

# absolute india

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## MOST INDIANS STILL FINANCIALLY VULNERABLE AND UNCERTAIN



**THE AFTER-EFFECTS OF THE COVID PANDEMIC CONTINUE TO HAUNT A MAJORITY OF INDIANS, ESPECIALLY ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT. THEIR VULNERABILITY AND SENSE OF DISTRESS-UNCERTAINTY WAS REVEALED DURING THE IANS-CVOTER POST BUDGET SURVEY CONDUCTED NATIONWIDE.**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Even the latest Budget doesn't seem to have significantly assuaged their worries going by the responses. When the respondents were asked during the survey about their overall quality of life during the last one year, 46.6 per cent of the respondents said it had deteriorated, while 24.5 per cent said that it had improved. Another 25.5 per cent reckoned that it had remained the same. When asked about what they think about the quality of their life in the coming year, the pessimism seemed to have declined considerably. While 44.1 per cent of the respondents said that they expect it to deteriorate further, 39.7 per cent expected it to improve. The main problem seems to be managing finances of the household though inflationary expectations seemed to have cooled down a bit.

When asked if inflation will come down after this Budget, a significant 44.1 per cent said not at all. But if you add up those who said it will come down and it will come down a little bit, 49.3 per cent responded positively. However, Indians are still finding managing family expenses a challenge. When asked if the Budget will push up family expenses, a majority of 60 per cent of the respondents answered in the affirmative while 25.5 per cent said it will allow them to save some money. Interestingly, more than 23 per cent of the lower income respondents felt that they will be able to save some money after the latest Budget. This is in sharp contrast to the aftermath of the second wave when various CVoter surveys had found out that more than 65 per cent of Indians were finding it difficult to manage family expenses. While they are not out of the woods yet, Indians think the aura of gloom and doom is fading.

## NO DATA ON BODIES DUMPED IN GANGA DURING SECOND COVID WAVE: GOVT

### CONG CAUSED SPREAD OF COVID IN UP, UTTARAKHAND: PM IN LS

Starting with claiming that it seems the Congress has made up its mind not to return to power for 100 years, to inflation during Congress rule to calling it the leader of the 'tukde tukde gang', Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reply on Monday to the President's address was full of jibes at the Congress and at times its leader Rahul Gandhi. The first jibe that Modi took at the Congress was how state after state has been deserting the Congress and listed all the states that have not voted Congress for more than 25 years. He listed Nagaland, Odisha, Goa, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and even Telangana and Jharkhand that were created during Congress rule. Mentioning the problems faced by humanity during the corona pandemic, Modi said, "Congress crossed all limits during the pandemic time. The Congress government in Maharashtra handed over free tickets to migrants to leave Mumbai. In Delhi, the AAP government offered bus rides to people to leave Delhi and go back to their native places. As a result, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh all saw spiralling cases across these states." Without taking the name of the Congress party but looking directly at the Congress leaders, Modi said some people were waiting that the corona virus will damage his image, which was out of opposition to Modi. "It seems you have decided not to come back to power for 100 years. But now that you have decided it, I too have prepared for it." The debate on the motion of thanks to the President's Address in Rajya Sabha concluded on Monday and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to reply to the debate today.



### PM CARES COLLECTED RS. 10,990 CRORE TILL MARCH 2021, SPENT RS.3,976 CRORE

New Delhi: 64 per cent of the Rs. 10,990 crore collected by the PM CARES Fund between March 27, 2020, and March 31, 2021, remained unused as of the latter date, according to data accessed. As of March 2021, the PM CARES Fund - set up by the Narendra Modi government 12 months earlier with the aim of securing financial donations to help fight COVID-19 - was sitting on Rs. 7,014 crore. Billed as a "dedicated fund with the primary objective of dealing with any kind of emergency... and provide relief to the affected", PM CARES spent just Rs.3,976 crore in the first year of its operation. This was despite receiving Rs. 7,679 crore in donations in the Financial Year 2021 to add to an opening balance of Rs.3,077 crore from Financial Year 2020 and income from interest amounting to Rs. 235 crore. Of the donations received, Rs.495 were from foreign sources. However, PM CARES spent just Rs. 3,976 crore as of March last year.

estimated to have been dumped in the Ganga, Minister of State for Jal Shakti Bishweshwar Tudu said: "The incidents of 'unclaimed/ unidentified, burnt or partially burnt dead bodies, found floating in river or on grounds, in the shallow depth, on the banks of the river Ganga' were reported from certain districts in the States of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, in the media. National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMC), Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) sought from concerned state governments, a report on the dead bodies found floating and action taken or contemplated for ensuring proper handling, management and disposal of dead bodies by the state authorities for ensuring the protection of the river

Ganga. Information regarding number of Covid-19 related

dead bodies estimated to have been dumped in the river Ganga is not available."

## Aadhaar card not mandatory for Covid vax: Supreme Court

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday directed all authorities concerned with Covid vaccination should follow the Centre's policy and not insist on Aadhaar card for administering the vaccine. A bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and Surya Kant was hearing a plea filed by Siddharth Shankar Sharma, through advocate Mayank Kshrisagar, seeking directions to authorities to not insist on Aadhaar card as the only proof of identification for administering vaccine. The Centre's counsel informed the bench that 87 lakh people have been vaccinated, without any identity card, in the ongoing vaccination drive. The bench noted that the Centre's affidavit establishes that Aadhaar card is not mandatory for registration on the Co-WIN portal and any one of the nine documents, which includes PAN card, passport etc, can be used for registration. "It is humbly submitted that Aadhaar card



is not mandatory for registration of beneficiary on the Co-WIN portal," said the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in its affidavit. The petitioner had moved the top claiming that he was denied vaccination due to the non-availability of Aadhaar card. The Union Ministry said: "It is humbly submitted that in so far as denial of vaccination to the present writ petitioner due to non-availability of Aadhaar is concerned, the answering department vide letter November 2, 2021 sent to the Principal Secretary, state of Maharashtra has directed to take requisite action against

the concerned private CVC for denying vaccination to the write petitioner despite showing a valid passport ID issued by the government of India." The bench said in view of the clarification which has been issued in the Centre's affidavit in connection with the production of the Aadhaar card is not a mandatory precondition for availing of vaccination facilities, the grievance of the petitioner is substantially met. "All concerned authorities shall act in pursuance of the stated policy which has been extracted in paragraph 8 of the counter affidavit," it added.

## Avalanche hits army patrol in Arunachal, 7 trapped

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Seven Indian Army personnel, part of a patrol, are reported to have been trapped in an avalanche in the high altitude area of Kameng Sector in Arunachal Pradesh, the Indian Army said on Monday. Search and rescue operations are currently underway. Specialised teams have been airlifted to assist in rescue operations, the force said. The personnel have been stuck there since February 6. The area has been witnessing inclement weather with heavy snowfall since the last few days, the force said.

Arunachal Pradesh is generally divided into Kameng area on the west and Rest of Arunachal Pradesh. Indian Army Eastern Command handles the 1,346 kilometers long Line of Actual Control (LAC), including Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. This command has three corps -- 33 Corps (Sikkim), four Corps (Kameng Sector) and three Corps (Rest of Arunachal Pradesh) to handle the LAC. In the region, India's Border Roads Organisation has been focusing on the area for road construction after a push from the government.

## DALIT STUDENTS WEAR BLUE SCARVES IN SOLIDARITY WITH MUSLIM GIRLS

Bengaluru | Agencies

The Karnataka high court is scheduled to hear a plea, filed by a Muslim student, over the issue on February 8 following which the government will take a call over uniforms for pre-university colleges in the state. Several college students in Karnataka adorned blue scarves around their necks, raising slogans of "Jai Bhim" in solidarity with Muslim girls in the state who have been barred from entering their college for wearing hijab. Muslim girls of colleges in northern Karnataka were asked to shun their hijab after a group of male students arrived at the colleges, adorning saffron scarves, in a protest against girls being allowed to wear headscarves on the college premises. Dalit students from the IDGS government college in Chikmagalur wore blue scarves, on Monday, in solidarity with the girls who had been denied entry into the college for wearing headscarves, as a part of their religious

### THE HIJAB ROW

Muslim girls of colleges in Karnataka were asked to shun their Hijab after a group of male students arrived at the college, adorning saffron scarves, in a protest against Muslim girls being allowed to wear headscarves on the college premises. Although the rule book of a college suggested that girls are allowed to wear Hijabs on the premises of the institution, the management recently prohibited the girls from covering their heads, following the diktat of the state government.

obligation. The tense situation escalated forcing the college management to intervene as the groups adorning blue and saffron came face to face, one raising slogans of 'Jai Bhim' and hailing Dr BR Ambedkar, whereas the other raised slogans of 'Jai Shri Ram'.

## DELHI HC SEEKS CENTRE'S RESPONSE ON CRIMINALISATION OF MARITAL RAPE

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday sought the Centre's stand on a batch of pleas seeking criminalisation of marital rape following the submission of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who has said that a "holistic view" has to be taken on criminalising marital rape which is a sensitive socio-legal issue and a request for deferring further hearing was not justifiable. His submissions were before the bench of Justice Rajiv Shakdher, which is dealing with the pleas which recently created a stir across the socio-political spectrum. The bench has granted two weeks time to the Centre to clarify its stand on the issue, which the government said, is neither in favour nor against striking down the immunity granted to husbands under the Indian Penal Code. The Centre had recently filed a fresh affidavit in the high court, in response to a clutch of petitions to criminalise marital rape, maintained that it was examining the issue of broad changes in criminal law of the country and that the petitioner could also give their suggestions to the competent authorities.

## Curb tobacco use to prevent millions from cancer deaths

Team Absolute | New Delhi

ACCORDING TO AN ICMR REPORT, TOBACCO CONTAINS AT LEAST 69 CANCER-CAUSING AGENTS. YET ANOTHER REPORT PUBLISHED BY NATIONAL CANCER REGISTRY PROGRAMME (NCRP), THE NUMBER OF NEW CANCER CASES IN INDIA IS LIKELY TO INCREASE FROM 13.9 LAKH IN 2020 TO 15.7 LAKH BY 2025, A RISE OF NEARLY 20 PER CENT.

PRESENTLY DIFFERENT KINDS OF CANCER IS TAKING INTO ITS GRIP AROUND 14 LAKH INDIANS, KILLING 8 LAKH EVERY YEAR. AS MANY AS 27 PER CENT ARE ATTRIBUTED TO TOBACCO USE.

As tobacco-induced cancer is emerging as a major public health threat in the country, top medical experts have suggested a three-pronged tobacco control strategy -- public awareness, strengthening legislation and hiking taxes to make tobacco inaccessible to common man especially kids -- to keep the deadly disease at bay.

The health experts also felt that passage of the proposed amendments for a stricter tobacco-control law, COTPA, will help reduce the menace. Equating tobacco with poison, Dr G.K. Rath, former Head, National Cancer Institute said that it kills slowly given that tobacco consumption causes 17 types of cancer of which many are preventable. He also expressed displeasure that some Bollywood celebrities were engaged in sur-



rogate advertisements of health hazardous items like gutka. According to the health experts, cancers caused by tobacco include lungs, mouth, pharynx (upper throat), nose and sinuses, larynx (voice box), oesophagus (food pipe), liver, pancreas, stomach, kidney, ovary, bladder, cervix, and some types of leukaemia. Smoking causes other diseases too, such as heart disease and various lung diseases.



# SUPERTECH TWIN TOWERS' DEMOLITION TO BEGIN IN 2 WEEKS: SUPREME COURT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday said the demolition work for the two 40 story towers constructed by Supertech in Noida, will begin in two weeks.

A bench headed by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud directed the Noida CEO to commence the demolition work within two weeks, and also convene a meeting with all agencies concerned, including GAIL, within 72 hours to finalise the schedule and the dates for the demolition.

The top court was informed that GAIL's NOC was required as there is a high pressure underground natural gas pipeline, which is passing at a distance of 15 metres and depth of 3 metres. The court was also informed that the Defence Ministry will provide the explosives for the demolition.

In its August 31 judgment, the Supreme Court, besides ordering demolition of Supertech twin towers in Noida and refund for the flat purchasers, ordered prosecution of errant NOIDA and real estate company officials under Section 49 of



Uttar Pradesh Urban Development (UPUD) Act for their "nefarious complicity", which resulted in the construction of towers.

On January 17, senior advocate Ravindra Kumar, representing the Noida, submitted before a bench headed by Justice Chandrachud and Surya Kant that demolition agency, Edifice Engineering, has been finalised to carry out the demolition of towers.

Senior advocate Parag Tripathi, representing Supertech, submitted his client would require additional two weeks to obtain the mandatory no-objection certificates (NOC) in connection with the demolition process, for example NOC from the Fire Department to store explosives to pull down the structures. Posing Tripathi, Kumar said the real estate firm can sign the agreement with demolition agency, and the process to obtain NOCs can carry on. He said one week is sufficient to sign the agreement.

After hearing arguments, the top court told Supertech to execute the agreement with a building demolition agency within a week, to pull down its two 40-story towers.

# BJP MP says Nitish can shake hands with Dawood for CM post

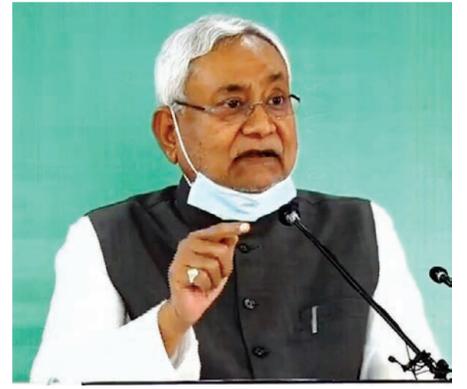
PATNA | Agencies

The acrimony between the ruling JD-U and the BJP is increasing with each passing day in Bihar. Now BJP MP Chhedi Paswan alleged that Nitish Kumar can shake hands with underworld don Dawood Ibrahim for the post of the chief minister.

"BJP top leadership has made a huge mistake by giving the post of the chief minister to Nitish Kumar. The value of BJP MP, MLA, MLC and workers are nothing in Bihar. It is totally zero," Paswan said.

"Nitish Kumar is a person who could shake hands with Dawood Ibrahim for the post of chief minister. He did the same in the past and he can do it again," Paswan said.

"Nitish Kumar and his party is raising disputed issues to bargain and blackmail BJP. The top leadership of BJP should open their eyes and take necessary steps. When PM Narendra Modi and the central cabinet turned down the demand for caste based census, still the party leaders of Nitish



Kumar raised it," Paswan said.

Nitish Kumar is also applying pressure on the Narendra Modi government on the special status of Bihar despite the fact that the Centre has already given a special package to Bihar. The BJP is the largest party in the alliance, still, it has given the chief minister's post to Nitish Kumar but he is going beyond the coalition dharma and is bargaining with the Centre," he said.

"During 2020 Bihar assembly elections, we already suggested that the party should contest alone but the top leadership of our party turned it down. Now, I request the party to think of two and half years each of the tenures of the chief minister in Bihar. The JD-U held the post of chief minister for two and half years and then should hand over to BJP for the remaining period," Paswan said.

# Rajasthan govt cancels REET Level 2 exams

JAIPUR | Agencies

Amid the uproar over the paper leak, Rajasthan's Ashok Gehlot government on Monday cancelled the REET Level-2 paper.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said, "The REET (Rajasthan Eligibility Examination for Teacher) level 2 paper stands cancelled." However, the REET level-1 examination will not be cancelled.

Meanwhile, the date for Level 2 exam will be announced as soon as the report of the committee headed by Justice Vyas comes by March 15, he added. The Rajasthan CM



further said, "This year, the candidates who will pass the REET level-1 examination will be given appointment on the basis of merit and they will not have to take any other examination."

"Also, now there will be 62,000 recruitments made in REET Level I and Level II papers in total out of which

15,000 have been fixed for first level," he informed.

REET was conducted for a total of 32,000 posts earlier. Level-1 had 15,500 posts while level-2 had 16,500 posts. Now the posts have been increased. Gehlot further announced to bring in a strict law in the Assembly session in this regard.

# Priyanka Gandhi Vadra takes swipe at Goa Cong leaders over ticket allocation to women

PANAJI | Agencies

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday took a gentle swipe at her own male party leaders in Goa, while trying to highlight the significance of the party's decision to allocate a large number of tickets in the assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh to women.

Addressing an election rally in South Goa district, Gandhi also said that introduction of more women in electoral politics would bring down the tone of hatred in electioneering, while also lending a touch of compassion to the manner in which politics is conducted in India.

Earlier, in the course of her speech, the Congress leader, while trying to impress upon the audience the importance of women's participation in Uttar Pradesh politics, responded to a nod from one of the participants in the rally inviting the



person to Uttar Pradesh. "You are nodding. Come to Uttar Pradesh. And come (back) and work hard on convincing these men here," Gandhi said, while referring to sen-

ior Congress leaders on the dais which included former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, All India Congress Committee official in-charge of Goa Dinesh Gundu

Rao, state Congress president Girish Chodankar, Leader of Opposition Digambar Kamat, among others."The first and foremost (reason) is that as women and 50 per cent of the population, it is our right to have 50 per cent of the representation. It is not something anyone is doing us a favour. It is our right and we want to fight for our right, but more than that politics today has become filled with hatred, it has become filled with anger. You hear speeches... 90 per cent of the speech is negative," she said. Vadra is the party's general secretary in-charge of Uttar Pradesh. "I firmly believe that as women being the practical people that we are and having to handle so much, can actually bring that positivity and compassion in politics as well. It is my belief that all of us women should also be helped to stand up on our feet," she also said.

# GAMBLING DEN BUSTED IN DELHI HOTEL, 8 ARRESTED

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A gambling den being run in a 3-star hotel located in northwest Delhi has been busted and eight people arrested in this connection, police said on Monday.

The accused were identified as Mohit Sharma, Rishabh Jaitley, Aman Gupta, Sachin Chhabra, Manav, Deepak Agarwal, Saurabh Chabbras and Sachin, all residents of Delhi.

DCP, North West, Usha Rangani said on the night of February 6, a tip-off was received that some persons were involved in gambling activities in a three-star hotel situated in Panchwati Area,



Adarsh Nagar. "Keeping in view of the nature & sensitivity of the information, facts were veri-

fied and accordingly a search warrant of the said premise was obtained from the competent authority," the DCP

said.

Subsequently, a team was constituted which raided the premises at Food-16 Restaurant cum Hotel, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi, where in Room No. 306-307, eight persons were found involved in gambling activities. "They were apprehended with toy notes (similar to Indian currency) with face value of Rs 1.5 lakhs and around 200 tokens carrying values of Rs 100 and 50 denominations and 2 decks of playing cards were recovered from the spot," the DCP said.

Police have registered an FIR under sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Gambling Act and further probe is on into the case.

# LET TERRORIST KILLED IN ENCOUNTER AT J&K'S AWANTIPORE

Srinagar: A terrorist was killed in an encounter between terrorists and security forces at Awantipore in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on Monday and has been identified as a resident of the district, officials said. Police said based on a specific input generated by the local police, a raid was conducted by a small team at Nambal area of Awantipora. During raid, the hiding terrorist started firing indiscriminately upon the police party which was retaliated effectively leading to an encounter. In the meantime, reinforcement of the army's 42 RR immediately reached at the encounter site. "In the ensuing encounter, one terrorist was killed and his body was retrieved from the site of encounter," police said. He has been identified as Irfan Ahmad Sheikh, resident of Karemabad Pulwama, and linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT/TRF.

# Delhi man arrested for duping public over fake plots in Rajasthan

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Economic Offence Wing of Delhi Police has arrested a 49-year-old man for cheating people on the pretext of allotment of residential plots at a proposed township in Rajasthan.

The accused, identified as Vijay Chowdhury, was running in Judicial Custody in various other cases registered at Police Station Paniala, Jaipur, Rajasthan. After necessary permission from a concerned court of Delhi, the accused was arrested in this case as well. Furnishing more details, Joint Commissioner of Police, Chhaya Sharma said the case was registered on a complaint of Mehar Singh Rana, in which he alleged that authorised representatives and Directors of alleged company Habitech Infraventures Pvt. Ltd. having office at B-1, Mohta Building, Bhikaji Cama Place, Delhi, through their

project namely "Habitech Wishtown-Neemrana" induced the complainants and victims for booking of plots which was proposed to be developed at Neemrana in Rajasthan. Bookings of plots were done without having sufficient land and necessary approvals from the concerned agencies. The money collected from the investors has been siphoned off by the alleged company through its directors. "Total 51 complaints for the allegedly cheated amount of Rs. 3.00 Crores approx have been received in this matter," the Jt CP said. During the course of investigation statements of complainants were recorded which revealed that present accused along with co-accused Kamal Singh had induced the public at large and collected an amount from them on the pretext of allotting them the plots in the proposed residential project.

# Mamata Banerjee likely to sever ties with PK's I-PAC

KOLKATA | Agencies

Recently in an interview Trinamool Congress All India General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee in a way admitted that he has differences with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. The admission comes just a couple of days after Trinamool Congress supremo gave a dry 'Thank You' in a reply to a request by the I-PAC chief Prashant Kishor that he doesn't want to work with Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, Tripura and Meghalaya.

The response is indicative enough after the Chief Minister's announcement in a recent meeting with the party MPs where she said that she would look after the organisation of the party herself. Sources in the party said that the Chief Minister was not very happy with the shadow of a professional group (Read I-PAC) growing larger in the party and strongly interfering in the party's organisational policies and internal decisions.

The differences between the party high command and I-PAC reached a flashpoint when a list of candidates for the 108 Municipalities was uploaded on the party website without the approval of the Chief Minister. Senior party leaders like Partha Chatterjee and Subrata Bakshi had to intervene and say that the list undersigned by them is the original list.



The chief minister who was waiting for the list to have a look was kept in the dark and it was uploaded. This didn't go down well with Mamata Banerjee. Even Partha Chatterjee had to speak with the I-PAC representatives to make sure that the original list gets published," a senior Trinamool Congress leader told reporter on condition of anonymity.

Not only that, the list prepared by I-PAC for the Kolkata Municipal Corporation was rejected and names of certain candidates were included. Senior candidates who won the assembly election and have become MLA were not considered following the 'One man one post' formula introduced by the party recently but Mamata Banerjee insisted that their names should be included. She even strongly pushed the name of Firhad Hakim who became the mayor of the corporation.

# TWO MORE DISSIDENT TRIPURA BJP MLAS QUIT, LIKELY TO JOIN CONGRESS

AGARTALA | Agencies

In a major political jolt, two more dissident MLAs of the ruling BJP -- Sudip Roy Barman and Ashis Kumar Saha who are strong critics of Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb for the past more than two years -- on Monday resigned from the Assembly and the party before leaving for Delhi to decide their next course of action.

After submitting their resignation letters to Tripura Assembly Speaker Ratan Chakraborty, both Roy Barman, a former Minister, and Saha told the media that they have also sent their resignation letters to the BJP's state President Manik Saha.

"We are going to Delhi today (Monday) and will come back here on Saturday, then we will tell you everything in detail about our future political course," Roy Barman told the media just after submitting resignation letters to Chakraborty and before leaving for the national capital.

He said: "The BJP government led by Deb utterly failed to deliver the goods. An autocratic rule has been prevailing in the state. A reign of terror has been going on in the state. People are in serious distress. We want to work for the people as we are unable



to do this while remaining in the BJP." Sources close to Roy Barman and Saha said that they might meet Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and other leaders in Delhi and may join the party. Roy Barman and Saha, strong critics of Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb and other BJP leaders, were earlier in Congress before joining TMC in 2016 and then to BJP next year (2017).

Earlier, BJP MLA Ashish Das after strongly criticising the saffron party and its leadership including Chief Minister, joined the Trinamool Congress (TMC) on October 31, 2021 following which he was disqualified from Tripura Assembly by the Speaker on January 5 (this year).

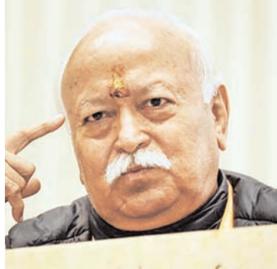
BJP, on the other hand, downplayed the resignations of Roy Barman and Saha and said that the duo's quit from

the Assembly membership would not be any constitutional crisis in the state. "It was in the expected line that Roy Barman and Saha left from the Assembly membership and the party. They have been openly criticising the chief minister and other party leaders. Their resignation from the Assembly and the party has no importance to BJP," state BJP spokesman Nabendu Bhattacharjee told the media.



# HINDUTVA IS REFLECTED IN INDIAN CONSTITUTION: MOHAN BHAGWAT

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday said Hindutva is nothing but a true reflection of Indian Constitution, and has been derived from the 5,000-year-old tradition and culture of the country.



social justice and "thread of unity" running through its diversities. Bhagwat made the remarks while speaking at a programme organised by Lokmat group of newspapers on the occasion of its golden jubilee. He said the entire population of the country was progeny of Bharat Mata and Vande Matram unites the people. "We should all walk together and it is the Hindutva that binds all of us together as Hindus. We have to give up all wrong doings and sustain unity in diversity. "All inclusive and all encompassing truth is what we call Hindutva. It is our national identity. We talk about secularism, but it existed in our country for years and before the constituting the Constitution and it's because of Hindutva," he added.

Bhagwat said the idea of unity in diversity has been path of the Indian culture since ancient times and Indian cultural identity is defined by Hindutva. "The world thinks that for unity you need uniformity. But in our country, the idea of looking for unity in diversity has been prevalent since ancient times." He further said that the word Hindutva was first coined by Sikh religious leader Guru Nanak Dev and not Veer Savarkar as claimed by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, without mentioning his name. "Hindu is a name of "Sanskriti" that is largely the lifestyle of people in the country. No one is free from religion," he said adding "we should change ourselves as the time changes and demands and does not oppose any religious rituals.

Team Absolute | Nagpur

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday said Hindutva is nothing but a true reflection of Indian Constitution, and has been derived from the 5,000-year-old tradition and

culture of the country. Speaking on 'Hindutva and National Integration' here in Maharashtra, Bhagwat described Hindutva as the reflection of the preamble of the Constitution, like equality, fraternity, justice, liberty,

## 'Ziddi' Lata Didi: No flyover, means NO Flyover!

Nearly two decades ago, Lata Mangeshkar and her kin managed to put their foot down and stalled a significant flyover project of Maharashtra government in south Mumbai.

project of Maharashtra government in south Mumbai. The proposed 4-km-long flyover would have cut through the narrow Pedder Road, linking the Haji Ali Junction with Girgaum Chowpatty to decongest traffic in that area. However, the flyover would have passed virtually above the home of Lata Didi at Prabhukunj at the Pedder Road corner.

Lata Didi, along with younger sibling Asha Bhosle expressed their displeasure to successive state governments on the project - which ultimately never took off - after it was conceived in

2000. At one point, she even threatened to 'quit Mumbai' and settle in Pune or Kolhapur if the government of the day went ahead with the project.

All Chief Ministers since then didn't dare raise the issue with her ever, though many traffic-weary Mumbaiers did not take kindly to her adamance.

Finally, considering options, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government implemented the upcoming Mumbai Coastal Road Project in lieu of that flyover, but Lata Didi was not destined to see the completion of its first phase by end-2022.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Nearly two decades ago, Lata Mangeshkar and her kin managed to put their foot down and stalled a significant flyover

## LATA DIDI WAS A GREAT FAN OF 'CID' SUSPENSE THRILLER

Among her few favourites, the legend Lata Mangeshkar loved the CID teleserial that was telecast on a private TV channel for two decades.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Among her few favourites, the legend Lata Mangeshkar loved the CID teleserial that was telecast on a private TV channel for two decades. She rarely missed an episode and in case she skipped any owing to her busy schedules, she made it a point to catch up the repeat telecast. "CID" one of the earlier fiction-crime and suspense thrillers of its kind in the country, started on January 21, 1998 and became the longest-running serial when it ended on October 28, 2018, clocking 1,547

instalments that were popularly lapped up. Incidentally, when its chief sleuth, ACP Pradyuman, played by veteran Marathi actor Shivaji Satam - turned 70 two years ago, Lata Didi did not forget to wish him with a

photograph, and hoping the serial would re-start. "Aaj CID serial ke ACP Pradyuman Shivajiroo Satam ji ka janamdin hai. Main unko bahut badhai deti hun aur phir se CID serial shuru ho ye meri mano kaamana,"

she had tweeted. She also posted some more pictures of her playfully aiming a revolver at the ACP and a group photo chilling out with the CID team: "Mera ek pasandida photo CID Team ke saath."

## Lata Mangeshkar wrote a letter in Gujarati for 1st time to PM Modi's mother

Though Lata Mangeshkar's mother tongue was Marathi, but she sang in many languages in her life as a singer. For the first time she wrote a letter in Gujarati, and that to Heeraben, the mother of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Though Lata Mangeshkar's mother tongue was Marathi, but she sang in many languages in her life as a singer. For the first time

she wrote a letter in Gujarati, and that to Heeraben, the mother of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Lata didi wrote this letter to Heeraben in June 2019 when

Narendra Modi won the general election with a thumping majority and became the Prime Minister for a second consecutive term. In Gujarati, the legendary singer

wrote: "Congratulations to your son and my brother for becoming Prime Minister for the second time in a row. I'm writing for the first time in Gujarati so forgive me for any mistake."

She sent her wishes to Heeraben for her son Narendra Modi, on winning the general elections and his second term as the country's Prime Minister.

In the letter, Lata Mangeshkar addressed Modi as a brother and herself as daughter to Heeraben.

The legendary singer breathed her last on Sunday after a month-long hospitalisation due to Covid-19 and other ailments. The Prime Minister visited Mumbai to pay his last respects to Lata didi.

## Man accused in Mumbai bank loot case held in UP

The UP Special Task Force (STF) have arrested Sunny Bhardwaj - one of the four criminals involved in looting Rs 70 lakhs from a bank in Mulund area of Mumbai on February 2.

Varanasi | Agencies

The UP Special Task Force (STF) have arrested Sunny Bhardwaj - one of the four criminals involved in looting Rs 70 lakhs from a bank in Mulund area of Mumbai on February 2. He was arrested by the UP STF personnel near a school in Cantonment area under the same police station on Sunday. According to STF, on being alerted by Maharashtra police, it started efforts to trace Bhardwaj. A team of STF, led by inspector Anil



Kumar Singh, arrested him in Cantonment area on Sunday with cash Rs 5,000 and a mobile phone. During initial interrogation, Bhardwaj divulged that he was native of Jaunpur district but was liv-

ing in Mumbai with his family for several years to earn livelihood. In Mumbai, he had come in contact of Monu Singh of Jaunpur and they became friends. Monu and Bhardwaj finalised a plan of looting bank with the help of two locals- Nilesh Murvey and Nitesh.

As per their plan they looted cash Rs 70 lakh on February 2. Bhardwaj said that Monu gave him Rs 7 lakh before he fled the scene in a van. Bhardwaj said that he left Mumbai and took shelter in Varanasi.

## 8 HELD FOR KILLING CIGARETTE SHOP OWNER, INJURING 2 OTHERS

Palghar: Police have arrested eight people for allegedly killing a cigarette shop owner and injuring two of his relatives after a dispute in Maharashtra's Palghar district, an official said on Monday. The accused persons went to the shop of Vinodkumar Singh (51) in Boisar area at around 11.30pm on Sunday and asked for cigarettes. But, Singh and his other relatives at the shop refused to serve them as they had retired for the day. The accused then left the place, but returned after some time with weapons. They allegedly ransacked the shop and attacked Singh, his 20-year-old son and uncle, aged 47, the official from Boisar police station said. The three injured persons were rushed to a hospital in Nallasopara where Singh died during treatment, he said. The deceased was also a member of the auto-rickshaw union in Nallasopara. The eight accused were later arrested and a case was registered against them under various Indian Penal Code sections, including 302 (murder) and 307 (attempt to murder), the official said. The body was sent for postmortem, while the other two victims were undergoing treatment in a hospital, he said.

## Four children drown Sindphana river

Police said they are looking into allegations that illegal sand excavation had deepened the part of the river where the boys swam, leading to their deaths.



Team Absolute | Pune

Four children aged nine to 12 drowned in the Sindphana river in Maharashtra's Beed district Sunday. Police said they are looking into allegations that

illegal sand excavation had deepened the part of the river where the boys swam, leading to their deaths. The incident came to light around 8.30 pm on Sunday in Shahjanpur Chakla village of Georai taluka, cops said. The

deceased boys, all from families of sugarcane labourers in nearby villages, have been identified as Akash Ram Sonavane (11), Ganesh Namdeo Inkar (9), Amol Sanjay Kolekar (12) and Bablu Ginaji Vakte (11).

Georai police said the parents of all four boys were in Karnataka when the incident took place. Assistant Inspector Sandeep Kale said, "The boys left their homes around 4 pm. We believe they entered the waters for a swim or to catch fish and crabs. In the evening, relatives and locals found their bodies in the river. Autopsy confirmed that they all died due to drowning." Another police officer said, "The villagers have alleged that the boys drowned at a which has grown deeper due to illegal sand mining. This allegation is being investigated."

## 7 HELD FOR ARMED DACOITY IN MUMBAI

Mumbai: Seven people who had allegedly barged into the office of an 'angadiya' (traditional courier) in Mulund in Mumbai and looted Rs 70 lakh at gunpoint earlier this month were arrested on Monday from different parts of the country, a police official said. The incident had taken place on February 1, after which multiple teams were formed to crack the case, leading to the arrest of Nilesh Bhagwan Surve (24), Nilesh Mangesh Chavhan (34), Manoj Ganpat Kalan (32), Vasuallah Kitabullah Chowdhary (43), Dilip Shivshankar Singh (23), Ratnesh alias Gagan Anilkumar Singh (25) and mastermind Bipinkumar Rajendraprasad Singh alias Monu (34), he said. "They were nabbed from different parts of the country, including Uttar Pradesh (UP). We have recovered Rs 37 lakh cash, four pistols, two country-made pistols, 27 live cartridges, two magazines and three cars, including the one used in the crime," official said. "The probe first zeroed in on the driver of the car in Navi Mumbai. He told us on the name of his associates. Monu is the main accused as he provided the weapons, vehicle etc. After carrying out the dacoity, the accused were changing the number plate of the car and also their own clothes," he said.

## Mumbai startup develops India's first universal gene test for infectious disease

Mumbai-based health-tech startup HaystackAnalytics has developed the first of its kind universal infectious diseases (ID) gene test to identify existing and emerging infections, the company said on Monday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai-based health-tech startup HaystackAnalytics has developed the first of its kind universal infectious diseases (ID) gene test to identify existing and emerging infections, the company said on Monday. The company is supported by the Department of

Science and Technology, as well as several private healthcare players. To identify infections, the company deploys Next-Generation Sequencing (NGS) technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI), and also provides information on drug resistance to support and identify correct treatment options for patients. The new Universal Infectious Diseases test will be rolled out with their current partners in a phased manner over the next three months, the company said in a statement. It will initially be targeted at identifying and treating sepsis in Intensive Care Unit (ICU) patients, but gradually be made available to anyone suffering from a fever of unknown origin, by eradicating the need to conduct multiple tests. The test comes at an opportune time, as Covid-19 pandemic highlights the need for better diag-

nostic technologies, appropriate antibiotic use, and the renewed importance of infection prevention strategies. "The test enables rapid (within hours) and comprehensive (covering nearly all known bacterial and fungal pathogens) screening in a near to point of care deployment. Leveraging the power of next generation sequencing and AI, the team of scientists and engineers at Haystack has been able to eliminate the need for a redundant and expensive battery of tests, with a single test," Dr. Anirvan Chatterjee, Co Founder and CEO of HaystackAnalytics, said. "Our single point focus is to prevent each and every death caused due to treatable infections. Genomics has the potential to reduce trial and error in disease management and bring equality of access to high quality healthcare," he added. In the past,

HaystackAnalytics had partnered with various diagnostic centers and over 20 hospitals including AIIMS, to introduce their sequencing-based clinical products for Tuberculosis and Covid in the past. It is while working on two of the most debilitating infectious diseases -- Tuberculosis and Covid -- the company said it recognised the true burden of inaccurate diagnosis of infections in India and the world. While the novel coronavirus infected and killed millions of people across the globe, there are various other infectious diseases that continue to plague India. In particular, India accounts for the largest number of sepsis cases (11.3 million) and sepsis-related deaths (2.9 million) in the world, as per a global study published in the Lancet in 2020.

## WOMAN STEALS NEWBORN BABY FROM JALNA HOSPITAL; COPS LAUNCH SEARCH

Mumbai: An unidentified woman allegedly stole a newborn boy from a government hospital here in Maharashtra on Monday, police said. Efforts were on to trace the culprit and the child, they said. A woman, Rukhsana Ahmed Shaikh, resident of Paregaon in Jalna tehsil, had delivered the baby on Sunday night, an official said. Around 9 am on Monday, the unidentified culprit gained confidence in the newborn's mother and took both of them out of their ward in the hospital on some pretext. She then asked the child's mother to bring some warm water. When the boy's mother returned with water, she did not find her child and the other woman, and raised an alarm, the police official said. The hospital authorities alerted the police who reached the hospital and examined the CCTV footage, in which the accused woman was seen with her face covered with a scarf, he said. The woman was roaming in the hospital premises since Sunday evening and had befriended other patients also, according to sources. The other patients could not identify her as she had covered her face with a scarf. The woman had also purchased some baby clothes outside the hospital, the sources said. "We enquired with the garments seller, but could not get any clue," the police official said. Efforts were on to trace the child and the woman, he added.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Exchange of candidates creates dissent in parties

Exchange of candidates between parties in the ongoing elections is now creating problems for political parties that have fielded these turncoats. The Samajwadi Party and the BJP, in particular, are facing issues over candidate selection in Prayagraj since both the parties have opted for 'outsiders', ignoring the claims of their own party leaders. Bara MLA Ajay Kumar, who quit the BJP on February 2, has entered the poll fray on a Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) ticket now. The BSP had earlier declared Shiv Prakash as its candidate from Bara but then Ajay Kumar was given preference after cancelling Shiv Prakash's ticket. Ajay Kumar had revolted in the BJP because his Bara seat was being given to its ally Apna Dal (S). Two of its sitting MLAs Rajamani Kol (Koraon) and Vikramjit Maurya (Phaphamau) have been denied tickets. Aarti Kol, a former zila panchayat member, has been fielded from Koraon (SC) seat and Guru Prasad Maurya from Phaphamau seat. There is trouble on the Allahabad North seat on which BJP has a sitting MLA Harshwardhan Bajpai. However, the party has yet to declare its candidate from the seat. There is also talk of BJP giving the seats of Karchana and Handia to its ally Nishad Party while handing over the seats of Bara, Pratappur and Soraon to its other ally Apna Dal (S). Maximum dissent is being seen within the Samajwadi Party (SP). Babban Dubey, who had claimed ticket from Allahabad South and had even put up posters and banners in his area, is now protesting after being denied a ticket. Similarly, Richa Singh, who was the SP candidate from Allahabad West in 2017 election, is also opposing on Facebook the party's decision of denying her a ticket. By releasing photos, videos of SP candidate with BJP leaders, questions are being raised over ticket distribution.

PAKISTAN'S DIPLOMATIC DEBACLE IN CHINA

Asad Mirza

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan was on a four-day visit to China last week. Apparently the visit was billed as to attend the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Beijing. But Khan was accompanied with a huge delegation including Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Finance Minister, Planning Minister, Information Minister, National Security Advisor, Commerce Advisor and Special Assistant on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

China's undiplomatic move

However, the Pakistan Prime Minister and his team were left red-faced when they were informed that one of the key meetings would be held in virtual mode, though the Pakistani delegation was present in Beijing.

The meeting with He Lifeng, chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and vice chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference was held virtually. This indeed was a completely undiplomatic step by China and was perhaps taken by it to show Pakistan and its leadership its place.

Khan's China visit comes at a time when Pakistan finds itself in a quagmire of issues. On one hand, Pakistan's economy is turning from bad to worse, and on the other the security scenario within the country particularly in the restive Balochistan region and Afghan border has added to Khan's troubles.

Pakistan's economic woes

Pakistan is currently facing severe economic difficulties due to high inflation and no foreign aid. To ease the pain, Khan has requested for a \$5 billion loan from China and pushed for increased trade and cooperation along the CPEC. The Corridor, an infrastructure project initiated in 2015, to promote trade and development, has so far performed below expectations. It also suffered a jolt when China stopped the work on the Dasu Hydropower Project after 9 Chinese nationals were killed in an explosion in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Launched in 2015, the CPEC is the flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It was expected to bring in massive investment from China, creating thousands of job opportunities for the people of Pakistan. However, Khan's regime has witnessed the stalling of the CPEC projects owing to the dire economic situation and non-cooperation of the bureaucracy due to the prevailing fear of the National



Accountability Bureau (NAB).

Other reports state that Pakistan plans to seek \$5 billion from China and \$1 billion each from Russia and Kazakhstan. It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan has also been striving to get the suspended loan programme worth \$6 billion revived from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

However, these loans are unlikely to help, as they will only add to Pakistan's growing debt obligations. Beyond loans, China will likely promote its own agenda. Also it may do little to solve Pakistan's long-term economic problems. Instead, it may burden it with public discontent and protests, as the government and the CPEC has so far been unable to deliver the promised benefits, particularly to the local populace in provinces where CPEC footprint is stronger.

Prior to his China visit Imran Khan had done his homework and tried to address the Chinese criticism of delays in CPEC projects. Khan had ordered the removal of 37 regulations hindering the pace of the CPEC projects, and reaffirmed his commitment to the timely completion of different projects.

CPEC

The ambitious CPEC connects China's northwest Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous region and the Gwadar port in the Baluchistan province of Pakistan, covering a distance of 3,000 kilometres and a range of

new infrastructure projects. India has repeatedly protested to China over the CPEC as it is being laid through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Last year, a report by US-based international development research lab AidData had reported that a substantial chunk of Chinese development financing under the CPEC comprised loans which have been given at current commercial market interest rates as opposed to grants, which is a norm for bilateral infrastructural projects.

The Pakistani daily Dawn had earlier printed excerpts of the report, according to which Pakistan received about half of all Chinese development finance in the form of 'export buyer's credit' and was to be used by Pakistan to pay Chinese implementation partners and purchase of equipment by them. In its editorial in September last year Dawn had commented that the nature of Chinese financing for infrastructural schemes merits greater transparency for the projects executed in Pakistan since 2015. It further said that after coming to power Imran Khan's government has also kept the matters under wraps, just as his predecessors had done. In his meetings with the Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang, Khan also briefed them on his geo-economic vision and the government's policies for sustained growth, industrial development, agricultural modernisation

and regional connectivity.

Indo-Pak

During his meetings, Khan also highlighted that Indian atrocities in Indian Kashmir and said the persecution of minorities in India were a threat to regional peace and stability. He said that rapid militarisation of India was undermining regional stability; he also cited India's aggressive behaviour and the prevailing Hindutva ideology as a threat to regional peace and a cause of lingering instability of the region.

Khan's remarks came in an exclusive session with the heads and representatives of leading Chinese think tanks, universities and the Pakistan Study Centre in Beijing.

Regarding Afghanistan, both leaders acknowledged that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan would promote economic development and connectivity in the region and called on the international community to promptly assist the Afghan people in averting a humanitarian catastrophe. He recalled that Pakistan in the past had played a role in building bridges and remained ready to do so again. During the visit, Pakistan also signed a new agreement with China to start the second phase of the \$60 billion CPEC. The Prime Minister showered praise on the controversial projects under CPEC, saying it has strategic significance for both the countries and delivering tangible benefits to the people. This is in contrast to his earlier views on CPEC before coming to power criticising its secret nature and investments.

In his statements in Beijing, Khan didn't utter a word about the Uyghur Muslims of Xinjiang province of China and the atrocities committed against them by Chinese authorities. Last year, in an interview he had said that the Pakistan government understands the Chinese policy in Xinjiang very well, which is for the betterment of its people and is more concerned about the situation on its borders i.e. Kashmir.

One fails to wonder why Khan who was a critic of OPEC earlier, is now endorsing it. Perhaps he doesn't fathom that through CPEC China wants to manage a foothold in Afghanistan via Pakistan, as most of the Chinese companies, which are involved in developing CPEC are related to mining, infrastructure development, minerals and mine technology, and they might have plans on how to tap the mineral reserves of Afghanistan which is reported to be around \$1.3 trillion.

international

22 RULING PAK PARTY MNAS READY TO JUMP SHIP

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Pakistan premier and senior Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has claimed that 22 MNAs of the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) are ready to jump ship, adding that a no-confidence motion would be tabled once the required numbers are achieved. Friday Times reported. "Twenty-two MNAs of the PTI do not want to be with their party. The country is hurtling towards devastation and collapse and the only solution is fair and immediate elections," he said during a press conference in Islamabad. "There is an unconstitutional interference in our system ... Whenever the crutches are removed,



the government will go home within 24 hours," he maintained. On Saturday, PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif met with Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and his father PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari at Shehbaz's home in Lahore's Model Town on Saturday. PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz Sharif was also in attendance.

The opposition leaders met to coordinate a strategy aiming to oust the incumbent government, according to insider reports. PML-N had reportedly told PPP that it would like to build a broader coalition with the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), after a no-trust proposal is presented to the party's central executive committee, the report said.

EX-PRESIDENT LEADS IN COSTA RICA POLLS

San Jose: Former Costa Rican President Jose Maria Figueres is leading in the country's presidential election, while a runoff is looming as no clear winner has emerged as of Monday, according to the latest data from the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE). With 79.96 per cent of the ballots counted, Figueres of the National Liberation Party, who was the country's President from 1994 to 1998, was leading with 27.29 per cent of the votes. Xinhua news agency reported citing figures from the TSE. In second place was former Finance Minister Rodrigo Chaves of the Social Democratic Progress Party with 16.66 per cent of the votes. Fabricio Alvarado of the New Republic party came third with 14.93 per cent of the vote, and the gap between Chaves and Alvarado has been widening, according to the TSE. If none of the candidates exceeded the threshold of 40 per cent of the vote to win the country's presidency in the first round, a runoff will be held on April 3. The winner of the runoff will assume the presidency in Costa Rica on May 8, replacing the current president, Carlos Alvarado.



IAEA team plans to visit crippled nuke plant in Japan

Tokyo | Agencies

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plans to send a team to the crippled Fukushima nuclear plant next week to evaluate the safety of Japan's contentious plan to discharge radioactive water from the plant into the Pacific Ocean, the government said on Monday. Japan's Foreign and Industry Ministries said a team of IAEA experts led by Gustavo Caruso, director and coordinator of the IAEA's Department of Nuclear Safety and Security, will visit Japan from February 14-18, reports Xinhua news agency. The visit to the crippled Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant is likely to take place on February 15. The visit and on-site

assessment of the plant have been pushed back from December last year, as Japan was overrun by a surge in Covid-19 cases in another sluggish rollout of vaccines by the government. Japan has said it still plans to release radioactive water that has accumulated at the plant into the Pacific Ocean. The water, stored in tanks at the plant in Japan's north-east, is expected to soon reach capacity. The Fukushima plant had its key cooling functions knocked out after being battered by a massive earthquake-triggered tsunami in 2011, resulting in the worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl in 1986. The polluted water that the government plans to release into the Pacific Ocean contains radioactive tritium as a result of being

used to cool down melted nuclear fuel at the plant in Fukushima Prefecture. Japan's fisheries industry has voiced its ardent opposition to the plan, as it will almost certainly cause further damage to the industry's reputation. Moreover, some of Japan's closest neighbours have voiced strong concerns over the plan as well as a number of worried countries from further afield. Japan's government had been considering a number of alternative plans other than its unilateral proposal to just dump radioactive water into the Pacific. These options included injecting the toxic water deep into the ground, releasing it into the atmosphere after vaporizing it, or making it into a solid state and burying it underground.

S KOREAN PRESIDENT'S APPROVAL RATING RISES TO 42.2%



Seoul: South Korean President Moon Jae-in's approval rating rose to 42.2 per cent last week, a new poll showed on Monday. The negative assessment on Moon's conduct of state affairs gained 0.6 percentage points to 54.4 per cent, according to the Realmeter survey. Support for Moon's ruling Democratic Party increased 3.3 percentage points to 37.6 per cent last week, reports Xinhua news agency. The main conservative opposition People Power Party secured 39.4 per cent of support last week, up 4.2 percentage points from the previous. The minor centre-right People's Party won 7.3 per cent of approval score, followed by the minor progressive Justice Party with 2.8 per cent of support. As for the approval rating of presidential candidates, support for the Democratic Party's Lee Jae-myung shrank 0.4 percentage points over the week to 38.1 per cent last week. Support for the People Power Party's Yoon Suk-yeol climbed 3.2 percentage points to 43.4 per cent last week. The country's presidential election is scheduled for March 9.

Over 31% of Pakistan's educated youth is unemployed; Survey

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan's current crippling economic condition is taking a major toll on the educated youth, of which more than 31 per cent are unemployed and are unsure about the future opportunities amid the deteriorating situation, a new report has revealed. The report released by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) said: "Out of these 31 per cent, 51 per cent are females while 16 per cent are males, with many of them possessing professional degrees. Nearly 60 per cent of Pakistan's population is less than 30 years old. "The current unemployment rate of 6.9 per cent is considered to be comfortable and frequently makes headlines. For more females and those living in urban areas are unemployed than their



male and rural counterparts." Interestingly, the PIDE report also revealed that a large part of the working-age group is not even part of the labour force. "These people are either discouraged workers or have other means of income to support them," it said. The startling rate of unemployment negates the Imran Khan-led government's claims of creating job opportunities for the youth through policy initiatives. "Despite the talk about the youth bulge and reaping the demographic dividend, the unemployment rate is the highest for the young new entrants in the labour force," the report stated. "Education is considered a panacea and the key to all opportunities, but reality shows us otherwise." Majority of the rate of unemployment links to the

urban area, where lack of opportunities and mobility has kept the educated youth away from being on job. The report questioned why the urban areas were not providing the kind of opportunities they should, while it also raised the pivotal question if Pakistan is offering such opportunities to its people to make use of and excel for a better progressive future. It insisted that youth engagement should be the prime priority of the government and the private working sector, especially when the youth constitutes a major portion of the country's population. "One-third of the youth, in both rural and urban areas, are disconnected from the system as they are neither employed nor enrolled. "The disconnect is higher for young females, with 60 per cent neither working nor studying," the report added.

Experts call for lowering voting age in Aus capital

Canberra | Agencies

A group of experts have called for the voting age in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) to be lowered to 16. In a submission to a parliamentary committee examining legislation that would change the voting age in the ACT, 30 academics and advocates said the move would be "very positive for our democracy", Xinhua news agency reported. Faith Gordon, an associate professor at the Australian National University (ANU) College of Law and a lead author of the submission, said lowering the age would increase voting rates in the ACT. "There's a lot of international evidence to show that lowering the voting age and expanding suffrage to young people can be a really positive thing for democracies," she told local media on Monday. The current voting age in all eight Australian

states and territories is 18. The Electoral Amendment Bill 2021 would lower it to 16 in the ACT, with those who fail to vote to face a \$40 (\$28) fine. Gordon said changing the age in the ACT could lead to other jurisdictions following suit. "Lowering the voting age to 16 years extends basic citizenship, democratic and human rights to more young people," she said. "Reducing the voting age will also better align with the values of fostering an inclusive society by promoting youth participation and acknowledging the right to be heard in all matters affecting their lives." Think tank the Australia Institute made a submission proposing that voting be made voluntary rather than mandatory for the younger age group. The committee is expected to hand down its report on the bill by March 3 before the bill goes to the ACT's Parliament.



MP GOVT TO SET UP MUSIC ACADEMY, STATE AWARD IN LATA MANGESHKAR'S MEMORY

The Madhya Pradesh government on Monday announced to set up a music academy and a museum in memory of Lata Mangeshkar at her birthplace, Indore.

- CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN PAYS FLORAL TRIBUTES TO LATA MANGESHKAR
SONGS OF LATA JI INFUSE NEW ENTHUSIASM, NEW ENERGY AMONG THE PEOPLE
LATA JIS STATUE WILL BE INSTALLED IN INDORE
SANGEET ACADEMY, SANGEET MAHAVIDYALAYA AND MUSEUM WILL BE ESTABLISHED IN INDORE IN THE NAME OF LATA JI
LATA MANGESHKAR AWARD WILL BE GIVEN ANNUALLY ON THE BIRTHDAY OF LATA JI
CM CHOUHAN PLANTED A BANYAN TREE IN MEMORY OF BHARAT RATNA SWAR KOKILA LATE LATA MANGESHKAR
FAMOUS MUSIC PERSONALITIES OF BHOPAL PARTICIPATED IN PLANTATION



Mangeshkar) is the daughter of Madhya Pradesh and we all are proud of her. She will always remain amid us with her melodious songs. The Madhya Pradesh government has decided to set up a college after Lata Mangeshkar, besides a museum and a musical academy in her birth place in Indore," Chouhan said. The state government on Sunday declared a two-day state mourning as a mark of respect for the legendary singer. Chouhan planted a banyan tree in Smart Garden on Monday in the memory of Bharat

Ratna Swar Kokila Late Lata Mangeshkar. Before planting saplings, Chief Minister paid floral tributes by garlanding the portrait of Lata Mangeshkar in Smart Garden. Along with Chief Minister, noted personalities from Bhopal who have contributed in the field of music and singing Pandit Sajjan Lal Brahmabhatt, Umakant Gundecha, Kirti Sood, Aakriti Mehra, Dhani Gundecha, Dilip Mahashabde, Sajid Khan and Salim Allahwale planted Moulshree and Cassia saplings.

Paying tribute to Swar Kokila Sushri Lata Mangeshkar, Chief Minister Chouhan said that Lata ji's passing is a personal loss. This in itself is a unique event. Every Indian feels that this is his personal loss. Every household feels that they have suffered a big loss. Her songs infuse new enthusiasm and new energy among the people. The song "Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon" has become very popular among the people of India. Lata ji's voice gave a distinct identity and great contribution to the music.

CM Will distribute loan of 300 Crore to Self-Help Groups on February 8

- Will Communicate With Group Members of Districts
Programme Will Be Held at Kushabhau Thakre Hall

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will distribute bank loans worth Rs 300 crore to the members of self-help groups formed under the State Rural Livelihood Mission on February 8. Along with this, self-help groups of some districts will also hold virtual dialogue with the members. In this virtual programme to be held at Kushabhau Thakre auditorium from 10:30 am, group members will connect through various virtual mediums at Gram Panchayat level in all the districts. Minister of State for Panchayat and Rural Development Ramkhelawan Patel will also be present in the programme. So far, financial assistance of Rs 2,762 crore has been provided in the form of bank loan to more than 40 lakh rural poor families in the state by connecting them with about 3 lakh 50 thousand self-help groups under Aajeevika Mission. The Panchayat

and Rural Development Department has been benefiting the beneficiaries by organising virtual programmes continuously since the time of lockdown to strengthen the economic condition of rural families during the corona period. By receiving the amount, the group members will increase their income by further strengthening their present livelihood, which will open the doors of their prosperity and their economic and social status will be better than before.

It is noteworthy that in the mission, social and economic empowerment of women members of poor families living in rural areas is being done by connecting them with self-help groups. With a view to simplify the banking service process by the state government, the availability of adequate bank credit for self-help groups has been made easy by establishing wide coordination with banks. Intensive monitoring and transparent process has been made with the submission of bank loan cases through the software of Self-Help Groups. Bank Sakhiyas have also been identified by the Mission to make banking services accessible, who are cooperating with group members in banking work in rural areas.

CM PAYS OBEISANCE TO GREAT REVOLUTIONARY SANYAL

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid obeisance to the great freedom struggle revolutionary Shachindranath Sanyal on his death anniversary. Chouhan has said that the great revolutionary Sanyal endured severe torture of jail many times during the freedom struggle. He was also punished twice with Kala Pani, but he did not let the fire of revolution go out. He said that the sacrifice of Sanyal will always inspire love for the country.

ACS General Administration Conducted Surprise Inspection at Mantralaya

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Additional Chief Secretary General Administration Vinod Kumar on Monday conducted a surprise inspection of various offices located in Mantralaya Vallabh Bhawan No. 1, 2 and 3. He looked after the arrangement of drinking water, solar water heater, duct ventilation, centralized AC system, fire fighting, canteen and toilet and gave instructions for necessary improvements. He directed to check the quality of drinking water and get its pH value, TDS, chemical and biological components checked. He said that proper arrangements should be made for cleanliness and the officials concerned should also inspect from time to time. Kumar directed to



make proper seating arrangement and install exhaust fan in Didi Cafe located in Vallabh Bhawan 3. Kumar inspected the park in front of Vallabh Bhawan and directed to start the water fountain. He inspected the outlet of Mrignayani Emporium run by Handicrafts and Handloom Development Corporation

and got information about various decorative items and materials. Deputy Secretary DK Nagendra, Chief Security Officer Vishwas Kumar Bhatele, officers of Capital Project Administration, General Administration, Mantralaya Security Office, Public Works and other concerned officers were present in the inspection.

OVER TEN LAKH MASKS DISTRIBUTED UNDER "MASK HI HAI ZINDAGI" CAMPAIGN

Bhopal: 10 lakh 21 thousand 301 masks have been distributed till February 6 under the "Mask Hi Hai Zindagi" campaign being run under the leadership of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. This campaign started simultaneously in all the urban bodies on January 20. Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh has informed that so far 9 lakh 65 thousand 556 houses have been contacted by the urban bodies in the "Roko-Toko" campaign. Various activities are being done to make citizens aware about prevention from Corona. Around 13 thousand 279 online discussions have been conducted.

His Plane Crash-Landed On Gwalior Runway. 85-Crore Bill Given To Him

- THE PILOT HAS ALLEGED THAT HE WAS NOT INFORMED OF THE BARRIER THAT CAUSED THE ACCIDENT AND ALSO DEMANDED AN INQUIRY INTO WHY THE PLANE WAS UNINSURED.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh pilot, among those who were dubbed "Covid warriors" for putting their lives at risk during the pandemic, has been handed over a bill of Rs 85 crore by the state government for causing damage to an aircraft last year because he crash-landed at the Gwalior airport. Captain Majid Akhtar, along with his co-pilot with the Madhya Pradesh government, was ferrying samples of suspected COVID-19 patients and a shipment of drugs used to treat infected patients when the aircraft hit the arrestor barrier on the runway during landing. The pilot has alleged that he was not informed of the barrier that caused the accident and also demanded an inquiry to find

out who failed to follow up on the insurance of the aeroplane if it wasn't insured before being allowed to operate, as is the norm. The state government, in its charge sheet to the pilot last week, had claimed that the state plane that cost around Rs 60 crore was reduced to scrap because of the crash. They added another Rs 25 crore as the cost to hire planes from other private operators as a consequence. Captain Majid Akhtar in his reply to the charge sheet, that has been accessed by NDTV, has said the crash was caused by the arrestor barrier installed at the Gwalior airport about which he was not informed by the Air Traffic Controller (ATC). The pilot, who has flying experience of over 27 years, has also alleged that he was not provided with the contents of the black box which contains all the instructions received from the Gwalior ATC. The state-owned plane had crash-landed in Gwalior on May 6, 2021. The aircraft, a Beech Craft King Air B 250 GT, was carrying 71 boxes of Remdesivir from Ahmedabad to Gwalior when it landed on the Gwalior runway after hitting the

arrestor barrier. Three persons, including pilot Majid Akhtar, co-pilot Shiv Jaiswal and naib tehsildar Dilip Dwivedi, had escaped with minor injuries. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), India's civil aviation regulator, had suspended Akhtar's flying licence for a year. The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau is also investigating the case. The state government is silent over how the aircraft was allowed to fly without following up on the mandatory insurance protocols. Experts say the government could have recovered the cost of the plane even after it was reduced to scrap had the insurance protocols been followed. The incident had resulted in major damage to the cockpit front, propeller blades, propeller hub and wheels of the newly-bought plane. The state government has also held the pilot responsible for failing to keep his licence valid post the crash. Akhtar, in his reply to this charge, has said that licences of several pilots have been suspended in the past only to be revoked later and that he should not be held guilty till the DGCA completes its enquiry.

Canara Bank E-Auction Sale Notice. Recovery & Legal Section, Circle Office, 2nd Floor, Sector 34-A, Chandigarh. Ph. No. 0172-2602431, 2663733, E-mail: rlcochd@canarabank.com. SALE NOTICE OF MOVABLE / IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES THROUGH E-AUCTION UNDER RULES 6(2), 8(6) & (9) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES 2002. Last Date of Receipt of EMD 09.03.2022 upto 4:00 P.M. Date of E-Auction: 11.03.2022 at 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM (with unlimited extension of 5 minutes duration each till the conclusion of the sale).



## Billie Eilish shades Travis Scott as she stops concert to give fan asthma inhaler



Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Billie Eilish stopped her Atlanta concert to give a fan asthma inhaler before appearing to shade Travis Scott and his deadly Astroworld Festival tragedy. The Grammy-winning artist was in the middle of a show at the State Farm Arena in Atlanta when she spotted a female concert goer caught in a pit near the front of the stage's catwalk, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#). In the video posted by a Billie fan account, the singer asked her fan, who appeared to need medical attention, "Do you need an inhaler?" Billie then turned to her crew. "Do we have an inhaler? Can we just grab one?" the 'Bad Guy' singer asked, before saying, "It's OK, we got one". After making sure the fan got the inhaler, she then blew her a kiss, mouthed, "I love you", and urged the audience to "give her some time, don't crowd". "I wait for people to be okay until I keep going," Billie said later on stage. While she didn't name Scott, fans believed she was referencing the Astroworld tragedy, which resulted in 10 people killed. The incident involving Travis took place during the first night of the Astroworld concert, which was held in November last year. The 'Sicko Mode' rapper's fans began acting aggressively just after the start of his set, during which a crowd surge occurred and thousands were pushed towards the main stage. However, the hip-hop star continued to perform for his fans and brought out Drake to finish off his set, which ended around 10 p.m. Hundreds of lawsuits were filed against Travis for his role in the festival's tragic events. Recently, nearly 400 suits, which represent almost 2,800 alleged victims, were officially bundled into one giant case.

## 'She had a moment'

London | Agencies

Sheridan Smith 'had a moment' when a group of Amy Winehouse impersonators took to the stage on her new show *Starstruck*. The actress, 40, was a friend of the late singer and became emotional when she saw performers paying tribute to her on the new ITV series, according to her fellow judge Jason Manford.

Speaking to MailOnline, he said: 'Some of the performances are beautiful, really lovely moments. Music has that ability to take you places.'

'Sheridan had a couple of moments with Amy Winehouse, who she knew. Adam watching Freddie Mercury, that was a moment.'

*Starstruck* sees teams of superfans transform into their idol and perform in front of judges Sheridan, Jason, Beverley Knight and Adam Lambert.

Four teams of three will battle it out each week to win the votes of the judges and the virtual audience with the winning trio then competing against each other for a place in the final and a chance to win a cash prize of £50,000.



Sheridan Smith became emotional when tribute acts of her friend Amy Winehouse appeared on new show *Starstruck*, reports [daily-mail.co.uk](#).

## 'ENCANTO' SOUNDTRACK NO. 1 FOR FOURTH WEEK ON BILLBOARD 200 CHART

Los Angeles | Agencies

Animated film 'Encanto' soundtrack has stayed atop the Billboard 200 albums chart for its fourth non-consecutive week. The soundtrack album for the Disney+ animated movie leads the quiet week, where no new albums debut in the region, after earning 113,000 equivalent album units in the US in the week ending February 3, according to MRC Data, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#). Of the sum, SEA units comprise 93,000, equaling 139.52 million on-demand official streams of the set's songs. Meanwhile, album sales comprise 16,000 with 3,000 units being in the form of TEA units. 'Encanto' is the new soundtrack with four weeks at No. 1 since Lady GaGa and Bradley Cooper's 'A Star Is Born' in 2018-2019. At No. 2 is The Weeknd's 'Dawn FM',

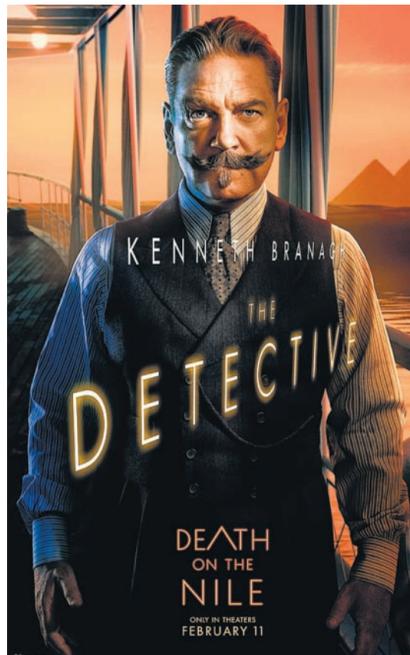
which soars two ranks from No. 4 to No. 2 following the release on CD on January 28. The set occupies the No. 2 spot after earning 70,000 equivalent album units with 37,000 of them being in traditional album sales. That makes the album jump to No. 1 on the Top Album Sales chart for the first time. Meanwhile, Gunna's former No. 1 'DS4Ever' is a non-mover at No. 3 on the Billboard 200 with 54,000 equivalent album units earned. Morgan Wallen's former leader 'Dangerous: The Double Album', meanwhile, moves up one spot to No. 4 with 41,000 units. As for NBA YoungBoy's (YoungBoy Never Broke Again) 'Colors', the album fell from No. 2 to No. 5 in its second week with 39,000 units. Staying stationary at No. 6 is Adele's '30' which earned 34,000 equivalent album units.



## 'DEATH ON THE NILE' DIRECTOR TALKS ABOUT HOW CINEMA IS CHANGING WITH TIME

Los Angeles | Agencies

Kenneth Branagh, the director of the upcoming murder mystery 'Death On The Nile', recently spoke about how with changing times the tonal quality of movies is also changing. The director also shared his thoughts about his shooting experience while travelling to holiday hotspots like Egypt, where a major chunk of the film has been shot. The director said, "For me, the escapism and the transportation are so total. It is a wonderfully immersive, illusory experience that is very full and thick. The depth, the detail, the chance to replicate the experience of the human eye is absolutely at its premium." He further said, "And it is a very unusual and unique opportunity (especially in the wake of what we've all been through recently, the pandemic) to share the experience of community in the telling of a story in a socially distanced, smaller audience-auditorium with a massive wall of communication and picture and sensory stimulation." Talking about the dynamism in cinema, he added, "Cinema has never been more attractive. Cinema has never been more vital and cinema has never been more thrilling than it has a chance to be, coming out of lockdown and coming into stories like 'Death on the Nile'." 'Death on the Nile' is based on Agatha Christie's novel of the same name and is a follow up to 'The Murder On The Orient Express'. Produced by 20th Century Studios, the film features an ensemble cast which includes Kenneth Branagh, Tom Bateman, Gal Gadot, Ali Fazal and Emma Mackey in pivotal roles among others.



### ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Beyoncé



Los Angeles | Agencies

## Spotify CEO apologises to staff over Joe Rogan N-word controversy

Swedish audio streaming platform Spotify CEO Daniel Ek, under fire from critics inside and outside the company over its partnership with podcaster Joe Rogan, said in a memo to employees that it was "deeply sorry" for how the controversy over the podcast host has affected them. But after the company's removal of 70 past episodes 'The Joe Rogan Experience' amid Rogan's use of the N-word and racially charged language numerous times on his show, the CEO signaled that Spotify does not plan to terminate its deal to distribute the podcast, reports [variety.com](#). "I do not believe that silencing Joe is the answer canceling voices is a slippery slope," he wrote in the memo on Sunday, which was obtained by Variety. Ek said he is "committing to an incremental investment of \$100 million for the licensing, development, and marketing of music (artists and songwriters) and audio content from historically marginalized groups". Spotify's exclusive multiyear deal with Rogan is reportedly worth more than \$100 million. "If we believe in having an open platform as a core value of the company, then we

must also believe in elevating all types of creators, including those from underrepresented communities and a diversity of backgrounds," the CEO wrote. According to Ek, Spotify has had conversations "with Joe and his team about some of the content in his show, including his history of using some racially insensitive language". "Following these discussions and his own reflections, he chose to remove a number of episodes from Spotify. He also issued his own apology over the weekend." Rogan has been a controversial figure ever since Spotify inked its exclusive deal with him in 2020, given his friendliness with several right-wing personalities he has hosted on 'The Joe Rogan Experience'.



## IND VS WI: KL RAHUL, MAYANK JOIN INDIA CAMP; SAINI RETURNS FROM COVID ISOLATION



Ahmedabad | Agencies

Vice-captain KL Rahul and batter Mayank Agarwal have joined the India camp after missing the first ODI against West Indies.

Meanwhile, Navdeep Saini, who was in isolation after contracting Covid-19, is also back with the team.

On Monday, the Indian cricket board (BCCI) took to Twitter to share pictures of Rahul, Mayank,

and Saini training at the Narendra Modi Stadium as India began preparation for the second ODI, which will be played on Wednesday. "Look who are here! The trio has joined the squad and sweated it out in the practice session today. #TeamIndia

#INDvWI", the BCCI said in a statement. Rahul missed the first ODI due to personal reasons. Agarwal was not part of the squad for the first ODI as he was still completing his quarantine after being added to the squad last week following

Covid-19 cases in the Indian camp. Earlier, the trio of Shikhar Dhawan, Rituraj Gaikwad and Shreyas Iyer along with four members of the support staff and standby player Saini tested positive for Covid-19 upon their arrival in Ahmedabad.

## BENGALURU OPEN: MYNENI LOSES IN FIRST ROUND, KHADE QUALIFIES FOR MAIN DRAW

Bengaluru | Agencies

It was a mixed day for India at the ATP Bengaluru Open I with Arjun Kadhe bringing cheers by storming into the main round while wild card entrant Saketh Myneni went down without a whimper against Italian Gian Marco Moroni in the opening round. Myneni lost 1-6, 1-6 to Moroni in a first round match, Khade got the better of Alexander Erlinger of Austria 6-3, 6-4 in the second round of qualifiers.

As the number of Indians in the fray reduced to six amongst the 32



ying for the coveted title, Khade faces fifth seed Altug Celikblek of Turkey in the first match on Tuesday.

Meanwhile in the other first round matches played at the KSLTA courts here on Monday, fancied players -- third seed Aleksandar Vukic of Australia and fourth seed Hugo Grenier of France -- marched into the pre-quarterfinals with contrasting wins.

While Vukic won over his country-mate Jason Kubler 7-5, 6-4, Grenier dropped a set before beating Vit Koprivka of the Czech Republic with a 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 margin.

## Senegal wins first-ever Africa Cup of Nations title

Yaounde | Agencies

Senegal are the new kings of African football as the Teranga Lions won the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) title beating Egypt in the final on penalties on Sunday evening. The final ended 0-0 after 120 minutes with a major opportunity coming from a penalty for Senegal that was missed by Sadio Mane just seven minutes into the match. After a tense shootout, Senegal's most precious player and forward



Mane scored the winning spot-kick as Senegal beat Egypt 4-2 on penalties to win their first-ever AFCON trophy. After reaching the AFCON final in 2002 and 2019 and losing, Senegal restored their reputation on the African football scene

with the victory at the Olembe Stadium in Cameroon's capital city of Yaounde. Egypt will soon have a chance for revenge when the two sides meet again next month in a two-legged play-off for a spot at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

## Huge proponent for long-form cricket in the women's game: Ellyse Perry

Melbourne | Agencies

Australia all-rounder Ellyse Perry has emphasised on Test cricket being an important format of the game for women's cricket. In the ongoing women's Ashes, the one-off Test ending in a thrilling draw at the Manuka Oval, where England almost chased down 248, has resulted in a loud clamour for women cricketers to play more Tests.

"I'm a huge proponent for long-form cricket in the women's game. Not just at an international level but also at a domestic level. It's such an important format of the game, and it's great for cricket. For the development of a lot of our domestic players,



the more cricket they can play, the more they can be out on the field, the better for the sport," Ellyse told SEN SA Breakfast show on Monday.

Ellyse, in her tenth Test match, made 18 and 41 in both innings and took four

wickets. Since her Test debut in 2008, Ellyse has made 752 runs at an average of 75.2 with two centuries and picked 37 wickets at an average of 19.97. She believes that playing Test cricket benefits playing in other formats.

## LEVERKUSEN UPSET DORTMUND IN BUNDESLIGA

Berlin | Agencies

Borussia Dortmund suffered a setback in the title race after third-placed Bayer Leverkusen clinched a stunning 5-2 victory at the closing of the 21st round on Sunday.

The game started with an own goal from each team in the opening stages. Dortmund's Manuel Akanji deflected a parry into the wrong goal to give Leverkusen the lead in the 11th minute before Jeremie Frimpong flicked on a Dortmund free-kick over his goalkeeper Lennart Grill to level the scores five minutes later.

Both sides remained dangerous in front of the target. Even after the restart, Leverkusen remained in control of the proceedings and made it 4-1 on the scoreboards as Dortmund couldn't clear a corner allowing Jonathan Tah to artistically hammer the ball into the roof of the net with 53 minutes gone. Things went from



bad to worse for uninspired Dortmund after Frimpong's cross the second post found Moussa Diaby, who established a 5-1 advantage left-

footed from close range in the 87th minute. Elsewhere, struggling Wolfsburg ended its losing run and returned to winning ways after easing

5-1 past last-placed Greuther Furth. Aster Vranckx's brace paved the way for the "Wolves" seventh win of the campaign.

Meanwhile, Bayern Munich custodian Manuel Neuer will be sidelined for several weeks after undergoing knee surgery, the German record champions announced via the club's official homepage on Sunday.

Bayern's No. 1 successfully underwent surgery on his right knee joint and will be out of action for the upcoming weeks. "All of us at the club and the whole team wish Manuel a speedy recovery. We are sure that he will soon be in top form with us again," Bayern Munich's sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic said.

The 35-year-old goalie has large shares on Saturday's 3-2 victory over resilient Leipzig after diffusing five promising opportunities to equal Oliver Kahn's Bundesliga record of 310 league wins.

## There has been a 'huge misunderstanding' over sexual assault allegation: Peng Shuai

Beijing | Agencies

Tennis star Peng Shuai has said that there has been a "huge misunderstanding" over a post in which she claimed she was sexually assaulted by a Chinese party leader.

The 36-year-old added that she never "disappeared", but had been contacted by so many people after her social media post that it was impossible for her to reply to everyone.

On 2 November, Peng had published a 1,600-word essay on Chinese social platform Weibo where she accused Chinese leader Zhang Gaoli of



sexual assault. The post was shared widely on Chinese social media before it was removed less than an hour after publication.

"This post has given rise to a 'huge misunderstanding' from the outside world. I hope that the meaning of this post will no longer be distorted. And I also hope that we don't add more hype to this. I would like to know: why such concern? I never said anyone sexually assaulted me," she told French newspaper L'Equipe.

She added that she had chosen to delete the post soon after publication. However, she failed to explain why the claim was originally made.

## Focus on gaining momentum as India take on France

Potchefstroom | Agencies

The Indian men's hockey team will focus on "gaining momentum" for a busy year ahead when they play France in the opening match of the FIH Pro League here on Tuesday.

After a stellar 2021, when the men's hockey team won the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games bronze medal after more than four decades, the Manpreet Singh-led side is set to embark on a new mis-



sion in South Africa with the hosts and France their first opponents of the year.

The world No. 3 side will play two matches apiece against South Africa and France and India vice-captain Harmanpreet Singh said they were really excited about the first assignment of 2022. The last time India met France was during the 2015 Fintro Hockey World League Semi-Final Antwerp, with the former winning the match 3-2.

## Odisha FC beat SC East Bengal

Vasco (Goa) | Agencies

Odisha FC fended off a strong challenge from SC East Bengal to record a 2-1 win in the 2021-22 Indian Super League (ISL) at the Tilak Maidan Stadium, here on Monday. The result keeps the outfit in the hunt for the top-four places by elevating them to sixth place in the points table.

Jonathas (23') gave the Odisha FC an early lead that lasted until Antonio Perosevic (64') scored the equaliser in the second half. Javier Hernandez (75') regained the lead for OFC with a precise finish which



proved to be the winner in the end. In the early stages of the match, Odisha FC piled a lot of pressure and was finally rewarded with an early goal from Jonathas.

Looking for the equaliser, Hira Mondal took an attempt just before half-time but his left-footed strike went way-

ward. The first half ended with the Kalinga Warriors retaining their one-goal advantage. The Red & Gold Brigade had four minutes of added time to find the leveller for the second time which they eventually could not, allowing OFC to bag the three points.

## REAL MADRID MOVE SIX POINTS CLEAR AS SEVILLA HELD; BARCA BEAT ATLETICO

Madrid | Agencies

Marco Arsenio's excellent 74th-minute goal gave Real Madrid a 1-0 win at home to Granada. The forward's powerful shot into the corner of the Granada goal gave Madrid a win they deserved for an improved second-half display after an even first 45 minutes, and moves them six points clear at the top of La Liga.

Real Madrid were without Vinicius Jr and Karim Benzema on Sunday night and in the first half they struggled without the Frenchman.

FC Barcelona moved into fourth place in La Liga after a thrilling 4-2 win over Atletico Madrid in the Camp Nou Stadium. Atletico opened the scoring after a neat combination between Luis Suarez and Yannick Carrasco saw the Belgian beat Marc Andre Ter Stegen after just eight minutes, but Barca were quickly level after Jordi Alba's volley just two minutes later. Adama Traore was enjoying a happy return to Camp Nou and his pace was vital as he beat Mario Hermoso in the 22nd minute to cross



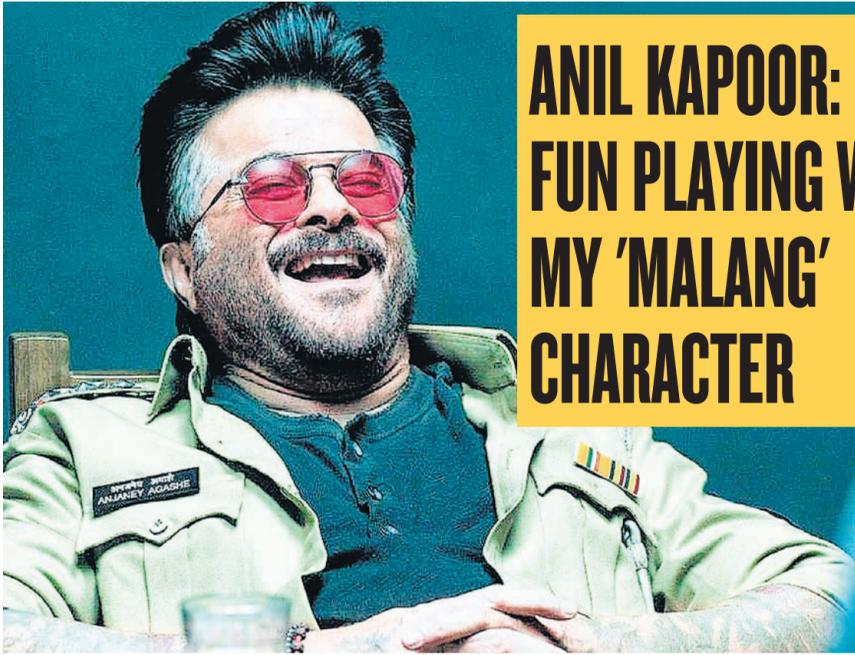
from Gavi to head in Barca's second and just before halftime Barca breached Atletico's defence a third time, Xinhua reports. Gerard Pique headed against the bar and after Ferran Torres was unable to turn the ball in, Ronald Araujo provided the finish to make it 3-1. Dani Alves rifled a loose ball home from outside of the penalty area to make it 4-1 in the 49th minute after Atletico again failed to clear a ball into their area. Luis Suarez then nodded Atletico back into the game and Atletico's

chances of getting a point increased when Alves was then sent off for putting his studs into the back of Carrasco's calf. Villarreal continue their climb up the table with a 2-0 win away to third-placed Betis thanks to a Pau Torres header just before halftime with Etienne Capoue sealing the win with seven minutes left to play.

Valencia rested several first-team regulars ahead of their forthcoming Copa del Rey semifinal in Bilbao on February 11 for their 0-0 draw at home to Real Sociedad in a match that had more chances than the final score suggests.

Osasuna goalkeeper Sergio Herrera saved Ivan Rakitic's 92nd-minute penalty to hold second place Sevilla to a 0-0 draw in the El Sadar Stadium. A draw was a fair result as Sevilla looked flat against a well-organised home side and the result sees them lose ground on Real Madrid.

Two goals from Brais Mendez gave Celta a 2-0 home win against Rayo Vallecano, who made had several changes to their team ahead of next week's Copa del Rey semifinal.



## ANIL KAPOOR: HAD FUN PLAYING WITH MY 'MALANG' CHARACTER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As his film 'Malang' completed two years since its release, actor Anil Kapoor has opened up about playing a flamboyant police officer.

There's a certain charm that Anil Kapoor adds to any project that he becomes a part of and 'Malang' is a perfect example of the same. The action drama, released two years ago, became a hit.

The actor's expressions, body language and dialogue delivery earned him great acclaim.

While speaking about the same, Anil said, "The Malang set was beaming with infectious, young energy and you could see the same on the screen."

He added: "I had fun playing with my character because it was very well written. It was such a great experience collaborating with the team."

Anil's other work includes 'Jug Jugg Jeeyo', 'Animal' and 'Fighter'.

## Sanjay Dutt

### LAUNCHES PRODUCTION HOUSE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt is launching production company Three Dimension Motion Pictures with a view to bringing back the golden age of heroism to the industry.

Sanjay cites the recent pan-Indian box office success of South Indian film 'Pushpa' and the films of 'Baahubali' filmmaker S.S. Rajamouli as an example of the vanished larger-than-life heroism in Bollywood, reports variety.com.

"We're trying to get back what we had, what the South Indian films are doing now," Dutt tells Variety.

"When we entered the film industry, we started off with the heroism, the heroic roles, the mass love and everything, and I just saw that stopping. And I am trying to revive that. 'Sanjay debuted with 'Rocky' in 1981, in an era where leading men of mainstream Indian cinema were written as a complete heroic package. Today, that genre in the Hindi film industry has reduced to a niche, or a 'little gap' as Dutt describes it.

"What Denzel Washington and Kevin Costner and Mel Gibson are doing in Hollywood, I think that little gap is missing here. I'm trying to get that gap back, of a hero of that age, who can perform and who can fight and who can stand for his rights," the actor said. "The golden age - it just can't die. Even if you look at Hollywood, it exists there, and in the South. I don't know what happened to Bollywood. But that's what we're trying to get back - those days of heroism," he added. Three Dimension is preparing a slate which includes horror-comedy 'The Virgin Tree', to be directed by Sidhaant Sachdev, who has TV, music video and assisting experience and will make his feature debut, with a cast of four newcomers.



## Richa Chadha decodes why crime thrillers are interesting to watch

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress Richa Chadha, whose latest OTT release is 'The Great Indian Murder', has talked about what makes the genre of thrillers so popular universally.

Talking to IANS about the show, Richa said: "This is like a deep dive investigation. This is like a team cracking a case. Within that team there are different things.

"But 100 per cent I feel these things are interesting because there is a lot of crime around us and I think crime by and large is an interesting topic. If you see one of the most watched shows is 'Savdhaan India'."

Ever since she stepped into the

world of acting, Richa has always impressed the audience and critics with her powerful performances.

Are taking on strong-headed characters a conscious choice?

"No, not really. What happens is when people perceive you as strong-headed then those are the parts that tend to come to you. It's not something that's conscious at all.

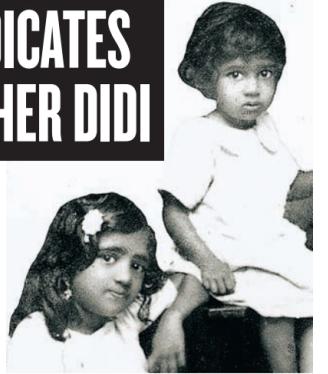
"I would love to play a variety of characters but obviously I am not going to turned down super interesting characters like in this one it is a no brainer I will not turn down a character like Sudha," she added.



## ASHA BHOSLE DEDICATES 'SUJATA' SONG TO HER DIDI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Asha Bhosle celebrated the legacy of her ageless elder sister by posting a throwback picture of herself with Lata Mangeshkar when they were little children. In her caption, the singer-restaurateur wrote: "Bachpan ke din bhi kya din the! (How wonderful were the days of our childhood)." The reference was to one of Asha Bhosle's melodious numbers, which she sang along with Geeta Dutt, in one of Bimal Roy's most-remembered films, 'Sujata' (1959). The song's lyrics were by Majrooh Sultanpuri and the music by Sachin Dev Burman, with whom Lata Mangeshkar had a long association, though they had a falling-out after 'Devdas', only to start collaborating again later. The film, which was remarkable because of Nutan's stellar performance in it, was India's official entry into the competition section of the Cannes Film Festival in 1960. By dedicating the song to Lataji, Asha Bhosle not only provided a glimpse of their childhood together, but also brought back memories of a film, one of a handful to be inspired by Dr B.R. Ambedkar, about the love story of a Brahmin man and an 'untouchable' woman.



## Sara Ali Khan juggles between multiple shoots

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sara Ali Khan, who is currently riding high on the success of her latest release 'Atrangi Re', has been hopping from one set to another, from one city to another, since the last few months.

Sara will be next seen in 'Gaslight' and Laxman Utekar yet-untitled next.

A source said: "After returning from Laxman Utekar's film from Indore, Sara has been running on a crazy work schedule. She's finishing all her brand commitments before going on the next film's set. Her day is filled with brand shoots, dubbing for them and daily workouts."

The source shared that the actress has begun preparing for her upcoming films, "which are scheduled to go on floors soon". "She wants to be fully prepared once she gets on sets."

## Samantha Ruth Prabhu enjoys girls' day out

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who is back from her Switzerland vacation, enjoyed a day out with fellow actresses Varalaxmi Sarathkumar and Neerajaa Kona on the weekend. Tamil actress Varalaxmi, who posted some cute pictures, had Samantha flaunt her new hairdo, as the duo is seen having a great time together. In one of the pictures, Samantha, Varalaxmi, and their costume designer Neeraja Kona, are seen waiting for their food to arrive, as they pose together. In recent times, Samantha has been travelling a lot, as she always says travelling makes her feel alive.

She was recently seen taking skiing classes in some hilly areas of Switzerland, while she is back to her job as she resumed work earlier this week. On the work front, Samantha and Varalaxmi are to share the screen in an upcoming movie titled 'Yashodha'. Billed as a woman-oriented movie, 'Yashoda' is directed by Hari and Harish. Samantha, who was last seen performing to a mass item number 'Oo Antava' in Allu Arjun starrer 'Pushpa', will be a part of two bilingual movies, apart from her other projects. Samantha will also make her Hollywood debut, while she is rumored to enter Bollywood with an interesting movie as well.



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Vaani Kapoor