Variety', to prepare for the drama's most intimate sex scenes, a private rehearsal was arranged, with Hyde, Thompson and McCormack sitting in a circle and discussing their bodies and sexuality story". "And what felt so significant was that we, the three of us, had to go on a journey with regards to our

story". "And what felt so significant was that we, the three of us, had to go on a journey with regards to our



'Ms Marvel' reveals her love for Shah Rukh Khan

Los Angeles | Agencies

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan has found a big fan in the superhero 'Ms Marvel' also known as Kamala Khan. With a new episode dropping every week, it tells the story of a South Asian teenager growing up in Jersey

City. The series also gives a massive shout-out to Shah Rukh Khan.

In this new clip from the series, Kamala Khan and her friend are seen talking about Shah Rukh Khan and his best movies, especially 'Baazigar' and 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge' (DDLJ).

Meanwhile, co-executive producer for the series Sana Amanat revealed in a recent interview that Shah Rukh's mentions in the web series are taken from the comics.

"If Shah Rukh Khan wants to be in this show, we will go film again! We'll go back to production. We're (definitely) going

back to production! Call somebody! SRK is from the comics. We have some Shah Rukh Khan mentions in the comics because it was linked to Kamala's connectivity with Bollywood, and we love him," Sana Amanat added.

Myleene Klass



Sports

absolute india

07

New Delhi, Saturday, June 18, 2022

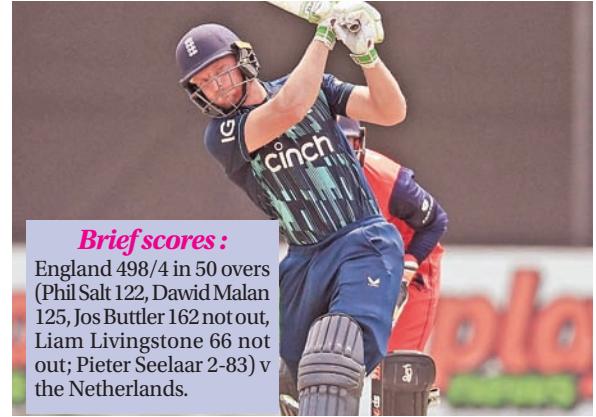
ENGLAND HIT MAMMOTH 498/4 AGAINST THE NETHERLANDS, REGISTER HIGHEST TEAM SCORE IN HISTORY OF ODI CRICKET

Amstelveen | Agencies

England on Friday registered the highest-ever score in the history of ODI cricket after they posted a mammoth total of 498/4 in 50 overs against the Netherlands in the first game of the three-match series at the VRA Stadium, here on Friday.

The Eoin Morgan-led England team broke their own record in men's cricket that they previously created when they scored 481 against Australia in June 2018 at Trent Bridge in Nottingham.

The Three Lions also made the highest ODI score, combining men's and women's cricket. Back in 2018, New Zealand Women scored 491 against Ireland Women. England also broke the record for the highest-ever List A score. Back in April 2007, Surrey made 496/4 against Gloucestershire at the Kennington Oval in London.



Brief scores :

England 498/4 in 50 overs (Phil Salt 122, Dawid Malan 125, Jos Buttler 162 not out, Liam Livingstone 66 not out; Pieter Seelaar 2-83) v the Netherlands.

After being put in to bat first, three England batters -- Philip Salt (122 off 93), Dawid Malan (125 off 109) and Jos Buttler (162 not out off 70) smashed centuries. Apart from them, Liam Livingstone also played a sensational knock (66 not out off 22) to help England post a record-breaking total.

It was the third instance of three players scoring hundreds for a team in the same

ODI innings. Both the previous instances came in 2015 by South Africa: by Hashim Amla, Rilee Rossouw, and AB de Villiers against West Indies at Wanderers and by Quinton de Kock, Faf du Plessis, and AB de Villiers against India at the Wankhede. During his innings, Buttler scored England's second-fastest hundred in ODIs, smashing his way to the mark off 47 balls. He now holds his side's

INDIA'S ASHOK MALIK WINS GOLD IN ASIA-OCEANIA PARA POWERLIFTING CHIPS

Pyeongtaek (South Korea):

The only representative with three legal lifts, India's Ashok Malik won a gold medal in total combined score in men's up to 65 kg class at the Asia-Oceania Para Powerlifting Championships 2022 here on Friday.

Malik also bagged a bronze medal in the individual category.

He clinched gold by lifting a total of 491 kg to finish ahead of Yi Zou of China and Amir Jafari Arangeh of Iran in the regional competition. The Chinese lifter had a total of 390 kg while the Iranian finished third with 382 kg. In the overall Individual category, Malik won bronze with a best lift of 173 kg.

Malik came up with consistent performance as he was the only lifter in the final group with three successful lifts and bagged the gold medal in total combined score. He started with the first lift of 150 kg and followed it up by lifting 168 kg and 173 kg in his next two attempts to finish with a total of 491 kg, which fetched him the gold medal.



German Open: Maria Sakkari reaches semis with win over Daria Kasatkina

Berlin | Agencies

World No. 6 Maria Sakkari reached the women's singles semi-finals of the German Open after beating No. 6 seed Daria Kasatkina 6-0, 6-3 in the quarterfinals, here on Friday.

It was emphatic revenge for Sakkari, who had not beaten Kasatkina in four previous encounters, including a 3-6, 6-3, 6-1 loss in the second round of Madrid last month. However, the pair had never played on grass before and the 26-year-old used the slick surface to her advantage to enhance her aggressive strategy.

Seeking to take control of each rally as soon as possible, Sakkari was quick to sense an opportunity to finish points with her forehand or at the



net. Consequently, she tallied 27 winners to only seven for Kasatkina, while also keeping her unforced error count down to 16 compared to Kasatkina's 11.

Appropriately, the result puts the Greek into her first career semifinal on grass. It is also her fourth WTA Tour semifinal of 2022 so far, and the first since her run to the

Indian Wells final in March. Sakkari will next face either No. 8 seed Belinda Bencic or Veronika Kudermetova.

Fourteen of Sakkari's winners came during a near-flawless opening set. She saved both of the breakpoints she faced and prevented Kasatkina from even reaching a game point to hold any of her service games.

Ranji Trophy semifinals

Mumbai in control against U.P.; M.P put Bengal in a spot of bother

Bengaluru | Agencies

Mumbai were in complete control of proceedings against Uttar Pradesh while Madhya Pradesh put Bengal in a spot of bother at the end of the fourth day's play in their respective Ranji Trophy semifinal matches, here on Friday.

Mumbai were 449/4 in their second innings, leading U.P. by monstrous 662 runs at stumps on Day 4 at the Just Cricket Academy.

Beginning the day at 133 for 1, Mumbai continued to pile on the runs as Yashavni Jaiswal scored his second hundred (181) of the match and joined an elite group of Mumbai batters while Armaan Jaffer compiled a patient 259-ball 127.

The duo stitched a substantial stand of 286 for the second wicket to put their side in command. After Jaffer got out to Shivam Mavi, U.P. had an opening but by then, the match had more or less slipped away from



their grasp. Sarfaraz Khan (23) and Shams Mulari (10) were unbeaten at the crease for Mumbai and will resume their innings on Day 5. It will be interesting to see whether Mumbai will declare their innings on the final day. In the other semifinal, Bengal were in a spot of bother at 96 for 4 in their second

dismissed Abhishek Porel and took the prized scalp of Manoj Tiwary.

Saransh Jain also took a wicket, dismissing Sudip Gharami LBW. Meanwhile, Abhimanyu Easwaran was unbeaten on 52 along with Anustup Majumdar (8) at the close of play. Earlier, Aditya Shrivastava (82) and Rajat Patidar (79) had played crucial hands to power M.P. to a good score of 281 in their second innings, with an overall lead of 281. On the other hand, Shahbaz Ahmed and Pradipta Pramanik shared nine wickets between them for Bengal.

Brief scores :

Mumbai 393 & 449/4 (Yashavni Jaiswal 181, Armaan Jaffer 127) lead Uttar Pradesh 180 by 662 runs
Madhya Pradesh 341 & 281 (Aditya Shrivastava 82, Rajat Patidar 79; Shahbaz Ahmed 5-79) lead Bengal 273 & 96/4 (Abhimanyu Easwaran 52 not out; Kumar Kartikeya 3-35) by 253 runs.

Sri Lanka level ODI series vs Australia 1-1

A dramatic series of events saw Australia lose from a winning position the rain-curtailed second One-day International game against Sri Lanka by 26 runs at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium here.

Pallekele | Agencies

After restricting Sri Lanka to a below-par 220/9 in 47.4 overs on Thursday night, Australia looked on course for victory, only for a dramatic series of events leading to the hosts equalising the five-match series 1-1.

On Thursday night, though, they lacked it. Only three batters made more than 30, with Kusal Mendis top-scoring with 36. They failed to convert good starts into innings of note as Australia struck at regular intervals.



Brief scores :

Sri Lanka 220/9 in 47.4 overs (Kusal Mendis 36, Dhananjaya de Silva 34, Dasun Shanaka 34; Pat Cummins 4/35, Glenn Maxwell 2/26, Chamika Karunaratne 3/47, Dunieth Wellalage 2/25) by 26 runs (DL method).

IND V SA, 4TH T20I

India thrash South Africa by 82 runs, level series 2-2

Rajkot | Agencies

On the back of a blistering 55 from Dinesh Karthik and Avesh Khan scalping 4/18, India thrashed South Africa by 82 runs at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium here on Friday. Despite losing the toss for the fourth time in a row, India ended up on the winning side, meaning that the hosts squared the five-match series 2-2, with Sunday's match at Bengaluru now a winner takes it all affair. After Karthik's career-best efforts of 27 ball 55, hitting nine fours and two sixes at a strike-rate of 203.7 apart from sharing a 65-run stand off 33 balls with Hardik Pandya (46 off 31 balls) propelled India to a competitive 169/6, South Africa were never in the chase from the word go, with only three batters reaching double figures and crashed to 87 all out in 16.5 overs. With India's bowlers hitting hard lengths consistently, seamers finding variable bounce and spinners keeping things tight while getting hint of turn, it was difficult for South Africa to chase 170. It was the bounce which hit captain Temba Bavuma on the shoulder off Bhuvneshwar Kumar. But while taking a single off Avesh Khan, Bavuma injured



his left elbow and had to retire hurt for eight. With the visitors struggling with their timing and Bavuma leaving the crease, one could feel that South Africa could slip in trouble. A massive mix-up for a quick single resulted in Quinton de Kock run-out for 14. In the next over, Dwaine Pretorius tried to break free from dot-ball pressure by slogging but was caught behind off Avesh Khan for a six-ball duck. Heinrich Klaassen survived an lbw appeal on umpire's call off Axar Patel in the eighth over. But in the next over, he failed to connect with the sweep off Yuzvendra Chahal and was trapped

plumb in front of stumps. David Miller was the next batter to fall as Harshal got one to jag in and uproot the off-stump. In the 14th over, Avesh ensured that the South African challenge was as good as over. He had Rassie van der Dussen holing out to deep mid-wicket, then rattled Marco Jansen with a bouncer and got him holing out to the same region on the very next ball. Avesh closed the over by having Keshav Maharaj caught easily at mid-on. Chahal and Axar wrapped up the innings by taking a wicket each to complete India's thrashing of the Proteas.

Brief scores :

India 169/6 in 20 overs (Dinesh Karthik 55, Hardik Pandya 46; Lungi Ngidi 2/20, Anrich Nortje 1/21) beat South Africa 87/9 in 16.5 overs (Rassie van der Dussen 20, Quinton de Kock 14, Avesh Khan 4/18, Yuzvendra Chahal 2/21) by 82 runs

WTT Contender: Sathiyan Gnanasekaran enters round of 16, beats world No. 6 Darko

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian paddler Sathiyan Gnanasekaran entered the men's singles round of 16 in the WTT Contender after registering an upset 3-1 win over world No. 6 and reigning European champion Jorgic Darko in Zagreb, Croatia.

A courageous Sathiyan beat second-seeded Slovenian player Darko 6-11, 12-10, 11-9, 12-10 in their round of 32 clash.

"Went all guns blazing as I secured a MASSIVE WIN tonight taking down the World Rank 6 & current European cup champion Jorgic Darko (SLO) 3-1 in the Men Singles Round of 32 here in WTT Contender Zagreb 2022," Sathiyan tweeted on late Thursday night.

The Indian will now face Chinese player Chen Yuanyu in the last 16. Notably, this is Sathiyan's second win over a player ranked inside the top 10



in the world. Prior to this Sathiyan had beaten former World No 5 Tomokazu Harimoto of Japan during the 2019 Asian Championships. The 29-year-old is also part of the Indian table tennis

squad for the upcoming 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games, which is to start on July 28. The ongoing tournament in Croatia will help Sathiyan to fine-tune his preparations for the CWG.

2026 FIFA World Cup to be held across 16 cities including Los Angeles and Miami

New York | Agencies

The United States will have 11 of the 16 hosts cities at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, which will also feature matches in Mexico and Canada, the world football governing body has said.

The 2026 edition of the World Cup will be the first to feature 48 teams and three host countries, and FIFA president Gianni Infantino said on Thursday night that he was delighted by the "unparalleled competitiveness of this selection process".

Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Kansas City, Dallas, Atlanta, Houston, Boston, Philadelphia, Miami and New York/New Jersey were the US cities named during an event in New York City.



Mexico will hold games in Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey while Canada's Vancouver and Toronto were also chosen from a preliminary list of 22.

The cities which missed out were Cincinnati, Denver, Nashville, Orlando, Washington DC/Baltimore and Edmonton.

The US will be staging the event for a second time, having also done so in 1994. Mexico was the tournament host in 1970 and 1986.

West Indies pace bowlers have Bangladesh on the mat in opening Test



North Sound (Antigua) | Agencies

West Indies had an inauspicious start in the opening Test against Bangladesh at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, earning the dubious distinction of collecting six ducks as the hosts bundled them out for 103 in just 32.5 overs here on Friday (IST). As Alzarri Joseph and

Jayden Seales grabbed three wickets each, Shakib Al Hasan's side looked bereft of answers in the batting department.

Lasting less than a session and a half, Bangladesh narrowly avoided a fourth double-figure score in the current World Test Championship cycle, unable to deal with the West Indies' fast-bowling attack.

The hosts will begin day

two at 95/2, just eight runs shy of Bangladesh's first innings total.

Brief scores :

Bangladesh 1st innings 103 in 32.5 overs (Tamim Iqbal 29, Shakib Al Hasan 51; Jayden Seales 3/33, Alzarri Joseph 3/33) vs West Indies 95/2 in 48 overs (Kraigg Brathwaite 42 not out, John Campbell 24).



Genelia D'Souza's grand re-entry in Tollywood with bilingual movie

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Genelia D'Souza, who once was one of the top heroines in Tollywood, was last seen in the 2012 film 'Naa Ishtam'. So it's been 10 years since she last acted in a Telugu film. With a Kannada-Telugu bilingual feature, she will again return to the Telugu film industry.

Furthermore, Kireeti, the son of former Karnataka minister and well-known industrialist Gali Janardhan Reddy, will make his screen debut in this film.

When it comes to Genelia's part, she has apparently been offered the role of CEO of a software company and has higher importance in this bilingual movie. The makers will soon make Genelia's role official, as per the sources.

Kireeti will be romancing Sree Leela, who is most

known for her role in the film 'Pelli SandaD'. Billed as an action-based romantic drama, the movie is expected to have many other entertaining aspects.



I enjoy portraying challenging roles: Aaditi Pohankar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Aaditi Pohankar says it was highly challenging for her to play the character of Bhumika Pardeshi in the web series 'She'.

Aaditi is seen portraying an undercover cop and a secret seductress. She says it was emotionally draining to do this role to perfection. "The sec-

ond season will give a lot more context to Bhumika's past. As an artiste I enjoy portraying challenging roles that allow me to experience a range of varying emotions," says the actress who was seen in Marathi action film 'Lai Bhaari' and rose to fame with 'She' and 'Aashram' web series. She further shares how the role had an impact on her mind and how she connects emotionally with her character.

"While shooting for Season 2, there were days when I've just gone

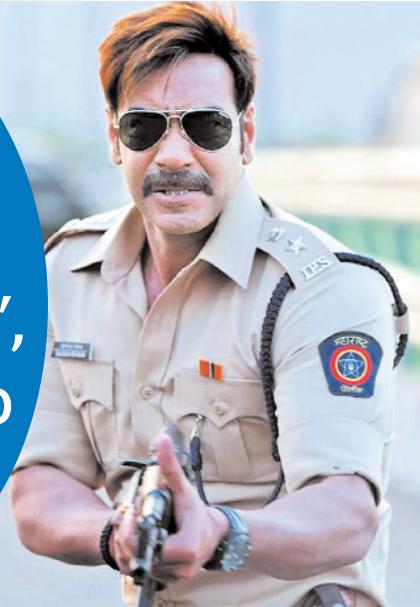
to a corner and cried because I deeply empathised with what Bhumika was going through. There are many Bhumikas in this world, her plight and pain will resonate with a lot of women," she adds. The series also stars Kishore Kumar G, Vishwas Kini, Shivani Rangole, Sam Mohan, Suhita Thatté, amongst others in pivotal roles. Written and created by Imtiaz Ali, the series is directed by Arif Ali and is produced by Viacom18 Studios' Tipping Point and Window Seat Films.

Rohit Shetty confirms 'Singham 3', ready to go on floors

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After the humongous success of Ajay Devgn starrer Singham and Singham Returns, the third part of the cop drama is all set to go on floor. Reportedly, the ace filmmaker Rohit Shetty confirmed the same while interacting with a news portal. Rohit Shetty, who is the host of popular adventure-based reality show

Khatron Ke Khiladi is currently in Capetown. While shooting there, he confirmed that the sequence is on the cards. Spilling the beans on his plan to make Singham 3, Rohit Shetty told the news portal, "I am focussing on the next chapter of Singham. We will be starting the film in April next year, after Cirkus releases. While Singham is technically part of Simba and Sooryavanshi, it's



been a long time since I worked with Ajay. The last Singham came in 2014 and is yet one of the most favourite films on satellite. Time has changed and the canvas has become bigger and I have been wanting to make something with Ajay." Rohit Shetty further added that Singham 3 is going to be 'massive'. He said, "I think it will take about a year, only after that will we think of another film".

Talking about Khatron Ke Khiladi 12, it will launch on July 2 and air on weekends at 9 pm. Besides this, Rohit Shetty is gearing up for the release of Cirkus which stars Ranveer Singh, Pooja Hegde and Jacqueline Fernandez in the pivotal roles. The filmmaker is also working on his first web show, Indian Police Force, which features Sidharth Malhotra, Shilpa Shetty and Vivek Oberoi.

Nikamma: A futile attempt to crack you up

FILM REVIEW

BY AAKRUTI BAGLA

Directed by : Sabbir Khan**Starcast :** Shilpa Shetty Kundra, Samir Soni, Abhimanyu Dassani, Shirley Setia**Runtime :** 152 minutes**Rating :** 2/5

Nikamma is a remake of 2017 Telugu film Middle Class Abbayi. But has Sabbir Khan managed to rightly entertain us with its Hindi version?

STORY

Adi, a middle-class boy, confronts a gangster in order to protect his sister-in-law whom he disliked previously. His stance towards her gradually changed after he learnt of her sacrifice for him and his girlfriend. But how does this love-hate relationship between the Devar-Bhabhi evolve and how does he manage to protect her, is what lies in the 152 minutes.

REVIEW

While one is aware of putting so-called logic aside when we watch a masala entertainer, it needs to be presented with sheer conviction or articulated well. Despite having the penchant towards the masala entertainer genre, Sabbir Khan's shoddy execution fails not only to entertain, but also to thrill. Overall, he fails to hit the right mark.

The first half is used to set up the story, but doesn't move at a desired pace. The music is a big letdown and only adds to the runtime.



Also, the film could have been tighter, which could have kept its perspective in place despite being predictable.

Inspite of being positioned as an action, the scenes are badly choreographed and not fleshed out well. However, some of the jokes do fall flat, and a few even seem dated. Some work could have been done on that as well.

PERFORMANCES

Shilpa Shetty was the only saving grace of the film as it was a delight to see her on the big screen after 14 years. But it was the insipid writing that sal-

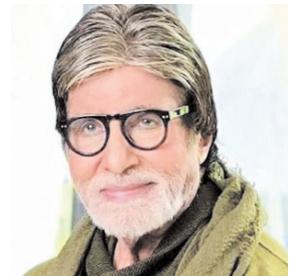
vaged her performance. But, one can surely expect a surprising element from her end, which despite being predictable is a fine watch.

While young talents Abhimanyu Dassani and Shirley Setia energy was palpable, at places they went on board. Shirley Setia does not have much screen time and her role is passable. While Abhimanyu also fails to strike the right chord. His equation with Shilpa lacked the emotional depth.

Overall, Nikamma is an amalgamation of fun, action, and romance. But expecting too much from it would be a little disappointing as it has nothing pleasant to offer and can be skipped.

Amitabh Bachchan recalls days having five blockbusters in one year

Team Absolute | Mumbai



Millennium star Amitabh Bachchan is an avid social media. The veteran actor often shares endearing posts either giving a glimpse of his day or recalling fond memories from the past. In his recent post, the actor shared a picture of the public standing in queue for advance booking of his iconic film DON. He also got nostalgic remembering his five blockbuster releases running in theatres for more than 50 weeks.

His post read, "Advance booking of my film DON ..! And they said. THEY.... that the queues were a mile long released in 1978 .. 44 years !!

AND these also released same year:
DON, Kasme Vaade, Trishul, Mugdhar Ka

Sikandar, Ganga Ki Saugandh 5 Blockbusters in one year !! some of them ran more than 50 weeks...

Kya din the wo bhi!!"

On the professional front, the actor was recently seen in Runway 34 which starred Ajay Devgn as well. Apart from this, he is gearing up for the release of magnum opus Brahmastra alongside Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor. He is also all set to share screen space with Deepika Padukone yet again via Project K.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shriya Pilgaonkar says that she's here to showcase her versatility through her performances and is consciously seeking projects that prevent her from being stereotyped.

Shriya says: "It feels surreal at this point that both my shows 'Guilty Minds' and 'The Broken News' have got such critical appreciation and love from the viewers. This truly is an exciting, new phase in my career and I have nothing but gratitude for the love and appreciation coming my way. "It means a lot to receive messages, especially

DON'T WANT TO BE STEREOTYPE: SHRIYA PILGAONKAR

cially from young girls who have been inspired by the characters of Kashaf and Radha. I've never taken this for granted." She added: "After playing a forensics expert, a lawyer and a news reporter, I am now doing a comedy-drama 'Taaza Khabar' with Bhuvan Bam where I play a sex worker. It's unlike anything I've done before which is super exciting.

"There's another film coming up which is a romantic comedy of sorts. I want to continue to challenge myself and don't want to give people a chance to stereotype me in any way which is why I am consciously seeking out different genres and characters. I also want to explore more films."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Kriti Sanon