

absolute india

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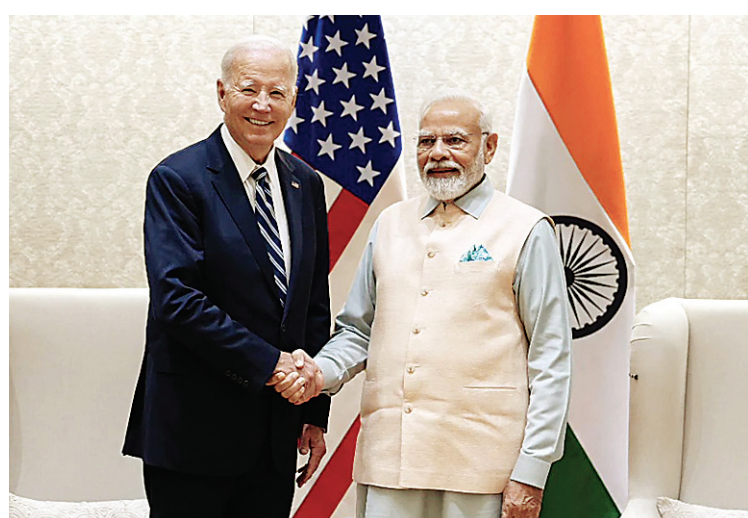
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PM MODI, PRESIDENT BIDEN EXPRESSED THEIR APPRECIATION FOR THE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden held a bilateral meeting on Friday. PM Modi and President Biden reaffirmed the close ties between India and the United States.

President Biden reaffirmed his support for a reformed UN Security Council with India as a permanent member, and, in this context, welcomed once again India's candidature for the UNSC non-permanent seat in 2028-29. India for long has been calling for reforms in the UNSC, while seeking its membership.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed President Joe Biden, reaffirming the close and enduring partnership between India and the United States. The leaders expressed their appreciation for the substantial progress underway to implement the ground breaking achievements of Prime Minister Modi's historic, June 2023, visit to Washington. The leaders called on their governments to continue the work of transforming the India-U.S. Strategic Partnership across all dimensions of our multifaceted global agenda, based on trust and mutual understanding. The leaders re-emphasized that the shared values of freedom, democracy, human rights, inclusion, pluralism, and equal opportunities for all citizens are critical to the success our countries enjoy and that these values strengthen our relation-

ship. President Biden lauded India's G20 Presidency for further demonstrating how the G20 as a forum is delivering important outcomes. The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the G20 and expressed confidence that the outcomes of the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi will advance the shared goals of accelerating sustainable development, bolstering multilateral cooperation, and building global consensus around inclusive economic policies to address our greatest common challenges, including fundamentally reshaping and scaling up multilateral development banks. Prime Minister Modi and President Biden reaffirmed the importance of

the Quad in supporting a free, open, inclusive, and resilient Indo-Pacific. Prime Minister Modi looked forward to welcoming President Biden to the next Quad Leaders' Summit to be hosted by India in 2024. India welcomed the U.S. decision to co-lead the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative Pillar on Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport, further to the U.S. decision to join IPOI in June 2023. Prime Minister Modi and President Biden reaffirmed technology's defining role in deepening our strategic partnership and lauded ongoing efforts through the India-U.S. Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) to build open, accessible, secure, and resilient technology ecosystems and value chains,

based on mutual confidence and trust, which reinforce our shared values and democratic institutions. The United States and India intend to undertake a midterm review of iCET in September 2023 to continue to drive momentum toward the next annual iCET review, co-led by the National Security Advisors of both countries, in early 2024.

GUTERRES CALLS FOR SECURITY COUNCIL TO REFLECT REALITIES OF TODAY'S WORLD

New Delhi: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Friday called for Security Council to reflect realities of today's world. Guterres, who arrived earlier in the day in New Delhi to attend the G20 summit, while speaking on UN Security Council (UNSC) reforms, noted: "Some people think that if the world is multipolar, then peace will come by itself. It's not true. Multipolarity requires strong and reformed multilateral institutions. But when one looks at the Security Council of the United Nations, they do not reflect today's world. They reflect the world at the end of the Second World War." He added that many things have changed and "So it is clear that if we want multilateral institutions to work properly, we need to adapt their structure, their organisation...we need to adapt them to reflect the reality of today".

INDIA alliance passes big test, wins 4 out of 7 assembly seats

While BJP candidates have been elected from the Dhanpur and Boxanagar assembly seats in Tripura and Bageswhar in Uttarakhand, the Opposition bloc has won in Uttar Pradesh's Ghosi, Jharkhand's Dumri, Puthuppally in Kerala and Dhugguri in West Bengal.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Opposition has come out on top, albeit by a very narrow margin, in what was being seen as a major test for it after the formation of the INDIA alliance. Parties that are members of the bloc have won in four of the seven state Assembly seats where bypolls were held on Tuesday. Dara Singh Chauhan, the sitting MLA from Ghosi assembly constituency in Uttar Pradesh and a popular OBC leader, had rejoined the BJP after resigning from the Samajwadi Party in July. His resignation necessitated a by-election in the seat, which has been won by the Samajwadi Party's Sudhakar Singh with a margin of 42,759 votes.

Delivering a big blow to the ruling CPI(M), Chandu Oommen of the Congress-UDF alliance won the Puthuppally by-election in Kerala by a margin of over 36,000 votes. Oommen, son of late Congress stalwart Oommen Chandy, gained a clear edge in the first round and retained that position till the counting of votes was completed. Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) candidate Bebi Devi has won the by-election to the Dumri assembly seat in Jharkhand's Giridih district and defeated All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) party nominee Yashoda Devi by over 17,000 votes. Over in West Bengal, two INDIA bloc parties - the Congress and the CPI(M) -

joined forces to take on their ally, the Trinamool Congress (TMC), in the BJP-ruled Dhugguri constituency. However, the TMC's Nirmal Chandra Roy prevailed and asserted the Mamata Banerjee-led party's control over the seat. In Tripura, BJP's Tafajjal Hossain won the Boxanagar seat while the tribal-dominated Dhanpur was won by Bindu Debnath. In Uttarakhand's Bageswhar, after taking an early lead over the BJP's Parwati Dass, the Congress party's Basant Kumar fell behind. Dashed defeated Kumar by over 2,400 votes. The bypoll was held after the death of four-time MLA and cabinet minister Chandan Ram Das in April.

India vs Bharat row a panic reaction: Rahul Gandhi

Brussels | Agencies

Dubbing the India vs Bharat controversy a "distraction tactic" and a "panic reaction", Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday said the government is little scared and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "disturbed" to the extent that he wants to change the country's name which is "absurd". Addressing a press conference here, Rahul Gandhi, who is on a week-long Europe visit, said: "I am happy with the names that we have in the Constitution. 'India that is Bharat' works perfectly for me. I think these are panic reactions, there is a little bit of fear in the government and it is a distraction tactic." While discussing Manipur violence he said that his party is very much for democratic rights and



peace and the democratic and institutions are under attack in the country. Rahul Gandhi said, "Our position on Manipur was very clear and I actually visited Manipur and I think we are very much for democratic rights, harmony, peace between people." He held a roundtable meeting with the Members of the European Union (MEP) to discuss the human rights situation in Manipur. The meeting was not on the official agenda, so it was held behind closed doors. To another question on

Kashmir and the role of international diplomacy, the Congress leader said, "Kashmir is an integral part of India so it's nobody's business other than India's." "Our position is very clear and even in a resolution of the CWC we have mentioned it. But I feel that democratic structures and institutions need to be protected and the voice of people need to be protected and defended and that goes across India including Kashmir," Rahul Gandhi said. When asked about the opposition's point of view of the Russia-Ukraine war, Rahul Gandhi said: "I think the opposition by and large would agree with the government position. We have a relationship with Russia. And I don't think the opposition will have a different view of what the government is currently proposing."

NIFTY AT SEVEN WEEK HIGH, JUST 172 POINTS FROM LIFE HIGHS

New Delhi: Nifty closed higher for the sixth straight day with gains of 93 points (+0.5 per cent) at 19820 levels. Despite mixed global cues, index bounced back to seven week high and is just 172 points away from its life highs, says Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services. He said that the broader market too ended in green with Midcap100/Smallcap100 up 1 per cent/0.6 per cent. Financials, Realty and energy stocks led the gains in the market. He said that the banking stocks saw renewed interest after RBI announced removal of incremental CRR in phased manner by October 7. Coal India, NTPC, BPCL, Tata Motors and Larsen and Toubro were among the top gainers on the Nifty, while losers included UPL, Eicher Motors, Apollo Hospitals, ITC and UltraTech Cement.

Over 50 injured in Manipur clashes; situation tense in valley and hill districts

SEVERAL MEDIA REPORTS SAID THAT TWO PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN THESE CLASHES AND FIRING INCIDENTS. HOWEVER, THE POLICE ARE YET TO CONFIRM THE CASUALTIES. ACCORDING TO THE POLICE, 11 CIVILIANS SUSTAINED BULLET WOUNDS IN THE CLASHES BETWEEN RIVAL ARMED GROUPS AND THE SECURITY FORCES.

Imphal | Agencies

Around 50 people, including women, were injured in different clashes and firing incidents at Pallel in Manipur's Tengnoupal district on Friday, officials said. As the news of firing spread



on social media, hundreds of men and women from Thoubal and Kakching districts rushed to Pallel, but they were stopped by Assam Rifles personnel leading to stone pelting by the agitating people. Over 30 people, mostly women, were injured after Assam Rifles lobbed teargas shells to disperse the mob.

An Assam Rifles jawan also sustained minor injury. A large contingent of Rapid Action Force (RAF) personnel tried to move to Pallel from Imphal to control the mob, but the protesters blocked the roads at Thoubal leading to confrontations. More than 10 people including women were

injured in the clashes with the RAF personnel. Though the firing has reportedly stopped in Tengnoupal district and other places just before the evening, the situation is still tense. The Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), an apex body of the Meitei community, and leading tribal organisation Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) gave accused each other for the attacks. Friday's incidents took place two days after thousands of protesters had gathered at Phougakchao Ikhai in Bishnupur district to break through army barricades in a bid to return to their houses in Torbung, which they had vacated and took shelter in the relief camps after violence broke out in Manipur on May 3.

US, SAUDI ARABIA, INDIA DISCUSS POSSIBLE RAIL, PORT DEAL

Washington DC | Agencies

The leaders of the US, India, Saudi Arabia and other countries are in talks on a possible infrastructure deal involving railroads and ports, Reuters reported on Friday, quoting sources. According to the agency, the talks were first reported in the American newsletter Axios. As per the American newsletter, this new project can be the key initiative that the White House is pushing in the Middle East where China's influence is growing and the country is a key part of Beijing's Belt and Road vision. Biden administration seeks to complete its diplomatic push for a mega-deal with Saudi Arabia that could include a normalization agreement between the kingdom and Israel before the 2024 campaign consumes Biden's agenda.



According to Axios, the project is expected to connect Arab countries in the Levant and the Gulf via a network of railways that will also connect to India through seaports in the Gulf, the sources said.

The idea for this new initiative came up during talks that were held over the last 18 months in another forum called I2U2, which includes the US, Israel, the UAE and India, according to Axios citing two sources. The forum was established in late 2021 to discuss strategic infrastructure projects in the Middle East and to serve as a counterweight to Beijing's growing influence in the region. Israel raised the idea of connecting the region through railways during the I2U2 meetings over the last year. Part of the idea was to use India's expertise on such big infrastructure projects, a source said. The Biden administration then expanded on the idea to include Saudi Arabia's participation, Axios reported while citing the source.

Dhangars up ante for quotas, throw turmeric powder on Maharashtra Minister

Solapur | Agencies

As the Maharashtra government grapples with the Maratha reservations issue, the Dhangars on Friday adopted an aggressive stance for quotas and threw turmeric on a Minister to press for their demands. Senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader and Revenue Minister Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil was the target of the turmeric attack by two persons at the government guest house, catching his aides and security unawares. Vikhe-Patil was reading a memorandum the duo had handed to him when one of them whipped out a packet of turmeric powder and emptied it on the minister's head and face, even as some others clicked videos which went viral. As the aides and security caught the person, thrashed him and then handed him over to the local police, he was heard raising slogans demanding reservations for the Dhangar community. He was identified as a Dhangar Aarakhshan Kruti Samiti member Shekhar Bangale, who warned that next time they would not hesitate to "blacken the face" of ministers or even the CM if the Dhangar reservations issue is not



sorted out. Later, Vikhe-Patil sought to downplay the incident claiming that "turmeric powder is holy...and it's a matter of joy", while assuring that the government is adopting a sensitive stand on Dhangar quotas issue. The Dhangars get quotas under the Vimukta Jati & Nomadic Tribes category, around 3.5 per cent, but they are on a warpath for quotas in the Scheduled Tribes group akin to the 'Dhangad' in other parts of India who are getting reservations under the SC category.



NO NEED TO MIX RELIGION, POLITICS: MALLIKARJUN KHARGE

Raipur | Agencies

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday said religion and politics are different things and one need not mix them, his comment coming amid a political tussle over DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin's remarks about Sanatana Dharma recently.

Udhayanidhi Stalin, Tamil Nadu minister and son of the southern state's Chief Minister MK Stalin, had derided Sanatana Dharma for its alleged divisiveness and lack of equality and had called for its eradication on the lines of diseases like malaria, dengue and coronavirus.

Asked about the remark, Kharge said, "I have not come here to speak about anyone's religion. I have come to participate in a programme meant for the poor. Religion and politics are different things and there is no need to mix them. I don't want to debate on it."



Kharge was speaking to reporters after attending the Chhattisgarh government's 'Bharose ka Sammelan' event in Thekwa in Rajnandgaon district in the afternoon.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, who is the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, has not been invited for dinner to be hosted by President on Saturday.

Sources at Kharge's office told, "He has not been invited for dinner to be hosted by the President till now (Friday morning)."

Earlier on Wednesday, a Congress source had said that many Union ministers and chief ministers have been invited for the dinner to be hosted by the President, but Kharge was not sent an invite.

He had also said that former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was invited for the dinner.

The G20 Summit is being held in New Delhi on September 9-10 under India's Presidency this year.

Congress got Subhash Chandra Bose killed, says K'taka BJP MLA

Raichur | Agencies

Karnataka BJP MLA from Vijayapura Basanagouda Patil Yatnal on Friday said that the Congress is the "murderer" of freedom fighter Subhash Chandra Bose.

Answering a question, on Congress leaders alleging that BJP is supporting Godse who killed Mahatma Gandhi, Yatnal said that the Congress got the freedom fighters of the country "murdered".

"The death of Subhash Chandra Bose is still a question mark. The Congress leaders have concealed whether it was a murder or a flight accident. Many people maintain that Nehru (first PM late Jawahar Lal Nehru) had got Bose killed," Yatnal said.

He said that those who talk about Sanatana Dharma are affected by HIV AIDS and leprosy.

"One of them asked when



Sanatan Dharma took birth. The minister who asks such a question does not know about his own birth. How can they question our Sanatana Dharma," Yatnal said without taking the name of Home Minister G. Parameashwara.

"If they have courage, let them question Islam or Christianity. All those who are talking today are born in Sanatana Dharma. Mughals, Aurangzeb and many others have invaded India. They can't Islamise the country," he said. He said that neither

there are founders of Sanatana Dharma nor there is an end to it. "Sanatana Dharma is eternal. It is the culture of our country. The Ramayana had taken place 5,000 years ago. Mahabharata took place 3,500 years ago. Sanatana Dharma existed even before them. It is impossible to track the origins of Sanatana Dharma. This is a creation of gods," Yatnal said.

He said that people claim that there is no equality in India. "Did Ambedkar become the law minister on reservation? He became a minister due to his own capabilities. Valmiki had written Ramayana, then where was the caste system? Vedavyasa wrote Mahabharata. To save our constitution, Sanatana Dharma is required. If India turns into an Islamic country, it will turn into a jihadi society," Yatnal said.

Trinamool office, police station ransacked in Murshidabad after Cong workers clash with cops

Kolkata | Agencies

Raninagar in West Bengal's Murshidabad district turned into a virtual battlefield on Friday after Congress workers allegedly ransacked the local police station and a party office of the ruling Trinamool Congress.

The angry mob even torched the party office of Trinamool Congress after ransacking it. Four police personnel have been reportedly injured in clashes with the violent mob. Ten persons have been arrested in this connection so far.

It is learnt that on Friday, there was a joint gathering of Congress and CPI(M) at Raninagar to celebrate the victory of the alliance candidate in a zilla parishad seat in the recently-concluded pan-



chayat elections.

State Congress President and veteran Lok Sabha MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who hails from Murshidabad district, was also present on the occasion. Local police sources said that tension broke out at the end of the meeting and after Chowdhury had left, when some Congress supporters got engaged in an altercation with the police. The

altercation soon took a serious turn as the Congress supporters got engaged in clashes with the police following which the Raninagar police station and the local Trinamool office were attacked. Till the time of filing of this report, tension was prevailing in the area. A large police contingent has been deputed there to keep the situation under control.

G20 summit: Man arrested for posting false alert on social media in Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A man was arrested on Friday from north Delhi for allegedly posting a false alert on social media, claiming that an auto-rickshaw was transporting firearms and explosives towards the Pragati Maidan area, a police official said.

The Pragati Maidan area falls under New Delhi district, which has been termed the "Controlled Zone 1" for the G20 Summit and vehicular restrictions are imposed in the area.

According to police, the official twitter handle of DCP Outer North was tagged regarding a tweet by twitter handle of one Kuldeep Sah (21), mentioning that "Yah auto driver Pragati Maidan ki taraf guns aur explosive lekar ja raha hai (this auto-rickshaw driver is transporting



firearms and explosives towards the Pragati Maidan"), while sharing the registration number and picture of auto-rickshaw. The Deputy Commissioner of Police (outernorth) Ravi Kumar Singh said that considering the sensitivity of the tweet, the

ownership of concerned auto was taken which was found in the name of Gurmeet Singh, (50) a resident of SSN Park.

"The address was visited where the auto driver identified as Harcharan Singh (48) was found, who stated that

the auto is registered in his brother's name and he is using the auto for carrying material of clothes in Chandni Chowk area," said the DCP.

Singh further stated that he is having a dispute with a person namely Kuldeep Shah, who resides in the same street over parking of his auto.

"All facts were verified and the auto was checked thoroughly and no suspicious thing was found. Further house of Kuldeep Shah was also visited, who was found at home," said the DCP. On inquiry, Shah told police that he has posted the tweet as the auto driver parked the auto outside his house and he has warned him several times not to park it outside his house.

"Shah has made rumours/false post regarding the G20 Summit security. Legal action is being taken against him," the DCP added.

'Faceless' BJP banking on 'World's Largest Political Party' posters in poll-bound Rajasthan

Jaipur | Agencies

Although going 'faceless' into the Assembly elections in Rajasthan, the BJP has given a push to its poll campaign with posters branding it as the 'World's Largest Political Party'.

The central leadership of the BJP had announced that the saffron party will go faceless in the elections, following reports of factionalism within the state unit of the party.

Now posters have been put up in the party office here with no faces but only the lotus symbol and catchy slogans on them, the main being 'World's Largest Political Party'.

Narayan Panchariya, who has been assigned the role of Election Management Committee chairman, told IANS that BJP is proud to be the largest party in the world.

"Earlier, this tag was with China (Communist Party of China), but things have changed now," he said. "There is a story behind this suc-



cess. Our 'panna pramukh' model has taken the party into the interiors. There is a lean hierarchy in the party which is quite simple.

I have been a 'panna pramukh' since 2018, dealing with issues at the grassroots level despite handling other responsibilities. This is the beauty of our party's model which is strong at its base," Panchariya said.

Meanwhile, one big poster outside the party office continues to have pictures of former CM Vasundhara Raju, leader of opposition Rajendra Rathore and state unit chief C.P. Joshi alongside Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP President J.P. Nadda.

Earlier, Raju's pictures were removed during the tenure of then state BJP chief Satish Poonia citing that the party is following the rule of using pictures of the Prime Minister, the national President along with state unit chief and leader of opposition in states where the party is in opposition.

JU ragging death: 12 accused to be booked under POCSO Act

Kolkata | Agencies

The homicide department of Kolkata Police informed on Friday that the 12 accused present and former students of Jadavpur University, who have been arrested in connection with the tragic death of a fresher of the institute, will now be booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The first year student of Bengali honours had died after falling from the balcony of a students' hostel on August 10. It is suspected that he became a victim of ragging.

"It has been decided to add sections under the POCSO Act against the 12 accused in view of the fact that the deceased student was below 18 years of age, and hence should be consid-



ered as minor," said an official of the city police.

All the 12 accused students are currently in judicial custody and will be presented before a lower court in Kolkata on September 11.

The demand for inclusion of provisions under POCSO Act was first raised by the West Bengal Child Rights Commission (WBCRC) on grounds that the victim was a

minor at the time of his death. The tragic event exposed the sorry state of monitoring and supervision within the JU campus, especially in the students' hostels where former students not only occupied beds months after passing out from the institute, but also acted as the final authority in accommodation-related administrative matters.

Heavy traffic jams witnessed on Delhi borders ahead of G20 Summit

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Heavy traffic jams were witnessed at Delhi borders following the checking and pickets by police on Friday.

There were long queues of vehicles on Noida-Kalindi Kunj road, Gurugram border, MG road, Ghaziabad, Faridabad and Singhu borders.

"I have been stuck for over 30 minutes here on Kalindi Kunj road from Noida. I had to reach Sarita Vihar and I don't know how much time it will take as traffic is moving at snail's pace," said Amit Shahni, whose office is in Noida's Sector 62.

"Today, I was expecting traffic to be less but it is unexpectedly more than other days," said Neeraj, a com-



muter stuck on the Noida-Delhi border. From Thursday midnight, non-essential vehicles were directed to use the Eastern and Western Peripheral Expressways and other alternate routes from city borders. "This restriction applies to Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), Medium Goods Vehicles (MGVs), and Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs), which will not be allowed to

enter Delhi. However, goods vehicles transporting essential commodities like milk, vegetables, fruits, and medical supplies, with valid permissions, will have entry permission," as per a traffic advisory. In preparation for the upcoming G20 summit at Pragati Maidan on September 9-10, Delhi Police has implemented various security measures.

Heavy rainfall likely over northeast India, 3 other states during next few days: IMD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday said that heavy rainfall activity is likely over northeast India during the next five days and over Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat during the next three days.

In East India, the weather forecast for the coming days includes the likelihood of light to moderate rainfall, thunderstorms, and lightning.

"This weather pattern is expected to be fairly widespread to widespread, with isolated instances of heavy rainfall. Specifically, Gangetic West Bengal and Jharkhand are expected to experience these conditions on Friday," said the IMD in its bulletin.

"Odisha will see light to moderate rainfall, thunderstorms, and lightning on both Friday and September 12,

while Bihar and Sub-Himalayan West Bengal can expect it on Friday and Saturday. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are anticipated to experience these conditions from Sunday to September 12," the weather forecast agency said. In South India, there's a forecast of light to moderate rainfall that will be fairly widespread to widespread.

"This will also include isolated occurrences of heavy rainfall. Coastal Karnataka and South Interior Karnataka are likely to experience these conditions on Friday. The ghats areas of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and Karaikal can expect similar weather from Friday to Sunday, and Kerala and Mahe will likely see this pattern till September 11," the IMD predicted. Moving to Central India, the weather forecast indicates light to moderate rainfall, thunderstorms,

and lightning.

"This pattern is expected to be fairly widespread to widespread, with isolated instances of heavy rainfall. Madhya Pradesh is likely to experience these conditions from Friday to Sunday, while Vidarbha and Chhattisgarh will see it on Friday. There's a possibility of isolated very heavy rainfall over West Madhya Pradesh on Friday," said the IMD.

In West India, there's a forecast of light to moderate rainfall, thunderstorms, and lightning, along with isolated heavy rainfall.

"Marathwada is expected to experience this on Friday, while Konkan, Goa and Madhya Maharashtra will see it till September 12. The Gujarat region is also likely to have this weather pattern on Friday and Saturday, with isolated very heavy rainfall possible over Konkan, Goa,

Madhya Maharashtra, and the Gujarat Region on Friday," said the IMD. In Northeast India, the weather forecast includes light to moderate scattered to fairly widespread rainfall, thunderstorms, and isolated heavy rainfall activity.

"This is expected over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura till September 12. Arunachal Pradesh can expect similar conditions on Sunday, with isolated very heavy rainfall likely over Assam and Meghalaya on Friday," said the weather department.

In Northwest India, the forecast indicates light to moderate scattered to scattered rainfall, thunderstorms, and isolated heavy rainfall activity. Southeast Rajasthan will likely experience this on Friday, Uttarakhand on Saturday, and East Uttar Pradesh from Friday to Sunday.



MARATHA QUOTA ACITIVIST URGES COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO 'AGITATE WITHIN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK'

Team Absolute | Jalna

Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange, on Friday, opined that the community should continue their agitation using resources permitted by law and not by "pelting stones". The Maratha community has been demanding reservations in government jobs and educational institutions. Jarange, whose hunger strike entered its 11th day, urged the Maharashtra government to drop the clause of genealogy while issuing Kunbi caste certificates to Marathas from the Marathwada region to avail of benefits under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. He said, "We are fighting for Maratha reservation and we will get it. The agitations that are taking place across the state should go on, and the agitators should work towards raising support for it." Jarange said that the community members must not take the law into their own hands and should "agitate within the legal framework". "There is no need to agitate by pelting stones. They should use the means of



protest permitted by the law," he was quoted saying. Maharashtra on Thursday issued a Government Resolution (GR) which stated that Kunbi caste certificates would only be issued after Marathas from Marathwada provide genealogical records from the Nizam era. The decision was taken during a cabinet meeting on Wednesday. Marathwada was once part of the erstwhile Hyderabad Kingdom ruled by Nizams. Meanwhile, Kunbi is a community associated with agrarian occupations grouped under the OBC category that enjoys reservation benefits. Jarange, asserted that the protest will continue and urged the government to revise the GR and do away

with the clause of providing genealogical records while issuing caste certificates to Marathas. The Maratha quota issue flared up in the state when police last week lathi-charged and fired tear gas shells against the protestors in Jalna after they allegedly refused to let activist Jarange shift to the hospital. Several, including 40 police personnel, sustained injuries and over 15 state transport buses were burnt in the violence. The police action triggered more protests by the community across the state and a war of words between the incumbent government and the Opposition; Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis admitted on Monday that the government regretted the use of force by the police.

MUMBAI POLICE ISSUES PREVENTIVE ORDERS TILL OCT 8

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai Police on Friday issued a routine preventive order for the city. The order that comes into effect from September 9 will remain in place till October 8, the police said in the order. The order was issued by Dr. Maheshwar Reddy, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Operations), Mumbai Police. "Its a routine preventive order which is reviewed and extended on regular intervals," said an official. The preventive order said, whereas considering necessity for the preservation of public peace and public safety in Mumbai. It is being ordered that the following acts, throughout Mumbai are prohibited for the period from 00.01 hours of 09/09/2023 to 24.00 hours on 08/10/2023. The order further said, "If any person goes armed with any such article or carries any corrosive substance or explosive or missile in contravention of such prohibition, he/she shall be liable to be disarmed or the corrosive substance or explosive or missile shall be liable to be seized from him/ her by any police officer, and the article, corrosive substance, explosive or missile so seized shall be forfeited to the state government." "This order will not be applicable to any person being in service or employment of any government or government undertaking required by his superiors or by the nature of his duties, to carry weapons," the order stated. The order will also not be applicable to Private Security Guards or Gurkhas or Chowkidars etc., employed on watch-n-ward duties carrying lathis admeasuring in length



not exceeding 3 1/2 feet, the order said. It further said, notwithstanding the expiration of this order after the period herein above mentioned. Any investigation or legal proceedings may be instituted, continued or enforced. Any penalty, forfeiture or punishments incurred in aspect of any contravention of this order may be imposed, as if this order had not expired.

THE LIST OF PROHIBITED ACTS DURING THE SAID PERIOD, ACCORDING TO THE ORDER:

- The Carrying of arms, cudgels, swords, spears, bludgeons, unlicensed guns, knives, sticks or lathis or any other such thing which is capable of being used for causing physical harm (violence), save for such firearms where license has been granted by this authority or where specific permission is sought for carriage of such arms from the competent authority.
- The carrying of any corrosive substance or explosives. The carrying, collection and preparation of stones or other missiles or instruments or means of casting or impelling missiles.
- The exhibition of persons or corpses or figures or effigies thereof.
- The public utterance of cries, singing of songs, playing of music.
- Delivery of harangues, the use of gestures or mimetic representations, and the preparation, exhibition or dissemination of pictures, symbols, placards or any other object or thing which may in the opinion of any police officer posted in Mumbai City, offend against decency or morality or undermine the security of or tend to overthrow the state.

47 STUDENTS INJURED IN PALGHAR BUS-TRUCK COLLISION

Palghar: At least 55 persons, including 47 students, were injured in Palghar district of Maharashtra on Friday following a collision between their bus and a truck. Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) officials said that the incident took place near Desai village in Wada tehsil. Vilas Rathod, the corporation's Thane Divisional Controller said that the bus involved in the accident was operated by MSRTC and was ferrying a number of school and college students. At the time of the collision on Chinchpada-Wada Road, the bus, carrying a total of 70 passengers, collided with a truck approaching from the opposite direction. Rathod said that of these passengers, 55, including 47 students, sustained injuries. He said none of the injuries were severe.

IN A FIRST, GEM & JEWELLERY EXPORTS UPTO RS 1 MN ALLOWED VIA COURIER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major milestone, the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) has facilitated India's first exports through the "courier mode" from Mumbai - as against the regular 'cargo mode' - marking a huge leap in simplifying international trade, an official said here. The country's first four jewellery exports from Caratane worth more than \$1,000, via an Air India flight to the US departed on Wednesday. Terming it as a 'historical step', GJEPC Chairman Vipul Shah said that the swift implementation of exports via courier mode within a year of its announcement underscores the government's commitment to this vital sector. "Enabling exports through courier mode -- of upto Rs 10 lakhs value -- will not only open doors to new markets but also significantly expand the value added exports from the sector by reaching directly to retail and end consumers abroad... At a crucial juncture, considering the industry's current challenges," said Shah. Additionally, he said the courier mode for exports can reduce the costs by as much



as 70 per cent compared with the cargo mode, thereby paving the entry of many jewellery businesses in the country into the realm of 'e-commerce'. The GJEPC worked with the Customs Department's Courier Cell, stakeholders of the

Adani Group and the BVC to make the entire process seamless and efficient. Mumbai, being a pivotal export destination would greatly benefit from this service, given its proximity to key gem and jewellery manufacturing

regions including Gujarat. Shah said that the new initiative aligns with GJEPC's mission to promote and simplify international trade in the gems and jewellery sector. This development is expected to further enhance the growth of the industry and open up new avenues for exports, especially in the e-commerce segment. "With the support of the government and the dedication of its members, GJEPC looks forward to continued success in promoting Indian gems and jewellery on the global stage," said Shah. A Mumbai industry player termed the move as very 'laudable' and will now help do away with cumbersome paperwork, liaising with multiple departments including the air cargo and thereby avoiding delays. An apex body of some 9,000 members, the GJEPC was set up by the Union Ministry of Commerce in 1966 to boost the country's export thrust and granted an autonomous state status in 1998. Headquartered in Mumbai, the GJEPC now has regional offices in New Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Surat and Jaipur, all major business centres for the industry.

BANGLADESHI NATIONAL ARRESTED FOR SEXUALLY HARASSING VISTARA AIR HOSTESS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 30-year-old Bangladeshi national was arrested in Mumbai for allegedly sexually harassing a woman flight attendant on board a Muscat-Dhaka flight travelling via Mumbai, a police official said today. The incident took place in the early hours of Thursday some time before the Vistara flight was scheduled to land at the Mumbai international airport, he said. "The accused, identified as Mohammed Dulal, who is a Bangladeshi national, was going to Dhaka from Muscat via Mumbai on a Vistara flight. Half an hour before the plane was to land in Mumbai, Dulal got up from his seat, hugged a female flight attendant and tried to kiss her," the official said. He also tried to flash at other cabin crew members and passengers when they tried to intervene, he said. The accused flyer also did not listen to the flight captain when the latter was reading out a red warning card, declaring him an unruly passenger, he said.



After landing at the Mumbai airport, the accused was handed over to security officers, who took him to the Sahar police station, the

official added. Based on a complaint filed by the flight attendant, a first information report (FIR) under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered against the accused and he was placed under arrest, he said. He was produced in a local court, which remanded him in police custody till Friday, he said. In a statement, a Vistara spokesperson said, "An incident regarding an unruly passenger was reported on Vistara flight UK 234 operating from Muscat to Mumbai on 6 September. In view of the gross misconduct, the captain issued a warning letter and made the decision to restrain the customer." "In accordance with the guidelines and our stringent standard operating procedures (SOPs), the security agencies on-ground were informed to take immediate action upon arrival," the airline official said. The customer has been taken into custody for further investigation by the security agency at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai. The incident has been reported to the local authorities as per the SOPs, the statement added. "Vistara stands firm with its zero-tolerance policy against unruly behaviour that endangers the safety, security, and dignity of its customers and staff," the spokesperson said.

RAIPUR AIRHOSTESS' KILLER HANGS SELF IN MUMBAI POLICE LOCK-UP

Mumbai: Vikram Atwal, the prime accused in the killing of a trainee airhostess Rupal Ogrey of Raipur, Chhattisgarh on September 3, has allegedly ended life by hanging himself in the police lockup, hours before he was to be produced before a court for extending his police remand, officials said here on Friday. Atwal, 40, was nabbed early on Monday by a team of the Powai Police Station, barely hours after he had slit the throat of Ogrey, 24, at her posh home in Marol, Andheri east. A resident of Tunga in the Marol area, he was due to be produced before a court on Friday afternoon for extension of his custodial remand. Early in the day, he had gone to the lock-up toilet and then did not come out for long, after which the police broke the door and found him hanging there with his own clothes from a pipe. Atwal's family comprising his wife and two daughters have been informed of his death and further investigations are underway.

FIRE BREAKS OUT AT KURLA SLUM; NO CASUALTIES

Mumbai: A massive fire broke out at a slum in Mumbai's Kurla East slum area - Qureshi Nagar in the early hours of Friday morning. According to officials, no casualty or injury to anyone has been reported so far. "The locals of the area noticed the fire and raised an alarm," said the official. Around five to six residential structures have been gutted, the official informed. "These are one-storey structures. No one was injured," said the Mumbai Fire Brigade (MFB) official. "At 5:20 am, a fire broke out due to a short circuit in the meter box. The fire was extinguished completely after two hours," the MFB official added. Following the information, fire tenders reached the spot and started the operation to douse the fire. "The fire started from the electric meter box. The primary cause of the fire has been identified as a short circuit," the official added. "We asked the residents if they require temporary shelter but they shifted to other places on their own," the official stated. Further details are awaited.

POLICEMEN TURN 'GOVINDAS' AND BREAK 'DAHI HANDI' AS TWO GROUPS QUARREL

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Some police personnel on 'bandobast' duty assumed the role of 'Govindas' and broke a 'dahi handi' after noticing two groups fighting over their turn to form a human pyramid first to reach the clay pot filled with curd at Bhiwandi town in Maharashtra's Thane district. According to the news agency, the incident, in which a policeman got richer by Rs 40,000 for successfully completing the task, occurred on Thursday when 'Dahi Handi' festival was celebrated across Maharashtra with fervour. As part of the Dahi Handi festival, which marks the birth anniversary of Lord Krishna, youngsters form multi-storeyed human pyramids to reach the curd-filled claypots that are suspended mid-air. Those participating in the act are called 'Govindas'.



A big Dahi Handi event was organised at Anand Dighe Chowk in Bhiwandi on Thursday. But two local groups - one from Chavindra village and another from Nagoan - confronted each other over who would break that dahi handi, a police official said. The police personnel, who were on duty there, brought the situation under control by pacifying the warring groups. The prize money was distributed equally between the two groups, but the police decided that none of the groups would be allowed break the dahi handi, he said. It was also decided that the police would themselves break the dahi handi. Accordingly, the height of the dahi handi was lowered and a two-tiered human pyramid comprising the police personnel was formed, he added. The policeman who broke the dahi handi got the cash prize of Rs

40,000, the official said. Meanwhile, as many as 195 'Govindas', youngsters involved in the formation of multi-storeyed human pyramids as part of 'Dahi Handi' celebrations associated with Krishna Janmashtami, were injured in Mumbai, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said on Friday. BMC said that out of 195 Govindas, 18 were admitted to the hospital while 177 others were discharged. "195 Govindas injured in different incidents during Dahi Handi organised on the occasion of Krishna Janmashtami, in Mumbai. Out of which, 18 were admitted to the hospital, and 177 others were discharged," BMC said. The injured revellers were taken to various medical facilities, including KEM Hospital, Sion Hospital, Rajawadi Hospital, ST George Hospital, Nair Hospital, Bombay Hospital and Cooper Hospital.



EDITOR'S SPECS

India's G20 presidency has led to several new initiatives

The G20 presidency in India has led to many new initiatives and achievements. With the G20 summit scheduled to take place on September 9 and 10 in New Delhi under India's G20 presidency, there have been several initiatives which have been witnessed in the last 10 months. India took the lead in the annual G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting by being the first to deliver a fully negotiated and embraced G20 Foreign Ministers Outcome Document and Chair Summary (FMM ODCS), sources said. This comprehensive document highlighted critical themes relevant to member states, including the strengthening of multilateralism, countering terrorism, and addressing global health concerns, among others. It was India's presidency that played host to the inaugural Voice of the Global South summit, they further said. With participation from 125 countries across 10 sessions spanning two days, this landmark event provided a platform for participants to voice the concerns, ideas, challenges, and priorities of the developing world. The G20 meeting of Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS) during India's Presidency supported the launching of Millets And Other Ancient Grains International Research Initiative (MAHARISHI), which is an endeavour to establish mechanisms to connect researchers and institutions, encourage information sharing and organise capacity-building activities, among other across the G20 countries, sources said. The inception meeting of the G20 EMPOWER group was held under India's presidency. G20 Alliance for the Empowerment and Progression of Women's Economic Representation (EMPOWER) is an alliance of G20 business leaders and governments that aims to accelerate women's leadership and empowerment in the private sector, they further said. Also, there was consensus around 'Cyber Security in the Digital Economy' and digital skills.

XI'S TELLING ABSENCE AT G20

Satarupa Bhattacharjya

Chinese President Xi Jinping will skip the two-day G20 Summit in New Delhi slated to kick off on Saturday. In his place, the Chinese delegation will be led by Premier Li Qiang, who heads the country's cabinet and is second in government hierarchy in Beijing. Many China-watchers were surprised when it became clear that the top leader of the world's second-largest economy will not attend the annual gathering on global economic governance. China's Foreign Ministry announced Li's visit earlier this week. Through remarks to media, China has said it wants the G20 Summit to succeed and called for deeper economic cooperation among the grouping's 19 countries plus the European Union, and Indian officials have said Xi's absence would not be the first time a head of state or government would miss such an event. But China's decision is telling -- Xi has attended all previous G20 Summits (including appearing on video post-pandemic) since taking over the Communist Party leadership in 2012. Some foreign policy analysts interpret this as a snub to both host country India and the Western world but do not view the development as undermining the overall summit. In addition, there is little expectation among analysts that the so-called leaders' declaration, to the liking of all members, will be produced at the end of the September 9-10 meetings - an assessment since last year's G20 Summit in Indonesia that any version this year will likely contain "notes of objection" from Russia and China due to different positions in the global grouping on Moscow full scale invasion of Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Mexican counterpart Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador will also not be present, as they have indicated to the Indian government. Leaders of the other 15 countries and the EU are scheduled to arrive in India. Russia will be represented by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Mexico by Economy Minister Raquel Buenrostro Sanchez. Conveys message. Ashok Kantha, a former Indian ambassador to China, said, Xi's absence conveys a message. "In the context of G20, it is the downgrading of China's representation, from president to premier."

Going by Chinese diplomatic norms, the President usually attends the main G20, BRICS and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings while the premier attends the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the East Asia Summits (EAS), and both attend the main Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting, hence this break from protocol is unusual. Li is expected to travel to New Delhi from Jakarta after participating in ASEAN meetings and the East Asia summit. Kantha, who was posted in Beijing during Xi's first term as party general secretary (president of the country), said: "This is also a signal to India, given the high level of importance China attaches to G20." The decision reflects the downward slide in India-China relations, with continued border tensions among the most prominent of issues. That Xi's interaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Johannesburg in August "didn't go well", is showing to an extent now, Kantha said. Both governments had issued statements soon after when the differences were apparent. Kantha said tangible outcomes in different fields are expected from this year's G20 and Xi's absence, while notable, does not undermine the summit. Some analysts perceive a growing discomfort for China in the global grouping that was founded in 1999, following an Asian financial crisis, owing to differences with the West over the Ukraine war. "Under the present circumstances, China has a lower comfort level (than earlier) at G20 if you look at the statements on Ukraine," Kantha said. Srikanth Kondapalli, a professor of Chinese studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, said a major reason for Xi's absence could be China's approach to the summit -- through foreign policy. "It would be a worst-case scenario for Chinese foreign policy if a situation arose where it's China versus the rest 18," Kondapalli said, adding that many countries of the grouping might look to China's leader for answers on the Ukraine conflict because of well-established Sino-Russian ties. "China wouldn't like to see itself isolated at the meeting." India has taken a position (abstention) similar to China's at the UN during votes related to the war, with regard to Russia. China has blamed the North Atlantic Treaty

Organization (NATO) for what it sees as forcing Putin's hand in the conflict. The news of Xi's absence is also frustrating some EU leaders who had sought appointments to meet with him on the sidelines of the summit, according to the South China Morning Post. Unprecedented move. Analysts suggest Xi's nonattendance at this year's G20, which is unprecedented going by his past appearances, does not help China either, especially at a time of its geopolitical ascension. "You are a rising superpower that wants to help shape global rules, you should show up," Ian Chong, associate professor of politics at the National University of Singapore, said. "Xi not being there takes away some of the weight from the Chinese delegation. "The other economies will not hear the PRC chief himself speak," Chong said, referring to China by its full formal name. On the other hand, it doesn't undermine the event, Chong said. China's intensifying rivalry with the US over a host of issues and strained relations with India could still put pressure on the summit's atmosphere. India is pushing for the African Union to be included in G20, China, which has its own engagement with Africa, is unlikely to come in the way of that. But the Asian neighbours appear to be vying for a championing role in the developing world. "I can see why India might use the G20 to claim some leadership in the Global South," Chong said, adding that Xi not being at the summit would help India in that context. Xi was given South Africa's top honour during his recent visit to the country for BRICS. Chong, who specialises in Chinese politics, said the reason (or reasons) why Xi is skipping this year's G20 summit is unclear because of the opacity of China's political system, which is leading to speculation, but, more importantly, affecting the global public perception of the country. Although missing a G20 summit is a first for Xi, Kondapalli, the veteran China analyst, cited the example of former Chinese President Hu Jintao, who in 2009 cut short his visit to Italy for the erstwhile G8 summit following ethnic clashes in Northwest China. "Xi is not going to G20 because he doesn't want the summit to be hijacked by bilateral issues," Einar Tangen, a commentator on political and economic affairs in Beijing, said. "India has politicised the issue



by holding some meetings in Kashmir." A G20 tourism event was held in Kashmir in May, which the Chinese government then boycotted. "As G20 is about economies, Xi is sending his top economy person to the summit," Tangen said of Li, who heads the State Council, which is responsible for economic planning in China. Other senior officials in the Chinese G20 delegation are State Councilor Wu Zhenglong, Commerce Minister Wang Wentao, Vice-Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxun, Pan Gongsheng, governor of the People's Bank of China, and Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin, according to non-Chinese diplomatic sources. Tangen, who is often quoted in Chinese state media, said economic issues are at odds with political issues at G20. Despite the hectic behind-the-scenes negotiations that diplomats from G20 member countries and economies are conducting, an all-pleasing joint statement will likely elude this year's summit.

international

SPACEX REFUSED GOVT REQUEST TO ACTIVATE STARLINK TO SINK RUSSIAN FLEET: MUSK

San Francisco | Agencies Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk on Friday revealed that he did not budge to an emergency request from the government authorities to switch on space internet service SpaceX up to Sevastopol in Crimea, which is a major port on the Black Sea, to target Russian ships. "There was an emergency request from government authorities to activate Starlink all the way to Sevastopol," said Musk, without mentioning the Ukrainian government. "The obvious intent being to sink most of the Russian fleet at anchor. If I had agreed to their request, then SpaceX would be explicitly



complicit in a major act of war and conflict escalation," the X owner added. "The Starlink regions in question were not activated. SpaceX did not deactivate anything," Musk added. "Both sides should agree to a truce. Every day that passes, more Ukrainian and Russian youth die to gain and lose small pieces of land, with borders barely changing. This is not worth their lives," Musk emphasised. Last year, Musk had said that his Starlink was the only internet service left in Ukraine, and Russia was actively trying to kill it too. "Starlink is the only comms system still working at warfront -- others are all dead. Russia is actively trying to kill Starlink. To safeguard, SpaceX has diverted massive resources towards defence," he had tweeted.

and Ukraine should agree to a truce as hundreds of youth continue to die at both sides. "Both sides should agree to a truce. Every day that passes, more Ukrainian and Russian youth die to gain and lose small pieces of land, with borders barely changing. This is not worth their lives," Musk emphasised. Last year, Musk had said that his Starlink was the only internet service left in Ukraine, and Russia was actively trying to kill it too. "Starlink is the only comms system still working at warfront -- others are all dead. Russia is actively trying to kill Starlink. To safeguard, SpaceX has diverted massive resources towards defence," he had tweeted.

49 CIVILIANS, 15 SOLDIERS KILLED IN TERRORIST ATTACK IN MALI

Bamako | At least 49 civilians and 15 soldiers were killed in a dual terrorist attack in northern Mali, the government said in a statement. Claimed by the Group to Support Islam and Muslims (GSIM), the two attacks targeted the passengers of the boat "Tomboutou" and a military camp of the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA) in Gao region on Thursday, Xinhua news agency quoted the statement as saying. The river was traveling on the River Niger from Gao to Mopti. "In response to this double attack, a combined air-land action by our valiant FAMA made it possible to neutralise around 50 terrorists," the statement said. "Immediate arrangements were made to evacuate all passengers and secure the places which are still the subject of sweeping and surveillance." A few hours after the attacks, Mali's interim president, Assimi Goita, declared a three-day national mourning. Mali has been ruled by a military junta since 2020. An insurgency with links to the Al Qaeda and Islamic State terror groups took root in the north of Mali in 2012.

HK hit by heaviest rainfall in nearly 140 years

Hong Kong | Agencies Hong Kong was battered by the heaviest rainfall in nearly 140 years, leading to widespread flooding and waterlogging, authorities said on Friday. On Friday, streets and subway stations were inundated, with schools and workplaces ordered to shut down, reports the BBC. The weather bureau said the downpour, which began on Thursday, is the biggest to hit the city in nearly 140 years. Emergency services said more than 100 people were taken to hospitals and several rescues had taken place. Pictures from the city on Thursday night showed the torrential rain flooding streets, shopping centres and public transport. Videos on social media showed people climbing on to cars and other elevated platforms to escape the waters, which have risen several metres-high in some areas, blocking



off subway entrances, the BBC reported. Hong Kong's cross harbour tunnel, a key route connecting the main island to the Kowloon peninsula in its north, was inundated. The rain also triggered landslides in Hong Kong's mountainous areas, blocking some highways. By Friday afternoon, the downpours had somewhat eased with authorities downgrading the rain-storm from a "black" warning to "amber" alert. But they warned show-ers were expected to persist until Saturday.

Record-breaking 24 mn domestic train tickets sold in France this summer

Paris | Agencies Domestic train ticket sales in France hit a record-breaking number of 24 million this summer, Minister Delegate for Transport Clement Beaune said. Beane told radio station Franceinfo on Thursday that over 800 mainline trains were put into service across the country during the summer season, adding 450,000 to 500,000 additional seats compared to the number available in the summer of 2022, reports Xinhua news agency. Meanwhile, the CEO of the French national railway company's passenger train section, Christophe Fanichet, told French newspaper 20 Minutes that the new record of ticket sales was 4 per cent higher than in the summer of 2022. The occupancy rate of high-speed trains (TGV) in France exceeded 80 per cent during the summer season, and 40 per cent of these trains were full, Fanichet



added. The Atlantic coast and the Mediterranean were particularly popular destinations this summer, he said, while ticket sales also increased sharply for "green destinations" such as the Alps, Burgundy, and Alsace. Rail traffic was boosted by

N.KOREA UNVEILS NEW 'TACTICAL NUCLEAR ATTACK SUBMARINE'

Seoul | Agencies North Korea has launched a newly built "tactical nuclear attack submarine" capable of carrying out an underwater nuclear attack, with leader Kim Jong-un vowing to "further strengthen the state nuclear deterrence," the North Korea's state media said on Friday. The launching ceremony for the submarine, held on Wednesday, was attended by the North Korean leader ahead of the country's 75th founding anniversary, which falls on Saturday, according to the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). "The submarine-launching ceremony heralded the beginning of a new chapter for bolstering up the naval force of the North Korea and made clearer the steadfast will of the WPK and the government of the North Korea to further strengthen the state nuclear deterrence both in quality and quantity and by leaps and bounds for regional and global peace and security," the KCNA said, referring to the ruling Workers' Party (WPK). Named the "Hero Kim Kun Ok", the tactical nuclear attack submarine No. 841 -- the first of its kind -- will "perform its combat mission as one of the core underwater offensive means of the naval force" of the North Korea, Yonhap news agency reported. "The fact that the nuclear attack submarine, considered a symbol of invasion against our republic for decades, now symbolises our power that terrifies the shameless enemies and that it is a



new attack submarine of our own style unseen by the world, is truly something welcomed by all our people," Kim said during his speech, hinting that the latest move was aimed at countering US nuclear-powered submarines. Calling it an "urgent task of the times" to arm the navy with nuclear weapons, Kim urged the swift transfer of "underwater and surface vessels equipped with tactical nuclear weapons" to the Navy.

He also announced the country's plans to build more submarines, including a nuclear-powered submarine. "Today's launching ceremony will shoulder no less burden for our enemies than building a nuclear-powered submarine," Kim said. He then stressed that the rapid development of the naval force is the "top priority" for national defence, given the geopolitical situation, as well as "recent aggressive attempts by the enemies". Initial photos released by the KCNA suggest the latest submarine is equipped with 10 missile tubes that can likely fire submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), though the reclusive North Korea has not provided any details. A military source said the North Korea appears to have modified a Romeo-class submarine, which is not capable of carrying an SLBM launcher. The submarine is also presumed to be capable of launching the "Haeil," the North Korea's first-ever nuclear-armed unmanned underwater vehicle unveiled last March. The ceremony comes as North Korea has been bolstering its military cooperation with Russia and China in the wake of growing trilateral security cooperation among Seoul, Washington and Tokyo. It also comes amid reports that Kim may travel to Vladivostok, Russia, next week to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin and discuss a possible arms deal. Seoul's spy agency earlier said Russia had proposed conducting three-way naval exercises with North Korea and China in late July.





CHIEF MINISTER SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN CHAIRS SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEET Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit MP's Bina on Sep 14

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday chaired a high-level meeting of senior officials and directed them to work for bringing about development in the state.

Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains and Madhya Pradesh Director General of Police (DGP) Sudhir Saxena along with other senior officials heading their respective departments were present in the meeting held at Chief Minister's residence.

During the meeting, CM Chouhan gave necessary guidelines regarding law and order situation in the state. He directed officials to continue monitoring the condition of crops, supply of fertilizers, electricity system, and timely payment in beneficiary-oriented schemes.

"District collectors and SPs should coordinate with each other and take



necessary action to ensure law and order situation in the state. Strict action would be taken against those creating disturbance," CM Chouhan said. He directed officials to review

the condition of crops, supply of fertilisers, electricity system, timely payment in beneficiary-oriented schemes, implementation of tap-water schemes and operation of

development chariots in the state.

Meanwhile, CM Chouhan also said that 'Jan Awas Yojana' will be launched soon in Madhya Pradesh. The scheme would provide home to those who could not avail the benefit of Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY). He had announced the scheme while addressing the state on August 15. As per the official data, Madhya Pradesh has created a record in the country in 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna' (Urban) as it got second position in the category of best-performing states by providing about 6.76 lakh 'pucca' houses to beneficiaries in urban areas in the state while 2.78 lakh houses are under progress.

"Under the PMAY (Urban) scheme, a total of 6,75,988 lakh houses have been provided to beneficiaries in urban areas in the state so far against the sanctioned 9,53,933 whereas 2,77,945 'pucca' houses are under progress," said an official.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit poll-bound Madhya Pradesh on September 14, Chief Minister's Office said on Thursday.

During his visit, he will lay the foundation stone for the expansion of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL) in Bina district.

According to the MP government, the Bina refinery project (BPCL) would be worth Rs 50,000 crore.

The refinery's capacity (crude distillation/vacuum distillation unit) is 7.7 million metric tonnes per annum and the expansion aims to take this figure to 11 MMTPA.

Notably, the BPCL refinery unit in Bina district was set up on May 11 and the project



was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. Last time, PM Modi visited

a poll-bound MP on August 12 and laid the foundation stone for Sant Ravidas temple in Sagar district.

Big B 'scared' of Income Tax Dept: 'Hawa paani sab band ho jata hai' Scribe-turned-media advisor to Kamal Nath sans political background rising face in MP politics

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Veteran Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan, who is the host of the quiz based reality show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati' season 15, shared how he gets scared when Income Tax Department does their normal and routine work.

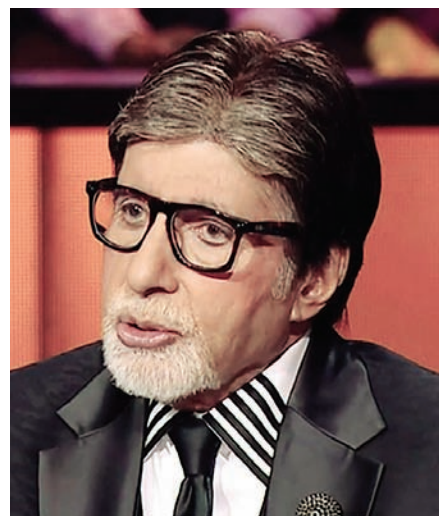
In the episode 19 of the show, Akanksha Singh from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, bagged the hot seat after winning the fastest finger first.

She lauded the actor saying: "Your energy, and aura is exemplary".

Replying to her, Big B said: "What do you do?", to which she said: "Sir, I'm Assistant Commissioner, State Tax, at present. I work in the commercial tax department of Madhya Pradesh."

The actor said: "This is scary. Income tax related stuff. Your job, do you work with all your might? I'm doing the same here. What is so special here? When you write summons and instruct to locate a person who hasn't paid tax. It requires your energy, right? I do as I'm told". Akanksha

The 'Sholay' actor said: "Everybody has an



income tax issue, and you resolve it. When we meet people like you, from the Income Tax Department, and they say that it's normal and routine work. It's your routine, but hamare liye hamara hawa paani sab band ho jata hai."

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former journalist Piyush Babele, who is currently heading Madhya Pradesh Congress media cell, has established himself as one of the key strategists in the team of former chief minister Kamal Nath. Babele (41), who was appointed as media advisor to state Congress president Kamal Nath in January this year, has been a non-political rising face in Madhya Pradesh through his literary works and strategies to counter the ruling BJP.

Recently, he has been awarded with 'Pt. Nehru Shikhar Samman' for his book titled 'Nehru Mithak Aur Satya'. The award was presented by a panel of jurists associated with 'Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru Bal Sahitya Academy' during a programme in Jaipur (Rajasthan) on Wednesday. The academy has also awarded 16 others persons for their distinguished contribution in literature. Notably, Babele was appointed as



media advisor to Kamal Nath in January this year after former Congress media coordinator Narendra Saluja joined the BJP at a time when the Bharat Jodo Yatra was marching through the state. Beside, heading the state Congress media, Babele is also handling the social media accounts of Kamal Nath.

With over two decades of experience in journalism with several national media organisations, Babele has established himself as one of the key strategists to Kamal Nath.

Sources said that it was Babele's plan to put banners projecting Kamal Nath as future Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh on January 1.

However, a section of senior Congress leaders had then raised questions and debate over declaring Kamal Nath as chief ministerial face has started. There were resentments from some senior party leaders, however, Babele's plan succeeded after former chief minister and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh had also made a statement that the Congress will contest the election under the leadership of Kamal Nath.

The former journalist, who claimed to be a follower of Gandhian ideology, has also authored the book 'Congress and Rashtrianman ki Gaatha', which elaborates the roles of Congress before and after independence and on the other side the boos also raises questions on BJP's ideological body Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its leaders' role for the same. In his book, Babele has

explained the role played by the contemporary Congress leaders and freedom fighters in making the nation free, including the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose, Lokmanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi. However, the content of the 47th number page made BJP leaders furious, wherein he has questioned the role of contemporary RSS members, including its founder Keshav Baliram Hedgewar and VD Savarkar.

In his book, Babele has put Savarkar and Pakistan's founder Mohd. Ali Jinnah in the same category. It has mentioned that "both Mohd. Ali Jinnah and Savarkar were against Congress' 'Bharat Chhodo movement' (Quit India Movement)". "Jinnah demanded the formation of Pakistan on the basis of religion (Islam), and Savarkar too had demanded to make India a Hindu Rashtra. Therefore, both Jinnah and Savarkar had a similar hardliner ideology," he writes in the book.

CARRIERS AND SICK PERSONS SHOULD GET COUNSELING CARDS IMMEDIATELY: GOVERNOR Our main goal is to increase the income of Ladli Bahnas by connecting them with self-help groups: CM Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel said that after sickle cell test, ensure timely arrangement to provide counseling cards for sick persons. He said that in order to speed-up sickle cell examination, identify sensitive areas and communities and examine them. Governor Patel has said that the challenges of health programmes should be taken up with full force and sensitivity. An action plan should be made in advance so that the progress of health programmes does not stop due to election work.

Governor Patel was addressing the review meeting of Sickle Cell and T.B. eradication programmes at Raj Bhavan. In the meeting, President of Tribal Cell Deepak Khandekar, Additional Chief Secretary Public Health Family Welfare Mohammad Suleman and Principal Secretary to the Governor D.P. Ahuja were also present.



Governor Patel said that a separate special ward should be made for the treatment of sickle cell in big hospitals of tribal dominated areas. Integrated arrangements for sickle cell diagnosis and treatment should be ensured in the ward. The health department should do effective phase-wise monitoring of screening, card distribution, treatment etc. Cure for sickle cell in traditional medicine also Citing the example of Dang, district in Gujarat

with 95 percent tribal dominance, Governor Patel said that there are only a few hundred patients of sickle cell disease there. Presumably there may be the widespread availability of herbs, their effects on the environment, and the traditional herbal knowledge of the community. He also informed about the success of medicine by homeopaths and asked the department to make efforts for research and study for this. Information should also be sought on sickle cell treatment efforts in different regions around the country.

Respect Nikshay Mitras Governor Patel said that the goal of eradication of TB is to be achieved by the year 2025. Awareness programmes must be conducted for its eradication. Active Nikshay Mitras should be encouraged to achieve active public participation in patient nutrition efforts. Local public representatives, distinguished citizens and industrialists should also be included in these programmes.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that our only goal is not only to provide funds to the Ladli Bahnas of Madhya Pradesh every month under the Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana, but also to increase the income of the Bahnas to Rs 10,000 per month by connecting them with self-help groups.

Chief Minister Chouhan has said in a special message to the Ladli Bahnas of the state that- "It is our

endeavour to raise the income of sisters to at least Rs 10,000 per month. For this, all women who are doing domestic chores will have to connect to self-help groups. We will increase the income of women by initiating many activities. Women should resolve not to remain poor, not to shed tears, and live happily.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that the amount of Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana will be transferred from Gwalior on September 10 at 2 pm to the accounts of Ladli Bahnas. Ladli Bahnas

will gather in their village and city and will also participate in the dialogue.

Chief Minister Chouhan has also said in a message that- "This time Raksha Bandhan has been celebrated with great joy and enthusiasm. I consider myself a lucky brother because lakhs of sisters from all over the state have sent rakhis as well as letters which I have preserved. My goal is to usher happiness in the lives of my sisters. May you be happy and may you be blessed. Your brother will leave no stone to ensure this."

G-20 CONFERENCE WILL SHOW THE WAY TO WORLD WELFARE: CM CHOUHAN

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that it is a matter of great pride that India is presiding over the G-20 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. On this occasion, I heartily welcome and greet all the heads of state and guests who have visited our country. India gave the principle of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam thousands of years ago, we consider the entire world as one family and this is also the theme of G-20. Welfare of the world is the basic feeling of India, Prime Minister Modi is leading the world.

Under his leadership, this G-20 conference will show a new way for the welfare of the world and for everyone to remain happy and healthy.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan for Constantly Monitoring of Law and Order Situation

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan while addressing the Commissioners, IGs, Collectors and S.Ps through video conference asked them to continuously monitor law and order situation, supply of fertilizers, electricity supply, timely payment in beneficiary oriented schemes, implementation of tap water schemes and operation of Vikas Rathas.

It is our duty to maintain law and order

CM Chouhan said that it is our duty to maintain law and order. Let us not let leave any chance for lacuna. The Director General of Police should continuously review the law and order situation during festivals. He asked them to hold a meeting of SP-Collector Peace Committee and take decisions, create an environment of peace in the state.

Relief for crop loss

The Chief Minister said that it is a matter of happiness that rains. This will give life to many crops, but soybean crops have been damaged at many places. Farmers should not worry. The welfare of farmers is the priority of the government. All district officers should keep an eye on the crops. Relief will be given for loss of crop due to deficient rainfall. Crop insurance will also be paid. CM Chouhan said that it is our duty to provide relief under RBC 6(4) after assessing the damage.

10 hour power supply for agriculture

CM Chouhan said that situation regarding power supply is normal, but we are constantly monitoring the situation. Collectors-Commissioners should also keep assessing the supply situation in and ensure 10 hours of power supply for agriculture.



CM Chouhan instructed to develop a system to provide necessary guidance to farmers to save them from

damage to crops. He said that arrangements should be made to provide quick guidance to the farmers accord-

ing to the circumstances. Instructions were given to hold a meeting of the water utility committee of the district and to ensure water supply from the dam for the crops.

Give Fertilizer to Farmers On Time

The Chief Minister said that there is no shortage of fertilizers. It is the responsibility of the collectors to ensure the supply of fertilizers. After assessing the availability of fertilizers in the district on time, the demand of the district should be conveyed to the state government. It is necessary to ensure that fertilizers are available to the farmers at the time of need.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that the works of Jal-Jeevan Mission should be reviewed. All related tasks are completed within time frame. Restoration works should be completed on priority.

Payments to beneficiaries

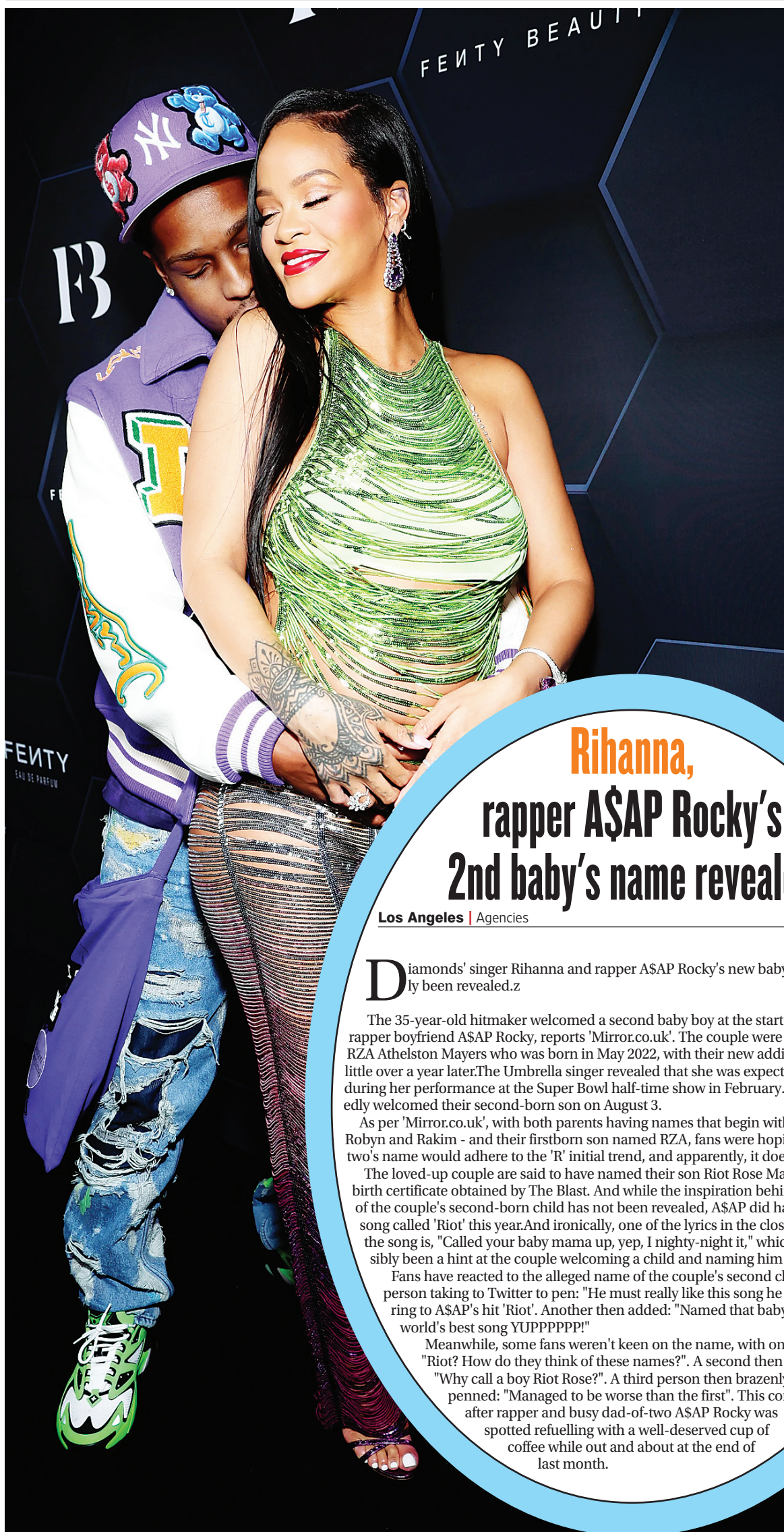
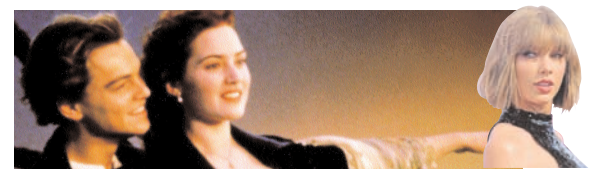
Chief Minister Chouhan said that timely payment of benefits under beneficiary oriented schemes should be ensured. Beneficiaries did not face any problem in payment due to election work or other reason.

Chief Minister Jan Awas Yojana soon

Chief Minister Chouhan said that Mukhyamantri Jan Awas Yojana is being implemented in the state soon. Those who could not be included in Pradhan Mantri Awas and Awas Plus will be provided houses under this scheme. It is necessary to ensure that no unethical activity starts in this work.

Copies of Gareeb Kalyan Panchayat level

Chief Minister Chouhan said that on September 10, Ladli Bahna Day, the amount of Ladli Bahana Yojana will be deposited in the accounts of women from Gwalior. He instructed to make copies of the reports of Gareeb Kalyan available up to the panchayat level.



Rihanna, rapper A\$AP Rocky's 2nd baby's name revealed

Los Angeles | Agencies

Diamonds' singer Rihanna and rapper A\$AP Rocky's new baby's name has finally been revealed.

The 35-year-old hitmaker welcomed a second baby boy at the start of August with her rapper boyfriend A\$AP Rocky, reports 'Mirror.co.uk'. The couple were already parents to RZA Athelston Mayers who was born in May 2022, with their new addition coming just a little over a year later. The Umbrella singer revealed that she was expecting baby number two during her performance at the Super Bowl half-time show in February. The couple supposedly welcomed their second-born son on August 3.

As per 'Mirror.co.uk', with both parents having names that begin with the initial 'R' - Robyn and Rakim - and their firstborn son named RZA, fans were hoping that baby number two's name would adhere to the 'R' initial trend, and apparently, it does.

The loved-up couple are said to have named their son Riot Rose Mayers, according to a birth certificate obtained by The Blast. And while the inspiration behind the alleged name of the couple's second-born child has not been revealed, A\$AP did happen to release a song called 'Riot' this year. And ironically, one of the lyrics in the closing moments of the song is, "Called your baby mama up, yep, I nighty-night it," which could have possibly been a hint at the couple welcoming a child and naming him 'Riot'.

Fans have reacted to the alleged name of the couple's second child, with one person taking to Twitter to pen: "He must really like this song he made," referring to A\$AP's hit 'Riot'. Another then added: "Named that baby after boys world's best song YUPPPPPPP!"

Meanwhile, some fans weren't keen on the name, with one writing: "Riot? How do they think of these names?". A second then said: "Why call a boy Riot Rose?". A third person then brazenly penned: "Managed to be worse than the first". This comes after rapper and busy dad-of-two A\$AP Rocky was spotted refuelling with a well-deserved cup of coffee while out and about at the end of last month.



LEONARDO DICAPRIO IS 'SETTLING DOWN' WITH VITTORIA CERETTI

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio has found love again and has reportedly settled down with the Italian model Vittoria Ceretti.

The 'What's Eating Gilbert Grape' star has reportedly been dating Vittoria, 25, for at least two months and they were spotted kissing in a nightclub in Ibiza earlier this week, reports Mirror.co.uk.

Leo, 48, is 23 years older than Vittoria with whom he appears to be smitten.

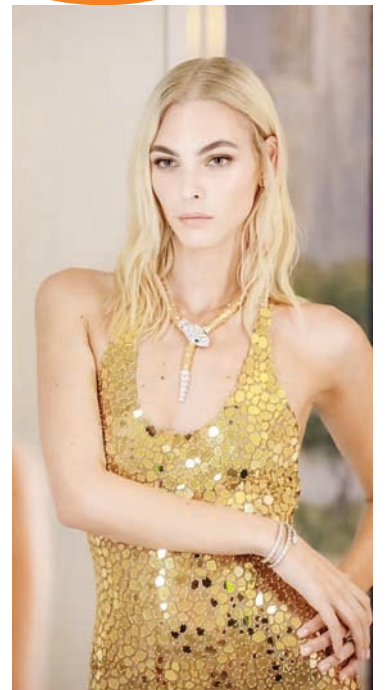
The actor has notoriously only dated women under the age of 25 and appears to break up with his significant other when they reach the milestone. But sources close to the 'Wolf Of Wall Street' star now say that he has found true love.

As per Mirror.co.uk,

one insider claimed that he is "besotted" with Vittoria and that she is being called his "girlfriend". He has allegedly spent the summer jetting around the world with his new love.

One friend close to him told the Daily Mail: "Vittoria is a beautiful girl, but Leonardo is of course surrounded by many beautiful girls most of the time. But he adores her and she adores him. They have been spending a lot of time together this summer, travelling around on romantic trips. It has obviously led to much chatter within his circle that Leo is ready to hang up his lothario ways. There have been many women pictured with him, partying with him, but what he has with Vittoria is much more serious."

The daughter of designer Francesca Lazzari, Vittoria has seemingly rubbed shoulders with many mutual acquaintances of Leonardo, including his alleged former flame Gigi Hadid.



Leah Remini opens up on Danny Masterson hearing, says justice was served

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Leah Remini, best known for her role in the series 'King of Queens' has spoken out about the sentencing of Danny Masterson for rape, saying that justice is finally served.

The 'That 70's Show' star was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment following two counts of rape, after he was found guilty, proceeded to rip the actor a new one. Taking to X, she wrote: "I am relieved that this dangerous rapist will be off the streets and unable to violently assault and rape women with the help of Scientology, a multi-billion-dollar criminal organisation with tax-exempt status. Hearing the survivors read their victim impact statements aloud in court while the man who raped them and some of the very Scientologists who terrorised them over two decades were just a few feet away displayed a level of bravery that I am in awe of." The women who survived Danny's predation fought tirelessly for justice. Their tenacity, strength, and courage have given hope to all victims of

Scientology that justice is possible. For that, we will forever be grateful," she added.

The actress further penned her gratitude to the Los Angeles Police

Department and the city's District Attorney for the sentencing. "To the LAPD detectives, the LA District Attorney's office, Judge Olmedo, and the jury, we thank you for your fair and impartial approach to this case and trial."

Prosecutors had alleged that Masterson, who was arrested and charged on three counts of forcible rape in 2020, sexually assaulted three women in separate incidents between 2001 and 2003 at his Hollywood Hills home, Eonline reported. Masterson's first trial in 2022 was declared a mistrial after a jury was unable to reach unanimous decisions for the three rape charges. However, during Masterson's retrial, which took place earlier this year, the jury found him guilty on two counts. The jury was unable to reach a verdict on the third count.



Lily Allen calls her wedding with David Harbour 'best decision'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor David Harbour and English songstress Lily Harbour are now celebrating three years of a happy and blissful marriage, with the singer calling the wedding, her best decision.

The British singer-songwriter, 38, shared an Instagram photo from the couple's wedding day in 2020. "3 years with this guy, 2nd best decision I ever made. 1st was that dress," Allen captioned the post.

In the image, Allen and the 'Stranger Things' actor, 48, are looking at each other, with the singer laughing while wearing a simple veil to complement her white off-the-shoulder mini wedding dress, People magazine reported.

Two years ago, to celebrate their first wedding anniversary, Allen shared a carousel of photo and video memories on Instagram.

One of the photos included a picture of her in her wedding dress, paired with a cheetah coat, while showing off her veil and manicured nails.

"1 year down with this guy. Happy Anniversary baby @dkharbour," she wrote. "I prefer my life with you in it. You can stay." Allen and Harbour tied the knot in Las Vegas in a low-key ceremony officiated by an Elvis Presley impersonator. The wedding took place only a day after the couple obtained a marriage license.

"In a wedding officiated by the king himself, the people's princess wed her devoted, low born, but kind credit card holder in a beautiful ceremony lit by the ashen skies courtesy of a burning state miles away in the midst of a global pandemic," Harbour captioned his post from their wedding day at the time.



"Refreshments were served at a small reception following." Since the wedding, Harbour has become the step-father of Allen's two daughters, Marnie and Ethel, whom he has frequently been hanging out with since. Just recently, he took one of them to Taylor Swift's Eras Tour concert in Minneapolis.

Speaking with People back in 2020, Harbour explained that he is proudly involved in the lives of Ethel, 11, and Marnie.

"I'm in a relationship with three women who all have very different opinions of me at various times," the 'Hellboy' star joked at the time.

In all seriousness, Harbour said, "Making that kind of a commitment, which I haven't for most of my life, was a huge thing for me. And it just makes you feel a little bit more like a man, to be honest. I just feel a little bit more like an adult."

Cardi B, Megan Thee Stallion 'Bongos' features rappers dancing on beach, pool in extravagant outfits

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rappers Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion have shared their first collaboration since 2020's 'WAP' with 'Bongos'.

"BRING OUT THE BONGOS (sic)", Megan posted on X (formerly Twitter) alongside two sultry pictures. "Is everybody doing alright?" Cardi B asked, sharing a clip of the video on her social media, reports People magazine.

The track, which features Latin-infused beats, was released alongside a music video, which features Cardi, 30, and Megan, 28, dancing on the beach and pool in extravagant outfits, accessories and bright backgrounds. In the colourful visual, Cardi wears a variety of outfits, including a large, teal feathered hat and an orange bikini top, while Megan rocks a multi-coloured green one-piece in one of her looks, in addition to a golden yellow swimsuit with a matching gold skirt.

As per People, the rappers matched out-

fits near the end of the video, wearing cherry-red swimsuits.

The pair initially began teasing the release of 'Bongos' on Monday via Instagram, revealing their latest collaboration would drop on Friday.

Both musicians, whose real names are Belcalis Marlenis Almanzar and Megan Pete, shared the news with an image of the single's vibrant artwork. On the cover, the rappers both hold lollipops while wearing matching bodysuits, heels and bracelets in different pastel shades, sporting cotton-candy-coloured curls.

'Bongos' marks the two Grammy winners' first follow-up since their 2020 hit 'WAP'. Their past collaboration made history as the first female rap collaboration to debut at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 and went on to spend four weeks at the top of the charts. Although Cardi has yet to drop a full-length album since her 2018 debut 'Invasion of Privacy', 'Bongos' is the latest of a handful of singles she's shared over the past few years.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Chloe



Asia Cup

INDIA-PAKISTAN SUPER FOUR STAGE MATCH TO HAVE A RESERVE DAY

Colombo | Agencies

The India-Pakistan Super Four stage match in the Asia Cup will have a reserve day if rain affects the highly-anticipated game to be held in Colombo on September 10. India and Pakistan had met in the league stage at Pallekele last week, but it was abandoned due to persistent rain.

"A reserve day has been incorporated for the Super11 Asia Cup 2023 Super 4's match between Pakistan vs India scheduled to take place on 10th September 2023 at R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium in Colombo.

"If adverse weather suspends play during the Pak vs India game, the match will continue on 11th September 2023 from the point it was suspended. In such an eventuality, ticket-holders are advised to hold on to their match tickets which will remain valid and will be utilised for the reserve day," said an official state-



ment from the tournament.

It means that if the India-Pakistan match stretches to September 11, then Rohit Sharma & Co will be playing for three days at a stretch, as they

are slated to face Sri Lanka at the same venue on September 12. Interestingly, there's no word on having a reserve day for the rest of the Super Four matches in the competi-

tion, including India's last game in this stage of the tournament against Bangladesh on September 15.

There had been objections on hosting Asia Cup matches in Colombo due to heavy rain forecast and a move to a drier place like Hambantota was on cards, till the tournament decided to stick to its original plan.

Also, the tournament said that the ticket prices for other Super Four games will be reduced, as compared to the India-Pakistan clash. "Tickets for Lower Blocks 'C' and 'D' of the RPICS Colombo for the Super Four Stage of the Asia Cup will be reduced to LKR 1000 per ticket."

"The reduction will be applicable for the games to be played on September 9, 12, 14, and 15. However, for the game between Pakistan and India on September 10 and the finals of the tournament, the ticket prices for the respective blocks will remain at the originally set prices," it concluded.

US Open

Gauff holds off Muchova; Sabalenka outlasts Keys to reach final

New York | Agencies

For the second time in her career, American teen sensation Coco Gauff will play in a Grand Slam final after a straight-sets win against Karolina Muchova at the US Open.

Extending her exceptional summer run, Gauff defeated Muchova 6-4, 7-5 on Thursday night to earn her first trip to the women's singles final at the Flushing Meadows.

The sixth-seeded Gauff has won 11 straight matches, the best streak of her career, and 17 of 18, a stretch that includes titles in Washington D.C. and Cincinnati.

Gauff is the youngest of the four semifinalists here - by nearly six years. The 19-year-old, is also the youngest American women's player to appear in the final of the US Open since Serena Williams in 1999. She's looking to become the fourth American woman to win the Open this century after Serena, her sister Venus and Sloane Stephens. Moreover, Gauff is the youngest woman to appear in multiple Grand Slam finals (including 2020 Roland Garros) since Maria Sharapova (2004 Wimbledon and 2006 US Open) and the youngest American woman to do it since Monica Seles, from 1990-93. In the Saturday's final, Gauff will meet No.2 Aryna Sabalenka, who narrowly escaped No.17 Madison Keys in a third-set tiebreak in the second match of the night.



Sabalenka, the WTA No. 1 in-waiting, emerged 0-6, 7-6(1), 7-6(5) from a back-and-forth semifinal against Keys to advance to her first US Open final.

The 25-year-old Belarusian hadn't dropped a set en route to the semifinals, and had only lost 21 games in 10 sets played, but was put on the back foot early by a dazzling performance from Keys in the opening set. Officially rising to the top of the rankings after the US Open, Sabalenka continues a breakthrough season at the majors with her second Slam final this year. She is also the first player to reach the semifinals of all four Grand Slam events in a single year since Serena did so in 2016.

The post-midnight victory marks Sabalenka's 50th match-win of the year. It is the first time in her career that Sabalenka has hit that total number of tour-level wins in a single season.

Poland beats Faroe Islands 2-0 in Euro 2024 qualifier

Warsaw | Agencies

Robert Lewandowski scored twice as Poland eased to a 2-0 victory over the Faroe Islands in a UEFA Euro 2024 qualifier.

Fernando Santos's men were dominant from the whistle, but had problems creating chances.

Lewandowski hit the bar with a header from the right side of the six yard box eight minutes after the break and he put Poland in front in the 73rd minute when he converted a penalty after Odmir Faero's handball, Xinhua reports. The hosts controlled the rest of the game, and Lewandowski made it 2-0 with a precise effort inside the far post with seven min-



utes to go.

In Group E, Poland are third with six points, behind the Czech Republic and Albania. The Faroe Islands

have earned one point so far.

On Sunday, Poland will face Albania, while the Faroe Islands take on against Moldova.

INDIA THRASHES MALDIVES BY 8-0; SEAL SPOT IN FINAL

Thimphu (Bhutan) | Agencies

Aibirang Kharthangmaw and Mohammad Arbash scored a brace of goals each as India romped home to an 8-0 victory against the Maldives in the semifinal of the SAFF U-16 Championship at the Changlimithang Stadium here on Friday.

It was a game of complete control as the India U-16 team sealed its berth in the final in style, with Mohammad Arbash netting two goals in the 62nd and 82nd minutes and Aibirang Kharthangmaw scoring in the 77th and 84th minutes.

Vishal Yadav, Mohammed Kaif, Levis Zangminlun, and Manbhakupar Malngiang netted a goal apiece as the Blue Clots made merry on a brilliant afternoon. The victory now means that India will next face the winners of the second semifinal between Pakistan and Bangladesh in the final on Sunday. India were in command from the very start, with efforts from Bharat and Levis, which went wide, setting the tone of the proceedings.

The Blue Clots led 2-0 at half-time and pumped in half a dozen more after the change of ends. India finally got the breakthrough that they deserved, in the 21st minute, when Karish Soram



chipped an aerial through ball as Yadav caused some confusion in the Maldives defence with his diagonal run into the box. He scampered in between two defenders, received the ball and slotted it home with great aplomb.

A little over the half-hour mark, Bharat Lajrenjam snuck in between the lines and had a

crack, but Maldives keeper Ahmed Mifzal was on hand to make the save.

India doubled their lead in the 36th minute when a Mate Ngamgouhou corner was nodded in by Mohammed Kaif, as the Blue Clots went into the dressing room at the break with a comfortable lead. The changeover did not change any fortunes for the Maldives, as India came out with more determination to put the game beyond a single shadow of a doubt. Yaipharemba Chingkhaw cut in from the left and threaded a pass through to Levis, who slotted it into the far post with the inside of his boot. India head coach Ishfaq Ahmed soon made a host of changes, bringing on Manbhakupar Malngiang, Yoienba Meitei, and Aibirang for Bharat, Mate Ngamgouhou, and Vishal Yadav, respectively. The changes instantly paid further dividends as Aibirang and Manbhakupar added two more goals in the 62nd and 70th minutes, respectively. The fourth and fifth goals were split by a rather unusual substitution, as India goalkeeper Suraj Singh came off, allowing Rohit to get some game time in. In the closing exchanges, Mohammad Arbash netted two goals, with Aibirang scoring his own second in between, as India completed the 8-0 rout.

Jasprit Bumrah re-joins India squad ahead of Asia Cup Super Four clash against Pakistan: Report

Colombo | Agencies

India's fast-bowling spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has re-joined the Indian squad ahead of their Asia Cup Super Four clash against Pakistan, to be held in Colombo on Sunday.

The pacer had gone back home after India's league match against Pakistan at Pallekele due to the birth of his son Angad. It meant that Bumrah missed India's second league match against Nepal, which they eventually won by 10 wickets in what was another rain-curtailed clash.

As per a report in Cricbuzz, Bumrah will join the team for a practice session at the R. Premadasa Stadium on Friday evening. "Anticipating inclement weather, the Indian team may have to practice indoors, as they did on Thursday, unless the weather improves later in the evening, which has been the recent trend."



"Fortunately, there has been no rain in Colombo since Friday morn-

ing (at the time of publishing), raising hopes for a productive evening prac-

tice session," it added.

Bumrah's return also comes at a time when the India-Pakistan Super Four clash, scheduled for September 10, has been given a reserve day. The pacer is yet to bowl in an ODI, as rain washed out the second half of the India-Pakistan league match last week. The last time Bumrah bowled his full quota of ten overs in an ODI was in July 2022 at Lord's.

"The weather outlook for the upcoming week is not very promising, with Colombo expected to receive heavy rainfall, including a 90 percent chance of rain on Sunday. This explains the ACC's decision to arrange a reserve day for such a crucial match," added the report.

Following the game against Pakistan on Sunday and possibly Monday, if the match goes to a reserve day, India will face Sri Lanka at the same venue on September 12 and play against Bangladesh on September 15.

Santos Borre fires Colombia to win over Venezuela in opening World Cup qualifier

Barranquilla | Agencies

Rafael Santos Borre scored with a spectacular second-half header as Colombia began their qualifying campaign for the 2026 FIFA World Cup with a 1-0 home win over Venezuela.

After a turgid first half, Santos Borre broke the deadlock less than a minute after the restart in sweltering heat at Estadio Metropolitano in Barranquilla, Xinhua reports.

The Werder Bremen striker timed his run to perfection as he leapt acrobatically and sent a powerful header past goalkeeper Rafael Romo following Jhon Arias' cross from the right wing.

Venezuela did little to threaten the Cafeteros' defense, controlling just 29 percent of possession and managing just two shots on



target. Elsewhere in the South American qualifying zone on

Thursday, Peru held Paraguay to a goalless draw in Asuncion.

Bopanna becomes oldest man to reach Grand Slam final

New York | Agencies

India's Rohan Bopanna on Thursday became the oldest male player to reach the Grand Slam final setting a world record after he and his partner Matthew Ebden of Australia reached the men's doubles final at the US Open here.

Playing at the Louis Armstrong Stadium, the sixth-seeded pair of Bopanna and Ebden defeated the French pair of Pierre-Hugues Herbert and Nicolas Mahut 7-6 (3), 6-2 in a semifinal clash that lasted 1 hour 34 minutes.

In the process, Bopanna continued to defy age as he reached the US Open men's doubles final at 43 years and 6 months.

Bopanna, the fourth Indian player to win a Grand Slam when he claimed the 2017b French Open mixed doubles crown with Gabriela Dabrowski, beat the record held by Daniel Nestor of Canada, who had done the same at the age of 43 years and 4 months. Bopanna is currently ranked 14th in doubles rankings. This is the second time that Bopanna has reached the men's doubles final at the US Open, after doing so in 2010 with



Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi.

In doubles, Bopanna, who has won 24 career titles, has a win-loss record of 482-359 (57.3%) in ATP World Tour and Grand Slam main-draw matches, and in the Davis Cup.

He and Matthew Ebden will next play the winner of the second semifinal between the third-seeded pair of Andy Ram/Joe Salisbury and second-seeded Ivan Dodig/Austin Krajicek in the final.

ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 NITIN MENON, JAVAGAL SRINATH AMONG 20 MATCH OFFICIALS

Dubai | Agencies

Nitin Menon, who is in Elite Panel of ICC Umpires, and Javagal Srinath, a member of Elite Panel of Match Referees, are among 20 match officials for the league stage of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 in India, starting from October 5.

Sixteen umpires will officiate the league stage of the mega tournament, including all 12 of the Emirates Elite Panel of International Cricket Council (ICC) Umpires and four members of the ICC Emerging Umpire Panel.

The 12 Elite Panel of ICC Umpires are: Christopher Gaffaney (New Zealand), Kumar Dharmasena (Sri Lanka), Marais Erasmus (South Africa), Michael Gough (England), Nitin Menon (India), Paul Reiffel (Australia), Richard Illingworth (England), Richard Kettleborough (England), Rodney Tucker (Australia), Joel Wilson (West Indies), Ahsan Raza (Pakistan), and Adrian Holdstock (South Africa).

The remaining four belong to the ICC Emerging Umpire Panel are Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid (Bangladesh), Paul Wilson (Australia), Alex Wharf (England) and Chris Brown (New Zealand). The experienced list includes three of the four



umpires who were appointed for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2019 final at Lord's - Dharmasena, Erasmus and Tucker - with only Aleem Dar missing, who stepped down from the Elite Panel in March of this year.

The ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees is represented at the event by a quartet of former international cricketers, namely, Jeff Crowe, Andy Pycroft, Richie Richardson and Javagal Srinath. Srinath will take charge of the tournament opener between the

last event's finalists, England and New Zealand on 5 October in Ahmedabad. Menon and Dharmasena will be the standing umpires, with Paul Wilson as TV umpire and Saikat taking on fourth umpire duties.

"The officials have been named for the entirety of the League segment, with the selections for the semi-finals and final of the tournament to be named in due course," it said in a release.

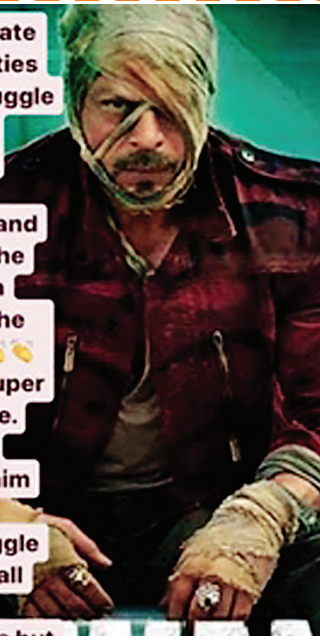
The ICC General Manager of Cricket, Wasim Khan, said: "To deliver an event of this magnitude you require high-performing individuals at every level.

The ICC Elite panel of umpires, referees, and emerging group of umpires involved will bring immense skills, experience, and world-class standards to this World Cup. We are delighted with the group that we have assembled for this tournament."

Sean Easey, ICC Manager of Umpires and Referees said: "This group is the best from around the world and will be ready to perform a challenging job, with the eyes of the global cricketing community focussed on the event. We are confident that they will do an excellent job and wish them all the best of luck for what promises to be a World Cup to remember."



From being the ultimate lover boy of the nineties to a decade long struggle again to reinvent his connection with his audience in his late forties to mid fifties and ultimately rising as the quintessential Indian mass super hero at the age of 60 (almost) 🍌🍌 Is nothing short of super heroic even in real life. I remember the time when people wrote him off and mocked his choices but his struggle is a master class for all those artists who



KANGANA CALLS SRK 'CINEMA GOD'; BOWS DOWN TO HIS HARD WORK

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress Kangana Ranaut lauded superstar Shah Rukh Khan for his recently released action thriller 'Jawan', calling him the 'cinema God', and said that India needs him not just for hugs or dimples, but for some serious world saving as well.

SRK's blockbuster 'Jawan' went house full on the first day of its release in its early morning shows, and even went on to create mass hysteria among fans.

Heaping praise on the 'Badshah' of Bollywood, Kangana said his struggle is a master class for all those artists, who are enjoying long careers, but must reinvent and re-establish.

Taking to her Instagram Stories, Kangana shared a poster of SRK's 'Jawan' and penned a long note.

The post read as: "From being the ultimate lover boy of the nineties to a decade long struggle again to reinvent his connection with his audience in his late forties to mid fifties and ultimately rising as the quintessential Indian mass super hero at the age of 60 (almost) is nothing short of super heroic even in real life."

"I remember the time when people wrote him off and mocked his choices but his struggle is a master class for all those artists who enjoying long careers but must reinvent and re-establish. SRK is the cinema God that India needs not

just for hugs or dimples but for some serious world saving as well. Bowing down to your perseverance, hard work and humility King Khan (sic)", added the 'Queen' fame actress.

The actress concluded the note as: "Congratulations to the whole team".

Social media is proof that after the mammoth success of 'Pathaan', SRK is back again with a gigantic blockbuster 'Jawan', directed by Atlee, on the big screen.

The flick stars SRK in a dual role, alongside southern stars Nayanthara, Vijay Sethupathi, Deepika Padukone (billed as a special appearance), Priyamani and Sanya Malhotra. It was theatrically released on September 7.



I was exhausted, tired & bruised everywhere: Avinash Tiwary

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actor Avinash Tiwary, who is gearing up for his upcoming streaming crime thriller series 'Kaala', has said that the shoot left him with bruises as it was physically demanding.

The series, helmed by Bejoy Nambiar, features Avinash as the relentless IB Officer chasing the biggest case of reverse hawala.

Talking about his journey, and the character in 'Kaala', Avinash shared: "All parts are different so every journey, every preparation becomes different. 'Kaala' has been a lot simpler for me preparation wise but one of the most difficult ones as far as the execution is concerned."

"I was exhausted, tired, bruised everywhere, but it's like when you come back and see the show the way it has turned out, it really warmed my heart. I would say the beauty of Ritwik was his endurance, he was bruised and battered from start to the end, but he was unstoppable and he was always the last man standing," he said.

The actor concluded by saying: "If I have to say which part has been the most heartwarming for me, it'd be 'Kaala'."

'Kaala' shows the workings of the parallel economy of black money as white money is turned to black through the process of reverse hawala. It shows the intense pursuit of IB Officer Ritwik (played by Avinash) to dismantle a reverse hawala operation from its very core.

The show also stars Rohan Vinod Mehra, Nivetha Pethuraj, Taher, Jitin Gulati, Elisha Mayor and Hiten Tejwani. Produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar and Bejoy Nambiar, 'Kaala' is set to stream from September 15 on Disney+ Hotstar.

others before me, it's because I get so engrossed in your performances. In my heart, there's always a golden buzzer for you. You are amazing."

Raaga Fuzion also enjoyed the support of the Indian Railways Musicians on the show. And it was then revealed that Raaga Fuzion's Harshit Shankar has a special connection to the group as his father is also a member of the Indian Railways Musicians.

Furthermore, viewers are in for a treat as Harshit and his father will showcase their musical synergy by performing a soulful flute rendition of 'Pyaar Ka Nagma Hai', on a special request made by the show's host, Arjun Bijlani.

The stage is set to sizzle with an array of spellbinding performances by the Top 13 contestants who will honour the monumental contribution of the Indian Railways.

'I got goosebumps'

Farah Khan lauds act of 'Raaga Fuzion'

Team

Absolute | New Delhi

In the upcoming episode of the reality show 'India's Got Talent', 'Raaga Fuzion' is all set to give a spectacular performance, and steal the hearts of viewers with their soul-stirring renditions of 'Tu Hi Re' and 'Sun Re Saki'.

The talent reality show will pay tribute to the incredible legacy of the



Indian Railways, in the upcoming weekend episodes. Making the episode special is the presence of director-choreographer Farah Khan, who will join the judges' panel, alongside Badshah and Kirron Kher as a guest judge.

Raaga Fuzion which comprises Jayant Patnaik (Ludhiana), Ajay

Tiwari (MP), Amritanshu Dutta (Patna) and Harshit Shankar (Patna) will perform renditions of 'Tu Hi Re' and 'Sun Re Saki'.

Farah, impressed by their performance, said: "It was truly amazing. In the middle of the performance, I kept telling Badshah that I was getting goosebumps. And,

Badshah was flexing the entire time, saying this is our talent. It started as a performance but turned into a rock concert at the end. Bravo!"

Awed by their act, judge Badshah compliments them saying, "Raaga Fuzion, I was waiting to catch a mistake, but I didn't find any. Every time you receive a golden buzzer from

Kritika Kamra says her character in upcoming series is a woman of 'many shades'

Mumbai: Actress Kritika Kamra, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming streaming series 'Bambai Meri Jaan', has spilled beans on her character of Habiba, the youngest and the only sister among Dara Kadri's siblings.

The actress's character of Habiba makes for a good contrast in the show as she stands out as a bold and confident woman who breaks away from the stereotypical construct of a woman in such a setting, to make her voice heard with impact. Sharing the dimensions of her part, Kritika said: "Habiba is a woman of many shades. She is stubborn like her father, courageous like Dara and is fiercely loyal like him. At the same time, being the youngest and the only woman among the siblings. She idolises her brother Dara and shares a special bond with him which influences his decisions and actions as well." The actress said: "Just like him, she shares the ambition for power. Right from the beginning you see that she is an alpha. As the show progresses, we get a glimpse of how she thinks and what her ambitions are, making it an absolute delight for me as an actor." The series also stars Kay Kay Menon, Avinash Tiwary, Nivedita Bhattacharya and Amyra Dastur among others. Produced by Excel Media and Entertainment's Ritesh Sidhwani, Kassim Jagmagia and Farhan Akhtar, 'Bambai Meri Jaan' is created by Rensil D'Silva and Shujaat Saudagar and directed by Saudagar. The 10-part Hindi series will premiere on Prime Video on September 14 across multiple Indian and international languages.



Chahatt Khanna misses jamming with Raghubir Yadav

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Chahatt Khanna, who is awaiting the release of her upcoming slice-of-life, family drama 'Yaatri', is missing the jamming sessions that she had with her co-actor Raghubir Yadav in the film.

Raghubir, a veteran actor, having studied in the National School of Drama (NSD) is adept at singing given his extensive work in theatre.

Sharing her experience of working with the veteran actor, Chahatt said: "It was much awaited, as I love him as an actor, also after knowing him as a person I have learned that he is an amazing person and a great singer. I miss his jamming sessions after the pack-up, which we all enjoyed and looked forward to."

The film also stars Seema Pahwa. In the film, which is set to release on October 6, Chahatt plays Sonam, a modern woman with a heart that loves fiercely wholly or not at all, as she discovers heartbreak and self-discovery!

Talking about what prompted her to take up the role, Chahatt shared: "It's a slice of life, family drama, light comedy which is very much my genre. When I heard the script, I felt it was



such a light-hearted, feel good factor film that I had to be a part of this because I love to watch such cinema, and being a part of such a movie was a bliss in my long-awaited career."

"It's a very realistic film and my character is also very relevant to the kind of person I am. I was left in front

of the camera to play a shade of myself," she added.

Shedding light on her character look and poster launched recently, Chahatt said: "Getting the perfect look for my character Sonam took us many trials and discussions but I believe it has come out good."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Arushi Handa