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SC TO EXAMINE 2016 DEMONETISATION DECISION, SEEKS DETAILED AFFIDAVITS FROM CENTRE, RBI

WHY IT WAS NEEDED?

▶ **THE BENCH SAID THE PETITIONERS' MAIN ARGUMENT IS SECTION 26 OF THE RBI ACT DOES NOT AUTHORISE THE CENTRE TO COMPLETELY CANCEL THE CURRENCY NOTES OF PARTICULAR DENOMINATION. THEREFORE, THE MAIN QUESTION IS WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAD POWERS UNDER SECTION 26 TO DEMONETISE ALL NOTES OF RS 500 AND RS 1000 DENOMINATION, NOTED THE BENCH.**

▶ **THE TOP COURT IS HEARING OVER 50 PETITIONS CHALLENGING THE CENTRE'S 2016 DEMONETISATION DECISION.**



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Centre and the RBI to file comprehensive affidavits on the 2016 demonetisation decision and also keep the files ready in connection with Centre's letter to the RBI, the decision of the RBI Board, and the demonetisation announcement.

During the hearing, a five-judge bench, headed by Justice S.A. Nazeer, noted that the court is aware of its 'Lakshman Rekha' on judicial review of government policy.

On September 28, the Supreme Court had asked the petitioners challenging Centre's decision to demonetise currency notes of Rs 500, and Rs 1,000, in November 2016, if the issue survives now?

Attorney General R. Venkataramani and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submitted that the issue has become an academic exercise now. Senior advocate P. Chidambaram,

representing a petitioner, submitted that validity of the government's decision is still open to challenge. The petitioners' lawyer insisted that the government did not have power to cancel the currency notes through an executive order and stressed that for future, the issue is still relevant. The bench noted that when issues of constitutional importance are referred, it is the duty of the court to answer them. However, it asked in this case, has the issue not become fait accompli? Chidambaram said that the demonetisation carried out in 1978 was through a separate Act of the Parliament unlike the 2016 decision. He queried whether the demonetisation of this kind -- withdrawing 86 percent of currency notes -- in circulation requires a separate law by the Parliament.

'2019 AYODHYA VERDICT DOES NOT COVER PLACES OF WORSHIP ACT'

New Delhi: Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that the 2019 Ayodhya case judgment does not cover the questions connected with the validity of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991.

A bench headed by Chief Justice U.U. Lalit asked a specific question to Mehta, representing the Centre: "Is the 1991 Act covered by the Ayodhya judgment? What is your personal view?" To this, he replied it is not covered.

The top court was hearing a clutch of pleas against the certain provision of the 1991 law, which mandates maintaining character of religious places as prevailed on August 15, 1947.

The top court asked the Centre to bring on record its exact stand on petitions challenging the validity of certain provisions of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act 1991, and how much time will it take to file a response in the matter.

'NO CITIZEN SHOULD BE PROSECUTED UNDER SECTION 66A OF THE IT ACT'

Cases were still being registered across the country under draconian Section 66A, which gave permission to police to make "arbitrary arrests" and prosecute for what the police felt was "offending and offensive" online posts, even after the provision was declared violative of both Articles 19 (free speech) and 21 (right to life) of the Constitution.

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday took a serious view of people still being prosecuted under Section 66A of the IT Act 2000, and directed that no citizen should be prosecuted under the provision, which was struck down as unconstitutional by it in 2015 in the Shreya Singhal case.

Passing a slew of directions, the top court directed the Director General of Police (DGPs) and Home Secretaries of all state governments and competent officers in union territories to direct the police force not to register any complaint with respect to violation of Section 66A.

The top court added that this direction should apply only with reference to Section 66A and if the crime has other facets, where other offences are also alleged, those should not be deleted.

RETAIL INFLATION UP AT 7.41%, IIP DOWN BY 0.8%



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Retail inflation rose to 7.41 per cent in September from 7 per cent in August, mainly due to higher food inflation which went up sharply to 8.6 per cent from 7.6 per cent in August.

September's retail inflation of 7.41 per cent was much higher than last September's level of 4.35 per cent.

This is the ninth straight month when retail inflation has remained above the RBI's tolerance limit of 2 to 6 per cent.

High prices of cereals, meat, fish and eggs along with those of fruits and vegetables led to the spike in retail inflation.

Suman Chowdhury, Chief Analytical Officer, Acuite Ratings & Research said: "While the market was expecting the headline CPI inflation print to remain over 7.0 per cent in Sep-22, the actual figure has come higher at 7.4 per cent vs 7.0 per cent in Aug-22. As expected, the key factor has been food inflation which has increased sequentially by 0.9 per cent, leading to the overall inflation to go up by 0.6 per cent over the index in the previous month."

While the inflation in cereals

has also inched up, the steps being taken by the government and a reasonably healthy kharif output are expected to address the concerns behind the further hike in cereal prices, Chowdhury added.

According to Nikhil Gupta, Chief Economist, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, the food inflation surged to 22-month high of 8.6 per cent YoY in Sep'22, while core inflation rose to 4-month high of 6.3 per cent.

On the other hand, the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) declined 0.8 per cent YoY in Aug'22 as against the market consensus/expectation of 1.7 per cent. This was the first contraction in 18 months, Gupta said.

Price pressure on import of crude oil shall have a cascading impact on other items of the basket too.

Additionally, factors such as transmission of input costs and pick-up in consumer demand supported by service sector recovery would further add to inflationary risk in the coming months.

With the inflation level consistently remaining ahead of the four per cent CPI target level of the RBI, an out of turn monetary policy rate action remains a possibility.

No distribution of sarees, shirts by party or candidate during rallies: EC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Election Commission has said that all political parties should get equal opportunity to have access to earmarked space for election related advertisements during the poll period.

The Commission also banned sarees, shirts as gifts during rallies.

The Commission said that educational institutions including their grounds (whether government aided, private or government) shall not be used for political campaigns and rallies.

For advertisements at private places, if the local law does not expressly permit wall writing, pasting of posters, and similar other permanent or semi-perma-



nent defacement which is not easily removable, the same shall not be resorted to under any circumstances, even on the pretext of having obtained the consent of the owner of the property, said the Election Commission.

The Commission has clearly said that nothing inflammatory or which is likely to incite disaffection amongst the community shall be permissible in such writings and display.

The Commission said that in processions and rallies, wearing of cap, mask, scarf supplied by a party or candidate may be permitted. However, the supply of apparels like saree, shirt etc by a party or a candidate is not permitted.

21 IIT Guwahati researchers feature in world's top 2% scientists' list

Guwahati: A total of 21 researchers and faculty members from the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, including Director T.G. Sitharam, feature in the list of the world's top two per cent scientists' list created by the US' Stanford University, the institution said on Wednesday. IIT Guwahati said that Sitharam, along with 20 other faculty members, have been ranked for their research publication citations using all Scopus author profiles as of September 1 and their lifetime contribution to their specific fields of research in the list. Scientists are classified into 22 scientific fields and 176 sub-fields.

Religion is not a ground for registering marriages: Kerala High Court

The court passed the order on a plea moved by a Hindu man and a Muslim woman who got married as per Hindu rites and continued to follow the Hindu religion.

The local Registrar refused to register the marriage solemnized between the petitioners, as per the Kerala Registration of Marriages (Common) Rules, 2008, on the ground that the registration of marriage is possible only if it is solemnised as per the marriage laws in force.



Kochi | Agencies

The Kerala High Court on Wednesday ruled that the religion of parties is not a relevant ground to be considered when marriages are registered, reminded the registrars in charge of marriages that India is a secular country and that Kerala has been

home to many reformers, such as Ayyankali and Sree Narayana Guru.

In its directive, the court observed that "the respondents, while registering the marriage as per the Rules 2008, should remember that our country is a secular country giving liberty to all citizens to adopt their own religion and to follow their own rites, customs, and ceremonies. Kerala is a state, where the great reformers like Sree Narayana Guru and Ayyankali lived and they propagated the principle of secularism."

The court pointed out that some caste groups have been attempting to hijack the names of such reformers, and "this should not be permitted as they are leaders of for all citizens, irrespective of religion and caste". "The registration of marriage as per the Rules, 2008 will not prove a valid marriage, and it is only to protect the rights of the women and the children born in that marriage. Therefore, hyper technical defects shall not be raised by the Marriage Officers."

WHATSAPP NOW A SPAM FACTORY

1 IN 2 INDIAN SWAMPED WITH PROMOTIONAL MESSAGES



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Meta-owned WhatsApp has become a spam factory as more than one in two Indians now say that they are facing four or more spam messages each day, a report showed on Wednesday.

Despite clear norms laid by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on unsolicited communication, consumers still face unwanted calls, SMS (short messaging services) and Whatsapp messages from vendors, telemarketers, banks, insurance bro-

kers, car dealers, pathology labs, property and other investment agents, among others.

About 68 per cent mobile subscribers, on an average, receive 4 or more promotional or spam SMSs every day with every subscriber surveyed getting spam, according to online community platform LocalCircles.

About 95 per cent of Whatsapp subscribers surveyed got spam while every mobile subscriber surveyed got it.

Financial services, real estate services, and pathology services are top sectors sending spam SMS as well spam Whatsapp, indicating the same offenders are now spamming using both channels.

About 77 per cent mobile subscribers surveyed want the TRAI to work with telcos and enable mark spam feature with each SMS.

There were reports that the Department of Telecommunication (DOT) has decided to levy fines ranging from Rs 1,000 per violation for zero-10 breaches, Rs 5,000 each for 10-50 violations, and Rs 10,000 each for more than 50 violations by registered telemarketers. However, the telecom authority has not issued any notification in this regard.

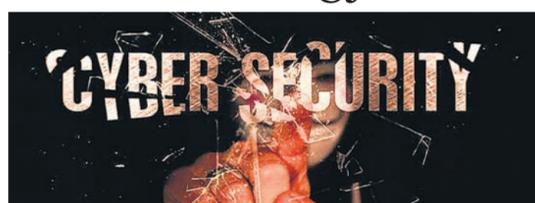
- The threat intelligence team of AI-driven Singapore-headquartered CloudSEK discovered a threat actor advertising a database of 1.2 million cards for free on a Russian-speaking Dark Web cyber-crime forum.
- This followed another incident of 7.9 million cardholder data advertised on the BidenCash website.
- Unlike previous records, this time, the hackers released sensitive Personal Identifiable Information (PII) information such as SSN, card details and CVV, the team revealed.
- Leaked PII could enable threat actors to orchestrate social engineering schemes, phishing attacks, and even identity theft.

Financial data of over 9 million cardholders leaked, including from SBI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Cyber-security researchers on Wednesday said they have discovered a massive leak involving over nine million cardholders' financial data that includes customers of the State Bank of India (SBI). "State Bank of India, Fiserv Solutions LLC, American Express were some of the top banking institutions which were affected. There were approximately 508,000 debit cards breached with 414,000 records of Visa payment network followed by Mastercard," the security researchers said.

The majority of personal emails associated with the card details were exposed. Other official emails records were found to be exposed associated with SoftBank, Bank of Singapore, and World Bank from the previous data breach by BidenCash. "Marketplaces like BidenCash emerge frequently where the threat actors trade-sensi-



tive card data for carding and cloning services. While the modern day security mechanisms are able to minimise the impact, threat actors regularly check deploy new methods to bypass them," said Rishika Desai, Cyber Threat Researcher - CloudSEK.

"Exposed card details might be used by them to carry out attacks such as card trafficking, card cloning, and unauthenticated transactions to facilitate illegal purchases," said researchers.

The motivation behind these data leaks was to gain more traffic to

their website and establish a reputation. BidenCash forum became active in early February 2022. Post that the threat actor resorted to various ways to gain traffic to his website such as spamming comments on websites. "On a personal level, trying to track your card transactions, being aware of malicious sites luring off a great deal can help prevent to a greater extent. With the BidenCash group trying to gain popularity through various measures, leaking card data motivates other groups to follow the same steps," Desai noted.



NOW A RS 223 CR FD SCAM OF DELHI GOVT'S FOREST AND WILDLIFE DEPT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A new scam of Rs 223 crore has come to light at the Department of Forest and Wildlife of the Arvind Kejriwal led Delhi government. The amount was deposited with the Bank of India's Paharganj branch as a fixed deposit for one year, but later it was transferred to a dummy account. Now the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has lodged an FIR in this case.

A senior CBI official said that the Department of Forests and Wildlife of the Delhi government issued its surplus of Rs 223 crore to the Bank of Baroda's Paharganj branch for the purpose of a FDR in the name of the Ridge Management Board Fund.

The CBI said that L A Khan, the then senior branch manager of BOB, transferred the whole amount to an account registered in the name of DUSIB (Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board), which is a fake account. "Our investigation revealed



that Department of Forests and Wildlife of the Delhi government had approved the proposal to invest the amount of Rs 223 crore in fixed deposit scheme in the name of "Ridge Management Board Fund" with Bank of Baroda, for a period of one year

and transferred the said amount from its bank account at State Bank of India, I.P. Estate, New Delhi.

"Khan, the then Sr. Branch Manager, BOB in conspiracy with unknown officials of DFW and unknown officials of the bank trans-

ferred the amount of Rs 223 crore illegally and unauthorisedly from the SUNDRIY account of BOB to the Saving Bank account no. 00980100028204 on the basis of a forged letter said to be issued by DFW," a source said.

The source said that verification revealed that the bank account in the name of Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board was a fake account and the letter allegedly issued by DFW was also a fake. The CBI has learnt that it was Khan who issued fake FDRs in the name of "Ridge Management Board Fund" and handed over the same to the office of DFW.

The CBI said that on the basis of their preliminary inquiry they lodged an FIR under sections 120-B, 409, 420, 467, 468 and 471 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) read with sections 13(2) 13(1) (a) of PC Act, against Khan and others including unknown officials of the Bank and DFW. Further probe in the matter is on.

Nitish slams Amit Shah, says 'he has no knowledge of our country's history'

Patna | Agencies

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has slammed Union Home Minister Amit Shah and said that the latter has been in politics only for the last few years, therefore he does not have any knowledge about Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) movement or socialist leaders like Ram Manohar Lohia.

He added that people like Shah do not know about the history of the country.

"People like him (Amit Shah) do not have any contribution in the country. He does not know the history of the country. They do not have knowledge about Jayaprakash Narayan ji. They get the opportunity to stay in the government. Hence, they are giving statements against me," Kumar said while offering tributes to socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia at his statue in Patna on his death anniversary.



"I went to Nagaland on the invitation of the people of that state. It was a grand event. People of Nagaland have great respect for Jayaprakash Narayan ji. He stayed there for three years from 1964 to 1967 and addressed the issues at that time," he added.

The Chief Minister on Tuesday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union Home Minister have no knowledge about

the freedom struggle and the JP movement.

Modi gained prominence as a politician only after 2002, Kumar added.

Shah came to Sitab Diara, the birthplace of Jayaprakash Narayan in Bihar's Saran district, on Tuesday.

The Union Home Minister said that the Bihar Chief Minister is sitting in the lap of the Congress which had sent Jayaprakash Narayan to jail only to retain power in Bihar.

Arranging cabs for drunk customers not possible: Goa bar owners

Panaji | Agencies

S tating that drinking alone is not the cause of accidents, the All Goa Bar and Restaurant Owners Association (AGBROA) has opposed the government move to arrange cabs for inebriated customers to drop them home or hotels in case of tourists.

Transport Minister Mauvin Godinho on Monday had said that arranging cabs for inebriated customers will be a new norm in the coastal state.

Michael Carrasco, president of AGBROA, speaking to reporters said that their association does not accept it. "Minister says that accidents occur because people drink and drive. But drinking



is not the only cause of accidents. There are various other reasons," Carrasco said.

According to him the roads are not in good condition, there are potholes due to which accidents occur.

He said the faulty design of some roads leads to accidents. "Speed breakers are not properly painted, there

are no indicators on roads," he lamented.

According to Carrasco if they try to convince their customers in that situation, then they might even fight with them saying when they have their own vehicle, why should they opt for a cab.

He added that if there are app based taxis available then they can opt for the service and go home.

"Because there are no taxis, they are forced to drive their own vehicles. If app based taxis are made available then they may choose to travel by it," he said. Last year too, Godinho had announced this initiative but it had not fructified. Recently the police have intensified checks at night and had fined drunken drivers.

Interpol turns down Indian agencies' request for notice against Khalistani leader

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Interpol has rejected the request of the Indian agencies regarding issuance of a Red Corner Notice against Khalistani leader -- the Canada-based founder of Sikh for Justice (SFJ) Gurpatwant Singh Pannu.

The Interpol had put the request of issuing Red Corner Notice on hold for six months before cancelling it.

Pannu has been named as an accused in terror and riot cases by a number of agencies in India. He has been accused of provoking Khalistani movements in India.

It was the second time when the request of the Indian agencies has been turned down.

Around six to seven months ago, the request of issuing a red corner notice was put on hold by the Interpol. Indian agencies maintained that Pannu had tried to create unrest in India and was accused of Unlawful Activities.

However, the Interpol was not convinced by this



and after putting on hold the request of agencies, they have finally cancelled it. Interpol has demanded more proof against Pannu. Pannu has been con-

tinuously sending video message through social media regarding Khalistani movements. During farmers' agitation, he had provoked the farmers to attack the Red Fort and had also released a video in this respect.

Pannu has threatened the government on a number of occasions and had indicated in the videos that they could attack the Prime Minister.

He founded the SFJ in 2007 with an intention to give relief to the 1984 victims.

However, he has been using this against India and to create Khalistan. He said that he would break India into several parts and one of them would be Khalistan.

The agencies have learnt that he has no concern with the common Sikhs. He has allegedly been working at the behest of "agents of enemy states".

The MHA had in 2019 declared SFJ as "unlawful association" under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. In most of the videos, Pannu could be heard talking about referendum regarding Khalistan.

Gang of women targeting female commuters on Delhi Metro busted

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A gang of women thieves, who used to target women commuters in the Delhi Metro, have been arrested by the Metro Police, officials said.

Four women of the gang, who were involved in a dozen cases of theft, have been arrested.

Jitendra Mani, Delhi Metro Deputy Commissioner of Police, said that the accused women gang members used to steal valuable articles from the handbags of women commuters. The Metro Police had been receiving constant complaints in this regard.

The accused women were identified as Laxmi, Shashi, Sarita and Reshma. An FIR against them was lodged with the Kashmere Gate police station.

"One Rahul had reported one of the cases to us. He told us that his



uncle and aunt came to Delhi from Patna. They boarded the Delhi Metro from Kashmere Gate station. They got

off at the New Delhi Railway Metro station. As they were exiting the Metro using an escalator, the bag of

his aunt containing valuables, cash and gold jewellery was stolen," the official said. The Metro Police which was already getting a number of complaints decided to examine the CCTV of all the Metro stations. They scanned more than a thousand CCTV footages to get a clue about the accused. The Metro Police official said that the accused Laxmi was identified and seen in the footage standing along with her three accomplices. The police checked the records and came to know that Laxmi had a previous criminal record.

The police said that they raided the house of Laxmi in Delhi's Anand Parbat area and she was arrested from there.

During questioning, she broke down and confessed that she and her accomplices were involved in several theft cases as well as targeting women commuters on the Delhi Metro.

Faced with house demolition, B'luru couple threatens self-immolation

Bengaluru | Agencies

Amid the anti-encroachment drive, a couple on Wednesday threatened to set themselves ablaze in a bid to prevent the BBMP authorities from demolishing their house here.

The BBMP has been carrying out the drive against properties encroaching stormwater drains (SWDs) in Bengaluru.

According to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) officials, the house had been identified as encroaching upon the SWD during the recent survey and a notice had been served to its owners.

The incident took place in the KR Puram locality where the couple, Sunil and Sona Singh, reside.

The couple, who are pri-



ivate firm employees in the city, poured petrol on themselves and threatened to set themselves ablaze when the BBMP officials reached their house which allegedly encroached a SWD by two metres.

The police and the BBMP officials splashed the couple with buckets of water and also used water hoses to spray water at high pressure. The couple were detained by the KR Puram police for a

brief period of time.

According to the local police officials, the couple were distraught as they had constructed the house by availing a loan and were in the process of repaying it.

Ever since heavy rainfall resulted in massive flooding in some parts of the city in September, the authorities have been following up with anti-encroachment drives against constructions blocking the SWDs.

GURUGRAM: 6 INJURED AS DIWALI CRACKERS STORED IN HOUSE EXPLODE

Gurugram: Six persons, including two children, sustained critical injuries after an explosion due to firecrackers inside a house in Nakhrola village in Haryana's Gurugram district on Wednesday, police said.

According to reports, the victims used to make firecrackers and stored them in their house.

The entire stock of firecrackers reportedly exploded injuring six people, who were present inside the house at the time.

The injured have been identified as Jai Bhagwan (48), Satish Kumar (45) and his relative, Tanuj (10), Manish (17) and Chavi (11) and another.

The explosion was so intense that the roof of the house collapsed following which the victims were trapped inside it.

Fire personnel, police and forensic teams and Civil Defence personnel rushed to the site and rescued the victims and took them to the Gurugram civil hospital from where they have been referred to Safdarjung hospital in Delhi for further treatment.

UP to impose fine for stubble burning

Lucknow | Agencies

The Uttar Pradesh government has asked all District Magistrates and police chiefs to impose fines on those found burning stubble in fields.

As per the directives issued by the state's Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra, anyone caught burning agriculture residue or waste in their fields, the fine is Rs 2,500 if the field is less than 2 acres, Rs 5,000 of the field is 2 to 5 acres and Rs 15,000 if the size of the field is above 5 acres.

Mishra has asked concerned officials to ensure that no agricultural waste is burnt in fields.

He said a campaign should be organised to sensitise farmers against the ill effects of crop burning but if anyone is caught burning waste, then action should be initiated against them.

A government spokesman said: "The Chief Secretary has said that 14 instruments and machines have been identified for dealing with agricultural waste. It has been directed that farm banks, where common use instruments and machinery can be kept, should be set up and equipment given to



individual farmers as per need. Individual farmers will get 50 per cent subsidy while Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), cooperatives and panchayats will get 80 per cent subsidy for estab-

lishment of machinery banks." The purchase of instruments and machinery should be completed by October 15.

As per the directives, agricultural waste from fields of those farmers

who burnt this waste last year, should be collected and stored in cow shelters.

Of the farm residue so collected, 25 per cent should be used for mixing in the fodder for cattle.

Pregnant woman, minor sister axed to death in UP

Badaun | Agencies

A woman who was eight months pregnant and her minor sister were axed to death in Sheikhpur village in Uttar Pradesh's Badaun district.

The incident took place late on Tuesday night.

As her husband Kamal Singh was away working in Haryana, Lajwati, the 22-year-old pregnant woman, had called her seven-year-old sister Manju to stay with her.

Lajwati and her sister were sleeping in the courtyard when the incident took place.

Police sources said that as per initial investigations, the two brothers of Kamal Singh committed the crime and are absconding.

According to reports, the two brothers used to beat their wives who had complained to the police and the brothers were detained on Tuesday at the police station.

They were later released with a warning. Their wives were not at home when they returned. The brothers, sources said, believed that



Lajwati was instigating their wives to lodge complaints with the police and decided to teach her and her sister a lesson.

They killed Lajwati and her sister with an axe and fled. They were found dead on Wednesday morning.

Kamal Singh has been informed of the incident and is on his way home from Haryana. No complaint has yet been filed in the case.

Police have sent both the bodies for post-mortem.



WILL IMPLEMENT UDAIPUR DECLARATIONS IF ELECTED CONG PREZ: KHARGE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Veteran Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Mallikarjun Kharge said on Wednesday that after becoming the Congress national president, his prime responsibility would be to implement declarations made during the party's meeting held in Rajasthan's Udaipur.

Kharge, who is one of the candidates for the Congress president, was in Bhopal to seek support for his candidature.

Addressing a press conference at the Congress headquarters in Bhopal, the Congress Rajya Sabha MP said that all the declarations made during the Udaipur conclave were finalised after long discussions and they are the need of the hour. He said that all decisions would be taken by the collective leadership of



the Congress. Kharge added that he was selected as a candidate for the Congress presidential poll by the collective leader-

ship of the party. "There are different committees which are assigned a specific role to play, and all those decisions are

taken in a collective way," he said. Kharge slammed the BJP, saying that all institutions have been destroyed in the last few years and the democratic process of the country has been jeopardised.

"I am contesting elections after it was decided that no one from the Gandhi family is ready to run for the party president's post," Kharge added.

The veteran leader, who was accompanied by senior party leaders Pramod Tiwari and Gaurav Ballabh, made it clear that Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi will be the prominent leaders in the Congress.

"Congress has won six states under Rahul Gandhi's leadership, but the BJP's horse trading policy and undemocratic policy wrested power from us in several states, including Madhya Pradesh and the fresh example in Maharashtra,"

Aamir Khan shouldn't hurt religious sentiments: Mishra

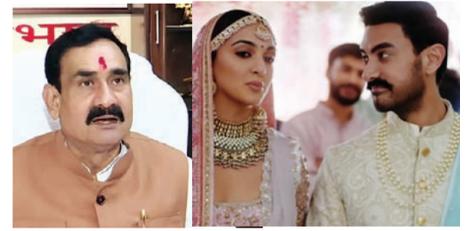
Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra on

Wednesday said Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan should stay away from advertisements and acts which hurt religious sentiments, after a bank advertisement featuring Khan and actor Kiara Advani faced criticism by some people on social media platforms.

Talking to reporters here, Mishra also said Aamir Khan should do such advertisements by keeping the Indian traditions and customs in mind. The advertisement shows Khan and Advani as newly-weds travelling back from their wedding and discussing that both of them did not cry during 'bidai'.

The ad further shows the couple reaching the bride's house and the groom taking



the first step into the house, as against the traditional practice for brides. Mishra said, "I have seen actor Aamir Khan's advertisement for a private bank after receiving a complaint. I request him to do such advertisements by keeping the Indian traditions and customs in mind." "I do not consider it appropriate. Such things about Indian tradition, customs and deities keep coming, especially about Aamir Khan. The sentiments of a particular religion are

hurt by such acts. I believe he is not allowed to hurt anyone's sentiments," said Mishra, who is also the state government's spokesperson. In August this year, there was a controversy over Zomato's advertisement featuring actor Hrithik Roshan, following which the online food delivery firm withdrew it. Priests of the famous Mahakaleshwar temple in Madhya Pradesh had objected to the advertisement, claiming that it offended Hindu sentiments.

Time to join hands, touch feet for Congress's victory in MP: Kamal Nath

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In Madhya Pradesh, Congress has intensified the election preparations, the round of meetings is going on, in this sequence, on Wednesday, in the conference of Congress candidates and elected councilors, chairman and mayor of urban bodies, State President Kamal Nath said that next year's elections will be held. Get ready, now only 11 months are left for the election, so it is time to 'join hands, touch feet' with the determination to win. Kamal Nath told the candidates and elected representatives of the urban body, "Congress party government is set to form in Madhya Pradesh in 2023. It is the responsibility of all our mayors, municipal presidents, vice presidents and councilors to work hard in their respective areas and serve the public. You all have come here after going through a litmus test; it was a rehearsal for the election, now you all get ready for the elections of 2023.

Kamal Nath said, "Be it Ram's candidate or many other candidates, whom I did not even know, I do justice to the workers. Referring to the factionalism prevailing in the party, he said that it is true that factionalism was there, in which family it does not happen. Not everyone can agree with everyone's point of view. Now is the time to join hands and bow your head to feet. There are only 11 months left in the election, take a pledge to win."

He said, "Government, administration officials are all knowing whose government is coming ahead in the state, we are also making letters for them, and you guys should also



make them." On the arrival of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the program of Ujjain Mahakal Lok, Kamal Nath said that "the child birth to someone, someone else distributes sweets. Now, PM Modi has come to distribute sweets." Former MP and state in-charge of Congress JP Aggarwal challenged Prime Minister Modi to travel across the country like Rahul Gandhi. Show Modi by traveling 4000 km like Rahul Gandhi. Rahul Gandhi has the blood of freedom fighters in his veins, he is not weak. Rahul Gandhi is an iron gram. Leader of Opposition in MP Vidhan Sabha Dr. Govind Singh said that all the workers should unite and join the campaign to form the Congress government in 2023.

World Mental Health Day celebrated at AIIMS Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Today on 12th October, it was the day 3 of the organization of World Mental Health Day-2022 by Department of Psychiatry and Nursing College at AIIMS Bhopal. A debate competition on topic "Stop Scrolling, Start Living: Does Growing Engagement on Social Media Reflects the Mental Health of Next Generation" was organized for the undergraduate

and post graduate students at AIIMS Bhopal. Many students from MBBS and Nursing course participated in the debate. This event was attended by Prof. Bertha AD Ratinam and Prof. Shyam Lal of Surgery as judges for the debate competition. The debate focussed on the advantages and ill effects of social media usage of youth. The debaters argued that the excessive use of social media by young generation may have its deleterious effects.



There are research-based evidences in this direction. Although the debate also impressed on the appropriate and judicious use of social media for disseminating the healthy life style related messages, availability of resources

to deal with the adverse effects of exposure to social media. Dr Raj Rattan, Faculty of Nursing College delivered a session on the topic "Strengthening Patient care with Mental illness: Newer Developments". He said that comprehensive care of persons with mental illnesses encompasses a holistic approach consisting of legal issue and ethical issues of care. He shared that nursing as a profession can contribute significantly to strengthen the level of mental health care at all levels.

DATA ANALYSIS WITH R SOFTWARE WORKSHOP ORGANISED

Department of Community and Family Medicine has organized a four-day workshop on "Data analysis with R software" and hands on training from October 11th to 14th.

Prof. (Dr) Arun Kokane, HOD, Dept of CFM & organizing chairperson welcomed the participants and guests and briefed about the various research activities conducted by the Department. He further highlighted about the R software and the perceived need of data analytic workshop by the faculty and the students in relation to their research projects and the solution of how that could be addressed through such workshops.

The Dean Research complimented the hands-on training and added that analysis can serve as a flavour to their research proposals. The Dean Academics commented that the skills acquired through such workshops can be disseminated and enable better writing of manuscripts with independence. Executive Director appreciated the activities conducted by the dept and desired the support of organizing more events in the future for the benefit of a larger audience. This workshop focused on the hands-on training of R software for Clinical researchers and public health practitioners. It is expected that skills gained through this workshop be translated into robust results writing and publication in journals of international standard.

FANCY DRESS COMPETITION ON THE THEME OF SWACHHATA WAS ORGANIZED

Bhopal: Under the Swachhata campaign 2.0, AIIMS Bhopal has organized an entertaining Fancy Dress competition on theme of Swachhata, sanitation, personal and environmental hygiene for all cadres of employees and staff on 12.10.2022. The fancy dress was organized with efforts to spread awareness on sanitation, waste segregation, environment protection among employees, patients and visitors. Dr Manisha Srivastava Medical Superintendent AIIMS Bhopal grace the events and expressed gratitude to Dr Ajai Singh, Executive Director for his guidance and to all participants for organizing such an entertaining event with the aim of Swachhata awareness. Judges of the today program were Dr. Babita Raghuvanshi, Associate Professor, Department of Transfusion Medicine & Blood Bank and Dr. Shaikat Das, Associate professor, Department of Radiotherapy. The fancy dress was attended by large number of various cadre of staff members, patients, and visitors.



CM CHOUHAN PAYS TRIBUTE TO RAJMATA SCINDIA ON HER BIRTH ANNIVERSARY



Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today paid homage to Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia on her birth anniversary by garlanding her portrait in the CM's residence hall. CM Chouhan paid homage to Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia on his death anniversary by offering flowers on his portrait. He also remembered the contribution of Rajmata and Dr. Lohia.

Fertilizers should be Store and distributed systematically as per the availability - CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that despite adequate availability in the state, the complaints of farmers regarding non-availability of fertilizers at some places should be resolved immediately. The Central Government is also extending full cooperation in providing fertilizers to Madhya Pradesh as per the requirement. There are also discussions with the Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers Mansukh Lal Mandaviya from time to time and the supply of fertilizers to the farmers of the state has been going on without any hindrance. CM Chouhan was reviewing the fertilizer distribution work in the state in a meeting held at his residence today.

In the meeting it was agreed to make more than one selling point of fertilizer by Markfed and to ensure storage before the stock is



exhausted. This work will be done after continuous review. Chief Minister Chouhan said that sufficient quantity of fertilizer is available in the state. In such a situation, such arrangements should be ensured by Markfed and other related organizations so that there is no complaint of non-availability of fertilizers from anywhere. CM Chouhan said that it is necessary to assure the farmers that fertilizers are available in sufficient quantity. Unnecessary storage should also not be done on the basis of apprehension of its non-availability at any stage. Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, while participating virtually in the meeting, said that no such complaints had come last year. Joint efforts are yielding good results. All the concerned departments and institutions are monitoring together. Micro management is essential for the distribution of fertilizers. Detailed instructions have been given to the concerned officials.

Benefits of government schemes will reach every eligible person: CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that along with keeping law and order strong in Madhya Pradesh, all illegal business including drugs will be destroyed. CM Chouhan was addressing a public meeting in Raisen after transferring an amount of Rs 345 crore 59 lakh to the bank accounts of 15 thousand 948 labour families under Sambal 2.0 scheme in Raisen.

Referring to the damage caused to crops due to untimely rains in many districts of the state, CM Chouhan assured the farmers that "Don't worry, the government will take you out of trouble." He said that along with the Prime Minister's crop insurance, relief amount would also be given to the affected farmers.

CM Chouhan said that the



respect of the poor would be maintained by the state government at any cost. Mukhyamantri Jan Seva Abhiyan is also being run so that no poor is deprived of the benefits of any scheme of government. He said

that the state government would give land to poor families to build houses, even if they had to buy and give land, but the government would not allow any poor person to live without a house.

While reviewing the availability and distribution of fertilizers from the stage itself, CM Chouhan assured the farmers that there would be no shortage of manure. He instructed the administration to strengthen its intelligence system and take strict action against those who steal ration including manure.

CM Chouhan said that no stone will be left unturned in the development of Raisen. He announced that a ropeway would be established in Raisen Fort to increase tourism facilities. He also announced the construction of a fully equipped auditorium for conducting survey for sewage and for cultural events. The CM directed to complete the work of Semri reservoir by the month of March and provide water from tap to every family of the nearby village by December.

99 roads will be completed in the state with 1373 crores by July 2023: Gopal Bhargava

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Public Works Minister Gopal Bhargava has said that 99 roads under construction in the state will be completed by July 2023 and remaining incomplete and newly approved road construction works will be completed by April 2024. An amount of Rs 1373 crore has been sanctioned by the Central Government for the completion of 2 new roads and 107 incomplete roads. Minister Bhargava has expressed gratitude to the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for the approval.

Minister Bhargava has instructed the officers of the department to ensure that the works of new and incomplete road construction are completed with quality and within the stipulated time-frame. He said that after the completion of two new and 107 incomplete roads, traffic would be smooth in about 15 districts of the state.

Principal Secretary, Public Works Neeraj Mandloi informed that under the Centrally



Funded Special Assistance for Capital Expenditure 2022-23, a loan of Rs 1373 crore 27 lakh has been sanctioned by the Union Finance Ministry. This amount will have to be returned by the state government in the next 50 years. He said that with this amount, approval has been given for the construction of new roads.



EDITOR'S SPECS

JAL JEEVAN MISSION WILL PREVENT CHILD DEATHS

The Jal Jeevan Mission's ambition to bring safe drinking water to all rural homes is likely to be highly valuable, preventing around 1,36,000 child deaths annually. This is as per a paper titled "Potential Reduction in Child Mortality through Expanding Access to Safe Drinking Water in India" by Nobel Laureate Michael Kremer with Akanksha Saletore, Witold Wiecek, and Arthur Baker. The Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India. In 2019, at the inception of JJM, more than 50 per cent of the population did not have access to safe drinking water. Although geogenic contaminants such as arsenic, fluoride, and nitrate are widespread in certain regions of India, the most ubiquitous type of contamination is microbial. Diarrhea is the third most common responsible disease for under-five mortality in India. Water treatment is a cost-effective way to reduce diarrheal disease and child mortality. A recent meta-analysis of 15 randomised controlled trials conducted by Kremer et al (2022) suggests that the expected reduction in all-cause under-5 mortality from water treatment is around one in four. This meta-analysis also suggests that water treatment is among the most cost-effective ways to reduce child mortality. Providing piped water is an important step towards improving water quality. However, it is critical that it be free of microbial contamination. Even in cases where water is treated at a central location, negative pressure in pipes can cause contamination. For example, a 2019 study in Maharashtra found high rates (37 per cent) of E. Coli contamination in piped water samples. Cost-effectiveness analysis in Kremer et al. 2022 also suggests that water treatment is among the most cost-effective ways to reduce child mortality. This implies that efforts to reach as many people as possible with safe water are likely to have very large net benefits.

LASTING LESSONS FOR POST-COVID CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

D.C. Pathak

Business and professional organisations are recovering from the unprecedented disruption caused across the board by the Covid-19 pandemic that had arrived without much notice and enveloped the population at large in deep fear and survivalist concerns. The world is on its way to recovery and organisations relying on their job content and dependence on human resource are moving ahead after absorbing the paradigms of the 'new normal' set with regard to place and timing of work, methodology of communication and performance evaluation and the altered 'boss-subordinate' relationship.

Many of the shifts reflect an 'evolution of management' and are hence fit for future times. Smart CEOs have grasped the learnings from what was undoubtedly a first time experience for everybody, including the leaders, employees, clients, investors and regulators. Business is all about human activity and a health crisis that directly impacted people regardless of distinctions of class, community and region evidently challenged it in all aspects in an unending and unpredictable kind of way. And yet a deep insight and analysis of the demands that the Covid saga put on the leadership of all organisations yield extremely valuable lessons for it - for application in the times ahead. At least five of these can be easily deciphered.

First and foremost, the pandemic legitimised the call that a leader should be able to 'ride a challenge' and not merely cope with it so that the organisation is carried forward amid all odds.

For this, it was necessary to have a correct understanding of the nature of the crisis itself - Covid was an emergency of external origin, was primarily a disabler of the human resource and was, in terms of 'competition', a great equaliser for all enterprises, big and small. Madame Curie, the greatest woman scientist of all time, famously said that "nothing in life is to be feared but is to be understood", suggesting that understanding is the end of the problem. Lockdowns confined people indoors, creating a mortal scare of the 'danger lurking in the air' but the nature of the threat of the virus that required the logical triple precaution of mask, social distancing and washing of hands to counter possible touch with a contaminated surface, took a long time to be understood - even after the confinement was lifted. Leaders with a scientific temperament and a certain familiarity with human psychology and behaviour did a better job of handling the crisis but there were many who didn't understand a simple thing that mask without covering the nose had no meaning as



virus could get in with the breadth.

The leadership's first duty even now is to keep all the members updated on the virus mutations that might still be coming back with varying effects and maintain the morale of the employees.

The second most important Covid learning for corporate leaders is that a prime responsibility that fell on them in the pandemic was to ensure the welfare of the employees even if it meant foregoing some of the corporate profits temporarily.

Covid affected the precious human resource of the organisation and expected the leadership to display a higher degree of emotional intelligence so that apart from the changes in working protocols compelled by the crisis, bosses gave the impression of being aware of the family concerns of their employees too. They were required to send out the message that the corporate body was keeping up with necessary preventive medical arrangements such as oximeters, oxygen supply and special transport for a contingency. In a way, this paternal nurtural approach of the management has returned to the corporates for good. The enterprise will gain by receiving in return a much deeper organisational loyalty from its members and that would surely advance the cause of productivity as well.

Perhaps the most significant and lasting fallout of the Covid crisis is the adoption of 'work from home' resulting in a happy adjustment of the enterprise with the so-called hybrid work environment for the future.

Both employees as well as the corporate employer needed each other and with a small one-time expenditure by the organisation on fixing a workplace at home for the employee - saving the latter from the hassle of preparing for commuting to the company headquarter everyday - the new arrangement is now in vogue with satisfaction on both sides.

Flexible working hours, viability of online team meetings and introduction of shifts for attendance at the workplace provided a cost-effective alternative to the maintenance of an ostentatious corporate headquarter.

All of this has made hybrid work environment a new acceptable feature of businesses. The new challenge for the HRD leadership of ensuring supervision from a remote point, measuring the output and keeping up the vital camaraderie among the members of the organisation, seems to have been met with experience overtime and a harmonious play of the new system is in evidence, marking a progressive shift in the practice of business management universally.

Of course, online work from home has come as an advantage to certain segments of business - other than those concerning physical manufacture of products - but online support functions have become important even for the latter. Technology has received a big boost in the post-Covid era. It is not a surprise that there is phenomenal growth of global businesses offering online delivery of products and services. This trend is there to stay, but quality assurance has become pivotal for retaining a competitive edge since consumers are more impatient in today's environment. In the West, there is a debate as to whether the employees are beginning to place their personal comfort above their organisational commitment, but in the Indian context the business world is hopefully settling down to a productive economic outcome from the changes compelled by Covid. In a situation of shrinking demands and disruption of supply chains, study of local markets as also trends of globalisation, tracking of social media marketing (SMM) and in general gathering of business intelligence have become much more crucial since reliable information is needed for diversification, opening of subsidiaries and mid course corrections - which are now the order of the day.

Knowledge-based decision making was never so important. Confidentiality of exclusive knowledge is vital too for the organisation in these times when information is becoming public as soon as it is produced. Exclusive information makes a difference between a decision and a guess.

Apart from the scan of external environment, the enterprise has to have a close look internally at how the human resource development programmes are working, how is information on insider's views on the corporate working being garnered and how is the competition possibly trying to poach the experienced hands of the organisation.

Today once again the Toyota experience of feedback from the 'assembly line' is proving its worth. Moral of the story for the business world is that honesty pays in today's pandemic-ridden times. Only correct information is to be acted upon for formulating business strategy - being too tactical would not do - since what would bring success to a business enterprise is the established transparency of its dealings with the clients.

Covid might have just brought the business world closer to creating the correct relationship with the consumers and discouraging trade malpractices. If information is important for business, it is equally important to make sure that communications with partnering firms, clients and investors as also internal messaging are flawless in terms of avoiding any ambiguities, combining brevity with clarity and being prompt so that timely action is made possible. Face-to-face briefings are substituted by online reporting and advice - this is another upshot of the Covid crisis - and clearly the leadership is on test for skills of producing competent and meaningful communications.

It would do a lot of good to the organisation if its leadership looks afresh at the system of communications within the corporate body, keeping in view the hybrid work environment - this will also enable it to ensure security of sensitive information being shared online.

The days of lengthy letters drafted in black and white are over and a training of senior executives in drafting short but complete messages online would be of great help.

The empathy one can show and the willingness to explain things one could express in a verbal conversation would be difficult to replicate in digital communications and this is an important reason why leaders who communicated well on-line would achieve quick success in today's times of scarcity of in-person contacts. In short, what Covid has done is to put a further onus on the leadership for maintaining smooth functioning of the organisation in general, and keeping up productivity in particular.

(The writer is a former Director of Intelligence Bureau. The views expressed are personal)

international

WORLD MUST TRIPLE INVESTMENT IN RENEWABLE ENERGY: UN REPORT

Geneva | Agencies

Global investments in renewable energy should be tripled by 2050, in order to put the world on the trajectory towards net zero emissions, according to the latest report released by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

The supply of electricity from clean energy sources must be doubled within the next eight years, or global energy security could be undermined, the report was quoted by Xinhua news agency as saying.

According to the WMO's 2022 State of Climate Services report, climate change is putting global energy security at risk. The effects of climate change, including more frequent and intense extreme weather, are directly affecting fuel supply, energy production, and energy infrastructure.

Although water resources are scarce on a global scale, 87 per cent of global electricity generated from thermal, nuclear and hydroelectric systems in 2020 directly depended on



the availability of water. Some 33 per cent of the thermal power plants that rely on freshwater for cooling are in high water stress areas, as are 15 per cent of existing nuclear power plants -- a figure that could rise to 25 per cent in the next 20 years.

"Net zero by 2050 is the aim. But we will only get there if we double the supply of low-emissions electricity within the next eight years," said

WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas.

"The energy sector is the source of around three-quarters of global greenhouse gas emissions. Switching to clean forms of energy generation, such as solar, wind and hydropower -- and improving energy efficiency -- is vital if we are to thrive in the twenty-first century," he added.

"Time is not on our side, and our

climate is changing before our eyes. We need a complete transformation of the global energy system," the WMO chief warned.

Africa could be a major renewables player in the future, the report says. Africa is already facing severe effects from climate change, including massive droughts. The declining cost of clean technology holds new promise for Africa's future, and there is a huge opportunity for Africa to help close the gap in the need for renewable energy.

By 2050, global electricity needs will mainly be met with renewable energies, with solar power set to be the single largest source. However, although Africa is home to 60 per cent of the best solar resources globally, it only has one per cent of installed photovoltaic capacity.

In order to provide access to modern energy for all Africans, an investment of \$25 billion annually is required, the report says. This represents around one per cent of current global energy investment.

'Women entrepreneurs play vital role in ASEAN's economic growth'

Phnom Penh | Agencies

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said on Wednesday that women entrepreneurs have and will continue to play a significant role in helping boost economic growth of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the post-Covid-19 era. Addressing the second ASEAN Women Leaders' Summit in Phnom Penh, which was held in a hybrid format, Hun Sen said women entrepreneurs are a key driving force for sustainable and resilient socio-economic recovery and development toward building a common future and prosperity, reports Xinhua news agency.

He said ASEAN is a region with high economic potential and rapid development, mainly thanks to the active participation of women. "The economies of ASEAN countries depend heavily on micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), led by women," Hun Sen said.

"Within the ASEAN framework at present and in the future, women will continue to play a significant role, especially in recovering and boosting sustainable, inclusive and resilient ASEAN economic growth," he added. Hun Sen, whose country is the rotating chair of ASEAN for 2022, said in Cambodia, MSMEs, accounting for 98 per



cent of the total number of enterprises, contributed around 58 per cent to the national economy, and created around 73 per cent of total jobs.

"Of which, women establish and manage approximately 61 per cent of the total number of MSMEs," he said.

"The royal government of Cambodia has identified and promoted women as the backbone of national socio-economic development, by increasing investment in gender equality and promoting the role of women in development across sectors, and at all levels."

ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Thailand to tackle gun, drug issues after mass shooting

Bangkok | Agencies

The Thai government announced on Wednesday that gun and drug control has become a national agenda following a mass shooting at a daycare centre last week which claimed the lives of 37 people, mostly children.

Addressing a press briefing, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha said he will be chairing a new committee in an effort to tackle the country's illicit drugs and firearms abuse, Xinhua news agency reported.

Measures such as strengthening law enforcement on gun control from licensing and bearing and reviewing relevant laws are the primary scope of the committee,



Prayut said.

"The government has taken the prevention and suppression of illicit drugs seriously and from a holistic perspective," he said.

Interior Minister Anupong Paochinda shared some details about the gun control measures, which include tightening of gun licensing and crackdown on illegal possession of firearms.

Anupong also ordered the authorities to combat the

supply chains of drug trafficking and further promote rehabilitation programs for addicts.

"When the supply runs out, the chances of people getting into drugs will be lower," he said.

A shooting took place on October 6 at the centre located in Nong Bua Lamphu province.

The 34-year-old attacker was a former police officer who had been involved in drug abuse before and was fired from the force over drug allegations.

He was supposed to face trial on drugs charge in court on October 7.

The mass shooting came less than a month after an army officer shot dead two of his colleagues at a base in Bangkok.

Zelensky calls for fresh sanctions against Russia over 'new wave of terror'

Kiev | Agencies

In the wake of Russian missile strikes all across Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelensky has called for fresh sanctions against Moscow for "such a new wave of terror". He made the remarks while virtually addressing G7 leaders on Tuesday during an emergency meeting over the developments in Ukraine.

Addressing the bloc which consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and US, the President said: "For such a new wave of terror there must be a new wave of responsibility for Russia -- new sanctions, new forms of political pressure and new forms of support for Ukraine."

"The terrorist state must be deprived of even the thought that any wave of terror can bring it anything." He went on to say that at the level



of the entire G7 and the democratic world, "we must respond symmetrically: when Russia attacks the energy sector and energy stability of our countries, we must block its energy sector with sanctions, break the sta-

bility of Russian revenues from oil and gas trade".

"A tough price cap is needed for the exports of oil and gas from Russia -- zero profit for the terrorist state. Such steps can bring peace closer, they will

encourage the terrorist state to think about peace, about the unprofitability of war. Zelensky also stressed on the "obvious fact" that there cannot be any dialogue with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"Talks can be either with another head of Russia, who will comply with the UN Charter, the basic principles of humanity and territorial integrity of Ukraine, or in a different configuration, so that the key terrorist does not have the opportunity to influence key decisions through terror."

"Now one person is blocking peace, and this person is in Moscow," he added.

Responding to the Ukrainian leader's call, the G7 leaders in a joint statement condemned the missile attacks in the strongest possible and said that "we will hold President Putin and those responsible to account".



SHINDE-FADNAVIS GOVT SLAPS CASES AGAINST SENA (UBT) LEADERS

We will teach lesson to detractors: Uddhav Thackeray

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

Under siege from the continuous onslaught of the Opposition Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), several of its leaders have been targeted with police cases by the government of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis.

Among them are a Sena (UBT) MP Arvind Sawant, a deputy leader Sushma Andhare and MLA Bhaskar Jadhav, besides other leaders, following complaints by Dattaram Gavas, an activist of Shinde's Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena.

Sawant has been booked for ridiculing the Bharatiya Janata Party's Union MSME Minister Narayan Rane whom he referred to as 'kombdi chor' (chicken thief) at a public rally in Thane this week, ruffling feathers.

Jadhav has been slapped with a case for aping Shinde's style of reading out a prepared speech at his October 5 Dussehra Rally in Bandra Kurla Complex.

Andhare, has also been booked -- for mimicking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promises of giving employment to two crore youths -- at a Thane meeting.

In a statement on the October 9 meeting, the Naupada Police Station (Thane) has named other local level leaders and activists like Anita Birje, Madhukar Deshmukh, Sachin Chavan, and Dharmarajya Party's Rajan Rajee.

Accordingly, the police have charged them under various sections of Indian Penal Code for inflammatory speech, using objectionable language, attempts to incite passions and sul-



Uddhav Thackeray and Eknath Shinde.

lying the image of CM Shinde, etc. Sena (UBT) leaders have cried foul over the police action, terming it as a 'political vendetta' intended to 'silence and destroy the Opposition'.

Senior farmers leader of the Sena (UBT) Kishore Tiwari said that the Shinde-Fadnavis government is "selectively targeting" party's leaders who raise their voice against the regime to demoralise the party rank-and-file.

"Does the government have the courage to throw them in jail like other Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) leaders? How many Opposition leaders will they imprison... This

is blatant misuse of power and harassment of those who oppose them," said Tiwari grimly.

Condemning the development, Nationalist Congress Party Chief Spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said that "the validity of this (Shinde-Fadnavis) government is still pending before the Supreme Court", and the Opposition leaders have a fundamental right to criticise the government's shortcomings.

"Under such circumstances, such police actions are anti-democracy and the government is trying to brow-beat the Opposition and silence them from speaking out," Tapase added sharply. Strongly flaying the police

cases, veteran Sena (UBT) union leader Dr. Raghunath Kuchik said that the Shinde-Fadnavis government has "crossed all limits of political decency" by targeting political opponents.

"When the BJP was in the Opposition, they used foul language against the Maha Vikas Aghadi CM (Uddhav Thackeray), other ministers and party leaders, but we did not hound them with flimsy cases... The government should withdraw these police cases," demanded Dr. Kuchik.

Congress state G.S. Sachin Sawant said this was another example of how the BJP muzzles the Opposition parties all over India.

"Although the language used by the BJP leaders is extremely derogatory and abusive, no action is taken against them. Two sets of laws are vividly seen currently, one for the BJP leaders and the other for the opposition which is extremely unfortunate," rued Sawant.

An unfazed Andhare said that if speaking the truth is an offence, then she was ready to face all the consequences of the police case lodged against her, but would continue to raise her voice against any injustice to the people. Though both Andhare and Jadhav said they had received no communication from the police, they said whatever they spoke is in the public domain, even as the Thane Police continues its probe.

Earlier, Thane MP Rajan Vichare had alleged that the police were under pressure from CM Shinde and even people who attended Thackeray's Dussehra Rally (October 5) at Shivaji Park last week were being served notices or facing cases.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday said the Election Commission's move to freeze the 'Shiv Sena' name and the 'bow and arrow' symbol has angered his party workers who will teach their detractors a lesson.

The Election Commission on Monday allotted 'flaming torch' (mashaal) election symbol to the Thackeray faction of Shiv Sena.

In an order on the dispute in the Shiv Sena, the Election Commission allotted 'ShivSena - Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray' as the party name for the Thackeray faction, and 'Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena' (Balasaheb's Shiv Sena) as the name for the Eknath Shinde group of the party.

The Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government collapsed in June this year after a revolt led by Shinde against the party leadership. Shinde later became the chief minister with the BJP's support.

On Wednesday, addressing his party workers from Uran in neighbouring Raigad district, Thackeray said their organisation will



Uddhav Thackeray speaking at a podium.

brave all attempts to destroy it and emerge stronger. "We will teach our detractors a befitting lesson. Our boiling blood will ensure our detractors are taught a lesson," he said. Thackeray further said there will be a Shiv Sena "wave" and "we will have a chief minister from our party" in near future.

He urged the party workers to ensure the awareness about their new poll symbol 'mashaal' reaches every household. "We have to prepare for elections - from the gram panchayat to the Lok Sabha," he said. The Election Commission had barred both the factions from using the name 'Shiv Sena' and the election symbol 'bow and arrow' in order to place the rival groups on an even keel and to protect their rights and interests ahead of the November 3 bypoll to Andheri East Assembly seat in Mumbai.

Mumbai man thought 'Djinn' was stealing gold

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A Mumbai businessman was perplexed at first when he noticed some gold ornaments were missing from his home in February. More jewellery items went missing over the next few months but, he avoided filing a police complaint. He thought it was a "djinn's doing".

He finally filed a police complaint in September after a huge sum of cash was also stolen along with the

jewellery. "Djinn's don't steal cash," Abdulkader Shabbir Ghoghawala, the businessman, told the Byculla police. By then, gold and cash worth more than Rs 40 lakh had been stolen from his house.

The police, who suspected the case to be an inside job, acted swiftly and traced the accused within a day. It turned out to be the man's 12-year-old niece.

During the investigation, she revealed that her cousin, who was from Surat in

Gujarat, asked her to steal from her uncle's house. After her revelation, the police arrested the cousin and his two friends after the probe linked them to the case.

The police also recovered some of the stolen items worth Rs 40.18 lakh from their possession.

No action has been taken against the girl so far, the police said, adding a detailed report to the Juvenile Justice Board will be sent after her role in the case is ascertained.

Iranian navy officer suffers heart attack, evacuated by Indian Navy

Team Absolute | Mumbai

An Indian Navy ALH helicopter was despatched to help an Iranian Navy officer who had suffered a heart attack on a ship sailing off Mumbai, officials said on Wednesday.

At around 8.30 a.m., the Iranian Navy requested medical evacuation of its Navy officer who had suffered a cardiac arrest onboard IRI Ship Makaran, off the Mumbai coast. The Indian Navy helicopter from INS Shikra flew to the vessel and evacuated the patient along-



with two attendants. They were directly airlifted to the Navy hospital, INHS Asvini by 9.50 a.m., in less than 90 minutes, and the officer admitted for treatment.

Surge in airfares ahead of festive season as demand goes up

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

Rise in domestic aviation traffic has led to a surge in the airfares ahead of the festive season.

The domestic aviation traffic has recorded continuous improvement and as per Civil Aviation Ministry, the number crossed the mark of 4 lakh daily passengers on October 9.

Similarly, airlines passenger load factor (PLF) has also witnessed remarkable rise along with the restoration of domestic air traffic. Most of the airlines recorded occupancy or PLF in the range of 90 per cent as compared with nearly 80 per cent a couple of weeks ago.

"We are witnessing a surge in positive consumer sentiment and this is driving our demand for the upcoming Diwali period by 50-60 per cent Vs last year. Understandably there is a considerable surge in airfares to high-load domestic destinations compared to pre-cap removal; also supply con-



straints for international destinations," said a spokesperson of Thomas Cook India.

Airfares to popular routes from various hubs like Mumbai, Pune, Delhi and Bengaluru are witnessing an uptick during the upcoming Diwali period as compared with the previous year. "We have seen an increase of 50-60 per cent for Andaman, Himachal and Kashmir, 50 per cent for Goa and Kerala. Metros like Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, etc are also witnessing

surge pricing of 25-30 per cent Vs last year as India's migrant working professionals are travelling back to their hometown to celebrate Diwali with their families," he said.

Our data indicates that despite a surge in airfares coupled with visa challenges, we continue to see a strong uptick for international travel compared to pre-pandemic levels. Airfares to Australia, Europe's Switzerland, France and Spain; UK have seen a surge by 30-35 per cent

for Diwali, South East Asia's Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia by 35 per cent; Vietnam and Cambodia by 40 per cent; also Dubai 35 per cent and Mauritius 15 per cent," he said.

Earlier, the Civil Aviation Ministry had removed limits imposed on domestic airfares from August 31, 2022. The decision to remove the limits was taken after analysis of daily demand and prices of air turbine fuel (ATF).

Sherlyn Chopra not looking to settle scores with Sajid

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress and celebrity Sherlyn Chopra is miffed with the makers of the reality television show 'Bigg Boss' for including film director Sajid Khan, who was embroiled in the #MeToo controversy in India, back in 2018.

However, she has clarified that she just wants to make her voice heard along with several other women, who are the victims to Sajid's sexual misconduct.

During a media interaction at her Juhu home in Mumbai, Sherlyn told reporters, "I'm not looking to settle the scores with Sajid, I just want to make sure that no other



woman falls victim to a molester like Sajid Khan."

She further mentioned that she would like to go to the 'Bigg Boss' house not as a contestant but just for a day to have a face off with Sajid Khan so that she could bring the truth to light on national television.

"I'm waiting for 'Bigg Boss' makers to call me and

women who are Sajid's victims, to the reality show just for just one day. I'll come on national television and face him and ask him to flash his private parts for the camera, we will then give a rating to him on national television, as he requested me for the same several years back when I went to his place for a narration", she added.

Mumbai Police prohibits flying, sale of lanterns ahead of Diwali

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A prohibitory order issued by the police on Wednesday said, as reports have been received that due to the situation prevailing in the areas under the control of the Commissioner of Police, Mumbai, it is noticed that the use, sale and storage of flying lanterns during October 16 to November 14 in Mumbai Police Commissionerate area may cause grave danger to human life, safety and injury to public property.

It further said, the use, sale and storage in the Mumbai Police Commissionerate, to prevent the activities of anti-social elements through flying lanterns, immediate action is necessary for the prevention of the same.

The order issued by DCP



(Operations) Sanjay Latkar further said that no flying activities of such type of flying lanterns and no use, sale and storage is to be allowed in the jurisdiction Mumbai Police Commissionerate. Any person contravening this order shall be punishable under Section 188 of the

Indian Penal Code, 1860. The order would be published for the information of the public, the affixing copies on the notice boards of the police stations, Divisional ACPs, Zonal DCPs, Municipal Ward offices and by affixing copies at Tahsil and Ward offices.

'I will definitely return': Sanjay Raut's touching note to Mom

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut - currently in custody - recently penned a touching letter to his "Priy Aai" (Dear Mother) in which he displayed his fighting spirit and promised to "return" and re-join her.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The letter, released by him on social media, was penned by him on August 8, sitting on a bench outside the court when he was sent to judicial custody - a week after his arrest on August 1 by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

He recalled how his Mom - Savita R. Raut - had sat stoically near a photo of the Shiv Sena founder, the late Balasaheb Thackeray at their home, when the ED team raided their home (July 31), and how she finally lost composure and broke down when the sleuths took him away that evening.

"You gently rebuked me... started crying... I heard your cries above the roar of hundreds of Shiv Sainiks raising slogans outside, came outside and waved to them, told me to 'come back soon', and kept your hand raised till the (ED)



car went out," Raut said.

Vowing to come back, he said that thousands of jawans guard the borders for months before going home, some never return, and "wars are like this". "Even I am fighting against injustice, I will never bow before the enemies of Shiv Sena, meaning Maharashtra, that's why I must remain away from you... Haven't I learnt this from you," Raut asked.

The Sena MP referred to the revolts and exits of Chhagan Bhujbal and later Narayan Rane and four months ago, Eknath Shinde, and said "it was you who wondered why these people left, what did they not get (in Shiv Sena) and do anything but save the party".

Raut said that in order to save the party, a struggle was necessary and as taught by Mom, he committed to never "betray the Shiv Sena or Balasaheb Thackeray".



Khloe Kardashian had a tumour removed from her face

Los Angeles | Agencies

Reality TV star Khloe Kardashian had a tumour removed from her face after suffering a cancer scare. The 38-year-old star has revealed to her social media followers that she's undergone an operation to have a small bump removed from her cheek, reports femlefirst.co.uk.

Khloe wrote on her Instagram Story: "I have seen numerous stories going around about the ever-evolving bandage on my face, with some of you wondering why I've been wearing one for the past few weeks."

"After noticing a small bump on my face and assuming it was something as minor as a zit, I decided to get it biopsied 7 months after realising it was not bugging."

"Dermatologist Dr Tess Mauricio (@drtessmauricio) examined it, and a second biopsy was ran by Dr. Daniel Behroozan (@drdanbehroozan) because what they were both seeing was incredibly rare for someone my age."

"A few days later I was told I need to have an immediate operation to remove a tumour from my face. I called none other than Dr. Garth Fischer, a dear friend of my families and one of the best surgeons in Beverly Hills who I knew would take incredible care of my face."

The reality star subsequently explained that her face is currently "healing". Khloe also speculated that she'll have a scar on her face for some time to come.



Tom Felton admits to struggling to land roles

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Tom Felton is all set if he's asked to return for another 'Harry Potter' film. Playing Draco Malfoy in the movie adaptations of J.K. Rowling's wizardry novels, the 35-year-old actor confirmed that he would "consider" reprising the part if the series returned to the big screen, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I'd be lying if I said I wouldn't consider it. I definitely don't miss Draco Malfoy, but I am very affectionately linked to him," Tom told the newspaper. "It seemed, looking back at it now that Potter would be the only thing in my life. But there were many, many things ahead of that."

Felton, who has written the memoir 'Beyond the Wand, The Magic and Mayhem of Growing Up a Wizard', explained that it has been tough to move beyond 'Harry Potter' as an actor and found it difficult auditioning for parts in Hollywood.

He explained, "It wasn't really returning to auditioning. It was learning to audition all over again. When children are brought in, half of it is, 'Can you stand on the mark, not look down the lens of the camera, and take basic direction?' I mean, really, how good can any seven-year-old be at anything?" "Going in there as a 20-year-old, especially in Los Angeles, the auditions are far more frequent and cut-throat. It's a lesson - not necessarily in brutality, but in acceptance."



Los Angeles | Agencies

Disney has paused its film schedule, delaying the releases of 'Blade', 'Deadpool 3', 'Fantastic Four' and other major Marvel properties. As part of the shuffle, 'Blade' has moved from November 3, 2023, to September 6, 2024. 'Deadpool 3' has relocated from September 6, 2024, to November 8, 2024; 'Fantastic Four' has shifted from November 8, 2024, to February 14, 2025; an untitled Marvel film has been pushed from February 14, 2025, to November 7, 2025; 'Avengers: Secret Wars' has been delayed from November 7, 2025, to May 1, 2026; and another untitled Marvel film set for May 1, 2026 has been removed from Disney's calendar, reports 'Variety'. In non-comic book news, Searchlight's historical drama 'Chevalier', starring Kelvin Harrison Jr. as the musician

'Blade', 'Deadpool 3', 'Fantastic Four', 'Secret Wars' and more Marvel films delayed

Chevalier de Saint-Georges, will open in theaters on April 7, 2023; 'Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes' is set for May 24, 2024; and 'A Haunting in Venice' is dated for September 15, 2023.

In the case of 'Blade', the yearlong postponement is unsurprising, given the recent news that Bassam Tariq exited the project, leaving the film without a director.

Marvel has paused the production -- starring Mahershala Ali as the vampire slayer -- as the studio looks to hire a new helmer.

Given the interconnected storylines in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, the substantial delay for 'Blade' reverberated on the rest of the films in development. The next Marvel movie to hit the big screen will be November's 'Black Panther: Wakanda Forever', which marks the end of Phase Four of the MCU.

Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige announced in July at San Diego Comic-Con that 'Fantastic Four' will kick off Phase Six, making 'Blade' and 'Deadpool 3' the final two films to round out Phase Five.



NYC's Mayor performs Allu Arjun's hand gesture from 'Pushpa'

Los Angeles | Agencies

The entire world has been bitten by the 'Pushpa: The Rise' bug as now New York City's mayor performed actor's iconic hand gesture from the film. New York's Mayor Eric Adams was seen doing the hand gesture during an event organised by the Telugu community in the city where he interacted with the people and also celebrated the festival of Batukamma with them.

A clip shared by a fan account on Twitter, Mayor was seen performing the iconic hand gesture with two more guests. The fan account wrote, "Thank you @NYCMayor for Showing Your Love towards Our Indian Film #Pushpa ai, ! Special Thanks and Congratulations to our @anusuyakhasba gaaru and #mangli for making the event grand Successful Video By: @NYCMayorsOffice @alluarjun ac #Anasuya ac #AlluArjun @PushpaMovie" Allu Arjun's 'Pushpa: The Rise' became a phenomenon upon its release. The film also stars Rashmika Mandanna and Faahad Faasil. The second installment has gone on floors.



Los Angeles | Agencies

'Under the Silver Lake' star Sydney Sweeney has been signed for a new 'Barbarella' movie for Sony Pictures. The film is currently in the early phase of development, with no director, producer or writer currently attached, reports 'Variety'. Sweeney seemed to confirm her involvement with the project through an Instagram post.

The actress shared an image of original artwork from the original 1968 space opera, with a caption, "time to save the universe."

According to 'Variety', Sweeney has become somewhat of a marquee talent at Sony Pictures, with the actress co-starring alongside Dakota Johnson in the Marvel Comics adaptation 'Madame Web'.

The studio also landed the rights to 'The Registration', an adaptation of Madison Lawson's thriller of the same name. Brad Fuller is producing, while Sweeney is attached to star. Adapted from French writer and illustrator Jean-Claude Forest's comic series, the original 1968 'Barbarella' starred Jane Fonda as the eponymous space-travelling heroine. Although the film was not a box office smash at the time, it has garnered a cult film status in the decades since, with Barbarella widely seen as one of Fonda's most iconic on-screen roles.

Sydney Sweeney on-board new 'Barbarella' movie



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actors Michelle Yeoh and Pete Davidson are rolling out for 'Transformers: Rise

of the Beasts', with both actors cast in voice roles in the upcoming franchise entry from Paramount. On Tuesday afternoon, 'Rise of the Beasts' director Steven Caple Jr.

Pete Davidson, Michelle Yeoh roped in for 'Transformers: Rise of the Beasts'

shared the news of the pair joining the production through an Instagram post, featuring two different videos from recording sessions "the first with Davidson and the second with Yeoh, reports 'Variety'. Yeoh voices a character named Airazor, while Davidson voices Mirage. The two join a cast that includes Anthony Ramos and Dominique Fishback, who will star in the film in live-action roles.

"Rise of the Beasts" will bring the 'Transformers' franchise to the 1990's, a time period which

Paramount's films have not taken place in yet.

"The film is said to introduce the Maximals and Terrorcons, two more cybernetic alien parties that will take sides in the Earth-bound battle between Autobots and Decepticons." Within 'Transformers' lore, Yeoh's character, Airazor, is a member of the Maximals, which are the descendants of the Autobots. She can transform into a falcon-like appearance. Mirage is an autobot that has previously appeared in

Paramount's "Transformers" films, voiced by the late actor Francesco Quinn in 2011's "Transformers: Dark of the Moon."

'Transformers: Rise of the Beasts' is produced by Lorenzo di Bonaventura, Michael Bay, Mark Vahradian and Duncan Henderson. Entertainment One, Hasbro's entertainment studio, executive produces, while Skydance and New Republic Pictures are co-financing and executive producing. The film is set to hit theaters on June 9, 2023.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Emma Hernan



National Games

Services bag five boxing gold, Kerala claim grand double in volleyball on final day

Gandhinagar | Agencies

Table toppers Services completed their National Games campaign in a blaze of glory, winning five gold medals in the boxing ring at the Mahatma Mandir complex here on Wednesday.

While Services sent out five winners from among six boxing finalists, Haryana were left disappointed as only four of their eight pugilists on view on Wednesday emerged winners. With Nikhil Dubey, the lone Maharashtra finalist, claiming an emotional 75kg class gold, the Western Indian state was able to take the second spot on the medal table behind Services, who finished with 61 gold, 35 silver, and 32 bronze medals.

Nikhil Dubey realised his late coach Dhananjay Tiwary's dreams by pocketing the yellow metal with a 5-0 victory over lesser-known Malsawmitluanga of Mizoram in the men's middleweight final. Coach Tiwary died in a road accident on Tuesday when on his way here to watch his ward in the final.



In Bhavnagar, Kerala completed a volleyball double, winning both the men's and women's gold medals.

Kerala men defeated Tamil Nadu 25-23, 28-26, 27-25 to clinch the last gold medal on offer in the Games.

Earlier, Kerala won the women's Volleyball gold with a straight-set victory over West Bengal. The second set was thrilling as it was played over several extra points before

Kerala closed it at 36-34.

At the Mahatma Mandir here, the Services juggernaut was well served by two-time Commonwealth Games medallist, Mohammed Hussamuddin (57kg), Etash Khan Muhammed (60kg), Akash (67kg), Sanjeet (92kg) and Narendar (+92kg) in winning five Boxing gold medals on the final day of the National Games.

Earlier, National championship silver medallists Ankit Sharma (51kg) and Minakshi (52kg) boosted Haryana's gold haul by winning the men's and women's flyweight finals, respectively.

Ankit gained a unanimous verdict over Himachal Pradesh's Avinash Chandel while Minakshi, a 2018 Khelo India gold medallist, produced a similar verdict against Uttarakhand's Shobha Kohli with clean punches to unsettle an opponent who was over-reliant on the counter-attack.

Tokyo 2020 bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain (Assam) got her jabs and combination punches working to perfection against Haryana's Saweety Boora to cap her National Games debut with a memorable gold. Haryana and Assam sent out two winners each while Punjab's Simranjeet Kaur took a redeeming gold in the 60kg category. In the women's 57kg featherweight bout, Punjab's Mandeep Kaur paid the price for starting defensively as Haryana's Poonam gave herself a clear lead after the first two rounds to pocket the contest by a 4-1 margin.

Suryakumar firm at No. 2 in latest T20I Batter Rankings

Dubai | Agencies

New Zealand star batter Devon Conway has jumped into the top-five in the latest T20I Batter Rankings to join the likes of Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan, India's Suryakumar Yadav and Babar Azam, who are holding on to the top three positions.

As the race to be the No.1 batter in the world heats up ahead of the T20 World Cup, Conway, the leading run-getter in the ongoing T20I Tri-series in New Zealand, jumped into the top five T20I Batting Rankings following an unbeaten 70 against Bangladesh and another unbeaten 49 against Pakistan in the following game to leapfrog Aaron Finch and Dawid Malan. He currently has 760 rating points.

The New Zealand cricketer closely follows South Africa middle-order batter Aiden Markram, who is at No.4 with 777 points.

Rizwan started the tri-series with an unbeaten 78, but hasn't made significant contributions since. His lead



over Suryakumar is now reduced to just 15 rating points and Babar is another 30 points back in third. The T20 World Cup in Australia should heat up the three-way race for the pole position.

Meanwhile, England quicks Mark Wood and Reece Topley were the big movers in the Bowling Rankings with the latter finishing just outside the top 10 by jumping three places to reach career-best rating points of 646.

Wood, who impressed with his pace after returning from injury, moved 14 places to enter the top 20. At

No.18, he is the highest-ranked England pacer after Topley in the T20I bowling rankings.

Wood took 3/34 in the first T20I against Australia after taking six wickets at an average of 7.50 in Pakistan in the seven-match series. Topley, meanwhile, took two wickets in the Perth T20I and is England's leading wicket-taker in T20Is this year.

Jos Buttler and Alex Hales too gained big points after a 132-run opening stand in the T20I in Perth. Buttler jumped up four places to No.22 while Alex Hales moved into the top 100.

SAN DIEGO OPEN



ZHENG QINWEN SETS SWIATEK REMATCH AFTER MUGURUZA RETIRES

San Diego (USA) | Agencies

World No.1 Iga Swiatek will start her San Diego Open campaign against Tokyo finalist Zheng Qinwen after the Chinese star advanced to the second round after Garbine Muguruza was forced to retire, down 5-0 in the first set, due to illness.

A finalist at the Toray Pan Pacific Open two weeks ago, No.28 Zheng fell in the final round of qualifying to Camila Osorio, 4-6, 6-4, 7-6(3). She gained entry into the main draw on Tuesday as a lucky loser, after Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina withdrew earlier in the day due to illness. Zheng's victory sets

up a French Open rematch against Swiatek. The two young stars faced off for the first time in Paris this spring, with Zheng taking the first set before losing 6-7(5), 6-0, 6-2 in the Round of 16. It was the only set Swiatek lost during her dominant title run.

Zheng's first-set performance left a big impression on Swiatek, who was in the midst of her 37-match win streak at the time.

"It's hard for me to say how she plays on a hard court because I didn't really watch her matches," Swiatek said in Paris.

Zheng struggled physically in the match, but the 20-year-old walked away confident that she was ready to challenge the best in the game.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Berlin | Agencies

Borussia Dortmund have consolidated their second place in UEFA Champions League Group G after Jude Bellingham's equaliser helped to clinch a 1-1 draw with Sevilla on Tuesday.

The visitors from Spain started brightly on the road and produced the first chance of the encounter with 12 minutes play.

Sevilla were rewarded for their courageous start six minutes later, after Tanguy Nianzou headed home a pinpoint free kick from Rakitic into the area.

The opener was a wake-up call for Dortmund as Karim Adeyemi pushed forward, but the youngster opted for a

Dortmund draw with Sevilla; Maccabi Haifa shock Juventus



cutback instead of unleashing a shot on target with only Sevilla goalkeeper Yassine Bounou to beat in the 24th minute, reports Xinhua.

Dortmund's efforts paid off as Edin Terzic's side eventu-

ally restored parity 10 minutes later after Thomas Meunier's cross into the box allowed Bellingham to slot home the equalizer from a central position.

Sevilla had the only

chance to snatch victory, but Erik Lamela couldn't poke home a loose ball following a corner from very close range in the 67th minute.

Meanwhile, Israeli champions Maccabi Haifa achieved a surprising 2-0 home win against Juventus.

The win gave Haifa their first points in Group H after three losses, while Juventus remained with three points from their 3-1 win over Haifa in Turin last week.

Around 30,000 fans at the Sammy Ofer Stadium saw a strong opening by the home team.

On the next matchday, Maccabi Haifa will play Paris Saint-Germain in France, while Benfica will host Juventus, with both matches to be played on October 25.

BCCI CHIEF GANGULY LEFT 'DISAPPOINTED AND DEJECTED' AFTER FALLING OUT OF FAVOUR

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly, who is soon going to become a former BCCI president, has fallen out of favour in the board and is reportedly ending his term on a 'disappointing' note.

During the upcoming BCCI AGM and elections on October 18, most members of the outgoing administration are set to find places in the new dispensation, barring Ganguly and Jayesh George, the joint secretary. And, Ganguly is definitely not pleased with the developments in the last few days. The former India all-rounder Roger Binny on Tuesday



filed his nomination for the post of BCCI president and is likely to get elected unopposed since no other candidate has emerged so far as his challenger. As a normal practice, the outgoing BCCI president proposes the name of the upcoming

board chief but a dejected Ganguly didn't do the same with Binny. The former cricketer was to himself on Tuesday at the board's office largely, while others were involved in the nomination process, a Cricbuzz report said.

"He clearly looked upset, disappointed and dejected," said a member who was present at the BCCI office. The 50-year-old was the last one to leave the BCCI office after the nomination process ended, swiftly getting into his car and rolling up the glasses of the window. Outside the BCCI office, there were also murmurs among state representatives about the immediate future of Ganguly.

Not disappointed over T20 World Cup non-selection; working on processes: Kuldeep Yadav

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav remarked that he was not at all dejected over his non-selection for the upcoming T20 World Cup, starting in Australia this month and insisted he's working on his processes on match-by-match basis apart from a boost in confidence.

"I am not disappointed (over not getting selected) in the T20 World Cup as I am working on my process match by match. I am assessing how I can improve. My confidence improved after the IPL. I went to the West Indies and bowled well there." "I bowled well in Zimbabwe, too,

and for India A recently. I've always had confidence. Wickets or the lack of them don't reflect the confidence I have. Throughout the series, I was bowling as well as I wanted to bowl. My confidence has gone up," said Kuldeep in the post-match press conference.

Kuldeep had suffered a knee injury during the second half of IPL 2021 and had to undergo surgery for the same, keeping him out of action for a long time. After he made a comeback through the ODIs against the West Indies, Kuldeep shined in IPL 2022, picking 21 wickets for Delhi Capitals, becoming the fifth leading wicket-taker in the competition.

Men's T20 World Cup

Shardul replaces injured Chahar; to fly to Australia with Shami, Siraj



Team Absolute | New Delhi

All-rounder Shardul Thakur has replaced injured Deepak Chahar as a reserve player in the India squad for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Australia beginning on October 16. Shardul, who played a crucial role in India's 2-1 series win over

South Africa, will soon leave for Australia along with fellow pacers Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj to join India's T20 World Cup squad, an India Today report said on Wednesday.

The 30-year-old Chahar was named as part of the reserves for the T20 World Cup along with Shami, Shreyas Iyer and Ravi

Bishnoi. But with pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah ruled out due to a stress fracture in the back, the CSK pacer was tipped to replace him in the 15-member squad. Shami is being tipped to replace Bumrah in the squad but with the 32-year-old returning to the side following a prolonged bout of Covid-19 and having hardly played T20I cricket since the 2021 T20 World Cup in the UAE could go against him, though he did exceptionally well during the Test series in Australia, which India won 2-1 to clinch the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

On the other hand, Siraj's impressive form in the recently-concluded ODI series against South Africa, which India won 2-1, might push him in the 15-member squad.

Suryakumar reminds me of AB de Villiers: Dale Steyn

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former South African pace bowler Dale Steyn has likened charismatic middle-order batter Suryakumar Yadav's emergence to AB de Villiers, one of the most successful Proteas batter, adding that the Indian's red-hot form will be crucial to the 2007 T20 World Cup champion's success in the upcoming edition of the tournament in Australia.

Suryakumar has been in blazing form, with his success with the bat in the recently-concluded T20I series against Australia and South Africa pivotal to the hosts winning both the high-stakes fixtures.

"He's (Suryakumar) the kind of player that likes to use the pace of the ball. He likes to get in behind the square. In places like Perth, Melbourne, all of these grounds, there is a little bit of extra pace on it. So, you can use the pace, you can hit on fine leg, behind and all along the carpet. And he's also really good



when standing still and getting off the back foot. He has played some amazing back-foot cover drives and some beautiful cover drives off the front foot too," opined Steyn on Star Sports show Cricket Live.

Steyn also called Suryakumar a 360-degree player who played very much like De Villiers.

"So, he's an all-round player, and it's in Australia, where the wickets are so good, they are batter friendly. You can also get away when a bowler tries to bowl full, you can place the ball left and you can use the pace of the ball really well, given some room. So, he is a wonderful 360 degree player, and reminds me of AB de Villiers. He could be India's version of AB de Villiers and with the red-hot form that he's in right now, he's a player to definitely watch out for this World Cup," added Steyn.

Steyn also heaped praise on Shreyas Iyer, who scored a match-winning century in the second ODI against South Africa.



Rapper Badshah dating Punjabi actress Isha Rikhi?

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rapper-Singer Badshah separated from his wife Jasmine two years ago. If reports are to be believed, all was not well in their paradise. However, Rapper Badshah is reportedly in a serious relationship with Punjabi actress Isha Rikhi. A source close to Badshah told a leading portal, "It's been a year that rapper is seeing a Punjabi actress. Badshah met Isha Rikhi at a party of their common friend. The lovebirds instantly hit it off.

At a party, they figured out that they have familiar taste in films and music, so they vibed together. The couple wants to take things slowly as of now. But as a matter of fact, Badshah and Isha have already

told about their relationship to their respective families. And everyone is happy about it."

For those who are unaware, Badshah and Jasmine have a daughter Jessem Grace Masih Singh. After separation, Jasmine decided to shift to London with her daughter.

On the professional front, the rapper has had 3 music singles this year - Tabahi, Voodoo and Trap Munde. He was previously seen in a special appearance in Ek Villain Returns. He has composed music for Dhaakad.



Netizens ask her to leave Rishabh Pant alone

URVASHI RAUTELA POSES WEARING SINDOOR, MANGALSUTRA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Urvashi Rautela has shared a cryptic post for Karva Chauth, which has made netizens ask her to leave cricketer Rishabh Pant alone. Urvashi, who is currently in Australia, made a post for Karva Chauth on Instagram. She is seen dressed in a red saree and has completed her look with a

mangalsutra and sindoor.

She captioned the image: "Prem main padi premika ko, sindoor se priye kuch nahi hota! Saari rasm rivaaz ke saath chahiye umar bhar ka saath piya tumse."

Users couldn't stop themselves commenting on the picture as they thought the caption is cryptic and directed towards Pant.

One wrote: "World cup ke baad hum shaadi karwa denge but please usko divert na karo." "Pant ko chod do world cup ke liye please," said another.

"Is hisaab se chalta rahega to World Cup ka to pata nai, bhayai Bhabhi ki Australia me zarur ho jaegi," commented a user. Another wrote: "Bus T 20 world cup tak ruk jao, uske bad ma khud baat karunga bhai se appko apni bhabhi bna krr hi rahunga."

It was in 2018, when rumours started brewing that Pant and Urvashi were dating as they were spotted together. However, later, the cricketer debunked all rumours with a picture with Isha Negi.

ARMAAN MALIK
NOMINATED FOR MTV EUROPE
MUSIC AWARDS 2022!



Team Absolute | Chennai

Singer-songwriter Armaan Malik, who has had a terrific year so far doing career-defining projects such as the feature on Ed Sheeran's '2Step' and 'Memu Aagamu' with Allu Arjun, seems all set to close the year on a high with his latest English single 'You' earning him his second MTV EMA nomination for 'Best India Act'.

His first International single, 'Control', won him the MTV EMA in 2020 and marked a major milestone in the journey of taking his music from India to the world. Talking about this honour, Armaan

says, "I am elated to earn yet another nomination at the prestigious MTV EMAs for my English single, 'You'!

"Last time, I'd won the award for my debut single 'Control' and it was such a massive career milestone for me! I hope to make my fans, family and the country proud once again. I wish the very best to the other talented nominees alongside me, this is a big moment for all of us." Public voting for award categories is now live on the MTV EMAs website: <https://armaan.lnk.to/voteAM4EMA> The awards ceremony celebrating global artists will be held in Dusseldorf, Germany on November 13.

NEETI MOHAN SAYS FATHER WAS HER BIGGEST 'SUPPORT SYSTEM'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer Neeti Mohan, who is currently seen judging the young talents on the singing reality show 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Li' Champs' gave credit to her father Brij Mohan Sharma for her successful career. When 'Jiya Re' singer saw the performance of 11-year-old Devika Sharma from Hyderabad on the track 'Humain Tumse Pyaar Kitna' from Rajesh Khanna and Hema Malini-starrer 'Kudrat', she praised her and was touched to see her father's reaction looking at his daughter.

She said it is a proud moment for any father to see their daughter performing so well and recalled her father. Neeti said: "I can connect to your story because just like you are 3 sisters, we are also 4 sisters. When we all decided to be artists, our father was our biggest support system. Today, when I saw your father getting emotional while you were singing, I knew how he was feeling."

The 42-year-old singer, who became quite popular with the song 'Ishq Wala Love' from the movie 'Student of the Year' and later also sung 'Nazar Laaye' from 'Raanjhanaa', 'Sau Aasmaan' from 'Baar Baar Dekho', 'Tu Hi Tu' from 'Kick' and others. She said every father plays a very important role in the success of their daughter and similarly, her father also supported her a lot to reach the level where she is now. "I truly believe that behind every successful daughter there is a father, and I think this thought fits into my life story as well as yours. In the future, wherever we reach, whatever we do, it's all because of our father's blessing and his support. I want to thank my father and all the other fathers who support their daughters in achieving their dreams," she added. 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Li' Champs' is judged by Shankar Mahadevan, Anu Malik, Neeti Mohan and hosted by Bharti Singh.



Rihanna is Ayushi Khurana's fashion icon

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ayushi Khurana, who is currently seen playing the titular role in the TV show 'Ajooni' talks about her look in the serial and says that pop star Rihanna is her fashion icon and she loves her style. Ayushi started her career as a stylist and with the money she earned, she came to Mumbai to fulfill her dream of becoming an actress. She says: "Comfort is my number one style motto. Style refers to a person's own way of expressing oneself. Being an actress has always been my dream." "And styling is just a passion that has evolved into a career. Since I couldn't start out as an actress, I started styling to manage my expenses. Once I had saved up some cash, I came to Mumbai to pursue my goal."

"Rihanna is my fashion icon; I adore how she handles herself. I've always looked up to her as my fashion inspiration since she can look good in any outfit, but when I style myself, I also prioritise my comfort and how I feel. Since comfort is my number one fashion tenet, I often try to keep things simple, stylish, and bohemian."



Team Absolute | Chennai

Actress Kaniha, who has made a mark in the Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam film industries with

her commendable performances, has told her followers on Instagram that one's competition must be with oneself. On Instagram, the actress, who posted a video of her working out to stay fit, wrote, "It's me against me. I am in no competition with anybody. I just try to be a better version of myself everyday, I set simple goals every morning." "Some days are hard, some days you may end up feeling unworthy, and some days you may feel on top of the world! Life is a roller-coaster, brace yourselves and enjoy the ride." "Haters will hate! You keep inching forward and make progress. Remember it's just you vs you." The actress had, only a few days ago, told her followers to try putting a smile on someone's face to feel good. She had written, "Wanna feel good today? Try putting a smile on someone's face. Flash a genuine smile and compliment someone at home, at your work place, someone from your own family or friends. Sometimes acknowledgement and appreciation can go a long way!!"

IT'S
ME AGAINST ME,
SAYS ACTRESS
KANIHA



Ananya Pandey