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DOLO-650 MAKERS SPENDING RS 1K CR AS FREEBIES ON DOCS FOR PRESCRIBING TABLET

'SERIOUS ISSUE'

The Supreme Court was told on Thursday that the Central Board for Direct Taxes (CBDT) has accused makers of Dolo-650 tablet of distributing freebies around Rs 1,000 crore to doctors as consideration for prescribing the tablet.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Senior advocate Sanjay Parikh, representing Federation of Medical & Sales Representatives Association of India, contended before a bench headed by justice D.Y. Chandrachud that Dolo had invested Rs 1,000 crore in freebies to have its anti-fever drug prescribed to patients. Justice Chandrachud said that it is a serious issue and even he was prescribed the same during Covid and said, "I was also asked to have the same when I had Covid." He added, "This is a serious issue and matter."



The bench asked Additional Solicitor General K.M. Natraj, representing the Centre, to file a reply within 10 days. The apex court was hearing a PIL seeking directions to make pharmaceutical companies liable for giving freebies to doctors as incentive to prescribe their drugs. The plea said: "Petitioners seek enforcement of the fundamental right to health enshrined in the Right to Life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India in view of the ever-increasing instances of unethical marketing practices by Pharmaceutical Companies in their dealings with healthcare professionals resulting in prescription of excessive and/or irrational drugs and a push for high-

cost and/or over-priced brands, which are practices that directly affect citizens' health, violating their rights under Article 21 of Constitution." The plea argued that due to the voluntary nature of the existing code, unethical practices continue to increase and have also surfaced during the COVID-19 times.

THE PLEA

▶ THE PLEA CONTENDED THAT IT IS HIGH TIME THAT THE LACUNA IN ENSURING THE RIGHT TO HEALTH IS URGENTLY FILLED UP BY AN APPROPRIATE LEGISLATION. THE PLEA ADDED THAT THERE ARE ABUNDANT EXAMPLES THAT SHOW HOW CORRUPTION IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR ENDANGERS POSITIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES AND PUTS PATIENTS' HEALTH AT RISK.

▶ "AS VIOLATIONS OF THIS KIND HAVE BECOME A RECURRING PHENOMENON AND ARE PROGRESSIVELY BECOMING MORE PERVERSIVE, THE PETITIONERS PRAY THAT A STATUTORY CODE OF ETHICAL MARKETING FOR THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY, WITH PENAL CONSEQUENCES, BE ESTABLISHED TO CURB SUCH PRACTICES FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE OF INDIA," ADDED THE PLEA.

SCARE AS CREW-LESS SPEED-BOAT WITH WEAPONS DRIFTS ON MAHA SHORE

Raigad | Agencies

A crew-less Australian-couple owned speedboat with some sophisticated weapons -- adrift in the Arabian Sea for 52 days -- washed ashore at Harihareshwar Beach in Raigad coastal district, sounding alarm bells on Thursday, a day ahead of the crowded 'dahi-handi' celebrations.



The speedboat, named 'Ladyhaan' is owned by the Australian woman Hannah Lauderger and her husband James Horbert was sailing it.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that the speedboat was scheduled to sail from Oman to Europe.

On June 26, around 10 a.m., the speedboat suffered an engine failure and the crew called for help, and after 3 hours the same day, a Korean warship picked up the boat crew and dropped them off to Oman.

Owing to the rough seas, the couple could not arrange to tow the vessel and after remaining astray for nearly seven weeks, in the Arabian Sea waters, it finally landed up Harihareshwar Beach yesterday.

Fadnavis said that the

Raigad Police have recovered 3 AK-47 guns and some quantities of ammunition from the speedboat.

"The issue is being probed by the Raigad Police and Maharashtra Anti Terrorist Squad, and in view of past incidents, the police are put on high alert," said Fadnavis.

Various central agencies including the Indian Coast Guard have also been informed and further investigations are on.

The boat was first detected by some local fisherfolk at Harihareshwar Beach, around 200 km south of Mumbai, sending shockwaves in the state security setup.

The UAE-based Neptune P2P Group said on Thursday evening that it had provided private security to the vessel

'MY Ladyhan' in June, which was damaged during monsoon in the Arabian Sea and the Captain declared an emergency.

It is also not clear whether the purported Australian owners, plus another person whose identity or nationality is not known, had informed the Indian maritime, coast guard or naval authorities of their speedboat which remained adrift in the Arabian Sea for at least 52 days, posing a potential maritime hazard.

The Neptune P2P Group said while the crew was rescued, the yacht could not be salvaged due to the extreme weather conditions, and the vessel was presumed sunk till this morning the company learnt that it had washed ashore in India (Raigad).

National flag found 'lying on ground' at MP BJP headquarters

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A Tricolour was reportedly found lying on ground at Madhya Pradesh BJP headquarters in Bhopal. The incident came to fore after a journalist shared a video on social media in which he was seen picking up the Tricolour lying on ground at a garden inside the party office's premises.



The act of Sandeep Mishra, the journalist, was appreciated by people as well as politicians who praised him for showing his respect for the Tricolour, however, it did not go down well with some BJP office bearers in Bhopal.

Mishra, who is associated with Bhopal based news channel and covers political developments in the state, reached the party's headquarters on Tuesday. On entering, he noticed the national flag lying on ground at the garden located in front of the main gate, where Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had unfurled Tricolour on Independence Day. He noticed that one Tricolour was waving on flagpole, while another one was lying on the ground. The video that went viral on social media, Mishra was heard saying that

the Tricolour is lying on ground at the BJP office, the party that carried nationwide Har Ghar Tiranga campaign. "Now, the campaign is over and this Tricolour is lying here on ground at the party office," Mishra can be heard saying in the viral video. Mishra uploaded that video on his personal social media accounts. The opposition Congress found it as an opportunity to attack the BJP. Veteran Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh re-tweeted the video and thanked Mishra for his conduct. Some BJP office bearers, who were responsible to look after the daily affairs at the party office and failed to notice the national flag lying on ground for over 24 hours, accused the journalist of conspiring to defame the party.

India's first electric double-decker bus launched in Mumbai

The new electric double-decker bus will be the world's first - semi-low floor, air-conditioned, electric double-decker with wider door on rear overhang and a rear staircase.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, on Thursday inaugurated India's first AC double-decker electric bus in Mumbai.

Taking to his Twitter handle, Gadkari said, "Ushering Sustainable Revolution! It gives me immense pleasure to launch the Ashok Leyland's Electric Double-Decker Bus in Mumbai today."

The minister also said the initiative will give a dynamic boost to the sustainable transport sector.

"Giving Dynamic Boost to the sustainable transportation sector, such initiatives are cost-effective solutions & achieve PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat by cutting down oil imports and promoting indigenous resource & services," the minister said in another



tweet.

Gadkari added that the government's vision and policies are supportive towards EV adoption with growing consumer demand for greener solutions.

Manufactured by Switch Mobility Ltd (Switch), the electric double-decker has more capacity

and can carry nearly twice the number of seated passengers as compared to single-decker bus.

The electric bus has contemporary styling with feel-good interiors and exteriors. With wide front and rear doors, two staircases and an emergency door, the bus boats of the latest safety standards.

Centre blocks 8 YouTube channels for spreading disinformation

New Delhi: The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has blocked eight YouTube channels, seven Indian and one Pakistan based, for spreading disinformation related to the country's national security, foreign relations and public order.

The Ministry, utilizing the emergency powers under the IT Rules, 2021, had issued orders for blocking the eight YouTube news channels, one Facebook account, and two Facebook posts. The blocked YouTube channels had a cumulative viewership of over 114 crore, and were subscribed by over 85 lakh users. Analysis of content revealed that the purpose of the content published by some of these YouTube channels was to spread hatred among religious communities in India. False claims were made in various videos of the blocked channels and content was found to have the potential to create communal disharmony and disturb public order in the country. The channels were also used to post fake news on various subjects such as the Indian Armed Forces, Jammu and Kashmir, etc. The content was observed to be completely false and sensitive from the perspective of national security and India's friendly relations with foreign States. The content blocked by the Ministry was found to be detrimental to sovereignty and integrity of India, security of the State, India's friendly relations with foreign States, and public order in the country. Accordingly, the content was covered within the ambit of section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000.



GOVT REVIEWS WINDFALL GAINS TAX, CUTS CESS ON CRUDE OIL

New Delhi: Reviewing the windfall gains tax, the government slashed cess on crude oil late on Thursday, bringing it down from Rs 17,750 per tonne to Rs 13,000 per tonne. According to a Finance Ministry notification, export duty on aviation turbine fuel (ATF) has been hiked to Rs 2 per litre from zero. At the same time, a Rs 2 hike was effected on export duty on diesel to Rs 7 per litre from Rs 5 per litre. All these changes will come into effect from August 19. During the earlier review conducted a fortnight ago, export duties on jet fuel and petrol were scrapped by the government.

▶ UGC CHAIRMAN PROFESSOR M. JAGADESH KUMAR SAID THAT THE EXAMINATION WAS CONDUCTED FOR 1,45,885 CANDIDATES IN TWO SHIFTS ON WEDNESDAY. DUE TO SOME UNAVOIDABLE TECHNICAL REASONS, SHIFT 1 AND SHIFT 2 EXAMS WERE CANCELLED AT 13 CENTRES.

▶ OUT OF 1,45,885 CANDIDATES IN BOTH SHIFTS, UTTAR PRADESH HAD THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF CANDIDATES (44033), FOLLOWED BY DELHI WITH 25,131 STUDENTS.

▶ APART FROM WEDNESDAY, THE FOURTH PHASE OF THE CUET (UG) IS ALSO TO BE HELD ON THURSDAY AND FRIDAY. ADMIT CARDS WERE ISSUED TO THE CANDIDATES FOR THESE EXAMINATIONS LAST WEEK. A TOTAL OF 3.72 LAKH CANDIDATES WILL APPEAR FOR THE EXAM IN THE FOURTH PHASE. SO FAR AROUND 6.31 LAKH STUDENTS HAVE APPEARED FOR THE CUET (UG) EXAMINATIONS.

CUET Phase 4: 8,693 candidates affected as examinations at 13 centres cancelled

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The first and second shift examinations of the fourth phase of the CUET (UG) entrance test held on Wednesday were cancelled for 13 centres, affecting 8,693 candidates.

The new date for the examinations will be announced on Thursday. However, the proposed date for the examinations is August 25.

The examinations were conducted in one centre each in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Daman and Diu, Goa, Leh, Ladakh, Manipur, Mizoram, Puducherry and Tripura.

The entrance test was conducted across 245 cities, which even included remote cities like Navsari, Itanagar, Barpeta, Nalbari, Araria, Arrah, Begusarai, Bettiah, Bhabua, Buxar, Jammu, Samastipur, Bilaspur, Deoghar, Kargil, Leh, Morena, Behrampur, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Sri Ganganagar, Ballia, Basti, Chandauli, Ghazipur, Mau, Sonbhadra, Srinagar (Uttarakhand). Through the CUET (UG),



admissions will be given to undergraduate courses in a total of 91 universities, including all central universities in the country. These examinations are being conducted for admission to the first year. The first phase of CUET UG examinations started on July 15. These examinations will continue till August 30. According to the UGC chairman, most of the candidates have been given cities of their choice. Despite this, there are about 11,000 candidates who could

not be given the exam centre or city of their choice. Examinations of all such students have been scheduled for August 30. The candidates who could not appear in Phase 2 examinations held on August 4, 5, and 6 either due to technical reasons or due to cancellation of the examination centre will be allowed to appear in examinations to be held from August 24 to 30. The admit cards of these students will be issued on August 20.

Anti-CAA protests return to northeast

Team Absolute | Guwahati

The anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) agitations returned to the northeastern region after two years with influential North East Students' Organisations (NESO) staging protests across the capitals of northeastern states on Wednesday in support of various demands including scrapping of the contentious law.

In Assam, a protest meeting was held by the All Assam Students Union (AASU) against the CAA.

The AASU is one of the constituents of the NESO, an apex students' body of eight organisations in the northeastern region. NESO Advisor and AASU leader Samujjal Bhattacharya said that NESO staged peaceful protests at all the state capitals. The protest is also pertaining to issues related to floods, influx of migrants, complete scrapping of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, providing constitutional safeguards to the indigenous communities, the imposition of Inner Line Permit (ILP) to protect the indigenous people in all northeastern states and implementation of the Clause 6 of the Assam Accord, 1985. The anti CAA protests had first started in Assam, parts of West Bengal and other northeastern states in 2019 and continued for some time till 2020 before the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic.





TOP KAMTAPUR LIBERATION MOVEMENT LEADER SURRENDERS IN KOLKATA

Kolkata | Agencies

In a major development, Kailash Koch, the general secretary of underground separatist group Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), surrendered before the West Bengal police along with his wife and child on Thursday.

Koch arrived at the West Bengal police headquarters in Kolkata and surrendered before DGP Manoj Malviya, laying down his AK-47 rifle before him.

"This is a great day. Koch was an important leader of the Kamtapur liberation movement. He has voluntarily surrendered along with his wife. He has also submitted his AK-47 rifle," Malviya said.

KLO is a separatist group carrying out a movement for the formation of a separate Kamtapur state forked out of different districts in the northern



part of West Bengal, Assam and Bihar and even Jhapa district of Bhutan. Speaking to mediapersons, Koch said he decided to surrender because of the inspiration appeal of West

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. "I am really impressed by the development work undertaken by her (Banerjee's) government for the peo-

ple of the proposed Kamtapur region in West Bengal. I want to come back to the mainstream and hence I decided to surrender along with my wife," he said.

Koch also said that after treading the path of armed revolution for so many years, he has realised that armed movement is never a solution.

"So, I appeal to the other activists of KLO to surrender their arms and return to the mainstream," he said.

Koch added that more KLO activists will surrender their arms in the coming days.

The development is seen as a major setback for the KLO movement in West Bengal, especially at a time when KLO chief Jeevan Singh, through a recent video message from an undisclosed location, threatened of bloodbath if Chief Minister Banerjee ever steps in the proposed Kamtapur region in north Bengal.

Study files carefully before signing, Mamata tells Cabinet colleagues

Kolkata | Agencies

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during a Cabinet meeting on Thursday instructed all the ministers to carefully study all files before putting their signature.

In the meeting, she also issued a clear instruction to all ministers that no one can use the red beacon-fitted vehicles or pilot-cars even when they are on official duty, be it in the state capital, or in other districts.

Cabinet sources said that the chief minister was "extremely poised" while she issued these two instructions.

"She also said that she will not take the matter lightly if any minister is found violating her instruction about the use of red beacon-fitted or pilot cars," a senior member of the cabinet said on the condition of anonymity.

It has been learnt that in the cabinet meeting, the chief minister also said that all ministers should take their respective positions seriously. "The ministers should understand their sphere of responsibilities and take their assignment seriously," the chief minister was quoted as saying.

She also directed the cabinet ministers to update the ministers of state in their respec-



tive department about their assignments. It was learnt that at the meeting, the chief minister, specially emphasised that all cabinet ministers and ministers of states should be careful about maintaining a clean image. Political analysts feel that such words of caution from the chief minister have come in wake of the recent development concerning Partha Chatterjee, which has caused immense embarrassment for the party in general and hence the chief minister cautioned her cabinet colleagues in advance.

Cops still clueless on theft of 165 files from Tripura Police HQ

Agartala | Agencies

Even as Tripura's political circle has been rocked by the theft of 165 files from the high security Tripura Police headquarters here, the police are yet to get any clue about the motive behind the incident that happened on the intervening night of Monday-Tuesday.

The police have arrested five persons in connection with the incident. The stolen files mostly belong to the Crime Branch of the police. The Tripura Police headquarters is guarded by the elite Tripura State Rifles.

A senior police officer said the files meant for weeding, destruction of various illegal cultivation and installations and also some dormant files kept in an isolated cabin of police headquarters were stolen and damaged by miscreants on the intervening night of Monday-Tuesday.

"An FIR was lodged on Tuesday in West Agartala police station. Police immediately launched a probe and almost all the stolen files were recovered. Five persons involved in this crime have been arrested so far," officer-



in-charge of the Agartala police station Subrata Chakraborty told reporter. However, another senior police officer of the headquarters said that they are yet to know the exact reasons behind the "mysterious crime". "However, our probe is on to know the reason and intention of the theft. The security of the PHQ is being reviewed to prevent any recurrence in future and necessary action is being taken for security lapse," the official told reporter, refusing to be named.

K'TAKA: PVT SCHOOL ASKS STUDENTS TO REMOVE RAKHIS, PARENTS FUME

HYDERABAD | Agencies

Uttara Kannada : Parents as well as Hindu activists staged a protest against a private school in Uttara Kannada district on Thursday for reportedly asking students to remove rakhis tied during Raksha Bandhan.

The parents alleged that the management of Loyola School in Karwar told around 200 students to remove their rakhis. Later, Hindu organisations joined hands with the parents and staged a protest in front of the school.

The protesters demanded that the school management should apologise for its act of getting rakhis removed from the hands of the students. Further details are awaited.

Inter-state fake currency gang busted in Hyderabad

Hyderabad police on Thursday unearthed an inter-state fake currency circulation gang with the arrest of two persons.

The police seized fake Indian currency notes worth Rs 2.5 lakh. The Commissioner's Task Force, South Zone Team, Hyderabad along with Mirchowk Police apprehended two persons who were making, printing and circulating fake notes in Hyderabad and other cities.

P. Sai Chaitanya, Deputy Commissioner of Police, South Zone, told reporters that Syed Ansar, 27, a resident of Lathur district of Maharashtra and Shaik Imran, 33, a resident of Vattapally in Hyderabad.

Shaker, a resident of Hulsoor, Karnataka, is absconding. He is said to be the main source for fake currency. Seized currency notes were of Rs 100, Rs 200, Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 denominations. According to police, Shaker, who was running Xerox Centre at his native place. Further, hatched a plan to print



the fake currency notes to make easy money through illegal means. He procured all necessary equipment and started to print fake currency for further circulation.

Later, he shared his plan with his relative Syed Ansar and directed him to circulate the fake notes in the market. Shaker sold out the fake currency of 50,000 to Ansar for Rs 8,000. Ansar was re-selling the same to Shaik Imran in a ratio of Rs 15,000 (original) : Rs 50,000 (fake) for further circulation.

It is a blessing in disguise if few quit the party: Raj CM Gehlot

AHMEDABAD | Agencies

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who was in the state capital on Thursday, said he did not see any reason to worry if few leaders quit the party and join the BJP.

Addressing the mediapersons, he said, "It is a blessing in disguise if few leaders quit the party, new faces will get an opportunity to rise in the cadre."

He was reacting to the question of some Congress leaders and workers abandoning the party to join the BJP or others. In the last one decade at least 40 Congress leaders and sitting MLAs have quit the party and joined the BJP. A few of them were accommodated in the state government. In 2020-21, eight MLAs were renominated on the BJP symbol in bypolls and got elected to the Assembly.

Citing his personal experience, Gehlot said, "When Indira Gandhi was defeated in 1977, people used to say this party will never come

to power, then I was with the NSUI. Some quit the party, I did not because I believed in the party. See today I am the Chief Minister of a state today. If you believe in a party, stay loyal in bad times, time rewards you."

Gehlot launched the party's digital campaign and also flagged off rath yatras that will move across the state and collect people's views, which can help in making the district and state level manifestos of the party.

Speaking on the current lumpy virus situation, Gehlot said now it has spread in four to five states and considering the situation, "I demand that the Central government should declare it a national pandemic and give assistance to the state to handle the situation."

He cleverly avoided questions on pre or post alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party. He said he was confident that the party will perform better this time, because people are tired with inflation, privatisation of education and poor health and other infrastructure in the state.

MASKED MEN LOOT RS 6L FROM UP BIZMAN'S OFFICE

Prayagraj: Three masked men entered a businessman's office in Prayagraj in broad daylight, held him at gun point and looted Rs 6 lakhs. A 25-second CCTV footage of the robbery showed the three men with their faces covered barging into the office of the businessman, who deals in iron rods. One of the robbers, who was carrying a gun, pointed it at the businessman.

The robbers then started filling their bags with the cash. They searched the drawers under his table for cash. The businessman stood with his hands raised. Prayagraj police said in a statement that an FIR has been registered at Colonelganj police station and teams have been formed for speedy investigation of the case. Police said they are scanning the CCTV footage to identify the robbers.



Allow us to celebrate Eid Milad on lines of Ganesh festival in schools: K'taka Wakf Board

Bengaluru | Agencies

After the hijab row, the Karnataka education sector is all set for another crisis with the state Wakf Board demanding that the education department permit them to celebrate Eid Milad in schools like the Ganesh festival.

Education Minister B C Nagesh stated on Thursday that no religious function is allowed in schools. Such a permission has not been given so far and the demand of the Wakf Board will not be considered.

Nagesh said that the celebration of the Ganesh festival has not been introduced by the BJP government. The idols of Lord Ganesh have been kept in schools since the pre-independence period.

The Wakf Board under the



chairmanship of Shafi Saadi had demanded that the education department reserve a separate room in schools to perform namaz. Shafi Saadi demanded that, "there should be an opportunity for the celebration of festivals of our religion. Children belonging to all religions must have equal rights." "During the hijab crisis also we had clarified that misunderstandings must be allayed through creating awareness about religious matters. Like the Ganesh festival is celebrated, a room should be kept for the practise of Islam," he maintained.

Family planning is not a cruelty, says K'taka High court

Bengaluru | Agencies

In a major development, Karnataka High Court has observed that a husband asking his wife to pursue higher education and talking to his wife on when to have baby can not be considered as cruelty.

The bench headed by Justice H.B. Prabhakara Shastri on Wednesday also quashed charges alleging harassment by husband and mother-in-law levelled by his wife. The bench considered the petition of the accused husband and his mother seeking relief from the punishment given by the lower court.

The bench said that the couple are educated and have spoken to each other before marriage about their future. Therefore, a husband asking his wife to pursue her education and join the job can't be considered as cruelty.

The husband had spoken to wife about not having a baby for 3 years. But, the wife had alleged that her hus-



band's family tortured her for the matter of having the baby. The court observed that, in the larger interest of family, husband talking to his wife on when to have baby can't be considered as cruelty or torture.

The wife had also alleged that she was forced to learn Tamil language and to play shuttle and card games with her husband. The court has also stated that there is no wrong in asking the partner to learn language which is known to all in the family. The couple stayed in

America and the accused husband asked his wife to continue the education and find a good job there. He also told her that this would help the family.

The wife had lodged a dowry case against her husband and his mother and also alleged torture and cruelty. The lower court had accepted her petition and pronounced punishment. The Session's Court had also upheld the punishment order. Hence, the petitioner had approached the High Court seeking relief.

Mehbooba seeks all-party meet to oppose right to vote for non-locals

Srinagar | Agencies

Former chief minister and president of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday sought an all-party meeting to oppose and fight the decision to allow voting rights to non-locals in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing a press conference here, Mufti said that she has already spoken to Dr. Farooq Abdullah, head of People's alliance for Gupkar declaration (PAGD) and president of National Conference (NC) to convene an all-party meeting to decide on the future course of action to oppose and fight the decision announced by the election commission on Wednesday that anybody living ordinarily in J&K can vote here.

"It is time when we should focus on the Kashmir resolution more than elections as it has gone beyond elections now. "Our youth are being radicalised. Our brothers from the Kashmir Pandit community are being killed, police and security forces personnel are being killed, everybody is suffering," she said. She alleged that after the 2024 elections, the BJP will remove the country's constitution and also



replace the national flag. "All decisions being taken are in favour of the BJP and not the nation. BJP is not going to change the country into a Hindu Rashtra, but in a BJP Rashtra," she alleged.

She said voting rights for the non-locals is aimed at conducting fraud elections to allow the BJP to rule here. "They have understood that

after three years of rule in J&K, they couldn't break the resistance of the silent people. "The situation is not different for Muslims only, but for every community including Dogras and Pandits.

"Despite beating the drum for Kashmiri Pandits, the BJP failed to ensure their right to vote and the result is that Kashmiri Pandits have

now stopped voting. "Despite spending a hefty amount for deradicalization, the decisions being taken will certainly radicalize the youth. The government cannot change the ground reality, but it needs to resolve the issue once for all. "It is not about legality, but about the intentions behind allowing voting rights to non-locals," she said.



FESTIVAL SEASON POLITICS: BJP NEEDLES SHIV SENA IN THACKERAY JR'S BASTION

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

Apparently poking the Shiv Sena, the Bharatiya Janata Party has decided to hold its major 'dahi-handi' celebrations at the Jambori Maidan in Worli on Friday, which is a Sena stronghold and also the Assembly constituency of the Yuva Sena chief, Aditya Thackeray.



sarcastically, targeting its former ally.

Hitting back, Ahir said if they (Shelar and BJP) are so obsessed with Worli, then he should change the constituency and contest from Worli, and the people here will show them their level in the elections.

Aditya Thackeray said Worli has suddenly become the beloved of the BJP and they are welcome to organise their celebrations, but the people of the constituency know 'the traitors' and will teach them a lesson soon.

After Ahir's NGO Sankalp Pratishthan stopped organising dahi-handi at Jamboree Maidan in 2015, Sena MLA Sunil G. Shinde took over in 2019, but this year the BJP beat it in

securing permission for the ground.

MLA Shinde said that the Jambori Maidan was recently given a Rs 2.50 crore facelift from the funds sanctioned by Aditya Thackeray and former CM Uddhav Thackeray, to convert it into a sports centre.

Many locals were against the dahi-handi celebrations in Jambori Maidan as it could damage the new facilities added there, hence the Sena will organise its event at the neighbouring Worli Naka, he averred.

With the tag-line of 'We Are Determined', the BJP plans to organise more than 300 big and small dahi-handi bashes across Mumbai to counter the Sena's events and make

inroads into the latter's traditional political bases, ahead of the civic polls. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announced an insurance cover of Rs 10 lakhs for each 'Govinda', though the Sena has expressed doubts over how the belated scheme will be implemented.

Similarly, CM Shinde and his MP son Dr. Shrikant Shinde will be organising a series of dahi-handi events in Thane, while Sena MP Rajan Vichare will organise at Jambhali Naka in Thane city.

Usually linked with the Sena in Mumbai, the festivities will undergo a metamorphosis this year with BJP planning to aggressively organise human pyramid events in all wards of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, plus other major public venues, ahead of the civic polls.

The dahi-handi celebrations will be a trailer to the upcoming biggest public festival of Maharashtra, the 10-day Ganeshotsav -- another Sena speciality -- which will be celebrated with full vigour in 2022 after two years of the pandemic restrictions, between August 31-September 9).

This will be followed by the BJP-dominated nine-nights Navratri festival from September 26-October 5, with the political fireworks predicted to take place along with Diwali revelries in the last week of Oct.

Kolhapur Airport to get new terminal building with enhanced capacity



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Considering the tremendous passenger traffic growth at the Kolhapur airport, Airports Authority of India has undertaken the work for developing the airport for enhanced capacity. The development project includes construction of a new terminal building, strengthening of existing runway, extension of runway, construction of new apron and isolation bay.

Kolhapur Airport has been identified for regional connectivity operations under UDAN scheme and is presently connected to Hyderabad, Bangalore, Mumbai and Tirupati. Recently, the Airport Aerodrome license has been upgraded to 24X7 flight operations.

The new world-class terminal building of the airport will enhance the connectivity to this industrial city, boosting tourism industry of the region. The increased connectivity will not only create new employment opportunities for the local community but will also provide access to better educational and medical facilities. More than 60 per cent of the work for extension of terminal building is completed and the building will be ready by March 31 next year. A work of upgrading of the airside facilities is completed.

Apart from this, a new Air Traffic Control Tower is also being constructed to cater to future traffic growth. Parking area with capacity for 110 car,

10 buses are also part of the development activities.

The new terminal building is being constructed in an area of 4,000 sqm and will be able to process 300 passengers during peak hours. With 10 check-in counters the, terminal will be equipped with all modern passenger amenities. The building will be a Four-Star GRIHA rated energy efficient building with sustainability features. The interiors of the terminal building will reflect the art and culture of local culture & heritage. The big archways at the front facade of the new terminal building is influenced and derived from the commonly used arches in the heritage structures like Maharaja Palace, Bhavani Mandap, Panhala Fort of Kolhapur city.

Agnipath recruitment rally from Nov 22 to Dec 11 in Maha

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Ministry of Defence has announced the Agnipath recruitment scheme from November 22 to December 11 in Maharashtra.

Recruitment will be conducted for Agniveer General Duty (All Arms), Agniveer Technical, Agniveer Clerk/Store Keeper Technical/Inventory Management (All Arms), Agniveer Tradesman (10th Pass) (All Arms) and Agniveer Tradesman (All Arms) (8th Pass) (For Housekeeper and Mess Keeper) categories.

"This rally is applicable to candidates who are domiciles of five districts of Kolhapur, Satara, Sangli, Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri of Maharashtra State and North Goa and South Goa of Goa State," said the communique.

The venue will be Sports Ground, Shivaji University Kolhapur.

The main aim of the recruitment rally is to generate employment for the youth of Maharashtra and Goa, thereby giving them an opportunity to serve the motherland and lead a dignified life. Candidates are required to register and apply online on the Indian Army



website www.joinindianarmy.nic.in. The Admit Card of candidates for those who have successfully registered themselves online will be sent on their email IDs. Registration for Army Recruitment Rally in Kolhapur has opened from August 5 and will go on till September 3.

These candidates will be biometrically verified and Admit Cards for the rally will be scanned before allowing candidates to undergo an actual selection test which is in three phases -- Physical Tests, Medical Tests and Common Entrance Examination (written exam). Those candidates found physically and medically fit will undergo the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) on January 15, 2023.

Nitin Gadkari pitches for alternative fuels to reduce oil import, pollution

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday pitched for the use of alternative fuels for vehicles to reduce the import of crude oil as well as cut down on pollution.

As much as 35 per cent of the pollution in the country is due to diesel and petrol, Gadkari said, adding, "this is why we need import-substituting, cost-effective and pollution-free and indigenous products".

At the launch of the country's first electric double decker air-conditioned bus, the Minister for Road Transport and Highways said that electric automobiles are greatly cost effective when compared to diesel ones.

"In the Indian situation, import of crude oil is a big challenge. We are already experiencing the way rates



are increased. It is also very difficult for the common man..." he said.

According to him, it is time to start using alternative fuels like electricity, ethanol, methanol, bio-diesel, bio-CNG, bio-LNG and hydrogen for the

automobile sector. Further, he said the current size of the Indian automobile industry stands Rs 7.5 lakh crore and it has maximum employment potential besides giving maximum taxes to central and state gov-

ernments. "My dream is to make this industry Rs 15 lakh crore by the end of 2024, and this is possible," he said.

Switch Mobility, the electric vehicle division of Hinduja group's flagship Ashok Leyland, unveiled the country's first electric double-decker air-conditioned bus EV 22.

These buses, with a seating capacity of 65 passengers, will replace the existing double-decker fleet of the BEST (Brihanmumbai Electricity Supply and Transport) undertaking.

As of now, Switch is operating its twin-floor electric AC buses in the United Kingdom. Switch India has already secured an order of 200 electric double-decker buses from the BEST and it is looking at a dominant space in the electric double-decker segment across key regions in the country, the company said.



Raju Srivastava's condition serious, almost brain dead': Sunil Pal

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Star comedian Raju Srivastava's condition is serious and his brain has also stopped functioning, says fellow comedian Sunil Pal.

Raju Srivastava, 58, is admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi following a cardiac arrest on August 10. He collapsed while running on the treadmill in a gym in South Delhi and was

rushed to the hospital by his trainer and was reportedly given CPR. Comedian Sunil Pal shared a video talking about Raju Srivastava's condition and asked everyone to pray for him. He said in the video: "Please pray for Raju Srivastava.

He is going through a serious situation. Doctors also don't know what to do. Please pray. The brain has stopped working. Please pray. Raju bhai get well soon."

Raju Srivastava first appeared in small roles in Bollywood films such as the 1989 Salman Khan-starrer 'Maine Pyaar Kiya'. He then appeared in Shah Rukh Khan's 'Baazigar', which was released in 1993.

He made a name through the small screen after he became the second runner's up with the first season of 'The Great Indian Laughter Challenge' in 2005. He was also seen in 'Comedy Nights with Kapil'.

Sanjay Raut pleads not guilty in defamation case by BJP leader

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Jailed Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Thursday appeared before a magistrate in Mumbai through video conference in a defamation case filed by BJP leader Kirit Somaiya's wife Medha Somaiya and pleaded not guilty.

Raut is lodged at the Arthur Road jail in Mumbai following arrest by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case.

Earlier in the day, the Sewri metropolitan magistrate, hearing the defamation case filed by the BJP leader's wife, asked



the jail authorities to produce the Sena leader before the court through video conference at 12 noon.

Accordingly, Raut appeared before the magistrate and pleaded not guilty in the case, Medha Somaiya's lawyer Vivekanand Gupta said. The lawyer said the matter has been adjourned till September

19. Medha Somaiya in her complaint alleged that Raut had made baseless and completely defamatory allegations against her and her husband, accusing them of being involved in a scam worth 700 crore over the construction and maintenance of some public toilets under the jurisdiction of the Mira Bhayander Municipal Corporation in neighbouring Thane district.

She has urged the court to begin proceedings against Raut on the charges of defamation as defined under sections 499 and 500 of the Indian Penal Code.

Rupee falls 23 paise to close at 79.67 against US dollar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Indian rupee depreciated nearly 23 paise to close at 79.67 against US dollar following sell-off in global assets which followed in domestic equities and corporate outflows, dealers said.

At interbank foreign exchange market, rupee ended at 79.67, as against 79.44 close on the previous trading session against US dollar.

"It was largely range bound within the range of 79.58 to 79.70. Overall demand was there by importers and corporate outflows," said CR Forex, MD, Amit Pabari. By the closing of market trading hours, Brent crude oil prices were trading at \$94.83 a barrel in the international market.

The minutes of Fed's July policy showed Fed officials



find it appropriate to slow the pace of rate hikes at some point. While most members backed 75 bps rate hike in July, they expressed concerns on overtightening. Additionally, Fed members emphasised the need to gauge the impact of earlier rate hikes on inflation and economic activity. However, the minutes did

not give a clear insight to quantum of rate hike at September/upcoming meetings, the market revised its rate hike expectations for the September meeting. Meanwhile, Sensex ended 37.87 points or 0.06 per cent up at 60,298.00, and Nifty ended 12.25 points or 0.07 per cent higher at 17,956.50 on Thursday.

Indices erase losses, end marginally higher

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Benchmark indices have erased all its losses and ended marginally higher after the minutes of Federal Reserve's July meeting signalled a slowdown in the pace of future rate hikes.

At close on Thursday, Sensex ended 37.87 points or 0.06 per cent up at 60,298.00, while Nifty ended 12.25 points or 0.07 per cent higher at 17,956.50.

Kotak Mahindra Bank, Larsen & Toubro, Bharti Airtel and Ultratech Cement, among others, were the major gainers on the BSE. About 1,900 shares advanced, 1,494 shares declined, while 146 shares remained unchanged on Thursday.

BSE large-cap ended 0.11 per cent up, whereas small-cap and mid-cap closed 0.34 per cent and 0.42 per cent higher, respectively.

"Following the release of the Fed minutes, domestic equities experienced profit booking amid weak sentiment from global peers. The minutes showed that even while decision-makers were concerned about the impact of aggressive actions, they were in favour of raising rates further.



"In the domestic market, IT and pharma were the major laggards, responding to the fall in the US stocks, while financials maintained their support," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. The minutes of Fed's July policy showed Fed officials find it appropriate to slow the pace of rate hikes at some point. While most members backed 75 bps rate hike in July, they expressed concerns on overtightening. Additionally, Fed members emphasised the need to gauge the impact of earlier rate hikes on inflation and economic activity.

However, the minutes did not give a clear insight to the quantum of rate hike in September/upcoming meetings, the market revised its rate hike expectations for the September meeting.

Meanwhile, Asian stocks fell on Thursday. The Hang Seng Index sank 0.80 per cent while the Shanghai Composite Index shed 0.46 per cent.

Nifty made a double top compared to the previous session but ended marginally higher. Large volumes and range move mean that a lot of churning seems to be happening between sectors and stocks.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Women ministers of Nitish's cabinet

Even as Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's government is facing criticism over the criminal background of some of the newly sworn-in ministers, the decision to induct three women MLAs in the cabinet is being praised. Kumar's cabinet, which was expanded a few days ago, has three women ministers -- Anita Devi, Sheela Kumari Mandal and Leshi Singh. The RJD is being criticised over its quota of ministers having criminal background, but its sole woman minister does not have any criminal case against her. Anita Devi (50), RJD MLA from Nokha in Rohtas district has been elected for the second time in Bihar Vidhan Sabha. Devi, is said to be very close to former Chief Minister Rabri Devi. This was probably the reason why she managed to obtain a berth during the cabinet expansion of Nitish Kumar government and become OBC and EBC welfare minister of the state. Sheela Kumari Mandal, JD(U) was elected for the first time from the Phulparas Assembly constituency in Madhubani district in 2020 and Nitish Kumar given her the cabinet berth in his government. Mandal has a political background, her father-in-law, Dhanik Lal Mandal, was also an MLA from Phulparas and holds the constitutional post of Speaker in the Bihar Vidhan Sabha. In 1977, he became MoS Home in the Morarji Desai government. He was also the Governor of Haryana from 1990-95. Leshi Singh, JD(U), first became the MLA from Dhamdaha in 2000 after her murder of her husband, Madhusudan Singh alias Butan Singh. Butan was gunned down inside a district court in Purnea in 2000. After the murder of her husband, she actively participated in politics. She became an MLA for the fourth time in 2020 and second time entered the cabinet of Nitish Kumar government. Leshi Singh's name has come up in two murder cases.

An Indian Deficit: Why don't our historical characters inspire fiction?

Vikas Datta

"The whole Earth is the sepulchre of famous men..." once observed Athenian statesman Pericles, going on to stress that their story is not engraved only on stone, "but lives on far away." The ancient Greek leader may not have known it but his sentiment finds suitable reflection in the domain of historical fiction, particularly the variant which focuses on or draws in real-life notables from various ages. And while, for Rowan Atkinson fans, the serial "Blackadder", in its various manifestations across four seasons, is a prime example, it pales before what you can find in the realm of books.

Dipping into the genre, you can find Roman emperors, Mongol conquerors, Persian poets, Spanish conquistadors, Soviet statesmen, American gangsters, Nazi leaders, philosophers, scientists, revolutionaries of all stripes, and a wide array of many others in human history's colourful tapestry, in all their glory or notoriety. The accuracy and veracity of their depiction may differ, depending on the amount of research done by the author and the intention.

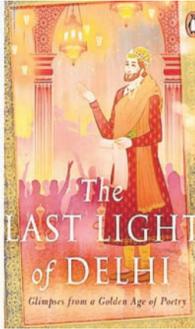
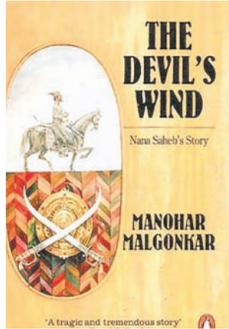
Let us see what this strand of historical fiction is about, some prominent personages it features, and some examples before coming to see how it plays out in the Indian context.

The use of historical domain characters has been a staple of literature, right down from the age of epics and folklore, but for the form we are generally concerned with, it had to wait till the development of the novel, and the pioneering efforts of writers such as Sir Walter Scott ("Ivanhoe"), Alexandre Dumas ("The Three Musketeers"), and many others.

All historical fiction, however, does not have real-life historical characters, or might just reference them, or in a rather interesting variant, a supporting character, whose identity remains oblique in the story, may turn out to be a historical character or would be one subsequently.

Of this last, a prime example includes French author Paul Feval's "Vampire City" (1875, though serialised in 1867, a quarter century before Bram Stoker's "Dracula" would set the rules for the undead). It has a mysterious Englishman saviour who turns out to be a leading soldier-statesman from earlier that century.

As far as actual depiction goes, any interested reader would be spoilt for choice. Figures such as Alexander "the Great", Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Adolf Hitler (and his entourage), Stalin, William Shakespeare, Michaelangelo, Dr Sigmund Freud, and Che



Guevara are among those who figure regularly. Even the likes of Gamal Abdel Nasser, Yuri Andropov, and Marilyn Monroe can be found in some works. Strangely, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin does not figure as much as he should -- given the potential of someone whose main forte was polemical writings and sharp politics, as one episode of the pre-WWI political drama "Fall of Eagles" (where he was portrayed by Patrick Stewart) shows.

There are a lot of ensemble works too, and very well researched.

Fancy the American West, full of cowboys and fights between the US cavalry and the "Red Indians" (as they were then called)? Then take Thomas Berger's "Little Big Man" (1964) (and its 1999 sequel), where the "hero", 111-year-old Jack Crabb, a white man raised by Native Indians, recounts his exploits travelling across the Wild West, and crossing ways with the likes of Wild Bill Hickok, Wyatt Earp, Buffalo Bill, and George Armstrong Custer.

Less politically correct is the Flashman series, or author George MacDonald Fraser's tongue-in-cheek look at the entire Victorian age, where the caddish and cowardly anti-hero (drawn from "Tom Brown's School Days") takes part in the First Afghan War ("Flashman", 1969), the first Anglo-Sikh War ("Flashman and the Mountain of Light", 1990), the Opium War, the Crimean War (including the Charge of the Light Brigade), the 1857 rebellion/war of Independence ("Flashman and the Great Game", 1975), and the like. In the course of this overly active life, he goes on to meet Queen Victoria, Prince Otto von Bismarck, the Duke of Wellington, Florence Nightingale, Maharani of Punjab Jindan Kaur and Maharaja Duleep Singh, Rani Lakshmbai, the (future J&K Maharaja) Gulab Singh, Abraham Lincoln, Geronimo, Crazy Horse, General (and later US President) Ulysses Grant, Rajah James Brooke of Sarawak, and several other notables -- though his outlook on most of these is rather jaundiced. Even Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson

appear in unnamed cameos.

Then, there is Max Allan Collins' Nathan Heller series, where our Chicago-based policeman-turned private detective takes a look at some prominent unsolved US crimes from the 1930s onwards, including the assassination attempt on President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the disappearance of pioneering Amelia Earhart, the kidnapping and murder of Charles Lindbergh's baby, the death of Marilyn Monroe, the conspiracy to kill John F. Kennedy, and so on. Apart from all these personages, there are Mafia figures such as Al Capone, and Frank Nitti, actors like Frank Sinatra and Ava Gardner, real-life lawmakers like Elliot Ness and Frank Wilson, and many more.

Philip Kerr's Bernie Gunther series about a Berlin police detective, who leaves the force, soon after the Nazi takeover but is drawn back to working for them, features a large number of top Nazis, including Herman Goering, Heinrich Himmler, Josef Goebbels (whom we learn was derisively called 'Mahatma Propagandhi'), Reinhard Heydrich and Adolf Eichmann, among others.

There are many more, spanning space and time of recorded human history, for readers, but let's now turn to the Indian subcontinent.

Here, we find the oeuvre is rather sparse, despite the richness available across the many millennia of significant history and culture.

As noted above, several British and American writers have focussed on India and its notable historical characters -- apart from Flashman's three Indian forays in the mid-19th century, the Mughals are dealt with Alex Rutherford (actually the team of Diana Preston and her husband Michael Preston) in their six-part series spanning "Raiders from the North" (2009) to "Traitors in the Shadows" (2015).

How about Indian writers?

There are many who have written splendid historical fiction, from the late Khushwant Singh,

who paid a paean to his city with "Delhi: A Novel" (1990) which covers the city's bloody history from the Slave Dynasty to the shameful 1984 anti-Sikh riots, via the Mughal, British and Partition and post-Partition periods through some historical and fictional characters, to Madhulika Liddle's "The Garden of Heaven: A Novel" (2021), which concentrates on two eventful centuries for Delhi, spanning from the fall of Prithviraj Chauhan to the coming of Timur.

Yet, the sort of historical domain characters featuring in works as noted are painfully less.

One author who made an effort was Manohar Malgonkar who began his literary career with "The Sea Hawk: Life and Battles of Kanhoji Angrey" (1959). This is a stirring and evocative account of the talented Maratha sailor who fought and defeated various Europeans on the maritime domain where they were perceived as stronger in the early 18th century and deftly capturing the milieu he operated in, and the notable personalities of the time.

Malgonkar also went on to write "The Devil's Wind" (1972), told from the perspective of Nana Sahab Peshwa, one of the key figures of 1857, and besides giving some unforgettable views of his compatriots (Rani Lakshmbai, chiefly) and enemies, offers his take on episodes like the Satichaura and Bibighar massacres of the British in Kanpur, his dealings with the Scindia ruler (much more nuanced and credible than what we usually see), and his fate.

Bhagwan S. Gidwani's "The Sword of Tipu Sultan" (c 1970s) is a valuable look at the life and times of a key ruler with a contested heritage.

A.K. Sreekumar's "The Begum's Secret" (2011) is set in nawabi Avadh -- another untapped area -- but only briefly features the ruler of the time, Asaf-ud-Daula, whose magnificent constructions still define Lucknow.

Then, there is Arjun Raj Gained, whose second Maharaja Sikandar Singh whodunnit, "Death at the Durbar" (2018), has incisive portraits of an array of Indian Maharajas of the early 20th century, from the haughty yet miserly Nizam to the strapping yet capricious Maharaja of Patiala, and the thoughtful ruler of Baroda.

There are some more dealing with Shivaji and his son, the first six Mughals, but a lot of key epochs and their personalities still go unrepresented -- the research needed and the reverence expected being the major hurdles. The need is for absorbing stories, not pious hagiographies.

international

RUSSIA RECRUITING PRISONERS TO FIGHT IN UKRAINE WAR: ACTIVISTS

Moscow | Agencies

Russia is recruiting prisoners to fight in Moscow's continued war on Ukraine, according to human rights activists. Suspects and defendants are being recruited with the promise that in exchange, the authorities will drop criminal proceedings, Olga Romanova, a Russian civil rights activist based in Berlin, said in a Facebook post, citing examples from pre-trial detention centres in the Moscow area. "But I think it has started everywhere," said Romanova, a specialist on prisoners' rights in Russia. Moscow depends on volunteers as general conscription has not been introduced to fill the ranks of its armed forces fighting in Ukraine, in the invasion that began on February 24, reports



news agency. The fact that in many areas, officials are posting street advertisements for people to fight in the war may indicate a shortage of personnel at the front. Cities and regions are currently forming their own battalions. In the Russian judicial sys-

tem, almost all indictments end in a guilty verdict, meaning suspects and defendants appear to be given the choice between going to war or going to prison. The founder of Gulaga.net, a project created to combat violence in Russian prisons,

Vladimir Ossetschkin, confirmed the recruitment practices in prisons from France, where he is living in exile. He said there were indications of the practice from St. Petersburg, Ryazan, Tver and Bryansk. Russian media have been reporting on the search for volunteers in the nation's many penal camps since July, according to Meduza website, which said Wagner mercenary group was recruiting convicts. Yevgeny Prigozhin, a wanted Kremlin businessman and backer of Wagner, personally recruited volunteers in prison camps, Media reported. The prisoners were said to have been promised monthly pay of 100,000 roubles (\$1,625) along with bonuses, payments to their families in the event of death, and an amnesty.

21 KILLED IN KABUL MOSQUE BLAST

Kabul: Police in Kabul confirmed on Thursday that 21 people were killed and 33 others injured in a blast that targeted worshippers at a mosque in the Afghan capital the previous day. "The blast took place during the evening prayers inside the mosque in Police District 17, leaving 21 dead and 33 others injured at the spot," Khalid Zadran the Kabul police spokesman, told reporters. Witnesses heard a powerful explosion which shattered windowpanes of the nearby buildings, reports news agency. No one has so far claimed responsibility for the deadly incident. The blast came a few days after a prominent pro-Taliban cleric was killed in a suicide bomb blast in Kabul. The Islamic State terror group had claimed responsibility for the earlier attack.

CHINA WANTS MILITARY POSTS IN PAKISTAN TO SAFEGUARD ITS INVESTMENTS

New Delhi | Agencies

As part of its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, China has made significant investments in the conflict-prone Pakistan-Afghanistan region. China is planning to protect its interests in the two Asian countries by stationing its own forces in specially designed outposts, according to top diplomatic sources. China has made significant investments in Pakistan and Afghanistan to further its goal of expanding its influence in the region. China is a major source of financial, military and diplomatic support for Pakistan, and according to some estimates, the Chinese investments have exceeded \$60 billion. Given the huge imbalance of power in its favour, China started putting pressure on Pakistan to allow the construction of posts where it would station its armed personnel. However, Afghanistan, where the Taliban is currently in power, still has to meet the expectations of China and Pakistan on many counts. Top diplomatic and security officials in



Islamabad, who requested anonymity for this report, are convinced that China's People's Liberation Army is working at a war scale to establish military posts in Pakistan and Afghanistan to support its operations and expansion of its Belt and Road Initiative. A diplomatic source claims that Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong discussed the issue in a meeting with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, Army and leaders of its Prime Minister's Office.

ISRAEL, TURKEY AGREE TO RESTORE FULL DIPLOMATIC TIES

Tel Aviv/Ankara | Agencies

Israel and Turkey want to fully resume diplomatic relations, leaders from both countries said on in a historic step that followed a visit by the Israeli Prime Minister to Turkey. Both countries have decided to reinstate Ambassadors and Consuls General, news agency quoted the office of Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid as saying on Wednesday. The step came after Lapid's visit to Ankara in June and talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the official statement said. "The resumption of relations with Turkey is an important asset for regional stability and very important economic news for the citizens of Israel" Lapid was quoted as saying in the statement. Israel's standing will be further strengthened worldwide, he added. The restoration of diplomatic relations is a continuation of the positive direction in the development of relations over the past year, since President Isaac Herzog's

diplomatic visit to Ankara, and the reciprocal visits of the Foreign Ministers to Jerusalem and Ankara, the statement said. Herzog was the first Israeli President to travel to Turkey in May in 10 years. "We, as Turkey, have too decided to appoint an ambassador to Israel, Tel Aviv," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told reporters on Wednesday in Ankara, calling the move a "positive step" "The official process of re-appointing envoys will start in the coming days, Cavusoglu said, adding Ankara "will continue to defend the rights of Palestine, Jerusalem and Gaza" through direct contact with Israel via its new Ambassador. Turkey and Israel, once close allies, fell out in 2010 after 10 Turkish citizens were killed when the Israeli navy stormed a Gaza solidarity ship. There was an initial rapprochement in 2016 but since the 2018 Gaza crisis, which escalated around the opening of the US Embassy in Jerusalem, the two countries have not had Ambassador.

Ukraine plans to attack Zaporozhye nuclear power plant on Friday: Russia

Moscow | Agencies

Ukraine plans to carry out artillery strikes on the Russia-controlled Zaporozhye nuclear power plant on Friday, and then accuse Russia of causing a disaster at the site, the Russian Defence Ministry said on Thursday, as per a media report. The predicted attack will be timed to coincide with the ongoing visit to Ukraine by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, the ministry claimed. The Russian ministry said it has detected movements of Ukrainian troops, indicating a looming 'provocation.' Kiev has deployed units trained in responding to the use of weapons of mass destruction, pre-positioning them to report a radiation leak and demonstrate a purported action to mitigate it, Russian military spokesman Igor Konashenkov said. Reported. The

ministry said it expects a Ukrainian artillery unit to attack the plant on Friday from the city of Nikopol. "The blame for the consequences (of the strike) will be attributed to the Russian armed forces," the statement said. In a separate statement on Thursday, Igor Kirillov, who heads Russia's Nuclear Biological and Chemical Defense Troops, said his directorate has modelled possible scenarios for a disaster at the Zaporozhye plant. A plume of radioactive materials from the site may reach Poland, Slovakia and Germany, he warned. Russia has accused Ukraine of conducting frequent drone and artillery strikes against the nuclear power plant in the city of Enerгодар over the past few weeks. Kiev has denied responsibility and said Russian forces were attacking the plant to discredit Ukraine. Ukrainian officials have also claimed that Russia is using the

Zaporozhye facility as a military base.

6. Spanish wildfires under control amid rain

Madrid: Long-awaited rains have aided emergency workers in subduing raging wildfires in the eastern Spanish province of Valencia, authorities said on Thursday. Spanish emergency services tweeted on Thursday that the spread of the fire has been arrested and that the flames could be extinguished in many areas, reports news agency. Two wildfires in the Bejis region in the north, and in Vall d'Ebro in the south of Valencia have ravaged an area of around 21,000 hectares of land. On Wednesday, the fires in Bejis region a train to stop. Several passengers panicked and jumped out of the train, with five suffering significant burns, before the train backed out of the blazes and returned to its station of origin

. Some 2,000 people were evacuated from their homes amid the fires, of which some are now able to return, Spanish newspaper La Vanguardia and national television broadcaster reported. 2022 has been the worst year for forest fires since records began, with hundreds of wildfires throughout the summer destroying swathes of the countryside. Forest fires have erupted across Europe amid dry conditions throughout the summer. In Portugal, a forest fire around 80 km north of Lisbon has also been brought under control by around 500 emergency workers, according to Portuguese news agency Lusa. Experts estimate climate change to be a major factor in the increasing number of wildfires. Climate change causes higher temperatures, which in turn leads to the dry conditions that allow fires to erupt and spread more easily and more quickly.

16 DEAD, 36 MISSING AFTER FLASH FLOODING IN CHINA

Beijing: At least 16 people have died and 36 others were reported missing after a flash flood in north-western China, state media said on Thursday. The flash floods occurred on Wednesday evening in the mountains in Datong county near the city of Xining in Qinghai province, after heavy rainfall, reports news agency citing state media. The downpours triggered landslides that blocked and diverted rivers, affecting more than 6,000 people in two townships and six villages, the report said. The authorities mobilized around 2,000 rescue workers, including police officers, paramilitary units, emergency services and government officials, for recovery efforts. Qinghai province has declared the second-highest alert level in its four-tier emergency and disaster response system, state media reported.



TO REACH HOSPITAL FOR DELIVERY, PREGNANT WOMAN CROSSES RIVER ON RUBBER TUBE

▶ A PREGNANT WOMAN WAS TIED TO A RUBBER TUBE TO CROSS A RIVER TO REACH A HOSPITAL IN HARDA DISTRICT. A VIDEO OF THE INCIDENT SURFACED ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA.

▶ THIS HAPPENED THREE DAYS AFTER THE BODY OF A DECEASED PERSON WAS FLOATED ON A RUBBER TUBE DUE TO THE ABSENCE OF THE CONNECTING BRIDGE OVER A RIVER IN ANUPPUR DISTRICT.



The nine months pregnant woman, who lives in a remote village, had to reach a hospital as her labour pains began. The family members had no option but to put the life of the woman at risk to cross the river.

Due to heavy rain, road connectivity from the village was disrupted and the van to take the woman to a hospital was stuck on the other side of the river. The family members somehow managed to take the woman across

the river on a rubber tube. From there she was taken to a hospital in an ambulance.

Later, the woman delivered a boy and as per the doctors in Harda district hospital, both the mother and child are healthy. District health officer H. P. Singh said the woman was first made to sit on a tube and cross the river. Thereafter, a 108 ambulance brought her to Harda. Here the woman gave birth to a son in the hospital.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A pregnant woman was tied to a rubber tube to cross a river to reach a hospital in Harda district. A video of the incident surfaced on the social media.

GIRIRAJ SINGH IN KAMAL NATH'S HOME TURF



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Senior BJP leader and Union Minister Giriraj Singh on Thursday was on a tour of Chhindwara, the stronghold of former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and state Congress chief Kamal Nath.

The BJP's central leadership has appointed Singh as in-charge of Chhindwara, and he is on a three-day tour of the district, as part of the BJP's strategy to make inroads in Kamal Nath's bastion. Sources in MP BJP told IANS that Singh will be meeting with the party's cadre and chalk out plans to take on Kamal Nath.

Singh reached Chhindwara on Wednesday via Nagpur. He visited the Jamsavali temple and recited Hanuman Chalisa along with MP minister Kamal Patel and other party workers. "Singh is in Chhindwara for three days. He will tour the district to

meet the people. He will also hold meetings with the local party workers," said a BJP leader in Madhya Pradesh.

Chhindwara is the only district in Madhya Pradesh where the Congress won all eight Assembly seats in 2018 and Kamal Nath's son Nakul Nath is an MP from Chhindwara. Before his son's win, Kamal Nath won the Chhindwara Lok Sabha seat nine times. In Madhya Pradesh, like Gwalior-Chambal is considered a stronghold of Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, Raghogargh of veteran Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh, Chhindwara is the home turf of Kamal Nath.

Sources said that Giriraj Singh has been tasked to encourage the BJP cadre in Chhindwara and to weaken Kamal Nath. It is also the BJP's plan to attack Congress's stronghold area to counter Gwalior's loss in the Mayoral post. However, the Congress leaders said Giriraj Singh will not make any impact in Chhindwara. "We are not worried about Giriraj Singh's visit to Chhindwara. People know what kind of politician he is. He will try to disrupt the communal harmony, for what he is popularly known," said KK Mishra, MP Congress media head. It is not the first time when the BJP has appointed its strong leaders to take on Kamal Nath, especially in his home district Chhindwara. The other BJP leaders, who were earlier appointed as in-charge of Chhindwara were Uma Bharti, Kailash Vijayvargiya, Prakash Javadekar, Kailash Soni and Swatantra Dev Singh, however, except for Uma Bharti the rest could not make any impact there.

PLEDGE OF SADBHAVNA DIWAS ADMINISTERED IN MANTRALAYA



Bhopal: Medical Education Minister Vishwas Kailash Sarang administered the pledge of Sadbhavna Diwas at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Park, Mantralaya. Everyone took a pledge that they would work for the emotional unity and goodwill of the people of India without any discrimination of caste, sect, region, religion or language. All differences will be resolved through dialogue and constitutional means without resorting to violence.

Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Additional Chief Secretary Shailendra Singh, Additional Chief Secretary Vinod Kumar, Principal Secretary Neeraj Mandloi, Principal Secretary Sanjeev Kumar Jha along with officers and employees of Mantralaya, Satpura and Vindhya Bhawan were present.

Better implementation of schemes possible with factual and accurate data: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that if factual and accurate data of economic activities is available, it can make better implementation of schemes possible. In this era of change, if accurate data is not available, the policy will also not be good. From the formulation of the plans to the implementation, the responsibility depends on the data itself. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan was addressing the concluding session of training-cum-workshop on calculation and methodology for preparing estimates of GDP of Madhya Pradesh at Kushabhau Thackeray Auditorium.

Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country where State Statistical Commission is being constituted on the basis of the recommendation of the Task Force Committee. Decision has been taken for complete computerization at the state and district level. This will make it easier to work. Statistical cell has been created for standardization



of data. Goals will have to be fixed to take the country and the state forward. We cannot progress much without setting a big goal.

Chouhan said that data is also the basis of our daily life activities. No work can be done in any area without data. The present century is dependent on data. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has emphasized on data for the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. The data should be pure and reliable, so that the plans are good and their benefits reach the bottom-most person. He said that such training would continue.

arrangements will be made for data collection. There should be no interference from other agencies for the reliability of the data. The data should be useful and actual. If the data is incorrect, then the conclusions will also be incorrect. We need actual data.

Chouhan said that the contribution of \$ 550 billion will be given by the state in making India's 5 trillion economy. He said that what a man thinks and does, so he becomes. So it has been decided to set this ambitious target. He said that such training would continue.

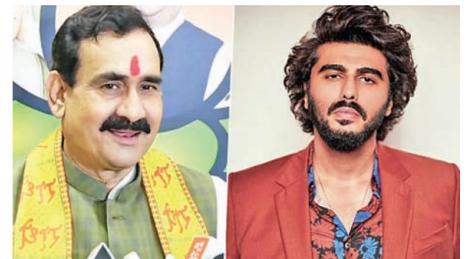
'Flop actor,' Home Minister reacts to Arjun Kapoor's statement on boycotts

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Arjun Kapoor recently spoke out against the boycott trend that seems to have plagued almost every Bollywood film of late. His comments have irked the Home Minister of Madhya Pradesh Narottam Mishra, who called the Bollywood personality a "flop actor."

During a press event, the footage of which he also shared on his Twitter, Mishra said: "Instead of threatening people, Arjun Kapoor should rather focus on his acting." "Actors targeting Hinduism in their films and supporters of the Tukde-Tukde gang should not try to threaten the public," he added.

Earlier, in an interview with 'Bollywood Hungama', Arjun Kapoor had said, "I think we made a mistake by being silent for so long. Our decency was taken as our weakness. We always believe in let the work speak for itself, all this



doesn't matter." He also mentioned that the film industry needs to come together and get to the root cause of the issue.

Talking about the cancel culture on social media affecting Bollywood, Arjun Kapoor added: "We tolerated a little too much. Now people are used to it." Post his comments around the boycott trend, Arjun, who was recently seen in 'Ek Villain Returns', is being brutally trolled online. The boycott trend, of late, seems to have affected

Bollywood. While a huge negative campaign ran against Aamir Khan's 'Laal Singh Chaddha' over the film's lead actor's 2015 remark around growing intolerance, Akshay Kumar's 'Raksha Bandhan' too faced the boycott heat as trolls dug out the film's writer Kanika Dhillon's tweets.

In addition, boycott 'Vikram Vedha' also trended on social media because the film's lead actor Hrithik Roshan supported 'Laal Singh Chaddha'.

Biggest Rakshabandhan festival of the country begins

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Medical Education Minister Vishwas Kailash Sarang on Thursday inaugurated the country's biggest 'Narela Rakshabandhan Festival' from Chhola Dussehra ground. After this Raksha Bandhan festival was also held at Subhash Phatak Sports Ground and Rajendra Nagar. About 27 thousand 300 sisters tied raksha sutra to the minister Sarang.

Minister Sarang said that Narela region is not the assembly but it is my family. Rakshabandhan festival is the grand festival of Narela assembly. Every year, more than 70 thousand sisters tie Raksha sutra to give their love and blessings. This festival is an indelible example of Sanatan Sanskrit. He said that the

Rakshabandhan festival could not be held for the last two years due to Corona. This time this festival is being celebrated again as a grand ceremony with gaiety and enthusiasm. Example of patriotism and unbroken relationship between brother and sister seen in 'Tiranga Rakhi'. Sisters of Narela Vidhan Sabha also tied 'Tiranga Rakhi' to Minister Sarang during Raksha Bandhan festival. This unique Rakhi adorned in three colours was prepared by the sisters themselves. Apart from this, pictures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Rakhi made of flowers were also the centre of attraction. Minister Sarang presented purse and aarti collection to all the sisters as gift. Also, arrangements were made for the meal for the sisters.

VETERAN SCRIBE MAHENDRA SETHIA PASSES AWAY



Bhopal: Senior journalist of Hindi journalism, Mahendra Sethia died on Thursday. His health was deteriorating since few weeks. He was passionately attached with movie related articles. His last rites will be held Regional park crematorium at Pipalyapala.

CM PLANTS SAPPLINGS IN VIRTUOUS REMEMBRANCE OF BADE GURUDEV

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Shami saplings in Chinar Park on the 37th virtuous remembrance of Bade Gurudev Shri Bal Govind Ji Shandilya Maharaj, the Pitru-purush (ancestor) of Karunadham Ashram. Before planting saplings, Chouhan garlanded the picture of Bal Govind Shandilya Maharaj and paid floral tribute. On this occasion, the Peethadheeshwar Gurudev of Karunadham Ashram, Sudesh Shandilya Maharaj and Guru Mata Mamta Shandilya were present. Devotees associated with the ashram participated in the plantation.

Chouhan, while remembering Param Pujya Brahmalin Bade Gurudev Bal Govind Shandilya Maharaj, said that as a result of his imagination, Karunadham Ashram was able to take shape and according to his intention, service projects are continuing here. The projects of human service are commendable and exemplary, embodying the spirit of Nar Seva-Narayan Seva (service to man is service to God) along with worship-ritual of the Maa. Referring to the lack of ego and tendency of constant self-analysis of the personality of Brahmalin Gurudev Bal Govind Shandilya, CM Chouhan said that he used to deal with the friend



and foe with same feeling and accepted the happiness and sorrow with similar calmness. Saplings planted in memory of his virtuous remembrance will become a medium for the welfare of many living beings. Chouhan said that planting saplings is a means of giving life to many creatures. This is the best effort in the direction of keeping the earth safe for the coming generations. Therefore, remembering the Bade Gurudev 1008 Bal Govind ji Shandilya by means of tree-planting is the best effort. Chouhan inspired everyone to plant saplings. Shami planted in the memory of Bal Govind

Shandilya Maharaj is considered very beneficial from the point of view of Ayurveda. Also, the use of samidhas of Shami tree in yagyas is considered auspicious. Devotees associated with Karunadham Ashram also planted saplings in Chinar Park.

Meanwhile, Chouhan also planted Banyan, Moulshree and Harsingar saplings in Smart City City Park on Thursday. Praveen Gupta, Varun Gupta, Rupesh Gupta, Vandana Gupta, Gunjeshwari Gupta, Pranjal, Kumari Suvigya and Manish Ramanani of Tejas Jan-Kalyan Samiti participated in the plantation.

Tejas Jan-Kalyan Samiti has been working for social service and social harmony for last 6 years. Every year the organisation holds a grand ceremony of Govardhan Puja at the Chhola Dussehra Maidan. Necessary educational assistance is provided by the institution to the needy children. The organisation conducts tree plantation and cleanliness awareness programmes continuously.

The banyan planted today has religious and medicinal importance. According to Ayurveda, many diseases can be treated with the help of Banyan leaves, bark etc. Moulshree is also a medicinal tree. It has been used in Ayurveda for centuries. Harsingar is an excellent medicinal plant.

MAYOR CONSTITUTES MIC

Bhopal: The much awaited Mayor in Council for the Bhopal Municipal Corporation was announced on Thursday. Mayor Malti Rai constituted Mayor in Council using her powers under article 37 of MP Municipal Corporation Act 1956. The ten member Council constituted by the mayor include Ravindra Yati, Rajesh Hingorani, Sushma Bavisa (SC Women), Ashok Vani, Anand Agarwal, Chhaya Thakur, Jitendra Shukla, RK Singh Baghel, Manoj Rathore (OBC) and Jagdish Yadav (OBC).

SHIVRAJ CHOUHAN'S EXIT FROM BJP PANEL FUELS "CLEAR SIGN" THEORY

Congress says exclusion from BJP Parliamentary Board shows party "not in mood to keep him in key posts" ahead of 2023 state polls; BJP says "no worry"

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was excluded from the BJP's top decision-making body, Madhya Pradesh's political circles are drawing a straight line between his exit and the state elections due next year.

"We used to think that he will move to the Centre after 2023 but now the party is not in a mood to keep him in key positions," said Congress's Govind Singh, Leader of Opposition in the assembly.

State BJP leaders have said there isn't anything to worry about for him. "Is there any other chief minister on the BJP Parliamentary Board? No. He would have something to worry about if there was any other CM included," said BJP spokesperson Divya Gupta.

The Congress alleging that the state government

is corrupt hence shaky insists the exclusion is "a clear sign to Shivraj Chouhan from the top." "There are many leaders in BJP who feel they can replace him now," said Govind Singh, "Let's wait and watch."

Chouhan, a prominent face from among the Other Backward Classes (OBC), and the longest serving BJP chief minister of any state with 15 years in the chair, hasn't said anything beyond congratulating the new board.

One of two leaders who have lost their place on the party board the other is Union Minister Nitin Gadkari Shivraj Chouhan was once posited as a contender against Narendra Modi in the race to be BJP's PM candidate ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. At a BJP meet in 2012, when LK Advani praised Chouhan's work, it was seen as an attempt to downplay Modi, who was the chief minister of Gujarat at

the time. In 2013, Modi and Chouhan were together inducted to the board. In the latest shuffle, its members have gone up from seven to 11, with six new faces. PM Modi, senior ministers Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh, and Organisation Secretary BL Santhosh are the constants, besides party chief JP Nadda.

The new members include Satyanarayan Jatiya from Madhya Pradesh. "This change in the parliamentary board is rotation in the party," he said to media persons, "I appreciate his (Shivraj Chouhan's) work. He will be used elsewhere. The party works constantly."

In 2005, When Shivraj Chouhan was deputed full-time to Madhya Pradesh politics, he had replaced Jatiya as president of the state unit. He became chief minister later that year and - barring 15 months of a

Congress government - has been in the chair since.

"The party gives different responsibilities to everyone at different times," said BJP MLA Ganesh Singh. "He should spend his time in Madhya Pradesh - I think party has taken this decision with that idea in mind."

The party does not have a ready replacement for Chouhan, if public profile is seen as the measure.

He is the only BJP chief minister to have been in power since before Narendra Modi became PM. All the ones in other states are seen as PM Modi and Amit Shah's appointees.

But the loss in the 2018 state elections though wafer-thin - dimmed his aura. He managed to get his chair back within 15 months when the Congress government fell apart in 2020.

The state is to elect a new government in November 2023.



Gwyneth Paltrow to be 'guest shark' in 'Shark Tank'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor and founder of Goop Gwyneth Paltrow will join the series 'Shark Tank' as a guest shark for its 14th season. It marks the actress' first appearance on the business format, reports a website. She will be joined by DoorDash CEO and co-founder Tony Xu as a guest shark alongside long-standing Sharks Mark Cuban, Barbara Corcoran, Lori Greiner, Robert Herjavec, Daymond John and Kevin O'Leary. Other guest sharks returning for the season are Emma Grede, CEO and co-founder of Good American, Peter Jones, a dragon on the BBC's version, known as 'Dragon's Den', Daniel Lubetzky, founder of Kind and Kendra Scott. The show returns on Friday September 23 with a live episode. In addition to films such as 'Emma' and 'Sliding Doors', Paltrow founded lifestyle brand Goop in 2008 and became CEO in 2016. The company has its own show on Netflix, a book imprint, retail stores, its own product lines including skincare and fragrances as well as its own health summit. Back in 2017, Paltrow also starred in 'Planet of the Apps', which was a Shark Tank-esque format for Apple that focused on Silicon Valley-type startups. Her last on-screen role was in Netflix's 'The Politician'.



Trevor Noah to lead self-guided interactive tour

Los Angeles | Agencies

Satirical news television programme 'The Daily Show with Trevor Noah' is set to launch an interactive self-guided walking tour which aims to take guests on a journey through the events of the January 6, 2021 insurrection in Washington D.C. The show is partnering with VoiceMap for the technological breakthrough, which is known as 'In the Footsteps of the FreedomSurrection', reports a website. It will allow listeners to trace the exact route taken by the insurrectionists on January 6, 2021, to revisit the events that occurred before, during and after the historic day. According to website, beginning near the White House, the tour promises to take guests down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol, following in the footsteps of the people who marched in support of keeping former President Donald Trump in office. As a follow up to its 'Heroes of FreedomSurrection' installation -- 'The Daily Show's' collection of monuments paying "tribute" to the "heroes" most responsible for inciting the Capitol riots -- the new excursion will use VoiceMap's technology to recapture the history of the insurrection for Washington, DC visitors. 'In the Footsteps of the FreedomSurrection' features fifteen stops that spotlight important sites from the January 6 events.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Florence Pugh was very disturbed by the comments on her "small breasts" in a sheer dress. Talking about how she was shocked by the backlash from some people, the actress called out critics of her revealing pink outfit last month at the Fall/Winter 2022 Haute Couture runway show in Rome.

"I was comfortable with my small breasts, and showing them like that - it aggravated (people) that I was comfortable," she said in the monthly issue of a local magazine.

"It was just alarming, how perturbed they were. They were so angry that I was confident, and they wanted to let me know that they would never w*** over me. Well, don't."

"Why are you so scared of breasts? Small? Large? Left? Right? Only one? Maybe none? What. Is. So. Terrifying?"

Meanwhile, the actress also revealed her family's response to her stepping out at the event in a see-through gown.

She said: "I went to see my gran, and she goes, 'So what's all of this business about your nipples then?' After seeing photos, she gasped because the dress was so beautiful."

Pugh has previously blasted the "vulgar" reaction to the gown as she took to Instagram and urged people to "grow up" and "respect" other people's bodies.



Florence Pugh hits back at body shamers

MARK HOPPUS HAD SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AFTER CANCER DIAGNOSIS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Link-182 bassist Mark Hoppus, who was declared cancer-free in September last year, had contemplated suicide after his lymphoma cancer diagnosis sent him into depression. In a new interview with a website, the 50-year-old rocker recalled one time when he was "in the living room crying" after his diagnosis.

At that time, he told his wife Skye: "I don't know if I can do this." He continued: "She was like, 'Well, what are you going to do, kill yourself?' And that's exactly what I was thinking. It was pretty dark." Later on, Hoppus credited his wife's forthrightness for helping him "snap out" of his depression. "I was like, 'What a s***ty thing to say.' But also, what a kind thing to say, like, 'Snap out of it, you f***ing baby,'" he said he pondered after his 50-year-old spouse

"You have a beatable form of cancer. It's going to suck to get there, but get there," he quoted his wife, adding, "I had to do the work." Hoppus also told the outlet that undergoing chemotherapy was "brutal" and gave him a host of symptoms. "I had no energy and ended up being on the couch just trying to get through the day," he said. "I had the worst brain fog." The 'First Date' rocker added: "We were sitting at dinner with friends that we've known for years, and I'm looking at the husband across the table, thinking to myself, 'I can't remember your first name.' And it was like that all the time. I still feel it once every couple days, I'll forget a word, but it's much better." Hoppus also opened up about how he came to learn he was battling cancer in the first place. "I texted my doctor, 'Hey, weird lump on my shoulder. It's either a pulled muscle or a deadly lymphoma,'" he recalled. "I was trying to make a joke out of it."



Los Angeles | Agencies

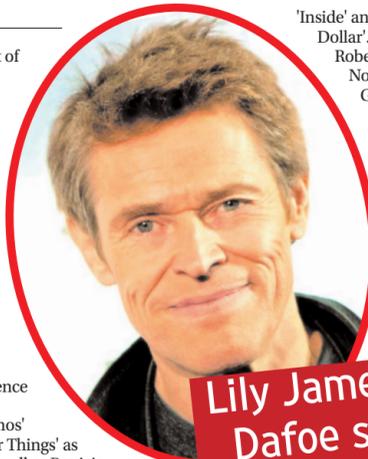
Lily James and Willem Dafoe have joined the cast of the indie drama 'Finalmente l'alba' (Finally Dawn). Rachel Sennott and Rebecca Antonac are also on board with Saverio Constanzo directing the movie. Plot details are currently unknown and production is set to start sometime this month in Italy, reports a website.

James has already had herself quite the year that started with Hulu hit limited series 'Pam & Tommy', where she portrayed Pamela Anderson.

According to a website, the show was not only a huge hit for the streamer but landed 10 Emmy nominations including one for James as well as for best limited series. James' other recent credits include 'The Dig' on Netflix and 'Mama Mia! Here We Go Again!'

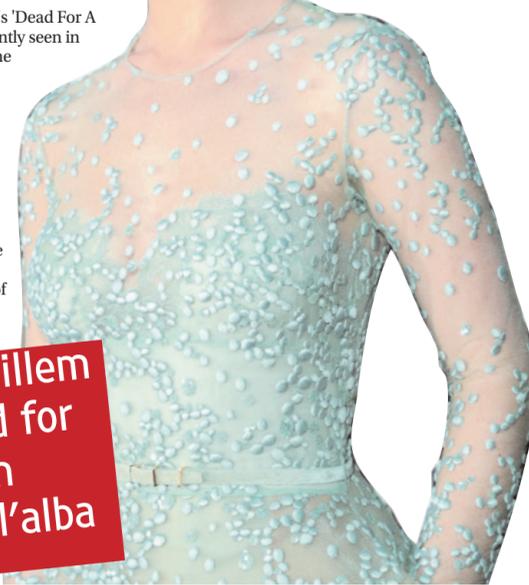
Deadline further states that she most recently wrapped production on the ensemble drama Providence opposite Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Himesh Patel.

Dafoe's upcoming projects include Yorgos Lanthimos' 'Poor Things' as well as Patricia Arquette's 'Gonzo Girl'. He also has Vasilis Katsoupis'



'Inside' and Walter Hill's 'Dead For A Dollar'. He was recently seen in Robert Eggers' 'The Northman', Guillermo del Toro's 'Nightmare Alley' and 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' where he reprised his role of Green Goblin.

Lily James, Willem Dafoe signed for indie film 'Finalmente l'alba'



Mark Ruffalo calls Hulk an 'unwanted mentor' in She-Hulk's life



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Mark Ruffalo, who is returning to the iconic role of Bruce Banner/Hulk in 'She-Hulk: Attorney at Law', has called his character an "unwanted mentor" in She-Hulk's life. Exploring the legacy of the Incredible Hulk in detail for the first time since 2008, the series will introduce Emmy Award-winning actress Tatiana Maslany as Jennifer Walters/She-Hulk. With her specialisation in superhuman-oriented legal cases, Maslany will navigate her new smashing green persona and her role as a

lawyer in the series. Jennifer Walters didn't volunteer to be a superhero. She's not from another planet-wasn't born with superhuman abilities. She gained Hulk's incredible strength following a serious car accident and her subsequent efforts to help her cousin, who happens to be Bruce Banner.

Actor Mark Ruffalo calls The Hulk an "unwanted mentor" in She-Hulk's life.

"She doesn't want anything to do with what he's offering. But she doesn't understand the power she's been given or what it's going to mean for her life, and he knows that it's not easy to live with, so he's trying to prepare her as best he can. They have a great rapport, and Bruce is excited to have someone who can relate to him on a Hulk level," he added.

Maslany, who loved working with Mark, said he works from a place of a child-like openness. "I loved working with Mark. So much of our work together is in those mocap suits-we're just two babies in weird

onesies who get to wrestle and make fun of each other, added Tatiana. For Ruffalo, sharing the stage with another mocap performer is particularly special. "Other actors usually want to run away from me in those scenes: I'm on a box, covered in dots with a head cam right in the centre of my face.

"It's not a natural experience for them. I did scenes with another actor in the same position for the first time. We see that Bruce/Hulk is grief-stricken and lonely but free in a way he's never been before. It's been exciting," added Ruffalo.

Along with Maslany, the nine-episode comedy series stars Ginger Gonzaga as Nikki Ramos, Jennifer's best friend and paralegal; Jameela Jamil as superhuman Titania, She-Hulk's nemesis and Tim Roth as surprise new client Emil Blonsky/Abomination.

The series also features special appearances by Mark Ruffalo as Jennifer's cousin Bruce Banner/Hulk, and Benedict Wong as Wong.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Demi Lovato



Changwon 2022 World Cup

RAHUL JAKHAR'S GOLD LEADS INDIA'S IMPRESSIVE START

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Pistol shooter Rahul Jakhar held his nerves to emerge victorious in a shoot-off as Indian shooters opened their campaign at the Changwon 2022 World Shooting Para Sport World Cup on a resounding note clinching three medals including gold on Thursday.

According to information received here, Jakhar, who qualified in the second spot with a score of 574-14x, held off a determined Kim Jungam in the shoot-off (3+3+2: 3+3+0) to win the P3 -- Mixed 25m Pistol SH1 finals.

Trailing Jungam throughout the final, the 36-year-old Indian kept his calm to equal the scores 20-all in the last series of the Elimination round.

"It was an amazing final. I am very happy to win the gold despite facing two malfunctions during the finals. It was a good experience before the all-important World Championships in November," Jakhar told the Paralympic Committee of India. Pooja Agarwal claimed the bronze with 14 points.

Paralympic champion Avani Lekhara was also in action on the opening day, in the R2-Women's 10m Air Rifle Standing SH1 event. The 20-year-old, qualifying in the top spot, claimed the silver medal with a total score of 247.8 finishing behind South Korea's Beijing 2008 gold medallist Yunri Lee (249.1).



Lee's compatriot Myungsoon Kang took the bronze with 224.2 points.

Lekhara, who took gold with a world record effort at Chateauroux 2022 in June 2022, was happy to get the silver competing with a new wheelchair and new rifle.

In R1 - Men's 10m Air Rifle Standing SH1, the hosts South Korea swept the podium with Tokyo 2020 Paralympic bronze medalist Shim Youngjip taking the gold medal with a score of 249.7. Meanwhile, France claimed the 1-2 position in the R4 - Mixed 10m Air Rifle Standing SH2 finals with Kevin Liot (252.7) claiming the gold medal by just 0.1 points over Tanguy De La Forest (252.6).

Represented by 14 shooters, India are one of the strongest teams at the Changwon 2022 World Cup.

Harare | Agencies

Vice-captain Shikhar Dhawan and his opening partner Shubman Gill slammed unbeaten half-centuries to give India a resounding 10-wicket victory in their ODI series opener against Zimbabwe at the Harare Sports Club on Thursday.

After Axar Patel, Deepak Chahar and Prasidh Krishna picked three wickets each to bowl out Zimbabwe for 189 in 40.3 overs, Gill (82 not out, 4x10 and a 6x1) and Dhawan (81 not out, 4x9) were unbroken in their opening partnership to chase down the total and help India take 1-0 lead in three-match series.

The win is also India's third 10-wicket victory over Zimbabwe in ODIs and also their 13th consecutive triumph over the hosts' in 50-over cricket. A major part of the Dhawan-Gill stand was how Dhawan, the early aggressor, took a backseat for some time when Gill found his groove after a watchful beginning in the innings.

Dhawan began the chase of 190 with back-to-back boundaries off Richard Ngarava -- a tinkle through fine leg was followed by slicing over backward point. He and Shubman



Gill focused on strike rotation with a few lbw shouts in between from the Zimbabwe bowlers.

Dhawan broke the rut of boundaries by cutting past square gully on some width provided by Ngarava. As Gill continued to take time, Dhawan quickly pulled off Sean Williams and also had a life when Brad Evans dropped the catch at square leg.

IND v ZIM, 1st ODI

INDIA WIN BY 10-WICKETS IN SERIES OPENER

punched to long-on and on the very next ball, he lofted inside-out over extra cover to bring up India's hundred and complete a century of his opening stand with Gill.

Helped by some extras and loose bowling from Zimbabwe's bowlers, Dhawan and Gill continued to be undeterred in the chase. Gill then slammed successive fours off Ryan Burl -- a drive through extra cover was followed by smash through cover-point -- to reach his third ODI fifty in the last four matches in 52 balls. Gill shifted his gears seamlessly by hitting a four and a six over the leg-side boundary off Madhever's successive deliveries to bring up India's 150. Dhawan and Gill knocked off the rest of the needed runs with immaculate ease, with the latter's short-arm pull being the standout, as India sealed the game with 115 balls to spare.

Brief scores

Zimbabwe 189 all out in 40.3 overs (Regis Chakabva 35, Richard Ngarava 34; Axar Patel 3-24, Deepak Chahar 3-27) lost to India (Shubman Gill 82 not out, Shikhar Dhawan 81 not out) by 10 wickets

Western & Southern Open

Rafael Nadal crashes out in second round

Cincinnati (US) | Agencies

Rafael Nadal crashed out of Western & Southern Open after losing the match 7-6 (9), 4-6, 6-3 against Borna Coric of Croatia here on Thursday.

Nadal's defeat ends his bid for a return to the top spot in the ATP Rankings this week. The World No. 3 will have another chance to leapfrog Alexander Zverev and Daniil Medvedev at the US Open.

The Croatian edged Nadal to advance to the third round in Cincinnati, battling for two hours, 51 minutes to secure his biggest win of the season by both opponent and stage.

Borna Coric picked up his fifth tour-level win since his March return from shoulder surgery on Wednesday at the Western & Southern Open. But with this one, the former World No. 12 announced that he is back at his best.

After taking a dramatic first-set tie-break in which both players saved two set points, Coric scored his first



break of the match midway through final set.

RADUCANU DEFEATS AZARENKA IN SECOND ROUND

Cincinnati (US): Less than 24 hours after scoring a first-round win against 23-time Grand Slam champion Williams, Emma Raducanu was back on court to face another former World No.1 in Victoria Azarenka, and was similarly dominant. She dropped just two games in a 6-0, 6-2 win that lasted just 62 minutes to reach Round 3. Raducanu ousts Serena in opening round in Cincinnati. The win over World No.22 Azarenka is Raducanu's first over a Top 30 player since she won the US Open last summer.



SIMONA HALEP WITHDRAWS DUE TO LEG INJURY

Cincinnati (USA): World No. 6

Simona Halep has withdrawn from the Western & Southern Open due to a right thigh injury. Just 48 hours after winning the title in Toronto, Halep was back on the court in Cincinnati for her first-round match against Anastasia Potapova. She prevailed in another three-set encounter, winning 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 in 2 hours and 11 minutes. The victory was Halep's 39th of the season, second behind only World No.1 Iga Swiatek. However, she eventually pulled out from the second round due to injury, a WTA report said.



Durand Cup: Mumbai City begin campaign with 4-1 win over Indian Navy

Kolkata | Agencies

Ascintillating second-half display helped Mumbai City FC begin their Durand Cup 2022 campaign with a win as they beat Armed Forces side Indian Navy 4-1 in their opening fixture of Group B at the Salt Lake Stadium, here on Thursday. Indian Navy's Adersh (43') opened the scoring of the game before Vikram Partap Singh's goal (45+3') at the cusp of the half-time cancelled out their lead. A Greg Stewart penalty (65') followed by two quick-fire goals from super sub-Lallianzuala Chhangte (89', 90+1') sealed the deal for the Des Buckingham-led side.

The Islanders got off to an attacking start from the get-go as Vikram's header flew past the goal from a Bipin Singh cross through the left wing. In the tenth minute, the Indian Navy's defence was put to test as the pacey Vikram Partap Singh tried to get past his man with his skills but was brilliantly tackled by the armed forces defender.

Having lesser possession, the Indian Navy managed to crack open the Islanders' defence to draw first blood with the help of Adersh who was left unmarked in the centre of the park, pulling a splendid finish from outside the box to make it 1-0 for the armed services side in the 41st minute.

The second half continued similarly for



both sides with Mumbai City FC constantly penetrating in their opponent's half while the Navy kept their defence intact.

In the 65th minute, marquee signing Greg Stewart opened his goalscoring account in the Mumbai colours after making the keeper dive the wrong side from the penalty spot to make it 2-1 for his side. The Islanders were awarded a penalty as Alberto Noguera was tripped inside the box. Minutes later, in stoppage time, Chhangte found himself in the right position at the right time as a foul on Gurkirat Singh saw the ball rebound to Chhangte. The winger fired it right down the middle to net the Islanders' fourth one of the day, securing the three points in the kitty and making a winning start in the Durand Cup. Mumbai City FC take on rivals ATK Mohun Bagan on Wednesday while Indian Navy FT will be up against East Bengal two days earlier.

West Indies snap nine-match losing streak in ODIs with comfortable win over New Zealand

Bridgetown (Barbados) | Agencies

West Indies snapped their nine-match losing streak in ODIs with a comfortable five-wicket win over New Zealand in the first match of the series.

On a pitch assisting the bowlers, left-arm spin all-rounder Akeal Hosein and pacer Alzarri Joseph picked three wickets each to bowl out New Zealand for just 190 in 45.2 overs.

The chase was not straightforward for the West Indies. But Shamarr Brooks made a patient 79 off 91 balls to ensure West Indies had a rare clinical performance in ODI cricket and take a 1-0 lead in three-match series.

West Indies were 172-5 and Jason Holder, along with Jermaine Blackwood, playing in his first ODI since 2015, saw the team get over the line with five wickets and 11 overs remaining.



Brief scores

New Zealand 190 all out in 45.2 overs (Kane Williamson 34, Michael Bracewell 31; Akeal Hosein 3-28, Alzarri Joseph 3-36) lost to West Indies 193-5 in 39 overs (Shamarr Brooks 79, Nicholas Pooran 28; Tim Southee 2-39, Trent Boult 2-49) by five wickets

IRELAND CLAIM T20I SERIES OVER AFGHANISTAN WITH SEVEN-WICKET THRILLING WIN

Paul Stirling become the fourth man in history to the milestone of 3,000 T20I runs.

Belfast | Agencies

Ireland sealed the five-match T20I series against Afghanistan with a thrilling, rain-affected seven-wicket win in the decider match at Stormont.

After winning the toss and electing to bowl first, Ireland had an excellent start, thanks to an opening burst from Player of the Match, pacer Mark Adair. After a quiet first over from Josh Little, Hazratullah Zazai looked to have got Afghanistan moving with two consecutive boundaries, the first streakily skewed past point, and the second smoked through the covers.



Afghanistan found themselves 26-3 after four overs and took their time to rebuild. Once again Afghanistan rebuilt, putting on 29 in the next four

overs to lay the platform for the last five overs. However, it was at this point that the rain fell, and with the score reading 95-5. It left Ireland needing 56 runs in seven overs for a series win.

Brief scores

Afghanistan 95-5 in 15 overs (Usman Ghani 44 not out; Mark Adair 3-16, Joshua Little 2-14) lost to Ireland 56-3 in 6.4 overs (Paul Stirling 16, Lorcan Tucker 14; Mujeeb Ur Rahman 2-17) by seven wickets (Target revised to 56 off 7 overs due to rain)

US Open 2022

VENUS WILLIAMS, SOFIA KENIN LEAD WOMEN'S SINGLES WILD CARDS LIST

New York | Agencies

Seven-time major champion Venus Williams and 2020 Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin lead the list of the eight women who have received wild cards into the 2022 US Open women's singles main draw, the tournament organisers announced on Wednesday.

Venus and Sofia will be joined by fellow Americans CoCo Vandeweghe, Elizabeth Mandlik, Peyton Stearns and Eleana Yu, as well as Australia's Jaimee Fourlis and France's Harmony Tan as part of reciprocal wild card agreements with Tennis Australia and the French tennis federation.

The 42-year-old Williams will be making her 23rd US Open main draw appearance. The 2000 and 2001 US Open singles champion missed last year's tournament with injury, and was sidelined for nearly a year before returning to play mixed doubles at Wimbledon this June.

She's played a full slate of singles matches this summer at the Citi Open in Washington, DC, the National



Bank Open in Toronto, and the Western and Southern Open in Cincinnati.

On the other hand, Kenin, the most recent American woman to win a Grand Slam singles title with her triumph at the 2020 Australian Open, is also in the midst of a return from

injury. The 23-year-old missed four months this year with an ankle injury and made her own comeback at the Citi Open.

Meanwhile, 2018 US Open doubles champion Vandeweghe recently captured her biggest title in six years with a sweep of the singles and doubles

events at the WTA 125 Series event in Concord, Mass, the WTA's equivalent of ATP Challenger tournaments.

The former world No 9 has struggled with injuries and health issues for the better part of four seasons, but victory in Concord pushed her up nearly 70 spots in the WTA singles rankings this week to No 125.

The likes of Mandlik, Stearns and Yu will all be making their Grand Slam main-draw debuts after earning their wild cards through competition.

Mandlik won the US Open Wild Card Challenge, which rewards the American man and woman who earns the most points at summer hard-court with a US Open wild card while Stearns, from Mason, Ohio, won the 2022 NCAA singles titles to cap her sophomore season at the University of Texas.

The 17-year-old Yu, also from Ohio, is the USTA Girls' 18s national champion.

The 2022 US Open will be played from August 29-September 11 at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing, New York.

Champions Chess Tour: Carlsen and Praggnanandhaa neck-and-neck after third round

Miami | Agencies

Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa earned a hard-fought win in the third round as the Indian star and World No 1 Magnus Carlsen remained neck-and-neck on a perfect 9/9 score after both won their matches in the FTX Crypto Cup.

Praggnanandhaa, bidding for his first Meltwater Champions Chess Tour title, wasn't at his best against an aggressive opponent in Hans Niemann but still ground out 3 points with a final game win on Wednesday. Niemann had shown he meant business as he got off to a winning start against the 17-year-old joint-leader. But Praggnanandhaa struck back with a game Grandmaster Peter Leko called a "fantastic positional masterpiece". Niemann, as he did on Tuesday day against Carlsen, surrendered a hard-fought lead immediately, the organ-



isers if the event Play Magnus Group informed in a release.

A draw in the third left the match hanging on the final game which could have gone either way before Niemann made a fatal blunder and

Praggnanandhaa won it for a 2.5-1.5 win in this eight-player all-play-all field in the first offline event on the tour in which players get three points for winning their four-game mini-match.



Karan Johar suggested Ananya Pandey's name as lead actress when we collaborated; Puri Jagannath on casting lead actress for Liger

IT TOOK ONE YEAR TO SIGN MIKE TYSON: PURI JAGANNATH

Aakruti Bagla | Mumbai

Puri Jagannath has worked in many good films in Telugu cinema and established a place for himself. Currently, he is anticipating the release of his pan-India film 'Liger', starring Vijay Deverakonda and Ananya Pandey.

In a freewheeling chat ahead of the release, the director spoke about casting, box-office pressure, big-budget films tanking and much more. Excerpts:

► **On casting Ananya Pandey and Mike Tyson** Liger stars Ananya Pandey and former world heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson. When asked the director about how did they come on board, he said, "When I decided to make Liger, a pan India film, we collaborated with Dharma Productions, and I showed the script to Karan Johar. So after listening to the story, he only suggested Ananya Pandey. For Mike

Tyson, the role was there in the script and so when we were discussing about having someone like him, we thought why not cast him only? But, it was not easy to get him on board. It took one year to sign him."

He further revealed if he had someone else in mind for female lead. Puri Jagannath said, "I am a big fan of Sridevi so I wanted to cast Janhvi Kapoor, but her dates were not available."

► **On being concerned about Liger's fate at box-office**

Looking at the current box-office trend, some of the Hindi films in recent times have not worked as per the public's expectations. When asked about his concern regarding Liger, the director quipped, "Not only in Bollywood, it's happening everywhere. The pandemic has disturbed the audience and made them choosy. If they don't like the trailer, they don't go to the theatre despite whoever

er is there. So it is very scary actually."

► **On south dubbed films working in North**

The director was further asked about South dubbed films doing wonders in Hindi belt, whereas dubbing of Hindi films not being accepted down South. He averred, "It's not working big time actually. North people are receiving South ones. But in the South, dubbed ones are not doing good." When asked him about the reason behind it, the director said, "I don't know. But it's happening."

► **On Telugu films working in the Hindi belt**

On a parting note, when the director was asked about formula behind Telugu films being liked by the audiences across India, he said, "There is no formula. But they yearn for masala entertainer. Unless there is an event movie, or something exciting, or some madness in the movie, they are not going to the theatres."

SHEHNAAZ GILL GETS IRKED ABOUT RELATIONSHIP RUMOURS WITH RAGHAV JUJAL

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shehnaaz Gill became a household name post her appearance in Salman Khan hosted reality show, Bigg Boss 13. The actress won hearts with her bubbly nature. Recently, the actress has been making headlines for the past few days due to her dating rumours with her upcoming movie co-star Raghav Jujal.

Shehnaaz dismissed the rumours and got irked when asked about the same at an event.

On Wednesday, Shehnaaz attended the song launch of her brother Shehbaaz in Mumbai. The 'Honsla Rakh' actress looked smart and confident in black top and matching shorts and paired it with a red blazer. She completed her look with a slick ponytail. During the interaction with the media, the Bigg Boss contestant was asked about her relationship status with the ace dancer and choreographer Raghav Jujal.

Gill was irked with the question and gave a befitting reply. She was quoted saying, "Media jhoot kyun bolti hai? Media har bar jhoot bolti hai and kuch bi bolti hai. Hum kisi ke saath khade ho jayen ya kisi ke saath ghum lein toh relation mein hai? Nahin na Toh bas, media fizo-ol bolti hai. Ab Main Hyper Ho Jaongi". (Why does media lie everytime? If we are spotted with someone, then we are meant to be in a relationship, it isn't true. So the media doesn't make sense at times).

Shehnaaz then stopped the media from asking her personal questions and promised that when she makes an appearance for her project next, she would answer all questions by the media.

On the work front, Shehnaaz recently confirmed being a part of Salman Khan and Pooja Hegde starrer Bhaijaan. The flick also stars Raghav Jujal and Siddharth Nigam.



SRK to shoot in Dubai for his upcoming film



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shah Rukh Khan's fans are eagerly anticipating the actor's return to the big screen. King Khan has three major releases planned for 2023, making it a big year for him. The actor was recently in the United

film's producers have reportedly begun working on post-production in order to meet their 2023 deadline.

Dunki is said to be an immigration drama starring SRK and Taapsee.

A couple of photos from the sets of Dunki were leaked last month, showing Shah Rukh with a messy look. In another photo, he can be seen carefully listening to the director. In response to the leaks, Taapsee revealed in an interview that Shah Rukh and Hirani were not pleased.

Taapsee opened up about her co-star and how the director reacted to the leaked photos. They tried to not... But we were shooting at Westminster Bridge (London), there is only so much you can do. Shah Rukh sir also tried a lot. They were not really happy that the pictures came out," she said.

Meanwhile, fans are anticipating Shah Rukh Khan's Pathaan, which will hit theatres on January 25. Deepika Padukone and John Abraham also star.

In addition to Pathaan and Dunki, the actor will co-star with Nayanthara in Atlee's Jawan.

DOBAARAA: TAAPSEE AND ANURAG'S FILM WILL LEFT YOU PONDER



BY SHACHI CHATURVEDI

Directed by: Anurag Kashyap

Rating: 3/5

Runtime: 2 hrs 12 mins

Cast: Taapsee Pannu & Pavail Gulati

Synopsis: A lady is murdered on a stormy night in 1994, and the only witness is a 12-year-old kid 'Anay'. Antara's daughter goes missing 25 years later, on a similar stormy night. She has given up her medical profession for the sake of her husband and moved into a new house with her family, where she connects with Anay, who was hit by a car 25 years ago, via an ancient TV set. She winds herself in her own parallel universe, one in which her life is dramatically different.

Review: The film opens in the present day, in Antara's reality, where she has a somewhat messed-up marriage, and then one fine night she connects with a boy from a parallel dimension, and Antara's life is turned upside down. She winds up in an entirely another universe with a completely different lifestyle.

Antara's relationship with each of her world's characters is quite different in this other universe. The film is a great attempt to make something for the modern generation, which is always fascinated by technology. Anurag Kashyap's film will have you pondering and unraveling the mystery, but the climax of the parallel universes will flip everything in your reality.

The only negative aspect was that the conclusion should have been a bit



more informative, as the spectator just has a few seconds to figure out what happened.

The film is intended for individuals who are committed to concentrating throughout without being distracted by WhatsApp messages from their friends, lovers, and so on. This is not a film where you can take a back seat and make your own movie.

When it comes to the soundtrack of the picture, the film does not have many songs, but they work effectively as they are used in the proper amount and at the right moment.

Taapsee, as always, did an excellent job as Antara, but kudos to the support-

ing cast for making this film thrilling and engaging.

In terms of technical qualities, the film succeeds in enthralling you with various sequences. The editing was overall tidy, with no superfluous pans or close-ups. Surprisingly, it is a remake by Anurag Kashyap, but you can see he has contributed his own flavour to the film.

Final words: Taapsee is a fantastic actress, as seen by her performance in this film. This is the film for you if you like Taapsee or suspense thrillers. Although the climax is a little disappointing, you will surely enjoy the journey that the film takes you on.



'The Kashmir Files' will be 'embarrassment to India' if sent to Oscars: Dylan Gray

Team Absolute | Mumbai

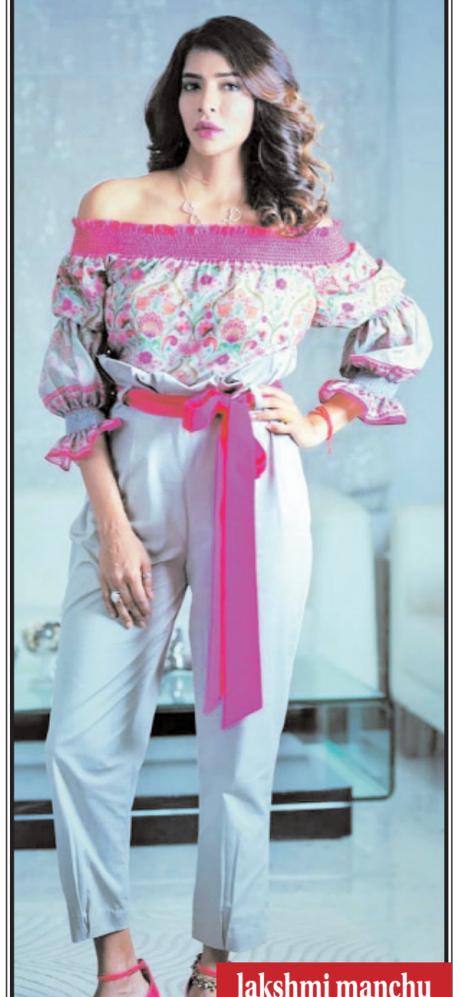
Vivek Agnihotri's directorial, The Kashmir Files garnered a thunderous response and surpassed the 100-crore mark at the box office. Post which it made of to the list of highest grosser of the year.

Recently, in an interview, Anurag Kashyap said that, 'RRR' would have 99% chance to be on the Oscars nomination list if selected as the official entry. He further added that although he doesn't know what film will be picked, he said that he hopes it is not 'The Kashmir Files'.

After which Vivek Agnihotri shared a screenshot of a news article quoting Anurag's remark and tweeted, "Important: The vicious, genocide-denier lobby of Bollywood has started their campaign against The Kashmir Files for Oscars, under the leadership of the maker of Dobaaraa (Anurag)."

Responding to Vivek Agnihotri's tweet on Anurag's remark, Dylan tweeted, "Yeah, actually it's (hatemongering, revisionist) garbage of no artistic merit and will be a further embarrassment to India if 'selected' by the 'neutral' board... Anurag Kashyap is just trying to preserve what's left of the country's good name." He used the hashtags 'you're welcome' and 'The Kashmir Files'. Dylan added in a separate tweet, "Though RRR is also vile and sadistic, so not much of a step up." For those who are unaware, Gray, has worked on the 2020 Netflix docu-series 'Bad Boy Billionaires India'. Talking about the Kashmir files, the movie is based on the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley in the late-1980s. It featured Anupam Kher, Darshan Kumar, Pallavi Joshi and Mithun Chakraborty.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



lakshmi manchu