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INDIA'S ECONOMY TO GROW BY 8.3%, MAKING IT 2ND FASTEST GROWING-MAJOR ECONOMY

UNITED NATIONS | Agencies

India's economy is expected to grow by 8.3 per cent this fiscal year, according to the World Bank, making it the second-fastest-growing major economy.

The Bank's Regional Economic Update released on Thursday said that after the "deadly second wave" of Covid-19 in India "the pace of vaccination, which is increasing, will determine economic prospects this year and beyond."

"The trajectory of the pandemic will cloud the outlook in the near-term until herd immunity is achieved," it cautioned.

According to the Update issued ahead of the Bank's annual meeting next week, India's gross domestic product (GDP) which shrank by 7.3 per cent (that is, a minus 7.3 per cent) under the onslaught of the pandemic last fiscal year is expected to record the 8.3 per cent growth this fiscal year, which will moderate to 7.5 per cent next year and 6.5 per cent in 2023-24.

The Bank said, "The Covid-19 pandemic led India's economy into a deep contraction in FY21 (fiscal year 2020-21) despite well-crafted fiscal and monetary policy support." It said that growth recovered in the second half of the last fiscal year



"driven primarily by investment and supported by unlocking of the economy and targeted fiscal, monetary and regulatory measures. Manufacturing and construction growth recovered steadily."

Although significantly more lives were lost during the second wave of the epidemic this year in India, compared to the first wave in 2020, "economic disruption was limited since restrictions were localised," with the GDP growing by 20.1 per cent in the first quarter of the current fiscal year compared to the first

quarter of 2020-21, the Update said. It attributed the spurt to "a significant base effect" (that is, coming off a very big fall in the compared quarter), "strong export growth and limited damage to domestic demand."

Looking ahead, the Bank's Update said that "successful implementation of agriculture and labour reforms would boost medium-term growth" while cautioning that "weakened household and firm balance sheets may constrain it." "The Production-Linked Incentives scheme to boost manu-

facturing, and a planned increase in public investment, should support domestic demand," it said.

The extent of recovery during the current fiscal year "will depend on how quickly household incomes recover and activity in the informal sector and smaller firms normalises."

Among the risks, it listed "worsening of financial sector stress, higher-than-expected inflation constraining monetary-policy support, and a slowdown in vaccination."

Taking stock of the pandemic's effects, the Bank said, "The toll of the crisis has not been equal, and the recovery so far is uneven, leaving behind the most vulnerable sections of the society - low-skilled, women, self-employed and small firms."

But it said that the Indian government has taken steps to strengthen social safety nets and ease structural supply constraints through agricultural and labour reforms deal with the inequality.

It said that the government continued investing in health programs "have started to address the weaknesses in health infrastructure and social safety nets (especially in the urban areas and the informal sector) exposed by the pandemic."

Bomb kills at least 100 at Shia mosque in Afghanistan's Kunduz

The blast occurred in a Shia mosque in Kunduz province during the weekly Friday prayer service.

KABUL | Agencies

An apparent bomb attack on worshippers at a Shia mosque in the Afghan city of Kunduz killed at least 100 people on Friday, in the bloodiest assault since US forces left the country.

Scores more victims from the minority community were injured in the blast, which has not been claimed but appears designed to further destabilise Afghanistan in the wake of the Taliban takeover.

Images on social media showed bodies and debris inside the mosque, used by the minority Shia Muslim community, the BBC reported. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack. Sunni Muslim extremists,

including the local Islamic State (IS) group, have targeted the Shia community because they consider them to be heretics. IS-K, the Afghan regional affiliate of IS that is violently opposed to the Taliban, has carried out several bombings recently, largely in the eastern part of the country. The deputy minister of information and culture, Zabiullah Mujahid, confirmed the incident.

"Today in the afternoon, in the Khanabad Bandar area in the capital city of Kunduz, a blast targeted a mosque belonging to our Shia citizens, which martyred and wounded a number of our compatriots," he added.

Zalmay Alokzai, a local businessman who rushed to a

hospital to check whether doctors needed blood donations, described seeing chaotic scenes. "Ambulances were going back to the incident scene to carry the dead," he said. The extremist Islamic State group, bitter rivals of the Taliban, has repeatedly targeted Shiites in a bid to stir up sectarian violence in Sunni-majority Afghanistan.

An international aid worker at the MSF hospital in the city said there were fears the death toll could rise even further. "Hundreds of people are gathered at the main gate of the hospital and crying for their relatives but armed Taliban guys are trying to prevent gatherings in case another explosion is planned," he said

Modi scores big in latest survey, gets 66.4% support

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi continues to fare better in terms of satisfaction of work, according to the ABP-CVoter-IANS State of States 2021 tracker.

Across the country, Modi got support of 66.4 per cent of the respondents, with 40.3 per cent people 'very much satisfied' with his work and 26.1 per cent 'satisfied to some extent' despite a decline in popularity ratings during the devastating second wave of the Coronavirus pandemic.

However, 30.6 per cent people are 'not satisfied' at all with the performance of Modi. Three per cent of the participants chose the 'Don't know/Can't say' category.

Notably, Manipur backed the PM with highest percent of support recording 51.2 per cent. Next to the northeastern state, Uttarakhand stands with 47 per cent. One of the poll-bound states Uttar Pradesh, has also given a thumbs up to Modi with 43.3 per cent support. In Goa, 35.8 per cent people are very much satisfied with Modi while 39 per cent



people are satisfied to some extent.

According to the latest survey, Punjab recorded the least popularity of PM Modi registering 15 per cent. In Punjab, 18.2 per cent people are satisfied to some extent with the Modi government while a majority of 58.6 per cent people are challenging his popularity, stating they are not at all satisfied with his work. After Punjab, 33.2 per cent participants of Uttar Pradesh recorded not at all satisfied with Modi's work. However, 2.7 per cent people of the largest populated state refrained from registering their opinion.

Living standards 'deteriorated' in poll-bound states: Survey

New Delhi: As per the latest ABP-CVoter-IANS State of States 2021 tracker, the living standards in ploo-bound Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have deteriorated in the last one year, with the Yogi Adityanath-led state topping the list as 59 per cent of the surveyed voters said that their way of life has gone downhill since 2021. Uttar Pradesh is followed by Punjab and Uttarakhand at 58.5 per cent and 55.7 per cent, respectively.

Having reported the highest percentage of "improved" condition at 24 per cent, 51.3 per cent of the people in Manipur have gone with the "deteriorated" section.

Not satisfied with action of state: SC on UP govt's probe in Lakhimpur Kheri violence

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday said it is "not satisfied with the steps taken by the state" in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case, and expected a responsible government, system and police. The top court also observed that handing over the case to the CBI was not the solution.

A bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana and comprising Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli said: "We are not satisfied with the action taken by the state".

On the non-arrest of Ashish Mishra, son of Union Minister Ajay Mishra, the bench queried Salve, "Is this the way you treat the accused in other cases as well?...Sending notice". The bench told Salve, "When there is a serious allegations of murder and gunshot injury, how the accused in other parts of the country are treated. Please tell us."

The bench further queried senior advocate Harish Salve, representing the

Uttar Pradesh government, that has the state government made a request to give the case to the CBI?

Salve replied that it is entirely in their hands. However, the bench told Salve: "CBI is also not a solution and you know the reason why...You find out better mode".

Salve said the case is extremely serious. The bench replied: "If it is an extremely serious case that's not how things are taking place. It is only in words and not in action".

Salve admitted before the top court that what has been done by the state is not satisfactory and remedial action will be taken soon, and urged the bench to put the matter for hearing immediately after the Dussehra vacation.

The top court also took a strong objection to SIT formed in the matter, which comprises local officers.

The bench said it may not be required to keep the SIT anymore, and emphasized that they should not destroy evidence or do anything negative. Salve

submitted that given the evidence in hand, allegations under Section 302, may be possibly true.

The top court told Salve that it will take up the matter after Dussehra vacation, "but that does not mean the state holds its hands", and insisted that the state must take immediate steps.

Justice Kant said: "You have to inspire confidence". Salve said, "What they have done isn't satisfactory".

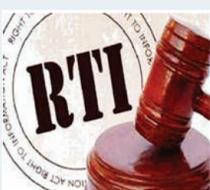
The bench said: "Because of the sensitivity of the issue, state should understand, we aren't saying anything more".

The apex court has listed the matter for further hearing on October 20. On Thursday, the top court had directed the Uttar Pradesh government to submit a status report indicating who are the accused named in the FIR filed in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case and whether they have been arrested or not.

On October 3, nine persons, including four farmers, were killed in the violence that had erupted during a farmers'

AFTER 10-YR LEGAL WRANGLE, GOA GUV BRINGS RAJ BHAVAN UNDER RTI AMBIT

Panaji: After 10 years of efforts by the previous governments and state governments to resist efforts to bring the Raj Bhavan under the ambit of the Right to Information Act, Goa Governor PS Sreedharan Pillai on Friday, threw open the doors of the gubernatorial institution to RTI queries.



The announcement was made by Pillai at a public function in Raj Bhavan in presence of Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Leader of Opposition Digambar Kamat, while also refusing to blame the past Governors for not taking such a decision earlier. "I would like to publicly declare my policy that Governors are bound to furnish information to the people and people are supreme," the Governor said.

"I do not want to blame anybody, but hereafter RTI with respect to Raj Bhavan will be available for all the citizens," he further said. The Raj Bhavan has been at the Centre of a controversy for nearly a decade now, over its refusal to acknowledge itself as a "public authority", ever since the Goa State Information Commission passed an order in 2011, stating that the institution should share information under the RTI act, because it was a "public authority".

Following the Commission's order, which was passed while hearing a petition by local activist Aires Rodrigues, the Raj Bhavan had appealed in the Bombay High Court of Goa challenging the contents of the order.

In the same year, 2011, the High Court also upheld the order of the Commission, following which the Raj Bhavan had appealed in the Supreme Court.

Earlier in his speech, Pillai had extolled the virtues of Mahatma Gandhi in his speech, especially the prism with which the Father of the Nation viewed the people of a country as more powerful in a democracy than an elected representative or one holding a constitutional post like a Governor. "The basis of democracy is that people are supreme rather than the Governor, Chief Minister, or opposition leader... all are expected to serve the people. They are not the boss of the people," Pillai said.

CBI can directly register case, preliminary probe not mandatory: SC

The Supreme Court on Friday held that it is not mandatory for the CBI to launch a preliminary enquiry (PE) in all cases of corruption or other offences, and instead it can register a regular case upon the satisfaction of a cognizable offence.

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A bench, headed by Justice DY Chandrachud and comprising Justices Vikram Nath and BV Nagarathna, said: "We hold that in case the information received by the CBI, through a complaint or a 'source information', discloses the commission of a cognisable offence, it can directly register a regular case instead of conducting a preliminary enquiry, where the officer is satisfied that the information discloses the commission of a cognizable offence."

The top court, however, added this does not take away from the value of conducting a preliminary enquiry in an appropriate case, and conducting a preliminary enquiry would not take away from the ultimate goal of prosecuting accused persons in a timely manner.

"However, we once again clarify that if the CBI chooses not to hold a preliminary enquiry, the accused cannot demand it as a matter of right," it added.

The bench added that precedents of the top court and the provisions of the CBI manual make it abundantly clear that a preliminary enquiry is not mandatory in all cases which involve allegations of corruption. "The decision of the Constitution Bench in Lalita Kumari case holds that if the information received dis-



closes the commission of a cognisable offence at the outset, no preliminary enquiry would be required," it added, in its 64-page judgment.

The bench said since the institution of a preliminary enquiry in cases of corruption is not made mandatory before the registration of an FIR under the CrPC, the Prevention of Corruption Act, or even the CBI manual, for it to issue such a direction "will be tantamount to stepping into the legislative domain".

The bench also pointed out that registration of a regular case can have disastrous consequences for the career of an officer, if the allegations were proved to

be wrong. The top court set aside a Telangana High Court judgement, which quashed a 2017 FIR against civil servant-turned-politician, state Education Minister Audimulapu Suresh and his IRS officer wife, TN Vijayalakshmi, in a case of possessing assets disproportionate to their known sources of income.

"The Single Judge of the Telangana High Court has acted completely beyond the settled parameters which govern the power to quash an FIR. The Single Judge has donned the role of a chartered accountant. The Single Judge has completely ignored that the Court was not at the stage of trial or considering an appeal against a verdict in a trial," it said.

The bench added that reasons provided by the single judge for entering into the merits of the dispute while quashing the FIR are specious, especially so considering our finding that the CBI need not hold a preliminary enquiry mandatorily. On February 11, 2020, the high court had said, among other reasons, the CBI should have conducted a preliminary enquiry into the matter in accordance with its manual, before registering an FIR. The CBI moved the top court challenging the high court saying the court has breached the domain of its jurisdiction, and virtually conducted a trial in an effort to absolve the accused.

Congress attacks govt for not sacking Ajay Mishra

New Delhi: The Congress has stepped up its attack on the government for not sacking MoS Home Ajay Mishra Teni after his alleged involvement in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident while his son is said to be absconding and not turning up for questioning. Addressing a press conference Congress Chief Spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, "Prime Minister and UP Chief Minister are standing with the criminals." The Congress leader provided details of the case in which Mishra's acquittal in a murder case was challenged in the Allahabad High Court and the judgement is reserved since 2018. Surjewala said, "I am saying with full responsibility that the conduct of the court is in doubt in this matter as how can a judge remember the arguments after three years."

The Congress asked if the same treatment will be meted out to persons who have committed similar crimes and are absconding as the Supreme Court has pointed out in the case on the non-arrest of Ashish Mishra, son of Union Minister Ajay Mishra. The bench queried the Uttar Pradesh government "Is this the way you treat the accused in other cases as well?...Sending notice". The bench told Harish Salve, "When there is a serious allegation of murder and gunshot injury, how the accused in other parts of the country are treated. Please tell us." The bench queried senior advocate Harish Salve, representing the Uttar Pradesh government, that has the state government made a request to give the case to the CBI? The Police in UP's Lakhimpur Kheri on Friday issued a fresh notice to Ashish Mishra, son of Union Minister Ajay Mishra Teni, asking him to appear before them on October 9 to record his statement. The notice said that Ashish Mishra was asked to appear before the police on Friday but he failed to do so. This time, the notice also warns Ashish Mishra that if he fails to appear on Saturday, necessary legal action would be initiated against him. The second notice was issued after the state government told the Supreme Court that Mishra would appear before the police on Saturday.



UP BECOMING BIPOLAR CONTEST BETWEEN BJP AND SP

Over 60% believe Ajay Mishra's statement responsible for Lakhimpur incident

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Over 60 per cent people believe that the 'statement' of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra became the reason for the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, according to the ABP-CVOTER-IANS State of States 2021 tracker.

The tracker found that about 60.6 per cent participants think Mishra's statement is the reason behind the incident. About 39.4 per cent think that the minister's statement is not the reason behind the incidents.

The survey revealed that about 57.6 per cent people believe that the opposition party is making it a political issue in view of the upcoming assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh despite the agreement between the farmers and the government after the Lakhimpur incident. About 42.4 per cent participants think that the opposition is not politicising the incident.

More than two third participants believe that incidents like Lakhimpur have tarnished the image of Uttar Pradesh.

While 69.6 per cent respondents believe that the image of the Uttar Pradesh government is getting tarnished due to incidents like Lakhimpur 30.4 per cent think the image of Uttar Pradesh government was not tarnished, the survey found. The survey further revealed that 59.6 per cent respondents feel that the Lakhimpur incident will prove to be harmful for the BJP in the upcoming assembly elec-



tions in Uttar Pradesh while 40.4 per cent feels it will have no impact on BJP in the upcoming Uttar Pradesh assembly polls.

"About 63.2 per cent participants think the image of the Uttar Pradesh government has tarnished because of the law and order situation in the state in the past few days. About 36.8 per cent feel that it has no impact on the image of the state government," the survey reveals. About 58.5 per cent believe that farmers are right on the issue of their movement and only 41.5 per cent think the government's stand is right on farmer's movement

The survey was conducted from October 5 to 8 in all the 403 constituencies of Uttar Pradesh with a sample size of 2,805 participants.

The ABP-CVoter-IANS tracker was conducted between September 4 and October 4 across 690 Assembly seats in five poll-bound states with a sample size of 98,121.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections are turning out to be a bipolar contest between the BJP and the Samajwadi Party (SP), as per the latest ABP-CVOTER-IANS State of States 2021 tracker. Yashwant Deshmukh, Founder, CVoter, said the Lakhimpur Kheri incident has made the contest very partisan and polarised.

Deshmukh said the anti-BJP votes are consolidating behind the SP and the scope for growth of other parties like the BSP and the Congress in the run up to the elections is now limited.

Deshmukh said the SP can get a big boost if its leader Akhilesh Yadav can hit the ground and even be 1 per cent active of what his father, Mulayam Singh Yadav, used to be,



otherwise the arithmetic gap of vote share will favour the BJP.

The ABP-CVoter-IANS tracker was

conducted between September 4 and October 4 across 690 Assembly seats in five poll-bound states with a sam-

ple size of 98,121.

As many as 69.6 per cent said that due to incidents like Lakhimpur, the image of the Uttar Pradesh government is getting tarnished.

As many as 59.6 per cent said the Lakhimpur incident will prove harmful for the BJP in the upcoming Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh.

A total of 63.2 per cent said the image of the UP government has got tarnished because of the law and order situation in the state over the past few days.

As per the tracker, the BJP led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is winning the state with 245 seats, followed by SP with 134 seats. The BJP is losing 80 seats compared to the previous elections, while the SP is gaining 86 seats.

Akali Dal demands dismissal of Union Minister Misra

Chandigarh | Agencies

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Friday demanded the dismissal of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra, besides the arrest of his son Ashish Misra, who allegedly crushed four farmers to death in Uttar Pradesh.

The demand was made at Lucknow by former Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal, who visited residences of the four farmers along with a delegation of senior party leaders in Lakhimpur Kheri. Harsimrat Kaur said it was condemnable that the minister's son allegedly crushed the farmers when their backs were turned towards his vehicle in an act of

vengeance after his father warned farmers not to hold any protests or be ready to face the music.

She said it was condemnable that no action had been taken in the heinous case either by the Central government or the Uttar Pradesh government despite clear cut evidence in the case.

"The video footage of Ashish Misra's vehicle is available. There are eyewitness accounts that Ashish Misra fled from the scene after mowing down the farmers. He should be arrested on murder charges immediately."

Harsimrat Kaur said similarly there was video footage of the Union Minister threatening the farmers and even inciting violence against them.

TN MINISTER ASKS BJP TO PROTEST AGAINST CENTRE ON TEMPLE OPENING

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Minister for Hindu Religious and Charity Endowment (HR&CE) P.K. Sekar Babu has called upon the Tamil Nadu unit of the BJP to conduct protest marches against the Central government regarding opening of temples on all days. The minister said that the state government had closed temples in the state on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday on the basis of guidelines from the Union government. Tamil Nadu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president, K. Annamalai had on Thursday while inaugurating a protest of the party in front of Kalikambal temple said that if the state government does not take an action to reopen temples on all days within 10 days, the state BJP would conduct massive agitations that would bring the Tamil Nadu government in a standstill. Meanwhile, the HR&CE minister said 10 new arts and science colleges would be opened across the state. The Minister also said that two of the new colleges would be named after Lord Shiva and Lord Muruga. The Sri Kapaleeswar College named after Lord Shiva would come up Kulathur in Chennai while Arulmigu Arthanareeswar Arts and Science College named after Lord Muruga would be set up at Thiruchengode Taluk in Namakkal district.

Harish Rawat preferred 'dulha' in Uttarakhand, but Congress 'baaraat' missing

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Harish Rawat of the Congress is way ahead of his own party in Uttarakhand, and while the 'dulha' is there, the 'baaraat' is missing, as per the latest ABP-CVoter-IANS State of States 2021 tracker.

Rawat is leading the poll with 36.6 per cent in the race for CM, followed by current Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami of the BJP at 24.1 per cent.

While the wind of change is blowing in Uttarakhand, till the Congress gets its act together and declares Rawat as the CM candidate, it will lag behind the BJP as the Aam Aadmi Party is polling 10 per cent votes, said Yashwant Deshmukh,



Founder, CVoter. "The Congress has a 'dulha' in Rawat, but it has to get the 'baaraat' behind him,"

Deshmukh said. A majority of 67.3 per cent said the BJP will not benefit from changing the Chief Minister again and again, while a similar number of respondents said that the promise of free electricity by political parties in Uttarakhand will not affect the elections. The tracker was conducted between September 4 and October 4 across 690 Assembly seats in the state with a sample size of 98,121. In Uttarakhand, the BJP is projected to win 44 seats, while the Congress is behind with 23 seats. The Opposition vote is getting divided with the Aam Aadmi Party polling 14.7 per cent votes, as per the tracker. The BJP is down from 57 seats it won in the previous Assembly elections in the 70-member House.

KCR opposes Centre's move to take over irrigation projects

Hyderabad | Agencies

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu on Friday found fault with the Centre for trying to take control of the state's irrigation projects.

He told the Assembly that this is an issue of the state's self-respect and he has requested the Centre to postpone implementation of the gazette notification in this regard and was waiting for its response.

He said if the Centre went ahead with the implementation of the notification from October 16, he would take an all-party delegation to New Delhi.

The Chief Minister accepted a suggestion of

Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) leader Akbaruddin Owaisi that an all-party delegation meet the Prime Minister on the issue. KCR, as the Chief Minister is popularly known, said he raised the issue during his meetings with the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and the Jal Shakti Minister last month and claimed that they all gave an assurance that the notification will not come into effect. "They plan to implement it from October 16. I requested them to better postpone it. They have given the assurance. Let us see what happens," he said.

KCR said neighbouring Andhra Pradesh created some problems over sharing of river waters which

led to the Centre issuing the notification. The Union Jal Shakti Ministry on July 15 issued the notification to take over all the completed and ongoing major and medium irrigation projects on Krishna and Godavari rivers in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

The ministry last month stepped up efforts to implement the notification. A meeting was held with the Chairmen of the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) and the Godavari River Management Board (GRMB) to finalise the modalities. The ministry appointed two chief engineers each for two boards to oversee the implementation of the gazette notification.

SC COLLEGIUM APPROVES FRESH NAMES AS JUDGES FOR 6 HIGH COURTS

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Collegium, which is headed by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana, has approved the proposal for the appointment 10 additional judges as permanent judges in the Punjab and Haryana High Court. A statement uploaded on top court's website said: "The Supreme Court Collegium has approved the proposal for appointment of the following Additional Judges as Permanent Judges in the Punjab & Haryana High Court: Justice Suvir Sehgal, Justice Alka Sarin, Justice Jagsurpreet Singh Puri, Justice Ashok Kumar Verma, Justice Sant Parkash, Justice Meenakshi I. Mehta, Justice Karamjit Singh, Justice Vivek Puri, Justice Archana Puri, and Justice Rajesh Bhardwaj." In another statement, the top court said the collegium in its meeting held on 8 October, has approved the proposal for elevation of Shubha Mehta, judicial officer, as judge in the Rajasthan High Court, and elevation of Soubhik Mitter, advocate, as judge in the Calcutta High Court. In its meeting held on October 6, the collegium recommended for elevation advocates -- Anant Ramanath Hegde, Cheppudira Monnappa Poonacha, Siddaiah Rachaiah, and Smt Kannankuzhivil Sreedharan Hemalekha -- for appointment as judges in the Karnataka High Court. The collegium also recommended for appointment of advocate Manu Khare, as judge in the Allahabad High Court, and advocate J Sathya Narayana Prasad, as judge in the Madras High Court.

Hype around Lakhimpur-Kheri won't revive Cong's fortunes: Kishor

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress party's fortunes in Uttar Pradesh, which goes to the polls next year, would not be revived despite all the "hype" generated around the Lakhimpur-Kheri incident, and the subsequent arrest of party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, political strategist Prashant Kishor said on Friday.

"People looking for a quick, spontaneous revival of GOP led opposition based on #LakhimpurKheri incident are setting themselves up for a big disappointment. Unfortunately there are no quick fix solutions to the deep-rooted problems and structural weakness of GOP," Kishor, who played an instru-



mental role in propelling Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress back to power in the West Bengal assembly polls held in March-April this year, wrote on Twitter.

GOP stands for Grand Old Party -- a term often used for the Congress. The Congress, however, refused to comment on Kishor's remarks. Senior party leader and spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said: "I do not comment on the remarks

made by any consultant." Kishor's assertion has not gone down well within the Congress provided that both Priyanka Gandhi and former party chief Rahul Gandhi have raised the issue of Lakhimpur-Kheri, and even visited the families of the victims. The remarks have come amid "strong speculation" that Kishor would join the Congress and the party was deliberating on the issues raised by him.

Even as no one in the party is averse to the idea of Kishor joining the Congress, the party leaders have said that he should not be given sweeping powers regarding elections. The Congress is preparing for the upcoming assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh.

No external forces will be allowed to violate our territory: IAF chief

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian Air Force chief V.R. Chaudhari on Friday asserted that the force will not allow any external forces to violate the country's territory, even as he pitched for to lead further indigenisation to achieve self-reliance.

Addressing the force on the occasion of the 89th Air Force Day, Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari exhorted the Air Warriors that they must demonstrate to the nation that the country's territory will stay secure.

"When I look at the security scenario that we face today, I am acutely conscious that I have assumed command at a crucial time. We must demonstrate to the nation that external forces will not be allowed to violate our territory," he said.

He pledged to do all he can to provide the force with clear direction, good leadership, and the best resources that he can muster.

On behalf of all Air Warriors, he paid homage to fallen braves, who have made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. "Today, it is an occasion to renew our solemn pledge for preserving IAF's rich heritage and passing it on to the future generations," he said.

The IAF chief said that the last year had been quite challenging, yet extremely rewarding, and the prompt actions in response to developments in eastern



Ladakh - where India and China have been in a standoff over the border dispute since May 2020 - were a testament of the IAF's combat readiness. "Your accomplishments have been impressive and you have helped achieve significant progress in many areas. I want to thank each of you and your families for the sacrifices that you have made and continue to make, while serving in this glorious service. I will continue to rely on your skills, courage, determination and hard work in the years ahead," he said. He said that the force's sacred duty is to protect nation's sovereignty and integrity at any cost. "... you are

to do what it takes to ensure that we do not let the nation down," he said.

Noting the security environment in the region and beyond has been impacted by a complex interplay of geo-political forces, he said that moreover, the advent of new domains - over and above the traditional domains of land, sea and air - have resulted in a paradigm shift in the way military operations will be conducted.

In sync with the changing nature of war-fighting, ongoing capability enhancement in the Indian Air Force is aimed at providing the optimum means for employing air power and achieving desired effects across

domains - swiftly and decisively, the IAF chief said.

He said that theme for this year's anniversary celebrations is being self-reliant and being capable.

Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari said that the force has been at the vanguard of indigenisation in domestic aerospace sector, and due to concerted efforts at all levels, a large number of low-tech, low-cost, and high-volume spares have been indigenised across all fleets.

The need of the hour is to reassess and realign with emerging trends, in order to gain from ongoing efforts towards greater self-reliance in high-tech items, he added.

"I am happy to report that several projects are well underway for harnessing the potential of automation, data analytics and artificial intelligence in order to transform the way we fight future wars," he said.

The IF chief stressed that force have to upgrade operational training methodology so that the young air warriors are equipped with the right skills and knowledge - for confident and audacious use in battle. "In fact, I am of the view that while we are actively pursuing self-reliance in hardware, innovative thought has historically been our core strength and I look forward to skilful and creative employment of these capabilities through development of our own unique tactics and 'out-of-the-box' operational plans," he said.

3 from G-23, Pilot, Sidhu in Cong star campaigners' list for bypolls

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress has submitted a list of star campaigners for the bypolls, which includes some prominent leaders from the G-23 list and Kanhaiya Kumar, who has recently joined the party.

Anand Sharma, who belongs to Himachal Pradesh, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, former Chief Minister of Haryana, and Raj Babbar are the three members of G-23, who have been included in the list. Apart from them, Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi and Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel are also in the list with Sachin Pilot and Navjot Singh Sidhu while Ashok Gehlot is excluded, sources said, adding that Gehlot is looking after the elections in Rajasthan. The Congress is slated to hold a CWC meeting this month and ahead of the meet, the party has tried to reach out to the dissenters, who have demanded the meeting of the highest decision making body of the

party. Former Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad had written for an early meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC). Azad in his letter had pointed out about the need for a permanent president and to discuss party affairs in the present scenario. He had reiterated his demand for organisational elections in the party.

Senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal had launched an attack on Rahul Gandhi and wondered who in the party was taking decisions. He said that the party leaders' demand for organisational elections had not been met. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Sibal had said, "There is no president in our party, so we do not know who is taking all the decisions. We know it, yet we don't know." The bypolls are going to be held in 15 states and union territories, including Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh and West Bengal on October 30 and the counting of votes will take place on November 2.



ARYAN KHAN, 2 OTHERS' BAIL PLEAS REJECTED BY MUMBAI MAGISTRATE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major setback for megastar Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan, a Mumbai court on Friday rejected his bail plea, and of two others who were among the 8 arrested accused in the raid on an alleged rave party on a luxury cruise ship.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate R.M. Nerlikar rejected the bail applications of Aryan, Arbaaz Merchant, and Munmun Dhamecha, on grounds of "maintainability", upholding the contentions of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) legal team.

Shortly after the verdict, lawyers for some of the accused told the media that though the detailed reasoning for the ACMM's order will come later, they plan to apply to the Sessions Court for bail on Monday.

The developments came a day after all the eight accused were sent to judicial custody, and they shifted to the regular prisons from the NCB lockup.

The two women accused - Munmun Dhamecha and Nupur Sarika - were shunted to the Byculla Women's Jail, and the others - Aryan, Arbaaz Merchant, Vikrant Chhoker, Ismeet Singh, Mohak Jaswal, and Gomit Chopra were sent to the ARCJ.

Earlier, for the past one week since their detention and subsequent arrest, they were kept in the NCB lockup in south Mumbai.



Aryan, other accused sent to Arthur Road, Byculla jails

Mumbai: A day after they were sent to judicial custody, Aryan Khan, son of megastar Shah Rukh Khan, and seven co-accused in the rave party raids, were sent to the Arthur Road Central Jail, here on Friday afternoon. The two women accused - Munmun Dhamecha and Nupur Sarika - were sent to the Byculla Women's Jail, and the others - Arbaaz Merchant, Vikrant Chhoker, Ismeet Singh, Mohak Jaswal, and Gomit Chopra were sent to the ARCJ, along with Aryan Khan. Since their arrest on October 3 - a day after their detention following the rave party raid aboard the Cordelia Cruise ship - they were kept for six nights in the NCB lockup in the central agency's custody, in south Mumbai till they were sent to judicial custody on Thursday by Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate RM Nerlikar. They will remain in the respective jails till they are granted bail, even as their lawyers and the Narcotics Control Bureau advocates were engaged in a fierce legal battle over this. This morning, all the eight accused youngsters underwent a medical test at the Sir JJ Hospital, before they were taken to the jails by the NCB under tight security.

This morning, all the eight accused youngsters underwent medical and RT-PCR tests at the Sir JJ Hospital, and after they tested negative for the latter, were taken by the NCB under tight security to the jails, where they are lodged in the quarantine wards.

In the high-drama rave party raid on October 2, the NCB had stated that it recovered drugs like 13 grams cocaine, 21 gms charas, 5 gms MD, and 22 MDMA pills in the operation from the accused, most of whom are linked to the glamour and entertainment industry.

Later, in the past few days, another 10 persons have been arrested for their alleged involvements in the rave party, including four from a Delhi-based event management company which had chartered the Cordelia Cruise ship for the Mumbai-Goa voyage.

That night (Saturday) the 8 were apprehended by NCB and kept under detention, the following day they were formally arrested and after getting two remands from the ACMM, they spent the next 5 nights in the NCB lockup.

On Friday night, they will spend their night in the Arthur Road Central Jail and Byculla Women's Jail, and will remain there till they are released on bail, hopefully sometime next week.

The lawyers of the accused youngsters said that they will prepare the papers and move the Sessions Court at the earliest opportunity, while the NCB has indicated that it would oppose their bail pleas.

Rave party raids row: NCP warns of another expose on NCB



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Two days after slamming the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) for involving "outsiders" in the cruise ship raid, the NCP on Friday warned of making another expose on how the probe agency allegedly helped a Bharatiya Janata Party-linked person escape action.

"I have full evidence, including photos and videos... Going by the NCB Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede's own statement of '8 to 10' accused detained on October 2, finally only 8 names came out, what about the other 2," Nationalist Congress Party spokesperson and Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik said.

He accused the NCB of allegedly helping the other two persons, including one who is related to a BJP leader, escape, and warned of unmasking them. Malik also said serious questions arise as to which BJP leaders are in contact with Wankhede, what are his connections with the party and related aspects, and how it is working to defame Bollywood and discredit the Maha Vikas Aghadi government in the state.

US Dy Secretary of State Sherman visits Navy HQ in Mumbai

Team Absolute | Mumbai

US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, leading a high-level delegation, visited the Indian Navy's Western Naval Command Headquarters, officials said here on Friday.

Received by top officials during the trip on Thursday, Sherman interacted with WNC chief, Vice Admiral R. Hari Kumar, and held talks on a variety of issues.

These included avenues to strengthen the growing cooperation between the two nations and their navies, deal with challenges emerging on the maritime front besides enhancing collaboration and interoperability to ensure maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Sherman was given a broad overview of regional security dynamics and the operational responses of the WNC in recent times. These related to delivering humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) to friendly foreign countries, conducting counter-piracy operations, enhancing maritime safety and security in the region, and



strengthening foreign cooperation initiatives with special emphasis on Indo-US co-operation. Also highlighted was the stellar support provided by IN ships through Operation Samudra Setu II to battle the Covid-19 pandemic by bringing home containerised liquid medical oxygen to mitigate shortfalls in the country. Sherman was escorted on a tour of the state-of-the-art Aircraft Carrier Dock at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai at the culmination of her visit. The interactions with the visiting Deputy Secretary of State's high-level delegation at the WNC is described as "an additional but significant step in expanding and intensifying the multi-dimensional Indo-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership".

Will speak after IT searches get over: Pawar

NCP leader & Deputy CM of Maharashtra Ajit Pawar said he will talk on the I-T raids on properties of his relatives & aids once the action is over as he does not want to obstruct their work.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Friday said he will speak about the Income Tax department's raids on the properties of his relatives and aides once the action is over. He did not want to obstruct the I-T department's work, he told reporters here.

"The department is doing its job. The officials are still there. Once they leave, I will issue my statement. By speaking while the searches are on, I do not want to obstruct their work," said the senior NCP leader. He also appealed the NCP workers who had gathered outside the Council Hall here to express support for him to leave, Pawar added.

"Let I-T officials leave and I will answer all questions. I have answers for your questions," said Pawar, who holds finance portfolio in the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress government. "My stand is



always clean and transparent. I am disciplined about financial matters. I always appeal people to pay their taxes...tax should be paid by everyone including me and the firms linked to me, he said. He will also speak about the controversial sale of

defunct cooperative sugar mills in the state by providing proof, Pawar said. Earlier in the day, NCP president Sharad Pawar had alleged that the Income Tax raids came after he compared the Lakhimpur Kheri violence in Uttar Pradesh to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

"The I-T raids were carried out because I likened the Lakhimpur Kheri violence to Jallianwala Bagh massacre...Don't we have the right to air our views in democracy?" asked the senior leader who is Ajit Pawar's uncle. The I-T department on Thursday raided some businesses linked to family members of Ajit Pawar and some real estate developers on charges of tax evasion. The premises linked to business groups such as DB Realty, Shivalik, Jarandeshwar Sahkari Sugar Karkhana (Jarandeshwar SSK) and businesses linked to Ajit Pawar's sisters were raided during the operation, official sources had said.

Jewellery firm MD arrested, 3 offices attached for duping investors of at least Rs 8 crore

So far, 40 investors have approached the police alleging that they have been cheated of Rs 15 crore

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Thane Police arrested the Managing Director of a jewellery firm Tuesday for allegedly duping at least 13 investors to the tune of Rs 8 crore by taking investments from them promising unrealistic returns.

The police said Virath Gopalan Nair, managing director of VGN Jewellers, got about 50,000 investors to partake in the scheme out of which 40 have approached them so far alleging that

they have been duped of Rs 15 crore. A process is underway to record their statements.

"Nair was produced before a magistrate court after his arrest and has been remanded to EOW's custody till October 9," said Sunil Lokhande, DCP, EOW. So far, the EOW has attached three offices of Nair at Kalyan, Ulhasnagar and Mulund, he added. His bank accounts have been frozen too but cops said it had only around Rs 9 lakh. The 13 investors had registered an FIR against him at Kolsewadi police station. Since a huge

amount is involved, the case has been transferred to the EOW. Nair has been booked for cheating and criminal breach of trust under sections of the IPC and the Maharashtra Protection of Interest of Depositors (MPID) Act.

Nair told police that he invested all his clients' money in gold trading, share market and his own chit fund. The police are trying to determine if he invested in real estate and are making enquiries regarding the properties in his ownership so that they can be attached to recover the investors' money.

The company's main office is in Kastubh complex on Pune Link Road in Kalyan (East). Nair has been collecting investments from the public from 2006 to 2021. As per one of the schemes, the investor had to pay Rs 500 per month for a year and would get Rs 14,000 or gold worth the amount. He also promised 15 per cent interest on fixed deposits for one to five years.

Nair, who hails from Kerala, has been a jeweller in the city for decades and had earned the trust of several Malayalis who invested their money with him.

Mumbai NCB officer held for 'sniffing' at woman's underwear

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Asuperintendent of Police-rank officer with the Narcotics Control Bureau has been arrested for allegedly molesting a 25-year-old woman in a train in Maharashtra, a railway police official said on Friday.

The accused, identified as Dinesh Chavan, 34, working for the NCB Mumbai, who was nabbed by the Railway Police at Parli in Beed district.

Railway Police Commissioner Quaiser Khalid said that the accused was travelling on the same train as the victim after attending a court case in Hyderabad. "In her complaint, she (victim) explains

the incident as him touching her in an immodest way, removing her undergarment from her bag and sniffing them, and placed on his chest that disturbed her," said Khalid in a statement on social media. The victim raised her voice for help, waking up the other passengers, who caught hold of Chavan and handed him over to the GRP who arrested him, while the woman continued with her onward journey to Pune. The GRP have registered a case under various sections of Indian Penal Code pertaining to sexual harassment, lewd words and gestures intended to insult the modesty of a woman, etc and further investigations are on.

COVID-19: Maharashtra records 2,620 new cases, 59 deaths, 2,943 recoveries on Friday

Maharashtra on Friday, October 8, recorded 2,620 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the number of active cases to 33,011. Besides, 59 COVID-19 deaths were reported in the day, taking the number of total fatalities to 1,39,470. 2,943 patients were discharged in the day, taking the tally to 63,97,018. The recovery rate in the state is 97.32%. The case fatality rate in the state is 2.12%.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Currently, 2,41,972 people are in home quarantine and 1,050 people are in institutional quarantine.

The Mumbai circle that consists of MCGM, Thane, TMC, Navi Mumbai, KDMC, Ulhasnagar MC, Bhivandi Nijampur MC, Mira Bhayandar MC, Palghar, Vasai Virar MC, Raigad, Panvel MC--recorded 1010 new cases. The Nashik circle that



consists of Nashik, Nashik MC, Malegaon MC, Ahmednagar, Ahmednagar MC, Dhule, Dhule MC, Jalgaon, Jalgaon MC, Nandurbar reported

429 fresh COVID-19 cases. The Pune circle that includes Pune, PMC, PCMC, Solapur, Solapur MC, Satara--recorded 789 new cases. The Kolhapur circle that includes Kolhapur, Kolhapur MC, Sangli, Sangli MC, Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri--reported 217 new cases.

The Aurangabad circle that consists of Aurangabad, Aurangabad MC, Jalna, Hingoli, Parbhani, Parbhani MC reported 57 fresh cases. The Latur circle that consists of Latur, Latur MC, Osmanabad, Beed, Nanded, Nanded MC recorded 100 fresh cases.

The Akola circle that includes Akola, Akola MC, Amaravati, Amaravati MC, Yawatmal, Buldhana, Washim-- recorded 8 fresh cases.

Nagpur circle--which includes Nagpur, Nagpur MC, Wardha, Bhandara, Gondia, Chandrapur, Chandrapur MC, Gadchiroli --reported 10 fresh cases.

Maharashtra to set up anti-narcotics cells in all districts to curb drugs menace

Maharashtra Home Minister said that each district will be setting up an anti-drug cell under the chairmanship of the Superintendent of Police to curb the growing menace of narcotics substances

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil has directed officials to set up an 'Anti-Drug Cell' in each district after the state's Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) nabbed Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan in a drug raid. The Maharashtra Home Minister

said that each district will be setting up an anti-drug cell under the chairmanship of the Superintendent of Police to curb the growing menace of narcotics substances.

The minister said that the sale of narcotics substances has started in villages and their use has increased among schoolchildren and youth. Therefore, he directed police to be vigilant and prevent the growing drug use in Maharashtra. Walse underscored that drugs were being sold through online marketing. He directed the authorities to set up committees to take joint action in such cases with help from the police, industry and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). On Sunday, NCB busted an alleged drugs party on the Cordelia Cruise ship which was on its way to Goa at mid-sea on October 2

night. Eight persons including Aryan Khan, Arbaz Seth Merchant, Munmun Dhamecha, Vikrant Chhoker, Ismeet Singh, Nupur Sarika, Gomit Chopra, and Mohak Jaswal were produced before Mumbai's Esplanade Court. Meanwhile, on Thursday, the Mumbai court sent Aryan and seven others to judicial custody for 14 days. Khan's lawyer Satish Maneshinde said that the 23-year-old was invited to the Goa-bound cruise ship to "add glamour", and he had no connection with its organisers.

"I (Aryan) am nowhere connected with any other person in cruise, or other arrested accused. I have no connection with the organisers or the other arrested accused," advocate Maneshinde submitted. He, however, accepted that Aryan knew Arbaaz Merchant.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Rise in rapes in Gujarat

In a shocking revelation in the data submitted in the Gujarat state assembly, the state government has revealed that there was a rise of 40% in rapes during the four years from 2016 to 2019. The incidents of gang-rape also quadrupled during the five years from 2016 to 2020. The Gujarat Chief Minister, who also holds the home portfolio, informed that there were a total of 8,317 cases of rape registered between October 1, 2015 and September 30, 2020. This means that there were around 4 to 5 rapes committed everyday in Gujarat during the five years. Between October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016, a total of 1,382 crimes were committed. In the preceding year, 1,480 cases were registered (a 7% rise over the previous year). In the year after that, 1,765 cases were registered (a whopping 19% rise over the previous year). From October 2018 to September 2019, 1,936 cases of rape were registered by the Gujarat Police (a 10% rise over the previous year). There was a fall in this figure by 9% during the preceding year from October 2019 to September 2020 and 1,754 cases were registered. This decline in the number of cases can be attributed to the pandemic in the state. The maximum cases were registered in the financial capital of Gujarat, Ahmedabad -- 1,261 during this five-year period. Second was Surat with 899 cases, Bhavnagar 432 cases, Rajkot 409 cases and Vadodara with 343 cases. During the same period, the number of incidents of gang rape quadrupled. While there were 11 cases of gang rape between October 2015 and September 2016, the next year saw 19 cases. During October 2018 to September 2019, 36 cases of gang rape were registered with the Gujarat Police and in the next year from October 2019 to September 2020, 40 cases of gang rape were reported in Gujarat.

WHAT DOES TALIBAN'S TRIUMPH MEAN FOR POLITICAL ISLAM?

Talmiz Ahmad

Over several months before the Taliban took control of Kabul in August 2021, their spokespersons asserted that they were now a "new" Taliban -- a Taliban who would be moderate in doctrine and accommodative of the country's diversity. During the last six weeks, there have been few indications of change. On women's education and employment, the Taliban have not yet taken a final view: though women at present are not permitted access to higher education or employment, the door has not been finally closed on these claims.

In the broad area of ideology, there have been three developments: one, there are reports that numerous Salafi mosques and madrassas in 16 provinces have been shut down. Two, Taliban militants have committed themselves to conflict with the ISK, which the latter has cheerfully accepted.

Three, the Taliban have made no call for jihad or for attacks on western targets; in fact, the emergence of Taliban in power suggests the efficacy of dialogue with major powers. This is affirmed by the Taliban's recent engagements with Russia and China, both of which have been important interlocutors for the nascent administration, despite being associated with abiding hostility to their domestic Muslim communities -- the Uyghurs in China and the Chechens in Russia.

What implications does this have for Afghanistan emerging as the bastion of violent extremism?

The Taliban's hostility to Salafi influences in Afghanistan and specifically the ISK would suggest that it is unlikely to provide sanctuary to jihadi groups and allow the country to become the playing field for extremist activity. In fact, the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the erstwhile Al Qaeda-affiliated Jabhat Nusra in Syria, has seen the value of re-inventing itself on the Taliban precedent -- confine its activities to Syria, back Turkey and Russia in fighting extremist groups at Idlib, and seek international recognition and support as a legitimate opposition movement in Syria.

While HTS cadres have welcomed the Taliban's success, their leaders have cautioned that they view Afghanistan as a refuge for them as civilians and not as a base for violent attacks as the Taliban will not tolerate them.

The crucial issue is that of international recognition -- like any liberation movement that has come to power after prolonged struggle, the Taliban would like broad international acceptance. Failure in this regard could have serious consequences: as Russian commentator Kirill Semonov has noted, if international recognition is not forthcoming, the Taliban could use extremist groups to perpetrate violence in neighbouring countries, posing a particularly serious threat to the Central Asian republics.

The success of the Taliban in Afghanistan is thus a victory for freedom from foreign occupation, but it is not yet a triumph for representative governance. Developments over the next few months will tell us in which direction that country



will move.

Outlook for political Islam: Today, in West Asia, neither jihad nor the Brotherhood have the state sponsors they had earlier. Saudi Arabia and the UAE, that, besides Pakistan, had been the only countries to recognise the "emirate" at Kandahar, now espouse moderate Islam; neither has shown any enthusiasm for the Taliban victory in Kabul. The UAE has given sanctuary to former president Ashraf Ghani, while the kingdom has called for an "inclusive" government in Kabul.

A Saudi commentator has said Saudi Arabia would like to see an Afghanistan that is not driven by extremist religious ideology. It now only views the country through the prism of its geopolitical competition with Iran and is expected to work with Pakistan to stem Iranian influence rather than back extremist ideological politics in that country.

Again, Turkey and Qatar, both champions of Brotherhood-affiliated political Islam, are shaping fresh ideological approaches. Both have called for an inclusive government in Kabul; in fact, Turkey has made its management of Kabul airport conditional on the fulfilment of this requirement.

Turkey has also been similarly cautious in its criticism of the Tunisian president's attack on Ennahda, despite close ties of the AKP with its ideological partner. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has remained silent, in contrast with the rallies he had personally led when President Mohamed Morsi of Egypt was ousted. Turkish spokespersons have merely described events in Tunisia as "worrying", "illegitimate" and a source of "deep concern". Turkey's low-key responses reflect its interest to revive its ties with Egypt and Saudi Arabia and promote a new political order in Libya in cooperation with Egypt. A commentator has noted that Turkey will sacrifice the Brotherhood to appease Cairo and Riyadh "in the hopes of securing new friends in the region". In an ironical twist, Saudi Arabia is also reviewing its ties with the Brotherhood-affiliated Al-Islah party in Yemen. Contrary to its traditional hostility to the Brotherhood and its off-shoots, the kingdom has maintained close relations with the Al-Islah for several decades and has in recent years used the party in its fight against the Houthis. This is an opportunistic alliance as the two sides differ on impor-

tant matters: Al-Islah rejects the sectarian approach of the Saudis and supports a united Yemen made up of all its diverse groups and ideologies. These differences have come to the fore in recent months: Saudi Arabia has voiced strong criticisms of Al-Islah as an Islamist organisation. The kingdom's clerics have called it a "terrorist" organisation and accused it of "sedition, wreaking havoc, committing violence and terrorism". Al-Islah member and Nobel laureate, Tawakkol Karman, has responded sharply by calling the Saudi clerics "hypocrites for bin Salman and his shoe polishers", pointing out that the Brotherhood is struggling for freedom, and that Saudi Arabia is "the mother and father of terrorism". This divide has pushed Al-Islah closer to the Houthis.

These developments reflect a region in the throes of uncertainty as the US prepares to disengage from the region's competitions and conflicts. But they certainly do not portend the demise of political Islam, even if its principal parties are experiencing pressure from authoritarian rulers.

Despite severe repression in Egypt, the Brotherhood remains resilient today largely due to the depth and spread of its leadership, the discipline and commitment of its members, and the free debate that is going on through social media on how the movement should face the current challenges and where it should affect major changes.

Ideas being discussed include: accommodation with the al-Sisi government; recourse to violent opposition; and even a shift away from Islam towards the adoption of a broader agenda that would include matters that concern the global South: issues of culture and identity; ethnic, communal and sectarian extremism; poverty, inequality and exploitation, and environmental degradation and food security, etc.

In order to understand the place of Islamism in West Asian affairs we should see it, not as movements with diverse expressions, but as a solid platform of resistance to authoritarian rule. The only relevant political issue in West Asian politics, as Peter Mandaville has learnt from Brotherhood activists, is whether one supports or opposes the authoritarian regime -- Islam, he points out, "provides a culturally and politically permissible means of registering dissent".

Recent developments in Tunisia and Morocco are setbacks in the struggle for popular participation in governance. However, given the persistence of authoritarian rule in the region, political Islam will remain for several years the principal and enduring instrument of resistance in West Asia.

(The author, a former ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Oman and the UAE, holds the Ram Sathe Chair for International Studies, Symbiosis International University, Pune. This is the second and concluding part of his article. Views expressed are personal. The content is being carried under an arrangement with indianarrative.com)

international

US SENATE APPROVES SHORT-TERM DEBT LIMIT INCREASE TO AVERT DEFAULT

Washington | Agencies

The US Senate has approved a bill to increase the nation's borrowing limit in the short term to avert a looming debt default.

Late Thursday night, the Senate voted 50-48 along party lines to raise the federal government's debt limit by \$480 billion, which would allow the Treasury Department to meet obligations through December 3, reports Xinhua news agency.

The vote came after Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced on Thursday morning that he had reached an agreement with Republicans to extend the debt limit into December.

The short-term debt limit increase still needs a vote in the House of Representatives, which is currently on a break through next week, according to local media.

The White House on Thursday called the bill a "positive step forward", signalling support for it.

"And it gives us some breathing room from the catastrophic default we were approaching because of Senator (Mitch) McConnell's decision to play politics with our economy," White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters.

"Addressing the debt limit shouldn't be a partisan football. This is about paying the debt that both parties have

already incurred," Jean-Pierre said.

As part of a bipartisan budget deal enacted in August 2019, Congress suspended the debt limit through July 31.

After the debt limit was reinstated on August 1, the Treasury Department began using "extraordinary measures" to continue to finance the government on a temporary basis.

The debt limit, commonly called the debt ceiling, is the total amount of money that the US government is authorised to borrow to meet its existing legal obligations, including social security and Medicare benefits, interest on the national debt, and other payments.

N KOREA SEEMS TO MAINTAIN STRICT LAND BORDER CONTROLS: SEOUL

Seoul: North Korea appears to maintain its tight restrictions on the movement of materials through land borders with China despite some signs that it is easing up its maritime border controls to bring in outside assistance, the South Korean Unification Ministry said on Friday.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that it has begun shipping Covid-19 medical supplies to North Korea through the Chinese port of Dalian, indicating that Pyongyang might be opening a maritime route that has been blocked since July last year due to the pandemic, reports Yonhap News Agency.

Powerful quake in Japan injures 32, disrupts train services

Tokyo | Agencies

Authorities in Japan said on Friday that a powerful earthquake which jolted the country the previous day left 32 people injured, while also disrupting train services in the Tokyo area, affecting around 368,000 passengers in total.

The earthquake that struck the capital region at 10.41 p.m. on Thursday night reached upper 5 on the Japanese seismic intensity scale of 7 in parts of Tokyo and Saitama prefecture, reports Xinhua news agency.

The last time that people in central Tokyo faced such an intense jolt was during the massive quake of March 11, 2011, which devastated northeastern Japan and triggered a tsunami and



nuclear disaster. According to East Japan Railway Co. (JR East), the strongest earthquake for the Japanese capital in a decade caused services on the Shinkansen bullet train and 16 local train lines cancelled or delayed from late night Thursday to about 3 pm (local time) on Friday, resulting in many late-night train passengers stranded and a commuter disruption in the morning. JR East have resumed train services,

but many passengers were forced to wait at stations due to delays. After a train derailed in Tokyo's Adachi Ward, one of the areas hit hardest by the tremor, the operation of the Nippori Toneri Line, a driverless guideway transit system in Tokyo, might remain suspended for several days, according to its operator. The Japan Transport Safety Board has sent officials to investigate the derailment. According to a tally by the Fire and Disaster Management Agency, two in Saitama Prefecture and one in Chiba Prefecture sustained severe injuries among the 32.

Around 250 houses in Tokyo's Shinjuku Ward briefly experienced power outages due to the earthquake, and water stoppages and leaks were reported in central Tokyo.

GREEK PARLIAMENT RATIFIES DEFENCE PACT WITH FRANCE



Athens: The Greek Parliament has ratified an agreement with France on the establishment of a strategic partnership for cooperation in defence and security.

The agreement, which was signed last week in Paris by French President Emmanuel Macron and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, passed on Thursday by 191 votes in favour in the 300-member assembly, reports Xinhua news agency.

"It is an accord that upgrades bilateral cooperation in defence, security and foreign policy," Mitsotakis said in Parliament.

Calling it a historic agreement, he said that "for the first time there is a clear clause of military assistance in the event of an attack by a third party on one of the two states".

In the context of the new accord, Greece will also purchase three French frigates in addition to an earlier order of French fighter aircraft.

The first Rafale planes are scheduled to be delivered this year, and the first Belharra frigate in 2025, the Greek leader said.

Moscow vows retaliation for NATO's expulsion of Russian diplomats

Moscow would retaliate following the decision made by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to expel eight Russian diplomats, the Russian Foreign Ministry said on Thursday.

Moscow | Agencies

NATO's reluctance to interact has become obvious, and this seems to be definitive and irrevocable. We will proceed from this when developing response measures, which will follow," said Russia Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova during her weekly press briefing.

She added that while the alliance's decision did not come as a surprise, it was nonetheless an arrogant and hypocritical move, especially as no official explanations were provided.

Meanwhile, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday the bloc's decision to expel the Russian diplomats in response to alleged "malign activities" completely undermined the prospects for the normalization of Russia's ties with the alliance.

On Wednesday, NATO announced the expulsion of eight members of



Russia's mission to the military alliance in Brussels, calling them "undeclared Russian intelligence officers."

Additionally, the number of Russian staff at the mission was reduced by half from 20 to 10 employees.

IRAN, LEBANON AGREE TO BOOST TIES



Beirut: Visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said that his country and Lebanon have agreed to strengthen bilateral ties in various ways.

Abdollahian made the remarks on Thursday at a press conference following his meeting with Lebanon's House Speaker Nabih Berri, reports Xinhua news agency.

The Foreign minister said he discussed with Berri the importance of Hezbollah's armed forces to deter Israel, as well as some other regional issues.

"I would like to assure you that the Islamic Republic of Iran will always stand alongside Lebanon and assist it in overcoming its various crises," he said.

In his meetings with Lebanese President Michel Aoun and Prime Minister Najib Mikati, the Iranian Foreign Minister reiterated his country's readiness to support Lebanon amid the current financial crisis.

For his part, Aoun thanked Iran's continuous support for Lebanon and its donations following the Beirut port blasts. Abdollahian also met Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib, noting that Iranian companies are ready to construct power stations in Lebanon within 18 months to produce 1,000 megawatts in the capital Beirut and southern parts of the country.



SUB PUBLIC SERVICE CENTRES WILL BE OPENED IN BIG GRAM: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the system of various services being provided to the citizens in the state will be further strengthened. Under this, the public service centres will be expanded from the tehsil to the gram Panchayat level. In the coming one year, Sub Public Service Centres will be established in Gram Panchayats having population of more than five thousand. Services will be made available to the citizens at their doorsteps. Copy of Khasra will be provided to the citizens at only Rs 10 per page. The facility of sending this service to the registered WhatsApp number on 181 Janseva will also be started.

Chouhan was addressing at Minto Hall meeting hall on Friday on the concluding day of Jan Kalyan and Suraj Abhiyan which started from September 17. On this occasion, Chouhan started seven new portals and eight public service centres with a single click. New portals of General Administration, Urban Development, Planning and Statistics, Home and Energy Departments were started. These portals will increase the public facilities available to the citizens and their work will be easier. Now e-FIR can be possible on the portal of Home Department.

Chouhan said that the system of "e-Rupee" would be implemented in the form of e-voucher in the state. Under Ayushman Bharat, cash benefit can be transferred directly to the beneficiaries for specific purpose through "e-Rupee" for payment of treatment amount of patients and scholarships. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that



whether all the beneficiaries are getting the benefits of beneficiary-oriented schemes, it would be ensured by running a campaign in the state from November 15 to January 15, 2022.

Chouhan said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has completed 20 successful years by working continuously as the Chief Minister of Gujarat and Prime Minister of the country. He introduced a transparent system for the general public. Irregularities have been eliminated by the system of sending the amount directly to the account of the benefi-

ciaries. Suraj also means that services are received within a certain time frame. PM Modi is engaged in building a magnificent, glorious, powerful India. He presented the Gujarat model. He is the combination of development, good governance and public welfare. He benefitted the general public through Ujjwala scheme, farmers' Samman Nidhi, cheap ration, treatment facilities to all, housing for the poor, public toilet system and cleanliness campaign in the country. In Madhya Pradesh, beneficiaries of different schemes were benefitted in the Suraj

Abhiyan from September 17 to October 7.

Chouhan said that despite the economic difficulties of the Corona period, an amount of 40 thousand crore rupees was spent on infrastructure development and other works in Madhya Pradesh. Children who have lost their parents to Covid should not consider themselves alone. The government is with them. Chief Minister said that continuous efforts are being made for self-reliant Madhya Pradesh and self-reliant India. Madhya Pradesh will make its special participation in this work.

NGT asks Bhopal civic body to follow environment norms for PMAY housing projects

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) not to proceed with further construction of housing projects without having mandatory environmental clearance.

The Tribunal's directive came while hearing a plea alleging violation of environmental norms and energy information administration (EIA) for the construction of affordable housing projects under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (urban) in Bhopal.

The petitioner in his plea alleged that the construction of housing project in Kotra Sultanabad area has been carried out by BMC without the requisite environmental clearance. "We direct that the Bhopal Municipal Corporation may not proceed further with any constructions without requisite environmental clearance. For the constructions already raised without environmental clearance, remedial measures, including recovery of compensation, may have to be looked into," said a directive issued on October 4 by special bench (Bhopal) of the Tribunal. The housing project was approved in 2018 by the Town and Country Planning department of the Madhya Pradesh government and was registered with Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) along with different approvals

but there was no environmental clearance required, the applicant has informed the NGT.

It said the land was allotted to the Bhopal civic body under PMAY project in 2019 and thereafter construction work started before requisite permissions. The applicant has alleged that open spaces and green belts as required under the housing project were not provided.

Following this move, the NGT in July 2020 had issued notice to BMC on this issue. Meanwhile, the Tribunal had set up a joint committee comprising BMC Commissioner, Divisional Forest Officer, Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board, to provide a factual report in the matter.

Subsequently, BMC in August 2020 had contended that the construction area was less than 20,000 square metre and therefore, the project did not attract the requirement of prior environmental clearance under the notification issued in September 2006. The NGT's special bench headed by its Chairman Adarsh Kumar Goel said the objective of the project to provide affordable housing is undoubtedly appreciable, "even such projects need to be undertaken in accordance with the environmental norms, more so when the project proponent is at public authority which has to be the model of compliance of environmental norms."

Forests are the pride of Madhya Pradesh: Governor

Local people should be trained for employment in the field of

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that forests are the pride of Madhya Pradesh, our forests are full of natural beauty and make the state pollution free. It is everyone's responsibility that better efforts should be made for the conservation of forests. Tribal society and forests are closely related to each other. Conservation of forests will be done only with the protection of tribal community. Patel was discussing with the officials regarding the progress of development works and schemes at Raj Bhavan Pachmarhi on Friday. Patel said that in order to increase the production and maintain the fertility of the land, it is necessary that crops should be cultivated in a cyclic order. More and more modern technology should be used in the agriculture sector. Inspire the farmer brothers for this.

Patel said that plantation of medicinal plants should be done in maximum forest and



tourist areas in the plantation work being done by the Forest Department. The coordination of the concerned department with the forest department is necessary in the schemes being implemented for the tribal community, so that the schemes can be implemented effectively. Patel said that children should be motivated to take up higher education. Governor said that training centres should be set up for training the local people in different areas of employment. Efforts should also be made to benefit more and more local people through employment fairs. In the meeting, Governor Patel was given detailed information about the works conducted by senior officers of Public Works Department, Forest Department, Satpura Tiger Reserve, Tourism Development Corporation, Cantonment Board etc.

Our priority is to make the lives of tribals better: Governor

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that a large number of tribal people live in Madhya Pradesh. About 21 percent of the population of the state belongs to the tribes. Tribal society is still behind in the pace of development. Patel has said that we should all participate in the all-round development of the tribes. The government has given the slogan of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas.

Together we can make this concept a reality. Take as a challenge the task of implementing the welfare schemes of the government by going among the people of the tribal society, bringing happiness in their lives.

Patel said that everyone together will have to make positive efforts to bring growth, progress and prosperity in the life of tribal community. Continuous efforts will have to be made to bring improvement in the lives of the people of the tribal community. Governor Patel was addressing a debate on prevention of sickle



cell disease at Indira Gandhi Tribal National University, Amarkantak today. The debate was inaugurated by the Governor Patel by garlanding the photo of Maa Saraswati and lighting the lamp. Patel said that everyone's goal is human welfare. I have a great expectation from all of you that you will go among the people of the tribal society and cooperate with them in the matter of their growth and progress. By guiding them, we will try to bring them on path of development and progress with confidence.

Patel said that good health is also necessary along with development. Sickle cell disease is more prevalent in tribal areas. Many health disorders arise due to sickle cell disease. Awareness is essential for the prevention of sickle cell disease. Information about the causes of sickle cell disease and what are the measures to prevent it should reach the people of the tribal society living in remote areas.

Patel said that patients suffering from sickle cell should also get the services of specialists and doctors.

Patel said that efforts should also be made to eradicate sickle cell disease completely. He said that continuous efforts are being made by the government for the patients suffering from sickle cell. Patel said that the knowledge of Tribal University should reach the villages and the poor. The knowledge of the university should be utilised in the prevention of sickle cell disease and other diseases and in providing employment and self-employment to the people of tribal society. The knowledge imparted by the universities to the students should be employment-oriented. The education provided by the universities should also provide employment to the students. Patel inaugurated the Center of Excellence set up in the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University campus by cutting the ribbon. He also planted saplings on this occasion. Patel distributed benefits to the beneficiaries of Kalyani Pension Scheme, Forest Rights Patta and Sambal Yojana in a programme organised at Indira Gandhi Tribal University, Amarkantak today.

CM PLANTS COCONUT SAPLING IN RESIDENCE PREMISES



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a coconut sapling in the residence premises today. Coconut is considered auspicious and beneficiary in Indian culture. Therefore it is used in worship-rituals and auspicious works. Coconut is considered a symbol of good luck and prosperity. Coconut is called 'Shriphal' in Sanskrit and Shri means Lakshmi. Coconut tree is also called 'Kalpavriksha' in Sanskrit. Coconut water contains a good amount of electrolytes, which makes one feel fresh when tired or weak. One coconut contains about 600 mg of potassium.

CM OFFERS GARLAND ON THE DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF JP



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage to Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan on his death anniversary. Chouhan garlanded his portrait in the auditorium at his residence. Jai Prakash Narayan, popularly known as JP or 'Lok Nayak', was an Indian freedom fighter, social reformer and politician. He is mainly known for leading the opposition against Indira Gandhi in 1970. The Government of India posthumously awarded him the country's highest civilian honour 'Bharat Ratna' in 1998. In 1965, he was also awarded the Magsaysay Award for social service. Jai Prakash Narayan ji died on October 8, 1979 in Patna after a prolonged illness.

Land, language and life is the land of literature: Mishra

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The 5th Tribal Literature Festival was inaugurated on Friday at the Rock Art Centre of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal (IGRMS) by noted folk lyricist Mahendra Mishra.

The TLF 2021 is commenced with the welcome address by Sudhir Shrivastav, he gave a brief introductory about the programme and detailed about the research papers to be presented with in these two days. The keynote address was given by Mahendra Mishra, Raipur on the topic Tribal Literature: concept and relevance. In his keynote address he focused on the importance of oral tradition and tribal societies of India. On the nature of tribal literature and its Tribal Oral Literature has the potential of restoring the ecology of the globe. The whole world is divided into two sects, one is the exploitation of the earth and destruction of the global environment, and the other is registration and maintenance of nature by nurturing the world around them. The modern environment scientists



must learn from the tribal older knowledgeable persons to restore the earth to save this planet. Written tribal literature is certainly writing their pains and protests against the exploitation, but at the same time, the oral tradition of the tribal people has the resources of sustaining the earth. Tribal Oral literature has the energy of maintaining social solidarity, the harmony of nature and animals, and the natural world view to eliminating the discrimination between humanity. Tribal people have the world-view of Vedic literature. Mukesh Mishra gave the inaugural address of the festival. He said more research to be done

on the oral literatures as it gives a deep knowledge about tribal life. It is necessary to write down the knowledge that is in their oral traditions with the help of tribal literature, so that the people living in the three-tier social structure will be able to understand and define the diversity of Indian culture properly. To know history, it is necessary to know the event, place and time, but our sages must have been trying to explain the essence of life by writing texts like Mahabharata, Ramayana, so they understood the time and did not pay attention.

While conducting the program, Sudhir Shrivastava spoke on the topic of Indian way of life and tribal traditions in today's second session with Rajkishore Hansda, Dumka and Prof. Hetal Choudhary, Surat expressed her views as well as in the third session on the topic Tribal Philosophy: Context of medieval India, Narmada Prasad Upadhyay, Indore, Dharmendra Pare, Bhopal, Rajiv Ranjan Prasad, Delhi, Rekha Nagar, Indore provided research information. At the end of the program, program coordinator Rakesh Bhatt, assistant curator proposed vote of thanks.

MINISTER PREM SINGH PATEL CALLS ON CM



Bhopal: Animal Husbandry, Social Justice and Disabled Welfare Minister Prem Singh Patel made a courtesy call to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at the Chief Minister's residence on Friday. Chouhan inquired about Patel's health and wished him good health soon.

Commendable work done in state for Corona prevention: Governor

Provide benefits of schemes to the poorest first
Officers should do their best every day and also motivate for it

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that the poorest of the poor should first get the benefit of government welfare schemes. Officers should consider it their responsibility to provide benefits of the schemes to those people from the society who are illiterate and are ignorant about the schemes. Patel was addressing the officers in a meeting held at Amarkantak on Friday.

Patel said that every officer should perform their best daily and inspire others also to do good work. Every officer should be sensitive to the needs of the poor and have a sense of service to the poor. During the Corona period, doctors and other officers of the state worked with dedication and devotion. Many doctors, officers and employees sacrificed their lives



while serving the people. Seeking information about the situation of Corona in Anuppur district, Governor Patel said that it should be ensured that the families of officers and employees who died due to Corona should get the benefits of Corona Warrior Programme and Compassionate Appointment Scheme on priority.

Patel said that everyone has done a good job collectively for Corona prevention in Madhya Pradesh and I am proud of this. He said that efforts should also be made in the tribal areas to prevent the dreaded disease like Sickle Cell. Patel

said that there is a need to make people aware about Sickle Cell disease. For this, continuous efforts should be made in rural areas. Patel sought information from the officials regarding the efforts being made to prevent Sickle Cell in Anuppur district. Chief Medical and Health Officer Anuppur said that about 77 thousand people have been surveyed for Sickle Cell disease in the district, in which about 13 thousand people have been found to be positive and 1200 are patients. Patients are being treated continuously and the Sickle Cell disease survey is also being conducted. Free medicines are being provided to people suffering from the disease and they facilities for blood transfusion is also being made available. Patel also directed to seek guidance and services of country's medical experts to prevent Sickle Cell disease, besides organizing conferences and workshops to create awareness among people about the disease. Collector Anuppur Sonia Meena informed that in Anuppur district, more than 4 lakh 90 thousand persons have been vaccinated against Corona in the first phase. She said that vaccination is being done at a rapid pace in the district. The work of Phase II vaccination is also in progress. The Collector also apprised Governor about the progress of setting up oxygen plant in Anuppur district.



Reaffirming Status

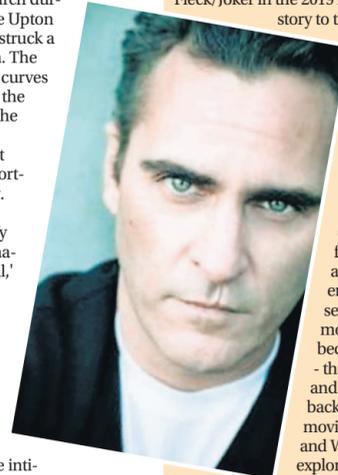
Kate Upton reaffirms her bombshell status as she accentuates her famous curves in purple lace lingerie for sizzling snaps

Los Angeles | Agencies



Last month, she was walking the runway for Tory Burch during New York Fashion Week. But on Thursday, Kate Upton took a more relaxed approach to modelling as she struck a seductive pose from the comfort of her living room. The 29-year-old blonde bombshell slipped her famous curves into a purple lace bralette and a pair of matching bottoms for the Instagram snapshot. Her bright blonde hair was parted down the middle and she appeared to be wearing little to no makeup. She posed with her arms out besides her and flashed a slight smile, while her figure-flattering lingerie effortlessly put her flat tummy in full view.

'Feeling strong, sexy and comfy in my @yamamayofficial,' captioned Upton, who made the post in celebration of the intimates line's 20th anniversary. Taking to her Instagram Story, Kate wished Yamamay another 'happy birthday' and thanked them for 'celebrating women for 20 years.'



JOAQUIN PHOENIX HINTS AT 'JOKER' SEQUEL

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oscar-winning actor Joaquin Phoenix has suggested that a sequel to 'Joker' is possible as there are more things to "explore" with the villain. The 46-year-old star won the Best Actor Oscar for his role as Arthur Fleck/Joker in the 2019 movie, which serves as an origin story to the iconic 'Batman' villain.

Phoenix told Playlist: "This is an interesting guy. There are some things we could do with this guy and could (explore) further. But as to whether we actually will? I don't know." It was reported earlier this year that director Todd Phillips was working on a script for the sequel and he previously suggested that a follow-up had been discussed during filming for the first film, reports variety.com. Speaking after the movie's release, the filmmaker said: "Well there was (a push for a sequel) even before 'Joker' came out. 'A movie does that kind of business and became that beloved around the world - they had talked to us about it. Joaquin and I had spoken about it anyway as far back as when we were shooting the movie.' Phillips had planned to get DC and Warner Bros., to focus on movies that explore the darker side of their superheroes and hoped that other filmmakers would embrace the concept. The 50-year-old director explained: "I pitched it as three movies, 'Joker' being the first with me, and then these two other movies, with two other directors." But I don't really want to name them, because then it'll become a thing and I'm pulling these directors into it when I've never even told them about it. It was just me telling Warner Bros. about it."

Claire Foy to play Facebook COO in 'Doomsday Machine' series

London | Agencies

English actress Claire Foy will play Facebook's Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg in a scripted series adaptation based on Sheera Frenkel and Cecilia Kang's New York Times bestselling book "An Ugly Truth: Inside Facebook's Battle for Domination".

The drama titled 'Doomsday Machine', hails from Anonymous Content, who recently closed a deal with Foy. The show will lift the veil on the relationship between Mark Zuckerberg and Sandberg and the obstacles Facebook has faced on its relentless quest for growth. Several journalists will serve as consultants to ensure the plot's accuracy, reports variety.com. The series spans from 2016, beginning with the election and rise of disinformation, followed by recent revelations like XCHECK, a program that shielded important users, including former President Donald Trump, from Facebook's rules and regulations.

The show will also cover how the company was aware of the mental health risks posed by Instagram to younger users, and the push by Zuckerberg to use the News Feed as his own propaganda machine to push out articles with positive slants about Facebook. 'Doomsday Machine' is created by Ayad Akhtar, author of the bestselling novel "Homeland Elegies", which he is concurrently adapting for an FX series. Akhtar is also a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright. 'Doomsday Machine' is based on Frenkel and Kang's reporting for the New York Times and Andrew Marantz's work for The New Yorker. Frenkel and Kang executive produce and consult on the project, along with Marantz.

Woody Harrelson punched man in self-defense



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Woody Harrelson punched a man in self-defense following a row after a man reportedly would not stop taking pictures of him and his daughter.

Police were called to a hotel in Washington D.C. at around 11 p.m. on Wednesday in response to a report about an assault on the roof deck, and found several people there, including the 60-year-old actor, who has Deni,

Zoe and Makani with wife Laura Louie, reports femalefirst.co.uk. Police said a man, who appeared to be intoxicated, had taken photographs of Harrelson and his daughter, and so the 'Hunger Games' star reportedly approached him and asked him to stop and delete the pictures he had already taken.

A report by police officers then tells how the actor admitted he got into a verbal dispute with the man who "lunged towards" him in an attempt to "grab his neck", and so he punched him "in his neck in defense of himself".

Witnesses backed up the 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri' star's account of what had happened, and police told NBC Washington their statements suggested the other man had been the aggressor.

The unnamed guy who had been taking photographs was questioned in

his hotel room and his name will be released if he is charged. The investigation is still ongoing.

The actor, who has been in the city filming HBO series 'The White House Plumbers', has declined to comment on the incident.

This isn't the first time the actor has had an altercation with someone taking pictures.

In 1995, he got into a scuffle with two paparazzi who he claimed had stalked his family during a visit to Martha's Vineyard and was later ordered to pay one of them over \$4,800, while the other, who had filmed the incident, was given just \$2.



'Pokemon The Movie: Secrets of the Jungle': Reminds you of 'Jungle Book'



FILM REVIEW

TROY RIBEIRO

(Streaming on Netflix)

Direction: Tetsuo Yajima

Cast: Sarah Natochenny, Ikue Otani, Michele Knotz, James Carter Cathcart, Erica Schroeder and Rodger Parsons.

Duration: 99 minutes

Ratings: *** (three stars)



This film directed by Tetsuo Yajima is the 23rd in the Pokemon Universe, which was created by Satoshi Tajiri, the originator of Nintendo's Pokemon franchise.

It tells us the story of Koko, a human boy raised by a Zarude, a sophisticated Mythical Pokemon in the forests of Okoya.

Just like the Biblical Moses, a baby is found floating in a cane basket on the banks of a river in the jungle by a group of Zarudes. Unable to leave the child on his own, one of

them abandons his tribe to adopt him as his son, giving him the name, Koko. Believing the Zarude to be his father, Koko fondly calls him 'Dada'.

Completely cut off from human society, Koko grows up believing that he is a Pokemon, although he does not resemble them in any way.

Ten years later, Ash Ketchum and Pikachu from the nearby Millyfa Town, while attempt-

ing to capture a wild Cormorant in the Jungle, chance upon Koko, who interacts with humans for the first time. This throws his identity into chaos as he begins to question who he is and how he fits into the world.

On a parallel track, there is a research team from a biotech company, headed by a crooked scientist named Dr Zed, who is scouting around in the jungle in the hope of finding the existence of healing springs.

How their lives intersect, and Koko realises his true identity, forms the crux of the narrative. Right from the opening sequence, you find a familiarity with the narrative of Rudyard Kipling's 'Jungle Book' and you'd be comparing Koko to Mowgli. Except that the twists and turns are wild and raging.

The film indulges you with a current of enchantment, climaxing in a thunderous extended action sequence that dazzles while trying off every lingering plot point and gathering up all the bits of incredible, unpredictable folklore and iconography from the world of Pokemon.

It is for the first time that a Pokemon film has six songs, all written by Tajiri Okazaki. The songs -- 'The Rule Song', 'Koko', 'Show Window', 'The Hum of the Forest', 'Strange and Wonderful Creatures' and 'I'm Home and Welcome Back' -- seamlessly integrate into the narrative and elevate the viewing experience.

Visually, the 2D computer-generated animated frames with pastel shades are all bright, colourful and appealing to the eye, and the voices of its ace cast brighten the characters and bring them to life.

Overall, if only you're a Pokemon fan, the film will appeal to you.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Delilah Belle Hamlin



IPL 2021:

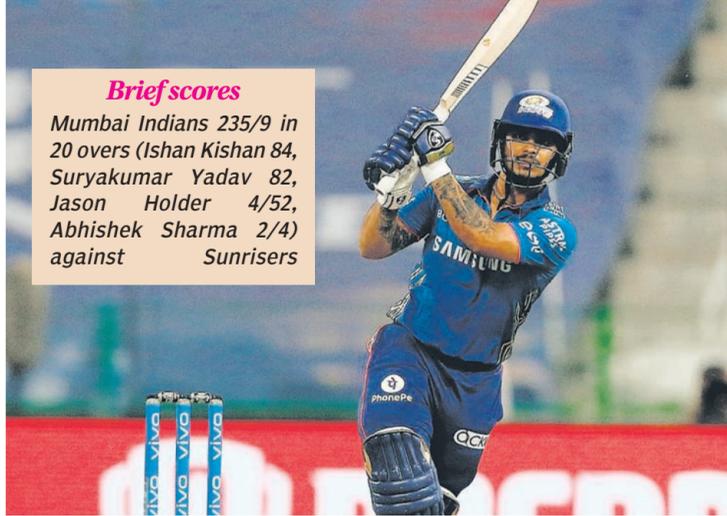
KISHAN, YADAV POWER MUMBAI TO A MAMMOTH 235/9

Abu Dhabi | Agencies

Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar Yadav produced terrific half-centuries to power Mumbai Indians to a mammoth 235/9 in Match 55 of IPL 2021 here at Sheikh Zayed Stadium here on Friday. While Kishan batted like a video game panning out in reality, Yadav combined timing and grace for his knock. Mumbai now need to bowl Hyderabad out for 65 or below to give themselves a chance to qualify for the playoffs.

After electing to bat first, Mumbai were off to a flying start. Ishan Kishan hit four fours in as many balls against Siddarth Kaul while taking 18 runs in the second over. Be it Mohammad Nabi, Jason Holder or Umran Malik, all came in for severe thrashing from Kishan. The youngster's fireworks continued as he raced to his second consecutive half-century in just 16 balls, the fastest fifty of the tournament. The blazing opening partnership of 80 runs was broken by Rashid Khan in the final over of power-play as Sharma top-edged a pull to a tumbling square leg.

After power-play ended at 83/1, Kishan continued with the carnage, hitting a four and six off Malik followed by slog-sweeping Rashid Khan in the next over. Hyderabad enforced a slowdown in middle overs as Hardik Pandya holed out off Holder in the ninth over. In the next over, Malik put an end to Kishan's astonishing knock, nicking behind to keeper. Three overs later, Abhishek Sharma claimed wickets on successive



Brief scores

Mumbai Indians 235/9 in 20 overs (Ishan Kishan 84, Suryakumar Yadav 82, Jason Holder 4/52, Abhishek Sharma 2/4) against Sunrisers

deliveries as Kieron Pollard picked out the fielder in between the 'v', followed by James Neesham spooning a catch to cover.

In between, Yadav slammed boundaries at will and with panache despite losing Krunal Pandya and Nathan Coulter-Nile from the other

end. Yadav reached his fifty with a loft straight down the ground off Kaul. He went on to slam boundaries against Kaul and Holder followed by a hat-trick of fours off Malik in the 19th over. Holder took out Piyush Chawla and Yadav in the final over to concede just five runs.

IPL 2021: RCB beat Delhi Capitals by 7 wickets



Dubai | Agencies

Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Delhi Capitals by 7 wickets in the 56th match of IPL 2021 at Dubai International Cricket Stadium, here on Friday.

With this win, Virat Kohli led RCB finished the league stage with 18 points in 14 matches. They will face Kolkata Knight Riders in the Eliminator in Sharjah on October 11. Riding on some fine knocks by Prithvi Shaw (48 off 31) and Shikhar Dhawan (43 off 35) Delhi Capitals posted a total of 164/5 in 20 overs.

Apart from Shaw and Dhawan, Shimron Hetmyer also made a valuable contribution with the bat, scoring 29 runs in 22 balls.

In reply, Virat Kohli and Devdutt Padikkal were dismissed cheaply with Anrich Nortje dismissing the two openers. Things looked worrisome when Axar Patel dismissed AB de Villiers soon after.

But KS Bharat (78 off 52) and Glenn Maxwell (51 off 33) stitched an unbeaten 111-run stand to take RCB over the victory line in the last ball. Bharat struck a six off the final delivery to seal victory.

Brief scores

Delhi Capitals 164/5 in 20 overs (Prithvi Shaw 48 off 31, Shikhar Dhawan 43 off 35; Mohammed Siraj 25/2) lost to Royal Challengers Bangalore 166/3 in 20 overs (KS Bharat 78 off 52 and Glenn Maxwell 51 off 33; Nortje 2/24)

Gold and bronze for India in mixed rapid fire, silver in women's 3P team

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India won its 10th gold medal at the ISSF Junior World Championships, being held in Lima (Peru), after Vijayveer Sidhu and Rhythm Sangwan out-classed Thailand's Kanyakorn Hirunphoem and Schwakon Triniphakorn 9-1 in the mixed rapid fire event, according to information received here on Friday.

Also winning silver on the day was the junior women's 50m rifle 3-positions (3P) team comprising Prasad Mahant, Nishcal and Ayushi Podder, while the second Indian pair in mixed rapid fire pistol, Tejaswini and Anish Bhanwala, also won bronze, making it a total haul of 23 medal thus far with two more competi-



tion days remaining.

Vijayveer and Rhythm came through two rounds of qualifying to completely dominate their match against the Thai pair, not allowing them to win even one series.

The 3P women on the other hand went down eventually go down 43-47.

In the mixed rapid fire bronze match, Tejaswini and Anish put it across a second Thai pair 10-8.

There are two medal events scheduled on Friday, the penultimate day of competition. India are leading the medals tally with 10 gold, nine silver and four bronze medals. USA is second with six gold.

Montevideo | Agencies

Argentina and Uruguay had to settle for goal-less draws in their respective 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifiers against Paraguay and Colombia. In Asuncion, Argentina looked in control for most of the match but struggled to find a way past the hosts' defence as Albiceleste captain Lionel Messi endured a frustrating Thursday night. The Paris Saint-Germain forward's best scoring chance came when he curled a first-half free-kick narrowly wide of the far post.

The hosts had goalkeeper Antony Silva to thank for denying Argentina a late winner as he launched himself sideways to keep out Nicolas Gonzalez's dipping shot. Carlos Gonzalez had a chance to steal an unlikely victory for Paraguay but sent his shot from 12 yards sailing over the bar.

Argentina remain unbeaten with five wins and four draws from their nine qualifiers so far while Paraguay have two wins, six draws and two defeats, Xinhua reports.

Meanwhile, Colombia secured a vital point away from home at Montevideo's Gran Parque Central



stadium. Uruguay dominated for much of the first half and were unlucky not to go ahead when Suarez was flagged for a marginal offside after finding the back of the net in the 22nd minute.

Suarez also sent a close-range attempt wide of the target when he had only goalkeeper David Ospina to beat. Colombia's best scoring opportunity came in the 70th minute when Luis Diaz's cross left Duvan Zapata one on one with goalkeeper

Fernando Muslera six yards out. But the Atalanta striker sent a timid attempt straight at the Galatasaray stopper.

In Caracas, Brazil produced a late flourish to keep their perfect 2022 World Cup qualifying record intact with a 3-1 victory away to Venezuela.

The hosts shocked the five-time World Cup winners by taking the lead through an Eric Ramirez header following Yeferson Soteldo's cross in the 11th minute. Brazil, who were without talismanic forward Neymar due to suspension, controlled most of the possession but lacked intensity in the final third.

In Lima, Peru kept alive their hopes of qualifying for a second consecutive FIFA World Cup with a 2-0 home win over Chile. The hosts went ahead in the 35th minute when Paolo Guerrero's powerful shot was kept out by goalkeeper Claudio Bravo before Christian Cueva thumped in the rebound.

Fenerbahce forward Enner Valencia netted a first-half brace as Ecuador routed Bolivia 3-0 in their World Cup qualifier. Michael Estrada opened the scoring on the quarter-hour mark by heading home following a Byron Castillo cross.

GREAT CHANCE FOR US, INDIAN WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM ON PLAYING PRO LEAGUE

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

The Indian women's hockey team captain Rani Rampal on Friday hoped that the experience gained from playing against the best teams in the FIH Hockey Pro League will help her team in the same way as it did the mens team. The Indian women's team was on Friday included in the Pro League for the upcoming Season 3 along with Spain as a replacement for Australia and New Zealand who had pulled out because of the Covid-19 restrictions imposed by their respective governments.

The other players too expressed their excitement over playing the top league which kicks off on October 13 with the first match between Olympic and World Champions, the Netherlands and Belgium.

Rani said, "This is great news for us. We have seen how much the exposure at the FIH Hockey Pro League helped our male counterparts from the Indian team. They got to play the best teams in the world, and I believe that helped them take their game to the next level. Likewise, the Indian women's team is also looking forward to making the most

of this opportunity. The entire team is excited." Goalkeeper Savita, on the other hand, stated that this



exposure will help increase the talent pool in the Indian team. "We have some very talented junior players coming into the core group. Playing regular matches against top teams in the FIH Hockey Pro League will help the team try a different combination of players ahead of important tournaments like the Asian Games in 2022 and the FIH Women's World Cup in July 2022. We believe this experience in the Pro League will help us improve our game further," said Savita, who recently won the FIH Woman Goalkeeper of the Year award.

SOHA, AKANKSHA WIN DOUBLES TITLE IN AITA WOMEN'S TENNIS EVENT

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

Local lass Soha Sadiq and Akanksha Nitture of Maharashtra teamed up to win the doubles crown of the AITA Rs 1 lakh prize money women's tennis tournament played under the aegis of KSLTA here on Friday. They will be on the opposite ends of the court in the singles final and one of them will complete a grand double on Saturday.

The top-seeded pair outplayed the Tamil Nadu duo of Sambhitha Sai C and Avanthika Sai 6-0, 6-2 to win the title. However, on Saturday, Soha and Akanksha will be hoping to complete a



grand double when they take to the court as rivals for the singles honours in the final. In contrasting semi-finals played at the Padukone-Dravid Centre for Sports Excellence courts on Friday, defending champion and top seed Soha faced stiff resistance from fourth seed Pooja Ingale of Maharashtra before overcoming her rival with a 7-6, 6-2 victory, according to a press release issued by KSLTA on Friday. Akanksha almost blanked her opponent Sambhitha Sai C of Tamil Nadu, seeded a notch above her winning 6-0, 6-2.

MOTORCYCLE NATIONALS

NOVICE ALWIN SUNDER AT POLE; RAVIKUMAR, SETHU TOP PRACTICE

Chennai: Local collegian, Alwin Sunder (AS Motorsports), grabbed the pole position in the Novice (Stock 165cc) category as the third round of the MMSC fmsci Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship 2021 commenced at the MMRT, here on Friday in fair weather conditions. Alwin, only 19, and who heads the championship in the Novice category following a double in the first round in August, overcame a shaky start in the qualifying session when he went off the track on the out-lap, but gathered himself to post the fastest lap of two minutes, 08.098secs after deftly negotiating traffic.

Mumbai's Kayan Zubin Patel (Sparks Racing) posted the second-best lap of 02:08.545 while team-mate Alwin Xavier (Thrissur) completed the front row clocking 02:08.772. In all, 38 riders out of 43 qualified to start Saturday's race. Meanwhile, TVS Racing's Deepak Ravikumar (01:52.567) and Jagan Kumar (01:52.627) were among the quickest riders in the free practice session in the premier Pro stock 301-400cc category with championship leader Rajini Krishnan (RACR Castrol Power Racing) just behind the lead pair, clocking 01:52.647.

PAKISTAN WRITES 'T20 WORLD CUP UAE 2021' INSTEAD OF 'INDIA 2021' ON TEAM JERSEY, SPARKS CONTROVERSY

New Delhi | Agencies

Ahead of the upcoming T20 World Cup, the Pakistan Cricket team has sparked a controversy by writing 'T20 World Cup UAE 2021' instead of 'India 2021' on their jersey for the mega event, in a leaked picture on social media.

A picture is doing the rounds on social media in which Pakistan captain Babar Azam can be seen sporting the kit for the tournament with UAE written on it as the host. "ICC Men's T20 World Cup UAE 2021", reads the top right of the jersey of the batsman.



The T20 World Cup was originally to be played in India, however, due to the existing Covid-19 situation in the country, it was shifted to UAE and Oman. But, BCCI is still the official host of the mega event and hence, all

team jerseys should have 'ICC Men's T20 World Cup India '21' written on them, according to ICC rules.

The act by Pakistan is shocking and can irk both BCCI and ICC. However, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has not unveiled the jersey officially, and it remains to be seen if they will go ahead with the same kit or not.

Many teams, who are playing the qualifying round of the World Cup, have already unveiled their jerseys with India mentioned as the hosts on their kits. Scotland and Netherlands jerseys can be seen with 'India 2021' written on them.

SUB-JUNIOR HOCKEY

ODISHA HIGH-PERFORMANCE CENTRE WINS, TOPS THE GROUP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Odisha Naval Tata Hockey High-Performance Centre, Olympian Vivek Singh Hockey Academy, Raja Karan Hockey Academy, and Roundglass Punjab Hockey Club Academy earned victories in their respective matches on Day Five of the 1st Hockey India Sub Junior Men Academy National Championship 2021 here on Friday. In the first match of the day, Odisha Naval Tata Hockey High-Performance Centre registered a clinical 3-0 win against Naval Tata Hockey Academy, Jamshedpur to finish on the top of Pool A. Premdayal Giri (4'), Ricky Tonjam (19'), and Aryan Xess (32') scored a goal each for the Odisha.

In Pool B, Olympian Vivek Singh Hockey Academy beat Namdhari XI 7-1 to remain unbeaten in the league stage



of the tournament. Anand Kumar Yadav (29', 57') netted twice, while Irfan Husain (5'), Anand Yadav (32'), Arjun Chauhan (45'), Sajan Yadav (49'), and Viveka Pal (53') contributed a goal each in what was their team's yet another dominating win in the tournament. Captain Navraj Singh (40') got on the scoresheet for Namdhari XI. In the third match, Raja Karan

Hockey Academy continued their sublime form as they beat Mumbai Schools Sports Association (MSSA) 9-1 to remain unbeaten in Pool C. Jai (5', 52') and Captain Neeraj (54', 56') bagged a brace each, while Rupinder Singh (7'), Ansh Kamboj (13'), Gourav Kumar (24'), Lovepreet Singh (36') and Bittu Kumar (39') chipped in with one goal each for Raja Karan Hockey Academy. Seraj Ahmad (55') was the lone goal scorer for MSSA. In the final match of the day, Roundglass Punjab Hockey Club Academy registered a comprehensive 6-0 win against Mata Sahib Kaur Hockey Academy, Jarkhar - Ludhiana. Gursewak Singh (14', 49', 50') bagged a hat-trick, while Himanshu Bansal (6'), Captain Harmanjit Singh (10'), and Prince Kumar (59') scored a goal each to help their team finish the league stage on top of Pool D.



Pratik Gandhi: I take decision based on my gut feeling



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actor Pratik Gandhi, who became an overnight sensation with his powerful performance in the web series 'Scam 1992', has talked about how he decides projects he wants to star in or not.

The actor in a conversation with reporter said: "It is a simple approach for me I read the script and I also want to have a narration from the director to understand his vision. If it matches with me and I feel connected and feel it from within then I say yes."

It's all about the "gut feeling" for Pratik, who is gearing up for the release of his next film 'Bhava'.

"I take my decision absolutely based on my gut (feeling). It is all in the gut feel. I don't see the size of the project or names that are involved, it does not make sense to me," he said.

Pratik also talked about the pros and cons of being famous.

"The good part is that you will be

given a lot of options as far as stories are concern. You are in a position you can select a project create interesting characters who can touch peoples hearts. That is a good part I think," he said.

Pratik added: "The very tricky part is to manage your state of mind and your focus... All around you everyone is thinking and expecting something but you have to be equally human, open and connected to the character."

'Bhava' is slated to release on October 22. The movie stars Pratik as Raja Ram Joshi and actress Aindrita Ray as Rani as lead characters.

The movie revolves around the love tale of two actors working in a drama company and how their reel life affects their real

life off stage.

The film is presented by JayantilalGada (Pen Studios), produced by Dhaval JayantilalGada, AkshayJayantilalGada, ParthGajjar, and Hardik Gajjar films in association with Backbencher Pictures.

Shilpa finds judging 'Super Dancer 4' rejuvenating

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The dance reality show 'Super Dancer Chapter 4, judged by Geeta Kapur, Anurag Basu and Shilpa Shetty, will air its finale episode titled 'Nachpan Ka Maha Mahotsav' on Saturday, October 9.

Shilpa Shetty Kundra, who has been associated with the show for quite a long time, describes how it has impacted her life. She said: "Every year, these kids blow your minds with their unparalleled talent and dedication. Watching this younger generation of talent capture the stage inspires me to reinvent, unlearn, and relearn."

The top five finalists will showcase their talent and compete with each other as they vie for the top prize. They are Florina Gogoi, SanchitChanana, PruthvirajKongari, Esha Mishra and Neerja Tiwari. "They make me believe in the process and in divinity even more," Shilpa said. "It assures me that the craft and the future of India are in the best hands."

Florina Gogoi shared her experience of being on the show and said it was a great feeling to reach this point and she was willing to give it her best.

"It is a very big achievement for me to be a part of 'Nachpan Ka MahaMahatsav'," she said. "I am experiencing all kinds of emotions and am elated to have reached the top five ladder. The goal is yet to be achieved, but I will give it my all."

SanchitChanana added that although he was excited, he was anxious too about the finale. He gave the credit to Vartika, his choreographer and guru. Looking ahead, he said: "I have mixed emotions right now. I am both excited and anxious at the same time as this has been a long journey for me. I have been practising constantly with Vartika 'didi' for my finale act to give the audience a power-packed performance."



Team Absolute | Mumbai

In the midst of all the wars and arguments on 'Bigg Boss 15', love also seems to be blossoming in the jungle. Miesha Iyer and IshaanSehgaal are palpably getting close to each other.

Over the past few days, their bonding seems to be getting stronger. In a recent promo for the show, they were seen sitting together inside a blanket and trying to know about each other better over a chat.

Miesha asked Ishaan: "What kind of girl do you like?" To this, he replied: "I want a pretty and cute girl who loves me without conditions." When he inquired about her choice, she said: "I like a very off-beat kind of boy who can bear my tantrums."

Miesha was surprised when Ishaan said to her that he started liking her when she cried. She said it was just unbelievable for her, to which he responded by saying that he wasn't like the others.

On being teased by the other contestant about how she was cosying up to Ishaan, she insisted they were just friends. It will be interesting to see them getting closer to each other and Pratik getting into unnecessary fights with them.



'BIGG BOSS 15': ROMANCE IN THE JUNGLE AS MIESHA, IESHAAN GETS CLOSER

Gandhiji's Films to be preserved for more than 500 Years with Piqui-Norway Technology

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Gandhi Film Foundation (GFF) & Piqui Norway proudly announces their association to preserve the Gandhi Films Foundation Films for more than 500 Years with Piqui Technology. An Announcement about this association has been jointly made today on 2nd October 2021 (152nd Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi) by Mr. Nitin Potdar, Chairman



of Gandhi Films Foundation from Mumbai, India & Mr. Rune Bjerkestrand Managing Director, Piqui, AS from Drammen, Norway.

This is the first such attempt in India to preserve the Digital Data of scanned Films by Piqui Process for long term preservation.

Two Films are selected initially for this project, First one is a 14 Mins Documentary on Round Table Conference in London (1930-1932). This documentary also consists of Gandhiji's visit to Switzerland & Italy. Majority of the Audio content for this documentary is in English.

Second Film is a 11 Mins Documentary on Salt March (Dandi Yatra, 12th March 1930) Gujarat, India. Audio for this documentary is in Hindi & English.

The rights of these Films will always remain with Gandhi Films Foundation.

Piqui Process is a New Patented Process of writing digital data on Black & White Film, which has a life of more than 500 Years. This life can be extended further if the recorded film is stored at sub-zero temperature at Piqui's Arctic World Archive (AWA) at Norway.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

From changing her diet to training vigorously to ace her look, TaapseePannu has upped her own game for her film 'Rashmi Rocket'. The actress says she does not want to see herself competing with others and she likes to up her own game with each performance she does. "I don't want to see

myself competing with anyone and I try to maintain it like it because I just feel that I need to just need to up my game," Taapsee said while in a conversation with reporter.

She added: "Every year whatever I perform I need to up it the next year. That has been the only thing that has put me in pressure... That pressure drives so it is a good pressure to have. That's the pressure I like today and that's the race like to run, where I am running solo. I am competing with my timing and not other competitors."

The sports drama, which is directed by Akarsh Khurana, narrates the story of a small-town girl, who overcomes all

Taapsee Pannu: Don't want to see myself competing with anyone

societal barriers to become a national-level athlete, but is hindered when she is asked to undergo a gender test.

'Rashmi Rocket' is very close to Taapsee's heart as she has been attached to it since the idea was presented.

"If not the character definitely the film is the closest than any film has been because I have never been attached to film from that level... where you know the germ of an idea is presented and I kind of hand held it and gave it to someone else to develop because when I heard it I felt it deserves to be made into a film that our entire country sees," she said. Taapsee reached out to PranjalKhandhdiya, the producer of the film, to discuss about the movie.

Comedy series 'Call My Agent: Bollywood' to release on Oct 29

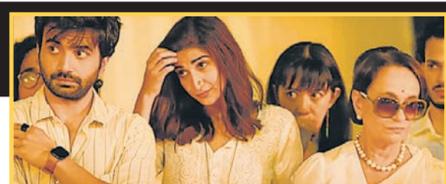
Team Absolute | Mumbai

The multi-starrer comedy series 'Call My Agent: Bollywood', inspired by the French multi-season show, Dix Pour Cent (Ten Per Cent), will start streaming on Netflix on October 29. The show offers hilarious glimpses into the world of glitz, glamour and drama.

The French original, which ran from 2015 to 2020, had a procession of international

stars, from Isabelle Adjani to Sigourney Weaver and Monica Bellucci, from Guy Marchand to Jean Reno.

Produced by Applause Entertainment in association with Banijay Asia, the series, will be directed by Shaad Ali, will feature Rajat Kapoor, Soni Razdan, Ayush Mehra and Ahana Kumra, and include special appearances by Jackie Shroff, Farah Khan, Sarika and Richa Chaddha, among others. It provides an inside look at what goes into



the making of a Bollywood star.

Speaking about the series, Shaad said "This project has been close to my heart since the beginning. It was a huge responsibility to be mindful of the original screenplay, which has been such a success, and yet leave my own stamp on the adaptation."

He added: "Each component of the show, from the casting to the cameos, has been planned with great care. All of us who are a part of the show have poured our heart and soul into it. I just can't wait to introduce the audiences to the world of showbiz through my lens."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Samantha