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IMF slashes India's 2022 growth forecast to 7.4%



Given the gloomy global outlook and inflation contagion, IMF's growth forecast for India moderating it down by 0.8 percentage point is rational. Indian economy seems to be far more resilient at this point in time as others like US and China are talking a bigger hit with the forecast cut down to 1.4 and 1.1 percentage points respectively.

Yashwant Raj | Washington

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday slashed its annual growth projection for India by 0.8 percentage points to 7.4 per cent for 2022 and forecast "increasingly gloomy developments" for the global economy such as high inflation, downturn in China because of Covid, and spillovers from the war in Ukraine. The fund cut its 2023 projection for India also by 0.8 percentage points to 6.1 per cent. These revised forecasts are relative to those in the fund's April world outlook report. The 2022 cut for India "reflects mainly less favorable external conditions and more rapid policy tightening", said the

fund's World Economic Outlook Update, titled "Gloomy and More Uncertain". The World Bank has also slashed its projections for India to 7.5 per cent from 8 per cent for 2022-23, blaming it on a surge in Covid-19 cases, related mobility restrictions and the war in Ukraine. The IMF forecast for India was called "rational" by an official who spoke on background. "Further, IMF continues to project India's growth rate in 2022 as the fastest growing major economy with 7.4 per cent and only other country around this rate is Saudi Arabia with 7.6 per cent. Nearest to this ASEAN-5 at 5.3 per cent while China is way down to 3.3 per cent."

GLOBAL GROWTH FORECAST SLASHED FOR THE NEXT EIGHTEEN MONTHS

London: The International Monetary Fund has slashed its growth forecasts for the next 18 months after warning that the world's three biggest economies are all stalling. The Guardian reported. The Washington-based IMF said it now expected the global economy to grow by 3.2 per cent in 2022 -- a 0.4 point reduction since April -- while inflation is now believed to be higher than the previous forecasts. The slowdown is predicted to continue next year, when growth is now forecast to be 2.9 per cent -- 0.7 points lower than had been pencilled in three months ago.

SC SAYS FREEBIES TO INFLUENCE VOTERS' SERIOUS ISSUE, ASKS CENTRE FOR WAY TO CURB IT

TAKE A STAND

A BENCH, HEADED BY CHIEF JUSTICE N.V. RAMANA ASKED THE CENTRE, TO FIND OUT FROM THE FINANCE COMMISSION, IF THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF CURBING STATE GOVERNMENTS AND POLITICAL PARTIES FROM PROMISING AND DISTRIBUTING IRRATIONAL FREEBIES TO INDUCE VOTERS. IN APRIL THIS YEAR, THE EC TOLD THE SUPREME COURT THAT OFFERING FREEBIES EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER THE ELECTIONS IS A POLICY DECISION OF THE POLITICAL PARTY, AND IT CANNOT REGULATE STATE POLICIES AND DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE PARTIES. THE TOP COURT WAS HEARING A PIL BY UPADHYAY AGAINST THE ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE BY POLITICAL PARTIES FOR INDUCING VOTERS, THROUGH FREEBIES, DURING ELECTIONS.



Initially, the bench queried Additional Solicitor General K.M. Nataraj to find out Centre's stand on the issue. "You take a stand whether freebies should continue or not," the bench, also comprising Justices Krishna Murari and Hima Kohli, told Nataraj, representing the Central government. On the other hand, counsel representing the Election Commission submitted that it was held in previous judgments that a manifesto was part of the promises of a political party. The EC counsel suggested that the Central government could bring a law to deal with the issue, but Nataraj suggested that it falls under the domain of the

We are on freebies to bribe the electorate. Now if you say it's hands off for you, then what is the purpose of the Election Commission of India? SC to EC

EC.Taking exceptions to Nataraj's submissions, the bench asked the Central government to take a stand on the matter. "Why don't you say that

you have nothing to do with it and the ECI has to take a call? I'm asking if the government of India is considering whether it's a serious issue or not? "Why are you hesitating to take a stand? You take a stand and then we'll decide whether these freebies are to be continued or not," it told Nataraj. At this juncture, the bench turned to senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who was present in the courtroom for another matter. "Mr. Sibal is here as a senior parliamentarian. What is your view?... How to control these freebies?" Sibal said freebies were a "serious issue" and it would be not fair to put the liability on the Central government. He said this issue had to be tackled at the state government level and suggested tapping into the expertise of the Finance Commission. Citing that the Finance Commission is an independent body, Sibal added that while making allocations to the states, it can examine debts of each individual state and could scrutinize whether offers of freebies are viable, or not. The bench then told Nataraj: "Please find out from the Finance Commission. Will list this sometime next week... what is the authority to initiate debate...". The top court scheduled the matter for further hearing on August 3.

Rahul Gandhi detained, released later : Delhi Police



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was released by the Delhi Police almost over six hours after he was detained during his party's march from Parliament to Rashtrapati Bhawan, officials said Tuesday. Rahul was detained during a protest march carried out by the Congress party from Parliament to Rashtrapati Bhawan. However, as the parliamentarians moved forward to give a memorandum to President Droupadi Murmu, the Delhi Police stopped them midway near Vijay Chowk. Subsequently, the Congress parliamentarians, including Rahul Gandhi, sat in the middle of the road near Parliament, holding placards and raised slogans against the probe agency ED and the Central government. Later, Rahul Gandhi among several other leaders was detained by the police and taken to new police lines, Kingsway Police camp in a bus.

SONIA GANDHI SUMMONED AGAIN ON WEDNESDAY

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi again on Wednesday to join the investigation in connection with the National Herald matter. Wednesday will be the third day of her questioning. On Tuesday she was questioned for almost six hours in two sessions. Earlier in the day, she arrived at the ED headquarters at 11 a.m. along with her daughter Priyanka Gandhi who was carrying a medicine box.



Media must confine to honest journalism: CJ

On July 23, Justice Ramana hit out at electronic and social media "trials", saying that media run 'kangaroo courts' at times on issues and even experienced judges find it difficult to decide.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Chief Justice N.V. Ramana on Tuesday observed that independent journalism is the backbone of democracy and the media must confine itself to honest journalism without using it as a tool to expand its influence and business interests. "When a media house has other business interests, it becomes vulnerable to external pressures. Often, the business interests prevail over the spirit of independent journalism. As a result, democracy gets compromised," he said at the release of book "The Geeta Vijnana Upanishad" authored by Gulab Kothari. The Chief Justice stressed that independent journalism is the backbone of democracy and

journalists are the eyes and the ears of the people. "It is the responsibility of media houses to present facts. Especially in the Indian social scenario, people still believe that whatever is printed is true. All I want to say is that the media must confine itself to honest journalism without using it as a tool to expand its influence and business interests," he added. He pointed out that there is still a huge lacuna when it comes to systemic support for journalists in India. "Unfortunately, we still do not have an award which is comparable to the Pulitzer, and neither do we produce many Pulitzer winning journalists in India. I urge upon all the stakeholders to introspect as to why our standards are not considered good enough for international recognition and laurels," said the Chief Justice.



RAINS TRIGGER FLASH FLOODS IN AMARNATH SHRINE AREA

Srinagar: Heavy rains in the Amarnath shrine area triggered flash floods on Tuesday and security forces evacuated 4,000 Yatis to safety, officials said. Police sources said heavy rains occurred in Amarnath shrine area in the afternoon. "Alert security forces deployed in the area swung into action immediately and evacuated 4,000 Yatis to safety," a source said.

OUR PARTY'S IDEOLOGY IS COUNTRY'S IDEOLOGY: KIREN RIJJU ON UCC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Law Minister Kiren Rijju dropped hints in Parliament on Tuesday over his party's stand on the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC). The minister was responding to a question by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey who asked Rijju if the time has arrived for the implementation of the UCC. Dubey also wanted to know the Central government's stand on the matter. Responding to the query, the Law Minister said: "You know what our government's thinking is. Whatever is our ideology, consider it as the country's ideology. Whatever



we think... is for the country... I'm proud of it."

Notably, just a few days ago, Rijju had said in Parliament that no decision has been yet taken by the government on the implementation of the UCC in the country as the matter is still subjudice with some petitions pending in the Supreme Court.

NO PROVISION TO ACCOMMODATE MEDICAL STUDENTS FROM FOREIGN INSTITUTES: CENTRE

New Delhi: There is no provision to accommodate or transfer medical students from any foreign medical institutes to Indian medical colleges, the Parliament was told on Tuesday. "There are no such provisions in Indian Medical Council Act 1956 & National Medical Commission Act, 2019 as well as the regulations to accommodate or transfer medical students from any foreign medical institutes to Indian medical colleges," Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare Bharti Pravin Pawar told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply to a question of the delay in accommodating those medical students. Pawar also said that the permission has not been given by the NMC to transfer or accommodate any foreign medical students in any Indian medical institute or university. On a question of the total numbers of such students, she said that as per information received from the Ministry of External Affairs, about 20,000 Indian students returned from Ukraine.

Meta's fact-checking programme will now include more Indian languages

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Meta, formerly known as Facebook, on Tuesday announced that it is adding four new languages to its fact-checking programme in India. The programme will now include Kashmiri, Bhojpuri, Odia and Nepali, in addition to the existing 11 Indian languages, the company said in a statement. In addition, it has also partnered with NewsMeter, a fact checker primarily focused on the southern states in the country. The partnership will help connect people to accurate and ver-

ified information and enhance Meta's fact-checking capabilities in regional Indian languages including Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Tamil, the company said. Globally, Meta works with more than 80 fact-checking partners that review and rate content in over 60 languages. All of its fact-checking partners have been certified through the independent, non-partisan International Fact-Checking Network. With the new partnership, Meta will have 11 fact-checking partners in India, making it the country with the most number of third party fact checking partners globally.

MONKEYPOX MAY NOT BE LIMITED TO GAY, BISEXUAL MEN, CAN SPREAD TO OTHERS: WHO

Washington | Agencies
More severe cases could become apparent if the virus spreads to more immunologically vulnerable groups like young children, pregnant women and the immunocompromised, Smallwood was quoted as saying. While several countries have already stepped up vaccination programmes for people most at risk, the vaccines are designed primarily for treating smallpox, said Smallwood adding more information is needed to determine their efficacy as the monkeypox virus continues to spread. The WHO has activated its highest alert level for the escalating outbreak, declaring the virus a public health emergency of international concern.

Smallwood, senior emergency officer at the WHO, there is little evidence to suggest that the disease will remain confined to gay and bisexual communities, NBC reported. She cautioned against complacency in the rapidly escalating monkeypox outbreak, which has so far caused more than 16,000 cases in about 75 countries and five deaths in Africa. "At the moment, cases continue to be reported among men who have sex with men for the most part, but we should not expect that to remain as such," Smallwood said. "If it does spread to other groups, particularly to people who are vul-

nerable to severe monkeypox disease, which we know there are certain groups that are more prone to severe illness, then we might see increased public health impact," she added. It is not uncommon for a virus outbreak to start in one particular group or setting before spreading more widely in the general population, Smallwood said, noting that health authorities could take cues from the early findings. This would now draw more attention to the outbreak and, as a consequence, research on vaccines and other modes of treatment, Smallwood said.

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19 OPPN MEMBERS IN RS SUSPENDED FOR A WEEK

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Nineteen opposition Members on Tuesday were suspended from Rajya Sabha for a week for disrupting House proceedings.

The 19 members include seven from the Trinamool Congress, six from the DMK, three from Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), two from CPI-M and one from CPI.

Suspended Trinamool Rajya Sabha members are Sushmita Dev, Mausam Noor, Shanta Chhetri, Dola Sen, Santanu Sen, Abir Ranjan Biswas and Nadiumal Haque.

Six suspended DMK members are Kanimozhi N.V.N Somu, M. Shanmugam, M. Mohamed Abdulla, S. Kalyanasundaram, R. Girirajan and N.R. Elango. Other suspended members are B. Lingaiah Yadav, Ravichandra Vaddiraju and Damodar Rao Divakonda of TRS, V. Sivadasan and A.A. Rahim of CPI-M and Sandosh Kumar of CPI. Deputy chairman Hariवंश said the Members were suspended for showing utter disregard to the House and the authority of the Chair. The Chair asked the suspended members to leave the House, but they kept protesting in the Well, leading to



two adjournments.

Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs V. Muraliedharan moved a motion to suspend the members. But when the motion was adopted by a voice vote, Deputy Chairman Hariवंश read out the names of 19 members who have been suspended for the remainder of the week.

The proceedings were first adjourned for 15 minutes and then for

an hour after the suspended members refused to leave the House when it met again. Finally, the House was adjourned for the day to meet on Wednesday at 11 a.m.

The Opposition members have been continuously protesting in the House demanding discussion on price rise, inflation, hiked GST rates and other issues since the start of Monsoon Session.

YOUTH CONG'S BV SRINIVAS MANHANDLED, POLICE ASSURE DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST ERRANT COPS

New Delhi: Indian Youth Congress' president BV Srinivas was allegedly manhandled by the police personnel while he was being detained during the party's protest in the national capital on Tuesday.

In a video of Srinivas, which is going viral on social media, a police personnel could be seen snatching the Congress leader's hair as a dozen policemen tried to bundle him inside their vehicle.

In the same video, Srinivas too could be seen struggling to get out of the grip of policemen and talk to the media persons.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi district) Amrutha Guguloth said they are trying to identify the police staff who allegedly manhandled Srinivas. "Disciplinary action would be initiated against the staff after identifying," the DCP assured.

Earlier, the Delhi Police detained hundreds of party workers and parliamentarians, including Rahul Gandhi from two different locations - near Parliament and outside Congress party headquarters at 24, Akbar Road. Srinivas was detained from outside the AICC office.



Kargil Vijay Diwas: Service chiefs lay wreaths at National War Memorial



Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the country celebrated Kargil Vijay Diwas on Tuesday, Army chief General Manoj Pandey, Navy chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar and Air Force's Air Chief Marshal V.R. Choudhary laid wreaths at the National War Memorial in Delhi.

Kargil Vijay Diwas is celebrated across the country on this day. 23 years ago on July 26, 1999, the brave soldiers of India gave a befitting reply to Pakistan and drove out the Pakistani intruders. On this occasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has saluted the spirit of the soldiers, remembering the valour of the Indian Army. "Kargil Vijay Diwas is a symbol of pride and glory of Mother Bharati. On this occasion, my salute to all the brave sons of the country who have accomplished their valour in the defence of the motherland,"

Modi tweeted.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has also saluted the bravery, courage and sacrifice of the armed forces on Kargil Vijay Diwas. "India salutes the bravery, courage and sacrifice of our armed forces. They fought bravely in extremely harsh conditions to protect our motherland. Their valour and indomitable spirit will always be etched as a defining moment in the history of India," he tweeted. President Droupadi Murmu also remembered the valour and determination of the army on this occasion. "Kargil Vijay Diwas is a symbol of extraordinary valour and determination of our armed forces. I bow to all the brave soldiers who laid down their lives to protect Mother India. All the countrymen will always be indebted to them and their family members," Murmu wrote on Twitter.

Absconding Meghalaya BJP leader accused of running brothel held

Shillong | Agencies

The BJP's Meghalaya unit Vice-President Bernard N. Marak, against whom look out notice was issued by the state police after five children were rescued and 73 people arrested on Saturday from a brothel reportedly run by him in West Garo Hills district, has been arrested from Uttar Pradesh, the police said on Tuesday.

An official said a Meghalaya Police team led by senior officers would be leaving for Uttar Pradesh to bring Marak here on transit remand.

The BJP leader, who has been absconding following the Saturday's police raid at the farmhouse at Tura, was arrested in Hapur district by the Uttar Pradesh police, hours after the Meghalaya police issued a look out notice against Marak, who had been booked under different sections under POCSO and the Immoral Trafficking Act. A Meghalaya court had also issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against Marak, who through several statements and video messages denied the



charge and accused Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma of political vendetta. On Saturday, the police acting on a tip-off conducted an eight-hour-long raid at Rimpu Bagan, a farmhouse owned by militant-turned-politician Marak alias Rimpu, in West Garo Hills district.

West Garo Hills district police chief Vivekanand Singh had said that police rescued five minors -- four boys and one girl -- who were found locked inside dingy cabin-like unhygienic rooms at Rimpu Bagan, comprising 30 rooms.

Jodhpur flooded: Many trains cancelled, schools closed

Jaipur | Agencies

Heavy rain wreaked havoc in Jodhpur as water was seen gushing through the streets making parked cars float in some areas. The traffic came to a standstill due to waterlogging reported at many places and schools were closed.

In fact, torrential rain in the city which started from 7 p.m. on Monday continued for five hours due to which roads were waterlogged and over 30 colonies were flooded with water.

Looking at the flood-like situation in the city, district collector Himanshu Gupta ordered the closure of the schools, both government and private. At the same time, the



administration cancelled two trains due to water overflowing the tracks.

It was being said that this was Jodhpur's first heavy rain in the last 22 days of the monsoon season. It has rained 118mm since Monday

evening till 8 a.m. Tuesday. Several areas reported power outages.

Commuters had to face a harrowing time due to waterlogging at the Jodhpur railway station.

Rajasthan has been witnessing

heavy rainfall since the start of the week. Bhillwara recorded the highest 205mm rainfall in the last 24 hours, which was followed by Chittaurgarh with 179 mm rain and Jodhpur with 111mm.

WBSSC scam: Partha Chatterjee had air-conditioned apartment for 4 pet dogs

Kolkata | Agencies

Enforcement Directorate (ED) sleuths probing the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) recruitment multi-crore scam, have found that minister Partha Chatterjee had an air-conditioned apartment exclusively for his four pet dogs.

This was found by the ED sleuths while segregating the huge properties and assets that have direct and indirect links with the former education minister and Trinamool Congress secretary general, Partha Chatterjee.

Currently, the ED sleuths are trying to segregate such properties and assets in three categories -- properties directly owned by Chatterjee, properties owned by him jointly with his close confidants or aides like Arpita Mukherjee and properties that he gifted to his aides.

While doing this segregation, the ED sleuths were quite amazed to come across a luxurious flat owned by Chatterjee, currently the state commerce & industries minister, which is dedicated to



house four pet dogs of the minister.

Incidentally, this pet-dedicated accommodation of the minister, is in the same posh Diamond City Complex at Tollygunge in South Kolkata that houses the residence of his close aide, Arpita Mukherjee, from where the ED recovered huge treasures in forms of Indian and foreign currencies, gold ornaments, sale deeds of multiple flat and other expensive items.

"As per our estimates, the pet-dedicated accommodation, which is centrally air conditioned, will fetch an estimated market value of over Rs 1 crore. As per the documents available with us, the accommodation of Arpita Mukherjee in the same complex, where huge cash was recovered, was also gifted to her by Chatterjee. Apart from that there are two other flats in the same complex, one of which is owned directly by the minister and the other jointly with Arpita Mukherjee. It seems that Diamond City complex was the epicenter of the illegal transaction associated with the scam," confirmed an ED official.

ALLAHABAD HC DENIES BAIL TO ASHISH MISHRA

Lucknow | Agencies

The Allahabad High Court on Tuesday rejected the bail petition of Ashish Mishra, the son of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra, in connection with the October 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence.

The verdict was delivered by a Lucknow bench of the court comprising Justice Krishna Pal, which said that Ashish Mishra might influence witnesses if granted bail. Ashish Mishra, whose car was part of the convoy that ran over eight people, including four protesting farmers, in Lakhimpur Kheri last year, is the prime accused in the murder and conspiracy case.

The Lucknow bench had granted bail in February this year. However, the Supreme Court in April set aside the bail order and had directed the high court to reconsider his bail plea after affording adequate opportunity to the victims' side. In May, the high court rejected the bail pleas of co-accused Lavkush, Ankit Das, Sumit Jaiswal, and Shishupal. The Uttar Pradesh Special Investigation Team (SIT), which has been probing the case, said in January that the



unrest created at the protest site of the farmers agitating against agricultural laws was a "pre-planned conspiracy", and not an act of negligence.

The SIT had filed a charge sheet spanning approximately 5,000 pages against the 14 accused in the case.

It also recommended the state government to challenge Ashish Mishra's bail, stating that he is an influential person and could tamper with evidence while being out on bail. However, the state government had not challenged the bail in the Supreme Court.

The appeal in the apex court had been filed by the families of the victims.

Haj organisers don't conduct religious ceremony, can't be exempted from GST: SC

The Supreme Court Tuesday dismissed a clutch of petitions filed by various private tour operators seeking Goods and Services Tax (GST) exemption for the Haj and Umrah tours offered by them.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A bench, headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar and comprising Justices Abhay S. Oka and C.T. Ravikumar said: "The service rendered by HGOs (Haj group organisers) to Haj pilgrims is to facilitate them to reach at the destination to perform rituals/religious ceremonies. No religious ceremony is performed or conducted by the HGOs. The religious ceremony is conducted by Haj pilgrims or by someone else in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

The bench added that a clear distinction has been

made between a service provided in respect of religious pilgrimage and a service rendered by way of conduct of any religious ceremony. "We may give an example of a person engaging a priest to perform certain religious ceremonies or ritual or puja on his behalf. In such a case, the priest renders service by way of conducting a religious ceremony", it noted, in a 78-page judgment. The top court said the real question is whether HGOs are rendering service by way of conduct of any religious ceremony. "As held earlier, HGOs have no role to play in actual conduct of religious ceremonies

which are a part of Haj pilgrimage. The service rendered by HGOs is by way of providing air bookings, arranging for the stay of Haj pilgrims in Saudi Arabia, arranging for food while they are in Saudi Arabia, arranging for foreign exchange, and arranging registration with Tawafa establishment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," it pointed out. The petitions seeking exemption had alleged discrimination against the pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia. However, the top court dismissed the petitions on both the grounds of exemption and discrimination.

Moral policing fears in K'taka: Hindu outfits warn police if it can't do the job, they will

Dakshina Kannada | Agencies

Fear of moral policing in the coastal districts of Karnataka, especially in Dakshina Kannada district, is back with Hindu organisations warning the state police that if they don't act on drugs, entry of minors into pubs, they will ensure things are set right.

Speaking to the media, district convener of the Bajrang Dal, Punith Attavar stated that if the police department does not ensure action on drugs and entry of minors into pubs, the Bajrang Dal will take care of it and ensure that no one misuses the law or misguides the younger generation in Dakshina Kannada district.

Meanwhile, leaders of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) met BJP MLA Vedavyasa Kamat in connection with the incident of partying college students being sent



back from a pub in Mangaluru. The delegation headed by VHP south region assistant secretary Sharan Pumpwell demanded action against pubs operating beyond time limits.

They also asked him to check drug peddling and college students. Kamat assured the VHP activists that he will speak to the police about it. Punith Attavar maintained that the Bajrang Dal activists

informed the police and took everyone along to the Recycle pub where minors were consuming liquor and indulging in other activities. No law was violated and no one was harmed, he maintained.

A debate has now started on the activism of Hindu organisations leading to moral policing in the state. The recent incident of sending back partying students from the pub has brought back memories of more than 40 Hindu activists barging into the pub 'Amnesia: The Lounge' in Mangaluru and beating up young women and men, which made international news in 2009.

Mangaluru Police Commissioner N Shashikumar stated that information will be gathered from the students who were sent out from the pub and further action will be initiated. There is no provision for outsiders to carry out checks in pubs.



CM PAYS FLORAL TRIBUTES TO KARGIL MARTYRS

The saga of brave sons of Kargil will always make future generations proud: CM



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the state and the country will always remember the valour, indomitable courage and heroism of the immortal martyrs of Kargil. CM Chouhan paid floral tributes to the martyrs of Kargil at Shaurya Smarak in Bhopal on Kargil Vijay Diwas. Chouhan laid a wreath in front of Anant Jyoti located at Shaurya Smarak Pillar. He paid his respects to the statue of Bharat Mata at the Shaurya Smarak. The newly-elected Mayor of Bhopal Malti Rai along with officers of the army and police administration

were present. Chouhan said that India won Kargil, many soldiers of Pakistan were killed and 527 of our jawans were also martyred. The Kargil victory is the reward of the bravery, courage, valour and sacrifice of our country's bravehearts. The indebted nation pays obeisance at the feet of the brave sons who sacrificed their lives to protect the country's pride and honour. The saga of the brave sons of Maa Bharati will continue to make the future generations proud. The bravery shown by our army in the battle against the enemies sitting on high and inaccessible hills is amazing in world history. Chief Minister Chouhan also remembered the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Kargil Vijay Diwas.

Har Ghar Tiranga campaign:

Tricolor to be hoisted at more than 1.5 crore houses

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has instructed to make elaborate preparations to take this campaign to the people. AIR correspondent reports that in order to ensure adequate availability of national flags in the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign in Madhya Pradesh, cooperation of self-help groups, micro, small and medium industries and NGOs is being taken in the districts.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In Madhya Pradesh, the tricolor will be hoisted at more than 1.5 crore houses under the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has instructed to make elaborate preparations to take this campaign to the people. AIR correspondent reports that in order to ensure adequate availability of national flags in the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign in Madhya Pradesh, cooperation of self-help groups, micro, small and medium industries and NGOs is being taken in the districts. Eight lakh tricolors are being manufactured in Indore district for this campaign. Out of these, five lakh tricolors are being made by women from urban and rural self-help groups. In Bhopal too, women self-help groups



UPLOAD SELFIE WITH TRICOLOUR: Get certificate by pinning Tricolour on your location on digital platform: Thakur

Bhopal: Culture, Tourism, Religious Trust and Endowment Minister Usha Thakur has informed that "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign will be made a campaign of masses. She has appealed to the people to become a participant in the campaign by uploading a selfie with the tricolour on the digital platform and pinning the tricolour at their location.

have been entrusted with the task of making more than 3 lakh flags. The 350 women of these self help groups are devotedly engaged in the work. The state government has given instructions to provide flags free of cost from the gram Panchayat level to the economically weak, widows, nomadic persons and families living below the poverty line. State Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises Minister Om Prakash Sakhlecha has directed to organize a rally, cycle rally, essay competition, street plays and poster competitions in every village for public awareness about this campaign.

Thakur informed that every person who has pinned the tricolour at the location of their home, shop, institute etc. on the www.harghartiranga.com website of the Union Ministry of Culture will be given a certificate by the Ministry of Culture. She has appealed to all the people of the state to upload the certificate on social media and become a partner in the campaign using #HarGharTiranga. Thakur said that after uploading selfies with the national flag on the website, it will be displayed on the home page of the website. She urged the people of the state to join the "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign on the Amrit Mahotsav of independence. This will not only show respect for the national flag tricolour, but will also be a true tribute to the brave revolutionaries and great men who sacrificed their lives for India's independence.

SAKHYA SAGAR LAKE OF SHIVPURI ADDED TO RAMSAR SITES

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has extended warm greetings to the people of the state on the status of Ramsar Site accorded to Sakhya Sagar Lake of Shivpuri. It is the second Ramsar site after Bhojtal, Bhopal in the state. In a message released on social media, CM Chouhan said that - "This status to Sakhya Sagar Lake is a reward for the efforts to protect biodiversity and environment under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi." It is noteworthy that the list of wetland sites of international importance is maintained on the basis of an international treaty in 1971 in Ramsar city of Iran for wetland protection. Wetlands are extremely sensitive in terms of biodiversity.

LIQUOR, MEAT PARTY AT COW SHELTER; PROBE ORDERED

Some unidentified persons were allegedly found consuming alcohol and cooking meat at a gaushala (cow shelter) in Tikamgarh district, prompting the authorities to initiate a probe, an official said on Tuesday. A video of the alleged incident, that took place on Monday, has surfaced on social media.

Team Absolute | Tikamgarh

Some unidentified persons were allegedly found consuming alcohol and cooking meat at a gaushala (cow shelter) in Madhya Pradesh's Tikamgarh district, prompting the authorities to initiate an inquiry, an official said on Tuesday. A video of the alleged incident, which took place on Monday, has surfaced on social media. At least 15 people were allegedly partying with alcohol and cooking meat in the premises of Ram Harshan Gaushala of Chandrapura village on Monday evening, said Prabhash Ghanghoria, the

chief executive officer of Baldevgarh Janpad Panchayat. A person belonging to the Ahirwar community was ostracised by his own people recently after he was arrested in a murder case. However, the community members told the accused to give a party with liquor and meat to end the punishment, he said. On getting information about the party being held at the cow shelter, members of the Bajrang Dal reached there, following which people who were at the party fled the premises, the official said. A three-member committee has been constituted to inquire into the incident, and it will submit a report on

Wednesday, following which further legal action will be taken, he said. The government had constructed the cow shelter last year at a cost of Rs 35 lakh and it is being run by Ram Harshad group of former Sarpanch Meera Tiwari, he said. At present, there are 70 cows in this shelter and they are released for grazing during the day, the official said. Meanwhile, Kudila police station in-charge Manoj Dwivedi said people partying at the cow shelter fled with their things after Bajrang Dal activists arrived there. The police have not received any complaints in this regard, he added.

'Sex With Pillow, Abuse Batchmate': Madhya Pradesh College Ragging Horror

AFTER THE INCIDENT INVOLVING SENIOR STUDENTS OF MGM MEDICAL COLLEGE IN INDORE, THE SHOCKED JUNIORS DIALLED THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION, OR UGC, ANTI-RAGGING HELPLINE AND NARRATED THEIR HORRIFIC ORDEAL

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A group of senior MBBS students at State's biggest state government medical college have been charged with ragging, including forcing juniors to perform vulgar and abusive acts. The senior students' identities have not been revealed.

After the incident involving senior students of MGM Medical College in Indore, the shocked juniors dialled the University Grants Commission, or UGC, anti-ragging helpline and narrated their horrific ordeal. The juniors told the police they were made to pretend to have sex with pillows and batch-mates at the flats of the senior MBBS students. With no tolerance for ragging, which can scar students for life, the UGC contacted the college and sought action, after which the college's anti-ragging committee decided to file a police case or FIR (first information report) against all the accused. The Indore Police said they will start recording the statements of all MBBS fresher's. In the complaint filed by a junior student with the UGC's anti-ragging helpline, it was also alleged the seniors made fresher male students perform abusive and vulgar acts, such

as making them choose the name of a female batch-mate and heaping abusive remarks on her. The complaint to the UGC alleged some professors did nothing to discourage ragging and in fact supported it. The junior students have alleged their mobile phones were snatched, they were forced to do sit-ups, and slap each other so hard that the sound is "loud and clear." The students said they are scared to disclose their identities as their seniors could take revenge. The detailed complaint to the UGC has evidence in the form of audio and video recordings, including WhatsApp chat, linked to ragging and torture of junior students, officials said. "We're recording statements of all the students concerned at the medical college, on the basis of which the accused seniors will be identified," local police station in-charge Tehzeeb Qazi said.

Personal fight between 2 individuals given communal colour in Rewa

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A scuffle between two individuals, who were known to each other, over some personal remarks was allegedly given a communal colour with one of them alleging that he was attacked for supporting Nupur Sharma. The incident was reported in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district a few days back. The incident took place after two persons -- Mukesh Tiwari and Mohammad Suleman of the same village in the Baikunthpur area (around 35 km from Rewa district headquarters) -- met each other after a long time. Mukesh had been a friend of Suleman's younger brother as they were room partners during their studies. Both started discussing their families, etc.

reason for the younger brother quitting his job. However, after a while the friendly discussion changed into a heated argument. Suleman objected that Mukesh should not make comments about his (Suleman) wife and younger brother as they were friends. However, the heated argument turned into a scuffle, a police official, who is investigating the incident, told IANS. During the fight, Mukesh's hand got fractured. Some locals intervened and separated the two. Subsequently, Mukesh reached the Baikunthpur police station and lodged an FIR against Suleman. In his complaint, Mukesh accused Suleman of beating him due to which his hand got fractured. He also alleged that Suleman robbed him of his money. According to Raj Kumar Tiwari (Town Inspector-Baikunthpur), till then it was a case of a scuffle and snatching and the same was

mentioned in the FIR. The issue was, however, given a communal colour after the victim went to Rewa to get better medical treatment for his fractured hand. Sources said that Mukesh's brother Ashish Tiwari was associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Mukesh and Ashish decided to take revenge and linked the fight with the Nupur Sharma controversy. Ironically, Mukesh, who in his complaint filed at the police station had accused Suleman of beating him and snatching his money, later told some local mediapersons that he was beaten up by a Muslim for supporting Nupur Sharma. "In the FIR Mukesh alleged that he was beaten by Suleman. Both the parties are very familiar with each other as they have been living in the village for years. Despite being from different religions, the families had a good bond. But some people misled them.

NGO collects clothes for actor Ranveer Singh, calls his nude photoshoot 'mental garbage'

Team Absolute | Indore

Days after Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh's nude photoshoot for a magazine cover went viral on social media, an NGO 'Neki Ki Diwar' from Indore, has begun a campaign to collect clothes for the actor. Staging protest against the photoshoot they have installed a box asking the civilians to drop clothes for the actor. According to the reports, the box installed by the NGO features a photograph from his photoshoot with a bizarre tagline 'manasik kachra (mental garbage.)' The video of the campaign went viral over social media on July 26 where people could be seen gathering around the box and dropping clothes for the Bollywood actor. Reportedly, Ranveer's photoshoot has also landed him in legal trouble after an



application was filed on Monday with Mumbai Police seeking registration of an FIR against the actor. The application mentioned that the actor had hurt the sentiments of women through his nude social media photos. The complaint was filed by an officer of an NGO situated in the east Mumbai neighbourhood of Chembur at the Chembur police station. The complaint further claimed that the actor had disrespected the modesty of women through his images. The complaint requested that the actor be charged under the Information Technology Act and certain sections of the Indian Penal Code. After the photoshoot, actor Ranveer had said to the Paper Magazine that it was easy

for him to be physically naked as earlier he had given best performances. "It's so easy for me to be physically naked, but in some of my performances I've been damn f**king naked. You can see my f**king soul. How naked is that? That's being actually naked. I can be naked in front of a thousand people, I don't give a sh*t. It's just that they get uncomfortable," he had said. Ranveer had executed the photoshoot for Paper Magazine last week. While some of his Bollywood friends praised him for his courage and the photographs, netizens trolled him for blatantly showing off his body parts. The video of the NGO collecting the clothes for the actor is also doing the rounds on social media.

Text from boy's mobile number before his death has MP police on its toes

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The body of a B-Tech student was found on the railway tracks hours after his father lodged a missing person complaint with the Bhopal police. The postmortem on the body was performed in Bhopal's AIIMS on Monday, which mentioned that death occurred after coming under a moving train. However, a message received by the deceased Nishant Rathore's friends and family mentioning that "Gustakh-e-Nabi ki ek hi saja, Sar Tan se juda", has forced the police of two adjoining districts, Bhopal and Raisen, to investigate the matter from other angles also. Nishant was pursuing B-Tech (3rd year) and was living with his college friends in a rented accommodation in Bhopal. His body was found on the railway tracks near Obaidullaganj in Raisen district, around 37 km from the state capital. As per reports, Uma Shankar Rathore, the father of the deceased, received a message at 5.45 p.m. on Sunday on his mobile which read "Gustakh-e-Nabi ki ek hi saja, Sar Tan se juda". The message was

sent from Nishant's mobile number. Suspecting some untoward incident, the father made several calls to Nishant's mobile number, but received no answer. He then contacted one of Nishant's roommates and was told that his son left the room saying 'he is going to meet his sister'. However, Nishant did not reach his sister and therefore the family decided to lodge a missing person complaint at TT Nagar police station in Bhopal. Later in the night, his father received a call from the police that a body has been found on the railway tracks and upon reaching there the family identified him as Nishant. The Bhopal police said during the preliminary investigation it was found that Nishant took fuel from a petrol pump in Bhopal's board office area. As per the police, CCTV footage suggested that he was heading towards Bagsewaniya (outer part of Bhopal). After the postmortem on Monday, Inspector General (IG) of Police Narmadapuram range, Deepak Suri said, "the cause of death was impact from a moving train." However, the family of the deceased ruled out the possibility of suicide, suspecting the Nishant

was murdered. The family has demanded a further investigation in the matter, mentioning the message received before his death. Responding to the message received by the deceased's father and friends, Additional Commissioner of Police, Bhopal, Sachin Atulkar said, "The family has informed about the message, but they have not submitted the details. The body was found in the jurisdiction of the Raisen police and they are investigating the case. The boy was living in Bhopal and therefore, we are also investigating and we are in touch with the Raisen police." Meanwhile, sources told IANS that the deceased had invested money on 'Cryptocurrency' and lost it. The sources also claimed that he had borrowed money from someone to invest in Cryptocurrency. Responding to this issue, a senior police official told IANS that, "We are investigating the matter from all possible angles, but so far it appears and as the postmortem report also suggested that death was caused by being hit by a train. We will interrogate his roommates and some other friends who were close to Nishant."

Chief Minister plants Peepal, Neem and Gulmohar saplings

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Peepal, Neem and Gulmohar in the Smart City Garden. On this occasion, newly elected Mayor Malti Rai, former MLA Dhruvvarayan Singh along with Preeti Kakade, Prabhakar Tagde, Indu Tagde, Anoop Dubaulia, Pooja Tagde and Shams Minhaj of Princess Santha



were present. Zareen Dilawar Hussain, Lieutenant Governor from Zonta Club International Branch in Bangladesh also planted a sapling. She also presented a

memento to the Chief Minister Chouhan. Princess Santha is conducting various activities in the fields of environment, cleanliness and education. Besides, the organisation is active in the direction of taking the mission of Go-Green and Plastic-free Madhya Pradesh to the masses. Zonta Club is conducting activities at the international level, taking climate change as a challenge.



EDITOR'S SPECS

SMRITI IRANI IN CONTROVERSY AGAIN

A fresh political controversy has erupted surrounding Silly Souls Cafe and Bar, allegedly operated by Union Minister Smriti Irani's daughter Zoish Irani in Goa's Assagao. The Congress party has alleged that the daughter of Smriti Irani was running an illegal bar in the BJP ruled Goa. While Smriti Irani refuted Congress' allegations terming them as "malicious" intended to "malign" her and assassinate the character of her 18-year-old student daughter, the Congress party urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to sack her as Union minister. Smriti Irani has served legal notice to Congress leaders Pawan Khera, Jairam Ramesh, and Netta D' Souza and demanded a written unconditional apology and asked them to withdraw the allegations against her daughter with immediate effect. A nationwide survey conducted to know what people think about the whole controversy and claims and counter claims made by Smriti Irani and leaders of the Congress party. During the survey, while people were divided in their views about the whole issue a bigger proportion of respondents did not agree with the allegations made by the Congress party. As per survey data, while 56 per cent respondents insisted that Congress' accusations against Smriti Irani's daughter were wrong, 44 per cent respondents agreed with the charges. During the survey, while a majority of NDA voters - 71 per cent insisted that Congress' allegations were incorrect, opinion of opposition voters was divided on the issue. As per the survey data, while 55 per cent opposition supporters agreed with Congress' claims in the case, 45 per cent disagreed. The survey revealed that while views of both urban and rural voters were divided on the issue, a bigger proportion of respondents from both the categories refused to agree with Congress' allegations. During the survey, 57 per cent urban voters and 56 per cent respondents from the rural areas termed Congress' charges as wrong.

EUROPE SCORCHED

Asad Mirza

The extreme temperatures witnessed in Europe during the last fortnight, are the results of our own making, and maybe this is a wake-up call for the humans to stop playing with nature.

When we think of Europe, we mostly think of cold and enjoyable weather, as compared to our scorching heat and humid weather. But in 2022, the European continent is facing one of the worst summers.

Usually, by Indian standards even the European summers were considered to be much better than our winters, but record-breaking heat affecting parts of Western Europe during the fortnight, with UK temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius for the first time since record-keeping began in 1772, has proved us wrong.

Temperatures dived in many other countries in Europe, with 64 different areas in France experiencing record highs and temperatures in Portugal reaching 47 degrees Celsius.

The dangerously high temperatures have had other additional consequences, too, with Portugal reporting more than 1,000 heat-wave-related deaths in the last fortnight. At least 13 people have died in open water-related incidents in the UK.

Extreme heat-wave warnings were issued in France and record July temperatures were reported in the Netherlands. In Paris, the thermometer crossed the 40 degrees Celsius for the third time this summer.

In addition, wildfires continue to sweep across parts of Southwest Europe. As well as increased ozone pollution, the European heat wave is also exacerbating the scale and intensity of wildfires currently raging across southern Europe, especially in south-western France, Spain and Portugal. The worst affected regions to date include the Gironde region south of Bordeaux, Extremadura and Galicia in Spain, and parts of Portugal.

This is also accompanied with the fact that Europe is witnessing more and more floods in the regions where they were unheard of like in Germany and the UK. Experts blame Climate Change for the soaring temperatures across the world, especially Europe, and have warned that worse is yet to come.

Scientific View
The Guardian reported Prof. Richard Allan, of the University of Reading as saying that Climate Change is intensifying these heat



waves as greenhouse gas increases raise temperatures and a warmer, more thirsty atmosphere dries out the soil, so that more of the sun's energy is available to heat the ground rather than evaporating water.

The Politico quoted Mariam Zachariah, climate scientist at Imperial College London, as saying that build-up of CO2 from burning fossil fuels has made heat waves more intense and more frequent across the globe, including in Europe.

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) warned last week that Europe's heat wave could persist into the middle of next week, whereas the negative impacts of climate change are bound to continue at least until 2060s. Robert Stefanski, chief of Applied Climate Services at the WMO, at a joint press briefing with the World Health Organisation (WHO), also said that record heat waves are becoming more frequent because of climate change. The Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS) scientists are predicting very high levels of surface ozone pollution across a large region of Europe as temperatures soar. They also warn about very

high levels of ozone pollution in southern Europe caused by the heat wave could now affect north-western regions in the coming week. The prediction comes after extremely high surface ozone pollution was experienced across western and southern Europe, particularly along the west Coast of Portugal and parts of northern Italy.

Mark Parrington, Senior Scientist from the CAMS, says the potential impacts of very high ozone pollution on human health can be considerable both in terms of respiratory and cardio-vascular illness. Higher values can lead to symptoms such as sore throat, coughing, headache and an increased risk of asthma attacks. The Climate and Clean Air Coalition estimates that ozone pollution causes approximately one million additional deaths per year. This is why it is crucial that we monitor surface ozone levels.

Recently BBC has published a revealing report, which highlights how the major culprits responsible for environmental degradation had planned and executed a bold campaign 30 years ago, to spread doubt and persuade

the public that Climate Change was not a problem. The tie-up between some of America's biggest industrial players and a PR genius - forged a devastatingly successful strategy that endured for years, and the consequences of which are all around us.

Climate Change and Big Business
The Global Climate Coalition (GCC), which represented the oil, coal, auto, utilities, steel, and rail industries, hired a communications partner to change the narrative on Climate Change. The strategy was implemented through an extensive media campaign, including placing quotes and pitching opinion pieces. The groundwork was laid meticulously for the industry's biggest campaign to date - opposing international efforts to negotiate emissions reductions in Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997.

This makes us wonder where we have gone wrong. It is indeed true to say that during the last 100 years humans have wrecked the earth so much that nature is turning back on them.

We hear constant talk of environment planning and tackling Climate Change effects, but find most governments wanting in fulfilling their pledges committed at different environment foras, such as COP26 and other international bodies.

The basic requirement is that we'll have to change our lifestyles too, to cope with the climate challenges. We'll have to change the way we are constructing our commercial and residential buildings, all clad in either glass or aluminium cladding requiring more heat intensive mechanisms to maintain cooler temperature. In hotels worldwide it is a normal practice to maintain the building temperature at 17 degrees Celsius, why can't we make it a more reasonable 21 degrees Celsius? In addition we also need to change our style of construction using a judicious mix of stone, cement and wood, not just relying on one particular product, besides ensuring less usage of wood.

If we humans don't act now instead of just preaching and making hollow promises then we could just look forward to our own extinction much earlier than envisaged by nature.

(Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. He writes on Muslims, educational, international affairs, inter-faith and current affairs. The views expressed are personal)

international

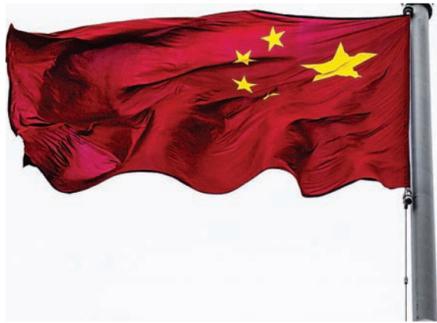
BLACKOUTS IN CHINA AS HEAT WAVE PUSHES ELECTRICITY USAGE TO RECORD LEVELS

Taipei | Agencies

A long-running heatwave in China has pushed electricity usage to record levels in some areas and led to blackouts, with warnings that the high temperatures are expected to continue for at least another week, a media report said.

More than 300 cities were forecast to reach temperatures above 35 degrees Celsius on Tuesday. China Southern Power Grid Company said Monday's usage had surpassed last year's peak load by 3 per cent. The Guardian reported.

The Guangdong province power grid also hit a record high, reaching 142m kilowatts, an increase of 4.89 per cent over last year's peak load. Blackouts were reported in the provincial capital, Guangzhou, which has



recorded a full week of maximum temperatures above 37 degrees Celsius, including highs of 40 degrees Celsius on Sunday and Monday.

Yang Lin, the manager of the company's dispatching office, said once temperatures in Guangzhou surpassed 35 degrees Celsius,

have caused havoc across China, blamed on extreme temperatures, rising demand for electricity and shortages in coal, which is still the main source of China's power, The Guardian reported.

China is among several countries to have moved back towards a coal-focused energy supply, despite ambitious emissions reduction pledges, amid a global crisis exacerbated by the Ukraine conflict. On Friday the ministry of emergency management warned safe operation of the power grid faced "severe tests".

On Monday, 21 red warnings and 140 orange warnings were issued for high temperatures, predominately across the south-east and in the far west, including Xinjiang, The Guardian reported.

ARMED ASSAILANTS KILL 6 AT MEXICO REHAB CENTRE



Mexico City: Six people were killed by armed assailants at a drug rehabilitation centre in Mexico's Jalisco state, authorities said.

Police arrived at the scene after receiving emergency calls, but were unable to make any arrest, reports Xinhua news agency citing the authorities as saying. Witnesses told local media that hooded gunmen burst into the facility and opened fire. Jalisco is one of the most violent states in the country and a bastion of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel.

30 passengers killed in road accident in Kenya

Nairobi | Agencies

At least 30 passengers were killed and several others injured when their bus fell off a bridge and plunged into a river along the highway in Tharaka Nithi, Kenya, local police said.

The bus, travelling from Meru town to the coastal city of Mombasa, plunged into the Nithi river, about 40 metres below along the Meru-Nairobi highway at around 6:40 p.m., Eastern Regional Police Commander Romo Bunei said on Monday.

Bunei said the bus must have developed brake failure because it was at a very high speed when the accident took place, Xinhua news agency reported. The wreckage of the bus could be seen strewn on the hillside near the black spot. Alex Mugambi,



Tharaka Nithi County Rescue team manager, said the death toll may rise. The accident is among a series of deadly crashes in

the country. On July 8, more than 20 passengers were killed in an accident along the Nairobi-Mombasa highway.

1st German air defence systems arrive in Ukraine



Kiev | Agencies

Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov announced that the first Gepard air defence systems from Germany have arrived in the war-torn nation.

"Today, the first three Gepards officially arrived. These are anti-aircraft systems, for which we have received tens of thousands of rounds of ammunition," Ukrayinska Pravda quoted the Minister as saying on Monday.

"We are waiting for the first 15 Gepards. Three arrived in

Ukraine today. They are already at the disposal of the Armed Forces of Ukraine," he added. Earlier this month, Germany had announced an official list of weapons it planned to send to Ukraine, including 30 Gepard air defence systems. The supply of ammunition for Gepard was previously considered a problem, as only slightly fewer than 60,000 35 mm shells were available. After several weeks, the German government and the Norwegian Ministry of Defence found a manufacturer that could produce additional ammunition.

Liz Truss beats Rishi Sunak in TV debate in poll of electoral college

London | Agencies

Liz Truss, the incumbent caretaker Foreign Secretary in deposed UK Prime Minister Boris Johnsons government, beat her rival Rishi Sunak, the Indian-origin former Chancellor, according to a survey of ruling Conservative party members, the electoral college to choose the winner.

Forty-seven per cent of respondents to pollster Opinium sounding them out felt Truss performed better versus 38 per cent who thought likewise about Sunak.

However, Sunak marginally defeated Truss, again according to Opinium, in a poll of regular voters who watched the debate. Thirty-nine per cent said Sunak won, while 38 per cent stated Truss did.

The debate held at Stoke-on-Trent, a town in the west Midlands of England, was hot-tempered and combative in which Sunak was noticeably aggressive, often talking over his opponent.

Sunak was trailing 62 per cent to 38 per cent in YouGov's poll of



Conservative members, who will begin voting next week and will have time up to September 2 next to do so. It would appear he did not make up sufficient ground with this constituency as yet to turn the tables on Truss.

Clearly, Sunak's strategy was to attack. Several viewers interviewed after the debate thought his constant interruptions were 'rude' and they sounded as if they were displeased by such behaviour. It was certainly un-British

tactics. The two contenders clashed on tax cuts -- Sunak sticking to doing so later, Truss promising it will be as soon as she comes prime minister.

On British policy towards China, both agreed this should be tough. Sunak said Truss was on a 'journey' when it came to China, alleging she had previously argued in favour of a 'golden age' in the UK's relations with the country. Ultimately, they concurred on a clamp-down on companies like TikTok.

310 killed, 300 injured as heavy rains continue to wreak havoc in Pakistan

Islamabad | Agencies

Nearly 310 people have been killed and 295 others injured in separate rain-related incidents in Pakistan since June 14 as heavy downpours continued to lash the country, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said.

A total of 175 women and children are among the deceased, the NDMA said in a situation report released on Sunday, adding that the rains have partially or fully damaged nearly 8,979 houses along with 48 bridges and several shops across the country, Xinhua news agency reported. Most of the damages and casualties were reported from the country's southwestern Balochistan province, where 100 people died and 57 others sustained injuries due to monsoon rains that trig-



gered flash floods, followed by the southern Sindh province, which has reported 70 deaths and 27 injured people, according to the NDMA. Almost 64 people were killed in the east Punjab province, 62 in the northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, and 14 people in other parts of the country, said the NDMA.

The NDMA added that rescue and relief activities are underway. The agency has been providing food packs, tents, kitchen sets, mosquito nets, hygiene kits, blankets and tarpaulins to victims of rains and floods across the country.



IN ITS LAST DAYS THACKERAY GOVT ISSUED 400 ORDERS, WE ARE REVIEWING THEM: FADNAVIS

These government orders, largely related to allocation of funds for various development-related works, were issued at a time when the ruling govt was reduced to a minority following a revolt in the Shiv Sena, Fadnavis said



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday said the previous Uddhav Thackeray-led government issued a whopping 400 government orders in its last days in office and allotted funds that were five times more than the budgetary allocation. These government orders (called government resolutions in official parlance), largely related to allocation of funds for various development-related works, were issued at a time when the ruling coalition

Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) was reduced to a minority following a revolt in the Shiv Sena and the three-party dispensation's legitimacy was under doubt, he said. The new Eknath Shinde-BJP government is reviewing such hasty decisions to avoid unnecessary burden on the state exchequer, said Fadnavis while speaking to reporters here at Mantralaya, the administrative headquarters of the Maharashtra government. The previous government led by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray

government had issued 400 government orders and allocated funds five times more than the budgetary allocation (in its last days in office). If we go ahead with these orders, there will be an unnecessary burden on the state exchequer," said the BJP leader. Since taking oath on June 30, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his deputy Fadnavis have been carrying out a review of functioning of various departments and stayed several government orders issued by the erstwhile Shiv Sena-led

administration. This move has irked the opposition parties, including the Thackeray-led Shiv Sena, the Nationalist Congress Party and the Congress. Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Ajit Pawar of the NCP has requested Shinde not to put an arbitrary stay on all government decisions, saying such a move will halt several ongoing development works. Fadnavis said, "It was not right for the government to issue orders when it had lost moral right to remain in office. The (Thackeray-led MVA) government was in a minority and should not have taken such decisions. Hence, we are taking a review of all these decisions and giving permission on merit. Thackeray resigned as Chief Minister on June 29 following a rebellion by a section of Shiv Sena MLAs led by Shinde on June 21. Shinde and Fadnavis were sworn-in on June 30, but a full-fledged state cabinet is yet to be put in place.

REBELS BETRAYED SHIV SENA WHEN I WAS FIGHTING FOR LIFE IN HOSPITAL: UDDHAV THACKERAY

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

In a startling revelation, Shiv Sena president and ex-Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday said that when he was critical and battling for life in a hospital for his spinal issues, the rebels actively hatched a conspiracy to topple the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

During his hospitalisation in November 2021 for his neck and spine problems, Thackeray underwent two surgeries in a space of a week, but the anxious family had not disclosed then that the paterfamilias was practically pushed into the jaws of death.

"I avoid talking about that terrible experience as I don't want any sympathy. After my first surgery (Nov. 2021), I recovered well, but after a week or so, I developed some blood clot, and lost all movements below my neck," Thackeray said, in a marathon interview to the party mouthpiece 'Saamana' and 'Dopahar Ka Saamana'.

Virtually paralysed then, the doctors diagnosed it as a blood clot and suggested emergency procedures... In what is termed the 'golden hour', I was operated successfully -- and that's why I am here before you today. During that

period, I had lost complete mobility including my arms and legs," the Sena chief said. When Thackeray lay immobile, the (future) rebels were apparently hyper-active and were working against the Shiv Sena's interests, amid canards being spread that "he (Uddhav Thackeray) would never recover again", and while some wished he should not bounce back, there were thousands of commoners who prayed for his quick recuperation. "This was the time when I had entrusted them (then minister and current Chief Minister Eknath Shinde) as the No. 2, to look after the party... When I needed them most, they were busy hatching a plot to bring me down. This painful truth will remain with me for my entire life..." said Thackeray with a bitter tinge in his voice.

He said after he had handed the second-in-command position (to Shinde), "you killed that trust and betrayed the faith to handle the party during my absence".

Referring to the breakaway faction which ultimately formed the new government with support of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on June 30 - as being the 'real Shiv Sena' and proclaiming their faith and loyalty to Balasaheb Thackeray, Thackeray sounded

amused. "Now, they want to 'steal' other peoples' fathers also... because they have no worthy idols to look up to! They did the same with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose... Their intention is to destroy Shiv Sena by delinking it from the Thackerays, just as they are attempting to do with the Congress to sever it from the Gandhi family," said Thackeray sharply.

He accused the BJP of spending "thousands of crores of rupees" to topple the MVA government of Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress, and dared the rebels to face the elections.

"Now, they say it was a mistake to ally with the NCP-Congress... If the BJP had kept its promise in 2019, the present crisis would not have arisen... There would be no need for a 'Bharat darshan' or spending thousands of crores of rupees... All this would have happened with dignity," reiterated Thackeray, referring to the June 20 revolt which spanned across Maharashtra, Gujarat, Assam, Goa and then back home.

The Sena chief's candid remarks came in a marathon interview with the Saamana Group Executive Editor Sanjay Raut, MP and the party's Chief Spokesperson.

Shilpa asks court to reject plea against her discharge in Richard Gere kiss case

The Richard Gere-Shilpa Shetty on-stage kiss at a charity event in New Delhi in 2007, doesn't seem to leave the Bollywood actress.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Richard Gere-Shilpa Shetty on-stage kiss at a charity event in New Delhi in 2007, doesn't seem to leave the Bollywood actress. Shetty, acting through her lawyer, Prasant Patil, has sought the dismissal of a plea challenging the January order of a Ballard Pier, Mumbai, magistrate court discharging her from an obscenity case resulting from the incident.

In April, the Alwar, Rajasthan, police had approached the sessions court against the magistrate's order



and stated in its plea that the magistrate had erred in discharging Shilpa and that her act in kissing or allowing

to be kissed in a public place amounted to obscenity.

The police had contended if the court examines the FIR, it would find that a prima facie case is made out against the actress.

In her reply, Shetty noted that she was a victim of malicious proceedings and harassment at the hands of the complainant, and that she as an artist had always acted responsibly in public. She also alleged that the complainant was approaching the court for cheap publicity.

The complainant, who had approached the Alwar police in 2007, had contended that Shilpa did not protest while being kissed by the Hollywood star.

Shilpa countered this charge by stating in her plea that it did not make her a conspirator or perpetrator of any crime.

MUMBAI LOCAL TRAIN COACH DERAILS, NO CASUALTIES

Mumbai: One bogie of a suburban local train bound for Panvel derailed while leaving the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) platform No. 1 here on Tuesday, officials said.

According to a Central Railway spokesperson, one trolley of one rear-end coach grazed the dead-end of the platform and derailed during the morning peak hour.

There were no injuries reported so far and work on the re-railment of the coach is underway. The mishap has hit the Harbour Line schedules as all are now operated from platform No. 2, while the mainline operations from CSMT to the Kalyan, Karjat, Kasara sectors are normal.

Aaditya Thackeray in BIG Trouble! Modi government takes BOLD step amid Shiv Sena crisis

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The difficulties of Aaditya Thackeray, son of former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, have increased. The central government has ordered an audit of Aaditya Thackeray's ministry. Their work for the last two and a half years will be audited. Aaditya Thackeray was the Environment Minister in the Uddhav government.

Notably, the tussle between the BJP and the Thackeray family is increasing continuously. Meanwhile, the audit step taken by the central government will add to the difficulties of Aaditya Thackeray. Recently, Eknath Shinde,

who rebelled from the Thackeray family with the help of BJP MLAs, has formed the government in Maharashtra and ousted Uddhav Thackeray from power.

Significantly, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra is no longer Uddhav Thackeray, father of former Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray. Eknath Shinde has become the CM of the state by removing him from the post. In such a situation, the audit being done by the center is a big blow to Aaditya Thackeray.

Uddhav Thackeray's party is divided into two factions, Uddhav Thackeray faction and Eknath Shinde faction. Most of the Shiv Sena MLAs

and MPs are with the Eknath Shinde faction. The Eknath Shinde faction has also claimed the party's election symbol and has applied to the Election Commission. In such a situation, there is also doubt on whether the Thackeray family will have the right to exercise authority over the Shiv Sena party or not!

In such a situation, Aaditya's Ministry will be audited. Let us tell you that the allegations against former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's son Aaditya Thackeray will be investigated and all the work done by his ministry in the last two and a half years will be audited.

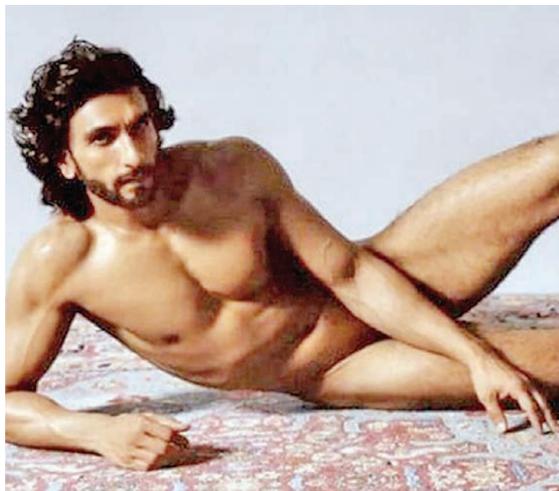
MUMBAI POLICE FILE AN FIR AGAINST RANVEER FOR NUDE PHOTOSHOOT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Police have booked Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh for obscenity and on other charges after his nude photos appeared in a New York-based magazine and later became viral on social media networks.

"I have filed the complaint along with my husband Abhishek Chaubey's NGO on the issue with the Chembur police on Monday. The police have taken cognizance and registered a first information report on the NGO's plea," lawyer Vedika Chaube told reporter.

Among other things, the couple have contended that the photos of Singh have hurt the sensitivities and modesty of many women who are the actor's followers on various social media networks. Singh's photos, which surfaced on his Instagram account on July 22, evoked massive attention from



celebs like Trinamool Congress MP Mimi Chakraborty, film-maker Ram Gopal Verma and commoners, getting likes and trolls in equal measure.

Following the Chaubey couple's written complaint, the Chembur police have lodged the FIR invoking Indian Penal Code Sections 292, 293 and 509, dealing with obscenity and actions intended to insult the modesty of a woman, plus Information Technology Act's Section 67(A).

The complainant alleged that the actor had hurt the sentiments of women in general and insulted their modesty through his photographs.

The complainants claimed that Singh has been paid crores of rupees for his photo shoot as well as the social media at the cost of polluting the social environment and sought appropriate action against the actor.

CBI files supplementary charge sheet in DHFL-Yes Bank alleged loan fraud case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday filed its supplementary charge sheet in connection with the Rs 3,700 crore Yes Bank-DHFL loan fraud case.

"A supplementary charge sheet has been filed today against Avinash N. Bhosale, Satyan Gopaldas Tandon, Metropolis Hotels LLP, ABIL Infraprojects Pvt Ltd, ABIL Hospitality Pvt Ltd, Arindam Developers LLP, Avinash Bhosale Group and Flora Developments Ltd," the CBI said. The federal probe agency had arrested Sanjay Chabaria of Radius Developers, in May. Radius Developers took loan of Rs 3,000 crore from Dewan

Housing Finance Ltd (DHFL) on the pretext of financing a project in Mumbai. "Bhosle, Goenka and Balwa were allegedly used their firms to channel money of the loan. Hence their premises were also raided," the CBI had said.

In March 2020, a case of loan fraud of Rs 3,600 crore was lodged by the CBI against Rana Kapoor, the promoter Director and CEO of Yes Bank for entering into a criminal conspiracy with Kapir wadhawan, the promoter Director of DHFL and others. Financial assistance was extended to DHFL by Yes Bank in lieu of substantial undue benefit to himself and his family members through the companies held by them.

Between April to June 2018, Yes Bank Ltd invested Rs 3,700 crore in the short term debentures of DHFL. Simultaneously, Wadhawan paid a kickback of Rs 600 crore to Kapoor and his family members in the garb of builder loan of Rs 600 crore given by DHFL to DOIT Urban Ventures (India) Pvt Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of RAB Enterprises (India) Pvt Ltd in which Bindu Kapoor, the wife of Kapoor, is a director and 100 per cent shareholder.

Kapoor's daughters - Roshini Kapoor, Radha Kapoor Khanna, and Raakhe Kapoor Tandon were 100 per cent shareholders of DOIT Urban Ventures (India) Pvt Ltd through Morgan Credits Pvt Ltd.

GROUNDING FOR THREE YEARS, JET AIRWAYS ALL SET TO SOAR UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

▶ VIRTUALLY WRITTEN OFF FOLLOWING MASSIVE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, JET AIRWAYS IS NOW READY FOR ITS REINCARNATION -- THIS TIME UNDER A NEW MANAGEMENT -- COME SEPTEMBER.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Virtually written off following massive financial problems, Jet Airways is now ready for its reincarnation -- this time under a new management -- come September.

Paving the way for the private carrier's revival, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) granted the revalidated Air Operator Certificate to the new owners, Jalan Kalrock Consortium (JKC), on May 20.

The JKC fulfilled all the conditions laid down in the NCLT-approved resolution plan for the revival of the airline, founded in April 1992 and launched in 1993 by businessman Naresh Goyal, and shut after 27 years in April 2019.

The Jet Airways now hopes to launch com-

mercial operations in September with fresh funding of more than Rs 1,300 crore over the next couple of years, changed ownership with a new management, and a few other changes to re-capture its market.

Though starting with a fleet of 11 aircraft of the Jet Airways that got transferred as assets to the kitty of the new entity, these planes are unlikely to be deployed for commercial operations, said official sources.

However, the company is at an advanced stage of discussions with lessors and aircraft manufacturers before finalising its choice of aircraft and fleet plans -- a critical decision for any airline -- though officials remained tight-lipped. "Jet Airways shall be a smart' full-service carrier, with a two-class cabin configuration, including a world-class business class and an evolved economy class in tune with the demands of the digital age' customers," explained an official spokesperson.

A high-level source made it clear that Jet Airways will not be "a small or marginal airline, but will grow-to-scale", though he kept all plans secret for the carrier that once strutted with a fleet strength of 124 big and small, wide-body and narrow-body aircraft.

Prior to suspension of operations over three years ago, Jet Airways had grabbed more than one-fifth of the country's aviation market, with 65-plus destinations in India and globally, as

many others like Air India, Indian Airlines, or private competitors like East West, ModiLuf, Sahara, NEPC and more crash landed by the wayside.

This time, the scenario is much different considering rising operational costs, wary customers just stirring out after a two-year Covid pandemic halt, the once floundering Air India now in the safe arms' of Tata Group, and other airlines going determinedly for their share, etc.

The revived Jet Airways has taken the first baby-steps of its historic revival' with over 250 staffers, including nearly 75 per cent former employees, onboard, and now sifting through thousands of applications at various levels, with hiring of pilots, engineers, technicians, etc. to happen soon. The changes will continue with certain things undisturbed -- like the Jet Brand', its globally recognisable Flying Sun' logo, the familiar aircraft livery, the eye-catching cabin crew uniforms, etc., but the airline logo has been slightly tweaked 'to reflect an evolved, modern Jet Airways that is prepared to win in the Digital Age.' Officials concede that it will be a challenge as there are high expectations' from the Jet Airways brand, and the airline would try to exceed the customer's hopes by attempting to excel in all departments.

As Murari Lal Jalan, the new owner of Jet Airways and Lead Member of the JKC, remarked recently: "We are now at the brink of creating



history by bringing India's most-loved airline back to the skies. We are committed to making this an extraordinary success story in Indian aviation." Recalling the tagline of Jet Airways The Joy of Flying' - the new CEO Sanjay Kapoor declared that in its new avatar, it will not be a mere clone of other airlines, but actually offer something meaningfully different to lure, delight

and win the customers. "All of us are deeply committed and passionate about building the new Jet Airways into a modern, differentiated, people-focused airline for the digital age, combining the best of what was known for with new ideas to set the bar even higher," assured Kapoor.



SARAH PAULSON TO STAR IN HORROR THRILLER 'DUST'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Sarah Paulson is set to star in upcoming horror thriller 'Dust'. Will Joines and Karrie Crouse are directing the picture, reports 'Deadline'. "Sarah is an extraordinary artist and we are thrilled to be working with her again," said Searchlight Presidents David Greenbaum and Matthew Greenfield. For Searchlight, Paulson previously starred in Steve McQueen's '12 Years a Slave', which received an Academy Award for Best Picture, and Sean Durkin's 'Martha Marcy May Marlene', reports 'Deadline'.

The film follows a woman who is trapped by increasingly perilous dust storms and is haunted by her past encounters with a threatening presence and takes extraordinary measures to protect her family.

Alix Madigan and Lucas Joaquin are producing, SVP, Acquisitions and Production Chan Phung, Director of Development Zahra Phillips and Creative Affairs Manager Daejione Jones are overseeing Searchlight Pictures, reporting to Heads of Production and Development Dan Tram Nguyen and Katie Goodson-Thomas.

Paulson will soon begin production on Bruce Norris' film adaptation of his Pulitzer, Tony and Olivier award-winning play, 'Clybourne Park' directed by Pam MacKinnon. She is also set to star in Bad Robot's series adaptation of Glennon Doyle's memoir, 'Untamed'.



Los Angeles | Agencies

New works by Darren Aronofsky, Andrew Dominik, Alejandro J. Inarritu, Luca Guadagnino, Joanna Hogg and Laura Poitras are among the rich roster of titles that will launch from the Lido and compete for a Golden Lion at the upcoming Venice Film Festival, which is set for a standout stellar 79th edition.

Artistic director Alberto Barbera has unveiled a luscious, politically infused line-up comprising a slew of hotly anticipated films from the US and elsewhere around the world, featuring scores of stars.

Olivia Wilde, Penelope Cruz, Ana de Armas, Cate Blanchett, Timothee Chalamet, Hugh Jackman, Laura Dern, Christoph Waltz, Sigourney Weaver and Mia Goth are some top talents expected to be on the Palazzo Del Cinema's red carpet during the August 31-September 10 event, reports 'Variety'.

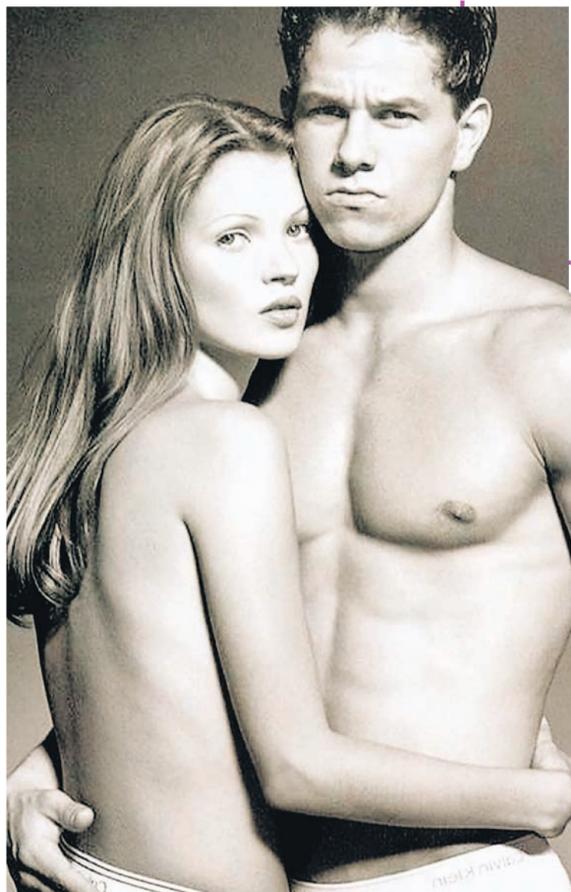
Aronofsky, a Venice aficionado whose 'Black Swan' was the Lido's opener in 2010, is back with 'The Whale', an adaptation of Samuel D. Hunter's play about a morbidly obese recluse, played by Brendan Fraser and also starring Sadie Sink and Samantha Morton.

Meanwhile, Dominik's Marilyn Monroe drama 'Blonde' starring de Armas as the Hollywood icon is one of four Netflix original films in the 23-title competition section.

Also getting a Venice launch from the streaming giant, which is clearly gunning for more Oscars after 'Power of the Dog', which premiered on the Lido last year - is the fest's previously announced opener, Noah Baumbach's 'White Noise', with Greta Gerwig, Adam Driver and Jodie Turner-Smith, which is based on the 1985 novel of the same name by Don DeLillo, reports 'Variety'. 'White Noise' marks the first time a Netflix film has landed in Venice's opening slot.

Netflix will also be bowing Nicholas Winding Refn's neon-noir 'Copenhagen Cowboy' TV series, which will screen out of competition in the second half of the festival.

Venice Film Festival lines up an impressive array of international stars



Kate Moss felt 'vulnerable, scared' during topless shoot with Mark Wahlberg

Los Angeles | Agencies

Supermodel Kate Moss said her 1992 ad for a luxury brand, where she posed shirtless, wasn't as glamorous as it seemed.

The supermodel, 48, opened up about the time in her career during her appearance on Sunday's episode of BBC Radio 4's 'Desert Island Discs' radio show, reports people.com.

In her conversation with host Lauren Laverne, she opened up about feeling "vulnerable" and "scared" while working alongside actor Mark Wahlberg on the set of their shoot.

When asked how she remembered working on the underwear campaign, Moss said she had "not very good memories."

"He was very macho, and it was all about him. He had a big entourage. I was just this kind of model," she recalled of working with Wahlberg.

Moss was a teenager when she was featured in the advertisement.

She posed topless in the black-and-white photographs, pressed against Wahlberg's body in some photos.

"You felt objectified?" Laverne asked Moss.

"Yeah, completely. And vulnerable and scared," she replied, adding, "I think they played on my vulnerability. I was quite young and innocent, so Calvin loved that," Moss continued.

She also described feeling "severe anxiety" before the shoot, which resulted in a doctor prescribing her Valium.

WHY ASHTON KUTCHER IS RETURNING FOR 'THAT 70S SHOW' SPINOFF 'THAT 90S SHOW'?



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Ashton Kutcher is set to return for the spinoff of 'That '70s Show' on Netflix titled 'That '90s Show'. "It was really nostalgic to be back on the set," Kutcher told Variety's Carson Burton at the red carpet premiere of 'Vengeance' at the Ace Hotel in Los Angeles Monday evening. "It's all the same folks that made 'That '70s Show', so it was pretty bizarre."

Kutcher went on to explain that he and his wife, his '70s Show' co-star Mila Kunis, felt a return to the property was the right thing to do - beyond being a blast, of course, reports 'Variety'.

"Mila and I were contemplating it," Kutcher said.

"We thought, Listen, we're only in the position that we're in because of that show, so let's just go back and do this. We just went back and had fun for a week. It was so random and fun." Kutcher also gave some encouraging words about the new '90s-set series: "It's really funny. The new cast is phenomenal." 'That '90s Show' is set to follow Eric (Topher Grace) and Donna's (Laura Prepon) daughter Leia Forman (Callie Haverda) as she visits her grandparents for the summer. Kurtwood Smith and Debra Jo Rupp are returning from the original cast to once again play Red and Kitty. The series, set in 1995, will follow a new generation of Point Place kids and includes newcomers Haverda, Ashley Aufderheide, Mace Coronel, Maxwell Acee Donovan, Reyn Doi and Sam Morelos.

Kutcher will reprise his character of Michael Kelso in a guest role for the new series. Fellow original castmates, including Grace, Prepon, Kunis and Wilmer Valderrama, are also all set to join in guest appearances.

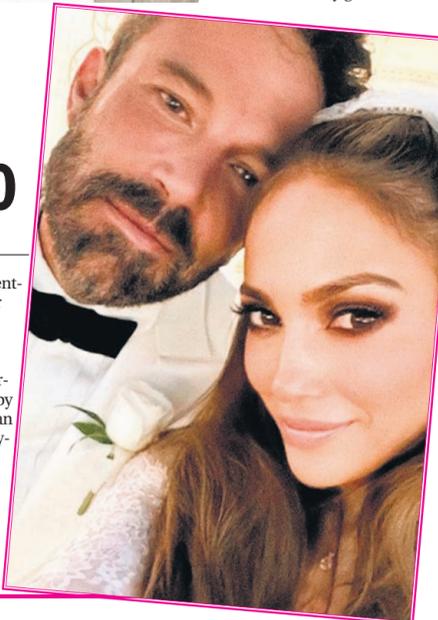
BEN AFFLECK BREAKS DOWN IN TEARS ON HONEYMOON WITH JLO

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star couple Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez are currently enjoying their romantic getaway in Paris. However, the actor was spotted getting emotional during their trip as he broke down in tears as the singer-actress cradled his head.

The pair had stopped off at restaurant La Girafe for dinner on her 53rd birthday as they enjoyed the view of the Eiffel Tower, reports mirror.co.uk. Pictured enjoying an intimate meal before being surprised by a cake adorned with sparklers, the couple appeared to be happier than ever as they cuddled each other. It's not known why Affleck began crying, though Lopez appeared to be comforting him by putting a hand on his cheek. The couple tied the knot in a surprise ceremony in Las Vegas earlier this month and haven't been able to keep their hands off one another since arriving in the French capital.

They have also been seen enjoying an alfresco dinner with their kids - Affleck's children Violet, 16, and Seraphina, 13, as well as Lopez's 14-year-old Emme.



Chris Rock on Oscar controversy "I don't go to the hospital for a papercut"

Los Angeles | Agencies

Chris Rock is taking the usual comic approach, turning his anguish into a humorous stand-up routine! The 57-year-old comedian-actor addressed Will Smith unexpectedly slapping him at the Oscars 2022 while co-headlining a concert with Kevin Hart. The argument erupted after Chris made a joke about Will's wife Jada Pinkett Smith's bald head, which coincided with the actress' alopecia diagnosis.

As a result, the Oscar winner stormed the stage, slamming Rock and finally insulting him: "Keep my wife's name

out your f***g mouth." Chris Rock made a joke on cancel culture during his stand-up show, "Anyone who says words hurt has never been punched in the face," according to an eyewitness who spoke to US Weekly. Chris also referred to the 53-year-old actor as "Suge Smith," which might be a reference to Death Row Records CEO Suge Knight, who is presently jailed.

Later, during a comedy about people being excessively sensitive and playing the victim, Chris Rock remarked, "I'm not a victim, motherf***r. Yeah, that st hurt, motherf***r. But I shook that s***t off and went to work the next day... I don't go to the hospital for a papercut."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Zoey Deutch



NEERAJ CHOPRA RULED OUT OF COMMONWEALTH GAMES DUE TO GROIN INJURY

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The strong Indian contingent for the Commonwealth Games suffered a massive setback as ace javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, fresh from his silver medal-winning performance at the World Athletics Championships in Eugene (US), has been ruled out of the quadrennial showpiece due to a groin injury.

Speaking to reporter, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) secretary-general Rajiv Mehta confirmed Chopra's injury.

"Neeraj Chopra had been advised rest for a month by doctors after an MRI showed an injury in his groin. He had complained of pain in the groin region after his competition at the World Championships, following which he went for an MRI, which revealed a minor tear," said Mehta.

"It is a huge loss for the Indian contingent as Chopra was the defending Commonwealth Games champion and would have won gold had he competed," added Mehta.

Chopra, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist, had recently ended India's 19-year-long wait for a medal at the World Athletics Championships by winning silver with his best throw of 88.13 metres. This was India's second medal ever at the World Championships and the first podium finish since Anju Bobby George won a bronze medal in long jump at Paris in 2003.

However, Chopra had complained after the historic achievement that he felt something in his



groin during competition which did not make him feel good.

"In the first three throws, I did not feel good. My warm-up was not good. I felt something in my groin during the throw but I think it is OK," the Indian ace had said.

The shattering news of his injury would have rattled the Indian contingent in Birmingham. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) was in the final phase of deciding the flag-bearer for the Commonwealth Games opening ceremony on July 28, with Chopra the front-runner along with ace shuttler and two-time Olympic Games medal winner PV Sindhu. But with Chopra out of the Games, Sindhu should be the automatic choice to do the honours.

Chopra had been sublime form of late, winning silver medals at the Paavo Nurmi Games in Turku, Finland and the Diamond League competition in Stockholm, Sweden. He came within six centimetres of the magical 90-metre mark with a throw of 89.94 to win silver in Stockholm, and show he was in the form of his life to retain gold at the Commonwealth Games.

A recent social media post from Chopra that he always goes for gold was enough indication that he was motivated for a top podium finish in Birmingham.

"I don't fight to win, I fight for excellence, I fight to get better. Gold is the goal, so I put in the hard work consistently and focus on getting better," Chopra had said recently.

Cristiano Ronaldo back in Manchester for club's pre-season training

London | Agencies

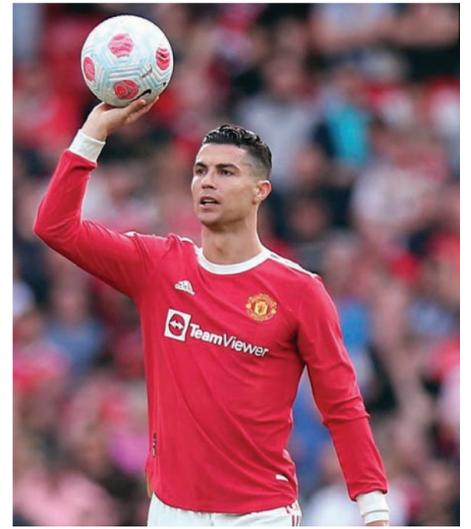
Star footballer Cristiano Ronaldo is back in Manchester and is expected to hold talks over his future with the club's manager Erik ten Hag.

The Portuguese striker did not travel on Manchester United's pre-season tour of Thailand and Australia due to family reasons and had asked to leave Old Trafford in a desire to play Champions League football.

The 37-year-old arrived with his agent Jorge Mendes at Carrington ahead of talks with manager Erik ten Hag over his future. Former United manager Sir Alex Ferguson was also seen arriving but it is understood he is there for a regular board meeting with chief executive Richard Arnold.

Ten Hag admitted he was unclear over the situation ahead of the tour - but Ronaldo will now start training with the club on Tuesday after training away from the squad in recent weeks.

Ten Hag said in Bangkok that Ronaldo, who has one



year remaining on his United contract, is in his plans for the season ahead and expects him to stay at the club. Ten Hag has previously said the 37-year-old is "not for sale" and "in our plans", but it has been reported that

Ronaldo wants to play Champions League football. Ronaldo, who was United's top scorer with 24 goals last season, has been training at the Portuguese national team's headquarters in Lisbon.

Australia will beat India in final to win 2022 Men's T20 World Cup: Ponting

New Delhi | Agencies

Former Australian captain Ricky Ponting feels that India and hosts Australia will play in the final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup later this year and Aaron Finch's side will beat Rohit Sharma's team to lift the coveted trophy.

Ponting has watched plenty of T20 cricket in recent times, with the former Australia skipper having spent time as an assistant of the Australian team under Justin Langer, been head coach of Delhi Capitals in the IPL for the last five years and commenting on Big Bash League matches.

Having seen and analysed the best players from around the world up close and personal, the two-time World Cup-winning captain admits that some luck is required to win a major ICC trophy but the 47-year-old is strong on the teams he feels are the most likely to taste success in Australia. "I think India and Australia will be the two playing in the final and I will just have to say that Australia will beat them in the final," Ponting declared in the latest episode of The ICC Review. "The reigning champions have got home conditions and that was one thing that



made Australia's win in the last World Cup, not remarkable, but that little bit sweeter for them. "The fact that a lot of people, me included, thought when they went to UAE, the conditions that they were going to have to face on the back of the IPL, I thought the conditions might have been the thing that might not have allowed them to win it. But they found a way," he added.

Asked who is the main danger to Australia and India in the mega event, the Australian great believes England also have many match-winners.

LANNING DISPLACES TEAMMATE MOONEY AT TOP OF ICC T20I RANKINGS FOR BATTERS

Dubai: Australia

women's cricket team captain Meg Lanning is the new No.1-ranked T20I batter in the world after the 30-year-old replaced teammate Beth Mooney at the top in the latest ICC Women's T20I Player Rankings release on Tuesday. Lanning was the eye-catching mover as she jumped one place to take Mooney's top spot on the back of her stellar tri-series against Pakistan and Ireland. Although some poor weather in Ireland put a dampener on much of the series, Lanning showed her class to finish as the leading run-getter with 113 runs from two innings for her country. Her best effort came against Ireland in Bready when she scored a quick-fire 74 from just 49 deliveries to help Australia post a huge total of 182/4 in yet another easy victory.

2nd Test, Day 3

Mendis' fifer, batters put Sri Lanka in driver's seat against Pakistan

Galle | Agencies

After an excellent five-for (5/47) from Ramesh Mendis, batters made some handy contributions and put Sri Lanka in the driver's seat against Pakistan at the end of a curtailed third day of the second Test at Galle International Stadium, here on Tuesday.

Sri Lanka were 176/5 in their second innings, leading Pakistan by 323 runs at stumps on Day 3 with Dimuth Karunaratne (27) and Dhananjaya de Silva (30) unbeaten on crease. Resuming the day on 191 for 7, Yasir Shah and Hasan Ali did put up a resistance in the morning, but once the stand was broken, Sri Lanka cleaned up the Pakistan tail



relatively quickly. The pair established a 32-run stand, which was ended by Prabath Jayasuriya, who bowled Ali for 21. Nauman Ali was the next to walk, getting stumped off the bowling of Ramesh Mendis for 1. Mendis then got his fifth wicket, trapping Yasir for 26, as Pakistan's innings ended on 231, with

the hosts taking a 147-run lead. In reply, a new opening pair of Oshada Fernando and wicketkeeper-batter Niroshan Dickwella walked out to the middle for Sri Lanka. Dickwella played a couple of cracking shots to get going, but could not stay in for the long haul. Skipper Dimuth Karunaratne walked

out to bat at No.6 and was joined by Dhananjaya de Silva. The pair embarked on a solid unbeaten 59-run stand, which helped their target of fattening up the lead. Karunaratne and de Silva were batting when bad light intervened to lead to an early end to the contest on Day 3.

Brief scores

Sri Lanka 378 (Dinesh Chandimal 80, Niroshan Dickwella 51; Naseem Shah 3-58, Yasir Shah 3-83) & 176/5 (Angelo Mathews 35, Dhananjaya de Silva 30 not out; Naseem Shah 2-29) lead Pakistan 231 (Agha Salman 62, Imam ul Haq 32; Ramesh Mendis 5-47, Prabath jayasuriya 3-80) by 323 runs

SERENA WILLIAMS, IGA SWIATEK HEADLINE US OPEN ENTRY LIST

New York | Agencies

American tennis great Serena Williams and world No. 1 from Poland Iga Swiatek are just two of the star players on a packed initial entry list for the US Open, the last Grand Slam event of the season, which commences here on August 29.

While Swiatek will aim for her second Grand Slam title of the year after clinching the French Open title as part of an incredible 37-match winning streak, Serena, who has won 23 Grand Slam singles titles in her career, will enter the tournament with a protected injury ranking of No.16.

Among those at the top of the list apart from six-time US Open champion Serena and Swiatek are Anett Kontaveit of Estonia, Maria Sakkari of Greece, Paula Badosa of



Spain and 2022 Wimbledon finalist Ons Jabeur of Tunisia, according to wtatennis.com.

Reigning Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan will also make her first appearance at a major as a Grand Slam champion. The newest top-10 player Emma Raducanu of Great Britain will return to defend her title. Last year, Raducanu sensationally came through 10 gruelling matches without the loss of a set to become the first player, female or male, to win a Grand Slam event as a qualifier.

The other teenage breakout of last year's US Open, finalist Leylah Fernandez of Canada, also appears on the entry list. 2019 US Open champion Bianca Andreescu joins Fernandez to expand Canadian interest further in the entries.

French cricketer Gustav McKeon becomes youngest to score T20I century

Vantaa (Finland) | Agencies

French opening batter Gustav McKeon, at just 18 years and 280 days, became the youngest men's player to score a T20 International century, smashing five fours and nine sixes in a 61-ball 109 against Switzerland in the T20 World Cup 2024 Europe Sub-Regional Qualifiers.

In the third T20 World Cup 2024 Europe Sub-Regional Qualifier tournament, McKeon broke Hazratullah Zazai's world record by more than two years, with the Afghanistan opener's unbeaten 162 from 62 balls against Ireland in 2019 scored at 20 years and 337 days, according to ICC.

McKeon's innings backed up a fine 76 from 54 balls against the Czech Republic, and the teenager leads the tournament for runs, with his tally of 185 coming at a strike rate of 161, and an average of 92.50. Despite the century, France couldn't finish lost in a last-ball thriller to their neighbours who chased down a target of 158.



Swiss skipper Faheem Nazir led at the top of the order with a 46-ball 67, with Ali Nayer's late-over heroics ensuring the last-gasp victory, the report said.

England make clean sweep of three-match T20I series vs South Africa Women

Derby | Agencies

England spinner Sophie Ecclestone's all-round performance helped the hosts defeat South Africa Women by 38 runs in the third and final T20 International at the County Ground here to complete a 3-0 series sweep here. Ecclestone displayed some clean hitting at the back end of the England innings on Monday, scoring an unbeaten 33 off just 12 balls to help her team to a massive 176/6 in the allotted 20 overs. She clobbered four boundaries and two massive sixes during an entertaining knock - also her highest T20I score - and then backed it up by picking up two crucial wickets to ensure South Africa fell short on the run chase. Both teams will now turn their attention to picking up a medal at the Commonwealth Games, which commences in Birmingham later this week.



Brief scores

England 176/6 in 20 overs (Danni Wyatt 30, Sophie Ecclestone 33 not out; Nonkululeko Mlaba 3/22) beat South Africa 138/6 in 20 overs (Tazmin Brits 59; Sophie Ecclestone 2/24).

'Great opportunity for youngsters'

Says Sunil Chhetri in special message to Next Generation Cup participants

London | Agencies

Indian national team captain Sunil Chhetri extended his best wishes to the Bengaluru FC reserve team ahead of the Next Generation Cup, 2022, in the United Kingdom.

Bengaluru FC face former Premier League champions Leicester City FC's academy team while Kerala Blasters FC play Tottenham Hotspur in the opening round on Wednesday.

The inspirational Sunil Chhetri shared a special video message wishing the coach, Naushad Moosa and his wards all the best, advising the players to enjoy the experience.

"Moosa (bhai), lads, all the very best. I think it is a great opportunity for all of you. I am pretty sure you guys are going to do well. I know you are going to face some of the best youth teams in England. You have all our support. Just go out there and enjoy. All the best," said Chhetri, the third-highest

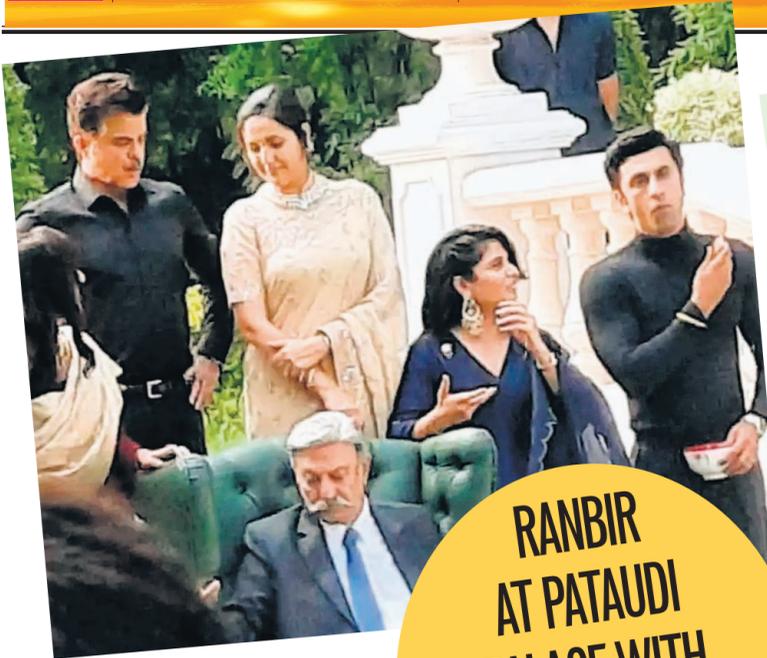
active international goalscorer in the world. The Next Generation Cup is part of Football Sports Development (FSDL) and Premier League's long-term partnership. Both the English and Indian leagues have been working together to holistically develop football in India.

Kerala Blasters FC's midfielder Sahal Abdul Samad also shared a message for the young yellow brigade. "Wishing all the very best to the Kerala Blasters youth team for the Premier League Next Gen Cup. Do well and enjoy your time in the UK. Come on boys," Sahal expressed.

Meanwhile, newly-appointed Bengaluru FC head coach Simon Grayson also had words of motivation for the emerging players. "Wishing the Under 23s all the best in the Premier League Next Generation Cup with the game they are involved in. I know you are playing Leicester City, one of my former clubs, which will be a fantastic experience for you. Make sure you go and enjoy yourself, and



work hard representing the (Bengaluru FC) badge. Good luck to all of you," the Englishman. Both Bengaluru FC and Kerala Blasters qualified for the international tournament by virtue of finishing top two in the inaugural Reliance Foundation Development League. The Next Generation Cup, 2022 features eight teams - five Premier League academy teams along with two Indian clubs and one South African team.



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RANBIR AT PATAUDI PALACE WITH RASHMIKA FOR THE SHOOTING

A photo from Ranbir Kapoor and Rashmika Mandanna's upcoming film *Animal* has been leaked online. While the image does not include the Dear Comrade star, it does show Ranbir and Anil Kapoor filming at the Pataudi Palace. Yes, you read that correctly: Sharmila Tagore-Saif Ali Khan's beautiful family home is once again being used as a filming location, this time for Kareena Kapoor Khan's cousin.

Ranbir Kapoor is dressed in a black-on-black ensemble and is clean-shaven. In one hand, the actor holds a bowl, and in the other, a snack. Anil stood to his right, twinning with Ranbir in black. Anam Khan, a makeup artist, shared the photo. The Pataudi Palace appears to be team *Animal*'s temporary residence. For the uninitiated, the royal property on the outskirts of New Delhi has frequently served as a film and television series shooting location. *Veer Zaara*, starring Shah Rukh Khan and Preity Zinta, and *Tandav*, starring Saif Ali Khan, are among them. The *Animal* is directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga of *Kabir Singh* fame. Earlier this summer, a portion of the film was shot in Himachal Pradesh.

Ranbir began filming the film shortly after he and Alia Bhatt married in April. At the time, images of the actors from the set in the mountains had leaked. Rashmika's third Bollywood film is *Animal*. Previously, Parineeti Chopra was set to play the lead. However, the actress had to withdraw, which is when Rashmika was offered the role. Ranbir's first collaboration with Rashmika and Vanga will be *Animal*. Bhushan Kumar, Pranay Reddy Vanga, Krishan Kumar, and Murad Khetani are the producers of *Animal*. Ranbir was most recently seen in *Shamsher*, and *Brahmastra Part One* is set to be released soon.



Allu Arjun show off his style guru self in an ad

Hyderabad: After setting the box office on fire with *Pushpa - The Rise*, Tollywood star Allu Arjun is busy completing his brand endorsements as well as raising expectations about the upcoming sequel.

The stylish star was seen shooting for a commercial in Hyderabad, helmed by ace movie director Trivikram Srinivas. As Allu Arjun, popularly known as the Icon Star, arrived at the shoot, he was seen sporting a funky shirt and a black hat. He was also seen wearing a red jacket and white T-shirt with black jeans paired perfectly with white shoes.

A look at the pictures of the star from the sets makes it abundantly clear that he was all set to stir a storm with his cool looks. The actor is on a constant spree of signing brands. As a result, he has a long list of brand shoots lined up.

Pushpa: The Rule, which will see Allu Arjun, Rashmika Mandanna and Fahadh Faasil reprise their characters in the first movie, will be theatrically released next year, which gives the icon star plenty of time to go on a brand endorsement spree.

Big B dubs for his cameo appearance in Gujarati film

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Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has lent his iconic baritone for narration for the upcoming Gujarati film *'Fakt Mahilao Mate'*, where he will also be seen in a cameo appearance.

The film stars Yash Soni and Deeksha Joshi and is directed by Jay Bodas. Veteran Producer Anand Pandit says: "Amit Ji always brings child-like energy to work. Even in a dubbing studio, he is full of joy and gives his all to every line, every word, and every inflection." "He has always been a master of long dialogues and to see him wrap up a long dubbing session with such passion and ease and that too in Gujarati was truly a humbling and inspiring experience."

Jointly produced by Anand Pandit and Vaishal Shah, *'Fakt Mahilao Mate'* is touted as a family-centric comedy. The film is releasing on August 19.

This is not the first time Amitabh is lending his iconic voice. The thespian has also lent his vocal prowess for songs such as *'Rang barse'*, *'Hori khele Raghuvvera'*, *'Roza Jiy'* and *'Ekla cholo re'*, among many others.

On the acting front, the 79-year-old icon, will be seen in films such as *'Brahmastra'*, *'Good Bye'*, *'Uchhaal'* and *'Project K'*.



Cinema has become the greatest source of joy in my life: Shruti Haasan

Chennai | Agencies

Actress Shruti Haasan, who completed 13 years in the film industry recently, says that Cinema has become the greatest source of joy in her life. Taking to Instagram, the actress posted a video expressing gratitude and wrote, "Magical 13 years - I never actually thought I'd do more than a movie. Even I wasn't born to do this. I learned to love it and cinema has become the greatest source of joy in my life - in fact, it has given me the life I'm so grateful for."

"Through the years, I've learned a lot on how to weather success and failures, how to waltz with confidence and doubt and most of all, to appreciate the honour of telling stories and giving souls to women I've never known before."

"I'm so eternally thankful for the love and appreciation I get and I never take it for granted, ever. Thank you for everything and I hope to give you more and fall more in love with this gift of time and art."

"p.s. - Weirdos just got to stick to being weirdos apparently. It eventually pays off! Thank you. Thank you for these 13 years!"



AFTER HRITHIK ROSHAN, ALI FAIZAL TURNED DOWN OFFER OF 'THE NIGHT MANAGER'

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The *Night Manager*, one of the most talked-about Hindi remakes at the time, was said to star Hrithik Roshan. The original, starring Tom Hiddleston, is a very successful British spy thriller series that has been in the works for some years for an official Hindi version. It was initially delayed due to the pandemic, and then the remake was further halted due to rumours that Hrithik Roshan was no longer involved.

While recent news sources have confirmed the Hindi adaptation starring Aditya Roy Kapur, the role was initially scheduled to be played by actor Ali Faizal. Ali had to refuse the offer owing to his filming commitments for his Hollywood picture with Gerard Butler and season 3 of *Mirzapur*.

According to a source, "Ali was approached soon after Hrithik couldn't do the project. The team was figuring out the perfect schedule to ensure the project starts on time, however, it was getting stuck between dates. Ali was already committed to do Vishal Bhardwaj's *Khufiya* and then also season 3 of *Mirzapur* and hence owing to these issues, he eventually had to let go of *The Night Manager* remake."

Interestingly, Ali will be featured in Vishal Bhardwaj's next as an intelligence officer, as well as *Kandahar*, a high-octane action movie.

I constantly chase new things: Akshay Kumar

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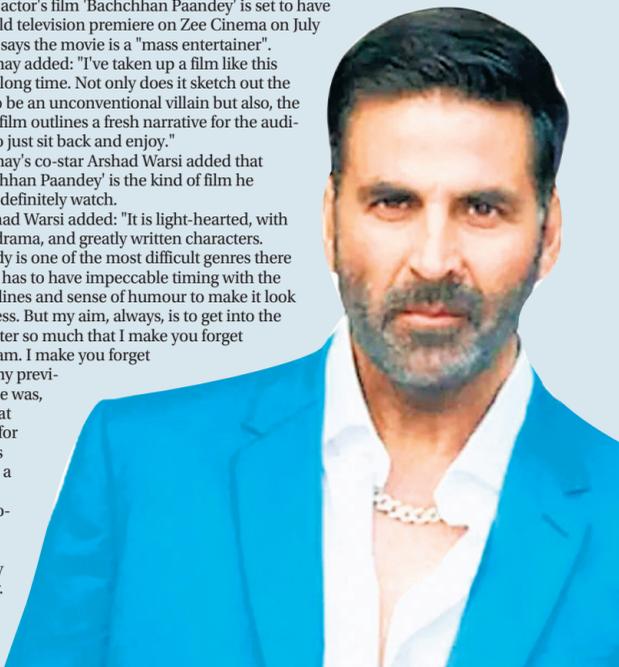
Bollywood star Akshay Kumar says even though comedy is his favourite genre, he loves experimenting with characters and is in a constant chase for new things. "Though comedy is my favourite genre, I love experimenting with different roles. I have a hunger for this, I constantly chase the new. So one could say I am a very greedy kind of a person when it comes to work," Akshay said.

The actor's film *'Bachchan Paandey'* is set to have its world television premiere on Zee Cinema on July 31. He says the movie is a "mass entertainer".

Akshay added: "I've taken up a film like this after a long time. Not only does it sketch out the hero to be an unconventional villain but also, the whole film outlines a fresh narrative for the audience to just sit back and enjoy."

Akshay's co-star Arshad Warsi added that *'Bachchan Paandey'* is the kind of film he would definitely watch.

Arshad Warsi added: "It is light-hearted, with thrill, drama, and greatly written characters. Comedy is one of the most difficult genres there is; one has to have impeccable timing with the punchlines and sense of humour to make it look effortless. But my aim, always, is to get into the character so much that I make you forget who I am. I make you forget what my previous one was, and that works for me. It's always a breeze collaborating with Akshay Kumar."



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Priyanka Jawalkar