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SUPREME COURT RECOGNISES RIGHT TO MARRY FOR TRANSGENDERS IN SAME-SEX MARRIAGE VERDICT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said that a marriage entered into by a transgender person is in the nature of a heterosexual relationship and must be recognised by the law.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Since a transgender person can be in a heterosexual relationship like a cis-male or cis-female, a union between a transwoman and a transman, or a transwoman and a cisman, or a transman and a ciswoman can be registered under Marriage laws," said a constitution Bench headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud.

It said that a transgender man has the right to marry a cisgender woman under the laws governing marriage in the country, including personal laws. "Similarly, a transgender woman has the right to marry a cisgender man. A transgender man and a transgender woman can also marry," it added.

The Supreme Court said that intersex persons who identify as a man or a woman and seek to enter into a heterosexual marriage would also have a right to marry.

During the hearing, the Centre government asserted that marriage must only be between 'biological' men and 'biological' women.



However, the written submissions of the Attorney General, the highest officer of the Centre, stated that: "The issues relating to transgender persons arising out of The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 stand on a dif-

ferent footing and can be addressed without reference to the Special Marriage Act. "In 2019, Madras High Court had ordered registration of marriage between a man and a woman - who happened to be transgender. The High

Court had said that the term "bride" in the Hindu Marriage Act cannot have a static and immutable meaning and that statutes must be interpreted in light of the legal system in its present form.

500 killed in Airstrikes on Hospital in Gaza, several trapped

World News | Agencies

Israeli air strikes on a hospital compound in the Gaza Strip killed at least 500 people, officials in the Hamas-run Palestinian territory said on Tuesday, on the eve of US President Joe Biden's visit to the Middle East.

Joe Biden's visit, potentially the riskiest of his presidency, is expected to see him reaffirm US backing for Israel and try to stop the escalating war against Hamas spiralling into wider conflict.

Thousands of people have been killed since the militants' October 7 attack, with most of the dead on both sides civilians.

The health ministry on Tuesday said between 200 and 300 people displaced by 10 days of heavy bombardment were killed in "occupation (Israeli) strikes" at the Ahli Arab hospital in central Gaza.

"Hundreds of victims are still under the rubble," a statement said, calling it a "war crime".

Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari told a televised press briefing: "We will look into it... the strike happened just a short while ago."



Separately, the United Nations agency supporting Palestinian refugees said six people were killed when one of its schools sheltering displaced families was hit, during Israeli air strikes.

UNRWA commissioner-general Philippe Lazzarini called the bombing at Al-Maghazi refugee camp, also in central Gaza, "outrageous" and warned the death count would likely rise.

"It again shows a flagrant disregard for the lives of civilians. No place is safe in Gaza anymore, not even UNRWA facilities," he added.

Hostages President Biden's trip will come 12 days after the Palestinian militants of Hamas burst through Israel's heavily fortified Gaza border, shooting, mutilating and burning more than 1,400 people.

Shell-shocked Israel has responded with withering air strikes against targets in Gaza, leaving about 3,000 Gazans dead, according to a count from the health ministry in Gaza before the Ahli Arab strike.

Israel has also imposed a crippling siege on the impoverished territory and deployed tens of thousands of troops in preparation for a full-scale ground offensive. Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas while also seeking to rescue the at least 199 hostages taken into Gaza by Hamas, which has released a video of one of the captives, French-Israeli woman Mia Shem. Her mother, Keren Shem, made an emotional plea for her safe return, at a Tel Aviv press conference. "I ask world leaders that my daughter be returned to us in the state that she is today, as well as the other hostages," she said.

Terrorism among most serious threats to world peace, connectivity key priority area for India: NSA Doval

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid the ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israel, which was triggered by the former's attack on the Gaza Strip, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval on Tuesday underlined that terrorism is among the most serious threats to world peace.

Addressing a conclave of NSAs of India and central Asian nations in Kazakhstan, he said that irrespective of its cause, terrorism is unjustifiable.

Referring to the key issue of connectivity and economic integration with central Asian nations, Doval said that it is an area of priority for India. At the same time though, he added that it is important to ensure that connectivity initiatives are consultative, transparent, and participatory.

The NSA further said that such initiatives should respect sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries and adhere to environmental parameters, while ensuring financial viability, rather than becoming debt burdens, in an oblique reference to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In this context, the absence of direct land access between Central Asia and India is an anomaly, he observed. This absence of direct connectivity is the result of a conscious policy of denial by a particular country, Doval said in an indirect reference to Pakistan.

Doval said this situation is not only self-defeating for that country but it also reduces



the collective well-being of the entire region. He also underlined the advantages of including the Chabahar port in the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

Meanwhile touching upon other issues, the NSA further added that India is willing to provide technological support to central Asian countries related to unified payment interface (UPI) without any cost for their independent use. An association based on sovereign digital systems between India and central Asian nations will boost commercial relations and also benefit people who travel to India for medical tourism, Doval added.

BJP-RSS keen to adopt one ideology in India; MNF, ZPM helping them enter Mizoram: Rahul

Aizawl | Agencies

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said the BJP and RSS are keen to adopt one ideology in India and also alleged that Mizoram's ruling Mizo National Front (MNF) and the opposition Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) were instrumental for their entry into the northeastern state.

Addressing reporters here, the Congress MP, who arrived in Mizoram on Monday on a two-day visit, urged people not to vote for the BJP, MNF and the ZPM in the interest of protecting their religion, culture and languages.

"MNF and ZPM are the entry points and platform for RSS and BJP in Mizoram," he said. The senior leader went blamed unemployment as the main reason for the increasing drug abuse cases in state.

"We need to create better and alternate opportunities for the youths. Through the small and medium enterprises, a large number of youths can economically empower themselves," he said, adding that the Congress will return to power in



Mizoram and defeat the BJP in the northeastern region like it did in Karnataka, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh.

Rahul Gandhi went on to say that the BJP wanted centralisation of power and to control Mizoram from New Delhi, but the Congress wanted the people of Mizoram to take their own decisions to govern.

"We do not believe that Mizoram should be ruled directly from the Centre. Like other states in India we are developing a vision for Mizoram. Your religion and traditions are under attack. We want the people of Mizoram to defend their culture, language and religion," he said.

The Congress leader said that the upcoming November 7 Assembly

election the state is about protecting the idea and culture of Mizoram from the BJP-RSS onslaught.

Rahul Gandhi claimed that other states in the northeast were also being attacked by the BJP-RSS.

Referring to his visit to violence-hit Manipur in June, the Congress leader said that the BJP is using local parties to adopt the RSS ideology in Manipur.

"For the first time in my political career, I saw in Manipur that the state is sharply divided in ethnic lines. Meiteis are not going to Kuki areas and the Kuki people are not going to Meitei inhabited areas.

"So the politics of division and hatred has created a division and it needs to be repaired. I wanted to highlight during my Manipur visit that hatred politics of BJP needs to be removed and that was my point on my Manipur visit.

"I still cannot understand, it's a puzzle to me why for months when Manipur has been burning, Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) did not visit the state though as a leader of the country it was his primary responsibility to visit Manipur," he added.

IT'S A FIGHT TO SAVE CONSTITUTION NOT HOUSE: RAGHAV CHADHA ON DELHI HC ORDER

Team Absolute | New Delhi

AP leader Raghav Chadha on Tuesday said that it was not a fight to save a house or a shop, but a fight to save the Constitution of India.

Chadha's reaction came after the Delhi High Court set aside a trial court order cancelling allotment of his official residence.

"I thank the Hon'ble Delhi High Court for setting aside the order of the trial court, which was against me," the MP said.

He further added that this was for the first time a Rajya Sabha member had been targeted in this manner. "Till now, I have delivered two speeches in Parliament holding the BJP-led Central Government accountable. After my first speech, my official accommodation was cancelled. After my second speech, my membership as a parliamentarian was sus-



pending." Chadha further added that he was glad that in the end, truth and justice prevailed. The Delhi High Court on Tuesday set aside an order by the Patiala House court that allowed the Rajya Sabha secretariat to evict Chadha from his official residence in the national Capital.

Remove restrictions on paddy export, demands Hooda

Chandigarh | Agencies

Veteran Congress leader and former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Hooda on Tuesday reiterated the demand for removal of restrictions imposed on the export of paddy, saying rice exporters have stopped purchasing paddy in seven states, including Haryana, due to the curbs imposed by the Centre.

This, he said, had pushed farmers into losses. "The restrictions have caused distress and losses to farmers who are suffering. Basmati prices have fallen from Rs 3,500-3,600 per quintal to Rs 2,500. Farmers are incurring a loss of at least Rs 1,000 per quintal, which means they are facing a loss of more than Rs 20,000 per acre. Farmers fear that if the exporters' strike continues, this rate may fall further," he said in a statement here.

"Rice exporters say the Central government has kept the minimum export price of Basmati rice at \$1200 per ton, which is very high. Countries like Pakistan are taking advantage of the restrictions imposed by the Indian government and are exporting rice. The farmers of Haryana



are suffering the most due to this restriction. "India exports around 45 lakh tonnes of rice every year and about 25 lakh tonnes of this come from Haryana alone. Due to the strike by exporters, the sale of varieties like 1121, 1509, 1781, and Sarbati have stopped in the state," he said. Hooda said the BJP-JJP government in Haryana "remains a silent spectator as farmers have been pushed in acute distress". "The Chief Minister should immediately talk to the Prime Minister and present the farmers' case before the

Centre," he demanded. "Earlier, when there was a ban on exports during the Congress government and as the Chief Minister them I had appealed to then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and got the ban removed. Farmers got full benefit from it and farmers got a rate of Rs 5,000 to Rs 55,000 per quintal. But during the present government, farmers are neither the MSP (minimum support price) of coarse paddy nor international market rate for Basmati rice," Hooda added.

Death toll in firecracker blasts in Sivakasi rises to 13

Chennai | Agencies

At least 13 people were killed and many others injured in explosions at two separate blasts at firecracker manufacturing hub Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar district on Tuesday, police said.

With Diwali nearing, the firecracker units at Sivakasi are busy and recording brisk sales.

According to police, one blast occurred in a cracker shop and the other in a cracker factory - Kanishar fireworks in Pudukutti while the second explosion occurred at Arya Fireworks Factory in Kichanayakanpatti.

The police and fire personnel had a tough time in extinguishing the fire at the firecracker units.

Police sources told IANS that the accident occurred when the firecrackers were sample tested as they were not properly dried due to the



rainy weather in Sivakasi area during the past few days.

In the accident at Kichanayakanpatti, one of the killed persons was identified as Vembu.

Police said that the identities of the other deceased are not known and that they are in the process of identifying them. Virudhunagar police officials told media persons that in wake of the explosions, some workers had ran away and hence the identifying process of the dead bodies are on. Many people are admitted at Srivilliputhur Government Hospital. Police have arrested the foreman of the unit, Gurumurthy while the search is on for the owner of the unit, Muthuvijayan is absconding.



RSS 'DEFAMATION': RAHUL GANDHI MOVES BOMBAY HC TO QUASH CASE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday moved the Bombay High Court seeking to dismiss a 2017 defamation case filed against him for allegedly linking the RSS with the murder of Bengaluru journalist Gauri Lankesh.

The matter which came up before Justice Sarang Kotwal, has been adjourned to December 5.

Through his lawyer Kushal Mor, Gandhi has challenged a 2019 order of a Borivali magistrate's court refusing to dismiss the private defamation complaint lodged by RSS ideologue and advocate Dhritiman Joshi.

Among other things, Gandhi has said that he was wrongly arraigned as an accused in the case along with CPI-M Secretary Sitaram Yechury who had allegedly made a separate statement in a different place and time after Lankesh's killing on September 5, 2017 in the Karnataka capital.

He has contended that Joshi's complaint violates CrPC's Section 218 which prescribes separate charges for



separate offences, and that the concept of a joint trial is unknown, not mandated or sanctioned under the law. Joshi's complaint against Gandhi

went back to September 6, 2017 after Lankesh's killing, and while watching the news, he claimed he saw the Congress leader speaking outside the Parliament, allegedly saying that

whoever raised their voice against the BJP-RSS ideology is pressured, attacked or killed.

Similarly, Joshi claimed that Yechury had allegedly spoken to the media that the RSS was responsible for the scribe's murder, and contended that these statements were made without any proof to tarnish the RSS in the eyes of the common masses.

Following the complaint, the Borivali magistrate's court issued summons in February 2019 to Gandhi and Yechury. The duo appeared before the court in July 2019 and sought bail, but later Gandhi and Yechury filed applications seeking to quash the complaint citing various grounds.

In November 2019, the Borivali Magistrate dismissed both the applications filed by Gandhi and Yechury in the matter, and now the Congress leader has moved the high court against that rejection order. Gandhi has prayed to the court to set aside and quash the lower court's order, set aside the process issued against him and dismiss the complaint.

NHAI issues new norms for implementation of AI-based traffic management system

Team Absolute | New Delhi

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is harnessing the latest advancements in AI technology as part of its new initiative to enhance road safety, digital enforcement of traffic rules and quick detection of accidents on National Highways and Expressways.

NHAI on Tuesday released its updated policy to implement upgraded and forward-looking Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) Standards and Specifications 2023.

The enhancements include replacing previous cameras with the newly introduced Video Incident Detection and Enforcement System (VIDES) to emphasise the digital enforcement of traffic rules. VIDES has the capability to identify 14 distinct incidents including triple riding, helmet and seatbelt violations, wrong lane or direction driving, presence of animals on the highway, and pedestrian crossings, NHAI said in a statement.

Depending on the detected incident, VIDES will alert route patrol vehicles or ambulances, generate e-challans, relay alerts to nearby Variable Messaging Boards, or send notifications through 'Rajmargyatra' mobile app to nearby travellers, the statement added.

For comprehensive coverage, these cameras are slated for installation every 10 km along National Highways, with state-of-the-art Command & Control Centres at every 100 km integrating various camera feeds. Apart from



this, Vehicle Speed Detection System (VSDS) is now integrated into VIDES, optimizing use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras. In addition, the Traffic Monitoring Camera System (TMCS) will also be upgraded. Positioned every 1 km on the National Highway, these cameras have been endowed with advanced capabilities like auto-detected detection of accidents and stalled vehicles.

Strengthening collaboration with local traffic agencies, NHAI will allocate dedicated workstations in the Command & Control Centre for traffic police representatives. Moreover, provisions have been made to share camera feeds over the network to enhance real-time coordination and response. The policy also provisions implementation of Digital Highways by developing integrated utility corridors along the National Highways to develop Optic Fibre Cables (OFC) infrastructure.

ED raids multiple locations linked to ex-J&K minister in money laundering case

Jammu | Agencies

Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday carried out searches in Jammu, Kathua and Pathankot (Punjab) in a money laundering case.

Sources said that the ED is conducting a money laundering investigation against an educational trust run by former J&K minister Choudhary Lal Singh's wife and a former government official.

Sources said that the raids were carried out at eight places in Kathua, Jammu and Pathankot (Punjab) in the case against R.B. Educational trust run by Choudhary Lal Singh's wife, Kanta Andotra and Ravinder Singh, a former government official.

CBI had filed a charge sheet in October 2021 alleging criminal connivance in the purchase of land for the trust between January 4 and



6, 2011.

The purchase was allegedly made in violation of the ceiling of 100 standard kanals imposed under Section 14 of the Jammu and Kashmir Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976. Subsequently, the ED discovered that the excess land purchased by the trust was being used for running a school and other commercial concerns.

"The places raided on Tuesday by the ED include those belonging to trust chairperson, land donors and third parties holding power of attorney from the land donors. The premises owned by a Patwari (Revenue Clerk), who had wrongfully issued 'Fards' (Copies of land records) for these land deals, were also raided," sources said.

Mahua Moitra files defamation suit against BJP MP Nishikant Dubey, advocate Jai Dehadrai

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra has moved the Delhi High Court against BJP MP Nishikant Dubey, lawyer Jai Anant Dehadrai, and several media organisations, following what she alleges are false and defamatory accusations against her.

The defamation suit, which comes after Moitra issued a legal notice to Dubey, Dehadrai, and several media outlets, vehemently denying any wrongdoing.

Dubey had lodged a complaint with the Lok Sabha Speaker, claiming that Moitra had accepted bribes in exchange for raising questions in Parliament. According to Dubey, the allegations stemmed from a letter addressed to him by Dehadrai.

"By way of background, it is stated that Defendant No. 2 (Dehadrai) was a close friend of the Plaintiff and recently, the cessation of this friendship soon took an acrimonious turn. Defendant No. 2 resorted to sending vile, threatening, vulgar messages to



the Plaintiff and also trespassed into Plaintiff's official residence and stole some personal possessions of the Plaintiff," Moitra's plea reads.

Moitra had then allegedly filed two police complaints dated March 24

and September 23 against Dehadrai and the same were later withdrawn by her on account of settlement talks.

"Despite the aforesaid, Defendant No. 2 went ahead and decided to tarnish and malign the reputation of the

Plaintiff by approaching credible journalist to run damaging stories against the Plaintiff, however, none of such journalists agreed to participate in his malicious and vindictive designs," the plea states.

Moitra's defamation suit has been listed for hearing on Friday.

Her legal notice said that Dubey, for immediate political gains, regurgitated the false and defamatory allegations contained in the letter sent to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. It further claimed that both Dubey and Dehadrai are directly responsible for tarnishing Moitra's reputation for their own personal and political motives.

The notice went on to clarify that Moitra has never accepted any form of remuneration or gifts related to her duties as an MP, including the questions she raises in Parliament. Regarding the alleged links between the questions raised by Moitra and private individuals, the legal notice dismissed these claims as "laughable" and lacking any specificity or concrete evidence.

Delhi L-G approves registration of case against PWD engineers under Prevention of Corruption Act

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi's Lieutenant Governor (L-G), VK Saxena, has given the green light for the registration of a case under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption (PoC) Act, 1988, against an Assistant Engineer and a Junior Engineer of the Public Works Department (PWD).

This approval was granted despite the fact that the PWD's administrative department had not recommended an inquiry against the accused engineers.

In the case of an accused Executive Engineer involved in the same matter, a decision will be made by the National Capital Territory Civil Services Authority (NCCSA) due to their Group 'A' status.

The LG's decision to approve the case registration was based on the findings of the Anti-Corruption Branch, GNCTD (Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi), and a recommendation from the Directorate of Vigilance.

Saxena has also directed action against the PWD officers who allegedly attempted to shield the



accused Engineers, even though the Anti-Corruption Branch had found a prima facie case against them.

The LG's approval under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018, pertains to the case against JS Chauhan, Assistant

Engineer, and Devi Singh, Junior Engineer.

The allegations revolve around the release of payment to a contractor without proper verification of work done in a road construction project in South Delhi. The LG's decision is rooted in his assessment that, after examining the facts and records of the case, it is in the interest of justice to investigate the allegations by registering a case.

The allegations originally stem from a complaint filed on May 19, 2017, by Rahul Sharma, the founder of the NGO 'Roads Anti-Corruption Organization.' The complaint alleged that payments were disbursed despite no work being carried out at the site designated for the "strengthening of road and improvement of footpath, drainage system, central verge of EPDP Road (Malik Ram Issar Marg, New Delhi)" in the Kalkaji area.

This alleged malpractice resulted in a loss to the Government exchequer. The Anti-Corruption Branch after conducting a preliminary inquiry, filed a complaint related to the work against three PWD Engineers, including Executive Engineer RS Garg, Assistant Engineer JS Chauhan, and Junior Engineer Devi Singh.

Delhi excise policy case: SC reserves verdict on Manish Sisodia's bail plea

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday reserved its judgment on the regular bail petitions filed by former deputy Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia in connection with corruption and money laundering cases arising out of the alleged scam in Delhi excise policy.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and S.V.N. Bhatti finished hearing the arguments by Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi appearing for Sisodia and Additional Solicitor General (ASG) S.V. Raju, appearing for the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

On Monday the apex court told the CBI and ED that they cannot keep Sisodia in jail for an "indefinite period" in the Delhi excise policy cases and asked the ASG about when the arguments on charges against Sisodia will commence in the trial court.

"Once a charge sheet is filed in a case, arguments on charge should commence immediately," the bench told Raju.



The ASG submitted that the cases against Sisodia were at the stage of section 207 of CrPC (supply of documents to the accused) and after that the arguments on charge will start.

The ASG also claimed that there was sufficient material to show the offence of money laundering and tampering with evidence by destroying his mobile phones, and thus were sufficient grounds to deny bail.

In March, the ED arrested Sisodia in a money laundering case arising from the CBI FIR. Sisodia has been in custody since February, after being arrested by the CBI.

I-T Dept moves Bombay HC against tribunal's order in favour of LIC in Rs 4,993 crore tax disputes

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Income Tax (I-T) Department has moved to the Bombay High Court to challenge an appellate tribunal order in favour of the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) in two major tax dispute cases involving a cumulative amount of Rs 4,993 crore.

The Income Tax Appellate Tribunal had ruled in favour of LIC in both the cases pertaining to the assessment year 2013-14. While one of them involves an amount of Rs 1,838.8 crore, the disputed sum in the second case is Rs 3,153.9 crore.

"The Income Tax Department has filed an appeal before Honourable Bombay High Court against the decision of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal. The communication in this regard was



received on October 17, 2023," LIC stated in a regulatory filing on Tuesday.

"These litigations will not have a material adverse effect on the Corporation's financial position and result of operations," the LIC filing further said.

The development comes close on the heels of LIC getting notices from the Income Tax Department for paying a

penalty of Rs 84 crore. The notices, pertaining to three assessment years were issued on September 29.

Last month, LIC had also received a GST notice of Rs 290 crore from the Bihar state Tax Department. The government-owned insurer had informed the exchanges that it would file an appeal before the GST Appellate Tribunal against the order.

POLL RELATED SEIZURES MOUNT TO RS 130CR IN TELANGANA

Hyderabad | Agencies

Indicating a growing influence of money and liquor in the Telangana elections, cash, precious metal, liquor and other freebies worth Rs 130 crore have been seized in the state in just eight days, surpassing the seizure made during the entire election process in 2018.

While all the seizures including cash, precious metals and liquor during the entire period of model code of conduct in 2018 stood at Rs 103 crore, the enforcement agencies have made a seizure of Rs 130 crore since October 9 when the Model Code of Conduct came into force.

During the last 24 hours that ended at 9 a.m. on October 17, cash, gold, liquor and other items worth over Rs 21 crore were seized. The total cash seized by authorities rose sharply to Rs 71.55 crore with seizure of Rs 12.58 crore.

The agencies have also seized 72 kg gold, 429 kg silver and 42,203 carat diamond, all valued at Rs 40 crore.

During the intense checking within the state and on inter-state check-



posts, police, excise and other departments have so far seized 52,091 liters of liquor worth over Rs 7.75 crore.

They also seized 1,694 kg ganja and 0.3 litre weed oil, all valued at Rs 4.58 crore. The enforcement agencies also seized 43,700 kg rice, 627 sarees, 80 sewing machines, 87 cookers, one car and other items all worth Rs 6.29 crore.

Voicing concern over the huge flow of cash, precious metals, liquor etc., Director General of Police Anjani Kumar has requested all the political parties to adhere to the Model Code of Conduct issued by the Election Commission for smooth conduct of elections.

The Election Commission has announced that elections for 119-

member state assembly will be held in a single phase on November 30.

As per the guidelines of the Election Commission, the state police formed 373 flying squads, 374 static surveillance teams, 95 state internal border check posts besides mobile parties of local police to curb illegal transportation of money, liquor and freebies.



SC gives Maha Speaker 'final opportunity' for schedule on defection pleas

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday gave the Speaker of the Maharashtra Assembly a final opportunity to provide a realistic schedule for deciding the pending defection petitions filed by the two rival factions of the Shiv Sena led by Uddhav Thackeray and CM Eknath Shinde against each other.

A bench, headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud accepted the submission of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta who assured the court that he would personally engage with the speaker during Dussehra vacation.

The court will again hear the pleas seeking expeditious decision by the Speaker in the disqualification proceedings against Shiv Sena MLAs on October 30.

After SG Mehta sought more time from the court for the Speaker to decide the timeline, the CJI pulled up Mehta on the Speaker's recent interview. "He has to decide Mr SG...meanwhile he's giving



interviews that we are a co-equal branch of the government..."

Speaker Narwekar on Saturday, said that it was his duty to maintain the sovereignty of the legislature and that the Constitution has given equal place to the judiciary, legislature, and executive and no one has any superintendence over the other.

The Supreme Court on Friday came down heavily on the Speaker for the delay in hearing and

deciding the disqualification petitions filed by Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray) and NCP (Sharad Pawar faction).

Following the split in the party, two factions of Shiv Sena filed petitions against each other under the anti-defection law. Jayant Patil of NCP (Sharad Pawar faction) also had filed a petition in the apex court against the delay by the Maharashtra Speaker in hearing the defection pleas following a split in the NCP. The bench comprising Chief Justice Chandrachud, and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra on Friday said that the Speaker should take a decision on the matter at least before the next Lok Sabha elections and should not render the issue infructuous by delaying it.

"I'm concerned about maintaining the dignity of our court," the CJI said.

The CJI had conveyed displeasure regarding the Speaker's conduct to SG Mehta and warned that the court would pass a peremptory order setting down a timeline if a hearing schedule was not put in place.

16-year-old girl gang-raped; 4 out of 7 accused arrested by police

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 16-year-old girl was allegedly raped by seven persons in Thane district of Maharashtra and four of the accused have been arrested, the police said on Tuesday.

One of the accused, who was known to the minor girl, called her near Kharbav railway station and raped her, said the police, adding he threatened the victim and warned of dire consequences if she disclosed about the incident to anyone.

After sometime, he called the girl again to the spot under some pretext and took her to a room near railway tracks, where six of his friends took turns to rape her, they said.

The traumatised victim did not approach the police immediately after the horrific incident out of fear. She later mustered courage and lodged a police complaint.

Based on the complaint, an FIR was filed against the seven accused under relevant sections of the IPC, including 376D (gang-rape) and also the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act), said the police.

The police have launched a search for the three other accused wanted in the case, said an official.



Meanwhile, in an another incident, a 12-year-old girl was allegedly kidnapped and raped by a man when she was walking home from school in Rewa district of Madhya Pradesh, police said on Sunday.

According to the news agency, the police on Saturday arrested the accused, a 23-year-old man, in connection with the assault that took place on Friday, Rewa superintendent of police Vivek Singh said. The girl, a Class 5 student, was walking home from school when the accused offered her a lift to her village, the official said.

The suspect, however, took the girl to a deserted

place and raped her. He later dropped the girl off near her village, which is close to the Uttar Pradesh border, he said.

The girl told her family members about the assault, following which she was taken to a hospital and the police were notified, the official said, according to the news agency.

According to the police, the girl sustained injuries to her private parts but is said to be out of danger.

A case under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act has been registered against the accused, he said.

Ajit Pawar junks ex-Pune CP's insinuations on govt land deal

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Under fire for past couple of days, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said that he had nothing to do with the allegations made by retired IPS officer and former Pune Commissioner of Police, Meeran Chadha-Borwankar regarding a government plot of land in the Yerawada Police Station (Pune), here on Tuesday.

While admitting that as the Guardian Minister, he had met the then Pune CP, Meeran Chadha-Borwankar, Ajit Pawar said he was in no way concerned with the 'decision making process' pertaining to the 3-acres property around the Yerawada Police Station premises.

"I was not involved with the decision-making process, I did not evaluate it, nor did I attend any meetings pertaining to it... I have nothing to do with it," said Ajit Pawar emphatically.

On demands by the Opposition Congress, Nationalist Congress Party (SP), Shiv Sena (UBT) and others, Ajit Pawar said that the land is still there, so let there be any kind of probe.



"The land has not gone anywhere, has it? Its still there... So, conduct an inquiry or do anything you want... I had absolutely no role to play in it," declared Ajit Pawar.

Dismissing contentions by various parties, he said that he would "never do anything that is illegal or cause a loss to the government" and politicians are 'custodians' of public lands like the one in Pune.

To Chadha-Borwankar's claims that he had spoken roughly with her at their meeting in 2010, Ajit

Pawar said that he had been a minister and Deputy CM for over 32 years, interacted with many officers and never had he faced such an allegation.

"I have handled all the major departments, you can ask any officer from any department... Though I may have a stern nature, I speak to them very cordially and respectfully," said Ajit Pawar.

He smiled and wondered, that although the retired IPS has written on so many other issues in her book, 'Madam Commissioner: The Extraordinary Life of an Indian Police Chief', "why is the focus solely on me?"

To prove his points, Ajit Pawar brought along and read out various old government records of meetings in the Yerawada plot, the names of those who attended it, the sequence of events and how the deal was finally cancelled owing to various objections.

In her book, Chadha-Borwankar recounted that 2010 'encounter' with Ajit Pawar in the office of the Pune Divisional Commissioner, and also how the then home minister, (the late) R.R. Patil had later advised her to 'keep off' that land deal matter.

Leopard spotted in Kopergaon town, residents in panic

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Panic gripped the residents of Maharashtra's Kopergaon after a leopard strayed into a residential

area of the town. A video shows the leopard roaming on a road in Kopergaon.

The people then informed the Forest Department officials who rushed to the spot to capture the leopard.

Efforts are on to capture the leopard and release the big cat to the forest, officials said.

Mumbai International Cruise Terminal to be ready in 2024, says CM Shinde

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The much-awaited International Cruise Terminal in Mumbai will be ready and made operational to handle cruisers from all over the world by 2024, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said on Tuesday.

In his address at the Global Maritime India Summit inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi this morning, the CM said that the ICT will have a capacity to handle 200 cruise ships and one million passengers per annum.

Elaborating on the maritime advantages that Maharashtra offers, Shinde said the state has a 720-km-long coastline, two major ports, more than 14 major



and intermediate ports and numerous bays, all of which contribute significantly to the growth of India's maritime trade.

"Apart from developing multimodal connectivity

comprising roads, railways, sea and waterways infrastructure for private ports, our maritime policy will give a significant boost to maritime tourism, shipbuilding, repair and recycling indus-

tries," he said, adding that the PM's efforts have elevated India's position in the global maritime arena.

The CM said the state notched a significant increase in cargo volume in 2022-2023, new routes were introduced for passenger transport services, the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority remains one of the best performing ports in India and one of the top 30 global ports while Mumbai Port Authority offers the best yet lowest cruise tariffs worldwide.

A postage stamp was released by Governor Ramesh Bais to mark the 150 years of Mumbai Port Authority along with a book, 'Propelling India's Maritime Vision' on the occasion.

Jailed Mumbai 'serial rapist' doctor accused in 3rd rape case, cheating

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a bizarre development, a medico from Malvani in Malad West has been booked in an alleged third rape case in three weeks, a police official said here on Tuesday.

The accused in the 'serial rapes' is Dr Yogesh Bhanushali, who was arrested after two cases were lodged against him for the offence on September 27 and October 3, and the third case lodged on October 15.

Malvani Police Station Senior Inspector of Police Chimaji Adhav said that the accused is currently in judicial custody in the earlier two cases which will end on Wednesday (October 18), and he will be arrested in the third case now, said the official. The medico followed a modus operandi of luring women into relationship with marriage promises through social media, and then inviting them to his home to meet the other family members who lived a lavish lifestyle.

Later, he would allegedly take the woman to his private room upstairs and then convince her to change hairstyle and clothes to go to a pub, force himself on her, and even cajole her into getting tattoos on private parts.

He would continue the relationship for sometime, extract money and jewellery from her under threats of making her intimate pictures viral, dump and go after the next victim.

When one of the victims lodged a police complaint, her family came to his rescue and threatened her to withdraw the cases, and he has reportedly extorted over Rs 5-lakhs from one victim so far.



Among his victims are a nurse, a call centre employee who were lured, sexually assaulted and cheated of money on various occasions. The accused was also booked by the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Nagar Police Station, Govandi (north-east Mumbai), under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in 2020, when he had misbehaved in a Covid-19 centre with a patient.

With four cases already registered, the Mumbai Police believe that there could be many more victims who would gradually come out openly against him.

Meanwhile, the victims' lawyers are clamouring for a probe into his medical degrees and other details of his family and their possible complicity into his alleged criminal activities.

Twin sisters killed, parents injured in road horror

Team Absolute | Pune

Three-year-old twin sisters were killed and their parents were injured when a petrol tanker crashed into their two-wheeler at Pune's Vishrantiwadi Chowk Monday evening, police said.

According to the police, Satish Kumar Jha, 40, was riding a two-wheeler with his 3-year-old twin daughters and wife when he stopped at the traffic light at Vishrantiwadi Chowk.

As the light turned green, a petrol tanker coming from behind collided with the motorcycle. The two children who fell to the ground were killed instantly, while both their parents were injured in the crash. The accident was caught on CCTV cameras installed in the area. Videos of the accident show people in the area immediately surrounding the family before emergency services were called in to take them to a hospital. The mother was seriously injured in the accident and is being treated at Sassoon Hospital while the father suffered minor injuries. The driver of the petrol tanker has been arrested.



"The tanker hit the motorcycle immediately after the signal turned green at the chowk. The driver of the truck was

arrested under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Motor Vehicles Act," the police said.

Biopic of 'Expressway Man of India' Nitin Gadkari to release on Oct 27

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

Starting life as an ordinary Jan Sangh activist to a Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha worker to a Bharatiya Janata Party leader to state and central minister and now acknowledged as the 'Expressway Man of India', Nitin Jairam Gadkari from Nagpur, has traversed long on political the fast lane.

On October 27, a Marathi biopic on the senior BJP leader entitled 'Gadkari' will hit the silver screens across Maharashtra, catapulting him to the ranks of eminent like the late Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray, the former Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Dr. Manmohan Singh, and present PM Narendra Modi, in the past few years.

The film dives deep into the life and times of the amiable and ever-smiling Gadkari, 66, who is popular not only among the BJP and NDA circles, but liked well even by the Opposition parties.

It also dwells on his long political journey, how he grabbed eyeballs as the PWD Minister in the Shiv Sena-BJP government of 1995-1999 (with CMs as Manohar Joshi and Narayan Rane)



when he spearheaded the country's first expressway linking Mumbai-Pune, and changing the face of travel between the two key cities.

He also took up the ambitious project to build 55 flyovers in Mumbai to ease road traffic and faced tonnes of sniggers, but today, after three decades he is proved prophetic.

Currently, despite having more than 150 flyovers in and around Mumbai, a Sea Link, an upcoming Coastal Road and a Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, the network of Metro Rail, tunnels, Monorail, etc., the pace of Mumbai traf-

fic remains practically the same as it was three decades ago! Not known to be a typical greedy politician working till the 'next election' and seeking votes with tall unkept promises, Gadkari is a non-nonsense administrator who demands time-bound performance, said a close family friend.

With the blessings of the RSS, Gadkari was also elected as one of the youngest BJP Presidents -- in Maharashtra (April 2005 - December 2009) and all-India (December 2009 - January 2013), and is occasionally tipped for even the country's top executive post.



EDITOR'S SPECS

BIHAR EDUCATION DEPT IS TAINTED

The vigilance department in Bihar has issued lists of tainted officers and employees with the education department having the highest numbers. The report of the vigilance department is based on the parameters, including the number of FIRs, charge sheets, departmental actions and other violations against the officers and employees. Accordingly, the vigilance department sends the reports to every department following which the promotion of the employees and officers are being decided. The employees and officers of every department gets promotion in the second half of every year and the vigilance department issues the lists of tainted and honest officers. The highest numbers of tainted officers are in the education department and the lowest in the fire and sports departments. Interestingly, the education department has the highest allocations of budget. As per the vigilance list, the education department has 935 tainted officers and employees followed by 330 in Panchayati Raj department, 245 in general administration, 235 in home ministry, 190 in revenue, 130 in rural development, 128 in urban development and housing, 120 in power, 113 in water resource department, 81 in road construction, 77 in food supply, 69 in social welfare, 64 in cooperative, 56 in agriculture, 55 in building construction, 54 in rural development, 35 in SC-ST, 32 in forest, 28 in health, 28 in planning and statistic, 26 in registration, 25 in transport, 24 in animal husbandry, 24 in labour, 19 in public health engineering, 14 in finance, 12 in excise, 12 in industry, 12 in minority welfare, nine in mining, six in science and technology, six in weight and measures division, five in prison, three in bridge construction, three in sugarcane, three in vigilance, two in law, two in basic education infrastructure, one in fire brigade and one in sports department.

Hamas attacks give rise to fears of copycat actions in an unstable region

Arul Louis

The Hamas terrorist attack on Israel has parallels to the Pakistani terrorists' assault on Mumbai, but the scale of the onslaught is much bigger and the reverberations have a far wider global impact. The 26/11 attack by just ten attackers coming by dinghies and boats kept Mumbai locked down for four days in 2008 and killed about 170 people - including six Jews in a targeted attack on their religious centre - could be the template for a lo-tech mayhem like the 7/10 (or 10/7) onslaught by the Hamas on Israel. And anti-Semitism was a common thread. The 7/10 attack was on a much larger scale with 1,500 terrorists catching Israel's much-feared intelligence and military unawares, overrunning Israel's highly sophisticated security apparatus with bulldozers, paragliders, and drones. They took hostages back and left behind a horrific carnage of mass killings, babies among the victims. Neither the much-admired Iron Dome anti-missile defence system nor the array of surveillance and weapon systems along the Gaza border were ultimately a match for the primitive Hamas arsenal. That gives rise to fears of copycat attacks, massive lo-tech invasions by suicidal terrorist armies scattered in the volatile region, in Africa and beyond. While 26/11's repercussions were contained because India and Pakistan are nuclear powers and there were no dangers of a regional spillover or global impact, 7/10 was carried out by a non-state actor -- the euphemism for terrorists -- from a non-country but at the centre of a region already fraught with upheavals and important to the world's economy because of its hold on energy supplies. World Bank President Ajay Banga told The New York Times that if the conflict were to spread, "then it becomes dangerous" and could lead to "a crisis of unimaginable proportion". As the sole nuclear power in the region and its adversary running a territory not recognised as a nation, Israel is able to mount a mighty retaliation of bombardments, a total blockade, and a possible ground invasion of Gaza, although it is complicated by the hostages held by Hamas that upends the strategic scenario there. A surprise behind 7/10 is the monumental intelligence failure of Mossad, which is credited with the pinpoint killing of nuclear scientists inside Iran and the hunting of ex-Nazis hiding in Latin America. As for the US intelligence services, they were possibly distracted by monitoring what they assume to be diplomatic conversations within Canada. Regardless of whether Iran was involved in the planning of



the attacks as Israel asserts or not - Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said there was no definite evidence yet - it stands to gain from the chaos after 7/10, along with Hamas and Hezbollah, the other aligned group in the North along Lebanon. Its proxy Hamas's suicidal ideology that sends its cadres into self-destructive conflagrations sees the 7/10 attack as a means to provoke Israel into launching a massive retaliation where civilians could be unintended victims. Targeting just the Hamas fighters in a densely populated Gaza, some of them using hostages and civilians as human shields is a risky undertaking. Hamas hopes the retaliation and the vivid images of it can be manipulated to allow the smouldering sympathy for Palestinians to flare up as challenges from the ruled to the rulers in the Arab world with a potential for destabilising the region. That is if even the Palestinians are collateral victims unlike the old and the very young targeted by the Hamas. "Every Hamas member is a dead man," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said of the scale of the threatened retaliation. Sounding a note of caution, US National Security Adviser John Kirby said: "If you're an innocent civilian, you didn't cause this. You didn't ask for this, and you shouldn't be having to fear for your life. Nobody wants to see that happen." The fears of Israel's retribution have created at least a hiccup in the rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Israel and put a chill on the Abraham Accords of peace with Israel that brought together the United Arab Emirates and three other Arab

countries with Israel - both of which are the keystones of US approach to the Middle East.

Hamas and other Palestinian groups were alarmed by the prospects of losing their priority with their patrons, especially if more countries were to reconcile with Israel, and theirs could become a lost cause. For Iran, stability in the region, more so if it is promoted by the US and pivots on Israel, is anathema. Add to this, the Ukraine factor: Any rearranging of the geostrategic scenario in the Middle East and the needs of Israel could move Ukraine from the front burner to the advantage of Russia, the ally of Iran and its protector at the United Nations Security Council.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said: "Russia is interested in triggering a war in the Middle East, so that a new source of pain and suffering could undermine world unity, increase discord and contradictions, and thus help Russia destroy freedom in Europe." For India, the fallout of the 7/10 throws up many challenges, although its ties to Israel are no longer seen as a contentious domestic issue. But India has to balance its growing defence to Israel ties - New Delhi buys billions of dollars of military equipment from it and they have signed onto a 10-year "India-Israel Vision on Defence Cooperation" plan - with the energy dependence on Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries, where an estimated 9 million Indians work. The future of the I2U2 cooperative group of India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the US launched last year and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor announced

during the G20 Summit last month rests on continued good relations between the Arab states and Israel. Within Israel, 7/10 has led to an unexpected turn of events for Prime Minister Netanyahu who confronted a national upheaval because of his policies that pitched the secularists against religious primacists. After his government dependent on the support of religious fundamentalists - described in the media as "ultra-orthodox" - passed a law to limit the powers of the Supreme Court in July, the rightward drift was met head-on by the secularists and with disapproval by President Joe Biden's administration. Thousands of military reservists - on whom the country's defence forces depend - threatened to resign in protest against what they called the erosion of democracy. Underlying it is the tension between the secularists who form the bulk of the military and are the force behind the economy and the ultra-orthodox, who get exemptions from military service to continue their indefinite religious education, while limiting their economic productivity, and who are behind the contentious settlements in the Palestine areas. However, the ultra-orthodox wield considerable influence as a solid voting bloc, with their own political parties that can determine who forms the government in Israel's fractured polity. The 7/10 attacks brought the opposition leader Benny Gantz, a former general and Defence Minister who is a moderate, into a national unity government with Netanyahu and the wartime cabinet. Israel, for now, has set aside the debilitating polarisation and come together to face Hamas. US President Biden, who ostracised Netanyahu for what he considered his authoritarian ways and had refused to meet him at the White House where he instead welcomed President Isaac Herzog, now has publicly backed him. The 27-member European Union, too, stands solid behind Israel, despite the mix-up of stopping aid to Palestine and then reversing course. Any long-term settlement of the Israel-Palestine problem is problematic, even if the EU, the US and the rest of the world back a two-state solution because Palestine has been unable to govern itself as shown vividly in Gaza. Israel withdrew from there, destroying its settlements, but the Palestine Authority could not hold it as the de facto power slipped to the Islamist terror group Hamas amid intercommunal killings there and on the West Bank with a toll that could rival that of any from Israeli actions.

international

49 KILLED IN ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES IN SOUTH GAZA: PALESTINE



Gaza | Agencies

The Palestinian Interior Ministry on Tuesday claimed that at least 49 people were killed in Israeli airstrikes in south Gaza. While 21 people were killed in an airstrike on Monday night in Khan Younis, the remaining 28 died when a house was hit in the Rafah area, near the border crossing with Egypt, the BBC quoted the Ministry as saying.

The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said women and children were among the 28 killed at the "family house" in Rafah.

Regarding the strikes, Israel Defense Forces spokesman Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus told CNN on Tuesday morning that he was "not aware of any strikes specifically in those areas but they could have happened".

"The combat operations continue. We continue to hunt Hamas operatives to attempt to degrade their military capabilities," Conricus said.

He said the hunt for Hamas targets is part of "the war that has been forced upon us" and Israel will continue military operations "according to the law of armed conflict and of course to minimise civilian

Hamas says 200-250 Israeli captives held in Gaza

Al-Qassam Brigades, armed wing of the Hamas militant group, said there were 200 to 250 Israeli hostages in Gaza who were captured after the October 7 attack.

In a televised address on Monday, Abu Obaida, spokesperson of the Al-Qassam Brigades, said the Hamas is holding 200 prisoners, while "the rest are captured by other resistance factions in the Gaza Strip", reports Xinhua news agency. The spokesman added that they cannot determine the exact number of hostages in the besieged enclave due to constant Israeli bombardment. Obaida added that the ongoing Israeli attacks on Gaza have killed at least 22 Israelis, including Guy Olives, a Tel Aviv-based artist. He noted that foreigners were not prisoners in Gaza, and they will be released when "the opportunity arises on the ground". The spokesman asserted that the Al-Qassam is "committed" to protecting them, but warned that any foreign national serving with the Israeli military will be considered a "direct enemy".

casualties". Meanwhile, the death toll in Gaza since the raging conflict erupted on October 7 stood at 2,778, with 9,938 injured persons.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health said that 47 entire families have been killed, amounting to about 500 people. According to official Israeli sources, at least 1,300 Israelis and foreign nationals have been killed in the Jewish nation, while 4,121 others were injured.



BIDEN TO VISIT ISRAEL TODAY

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has announced that President Joe Biden will visit Israel on Wednesday during which the latter will hear from the Jewish nation on "how it will conduct its operations in a way that minimises civilian casualties". Blinken, who arrived in Tel Aviv on Monday marking his second trip to the war-torn nation since Hamas launched its unprecedented attack on Israel on October 7, announced the visit at the end of an over seven-hour long meeting with the Jewish state's war cabinet, CNN reported. During his visit on Wednesday, the President "will hear from Israel how it will conduct its operations in a way that minimises civilian casualties and enables humanitarian assistance to flow to civilians in Gaza in a way that does not benefit Hamas, the Secretary of State said. Biden "will reaffirm the US' solidarity with Israel and our ironclad commitment to its security", he added.

Sikh teen in US punched for wearing turban, told 'we don't wear that in this country'

New York | Agencies

In a racially-motivated attack, a man punched a 19-year-old Sikh teen multiple times and attempted to remove his turban onboard a Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) bus in New York City.

Police said both men were riding on a shuttle bus on Sunday morning near 118th Street and Liberty Avenue in Richmond Hill when the suspect approached the victim, ABC7 news channel reported. "We don't wear that in this country," the suspect told the victim pointing at his turban, following which he punched the young Sikh several times and tried to remove it. He then got off the bus and remains at large, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) said, urging the public to help in nabbing the suspect. Releasing a picture, the NYPD described the suspect as "a male, 25-35 years of age, dark complexion, slim build, approximately 5'9 tall, with brown eyes and black hair". The victim, who suffered a minor cut and pain, refused medical attention at the scene, police said. Slamming the incident, the US-based Sikh Coalition said on X that it is "deeply disturbed by an apparent hate-motivated attack on a Sikh teen". "We are in contact with the survivor and working



with him to provide support as needed; he has requested anonymity for the time being. Our current understanding is that (the) NYPD is, appropriately, investigating this incident as a hate crime," the Coalition said. "Right now, the victim is very traumatised," community activist Japneet Singh told ABC7. "The family is very scared for him." Japneet said the victim was injured badly enough that he won't be able to work for the next few days. The NYPD Hate Crimes Unit is investigating the bus attack. Releasing its annual report of hate crimes statistics in 2022 on Monday, the FBI reported 198 cases of anti-Sikh hate crime victimisations. Stating that religiously-motivated hate crime victimisations were at their highest with a 17 per cent increase since 2021, the FBI said that Sikhs still remain the second-most targeted group in the nation.

Indonesia's Ibu volcano erupts

Jakarta | Agencies

The Ibu volcano in Indonesia's North Maluku province erupted on Tuesday, prompting authorities to warn locals and tourists to stay away from the area. The volcano erupted at 12:42 p.m., spewing hot ash as far as 600 meters from the crater, according to the Ibu Volcano Monitoring



Post. Ahmad Basuki, an officer of the monitoring post, said in a statement that the volcano's eruption spewed a column of thick, gray ash towards the east with a maxi-

mum amplitude of 28 mm and a duration of 57 seconds, reports Xinhua news agency. "People who have outdoor activities are advised to wear nose, mouth and eye protectors when volcanic ashes fall," he added. Standing as high as 1,377 meters above sea level, Ibu volcano is now in the second danger level, below the highest level of IV.

Brazil's Rio Negro river registers lowest water level since 1902

Brasilia | Agencies

The Rio Negro river, one of the main waterways in Brazil's Amazon region, has recorded its lowest water level since 1902, with dozens of boats stranded in the Manaus Port. According to official information from the Manaus Port Authority, the largest blackwater river in the world reached 13.59 meters, the lowest level since measurements began in 1902, shattering the previous record of 13.63 meters set in 2010, reports Xinhua news agency. "It is the worst drought in Manaus," said a spokesperson for the port in the capital of Amazonas state. Hundreds of boats were stranded



on the river's sandbanks as a drought has put more than 50 municipalities in the Brazilian Amazon region under emergency conditions, reported local media. October is one of the periods when the waters recede in the Amazon river basin, so the government has launched an operation to dredge the watercourses to allow navigation and avoid water shortages in riverside cities. "The Rio Negro will go down a little more. From historical data, major droughts last until the end of October to the beginning of November," said Renato Senna, climatologist and researcher at the country's National Institute for Space Research.

Man dead in Australia bushfire

Sydney | Agencies

Police confirmed on Tuesday that a man died in the Australia's New South Wales (NSW) after a bushfire ripped through a rural property in the state's north. Emergency services were called to Stony Creek Lane at Temagog at about 10:15 p.m. on Monday night and a 56-year-old man was reported missing after a bushfire passed through the area, reports Xinhua news agency. On arrival, police



officers located the body of a man, and his bulldozer nearby was destroyed. The man is believed to be a local property owner, whose identity still requires formal confirmation. The Temagog area is currently remaining under the threat of an out-of-control blaze that has already

burnt 21,010 hectares. The NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) called on residents to stay alert and monitor their surroundings, as the active fire continues to burn close to properties. According to the fire authority, there were currently 69 fires burning around the state, with 32 yet to be contained. "While there are no total fire bans today, several areas in the north of the state will experience high fire danger," the NSW RFS warned.



FOCUS ON YOUTH: CONGRESS' MP ELECTION MANIFESTO PROMISES 2 LAKH JOBS, RECRUITMENT BILL, TRANSPARENT

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Aimed to get support from youth, including 22.36 lakh first time voters, the Congress has made several promises for them in its manifesto for the November 17 Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections, released on Tuesday. Kamal Nath led MP Congress has promised to fill two lakh vacant posts and promised that at least one lakh job vacancies will be created for youths in rural areas.

In its manifesto, the Congress has mentioned that more than two crore youth are unemployed, and of them, several lakh are skilled and they will be provided jobs through various schemes. Job-oriented diploma courses related with farming, animal husbandry, and fisheries would be included in school education, it said.

The Congress also said that if it forms the government in Madhya Pradesh, it would allocate a Rs1,000 crore corpus fund for new startups and to encourage skilled youth for entrepreneurship. The party has mainly issue plaguing the youth for the last few decades -- irregularities in the state government's recruitment exams, saying



that in power, recruitment exams for government jobs would be made transparent. Kamal Nath has promised that if he comes to power, his government will introduce a new system of selection for the government jobs in the state. "The Congress is committed to bring transparency in the recruitment system and to make it possible; we will introduce a bill in the state Assembly, which will be called the Madhya Pradesh Recruitment Act. Beside all these, we will also establish a recruitment commission and a separate inquiry commission will also be setup to monitor the irregularities in the system," the Congress 'vachan patra' said.

The multi-layer Vyapam scam, which broke out in 2013, stormed into the inter-

national headlines because of over 50 mysterious deaths. The BJP government led by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan changed the names of the board twice in the past couple years to get rid of its tainted image, however, the ghost still remained in the system.

One after another, irregularities kept on surfacing in recruitment exams - in the nursing exams, patwari exams, police constable exams and many more in the past few years, offering a clear indication that merely the name of the board has changed, and the problems still persist. These multiple scams in recruitment exams for the various departments of the state government, have not just ruined the future of lakhs of youths, it has also

denied Madhya Pradesh's image.

Gauging the sentiment of the people, Kamal Nath has included this particular issue in his election manifesto. There are at least 31 constituencies in the state where the number of young or first-time voters aged between 18 and 19 years is more than the winning margin in the previous Assembly elections. There are 17 constituencies in the state where the victory margin in the 2018 assembly election was less than one per cent. However, there is no such constituency in this election where the percentage of young or first-time voters is less than 2 per cent of the electorate. There are 22.2 lakh first time voters in the state, according to the Election Commission's data.

"A LETTER OF LIES": SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN ON CONGRESS' POLL MANIFESTO

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday took a jibe at the Congress party over their election manifesto saying that it was not a manifesto of the Congress, but the letter of lies. CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan made the remark while speaking to ANI in the state capital Bhopal soon after the Congress's manifesto was released.

"It is not a manifesto of the Congress, it is a letter of lies. Five years ago, they made over 900 promises to the public but did not even fulfill nine of them. Till today people are yearning. When will the youth get Rs 4,000 unemployment allowance? When will the bonus on the support price be given? Not just one but many promises were given, all of them turned out to be false and today again presented a letter of lies," CM Chouhan



said.

"The public is not going to trust these lies because the public knows that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) does whatever it says. It even fulfills what it doesn't say like the 'Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana,' it was not in the vision letter but we implemented it," the chief minister added. He further said that the public knew the truth of Congress and would not be confused.

On the other hand, reacting to CM

Chouhan's remark Congress Spokesperson Abbas Hafeez hit back and said that their manifesto was their promise letter and Kamal Nath fulfilled the promise he (Nath) made.

"Our manifesto is our promise letter and Kamal Nath fulfills the promises he makes. CM Chouhan is making allegations against Congress while the public makes the same allegation against the BJP. Chouhan and BJP have given four manifestos to Madhya Pradesh in the last 20 years, but if all four are taken together, then 90 to 95 per cent of the promises made by them have not been fulfilled till date," Hafeez said.

The Congress leader further said that if those who cheat the public (referring to BJP) were accusing the Congress party then the public would not tolerate it. The people of Madhya Pradesh would not make any mistake in choosing the state-friendly party.

Voters will be able to vote by showing any one of the 12 alternative photo documents

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In compliance with the instructions of the Election Commission of India, voters in all constituencies, who have been issued Photo Identity Card, will have to produce Photo Identity Card (EPIC) for identification at the polling station before voting.

Voters who are not able to produce photo identity card will have to produce any one of the 12 alternative photo identity documents prescribed by the Election Commission to establish their identity. If EPIC voting is not possible, these 12 alternative photo identity documents which include Aadhar Card, MNREGA Job Card, Driving License, PAN Card, Indian Passport, Pension documents with photo, photo issued to employees by Central/State Government/PSU/Public Limited Companies, Service Identity Card, Passbook with photo issued by Bank/Post Office, Smart Card issued by



RGI under National Population Register, Health Insurance Smart Card issued under the scheme of the Ministry of Labour, official identity card issued to MPs/MLAs/MLCs and Unique Disability ID issued to the disabled by the Ministry of Social Justice, Government of India can be shown.

Non-resident Indian voters (NRI) need to show their original passport only for identification. If it is not possible to identify a voter if his photograph does not match etc. in EPIC, then that voter will have to show any one of the above mentioned 12 alternative photo documents.

KAMAL NATH-DIGVIJAYA SINGH'S BANTER VIDEO VIRAL, BJP CLAIMS INFIGHTING

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The video of an on-stage banter between Congress leaders Kamal Nath and Digvijaya Singh has emerged as a big talking point in Madhya Pradesh, with the BJP calling it a sign of infighting and Congress leaders saying the video just captures a light moment between two veterans.

The video is from an event during which the Congress's Madhya Pradesh unit released its manifesto for the November 17 election. The polls in the BJP-ruled state are expected to be a close contest as the Congress pushes hard for a victory. Kamal Nath is the state Congress president and the face of the party's Assembly poll campaign.

Singh, a former Chief Minister, is a Rajya Sabha MP and one of the tallest leader of the Congress in Madhya Pradesh.

In the video, Nath is heard saying that when he was asked to "tear Digvijaya Singh's clothes for not fulfilling promises", he had replied that the people should do so if their concerns are not heard.

Singh, who was on the stage, intervened and said the party's documents are signed by the state Congress chief. "Then whose clothes should be torn?" he asked as party leaders laughed.

Responding, Nath said his relationship with Singh is not political. "It is a relationship of jokes and laughs, of love.



Long back, I had given him a power of attorney that he will face verbal abuses for me. That power of attorney is still valid," he said.

At this, Singh responded, "But people should know who is making mistakes". "Whether it is your mistake or not, you will face abuses," Nath said, amid cheers and claps from other leaders.

The state Congress chief reiterated that he and Singh go back a long way. "As I said, it is not a political relationship. It is a family relationship."

Singh quipped, "He is basically saying, Lord Shiva's job is to drink poison. Fine, I will drink it."

As soon as the video circulated on

social media, the BJP said infighting in the Congress has come out in the open. "A contest to tear clothes within infighting-hit Congress," the BJP said in a post on X, adding that the state Congress chief and Rajya Sabha MP were fighting in the open.

Soon after, Singh put out a post on X, saying he and Mr Nath go back a long way. "I have a family relationship with Kamal Nath since 1980. We have had differences on several issues. It is natural for two friends to have differences of opinion, but we have never had a difference of heart," he said, sharing a video of the banter and requesting people to watch it.

Former BJP MLA from Ater Munna Singh Bhadauria resigns from party membership

Team Absolute | Bhind

Munna Singh Bhadauria, former BJP MLA from Ater in Bhind district, resigned from the primary membership of BJP. He submitted his resignation to BJP state president VD Sharma. Bhadauria has been an MLA from BJP in 1990 and 1998. He has also been the Chairman of Seed Corporation. Presently he was Bhind in-charge of district Tikamgarh.

Uma Bharti's new tweet creates political ruckus in MP BJP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The tweet made by BJP's fire brand leader and former CM Uma Bharti on Tuesday, a week after the fourth list of BJP candidates was released, has once again created a political stir in Madhya Pradesh. Uma has written in the tweet that she is surprised and happy about this list and she has informed the top leadership of BJP about this.

But in the tweet, Uma, while referring to a line from Allama Iqbal's couplet, said something which is being interpreted to have many political implications. He has once again raised the issue of OBC women reservation.

Uma Bharti has written in the tweet that 'perhaps we



have accepted the ability to win as the basis. But we should be free from the desire to win and the fear of defeat. Uma wrote that the fourth list of candidates of

our party BJP has arrived. Everyone and I have a mixed feeling of surprise and happiness due to the impression I have formed after talking to our workers and voters of

Madhya Pradesh about these four lists of BJP candidates. I have informed all the senior BJP leadership of Delhi and Madhya Pradesh about this. Perhaps we have considered the ability to win as the basis. Our party has been a worshiper of loyalty and moral values. We should always be free from the desire to win and the fear of defeat and should also be visible.

A line from Iqbal's couplet - "Guffar's son became a Ghazi, but the character's Ghazi could not be made." Now, after the final list, we will also assess how many women from backward classes got tickets. With this, my demand for reservation for women from backward classes will seem correct to everyone.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

These days, tremendous action is being taken by ED and Income Tax team in Madhya Pradesh.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday the Income Tax team raided a company in Budhni, the assembly constituency of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. This raid of the Income Tax team in Budhni Assembly has become a cause of discussion. It is being told that the Income Tax team has raided Budhni's Trident company. Income Tax team officers have reached Trident Company in 60 vehicles. After this the company campus has been sealed for investigation. It is being told that the Income Tax team is busy investigating the documents of the company. In fact, 75 percent of the products of Trident Company located in Budni area of Sehore district are exported abroad. The Income Tax team has conducted raids on the institutions of Trident Company located across the country. According to the information received, raids have been conducted simultaneously in all the industries of Trident including Budhni, Ludhiana, Jalandhar.



BJP TRYING TO MAKE LOTUS BLOOM IN LAHAR, GOVIND SINGH OF CONGRESS WINNING SINCE 1990

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Gwalior Chambal assembly constituency is also Lahar assembly constituency since independence. The voters of this area had used their votes in the first election i.e. 1951-1952. In 1952 and 1957, two candidates stood for election from this area, one from general and the other from reserved seat. Both the times Congress candidates emerged victorious from general and reserved seats. This area remained under the control of Congress from the beginning. From 1962, the trend of two candidates stopped and one candidate was in the fray. Even in 1962, this seat remained in the possession of Congress. Govind Singh of Congress has made it his stronghold since 1990. This time BJP is trying hard to make the lotus blossom here.

In 1967, Jan Sangh had won by Lahar. After this, from 1985 to 2018, BJP could not taste victory. It is a coinci-



dence that Govind Singh contested the elections with Janata Dal in 1990 and was victorious. Later he joined Congress and has been continuously winning on Congress ticket. Lahar has been a strong-

hold of Congress since the beginning and it is a challenge for BJP to penetrate it. Lahar remained reserved for Scheduled Tribes in 1957 and 1962, however, it was converted into a general seat from 1967. In June this year,

Ambrish Sharma left BSP and again joined BJP. At the same time, Govind Singh joined Congress from JD and contested elections and is winning till date. Now Ambrish Sharma Guddu Bhaiya did the same, will Sharma repeat history? Only time will tell, both the greats are in the fray in the elections. Let's see who the voters choose.

What voters say: Dr. Govind Singh is such a public servant who has served the public in the area with full dedication and heart and has never discriminated against any section. He has always given priority to the development and progress of the area. On the request of voters He is playing his last innings of politics, that is, this is his last election. Voters say that Doctor Saheb has served the public all his life, hence we will make him win the last election also. While talking, people are praising Doctor Saheb's services and They also become jealous of their good behaviour.



Pink postpones concert tour dates due to 'family medical issues'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Pink was apologising for having to postpone two concerts in Tacoma as the singer shares the dates will have to be rescheduled due to "family medical issues".

"I send my sincerest apologies, love and health to all," Pink wrote in an Instagram post alongside a statement informing fans that the shows set to take place at the Tacoma Dome in Washington state were being postponed, reports [deadline.com](#).

"I am so sorry to inform the Tacoma ticket holders that the two shows October 17 and October 18 (tomorrow and Wednesday) will be postponed," read the

statement.

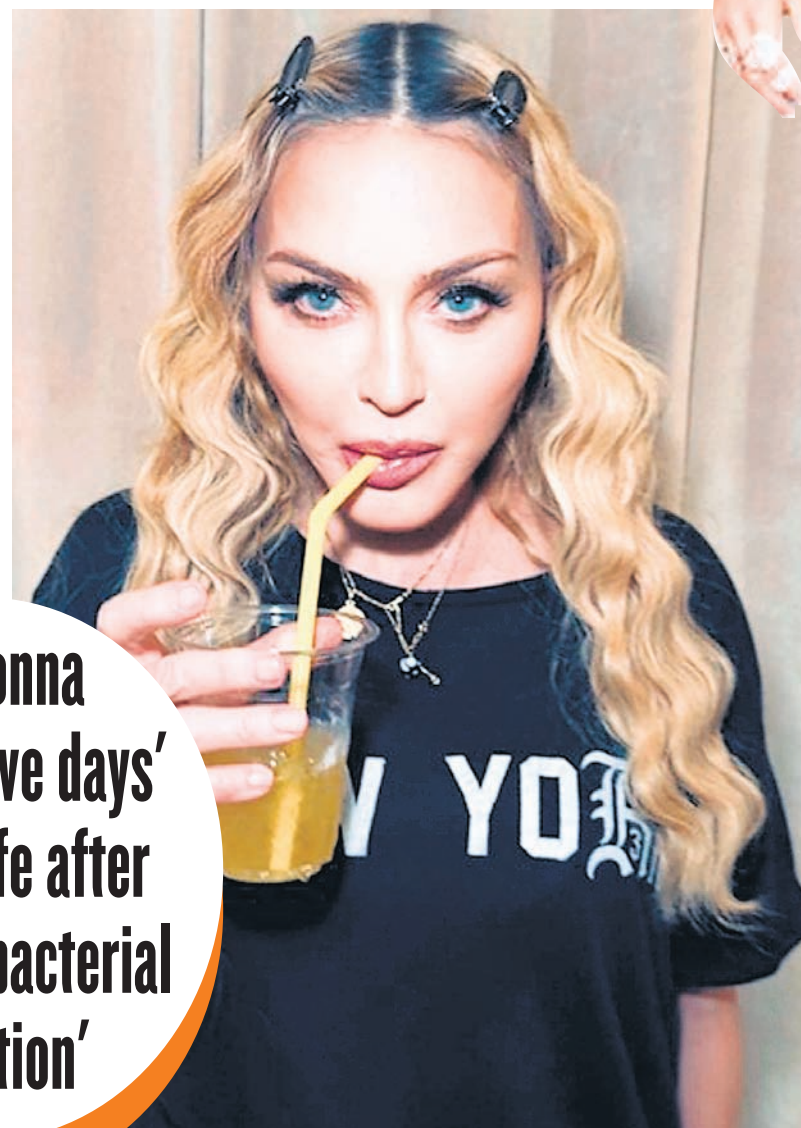
"Live Nation are working on future dates to reschedule."

The statement continued, "Family medical issues require our immediate attention. I send everyone my sincerest apologies for any inconvenience this has caused. I am sending nothing but love and health to all."

Pink didn't elaborate on the medical issues she is facing. The singer just started last week the Trustfall Tour performing her first date on October 12 in Sacramento followed by two shows in San Francisco on October 14 and 15.

Her next scheduled tour date is set for October 20 and 21 when she will travel to Vancouver, Canada.

Other cities Pink is scheduled to travel to in her current tour include Denver, Kansas City, Montreal, New York City, Indianapolis, Cleveland, Louisville, Charlotte, Miami, Sunrise, Orlando and Tulsa.



Madonna forgot 'five days' of her life after 'serious bacterial infection'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Queen of pop Madonna said to fans on the first night of her world tour that she feared she "wouldn't make it" after her near-death health scare.

She made the remarks on stage at London's O2 Arena, where she kicked off her much-anticipated "Celebration" shows after they were postponed when the singer was rushed to hospital in June suffering a "serious bacterial infection."

"I didn't think I would make it, and neither did my doctors. That's why I woke up with all of my children sitting around me," Madonna told her fans at the sold-out concert while holding her guitar, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#).

She added: "I forgot five days of my life, or my death, I don't really know where I was. But the angels were protecting me. And my children were there." "And my children always save me, every time. If you want to know how I pulled through and how I survived, I thought, I have got to be there for my children. I have to survive for them."

Madonna then played an acoustic version of the Gloria Gaynor track 'I Will Survive', reports [aceshowbiz.com](#).

After recovering from her illness at home in New York, Madonna told fans she was rescheduling her world tour in October.

There had been reports the singer had been exhausting herself in rehearsals for the shows, but before they were relaunched, it was reported she

was in top health. Her tour features a 45-song set list celebrating Madonna's 40-year career, with her opening night showcasing a series of raunchy outfit changes and a moment where she pulls her skirt over one of her dancer's heads while straddling his shoulders.



MILLIE BOBBY BROWN CAN'T WAIT TO BID FAREWELL TO 'STRANGER THINGS'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Millie Bobby Brown, who plays Eleven on the hit sci-fi series 'Stranger Things', shared that she is ready to say goodbye to the show, which will end with its upcoming fifth season.

Speaking with Glamour, the actress insinuated that she wouldn't be mourning the fifth and final season of 'Stranger Things' that is set to air once the SAG-AFTRA strike ends, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#).

"When you're ready, you're like, 'All right, let's do this. Let's tackle this last senior year. Let's get out of here,'" Millie shared in an interview published on Monday.

The 'Enola Holmes' actress added that 'Stranger Things' blocked her from doing what she wants to do in her acting career.

"'Stranger Things' takes up a lot of time to film and it's preventing me from creating stories that I'm passionate about," she divulged.

"So I'm ready to say, 'Thank you, and goodbye.'" Millie went on to share that she will keep in touch with her co-stars on the series.

"When it ends, I'm going to be able to still see these people," she shared, noting that "no one is dying."

Elsewhere in the interview, Millie reflected on her fame after playing Eleven on 'Stranger Things'.

She slammed trolls who criticised her for talking loudly during interviews with fellow 'Stranger Things' cast members, including Finn Wolfhard, Noah Schnapp, Sadie Sink, Caleb McLaughlin and Gaten Matarazzo.

"We're kids - we talk over each other. I was just penalised for overtalking and oversharing and being too loud," she said.



LIAM PAYNE FINED FOR SPEEDING, BARRED FROM DRIVING FOR 6 MONTHS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Liam Payne has been forbidden from getting behind the wheel "due to repeat offending" and was fined over \$300 after he was caught on camera behind the wheel speeding to 43mph in a 30mph zone in west London in February.

The 30-year-old star wasn't required to attend as his case was heard at Lavender Hill Magistrates court on October 9, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#).

However, he apologised and claimed he wasn't aware of the speed limit in a previous submission to the court. According to The Sun, he said, "I did not realise the

speed limit and apologise for speeding."

The 'Strip That Down' singer -- who was also handed four penalty points for the offence -- declined to give financial information but pledged to pay any fine imposed.

The singer added: "I am self employed and cannot provide the information at this stage. However I will pay any fine imposed within 14 days."

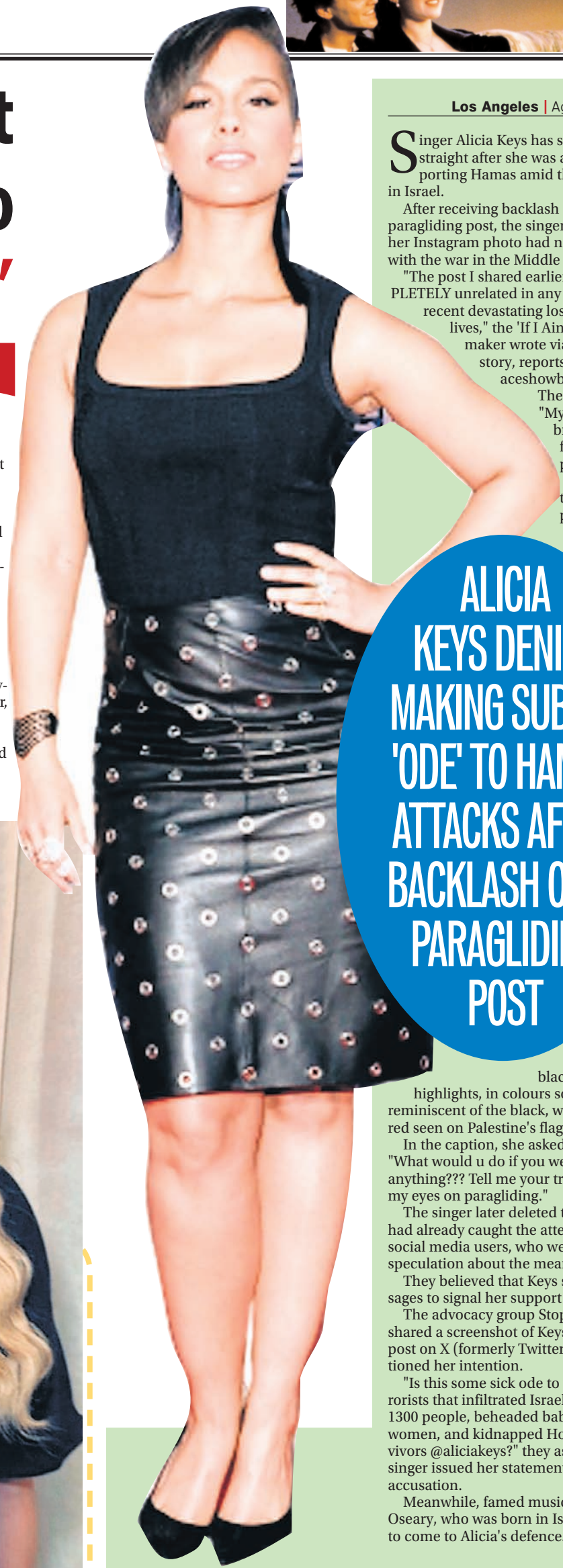
Liam has had a number of health issues of late and was hospitalised in Italy last month after being struck down by agonising kidney pain while on holiday in Lake Como with girlfriend Kate Cassidy.

His mother, Karen Payne, previously told MailOnline: "We are all worried sick about it but we just have to get on. It's horrible - him being all the way over there. It's such a horrible situation and we just hope he's in the best place possible. He's in Milan and it sounds like he'll be there for a week. I feel helpless."

But days later, Kate confirmed the singer had been discharged from hospital and was doing well.

She told her TikTok followers, "He is doing so much better. He is out of the hospital and he is in good hands."

Weeks before his Italian hospitalisation, Liam had axed a number of shows in South America after he revealed he'd been treated for a serious kidney infection.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Alicia Keys has set the record straight after she was accused of supporting Hamas amid the terror attacks in Israel.

After receiving backlash over her paragliding post, the singer insisted that her Instagram photo had nothing to do with the war in the Middle East.

"The post I shared earlier was COMPLETELY unrelated in any way to the recent devastating loss of innocent lives," the 'If I Ain't Got You' hit-maker wrote via her Instagram story, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#).

The singer stressed: "My heart has been breaking.... I pray for and stand for peace."

Alicia got into trouble after posting a photograph of herself wearing a green

ALICIA KEYS DENIES MAKING SUBTLE 'ODE' TO HAMAS ATTACKS AFTER BACKLASH OVER PARAGLIDING POST

leather racing jacket with black and white highlights, in colours some said were reminiscent of the black, white, green and red seen on Palestine's flag.

In the caption, she asked her followers: "What would u do if you weren't afraid of anything??? Tell me your truth... I've had my eyes on paragliding."

The singer later deleted the post, but it had already caught the attention of some social media users, who weighed in with speculation about the meaning of the post.

They believed that Keys sent coded messages to signal her support to Hamas.

The advocacy group StopAntisemitism shared a screenshot of Keys' controversial post on X (formerly Twitter), and questioned her intention.

"Is this some sick ode to the Hamas terrorists that infiltrated Israel, killed over 1300 people, beheaded babies, raped women, and kidnapped Holocaust survivors @aliciakeys?" they asked, before the singer issued her statement to deny the accusation.

Meanwhile, famed music manager Guy Oseary, who was born in Israel, was quick to come to Alicia's defence.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Scarlett Johansson



69TH NATIONAL FILM AWARDS



Want people to remember me as good human being: Waheeda Rehman

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Veteran actress Waheeda Rehman was conferred with the Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Award for her immense contribution to Indian cinema, at the 69th National Film Awards, here on Tuesday. Known for films like 'Guide', 'Pyasa', 'Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam', 'Delhi-6', 'Kaagaz Ke Phool' and several others, the actress has played countless memorable characters on the celluloid, and has a career spanning almost seven decades.

The 69th National Film Awards held in the national capital was attended by the President Droupadi Murmu.

Information and Broadcasting minister Anurag Thakur was also present on the occasion. Waheeda wore a cream and golden coloured saree, and accessorised it with a green necklace and matching earrings. She tied her hair in a bun. The President and other dignitaries present on the occasion gave the standing ovation to the legendary actress.

ALIA BHATT WEARS WEDDING SAREE FOR CEREMONY

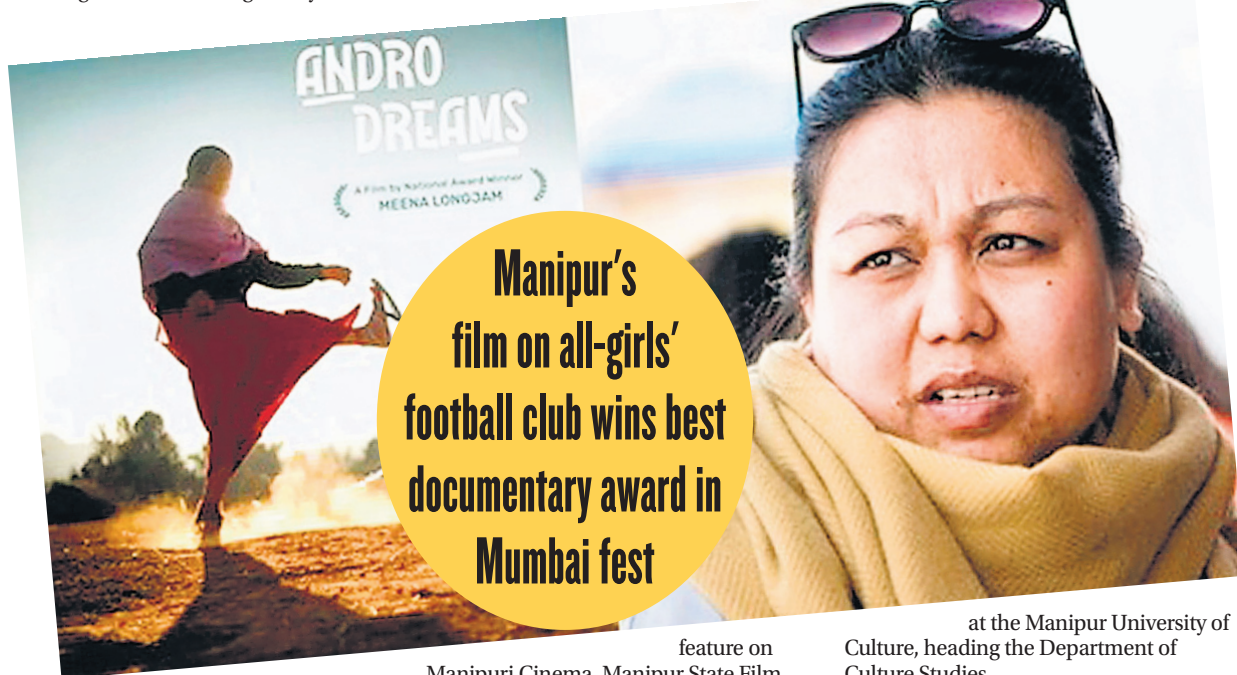
New Delhi: Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt, who has received the 'Best Actress' award at the 69th National Film Awards for her performance in 'Gangubai Kathiawadi', wore her wedding saree to the ceremony on Tuesday.

The 69th National Film Awards held in the national capital was attended by the President Droupadi Murmu.

Information and Broadcasting minister Anurag Thakur was also present on the occasion.

As Alia went on the stage to receive the prestigious award, she bowed down and touched the floor of the stage.

The actress looked beautiful in her wedding saree which was in ivory colour.



Manipur's film on all-girls' football club wins best documentary award in Mumbai fest

Team Absolute | Imphal

Critically acclaimed filmmaker Meena Longjam's 'Andro Dreams', capturing the journey of an all-girls football club from Andro, a remote town in Manipur's Imphal East district, has won the best documentary award at the eighth edition of the Jagran Film Festival in Mumbai. In a glittering ceremony held in Mumbai on Sunday, Meena, a doctorate holder in mass communication, bagged the prestigious award.

Describing Meena's "win" as another

feature on Manipuri Cinema, Manipur State Film Development Society (MSFDS), Secretary Sunzu Bachaspatimayum congratulated Meena Longjam and her entire crew of 'Andro Dreams' on their achievement coming at a time when the state is battling to recover from the unprecedented ethnic strife it has witnessed since May 3.

"Andro Dreams" is the story of Laibi, a spirited old woman and her three-decade old all-girls' football club battling economic challenges, patriarchal system and orthodoxy at Andro, an ancient village of northeast India," said Meena, who is currently working as an Assistant Professor

at the Manipur University of Culture, heading the Department of Culture Studies.

Her feat came a couple of days ahead of the 69th National Film Awards ceremony to be held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi wherein two renowned Manipuri film makers - Mayanglambam Romi Meitei and Saikhom Ratan - will receive awards for their films 'Eikhoigi Yum' (Our house) and 'Beyond Blast' respectively.

In her decade-long career as a filmmaker, Meena has won many awards, and the most prominent one is her 2015 win for the documentary film 'Auto driver', which portrayed the struggles of Imphal's first female auto rickshaw driver.

Amandeep Sidhu's journey mirrors fearless spirit of Goddess Durga

Mumbai: Actress Amandeep Sidhu, who is currently seen in the show 'Saubhagyavati Bhava - Niyam aur Shartien Laagu', shared her plans for Navratri festival, and said how she finds similarity between Goddess Durga's personality and herself.

Navratri is a nine-night Hindu festival dedicated to the Goddess Durga, celebrating her various forms and attributes. The festival involves traditional dances like garba and dandiya, where people dress in colourful attire, offer prayers, and come together to celebrate the spirit of unity and devotion. Talking about the same, Amandeep said: "Navratri, a celebration of Goddess Durga's triumph over the demon king Mahishasura, holds a special significance for me. I find a similarity between Durga's personality and my own - caring and loving yet capable of assertive action when needed."

"I eagerly anticipate the joy of playing dandiya and relishing the traditional Navratri prasad, such as puri, chole, and more. The vibrant festivities bring back cherished memories. Although I'm busy shooting for 'Saubhagyavati Bhava' I might still be joining the garba dance this year with friends and family if I get time," she said.

Amandeep added: "As Navratri is a time for revelry and spiritual reflection, blending tradition and merriment in a wonderful way I would like to wish everyone Happy Navratri."

The actress is seen portraying Siya in 'Saubhagyavati Bhava', while Dheeraj Dhoopar plays the lead role of Raghav.



Now, I am known as a pretty girl with acting talent: Karishma Tanna

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress Karishma Tanna, who has bagged the 'Best Lead Actress' award for her work in Netflix's series 'Scoop' at the Busan Film Festival 2023, shared how winning a film festival is a big deal, but she will not keep changing her parameters of choosing roles as per the projects.

Karishma also picked the trophy for 'Best Series' for 'Scoop' at the Busan Film Festival, which is one of Asia's most celebrated cinematic events.

Speaking to reporter, Karishma talked about her win, the celebrations, journey of her character Jagruti Pathak and more.

Karishma said she was literally excited, dumbfounded, nervous and everything at the award ceremony.

"It started with the series category, and straight away I am hearing 'Scoop', so it was a very good start for me. Nervous, because I was the first one to go on the stage among the artists. I was representing Netflix, the entire show, Hansal Mehta sir. Speak to different countries, artists, people from all walks of life were sitting there. It was very surreal," she said.

Karishma said:

"Winning a film festival is a big deal, so I am glad that I got to experience this for 'Scoop'."

'Scoop' has catapulted Karishma to international acclaim.

If her perception towards choosing projects will change in future, the 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi' fame actress replied: "Before 'Scoop' also I always wanted to do meaningful and complex characters and meaningful cinema. And I don't think that has changed because I am an actor. So, I will not keep changing as per projects."

"'Scoop' has come to me, I mean it's a brilliant show to be a part of, it's definitely a feather in the cap, but I have always been looking for, and have always drawn to, something which is challenging. I won't be able to do something that doesn't excite me. I will not take up only. That is why you hardly see me doing back to back OTT or TV shows. I need something that stimulates my mind, which challenges me on the set. And I would continue to do that," said Karishma.



ANURAG GUPTA'S VOGUE OF COMPASSION: CHARTING A STYLISH COURSE WITH A CAUSE

Rubal Bansal | New Delhi

In the heart of the fashion world, where aesthetics and trends often reign supreme, designer Anurag Gupta is carving out a unique niche. His recent debut at Lakme Fashion Week in Delhi's iconic Pragati Maidan was a remarkable statement of style interwoven with social purpose.

Gupta's collection went beyond the ordinary, featuring models who walked the runway veiled by masks and restricted by tightly cuffed hands. In the background, a haunting soundscape echoed sirens and the agonizing symphony of struggle. Gupta's designs were a profound message, shedding light on the struggles of manual scavengers, a group often silenced by society's indifference. Gupta's fashion was not just an ensemble; it was a cause, and a remarkable one at that.

Lakme Fashion Week's Gen Next program provided a platform for emerging designers like Gupta to shine. Names such as Ajay Kumar Singh, Shweta Gupta, Kanika Sachdev, and Yadv Agarwal added their creative sparks to the event, each bringing their unique inspirations, spanning sustainability to cultural richness



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Aamna Sharif