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BHARAT BANDH CALLED ON MONDAY, TUESDAY; ESSENTIAL SERVICES MAY BE DISRUPTED BY

DISGRUNTLED EMPLOYEES

► THE STRIKE NOTICES WERE GIVEN BY WORKERS' UNIONS OF VARIOUS SECTORS SUCH AS COAL, STEEL, OIL, TELECOM, POSTAL, INCOME TAX, COPPER, BANKS AND INSURANCE. UNIONS IN RAILWAYS AND DEFENCE SECTOR WILL CARRY OUT MASS MOBILISATION IN SUPPORT OF THE STRIKE AT SEVERAL PLACES, THE JOINT FORUM SAID.

► THE UNIONS' DEMANDS INCLUDE SCRAPPING OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES IN LABOUR LAWS, PRIVATISATION OF ANY FORM AND THE NATIONAL MONETISATION PIPELINE.

► INCREASED ALLOCATION OF WAGES UNDER MAHATMA GANDHI RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT AND REGULARISATION OF CONTRACT WORKERS ARE ALSO PART OF THEIR DEMANDS.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Some of the essential services related to banking, transportation, railways and electricity are likely to be impacted during a two-day nationwide strike called by a joint forum of central trade unions beginning Monday.

Workers of roadways, transport and electricity departments have also decided to join the strike in spite of the impending threat of Essential Services Maintenance Act



(Representational Image)

which is likely to be imposed in Haryana and Chandigarh, the joint forum said in a statement.

The West Bengal government has mandated employees to report for duty on Monday and Tuesday saying that all state government offices will remain open despite the Bharat Bandh.

In its memorandum, the Bengal government also said that no casual leave or a half-day leave would be granted to any employee on March 28 and 29. "It is further notified that the absence of employees in those days will be treated as

'dies-non' and no salary will be admissible," reads the state government memorandum.

The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh has announced that it will not participate in the strike. The Sangh said that the upcoming strike was 'politically motivated' and aimed at the survival of selected political parties. The All India Unorganised Workers and Employees Congress has extended support to the nationwide strike. "Our leader Rahul Gandhi has been voicing concern in favour of their demands.

CENTRE ISSUED ADVISORY TO STATES

The Power Ministry on Sunday has asked all state governments and electricity authorities to ensure normal functioning and supply of electricity during the 48-hour nationwide strike on March 28 and 29. According to the advisory issued to all states, Central Electricity Authority (CEA), National Load Despatch Centre (NLDC), all Regional Load Despatch Centres (RLDCs), shutdown activities will be rescheduled and additional manpower deployed at all critical power stations to handle any emergency conditions during the strike.

"The Ministry advised that all the power utilities shall take necessary measures to ensure round the clock normal functioning of the electricity Grid and availability of all plants, transmission lines and substations," it said.

The statement comes ahead of a nationwide strike on March 28 and 29 called by a collective forum of trade unions against the Centre's policies 'affecting workers, farmers and people'. Services including banking, transport, electricity, etc are likely to be hit as strike notices have been sent to unions to join the strike to oppose the anti-labour policies of the Centre.

State Bank of India has warned banking services may get impacted due to the strike. "We advise that while the bank has made necessary arrangements to ensure normal functioning in its branches and offices on the days of strike, it is likely that work in our bank may be impacted to a limited extent, by the strike," it said.

Roadways, transport workers and electricity workers have also decided to join in spite of the impending threat of ESMA (Haryana and Chandigarh, respectively), prohibiting any strike by doctors or other categories of the health department employees in the next six months.

STATES WHERE HINDUS/OTHER COMMUNITIES ARE LESS CAN DECLARE THEM MINORITIES, SC TOLD



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central government has told the Supreme Court that state governments, where Hindus or other communities are less in number, can declare them a minority community within their territory.

The Ministry of Minority Affairs, in an affidavit, said: "It is submitted that the state governments can also declare a religious or linguistic community as a minority community within the state. For instance, the government of Maharashtra has notified Jews as a minority community within the state of Maharashtra."

It also said that the Karnataka government has

notified Urdu, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Tulu, Lamani, Hindi, Konkani, and Gujarati languages as minority languages within the state. "Further, the states too can certify institutions as being minority institutions as per the rules of the said state," the affidavit said.

The ministry, however, said the allegations made by BJP leader and advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay in a PIL that "followers of Judaism, Bahaism and Hinduism, who are minorities in Ladakh, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Kashmir, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Punjab and Manipur, can't establish and administer their institutions of choice is not correct".

DRDO successfully flight-tests Army's surface to air missile

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted two successful flight tests of the Indian Army's version of the Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM) on Sunday.

The tests, conducted at the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha, were carried out as part of the live firing trials against high-speed aerial targets.

The first test was to intercept a medium-altitude, long-range target and the second against a low-altitude, short-range target. The missiles intercepted the targets and destroyed them completely, registering direct hits at both ranges.

Developed jointly by DRDO and the Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), for use by the Indian Army, the MRSAM Army weapon system comprises multi-function radar, mobile launcher system, and other vehicles.



The flight tests were carried out with the weapon system in deliverable configuration.

The performance of the weapon system was validated through the flight data captured by range instruments like radars, electro-optical tracking systems and telemetry deployed by ITR, Chandipur.

Senior officials from the DRDO and the Indian Army were present at the test site.

PETROL, DIESEL PRICES HIKED AGAIN, FIFTH TIME IN 6 DAYS

New Delhi: Petrol price on Sunday was hiked by 50 paise a litre and diesel by 55 paise, taking the total increase in rates since resumption of daily price revision less than a week back to Rs 3.70-3.75 per litre.

Petrol in Delhi will now cost Rs 99.11 per litre as against Rs 98.61 previously while diesel rates have gone up from Rs 89.87 per litre to Rs 90.42, according to a price notification of state fuel retailers.

Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending upon the incidence of local taxation.

This is the fifth increase in prices since the ending of a four-and-a-half-month long hiatus in rate revision on March 22. On all the previous four occasions, prices had been increased by 80 paise a litre - the steepest single-day rise since the daily price revision was introduced in June 2017.

In all, petrol prices have gone up by Rs 3.70 per litre and diesel by Rs 3.75 in six days.

West's reaction could push Russia towards China: EU official

BIDEN NOT SEEKING RUSSIA REGIME CHANGE: WHITE HOUSE

Washington: The White House has clarified President Joe Biden's latest remark against his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, saying that Washington was not seeking a regime change in Moscow.

During an address on Saturday in Warsaw, Biden had said that "for God's sake, this man cannot remain in power" over Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, the BBC reported.

Clarifying the remark, a White House official said: "The President's point was that Putin cannot be allowed to exercise power over his neighbours or the region."

In response, the Kremlin said: "That's not for Biden to decide - the president of Russia is elected by Russians."



BRUSSELS | Agencies

Josep Borrell, the European Union's (EU) foreign-policy chief, warned that the Ukrainian crisis and the West's reaction could "push" Russia towards China.

Doing so could lead to the creation of a major rift between the global north and south, RT News quoted the diplomat as saying during the opening session of the Doha Forum, adding that such a scenario should be avoided.

"One of the bad consequences of what's happening is that we can push Russia to China, and we can create a division between the global southeast and the global northwest," Borrell stated.

First of all, the West should ramp up its efforts to end the Ukrainian conflict in order to avoid the emergence of a global rift, he explained, describing Russia's ongoing offensive in Ukraine as a "war of attrition".

"In order to avoid this trend, the first thing to do is to stop this war of aggression, war of attrition today," the diplomat said, outlining the West's strategy as a mix of military aid to Ukraine and anti-Russian sanctions.

Borrell did not elaborate on how such a strategy would help to avoid "pushing" Russia into China's arms, RT News reported.

AMARNATH YATRA TO START ON JUNE 30

Jammu: After remaining suspended for two years due to the Covid pandemic, the Amarnath Yatra 2022 will start on June 30.

Officials at the Raj Bhavan said this year's annual Amarnath Yatra to the holy cave shrine in Kashmir Himalayas will start on June 30 and conclude after 43 days, as per the tradition, on the day of the Raksha Bandhan festival.

Officials said this year, the Yatra would be held with all Covid protocols.

The pilgrimage was not held during 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, while in 2019, it was disrupted due to the events preceding the scrapping of Articles 370 and 35A on August 5, 2019.

After Covid, 19 per cent spike in TB cases returns to haunt India

► DESPITE THE BRIEF DECLINE IN TB NOTIFICATIONS OBSERVED AROUND THE MONTHS CORRESPONDING TO INDIA'S TWO MAJOR COVID-19 WAVES, THE NATIONAL TUBERCULOSIS ELIMINATION PROGRAMME (NTEP) HAS REPORTED A RISE IN THESE NUMBERS.

► THERE WAS A 19 PER CENT INCREASE IN 2021 FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR IN TB PATIENTS' NOTIFICATION. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF TB PATIENTS (NEW AND RELAPSE) NOTIFIED DURING 2021 WERE 19,33,381, AGAINST 16,28,161 IN 2020.

► ACCORDING TO THE SURVEY, THE PREVALENCE TO NOTIFICATION RATIO OF ADULT PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS IN INDIA IS 2.84, WHILE PREVALENCE OF TB INFECTION AMONG POPULATION AGED 15 AND ABOVE IS 31.7 PER CENT. THE HIGHER PREVALENCE OF PULMONARY TB WAS OBSERVED IN OLDER AGE GROUPS, MALES, MALNOURISHED, SMOKERS, ALCOHOLICS, AND KNOWN DIABETICS.

Avinash Prabhakar | New Delhi

While the world is still reeling with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, India's fight against tuberculosis (TB) has encountered setbacks after decades of gains. The National TB Prevalence survey in India was conducted from 2019 to 2021 to know the actual disease burden of TB at a national level. The survey, conducted after a gap of 60 years from the first national survey in 1955-58, estimated the point prevalence of microbiologically confirmed pulmonary TB among persons aged 15 and above at the national level and for 20 individual states and state groups.

It has revealed that the prevalence of microbiologically confirmed pulmonary tuberculosis in those 15 years and above age in India is 31.7 per 100,000 population - with the highest prevalence of 534 per lakh in Delhi, and the lowest 115 per lakh in



Kerala, while the prevalence of all forms of tuberculosis among all age groups in India is 312 per 100,000 population.

As TB and leprosy are notified diseases so as per rules, any private practitioner cannot treat them, and patients need to be referred to the

government centre only.

The survey also notes that the significant burden of TB in India is compounded by the dual existence of food insecurity and undernutrition, signifying the necessity of facilitating nutritional support to TB patients.

HEAT WAVE PREDICTED IN CENTRAL, NW AND WESTERN INDIA OVER NEXT 5 DAYS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After Mumbai and parts of Gujarat experienced unusually hot days two weeks ago, it's time for the northern and central regions to brace against sweltering heat. The Met department has predicted a heatwave spell over northwest, central and western India over the next four to five days.

Sunday's weather bulletin by the India Meteorological Centre (IMC) stated that isolated heatwave is "very likely" over western Himalayan region and Gujarat during the next three days. In the next four to five days, similar conditions may prevail over western Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha and Rajasthan while heatwave conditions are likely over south Punjab, south Haryana, Bihar, Jharkhand, north Madhya Maharashtra and Marathwada from March 29 to 31.

The IMD said heatwave conditions will likely prevail due to the absence of active western disturbance or any system in the easterlies wind regime.

In the last 24 hours, Vidarbha and Marathwada, western Rajasthan, some parts of Gujarat as well as western Madhya Pradesh have witnessed maximum temperature of 40 to 41 degrees Celsius. In other parts of the country, especially the northern and Himalayan regions, the maximum temperature has been four to six degrees above normal.

The IMD tweeted: "Isolated Heat Wave are very likely over Western Himalayan Region & Gujarat state during next 3 days; over West MP, Vidarbha & Rajasthan during next 4-5 days; and over south Punjab, south Haryana, Bihar, Jharkhand, north Madhya Maharashtra & Marathwada during 29th-31st March."



'Mann Ki Baat': Modi calls for increasing water conservation efforts

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday called for scaling up water conservation efforts to save every drop along with recycling and reuse.

Addressing the countrymen through his monthly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat', he said, "We all have to keep giving equal emphasis on recycling of water. The water used at home can be used in pots and can be used in gardening which can be done with a little effort."

Modi further said that he has high hopes from the children for this task of saving water as they made cleanliness a movement and they can help save water by becoming 'Water Warriors'.

Describing that water conservation in our country and protection of water sources have been part of society, the Prime Minister also said



that he was happy that many people in the country have made water conservation a life mission. Modi cited the example of Chennai-based Arun, who has been running a campaign to clean the ponds and lakes in his area and has already done the job successfully on 150 ponds and lakes.

Modi also cited the case of Maharashtra-based Rohan Kale,

who is running a campaign to preserve hundreds of stepwells in the state.

Talking about the 'Jal Mandir Scheme' of Gujarat, Modi also said that these stepwells, known as 'Vav', have played a big role in protection of these wells. "Several stepwells were revived all over Gujarat. This also helped a lot in raising the water level in these areas," he said,

adding, "You can also run similar campaigns at the local level by construction of check dams or rain water harvesting or making at least 75 Amrit Sarovars in every district of our country in the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'."

He cited the example of 'Pots for water of life' by Mupattam Sri Narayanan of Kerala.

Lauding Narayanan's initiative, Modi said, "Mupattam Sri Narayanan ji is running a campaign to distribute earthen pots so that animals and birds do not go thirsty during summer. In summer, he used to get upset seeing the plight of animals and birds. Then he thought why not start distributing earthen pots himself so that others were left with only the task of filling water in those pots." "During this summer, this work of Narayanan will definitely inspire all of us and we will also make arrangements for water for our animal and bird friends this summer,"

'Talks with Pakistan can be held only when guns fall silent'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India can hold talks with Pakistan only when guns fall silent and bullets stop flying, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Sunday.

Talking to the media on the sidelines of an event here, he slammed Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti who on Saturday reiterated her call to the BJP-led Central government for holding dialogue with the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and Pakistan.

Jitendra Singh sought to know if the BJP should talk to the people of its own country or to the people of a foreign land.

Mehbooba Mufti, a former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, has said peace would be elusive as long as Kashmir issue remains unresolved.

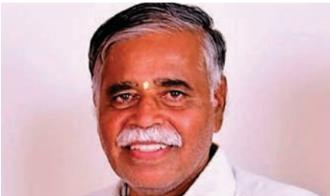
"If the Kashmir issue is not resolved, there will be



no peace in the region and therefore it is necessary to hold talks with people of Jammu and Kashmir, and Pakistan," she had said on Saturday. Reacting to her remark, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut said the PDP chief could pass such comments as the BJP had given people like her strength by forming government with her party in the erstwhile state. Taking a dig at Mufti, Raut had also said she was

a friend of the BJP at some point of time and they formed a coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir. The PDP has been "pro-Pakistan and sympathised with terrorists", and even as Mehbooba Mufti had supported the Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru, the BJP had formed an alliance with her to form the government in Jammu and Kashmir, Raut said.

Hijab row: Shed ego, attend exams, K'taka Minister tells students



Bagalkot (Karnataka) | Agencies

Karnataka Education Minister B.C. Nagesh on Sunday appealed to the students who are insisting on wearing hijab to shed their ego and attend the crucial Class 10 examination.

"Leave the ego and attend exams. Majority of students are following the High Court verdict and government notification," he said.

For those who will not attend the exams, re-exams will be conducted after one month. "Barring this, no other option is available for

them," he said.

"I have faith that they (students who are opposing) will also realise the importance of exams and attend. I repeatedly appeal... shed your ego and do not become scapegoat for others," he added.

As many as 17 lakh children are studying for SSLC exams. Around 100 students are said to have boycotted classes.

"I have made appeals many times and the Chief Minister (Basavaraj Bommai) has also made appeals," he said.

"Tomorrow (Monday), the SSLC exam will be conducted in 3,444 examination centres. A total of 8.74,000 children are taking up exams. Adequate staff is provided to conduct examination. I have confidence that the children will appear in the exams as per the verdict of the High Court," the Minister said.

"This time, the multiple choice questions are increased. Let students attend exams without any fear and with all the confidence," Nagesh added.

PROBE ORDERED AS 59 TONNES SEIZED BEEF WENT MISSING IN K'TAKA

Patna | Agencies

Kalaburagi: Karnataka police has ordered a probe into the case of missing beef of 59 tonnes seized in Kalaburagi district in the state, police said on Sunday.

It is being alleged that the police personnel who seized the beef are involved in the missing case also. After seizure, the beef was kept at the cold storage from where it went missing. The authorities have sealed the Taj Cold Storage located in Nandur Industrial area in the outskirts of the city after finding 61 tonnes of beef stored illegally in September last year. In the recent past the police which obtained permission from the court to dispose the seized beef, mentioned that they could dispose only 2 tonnes among the 61 tonnes of beef. It is alleged that the police have illegally disposed off the seized beef from the cold storage without consent of the court.

Hunachiraya Moragi, an animal activist had lodged a complaint in this regard to Home Minister Araga Jnanendra and higher officials of the police department. Kalaburagi DCP Addur Srinivasulu has stated that an investigation has been ordered into disappearance of 59 tonnes seized beef. A team will be headed by the ACP rank officer and if any illegality is found, the accused will be punished, he explained.

Mukesh Sahani sacked as Bihar Minister

Patna | Agencies

VIP chief Mukesh Sahani was sacked as Bihar Minister on Sunday, soon after the BJP said action will be taken against him.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is understood to have written to Governor Phagu Chauhan, recommending that Sahani be removed as minister, as being demanded by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

BJP leaders, including its Bihar chief Sanjay Jaiswal, were hinting that Sahani - with whom the party was at odds since his decision to contest the recent UP Assembly elections and attack Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath - was going to be axed after he lured away all the three VIP MLAs and inducted them into the party.

Jaiswal, who had met Deputy Chief Minister Tar Kishore Prasad on Saturday, had, earlier on Sunday said that action will be



taken against Sahani very soon.

The BJP, after inducting his three MLAs, had given Sahani a chance to resign but he had turned it down, saying it was the special privilege of the Chief Minister to take any decisions on him.

As per the normal procedure, the Chief Minister recommends the removal of any minister, and the Governor generally does not turn down the recommendation. However, there has been no

IMPLEMENTATION OF 100 DAYS LEAVE PLAN FOR CAPFS PERSONNEL SOON: OFFICIALS

New Delhi: The Union Home Minister Amit Shah's announcement regarding at least 100 days leaves for all Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) jawans in a year will be implemented soon and a policy has been prepared in consultation with all stakeholders, the officials in the security set up said.



The Home Minister in 2019 had announced that all CAPFs jawan will be given at least 100 days leave in a year so that they can spend more time with their families.

According to the officials, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has been examining all the details about the proposal before making the policy and the CAPFs have also been asked to submit its recommendations to the ministry at earliest. The officials also said that MHA recently held several rounds of the meetings to frame the policy and discussed the ways to implement it. The last meeting was held in the second week of March to sort out the delays in implementation. It is expected that the 100 days annual leave policy is likely to be implemented by the next month across all paramilitary forces, they added.

Accused in bank loan fraud case held by CBI after 10 yrs

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Sunday said that they have arrested an absconding accused in connection with a bank fraud of Rs 20.68 crore, on his arrival from Nairobi, Kenya.

Accused Sanjay R. Gupta, the director of Nova Shipping Pvt Ltd was also named in the case. Gupta was on the run for ten years.

A CBI official said that in 2012, a case was registered in this connection on the complaint from Canara Bank, Ahmedabad, against the accused and his firm on the allegations of cheating bank's Jamnagar Branch to the tune of Rs 20.68 crore.

In 2013, the CBI filed a charge sheet in this connection before a Special Court in Ahmedabad against eight accused.



Gupta was absconding since then. A Look out Circular and a Red Corner Notice was also issued against him. The arrested accused will be produced before the competent court at Ahmedabad. The CBI said it will not seek his custody as charge sheet in the case was already filed.

TENSION PREVAILS AS BODY OF MUSLIM YOUTH KILLED FOR CELEBRATING BJP WIN BROUGHT HOME

Kushinagar (Uttar Pradesh): Tension prevailed in Kushinagar on Sunday when the body of Babar, who had allegedly been killed by members of his own community for celebrating BJP's win in elections, was brought to his home. His family refused to perform the last rites unless those responsible for the youth's death were punished. According to the family, Babar was returning from his shop on March 20 when he chanted 'Jai Shri Ram' and was attacked by some local people. To save his life, Babar climbed on his roof, but the accused reached there and Babar fell off the roof. He was admitted to Ramkola CHC from where he was referred to the district hospital and then to Lucknow. Babar died during treatment in Lucknow. Family members said that the local people from their community, had warned Babar against campaigning for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and celebrating its victory. Babar had sought protection from Ramkola police but his request went unheard. Kasaya sub-divisional magistrate (SDM), Varun Kumar Pandey who reached the spot on Sunday, said that the matter is being investigated. He assured that the accused will be arrested and strict action will be taken against the guilty.

The local MLA Panchanand Pathak also met the family and convinced them to perform the last rites. On the complaint of the family members, an FIR has been registered under relevant sections.

7 killed as bus plunges into valley in Andhra



Tirupati | Agencies

Seven people were killed and 54 injured when a bus fell into a valley in Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor. The accident happened late on Saturday night.

A private bus plunged into the valley after the driver lost control of the vehicle near Bakarapeta, about 30 km from Tirupati.

The bus was carrying 63 members of a bridegroom's family from Rajendra Nagar

of Dharmavaram in Anantapur district to attend the engagement at Tiruchanoor, which was scheduled on Sunday.

According to police, when the bus reached Bakarapeta ghat, the driver lost control of the vehicle due to negligence and as a result the bus plunged into a 60-feet deep valley. There were no eyewitnesses on the road when the bus fell off the cliff. Later, some motorists heard the cries of the injured and alerted the police. The rescue workers had a tough time in the rescue operations due to darkness. Tirupati Urban Superintendent of Police Venkatappala Naidu, Collector M. Harinarayana and others rushed to the spot and supervised the rescue operations. As many as 54 injured were rushed to the Ruia Hospital in Tirupati, where the condition of four of them is critical.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed shock over the incident. He announced Rs 2 lakh ex-gratia each to the families of those killed and Rs 50,000 each for the injured.

Officials briefed the Chief Minister on the accident and the rescue work. Chandragiri MLA Chevreddy Bhaskar Reddy participated in the rescue work. Jagan Mohan Reddy directed officials to ensure best possible treatment to the injured.

Birbhum violence: Trinamool leader's statement

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has prepared a list in which 21 people, including Trinamool Congress' block president Anarul Hossain, have been named as accused in connection with the violence in West Bengal's Birbhum.

Hossain's statement was recorded by the CBI after he was questioned at the probe agency's camp set up at a government guest house in Rampurhat, an official said on Sunday. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday had ordered the arrest of Trinamool Congress leader Hossain for his involvement in the carnage. Earlier, the police had also prepared a list of the accused, and the list prepared by the CBI is almost same. Following the orders of the Calcutta High Court, a team of forensic experts led by the CBI officials went to Rampurhat and collected samples on March 25. Before the court order, the police had lodged a case, and also claimed to have arrested 10 people. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and others have accused the ruling Trinamool Congress of sheltering the accused. The BJP had Banerjee of trying to cover up the incident. The Trinamool Congress, however, has denied all the charges. After the Calcutta High Court order of handing over the probe to the CBI, the West Bengal government



said that they would support the agency in conducting a fair probe. Bhadu Sheikh, a Trinamool Congress leader and local deputy president of Rampurhat village was killed on March 21 by bike-

borne assailants, after which a mob allegedly set several houses afire. Next day, the police recovered the charred bodies of at least eight persons including children and women from a gutted house.



NOW RS 55 THOUSAND WILL BE GIVEN IN KANYA VIVAH YOJANA: CM

- ▶ LADLI LAXMI YOJANA-2 WILL START FROM MAY 2
- ▶ CHOUHAN REVIEWS IMPLEMENTATION OF INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO DEPARTMENTS
- ▶ DEPARTMENTS PRESENT PROGRESS REPORT ON DAY 2 OF PACHMARHI CHINTAN MEETING

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the amount given under Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah Yojana will be increased from Rs. 51 thousand to Rs. 55 thousand. Under the scheme, household items will be given as a gift to daughters. Chouhan said that Ministers Usha Thakur, Meena Singh and Yashodhara Raje Scindia have been entrusted with the task of finalizing the draft of Ladli Laxmi Yojana-2. This scheme will be launched on May 2.

Chief Minister was addressing the Chintan meeting on the second day at Pachmarhi. Information was presented regarding the implementation of the instructions given by Chouhan in the review meetings of various departments held from January 03 to 11.

Ministers of various departments gave information about the activities related to their departments. Chief Minister said that



the department should make arrangements for implementation and review of schemes within a stipulated time period by setting a time bound programme of budget expenditure. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that construction works at a cost of Rs 48 thousand crores has to be undertaken in the state. Influential and well-reputed institutions including PIU should be empanelled for construction work. The institutions of the Government of India should also be included in this.

It may also be considered to entrust the responsibility of completing construction works to be done in the coming time in the state to these agencies. Chouhan said that it is necessary to regulate and control the

process of giving construction works to petty contractors. All the construction departments were instructed to submit their reports in a week after contemplating on this and assessing the system going on in other states. He also directed to submit an action plan for the maintenance and operation of circuit houses and rest houses run by the Public Works Department.

It was informed in the meeting that the process of digitalization of offices is going on under the General Administration Department. Chouhan said that the disposal of departmental enquiries, pension cases etc. should be ensured within time-limit.

Chief Minister said that a clear roadmap of Madhya Pradesh's contribution in making

the country a five trillion dollar economy should be made and implemented with a time-limit as per Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream. Chouhan gave instructions to restart Bhamashah Yojana. In the meeting, instructions were also given to the departments receiving less revenue to make efforts to increase the revenue receipt.

Chouhan was apprised that laptops have been provided to 8 thousand 700 patwaris in the state. The work of land tiding is in progress. Chief Minister said that the help of drones should be taken in resolving land related matters. Taking forward the process of digitalization in the state, cyber tehsil should be established. Information about the progress of the Chief Minister's Residential Land Rights Scheme was also given. It was informed that the pilot project of Rural Transport Project would be implemented in Vidisha. Chouhan said that sports ground should be developed in every village of the state. A campaign should be launched to identify land and sports grounds should be developed under MNREGA. It was informed in the meeting that a web portal has been developed to remove middlemen from the trade of herbal products and facility is being made available in each district for the sale of the products. As per the instructions of Chief Minister Chouhan, activities are being conducted with the participation of residents to protect the forest area from encroachment and for their better management. In the month of May, a conference of forest committees will be organized in Shivpuri, Jabalpur, Rewa and Satna.

DREAM OF NATIONS DEVELOPMENT INCOMPLETE WITHOUT WOMEN'S EDUCATION: GOVERNOR

Bhopal: Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that the dream of the progress of any nation is incomplete without women's education because if a man is educated then only a family is educated. When a woman is educated she educates and enlightens many generations. In addition to providing employment, higher education gives rise to a broad developmental thinking by breaking out of the narrow circle of ideas. He called upon the girl students to cooperate in the empowerment and self-reliance of women from backward and deprived areas. Parents and family members of women coming from villages who are deprived of higher education should be convinced to cooperate in the efforts to educate them.

Patel was addressing the 30th annual function of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Girls College, Bhopal at Dayaram T Shahani Auditorium on Sunday. In the programme, the Governor awarded 10 meritorious girl students.

Governor Patel said that only when women are educated, empowered and helped to move forward with a strong intention can the family, society and nation be made strong. In the current environment, it is necessary for women to be empowered, aware, self-reliant and self-confident. Along with this, it is also necessary for women to have a strong intention to protect them and fight. Patel said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given an opportunity to make the country a super power in the field of knowledge through the new education policy. He said that education is such a mission which creates a conducive environment for the development of the needy and deprived sections in the country and society. He expressed the hope that the new education policy would prove to be a milestone in the all-round development of the girl students of the college. The Governor expressed hope that the students of the college would make the state proud by taking inspiration from great personalities like Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya and Sant Hirdaram Sahib. The Governor was honored with a shawl-shripal and a memento on behalf of the institution.

Joint Efforts Necessary for Tourism Development of Pachmarhi: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Pachmarhi, a unique tourist spot of Satpura region, can be developed not only as a national but also as an international tourist destination. For this joint efforts are necessary. In the tourism development of Pachmarhi, the role of public representatives along with government, administration and the general public is important.

Chouhan was discussing with MP Rao Uday Pratap Singh, MLA Thakur Das Nagvanshi, Madhav Das Agrawal, Kamal Dhoot and other public representatives, who came to meet him before the contemplation meeting at Pachmarhi on Sunday. The public represen-



tatives also gave suggestions related to tourism development to Chief Minister Chouhan and apprised him about the tourism development activities conducted at the local level. Chouhan said that the climate, hilly structure, wildlife and natural beauty of Pachmarhi are amazing. A high level meeting was organised here for the purpose of public welfare. Serious and fruitful discus-

sions have been held with the members of the State Council of Ministers in the meeting for two days. Final touches are being given to the form of many schemes.

MP Singh also presented a picture of Satpura region to Chief Minister Shri Chouhan. Chief Minister Chouhan also interacted with some media representatives and local administrative officials before the start of the meeting.

RELEVANCE OF LIFE LIES IN LIVING FOR OTHERS: GOVERNOR

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that the relevance of life lies in living for others. He said that nature has given human beings infinite power of speech and intellect for this purpose. He said that the work of inclusive development is being done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the trust of all, cooperation of all and efforts of all. For the success of his efforts, the contribution of every person is necessary in the building of the country. The progress of any one group or class does not lead to the development of the nation. Therefore, those who are competent and capable, it is their duty to assume the responsibility of development of the poor, backward and deprived sections.

Patel was addressing the closing ceremony of the three-day state level technical, sports and cultural event Novizio 2022 at NRI Education Institute on Sunday. Patel also rewarded 10 meritorious students in



the programme. Governor Patel asked the students to be aware of their duties along with the successes of their future life. Being educated is not enough, it is necessary to conduct like a well-educated person. Face the ups and downs of future life with confidence. Learn from experiences and move forward, always keep your thinking liberal and broad. Excellence is not in skill but in outlook. With determination, dedication, integrity and positivi-

ty, no goal is attainable. Patel said that the meaning of life lies in the service to parents and motherland. It is the responsibility of every person that his/her actions do not harm their honour and respect. Giving the example of NRIs of South Gujarat region, he said that a large number of people of the region are living abroad. Even while living abroad for years, they are continuously participating in the development and service works of their area.

The President of the Institute, D Subodh Singh informed about the establishment of the Institute, its achievements, academic innovations and the works being done in the fields of social concerns. He informed that about 240 students from Bangladesh, UAE, Nigeria and Nepal are among the former and current students of the institute. Convener of the function, Alka Awasthi informed that since the year 2001, three days state level programme of technical, sports and cultural activities is being organised by the institute. Students from various colleges of the state participated in this year's Novizio 2022. Patel was felicitated by presenting shawl-shripal, memento on behalf of the institute. Governor Patel inaugurated the programme by lighting the lamp. The Vice Chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi Technological University, Sunil Kumar, Secretary of Taramati Education Society Jaysree Singh, member RS Gautam and a large number of students were present in the programme.

BUFFALO DEATH FROM DOG BITE MAKES PEOPLE RUSH FOR RABIES VAX

The death of a buffalo and her calf following a dog bite created panic among people at a village in Madhya Pradesh, prompting them to rush to the hospital for rabies vaccine.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The death of a buffalo and her calf following a dog bite created panic among people at a village in Madhya Pradesh, prompting them to rush to the hospital for rabies vaccine. The incident took place at a village in Gwalior district.

As the news of the death of the buffalo and her calf spread on Thursday, people in the village became worried. They

panicked and rushed to a local health-care centre as they had consumed milk of the buffalo that died.

Upon hearing the news of the death of buffalo, one after another person started rushing for a rabies vaccine.

Gathering of a large number of people surprised the medical staff and they learned that a buffalo and its calf had died after being bitten by a rabid stray dog. "This caused an alarm when hundreds of people realised that the 'raitra' that they had consumed a day before at a religious ceremony was made from the curd of the same buffalo. Therefore, they rushed to get vaccinated," said a doctor posted in the hospital in Dabra town of Gwalior district. As per reports, the milk of the same buffalo was also delivered into many houses. People panicked knowing that the dog which had bitten

him was rabid. As soon as the news spread, people started fearing that they might contract rabies from the milk and curd. With a limited stock of rabies vaccine against around 1,000 people who gathered there, the medical staff had to face a tough time to convince people. They wanted to get vaccinated to save themselves. As the situation worsened, officers from Gwalior Medical College and Infectious Disease Centre had to rush to Dabra to control the situation.

With the high demand for rabies injection, the PHC also ran out of anti-rabies stocks. Nearly 1,000 people wanted to get anti-rabies shots but only one of them got the jabs, he further added. However, around 150 villagers were not convinced and were given anti-rabies shots. Many of them even approached private hospitals to get vaccinated.

CHIEF MINISTER CONDOLES THE DEATH OF AVINASH SHRIVASTAVA

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has condoled the death of senior journalist Avinash Shrivastava. Avinash Shrivastava was associated with many reputed newspapers. Chief Minister Chouhan has prayed to God to grant peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family to bear this loss.

CM PLANTED MANGO SAPLING IN PACHMARHI

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted a mango sapling in the Ayurvedic Gyan Kendra in Cantt area of Pachmarhi. Chouhan plants saplings every day. During the plantation, Culture and Tourism Minister Usha Thakur, Tribal Affairs and Scheduled Caste Welfare Minister Meena Singh, MP Rao Uday Pratap Singh, MLA Piparia Thakur Das Nagvanshi, State President Kisan Morcha Darshan Singh Choudhary, Madhav Singh Agrawal and public representatives were pres-



ent. Mango is a very useful, long-lived, dense and large tree, which occurs extensively from Kanyakumari in the south of India to the foothills of Himalayas in the

north and from Punjab in the west to Assam in the east. According to botanical classification, mango is a tree of the Anacardiaceae family.

DEMAND FOR 'SOCIAL AUDIT' OF FUNDS BEING SPENT LIKE WATER TO QUENCH BUNDELKHAND'S THIRST

With the onset of summer the discussion over the water crisis in Bundelkhand comes to light again. This has become a golden opportunity for people with vested interests to swindle state funds meant for ending water scarcity in the parched land of Bundelkhand.

Team Absolute | Chhatarpur

With the onset of summer the discussion over the water crisis in Bundelkhand comes to light again. This has become a golden opportunity for people with vested interests to swindle state funds meant for ending water scarcity in the parched land of Bundelkhand.

This time too, the situation is somewhat similar compared to past several years because since the last decade crores of rupees were allocated from the state budget to end the water crisis in this region but successive governments failed to fix accountability for misusing this money meant to provide water to households in the Bundelkhand region.

Bundelkhand comprises seven districts each of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The seven districts of Madhya Pradesh include: Sagar,

Damoh, Chhatarpur, Panna, Tikamgarh, Niwari and Datia.

In the past, Bundelkhand had abundant water because there was a lot of emphasis given on water structures during the Chandela and Bundela rulers. At present, the situation is the reverse and there are numerous incidents related to water crisis which come to the fore in large parts of the area.

As soon as the summers begin and one enters majority of the rural areas, water crisis is rampant. People gather at various water sources everywhere waiting to collect water to quench their thirst. However, repeated efforts have been made to end the water crisis in the Bundelkhand region. During the year 2007-08, Rs 3,500 crore were allocated under the Bundelkhand package from the state budget but the situation remains far from change since a large amount of money was not utilised for the concerned purpose. At the same time, the ponds and water structures that were built, collapsed during the second and third spell of rainfall.

Pawan Ghuwara, a social worker who protested against the



misuse of the Bundelkhand package, says 1,296 structures were built under this package in the area. Upon inspection it was found that 1,098 structures were found unused and no action was taken against those government officials responsible for the misappropriation of funds and checking whether these structures were functional.

The Madhya Pradesh government must run bulldozers against the corrupt government officials similar to action against criminals otherwise such water campaigns will serve nothing but a source of looting money meant for ending water scarcity in Bundelkhand.

According to experts, in the last four decades, several thousand of crores of rupees have been spent in Bundelkhand region in the name of water, but it is hard to find any village which has abundant water throughout the year or does not face water crisis. Several campaigns were run to save ponds,

rivers etc but the construction of new ponds did not go beyond paperwork. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has once again announced to run the 'Jal Abhishek Abhiyan' under which water structures will be repaired and revived. There is still an apprehension in people's mind that the government will approve the budget meant for the parched region and people with vested interests will find an opportunity to serve their own interests.

Social worker Manoj Choubey says that Bundelkhand used to be water-abundant but now water crisis has become the biggest problem here. Government campaigns are a way to siphon away money by certain people to serve their own interests. Water structures and ponds are built in such places which are of no use and are not socially audited independently. This is the reason that despite spending thousands of crores of rupees, the water crisis of this area has not ended. The main reason for this is the lack of awareness and participation among the people. The 'Jal Abhishek' campaign will start in April and the monsoon season will begin from mid-June, the burning question is how will the assessment and review of the work which has been done because the structures built will be filled with rain water. It will also become easier for the construction companies to call the pits dug by them as ponds. This happens every year and all water conservation activists and construction agencies take undue advantage of it.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Baby Boomers are responsible for climate change!

The new generation of seniors, also known as baby boomers born post World War-II, are leaving behind a heavy climate footprint, according to a study. People over 60 are more likely to spend on houses, energy and food - leading to an increase in production of greenhouse gases which are harmful for both the environment and human health. In 2005, the above 60 age group accounted for 25 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions and by 2015 the proportion was close to 33 per cent, revealed the study detailed in the journal Nature Climate Change. While young people under the age of 30 have cut their annual emissions by 3.7 tonnes between 2005 and 2015, the 30-44-year-olds reduced emissions by 2.7 tonnes and the 45-59-year-old group by 2.2 tonnes. But people over the age of 60 have had the smallest decline, only 1.5 tonnes. The team from NTNU conducted a survey of greenhouse gas emissions by age in 2005, 2010 and 2015. They included people over 60 from about 32 countries. The findings showed that baby boomers in Norway, the UK, the US, Australia are the worst when it comes to their carbon footprint. Particularly the seniors in Japan account for over half of climate emissions. The research is of concern as the ageing wave is sweeping the world, so as the new elderly attain a larger climate footprint, it's bad news. Thus, the most important message from this research is for politicians to be aware that the ageing population is making it more difficult to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Further, the team found that in comparison with the other age groups, the emissions that the elderly account for tend to be more local. Younger age groups consume more imported goods, clothing, electronics and furniture, goods that lead to emissions in other countries.

AMID POLITICAL SLUGFEST, IT'S A LONELY BATTLE FOR KASHMIRI PANDITS

Deepika Bhan

In the din surrounding 'The Kashmir Files', Kashmiri Pandits seem to be fighting a lonely battle for justice. Yes, the movie has brought out a lot of empathy for the community, but the politics being played out over their plight is downplaying the fight for justice of every Kashmiri who has fallen to the bullets of terror.

Whether it is the BJP, Congress, Aam Aadmi Party, TRS, or the Trinamool Congress, the movie has become a tool to lash out at each other. All are trying to either score points or run one another down to portray a particular image for political benefits.

The BJP has given a push to 'The Kashmir Files' after Prime Minister Narendra Modi appreciated the film openly through his tweets and during his address to the BJP parliamentary party on March 16. He even said that "some people were trying to discredit the film which has depicted the truth".

Several BJP-ruled states, including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Bihar, and now Goa, have made the movie tax-free.

When a similar demand was made in the Delhi Assembly by the BJP MLAs, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal criticised the move of making the film tax-free, and suggested the filmmaker upload it on YouTube for all to see free of cost. Amid applause and table-thumping from the AAP MLAs present in the Assembly, Kejriwal attacked the BJP MLAs and said they have been on the job of putting up posters of the film. "Did you enter politics to do this?" he asked mockingly.

Soon thereafter, the BJP launched a scathing attack on Kejriwal. Posting a picture showing Kejriwal and AAP MLAs laughing in the Delhi Assembly, BJP general secretary B.L. Santhosh tweeted: "Never forget ... They are laughing people who lost their lives in J&K due to terrorism ... laughing at mothers who lost their children ... children who lost their parents ... security forces who were killed ... women who were butchered ... children who were shot at ... Shameless anarchists."

The BJP and the AAP have been at loggerheads over the Delhi municipal elections and both are using the 'The Kashmir Files' as the proverbial cannon ball.



Blaming the Congress for the plight of Kashmiri Hindus, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said in Gujarat: "The Kashmir Files' shows how under the Congress rule, atrocities and terrorism spread in Kashmir."

Rahul Gandhi, who claims to be a Kashmiri Pandit, has not commented on the movie or even on the plight of Kashmiri Pandits. Several other party leaders, however, jumped into the fray.

Senior leader Jairam Ramesh said in a tweet: "Some films inspire change. 'The Kashmir Files' incites hate. Truth can lead to justice, rehabilitation, reconciliation and peace. Propaganda twists facts, distorts history to whip up anger and promote violence. Statesmen heal wounds. Pracharaks exploit fear and prejudice to divide and rule."

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, after watching the movie at a multiplex in Raipur along with his cabinet colleagues and party MLAs on March 16, said: "The movie portrays half-truths and only shows violence without conveying any message." Chief Ministers Mamata Banerjee and

K. Chandreshekar Rao, and many other leaders have been critical of the movie and the way the BJP has been promoting it.

The political parties are making the most of the plight of Kashmiri Pandits, but no one is actually doing anything to bring justice to them. The BJP has been showcasing the Kashmiri Pandit genocide to whip up the majority's passion, but on the ground there's been no action. Thirty-two years after the genocide, no judicial commission or even an inquiry commission been formed to probe the exodus. In almost 95 per cent of the violent incidents perpetrated against the community, no FIR have been filed and even those where cases have been lodged, there has been no movement at all. The BJP-led Centre has failed to come up with a plan for the return and rehabilitation of the community. The plight of the Kashmiri Pandit community is yet another poll plank for the BJP and the ilk, but even those who champion the cause of humanity are failing to sit up and take note. Not any of the

civil society groups of the country or the plethora of human rights bodies have taken up the cause of the beleaguered community.

"The Kashmir Files' box office collection crossed the Rs 200 crore-mark on March 24, becoming the biggest post-pandemic grosser before the release of 'RRR'."

The makers surely must be exalted and the political parties jumping in to derive the appropriate mileage, but for the Kashmiri Pandit community, it is like reliving the horror and experiencing the trauma once again.

It is a lone struggle for the minuscule minority of Kashmir, which has a 5,000-year-old history behind it, but is today struggling to save its roots, culture, and identity, and getting justice for the families of B.K. Ganjoo, Tikal Taploo, Girja Tickoo, Prana Chatta, Neelkanth Ganjoo, Chuni Lal Shalla, Naveen Saproo, Satish Tickoo, Bhushan Lal, Omkar Nath Mota, Bansilal Kak, Sheela Kau.

international

UKRAINE WAR COULD LEAD TO FOOD RIOTS IN POOR COUNTRIES: WTO

London | Agencies

Rocketing global food prices as a result of the war in Ukraine could trigger riots from those going hungry in poor countries, the head of the World Trade Organization has said.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala warned food-producing countries against hoarding supplies and said it was vital to avoid a repeat of the Covid-19 pandemic, when rich countries were able to secure for themselves the bulk of vaccines, reports the Guardian.

In an interview with the Guardian, the WTO director general expressed concern about the knock-on effects of Russia's invasion - stressing the dependence of many African countries on food supplies from the Black Sea region. "I think we should be very worried. The impact on food prices and hunger this year and next could be substantial. Food and energy are the two biggest items in the consumption baskets of poor people all over the world," Okonjo-Iweala said.

"It is poor countries and poor people within poor countries that will suffer the most."

Okonjo-Iweala, a former Nigerian finance minister, said 35 African countries were dependent on food imported from the Black

Sea region, adding that Russia and Ukraine were responsible for 24 per cent of global supplies of wheat.

PUTIN MAY TRY TO IMPOSE A 'KOREAN' SCENARIO ON UKRAINE

Kiev: Russia will try to impose a "Korean" scenario on Ukraine and gather all the occupied territories into a single quasi-state entity, believes Kyrylo Budanov, Head of the Chief Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine. "After their failures near Kiev and inability to overthrow Ukraine's central government, Putin is already shifting his main operational directions - now it is the south and the east. He may be considering a 'Korean' scenario for Ukraine," Budanov said, Ukrayinska Pravda reported. He added that Putin will try to impose a dividing line between the unoccupied and occupied regions of our country. In fact, this is an attempt to create North and South Korea in Ukraine. After all, he is definitely not able to 'swallow up' the whole state, he added.

ISLAMABAD BRACES FOR POLITICAL SHOWDOWN

Islamabad | Agencies

Nerves are on edge as Islamabad braces for a political showdown on Sunday as the ruling PTI is going all-out to make its public meeting successful amid mounting pressure from opposition parties, which are also marching on Islamabad before the vote on a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan, Dawn reported.

Workers and leaders of the JUI-F, under the banner of the opposition alliance PDM, have already come to take the stage on the Srinagar Highway while PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz, along with Punjab opposition leader Hamza Shehbaz was leading her party caravan via GT Road to the capital, calling it the last nail in the coffin of the PTI government. Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid, speaking at a presser in Islamabad, warned the JUI-F that it would not be permitted to hold a sit-in in Islamabad, as they had been allowed to hold the public meeting on Saturday only and they would need to submit another request if they wanted to hold rally on Sunday, too, the report said.



He also cautioned that no party would be allowed to enter Red Zone and action would be taken against those who attempted to take law into their hands by blocking another party's route or by holding a sit-in in violation of Supreme Court direc-

tions. He said the interior ministry would cooperate with opposition parties in connection with their upcoming rallies and no-confidence vote and provide full security to "all their lawmakers".

TODAY IS A BATTLE FOR PAKISTAN: IMRAN KHAN

Islamabad: In his exclusive message for Sunday planned rally at the Parade Ground, Pakistan Prime Minister



Imran Khan urged the people to leave early for the public meeting, saying that "today is a battle for Pakistan and not for PTI", The News reported. He maintained that it is a battle for the future of our nation and urged the people to come out of their homes to rewrite the history of Pakistan. In view of the rush on the streets, he urged citizens to leave early so that they can reach their destination on time.

ALL 132 PEOPLE ON BOARD CHINA'S CRASHED PLANE DEAD

Nanning (China): All 132 people on board China Eastern Airlines' plane that crashed in south China's Guangxi Zhuang



Autonomous Region were dead, an official has announced. The national emergency response headquarters for the China Eastern Airlines Flight MU5735 aircraft accident on March 21 made the announcement at a press conference late Saturday evening after six days of all-out search and rescue efforts, Xinhua news agency reported. "It is with great sadness that we here announce that the 123 passengers and nine crew members on board China Eastern Airlines Flight MU5735 on March 21 have all died," said Hu Zhenjiang, Deputy Commander of the headquarters and Deputy Head of the Civil Aviation Administration of China departments, including fire fighters, soldiers, armed police, public security, health and quarantine, to carry out massive research at the crash site for the past six consecutive days, he added. Together with experts' analysis of video contents in various monitoring and recording equipments, the key data recorded by facilities such as the air traffic control radar, and particularly the wreckage distribution at the crash site, it can be determined that there have been no signs of life at the crash site, Hu said. So far, identities of 120 victims of the plane crash have been confirmed through DNA testing.

Saudi-led coalition airstrikes kill 8 in Yemen after Houthis' cross-border attack

Sanaa | Agencies

At least eight people were killed and three others injured after airstrikes launched by the Saudi-led coalition attacked a building of Houthi-controlled insurance authority in Yemen's capital Sanaa, Houthi-run al-Masirah TV has reported. The coalition airstrikes conducted early Saturday morning, which came a day after the Houthi militia launched drone and missile attacks on oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, damaged guards' quarters in the building courtyard, Xinhua news agency reported.

The coalition also launched airstrikes against



the al-Hafa military camp in eastern Sanaa and fuel tanks of the Yemeni national oil company in the Red

Sea port city of Hodeidah in western Yemen, according to al-Masirah TV. The coalition "carried out airstrikes

against the sources of Houthi threats in Sanaa and Hodeidah," Al-Arabiya TV, which is owned by Saudi Arabia, quoted a coalition statement as saying, without specifying names of the targets.

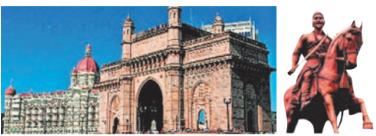
On Friday, the Houthi militia claimed responsibility for cross-border attacks on oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, the third such attack against Saudi oil facilities in less than a week. According to Al-Arabiya TV, the Houthi attack caused fires in the Aramco oil facility in the Saudi Red Sea port city of Jeddah, as well as some damage in facilities in other Saudi cities. No casualties were reported.

GENDER APARTHEID IMPOSED IN KABUL FUN PARKS

Kabul: A part of the Taliban-led government in Afghanistan tasked with enforcing adherence to strict Islamic fundamentalism has ordered all amusement parks in the capital to be segregated by gender, RFE/RL reported. The limit on such mixing at fun parks will deepen concerns for girls' and women's rights as it follows a last-minute reversal last week that prevented Afghan girls from returning to reopened schools.



The hard-line Taliban's Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice on March 27 ordered that all Kabul venues with rides and games should be opened to women and girls from Sundays through Tuesdays and to boys and men on Wednesdays through Saturdays. There is no exception for families on the ministry's timetable. UN and other international observers have repeatedly warned of abuses under the seven-month-old regime of girls and women, including draconian limits on their movement, freedom to work or travel, or ability to carry out even the simplest daily aspects of public life.



CATCH DAWOOD LIKE OBAMA NABBED OSAMA, MAHARASHTRA CM UDDHAV THACKERAY TELLS BJP

"You are demanding Nawab Malik's resignation. If he is guilty, he will resign," Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray told BJP MLAs.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday lashed out at the Centre after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) attached properties owned by one of his relatives in connection with a money laundering case.



them to the ED. You are the complainant, you are the investigator. Is it ED or domestic help? We have faith in the law and judiciary, we will face this," he said.

me is that the central agencies are so hollow that Nawab Malik, who, according to you, is Dawood's henchman, travelled all over Mumbai and the country and was elected four or five times.

plices. Did Obama ask for votes in Osama's name? They sent troops and broke into bin Laden's house. This is called manhood," CM Uddhav Thackeray said.

FIVE KILLED IN CAR-TRUCK COLLISION: POLICE

Some labourers working nearby rushed to the accident site. They rescued one of the car occupants, who was rushed to a hospital.

Amravati: Five members of a family were killed after a truck collided with their car in Maharashtra's Amravati district on Sunday while they were going to attend a marriage function, the police said.

Maharashtra logs 140 new COVID-19 cases, 1 death, 106 recoveries on Sunday

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra on Sunday, March 27, recorded 106 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the number of active cases to 926. Besides, 1 COVID-19 death was reported in the day, taking the number of total fatalities to 1,43,780.



The Nashik circle which consists of Nashik, Nashik MC, Malegaon MC, Ahmednagar, Ahmednagar MC, Dhule, Dhule MC, Jalgaon, Jalgaon MC, Nandurbar--reported 24 fresh COVID-19 cases.

PVR AND INOX LEISURE ANNOUNCE MERGER

New Delhi | Mumbai

Film exhibition majors PVR and INOX Leisure on Sunday announced merger. Accordingly, the Board of PVR and the Board of INOX Leisure at their respective meetings approved an all stock amalgamation of INOX with PVR.

mer at the approved exchange ratio. "Post the merger, the promoters of INOX will become co-promoters in the merged entity along with the existing promoters of PVR."

Jain would be appointed as Non-Executive Non-Independent Director in the combined entity. "The combined entity will be named as PVR INOX Limited with branding of existing screens to continue as PVR and INOX respectively.

has been one of the worst impacted sectors on account of the pandemic and creating scale to achieve efficiencies is critical for the long term survival of the business and fight the onslaught of digital OTT platforms."

22-year-old youth rapes 2 elderly women in Thane district; arrested

The accused carried out the crime by breaking into the house of the two elderly women, stated reports.

Thane | Agencies

In another shameful incident, a 22-year-old youth, identified as Bhushan Hindole, allegedly raped two elderly women in Maharashtra's Thane district, according to the police. Reportedly,

YOGA ON STREETS, CYCLING: MUMBAI POLICE LAUNCH 'SUNDAY STREET' INITIATIVE

Mumbai: In a bid to encourage citizens to step out of their homes to enjoy health and recreational activities in a relaxed manner, the Mumbai police have launched a 'Sunday Street' initiative to keep some roads closed for vehicular movement for a few hours every weekend, an official said.

the victims were above 70 years of age and the accused who was a resident of Sahapur carried out the crime by breaking into the house of a 70-year-old woman on March 20. His barbarity did not end here as he entered the neighbouring house and raped the 72-year-old woman there as well,

ANUPAM KHER SLAMS KEJRIWAL OVER THE KASHMIR FILES COMMENT

Mumbai: Anupam Kher starrer The Kashmir Files has become the talk of the town ever since its release.



propaganda movie. Recently, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also mocked BJP leaders for allegedly promoting the movie. Days after, Anupam Kher has slammed Arvind Kejriwal's comments on The Kashmir Files and has called it shameful.

MAHARASHTRA GOVT TO SET UP EV CHARGING STATIONS FROM GADCHIROLI TO SINDHUDURG, SAYS DY CM AJIT PAWAR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As Maharashtra has seen a massive jump of 157% in new EV registrations in 2021-22 following its new EV policy, the state government will set up charging stations at the petrol pumps from the naxal affected Gadchiroli district to Sindhudurg district.



Pawar said the government has set an ambitious target of construction of 5,000 charging stations by 2025. This is necessitated as the government targets to increase the share of EVs to 10% in new vehicle registrations by 2025 and share of public transport in major cities to 25%.

after the state government with the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation launched the EV cell with an objective to accelerate EV transition towards sustainable mobility. According to Tourism and Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray the EV cell will assist in creating a network of charging stations, supporting battery development & market penetration.

Amid fuel price rise, Maharashtra man commutes to work on horse

The diesel price in Aurangabad is just a few paise short of Rs 100 per litre, while the petrol rate has crossed Rs 115 per litre

Aurangabad | Agencies

In the wake of the fuel price rise and problems in maintaining a motorcycle due to the COVID-19 pandemic-induced restrictions, a man working as a lab assistant at a pharmacy college here in Maharashtra commutes on a horse to his workplace everyday.

and vary from state to state depending upon the incidence of local taxation. To tide over the situation, Shaikh Yusuf has put away his motorcycle and goes to his workplace, located 15 km from his home, riding a horse. He started the practice during the COVID-19-induced lockdown earlier.



'THE LOST CITY' TO SEIZE BOX OFFICE CROWN WITH PROJECTED \$30 MN OPENING WEEKEND

Los Angeles | Agencies

The adventure romantic comedy "The Lost City" which stars Sandra Bullock, Channing Tatum, Daniel Radcliffe and Brad Pitt, looks all set to seize the US domestic box office collection from the Robert Pattinson-starrer superhero movie "The Batman", with a projected \$30 million opening weekend, reports 'Variety'.

As per 'Variety', the film blasted off to \$11.5 million from 4,253 locations on its opening day, after grossing \$2.5 million in Thursday previews. It's particularly an impressive start for the film as this genre hasn't had the best track record of getting audiences into theaters over the past few years.

"The Lost City", in which Bullock plays a romance novelist, boasts of a grand jungle setting, a penchant for violence and a sense of scale that could've helped convince ticket buyers to perceive the release as an event worth attending.

The film follows the story of Bullock's character who is kidnapped by a billionaire (Daniel Radcliffe), who seeks to use her knowledge of an ancient language to find a treasure. Tatum plays the novelist's hunky cover model who decides to rescue her. The film carries a sizable production budget of \$68 million, so its production company Paramount will keep its fingers



crossed for solid word-of-mouth in the coming weeks.

The Indian epic 'RRR' also flew off to a good start with its North American debut, landing in third place on domestic charts with \$5.42 million from 4,517 locations. The Sarigami Cinemas release is expected to draw \$12 million to \$15 million in grosses through Sunday - numbers which would make it the biggest ever stateside debut for an Indian film.



Zendaya, Almodovar, Villeneuve party hard at pre-Oscars bash

Los Angeles | Agencies

Spider-Man: No Way Home' star Zendaya recently attended an Oscars party at the Los Feliz, Los Angeles home of writer-producer Mitch Glazer and actress Kelly Lynch along with fellow guests like Pedro Almodovar, Denis Villeneuve, Rose, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Hailey Bieber, Zoe Kravitz, Al Pacino, Troye Sivan and

Andie MacDowell, reports 'Variety'.

As per 'Variety', the party organized by fashion label Saint Laurent, was hosted by the label's creative director Anthony Vaccarello. The event began with a VIP dinner for about 50 people at the Harvey house, a John Lautner-designed architectural gem in Los Feliz owned by Mitch Glazer and Kelly Lynch.

In addition, a late-night reception

for about 150 included a performance from indie band Wet Leg. Other guests in attendance were Bill Murray, Dave Franco, Jack Dylan Grazer, Joachim Trier, Maude Apatow, Jessie Buckley, Justice Smith, Amber Valletta and Joe Kerry.

Other fashion labels too are hosting grand parties as a lead up to the 94th Oscars which is set to be held on Sunday at the Dolby Theater. The

Chanel Charles Finch dinner will return as an in-person event at the Beverly Hills Hotel.

Giorgio Armani too will toast Nicole Kidman at its annual festivities at the Armani boutique in Beverly Hills. Gucci once again will team up with talent manager Guy Oseary for an exclusive post-Oscar party on Sunday.

Lin-Manuel Miranda to miss Oscars as his wife tests Covid positive

Los Angeles | Agencies

Lin took to his Twitter to reveal his decision to his followers as he maintained that he is opting out of the prestigious ceremony, "out of caution". In the same tweet, he mentioned that he and his children have been tested negative for the bug.

Lin's tweet read, "This weekend, my wife tested (positive) for COVID. She's doing fine. Kids and I have tested (negative), but out of caution, I won't be going to the Oscars tomorrow night," Miranda wrote. Cheering for my (Tick, Tick ... Boom!) and Encanto families (with) my own family, alongside all of you, ALL of you."

Multi-hyphenate musician Lin-Manuel Miranda won't be attending the 94th Oscars ceremony, which is scheduled to be held on Sunday, following his wife Vanessa Nadal's Covid positive diagnosis, reports 'Variety'.

The composer has been nominated for the Oscars in the category of best original song for writing 'Dos Oruguitas' a ballad from Disney's 'Encanto'.

The award holds great value for the composer because if he emerges victorious over other nominees like Billie Eilish, Beyonce, Diane Warren and Van Morrison, he would achieve EGOT status: an honour in show business meaning he has won an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony during his career.

He would be the third youngest in history.

HILLARY CLINTON CAST IN 'INTO THE WOODS', TO LEND HER VOICE TO GIANT CHARACTER

Los Angeles: Former First Lady, US secretary of state and senator, Hillary Clinton has joined the cast of the upcoming production of the Stephen Sondheim stage musical 'Into the Woods' at the Arkansas Repertory Theater, set to open in Little Rock next month, reports 'Entertainment Weekly'.



However, Clinton will make an appearance in the capacity of a voice actor for the production and not on stage. As per 'Entertainment Weekly', she will lend her voice to the character of the Giant, which has been earlier voiced by artists such as Judi Dench and Glenn Close. The voice for the Giant is often pre-recorded as stated by 'Playbill'. Still, the show will present a rare opportunity to hear an American statesperson bellow at terrified underlings outside the office. 'Into the Woods', which is considered one of Sondheim's most popular and acclaimed works, follows several classic fairy tale characters, including Little Red Riding Hood, Jack (of Beanstalk fame), and Cinderella, as they embark on their familiar adventures.

But the show adds a unique twist to the tales in continuing beyond their "happily ever after" conclusions, exploring the consequences and moral repercussions of the characters' actions. The original Broadway production won Tony Awards for Best Score and Best Book, and the musical was adapted into a film starring Meryl Streep in 2014.



'KING RICHARD': A HAGIOGRAPHY OF AN AMBITIOUS FATHER

FILM REVIEW

TROY RIBEIRO

(Running in Theatres).

Duration: 146 minutes.

Director: Reinaldo Marcus Green.

Cast: Will Smith, Aunjanue Ellis, Jon Bernthal, Saniyya Sidney, Demi Singleton, Tony Goldwyn, Mikayla Lashae Bartholomew, Daniele Lawson, Layla Crawford, Erika Ringor, Noah Bean, Craig Tate, Dylan McDermott, Live Schreiber and Susie Abromeit.

Rating: ***

Director Reinaldo Marcus Green's 'King Richard' is an unusual, inspirational sports drama. Designed as a hagiography, it is the tale of an ambitious father who had planned the career of his daughters even before they were born.

Centred around their father, Richard Williams, the film aims at telling the story behind the meteoric success of two of the greatest professional tennis players of all time -- Venus and Serena Williams.

Richard has a plan. He and his wife Oracene aka 'Brandy' (Aunjanue Ellis) will add two more children to their family, and those children will grow up to be tennis prodigies. And he does everything the girls need to transform from being prodigies to becoming professional players.

Armed with a clear vision and a 78-page plan, Richard is a dedicated, hard-working dreamer, eccentric at times, determined to write his daughters into history.

Working as a security guard at night and relentlessly training his daughters during the day on the cracked and leaf-littered surfaces of Compton, California municipal courts,



making his daughters achieve their maximum potential, instilling in them immense confidence and a never-say-die attitude, and later strategising their career moves, forms the crux of the narrative.

The script by Zach Baylin is formulaic in glorifying Richard. He is hardworking, has a plan which he repeatedly tells others, gets beaten by local gangs, studies tennis magazines and instructors, and tries to get his girls formal training from professionals while holding them back to his demands.

Some moments shine, specifically the one when, after showing his daughters the film 'Cinderella', he asks them: "What did you learn from Cinderella?"

Will Smith essays the role of the flamboy-

ant, often outspoken, at times boorish Richard Williams with ease. If you have ever seen the real-life 'King Richard', during his famous interviews and press tours, you can easily understand the hard work and detailing Will Smith has put behind his portrayal of the famous dad-cum-coach, especially of his mannerisms and posture.

Will excels as the worried, over-protective and vulnerable dad who will stop at nothing to shield his talented daughters from the perils and pitfalls of stardom and celebrity.

Saniyya Sidney as Venus and Demi Singleton as Serena are a delight on screen. They both bring an easy uncomplicated innocence to their depiction of the girls the Williams sisters have always maintained they

are. Moreover, their tennis skills, particularly their ability to match the Williams sisters' style of play, are impressive.

Aunjanue Ellis, as Oracene, the girls' headstrong and equally supportive mother, holds her head against a charming and dominating Will Smith. She is a much more interesting character, but unfortunately her role is short-changed by the script.

Jon Bernthal also shines in a supporting role, as the eccentric and loud-mouthed real-life coach, Rick Macci.

Overall, 'King Richard' is a fitfully entertaining and intermittently feel-good film that reinforces the belief, "Daddy knows best", even as it portrays a lesser-known part of the Williams sisters' lives.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Charlotte Dawson



IPL 2022: PUNJAB KINGS BEAT RCB BY FIVE WICKETS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Punjab Kings beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by five wickets in the 3rd match of the IPL 2022 at DY Patil Sports Academy, here on Sunday.

After being invited to bat first, brilliant knocks by skipper Faf du Plessis (88 off 57), Virat Kohli (41 not out off 29) and Dinesh Karthik (32 not out off 14) powered Royal Challengers Bangalore to 205-2 in 20 overs. Apart from the trio of Du Plessis, Kohli and Karthik, Anuj Rawat also made valuable contributions with the bat for RCB with his knock of 21 off 20. For Punjab Kings, Rahul Chahar (1/22) and Arshdeep Singh (1/31) took a wicket apiece.

In reply, top three batters Mayank Agarwal (32) and Shikhar Dhawan (43), Bhanuka Rajapaksa (43) played freely and gave Punjab a solid base to chase the big target. And, lower down the order, Shahrukh Khan (24) and Odean Smith (25) remained unbeaten and helped Punjab chase down the target with one over to spare and five wickets in hand. Mohammed Siraj was the highest wicketeer as well as most expensive bowler for RCB with his figures of 2/59.



Brief scores :
RCB -- 205-2 in 20 overs (Faf du Plessis 88, Virat Kohli 41; Rahul Chahar 1/22) vs PBKS (Shikhar Dhawan 43, Bhanuka Rajapaksa 43; 2/59)

IPL 2022: Delhi Capitals beat Mumbai Indians by 4 wickets

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Axar Patel and Lalit Yadav's fine knocks helped Delhi Capitals beat Mumbai Indians by 4 wickets in their opening game in the IPL 2022 at the Brabourne stadium, here on Sunday.

A 70-run partnership in just 30 balls between Patel and Lalit Yadav enabled Delhi to chase down a competitive total of 177 runs in 18.2 overs.

However, Delhi started their innings in a hurry, losing wickets at regular intervals. Within the power-play Delhi lost three wickets in quick succession including their captain Rishabh Pant. Delhi were tottering at 32 for 3 in 4.2 overs.

But at the other end, Prithvi Shaw took sole charge to score runs. He smashed two consecutive fours off Daniel Sams and in the next overs of Jaspreet Bumrah, the right hand bat-



ter took 10 runs with the help of two fours.

After taking two quick wickets of Prithvi Shaw and Rovman Powell, it looked like Mumbai Indians have seized the initiative from Delhi. But Axar Patel who was not so impressive in his bowling, rescued the team. First he made a 32-run stand with Shardul Thakur for the sixth wicket and then made a 75-run 7th wicket partnership in just 30 balls with Lalit

Yadav to guide Delhi home. Axar made 38 runs in just 17 balls with the help of two fours and three towering sixes while Lalit Yadav made 48 runs in 38 balls.

Earlier, fine bowling performances by left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav and pacer Khaleel Ahmad helped Delhi Capitals restrict Mumbai Indians to a par score of 177/5 in 20 overs.

Put into bat, Mumbai

Indians' openers Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan started the proceedings with ease as the duo smashed 10 runs in the very first over of Shardul Thakur.

Sharma made 41 off 32 with the help of two sixes and four fours. Sharma and Kishan made a 67 runs partnership in only 8.2 overs.

When Mumbai were set to regain the momentum, Kuldeep once again provided a break, taking Kieron Pollard's wicket. Kishan returned unbeaten 81 as Mumbai managed to post a competitive total of 177/5 in 20 overs.

Brief scores :

Mumbai Indians 177/5 in 20 overs (Ishan Kishan 81 not out, Rohit Sharma 41, Tilak Varma 22; Kuldeep Yadav 3/18, Khaleel Ahmad 2/27) v Delhi Capitals 179/6 in 18.2 overs. Lalit Yadav 48 not out, Axar Patel 38 not out, Prithvi Shaw 38; Basil Thampi 3/35) lost by 4 wickets

Swiss Open: PV Sindhu clinches women's singles title, Prannoy finishes as runner-up

Basel | Agencies

Ace Indian shuttler PV Sindhu clinched the women's singles title in the 2022 Swiss Open, beating Thailand's Busanan Ongnamrunphan in the final while compatriot HS Prannoy finished the tournament as runner-up at the St Jakobshalle arena, here on Sunday.

Double Olympic medallist Sindhu registered a 21-16, 21-8 win over Ongnamrunphan in 49 minutes to claim the Super 300 crown. This was her second title of the year after winning the Syed Modi International in January.

Ranked seventh in the badminton world rankings, Sindhu went into the final with a 15-1 head-to-head record over world No 11 Ongnamrunphan.

The match ebbed and flowed in the early exchanges, with both shut-



tlers fighting for every point. While the Indian ace relied on her big smashes, Busanan was effective with her perfectly placed cross-court shots, especially near the net. The first mid-game break saw Sindhu take a narrow two-point lead. She managed to break away late into the opening game after

the Thai made a series of unforced errors. However, the second game was in complete contrast to the first, with Sindhu racing to a big 11-2 lead. Busanan provided little resistance in the remainder of the game as Sindhu clinched the title with ease.

Meanwhile, Prannoy went down fighting in the men's singles final against Indonesia's Jonatan Christie 21-12, 21-18

The first game could have gone either way, with the world No 8 Jonatan leading by three points at the break. However, the Indonesian went on a scoring spree to pocket seven successive points and win the opener.

The second game was much more competitive but, despite saving three match points, the 26th-ranked Prannoy lost the title clash in 48 minutes.

Women's World Cup INDIA OUT OF SEMIS RACE AFTER THREE-WICKET DEFEAT TO SOUTH AFRICA

Christchurch | Agencies

India on Sunday were knocked out of the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup after losing to South Africa by three wickets in a thrilling league match at Hagley Oval.

After sizzling half-centuries from Smriti Mandhana, Mithali Raj and Shafali Verma took India to a respectable 274/7, South Africa were cruising with Laura Wolvaardt top-scoring with 80 and sharing a 125-run stand with Lara Goodall (49).

But a straightforward chase turned into India making inroads. It required the calmness of Mignon du Preez to take South Africa home on the final ball of the chase. Another big moment was when South Africa needed three runs off two balls, du Preez holed out to long-on off Deepti Sharma.

But replays showed Deepti overstepping by the tiniest of margins. Eventually, du Preez's whip through mid-wicket broke the hearts of Indian fans as South Africa aced their highest successful chase in ODIs. It also meant that the West Indies sealed the



final spot for the semi-finals.

In pursuit of 275, Lizelle Lee was run out early via a direct hit from Harmanpreet Kaur.

Du Preez and captain Sune Luus stitched a stand of 37 runs for the fourth wicket

Mandhana dropped a simple

chance of du Preez at long-on off Gayakwad. But two balls later, Harmanpreet fired an underarm throw from cover-point and Ghosh whipped the balls to catch a diving Kapp short of her crease.

In a bid for the glory shot, du Preez holed out to long-on off Deepti but

Brief scores :

India 274/7 in 50 overs (Smriti Mandhana 71, Mithali Raj 68; Masabata Klass 2/38, Shabnim Ismail 2/42) lost to South Africa 275/7 in 50 overs (Laura Wolvaardt 80, Mignon du Preez 52 not out; Harmanpreet Kaur 2/42, Rajeshwari Gayakwad 2/61) by three wickets

the off-spinner had overstepped and from there, it was ecstasy for South Africa and West Indies while it was agony for India.

ENGLAND BOOK SEMIS SPOT WIN OVER BANGLADESH

Wellington: Defending champions England on Sunday booked their spot in the semi-finals of the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup with a 100-run win over Bangladesh in their final league stage match at Basin Reserve.

It marks a remarkable entry for the Heather Knight-led side into the last-four stage after starting their defence of the World Cup win with a hat-trick of losses. It means England's opponents in the semi-final will either be Australia or South Africa.

MIAMI OPEN: COLLINS MOVES ON, OSAKA TOO ADVANCES

Australian Open finalists Danielle Collins broke Vera Zvonareva four times Saturday to reach the fourth round of the Miami Open WTA event.

Miami | Agencies

The highest-ranked American woman at No.11, and the No. 9 seed here at the Miami Open, Collins defeated qualifier Vera Zvonareva 6-1, 6-4 in 78 minutes. Collins had four aces and broke Zvonareva's serve three times on the Stadium court. No.9 seed Collins will next play 8th-seeded Ons Jabeur in a clash between two of the three seeds



left in the top half of the draw. Alison Riske also advanced on Saturday.

The 28-year-old American, one of only three seeds left in the top half of the draw, benefitted when the following top players all lost their first matches: No.1 Aryna Sabalenka, No.3 Anett Kontaveit, No.6 arolina Pliskova, No.11 Elina Svitolina, No.11 Emma Raducanu, No.13 Angelique Kerber and No.18 Leylah Fernandez. No. 8 seed Jabeur, overcame Kaia Kanepi of Estonia 6-3, 6-0 in a third-round match while No. 22 seed Belinda Bencic of Switzerland defeated Heather Watson of Great Britain 6-4, 6-1 in a match that finished in just short of one and a half-hour. Meanwhile, four-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka of Japan advanced to the next round without having to hit a ball when her expected Round 3 opponent, Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic, was forced to withdraw from the tournament due to a left abdominal injury. As a result of the walkover, Osaka is into the fourth round in Miami for the second year running. Last year, she reached the quarterfinals in her best-ever tournament result.

Late Dani Olmo winner seals warm-up win for Spain against Albania

Barcelona | Agencies

Dani Olmo's last-minute winner gave Spain a 2-1 win in their friendly game at home against Albania here.

Olmo controlled a pass from Jordi Alba before curling the ball into the far corner of the net just when it looked that Spain's inability to turn control into goals was going to see the game end in a draw.

The game in Espanyol's RCDE Stadium on Saturday night was the first time Spain had played in Barcelona in 18 years and there were four FC Barcelona players in Luis Enrique's starting 11, reports Xinhua.

One of those, Ferran Torres, had put the Spanish ahead in the 74th minute after being set up by substitute Yeremi Pino, but an error from Pau Torres in the 85th minute looked to have gifted Albania a draw. Torres' back header deflected off Myrto Uzuni to leave Spain's goalkeeper David Raya completely wrong-footed in what was otherwise a relatively comfortable debut for him.

As has happened on so many previous occasions, it was no problem for a Spain midfielder of Rodri Hernandez, Pedri and Gavi, ably supported by Torres and Pablo Sarabia to control the ball. However, despite having over 70 percent of possession, Spain struggled to



test Albania keeper Etrit Berisha.

Ferran had a good run in the fourth minute of a high-energy first half before Pedri had a shot comfortably saved in the 20th minute and another blocked by Berisha 10 minutes before halftime. The second half saw Berisha block a thunderbolt from Rodri from outside the penalty area in the first minute of the second half and the Manchester City midfielder saw another effort deflected just wide moments later. Overall, however, Albania's five-man defense were relatively comfortable against Spain's control of the ball, until Torres opened the scoring. That is something the Spain coach has to work on in his side's remaining preparation games for the World Cup finals, starting against Iceland on

Women's inter-department hockey RAILWAYS, SSB LEAD GOAL-FEST ON DAY 4



Team Absolute | New Delhi

It was a goal-fest at the 2nd Hockey India Senior Women Inter-Department National Championship on Sunday with Railways and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) scoring big wins on Day 4 of the competition here.

In the first match of the day, Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) romped to an emphatic 5-0

win against Steel Plant Sports Board. Devika Sen opened the scoring in the 5th minute of the match for RSPB, while Anupa Barla doubled their lead in the 9th minute. Alka Durgdung added the third goal in the 15th minute of the match. In the second match of the day, Sashastra Seema Bal took on UCO Bank Women's Hockey Academy and emerged 9-1 winner in a one-sided affair.

3rd Test, Day 4: West Indies secure 1-0 series win over England

Grenada | Agencies

West Indies registered an emphatic ten-wicket win on the fourth day of the third Test after the first two drawn matches to secure a 1-0 series win over England, here on Sunday.

Needing just 28 runs for a win after bowling England out for 120 in the second innings, West Indies' openers -- Kraigg Brathwaite and John Campbell chased down the target in 4.5 overs as the game ended within the first session on Day 4. The victory for West Indies moved them above Bangladesh in the World Test Championship standings, while England remained at the foot of the table after a seventh defeat in 12 matches. Play on Day 4 resumed with Jack Leach and Chris Woakes at the crease, but a dire situation became even worse for England when Woakes was sent packing for 19 early in the day courtesy to a stunning catch by Jason Holder. Woakes made a pretty decent connection with a flick into the



leg-side off Kumar Roach's first ball of the day, but hadn't accounted for the reach of the totemic Holder, who stretched out a long arm to take a blinder of a catch at gully. England's

hopes of scrambling to a theoretically defensible total looked dead in the water, and the innings was soon wrapped up when Roach struck again, luring an edge from Leach (4) to

end his 55-ball stay at the crease. Roach's double strike meant he ended the innings with figures of 2/10 from 9.2 overs. But as impressive as those numbers were, they were distinctly second-best to those of Mayers, whose five-for on Day 3 saw him close with 5/18 from 17 overs, an ICC report said. Facing a minuscule target of 28 to win the match and series, the West Indies openers stroked four boundaries as they reached the winning total in just under five overs off the bowling of Woakes and Saqib Mahmood. The win for West Indies means they are unbeaten against England in the last four series on home ground, with England's victory in 2004 their only series win in Caribbean conditions since 1968.

Brief scores :

England 204 & 120 (Alex Lees 31; Kumar Roach 2-10, Kyle Mayers 5-18) lost to West Indies 297 & 28/0 (Kraigg Brathwaite 20 not out, John Campbell 6 not out) by 10 wickets



ASHA NEGI, VIDYA MALVADE ON SUPERNATURAL EXPERIENCE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the new season of the upcoming cop drama 'Abhay 3' shows the existence of the supernatural world and black magic, actors Asha Nehi and Vidya Malvade share their creepy experiences in real life.

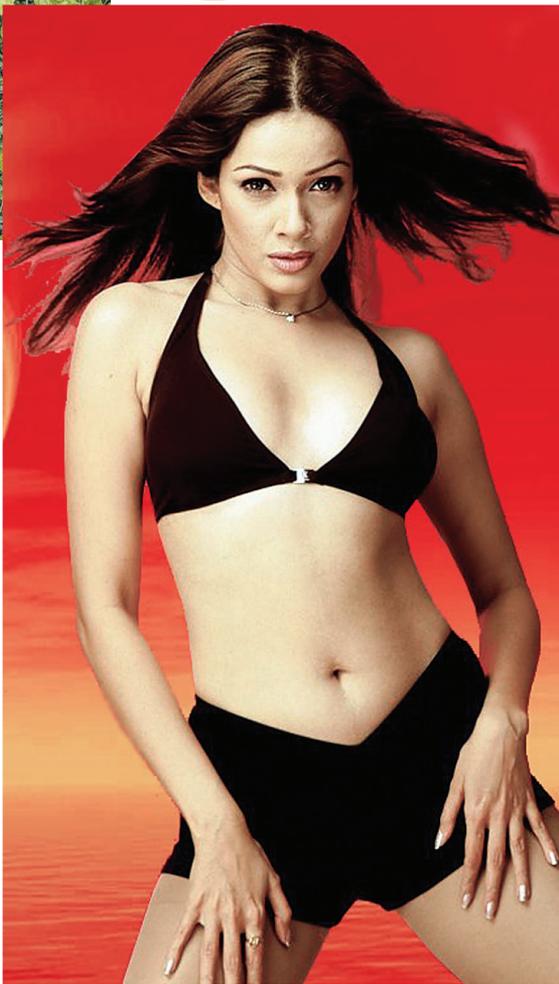
Asked about their belief in supernatural power Asha told reporter: "Even though I haven't experienced anything creepy so far, I believe in buri nazaar. Many times it happens that our elders like mothers, grandmothers burn chillis to remove negative energy from our surroundings and protect us. I believe that if blessing works, the curse also affects. But, in our show, the evil force showing their conviction and why they do that they so."

Vidya on the other hand shared one of the creepy experiences that she had during one of her trips to Finland.

Vidya mentioned, "Once I was in Finland, living in a resort where the location was beautiful but remote. When I opened the window of my hotel room, I saw a huge tree and there was a water body across. A visual just crossed my mind that of a lady in a white sari, holding a candle in her hand. But that's it, I did not entertain that much."

"In the night, when I was asleep, I heard a loud sound of banging on my door and I just felt that room is possessed, I might not stay alive tonight. I was so scared. In the morning even though I asked around if someone came at my door, but nobody was there! yes, I did experience that," she added. In the new season, Abhay, played by Kunal Kemmu is investigating a series of murders where the killer is leaving clues that shows some element of supernatural activities.

Vidya who is playing a pivotal part in the narrative said, "My character is onto the other side, the evil side. In the human mind, there is a good and evil side in all of us. It depends on how we interpret and let evil come out. Nidhi, my character believes that death is the ultimate moksha, so she is trying to give death to every human being to achieve their moksha."



'Pushpa' director Sukumar hails Rajamouli

Hyderabad | Agencies

Director Sukumar, who scored a blockbuster hit with 'Pushpa' recently, conveyed his best wishes to S.S. Rajamouli, as he loved the sensational 'RRR'.

Lifting the 'Magadheera' director up to the skies, Sukumar pens a heartfelt note in the form of a Telugu poem.

"Even though we are next to you, we have to run, to reach you. Even though we are in the sky, we need to lift up our heads to look at you", the

'Pushpa' director wrote.

Sukumar continued, "The only difference between you and us, Rajamouli, is, you can make a film like this and we can only watch it". It is a known fact that despite being in a competitive position, Rajamouli and Sukumar have always shared a cordial relationship with each other.

Sukumar, during an event, also mentioned that he had no plans to make 'Pushpa' as a pan-India movie, but Rajamouli was the one who insisted on doing that. 'RRR' starring Ram Charan and Jr NTR released a couple of days ago, creating many records and shattering a few.

A good actor is good across formats: Saanand Verma on World Theatre Day

Mumbai | Agencies

television

Actor Saanand Verma has done theatre, but not as much as he would have loved to.

The 'Apharan 2' star opines that a good actor is good everywhere, be it cinema, television or theatre. And, he does not agree with the common view that theatre actors are better actors.

"I have seen many theatre actors who are not good enough. Every actor rehearses a lot before their project. Without a doubt that theatre actors take a lot of time to prepare for a play and the rehearsals happen before every performance.

"If I give you an example of a



go to shoot a scene for my character, I don't even know the line I am supposed to say, I only get to know about it on the floor and it's then and there that I learn and deliver."

"Whereas in theatre, you get time to prepare. A good actor is a good actor irrespective of formats and mediums. We should not compare actors based on mediums. One thing that makes theatre fulfilling for an actor is that we get to see the live reaction of the audience. It is a mind blowing kick for any performer," he says.

The advent of OTT and the pandemic has heavily impacted theatre. There is a fear

among many that the art form is at risk of losing its relevance.



Charrul Malik on working with Bhagyashree in her first commercial

Team Absolute | Mumbai

They both shot for a commercial recently which is Charrul's debut in the ad world. Speaking more about it she says: "The producers Aditya Sharma and Rekha Gour (actor Rohitashv Gour's wife) called me and gave me the opportunity. It was quick and that's the way the industry works. You hardly get time. I am grateful to the producers for thinking of me for this project."

Sharing her working experience with Bhagyashree, Charrul says: "She is such a humble person. We spent a whole day with her and chatted a lot. She is soft-spoken, elegant and beautiful. She has beautifully maintained her fitness level. She is into yoga and eats healthy food, which is very inspiring. I was throughout the shoot looking at her like a fan. My favourite film of hers is definitely 'Maine Pyar Kiya'." "She had become a national craze after the film. The first expression after seeing her in the

film was 'heroine toh aisi honi chahiye' Interestingly when we were shooting for this ad there were few white pigeons on our set and it was a sweet coincidence as we were all looking at Bhagyashree. Indeed there is a deep connection between the pigeons and her."

Actress Charrul Malik, who is currently seen in 'Bhabji Ghar Par Hai', is elated to share the screen with none other than actress Bhagyashree.

Everyone knows that after her debut film 'Maine Pyar Kiya' she left the industry and got busy in her personal life. Speaking on that Charrul adds: "I remember when I watched her as Suman in 'Maine Pyar Kiya' we all fell in love with her. And when she left the industry and concentrated in her personal life that was completely her call.

Yes, she would have been in a different state altogether had she stayed back but I respect her decision. Look at her now. She is active on social media, doing commercials and is a fitness enthusiast. Recently I have seen her as Kangana Ranaut's mother in 'Thalivi' and she is fabulous in the film."

SINGER SHAILENDRA RECALLS MEETING RAJ KAPOOR FOR THE FIRST TIME



I'll take him to Raj'. I came to Bombay and he took me there."

"Those days I used to sing ghazals. He (Raj Kapoor) asked me, "Beta, what's your name?" I told him Shaileendra Singh and he said, "you reminded me of my friend!" because my name matched that of song writer Shaileendra."

Continuing further he adds: "Then on the shooting floor Raj sahab asked me to sing. They used to have these big fat mics on the set and there I sang a song. While singing, I saw that there was a young man standing afar and as soon as I ended my song he came to me and said, 'Hi, I'm Rishi Kapoor' and even I said, 'Hi, I'm Shaileendra Singh!' Raj sahab wanted a fresh voice! So, I got the film because of Mr Raj Kapoor and the rest is history."

Mumbai: Veteran singer Shaileendra Singh talks about meeting the late legendary actor Raj Kapoor for the first time and being chosen to be the voice of Rishi Kapoor in 'Bobby' on 'The Kapil Sharma Show'.

He is appearing as a special guest along with Anup Jalota and Sudesh Bhosale.

Shaileendra Singh shares: "I joined the Pune Film Institute (Film and Television Institute of India, Pune) to learn acting and I had never thought of becoming a playback singer, although I used to learn music as well. In my second year in college, Raj sahab's (Raj Kapoor) scriptwriter VP Sathé knew that I sang because he was my father's friend. He told my father, 'Call Shaileendra to Bombay (now Mumbai),

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Nusratt Bharucha