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RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR REACHES NUCLEAR SITES, RAISES WORLDWIDE CONCERN

THE LUST OF POWER

“Ukraine informed IAEA that Russian forces took control of the site of Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant; says safety systems of the plant’s six reactors had not been affected and there has been no release of radioactive material. Two people reported injured.”

IAEA

▶ UKRAINE HAS 15 NUCLEAR POWER UNITS (3.8 GW) AT FOUR NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS: RIVNE, KHMELNITSKIY, SOUTH UKRAINE AND ZAPORIZHZHIA, THE LARGEST ONE IN EUROPE.

▶ SO FAR THE RUSSIAN TROOPS HAVE TAKEN OVER THE CLOSED NUCLEAR POWER PLANT AT CHERNOBYL AND THE ACTIVE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT ZAPORIZHZHIA, SITUATED ON THE BANKS OF THE DNIPEP RIVER, IN THE CITY OF ENERHODAR.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The war in Ukraine has reached the nuclear sites with Russian troops making attempts to take over these plants. The attacks to take control of these nuclear sites have raised worldwide concern. On Friday after intense fighting at Zaporizhzhia, Russia claimed that its troops have taken control of the nuclear power plant. The fighting caused a fire at the nuclear site which was eventually doused by the Ukrainian authorities. The fire which began after Russian shelling was extinguished and the radiation levels remain unchanged, though several units of the facility have been damaged. Ukraine's nuclear regulator said that Russian military forces seized the plant on Friday morning but the plant's staff is continuing to ensure its operations. Enerhodar Mayor Dmytro Orlov



UNSC TO HOLD EMERGENCY MEETING

WASHINGTON: The United Nations Security Council will hold an emergency meeting following Russia's attack on Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine, diplomats said. Russia's defense ministry blamed the fire at the plant on a "monstrous attack" by Ukrainian saboteurs and said its forces were in control. "The United States, the UK, France, Ireland, Norway, and Albania have called an emergency UN Security Council meeting at 11:30ET following Russia's attack on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in Ukraine," Olivia Dalton, spokesperson for the U.S. mission to the United Nations, tweeted. Several countries including the United States and the United Kingdom are expected to make remarks at the meeting.

announced on his Telegram channel Friday morning: "The fire at the (nuclear plant) has indeed been extinguished." The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said the fire had not affected essential equipment and that Ukraine's

RUSSIA SAYS BUSES READY TO TAKE OUT INDIANS; NOT WITHOUT CEASEFIRE SAYS INDIA

New Delhi: With Russia state media reporting Russian authorities have arranged 130 buses for evacuation of Indian students from war-battered Sumy and Kharkiv in Ukraine, India on Friday said that pulling them out was not possible without a ceasefire as the gunfights and bombing are continuing in these areas. Russian news agency TASS said that the Russia is ready to send 130 buses to evacuate stranded Indian students and other foreigners from war-torn Ukraine's Kharkiv and Sumy cities to its Belgorod Region, quoting top Russian military official Colonel-General Mikhail Mizintsev. TASS had also said that this came a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin and discussed the safe evacuation of Indians from the war-torn Ukraine. Over 700 Indian students are stuck in Sumy and they are running out of basic necessities like food and water and they have been urging the Indian government to get them evacuated from there.



nuclear regulator reported no change in radiation levels. Ukraine's nuclear power plants are operated by NNEGC Energoatom, the country's nuclear power utility. It was the second time since the war

began and there are concerns about a nuclear accident or release of radioactive material. The first time there were concerns on February 24 when Russian troops took control of closed nuclear power site Chernobyl.

Blast in Bhagalpur claims 14 lives



Team Absolute | Patna

At least 14 persons have been killed and many others injured following a powerful explosion in a house in Bihar's Bhagalpur district, the police said on Friday. Bihar DGP S.K. Singhal said the main accused in the case has been identified as Leelawati Devi, who along with her family members used to manufacture illegal firecrackers in the house. Leelawati and four of her family members were killed in the blast. "We have recovered 14 bodies from the debris so far, and rescue operations are still on. Ten persons have been injured in the explosion, who are battling for their lives at the Mayaganj Medical College and Hospital in Bhagalpur. Four adjacent buildings have been completely destroyed by the explosion that took place in Kajawali Chak village under Tatarpur police station," Singhal said. "The explosion took place during the manufacturing of illegal firecrackers in the house by Leelawati Devi on Thursday at around 11.30 pm. She was making crackers without any licence. Five

of her family members, including herself, died in the explosion," he added. "Leelawati was initially owning the building where the explosion took place. She had sold it recently and was living there with her family on rent," Singhal said. The officer said that the main accused was a serial offender. Similar explosions had taken place there twice, in 2018 and 2020. Besides the family members of Leelawati, three members of Mahendra Mandal's family were also killed in the explosion. Mandal's house is located next Leelawati's house. "We have seized a large amount of explosives, explosive materials and rappers from the spot," he said. "The local police were well aware of the alleged activities of Leelawati and her family members, but they didn't take any preventive measures. Hence, we have suspended the SHO of Tatarpur -- Sudhanshu Kumar -- with immediate effect," Singhal said. The officer further said that as the matter is sensitive, the ATS has been directed to investigate the case to find out any possible terror angle.

Domestic wheat prices hit fresh high on export demand

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prices of wheat in India hit a fresh lifetime high on Friday due to a strong export demand for the foodgrain. The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine is expected to reduce supply as both the countries are major producers of wheat. In the key market of Indore in Madhya Pradesh, the foodgrain was sold at Rs 2,400-Rs 2,500 per quintal (100 kg) on Friday as against Rs 2,400 the previous day. Until recently, it traded at around Rs 2,000-2,100. "The current rise in prices of wheat will reduce the inflow of the foodgrain into the mandis as the buyers will purchase it from

BLOODBATH IN THE WHEAT MARKET

With Russia, the world's biggest exporter of wheat, going to war, the commodity's price in the international market has shot up by \$334 per quintal since February 18

Date	Closing Price*	Change %
18.02.2022	790.00	6.90%
22.02.2022	844.25	3.76%
23.02.2022	876.00	3.76%
24.02.2022	926.00	5.70%
25.02.2022	843.00	-8.96%
28.02.2022	928.00	10.08%
01.03.2022	1,001.75	7.94%
02.03.2022	1,058.00	5.62%
03.03.2022	1,134.00	7.18%



the farm gate itself," an Indore-based trader said. "Wheat trading above MSP is also an indication that the Centre will have relatively lower quantity to procure directly from the farmers," the trader told reporter. The Minimum Support Price for wheat for 2022-23 marketing season is fixed at Rs 2,015 per 100 kg.

Grant of EUA recommended for Covovax among 12-17 age bracket

New Delhi: The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation's (CDSCO) Subject Expert Committee on Friday recommended granting Emergency Use Authorisation for Covid-19 vaccine Covovax for administering to 12-17-year-olds, said a source. The expert committee cleared Pune-based vaccine manufacturer SII's application, and the recommendation will be sent to the Drug Controller General of India for approval. The SII had submitted an application to the DCGI seeking EUA for Covovax for the 12-17 years-old group on February 21. The DCGI had approved Covovax for restricted use in emergency situation in adults on December 28. However, the vaccine has not yet been included in the country's inoculation drive. Covovax is manufactured by technology transfer from Novavax. As of now only Bharat Biotech's indigenously-made Covaxin is available for vaccinating those aged 15 to 18.

K'taka White Stone Hill collapses during mining, labourers feared trapped

Chamarajanagar | Agencies

Several labourers from West Bengal were feared to be trapped inside the White Stone Hill caves of Madahalli village in Bilikallu quarry area near Chamarajanagar district's Gundlupet here on Friday. The hill collapsed while miners were working inside the cave. As a result, big boulders of white stone rolled down the hill and collided with the tipper trucks and vehicles, causing them to overturn. Several workers present there are feared to have been crushed under these boulders. The police and the fire department personnel rushed to the spot to



carry out operations along with the local villagers, to rescue trapped workers from inside the mine. The incident took place on land belonging to Mahendrapura, a resident of Bommalapura in Karnataka. One Hakeem had taken the land on lease for mining. However, Superintendent of Police (SP) Shivakumar said illegal min-

LEGENDARY AUSTRALIAN SPINNER SHANE WARNE DIES, AGED 52

Canberra: Legendary Australian spinner Shane Warne has died of a suspected heart attack, at the age of 52. As per a statement given to Fox News by Warne's management firm, he passed away in Koh Samui, Thailand of a suspected heart attack. For Australian cricket, this is the second devastating news in 24 hours with fellow great, Rod Marsh, dying earlier on Friday having suffered a major heart attack last week. Incidentally, Warne had consoled Marsh's demise in a tweet this morning. Warne, who was chosen as one of Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Century, finished his career with 293 wickets in ODIs and 708 wickets in Tests, the most by a leg spinner in the format.



India's forex reserves down by \$1.4 bn to over \$631 bn

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India's foreign exchange reserves declined by \$1.425 billion during the week ended February 25. The Reserve Bank of India's forex reserves decreased to \$631.527 billion from \$632.952 billion reported for February 18. The country's forex reserves comprises of foreign currency assets (FCAs), gold reserves, SDRs, and the country's reserve position with the IMF. On a weekly basis, FCAs, the largest component of the forex reserves, edged lower by \$2.228 bil-



lion to \$564.832 billion. However, the value of the country's gold reserves increased by \$958 million to \$42.467 billion. On the other hand, the SDR value declined by \$122 million to \$19.040 billion. The country's reserve position with the IMF also slipped by \$34 million to \$5.187 billion.

TERRORIST ARRESTED DURING ENCOUNTER IN KASHMIR

Srinagar: The J&K police along with the security forces have arrested a terrorist who was injured during an encounter in Handwara in North Kashmir, officials said on Friday. During the search operation, one injured terrorist was apprehended by the joint team. He has been identified as Abrar, a resident of Azadgunj Baramulla. "As per police records, Abrar was a stone-pel-ter earlier and several FIRs were registered against him. He joined the proscribed terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba recently," the police said. Incriminating materials, arms and ammunition, including one pistol, one magazine and two rounds, and cash worth Rs 1,41,500 were recovered from his possession.

INDIAN RAILWAYS' DEVELOPED ANTI-COLLISION SYSTEM 'KAVACH'

▶ THE INDIAN RAILWAYS AIMS TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OF "ZERO ACCIDENTS" BY DEPLOYING THE ANTI-COLLISION SYSTEM.

▶ AFTER THE TRIAL, THERE'S A PLAN TO COVER 2,000 KM OF THE RAIL NETWORK UNDER KAVACH.

▶ THE SYSTEM IS DESIGNED IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT WILL BRING A TRAIN TO A HALT AUTOMATICALLY IF IT NOTICES ANOTHER TRAIN ON THE SAME TRACK WITHIN A PRESCRIBED DISTANCE.

▶ THIS TECHNOLOGY IS SIL4 (SAFETY INTEGRITY LEVEL - 4) CERTIFIED, THE HIGHEST CERTIFICATION LEVEL, MEANING THERE'S A POSSIBILITY OF ONLY ONE ERROR IN 10,000 YEARS.

▶ FOLLOWING ORE TRAILS, KAVACH WAS APPROVED FOR SPEEDS UP TO 160 KMPH. KAVACH IS ALSO KNOWN AS TRAIN COLLISION AVOIDANCE SYSTEM (TCAS) AND AUTOMATIC TRAIN PROTECTION (ATP) SYSTEM.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday reviewed an anti-collision system developed by the Indian Railways today. Known as "Kavach", meaning armour, the

Railways is promoting it as the world's cheapest automatic train collision protection system. Vaishnaw boarded a train to get first-hand experience of how the system works. The trial took place in the Sanathnagar-Shankarpalli section.

Railway officials say a train will also stop on its own if the system finds a manual error or any other malfunction - like inadvertently jumping the red signal. The deployment of the Made-in-India technology was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during her Budget presentation this year as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative. Also, the lower cost of operating this system will help Indian vendors to compete in global markets. Developed by Railway Ministry's Research Design and Standards Organisation, in collaboration with other partners, Kavach has been in the works for some time. The first conceptual field trials took place way back in October 2012 and the first field trials on passenger trains began in February 2016.



PM HOLDS MEGA ROAD SHOW AT VARANASI

Varanasi | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi stopped for tea as he held a mega roadshow in

Varanasi on Friday, drumming up support for BJP candidates ahead of the last phase of the assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh.

The Prime Minister, whose antecedents as a tea-seller in Gujarat has long been the subject of many a BJP legend, was seen being warmly received by the owner of the tea shop.

At the Kashi Vishwanath temple, PM Modi joined supporters and worshippers in playing the 'damru' (small drum). He performed the Shodashopachara puja to Lord Shiva, priests said.

PM Modi stood in an open-roof vehicle as the convoy travelled over three kilometres through the holy city, part of the Prime Minister's Lok Sabha constituency, as crowds cheered and showered flower petals on Prime



Minister Narendra Modi's cavalcade.

The crowd chanted "Jai Shri Ram" and "Har Har Mahadev", and showered rose petals at several places as PM Modi waved to them or folded his palms in a 'namaste'. The PM wore a saffron cap and a 'gamcha' (towel) around the neck.

His roadshow covered the three assembly segments of Cantonment, Varanasi North

and Varanasi South.

Crowds followed PM Modi all through the roadshow and many people stood on balconies and rooftops, waving at him. PM Modi arrived in the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency after addressing a rally in neighbouring Mirzapur, on a two-day visit before the polling on March 7. Other political heavyweights also headed towards Varanasi on Friday.

Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav held a roadshow late evening, and Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi held a rally in the district.

The Prime Minister will wind up his Varanasi trip on Saturday --- the last day for campaigning according to Election Commission guidelines -- with a rally in Khajuria village in Rohaniya assembly constituency.

GOA LEADERS CONDOLE DEATH OF FORMER ARMY CHIEF RODRIGUES

Panaji: Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant condoled the death of former Indian army chief, Gen Sunith Francis Rodrigues, who passed on Friday.

"Saddened by the demise of Former Chief of #IndianArmy Staff General S.F. Rodrigues, who also served as Governor of Punjab from 2004 to 2010. His family belonged to Curtorim in Goa & all Goans are proud of his service to our motherland. Heartfelt condolences to the family," Sawant said in a tweet.

"Saddened by the passing away of former Army Chief & former Governor of Punjab, General Sunith Francis Rodrigues. He served our nation with dignity, dedication & devotion. He was a thinker & strategist. My condolences to his family. May his soul rest in peace," Leader of Opposition in the outgoing Assembly Digambar Kamat said. Though Rodrigues, who led the Indian Army from 1990 to 1993, was born and brought up in Mumbai, his parents hailed from Goa.

PM seeks vote on basis of lies: Rahul Gandhi in Varanasi

Varanasi | Agencies

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Friday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of seeking votes on the basis of "lies", and said he now does not talk about his poll promises of doubling farmers' income and generating jobs.

"Hindu religious books nowhere say to speak lies," Mr Gandhi told an election rally here after offering prayers at the Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi, during which he was also joined by his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

Rahul Gandhi alleged that PM Modi now doesn't speak on his earlier poll promises of doubling farmers' income and generating jobs for youths, whereas there is "no mismatch" in the Congress' words and deeds.

He cited the example of fulfilling poll promises of writing off farmers' loans by the Congress government in Chhattisgarh and also procurement of paddy at the Minimum Support Price of Rs 2,500 a quintal.

"Not in the name of dharma, rather he is winning



votes on the basis of lies," the former Congress chief said, attacking Modi.

On his arrival in Varanasi, both Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra offered prayers at the Kashi Vishwanath temple, days before the eight assembly seats in the district go to the polls.

The brother-sister duo reached the historic temple straight from the airport, temple and Congress sources said.

Hours later, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also visited the shrine dedicated to Lord

Shiva. Varanasi is also PM Modi's Lok Sabha constituency. Earlier in the day, Union minister Smriti Irani had visited the temple.

After their temple visit, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra left for the Pindara assembly constituency on the outskirts of Varanasi where they addressed a rally in favour of Congress leader Ajay Rai who is up against sitting BJP MLA Awdhesh Singh.

Polling will be held in Varanasi in the last phase of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections on March 7.

Haryana introduces Bill to stop forced conversion

Chandigarh | Agencies

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said on

Friday that the Haryana Prevention of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2022, has been introduced on the third day of the Assembly session with an aim to maintain communal harmony and brotherhood and not divide the society.

He said that in the past, many incidents have been reported from Yamunanagar, Panipat, Faridabad, Gurugram and Nuh wherein forced conversions were done by allurement, fake promises of taking abroad, expanding business and running away from home.



Such incidents have become a matter of great concern, said the Chief Minister.

FIRs have also been registered in many cases. Such incidents are happening all over the country and different states have made their

own laws to stop such incidents, said Khattar.

The Chief Minister said this while addressing the media after the debate on Governor's address during the ongoing session of Vidhan Sabha here.

He said the Bill does not bar a person from willful conversion, provided that such person submits an application before the District Magistrate one month in advance.

Although the provisions in the Indian Penal Code too call for action against those involved in forced conversion, this does not provide complete solution to this problem, hence enactment of this law is the need of the hour, the Chief Minister clarified.

Man held for making threat call in name of gangster Neeraj Bawania

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A 22-year-old man was arrested for allegedly making a threat call for Rs 60 lakhs and claiming to be a member of Delhi's Neeraj Bawania gang, an official said on Friday.

The accused, identified as Sohail, is resident of Kasba Kandla of Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district. Earlier in the day, a case was registered at Preet Vihar police station on the complaint of a wholesaler of gold jewellery of Kucha Mahajani, alleging that his son received a phone call in the night from some unknown person who claimed to be a member of Neeraj Bawania gang and demanded to pay Rs 60 lakhs otherwise he would be killed in 15 days. Immediately after the registration of the case, the police swung into action and constituted two teams. "The technical team col-



lected and analysed the technical data and in pursuance thereof raids were conducted in Shaheen Bagh, Jamia in Delhi, Ghaziabad and Noida

in Uttar Pradesh," the official said. The raiding team apprehended the accused from Noida while he was about to leave his rented house. The

police seized the mobile phone used in the commission of the crime. No previous involvement of the accused were found, the official added.

Delhi man arrested for cheating people to the tune of Rs 18.75 cr

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Economic Offences Wing of the Delhi Police arrested a 45-year-old man who inveigled people into pledging their properties to a bank by painting a rosy picture of the gold and diamond business before them. He then enjoyed the banking facilities and obtained cash credit from the bank to the tune of Rs 18.75 crores.

The accused, Sanjay Tulsyan, a resident of Ramesh Nagar in Delhi, duped gullible people by convincing them that if they pledge their property to a bank, then his company, SSP Diamond, can avail cash credit which can be used to run the said business.

Furnishing details, Joint Commissioner of Police (Economic Offences Wing) Chhaya Sharma said that the present case was registered based on the complaint of five victims. "Based on the inducement and



representation, the complainant pledged their properties with Indian Overseas Bank and the company, SSP Diamond, had obtained cash credit facilities from the bank to the tune of Rs 18.75 crores," the Jt CP said.

It was agreed between the parties that the properties would be pledged for a period of only one year and after

the expiry, the properties would be released from the bank and the title would be handed over to the complainants along with the proportionate profit obtained through business.

"However, after availing the CC limit from the bank, the accused Sanjay Tulsyan with other co-accused enjoyed the banking facilities and

after expiry of the agreed time, released neither the properties nor shared the profits," the senior official said, adding that in order to defraud the complainant, the accused had diverted the stocks of the company and declared his bank account as Non Performing Asset (NPA).

After this, the bank initiated SARFAESI proceedings and the properties of the complainants were auctioned. The official said, in September 2019, the wife of the accused was arrested and after that Tulsyan absconded and was subsequently declared a proclaimed person. The police kept technical surveillance on the accused and finally with local enquiry on the ground, nabbed him from his rented accommodation in Ramesh Nagar.

The accused has been taken into police custody in order to unearth the entire conspiracy, the official said, adding, that further investigation is in progress.

Nizamuddin Markaz cannot be reopened fully, Centre tells Delhi HC

Team Absolute | New Delhi



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Opposing the plea by Delhi Waqf Board for reopening of Nizamuddin Markaz, which has remained shut since March 3, 2020, the Centre on Friday submitted before the Delhi High Court that it is a

'case property' and cannot be fully reopened.

A bench of Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri was dealing with the Waqf Board's plea for reopening of the religious place considering recent guidelines issued by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA).

During the course of the hearing, advocate Wajeeh Shafiq, representing the Board, argued for the reopening of the premises in view of the festival of Shab e-Barat and the coming month of Ramzaan for religious purposes. Advocate Rajat Nair, appearing on behalf of the Centre, said that the offering of 'namaz' by five people was allowed earlier, and can be done this year also in the religious festival. While asking the Markaz's counsel to place on record the order concerned of the DDMA, the court slated the hearing for March 11. The Nizamuddin Markaz was shut following the incident of a spurt of Covid positive cases in the premises in 2020.

Centre extends modernisation plan for CAPFs till 2026

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Ministry of Home Affairs on Friday said that it has extended the modernisation programme of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) till March 31, 2026, with an allocation of Rs 1,523 crore.

The scheme envisages equipping the CAPFs with modern state-of-the-art weapons and equipment, as per their operational requirement, keeping in view their deployment pattern in different theatres. Besides, upgraded IT solutions will also be provided to CAPFs, Ministry officials said. The officials also said that with extension of this scheme for the next five financial years, the paramilitary forces will



improve their overall operational efficiency and preparedness, which will positively impact the internal security scenario. "This would bolster the government's ability to address the challenges being faced on the International Border/LoC/LAC as well as in the different theatres, such as areas affected by Left-Wing Extremism, Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and insurgency-affected northeastern states," a Ministry official

said. Recently, the Home Ministry extended the Central government-sponsored Border Infrastructure and Management (BIM) till 2026 at a cost of Rs 13,020 crore. According to officials, this decision will strengthen the border infrastructure for improving border management, policing, and guarding the borders. "The BIM scheme will help in the creation of infrastructure such as construction of border fence, border flood lights, technological solutions, border roads and Border Outposts, Company Operating Bases to secure the India-Pakistan, India-Bangladesh, India-China, India-Nepal, India-Bhutan, and the India-Myanmar borders," a ministry official said.

52% people are below the poverty line in Bihar, claims Tejashwi Yadav

Patna | Agencies

Leader of Opposition in the Bihar assembly Tejashwi Yadav on Friday claimed that 52 per cent of the people in the state are living below the poverty line and the state government is unable to spend the money allocated in the budget every year.

During the discussion on the Bihar budget 2022-23, Tejashwi said that 52 per cent of the people living in 22 districts of the state are below the poverty line. Moreover, in the remaining 18 districts, 61 per cent of the people residing there are living below the poverty line. "In 2021-22 state finance



minister Tarkishore Prasad had presented a Rs 2.18 lakh crore budget, while the government had expended Rs 1.05 lakh crore till March 3, 2022. The Nitish Kumar government has used only 48 per cent of the allocated

funds. "Now, the finance minister presented a budget of Rs 2.38 lakh crore again for the financial year 2022-23." "If the amount allocated in the previous budget had been utilised fully, issues of unemployment,

farmers, fertilisers, salary of government employees and pension of women and elderly persons would have been addressed," Tejashwi claimed. As per the CAG report of 2019, the Bihar government failed to spend Rs 80,000 crore of the allocated funds in the annual budget 2018-19. They have not expended 41 per cent of the funds in the agriculture sector, 31 per cent in health, 51 per cent in social welfare of minorities. When they allocate funds in the budget, why are they spending it on development projects?" Tejashwi asked. During the run-up of the 2020 assembly election in the state, the National Democratic

Alliance had promised to provide 19 lakh jobs in Bihar. Why has the finance minister not mentioned the road map for providing jobs in his budget, he asked. "At present, three out of four youths in Bihar are unemployed. Why has the finance minister not mentioned the industries, food processing units, sugar mills, IT park, SEZ, that the government is going to set up in this financial year," Tejashwi asked. However, senior NDA leader Bijendra Yadav informed the House that the CAG report is not considered conclusive. The CAG calculates just 10 per cent of the department to prepare reports.



मध्य प्रदेश के लोकप्रिय मुख्यमंत्री



जन-जन के नेता

मा. शिवराज सिंह चौहान जी को जन्मदिन पर हार्दिक बधाई



सुरेन्द्र नाथ सिंह, मुकुल राठौर एवं नितिन दुबे के सौजन्य से



EDITOR'S SPECS

Most turncoats left out in the cold

Party hopping before or during elections is a common feature in Uttar Pradesh, but not all leaders are fortunate enough to get a bigger and more visible role in the new party. Majority of these leaders are now left with no option but to campaign for other candidates. The luckiest defector in this scenario has been former Union Minister Jitin Prasada, who joined the BJP, months before the polls, got a seat in the Vidhan parishad and was then inducted into the Yogi Adityanath ministry. Initially, touted as the new Brahmin face of the BJP in the state, Prasada is now restricted to campaigning for the party in and around his home district Shahjahanpur. Former Union Minister R.P.N. Singh, who joined the BJP in the midst of elections, is another defector who is not contesting the elections. Singh is also not seen campaigning for the BJP outside his home district Kushinagar. The biggest example of a defector being left out in the cold is Aparna Yadav, the younger daughter-in-law of Mulayam Singh Yadav, who left her Samajwadi Party to join the BJP in January. A claimant for the Lucknow Cantt Assembly seat, Aparna was not given the ticket. Though she put up a brave front saying that the party's decision was best, sources said that she was sorely disappointed at being denied a ticket. Aparna is now campaigning for the BJP and has ruffled a number of feathers in her family with statements against the Samajwadi Party. In the Samajwadi Party too, a similar situation is seen. BJP MLA Rakesh Rathore, who joined the SP just before elections, was not given a ticket to contest his Sitapur seat. Imran Masood, a senior Congress leader, was also left out in the cold after he joined the SP. Masood was later pacified and asked to campaign for the party.

POJK INCHES TOWARDS SOCIAL REBELLION

Amjad Ayub Mirza

It was a cold night with subzero temperature on March 2 when a police convoy arrived outside the office of Rawalakot Commissioner in Pakistan occupied Jammu Kashmir (PoJK). More than two dozen political activists and members of Jammu Kashmir National Students Federation (JKNSF) had been observing a protest sit-in outside the gates of the Rawalakot Commission office building. Hoping that the administration had come to begin negotiations the protesters took a sigh of relief. Little did they know that they were in for a shock. No sooner had the police arrived at the protest camp that they began lathi charge and started to arrest the protesters. Liaquat Hayat, leader of Jammu Kashmir National Awami Party (JKNAP) a left wing political organisation of Stalinist tendency and Samad Shakeel leader of JKNAP's student wing of JKNSF were the first to get handcuffed and thrown into the police vehicles. In total six protesters are said to have been apprehended at the spot. Earlier on the same day, a long march from Muzaffarabad to Islamabad by adhoc employ-



ees was postponed after Prime minister Abdul Qayyum Niazi invited their leadership for negotiations. Similarly, a protest scheduled for March 3 by thousands of pensioners, most of whom are ex-army servicemen, and who were to gather in the capital city of Muzaffarabad was cancelled due to severe rain and bad weather conditions. Hardly a day passes by without a protest in PoJK against pressing social and economic issues. The situation in Pakistani occupied Gilgit Baltistan (PoGB) is no different. Since Pakistan Prime minister Imran Khan announced that PoGB will be incorporated as Pakistan's 5th provisional province on March 23 this year public unrest has become the norm. It has been 4 days since the PoGB

Awami Action Committee has conducted a sit-in in Kharmang blocking the vital Karakoram Highway since March 1. Protests against cuts in subsidies and lack of clean drinking water plus extreme load shedding has been the cause for spontaneous public unrest in all major cities and towns of PoGB. On March 3 several protests were held simultaneously in Titrinote, Dadyal, Rawalakot and Kotli city against the March 2 arrests of protesters in Rawalakot and a press conference was held in Muzaffarabad to warn the state to be ready to face grave consequences if political prisoners were not released within 24 hours. In the present day, public opinion in both occupied territories of PoJK and PoGB is decisively against Pakistan. Yet, lack of a comprehensive political programme and a visionary leadership has become a main obstacle in transforming the ongoing economic strife and the political discontent into a meaningful and collective social and political movement that could lead to social transformation and bring about fundamental political change in obtaining freedom from the clutches for Pakistani occupation.

There are three points that I would like to make and suggest a possible solution to the ongoing deadlock created due to the current dispersed form that the protests have manifested. Secondly, a political programme, based on historical facts such as the instrument of accession to the Indian Republic, signed by Maharaja Hari Singh and Lord Mountbatten on October 26, 1947, and international obligations based on the United Nations Resolutions that Pakistan must withdraw its troops from PoJK and PoGB, should be formulated and linked to the social and economic struggles currently going on in PoJK and PoGB. Finally, a consensus among all social, economic and political groups regarding direction of the way forward, should be established and followed through. This direction can only be quitting Pakistan and reunifying with Jammu and with Ladakh which in practical terms means joining the Union of the Indian Republic.

There is no doubt in my mind that the people of PoJK and PoGB are in a fighting mood. evertheless, this fighting mood could end up in frustration and defeat if it fails to rise to the event and produce visionary leadership.

(Dr Amjad Ayub Mirza is an author and a human rights activist from Mirpur in PoJK. He currently lives in exile in the UK. The views expressed are personal)

Protesting for 800 days, Amaravati farmers erupt in joy

Amaravati erupted in celebrations on Thursday after Andhra Pradesh High Court pronounced its judgment on petitions challenging Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government's decision to create three state capitals. Raising slogans of 'Jai Amaravati', farmers of the region burst crackers and distributed sweets to hail the court order. A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra directed the government to complete implementation of Amaravati capital city master plan in six months. The court also asked the government to hand over developed plots with all basic amenities to farmers within three months. The government was also asked not to alienate lands in Amaravati for any work other than development of the state capital. Farmers and women, who have been agitating for over 800 days, welcomed the judgment as vic-

tory of truth and justice. A group of women bowed down to thank the judiciary for upholding the justice. "Over 200 people have lost their lives in this protest due to a wrong decision by the government. At least now, the government should shed its arrogance and resume developing Amaravati as the only state capital," one of the women said. Farmers said the court verdict has come as a big relief for them as they were losing hopes of getting justice. They demanded that the Jagan Mohan Reddy government respect the court order and implement it without challenging it in the Supreme Court. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid foundation stone for Amaravati on October 22, 2015. Then Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu had grand plans to develop the capital. With nine theme cities, and 27 townships, Amaravati on the banks of Krishna river was planned in an

area of 217 square km as a world-class city. The Singapore government had made free master plan for capital region, capital city and seed area. It was designed not merely as an administrative capital but as an economic and job creating hub and tourism centre. The project then attracted the attention of investors from countries like Australia, Japan, Germany, Singapore and Britain. After coming to power in 2019, the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) reversed the decision of the previous Telugu Desam Party (TDP) government to develop Amaravati as the only state capital. The construction activity came to a grinding halt creating an atmosphere of uncertainty, leading to a big slump in land prices. The World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) were first to pull out of a project to fund Amaravati's development. Later, a consortium of

Singapore companies closed Amaravati Capital City Startup Project, the agreement for which was signed during the TDP rule. The government said they mutually decided to cancel the project as the consortium had failed to respond to the concerns raised. This triggered massive protest from farmers in 29 villages of Amaravati, who had given 33,000 acres of land for the capital and were hoping to reap its economic benefits. The government's decision had shattered dreams of 24,000 farmers who had voluntarily given lands ranging from half-an-acre to 50 acres. For every acre of cultivable land the farmers were promised 1000 square yards of residential plot and 250 square yards of commercial plot with all the. Almost all the farmers received the allotment papers but

their dreams of owning developed plots remained on paper with the change of guard. They were also promised Rs 50,000 annuity per acre with an annual hike of 10 per cent. In January 2020, the Andhra Pradesh and Development of All Regions Bill 2020 and the Andhra Development Authority (APCRDA) Repeal Bill 2020 were passed by the Assembly to create three capitals. Several farmers moved the High Court challenging the two Bills on the ground that they were not passed in accordance with the rules. Even as more than 75 petitions were being heard by the high court, the government in November last year repealed the two laws but made it clear that it has not gone back on its decision to develop three capitals.

international

SUICIDE BLAST IN PESHAWAR SHIA MOSQUE KILLS AT LEAST 57

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A suicide blast inside a Shia mosque shook Peshawar's Kocha Risaldar area on Friday, with hospital officials saying at least 57 bodies were brought to the Lady Reading Hospital, Dawn reported.



At least 80 people have been injured, according to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) minister Kamran Bangash. KP government spokesman Barrister Mohammad Ali Saif said at least 30 people have been killed in the explosion, which he said was a suicide attack, adding that two terrorists were involved in the attack. Capital City Police Officer (CCPO), Peshawar, Mohammad Ijaz Khan, said one police officer was martyred while Asim Khan, media manager of Lady Reading, said 30 bodies have been brought to the hospital so far. The CCPO said that

according to initial reports, two attackers tried to enter a mosque in the city's Qissa Khwani Bazaar and fired at the policemen standing guard, Dawn reported. As a result, one policeman was killed while another was critically injured, the CCPO said, adding that one of the attackers was killed in the gunfight. The remaining attacker then ran inside the mosque and detonated a bomb, he said. He said there were two attackers but only one of them was a suicide bomber. The SSP also told the media there was no "threat alert". He said it was premature to say anything about the explosives used in the

attack. "Initial investigations are underway and we can share more information later," he added. Talking to media later in the day, Barrister Saif said security was provided to mosques as a "general rule". He added that the administration had adopted security measures at this mosque as well, adding that such measures were always ensured during congregation prayers on Fridays. "Those martyred and injured in the attack would be given monetary assistance under the government's special package," he said. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

ANTI-WAR ELEMENTS IN RUSSIA THWARTED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS ON ZELENSKY

New Delhi: Ukraine

President Volodymyr Zelensky has survived at least three assassination attempts in the past week, The Times, UK, reported. Two different outfits have been sent to kill the Ukrainian President -- mercenaries of the Kremlin-backed Wagner group and Chechen special forces. Both have been thwarted by anti-war elements within Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), the report said. Wagner mercenaries in Kiev have sustained losses during their attempts and are said to have been alarmed by how accurately the Ukrainians had anticipated their moves. A source close to the group said it was "eerie" how well-briefed Zelensky's security team appeared to be, The Times reported. On Saturday, an attempt on Zelensky's life was foiled on the outskirts of Kyiv. Ukrainian security officials said a cadre of Chechen assassins had been "eliminated."



First Russian general killed in Ukraine war

Team Absolute | New Delhi

On the territory of the Chernihiv region, the armed forces of Ukraine killed Russian Major General Andrei Sukhovetsky, the Deputy Commander of the 41st Army.



This was announced by Anton Gerashchenko, the Advisor to Ukraine's Minister of Internal Affairs, UNIAN reported. "The first has left! The first Russian general has been destroyed in Ukraine. Prepare for others! Or, gentlemen generals, report to the mountain that the invasion of Ukraine is a bloody adventure that will destroy Russia if not stopped immediately!" he wrote. "Ukraine is your Afghanistan. We will not have to wait only 10 years for the collapse of Russia. We will invest in a month," Gerashchenko added. Ukraine's Defence Minister, Oleksiy Reznikov,

claimed that Ukrainian defenders stopped the enemy in most areas, the main thing now is to resist. He stated this in his address to Ukrainians, claiming that for more than 196 hours, Ukraine has been repelling the Russian occupiers. According to him, the situation in the south remains difficult, where the enemy fired on the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant in recent hours, but "the fighting spirit of the people in the

Cossack region is such that the Russian forces are doomed to defeat". "Kharkiv is an invincible fortress. All of Ukraine is watching the Russian shelling with pain. But now the whole of Europe knows that Kharkiv is not only an intellectual and industrial center, but also a proud city of brave citizens," Reznikov said, UNIAN reported. He added that fighting continues in Sumy and Chernihiv regions, which are saving Kiev from the siege.

S KOREA WINS EXEMPTION FROM US REGARDING EXPORTS TO RUSSIA

Seoul/Washington: South Korea won an exemption from the United States' expanded export restrictions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, industry ministry said on Friday. The move came as South Korea's Trade Minister Yeo Han-woo met with senior US officials in Washington on Thursday and the two sides agreed to include South Korea in the US' list of exempt countries. Last week, the US government announced the Foreign Direct Product Rule (FDPR) for "all of Russia" as part of its export controls to block Russia's access to global high-tech products and other foreign-produced major items, such as semiconductors, over the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The measure calls on companies to receive a license from the US for tech-related items using US technology before they can be shipped to Russia, which is feared to affect major South Korean exporters, as they use US technology and software, reports Yonhap news agency. "The US assessed that South Korea's sanctions against Russia are well-aligned with the international standard and announced its decision to put South Korea on the list of FDPR exempt nations," the industry ministry said in a release. Earlier this week, South Korea announced its decision to halt financial transactions with seven major Russian banks and their affiliates slapped with U.S. sanctions, joining the global move to remove Russia from the SWIFT global payment network.

MOON CASTS EARLY VOTE FOR S.KOREAN PREZ ELECTION

Seoul | Agencies

South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Friday cast his ballot as the country began the two-day early voting for the March 9 presidential election. Wearing a face mask and disposable gloves, Moon and First Lady Kim Jung-sook voted at a polling booth inside the Samcheong-dong community service centre near Cheong Wa Dae in Seoul, Yonhap News Agency reported. Earlier in the day, Moon encouraged people to cast their ballots, saying that "as the sovereign of a democratic republic, I hope all people will participate in exercising sacred voting rights". Ruling Democratic Party candidate Lee Jae-myung



and main opposition People Power Party's Yoon Suk-yeol have also cast their ballots. The presidential election comes as the nation is grappling with the worst wave of Covid-19 pandemic, driven by the highly transmissible Omicron variant. Early voting is open to

anyone who wishes to cast their ballot before Election Day. Moon said those infected with the virus can also cast their ballots. Polling stations open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. Covid-19 patients and those in quarantine will be able to

vote if they arrive at a polling station between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Saturday. More than 44 million people are eligible to vote in this year's election. This year's presidential election is being held concurrently with by-elections for five parliamentary seats.

TALIBAN OFFICIAL URGES AFGHAN INVESTORS TO RETURN

Kabul: The Taliban government

on Friday said that First Deputy Prime Minister Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar has urged Afghan investors to return to the country. He made the remarks at the Afghan National Private Sector Conference held in Kabul, the government said in a statement. "Baradar called on Afghan investors living abroad to return to the country and invest here, as security of investors and their assets will be guaranteed," Xinhua news agency quoted the statement as saying. "International sanctions are being eased day by day and we are trying to provide more facilities in industry, trade and investment, and efforts are being made to improve the economic situation," Baradar was quoted as saying. On Tuesday, the World Bank board of directors decided to unfreeze \$1 billion of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund which was frozen after the Taliban's takeover on August 15, 2021, according to Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB), the country's central bank. The DAB welcomed the move by the World Bank as a goodwill gesture, calling for further cooperation with the global financial institution in the Afghan banking and financial sectors.





MP GRAM PANCHAYATS TO DECIDE 'GAURAV DIWAS' CELEBRATION DATE

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has set a deadline for all gram panchayats in the state to decide a particular date to celebrate 'Gaurav Diwas' of villages by April 15.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has set a deadline for all gram panchayats in the state to decide a particular date to celebrate 'Gaurav Diwas' of villages by April 15.

The Chief Minister has asked panchayat representatives to ensure that each village in the state celebrates its birthday by the year end.

Gram panchayats' representatives have been asked to organise a meeting with all the people of the village and decide on a three-day programme and send it to the CM's office. Three days programme will consist of various activities for all age groups like sports activities, cultural programmes etc. Also, the gram panchayats have been asked to prepare a roadmap for the development of the villages. The Chief Minister asserted that there should be a dual roadmap of development of villages, one - using government funds, second - through collective efforts of people of villages. "Villages can't be developed without involving people. Try to understand the vision behind this proposal. If we could do this, we would set up a unique example in the country. The initiative will also set the path of economic and social growth of villages," Chouhan said.

As per the plan, the elected representatives of villages (panch and sarpanch) and the villagers will



decide a particular day to celebrate the birthday. The panchayats will decide a particular date, with its unique identification, coinciding it with any ritual, traditional, or historical value of their villages.

The gram-panchayat will hold a meeting with residents of the village and prepare a comprehensive plan for the celebration. All the people who belong to a particular village but are living in other districts, states, or countries will be invited for the event.

For instance, the Khandwa district administration has decided to celebrate Gorav Diwas on the occasion of legendary singer and actor Kishore Kumar on August 4. Khandwa is the birthplace of Kumar. It is mandatory for all gram panchayats to organise programmes and the details regarding the event will be uploaded in the government-run Panchayat Darpan portal. "If Madhya Pradesh is the body, 55,000 villages in the states are its heartbeats. It would not only give

villages their unique identification but people living far from villages will be able to reconnect with their birth places," Chouhan said. A proposal for celebrating birthday or 'Gram Gaurav Diwas' was announced by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on January 28 asserting that people living far from their villages, who have expertise in different sectors will gather under one roof and contribute in setting the path of development of their village.

FAMILY ENVIRONMENT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN: GOVERNOR

- Child Rights Protection Commissions Should Take Initiative for the Healthy Upbringing of Children in the Family
- Governor inaugurates "National Workshop with State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights"



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that family environment is very important for the healthy development of children. The mutual relationship between parents has a great impact on the child's mind. In this regard, initiative should be taken by the Commission for Protection of Child Rights regarding how to have healthy upbringing of children in the family. He said that innocent children suffer in husband-wife disputes. The family environment should be pleasant and healthy. Society should also consider this. Patel was addressing after inaugurating the workshop on "National Workshop with State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights" organised by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Union Minister of State for Women and Child Development Manjara Mahendrabhai was also present. Patel said that children are the future of the nation. Husband and wife have an important responsibility in their overall development.

The behaviour and language of family members have a profound effect on the soft psyche of children. Innocent children are most affected by parental discord and separation. He said that it is necessary to have a healthy and pleasant family environment for a strong nation. The Amrit Mahotsav of Azadi is an opportunity to acquaint the youth with the pride of Indian culture. We shall have to make efforts from now for what our country will be like when 100 years of independence will be completed. Efforts should also be made to acquaint the younger generation with the struggle and sacrifice made by our ancestors for freedom. Union Minister Mahendrabhai said that the Constitution has given equal rights to all, including children, without any discrimination. Along with this, special provisions have also been made for the holistic development of women and children. Effective efforts are being made by the government in this direction through the commission. Workshops on child rights are being organised in different parts of the

country. He said that he is a heart specialist physician by profession. He has come for the first time to Madhya Pradesh, the heartland of the country. The intimacy of the people of the state has impressed him a lot.

In his welcome address, Chairman of the Commission, Priyank Kanungo said that a workshop has been organised for healthy brainstorming on the topic of child rights and protection. About one and half lakh children who have lost their parents or one of them during the Covid outbreak are being brought up in a family environment under the protection of the Commission. To protect children from drugs, the commission has taken the initiative to get CCTV cameras installed at medical stores. Arrangements have been made for street children as per "Standard Operating Procedure to Point Zero." The vote of thanks was given by the Member Secretary of the commission, Rupali Banerjee Singh. Officials of the children's commission from 27 states were present in the workshop.

Trade promotion counselling formed under CM's chairmanship

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Trade Promotion Council' has been constituted under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, to increase the share of the state in national and international trade, to encourage exports and to formulate policy regarding employment generation. This Council will also formulate policy regarding quality enhancement and value addition of selected products as per national and international trade.

Ministers of Finance, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Forest, Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion, Transport, Tourism, Science and Technology, Horticulture and Food Processing, Cottage and Village Industries, Agriculture, Technical Education and Skill Development and Labour Department will be members in the Council.

Deputy Chairman and Chief Secretary of MP State Planning Commission, representatives of state level institutions of Agriculture and Food Processing, Pharmaceutical, Textile and Garment, Auto Mobile and Engineering and IT etc. Sectors and State Export Commissioner (Managing Director MPIDC) have also been made members in the Council. The Principal Secretary will be the member secretary of the Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion Council. The Trade Promotion Council will give approval primarily on the agenda presented by the Working Committee. Along with this, policy formulation, approval of five-year/annual action plan and budget, approval of plan for export of specific products, directions for amending the rules/policy in view of the problems of exporters, sending suggestions to the Government of India to encourage exports and reviewing the work being done for export promotion will also be done.

CM PAYS FLORAL TRIBUTES TO OF LALA HARDAYAL AND VK SAKHLECHA

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan remembered freedom fighter Lala Hardayal on his death anniversary. Chouhan paid floral tribute by garlanding his picture in the auditorium at his residence office. Chouhan also paid homage to former Chief Minister of the state, Late Virendra Kumar Sakhlecha on his birth anniversary. Chouhan garlanded his portrait in the auditorium at his residence office.

Lala Hardayal was one of the leading revolutionaries of the Indian freedom struggle, who inspired and encouraged Indians living abroad to contribute to the country's freedom struggle. He was born on October 14, 1884 in Delhi. He went to America and founded the Gadar Party. Lala Hardayal propagated the non-cooperation movement by establishing Deshbhakt Samaj



(patriotic society) in London. He founded the Young Man India Association parallel to the 'YMCA'. Lala Hardayal gave several lectures on Hindu philosophy at the University of California. American intellectuals used to call him a Hindu saint, sage and freedom fighter.

In 1912, he was appointed Honorary Professor of Hindu philosophy and Sanskrit at Stanford University. While living there, he also published Gadar magazine. Lala Hardayal passed away on March 4, 1939 in Philadelphia, USA. Chouhan also paid homage to

former Chief Minister of the state, Late Virendra Kumar Sakhlecha on his birth anniversary. Chouhan garlanded his portrait in the auditorium at his residence office.

Sakhlecha was born on March 4, 1930 in Jawad tehsil of Mandasaur. He received his education from Banaras Hindu University. In the year 1957, Sakhlecha won the election and became an MLA and was made the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly. In the year 1967, he was also the Deputy Chief Minister in the government of Govind Narayan Singh. Sakhlecha was the Chief Minister of the state from January 18, 1978 to January 19, 1980. Sakhlecha reduced the problems of the villagers by getting the village secretariat opened in the village panchayats and making the patwaris, gram sevaks, samiti sevaks of the cooperative institution and the panchayat secretary sit together. He passed away on May 31, 1999.

CM PLANTS SAPLINGS OF KARANJ AND GULMOHAR

Team Absolute | Bhopal



Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday planted saplings of Karanj and Gulmohar in Smart Park. Along with Chouhan, State Editor of Patrika Newspaper Group Vijay Chaudhary and members of Hobby Club, Bhopal, Ayushi Shrivastava, Shri Devendra Prakash Tiwari and Sudhir Pandya also planted saplings.

The members of the Hobby Club dedicated to environmental protection organise small exhibitions in schools, colleges and public institutions to create awareness among children and the general public about cleanliness and environment. Club member Ayushi

Shrivastava made Ganpati collection, Devendra Prakash Tiwari made Kabad se Jugaad (makeshift arrangement from junk) and Sudhir Pandya registered his name in the Limca Book of Record by celebrating the birthday of Neem tree and depositing the amount in odd numbers in the bank.

The Karanj planted today is considered important in Ayurvedic medicine. Karanj is also used in religious works. Gulmohar is considered one of the most beautiful trees in the world. Flowers blooming in big bunches among the leaves of Gulmohar give a distinct attraction to this tree. In summer, instead of leaves, Gulmohar trees are laden with flowers. It is also rich in medicinal properties.

PROJECT WILL BE CONSIDERED COMPLETE ONLY WHEN THERE IS 24X7 WATER SUPPLY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Managing Director of Madhya Pradesh Urban Development Company Nikunj Kumar Shrivastava reviewed the projects to be completed in the months of March and June this year. He said that any water supply project would be considered complete only when water supply would start in the city for 24 hours a week. The target is to complete 32 projects being executed by the company in March and 31 projects in June. These projects include water supply, sewerage and mini smart city works. Shrivastava said that it should be ensured that every house has metered tap connection. All water supply projects should be technically capable of

supplying water. Shrivastava expressed displeasure for the delay in water supply projects Kasrawad, Ganjbasoda and Maihar mini smart city projects and Chitrakot and Amarkantak sewerage projects. He directed the concerned contractors to complete the work fast. Managing Director Shri Shrivastava directed to ensure that the work is completed on time. This is the last chance otherwise action would be taken as per the provisions of the contract.

Additional Managing Director Ruchika Chauhan, Engineer in chief Deepak Ratnawat and Chief Engineer Vijay Gupta, all Project Managers, Team Leaders and Contractors of Project Management Consultancy Firm were present.

PURPOSE OF RERA ACT IS TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF ALLOTTEES

Bhopal: The objective of the RERA Act is to protect the interests of the colonizers as well as allottees in the real estate sector. Till the year 2016, the allottees had to approach civil and consumer courts against the colonizer to fight for their rights. RERA rule came into force in Madhya Pradesh from 2017. These have been made more consistent with partial reforms in the year 2021.

Secretary RERA Neeraj Dubey has told that land is important in the cost of the project, so the colonizer gets the benefit of the cost of land and the expenditure incurred for project approval. These provisions are already there in the rules.

The opening of the account in the name of the project is the most important point of the Act. Seventy percent of the amount received from the allottees is deposited in this account. This amount is deposited so that if the colonizer does not complete the project work on time, then RERA can use this amount to complete the work. Recently spent 70 percent of the project amount which was about Rs 80 crore in this account by a big colonizer of Bhopal for non-project purpose. RERA has imposed a fine of about Rs. 4 crore 50 lakh against the concerned colonizer in this case. In addition, the registration of the project has also been cancelled.

On the one hand while RERA expects work from the colonizer as per rules, on the other hand it also bears the responsibility of protecting the interests of the allottees. Show cause notices have been issued in 41 cases this year. With this move of RERA, where the allottees will get protection, at the same time he can take the decision not to register in guilty colonizers new projects.

VOTERS CAN PARTICIPATE IN AWARENESS COMPETITION TILL MARCH 15: SHRI RAJAN

Bhopal: Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan has informed that 'My Vote is My Future - Power of One Vote' competition is being organized by the Election Commission of India for voter awareness and importance of each vote. Any citizen can participate in the competition till March 15. Information regarding the contest can be obtained from <https://ecisveep.nic/contest/>. Many attractive prizes have also been kept in the competition for the participants. Rajan has appealed to the citizens and students to participate in the competition for voter awareness. Deputy Chief Electoral Officer Pramod Kumar Shukla informed that project work has been included in the curriculum of first year undergraduate students in the new education system. Under this, 10 students of Sarojini Naidu Government Girls Post Graduate (Autonomous) College, Shivaji Nagar, Bhopal are doing 60 hours of project work from 28 February to 23 March under the coordination of Professor Renu Patidar in the office of the Chief Electoral Officer. In the project work, 8 girl students who participated in the quiz competition on March 3, were given e-certificates and golden/silver badges by the Commission.

DALIT WOMAN STOPPED FROM ENTERING TEMPLE, PRIEST HELD

The incident happened on the occasion of Mahashivratri but the local police took action after a video of the incident went viral on social media on Thursday. In the video, the three could be heard abusing the woman for her caste.

Team Absolute | Khargone

A priest has been arrested for preventing a 31-year-old Dalit woman from entering a Shiv temple in Khargone district on March 1, on the occasion of Mahashivratri, police said.

A case has been registered against three people including priest Shankar Pujari, Manju Patidar and an unidentified woman, under section 505 (2) (statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes) of IPC and under relevant sections of the SC/ST (prevention of atrocities) Act, according to Siddharth Chaudhary, superintendent of police, Khargone. All of them are residents of Temla village.

The priest has been arrested and both the women are absconding, he added. The incident happened on the occasion of Mahashivratri but the local police took action after a video of the incident went viral on social media on Thursday. In the video, the three could be heard abusing the woman for her caste. "The complainant Pooja Khande and her friend Shivani Khande, residents of Temla village, had gone to worship at a Shiv Temple on March 1. But when they tried to enter the temple, the priest stopped them and said they could not enter the temple as a special pooja of the Patidar community was going on. Pooja insisted on entering but the two women including Manju Patidar

abused her and said Dalits could not worship with them," Chaudhary said.

Shivani Khande shot the video. The police got to know about the incident on Thursday. A police team visited the village and registered a FIR against all three who stopped the woman from entering the temple. "I kept trying and also said the Constitution had given us equal rights so how could they stop me from entering the temple but they didn't listen to me and kept abusing me. I entered the temple forcefully and offered pooja," Pooja Khande said.

Khande, who is studying for her BA second year, said she didn't do anything for publicity but she fought

for her rights. "I don't want to say anything more than this," she added.

This is not the first incident when members of the scheduled caste have been stopped from entering the temple. Last year in Indore, nine people were booked for stopping a Dalit groom from entering a temple. Dalit rights activist, Sunil Astay, said, "The incidents of atrocities and discrimination against the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people are increasing by the day. In many temples in Malwa, Nimar and Bundelkhand region, the entry of Dalits is banned. We are fighting against this social evil but the state government should also take strict action against it to save the rights of scheduled caste and tribe people."



Oscars: Lady Gaga, Zoe Kravitz, Kevin Costner Among Presenters

Los Angeles | Agencies

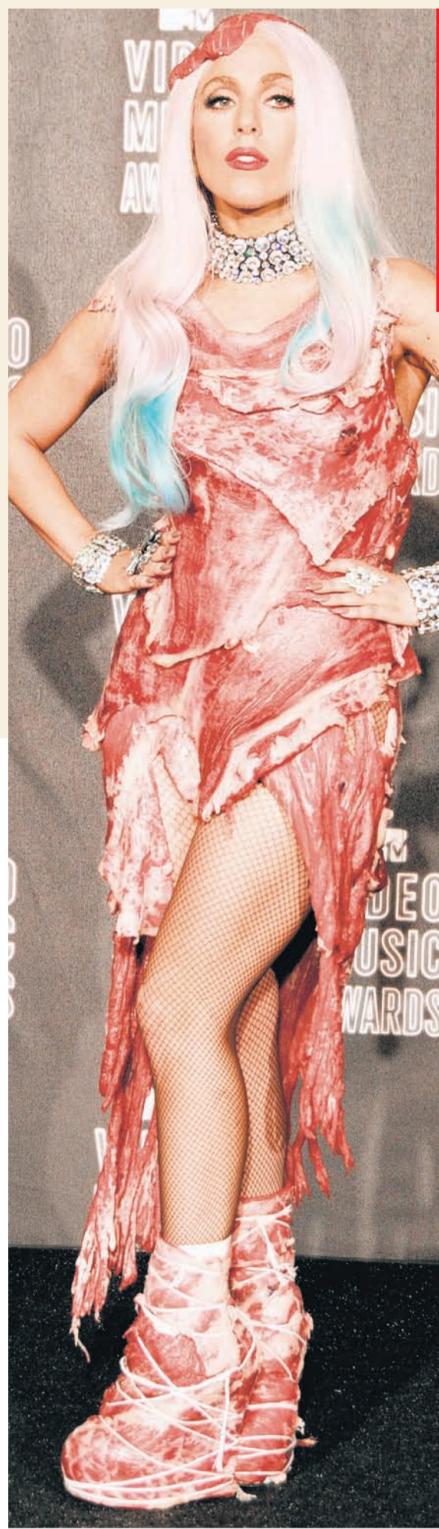
The Oscars announced Thursday the first six presenters for the 94th Academy Awards. The list so far includes Kevin Costner (director winner for 1990's 'Dances With Wolves'), Lady Gaga (original song winner for 2018's 'A Star is Born'), Youn Yuh-jung (supporting actress winner for 2020's 'Minari'), Rosie Perez (supporting actress nominee for 1993's 'Fearless'), Chris Rock ('Everybody Hates Chris') and Zoe Kravitz ('The Batman'), reports variety.com.

"Movies inspire us, entertain us and unite us across the globe," said Oscars producer Will Packer.

"That's the precise goal of the show this year, and we're thrilled to welcome the first of a stellar lineup joining the Oscars stage to help us celebrate the power of film and honour the year's best in filmmaking."

Last year's ceremony went without a host, in what the Academy called an "ensemble" format. This year's ceremony will be hosted by the comic trio of Wanda Sykes, Amy Schumer and Regina Hall, with additional presenters to be announced in the coming weeks.

On Wednesday, Gaga also signed on to co-host the Elton John AIDS Foundation Academy Awards viewing party with Billy Porter, Eric McCormack and David Furnish. The 94th Oscars will air live on March 27 and will be held at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood.



SKYLAR ASTIN JOINS CAST OF 'GREY'S ANATOMY' FOR 18TH SEASON

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor-singer Skylar Astin has been signed in a recurring role for the medical drama 'Grey's Anatomy'.

Skylar's arc will begin later this month, in the March 24 episode titled 'Put the Squeeze on Me', reports Variety. The representatives from television network ABC told Variety that Astin is set to play the character Todd Eames.

Providing the logline to the character, the representatives further said: "Charming and handsome with a gentle soul, Eames holds a PhD in environmental sciences and loves a good spreadsheet. He is close with his sister,

who is a pregnant patient at Grey Sloan Memorial." Astin gained recognition as a musical theatre actor, for his role of Georg in the coming-of-age musical 'Spring Awakening'. He starred as Jesse in 'Pitch Perfect' (2012) and 'Pitch Perfect 2' and on television, he was on both the much-loved 'Crazy Ex-Girlfriend' and 'Zoe's Extraordinary Playlist'. 'Grey's Anatomy', which is in its 18th season, continues to be the No. 1 show for ABC in the 18-to-49 demographic. The show was renewed in January for a 19th season. The original starcast of Ellen Pompeo, Chandra Wilson and James Pickens Jr. is all set to return with the upcoming season.

JACK HARLOW TO STAR IN 'WHITE MEN CAN'T JUMP' REMAKE

Los Angeles: Grammy-nominated rapper Jack Harlow is making his feature film debut in 'White Men Can't Jump', a remake of the 1992 sports comedy. Charles Kidd II, known professionally as Calmatic, is directing the reboot from a script by 'Black-ish' creator Kenya Barris and Doug Hall. In the new take on 'White Men Can't Jump', Harlow is playing the role that Woody Harrelson portrayed in the original film, reports variety.com.

That movie, written and directed by Ron Shelton, starred Wesley Snipes and Harrelson as street basketball hustlers who begin at odds with each other and then team up for a bigger game. The filmmakers are currently in the process of finding the actor to fill the role originated by Snipes. They are also auditioning people to portray Harlow's character's longtime girlfriend, an aspiring 'Jeopardy!' contestant played by Rosie Perez in the 1992 film.

Barris is producing the film through his company Khalabo Ink Society. Brooklyn Nets basketball star Blake Griffin, Ryan Kalil and Noah Weinstein will serve as executive producers through their label Mortal Media. Hall and E. Brian Dobbins will also executive produce. Harlow recently showed off his basketball chops in this year's NBA All-Star Weekend's Celebrity Game, but it was his audition that sealed the deal and won over the filmmaking team behind the movie.



PATTINSON WORE GEORGE CLOONEY'S BATMAN SUIT: ZOE KRAVITZ

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Zoe Kravitz says Robert Pattinson wore George Clooney's Batman costume during their screen test with sweatpants.

The 33-year-old actress told host Jimmy that the 35-year-old actor - who plays Bruce Wayne in the new Matthew Reeves movie - was "wearing sweatpants at the bottom," before labelling the look "casual Batman".

Kravitz admitted it was "weird" to see the sight, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She said: "Oh, that's Rob dressed as Batman, that's weird. He was so wonderful that I totally forgot it was him." The 'Big Little Lies' star called making the movie "wild" and a "long journey" due to COVID-19 shutting down the production for half a year.

In addition, Kravitz gave an insight her "method" approach of watching cat videos for getting into her character, Catwoman, the alias of Selina Kyle.

She said: "I watched a bunch of cat, feline videos, watching them fight and I was so interested in the fact that you can't believe their face at all, which is why I think people are kind of creeped out by them. You can't tell what they are going to do."

Kravitz urged movie-goers to see the DC Comics adaptation on "the big screen" with family and friends while calling the flick "intense".

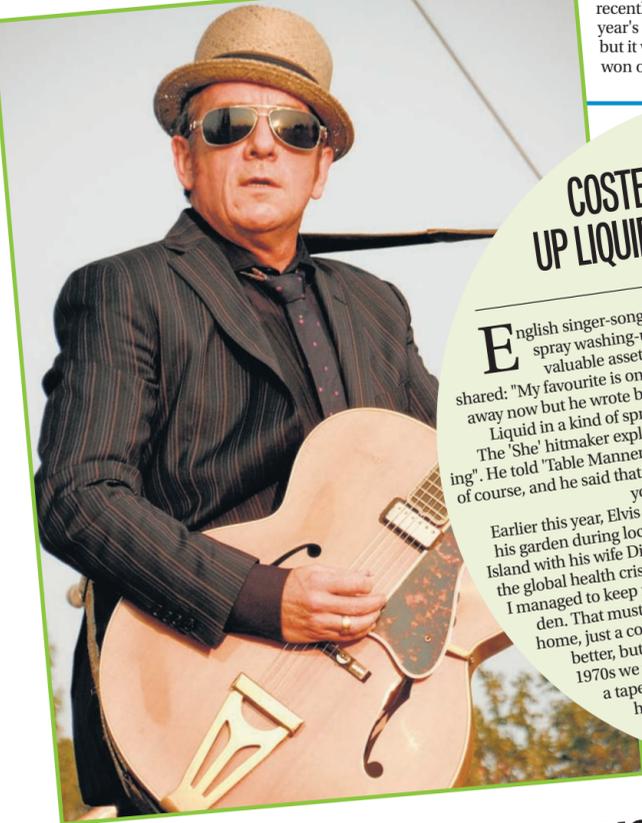
Kravitz said: "It's definitely something you want to watch on a big screen. It's definitely something you want to watch with people but it's an intense film."

ELVIS COSTELLO USES WASHING-UP LIQUID TO PROTECT HIS VOICE

London | Agencies

English singer-songwriter Elvis Costello was once advised by an expert to spray washing-up liquid into his mouth as a way of preserving his most valuable asset. Recalling the advice he's received during his career, he shared: "My favourite is one a renowned throat doctor told me years ago - he's passed away now but he wrote books about the voice. He told me (to try) one drop of Fairy Liquid in a kind of spray you use to spray your flowers to keep greenly away." The 'She' hitmaker explained that the washing-up liquid "stops the cords from sticking". He told 'Table Manners' with Jessie and Lennie Ware: "One drop of dish soap, diluted of course, and he said that stops the cords from sticking. You spray it into your mouth but you can't taste it because it's so diluted."

Earlier this year, Elvis revealed he kept his voice in good condition by performing in his garden during lockdown. The music star lives in New York and on Vancouver Island with his wife Diana Krall, and explained how he kept his voice "in trim" amid the global health crisis. He said: "During the morning I like to work on new songs. I managed to keep my voice in trim over the past year by performing in the garden. That must have freaked out the neighbours. I don't have a studio at home, just a computer. It's very easy to bang on about the old days being better, but I can compose on a laptop just as easily. "Back in the 1970s we were recording albums in poky London studios using a tape machine. If I dreamt up a song then I had to keep humming the tune until I was close enough to a guitar to write the chords down."



KAL PENN JOINS 'SANTA CLAUSE' LIMITED SERIES

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Kal Penn has joined the 'Santa Clause' limited series at Disney Plus, Variety has confirmed.

The series, which was announced on January 14, will see Tim Allen once again play Santa Claus/Scott Calvin and Elizabeth Mitchell reprising her role as Scott's wife, Carol Calvin, also known as Mrs Claus.

Mitchell first played the part in 'The Santa Clause 2' and did so again in 'The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause', reports variety.com.

In the series, Scott Calvin is on the brink of his 65th birthday and realising that he can't be Santa forever. He's starting to lose a step in his Santa duties, and more importantly, he's got a family who could benefit from a life in the normal world, especially his two kids who have grown up at the Pole. With a lot of elves, children and family to please, Scott sets out to find a suitable replacement Santa while

preparing his family for a new adventure in a life south of the pole.

Penn has been cast as Simon Choksi. An ambitious game inventor and product developer, and a devoted single father, Simon can talk the tech mogul talk but can't walk the walk, and his dreams of being the next Bezos fall drastically short. But all that changes after a visit to the North Pole.

Jack Burditt, who created the Allen-led comedy series 'Last Man Standing', will serve as executive producer and showrunner on 'The Santa Clause' series.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Kara Del Toro



1ST TEST: PANT, VIHARI FIFTIES POWER INDIA TO A FORMIDABLE 357/6 AGAINST SRI LANKA

Mohali | Agencies

Half-centuries hit in contrasting styles by Rishabh Pant (96 off 97 balls) and Hanuma Vihari (58 off 128 balls) powered India to a formidable 357/6 against Sri Lanka on day one of the opening Test at the IS Bindra PCA Stadium on Friday. It was a day where all the Indian batters got starts after Rohit Sharma won the toss and elected to bat first, but could not translate into big scores, except Pant and Vihari. Sri Lanka stopped Virat Kohli from reaching a fifty in his landmark 100th Test but couldn't stop Vihari and Pant from making a big impact with the bat. Their bowling attack, which had three seamers and one specialist spinner, was in com-



plete contrast to the three spinners and two pacers picked by India on a pitch that had grass all over except the full-length area. India were quick in racing to 62/1 at the end of the first

hour in a totally dominant show by the opening pair of Rohit Sharma and Mayank Agarwal. The duo made the most of the wayward line and length from Sri Lanka bowlers, who struggled with

keeping the run-flow and no-balls in check. But Sharma fell while trying to pull off Lahiru Kumara to fine leg. Vihari, coming in at number three for the first time in Tests, began well with delightful shots on both sides of the wicket. Vihari reached his fifty in 93 balls with a single through fine leg. Kohli, with his 38th run, brought up his 8000th run in Test cricket with a neat single through point. It made Kohli the second player after Australia's Ricky Ponting to reach 8000 runs in the 100th Test.

The 90-run partnership between Vihari and Kohli came to an end as Embuldeniya got the latter out for 45. Pant, promoted to five in order to counter Embuldeniya, walloped the left-arm spinner over long-on and added a 53-run partnership with Shreyas Iyer to take

India out of a tricky situation. Sri Lanka got a much-needed breakthrough soon after taking the second new ball as Pant fell short of his century by just four runs. Pant, who made 46 in his last 22 balls, tried to defend on the backfoot with no footwork off Suranga Lakmal but the ball went through the gate to clip the off-stump bail. Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin slammed five fours to maintain India's comfortable hold on day one. At stumps, Jadeja was batting on 45 and Ashwin on 10.

Brief scores:

India 357/6 in 85 overs (Rishabh Pant 96, Hanuma Vihari 58; Lasith Embuldeniya 2/107, Dhananjaya de Silva 1/47) against Sri Lanka

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

West Indies defeat New Zealand in thriller



Mount Maunganui | Agencies

A superb all-round display from West Indies' dependable player Hayley Matthews -- 119 off 128 balls and 2/41 -- helped the side score a nerve-wracking three-run victory over hosts New Zealand in the opening match of the ICC Women's World Cup at the Bay Oval here on Friday.

The top-order batter first helped her side score a fighting 259/9 in the allotted 50 overs and then returned to take the prized wicket of Amelia Kerr and Brooke Halliday to emerge the 'Player of the Match'. New Zealand skipper Sophie Devine's sensational century kept the hosts' chase on track for the most part but West Indies fought

back brilliantly towards the end to put the first points on the 2022 ICC Women's Cricket World Cup table. Katey Martin and Jess Kerr's quick-fire 40-run partnership brought it down to run-a-ball for the last over but Deandra Dottin's dramatic over changed the fortunes in no time. Dottin, bowling her first over of the game, held her nerve to pick two wickets and effect a run-out as West Indies emerged victorious.

Brief scores:

Brief scores: West Indies 259/9 in 50 overs (Hayley Matthews 119, Chedean Nation 36, Stafanie Taylor 30; Lea Tahuhu 3/57, Jess Kerr 2/43) beat New Zealand 256 in 49.5 overs (Sophie Devine 108, Amy Satterthwaite 31, Katey Martin 44; Hayley Matthews 2/41, Anisa Mohammed 2/60, Deandra Dottin 2/2) by three runs.

Late goal sees Betis into Copa del Rey final against Valencia

Madrid | Agencies

An injury time goal by Real Betis striker Borja Iglesias gave his side a 1-1 tie against Rayo Vallecano in their Copa del Rey semi-final second leg, securing Betis a 3-2 aggregate win and a place in the final of the Copa del Rey against Valencia. Betis went into the game as clear favourites to qualify for the final after their 2-1 win at the Vallecas in the first leg, coupled with the fact that Rayo have the worst away record in La Liga, but the first half certainly didn't confirm those expectations as both sides swapped attacks in an open game. Despite the open game and the fast, high-energy football, goalscoring chances were in short supply, with Luca Zidane's save to frustrate Juanmi's header the only shot on target, although the Rayo keeper had to be attentive after Alex Moreno's deflected cross after the Betis



left-back had raced into the Rayo area, Xinhua reports. The second half began with Rayo's Sergi Guardiola setting up Pape Ciss to volley over at one end, before at the other end the impressive William Carvalho saw Ciss deflect his 25-meter shot just wide. As the second half progressed, Rayo began to tire and their need for a goal saw

them commit more players forward and Betis began to find spaces on the break. Just as it looked as if the game was Betis' for the taking, Rayo substitute Bebe levelled the aggregate score with a spectacular 30-metre free kick, before Iglesias scored the decisive goal for Betis to send the home fans into ecstasy.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India got off to a strong start against Denmark in the Davis Cup World Group Playoff 1 tie with Ramkumar Ramanathan and Yuki Bhambri giving the hosts a comprehensive 2-0 lead at the Delhi Gymkhana Club here on Friday. Ramkumar set the stage with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Denmark's Christian Sigsgaard in the first singles before Bhambri tamed Mikael Torpegaard 6-4, 6-4 to give India a brilliant start in the two-day match.

The match between Bhambri and Torpegaard enthralled the Indian fans at the DGC after the Indian ranked World No. 590 displayed some wonderful groundstrokes early on, while the 305th-ranked Torpegaard took little time to acclimatise to the pace and bounce of the courts. The Indian player won the match in straight sets against the 27-year-old Torpegaard in 1 hour 27 minutes. Bhambri made full use of his home advantage and was aggressive from the beginning. He started the match with the opening serve and both players held onto their serve till 4-4 in



the first set. However, things changed when Torpegaard could not hold onto his serve in the ninth game. This allowed Bhambri to take a 5-4 lead. In the next game, he did not give any points to Torpegaard and took the first set with a perfect slice at the net. In the second set, Bhambri who smashed only 3 aces, displayed his 'slice and touch' skills on the net while Torpegaard, who was struggling with his first serve, made two double faults. The 27-year-old Torpegaard was trying very hard to hit more aces but in the process, he served seven double faults. However, he managed

to save two match points in the last game, but in the end, he gave up and lost the match. Earlier in the first singles, Ramkumar gave India a perfect start after defeating lowly-ranked Christian Sigsgaard in the first singles, 6-3, 6-2 in just 59 minutes. World No. 170, Ramkumar was at his best from the first game, breaking the service of his 24-year-old opponent regularly and grabbing points with ease. The 27-year-old Ramkumar caught the world No. 824 Christian off-guard from the beginning and took the lead in the very first game. He raced to 5-2

in no time and sealed the first set with a beautifully-crafted backhand stroke. In the second set, both players held their serves, but Ramkumar, who hit five aces during the match, broke the Dane in the third game and took a 2-1 lead. After that, the winner of the Adelaide trophy this year broke Christian's serve two times in a row, and completely took control of the match. Christian tried hard to come back into the match, but Ramkumar did not give him many opportunities and won the second set with an ace.

SHOOTING WORLD CUP

Debutant Rhythm Sangwan best-placed Indian after Precision round

Cairo | Agencies

The Indian women's 25m pistol squad comprising of Olympian Rahi Sarnobat, Esha Singh and Rhythm Sangwan will attempt to reach the finals of the individual event on competition Day 6 of the ISSF World Cup (Rifle/Pistol) here on Friday. The first 'Precision round' held on Thursday will be followed by the 'Rapid Fire round' before the top-eight make it through to the final stages. Rhythm Sangwan, yet another senior India debutant in this World Cup, returned the best score at the end of the 'Precision round', firing 289/300 to be placed eighth in the 54-strong field. She upstaged the seasoned Sarnobat, who shot 284 to lie 27th



while the in-form Esha Singh, who already has two medals from the competition, shot 283 to lie at 30th spot. World and Olympic champion Anna Korakaki is leading the field with a solid 294. In men's 50m rifle 3-positions (3P) qualification rounds, none of India's Kiran Ankush Jadhav, Akhil Sheoran or Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, could make it through to the final stages. Both the women's 25m pistol and the men's 3P finals are scheduled later on Friday. India still lead the medals tally with two gold and a silver. Over 500 athletes from 60 nations have entered to take part in the Cairo World Cup which has 20 medal sets on offer.

World No 1 Barty withdraws from Indian Wells and Miami

Canberra | Agencies

World No. 1 Ashleigh Barty has withdrawn from the upcoming WTA 1000 hard court events -- BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells, California and the Miami Open, citing a need for ongoing recovery after winning the Australian Open. Indian Wells begins next week and had she played there, it would have been Barty's first appearance in California since 2019. On the other hand, the Miami Open, where the Australian ace is the two-time defending champion, begins on March 21. "I wanted to share an update on my schedule for the coming months. Unfortunately my body has not recovered the way I'd hoped after the Australian



Open and I have not been able to adequately prepare for Indian Wells and Miami. I don't believe I am at the level necessary to win these events and as a result, I have decided to withdraw from both tournaments," read a statement from Barty on WTA's official website. "I love these events and am sad not to be there competing but getting my body right must be my focus," she added. Barty's withdrawal means that Indian Wells will be

without both players who made the women's final at the season's first major as another Australian Open finalist Danielle Collins, the top-ranked American in the women's rankings at No. 11, has also withdrawn from the tournament due to a continuing injury. However, Barty is hopeful to be back to represent Australia at the Billie Jean King Cup qualifying event, which begins April 15. Australia is set to play a home tie against Slovakia.

India wins historic bronze in women's 20km race walk team championships

Muscat (Oman) | Agencies

India bagged their first-ever medal in the World Athletics Race Walking Team Championships 2022 on Friday, winning a bronze medal in the women's 20km race walking team competition. This is India's first medal in the 61-year history of the World Athletics Race Walking Team Championships. The Indian team of Bhawna Jat, Ravina and Munita Prajapati finished third behind China and Greece to win the bronze medal. Lithuania finished fourth in the standings. Ravina produced the best finish by an Indian in the women's 20km event at



Muscat, with 14th place in 1:40:22. The experienced Bhawna Jat was 21st with a time of 1:43:08 and 20-year-old Munita Prajapati finished 26th at 1:45:03. Earlier in the day, India's top U20 men's race walker Amit Khatri suffered heartbreak when he was disqualified with four red cards, when in sight of a dramatic victory in U20 men's 10km race. Despite the disqualification, Amit will have learnt lessons and drawn heart from how he moved up from 10th place after the

opening kilometre and 11th place among a tight group of walkers at the halfway stage. Reshma Patel finished 23rd in the U20 women's 10km event in 53 minutes 10 seconds after doing well to stay with the leaders over the first 4km. The two yellow paddles from judges in the 3rd kilo. The 17-year-old from Dehradun dropped more positions even before she was given a one-minute stop at the penalty zone for having drawn her third red card in the 9th kilometre.

AUSTRALIAN CRICKET LEGEND ROD MARSH PASSES AWAY AT 74

Adelaide: The cricket world lost a legend as former Australia wicketkeeper Rod Marsh passed away on Friday aged 74. Marsh had suffered a massive heart attack in Queensland last week and was in an induced coma at the Royal Adelaide Hospital until his death. The Australia great played 96 Tests for his country, scoring three Test centuries and famously claiming a then world record of 355 dismissals for a wicketkeeper behind the stumps. Marsh was a key part of a formidable combination with feared fast bowler Dennis Lillee and the 'caught Marsh, bowled Lillee' dismissal is still the most common way a batter has been dismissed in the history of Test cricket, ICC said. Following a glittering 14-year international career as a player, Marsh played a major role in grooming young stars such as former Australian captain Ricky Ponting and pace bowler Brett Lee at the Australian Cricket Academy (ACA) in Adelaide.

Sports world mourns legendary Shane Warne's death

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Tributes came pouring in as the sporting world mourned the death of Australian cricket legend Shane Warne in Thailand on Friday evening. Former England footballer and sports broadcaster Gary Lineker led the tributes on Twitter, writing, "Terribly saddened and shocked to hear the news that Shane Warne has died. The greatest spin bowler of all time. Can't quite believe it. RIP Shane." Fellow footballer Stan Collymore followed Lineker as he tweeted, "My goodness, Shane Warne has died. 52 years old, this is truly awful news. Rest in Peace Ledge." The news has clearly affected the entire sporting world and the loss will undoubtedly be felt by the



cricketing community, particularly the Australian cricket community. As per a statement given to Fox News by Warne's management firm, the leg-spinner passed away in Thailand of a suspected heart attack. Graeme Fowler, who played in 21 Test matches for England,

wrote: "RIP Shane Warne. The greatest spinner ever, and fantastic company." "The brightest lights burn out faster." Indian Cricket team opener Shikhar Dhawan echoed Fowler's sentiment, "Sad, speechless, and completely shocked. An incredible loss to cricket. I have no words. Thank you for everything you've done for the sport. Rest in Peace, Shane Warne. Sending my condolences to his loved ones." Former Indian cricketer Wasim Jaffer too expressed his sorrow at the news, writing, "Whenever he came to the wicket, change came over the game of Cricket. My mind just cannot accept that Shane Warne is no more. Gone too soon. Thoughts and prayers with his family and friends...RIP Warne."

TRYING NOT TO TAKE ANY PRESSURE: POOJA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

There is no denying that she is one of the most popular and busiest actresses in Tollywood and Bollywood. Her much-awaited film Radhe Shyam is all set to hit the theatres on 11 March. The actress will be seen sharing screen space with Pan Indian Star Prabhas.

Touted to be science fiction, Radhe Shyam is set in 1970s Europe and Prabhas will be seen playing the role of a palmist and Pooja Hegde will be playing his love interest.

In an interview Pooja Hegde opened up about her belief in astrology. She said, "I strongly believe in science and astrology as Indian sciences have a lot of power and meaning. I had also taken advice related to my career. Apart from this I strongly believe in the magical powers that lie in our hands and creating our own destiny by working hard."

Talking about if she had any apprehensions being overshadowed by Prabhas Pooja quipped, "I always feel that God throws these challenges in my life. Either he makes me dance next to Hritik Roshan or Allu Arjun or be it my first ever ad with Ranbir Kapoor. It was my first moving image in my life and it was opposite Ranbir Kapoor. I feel like God has been prepping me every single day to be able to do this film because eventually I feel nobody can be your biggest motivator except for you. Other thing that helped me was studying my character and I think what helped was I studied the character which in turn made my exam easier. While working with Prabhas I was trying not to take the pressure and I was trying to give my all to the character and that is the only I can deal with it."

PRABHAS: THE ONLY PROBLEM IS MY HINDI HAS A HYDERABADI TOUCH

Aakruti Bagla | Mumbai

Pan India Star Prabhas who has enthralled us with his performances his larger-than-life films like Bahubali 1 and 2 and Sahoo is all set to entertain us yet again with his film Radhe Shyam. Prabhas will be seen essaying the role of a palmist which is vastly different from his usual action-hero outings. The superstar will be seen romancing Pooja Hegde in Radhe Shyam, which is scheduled to release on March 11.

In an exclusive interview Prabhas spoke about this excitement about the release of movie in theatre and his belief in astrology.

Talking about the release of the movie on the big screen, the actor says that it is exciting to be back on screen after a long gap because of covid.

Talking about the pressure on being a Pan India star Prabhas said, "Yaa there is definitely a lot of pressure definitely when so many people love you. Like from Telugu, few people from country like it is very beautiful and a lot stress definitely because if you do a film and you selected some script and it should be right. And script is like an ocean. If some point goes wrong and something big goes wrong. So yaa it's definitely a stressful job."

He also opened up on being criticized for his Hindi diction.

He said, "I worked a lot on it. I can read and write Hindi. I prefer reading my dialogues in Hindi rather than English as the pronunciation gets affected. The only problem is my Hindi has a Hyderabad touch, and at home, we don't speak in that language. But we do watch a lot of Hindi films and listen to Hindi songs. But when you speak at home you become more better."



YOU UNDERSTAND THINGS BY OBSERVATION: KRITI SANON

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amongst the top on the list of Bollywood heroines, Kriti Sanon is all set to deliver a full on masala entertainer alongside Akshay Kumar in her next, Bachchan Paandey as Myra Devekar. Talking about playing a director in her next, Kriti shares, "As an actor, once you have gone through a certain number of films, you soak in more than you think, just by observing and looking around, you start understanding how the directors make their vision come alive, their process and mannerisms. And I have seen so many talented directors at work, it feels like it was sort of easier for me to pick from them."

The Mimi star adds, "A direc-

tor's in control of everything on the set as he/she is the captain of the ship. So my main pick point on Myra was that this girl is very much in control and she is stuck in a place where situations get out of control."

The latest song, Meri Jaan Meri Jaan left fans raving about the sizzling chemistry between Kriti Sanon and Akshay Kumar. The actress who is all set to own the year with multiple big releases alongside a range of leading superstars of their generations as she matches the charisma of all with ease.

Besides Bachchan Paandey, Kriti has a massive set of films lined up including, 'Adipurush', 'Shehzada', 'Bhediya' and 'Ganapath'.

This is how the leading actress, Kriti Sanon picked details for her role as a director, and preparing to play in her upcoming next.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sahher Bamba has signed on two major music videos this year. One being a B-Praak song with Emraan Hashmi, and the other one being a collaboration with the playback singer Dhvani Bhanushali.

The titles of the two songs are still under wraps. Commenting on the two projects Sahher said, "I am beyond thrilled for both of these amazing opportunities in the music space this year. Being associated with such noted and respectable names like B-Praak and Dhvani Bhanushali is a huge achievement for any newcomer and I consider myself to be extremely lucky to have gotten these wonderful opportunities." She additionally said that it's a dream come true for her to perform alongside Emraan, who is known for his hit musical streak, "Not to forget, starring opposite the undisputed king of Bollywood's music universe, Emraan Hashmi in one of them is like a dream come true as I have been a huge fan of all his songs growing up and I can't recall even one song that featured him which wasn't a chart-buster. Look forward to maintaining this streak with both my songs!" Sahher was last seen in rom-com series 'Dil Bekaraar' which was based on Anuja Chauhan's novel 'Those Pricey Thakur Girls'.

'Rudra - The Edge of Darkness': Engaging but pretentiously intense



FILM REVIEW

TROY RIBEIRO

L(Streaming on Disney+ Hotstar)

Direction: Rajesh Mapuskar

Cast: Ajay Devgn, Esha Deol Takhtani, Raashii Khanna, Satyadeep Misra, Ashwini Kalsekar, Atul Kulkarni, Milind Gunaji and Rajiv Kachroo.

Duration: Approximately 55 minutes per episode (Six episodes in all)

Ratings: **1/2 (two and a half stars)

With an exhausted and worn-out premise -- a bright but emotionally troubled police officer hunting hardened criminals, 'Rudra -- The Edge of Darkness', which is an adaptation of the British TV show 'Luther', is pretentiously intense.

Designed as a psychological thriller, Ajay Devgn's ACP Rudra Singh is introduced chasing a suspect who ends in the hospital in a comatose state. Months later, he is reinstated in the force following an investigation into what transpired, but the time away takes its toll on him. His wife, Shaila (Esha Deol), a humanitarian lawyer, has left him for Rajiv (Satyadeep Misra), causing Rudra's fragile psyche to begin fraying. His mental state is of concern to his colleagues, but being a perceptive investigator, they nevertheless rely on him, especially his departmental head Deepali Handa (Ashwini Kalsekar) and his teammates who are in awe of his gut feelings.

Rudra, meanwhile, encounters Alia Chokshi (Raashii Khanna) an intelligent and beautiful lady whose parents and dog have been murdered, the first of the many gruesome cases in the series. Being perceptive, Rudra gathers that



Alia is a psychopath when she stalks him and tries to complicate matters between him and Shaila. Yet he turns to her for assistance and thus intertwines their lives in the six-episode drama, which takes several unexpected twists, some involving a bureaucratic hierarchy that does not know quite what to do with Rudra.

While this may sound simple, the unpredictable game of cat-and-mouse hunt between Rudra and the sadistic criminals is far from convincing, as the plot moving at a slow pace, is simply liberal and laden with ample cinematic liberties.

Also instincts or "proof nahin hain, gut feeling" seems to be Rudra's mantra that keeps him ticking. Apart from this, his character is unconsciously crafted, and the emotion is missing.

Also, Alia Chokshi's character simply does not jell in the narrative because it is not well-etched according to the Indian milieu. Plus, she effortlessly fits in and out of Shaila's boyfriend Rajiv's house. With his brooding,

intense demeanour, Ajay Devgn appears sleepwalking through this author-backed role. We have often seen him perform similar characters, and as Rudra - the tortured, rule-bending lawman who never lied to his wife, offers nothing new. Raashii Khanna is effervescent as Alia Chokshi. She is charming and has a striking screen presence. She effortlessly portrays her character despite it being unrelatable.

KC Shankar as the artist Siddheshwar Kumar and Amaraa Sangam as the young mother Shenaz Daruwala are brilliant. They stand out with their fine performances.

Ashwini Kalsekar, Atul Kulkarni, Rajiv Kachroo as Rudra's colleagues, and Ashish Vidyarthi as the Inquiry Commissioner are bland and stereotypical in their delivery.

Esha Deol Takhtani as Rudra's ex-wife Shaila seems like an oddball in the series with an equally miss-matched partner in Satyadeep Misra's Rajiv.

Overall, the series may only appeal to Ajay Devgn's fans.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Kiara Advani