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# PEGASUS SNOOPING CASE: FRESH PLEA IN SC SEEKS FIR AGAINST PM MODI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A fresh plea has been moved in the Supreme Court seeking that it take cognisance of a news report in international media, in connection with the purchase of Pegasus spyware, and order an FIR against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The plea moved by advocate ML Sharma, lead petitioner in the pending Pegasus case, said the New York Times published a detailed report declaring that in July 2017, the Modi government purchased Pegasus from the Israeli firm.

"The report, published on Friday, revealed that in 2017, India and Israel agreed to a \$2 billion sale of a 'package' of weapons and intelligence gear. It further stated that Pegasus and a missile system were the 'centre-pieces' of this deal. In April 2017, it was reported that India had inked a \$2 billion deal with Israel Aerospace Industries for supply of air defence missiles to the Indian Army," said the plea. The plea seeks registration of FIR "to recover public money paid for the



impugned deal and prosecute concerned persons including Narendra D. Modi in accordance of law."

"That petitioner has also filed an application to issue a letter rogatory to Israeli Court for securing necessary evidence secured by the government during its raid upon NSO office and other places. Which is still pending," the plea added.

On October 27, the top court said it was compelled to take up the cause to determine the truth, as it appointed an independent expert

technical committee supervised by a retired top court judge, Justice RV Raveendran, to probe the Pegasus snooping allegations. It has authorised the technical committee to devise its own procedure to effectively implement and answer the terms of reference. The committee can hold an investigation it deems fit and take statements of any person in connection with the inquiry and call for records of any authority or individual.

Justice Raveendran is over-

seeing the functioning of the technical committee and he is assisted by Alok Joshi, former IPS officer and Sundeep Oberoi, Chairman, Sub Committee in (International Organisation of Standardisation/International Electro-Technical Commission/Joint Technical Committee). The three members of the technical committee are Naveen Kumar Chaudhary, Professor (Cyber Security and Digital Forensics) and Dean, National Forensic Sciences University, Gandhinagar,



Gujarat, Prabakaran P, Professor (School of Engineering), Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Amritapuri, Kerala, and Ashwin Anil Gumaste, Institute Chair Associate Professor (Computer Science and Engineering), Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, Maharashtra.

A batch of petitions including those by advocate Sharma, CPI-M MP John Brittas, journalist N Ram, former IIM professor Jagdeep Chokkar, Narendra Mishra, Paranjay Guha Thakurta, Rupesh Kumar Singh, SNM Abdi and Editors Guild of India were filed seeking an independent probe into the Pegasus snooping allegations.

# Parliament's Budget Session to start today

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Budget session of Parliament starting Monday offers only a seventy nine and a half hours window for the government's legislative agenda and for taking up issues of immediate public concern over the scheduled 29 sittings of both the Houses, Parliament officials said on Sunday.

On the first day on Monday, the President will address the Members of both the Houses after which copies of his address will be laid on the Table.

For this purpose, Rajya Sabha will meet at 2.30 p.m. On February 1, the General Budget for 2022-23 will be presented in the Lok Sabha by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and its copy will be laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha soon thereafter.

First part of the Budget session will have 10 sittings between January 31 and February 11 while 19 sittings are scheduled for the second part between March 14 and April 8. A total of 135 hours of sitting time is available for the 256th session of the Rajya Sabha for transacting various items of business during the 27 sittings scheduled during February 2- April 8, at the rate of five hours per day. Of this, first part of the session with 40 hours accounts for about 30 per cent of the total scheduled sitting time while the second part with 95 hours accounts for about 70 per cent.

The Upper House will have reduced Zero Hour by half to 30 minutes per day with a total time of 13 hours 30 minutes for raising issues of public importance besides laying of papers and reports during 27 sittings. The time share of Question Hour will be 27 hours. A total of 15 hours has been scheduled for Private Members' Business during the session. Private Members' Bills will be



taken up on Thursday as Friday being a holiday. "This leaves only 79 hours 30 minutes for considering and passing Bills to be proposed by the Government besides discussing issues of immediate public concern under Calling Attention Notices and as Short Duration Discussions," the officials said. The Discussion on Motion of Thanks to the President for his Address to the Members of both the Houses and on General Budget-2022-23, constitute the major items of business of the House. During the Budget session of 2021, discussion for 15 hours 37 minutes on Motion of Thanks to the President and of 10 hours 43 minutes on the Union Budget: 2021-22 in the Rajya Sabha account for over 52 per cent of the total time available during the first part of the session.

The Rajya Sabha has clocked a productivity of 47.90 per cent during the last 255th session and of only 29.60 per cent during the 254th Session.

The House, however, reported high productivity of 93.50 per cent during the last year's Budget session that had 23 sittings. To achieve maximum productivity, Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu has convened a virtual meeting of leaders of parties and groups in the House at 5.00 pm on Monday to discuss the agenda for this Budget session.

# Ahead of Budget session, Cong asks govt to address people's issues

A day ahead of the start of Budget session of Parliament and amid Pegasus snooping controversy, the Congress has demanded that government should address issues which concern common people.



Pegasus snooping issue. The Congress is reaching out to the opposition to devise a common strategy to corner the government.

Not only the Congress but other political parties are also planning to corner the government on the snooping row in the country.

Leader of the opposition Mallikarjun Kharge said, "We will seek the view of other political parties and then the further strategy will be decided."

The Congress has said that the Prime Minister is directly involved in it and alleged that the Modi government purchased Pegasus Spyware in 2017 and other military technology as the "centrepieces" of a package, including "weapons and intelligence gear worth roughly \$2 billion" from Israel during PM Modi's visit. It is not a coincidence that the Budget of National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) reporting to the NSA went up from Rs 33 crore to Rs 333 crore in 2017-18.

will Modi government address the issues of failing economy, unending price rise, unbearable unemployment, Chinese aggression, dismissal of MoS Ajay Mishra, compensation to the families of Covid victims & martyred farmers?"

The stage is set for a stormy Budget Session with the opposition gearing up against the government on the

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A day ahead of the start of Budget session of Parliament and amid Pegasus snooping controversy, the Congress has demanded that government should address issues which concern common people.

The party in a statement said, "With the Budget Session starting tomorrow,

# Top terror commander among 5 killed in Kashmir gunfight

Team Absolute | Srinagar

A top commander of the proscribed terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and a Pakistani national were among the five terrorists killed in two separate encounters in Kashmir's Budgam and Pulwama districts in a span of 12 hours, officials said on Sunday.

Four JeM terrorists were killed in a gunfight with the security forces in Pulwama's Naira area, while one Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist was killed in another encounter in Budgam's Chhri-sharief area.

The terrorists killed in the encounter have been identified as -- Zahid Wani resident of Karimabad, Waheed Ah Reshi from Khadamuh, and Inayatullah Mir from Nyira.

The Pakistani terrorist has been identified as Kafir alias Chotu. He was active in the area since 2020. Zahid Wani was one of the



main commanders of the JeM outfit after Lamboo and Sameer Dar, who were masterminds of the 2019 Pulwama attack, security forces said in a statement.

"This module was directly controlled from across with the support of Sakargargh and Kotli camps under the direct supervision of Qari Zarar and Mulana Rouf Azhar (brother of Massod Azhar). Pakistan is continuously trying to push these elements to India from across," the statement said.

Zahid was originally a staunch overground worker

(OGW) of the Tehri-ul-Mujahideen (TuM) outfit. He was arrested in 2016 in Srinagar in connection with harbouring two TuM terrorists, namely Danish and Mugeez belonging to Srinagar's Parimpore police station area. He had arranged camouflage gear for these two terrorists back then. He was an extreme radical and a hard core jihadi.

Zahid was one of the oldest surviving JeM terrorists and top Commander in South Kashmir after the killing of Lamboo and Sameer Dar.

He was active since 2017 and was responsible for large-scale recruitment of terrorists in South Kashmir.

His elimination will now surely disorient the remaining JeM terrorists operating in the valley since Zahid used to give them planning and leadership. Also, local recruitment in JeM may see a drop in forthcoming days.

Meanwhile, the weapons that were recovered from the slain terrorists included one M4 with night vision sight, two AK Series weapons, two pistols and 12 grenades.

"Five terrorists of Pakistan sponsored proscribed terror outfits LeT and JeM killed in dual encounters in last 12 hours. JeM commander terrorist Zahid Wani and a Pakistani terrorist among the killed. Big success for us," said the Jammu and Kashmir Police in an earlier statement quoting Inspector General Police Kashmir zone Vijay Kumar.

# 75% ADULT POPULATION IN INDIA FULLY VACCINATED

India achieved another milestone in its fight against Covid-19 on Sunday as it administered more than 75 per cent of the adult population with both doses of vaccines, said Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

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"With the mantra of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Prayas', India has administered 75 per cent of its adult population with both doses of the Covid vaccine. We are getting stronger in the fight against the pandemic. We have to follow Covid-appro-

priate behaviour and receive the vaccine as soon as possible," Mandaviya added in a tweet.

As per the Health Ministry report on Sunday morning, with the administration of more than 62 lakh vaccine doses in the last 24 hours, India's Covid-19 vaccination coverage has exceeded 165.7 crore in India. This has been achieved through 1,81,35,477 sessions.

"Seventy-five per cent of all adults are fully vaccinated. Congratulations to our fellow citizens for this

momentous feat. Proud of all those who are making our vaccination drive a success," tweeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi on this feat.

Meanwhile, India reported marginal decline in Covid-19 cases at 2,34,281 with 893 deaths in the last 24 hours. However, the daily positivity rate in the country has risen to 14.5 per cent. The active caseload has also reported a marginal decline at 18,84,937 which constitute 4.59 per cent of the country's total Covid-positive cases.

# 60% youths in 15-18 year age group are vaccinated: Modi in 'Mann Ki Baat'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that about 60 per cent of youths in the age group of 15 to 18 years are vaccinated. The Prime Minister also said that within 20 days, one crore people have taken the precaution dose as well.

Addressing his monthly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat', Prime Minister said that India is fighting with great success with the new wave of corona, "it is also a matter of pride that till now about four and a half crore children have been administered the dose of Corona Vaccine."

"This means that about 60 per cent of youth in the age group of 15 to 18 years have got their vaccines within three to four weeks. This will not only protect our youth but will also help them to continue with their studies. Another good thing is that within 20 days, one crore people have taken the precaution dose as well," the Prime Minister said. He mentioned that now the



cases of corona infection have also started decreasing and this is a very positive sign. "People should be safe, the pace of economic activities of the country should be maintained - this is the wish of every countryman," he said.

Sunday's 'Mann Ki Baat' is the first episode of 2022 and Prime Minister remembered Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary.

"Today is also the death anniversary of our revered Babu Mahatma Gandhi ji. The 30th of January reminds us of the teachings of Babu," he said.

Talking about the just concluded Republic Day celebrations, Modi said, "The display of the nation's valour and strength, which we witnessed on Rajpath in Delhi filled everyone with pride and enthusi-

asm. One change you must have noticed is that now the Republic Day functions will start from the January 23, i.e. the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and will continue till the January 30, i.e. Gandhiji's death anniversary."

He also talked about the digital sculpture of Subhas Chandra Bose installed at India Gate. "We can never forget the way the country welcomed this, the wave of joy that arose from every corner of the country; the kind of feelings expressed by every countryman," he said.

The Prime Minister also talked about the 'Swachhta Abhiyan', 'Vocal for Local' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'. "We should not forget the 'Swachhta Abhiyan', we should accelerate the campaign against single-use plastic, 'Vocal for Local' mantra is our responsibility, we have to work wholeheartedly for the Aatmanirbhar Bharat campaign. With the efforts of all of us, the country will reach new heights of development," he said.



# COURT REJECTS BAIL PLEA OF BULLI BAI APP CREATOR NEERAJ BISHNOI

Observing that the creator of Bulli Bai app, Neeraj Bishnoi, had been targeting women activists including journalists of a particular community, a Delhi court has rejected his bail plea.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Observing that the creator of Bulli Bai app, Neeraj Bishnoi, had been targeting women activists including journalists of a particular community, a Delhi court has rejected his bail plea.

The court said that allegations levelled against the accused were serious in nature and the investigation was at early stage, noting this the accused was not given bail, an official said on Sunday.

The court of Addition Sessions Judge Dharmender Rana while rejecting the bail plea noted that the



women were abused and insulted on public platform it is certainly going to be an adverse impact on the society which will affect the communal harmony.

The court said that it didn't find any merit in the plea of the accused and dismissed it.

The order of the court read that the act of the accused cannot be countenanced by any civilised society.

The court stated that he abused around 100 women activists publicly

is not only an act against the essence of the womanhood but also an act to design to enrage passion causes ill will amongst communities and disturb social harmony.

Niraj Bishnoi is a B.Tech, computer science student. He is doing course from Vellore Institute of Technology Bhopal. Vishal Jha was the first accused who was arrested on January 3 by a Mumbai Police team from Bengaluru following technical inputs. On January 4, Mumbai Police

arrested one Shweta Singh a resident of Uttarakhand. She was second person who was arrested in the controversy. Mayank Rawal was the third person who was arrested by Mumbai police.

Apart from Mumbai Police, the Special Cell of Delhi Police that was conducting a parallel investigation has made two arrests. The special cell arrested Neeraj Bishnoi the main accused of Bulli Bai and Aumkareshwar Thakur the main accused behind Sulli Deals.

Both the Mumbai and the Delhi Police are probing the matter.

The Bulli Bai app had posted the photos of a number of women of a particular religion including of journalists, social workers, students and famous personalities. It happened six months after the controversy of Sulli Deals. Hosting platform Github provided space to Sulli Deals and this time too the Bulli Bai was created on Github platform. Later on, after the controversy, Github had removed the user from its hosting platform.

# Love for nature for every living being is our culture: PM

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his monthly radio address 'Mann Ki Baat' on Sunday remembered 'collarwali tigress', who died recently, and 'Virat', a hanoverian breed horse and an elite member of President's Bodyguard who retired from the service on January 26.

Remembering 'collarwali tigress,' the Prime Minister said, "My dear countrymen, love for nature and compassion for every living being, this is our culture as well as innate nature. A glimpse of these 'Sankaras' of ours was seen recently when a tigress left the world in Pench Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh."

Talking about tigress's last rites, the Prime Minister said, "People used to call this tigress collared tigress. The Forest Department named it T-15. The death of this tigress made people so emotional as if someone of their own had left the world. People performed her last rites, bid her farewell with full respect and affection. You must have also seen these pictures on social media."

'Collarwali tigress' died on January 15. "This love of Indians for nature and living beings was greatly appreciated the world over. The collared tigress gave birth to 29 cubs in her lifetime and raised 25 of them to maturity. We also celebrated this life of T-15 and when she



left the world, we also gave her a heartfelt farewell. This is the speciality of the people of India. We make a relationship of love with every conscious being," Modi said.

Talking about 'Virat,' the Prime Minister said, "We also got to see a similar sight this time in the Republic Day parade as well. In this parade, the charger mount of the President's Bodyguard, Virat took part in his last parade. Horse Virat came to Rashtrapati Bhavan in 2003 and used to lead the parade every time on Republic Day as Commandant Charger." "Even when a foreign head of state was welcomed in Rashtrapati Bhavan, Virat used to play this role. This year, on Army Day, horse Virat was also given COAS Commendation Card by the Army Chief. In view of Virat's immense services, after his retirement he was given farewell in an equally grand manner," the Prime Minister added.

# Ahead of Budget, KTR reminds PM Modi of his promises

HYDERABAD | Agencies

Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) working president KT Rama Rao on Sunday reminded Prime Minister Narendra Modi of his promises made to the country 'with target delivery in 2022'.

Two days before the presentation of the Union Budget 2022-23 in the Parliament, Rama Rao took to Twitter to remind Modi of his promises and hoped that allocations will be made to fulfil them.

"As the NDA Govt is set to present Budget 2022, I would like to remind you of some promises that you had made to India with target delivery in 2022. Hope the allocations will be equitable and reflect firm resolve in translating your vision into reality,"



tweeted Rama Rao, tagging the Prime Minister.

KTR, as the TRS leader is popularly known, posted media reports about the promises Modi had made. These included doubling of farmers' income, a house for every Indian and water, electricity and toilet in every house, all by 2022.

Two other clippings posted by the TRS leader were about the Prime Minister's announcements that bullet trains will be reality in India by 2022 and that India's econ-

omy will double in size to \$5 trillion by 2022.

KTR, who is also the Telangana minister for industry, information technology, municipal administration and urban development, also urged Modi to support progressive state like Telangana. "I would also urge you to support progressive state like Telangana (which is 4th largest contributor to Indian economy) by way of honouring the promises made in AP Reorganisation Act & recommendations by Niti Aayog to support Mission Bhagiratha & Mission Kakatiya," he tweeted.

KTR has already dashed a series of letters to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and other central ministers, seeking funds for various projects.

# WILL INSTALL PHOTOS OF AMBEDKAR, BHAGAT SINGH IN OFFICES: KEJRIWAL

AMRITSAR | Agencies

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday announced that when the AAP government is formed in Punjab, the pictures of constitution maker Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar and Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh would be installed in all government offices, instead of chief minister and any political leader.

Talking to the media with AAP's chief ministerial candidate Bhagwant Mann here, Kejriwal said the AAP government would follow the principles and ideals of Ambedkar and Shaheed Bhagat Singh and fulfill their dreams.

"After a long struggle and great sacrifices, our country got independence. Our great freedom fighters sacrificed their lives to liberate the country. But today we are forgetting their ideals and sacrifices. People are moving away from their ideals and principles.

"In order to remember the sacrifices, principles and ideals of two



great freedom fighters of our country, we announced in Delhi on January 26 that the pictures of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Shaheed-e-Azam

Bhagat Singh will be put in place of the chief minister and leaders in all government offices. "In Punjab too, the AAP govern-

ment will remove the picture of the chief minister from all government offices, to install pictures of Baba Saheb and Shaheed Bhagat Singh, so that every time people see them, they will remember their struggle, sacrifice and thoughts and be inspired to follow his path."

AAP chief ministerial candidate Bhagwant Mann said today's announcement will inspire the youth and government employees to do good for the country and the state.

"I am very saddened when an old man tells us that the British were better than today's leaders," Mann said. Corrupt and selfish leaders have wasted the visions and sacrifices of the country's martyrs and freedom fighters. The way the ruling leaders are plundering the country today, the British will also be ashamed to see this. Mann said that after independence Babasaheb Ambedkar had suspicion that corrupt politicians would misuse the power and the people of the country would not get true freedom. "Today his suspicion is proving to be true," he added.

# Best time to ask for advanced version of Pegasus: Chidambaram to PM

A DAY AFTER PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI ADDRESSED THE 30 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH ISRAEL, CONGRESS LEADER P CHIDAMBARAM ON SUNDAY TOOK A JIBE AND ASKED WHETHER IT WAS THE BEST TIME TO ASK FOR ADVANCED PEGASUS SPYWARE.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the 30 years of diplomatic ties with Israel, Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday took a jibe and asked whether it was the best time to ask for advanced Pegasus spyware.

He said, "PM said that it is the best



time to set new goals in the India-Israel relationship. Of course, it is the best time to ask Israel if they have any advanced version of the Pegasus spyware."

"The last deal was for \$2 billion. India can do better this time. If we get more sophisticated spyware ahead of

the 2024 elections, we can give them even \$4 billion," he added.

After the new expose in an international publication on Pegasus, the Congress on Saturday targeted and alleged that the Modi government was involved in the whole incident and snooped on rivals 'which was an

act of treason'.

Addressing a press conference, leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge and Congress spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala jointly said that the snooping was an "act of treason."

"The Modi Government is the employer and executor of the illegal and unconstitutional snooping and spying racket through Israeli surveillance spyware Pegasus & the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is himself involved!"

"This is a brazen 'Hijack of Democracy' & 'An Act of Treason'," they said.

Surjewala said, "The Modi government purchased Pegasus Spyware in 2017 and other military technology as the 'centrepieces' of a package, including 'weapons and intelligence gear worth roughly \$2 billion' from Israel during PM Modi's visit. It is not a coincidence that the Budget of National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) reporting to NSA went up from Rs 33 crore to Rs 333 crore in 2017-18."

# Poor dying on roads, CM & Ministers doing politics: Delhi Cong

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Congress Committee President Ch Anil Kumar on Sunday alleged that 172 homeless people have died in the city in the first 28 days of January due to severe cold, as the Delhi Government has not made any arrangements to protect the poor living on the streets.

He said that with the Chief Minister and his Cabinet Ministers away on political tourism to states going for polls, Delhiites have been left to fend for themselves. Whether it was Covid-19 pandemic crisis, cold or pollution, the poor are the worst victims of Arvind Kejriwal's irresponsible and incompetent governance, he alleged.

He said that yet the CM has no shame in boasting about the "Delhi model" of development everywhere. Ch Anil Kumar said that Delhi reeled under one of the longest spells of cold and rainy conditions and for thousands of people, who have been sleeping under flyovers, cement pipes used for drainage purposes and bus shelters, it was a killing nightmare with the Kejriwal government doing little for their safety. Ch Anil Kumar said that considering the fact that over two lakh people live on the streets of Delhi without a roof over their heads for the past many years, the dirty night shelters setup by the Delhi Government can barely accommodate a few hundred, and



most poor people still prefer to sleep in the open, as the night shelters are unbearably filthy, unsafe and a breeding ground for infections and diseases, including Covid. He said that women dread to use such night shelters as they feel most unsafe in them in the absence of any security. Ch Anil Kumar said that any responsible Chief Minister would have been present in Delhi when the cold weather became unbearable in January and Covid infections and deaths were rising sharply, but CM Kejriwal's priority lay elsewhere as he was addressing election meetings and selling MLA seats in Punjab and other States, instead of tackling the issues dogging Delhi. The DPCC President alleged that CM Kejriwal has squandered crores for his comfort, publicity, political propaganda and useless stunts, but nothing for the poor who play a vital role in the upkeep and development of the National Capital.

# Toddler girl drinks milk from elephant in Assam, video goes viral

GUWAHATI | Agencies

People generally consume milk of domestic animals like cows, goats, buffaloes, but a toddler girl in Assam's Golaghat district drank milk from an elephant, making everyone witness a fabulous bonding of love between an animal mother and a human child.

The video, which went viral, shows three-year-old Harshita Bora playing with their domestic elephant at their courtyard and drinking its milk.

According to the video, Harshita was asking the elephant to move to allow her drink milk and the jumbo complied and allowed the little girl to consume its milk. The girl's elder sister and her other family members witnessed the happening and encouraged the girl. cording



to the neighbours, Harshita calls the elephant 'Binu' and is often seen playing with it.

The incident comes at a time when man-animal conflicts, especially of human-elephant, are rising in different districts of Assam.

According to the official record, over 100 people died

in 2021 due to elephant attacks while 71 elephants have died in different districts of Assam due to various causes including electrocution, poisoning, being hit by speeding train, and 'accidental' deaths including plunging into ponds and ditches, or lightning strikes.

# SAINTS WANT HINDU RASHTRA, BOSE TO BE NAMED 1ST PM

PRAYAGRAJ | Agencies

Saints at the Dharma Sansad in the ongoing Magh Mela in Prayagraj have demanded that India should be declared a Hindu Rashtra, Subhash Chandra Bose should be named as the first Prime Minister of the country and capital punishment for conversion which should be treated as treason.

The saints also said that 'patriotic' Muslims were part of the family and a decision to intensify their 'homecoming' campaign would continue.

Chief guest of the sammelan, Sumeru Peethadheeshwar, Jagadguru Swami Narendranand Saraswati, said: "The government may not declare India as a Hindu nation, but all Hindus should start writing and terming the country a Hindu Rashtra. By doing so, the government would be compelled to declare the country a Hindu nation."

"Islamic jihad is a big threat to the humanity and the world. To crush it, the policy of China will have to be adopted and it can be stopped by imposing sanctions as China has done. 'Sanatani' are the target of everyone and for this, it is necessary that the system of equal education and equal justice is implemented in the country."

He also demanded that there is a need to end



government takeover of Hindu monasteries and temples.

"If monasteries and temples are being acquired by the government, then mosques and churches should also be acquired," he added.

Jagadguru said that "Muslims are not a minority and action should be taken to withdraw their minority status." "The life of revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev should be included in the curriculum of schools. Provision should be made for capital punishment by keeping conversion in the category of treason," he added. Mahamandaleshwar Annapurna Bharti of Niranjani Akhara said that "when religious leaders spoke some words for their safety in Haridwar's Dharma Sansad, they were put in jail. It was said

that this has hurt the sentiments of the people of a particular religion, but when Tauqeer Raza gathered a crowd of 20,000 in Bareilly and spewed poison against Sanatan Dharma, no action was taken. Did it not hurt our sentiments? Owaisi's threatening video is released but no action has been taken." She appealed to the saints and devotees present in the Mela to write a letter to the government for the release of Mahamandaleshwar Narasimhanand Yeti and Jitendra Narain Singh Tyagi (former name Wasim Rizvi). Shakti Peethadhiswar Swami Lalitananda said that every child is a Hindu by birth. "Later, his rituals changed. We have left our culture only then others are adopting it."

Swami Anand Swarup said that at the time of partition of the country, there were nine crore Muslims, but today their population is about 40 crore. He alleged that there is pressure to stop Sant Sammelan. Swami Sindhu Sagar said that Hindus have no hatred towards Muslims and Muslims like APJ Abdul Kalam are respected.

Mahamandaleshwar Yatindranand Giri, who presided over the sammelan, said that Lord Krishna was born in jail. "If the doors of the jail are opening for the saints, then understand that we have succeeded in our objective."



## VILLAGERS SHOULD MAKE MASTER PLAN OF THEIR VILLAGE TOGETHER: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has appealed to the villagers that everyone should sit in the village one day and prepare a master plan for the village in order to make Madhya Pradesh an ideal state. The state government will make development plans accordingly. Chouhan was addressing a dedication and Bhoomi-Poojan programme of various development works worth Rs.36 crore 21 lakh at Shahganj in Sehore district on Sunday. The Chief Minister also transferred the first instalment amount of Rs.7 crore 97 lakh to the accounts of 797 beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Also distributed benefits under various beneficiary oriented schemes.

Praising the development works done in Shahganj, Chief Minister said that it is his intention that such systematic development should take place in every area of the state. The Chief Minister announced to make the road from Khategaon to Bari a National Highway, a new road from Bamori to Shahganj connecting about a dozen villages and to increase the number of beds in



Shahganj Hospital. The Chief Minister called upon the villagers to make their village clean and make Shahganj Nagar Parishad the cleanest Nagar Panchayat in the country. Chouhan said that everyone would be given the ownership rights of their houses by conducting a survey under the Swamitva Yojana. On the basis of housing plus survey also pucca houses will be given to all. The Chief Minister said that not only the development but education and employment are also in the priority of the government. He said that now a large number of jobs would be provided in the state

under Pradhan Mantri Swanidhi Yojana, Mudra Yojana, Mukhyamantri Udyam Kranti Yojana, Street Vendor Scheme and Rural Livelihood Mission by organising employment fairs every month. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan appealed to the public representatives to bring forward meritorious children so that no child from poor family is deprived of higher education. Chouhan said that the government is with the farmers in every misery and pain. The distribution of crop insurance amount will be started from next month to the farmers affected by excessive rain and hailstorm.

## Adopting Bapus Ideals and Values in Life Is True Tribute: Governor All Religion Prayer Meeting Organised at Gandhi Bhavan Trust

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel said that a true Vaishnav is the one who understands the pain of others. Always be ready to take it away. Keep your words, deeds, words and life pure. This formula of world peace is contained in the bhajan "Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye, Je Peer Parai Jaane Re" by famous litterateur Narsi Mehta. This bhajan was very dear to Babu. Babu's entire life philosophy is contained in this bhajan. Inculcating these ideals and values in our lives is a true tribute to Babu.

Governor Patel was addressing an all-religion prayer meeting at Gandhi Bhavan Trust on the 74th death anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. Patel said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mantra of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas' is also based on Babu's philosophy and principles. We all should follow these ideals and



give the message of amity, peace and brotherhood in the world.

Governor Patel paid tributes at the statue of Gandhiji and paid floral tributes at Gandhi Smriti Sthal. In the prayer meeting, students of Jawaharlal Nehru Higher Secondary School, BHEL paid tributes to Gandhiji by singing the bhajan "Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye Je

Peer Parai Jaane Re" and Ramdhun "Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram, Patit Pawan Sita Ram".

In the prayer meeting, prizes were given to the winners of the district level Gandhi Gyan Competition. First prize was given to Khalsa Higher Secondary School's student Aakriti Gupta, second prize to Sanjana Patel of TM Convent, third prize to Munaf Ahmed of Government Boys Higher Secondary School, station area and consolation prize to Megha Ahirwar, student of Vikram Higher Secondary School, BHEL. Secretary of Gandhi Bhavan Trust Dayaram Namdev, Father Anand Mutugal, Pandit Mahendra Sharma, Bhante Shakra Sagar, Professor Manoj Jain, Haji Mohd. Haroon, Shaik Murtaza Ali, Haji Kalim Haroon, Gurucharan Singh Arora, Haji Imran Haroon, Gurendra Singh, Rajendra Kothari, other religious leaders including Prajapati Brahmakumari Sangathan and Ishwariya Vishwavidyalaya and students and general public were present.

## Schools Reopening: Decision After Consulting Experts: CM

▶ THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAD ON JANUARY 14 ORDERED CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS AND HOSTELS FOR CLASSES I TO 12 TILL JANUARY 31 IN THE WAKE OF A SURGE IN COVID-19 CASES AT THAT TIME.

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Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said the decision on reopening schools in the state will be taken after consulta-

tion with experts and review of the COVID-19 situation. The state government had on January 14 ordered closure of schools and hostels for Classes 1 to 12 till January 31 in the wake of a surge in COVID-19 cases at that time.

The CM, while reviewing the COVID-19 situation in the state on Saturday, said COVID-19 cases were coming down in the state, including major cities like Indore, Bhopal, Jabalpur and Gwalior. "Very few coronavirus patients are admitted in hospitals. The decision on opening schools will be taken after considering the COVID-19 situation in other states...experts will be consulted. Schools will be opened only after full deliberation," Chouhan said.

There is a possibility that COVID-19 cases will come down by February 15, he said. Though there is nothing to worry, the administration should continue to adopt COVID-19-appropriate behaviour and follow the mandatory requirement of wearing masks, the CM said.

Health officials informed during the meeting that 72 COVID-19 patients were currently admitted on oxygen beds, while 150 were admitted in the Intensive Care Units (ICUs) in the state.

On Saturday, Madhya Pradesh reported 8,678 new COVID-19 cases, raising the state's infection tally to 9,50,134, while five more deaths pushed the toll to 10,607, a health department official earlier said.

## 3 LAKH 51 THOUSAND 804 MASKS DISTRIBUTED IN 'MASK HI HAI ZINDAGI' CAMPAIGN

Bhopal: In the 'Mask Hi Hai Zindagi' campaign being run under the leadership of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, 3 lakh 51 thousand 804 masks have been distributed to the needy till January 30. This campaign started simultaneously in all the urban bodies on January 20.

Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhopendra Singh has informed that so far 3 lakh 51 thousand 443 houses have been contacted by the urban bodies in the 'Roko-Toko' campaign. Various activities are being undertaken to make citizens aware about prevention from Corona. Around 5530 online discussions have been conducted. Publicity is also being done continuously through various mediums besides hoardings and wall-paintings in the cities. So far, 2094 mask banks have been established in urban bodies with public cooperation. Of these, one lakh 69 thousand 651 masks have been donated by citizens and various organizations. Singh has informed that on January 30, 40 thousand 604 masks have been distributed in the urban bodies through various activities. Five thousand 335 in urban bodies of Bhopal division, 732 in Chambal, 15 thousand 538 in Gwalior, 4 thousand 569 in Indore, 1787 in Jabalpur, 1672 in Narmadapuram, 2 thousand 297 in Rewa, 6 thousand 49 in Sagar, 677 in Shahdol and 1948 masks have been distributed in the urban bodies of Ujjain division.

## New Schemes Will Be Made if Needed for the Development and Welfare of SC Community: CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan

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Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Sant Ravidas Jayanti will be celebrated across the state on February 16. For the development and welfare of the scheduled caste community, new schemes will be made if necessary. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan was addressing the felicitation ceremony organised by Ahirwar Samaj at Shahganj in Sehore.

Chouhan said that the state government is providing free books, scholarships and hostel facilities to the children of scheduled castes, tribes and poor families, besides giving medical, engineering fees to the meritorious children. He said that the government is providing Pradhan Mantri Awas to the poor, so that poor people can also live with dignity.

Beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana honoured Chief Minister Chouhan.

Chouhan said that free ration is being provided under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan and Mukhyamantri Annapurna Yojna, so that poor families do not face any difficulty in their livelihood. He said that 10 thousand rupees are being given to small traders without interest under the Pradhan Mantri Swanidhi and Chief Minister Street Vendor Scheme to start business again. Through Ayushman card, now any poor person can get treatment up to Rs 5 lakh in the best private hospital. He said that many economic activities are being conducted by self-help groups women to become financially empowered. Chouhan said that bank linkage of Rs.200 crore is being done every month to self-help groups of the state. Many self-

help groups are doing excellent work in the state.

Chouhan said that Employment Day would be celebrated on February 25 so that maximum number of youth could be provided employment and self-employment.

Appreciating the Pradhan Mantri Awas built by Shahganj urban body in Ward No. 4 and 5, he said that the Pradhan Mantri Awas can be constructed by other bodies of the state in a systematic and beautiful manner by taking lessons from Shahganj. In ward no. 4 and 5 of Shahganj, 176 houses have been built under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and 44 houses have been approved under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. The Chief Minister announced financial assistance of Rs 50,000 each to the next of kin of three persons who died during the Corona period.

## THE DEBT OF THE EARTH HAS TO BE PAID: CM



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that by planting more and more saplings, we all have to pay off the debt of the earth. Planting trees is very important for the balance of the environment. Chouhan was planting saplings at Smart Garde on Sunday. Chouhan today planted saplings of Bija and Karanj. The Bija tree is rich in medicinal properties along with being environmentally important. Its wood is used for making furniture. Karanj plant is considered important in Ayurvedic medicine. Karanj plant is also used in religious works.

## CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE FATHER OF THE NATION MAHATMA GANDHI



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage by garlanding the portrait of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi at the Chief Minister's auditorium this morning. The death anniversary of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi is observed as Martyrs' Day. Chouhan also remembered the contribution of many known and unknown martyrs.

## CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO MAKHANLAL CHATURVEDI

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has paid humble tributes to the poet of the Chhayavadi movement in Hindi literature, the forceful freedom fighter and the eminent journalist Makhanlal Chaturvedi on his death anniversary. Chouhan has tweeted and said that "Makhanlal Chaturvedi ji infused the spirit of patriotism in the Indian public through his simple and powerful compositions. The contribution made by him will be unforgettable. His creations will continue to inspire the mankind for ages."

## PM makes 'collared tigress' memorable by her mention in 'Mann Ki Baat:' CM

### State fighting with full force against Covid under PM's leadership: CM Shri Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed many important topics with all of us today through 'Mann Ki Baat.' Chouhan said that PM Modi has made 'Super Tigress Mom' and 'Collared Tigress' of Madhya Pradesh memorable by mentioning in 'Mann Ki Baat.' The queen of Pench Tiger Reserve will always be alive in the memory of the

people of the state.

Chouhan said that Modi's decision to observe Republic Day celebrations from the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, on January 23 to January 30, the death anniversary of Babu, is a true tribute to them.

Chouhan said that under the leadership of Modi, Madhya Pradesh is fighting the battle against Covid-19 with full strength. In the state, first dose of vaccine has been administered to 98% people and the second dose have been

administered to more than 97 percent of the people. He said that we are determined to achieve 100 percent target.

Chief Minister said this after listening to Modi's Mann Ki Baat programme. Chief Minister said that India has achieved the target of providing both doses of the vaccine to 75 percent of its adult population. 100 percent vaccination is necessary to defeat Covid-19. He has called upon the eligible persons to contribute to building a healthy India by getting both the vaccines.

## GOVERNOR PATEL WILL DEDICATE SHILP UPVAN

Bhopal: Governor Mangubhai Patel and Home Minister Narottam Mishra will dedicate the newly developed Shilp Upvan at Home Guard Headquarters at 3:45 pm on Monday, January 31. Director General of Police, Home Guards and Disaster Management Pawan Jain said that in the programme, a photo exhibition centred on the multi-faceted struggle made by the jawans of Home Guards and Disaster Management to save the lives of the people trapped in an emergency situation will also be unveiled. He appealed to the citizens to attend the programme.

## CM EXPRESSES GRIEF OVER THE DEATH OF DWIVEDI

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed grief over the death of senior leader and social worker of Shahdol division Om Prakash Dwivedi. Chouhan has said that today the state and society have lost a true servant in the form of respected senior leader of Shahdol division Om Prakash Dwivedi ji. He worked for the progress of the society throughout his life. Chouhan has prayed to God to give place to the departed soul at his lotus feet and strength to the family members to bear this great loss.

## MADHYA PRADESH HIGH COURT UPHOLDS RIGHT OF INTER-FAITH COUPLE TO STAY TOGETHER

▶ JUSTICE DUBEY SAID, "NO MORAL POLICING CAN BE ALLOWED IN SUCH MATTERS WHERE THE TWO MAJOR PERSONS ARE WILLING TO STAY TOGETHER WHETHER BY WAY OF MARRIAGE OR IN A LIVE-IN RELATIONSHIP, WHEN THE PARTY TO THAT ARRANGEMENT IS DOING IT WILLINGLY AND NOT FORCED INTO IT."

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While hearing a habeas corpus petition moved by Gulzar Khan (27) for his wife Arti Sahu (19), the Jabalpur bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court upheld the constitutional right of two adult individuals to stay together either through marriage or in a live-in relationship.

Justice Nandita Dubey made the observation while hearing the petition moved by Khan, a resident of Gorakhpur in Jabalpur, who stated that he had married Sahu at a family court in Bandra, Maharashtra on December 28, a day after the two eloped from their houses in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh. Sahu is also said to have converted to Islam. The couple were reportedly residing in Mumbai since their marriage and were headed to Bandra on January 15 to collect a copy of their marriage certificate, when a police team from Jabalpur detained them in respect to a kidnapping case regis-



tered by Sahu's family and brought them back to Jabalpur.

In his petition, Khan stated that Sahu's parents had forcefully taken her to Banaras and illegally detained her there. He told indianexpress.com, "Soon after we got married, we sent three letters by speed post, intimating not only our respective families but also the police station concerned. But even then, we were brought to Jabalpur and also beaten up overnight. It was only the next morning that they handed over Arti to her family, while I was allowed to go but all my documents were taken away."

Khan in his petition alleged that Sahu has been locked up in a room in Banaras and she was being forced to give statements against him. "I did not know how to get my

wife back, which is why I started looking for solutions on YouTube and learnt about the habeas corpus petition. I could have also written to the SP, but after the way we were arrested and treated by policemen, I have lost faith in them," said Khan, who works as a mechanic in Jabalpur. Both Khan and Sahu lived in the same locality in Jabalpur and were reportedly in a relationship for the past four years.

After Khan moved the petition on January 18, Sahu was produced before the court, where she testified that she had willingly married Khan and converted to Islam.

But their marriage was opposed by the prosecutor who cited Section 3 of the MP Freedom to Religion Act, 2021, which stipulates no person shall convert for the pur-

pose of marriage and any conversion in contravention of the provision shall be deemed null and void. The prosecutor demanded that the woman be sent to Nari Niketan.

Justice Dubey said, "Be that as it may, the petitioner and corpus both are major. No moral policing can be allowed in such matters where the two major persons are willing to stay together whether by way of marriage or in a live-in relationship, when the party to that arrangement is doing it willingly and not forced into it." Justice Dubey while rejecting the argument of the prosecutor to send Arti to Nari Niketan ordered, "The corpus before this Court has clearly stated that she had married the petitioner and wants to stay with him. The corpus is a major person. Her age is not disputed by any of the parties. The Constitution gives a right to every major citizen of this country to live her or his life as per her or his own wishes."

The court also directed the public prosecutor and the police authorities to ensure that Khan and Sahu reach their house safely. The police were also directed to make sure that the couple are not threatened by Sahu's parents in future.

When contacted on Sunday morning Khan was reunited with Sahu a day after the court's directive and the two were setting out to start their new life in a different city.

"I have been beaten up, threatened and she has been tortured but why should we be scared anymore. I have legally married her. I can repair everything from a cycle to the most-sophisticated bike. I will easily find work in the new city and keep my wife happy. We don't want to stay here anymore," said Khan while boarding a train leaving Jabalpur.



EDITOR'S SPECS

## Congress is not campaigning in UP

As election activity begins to peak in Uttar Pradesh, senior Congress leaders are keeping away from the campaign and the party leaders have no explanation for their absence. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra remains the only star campaigner for her party and her 'campaigning' so far, has been limited to the virtual world. Party president Sonia Gandhi and former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh top the list of star campaigners but there is no information of their programme in UP polls. Other Congress leaders including Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, Rajasthan Congress leader Sachin Pilot and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan have campaigned and addressed press conferences for the party but leaders named as star campaigners like Ghulam Nabi Azad, Salman Khurshid, Raj Babbar are conspicuous by their absence. Leaders like Digvijaya Singh, who are popular in UP, especially among Thakurs, have not been included in the star campaigner list. A party functionary said that these leaders would be called when they were needed. Former UPCC presidents including Nirmal Khatri, Salman Khurshid and Raj Babbar have neither visited the UPCC office since Priyanka Gandhi took charge in 2019 and nor have they been invited by the state leadership for any event. Number of Congress candidates have either returned their tickets or have resigned in the past few days. The party's door-to-door campaigns at grassroots are yet to pick up momentum apparently due to lack of manpower. The Congress contested the 2017 assembly elections in alliance with the Samajwadi Party, fielding its candidates on 114 seats for the 403-member UP assembly. It won only seven seats, securing 6.25 per cent of the total votes and 22.09 per cent votes on seats contested. Earlier in 2012, it had won 28 out of the 355 seats contested, securing 11.65 per cent of the total votes.

# BATTERED BY COVID, COMMON FOLK CRAVE FOR A MIRACLE BUDGET

Deepika Bhan

If wishes were horses, then 'Nirmala would lower all prices'. The change in the original proverb may seem contrived, but the thought is not unwarranted, as it reflects the sentiment of common folk in the country today. The customary presentation of the Union Budget on February 1 invariably raises expectations that there may be a cut here or there to help people save money or earn more.

The Budget presentation is all about big numbers, lots and lots of money, multi-million-rupee projects and schemes, and policy stipulations, but all that common folk care about are announcements of relief measures.

These could be reductions in prices of food, clothing, medicine, education, housing and health, and above all, in taxes and fuel rates. This is the basic list of just about any family in the country.

Talk to any person and the principal complaint is about the ever-increasing prices of the basic items required for normal living. These include basic food items -- vegetables, fruits, grains, pulses, spices, edible oil and milk; stationery and items of clothing; and expenses on travel and healthcare.

Especially because of the Covid surge, the per capita personal expenditure on healthcare has increased manifold. Almost every family has seen a rise in medical expenses, from minor medical consultations to major hospitalisations.

Covid has altered the economic picture of households, especially in middle-income settings. Many spent their life savings on the medical treatment of their near and dear ones. When the Covid second wave struck the country in April-May 2021, a number of families had to resort to external help and crowd-funding to pay their hospital bills.

The desperation for treatment, hospital beds, medicines and even medical consultations has not been seen on such a massive, heartbreaking scale in recent times.

Covid exposed the huge gaps in the country's healthcare system and for some time even created a sense of hopelessness all around. The suffering has affected common people gravely and they desperately aspire for some relief, either in the form of tax cuts or a lowering of the cost of the medical



ical treatment of Covid-19 and other chronic major illnesses.

Since 2014, the Centre has increased the basic income-tax exemption limit and 80C deduction, introduced standard deduction and optional tax slab rates. This has been helpful, but in the Covid-affected environment, more needs to be done. So, hopes for some relief are expected in the family units.

Along with increased expenditure on health, the Covid surge has also affected the creation of new jobs. Hiring is muted; in fact in the private sector a significant number of people have been laid off, many have suffered salary cuts, and many more have either been not paid or are poorly paid.

The simmering frustration was lately manifested when a train in Bihar was set on fire by job aspirants. The Railways had received about 1.25 crore applications for 3,528 vacancies, and just 7,05,446 candidates had been shortlisted -- a mind-boggling statistics.

For any government, the challenge of creating jobs in these times is huge, but those who are unemployed continue to nurture the hope that vacancies in government departments are filled and private companies get an enabling business environment to bloom.

The middle class wants jobs, tax breaks, concessions on healthcare and education, and reduced prices. The lowering of fuel

prices is one such wish. After the deregulation of fuel prices, diesel and petrol rates have only risen relentlessly. Some time ago, sensing the disquiet among the people over the continually rising fuel prices, the Centre as well as certain state governments lowered the prices by a few rupees. A large cut is wished for, but with the Covid pandemic not ebbing and global crude oil prices rising yet again because of the Russia-Ukraine tensions, we can't hope for much on this front.

The wishes of common folk are best expressed by the nursery rhyme:

If wishes were horses, beggars would ride  
If turnips were watches, I'd wear one by my side

If 'ifs' and 'ands' were pots and pans  
There'd be no work for tinkers' hands.

In the present context, we will have to change the opening line to: "If wishes were horses, prices would come down."

With the Covid surge still showing no signs of slowing down, economies have taken a hit everywhere, whether at the global level or in family units. The macro and the micro are all affected equally.

A miracle budget is the need of the hour. And even a bigger miracle is needed to rid the country and the world of the pandemic. The economy needs to boom again and the wishes of common folk need to come true.

## Godse's 'heirs' have no place in India: M.K. Stalin



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has urged the people to take a vow that there remains no place for the "heirs" of Nathuram Godse -- who assassinated Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi, on the Indian soil. The Chief Minister after paying floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his 74th death anniversary at the Marina beach on Sunday in a tweet called upon the people to uphold unity by adhering to brotherhood and nurturing love. He said: "Let us take a vow that there is no place in the Indian soil for Godse's heirs and their evil thoughts."

The Chief Minister, however, neither mentioned anyone, nor took any names.

Governor R.N. Ravi also paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary at the Raj Bhavan.

He also administered a pledge against untouchability and observed a 2-minute silence as a mark of respect to Mahatma Gandhi.

He said that Mahatma Gandhi was a charismatic leader of the freedom movement and had an unwavering commitment to truth.

The Governor also said that his commitment towards non-violence and to serve the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and untouchables were exemplary.

Students from HarijanSevak Sangh and Raj Bhavan officials joined the Governor in his pledge against untouchability.

The Governor also interacted with students at the Raj Bhavan and distributed Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography to the students.

He also called upon the authorities to arrange career counselling for students so that they can opt for their future carrier prospects.

## international

## BANK OF AMERICA CUTS EXPECTED US GDP GROWTH RATE

Bank of America slashed its projection for the first-quarter US economic growth from 4 to 1 per cent on Friday because of disruptions caused by the Omicron coronavirus variant.

Washington | Agencies

Bank of America slashed its projection for the first-quarter US economic growth from 4 to 1 per cent on Friday because of disruptions caused by the Omicron coronavirus variant.

Economists at Bank of America told clients in a report that they expect US gross domestic product (GDP) to rise at an annual rate of 1 per cent during the first quarter, as "risks of a negative growth quarter are significant", Xinhua news



agency quoted a CNN Business report as saying. "That would break a streak of six consecutive quarters of growth that began in the summer of 2020," said the report.

Meanwhile, the Atlanta Federal Reserve's GDPNow forecasting model, released on Friday, projected a 0.1 per cent growth in the first quarter, a rapid slowdown from

the 6.9 per cent annual rate of growth during the final quarter of 2021.

For the year as a whole, Bank of America sees a US GDP growth of 3.6 per cent, down from its prior expectation of 4 per cent, citing the Omicron surge, along with the expected path of inventories and the outlook for fiscal spending, which is set to slow sharply.

## ARGENTINA REJECTS UK'S DEPLOYMENT OF NEW WEAPONS TO FALKLANDS

Buenos Aires: Argentina has expressed strong opposition to the UK's recent installation of new anti-aircraft weaponry on the disputed Falklands Islands.



The Argentine Foreign Ministry noted that the Sky Sabre ground-based air defense system newly deployed on the South Atlantic archipelago triples the range of the former Rapier system, reports Xinhua news agency.

Argentina "rejects in the strongest terms the new deployment of British military weapons in the Malvinas Islands", over whose sovereignty the two countries have been locked in a dispute and fought a war in 1982, the Ministry added. Argentina calls the disputed islands as Malvinas.

The recent deployment is "a new and unjustified show of force and a deliberate departure" from the calls of the UN and other international organisations for a peaceful and definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute, added the Ministry.

The South American country also stressed that "the alleged defensive status of the British military base in the South Atlantic is not only totally unjustified, but also represents a threat to the entire area".

Located off Argentina's southern Atlantic coast, the islands have been controlled by the UK since 1833, but Argentina insists on having sovereignty over the islands, which it deems as a vestige of colonial rule.

## Farmers in Pakistan announce plans to march in Islamabad

Pakistan Kissan Ittehad, a leading farmers body, has announced plans to march in Islamabad to protest against the shortage of agricultural inputs, including urea, and the economic hardships faced by farmers, Samaa TV reported.

New Delhi | Agencies

Pakistan Kissan Ittehad, a leading farmers body, has announced plans to march in Islamabad to protest against the shortage of agricultural inputs, including urea, and the economic hardships faced by farmers, Samaa TV reported.

The march would begin from Multan on February 14, the body announced on Saturday. Kissan Ittehad Chairman Khalid Mehmood Khokhar said that several marches would be staged across the country in February, and they would eventually converge in Multan to proceed towards



Lahore and Islamabad. The larger march would arrive in Islamabad in the last week of February, he said.

Farmers across Pakistan have faced a severe shortage of fertilisers, especially urea.

President of the opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Shehbaz Sharif has said the people who feed the whole country are protesting helplessly and the government is nowhere to be found.

The entire nation would suffer if the government does not come to the farmers' aid immediately, he said.

The opposition leader said that after sugar and gas, urea has also become a luxury in the country under the incumbent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, the report said.

The government should ensure the availability of urea to the growers at reasonable prices, he added.

Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also plans to lead a march on Islamabad at the end of February, while the Pakistan Democratic Movement has announced one for March 23.

## Iran's will for agreement in Vienna proven: Raisi

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said that his country has proven its will and determination to reach an agreement in the diplomatic endeavours in Vienna on the restoration of the 2015 nuclear deal.

Tehran | Agencies

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said that his country has proven its will and determination to reach an agreement in the diplomatic endeavours in Vienna on the restoration of the 2015 nuclear deal.

Raisi made the remarks in a phone conversation with his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron late Saturday night, reports xinhua news agency.

He said any effort by the other side to this end requires to incorporate the removal of the sanctions on Tehran in a verifiable manner, as well as a valid guarantee that no other party would be able to unilaterally pull out of the deal in the future, as did the US without having to bear the consequences.

He stressed that the US has acknowledged that the former administration's



"maximum pressure" campaign, launched against Tehran by former President Donald Trump, has failed.

Turning to developments in West Asia, Raisi said stability and security in the region can be ensured solely through intraregional solutions, not foreign interference.

The two Presidents also discussed

regional issues, particularly the situations in Yemen and Lebanon, as well as ways to boost bilateral ties.

Formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the deal was signed in 2015 between Iran and the P5+1 (namely the five permanent members of the Security Council -- China, France, Russia, the UK and the US, plus Germany), together with the European Union.

However, Trump pulled the US out of the agreement in May 2018 and reimposed unilateral sanctions on Tehran, which prompted the latter to breach the deal's restrictions one year later, and advance its nuclear programs it had put a halt to.

Since April 2021, several rounds of talks have been held between Iran and the other remaining parties to revive the deal.

## Australian Defence Force deployed to airdrop supplies to flood-hit region

Canberra | Agencies

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has been deployed to deliver essential supplies to flood-stricken parts of South Australia (SA).

Steven Marshall, the Premier of SA, on Sunday announced that the ADF will fly 20 tonnes of food and supplies into the town Coober Pedy in the state's north on Monday ahead of a forecast extreme weather, reports Xinhua news agency.

"We are very grateful to our friends in the Australian Defence Force who have been helping South Australia, first with the bushfires of course, then with our response to coronavirus and



now with these extreme weather events," Marshall said.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) has warned parts of SA's north to brace for up to 200 mm of rain in the next three days with a forecast peak on Tuesday, potentially cutting remote towns off from the

rest of the state. It comes with vast regions of the Outback already underwater due to an unprecedented flooding.

The Stuart Highway, which connects dozens of towns in rural SA including Coober Pedy to the state capital Adelaide and the Northern Territory (NT), remained

under half a metre of water on Sunday while vital freight rail tracks have been damaged and will not be repaired until mid-February.

Marshall urged motorists to avoid travelling to the region, with anyone driving between Adelaide and the NT forced to take a detour through Queensland.

"Unless you need to be traveling in the north of South Australia, please stay away -- this is a very dangerous situation," he said.

"Our concern is the further extreme weather and rainfall events forecast over the next 72 hours.

"This is going to further exacerbate the already difficult situation that we are envisaging."



# MVA IS MAHARASHTRA'S POLITICAL FUTURE; NO ROOM FOR SENA-BJP REUNION: RAUT

▶ THACKERAY, WHO UNDERWENT A CERVICAL SPINE SURGERY A COUPLE OF MONTHS BACK, HAD HIT OUT AT THE BJP OVER ITS "HYPOCRISY," "DOUBLE STANDARDS" ON HINDUTVA



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday asserted that the tripartite Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) is the political future of Maharashtra and there is no truth in speculations about an "under the table deal" for a reunion of the BJP and Sena. In his weekly column 'Rokhthok' in the party mouthpiece Saamana, Raut said state Chief Minister and Sena president Uddhav Thackeray in his address to Shiv Sainiks on January 23 had turned the tables on the BJP, which was criticising him over his illness. Thackeray, who underwent a cervical spine surgery a couple of months back, had hit out at the BJP over its "hypocrisy", "double standards" on Hindutva and elaborated on how the Shiv Sena had "rotted" in alliance with the BJP, he said. "The message from his speech was that the Maha Vikas Aghadi, comprising the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress, is the political future of Maharashtra, and there is no truth in speculations that there was an under the table deal hap-

pening between the Shiv Sena and BJP and they could get back together," Raut said. Thackeray's speech and BJP leader Devendra Fadnis's response to it have made the state's politics clear and there is no room for confusion, he said. Notably, Fadnis had claimed the Shiv Sena grew politically when it was in alliance with the BJP. "There is no possibility of a Shiv Sena-BJP reunion after Fadnis's response," said Raut, who is the executive editor of Saamana. The MVA is here to stay and the BJP will have to spend next many years around the Raj Bhavan, the Rajya Sabha member claimed in sarcastic comments, apparently referring to the BJP approaching the governor over various issues pertaining to the state. The Shiv Sena had snapped ties with the BJP after the 2019 Maharashtra Assembly polls over the issue of sharing the chief ministerial post. The Thackeray-led party later forged an alliance with the NCP and Congress to form government in the state. Raut also said the recent nagar panchayat

election results in Maharashtra should act as a guideline to both the ruling MVA and the opposition BJP in the state. The BJP did get more seats, but the MVA parties collectively were ahead of the BJP. This shows that whenever the state Assembly elections are held, the "MVA's majority of 170 seats (out of total 288 seats in the House) will continue to stay," he said. "This is the mindset of Maharashtra," the Shiv Sena's chief spokesperson said. He claimed there is a "wall of businessmen" around Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Modi has transformed Indian politics into an event and given it a festive character. No one in the world has done this," Raut said targeting the PM. Hitting out at former CM Fadnis for claiming that the Shiv Sena grew politically because of the BJP, Raut said the Sena was formed in 1966 and the BJP in 1980. "More than the year of birth, what is important is what one has achieved. The BJP's earlier avatar Jana Sangh never participated in the Sanyukta Maharashtra movement. Fadnis went to Belgaum recently calling for the defeat of the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti, which is fighting for the rights of Marathi people," he said. Earlier, BJP leaders like Gopinath Munde, Pramod Mahajan and Eknath Khadse never behaved in such a manner. Nitin Gadkari (senior BJP leader and Union minister) is a supporter of the Vidarbha state, but he has never gone to Belgaum to campaign against Marathi organisations, Raut added. Maharashtra and Karnataka are locked in a dispute over some bordering areas, including Belgaum, in the neighbouring state, where there is a sizable Marathi-speaking population.

# Maharashtra Govt to decide fate of 10th and 12th exams after February 15 after reviewing COVID-19 situation

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Days after Minister of State for Education Bacchu Kadu suggested that the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (MSBSHSE) exams for 10th and 12th classes be postponed till April, the School Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad said the government has taken a "wait and watch" policy and it will take a decision on holding exams as per the schedule or postpone them after February 15 after reviewing the COVID 19 situation across Maharashtra. The 12th standard exams will start from March 4 while 10th standard will begin from March 15 in the state. "Minister of State has recently held a meeting on the 10th and 12th examinations. A lot of things have to be considered. We are reviewing the Corona status today. We will review the Corona status in the state till February 15. A decision will be taken after that about the postponement of these exams after due consideration and discussions with the MSBSHSE and the Maharashtra State Council of Educational Research and Training," said Gaikwad.



Gaikwad admitted that the students miss the classroom feeling until there will be an interactive session. "We expect the 11th admission to be online. We expect the next academic year should start on time. We will decide the roadmap after holding discussions with the teachers' organizations, education experts and school principals," she said. The minister said as of now there is a possibility that 10th and 12th exams will be held on time and offline. However, she reiterated that till February 15 the state government has adopted a "wait and watch" policy. As reported by the Free Press Journal, Kadu on Friday at the online meeting with the education deputy director, education officers, group education officers and department officials had suggested that these exams need to be postponed till April because the students during the last two years since the closure of schools and launch of online teaching were not accustomed to study and writing. They have also lost the writing practice and they may find it difficult to appear for ensuing exams slated for March. "Students are also confused due to the lack of writing practice and they may face difficulties in exams. In addition, they still have to confront the ongoing online-offline muddle," said Kadu.

# 3rd Covid Wave Seems To Be Declining: Tope

Maharashtra health minister Rajesh Tope on Saturday said that the peak of Covid-19 third wave is over in the state as cases are reducing in cities like Mumbai, Thane, Raigad, Palghar that were worst hit. The state reported 27,971 new coronavirus cases and 61 deaths during the day.



Saturday. The state reported 27,971 new coronavirus cases and 61 deaths during the day. With the count of new daily cases dropping from the peak of 47,000 to about 25,000, "it seems the COVID-19 third wave has come down," Tope told reporters in Mumbai. "Yes, I can say that peak of the third wave has over now because COVID-19 cases are reducing in cities like Mumbai, Thane, Raigad, Palghar where the situation was worst during the recent wave of the. Although in some parts of Maharashtra

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The "third wave" of the coronavirus pandemic seems to be declining in the state though in some cities cases are showing an uptick, Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said on

still, the cases are moving upward. But some other cities like Pune, Nagpur, and parts of rural area are reporting more and more cases." Mumbai, Thane, Raigad, and Palghar districts were reporting "very high numbers" earlier while Nashik, Nagpur, Pune and Aurangabad are currently reporting more cases, Tope said. "People are generally getting discharged within seven-eight days even if they have mild symptoms," he said.

# Farmers have nothing to gain from Maharashtra nod for wine sale in supermarkets: Shetkari Sanghatana

The government says the decision will bring higher remuneration to farmers as wine is made from fruits, cereals and foodgrains.

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The Maharashtra government's decision to allow wine sale in supermarkets and walk-in stores has nothing to do with farmers' welfare but is driven by economic interests, the Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana has alleged. "The Maha Vikas Aghadi government has taken a decision to promote wine production and its distribution through supermarkets and shops. It purely is from a business angle. Why are they dragging poor farmers into wine marketing? How does the farmer stand to gain from the wine bottle finding its way to the supermarket shelf?" Raju Shetti, president of the farmers organisation said on Sunday. Shetti said neither the government nor the Opposition BJP was concerned about farmers' welfare. The government says the decision will bring higher remuneration to farmers as wine is made from fruits, cereals



and foodgrains. Shetti also said his organisation would launch statewide protests against the government for reducing land-acquisition compensation from five times of the market value to two times. "The state government has reduced the market rates for land acquired for state and nation highway projects by 20 per cent... In a village in Kavathe-Mahankal, a farmer whose land was acquired for a project was entitled to compensation of Rs32 lakh. But he received just Rs10.03 lakh," he said. He said the farmer was at the receiving end of the policies aimed at cutting government expenditure. "He

is not getting higher compensation for his land. Nor can he refuse to part with the land," said the farmers leader. Citing the amendments to the Land Acquisition Act, 2013, Shetti also accused the Centre of failing to protect farmers' right to fair compensation. "It was the Shiv Sena that was at the forefront opposing changes to the act in 2015. But today they are pushing anti-farmers laws in Maharashtra," he said. Shetti also questioned the state government's decision to pay sugarcane farmers in three instalments. "How can a small or marginal farmer manage his household without the full payment? Sugar mills want to hold back the payment for one full year," he said. Almost 78 per cent of the 1.56 crore farmers in the state come under the small and marginal category, Shetti said, claiming the government had done nothing to address the woes of the farmers who incur huge losses because of recurring natural calamities.

# Iran Foreign Minister's upcoming trip raises hopes for 5 Indians stuck there

▶ AS THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF IRAN, HOSSEIN AMIR-ABDOLLAHIAN ARRIVES IN INDIA IN EARLY FEBRUARY, HOPES OF A 'GHAR-WAPSI HAVE REKINDLED IN FIVE INDIAN YOUTHS, INCLUDING TWO FROM MUMBAI, STRANDED THERE SINCE THE PAST TWO YEARS.

In February 2020, during one 'black voyage' in the high seas off Oman, they were unwittingly trapped in a deadly maritime narcotics smuggling racket, leading to their arrest and jail. Even after their acquittal in the case, they are languishing in Iran since then.



Their frantic families have written letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Ministry of External Affairs, the Iranian government, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and other diplomatic officials, but to no avail. From mid-2019, the excited five-some enthusiastically worked on their maiden ship jobs till the treacherous voyage in February 2020 on a ship, 'MV Artin10', owned by an Iranian, Razaee Mulkadam, which changed the course of their lives. They sailed on several voyages lasting 6-7 weeks from Iran to deliver a variety of cargo in Kuwait, Muscat and other ports, with the ship's master, Capt M. Rasool Gharebi. "On February 20 (2020), Capt Gharebi suddenly ordered the ship to drop anchor mid-sea, around 140 kms off Muscat. Later, another vessel came and unloaded what seemed like small 'rice bags' on our ship," Aniket Yenpure said,

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the Foreign Minister of Iran, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian arrives in India in early February, hopes of a 'ghar-wapsi have rekindled in five Indian youths, including two from Mumbai, stranded there since the past two years. They are Naveen M Singh (New Delhi), Pranav A Tiwari, 22, (Patna), Thamizh R Selvan, 32, (Chennai), Aniket S Yenpure, 30 and Mandar M Worlikar, 27, (Mumbai). Their distraught families, waiting to see them, are fervently hoping that Iran will take an expeditious stand on repatriating their sons back to India. "We are optimistic that the Indian government would raise the issue of our helpless children there with the dignitary Amir-Abdollahian and urge his intervention for remedial measures," one of the parents, Sham Yenpure, told IANS. The saga of the five youngsters, harbouring dreams of a better future, began when they flew to Iran to join merchant navy ships in 2019 with valid qualifications and documents, through an Indian agent.

recounting the harrowing experience over the phone from Iran. Since such high seas cargo transfers are illegal as per international maritime laws, some of the crewmen secretly recorded the operation on their mobile phones as evidence for the Iranian police and customs authorities later. The very next morning, an Iranian Navy ship intercepted 'MV Artin10', arrested all aboard and transferred them to the naval vessel. Capt Gharebi later admitted that "the Indian crewmen were innocent and had no knowledge of the illicit cargo transfer operation in the high seas". He even attempted to commit suicide by stabbing himself, but was rushed to the small Konarak Port and survived. The five Indian youths were also offloaded at the same port town, arrested by the local Counter-Narcotics Department, and shunted to custody by a Konarak Court. Subsequently, Gharebi and the vessel owner Mulkadam were also arrested. It was only during the court proceedings that the Indians learnt that the 'rice bags' actually contained 1.50 tonnes of banned narcotics and they were willy-nilly ensnared in a maritime smuggling rack-

et. The youngsters then spent the next nearly 13 months in jail - though they had not committed any crime, rued the father Sham Yenpure in Mumbai. After some months, the case was transferred from the Konarak Court to the Chabahar Court which pronounced them innocent on March 8, 2021 and ordered their immediate release. As the delighted youth went to collect their passports and other documents, the Konarak Counter-Narcotics Department re-arrested them and produced them before the local Court. Though the Konarak Court also ordered their forthwith release as per the Chabahar Court ruling, it withheld their passports and other travel documents -- effectively leaving the five youngsters grounded there since March 10, 2021. They spent the next five months as vagabonds, running from one place to another, living on dole and barely able to survive in extreme weather. The prime accused Capt Gharebi died in jail in December 2021. After their plight was first highlighted by IANS (July 4, 2021), the Indian Embassy in Iran came to their rescue and shifted them to a single room in Hostel Marmano in Tehran where their basic needs are taken care of. "As the Konarak Court raised certain objections to the Chabahar Court verdict in April 2021, the case was transferred to the Supreme Court of Iran. After two months, in end-June 2021, the apex court quashed the Chabahar Court judgment. The latest (2022) we hear is that our matter may be heard afresh by the lower courts," said a shaken Aniket Yenpure over the phone. The youngsters have demanded legal assistance for the upcoming court battle, but officialdom is awaiting a nod from the Ministry of External Affairs.

# Industry body AHAR wants restaurant timings restored

▶ TWO WEEKS AGO, THE ASSOCIATION ALSO WROTE TO THE CHIEF MINISTER, DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER AND ALSO MET WITH NCP CHIEF SHARAD PAWAR SEEKING THEIR SUPPORT TO BAIL OUT THE BELEAGUERED INDUSTRY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In continuation of the previous representation made to the government of Maharashtra on restoring of pre-covid timings for restaurants and bars, the Indian Hotel and Restaurant Association (AHAR), an industry body, made representations to the state's tourism minister Aditya Thackeray and guardian minister and minister for textiles, fisheries and ports, Aslam Sheikh, to request them to support the industry which is in distress owing to the new time restrictions and conditions in Maharashtra. Two weeks ago, the association also wrote to the chief minister, deputy chief minister and also met with NCP chief Sharad Pawar seeking their support to bail out the

beleaguered industry. In the letter addressed to the state ministers, it requested a restoration of dine-in services in restaurants and bars to pre-covid timings, as the situation is under control owing to which other states have eased restrictions and are getting back to normalcy. It also requested for issuing specific guidelines for essential services such as home delivery / takeaways which will help in reducing overcrowding at outlets. Shivanand Shetty, president of the association said, "The industry is in dire straits with many restaurants and bars shut for ever and others barely able to keep their shutters up. Some states in the country have eased the imposed pandemic curbs with schools, colleges and businesses being allowed to open." Sukesh Shetty, the association's general secretary, added that given their business model, the prevailing timings are throttling the industry. "Now, since the situation is under control, we request easing of curbs so the industry can get back on track. We have been assured of a positive outcome in the next three-four days and we are hopeful that the administration will support our industry." Overall, the size of the restaurant industry shrank by more than 50% from Rs 423,624 crore in FY20 to about Rs 200,762 crore in FY21 according to the National Restaurant Association of India.



# TOM BRADY'S WIFE: EVERYTHING TO KNOW ABOUT GISELE BUNDCHEN

Los Angeles | Agencies

**T**om Brady is reportedly retiring from the NFL after 22 seasons and 7 Super Bowl championships! After dominating the game with the New England Patriots from 2000 to 2020 and scoring huge with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers since, Tom is finally ready to step off the field, according to ESPN. Sources told the outlet that he's ready to announce his retirement any day now. Another insider EXCLUSIVELY told HollywoodLife that the California native "is going to sign a one-day contract with the New England Patriots and officially announce his retirement likely early next week once New England gets over the blizzard that is happening right now."

Tom Brady is considered the greatest quarterback of all time and his gorgeous wife is no slouch either! Find out all about Gisele Bündchen here!

In his personal life, Tom is a superstar as well. He's a co-parenting champ with his ex, actress Bridget Moynahan, as they both help raise their 14-year-old son Jack. After his split with Bridget, he went on to marry Gisele Bündchen, who is often considered the GOAT in her area of expertise, Find out all about the beauty, below.

Gisele was born in Brazil on July 20, 1980. At the age of 18, she appeared on the cover of both Italian and British Vogue. Since then, she has appeared on hundreds of high-fashion magazines and walked in tons of runway shows. Her expansive career as a cover girl, Victoria's Secret Angel and actress would make her the 16th richest woman in entertainment in 2006, followed by the top spot on Forbes top-earning model list in 2012. According to Celebrity Net Worth, Gisele is worth \$400 million and pulls in \$40 million annually for her modeling contracts.

## Ali Fazal On His Journey As South Asian Actor In Hollywood: 'At Times Projects Are...'

Ali Fazal opened up about his journey as a South Asian actor in Hollywood and revealed if he faced difficulty while looking for work in Hollywood.

Los Angeles | Agencies

**A**ctor Ali Fazal is gearing up for the release of his upcoming Hollywood movie *Death On The Nile* where he will star alongside Gal Gadot. The actor will also be seen in the action thriller movie *Kandahar* with Gerald Butler. With more than one Hollywood movie under his belt, Fazal opened up about his journey in Hollywood and revealed if he had difficulty in finding work. In an interview with *Hindustan Times*, Ali Fazal was asked if he had difficulty in finding leading roles in Hollywood as a South Asian actor. Fazal replied and said it had been a journey of finding the right foothold. He further explained that one had to throw themselves in the right pit. He also added that at times projects were specific and, "I can't possibly start shooting for *Mission Impossible* as it is a Tom Cruise film."

Fazal said that with a film like *Death On The Nile*, the studio decided on a blind casting and earlier, his character was played by Geroge Kennedy and the character was older so the age was reduced. He concluded by saying, "In a weird way, the world is uniting and yet it is not." Ali will be seen playing the role of Andrew Katchadourian, the cousin of Gal



Gaddot's character Linnet Ridgeway. The movie is based on Agatha Christie 1937 novel of the same name and follows Hercule Poirot, a world-renowned private detective who is entrusted with the important task of identifying the murderer after a passenger is killed on a luxurious cruise. A brand new promo, of the movie, gave a closer glimpse at the characters of the movie including Ali Fazal's character. A new promo of the film tagged Ali's character as a 'slippery fish' making him quite a probable suspect for the murder that has taken place on the ship. The film also stars Kenneth Branagh returning as Hercule Poirot, along with Tom Bateman (also returning from the first film), Annette Bening, Russell Brand, Dawn French, Gal Gadot, Armie Hammer, Rose Leslie, Emma Mackey, Sophie Okonedo, Jennifer Saunders, and Letitia Wright. *Death On Nile* is set to be theatrically released on February 11, 2022, by 20th Century Studios.

Los Angeles | Agencies

## KATY PERRY ROCKS TIGHT RED LATEX BODYSUIT FOR COLORFUL 'SNL' PERFORMANCE

**K**aty Perry made her milestone 5th appearance on *'SNL's* Jan. 29th episode, where she performed "When I'm Gone" with a beyond epic stage set-up. Katy Perry is a seasoned vet when it comes to performing on Saturday Night Live! The 37-year-old pop star brought her A-Game to the stage for an epic first performance of song "When I'm Gone," her collaboration with Alessso. The Santa Barbara native sizzled in a skintight red latex bodysuit paired with fringe chaps out of the same material for the performance on Saturday, Jan. 29. "When I'm gone I'm never really gone/You think you're moving on/But it won't be for long, you'll see/When I'm gone I'm never really gone," she crooned on stage over the catchy beat.

She performed on an epic stage set up seemingly inspired by the Super Mario Bros. video games, right down to dancing mushrooms (a key element in the game). A large screen filled with a changing colorful background was behind Katy and wrapped around both sides, totally covering up the usual Studio 8H stage.

The "Firework" singer's *SNL* appearance coincides with her new Las Vegas residency - dubbed "Play" - which kicked off at Resorts World on Dec. 29. The initial leg wrapped on Jan. 15, however, she returns for the second set of shows on March 2nd, followed by two other legs due to high demand. The show, which has been described as "camp," draws on classic '80s and '90s films for inspiration such as Pee-wee's Big Adventure and Honey, I Shrunk The Kids.

"The show that I've put together in Las Vegas is one of a kind. It's the wildest, most fun and humorous show I've ever put together... I'm giving it my all," Katy said to *Interview* magazine about her latest live show, which includes songs from her latest album *Smile*, as well as all her previous projects. "I'm 37, I've been doing my thing for over 12 years, and people are still showing up and giving love."

## Kim Kardashian & Pete Davidson Twin In Hoodies As Romance Goes Strong



Seoul | Agencies

**K**im rocked a pair of Vans as the A-list couple were spotted in Beverly Hills amid reports Pete is looking for a pad in LA.

Inseparable! Kim Kardashian and Pete Davidson were spotted out together once again, this time in matching ensembles! The makeup mogul, 41, and the Saturday Night Live star, 28, enjoyed a sunny outing on Thursday (January 27) as they visited friends in the tony neighborhood of Beverly Hills in Los

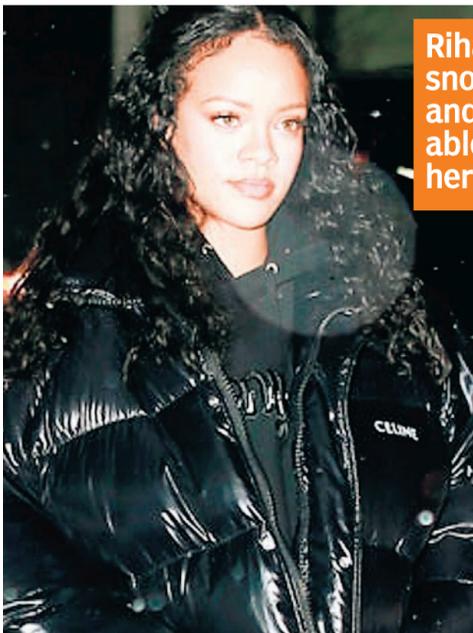
Angeles. The pair were twinning in all-black ensembles for the visit.

Kim rocked a designer black hoodie which featured oversized cuffs and drawstrings to give it that extra high-end touch. She matched the look with skin-tight leggings, a pair of hip Van sneakers and dark sunglasses. Her trademark raven tresses were pulled back in a tight bun, allowing a full view of her flawless face. Pete followed suit with a dark graphic hoodie, black joggers, a pair of slides and a set of black sunglasses.

The Beverly Hills outing comes

amidst reports the New York-based funnyman was looking for a place in Los Angeles. The move would make sense as the couple seem to be spending more and more time together. Earlier this week, Kim and Pete reportedly attended a party thrown by Jeff Bezos, before leaving to spend some alone time at a Beverly Hills hotel. The couple were also spotted grabbing dinner in Los Angeles at Quarters Korean BBQ before heading to have some fun at an Escape Room. They were joined by Kim's sister, Khloe Kardashian.

## Rihanna Bundles Up In \$3K Celine Jacket For Evening Shopping



Rihanna stepped out into the snowy New York City weather and rocked a casual yet fashionable warm outfit as she treated herself to some jewelry shopping.

Los Angeles | Agencies

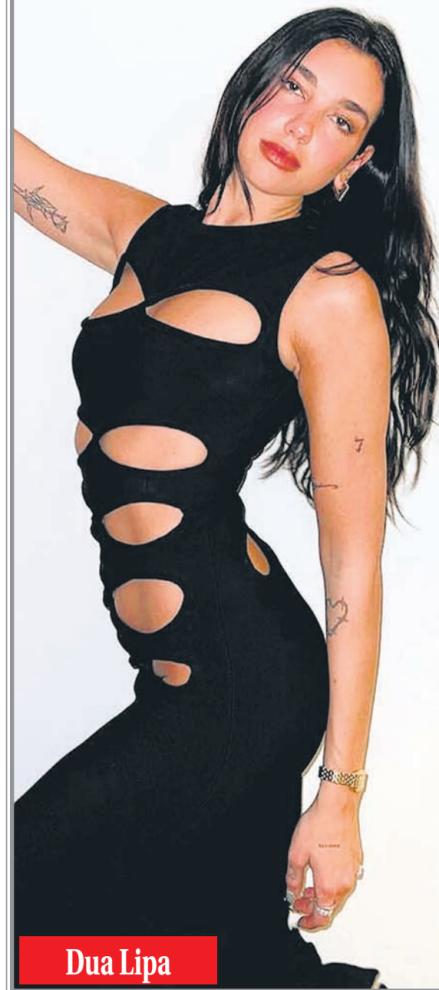
**R**ihanna, 33, is looking gorgeous in her most recent snapshots! The singer was photographed taking in a night of shopping at Tiffany & Co. in New York City as the white snow falling from the sky gave off the perfect winter vibe. She wore an eye-catching warm-looking black Celine jacket as well as black sweatpants and black and white sneakers during the outing and had long curly locks down.

The "Unfaithful" crooner also showed off a flattering makeup look as she walked outside and appeared relaxed and happy to be exploring the iconic jewelry store. It's not quite clear what she bought but we can guarantee it was something memorable and amazing.

The night before her visit to Tiffany's, Rihanna was spotted going out to dinner in the Big Apple with her boyfriend ASAP Rocky, 33. They reportedly looked like they were enjoying each other's company while leaving the restaurant, as they always do when out together.



## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Dua Lipa



## NADAL BEATS MEDVEDEV TO WIN AUSTRALIAN OPEN AND 21ST GRAND SLAM TITLE

Rafael Nadal roared back from two-sets-to-love down to beat Daniil Medvedev in the classic final and win Australian Open 2022 men singles trophy, claiming his record-breaking 21st Grand Slam title, here on Sunday.

Melbourne | Agencies

Rafael Nadal roared back from two-sets-to-love down to beat Daniil Medvedev in the classic final and win Australian Open 2022 men singles trophy, claiming his record-breaking 21st Grand Slam title, here on Sunday.



and Novak Djokovic who are both on 20 major crowns. The 35-year-old, who clinched the trophy in Melbourne in 2009, has also become just the second player in the Open Era alongside Djokovic to win each of the four majors at least twice. Nadal now leads

Medvedev 4-1 in their ATP Head2Head series, with their second meeting in a Grand Slam final. At the US Open in 2019, Medvedev rallied from two-sets-to-love down before Nadal prevailed in the decider in a Flushing Meadows epic.

## Odisha Open: Unnati clinches her first international crown, Kiran George men's singles champ

Unnati Hooda and Kiran George registered victories to clinch the women's and men's singles title respectively in the Odisha Open Super 100 badminton tournament here on Sunday.

January 30, 2022 06:08 PM (Updated 18:08 IST) 2022/01/30BBBB

Cuttack, Jan 30 (IANS) Unnati Hooda and Kiran George registered victories to clinch the women's and men's singles title respectively in the Odisha Open Super 100 badminton tournament here on Sunday.

Giant killer Hooda defeated Smit Toshniwal 21-18, 21-11 in just 35 minutes in the women's singles final while Kiran got the better of Priyanshu Rajawat 21-15, 14-21, 21-18 in 58 minutes in the men's category to end the three-event Indian leg in style.

Hooda, who was playing her second successive final on the senior national tour, was a bit jittery at the start and conceded a sizable lead to Toshniwal in the opening game. But once the 14-year-old found her nerves, she began pushing her opponent to play longer rallies and slowly but surely clawed her way back.

She also employed the half



smashes quite effectively to score points to pocket the opening game after taking the lead for the first time at 18-17. Hooda was the dominant player throughout the second game as she raced to a 17-4 lead. The youngster was guilty of dropping easy points from there on but the result was a foregone conclusion by then.

Later, Kiran had to dig deep into his physical and mental reserves to beat Rajawat in a summit clash that swung both ways till the very end.

Kiran was first off the mark opening up a 9-5 lead in the opening game but Rajawat fought back to

level the scores at 12-12. But the youngster could not maintain the tempo and the eventual champion nine of the next 12 points to pocket the game.

Rajawat had to play catch up at the start of the second game as well but he clinched eight straight points from 6-8 to open up a sizable lead and never looked back.

With the momentum firmly in favour of Rajawat, the 19-year-old was playing with confidence and verve at the start of the third and final game and took a 10-4 lead before Kiran staged a comeback.

Kiran went on the offensive as he

didn't have much to lose and came out on top as he bagged 12 of the next 14 points to take a 6-point lead. However, unforced errors cropped into his game just when he was looking comfortably on his way to victory.

That allowed Rajawat to first close the gap to 16-17 and then level scores at 18-18. However, Kiran had the final laugh as he clinched three straight points and the single's championship trophy.

In the doubles category, Treesa Jolly failed to grab the double crown as she won the women's doubles title but ended on the losing side in mixed doubles.

Syed Modi International finalist, Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, defeated compatriots Shruti Mishra 21-12, 21-10.

Earlier, Jolly and MR Arjun had gone down 16-21, 20-22 against Sri Lanka's Sachin Dias and Thilini Hendaheewa in the mixed doubles final.

In the men's doubles final, the Indian combination of PS Ravikrishna and Udayakumar Shankar Prasad could not build on their first game heroics and went down 18-21, 21-14, 21-16 against Malaysia's Nur Mohd Azriyn and Khim Wah Lim.

## Women's Asian Cup: Ji So-Yun's goal helps Korea stun Australia, reach semis

South Korea caused a huge upset in the AFC Women's Asian Cup football competition, beating two-time finalists Australia to make it to the Semi-finals here on Sunday. Ji So-Yun struck a late long-range stunner in the quarter-finals against Korea with a 1-0 win over 2018 runners-up Australia at the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex, Balewadi, here on Sunday.



it to the Semi-finals here on Sunday. Ji So-Yun struck a late long-range stunner in the quarter-finals against Korea with a 1-0 win over 2018 runners-up Australia at the Shree Shiv

Chhatrapati Sports Complex, Balewadi, here on Sunday. The Chelsea midfielder thumped her effort home from 25 yards out, two minutes from time to give the

Koreans victory after Cho So-Hyun had missed a penalty. Ji So-Yun's goal meant Colin Bell's side will meet either Chinese Taipei or the Philippines in the semi-finals on Thursday. Ji's goal allowed her to overshadow her clubmate, Sam Kerr, as the Australian forward endured a disappointing game in front of the goal as the Matildas crashed out.

Kerr had her first sight of goal as early as the seventh minute, chesting a long ball into the penalty area before rifling her effort over the bar.

Twelve minutes later the Australians threatened again, with Kerr involved once more. The Chelsea striker flicked the ball into the path of Mary Fowler as the Korean defence was backpedaling, but the midfielder's effort from distance was pushed wide by Kim Jung-mi. From the resulting corner, the Matildas went closer still, Kerr's header coming back off the woodwork. The Korea Republic were hanging on.

## Tata Open Maharashtra: Bhambri, Prajnesh to begin Indian challenge in singles main draw

India's Yuki Bhambri and Prajnesh Gunneswaran will kickstart their campaign at the 4th Tata Open Maharashtra as the main draw begins on Monday at the Balewadi Stadium here.



Pune | Agencies

India's Yuki Bhambri and Prajnesh Gunneswaran will kickstart their campaign at the 4th Tata Open Maharashtra as the main draw begins on Monday at the Balewadi Stadium here.

The Delhi-born Bhambri, who received a directed entry into the main draw because of his protected

rankings, will take on Slovak player Jozef Kovalik in the opening round encounter while the Asian Games medallist Prajnesh, who entered the tournament as a wildcard, will start his challenge against the fifth-seeded Daniel Altmaier.

Apart from Bhambri and Prajnesh, the fourth edition of Asia's only ATP 250 event, which is organised by the Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association, will also have the country's top-ranked singles player

Ramkumar Ramanathan and local boy Arjun Kadhe starting directly in the singles main draw which consists of a strong field in the presence of top players from the world including World No. 15 Aslan Karatsev. Lithuania's highest-ranked player for all time, Ricardas Berankis, who had a semi-final finish in the last edition in 2020, will also be seen in action as seven singles opening-round matches will be played on Monday. Berankis will be up against Halyts Quentin of France.

## Huge relief to have finally won the women's doubles title: Krejckikova

Melbourne | Agencies

Czech tennis player Barbora Krejckikova has said that winning the Australian Open women's doubles title with country-mate Katerina Siniakova was a "huge relief" given that they had been trying since their debut in 2018 and inching closer each year.

The No.1-seeded Czech pair clinched its fourth Grand Slam women's doubles title as a team, defeating Kazakhstan's Anna Danilina and Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia 6-7(3), 6-4, 6-4. This was their maiden Australia Open title in five attempts.

The Tokyo Olympic Games gold medallists have improved one step further in each of the last five editions of the Australian Open. They lost in the round of 16 in their 2018 debut, reached the 2019 quarterfinals, the 2020 semifinals, and the 2021 final before their title this year.

"Last year we finished in the finals, so just to get again all the way to the finals and finally making it, it's perfect," said Krejckikova. "It's like a huge, I would say, relief. We're just extremely happy that it's finally our trophy,"



she was quoted as saying by wtatennis.com. "It's amazing," Siniakova said. "After playing last year the final, we are so happy that we have the title. It was a really big fight, and we needed to push hard. We were fighting hard to get the Australian one. So it's just really exciting and super happy, because the focus on the Grand Slam... you want to get these titles, the big ones, so I'm just extremely happy that we got it."

"In the second set I was just telling Katka (Siniakova), 'Let's keep going, let's keep playing, we're gonna get our chances again, and we have to convert them.' I think this was pretty much the key in the second set that we convert the chances. Same thing (in the) third set.

## Beijing Olympics-bound Arif Khan thanks Govt for recognising Winter Sports

Arif Khan, set to represent India this Winter Olympics in the Slalom and Giant Slalom events, is in a good state of mind ahead of the games. Representing the nation is something he has always dreamed of and he is now ready to set his best foot forward.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Arif Khan, set to represent India this Winter Olympics in the Slalom and Giant Slalom events, is in a good state of mind ahead of the games. Representing the nation is something he has always dreamed of and he is now ready to set his best foot forward.

"It has been my dream to introduce the sport to Indians. I am happy to have inspired the youth in my own way by becoming that one person from the mountains to represent this country in the Winter Olympics. Many people are more aware now that there is an opportunity for mountain skiing in India," Arif said in a press conference facilitated by the Sports Authority of India (SAI). "We have mountains, snows as well as free ride Alpine Skiing in Gulmarg. In the next 4-5 years, if we get a few more slopes and infrastructure, we can become the next big destination for Winter Sports. We can utilise the



Himalayas for sport and tourism purposes. This is just the beginning. It feels great to represent 1.3 billion people. My dream is always to inspire people, especially in the Jammu and Kashmir valley. I still try to improve myself. Right now, I am very proud to carry the India flag in the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics this year," Arif added. Arif, inducted into the Target Olympic Podium Scheme, was recently approved an amount of Rs 17.46 Lakh by the Sports Ministry towards training in Europe

and procurement of equipment, ahead of the grand event in China. "It was great to get the support of SAI as a part of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme," Arif continued. "It helped me buy the equipment, pay the bills of the coaches. The financial support felt really good. Everyone in my Skiing fraternity is happy that the Government is recognizing the sport. The Govt has so many plans for the development and infrastructure up-gradation for Winter sports. I would like to thank all the stakeholders who are helping this cause and have assisted in my training too." Arif is set to compete in Beijing on February 13 and 16 in the two events he has qualified for. Looking ahead to the main event, he says, "I have been training for the last two years very seriously. I want to be in the top 30 in the World in the Winter Olympics. Even a slight mistake while going down the hill can make or break you in the competition. But I personally feel in the last 1 year, my training has been very good and I have improved a lot."

## Women's Ashes Test: One-off match ends in a thrilling draw

The one-off Test in the women's Ashes ended in a thrilling draw as England managed to survive the last two overs with one wicket in hand against Australia at the Manuka Oval on Sunday. The narrow draw meant that the women's Ashes is still alive with a three-match ODI series still left to play. The match also makes up for a strong case to have more women's Test matches in future, with the duration being extended to five days.

Canberra | Agencies

The one-off Test in the women's Ashes ended in a thrilling draw as England managed to survive the last two overs with one wicket in hand against Australia at the Manuka Oval on Sunday. The narrow draw meant that the women's Ashes is still alive with a three-match ODI series still left to play. The match also makes up for a strong case to have

more women's Test matches in future, with the duration being extended to five days. After Australia declared at 216/7 to set England a target of 257 off 48 overs, the tourists took on the challenge with aplomb. Tammy Beaumont was quick off the blocks, hitting seven boundaries to get 36 off 42 balls before Rachael Haynes at cover plucked a catch out of thin air to send the right-hander back to the dressing room.

Lauren Winfield-Hill, sedate till then, began to quicken up in company of captain Heather Knight till Rachael took a catch at mid-wicket on Ellyse Perry's bowling to end her stay at 33. At 94/2, Heather and Nat Sciver joined forces for an aggressive stand full of boundaries and strike rotation to get England close towards the target. With 104 needed off 17 overs, Australia brought a twist in the match as Darcie Brown trapped Heather plumb in front of the stumps. The captain went for the review but replays showed ball hitting the stumps. Sophia Dunkley played a blinder of a knock to keep England in the hunt for chase. She hit back-to-back boundaries off Darcie before smoking Annabel Sutherland for successive sixes. Nat reached her fifty and looked great till England lost their way sensationally. Annabel had Nat caught while pulling at square leg for 58, before returning in her next



over to dismiss Amy Jones for four at long-on. Alana King, in her debut Test, removed Sophia on 45 off 32 balls with Beth Mooney taking a brilliant catch at long-on. Annabel returned to take out Katherine Brunt with an edge behind to keeper Alyssa Healy while Alana effected a run-out of Anya Shrubsole and then dismissed Charlie Dean to leave England nine down with 2.1 overs left. Sophie Ecclestone and Kate Cross batted out the remaining balls to force a draw after England lost six wickets for 27 runs out of nowhere. Earlier, Australia, resum-

ing from 12/2 on day four, saw Beth and Ellyse steady the ship. The duo put on a 91-run partnership and were aided by generous drops (Beth at 40, Ellyse at 35) and mix-ups. Though Ellyse was trapped lbw by Sophie on 41, Beth marched on to reach her half-century before being trapped plumb lbw by Charlie for her maiden Test wicket. Post lunch, captain Meg Lanning fell to Katherine Brunt, edging to first slip for the pacer's ninth wicket in the Test match. Ashleigh Gardner (38), Tahlia McGrath (34) and Jess Jonassen (14 not out) picked up the scoring rate with boundaries to set up Australia's declaration. The bold declaration left England with a record chase and they did come really close, thanks to the efforts of the top five before losing their way suddenly but managed to hold on to the draw. With the Ashes scoreline now 6-4, the ODI series will now decide who will take the series.

### Brief scores:

Australia 337/9 d in 104.1 overs and 216/7 d in 64 overs (Beth Mooney 63, Ellyse Perry 41; Katherine Brunt 3/24, Charlie Dean 2/24) drew with England 297 all out in 105.5 overs and 245/9 in 48 overs (Nat Sciver 58, Heather Knight 48; Annabel Sutherland 3/69, Alana King 2/39).



## BIGG BOSS 15':

## RASHAMI EVICTED; SHAMITA, KARAN, TEJASSWI, NISHANT, PRATIK IN GRAND FINALE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**"B**igg Boss Season 15 Grand Finale" will see top 5 contestants competing for the winning title as television star Rashami Desai got evicted from the reality show hosted by Salman Khan. The top five contestants now include Shamita Shetty, Karan Kundrra, Tejasswi Prakash, Nishant Bhat, and Pratik Sehajpal. Mumbai, Jan 30 (IANS) "Bigg Boss Season 15 Grand Finale" will see top 5 contestants competing for the winning title as television star Rashami Desai got evicted from the reality show hosted by Salman Khan. The top five contestants now include Shamita Shetty, Karan Kundrra, Tejasswi

Prakash, Nishant Bhat, and Pratik Sehajpal.

Rashami had been a part of show's season 13 in 2019 where she finished as the third runner-up. She entered the latest season of the show in its 8th week along with her fellow season 13 contestant Devoleena Bhattacharjee as a wild card.

They might have been good friends in the earlier season of the Salman Khan-hosted show, but two years down the line, things changed between them as they didn't get along well this time around.

Rashami's closeness with Umar Riaz, however, became a highlight of the show's season 15 which will see its grand finale unfold on Sunday night.

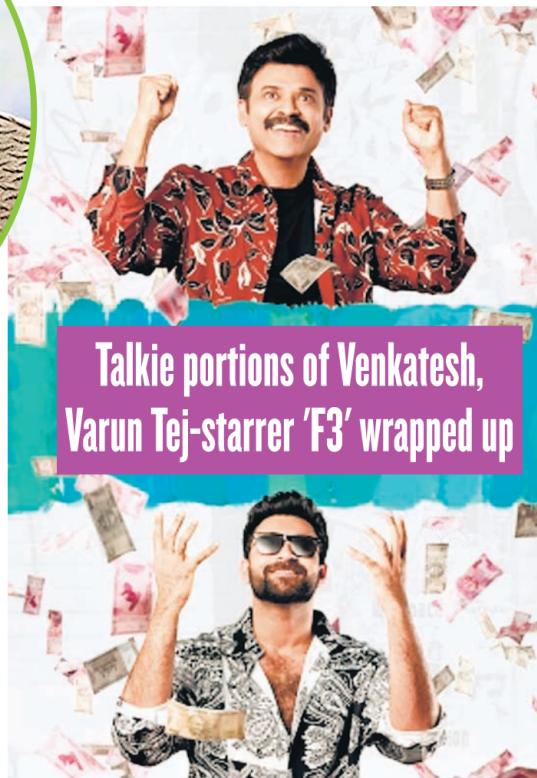
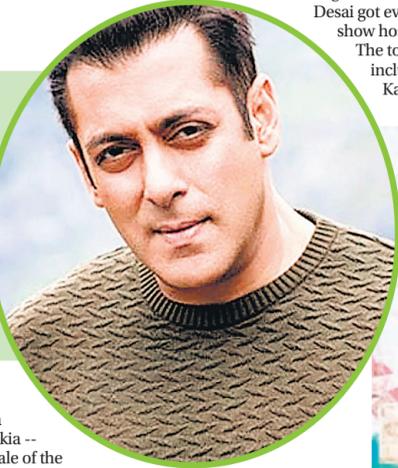
The official Instagram handle of Colors TV also shared the news of the actress' eviction. They wrote in the caption, "Top 6 mein aake keh rahe hai hum @imrashamidesai ko alvida, bhejiye unhe dher saara pyaar comments ke saath'."

## Salman wishes Kat a happy married life with Vicky Kaushal

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**F**ive former "Bigg Boss" winners -- Gautam Gulati, Shweta Tiwari, Gauahar Khan, Rubina Dilaik and Urvashi Dholakia -- danced their way into the sets of the Season 15 grand finale of the popular reality show on Sunday night, but the big news was Salman Khan wishing Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal a happy married life.

Shweta performed to the song "Nadiyon Paar", and Gautam, Urvashi and Rubina joined her on stage as further additions to the songs were played out for the audience. Rakhi Sawant challenged the ex-winners for a dance face-off. Rakhi and Rubina grooved to Katrina Kaif's iconic song "Chikni Chameli". At the end of the dance face-off, Salman wished Katrina on her marriage with Vicky Kaushal. The former winners will now go inside the 'Bigg Boss' house with the Rs 10 lakh cheque that will go to one of the five finalists who opts out of the contest, leaving four in the fray.



## Talkie portions of Venkatesh, Varun Tej-starrer 'F3' wrapped up

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**T**he talkie portions of director Anil Ravipudi's most awaited fun-filled entertainer 'F3', featuring actors Victory Venkatesh and Varun Tej in the lead, have been wrapped up.

Chennai, Jan 29 (IANS) The talkie portions of director Anil Ravipudi's most awaited fun-filled entertainer 'F3', featuring actors Victory Venkatesh and Varun Tej in the lead, have been wrapped up.

Sources close to the unit of the film, being produced on a grand scale by Tollywood's leading production house Sri Venkateswara Creations, said that the unit only has a song to shoot.

Post-production work is also underway for the film, which is being presented by Dil Raju and produced by Shirish. The makers

believe that 'F3', which is set to hit screens on April 28 this year, will be a bigger hit as the buzz about the film in trade circles has been positive.

While Tamannaah Bhatia and Mehreen Pirzada play the heroines opposite Venkatesh and Varun Tej respectively, Nata Kireeti Rajendra Prasad will be seen in a hilarious role. Sonal Chauhan has been roped in as the third actress to add more glamour and Sunil has been assigned an entertaining role.

According to sources, 'F3' will be a combination of entertainment, glamour and other commercial elements. Rockstar Devi Sri Prasad who provided a chartbuster album for 'F2' is well on his way to delivering a superhit album for 'F3'. Sai Sriram has cranked the camera for this film which has Tammiraju as its editor.



## 'He is Music', says Allu Arjun, showering praise on 'Srivalli' singer Sid Sriram

Team Absolute | Chennai

**S**id Sriram, who has become one of the country's most talked-about singers after the success of his 'Srivalli' track for 'Pushpa', was praised by the film's lead actor Allu Arjun as he remembered an event where the crooner belted out the now-famous song without any musical accompaniment.

Sid Sriram, who has become one of the country's most talked-about singers after the success of

his 'Srivalli' track for 'Pushpa', was praised by the film's lead actor Allu Arjun as he remembered an event where the crooner belted out the now-famous song without any musical accompaniment.

The absence of music had been caused by a technical glitch, but that did not stop the California-raised, Chennai-based Sriram from continuing with the performance. This happened before the release of 'Pushpa'. Recalling the event, Allu Arjun took to Twitter to say: "Wanted to write this at

leisure. My brother Sid Sriram Garu was singing 'Srivalli' on stage at the pre-release event."

He went on to note: "He started singing without music and I was waiting for the musical instruments to start slowly supporting his vocals. But they didn't. And he kept singing without any music."

Sharing a video of the event, Allu Arjun concluded: "I was blown away. It was sounding so magical I thought in my head... 'He doesn't need music. HE IS MUSIC.'"

## SHEFALI SHAH OPENS UP ON HOW SHE DOESN'T LET HER CHARACTERS AFFECT HER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**S**hefali Shah, who was most recently seen in the medical thriller 'Human', follows a different approach to work around with her characters. She takes an objective route and does not let her characters affect her emotions as a human being. Shefali Shah, who was most recently seen in the medical thriller 'Human', follows a different approach to work around with her characters. She takes an objective route and does not let her characters affect her emotions as a human being.

Talking about the demarcation in her subconscious, Shah told IANS: "When I do a project, I get completely submerged in it. Having said that, I am not the person who would carry the emotions of a scene or from the set back home. Yes, I will give everything that I have for that moment."

Despite the emotional disconnect, her mind constantly keeps exploring her characters, going deeper into them.

She said: "I do not disconnect as an actor because I come back home, freshen up and start working on the next day's scenes. It is a continuous process, I don't stop. Because that character has an identity of its own, you have to keep feeding that identity with your observations and homework to put a certain conviction into that character."



## Amala Paul turns philosophical, quotes Lao Tzu, Jordan Flesher

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**ctress Amala Paul, who has made her mark in both Tamil and Malayalam films, seems to have taken a shine to the ancient Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, whose aphorism, "Stop leaving and you will arrive", she has shared on Instagram. Actress Amala Paul, who has made her mark in both Tamil and Malayalam films, seems to have taken a shine to the ancient Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, whose aphorism, "Stop leaving and you will arrive", she has shared on Instagram.

The actress, who is known to often share her thoughts on life with her fans and followers on Instagram, carried her pictures with a set of thoughts that have left a mark on her.

One such quote was that of Lao Tzu. It reads: "Stop leaving and you will arrive. Stop searching and you will see. Stop running away and you will be found."

The actress also quoted the American life coach and healer Jordan Flesher in another post. Flesher says, "The more spiritual you are, the more sexy you are. The more conscious you are, the more attractive you become. The more peaceful you are, the hotter you are. Because the most sexy thing in the universe is spiritual enlightenment. There's nothing sexier than consciousness."

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Vaani Kapoor