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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI

NATION > 02
Hindu female must be in possession of property for conferment...



HOLLYWOOD > 06
Kylie is worried Kardashians' 'beauty standards' will harm her daughter...



SPORTS > 07
US advances to round of 16, China suffers setback in FIBA...



India to sweeten Rakshabandhan fest with packed mithais, chocolates

Conducted by the Kirana Club among 25,000 grocery shops, the survey, released here on Monday, found that besides the packed mithais and chocolate boxes, the next on the list of high-demand would be 'namkeens' (salty snacks) and ready-mixes.

Accordingly, the grocery stores are now stocking up these items ahead of the festival, including soan-papdi, pedhas, barfi, laddoos, gulab-jamuns, rasgullas, etc.

India has over 1.30 crore retail grocery stores ranging from the traditional brick-and-mortar local shops to suvank modern retailers operating chains across the country.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

This Rakshabandhan could see consumers flocking to buy packed Indian 'mithais' (sweetmeats), chocolate boxes as the top favourites for the festival symbolising the bonds of love between brothers-sisters, falling on Wednesday, revealed a survey among the neighbourhood grocery shops across the country.

The Kirana Club survey covered states like Maharashtra, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, said its founder Anshul Gupta.

Kirana outlets in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar,

Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand have given a thumbs up to Indian sweetmeats as the flavour of the season, while those in Maharashtra, Haryana, Gujarat, Punjab and Delhi have opted for chocolate boxes as the next most coveted item.

Among cities, Indore, Jaipur and Lucknow people would crave for packed mithais, while the people of Pune, Nagpur, New Delhi, Gurugram, Patna, Panipat, Agra, Kanpur, Gopalganj, Meerut and Panchkula plan to gorge on chocolates.

The all-time favourites 'namkeens', ready-mixes and assorted biscuits shall also be moving quickly adding to the festive delight at the kirana shops and adorn festival tables at homes.

In fact, the mouth-watering dry 'namkeens' like chivda, bhujia, sev, farsan, chips, mixes, etc. have been ranked among the top three categories by kirana shops in Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Incidentally, biscuits ranked lowest in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, while ready-mixes are at the bottom of popularity charts in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana, and few would opt for packed sweetmeats in Delhi.

The Kirana Club has over 15 lakh grocers onboard in 10 states and 16,000 pincodes, besides several regional, national and international brands also active on the platform.

Is there some timeframe for restoration of J&K's statehood: SC asks Centre

RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked Attorney General and Solicitor General to seek instructions from the Central government over the timeframe to restore statehood of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir which was downgraded into two union territories in 2019.

A Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, hearing pleas challenging the abrogation of Article 370, remarked that the erstwhile state cannot be a "Union Territory in permanence. We understand that these are matters of national security. We understand that ultimately preservation of the nation itself is an overriding concern. But without putting you in a bind, both you (SG) and Attorney General may seek instructions on the highest level - is there some timeframe in view?"



orally asked CJI Chandrachud. The top court made the observation after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta - appearing for the Centre, told the bench that the move to bifurcate the state into union territories of J&K and Ladakh was a "temporary measure" and that its statehood will be restored in the future.

The Supreme Court also asked if Article 370 can be used to amend Article 370 itself. "Article 370 can be used to amend other provisions but can it be used to amend Article 370 itself? That's the heart of the matter," the court observed.

UT NOT PERMANENT FEATURE: CENTRE

New Delhi: The Central government on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that the "union territory is not a permanent feature" after it asked Attorney General (AG) and Solicitor General (SG) to seek instructions from the Centre over the timeframe to restore statehood of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The state was downgraded into two Union Territories (UTs) in August 2019 -- J&K and Ladakh.

"The instructions are -- UT is not a permanent feature. But, I will make a positive statement the day after tomorrow (regarding Jammu and Kashmir)," said Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, adding that Ladakh would remain a UT. SG Mehta clarified that he will meet the functionaries in the government along with the AG to seek more instructions to make a statement.

Union Cabinet approves Rs 200 cut in LPG cylinders

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With eyes set firmly on the forthcoming elections, the Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved reduction in prices of LPG gas cylinders by Rs 200 for all connection holders. In addition to this, the Cabinet also cleared the proposal to give 75 lakh new LPG cylinders connections under the Ujjwala scheme, thus taking the total beneficiaries to more than 10 crore across the country.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur told mediapersons after the Cabinet briefing. As of now, the price of domestic LPG, which is used in the kitchen for cooking purposes, is Rs 1,103 per 14.2-kg cylinder in New Delhi. This will now come down by Rs 200 per cylinder.

Domestic LPG cylinder prices were last revised on



March 1, when they were hiked by Rs 50 per cylinder. The decision comes with Assembly elections scheduled

in four states in December and Lok Sabha polls are to be held next year. Oil marketing companies (OMCs) have been reporting heavy under-recoveries due to lack of hike in prices of domestic cooking gas. Under the Ujjwala scheme, the government provided free LPG connection to women beneficiaries in rural households.

Sins of nine years cannot be washed away: Kharage

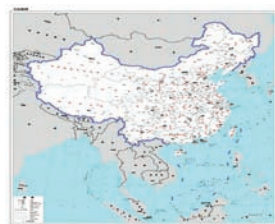
New Delhi: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharage on Tuesday took a veiled dig at the BJP government for Centre alleging that the election gifts started rolling out after fearing a dip in the vote and said the saffron party had mercilessly looted the people for last nine and half years and their sins cannot be washed away. "When the votes started decreasing, then the election gifts started getting distributed. The merciless Modi government, which looted the hard earned money of the people, is now showing feigned goodwill towards the mothers and sisters. For 9 and a half years, by selling Rs 400 LPG cylinders for Rs 1,100, they kept destroying the life of the common man, then why didn't any 'affectionate gift' come to mind?" Kharage wrote on X.

China releases new map; shows Aksai Chin, Arunachal as its territory

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In what could lead to yet another diplomatic flare-up, China has released what it called the "2023 edition of the standard map" of the country showing Aksai Chin -- one of the two large disputed border areas between India and China -- and whole of Arunachal Pradesh within its territory, according to reports quoting local Chinese media.

The map was released on Monday by China's Ministry of Natural Resources, the reports said. The latest development has come four months after Beijing had announced in April that it will



"standardise" names of 11 places in Arunachal Pradesh. Also the release of the map has come at a time when the New Delhi G20 summit is less than a fortnight away, which the Chinese President Xi Jinping is also expected to attend. The G20 summit is scheduled to be held between September 9 and 10.

Mere inclusion of territories doesn't mean anything: Jaishankar

New Delhi: India on Tuesday dismissed a 'standard map' released by China on Monday (August 28), showing parts of Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh within its territory.

External affairs minister S Jaishankar during an interaction with a television channel was quoting as saying said that China has a "habit" of releasing such maps and mere inclusion of territories belonging to other countries in its maps does not mean anything.

Bihar Education Dept suspends 55 teachers, cuts salaries of 6,000 others in 2 months

Patna: In a span of just two months, the Bihar Education Departments has suspended 55 teachers due to negligence or not being present in the schools, as well as slashed the salaries of 6,000 others for various teaching violations.

Soon after K.K. Pathak took charge as the Department's Additional Chief Secretary in June, he started inspections of different schools from July 1.

He has given strict directions to District Magistrates and district education officers to inspect every school twice or thrice a week and take action against the offenders.

MAHA RULING ALLIANCE TO HOLD TWO-DAY CONCLAVE FROM THURSDAY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The ruling alliance of Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party-Nationalist Congress Party (AP) and other allies will hold a two-day convention here on August 31-September 1, party officials said here on Tuesday.

BJP Spokesperson Prasad Lad said that the meeting will be held at the NSCI complex in Worli to carry out a review of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections to the 48 seats in the state which will be contested by the alliance partners jointly.

Interestingly, the ruling allies' poll meet will coincide with the upcoming National Opposition I.N.D.I.A. bloc's meeting scheduled here for two days.

The state meet will include a dinner hosted by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde at his official residence on August 31 for



all the elected leaders who will be present at the conclave.

On Friday, there will be a series of regional review meetings at the NSCI Dome which will be addressed by Shinde and Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar, besides other senior leaders of the three parties and other allies and elected representatives from across the state. The meetings will carry out a comprehensive analysis of the 48 parliamentary seats in Mumbai, Konkan, Marathwada, western and northern Maharashtra, the prospects of the three parties, the respective strengths and weaknesses of the allies vis-a-vis the Opposition parties, etc. However, contrary to speculation in some quarters, alliance party sources rule out the possibility of any poll candidacies being finalised at the two-day review meeting.

17% COVID PATIENTS STILL SUFFER HEALTH ISSUES, 6.5% LOST LIVES AFTER 1 YEAR: ICMR

Younger as well as older age, male gender, moderate-to-severe disease and presence of comorbidities are associated with higher odds of post-discharge one-year mortality, revealed the study based on the data of 14,419 patients across 31 hospitals. Among the 14,419 participants who were followed up at least once between four weeks and one year post-discharge, 942 (6.5 per cent) had died, and the remaining 93.5 per cent were reported alive during one year of follow-up.

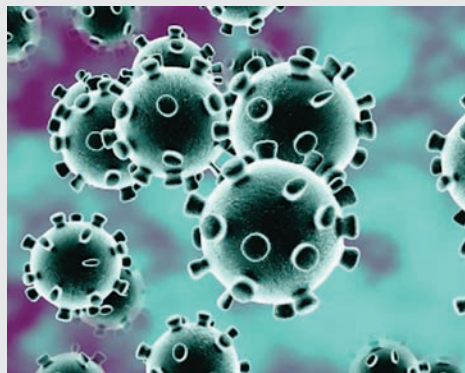
Team Absolute | New Delhi

About 17.1 per cent Covid-19 patients continue to suffer persistent or new onset symptoms, according to a new study by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

The symptoms of long Covid or post Covid condition (PCC) include fatigue, breathlessness or neurocognitive abnormalities. PCC was also linked with 2.7 times higher odds of post-discharge mortality.

The study led by ICMR's Clinical Studies and Trials Unit also showed that 6.5 per cent patients hospitalised due to Covid lost their lives a year post-discharge.

The odds of dying after the first follow-up between 4-8 weeks were higher among those with comorbidity and those who reported PCC.



"The odds of death after the first follow-up were lower among those who had a moderate-to-severe disease during initial hospitalisation and had

received anti-SARS-CoV-2 vaccination, although the association was not significant," the researchers said, in the paper published in the Indian Journal of Medical Research.

However, vaccination before the Covid-19 infection offered 60 per cent protection, the study showed. "Vaccination before the Covid-19 infection confers protection to post discharge mortality," it added. Multiple studies have identified increasing age as a risk factor for post discharge death.

The current analysis additionally showed that the participants younger than 18 years had 1.7 times higher odds of dying after discharge from the hospital. "Our earlier reports have shown that comorbidities among admitted children are more severe, such as malignancies, kidney disorders, haematological disorders and others.

Bank, Treasury and LIC employees in MP get first time holiday on Raksha Bandhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Banks, District Treasury (Treasury) and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) will have a holiday in Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday, August 30. For the first time, the state government has declared a holiday for these institutions on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan. About 50 thousand officers and employees of the state will be benefited by this.

Earlier, despite being a public holiday on Raksha Bandhan, there was no holiday in banks, treasuries, sub treasuries and insurance corporations. The United Forum of Bank Unions Madhya Pradesh had written a letter to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on August 10, demanding the declaration of Raksha Bandhan as a public holiday in banks and financial institutions. Other employees' unions also raised this demand.

United Forum of Bank Unions Madhya Pradesh's co-ordinator VK Sharma said that



the state government was demanded that when banks and financial institutions in different states of the country can declare a holiday on Raksha Bandhan, why not in Madhya Pradesh? On December 19, 2022, the Madhya Pradesh government had declared 16 days holidays for the year 2023 in banks and financial institutions under the Negotiable Instrument Act. The festival of Raksha Bandhan was not included in this list.



HINDU FEMALE MUST BE IN POSSESSION OF PROPERTY FOR CONFIRMATION OF A FULL OWNERSHIP UNDER HINDU SUCCESSION ACT: SUPREME COURT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court has recently held that a Hindu female must be in possession of property for conferment of a full ownership under Section 14 of the Hindu Succession Act.

A bench comprising Justices C.T. Ravikumar and Sudhanshu Dhulia was considering a special leave petition filed against an order of the Kerala High Court upholding dismissal by the trial court of a partition suit claiming ancestral rights over the property.

The suit was dismissed on the ground that the land along with the house sought to be partitioned is an agricultural land on which the appellants cannot claim any right. The trial court had held that in the facts of the case Hindu Women's Right to Property Act, 1937 was not applicable to agricultural land.

The Section 14 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 provided that



any property possessed by a female Hindu, whether acquired before or after the commencement of this Act, will be held by her as full

owner thereof and not as a limited owner.

Prior to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, amongst "Thiyyas" of Kozhikode, ancestral property devolved only on the male children and daughters had a right of maintenance till the time of their marriage.

The Supreme Court said that the essential ingredient for a property of a female Hindu to be her absolute property is possession over the property.

"A preexisting right is a sine qua non for conferment of a full ownership under Section 14 of the Hindu Succession Act. The Hindu female must not only be possessed of the property but she must have acquired the property," it said, referring to an earlier judgment of the Supreme Court.

Admittedly the plaintiff, Hindu female, was never in possession of the property, noted the top court while dismissing the civil appeal.

Governor's post is useless, says RLP MP Hanuman Beniwal

Jaipur | Agencies

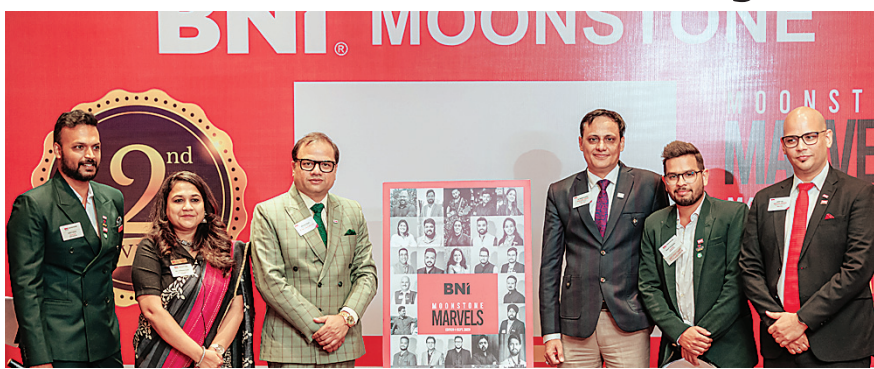
Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP) MP Hanuman Beniwal, while giving a controversial statement on Tuesday, said that the post of governor is useless as it costs a lot.

He said, "Most of the Governors are given the post when they cross the age of 80. To remove a candidate from mainstream politics, he is made to sit as a governor. Anyway, the post of Governor is useless. It costs a lot. You will also be shocked if you see their expense on tea, breakfast and food. While their work is limited to read what is given by government in writing, the government should rather read it itself. After all, why is there a post of governor for this small task? It should be abolished as the governor is only doing the job of a postman." Beniwal did not stop here and also attacked former deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot saying that he has tarnished his own image. While speaking at a Press conference in Jaipur on Tuesday, Beniwal said, "If Pilot had left his party in time, RLP and Sachin Pilot together would have won 100 seats in Rajasthan." Speaking on the cancellation of student union election in Rajasthan, Beniwal



said that he was very angry with the state after cancelling the student union elections. "In such a situation, now we will take out a rally against the government at the district level. Along with this, a student panchayat will be organised on September 14 at Vidyaadhar Nagar Stadium in Jaipur. More than one lakh youth will take part in it. Beniwal further demanded inquiry into allegations of corruption levelled by former leader of opposition Kailash Meghwal against Union minister Arjun Ram Meghwal. Repeating his earlier allegations on 'Gehlot-Vasundhara together in corruption', he quipped about Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's 2030 vision. He said when Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot will not be there in 2030, then what is the vision being released after all?

BNI Moonstone Chapter Shines with the Launch of "Moonstone Marvels" Magazine



Jaipur | Agencies

BNI Moonstone Chapter proudly unveils its latest endeavor, the "Moonstone Marvels" magazine, a testament to the chapter's commitment to fostering member spotlight and elevating professional connections.

The magazine, officially launched in Jaipur yesterday, aims to serve as a valuable resource for BNI Moonstone members, providing insights, success stories, and opportunities for growth within the business community. With a

mission to facilitate stronger PR and networking among members, "Moonstone Marvels" promises to be a vital asset.

This achievement would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of Akshit Baj, Dr. Vandana Garg, Ankit Kedia, and Mohit Kanani and the magazine core team. Their unwavering commitment and vision have brought this project to fruition. The grand unveiling of "Moonstone Marvels" was a momentous occasion, graced by Akshaya Goyal,

Executive Director of BNI Jaipur. The event saw the presence of enthusiastic members, esteemed visitors, and distinguished guests who came together to celebrate this milestone.

The magazine represents a new era of collaboration and growth within the BNI Moonstone Chapter. As it continues to evolve, "Moonstone Marvels" will undoubtedly strengthen the bonds between members and elevate the professional journeys of all who engage with it.

Delhi school sexual assault

Was threatened with physical harm if I revealed anything, says one of the victims

Team Absolute | New Delhi

One of the two students of a Delhi government school, who were allegedly sexually assaulted multiple times by a group of boys in the toilet of the school, had reported the matter to his teachers who reportedly asked him to remain silent. When his mother insisted, the boy narrated the horrific details of the assault to her.

"In the restroom, I encountered two boys already present. One of them locked the door from inside, while the other, standing next to me, subjected me to forced sexual acts," read the FIR lodged by the Class 8 student's family.

The boy, in immense pain, pleaded with his assailants to stop. They then attempted further inappropriate actions, according to the FIR.

"They desisted upon hearing approaching footsteps. They warned me against revealing anything, threatening physical harm if I did," stated the boy.



As per the FIR, the young boy confided in both the school principal and his mother. Subsequently, one of the accused boys and his mother were summoned. "The accused boy penned an apology letter, but later, outside of school, he issued threats of

severe consequences. This prompted my mother to dial 112," the complainant recounted.

"He informed me that he had already shared his traumatic experience with two teachers. I visited the school and inquired with them, but

they categorically denied any awareness of the incident," recounted the mother. She mentioned that the school administration provided no assistance for three days, compelling her to contact the police.

The Delhi Police has registered two separate cases after two boys were allegedly sexually assaulted by their classmates in northwest Delhi, an official said on Monday.

Sharing the details, a senior police official said that the alleged incident took place in April during a summer camp of the school.

"The two boys had filed separate complaints with the police at Samaypur Badli police station alleging that they were sexually assaulted by five to six classmates. All the accused are minors and they were produced before a child welfare committee," said the official.

The Delhi Commission for Women had also issued a notice to the police and the city government's Directorate of Education in connection with the sexual assault.

Traditional colors showcased at Dernier Cri Fashion Week

Jaipur | Agencies

Jammu graced the fashion scenario with peerless elegance. The objective of this groundbreaking event was to bring awareness and inspiration to the latest fashion trends in India. With an emphasis on empowering young talent, DernierCree Fashion Week 2023 endeavors to provide an impactful platform for the youth of India to unleash their potential.

The event, held at the opulent Aureum Grand Hotel in Jammu, created history as the city's first fashion week.

At its core, DernierCree Fashion Week 2023, envisions a revolution in the way fashion is perceived. Opening doors to visionary designers and supermodels, the event promises to redefine beauty and innovation.



The credit for the remarkable creative vision and direction goes to the visionary Mohit Kapoor & Syed Khizar who shaped this extraordinary event where trends are born. Styling was done by official Stylist Nakshatra and Sanya & Anshula.

Celebrities who graced the event were Mayur Mehta, Navya Singh, Rashmi Gupta, Shiwani Chakroborty, Mani Rana, Samrithya

Gupta, Isha Sharma and Samaira Sandhu. The Fashion Week was successfully completed under the guidance of Founder & Director Devrishi Krishan Sharma.

DernierCree Fashion Week 2023 powered by Rakesh Jewellers, Bhatia Sons and Talla Jewellers and powered by Nimbank, Mahaveer Watch Company and Film City Jammu.

GUJARAT CONMAN KIRAN PATEL GRANTED BAIL BY COURT IN SRINAGAR

Srinagar: Gujarat conman Kiran Bhai Patel was granted bail on Tuesday by a court in J-K's Srinagar city.

The court of chief judicial magistrate (CJM) Srinagar on Tuesday granted bail to conman Kiran Bhai Patel.

The court directed the counsel of the accused to furnish a bail bond to the tune of 1 lakh with 2 sureties. J&K police had arrested Patel on March 3, 2023 for allegedly impersonating as an additional director for strategy and campaigns in the Prime Minister's office.

The authorities said that Patel got facilities normally given to officials from the PMO including a bullet-proof car, security personnel and official accommodation at a five-star hotel during his visits to Jammu and Kashmir.

Girls write to Yogi in blood, complain of molestation by principal

Ghaziabad | Agencies

In a shocking turn of events, young girl students from a local school in Ghaziabad have written a letter in blood, addressed to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, levelling allegations of molestation against the school's principal.

The four-page letter lays bare the disturbing experiences faced by the girls.

It accuses Principal Rajeev Pandey of subjecting them to unwarranted advances. The narrative suggests a pattern of abuse, with the principal reportedly summoning one girl after another to his office, where the misconduct would occur.

The girls wrote, "Babaji we are girls studying in Kisan Adarsh Higher Secondary



School in Bamhaita village. The principal of our school, Rajeev Pandey, used to call one or the other girl to his office every day and misbehave with us and threatened to destroy us if we told this to anyone. Most of the girls remain silent because of his scare. Some of us girls dared to narrate the ordeal at home on August 21, after which our parents gathered together and went to the school with the female councillor Parmosh Yadav who spoke to

the manager." This reportedly angered the principal and he began abusing everyone. When the quarrel increased, the family members thrashed the principal. The parents then reported the matter to ACP Saloni Aggarwal who scolded the girls and their parents and made them wait at the police station for four hours.

The police also visited the houses of the girls and threatened them. Soon after the letter came in public domain, the principal retaliated by filing a counter-complaint against the parents of several girls, alleging physical assault.

ACP Saloni Aggarwal said that the case had been promptly registered against the principal based on the girls' complaint.

Rajasthan govt approves retirement benefits for part time workers

Jaipur | Agencies

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Tuesday held the state cabinet meeting in which decisions like approval of Rajasthan Part Time Contractual Hiring Rules-2023, establishment of Gem Bourse in Jaipur and allotment of land to various institutions were taken.

The government has decided to name the Animal Welfare Board as Amrita Devi State Animal Welfare Board. The cabinet has taken the decision to amend the name of the board in order to convey the sacrifice made by Mrs. Amrita Bishnoi for the protection of animals and forests and her dedication towards living beings.

Officials said that this will inspire the common man for the welfare of animals and animals.

The cabinet has also



approved the proposal to make available about 44000 square meters of land for the establishment and development of Gem Bourse in Jaipur. The land will be allotted to the Jaipur Gem and Jewellery Board constituted for setting up the Gem Board on a 99-year lease at three times the industrial reserve rate. This will give a boost to the export of gems. Around 60,000 people will get direct and indirect employment opportunities.

Gadkari unveils world's first prototype car, says biofuel will eradicate stubble burning almost to nil

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday unveiled the world's first prototype of the BS6 Stage II 'Electrified Flex Fuel Vehicle' which is developed by Toyota Kirloskar Motors.

The minister said that the bio fuel will eradicate the problem of stubble burning almost by 100 per cent and it will also help in doubling farmers' income.

Speaking at the unveiling ceremony of the prototype of the flex-fuel Toyota Innova Hycross hybrid which can run on up to 85 percent ethanol blend fuel, Gadkari said: "Today is a historic day for the entire world as first prototype is going to unveil. Earlier, Vikram Kirloskar was there and I usually took follow up about the prototype every time



from him, but his demise is a big loss for us."

He said that India is currently importing fuel worth Rs 16 lakh crore. "And if we see the pollution graph, 40 per cent of the pollution is generated due to the fuel. I hardly stay in Delhi for two or three days and when I return back to my native place I am down with infections. Everyone knows the condition of Delhi and the level of pollution," Gadkari said. He said that the Haryana's Panipat plant is

generating ethanol, which is generated from the bio-waste.

He cited the example that how 50 percent bio-aviation fuel is being used in two different flights. The Minister said that 65 per cent of the GDP of our country is coming from agriculture background and he knows about the condition of the farmers. "My dream is to transform 'annadatas' (food giver) to 'urjadatas' (producer of solar power)," the Minister said. He said that he himself belongs to a farmer family and

know that how much benefit it will be for farmers. He said that bio fuel will eradicate the problem of stubble burning to almost by 100 per cent.

Praising the vision of the Prime Minister for making farmers Aatmanirbhar, the Minister said that ethanol being an indigenous, eco-friendly, and renewable fuel holds promising prospects for India. "The emphasis of the Modi government on ethanol aligns with objectives of attaining energy self-sufficiency, doubling farmers' income, transitioning them to Urjadata while continuing to support them as Annadata, and positively impacting the environment," he said. He also said that aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's global mission against climate change, Toyota is fervently transitioning to cleaner energy solutions.

'CAN'T BEAR THE AGONY': SIBLINGS OF KOTA COACHING STUDENT WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE TO LEAVE CITY

Jaipur: The siblings of Kota coaching student Adarsh Raj, who committed suicide on Sunday, have decided to leave the city, citing their inability to continue their studies here after losing their brother.

Adarsh, who lived with his cousin brother and sister, hanged himself on Sunday at 7 p.m. Hailing from Bihar, he was scoring low marks and hence was under stress, said police officials.

Sister and cousin brother of Adarsh have now decided to move back to their native places, stating that they can't bear the agony of losing their brother whom they have grown with since childhood. It is impossible to stay here and study, said his brother.

Adarsh's uncle, who was here to collect his body did not hold anyone responsible for his death. "He (Adarsh Raj) was living with his sister and cousin brother. Even then it happened. It was God's wish," the uncle said.

Meanwhile, another student Raj hanged himself in his rented flat at around 7 p.m. nearly four hours after his death.

The city police handed over the bodies of two NEET aspirants and lodged separate cases of unnatural death under Section 174 of CrPC for investigation in the matter.



MP DOCTORS TO GET SALARY UNDER 7TH PAY COMMISSION SLABS WITH EFFECT FROM 2016: CM SHIVRAJ

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Doctors associated with state government-run medical institutions will get pay scale based on the 7th Pay Commission slabs with effect from January 1, 2016, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said.

The CM also announced on Monday that medical practitioners will receive increments in five, 10 and 15 years without any compulsion of promotions.

Inaugurating a 2000-bed hospital built at a cost of Rs 482 crore at the campus of Bhopal's Hamidia hospital, Chouhan said that the pay scale of assistant professors in medical colleges would be increased and the rules for shifting of 11 nursing homes in the city would be simplified.

Madhya Pradesh Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang, who was also present on the occasion, said that the state has become the fastest developing state in the coun-



try.

The minister stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the health sector of India has witnessed tremendous developments in the past nine years. "There has been a lot of improvement in health services in the country, while the number of medical colleges in Madhya Pradesh is increasing rapidly. Madhya Pradesh has become the first state to start MBBS courses in Hindi," Sarang

said.

The minister further said that, in 2002-2003, the health budget of the state was around Rs 578 crore, which has increased almost 20 times to Rs 11,988 crore in 2023-2024. "In 2003 the number of doctors and para-medical staff was around 7500, which has now increased to more than 51,000. Till 2003, the number of government medical colleges was five, which will increase to 24 in 2023," Sarang added.

Congress criticises BJP's 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' set to begin on Sep 3

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A day after the ruling BJP announced that it would launch as many as five 'Jan Ashirwad Yatras' in Madhya Pradesh, the Congress criticised the move, saying the "people will welcome yatras akin to 2018."

Former Chief Minister and Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath posted a message on social media, which read, "Before the assembly elections in 2018, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had taken out 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra', which was welcomed by the people of Madhya Pradesh by throwing stones. Instead of blessing, the public gave such a curse that the yatra had to be stopped in the middle of the way."

The Congress leader further added that the Central leadership of the BJP has already divided yatra into five parts.

"In this way this Ashirwad Yatra has turned into tukde tukde yatra and the public will soon turn it into a ruined



yatra instead of a blessed one."

On Monday, senior BJP leader and Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar along with state unit party's head V. D. Sharma announced that five 'Jan Ashirwad Yatras' would be launched from five different regions - Vindhya, Mahakaushal, Gwalior-Chambal, Indore and Ujjain on different dates.

Sharma told the media that Union Home Minister Amit Shah will flag-off the first yatra from Chitrakoot (Satna district) of Vindhya region on September 3. He also said that the state party unit has also requested Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and BJP national president J. P. Nadda to participate in yatras. However, in a departure from the past where a sin-

gle such yatra would be taken out with long-time Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan leading it, there would be five such yatras covering all the 230 Assembly segments.

"This time the BJP leadership has collectively decided that many a time, some Assembly segments would be left out during the election-campaigning. Because of one single yatra, it wasn't possible to reach deep into all Assembly segments. This is why, the BJP leadership decided that there will be five yatras through which we would reach each and every Assembly constituency, and seek the blessings of the public," said BJP State president V.D. Sharma.

Sharma said that the yatras would begin on different dates, and after traversing through the major regions over the next fortnight, each would culminate in Bhopal on September 21, the birth anniversary of BJP ideologue Deendayal Upadhyaya. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address a gathering of workers on the occasion, he said.

'Choonaa' actor Gyanendra Tripathi funded his FTII education with money from BPO job



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Actor Gyanendra Tripathi, who has been receiving a lot of positive response for drama series 'Half CA', and has the highly anticipated streaming series 'Choonaa' on the horizon, has shared that he funded his FTII education with the money

that he earned from his BPO job.

The actor shared that FTII Pune was a place which he desperately wanted to get in and learn the craft of acting after his graduation in Bhopal.

The actor said, "When I researched about the FTII acting course there, I found out one has to fill out an application form of Rs 1,500 and the annual fees would be 1.25 lakh. I couldn't afford the form fees, and there was no way my family could afford that amount. He shared that as a young boy he cried so much knowing his other classmates were going to study further as he felt that this was the end of his formal education.

The situation demanded him to start earning as soon as possible and support the family financially.

He further mentioned, "I applied for several BPO jobs since people were earning salaries in double fig-

ures there, which was a huge thing at that time. I happened to get a job in Infosys BPO which was based in Pune. I grabbed that opportunity because I wanted to be in Pune where FTII was. I thought I would earn and save money from my job, then take admission to FTII and pay my fees with that savings. I started working on this plan and I got selected in FTII in my second attempt." The plan seemed to be working for him for a while. However, he couldn't save the required amount of money to pay his fees. He had savings of Rs 50,000 which wasn't enough. The actor shared with IANS, "I requested the director of the institute to allow me to continue my night shift for another 6 months during the integrated course and let me pay my fees in instalments. He was kind enough to consider that. I left my job as soon as the

acting specialisation started but managing the entire two-year fees was a constant struggle. Seeing your name appear frequently in the list of fee defaulters is embarrassing, I often used to wonder what jobs I could do to support myself financially, ATM's security guard, and tea vendor at the campus at night were some ideas that I was very close to trying."

"Subsequently, with the help of some scholarships from Shatrughan Sinha ji, Shabana Azmi ji and Jaya Bachchan ji, I could complete my acting course. FTII not only gave me the opportunity to learn the craft of film acting and gain confidence as an actor but it also gave me the atmosphere, exposure and space to grow as an individual. That place is a second home to me, it embraced and nurtured me at the time when I needed it the most," he added.

Youth Cong chief takes jibe at Smriti Irani over prices of cooking gas

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Youth Congress chief Srinivas B.V. on Monday took a jibe at Union Minister Smriti Irani over the increasing prices of cooking gas cylinders while "reminding" her of the statements she used to make before 2014 on the issue.

Addressing a press conference in Indore, Srinivas sarcastically said that he had found the old gas cylinder which the Irani used to carry before 2014, and he would gift it back to her.

The Youth Congress chief has visited Indore to participate in the 'Parivartan' rally organised by the district unit of the party. Addressing the gathering of party workers,



Srinivas said Irani has been making a lot of statements these days but has forgotten

that the BJP leaders used to call inflation a dayan (witch) prior to 2014.

MP police arrest Chhattisgarh resident for involvement in Naxal activities

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) of the Madhya Pradesh police has arrested one person for allegedly helping in Naxal activities.

The arrested person was identified as Dhan Singh Pungati, a resident of neighbouring state Chhattisgarh, a press note issued by the MP police said on Tuesday. It stated that during interrogation, Pungati confessed to being involved in Naxal activities for the last several years. As per the police, the arrested person was providing the Naxals with food and cash, besides conveying their messages and carrying out any work assigned by them.

"The ATS arrested Pungati, a resident of Kanker (Chhattisgarh) from Kalpi village in MP on August 25



when he was going to Mandla from Jabalpur," the release said. Pungati was nabbed following information received during the interrogation of Naxal leader Ashok Reddy and Kumari Potai aka Remati, who were arrested on August 21, the police said. Pungati told the police that he got acquainted with Reddy through another

Naxalite named Vijay. On the instructions of Vijay, Pungati had arranged a vehicle for Reddy and made other arrangements, the release said. On August 21, Ashok Reddy, who was accused in more than 60 criminal cases and wanted by the police in four states, was arrested by the MP ATS from Jabalpur, officials had said earlier.

Congress moves MP Lokayukta for probe against Chief Secy, others in nutrition scam

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A delegation of Congress leaders on Monday met the Madhya Pradesh Lokayukta and handed over a written complaint against Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains and State Rural Livelihood Mission CEO Lalit Mohan Belwal.

Referring to an earlier confidential report by the state Accountant-General, which had revealed "large scale fraud/misappropriation" in the state government's nutrition programme for women and children between 2018 and 2021, the party demanded an investigation into the alleged scam.

Later addressing a press conference at Congress headquarters, senior advocate and Rajya Sabha member Vivek Tankha said: "Today we met the state Lokayukta and requested to conduct an inquiry into the matter. We have also requested to conduct an inquiry against Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains and Lalit Mohan Belwal."

He alleged that the alleged scam had taken place in the tenure of Belwal who enjoyed Bains' patronage. "The Accountant General had conducted this inquiry on a sample basis and said that it was the responsibility of the state government to get the matter investigated by an independent



body. But the state government did not take any initiative to conduct any inquiry in this regard," Tankha said.

He also added that the complaint has been filed before the Lokayukta with a prayer that FIRs be filed against Bains, Belwal and other constitutional, government and private sector beneficiaries "who were involved in this large scale corruption".

Tankha said: "There are clear orders of the Supreme Court that FIR should be registered in

such a case and investigation should be started immediately by seizing all relevant documents."

"We have full faith on the state Lokayukta that justice will be provided to the people of Madhya Pradesh. These two officials have cheated the women and children of the state and despite these scams, they have been serving in the state government. If Lokayukta do not take action, we will be forced to approach the High Court," he added.

Last week, Tankha had questioned why Bains, whose service period got over in November 2022, is being given extension time and again.

"Is there no other IAS officer in Madhya Pradesh who can replace Iqbal Singh Bains," he had said.

Tankha, who is also a member of political affairs committee of state Congress, had also alleged that Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan "is fully dependent on Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains to set his political agenda".

"In such a situation, the officer applies all his mind to favour the Chief Minister and the ruling party." Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains should resign from the post on moral grounds, and if he does not do so till the next Saturday, we will be forced to proceed to challenge his extension in service in a legal way," he added.

MAHUA TRAVELS TO EUROPE FROM MADHYA PRADESH

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Mahua - Madhura Longifolia from Madhya Pradesh is now gaining recognition as an ethnic food among Europeans. Mahua-based food products are visible in the European food market. They have become essential for every food-basket. The UK-based company O-Forest has introduced Mahua products in the market. Of them, Mahua tea, Mahua powder, and roasted Mahua snacks are now gaining popularity. O-Forest has undergone an agreement with the Government of Madhya Pradesh for purchasing 200 tons of Mahua. This will directly benefit the tribal families who are tragically involved in Mahua collection.

Mahua is a sacred fruit for tribal communities. Mahualaddos and traditional Mahua liquor are part of their heritage cuisine. The Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan for the first time in the country declared the support price for Mahua along with other minor forest produce. With this, the tribal families doing Mahua collection have got rid of middlemen. They are also getting good prices in the market now. Going into the international market will fetch higher prices for Mahua collecting families. The support price for Mahua is Rs. 35 per kilogram. With increasing demand for Mahua in Europe, they will get Rs. 100 to 110 rupees per kilogram.

Mahua-Rich State - Mahua is abundant in Madhya Pradesh. In one season, approximately 7.55 lakh quintals are col-



lected. A full-grown Mahua tree laden with flowers yields upto 100 kilograms of Mahua. About 3.77 lakh families collect Mahua to eke out living. Each family collects Mahua from at least three trees. They collect an average of two quintals of Mahua per year. Around 50 percent of Mahua collection comes from the Umaria, Alirajpur, Sidhi, Singrauli, Dindori, Mandla, Shahdol, and Betul districts. Under the guidance of the Chief Minister, Mahua collectors have been provided a number of facilities.

Meera Shah, co-founder O-Forest Company,

observes that Mahua fruit is a gift of nature. We are extremely happy working with Madhya Pradesh Govt as we have got an opportunity to celebrate the Mahua fruit and contribute to preserving it in tribal culture. She says that buying Mahua flowers at the support price is a bold step by the government. This will increase the importance of Mahua as a food item, and facilitate its access to larger markets. The income of Mahua collecting families will certainly increase and they will be inspired to conserve Mahua trees. She says that the value of Mahua flowers has increased several times with value-added food products.

When asked about the growing preference for ethnic Mahua-based food products in the European market, Smt. Meera Shah points out that millions of people move from one country to another. They want to be have flavour of culinary cultures of new country. In this way, Mahua-based food products from Madhya Pradesh are being tasted with interest. She says that the UK has a diverse population, so the cuisines and food products from every country in the world are available there increasing prospects of ethnic food items.

Heritage Wine The state government has launched a policy to present traditional Mahua liquor as Heritage Wine. The Self-help Groups from tribal areas will be granted licenses to make it. Each self-help group can give its product a unique brand name. More than one self-help group in a district can also be granted licenses. At least 50 percent of the members of self-help groups should be women.

CM Chouhan plants saplings with social workers

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Gulmohar, Sarika Indica and Meena in the Smart Garden. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, social workers Mukesh Mehta, Mahendra Chaturvedi, Ranjana Mehta, Kuldeep Chouhan, Pushpalata Thakur, besides social workers from Gwalior Akhilesh Khandelwal, Rakesh Singh Tomar, Kaushalendra Singh, Janved Chaurasia and Ashish Mishra also planted saplings. The workers of Gwalior conveyed their gratitude to CM Chouhan for legalizing illegal colonies and starting development works there. Mrs India also planted saplings along with Chief Minister Chouhan, the Saluja family, residents of Bhopal also planted saplings today. Jaswinder Kaur Saluja of this family has won the title of



Mrs. India in a beauty pageant held on August 5 in Dubai. As many as 43 women from India participated in this competition named Glamour India Beauty Pageant Season-8. Chief

Minister Chouhan greeted Smt. Saluja for this achievement. On this occasion the family members of Saluja, Jasmeet Singh Saluja, Indrajit Saluja and Surjit Kaur were present.



EDITOR'S SPECS

BSP leader sings paeans to Rahul Gandhi

In a clear indication of changing moods on the eve of Lok Sabha elections, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader Imran Masood has started praising Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, much to the chagrin of his own party. Masood, an influential Muslim leader from Saharanpur district in western Uttar Pradesh, did not attend a meeting of party leaders and office bearers chaired by BSP chief Mayawati at the state unit office in Lucknow on August 23. Instead, he said that "it was good to have worked with Rahul Gandhi. He can understand the problems of even ordinary party workers". "I committed a mistake by deserting the Congress before the 2022 Assembly elections. Under pressure from my supporters, I left the Congress. Even after leaving the Congress. I have a good relationship with Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Vadra. I respect both the leaders." Talking about having skipped the BSP meeting, he said: "I was not invited to the party meeting held in Lucknow. At present, I am a member of the BSP and, on the direction of party chief Mayawati, I am preparing for the Lok Sabha elections. I will contest the Saharanpur seat." Haji Fazlur Rehman had won the Saharanpur Lok Sabha seat in the 2019 on a BSP ticket, defeating BJP candidate Raghav Lakhanpal. Before the 2022 Assembly election, Imran Masood had defected from the Congress to the Samajwadi Party, while his brother Noman Masood joined the BSP. Noman contested the Assembly election from the Gangoh seat in Saharanpur, whereas the SP fielded BJP rebel Dharam Singh Saini from the Nakur seat. Imran Masood was also in the race for the SP ticket for the Nakur seat. He had alleged that SP dumped him for the BJP rebel.

RAKSHA BANDHAN: FESTIVAL OF PROTECTION AND LOVE!

Lalit Garg

India has many religious-cultural traditions and festivals; every festival here has its own purpose and colour, which brings different religions, societies and people closer to one another. Raksha-Bandhan also is one such unique cultural festival. The thread of Rakhi is not just a thread of sacred love and protection of a sister, but it is an infallible means of religious, social and familial unity and solidarity. The Rakhi is a festival of providing equality and security to women, because if you look closely, women folk are now touching miraculous heights with their amazing work style in areas full of difficulties and challenges. Be it the army, flying fighter jets, or the wrestling arena, everywhere the whole world welcomes them with thunderous applause. The inspiration to liberate women from bondage, oppression and neglect is woven in the threads of Rakhi. Rakshabandhan is that invaluable bond of affection, which cannot be repaid even by giving everything, let alone money. This festival is a symbol of unbreakable love between brother and sister, and it is an assurance of protection to the woman who has been constantly struggling for security and self-esteem. Through Rakhi, sisters pray for the well-being of their brothers, while brothers take care of their sisters throughout their lives, whether it is a blood relation, or a non-kin sister! Surely, the festival of Rakhi, associated with women's identity and existence, is a monument of ideals and a step of resolutions. Raksha Bandhan is a festival of threads of love, which not only in every house-hold, but in the society and the nation, infuses new energy in human relationships. It infuses excitement and enthusiasm among the sisters, they are eager to tie



rakhi on the hands of their beloved brothers. This festival, which is very decent and pure, is centuries old - till now it continues to be a unique festival focused on women's respect and safety. Apart from real brothers and sisters, many emotional relationships are also tied to this festival, which are beyond the boundaries of religion, caste and country. This festival is a festival of strengthening relationships with the bond of intimacy and affection. Raksha Bandhan is the bond of human emotions even amongst non-kinds. It is a bond of love, sacrifice and duty. Once tied in this bond, it is very difficult to break it. There is so much power in these threads, which is not even in iron chains. To understand this unprecedented festival of Rakhi, it is very important to understand its historical context; otherwise the color of this festival will remain incomplete. This festival is described in the Bhavishya Purana that when the war started between the gods and the demons, then the demons started dominating. Lord Indra got scared and went to Sage Brihaspati. Indra's wife Indrani was sitting there listening to the conversation. She purified the silk thread with the power of mantras and tied it on her

husband's hand after which Indra was victorious. There are many historical contexts of this festival as well. When the Rajputs used to go to fight, women used to apply Kumkum Tilak on their forehead, as well as tie Rakhi in their hands. During the Mughal period, when the Mughal emperor Humayun went to attack Chittor, Rana Sanga's widow Karmavati took a promise of protection by sending a rakhi to Humayun. Accepting this, Humayun removed the thought of attacking Chittor from his heart and in spite of being a Muslim, in order to protect Chittor, he protected Karmavati and Mewar state by fighting on behalf of Mewar against Bahadur Shah. Similarly, Alexander's wife tied a rakhi to her husband's Hindu enemy Puru and made him her brother-in-law and took a vow not to kill Alexander during the war. Puru gave life to Sikandar, honouring Rakhi tied in his hand during the war and the promise given to his sister. Alexander also returned Porus's kingdom through keeping the dignity of the defense formula, and behaving like a warrior. Rakhi is a thread of love, which gives this festival a cosmic significance, this thread further strengthens the brother-sister relationship,

which not only gives the message of love and belonging, but also gives a sense of duties. Seeing the thread of Rakhi, every brother realizes his duties towards his sister. The festival of Rakhi is celebrated on the last day of the month of Sawan. It is also mentioned in the Mahabharata that when the eldest Pandava Yudhishtira asked Lord Krishna how he could overcome all the difficulties, then Lord Krishna advised him to celebrate the festival of Rakhi to protect him and his army. He used to say that this silk thread of Rakhi has the power with which you can get rid of every objection. There is another story of Shri Krishna and Draupadi related to Raksha Bandhan in Mahabharata itself. When Shri Krishna killed Shishupala with his Sudarshan Chakra, his index finger got hurt. At that time Draupadi tore her sari and tied a bandage on his finger. It was the full moon day of the month of Shravan. Shri Krishna later repaid this favour by increasing her saree at the time of tearing. In this way, with the two threads of Rakhi, there has been a deep connection not only between brother and sister, but also with the entire human sensibilities. The festival of Rakhi was earlier more important in North India. Today it is celebrated with great enthusiasm all over India. In Maharashtra, it is celebrated as Narali Purnima. People offer coconuts to Varuna Raja in the sea. The three eyes of the coconut are considered to be the three eyes of Lord Shiva. In South India, it is known as Avani Avittam. In Skandha Purana, Padmapurana and Shrimad Bhagwat, the context of Raksha Bandhan is found in the story called

Vamanavatar. The story goes something like this- When Danvendra Raja Bali tried to snatch away the kingdom of heaven by completing 100 yagas, then there was panic among the deities like Indra and they all came to pray to Lord Vishnu. Then Lord Vamana disguised himself as a Brahmin and went to King Bali to beg for alms. Even after the refusal of his Guru, Bali donated three steps of land. God measured the entire sky, underworld and earth in three steps and sent King Bali to the abyss. In this way, because of Lord Vishnu shattering the pride of King Bali, this festival is also famous as Bolev. These popular stories about Rakhi force us to think that how great were those people with principles and human sensibilities, under whose supervision a whole tradition took birth and continues unabated till date. Today the tradition may be continuing, but that depth of feeling and love is not visible in it. Now he has got the mite of performance. Instead of celebrating the festival with simplicity, the sisters are more concerned about their decorations and in the greed of getting something from the brother on the pretext of Rakhi. Instead of taking a pledge to protect her and remove the crisis, the brother also lightens his pocket, and considers it his. Now the tide of brother-sister love is not visible in Rakhi, which might have once been there. That's why on this auspicious festival of Rakhi, brothers are expected to take an oath to protect and respect not only their sister, but the entire women folk. Only then this festival of Rakhi will become meaningful and the love between brother and sister will remain eternal!

international

ISLAMABAD HC SUSPENDS IMRAN'S SENTENCE IN TOSHAKHANA CASE, ORDERS RELEASE

Hamza Ameer | Islamabad

In a major relief to Imran Khan, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday suspended the former Prime Minister's sentence in the Toshakhana case and ordered his release from jail. A division bench of the IHC, comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Tariq Mehmood Jahangir, announced the short order, declaring the conviction of in the case as suspended. As per the order, the former premier has been directed to submit surety bond worth 100,000 PKR and a guarantee of at least one person for his release. Addressing mediapersons outside the IHC, Khan's lawyer Babar Awaz said that after suspension of the trial



court verdict, his position as the chief of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party has also been reinstated. "After the suspension of trial court order, Imran Khan can no longer be kept at the

Attock Jail. Also, after the court order, Imran Khan's position as the party chief also stands reinstated. After this, PTI and Imran Khan will move towards elections," Awaz was quoted as saying.

Khan was arrested on August 5 from his Zaman Park residence in Lahore after a trial court issued its verdict in the Toshakhana case, finding the PTI chief guilty of opting to corrupt practices for personal gains using his office and its powers. It sentenced him to three years in jail and imposed a fine of 100,000 PKR. The trial court verdict also added that Khan would serve at least six-months more jail term if he fails to pay the fine. In the wake of Tuesday's verdict, the PTI leadership and supporters are in celebration mode as they termed the decision of the IHC as their victory. However, legal experts say that the IHC has not cancelled Khan's conviction or

disqualification, but has suspended it and issued a bail, adding that trouble was not yet over for the former Prime Minister. "The IHC has suspended Imran Khan's sentence. It has not cancelled the case, nor has it ended the Toshakhana case against him. The suspension of the trial court means that there would be a re-trial into the case and PTI would file an appeal in the same case as well. Therefore, Imran Khan's disqualification and conviction still stands and would be later decided in the re-trial proceedings", said Hafiz Ahsan Ahmed Khokar, a senior advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The IHC verdict is based on the merits of the case and its trial at the session court.

Major outage hit UK air traffic control systems, over 1200 flights cancelled

London | Agencies

Thousands of air passengers have been left stranded after a major outage hit UK air traffic control systems. More than 1,200 flights were reportedly cancelled due to the outage. People are stuck in the UK and abroad after National Air Traffic Services (Nats) on Monday limited the number of planes landing, the BBC reported. Airlines and airports warned there were still "significant delays" despite the issue being fixed within hours. Holidaymakers - many of whom were returning from holidays and due to return to work on Tuesday - were braced for the chaos to continue as airlines struggle to clear the backlog. There have been warnings that some knock-on disruption could last for days. Heathrow said late on Monday evening that schedules remained significantly disrupted, adding that people travelling on Tuesday should contact their airline before heading to the airport, the British news broadcaster reported. Gatwick Airport said it was planning



to operate a normal schedule on Tuesday, but advised passengers to check the status of their flight with their airline before going to the airport. London Luton Airport also said on Monday evening that flights across UK airspace remained subject to delays and cancellation, and people should check with their airline for the status of their flight. Nats confirmed that it had identified and remedied the issue. It said that "it will take some time for flights to return to normal". Several UK airports and airlines including British Airways, Virgin Atlantic and TUI, were hit by delays and cancellations on Monday.

Indian-American dentist admits stealing \$500k Covid relief money

New York | Agencies

A 46-year-old Indian-origin doctor of dental surgery in California has pleaded guilty to stealing \$500,000 Covid-19 relief money and using it for personal expenditures, such as investments. Ranjan Rajbanshi, who ran a dental practice in Bakersfield and Santa Barbara, received over \$850,000 in Covid relief money from the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) from April 2020 through February 2022. He represented to the government that he would only use the relief money for specified business purposes such as facility costs, payroll, and protective equipment for him and his staff, a release by US attorney's office for Eastern District of California stated last week. Rajbanshi subsequently used \$500,000 of the relief money for improper personal expendi-



tures such as investments. He has agreed to pay that money back to the government before his sentencing. He is scheduled to be sentenced by US District Judge Ana de Alba on December 4, and faces a maximum statutory penalty of 10 years in prison and fine of

\$250,000. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of any applicable statutory factors and the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables.

Powerful players expected to arrive in Ukrainian arms market: Defence Ministry

Kiev | Agencies

Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov said that "powerful players" were expected to arrive in the war-torn nation's arms market. Addressing a news conference on Monday, he said: "By the end of this month or at the beginning of September, there will be good news about powerful players arriving on Ukraine's arms market. Several agreements will be signed." Ukraine plans to hold an industrial defense forum around the end of September or the beginning of October, CNN quoted the Minister as saying. "The participation of about 50 powerful players of the arms market is planned," Reznikov added. He further said that Ukraine has "significantly increased the production of domestic weapons", such as 155 mm artillery shells that have already passed tests. "The contract is being executed. The first orders are already in place,



we will immediately transfer them (artillery shells) to the Armed Forces. And we plan to increase the number for their production."

Reznikov noted that while the 125 mm artillery shells are still currently being tested, there are difficulties with producing 122 mm

artillery shells. Ukraine has several missile and anti-missile programs and is discussing "how to use the funds more appropriately in this direction", CNN quoted the Minister as saying. "A lot of money is needed so that these programs can be put into effect in 2024-2025. That's why we are having a discussion: whether to spend money and buy shells now from foreign manufacturers or invest it (at home) and have missiles approximately in a year," he explained. In his nightly address to the nation, President Volodymyr Zelensky echoed Reznikov's comments, noting that Ukraine is "maximising production capacity" of domestic weapons. "Artillery made in Ukraine. Shells made in Ukraine. Drones, missiles, armored vehicles. We are maximising production capacity. Ukraine can do it. Funding is available. Our defence industry will yield better results," Zelensky said.



WARDHA FARMERS JUMP ON SAFETY NET INSIDE MANTRALAYA TO HIGHLIGHT UNMET DEMANDS



Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a shocking form of protest, scores of farmers from Wardha jumped onto the heavy safety-nets installed in the foyer of the Mantralaya, the state government headquarters to press for their long-pending demands, here on Tuesday afternoon. The farmers came inside Mantralaya in small groups, ostensibly

to attend a medical camp set up there, but suddenly started raising slogans against the government, attempted to go and gherao PWD Minister Dada Bhuse and then jumped onto the safety-nets. The farmers also sported black posters with the legend, 'Upper Wardha Action Committee' and said that despite repeated reminders their demands were not accepted.

Their leaders claimed that many of the farmers had given up their lands to the government for the proposed Upper Wardha Dam Project nearly four months ago, but so far have not been paid any compensation as assured. "We have been making rounds of Mantralaya and the concerned departments for several weeks now, but we are not allowed to meet the Chief

Minister Eknath Shinde or the Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar... If the government fails to take action by tomorrow, we shall commit suicide," warned one of the protesting farmers.

The protestors threw leaflets and posters of their demands on the safety-net and then more than two dozen of them jumped on it from the first floor, even as the Mantralaya staffers and others rushed to witness the sensational development.

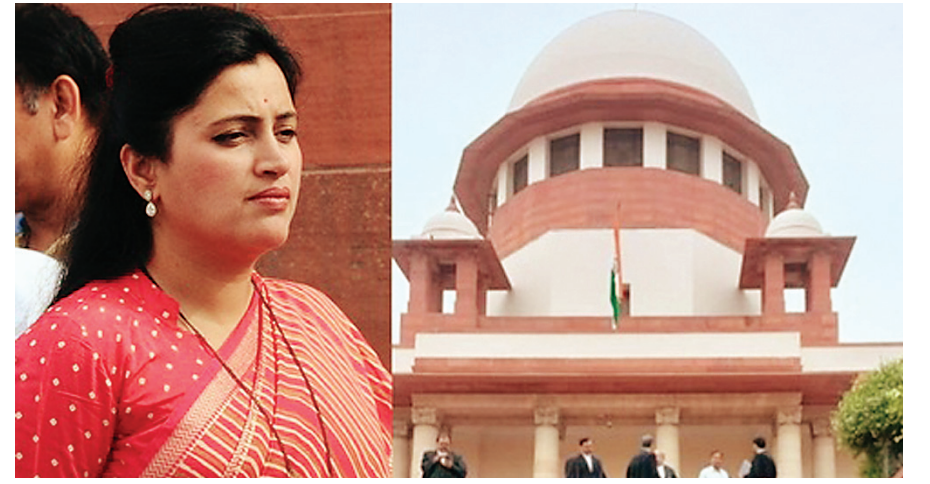
Later, Bhuse went to meet and calm their representatives, while the police came and got down on the safety-nets and removed the farmers one-by-one to safety.

Shiv Sena (UBT)'s farmer face, Kishore Tiwari said that "this is another instance of the present state government's total insensitivity towards the farmers" due to which they are committing suicides almost every day in Maharashtra.

Expressing concerns, Aam Aadmi Party Mumbai President Preeti Sharma-Menon slammed the government on the issue.

"Farmers are doing a risky protest inside Mantralaya. This callous government has failed to provide the promised compensation, it doesn't even bother to address farmers' issues," said Sharma-Menon.

SC defers hearing on plea relating to caste certificate cancellation of Maha MP Navneet Kaur Rana



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday adjourned hearing on a plea filed by Maharashtra's Amravati MP Navneet Kaur Rana against an order of the Bombay High Court which had cancelled her Scheduled Caste certificate.

A bench comprising Justices J.K. Maheshwari and K.V. Vishwanathan fixed the plea for further hearing on September 5. Earlier in June 2021, the Supreme Court had stayed the operation of the Bombay High Court which cancelled her caste certificate

saying it was obtained by using fabricated documents. It had remarked that the High Court ought to have sent the matter back to the committee for fresh consideration.

Complainants, at whose instance the High Court had cancelled Rana's caste certificate, opposed the extension of SC stay order saying that she has been enjoying a stay for two years and continues as a Member of Parliament.

In her special leave petition, Rana pleaded that the terms Mochi and Chamar are synonymous, and the scrutiny committee had decided her caste status based on

original records produced before it.

The High Court had reversed the scrutiny committee's decision on writ petitioners' claim that the vigilance committee had found that documents were fabricated. In its order, the HC had also imposed a cost of Rs 2 lakh, which Rana was to deposit with the Maharashtra Legal Services Authority within two weeks.

Rana, a first-time Member of Parliament (MP), had successfully contested the Amravati Lok Sabha seat in 2019, reserved for Scheduled Castes.

IndiGo flight safely lands at Mumbai airport after engine shutdown

Team Absolute | Mumbai

An IndiGo flight from Madurai landed safely at the Mumbai airport on Tuesday despite one of the aircraft's engines shutting down.

Given that twin-engine planes can safely operate on a single engine, the Airbus A321 safely landed in Mumbai.

"IndiGo flight 6E-2012 operating from Madurai to Mumbai had a technical issue prior to landing in Mumbai. The pilot prioritised the landing in Mumbai. The aircraft is held at Mumbai and will be back in operations after necessary maintenance. We regret the inconvenience caused to the passengers," said the airline spokesperson.

Tuesday's development comes after the aviation regulator, DGCA had said earlier that subsequent to the announcement made by Pratt & Whitney regarding material anomalies on the PW1100G engines worldwide affecting approximately 200 engines, the aerospace



manufacturer issued the Service Instructions (SI) enlisting the serial numbers of the engine series which are required to be removed for performing Angle Ultrasonic Scan Inspection during shop visit and accordingly are required to be removed before September 15.

VP DHANKHAR TO LAUNCH MDL'S P-17A STEALTH FRIGATE 'MAHENDRAGIRI' ON FRIDAY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar will launch the fourth Stealth Frigate of Project-17 Alpha, 'Mahendragiri' being built by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) on Sep. 1 in Mumbai, an official said here on Tuesday.

The fourth and final ship of the Nilgiri Class being constructed by the MDL, the 'Mahendragiri' has been designed by the Indian Navy's Bureau of Naval Design and shall be fitted with advanced state-of-the-art weapons, sensors, communication facilities and other systems.

The first ship in the P-17A 'Nilgiri' was launched in Sep. 2019 and is expected to go for sea trials around mid-2024, the second ship P-17A 'Udaygiri' was launched in May 2022 with sea trials in the second half of 2024, and the third 'Taragiri' was launched in Sep. 2020 with delivery



expected by Aug. 2025.

The keel of 'Mahendragiri' was laid in June 2022, and like the previous versions, is being built with integrated construction methodology.

The P-17A series is valued at a total Rs.27,500 crore and the MDL Mumbai is constructing four of the seven ships in this class.

The 'Mahendragiri' will be around 149 metres long and 16 metres wide, with a displacement of around 6,600

tons and a speed of some 30 knots.

Akin to the other three frigates, the steel used in the Hull construction is indigenously developed DMR 249A, a low-carbon micro-alloy grade steel manufactured by SAIL.

The P-17A ships are far more advanced than any other frigates operated by the Indian Navy and come with powerful weapons and sensor packages which are capable of neutralising threats from three

dimensions - Air, Surface and Sub-surface. The home-designed 'Mahendragiri' shall have state-of-the-art weaponry, sensors, advanced action information system, integrated platform management system, world-class modular living spaces, sophisticated power distribution system and other modern features.

It will be fitted with a supersonic surface-to-surface missile system, and its air defence capability designed to counter enemy aircraft threats and anti-ship cruise missiles will revolve around the vertical launch and long-range surface-to-air missile system. The ship will have two 30-mm rapid-fire guns for close-in-defence capability and an SRGM Gun will provide effective naval gunfire support, plus other 'punches' like an indigenously developed triple tube lightweight torpedo launchers and rocket launchers for anti-submarine operations.

Mumbai Tribunal awards Rs 1.36 crore compensation over road accident death

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) in Mumbai has awarded a compensation of more than Rs1.36 crore to the family of a motorcycle rider killed in a road accident in neighbouring Thane district of Maharashtra in 2018.

In the order passed on August 21, the MACT negated the defence of the offending vehicle's insurance company that the accident occurred due to sole negligence of the deceased rider.

The incident took place in December 2018 on Mumbai-Agra highway at Shahapur in Thane.

The man who died, Arvind Balasubramaniam, worked with an IT company and was going on his motorcycle towards Igatpuri from Thane when a jeep coming from the opposite direction hit his two-wheeler. The man fell on the road due to the impact of the collision and suffered injuries. He was taken to a nearby hospital where doctors declared him dead, his family told the tribunal in their appli-



cation. The dead man's family, including his wife, parents and sister, contended that the accident took place "due to rash and negligent driving" of the offending vehicle's (jeep) driver.

Therefore, they sought a compensation of Rs 2 crore jointly from the vehicle owner and the insurance company. The tribunal negated the insurance company's defence that the accident occurred due to sole negligence of the rider. No cogent evidence to establish this defence has been placed on record, the tribunal said. "The material placed on record indicates that at the relevant time of accident, he (the driver of the jeep) was driving the vehicle in a rash and negligent manner without observing the moving traffic of the road," it said.

Therefore, the owner of the offending vehicle and its insurance company both are jointly and severally liable to pay a compensation of Rs 1.36 crore, plus interest, to the applicants, the tribunal ordered.

Leopard mom, 2 cubs electrocuted in Maha's Gondia, 4 poachers arrested

Team Absolute | Nagpur

A big cat family comprising a mother leopard and her two cubs were electrocuted by live wires laid to kill wild boars in the forests of Maharashtra's Gondia district, officials said here on Tuesday.

The incident came to light when a forest guard in the Deori jungles noticed a stench in the vicinity and informed the local forest officials who rushed there.

A search in the area revealed the three carcasses of the leopard and her cubs which were intact, and electrical wires laid there by some poachers for illegal poaching activities, said a



forest department official.

Teams of the forest officers and local police got cracking and managed to track down eight suspected poachers from surrounding villages of Mehtkhedha and Bhoiyatala.

After interrogation, four were arrested and charged under various sections of the

Indian Forest Act and Wildlife Protection Act.

The accused poachers have confessed that they laid the electric wires to trap and kill wild boars last Saturday but the big cats got ensnared in them and electrocuted.

The forest officials completed the autopsy on the three leopard carcasses which were later cremated after following the due protocols. The official said that an alert will be issued to the forest staff to keep an eye open for more such electric traps that may have been laid by poachers in the nearby forests to prevent such tragedies and also intensify anti-poaching vigil in the region especially at night.

Child marriages increased after lockdown: Maharashtra Women's Panel Chief

Latur | Agencies

Maharashtra Women's Commission chief Rupali Chakankar has said the number of child marriages in the state increased after the lockdown was imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, Ms Chakankar said 37 child marriages were stopped in Latur alone, and cases were registered in connection with two of these incidents.

She, however, did not give figures or a timeframe in connection with her statement on child marriages increasing in Maharashtra. The gram sabhas must pass resolutions to strictly curb child marriages and action must be taken against all those involved, including units that print wedding invites for them, she said.

Chakankar claimed the advent of mobile phones and other forms of technology



created a "communication gap" between parents and children, which may be resulting in girls falling in love and eloping. The police's 'Damini squad' must interact more with girls to protect them, she added. "Some 18,000 complaints from 28 districts have been resolved by the commission under the Mahila Aayog Aplya Dari initiative. On Monday, we received 93 complaints in Latur and three panels will work towards solving them speedily," she said. MLC Vikram Kale, Collector Varsha Thakur-Ghugre, Superintendent of Police Somay Munde, ZP chief executive officer Anmol Sagar were present on the occasion.

Two held for thefts onboard express trains; valuables worth Rs 4.14 lakh recovered

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Government Railway Police (GRP) arrested two persons in connection with a series of thefts onboard express trains and recovered stolen valuables worth Rs 4.14 lakh in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official said on Tuesday.

The GRP's crime branch last week nabbed the accused Dinesh Ganpat Ninave and Santosh Prasannakumar Choudhari, both aged 35, in connection with a theft onboard an express train at Kalyan in May. Following interrogation, the police recovered 51 gm of gold, five mobile phones and a tablet valued at Rs 4.14 lakh from the duo, he said.

The duo were history-sheeters and were involved in five cases of thefts onboard trains, the official added. Meanwhile, last



week, the Government Railway Police had on Wednesday claimed to have detected at least seven cases of thefts on long-distance trains with the arrest of three persons, a release said.

As per the GRP release, someone stole a purse belonging to a family travelling from Madgaon to New Delhi by the Ernakulam-Hazrat Nizamuddin Express on April 12. The purse contained jewellery worth Rs 36,500, it had said.

A special investigation team (SIT) probing into the crime learnt that three persons would target passengers on mail and express trains and that they were in the coastal district of Ratnagiri, the news agency had earlier reported. GRP recently arrested the trio, identified as 28-year-olds Ramishwar Kumar Nandlal Sahani, Khubal Kailas Mahto and Binod Sonaram Mahto, from Ratnagiri and recovered gold jewellery, 17 mobile phones,

a TV and cash worth Rs 8.58 lakh from them, the release said.

With their arrest, the GRP said it detected at least 7 such cases, including four registered at the Panvel railway police station.

The trio also committed thefts on trains within the limits of Ratnagiri rural and Kerala's Thrissur Kottayam districts, the release said.

In another incident earlier this month, the GRP had on August 21 arrested a 23-year-old man for allegedly kidnapping a teenage girl whom he befriended on a social media platform, the GRP had said.

The incident took place at Kalyan station in Maharashtra's Thane district on August 18. The 17-year-old girl was later rescued and the man was arrested on charges of kidnapping her, the GRP had said in a release.

Court denies pre-arrest bail to ex-Mumbai mayor Kishori Pednekar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sessions court here on Tuesday refused anticipatory bail to former Mumbai mayor Kishori Pednekar in a case pertaining to alleged corruption in the purchase of body bags meant for Covid-19 victims.

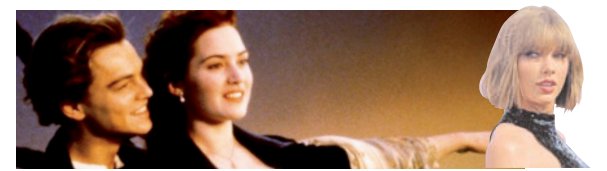
Fearing arrest in the case, the Shiv Sena (UBT) leader earlier this month moved an anticipatory bail application before the court.

Additional sessions judge S B Joshi on Tuesday refused anticipatory bail to Pednekar and two other accused in the case. The city police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) had registered a case against Pednekar and two senior officials of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) under various Indian Penal Code sections, including 420 (cheating) and 120 (B) (criminal conspiracy). The case is linked to Covid-19 centres "scam" allegedly involving



misappropriation of funds in management of health facilities and financial irregularities in purchases of body bags for deceased coronavirus patients, masks and other items by the BMC during the pandemic.

It is based on a complaint filed with the EOW by BJP leader Kirit Somaia last month. Pednekar held the position of mayor from November 2019 to March 2022. In her pre-arrest bail plea, filed through advocate Rahul Arote, the former mayor claimed she has been falsely implicated in the case. Pednekar claimed the complaint against her is tainted with mala fides, politically motivated, and made with an ulterior motive.



Selena Gomez underwent surgery after breaking her hand

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-actress Selena Gomez has had to have surgery after breaking her hand. She shared that she recently suffered an injury and had to undergo an operation but "doesn't care" about the sales of her new single 'Single Soon' and instead insisted she is "happy" just creating music with those closest to her, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Writing in the comments section of a promotional post for her new single, she wrote: "Broke my hand and had surgery. I don't care about selling anything. I'm just happy to make music with my friends."

Gomez did not elaborate any further on her injuries. The song is about plotting how to break up with an ex. However, the former Disney Channel star, who has also had relationships with fellow pop singer Justin Bieber and was briefly linked to former 'One Direction' star Zayn Malik, has shared that the track is not about The Weeknd, whom she dated for 10 months between 2016 and 2017.

The lyrics include, "Should I do it on the phone? Should I leave a little note in the pocket of his coat? Maybe I'll just disappear. I don't want to see a tear. And the weekend's almost here." She goes on, "I know I'm a little high maintenance, but I'm worth a try. Might not give a reason why. We both had a lot of fun, time to find another one. Blame it all on feeling young." Commenting underneath Hollywood Life's article about some of her fans believing it to be aimed at The Weeknd, she wrote, "Couldn't be more false." The chart-topping star, whose last studio album was 2020's

'Rare', shared that she is switching things up with the overall mood of her next project.

Asked if more new tunes are on the way following the release of the single from her Apple TV+ documentary of the same name,

'Selena Gomez: My Mind & Me', Selena said on 'The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon', "That's accurate. Finally."

Adele reveals plans to have children with fiancé Rich Paul

Los Angeles | Agencies

English pop star Adele has revealed that she has already planned to have children with her fiancé Rich Paul, hoping to start a family together soon, admitting that she has already chosen a number of names for their unborn baby.

"The Easy on Me singer", who shares 10-year-old son Angelo with her ex-husband Simon Konicek - said she and fiancé Rich Paul plan to have a baby together very "soon" mirror.co.uk reported.

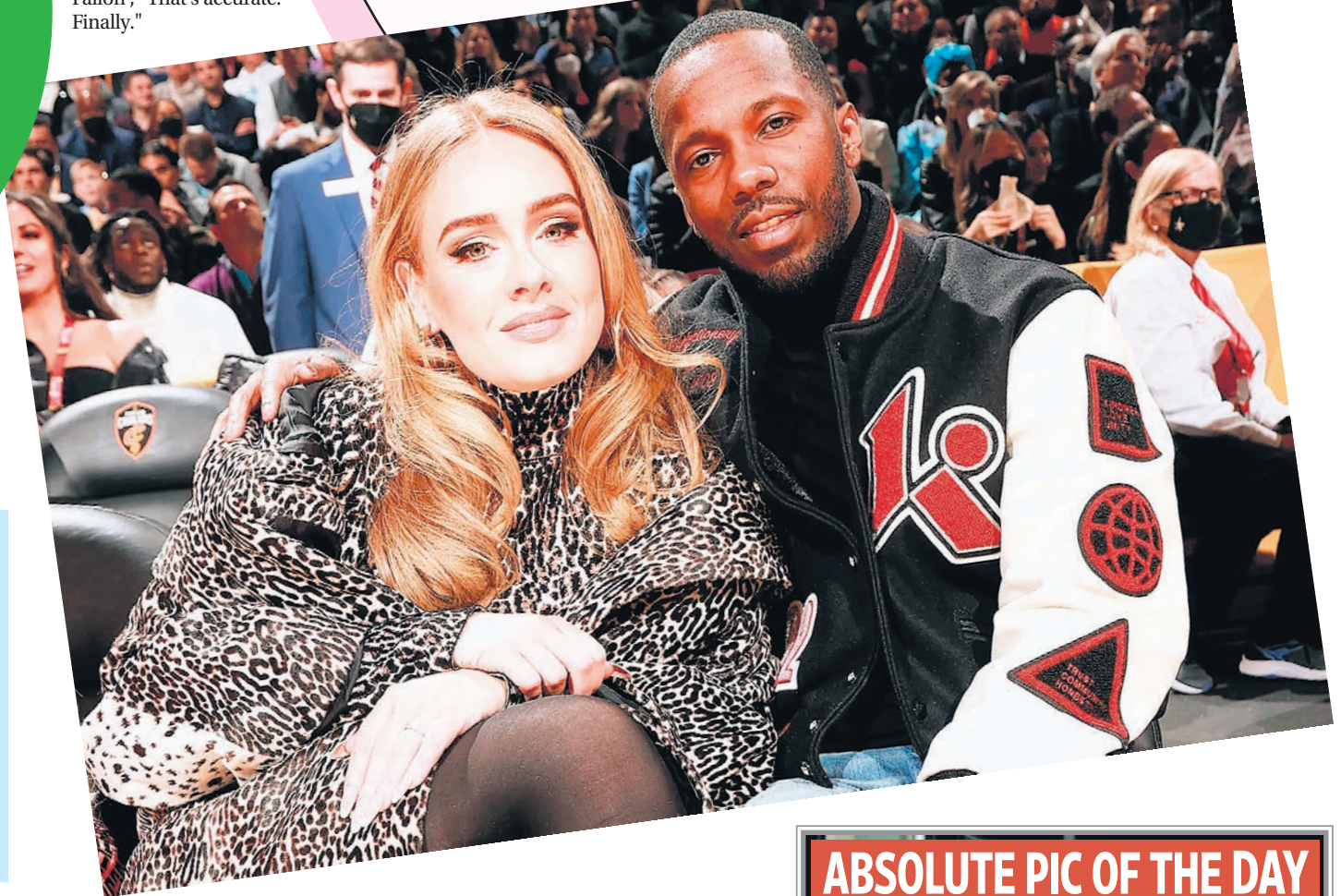
During a recent concert amid her hit Las Vegas residency, Adele shared her hopes of expanding her family as she stopped the show to speak to a pregnant fan who was having difficulty choosing a name for her unborn child. Adele gushed over the pregnant woman as she told her that she often writes down baby names on her notes app on her phone amid hopes of having another child soon.

While speaking to the pregnant fan, Adele said, "I really want to be a mum again soon, so every time I see a name I like, I write it down on my phone." To which the fan replied: "We have two names and we've been going back and forth. I can't, for the life of me, decide. I like boy names for girls. The first name is Parker or Spencer."

After hearing the options, Adele replied: "I can't say Parker because Rich likes that name. I'll say Spencer. I love Ray for a girl as well, spelled like the boy's name."

This is not the first time that Adele has discussed her dream of being a mum again. Last year she appeared on The Graham Norton Show and said she'd love to have a second baby in 2023.

At the time, she told BBC viewers: "I want a baby next year. I have plans for next year. I have plans. Imagine if I have to cancel the shows because I'm having a baby."



POP VETERAN CHER SCRAPS BIOPIC, STARTS PROJECT FROM SCRATCH



Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-actress Cher is re-writing her biopic because it "wasn't working out."

The 77-year-old pop veteran has been developing a movie based on her life for two years, but the project has now been scrapped and she is starting from scratch so she can make some changes to ensure the film is exactly how she wants it, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"We are kind of starting again. It just wasn't working out, and we needed to adjust some of the things," she told The Hollywood Reporter.

However, the film is going to face further delays because work can't resume until after the strikes by the writers and actors unions which have brought Hollywood to a standstill. Cher added, "We're going to have to wait (until after the strikes). I'm not going to go against my people."

When asked whether the film is going to be a "jukebox musical" which showcases her hits, Cher insisted she still hasn't decided which direction to go in.

She explained, "I can never decide what I want to do. The thing about my life is that there's too much. It's hard to capture it and all the things I've done. So it's really a lot. The biggest problem is trying to get the story into a decent time period."

The singer previously confirmed she was working on the biopic alongside producers Judy Craymer and Gary Goetzman - the team behind 2008 ABBA movie-musical "Mamma Mia!" and its sequel "Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again" which featured Cher in a supporting role.

'Rebel Moon' team is glad that film did not end up being a 'Star Wars' IP

Los Angeles | Agencies

Director Zack Snyder, who is currently focused on releasing his upcoming sci-fi epic film 'Rebel Moon', had in fact earlier intended the movie to be a part of the 'Star Wars' universe. However, the movie became its own thing eventually, and the team behind 'Rebel Moon' have said they are glad the film did not end up becoming a 'Star Wars' IP.

Zack Snyder had originally conceived 'Rebel Moon' as a 'Seven Samurai' inspired 'Star Wars' movie that he pitched to Lucasfilm shortly after Disney acquired the studio in 2012 for \$4.05 billion.

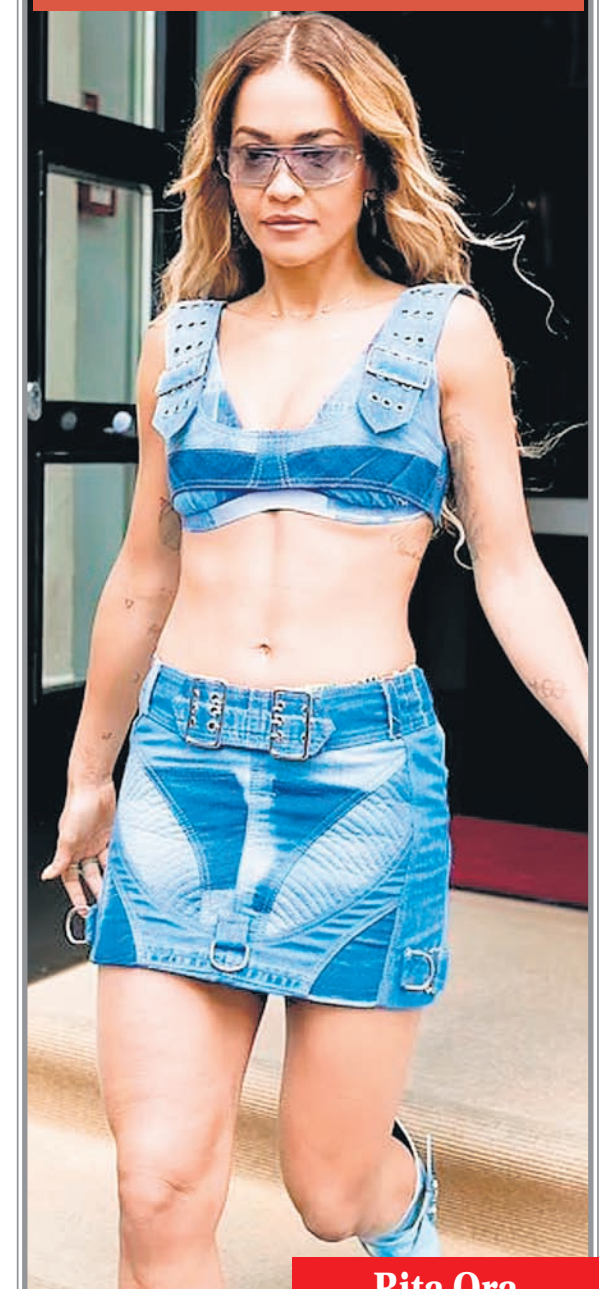
The director wanted to create original characters and he pushed for an R-rated script, which ultimately led 'Rebel Moon' to become its own property outside of the 'Star Wars' franchise after being deemed to be too dark and melancholic.

According to 'Variety', Deborah Snyder recalled "Once, it was a 'Star Wars' film, and I never wanted it to be. I remember, I said to Zack, 'I just feel like your hands are going to be tied so much in what that IP is,' even though it kind of lived outside of it. So I was kind of happy when that fell apart, because I always felt like it was better."

"We learned so much with all our years working with the superheroes and creating those worlds, and to do something now that's wholly original... we say it's a science fantasy more than science fiction, and to take all those skills that Zack has been honing, and to do something in this space, just seemed really exciting," Deborah added.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Rita Ora



Asia Cup 2023

ACTION STARTS WITH PAKISTAN TAKING ON DEBUTANTS NEPAL

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The wait will finally be over after days of ifs and buts, with Pakistan and Nepal kickstarting the proceedings in the Asia Cup 2023 in Multan on Wednesday.

The first match of the competition, which is being held, for the first time, in two different countries -- Pakistan and Sri Lanka -- because of geo-political considerations as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) refused to send its team across the border to play in Pakistan.

Thus Pakistan, with an enviable bowling lineup, will kickstart its campaign in Match No.1 of the continental event at the Multan Cricket Stadium in Pakistan on Wednesday, while India will play their matches in various venues in Sri Lanka.

Never before has the Asia Cup been co-hosted. But after the BCCI refused to send its team to Pakistan, the ACC (Asian Cricket Council), was forced to find this unique solution.

Though some of the PCB officials expressed their dissatisfaction, it was to no avail as this seemed the only



way to salvage the tournament.

Now the stage is set and players are eagerly waiting to test their skills ahead of the ICC ODI World Cup scheduled later this year.

For the Asia Cup, the teams have been divided into two groups comprising three teams each, playing in a round-robin cycle, set to compete for the prized trophy.

The top two teams from each group will qualify for the Super-Four stage, followed by the top of each group to play the final on September 15 in Colombo. India, Nepal, and Pakistan are placed in Group A, whereas Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka are in Group B.

A total of 13 games will be played throughout the tournament. The

group stage matches will be played between August 30 to September 5, with three games being played in Pakistan, and the rest in Sri Lanka.

The Super-Four Stage will be played between September 6 to 15, with five being played in Sri Lanka and one game in Pakistan. The final will be hosted at R. Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on September 17. Team Nepal will play for the first time, marking their debut in the tournament. They qualified by winning the inaugural ACC Men's Premier Cup 2023, in which they overcame the United Arab Emirates in the final by seven wickets.

The Asia Cup was started way back in 1984 in the ODI format. However, the recent edition has been played in both ODI and T20I formats.

India is the most-crowned team in the tournament with seven titles (6 ODI and 1 T20), Sri Lanka are second with six titles (5 ODI and 1 T20I) and Pakistan have won the title twice.

The much-anticipated match between the two arch-rival teams, Pakistan and India will be played on September 2.

BWF World Rankings

Prannoy soars to career-best sixth position, Sindhu moves to 14th

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Riding on his superb performance in the World Championship, ace Indian shuttler Prannoy H.S. achieved a career-best world ranking as he reached No.6 in the latest chart released by the Badminton World Federation (BWF) on Tuesday.

After pocketing a bronze, his first-ever medal in World Championships, at Copenhagen recently, Prannoy climbed up three spots to achieve his new career-high rank with 72437 points in the men's singles category. Prannoy, who stunned the Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen in the quarterfinals in the World Championship, is the lone Indian featuring in the top 10 in the men's singles list.

The 31-year-old reached two finals this year. He won his first BWF title this May at Malaysia Masters and finished runner-up at the Australian Open after an epic, intense three-game battle against China's Weng



Hong Yang earlier this month. Among the other Indian shuttlers, Lakshya Sen dropped a place to the No. 12 after his third-round exit from the World Championships while Kidambi Srikanth maintained his position at 20th, despite making an early exit at the World Championship.

In women's singles, former world champion P.V. Sindhu moved one place up to 14th position following her first-round exit from the World

Championship. In top men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty held onto their second place, despite their quarterfinal defeat in the World Championship against Kim Astrup-Anders Rasmussen.

The women's doubles pair of Tressia Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand gained two spots to be placed 17th in the world rankings after their pre-quarterfinal finish at the World Championship.

US advances to round of 16, China suffers setback in FIBA World Cup

Manila | Agencies

The US secured a spot in the round of 16 at the FIBA World Cup with a dominant 109-81 victory over Greece in a Group C clash, while China suffered another setback, facing an 89-69 defeat against South Sudan.

In its first game last Saturday, the US overcame a 10-point deficit to claim a comfortable 99-72 win against New Zealand. Greece also had a smooth victory, defeating Jordan 92-71, reports Xinhua.

The US has won four of its last five encounters with Greece in the World Cup, with Greece's only victory occurring in the 2006 semi-finals. These teams also met in the most recent tournament, where the US won by a 16-point margin.



Without key player Giannis Antetokounmpo, the European side was clearly outmatched. The US outscored Greece 50-37 in the first half and continued their dominance afterwards.

Austin Reaves, shooting guard for the Los Angeles Lakers, earned his second consecutive MVP award with 15 points, five rebounds, and six assists. In Group C, New

Zealand needed overtime to overcome Jordan 95-87. Rondae Hollis Jefferson scored a game-high 39 points, but it wasn't enough to prevent Jordan from suffering its second consecutive defeat.

Spain advanced to the next round alongside the US by defeating Brazil 96-78, extending their superior head-to-head record.

Novak Djokovic makes a stunning return to US Open, gains World No.1 spot

New York | Agencies

Novak Djokovic made a stunning comeback to the US Open after he was denied the calendar grand slam in the 2021 final by the Russian Daniil Medvedev.

In his opening-round encounter on Monday night against Frenchman Alexandre Muller, Djokovic displayed a sheer governing performance at the Arthur Ashe Stadium with a 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 scoreline.

With the win, he regained his top spot at the ATP World Rankings from defending US Open Champion Carlos Alcaraz on September 11, when Djokovic will start a record-extending 390th week at the top.

He celebrated this win pleasantly and stated in his on-court interview, "The first set I started tremendously well off the box. We started quite late. Obviously, there was a ceremony between matches and I knew that we might have a late start, but neverthe-



less, I was excited to come out on the court." It's been a couple of years, and to come out here in front of you

guys is always an honor and a pleasure here on Arthur Ashe," he added. The dominance on the court that

Djokovic showed was pretty evident to all, especially to former American President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama who enjoyed his game till the end.

Djokovic will be eyeing his 4th US Open title in his 10th appearance and also to make his third career appearance in the final of all four Slams during the same season (2021 and 2015).

The World No. 76 Spaniard Bernabe Zapata Miralles, who upset NCAA champion Ethan Quinn of the United States 6-4, 6-4, 6-3, will meet Djokovic in the second round.

Djokovic also expressed his respect towards Zapata Miralles, "He's a clay-court specialist but over the years all these guys learn how to play on the hard courts."

"There's no easy opponent, obviously I respect everyone. I don't underestimate anybody and try to give my best. Hopefully, I can get another win in a few days."

Sports Minister Anurag Thakur launches several digital initiatives on National Sports Day

Team Absolute | New Delhi

On the occasion of National Sports Day 2023, Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur felicitated the 4x400m men's relay team that set an Asian record at the World Athletics Championships held at Budapest.

The Minister also launched an Information booklet on Sports Infrastructure Projects sanctioned under the Khelo India Scheme as well as a National Sports Federations portal.

He also launched the third edition of the Fit India Quiz, among other initiatives, at an event at the JLN Stadium here on Tuesday.

The event was attended by almost 500 schoolchildren from New Delhi as well as several elite athletes and officials from the MYAS, SAI and the National Sports Federations.



Addressing the event, Thakur said, "The Wizard of Hockey, Major Dhyan Chand gave us three consecutive Olympic gold medals in hockey in 1928, 1932, and 1936. This is a fitting day for tribute to this great maestro and I'm happy to observe that over the years, coaches and athletes have also played a big role in taking this sporting revolution forward. Coaches and athletes play a big role. "There are 3526 events happening

today across India and that's a testament of the road to which we have come today. This is an unbelievable phase for Indian sports. In 60 years, there were only 18 medals at the World University Games.

"This year itself, we won 26 medals in the tournament, across all sports. Be it Praggnanandha in chess to Antim Panghal in wrestling and Aditi Gopichand Swami in archery, we are getting phenomenal results.

"In the World Athletics Championships Budapest too, our 4x400m relay team gave a great display, along with Parul Chaudhary as well as our evergreen Neeraj Chopra, who has not got gold in every possible high-scale international competition in the sport," the Minister added.

Commenting on the Fit India Quiz, Thakur said, "I was amazed to see that students from the Tenga valley of Arunachal participated in the Fit India Quiz, along with remote locations in Andaman, Sikkim and so on. They were the top teams in the quiz."

The National Sports Federations portal launched on Tuesday is in line with the Government of India's vision for Digital India.

It is a unified online portal for the NSFs which shall be a single window system for processing of annual renewal of recognition of NSFs, elections of National Sports Federations etc.

ODI cricket has always brought the best out of me: Virat Kohli

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Star India batter Virat Kohli has expressed his deep affinity for one-day cricket, emphasising how the format rigorously tests a player's all-around skills while highlighting the technical challenges, strategic decision-making, and adaptability required throughout the game.

In the realm of 50-over cricket, Kohli boasts an exceptional track record. His ODI journey is adorned with an impressive tally of 46 centuries. The 34-year-old scored 427 runs across the 10 ODIs he played in 2023, maintaining an average of 53.37, including the high score of 166 not out.

Speaking to Star Sports, Kohli said ODI cricket has always brought the best out in him as it compels him to embrace challenges and adapt my play to the situation to help the team win. "I love playing ODI cricket. I think for me, ODI cricket is probably the one format that tests your game completely. Your technique, composure, patience, playing the situation, and playing differently in different phases of the game. So, I think it tests you as a batsman completely, and I feel that ODI



cricket has always brought the best out of me because I like to embrace that challenge and play according to the situation to help my team win. "I have always tried to do that, so yeah, as I said, it gives me an opportunity to test myself regularly, all aspects of my batting, and that's why I really enjoy playing ODI cricket," said Kohli.

On the other hand, former India cricketer Mohammad Kaif discussed Kohli's remarkable performance in recent tournaments, particularly against Pakistan.

He praised Kohli's ability to take charge during chases, noting his substantial impact during the T20 World Cup in Australia.

The brilliance of Lamine Yamal: 16-year-old is already deciding matches for FC Barcelona

Team Absolute | New Delhi

At just 16 years and 45 days, Lamine Yamal became the youngest player to provide an assist in a LALIGA EA SPORTS game in the 21st century, which earned a standing ovation from the Villarreal CF fans.

Sunday afternoon's LALIGA EA SPORTS duel between Villarreal CF and FC Barcelona was a thriller, which finished 4-3 to the Catalan side and which featured so many world-class players. There was the World Cup winner Juan Foyth, the reigning Pichichi Robert Lewandowski, the current Zamora Trophy holder Marc-Andre ter Stegen, the two-time Zarra Trophy recipient Gerard Moreno, the former Golden Boy Gavi... yet the MVP of the match was 16-year-old Lamine Yamal, making just his fourth appearance for FC Barcelona's first team. Lamine Yamal was simply spectacular at the Estadio de la Ceramica. The La Masia

graduate had already impressed on the right wing in Los Blaugrana's matches against Getafe CF and Cadiz CF and he was given another start by coach Xavi Hernandez. The coach's faith in the youngster immediately paid off, as Lamine Yamal assisted Gavi for the opening goal with a perfect cross just 12 minutes in.

With that assist, and given his age of just 16 years and 45 days, Lamine Yamal became the youngest footballer to provide an assist in a LALIGA EA SPORTS game in the 21st century, taking that record from his teammate Ansu Fati, who'd provided his first assist aged 16 years and 318 days.

Despite entering the history books in the opening stanza of the match, Lamine Yamal was only just getting started. He also completed all three of his dribble attempts in the game, found his target with 34 of his 37 passes (92%), won a pair of freekicks, made one tackle, pinched one interception and hit the woodwork twice.

UNITED STATES WINS BIG, STARS SHINE AT WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP

Budapest | Agencies

Stars like sprinter Noah Lyles and pole vaulter Armand Duplantis and long-distance runner Faith Kipyegon showcased their abilities as the World Athletics Championships concluded here on Sunday, with the United States emerging as the biggest winner.

The tournament, consisting of 49 events, unfolded over nine scorching days in Budapest. The U.S. team secured an impressive 29 medals, including 12 gold. Their dominance extended beyond sprint races, as they also held a firm grip on throwing events. In the men's 4x100m relay final on Saturday, the 26-year-old Lyles delivered a sensational fourth-leg run, clinching three gold medals and solidifying his position as the Championships' most prolific athlete, reports Xinhua.

On Friday, Lyles clinched his third consecutive world title in the 200m event, becoming the first man since Jamaican legend Usain Bolt in 2015 to achieve the 100m and 200m double at the World



Championships.

Lyles' teammates also shone: Ryan Crouser defended his title in the men's shot put, while Chase Ealey mirrored this feat in the women's event. Lauluga ausaga stunned the competition by improving her personal best by over four metres,

securing gold in the women's discus throw. Lyles openly shared his ambition to enhance athletics' popularity, recognising that achieving greatness is crucial to realising his broader goals.

Duplantis, a role model for Lyles, remained a force to be reckoned with. The 23-year-old Swede maintained his winning streak for four years, with just one loss on record. In Budapest, he successfully defended his Olympic title and persistently challenged his own world record of 6.22m.

Yulimar Rojas also captivated the audience. Despite initially being in eighth place with a jump of 14.33m in the women's triple jump final, the world record holder and Olympic champion showcased her magic with a final jump of 15.08m, securing her fourth consecutive world title.

In the long-distance races, Faith Kipyegon of Kenya stood out, triumphing in both women's 1,500m and 5,000m.

Spain's Alvaro Martin and Maria Perez both secured double victories in the race-walking events, enabling Spain to sweep all four titles.



SRK rocks out dance floor with Nayanthara



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Just days ahead of the release of the official trailer for 'Jawan', Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan has released the full version of the song 'Not Ramaiya Vastavaiya' in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu. The upbeat dance track sees King Khan rocking it out on the stage alongside south superstar Nayanthara.

The song features booming production with great sound design,

letting all the instruments shine though there is a specific focus on the bass which is by far the loudest. Mixing up electronic, techno, film music, EDM, a bit of folk and even the flair of item numbers, 'Not Ramaiya Vastavaiya' is a pure dance on the floor track.

SRK is seen dancing on the floor with actress Nayanthara and a bunch of other backup dancers really going at it, just having fun and is in a pure mood for joy, celebration and bring-the-house-down kind of partying, dancing

with all the vigour and passion of a young man.

The track is further amplified by all the charm, attitude, vigour and swag that King Khan brings to the dance floor, showing that while he may appear to be aging, he is truly 'Jawan' both in spirit and style. As such, he suits the title of the film as well. 'Not Ramaiya Vastavaiya' has the modern touch given to the iconic track from Raj Kapoor's legendary film 'Shree 420' but is still very much its own entity, and rather than being just a remix,

remake it is something else entirely.

So when titled 'Not Ramaiya Vastavaiya' it is aptly titled so, because while it pays a strong tribute to an all time classic, it is still a new song and a very enjoyable one at that which is guaranteed to be a chartbuster.

Packing in all the swag, groove and attitude, SRK has brought the perfect dance track which only makes people more hyped for the trailer of 'Jawan' which will be releasing on August 31.

Sushmita on 'Rakshabandhan': It's a celebration where you embrace 'imperfect' bond

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress Sushmita Sen shared her thoughts about her on-screen brother-sister bond with Ankur Bhatia, portrayed in 'Aarya', saying Rakshabandhan is a celebration where you embrace 'imperfect' bond, promise to be each other's strength in tough times

From having each other's backs to fighting over the silliest things, brother-sister bond experiences all emotions possible. One such complex aspect of the relationship we witnessed in the fan-favorite series 'Aarya'. While Aarya (Sushmita) and Sangram (Ankur) do not share the perfect brother-sister relationship, the love and care for one another remain unwavered.

Opening up about the same, Sushmita said: "Sibling relationships are very difficult to put into words. They fight, they make-up, they fight again, it's a vicious cycle that we all enjoy going through. The bond between Aarya and Sangram is not the ideal one but what I love about their relationship is that they have accepted their bitter relationship and not let go of the love they have for each other; that's exactly what Rakshabandhan stands for."

"A celebration where you embrace this imperfect bond and promise to be each other's strength in tough times," added the actress.

'Aarya' is a crime-thriller drama co-created by Ram Madhvani and Sandeep Modi, who also directed the series, with Vinod Rawat, serving as the co-director. Produced by Madhvani under the banner Ram Madhvani Films, along with Endemol Shine Group, it stars Sushmita in the titular role, and is based on the Dutch drama series 'Penzo'. It is streaming on Disney+ Hotstar.

On the work front, Sushmita was recently seen in 'Taali', which throws light on the trials and tribulations of Shreegauri Sawant's (played by Sushmita) life - her daring transformation from Ganesh to Gauri, and the discrimination she was subjected to because of that, her fearless journey towards motherhood, and the audacious battle that led to the inclusion and identification of the third gender on every official document in India.

Created by Arjun Singh Baran and Kartik D Nishandar, and directed by Ravi Jadhav, 'Taali' is a story of courage and change. It is streaming on JioCinema.

AAMIR KHAN TO RETURN TO ACTING WITH CHRISTMAS RELEASE IN 2024



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan is all set to make a comeback into acting with a yet-untitled film, which has been locked for Christmas 2024 and will be clashing with Akshay Kumar's 'Welcome 3'.

Film trade analyst Taran Adarsh took to X, formerly called X, where he announced the film. He even shared that the pre-production of the film is ongoing and it goes on floors on 20 January, 2024.

"#Xclusiv... AAMIR KHAN LOCKS CHRISTMAS 2024 FOR NEXT FILM... Aamir Khan Productions' Prod No. 16 [not titled yet], starring #AamirKhan in the lead role, to release on 20 Dec 2024 #Christmas2024. Pre-production of the film is ongoing and the film goes on floors on 20 Jan 2024... More details to follow soon," Adarsh tweeted.

Aamir hit the pause button from acting after the debacle of 'Laal Singh Chaddha'. The actor had also said at a press event during the trailer launch of Punjabi film 'Carry On Jatta 3':

"I haven't decided to do any film as of now. I want to spend time with my family right now. I'm feeling good about it because that's what I want to do right now. I'll do a film when I'm emotionally ready, for sure."

Akshay's 'Welcome 3' is reportedly titled as 'Welcome To The Jungle'. It will reportedly star Sanjay Dutt, Arshad Warsi, Suniel Shetty, Disha Patani, and Jacqueline Fernandez. It will also have Raveena Tandon.

I'm passionate about my health and fitness, as I am about my career: Navneet Malik

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Fitness and a healthy lifestyle are a way of life for model and actor Navneet Malik. He is passionate about his health and fitness, as he is about his career and craft. Navneet wouldn't compromise on his fitness and a healthy lifestyle for anything or almost anything.

"For fitness, I try to wake up early in the morning around 4-4:30 am, and try to finish my fitness routine like yoga and meditation very early in the morning. I try to own my first two-three hours of the day, everyday. And that's how I maintain my fitness," Navneet said. He said: "I'm as passionate about my health and fitness as I am about my career and craft. So, whether I need to gain weight for a portrayal or lose it to be in ship shape again, I do it all with all my might."

Did he always wanted to be an actor?

Navneet, who is known for his appearances in projects like 'Heropanti 2', and 'Love Hostel' said: "No, I never thought of being an actor. I started my career with a job as a civil engineer in Delhi, and then I turned into a model, then a supermodel and did all big brands in India, and represented our country internationally. And then I got inclined towards acting."

"I started grooming myself, working on my craft, taking workshops, and theatre. Eventually it happened, but I never thought of it. But I am loving it right now, where I am and doing right now. It's like this is meant to happen," he concluded.

On the work front, Navneet will be next seen playing the negative role of Mohsin in the riveting thriller series 'The Freelancer'. Helmed by Mohit Raina, the extraction series is directed by Bhav Dhulia, produced by Friday Storytellers and Neeraj Pandey is the creator and showrunner.



Abhishek Banerjee shares what he loves about working in crime thrillers

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Abhishek Banerjee, who is receiving a lot of positive response to his work in the recently released streaming crime thriller series 'Aakhri Sach', has shared that the thrill of knowing about the complexities of the human mind through the characters in a thriller always amazes him.

Abhishek said: "While working on a thriller, you are curious about the human mind itself as an actor because it's not always a twisted mind that commits a crime. Sometimes a perfectly sane person too can commit a crime in a fit of rage."

He went on to explain it with an example of a war which calls for soldiers at loggerheads to shoot at each other, under the orders from war strategists.

"Suddenly, a war takes place and people who were quite normal start shooting each other on the battlefield. For me as an actor, it's the fun of knowing other human beings and what makes them commit a crime," he added.

'Aakhri Sach' which also stars Tamannaah Bhatia as an investigating officer on a case which involves the suicide committed by 11 members of a family, is currently available to stream on Disney+ Hotstar.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Neeti Mohan