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## CONG MLA SPRINKLES 'GANGA JAL' TO 'PURIFY' ODISHA ASSEMBLY

**TARA PRASAD BAHINIPATI, A SENIOR CONGRESS LEGISLATOR IN ODISHA ASSEMBLY ON SATURDAY DRESSED UP AS A HINDU PRIEST AND SPRINKLED 'GANGA JAL' AND COW URINE' INSIDE THE ASSEMBLY HALL IN A BID TO 'PURIFY' IT.**



having links with Gobinda Sahu - the prime accused in the murder of Mamita Meher, has put his 'unholy feet' in the House and the temple of democracy has become 'desecrated'. So in a bid to purify the House, Bahinipati, donning the attire of a priest, performed puja in the Assembly amidst ringing of bells by his party colleague. He also chanted mantras. Speaking to the media outside the House, Bahinipati said: "Minister Mishra put his unholy steps in the temple of democracy and desecrated it. I sprinkled Ganga

Jal, cow urine and basil leaves on the floor to purify it." The Congress MLAs did it soon after the Assembly assembled for the day at 10.30 a.m. In his response, Speaker SN Patro said: "It is not a drama hall... please go to your seat." Other party colleagues also joined Bahinipati. The BJP members, who performed a similar act in the Assembly premises outside the Hall, on Saturday also continued to create uproar in the House along with the Congress. Carrying placards, the

opposition members rushed and shouted slogans against the government over the case and created a ruckus. Unable to conduct the question Hour session, the Speaker repeatedly requested the members to go to their seats. As the opposition members did not respond to him, the House first adjourned the House till 4 p.m. When the BJP and Congress members continued their protest in the post-lunch session, the House was adjourned till Monday. With this, a stalemate continued in the Assembly for the fourth consecutive day of the winter session. The opposition BJP and the Congress members were continued their protest demanding dismissal and arrest of Minister Mishra for his alleged involvement in the murder case. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had made a statement in the House through video conference yesterday saying his government is committed to give justice to Mamita Meher. However, it seems that the Opposition is not in a mood to go back until their demands are not fulfilled.

## No evidence to suggest if Omicron more severe than other variants: Singapore

SINGAPORE | Agencies

As the Omicron variant has been detected in several countries, Singapore's Ministry of Health said that there is no evidence yet to suggest if the Omicron variant is more severe than other variants. Singapore has preliminarily detected two imported Covid-19 cases with the Omicron variant. "There is currently no evidence to suggest that symptoms associated with the Omicron variant are different or more severe than those of other variants, or that current vaccines and therapeutics would be ineffective against Omicron," the ministry said. "We have also been closely monitoring studies on the sensitivity of Antigen Rapid Tests (ARTs) to the Omicron variant," it added. The ministry mentioned that preliminary validation by the manufacturers shows that ARTs remain effective in detecting Covid-19 cases of the Omicron variant, and labora-



tories are doing further biochemical tests to confirm these results. These initial results give confidence that ARTs remain effective as a method of detecting Covid-19, including Omicron cases. The new Omicron variant was first reported to the WHO from South Africa on November 24. Recently, a Singapore-based infectious disease doctor Leong Hoe Nam of

Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital warned that the new variant Omicron will likely "overwhelm the whole world" in the coming months. According to the National Association for Manufacturers, vaccines against the strain can be developed quickly, but they need to be tested over three to six months to prove that they can provide immunity against the variant.

## Pakistan embassy in Washington ran out of funds to pay salaries

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Pakistan embassy in Washington had run out of funds to pay salaries for at least four months to some of its employees, though the Pakistani ambassador's active engagement saved the day, The News reported. At least five of the Pakistani embassy's locally recruited contractual employees faced delays and non-payment of their monthly wages from August 2021. One staffer out of the five affected, who had been working for the past ten years with the embassy, resigned in September owing to delays and non-payment, the report said. These unpaid local staffers were hired by the embassy on an annual

contract basis and worked for the mission on bare-minimum salaries, which ranges from 2,000 to 2,500 dollars per person per month. The local hires, whether permanent or contractual, do not get perks and privileges that Foreign Office employees enjoy, including healthcare benefits. The domestic staffers are usually hired to help with the 'Consular section' that provides visa, passport, notarization and other consular services to the diaspora, the report said. Sources said that such staffers are paid out of the Pakistan Community Welfare (PCW) fund, which is generated locally through services fees and then dispensed locally as

well. Sources familiar with the situation say that the PCW fund collapsed last year because the money was diverted to purchase ventilators and other medical equipment after the Covid-19 pandemic. The embassy struggled to maintain the funds that eventually affected the salary payments, sources said, adding that the embassy had to borrow money from other account heads to keep up with the monthly salaries for the staffers hired locally. The second factor that played in was that Islamabad has digitized its visa services that are now handled in coordination with NADRA (National Database and Registration Authority), the report said

## Odisha govt identifies 6,970 beggars in state

Bhubaneswar |

The Odisha government has identified a total of 6,970 beggars across the state and is implementing a scheme called Sahaya for their welfare, a minister said on Saturday. In a written reply in the state Assembly, social security and empowerment of persons with disabilities minister Ashok Chandra Panda said as many 4,128 male and 2,842 female beggars have been identified by the state government in all 30 districts of Odisha. However, Panda said that there is no child beggar in the state. Cuttack district tops the list with 1,060 beggars, it is followed by 595 in Bargarh district, 545 in Ganjam, 502 in Bolangir, 447 in Sundargarh, 418 in Khurda, 363 in Kalahandi, 354 in Nuapada and 350 in Puri, the minister said.

## Explore mediation, courts should be last resort: CJ to business community

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Chief Justice of India NV Ramana on Saturday said the business community should explore the alternate dispute resolution mechanism like mediation, conciliation, and arbitration to resolve disputes, rather than going to courts, which should be the last resort. Justice Ramana was speaking at the 'Stakeholders' Conclave' at the International Arbitration and Mediation Centre, Hyderabad. He said in business, differences of opinions should be initially sorted through a dialogue and if this doesn't work then parties should look for people who can resolve the issue by negotiation. He said: "If this also doesn't work, then the only option people consider is to go to courts. My advice, after participating in the legal profession for over 40 years in different capacities, is that you must keep the option of going to courts as a last resort." He added, "Use this last resort only after exploring the



option of ADR (alternate dispute resolution) -- arbitration, mediation and conciliation. Arbitration and mediation are efforts at restoring a relationship". He said every day in our lives, "we face conflicts - be it between family members or in our business or professional life". Justice Ramana said nobody can imagine a world without conflicts. "Conflicts have a human face and it helps to be humane in our approach to resolve the same. One must have the foresight to look beyond the conflict", he said. He said the most important factor behind the resolution of any dispute is having the right attitude. "By right attitude, I mean we should

leave aside our ego, emotions, impatience and embrace practicality. But, once these conflicts enter a Court, much gets lost in the practice and procedure", he added. Justice Ramana cited various reasons for opting for mediation or arbitration over traditional litigation, saying its benefits are manifold: fewer delays, less expensive, greater party choice, more control, more comfortable and amicable environment for the parties etc. Justice Ramana said despite the presence of some arbitration centers in India, Indian parties that enter into an international arbitration agreement often opt for an arbitration centre outside India incurring huge expenses. "The setting up of this International Arbitration and Mediation Centre in Hyderabad will change this trend in India. This Centre is being established with the best infrastructure and the empanelling of internationally acclaimed arbitrators and mediators", he added.

## PREPARATIONS FOR KHELO INDIA YOUTH GAMES TO BE OVER BY DEC 31

CHANDIGARH | Agencies

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Saturday said all preparations for the fourth edition of the Khelo India Youth Games in Panchkula would be completed by December 31. A total of 25 sporting events will be organised from February 5 to 14, in which about 10,000 players are expected to participate. The opening ceremony will be held on February 5 at Tau Devi Lal Stadium in Sector 3 in Panchkula, he added. The Chief Minister inspected the preparations being made for the Games at the stadium. Sports Minister Sandeep Singh also accompanied him. Khattar expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister and the Union Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs for allowing Haryana to host the Khelo India Youth Games. The Chief Minister said that five regional games have been added this time. They include galka of Punjab, thang-ta of Manipur, kalaripayattu of Kerala, malkhamb of Maharashtra and Yogasan. An amount of Rs 250 crore will be spent on the devel-



opment of necessary infrastructure for the games, of which Rs 150 crore will be spent for infrastructure development and the remaining on equipment and developing facilities. He said the entire arrangements are being made for the boarding, lodging, and transportation of the players. Besides Panchkula, the games would be organized in Ambala, Shahabad, Chandigarh and Delhi. The Chief Minister said final matches of most of the games will start from February 8, which will be telecast live

through Star Sports channel. In response to a question regarding compliance of Covid-19 guidelines during the games, the Chief Minister said the health department is fully prepared to deal with any situation. He said Haryana is progressing in sports and the state government is increasing the budget of sports every year. Where the budget of sports was Rs 151 crore in the year 2014-15, it has now increased to Rs 394 crore in 2021-22, which is more than double. He said 500 sports nurseries, which were closed due to Covid-19, have been revived to nurture sports talent among the budding sportspersons under the government's Catch them Young Policy. In addition, 500 more sports nurseries will be developed. He said sports stadia are being renovated at the village level. Besides, mapping is also being done by the government and where the number of sports stadia is less, sports stadia will be built as per the requirement. Khattar said a scientific training and rehabilitation centre is being set up in Panchkula to prepare the players mentally and physically for sports. Besides, such centres will also be set up in Karnal, Hisar, Rohtak and Gurugram.

## Scientists developing chewing gum that could reduce SARS-CoV-2 transmission

NEW YORK | Agencies

A chewing gum laced with a plant-grown protein serves as a "trap" for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, reducing viral load in saliva and potentially tamping down transmission, finds a new study. The researchers exposed saliva samples from Covid-19 patients to the ACE2 gum and found that levels of viral RNA fell so dramatically to be almost undetectable, indicates the study published in the

journal Molecular Therapy. "SARS-CoV-2 replicates in the salivary glands, and we know that when someone sneezes, coughs, or speaks some of that virus can be expelled and reach others," said researcher Henry Daniell from the University of Pennsylvania in the US. "This gum offers an opportunity to neutralise the virus in the saliva, giving us a simple way to possibly cut down on a source of disease transmission," Daniell added.

## Public urged to inform TNPCB on single-use plastic units

CHENNAI | Agencies

Tamil Nadu has appealed to the general public to inform the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) of the manufacturers of single-use plastic bags in their neighbourhood. The single-use plastic bags and other items are in rampant use in many parts of the state even after the government has banned them. The Madras High Court and the National Green Tribunal, Southern Bench had come down heavily on the government on several occasions about the measures taken by it to implement the ban properly. The state government had banned manufacture, storage, supply, transport, sale, distribution of single-use plastic items, non-woven carry bags, and several such items. Villupuram District Collector T. Mohan in an appeal to the public said that they can complain to the respective environment engineers of the TNPCB. He also requested them to provide their



phone numbers and other contact details so as to avoid prank calls. He said that the identity of the caller would not be revealed at any cost and the complainant would be aptly rewarded. Madurai, Cuddalore, Tiruchy, Coimbatore, and Nilgiris District Collectors have also appealed to the public to complain to the TNPCB. All the Collectors said that the identity of the complainant would be protected and those who lodge

real complaints would be properly rewarded. The state government has been under dire stress to unearth the unofficial manufacturing units of single use plastic items as most of them are functioning within residential properties and in rented accommodations. All the state governments have been given directives by the Union Ministry for Environment and Forests on the necessity to ban single-use plastic items as they were creating major damage to the environment. Sumanth Narayanan, an activist based out of Chennai, who is campaigning against the single-use plastic items told IANS: "At last wisdom has dawned on the government and they understood that without community participation, such things cannot be weeded out. The move of the government is appreciable and it is now up to the general public to properly complain against these manufacturers and help in implementation of ban on this dangerous item once and for all in our state."

## TN green activists against Film city project at Nilgiris

CHENNAI | Agencies

Environmentalists and social activists of Nilgiris have come out against suggestion by local Member of Parliament and former Union Minister A. Raja to set up a Film City in the district. Recently, while speaking in Parliament, the MP had said that Udhagamandalam in Nilgiris is highly suited for constructing a Film City as several movies had already been made there. He said that if a Film City is constructed, it can become a major revenue earner and a hub of filmmaking. Manoj Narayanan, a local environmentalist, and a conservationist told IANS: "It is unfortunate that a Member of Parliament is making such a statement. Ooty and Nilgiris are fast becoming a concrete jungle and bringing up a film city would lead to more losses of natural

habitat and this cannot be allowed to happen." N Mohanraj, a conservationist in Nilgiris said: "The ecology of the district is already burdened by existing projects, like a number of hydroelectric projects and Radio Astronomy Centre and Cosmic Ray Laboratory. The idea of a Film City at this place would lead to more issues and it has to be prevented." Conservationists and environmentalists are of the opinion that the present system of a few movies being shot at the natural beauty of Udhagamandalam and Nilgiris is acceptable. The activists, however, said that construction of concrete buildings in the name of Film city would hamper the ecological balance in the area and that it cannot be allowed to happen. Raja told IANS: "The Film city project was my suggestion and I had passionately spoken about it in Parliament as I believe that it is a good project for



# AT 8,603, INDIA SEES DIP IN COVID CASES IN A DAY

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India on Saturday reported 8,603 fresh Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours. In the same time span, a total of 415 deaths have also been reported across the nation, said the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Saturday morning. With the addition of 415 new deaths, the death toll has climbed to 4,70,530.

The recovery of 8,190 patients in the last 24 hours has increased the cumulative tally of recoveries to 3,40,53,856. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.35 per cent, highest since March 2020.

India's Active caseload presently stands at 99,974. Active cases constitute 0.29 per cent of the country's total Positive Cases, which is lowest since March 2020. Also in



the same period, a total of 12,52,596 tests were conducted across the country. India has so far conducted over 64.60 crore cumulative tests. Meanwhile, the weekly positivity rate at 0.81 per cent has

remained less than 1 per cent for the last 20 days now. The daily positivity rate stands at 0.69 per cent, which has also remained below 2 per cent for last 61 days and less than 3 per cent for 96 consecutive days now. With the administration of 73,63,706 vaccine doses in the last 24 hours, India's Covid inoculation coverage has reached 126.53 crore as of Saturday morning. This has been achieved through 1,31,55,745 sessions. More than 21.38 crore balance and unutilized Covid vaccine doses are still available with the states and UTs to be administered, according to the health ministry as of on Saturday morning. India has administered over 126.53 crore vaccine doses so far under Nationwide Vaccination Drive.

## Omicron enters Maharashtra via Delhi as Thane man tests positive

Thane | Agencies

Confirming the state's worst fears, the first case of the Covid-19 variant Omicron has been detected in Maharashtra after a 33-year-old man -- who flew down from South Africa to Mumbai via Dubai and New Delhi -- tested positive, an official said here on Saturday.

The passenger who is exhibiting mild symptoms, is currently under treatment at a Covid centre in Kalyan-Dombivli. The infectee reached here from Cape Town on November 24 and then complained of low fever but has not exhibited any other symptoms, said the official. Moving swiftly, the Thane health authorities launched a drive and traced 12 of his high-risk contacts and 23 low-risk contacts, but all have tested negative.

Another 25 passengers who arrived by the same New Delhi-Mumbai flight on

November 24 have also tested negative and more of their contacts are currently being traced, according to the official. As the state went into a high-alert mode, a 60-year-old male passenger who arrived here from Zambia recently, has been detected positive for a sub-lineage of the Covid-19 Delta variant as per a report of the NIV, Pune.

With this, Maharashtra becomes the third state - after Karnataka and Gujarat - to come on the country's 'Omicron map', during this week. Till Saturday morning, the state health authorities said they have tested 3,839 passengers arriving from the 'high-risk' or 'at risk' Omicron afflicted nations, landing at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA). Besides, another 344 out of 17,107 passengers arriving to Mumbai from other countries have also been subjected to random testing. In the past four days (since December 1), 8

passengers have tested positive for Covid-19 and their samples sent for genomic sequencing as a precaution. Simultaneously, an intensive field surveillance of all international passengers who landed at CSMIA Mumbai since November 1 is currently underway. The state has appealed to all people that all those who have had international travel history in the past one month, or those who have completed their vaccination must get their doses on priority. Allaying apprehensions, the health department said that genetic changes/mutations in viruses is a natural phenomenon and they should not panic, but strictly follow all Covid appropriate behaviour and adhere to all protocols. Unwilling to take any risks, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation Commissioner IS Chahal on Saturday clamped stringent home isolation norms for all international passengers from the afflicted countries.

## MISSING SOUTH AFRICANS TRACED; K'TAKA HEALTH DEPT HEAVES SIGH OF RELIEF

Bengaluru:

The South African nationals, who had arrived in Bengaluru and gone incommunicado, have been finally traced by the civic and police authorities in Bengaluru, sources in the health department said on Saturday.

As many as 10 South African nationals were untraceable till Friday evening. Health department officials were worried in the backdrop of detection of the country's first two Omicron cases in Bengaluru, amid testing of all passengers arriving to the state from the 'high risk' countries.

However, these 10 South African nationals were not found at their addresses and their mobile phones were also switched off. The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) had sought the help of the police to trace them. The joint operation has now yielded results, and all the South Africans have been tracked, and their swabs have been sent for testing. Revenue Minister R Ashok had stated that the missing persons would be tracked by Friday midnight.

These South African nationals had arrived in Bengaluru between November 12 and November 22. As many as 57 persons arrived here from the 'high risk' during this period, including the South African national. The health department is planning to send all the samples for genomic sequencing to get clarity on the presence of Omicron virus.

The stringent measures at the airport were initiated from November 22 onwards, before these persons arrived in Bengaluru.

## Extortion case: Mumbai Police file charge-sheet against Param Bir, others

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Police on Saturday filed a voluminous charge-sheet against suspended DGP Param Bir Singh and three others in an extortion case lodged by a businessman before the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, officials said here.

This is the first charge-sheet filed against Singh -- a former Mumbai Police Commissioner, who was suspended on December 2 -- in the five FIRs lodged against him in Mumbai and Thane. The chargesheet, with evidences and the recorded statements of witnesses, also names sacked cop Sachin Vaze, currently in police custody, and two others in the extortion case filed by a hotelier, Bimal Agarwal. The two other accused named are Alpesh Patel and Sumit Singh, who are currently out on bail, while the police are yet to file charges against two more accused, Vinay Singh and Riyaz Bhati. Singh, the Maharashtra State Home Guards Commandant General, who was 'untraceable' for nearly six



months till he resurfaced in Mumbai 10 days ago, had recorded his statement in the case, which was registered by the Goregaon Police on August 25 and later transferred to the Crime Branch. As per Agarwal's complaint,

Singh, Vaze and the others allegedly threatened to file fake cases against him and extorted nearly Rs 12 lakh between January 2020 and March 2021. The Crime Branch is probing the case now.

## K'TAKA OPPOSES DECLARING WESTERN GHATS 'ECO-SENSITIVE ZONE'

Bengaluru:

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Saturday said declaring Western Ghats as Ecologically Sensitive Zone would adversely affect the livelihood of the people in the region. ".... Therefore, the Karnataka government and the people living in the region are opposed to the implementation of the Kasturirangan report," Bommai said.

His remarks came at a virtual meeting on the implementation of Kasturirangan report on Western Ghats, chaired by Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Labour, Bhupinder Yadav. During the meeting, Bommai "strongly" presented his state's stand. He drew the attention of the participants to the fact that the state cabinet had decided to oppose the Kasturirangan report. The decision had been taken after exhaustive discussions with people of the Western Ghat region and officials. Karnataka has the distinction of being one of the states with extensive forest cover. "Our government has taken extreme care to protect the biodiversity of Western Ghats. People of the region have adopted agriculture and horticultural activities in an eco-friendly manner. Priority has been accorded for environment protection under the Forest Protection Act. In this background, bringing one more law that would affect the livelihood of the local people is not appropriate," Bommai said. asturirangan report has been prepared based on the satellite images, but the ground reality is different, the Chief Minister said. The Union Minister, however, assured the state that officials from the central Environment and Forests department would visit the state before taking any decision.

## OMICRON FEARS: BMC CLAMPS STRINGENT HOME ISOLATION NORMS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

With Omicron cases getting detected in the two adjoining states of Karnataka and Gujarat this week, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has introduced a set of stringent home quarantine norms, which include five calls a day and visits by medical teams with ambulance.

BMC Commissioner I.S. Chahal said that after the successful 'Dharavi Model' in the first Covid-19 wave -- which earned global accolades -- and the 'Mumbai Model' which was also very successful, this is the third initiative to secure the country's commercial capital from Omicron. The process will start daily morning with the Mumbai International Airport Ltd sending a list of all Mumbai passengers landing at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, or who have visited from the 'high risk' and 'at risk' nations in the past 15 days, to the Disaster Management Unit (DMU). Thereafter, the DMU will relay it to the 24 administrative wards based on the passengers' addresses and then to the Ward War Rooms (WWR) which will track, test and start contact tracing.

Chahal added that the WWR will call each person under home quarantine at least five times a day to monitor their health and also ascertain if they are indeed in isolation at home and following the rules, and if needed counsel them and address their concerns. Besides, medical teams will be sent regularly with ambulance to see whether the passengers are complying with the rules, and check their health. After seven days in home isolation, they will ensure that the concerned passengers take undergo RT-PCR tests. The housing societies/complexes where they live shall be informed in writing by the BMC, asking them to ensure that the passengers remain isolated at home, and no visitors are allowed. Violators shall face stringent punishment, including being shunted to compulsory institutional quarantine. If any passengers develop any symptoms, they will be immediately put on treatment protocols or hospitalised, said Chahal. The WWRs would be adequately staffed and would have multiple functional communication lines and 10 ambulances at their disposal. They would inform the DMU of any violation of the rules by any passenger.

## Vijayan hand in glove with TN on Mullaperiyar dam issue: Congress

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

In a scathing attack on Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in the manner in which he is handling the vexed issue of the leaking Mullaperiyar dam, Leader of Opposition V.D. Satheesan on Saturday remarked that Vijayan is hand in glove with Tamil Nadu, which is aiming to raise the water level to 152 feet.

Satheesan attacked Vijayan at the 24-hour fast protest launched by Idukki Lok Sabha Congress member Dean Kuriakose, near the dam site at Cheruthoni, demanding that permission be granted to build a new dam in place of the leaking one which is now 126 years old.

Satheesan, inaugurating the 24-hour fast, recalled a protest of the then Left Democratic Front opposition on December 8, 2011 when Oommen Chandy was the chief minister. "Vijayan along with then Leader of Opposition V.S. Achuthanandan was part of human chain that was formed which saw lakhs taking part in the 208 km stretch from near the Mullaperiyar



dam site to the Arabian sea at Kochi and took a pledge demanding a new dam at Mullaperiyar replacing the then 116 years old leaking Mullaperiyar dam. And see what's he saying now, he says the dam is safe and is hand in glove with Tamil Nadu, who are demanding raising the water level to 152 feet," said Satheesan.

"We all saw on what happened when permission was granted to cut trees to strengthen the baby dam at Mullaperiyar. We have two State

Ministers (Water Resources Minister, Forest Minister) who have no clue of what's happening in their department, as all decisions are taken by Vijayan. We are also seeing the way Tamil Nadu is opening the shutters of the Mullaperiyar dam without following the rules and none in Kerala government is bothered about it and we all heard a statement that Vijayan has written a letter to his counterpart in Tamil Nadu. Is this the way this serious issue has to be tackled?" asked

Satheesan.

Incidentally this protest is taking place when in the Lok Sabha the other day Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti, Bishweswar Tudu said in a written reply that there is a report titled 'Ageing Water Storage Infrastructure: An Emerging Global Risk' published in the 11th Series Report of the United Nations University-Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) which has mentioned certain safety concerns of the Mullaperiyar dam. He however, sought to allay fears about the safety of the dam, stating that through inspections, investigations, tests and studies, the health of a dam can be evaluated. Various instruments, which are installed in the dam, provide relevant information on the safety conditions of a dam. Pre and post-monsoon inspections are generally carried out by the dam owning agencies every year. The dam has been a bone of contention between Kerala - where the dam is located - and Tamil Nadu, which owns the dam as per the old lease agreement.

## DMRC FLOUTED ENVIRONMENTAL NORMS DURING PHASE III IMPLEMENTATION: CAG

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) failed to adhere to various environmental requirements like in obtaining environmental clearance, conducting water audit, maintaining records of water extracted, consumed and lost, monitoring of compensatory afforestation during the implementation of its Phase-III project, a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India said. The DMRC is required to comply with various environmental provisions under the National Environment Policy, the Central Water Commission, Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, and Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act etc. However, as per the CAG in its recent performance audit report on the implementation of Phase-III Delhi Mass Rapid Transit System by DMRC, it was observed that no environment clearance was obtained by DMRC for the Phase-III project even though it had constructed four metro car maintenance depots each

having a built-up area of more than 20,000 sqm. "General Guidelines for Water Audit & Water Conservation" by the Central Water Commission (2017) recommends water audit as an important management tool for effective conservation of water. DMRC Water Policy (2013) also provides to minimise wastages by carrying out half-yearly water audits at selected stations and depots. However, as per the audit, "DMRC uses water for construction work and operation and maintenance purposes, but it did not conduct any water audits at stations, depots and construction sites from 2011 to March 31, 2020." "It neither assessed the extent of water losses and efficiency of the system nor performed any cost-benefit analysis for optimum recovery of water. It also did not formulate a Water Management Plan," the report stated. It further observed that during the entire Phase-III project, no details and records for water extracted, consumed or loss of water were maintained either by DMRC or the contractors. There were no checks and balances for the extraction and con-

sumption of water by the contractors. This happened despite the recommendation by Central Water Commission and Central Ground Water Board that supplies to industries should be from surface water and if the groundwater supply is considered essential, it should be managed by a government agency. A total of 1,74,550 trees were to be planted in lieu of 17,455 trees to be cut under compensatory afforestation by DMRC during the period from 2011 to 2019. However, due to the absence of proper records by the Forest Department and monitoring by DMRC as no site visit or inspection was conducted by DMRC officials during April 2011 to December 2018, the audit could not verify whether Forest Department planted the required number of trees on behalf of DMRC. Besides, noise levels were higher than permissible values at different locations of Line-7 -- the 58.596 km long stretch from Majlis Park to Shiv Vihar as wheel profiling of rolling stock was being carried out after running some kilometres, the report added.

## 12 Omicron suspects in Delhi, genome sequencing awaited: Minister

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Saturday said that total 12 patients are suspected of carrying Omicron variant of the coronavirus so far in the national capital. He said that all have been admitted in the isolation ward of the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital. "There were total 12 suspected patients of Omicron till yesterday in Delhi. Their samples have been sent for genome sequencing and the report will be out by today evening or tomorrow", said

Minister Jain, adding that Delhi government has two genome sequencing labs, one at ILBS and one at LNJP. Talking about the new Omicron variant, he said, "more than expressing concern, it is the subject of caution and vigilance. We all need to be alert of this Covid variant". He underlined that the global health body WHO has called it a variant of concern but has not said that it will cause a major disaster. "RT-PCR test is being done for all the passengers landing at the international airport from abroad. No one is being allowed to go without the

test", he added. While talking about Hepatitis, the Delhi Health Minister said that Hepatitis is very high in the country and Delhi, but there is a lack of awareness about it. "Delhi government provides free treatment for both Hepatitis B and C. Hepatitis vaccination is being done for 70 per cent children in Delhi, we will take it to 100 per cent. Hepatitis medicine will also be made available to Mohalla clinics, doctors will be trained for this, so that it can be treated in Mohalla clinics as well", said Minister Jain.

# absolute india



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## SCAMS EXPLODED DURING TEN YEARS OF UPA RULE: MODI

Team Absolute | New /Delhitarakhand

Launching a scathing attack on the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA), Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said scams exploded in the name of infrastructure during the ten year rule of the Manmohan Singh government.

Addressing a public gathering in poll-bound Uttarakhand after inaugurating and laying the foundation stones for development projects worth Rs 18,000 crore in Dehradun, the Prime Minister accused the Congress of doing politics of appeasement and dividing the country.

He said perversion of politics does not allow people to be strong and makes them dependent on the government for their needs.

Modi claimed that "Whatever schemes we bring, we will bring them for everyone, without discrimination. We do not make vote bank politics the basis but give priority to the service of the people. Our approach has been to strengthen the country."

Targeting the Congress, Modi said: "For 10 years there were scams, scams in the name of infrastructure in the country. We worked twice as hard to make up for the loss caused to the country and are doing it even today."

He heaped praises on his party leader and state



Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and also spoke about other veteran BJP leaders in the state. The Prime Minister said that Uttarakhand is not just the centre of faith but is the symbol of hard work and determination. That is why development of the state is one of the foremost priorities of the 'double engine government' of the

Centre and the state.

Comparing the pace of development, the Prime Minister pointed out that between 2007 and 2014, the then Central government (UPA), built only 288 km of national highways in Uttarakhand in seven years, whereas the current (NDA) government has constructed a national highway of more than 2,000 km in the state in seven years.

He charged that the earlier governments did not work on the infrastructure of the border hill areas as seriously as they should have.

The previous governments did nothing on critical issues like One rank, one pension, modern weapons, giving a befitting reply to terrorists that demoralised the Army at every level, he said, adding that "The government which is in place today cannot come under the pressure of any country in the world. We are people who follow the mantra of nation first, always first."

He said the reconstruction of Kedar Dham has not only increased the number of devotees coming for darshan, but also provided many opportunities for employment and self-employment to the people there. Before the Kedarnath tragedy in 2012, 5,70,000 devotees had darshan, which was a record number, whereas before the start of the corona period, in 2019, more than 10 lakh people had come to visit Kedarnath.

## Govt clears production of 5L AK-203 rifles ahead of Putin's visit

▶ THE GOVERNMENT HAS APPROVED THE PLAN FOR PRODUCTION OF OVER FIVE LAKH AK-203 ASSAULT RIFLES AT KORWA IN AMETHI IN UTTAR PRADESH AHEAD OF RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN'S VISIT TO INDIA, SOURCES SAID.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The government is seeing it as an endeavour to provide a big boost to self-reliance in defence manufacturing in India.

The project, worth Rs 5,100 crore, is in partnership with Russia. Sources said that this endeavour reflects the deepening ties between the two countries in the defence

sector. The project will provide business opportunities to various MSMEs and other defence industries for supply of raw material and components, which will lead to generation of new employment opportunities.

The project marks a significant stride towards making UP a key contributor in the ascendant defence manufacturing prowess of India.

The 7.62 X 39 mm caliber AK-203 Rifles will replace in-service INSAS Rifle inducted over three decades back. AK-203 Assault Rifles, with an effective range of 300 meters, are light weight, robust and easy to use. Modern Assault Rifles with proven technology that will enhance the combat potential of soldiers to adequately meet present and envisaged operational challenges.

"They will enhance the operational effectiveness of the Indian Army in Counter Insurgency/Counter Terrorism operations," the source said. The project will be implemented by a special purpose Joint Venture called Indo-Russian Rifles Private Ltd (IRRL).

It has been created with erstwhile OFB [now Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWEIL)] and Munitions India Limited (MIL) of India and Rosoboronexport (RoE) and concern Kalashnikov of Russia.

## Pakistan hacker attacked govt computer in India to steal credentials

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A Pakistani threat actor successfully socially engineered a number of ministries in Afghanistan and shared government computer in India to steal sensitive Google, Twitter, and Facebook credentials from its targets and stealthily obtained access to government portals, The Hacker News reported.

Malwarebytes' latest findings go into detail about the new tactics and tools adopted by the APT group known as SideCopy, which is so-called because of its attempts to mimic the infection chains associated with another group tracked as SideWinder and mislead attribution.

"The lures used by SideCopy APT are usually archive files that have embedded one of these files: LNK, Microsoft Publisher or



Trojanized Applications," Malwarebytes researcher Hossein Jazi said, adding the embedded files are tailored to target government and military officials based in Afghanistan and India, the report said. The revelation comes close on the heels of disclosures that Meta took steps to block malicious activities carried out by the group on its platform by using romantic lures to compromise individuals with ties to the Afghan government, military, and law enforcement in Kabul. Some of the prominent attacks were waged against personnel associated

with the Administration Office of the President (AOP) of Afghanistan as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and the National Procurement Authority, resulting in the theft of social media passwords and password-protected documents. SideCopy also broke into a shared computer in India and harvested credentials from government and education services.

In addition, the actor is said to have siphoned several Microsoft Office documents, including names, numbers, and email addresses of officials and databases containing information related to identity cards, diplomatic visas, and asset registrations from the Afghan government websites, all of which are expected to be used as future decoys or to fuel further attacks against the individuals themselves, the report added.

## No need to panic, take precautions: Vice Prez on Omicron scare

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday said there is no need to panic about the emergence of new Covid-19 variant -- Omicron, while advising people to remain vigilant and follow the Covid appropriate behaviour till the pandemic is over.

He also urged the people to shed hesitancy and get vaccinated at the earliest.

Launching Gautam Chintamani's book 'The Midway Battle: Modi's Roller-coaster Second Term' at Uda-Rashtrapati Nivas on Saturday, the Vice President said that the Coronavirus pandemic has come as a big challenge for the entire human race and appreciated the world's largest vaccination drive currently underway in India.

Naidu said that writing contemporary history is never an easy task. Referring to the transformational changes brought in the governance over the past seven years, he said that these changes are both empowering and enabling the 1.3 billion people to deliver on their potential. "Be it life expectancy, financial inclusion, access to healthcare, employment, owning a house, or honouring entrepreneur-



ial ability, the quality of Indian lives is getting better with each passing day," he said.

Quoting the Prime Minister's three word mantra -- 'reform, perform and transform', the Vice President praised the tremendous progress made by the nation over the past few years in various fields such as financial inclusion, insurance coverage, number of LPG connections for poor women and tap water connection to households.

He said that following the principle of 'minimum government and maximum governance', the

Government is leveraging technologies to bring transformation in every sector and expressed satisfaction over India becoming the third largest startup ecosystem in the world. "It is a testimony to the government's resolute commitment to improve the business environment in the country that India's ranking rose to 63rd place in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index 2020," he added. Noting that there are still many challenges in the path, the Vice President said that ever since Independence, India has faced many obstacles but we have overcome them successfully. "Nothing could deter us from the path of progress and humanity. This is why India's success is the success of the world," he added.

Calling for making India a 'Vishwaguru' once again, he urged all stakeholders to come together and join this Maha-Yajna of creating a self-reliant, prosperous, happy and strong India.

The Vice President further said that India's strategic partnerships are based on mutual respect and the nation has given a resolute response to inimical forces who dared to challenge our integrity and sovereignty. "We are guided by our unwavering self-belief and our dedication to becoming 'atmanirbhar' in every possible way," he added.

## 6 high Covid reporting states told to curb infection, fatality

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Union Health Ministry on Saturday directed six high Covid-19 cases reporting states to take necessary steps to control the spread of the infection, and also reduce fatalities, officials said.

The states -- Kerala, Jammu & Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Odisha and Mizoram -- have been told to take the required steps according to the strategy of Test-Track-Treat-Vaccinate-Covid Appropriate Behaviour to keep the situation under control. The ministry, in separate letters addressed to the six states -- has said that in the context of the new Variant of Concern -- Omicron, all states have been advised to undertake enhanced surveillance of international travellers, continued monitoring of emerging hotspots, prompt and comprehensive contact tracing of positive individuals and follow up for 14 days, sending all positive samples for genome sequencing quickly to INSACOG Labs, early identification of cases through adequate test-



ing, review of health infrastructure preparedness and most importantly to focus on IEC and community sensitization. In the letter to the Kerala government, the Health Ministry has said that 13 out of 14 districts in the state are reporting high quantum of weekly new cases in the southern state. Four districts -- Thiruvananthapuram (11.61 per cent), Wayanad (11.25 per cent), Kozhikode (11 per cent) and Kottayam (10.81 per cent) -- are showing high

weekly positivity of more than 10 per cent. Other nine districts are reporting weekly positivity between 5-10 per cent.

In the letter to the Karnataka, the ministry has expressed concern that the state has reported a slight increase in weekly new cases to 2,272 from 1,664 cases along with an increase in weekly new deaths from 22 to 29 over the same period.

"Increase in weekly new deaths has been noted in Bengaluru urban, from 8 new deaths reported in the week ending November 25 to 14 deaths in the week ending December 2," the ministry noted.

In similar letter to Odisha, the Centre has expressed concern over declining trends of the weekly test conducted. The state exhibited a decline of 3.1 per cent in weekly tests conducted from 4,01,164 total tests in week ending 26th Nov to 3,88,788 total tests in week ending December 3," said the ministry. "Eight out of 11 districts are showing high weekly positivity of more than 10 per cent in Mizoram," said ministry in the letter to the state government

## SKM sends list of 702 farmers who allegedly died during protest

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) on Saturday sent a list of 702 farmers who are said to have "died" during protest against three contentious farm laws, to the government.

Confirming the development, farmers' leader Kishan Pal told IANS: "We have sent a list of 702 farmers who were martyred during the agitation." A question was recently asked in the Lok Sabha whether the Union government has any data of farmers who died during the agitation, and whether it will provide compensation to the affected families?

In reply, the government said that the Agriculture Ministry has no record of anyone losing life due to agitation, so the question of granting compensation does not arise.

The farmers are holding an important meeting at Singhu border to discuss the future course



of action after the repeal of three farm laws. They are also demanding withdrawal of cases registered against them, law on MSP, compensation for the families of those dead, among others. Earlier on Friday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had said: "The government says that it does not have any record. We have data of 503 farmers. If the government wants, it can take the list from us. The Punjab government has given compensation to 403 families and jobs to 152 affected families.

## Novel test identifies antibody effectiveness against Delta, Omicron

NEW YORK | Agencies

A team of researchers has devised a test that could measure patient immunity against multiple Covid-19 variants such as Omicron and Delta at once and inform which synthetic monoclonal antibody to use for treatments.

The findings showed that this test could potentially tell doctors how protected a patient is from new variants and those currently circulating in a community or, conversely, which monoclonal antibodies to treat a Covid-19 patient. "While developing a point-of-care test for Covid-19 antibodies and biomarkers, we realised there could be some benefit to being able to detect the ability of antibodies to neutralise

specific variants, so we built a test around that idea," said researcher Ashutosh Chilkoti from the Duke University.

The test's technology hinges on a polymer brush coating that acts as a sort of non-stick coating to stop anything but the desired biomarkers from attaching to the test slide when wet.

The high effectiveness of this non-stick shield makes the test incredibly sensitive to even low levels of its targets. The approach allows researchers to print different molecular traps on different areas of the slide to catch multiple biomarkers at once.

In this application, researchers print fluorescent human ACE2 proteins -- the cellular targets of the virus's infamous spike protein -- on a slide.

They also print spike proteins specific to each variant of Covid-19 at different specific locations. When the test is run, the ACE2 proteins detach from the slide and are caught by the spike proteins still attached to the slide, causing the slide to glow.

But in the presence of neutralising antibodies, the spike proteins are no longer able to grab onto the ACE2 proteins, making the slide glow less, indicating the effectiveness of the antibodies.

By printing different variants of the Covid-19 spike protein on different portions of the slide, researchers can see how effective the antibodies are at preventing each variant from latching onto their human cellular target simultaneously.

## Follow all Covid protocols while travelling to tourist destinations: Union Tourism Minister

PANAJI | Agencies

Union Tourism Minister G. Kishan Reddy on Saturday urged people to travel to tourism destinations while following all the Covid-related protocols.

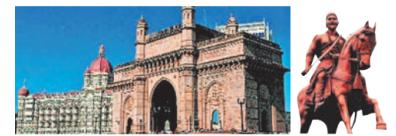
Addressing a press conference here, Reddy also said that the emergence of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 could prove to be a dampener for international tourist footfalls in India. "The tourism sector, not just in India but across the world, has been affected. Domestic tourism is picking up pace now and people are travelling to destinations in a big number. But today there is a debate about the third wave," Reddy told mediapersons. "I urge people to follow all the Covid protocols while travelling to tourist destinations. The state governments have also taken their own decisions regarding following the protocols," he said. Commenting on the immediate future of chartered tourism flights to Goa, which had recently been allowed by the Union Home Ministry, Reddy said that the emergence of Omicron globally could prove to be a dampener.



"We have made a decision and we have met the tour operators from different countries in Delhi. We had opened chartered flights, but because of the new variant, countries have imposed restrictions on tour operators in their countries, therefore a problem has cropped up again," he said.

He also said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that international cruise tourism should be pursued on a mission mode, adding that his Ministry is working with the Union Ministry of Shipping to further the Prime Minister's agenda. "Cruise tourism is a part of the Sagarmala initiative, and our Shipping Ministry is encouraging it. In the coming days, cruise tourism develop-

ment will be taken up on a mission mode, as per the directions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said, adding that officials from his ministry would be meeting with their counterparts in the Shipping Ministry to work out an action plan to start cruise terminals across India's coastline. Reddy also said that Goa would stand to benefit from the Central government's international cruise terminal initiative. "If cruise tourism is developed in Goa, the largest amount of benefit will be accrued by the state. Andaman, Visakhapatnam, Chennai -- all these destinations can be connected to Goa. Passenger terminals will be developed in ports and the Tourism Ministry has given the shipping department funds to develop the same," he said. Reddy also said that Goa would stand to benefit by developing heli-taxis (helicopter taxis), which has worked well as a concept in the Northeastern states. "In the Northeast, we have developed heli-taxis in many places. It can be done here too. Goa is a tourism destination, it should have helipads... We also do gap funding for helicopter taxis to control the rates," he said.



'NCB WANTS TO TAKE OVER TOP 5 DRUG CASES FROM MAHARASHTRA POLICE'

# IT'S AN ATTEMPT TO INFRINGE ON STATE'S RIGHTS: NAWAB MALIK

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Minister and Nationalist Congress party (NCP) leader Nawab Malik on Friday questioned the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) letter to Maharashtra police asking the latter to transfer 'top five' cases with the Anti-Narcotics Cell of the State police to the Central agency.

"NCB Director General SN Pradhan wrote to Maharashtra Director General of Police on November 24 asking for a list five cases fit to be handed over to the NCB. This has been as per the directions of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. We want to know the criteria for selecting five cases. Are they the ones which garnered maximum publicity?"



asked Mr. Malik.

The Minister termed it an attempt to infringe on the State's rights as there is no provision in the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act for such take-over. As per the letter, the NCB is asking the State to transfer five cases with inter-State and international ramifications. Malik, who has been targeting the NCB since the Aryan Khan case, pointed out that it is the State police's Anti-Narcotics Cell which has unearthed drug rackets in the State and not the NCB.

If NCB unit is not working, then close it down," he said. Reiterating his earlier allegations that the NCB officers were extorting money, Malik questioned whether seeking transfer of five cases is another attempt to extort money.

## MSRTC STRIKE:

# Maharashtra mulls taking action under essential services act

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra minister said the state is seriously considering taking action in view of the strike called by the employees of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation. Maharashtra State Transport Minister Anil Parab on Friday said that the state government is seriously considering taking action under the Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act, in view of the strike called by the employees of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation.

Speaking to reporters on Friday, Parab said, "There are people who are preventing State Transportation employees from returning to work. This strike will not end until



action is taken against them... State Government is seriously considering taking action under Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act." Lauding the efforts of the Maharashtra government, he said, "The government has given a very good salary increase to these employees. Some are spreading rumours that the pay hike is fraudulent. We have also issued a

notification on the pay hike. When you receive your pay slip, you will know that we have not cheated. "Some workers think that after 60 days of strike, the Chief Minister has to resign. This is not true. Many workers want to work but they are being stopped by miscreants. Some are threatening workers to go home. We are keeping an eye on all this," he said

## 10 months into Covid immunisation drive, Maharashtra acting chief secy takes first dose

The incident comes at a time when only 45 per cent of the state's eligible population has been fully vaccinated.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ten months after the mass immunisation programme against Covid-19 began in the state, Acting Chief Secretary Debashis Chakraborty took his first dose of the vaccine on Thursday.

Chakraborty took a shot of Covaxin at the government-run JJ Hospital. Sources at the hospital said that after the matter became public, the bureaucrat held senior doctors at the hospital responsible for 'leaking' his personal details.

Chakraborty could not be reached for his comments.

The incident comes at a time when only 45 per cent of the state's eligible population has been fully vaccinated. Districts across Maharashtra have sought the help of local priests, hakims and political leaders to motivate people to get vaccinated. Districts like Aurangabad, Hingoli and Ahmednagar among others have even imposed coercive measures, including issuing orders to stop supply of ration to unvaccinated individuals, threatening non-payment of salaries to government employees and prohibiting petrol pumps from

selling fuel to such people. With the Winter Session of the Assembly scheduled to be held towards the end of the month, Chakraborty's vaccination status holds importance. In the wake of the Omicron variant, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anil Parab has directed that only fully vaccinated persons with RT-PCR negative reports will be allowed to enter the Vidhan Bhawan premises. Besides, as per the rules, most bureaucrats have to be fully vaccinated to enter the Mantralaya.

## MSRDC begins land acquisition process for Jalna-Nanded stretch of Samruddhi Mahamarg

About 2,200 hectares of land will be needed for 179-km stretch in three districts and a total cost of the project, including construction is Rs 14,500 crore.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) on Saturday kicked off its land acquisition programme for the proposed Jalna-Nanded extension to the 701-mm Nagpur-Mumbai Samruddhi Mahamarg, an official said. The MSRDC's vice-chairman and MD Radheshyam Mopalwar addressed a workshop of revenue department officials in Maharashtra's Nanded, which was attended by collectors of three districts and land acquisition teams, the official said.

"The basic processes of land acquisition have already been initiated and now the corporation would like to begin joint measurement surveys in

Parbhani, Jalna and Nanded districts soon," Mopalwar said. The corporation wishes to complete all the processes related to the land acquisition

within seven months (June 2022), he said.

"We are confident of issuing tenders for the construction of Nanded-Jalna stretch of the Samruddhi Mahamarg by March 2022 in order to adhere to the completion time frame of October 2024, as indicated by the state government," Mopalwar said. About 2,200 hectares of land will be needed for 179-km stretch in three districts and a total cost of the project, including construction is Rs 14,500 crore, an official said. MSRDC joint MD Chandrakant Pulkundwar, District Collectors from Nanded and Parbhani Vipin Itankar and Rajesh Katkar respectively attended the meeting. Pulkundwar in his opening remarks said, "Jalna-Nanded stretch of the Samruddhi Mahamarg will reduce the travel time between Nanded and Mumbai to six hours. The project will strengthen the infrastructure of the region and attract non-agriculture employment trial growth."

## THE FINE FOR DRIVING THE VEHICLE WITHOUT LICENSE HAS BEEN INCREASED FROM RS 500 TO RS 5,000.

# COMPOUNDING FINES FOR TRAFFIC OFFENCES INCREASED

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government on Thursday notified the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019, increasing compounding fines for different traffic offences. The notification has come into effect from December 1. For violating parking rules, not having Pollution Under Control (PUC) certificate, not being able to furnish documents, having dark film or advertisements on the glass, jumping signal and not wearing seat belt, one will have to pay Rs 500 as fine now for the first offence. For the second and consecutive offences, one will have to pay Rs 1,500. Earlier, one had to pay Rs 200 for each offence. Moreover, the fine for driving the vehicle without license has been increased from Rs 500 to Rs 5,000. According to a new provision, a fine of Rs 1 lakh will have to be paid by the dealer,

importer or manufacturer of vehicles who offers to sell or delivers vehicles that violate the rules under the Act. This includes whoever sells or allows sell of any part of the vehicle that has been notified as its critical safety component. As per the notification issued by the government, a biker's driving license will be disqualified for three months if both the rider and pillion are caught without helmet and riding in excess of the seating capacity. The driving licence will also be disqualified if any person drives or is driven in a vehicle in a public place in contravention to standards prescribed in relation to road safety, control of noise and air pollution. The fine for this has also increased. The fine for racing on a public place has been increased from Rs 2,000 to Rs 5,000 for the first offence and Rs 10,000 for every second and consecutive offence. For allowing an unauthorised person to drive a vehicle, the owner

will be fined Rs 5,000. This was earlier Rs 500. The fine for driving without insurance has been increased from Rs 300 to Rs 2,000 for the first offence and Rs 4,000 for the second and consecutive offences. "While the new compounding fine for various offences has come into effect from December 1, the implementation will take a day or two," said an official. Officials said the increase and changes in the fines will discourage motorists from violating traffic rules and also help reduce road accidents and fatalities. "The current amendment has been done only in compoundable offences. The increase in fines will also help improve road safety for motorists and pedestrians," said an official. The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha on July 15, 2019. While it was passed and became an Act, Maharashtra did not implement it.

## Mumbai's Latest Home Quarantine Rules Amid Omicron Threat

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai municipal agency has released a set of rules to ensure proper monitoring of people in home quarantine amid the Omicron threat. Seven-day home quarantine is a must for international arrivals from at-risk nations. Mumbai's "ward war room", or WWR, team will dial people in home quarantine at least five times a day to monitor their health. It will monitor whether those who are in home quarantine are indeed following the rule. A software will segregate passengers according to their addresses into 24 wards of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, or MCGM. The disaster management unit will distribute the list of

addresses to all the 24 "ward war rooms", or WWR, and field medical officers.

The WWRs will inform passengers to remain under seven-day home quarantine. They will provide passengers with information on COVID-19 protocols and answer their concerns. Medical teams will be sent regularly with ambulances to check whether passengers are complying with rules. On Day 7 of home quarantine, WWRs will ensure passengers take RT-PCR test. Everyday at 9 am, the chief executive of Mumbai International Airport

LT will send a single list of international passengers arriving in the preceding 24 hours from high-risk and at-risk nations. The list will be sent to the director of the disaster management unit.

## Beef worth over Rs 20 lakh seized in Palghar; two from TN held

Palghar | Agencies

Based on a tip-off, the district rural police laid a trap at Ghol village on Mumbai-Ahmedabad Highway in Palghar and intercepted a container truck on Tuesday evening, senior inspector Ajay Vasave said. The police in Maharashtra's Palghar district have seized beef worth Rs 20.6 lakh and arrested two persons from Tamil Nadu who were allegedly transporting it in a container truck, an official said on Saturday. Based on a tip-off, the district rural police laid a trap at Ghol village on Mumbai-Ahmedabad Highway in Palghar and intercepted a container truck on Tuesday evening, senior inspector Ajay Vasave said. On inspection, the police found that beef from Tamil Nadu was being transported to the state, he said. The transporters had given fake declaration about the consignment and made an attempt to escape but were caught, the official



said. A total of 21,018 kg of beef worth Rs 20 lakh were seized from the vehicle, he said, adding that the illegal consignment was meant to be delivered at Taloja. A case has been registered against the accused Kolinchinath Rajendra Vaniar (37) and Ranjit Kumar Ganeshan (36), both

residents of Ariyalur in Tamil Nadu, the official said. The police have also booked the owner of the container truck and others associated with the crime under relevant sections of the IPC, Maharashtra Animal Protection Act and Cruelty to Animals Act, he added.

## MIMER DEVELOPS NANO ROBOT FOR RAPID CANCER DIAGNOSIS

Pune: The new nano robot-based diagnostic tool is likely to help improve cancer treatments and enable early interventions, a scientist at MIMER said. Maharashtra Institute of Medical Education and Research (MIMER), Pune has developed a nano robot that is programmed to capture and isolate circulating tumor cells. The tool is expected to lead to a new rapid and accurate diagnostic method for cancer, said Dr Shashwat Banerjee, Scientist at MIMER Medical College at Talegaon Dabhade in Pune. "In search of better cancer diagnostics, scientists from MIMER, Pune, synthesized multifunctional nanorobot using magnesium-iron oxide Janus nanoparticles. The reported nano robot tested on blood containing a low number of cancer cells exhibited ~100% capture efficiency in less than five minutes. The nano robot was further clinically validated by testing it on a cancer patient's blood samples and it exhibited rapid and efficient circulating tumour cells (CTC) capture ability," Dr Banerjee said in a statement. The findings were published recently in the peer-reviewed journal Communications Chemistry under the title 'Water-Powered Self-Propelled Magnetic Nanobot for Rapid and Highly Efficient Capture of Circulating Tumor Cells'.

This new nano robot-based diagnostic tool may help in improving cancer treatments, allow for better treatment control, enable early interventions and change decision-making from reactive actions towards more predictive early interventions, he added. According to a recently released report by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research (NCDIR), the number of cancer cases in the country will rise to 15.6 lakh by 2025. This will be an increase of 12 per cent from the current estimated cases. With this rising global burden, prevention and cure of cancer is one of the most important public health challenges of the 21st century. For carrying out this advanced research, the Department of Science &

Technology and the Department of Biotechnology under the government of India has provided a fund of nearly Rs 1

## OMICRON SCARE: Mumbai airport revises rates of Rapid PCR test, ramps up testing

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid rising concerns over the new Covid-19 variant Omicron, the authorities at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) have stepped up testing facilities to cater to the new travel guidelines put in place by the Centre and state government. In an official statement on Saturday, the airport authorities said they have set up 100 registration counters and 60 sampling booths to handle the Covid-19 testing requirements. They have also arranged 100 Rapid PCR machines. The Mumbai Airport has revised the rate for Rapid PCR tests to Rs 3,900 from the earlier Rs 4,500. "Normal RT-PCR test costs Rs 600 at CSMIA. The reduced charges will help passengers avail tests at minimal cost and enable them to travel safely," an official said. Passengers arriving from countries which have been declared 'at risk' (such as European nations including United Kingdom, South

Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Brazil, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong and Israel) are deboarded on priority. They all have to undergo mandatory RT-PCR test on arrival. They are required to wait for their test results before leaving or taking a connecting flight. If the RT-PCR test is found to be positive, the passenger will be shifted to a designated isolation facility or hospital by the authorities. Passengers arriving from South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe and those who have visited any of these three countries in the last 15 days before arrival in Maharashtra must undergo mandatory institutional quarantine for seven days after giving their RT-PCR test at CSMIA. "Such passengers shall also undergo second RT-PCR test on seventh day. If any of the RT-PCR tests is found to be positive, then such passenger will be shifted to a hospital with Covid treatment facilities by the authorities. If seventh day test is found negative, pas-

senger will have to undergo further seven days of home quarantine," an official said. Travellers from countries excluding those at risk are allowed to leave the airport and shall self-monitor their health for 14 days' post arrival. A sub-section (two per cent of total passengers on random) are required to undergo RT-PCR test post-arrival at CSMIA. "The two per cent of such travellers on each flight are identified by the concerned airline (preferably from different countries). Such travellers are escorted by the concerned airlines to RT-PCR testing area on arrival," an official said. Domestic arrivals are required to be double-vaccinated or they must carry a negative RT-PCR test report carried out within 72 hours before boarding for Mumbai. As per officials, children under five years of age are exempted from both pre- and post-arrival testing. "However, if found symptomatic for Covid-19 on arrival or during home quarantine period, they shall.



### PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD IN THREE PHASES: SEC

Model code of conduct effective in rural areas  
Voting will be held on January 6, January 28 and February 16



Team Absolute | Bhopal

State Election Commissioner Basant Pratap Singh has announced the election programme for the general election year 2021-22 of three-tier panchayats on Saturday. Singh said that the model code of conduct has become effective in rural areas as soon as the election was announced, and will remain in force till the results are declared. The provisions of the Model Code of Conduct will be applicable to political parties, candidates, government departments and employees and office bearers and employees of three-tier panchayats. Although Panchayat elections are being held on non-party basis, the provisions of the code of conduct will be applicable to political parties in general. Polling will be held in three

phases on January 6, January 28 and February 16, 2022. The publication of election information and the receipt of nomination papers will start on December 13 for the first and second phase and on December 30 for the third phase. The last date for receipt of nomination papers is December 20 for Phase I and II and January 6 for Phase III. Scrutiny of nomination papers will be held on December 23 for Phase I and II and January 7 for Phase III. The last date for withdrawal of candidature and allotment of election symbols is December 23 for the first and second phase and 10 January for the third phase till 3 pm. Voting (if required) will be held on 6 January for the first phase, 28 January for the second phase and 16 February 2022 for the third phase from 7 am to 3 pm. The counting of

votes for the post of Panch and Sarpanch at the polling station will be done immediately after the poll is over. Counting of votes of Janpad Panchayat member and Zila Panchayat member from EVM at Block Headquarters will be done on January 10 for first phase, February 1 for second phase and February 20, 2022 for third phase from 8 am onwards. The election results for the post of Panch and Sarpanch will be announced on 11 January for the first phase, 2 February for the second phase and 21 February 2022 from 10:30 am for the third phase. The election results for Janpad Panchayat members will be announced on February 22 for the first, second and third phases and for Zila Panchayat members on February 23, 2022 from 10:30 am.

### CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO MARTYR RATHORE

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has paid homage to martyr Banwari Lal Rathore, of Agar-Malwa. In his tweet Chief Minister Chouhan said that martyr Rathore has become immortal by laying down his life while discharging his duty. I pay obeisance at his feet.

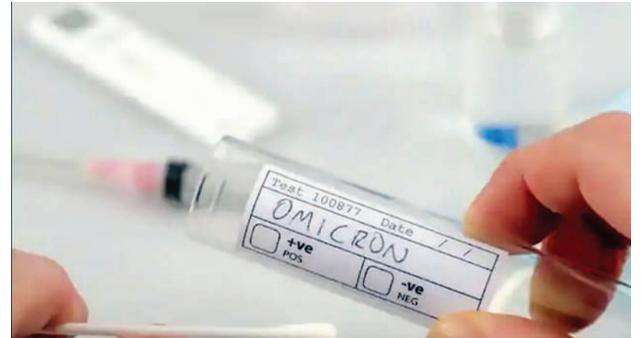
Banwari Lal Rathore, of Agar-Malwa district of Madhya Pradesh, was the son of Ramdayal Rathore, former sarpanch of Diwankhedhi. He was serving in the Indian Army. While removing the soil that was spread on the road in the hilly area, his dozer got off balance and fell into a ditch near Guwahati following which Martyr Rathore was seriously injured. He was admitted to the Army hospital, where he breathed his last during treatment.

## Possibility of Omnicron spread in MP likely in January

A senior IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh government has feared that the new variant of Corona, Omicron, will spread by January. He said that due to better health preparations in Madhya Pradesh, it will not be more fatal.

Zafar Alam Khan | Bhopal  
www.absoluteindianews.com

The outbreak of Corona is not over yet that Omicron, the new variant of Corona, has created a new fear among the people. A prominent official of the Health Department of the Government of Madhya Pradesh Mohammad Suleman has created a sensation in this regard by stating that the new variant of Corona is likely to spread in the next month i.e. in January. Suleman said this to the media on Friday at a medical camp being organized in the memory of the father of Madhya Pradesh Medical and Education Minister Vishwas Sarang. He said that there is no need to panic with the new variant because before its arrival, our target is to provide both doses of the vaccine to five crore people of the state. Regarding the increasing corona cases in the country, he said that this time the preparedness of health facilities in the state is good, so it is expected that the corona will not be more



deadly now. Notably, Mohammad Suleman is the Additional Chief Secretary in the Government of Madhya Pradesh and throughout the Corona period, the reins of the Health Department remained in his hands. He is a 1989 batch IAS officer. Apart from the health department, he has also held various positions in important departments like energy, road development, trade and industry. According to Suleman, till now about 94 percent of the people in the state have received the first dose of corona vaccine and 68 percent of the people have received the second dose. On the basis of this, it can be said that we have achieved the target of the first dose, but for the second dose, the government is working hard and if everything goes well, then in December, the entire population will be vaccinated. Regarding the preparations

for Corona, he said that the preparation of health facilities in the state is good, so it is expected that Corona will not be more deadly now. He further said that the new variant that is being talked about will spread in January, but the good thing is that it is being caught by RT-PCR test. That's why now more and more people will get RT PCR test done. Any patient who has symptoms will not be treated at home but in the hospital itself. People coming from outside are being monitored and we try to stop the corona before it spreads. For the last few days, the number of corona infected patients in Madhya Pradesh has reached double digits, which is a matter of concern for the government and this time not many people are coming from Bhopal, so the government is more worried.

### Doors of development for tribal brothers opened through many schemes: Governor

## PESA Act will be implemented in the state from today: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Puje na shaheed gaye to phir yah beej kahan se aayega, dharti ko maa kah kar, mitti mathe se kaun lagayega. (If martyrs are not worshipped, then from where will this seed come, who will put soil on his forehead after addressing the Earth as mother.) With the utterance of these words, Governor Mangubhai Patel and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage to Jannayak Tantiya Mama, a symbol of tribal pride and identity, on his sacrifice day in a memorial programme organised at Nehru Stadium, Indore on Saturday. In the remembrance programme, Governor and Chief Minister worshipped the Gaurav Kalash Yatra organised in the memory of Jannayak Tantiya Mama. They also paid respect to the descendants of Krantisurya Jannayak Tantiya Mama and honoured them. Governor Patel said that he is feeling happy and proud to participate in the programme organised on the martyrdom day of the great leader of freedom movement Krantisurya Jannayak Tantiya Mama. Governor thanked Chief Minister for organising a grand programme to honour the memory and martyrdom of Jannayak Tantiya Mama. He told that the Gaurav Kalash Yatra, dedicated to the sacrifice of Tantiya Mama, came to Indore today after travelling thousands of kilometers. Lakhs of people participated in this yatra, which itself shows the popularity of Tantiya Mama. He said that efforts are being made day and night by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Chouhan for the welfare and all-round development of the tribal community. New doors are being opened for the development of tribal brother



ers through many schemes by the Central and State Governments. Chouhan said that the British of even up to England were scared by the name of Tantiya Mama. Tantiya Mama, the leader of the freedom movement, took up arms against the atrocities against the poor. Today is the time to remember the tribal heroes like Tantiya Mama who dedicated the last drop of their body's blood for the country's independence. While making a big announcement in the programme, Chouhan said that "PESA Act" is being implemented in Madhya Pradesh from today. He himself read out the notification to the forest dwellers present in the programme and said that today this Act is being implemented in the state to empower the gram sabhas in the scheduled

areas of the state under the provisions of the notification. He said that forest dwellers residing in the state, whose possession of forest rights before December 2006 has not been given yet, will be given forest rights patta. For this, a campaign will be launched again in the state. No tribal will be deprived of their rights anymore. Chouhan said that no tribal will be harassed on the soil of Madhya Pradesh. Due to minor legal matters, you will not have to make rounds of the police and the court. He announced that all the pending minor cases against tribal people would be taken back. Chouhan announced that the tribal brothers and sisters in the state, who do not have pucca house to live in, would be given land lease for construction of houses. No tribal brother will live on the soil of Madhya Pradesh without land or house. For this, the Madhya Pradesh government will implement the Mukhyamantri Awasiya Bhu-adhikar Yojana. Chouhan said that now the tribal brothers and sisters will not have to spend the whole day going to remote villages for ration, but under the "Ration Aapke Gram" scheme, ration will be delivered door-to-door in every village. Instead of government vehicles to transport ration, the vehicles for the tribal youths will be financed by the government from the bank. Chouhan said that recruitment on one lakh backlog posts would be held to provide employment to the tribal youths. He said that under Mukhyamantri Udyam Kranti Yojana loans up to Rs 50 lakh would be given to the youths for setting up industries. Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh government is running a campaign for the development of tribal brothers. In this, a campaign of freedom from exploitation will also be launched.

## Governor and Chief Minister visited the photo exhibition

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan visited a photo exhibition displayed at Nehru Stadium. The photo exhibition also includes the original photograph of Tantiya Mama when he was arrested and sent to Jabalpur Jail. The exhibition also includes a photo of Tantiya Mama with shackles on his feet. The Devasthan situated at the residence of Kishan ji in his native village Garhi Kothda gives information about the Bhil tradition. The real photo of Nathu Singh, grandson of Tantiya Mama and son of Kishan ji, the dargah of Peer located in village Kothda and the photo of Central Jail built in Jabalpur in 1874 have also been put up there. It was here that Tantiya Mama was hanged on 4 December 1889. In this photo exhibition, there are photographs of arrows and bows seized from Tantiya Mama and his companions when they were arrested, these arrows bows are currently safe in the Museum of London. A news article was published in The New York Times on November 10, 1889, in which Tantiya Mama was called Indian Robin Hood by an English journalist. It is mentioned in this that the money and goods looted from the British were never used by Tantiya Mama himself. The looted money and goods were distributed among the poor. Photo of the newspaper is also exhibited here. Besides, many other portraits have been put up here which show different aspects of his life.

### CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO KRANTISURYA JANNAYAK TANTIYA MAMA

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid tributes to KrantiSurya Jannayak Tantiya Mama on his death anniversary. Chouhan paid floral tributes to his photograph in the auditorium at his residence office. Krantisurya Jannayak Tantiya Mama was one of the great revolutionaries of the freedom struggle. Jannayak Tantiya Mama's real name was Tantiya, who was fondly called as Tantiya Mama. He was a brave warrior. Even today Jannayak Tantiya Mama is worshipped in many tribal homes. Tantiya Mama, a revolutionary known as Mama because of his public welfare image, did not let the British rulers rest for many years and remained a challenge to them. From the year 1874 till his arrest, he looted the government treasury on many occasions and distributed it among the common people. He was arrested by the British towards the end of his life. KrantiSurya Jannayak Tantiya Mama was hanged on December 4th, 1889.

### CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO MARTYR RATHORE



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has paid homage to martyr Banwari Lal Rathore, of Agar-Malwa. In his tweet Chief Minister Chouhan said that martyr Rathore has become immortal by laying down his life while discharging his duty. I pay obeisance at his feet. Banwari Lal Rathore, of Agar-Malwa district of Madhya Pradesh, was the son of Ramdayal Rathore, former sarpanch of Diwankhedhi. He was serving in the Indian Army. While removing the soil that was spread on the road in the hilly area, his dozer got off balance and fell into a ditch near Guwahati following which Martyr Rathore was seriously injured. He was admitted to the Army hospital, where he breathed his last during treatment.

## Will run a campaign to change the lives of the poor and tribals: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan unveiled a grand statue of Krantisurya Jannayak Tantiya Mama made of Ashtadhatu on his Sacrifice Day at Patalpani. The Governor and the Chief Minister also planted saplings after offering prayers at the Mahakali temple here. The descendants of Jannayak Tantiya Mama were also welcomed and felicitated in the programme. Chouhan said that Tantiya Mama fought with the British against exploitation and injustice and fought decisive battle while playing an important role in freeing Mother India from the chains of slavery. The British also made a separate Tantiya Police to catch Tantiya Mama. Chief Minister said that Patalpani, the place of work of such a brave person would be developed as a new pilgrimage. A meditation center will be built here, so that the coming generations can follow their valour. Chouhan said that now a campaign to change the lives of the poor and tribals in the state will be run jointly by the



Central and State Government. Chouhan said that memorials of martyrs would be built as per the wishes of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. No stone will be left unturned to build a memorial for the martyrs of any community in the state. A new

### Team of famous doctors of the country gave free consultation

## About 65 thousand people benefitted in two days in free medical camp

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In two days, about 65 thousand people benefitted in a massive free medical camp organised in the memory of Late Kailash Prasoos Sarang, the parents of Medical Education Minister Vishwas Kailash Sarang. A total of 38 thousand 166 people got their treatment done in the camp on Saturday. Whereas on the first day 26 thousand 338 people took benefit of health facilities. Citizens of Bhopal and other districts took advantage of free medical facilities in the camp. There was a lot of enthusiasm among the citizens from 9 am to get free consultation from the doctors of famous medical institutions of the country. The



Orthopedic and Ophthalmology blocks of the camp were the most crowded on Saturday. A total of 38 thousand 166 patients got free check-up and medicines along with consultation from doctors of famous medical institutions in the camp today. Mani Ram, a patient who had come to the free medical camp, was taken by the Minister Sarang himself on a stretcher to the doctor for

medical consultation. Sarang himself is constantly monitoring all the arrangements and is learning about their experience from the patients availing the facilities in other blocks including ICU. On Saturday various specialist doctors including Dr. Ashok Gupta (Padmashri) Plastic Surgeon Breach Candy Hospital Mumbai, Dr. Amit Maydev (Padmashri), Gastroenterologist Surgeon,

Global Hospital Mumbai, Dr. Amit Joshi, Cancer Disease Specialist, TMH Mumbai, Dr. Chaitanya Kulkarni, Kidney Disease, Apex Kidney Foundation Mumbai, Dr. Vinayak Ukirde, Kidney Disease, Apex Kidney Foundation Mumbai, Dr. Srirang Bichhu, Kidney Disease, Apex Kidney Foundation Mumbai, gave free consultation. On the last day of the camp on Sunday, team of many eminent doctors including Padmashri Dr. Ramakant Deshpande, Cancer Disease Specialist, Asian Cancer Institute Mumbai, Dr. Dilip Nikam, Cancer Disease Specialist, Bombay Hospital Mumbai, Dr. Suyash Kulkarni, Radiologist, TMH Mumbai will give free consultation.

## MP Pulls The Trigger On Dropping Urdu Words From Police Work

Team Absolute | Bhopal

When a senior police officer in Madhya Pradesh used the Urdu word 'Dastayab' - referring to the recovery of a missing item - during a meeting attended by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, he did not know the chain of events he would set off. Not only was the Superintendent of Police advised to use simpler words and avoid those from the Mughal era, but the state's Home Minister also ordered that Persian and Urdu words and phrases will be deleted from the official lexicon of the Madhya Pradesh Police. Chief Minister Chouhan has said the police should incorporate "simple Hindi words" when filing complaints, investigation and research reports, and other formalities. In effect, around 350 words like 'adam pata' (untraceable), 'tarmeem' (amendment), 'ishtgassa' (petition), 'muddayi' (complainant), 'istgasa' (complaint letter), and the fateful 'dastayab' will now disappear from use. The Urdu and Persian terms had been in use by the police since the days of the British Raj when all matters of government were conducted in Urdu. While many such words have been changed in Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, such instructions have been sent out in Madhya Pradesh for the first time. Home Minister Narottam Mishra said, "The process of changing such words which are not in practice will be started here like in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan."



# DANIEL RADCLIFFE HAS AN 'ODD' RELATIONSHIP WITH ROBERT PATTINSON

London | Agencies

Actor Daniel Radcliffe has shared that he has an "odd" relationship with former co-star Robert Pattinson and says that the two only communicate through the press.

Radcliffe said: "Literally the first, I was in New York about to do 'Equus' (the play), and I was on the Westside Highway and I turned around and saw this billboard and I was like, 'What, I know that guy!' I hadn't heard of the 'Twilight' books at the time; I hadn't been aware of that phenomenon. And so yeah, it's odd."

"We have a very strange relationship now where we basically only communicate through journalists. We haven't seen each other in ages."

The 32-year-old star understands why people assume he and Pattinson are 'great mates', but he said the 'Lighthouse' actor is just someone he has "met", although they enjoyed working together on 'Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire', reports female-



first.co.uk. He added in an interview on "The Jonathan Ross Show": "Because everyone assumes we're kind of great mates, but I've met him, he's a lovely guy when I worked with him."

The 'Harry Potter' actor's admission comes shortly after it was said he is to reunite with his 'Harry Potter' co-stars Rupert Grint and Emma Watson, who played Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger in the fantasy film series, for a

HBO Max special to mark 20 years since the first movie was released.

Other stars confirmed to be taking part in 'Return to Hogwarts' include Helena Bonham Carter, Robbie Coltrane, Ralph Fiennes, Jason Isaacs, Gary Oldman, Imelda Staunton, Tom Felton, James Phelps, Oliver Phelps, Mark Williams, Bonnie Wright, Alfred Enoch, Matthew Lewis, and Evanna Lynch.

# 'Inseparable and leaning on each other'

Los Angeles: Kylie Jenner and Travis Scott are closer than ever following the Astroworld tragedy in Houston, Texas on November 5.

The pregnant 24-year-old makeup mogul and the 30-year-old rapper are said to be 'inseparable and leaning on each other' in wake of the catastrophic concert which claimed 10 lives, per E! News.

Additionally as the pair are set to welcome their second child together in a matter of months, the source added that both are 'excited' for the baby's arrival. "They have definitely been inseparable and leaning on each other," the source said of the pair's relationship at this time. "Travis has been by [Kylie's] side and has been very supportive during her pregnancy," the insider noted, adding that 'they are both excited for the baby to come.' The insider continued to say that the reality star is 'nesting until the baby comes' and that



# New York Film Critics Circle award for Japanese movie 'Drive My Car'

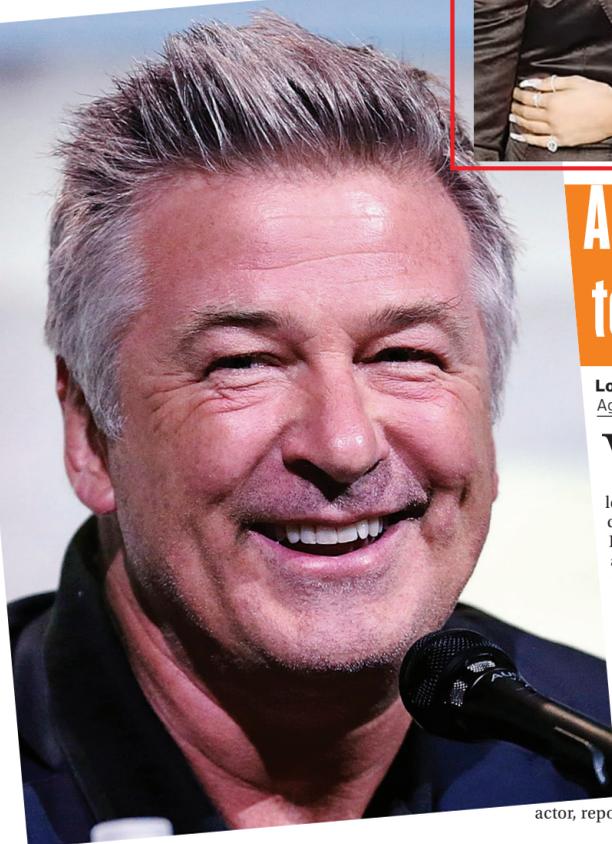
New York | Agencies

The New York Film Critics Circle (NYFCC) announced its winners on Friday morning (U.S. Eastern Time) -- and they were enamoured of Japanese cinema, Italian accents and a Western.

One of the first critics' groups to weigh in on the awards season, the NYFCC named Ryusuke Hamaguchi's 'Drive My Car' the best film of 2021. It will represent Japan for the international feature category at the Oscars, reports 'Variety'. The film is based on the short story of the same name by the Japanese master, Haruki Murakami, from his 2014 collection, 'Men Without Women'.

The NYFCC, which consists of 50-plus journalists from publications such as 'Time', 'Vanity Fair' and 'Variety', however, was clearly enamored of Netflix's 'The Power of the Dog', which nabbed three major prizes -- the most of any film. NYFCC's winner for best film has typically had a strong correlation with the Academy Awards' best picture category. Last year's 'First Cow' (2020) was the first film that has won NYFCC's top prize and failed to garner a single Oscar nom.

Lady Gaga asserted her status in the best actress category by picking up her first mention of the awards season for Ridley Scott's 'House of Gucci'.



# Alec Baldwin: Would go to any lengths to undo what happened to Halyna

Los Angeles | Agencies

Veteran actor Alec Baldwin says he would "go to any lengths to undo" the death of Halyna Hutchins, who died after being shot on the set of 'Rust' during an incident involving Alec.

The cinematographer was fatally shot on the set of the movie 'Rust' on October 21 in an incident which involved a gun that was being handled by the 63-year-old actor, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

And in an emotional interview with ABC News' George Stephanopoulos which aired on Thursday, Baldwin said he would give anything to go back and stop the incident -- which also injured director Joel Souza -- from happening.

In first clips of the interview taken by People magazine, he said: "I wanted to come to talk to you to say I would go to any lengths to undo what happened. I want to make sure that I don't come across like I'm the victim, because we have two victims here. All of what happened that day leading up to this event was precipitated on one idea, and that idea is that Halyna and I had something profound in common."

"That is, we both assumed the gun was empty, other than those

dummy rounds." The actor also shared "there were a number of misconceptions" about the incident that had surfaced since October 21 and said "most of it" was from sources he "really wouldn't concern (him)self about".

In a previously released clip from the interview, Baldwin said he did not pull the trigger of the gun that killed Halyna.

He said: "The trigger wasn't pulled. I didn't pull the trigger. I would never point a gun at someone and pull the trigger on them, never."

However, the preview for the actor's interview did not include an explanation of how the shot was fired.

# 'We will always be as one'

## Little Mix break their social media silence with sweet snap after announcing their split

Los Angeles | Agencies

Little Mix shared a sweet snap together with a heartfelt caption underneath on Friday a day after announcing their split to the world.

The band comprising of Jade Thirlwall, 28, Perrie Edwards, 28, Leigh-Anne Pinnoch, 30, and formerly Jesy Nelson, 30, told fans on Thursday that they are set to part ways to pursue 'other projects' and 'spread their wings'.

And on Friday Leigh-Anne and Jade shared the same striking image of the trio together with the emotive caption '2011-Always' printed underneath.

Jade captioned her post: "Even when life moves on we will always be as one." Leigh-Anne wrote under hers: "Nothing comes between us... love will never leave us..."

Announcing their split on Thursday the band penned in a statement: "We wanted to let you all know that after the Confetti tour in April/May next year we are going to be taking a break from Little Mix. It's been 10 amazing years, a wonderful non-stop adventure, and we feel the time is right to take a break so we can recharge and work on some other projects. We can't thank you enough for your love and never-ending support since the beginning. We love you all SO much."



# BTS TOPS NINE OF BILLBOARD'S YEAR-END CHARTS



Seoul: K-pop superband BTS has topped nine of Billboard's year-end charts for 2021, including the year's top duo/group category.

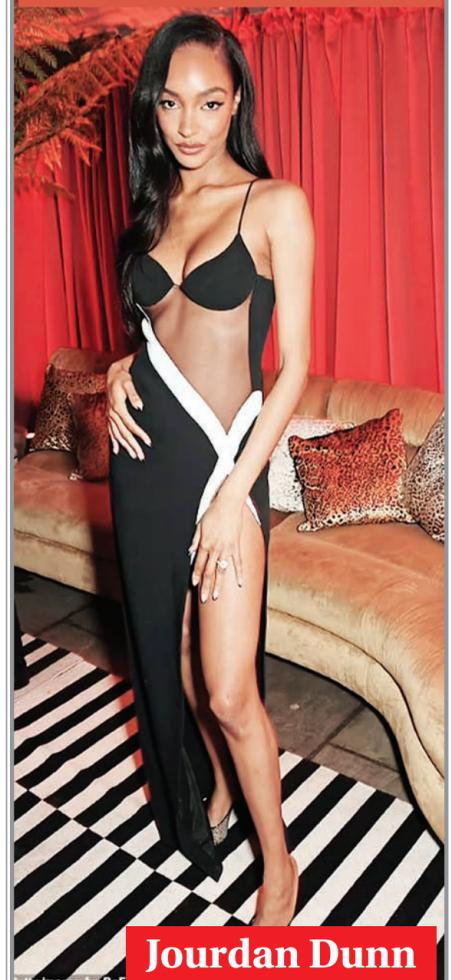
Yonhap News Agency quotes Billboard as saying that BTS ranked No. 1 on the lists of Top Artists - Duo/Group, Hot 100 Artists - Duo/Group, Billboard 200 Artists - Duo/Group, Billboard Global Excl. U.S. Artists, Digital Song Sales Artists and World Albums Artists.

The band's 2020 hit song 'Dynamite' led the year-end Billboard Global Excl. U.S. chart, while 'Butter' stood atop the Digital Song Sales list. Its fifth studio album 'BE' took the No. 1 title on the top World Albums for 2021.

"BTS dominates internationally," said Billboard in a posting on its website. "The seven-piece South Korean group is the year's top artist, and has the year's top song, on the Billboard Global Excl. U.S. recaps."

BTS has gone big in 2021, having three Billboard Hot 100 chart-toppers under its belt - 'Butter', 'Permission to Dance' and 'My Universe', a collaborative effort with British rock band Coldplay.

# ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Jourdan Dunn



## 'PERFECT 10': AJAZ PATEL ENTERS HISTORY BOOKS ALONGSIDE LAKER, ANIL KUMBLE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

His first 10 Tests produced only 29 wickets but his brilliant effort in the 11th propelled Ajaz Patel of New Zealand into the record books on Saturday as he became the third bowler in the history of Test cricket to claim all 10 wickets in an innings.

His sensational effort on the second day of the second and final Test against India at the Wankhede Stadium was not only his best ever but also the best by any New Zealand bowler. With figures of 10-119 in 47.5 overs, Ajaz joined legends Jim Laker of England (1956) and India's Anil Kumble (1999) as the third bowler to dismiss the entire opposing team single-handedly. Laker claimed 10-53 against Australia at Old Trafford on July 26, 1956 while Kumble bagged 10-74 against Pakistan at the then named Feroze Shah Kotla ground in New Delhi on February 4, 1999.

Laker took 51.2 overs to become the first bowler in the history of the game to take all-10 wickets in an innings while Kumble bowled only 26.3 overs for his haul. While, Ajaz in 47.5 overs - that he bowled in four spells of 24-10-57-4, 5-0-16-0, 6-0-16-2 and 12.5-2-30-4 -- his fourth spell on the second day of the Test being the most devastating.

Ajaz, whose previous best effort in an innings is 5/59 against Pakistan, gave away 73 runs for his first four wickets but claimed the next six for only 46.

In the process, he produced the best bowling figures ever in an international match at the Wankhede stadium and also the best bowling figures against India. The 33-year-old spinner, who represents Auckland and Central Districts in domestic cricket, was born



in Mumbai and had migrated with his family to New Zealand when he was eight. On Saturday, he wrote his name in the history books on his return to his birth place, claiming the best bowling figures for a Black Caps bowler. He said it was special to get the 10-fer in the city he was born in.

"Yeah, by the grace of God, I think I am quite fortunate to have an occasion like this to be born here and to come back here to achieve something like this is quite special," said Patel, who made his Test debut against Pakistan at Abu Dhabi in 2018.

"It's quite a special occasion for me, not only for me but for my wife, my mum and dad and my family, so a very special day for me for sure," he added.

Ajaz bowled brilliantly, gave the ball lots of revs, flighted it and kept a tight line and length. He was hit quite easily by Mayank Agarwal on the first day as the Indian opener targeted him, but came back strongly to claim two wickets in an over, dismissing Cheteshwar Pujara and Virat Kohli in the same over. Patel claimed all his 10 wickets from one end -- the Tata End at the Wankhede. On Friday, he bowled 24 overs unchanged from that end and

after getting four wickets, never thought of bowling from the other end.

He was on hat-trick in his 30th over, claiming two wickets off successive balls in his first over on the second day, trapping overnight batsman Wriddhiman Saha lbw for 27 and casting R Ashwin, first ball, with one that spun and struck the off-stump. Axar Patel survived the hat-trick ball but became his eighth victim.

And when Rachin Ravindra pounced the catch of Siraj, the entire New Zealand team rushed towards him, enveloping him in embrace as they celebrated with gusto.

"It was a nervous time. We backed Rachin to take it but the ball wobbled and we were all nervous. I told Neil Wagner, during drinks, that I was more nervous now than I was all game. We don't have these moments as cricketers often. It was special that it came in Mumbai," he said later.

On Friday after claiming four wickets, Ajaz had said that it was a special feeling to succeed at the Wankhede. On Saturday, he made it an extra special visit to his birthplace with an extraordinary effort and made it to the record books as the best New Zealand spinner.

## IND vs NZ, 2nd Test: India tighten noose around Kiwis, lead by 332 runs

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Despite New Zealand left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel's historic 10-wicket haul, Team India bounced back in style to take a stranglehold on the second and final Test here at the Wankhede stadium, gaining a mammoth 332-run lead with no loss, on Saturday.

The Virat Kohli-led side wrested the initiative by bundling New Zealand for 62 in 28.1 overs in their first innings with off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin claiming 4-8 and Mohammed Siraj 3-19.

At the end of Day 2, the hosts were 69 for no loss in their second innings. Mayank Agarwal was batting on 38 with Cheteshwar Pujara, who opened the innings as Shubman Gill had suffered a blow to his right elbow while fielding, was batting on 29.

India may have tightened the noose around the Black Caps but the talk of the town was Ajaz Patel. The New Zealand spinner scripted history by scalping all ten wickets in an innings. He bowled beautifully by giving the ball a lot of revs, giving it enough air and getting a nice loop going.

With his figures of 10-119, Ajaz joined the likes of legends Jim Laker of England (1956) and India's Anil Kumble (1999) to dismiss the entire opposing team single-handedly.

Laker claimed 10-53 against Australia at Old Trafford, while Kumble bagged 10-74 against Pakistan at the Feroze Shah Kotla ground in New Delhi. Incidentally, Ajaz plays for Yorkshire just like Laker, the first man to claim all-10 in an innings. The Kiwis spinner, who had taken only 29 wickets in his previous 10 Tests, claimed four wickets on Friday, added two more to his tally in the morning session on the second day and then claimed four more wickets in the post-lunch session.

The 30-year-old Ajaz, who migrated



from Mumbai to New Zealand when he was eight and made his Test debut against Pakistan in Abu Dhabi in 2018, claimed his first four wickets for 73 runs and the next six for just 46 runs. He was on a hat-trick in his first over of the second day when he claimed Wriddhiman Saha and Ashwin off successive balls.

India, starting on overnight 221/4, were then bowled out for 325.

Ajaz's brilliant effort overshadowed the fantastic 150-run knock by Indian opener Mayank Agarwal. In a 311-ball inning, he smashed 17 fours and four sixes. Agarwal, who was 120 overnight, added 30 runs to his total on Saturday but more importantly raised 67 runs for the seventh wicket with Axar Patel (52).

Chasing the total, the Kiwis' meek surrender raised several eyebrows. The entire team got out for just 62 runs. This is the lowest-ever total by any team

against India, the previous lowest being 79 by South Africa at Nagpur in 2015.

Siraj started the carnage for India as he claimed the first three wickets, the only pacer in this Test to get wickets. He bowled a beautiful line, kept the ball in the channel and disguised a straight one quite brilliantly to castle a batsman of the caliber of Ross Taylor.

Ashwin then took over as he bagged four wickets for eight runs. The entire New Zealand innings lasted just 128 minutes as only two batters -- stand-in skipper Tom Latham (10) and bowler Kyle Jamieson (17) -- could reach double figures. Three batsmen got out for zero.

India did not enforce the follow-on and scored 69 for no loss in their second innings with Mayank Agarwal batting on 38 and Cheteshwar Pujara on 29 at stumps.

### Brief scores:

India 325 all out in 109.5 overs (Mayank Agarwal 150, Axar Patel 52, Shubman Gill 44, Ajaz Patel 10-119) & 69/0 in 21 overs (Agarwal batting 38, Pujara batting 29) v New Zealand 62 all out in 28.1 overs (Tom Latham 10, Kyle Jamieson 17; R Ashwin 4-8, Mohd Siraj 3-19, Axar Patel 2-14).

## Pune Open Golf: Chadha cruises to six-shot win, rookie Kartik posts career-best 2nd place

Team Absolute | Pune

Chandigarh's Abhijit Singh Chadha cruised to a comfortable six-shot win after shooting a solid last round of four-under 66, his third consecutive bogey-free round, at the 2021 Pune Open Golf Championship, here on Saturday. Thirty-year-old Chadha (63-65-64-66), leading by one shot at the end of round three, sank four birdies on the day, to end up with an impressive winning total of 21-under 258.

Chadha negotiated the tough conditions to perfection through the week as he went error-free for 71 holes after his bogey on the first hole in round one. Abhijit thus lifted his third title which also accounted for his first win in six years. He took home a prize money cheque worth Rs 6,46,600 to move up nine spots to 15th place in the PGTI Order of Merit.

Meanwhile, rookie Kartik Sharma (66-60-67-71) of Gurugram, who was placed second, one shot off the lead, after round three, returned a one-over 71 on the final day to finish second at 15-under 264.

Kartik's round featured a birdie and two bogeys as the putts didn't roll in for him. Nonetheless, it was a career-best finish for the left-hander who moved up seven spots to 18th place in PGTI's merit list. It was also Kartik's fifth top-10 this season.

Kolkata's Sunit Chowrasia shot the day's best score for the second day in succession to finish third at 13-under 266. In round four,



Chowrasia's 65 was matched by Chandigarh's Yuvraj Singh Sandhu (tied eighth at seven-under 272), Bengaluru's C Muniyappa (tied

17th at three-under 276) and Gurugram's Ankur Chadha (tied 26th at two-over 281). The par for the course was 70 during round

four. Play commenced on time on Saturday and the day witnessed a light drizzle in the afternoon towards the closing stages of the tournament.

Abhijit Singh Chadha, a silver medalist from the 2010 Asian Games, dominated the proceedings from the outset in round four as he began pulling away from the rest of the field early on.

After nearest challenger Kartik missed the green and the subsequent chip-putts to drop bogeys on the second and third, Abhijit further capitalized with 10-five birdie conversions on the fifth and sixth to stretch his lead to a massive five shots.

Thereafter, Kartik could not convert his opportunities on the greens and Abhijit maintained his lead before further extending it with birdies on the 16th and 17th making a mammoth 66-foot putt on the latter. Chadha finally emerged triumphant by six shots after Sharma picked up a birdie on the 18th hole.

Bengaluru's Syed Saqib Ahmed (69) took fourth place at nine-under 270.

Among the Pune golfers, amateur Rohan Dhole Patil (75-67-68-70) had the best finish as he secured tied 24th place at one-over 280. Rohan also took the trophy for the best performing amateur.

Delhi-based amateur Krishnav Nikhil Chopra, son of former cricketer Nikhil Chopra, struck a hole-in-one on the 16th hole during his final round of 67. He claimed tied 26th place at two-over 281.

## Manu Bhaker crowned Women's Air Pistol National champion



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Haryana's Manu Bhaker was crowned Women's 10M Air Pistol National champion for the second successive edition, shooting 241.6 in the final of the ongoing 64th National Shooting Championship at the Karni Singh Shooting Range on Saturday.

Manu has now won three of the last four Nationals in the event, losing it briefly to Esha Singh in the 62nd Nationals. Esha did win bronze in the event behind second placed Shri Nivetha of Tamil Nadu, to go with both the Junior and Youth Women gold medals, but

Manu could not be dislodged in the plum event of the day.

Manu had made it to the eight-woman final with a fifth-place finish in qualifying and a score of 576. Esha had topped the qualifiers with a solid 582. In the final though, Manu was in her elements from get go, leading from start to finish to leave Nivetha 1.7 points behind after the allotted 24-shots. Esha bowed out third with 215.4.

In the Junior final later, it was Esha who did the star turn to register a wire-to-wire finish with her 240.7, more than 2.8 ahead of second finishing Devanshi Dhama of UP. Haryana's Tejaswani won bronze.

## BWF World Tour Finals: Sindhu beats Yamaguchi in semis, to face An Seyoung in final

Bali (Indonesia) | Agencies

Ace Indian shuttler PV Sindhu reached the final of the 2021 BWF World Tour Finals after beating Japan's Akane Yamaguchi in the women's singles semi-finals, here on Saturday.

Two-time Olympic medalist beat her opponent Yamaguchi 21-15, 15-21, 21-19 in an exciting clash that lasted one hour 10 minutes. She will now face South Korea's An Seyoung, who beat Thai top seed Pornpawee Chochuwong 25-23, 21-17 in the other semis, in the final.

It was Sindhu and Yamaguchi's fourth meeting of the year. While Indian beat the Japanese shuttler at the All England Open and the Tokyo Olympics quarter-finals, Yamaguchi came out on top in the most recent meeting - the Indonesia Masters semi-finals.

Right from the beginning of the match, the momentum constantly shifted between the two players. However, it was the reigning badminton world champion Sindhu who took a two-point advantage into the first game's midway interval.



The neck-and-neck battle continued even after the restart with the Indian shuttler only just managing to hold onto her slender lead against the Japanese. With the score at 15-14, PV Sindhu brought her top game and got two clusters of three points each, closing the opening game 21-15.

In the second game, the Japanese player had a solitary point lead midway through. After the restart,

Akane's tempo increased and she kept extending her lead slowly to take the second game to level things up. Thereafter, both players went in all guns blazing in the third and deciding game. Down 4-5 at one stage, Sindhu rallied to win the next eight points on the trot and turned the tide of the game in her favour.

Yamaguchi managed to cut the Indian's lead following some long, exhausting rallies and even drew

level at 17-17. However, Sindhu won the battle of nerves to secure herself a place in the final.

Sundhu's title clash will be Sindhu's first final since making the Swiss Open decider in March. Meanwhile, Indian youngster Lakshya Sen will face reigning Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen of Denmark in the men's singles semis, later in the day.

## India tour of South Africa to begin on December 26, confirms BCCI in its AGM

Kolkata | Agencies

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Saturday confirmed that the India tour of South Africa will begin from December 26. The tour of South Africa was one of the eight decisions taken by the BCCI in its 90th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Kolkata.

"India's tour of South Africa, 2021-22, will proceed with the revised dates and itinerary. The team will participate in a three-match Test series followed by a three-match ODI series starting December 26th, 2021," read the BCCI's statement in decisions made at the AGM. It comes after Cricket South Africa (CSA) said a couple of hours ago that the tour of India will go ahead as planned, clearing the air of uncertainty caused by the new Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus. The four T20Is will not be a part of the tour and will be rescheduled for next year. CSA also said that the venues for the tour will be announced in the next 48



hours. Amongst other key decisions taken by the BCCI in the AGM were the re-induction of Brijesh Patel and M Khairul Jamal Majumdar as representatives in the Indian Premier League (IPL) Governing Council while including former India spinner Pragyan Ojha as the representative of the Indian Cricketers Association (ICA) in the IPL Governing Council. It also announced the decision to form the Tours, Fixtures and Technical Committee, Umpires

Committee and Differently Abled Cricket Committee.

The BCCI has also increased the Age Limit of Match Officials and Support Staff to 65 from 60 years, subject to their fitness. It has also taken the decision to initiate infrastructure development of the North-Eastern States, Puducherry, Bihar and Uttarakhand. The general body also adopted the "Annual Budget of FY 2021-22 apart from the audited accounts for FY 2019-20 and 2020-21."



## SHANTHIPRIYA MAKES DIGITAL DEBUT OPPOSITE SUNIEL SHETTY IN 'DHARAVI BANK'



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shanthipriya, who entered Bollywood and made her debut opposite Akshay Kumar in 'Saugandh' back in 1991, will now be seen in web series 'Dharavi Bank' which will feature her opposite Suniel Shetty. Talking about the OTT show, Shanthipriya says: "Right now I can't reveal much details about my role, but it's definitely one of most interesting and different avatars my fans will get to witness. I wanted to do something different, a creatively satisfying role and this is one of those."

'Dharavi Bank', the upcoming web series will stream on MXPlayer, and is produced by Zee Studios. The series is directed by Samit Kakkad and it stars Suniel Shetty, Shanthipriya, Sonali Kulkarni, Vivek Oberoi, Freddy Daruwala, and Santosh Juvekar.



## IMMAN LAUNCHES FIRST SINGLE FROM HANSIKA MOTWANI'S 'MAHA'

Chennai: Music director D. Imman on Saturday released 'Kedutthuttiye', the first single from director U.R. Jameel's thriller 'Maha', featuring actress Hansika Motwani in the lead. The foot-tapping number, which has been sung by Benny Dayal, has music by Ghibran and lyrics by Viveka. The song has been choreographed by former 'Bigg Boss' contestant Gayathri Raghuram. Releasing the single, director Imman said, "Glad to launch the first single '#Kedutthuttiye' from '#Maha' All the best team!" The film, which has been garnering a lot of attention as it actress Hansika Motwani's 50th film, also has actor Silambarasan playing an important role.

Maha is produced by Malik Streams Corporation, a production and distribution company that is based in Malaysia.

## Sharad Malhotra open to work with newcomers



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Sharad Malhotra has spoken about working in two music videos

and his experience of working with freshers in the industry. "I have a couple of music videos that are lined up. There are 2 more that are yet to be released. I am in conversation for a few more right now. I would also like to mention that a lot of people have asked me why I work with new people."

"Let me tell you, when I started off my career, I was very new but then someone trusted me, so if somebody is new and he is passionate and he is sincere and wants to do good work, why not work with him? I don't understand what's the problem," he added on his experience of working with newcomers in the industry.

The actor further shared that everybody wants to work with people who are established and even he wants to, but at the same time he is not reluctant on working with anyone. "Everybody wants to work with people who are established, even I want to. It's not like I don't want to. I would love to, but there's a time if they want to work and when they approach me and if the content is good, I don't think twice. If he has potential and wants to do good work and if I get a positive vibe from that person, I don't think much," added the 'Door Ho Gaya' actor.

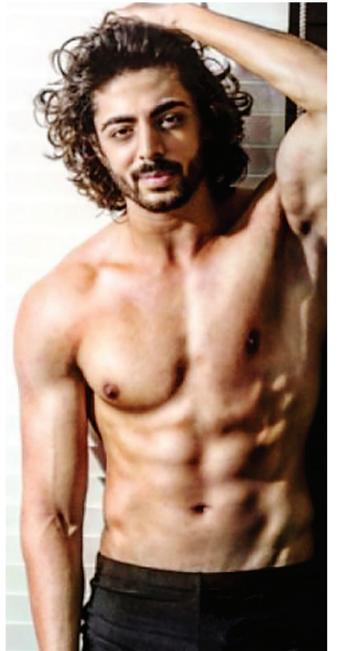
## Krushal Ahuja built a gym for himself on the set

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Krushal Ahuja being a gym aficionado who strongly believes in living a healthy life, has built a gym for himself on the sets of 'Rishton Ka Manjha'. He says he takes out time for working out no matter what happens or wherever he is.

Krushal says: "I strongly believe we all should have a healthy and fit body, and this isn't something that will miraculously happen one fine day. Simple steps like reducing intake of sugar and working out at least 30 minutes a day can truly bring a huge change in one's life. I have been following a strict diet ever since I was in college as I have always been conscious

about my physique." He shares how while shooting on the sets he takes out time in between breaks to do a couple of his regular exercises. He brings dumbbells to the set every day and works out in a makeshift gym. "I have made a lot of sacrifices for achieving this look and I don't want to lose it now. Hence, even while I am at the shoot, I do not miss my workout at all. I bring my dumbbells with me, and thankfully my production team has given me a room where I do my usual exercises whenever I have a break. My co-actors even joke that I've turned the set into a gym, but I can't simply skip it. It has become a habit which I don't intend to change, and I feel it's always a good thing to prioritise your health and would request everyone to do so," he adds.



## Deepika Padukone flies to Hyderabad



Hyderabad: | Agencies

Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone preps herself to put the shoulder to the wheel on her upcoming magnum opus 'Project-K'. Helmed by 'Mahanati' fame filmmaker Nag Ashwin, the movie is to star Deepika as the female lead. As Deepika Padukone

was spotted at the airport, it is reported that the 'Piku' actress has flown down to Hyderabad for Nag Ashwin's upcoming movie 'Project-K'. In her roped lavender blazer-pant set, the actress was seen in a perky mood. Sources reveal the actress is to participate in the first schedule of the upcoming movie in Hyderabad before she leaves for Mumbai.

Deepika is to appear in Shakun Batra's film, for which she is to begin dubbing as soon as she wraps up her present commitments. Starring pan-India star Prabhas Uppalapati as the hero, the movie is said to be Nag Ashwin's much-hyped venture. Touted to be a movie with a big budget, the movie is to feature megastar Amitabh Bachchan in a key role as well. Prabhas, who is currently busy with 'Salaar' and 'Aadipurush', has reportedly allocated bulk dates for the project. A major portion of the film will be shot in special sets that are laid up in Hyderabad's famous Ramoji Film City. Telugu's ace producer C. Ashwini Dutt is bankrolling this mega-budget project and the film is expected to hit the screens in 2023.

## Work on Tamil thriller featuring four lead actresses begins



Chennai | Agencies

Filming for a Tamil thriller film, featuring four actresses in the lead, began with a traditional 'pooja' here on Saturday. Featuring actresses Sai Dhansika, Srushiti Dange, Manisha Jasnani and Chandralekha in the lead, the film, tentatively titled 'Production No 1', will be directed by

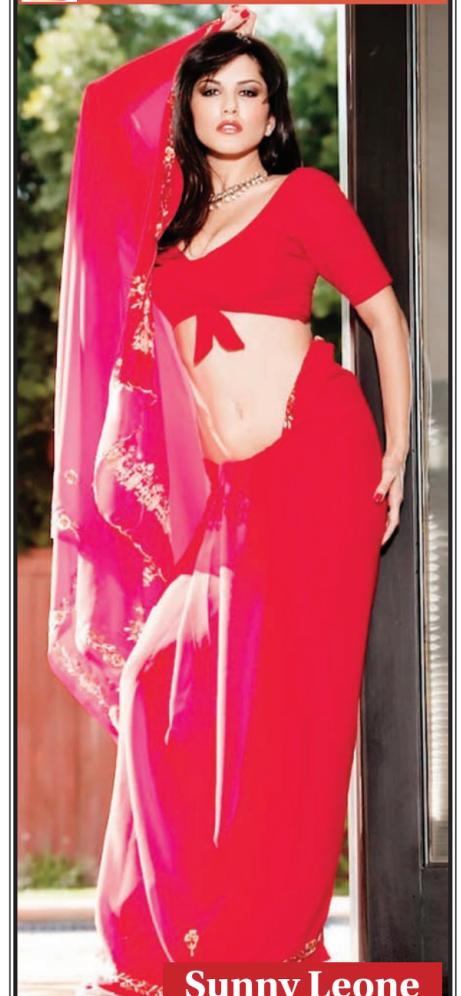
Giridharan. Produced by S.S. Prabhu and Shankar Pictures, the film will also feature actor John Vijay, who received praise for his performance in 'Sarpatta Paramabara', in a pivotal character. Music for the film is by Karthik Raja with cinematography by Ashok Kumar. Art direction is by S.J. Ram and R. Ramar is the editor. The shooting for the film will begin shortly.

## LETTING HER HAIR DOWN: ASHI SINGH HAPPY TO FLAUNT HER TRESSES IN 'MEET'

Mumbai: 'Meet' actress Ashi Singh is all excited to don a different look and flaunt her long hair for the upcoming sequence in the show. For an upcoming sequence, Meet Hooda (Ashi Singh) and her on-screen sister Manushi Hooda (Sharin Khanduja) will be seen wearing the same set of clothes, Ashi Singh got the opportunity to open up her hair and have a different look for a change. Usually in the show she is not seen with long hair. Talking about her experience, Ashi Singh said: "Finally I got the chance to show off my hair and not wear the wig which I generally put on while playing Meet's character. It was indeed a change, and I was super excited to have a different look this time. Twinning with Sharin was so much fun that we didn't miss the opportunity to click multiple pictures and shoot a cute reel." She spoke further about her attire in the show and added: "Moreover, for me, it was a variation since I got to wear a nice purple suit and also had my hair long for the occasion. Overall, it was quite exciting and tiring, all on a platter."



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sunny Leone

## Kumar Sanu: Wanted to take 'revenge' from Anu Malik

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Popular singer Kumar Sanu recreated the song 'Yeh Kaali Kaali Ankhien' from the movie 'Baazigar' to mainly sing the rap part of the song 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa'. Sanu is appearing as a special guest on the singing reality show. Talking about his song, Kumar Sanu said: "I actually wanted to take

revenge from Anu Malik. He didn't let me sing the rap part of the song 'Yeh Kaali Kaali Ankhien'."

He added: "I could have done it easily, but he didn't let me do it. Since then, I always wanted, from the bottom of my heart to take revenge on him by singing the rap part. And today my revenge is completed on the sets of 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa'."