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New India-B'desh rail line to cut distance between NE states and Kolkata to 500 km from 1,600 km

NOW, EASY TO COMMUTE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday virtually inaugurated the Agartala (Tripura)-Akhaura (Bangladesh) railway project along with 1,320 MW generation capacity Maitree Super Thermal Power project at Rampal in Bangladesh's Khulna division, and the 86.87 km Khulna-Mongla port rail line project. All the three projects are financially assisted by India.

Agartala | Agencies

With the execution of Agartala-Akhaura railway project, which was virtually inaugurated by Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh on Wednesday, the rail route distance between the north-eastern states and Kolkata will be reduced to 500 km via Bangladesh from the existing 1,600 km via Guwahati.



Saha told the media.

He said the escalated cost of the Agartala-Akhaura railway project, which was approved by the governments of India and Bangladesh in July 2016, rose to Rs 1255.10 crore.

The 12.24 km Agartala-Akhaura railway line (5.46 km in India and 6.78 km in Bangladesh) is linked with Akhaura through an international immigration station at Nischintapur in western Tripura, the Chief Minister said.

Funded by India's Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) and

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) is the nodal agency of the Agartala-Akhaura railway project, which was in principle agreed in January 2010 when Bangladesh Prime Minister Hasina met then India Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during her visit to New Delhi.

As part of the trial run through the newly built Agartala-Akhaura railway line, a Bangladeshi goods train reached Nischintapur on Monday.

The Agartala-Akhaura railway project, which is a dual gauge line for

both passenger and goods interchange between India and Bangladesh, would enable people of the northeastern states, especially Tripura and southern part of Assam and Mizoram, to visit Kolkata by rail saving 22 hours of travel time.

Railway officials said the Indian Railways portion has a broad gauge system while the portion in Bangladesh is a metre gauge system.

Currently, the people of the region, especially those in Tripura and its adjoining areas, go to Kolkata via Guwahati by rail, spending more than 38 hours. The new railway project is part of India's 'Act East Policy', which aims to promote economic cooperation and develop strategic ties with countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

The northeast region, comprising eight states, has been earmarked as a priority region in this policy. The Agartala-Akhaura line is the first railway line between northeast India and Bangladesh, though there are few rail links between West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Rupee plummets to lifetime low versus US dollar



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The rupee plunged by 9 paise to settle at an all-time low of 83.33 vis-a-vis the US dollar on Wednesday, foreign funds continued to pull out of the stock markets, and oil prices rose amid geopolitical uncertainties in the Middle East.

The US greenback also strengthened on the dollar index against the basket of six major currencies going up 0.20 per cent higher at 106.87. The rupee opened at 83.26 against the dollar on Wednesday and plummeted to an intra-day low of 83.35 against the US currency.

However, after some vacillation, it finally settled 9 paise lower over the previous day's close to end at its lifetime

low of 83.33.

The Indian rupee is facing headwinds as higher yields on US bonds is leading to hot money exiting the Indian stock markets and rising crude oil prices in the global market have firmed up the demand for dollars.

According to market analysts, while the RBI has succeeded in keeping the volatility of the rupee in check by releasing US dollars from its reserves, this cannot continue beyond a point as there has been a continuous decline in India's foreign exchange kitty in recent weeks.

The RBI has been continuously intervening in the forex market during October to prevent the rupee from falling below the low of 83.29 vs the US dollar.

India's foreign exchange reserves fell by \$2.36 billion to \$583.53 billion during the week ended October 20, according to RBI data released on Friday.

In the preceding week the country's forex reserves had increased by \$1.15 billion, reversing a continuous decline over the previous five weeks.

The country's forex reserves had fallen by \$14.166 billion to a five-month low of \$584.74 billion for the week ended October 6. With the fresh decline, the forex reserves have fallen even further. A decline in the country's forex kitty leaves the RBI less headroom to intervene in the market to stabilise the rupee which would weaken the Indian currency.

Last Diwali to worry about inflation, INDIA govt to change policies in 2024: Cong

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress on Wednesday slammed the BJP government at the Centre over the skyrocketing prices during the festival season, saying "this is the last Diwali when people have to face such inflation as INDIA government will immediately change the policies that are increasing inflation and benefiting the Prime Minister's friend".

In a post on X, Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "The festivals that bring happiness are also increasing the worries of the people in the Modi government. Because the prices of every essential thing are skyrocketing."

He said that onion prices have increased by more than 90 per cent and are close to Rs 100 per kg. The price of arhar dal has increased by 40 per cent in a year to Rs 152.

"But now this is the last Diwali, when people are facing problems like this due to inflation. The public is fed up with this government and is ready for change in 2024. The INDIA government will immediately change the policies that are increasing inflation and benefiting the Prime Minister's friend and will provide relief to the common people," Ramesh said.



The Congress has been critical of the government over inflation.

The prices of onion have skyrocketed since Navratri and are being sold at Rs 80 to 90 per kg in several parts of the country.

At least 28 parties have formed the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc to take on the BJP government at the Centre.

4 LET TERRORIST ASSOCIATES ARRESTED IN J&K'S BARAMULLA

Srinagar: Four terrorist associates linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT/TRF have been arrested by joint security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district and arms and ammunition and other incriminating materials recovered from their possession, police said on Wednesday.

Police said on October 30, a joint team of Baramulla police, along with army and the CRPF, at a checkpoint established at Naradhiri Dangerpora junction intercepted two suspicious persons, who on seeing the joint party tried to flee from the spot but were apprehended.

They were identified as Gh Hassan Mir, resident of Muran Tangwari Chandoosa and Mukhtar Ahmad Khan, resident of Pinjwara Laridora Chandoosa.

During search, a Chinese pistol, one pistol magazine, 12 live rounds, two hand grenades and other incriminating materials were recovered from their possession. Police said during further investigation, it came to surface that all the four accused persons were working for terrorist associate Mudasir Ahmad Sheikh, a resident of Kunzer in the past, who is presently lodged under the PSA.

Nations, including India, supporting Israel face uptick in hacking activities

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Nations supporting Israel in the ongoing war with Hamas, that includes India, have seen a notable uptick in cyber activities against them, a report showed on Wednesday.

Pro-Palestinian cyber activists have broadened their scope beyond Israel, targeting countries perceived as Israeli allies in the war against Hamas.

The US, France, India, and more recently, Italy have seen a significant rise in hacking attempts against their interests, according to the report by cyber-security firm CheckPoint.

Groups like 'Cyber error system', which typically concentrate their efforts in Asia, particularly India, continued to maintain their focus on the region.

"They justified their ongoing attacks by citing the ongoing conflict as a rationale. The number of attacks on India exceeded 230," said the report. Mysterious Team



Bangladesh, a group that has regularly participated in various cyber operations against France for its colonialist past, as well as against India and Sri Lanka, declared its readiness to initiate cyberattacks against Israeli targets and promoted collective action with the hashtag #OpIsraelV2.

They collaborated with 'Team_insane_Pakistan', exchanging target information and successes. "Their attacks targeted various Israeli entities including the space agency, port authorities, media outlets, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), and financial institutions, yet the inflicted damage was minimal," the report mentioned.

French digital infrastructure experienced over 300 incidents, predominantly DDoS attacks and

website defacements with minimal impact.

"Since the beginning of the conflict, in particular as foreign leaders expressed their solidarity with Israel, additional nations were added to the roster of potential targets," the findings showed.

The EU's suspension of financial aid to the Palestinians on October 10 led to a flurry of cyber operations targeting European organisations. UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's personal website experienced a DDoS attack by the hacktivist actor SYLHET GANG-SC.

Similar attacks were also launched against the Cyprus police, several Canadian entities, the British military, and other targets. Even UNICEF has been listed as one of their targets. "While the direct damage inflicted by these cyberattacks remains relatively contained, the broader implications are significant. The persistence and evolving nature of these threats underscore the need for robust cybersecurity measures," said the researchers.

UPI TRANSACTIONS SOAR TO ALL-TIME HIGH OF RS 17.16 LAKH CRORE IN OCT

New Delhi: Unified Payment Interface (UPI) transactions soared to an all-time high of Rs 17.16 lakh crore in October with a 9 per cent increase from Rs 15.8 lakh crore in September this year, according to data.

In volume terms also the number of transactions touched a record 11.41 billion, up 8 per cent compared to 10.56 billion in September, the data compiled by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which runs the real-time payments platform, revealed. Based on the latest numbers, UPI has recorded a 55 per cent year-on-year growth in terms of transaction volume and 42 per cent growth in terms of value, according to NPCI. UPI registered a transaction volume of 10.56 billion in September and crossed the 10 billion mark in August. "Over 11 Billion UPI transactions were done in October 2023! People are making seamless payments from mobile in real-time with UPI," the Ministry of Electronics and IT posted on X.

Bad air quality in Delhi spiking asthma, lung problems in kids, elderly

"SOME PATIENTS ALSO ARE COMING WITH LOWER RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS LIKE PNEUMONIA AND GETTING ADMITTED; ASTHMA ATTACKS AS WELL AS CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD) ATTACKS. EXACERBATIONS ARE ALSO RISING. A MAJORITY OF THESE PATIENTS ARE THE ELDERLY AND CHILDREN," THE DOCTOR SAID.

"CHILDREN AND THE ELDERLY ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE, AS PROLONGED EXPOSURE CAN STUNT LUNG DEVELOPMENT IN YOUNGSTERS AND INTENSIFY PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS IN OLDER INDIVIDUALS. MOREOVER, THE INCREASED PREVALENCE OF RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS, SUCH AS BRONCHITIS AND PNEUMONIA, COMPOUNDS THE HEALTH BURDEN ON THE POPULATION," THE DOCTOR SAID.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The continuing air pollution levels in the national capital is increasing asthma and lung problems in children and the elderly, doctors said on Wednesday.

According to data from the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), the air quality in Delhi remained in the 'very poor' category as the overall Air Quality Index (AQI) reached 336 on Wednesday morning. It is the fourth day in a row with such bad air.

Due to bad air, "there has been a significant increase in the number of patients coming to the OPD as well as getting admitted with respiratory diseases," Vikas Maurya, Director and Head of the Department, Pulmonology, Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh, told reporter. "In the last three to four



weeks, there has been a 20-30 per cent rise in patients coming with recurrent cough and upper respiratory tract infections. As per SAFAR data, at Pusa and Delhi University, PM 2.5 was recorded at 311 and 391 in the 'very poor' category. At Lodhi Road, the PM 2.5 concentration was at 317 in the 'very poor' category while the PM 10 stood at 219, also in the 'poor' category.

At IIT Delhi station, the PM 2.5 was at 329, 'very poor' category, while PM 10 reached 188,

in the 'moderate' category. Nikhil Modi, Consultant, Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, told reporter that "fine particulate matter, notably PM2.5, penetrates deep into the lungs, causing inflammation, aggravating asthma, and leading to COPD".

Meanwhile, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Wednesday that the next 15-20 days would be critical in the context of AQI.

"From November 1, the next 15 to 20 days are critical. Scientists are saying that the temperature is dropping and the speed of air has decreased, so pollutants are at a lower level. Yesterday, the AQI was nearly 350." Due to the work going on in 13 hotspots in Delhi, the situation is fairly under control. At some hotspots, vehicle pollution's contribution is high," he said.

Google launches new '.ing' domain that lets you build website in single word

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Google Registry has launched a new domain extension type ".ing" that will let brands and businesses build their website in a single word.

Users can now register .ing domains as part of Google's early access period, however they will have to pay "an additional one-time fee".

"This top-level domain is ready for whatever you're interested in, whether it's making a fun website, giving to a good cause, design.ing something beautiful or editing an existing document," Google explained in a blogpost on Tuesday.

Users can register for their unique domains through partner companies like GoDaddy and 101Domain.

The early access period will run until December 5, with fees decreasing on a "daily schedule".

"On December 5 at 16:00 UTC, .ing domains will be publicly available at a base annual price through your



registrar of choice," the company said.

Google is also working on a .meme top-level domain, as per a Google Registry post from August.

The .meme domain is currently in a limited registration period, as mentioned in that post. On November 28, early access to .meme will open up, and the domain will be available for registration beginning December 5.

Meanwhile, Google's AI chatbot Bard will now be faster and reply to your questions in real-time.

"Responses will show in real-time while in progress," according to the update.

If you can tell the response won't be useful, a blue "Skip response" button appears, reports 9to5Google.



ELECTORAL BONDS CASE: SC GRILLS GOVT ON SELECTIVE CONFIDENTIALITY, LEGALISING KICKBACKS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday posed several tough questions to Solicitor General Tushar Mehta as it heard the pleas challenging the electoral bonds scheme.

A constitutional bench, headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud and comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B.R. Gavai, J.B. Pardiwala, and Manoj Misra, is hearing the case.

The bench posed many questions SG Mehta based on submissions made by the petitioners against the constitutional validity of the electoral bond scheme.

While raising the issue of selective anonymity, CJI Chandrachud remarked that the scheme is not completely anonymous. He also questioned the SG as to whether there was any statutory obligation on the State Bank of India (SBI) to not reveal the details of the donations made through electoral bonds to the government or any law enforcement agency.

"The problem with the scheme is that it provides selective anonymity. It's not completely anonymous. It's not confidential qua the SBI. It's not confidential qua the law enforcement agency. So a large donor would never take the risk of buying the Electoral Bonds," he said.

The CJI further pointed out that under the scheme, a large donor might disaggregate the donation by getting people who will purchase electoral bonds with small amounts which will be then purchased by official banking channels, not through cash.

"...a large donor will never put his/her head on the line by being in the books of account of the SBI," the CJI observed. To this, the SG replied that large donors are doing it, and a possible or potential abuse may not perhaps be the ground on which the scheme can be declared unconstitutional.

Mehta maintained the government stance that the scheme was brought in as a deliber-



ate attempt to ensure clean money coming through banking channels to political parties.

"After going through the history, I will attempt to satisfy your lords that each and every word is used very consciously. And what they call anonymity and opacity is confidentiality by design. And why, how, what is the rationale, I will explain, he said.

Taking the court through the shortcomings of the previous regime, SG Mehta further emphasised that if the element of confidentiality goes from the scheme, the scheme goes and we are back to the 2018 regime.

The CJI, however, said that the argument that striking down the current scheme will send us back to the previous situation is not valid as the court is not precluding the government from coming out with a transparent scheme or a scheme with a level playing field.

He also told the SG that as per the other side's arguments, the scheme doesn't provide a level playing field to political parties and suffers from opacity.

The CJI remarked that in an effort to bring

white money in the process, "essentially, we're providing for a complete information hole!"

"That is the problem. The motive may be laudable. But the question is have you adopted proportional means?" he asked the SG.

The SG however maintained that confidentiality is important to address the problem of victimisation of the donor. "...anything else other than keeping it confidential will not be able to address the problem of victimisation. And victimisation incentivises payment in cash." At this, Justice Khanna pointed out that victimisation and retribution is normally by a party in power, not by a party in opposition.

"So the figures which you're saying - that maximum donations are to party in power - may not be logically flowing from the argument," he said. Justice Khanna also raised concern on the issue of selective confidentiality saying that it may be easier for the party in power to get information on donors of the opposition party. "Because of this selective confidentiality, the opposition party may not know who are your donors. But donors to the

opposition party can be ascertained, at least by the investigative agencies. So they're at a disadvantage to question you on your donations."

To this, Mehta replied that they have to trust, at some stage, someone as the final fiduciary authority. He further asserted that he can show the court through the scheme that nobody can get to know including the Centre.

However, the CJI replied that retribution is not avoided by the scheme. "Under the Companies Act, now modified, a company doesn't have to disclose to which political party it has contributed. But it has to show how much it has contributed...So a company says I've contributed Rs 400 cr this FY. But the party in power knows how much has come to it in terms of electoral bonds from that company."

As the SG said: "It can never be known", the CJI said: "No, the party of course knows."

CJI Chandrachud noted that if a party ABC knows how much donations it has received from a company, it can always add up from the company's balance sheet that how much money has been donated in total.

And thus this mismatch might be sufficient to know.

"For us, it is not whether the ruling political party presently will be the beneficiary or not. We are testing a question of constitutionality," the CJI said.

Raising the problem of aggregators, he said that the person who buys the bond may not be the donor, and how will be the source, the donor and where the money is spent will be known? SG Mehta however said that out of 100, 5 people may misuse the scheme. But it can't be the grounds to decide the validity of the scheme. However, the CJI maintained that the bench is not on the question of misuse, but on what the scheme is capable of.

The hearing will continue hearing on Thursday.

Rahul visits house of farmer who committed suicide in 2020



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday visited the house of late Kummari Chandraiah, a farmer who committed suicide in 2020 and said that the farmers of India are real 'tapasvis' and it is heartbreaking to see that they get no return for their hard work.

Rahul Gandhi said that the Congress' Rythu Bharosa guarantee in Telangana is designed to support farmers and families like these.

In a post on X, Rahul Gandhi, who is currently campaigning for the party in the southern state said, "In Kummari Tirupathamma's eyes, I saw the pain of a dreadful past, and a hope for a bright future. The farmers of India are the real 'Tapasvis' of our land. It is heartbreaking to see that they get no return for their 'Tapasya'."

He said, her husband, late Kummari Chandraiah was one of the many farmers who,

unable to bear the burden of agricultural loan, committed suicide in 2020, leaving behind a devastated family.

"I visited their home today, in Jillela village of Telangana, where she now works as an agricultural labourer to take care of her family. But her debt burden has in fact increased. This is why Congress Guarantees are of utmost importance. They provide minimum welfare that each Indian family is entitled to," he said.

"The Rythu Bharosa Guarantee in Telangana is designed to support farmers and families like these. We promise Rs 15,000 per year for farmers and tenant farmers, Rs 12,000 per year for farm labourers and Rs 500 bonus per quintal for Paddy, in addition to MSP. We will build a 'Bangaru' Telangana, where no one is forced to commit suicide. I will strive to ensure that no other family suffers like Kummari Chandraiah's has," the Congress leader said.

Denial of sex by spouse can amount to mental cruelty, rules Delhi HC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Setting aside a trial court's order, the Delhi High Court has ruled that denial of sex by spouse can be considered as mental cruelty, but it must be persistent, intentional, and over a considerable period of time.

The lower court had granted divorce to a husband based on his claim of mental cruelty by his wife.

The husband sought divorce, alleging that his wife was not interested in living with him in their matrimonial home and wanted him to live with her at her parental home as a "ghar jamai".

The man claimed that his wife deserted him on various pretexts, prioritised her coaching centre over their marriage, and denied him sex. The court, while considering the wife's appeal, stressed that allegations of sexual denial should be dealt with carefully due to the sensitive nature of the issue.

The court said these claims cannot be



based on vague and unspecific statements, especially when the marriage has been consummated.

In this case, the husband failed to prove any mental cruelty, and the court found the situation to be a normal wear and tear of the matrimonial bond. It noted that the discord was primarily between the wife and her mother-in-law, noting that trivial irritations should not be confused with mental cruelty.

KERALA LIT FEST 2024 WILL HAVE PARTICIPANTS FROM NINE COUNTRIES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The seventh edition of the Kerala Literature Festival (KLF) is all set to begin from 11-14 January, 2024 on the beaches of Kozhikode. With a half-million-footfall, KLF has become Asia's Largest Literature Festival.

Organised by DC Kizhakemuri Foundation and co-promoted by DC Books, KLF 2024 will feature Nobel laureates, Booker Prize winners, literary luminaries, media personalities, and celebrities. Renowned Writer, Prof. K. Satchidanandan is the Festival Director. Kozhikode, the venue of choice for the Kerala Literature Festival was named the 'City of Literature' by the Unesco Creative Cities Network (UCCN), making it the first such city in India. Spanning four days, in six venues at the Kozhikode beach, the festival will feature 400+ global speakers and will be inaugurated by the state Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan. This edition



of KLF will feature Turkey as the guest country of honor, featuring its literature and art forms. The UK, Wales, Spain, Japan, USA, Malaysia, Spain, and France will be the other participating countries.

The initial list of speakers includes Arundhati Roy, Mallika Sarabhai, Shashi Tharoor, Piyush Pandey, Prahlad Kakkar, William Dalrymple, Gurucharan Das, Mani Shankar Aiyer, Catherine Ann Jones, Monika Halan,

Durjoy Dutta, Manu S Pillai. The Festival will also host concerts by TM Krishna and Vikku Vinayakram; Surbahar and Sitar concert by Padmabhushan Pandit Budhaditya Mukherjee.

DELHI METRO INTRODUCES 'MOMENTUM 2.0,' APP FOR VIRTUAL SHOPPING

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Wednesday launched 'Momentum 2.0,' app which provides instant and direct access to services such as Integrated QR Ticketing (mainline and airport line), a wide array of e-shopping choices, digital lockers for quick and safe deliveries, Smart Utility Payments and last-mile connectivity options.

The 'Momentum 2.0' platform was formally launched by DMRC's Managing Director, Dr Vikas Kumar at the Shivaji Stadium Metro station.

According to officials, the new app, a joint initiative of Delhi Metro & AutoPe Payment Solutions Pvt. Ltd., simplifies Metro entry with QR Ticketing, providing a seamless experience. "It offers integrated QR tickets for all Metro lines, including the Airport Line, eliminating the



need of multiple apps in turn enhancing user experience. In addition, DMRC card recharge as well as transaction details of the card are also available on App, thus enabling

commuters to go through their travel & recharge history. There is also an option for commuters to give standing instructions in the App for "Auto Top Up" in case the balance

falls below a minimum defined value," said the official.

The app also has an e-shopping option with a wide array of goods to choose from.

Russia simplifies norms for Indians to open bank accounts with its financial institutions

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Russia has introduced simplified norms for Indian nationals to open bank accounts with its financial institutions.

In a series of posts on X, the Russian embassy in India on Wednesday announced that now it will be possible to obtain a bank card in a partner Russian bank and initiate financial transactions, upon arrival in Russia by Indians.

This feature is especially convenient for Indian tourists and students, the Russian embassy said.

"We're excited to announce the decision of the Russian Government to introduce simplified norms for #Indian nationals seeking to open bank accounts with #Russian financial institutions. It is now possible to open bank accounts or deposit funds in Russian banks remotely.

Upon arrival in #Russia, it will be possible to quickly obtain a bank card in a partner Russian bank and initiate financial transactions. This feature is especially convenient for

Russia in India @RusEmoIndia

We're excited to announce the decision of the Russian Government to introduce simplified norms for #India'n nationals to open bank accounts with #Russia'n financial institutions. It is nossible to open bank accounts or deposit funds in Russian banks remotely.



#Indian tourists and students," it said in a post.

"The process is straightforward: #Indian nationals wishing to open such a bank account are advised to approach an Indian bank that has a partnership agreement with the Central Bank of the #Russian Federation for guidance," it informed.

Will regularise temporary employees wherever AAP comes to power: Kejriwal

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Day after approving the proposal to regularise the jobs of 5,000 MCD workers, Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said it will regularise temporary employees wherever it comes to power.

Addressing a press conference here, regarding the permanent employment of MCD's sanitation workers, Kejriwal said, "MCD house's meeting commenced on Tuesday. In that meeting, a proposal was passed to make approximately 5,000 sanitation workers of the MCD permanent employees."

He said that the AAP came to power in the MCD in January this year and since then, we have made around 6,494 sanitation workers permanent.

The AAP national convenor said that the employment of sanitation workers is often uncertain as they may be called to work today, but there's no guarantee if they shall be called next day.



He said that they don't know if they will work for 15 days or 20 days in a month. Many sanitation workers have not received their full salaries, he said, adding that so far sanitation workers have been subjected to various forms of exploitation.

ANOTHER BLOW TO TELANGANA BJP AS EX-MP VIVEK JOINS CONGRESS

Hyderabad | Agencies

In yet another blow to the BJP in Telangana ahead of the Assembly elections, former MP and BJP's national executive member G. Vivek Venkataswamy resigned from the party and joined the Congress on Wednesday.

"With a heavy heart, I tender my resignation from the Bharatiya Janata Party," Vivek wrote in his letter addressed to Telangana BJP president G. Kishan Reddy.

Vivek later met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at Novotel Hotel at Shamshabad here and joined the party. Accompanied by his son Vamsi Krishna, the former MP called on Rahul Gandhi, who is currently campaigning for the party in Telangana.

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president A. Revanth Reddy and other leaders



were present. Revanth Reddy told reporters that Vivek's joining will further strengthen the Congress party in its task of removing Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) from power. Vivek said he did not join the

Congress for any post or ticket but to work for throwing the KCR government out of power.

Vivek alleged that for the last 10 years, the KCR government was working for his family and not for the bet-

terment of people. "There is a need for all to come together and end this evil rule," he said.

There has been speculation for the last several weeks that Vivek was planning to return to the Congress party. His son is likely to get a Congress ticket to contest the November 30 Assembly election.

Vivek, son of Congress leader and former Union minister late G. Venkataswamy, had quit TRS (now BRS) in 2019 to join BJP. He had resigned as advisor to Telangana government and quit the ruling party after he was denied ticket to contest from Peddapalli Lok Sabha seat.

Vivek, an industrialist, has switched loyalties at least six times. He was elected to Parliament in 2009 from the Peddapalli constituency. He later joined TRS to put pressure on the Congress over the demand for stashed out of Telangana.



MP POLLS: REBELS NOT THE MAIN PROBLEM FOR BJP, BUT ANGER OF PARTY'S GROUND WORKERS

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

Placating the ground level workers, who are the core strength of the BJP, and bringing them back into action is proving more challenging for the party election strategists in Madhya Pradesh than those who were denied tickets and turned rebels. Sources privy to the developments in the BJP told correspondent that the party has covered a lot of ground in the past two-three months and has been successful in countering the high anti-incumbency after nearly two decades of its rule in the state. However, what is more worrying is the resentment of its ground level workers. Party workers would attend meetings and leave with instructions from the top leaders, including from the Centre, however, they were not executing the plans on the ground. A BJP leader, who has been active in Madhya Pradesh's politics for decades, said conducting meetings with the ground level workers has always been the job of the state in-charge, party president, but not the home minister. "Ground workers are angry with the state leadership because they were not paid heed for the last five years or more and the leaders gave more importance to their near ones. Now when the elections are near, the angry workers are not getting ready



to work in the way they used to earlier. This is a major concern, which is why the top leadership has now taken this responsibility," a Delhi based senior BJP leader, who is part of the Madhya Pradesh election team, said on condition of anonymity. He cited the three-day visit of Union Minister Amit Shah to Madhya Pradesh. The leader claimed multiple attempts were made to cajole the party workers into action and promises were made to them. He claimed that Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar was enrolled for the MP election campaign mainly to convince the party's ground level workers. "Not only Narendra Singh Tomar but other senior leaders like general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya and Union Ministers Prahlad Patel, Bhupendra Yadav and some state BJP leaders have been working on it for long. But the workers have a long list of grievances for their annoy-

ance with the state leadership. And it is not just against Chief Minister Chouhan and the state unit head V. D. Sharma, but most of the powerful ministers," the BJP leader added. Importantly, in the last three days, Amit Shah visited several places including Bhopal, Ujjain, Chhindwara, Jabalpur and Gwalior and held meetings with the party workers. This visit by Shah has been quite different from the other times as he used to address big rallies also. But, this time he emphasised on meeting the workers in a bid to bring them back into action. A senior political observer who spoke to correspondent agreed with the BJP leader saying the top leadership frames strategies and it is upto the state leaders and workers to execute those plans. He said the BJP workers seem more angry than the general public and they seem to have made up their mind to teach a lesson to these leaders. "Here in Madhya Pradesh, the BJP is always on edge because of its committed workers on the ground. But, for the last few years, the leaders have sidelined the party's core workers and relatives were given more preference, which was not the BJP's culture earlier. It is a cadre based party, and if it's cadre is not happy and not working honestly, then it's a big problem for the BJP," said the political observer.

Now Soorma Bhopali's entry with Jai Veeru in political show



Team Absolute | Bhopal

These days political fires are burning in Madhya Pradesh. On the lines of all time superhit film 'Sholay', here too there is noise of Jai-Veeru. BJP and Congress are accusing each other through these characters and meanwhile, an edited video of the film is going viral on social media in which the character of Soorma Bhopali has been entered. Before the Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections 2023, a scene from the film 'Political Sholay' is now going viral on social media. This is actually an edited video in which Jai

Veeru and Surma Bhopali are together. Here Soorma Bhopali, as per his usual habit of driving, is telling how Jai-Veeru caught hold of his feet. This is a famous comedy scene of the film which was a huge hit. Now the faces of the characters have been changed in this scene.

Actually, the faces of Digvijay Singh and Kamal Nath have been put on the faces of Jai and Veeru through editing, while Soorma Bhopali has been given the face of CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan. And in this edited video, CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan has been taunted. At present, many similar film scenes are being seen during the election season of Madhya Pradesh.

Surendra Patwa and Ajay Singh got relief from Election Commission, objection regarding nomination rejected

Team Absolute | Bhopal

BJP candidate and current MLA Surendra Patwa from Bhojpur seat of Raissen district and Congress candidate from Churhat seat of Sidhi district have got relief from the Election Commission in the matter of nomination. All the objections against them have been rejected. His nomination form was put on hold on Tuesday.

Surendra Patwa had submitted two separate nominations. It was alleged that the information given in the affidavits of both was different. From the same seat, three different candidates had raised objections before the Returning Officer, which included Congress candidate Rajkumar Patel, independent Ganesh Malviya and Sanyam



Jain. All three had complained about the discrepancy in the information given in Patwa's oath. After which his nomination was put on hold.

The returning officer has rejected the objection filed regarding the nomination form of former CLP leader and senior Congress leader Ajay Singh Rahul. BJP candi-

date Sharadendu Tiwari's advocate Prakash Upadhyay had raised an objection, but the returning officer rejected the objection filed after hearing both the parties.

Sarpanch arrested taking bribe of Rs 20 thousand

Team Absolute | Agar Malwa

Major action has been taken by Ujjain Lokayukta in Agar Malwa district of Madhya Pradesh. Where the Lokayukta team on Tuesday caught Ahir Bardiya Sarpanch Balusingh Malviya red handed while taking a bribe of Rs 20 thousand. Police have arrested the sarpanch and registered a case

under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Sarpanch Babu Singh had demanded a bribe of Rs 50 thousand in the name of getting the Prime Minister's residence. The name of the victim Amar Singh had appeared in the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Where the matter was settled for Rs 30 thousand to get the amount of PM's residence approved. In which the victim had paid the first installment of

bribe of Rs 10,000. A seven-member team of Lokayukta arrested the sarpanch red-handed while collecting the second installment. Inspector Basant Kumar Srivastava of Lokayukta Ujjain said that the complaint about this matter was made by Amar Singh, resident of Badi Sundi. Let us tell you that the Lokayukta team has arrested the Sarpanch and has started further action.

KAMAL NATH, DIGVIJAYA CLAIM BEING JAI-VEERU OF 'SHOLAY' TO TAKE ON 'GABBAR SINGH'

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Amid rumours of a rift between two Congress stalwarts -- Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh and state's Congress chief Kamal Nath, the duo has countered them by projecting their bonding like the iconic Hindi movie 'Sholay's' popular characters -- Jai and Veeru. The two Congress leaders, who are 76 years of age, are leading the party from the front for another bipolar battle against arch-rival and the ruling BJP in the November 17 Assembly election. Both on Tuesday claimed that their "friendship was like 'Sholay' film's Jai-Veeru and they will end the rule of Gabbar Singh". They referred the word 'Gabbar Singh' (villain in 'Sholay') to the incumbent Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. The BJP alleged that state Congress leadership has been battling factionalism, and the subject has become a talking point in the political



circle after the duo went to Delhi for a meeting. It all started after the Congress released the second list of its candidates on October 20, following which, the supporters of some of the leaders who were denied tickets, started protesting and alleged that there was 'bias' in candidate selection. The Congress leadership, however, maintained that candidates were selected on the basis of multiple surveys conducted by the party and seeing the balance of

caste and regional equation along with win-ability. Former Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh had then said that, "I have been involved in the process of candidate selection for more than 34 years and I can say that the level of transparency in selecting candidates this time, was never before in Madhya Pradesh. Candidates were selected on the basis of multiple surveys and involvement of local party workers." However, the relentless protest and annoyance from the party workers prompted the Congress leadership to replace its candidates in seven Assembly seats. On the occasion of releasing the party's election manifesto two weeks ago, Kamal Nath and Digvijaya Singh bantered on stage over the 'kurta-fad' remark. However, Kamal Nath had said that his relationship with Digvijaya Singh was beyond politics and has given the latter the "power of attorney" to become a safe-guard for him.

Madhya Pradesh Foundation Day celebrated with patriotic songs

Team Absolute | Bhopal

On the occasion of Madhya Pradesh Foundation Day, collective singing of Madhya Pradesh Anthem, National Song Vande Mataram and National Anthem "Jan Gana Mana" took place at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Park located in Mantralaya. On this occasion, the team of Culture Department presented patriotic songs. Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Additional Chief Secretary, Mohammad Suleman, Vinod Kumar, J.N. Kasotia, Rajesh Rajoura, Malay Srivastava, S.N. at the Foundation Day and singing of Vande Mataram. Mishra, K.C.Gupta, Principal Secretary, Shivshekhar Shukla, Raghavendra Singh, Secretary, Sanjay Gupta, Commissioner, Sonali Pankshu Wayangankar, Deputy Secretary, Girish Sharma, Meenakshi Singh, D.K. Nagendra, Madhavi Nagendra and officials/employees of Satpura, Vindhyaachal Bhawan including the Ministry were present.

Gwalior included in UNESCO Creative Cities, selected for musical heritage

Team Absolute | Gwalior

On the Foundation Day of Madhya Pradesh, the people of the state have received a great gift. UNESCO has included the state's historical city Gwalior in its Creative Cities. Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and State Congress President Kamal Nath have congratulated on this achievement. Gwalior has been chosen for its musical heritage. UNESCO has given place to only 55 cities from across the world in various categories. Among these, Gwalior has been selected from India. With this, Kozhikode of Kerala has also achieved this achievement. It has been included in this list in the 'Literature' category. UNESCO has announced this on its official website. So far, 350 cities from more than 100 countries have been included in this list.

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Department had sent its proposal to UNESCO. It was told in this proposal that Gwalior is known all over the world for its musical heritage. The city is famous for Tansen, Beju Babara, Raga Ragni, Dhruvad. Expressing happiness over this success achieved by Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Department has said that it will further enhance this heritage.

It has also been said that proposals from other cities of the state will also be sent to UNESCO. Scindia had written a letter. Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia tweeted that on the occasion of



Madhya Pradesh Foundation Day, it is a proud historical moment for the state, especially the people of Gwalior. I am extremely happy to inform that Gwalior has been recognized as the City of Music by the Government of India. This achievement is the result of our tireless efforts. This achievement of

Gwalior will establish a new identity of Madhya Pradesh on the world stage and will open new doors of development and employment. Infinite congratulations to all the people of the state for this historic achievement and hearty congratulations on the Foundation Day.

Court framed charges against 29 sitting MLAs in MP, 16 from Congress: ADR

Team Absolute | New

Out of the 230 sitting MLAs in Madhya Pradesh, charges have been framed by the court against 29 legislators, of which 16 are from the Congress, a report said on Wednesday.

The report was published by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and Madhya Pradesh Election Watch which analysed the affidavits of 230 sitting MLAs from Madhya Pradesh Assembly in 2018.

Out of these 230 sitting MLAs, there are 29 sitting MLAs (13 per cent) against whom charges have been framed by the court for offences falling under Section 8(1) (2) and (3) of the Representation of People Act, 1951, the report said.

"Congress has the highest number of MLAs 16, followed by BJP with 12 and one BSP MLA, who have declared criminal cases where the charges have been framed under the RP Act," it said.

The report is based on analysis of the affidavits submitted by the candidates prior to the 2018 Assembly elections and bye-elections



conducted thereafter.

The report focuses on the number of MLAs with criminal cases which fall under Section 8(1) of the RP Act who will be disqualified, if convicted, the number of MLAs with criminal cases which fall under Section 8(2) of the RP Act and who will be disqualified, if they are convicted with a punishment of not less than six months, and the number of MLAs with criminal cases which fall under Section 8(3) of the RP Act who will be disqualified, if they are convicted with a punishment of not less than two years.

As per details of criminal cases declared in the self sworn affidavits submitted by the MLAs while contesting Madhya Pradesh assembly elections in 2018 and bye-

elections held thereafter, pendency in respect of criminal cases where charges have been framed under Sec 8 (1), (2), (3), and the average number of years that criminal cases against 29 MLAs have been pending is six years, were also analysed. It said, "10 MLAs have a total of 12 criminal cases pending against them for 10 years or more."

The report also said that, however, the status of these cases may have undergone a change over the years for some MLAs.

"The exact current status will be known only in respect of MLAs who decide to re-contest in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections 2023, after they file their nomination papers," the report said.

The report said that for 17 years the criminal cases against Congress MLA Dilip Gurjar from Nagda-Khacharod assembly has been pending in court for voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means, punishment for voluntarily causing grievous hurt, punishment for rioting, armed with deadly weapon.

The report said that criminal cases are pending for 16 years for defamation against Ramkhelawan Patel of BJP from Amarpatan constituency. The Section 8 of the RP Act lays down disqualifications for persons being chosen as, and for being, a 'Member of either House of Parliament' as well as a 'Member of the Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council' of the State. Sub-sections (1), (2) and (3) of Section 8 of the Act provide that a person convicted of an offence mentioned in any of these sub-sections shall stand disqualified from the date of conviction and shall continue to be disqualified for a further period of six years since his/her release. Polling for 230-member assembly in Madhya Pradesh is scheduled on November 17 and counting of votes will take place on December 3.



EDITOR'S SPECS

GO SLOW

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways' annual report of accidents during 2022, revealed that 'overspeeding' accounted for 72.3 per cent of the total road accidents, 71.2 per cent of total deaths and 72.8 per cent of total injuries. It also said that 'Hit from Back' accounted for the largest share in total accidents deaths at 19.5 per cent, followed by 'Hit and Run' and 'Head on Collision' which accounted for 18.1 per cent and 15.7 per cent deaths respectively. The report on road accidents attributable to various types of traffic rule violations reveals that 'Overspeeding' constituted the main violation associated with accidents, fatalities and injuries, in 2022. A total of 4,61,312 road accidents have been reported by states and union territories during the calendar year 2022, claiming 1,68,491 lives. The number of road accidents in 2022 increased by 11.9 per cent compared to 2021 and the number of deaths and injuries also increased by 9.4 per cent and 15.3 per cent respectively. During 2022 'Overspeeding' accounted for 72.3 per cent of the total road accidents, 71.2 per cent of total deaths and 72.8 per cent of total injuries. The number of accidents, fatalities and injuries due to 'Overspeeding' increased by 12.8 per cent, 11.8 per cent and 15.2 per cent respectively in 2022 relative to 2021. 'Driving on the wrong side' was the second-highest cause of total road accidents during 2022 accounting for 4.9 per cent. Drunken driving/consumption of alcohol, drugs, jumping of red light and use of mobile phones taken together accounted for 7.4 per cent of total accidents and 8.3 per cent of total deaths. The other categories which would include reasons like road environment, vehicular condition etc. accounted for 18.2 per cent of the accidents, 18.1 per cent of fatalities and 18.1 per cent of injuries.

How long will we have to face air-pollution?

Lalit Garg

This year again the menace of a suffocating environment caused by burning of stubble in agricultural fields, and other forms of air-pollution are threatening life in some areas of Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The air quality in Delhi-NCR is deteriorating. Winter season hasn't even started yet; still this is the second time in this season, when we are made to face this menace. Although we may get relief occasionally due to some immediate measures being taken up, yet it is becoming a permanent problem and life threatening crisis for the people living not only in Delhi-NCR, but in large areas of North India, which is affecting adversely the health of children, elderly and all other age-groups equally. It is proving to be fatal for people suffering from lungs diseases. Even though the governments seem to be serious about this issue, and a complete action plan is ready to solve this increasingly complex problem, its effective results are not visible. It reflects the failure of the measures adopted by the government somewhere. Delhi and Punjab governments gave many tempting arguments and facts, but whatever arguments the governments give, the reality is that people continue to be suffocating all the same. Had the governments been really serious about overcoming this problem, it should have been visible on the practical level.

Degradation of air quality and ever increasing pollution is such a huge web in which all living beings, including humans are trapped and struggling with the threat of life and breath. Long queues have already started being visible outside hospitals. According to the Central Pollution Control Board, people do not expect any reduction in bad air for the next few days. According to the Meteorological Department, if the air quality is between zero and 50, then it is considered 'good'. If AQI is between 51 to 100 then it is considered 'satisfactory' and AQI between 101 to 200 is considered 'moderate'. If AQI goes above 201 and remains up to 300, then it is considered 'bad', if it is between 301 to 400, then it is considered 'very bad', and if it reaches above 400 then it is considered 'severe'. On October 22, AQI in Delhi-NCR reached 313 i.e. very poor level. Since then, the air quality has remained in the 'very poor' category due to slowing down of wind speed and drop in temperature. This problem is becoming more serious year after year.

To overcome this serious problem, the Delhi



government has tried many measures, and issued instructions to control pollution, but they are not proving effective. Government vehicles are also seen sprinkling water at various places in Delhi-NCR, which reduces the quantity of dust in the air. But the nature of these steps itself shows that the government is trying to reduce the symptoms of the problem, but till now no significant success has been achieved in solving the problem or reducing its severity. The practice of stubble burning in Punjab, Haryana and a few other surrounding states has been identified many years ago as one of the major reasons for this. But due to political reasons there are no signs of significant progress on that front. Pollution level has come up from being dangerous to life-threatening levels. The question is why Delhi-NCR, which has been continuously struggling with this menace for the last few years, does not get the light of any permanent solution? Why are the governments and politicians not ready for a solution, instead of blaming each other? To get rid of this burning problem, every political party and government will have to become sensitive and insightful. Will we have to wait for a Chanakya to be born, who can put butter in the roots? No, now every political mind will have to become Chanakya. Only then will we get relief from the growing problem of air pollution.

If we talk about the last week itself, 398 incidents of stubble-burning were recorded in

Punjab on Wednesday, 589 on Thursday and 766 on Friday. However, governments are trying to reduce this pollution in their own way. Teams of fire-fighters have been deployed in many areas of Punjab, including Moga, who reach the spot as soon as information about stubble burning is received and work to stop it. It has been said in UP that farmers found burning stubble will not be given the benefits of schemes like Kisan Samman Nidhi. But here also the matter is to strictly stop the farmers from burning stubble, whereas the need is to provide them some better options, so that they themselves start turning away from it. Many suggestions have been discussed, such as making fertilizer from stubble and using it in agriculture or increasing the use of stubble as fuel in thermal power plants and other industries through other measures, but it is clear that those options have not yet been made available to the farmers.

It is not only the responsibility of the governments to improve the air quality and reduce pollution and to make Delhi and other metropolitan cities of the country liveable, but it is the responsibility of all of us. Although people just have to play the role of responsible citizens, anti-dust campaigns should also be carried out continuously. People themselves will have to be completely cautious. People should not throw garbage in open spaces, or burn it. Pollution level of vehicles

should also be checked. Try to minimize the use of private vehicles and use public vehicles. It is also necessary to stop the materialistic mentality of bursting crackers which is playing with the lives of the common people. Because burning firecrackers has the potential to have dangerous effects on the lives of not only the elderly, but also of children, and thereby causing various diseases. To materialize the global concept of a pollution-free environment, meaningful initiatives will have to be taken up for celebrating eco-friendly Diwali and a positive environment will have to be created. Like stubble, the pollution caused by firecrackers is dangerous. Today, stubble-firecrackers have become a political pollution. This pollution has to be fought in the same way as a small lamp fights intense darkness. Small position, but does not let darkness come near, gives a trial by fire every moment. But yes! No one can pass the ordeal of fire with straw wrapped around his body. There are only one party governments in Delhi and Punjab, instead of blaming others, why doesn't Aam Aadmi Party government provide a solution.

Instead of blurring the glorious cultural existence and identity of 'Diwali' due to stubble-pollution, a permanent solution should be found. The attempt to cover up stubble-pollution in the name of firecracker pollution should be avoided. 'Diwali' is our culture, civilization, mutual love, history, heritage and the wonder of the rows of lamps. Calling the pollution caused by stubble-burning around Diwali as pollution from firecrackers is an excessive irony and an escapist mentality to shy away from the problem. In fact, it is the irresponsible behaviour of politicians, which has forced everyone to live in a poisonous atmosphere. During the winter season, there are deadly metals in the air, which cause difficulty in breathing. Increase in the amount of cadmium and arsenic in the air increases the risk of cancer, kidney problems and high blood-pressure, diabetes and heart diseases. In this season, the lethality increases manifold due to pollution of stubble. Pollution from firecrackers is even more dangerous. The number of cities with AQI more than 300 is increasing. The reasons why the residents of the National Capital Region are forced to inhale poison have been discussed so many times that they need not be repeated.

international

ISRAEL CLAIMS STRIKE ON LARGEST REFUGEE CAMP IN GAZA, SAYS TOP HAMAS COMMANDER KILLED

Jerusalem | Agencies

The Israel military on Wednesday claimed responsibility for the airstrike on the Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza, the largest in the besieged enclave, and said that one of the top Hamas leaders who was responsible for the October 7 assault was killed in the attack. In a post on X, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said: "IDF fighter jets eliminated Ibrahim Biari, Commander of Hamas' Central Jabalya Battalion. Biari was one of the leaders responsible for the murderous terror attack on October 7th."

"The strike damaged Hamas' command and control in the area and eliminated a large number of terrorists who were with Biari. Additionally, underground terrorist infrastructure collapsed following the strike." The IDF reiterates its call to the residents of the area to move south for their safety. "Jabalya is the largest of the Gaza Strip's eight refugee camps, according to the UN. Defending Tuesday's airstrike which killed a large number of people and caused catastrophic damages, IDF spokesperson Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus said the refugee camp was targeted to kill Biari, who was "pivotal to the planning and the execution of the October 7 attack". "He was actively coordinating, orchestrating, and leading combat activities against the IDF as he was targeted," CNN quoted Conricus as saying to reporters. The IDF spokesperson said that Biari's activities go back to before 2004 when he "masterminded" an attack in Ashdod that led to the killing of 13 Israelis. "Dozens"



of Hamas combatants were also killed in Tuesday's strike when underground tunnels beneath the camp collapsed, Conricus said, adding that the IDF is still working to obtain a precise number of casualties. "I understand that that is also the reason why there are many reports of collateral damage and non-combatant casualties. We're looking into those as well," Conricus said. Conricus said they are working to determine the number of civilians who were also killed in the strike, adding that the IDF had considered all factors when making the strike "including the possibilities of non-combatants being affected". The spokesperson noted that the military had notified civilians to leave the area through the distribution of leaflets, messages on social media and radio dispatches, CNN reported. "I want to emphasize the strike was on a military target of significant military

importance to the battlefield and for us to be able to be able to obtain our military objectives. That is why it was struck," Conricus said.

Earlier on Tuesday, the IDF said that its troops on the ground had targeted a Hamas terrorist stronghold in Jabalya "used for training and execution of terrorism activities".

"During the ground activity, the troops eliminated approx. 50 terrorists, as well as destroyed entrances to terrorist tunnels and weapons," it said on X.

Meanwhile, the Hamas has denied that a member was present in the camp during the airstrike.

Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem accused Israel of attempting to justify what he described as a "heinous crime against safe civilians, children, and women in Jabalya camp".

According to the Gaza-based Interior Ministry, at least 20 homes were completely flattened as a result of the strike. However, the number of casualties were not immediately confirmed.

Multiple Arab nations have condemned the airstrike on the Jabalya camp.

While Jordan held "Israel, the occupying power responsible for this dangerous development", Saudi Arabia "affirmed that the dangerous humanitarian conditions resulting from the continuous escalation cannot be justified at all", reports CNN.

Iran "condemned in the strongest terms the barbaric attack" and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) warned that "indiscriminate attacks will result in irreparable ramifications in the region".

US mother who fled to India indicted for murder of minor son

New York | Agencies

A US woman, who fled to India in March this year with her Indian-origin husband, has been indicted by a grand jury in the state of Texas for the murder of her missing six-year-old son with special needs.

Cindy Rodriguez-Singh boarded a flight to India with Arshdeep Singh and her six other children just before a welfare check at the family's home in Everman found Noel Rodriguez-Alvarez missing.

Police continue to search for Noel, who was last seen in late October or early November last year in a hospital where his twin sisters were born.

Witnesses told police that he appeared "unhealthy and malnourished".

Cindy, who "severely abused and neglected" the child, faces charges



of capital murder, two counts of injury to a child, and one count of abandoning without the intent to return in the disappearance of Noel,

police said.

"These indictments will significantly support our effort to apprehend and extradite Cindy back to the US," Everman Police Chief Craig Spencer said at a press conference on Monday.

Noel was one of the 10 children born to Cindy. Three siblings lived with their grandparents, while Noel and the others lived with their mother in a shed in Everman.

At the time of welfare check, Cindy told police that Noel was in Mexico with his biological father, which investigators later found out to be false.

Police investigations found that Cindy neglected and abused Noel, which included depriving that child with food and water.

She had reportedly told relatives that the child was "evil" or "possessed".

Violent storm pounds northern Italy

Rome | Agencies

A violent storm that brought heavy rains and strong winds to northern Italy triggered rapid floods through Milan and caused Lake Como to breach its banks. Due to the continued heavy rain since Tuesday and overnight, several waterside eateries were flooded at Lake Como, a popular tourist attraction, reports CNN. The Seveso river which runs through Como, Monza e Brianza and Milan, also broke its banks, according to Italy's civil protection agency. Parts of Milan became inaccessible due to the heavy downpour, with images on social media showing water gushing down stairs of underground train stations. The city's safety councilor, Marco Granelli, said the winds felled trees, tore down scaffolding and ripped off roof tiles.

Electricity was also cut in several parts of the city as a precaution.

Meanwhile, Tuscany in central Italy, was also affected by heavy rainfall, CNN reported.

Sydney | Agencies

The bushfire danger period is now in place across the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW), after the remaining nine local government areas on the southern border entered the statutory phase on Wednesday.

According to the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), the period normally runs from October 1 to March 31, during which residents are required to obtain a fire permit if they plan to conduct burning activities on their properties, reports Xinhua news agency.

After weeks of unseasonable heatwave, this year saw the official start of the 2023-24 bushfire season fall on October 1.

But the NSW RFS reported that 32 local government areas across the state had already been in the bushfire danger period for at least a month from September 1, including 11 entering earlier than usual due to warm and dry conditions.

As of Wednesday, there are 65 fires burning



around NSW, with 12 of those burning out of control.

A large bushfire in the Tenterfield local government area has grown to 6,349 hectares in size, threatening homes and properties not only in the NSW's Jennings area but also in the Wallangarra township of Queensland.

Speaking to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation earlier in the day, NSW RFS Commissioner Rob Rogers flagged Tenterfield as an area of main concern, since it was "literally surrounded by fires."

Bangladesh: Four dead, over 500 arrested on first day of BNP's nationwide blockade

Dhaka | Sumi Khan

At least four people died while more than 500 BNP-Jamaat men were arrested across Bangladesh on the first day of the Opposition's nationwide 72-hour rail, road, and waterways blockade on Tuesday.

There were reports of 26 violent clashes in 14 districts across the country, during which more than 24 public buses were set on fire while 18 buses were vandalised.

The political turbulence, which erupted on October 28 after a senior BNP leader and dozens of members of his party were arrested following violent anti-government protests in Dhaka, has now spread into a five-day ordeal, leaving a trail of deaths, blood and mayhem with no resolution in sight.

A senior Bangladesh opposition leader and dozens of members of his party have been arrested after violent anti-government protests in Dhaka.

The ruling Awami League promised to come down hard on the main opposition BNP and arrested more than 500



including two top leaders of the party. With the time for the next election schedule approaching fast, the current situation bears a frightening resemblance to the period leading to the 2014 elections marked by violent clashes amid opposition boycott.

As of now, the ruling Awami League is determined to keep the situation under control while the opposition BNP wants to paralyse the administration to force the government to resign in favour of a polls-time government.

With both parties locking

believe that the situation may continue to deteriorate before the announcement of the election schedule.

The Election Commission will hold dialogues with all 44 registered political parties on November 4 and the chief election commissioner is scheduled to meet with the president the next day to discuss the upcoming election schedule.

The announcement of the election schedule is expected to follow the usual practice, likely in mid-November.



Maha CM: Maratha quotas definitely coming, but need time; activists must shun violence

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde convened a meeting of leaders of all political parties on Wednesday to discuss the raging issue of Maratha quotas which unanimously decided that reservations will be given, but the government needs time to complete the relevant legal formalities, and also appealed to the protesters to shun violence.

The meeting was attended by over 30 leaders, including Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar, Congress state President Nana Patole, Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Leader of Opposition (Council) Ambadas Danve, Leader of Opposition (Assembly) Vijay Wadettiwar, and others.

The all-party meet adopted a detailed resolution saying: "We are unanimous about giving reservation to Marathas. This can be done only after completing the legal formalities to ensure reservation



that can withstand legal scrutiny. For this all political parties are ready to work together."

"The legal formalities shall be completed as soon as possible. However, it must be given sufficient time, that we have to take into consideration," added the resolution, reiterating the CM's stance in

the past few days.

"The kind of violence that has flared in the state is not proper and is giving a bad name to the Marathas quota agitation. We are strongly against such violence. Nobody should take the law into their hands. We appeal to maintain the law and order situation in the state," said the leaders of all the political parties.

They also appealed to (Shivba Sanghatana leader) Manoj Jarange-Patil to cooperate with the government and withdraw his hunger strike, which entered the eighth consecutive day on Wednesday, said the resolution signed by the CM and all the leaders present. This was the first major attempt by the ruling alliance to involve the Opposition parties in the Maratha quotas imbroglio that has culminated in violence, stone-pelting, arson, road and rail blocks, demonstrations, attacking political leaders' homes, banning political leaders in over 4,000 villages, etc., in several parts of the state since Sunday.

500 protestors face charges for protest on highway in Pune

Team Absolute | Pune

As many as 500 activists who participated in the Maratha quota agitation in Pune have been charged by the police for arson and obstructing traffic on the Pune-Bengaluru Expressway, officials said on Wednesday.

According to the report, nearly 500 activists backing the Maratha reservation on Tuesday protested on the expressway near Navale bridge in Maharashtra's Pune between 12.15 pm and 2.45 pm on Tuesday. They burnt tires to emphasize their demand for Maratha reservations, as confirmed by the police, the report added.

Reportedly, law enforcement has filed charges against 400 to 500 members of the Maratha Kranti Morcha and Sakal Maratha Morcha, encompassing a range of offences, including endangering the lives of others and causing fear among commuters.

The activists have been subjected to legal action under pertinent sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Maharashtra Police Act, and the Criminal Law



(Amendment) Act, the police were quoted.

Protests by the Maratha quota activists have intensified across Maharashtra, especially in the Marathwada region, since activist Manoj Jarange began indefinite fast against on October 25. He, on Wednesday, has said that he will stop drinking water as well if the state government does not give Marathas reservation. In Beed district, people

resorted to violence and arson and set on fire home and office of a Nationalist Congress Party (Ajit Pawar faction) leader on fire. The widespread violence led to imposition of curfew and suspension of internet services.

Since the protest took violent turn in Beed, curfew was enforced in periphery of 5 kilometres from the collector office, head offices of talukas along with all national highways passing through the district. The administration, however, on Wednesday lifted curfew imposed however said that prohibitory orders shall continue and internet services are still shut.

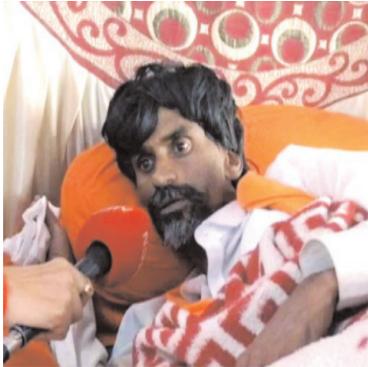
Meanwhile, curfew in Dharashiv (erstwhile Osmanabad) has not been relaxed. The police have registered over 30 offences and have arrested 99 persons in Beed. Prohibitory orders were also imposed in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (previously Aurangabad) to maintain law and order. Additionally, Nanded collector Abhijeet Raut has also imposed prohibitory orders on national highways and other roads.

'We Are Kunbis, why separate reservation for us?' Maratha quota activist

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Marathas belong to the Kunbi caste, which comes under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category, and are not demanding any separate reservation, quota activist Manoj Jarange Patil said during an exclusive interview with NDTV. Patil, face of the Maratha quota agitation, has been on an indefinite hunger strike since October 25. This triggered a fresh wave of protests and violence broke out in parts of the state on Monday.

However, Patil said the protests are being held peacefully and he's not aware who are indulging in violence. The Maratha community has faced injustice for years and this time they will not relent until they get reservation, said the activist. "Marathas across the country support us. I am not



afraid of dying. My aim is to get reservation for the Maratha community," he added.

"We are Kunbis. We are already in the OBC category. Why do we need separate reservation? If one brother gets reservation, then why not another? It is our right," said Patil. "We, Kunbis, are farmers and if reservation is being given based on one's occupation, then why aren't we getting it," he questioned.

Marathas will keep protesting until the community gets reservation as Kunbis, he asserted. "If law and order situation deteriorate, then it is the responsibility of the government," added Patil.

The Maharashtra government is in favour of Maratha quota, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said after an all-party meeting in Mumbai. They also passed a resolution urging Patil to call off his hunger strike.

ED attaches properties worth Rs 538 cr of Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal, family

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

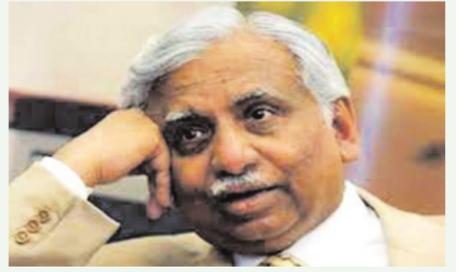
In a massive action, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said that it has attached properties worth Rs 538 crore of now defunct Jet Airways founder Chairman Naresh Goyal, his wife Anita Goyal, and son Nivaan Goyal situated in London, Dubai and various states of India and various other companies in a bank fraud money laundering case.

The action comes a day after the ED filed a charge sheet in the Canara Bank's Rs 538 crore fraud case naming the Goyal couple, and four other companies.

The ED, in a statement, said that it has attached properties worth Rs 538.05 crore under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 in the money laundering investigation against Jet Airways (India) Ltd (JIL).

"The attached properties include 17 residential flats and bungalows and commercial premises in the name of various companies and persons, viz Jetair Private Ltd, Jet Enterprises Private Ltd, founder Chairman of Jet Airways (India) Ltd (JIL) Naresh Goyal, his wife Anita Goyal, son Nivaan Goyal, situated in London, Dubai and various states of India," the ED said.

The ED probe revealed that JIL siphoned off the



loans from consortium of banks led by the SBI and the PNB.

"Naresh Goyal implemented a massive financial fraud in which the funds of JIL were systematically diverted in the garb of irrational and inflated General Sales Agent (GSA) commissions, large unexplained payouts to various professionals and consultants, by granting of loans to JetLite Ltd (100 per cent subsidiary to acquire Air Sahara), and subsequently writing off the loans by making provisions in the balance sheets," the agency alleged.

It said that its probe has established that GSA commissions were wrongfully paid to Jet Air Private Ltd (GSA of JIL for India), Jet Airways LLC Dubai (Global GSA of JIL) and JIL wrongfully paid for the operational expenses of these GSAs.

"All these GSAs were beneficially owned by Naresh Goyal. Hence, the management of JIL toed the line of Naresh Goyal, and kept on paying large sums of money

on regular basis despite the fact that these entities were not performing any substantial service after 2009. The funds so received were again used by Naresh Goyal and his family for their personal expenses and investments," the ED said.

Earlier, the financial probe agency had conducted searches and survey at the premises linked to Goyal, the chartered accountants of JIL and others.

The ED arrested Goyal on September 1 and he is presently in judicial custody. The ED had filed a charge sheet before the Special Court (PMLA) on October 31. Its case is based on the FIR registered by CBI, BS&FB, Delhi on the basis of a written complaint submitted by Canara Bank, Mumbai, alleging therein offences of cheating, criminal conspiracy, criminal breach of trust and criminal misconduct committed by JIL and its promoter and directors which resulted in a massive NPA of Rs 538.62 crore.

ED searches premises linked to Mumbai drug lord Ali Asgar Shirazi, recovers gold worth Rs 57 lakh

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday said that it carried out searches at several premises linked to drug lord Ali Asgar Shirazi in Mumbai and recovered cash to the tune of Rs 5.5 lakh, and gold worth Rs 57.11 lakh.

In a statement, the financial probe agency said that it carried out search operations under PMLA, 2002 at various locations in Mumbai on October 16, 17, 19 and 27 in relation to a money laundering case registered against Shirazi and others.

"During the searches, cash of Rs 5.50 lakh and gold worth Rs 57.11 lakh, various digital devices including mobile phones and laptops, and incriminating records were recovered and seized,"



the ED said. The ED registered a fresh case on the basis of the FIR registered by Jogeshwari Police Station in Mumbai under various sections of NDPS Act against Shirazi and others concerning the seizure of 15.743 kg ketamine worth Rs 7.87 crore.

The agency said that its probe has revealed that there were huge cash deposits in

the accounts linked to Shirazi and related persons or entities, which prima facie appeared to be illegal money earned via selling of drugs. "Therefore, four search operations at 10 locations in Mumbai were conducted on October 16, 17, 19 and 27 at the premises of Shirazi and various related persons or entities," it added.

75-year-old woman killed in Wadala, one held

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Wadala police in Mumbai arrested a suspect involved in the alleged murder of a 75-year-old senior citizen and the subsequent destruction of evidence by burning the victim's body. The case had baffled investigators, but through human intelligence and technical evidence, the alleged murderer was tracked down within just five days, the police said.

The incident came to light on October 26 when Shrikant Sonawale, the railway station incharge of the Mumbai Port Trust's (BPT) informed the police about an unidentified body found between gate numbers 4 and 5. Immediately, the police registered a First Information Report (FIR) against an unknown person under sections 302 (Murder) and 201 (Destruction of Evidence), an official said. The victim was identified as Sugrabi Mulla (75), who worked as a maid in Dosti Erene. Concerned about her prolonged absence reported her relatives reported her missing at the Wadala police station. Upon seeing the body being found in BPT, the police identified it as Sugrabi Mulla, the official said.

Initially, the police detained family members of the victim for investigation, but after a thorough inquiry,



they were released. It was discovered that the woman was last seen near a shop before her disappearance.

The police took a proactive approach, sharing her photos on WhatsApp groups in the nearby area, and mobilized 12 teams from the port zone to investigate the crime.

Through diligent work and investigation, the police located the woman in a house. The accused, Mohammad Sayeed (27), had invited Sugrabi Mulla to his residence by telling her, "Khalla Ghar aao, Chai piyo" (Come uncle, have tea). Mulla knew the accused and entered his residence.

However, once inside, Mohammad Sayeed physically assaulted the woman, striking her over the head twice with an iron rod. He then placed her lifeless body

in a gunny bag and threw it from his building. Later, under the cover of darkness, he dragged the body to a deserted area and set it ablaze.

"Preliminary evidence suggests that Mohammad acted alone in the crime. Our Crime Detection Team, led by Police Inspector Vikas Mahumkar and other dedicated officers, worked tirelessly to apprehend the accused within just five days," stated Senior Police Inspector Milind Jadhav of the Wadala police station.

Mohammad Sayeed, who allegedly has no prior criminal record, has been arrested will be produced before a court. The police investigation continues to uncover all the details surrounding this tragic incident, the police said.

Diamonds worth over Rs 5 crore stolen from Mumbai shop, 2 workers arrested

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Diamonds worth Rs 5.62 crore have been allegedly stolen from a gems company store in Mumbai over six months following which police have arrested three persons, including two employees of the firm, an official said on Wednesday. Sanjay Shah, one of the directors of JB and Brothers Private Limited, which has a store at the Bharat Diamond Bourse in Bandra-Kurla Complex here, approached the police claiming diamonds worth Rs 5.62 crore were missing from their



stock, the official from BKC police station said. The complainant suspected that the firm's employees, Prashant Shah and Vishal Shah, both from Kandivali, were stealing diamonds from their store since April, he said. Nilesh Shah, a former employee of the firm, allegedly helped the duo in selling the stolen diamonds, the police said quoting the FIR. The police have arrested the three accused and booked them under relevant Indian Penal Code sections, including 420 (cheating), the official said. An investigation was on into the case, the police added.

Shiv Sena (UBT) seeks time from President, demands special session of Parliament

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Vinayak Raut has written a letter to President Droupadi Murmu, seeking time to meet her and demand a special session of Parliament to discuss the issue of reservation for Maratha and Dhangar communities, reported a news agency. The letter, dated October 31, states that an 11-member delegation led by Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut wants to meet the president on November 5 or 6. Marathas are demanding reservation in government jobs and education under the OBC category, while the Dhangar (shepherd) community wants the ST (Scheduled Tribe) status. On Tuesday, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray demanded a special session of Parliament and said that the issue can be resolved by the Centre. He said all Union ministers from Maharashtra should raise the reservation issue in the cabinet meeting. Uddhav Thackeray also urged the Union ministers to resign if the (Maratha reservation) demand is not met. Incidents of violence erupted in parts of Maharashtra over the past few days with the



Maratha quota supporters vandalising the residences and offices of some politicians. Activist Manoj Jarange has been on a fast since October 25 at his Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district to demand Maratha reservation. Meanwhile, activist Manoj Jarange on Wednesday reiterated that he will stop drinking water from this evening if his demand for reservation to the Maratha community is not fulfilled by the Maharashtra government.

Leaders of all parties should ask the Maharashtra government to call a special session of the state legislature and give reservation to the Maratha com-

munity, Jarange who has observing fast at Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district since October 25, told reporters.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has called an all-party meeting in Mumbai on Wednesday to discuss the situation in the state amid the intensified Maratha quota agitation which took a violent turn in some parts of the state.

Shinde will apprise opposition leaders of the government's plans to handle the situation and seek their support, an official in the Chief Minister's Office earlier said.

"Leaders of all parties who are in Mumbai should ask the state government to call a special session of the state assembly and declare Maratha reservation. If this is not done, I will quit drinking water from Wednesday evening. The agitation will not stop and will continue peacefully," Jarange said. He also noted that some Maratha quota agitators were detained by the police at Kej in the violence-hit Beed district, but have now been released.

"I will still take a review of this," he said. Jarange also hit out at the ruling BJP leaders over some of their statements on the Maratha quota agitation.



Helen Flanagan

DISCUSSES DATING 'REALLY HOT' MAN WITH DAUGHTER MATILDA

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Helen Flanagan is back in the dating game and has been discussing her nerves about meeting a man with her young daughter.

The 33-year-old 'Coronation Street' actress is a proud mum of three, sharing seven-year-old daughter Matilda, four-year-old daughter Delilah and two-year-old son Charlie with her former fiancé, Scott Sinclair, reports Mirror.co.uk.

Helen and Scott split in October last year after being together for 13 years and engaged for four. Now Helen has made her return to the dating world - and it seems she has a dating app and the screening skills of her daughter to help. In a candid family moment, Helen shared a video of herself and Matilda talking together.

As per Mirror.co.uk, the footage showed the mum discussing the fact she was soon to go on a date with a mystery man - and getting her daughter's approval appeared to be high on her agenda.

The video clip showed Matilda reveal: "My mum's going on a date with someone tomorrow and I think she said he's very hot." A blushing Helen replied: "Do you like the look of him? I think he looks quite nice." Matilda then replied: "But you think he's really hot."

Helen said: "Yeah I know but Matilda I'm a bit nervous actually because I don't know him." Her daughter said: "Yeah but you have this dating app, so you look at these boys but some of them do this, (creating a boy impression)." The 'Corrie' star continued: "Most of them look really creepy don't they..."

Matilda jokes: "Yes." The Sun has claimed that Helen is indeed back on her dating horse with a source saying: "Helen's officially back on the dating scene - she's been seeing someone on/off for a while but has said they're better off as friends, but she did really like dating him. Everything's really casual and she's taking things slow - she doesn't want anything serious."

Mirror.co.uk further states that Helen recently opened up about the fact she is rediscovering her confidence after splitting from Scott.

Getting into the mood for Halloween, reality TV stars Kylie Jenner and Kendall Jenner paid homage to 'Batman Forever' film as they donned the costumes of the film's characters 'Sugar' and 'Spice', the two female lackeys of Two-Face in the film, becoming 'Sugar and Spice' in the process.

The sisters put on a racy display as they dressed up as 'Sugar & Spice' from 'Batman Forever' in their latest Halloween shoot.

Kylie, 26, donned the all-black leather bodysuit which was adorned with imagery of silver skulls and black fishnet tights.

Fully embracing the look of 'Spice', she donned a pair of black leather gloves and a silver spike studded choker and wore a fake dagger on her hip, before finally completing the look with a bouffant black and red-streaked wig.

Donning the look of 'Sugar', Kendall, 27, wore a plunging white lace lingerie bodysuit with matching stockings and suspenders and a feather-trimmed semi-sheer gown over the top. Her headgear seemed to have been modelled after the same curly blonde wig she wore dressed up as Marilyn Monroe over the weekend, according to People.

In a close-up shot, the sisters showed off their strikingly different Halloween beauty looks as they leaned into each other.

KENDALL JENNER, KYLIE JENNER DRESS UP AS 'SUGAR & SPICE' FROM 'BATMAN FOREVER' ON HALLOWEEN



BEN AFFLECK BUMPS HIS LUXURY CAR AFTER CHATTING WITH EX JENNIFER GARNER

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Ben Affleck has bumped his luxury Mercedes-Benz into a car on a recent outing. He was involved in the accident after he was caught on camera chatting with his former wife Jennifer Garner.

The 51-year-old Oscar-winning actor was spotted out and about in Santa Monica, California.

In pictures making their rounds online, it could be seen that he accidentally backed his Mercedes-Benz into a white car, which was parked behind his luxury vehicle, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Shortly before the incident, Affleck was spotted having a sweet interaction with Jennifer.

In the photos, they were captured having a seemingly fun conversation while they were attending a Halloween celebration at their children's school.

At one point, Affleck was pictured placing one of his hands on Garner's arm as they talked to each other. In the meantime, she was seen looking at him and frowned. She later let out a smile as she looked in another direction.

For the day out, the 'Argo' actor looked clean in an ivory ribbed top that came with a high neck design, unbuttoned long-sleeved beige blazer with two big pockets and a pair of long blue pants.

He completed the look with a pair of colorful Nike sneakers with white laces and a wedding ring. Throughout the outing, he was carrying a cup of coffee.

In the meantime, Garner opted to wear an all-black ensemble. The actress of 'The Adam Project' donned a long-sleeved Moncler sweater under a matching insulated vest that came with a zipper.

She covered her eyes with a pair of matching sunglasses. She let loose her shoulder-length hair and parted it in the middle. Similar to Ben, she was holding a glass of drink in one of her hands.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Demi Moore stunned fans as she highlighted her gym-honed frame in a teeny black bikini as she posed under a breathtaking waterfall at the mouth of Deer Creek.

The actress was all smiles as she reflected on a life-changing eight-day trip down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon with a group of her besties, reports Mirror.co.uk.

The 60-year-old model took to Instagram to share snaps from her outdoor adventure, showing off her incredible washboard abs as she threw her arms in the air while getting soaked underneath a massive waterfall.

Sharing a carousel of fun times and astonishing views, Demi wrote: "Back in September, I had the opportunity to journey through the Grand Canyon on the Colorado River alongside so many beautiful souls. We laughed, cried and formed lifelong bonds that I will hold close to my heart forever."

She continued: "I will never truly be able to describe the many ways that this recent nature immersion has impacted me. Standing on the banks of the Colorado River as we all took in its magnificence and beauty, I was reminded of the urgent need to preserve and protect this vital lifeline."

As per Mirror.co.uk, in the photo dump, Demi looked radiant and youthful as she and her friends trekked the wilderness together.

On her memorable journey, the former 'Ghost' star was seen white water rafting down a river, dancing and laughing on top of a mountain, and posing at the top of a steep cliff surrounded by rocks. Demi was joined by fellow actress, Emily Osment, Alex Cornell du Houx, River Morgan, Karolina Vidales, Andezu Orionzi, Tiyana Blackeagle and Emma Robbins on her exciting expedition.

DEMI MOORE SIZZLES IN BLACK BIKINI UNDER A WATERFALL



Zayn Malik gets flak over Halloween post and keeping mum about Palestine

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-actor Zayn Malik shared a picture of himself dressing as an iconic 'Harry Potter' character and got criticised by Internet users.

The 'Pillow Talk' hit-maker was unrecognisable as he transformed into Lord Voldemort from J.K. Rowling's best-selling 'Harry Potter' novels.

The 30-year-old wore a bald prosthetic head featuring Voldemort's snake-like nose as well as the character's signature black gown, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"Happy Halloween," he captioned the post.

Fans, however, slammed the singer, who is of Pakistani descent, for staying silent on the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict as Israel continues its attack on Gaza strip.

"Sir people are dying in Palestine this is what you're posting," one said in the comments section.

Some others echoed the sentiment



by commenting: "Free Palestine."

On the other hands, some fans praised Zayn for nailing the Voldemort costume.

"Please you actually look scary. I remember when I cried after watching lord voldemort in 4th movie for the first time when I was small," a fan said.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Camila Cabello



Men's ODI WC

SOUTH AFRICA DOMINATE NEW ZEALAND FOR MASSIVE 190-RUN WIN

Pune | Agencies

South Africa went to the top of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup points table after a dominating 190-run against New Zealand in the league stage match at here MCA Stadium on Wednesday.

Batting first, South Africa posted a total of 357/4 thanks to 200-run second-wicket stand between centuries Quinton de Kock (116) and Rassie van der Dussen (133). Later, the Proteas were boosted by a late charge from David Miller (53).

Later, Marco Jansen's double strike lifted South Africa in the first Powerplay during New Zealand's chase before Gerald Coetzee and Kagiso Rabada followed up with wickets of their own. Keshav Maharaj ensured that the spinners had their say and struck four times as they bundled out New Zealand for 167 in 35.3 overs to ensure a dominant win.



Chasing 358, New Zealand tried their best to go for quick runs but lost Devon Conway pretty early to a sharp catch from Aiden Markram off the bowling of Jansen. Will Young and Ravindra tried to open their arms and go for quick runs.

But Jansen struck yet again in the ninth over to get Ravindra caught at fine leg. However, Gerald Coetzee and Kagiso Rabada ensured that the built-up pressure wasn't let off. Coetzee had Young caught behind with a peach, and

Rabada had the New Zealand skipper Tom Latham caught in the covers.

Daryl Mitchell was holding the fort for the BlackCaps before he fell to Maharaj in the 19th over. He lofted one down the wicket, where he was expertly caught by Miller.

New Zealand crumbled under the pressure exerted by Proteas bowlers lost their next four for merely 43 runs. A number of lusty blows from Glenn Phillips against the run of play, who was the only half-century from the Kiwi setup, helped New Zealand bat till the 36th over.

Brief scores

South Africa 357/4 (Quinton de Kock 116, Rassie Van der Dussen 133; Tim Southee 2-77) beat New Zealand 167 all-out in 35.3 overs (Glenn Phillips 60, Keshav Maharaj 4-46, Marco Jansen 3-31) by 190 runs.

Saudi Arabia set to host FIFA World Cup 2034

Los Angeles | Agencies

Saudi Arabia will host the FIFA World Cup 2034, the president of the International Football Federation (FIFA), Gianni Infantino announced through a social media post, late on Tuesday.

Earlier, Football Australia on Tuesday opted out of the 2034 FIFA Men's Football World Cup bid, paving the way for Saudi Arabia to potentially host the tournament.

"The next two editions of the FIFA World Cup are set to be hosted in Africa (Morocco) and Europe (Portugal and Spain) - with three celebratory matches played in South America (Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay) - in 2030 and in Asia (Saudi Arabia) in 2034," Infantino wrote in Instagram. "The bidding processes were approved by consensus via the FIFA



Council - where all six confederations are represented - after constructive dialogue and extensive consultation. Thank you to everyone who has participated in this positive exchange."

Three countries from the continent of North America, the United States of America, Mexico and Canada will host the FIFA World Cup 2026. Earlier in the month FIFA

has invited bids from the Asia and Oceania regions for confederation rotation and of securing the best possible hosting conditions for the World Cup earlier this month. Australia, however, will aim to secure the hosting rights for the 2029 Club World Cup and the 2026 Women's Asian Cup, with Saudi Arabia also bidding for the latter tournament.

Tendulkar's statue in 'lofted drive' pose unveiled at Wankhede Stadium

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Wednesday unveiled a grand and gleaming bronze statue of Sachin Tendulkar at the Wankhede Stadium here.

Present on the occasion were Sachin Tendulkar and his entire family, Sports Minister Sanjay Bansode, Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar, BCCI Vice-President Rajeev Shukla, BCCI Secretary Jai Shah, Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) President Amol Kale, Secretary Ajinkya Naik and other BCCI and MCA office-bearers.

Commissioned by MCA, the statue depicting the cricket icon in his trademark 'lofted drive' pose is the first-erected for any legend at the 49-year-old Wankhede Stadium, and is placed prominently at the Sachin Tendulkar Stand. It has been created by Ahmednagar-based sculptor Pramod Kamble, who said the larger-than-life size statue stands 14 feet tall. It now adorns the stadium high above, at a strategic location visible from all sides, just ahead of



some of the ICC ODI World Cup matches scheduled here this week. First announced in February and planned around June-July, the statue is billed as the MCA's tribute to the 50th birthday (April 24) of Tendulkar, being celebrated by his fans and cricket lovers world over this year. The selected pose, after scouring thousands of action images of Tendulkar, finally zeroed down to the memorable sixer shot in a lofted drive pose, with his left leg extended, body slightly bent, head high and the bat pointing at the sky, and had the personal approval of the cricketing giant.

TEENAGE POLE VAULTER DEV MEENA CLINCHES GOLD, QUALIFIES FOR WORLD U20

Panaji | Agencies

Madhya Pradesh teenage pole vaulter Dev Kumar Meena scaled a height of 5.16m to not only clinch the gold medal in the 37th National Games but also qualified for the World U20 Athletics Championships to be held next year.

The 18-years-old from agricultural belt of Dewas in Madhya Pradesh unsuccessfully attempted to cross 5.20m at the Bambolim Athletics stadium but said the competition was valuable learning experience.

"The World U20 scheduled to be held in Lima will be a good opportunity for me to further scale new heights," said the trainee of Madhya Pradesh Athletics Academy in Bhopal.

The sprinter-turned-pole vaulter, was spotted in November 2020 by the talent search team of the Madhya Pradesh government. He was initially selected for short sprints, but later switched to pole vault as he showed more interest in the jumping event.



"He (Meena) has good fundamentals to be a jumper," Sanjay Garnaik, former head of the Bhopal athletics academy said. "He showed interest in pole vault and has made good progress in the last two years."

According to Garnaik, a senior multi-discipline athletics coach, pole

vault is a technical event and it takes a minimum of four to five years to master the fundamentals.

"Meena has proved to be a good learner. He is always eager to work hard. But there is a process of gradually building up to avoid early burnout," Garnaik added. "With more

specialised training programme in future we expect better results from him." Despite having established himself as the leading pole vaulter at the junior level, Meena often works with his father at the fields and believes it's an excellent way to keep fit. "When I'm not at the academy in Bhopal, I like to work at the farm. It is like good cross training in the gym," he added.

Meena said a decision to get enrolled at athletics academy in Bhopal was a turning point. "At the village we don't have good facilities or coaching to become national level athletes." Garnaik recently shifted his base from Bhopal to Bhubaneswar in Odisha, but still guide the young Madhya Pradesh athlete.

To further improve Meena's pole vaulting skills search is on for a foreign expert. "Proper grooming is important. The Madhya Pradesh government has agreed to sanction funds for international exposure. Or for an appointment of a foreign expert for specialisation," Garnaik revealed.

Zeng aims for successful title defence in Zhangjiagang Shuangshan Golf Challenge

Nanjing | Agencies

Zeng Liqi is back on home ground this week for the Zhangjiagang Shuangshan Challenge after a successful showing stateside in the second stage of the 2023 LPGA Tour Qualifying Tournament.

The 17-year-old Nanchang native, a four-time winner on the China LPGA Tour over the past two seasons, put together rounds of 72-76-66-72 to finish equal 30th in Florida earlier this month. She now advances to the final stage of qualifying with 40 other players, reports Xinhua.

This week, the teenager is at Zhangjiagang Shuangshan Golf Club, where last year she won her maiden pro title by a commanding three-stroke margin. In the same tournament the year previous, she finished runner-up to Zhao Zhimeng as an amateur.

"I've played in the Zhangjiagang Shuangshan Challenge for four years in a row. Zhangjiagang Shuangshan Golf Club is my lucky course," said Zeng ahead of the start of the 500,000 yuan (68,310 U.S. dollars) CLPGA Tour tournament. "To me, it just feels so warm and nice here. The fans are great



and it is here that I have had some of the biggest moments in my golf career as an amateur and as a professional."

Looking to spoil Zeng's title defence is Wang Xinying. In March, the Beijing native won the IOA Championship and currently sits 15th on the 2023 Epson Tour's Race for the Card. The Duke

University graduate finished equal third at the Zhangjiagang Shuangshan Challenge in 2020 and equal eighth the following year.

"It's nice to be back, everyone has been so warm and kind to me here. A lot of good memories," said 24-year-old Wang. "You know, I can still remember every hole here. I would really like to break through on the CLPGA Tour. It would be wonderful to get my first CLPGA title here."

Cao Xinyu goes into the tournament as the top-rated amateur. Last week the teenager represented China at the 2023 Women's World Amateur Team Championship in Abu Dhabi, finishing T38 in the individual scoring. The Chinese team, which included Ni Zixin and An Tong, finished T30. "The fairways were quite narrow last week. My driving and approach shots were good, but I had some regrets with my putting. I didn't make as many birdie putts as I would have liked. Overall, I'm still satisfied with my performance," said Cao, currently 133rd in the world amateur golf rankings.

"Through this tournament, I realized that there is still a big gap between me and amateur players from other countries and regions."

RTU'S INTER COLLEGIATE SPORTS TOURNAMENT

Jaipur | Agencies

The three days Inter Collegiate Sports Tournament for the year 2023-24 was organized by Rajasthan Technical University (RTU) at Poornima College of Engineering (PCE). In this, the host team performed brilliantly and won trophies in two categories. Organizing Secretary Ashwini Lata said that in the Kabaddi Girls' final PCE captured the trophy by defeating GIT 55-52. Earlier in the semi-finals, PCE defeated PIET by a huge margin of 67-13, while GIT entered the finals through a bye. The final of American Football (Boys) was played between Poornima College of Engineering and GIT. In this one-sided match, the host team was victorious 18-0. In the Kabaddi (Boys) final, SKIT won the trophy by



defeating host Poornima College 38-29. Earlier in the semi-final, PCE entered the semi-final by defeating MLV Textile and Engineering College, Bhilwara by 47-17, while in the second semi-final, SKIT defeated PIET by 51-22.

Apart from these, selection trial matches of Wrestling Freestyle, Judo and Squash were also organized to make the West Zone team of Inter University Tournament. All matches of the tournament were played as per AIU rules.

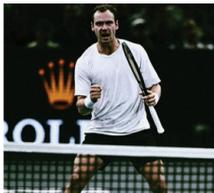
Paris Masters: Roman Safiullin Stuns World No.2 Alcaraz

Paris | Agencies

Russian Roman Safiullin earned the biggest win of his career year by stunning No.2 Carlos Alcaraz in the Paris Masters.

The qualifier recovered an early break in both sets of a shock 6-3, 6-4 victory, dealing Alcaraz his first opening-round loss of 2023.

Safiullin is up to No. 39 in the ATP Live Rankings with the victory, setting himself up to break into the Top 40 for the first time. The 26-year-old's upset win against Alcaraz follows breakthrough runs to the Wimbledon quarter-finals and the Chengdu final in recent months. "Since qualies, I was not playing at this level but against Carlos and these Top 10, Top 20 guys, you have to lift up the level. I managed to do it," said Safiullin in the post-



match.

"For Carlos, it was not his best performance, but still I'm happy that I can win even if he's not in the best shape it's tough to beat him. So I'm really happy that I made it."

Alcaraz, who was forced to pull out of Basel due to problems with his left foot and lower back, was competing for the first time since his defeat to Grigor Dimitrov in September ending in the Shanghai last 16. The defeat deals a heavy blow to his bid to finish the season atop the

Pepperstone ATP Rankings for the second straight year; he remains 500 points behind world No. 1 Novak Djokovic in the ATP Live Race To Turin, with the Serbian set to open his Paris campaign on Wednesday. Following a first-round bye in Paris, Alcaraz started brightly in both sets but was pegged back by the steadier play of Safiullin. The qualifier was aided by 27 unforced error count from the Spaniard, though he played his part in Alcaraz's miscues by defending well in the corners, particularly at the critical moments. Playing in a non-descript white shirt devoid of any sponsor patches, the workmanlike Safiullin converted four of eight break chances in the match - two in each set - while saving two of four break points against Alcaraz, one of tennis' biggest superstars.

Aishwary Tomar shoots gold in men's 3P as India sign-off with 51 medals

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar won his fourth international gold at the senior level, nailing the men's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P) title in emphatic fashion, as India signed-off from the 15th Asian Shooting Championship in Changwon, Korea, with a haul of 51 medals and second place behind China on the medals tally.

Aishwary also won the team silver in the event along with Akhil Sheoran and Swapnil Kusale, as India picked up four more medals on the concluding day including gold in the Trap Mixed Team competition through Prithviraj Tondaiman and Manisha Keer.

It was a high-quality final and men's 3P competition throughout, as China's former junior world champion Du Linshu scorched the lanes in the morning to register a stunning 597 in qualification and set a new world record. He shot four series of 100 across the three positions, including a perfect 200 in the first kneeling position in a sensational display. Aishwary, also a former junior world champion, shot 591 to qualify fifth. In the final, Aishwary was among the leaders from



the beginning. He was fourth after the first 15 kneeling shots but at the end of the 15 shots in the prone position, the Indian was just 0.3 behind Du, who had been leading the final till then.

By the time Indonesian Fathur Gustafin and Korean Cheon Min Ho exited after the 40th shot, Aishwary had taken a two-point lead over Tian, with five-single shots in the final standing position remaining.

Aishwary, who had also won a gold at the same range in a world cup stage last year, shot 10.5 for his 41st but scores of 9.2 and 8.8 for his next two meant Tian had taken over the lead. The 22-year-old Hangzhou Asiad silver medallist however, finished with 10.8 and 10.7 to leave Tian 0.8 behind in silver position.

Aishwary finished with a score of 463.5. Du finished third, thereby missing out on a Paris Olympics quota to teammate Tian as Kazakhstan bagged the other available quota place.

India then won a total of 19 gold, 19 silver and 13 bronze medals to finish behind China who won 73 medals including 32 gold in the final calculations.



Salman Khan starrer 'Tiger 3' to release a day prior overseas

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan's upcoming actioner 'Tiger 3' is all set to release in overseas territories on November 11, a day prior to its release in India. Mumbai, Oct 31 (IANS) Bollywood

superstar Salman Khan's upcoming actioner 'Tiger 3' is all set to release in overseas territories on November 11, a day prior to its release in India. 'Tiger 3' will release on November 11 in overseas territories owing to exhibitors' demands based on advance sales and no Pre-Diwali effect in these markets.

International territories, starting with Middle East and all western markets, will release Tiger 3 timed to 9 p.m. IST on November 11. Asia Pacific and Australia and New Zealand markets will open on November 12.

The film will also be screened from 7 a.m. morning on November 12 in India and the advance booking opens on November 5.

'Tiger 3' is the fifth film in the blockbuster YRF Spy Universe which follows the events of 'Ek Tha Tiger', 'Tiger Zinda Hai', 'War' and 'Pathaan'.

The film, which also stars Emraan Hashmi and Katrina Kaif, is directed by Maneesh Sharma.

It will open in Hindi, Tamil dubbed and Telugu dubbed versions.

Pregnant Malayalam actress Priya dies of cardiac arrest, baby in ICU

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Popular Malayalam television actress Priya, known for her role in 'Karuthamuthu', passed away on Wednesday after suffering a cardiac arrest. Mumbai, Nov 1 (IANS) Popular Malayalam television actress Priya, known for her role in 'Karuthamuthu', passed away on Wednesday after suffering a cardiac arrest.

The actress was eight months pregnant, and currently the doctors are trying to save her baby in the intensive care unit.

Priya, who was also a doctor by profession, took a break from acting after getting married.

Actor Kishor Satya shared the news of her death on his Instagram account. Sharing a picture of the actress, he wrote in Malayalam, "One more unexpected death in the Malayalam television sector Dr Priya died of cardiac arrest yesterday. She was eight months pregnant. The baby is in ICU. There were no other health issues. Went to hospital for routine checkup yesterday. Sudden cardiac arrest was there (sic)".

The actor further mentioned, "The mother who is crying unable to accept the death of her only daughter. The pain of husband Nanna as a loving partner with Priya without going anywhere for six months... Last night while going to the hospital, the sight of sadness rained in my mind. What will you say to comfort them... Why did God show this cruelty to those innocent minds who are believers.... The mind kept repeating the questions (sic)".



KARAN KUNDRRA: 'I FOUND LOVE ON A REALITY SHOW LIKE BIGG BOSS'



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Karan Kundrra is all set to host the upcoming reality series, 'Temptation Island India'. He said that he fell in love on a reality show, which he said was like a journey to discover oneself. Mumbai, Nov 1 (IANS) Actor Karan Kundrra is all set to host the upcoming reality series, 'Temptation Island India'. He said that he fell in love on a reality show, which he said was like a journey to discover oneself.

Karan commented: "I fell head over heels in love on a reality show! Khud ke baare pata chala hai mujhe aise show se! (I got to know about myself through such shows). "A show like this will help these couples to explore the intricacies of relationships. Love and lust are all a part of human behavior, and this show will help them test it to get a better understanding of their own emotions and preferences." He continued: "Shows like this are like a journey to discover yourself, similar to what I experienced when I found love on a reality show like Bigg Boss. It was on that show that I learnt about my emotions and the strength of human connections." "Love, in all its forms, is a beautiful part of our lives, and this show will help these couples understand their feelings, just as I did when I started my own romantic journey on reality TV."



HRITHIK

Wishes his 'love' Saba Azad on 38th birthday, says 'Let's adventure on'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As Saba Azad turned 38 on Wednesday, Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan penned a sweet note for his lady love along with picture and said that it feels like home with the actress and singer.

Mumbai, Nov 1 (IANS) As Saba Azad turned 38 on Wednesday, Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan penned a sweet note for his lady love along with picture and said that it feels like home with the actress and singer.

Hrithik took to Instagram on Wednesday morning, where he shared a picture. In the image, the two are seen sitting on a staircase and Saba has her arms around Hrithik's arm. The two are seen smiling at the camera.

He captioned it: "We all look for that place that place where you can feel warm, inspired and safe enough in a partnership - just enough, to be able to shout out together "C'mon life, gimme what you got, bring on the adventure !! That's what it feels like with you. like Home.

"That's where the adventure begins...creating magic even with the mundane. And that I learn from you Sa. Thank you for being you. Let's adventure on. Happy birthday my love," he added.

Hrithik and Saba have been together for over a year now. The two are always seen attending events and parties together. Hrithik was earlier married to Suzanne Khan. They have two sons together.



'BIGG BOSS 17': ABHISHEK AND KHANZAADI SEEM TO BE GROWING CLOSER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ever since Samarth Jurel entered 'Bigg Boss 17', Abhishek Kumar seems to be staying away from his ex Isha Malviya in the house and it seems he is now focusing his attention on housemate Khanzaadi.

Mumbai, Nov 1 (IANS) Ever since Samarth Jurel entered 'Bigg Boss 17', Abhishek Kumar seems to be staying away from his ex Isha Malviya in the house and it seems he is now focusing his attention on housemate Khanzaadi.

A promo shared by the channel on Instagram, shows Abhishek asking Khanzaadi to forgive him for all the fights they've had.

He is then heard telling her: "Sundar lagne lag gayi hai mujhe ekdam se. Main Kaan pakad ke utthak beithak karke sorry maangta hun."

Khanzaadi then asks him what if he repeats his mistakes. Abhishek replies: "Cheeks pe kiss kardena please."

The nomination task took place in the latest episode, where Sana Khan, Isha Malviya, Samarth Jurel, Manasvi Mangai and Arun Mashetty got maximum votes.

Ram Charan, Allu Arjun, Chiranjeevi partake in Varun Tej, Lavanya Tripathi's pre-wedding rituals

Hyderabad | Agencies

After kicking off their pre-wedding celebrations with a grand night time cocktail party, Varun Tej and Lavanya Tripathi's wedding celebrations have begun, and they partook in the rituals where they were accompanied by stars Ram Charan, Allu Arjun, Nithiin and Chiranjeevi.

Hyderabad, Nov 1 (IANS) After kicking off their pre-wedding celebrations with a grand night time cocktail party, Varun Tej and Lavanya Tripathi's wedding celebrations have begun, and they partook in the rituals where they were accompanied by stars Ram Charan, Allu Arjun, Nithiin and Chiranjeevi.

After their pre-wedding night time cocktail party, the two started off with a Haldi ceremony on October 31, which was soon followed by a Mehendi ceremony which was held in the presence of family members, and close friends.

Just a few hours away from tying the knot, the photos taken from the private cele-



brations have surfaced and they went viral instantly.

The couple was spotted in a yellow-themed Haldi ceremony and the photos taken positively radiate love among the star couple.

For the Mehendi ceremony held on Wednesday, Varun was sporting a Beige coloured embroidered Kurta with an ombre-fuscia coloured mix indo-western jacket by Manish Malhotra.

Lavanya was seen wearing a glittering lehenga, which was actually a customised version of her mother's old

wedding saree designed by Archana Rao. She was donning beautiful jewellery with footwear from Aprajita Toor.

Throughout the Mehendi ceremony, Varun and Lavanya were accompanied by Ram Charan, Allu Arjun, Sneha Reddy, Chiranjeevi, and Nithiin, who came to the wedding after the Haldi ceremony but was part of their Mehendi ceremony.

As these rituals come to a close, the two will hold a fun pool party for their guests where they will relax and have fun, before Varun and

Lavanya take their vows at 2.48 p.m. in Italy.

Earlier, for the Haldi ceremony held late at night on Tuesday, megastar Chiranjeevi was spotted in one of the pictures, posing with the couple and blessing them. In another picture, Varun and Lavanya are seen embracing each other.

The couple's love story began back in 2016 on the set of 'Mister' where they fostered a strong friendship which eventually blossomed into a deep and enduring love.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Shilpa Shetty