



MP SHINES IN SETTING UP E-GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

MADHYA PRADESH HAS WON AS MANY AS 23 NATIONAL E-GOVERNANCE AWARDS SINCE 2007

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Encouraged by the Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's initiatives for ease of living with IT-based governance systems and practices, many departments have come out with innovative practices immensely benefitting the targeted stakeholders. Many of them have been nationally acclaimed for replicability and universality in context of identical socio-economic contexts of states. Initiatives like integrated treasuries computerization in 2007, tele-Bhugtan at collectorate at Jabalpur in 2008, Forest Dwellers Survey System and mponline in 2010, Samagra portal, panch-parmeshwar portal, Indore 311 App, State's Pension Portal Online social security schemes management system, MP ShramSeva portal, SARSH- a special project for assisting, rehabilitating and strengthening the handicapped - A Touch for persons with disabilities, State School Education Portal, automated metering project and fire alert and messaging system etc. have won appreciation at national level. Recently Bhopal Smart City Development Corporation Limited, Madhya Pradesh received Silver Award for Water SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) project. This aims to develop centralized system that enables real-time monitoring, control, and data management of water treatment plants, pump houses, and storage reservoirs, ensuring efficient water supply, accurate measurements, and effective energy management. Configurable alarms alert operators to abnormal conditions, ensuring prompt responses and minimizing risks. Integration with hardware components enhances communication and transforms



manual management into a modern electronic system are the key features. Benefiting population of Bhopal District and also supporting Bhopal Municipal Corporation. In 2021, Indore 311 Application initiative got the award in the category of district level initiative for e-governance. This application has played an important role in making Indore number one in cleanliness. Indore-311 is the easiest way to raise your concerns around such issues and influence the respective authorities to have them resolved. Indore-311 is a voice raising platform for Indore citizens to report civic issues, and governments to analyse, track, manage, and resolve. The goal is to make Indore better through transparency, collaboration, and co-operation and thus better crowd sourced. It is notably a grievance redressal platform but also used for getting many citizen-centric services like Birth, Death, Marriage certificate, The Panch Parmeshwar portal won Gold in 2018. So far Innovative Use of Technology in e-Governance ICT for Excellence in Sports won Silver Award by Directorate of Sports and Youth Welfare. ANMOL State Adoption Resource Agency, Bhopal won Innovative Use of Technology in e-Governance category. ANMOL is the country's first

state level e-initiative for monitoring children residing in Specialised Adoption Agency (SAA) across various centres. ANMOL is a single window centre that provides information on the status of children, procedure for adoption, informs parents about their status on waiting list, provides information on availability of children according to their needs and tracks children status by gender. Monitoring of special cases and target monitoring is now possible. The School Education Portal is a comprehensive portal designed as an integrated e-Governance System for enhancing the performance of school-education sector by providing proactive, transparent & accountable governance and bringing perceptible systemic improvements to implement the objects and requirements of RTE Act, 2009 and fulfill the spirit of the RTI Act, 2005. The portal leveraged use of ICT to facilitate Process Re-engineering that was necessary for managing and administering the department in a manner so as to ensure better services and response to the large number of beneficiaries, stakeholders & partners and enhancing the quality of education by responsive and transparent governance. The portal facilitates control, supervision & ensuring the compliance of Government Instructions and has brought transparency with community ownership. Other initiatives recognized for innovative use of IT for effective pro-people e-governance include integrated geomatics based application for planning rural road connectivity to habitations, Tele Samadhan call centre for citizen facilitation and grievances redressal, Jan Mitra Samadhan Kendra, Gwalior, Automated Building Plan Approval System, SMS based failed distribution transformer information and management system.

FIR against ex-CM Digvijaya Singh in MP over 'misleading' social media post

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Member of the right-wing group Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has lodged a complaint against former chief minister Digvijaya Singh over his social media post regarding Jain pilgrimage Kundalpur in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district. Police said that a complaint has been received against the Rajya Sabha MP for his social media post, and the complainant Sambhu Vishwakarma (a member of VHP) has accused him of sharing misleading information. On the basis of the complaint, an investigation was conducted which found that Singh's social media post was misleading. "The user of the social media account (Digvijaya Singh) has been booked under Section 153-A, 177, 505 (2) of IPC. Our further investigation is underway and an action would be initiated as per law," Damoh SP Abhishek Tiwari told the media persons on Wednesday. No such incident had taken place, he added. On Sunday, Digvijaya Singh posted a message on his social media account mentioning



that a group of Bajrang Dal activists with Lord Shiva's 'pind' demonstrating at Kundalpur the Jain temple. Singh has raised apprehension saying the investigation needs to be done to avoid any untoward incident at the famous Jain shrine. "In Kundalpur, a famous Jain pilgrimage area of Damoh district, some workers of Bajrang Dal are sitting with 'pind' and creating ruckus, which the Chief Minister should take cognisance of. The situation can take a serious turn anytime," Singh has posted this message on his social media post on August 28.

Contractor stages protest outside Shivraj's residence, says was asked to pay 50% commission

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Gwalior-based couple on Wednesday sat in protest on a road outside Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's residence here on Wednesday, claiming they were fed up with the alleged 50 per cent commission being sought by government officials. Identifying himself as Sanjay Mishra, the man said he had worked as a civil contractor in Gwalior. However, his bill, which stood around Rs 13 lakh, was not cleared by the Public Works Department (PWD) of the state government. "When I asked for clearance of the bill, PWD officials demanded 50 per cent commission. I had written to CM Chouhan around four months back but no response was received. Today, I along with my wife, came to Bhopal to meet CM Chouhan but the police barred our entry. Hence, we



are sitting outside," Mishra said in a video message. He also threatened that if his dues were not cleared in the next four-five days, he along with his wife would be forced to end their lives. As the alleged 50 per cent commission matter had been a main weapon

of the Congress to target the ruling BJP in the run up to the Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, the Opposition found yet another opportunity to target the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government. Reacting to the development, Congress Madhya Pradesh unit pres-

ident Kamal Nath said: "The 50 per cent commission issue has now crossed all limits. Today, a contractor from Gwalior is sitting on a dharna along with his wife outside the Chief Minister's residence. Earlier, a contractor from Gwalior had written a letter to the High Court alleging 50 per cent commission. But, the Shivraj government became active against those who raised their voice, instead of providing justice to the people," a social media post by Kamal Nath read. The post further added that Shivraj Chouhan had protected criminals involved in the Vyapam scam, and no action was taken till around 50 innocent people died suspiciously and the Supreme Court intervened. "This 50 per cent commission matter is now becoming a life-threatening menace for the honest contractors and officers of Madhya Pradesh," it added.

3 Dead, Several Injured After Bus Collides With Pick-Up Truck In Seoni

Team Absolute | Seoni

Three individuals lost their lives in a road accident occurred in Seoni near Sahasna village, after a bus collided with a pickup truck on Wednesday. The pickup truck, carrying three passengers, collided with a bus that was traveling from Bhopal to Mandla. The impact of the collision was severe, leading to the unfortunate deaths of the three individuals in the pickup truck. The identities of the deceased have not yet been released. In addition to the fatalities, several passengers on the bus sus-



tained injuries in the accident. Immediate medical attention was provided to the injured, and they were transported to the Lakhnadaun hospital for treatment. Local authorities were present at the accident site to manage the situation. An investigation into the cause of the collision has been initiated to determine the factors that led to this tragic incident.

CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan plants Karanj, Kadamba and Gulmohar saplings

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted saplings of Karanj, Kadamba and Gulmohar in the Smart City Park in Shyamla Hills. CM Chouhan and the citizens present on the occasion also offered Shramdaan along with plantation. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, members of "Think and Support Foundation", public participation committee members of colleges, NCC officers, NCC cadets etc. also planted saplings. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan today retired IAS officer S.S. Uppal, Anil Kant, Sukanya Sharma Smriti Sen,



Harsh Bansal, Akash Mishra, Chhaya Kushwaha, Kishore Gurwani, Sushri Rashi, Gunjan, Rashmi, Shubhshri, Deepshikha Trivedi, Alpna Sharma, Vimla Tiwari, Manoj Katare, Barelal Ahirwar, Sanjay Jain, Khilan Singh, Tej Singh Thakur, Shivam Mishra, Sushri Samta Jain and Dhara Jain etc. also planted saplings.

GIRLS AND SISTERS TIE RAKSHA SUTRA TO GOVERNOR PATEL

Bhopal: Governor Mangubhai Patel celebrated the festival of Raksha Bandhan at Raj Bhavan. Today, on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, the girls of SOS Children's Village Khajuri Kala, officials of Prajapita Brahmakumari Ishwariya Vishwavidyalaya reached the Raj Bhavan. Raksha Bandhan was celebrated in traditional manner by tying Raksha Sutra to Governor Mangubhai Patel. Governor Mangubhai Patel gifted an amount of Rs 11,000 to the SOS Children's Village organisation. He distributed toffees and sweets to the children. On this occasion, Regional Director of Prajapita Brahmakumari Ishwariya Vishwavidyalaya, Bhopal B K Awadhes was also present.



People seen with sick leopard in MP, video goes viral

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Some people in Dewas district of Madhya Pradesh were seen, in a viral video, walking along with a leopard who apparently seemed sick. In the viral video, the leopard is seen surrounded by over a dozen persons and one of them was seen sitting on leopard's back. The villagers were seen playing with the animal and taking selfies. Seeing the leopard roaming outside the forest area, the villagers got scared at first, but when they noticed that the animal wasn't aggressive, they surrounded him. Upon



receiving information, a team of forest guards reached the spot and took the leopard to a safe place. A forest guard said the leopard was wandering in the forest in a dizzy condition. Forest official Santosh Shukla said that the team has taken the two-year-old leopard to Van Vihar in Bhopal for treatment. A veterinary doctor also conducted a medical examination of the animal, he said. "The condition of the leopard was critical. Despite this, people were troubling him. The veterinary doctor was called from Mhow in Indore," Shukla said.

Mangal Bhawan will be built in Chandgarh Kuti at a cost of Rs 25 lakh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan reached Chandgarh Kuti Dham in Seoni Malwa of Narmadapuram district on Wednesday. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan prayed for the happiness and prosperity of the people of the state by offering prayers to Lord Shiva, Maa Narmada and Lord Ganesha. Chief Minister Chouhan also approved an amount of Rs 25 lakh for the construction of Mangal Bhawan in Chandgarh Kuti on the suggestion of the area residents. Chief Minister Chouhan also met the villagers. Ladi Bahnas tied rakhis to their brother Shivraj Singh Chouhan on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, the holy festival of brothers and sisters. Ladi Bahnas were very happy to have their brother Shivraj Singh Chouhan in their midst. They gave their best wishes to Chief Minister Chouhan by giving rakhi and shripal. Ladi Bahnas told the Chief Minister Chouhan that he



has increased our honour by initiating the Ladi Bahna Yojana. Due to this, our small requirements are being fulfilled on time. The Ladi Bahna amount

is being used in many auspicious activities including Teej festival. On this occasion, many Ladi Bahnas including Kanchan Keer, Anisha Bai, Kavita Bai, Sangeeta Bai, Kaushalya Keer and Kantabai etc. were present. Chief Minister Chouhan met the citizens and inquired about their well-being. Chief Minister Chouhan said that a survey will be conducted of the beneficiaries who have not been able to avail the benefits of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. CM Jan Awas Yojana will be started to provide housing assistance to the needy. He directed the district administration to conduct a survey of all the eligible beneficiaries who were left out. Chief Minister Chouhan was accompanied by former minister Rampal Singh, Sohagpur MLA Vijaypal Singh, Seoni Malwa MLA Premshankar Verma, many public representatives and citizens of the area were present. Before this Chief Minister Chouhan also received blessings from Swami Shadmukhanandpuri Maharaj. Chief Minister Chouhan's wife Sadhana Singh was also present.



EDITOR'S SPECS

INDIA meet: For better coordination

With just two days to go for the third crucial meeting of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) in Maharashtra's Mumbai, several important decisions are likely to be taken including that of announcing separate convenors for the four zones. According to sources, during the two day meeting in Mumbai starting from August 31, which will be attended by several opposition parties, several important decisions will be taken after a detailed brainstorming and discussion. The source said that discussion of having four separate convenors will be come up for discussion during the meeting and a decision will be taken, if there is a requirement for separate convenors instead of one. The source said that as there are multiple parties in the INDIA alliance, and a separate set of convenors will help in smooth functioning of the alliance with leaders from the zone having better understanding of the issues and the language. The source further said a discussion on naming the chairperson of the INDIA will also come up for discussion and there are chances that Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge might be nominated for the same. The source also said that there are chances that there might be more than one convenor in the INDIA alliance. However, the source said that a decision on all the issues will be taken during the meeting after taking views and suggestions from every opposition party leader. The first meeting of the INDIA alliance took place in Bihar's Patna on June 23 while the second meeting of the opposition parties took place in Karnataka's Bengaluru on July 17 and 18. The opposition parties have come together to take on the ruling BJP ahead of the crucial Lok Sabha elections scheduled next year.

BRICS MARCHING AHEAD

Asad Mirza

The 15th summit of the BRICS bloc comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, was held in Johannesburg, and majorly focussed on two issues; first, admitting new members to the five-nation organisation and boosting trade using the local currency of the member nations. Reportedly, encouraged by BRICS success on the economic and geopolitical fronts, a growing number of countries in the Global South consider it as an attractive agent of multilateralism. More than 40 nations, including Algeria, Egypt, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates, as well as key G20 countries such as Argentina, Indonesia, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia, had formally expressed their interest in joining the BRICS. But finally only six more were added to the original members' list. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa formally announced BRICS expansion, and now Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE, Argentina and Ethiopia will join BRICS. Overly this seems to be an attempt to reshape the global world order and provide a counterweight to the US and its allies. Chinese President Xi Jinping, described the expansion as "historic". Xi had leading the demand admitting new members, thus shaping-up an enlarged BRICS as a way for the Global South to have a stronger voice in world affairs. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, welcoming the expansion of the five-nation grouping, said: "Through this step, the faith of numerous nations in a multipolar world order will become stronger." Media reports prior to the summit cited Chinese officials furthering the view that the bloc should be a rival to the G7. But they were silent on plans to enhance the group's clout on the global stage. It would depend on how far it will be



able to act in unison, as the addition of new members has made it even more disparate. The Guardian quoted the director of the Asia and Latin America programme at the Inter-American Dialogue, Margaret Myers, as saying that this move is more symbolic than anything -- it's an indication of wide-ranging global south support for a recalibration of the global order. The decision to admit Iran represented a win for both Russian President Vladimir Putin and Xi, giving the group a more anti-western nuance. Iran, which has been looking for ways to sidestep the US sanctions, was indeed elated and same could be said about Putin, who'll be hosting the next summit and addressed the Johannesburg summit virtually. While India had not opposed the expansion of the BRICS, it did push for rules and procedures to be laid down, which would govern which countries could enter the bloc. China's push to incorporate Pakistan into the BRICS alliance earlier stirred a diplomatic conundrum, but ultimately it was not

amongst the lucky six. For Argentina, facing dire economic problems, membership may provide a lifeline to escape from the deepening crisis. Its president, Alberto Fernandez, said it represented a "new scenario" for the country. Ethiopia became the only low-income country in the group. Its Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, described it as "a great moment" for his country. Al Jazeera quoted Ayham Kamel, the head of Eurasia Group's Middle East and North Africa research team, as saying that in one move, the Middle East and North Africa region could have four members in an expanded BRICS organisation. This will structurally enhance their leverage regionally and globally. A strengthened region would further pave the way for a multipolar world, Al Jazeera quoted Trita Parsi, vice president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, as saying. "As the world moves away from unipolarity, the US is also losing its ability to act as a gatekeeper, no one single state can any longer decide who is in the Community of Nations and who is

a pariah." However the most important takeaway from the summit was described by Ryan Berg, the head of the Americas programme at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, quoted by the Guardian as saying: "For China and Russia, this is a win. They have been pushing for this for five plus years now. For China, it allows them to continue to build what they hope is a Beijing-centric order. For Russia, who is hosting it next year, it sees this as a tremendous opportunity in its current moment of significant isolation." In addition, BRICS members also discussed sustainable development in the climate change era, global governance reform, and an orderly process of increasing trade in local currencies., which many emerging economies are exploring and where India is pushing for trade in the Indian rupee. Hippolyte Fofack, chief economist and director of research at the

(Afreximbank) told The Atlantic magazine that the dollar remains the global reserve currency, and the pace at which other currencies have chipped away at its dominance has been incremental. But a growing number of experts, including senior US government officials, recognise that the aggressive use of economic and financial sanctions to advance US foreign policy could threaten the dollar's hegemony in the years ahead. There were also rumours that the Summit may announce a BRICS-issued reserve currency to be used by members in cross-border trade. Though the member nations collectively enjoy a comfortable balance of payment surplus, they don't have the financial wherewithal, Hippolyte opined to establish such a currency as they lack the institutional architecture and the scale to sustainably achieve this end. Reflecting on these challenges, Anil Sooklal, South Africa's ambassador-at-large to BRICS, had reiterated in July earlier that a BRICS currency will not be on the agenda during the summit, though expanding trade and settlement in local currencies will be. According to Hippolyte BRICS countries are already making strides in the use of local currencies in cross-border transactions. Their use is helping to sustain and boost cross-border trade between members, even amid a challenging operating environment of heightened geopolitical risks. It is also loosening the balance of payments constraints associated with dollar funding, bolstering local economies. Lastly, the 15th summit served as a new foundation in advancing cross-border payment systems and embracing local currencies to fortify international trade, besides sending a warning light to US-led western democracies that the concerns of developing nations shouldn't be ignored any further.

international

GABON MILITARY CLAIMS TAKEOVER, CANCELS ELECTION RESULT

Libreville | Agencies

Just hours after Gabon's electoral commission announced that President Ali Bongo Ondimba had secured a third term in office after winning the August 26 election, the Central African nation's military on Wednesday claimed to have taken over after dissolving state institutions and cancelling the poll result. In a video message, a group of senior Gabonese officers announced that they had seized power and also closed the country's borders until further notice, reports Xinhua news agency. "In the name of the Gabonese people... we have decided to defend the peace by putting an end to the current regime," the senior military officers said on national television after the results were announced. The officers said that the



general election was not credible and the results stood annulled. They read a statement on behalf of the Committee for the Transition and Restoration of Institutions. "All the institutions of the Republic are dissolved, in particular the government, the Senate, the National Assembly, the Constitutional Court, the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, the

Gabonese Center for Elections," they added. The Gabonese presidency and the government are yet to issue official statements on the development. Local media reported that gunfire was heard in the capital Libreville. Meanwhile, internet has been restored in Gabon after the government had cut off access and imposed a curfew after the end of voting, the BBC

reported. The government had said the move was necessary to prevent the spread of misinformation and outbreak of violence. Ondimba's overthrow would end his family's 53-year hold on power in Gabon. As in the previous general elections in Gabon, there were serious concerns about the process in the August 26 vote. Main opposition candidate Albert Ondo Ossa com-

plained that many polling stations lacked ballot papers bearing his name, while the coalition he represents said the names of some of those who had withdrawn from the presidential race had still been on the ballot sheet, reports the BBC. According to Reporters Without Borders, foreign media was banned from entering the country to cover the election. As polls closed, the government announced a curfew and suspension of internet access for security reasons. Ondimba came to power when his father Omar died in 2009. In 2018, he suffered a stroke which sidelined him for almost a year and led to calls for him to step aside. The following year, a failed coup attempt saw mutinying soldiers sent to prison.

Super typhoon Saola affects nearly 200,000 in Philippines

Manila | Agencies

Super typhoon Saola has triggered floods and landslides in seven regions of the Philippines, affecting nearly 200,000 people, the government said on Wednesday. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council said at least one person was reported missing, but there has been no fatality so far, reports Xinhua news agency. The disaster management agency said Saola flooded 193 areas and triggered 12 landslides on main Luzon island and the central Philippines. More than 35,000 of the displaced residents are still in temporary shelters. Saola intensified into a super typhoon at dawn on Sunday, dumping heavy rain and severe winds in the northern Philippines. The Philippine State



Weather Bureau said Saola maintained its strength on Wednesday as it moved west-northwestward at 15 km per hour over the northernmost province of Batanes, packing sustained winds of 195 km per hour and gusts of up to 240 km per hour. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said Saola will continue to bring heavy

rain, especially in mountainous areas, which could trigger more flooding and landslides. Saola is the seventh typhoon to lash the Philippines this year, and will likely remain a super typhoon until Friday, the agency said, adding that severe tropical storm Haikui is also approaching the Philippines, threatening areas in northern Luzon.

'Drone strike' in Russia 'damages' four heavy transport planes

Moscow: A drone attack on Pskov city in northwestern Russia has reportedly damaged four heavy transport planes early on Wednesday. "The defence ministry is repelling a drone attack in Pskov's airport," Regional Governor Mikhail Vedernikov wrote on social media, posting a video of a massive fire. "I arrived on the site at the very start of the incident. According to preliminary information, there have been no casualties. The scope of damage is now being assessed," Vedernikov later wrote on his Telegram channel. An unconfirmed Russian media report says four Ilyushin 76 transport planes were damaged at the airport, the BBC reported. Pskov is more than 600km (372 miles) away from Ukraine, close to the border with Estonia. Separately, the Russian Defence Ministry said early on Wednesday that an aircraft of its naval fleet destroyed four "high-speed military boats in the Black Sea carrying assault groups of the Ukrainian special operations forces comprising 50 men in total".

US PROVIDES \$250 MN WORTH OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE

Washington | Agencies

The US has announced an additional package of military assistance to Ukraine worth \$250 million. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement on Tuesday that the new package includes AIM-9M missiles for air defence, munitions for High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, 155mm and 105mm artillery ammunition, and over 3 million rounds of small arms ammunition, Xinhua news agency reported. The latest assistance is executed under a previous directive from President Joe Biden using the Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA). Weapons and equipment being provided through this approach are drawn directly from the



Department of Defense's (DoD) inventories for Ukraine. This is the Biden administration's 45th PDA-related military aid to Ukraine since August 2021, according to a DoD list of the latest weapons heading to Ukraine. The US has committed more than \$43.7 billion in military assistance to Ukraine since the Biden administration took office, including more than \$43 billion since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war in February 2022, according to the DoD.

93 potential unmarked child, infant graves found at ex-residential school in Canada

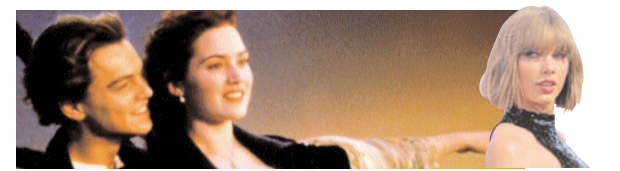
Ottawa | Agencies

First Nation has found 79 suspected child grave sites and 14 potential infant grave sites at a former residential school in Saskatchewan, Canada, local media reported. "This is not a final number. It breaks my heart that there are likely more," CTV News quoted English River First Nation chief Jenny Wolverine as saying during a news conference in Saskatoon, the capital city of Saskatchewan, on Tuesday. "We were not sure what to expect and what we would find. But we did know the stories that were shared over generations about the treatment of the students and those students who never returned home," Wolverine said. According to the report, the English River chief called upon the federal and provincial governments to provide resources for the First Nation's search effort. English River started searching the site of



the former Beauval Indian Residential School in August 2021, using ground-penetrating radar, the CTV News report said, adding that the research team is preparing to move into the second phase of the search. Beauval Indian Residential School was first founded in 1860 and operated for more than 100 years, according to the University of Regina.

In 2013, a former dormitory supervisor at the school was convicted of indecent assault and gross indecency for assaults on young boys between 1959 and 1967, CTV News reported. The site is the latest of several Canadian locations being searched for possible unmarked graves of children who died while being forced to attend residential schools.



Taiwan submits 'Marry My Dead Body' as official entry for 96th Academy Awards



Los Angeles | Agencies

The Taiwanese supernatural comedy mystery film 'Marry My Dead Body' Cheng Wei-hao has been selected as the official entry for the country's Oscar submission for the Best International Feature category for 96th Academy Awards.

The movie was selected by Taiwan's Bureau of Audiovisual and Music Industry Development (BAMID) as their Oscar entry. The film was one of Taiwan's biggest hits, with the supernatural comedy-crime thriller with its intriguing twist doing extremely well in markets of Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Philippines and the US as reported by Deadline.

BAMID, which is under Taiwan's Ministry of Culture, said that a total of nine films were submitted for consideration. The selection committee said it chose 'Marry My Dead Body' because the film "cleverly combines traditional customs with modern perspectives, has both humor and emotion, and showcases the characteristics of Taiwanese culture and life."

Starring Hsu Kuang-han, Austin Lin and Gingle Wang, the film tells the story of a homophobic cop who is forced into a same sex "ghost" marriage to appease the spirit of a man who has passed away.

Although terrified of both homosexuality and ghosts, he has no choice but to team up with his ghostly spouse to solve a long running drugs case. As such, the two partners need to overcome their differences and cooperate to solve the dead man's mysterious death.

The film, which is produced by Taiwan's Calendar Studios and Bole Film, also landed in Netflix's global top ten (non-English) chart during its first week of release on the platform. In addition, it also won best screenplay at the Taipei Film Awards.

Nominations for the 96th Academy Awards will be announced on January 23, 2024 with the winners to be unveiled on March 10, 2024. However, the SAG-AFTRA and WGA strikes present a likelihood that the Oscars too, may very well get delayed.

Beyonce becomes honorary Mayor of Santa Clara for her concert at Levi Stadium

London | Agencies

Pop star Beyonce will now be running the town of Santa Clara as she is given the key to the city and made the town's honorary Mayor for her concert at Levi Stadium.

Santa Clara City Council carried out a vote back on the night of August 29, to pass over the title for a day from Mayor Lisa Gillmor to the 'Crazy In Love' singer as reported by People magazine.

"The city of Santa Clara is excited about Beyonce's upcoming visit to the world-renowned Levi's Stadium. Her concert will certainly bring a great deal of energy and excitement," Santa Clara spokesperson Michelle Templeton said in a statement, as per The Mercury News, a day ahead of her concert.

As such, the city of Santa Clara has declared that Beyonce has become the honorary Mayor of Santa Clara for the whole duration of August 30, in celebration of her 'Renaissance' tour stop at the Levi's Stadium.

Beyonce is now the latest pop star to be

named honorary Mayor of Santa Clara. Prior to this, Taylor Swift was also given the title of City Mayor on July 28 and 29 as part of her 'Eras' tour dates at the Levi's Stadium. The city was also dubbed 'Swiftie Clara' for the duration of those two days.

Taylor Swift's Eras Tour has already done wonders, though Beyonce is not behind as it has been estimated that the 41-year-old singer's

'Renaissance' could be her highest-grossing concert tour ever, and may even exceed the revenue she has earned from all of her previous concerts combined.

Much like Santa Clara which is currently celebrating the singer's arrival, cities like Atlanta and Minneapolis had also similarly put into effect what they have titled 'Beyonce Day'.

The 'Formation' singer kicked off the Renaissance World Tour on May 12 in Stockholm, Sweden. After the European leg wrapped up in late June, and in early July, the performer began taking the tour across North America, which she will continue to do through late September.



Taissa Farmiga talks about returning to 'The Nun' franchise after four years



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Taissa Farmiga, who is all set to return as Sister Irene in 'The Nun 2', has spoken about returning to the franchise after four years. She also revealed what she liked about her character and the script.

The sequel to the hit follows Sister Irene as she once again comes face-to-face with Valak, the demon nun. Farmiga is joined again by Jonas Bloquet as Maurice, along with Storm Reid as Sister Debra, Anna Popplewell as Kate and Bonnie Aarons (reprising her role from 'The Nun').

"What I really loved about the script is this beautiful partnership and friendship between these two empowered female characters..." says Farmiga as she talks about reprising her role as Sister Irene.

"Storm (Reid) plays Sister Debra, a young woman who doesn't know her place in this world, so she feels like she's lost. And what's so beautiful is that the layers that are written into these characters give an opportunity to play real people. I think it was such a collaborative effort from the very beginning to make sure the characters were real and had true distinct colors and layers."

"Tropes are not real people. So, I think it was beautiful in the script to be able to play a young woman who's confident and knows what she's doing and doesn't need somebody to tell her what to do. And not only do you have that with Sister Irene, but you also have that with Sister Debra."

Ask her what she loved about her character and returning to the world of The Nun franchise after four years, Farmiga said: "I feel like denial is a wonderfully terrible tool that a lot of people use, and I definitely think that Irene sort of held on to the expression 'out of sight, out of mind.' I think deep down, Irene knew that this couldn't just be it. The connection was too strong. I think Irene also is someone who probably always questions, 'Is she good enough?' She's come to accept her gifts to a degree."

"But she was tasked with this enormous thing-to banish a demon. I think absolutely part of her has been terrified every day of these past years that she didn't accomplish what she was supposed to. 4 "It's been four years since the first film. Irene and Frenchie have definitely gotten older. They're a bit more weathered. I would say that they both come back with a strong sense of self in this movie."

Jamie Foxx says, 'The Burial' tells 'great American story'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actors Jamie Foxx and Tommy Lee Jones are teaming up to bring true events to life in 'The Burial'. The two actors recently discussed working together and what appealed to them about the story.

'The Burial', which will have its world premiere on September 11 at the Toronto International Film Festival, follows the real-life story of Jeremiah Joseph O'Keefe's lawsuit against the Loewen Group, a Canadian funeral-home company, as documented by The New Yorker, reports 'People' magazine.

Asked about what drew him to 'The Burial', Foxx, who also co-produced the drama, told 'People' that it's "a great American story" and noted, "We actually heard about this project probably 15 years ago. So it tells you how projects can be special. You hear about it 15 years ago, but now, everything lines up."

"Maggie Betts lines up. [Producer] Datari Turner lines up. Everybody involved lines up, and then here we are embarking upon an incredible story, with an amazing character. It just feels good!" he said, adding that, upon learning Betts was involved as director, he was ready to "jump in."

Jones plays Mississippi funeral director Jeremiah O'Keefe, who, due to debts, is forced "to sell parts of his business to a corporation rapidly buying up funeral homes, cemeteries and insurance companies to profit from what its CEO, Ray Loewen (Bill Camp), refers to as 'the golden age of death,'" a synopsis from TIFF reads.

"I had a lot of fun working with Jamie," Jones said. "He's fun to be around, and every work day was highly energised. We did a lot of laughing and some pretty good work got done, too." And the feeling is mutual, as Foxx says of Jones, "When the artistic stars line up and certain people step into a role, it usually turns out really, really good. He's so special for the part."



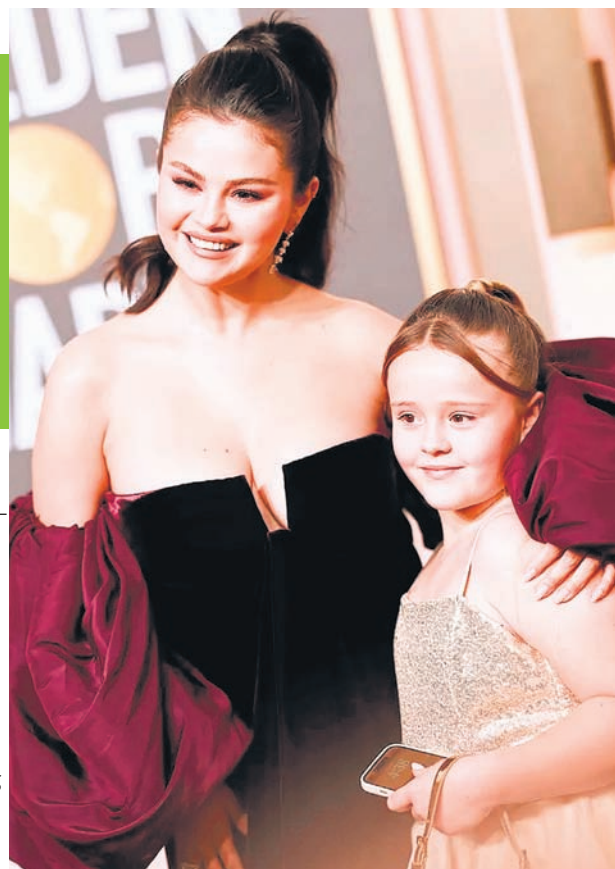
Selena Gomez shares pic of her sister shaving Brooklyn Beckham's head

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Selena Gomez's sister Gracie Elliot is showcasing her hairdressing skill. The 'Back To You' singer, 31, shared a snap of Gracie, 10, and friend Brooklyn Beckham on her Instagram story. In the photo, Gomez's little sister held onto clippers as she shaved a slightly smiling Beckham's head. "My. Babies," Gomez wrote over the photo, reports People magazine.

Rocking a pink Mean Girls top and silver wrist bangles, Gracie looked focused as she kept her eyes on the task at hand, while the eldest child of David Beckham and Victoria Beckham had his tattoo collection on display as he sat shirtless during the hair trim. As per People, Gomez's mother Mandy and stepfather Brian Teeffey welcomed Gracie in 2013. Despite the age gap - the actress and singer was 20 years old when her sister was born - the pair appear to have a close bond and are regularly pictured together on Gomez's social media.

In another Story post that is no longer available, a smiling Nicola Peltz Beckham - Brooklyn's wife - joined in the head-shaving fun. In the pic, she held her hand to her husband's neck, beaming at the camera as she appeared to shave the front part of Brooklyn's head using the clippers.



Scarlett Johansson



Content-driven films are back in trend: Vicky Kaushal

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Vicky Kaushal, who earlier delivered the superhit 'Zara Hatke Zara Bachke', is gearing up for yet another theatrical release. This time, too, it will be a content-driven family entertainer for Vicky. Titled

'The Great Indian Family', the film will see him essay the role of a devotional music singing sensation Bhajan Kumar, who makes a living by singing songs of Lord Krishna at different events.

At the song launch event of the film, Vicky discussed with the media that the content-driven films are back at the top after an extended lull induced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The actor said: "Agar koi 3 mahine pehle ye kehta ki 'content-driven films are not working at the box-office', toh main maan bhi leta (If three months back someone told me that content-driven films are not working at the box-office, I would have still believed them). But now, things have changed. The trend about content-driven films not working at the box-office has changed for good."

He then went on to quote recent examples of films which are content-driven and are working at the box-office: "Look at 'Dream Girl 2', 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani', 'OMG 2' and 'Ghoomer', these are all high on content films, and are pulling the crowd back in the theatres. I hope our film 'The Great Indian Family' too works its magic and receives love from the audience."

'The Great Indian Family' which also stars former Miss World Manushi Chhillar, Kumud Mishra and Manoj Pahwa, has been produced by Yash Raj Films, and has been directed by Vijay Krishna Acharya. The film will debut in cinemas on September 22.



'IT'S TIME FOR INDIAN ACTORS TO THINK GLOBAL'

Allu Arjun opens up on his Hollywood plans

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Star Allu Arjun has plans for Hollywood, as the popularity of 'RRR' has propelled Indian cinema world-wide. The actor said that this phenomenon has opened the doors for Indian cinema to go international.

Speaking to Variety about his Hollywood plans, Allu Arjun said: "It has opened the doors and the minds of people that there is something beyond our regular traditional markets that we need to go explore and our reach as much as possible."

As part of this expansion, the actor said that he already has plans to sign up with a Hollywood agent: "It's time for all Indian actors to think globally, because India is going to be a global superpower. All businesses in India will flourish and so will the Indian film industry." "I feel in less than 10 years from now, Indian cinema will be viewed all over the world, like how Korean dramas have been watched all over the world, with a very high probability for India to be in the same spot in

the coming decade. It's really a golden era for entertainment industry in India."

Talking about his win at the National Indian Film Awards and becoming the first actor to do so, Allu Arjun told Variety: "Getting the national award is the highest official respect you can get. What we realised was that in 69 years of Telugu cinema, while other technicians and directors have won, no actor had won best actor at the National Awards."

"So that was a pathbreaking achievement and became the pride of the Telugu people. I was glad that I could contribute to it in a small way." He attributed the success of 'Pushpa' to its rootedness and rustic nature. "It's the common man factor, it's the character's attitude that really connected across all languages," Arjun said. "We wanted a very authentic, rustic, rooted storytelling."

"I think that authenticity and honesty paid off, we were not trying to be somebody else, we were trying to be who we are and still trying to appeal to everybody else. It's like how they say, going local is going global."



AMIT SADH'S BIKE EXPEDITION REACHES DELHI AFTER COVERING 1,500 KM



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Amit Sadh, who is known for his work in 'Sultan', 'Jeet Ki Zid', 'Avrodh', 'Breathe' and others, is currently on a bike expedition covering the key points in India. The actor recently reached the national capital covering 1,500 kilometres on his bike.

His journey encompasses the route from Balasor to Ahmedabad, Jodhpur, Jaipur, and finally, Delhi. In the spirit of celebrating Indian culture and the serenity of its landscapes, Amit Sadh embarked on this extraordinary adventure.

The actor hosted a press conference at the Press Club India in Delhi, to share insights into his bike trip, shedding light on the importance of biking and how it played a pivotal role in transforming his life.

He spoke about the challenges faced during the arduous Jaipur to Delhi leg of the journey, and how it was filled with demanding terrains and roads.

Talking about his incredible journey, Amit shared: "This expedition has been an experience like no other. Jaipur to Delhi was a challenging ride, but every moment on this journey has been a testament to the beauty of India and the warmth of its people. I'm overwhelmed by the love and support I've received throughout, and this reinforces my belief in the unity and diversity of our incredible nation."

The actor's journey will soon culminate in Leh Ladakh.

AP Dhillon says success of 'With You' reflects his goal to make Punjabi music global

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer AP Dhillon has been soaring high on Spotify with his new single 'With You', which has become one of the biggest streamed tracks on the platform. Regarding the success of it, the Canadian-Punjabi singer has said that it's his goal to take Punjabi culture to the world and 'With You' is a reflection of that. "Taking Punjabi culture global has been at the heart of all the music I make. My goal is to create something that can appeal to all types of listeners and something that lasts for generations. My new single 'With You' reflects this and the love I've received for this single has been amazing to see," AP Dhillon said.

As for 'With You', the track has reached number 2 on the Spotify's Weekly Top Songs India chart and number 38 on Spotify Daily Global Charts. This success has only got him more excited, with the singer saying "Reaching number 38 on the Spotify Daily Global Charts is a milestone moment for me, and I can't wait to do more," he said. By August 24, the song had already hit over 25 million streams in just over two weeks. During the same period, AP Dhillon also became the seventh most streamed artist in the Weekly Top Artist India chart, going up 18 positions from being at #25 in the week before the song's release on August 10.

'With You' is one of the nine tracks by AP Dhillon that feature in the Weekly Top Songs India chart. Other songs that feature in this list are: Over half of these songs entered or reentered the charts after the Punjabi-Canadian artist dropped his new single. The singer has currently four million followers on Spotify, and the number is only increasing.

The singer has more followers on the Spotify that in any of his social media platforms. Earlier this month, he also gave his fans a peek into his journey as an artiste, through his docu-series 'AP Dhillon: First of a Kind'.

India is not the only country where his songs have been streamed so many times on Spotify, as AP Dhillon continues to make great strides across the world, with listeners from many international markets such as Canada, the US, the UK, Norway, Brazil, Greece, Chile, Mexico, Kenya and more.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Nargis Fakhari



Kriti shares video showcasing strong bond with sister Nupur Sanon

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Kriti Sanon is celebrating Raksha Bandhan with her sister Nupur Sanon and has shared a video talking about how much they have bickered and argued, though at the end, they still have a strong and unbreakable bond. Taking to Instagram, Kriti Sanon posted a reel of her YouTube video where the two narrate their relationship, with the two sisters wishing each other a "Happy Rakhi." Kriti Sanon captioned: "The Sanon Sisters!! @nupursanon" "Sisters are the best!!! Love you to the moon and back!!" "Happy Rakhi!!" The two shared a montage of their relationship as Kriti Sanon says in the video: "So in the morning it was really funny, because I was like 'Oh yay today we're shooting together!'"

"We're gonna post some Instagram stories, and cut to she's already left!" Nupur Sanon said: "I left early and her spot dada was 'Aap itne jaldi jaa rahe ho? Kyun?' So I said 'Mujhe time se pohachana hai'" So they travelled in separate cars for the shoot, with ultimately Nupur revealing that she just planned all this because she does not like riding with her sister because she doesn't let her listen to her Punjabi songs. Kriti Sanon in response said: "Oof! Tantrums!" Then sharing snaps of her early make up, Kriti was not really much of a fan of her Vanity with Nupur saying that her sister wanted to actually keep her Vanity collection as she found it better.

Talking about their collective shoot, Kriti said: "You know it's really irritating at times, but in the end I still like shooting with her, because we also sort of break out into laughter."

Nupur who is gearing up for her debut said: "I usually just listen to my sister because she's smarter, obviously because she's worked on so much, so she knows much more."

The two tend to frequently annoy one another on set, though at the end, they have a strong bond which cannot be doubted, because even off-set the two are best friends, frequently playing pranks on one another, but also helping each other out and standing by their side when they need each other the most.