

absolute india



VOL. 10, ISSUE 150, MUMBAI | FRIDAY, APRIL, 14, 2023 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHOPAL AND NEW DELHI

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Temperatures to rise soon: IMD's latest heat wave warning

▶ THE WEATHER OFFICE HAS ALSO PREDICTED LIGHT RAINFALL WITH THUNDERSTORMS AND LIGHTNING OVER GOA, MADHYA PRADESH, AND MAHARASHTRA OVER THE NEXT FIVE DAYS.

▶ SEVERAL PARTS OF INDIA ARE FORECAST TO WITNESS HOTTER-THAN-USUAL WEATHER THROUGH JUNE, RAISING THE RISK OF MORE STRAIN ON THE POWER NETWORK AS PEOPLE TURN TO AIR CONDITIONERS TO FIND REPRIEVE FROM HEAT WAVES.



“Maximum temperatures are very likely to be above normal by 3-5 degrees Celsius over Northeast India, West Bengal, Sikkim, Odisha, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh during the next 4-5 days.”

IMD said in a statement

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Some parts of the country will witness a rise in temperature by 3-5 degrees Celsius over the next five days, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said today.

"Heat wave conditions very likely in isolated pockets over Gangetic West Bengal during 13th-17th; over north coastal Andhra Pradesh & Odisha during 13th-15th April and over Bihar during 15th-17th April 2023," the IMD statement read.

India logged its hottest February this year since record-keeping began in 1901, according to the IMD. However, above-normal rainfall due to seven western disturbances, including five strong ones, kept temperatures in check in March.

In the wake of the heat wave predictions in the national capital, the Delhi government today issued guidelines on school preparedness. The new guidelines direct all the schools recognized under the directorate of education to ensure that there is no student assembly in the schools in the afternoons.

Earlier, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik directed all anganwadi centres and schools to remain closed from April 12 till April 16 in view of rising temperatures across the coastal state.

Most parts of India are forecast to experience hotter-than-usual weather this year. Most areas of central, eastern and northwestern states are likely to experience heat waves during the three-month summer season, the weather office has said.

INDIA DEPLOYS SHATRUJEET BRIGADE CLOSE TO LINE OF ACTUAL CONTROL

CONQUERORS ON THE GROUND

50th Independent Para Brigade also known as Shatrueet Brigade is a formation of the Indian Army. The Parachute Regiment, colloquially known as the Paras, is an airborne infantry regiment of the Indian Army. The Brigade consists of Airborne Battalions, Artillery Batteries, Para field hospital, Signal and Engineers section. These Paratroopers are trained to conduct a variety of missions, from prevention and pre-emption tasks to multifaceted, high-intensity combat fighting. These soldiers epitomize professionalism, resilience, discipline, adaptability, bravery and self-sufficiency.

■ Ex Vayu Prahar was a 96-hour multi-domain air-land exercise conducted during the second week of March. It involved insertion and extraction of the Army's Special Forces at a designated Advanced Landing Ground (ALG) by C-130J Super Hercules and C-17 Globemasters of the IAF.

■ The latest exercise involved both tactical fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft of the IAF to land/drop Special Forces in designated areas for 'undertaking kinetic actions to provide surge to ongoing operations by regular land forces', the Army's Eastern Command revealed on Thursday.

■ This exercise is important, keeping in mind the continuing standoff between the Indian Army and the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) at Doklam -- a trijunction between India, Bhutan and Tibet Autonomous Region close to the Chicken Neck Corridor of North Bengal -- and China's aggressive stance along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh.



Team Absolute | Kolkata

In less than a month after Ex Vayu Prahar close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Eastern Theatre, the Indian Army and Indian Air Force (IAF) conducted yet another tactical drill in the first week of April to validate multi-mode insertion of strategic forces along the Frontier.

China has not only created military infrastructure on its territory close to the LAC but has also renamed certain parts of Arunachal Pradesh which it claims as southern Tibet. India has diplomatically rubbished this attempt by China to rename locations in Arunachal but the mili-

tary threat from across the LAC continues. Army chief Gen Manoj Pande and other top officers have maintained that the situation along the LAC continues to be tense. Both the Indian Army and the IAF is now at a state of full preparedness to meet any challenge from across the LAC.

This involves regular forces of the Army and specialised units from the Brahmastra or XVII Corps under the Eastern Command.

China is certainly watching. While India does not want a military confrontation with her northern neighbour, she certainly wants to push a subtle message through. The message is that

“Such Special Operations Exercises are a mix of conventional/unconventional military actions that are undertaken by specially designated, selected, trained and equipped units. C-17 Globemasters, Chinooks and Mi-17 V5s of the IAF undertook multi-mode insertion into greenfield landing zones with surgical precision. Paratroopers of the Shatrueet Brigade conducted special heli-borne operations with the aim to validate their ability to rapidly deploy into hostile environment using Chinook and Mi-17 V5 helicopters to augment the capability of regular ground forces,” a highly placed source in the Eastern Command said.

India has certain aces up her sleeves and won't take any aggressive stance from across the LAC lying down.

India sees surge in Covid cases; virus moving towards endemic stage: officials

▶ SINCE ITS DETECTION IN 2021, OMICRON HAS SPAWNED MORE THAN 1,000 SUB-LINEAGES, INCLUDING XBB. 1. 16 AND XBB. 1. 5, ACCORDING TO DR N.K ARORA, CO-CHAIR OF THE INDIAN SARS-COV-2 GENOMICS CONSORTIUM (INSACOG).

▶ WHILE XBB. 1. 16 HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS THE CAUSE OF A SURGE IN CASES, DR ARORA STATED THAT HOSPITALISATIONS HAVEN'T INCREASED, AND MOST DEATHS ATTRIBUTED TO THE DISEASE ARE AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH SERIOUS COMORBIDITIES. HOWEVER, HE ADDED THAT THE BIOLOGICAL BEHAVIOR OF THE VIRUS CANNOT BE PREDICTED AND THAT CONTINUED SURVEILLANCE OF HOSPITALISATIONS DUE TO SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY INFECTION (SARI) IS NECESSARY.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

India is witnessing a surge in Covid-19 cases with 7,830 new infections recorded on Wednesday, the highest in over seven months, as per the Union Ministry of Health and Family Affairs data. However, top officials in the health ministry say that the virus is moving towards an endemic stage, which means that it will be consistently present but limited to a particular region, making it more predictable and manageable.

Officials have noted that while cases may continue to rise over the next 10-12 days, hospitalisations remain low. The virus becoming endemic is likely to generate a large number of variants, according to them. India is ramping up its vaccination drive and promoting adherence to Covid-19 protocols such as wearing masks, social distancing, and washing hands frequently. With the emergence of new sub-lineages of Omicron, officials are urging the

public to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions to prevent the spread of the virus.

INDIA LOGS 10,158 NEW COVID CASES, HIGHEST SINGLE-DAY SPIKE SINCE SEP 2022

New Delhi: In the last 24 hours, India reported 10,158 new Covid-19 cases, marking the highest single-day spike since September 2022, according to the latest Union Health Ministry data released on Thursday.

The new figures have pushed the active caseload to 44,998. The active cases stand at 0.10 per cent.

The data revealed that the daily and weekly positivity rates currently stood at 4.42 per cent and 4.02 per cent, respectively. Also in the last 24 hours, 327 doses were administered. The country has so far administered 220.66 crore vaccine doses.

महामानव

आपले आदर्श : आपली प्रेरणा

भारतरत्न डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर (१४ एप्रिल १८९१-६ डिसेंबर १९५६)

१४ एप्रिल
भारतरत्न
डॉ. बाबासाहेब
आंबेडकर
जयंती

- सामाजिक न्याय विभागाच्या योजनांसाठी १६ हजार ४९४ कोटी रुपयांची तरतूद.
- भारतरत्न डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांच्या इंदू मिल येथील भव्य स्मारकाचे काम प्रगतिपथावर.
- रमाई आवास योजनेतर्गत ग्रामीण व शहरी भागाकरीता १ लाख ५० हजार घरकुलांचे उद्दिष्ट निश्चित.
- बार्टीच्या सर्व प्रशिक्षणाच्या योजना प्रभावीपणे राबविणार.
- बार्टीतर्फे देण्यात येणारी डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर राष्ट्रीय संशोधन अधिछात्रवृत्ती ८६१ विद्यार्थ्यांना देण्याचा निर्णय मंजूर.
- सामाजिक न्याय विभागातर्गत येणारी महामंडळे व बार्टीमार्फत आगामीकाळात एक लाख युवक-युवतींना रोजगाराभिमुख प्रशिक्षण मिळणार.
- जागतिक स्तरावर रोजगाराच्या संधी उपलब्ध होण्यासाठी बार्टीमार्फत फ्रेंच, रशियन, जपानी, जर्मन आणि स्पॅनिश या भाषांचे शिक्षण देणार.
- संजय गांधी निराधार व श्रावणबाळ योजनेतील अर्थसहाय्यात १००० रुपयांवरून १५०० रुपये वाढ.
- ज्येष्ठ नागरिकांसाठी राष्ट्रीय वयोश्री योजनेचा विस्तार आणि प्रत्येक महापालिका क्षेत्रात विरंजुळा केंद्र.

असामान्य, अद्वितीय महामानवाला जयंतीनिमित्त विनम्र अभिवादन!

नरेंद्र मोदी
प्रधानमंत्री

देवेन्द्र फडणवीस
उपमुख्यमंत्री

ROC-2023-24/No - 5/C 214

एकनाथ शिंदे
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'DIFFERENT INDIA' NOW CAPABLE OF MEETING SECURITY CHALLENGES: JAISHANKAR

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Thursday said that forces troubling India for long are now aware that this is a "different India", which is capable of giving them a befitting reply and can combat the national security challenges.

Team Absolute | New Delhi



that now people see the country in a new light, as it is willing to stand up and meet challenges posed to it like in Uri and Balakot.

The External Affairs Minister, who is currently on a tour of Uganda and Mozambique, also

referred to challenges faced at areas bordering China, saying that for the past three years, the South Asian nation has been violating agreements and deploying its troops in forward areas, referring to Doklam and Galwan stand-offs between the two

nations. However, the Indian Army has now complete support of the government as they are better equipped to tackle military challenges, Jaishankar said.

At the same time, he admitted that lots of work needs to be done for developing infrastructure in areas bordering China, something which was neglected in the past.

Jaishankar's comments come at a time when massive Chinese build-up has been witnessed near Doklam region.

He further said that today India cannot be dictated by other nations, regarding from whom it should buy crude oil. India will do anything to safeguard the interest of its citizens, he added. For the past several months, India has been buying discounted oil from Russia, despite restrictions imposed on that country by the European Union owing to its invasion of Ukraine last year.

CALCUTTA HC ALLOWS ED, CBI TO QUESTION ABHISHEK BANERJEE ON KUNTAL GHOSH'S ALLEGATIONS

Team Absolute | Kolkata

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday permitted the CBI and the ED to question Trinamool Congress' national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee over the allegations levelled by expelled youth Trinamool leader Kuntal Ghosh that the central agencies are putting pressure on him to name Banerjee in the multi-crore teacher recruitment scam in West Bengal.

The high court's single-judge bench of Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay also permitted the ED and the CBI to question Kuntal Ghosh in the matter if the central agencies feel that is necessary.

In a letter to a local police station on Wednesday, Ghosh, who is currently in judicial custody in connection with the recruitment scam, had alleged that the central agencies had been putting pressure on him to name senior Trinamool leaders, including Lok Sabha MP Abhishek Banerjee, in the scam.

Earlier, Ghosh had forwarded a similar letter to the judge of a special court in Kolkata.

On Wednesday, the ED had approached the bench of Justice Gangopadhyay claiming that the allegations levelled by Ghosh were clear-cut attempts to influence the investigation into the recruitment scam.



While hearing ED's plea on Thursday, the single-judge bench authorised the CBI and the ED to question Ghosh and Banerjee in the matter if necessary.

Justice Gangopadhyay also referred to a public statement made by Abhishek Banerjee on March 29, wherein he alleged that during the investigation into the Saradha chit fund scam, the CBI had put pressure on party leaders like Madan Mitra to name him.

Incidentally, Ghosh had levelled the allegation of central agency's pressure tactic in a letter to the judge of a special court in Kolkata the very next day.

Justice Gangopadhyay noted on Thursday that there is a necessity to find out whether there was a link between the two developments.

On Wednesday, the same single-judge bench had put an interim stay on any action, either by the police or by the lower court, against the central agencies on the basis of Ghosh's complaint. Justice Gangopadhyay had also made some strong observations in the matter.

"This is a dangerous trend. The investigating officers are being threatened. These are clear-cut attempts to create hurdles for the investigation process. This has to be stopped for the sake of justice. Such over-smart attempts cannot be tolerated," he had observed on Wednesday.

Seven parties together couldn't face BJP in Bihar: Sushil Modi on Oppn unity

Team Absolute | Patna

Taking a dig at the Opposition for striving to create a unified front, BJP Rajya Sabha MP Sushil Kumar Modi on Thursday said when seven parties of Mahagathbandhan failed to fight his party in a small state like Bihar, how will they compete against it in the country in the 2024 general elections?

His statement comes a day after Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal.

"Nitish Kumar failed to take care of his home (Bihar) but aspires to run the entire country. In the past, we have seen three bypolls in the state where seven parties of Mahagathbandhan contested with full strength. Still, BJP defeated them in Gopalganj and Kurhani. The BJP candidate managed more than 64,000 votes in Mokama and the margin of defeat was narrow. They have failed to compete with BJP in Bihar. So how could they face the BJP in the country," Modi said.

"Nitish Kumar has gone to Delhi not to unite the opposition parties but to unite the corrupt leaders. Since the CBI and ED are taking action against the corrupt, they are under deep stress. These scared people are trying to unite only to contest against Narendra



Modi. Can Nitish Kumar make a political deal between Kumaraswami and the Congress in Karnataka?" the BJP leader asked.

Nitish Kumar is harbouring the corrupt. The Lalu family is facing serious charges of corruption. Bihar Deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav, at the young age of 32, has become the owner of 52 properties. Will the people support an honest PM or the unity of people neck-deep in corruption," Modi said.

No conspiracy in 2018 knife attack on Jagan, NIA tells court

Team Absolute | Vijayawada

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) told a special court here on Thursday that there was no conspiracy behind the knife attack on Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy at Visakhapatnam Airport four years ago.

The agency stated this in a counter affidavit to a petition filed by Jagan Mohan Reddy, seeking further investigation into the case. It urged the NIA court to dismiss the petition.

The agency told the court that Harshvardhan, the owner of the airport restaurant, was not affiliated to any political party.

J. Srinivas Rao, a worker at the restaurant, had attacked Jagan Mohan Reddy with 'kodi katti' or a small knife used in cockfight, at Visakhapatnam Airport on October 25, 2018.

Jagan, then leader of the oppo-



sition, had suffered an injury to his arm.

The court was also told that the accused Srinivas was not linked to the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) or any other party.

The agency argued that since the trial had started in the court, there was no need for another investigation into the case.

The counsel for Jagan Mohan Reddy sought time to present his arguments on the NIA counter-

charge his duties as the chief minister and also on the ground that his appearance in the court may lead to traffic jam around the court premises and thus, inconvenience the people.

The chief minister requested the court to appoint an advocate commissioner to record his statement. After the attack, the then TDP government had handed over the case to a Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the state police but Jagan Mohan Reddy had refused to record his statement saying he had no trust in agencies controlled by the state government.

Suspecting a conspiracy by the TDP, the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) had moved the state high court, seeking a probe by a central agency into the case.

Based on the court direction, the Centre handed over the case to the NIA on December 31, 2018 and the agency registered the case on January 1, 2019.

SECURITY FORCES RECOVER PAK DRONE WITH ARMS & AMMUNITION IN J&K'S RAJOURI

Team Absolute | Jammu

The security forces recovered a Pakistani drone with arms and ammunition in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district.

A Defence ministry spokesman said in a statement on Thursday, "On the intervening night of 12-13 April 2023, the alert troops of Indian Army in coordination with J&K Police recovered a Drone crossing the Line of Control (LoC) from Pakistan into Indian territory in Beri Pattan area of Sunderbani sector of Rajouri district."

The spokesman said that 131 rounds of AK-47, five magazines and Rs two Lakh in cash was also recovered. "The search operations are currently under progress," said the ministry official.

MP high court revokes IPS officer's suspension order after police produce respondent

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh High Court on Thursday revoked its order to suspend an IPS officer within 24 hours after the state police swung into action and complied with its direction.

On Wednesday, the bench of Chief Justice R.V. Malimath, while hearing a petition seeking compensation against land acquired by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), got annoyed with Chhindwara district Superintendent of Police for his alleged failure to comply with its previous order.

In its previous order, the court had directed SP Vinayak Verma to produce the respondent (NHAI officer) in the case before the court. However, when the court was hearing the case on



Wednesday, it learnt that the NHAI officer, who is the main respondent in the case, has not been produced before the court. The court got annoyed with lucrative approach of the police and directed DGP Sudhir Saxena to suspend Verma for his failure to comply with the court's order. Following this, the police got into action and subsequently produced the respondent NHAI officer

before the court on Thursday.

The case pertains to compensation against land acquired by the NHAI in 2018. According to advocate Ved Prakash Nema, who represented the complainant, NHAI had acquired 1254 sq ft land, which belonged to the 'Tulsi Ramayan Kirtan Mandal', for a development project.

In 2018, the land owner

had appealed in the court alleging that the NHAI did not pay adequate compensation for the acquired land. The court had then ordered NHAI to pay the remaining compensation amount to the land owner, but the order wasn't complied with.

Subsequently, the court had ordered Chhindwara district police to ensure that the respondent is produced before the court during the next hearing (April 12), but the police failed to comply with the order. However, after the court directed DGP Saxena to suspend the Chhindwara SP, the police searched the NHAI officer within the next few hours and produced him before the court on Thursday.

Meanwhile, SP Vinayak Verma tendered his apology and requested for leniency after which the court revoked its suspension order.

ED raids locations linked to Jharkhand IAS officer Chhavi Ranjan

Team Absolute | Ranchi

The Enforcement Directorate conducted simultaneous raids at 22 locations of state administrative service officers, including IAS officer Chhavi Ranjan who is posted as a Director in the Jharkhand's Social Welfare Department, and some land dealers on Thursday.

The raids were conducted in Ranchi, Jamshepur, Simdega and Hazaribagh. Along with these, locations in Kolkata and Bihar's Gopiganj were also raided.

According to sources, the action was taken in the case of money laundering and illegal purchase and sale of more than four acres of Army land located in Ranchi.

Ranjan was posted as the Deputy Commissioner



of Ranchi till a few months ago. The case of forgery in the purchase and sale of the Army land in Bariatu area of Ranchi came to light during his tenure. The ED had started probing the matter by registering a case under money laundering.

Raids were also being conducted at the locations of Ranjan and his wife, Lovely.

Ranjan faces allegations in several cases, including cutting and selling trees at

government houses during his posting as the Deputy Commissioner in Jharkhand's Koderma. The senior officials had also submitted an inquiry report against him to the government.

He is the second IAS officer from Jharkhand, against whom the ED has conducted raids recently. Earlier, the ED raided the premises of senior IAS Pooja Singhal who was later arrested on charges

of money laundering.

Delhi Police seizes heroin valued at Rs 10cr; nabs 2

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Special Cell of Delhi Police on Thursday said it has busted an interstate drug cartel and arrested two drug traffickers in this connection.

A police officer said that 2 kg of heroin valued at Rs 10 crore was recovered from the possession of the arrested individuals, identified as Mohammad Alam a.k.a. Gaddu and Parmanand a.k.a. Pappu.

Alok Kumar, DCP Special Cell, said: "On April 8, acting on secret information, the police laid a trap near Ghazipur Subzi Mandi and two key members of the syndicate were finally held with 2 kg of heroin." During questioning, Mohammad Alam disclosed that he had been supplying heroin for the last two years to different people in Delhi, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. He further said that



he used to receive consignment from Parmanand to

further distribute it to various drug peddlers.

AKHILESH TERMS ENCOUNTER OF ATIQ'S SON FAKE, SLAMS BJP

Team Absolute | Lucknow

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday accused the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh of carrying out a 'fake encounter' to eliminate the son of gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad and his associate in Jhansi.

Akhilesh said that the ruling party was trying to divert the attention of the people from the real issues plaguing the state.

He said the BJP government did not believe in the judiciary and was taking the law into its own hands. He said it was not right for those in power to pass judgement on who was right or wrong and to decide who should live or die.

Yadav tweeted in Hindi, "With fake encounters, the BJP government is trying to divert attention from the real issues. The BJP does not believe in courts at all.



Today's and recent encounters should also be thoroughly investigated and the culprits should not be spared. Those in power do not have the right to decide what is right or wrong. BJP is against harmony."

Akhilesh was reacting to the encounter of Asad, son of Atiq Ahmad and shooter Ghulam, both of whom were killed in an encounter in Jhansi on Thursday.

According to the police, Asad and Ghulam were try-

ing to flee on a motorcycle when they were intercepted by a Special Task Force team in Jhansi. They opened fire on the STF team and were killed in retaliatory firing.

The police claimed to have recovered sophisticated foreign-made weapons from them.

The encounter took place on a day when Ahmad was presented before a court in Prayagraj in the same murder case and was sent to seven-day police custody.

MAYAWATI DEMANDS HIGH-LEVEL PROBE

Lucknow: Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) president

Mayawati has demanded a high-level probe into the encounter of Asad Ahmad and his associate in Jhansi.

In a tweet, the former Uttar

Pradesh chief minister said: "Apprehensions of a repeat of the Vikas Dubey encounter has come true, and people were discussing about the 'truth' behind the encounter."

Mayawati said that a high-level probe would set to rest all speculations, and bring the truth out in the open.

The BSP chief said this while reacting to the encounter of Asad, son of Atiq Ahmad and shooter Ghulam, both of whom were killed in an encounter in Jhansi on Thursday.





NCP alleges BJP 'erasing' Maulana Azad's name from history as he was a Muslim

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on Thursday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of attempting to 'erase' the name of India's first Education Minister and Bharat Ratna, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, from history because he was a Muslim. NCP national spokesperson Clyde Crasto said that the BJP-led government at the Centre is using the NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) to wipe out Maulana Azad's identity and his glorious contributions from India's education system. Citing instances, he said a para in the first chapter of the old Class XI NCERT political science textbook said: "The Constituent Assembly had eight major Committees on different subjects. Usually, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad or Ambedkar chaired these Committees." "However, in the new version of the same textbook by NCERT, the name of Maulana Azad has been omitted and the same sentence now reads: 'Usually, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad,



Sardar Patel or B.R. Ambedkar chaired these committees'. This is truly unfortunate," Crasto said. Suspecting a systematic conspiracy to delete Maulana Azad from history, the NCP leader pointed out how last year the Minority Affairs Ministry had abruptly discontinued the 'Maulana Azad Fellowship', which was started in 2009 (by the former UPA government) to provide financial help to students from

six notified minorities for a period of five years. The NCERT comes under the Government of India which is currently led by the BJP, and therefore the question that comes to the mind is whether they are seeking to obliterate the name of India's first Education Minister because of his religion, Crasto said. "There appears no other reason why they would do this to the first Education Minister of Independent India and one of our leading freedom fighters. The NCERT must clarify and answer to the citizens why Maulana Azad's name is missing in the new version of the textbook, and how it will rectify this error," Crasto said. Maulana Azad, a distinguished Islamic scholar, author, academician and a prominent freedom fighter, was elected as the youngest President of Indian National Congress aged 35, and later led the historic Khilafat Movement. After independence, Maulana Azad served as India's first Education Minister for over 10 years, during which he laid the foundations for the country's massive academic network. Acknowledging his contributions, his birthday - November 11 - is celebrated as National Education Day.

'EKNATH SHINDE CRIED, FEARED ARREST IF HE DIDN'T JOIN BJP', CLAIMS ADITYA THACKERAY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Dropping a new political bomb, Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA and ex-minister Aditya Thackeray has claimed that before his revolt in June 2022, current Chief Minister Eknath Shinde had reportedly "cried and apprehended arrest by central probe agencies". "Shinde had come to our home (Matoshri) before the rebellion... he cried saying he would land in jail if he didn't go with the Bharatiya Janata Party," claimed Thackeray Jr, speaking to a private television channel. He declared that Shinde and the 40 MLAs quit the original Shiv Sena "only to save their seats and for money... there was no other reason for them to quit", as a fresh political row erupted. Endorsing the party leader, Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut said Shinde was "under the radar of the central agencies" and more



than half the legislators were under the pressures of action by CBI, ED or ITD, compelling them to rebel, and the Maha Vikas Aghadi government was toppled in nine months. "We talked to them, attempted to convince them to fight as we are Balasaheb Thackeray's Shiv Sainiks, but they did not listen and caved in under the pressures. Now a similar attempt

is being made with the Nationalist Congress Party MLAs to break them," said Raut. The Sena (UBT) MP's reference was ostensibly to certain speculation that NCP's Leader of Opposition (Assembly) Ajit Pawar was allegedly "on way to BJP", but Pawar himself rubbished the contentions. Leader of Opposition (Council) Ambadas Danve also supported Aditya

Thackeray, while Deputy Leader Sushma Andhare said it clear that CBI-ED-ITD were misused to bring down the MVA government. Union Minister Narayan Rane dismissed Aditya Thackeray's comments as "childish" and declined to comment on his contentions, questioning Thackeray Jr's locus standi. "When did he (Shinde) cry, where and why... He brought the Shiv Sena to us... the BJP is allied with the real Balasaheb Thackeray's party," Rane countered. Denying Aditya Thackeray's assertions that Shinde had "shed tears", other leaders of the ruling alliance Shiv Sena like Sanjay Shirsat said that he (Shinde) had gone to Matoshri to discuss and resolve their problems with Thackeray on various issues. The MVA allies Congress-Nationalist Congress Party have not yet reacted to Thackeray Jr's sensational claims.

Uddhav Thackeray "Resigned On His Own", Can't Be Reinstated: Devendra Fadnavis

Mumbai: Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray had resigned as Chief Minister of Maharashtra on his own in June last year without facing a floor test, so how can his government be reinstated by the Supreme Court, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Thursday. Fadnavis also maintained his party BJP will continue to work with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and fight the next elections under the latter's leadership. "If you read the Supreme Court proceedings carefully, you will realise that Uddhav Thackeray himself had resigned... he did not even face the floor test in the Assembly. By no stretch of imagination his government can be brought back in Maharashtra," he said while speaking at an event organised by Marathi news channel Mumbai Tak. In mid-March, the Supreme Court reserved its verdict on a batch of cross-petitions of Uddhav Thackeray and Shinde factions of the Shiv Sena pertaining to the June 2022 political crisis in Maharashtra. Expanding his point, Fadnavis said, "I have been a lawyer. If he (Uddhav Thackeray) had resigned on his own, how will the Supreme Court set aside his resignation and reinstate him as Chief Minister? This is not possible."

Delhi Metro to operate Mumbai Metro line 3? emerges as lowest bidder

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation has emerged as the "lowest bidder" to operate and maintain the 33.5-km Line 3 of the Mumbai Metro, officials said on Thursday. Mumbai Metro's proposed Line 3 will run from Aarey to Cuffe Parade, covering 27 stations. The process will pave the way for the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) to foray into a region much beyond the National Capital Region (NCR), if it gets the job. "The Mumbai Metro Line 3 is currently under construction under the MMRDA (Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority) and is expected to be operationalised in parts from the end of this year onwards," the DMRC said in a statement. Delhi Metro has emerged as the "lowest bidder to operate and maintain the 33.5-km Line 3 of the Mumbai Metro, from Aarey to Cuffe Parade covering a total of 27 stations, from the south of the western metropolis to the north", it said. DMRC outbid Keolis, a reputable public transport operator from France with experience functioning in various cities across the world, the statement said. Delhi Metro, besides running its own range



of corridors, also operates the Rapid Metro in Gurgaon. It built the Kochi Metro, Jaipur Metro and the Noida Metro, and also served as a consultant for a number of other projects across the country. It is currently building the Patna Metro. It is also associated with the operation of the Aqua Line (Noida-Greater Noida corridor), a senior official said. The Delhi Metro is gradually expanding its

footprint in the consultancy business across the world. In India, it is involved in the construction of the Mumbai and Patna metros, besides acting as the consultant for various other metros. Internationally, in Dhaka, DMRC is currently working as a general consultant, the statement said. The scope of work for this contract (Line 3 of the Mumbai Metro) will primarily include

metro rail operation and safety management, it said. Revenue collection will include management of ticket sales, maintenance of metro assets, minor civil repairs of stations and buildings, hiring, training and timely organising competency of all staff, marketing and sales assistance. Management of contracts will cover training and timely organising competency of their staff, to be awarded by the employer, including housekeeping, security (guards for watch and ward), call centre, horticulture and parking, etc, the statement said. The validity of the contract will be for a period of 10 years. The Delhi Metro, with its experience of operating and maintaining the largest metro system in the Indian subcontinent in NCR, will be able to extend the right support to the Mumbai Metro corridor since Mumbai is also highly populated with similar urban challenges like Delhi, it said. Further expanding its presence as a consultant, the Delhi Metro is actively bidding for projects across the world. Currently, Delhi Metro's bids are under process for projects in Tel Aviv (Israel), Alexandria (Egypt), Bahrain, Mauritius and Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam), the DMRC said. PTI KND SZM

Savarkar's grandson files defamation complaint against Rahul Gandhi

Pune | Agencies

Late Hindutva ideologue VD Savarkar's grandson on Wednesday approached a court here in Maharashtra with a criminal defamation complaint against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accusing him of making false allegations against Savarkar during his address in London. The grandson, Satyaki Savarkar, said his lawyers have moved the city court with a complaint under sections 499 and 500 of the Indian Penal Code. "Since the concerned court officer was absent today, they asked us to come again on Saturday to get the number of the case. We have not received the case number yet and we will receive it on Saturday," Satyaki Savarkar said. Speaking about the content of the complaint, Satyaki Savarkar said Rahul Gandhi during his interaction with Indian expats in London had raised Savarkar's topic. "Rahul Gandhi told the gather-



ing that VD Savarkar had written a book in which the latter stated that he and his five to six friends were beating a Muslim man and he (Savarkar) felt happy. "Rahul Gandhi, while speaking about this incident, asked if it was not a cowardly act. First of all, this incident, as narrated by Gandhi, is a fictional one. No such incident

had taken place in the life of Savarkar who was a man of scientific temperament. He believed in democracy and had advised Muslims to adopt a scientific approach," Satyaki Savarkar said. He added that Rahul Gandhi's statement about VD Savarkar was false, malicious, and aimed at insulting him.

2 foreigners swap boarding passes in Mumbai, fly to different countries

Mumbai: Mumbai Police arrested a Sri Lankan native and a German citizen after they allegedly exchanged their boarding passes at the airport in Mumbai to travel to London and Kathmandu respectively, an official said today. The incident took place on Monday at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai. The 22-year-old Sri Lankan citizen, who was travelling on a fake passport, and the 36-year-old German native had exchanged their boarding passes in a toilet at the airport for travelling to London and Kathmandu, the official said. The matter came to light when an attendant of an airline company noticed that the departure stamp on the passport of the Sri Lankan citizen appeared to be forged, he said. It was also found that the departure stamp number on the passport was different from the stamp number on his boarding pass, the official said. After realising that he was caught, the Sri Lankan national, who had reached the UK, revealed his original identity following which he was deported to Mumbai on Tuesday, the police said. During enquiry, he told the police that he wanted to go to the UK for a better career opportunity, the official said.

RASHMI THACKERAY TO ADDRESS SHIV SENA (UBT) WOMEN ACTIVISTS' IN NASHIK

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rashmi Thackeray, the wife of Shiv Sena (UBT) President and former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, is likely to address party's women workers in Nashik later this month, party sources indicated here on Thursday. Rashmi, currently the Editor of 'Saamana Group' of publications, will travel to Nashik to boost up the party cadres and prevent the continuous 'leakage' of party supporters, witnessed in the city Sena (UBT) since the past few months, after the split in June 2022. Reputed to be a woman with a firm independent mind, she has always remained in the shadows to manage the Thackeray household for the past over two decades after she became a "Thackeray bahu" 34 years. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) state



President Chandrashekar Bawankule reacted sharply to the development saying that since the party (Sena-UBT) is being decimated, it has to rely on other family members to keep it going. However, senior leaders like Sushma Andhare or Kishore Tiwari dismissed Bawankule's statements and said that Uddhav and Aditya "are sufficient to give a strong challenge" to the BJP. Tiwari also questioned Bawankule's locus standi to comment on the Sena (UBT)'s internal matters,

while Andhare said "nobody takes the BJP chief seriously". Nashik is considered a 'weak-link' in the Sena (UBT)'s scheme of things with the rival BJP, and even Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) going all out to woo the people there ahead of the upcoming civic elections. Earlier, Rashmi has attended women activists camps and even certain political rallies addressed by her husband, and stood behind him like a rock during the crisis that split the party vertically nine months ago, with a loyalist-turned-dissident Eknath Shinde becoming the CM. Simultaneously, Uddhav and Aditya go around on tours across the state to pep up the morale of their workers, and attempt to strengthen the Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance and pose a tough challenge to what they term 'gaddar' (traitor) Shinde.

GOLD-DIGGERS STEAL ASHES FROM PANDHARPUR CREMATORIUM

Solapur (Maharashtra) | Agencies

In a bizarre case, unknown thieves stole the ashes of a deceased woman a day after her cremation, ostensibly to retrieve the gold jewellery she was adorned with during the funeral rites, officials said on Thursday. The incident occurred at the Pandharpur's civic-run Vaikunth Crematorium, sparking a sensation in this famed temple town - renowned for the Shri Vitthal Rukmini Mandir, where the reigning Chief Minister performs the traditional Maha-Pooja on Ashadhi Ekadashi. The officials said that elderly woman Rakhmabai Deokar, who passed away on Tuesday, was brought to the crematorium and

her last rites were performed. As is the custom in some communities, her body was decked with certain items of gold jewellery during her cremation, usually comprising a gold guinea in the mouth, or a gold mangalsutra, or earrings, or nose-rings, or finger-rings, etc. The next day, (Wednesday), her mourning family and relatives landed at the crematorium to collect her ashes (asthi) along with the gold, for the post-funeral Hindu ceremonies. However, they were stunned to discover that all the ashes underneath the funeral pyre had been totally swept clean - along with the gold in it - by some unscrupulous gold-diggers. The relatives and others staged a sit-in protest at the crematorium and later lodged a



complaint with the Pandharpur police which is probing the matter. Local Marathi media person Sunil Umbre said that such thefts are regularly taking place here, but most grieving relatives don't bother to highlight such

incidents as they are busy with the post-funeral rituals. "In the present case, the deceased woman's family is well to do and influential and they have raised a strong protest, including lodging a police com-

plaint. Moreover, given their affluent background, they had decked the woman's body with a considerable quantity of gold jewellery," said Umbre. Police suspect some local gangs which keep an eye on such funerals, especially women, and after the cremation, they filter the ashes to retrieve the gold and sell it off at huge profits, as the gold rates are currently in the range of Rs 60,000/tola. The present case is the first one in which the entire quantity of ashes generated - around a few kilos - that was siphoned off at the dead of the night, to recover the gold in it, they surmise. Several aghast citizens have now demanded that CCTV cameras be installed in all crematoriums to prevent similar incidents in future.

"BAL THACKERAY CAN'T BE SEPARATED FROM AYODHYA MOVEMENT": EKNATH SHINDE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Thursday said the name of Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray cannot be separated from the Ayodhya movement, a remark that came in the wake of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Chandrakant Patil questioning the role of Sena workers in the Babri mosque demolition. Disapproving of Patil's remarks, Shinde said Ayodhya was a matter of faith for him. Speaking at the Mumbai Tak-Baithak interaction, the chief minister said, "I told BJP leader and minister Chandrakant Patil that he shouldn't have spoken against Balasaheb Thackeray." Patil's statement that not a single Sena worker was present when the

Babri mosque in Ayodhya was demolished in 1992 has put the BJP in a spot, as it is a partner in the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena in the Maharashtra government. "Ayodhya is a matter of faith for me... We got the Shiv Sena name and symbol because people have accepted our stand on why we rebelled," he said, adding that his government was not scared of holding local bodies elections in the state. "Balasaheb Thackeray cannot be taken out of the Ayodhya movement. The late Sena chief gave the slogan 'Garv se kaho hum Hindu hai' (Say with pride, we are Hindus) and people became united as Hindus," he said. Shinde said Patil told him that he did not mean to disrespect the late Sena supremo.



EDITOR'S SPECS

K'taka polls: Adamant Shettar not ready to step down

Former Karnataka Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar, whose name did not feature in the first list of 189 candidates announced by the BJP for the May 10 Assembly polls, met BJP President J.P. Nadda here on Wednesday after he was summoned by the party high command as he continued being adamant on contesting the election. During the meeting, Nadda tried to mollify Shettar but the senior party leader from Karnataka refused to budge from his stance. Shettar reportedly told the saffron party chief that he wishes to contest the polls. During a media interaction, Shettar said he has won the last six elections, and intends to contest the May 10 election. The former Karnataka chief minister claimed that Nadda assured him of taking a decision on his and other leaders' demands following a discussion. In fact, even much ahead of the release of the list, Shettar had publicly announced that he would contest the polls. Earlier, Union Minister and Karnataka election-in-charge Dharmendra Pradhan also spoke to Shettar in a bid to soften his stance but yielded no results. He was eventually called to Delhi by the party high command as he continued being a "rebel". Meanwhile, The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has released the second list of 23 candidates for the Karnataka Assembly election. In the second list of candidates for the Karnataka Assembly election, the saffron party has fielded Nagaraj Chabbi, who recently quit the Congress, as its candidate from Kalghatgi Assembly constituency. However, BJP has not given a ticket to former Karnataka Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar in its second list as well.

2023: THE FIRST QUARTER IS DISMAL

Vinod Mirani

The first quarter of 2023 has come to an end and the Hindi film industry has little to show for itself. The scene has been dismal, not because of the first quarter, but also because of the second quarter, which holds no promise of box-office boosters. A lot of producers seem to think it is easier to create content for OTT platforms, which is why many makers have opted to produce for that medium. When you make OTT content, it's an all-in-one deal. You complete the project, hand it over to the platform and cash out. No hassles such marketing or complying to the terms of cinema chains to endure. It is you who make a film and it is some marketing wizkid who'll decide how your film should be released. The problem, though, is that they know little or nothing about which film needs what kind of handling. What is more, on OTT, you can bring to life the stories that are long embedded in the minds of the masses, but still, the details are not known. An example is the Harshad Mehta case, which was the subject of 'Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story'. Or take the instance of 'Rocket Boys'. You may have heard about Homi Bhabha and Vikram Sarabhai, but knew little about them and did not dare to ask for fear of looking ignorant. If you made something similar for theatrical release, the cinema management wouldn't have touched your product with a bargepole. Besides the OTT platforms, one must also consider television channels. There are now hundreds of them for national viewers as well as the ones who are more comfortable with regional languages. All have been dishing out interesting content with great production values. Entertainment that uses action and comedy and romance is fine but the generation now is curious and is open to such content as 'Scam 1992' and 'Rocket Boys'. As for filmmakers, they, sadly, can't think beyond the formula. They now dish out the same old stuff costing crores, what the earlier generation delivered for lakhs. Only, these are much inferior when compared to earlier films. As things stand now, a normal film with a big star would cost on average Rs 200 crore. Because these big stars charge Rs 100 crore or more. That limits the budget for the actual making of the film. Add to that the cost of special effects to make these aged stars look younger. And then, in most cases, add the cost of acquiring the remake rights paid to a South Indian producer (almost all Hindi films are



remakes of South Indian productions, when they are not inspired by Hollywood movies). With this kind of input costs, a film with a major star needs to do business of at least Rs 500 crore to show some profit. It's a high-stake risk which is not worth taking because most films fail to manage to make that kind of money. Here, one may argue that there are also satellite rights and OTT rights that contribute to a film's recovery. But these mediums no longer go by the filmmaker's word when it comes to box-office figures and have tied up the final cost of a film's rights to its box-office collections. To them, the face value of a film does not matter anymore the way it did initially when they entered the Indian market. If one observes closely, there are no big stars in OTT programming. Most feature those who played character roles in films or those who were not getting films anymore. It seems, what sells is content and performances. This year so far, 12 films were released directly on OTT and about 18 after a formal theatrical release. So, what does the industry have to show for the first three months? Two films stood their ground to a varied extent namely 'Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar' and 'Pathaan'. Between them, they have collected approximately Rs 700 crore. Out of these, 'Pathaan' claims a take of Rs 500 crore; 'Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar' collected Rs 120 crore. Films such as 'Kuttay', 'Gandhi Godse: Ek Yudi', 'Shehzaada', 'Selfie', 'Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway', 'Zwigato' and 'Bheed' contributed the rest. Other small films contributed around Rs 100 crore. 'Bhola' released at the fag end of March and its business will reflect only later. Compare this with the first quarter of 2019 when there were quite a few films that hovered around Rs 100 crore or more. These films included 'Uri', 'Manikarnika', 'Total Dhamaal', 'Gully Boy', 'Luka Chuppi', 'Badla', 'Kesari', along with 'Junglee', 'The Accidental Prime Minister', 'Ek

Ladki Ko Dekha To' and 'Thackeray' contributing another Rs 100 crore, all adding up to Rs 1,100 crore for the first quarter. So, were it not for 'Pathaan', this quarter would have been a total disaster. It does not stop at the dismal first quarter, the next quarter promises nothing material in the offing. This is because in the quarter that just closed, there has been no big announcement. Filmmakers such as Sajid Nadiadwala, Karan Johar or other big-time producers have not been hasty in announcing new projects -- the circumstances being so uncertain. Also, there are no corporate houses to bankroll huge projects. It has always been the norm: you earn from this industry, but never reinvest your earnings (except in property). Movies have always been made on borrowed or outside monies. One announcement that made it to the media in the first quarter was about 'Pathaan vs Tiger' from Yash Raj Films. The announcement sounds gimmicky, aimed at keeping it in the media glare and garnering the initial audience for the first few days. After all, the two stars fell apart after doing Rakesh Roshan's 'Karan Arjun' (1995). For whatever differences they had with Rakesh Roshan, both are said to have vowed never to work with him again. Shah Rukh Khan, however, went ahead and did 'Koylaa' for the same producer. Of course, some maturity of thinking did lead to guest roles in each other's films in this duration. If your film gets footfalls in the first few days, it adds to a film's prospects on the satellite and OTT circuits. They no longer buy films blindly on face value. Their buying is now determined by the box-office figures generated by a film. A film's satellite rights are worth 25 per cent and the OTT rights 50 per cent of the box office collections. Inflated collections are good for social media and even news channels. OTT and satellite platforms are not fooled by these

figures anymore. They ask for GST payment receipts. In such circumstances, cinema chain holders are facing tough times. Footfalls have still not returned to pre-Covid days. As one may be aware, almost all, save a few, major multiplex properties are on rent and, lately, films are not doing well enough for the cinemas to be comfortable paying these rents. In such an event, they are said to have proposed that the property owners take a share in the box-office revenue instead of the rents! Due to the desperate situation cinemas face, the managements came up with various ways to generate extra revenue with new ideas. Usually, the ideas they come up with don't generate money. The whizkids at PVR and INOX have come up with one such idea, which can only be described as harebrained. This cinema chain has plans for the viewers to pay Re 1 and watch release trailers of various new films in a 30-minute slot! Somebody has to be really naive to take out time and watch 30 minutes of trailers of forthcoming films even for free, let alone Re 1. Does the Re 1 include parking? Considering there is a short supply of cinema content internationally and at home, where will the new trailers come from? How do you check if one buys a Re 1 ticket, loiters around the lobby and sneaks into any other auditorium screening a full-length film? The number of ushers at these multi-screen cinemas is very limited. What about the risk that the trailer you screen fails to inspire or even disappoints, so much so that the viewer decides not to watch the film when released? It may lead to rating the trailers. And what purpose will your generous offer serve when every teaser or trailer is instantly available on YouTube after it is put in the public domain?

international

Will strike terrorists' hideouts inside Afghanistan, warns Pakistan Defence Minister

Islamabad | Agencies
Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has warned the Afghan Taliban that Islamabad will strike terrorists' hideouts inside the country if the de facto rulers in Kabul are unable to rein in anti-Pakistan militants. Asif, in a recent interview with VOA, said in his late-February visit to Afghanistan that he reminded Taliban leaders to live up to their cross-border security commitments forbidding terrorists from using Afghan soil to plan and conduct attacks on Pakistan or Islamabad will take action, Samaa TV reported. "If that is not done, at some point we'll have to resort to some measures, which will definitely - wherever (terrorists) are, their sanctuaries on Afghan soil - we'll have to hit them," he said. "We'll have to hit them because we cannot tolerate this situation for long." Since the Afghan Taliban's takeover of Kabul in August 2021, Pakistan has witnessed

a resurgence in terror attacks led by Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an ideological offshoot and ally of the Afghan Taliban. Pakistan alleges the TTP leadership is operating from Afghanistan after Pakistani military operations in the border areas a few years ago forced it to flee along with thousands of fighters, Samaa TV reported. Asif claimed Taliban leadership "responded very well" to the recent warning. He said he believes that the Afghan Taliban are trying to "disentangle" from the TTP, after receiving support from the group to fight the US-led coalition troops. Pakistan's military is now contemplating a comprehensive plan, including a possible military operation in areas bordering Afghanistan, Samaa TV reported. Asif said the economic crisis is the biggest threat for the country right now, and the military, which receives the largest chunk of the annual federal budget, is looking at curtailing its expenses.

Sumi Khan | Dhaka
The Bangladesh Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) has asked all the schools and colleges across the country to take out 'Mangal Shobhajatra' procession -- a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage -- on Friday to mark the Bengali New Year, or Poila Baishakh. The procession organised by the teachers and students of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Dhaka, is considered an expression of the secular identity of the Bangladeshi people and as a way to promote unity. It was declared an intangible cultural heritage by the Unesco in 2016, categorised



on the representative list as a heritage of humanity. The DSHE's direction came after Supreme Court lawyer Md Mahmudul Hasan's issued a legal notice to halt the procession, saying that the Mangal Shobhajatra

is an "artificial event that has been introduced into the Bengali culture" and that it is not a necessary component of the traditional Poila Baishakh festival. It has also directed the students must sing the national anthem, as well as 'Esho He Boishakh' song of Rabindranath Tagore, to welcome the Bengali New Year as part of the celebrations. "The educational institutions across the country must organise students' rallies in the morning as part of the celebration of Poila Baishakh," the DSHE said in a statement sent to Correspondent. On Thursday, DSHE Director Prof Shahedul Kabir told Correspondent that they sent an order to all schools and colleges on Tuesday regarding the celebration following a directive from the Ministry of Education. "This festival is not just a tradition to protect our heritage, but also motivates us to be human beings with greater values. Many countries celebrate the New Year like us. We hope the New Year will bring happiness, peace, and prosperity to everyone's life," students and teachers told correspondent. "War is right now the biggest problem facing the globe. War puts people's lives at risk across the world. This year's Mangal Shobhajatra will call for the end of all wars and wishing for the welfare of the people," said Nisar Hossain, dean of Fine Arts faculty at Dhaka University. This year, six large structures of sheep, elephant, nilgai, tepa doll, tiger and peacock will be presented in the Shobhajatra to represent the Bengali New Year's motifs.

Six inmates found hanged in Ecuador prison

Quito: Six prisoners were found hanged in their cells in a prison in the Ecuadorian city of Guayaquil, the National Service of Integral Attention to Adults Deprived of Liberty and Adolescent Offenders (SNAI) said. According to SNAI, security guards found the bodies of the prisoners hanged inside their cells at the Guayas I prison, known as Litoral Penitentiary. "This service and the authorities of the centre are providing all the means to the respective institutions for the corresponding procedures and investigations," SNAI said on Wednesday. According to local media, the cellblock where the inmates were found dead was reportedly under the control of a criminal gang linked to drug trafficking, Xinhua news agency reported. Since February 2021, nearly 214 inmates have been killed in this prison in the port city of Guayaquil.

Trump heads to NY to face civil trial after suing ex-lawyer for \$500mn

Arul Louis | New York
Former US President Donald Trump is heading back to New York City for a civil trial after filing a \$500 million suit against his former lawyer, Michael Cohen - the prime witness against him in the criminal case against him. In the case filed in a federal court in Florida on Wednesday, Trump alleged that Cohen had violated his contract with him as his lawyer, disclosed confidential information and spread "falsehoods". Cohen had acted as Trump's "fixer" paying \$130,000 to adult film actress Stormy Daniels to buy her silence after she claimed to have had an affair with the former President. That is one of the elements in the 34 charges filed last week against Trump by Manhattan Prosecutor Alvin Bragg who alleges that the payoff was illegally disguised as a lawyer's fees. Cohen was convicted on tax and election finance charges in con-



nection with the payoff. On Thursday, Trump is scheduled to participate in a legal process called deposition in connection with a \$250 million civil lawsuit filed by New York's Attorney General Letitia James against the former President, three of his children involved in his business and the Trump Organization alleging they falsified financial statements to obtain loans. In a deposition, the accused or witnesses appear before lawyers away from a courtroom without the judge being present and their testimony and cross-examination are recorded and presented at trial to cut the actual trial time in court with a judge. Last August, a deposition was taken with Trump in the case during which he is reported to have refused to answer about 400 questions claiming constitutional protection against being made to make self-incriminating statements.

N.Korea fires ballistic missile: Seoul military

Seoul | Agencies
North Korea fired a ballistic missile toward the East Sea on Thursday, escalating tensions amid its continued refusal to answer what used to be daily cross-border calls, the South Korean military said. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said it detected the launch in the vicinity of Pyongyang at 7.23 a.m., and the missile, fired at a lofted angle, flew about 1,000 km before splashing into the water, reports Yonhap News Agency. "The intelligence authorities of South Korea and the US are conducting a comprehensive analysis on its detailed specifications," the JCS added. The North appears to have tested a "new" missile system, a Seoul official said, adding that the allies are looking into "various" possibilities, including the launch having involved a solid-propellant intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). South Korea's presidential National Security Council (NSC) "strongly" denounced the North's launch of a ballistic missile, while the US NSC called the launch an "ICBM" test. Seoul officials said the latest launch might have been aimed partially at flaunting



the North's nuclear force ahead of the 111th birth anniversary of the late Kim Il-sung, the North's national founder and the current leader's grandfather, on Saturday, and protesting the deterrence efforts by Seoul and Washington. The North's last launch involving an intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) or a longer-range one was that of a Hwasong-17 ICBM on March 16. This week's launch came amid speculation that the reclusive regime could fire a long-range rocket to put its first military satellite into orbit given its professed plan to finish preparations for the launch by this month.



FANS STUNNED AFTER DWAYNE JOHNSON SHARES 'POST-WORKOUT CHEAT MEAL'

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Rock Dwayne Johnson moves mountains when it comes to workouts so, a little indulgence doesn't harm when it comes to food.

The 'Baywatch' actor took his fans on an epic food journey as he posted his mammoth cheat meal recently. The wrestler-turned-actor had so much food he had to make two Instagram posts to share his feast - but some fans simply weren't impressed at his choice, reports Mirror.co.uk.

The star went to town on the meal, sharing his huge portion on plate number one - a dozen eggs, two english muffins, one homemade biscuit and

"super crispy" turkey bacon.

He joked "beat up dinosaur hands made his muffins look kid size, while he gushed to his followers: "Don't cheat yourself, treat yourself."

He followed up the post with meal number two, which consisted of coconut banana pancakes which he labelled "so damn good."

Mirror.co.uk further states that despite his claims, some fans didn't feel the cheat meal was indeed a cheat despite its size.

One user joked: "Your cheat meals are my 'healthy meals..." while another agreed, saying: "Mans cheat day still manages to be healthy."



I didn't want to be the sexy young thing: Katie Holmes

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Katie Holmes "didn't want to be sexy" as a young star.

Shooting to fame in her late teens when she played Joey Potter on "Dawson's Creek", the actress admitted that during her time on the drama series, she would have someone make sure that she wasn't too sexualised in publicity shoots because she "just wanted to be an actor," reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I didn't want to be the sexy young thing. I am not sexy," She told Glamour.

"I used to have a friend of mine come to all my photo shoots to make sure that they didn't try to make me that way! I guess I just wanted to be an actor."

Meanwhile, Holmes went on to reveal that she isn't a frequent user of social media and suggested that is perhaps because she became famous at a time when television shows aired weekly and mass online reactions through the likes of Instagram and Twitter did not exist.

"In my life now, I don't go on social media that much," she confessed. "I don't scroll that much because I don't want all that information. And maybe because I did come up where there was a time and place for things, even with our show - it started airing on Tuesday nights and you had to wait a week. So you got to think about that one episode."

"The work was limited to that. We also were protected," she continued recalling. "We were in North Carolina, we were working

14 hours a day, and we were really contained and not really distracted by the outside world, which was to our benefit and to the benefit of the show, so we could do what we had to do."

'GAME OF THRONES' GETS ANOTHER PREQUEL SERIES



Los Angeles | Agencies

The 'Game of Thrones' prequel based on George R.R. Martin's 'Dunk and Egg' books is officially moving. The announcement was made during Warner Bros.

Discovery presentation to press and investors on April 12, in which it was announced that the combined HBO Max and Discovery+ streaming service will be known simply as Max, reports 'Variety'.

It also comes a little over two years after 'Variety' exclusively reported that the series was in development.

The show is based on the series of fantasy novellas by Martin, which follow the adventures of Ser Duncan the Tall (Dunk) and a young Aegon V Targaryen (Egg) 90 years prior to the events of 'A Song of Ice and Fire'. The series is currently titled 'A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms: The Hedge Knight'. Martin will serve as writer and executive producer, as will Ira Parker, who was a co-executive producer on Season 1 of 'House of the Dragon'. 'Game of Thrones' and 'House of the Dragon' vets Ryan Condal and Vince Gerardi will serve as executive producers.

NEW 'BIG BANG THEORY' SPINOFF IN DEVELOPMENT



Los Angeles | Agencies

Chuck Lorre, who co-created 'The Big Bang Theory' as well as its spinoff 'Young Sheldon', is in the early stages of developing another comedy series derived from that via his overall deal at Warner Bros. Television.

The news came out of Warner Bros. Discovery's press day announcing its new streaming service. If ordered to series, the new 'Big Bang' project would stream on Max, the company's rebranded platform combining HBO Max and Discovery+, reports 'Variety'.

No plot details were revealed during the WBD presentation. And though nothing is set in stone, it is believed to be an hour-long series featuring a mostly new cast with potential for known 'Big Bang' stars to appear in guest spots.

'The Big Bang Theory' aired for 12 seasons from 2007 to 2019 and brought the network major ratings successes by the end of its run, garnering just under 18 million viewers for its series finale. 'Young Sheldon' premiered in 2017 and is currently on its sixth season, with a seventh season already greenlit.

The spinoff, starring Iain Armitage as the nine-year-old version of Jim Parsons' character from the original series, with Parsons making appearances in retrospective voice-over, is consistently the most viewed comedy on the air.



"HARRY POTTER" TV SERIES ANNOUNCED, WILL FEATURE ENTIRELY NEW CAST

Los Angeles | Agencies

A 'Harry Potter' TV series is officially moving forward at HBO Max. The announcement was made during Warner Bros. Discovery's presentation to press and investors on April 12, during which it was announced that HBO Max and Discovery+ are officially being combined into a new service dubbed simply Max, reports 'Variety'.

News of a show based on the megahit J.K. Rowling's book series first leaked on April 3, but details have now been confirmed. Each season of the show will be based on one of the books in the franchise, with Warner Bros. Discovery describing the show as a "decade-long series." It will feature an entirely new cast from the films. "We are delighted to give audiences the opportunity to discover Hogwarts in a whole new way," said Casey Bloys, chairman and CEO of HBO & Max Content.

"Harry Potter is a cultural phenomenon and it is clear there is such an enduring love and thirst for the Wizarding World. In partnership with Warner Bros. Television and J.K. Rowling, this new Max Original series will dive deep into each of the iconic books that fans have continued to enjoy for all of these years." Max will produce in association with Bronte Film and TV, and Warner Bros. Television. Rowling will executive produce along with Neil Blair and Ruth Kenley-Letts. David Heyman is currently in talks to executive produce. "Max's commitment to preserving the integrity of my books is important to me, and I'm looking forward to being part of this new adaptation which will allow for a degree of depth and detail only afforded by a long form television series," said Rowling. The announcement brings an end to years of speculation on whether or not the Wizarding World of Harry Potter would make the transition to TV. Variety reported in 2021 that the company was looking to develop a "Harry Potter" show.

Mia Goth joins Mahershala Ali in Marvel Studios' 'Blade'

Los Angeles | Agencies

'X' and 'Pearl' actress Mia Goth have bagged a role in the Marvel Cinematic Universe to her resume, joining Marvel's 'Blade'. The Marvel Studios film stars Oscar winner Mahershala Ali as the title vampire slayer, directed by Yann Demange from a script by Emmy nominee Michael Stabbury, which is said to be "darker than most MCU movies."

Goth joins a star-studded cast that also includes Aaron Pierre and Delroy Lindo, but details of her role are being kept under wraps, reports 'Variety'.

The 'Blade' reboot was first announced at the 2019 Comic-Con, where Marvel Studio chief Kevin Feige surprised Hall H by announcing Ali would take up the mantle of the infamous day-walker after Wesley Snipes played the Marvel Comics character in three films between 1998 and 2006.

'Blade' is currently slated to hit theatres on September 6, 2024 as the final film in Phase Five of the MCU.

Since making her big screen debut in Lars von Trier's 'Nymphomaniac', Goth has been a standout player in films like Luca Guadagnino's 'Suspiria', Claire Denis' 'High Life', Autumn de Wilde's 'Emma' and Brandon Cronenberg's 'Infinity Pool', which made its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival earlier this year.

Goth is next set to close out her work in Ti West's horror trilogy with the release of 'MaXXXine'.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Lottie Moss



IPL 2023

Gujarat beat Punjab by six wickets

Mohali | Agencies

Opener Shubman Gill notched up his fifth half-century against Punjab Kings since his entry into the IPL fold to lead the way for a six-wicket victory for Gujarat Titans at the IS Bindra PCA Stadium on Thursday.

After pacer Mohit Sharma made a stellar comeback to the tournament with 2-18 and led a clinical bowling performance from Gujarat in restricting Punjab to 153/8, the defending champions were on course for a comfortable chase, thanks to Gill's serene 67 off 49 balls, laced with seven fours and a six.

With seven runs needed off the final over, Gill survived a run-out attempt, before Sam Curran uprooted his off-stump on the very next ball, bringing sudden tension into the match. After Curran

nailed two back-to-back yorkers, David Miller completed the second run with a desperate dive.

With four runs needed off the last two balls, Rahul Tewatia finished off the chase by moving across and scooping a full ball from Curran over short fine leg for four to seal victory for Gujarat with a ball to spare.

Gujarat were off to a flier as Gill eased into a cover drive off Arshdeep Singh for four. After he and Wriddhiman Saha took a four each off Kagiso Rabada, the latter launched into Arshdeep by driving, whipping, pulling and slicing with disdain to take four boundaries in the third over.

But a bouncer from Rabada in the fifth over saw Saha go for the pull but ended up finding deep square leg, giving the fast bowler his 100th IPL wicket. Sai Sudharsan immediately



got going with a delightful punch through point for four.

Sudharsan and Gill kept the scoreboard ticking through strike rotation, with the latter taking two boundaries off Rahul Chahar through a cut past short third and coming forward to loft inside-out over extra cover in the ninth over.

But Sudharsan fell in the 12th over, as Arshdeep forced him to pull towards the longer side of the ground on a short ball and gave a catch to deep fine leg. Three overs later, Hardik Pandya holed out to long-on off Harpreet Brar. Gill brought up his fifty in the 16th over with a nonchalant lofted cover drive on

Brief scores

Punjab Kings 153/8 in 20 overs (Matthew Short 36, Jitesh Sharma 25; Mohit Khan 1-26) lost to Gujarat Titans 154/4 in 19.5 overs (Shubman Gill 67, Wriddhiman Saha 30; Harpreet Brar 1-20, Sam Curran 1-25) by six wickets

the front foot off Chahar. He left fans astonished by playing a tennis-like forehand that flew past the non-striker off Sam Curran for four and then stood tall to pull Rabada nonchalantly over deep square leg for six. Though he fell in the final over, Tewatia ensured Gujarat got their third win of the competition.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Real Madrid defeat Chelsea in quarter-final first leg

Madrid | Agencies

Goals from Karim Benzema and Marco Asensio gave Real Madrid a 2-0 first-leg lead in their Champions League quarter-final against Chelsea.

Real Madrid dominated nearly the entire match against a rival that appeared worryingly disorganised at times, but they could be slightly disappointed not to have put the tie out of reach given their dominance.

While Real Madrid coach, Carlo Ancelotti, repeated the side that won 4-0 away to FC Barcelona in the Copa del Rey a week ago, Frank Lampard opted to play with three central defenders, wingbacks, and a midfield trio of N'Golo Kante, Enzo Fernandez, and former Madrid player, Mateo Kovacic, a Xinhua report said.

The game started with both sides looking to attack,



and Chelsea's Wesley Fofana and Madrid's Eduardo Camavinga were both shown slightly harsh yellow cards before Real Madrid gained control. Vinicius Jr forced a save from Kepa in the 12th minute, and the Chelsea keeper would be in for a busy 45 minutes.

Kepa did well to deny Vinicius in the 21st minute after the striker latched onto a pass from Dani Carvajal,

but he could do nothing to stop Benzema tapping home from close range.

The halftime whistle would have been welcome for Chelsea boss, Frank Lampard, but the second half saw little change in the script as Madrid continued to dominate. Substitute Marco Asensio made it 2-0 with a left-foot shot after a corner, as Chelsea failed to close down, first Kroos and then Vinicius.

Neeraj Chopra to begin Diamond League defence in Doha



New Delhi | Agencies

Reigning Olympic champion and world silver medalist Neeraj Chopra will begin his Diamond League title defence from Doha meeting on May 5.

Due to injury, Chopra missed the 2022 Doha meet, where Grenada's two-time world champion, Peters, recorded the fifth-longest throw in history with his 93.07m attempt.

The current Indian national record holder, who improved his lifetime best by almost two metres with a throw of 89.94m for second at last

year's BAUHAUS-Galan in Stockholm, was crowned 2022 Wanda Diamond League champion and became the first Indian track and field athlete to win the prestigious event.

At Doha, Neeraj will join the world champion Anderson Peters (Grenada) and Tokyo 2021 silver medalist Jakub Vadlejch (Czech Republic) in the much-anticipated javelin competition.

Alongside the star trio, Doha Diamond League will also see the participation of European champion Julian Weber of Germany, former Olympic champion Keshorn Walcott from Trinidad & Tobago and Rio Olympic silver medalist Julius Yego of Kenya.

The 2023 Wanda Diamond League comprises 14 meetings in total, starting with Doha at the Qatar Sports Club on May 5 and concluding with a single final across two days in Eugene (September 16-17).

Shooting: Manu, Arjun, among day one winners at Rifle/Pistol selection trials

Bhopal | Agencies

Manu Bhaker, fresh from a World Cup bronze at the same Finals Hall of the MP State Shooting Academy Range in Bhopal, was among the Day One winners at the National Rifle/Pistol Selection Trials 3 & 4, along with the likes of Arjun Babuta and Ashi Chouksey.

These trials will be important from the perspective of Indian team selection for important events like the World Championships and the Asian Games. The juniors will also be vying for places in the Junior World Cup and Junior World Championships squads.

Manu outgunned on-the-comeback trail local favourite Chinki Yadav 31-29 in the medal match to clinch the women's 25m Pistol title. Rhythm Sangwan won bronze through a shoot-off with Neha. Rhythm had topped the qualifying stage with a 583 ahead of Manu (580), with Chinki



qualifying sixth with a 577.

However, Manu proved better on the day when it mattered most.

In the men's 10m Air Rifle T3, Punjab's Arjun Babuta overcame the Railways' Akhil Sheoran 16-6 in the gold medal match. The two had entered the gold shootout finishing 1-2 in the ranking round. Arjun was in scintillating form topping the qualifying round with a 634.5. The national record stands with Rudranksh Patil at 633.2, however, scores at trials are not considered for records.

In the women's 50m Rifle 3-Positions, hosts Madhya Pradesh won gold when Ashi Chouksey defeated Odisha's Shriyanka Sadangi 16-10. It was a pillar-to-post effort from the local girl as she topped qualifying with a 589 and then the ranking round as well with a score of 407.3.

Among the juniors who won on the day were Dhanush Srikanth (10m air rifle men) and Nikita Kundu (50m rifle 3 positions women).

Weakened New Zealand all set for T20I experience in Pakistan

Lahore | Agencies

Second-rung players from New Zealand that are not injured or involved in the cash-rich Indian Premier League (IPL) are set to lock horns with a full-strength Pakistan squad in a five-match T20I series, starting with the first game today.

During the time when the best players of world cricket are involved in IPL, the New Zealand tour of Pakistan -- comprising five T20Is and as many ODIs -- promises some riveting international action.

Hosts Pakistan have picked a star-studded T20I squad, boosted by the return of pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi, who is all set to play for the first time in international cricket since the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Final against England in November 2022.

Though he returns to play international cricket after a four-month gap, Afridi has been busy picking up silverware and smashing records in Pakistan. During the recent Pakistan Super League (PSL), the ace pacer

led Lahore Qalandars to the trophy, thus becoming the first captain to win the PSL twice.

Also returning to the squad are Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, Fakhar Zaman and Harris Rauf, all of whom were rested for the Afghanistan T20I series in Sharjah.

New Zealand has a huge challenge in front of them. Not only are they playing T20Is in Pakistan for the first time but they will do so with several of their key players absent, including regular skipper Kane Williamson.

With numerous players currently involved in IPL, the inexperienced Black Caps will be led by Tom Latham. However, they can take heart from their performance in the ODI series against Pakistan three months ago, where they emerged 2-1 victors, although with a much stronger squad at their disposal.

The Kiwis will be banking on the experience of their stand-in captain Latham, Jimmy Neesham, Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell and Ish Sodhi to put up a fight against a full-strength Pakistan.

UEFA receives three bids for Euro 2028 and 2032

Geneva (Switzerland) | Agencies

UEFA announced that it received three bids from Britain and Ireland, Turkey and Italy to host the 2028 and 2032 European Championships.

These includes a joint bid from Britain and Ireland, represented by the football associations of England, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Scotland and Wales to bid for EURO 2028, while Turkey is interested in either EURO 2028 or 2032, the UEFA said on Wednesday.

The Italian Football Federation submitted its bid dossier for EURO 2032, a Xinhua report said.

The UEFA Executive Committee will decide the hosts in October.



MONTE CARLO MASTERS

Medvedev sinks Sonego; Holger Rune powers past Dominic Thiem

Monte Carlo | Agencies

Daniil Medvedev continued his impressive form as the third seed made a winning start to his Monte-Carlo Masters 2023 campaign, beating dangerous free-hitting Italian Lorenzo Sonego 6-3, 6-2 to reach the third round of ATP Masters 1000 event.

Medvedev was dialled in from the start of his first clay-court match of the year. He moved into an early 3-0 lead with the help of some delightful early touches at the net and he stayed typically relentless from the baseline throughout to seal an 89-minute victory.

Monte Carlo, April 13 (IANS) After enjoying a strong clay campaign last season, Denmark's Holger Rune saw off Dominic Thiem in straight sets in his Monte Carlo Masters 2023 opener to enter the



third round of the ATP Masters 1000 event. The Dane, who won his first ATP Tour title in Munich and reached his first Grand Slam quarter-final at Roland Garros last year, made it to the third round with a 6-2, 6-4 win against Thiem on Wednesday night for the first time in Monaco in three appearances.

He was beaten by Casper Ruud in

each of the past two editions of the event, losing in the opening round of his 2021 debut and in the second round in 2022.

The 19-year-old will face Italy's Matteo Berrettini on Thursday, seeking his second ATP Masters 1000 quarterfinal and first since he won the Paris Masters last November.

Ten Hag confirms Rashford to miss "several games" with groin injury



London | Agencies

Manchester United coach Erik ten Hag has confirmed that England forward Marcus Rashford will miss



"a few games" due to a groin injury, but added that he will return before the end of the season. Speaking ahead of his side's UEFA Europa League quarter-final first leg at home to Sevilla, Ten Hag was asked

about the striker, who limped off with 10 minutes left to play in United's 2-0 win at home to Everton last weekend.

"It's a few games, that's the statement. I can't give more details because we don't know. We have to see how the injury develops," said the coach on Wednesday.

Rashford has scored 28 goals in all competitions for his club this season - his best ever total for United, and will be an important absence in an intense period of matches, a Xinhua report said.

After facing Sevilla on Thursday, United visits struggling Nottingham Forest before next week's Europa League return leg in Sevilla and an FA Cup semi-final against Brighton on April 22.

"Of course, it's a setback and he's disappointed about it, but he's not totally broken because he knows he will return quickly, so he's optimistic. He's started straight on his recovery and rehab, which helps to get back soon," added Ten Hag.

WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS: AVINASH SABLE TO TRAIN IN SWITZERLAND; TT PLAYERS' TOUR TOO GETS THE NOD



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

(MYAS) has approved Commonwealth Game silver medalist Avinash Sable's proposal to train in St. Moritz, Switzerland to prepare for the World Athletics

Championships that is set to take place in August this year.

Expenditure for Sable's Switzerland training camp will be covered under MYAS's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) and cover Avinash and his coach's airfare, visa fees, local transport costs, boarding and lodging fees, and out-of-pocket allowance (OPA) amongst other expenses, the Ministry informed in a statement on Thursday.

Sable, along with his coach Scott Simons, is scheduled to train at St. Moritz from August 7, 2023, till August 16, 2023 (10 days), before heading out to Budapest, Hungary for the World Championships.

Besides Sable's proposal, the MOC also approved proposals of eight table tennis players to compete at various World Table Tennis (WTT) events.

SUNNY LEONE STARRER SELECTED FOR CANNES

Film Festival

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap, who is known for creating the modern day classic 'Gangs of Wasseypur', 'Ugly', 'Gulaal' and 'No Smoking', is once again set to visit the French Riviera as his next film 'Kennedy' starring Sunny Leone has been selected for the Cannes Film Festival.

The festival's Twitter handle made the announcement on Thursday afternoon. They tweeted: "KENNEDY by Anurag KASHYAP #SeanceDeMinuit / #MidnightScreenings #Cannes2023." The film will be a part of the midnight screening section. Kashyap has been a regular at Cannes.

While his magnum opus 'Gangs of Wasseypur' was screened at the 2012 Cannes Directors' Fortnight, an independent selection of the Cannes Film Festival, the anthology film 'Bombay Talkies', on which he served as one of the directors, premiered under Special Screenings at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival. 'Ugly' released a year after 'GoW' and was screened in the Directors' Fortnight section at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival where it also received a standing ovation. His 'Raman Raghav 2.0' also premiered in the Director's Fortnight section at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival.

Talking about the film festival, which is set to be held from May 16, it will showcase films by Wes Anderson, Hirokazu Kore-eda, Wim Wenders, Ken Loach, Todd Haynes and Steve McQueen. Maiwenn's Jeanne du Barry, starring the director opposite Johnny Depp, will open the festival on May 16.

The Cannes Film Festival is considered to be one of the most prestigious film festivals across the world and is part of the Big 3 European film festivals besides Venice Film Festival and the Berlinale.

'We all have the right to like or dislike something'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Pooja Hegde, who is set to share the screen with Bollywood superstar Salman Khan in the upcoming theatrical movie 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan', has reacted to a section of Internet users trolling the film's trailer for its over the top action and hard to digest sequences. Soon after the film's trailer released, some people started brutally trolling the trailer as they felt that it was "cringe," "far from reality" and had "loose editing." Pooja in an interview said: "It's okay if some people don't like the trailer. It's not possible to keep everyone happy. Films are very subjective, if some people like it, a section of the audience may not like it as well and rightly so. We all have the right to like or dislike something."

But, she mentioned that she would like people to give the film a chance and assured that it will entertain them.

"However, I hope that their perception changes once they see the film. I can promise that you will have a good time in theatres watching the film," she added.

'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan', produced by Salman Khan Films, stars an ensemble cast of Venkatesh Daggubati, Palak Tiwari, Siddharth Nigam and Shehnaaz Gill.

IT'S BEEN A LONG WAITING GAME: RHEA ON RETURNING ON SETS

POOJA HEGDE REPLIES TO PEOPLE'S TROLLS ON HER UPCOMING FILM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As she makes a comeback on the sets almost after three years, actress Rhea Chakraborty said that "times have been hard" and that "it has been a long waiting game" as she shared a video.

Rhea, who is an accused in the death of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput, was announced as one of the gang leaders for MTV Roadies season 19.

She shared a clip, where Rhea is seen getting her makeup done and is asked about how does it feel to be back on the set.

She is heard saying: "I haven't shot in three years and I am back on set. Vanity van is feeling all new, hair and makeup hasn't happened in a while."

"Strangely enough when I shot three years ago, it was on this very set, in this vanity van for Chehre. I am back here after three years... Overwhelming and excited, welcome back to me."

Posting a video from her vanity, the actress wrote on Instagram: "It's been a long waiting game. Being back on set, back to work is a joy I can't describe. Heart full of gratitude, raring to go. Thank you to all of you for your love and support. Times have been hard, but your love has been real. BRB - crying happy tears."

Sushant Singh Rajput died in 2020 in mysterious circumstances which created a nationwide uproar. He was found hanging in his flat in Juhu. Days after his death, the actor's father filed a case against Rhea, the actor's then girlfriend, accusing her of abetment to suicide and money laundering.



ALL-INDIA FASHION WEEK CUM BEAUTY PAGEANT BEGINS IN JAIPUR

Team Absolute | New Delhi

All set to spread glitter and glamour around, the three days long Ms VogueStar India and Mrs VogueStar India 2023 event began at Le Meridian Hotel, Jaipur. VogueStar, an inclusive platform of the women and by the women supporting them create their distinctive identities, is organizing the all-India fashion week cum beauty pageant. The extravaganza of fashion and beauty is witnessing XY state level winners competing and adorning designer masterpieces created by emerging designers from across India.

Divided into two categories, the pageant will crown three national winners under Miss VogueStar India and Mrs VogueStar India on 16th April. The Mrs VogueStar India is further categorized into two groups

where in the group one married women of 18-35 age group are working hard to win the title while group 2 represents the women belong to 36-60 age group. The idea behind this categorization is to ensure fair competition and inclusion of women across the age groups and relationship status to perform with best of their real abilities.

The contestants of the upcoming extravaganza of fashion and beauty will don designing masterpieces created by 20 emerging fashion designers and will be groomed by 10 make-up artists from across the country.

The event which will be hosted at Le Meridian Hotel on 14th to 16th April 2023 is set to spread a message around unity in diversity. The make-up artists have been handpicked by the organizers after a prolonged

screening process. Megha Thakur, Zahida Khatoon and Dyuti Toor Dutta from Delhi, Tisha Morwani from Rajasthan, Shivangi Upadhyay and Kartiki Joshi from Gujarat, Prthika Kumaran from Karnataka, Kiran Swarnkar from Uttar Pradesh, Sonali Jaiswal from Jharkhand and Shiwani Dawar from Punjab were selected to enhance the beauty of the contestants.

The grand finale of Miss and Mrs VogueStar India 2023 and VogueStar Fashion Week is witnessing the participation of 700 participants from across the states that have extensively been trained for six months by a team of experts. Under the choreography of Alison Woodham, the grand finale and fashion show is displaying the talented designers' experimentation, both in fabric and silhouette for three days.

Vidyut Jammwal flaunts 'new calisthenics tricks'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood action stars Vidyut Jammwal redefined fitness goals as he flaunted calisthenics in a video on social media, leaving many stunned.

Vidyut, who is currently busy shooting for his next 'Crakk - Jeethegaa Toh Jiyegaa' took to Instagram, where he shared a video performing calisthenics, an exercises that doesn't rely on anything but body weight.

In the clip, the actor is seen in grey loose pants and is shirt less as he showcases his perfectly chiselled body and washboard abs. He then, with the help of metal poles, performed the stunt.

"My newest stunt double," he captioned the video, which in just hours of posting received over 616,000 views. Fans could not stop gushing at the picture.

On the work front, Vidyut will next be seen in 'IB71', which revolves around a two-front war between Indian intelligence agencies and the Pakistani establishment. The film is directed by Sankalp Reddy.

He will also be seen in 'Crakk - Jeethegaa Toh Jiyegaa' directed by Aditya Datt. The film follows the journey of a man from the slums of Mumbai to the world of underground extreme sports.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Palak Tiwari