

# absolute india



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## FRESH WAVES OF COVID INFECTIONS VOICING CONCERN THE VIRUS IS "RUNNING FREELY"

# 'NOWHERE NEAR OVER'

The WHO's emergency committee said the trajectory of virus evolution and the characteristics of emerging variants remained "uncertain and unpredictable", with the absence of measures to reduce transmission increasing the likelihood of "new, fitter variants emerging, with different degrees of virulence, transmissibility, and immune escape potential".

**New waves of the virus demonstrate again that Covid-19 is nowhere near over. The virus is running freely and countries are not effectively managing the disease burden based on their capacity, in terms of both hospitalisation for acute cases and the expanding number of people with post-Covid condition, often referred to as Long Covid.**

**Tedros Ghebreyesus, WHO Chief**



### INDIA RECORDS 13,615 NEW COVID CASES, 20 DEATHS

New Delhi: India reported 13,615 new Covid cases in the last 24 hours, a decline from the previous day's count of 16,678, said the Union Health Ministry on Tuesday. In the same period, the country reported 20 more Covid deaths, taking the nationwide death toll to 5,25,474. The active caseload has also risen to 1,31,043, accounting for 0.30 per cent of the country's total positive cases. The recovery of 13,265 patients in the last 24 hours took the cumulative tally to 4,29,96,427. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.50 per cent. Meanwhile, India's daily positivity rate has declined to 3.23 per cent, while the weekly positivity rate currently stands at 4.24 per cent. Also in the same period, a total of 4,21,292 tests were conducted across the country, increasing the overall tally to over 86.73 crore.

### INDIA'S FIRST VACCINE AGAINST CERVICAL CANCER GETS DCGI'S NOD

New Delhi: The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) on Tuesday granted market authorisation to India's first Quadrivalent Human Papillomavirus vaccine (qHPV) against cervical cancer. The vaccine is manufactured by Serum Institute of India and is scheduled to be launched later this year. The apex regulator approval comes following the recommendation made by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation's Subject Expert Committee. Government advisory panel NTAGI had recently also approved the qHPV after reviewing the clinical trial data of the vaccine.

GENEVA | Agencies  
The WHO's emergency committee on Covid-19 met on Friday via video-conference and determined the pandemic remains a Public Health Emergency of International Concern - the highest alarm the WHO can sound. WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan told the meeting global Covid cases reported to the WHO increased by 30 percent in the last two weeks, largely driven by Omicron sub-variants BA.4, BA.5 and the lifting of public health and social measures. Ryan said recent changes in testing policies were hindering the detection of cases and the monitoring of virus evolution. The committee stressed the need to reduce transmis-

sion of the virus as the implications of a pandemic caused by a new respira-

tory virus would not be fully understood, the WHO said in a statement Monday. The group voiced concern over steep reductions in testing, resulting in reduced surveillance and genomic sequencing.

### 1.1 BILLION COVID VACCINE DOSES WASTED GLOBALLY: REPORT

London: The governments across the globe have wasted more than a billion doses of the Covid vaccines, even as many people, including health workers, particularly in the low-income countries are yet to get at least a single shot, according to a report.

The report, by science and data analytics company Airfinity, assumed a 10 per cent wastage rate from June 2021 when global dose sharing began.

Public reports of vaccine waste and expirations from around the world showed that some 158 million doses have been discarded throughout the world. Pointing out to a significant underreporting of vaccine wastage, the report highlighted few drugmakers.

With 25 million doses, Russia's Sputnik V has the highest wastage figures, followed by AstraZeneca, with claims of 19 million wasted jabs, the report said. The company noted that of the 14 billion vaccine doses supplied globally to date, 1.1 billion have been wasted and gone unused.

Various organisations, including the WHO and UNICEF had called out countries to share vaccines equitably during the pandemic. Several rich countries also dumped about 100 million Covid-19 vaccines that were near expiry to the third world nations.

## National Emblem - Opposition flags major controversy

The designers of the emblem atop the new parliament building, stressed that there is "no deviation"



▶ **THE NATIONAL EMBLEM IS MADE OF BRONZE, WEIGHS 9,500 KG AND IS 6.5 METRE HIGH. A SUPPORTING STEEL STRUCTURE WEIGHING AROUND 6,500 KG HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED TO SUPPORT THE EMBLEM, A GOVERNMENT NOTE SAID.**

▶ **INDIA'S NATIONAL EMBLEM IS AN ADAPTATION OF THE LION CAPITAL OF ASHOKA, AN ANCIENT SCULPTURE DATING BACK TO THE MAURYAN EMPIRE.**

▶ **THE STATE EMBLEM OF INDIA (PROHIBITION OF IMPROPER USE) ACT, 2005 LAYS DOWN THAT THE STATE EMBLEM "SHALL CONFORM TO THE DESIGNS AS SET OUT IN APPENDIX I OR APPENDIX II" OF THE ACT.**

▶ **EARLIER, OPPOSITION LEADERS TARGETED THE GOVERNMENT FOR NOT INVITING THEM TO THE UNVEILING CEREMONY.**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The national emblem unveiled atop the new parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sparked a

huge controversy. Opposition parties have questioned why the Prime Minister, as head of the Executive, unveiled the emblem. They have also said that the emblem has been modified and "insulted". The designers of the massive sculpture, however, have claimed that there is "no deviation"

Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal tweeted that the lions in the national emblem are known to have a mild expression, but those on the new sculpture appear to have a "man-eater tendency".

The tweet added that every symbol "shows the thought of a human being". "Symbols convey the true nature of a human," it added.

Jawhar Sircar, a Rajya Sabha MP of Trinamool Congress and a former CEO of the government-run Prasar Bharati, termed it an "insult to our national symbol, the majestic Ashokan Lions".

Sharing pictures of the emblem and its new version side by side, he tweeted, "Original is on the left, graceful, regally confident. The one on the right is Modi's version, put above new Parliament building - snarling, unnecessarily aggressive and disproportionate. Shame! Change it immediately!"

In-charge of the BJP's national information and technology department Amit Malviya said, "The National Emblem atop the new parliament building of India is an adaptation from the Sarnath Lion Capital of Ashoka, which is preserved in the Sarnath Museum. There is no change. The opposition is comparing 2D images in print to an imposing 3D structure. They have lost it."

## J&K POLICE ASI KILLED, 2 COPS INJURED IN TERRORIST ATTACK

Srinagar: An Assistant Sub Inspector of the Jammu and Kashmir Police was killed and two other policemen injured after terrorists attacked a police party in Srinagar on Tuesday evening, police said.

Police said terrorists fired upon police naka party at Lal Bazar area of Srinagar. "In this terror incident, three police personnel got injured and they were shifted to hospital," a police official said, adding that ASI Mushtaq Ahmad later succumbed to his injuries.

"ASI Mushtaq Ahmad succumbed to his injuries and attained martyrdom. We pay rich tribute to the martyr for his supreme sacrifice made in the line of duty. Other two injured personnel are being treated," police said.

Meanwhile additional police parties have reached the spot. The area has been cordoned and an operation has been started to nab the attackers.

## Centre reminds to bring down prices, edible oil bodies say in 10-15 days

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Almost a week after asking the edible oil associations to cut down on MRP by at least Rs 15 per litre in line with the reduction in international prices, the Centre has issued a strict reminder, warning that it is keeping a watch on prices of edible oil.

One of the prominent associations said on Tuesday that it takes about 10-15 days of buffer for the prices to cool down and cannot happen overnight.

Secretary in the Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD), Sudhanshu Pandey, on Monday wrote a strong reminder to the prominent edible oil associations such as the Solvents and Extractors Association of India (SEAI),



Indian Vegetable Oil Producers' Association (IVPA) and Soybean Processors Association of India (SOPA), asking those who have not yet reduced prices to immediately do so. The DFPD had held a

meeting last week with the various associations after edible oil prices in the international markets spiralled down, prompting the government to direct them to reduce the MRP by at least Rs 15 per litre.

## BENGAL BJP LEFT RED-FACED AS 2 MPS, 3 MLAS SKIP MEETING WITH DRAUPADI MURMU

Kolkata | Agencies

The BJP in West Bengal was left red-faced on Tuesday as a number of the party's MPs and MLAs skipped a meeting with National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) Presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu.

Out of the 68 BJP legislators who were asked to attend the meeting with Murmu, 65 were present. Of the three MLAs who skipped the meeting, two were from North Bengal, namely Niraj Zimba Singh from Darjeeling and Bishnu Prasad Sharma from Kurseong. The third absentee legislator was Mukut Mani Adhikari from Ranaghat (South) Assembly constituency in Nadia district.

Two Lok Sabha members of the BJP also skipped the meeting, namely Raju Singh Bista from Darjeeling and Subhas Sarkar from Bankura. Sarkar also happens to be the Union Minister of State for

Education.

BJP's current strength in the West Bengal Assembly is 70, out of which the state committee had asked 68 legislators to be present in the meeting.

The party's MLA from Bhatpara Assembly constituency, Pawan Singh, was deliberately kept out of the meeting as the BJP leadership is not quite clear about his stand after his father and erstwhile BJP Lok Sabha member from Barrackpore, Arjun Singh, recently joined Trinamool Congress.

BJP legislator from Balurghat and former chief economic advisor to the Union government, Ashok Kumar Lahiri, was not called for the meeting since he is currently outside the state for medical treatment.

The state BJP leaders were tight-lipped over the absence of three MLAs and two MPs. However, party insiders admitted that their absence was an embarrassment for the state leadership.

## SRI LANKAN PREZ GOTABAYA RAJAPAKSA SIGNS RESIGNATION LETTER

Colombo: Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has signed his resignation letter, dated for July 13 and the Speaker of Parliament will publicly announce it to the nation on Wednesday, the Daily Mirror reported. The resignation letter of the President was signed and handed over to a senior government official who will hand it over to the Parliament Speaker.

Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena who has been informed of the letter will then make a public announcement on Wednesday ending Gotabaya Rajapaksa's presidency, the Daily Mirror reported. Speculation was rife on Monday that Rajapaksa had already left the island nation last afternoon, however, these reports were rejected by senior sources close to the President who confirmed to Daily Mirror that Rajapaksa was still in the country and was protected by the Armed Forces.

## IDENTITY OF CHILD'S FATHER IMMATERIAL IN RAPE CASE, RULES SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to entertain a plea seeking a DNA test of the child of a minor, who was allegedly raped.

A bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and A.S. Bopanna, in its order, said: "We are not inclined to entertain the Special Leave Petition under Article 136 of the Constitution. The Special Leave Petition is accordingly dismissed. Pending application, if any, stands disposed of."

During the hearing, the bench noted that the identity of the child's father is immaterial to the case. It added that in the offence under the Indian Penal Code's Section 376, the identity of the father has no relevance.

Counsel representing the accused contended that his client moved the top court against the Allahabad High Court order dated June 25, 2021, which set aside the sessions court order, allowing the DNA test of the child. The accused, in the plea in the apex court, claimed that it is being alleged that he is the father of the child.

## NASA RELEASES NEW IMAGES OF UNIVERSE TAKEN FROM WEBB TELESCOPE

James Webb Space Telescope- world's largest and most powerful space telescope- captured the latest image of planetary nebula NGC 3132, and known as the Southern Ring Nebula.

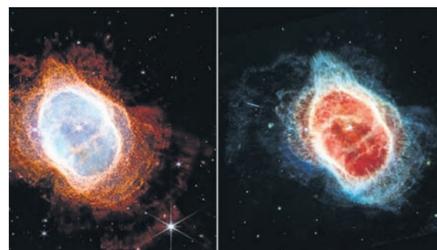
Team Absolute | New Delhi

Two cameras aboard the James Webb Space Telescope- world's largest and most powerful space telescope- captured the latest image of planetary nebula NGC 3132, known as the Southern Ring Nebula. It is approximately 2,500 light-years away from the Earth.

Explaining what NASA called the "dying star's final dance", the space agency said

that in the images the dimmer star that can be seen at the centre sends out rings of gas and dust in all directions. This phenomenon takes place for thousands of years and has now been captured by NASA's James Webb Space Telescope for the first time showing the star cloaked in dust. The Southern Ring Nebula can be seen almost face-on in the image. "But if we could rotate it to view it edge-on, its three-dimension-

al shape would more clearly look like two bowls placed together at the bottom, opening away from one another with a large hole at the center," NASA said. The stars and their layers of light can be seen clearly in the image from Webb's Near-Infrared Camera (NIRCam) on the left, while the image from Webb's Mid-Infrared Instrument (MIRI) on the right shows the second star is surrounded by dust. "The brighter star is in an



earlier stage of its stellar evolution and will probably eject

its own planetary nebula in the future," NASA noted.

The brighter star has an influence on the overall appearance of the nebula. Both the stars continue to orbit, as "they stir the pot of gas and dust, causing asymmetrical patterns".

James Webb telescope was constructed by aerospace giant Northrop Grumman Corp and was launched to space for NASA and its European and Canadian counterparts in December 2021 from French Guiana.



# DELHI HC SEEKS RESPONSE FROM PMO ON PIL TO DECLARE PM CARES FUND AS 'STATE'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday sought a detailed response from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on a plea seeking a declaration that the PM CARES Fund is a 'State' under Article 12 of the Constitution.

The court's direction was following a one-page affidavit response filed by the PMO secretary.

A division bench presided over by Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad asked the Centre to file a 'detailed and exhaustive' reply to the public interest litigation (PIL).

"Only one page reply to such an important issue?" the bench orally remarked during the course of the hearing saying, "We need a proper reply. The issue isn't that simple. We need an exhaustive reply."

Appearing for the petitioner Samyak Gangwal, senior advocate



Shyam Divan said that the Fund is 'State' within the meaning of Constitution of India and that any fund created by constitutional func-

tionaries cannot be contracted out of the Constitution. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who appeared for the Centre, submitted that a detailed

response will be filed within four weeks. The matter will be further heard on September 16.

The court was hearing a petition seeking a declaration that the fund is "state" under Article 12 of the Constitution and to restrain it from using Prime Minister of India or Prime Minister, including its abbreviations, in its name and on its website. According to the Centre's earlier submissions, PM CARES Fund is not a "public authority" under the ambit of Section 2 (h) of the RTI Act, further clarifying that no government money is credited in the PM CARES Fund and only unconditional and voluntary contributions are accepted under PM CARES Fund.

"It is reiterated that the Trust's fund is not a fund of the Government of India and the amount does not go in the Consolidated Fund of India," said an earlier affidavit filed by the PMO.

# Sri Lanka's situation 'sensitive and complicated': Jaishankar

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

The situation in Sri Lanka, which is grappling with economic and political crises was "sensitive and complicated", External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Tuesday.

"Support of India is for the people of Sri Lanka as they are our neighbours and we want to help them go through a very difficult phase in their lives," he said at a "Meet the Press" programme organised by the Kerala Union of Working Journalists here.

Coming down heavily on Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Jaishankar, who is on a three-day visit to the state, said that the ministers of the Narendra Modi cabinet were working



as a team and that his inspection of the Kazhakoottam flyover was not unusual.

He was responding to Vijayan's jibe earlier in the day that the "busy" External Affairs minister was in the

state and inspecting the national highways.

Jaishankar said that regarding Covid, railways, and education, the ministers of the Modi government was working as a team and making decisions jointly.

# Six die as heavy rain lashes Gujarat

Ahmedabad | Agencies

Six persons died in lightning strikes while scores have been displaced as heavy rain lashed Gujarat for the past three days. The meteorological department has forecast heavy rain in 14 districts of the state in the next 24 hours. A red alert has been issued for heavy rain in Bharuch, Chhotaudepur, Narmada, Surat, Tapi, Dang, Navsari and Valsad districts. The weather department has predicted heavy rain in Porbandar, Junagadh, Bhavnagar, Kheda, Panchmahal, Dahod, Anand and Vadodara. In the last 24 hours, Dadiapada town in Narmada district has received the maximum rainfall of 21 inches while it was 16 inches in Umrpada, 20 inches in Tilakwada, 16



inches in Sagbara and 15 inches in Kaprada.

While briefing the media at a meeting held at the State Emergency Operations Centre, Gandhinagar on Tuesday, Disaster Management Minister Rajendra Trivedi said that so far six deaths have been

reported in the state in which most of the deaths have been due to lightning. "Not a single death has been reported because of administrative malpractice or negligence. Adequate cooperation of citizens is also being received in the rescue operations," he stated.

# Delhi Police steps up vigil to ensure incident-free Kanwar Yatra

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi Police is taking all steps, including anti-terror measures, to prevent any untoward incident during the 'Kanwar Yatra' that will pass through the national capital, officials said on Tuesday, just two days ahead of the annual pilgrimage.

"We'll make sure that there is no scope for trouble-makers that is why we are also taking some anti-terror measures and keeping a strict vigil," Deputy Commissioner of Police (northeast district), Sanjay Kumar Sain said. This year, Kanwar Yatra, an annual pilgrimage which had been halted for the past two years due to the pandemic, will begin on July 14 and go on till July 26.

The pilgrimage sees thousands of Lord Shiva devotees, most of whom travel on foot and, more recently on trucks, to Haridwar in Uttarakhand to collect holy water from the Ganga



river. The pilgrimage mostly begins in late July and goes on till the first week of August.

A heavy rush of people is expected this year as the Yatra is being held after a gap of two years. Sain said that the local residents have been asked to alert the police immediately

if they spot any unusual activity in their area. The Delhi Police has also initiated the registration process for this year's 'Kanwar Yatra'. The database of devotees will enable better coordination among the authorities to provide assistance and facilitation for the pilgrimage. The devotees can

register themselves at [kavad.delhipolice.gov.in](http://kavad.delhipolice.gov.in) through their mobile phones.

"A databank of devotees will help in providing facilities and identifying devotees in case of any mishap. Registration is not mandatory. We're aware of all sensitive incidents across India and are alert," Delhi Police spokesperson Suman Nalwa said. A few days back, a meeting of the members of various Aman Committees, Hindu Muslim Sikh Isai Ekta Committee, spiritual leaders and other prominent people of the east district was convened by the police. DCP (East) Priyanka Kashyap briefed the participants about the anti-terror measures as well as precautions to be taken during the celebration of festivals and requested them to continue their cooperation in reaching out to the public, making them aware and thereby help in maintaining peace and communal harmony in the area.

# Jilted lover stabs Class 12 girl in UP's Jhansi

Jhansi | Agencies

A Class 12 girl student was attacked by her alleged stalker when she was coming out of the house of her tutor in Mission compound locality in Jhansi.

The victim suffered deep wounds on her neck and face. She has been admitted to Rani Laxmi Bai Memorial Medical college, the police said.

Her mother alleged that one Danish Khan was harassing her daughter for the past two years. He used to stalk her following which she and other family met her parents. Danish had then assured them that he would



no longer trouble her.

"On Monday night, he attacked my daughter with a knife when she was coming out of her tutor's house," she said. The tutor rushed her to the medical college where she was under treatment.

Circle officer city Rajesh Kumar said the victim and the attacker knew each other and used to speak over the phone. The victim said he attacked her in the Mission compound and ran away after injuring her.

# If you love Bihar, its people will give you the same love several times more: Modi

Patna | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that if you love Bihar, the people of the state will return the same multiple times.

Modi is in Patna for the inauguration of the Bihar Bhavan memorial column inside the premises of the Bihar Vidhan Sabha after it completed 100 years. He also inaugurated another building and a guest house inside the Vidhan Sabha. He noted that he was the first prime minister of the country to enter the premises of the Bihar Vidhan Sabha.

The PM mentioned that when the rest of the world was discussing the structure of democracy, the leaders here were organizing democratic procedures in Vaishali. States like Lichwi and Vajji Sangha were on the top and practicing democracy.



The Bihar Vidhan Sabha has a long history with its first governor Satyendra Prasanna Sinha who promoted domestic (Swadeshi) industries and urged people to adopt the Charkha.

"Whenever, I go to global platforms, I proudly say that the mother of democracy is our country India," Modi said. "Bihar has a great history and contribution to the country. It has given the first president Dr Rajendra Prasad, Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan, Karpoori Thakur, Babu Jagjivan Ram and many other top leaders. When people had

tried to mow down the constitution of the country, Bihar stood against it (During the Emergency period) and initiated massive protests," Modi said. "It was the Bihar Vidhan Sabha which abolished the Zamindari Act. The Nitish Kumar government has gone a step ahead and brought 50% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj," Modi said. "The 21st century belongs to our country. It is a century of duty for the people of the country. We have to work hard to bring our country to a golden period in the next 25 years. We have to walk on the path of duty for the next 25 years," Modi stated. "Every lawmaker has their responsibility to deal with problems coming in front of our democracy. We will defeat the problem together by putting aside the thinking of ruling and opposition parties. Our voice should come in the interest of our country," he added.

# Stalin tests Covid-19 positive, isolates himself

Chennai | Agencies

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has isolated himself after testing Covid-19 positive.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Chief Minister's office said Stalin tested positive after he complained of tiredness and fever.

Stalin has appealed to the people of the state to wear masks and get vaccinated and stay safe.

It may be noted that there was an increase in the number of Covid-19 cases for the past few days and the presence of Omicron and its sub-variants. The state's Public Health Department has directed people of the state to wear masks, keep safe dis-



tancing, and sanitise regularly. The department also said that while the number of people taking treatment at the hospital is very less and only 5 per cent of the total Covid positive cases are under treatment at hospitals. The department in the statement said that 95 per cent of the people are taking treatment at home.

# 44% criminal law makers will vote in Presidential polls: ADR

In a shocking revelation, it has been found that nearly 44 per cent of MPs/MLAs who will be voting for the upcoming Presidential election have declared criminal cases against them.

Lucknow | Agencies

In an analysis report released on Tuesday by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), a total of 4,72,477 votes (44 per cent) out of 10,74,364 votes analysed are of MPs/MLAs who have declared criminal cases against themselves.

The ADR and National Election Watch have analysed 4,759 out of 4,809 affidavits of all sitting MPs and MLAs.

It includes 768 out of 776 affidavits of MPs and 3,991 out of 4,033 MLAs from all the states of India.

They collectively form the Electoral College, who will be voting for the Presidential Election on July 18 to elect the new President of India.

Nearly 236 (44 per cent) out of 542 Lok Sabha MPs, 71 (31 per cent) out of 226 Rajya Sabha MPs and 1,723 (43 per cent) out of

3,991 MLAs (all state assemblies/UTs) analysed, have declared criminal cases against themselves.

Of the 4,759 MPs/MLAs analysed, 1,316 (28 per cent) members have declared serious criminal cases against themselves in a self-sworn affidavit filed with the ECI before their most recent elections.

About 157 (29 per cent) out of 542 Lok Sabha MPs, 37 (16 per cent) out of 226 Rajya Sabha MPs and 1,122 (28 per cent) out of 3,991 MLAs (all state assemblies/UTs) analysed have declared serious criminal cases against themselves.

The report further says that 3843 (81 per cent) out of 4759 MPs/ MLAs analysed are crorepatis as per their self-sworn affidavits submitted to the ECI at the time of nomination for contesting elections.

About 477 (88 per cent) out of 542 Lok Sabha MPs, 197 (87 per cent) out of 226 Rajya

Sabha MPs and 3161 (79 per cent) out of 3991 MLAs (all state assemblies/UTs) analysed are crorepatis.

Meanwhile, of the total 4,759 MPs/MLAs who are entitled to vote in the upcoming Presidential Election, only 477 (10 per cent) are women.

Based on the number of votes the MPs/MLAs are entitled to vote, 1,30,304 (13 per cent) out of 10,74,364 votes analysed are women.

Among MPs, Lok Sabha has 56,700 (15 per cent) votes out of 3,79,400 from 81 women MPs and Rajya Sabha has 21,700 (14 per cent) out of 1,58,200 votes analysed from 31 women MPs. Among State assemblies, Uttar Pradesh has the maximum number of women votes with 9,776 votes out of 83,824 (47 out of 403 MLAs) followed by West Bengal with 6,191 votes out of 44,394 (41 out of 294 MLAs) and Bihar with 4,498 votes out of 41,693 (26 out of 241 MLAs).

# Deora makes comeback, Cong makes Gehlot & Baghel Sr observers in poll-bound states

► AHEAD OF THE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN GUJARAT AND HIMACHAL PRADESH, THE CONGRESS HAS APPOINTED SENIOR OBSERVERS FOR BOTH STATES, AND A SURPRISE INCLUSION IS THAT OF MILIND DEORA, WHO HAD BEEN SIDELINED FOR A LONG TIME.



Chhattisgarh and Milind Deora former Mumbai chief. Baghel will be helped by former Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan Sachin Pilot and Punjab Congress legislative party leader Partap Singh Bajwa. Both the states go to polls this year.

Milind Deora, who was sidelined since his resignation from the post of Mumbai Congress chief, has made a comeback in the election management of the crucial state of Gujarat where the Congress has been out of power for more than two decades. Deora, a former Union

Minister, was once considered to be very close to Rahul Gandhi, but was out of mainstream Congress in Mumbai and also had been ignored for the Rajya Sabha polls after he lost Lok Sabha elections. Recently, the Congress appointed seven working presidents for its Gujarat unit. Following a social engineering strategy, each of these leaders represents a caste. The Congress is also attempting to send a message to upper caste voters that the party is trying to rise above its dedicated SC/ST/OBC vote bank and cares for them too.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has been appointed a senior observer in Gujarat and Bhupesh Baghel, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister, will look after Himachal Pradesh.

Gehlot will be assisted by T.S. Singh Deo, a Minister in



## PREZ POLLS: DROUPADI MURMU, SINHA TO VISIT BHOPAL

**Bhopal:** The National Democratic Alliance (NDA's) Presidential nominee Droupadi Murmu and Opposition Presidential nominee Yashwant Sinha will visit Bhopal in the coming days to drum up support for the July 18 elections to the country's top post.

Opposition Presidential nominee Yashwant Sinha will visit the Madhya Pradesh capital on July 14 where he is scheduled to meet MLAs and MPs of Congress over lunch, a party leader said on Monday, adding that the venue is not finalised yet. During her visit to Bhopal on July 15, Murmu will have a luncheon meeting with MLAs and MPs of the BJP at the residence of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, a party leader said.

Both the Congress and the BJP are going to impart special training to their elected public representatives to ensure that no vote is wasted, sources said. The Congress will impart training to their legislators and MPs in Bhopal, they said. The BJP may hold a special training session for its elected public representatives in Delhi, party insiders said.

# State Election Commissioner Singh appeals to voters to cast vote

### All preparations completed for the voting to be held in 214 urban bodies on July 13

**Team Absolute | Bhopal**

State Election Commissioner Basant Pratap Singh has informed that the voting for the second and last phase of Urban Body Election-2022 will be held on July 13 from 7 am to 5 pm. All preparations have been completed for peaceful polling. The State Election Commissioner has appealed to the voters to cast their vote fearlessly.

In the second phase, polling will be held in 5 municipal corporations, 40 municipal councils and 169 Nagar Parishad in 43 districts. A total of 6 thousand 829 polling centres have been set up for this. Out of these, 1627 polling centres are sensitive. About 34 thousand officers and employees in the polling parties have been posted on duty.

About 17 thousand police personnel has been deployed.

In the second phase, a total of 44 mayoral candidates are in the fray in 5 municipal corporations. There are 3657 posts of corporators in a total of 214 bodies. Out of these, election on 79 posts has been held unopposed. Election is to be held on the remaining 3578 posts. For this 15 thousand 312 candidates are contesting the elections.

In the second phase, 49 lakh 9 thousand 280 voters will be able to exercise their Voting rights. Of these, 25 lakh 20 thousand 923 are males, 23 lakh 88 thousand 65 are females and 292 are other voters. Total voters in Municipal Corporation Morena are 2 lakh 52 thousand 817. Out of these, there are one lakh 35 thousand 467 males, one

lakh 17 thousand 333 females and 17 other voters. There are a total of one lakh 71 thousand 57 voters in Rewa. Of these, 88 thousand 886 are males, 82 thousand 159 females and 12 are other voters. There are total one lakh 93 thousand 388 voters in Katni. Of these, there are 97 thousand 444 males, 95 thousand 935 females and 9 other voters. There are 2 lakh 39 thousand 692 voters in Dewas. Of these, one lakh 21 thousand 731 are males, one lakh 17 thousand 955 females and 6 other voters. There are a total of 2 lakh 14 thousand 337 voters in Ratlam Municipal Corporation. Of these, one lakh 7 thousand 166 are males, one lakh 7 thousand 167 females and 4 are other voters.

In the urban bodies where elections are to be held on July 13, the state government has declared a public holiday.

## 1473 UNLICENSED ARMS SEIZED SO FAR

**Bhopal:** Continuous action is being taken by the police in view of the law and order situation in the state under Panchayat and Urban Bodies General Election-2022. So far, 1473 unlicensed arms (arms) have been seized in the state. As many as 2 lakh 58 thousand 131 licensed weapons have been deposited in the state. Action has been taken against one lakh 89 thousand 833 persons under Preventive Section of Cr.P.C. So far 24 thousand 6 non-bailable warrants have also been executed. Secretary State Election Commission Rakesh Singh has informed that from June 1 to July 11, 2022, as much as 64 thousand 773 bulk liters of liquor have been seized in the state. The estimated value of the seized liquor is Rs 7 crore 7 lakh 99 thousand 344.

## Serving substandard food to CM lands officer in trouble

■ A government employee in Madhya Pradesh landed in trouble for allegedly serving cold tea and substandard food to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan during a transit visit to Khajuraho.

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A government employee in Madhya Pradesh landed in trouble for allegedly serving cold tea and substandard food to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan during a transit visit to Khajuraho.

A show-cause notice has been issued against a food inspector seeking reply in the matter, mentioning - "why not punitive action be initiated against you."

The notice issued by Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Rajnagar (under Chhatrapur district) on July 11, noted that food inspector Rajesh Kanhua was entrusted with providing breakfast and tea to the dignitaries at the airport lounge on Monday. "We have learnt that the

chief minister was served substandard food (breakfast). Also, the tea offered to him was cold. Indecent behaviour of the district administration has put a question mark on handling of CM's protocol. This happened as the VVIP services were taken casually," notice issued to food inspector Rajesh Kanhua, read. "Why no disciplinary action should be initiated against you. You are directed to submit your reply within three days after receiving the notice," it further read.

Notably, Chouhan and MP BJP president VD Sharma, who is also MP from Khajuraho Lok Sabha constituency, were on a transit visit to Khajuraho on Monday. After meeting with party workers at the airport,

the duo had left for Katni to campaign for ongoing urban body elections.

This notice provided fodder to the opposition Congress to criticise Chouhan and the ruling BJP. The Congress slammed Chouhan after videos of an eight-year-old child cradling his brother's body for hours waiting for an ambulance in Morena district surfaced.

However, following outrage on social media over the notice, Chhatrapur district collector Sandeep GR has cancelled the notice served by Dwivedi.

Dwivedi clarified that the tea and breakfast arranged by Kanhua were not served to the chief minister as he didn't take a halt at the airport but only changed the aircraft at the airstrip.

## Monthly meeting of registrars at Raj Bhavan

# Mention Date of Examination and Results in Universitys Academic Calendar

### University to Test Sickle Cell Anemia through camps

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The universities will have to mention the proposed date of examinations and results of all the courses conducted by them in the academic calendar. This information should be displayed clearly on University's website. Principal Secretary to Governor DP Ahuja has directed the registrars of government universities in this regard in the monthly meeting of registrars at Raj Bhavan.

Ahuja said that the target group of university students should be compulsorily tested for Sickle Cell Anemia disease within 45 days. This work should be done in coordination with the government hospitals. It must be ensured that 100 percent target group students are tested by organizing



campus. He was apprised from the universities regarding the adoption of villages and instructed that the selected 5 villages should necessarily be from tribal dominated development blocks. There shouldn't be overlapping between universities in selection of villages. Ahuja was briefed about court cases, audit objections, construction works, placements and spe-

cial achievements of the university. It was told that the examination results of the courses started under the National Education Policy would be declared by the second fortnight of September. Prior to this results of all other courses will also be released. After the declaration of these results by the Distance Education University, information was given about con-

ducting the examinations. Deputy Secretary to the Governor DK Jain, Law Officer DPS Gaur, Awadhesh Pratap Singh University Rewa, and registrars of Barkatullah University Bhopal, Maharaja Chhatrasal Bundelkhand University Chhatrapur, Raja Shankar Shah University Chhindwara, Devi Ahilya University Indore, Jiwaji University Gwalior, Rani Durgavati University Jabalpur, Vikram University Ujjain, Maharishi Panini Sanskrit and Vedic University Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh Bhoj (Open) University Bhopal, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Hindi University Bhopal, Mahatma Gandhi Chittrakoot Gramodaya Vishwavidyalaya, Chittrakoot, Dr BR Ambedkar University of Social Sciences Mhow and Pt. SN Shukla University, Shahdol were present.

## JUNIOR DOCTORS OF PEOPLES' MEDICAL COLLEGE GO ON STRIKE FOR STIPEND HIKE

**Bhopal:** They had also written a letter to the dean of the college for a reasonable stipend. Indian Medical Association (IMA) has extended support to the strike of junior doctors.

Junior doctors of People's College of Medical Sciences & Research Centre on Tuesday went on a strike for revision of stipend. They had also written a letter to the dean of the college for a reasonable stipend. Indian Medical Association (IMA) has extended support to the strike of junior doctors.

Around 31 junior doctors have signed in support of the letter. IMA national joint-secretary (junior doctors' network), Dr Shankul Dwivedi said, "IMA has supported the striking junior doctors as their demand is well justified. They are getting stipends of Rs 65,000, Rs 67,000 and Rs 69,000 for first year, second year and third year respectively from April 2022. But they were demanding it from April 2021." So those who are in final year now (they were in second year in 2021-22) are now demanding the remaining increment amount of second year residency (total amount of around Rs 1.20 Lakh/Resident) to be either adjusted in final year fees or to be paid to them, Dr Dwivedi added.

**Chief Minister greets Prajapati**

**Bhopal:** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has greeted Deepak Prajapati of Dewas for securing high rank in JEE Mains 2022 examination with 99.93 percentile. Congratulating Deepak Prajapati through a tweet, CM Chouhan said that - "If someone really wants to do something, they will find a way to do it. Madhya Pradesh is proud of your achievement."

## Chief Minister plants saplings of Peepal, Neem and Kadamba

**Team Absolute | Bhopal**

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Peepal, Neem and Kadamba saplings in the Smart City Garden. Mamtesh Sharma, Vinod Parnami, Rajneesh Tripathi, Atul Dubey, Amarnath Sharma and Roopraj Sharma of Krishna Pranami Mandir Samiti Shivaji Nagar Bhopal also planted saplings. Anurag Upadhyay of Dakhal News YouTube channel and Sunil Shrivastava, Bureau Chief of IND TV also participated in the plantation. It is noteworthy that Chief Minister Chouhan is constantly motivating the people of the state to plant saplings on birthdays, marriage anniversaries etc.

Under the banner of the Mandir, Samiti is continuously carrying out service-oriented works like food donation, Sarthak Deepawali, mission education, plantation, come help the birds, earthen Ganesha, Gau-kashtha (cow dung log), public awareness and depositing fees of talented children of poor families. For the last seven years, blood donation camps have also been organised by the Samiti for Hamidia Blood Bank on New Year's Eve.



Peepal planted today is a shady tree. It purifies the environment. It has religious and Ayurvedic significance. Abounding in antibiotic elements, neem is recognised as the supreme medicine. Kadamba is well-known in Ayurveda for its medicinal properties. Its flowers have special significance. The fragrant flowers of Kadamba find a mention in ancient Vedas and compositions.

## CM GREETs SECOND TIME NATIONAL BOXING CHAMPION

**Bhopal:** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has greeted Aman Singh Bisht of Bhopal for winning gold medal in Youth National Boxing Championship and becoming National Champion for the second time. Chouhan has congratulated the Madhya Pradesh State Boxing Academy players Anand Yadav, Adarsh Katara on winning silver medals and Yogeshwar Dutt, Ayush Yadav and Khushi Singh for winning bronze medals and their coach Roshan Lal and tweeted that "May your chariot of victory continues uninterrupted." It is worth mentioning that in the fifth Youth National Boxing Championship in Chennai, the boxers of the state have earned 6 medals while performing brilliantly.

## Presidential poll preparation; special pen to be used in polls to arrive on Wednesday along with other election material

■ Deputy CEO of Election Commission, Pramod Shukla and additional secretary BD Singh along with others are in Delhi and bring the election material from the Election Commission of India office. This material will be placed in the strong room situated in the State Assembly.

**Team Absolute | Bhopal**

The special pen that will be used in the presidential polls, along with other election material like ballot paper etc will reach Bhopal on Wednesday. These

special pens are the only instrument they can use to record their votes. A team of officials of the state assembly are in New Delhi and bring the election material under strict supervision and safety, said assembly official.

Deputy CEO of Election Commission, Pramod Shukla and additional secretary BD Singh along with others are in Delhi and bring the election material from the Election Commission of India office. This material will be placed in the strong room situated in the State Assembly. Voting for the President will be held on July 18 from 10 am to 5 pm in the state Assembly. All election material including the ballot papers etc will be flown to Delhi immediately after the voting under special security arrangements under supervision of a special team from

the state Assembly, marshals and the MP Police.

The President is elected by the members of an electoral college consisting of MPs of both the Houses of Parliament and the elected members of the Legislative Assemblies of States and the Union Territories of Delhi and Pondicherry.

Nominated members of Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha and the Assemblies, and members of state Legislative Councils, are not part of the electoral college. Voters for the Presidential polls have to mention preference 1 and preference 2. The ballot papers are then taken to the Election Commission of India's office and taken up state-wise and allotted to each candidate on whose name appears as first preference.

# Man drowns; heavy rain today too

**Team Absolute | Bhopal**

Already knee-deep under, is bracing for heavy rainfall on Wednesday as well. Incessant rain since Sunday has claimed a life and left many localities in 3-5 feet of water.

On Sunday evening, a trader drowned after he mistakenly stepped into a water-filled culvert in Gautam Nagar. ASI Ghumendra Singh said Akku Yakub of Nawab Colony, was on his way home when he fell into a deep culvert next to railway tracks in New Arif Nagar. Four hours later, when water receded, locals saw his body.

Bhopal recorded 91mm rainfall in 24-hours - thrice the usual - causing a petrol pump near Bhopal railway station to be closed and many businesses submerged. Upper Lake's water level has risen by 2.5 ft in just three days.

In neighbouring Vidisha, a 26-year-old youth was washed away on Monday evening and is yet to be traced. It's raining so hard in Vidisha - 7.8 inches overnight - that schools will be shut on Tuesday as well. For the first time in this monsoon season, normal life was thrown out of gear in several districts of state as incessant rains continue to lash since Saturday evening. One person was reported to be washed away in Vidisha district on Monday evening, rescue operations are going on. Babul Ahirwar, 26, got washed away at a culvert near Dwarakapuri gate at around 5.30

pm in Vidisha, divers have been roped in and rescue operations are going on. Vidisha city remained the most affected as it received maximum 7.8 inches in rainfall in the intervening night of Sunday and Monday several areas of the city remained inundated. Administration said it distributed more than 1,500 packets of food and rescue teams roped in. "A total of 160 people had to be shifted to camps, majority of them have now returned. Water has receded from most of the areas now," Vidisha collector, Uma Shankar Bhargava said. In Chhindwara, rain threw normal life out of gear. Sausar tehsil was worst affected. "Water has now receded. No one had to be shifted we are monitoring the situation," said district collector Chhindwara, Saurabh Kumar Suman. In Hoshangabad, there was water logging in several areas. It receded by the evening. "The situation is normal now," said district collector Hoshangabad, Neeraj Kumar Singh. In Raisen, a house also caved in on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday in Begumganj town. No casualties were reported.

As per the met officials, Raisen, Mandla, Narmadapuram districts also received significant rainfall in past 24 hours. Met officials have also issued warning for heavy rainfall with thunder and lightning at isolated places in districts of Bhopal, Narmadapuram, Indore, Jabalpur, and Shahdol divisions of the state. Raisen received highest 98 mm rain on Monday, followed by Bhopal city (78.2mm)

## 15 Labourers Rescued Safely After They Were Trapped In Sehore

### A sudden rise in water levels in the Oyster river coming from Semalpani village caused about 15 construction workers to get trapped late in the night on July 11

**Team Absolute | Bhopal**

Due to the incessant rain that has been lashing down the State, the low-lying settlements in the state have been flooded.

A sudden rise in water levels in the Oyster river coming from Semalpani village caused about 15 construction workers, working on the Seevan River Stop Dam in Nasrullaganj in Sehore district, to get trapped in the

floods, late at night on July 11. Reportedly, all of these workers were rescued and were brought back safely to their residence with the help of the Home Guard Jawans and the administrative staff that was present on the spot. The Sehore district has been facing the brunt of heavy rainfall in the last few days which has hugely affected daily life in Madhya Pradesh.

Amid the heavy rain, a flood-like situation has arisen in many

parts of the state as the low-lying settlements have been flooded.

As per sources, apart from Betwa, Tapi and Narmada rivers, the water level of small rivers is increasing rapidly.

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a orange alert for most of the districts in the state of Madhya Pradesh, with heavy to very heavy rain and lightning very likely in isolated places all over the state.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Decriminalisation of Forest Act

Continuing the spree of public notices for amendments to its various acts at a pre-draft stage, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has now proposed decriminalisation of certain sections of the Indian Forest Act, 1927. During last 10 days, the Ministry has issued similar notices seeking input/feedback from public and experts for decriminalisation of environment, water, and air acts. It has also brought out notification for changes in Forest (Conservation) Act that has become a bone of contention between the opposition Congress and the government. Now, the Ministry said it is undertaking a review of the Act to decriminalise certain sections of the law, including carrying timber out of the reserved forest, trespassing by cattle, and felling a tree. The Indian Forest Act, 1927 provides a legal framework for the protection and management of forests, transit of forest produce and timber and the duty leviable on forest produce and timber. As per the public notice, a person who "kindles, keeps or carries any fire", "permits cattle to pasture or trespass", or "causes damage by felling of a tree or dragging timber through the forest" was earlier penalised with six months imprisonment or a fine upto Rs 500 or both. Now, the penalty proposed is simply a fine of Rs 500. Explaining its reasoning, a senior Ministry official said that at times there are "difficulties in differentiating between major and minor offenses and because of that punishments are often not distinct" and that "this abets habitual offenders to commit more crimes as there is the same level of punishment for both first time and repeat offenders". The notice, issued on Saturday, seeks comments, feedback and objections etc. from common public and experts by July 31, a mere three weeks.

# THE NEW CROSS-BORDER TERROR IS FAR MORE AUDACIOUS

D.C. Pathak

The two ghastly incidents of Islamic terrorists slitting the throat of a Hindu target at Amravati in Maharashtra and the beheading of another at Udaipur in Rajasthan a week later, in full public view after delivering an open threat in both cases for the support voiced by the victims on social media for now suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma for her remarks on Prophet Muhammad made during a TV debate, indicate a new level of threat to India's internal security from radicals manoeuvred by a hostile Pakistan. In both cases, the terror act was preceded by meticulous planning negating the view that these events of raw violence could be attributed to 'sudden and grave provocation' linked directly to what the apex court while throwing out the request of the 'accused' former BJP spokesperson to club together the numerous cases filed against her on the same count. In essence, the court held Sharma directly responsible for the Udaipur beheading of a hapless Hindu tailor. Can it be said that what the BJP representative gave out by way of a 'spoken' word - for which a set of laws is already being applied - was good enough for a group of people to plan physical violence of gruesome murder of two Hindus for merely agreeing to her remarks?

The socio-political environment - however bad - cannot legitimise resorting to a medieval kind of public violence. The state in democratic India must punish these 'terrorists' on a deterrent note for the sake of its internal security and go all out to uncover the wider conspiracy behind these events involving India's adversaries, for an equally

effective response. In India, all religions are on the same footing as far as respecting the sensitivities of their followers is concerned and no community could claim to be on a different pedestal from others in this regard. It is now becoming clear in the investigation of these cases by the NIA that the acts of terrorism might be the doing of Pakistani agents who have been guided through the planning, resource mobilisation and modus operandi for carrying them out. These events should be seen as the culmination of three alarming aspects of cross-border terrorism which became particularly marked ever since Prime Minister Narendra Modi - known for his tough stand on Pakistan-sponsored terrorism against India - returned to power for a second term in 2019. One is the extensive harnessing of Islamic radical outfits by Pak ISI in the proxy war against India in Kashmir and elsewhere - more so after the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution. It was aided by the re-installation of the Taliban Emirate in Kabul in August 2021 that had come about with the full backing of Pakistan. Secondly, the rise of the anti-Modi lobby comprising elements of the opposition, civil society fora and anti-India forces abroad, with its narratives of majoritarianism, authoritarianism and anti-minority outlook of the regime, has encouraged Pakistan to openly denounce India for promoting Hindutva at the cost of Muslim rights and freedom. Former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan clearly made this allegation while announcing the National Security Policy of Pakistan. His successor, Shehbaz Sharif, has followed it up with a stepped-up propaganda about suppression of human rights in Kashmir - this was done in an attempt to draw Pakistan closer to the US once again. There is an acceleration of attempts by Pakistan to spread radi-

calisation and raise potential agents in India through clandestine use of social media for creating terror modules taking advantage of the Hindu-Muslim conflicts here. It may be recalled that following the ban imposed on Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) - a militant communal front of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind - in 2006, the Indian Mujahideen (IM) emerged as the Jihad front of SIMI that was responsible for several acts of terror subsequently. IM had strong international links and showed how Islamic terrorism could be whipped out of communal militancy. It is a matter of great satisfaction that India's intelligence setup is fully geared to detect every potential militant linked with Pakistan or any other foreign entity. The third disquieting development is the stepping up of minority politics by a diminished opposition and its allies for the purpose of garnering electoral numbers - they campaigned that India under Modi has ceased to be a secular state. This was done in complete disregard of the fact that the built-in secularism of the Constitution ensured that the democratic principles of one man one vote, development of all and equal protection of law to be provided by state governments, could not be diluted. The domestic environment is marked by an increased proneness to communal violence and spread of radicalisation. The case of alleged insult of Prophet Muhammad by a BJP functionary is being used by Pakistan to highlight the overriding identity of Indian Muslims as a part of Ummah and bring in OIC in the picture to buttress this - an unusual demand was made that India as a nation must apologise for what was at best an indiscreet expression of views by a party person about the Prophet in a debate where a Muslim participant was earlier freely insulting Hindu Gods. The leadership of the minority

community here was silent on the 'internationalisation' of a domestic event - it had every right to take it up with the government and protest against it. The sovereign democratic republic of India cannot be questioned by any country on a matter of internal governance. There are forces - home-based and those operating from across the borders - which are seizing every opportunity of destabilising this country, particularly on inter-community issues. The narrative of majoritarianism and lack of protection of minorities is now being turned into calls for violence and many leaders of the minority community are even putting up with foreign-inspired radicalisation and terrorism. It was clear all along that following the success of the anti-Soviet armed campaign in Afghanistan, Pak ISI had planned to replicate the Afghan Jihad in Kashmir and tried sending the first Taliban Mujahideen into the Valley under the cover of Harkatul Ansar in 1993. It is not surprising that Taliban elements reportedly made an appearance in POK following the recent return of the Kabul Emirate. The militancy in Kashmir is being made an instrument for spreading radicalisation in the rest of the country and stepping up recruitment of terrorists for planned action wherever possible. The incidents of Amravati and Udaipur have to be seen in this larger backdrop and the strategy of dealing with this threat be reframed for urgent action. Time has come for taking to zero tolerance against any violence that adds up to a terrorist activity. Stray communal violence and isolated cases of clash among individuals are on a different footing. It is good that the NIA is going into all the aspects of the Amravati and Udaipur cases, including conspiracy

as well as the role of local administrators and police officers. If any political elements are directly involved, no latitude should be shown to them. The Centre needs to demonstrate its political will to legally pursue the matter till its logical conclusion in order to create a deterrence against this kind of dictated violence. It needs to be mentioned that the average members of any minority community in India have the same concerns of livelihood and security as the ordinary people of the majority community here would face - they all desire to live in peace. Democratic India must sternly put down the violence encouraged out of political motives and in particular counter radicalisation fomented by the adversary. Scan of social media has to be enlarged manifold since this has become an instrument of combat and subversion. People have to be made aware that social media is like a public platform which should be used only for legitimate communication and which is subject to do's and don'ts governed by the IT Act. Broadly speaking, one should not use social media for anything that one would not be doing or saying at a public forum. Right to privacy cannot be taken for granted while using social media. Indian citizens need to be also educated on national security in a broad sense and on their contribution to the same for the sake of national unity and integrity as enjoined upon them by the Preamble to our Constitution. The country should stand together against terrorism regardless of internal differences on political or religious issues. (The writer is a former Director of Intelligence Bureau. The views expressed are personal)

international

## RISHI SUNAK CEMENTING POSITION AS TORY LEADERSHIP FRONT RUNNER

London | Agencies  
UK's former Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak underlined his status as Tory leadership front runner on Tuesday as more Cabinet big beasts backed him - with Foreign Secretary Liz Truss begging the Tory right to unite behind her to take him on, media reports said on Tuesday. Would-be PMs have just hours left to rack up the 20 nominations needed to feature in the first round of the contest, with voting due to start on Wednesday, Daily Mail reported. Sunak already appears to be well over the threshold as he formally launched his campaign this morning, introduced by deputy PM Dominic Raab and Grant



Shapps. The former Chancellor again batted away calls for tax cuts before inflation is under control, saying "we need to have a grown up conversation". At the event in Westminster, he also heaped praise on Boris Johnson, describing him as "one of the most remarkable people I have ever met" who has a "good heart" - but it was "not working" any more. Sunak - who only took a few questions from the media while journalists asking combative points were

heckled by the crowd - said his plan was to "tackle inflation, grow the economy and cut taxes". "I want to have a grown up conversation where I can tell you the truth," he said. Raab said before the speech: "We need a leader who can win... he is the only one who can win", Daily Mail reported. Penny Mordaunt and Tom Tugendhat also seem to have reached nominations the mark, while Truss is over the top after securing endorsements from Boris Johnson allies Jacob Rees-Mogg and Nadine Dorries - who declared their loyalty on the steps of Downing Street. However, other big names are struggling, with Jeremy Hunt, Nadhim Zahawi, Sajid Javid, and Priti Patel all short of declared backers.

## S KOREA TO JOIN US-LED SPACE SECURITY EXERCISE BY JULY-END

Seoul: South Korea plans to join a US-led multinational space security exercise slated to begin later this month, its officials said on Tuesday, as Seoul seeks to strengthen defense cooperation in the increasingly crucial security domain. Led by the US Space Command, the Global Sentinel exercise is set to take place from July 25-August 3. It involves participants from 18 countries, including South Korea, according to the officials. The exercise focuses on promoting collaboration among participating countries over combined space situational awareness operations, Yonhap news agency reported. "Our military plans to participate in the Global Sentinel to prepare against risks of possible clashes and drop in outer space," a Seoul official said on condition of anonymity. For this year's edition, Seoul plans to send two Air Force personnel, one official from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and one from the state-run Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute. South Korea has taken part in the exercise as a full participant since 2018.

## 34 killed in Ukraine's Chasiv Yar in Russian strike

Kiev | Agencies  
On July 12 morning, 34 people were found dead under the rubble of a five-storey residential building in Ukraine's Chasiv Yar which suffered a Russian attack on July 9. Nine civilians sustained injuries in the attack, said Pavlo Kyrylenko, Head of the Donetsk Oblast Military Administration, on Telegram. "Rescue workers have pulled out 34 people who were killed and nine who sustained injuries from under the rubble of the destroyed multi-storey building in Chasiv Yar. There is one child among those killed in the attack." The Head of the Donetsk Oblast Military Administration said that State Emergency Service rescue workers had cleared away nearly 70 per cent of debris as of 6:30 a.m. on July 12. Rescue operations are continuing, Ukrainska Pravda reported. Kyrylenko added that one civilian was killed in Mariinka on July 11. Another two civilians in Donetsk Oblast sustained injuries. Overall, at least 602 civilians have been killed and 1,552 have been injured in



Donetsk Oblast since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, Ukrainska Pravda reported. Kyrylenko stressed again that it remains impossible to determine the number of casualties and fatalities in Mariupol and Volnovakha. Russia used Iskander missiles in an attack on Chasiv Yar on July 9 evening, hitting a five-storey residential building. The local authorities reported at the time that more than 30 people might be trapped under the rubble, Ukrainska Pravda reported. The Russian Defence Ministry stated that "over 300 nationalists" were killed in the missile strike on Chasiv Yar.

## Sri Lankan Prez Gotabaya Rajapaksa signs resignation letter

Colombo | Agencies  
Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has signed his resignation letter, dated for July 13 and the Speaker of Parliament will publicly announce it to the nation on Wednesday, the Daily Mirror reported. The resignation letter of the President was signed and handed over to a senior government official who will hand it over to the Parliament Speaker. Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena who has been informed of the letter will then make a public announcement on Wednesday ending Gotabaya Rajapaksa's presidency, the Daily Mirror reported. Speculation was rife on Monday that Rajapaksa had already left the island nation last afternoon, however, these reports were rejected by senior sources close to the President who confirmed to Daily Mirror that Rajapaksa was still in the country and was protected by the Armed Forces. Just before the July 9 riots, President Rajapaksa was evacuated from the President's House in Fort by the security forces and was protected on a naval vessel

within the territorial waters of the country for security reasons, the Daily Mirror reported. However, sources close to him said that Rajapaksa physically met Commanders of the tri-forces on Monday morning at 9.30 a.m. and thereafter remains in the country. His exact whereabouts in the country is unknown but he is likely to leave the country this week, paving way for a new President to be sworn in and an all-party government to be formed. On Wednesday, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe will for a temporary period be sworn in as the President till a new President is selected by Parliament on July 20. Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena in a statement said party leaders had decided to elect a new President on July 20 through a vote in Parliament in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Nominations for the presidency will be called for on July 19. So far the two confirmed candidates are the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa, who on Monday, already informed that he is ready to rebuild Sri Lanka's economy.

## 1.1 BILLION COVID VACCINE DOSES WASTED GLOBALLY: REPORT

London | Agencies  
The governments across the globe have wasted more than a billion doses of the Covid vaccines, even as many people, including health workers, particularly in the low-income countries are yet to get at least a single shot, according to a report. The report, by science and data analytics company Airfinity, assumed a 10 per cent wastage rate from June 2021 when global dose sharing began. Public reports of vaccine waste and expirations from around the world showed that some 158 million doses have been discarded throughout the world. Pointing out to a significant under-reporting of vaccine wastage, the report highlighted few drugmakers. With 25 million doses, Russia's Sputnik V has the highest wastage figures, followed by AstraZeneca, with claims of 19 million wasted jabs, the report said. The company noted that of the 14 billion vaccine doses supplied global-



ly to date, 1.1 billion have been wasted and gone unused. Further, the new estimate shows that around 8 per cent of the 1.1 billion doses reportedly disbursed until now have gone unused. These are within the recommended range of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which assumed the wastage rate for Covid

vaccines could be as high as 10 per cent, the report said. At the same time, the estimates also reflect a certain level of uncertainty toward the under-reporting of vaccine wastage in terms of individual reports from nations' public health systems. "Despite countries' best efforts to

avoid wastage, some degree is inevitable," said Dr Matt Linley, analytics director of Airfinity. "Large multi-dose vials can make efficiencies more challenging, as well as cold chain storage and predicting daily demand or simply a vial being dropped or left out too long. Vaccines in single-dose vials with a longer shelf life, which can be transported and stored more easily, will reduce wastage over time," he added. Various organisations, including the WHO and UNICEF had called out countries to share vaccines equitably during the pandemic. Several rich countries also dumped about 100 million Covid-19 vaccines that were near expiry to the third world nations. "The vaccines were developed with unprecedented public funding and should be global public goods. But instead, vaccine monopolies have concentrated manufacturing and distribution in a handful of countries. And the needs of developing countries have been treated as an afterthought," said Julia Kosgei, policy advisor to global health campaigners the People's Vaccine Alliance.



THACKERAY BACKS MURMU FOR PRESIDENT, DUMPS OPPOSITION'S YASHWANT SINHA

On expected lines, the Shiv Sena on Tuesday announced that it will support the NDA's Presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu vis-a-vis the non-BJP Opposition's contender for the top post, Yashwant Sinha.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

On expected lines, the Shiv Sena on Tuesday announced that it will support the NDA's Presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu vis-a-vis the non-BJP Opposition's contender for the top post, Yashwant Sinha.

Sena President Uddhav Thackeray made the formal announcement after a series of consultations with the party MPs, MLAs and other leaders including tribals.

"There have been absolutely no pressures from the MPs, as claimed in the media. However, many Sena leaders and office-bearers from tribal communities have requested us to have taken a decision to support Draupadi Murmu for the President's elections," Thackeray told mediapersons.

The Sena chief recalled that in the past when it was with the NDA, it had supported the rival candidates in Presidential polls.

"For the first time a tribal woman is slated to occupy the country's top post... We are not small-minded and



we shall back her candidature. Even in the past we had supported the candidature of Pratibha Patil (2007), Pranab Mukherjee (2012) when we were with the NDA," said Thackeray.

Earlier on Tuesday, Shiv Sena MP and Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut had given strong indications to the party's possible stance while interacting with the media. "Backing Murmu does not mean supporting the Bharatiya Janata Party. The decision

will be taken keeping in view public sentiments," Raut made it clear, amid a clamour from its former saffron ally Bharatiya Janata Party to toe its (BJP) line. Raut said on Monday, Thackeray had discussed the Presidential polls issue and other matters in detail at a meeting of most Sena MPs from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha besides some other top leaders.

"In the past even Balasaheb Thackeray used to hold such consul-

tations with party leaders on major issues and the decisions were made on the basis of the view of the colleagues. At yesterday's meeting, the candidature of Murmu was also discussed," said Raut.

While emphasising that supporting Murmu doesn't imply backing the BJP, he said the Sena has all the goodwill for Sinha.

"A majority of our MPs were present at yesterday's meeting barring Shinde's son, Dr. Shrikant Shinde and Bhavana Gawali. The party does not take any decisions under pressure and whatever is finally decided, would be binding on all MPs and MLAs," Raut said. Nationalist Congress Party and Congress, the other Maha Vikas Aghadi - of which the Sena is a part - have not yet reacted to the developments, though sources indicate both parties are not too surprised by its ally's decision.

Meanwhile, both Murmu and Sinha are expected to be in Mumbai this week to campaign for the Presidential elections and are likely to meet the top leaders of all political parties to seek their support.

Rains clobber Maharashtra for 5th day running, toll rises to 87

Heavy rains lashed large parts of Maharashtra on Tuesday for the fifth consecutive day, playing havoc with routine life while the state's toll in rain-related incidents in the current monsoon season touched 87 while 66 others were injured, officials said.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Heavy rains lashed large parts of Maharashtra on Tuesday for the fifth consecutive day, playing havoc with routine life while the state's toll in rain-related incidents in the current monsoon season touched 87 while 66 others were injured, officials said.

The worst-hit district in terms of deaths are: Nashik with 12 fatalities, followed by Nagpur with nine, Thane with five, Palghar, Jalgaon, Nanded, Amravati, Wardha, and Gadchiroli with four each,

Mumbai, Ahmednagar, Jalna, Latur, Buldhana, and Yavatmal with three each, Sindhudurg, Nandurbar, Dhule, Washim, Bhandara, and Gondiya with two each, and one each in Ratnagiri, Pune, Satara, Beed, and Akola. Though ravaged by torrential rains too, districts like Raigad, Sangli, Solapur, Kolhapur, Aurangabad, Osmanabad, Parbhani, Hingoli, and Chandrapur have been spared of any casualties so far. Owing to a severe rains and flood situation in Gadchiroli and surroundings, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis air-dashed to the district on Monday evening to a spot assessment and to guide the rescue and relief operations there. In the past 24 hours, certain districts were

pounded by extremely heavy rains, like Palghar, which recorded 109.9 mm rains, Thane 106.3 mm, Raigad 96.8 mm, Nashik 94.6 mm, said the State Disaster Management Authority. The state received an average of 29.00 mm rains in 24 hours though the actual rainfall in many areas of Konkan and parts of Vidarbha, north and Western Maharashtra was much higher, while Mumbai notched 32.8 mm and 62 mm rain in suburbs. The IMD has issued a red alert for Palghar, Nashik, and Pune till Thursday, and for Raigad till Wednesday, an orange alert for Thane, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Kolhapur, and Satara till Friday, for Mumbai till Thursday, besides certain other districts.

Summon to Sonia Gandhi: Maha Congress accuses ED of political vendetta

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Hours after the Enforcement Directorate summoned interim Congress President Sonia Gandhi for questioning in the National Herald case on July 21, the Maharashtra unit of Congress accused the BJP-led Central government of pursuing vendetta politics against the Opposition parties.

"The dictatorial government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is acting arbitrarily and misusing institutions like the ED, Income Tax and CBI to silence the Opposition. Even the ED notice sent to Sonia Gandhi in the National Herald case has arisen out of this political vendetta," said state party President Nana



Patole.

Patole. Reiterating that the party or its leaders would not be "cowed down" by such tactics of vengeance, Patole said that not a single rupee was misappropriated and none of the directors of the company received any dividends or kickbacks, as alleged.

"All the transactions are completely transparent. How can money-laundering take place when there is no transfer of movable or immovable property with no benefits to

anyone," Patole said.

The reopening of the National Herald case - which was closed in 2015 - is just another strategy of the Modi government to unnecessarily and deliberately harass the Gandhi family and the party leaders, and the ED summons are in the same vein, he added. Accusing the Centre of making efforts to intimidate the Congress and its leaders, the state party chief said that "we are not scared of these" moves, and the party will continue to raise public issues and keep on questioning the Modi regime. Patole recalled how recently the ED had harassed Rahul Gandhi daily for 10 hours over five days "under the guise of interrogation", and slammed the Centre for using the Central probe agencies like its puppets.

NHSRCL requests Maharashtra govt to resolve pending issues for Ahmedabad-Mumbai Bullet train project

THE LETTER ALSO INCLUDES A LIST OF 16 IMPORTANT LOCATIONS WHERE THE PROJECT IS FACING DELAYS FROM THE MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT DUE TO ISSUES RELATED TO LAND ACQUISITION.



come after a change in the government of Maharashtra. The letter was written on July 7 by former NHSRCL chief Satish Agnihotri, the day he was sacked by the Railway Board.

In the letter, Agnihotri said that one of the most important long-pending issues, which will affect the commencement of the work in Maharashtra, is the clearance under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

The application for the clearance, after compliance with the conditions and the payment of the mandatory charges, was submitted in March 2021, the issue is still pending with the Maharashtra forest department, he added. "Your kind intervention is requested in resolving aforesaid issues for providing encumbrance-free land at the earliest and expedite the acquisition of remaining land in

Thane and Palghar districts," Agnihotri stated in the letter.

According to Agnihotri, the Japanese have been requesting for the likely dates for the commencement of the civil work in Maharashtra as the tenders for underground stations at the Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) and an undersea tunnel were cancelled after repeated postponement over the last couple of years.

The letter also includes a list of 16 important locations where the project is facing delays from the Maharashtra government due to issues related to land acquisition. The progress of land acquisition in Maharashtra for the bullet train project is moving very slowly with 72 per cent (313 hectares out of a total requirement of 434 hectares) of the land needed for the project acquired. Whereas physical possession has only been for 39 per cent of the land, which is 168 hectares.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) has written to Maharashtra's chief secretary, requesting him to intervene to resolve long-pending issues that are delaying the bullet train project. This move has

MAN GETS 10 YEARS RI FOR SEXUALLY ASSAULTING MINOR GIRL IN THANE

Thane: A special court here sentenced a man to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment for kidnapping and sexually assaulting a seven-year-old girl in Thane district.

Special judge V V Virkar on Monday convicted the accused Sajad Aslam Kankali (26) of charges under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The judge sentenced him to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 13,000 on him.

Special public prosecutor Rekha Hivrale informed the court that the accused and the victim lived in the same colony.

On December 5, 2015, the accused abducted the victim who was playing near her house and took her to a forested area nearby, where he sexually assaulted her and injured her face and back, she said.

The victim came home crying with severe pain in her private parts and recounted the incident to her mother, she said.

The prosecution had examined 11 witnesses, including the parents of the victim, during the course of the trial, it was stated. (The victim's identity has not been revealed to protect her privacy as per Supreme court directives on cases related to sexual assault)

BJP asks SEC to push back village polls amid floods

BJP state unit president Chandrakant Patil called on state election commissioner U P S Madan on Monday. He was accompanied by MLA Girish Mahajan, MLCs Chandrashekar Bawankule and Ram Shinde, and others.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The BJP has urged the state election commission (SEC) to consider postponing elections to nagar parishads, nagar panchayats and gram panchayats due to the flood situation in many districts.

BJP state unit president Chandrakant Patil called on state election commissioner U P S Madan on Monday. He was accompanied by MLA Girish Mahajan, MLCs Chandrashekar Bawankule and Ram Shinde, and others.

Speaking to the media, Patil said postponement would give time to decide on electoral reservation for OBCs, which was scrapped by the Supreme Court.

The SEC has announced elections for 92 nagar parishads, 15 nagar panchayats and 95 gram panchayats.

"The elections were announced all of a



sudden two days ago from July 20 to August 18. Considering the heavy rain and the flood situation, it will be difficult for candidates to file nominations and campaign and for voters to cast votes," he said.

MAN FOUND MURDERED IN FLAT

Mumbai: A 52-year-old man was found murdered in an apartment in Mumbai area of Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Tuesday. The victim, Abdul Haque Zakir Ali Sayyed, was found dead in his apartment in Kausa area of Mumbai on Monday morning, inspector Babasaheb Nikam of Mumbai police station said.

An offence under section 302 (murder) and other relevant provisions of the IPC has been registered against the unidentified accused, he said. Some unidentified persons slit the victim's wrists and throat and placed the bloodstained knife in his hand to make it appear like a suicide, the official said.

Vasai MLA Hitendra Thakur likely to get ministerial berth

Thakur has 3 MLAs from his party - Vasai, Nala Sopara and Boisar - and is known to be a confidante of NCP chief Sharad Pawar.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

There are active talks in Maharashtra politics of Vasai MLA and president of Bahujan Vikas Aghadi (BVA) Hitendra Thakur getting a ministerial berth as a token of appreciation for voting against the no-confidence motion of the Eknath Shinde and Devendra Fadnis government.

Thakur has 3 MLAs from his party - Vasai, Nala Sopara and Boisar - and is known to be a confidante of NCP chief Sharad Pawar. Shinde is not

on good terms with Thakur as Shiv Sena had fought against BVA during the 2019 Assembly polls with encounter cop Pradeep Sharma fighting against Kshitij Thakur and Vijay Patil fighting against the BVA chief and the Shiv Sena candidates were trounced miserably. Since then Hitendra Thakur had a grudge against CM Shinde. During the MVA regime, Bachu Kadu of Prahara party was given a ministerial berth even as he had 2 MLAs elected from his party including Kadu.

Now the political scenario has changed and Thakur has inched towards the BJP and BVA has voted for the BJP (NDA candidate) during the MLC polls as well as the Rajya Sabha polls. Besides, during the no-confidence motion tabled before the

Assembly last week, BVA voted against the motion and thus won loyalty points from Shinde and Fadnis.

According to political sources, during Fadnis and Shinde's meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP President J P Nadda, the clearance for giving Thakur a ministerial berth was okayed. Now either Hitendra Thakur or his son Kshitij may get the berth.

Furthermore, the important Vasai Virar civic polls are approaching and BVA is in the majority but Thakur needs the ministerial berth to win comfortably during the ensuing civic polls.

A BVA leader said this is good news that one of our party MLAs are being considered for a ministerial berth though we are not sure what portfolio will be given.

SC REFUSES TO STAY POLL PROCESS STARTED IN 271 GRAM PANCHAYATS SANS OBC QUOTA

The SC's judgement came days after the ruling and opposition parties made a strong case before the SEC to postpone these elections.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major blow to the Shinde-Fadnis government and the opposition in Maharashtra, the Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to stay the election process launched in 271 gram panchayats in 62 talukas with polling slated for August 4. These elections will take place in the absence of 27% political reservation in local bodies. The code of conduct has already been in place from June 29 when the State Election Commission (SEC) had made an announcement in this regard. These talukas having low rainfall were selected as per the Supreme Court order delivered on May 17, 2022.

The SC's judgement came days after the ruling and opposition parties made a strong

case before the SEC to postpone these elections and also to 92 nagar parishads and 4 nagar panchayats slated for August 18 citing heavy rains and absence of OBC quota.

Interestingly, today was the first day for filing nominations in 271 gram panchayats. As it will continue till July 19 except on July 16-17 being government holidays. The scrutiny of nomination papers will take place on July 20. The deadline for withdrawal of nomination papers will be July 22. The voting will be held on August 4 and counting of votes will take place on August 5.

A senior officer from the rural development department told the Free Press Journal, "As per today's order the elections will be held in 271 gram panchayats from 62 talukas. However, the government will make request to the apex court and also to SEC to

defer it considering the heavy rains and floods reported in some of these talukas and other parts of Maharashtra as it has completely hampered the transportation and communication. It will adversely impact the movement of the necessary staff in these areas." On the other hand, a SEC officer said that the election process in 271 gram panchayats was already underway and the voting will take place on August 4 as per the poll schedule. "However, SEC will look into the representations by district authorities on heavy rains and floods and accordingly will modulate the poll process."

As reported by the Free Press Journal, BJP, NCP and Congress have demanded that these polls be deferred and will be conducted after the monsoon and also after the restoration of OBC quota in local bodies.

They have cited that a dedicated commission on OBCs has already submitted its report on empirical data to the state government which in turn has presented it to the apex court. The opposition NCP has announced that it will field OBC nominees in these elections. The BJP leader and former minister Pankaja Munde insisted that the local body elections should take place only after the restoration of OBC quota. "I will request the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister to immediately stay the elections to 271 gram panchayats and 92 nagar parishads and 4 nagar panchayats although the apex court has ruled that the elections are inevitable in these local bodies. There won't be any compromise on the OBC quota in local bodies and therefore elections need to be postponed," she noted.

4 injured as old residential structure collapses in Pune

Pune: Four people were injured, including two critically, after a portion of a dilapidated residential structure collapsed in Vasai city following heavy rains, fire brigade officials said on Tuesday.

The dilapidated 'wada' collapsed around Monday midnight in Nana Peth area of Pune. Wada is an old cluster of houses with many rooms. Fire brigade personnel received a call around midnight that four people were trapped under the debris of the collapsed structure. They rushed to the spot and rescued the four people. Two of them were critically injured and taken to a nearby hospital, the official said.



# JEN SHAH

## pleads guilty to fraud charges

Los Angeles | Agencies

American television star Jen Shah, who is known for her work in the reality TV series, 'The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City', has pleaded guilty on criminal fraud charges. The charges are linked to an alleged telemarketing scheme, according to court documents obtained by 'Variety'.

Having pleaded not guilty to the charges earlier, Shah entered the plea on Monday morning (Pacific Standard Time) in Manhattan federal court, one week ahead of the planned trial, which was scheduled to begin on July 18.

'Variety' further states that Shah and others were previously accused of scamming hundreds of elderly people through a wide-ranging telemarketing scheme in the US. The situation has been a storyline on Bravo's 'Real Housewives of Salt Lake City', where Shah is known for her over-the-top lifestyle, glitzy fashion, many assistants, crying, screaming, throwing drinks and continuous denials.

In addition to time behind bars, the plea agreement calls for Shah to make restitution in an amount of more than \$9 million to victims, as well as forfeiture of \$6 million.

At the recent hearing, Shah's attorney, Priya Chaudhry, said the reality star would like to withdraw her plea of not guilty. Shah admitted to wrongdoing, apologised to the judge and said she would not appeal if the sentencing is for 168 months or fewer. The maximum penalty on the count of conviction is 30 years of imprisonment. Under the terms of her plea deal, Shah's sentencing guidelines are between 135 to 168 months of imprisonment (between 11 and 14 years), though the judge can choose to sentence Shah above or below that timeframe.



## 'DOCTOR STRANGE' WRITER JON SPAIHTS HEAPS PRAISE ON 'RRR'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Screenwriter and author Jon Spaihts, who has famously penned the scripts for the 2016 superhero film 'Doctor Strange' and Denis Villeneuve's epic sci-fi movie 'Dune' is heavily impressed with Indian filmmaker S.S. Rajamouli's epic period drama 'RRR'. Jon took to Twitter to share his thoughts on the film. Showering praise, he tweeted with the film's still: "Holy hell, RRR. Has any movie ever packed more movie into a couple days later?"

The movie team has shared the same with the world through their social media handle. Not just

Jon Spaihts, but several known Hollywood celebs have been lauding the film for its content, ever since it started streaming on Netflix.

Earlier in June, Doctor Strange screenwriter C. Robert Cargill watched the movie and shared his review on Twitter. Sharing his reaction to the period drama, Cargill wrote: "Friends came over last night to initiate me into the cult of RRR and I'm here to report I am now fully, truly, deeply a member."

He described RRR as "the craziest, most sincere, weirdest blockbuster I've ever seen." Cargill added that he was quite certain that he was going to watch the movie once again with his partner.

# Sam Taylor-Johnson to direct Amy Winehouse biopic in the works

Los Angeles | Agencies

Filmmaker Sam Taylor-Johnson will soon helm a biopic based on the late singer Amy Winehouse, who died of alcohol poisoning at the age of 27.

Sam has earlier directed 'Nowhere Boy' / European studio Studiocanal is backing the film, which has been tightly under wraps, reports 'Variety'.

The script for the movie has been in circulation for sometime now with the project entering the casting stage. As per 'Variety', it's believed Taylor-Johnson hopes to cast a relative newcomer for the part of Winehouse.

The film is believed to be very much a passion project for Taylor-Johnson, who was a close friend of Winehouse's. Mitch Winehouse also participated in the 2021 BBC documentary 'Reclaiming Amy', which marked the 10-year anniversary of Amy's death.

A biopic about her life has been in the works for a number of years, with Owen and Hayward attached from the very beginning. The Winehouse estate first signed a deal for the movie back in 2018, though an earlier script was originally penned by 'Kinky Boots' writer Geoff Deane.

## J-HOPE'S 'MORE' DEBUTS AT NO. 82 ON BILLBOARD MAIN SINGLES CHART

Seoul | Agencies

K-pop superband BTS' member J-Hope launched a solo venture and has entered the US Billboard's main singles chart with 'More'.

The song debuted at No. 82 on the Hot 100 chart for this week, Billboard said on social media on Monday, reports Yonhap.

It came out on July 1 as a pre-released track from 'Jack in the Box', his solo debut album set to be out on Friday. He previously reached 81 on the chart with 'Chicken Noodle Soup', a collaborative single with American singer-

actor Becky G in 2019. 'More' is an old-school hip-hop song combining strong drum beats and guitar sounds with lyrics about the rapper-dancer's hope to show more of his side to the world. The tune debuted at No. 70 on the British Official Singles Chart.



# Depp settles assault case with 'City of Lies' location manager

Los Angeles | Agencies

A settlement between Johnny Depp and a 'City of Lies' crew member has saved the actor from making an encore appearance in court this month. The crew member had alleged that Depp punched him on the film's set back in 2017, reports 'Variety'.

As per 'Variety', Depp had been scheduled to go to a civil trial in Los Angeles on July 25, less than two months after winning his defamation battle in a Virginia courtroom against ex-wife Amber Heard.

Gregg "Rocky" Brooks, a location manager, sued Depp in 2018, alleging that Depp became angry after Brooks informed him they had to stop filming for the night. According to the suit, accessed by 'Variety', the production had a permit to shoot at the Barclay Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, but the permit expired at 10 p.m. Depp wanted to go later to get a longer

version of a scene, and Brooks was able to get two extensions. But at 11 p.m., he was told he would have to shut it down. Brooks first informed the director, Brad Furman, who responded: "Why don't you tell that to Johnny Depp?"

'Variety' further states that Brooks tried to get a police officer to help him break the news, at which point Depp began to shout, "Who the fuck are you? You have no right to tell me what to do!", according to the lawsuit.

Depp allegedly punched Brooks twice in the lower rib cage, according to the lawsuit. Brooks claimed that Depp had alcohol on his breath, and shouted "I will give you \$100,000 to punch me in the face right now!"

The case was set for a final status conference before trial on Tuesday (Pacific Standard Time). On Monday, the notice of settlement was sent to the judge. The suit is expected to be dismissed once the settlement is completed. No terms were disclosed.



# James Franco to star in post-World War II drama 'Me, You'

Los Angeles | Agencies

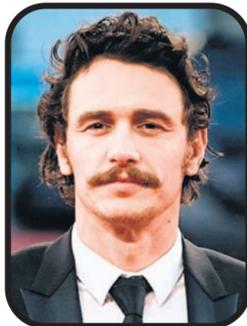
Actor James Franco is set to star in Bille August's post-Second World War drama 'Me, You'.

Franco will play "one of the lead roles" in the feature, which also stars Tom Hollander and Daisy Jacob, reports 'Variety'. A coming-of-age drama, 'Me, You' takes place on the Italian island of Ischia in the 1950s. That's where Marco, a 16-year-old on break from his dreary Scottish boarding school, befriends US GI turned fisherman Nicola.

The duo while away the hours sailing in the bay of Naples while Nicola regales his young friend with tales of war and oceans. But when Marco meets the mysterious 20-year-old Caia (played by Jacob) he is entranced and upon finding out she is a concentration camp survivor, he vows to take revenge. Soon he is plotting to set fire to a villa occupied by a group of boorish German tourists in the hopes of winning Caia's affections.

"Deeply tender and bittersweet, 'Me, You' explores the raw beauty and tragedy of love, the age of innocence and the bitter realities of war," reads the official logline. Hollander plays Marco's father Edward. Principal photography is set to start in September 2022 on location in Ischia.

"I am excited to board this phenomenal project and to be working with the legendary Bille August," Franco said in a statement. "I'm a huge fan of his work and 'Me, You' is a truly brilliant script."



## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Simone Ashley



# 1ST ODI: INDIA THRASH ENGLAND BY 10 WICKETS

London | Agencies

Jasprit Bumrah's career-best show with the ball (6/19) followed by a solid unbeaten opening stand between Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan helped India thrash England by 10 wickets in the first ODI and take 1-0 lead in the three-match series at the Kennington Oval, here on Tuesday.

Bumrah's sensational performance helped India bowl out England for a paltry 110 in 25.2 overs. The 28-year-old with his career-best ODI figures of 6 for 19 became the first Indian pace bowler to take six wickets in an ODI in England. He was supported well by Mohammed Shami, who bagged 3 for 31 en route to becoming the joint third-fastest to 150 wickets, and Prasadidh Krishna (1/26).

Skinner Jos Buttler (30 off 32) was the highest scorer for England, who



kept losing wickets at regular intervals after being put in to bat first. David Willey (21 off 26), and Brydon Carse (15 off 26) were the other main

contributors for the hosts. Chasing a small total, Sharma and Dhawan stitched an unbeaten century partnership and led India to a convincing

10-wicket win in the 18.4 overs. Sharma hit six fours and five sixes in his 58-ball unbeaten 76, while Dhawan finished on 31 not out off 54, having hit the winning boundary.

### BOOM BOOM BUMRAH

Jasprit Bumrah's sensational and career-best show with the ball (6/19) helped India bowl out England for a paltry 110 in the first ODI of the three-match series at the Kennington Oval here on Tuesday. Bumrah with his career-best ODI figures of 6 for 19 became the first Indian pace bowler to take six wickets in an ODI in England. He was supported well by Mohammed Shami, who bagged 3 for 31 en route to becoming the joint third-fastest to 150 wickets, and Prasadidh Krishna (1/26).

**Brief scores:** England 110 all out in 25.2 overs (Jos Buttler 30, David Willey 21; Jasprit Bumrah 6/19, Mohammed Shami 3/31) lost to India 114 for no loss in 18.4 overs (Rohit Sharma 76 not out, Shikhar Dhawan 31 not out) by 10 wickets

## Indian grapplers bag 22 medals in Asian U-20 wrestling in Bahrain

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India's U-20 wrestling team came up with a superb performance to bag 22 medals including four gold in the Asian U-20 Wrestling Championships in Manama, Bahrain.

Besides the four gold medals, India claimed nine silver and nine bronze medals in the event which ended on Sunday night.

Among the 22 medals, the women's team won 10 medals including three gold through Priyanka (65kg), Arju (68kg) and Antrim (53kg). Men's freestyle wrestler Sujet won the fourth gold medal for India in the 65kg weight class.

India finished second in the team ranking in women's wrestling, second in men's freestyle and fifth in the team ranking in Men's Greco-Roman competition, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) tweeted on Monday.

Among the medallists, women wrestler Sweetie (53kg), Reena (65kg), Bipasha (72kg), Priya (76kg) won silver medals while Mulayam Yadav (70kg), Ashish (97kg), Mohit



Kumar (61kg), Jaideep (74kg) and Mahendra B Gaikwad (125kg) are the male grapplers to bag silver medals. Three women -- Sita (57kg), Tanu (59kg) and Sarika (62kg) -- and four male freestyle wrestlers -- Aman (57kg), Deepak (67kg), Jointy Kumar (86kg), Akash (92kg) besides two men's Greco-Roman wrestlers -- Rohit Dahiya (82kg) and Ankit Gulia (67kg) -- won bronze medals in the event.

## ATP TOUR: DOMINIC THIEM RETURNS TO WINNING WAYS IN NORDEA OPEN

**Bastad (Sweden):** Former World No. 3 Dominic Thiem battled to a 3-6, 6-1, 7-6(5) first-round victory against Emil Ruusuvuori of Finland at the Nordea Open here on Tuesday.



It was the Austri'n's first tour-level win for 14 months, nine of which the 2020 U.S. Open champion spent out of action due to a wrist injury.

Thiem was under pressure early against the World No. 43 Ruusuvuori in the pair's first ATP head-to-head meeting. The Finn raced to an unassailable 5-1 lead in the opening set, but Thiem raised his level to roar back into contention by reeling off five games in a row in the second set to level proceedings. Despite some nervous moments in the deciding-set tie-break, Thiem stayed solid to clinch just his second win at any level in 2022 having saved eight from 12 break points against the debutant Finn. Thiem's next opponent on his debut appearance in Bastad will be fourth seed Roberto Bautista Agut.

## Women's hockey World Cup

# Savita makes six saves in shootout as India beat Canada

Terrassa (Spain) | Agencies

Riding on captain Savita's heroics in the shootout, the Indian women's hockey team defeated Canada to register their first win at the FIH Women's World Cup Spain & Netherlands 2022 late on Monday.

After the two teams ended the regulation time at 1-1, the Indian team defeated Canada 3-2 in the sudden death to progress to the 9-12th placings of the tournament.

India are already out of medal contention after they lost the crossover match against Spain for a place in the quarterfinal by a solitary goal.

Madeline Secco (11th minute) scored for Canada, while Salima Tete (58th) scored the equaliser for India in the regulation time.

Savita, who put up a scin-



tillating show, made six saves in the shootout, while Navneet Kaur, Sonika and Neha converted their chances to help India register their first win in the competition. Desperately looking for an equaliser, India showed urgency to convert a goal in the final quarter. After

a number of missed PC attempts, India finally scored the equaliser in the 58th minute through Salima Tete who found the back of the net through a perfectly executed PC variation.

India will take on Japan on July 13 in the 9th-12th placing match.

## Djokovic anticipatory to play in US and Australian Open

Belgrade (Serbia) | Agencies

The 21-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic "believes things will change" and he will be allowed to compete at next year's Australian Open.

Fresh from winning a seventh Wimbledon title and 21st Grand Slam trophy, the Serbian concedes he is running out of time to travel to New York for the US Open.

As things stand, only visitors who are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus are allowed to enter the United States and Djokovic has made it clear that he will not get the vaccine.

Djokovic suffered a major blow earlier in the year, as he was not allowed to defend his title at the 2021 Australian Open since he was not vaccinated against Covid-19.

Djokovic, though, is confident his Australian ban will be overturned, but he is not too sure about the US Open. "As things stand now, I cannot travel to Australia and the United States, but I am



hoping to get positive news," Djokovic told RTS following celebrations at Belgrade City Hall.

"I believe things will change for Australian Open. For the US Open there is not much time, but hope dies last. I would like to play at the US Open and Australia Open, but even if I do not it's not the end of the world."

## Changwon Shooting World Cup

# MEHULI GHOSH, SHAHU TUSHAR MANE SEAL MEDAL IN AIR RIFLE MIXED TEAM

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Mehuli Ghosh and Shahu Tushar Mane ensured India's second medal of the ongoing ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun stage in Changwon, Korea, topping their 10m Air Rifle Mixed team qualifiers with a sizzling 634.4 after 60-shots.

According to information received here, they were joined by the strong Hungarian pair of Istvan Peni and Eszter Meszaros, who finished second in the 30-team qualifying round with a score of 630.3, well behind the Indian pair.

Also reaching the bronze medal match was the 10m Air Pistol Mixed team pairing of Shiva Narwal and Palak, who shot a total of 574 in their qualifying round to finish third behind the Greek pairing of Anna Korakaki and Dionysios Korakakis. They shot 579 to finish second. The top spot was claimed by Olympic champions Zorana Arunovic and



Damir Mikec of Serbia who shot 584.

All the Mixed Team bronze medal matches are slated for Wednesday (July 13) and they will be followed by the gold medal encounter.

Two other pairs, namely Naveen and Rhythm Sangwan in the 10m Air

Pistol Mixed Team and Arjun Babuta and Elavenil Valarivan in the corresponding Rifle competition could not make the grade as both finished in the eighth position.

Arjun and Elavenil shot 627.8 for their eighth-placed finish while

Naveen and Rhythm finished on a total of 570. Earlier in the day, India missed out on about five chances for a medal when none of the qualifiers in Men's and Women's 10m Air Pistol as well as in the Men's Trap could make their opportunities count.

In the Men's 10m Air Pistol, India had three qualifiers in the top eight ranking round but Naveen came closest to a medal, finishing fourth with an effort of 250.7. Shiva Narwal was fifth with 199.7 while Sagar Dangi was sixth with 199.2.

In the Women's 10m Air Pistol, India's lone ranking round qualifier Yuvika Tomar ended seventh with 147.1 to her name.

In the Men's Trap, young Vivaan Kapoor shot a brilliant 122 out of 125 to qualify third among eight qualifiers for the ranking rounds but ended fourth in his match to finish outside the medals.

India has one gold in the tournament so far and are lying fourth on the medal tally.

Northampton | Agencies

Young Emma Lamb scored a maiden international century as England, backed by fine bowling performances from Nat Sciver and Katherine Brunt, won the opening One-day International against South Africa Women by five wickets with 107 ball remaining at the County Ground here.

England bowlers were tough to negotiate, with Sciver grabbing a four-wicket haul, while Brunt took three as the Proteas were dismissed for 218 in 47.4 overs. England's massive win comes months after they stopped South Africa's charge in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup semifinal in New Zealand.

The hosts then notched up the winning runs in 32.1 overs with Emma Lamb smashing 15 boundaries in her nearly run-a-ball 102.

Earlier, Katherine Brunt found an early rhythm in her return, taking 2/5 in her opening spell of five overs. Cracking the South African batting order open with strikes in consecutive overs, the quick finished with a third, beating the defences of Ayabonga Khaka as the hosts pressed on to take all 10 wickets.

Lamb was the star though, bringing up her



century with a superb drive wide of cover. The opener eventually fell to Tumi Sekhukhune for 102, though had all but sealed victory for the hosts, who coasted home in the 33rd over.

Brief scores: South Africa Women 218 in 47.4 overs (Laura Wolvaardt 43, Chloe Tryon 88, Nadine de Klerk 38; Nat Sciver 4/59, Katherine Brunt 3/18) lost to England 219/5 in 32.1 overs (Emma Lamb 102, Nat Sciver 55) by five wickets.

## Athapaththu, Harmanpreet rise in Women's ODI Player Rankings

Dubai | Agencies

A host of Sri Lanka and India players including captains Chamari Athapaththu and Harmanpreet Kaur rose up in the latest ICC Women's ODI Player Rankings, released on Tuesday, following the completion of their three-match one-day series in Pallekele.

While India registered a 3-0 series sweep during the dominant 50-over series, it was Sri Lanka captain Athapaththu, who made the biggest impression on the top 10 list for batters.

Athapaththu scored a quick-fire 44 in the final match of the series last week and that saw the talented 32-year-old rise two spots to a career-best-equaling eighth position, which she had first attained after an epic 178 off 143 balls against Australia in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in Bristol five years ago.

On the other hand, India



captain Harmanpreet moved up one place to 13th following her Player of the Match effort of 75 helping her gain 12 rating points. Kaur, who finished with 119 runs and three wickets in India's 3-0 win and was named Player of the series, has also moved up eight slots to 71st among bowlers and four spots to 20th among all-rounders.

Other India batters to move up in the rankings

include opener Shafali Verma (up three places to 33rd), Yastika Bhatia (up one place to 45th) and Pooja Vastrakar (up eight places to 53rd).

In the rankings for bowlers, Rajeshwari Gayakwad is up three places to joint-ninth after grabbing three for 36 while Meghna Singh (up four places to 43rd) and Vastrakar (up two places to joint-48th) have also advanced.

## Youth national boxing

# Services, Haryana crowned champions

Chennai | Agencies

Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) and Haryana pugilists once again stamped their authority by clinching the team championship titles of the men's and women's categories respectively at the 5th Youth Men's and Women's National Boxing Championships here.

SSCB boxers pulled off a stunning show on the final day of the competition as nine of their 11 finalists emerged victorious and took home the gold medals as well as the team championship trophy with 81 points, finishing at top of the table with 11 medals, including 2 silver medals.

Reigning Asian Youth Champion Vishwanath Suresh (48kg) started the day's proceedings for Services with a 4-1 win over Haryana's Vishesh in a close bout where both the boxers played fiercely from close range.

The other eight gold medal winners for SSCB were Jadumani Mandangbam (51kg), Ashish (54kg), Nikhil Kumar (57kg), Harsh (60kg), Preet Malik (63.5kg), Ankush Panghal (67kg), Deepak (75kg), Mohit (86kg). Anjani Kumar (71kg) and Rytham (92+kg) were the two silver medalists for SSCB. Haryana and Madhya Pradesh claimed second and third positions respectively in the men's section with 44 and 28 points. While Haryana won two gold, four



silver and two bronze medals, Madhya Pradesh concluded their campaign with one gold, two silver and three bronze medals.

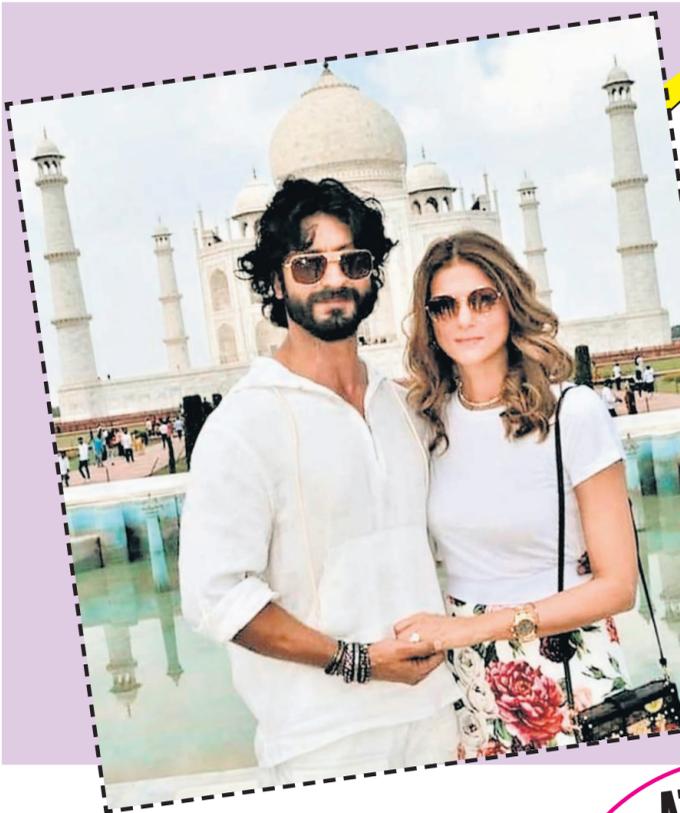
Haryana's Sahil Chauhan (71kg), who defeated SSCB's Anjani Kumar 3-2 in the final, was adjudged the Best Boxer while Haryana's Akshat received the Most Promising Boxer award for his brilliant display throughout the tournament. Bharat Joon (92kg) was the other gold medalist from Haryana. In the women's section, led by Bhawna's (48kg) 4-1 win over Delhi's Sanjana and Asian Youth champion Tamanna's (50kg) 5-0 win against Himachal Pradesh's Kashish, nine Haryana boxers won the

finals and helped the team finish at the top of position with 72 points by winning 11 medals, including two silver medals.

Neeru Khatri (54kg), Ravina (63kg), Priyanka (66kg), Lashu Yadav (70kg), Muskan (75kg) Pranjal Yadav (81kg) and Kirti (81+kg) were the other seven gold medalists. Anjali (52kg) and Prachi (60kg) were (60kg) were the two silver medalists for Haryana. Maharashtra and Delhi finished in the second and third positions respectively in the women's category with 34 and 18 points. Maharashtra won two gold medals and three silver medals whereas Delhi finished with two silver and three bronze medals. Devika Ghorpade of Maharashtra got the better of Haryana's Anjali 5-0 in the 52kg final and was awarded with the Best Boxer trophy. Meanwhile, Haryana's Prachi (60kg) was adjudged the Most Promising Boxer. Aarya Bartakke (57kg) was Maharashtra's second gold medalist as she defeated Naom Chingsanuami of Mizoram in the final. Kunjarani Devi (60kg) handed Manipur their only gold medal at the tournament after defeating Haryana's Prachi 5-0 convincingly.

Madhya Pradesh's Aman Singh (92+kg) defeated Rytham of SSCB 5-0 to bag the gold medal.

Rockey Chaudhary (80kg) was the lone gold medal winner for Uttar Pradesh as he got the better of Haryana's Ishan Kataria 3-2 in a close contest.



## VIDYUT AND NANDITA WILL TIE THE KNOT IN LONDON

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In September of 2021, Bollywood actor Vidhut Jammwal proposed to fashion designer Nandita Mahtani. Vidhut and Nandita have stayed in the news since then. Nandita is now in London, and there is anticipation that the two may marry shortly. According to some reports, both have already married and their pals have kept the marriage a secret. Some people believe this since Vidhut and Nandita kept their affair and engagement a secret for a long period. Although some people believe that their marriage will take place within the next 15 days and that both parties announce it. Vidhut Jammwal and Nandita had already surprised the audience. Vidhut and Nandita announced their engagement in September 2021 by posting a photo of themselves in front of the Taj Mahal, arms in their arms. Nandita Mahtani was formerly married to Sanjay Kapoor, Karisma Kapoor's ex-husband. Although their marriage was short-lived, they divorced in 2003. In terms of Vidhut Jammwal, his film 'Khuda Hafiz 2' was just released. The public and reviewers have had mixed reactions to the picture. He is currently filming for his next projects 'IB71' and 'Sher Singh Rana.'



Bharti Singh, Haarsh share adorable pictures of their son

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Comedian Bharti Singh and her husband Haarsh Limbachiya have shared adorable pictures of their son, Laksh on their Instagram handle. The couple have finally introduced him to their fans and friends. Both Bharti and Haarsh have posted a series of pictures in which Bharti was seen holding her baby in her arms and in the other Haarsh was seen kissing him on his forehead. While another one looks beautiful with both the parents looking at his face while his eyes are closed.

She captioned it with a heart emoji: "miliye humare bete LAKSH se (meet our son Laksh) Ganpati bappa moriya"

After this many of their fans and industry friends have shared their best wishes and blessings for the baby.

Karan Kundrra commented with a heart emoji. Neha Kakkar wrote: "Awww..Pyara Laksh!!" Rubina Dilaik also mentioned: "Aaaww.. adorable" Bharti and Haarsh got married in December 2017 and their baby was born on April 3, 2022.



## ATHIYA SHETTY, K.L. RAHUL TO TIE THE KNOT IN THREE MONTHS



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Athiya Shetty, who has been dating K.L. Rahul, captain of IPL team Lucknow Super Giants and the vice-captain of Indian national team for more than three years, is set to tie the knot with him in the coming three months.

A source close to Athiya told India Today that preparations for the wedding are going in full swing and Rahul's parents were recently in Mumbai to meet Athiya's family. The couple,

along with their families, reportedly visited the new house to see the progress as they will be moving in soon. The wedding, every detail of which is being overseen by the bride herself, is expected to take place in Mumbai.

According to India Today, Athiya recently jetted off to Germany with K. L. Rahul for his treatment. The cricketer was ruled out of India's tour of England due to an injury. The 30-year-old, who sustained a groin injury, underwent surgery in Germany. The source further revealed that Rahul would remain there for about a month and Athiya would be by his side during his recovery.

## Ananya And Aditya Roy are New Lovebirds In Town?

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ananya Panday, who was earlier dating Ishaan Khatter, is now making headlines with a handsome hunk of Bollywood Aditya Roy Kapur! Yes, you read it right. As per reports, Ananya and Aditya are said to be the hottest couple in the industry. While Ananya and Aditya were never spotted together in public, rumours are rife that something is cooking between them. According to the latest report in a news portal, Ananya and Aditya's mutual bond towards each other is the latest growth in their relationship, however, both are very tight-lipped about their companionship, or perhaps they want to keep it a low-key affair. For the unversed, Ananya was rumoured to be dating Ishaan Khatter. On the other hand, Aditya was rumoured to be dating model Diva Dhawan.

On the work front, Ananya Pandya will soon be seen alongside Vijay Deverakonda in Liger. While Aditya Kapur's latest release Rashtara Kavach Om tanked at the box office.

## Shakti Arora has stopped using glycerin for emotional scenes

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Shakti Arora revealed how he tries to be realistic while doing his scenes and avoids using glycerin in emotional sequences. He uses his inner feelings to do such scenes in the show.

Shakti says: "I generally immerse myself completely into the character as well as the sequence so that I can give my best. In fact, it is very important for me to read the script

before my shot as I need to plan exactly what I need to do and I need to think about channelling specific emotions to give the perfect take."

"In front of the camera, I put everything on the line and whenever I am shooting for such sequences, I never look at the monitor after performing the scene. I get a sense of how well I have performed and in case I am dissatisfied, I ask for another shot," he adds.

He further shared how he got so involved while shooting that he started to shed tears without using glycerin.

"While we were shooting for a recent emotional sequence, I truly felt the emotions of my character and I started shedding tears. The team had also kept glycerin on standby, however, I have stopped using glycerin for emotional sequences in this show as I am so much into the character and I try to channel my inner emotions to perform the sequence in the best way possible and that's what happened."

"It was truly a special moment for us and I guess our bond has only grown offscreen after this heartwarming scene," he concludes.

## Hrithik Roshan celebrates three years of Super 30

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The critically acclaimed biographical drama Super 30, which celebrates its third anniversary on 12 July, won Hrithik Roshan critical acclaim and was a huge commercial success in 2019. However, the superstar found it difficult to fill the shoes of the inspirational mathematics teacher and educator Anand Kumar. Hrithik Roshan, "India's Greek God," had to give up his physique and sophistication to become Anand Kumar, imitating not only his avatar and mannerisms but also his dialect, accent, and other minute details. Hrithik went above and beyond, from practising Bihari for hours on end to devoting time to his workout routine. In a throwback video showing the superstar's dramatic transformation, he said, "The very first sacrifice that I had to make was to allow myself to look unfit and out of shape. Next was the Bihari accent which is both vulnerable and strong. I had to practise Bihari every day for about 2-3 hours. Additionally, I worked on my jaw, cheek and tongue muscles...all of which would help improve my dialect and talk. I had to be uninhibited and just let go."

Hrithik Roshan was already a star and in a league of his own when he made his debut in Kaho Na Pyaar Hai. While the film almost overnight made him a sensation and a national crush.



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Aamna Sharif