



NATION > 02

'We have not shut our eyes,' SC on Shiv Sena plea seeking...



HOLLYWOOD > 06

More women allege harassment, assault by Ezra Miller...



SPORTS > 07

Stockholm Diamond League: Neeraj Chopra breaks national...



PM MODI, VLADIMIR PUTIN DISCUSS BILATERAL TIES

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday reviewed the implementation of the decisions taken during the latter's visit to India in December last year, an official statement said.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday reviewed the implementation of the decisions taken during the latter's visit to India in December last year, an official statement said. In particular, the two leaders, in their telephonic conversation, exchanged ideas on how bilateral trade in agricultural goods, fer-

tilisers and pharma products could be encouraged further, it said. The two leaders also discussed global issues, including the state of the international energy and food markets. In the context of the ongoing situation in Ukraine, the Prime Minister reiterated India's longstanding position in favour of dialogue and diplomacy. The leaders agreed to maintain regular consultations on global and bilateral issues, the statement said.

India asks Pakistan to release Indian prisoners in its custody

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has asked Pakistan to provide immediate consular access to 105 fishermen and 20 civilian prisoners who have been in Pakistan's custody and are believed to be Indians.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India on Friday called on Pakistan to release and repatriate 536 Indian fishermen and three civilian prisoners who have completed their jail-term and whose nationality has been confirmed.

"The government has called for early release and repatriation of civilian prisoners, missing Indian defence personnel, and fishermen along with their boats, from Pakistan's custody," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

Additionally, The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has asked Pakistan to provide immediate consular access to 105 fishermen and 20 civilian prisoners who have been in Pakistan's custody and are believed to be Indians. India made the request in the



context of the exchange of the lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen by the two countries as part of a practice to do so on January 1 and July 1 every calendar year under the framework of a 2008 agreement.

Further the MEA reported that India has handed over a list of 309 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 95 fishermen in India's custody to Pakistan.

"In this context, Pakistan was asked to expedite the release and repatriation of 536 Indian fishermen and three Indian civilian prisoners to India who have completed their sentence and whose nationality has been confirmed and conveyed to Pakistan," the Ministry added.

As per the MEA, India remains committed to addressing, on priority, all humanitarian matters, including those pertaining to prisoners and fishermen in each other's country. Moreover, India has also urged Pakistan to expedite necessary action at its end to confirm the nationality status of 57 Pakistani prisoners, including fishermen, whose repatriation is pending for want of nationality confirmation by Pakistan. Lastly, the Ministry also informed that in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pakistan had been requested to ensure the safety, security and welfare of all Indian and believed-to-be Indian civilian prisoners and fishermen.

Eknath Shinde to prove majority in spl assembly session on July 3-4

A day after swearing-in a new government headed by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde with Devendra Fadnavis as the Deputy Chief Minister, Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari has convened a Special Session of Maharashtra Assembly on July 3-4.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A day after swearing-in a new government headed by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde with Devendra Fadnavis as the Deputy Chief Minister, Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari has convened a Special Session of Maharashtra Assembly on July 3-4. The agenda will be - election of a new Speaker which is likely to take place on Sunday (July 3), followed by a 'vote of confidence' in the new government on Monday (July 4), according to officials.

The Speaker's post is vacant since over a year after the previous incumbent, Congress' Nana Patole had resigned over a year ago, and Nationalist Congress Party's Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal functioned as Acting

Speaker. The latest developments came a day after the Shinde-Fadnavis government assumed charge following the abrupt resignation of the Maha Vikas Aghadi Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on June 29. Belying all expectations at the last-minute, the BJP offered the coveted post of CM to Shinde, and offered outside support, but hours later, following a Central party diktat, Fadnavis joined as Deputy Chief Minister -- ending a 10-day long unprecedented political upheaval in the state.

The Shinde group has claimed the support of around 40 Shiv Sena MLAs plus 10 independents and others, besides the Bharatiya Janata Party's 106 MLAs, well above the required 145 mark in the 288-member house.

Violence will not resolve problems: Rahul Gandhi in Wayanad

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Congress leader and Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi, who arrived here on Friday to see his constituency office which was vandalised by Students Federation of India activists last week, said that violence will not resolve any issues.

Gandhi had arrived at the Kannur airport in the morning and then drove down to Wayanad. All top Congress state leaders accompanied him to Wayanad.

Interacting briefly with the media after seeing the vandalism, he said even though it is his office, this office is also the people of Wayanad.

"Violence is seen everywhere, but violence will not resolve problems. Even though I feel sad that my office was attacked, I am not angry as it's been done by 'children'. I don't have any hostility towards them. They have acted irresponsibly and did a silly thing. They



are kids and I don't think they know what they did and I have forgiven them," said Gandhi.

He agreed with what the Supreme Court said about what is happening in the country and it is for the ruling dispensation to see that, as this is against the interest of India and the people. Gandhi will be in Wayanad for two more days, attending various functions.

BJP MP 'PREDICTS' MAHARASHTRA-LIKE SITUATION IN TELANGANA

BJP MP K LAXMAN ON FRIDAY 'PREDICTED' MAHARASHTRA-LIKE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN TELANGANA.

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

BJP MP K Laxman on Friday 'predicted' Maharashtra-like political developments in Telangana.

The MP said the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) would face a situation like the one witnessed by Shiv Sena in Maharashtra recently.

Laxman also predicted that the political scenario in Telangana would completely change after BJP's national executive and the public meeting in Hyderabad.

The two-day national executive of the BJP is beginning on Saturday while a massive

public meeting is scheduled at the Parade Grounds in Secunderabad on Sunday, which will be addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP president JP Nadda, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other leaders.

Laxman, who is a member of the Rajya Sabha, said since TRS is like a family party like Shiv Sena it would meet the same fate. "The downfall of TRS and KCR has started," he said.

Stating that Modi, Amit Shah and Nadda were especially focusing on Telangana, the MP remarked that in a year's time there will be 'Ram



Rajya' in Telangana. He also predicted that TRS and Congress will join hands for the next elections in the state. He dubbed the Congress and AIMM as the

'B' parties of TRS. Laxman criticised the TRS for not extending support to NDA's candidate for Presidential election Draupadi Murmu.

Laxman along with Union minister for tourism and culture G. Kishan Reddy visited the Parade Ground to review the arrangements for the public meeting.

Kishan Reddy alleged that TRS was creating hurdles for the BJP meeting as it was scared of defeat in the next elections.

He said the public meeting will give an assurance to the poor about their secure future under the BJP rule.

The minister said while the BJP meeting enjoys people's blessings, the TRS government is creating problems by putting up hoardings to mislead people.

India carries out maiden flight of unmanned combat aircraft

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully carried out the maiden flight of the autonomous flying wing technology from the Aeronautical Test Range in Karnataka's Chitradurga on Friday.

DRDO officials said, "In a major success towards developing unmanned combat aircraft, the maiden flight of the Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator was carried out successfully from the Aeronautical Test Range, Chitradurga, Karnataka today."

Giving further details on the flight, the DRDO in a statement said, "Operating in a fully autonomous mode, the aircraft exhibited a perfect flight, including take-off, way point navigation and a smooth

touchdown. This flight marks a major milestone in terms of proving critical technologies towards the development of future unmanned aircraft and is a significant step towards self-reliance in such strategic defence technologies."

The unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) is designed and developed by Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), Bengaluru, a premier research laboratory under DRDO. It is powered by a small turbofan engine. The airframe, undercarriage and entire flight control and avionics systems used for the aircraft were developed indigenously.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO on successfully carrying out the maiden flight of an unmanned flight aircraft. He tweeted, "Congratulations to



@DRDO_India on successful maiden flight of the Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator from Chitradurga ATR. It is a major achievement towards autonomous aircrafts which will pave the way for Aatmanirbhar Bharat in terms of critical military systems."

Normal to above normal rainfall in July for north, central, south India: IMD



Team Absolute | New Delhi

After a "normal" June, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday predicted "normal to above normal" rainfall over some parts of north and central India and

most parts of south peninsula. The IMD also said "normal to below normal" rainfall is most likely over most parts of east and northeast India and areas adjacent to east central India and some parts of west south peninsula. "Normal to above normal" minimum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country, except some parts of the Himalayan foothills and peninsular India where "below normal" maximum temperatures are likely.

Monthly rainfall for July 2022 over the country as a whole is most likely to be normal, i.e., ranging between 94 and 106 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA).

Despite tremendous disparities in the rainfall received regionwise - excess in the northeast and dry in the northwest - India, as a whole registered "normal" rainfall in the month of June.

The IMD forecast for temperatures in July said, "normal to above normal" maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country, except some parts of the Himalayan foothills and peninsular India where "below normal" maximum temperatures are likely.

"Normal to above normal minimum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country except over parts of west, northeast, and peninsular India where 'below normal' minimum temperatures are likely."

'Arrogant, obstinate & loose tongue,' SC slams Nupur Sharma

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday minced no words in slamming suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma, whose remarks on Prophet Muhammad sparked a controversy. The top court said her loose tongue has set the entire country on fire and her irresponsible remarks shows that she is "obstinate and arrogant."

Senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing Sharma, mentioned the plea before a bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and JB Pardiwala seeking transfer of all FIRs filed against her to Delhi. However, the bench reprimanded Sharma for making irresponsible comments against a religion during a TV debate. It said, "These remarks are very disturbing...shows her arrogance. What is her business to make such remarks?" Singh pointed at the written apology issued by her.

"This lady has a loose tongue...making inflammatory statements...she should have to go on TV and apologize to the whole country. Please don't compel us to open our mouth," the bench told Singh. It further added, "It is so disturbing...the outcome is what happened at Udaipur."

Singh said the top court has laid down the principle in Arnab Goswami case to stop vexatious multiple FIRs for the same alleged offence. Singh said his client is facing a security threat and it would not be safe for her to travel now. The bench replied, "She faces threats or she has become a security threat? This lady is single-handedly responsible for what is happening in the country."

The bench continued with its criticism of Sharma's remarks, saying, "These remarks have led to unfortu-



nate incidents in the country...These people are not religious. They do not have respect for other religions...nefarious agenda...cheap publicity."

The bench said the remarks show she is obstinate and arrogant, and queried, if you are a spokesperson, "you have got license to make statements?... sometimes power goes to head". Singh insisted that there are multiple FIRs lodged in various parts of the country and her client is an advocate with 10 years of practice.

Singh added during the debate a foundation was laid for a mischievous provocation and cited top court's judgments ordering clubbing of FIRs in the same alleged offence. "All I am asking is for an investigation done at one palace...", said Singh. The bench queried what has been done in an FIR registered with Delhi Police so far. "They must be red carpeting for you..." said the bench. Singh said his client has joined the investigation and also cited the top court's order in businessman Satinder Singh Bhasin case where multiple FIRs were clubbed into a single FIR.

The bench questioned the police

action in the case. It said, "When you lodge a complaint against someone that person is arrested but nobody dares to touch you...That shows your clout."

The bench also pulled the TV channel for the debate saying, "what was the TV debate about? Only to fan an agenda? Why did they choose a sub-judice topic?" The TV debate was on the issue of Gyanvapi mosque.

The bench added that on her complaint, a person is arrested but despite multiple FIRs she has not been touched by the Delhi Police.

The top court also expressed its reservation on Sharma bypassing the lower courts and directly moving the Supreme Court. "The petition smacks of her arrogance, that the magistrates of the country are too small for her," said the bench.

Sharma had moved the top court seeking transfer of several FIRs, registered against her in many states for alleged remarks to Delhi for investigation. Sharma contended she is constantly facing life threats from unsocial elements despite withdrawing her comments.



'WE HAVE NOT SHUT OUR EYES,' SC ON SHIV SENA PLEA SEEKING SUSPENSION OF REBEL MLAS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear Shiv Sena Chief whip Sunil Prabhhu's plea seeking suspension of 16 MLAs, including Eknath Shinde, from the Maharashtra Assembly till the disqualification proceedings initiated against them are decided and also a direction to restrain delinquent MLAs from entering the Assembly.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing Prabhhu, mentioned the matter before a vacation bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and JB Pardiwala.

Sibal submitted that there was no merger of the Shinde faction with the BJP and the moment Eknath Shinde was sworn in, he violated the Tenth Schedule (anti-defection law) of the Constitution.

Sibal said: "He is not the party...It is not a dance of democracy."

Justice Kant said: "We have not shut our eyes...we will examine."

The bench agreed to take up the matter on July 11 along with the Shinde faction petitions challenging the disqualification proceedings



against them.

Sibal contended that whose whip will count? Both will elect their own whips. "Who is the real Shiv Sena can be decided by the Election Commission. If so, how votes would be counted during trust vote," submitted Sibal. The bench said, "Let us see what is the procedure...if it is defective. We will examine."

The bench told Sibal that it will take up the matter on July 11. "We will look into this," said the bench. Prabhhu's plea said the delinquent MLAs, who have been acting as pawns of the BJP, thereby committing the constitutional sin of defection, ought not to be allowed to perpetuate their sin even for a single day by permitting them to continue as members of the Assembly.

"Though this court may have injuncted the Deputy Speaker from proceeding with the disqualification petitions since his jurisdiction has been questioned, that in no way means that the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution would become a dead letter," said the plea.

It added that the rebel MLAs have committed the constitutional sin of defection under Para-2(1)(a) of the Tenth Schedule. The plea urged the top court to pass an interim order suspending the delinquent MLAs, against whom disqualification petitions have been filed by the Applicant herein, from the membership of the 14th Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, till the final adjudication of the Tenth Schedule proceedings initiated against them.

Rath Yatra was targeted in Congress rule; BJP made Gujarat curfew-free: Shah

GANDHINAGAR | Agencies

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, reminding of the Congress rule in Gujarat, said on Friday that "during those days, Rath Yatra processions were stopped, violence would break out, curfews were normal, people used spend the entire day tensed. But ever since BJP came to power, people are freely enjoying Rath Yatra and curfews have become a thing of the past in Gujarat."

Shah was addressing a gathering at the foundation stone-laying ceremony of a trust hospital in Kalol town in Gandhinagar district. Speaking on the occasion, Shah announced that the multi-specialty hospital with 750 beds is coming up to serve the needs of north Gujarat and Rajasthan.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the last eight years, 387 new medical colleges have come up; with this, there are 603 medical colleges in the country now," he said. Enumerating further, Shah said: "There were 51,348 medical seats



in the country. Now the number has increased to 89,875. Even for medical post-graduation, seats have increased. For MD and MS courses, seats have been increased from 31,100 to 60,000." Citing the budget allocation for the three-tier health sector, Shah said, "For the upgradation of primary health centres, community health centres and district government hospitals, Rs 64,000 crore has been allocated."

Plea in SC seeks withdrawal of observation by judge in Nupur Sharma case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A plea has been moved in the Supreme Court demanding withdrawal of Justice Surya Kant's observations made during the hearing of former BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma's case regarding clubbing of all FIRs in connection with her remarks on Prophet Muhammad.

The letter petition filed by Ajay Gautam, addressed to the Chief Justice of India, said: "It has not been proved in any court of law that the statement made by Nupur Sharma is incorrect. Because telling the truth which is documented and acknowledged by clerics and society is not an offence."

The plea sought a direction to the bench headed by Justice Surya Kant to withdraw the observations in the matter of Nupur Sharma so that she gets a chance of fair trial.

The plea added that observations made by the court directly affect/effect the merit of the case and in the mind of the trial court which deprives Nupur Sharma from fair trial and natural justice. The plea sought a direction to declare the observation made by Justice Surya Kant in the matter uncalled for. The plea said: "It is submitted that news has been flashed through all media channels that court has made following observation about Nupur Sharma as under I. Nupur Sharma is responsible for Udaipur murder

case II. She is responsible for fire in country III. She tender apology before TV unconditionally. She hurt the religious sentiments of a particular country V. Whatever happened in the country, Nupur Sharma is only responsible. VI. Police failed to arrest Nupur Sharma...."

Earlier, during the day the Supreme Court minced no words in slamming suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma, whose remarks on Prophet Muhammad sparked a controversy. It said her loose tongue has set the entire country on fire and her irresponsible remarks shows that she is "obstinate and arrogant".

Senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing Sharma, men-

tioned the plea before a bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and J.B. Pardiwala seeking transfer of all FIRs filed against her to Delhi. However, the bench reprimanded Sharma for making irresponsible comments against a religion during a TV debate. It said, "These remarks are very disturbing...shows her arrogance. What is her business to make such remarks?" Singh pointed at the written apology issued by her.

Sharma had moved the top court seeking transfer of several FIRs, registered against her in many states for alleged remarks to Delhi for investigation. She contended she is constantly facing life threats from unsocial elements despite withdrawing her comments.

"Thorough Wall Radar" is also being inducted to detect the presence of personnel buried in the debris," Lt Col Vaishnava said adding that a search and rescue dog squad is also being inducted.

Army's Eastern Command Chief Lt Gen RP Kalita met the six injured Territorial Army personnel who were initially evacuated to Liemakong Military Hospital on Thursday and are now being provided medical aid at the Assam Rifles Hospital at Mantripukhuri. Meanwhile, the district administration has cautioned civilians living in downstream areas of the Ijei river to evacuate due to the likelihood of breach in the dam created on the river by the landslide.

Noney Deputy Commissioner Haulianlal Guite said the landslide occurred at the Tupul Yard Railway construction camp, and it also obstructed the course of the Ijei river which flows through Tamenglong and Noney districts.

Shiv Sena MPs Undecided On Joining Eknath Shinde Camp: Report

▶ A CENTRAL BJP MINISTER CLAIMED THAT THE SPLIT IN THE SHIV SENA IN MAHARASHTRA WILL ALSO HAVE AN IMPACT IN THE LOK SABHA AS AT LEAST A DOZEN LOK SABHA MEMBERS OF THE OUTFIT, OUT OF THE TOTAL 19, WERE READY TO SWITCH SIDES.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Shiv Sena parliamentarians are still undecided on joining the breakaway faction led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde amid claims by the BJP leaders that at least a dozen Lok Sabha members were in touch with them.

A central BJP minister claimed that the split in the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra will also have an impact in the Lok Sabha as at least a dozen Lok Sabha members of the outfit, out of the total 19,



were ready to switch sides.

The Shiv Sena's 19 members in Lok Sabha include one from Dadra & Nagar Havel. It has three members in the Rajya Sabha.

Shinde's son Shrikant, a two-term Lok Sabha member from Kalyan, has already joined ranks with his father, while five-term parliamentarian from Yavatmal Bhawana Gawli had written a letter to the then chief minister Uddhav Thackeray urging him to consider the grievances of the rebels

with regard to Hindutva.

Rajan Vichare, the Lok Sabha member from Thane, was mentored by the late Anand Dighe like Mr Shinde. Gawli has been under the radar of the Enforcement Directorate over allegations of money laundering connected with a non-governmental organisation run by her.

Thirty-five-year-old Shrikant, who was with the rebel MLAs in Goa, was not available for comments. A section of the Lok Sabha members was in a quandary as several MLAs in their constituencies had sided with Mr Shinde and were apprehensive of financial support for development projects under the new dispensation. "There has been no impact of the rebellion on the Shiv Sena parliamentary party," Vinayak Raut, leader of the Shiv Sena in the Lok Sabha said.

Lok Sabha member from Osmanabad Omraje Nimbalkar too said he was firmly with Thackeray and would cast his vote in the July 18 presidential elections as per the directions of the Shiv Sena chief. "The split is in the Shiv Sena legislature party, why do you want to drag the Parliamentary unit into this," a Sena Lok Sabha member from Vidarbha region said.

Ordered trust vote in Maha, slammed Nupur Sharma 'for setting country on fire': SC judge Surya Kant's bench

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Supreme Court bench, headed by Justice Surya Kant, had on Wednesday declined to stay the floor test in the Maharashtra Assembly ordered by Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, after which Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray quit. On Friday, the same bench minced no words in slamming former BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma in connection with her remarks on Prophet Muhammad.

On Friday, the same bench took up a plea filed by Sharma seeking transfer of several FIRs, registered against her in many states for alleged remarks on the Prophet, to Delhi for investigation. Sharma contended she is facing life threats from unsocial elements despite withdrawing her comments.

However, the bench

noted that Sharma apparently appeared before the court under a "deceptive name".

As senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing Sharma, replied she has a threat, Justice Surya Kant remarked: "She has a threat or she has become a security threat?" "The way she has ignited emotions across the country. This lady is single-handedly responsible for what is happening in the country," the bench added. It said the remarks show she is obstinate and arrogant, and queried, "if you are a spokesperson, you have got license to make statements?... sometimes power goes to the head."

Singh said that there are multiple FIRs lodged in various parts of the country and her client is an advocate with over 10 years of practice, as he noted during the debate, the foundation was laid for a mischievous

provocation and cited top court's judgments ordering clubbing of FIRs in the same alleged offence. "All I am asking is for an investigation done at one place...," said Singh.

At this, the bench queried what has been done in an FIR registered with Delhi Police so far.

"They must be red carpeting for you...."

Singh said his client has joined the investigation and also cited the top court's order in businessman Satinder Singh Bhasin case where multiple FIRs were clubbed into a single FIR.

The bench then questioned the police action in the case. "When you lodge a complaint against someone that person is arrested but nobody dares to touch you...That shows your clout." It declined to entertain Sharma's plea and her counsel withdrew it from the court.

Shiromani Akali Dal announces support for NDA's presidential nominee Droupadi Murmu

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) has announced support for NDA's presidential nominee Droupadi Murmu, despite differences with the BJP.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), an estranged former ally of BJP, announced support for NDA's presidential nominee Droupadi Murmu. SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal said that they have decided to support NDA's presidential candidate Droupadi Murmu. Badal said that they would not never go with the Congress because of the atrocities they had committed on the Sikh community.

"She has emerged as a symbol of the poor and tribal segments in the country," a resolution passed at a meeting of the party's Core Committee said.

Later on, Sukhbir Singh Badal met Murmu to convey to her the party's decision to support her candidature. Murmu thanked the SAD president for their support. Badal was accom-



panied by senior leaders Balwinder Singh Bhunder, Charanjit Singh Atwal, Prem Singh Chandumajra and Harcharan Bains.

"We have decided to support NDA's presidential candidate Droupadi Murmu. We will never go with Congress because of the atrocities they have committed on the Sikh

community," he was quoted by ANI as saying.

SAD Chief in a tweet said, "Shiromani Akali Dal has accepted the appeal of Ms Droupadi Murmu for support in the forthcoming presidential poll as she symbolizes the cause of minorities, tribals, the exploited and backward classes as

well as the dignity of women. She has emerged as a symbol of the poor."

On Thursday, BJP President JP Nadda had reached out to estranged former ally SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal to seek support for NDA's presidential nominee Droupadi Murmu. Badal had told Nadda that he would get back to him after consulting other Akali Dal leaders.

CHANGE OF NAME
I SAPNA JAIN THAT MY PREVIOUS NAME WAS SAPANA JAIN AT PRESENT I KNOW AS A NEW NAME IS SAPNA JAIN W/O PRAKASH CHANDRAJAIN.
ADDRESS : 877 - A, SUDAMA NAGAR, BEHIND JAIN MANDIR, INDORE (M.P.) - 452009



SHIV SENA MOVES SC SEEKING SUSPENSION OF REBEL MLAS, ALSO RESTRAINING THEM FROM ENTERING ASSEMBLY

The Uddhav Thackeray camp, led by Sunil Prabhu, has moved the Supreme Court seeking suspension of 16 MLAs, including Eknath Shinde, from the Maharashtra Assembly till the disqualification proceedings initiated against them are decided and also urged the court to restrain 'delinquent' MLAs from entering the Assembly.

ings initiated against them are decided and also urged the court to restrain 'delinquent' MLAs from entering the Assembly.

Prabhu has filed the plea through advocate Javedur Rahman, which will be mentioned on Friday before a vacation bench.

The plea said till date there is no dispute regarding the leadership position of Uddhav Thackeray as the president of the Shiv Sena political party. It cited the resolution passed in national executive meeting of the Shiv Sena political party held on June 25, this year, where Thackeray's leadership was re-affirmed and the conduct of the delinquent MLAs led by Eknath Shinde has been criticised. The plea said it has further been resolved to take necessary steps to disqualify the rebels from the membership of the Legislative Assembly.

The plea said despite the rebellion carried out by the Eknath Shinde faction, the original Shiv Sena political

party remains under the leadership of Uddhav Thackeray, who was elected as the president on January 23, 2018, when the organisational elections of the Shiv Sena were conducted and the same was duly communicated to the Election Commission on February 27, 2018. The plea said, "Pass an interim order suspending the delinquent MLAs, against whom disqualification petitions have been filed by the Applicant herein, from the membership of the 14th Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, till the final adjudication of the Tenth Schedule proceedings initiated against them."

It further added, "Restrain the delinquent MLAs, against whom disqualification petitions have been filed by the Applicant herein from entering the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly or participating in any proceeding relating to the House till the final adjudication of the disqualification proceedings against them."

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Uddhav Thackeray camp, led by Sunil Prabhu, has moved the Supreme Court seeking suspension of 16 MLAs, including Eknath Shinde, from the Maharashtra Assembly till the disqualification proceed-

People will know if I visit 'Matoshri': Maha CM Eknath Shinde

CALLING IT AS A VICTORY OF THE HINDUTVA IDEOLOGY OF BALASAHEB THACKERAY AND TEACHINGS OF ANAND DHIGE, MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER EKNATH SHINDE HAS SAID THAT PEOPLE WILL COME TO KNOW IF HE VISITS 'MATOSHRI'.



Panaji | Agencies

Calling it as a victory of the Hindutva ideology of Balasaheb Thackeray and teachings of Anand Dhige, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has said that people will come to know if he visits 'Matoshri'.

Shinde after being sworn in as the Chief Minister, came back to Goa

Thursday late night and joined the rebel MLAs at the Taj hotel in Panaji.

The rebel MLAs of Shiv Sena, who forced Uddhav Thackeray to resign as Chief Minister, will continue camping in Goa and may go back before the floor test.

Shinde said that as they (BJP and rebels) have 175 MLAs, floor test will be just a formality and they will win it easily. "We have 175 numbers, the

picture is clear," he said.

"When the time comes, people will come to know if I visit 'Matoshri'," he said while replying to a question.

"This victory is of Hindutva ideology of Balasaheb Thackeray, teachings of Anand Dhige and unity of 50 MLAs. These MLAs have created history in Maharashtra. I congratulate them," he said.

"Though the BJP had the number

of 115 to 120 MLAs they supported me, I am a saint of Balasaheb, with a big heart. Hence I thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP President J.P. Nadda, and also Devendra Fadnavis," Shinde said.

"They have supported Shiv Sainik to become the Chief Minister. They have shown a way for the development of the state," he said.

Shinde said that he is committed to resolve all the issues pertaining to the constituencies of the 50 MLAs who are with him. "I will resolve their issues. I have all the records. There will be no shortage of funds to carry out the developmental works in their constituencies. It is my responsibility to fulfill the desires of voters," he said.

"We are taking ahead Hindutva of Balasaheb, even Anand Dhige has taught us to fight against injustice and raise voice against it. We will work as Shiv Sainiks and will take our state to overall development. All projects will be completed on time," Shinde said.

"This is a historic incident. People hobnob for getting power, but they stepped out for development," Shinde said.

SANJAY RAUT REACHES ED OFFICE FOR MONEY-LAUNDERING PROBE

ACCOMPANIED BY A LARGE NUMBER OF SUPPORTERS AND A LEGAL TEAM, SHIV SENA MP SANJAY RAUT WENT TO THE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE (ED) OFFICE IN SOUTH MUMBAI IN CONNECTION WITH THE ALLEGED MONEY-LAUNDERING CASE PERTAINING TO THE RS 1,034-CRORE PATRA CHAWL LAND SCAM, HERE ON FRIDAY.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Accompanied by a large number of supporters and a legal team, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut went

to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) office in south Mumbai in connection with the alleged money-laundering case pertaining to the Rs 1,034-crore Patra Chawl land scam, here on Friday.

"Whatever it is, its my duty to join the probe as a law-abiding citizen... I don't blame the ED... I shall provide them whatever information they need," said Raut, while urging his followers not to crowd outside the agency's office. before going inside the ED office, Raut said that he did not even know where Patra chawl was

located. "In my life I have never done anything wrong and I have no relation with the Patra Chawl case," Raut said.

Raut responded to the summons -- earlier on Monday, he excused himself in view of the massive political crisis raging in Maharashtra -- but said he would join the ED probe and give his statement on Friday.

At that time he had accused the Centre for the action and challenged the ED to arrest him, shoot him or behead him, but he wouldn't go "the Guwahati way" -- referring to the Shiv

Sena rebels camping in Assam.

Last April, the ED had slapped attachment orders on properties allegedly linked to Raut, his wife and a business associate, in connection with the land scam under the ED scanner.

These included a Rs 2-crore property belonging to Sanjay Raut's wife Varsha and another 8 plots of land worth Rs 9-crore in Raigad, belonging to his associate Pravin Raut, who was also arrested.

Heavy police force was deployed outside the central agency's office as a large number of Shiv Sena workers were present at the spot. Barricades were placed on the roads leading to the office.

On the ED summons, Raut told India Today, "If they [probe agency] want to arrest me, then they can. Unlike others, I won't run away from the ED and will be ready to face them. People leave the country in fear of ED. I am going in front of them."

"I have been a lawmaker for years. I respect the law. I am going to ED to clear their doubts. If they have any questions, they can ask me," Raut added.

Deserter cannot be Shiv Sena Chief Minister: Uddhav Thackeray

Firing his first salvo after demitting office, former Chief Minister and Shiv Sena President Uddhav Thackeray on Friday said that a person who deserted the party cannot be a 'Shiv Sena CM' -- referring to the new incumbent Eknath Shinde.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Firing his first salvo after demitting office, former

Chief Minister and Shiv Sena President Uddhav Thackeray on Friday said that a person who deserted the party cannot be a 'Shiv Sena CM' -- referring to the new incumbent Eknath Shinde.

Slamming the statements of several Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders claiming that a 'Shiv Sainik' (Shinde) had finally become the state Chief Minister, Thackeray termed them as "attempts being made to misguide the Shiv Sena workers."

"A person who has sided with the Sena cannot be called a 'Shiv Sainik' CM," said Thackeray, firmly dismissing the new ruling com-



bine's contentions after Shinde took oath as the CM and former Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis was sworn-in as the Deputy CM late Thursday.

The Sena chief's statements assume significance amid claims by the Shinde Group of 40-MLAs that they are 'the real Shiv Sena' with the possibility of a tussle to control the 56-year-old party and its assets. Moreover, the Sena President said that he had been saying that for the

past two-and-half-years that a Shiv Sainik should be the Chief Minister and it was even decided at 'Matoshri' well before the last Lok Sabha elections and state Assembly polls (both in 2019). If Amit Shah (BJP's Union Home Minister) had kept his word, and shared the post of CM, whatever happened in the past few days could have happened in a dignified manner," said Thackeray, referring to the rebellion in the party ranks.

He reiterated that Shah reneged on its promise of sharing the CM's post for 30-months each, and now the two-and-half-year period was over, and there could have been an amicable changeover.

We will not merge with any party, will remain in Shiv Sena: Deepak Kesarkar

ALLEGING THAT SHIV SENA SPOKESPERSON SANJAY RAUT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN MAHARASHTRA, REBEL SHIV SENA MLA DEEPAK KESARKAR SAID ON THURSDAY EVENING THAT THEY WILL NOT MERGE WITH ANY PARTY, BUT WILL REMAIN AS SHIV SENA.



Panaji | Agencies

Alleging that Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut is responsible for the present political situation in Maharashtra, rebel Shiv Sena MLA Deepak Kesarkar said on Thursday evening that they will not merge with

any party, but will remain as Shiv Sena.

Earlier, capping off a series of startling political events of the past 10 days, Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari administered the oath of office to rebel camp leader Eknath Shinde as the 20th Chief Minister of the state, while BJP's Devendra Fadnavis was sworn-in as the Deputy CM. In an interview to a local news channel here, Kesarkar said that the group following Shinde will remain as Shiv Sena.

"We will not merge with any party. We will work as Shiv Sena. We will work in the interest and development of Maharashtra and contribute towards it. We will not backstab the party," Kesarkar said.

"I usually don't criticise anyone, but

his (Sanjay Raut) language is so bad? Calling people pigs, dead persons, speaking of doing their post-mortem show it. When such things are said by him, at least once he should be asked about it," Kesarkar said.

"Sanjay Raut is more than 50 per cent responsible for today's political situation of losing power (by Uddhav Thackeray). He (Raut) needs to control his language," he said.

"One can instigate the people by using such language, but if it is done every day then people will simply switch off their TV sets. Once a man told me that if he (Raut) appears again on television, he will damage his TV. Why do you need such a spokesperson," Kesarkar asked. He said people were misguided that rebel Shiv Sena MLAs will merge with the BJP. "We will remain in Shiv Sena. Misinformation spread about us was part of a pressure tactic. If someone says that his party is being hijacked, he may get sympathy. But people at times also get violent," Kesarkar said.

Earlier on Thursday afternoon while addressing a press conference, Kesarkar had targeted Raut, saying he was the one who backstabbed Uddhav Thackeray, and not the rebel MLAs.

CM EKNATH SHINDE STARTS WITH VETO TO UDDHAV'S AAREY SHED PLAN

Fadnavis directed the urban development department officials to bring a proposal for building the car shed at Aarey before the Cabinet.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his deputy Devendra Fadnavis, in their first Cabinet meeting held after assuming power on Thursday, overturned the previous Uddhav Thackeray-led government's decision of moving the Metro 3 car shed from Aarey in Mumbai.

It was also decided in the Cabinet that a special session of the state legislature will be convened on July 2 and 3 in Mumbai, when the test of majority and election of the Speaker will be conducted.

Fadnavis directed the urban development depart-

ment officials to bring a proposal for building the car shed at Aarey before the Cabinet. He added that the 33-km long underground Metro project between Colaba-Bandra-SEEPZ was stuck because of a legal wrangle over the Kanjurmarg plot, where the previous Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government had proposed to build the car shed.

Fadnavis asked the bureaucrats whether the courts could be apprised through the advocate general that the car shed could be built at Aarey itself. The move was seconded by Shinde.

The move to shift the car shed from Aarey has been a major bone of contention between the Shiv Sena and its former ally BJP.

A day after taking over reins of the state, Thackeray, on November 29, 2019, had overturned Fadnavis' decision to build the car shed at Aarey.

Several environmentalists

in Mumbai had opposed the construction of the car shed in Aarey, which is an extension of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park and a habitat for leopards and other fauna. Environmentalists, who had claimed that the car shed would damage the last big vestige of greenery in Mumbai, were backed by Aadiya Thackeray.

Soon after the MVA government came to power, 804 acre of land in Aarey was declared as reserve forest. It was sought to build the car shed on an alternate piece of land in Kanjurmarg.

The Bombay High Court had, however, put a spanner on one of the biggest decisions of the Thackeray government by imposing a stay on the construction of the shed at Kanjurmarg in December 2020. The government since then has not been able to find a viable alternative for building the car shed.

The BJP had claimed that the decision to move the car

shed from Aarey was being done to satisfy Thackeray's ego and would delay the construction of the underground Metro project for four years and increase its cost.

The decision of the new government was opposed by environmentalists, who said that they will move court against any move to build the car shed in Aarey. Environmentalist D Stalin of NGO Vanshakti said, "We will oppose the matter in the court. They can't build the car shed and the Supreme Court has stayed felling of trees."

Sanjiv Valsan of Save Aarey Movement said, "There is a detailed plan for integrated Metro shed at Kanjurmarg, which will do away the need for a separate car shed at Aarey and Thane. This land at Kanjurmarg belongs to the government. The MMRC is still spare Aarey and it is forest area, flood plain of Mithi river and habitat of wildlife, including leopards."

IANS-CVoter National Mood Tracker:

Indians divided about the political future of Aadiya Thackeray

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The past 10 days have been full of political upheaval and surprises in Maharashtra politics. First, it was the rebellion of a large section of Shiv Sena MLAs led by senior party leader Eknath Shinde on June 21 that brought about the collapse of Uddhav Thackeray-led Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

Thackeray resigned as Maharashtra Chief Minister on June 29 after the Supreme Court refused to stay the Maharashtra Governor's direction to hold a floor test in the assembly on June 30. Another surprise came when everyone was expecting the return of Devendra Fadnavis as Maharashtra CM after dislodging the MVA government. But the man himself announced that Shinde will be the next head of the new government in the state.

Though Fadnavis had announced that he will not take any position in the new Maharashtra government, the BJP leadership asked him to join the new dispensation as Shinde's

deputy. Shinde and Fadnavis took oath as Maharashtra Chief Minister and Deputy CM respectively on the evening of June 30.

BJP's decision to make rebel Shiv Sena leader Shinde as Maharashtra CM is being seen by many as an attempt to make Thackeray's redundant in the state politics.

CVoter-IndiaTracker conducted a nationwide survey on behalf of IANS to know people's views about the future



of the next generation of the Thackeray family in Maharashtra politics. During the survey, Indians were divided in their opinion about the capability of Aadiya Thackeray, son of Uddhav Thackeray to emerge as a mass leader on the political landscape of Maharashtra's future.

According to the survey data, while 49 per cent of the respondents believe that Aadiya Thackeray has the potential to emerge as a mass leader in Maharashtra politics, 51 per cent respondents did not agree with the sentiment.

The survey highlighted political polarisation in the views of NDA

voters and opposition supporters on the issue. During the survey, while 61 per cent opposition voters asserted that Aadiya will be able to carry forward the legacy of his grandfather Balasaheb Thackeray and emerge as popular leader in state politics, 68 per cent of NDA voters expressed completely different opinion about him. The survey revealed differences in the opinions of different social groups about the future of Aadiya Thackeray in Maharashtra politics. During the survey, while majority of Scheduled Castes (SC) - 66 per cent and Scheduled Tribes (ST) - 69 per cent voters asserted that Aadiya Thackeray will emerge as mass leader in future, majority of Other Backward Classes 60 per cent and subsequent proportion of Upper Caste Hindus (UCH) - 59 per cent did not share the sentiment about him.

According to the survey data, views of Muslims were divided on the issue. During the survey, while 55 per cent Muslims expressed their faith in Aadiya Thackeray's abilities to emerge as mass leader in Maharashtra, 45 per cent respondents from the community expressed completely different views.



EDITOR'S SPECS

PM Modi's G-7 commitments and freedom of speech

Geopolitics trumped economics at the annual summit of the world's "most industrialised" countries, as the G-7 is known, at the German resort of Schloss Elmau, a summit Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended, along with other special invitees from Argentina, Indonesia, Senegal, and South Africa. While the G-7 countries did have some economic initiatives on their agenda, it was clear that most of the deliberations took aim at the twin challenges seen from Russia and China. The G-7 countries issued separate statements on support for Ukraine, food security and a 'Climate Club'. In addition, the G-7 and special invitee "partner countries" issued a statement on "Resilient Democracies", committing to free and fair elections, protecting freedom of expression, and gender empowerment. Given the targeted nature of the G-7 outcomes, India had its work cut out as a balancing power. Prime Minister Narendra Modi made it clear that it is the developing world that needs the most support, including to weather the "knock-on" effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The Government sought to distance itself from the PGII, pitched as a G-7 counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative, and made it evident that India had only signed on to the statements on "Resilient Democracies" and a "Just Energy Transition", and not the many statements castigating Russia and China, much like Mr. Modi had, at the earlier BRICS summit, stayed away from President Putin and President Xi's stringent criticism of the West. On the global stage, the G-7 outcomes mean New Delhi will have to continue to walk a tightrope between these two blocs that are growing more polarised and inimical towards each other. On the Indian stage, Modi's G-7 commitments will be scrutinised for his pronouncements on democracy, and his written assurance that his government will protect civic society, freedoms of expression and "thought, conscience, religion or belief," which are facing challenges within the country.

MODI VS THACKERAY - WHO IS INDIA'S 'HINDU HRIDAY SAMRAT'

"Trail of the Tiger" tracks the personal and political journey of Uddhav Thackeray against the backdrop of the changing narrative of Hindutva, and new connotations to Hindutva sub-national plot, with the rise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a new Hindu Hriday Samrat. It is the story of one of the biggest upheavals in Indian politics where breaking a 30-year-old alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Shiv Sena joined Sonia Gandhi's camp, holding Sharad Pawar's finger after the 2019 Maharashtra Assembly elections)

Uddhav Thackeray's decision to snap ties with the BJP and align with the Congress and the NCP in Maharashtra needs to be understood against the backdrop of the political narrative built by Balasaheb, revered by hardcore Hindu nationalists and Sainiks as the Hindu Hriday Samrat (monarch of the Hindu heart), and the emergence of Narendra Modi.

Balasaheb claimed that the Thackerays had been proponents of Hindutva ever since his father Keshav Thackeray started a movement in 1922. Balasaheb claimed that he was only taking forward his father's push for Hindutva. But Balasaheb coloured his father's reformist Hindutva agenda an even darker saffron after the latter's death in 1973.

The 1987 Vile Parle by-poll was one of the turning points in Hindutva politics. The Shiv Sena decided to contest the seat after the death of the sitting Vile Parle MLA, Hans Bhugra. It fielded the Mumbai mayor, Dr Ramesh Prabhoo, as a 'Shiv Sena independent' candidate because at the time the Sena had not yet been recognised as a political party.

This was the first time Balasaheb fiercely and openly sought votes in the name of religion. In one campaign speech, he said, 'We are fighting this election for the protection of Hinduism. Therefore, we do not care for the votes of the Muslims. This country belongs to Hindus and will remain so.' A banner with the slogan 'Garva se kaho hum Hindu hain' was displayed on the dais. Balasaheb claimed that Hindutva was in danger and Shiv Sena would be its saviour. He appealed to voters to vote for the victory of Hindutva.

Sena won the by-election. The defeated candidate, Congress leader Prabhakar Kunte, took the matter of the communal speeches to the Bombay High Court which declared Prabhoo's election void as per the Representation of the People Act, 1951. The court named Balasaheb for the commission of corrupt practices under the Act. Prabhoo approached the Supreme Court which upheld the high court's judgment and concluded that Balasaheb's three speeches amounted to corrupt practices under the Act. Since votes were sought in the name of Prabhoo, he too was declared a part of the corrupt practices. The Election Commission stripped Balasaheb of voting rights for six years. The Supreme Court, in its judgment, said that the offending speeches made by Balasaheb violated and eroded India's secular polity. 'We say this with the fervent hope that our observation has some chastening effect in the future election campaigns,' the court added. The Supreme Court Bench, comprising Justice Jagdish Verma, N P Singh and K Venkataswami, said that it had to record its distress at the communal speeches given by top political leaders. It added that given the likely impact of such speeches, leaders need to be more circumspect in how they address voters during campaigns. But Balasaheb had already set the tone for all hardcore Hindu nationalist leaders to follow. He even questioned the court's judgment.

Balasaheb's Hindutva turned even more ferocious after the 1987 by-polls. Interestingly, the BJP was not with the Sena -- or the Hindutva agenda -- in this election; it had opted to support a Janta Dal candidate who championed secularism. After this election, the Sena fought and won the Aurangabad civic election, again using the Hindutva line. Thackeray led the way for the BJP on Hindutva, noted Prakash Akolkar in his book Jai Maharashtra, which documents Shiv Sena's history.

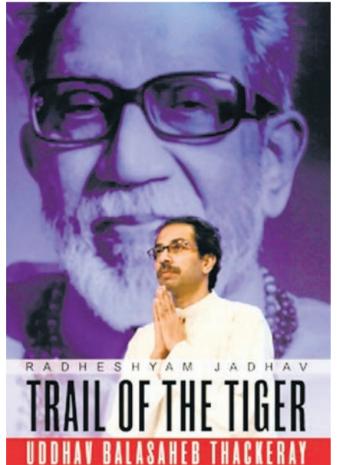
The BJP was forced to abandon its Gandhian socialism after Balasaheb's strategy won the popular vote. Balasaheb did not just introduce hardcore Hindutva narrative into

India's electoral politics but also placed Lord Ram at its centre, as mentioned earlier. During the Vile Parle elections, the Sena objected to how Dr B R Ambedkar spoke of Ram and Krishna in his writings, especially Riddles in Hinduism. The government of Maharashtra was publishing his collated works and the Sena objected to this. For Balasaheb, the Vile Parle election verdict was the victory of Ram and Krishna and a 'licence' for the formation of a 'Hindu Rashtra'. It was God's wish to put this 'licence' in his hands, said Balasaheb, and claimed that the process of building the Hindu Rashtra would begin from Maharashtra before spreading across India.

Hindutva and nationalism proved to be powerful political tools and the Sena wore its 1987 victory, as a badge of honour. According to Uddhav, 1987 gave a specific 'direction' to Indian politics. He claimed that the Sena propelled Hindutva politics long before the BJP. "That election (1987) showed that India needs the Hindutva ideology and that this ideology can lead to electoral victory. Then the BJP also realised it. Honourable Advanisaheb started the rath yatra,' Uddhav said in an interview in Saamana.

He pointed out that Pramod Mahajan and Gopinath Munde joined the Hindutva bandwagon after this, starting the era of the Sena-BJP alliance. After 1987, Balasaheb talked about hardcore Hindutva without worrying about the political or legal consequences. His popularity soared as the media broadcast his sensational statements to a national audience. He became, for his followers, the 'Hindu Hriday Samrat'.

The year 1992 was a decisive chapter in India's politics. The demolition of the Babri mosque gave BJP a stronger hold on Hindutva. Riots broke out in Mumbai in December 1992 and January 1993, killing about 900 and injuring around 2,036. The Sena's role in the riots was highlighted by the Srikrishna Commission appointed by the Maharashtra government to



probe the riots. The panel named Balasaheb in its report. Saamana was spewing fire and Mumbai was gripped by fear. It was around this time that the BJP leader Sunder Singh Bhandari claimed that the Babri mosque was demolished by the Sena cadre. Sujata Anandan, a reporter with a national wire service, called Balasaheb for a reaction to this statement and reported that he sounded 'flummoxed' when he heard about it. He asked her to call him back for a response and later said, 'Well, if my Shiv Sainiks have brought down the mosque, I can only be proud of them.' Anandan further claims that Balasaheb knew that no Shiv Sainik was present in Ayodhya during the demolition. However, Bhandari had given away an ace to Balasaheb -- he became the hero of hardcore Hindus, boasting that his men demolished the mosque. This line was repeated often by Uddhav and the rest of the Sena.

(Excerpted from "Trail of the Tiger: Uddhav Baalasaheb Thackeray - A Journey" by Radheshyam Jadhav, with the permission of the publisher, Bloomsbury)

international

Once known as Asia's World City, Hong Kong seen as just another Chinese city now

Hong Kong | Agencies

Just 25 years after the handover, Hong Kong is no longer the world's freest economy and has plummeted in global press freedom rankings following a citywide crackdown on dissent under the national security law, RFA reported.

On July 1, 1997, the British flag came down for the last time in Hong Kong, as the city returned to Chinese rule.

The ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under Deng Xiaoping had promised it could run its own affairs under "one country, two systems," with the city's freedoms preserved for at least 50 years, and with progress promised towards fully democratic elections.

The reality has been rather different. "People who stayed are like the frog in a pan of gradually warming water," economist Law Ka-chung told RFA.



"Maybe some of them think everything's fine, but others see a huge difference." Today, not a single promise made by Chinese leaders before the handover has been kept. Halfway into the 50-year grace period, Hong Kong is already unrecognisable to many. "Since the National Security Law came in, there's a lot of things you can't say any more; a lot of things you can't

write; even people you can't interview," former Stand News journalist Lam Yin-bong told RFA.

The last races under British rule took place in June 1997. More than H.K.\$2.5 billion in bets were placed.

Under "one country, two systems", China promised that "the horses will run as usual, and people can keep on partying". Now, people's lives may appear similar on the surface, but what was once the world's freest economy no longer gets its own separate trading status, RFA reported.

Once known as Asia's World City, Hong Kong is seen as just another Chinese city now, RFA reported.

"Important stuff like politics, the economy, used to be very different from mainland China," Law said. "The way we collected data, our stock market."

"But it all changed gradually until there was no difference at all."

NINE INJURED IN US SHOOTING

Washington: A shooting in the US city of Newark has left nine people injured, multiple media outlets reported. The shooting on Thursday took place on the 200 block of Clinton Place at around 6.20 p.m., Xinhua news agency quoted the reports as saying citing police. The victims, including a juvenile, were transported to hospital to treat gunshot wounds.

All of them are reportedly in stable condition. The incident is under investigation by the Newark Police Department. No further details were immediately known.

The mass shooting came less than a week after President Joe Biden signed into law what had been touted as a gun safety bill. The compromise legislation took effect a month after a gunman broke into an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, killing 19 children and two teachers in a rampage that had triggered nationwide demonstrations against gun violence across the US and political inaction.

There have been more than 21,800 deaths from gun violence and 296 mass shootings across the country since the beginning of this year, according to the latest data from the Gun Violence Archive.



UN Security Council renews sanctions on DRC

United Nations | Agencies

The UN Security Council has renewed the sanctions imposed on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Adopting resolution 2641 by a vote of 10 in favour to none against with five abstentions, the Council on Thursday night renewed its arms embargo measures, travel ban and asset freezes until July 1, 2023, reports Xinhua news agency.

China, Russian, Ghana, Gabon and Kenya voted in abstention.

In an explanation of the vote, Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative

to the United Nations, pointed out that the Security Council's sanctions on the DRC are designed to curb the violent activities of armed groups.

"Regrettably, 18 years after its initial implementation, armed groups in the eastern DRC remain rampant, while the DRC government's security capacity has been constrained. The DRC government has repeatedly requested the council to lift the arms embargo on the country," he noted.

Recently, the security situation in the eastern DRC has deteriorated, with many civilian casualties and displacements caused by the resurgence of the March 23 Movement (M23) rebels.

CAREER DIPLOMAT NAMED PHILIPPINES' NEW FOREIGN SECY

Manila: Newly-appointed Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos swore in career diplomat Luis Enrique Manalo as the country's new Foreign Secretary on Friday. Before his appointment, Manalo, 69, was the permanent Philippine representative to the UN, reports Xinhua news agency. He previously served as undersecretary for policy at the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and also acted as acting Foreign Secretary during the former Rodrigo Duterte administration. Having been working with the DFA since 1979, Manalo has a seasoned career, serving as ambassador in various countries and international organisations, including the UK and the European Union. Ferdinand Marcos, the son of late Filipino leader Ferdinand Marcos, was sworn in as the 17th President of the Philippines on Thursday at the National Museum in Manila in front of thousands of people who witnessed the inauguration. On May 25, the Philippine Congress proclaimed Marcos winner of the May 9 presidential election, with over 31 million votes or more than 58 per cent of the votes cast.

EU to trace crypto assets to prevent money laundering, terror financing

London | Agencies

The European Union (EU) lawmakers have passed a new legislation for tracing transfers of crypto assets like Bitcoin in the same way as traditional money transfers to prevent money laundering, terrorist financing and other crimes.

The negotiators reached a provisional deal on a new bill aiming to ensure that crypto transfers can always be traced and suspicious transactions blocked. "This new regulation strengthens the European framework to fight money-laundering, reduces the risks of fraud and makes crypto-asset transactions more secure," said Ernest Urtasun, co-rapporteur for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON). The EU travel rule will ensure that crypto assets service providers can prevent and detect sanctioned addresses and that transfers of crypto-assets are fully traceable, Urtasun said in a statement. The agreement extends the so-called "travel rule", already existing in traditional

finance, to cover transfers in crypto assets. This rule requires that information on the source of the asset and its beneficiary travels with the transaction and is stored on both sides of the transfer. "Crypto-assets service providers (CASPs) will be obliged to provide this information to competent authorities if an investigation is conducted into money laundering and terrorist financing," read the new legislation.

Before making the crypto-assets available to beneficiaries, providers will have to verify that the source of the asset is not subject to restrictive measures or sanctions, and there are no risks of money laundering or terrorism financing. The rules would also cover transactions from so-called un-hosted wallets (a crypto-asset wallet address that is in the custody of a private user) when they interact with hosted wallets managed by CASPs. In case a customer sends or receives more than 1000 euros to or from their own un-hosted wallet, the CASP will need to verify whether the un-hosted wallet is effectively owned or controlled by this customer.

New Zealand secures major FTA deal with European Union

Wellington | Agencies

New Zealand and the European Union (EU) have concluded negotiations on a major free trade agreement (FTA), which covers market access into 27 European countries and removes duties on the majority of products New Zealand exports.

"Our EU-NZ FTA is expected to increase the value of New Zealand's exports to the EU by up to NZ\$1.8 billion (\$1.12 billion) per year from 2035," New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said on Friday after the FTA signing in Brussels. "It's a strategically important and economically beneficial deal that comes at a crucial time in our export-led COVID-19 recovery," she said in a statement. The deal delivers tangible gains for exporters into a restrictive agricultural market. It cuts costs and red tape for exporters and opens up new high-value market opportunities, Xinhua news agency reported citing the Prime Minister as saying.

This is the fifth FTA New Zealand has concluded in the past five years and sits alongside upgrades to the existing



agreements with China and Singapore, she said, adding that the increase in market access means 73.5 per cent of New Zealand's global exports are now covered by an FTA, up from around 50 per cent five years ago.

The deal provides duty-free access on 97 per cent of the New Zealand's existing goods trade to the EU within seven years, 91 per cent from day one, said

New Zealand Trade and Export Growth Minister Damien O'Connor.

However, the meat and dairy industries, two of New Zealand's major export sectors, were disappointed as their gains in the trade deal were very limited.

The EU is New Zealand's fourth-largest trading partner with two-way goods and services trade worth NZ\$17.5 billion.



VIOLENCE MARS SECOND PHASE OF PANCHAYAT POLLS

The voting was held at 23,967 polling centres in 7655 gram Panchayats across the state. The total estimated turnout was 74 percent. Of these, 76 percent are women, 72 percent are men and 10 percent are other voters.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The second phase of Panchayat polls held in the state was marred by violent incidents at different places on Friday. The voting was held at 23,967 polling centres in 7655 gram Panchayats across the state till 3pm. According to the information received till 6 pm in the second phase of the three-tier Panchayat General Election-2022, peaceful polling was completed in all 106 development blocks. The total estimated turnout was 74 percent. Of these, 76 percent are women, 72 percent are men and 10 percent are other voters.

A dispute between two groups occurred in Torah gram panchayat of Panna district regarding fake voting. Following which supporters of district panchayat member candidate attacked with sticks in which four people sustained injuries.

The injured were identified as Ram Niwas Pathak (45), Thakur Prasad Pathak (72), Kailas Kori (38), Amit Pathak (25), residents of Torah village. Among the injured persons were the candidates' agent and two were voters. On getting the information, a heavy police force along with Panna Collector and SP reached the spot. The injured were admitted to the Community Health Centre, Amanganj. Later, the police arrested the accused from their house.

In another incident, there was a scuffle between the supporters of the candidates for the post of Sarpanch at Rani Virangba polling centre of Bhind district. Several people opened fire as well.

According to reports, five people sustained injuries in the incident. On getting the information about the incident, the district collector and SP reached the spot. In Rewa district, two groups clashed in Tiwani village of Mangawan area regarding fake voting. According to reports, the candidate had a bouncer along with him. It was alleged that he closed the door of the polling booth and tried to cast fake votes.

Similarly, supporters of two candidates clashed with each other during voting in Amiliha, Dongartola, Gram Panchayat, Anuppur. Many people were injured in the incident. Heavy police force reached the spot and pacified the matter.

In Damoh district, the villagers allege that the police personnel misbehaved with the voters at polling centre 158, Rampura Gram Panchayat. Following which, the heated locals boycotted the voting in the locality.



CHIEF MINISTER EXPRESSED GRIEF

THREE KILLED, SEVEN INJURED AFTER CAR RAMS INTO STATIONARY TRUCK

Team Absolute | Sehore

Three women were killed and seven others injured when their car rammmed into a stationary truck on IndoreBhopal Highway in Madhya Pradesh's Sehore district on Friday, police said.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed grief over the death of three persons in a road accident. The victims were on their way to a Shiva temple at Kubereswar Dham in the

district after attending a wedding in Indore, an official said.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed deep grief over the untimely death of three persons in the accident that took place near Seoul Resort on Sehore-Ashta road. The deceased were residents of Indore and Ahmedabad.

Chief Minister Chouhan has prayed to God to grant peace to the departed souls and strength to the bereaved family members to bear this loss and speedy recovery of

those injured in the accident. The accident occurred when the car hit the rear of a stationary truck near Jawar, he said.

Kalpna Ballai (48), Nallu Ben (62) and Rekha Ben (70) were killed in the accident, Jawar police station in-charge Madan Ivne said. Nallu Ben and the injured persons belong to Ahmedabad (Gujarat), he said. The injured persons were referred to Sehore district hospital after they were administered first-aid at Ashta town, the official added.

CM PAYS HOMAGE TO FREEDOM FIGHTER AND EMINENT PHYSICIAN BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday garlanded the picture of freedom fighter and eminent physician Bidhan Chandra Roy in the CM residence hall and reminisced him. The Chief Minister also recalled his achievements. Today is the birth anniversary and death anniversary of Roy. His

birth anniversary is celebrated as National Doctor's Day.

Bidhan Chandra Roy was born on July 1, 1882 in Bankipur, Bihar. He was a skilled physician and freedom fighter. He is considered the architect of modern West Bengal. For his great achievements in the fields of politics and medicine and for the great services rendered to the country, he was awarded the most prestigious award of the nation "Bharat Ratna" in the year 1961.

Roy held a prominent place among the doctors of the world. Initially in the country, he earned reputation as a physician to leaders like Pt. Motilal Nehru and the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi. He used to make the diagnosis and determine treatment of the disease by looking at the face of the patient. Due to his born skills, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine in the year 1909 and of the "American Society of Chest Physicians" in 1940. The services rendered by Bidhan Chandra Roy at the time of famine in Bengal are unforgettable. Roy passed away on 1 July 1962.

BOOTH CAPTURING IN BHIND

DEPOSIT RS 5 LAKH AS 'RE-POLLING COST' OR FACE DEMOLITION, ACCUSED TOLD

District administration in Bhind, issues show-cause notices to four people accused of vote tampering during the first phase of Panchayat polls held in Pachokhara village on June 25

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The district administration in Bhind, this week issued show-cause notices to four people accused of booth capturing, urging them to deposit Rs 5.02 lakh as the cost the administration had to bear for re-polling or face demolition of their illegal property to make the recovery.

The notices were issued to the family members of the four accused later identified as Ajay Singh, Saurabh Chouhan, Rampratap alias Raju Singh and Dharmendra Singh on June 27, the day the re-polling was held in Pachokhara village of Bhind

district. While these notices were handed over to the families, bulldozers were brought in and stationed at the local police station. However, the polling process went on smoothly and the four absconding accused were arrested by the end of the day.

On June 25, the first phase of Panchayat polls were held in Pachokhara village. At booth number 52, a girls' school in Pachokhara village, four men allegedly barged in and tampered with the votes cast. By the time the police arrived at the polling booth, all four accused had escaped.

"All four accused stay in Pachokhara village and some members of their family was a candidate. They belong to affluent families of the village and were often seen influencing voters," a senior Bhind district official said, requesting anonymity.

After the incident, the district administration initiated the process for re-polling, which was then held on June 27. On the re-polling day, Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Lahar AR Prajapati issued

show-cause notices which were handed over to the family members of the absconding accused.

The notice stated that 70 police officers and personnel and 10 polling officers along with others had to be posted on re-polling duty on June 26 and 27. These employees had to be given two days of salary, along with arrangements of snacks, food, tents, fans, drinking water and videography for the polling process, for which a total of Rs 5.02 lakh had to be spent. Voters too, the notice pointed out, were inconvenienced.

"Government would not have to bear these expenses had the need for a re-polling not risen. You are hereby asked to deposit this sum immediately, failing which, the illegal structures would be demolished to make the recovery," the notice added.

Prajapati said, "All four accused were habitual offenders who were made to sign a bond of Rs 50,000 with assurance of good behaviour. This bond has been forfeited. Now the notices will be a part of court proceedings with the accused being sent to jail."

UPSET OVER FIGHT WITH HUSBAND

WOMAN GIVES POISON TO 3 KIDS; 2 DIE

Dhar: A 35-year-old woman in Dhar allegedly administered poison to her three children and then consumed it herself after an altercation with her husband on phone, resulting in the death of two children, a police official said on Friday.

The incident took place on Thursday evening in Kod village, some 45 kilometres from the district headquarters, Superintendent of Police Aditya Pratap Singh said.

"Mamta Bai mixed poison meant to kill rats in water and gave it to her children Sakshi (8), Pari (7) and Kunal (3). She then consumed it herself. Neighbours rushed them to a nearby hospital from where they were taken to a medical facility in Ratlam," he said.

"Pari and Kunal died during treatment. The woman and her daughter Sakshi are in critical condition in a hospital in Indore. Initial probe has revealed Mamta had a fight with her husband over phone. More details will be had after we speak to her when she is medically fit," the SP informed. A case has been registered and further probe was on, Singh added.

Madhya Pradesh is in urban mess: AAP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Delhi minister and senior Aam Aadmi Party leader Atishi Marlena here on Friday claimed that despite BJP being in power for so many years, major MP cities are in an urban mess. Marlena the Kalkaji MLA from New Delhi who was in Bhopal for campaigning for party candidates appearing in civic polls, speaking to the media on Friday claimed that once you arrive in Bhopal, garbage dumps (Nishatpura) greet you first. Similar situation could be seen in other cities which feature among top Indian cities, she claimed. Same is the condition of roads, said the MLA adding needless to say roads built by urban

bodies have suffered sizable damage in Bhopal as well. Civic bodies are also not discharging duty of maintaining drains and recently a kid had died while falling into an uncovered drain, alleged the Delhi minister. She also claimed that health centers are also in a mess in the state as they remain bereft of doctors, medicines and tests. Private nursing homes and hospitals don't wish these facilities to run properly, she alleged.

Claiming that parents taking out their wards from private schools while in MP, 65,000 schools don't have power supply. The voters are disenchanted from both the Congress and the BJP as they know basic amenities won't improve, she added claiming that AAP candidates are in

the fray in all the municipal corporations. Our party workers are reaching out to every household with Delhi-model so that public faith remains intact on politics, added Marlena. Once elected, our corporators will be improving cleanliness and waste management besides probing into construction of crumbled road, once we come to power in civic bodies, said the leader. Among other things the party has promised to offer 20,000 litre of water per family free every month. Asked to comment on AAP policies of engaging in pre-poll freebies, Marlena explained that Delhi is the first government in the country which has a revenue surplus despite offering free power, water, studies, treatment and others.

4 COURSES IN NFSU WILL START FROM THIS SESSION: MISHRA

Bhopal: Home Minister Narottam Mishra has informed that 4 courses will be started in National Forensic Science University (NFSU) Bhopal from this academic session. He has informed that the state government has allotted 15 acres of land free of cost at Barkheda Bondar for the new building of the university. Home Minister Dr. Mishra has informed that till the construction of the campus of National Forensic Science University, classes will be held in the building of CFSL. Land has been allotted for NFSU. Further action will be taken on this soon.

Additional Chief Secretary Rajesh Rajoura has informed that 4 courses are being started in the academic session of the year 2022-23 in the building of Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) till the construction of new campus of National Forensic Science University at Bhopal. He said that the Union Home Ministry has issued a notification. According to the information, 30 seats have been allotted for the two-year course of MSc Forensic Science in Bhopal. 20 seats each are allotted for one year courses of Post Graduate Diploma in Finger Print Science, Post Graduate Diploma in Forensic Document Examination and Post Graduate Diploma in DNA Forensics.

MASS RECITATION OF VANDE MATARAM HELD IN MANTRALAYA

Bhopal: The mass recitation of national song Vande Mataram and the national anthem "Jana Gana Mana" was held on Friday at Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Park, Mantralaya. The police band presented melodious tunes. Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Additional Chief Secretary Vinod Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary JN Kansotiya and officers and employees of Satpura and Vindhyaachal Bhawan along with Mantralaya were present.



SARPANCH CANDIDATE GOES MISSING, KIN SUSPECT KIDNAPPING

Team Absolute | Ratlam

Amid the second phase of polling for the three-tier Panchayat Elections in the state, Gadavadiya panchayat which falls under the Sailana Janpad of Ratlam district witnessed a bizarre incident. Here one of the sarpanch post candidates, Dhulsingh Garwal is missing since last night.

The supporters of the candidate have demanded the administration stop voting. The officials of the

administration reached the village and requested the villagers not to hinder the voting. A total of six candidates, including Dhulsingh, are in the fray for the post of sarpanch in the village. The family members have expressed the apprehension of her being kidnapped by other candidates in an election rivalry.

The ADM and additional SP also reached the village to enquire about the case. At the same time, the police formed a team under the direction of SDOP and started the search for the

sarpanch candidate.

The relatives of the missing sarpanch candidate Dhulsingh say that he had gone to sleep on the farm at night but did not return the next day. Additional SP Sunil Patidar said, "Search is on for the sarpanch candidate who has gone missing on the complaint of the relatives. At the same time, interrogation of suspects is also going on. Five teams of police have been formed under Sailana SDOP and the search for the missing candidate is going on."

CM CHOUHAN PLANTS SAPLING

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday planted a banyan sapling in the Smart City Park. Chouhan plants saplings every day according to his resolve. Public representatives were present during the plantation. Banyan tree planted today has religious significance. According to Ayurveda, the treatment of many diseases is possible from the banyan tree.

1286 UNLICENSED WEAPONS SEIZED SO FAR

Bhopal: Continuous action is being taken by the police in view of the law and order situation in the state considering Panchayat and Urban Bodies General Election-2022. So far, 1286 unlicensed weapons (arms) have been seized. In the state 2 lakh 58 thousand 61 licensed weapons have been deposited. Action has been taken against one lakh 65 thousand 552 persons under the Preventive Section of CrPC. So far, 20 thousand 508 non-bailable warrants have also been executed.

"Nepy" - A Special Shawl of konyak chief's wife From Nagaland Exhibit of the July Month'

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Under the popular museum series 'Exhibit of the Month' of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS), a traditional object is displayed in the appearance for a whole month. The exhibit for the month of July, 2022 is "Nepy" - A Special Shawl of Konyak chief's wife Longwa village Mon District of Nagaland. Nepy is on display in the indoor exhibition building-Veethi Sankul. The 'exhibit of the month' was inaugurated by Soma Kiro, Assistant curator, IGRMS, renowned person present on this occasion. This exhibit of the month had been composed by Dr Surya Kumar Pandey, Assistant Keeper.

About the exhibit displayed in the exhibition by Surya Kumar Pandey said that The Konyak is one of the major tribes of Nagaland. This shawl has been collected from a Konyak village- Longwa, situated in the Mon district on the Indo-Myanmar international border where half of the village including the chief's house fall in India and half in Myanmar. The traditional village chief among the Konyak is known as Ang. The Angship is related to social, political, religious and traditional functions. The Ang solves all the problems of the village. Belonging to Ang's wife Wangsha, this shawl conveys the meaning of aristocracy, prestige, dignity as also the authority of Ang's wife.



Majority of the tribes in North-East India can be identified by the designs and motifs on their costumes. But this shawl is very different from the common shawls used by the Konyak women as it belongs

to Ang's wife. This shawl known as Nepi is woven in three equal parts and stitched together. The base is off-white in colour and is made using bark and cotton fibres. The vertically oriented extra weft designs

at the marginal bands which contain diamond-shaped woven motifs in yellow, green, blue and orange colour provide a unique identity to the shawl. The highlight of the shawl is the presence of round-shaped brass plates. The circumference of the brass plates has a groove pattern, and a garland of small red colour beads adorns the edges. A bunch of red hair on each of these plates are decorated and arranged at various points on the shawl. As the wife of a chief, these decorations are meant to maintain her pride and dignity.

Polygamy and clan endogamy for the Ang and monogamy and clan exogamy for other clans are the general rules of marriage. There is no marriage symbol as such. The nuclear family system prevails for the commoners and for the Ang, joint or extended family system. The artistic and aesthetic expression of the Konyak is displayed in their varied and colourful ceremonial dresses, ornaments, architectural designs of houses, wood carving, tattoo paintings, weaving, bamboo and cane crafts.

The main concentration of the Konyak tribe is in the Mon district of Nagaland bordering the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh in the north and Myanmar in the east. A considerable number of Konyak are also found in the Tuensang district. The word Konyak is derived from two root words, kha means head and nyak means black. This name thus has a connection with the habit of using black



Elizabeth hasn't seen 'Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Elizabeth Olsen hasn't seen her own superhero film 'Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness', which has raked in just over \$950 million at the worldwide box office, reports Variety.

The actress revealed on Show that a cold prevented her from watching the movie at its premiere, and then she refused to watch the watermarked screener Disney sent her as a back-up because it was just too "distracting".

Olsen told The Tonight Show host Jimmy Fallon that "I'm not one of those (actors who doesn't watch her own movies). I'm one of those people who likes to study something so I can figure out how to make it better."

"But I had a cold when we had the premiere and I didn't want to sit through it.

And so I asked them to send a copy so I could watch it, and it had my name on it and it had the time that I was watching it, and I didn't want to watch it like that."

"My name was on it and the exact time and date," Olsen added. "It's just distracting."

More women allege harassment, assault by Ezra Miller

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Ezra Miller, who is known for playing the DC superhero the Flash in several films for Warner Bros. In the following weeks, Miller, who identifies as nonbinary and uses "they/them" pronouns, became a regular at bars in Iceland's capital, Reykjavik, where locals came to know and even befriend them. They then started showing a different, volatile side to their personality one that began to concern Icelanders.

Miller had many altercations at the bar one of which includes the assault of a young woman at the bar, reports 'Variety'. Soon after the incident, 'Variety' spoke with the woman Miller assaulted; she recently confirmed that her comments could be printed for this article. She asked to remain anonymous out of concern for her privacy, as she's telling her story publicly for the first time.

In the blurry video, Miller is seen confronting the woman -- who is smiling and waving her arms as she walks toward them and asking, "Do you want to fight? Is that what you do?" After Miller grabs her neck, she lets out an audible gasp. The person filming the video stopped to intervene, 'Variety' has confirmed.



AGENCY SUES 'GAME OF THRONES' STAR LENA HEADEY FOR \$1.5 MN

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Lena Headey, who is known for her work in Game of Thrones, is being sued for \$1.5 million over unpaid commission fees by her former U.K. agency Troika with regards to a number of projects including the upcoming film 'Thor: Love and Thunder'.

The agency claims that Headey owes them at least \$500,000 -- equivalent to 7 per cent of her fee -- for her earnings on the Marvel movie. Variety has confirmed that Headey does not appear in the final cut of Thor: Love and Thunder, which stars Chris Hemsworth and Natalie Portman, and is set for drop in theatres next week.

As per Variety, the actress was set to play the titular character in the Showtime dramedy series Rita. However, the show didn't secure a series order beyond its pilot episode by the television network.

Troika are seeking an account of commission fees owed, an order for Headey to pay the fees, damages for breach of contract, interest and reimbursement of legal fees. In her defence, Headey claims she never signed any contract with Troika or with Duff, and that both parties were acting on an oral agreement formed when Duff was still at Lou Carl Associates in the late 1990s.

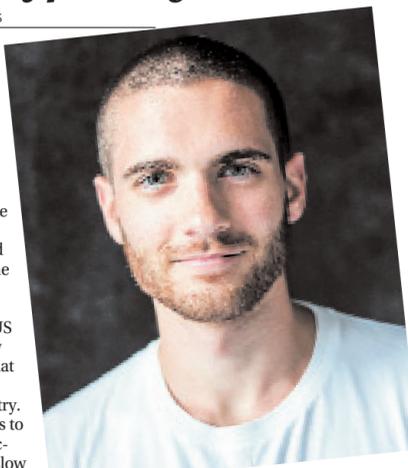
American actor Matt Ford goes public with monkeypox infection

Los Angeles | Agencies

American actor Matt Ford has become the first person ever with monkeypox infection to go public.

In a series of tweets, Ford, a self-employed actor who splits his time between Los Angeles and New York City, said the disease "sucks" as he is unable to "sleep through the night".

He also blasted the US government for its slow response to the virus that has infected more than 142 people in the country. "The government needs to pick up the pace on vaccines and testing. The slow



response is pretty unacceptable," Ford said. Ford said he was exposed to the virus via "skin-to-skin contact" and got the symptoms a week after he was infected in Los Angeles. From "just a couple bumps", he developed "intense" "fever, chills, sweats, fatigue".



'MONEY HEIST: KOREA' CLIMBS TO THE TOP OF NETFLIX'S GLOBAL NON-ENGLISH CHART

Los Angeles | Agencies

The South Korean counterpart of the hugely popular Netflix series 'La Casa de Papel' - 'Money Heist: Korea - Joint Economic Area' has raced to the top of the streamer's Global Non-English top ten chart over the last week, reports 'Variety'.

As per 'Variety', the series dropped on OTT on June 24, meaning that it only had three days to claim its spot in the chart that covers the period June 20-

26. During that time, it was played for 33.7 million hours. The series was also the number one show in South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Thailand.

'Variety' further states that it joins other Korean shows which have scored well globally for Netflix. In the first half of 2022, shows including 'All Of Us Are Dead', 'Juvenile Justice' and 'Business Proposal' have all reached #1 with global audiences, the company reports. Last year, Netflix and 'Squid Game' helped Korean content reach a new level of global audience consciousness.

'Dune: Part Two' release pushed, to clash with 'Hunger Games' prequel

Los Angeles | Agencies

The release of the sci-fi epic 'Dune: Part Two' has been pushed. The film will now open in theatres on November 17, 2023, instead of October 20, 2023, reports 'Variety'.

The sequel will now open in theatres alongside 'Hunger Games' prequel, 'The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes' and 'Trolls 3'. Warner Bros., co-producers of the 'Dune' franchise, also announced that an untitled 'Godzilla vs. Kong' is set to release on March 15, 2024.

According to 'Variety', Timothee Chalamet, Rebecca Ferguson, Zendaya, Josh Brolin and Javier Bardem are returning for 'Dune: Part Two', with Florence Pugh, Austin Butler and Christopher Walken set to join the cast.

Director Denis Villeneuve is expected to start filming the 'Dune' sequel, which follows the second half of Frank Herbert's seminal novel, later this year. 'Variety' further states that 'Godzilla vs. Kong' filmmaker Adam Wingard is back to direct the next monster mash-up between Godzilla and King Kong after steering the latest other-worldly blockbuster to COVID-era glory.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Bella Thorne



Rohit returns to lead India in white-ball series against England, Arshdeep gets his maiden ODI call-up

India on Thursday announced squads for the three-match T20I and ODI series against England, set to be played after the rescheduled fifth Test, with Rohit Sharma returning to lead both white-ball sides.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India on Thursday announced squads for the three-match T20I and ODI series against England, set to be played after the rescheduled fifth Test, with Rohit Sharma returning to lead both white-ball sides.

Keeping in mind the short time gap between the last day of the fifth Test and the start of the T20I series, the All-



India Senior Selection Committee has picked two different squads for the three 20-over matches.

The squad for the first T20I have all players, who took part in the recently concluded two-match series against Ireland, with Rohit being just one addition.

Ruturaj Gaikwad, Sanju Samson, Rahul Tripathi, Venkatesh Iyer and Arshdeep then make way for them in the second and third T20Is. However,

Deepak Hooda, who hit a hundred against Ireland, has been named in both the T20I squads. Apart from Hooda, pace sensation Umran Malik also retained his place in both T20 squads. Meanwhile, Arshdeep Singh, who was impressive during IPL 2022, has received a maiden call-up to the ODI squad.

Despite K.L. Rahul missing ODIs

due to injury, there's no place for Ruturaj Gaikwad as Shikhar Dhawan retained his spot at the top order. Injured Deepak Chahar, Kuldeep Yadav, Deepak Hooda, Ravi Bishnoi, Shahrukh Khan and Washington Sundar all miss out after being part of the last series.

India's squad for 1st T20I: Rohit Sharma (Captain), Ishan Kishan, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Sanju Samson, Suryakumar Yadav, Deepak Hooda, Rahul Tripathi, Dinesh Karthik (wk), Hardik Pandya, Venkatesh Iyer, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Ravi Bishnoi, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Harshal Patel, Avesh Khan, Arshdeep Singh, Umran Malik.

1st ODI: DEEPTI SHARMA'S ALL-ROUND HEROICS GIVES INDIA 1-0 LEAD AGAINST SRI LANKA

The all-round performance of Deepti Sharma and a valuable contribution with the bat by captain Harmanpreet Kaur (44 off 63 balls) helped India beat Sri Lanka by four wickets in the opening ODI of the three-match series here on Friday.



Brief scores:

India Women 176 for 6 (Harmanpreet 44, Shafali 35, Deol 34, Ranaweera 4-39) beat Sri Lanka Women 171 (Nilakshi 43, Hasini 37, Deepti 3-25, Renuka 3-29) by four wickets.

Pallekele | Agencies

The all-round performance of Deepti Sharma and a valuable contribution with the bat by captain Harmanpreet Kaur (44 off 63 balls) helped India beat Sri Lanka by four wickets in the opening ODI of the three-match series here on Friday.

Deepti Sharma first produced a brilliant bowling display, taking three wickets by giving away only 25 runs in 8.2 overs before guiding India to a comprehensive victory with the bat (22 not out) in a low-scoring match.

Sri Lanka won the toss and opted to bat in the first ODI in Pallekele. It was the beginning of a new era for India -- one without the great Mithali Raj in the team -- with Harmanpreet Kaur beginning her innings as India's full-time ODI captain.

Renuka Singh was welcomed into the attack by Hasini Perera but the Indian pacer came back strongly in the next over, removing the dangerous Chamari Athapaththu in the third over of the innings.

The introduction of spin early worked immediately as Hansima Karunaratne, trying to get off the mark with a big one, charged Deepti Sharma and was out caught at mid-off for an 11-ball duck.

Despite losing two wickets inside the Powerplay, Sri Lanka maintained a decent scoring rate, thanks to Perera. Her patient 34-run stand with Harshitha Madavi settled the early jitters before Deepti worked her magic again and trapped Perera in front of the stumps for 37.

Skipper Harmanpreet struck in the next over to send Kavisha Dilhari packing. Sri Lanka were soon in a whole lot of trouble when they lost their set batter Madavi and had half the side back in the hut for 84.

Sri Lanka were in danger of being bowled out before a fighting innings of 43 from Nilakshi de Silva bailed them out of trouble. Anushka Sanjeevani and Anusha Ranaweera made valuable double-digit contributions to take Sri Lanka's total to 171.

Renuka Singh and Deepti Sharma were the pick of the bowlers with three wickets each and were well supported by the rest of the pack.

Chasing the below-par total, India too lost two wickets inside the Powerplay -- Oshadi Ranasinghe scalped Smriti Mandhana and Yastika Bhatia in consecutive overs to put some early pressure on

India. Captain Harmanpreet Kaur walked out on the fall of the second wicket and together with Shafali Verma ensured Sri Lanka didn't inflict any more damage in the first 10 overs.

The partnership was starting to look dangerous when Shafali was out stumped trying to charge Inoka Ranaweera.

Playing her first ODI since 2019, there would have been some butterflies when Harleen Deol walked out to bat in a precarious position. Deol, though, put the pressure right back on Sri Lanka by hammering two boundaries in quick succession.

Harmanpreet too got in on the act but Ranaweera struck again to send the skipper back six runs short of a fifty. The slow left-arm orthodox picked up two more wickets in the next two overs, including that of Deol.

Still, 34 runs away from a win, a wicket or two could have put massive pressure on India. But Deepti Sharma and Pooja Vastakar batted sensibly to take India close to victory before the former finished the game off with two sixes to take a 1-0 lead in the series.

INDIA VS ENGLAND 5TH TEST DAY 1: RISHABH PANT, RAVINDRA JADEJA PUT IND IN DRIVER'S SEAT AT EDEGBASTON

New Delhi | Agencies

Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja helped India reach 338/7 on the opening day. Follow Live score and updates of the IND vs ENG Match Today at Edgbaston, Birmingham.

Rishabh Pant hit his fifth Test century off just 89 deliveries to lead India's turnaround in the rescheduled fifth Test in Birmingham. Pant broke MS Dhoni's record for the fastest century by an Indian wicketkeeper-batter. Virat Kohli, Hanuma Vihari and Shreyas Iyer fell in quick succession in the second session, leaving India reeling at 98 for five. Pant then teamed up with Ravindra Jadeja as the two left-handed players helped India recover from blows and cross the 300-run

mark. The two put on a double century stand, helping India gain firm control at Edgbaston. India reached 338/7 at stumps on Day 1. Earlier, India were 53/2 at lunch, which was taken early due to an expected drizzle. Shubman Gill fell early to James Anderson after England captain Ben Stokes won the toss and elected to field. The veteran seamer struck again to remove Cheteshwar Pujara, who nicked it to Zak Crawley in the slips. Kohli joined Vihari before rain halted the opening session. Rain forced early lunch with the scoreboard reading 53/2. Led by Jasprit Bumrah, India went with Pujara at the top alongside young Gill, while Shardul Thakur made it to the eleven in place of off-spinner Ashwin. Anderson replaced Jamie Overton in the England team.



After 'fruitful' discussion with CoA, Igor Stimac seeks camp, friendlies in September



New Delhi | Agencies

India head coach Igor Stimac has sought an at least two-week preparatory camp in Kerala and a friendly against Kerala

Blasters prior to international matches between September 19-27, the last available FIFA window in the World Cup year. "We would like to play teams above us or at our level. There will be no more

playing teams below us," Stimac said over the phone from his home in Split, Croatia, on Friday. "The problem is: most teams have already scheduled games so we will have to see whom we get." Prior to the camp, Stimac said he would like to "watch a few games and speak to coaches." The domestic season is scheduled to begin in August.

Stimac was speaking after his first meeting with the Committee of Administrators (CoA) now running the All India Football Federation (AIFF), one which he tweeted as being "fruitful." India would need a "bit longer camp in March 23," he said.

ELORDA CUP: Jamuna Boro, Ananta Chopde among six Indian to enter semifinals

Indian boxers continued their fine form as six of them, led by the 2019 World Championships bronze medallist Jamuna Boro, stormed into the semifinals of the Elorda Cup in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, on Friday.

New Delhi | Agencies

Indian boxers continued their fine form as six of them, led by the 2019 World Championships bronze medallist Jamuna Boro, stormed into the semifinals of the Elorda Cup in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, on Friday.

In all, 13 Indian boxers are assured of medals in the competition.

Jamuna looked in complete control throughout her 54kg quarterfinal bout against Aishagul Yeleubayeva of Kazakhstan as she showed strong skills and continued to pick up clean punches en route to a comfortable 5-0 win. The 2017 World Youth champion Jyoti Gulia (52kg), who hails from Rohtak faced Kazakhstan's Zhansaya Rakhymberdi. Jyoti took the first round to gauge her opponent's strategy before coming back strongly in the next two rounds. She displayed her speed, accurate punches and moved around the ring swiftly to earn a 4-1 split verdict in her favour.

The 2016 World Championships silver medallist Sonia Luther (57kg) defeated local boxer Zhuldyz Shayakhmetova 5-0 in a one-sided

affair, according to a press release by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI).

Ananta Chopade (54kg) also comfortably defeated Kazakhstan's Altybek Nursultan 5-0 while Sachin (57kg) progressed to the last-four stage after his opponent Lyu Ping from China got injured in the second round.

Sakshi (54kg) moved to the semis by getting the better of Kazakhstan's Muzdiman Balausa in a comfortable 5-0 win.

On the other hand, Arshi (52kg) and Aarti (57kg) lost to their respective Kazakh rivals by an identical 5-0 margin.

In the men's section, Aditya (67kg) showed great courage against reigning Asian Champion Baatarsukh Chinzorig of Mongolia but lost the bout unanimously. Pawan (75kg) also

ended his campaign with a defeat against Railways Nurkanat of Kazakhstan.

Late on Thursday night, three Indian women boxers, Gitika (48kg), Lalita (70kg) and Babita (81kg) advanced to the semifinals.

Four Indian boxers, S. Kalaivani (48kg), Neema (63kg), Alfiya (81+kg) and Jugnoo (92kg) will start in the semifinal as 13 Indian boxers are assured of medals.

Top players from strong boxing countries such as India, Uzbekistan, hosts Kazakhstan, Cuba, China and Mongolia, are competing in the inaugural edition of Elorda Cup. Finals will be played on July 4.

The champion boxer will receive USD 700 while the silver and bronze medal winners will take home USD 400 and USD 200, respectively.

EVERY SINGLE QUARTER WILL BE CRUCIAL IN HOCKEY WOMEN'S WORLD CUP: FORWARD VANDANA KATARIYA

Two players and three members of the support staff of the Indian men's hockey team, currently preparing for the Commonwealth Games 2022 in Bengaluru have tested positive for Covid-19, Hockey India confirmed in a statement on Thursday.



Amstelveen (Netherlands) | Agencies

Veteran India forward Vandana Katariya has emphasised the need to be vigilant in "every single quarter" of a game when her side begins its campaign in the Hockey Women's World Cup Spain and Netherlands 2022 against England in Pool B on July 3.

The 30-year-old added that each match in the group stage is crucial and no team should be taken lightly. "Each match in the group stage will be crucial and we cannot take any team to be easy. The most important aspect for us is to be consistent in every single quarter and be the best we can without worrying too much about the opponent. This is something we have learnt over the years

and it has really worked for us," said the experienced striker with over 250 international caps.

In their second match, India will play China on July 5 followed by a match against New Zealand on July 7 in Amstelveen.

"We have played practice matches against Chile and Ireland. Both were very good as we were able to practice some tactical moves for the upcoming games and were able to get used to the field which is always easier when you train on it," said Katariya.

With just a day left before the team plays its first game, the excitement among players is palpable. "We have one more training session on Friday

and we are ready to go. It will be a very interesting and intense World Cup and I anticipate matches to be quite close as almost five to six teams on par with each other," she added.

With the tournament's first match between Spain and Canada to be played later on Friday, Katariya appealed to the fans to follow the matches and rally their support for the India team. "When we were playing the Tokyo Olympics 2020, we were unaware of the kind of support we were getting from home in India where people were glued to their TV sets. "We got so much love and appreciation after we returned, and that meant a lot for us and it motivated us further to attain greater achievements. I hope the fans show us similar support and watch the matches live. We want to win a medal for the fans, for the country and end the wait for a medal in a prestigious global event."

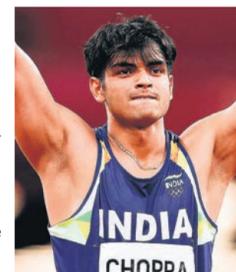
STOCKHOLM DIAMOND LEAGUE: NEERAJ CHOPRA BREAKS NATIONAL RECORD WITH THROW OF 89.94M

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Continuing his brilliant form, Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra broke the national record again with a throw of 89.94m to finish second in the Stockholm Diamond League 2022 in Sweden on Thursday.

The Indian javelin ace fell just six centimetres short of the elusive 90m mark but he bettered his personal best of 89.30m, set earlier this month at the Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland.

World champion Anderson Peters of Grenada broke the 16-year-old meet record with a huge 90.31m throw in his third attempt, which was enough to get him the top spot. World No 4 Julian Weber of Germany finished third with an effort of 89.08m. Jakub Vadlejch, the 2016 Diamond League champion, was fourth after Julian pipped him with his penultimate throw. After the record-breaking first throw, Chopra logged 84.37m, 87.46m, 84.77m and 86.67m in his subsequent attempts and was one of the top three athletes who made it to the sixth attempt. However, the 24-year-old Indian could only come up with 86.84m in his final throw and finished



behind Anderson Peters. "Today, I feel good and after the first throw, I thought I could throw even over the 90m today. But it is OK as I have more competitions coming this year. I am close to 90m now and I can throw it this year," said Chopra. "Despite the fact that I did not win tonight, I feel very good because I did my best," he added. This was Chopra's eighth appearance

in the Diamond League and his first top-three finish at the meet. He earned seven points for the second-place finish in Stockholm and moved to fourth in the qualification standings of the Diamond League. The top six athletes at the end of all qualification meetings will compete at the Diamond League Final in Zurich this September. Earlier this month, Chopra had made an impressive return to competition after Tokyo 2020, breaking the national record with an 89.30m throw to clinch the silver at Paavo Nurmi Games before claiming gold at the Kwartane Games with an 86.69m throw. The Stockholm Diamond League was his last event before the World Athletics Championships and the Commonwealth Games in July.



Disha Patani to play grey character opposite John

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Disha will be seen along with John Abraham in the forthcoming film 'Ek Villain Returns'. With this film Disha will be seen playing a grey character for the first time in her career.

Switching over to a negative character, the actress said, "I just followed my director's advice. I also remember watching a lot of these negative movies and there was a point I was like sir I can't watch it anymore because it's making me into a different human but I just followed what he told me, Mohit sir really knows what he wants and he just makes everybody's life easier."

Disha Patani has previously been noticed for her performance in Mohit Suri's 'Malang'. This is the second time she has been roped in for a project by him.



Bill Gates begins to follow Mahesh Babu on social media

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates has started following Telugu superstar Mahesh Babu on his official Instagram and Twitter accounts. The development comes days after Mahesh Babu, along with his wife Namrata Shirodkar, met the well-known businessman in New York.

Mahesh Babu and Namrata, had in their social media handles, posted pictures after meeting the billionaire. "Had the pleasure of meeting Mr. @BillGates! One of the greatest visionaries this world has seen and yet the most humble! Truly an inspiration" Mahesh wrote. In response, Bill Gates quoted Mahesh Babu's tweet on his timeline, as he wrote, "Being in New York is always fun -- you never know who you'll run into. It was great meeting you and Namrata!"

On the work front, the actor will soon start filming 'SSMB28'.



REMO D'SOUZA SHARES DIARY WITH TIPS ON BEING A 'SUPER HUBBY'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Choreographer and judge Remo DSouza shared about his diary in which he takes down interesting tips to be a 'super hubby' from the husbands of different contestants of 'DID Super Moms'.

Bollywood actresses Bhagyashree Dassani and Urmila Matondkar are also among the panel of judges.

When Bhagyashree asked Remo about the diary, he said: "I like helping my wife out with different kinds of household work like washing the clothes and dishes as well as cleaning the house and cooking food."

"However, with experienced Super Moms around me on the show, my plan was to meet their husbands and ask them for the perfect tips to be a 'Super Husband'. I feel it is the perfect opportunity to get some tips for a good married life too and I'll note all of them down in this diary and share the information with other married men too."



Dharmendra recalls how Dilip Kumar inspired the actor in him

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Veteran Bollywood actor Dharmendra shared how he has always been a huge fan of legendary actor Dilip Kumar and how he inspired the actor in him on 'Superstar Singer 2'.

He said: "Till Class VIII, I did not know anything about cinema and my father was a school teacher who was very strict. And parents always think about your good only and he never considered cinema to be a good thing."

"When I was in Class VI, some of my classmates were very thrilled about going to the cinema, and I kept asking them what cinema was." "And, when I went to the tenth grade, I saw Dilip Kumar Ji's film 'Shaheed' and I immediately fell in love with him and his acting skills, felt like he was my brother. I was elated by the audience's love for him and yearned for it myself. Hence, I became an actor to win the audience's love and I am getting the love to which I am truly grateful," he added.

R MADHAVAN BRILLIANTLY BRINGS TO LIFE THE STORY OF SCIENTIST DR NAMBI NARAYANAN

FILM REVIEW

SHACHI CHATURVEDI

'Rocketry: The Nambi Effect'

Directed by: R Madhavan
Written by: R Madhavan
Runtime: 2 hours 10 minutes
Cast: R Madhavan, Simran
Rating: 3.5/5

SYNOPSIS

The film is based on the story of Nambi Narayanan, an ISRO scientist who was detained in 1994 after being accused of being a spy.

STORY

The 2022 Indian biographical drama film Rocketry: The Nambi Effect is based on the biography of Nambi Narayanan, a former aerospace engineer and scientist with the Indian Space Research Organization who was wrongfully convicted of espionage.

REVIEW

The film, which is based on a true story, aims to bring up a significant subject. R Madhavan performed three roles in the film—director, writer, and main character—and he unquestionably nailed each one with his superb performance.

Nevertheless, the entire film was fantastic. The segment of the movie where the case started was one of the most difficult to watch. While it is true that the actual torture and bru-



tality the Narayanan family endured was probably worse, the goal of a feature film is to make the story acceptable enough.

Even so, it doesn't significantly alter the watching experience as a whole.

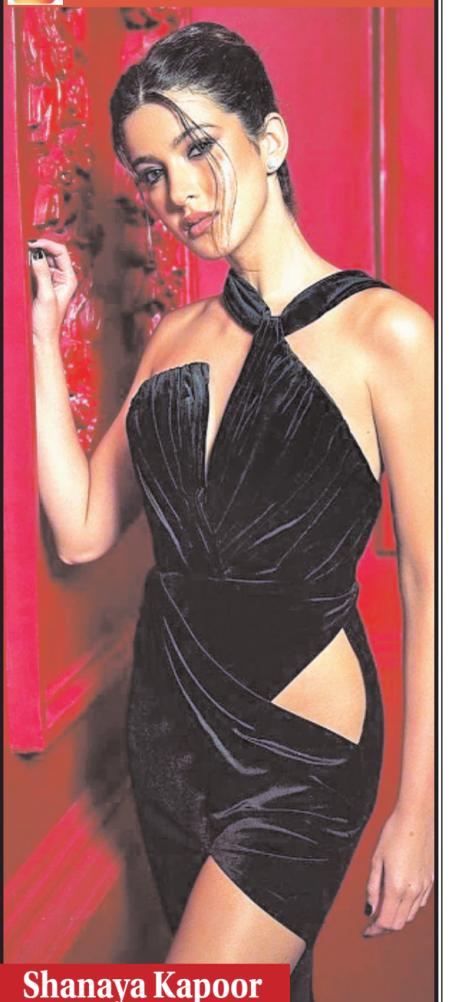
It was not surprising to see R Madhavan perform well because he is such a fantastic performer. What was pleasing to the eyes was the supporting cast's performance. From the wife to the colleague, each character was crucial in touching the viewers' emotional core.

Technically speaking, there was nothing to point out. Due to the overuse of machinery and technical issues, the film required precise editing, which was done well. Other than that, only closeups and necessary pans were used. The first half of the film was a little slow and jargon-heavy, but the second half unquestionably picks up. It was meant to be a delight to see Shah Rukh Khan on screen after four long years. To be honest, the cameo wasn't just a blink-and-miss appearance; rather, it was a full-fledged cameo.

The actor even had to act and express himself on several occasions, which he did with complete sincerity.

This flick is definitely a content heavy picture that has a powerful message, which has been presented and conveyed effectively.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Shanaya Kapoor