

absolute india

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PAK, NEPAL, BANGLADESH AHEAD OF INDIA IN GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX



► THE GHI SCORE IS CALCULATED ON FOUR INDICATORS -- UNDERNOURISHMENT; CHILD WASTING (THE SHARE OF CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE WHO ARE WASTED I.E WHO HAVE LOW WEIGHT FOR THEIR HEIGHT, REFLECTING ACUTE UNDERNUTRITION); CHILD STUNTING (CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE WHO HAVE LOW HEIGHT FOR THEIR AGE, REFLECTING CHRONIC UNDERNUTRITION) AND CHILD MORTALITY (THE MORTALITY RATE OF CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE).

► NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES LIKE NEPAL (76), BANGLADESH (76), MYANMAR (71) AND PAKISTAN (92) ARE ALSO IN THE 'ALARMING' HUNGER CATEGORY, BUT HAVE FARED BETTER AT FEEDING ITS CITIZENS THAN INDIA, ACCORDING TO THE REPORT.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India has slipped to 101st position in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021 of 116 countries, from its 2020 position of 94th and is behind its neighbours Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Eighteen countries, including China, Brazil and Kuwait, shared the top rank

with GHI score of less than five, the website of the Global Hunger Index that tracks hunger and malnutrition said on Thursday. The report, prepared jointly by Irish aid agency Concern Worldwide and German organisation Welt Hunger Hilfe, termed the level of hunger in India "alarming". In 2020, India was ranked 94th out of 107 coun-

tries. Now with 116 countries in the fray, it has dropped to 101st rank. India's GHI score has also decelerated -- from 38.8 in 2000 to the range of 28.8 - 27.5 between 2012 and 2021. The share of wasting among children in India rose from 17.1 per cent between 1998-2002 to 17.3 per cent between 2016-2020, according to the report. However,

India has shown improvement in other indicators such as the under-5 mortality rate, prevalence of stunting among children and prevalence of undernourishment owing to inadequate food, the report said. According to the report, the fight against hunger is dangerously off track. Based on the current GHI projections, the world

as a whole -- and 47 countries in particular -- will fail to achieve a low level of hunger by 2030. Food security is under assault on multiple fronts, it said, adding that worsening conflict, weather extremes associated with global climate change, and the economic and health challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic are all driving hunger.

INDIA'S SEPTEMBER WHOLESALE PRICE INFLATION EASES TO 10.66%

HOPE OF RELIEF

► THE ANNUAL RATE OF INFLATION, BASED ON WHOLESALE PRICES, EASED TO 10.66 PER CENT LAST MONTH FROM 11.39 PER CENT IN AUGUST.

► HOWEVER, ON A YOY BASIS, THE WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX (WPI) DATA FURNISHED BY THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY HAS RISEN EXPONENTIALLY OVER SEPTEMBER 2020, WHEN IT STOOD AT 1.32 PER CENT.



Lower prices of primary goods, along with food articles, eased India's September 2021 wholesale inflation on a sequential basis. As per the data, the primary articles segment, which has one of the highest weightage in the WPI, increased at a slower rate of 4.10 per

cent in September, 2021 than 6.20 per cent reported for August. In the fuel and power segment, which has a weightage of 13.15 per cent, the rise in inflation was recorded at 24.81 per cent from 26.09 per cent in August 2021. Under this category, prices of mineral oils (-) 1.75 per cent declined in September, 2021 as compared to August, 2021, whereas prices of coal and electricity remain

unchanged. However, cost of manufactured products, which has a weightage of 64.23 per cent, increased at a faster rate of 11.41 per cent from 11.39 per cent. Nevertheless, the growth rate of WPI food index consisting of food articles from the primary articles group and food products from manufactured products group eased to 1.14 per cent from 3.43 per cent. ICRA Chief Economist

“ The high rate of inflation in September 2021 is primarily due to rise in prices of mineral oils, basic metals, non-food articles, food products, crude petroleum and natural gas, chemicals and chemical products etc, as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year. The month over month change in WPI index for the month of September, 2021 (as compared to August, 2021) was 0.07 per cent,” the ministry said in its review of 'Index Numbers of Wholesale Price in India' for September.

Aditi Nayar said: "The WPI inflation mildly trailed our expectation for September 2021, which offers a modicum of comfort given the looming concerns related to coal, crude oil, metals and logistics costs, as well as a depreciating INR."

Term-1 board exams for Classes 10, 12 to be conducted offline

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The first-term board examinations for Classes 10 and 12 will be conducted offline in November-December and the date-sheet for the same will be announced on October 18, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) said on Thursday. The board said the exams will be objective-type and the duration of the tests will be 90 minutes. The exams will start from 11.30 am instead of 10.30 am, keeping in view the winter season. Bifurcating the academic session, holding two term-end exams and rationalising the syllabus were part of the special assessment scheme for Classes 10 and 12 board exams in 2021-22 announced by the CBSE in July in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. "After the conduct of the term-1 exams, the results in the form of



marks scored will be declared. No student will be placed in the pass, compartment and essential repeat categories after the first term. The final results will be announced after the first and the second-term examination," CBSE Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj said. "Practical exams or internal assessment will be completed in schools before the first-term exams are over. The

marks allotted will be 50 per cent of the total marks and mentioned in the syllabus. The schools will be informed separately about the full scheme so that they can make the necessary preparations," he added. Bhardwaj further said the second-term examination would be conducted in March-April, 2022 and whether it will be objective or subjective-type will depend on the Covid situation in the country.

India re-elected unopposed to UN Human Rights Council

UNITED NATIONS | Agencies

India was re-elected to the Human Rights Council on Thursday for another three-year term, starting next year with a pledge to "to bring its pluralistic, moderate and balanced perspective to straddle various divides or differences in the Council". India received 184 of the 193 votes cast in the election. India's manifesto for the election emphasised that the promotion and protection of human rights were best served by "dialogue, cooperation and constructive and collaborative engagement". A total of 18 seats were up for election this year under the system of rotating membership with three-year terms on the 47-member Council. The Asia group of countries



unanimously endorsed India, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates for the five seats for the region that were up for election this year ensuring their unopposed election. Despite the unanimity, two spoiler votes were cast - one each for Fiji and the Maldives.

LIC: Govt plans to file IPO papers with Sebi by March

The government is expected to sell a 5-10% stake in LIC and raise around ₹90,000 crore in what could be India's biggest listing. The company has long been considered a strategic asset, commanding more than 60% of India's life insurance market with 36 trillion rupees of assets under management.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The sale of national carrier Air India to conglomerate Tata has opened the way for faster privatisation of state firms and the government is on track to list Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) early next year, a top government official said on Tuesday. Tuhin Kanta Pandey, spearheading the drive to sell state enterprises or shut them down, said the



government hoped to complete the valuation exercise of LIC by November-December before filing the draft red herring prospectus for

the IPO planned by March. Pandey said the deal with Tatas to sell Air India for \$2.4 billion was complex and long in the making but provided

confidence for the divestment of other state assets. A previous attempt in 2017 to sell the carrier that has been losing a billion dollars a year had failed. "It has now come to fruition, it will give a fillip to privatisation going forward," he said, adding that government managers were building expertise and experience to handle state sales. "Selling state assets is not easy, this is going to be a major piece of reform," he said.

MONSOON WITHDRAWAL NOT YET COMPLETE, SAYS IMD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Against the normal date of October 15 when the southwest monsoon completely withdraws from across India, the process is delayed this time, and its exit may still be at least five days away, the IMD said on Thursday. The commencement of withdrawal of the southwest monsoon had started on October 6, against the normal date of September 17. Unlike the process of onset of monsoon, which is very slow, the withdrawal of monsoon need not be that slow, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had said. Generally, the complete withdrawal of the southwest monsoon hap-

pens by October 12 or maximum by October 15. "There are low pressure systems bringing in rains over Kerala, Tamil Nadu and another over Odisha and Andhra Pradesh coast. This has delayed this process," IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mahapatra told reporter. "It will be at least five days before the withdrawal process is complete." After October 12, the stage is set for commencement of north-east monsoon - that brings in rains mostly to Tamil Nadu, parts of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. This time, because of the low-pressure systems and cyclonic circulations since last week, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and parts of Karnataka have experienced heavy to extremely heavy rainfall.

VARUN GANDHI SHARES VAJPAYEE'S OLD CLIP TO TARGET GOVERNMENT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Bharatiya Janata Party MP Varun Gandhi, who has been consistently targeting his own government over the farmers protest and the Lakhimpur Kheri violence, has now shared an old video of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in which Vajpayee is seen warning the then Congress government against repressing farmers. In this video, which is of the year 1980, tweeted by Varun Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee is seen saying, "Want to warn the government, leave the path of suppression. Don't try to threaten farmers, they are not scared. We do not want to use the farmers' movement for party politics but we support the farmers' rightful demand and if the government

suppresses, misuses the law, tries to repress the peaceful movement, then we will not hesitate to jump in their struggle. We will stand shoulder to shoulder with them." Varun Gandhi wrote in the caption, "Wise words from a big-hearted leader." Varun Gandhi has been constantly putting forward his own point of view away from the party line by writing or tweeting against UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Earlier Varun Gandhi had demanded stringent action against those responsible for killing farmers in Lakhimpur Kheri on October 3. Varun Gandhi along with his mother Maneka Gandhi were recently dropped from the BJP national executive which could be seen as an indication that the party leadership is not happy with him.

MAHA MINISTER AWHAD ARRESTED IN ASSAULT CASE, GETS BAIL

Thane:

Maharashtra Housing Minister Jitendra Awhad was placed under arrest in connection with an assault case but later released on bail, officials said here on Thursday. Awhad, who belongs to ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi constituent Nationalist Congress Party, appeared before the Vartak Nagar Police Station in connection with a case lodged against him under various sections of the Indian Penal Code. Police recorded his statement and then produced him before a Thane magistrate who granted him bail on a bond of Rs 10,000 and one surety.



ARMY JAWAN HONEY TRAPPED BY PAK SPY, ARRESTED

Team Absolute | Jaipur

The Rajasthan police intelligence team has arrested a peon of Military Chief Engineer Jodhpur Zone for sharing crucial information with a Pakistan based woman handler. According to the Director General of Police Intelligence Umesh Mishra, "The fourth class employee Ram Singh, son of Gajendra Singh, aged 30-35 years, working under the Chief Engineer Jodhpur Zone M.E.S., resident of district Sirahi, has been arrested for sharing facts of strategic importance with Pakistan woman handler." Mishra said that the accused was in contact with the Pakistani woman handler through WhatsApp for the last two months. During this time, he sent photographs of strategic importance of the



Indian Army through WhatsApp after being lured by her on the pretext of meeting her soon and marrying her. He said that being a Class IV employee, he was sharing pictures of crucial documents he clicked on his mobile phone while carrying letters around and during operating photostat machines etc. Based on inputs received from Intelligence, it was being monitored by an intelligence team. Mishra said that Ram Singh was interrogated jointly by all the agencies in Jodhpur. When the Android mobile of the accused was brought to Jaipur for tests, evidence of obscene chats and information of strategic importance was found in it. A case has been registered and the accused has been arrested. Further investigation continues in the case, he added.



EXTENSION OF BSF'S JURISDICTION EVOKES MIXED RESPONSE

GUWAHATI/AGARTALA | Agencies

A day after the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) extended BSF's area of operational jurisdiction in three states -- Punjab, West Bengal and Assam -- within a belt of 50 km from the international borders, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday supported the move, while the CPI-M and the Trinamool Congress strongly opposed it.

As per the MHA order, the Border Security Force (BSF) has now been empowered to take action within a belt of 50 km in Punjab, West Bengal and Assam running along the borders of India. Earlier, the BSF had jurisdiction till only 15 km in these states.

Supporting the MHA decision, Sarma tweeted, "Assam welcomes the extension of BSF's operational jurisdiction. In coordination with the state police, this move will serve as a strong deterrent to cross-border smuggling and illegal infiltration. It will strengthen national security and national interest." However, the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and the CPI-M in Tripura have strongly opposed the MHA decision.

Terming the Centre's decision as "infringement" on the rights of the state, Trinamool Congress General Secretary Kunal Ghosh said the MHA decision must be opposed.



"The MHA decision is interference in the states' affairs through the back door. The Trinamool Congress is looking into the matter with all seriousness. Appropriate comments and reactions on the issue would be communicated," said Ghosh,

who is also the spokesperson of Trinamool Congress. CPI-M's Tripura state Secretary Jitendra Chaudhury said that the MHA decision is "unilateral and interference in the federal structure of the country". "If the decision to extend the BSF's operational jurisdiction is necessary for the interest of the country's security, it should have been discussed in the National Development Council or in an appropriate national platform.

"The Centre's decision reflects authoritarian mentality. Such unilateral decisions always undermine the states' constitutional rights," said Chaudhury, a former MP who is also the member of the CPI-M central committee. Slamming the Centre for amending Section 139 of the BSF Act to give the force wider jurisdiction and terming it as tantamount to an attack on federalism, Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhjinder Randhawa on Wednesday asked Home Minister Amit Shah to withdraw the decision.

On Wednesday, Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi had also condemned the decision, terming it as a "direct attack on federalism".

The BSF is deployed in five eastern states sharing international borders with Bangladesh -- West Bengal (2,216 km), Tripura (856 km), Meghalaya (443 km), Mizoram (318 km) and Assam (263 km).

India ships vaccines to four nations under 'Vaccine Maitri'



Team Absolute | New Delhi

India has recently sent crores of Covid vaccine shots to four nations in its neighborhood under the "Vaccine Maitri" programme, it was announced on Thursday.

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said that India has exported the Covid vaccines to Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and

Iran and its "top priority" is the neighborhood countries. Each received 10 crore doses.

India resumed vaccines export in the fourth quarter of 2021-22 starting from October to fulfill its commitment of India towards World Health Organisation's Covax programme in line with the motto 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world in one family). India is one of

the largest contributors to the programme aiming at equitable distribution of Covid vaccines from vaccine manufacturing nations contribute to other countries. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya had on Wednesday said that India will manufacture more than 28 crore shots of Covid vaccine in October as it pushes to ramp up supply.

Take steps to keep edible oil prices in check, Centre to states

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Department of Food and Public Distribution has written to all the major oil producing states to take appropriate and immediate action to ensure that the prices of edible oils are brought down to commensurate levels, in line with the import duty reductions.

The Centre has written a letter in this regard to Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, all of which are major oil producing states, a release from the Department said on Thursday.

The letter mentioned that the respective state government has to ensure that full benefits of duty reduction made by the Centre are passed on to the consumers in order to provide immediate relief from the prevailing high prices of edible oils, especially during the festival season. "This would also help in bringing down the food inflation and provide relief to ordinary consumers by reduction in the prices of edible oils by Rs 15-20 per kg (approx)," the release said. In a bid to reign in the continuous rise in cooking oil prices since the past one year, the Centre has slashed the basic duty on crude palm oil, crude soyabean oil and crude sun-



flower oil from 2.5 per cent to nil. The Agri-cess on these oils has been brought down from 20 per cent to 7.5 per cent for crude palm oil and 5 per cent for crude soyabean oil and crude sunflower oil. The basic duty on RBD palmolein oil, refined soyabean and refined sunflower oil has been slashed to 17.5 per cent from the current 32.5 per cent. The duty reduction will be effective from October 14, 2021 up to March 31, 2022. Before Thursday's reduction, the agricultural infrastructure cess on all crude edible oils was 20 per cent. Post the reduction, the effective duty on crude palm oil will be 8.25 per cent, while for crude soyabean oil and crude sunflower oil, it will be 5.5 per cent each from earlier 22.5 per cent for crude palm oil, crude sunflower oil, crude soyabean oil and 32.5 per cent for RBD palmolein, refined soyabean oil and refined sunflower oil.

JCO, ANOTHER SOLDIER CRITICALLY INJURED IN J&K'S POONCH

Jammu: A junior commissioned officer (JCO) and another soldier were critically injured on Thursday in an encounter with the terrorists in J&K's Poonch district, defence officials said.

Defence Ministry spokesman, Lt Col Devender Anand said: "In an ongoing counter-terrorist operation in general area Nar Khas Forest, Mendhar Sub Division, District Poonch, there has been exchange of fire between army troops and terrorists during evening hours..."

"During the ensuing exchange of fire, one JCO and one soldier have been critically injured. The operations are under progress. Update follows."

Earlier, gunshots were heard on Thursday during the search and cordon operation started by the army in Surankote area of Poonch district.

Police sources said the army started a cordon and search operation involving several villages adjacent to Dhera Ki Gali in Surankote area.

Two held for kidnapping, murdering 9-year-old boy in Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Police have arrested two people in a 9-year-old boy's murder case whose body was found in a sack in the national capital's Uttam Nagar area.

The arrested persons have been identified as Umesh Kumar and Naveen Mehto, both labourers working at a construction site.

According to the police, a complaint was registered on October 11 at the Uttam Nagar police station regarding a boy who went missing while playing in a park in front of the house. A case under section 363 (kidnapping) of the IPC was initially registered and the investigation was taken up.

The parents of the missing child then received a ransom call in which the kidnapers demanded Rs 5 lakh. Through the number, the police were able to locate a person named Bipin Bhandari, in whose name the mobile number was registered. When a team



of policemen checked Bhandari's house, six other labourers residing on the same floor were also apprehended. A search of the second floor in the same building was initiated on October 13 and finally the body of the missing child, identified as Ankush Kumar, was recovered from there, having being dumped in the garbage adjacent to the room of one of the apprehended labourers Umesh Kumar. A police team also inspected the spot from where the body was recovered

and all the CCTV cameras in the vicinity were thoroughly checked. Finally, during interrogation, Umesh Kumar broke down and narrated the whole incident. He said he was in dire need of money and also due to his addiction to drugs, he along with his friend, the second accused Naveen Mehto who is also a drug addict, had stolen the SIM card of Bipin Bhandari and used it in the handset of one Satender Bhagat who was residing adjacent to his rented room building.

NCPDR NOTICE TO DELHI GOVT FOR 'USING MINORS IN PROMOTIONAL VIDEOS'



New Delhi: The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights on Thursday issued notice to the Delhi government on a complaint about a promotional video that features minor school students.

The apex child rights panel said that the video, in which Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal can be seen with large gatherings of school kids without wearing a mask and avoiding social distancing, shows clear violations of Covid protocols and endangers the lives of minor school children.

The Commission said it received the complaint from the national convener of the Odisha-based Kalinga Rights Forum, and the videos violate the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and Covid-19 pandemic protocols. "Therefore, the Commission has accordingly taken cognisance in this matter under Section 13(1)(i) of CPDR Act, 2005," it said, asking the government to look into the matter for remedial measures and share the Action Taken Report within seven days.

WOMAN ALLEGEDLY GANG-RAPED ON HYDERABAD'S OUTSKIRTS



Hyderabad: A woman was allegedly gang-raped by three persons after being kidnapped near Himayat Sagar on the outskirts of Hyderabad, police said.

The incident, which occurred on Wednesday, came to light on Thursday after the victim lodged a complaint at Rajendranagar police station of Cyberabad police commissionerate. As per the complaint, the 30-year-old woman, a resident of Puranapal area, had gone to a liquor shop in Hyderguda on Wednesday evening. An auto-rickshaw driver, who was sitting there, befriended her and offered to drop her home. The victim said that she trusted him and boarded the auto-rickshaw but later, two more persons joined them and allegedly took her to a deserted place in Himayat Sagar. There they first sexually assaulted her, then snatched her valuables, and fled. After regaining consciousness, the woman reached the police station with the help of few local residents and lodged the complaint. Police inspector Kanakiah said that they sent the woman for medical examination and formed special teams to arrest the accused.

Lakhimpur Kheri violence case SIT recreates crime scene with Ashish Mishra

LAKHIMPUR KHERI | Agencies

The Special Investigation Team (SIT), probing the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, on Thursday, recreated the crime scene in the presence of four accused, including Union Minister's son Ashish Mishra and his friend Ankit Das, gunman Latif and driver Shekhar Bharti.

The entire area, where the October 3 incident took place, in which four farmers were mowed down by an SUV and five others killed in the ensuing violence, was cordoned off.

The accused were asked questions about their presence on the spot even though they knew that farmers were protesting there.

Thursday is the last day of the police custody of Ashish Mishra and a huge police presence was seen at the crime scene.

The SIT arranged for three SUVs and also dummies to recreate how the speeding vehicles mowed down farmers on that fateful day. The SIT cross-checked the statements of the four people in the case.

During this exercise, the team of



Forensic Science Laboratory, Lucknow was also present along with the SIT. The Rapid Action Force (RAF) has also

been deployed along with the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) on the spot.

Whoever wins Goa goes on to win general elections: Chidambaram

PANAJI | Agencies

Recounting recent electoral history, former Union Finance Minister and AICC senior observer for the 2022 assembly elections in Goa, P. Chidambaram on Thursday said that whoever wins Goa ascends to power in the national capital.

"Let me say one thing about history. Whoever wins Goa wins Delhi. In 2007 we won Goa, in 2009 we won Delhi. In 2012 we unfortunately lost Goa, in 2014 we lost Delhi. In 2017, you won Goa, but our legislators lost Goa and in 2019 we lost Delhi," Chidambaram said after the inauguration of the party's election office in Panaji.

"This time we will win Goa in 2022 and we will win Delhi in 2024. Go forward with courage and confidence that victory is ours," Chidambaram also said.

Obliquely referring to national parties like the Aam Aadmi Party, Trinamool Congress and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, Chidambaram also said that Goa



RLD rules out alliance with Congress in UP

LUCKNOW | Agencies

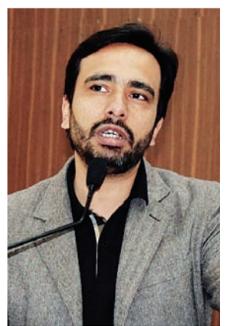
Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief Jayant Chaudhary has categorically ruled out an alliance with the Congress, ahead of the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh.

He said that talks were on with the Samajwadi Party (SP) for an electoral tie-up.

The RLD chief was reacting to media reports that the Congress and RLD were preparing for an alliance in the Assembly elections, due early next year.

Meanwhile, commenting on the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, he appealed to people to snatch the power from the guilty through their votes and termed it as the 'best possible revenge for the atrocities on farmers'.

"The minister who should be punished by the government, was called by Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi for a pat on back," he said. Chaudhary also said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was



silent on the Lakhimpur Kheri incident.

"The Prime Minister could tweet on the birthday of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, but had nothing to say on the killing of soldiers in gunfight with terrorists in Kashmir or on the Lakhimpur Kheri incident. He had gone to Lucknow, but did not utter a word about Lakhimpur." The RLD chief further said that the BJP was indulging in "caste politics".



EDUCATION, SECURITY AND RESPECT OF DAUGHTERS IS THE PRIORITY: CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN

Daughter should become a blessing not a burden, for this, Ladli Laxmi Yojana was made and implemented, Ladli Laxmi Yojana changed the attitude of the society towards daughters, The state government has reserved an amount of 47 thousand 200 crores for the Ladlis, The purpose of implementing the scheme is to make a daughter lakhpati as soon as she is born. An amount of 5.99 crores transferred to the account of 21,550 Ladlis in Ladli Laxmi Utsav. Scholarship acceptance certificates were also distributed. We are determined for the educational, social and economic empowerment of daughters, State government takes the responsibility of Ladli Laxmi from birth till her marriage. A system of tracking of each Ladli Laxmi prepared. Mama will bear the expenses of engineering and medical education along with schooling. Chief Minister Chouhan sought suggestions from daughters to make schemes for the welfare of daughters. Ladli Laxmi friendly gram panchayats will be formed in the state, Ladli Laxmi Day will be celebrated every year at Gram Panchayat, Block, District and District level, Vocational training will be given to the girls according to their aptitude, Bank loans will be made available to daughters for economic empowerment, Daughters are auspicious, they are Vedic hymns. 40 lakh daughters associated with Ladli Laxmi festival through social media. Give suggestions to Mama on mp.mygov.in to make daughters self-dependent in Ladli Laxmi Yojana-2. MP Government has given important support system to Ladlis, other states should follow: Guru Maa

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that education, security, health facilities, self-reliance, prosperity and respect for daughters are our priority in Madhya Pradesh. It is the responsibility of the entire society, not just of Mama. Woman you are only reverent, if this feeling is strong then surely the country will move forward. In the state, the work of economic empowerment of the girl child, giving them vocational training and giving guarantee on bank loans will be done by the government. Tuition fees will also be arranged for higher education. An amount of 25 thousand rupees will be given to Ladli Laxmi daughters who take admission in the college. All possible cooperation will be provided for development in areas like music and painting, Chief Minister Chouhan said that daughters without parents or found in a dependent situation will also be given the benefits of the scheme by treating them as Ladli Laxmi. Ladli Laxmi Day will be celebrated as a festival not only at the state level but also at the district, block and gram panchayat level. The effort is that Madhya Pradesh's Ladli Laxmi Yojana should become a role model in the whole world.

Chouhan was addressing the Ladli Laxmi festival in Minto Hall auditorium today. In the festival, Yoga Guru Anandmurti Guru Maa arrived from Chaitanya Ashram, Sonapat, Haryana and addressed the daughters. Chief Minister transferred a scholarship of Rs 5.99 crore into the accounts of 21 thousand 550 Ladlis of the state during the 'Ladli Laxmi Utsav' through a single click.

Daughters who were abandoned will be made Ladli Laxmis

Chief Minister Chouhan said that I want Ladli Laxmi Yojana to become such an example that the whole world should follow this path and work for the empowerment of daughters. Daughters should keep moving forward, in this is the progress and development of the country, in this is the empow-



erment of the society. Chouhan said that we are deciding that even such daughters, who have been left behind or have no one to look after them, will also be considered as Ladli Laxmi and will be given the benefit of the scheme. We have made Ladli Laxmi law, which no one will be able to change and the future of daughters will be bright.

Daughters don't become a burden, be a boon

Chief Minister Chouhan said that the State Government has reserved Rs 47 thousand 200 crore for the welfare of the Ladlis, which they have to get from time to time. The idea is that daughters

should not become a burden, but a boon. This is not just a plan, it is an attempt to change the vision of the society.

Chouhan said that as soon as he became the Chief Minister, the officers were asked to make such a plan that when daughters are born, then they are born as lakhpati. After a lot of exercise, the Ladli Laxmi scheme was formed. Chief Minister said that the parents of all the girls are urged to always take care of their daughters. Daughters will increase your respect. If there is any problem in the care of the daughters, then inform about it

There is no shortage of fertilizer in the state, distribution should be organized : CM Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that there is no shortage of fertilizers in the state. What is needed is that the distribution of fertilizers to the farmers should be done systematically. Chief Minister Chouhan reviewed the fertilizers with the officials of Agriculture, Cooperative, MARKFED and related departments at his residence today.

Negligence will not be tolerated

Chief Minister Chouhan said that there should not come complaint of any kind in the arrangement of distribution of fertilizers. Strict action will be taken against the concerned in case of negligence and complaint. Under no circumstances will they be spared. Failure to do so can result in a prison sentence. Chief Minister Chouhan said that black marketing of fertilizers



should not happen during offline sale of fertilizers. fertilizers should be available to the farmers without any hassle. Ensure proper distribution of fertilizers by coordinating with the collectors

of the districts.

Collectors should publicize the availability of fertilizers

Chief Minister Chouhan instructed the collectors of Morena and Bhind

districts to maintain the fertilizer distribution system and solve the problems. Chief Minister Chouhan said that allocation of 2 lakh 12 thousand metric tonnes of fertilizer has been approved for the state in the month of October. Adequate quantity of fertilizer is available, for which complaints of irregularities in distribution should not come to the fore. He said that the availability of fertilizer should be publicized in a good way. Chief Minister Chouhan said that NPK fertilizer is also as effective as DAP fertilizer. Its distribution to the farmers should also be ensured properly. Additional Chief Secretary Agriculture and Cooperation Ajit Kesari, Commissioner Agriculture Production Shailendra Singh, MD Markfed P. Narhari, Director Agriculture Preeti Maithil Nayak and other officers were present in the meeting.

Governor Patel administered oath to newly appointed MP HC Chief Justice

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Governor Mangubhai Patel administered the oath of office to newly appointed Chief Justice, Ravi Vijaykumar Malimath, as the Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh High Court at Raj Bhavan. The swearing-in ceremony was held at Sandipani Auditorium Raj Bhavan on Thursday. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was present on the occasion.

Among those who attended the ceremony were Dr. Narottam Mishra, Minister of Home, Jail, Parliamentary Affairs and Law and Legislative Affairs, Bhupendra Singh, Minister of Urban Development and Housing, Vishwas Sarang, Minister of Medical Education and Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation,



Om Prakash Sakhelecha, Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Science and Technology, Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, Member of Parliament, V.D. Sharma, MLA, Krishna Gaur, P.C. Sharma, Judges of Madhya Pradesh High Court and senior officials of legal and legislative affairs and other departments. Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains conducted the swearing-in proceedings.

CM Chauhan congratulated the newly appointed chief justice

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan attend the oath ceremony of Madhya Pradesh high court's newly appointed chief justice Ravi Vijay Kumar Malimath, he also congratulated him with a bouquet as a token of respect. Chauhan welcomed the hon'ble governor Mangubhai Patel at CM house. Along with chief justice Malimath, other judges, ministers and senior officials were also present there in the ceremony.

Workshop on effective communication skill and personality development at IISER



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Various workshops are recently conducted for the students of Indian Institute of Science Education

and Research (IISER), Bhopal. The workshop was specially designed for the final year Master of Science students as well as for research students seeking for Ph.D. Programme

in India & abroad. The objective for the workshop is refreshing these students after Pandemic as well inspire them for bright careers.

The various learning provided them includes, SWOT Analysis, Psychological testing, Personality Development, communication & Presentation Skills as well as preparing SOP's for research programmes. More than 100 students and faculty members attended the workshops. The workshop developed confidence among students for rewarding careers as well as preparation for a competitive world. The workshop was conducted by eminent experts from CRISP.

The resource person addressed the students on different aspects of communication and gave them various exercises to assess their communication skills and then told them how they could overcome their weaknesses. Stressed on the role of communication skills in the development of their personality and told them that good communication skills would help them in their profession.

CRISP Bhopal in its journey of 24 years, has set the platform to share the responsibility of developing the future skills with the services globally, it is well positioned to meet the increasing demand for skill development and professional education across the globe.

CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN PLANTS KARANJ SAPLING IN SMART PARK

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted sapling at Smart Park located in Shyamla Hills. Chief Minister Chouhan planted a sapling of Karanj, which is considered important in Ayurvedic medicine. Chief Minister Chouhan is continuously planting saplings as part of resolve to plant saplings every day.



CHIEF MINISTER GREETS CITIZENS ON VIJAYADASHAMI FESTIVAL

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has greeted the people of the state on the occasion of Vijayadashami. Chief Minister Chouhan said that this year the festival of victory of truth over evil is being celebrated with Covid protocol. Programmes are being organised at different places in the state with simplicity. Chief Minister Chouhan has urged citizens to cooperate in organising all the programmes during the festival with precautions while maintaining social distance.



Shri Durga Navami festival celebrated with reverence. Bhandaras were organized at many places on this occasion.



Capital city is ready to celebrate the 'Dushahra' festival. For this the idol of 'Ravana', 'Kumbhakarana' and 'Meghanaad' are installed amid Covid-19 Pandemic. To make citizens aware, Mask was applied to the idols.

Pragya Thakur playing kabaddi, video goes viral

BJP leader and Bhopal MP Pragya Thakur, who was confined to a wheelchair for a long time and had obtained bail in the 2008 Malegaon blast case on medical grounds, is purportedly seen playing kabaddi in a viral video.

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Earlier, a video of her taking part in a Garba dance during the ongoing Navratri festival had also emerged. But her sister said her spine problem can give her trouble any time.

A video which went viral on social media showed Thakur playing a game of kabaddi on the premises of a Kali temple on Wednesday.

Another video had shown her dancing at a Garba programme at the same venue during the ongoing Navratri, while an earlier clip had shown her shooting hoops on a basketball court.

Madhya Pradesh Congress spokesperson Narendra Singh Saluja posted the latest videos on

Twitter.

"It is a matter of happiness to see you healthy. Today you were seen playing Garba. But whenever people are in distress and they are calling you, you are seen sick, on a wheelchair or walking with support. It really hurts. God should always keep you healthy," he tweeted.

MP Congress media department's vice president Bhupendra Gupta said, "There are different faces of Bhopal MP. Sometimes she is seen in a wheelchair, sometime she plays Garba and kabaddi too. She has many faces."

Her past claims of defeating coronavirus with cow urine are worth publishing in international journals, he said in another jibe.

"People of Madhya Pradesh want to know which is her right face -- one playing garba or kabaddi or that of a wheelchair-bound person?" he asked.

The 51-year-old BJP MP is out on bail in the Malegaon blast case on health grounds and had sought exemption from personal appearance in the trial court citing her physical condition. She was in prison for almost nine years and was granted bail in 2017.

The case against her relates to bomb blasts at Malegaon in Maharashtra on September 29, 2008, in which at least six persons died. The case was probed by the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) before the National Investigation Agency (NIA) took it over.



EDITOR'S SPECS

TRANSPORTATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

New and emerging technologies, from electric cars and buses to zero-carbon producing energy sources, as well as the policy innovations, are critical for combating climate change, but to be effective, they must ensure that transport strategies benefit everyone, including the poorest, a new UN multi-agency report said. Transport solutions exist that can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Paris Agreement, although the report cautions that without the right policies and investments, they will not bring change to where it is needed most, particularly to people in developing countries. The world is well off course in efforts to limit climate change to 1.5 degrees Celsius. With 95 per cent of the world's transport energy still coming from burning fossil fuels, the transport sector produces a quarter of all energy-related emissions and without major changes, are expected to increase. The increasing emissions and rising temperatures are causing more extreme weather events, which in turn are also highly disruptive to transportation and transportation infrastructure. But at the same time, more than 120 million people were pushed into extreme poverty across the world in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Over a billion people still lack access to an all-weather road, and only about half the world's urban population has convenient access to public transport. A lack of access to roads and transport contributes to deprivation in terms of access to timely healthcare, education, jobs and markets for agricultural produce. Rural isolation disproportionately harms the poor, older persons, persons with disabilities, children and women. Women and girls can face additional challenges when there are concerns about their physical safety. Transport is especially costly for many of the world's least developed countries, particularly those that are landlocked, and small island developing countries. New innovative technologies, the report says, when appropriately applied, are key to solving many of the challenges to achieving sustainable transport.

Dussehra-Choosing between Ravana and Vibhishana

Radhanath Swami Maharaj

Life is full of choices. Sometimes we realize this. Often we don't. Owing to the technological advancement and aggressive capitalism coupled with consumerism, we are forced to become conscious of this fact. There are umpteen number of options for each choice. It takes a toll on time and mental energy to select. A toddler has to choose his toys. A teenager has to choose his clothes, cosmetics etc. An adult has to choose his career, home, gadgets, investments etc. A retired man has to choose his doctors. This is all the more fuelled by the aggressive advertisements and marketing tactics. Caught up in improving our external life - what we eat?, how we look?, what others think about us?, we are neglecting our internal life. We are not so conscious about choosing what we value between good and bad, ethical and non-ethical, being selfish and being selfless, the easy way and the right way, profits and ethics, profits and people etc. We are not conscious of the quality of our happiness - superficial or substantial, short-term or long-term. The questions - "what is the meaning and purpose of life?", "why the happiness is limited?", "why is there suffering in this world?" etc. are going to the backseat. The more we ignore these decisions and aspects of life, lesser we bother about knowing the right way to make these decisions. We are more likely to make wrong choices in these aspects. The wrong choices we make now influence our choices in future. If unattended and unabated, they led to wrong habits, then addictions and ultimately an unhealthy culture. These compel us to speak, act in a way that we don't intend to do. We end up hurting ourselves or others. Increasing addictions, crime and corruption are indicators of this trend. It's never late we can undo our wrong choices. The great epic Ramayana offers us a solution out of this predicament. Ravana is the mighty king of the island Sri Lanka. He possessed unrivaled strength and power in all the three worlds. Intoxicated by these



opulences, he succumbed to making wrong choices. He chose profits over ethics. He began to kidnap the heavenly damsels, the queens and princesses of weaker kings. He chose vice over virtue. He encouraged the demonic forces in the society. He tortured the weak and the innocent. He got allured by the beauty of the chaste Sita, the divine consort of Lord Rama. Ignoring the advice of many well-wishers, he made the wrong choice of abducting her in absence of her Almighty husband Ram. In this way he earned the ire of Lord Rama. This led to a war where his entire army and dynasty is devastated. Though Lord Rama is merciful and ready to forgive Ravana despite his offences, Ravana never made that choice. In this way, he met with a ghastly end. Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana always chose to stand by virtue and devotion to Lord Rama despite being surrounded by various negative influences. Devotion to Lord

Rama kept his wisdom and protected him from the influence of Ravana and his demonic associates. Ultimately when it came to him to choose between Ravana and Ram, he chose Lord Rama and sided with him. In the same way like Vibhishana, if we start making the choice to stand by virtue and be devoted to Lord Ram, we will be protected from the influence of our previous bad choices like Ravana and we will be bestowed the wisdom to maintain and enhance our devotion to Lord Ram. This will bestow on us everlasting, ever-expanding happiness which is the intent beneath all our choices in life. Every one anywhere anytime can practice devotion to Lord Ram by chanting His holy names, regularly associating with devotees of Lord Ram and by reading wisdom literature like Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita etc. (The author is the Spiritual Guru of International Society for Krishna Consciousness)

ICJ ruling on border dispute draw opposing reactions from Kenya, Somalia

A ruling by the United Nations' top court on the maritime border dispute between Kenya and Somalia has drawn opposing reactions from the two neighbouring countries in East Africa.



The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled on Tuesday that there was no agreed maritime boundary and ruled largely in favour of Somalia which will get a big chunk of the 100,000 square-kilometer area that is potentially gas and oil-rich. Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta has rejected the ruling, saying Nairobi is profoundly concerned by the import of the decision and its implications for the Horn of Africa region and international law generally. "At the outset, Kenya wishes to indicate that it rejects in totality and does not recognize the findings in the decision," Kenyatta said in a statement released on Tuesday evening, Xinhua news agency reported. The Kenyan leader insisted the ICJ had no jurisdiction to hear the case but went ahead to, despite the objections that had earlier been raised by Kenya. According to Kenyatta, international tribunals have jurisdiction only to the extent of consent by a State. Kenyatta also accused ICJ of unfairness and bias for refusing to allow Kenya to exhaust the use of regional dispute resolution mechanisms, despite the existence of a robust African Union legal framework on border issues and dispute settlement. Kenyatta said Kenya was forced to withdraw its participation in the public hearings on March 14, noting that Nairobi doubts that any State would have appeared at all in a case such as this. He however said Kenya is committed to a diplomatic solution to the current impasse, noting that Nairobi will resolve the sea border row through regional institutions and other bilateral arrangements. However, in a televised address to the nation on Tuesday evening, Farmajo said the ruling was a historic victory for all Somalis and exemplifies the integrity and transparency of the ICJ. "The federal government of Somalia hereby confirms that we accept the Court's decision, in line with the international laws and norms. We hope that the Kenyan government will respect the supremacy of international law and will forgo their misguided and unlawful pursuits," he said. He expressed the government's commitment to peaceful co-existence and cooperative relations between the two countries and their peoples, while creating a united front against terrorists who threaten the stability and security of the region. Regional analysts say the UN top court's decision could worsen the fragile relationship between the neighbouring countries since Kenya has been a major contributor of troops assisting the Somali government in its fight against the al-Shabab group. It could also have far-reaching security and economic consequences for future relations between the two countries.

international

BLINKEN WARNS OF 'OTHER OPTIONS' IF DIPLOMACY FAILS ON IRAN NUKE ISSUE

Washington | Agencies

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has warned that Washington would turn to "other options" if diplomacy fails to curb Iran's nuclear program, saying "time is running short". Blinken on Wednesday met with his counterparts of Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the State Department over bilateral and trilateral cooperation as well as regional security issues, including Iran, reports Xinhua news agency. During a joint press conference after their trilateral meeting, Blinken reiterated that diplomacy is the most effective way to ensure that Iran would not develop a nuclear weapon. "We are prepared to turn to other options if Iran doesn't change course," he said. The US and Iranian officials began indirect talks in Vienna this April to restore the 2015 nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The two sides still have significant



differences after six rounds of negotiations, which have been suspended since June. "I'm not going to put a specific date on it, but with every passing day and Iran's refusal to engage in good faith, the runway gets short," he said. Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid told reporters that the concern about Iran's nuclear capability was at the centre of his visit. "Israel reserves the right to act at any given moment in any way" to stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, he said. The former Donald Trump administration withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 and unilaterally re-imposed old and new sanctions on Iran. In response, Iran has gradually stopped implementing parts of its com-

mitments to the deal since May 2019. On Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said Tehran's actions "will be commensurate with the steps of other parties" in future talks aimed at reviving the nuclear deal. The Wednesday meeting of the top diplomats came shortly after the first anniversary of the normalisation between Israel and the UAE, which was brokered by the US last summer. UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan said at the press conference that he would soon visit Israel at Lapid's invitation, calling for new areas of cooperation between two countries. The three countries are launching two trilateral working groups on religious coexistence and water and energy issues, according to Blinken. He also reaffirmed that the Joe Biden administration supports a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians and will move forward with its plan to reopen a consulate in Jerusalem to deepen ties with the Palestinians, a move that the Israeli government opposed.

46 KILLED, 79 INJURED IN TAIWAN BUILDING FIRE



Beijing: At least 46 people were killed and at least 79 injured as a fire swept through a multi-storey residential and commercial building in Taiwan's Kaohsiung city early on Thursday, media reports said. It took fire-fighters more than four hours to extinguish the blaze, with their operations impeded by piles of unused items on the building's lower floors, the BBC reported. It quoted the Fire Department as saying that 79 people had been taken to hospital, including 14 in a serious condition. The cause of the fire is unclear and being investigated.

UN summit to advance action on zero emission vehicles

Beijing | Agencies

The UN Sustainable Transport Conference began in Beijing on Thursday with the government leaders, industry experts and civil society groups charting a sustainable pathway forward. The conference is being held to ensure the rapid development and deployment of new and innovative transport solutions to meet the climate crisis and spearhead action towards affordable and accessible transport for all. While science shows that urgent action is needed to keep the 1.5 degrees Celsius temperature limit within reach to prevent greater climate impacts, the world is still grappling with Covid-19, which has disrupted global supply chains, reversed years of development progress and



has pushed around 120 million people back into poverty. The UN Sustainable Transport Conference, taking place from October 14 to 16, will seek to provide concrete solutions for how we plan and design transport systems to ensure the pathway to achieving sustainable transport -- transport that is safe, accessible, green and resilient -- is at the scale and speed required. While there is increasing recognition that sustainable transport can spur economic growth and protect the environment -- global sales of electric vehicles grew from 1.3 million in 2015 to 5.1 million in 2018 -- progress has been slow and unequal. According to the World Bank, a transition to sustainable mobility could deliver savings of \$70 trillion by 2050, when considering full transport costs, including vehicles, fuel, operational expenses, and losses due to congestion.

Blast in Afghan province kills Taliban official

Kabul: A Taliban official was killed and 11 others were injured in an explosion on Thursday in Afghanistan's Kunar province, a source said. The source told Xinhua news agency that the incident occurred near a bridge in the provincial capital Asadabad's Karhali locality. "Abdullah who served as the Taliban's police chief for Shegal district in Kunar lost his life in the incident," the source added. Meantime, Attahullah Sapay, head of the provincial hospital, said that among those wounded were seven civilians, including a woman and two children, and four Taliban members. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet. Militants affiliated with the Islamic State (IS) outfit are active in the region. The security situation remained generally calm but uncertain across Afghanistan since the Taliban's takeover in mid-August. However, a spate of bomb attacks were launched by IS-affiliated militants in Kabul, northern Kunduz and eastern Nangarhar provinces in recent weeks.

Global Covid-19 caseload tops 239 mn



Washington | Agencies

The global coronavirus caseload has topped 239 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 4.87 million and vaccinations soared

to over 6.53 billion, according to the Johns Hopkins University. In its latest update on Thursday morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the cur-

rent global caseload, death toll and the total number number of vaccine doses administered stood at 239,115,805, 4,873,400 and 6,533,844,047, respectively. The US continues to be the worst-hit country with the

world's highest number of cases and deaths at 44,681,561 and 719,515, according to the CSSE. In terms of infections, India follows in the second place with 34,001,743 cases. The other worst countries with over 3 million cases are Brazil (21,597,949), the UK (8,311,654), Russia (7,742,899), Turkey (7,540,193), France (7,164,924), Iran (5,742,083), Argentina (5,268,653), Spain (4,980,206), Colombia (4,975,656), Italy (4,707,087), Germany (4,343,591), Indonesia (4,231,046) and Mexico (3,732,429), the CSSE figures showed. Nations with a death toll of over 100,000 are Brazil (601,574), India (451,189), Mexico (282,773), Russia (215,438), Peru (199,727), Indonesia (142,811), the UK (138,487), Italy (131,421), Colombia (126,726), Iran (123,275), France (118,080) and Argentina (115,582).

5 KILLED, 2 INJURED IN NORWAY BOW-ARROW ATTACK: POLICE



Oslo: A man armed with a bow and arrow killed at least five people and injured two others in Norway's Kongsberg town, some 82 km southwest of the capital city of Oslo, police said. Among the two injured in the Wednesday evening attack was a police officer in civilian clothes, reports Xinhua news agency. Both the injured are currently in hospital, confirmed Oyvind Aas, Police Chief in the South-East police district, to the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) late Wednesday night. "It was at around 6.13 p.m., local time before the police received several messages that there was a person who moved around with a weapon and fired at people with a bow and arrows," Aas said at a press conference. According to the police chief, the suspected attacker, a 37-year-old Danish man, had been arrested in the same area at around 6.40 p.m. There was a confrontation between the police and the suspect who tried to run away before he was arrested.



ARYAN KHAN BAIL VERDICT ON OCT 20, NCB PAINTS HIM AS A 'JUNKIE'

In a huge setback to Aryan Khan, a Mumbai special NDPS court on Thursday reserved its order on his and other co-accused's bail applications till October 20, even as the NCB virtually labelled him a 'junkie' regularly consuming drugs.

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Thus, Aryan Khan - the son of Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan - and other co-accused Arbaaz Merchant and Munmun Dhamecha will remain in judicial custody at the Arthur Road Central Jail and the Byculla Women's Jail for the next five days on account of public holidays over the next few days.

After hearing heated arguments by the prosecution for the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the defence lawyers, Special Judge VV. Patil kept his verdict on the bail pleas of Aryan Khan, Merchant and Dhamecha, who are among 20 nabbed so far in the sensational rave party raid of October 2, in abeyance for the next five days.

A day after alleging that Aryan



Khan was prima facie involved in "illicit drug trafficking, procuring and distribution of contraband", and having links with some international persons, the NCB said he was a "regular consumer" of drugs.

It said that though no drugs were recovered from him, Aryan Khan was in "conscious possession" of the contraband as he is linked with Merchant, from whom 6 gms charas was found and Aachit Kumar from whom 2.6 gms ganja was recovered.

Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh, representing the NCB, said that in Aryan Khan's WhatsApp chats, there is a specific reference

to bulk quantity and Aryan Khan is not a first-time consumer, and the evidence on record shows that he is taking drugs since the past few years. Special Judge Patil also hinted that he would examine the allegedly incriminatory chats.

However, Merchant's lawyer Taraq Sayed argued that the NCB could not check the WhatsApp chats as the mobile phones were not seized under a 'panchnama', which Singh countered saying that there was a voluntary surrender and statement of accused.

Aryan Khan's lawyer, senior advocate Amit Desai rubbished the allegations as baseless and argued

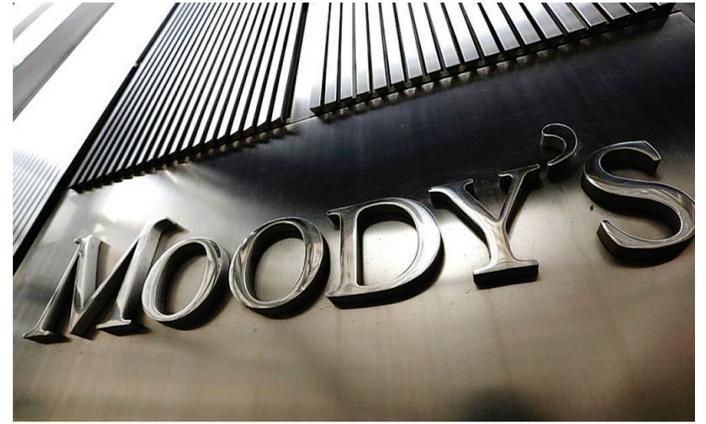
that there was no drugs recovery from him, nor did he have cash so he had no plans to purchase drugs, nor was he going to sell or consume them.

Strongly pleading for bail, the lawyers of the trio said they were invitees to the party and denied any involvement in the alleged illicit drug trade claimed by the NCB and also said that the alleged recoveries from Merchant and Dhamecha was a "small quantity" and no commercial quantities.

Desai urged that bail may be granted to Khan as it would not affect the NCB's ongoing investigations, and said the agency was relying on certain alleged chats ("Lets have a blast") without verifying them as there is nothing to suggest they have any connection with the current case. Strongly opposing the bail pleas, the ASG said that the NCB will investigate how they are all connected to each other and establish a "conspiracy" and bail could be considered at an appropriate stage.

NCB's Special Public Prosecutor Advait Sethna argued that the agency recovered 2.6 gms ganja from Kumar, who was nabbed after Khan's statements, which points to a conspiracy, while citing precedents where bail was rejected for even much smaller quantity of drugs recovered from the accused.

Economic pickup will support borrowers but Covid risks remain high: Moody's



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Over the next three to six months, auto loan delinquency rates will stay elevated, though broadly stable from current levels, Moody's Investors Service said in its comment on auto loans.

Indian auto loan asset backed securities (ABS) delinquency rates have improved alongside the easing of coronavirus restrictions over recent months, but remain elevated. Delinquency rates will stabilise at high levels as coronavirus restrictions ease, Moody's said, citing that Indian auto ABS delinquency

and collection rates improved in June and July as economic activity picked up after coronavirus restrictions eased. "While economic conditions have improved, this year's virus outbreak has eroded borrowers' financial reserves. Over the next three to six months, we expect delinquency rates will stay elevated at around current levels as many borrowers continue to deal with the pandemic's economic after effects," the ratings agency said.

"The Indian auto ABS rate benefit from non-amortizing cash reserves and

substantial excess spread," Moody's said, adding that these features mitigate risks from elevated delinquency rates for Indian auto ABS, because they provide deals with liquidity and buffers against losses. Auto ABS performance improved because the pickup in economic activity over recent months raised demand and rates for goods transportation. Improving conditions for goods transportation are positive for the Indian auto ABS sector, because deals mostly securitise loans to commercial vehicle operators who earn income by moving freight.

ED summons Bollywood actors Nora, Jacqueline in black money case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has again summoned Bollywood actresses Nora Fatehi and Jacqueline Fernandez in connection with an alleged Rs 200-crore money-laundering case, official sources said here on Thursday.

The case pertains to an FIR filed by the Delhi Police in connection with an extortion racket allegedly perpetrated by scammers Sukesh Chandrashekhar, Leena Maria-Paul and others, involving several big-



wigs.

The central probe agency had already recorded their statements earlier and they

are being summoned again as witnesses for further probe. More details are awaited.

NCP v/s NCB: Maha Minister Malik says agency framed his kin in drug case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A day after a Mumbai special court said that no case of illicit drug trafficking or conspiracy was made out against Sameer Khan, his father-in-law and senior Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik on Thursday slammed the NCB for falsely implicating him in the alleged narcotics seizure case in January.

Special Judge A. A. Joglekar, while granting bail to Khan after nearly nine months in custody, had observed that no commercial quantity of drugs were found from the accused, he had no criminal records, or had connived with the other co-accused.

Addressing the media Thursday,

Malik charged the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) of framing his son-in-law, filing fake cases, spreading falsehoods through selective media leaks, etc.

While Malik said his family would move the Bombay High Court to quash the agency's case against Khan, NCB Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede declined to comment on the minister's accusations saying the matter is "sub judice". Malik made a presentation showing pictures of seizures the NCB alleged to have made at Khan's home were actually of the agency's office to entrap his son-in-law, though the NCB had denied the charges.

The NCP national spokesperson further said that what the NCB claimed as 200 kg of Ganja, the chemical analysis

report proved it was only 'herbal tobacco'. "It is shocking... the NCB doesn't know the difference between ganja and tobacco?"

He pointed out that anti-drug agencies have kits that can instantly detect whether any substance is a narcotic or not and questioned how the NCB failed to distinguish between ganja and tobacco.

"I have been saying right from the beginning the NCB is framing prominent people through such 'farziwara' (fraudulent cases)... We shall approach the Bombay High Court," Malik said.

He said that after he exposed the NCB's raids on a cruise ship on October 2, he has been getting threat calls and support calls from all over India.

NO VACCINATION AT BMC CENTRES ON OCT 15

Mumbai: The vaccination against coronavirus at the centres run by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation and Maharashtra government in Mumbai will remain suspended on Friday, a senior civic official said. The civic body has a sufficient stock of vaccine doses and the inoculation will resume from Saturday, he said. There are 374 active inoculation centres in the city, including 309 run by the civic body and 20 run by the state government. As many as 1,33,13,138 people have received at least one coronavirus vaccine jab in the city as of October 13 evening.

Positive macros, results push equities higher; Sensex closes above 61k

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Positive macro-economic wholesale inflation data as well as healthy Q2 results pushed equities higher on Thursday.

In the process, S&P BSE Sensex made an intraday high of 61,353.25 points and the NSE Nifty50 touched 18,350.75 points.

The two indices had a gap-up opening and held on to the initial gains encouraged by positive global cues.

Globally, stock markets rose on companies' earnings reports that indicated strong consumer demand.

On the domestic front, a key macro-economic data point showed that wholesale inflation had eased to 10.6 per cent in September from 11.4 per cent in August. Sector-wise, realty, power, metals, capital goods and bankex gained the most, whereas, auto was the sole loser.

Consequently, the 30-scrip sensitive index traded at 61,305.95 points, up 568.90 points or 0.94 per cent. The Sensex opened at 61,088.82 points from its previous close of 60,737.05 points. Besides, the



NSE Nifty50 traded at 18,338.55 points, up by 176.80 points or 0.97 per cent. It opened at 18,272.85 points from its previous close of 18,161.75 points. "Nifty rose on Wednesday and Thursday

with runaway gaps which indicated strong upward momentum," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

"Though the daily technical indicators are close to overbought levels, Nifty could rise post the long weekend on Monday and cool down later."

According to Geojit Financial Services' Head of Research Vinod Nair: "The Indian market sustained its upbeat mood supported by positive global market, favourable inflation data and up move in IT stocks following strong earnings scorecards by sector majors." Banking stocks also contributed to the rally and remained in focus as the sector is set to kickstart its earnings season."

In addition, Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services said: "Domestic equity continued its northward journey amid positive global cues, strong economic data and expectation of upbeat Q2 earnings."

"The broader markets too ended in green with gains of around 0.6 per cent. Buying was spread across most sectors, except for auto which witnessed some profit booking after the sharp rise in the last couple of days."

Vavavara Rao should surrender by Oct 28

The Bombay High Court on Thursday said poet-activist Varavara Rao, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case, need not surrender before the Taloja prison authorities until October 28.

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The court also said it will hear on October 26 his plea seeking extension of the bail granted to him.

Rao, 82, was granted interim bail for six months on medical grounds by the HC on February 22 this year. He was scheduled to surrender and return to judicial custody on September 5. However, Rao filed an application last month through his lawyer R Sathyanarayanan and senior counsel Anand Grover, seeking extension of the bail. He also sought permission to stay in his hometown Hyderabad while out on bail. The NIA, which is conducting a probe into the Elgar Parishad-

Maoist links case, however, opposed Rao's plea for extension of medical bail and shifting to Hyderabad, saying his medical reports do not indicate that he suffers from any serious ailment.

In its affidavit filed before the HC last month, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) had said the medical reports filed by Rao did not disclose any major ailment, which necessitates him to take treatment in Hyderabad, neither did it form a ground for further extension of the bail. On Thursday, a bench of Justices Nitin Jamdar and SV Kotwal extended the time granted to Rao to surrender until October 28, and said it will hear his plea further on October 26.

Punit Goenka questions Invesco's silence on merger proposal with Reliance

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In the ongoing Zee-Invesco tussle, the company's Managing Director and CEO Punit Goenka has now broken his silence charging the company's largest shareholder with hiding facts that prevented it from bringing facts about a merger proposal earlier.

"...on a personal note, I have some questions as well. Why didn't Invesco make its plans public earlier? Does good corporate governance only apply to corporates and not their institutional investors?" Goenka asked in a statement issued by his office.

The statement talks about a merger proposal brought forward by Invesco in February involving Reliance Industries, which was rejected by him as it would have resulted in loss of shareholder value to the tune of Rs 10,000 crore.

"During my briefing to the Board, I emphasised on the points pertaining to the proposal from Invesco. My attention was on the imbalance observed in the valuation and how it was not in the best interest of our shareholders. The only reason I did not agree to the proposal was because the shareholder value was getting compromised," Goenka said in his statement.

"I will withstand any amount of pressure to preserve ZEE's intrinsic value and ensure that nothing impacts the returns being delivered to all the shareholders," he added.

Goenka said silence may be the best answer at times, but he quickly



realised that in certain situations it is better to break it at the right time, so that truth comes to the fore.

"The key reason for me to present the series of communications exchanged with Invesco to the Board of Directors of ZEE, was to bring the truth out in the interest of all our stakeholders," he said indicating that the questions he has raised and those by Invesco would be best answered by the judiciary. "I acknowledge the stance that has been taken by Invesco, but communications pertaining to such proposals are always well-documented, and they speak to the contrary. I too have a lot of points to put across, but I firmly believe that there is a right time and place for it. Our lawyers will do the needful in the court of law, as deemed necessary, he said.

"My demeanour is not to indulge in an ill-natured fight. Such battles are best handled by legal experts. All I am contending for, is to preserve the future of this Company, and not my position. This fight is to ensure that the Company continues to gain immense growth opportunities and become a stronger and more formidable player in the Media & Entertainment sector," Goenka's statement said.

"We should not let anyone impact the future of ZEE or diminish the shareholder value it has been consistently generating over the years," he added, hoping that this may be his first and last communication on this matter, so that focus is brought back on the value-creation journey at ZEE.



Natalie Portman was the 'biggest nerd' in school

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Natalie Portman, who went to Harvard University, has said that she was the "biggest nerd" in school. The actress was speaking on 'The Drew Barrymore Show', which airs on Zee Cafe in India. The show's host Drew asked Natalie: "You were voted in high school, most likely to appear on Jeopardy!" To which, Natalie replied: "Yes, I was like the biggest nerd. At school, I was known for always having like my hands covered in white gloves and being in all the dorky classes." Talking about getting her higher education from the prestigious Harvard University, Drew, while

speaking to Natalie said: "You were not willing to give up an education to remain an actress or be in your job that was worth the risk for you. To step aside and seek out a Harvard education, I have so much respect for that." Natalie replied: "Yeah, it was funny because I didn't know that it meant this much. It didn't feel like such a big choice to me." She added that she only became aware that it was like a choice when people started asking her about it in interviews. She added: "In my family it was just like you go to college and that's something you do. I'm so glad I did it."

'Shameless' set was 'positive' after Emmy Rossum left: Emma Kenney

New York | Agencies

Actress Emma Kenney says it was "weird at first" when her 'Shameless' co-actor Emmy Rossum quit her role as Fiona Gallagher in 2019 after nine seasons, but also found it a relief because the 35-year-old star's bad moods had had a negative impact on everyone working on the show.

Kenney said that it left her feeling "anxious" every day because she didn't know what to expect when she got to work. Speaking on the 'Call Her Daddy' podcast, Kenney, who played Fiona's younger sister Debbie, said: "It was weird at first for sure but it also - the set became more of a positive place, I'm not gonna lie. "I remember pre-(Emmy) leaving, I'd go to set some days and I'd be very anxious about having a scene with her because if she had a bad day, she made it a bad day for everybody." Despite their difficulties, the actress said she still

has "a lot of love for Emmy", who gave birth to her and husband Sam Esmail's daughter in May, and wishes her well, even though they haven't spoken since the 'Phantom of the Opera' actress quit the show, reports femalefirst.co.uk. She added: "We haven't spoken in years. But that's OK... I hope she finds her happiness. I heard she had a baby and that's beautiful. I'm sure she's going to be a lovely mother." The actress, who was only 11 when the show started, had a "sister relationship" with Rossum when they worked together, though she noted it was "in good and bad ways".



PLAYING BOND HAS MADE HIM MORE 'TRUSTING': DANIEL CRAIG

Hollywood star Daniel Craig, who played James Bond for the ultimate time in new movie 'No Time To Die', says playing the iconic spy for 15 years has changed him as a person.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Craig told SiriusXM: "I was really trying to reflect on this the other night. And it's a measurable how much it's changed me... One should change, one should you know, one should examine one's life and once you try and get yourself kind of into another place. But I think about how I, you know, I had a real problem with authority. I'm kind of always looking for the kind of, what's the angle. I'm not sure, I'm deeply, deeply suspicious, clearly I, but I'm not so much anymore. And I'm weirdly having been through this whole process. I'm much more open, I'm much more trusting in people weirdly." The 'Knives Out' star also reminisced about how he received some valuable advice from director Mike Nichols, who he worked with on the play 'Betrayal'. He recalled: "(He told me), 'Daniel, don't work with a*****'. And it was, I was like, 'Yeah, yeah, you're right'. And as I got older, I've just gone, 'Yeah, you're really right'. Don't work with a*****. If you get a chance and you, and you avoid a**holes, then you can show your best to people and hopefully people can show their best to you."

ADELE'S EAGERLY AWAITED ALBUM '30' OUT ON NOV 19

London | Agencies

English singer-songwriter Adele has announced in a lengthy Instagram post that her long-awaited album titled '30' will be released on November 19. According to Variety, in the post, Adele wrote on Wednesday: "I was certainly nowhere near where I'd hoped to be when I first started it nearly 3 years ago. Quite the opposite actually. I rely on routine and consistency to feel safe, I always have." "And yet there I was know-

ingly - willingly even, throwing myself into a maze of absolute mess and inner turmoil! I've learned a lot of blistering home truths about myself along the way. I've shed many layers but also wrapped myself in new ones. Adele added: "Discovered genuinely useful and wholesome mentalities to lead with, and I feel like I've finally found my feeling again. I'd go as far as to say that I've never felt more peaceful in my life. And so, I'm ready to finally put this album out." "It was my ride or die



throughout the most turbulent period of my life. When I was writing it, it was my friend who came over with a bottle of wine and a takeaway to cheer me up. My wise friend who always gives the best advice."

'Venom: Let There Be Carnage' appears rushed from start to finish



TROY RIBEIRO

(Releasing in Theatres on October 14)

Direction: Andy Serkis
Cast: Tom Hardy, Michelle Williams, Naomie Harris, Reid Scott, Stephen Graham and Woody Harrelson.

Duration: 97 minutes.
Ratings: ** and 1/2 (two and a half stars)



In today's digital age, comic-book adaptations of action-packed films, though promising, seem to be running out of steam. Every mega battle occurs in an incoherent cloud of computer graphics where you would not care less what you are watching, or what the stakes are. The 2018 edition was an origin story of 'Venom'; this one takes off from where it left. It dives into the bromance between Eddie Brock (Tom Hardy) and his alien symbiote Venom. It is at its best when traversing the thick and thin of the duo's relationship, arguing about morality, crime fighting, chickens, chocolate and decapitation. Even as Eddie and Venom struggle to compromise, Cletus Kasady (Woody Harrelson), the serial killer, is about to meet his end via lethal injection. In a brief flashback, we are told Cletus was in love with a mutant named

Frances Barrison (Naomie Harris), who was taken in by the government. Cletus has been pining for her ever since and now that he has learned she is still alive, he wants to reach out to her. To that end, he asks to see newsman Eddie, promising an exclusive interview. During one death row visit, a momentarily violent encounter results in Cletus biting Eddie, thereby ingesting some of his Venom-infused blood. This allows a new symbiote, Carnage, to develop inside Cletus. For Carnage to achieve autonomy, it must destroy its "father", so Cletus and Carnage reach an agreement: first, find Frances; second, kill Venom. How Venom and Carnage confront each other, and their journey to that fight, forms the crux of this convoluted narrative. Yes, if you are into some

dim-witted mindless action drama, then there are faint chances that you might like this one too. To put it simply, the film is sloppily mounted with staid set-pieces and often-seen visual effects that appear all over the place, and the humour seems forced. The film wanted to pit Venom and Carnage against each other, and it does not do anything except that. The script is sprinkled with a few light moments, thanks to Tom Hardy as Eddy and Venom, a mellower version of their previous joint appearance. Tom is a gifted actor and his quirky performance with Venom is what elevates this film. Woody Harrelson as Carnage does not share the same equation that Tom has with Venom. His Carnage is evil and is one of his worst performances. His get-up, including his wig,

is disastrous. And the pivotal showdown between him and Venom feels more like an afterthought with no stakes, no tension, just a long wait until the bad guy is pulled down. The weakest link in the film is between Eddie and his love interest Anne (Michelle Williams). Her character was barely in the film, but then you were meant to feel the loss Eddie experiences after breaking up with her. Another issue with the film is its pacing. It appears rushed from start to finish and just feels like a longer film squeezed into a shorter runtime. Scenes and information slip by quicker than you can expect, making it difficult for you to process what is happening on the screen. Overall, don't expect anything more than what you have seen in the trailers.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Beyonce



IPL 2021

EXPERIENCED CSK EYE 4TH TITLE, FACE RESURGENT KKR IN FINAL

Dubai | Agencies

MS Dhoni's experienced Chennai Super Kings will lock horns with resurgent Kolkata Knight Riders, led by Eoin Morgan, in the high-octane grand finale of IPL 2021 at Dubai International Stadium, here on Friday.

It will be a record ninth final appearance in 12 editions for Chennai, who have won three titles in 2010, 2011, and 2018 while KKR, who have won the trophy in 2012 and 2014 under the captaincy of Gautam Gambhir, will play their third final. It will also be a repeat of the 2012 IPL final, where both teams faced each other.

CSK beat Delhi Capitals by four wickets in Qualifier 1 in Dubai and became the first team to reach IPL 2021 final and Kolkata also defeated the same team by three wickets in Qualifier 2 on Wednesday to set up the blockbuster final showdown against MS Dhoni's team.

The summit clash on Friday will also be a battle between the two best white-ball captains MS Dhoni and Eoin Morgan, who might be short of runs but have been smart in their tactics on the field.

Openers Faf du Plessis and Ruturaj Gaikwad along with Moeen Ali, Ravindra Jadeja have done exceedingly well with the bat for CSK. But, how they deal with the 12 quality overers from KKR's spin trio of Varun Chakravarty, Shikib Al Hasan, and



Sunil Narine, can decide the outcome of the final. However, the final match will be played on a better pitch in Dubai in comparison to a slow and sluggish tack of Sharjah. And the likes of Ambati Rayudu, Robin Uthappa and MS Dhoni in middle overs can heave a sigh of relief. Deepak Chahar, Shardul Thakur, Dwayne Bravo, and Josh Hazlewood have been good with the ball for CSK. But they have also crumbled under pressure especially while defending the target. The experience of playing in Dubai in the last couple of games may help CSK bowlers to acclimatise well with angles of ground and pitch.

On the other hand, Eoin Morgan-led KKR have been on a fairytale ride since the UAE leg of the tournament began. A bulk of Kolkata's success in the UAE leg has been due to the fearless approach by their youngsters. Openers Shubman Gill and Venkatesh Iyer have given them fantastic starts and Rahul Tripathi and Nitish Rana have also chipped in with useful inn'gs. Shikib's all-round abilities have provided more balance to KKR in absence of Andre Russell, who sustained a hamstring injury. It will be interesting to see whether Russell becomes fit to play in the final or not. Their pacers Lockie Ferguson, Shivam Mavi have picked wickets at regular intervals while spinners Varun Chakravarty, and Sunil Narine have stifled opposition bats-

men with disciplined bowling. However, the big concern for the McCullum-coached side going into the final will be the form of Dinesh Karthik and Eoin Morgan, both of whom registered ducks in the Qualifier 2 against DC on Wednesday and continue to have a poor season with the bat.

Squads

Kolkata Knight Riders: Eoin Morgan (C), Andre Russell, Dinesh Karthik (W), Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Kuldeep Yadav, Lockie Ferguson, Nitish Rana, Pat Cummins, Prasidh Krishna, Rahul Tripathi, Sandeep Warrier, Shivam Mavi, Shubman Gill, Sunil Narine, Tim Seifert, Varun Chakravarty, Shikib Al Hasan, Sheldon Jackson, Vaibhav Arora, Karun Nair, Harbhajan Singh, Ben Cutting, Venkatesh Iyer, Pawan Negi, Gurkeerat Mann Singh, Tim Southee

Chennai Super Kings: Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Suresh Raina, Ambati Rayudu, KM Asif, Deepak Chahar, Dwayne Bravo, Faf du Plessis, Imran Tahir, N Jagadeesan, Karn Sharma, Lungi Ngidi, Mitchell Santner, Ravindra Jadeja, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shardul Thakur, R Sai Kishore, Moeen Ali, K Gowtham, Cheteshwar Pujara, Harishankar Reddy, Bhagath Varma, C Hari Nishaanth.

Thomas Cup

India lose 1-4 to China; face Denmark in quarters

Aarhus (Denmark) | Agencies

The men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty were the only ones to win their match as India went down 1-4 to Asian powerhouse China in their last Group C match of the Thomas Cup Finals here on Thursday.

With both India and China qualifying for the quarter-finals, the match was important to decide who tops the group and thus plays a comparatively weaker opponent. China, as expected, clinched the first position in the group and they did not with consummate ease barring the lone hiccup in the men's doubles.

The defeat to China and second place in the group means India will meet hosts Denmark in the quarter-finals on Friday. Denmark topped Group B by winning all three of their matches, with World No 2 Viktor Axelsen leading them from the front. China will meet Thailand, Indonesia will take on Malaysia and South Korea will play Japan in other quarter-final matches.

On Thursday, Kidambi Srikanth started the proceedings for India against World No 10 Shi Yu Qi in the first singles. Srikanth fought well on some points but the



Chinese did not give him many chances and emerged winner 21-12, 21-16.

Rankireddy and Shetty were up next and levelled the scores with a 21-14, 21-14 win against He Ji Ting and Zhou Hao Dong, using their experience and stronger combination to good effect against the Chinese pair. The Indians are ranked 10th in the world while He Ji Ting and Zhou Hao Dong are not a regular pair on the circuit and had played together in the last match against the

Netherlands. Sameer Verma raised hopes of giving India the lead when he won the first game against Lu Guang Zu before the Chinese came back to win the match 14-21, 21-9, 24-22.

Down 1-2, India lost the rubber when the men's doubles pair of MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila lost a close encounter to Liu Cheng and Wang Yi Lyu 24-26, 19-21. China made it 4-1 when Li Shi Feng defeated Kiran George 21-15, 21-17 in 43 minutes to seal victory.

World record holder athlete Tirop dead in apparent stabbing in Kenya

Nairobi | Agencies

The world athletics community was in shock on Thursday as reports emerged from Kenya of the death of World 10,000m bronze medallist Agnes Tirop, who was found dead at her home in an apparent stabbing incident.

According to a statement by Athletics Kenya, Tirop, 25, was found dead in their home in ITen after she was allegedly stabbed by her husband.

Reports said that the police are continuing to investigate the circumstances surrounding the tragic incident which happened just over a month after Tirop competed at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

Tirop's decorated CV also includes a World Cross Country title in 2015 during which she made history as the second youngest medalist at that level. She also won the Africa Cross Country Championship in 2014 in Kampala, Uganda as well as the World Junior Cross



Country Championship in 2013 in Bydgoszcz, Poland.

Ostapenko seals semis date with Azarenka in Indian Wells

Indian Wells | Agencies

Former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko advanced to her first WTA 1000 semi-final in three years, coming back from the brink in the final set to defeat unseeded Shelby Rogers 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 in the BNP Paribas Open here.

On a great run at Indian Wells, Jelena, the 2017 Roland Garros champion, defeated Hsieh Su-Wei, Yulia Putintseva, Iga Swiatek, and Shelby, to advance to her third semi-final of 2021, where she will face two-time champion Victoria Azarenka for a spot in her first WTA 1000 final since 2018 Miami.

It was an up and down performance for Jelena who fired 51 winners to 46 unforced errors in the match. Shelby hit 22 winners to 17 unforced errors.

Earlier, Victoria Azarenka, the



No.27 seed from Belarus, charged past 19th-seeded Jessica Pegula, 6-4, 6-2, on Wednesday, becoming the first semi-finalist at the 2021 edition in the desert.

Former World No.1 Azarenka, who was the Indian Wells champion in 2012 and 2016, took an hour and 34 minutes to end the run of American Pegula and reach the final four of this

Dimitrov stuns Medvedev

Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov rallied from a set and a double-break down to shock top seed Daniil Medvedev to reach the quarter-finals at the ATP Tour BNP Paribas Open here. Dimitrov, the 23rd seed rolled back the years as he battled back from 4-6, 1-4 down to move past the Russian 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 and produced one of the comebacks of the season on Wednesday, reaching the quarter-finals in Indian Wells for the first time.



Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas too advanced to the quarter-finals, beating Alex de Minaur of Australia 6-7(3), 7-6(3), 6-2 in three hard-fought sets.

In other matches, Argentina's Diego Schwartzman defeated Casper Ruud of Norway 6-3, 6-3; Hubert Hurkacz of Poland beat Aslan Karatsev of Russia 6-1, 6-3; Taylor Fritz beat Jannik Sinner of Italy 6-4, 6-2; Nikoloz Basilashvili beat Russia's Karen Khachanov 64, 7-6(6).

T20 World Cup

South Africa unveil two jerseys for mega event

Johannesburg | Agencies

The South African cricket team on Thursday unveiled two new jerseys for the 2021 edition of the Men's T20 World Cup, scheduled to be held in UAE and Oman.

The first jersey is yellow in color and has the logo of the 2021 T20 World Cup imprinted in the top right corner. On the right-hand side, the logo of Cricket South Africa can also be found on the jersey.

The other jersey that Proteas will sport during the tournament is green in colour.

"Inspired by the vibrant colours of our flag and unique designs of Ndebele art, the #Proteas #T20WorldCup kit honours our her-



itage and diversity. We celebrate all that is South African as we take on the world," the Cricket South Africa

(CSA) said in a tweet. The South African cricket team has never won the T20 World Cup. In fact,

they have never qualified for the final in the tournament's history.

Chhetri breaks Pele's record, says no comparison

Team Absolute | Mumbai

To go past the legendary Pele and be just one adrift of Lionel Messi in the list of top goal scorers in the world is an extraordinary feeling and one could be pardoned for being on cloud nine after achieving such a feat.

India skipper Sunil Chhetri, however, said he would not attach too much importance to overtaking Pele in the list of top scorers and would rather concentrate on coming up with his best performance for which team he was representing -- whether country or his club.

India skipper Chhetri scored a brace -- his 78th and 79th goals in his 124th match in the SAFF Championship in the 3-1 win against hosts Maldives in Male on Wednesday, going past Pele (77) and Hussain Saeed (78 goals) in the process. He is now tied with Godfrey Chitalu of Zambia on 79 goals and is joint sixth on the list. Ahead of him on the list are



Messi (80 goals), Ferenc Puskas (HUN, ESP) 84 goals, Mokhtar Dahati (MAS) 89 goals, Ali Daei (IRN) 109 goals, and Cristiano Ronaldo (POR) topping the list with 115 international strikes to his name. Though he was happy to be in august company, Chhetri said the times Pele or other greats played in were too different to compare each other's achievements.

BARCA TO MEET VALENCIA AS LA LIGA POSTPONES TWO MATCHES

Madrid: La Liga returns to action with a reduced number of matches this weekend after the competition agreed to postpone the fixtures of Real Madrid against Athletic Club Bilbao and Granada versus Atletico Madrid, due to World Cup duties. La Liga argues that the decision has been taken to avoid 'adulterating' the competition but appears to ignore the fact that the two games will now be played in midweek sometime in the future and this will hand a clear advantage to Real and Atletico, who have deeper squads and more able to successfully rotate their first team. Meanwhile, the fact that neither Athletic Club or Granada have European games next week means they will be three weeks without a competitive match -- 23 days in Athletic Club's case -- with the subsequent risk of losing match fitness when compared to their next rivals, reports Xinhua.

Dravid likely to be interim coach of Team India for home series vs Kiwis: Reports

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian men's cricket team is likely to have an interim coach for the upcoming home series with New Zealand after the ICC T20 World Cup, and former India captain Rahul Dravid has emerged as the frontrunner to be the stop-gap role.

Ravi Shastri's tenure -- as chief coach of Team India -- will get over after the T20 World Cup and the Indian cricket board has decided to give itself more time in the search for a replacement. According to reports, the BCCI wants to appoint an experience former India player as the chief coach even though many foreigners, including some Australians, have shown interest in taking up the job. It had earlier wanted Anil Kumble, who was forced to quit over differences with skipper Virat Kohli, to take over the role but the legendary cricketer had recused himself. He is currently the head coach of the IPL franchise Punjab Kings.

BCCI, according to sources, wanted Dravid, who is the coach of the Indian junior teams and also heads



the National Cricket Academy, to take up the job full time but Dravid has declined as he does not want to travel too much.

Though the board has not officially put out an advertisement for the vacancy, it has approached several people and has realised that its coach selection process will take more time than it had expected, according to a report in The Indian Express.

It is claimed that the BCCI did not want to put out an advertisement to avoid a potentially embarrassing situation when it may get a number of applications but not from someone that it considers suitable. This in simple terms means that it may get applications from some high-profile foreign coaches but not from similarly-rated Indians and thus won't have a proper explanation for choosing a comparatively lightweight Indian coach by ignoring the big-name foreigners. While it goes about its job of picking the suitable candidate, the BCCI wants Dravid to take up the role of the interim coach for the New Zealand series. Dravid had recently coached a second-string Indian team to a tour of Sri Lanka even as the national senior team was playing concurrently in England.



ANUBHAV SINHA RETURNS WITH BHEED

Another hard hitting social drama to be jointly produced by Bhushan Kumar; chooses Rajkumar Rao this time to be his leading man

Team Absolute | Mumbai

There's something about an Anubhav Sinha film that makes everyone sit up and take notice. With his sharp sense of stories, the filmmaker brand of conscientious cinema has over the years remoulded the purpose of cinema. What started with the crackling Mulk starring Rishi Kapoor and Taapsee Pannu - a layered tale of Islamophobia, soon became a cinema movement of sorts where Sinha discussed caste hierarchy in

Article 15 and everyday misogyny in the much raved about Thappad. His next directorial Anek, starring Ayushmann Khurrana is currently in post production and is set in the North East. While the work moves on the edit, Sinha has already nosedived into his next. The socio-political drama titled Bheed will be headlined by Rajkumar Rao. The film marks Sinha's reunion with Bhushan Kumar after the success of Thappad. Known to back meritorious projects, Kumar has forged a successful partnership with Sinha over the years, making their

equation a perfect recipe for success.

Sinha tells us, "Bheed is one of those titles that the whole team jumps at the moment you propose it. To me, casting was crucial. Raj is a very intriguing actor. He is one of the very few actors who can be so successfully transparent in a story. There always was a keen desire to work with him and I am looking forward to it."

The subject, much like the filmmaker's previous works, is an everyday issue that often gets brushed under the carpet. The

story demands an ease of a performance and Sinha found Rajkumar the right fit. The socio-political drama will be shot across Lucknow, where Sinha recently conducted an elaborate recce. The film is expected to go on floors in November as the unit continues their extensive pre-production for the next few weeks.

Bheed is jointly produced by Bhushan Kumar's T-Series and Anubhav Sinha's Benaras Mediaworks.



Sports stars are actually the real heroes for me: Taapsee Pannu

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Taapsee Pannu, who plays a sprinter in her latest film 'Rashmi Rocket', says that she is always in awe of sports personalities and that she feels they are the real heroes. She candidly revealed that squash is her favourite sport to play and when it comes to her favourite sportsperson she said, "I don't think I can choose because I am in so much awe of these sportspeople, they are actually the real heroes for me. I follow them more than I follow any other profession, or I don't think I consider any other profession as heroic as representing the country!"

Taapsee also confessed that running comes naturally to her, since she was an athlete in school and would run in 100, 200 and 400-metre races. For her role, she had to learn some professional sprinting techniques. Next, she had to unlearn and readopt the right technique to keep her free of injuries.

She shared these anecdotes in an exclusive chat with IMDb.

When asked about her most favourite memory on sets, she reminisces, "Once when I was sprinting during shots and there were real athletes, we had called who were there running with me, who were probably watching the training...the compliments from them that I did really look like a real athlete were the most cherished ones coming from the people who do it as a profession."

Directed by Akarsh Khurana and also featuring Priyanshu Painyuli, Abhishek Banerjee, Shweta Tripathi, and Supriya Pathak, 'Rashmi Rocket' releases on ZEE5.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty, who was under the scanner last year after the death of actor and her boyfriend Sushant Singh Rajput, has shared a cryptic message amid the ongoing drug case involving superstar Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan.

The actress shared the cryptic message on her Instagram stories, which read: "Grow through what you go through."

It was last year, when Rhea made headlines after she was accused by Sushant's family for abetment to suicide and also siphoning off funds from the late actor. She was also named in a Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) chargesheet along with her brother Showik in a drug-related probe into Sushant's death case.

The 29-year-old actress was arrested last year and spent a month in Mumbai's Byculla jail in September 2020.

In a claim, the NCB on Wednesday alleged that Aryan along with others, was prima facie involved in "illicit drug trafficking, procuring and distribution of contraband" banned under the NDPS Act.



OTT HAS LED TO DEMOCRATISATION OF OUR FILM INDUSTRY: SIKANDAR KHER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

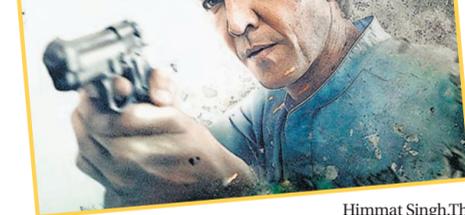
Actor Sikandar Kher, who was last seen in the web series 'Aarya', has hailed the digital platform. He says OTT has led to the democratisation of the film industry and has helped in bringing out brilliant content and actors coming to the limelight.

Sikandar said: "OTT has definitely led to the democratisation of our film industry and we have seen some brilliant content and actors coming to the limelight. I have spent almost a decade in the industry and have seen all the highs and lows that people go through."

He added: "But it took a pandemic and rise of the OTT platforms for filmmakers to realise the kind of talents India can produce. Well, I am glad this happened, and I am sure that the scope of telling stories and performing them will only increase from here on." "He is currently gearing up for his other projects in the pipeline such as Vasana Bala's 'Monica O My Darling,'



KAY KAY MENON'S 'SPECIAL OPS 1.5: THE HIMMAT STORY' TEASER UNVEILED



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The teaser of actor Kay Kay Menon-starrer 'Special Ops 1.5: The Himmat Story' has been unveiled on Thursday and it is packed with high octane action.

The teaser of 'Special Ops 1.5: The Himmat Story', takes the viewers back to where it all began for the young R&AW agent. Kay Kay reprises his role of

Himmat Singh. The upcoming 'Special Ops 1.5: The Himmat Story' goes back in time to 2001 and explores the formative years of Himmat Singh and how he uses his wit and intelligence for a high-impact operation.

Joining the action-packed series, Aftab Shivdasani, Aadil Khan will make an entry with new talent

Aishwarya Sushmita, Maria Ryaboshapka alongside Gautami Kapoor, Vinay Pathak, Parmeet Sethi, KP Mukherjee, and many others.

Talking about the new season, director Neeraj Pandey said: "We have always envisioned Special Ops as a multi-layered franchise which would be leveraged on characters, scale and format innovation."

Producer Shital Bhatia added: "Keeping up with the scale and high-production aesthetics of Special Ops 1.5 was extremely challenging during the lockdown, we hope the audiences enjoy the show as much as we loved making it."

'Special Ops 1.5: The Himmat Story' will be premiering on Disney+Hotstar.



Good people are needed for making good content: Nawazuddin Siddiqui

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui, who has been nominated in the Best Actor category at the International Emmy Awards for the Netflix film 'Serious Men', says that for making good content, good people are also needed.

Talking about what's more important according to him - content of a project or who all are starring in it, Nawazuddin in a conversation with IANS said: "I think both are important." "A lot of content is being made but it will not come out and shine till

the time the directors, actors and their performance isn't there."

He says if the actor or the maker are not good then there is no meaning to the content.

"No matter how good the content is, if the actor or the director is not good then there is no meaning to the content. For making a good thing, good people are needed," he concluded. 'Serious Men' is based on Manu Joseph's book of the same name. The film, directed by Sudhir Mishra, is a sharp take on ambition and caste politics, put in perspective in the Indian context.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sana Khan