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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI

NATION > 02

'Evidence speaks volumes..': Court denies Sisodia bail in ED's ...



HOLLYWOOD > 06

Rita Ora poses up a storm as she shares behind-the-scenes snaps of herself ...



SPORTS > 07

IPL 2023: Lucknow Super Giants hammer Punjab Kings by 56...



CASE TO BE REGISTERED AGAINST WFI CHIEF ON WRESTLERS' COMPLAINT

GRAPPLERS WON ROUND 1

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi Police on Friday informed the Supreme Court that it will register an FIR in connection with women wrestlers' allegation of sexual harassment against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Delhi Police, submitted before a bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, "We have decided to register FIR, we will register it today. Nothing else survives..."

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing the women wrestlers, submitted that they are worried on two grounds -- number one, security and safety -- and second, there are several cases against Singh.

The Chief Justice told Mehta, "Mr. Solicitor, we'll record your statement that FIR is being registered. Second, we'll say that let security be provided to her (to the minor complainant). Instead of disposing of it, we'll take it after a week?" On the aspect of the court taking up the case next week, Mehta said this is going in a different direction. The bench, also



Top Indian sports stars in support of protesting wrestlers

Mumbai: India's first two individual gold medals at the Olympics, Abhinav Bindra and Neeraj Chopra, led some of the country's greatest sportspersons in expressing their support for the wrestlers protesting against the Wrestling Federation of India at the Jantar Mantar in New Delhi. The top Indian sportspersons that have come out in support of the protesting wrestlers include reigning World Champion in boxing Nikhat Zareen, cricketers Bharbhajan Singh and Virender Sehwag, Grand Slam-winning tennis player Sania Mirza and former women's hockey team captain Rani Rampal. All of them on Friday put out tweets supporting the protesting wrestlers as #StandWithWrestlers was trending for most of the day. Former Cricket team captain Kapil Dev also extended his support to the protesting Wrestlers.

THAROOR, PARGAT 'WRESTLES' WITH PT USHA OVER GRAPPLERS' PROTEST

Thiruvnanthapuram: Shashi Tharoor on Friday expressed his displeasure on a fellow lawmaker and one who also hails from Kerala -- P.T. Usha over her statement in the ongoing protests launched by the wrestlers in New Delhi.



Tharoor took to Twitter and wrote: "Dear @PTUshaOfficial, it is does not become you to disparage the justified protests of your fellow sportspersons in the face of repeated & wanton sexual harassment. Their standing up for their rights does not 'tarnish the image of the nation'. Ignoring their concerns - instead of hearing them out, investigating them & taking just action - does."

Former Indian Hockey Captain and Olympian Pargat Singh on Friday criticised Indian Olympic Association President P.T. Usha's remark.

"It is all more ethical and demanding to defend and stand by your fellow sportspersons. The agitating wrestlers are not creating indiscipline but are out to cleanse the Indian sports of its dirt and filth. They are fighting a greater battle for neat, clean and sports with dignity for all," three-time legislator Pargat said in a statement.

comprising Justice P.S. Narasimha, said that the court will not monitor the investigation and it would ask the police to tell it what is being done.

The bench directed the Delhi police to assess the threat perception and provide security to the minor girl and this direction will not stand in the way of the police

making independent threat perception for other complainants in connection with providing security to them. The top court scheduled the matter for further hearing next Friday. The plea filed by wrestlers said they attempted several times to convince the Delhi Police to register an FIR, but they failed.

'We are apolitical' SC directs states to register cases against all making hate speeches

The Supreme Court on Friday directed all states and Union Territories (UTs) to register cases against those making hate speeches even if no complaint has been made, while stressing that both judges on the bench are apolitical and "they do not care about party A or party B or party C".

▶ THE BENCH WARNED THAT ANY DELAY IN REGISTERING CASES WILL BE TREATED AS CONTEMPT OF THE COURT AND EMPHASIZED THAT ITS OCTOBER 21, 2022 ORDER SHALL BE MADE APPLICABLE IRRESPECTIVE OF RELIGION.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The bench of Justices K.M. Joseph and B.V. Nagarathna termed hate speech a serious offence capable of affecting secular fabric of the country and added that the court had passed the order last year with public good in mind for suo motu action against hate speech.

"This is something which goes to the heart of our republic...about dignity of people...", said Justice Joseph.

During the hearing, the bench made it crystal clear that both judges are apolitical and they do not care about party A or party B,

or party C, "we only know the Constitution and the laws of the country... let us be very clear about it... whatever order we pass, it is allegiance to the oath we have taken".

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said there is no dispute about it and also there is no doubt about it.

When counsel cited instances of hate speeches in various parts of the country, the bench orally observed: "Don't bring in politics. If the attempt is to bring in politics, we won't be a party to this...we said in our order, irrespective of religion (action should be taken), what more do you want..."

It said it is entertaining petitions against hate speeches in different parts of the country for "larger public good" and to ensure establishment of "rule of law".

The top court was hearing a batch of pleas in connection with hate speech. One of the petitioners had initially sought direction against Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand to register cases against those delivering hate speeches.

754 MORE INDIANS BROUGHT BACK FROM SUDAN, TOTAL TALLY STANDS AT 1,360

New Delhi | Agencies

Another 754 Indian citizens have been evacuated from violence-hit Sudan and brought back home on Friday by the government under Operation Kaveri.

While 392 people arrived in New Delhi in a C-17 Indian Air Force aircraft, another batch of 362 Indians were brought to Bengaluru.

With this, the total number of Indians who have been brought back from the troubled African nation, is now 1,360, as per official data.

The people have been brought home from the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah, where India has set



up a transit camp for the evacuees.

The first batch of 360 evacuees was brought to New Delhi in a commercial plane on April 26.

The second batch of 246 evacuees arrived in Mumbai

in a C-17 Globemaster on April 27.

Under Operation Kaveri, India has been rescuing its citizens in buses from conflict zones in Khartoum and other troubled areas to Port Sudan.

New judge to hear Rahul Gandhi's appeal against conviction today

Ahmedabad:

The appeal filed by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi against the Surat sessions court's order denying a stay on his conviction in a criminal defamation case will be heard by a new judge of the Gujarat High Court on Saturday.

According to the cause list published by the high court, Justice Hemant Prachhkh will hear the matter on Saturday.

Justice Gita Gopi, who was earlier assigned to hear the matter, had recused herself from the hearing on April 26.

The criminal defamation case was filed against Rahul Gandhi for his remark made during an election rally in Kolar, Karnataka, in April 2019, where he had said, "How come all thieves have Modi as the common surname?"



Fix accountability on those who aid, fund terror activities: Rajnath at SCO meet

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday called upon the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states to collectively work towards eliminating terrorism in all its forms and fix accountability on those who aid or fund such activities.

Defence Ministers of China, Russia, Iran, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were present in the SCO meeting here. Addressing the defence ministers of the SCO countries, Singh asserted that any kind of terrorist act or support to it in any form is a major crime against humanity, and peace and prosperity cannot coexist with this menace.

"If a nation shelters terrorists, it not only poses a threat to others, but for itself too. Radicalisation of youth is a cause of concern not only from the point of view of secu-



urity, but it is also a major obstacle in the path of socio-economic progress of society. If we want to make the SCO a stronger and more credible international organisation, our top-most priority should be to effectively deal with terrorism," the Defence Minister said.

Rajnath Singh added that India envisions a robust framework of regional cooperation which mutually respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all member states by taking care of their legiti-

mate interests. He asserted that New Delhi strives to further bolster trust and cooperation among the members of the SCO as it believes in maintaining peace and security based on the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

"India has always followed the principle of 'Let us walk together and move forward together'. Every era has a zeitgeist (defining idea). The zeitgeist of the present era is 'win-win cooperation for the great gain'," he said.

8 Indian Navy officers in Qatar's custody on spy charges face potential death sentence: Pak media



New Delhi: Eight Indian Navy officers, who have been in the custody in Qatar since the past eight months on espionage charges, are learnt to be facing a potential death sentence, according to a Pakistani media report.

The Express Tribune report claims that the officers are accused of spying for Israel.

The accused have been identified as working for the India's intelligence agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and were reportedly caught carrying out espionage activities in Qatar, the report further claimed.

The arrested officials reportedly provided Israel details of Qatar's secret programme to buy advanced submarines from Italy, says The Express Tribune.

The CEO of a private defence company and the head of international military operations of Qatar have also been arrested in the same case, according to the report.

All eight officers of the Indian Navy were also employed in the same company, it added.

Female Cheetah again strays out of Kuno National Park

- The KNP's core area is spread over 748 sq km while its buffer zone covers an area of 487 sq km.
- Some wildlife experts believe that an individual cheetah needs a habitat of 100 sq km, and the KNP, which now has 18 translocated cheetahs (two animals have died so far) does not have enough space.
- But another forest official said that it is difficult to determine how much area a cheetah exactly needs. Some literature on the subject states that a female cheetah needs a habitat of 400 sq km.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Female cheetah 'Asha', one of the big cats translocated to India from Namibia, has wandered outside the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh once again, a forest official said on Friday.

Five-year-old Asha, known as 'F1' before she was renamed, strayed out of the park's buffer zone on Wednesday evening but now she seemed to be on her way back, said the

official, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

"Asha strayed out of the buffer zone on Wednesday evening. She kept on advancing farther away, but on Thursday it started returning. She is now close to the buffer zone," the official said.

Asha had ventured out of the park in the first fortnight of April too, but returned on her own.

'Pavan', a male cheetah, has sneaked out

of the park twice this month. It was tranquilized and brought back on both occasions.

According to KNP officials, unlike Pavan, Asha does not like to dawdle in agricultural fields, and gets distracted if people are around. "We are monitoring her movements with the help of the radio collar fitted around her neck," the forest official said.

Asha and Pavan are part of India's ambitious efforts to revive the cheetah population in the country by translocating them from Namibia and South Africa.

Deshdeep Saxena, a senior journalist who writes on wildlife issues, noted that at present only four of the translocated animals are out in the wild at the KNP, yet two of them ventured out. "What will happen when three more Namibian and 11 South African cheetahs (who are currently in enclosures) will be set free," he said.

"There is a need to develop 4,000 sq km of landscape adjoining the KNP for the cheetahs," said Saxena.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the first group of eight cheetahs brought from Namibia into quarantine enclosures at the KNP on September 17 last year. Of them, one female cheetah died due to a kidney ailment. The second lot of twelve cheetahs imported from South Africa was released on February 18. Of them, a male cheetah died due to cardiopulmonary failure.

CBI team at Satya Pal Malik's house in alleged corruption case

New Delhi: A CBI team on Friday reached the residence of Satya Pal Malik, the former Governor of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state, to gather more information in an alleged corruption case of Rs 60 crore.

The team arrived at the R.K. Puram residence in the national capital to seek clarifications from him on his claims, sources said.

The case pertains to a health insurance scheme that he was allegedly asked to push. Malik had claimed that he was offered a bribe for clearing the files during his tenure as the J&K Governor between August 23, 2018 and October 30, 2019.

Last year, the CBI had lodged a case in this respect and conducted raids in six states.



'EVIDENCE SPEAKS VOLUMES..': COURT DENIES SISODIA BAIL IN ED'S EXCISE POLICY CASE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi court on Friday denied bail to AAP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in connection with the Delhi excise policy case being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), holding that the evidence, prima facie, "speaks volumes" of his involvement in commission of the offence.

Special Judge M. K. Nagpal denied the relief, noting the "serious nature of allegations made and role played by Sisodia in the criminal conspiracy, his connection with the activities relating to generation or acquisition and use etc of the proceeds of crime and the oral and documentary evidence collected in support of the same".

"Hence, this court is not inclined to grant bail to the applicant in this case of economic offences having serious repercussions upon the general public and society at large as the evidence collected during investigation speaks volumes of his involvement in commission of the said offence."

The judge also said that the purported medical condition of Sisodia's wife was not a reason to grant him bail in



this case. Additionally, he stated that it was impossible to rule out the potential of Sisodia influencing key witnesses in the case.

The judge noted that the alleged offence against Sisodia was a "serious economic offence of money laundering" and that he has not been accused of committing the offence in his per-

sonal capacity, but rather in his official capacity as a public servant overseeing the Excise Ministry and serving as Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister. "The seriousness or gravity of the offence and its nature or category, the capacity of applicant in which it was committed, the manner of its commission and also certain other factors like impact of

the offence as well as the possible impact of release of applicant on society etc. are the factors which go against the applicant and force this court to decide against his release on bail in the present case," the judge said. Judge Nagpal pronounced the order on Friday after having reserved it on April 18.

The court had a day before, extended Sisodia's judicial custody by two weeks in the case. On Thursday, the same court extended Sisodia's judicial custody till May 12, in the case being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The ED had earlier submitted before the judge that Sisodia had planted fabricated emails to show that there was public approval for the policy. The directions to send these pro-drafted emails were given to Zakir Khan, Chairman of Delhi Minorities' Commission, who then asked his interns to send the emails, the ED claimed. The probe agency had also said that the 60 days given to complete the investigation against Sisodia are not over yet. It said that it has found fresh evidence indicating Sisodia's involvement in the alleged scam, and the investigation is at a crucial stage.

K'taka Polls: Modi bashing will only help BJP win more seats, says Shah

Hubballi | Agencies

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Friday that slamming Prime Minister Narendra Modi will only help the BJP win more seats in the May 10 Assembly elections in Karnataka.

Addressing a public rally here, Shah said, "Sonia Gandhi had called Modi 'Maut Ka Saudagar'. Rahul Gandhi calls him a lower caste man. But no matter how much you humiliate the Prime Minister, lotus will bloom in Karnataka. More threats to Modi will only create a pro-BJP wave."

Shah's remarks came a day after Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge likened Prime Minister Modi to a "poisonous snake", drawing strong rebuke from the BJP. Kharge later retracted his comment, saying that his remarks were not aimed at the Prime Minister, but at his party.

Addressing the rally, Shah



said that former Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa had presented a special budget for the agriculture sector and had worked for their welfare.

"He (Yediyurappa) brought happiness in the lives of the farmers of north Karnataka," the Home Minister said.

"People should decide for the comprehensive development of the state. If the BJP comes to power, development will take place. But if the Congress comes to

power, the state will suffer in terms of development," Shah said.

The Home Minister also said that the Congress has always betrayed the farmers.

"Farmers were shot during the Congress regime. The future of the state depends on the upcoming elections. The Congress led by Rahul 'baba' will provide a reverse gear government. Do you want a reverse gear government," Shah asked the gathering.

Union Minister Jal Shakti Minister terms Ashok Gehlot as 'Ravana of Raj politics'

Jaipur | Agencies

Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat termed Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot as "the Ravana of Rajasthan's politics" and called upon the people to end his tenure and bring "Ram Rajya".

While giving a speech at BJP's Jan Aakrosh rally in Chittorgarh on Thursday, Shekhawat lashed out at CM Ashok Gehlot and the Congress government.

Shekhawat said at the end of his speech, "If you want to end Ravana of politics in Rajasthan, Ashok Gehlot, then raise your arms. Make a resolution for bringing in Ram Rajya in Rajasthan."

During his speech, the Union Minister attacked the government on the issue of question paper leak and corruption. He said, "When the BJP gov-



ernment comes, there will be a CBI inquiry. Then many Congress leaders will be investigated." Shekhawat said, "The paper leaks are

happening in Rajasthan. On the RPSC paper leak, CM was saying that no leader or officer is guilty in this matter. Now a member of the RPSC has been caught. Let the government change. There will be a CBI inquiry into the paper leak. Many Congress leaders will go to jail. People will not forgive those who play with the future of the youth."

Reacting to this, Lokesh Sharma, OSD to CM, said in a tweet (in Hindi), "This statement of Gajendra Singh Shekhawat ji is highly condemnable. By making statements like this @gssjodhpur, you are not insulting the Chief Minister but the people of #Rajasthan, who give immense love and respect to their CM... BJP is unable to tolerate the way the Chief Minister is taking the state to new heights of development and giving relief from back-breaking inflation. The frustration is clearly visible," he said.

JAMMU-SRINAGAR NATIONAL HIGHWAY CLOSED DUE TO LANDSLIDE

Jammu: The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway has been closed for vehicular traffic due to a landslide, officials said on Friday.

"Jammu-Srinagar NH blocked due to landslide at Shalgari, Banihal," Jammu and Kashmir Traffic police said.

The traffic police said that the road clearance work is in progress. The highway remained blocked for several hours due to a landslide on Thursday as well.

The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway is the lifeline of the Kashmir Valley and the main road link connecting Kashmir with the rest of the country.

Kashmir-bound trucks laden with essential supplies and other vehicles pass through the highway and fruit carrying trucks from Kashmir head for the rest of the country through this road.

IPL betting racket busted in Goa, 14 arrested

Panaji | Agencies

The crime branch unit of the Goa Police on Friday busted an IPL betting racket and arrested 14 people, said officials.

Superintendent of Police (Crime Branch) Nidhin Valsan informed that all 14 accused persons were caught red-handed and have been arrested from Porvorim in North Goa.

"All accused persons were caught red-handed while accepting bets on the ongoing 20-20 IPL Cricket match played between Rajasthan Royal and Chennai Super Kings and seized from their possession cash of Rs 38,000, 47 mobile phones, one laptop, three LED TVs, three net routers, three set-top boxes, one router modem and other gaming electrical accessories all worth of Rs 25,38,000," Valsan said.



The accused persons have been identified as Ranjit Gedam, Pravin Rajput, Ankit Chaudhary, Nanda Kishan, Jyotiprakash, Kesham Kumar, Ayaz Khan, Jagdish Verma, Kawal Singh, Pankaj Chaure, Manjeet Singh, Nitish Pandey, all natives of Chhattisgarh; Mohit Kumar from Bihar and Rajan Dube from Uttar Pradesh.

The offence has been registered under section 3 & 4 of 'The Goa, Daman and Diu Public Gambling Act'.

Man caught doing inappropriate act on Delhi Metro, DCW issues notice

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a shocking incident, a video has gone viral on social media showing a man indulging in an inappropriate act inside a running Delhi Metro.

Although the video has sparked outrage among the public, Delhi Metro authorities are however, yet to issue a statement on the development.

The video shows the man seated inside the train and engaging in the act without any fear or shame.

The incident has raised serious questions on the safety of women and children traveling on the Delhi Metro.

Taking cognizance of the video, the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) on Friday issued a notice to the Delhi Police and Delhi Metro to



take strict action.

"Came across a viral video where a man can be seen shamelessly masturbating in Delhi Metro. It is absolutely disgusting and sickening. I am issuing a notice to Delhi Police and Delhi Metro to ensure strictest possible action against this shameful act," DCW Chairperson Swati Malival said in a tweet.

However, a senior police official said that they have not received any complaint in connection with the incident.

This incident highlights the urgent need for increased awareness and action against sexual harassment in public places. More details are awaited.

Punjab Police bust gang involved in providing passports to gangsters

The Punjab Police's Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF) has arrested three people involved in procuring and providing passports on fake particulars to gangsters and criminals to facilitate their escape from the country, Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said here on Friday.

Chandigarh | Agencies

The arrested have been identified as Onkar Singh, Sukhjinder Singh, and Prabhjot Singh of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh.

The police have seized at least nine passports, besides recovering several photocopies of passports of absconding gangsters prepared using fake particulars.

DGP Yadav said acting on tip-off about the involvement of an interstate travel agents in preparing passports using fake particulars, AGTF teams, headed by ADGP Promod Ban and assisted by AIG Sandeep Goel, in an overnight operation busted the gang. "Investigations reveal that the gang, having links in states, including Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra,



had facilitated a number of gangsters and criminals and other states to flee from the country on fake passports," he said.

The DGP said five more persons linked with the gang rounded up and investigations are on to unearth the entire network.

During the preliminary interrogation, accused Prabhjot Singh has revealed that one of his conduits, Charanjit Singh, who has been arrested by Delhi Police, had made a passport using fake particulars for gangster Deepak Boxer, who was recently deported from Mexico.

Another accused Sukhjinder Singh disclosed to have procured a passport on fake particulars for Deepinder Singh, alias Deepu, of Ajnala, who has a criminal background and is an associate of absconding gangster Harry Chatha.

STONE PELTING ON THE CONVOY OF 'KING' MAHENDRA'S BROTHER, 6 INJURED

Patna: At least 6 persons, part of a convoy of leading industrialist Umesh Sharma alias Bhola Babu, the younger brother of late JD-U leader 'King' Mahendra Prasad, sustained injuries during stone pelting in Jehanabad district on Friday afternoon, police said.

Sharma, along with company employees, were on the way to a village in Ghosi area and as they reached Bharthi village under Ghosi police station, around 20 persons chased his convoy and pelted stones on them.

The window panes of 4 vehicles broke down in the attack but luckily, Sharma escaped unhurt.

In a statement to police, Sharma said: "We were on the way to a village to participate in an event organised by my company under CSR scheme, when around 20 persons pelted stones on my convoy. 6 persons, who were inside the vehicles, were injured." Following the incident, a large number of police force reached the village. They are making efforts to identify the accused. The reason for stone pelting is not ascertained yet. King Mahendra, who hailed from Jehanabad, was a Rajya Sabha MP of the JD-U as well as the founder of Aristo Pharma. After his demise, his younger brother Umesh Sharma is looking after the company.

MAHA POLICE BURST TEARGAS, CANE ANTI-REFINERY PROTESTERS; OPPN LIVID

Ratnagiri | Agencies

On the fifth day of the ongoing protests against the proposed Ratnagiri Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd coming up with Arab help, police burst teargas shells and cane-charged protesters who attempted to block the ongoing soil survey work in the affected villages, here on Friday.

The problems started this afternoon when over 400 villagers, including many women, attempted to stop a team conducting soil testing work in one of the villages, according to activists.

The Ratnagiri Police, which had already clamped prohibitory orders in the region till May 31 to enable the soil testing work, accosted the villagers and attempted to disperse them but they resisted.

As they started running towards the soil testing team, the police stopped them and tried to push them away from the officials, but the locals continued to defy and tried to enter the testing area. Amid the huge ruckus, screaming, shouting, at one point the police cased the protesters running and burst teargas shells to drive them away.

According to an activist, Sachin Chavan, the police bundled off more than 500 villagers in six waiting vehicles from the soil testing site and took them into detention, though the number of arrests is not clear yet. "We are not allowed to go to these areas. The mobile phones of the villagers have been seized, several of our activists have been externed for two weeks from the district, and the media are facing restrictions," said Sachin Chavan.

Another activist of Sustainable Konkan



Movement, Satyajit Chavan, said in Mumbai that "the people in the region are being repressed by the use of police force", and not allowed to protest in a democratic manner.

Satyajit Chavan said that the police had arrested him and others under political pressure and "democracy is in danger", appealing to the people of Konkan to unitedly oppose the proposed RRPL project. In Mumbai, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said that there was no caning (lathi-charge) by the police though videos of the incident were being aired on social media and several local television

channels.

Shinde said that the project will not be implemented without taking the locals into confidence, even as the villagers' leader Kashinath Gorle said the agitation has been suspended for 3 days to hold talks with the government.

The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi, Swabhimani Shetkarl Sanghatana and others have slammed the ruling Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party regime, accusing it of excesses on the protesting villagers. At least one injured person has been injured, hundreds have been detained,

many fell ill in the fields owing to the scorching 40 degrees Celsius temperature in the afternoon during the agitation. Earlier on Friday morning, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Vinayak Raut was detained and prevented from going to the soil testing areas.

Nationalist Congress Party's Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar, Supriya Sule, MP, state Congress president Nana Patole, chief spokesperson Atul Londhe, Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut, SSS president Raju Shetti have criticised the Eknath Shinde government. They called upon the government to immediately hold negotiations with the villagers, understand their problems or objections, and not push through the projects.

Appealing for discussions, Industry Minister Uday Samant reiterated that as assured by the chief minister, the project will not be taken up without the consent of the locals, but made it clear that the government will not entertain 'any outsiders'. The villagers have set preconditions -- remove the police force in the region, stop the soil testing immediately, release people under detention, withdrawal of police notices/cases against the protesters, etc., before the talks with the locals on the project.

Protests and a political slugfest again hit the planned Rs 300,000-crore RRPL mega-venture - promoted by IOCL, HPCL and BPCL - coming up in Rajapur taluka with the help of Saudi ARAMCO and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, and would be the world's biggest single location refinery.

The RRPL project will be barely some km from the proposed world's largest Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant (JNPP) in Ratnagiri, which has also been mired in controversies, strong opposition and protests by the locals since over a decade.



CHANGING THE LIVES OF SISTERS IS MY FIRST PRIORITY-CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN

SISTERS SHOULD NOT BE HELPLESS, BE STRONG, THIS IS MY RESOLUTION THAT THE TIME OF WOMEN BEING CONFINED TO STOVE-FOURS AND HOME HAS PASSED, OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUALITY ARE AVAILABLE FOR SISTERS IN ALL FIELDS.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that changing the lives of sisters is my first priority. Sister-brother relationship is a relationship made by God, sisters do not have any religion or caste. I will take away all the sorrows and pains of my sisters, sisters are not helpless, they should be strong, this is my resolution. Sisters from poor, lower middle class families have to face many difficulties. God made son and daughter equal, but in the course of history, sons started getting more importance and daughters started being ignored. To change this situation and for the betterment of daughters,



the state government has implemented many schemes. In this sequence, Ladli Bahna Yojana is being started. Sisters don't worry about your daily needs, That's why we have started Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana to provide 1000 rupees per month. The sisters will spend the amount received from the scheme for the betterment of themselves and their families. This scheme will prove to be a social revolution. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan reached various wards of Bhopal city today to fill the forms of Ladli Bahna Yojana and hold dialogues. Dialogue held in

Idgah Hills, Tila Jamalpura, Barkhedi, Panchsheel Nagar and Sunhari Bagh. **Sisters are not born to suffer, be poor, live in hardship** In conversation with the sisters, Chief Minister Chouhan said that we do not want to remain poor. Sisters are not born to suffer, to be poor, to live in hardship. Together we will change the world. Sisters and daughters live life with dignity and self-confidence, the state government is committed to empowering women and providing equal opportunities to them in all fields. For this purpose, various schemes are being run from

Monsoon-like rain in Bhopal, hail in Sehore

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh is receiving monsoon-like rains even in the summer season. The unseasonal rains are continuing in almost the entire state. The capital Bhopal received heavy rains with strong winds on Friday afternoon. Hail has also fallen in some parts of the city. Sehore adjacent to Bhopal also got waterlogged. Due to hailstorm, a sheet of snow was spread here. Apart from this, Ujjain also got wet. And there has been drizzle in Indore. Two died due to lightning in Sagar and Chhatarpur.



It has also rained in Damoh, Naugaon, Rewa, Khandwa, Dhar, Indore, Guna, Sagar, Gwalior, Ujjain and Mandla. With the change in weather, day temperatures have also dropped in many cities. According to the Meteorological Department, the weather will remain like this for the next two days. It will rain with strong thunder-

storms and hail will also fall. **Flood and water logging on roads in Bhopal**

In the capital Bhopal, there was heavy rain with hail on Friday. Due to this the roads were also flooded. It started raining after 2 pm, which continued till evening. Hail has also fallen in Berasia area. More than half an inch of rain is expected here. At the same time, 4 mm of rain has been recorded in Bhopal city area. Apart from this, it rained with hail in Sehore.

New system active, it is raining

Meteorologist Narendra Meshram told that a new system has just been formed. Right there, the trough line is passing. Western Disturbance is also active. Because of this, the weather pattern has changed in the entire state. He told that usually hailstorm warning is not issued in summer, but this time the weather has changed, so warning has been issued.

Bihar Ex MP's release to affect public servants' morale: Madhya Pradesh IAS Body

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A body representing Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officers in Madhya Pradesh on Friday expressed deep concern and anguish over the release of gangster-turned-politician Anand Mohan, who was serving a life sentence for killing an IAS officer in Bihar three decades ago.

Anand Mohan, a former MP, was released from Saharsa jail on Thursday after being behind the bars for 15 years for the murder of G Krishnaiah, the then district magistrate of Gopalganj, who was beaten to death by a mob in Muzaffarpur district in 1994.

Anand Mohan's name figured in a list of more than 20 prisoners who were ordered to be set free by a notification issued by the Bihar government's law department earlier this week.

His remission of sentence followed an amendment of Bihar Prison Manual, whereby the restriction on early release of those involved in killing of a public servant on duty was done away with.

"The above decision will adversely affect the morale and fortitude of each and every public servant," the association's secretary



Vivek Porwal told a news agency on Friday. The association unanimously disapproves of this decision and urges the concerned state government to reconsider it, he said. A local court in October 2007 had initially sentenced Anand Mohan to death, but the sentence was later commuted to life term by the Patna High court in December, 2008, when he appealed against the lower court verdict. The Bihar government has drawn flak from the opposition BJP for its decision. BJP MP Sushil Kumar Modi has accused Chief Minister Nitish Kumar of sacrificing law to stay on in power with support from ally RJD.

MP POLICE GET TOUGH ON MODIFIED VEHICLE SILENCERS, ENFORCE TRAFFIC NORMS

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government has implemented the rules of Section 182 A (3) of Motor Vehicle Act, 1988, according to which, manufacturing and sale of modified silencers for vehicles will be a punishable offence now.

As per the police, the first of its kind rules have been introduced in Madhya Pradesh aiming to prohibit the sale of components or parts of vehicles that can harm the human health and violate the traffic laws. The violation of the rules will amount to the imprisonment of one year along with a heavy fine up to Rs one lakh.

With the implementation of the rules, police have also begun search operations of the vehicles' components manufacturing units, garages and car decorators, and the shops selling modified vehicle silencers across the state.

The first such search operation was carried out in Bhopal a couple days ago, during which car decorators for modified silencers were confiscated. Following which, a Bhopal district court dealing with cases related to Motor Vehicles Act, imposed a fine of Rs one lakh against a shop owner for selling the silencers.

Anurag Sharma, Additional Commissioner of Police (traffic /crime) of Bhopal said the implementation of Section 182 A (3) of Motor Vehicle Act,



1988 has become the need of hour in order to put a ban on manufacturing and selling of the vehicle components that are categorised as contravention of the provisions of the traffic norms. "Generally, the police will impose a fine on the vehicle owners for using modified silencers or other components, whereas, the manufacturers and sellers of such components are equally responsible. Now, they would also be held responsible and the violators would have to face punitive actions, including imposition of heavy fine," Sharma told correspondent.

Sharma also made it clear that the amount of fine against violation of norms would be decided by the court, and not by the police. "It will have an impact as the people will avoid using modified silencers or the other contravention components in their vehicles," Sharma added.

Besides this, the Madhya Pradesh Police have also taken several initiatives to spread awareness, and programmes are being organised involving the local people across the state. The Commissioner of Police (CP) Bhopal, Harinarayanachari Mishra recently flagged off a 'Yatayat Mitra Yojna', an initiative of the state Home Department which involves local citizens. The Madhya Pradesh High Court has repeatedly slammed the state government and police over growing cases of traffic violations, especially in big cities of the state.

Last month, a petition pointed out that the amended Motor Vehicle Act has not been implemented in the state, the government had then submitted that the amended rules would be implemented in the state within 45 days.

In another stance in September 2022, while hearing a petition stating that "lack of enforcement of the compulsory helmet rule for the two-wheeler riders is responsible for the majority of deaths in road accidents," Madhya Pradesh Chief Justice R.V. Malimath had commented that - "Yes, nobody is seen wearing helmets on the roads".

ELECTRICITY BILL PAYMENT CENTERS WILL OPEN ON 29 AND 30 APRIL

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bill payment centers will continue to function like normal working days on April 29 (Saturday) and April 30 (Sunday) under the jurisdiction of Central Region Power Distribution Company. All zonal offices and bill payment centers in Danish Nagar, Misrod, Mandideep under all the four city divisions of Bhopal city circle ie West, East, South and North divisions will remain open like normal working days on the said holiday. There is an appeal to electricity consumers that they can pay bills through cash through POS machine in the zonal office of the capital and also through online mode. The company has also given instructions that electricity distribution centers / bill payment centers in all the 16 districts of the company's jurisdiction will remain open on holidays. All field general managers have been directed for this. **There are many options for electricity bill payment**



Company's portal to electricity consumers, M.P. Various options have been made available like online kiosks, AISECT kiosks, POS machines and collection agents, through which consumers can pay their electricity bills without any additional charges.

Madhya Kshetra Vidyut Vitran Company has informed that the options available through the payment gateway of HDFC (payU) and India Idea.com (Bill Desk) on the website portal.mpcz.in of the electricity consumer company are Debit Card, Credit Card, UPI, Internet Pay

Electricity Bills through Banking, ECS/EBPS/NACH/Cash Cards/Wallets etc. or also through Google Pay, Phone Pay, Amazon Pay, Free Recharge etc.

In addition to M.P. Consumers can pay their electricity bills online through the website of Online and M.P. The electricity bill can be paid by the consumer without paying any extra charge through kiosks installed in different zones online. MP. The service charge payable to Online will be borne by the Company. On the other hand, consumers can also pay their electricity bills through AISECT kiosks installed in urban areas. According to the provision of the company, at present the facility of electricity bill payment has been made available to the consumers by the authorized employees of AISECT in the 51 zone and distribution center offices of the company area. No additional charges will be taken from the consumer even if the electricity bill is paid through AISECT.

Chief Minister Chouhan planted saplings of Peepal, Mango and Champa

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Peepal, Mango and Champa in the garden located at Shyamala Hills. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, Chairman of Madhya Pradesh Child Commission Dravidra More and Suman Chaurasia of Lata Mangeshkar Gramophone Record Museum, Indore also planted saplings. Sarvasri Abhijit Deshmukh, Sushil Vishwakarma, Subodh Srivastava, Rohit Singh, Gaurav Chauhan and Dalwan Yadav participated in the plantation. Ishwar Singh Pawar of Rajgarh planted saplings in the memory of his grandfather.



Bhopal Municipal Corporation sets up MP's first animal carcass incinerator

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In what is claimed to be the first in Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) has successfully established an animal carcass incinerator in the state capital to ensure safe and proper disposal of dead animals. This plant has been set up at an estimated cost of Rs 4 crore in the Adampur Chawni area in the state capital. "We used to dig pits and bury dead animals. We could not dispose of them properly. We have set up an animal incinerator plant in the Adampur Chawni area to dispose of animal carcasses safely," BMC commissioner KVS Chouhan said.

"The plant has been set up using the amount which we received to improve the air quality index. The plant is capable of burning dead animals at the rate of 500 kg an hour.



With this, we would no longer have to bury animal carcasses. This new facility will be used to burn carcasses, and the only waste we will have is ashes. It is comparatively safe disposal," Commissioner Chouhan said.

The plant runs on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) or Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).

Chouhan further said that they are going to start the plant's operation using LPG and shift to CNG later. He said that the animal carcasses can be burnt at this plant at a rate of 500 kg per hour, and it can run for up to 8 hours to 10 hours at a stretch. "The plant is ready, and we aim to start it within a week or so," he said. "The facility would process dead animals found on roads, and it will help to resolve the hazardous problem of disposing of the carcasses," he added.

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DEMAND NOTICE			
(under Rule 3 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)			
SUBSTITUTED SERVICE OF NOTICE U/s 13 (2) OF SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002.			
Notice is hereby given to the borrowers as mentioned below that since they have defaulted in repayment of the Credit facility availed by them from Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited (ABHFL), their loan accounts have been classified as Non-Performing Assets in the books of the Company as per RBI guidelines thereto. Thereafter, ABHFL has issued demand notices under section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act) on the last known addresses of the said borrowers thereby calling upon and demanding from them to repay the entire outstanding amount together with further interest at the contractual rate on the aforesaid amount and incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. as stated in the said demand notices. However, the demand notice is also being served by way of publication, as per Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (SARFAESI Rules):			
Sr. No.	Name and Address Borrower/ Co-Borrower and Guarantor / Co-Guarantor & Loan A/C No.	NPA Date	Date of Demand Notice
1.	SANTOSH PATIDAR House No. 151, P.H.No. 05, Saral No. 2205, Gram-Lasudiyia Kulmi, Tehsil-Tonkikurhd, District-Dewas, Madhya Pradesh-455116	10.04.2023	24.04.2023
2.	ALKA PATIDAR House No. 151, P.H.No. 05, Saral No. 2205, Gram-Lasudiyia Kulmi, Tehsil-Tonkikurhd, District-Dewas, Madhya Pradesh-455116		
3.	SANTOSH PATIDAR C/O Padidar Traders At Gram-Lasudiyia Kulmi, Teh Tonkikurhd, Dewas, Madhya Pradesh- 455116		
4.	SANTOSH PATIDAR Mekan No. 151, Post-Lasudiyia Kulmi, Tehsil-Tonkikurhd, Vic Lasudiyia Kulmi, District-Dewas, Madhya Pradesh-455116		
	Loan Account No. LNINLAP-07210095296 & LNINLAP-07210095295		
DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY/PROPERTIES MORTGAGED: All That Piece And Parcel Of Plot / House No. 151, Situated At Village: Lasudiyia Kulmi, P.H.N. 05 (Saral No. 2205), Tehsil: Tonkikurhd, District: Dewas (M.P.), Size: 100 X32 Feet, Plot Area 3200 Sq. Ft. (297.39 Sq. Mtrs.), Built-Up Area (G.F): 2304 Sq. Ft. (214.12 Sq. Mtrs.), And Bounded As: East: House Of Babulaji, West: House Of Shriram Patidar, North: Local Way, South: Local Way.			
We hereby call upon the borrower stated herein to pay us within 60 days from the date of this notice, the outstanding amount (s) together with further interest thereon plus cost, charges, expenses, etc. thereon failing which we shall be at liberty to enforce the security interest including but not limited to taking possession of and selling the secured asset entirely at your risk as to the cost and consequences.			
Please note that as per section 13(1) of the SARFAESI Act, all of your are prohibited from transferring by way of sale, lease or otherwise, the aforesaid secured assets without prior written consent of the Company. Any contravention of the said section by you shall invoke the penal provisions as laid down under section 29 of the SARFAESI Act and / or any other legal provision in this regard.			
Please note that as per sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, if the dues of ABHFL together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by ABHFL are tendered to ABHFL at any time before the date fixed for sale or transfer, the secured asset shall not be sold or transferred by ABHFL, and no further step shall be taken by ABHFL or transfer or sale of that secured asset.			
Date: 29.04.2023 Place: DEWAS (M.P.)			Sd/- Authorised Officer (Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited)



EDITOR'S SPECS

SP TO FILE DEFAMATION CASE AGAINST BJP'S POLL SONG

The Samajwadi Party (SP) announced that it will file a defamation suit against the BJP for a campaign song that is not only a "targeted attack on the SP chief but an attempt to vitiate peace and tranquillity, and trigger unrest in the state". On April 24, the verified Twitter handle of the Uttar Pradesh BJP uploaded a 4.27-minute video which was a spin on an SP's election anthem released ahead of the 2022 assembly polls -- 'Janta pukarti hai Akhilesh aaiye' (People are ready to welcome Akhilesh). Besides pointing fingers at the SP chief, the video includes a grab of the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots, holding the then Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav responsible for it. In an apparent response to the BJP's song, the SP has also released a 3-minute song on Twitter, 'Jo janata ko sataye hain, hum unko hatayenge', to highlight the BJP's failures. While the BJP maintained a studied silence on the issue after releasing the video, the SP took exception to it and announced that it would file a defamation case against the twitter handle that first uploaded the video. SP national general secretary Shivpal Singh Yadav, took to Twitter to post an agitated response. "BJP has become a symbol of language that roadside goons use and has turned into a centre that trains on how to indulge in character assassination. Despite conspiracies and injustice, we will come out strong. People want Akhilesh to lead the state to prosperity," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

OTT to the rescue of the cinema business

Vinod Mirani

The business of cinema has come a full circle. OTT platforms, which majorly depend on films as their prime content provider, are now facing a shortage of supply. Feature films carry a universal appeal and are the biggest draw for eyeballs on the OTT platforms.

People may have followed some web series on OTT, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic lock down and explored content from all over the world. That was because the supply of new films had halted. Still, feature films ruled the OTT platforms, mostly the old ones.

Now that the world was coming closer, thanks to the Internet, people explored all the options available to them during the lockdown. But films remained the main attraction.

So, two major players, Apple and Amazon Prime, have decided to invest up to a billion dollars in film production with the aim to give them a theatrical release. People love to watch a movie in a cinema, but high admission rates combined with the pandemic-borne lockdown drove the entertainment seekers to OTT streaming.

What worked here too were the films, except occasional web series. The catch here is that a movie is a movie only when it is released in cinemas and not directly on an OTT platform. A theatrical release is like an endorsement for a feature film. Also, when a film releases in a cinema, it gets publicity as well as media exposure. In short, it creates public awareness about the film.

In India, we learnt this lesson the hard way very early, a few decades back. This was when the video format came to India. Anybody who could afford a video player (others could get one on rent), rented video cassettes to watch films. Cassettes were available on rent as video piracy thrived.

Some prospect hunters with an aim to make quick bucks misread the demand for films on the video format. They started making feature films in the video format with budgets of as little as Rs 3-5 lakh at a time when the budget for a Hindi film went up to Rs 50-60 lakh.

The market was flooded with over 5,000 video films. Sadly, there were no takers, though the market was gradually going legit, because neither the video rights buyer, nor the viewer cared for films shot on video format. Nobody wanted a film that was not a regular feature film made for cinemas. As a result, investments in about 5,000 video films went down the drain.

This fact now seems to have dawned on the OTT big shots in the US of A. They plan big-time investments in feature films, give them a regular theatrical release, which would add majorly to a film's recovery and also qualify it for the OTT platform as a regular film. This will also help the cinema chains survive, considering the deficit of supply which has forced the cinemas to reduce admission rates by a third of the original.

Closer home, the good news for the trade in general and the exhibition trade in particular is that the entertainment arm of Reliance Industries, Jio Cinema, which has been working on putting together a slate of entertainment content for some time, has finally announced an extensive slate of 100 productions in various languages, which include films as well as OTT content.



Jio Cinema has been working on content gathering, but, probably, did not want to announce this till they had a substantial repertoire on hand. Although the company's initial plan was to expand itself in the news media with a channel dedicated to each city or town, an idea one would think was far-fetched and would serve no real purpose, this shift to the entertainment media is welcome. Entertainment has takers all around.

Jio Cinema has been making its moves gradually, one at a time. From the Jio mobile network to acquiring interests in television news media, its progression from a small smartphone screen to the big screen and 5G will finally be all-encompassing: from handphone to television to the big cinema screen.

A lot of producers have announced or launched more than one project at a time. Some were just publicity gimmicks; some meant it. But what Jio Cinema is planning is a 100-project slate to start with.

Jio Cinema has interests in all kinds of content. These include films such as 'Dunki' (Shah Rukh Khan), 'Bloody Daddy' (Shahid Kapoor), 'Bhediya 2' (Varun Dhawan), 'Stree 2' (Rajkummar Rao- Shraddha Kapoor) and many such regular star cast films. Stars in the company's acquisitions / joint ventures are from all regions. They include Vijay Sethupathi, R. Madhavan, Pratik Gandhi, and Arvind Swamy, among others.

Similarly, Jio Cinema's web content includes 'Laal Batti', 'Union: The Making Of India', 'Inspector Avinash', 'Rafuchakkari', 'Bajao' and others offering varied content and actors.

Along with Jio Cinema, the Viacom18 OTT platform, Voot, is also reported to be on a content acquisition spree. Reliance

has an interest in both Viacom and Voot. Jio planned to release 'Stree' directly on OTT, but, as an afterthought, decided to give the film a theatrical release; the risks were not high. The film worked wonders and registered a good business. Similar was their experience with 'Luka Chuppi'.

In all probability, had these films been released directly on OTT, they may not have worked or not met with the same success. As I mentioned earlier, a feature film is not accepted till it is screened in cinemas. Web series are fine, but for OTT to succeed, the route is through movies. What Apple, Amazon and Jio Cinema are doing will benefit and assure the survival of all channels of entertainment.

Government wakes up to 51-year-old problem

It has been more than 50 years since the video cassette recorder / player brought home viewing of films to India. It is also the time when video piracy also took roots. Owning a VCR was a luxury and watching a feature film at home was a privilege. Unfortunately, the films which were available on video cassettes were mostly pirated.

There were various ways of pirating a feature film. These included hijacking a film print for a few hours while it was being dispatched to nearby cinemas, or copying prints being sent to overseas markets (usually dispatched a week before a film's India release as it needed to complete censor and other formalities in the respective country), but the cheapest and crudest way to copy a film was to make a camera print while watching a film. The format was new and people did not mind even watching such copies.

Is it not odd that the government has woken up after so many years to the issue of piracy and unauthorised exhibition of films? What is the provocation, 51 years since the problem first reared its head? The government has labelled camcording of a film in a theatre as an offence. Does it still happen? I don't think so.

The piracy as it was done in the 1970s and 80s does not happen now. Yes, unauthorised exhibition of films happens big time and, no, these are not pirated prints as the government believes. The prints are acquired through unauthorised means without the acquisition of rights and are made available through the Internet.

The Government has amended the Cinematograph Act 1952. The new legislation is the Cinematograph Amendment Bill 2023. It provides for blocking websites transmitting unauthorised content.

Films from 1932 onwards, mostly from the later eras, are available on the Net. How does the government plan to determine which film is authorised and which one is not? Most of the OTT platforms operate from countries other than India and blocking a popular portal may not solve the problem because blocking does not guarantee no access. Yes, maybe you could try blocking the revenue flows to such portals.

The Bill does not mention piracy of music, which, probably, generates much more revenue for the pirates and other unlawful content providers.

international

BILLS INTRODUCED IN MICHIGAN TO RECOGNISE DIWALI, EID AS OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS

New York | Agencies

Three legislators, including an Indian-American, in the Michigan State House have introduced a set of bills to establish festivals like Diwali and Eid as official state-recognised holidays.

Led by Majority Floor Leader in the House, Abraham Aiyash, and state representatives Ranjeev Puri and Sharon MacDonell, introduced the legislation to make Diwali, Vaisakhi, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha and Lunar New Year as official holidays in Michigan.

House Bills 4446 and 4449, introduced by Puri, establish Diwali and Vaisakhi as state holidays.

"Celebrating our cultural diversity is a cornerstone of a vibrant and inclusive society. By recognising these holidays, we are not only showing our respect and appreciation for the traditions and beliefs of our fellow Michiganders, but we are also sending a powerful message of inclusion and unity," Puri said.

A Hindu religious festival, Diwali celebrates the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance, and Vaisakhi is a spring harvest festival celebrated by both Hindus and Sikhs, a statement released by Michigan



House Democrats read.

"These bills embrace the diverse fabric of our state by recognising various religious and cultural holidays," Aiyash said, introducing Bill 4447, which calls for Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr as state holidays.

"Making these holidays official state holidays will let Michigan's many communities know that they have a place in our great state and deserve to celebrate their joyous occasions like everyone else." At present, Michigan has 12 officially recognised holidays, including Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Year,

Juneteenth, and Martin Luther King Jr Day among the notable ones.

Close to 900,000 Asian Americans live in Michigan, with Indian-Americans making up the largest subgroup, according to Indian American Impact.

Most South Asians reside in Detroit and the surrounding area, in places like Troy, Novi, and Farmington Hills.

Recently, Pennsylvania declared Diwali as a national holiday after senators, Greg Rothman and Nikil Saval introduced a legislation in February this year.

TURKISH EVACUATION PLANE SHOT AT IN SUDAN

Ankara: The Turkish Defense Ministry said on Friday that its evacuation plane was shot at as it arrived in conflict-torn Sudan, but no injuries were reported.

The Turkish C-130 plane, which was landing at Wadi Seidna Airport outside Sudan's capital Khartoum for evacuation, was shot at, said a statement from the ministry, Xinhua news agency reported.

The plane landed safely, no injuries were reported for the personnel, and the aircraft is parked for inspection, the statement added.

Turkey has been running an evacuation operation since last Sunday for its citizens in Sudan where fierce fighting erupted between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

Sudan's army accused RSF of opening fire on the Turkish evacuation aircraft, while the RSF denied firing at the plane.

BBC Chairman resigns after Boris Johnson loan row

London | Agencies

BBC Chairman Richard Sharp resigned on Friday over a report into whether he failed to properly disclose his involvement in the facilitation of a loan to former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Barrister Adam Heppinstall was appointed by the Commissioner of Public Appointments to investigate the claims which had first appeared in the Sunday Times, says the BBC.

Confirming his resignation, Sharp said the report, which was published on Friday, found "that while I did breach the governance code for public appointments, he states that a breach does not necessarily invalidate an appointment".

He said the report finds he did not play "any part whatsoever in the facilitation, arrangement, or financing of a loan for the former Prime Minister".

But he said with hindsight he should have disclosed his role in setting up a meeting between Cabinet Secretary Simon Case and Sam Blyth -- a businessman who was offering the then PM

financial help -- to the appointments panel during the scrutiny process ahead of him taking up the senior role.

Sharp said not doing so was an "oversight" and apologised for it.

In a statement, he said he did not want to be a "distraction", adding that it had been an honour to chair the BBC.

He will remain in post until June until a successor is appointed.

In response to his resignation, the BBC board said: "We accept and understand Richard's decision to stand down."

We want to put on record our thanks to Richard, who has been a valued and respected colleague, and a very effective chairman of the BBC.

"The BBC board believes that Richard Sharp is a person of integrity."

The board added that Sharp had been a "real advocate for the BBC, its mission, and why the corporation is a priceless asset for the country, at home and abroad".

Sharp, a former banker, was appointed as Chairman of the BBC on February 10, 2021. He previously worked at JP Morgan for eight years, and then for 23 years at Goldman Sachs.

33 soldiers killed in attack in Burkina Faso

Ouagadougou | Agencies

Thirty-three soldiers were killed in an attack against a military detachment in eastern Burkina Faso, the military said in a statement.

The military detachment of Ougarou was targeted by a large complex attack on Thursday morning, which left 33 soldiers dead and 12 others injured, the statement added as quoted by Xinhua news agency report.

The fighting was particularly intense, and the soldiers showed "remarkable determination" facing the enemies who came in large numbers, according to the statement.

"They managed to neutralise at least 40 terrorists before the arrival of rein-



forcements," the statement said. Since 2015, insecurity in

the west African country has claimed many lives and displaced thousands more.

Turkey joins nuclear power club with Akkuyu plant: Erdogan

Ankara | Agencies

Turkey has joined the club of nuclear power countries with the nuclear fuel delivery into the first power unit of the Akkuyu power plant, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said.

"With the delivery of nuclear fuel by sea and air to our plant, Akkuyu has now acquired the nuclear power plant status. Therefore, our country has risen to the league of countries with nuclear power, albeit after 60 years of delay," Erdogan said at a ceremony via video link, joined by his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin online.

Akkuyu nuclear power plant, Turkey's first nuclear power plant, is being built by Russia's state nuclear energy company Rosatom in Mersin province on the southern Mediterranean coastline, reports Xinhua news agency.

Erdogan underlined that the power plant is "the biggest joint investment" between Turkey and Russia, and vowed that the Ankara govern-



ment will take steps to build a second and a third nuclear power plant as soon as possible. Putin, for his part, hailed the Akkuyu nuclear

power plant as one of the most "important partnerships" between the two countries in their history. "This is a flagship project and it brings both mutual economic benefits and, of course, helps to strengthen the multifaceted partnership between our two states," Putin said.

Erdogan "personally pays great attention to the expansion of Russian-Turkish relations", the Russian leader said. A new nuclear industry is being established in Turkey thanks to the Akkuyu Power Plant, Putin said.

In 2010, the two countries reached a deal to let Russia's state company Rosatom build and operate the Akkuyu plant, which is designed with four nuclear reactor units, each with a capacity to generate 1,200 MW of electricity.

Under the deal, the Akkuyu plant was to be constructed with a Russian capital of \$20 billion. The construction began in 2018 and is scheduled to complete in 2026.

Once fully operational, the plant is expected to produce annually 35 billion kWh of electricity to meet approximately 10 per cent of domestic electricity needs.



ACTOR SOORAJ PANCHOLI ACQUITTED IN JIAH KHAN 'ABETMENT TO SUICIDE' CASE

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

A CBI special court here on Friday acquitted actor Sooraj Pancholi, who was accused of abetment in the suicide of actress Jiah Khan in 2013.

Pancholi, 32, was present in the court along with his parents Aditya Pancholi and Zarina Wahab when Special Judge A.S. Sayyed pronounced the much-anticipated verdict before a packed courtroom this afternoon.

"Due to paucity of evidence, this court can't hold you guilty. Hence acquitted," said Special Judge Sayyed.

He also said that Rabiya Khan, Jiah's mother, could appeal in the matter in the Bombay High Court.

A visibly upset Rabiya, who has been relentlessly pursuing the case since the past 10 years, later said that she will file an appeal against the court verdict.

A relieved Aditya Pancholi reacted by saying, "the truth always wins! God is great!", while his wife Zarina was in tears and barely able to speak. Nafisa Rizvi Khan, 25, famous as Jiah, was found dead in her Mumbai flat in Sagar Sangeet apartments, Juhu, around midnight on June 3, 2013, sparking a huge sensation in Bollywood circles.

The tragedy took place hours after Sooraj had



left her home after living with her for two days, and later the Juhu Police Station recovered a note left by Jiah.

In the note pointing the needle of suspicion at Sooraj, she had narrated her troubled relationship, the ordeal, intimacy, physical and mental abuse and tortures, allegedly perpetrated on her by the actor.

Based on the note, the Mumbai Police booked and arrested Sooraj under IPC Sec. 306 (abetment

to suicide) on June 10, 2012, and he remained in jail for nearly a month till the Bombay High Court granted him bail of Rs 50,000, on July 1, 2013.

As Rabiya pursued the matter, a year later in July 2014, the Bombay High Court transferred the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), after which Aditya Pancholi hit back by slapping a Rs 100 crore defamation suit against Jiah's mother.

The Mumbai Police probe in 2013 had concluded that it was a suicide as Sooraj had broken off their relationship, and her career was not going ahead. Subsequently the CBI also upheld the case as 'suicide' in February 2016.

Undeterred, she challenged the CBI investigation report in the high court which was dismissed. In view of Rabiya's continued allegations of 'murder' against Sooraj, the prosecution attempted to enhance the charges to rape and murder in 2017, and he was charged with 'abetment to suicide' in 2018.

In 2022, Rabiya moved the Bombay High Court seeking to reopen the case, suspecting alleged errors in the previous probe and other things, but her plea was rejected.

She reiterated the allegations that her daughter was "murdered" and sought an investigation afresh by an independent or special agency with help from the Federal Bureau of Investigation as Jiah was a US national.

CBI to probe Palghar mob-killing case, Maharashtra tells Supreme Court

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

The Maharashtra government Friday told the Supreme Court that it has already recommended a CBI probe into the alleged lynching of three persons in Palghar in 2020 and this led to the closure of proceedings on as many as four pending petitions on the issue.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha took note of the fresh affidavit of the state government that a communication to this effect has already been issued by it.

"In view of the decision taken by the state government, no further direction is needed on these petitions at this stage. The petitions are disposed of," the bench said.

The pleas demanded a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), alleging that the investigation by the state police was being conducted in a biased man-



ner. Earlier, the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi government had opposed the plea for a CBI probe into the incident and later, with the change in dispensation in the state, it agreed to the petitions seeking investigation by the central probe agency.

Three people from Kandivali in Mumbai were travelling in a car to attend a funeral in Surat in Gujarat

amid the COVID-19-induced nationwide lockdown when their vehicle was stopped and they were attacked and allegedly killed by a mob in Gadchinchile village on the night of April 16, 2020 in the presence of police.

The victims were identified as Chikne Maharaj Kalpavrukshagiri, 70, Sushil Giri Maharaj, 35, and Nilesh Telgade, 30, who was driving the vehicle.

Water crisis in Maharashtra's Raigad, collective stock in dams at 35%

Team Absolute | Alibag

Several villages in coastal Raigad district of Maharashtra are currently reeling under acute water shortage and the local administration has started taking various relief measures like providing water through tankers and digging wells to tide over the crisis, authorities said.

At present, the collective water stock in the dams across Raigad is only 35 per cent, they said.

A total of 35 villages and 113 wadis (settlements) are currently facing the water crisis and the collective number is set to grow to 1,328.

A total of Rs 7,61,00,000 are likely to be spent this year by



the authorities on relief measures. The villages facing the crisis are located in Karjat, Khalapur, Pen, Mahad, Poladpur and Sudhagad tehsils of the district.

In 2012-13, Rs 6,67,75,000 were spent on the relief

measure and the figure rose to ? 9,94,24,000 in 2021-22.

Of the total number of reservoirs in the district, there is less than 40 per cent water stock in seven dams, while eight others have above 40 per cent storage, the authorities said.

Desist from using 'Shiv Sena' name: BJP MLA warns Shiv Sena (UBT)

Team Absolute | Mumbai

BJP legislator Nitesh N. Rane on Friday warned the opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) to refrain from using the name 'Shiv Sena' which has been allotted to the faction led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Nitesh, son of Union MSME Minister Narayan Rane, said that the Election Commission of India (ECI) has given the 'Shiv Sena' name and its 'Bow-and-Arrow' symbol to Shinde.

"It officially belongs to them (Shinde faction) and nobody has the legal right to use the name of another. The other side led by Uddhav Thackeray must identify themselves clearly as 'Shiv Sena (UBT)' to avoid



any confusions," Nitesh Rane said

while addressing mediapersons.

He further claimed that many Sena (UBT) leaders and even sections of the media continue to address their party as only as 'Shiv Sena' which is wrong and goes against the ECI's award last October on the two parties which split after the political upheavals in June 2022.

Nitesh Rane said he would soon raise the matter with the Shinde Shiv Sena leaders, the BJP and others concerned to ensure their party name is not misused in any manner.

He also slammed the Maha Vikas Aghadi, especially his bete-noire, Uddhav Thackeray, for proving to be an ill-omen to the opposition alliance comprising Sena (UBT), Congress and Nationalist Congress Party.

Days after Pawar suggests dialogue with protesters, Raut says locals have no trust in govt

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Friday said the locals at Barsu, where a refinery has been proposed, have no trust in the Shiv Sena-BJP government in Maharashtra, days after NCP president Sharad Pawar advised the ruling dispensation to hold a dialogue with those villagers opposing the project.

Talking to reporters, Raut also alleged that the refinery project is being executed to protect the interests of politicians and "outsiders" who have bought land at Barsu and demanded that the government make the list public of such people.

"I heard what Sharad Pawar said that there should be a dialogue with the locals and take them into confidence. But what should one do? They don't have trust in the government," Raut said.

Pawar on Wednesday said the



Maharashtra government should hold a dialogue with local villagers who are opposing a refinery project in the coastal Ratnagiri district. If the issue was not resolved even after that, an alternative site should be found,

he said.

The NCP chief said his party did not oppose development projects in Konkan, but finding out the opinion of the locals was a must.

A section of residents of Barsu vil-

lage in Ratnagiri district's Rajapur tehsil, more than 400 km from Mumbai, are up in arms against the project and the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress, the NCP's allies in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition, are supporting them.

Raut said his party chief Uddhav Thackeray has said that there was a continuous demand for alternative land from the Centre after the plan to have a refinery at Nana was shelved.

"An alternative land was proposed at the insistence of Delhi. But in two-and-a-half years, the then chief minister Uddhav Thackeray did not try to forcibly acquire land. Our position is that if people did not want the project then we do not need Barsu (refinery project). And the way locals are opposed and the atmosphere is, the government should stop land acquisition and the survey. Till that time the situation will not come under control," he said.

SC rejects plea for transfer of party assets from Thackeray faction to Shinde group

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea seeking a direction to the Maharashtra government that all party assets of the Shiv Sena being held by the Uddhav Thackeray faction be transferred to the group led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha questioned the locus of petitioner Ashish Giri, a lawyer, and dismissed his plea.

"Who are you? What is your locus," the bench asked and then said, "Dismissed." Giri said a plea has been filed in the top court as it has heard various petitions relat-



ing to the feud between the Thackeray and the Shinde factions. He had said the assets of the party should be transferred to the Shinde group.

"What kind of petition is this and who are you? Your request cannot be entertained," the bench said. The top court, on March

16, had reserved its verdict on a batch of cross-petitions of Uddhav Thackeray and CM Eknath Shinde factions pertaining to the Maharashtra political crisis.

The poll panel has granted the symbol, bow and arrow, to the Shinde faction and the issue is presently sub-judice.

EIGHT HELD FOR LYNCHING A MAN ON SUSPICION OF THEFT

Mumbai: At least eight persons have been arrested for allegedly beating a 20-year-old man to death and injuring another on suspicion of theft in Maharashtra's Thane city, police said on Friday.

The incident took place in Kasarwadavali area of the city on Wednesday night, when the accused allegedly attacked two men suspecting them of theft, an official said.

The accused allegedly stripped the victims, tied their hands and feet and beat them with iron rods and other objects, he said.

The victims were also robbed of Rs 1,100, the official said, adding that the beatings continued till the next day morning and the duo were later released.

While one of them died of the injuries, the other man is undergoing treatment at a hospital, the official said. Based on a complaint lodged by the injured man, an offence under sections 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code were registered against the arrested accused, senior inspector Rajesh Babshetty said.

Western Railway gears up ahead of monsoon, speeds up waterways work

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Western Railway (WR) on Friday said that its Mumbai division has been gearing up for the upcoming monsoon season to provide seamless services in the rains.

In a statement, the WR said, additional waterways are being constructed through 'Micro-Tunnelling' at flooding prone locations across the Mumbai suburban section. These waterways have been already constructed at 5 locations. Additional 2 recently commissioned, while 5 more to be completed in this year.

It said, WR is committed to provide smooth travel for its commuters, to keep the wheels of trains running and ensure uninterrupted services, especially during the monsoons. Due to the sustained efforts and infrastructure upgradations, the suburban operations have improved in the past few years during the monsoons, and WR ran train services smoothly and normally over Mumbai suburban section with minimum disruptions, despite heavy rainfall. One of the techniques adopted in this direction is construction of additional waterways using micro-tunnelling method. Such waterways have been already constructed at 5 locations. Recently, another two waterways were commissioned, while 5 more will be com-



pleted in this year.

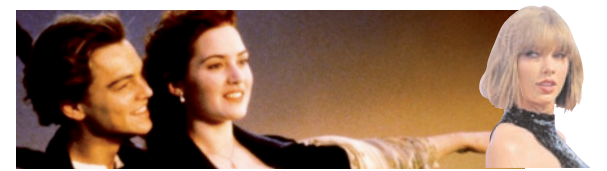
According to a press release issued by Sumit Thakur, Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, the topography of the major flood prone areas of previous monsoons such as Bandra, Andheri, Mahim, Grant Road, Goregaon, Vasai Road & Virar were studied in detail and an action

plan was drawn accordingly to suit the requirements of the particular area, the aim being to facilitate quick & smooth discharge of rainwater and prevent water logging.

It said, the WR studied the flooding pattern and devised customized solutions for each flooding locations by adopting modern technology and

techniques to put an end to this perennial issue of flooding. One of the technique include construction of additional waterways by using the advanced micro-tunnelling method. Such waterways have been constructed between Bandra - Khar, Goregaon - Malad, Vasai Road - Nallasopara, Nallasopara - Virar sections as well as at Nallasopara (South) near culvert no. 79.

Thakur stated that recently, WR undertook the work of construction of waterways at bridge No. 78 between Vasai Road and Nallasopara stations. Three pipes of 1800mm diameter were inserted by micro-tunnelling method. This will prevent negative free board at Ancholi Nallah, quick recession of water during high tide coupled by heavy rainfall in Vasai area. It will also help to reduce flooding in Vasai Yard. Also, the work of insertion of 2 pipes of 1800mm diameter, parallel to culvert 54 has been completed at Goregaon Yard. The work was completed in March'23 and this will help to augment discharge capacity of culvert no. 54 and ease out flooding problem of Goregaon Yard. Further, five more such waterways are being constructed at various locations. Out of these, the work on 2 waterways are in progress & will be completed before the onset of the monsoon while the remaining three will be completed in this year.



BREAKUP!

GLEN POWELL SPLITS FROM GIRLFRIEND AMID ROMANCE RUMOURS WITH SYDNEY SWEENEY

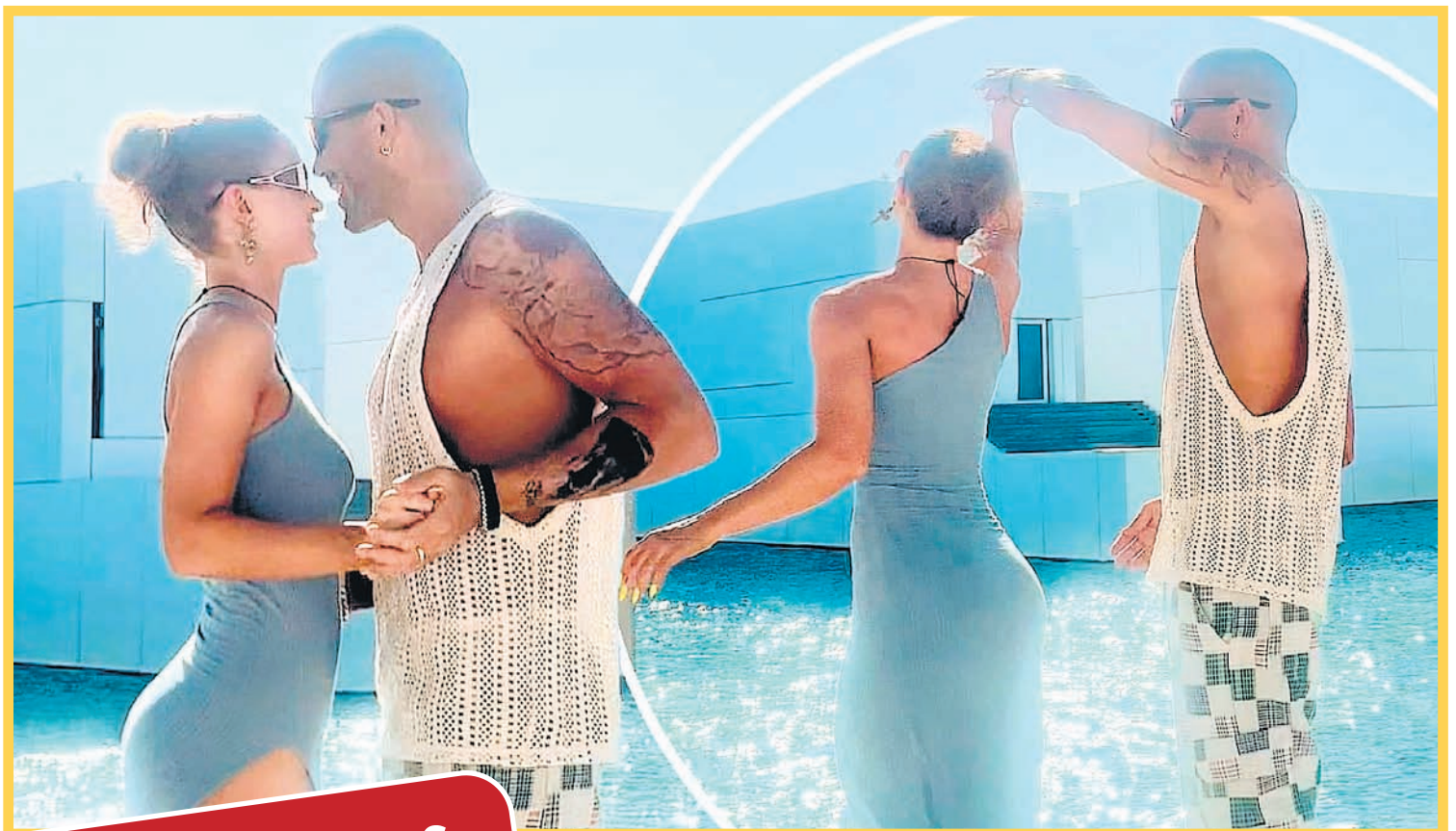
Los Angeles | Agencies

Top Gun' star Glen Powell has seemingly split from his girlfriend of three years Gigi Paris, amid rumours he is dating actress Sydney Sweeney. Recently, the model hinted at the

split on Instagram as she posted a video of herself walking down the street alone, reports Mirror.co.uk. She captioned the post: "Know your worth & onto the next," in an apparent dig at her actor ex. Fans rushed to the comments to share their support, with one person writing: "Yes girl, you deserve better teamgigi." Another said: "Good for you, some-

one else out there will treat you better," while a third added: "I love how quickly this happened. No time for messing about. No time for disrespect." As per Mirror.co.uk, Gigi also shared a picture to her Instagram story as she enjoyed a dinner party with friends and wrote: "New beginnings." Gigi has also unfollowed Glen on

Instagram, however, he still follows Gigi. Neither Glen nor Gigi have directly addressed the split. Gigi's latest post comes after she also unfollowed Glen's co-star Sydney after the pair were spotted cosying up at CinemaCon in Las Vegas on Monday. Glen was all smiles as he put his arm round 25-year-old Sydney.



Maisie Smith & Max George dance at the Louvre after jetting off to Abu Dhabi for romantic break

'Twirls at the Louvre'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Maisie Smith and Max George couldn't take their eyes off each other as they enjoyed a romantic dance at the Louvre in Abu Dhabi, reports dailymail.co.uk. The couple, who competed against each other during the 2020 series of strictly, decided to put some moves into practice as they twirled by the pool. It comes after Maisie was stunned when Max 'proposed' during a pre-recorded episode of The Chase Celebrity Special, which aired on Sunday. Maisie flashed a hint of her toned legs in a maxi dress with thigh-high split as The Wanted star Max spun her around. Maisie captioned the

shot: 'Twirls at the Louvre'. Fans took to the comment section to gush over the romantic snaps. Bake Off star John Whaite wrote: 'You guys'. Another fan wrote: 'Max I admire what you had to do in the dark, you're a lovely guy, my advice is get a ring on her finger your obviously in love just go for it, life's too short.' The couple has jetted off to Abu Dhabi after Maisie enjoyed a trip to Paris last week. The former EastEnders star embraced the city of fashion in a chic Burberry ensemble. Maisie beamed while posing for a snap nearby the Eiffel Tower, with the landmark sparkling in the background. The actress was stunned when Max 'proposed' during a pre-recorded episode of The Chase Celebrity Special, which aired on Sunday.

'Brief Appearance'

AMBER HEARD SEEN IN 'AQUAMAN 2' TRAILER DESPITE RUMOURS SHE'S REMOVED FROM FILM



Los Angeles | Agencies

Amber Heard was seen for a short moment in the sequel of Aquaman despite rumours that she has been removed from the Jason Momoa starrer film, reports International The News. As per report by Deadline, Warner Bros dropped the first trailer of Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom during CinemaCon 2023 and to the audience's surprise; Heard was seen for a brief moment. The Rum Diary star "does have a cameo" as Mera in the trailer of movie "but in a battle scene," the publication revealed. Heard's role in the superhero movie was cast into doubt during her bombshell defamation case against ex-husband Johnny Depp. During the trial, the mother-of-one claimed that her role in the movie was reduced after the Pirates of the Caribbean actor's lawyers called her abuse claims a "hoax." "I fought really hard to stay in the movie. They didn't want to include me in the film," she testified in the court. However, Walter Hamada, DC film head, refuted her claims after he was called to testify in court about the actor's minimized role. Hamada said Heard's role was cut down not because of the trial but because there were fears of lack of chemistry between the actor and Momoa. "The size of the role in the film that she has was determined in the early development of the script," Hamada said. Moreover, during the trial, a petition to remove Heard from the film received more than 4.5 million signatures.

James Corden gets emotional as he says farewell to his show

Los Angeles | Agencies

An emotional James Corden was in tears last night while signing off on his final The Late Late Show after eight years at the helm, as he prepares to return to the UK and regain favour among the British public, reports dailymail.co.uk. The TV personality ended his run on US late night television yesterday by performing a piano ballad with several references to his 1,200 episodes. His final guests included his pop megastar friend Harry Styles and comedian Will Ferrell, messages of support from President Joe Biden and a Carpool Karaoke with Adele. PR experts have claimed Corden could be set for a big-money move to ITV and even replace rival Jonathan Ross as part of a charm offensive to 'win back the British public' after a slew of negative headlines while in the US. Toward the end of the musical number last night, Corden's voice began to crack and tears welled up in his eyes as he looked into the camera. He sang: 'And part of me thinks why not stay here forever? But deep in my heart, I just know. No more shows to be showing. It's time I was going. It's time. Thanks for watching, that's our show.' The crowd uproariously applauded and gave him a standing ovation as the star waved goodbye for the final time. He said: 'Thank you so much for your time, everybody. I will miss you. Goodnight.' The Into The Woods star pointed to the camera before turning to his audience and giving them a salute. He wiped the tears away with his jacket sleeve as he made his way to the curtain and gave one final wave at the audience while taking the moment in. The actor and presenter said he decided to quit the show and wanted to spend more time with his family after a heartfelt conversation with his son, Max. But in recent months he has been beset with negative press about his off-screen antics, including a bust-up with the owner of a restaurant who banned him for being rude to staff.



Rita Ora poses up a storm as she shares behind-the-scenes snaps of herself getting ready

'GLAMOROUS'

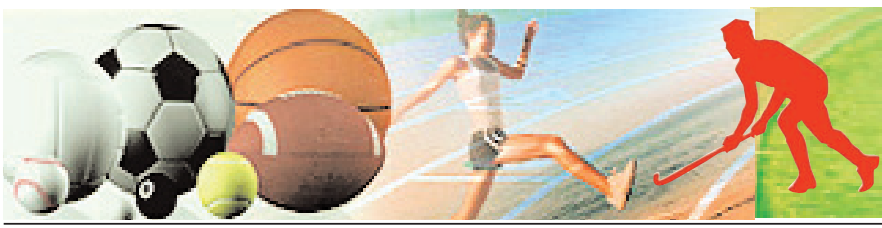
Los Angeles | Agencies

Rita Ora was the picture of glamour as she shared a series of behind-the-scenes snaps of her make-up team getting her ready for the Prince's Trust Global Gala. The singer attended the star-studded event in New York on Thursday night and pulled out all the stops for the occasion. Rita uploaded a series of snaps on Instagram after the event, giving an insight into her glamorous makeover, reports dailymail.co.uk. The 'Anywhere' hitmaker looked incredible in a floor-length white corset gown and matching evening gloves. With her hair slicked back in a high bun, Rita posed up a storm for the camera after getting her make-up done with the help of the Charlotte Tilbury team. Rocking a white dressing gown in some of the getting ready snaps, Rita captioned the post: 'Darling I was born ready. Thank you', before tagging the brand. The songstress accessorised with a silver necklace and stunning silver earrings for the evening out. The star-studded Prince's Trust

Global Gala raised more than 1.7 million US dollars (£1.4 million). A wide range of grantees - past and present - explained how the King's charity has improved their lives. Rita hung out with celeb pals including Sienna Miller, Charlotte Tillbury and Kate Moss at the star-studded occasion. It comes after Rita took to Instagram earlier in the day to catch her fans up on her busy week in New York with a photo dump. The singer, who is married to film director Taika Waititi, revealed she had enjoyed promoting her new single Praising You and went to Met Gala fittings. In other snaps, she looked stunning in a black crop top as she strolled through Manhattan and enjoyed coffee and bagels. The star also did a workout, donning a matching sports bra and shorts for the gruelling exercise. Later in the slideshow, Rita took a selfie in a blue shirt as she worked on her laptop. She captioned her post: 'Mid week catch up/praise you promo nyc style/met fittings which I can't show atm and just life really. Keep streaming praising you guys I love you!!'



Demi Rose



IPL 2023: LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS HAMMER PUNJAB KINGS BY 56 RUNS

Mohali | Agencies

Superb batting show followed by collective bowling performance helped Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) hammer Punjab Kings (PBKS) by 56 runs in an IPL 2023 match at IS Bindra Stadium, here on Friday.

With this win, LSG jumped to the second spot in the 10-team standings with 10 points in eight outings while Punjab placed sixth with eight points to their kitty.

Attacking fifties from Marcus Stoinis (72 off 40) and Kyle Mayers (54 off 24) set the foundation for LSG's massive total. Then Ayush Badoni 43 off 24 and Naveen-ul-Haq (3/30) 45 quickfire took Lucknow to 257/5 on the board, second highest total in IPL history.

In defence, bowlers came up with a brilliant show as Ravi Bishnoi (2/41) bowled brilliantly in the middle overs to pick two wickets. Yash Thakur (4/37) and Naveen-ul-Haq (3/30) then executed their plans in the slog overs to seal a big win for LSG.

Chasing the mammoth 208-run



target, PBKS didn't get the much-needed start as Stoinis struck in the first over and trapped the big fish Shikhar Dhawan cheaply for one. Then, Naveen removed Prabhsimran Singh in the fourth over. Atharv Taide

hit Avesh Khan for three boundaries, single-handedly taking the powerplay total to 55/2.

Putting into bat first, Lucknow lost the skipper KL Rahul early in the powerplay then Mayers, who com-

pleted his fifty off just 20 balls, took the PBKS bowlers to cleaners before falling in the sixth over as Lucknow posted 74 for 2 in the powerplay.

Marcus Stoinis and Ayush Badoni continued with the onslaught as the duo kept PBKS bowlers at bay with their calculated hits and stitched 89 off 47 balls for the third wicket partnership. LSG were strong in the middle overs, collecting 110 runs between 7-15 overs for the loss of one wicket.

Arsheep denied Pooran a half-century in the final over. With five runs coming off the last two balls, LSG finished with a huge total of 257/5 in 20 overs.

Brief scores

Brief scores: Lucknow Super Giants 257/5 in 20 overs (Kyle Mayers 54 off 24, Marcus Stoinis 72 off 40; Kagiso Rabada 2/52) beat Punjab Kings 201/10 in 19.5 overs (Atharv Taide 66 off 36, Sikander Raza 36 off 22; Yash Thakur 4/37, Naveen-ul-Haq 3/30) by 56 runs.

Badminton Asia Championships

Sindhu crashes out after losing to An Se Young in quarter-finals

Dubai | Agencies

Former world champion PV Sindhu crashed out of the Badminton Asia Championships 2023 after losing to world No. 2 An Se Young in her women's singles quarter-final match at the Sheikh Rashid Bin Hamdan Indoor Hall, here on Friday.

World No 11 Sindhu suffered her sixth straight defeat against the South Korean shuttler by going down 21-18, 5-21, 9-21.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medalist, began well and won the first game despite trailing 13-16 at one stage. The Indian had never won a game against An Se Young in their previous five meetings. An Se Young dominated the second game. In the third, Sindhu engaged in longer rallies but An Se Young proved tough to crack and ran away with the game convincingly.

At the last edition of the



Asian championships held in Manila last year, Sindhu settled for bronze after losing to Akane Yamaguchi in the semi-finals. The 27-year old Sindhu also won a bronze in 2014.

Meanwhile, India's mixed doubles team of Rohan Kapoor-N Sikki Reddy also lost to the world No. 19 duo of Dejan Ferdinansyah-Gloria Emanuelle Widjaja from Indonesia 18-21, 21-19,

15-21 in the quarter-finals.

Commonwealth Games 2022 men's doubles champions Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will be up against third-seeded Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan of Indonesia later, for a place in the semi-finals.

In the men's singles event, world No. 9 HS Prannoy will play world No. 15 Kanta Tsuneyama of Japan.

Premier League

Newcastle strengthen grip on top-four as Spurs recover their pride

London | Agencies

Newcastle United solidified their position for a top-four finish in the Premier League while Tottenham Hotspur staged a comeback to draw 2-2 at home against Manchester United in the latest action in the top-flight English league.

Newcastle registered a convincing 4-1 win away at Everton on Thursday night, which was never in question after Callum Wilson put them ahead in the 28th minute.

Everton's main issue this season has been a lack of goals, and despite 13 shots at the goal, they failed to find the net until Joelinton and Wilson's second of the game put Newcastle 3-0 up in the second half, reports Xinhua.



Dwight McNeil's goal in the 80th minute gave Everton hope, but it only lasted for a minute before Jacob Murphy added Newcastle's fourth, leaving Everton second from the bottom ahead of Monday's crucial game away at Leicester City.

Jadon Sancho and Marcus Rashford appeared to have secured a vital win for Manchester United when

they scored in the seventh and 44th minutes, putting their side 2-0 ahead away at Tottenham, where Ryan Mason was back as caretaker coach after Spurs' 6-1 defeat to Newcastle last weekend.

Left-back Marcus Tavernier scored early in the second half as Bournemouth won a south-coast derby 1-0 away against bottom-side Southampton.

PAK vs NZ ODI

FAKHAR ZAMAN'S TON SETS UP PAKISTAN'S 500TH WIN IN ODIS

Rawalpindi | Agencies

Pakistan opener Fakhar Zamans ninth century in ODI cricket helped the hosts secure a five-wicket victory over New Zealand in the series opener at the Pindi Cricket Stadium. Through this, Pakistan also claimed their 500th win in ODIs, becoming only the third team to do so after Australia and India.

Chasing 289, Zaman and Imam-ul-Haq shared a solid 124-run opening stand. After scoring his 15th ODI half-century, Imam was trapped leg-before by leg-spinner Ish Sodhi in the 22nd over, departing for 60 off 65 balls, laced with five fours and one six.

After 'mam's departure, Zaman added 90 runs for the second wicket with captain Babar Azam and also brought up his ninth ODI century in the 35th over. Babar missed out on his 25th ODI half-century by one when he was caught behind off pacer



Adam Milne in the next over, with Shan Masood too departing cheaply.

With 12 overs remaining, Fakhar and Mohammad Rizwan struck five boundaries and a six between them in the next three overs to keep

Pakistan in control of the chase.

There was some panic after Zaman got out to left-arm spinner Rachin Ravindra in the 43rd over, departing for 117 off 114 balls and Salman Ali Agha too fell quickly.

But Rizwan kept calm and remained 42 not out while Mohammad Nawaz was unbeaten on eight as Pakistan reached home with nine balls to spare and five wickets in hand, taking a 1-0 lead in the five-match series.

Earlier, after being put into batting first, New Zealand made 288/7 in their 50 overs, with Daryl Mitchell striking a century.

Pakistan bowlers made a remarkable comeback in the last eight overs, giving away only 53 runs and taking four wickets in the final eight overs of the innings, including Mitchell falling for 113 off 115 balls, smashing 11 fours and one six.

Brief scores: New Zealand 288/7 in 50 overs (Daryl Mitchell 113, Will Young 86, Naseem Shah 2-29) lost to Pakistan 291/5 in 48.3 overs (Fakhar Zaman 117, Imam-ul-Haq 60; Adam Milne 2-60) by five wickets.

Spain tour

INDIA U-17 MEN BEAT ATLETICO MADRILENO U-16S IN PRACTICE GAME

Madrid | Agencies

The India U-17 men's team registered a 2-1 victory over Atletico de Madrieno U-16s in a practice game at the Alcala de Henares.

The India U-17s are currently in Madrid, Spain, where they are playing a series of practice matches as part of their preparations for the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) U-17 Asian Cup 2023, which will take place in Thailand in June, this year.

Thangalaloung Gangete and Lalpekhlua scored early in the second half for India, before Tallon pulled one back for the local team, as the visitors ran away with a narrow win in the match played on Thursday night.

India keeper Julfikar Gazi was also called into action late in the first half,



as he kept the scores 0-0 before the breather.

The Spanish side began on the

front foot in the second half as well, and Gazi had to make an acrobatic save early on to keep them out in the

53rd minute.

As it happens in a training game, India head coach Bibiano Fernandes brought in a host of changes a couple of minutes later, as Danny Meitei, Gurnaj Grewal, Vanlalpeka Guite, Korou Singh, Lalpekhlua, Thokchom, and Ricky Meetei replaced Prachit, Rohen, Omang, Lemment, Gogocha, Faizan Waheed, and Dhanajit, respectively.

Interestingly, the changes turned the game around for the Blue Colts, and India took the lead as Korou passed it for Gangete, who took his chance with great aplomb. Having taken the lead, the Korou-Gangete duo worked their magic once again, just four minutes later.

Korou sent in a cross for Gangete, and this time, the latter, instead of going for the goal himself, left it for Lalpekhlua, to make it 2-0.

La Liga

Sevilla sneak late victory in Bilbao, Villarreal & Valencia score big wins

Madrid | Agencies

Lucas Ocampos scored a stoppage-time penalty to secure a 1-0 win for Sevilla away to Athletic Club Bilbao with their only shot of the game in La Liga on Thursday.

The penalty was awarded for a foul by Yeray Alvarez on the winger and confirmed by VAR, despite TV images showing the defender touched the ball as he challenged, reports Xinhua.

The penalty decided a tight match in which defenses dominated for the most part, but Athletic had two first-half goals disallowed for offside. Villarreal climbed



above Betis into fifth place after netting four second-half goals at home against Espanyol, who now find themselves deeper in trouble at second from the bottom of the table.

Javi Puado put Espanyol

ahead just before halftime, but Etienne Capoue equalized in the 53rd minute and Dani Parejo put Villarreal in front 10 minutes later.

Espanyol's top scorer Joselu levelled in the 73rd minute, but Nicolas Jackson broke free of the offside trap to score a remarkable individual goal with 10 minutes remaining, and Capoue secured his second of the game in stoppage time to seal the win.

The 19-year-old Javi Guerra scored a stunning stoppage-time goal to complete Valencia's comeback at home against Valladolid, lifting them out of the bottom three.

Madrid Open

Kvitova biggest first-round victim; Andy Murray loses, Thiem advances

Madrid | Agencies

The No. 10 seed Petra Kvitova fell victim to the first major upset in the Madrid Open while China's Zhang Zhizhen sailed into the second round of the clay court event.

The Czech player, who won in Miami earlier this month, lost 7-6(9), 6-1 to Jule Niemeier of Germany here on Thursday. Croatia's 20th-seeded Donna Vekic also bowed out, following a 6-1, 7-6 (5) loss to Spain's Rebeka Masarova.

Dominic Thiem advanced into the last 64 with a convincing 6-4, 6-1 victory against Kyle Edmund of Britain, who is still working his way back to his best after a knee injury, reports Xinhua.

In the men's tournament, China's Zhang Zhizhen qualified for the second round, earning a 7-6(6), 6-4 victory over Jurij Rodionov of Austria in a match that lasted one hour and 30 minutes. The 26-year-old Madrid Open debutant came back from one break down in the first set and saved one set point to lead into the second set where he hit 12 winners.



Former world No. 1 Andy Murray also exited in the first round, suffering a 6-2, 7-6(7) defeat to Andrea Vavassori of Italy.

China's Wu Yibing crashed out in the first round as well, following a 6-2, 6-4 loss to Slovakian Alex Molcan in one hour and 21 minutes on Wednesday. In the women's doubles, China's eighth seeds Xu Yifan and Yang Zhaoxuan advanced to the next round after defeating Ekaterina Alexandrova and Anastasia Potapova 7-5, 6-2.

SL vs IRE 2nd Test

Mendis' 5-wicket haul helps Sri Lanka beat Ireland, sweep series by 2-0

Galle | Agencies

Off-spinner Ramesh Mendis picked a five-wicket haul while conceding 64 runs as Sri Lanka beat Ireland by an innings and ten runs on day five of the second Test to complete a 2-0 series sweep at the Galle International Stadium on Friday.

Ireland had put up a record-breaking performance in the first innings, crossing 400 for the first time in Test cricket with Paul Stirling and Curtis Campher both making hundreds in their total of 492. But going into the final day's play, they were facing an uphill battle for survival after Sri Lanka declared on 704/3 in their first innings and Ireland had lost two wickets on day four.

Day five's play began with



Andrew Balbirnie and Harry Tector in the middle, but the Ireland cap-

tain was struck on the helmet by a bouncer from the fiery Asitha

Fernando and left the field after receiving medical attention.

Stirling attempted to counter-attack but picked out extra cover after backing away and driving off Prabath Jayasuriya. The scalp meant the Sri Lanka left-arm spinner became the fast bowler to reach 50 Test wickets, doing so in just seven Tests, snatching the record from West Indies' Alf Valentine.

Jayasuriya also equalled the second fastest bowler overall to reach the 50-wicket mark along with Vernon Philander of South Africa and Tom Richardson of England.

Brief Scores: Sri Lanka 704/3 dec in 151 overs beat Ireland 492 and 202 in 77.3 overs (Harry Tector 85, Andrew Balbirnie 46, Ramesh Mendis 5/64, Asitha Fernando 3/30) by an innings and 10 runs.



'Filmfare award winners list'



Alia Bhatt, Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Gangubai Kathiawadi, Badhaai Do win big

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The 68th edition of the coveted Filmfare Awards was held in Mumbai. The award show was hosted by Salman Khan and Manish Paul. It was graced by a number of top Bollywood celebrities. Big celebs on the red carpet included Alia Bhatt, Sunny Leone, Shriya Saran, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Rajkumar Rao, Ayushmann Khurrana, Alaya F, Rakul Preet Singh and others.



HAVE A LOOK AT THE FULL LIST OF WINNERS:

Best Film: Gangubai Kathiawadi.
Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male): Rajkumar Rao for Badhaai Do.
Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female): Alia Bhatt for Gangubai Kathiawadi.
Best Director: Sanjay Leela Bhansali for Gangubai Kathiawadi.
Best Film Critics: Badhaai Do.
Best Actor Critics: Sanjay

Mishra for Vadh.
Best Actress Critics: Bhumi Pednekar for Badhaai Do and Tabu for Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2.
Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male): Anil Kapoor for Jugjugg Jeeyo.
Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female): Sheeba Chaddha for Badhaai Do.
Best Music Album: Pritam for Brahmastra Part One: Shiva.
Best Lyrics: Amitabh

Bhattacharya for Kesariya - Brahmastra Part One: Shiva.
Best Playback Singer (Male): Arijit Singh for Kesariya - Brahmastra Part One: Shiva.
Best Playback Singer (Female): Kavita Seth for Rangisari - Jugjugg Jeeyo.
Best Action: Parvez Shaikh for Vikram Vedha.
Lifetime Achievement Award: Prem Chopra.



'UNFAIR'

Aakruti Bagla | Mumbai

Namashi Chakraborty, son of Mithun Chakraborty, is all set to kick start his career with Rajkumar Santoshi's Bad Boy. Ahead of the release, the actor exclusively interacted with Absolute India.

Namashi Chakraborty speaks on being compared with dad Mithun Chakraborty

When we asked the actor why he chose to work with this film, he said, "Bad Boy came to me as a much-needed break I was yearning for. It is because I was unable to crack a lot of things since the industry is erratic in its culture. I am not complaining about it but just stating a fact. So when the film came to me and I heard Rajkumar Santoshi is directing it, I was elated as this is the best debut I could ask for."

The flick also stars a legendary actor in a song making a special appearance. Sharing that it was exciting to shake a leg with him Namashi shared, "I was so excited when I got to know that Dad would be coming. Also, something I got to know about him is that he is a one-take artist. He has been my idol; I have been a huge fan of him and seen his every film."

Coming from a film background, where all his family members are associated with the industry, Namashi shared an advice he cherishes.

"So honestly, despite coming from a film background I bagged the film organically. My father didn't recommend me anywhere nor did my mom made any calls. It was faith of Sajid Qureshi and Rajkumar Santoshi that I landed up this role. The only advice I got from my father is to keep working hard and be honest to every project. Because we don't believe in any recommendations as such, landing a part on your own is in itself an achievement. And my parents are proud of it. They have always supported me emotionally."

Namashi further justified why it is not fair to compare him with his legendary father, Mithun Chakraborty. He said, "I definitely understand people have certain expectations from me because of the lineage I come from. I do acknowledge the fact that I am privileged. But my dad has been in the business for 47 years. So looking at his experience and longevity, the comparison seems unfair."

The Song of Scorpion: a classic Irrfan-style Indie film



BY SHACHI CHATURVEDI

Director: Anup Singh
Cast: Irrfan Khan and Golshifteh Farahani
Runtime: 1h 59m
Cinematography: Pietro Zuercher and Carlotta Holy-Steinemann
Ratings: 3/5

Synopsis

A young woman who is fiercely independent strives to move past a horrific betrayal and rediscover her own voice.

In The Song of Scorpions, a young woman enrolls in her grandmother's classes to learn how to sing scorpions like her. Everything was going according to plan until Nooran was struck by tragedy, which turned her world upside down.

Nooran, who has been rejected by her own people, finds a home in Aadam. However, soon after getting married, Nooran suffers another setback, which inspires her to seek revenge in order to atone for all the wrong doings that were committed against her.

The notion that a scorpion sting in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, can result in death in less than 24 hours and that the sole remedy is a song sung by a scorpion singer that counteracts the scorpion's poison served as the basis for the movie's plot.

The film discusses love, betrayal,



patriarchy, and defying social standards.

When it comes to star performance, this film is the last movie of late veteran actor Irrfan Khan. He, being himself, plays the role with the utmost honesty, and his portrayal of Adam makes you think how brilliant of an actor he was.

Golshifteh farahani, who plays Nooran, is good in her role; however when it comes to the 'singing a song' part of the movie, her voice doesn't seem to match at all. Her lips are clearly visible while the music plays in the background, which is disappointing. Aside from that, she has mastered the dehati accent and body language.

The makers do an outstanding job when it comes to the portrayal of the town, which is critical for this film to communicate emotion. The attention to detail in depicting the desert and culture is impressive. One minor detail that has a significant effect is how the filmmaker shot a close-up of

women clapping in a specific way.

When discussing the background score, music, and dialogues, it is important to remember how well the creators managed to maintain realism. The emotions have been communicated in their purest form by employing flute or instrumental music as background, and the same goes for songs in the native tongue. The dialogues are in Hindi, but with a hint of Rajasthani dialect to make them more realistic.

Some films are not for the general public and cater to a specific audience. A film like this requires viewing through a specific set of glasses. This is not your typical masala entertainers but rather flicks about something more serious and true.

Conclusion

Overall, it's a classic Irrfan Khan film that values art and should be watched with the intention of comprehending the underlying meaning.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Kundali Bhagya' actress Ruhi Chaturvedi is a well-known face on TV but she believes that OTT platforms offer various opportunities for actors to showcase their talent and reach a wider audience. However, she asserted that her first love will always be TV.

Speaking on the same, the actress shared her thoughts on exploring OTT: "OTT platforms have opened up new avenues for actors. The content on these platforms is diverse, and there is some-

thing for everyone. As an actor, I am excited to explore different genres and experiment with new roles."

"While TV will always be my first love, I cannot deny the fact that as an actor, it's important to broaden your horizons and not limit yourself to certain roles," she added. Ruhi Chaturvedi has recently been confirmed for the upcoming season of 'Khatron Ke Khiladi', a popular reality show that tests the contestant's physical and mental strength. She will be seen performing daredevil stunts and pushing herself to the limit.



'TV will always be my first love but I want to explore OTT,' says Ruhi Chaturvedi

PS 2: A STRONG & GRIPPING SECOND PART



BY SHACHI CHATURVEDI

Director: Mani Ratnam
Cast: Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Vikram, Karthi, Jayam Ravi, Trisha Krishnan, Sobhita Dhulipala, Prakash Raj, and Ensemble
Runtime: 165 minutes
Ratings: 3/5

Synopsis

A conspiracy to assassinate the monarch and two Chola dynasty princes on the same day is underway. Can the Cholas withstand the wrath of the Pandiya rebels, led by the vengeful Nandhini?

Review

The film begins with a summary of its first installment and then continues. The filmmaker plunges into the core of Kalki's novel, Ponnini Selvan. This section of the film opens with the two youngsters, Aadhitha Karikalan and Nandhini, the Yuvraj and an orphan, falling in love. As the two are separated by forces beyond their control, their love story turns into a sad saga.

The movie before the intermission is largely about constructing the storyline and creating some unanswered questions by picking up where the first part left off, however, the second half is what keeps you on the edge of your seat since it is when you start getting answers to all of your questions.

The filmmaker has paid attention to every detail, which contributes to the film's status as a masterpiece. It has been observed that dubbing occasionally takes away the spirit of the film, however, here; an honest attempt has been



made to keep the authenticity of the lines in the dubbed version.

When it comes to cinematography, the film has some incredible shots made. A couple of frames in the film are so mind-blowing that they steal your breath away.

Coming on to the star performances, Aishwarya Rai is an angel

when you look at her from Mani Ratnam's lens. The director's portrayal of her and her ability to penetrate the skin of the character is exceptional. It appears that her expressions speak louder than her words.

Vikram, who plays Aditha, has a distinct personality. The aura and

the way the actor carries himself throughout the film tell about why Mani Ratnam has chosen him to do the part.

Trisha has a pivotal part in the film, and her performance has been flawless throughout. She plays Aditha's sister and the film's most intelligent character. Throughout, she is stunning, personable, and sensible.

Karthi is the one who deserves to be recognised for his outstanding efforts.

There is no finer combination in music than Rahman and Gulzar Sahab, and Mani Ratnam manages to bring the two maestros together. With wonderful background music that complements and highlights the scenes, as well as some amazing songs, this film manages to captivate your heart with its soundtrack.

Conclusion

With a lot of suspense and drama, this part of the film is hands down amazing and needs to be watched in theatres.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sandeepa Dhar