

# absolute india

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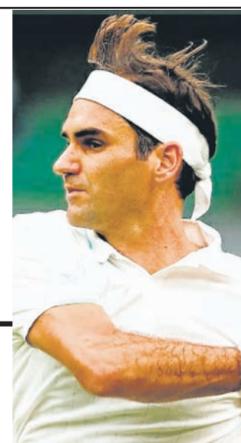
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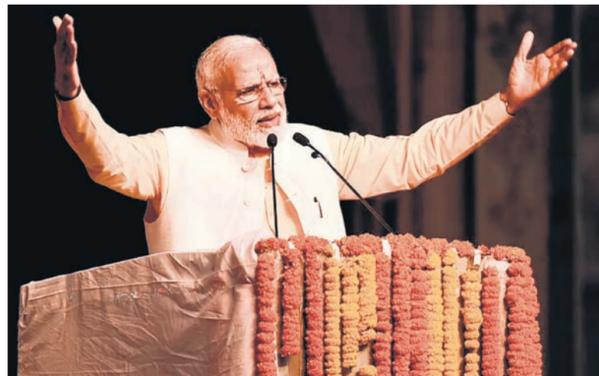
OVER 100 EX-BUREAUCRATS WRITE TO PM TO END POLITICS OF HATE:

## MR PM TAKE INITIATIVE TO END POLITICS OF HATE

As many as 108 former bureaucrats have written an open letter to Narendra Modi, urging the Prime Minister to end the politics of hate in the country.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As many as 108 former bureaucrats have written an open letter to Narendra Modi, urging the Prime Minister to end the politics of hate in the country.



who signed the letter. "As former civil servants, it is not normally our want to express ourselves in such extreme terms, but the relentless pace at which the constitutional edifice created by our founding fathers is being destroyed compels us to speak out and express our anger and anguish," the letter read.

They also said that the escalation of hate violence against the minority communities, particularly Muslims, in the last few years in many BJP-ruled states such as Assam, Gujarat,

Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand has acquired a scary new dimension.

Urging the Prime Minister, the letter said, "We appeal to your conscience, taking heart from your promise of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas'.

"It is our fond hope that in this year of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', rising above partisan considerations, you will call for an end to the politics of hate that governments under your party's control are so assiduously practising."

## INDIA, UAE AGREE TO WORK CLOSELY ON UNSC AGENDA

New Delhi:

The first round of India-UAE UN consultations, at the Director General-level, were held in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday and saw the two nations agree to work together closely on the issues related to UN issues, including the Security Council.

Both sides exchanged views on areas of priority during their ongoing UNSC tenure. In keeping with their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, they agreed to work closely together on key issues on the UNSC agenda, in particular on their shared commitment to reformed multilateralism and counter-terrorism.

The Indian delegation was led by Joint Secretary, UN-Political, Prakash Gupta, along with officials from the Embassy of India in Abu Dhabi, while the UAE delegation was led by Ahood Al Zaabi, Director of the United Nations Department of the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation. India also congratulated UAE on its successful Presidency of the UNSC in March 2022. Both sides welcomed their convergences and mutual support on multilateral issues.



## HM terror module busted in J&K's Kulgam, 3 terror associates held

A terror module of proscribed terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) was busted in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district with the arrest of three terrorist associates, police said on Tuesday.

Team Absolute | Srinagar

A terror module of proscribed terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) was busted in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district with the arrest of three terrorist associates, police said on Tuesday.

"In Kulgam, police busted a terror module of proscribed outfit HM by arresting three terrorist associates involved in the case pertaining to the killing of a Panch, namely Mohd Yaqoob Dar, son of Gh Mohd Dar, resident of Kulpora Kulgam, at his native village on March 2.

"Weapon used in the killing of the Panch including one pistol, eight pistol rounds and two grenades were recovered from their possession," police said.

Police said during the course of investigation, it was learnt that active HM terrorist Farooq Ahmad Bhat, resident of Cheki Desend Yarpura, had received directions from terror handlers based in Pakistan to target the Panchayat members of Kulgam.

"On their directions, he identified the target and further gave directions accordingly to active terrorist namely Raja Nadeem Rather, son of Ab Rehman Rather, resident of Ashmuji, to execute the terror act with the support of their associates namely

Nasser Ahmad Wani, son of Bashir Ahmad Wani, resident of Srandoo, Adil Manzoor Rather, son of Manzoor Ahmad Rather, resident of Ashmuji, and Majid Mohd Rather, son of Gh Mohd Rather, resident of Malipora Mirbazar. The directions included to conduct recce of the Panch's presence, arrange transport and provide logistics to execute the terror act," police said.

All the three associates were arrested. Police said during further investigation, involvement of one more person - Idrees Ahmad Dar, resident of Kulpora, Kulgam has surfaced. He was also part of the crime and is still at large and reportedly joined the terrorist ranks.

"It is pertinent to mention that the said module is linked with already busted HM terror module involved in the killing of Sarpanch Shabir Ahmad Mir, son of Mohd Abdullah Mir, resident of Audoora Kulgam on March 11. Both the busted modules were received directions from their HM handlers based in Pakistan," police said.

Police said further investigation of the case is in progress and more arrests and recoveries are also expected. Besides, efforts are on to neutralise the active terrorists behind this heinous crime.

## ALL RIGOURS OF CONSTITUTION OUGHT TO APPLY IN PM CARES: LAWYER



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court was on Tuesday told that the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund can be set up as a trust can be set up but all 'rigours of the Constitution' ought to apply.

The court was hearing a petition seeking a declaration that the fund is 'state' under Article 12 of the Constitution and to restrain it from using Prime Minister of India or Prime Minister, including its abbreviations, in its name and on its website.

The PMO maintained that the PM CARES Fund comprises voluntary donations made by individuals and institutions and is not a part of the business or function of the Central government in any manner.

Appearing for Public Interest Litigation petitioner Samyak Gangwal, senior advocate Shyam Divan said the Fund is very very closely interlinked with the Prime Minister of India. "Can you contract out of the Constitution? As long as you are ex-officio, the Constitution will drag you. You are ex-officio, you are taking the oath of office and your allegiance is to the Constitution," he said. As the bench asked whether he meant a trust could not have been set up, Divan said the trust can be set up but all rigours of the Constitution ought to apply there.

"Today it's a trust, tomorrow it may be a private company!" he said.

According to the Centre's earlier submissions, PM CARES Fund is not a "public authority" under the ambit of Section 2(h) of the RTI Act, further clarifying that no government money is credited in the PM CARES Fund and only unconditional and voluntary contributions are accepted under PM CARES Fund. "It is reiterated that the Trust's fund is not a fund of the Government of India and the amount does not go in the Consolidated Fund of India," said an affidavit filed by the PMO. The Centre further said that the trust functions on the principles of transparency and public good in larger public interest like any other charitable trust and, therefore, cannot have any objection to uploading all its resolutions on its website to ensure transparency. Such a prayer is not only unheard of but is legally not maintainable, it said while urging the Delhi High Court to dismiss the petition.

## MHA sounds alert on Maoist activities

Senior officials of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs have told the police of the four eastern Indian states -- West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha to remain alert during the next 15 days over possible Maoist activities.

Kolkata | Agencies

Senior officials of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs have told the police of the four eastern Indian states -- West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha to remain alert during the next 15 days over possible Maoist activities.

The alert was issued by senior officials of the Union ministry of home affairs at a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Eastern Zonal Council that took place at the West Bengal state secretariat of Nabanna here on Tuesday.

Besides senior officers of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, the meeting was also attended by the chief secretaries and home secretaries of the four eastern Indian states, among others.

Although, none of the attendees in the meeting was ready to face the media to detail the discussions on the meeting, highly placed sources from the West Bengal government told IANS on the condition of anonymity that as the alerts of



MHA officials the next 15 days are extremely crucial for these four states as there are central intelligence inputs of resurgent Maoist activities in the region during that period.

Although there had been no

Maoist activities in West Bengal recently, the West Bengal police is worried about the recovery of Maoist posters in the once Maoist stronghold of Janglemahal area scattered over the three districts of Bankura, Purulia and West

Midnapore.

Even the state police director general, Manoj Malviya had visited the Janglemahal area and reviewed the security arrangements there.

It is learned that in Tuesday's meeting of the Standing Committee of the Eastern Zonal Council, the West Bengal government representatives complained about withdrawal of central armed forces from the erstwhile Maoist bastions without prior discussions with the state government concerned.

The state government also presented the details of the current security arrangements in the Janglemahal area.

In the meeting, the representatives of the West Bengal government also stressed on greater coordination between Border Security Force and local police personnel in the Indo-Bangladesh bordering villages in the state.

The issue of raising barbed fencing at the borders was also discussed.

## No citizen should be deprived of property without due procedure of law: SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said no citizen should be deprived of his or her property without authority of law, as it would be a violation of the Constitution.

A bench of Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Vikram Nath said: "Construction/widening of road no doubt would be a public purpose but there being no justification for not paying compensation, the action of the respondents would be arbitrary, unreasonable and clearly violative of Article 300-A of the Constitution.

The bench said Article 300A though not a fundamental right but nevertheless it has status of being a constitutional or a statutory right and it provides that no citizen would be deprived of his property save without authority of law.

"Depriving somebody of his property, where it is land, can be made by number of modes e.g. by acquisition, surrender or by transfer



and other facets also," it said, adding that in the present case, land being utilised for the road to be owned by the panchayat/municipality, could either have been voluntarily surrendered, transferred by way of title deeds, or by way of acquisition as may be provided under the statute.

The top court's judgment came on a plea filed by eight farmers challenging a Kerala High Court judgment, which dismissed their appeals for compensation for taking

over their 1.7 hectares of land for widening of road by Sulthan Bathery Municipality. The high court relied on the Panchayat's contention that they had voluntarily surrendered their land for no consideration.

The top court noted that the high court proceeded on a wrong premise on shifting the burden on the appellants. "The assertion that it was surrendered voluntarily without any claim for consideration is by the panchayat/municipality. The PWD has only stated that it received the land from the panchayat and that it was given to understand that the land was surrendered voluntarily. Thus, it is the stand of the panchayat/municipality which is to be taken note of," it noted.

The bench said the panchayat and the PWD have failed to produce a single piece of document or evidence in any other form in support of their defense that the appellants have surrendered their land voluntarily. "The consistent stand of

the appellants, on the other hand, has been that they have not given their land to the panchayat voluntarily and that they were assured that they would be suitably compensated," it noted.

The top court said in this matter there is neither any acquisition proceedings nor any transfer of rights by the appellants by way of sale, gift or otherwise.

"The appellants are farmers and the land utilised is agricultural land. It was part of their livelihood. Depriving them of their part of their livelihood and also of their property without authority of law would be violative of Article 21 and Article 300A of the Constitution," it said, as it set aside the judgment passed by the division bench of the high court in 2018, and maintained the single judge bench's decision, which directed for disbursement of amount as may be determined by the Collector after ascertaining the market value of the property to the parties concerned.

## KNOWLEDGE-SHARING PACT HISTORIC: MANN

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a major initiative aimed at revitalising the core sectors of health and education, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday signed a knowledge-sharing agreement (KSA) with his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal.

Interacting with the media after having inked the agreement, both Chief Ministers Mann and Kejriwal described it as a historic initiative for the well-being and prosperity of people of both the states.

The agreement was signed between the Punjab and Delhi governments to share knowledge, experience and skills for the mutual welfare of the people of their respective territories.

It enables the two governments to send and receive officials, ministers and other personnel to learn and share their knowledge, experience and skills for public welfare.

Announcing to replicate the Delhi Model in the state, the Chief Minister said 117 government schools and an equal number of mohalla clinics will be set up with one each in every assembly segment across the state to impart quality education and the state-of-the-art healthcare facilities.

Mann said he was elated as the state has inked an agreement with the Delhi government, which has already evolved a world-class health and education model, adding it



will help the residents of Punjab to avail these top class facilities.

Divulging the rationale behind this agreement, the Chief Minister said: "Every individual should learn like a student throughout his life and should never hesitate to adopt the good in life from wherever he gets."

"With only this motive, they have signed the aforesaid agreement."

Asserting that he will never stop here, Mann said he would certainly visit other states even some countries across the globe for the holistic development of the state whenever and wherever it is required.

Brushing aside the criticism by the Opposition, he categorically said this is not one-sided agreement but both the states would be mutually benefited from it. Mann said that the Opposition was unnecessarily making a lot of hue and cry just for the sake of hollow criticism devoid of any tangible base.



# MASSIVE FIRE BREAKS OUT AT BHALSWA LANDFILL SITE IN DELHI

**A MAJOR FIRE BROKE OUT ON TUESDAY EVENING AT A LANDFILL SITE IN THE OUTER NORTH AREA OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL, A FIRE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL SAID.**



**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

A major fire broke out on Tuesday evening at a landfill site in the outer north area of the national capital, a Fire Department official said. The official said the Fire Department received a call about the incident at around 5.48 p.m. at a dumping ground in Bhalswa after which as many as 10 fire tenders were immediately

pressed into service. As the fire was a major one, three more fire engines were sent to the spot. "Currently, 13 fire tenders have been engaged to douse the flames," the official said. The police have also reached the spot. So far, no casualty has been reported from the incident. It is the second major incident of fire at a dumping yard in the past 30 days. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained. Officials, however, said the rising temperature these days allows

the formation of methane gas at the dumpyard site which is extremely flammable. "It could have triggered a spark that would have ultimately led to this massive blaze," said the official. As per the visuals from the spot, the 'hill' of trash is currently under a massive blaze. The clouds of thick smoke, billowing out of the burning garbage mountain, have enveloped the whole area. Earlier on March 28, a similar incident was reported from east Delhi's Ghazipur landfill site.

# Single offender can also be prosecuted under UP Gangster Act: SC

**The Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that a single offender can also be prosecuted under the Uttar Pradesh Gangsters and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 1986, even in case of a single offence or FIR for any of the anti-social activities mentioned in it.**

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that a single offender can also be prosecuted under the Uttar Pradesh Gangsters and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 1986, even in case of a single offence or FIR for any of the anti-social activities mentioned in it. A bench of Justices M.R. Shah

and B.V. Nagarathna said: "So far as the Gangsters Act, 1986 is concerned, there can be prosecution against a person even in case of a single offence/FIR/charge sheet for any of the anti-social activities mentioned in Section 2(b) of the Act provided such an anti-social activity is by violence, or threat or show of violence, or intimidation, or coercion or otherwise with the object of disturbing public order or of gaining any undue temporal, pecuniary, material or other advantage for himself or any other person." It said there is no specific provision under the Gangsters Act, 1986 like the specific provisions under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, 1999 and the Gujarat Control of Terrorism and Organised Crime Act, 2015 that while prosecuting an accused under the Gangsters Act, there shall be more than one offence or the FIR/charge

sheet. It noted that on a fair reading of the definitions of 'gang' contained in Section 2(b) and 'gangster' contained in Section 2(c) of the Gangsters Act, a 'gangster' means a member or leader or organiser of a gang including any person who abets or assists in the activities of a gang enumerated in clause (b) of Section 2, who either acting singly or collectively commits and indulges in any of the anti-social activities. "A member of a 'gang' acting either singly or collectively may be termed as a member of the 'gang' and comes within the definition of 'gang', provided he/she is found to have indulged in any of the anti-social activities mentioned in Section 2(b) of the Gangsters Act," said the bench. In an appeal in the top court, accused Shradha Gupta contended that solely on the basis of a single FIR or charge sheet and that too

with respect to a single murder, the appellant cannot be said to be a 'gangster' and/or a member of a 'gang'. Advocate Sanjay Kumar Tyagi, representing the UP government, contended that even in case of a single FIR or charge sheet, in view of anti-social activities mentioned in Section 2(b), there can be a prosecution under the Gangsters Act. The accused submitted that the allegations against her cannot be said to be in connection with anti-social activities for which she is to be charged for the offences under Sections 2/3 of the Gangsters Act, 1986. Dismissed the appeals filed by Gupta, the top court said the Allahabad High Court had rightly refused to quash the criminal proceedings against the appellant-accused under Sections 2/3 of the Gangsters Act, 1986, in exercise of powers under Section 482 Cr.P.C.

# 2 HYBRID TERRORISTS OF JEM ARRESTED FROM J&K'S BARAMULLA

**TWO HYBRID TERRORISTS, LINKED WITH PROSCRIBED TERROR OUTFIT JEM, HAVE BEEN ARRESTED FROM PATTAN AREA OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR'S BARAMULLA DISTRICT, POLICE SAID ON TUESDAY.**



**SRINAGAR** | Agencies

Two hybrid terrorists, linked with proscribed terror outfit JeM, have been arrested from Pattan area of Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district, police said on Tuesday. Police said based on specific reliable inputs regarding movement of two terrorists in a vehicle towards

Srinagar, joint Motor Vehicle Checking Points (MVCPs) were established by police, army and SSB at various spots along the national highway and surrounding by-lanes. "At one such MVCP established at Hanjiveera Bala, a speeding vehicle, swerving in a suspicious manner,

was signalled to stop. However, as the vehicle stopped, two individuals (driver and co-driver) jumped off the vehicle and fled towards nearby wooded orchard area," police said. The alert joint team chased the duo and succeeded in nabbing them. They have been identified as

Mohd Aqib Mir alias Kian Mir alias Raqib Mir, resident of Batpora, Sopore, and Danish Ahad Dar, resident of Sopore. A. Police said that they were searched and two Chinese pistols, two pistol magazines, 10 rounds, and two grenades were recovered from them. "The duo has been arrested and taken into custody for further questioning besides, the vehicle has also been seized. During the course of investigation, it has transpired that the duo belong to proscribed terror outfit JeM hybrid module and were looking for targeting of PRIs and minorities/outside. "The successful apprehension of these terrorists has foiled major terror plots and busted a module that was aiding the execution of various terror attacks including the killing of sarpanchs etc," it added.

# J&K DGP takes stock of Amarnath Yatra preparedness

**J&K's Director General of Police Dilbag Singh on Tuesday visited Ramban district and took stock of security preparedness at upcoming Yatra niwas in Chanderkote, transit camp in Banihal area and on the National Highway in the district for the forthcoming Amarnath Yatra.**

**JAMMU** | Agencies

J&K's Director General of Police Dilbag Singh on Tuesday visited Ramban district and took stock of security preparedness at upcoming

Yatra niwas in Chanderkote, transit camp in Banihal area and on the National Highway in the district for the forthcoming Amarnath Yatra. He also reviewed the present security scenario of the district in a meeting with the officers from civil administration, army, CRPF and district police at Chanderkote. The DGP was accompanied by ADGP, Jammu Zone, Mukesh Singh. Interacting with the officers, the DGP emphasised that local and highway security grids need to be kept fully geared up at all levels and joint efforts of all security forces must continue to ensure that elements inimical

to peace are not given any space to disturb peace. He reviewed the additional security measures being taken at the National Highway. He also discussed the traffic management on it with the traffic wing officers. The DGP also stressed on enhancing the functioning of model nakas and added that these should be functional round the clock. He said that the working with devotion and dedication in the right direction has to continue for the peace and stability of the Union Territory. He directed the officers to use all media avenues to highlight the advisories with regard to the traffic management, cut off timings, weather etc.

# Tejashwi to release report card of Nitish government on June 5

**LEADER OF OPPOSITION IN BIHAR ASSEMBLY TEJASHWI YADAV ANNOUNCED A REPORT CARD OF THE CURRENT TENURE OF NITISH KUMAR GOVERNMENT WOULD BE RELEASED ON JUNE 5.**

**PATNA** | Agencies

Leader of Opposition in Bihar Assembly Tejashwi Yadav

announced a report card of the current tenure of Nitish Kumar government would be released on June 5. The decision was taken after meeting with leaders of the Mahagathbandhan's other constituents - the CPI, the CPI-M and the CPI-ML in the RJD office here. However, the Congress was not invited and its status is not clear. "As per the poll promises of Nitish Kumar-led NDA government, it had mentioned issues like corruption, employment, smooth law and order situation. The Nitish Kumar government has failed to address these issues in the last one and a half years. Hence, we

have decided to issue a report card highlighting its failure on June 5," Tejashwi Yadav said. "Bihar is having a double engine government, still it has failed on all fronts. The leaders of NDA are not talking about the 19 lakh jobs which they had promised during the 2020 Assembly election. Incidents of crime are frequently taking place in Bihar. Price rise of fuel and commodities are also rocketing in Bihar," he said. Tejashwi Yadav also said that they had decided to organise such a meeting every month for the better coordination between Mahagathbandhan partners.

# Probe panel on Param Bir-Deshmukh matter submits report to CM Uddhav Thackeray

**The Justice KU Chandiwal Commission - appointed to probe ex-Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh's allegations against then Home Minister Anil Deshmukh - submitted its voluminous report to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray here on Tuesday.**

**Team Absolute** | Mumbai

The Justice KU Chandiwal Commission - appointed to probe ex-Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh's allegations against then Home Minister Anil Deshmukh - submitted its voluminous report to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray here on Tuesday. The probe panel has reportedly indicated that the allegations hurled by Singh against Deshmukh were



baseless, though officials declined to reveal the report contents. The Commission conducted over 80 sittings in the past nearly one year and recorded the final statements of Deshmukh, Singh, and dismissed cop Sachin Vaze. The panel probed the Rs 100-crore corruption allegations levelled by Singh against Deshmukh and also recorded the statements of others like Minister Nawab Malik of the Maha Vikas Aghadi government. Following the massive row last

year in the wake of the probe into planting of a vehicle with 20 gelatin sticks outside the home of industrialist Mukesh Ambani, culminating into the alleged corruption issues raised by Singh, the state government appointed the Commission on March 30, 2021 with a deadline of six months. However, its tenure was extended till April 30 this year, and its report was submitted to the state government days before its deadline was to end. The MVA government will take further decision on it including tabling it before the Legislature. While Deshmukh was forced to quit as Cabinet Minister following Bombay High Court's strong observations, then raided by multiple agencies over 100 times and was finally arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on November 2, 2021, and is in jail since then. Singh was suspended on December 2, 2021, cried foul at the probe against him, moved the courts for relief, kept away from the Commission hearings for which he was penalised, and finally all cases against him were handed over to the CBI as per the apex court's directives.

# No provision to release funds to states under domestic violence act: Centre to SC

**THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS TOLD THE SUPREME COURT THAT THERE IS NO PROVISION UNDER THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (PWDV) ACT, TO RELEASE FUNDS TO STATE GOVERNMENTS, YET FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACT, FUNDS ARE RELEASED FOR SCHEMES PERTAINING TO SAFETY AND SECURITY OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.**

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

In a counter affidavit, the Ministry of Women and Child Development said: "Though under the PWDV Act, there is no provision to release funds from Central government directly in the name of PWDV Act, yet for effective implementation of the Act, funds are released to states/UTs under various central schemes/ programmes pertaining to safety and security of women and children." The ministry emphasised that it is working in tandem with state governments and UTs for effective implementation of the PWDV Act and "also constantly endeavouring to combat all the crimes against the women including cases of domestic violence". The top court had asked the government to indicate broadly what are the desirable qualifications and eligible terms for the creation of a regular cadre of protection officers, as well as the nature of their training and other standards.



To this, the Centre said it may not be in position to prescribe a uniform and regular cadre structure for appointment of protection officers as their appointments are by states, depending on their requirements - such as the number of districts, number cases, and number of magistrates to look after domestic violence cases etc., The affidavit added: "As per information received from states/UTs, a total of 2,95,601 complaints/litigations have

been registered under PWDV Act, whereas number of courts for the purpose has been reported as 6,289. There are 807 shelter homes and over 700 one stop centres (OSCs) to take care of women affected by violence and in distress across the country." It said as per the provisions of PWDV Act, the responsibility of its implementation mainly lies with the state governments and UT administrations, as they have been authorised

to appoint protection officers in each district by notification. "As per information received from states/UTs, total number of protection officers notified under PWDV Act in the country is 3,637 and out of which 710 are holding regular charge, 272 are working on contract basis and remaining are holding additional charge," it added. The ministry said states/UTs have assigned additional charges of the post of protection officer to the departmental officers looking after child welfare or protection, or women welfare. It added that the protection officers are appointed by the state governments and they can be selected/appointed from a non-government organisation also. On the aspect of a separate cadre for protection officer for various Acts for women - The Dowry Prohibition Act, the PWDV Act, The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act 2013, The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, etc, the ministry said: "Majority of states/UTs have proposed for a separate cadre structure for protection officer for effective implementation of PWDV Act, as per information received from them so far." According to the Centre, there are 35 projects or schemes being implemented by various ministries, under Nirbhaya Fund. Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati represented the Central government in the top court. The top court had asked the Centre to file an affidavit on the nature of central programmes/plans outlining assistances to support the efforts under the domestic violence act by various states, collect state-wise relevant data of litigation under the Act with respect to the complaints made, number of courts, and, the relative number of protection officers (POs), and other aspects connected with POs.



## MP GOVT TO GIVE RS 900 PER MONTH TO FARMERS REARING INDIGENEOUS COWS; CM LAYS EMPHASIS ON NATURAL FARMING

► "DESI (INDIGENEOUS) COWS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR NATURAL FARMING...FARMERS SHOULD REAR AT LEAST ONE DESI COW. WE HAVE DECIDED TO PROVIDE RS 900 PER MONTH TO SUCH FARMERS. SO, A FARMER WILL GET A TOTAL OF RS 10,800 IN A YEAR FOR A DESI COW," CHOUHAN SAID IN HIS ADDRESS DURING THIS WORKSHOP.

month to farmers rearing indigenous cows. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan made the announcement on Monday while virtually addressing a NitiAyog workshop on agriculture. The CM also announced the constitution of the Madhya Pradesh Natural Agriculture Development Board to promote natural farming. "Desi (indigenous) cows are essential for natural farming...Farmers should rear at least one desi cow. We have decided to provide Rs 900 per month to such farmers. So, a farmer will get a total of Rs 10,800 in a year for a desi cow," Chouhan said in his address during this workshop.

"With the current Kharif crop season, natural farming activities will start in 5,200 villages of the state. We are looking for such farmers. So far, 1.65 lakh farmers in the state have shown interest in natural farming. Workshops will also be organised in the state to create an atmosphere for natural farming," he said. The CM further said five full-time workers will be appointed in each block to promote natural farming and they will be paid an honorarium. "Natural farming will be promoted in agricultural fields on both the banks of the Narmada river," Chouhan said.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government has said it will give Rs 900 per

## Video Calls Boycott Of Community, Case Filed

■ In the clip, which was shared widely on social media, an announcement on a truck-mounted sound system was heard about the call to boycott the community members, accusing them of spreading violence in Madhya Pradesh

tion has also started the work of installing 121 CCTV cameras at different locations, including those where stone-pelting was reported during Ram Navami on April 10, officials said.

The local administration eased curfew in the violence-hit town for nine hours - from 8 am to 5 pm - for the fourth day in a row on Tuesday and allowed passenger buses to run during that period.

Communal clashes had erupted in Khargone on April 10, during which shops and houses were damaged, vehicles torched and stones hurled. Subsequently, curfew was clamped in the city which is being relaxed since April 14.

Khargone's in-charge Superintendent of Police Rohit Kashwani said after they came to about the video of the call to boycott a particular community, a case was filed on Monday night against unidentified people with charge of spreading enmity between different groups.

Karahi police station in-charge Parmanand Goyal said the case was

registered under Indian Penal Code (IPC) Section 153-A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion). The police came to know about the video on Monday night. It was being investigated and people involved in the case were being identified, he said.

He said as per preliminary information, the announcement purportedly heard in the video was made on April 19 in Katargaon, nearly 60 km from the district headquarters.

The announcer was heard requesting Hindus to boycott the "adharmi" (impious) and "pakhandi" (hypocrite) shopkeepers and give them a befitting reply while accusing them of stone-pelting during a Ram Navami procession and burning the houses of Hindus in Khargone.

Another video also surfaced in which a group of women was purportedly seen taking a resolve to financially boycott "vidharmis" (heretic) by not purchasing from their shops and not selling stuff to them.

When asked about this, Sub-

Divisional Magistrate Milind Dhoke said the administration was looking into the video clip. "The video is not clear. After an investigation into the case, further legal steps will be taken," Dhoke said.

Khargone Municipal Council's chief Priyanka Patel in a statement said the police administration has given a list of locations where CCTVs need to be installed. Based on the list, work has been started to install 121 CCTV cameras at 36 locations, at a cost of Rs 64 lakh.

The areas where incidents of stone-pelting took place are also among these 36 locations, she said.

Kashwani said they have recovered a pistol used by Mohsin aka Waseem, who was arrested last week in connection with the firing at SP Siddharth Chaudhary during the violence on Ram Navami.

The accused told the police that he had bought the pistol from one Toofan Singh, who will also be questioned, the official said.

Choudhary is currently on leave as he is undergoing treatment for a bullet injury in his leg.

## Those Accused of Ragging Should Not Be Spared: Chief Minister

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion Minister Rajvardhan Singh Dattigaon along with Patidar family met Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at his residence on Tuesday. Family members told Chief Minister Chouhan that Chetan Patidar of their family had committed suicide on March 29 after being troubled due to the harassment of senior students in Indore. The accused were arrested in the case but they are still out on bail and one of the accused is out of

reach of the police. Chouhan said that the accused persons will not be spared. Instructions have also been given to investigate this matter. Chief Minister said that the state government is with the victim's family. Justice will be provided to the family. It is the joint responsibility of all the college management, students, parents and administration to completely control the evil practice like ragging. It is necessary that such incidents do not happen again, for this every-one should be vigilant and alert.

## LESS THAN 1 MALARIA CASE PER 1000 POPULATION IN MP: CHAUDHARY

► HEALTH MINISTER DR PRABHURAM CHAUDHARY RELEASES UPCHAR-CARD, LAUNCHES APP FOR ASHA AND ANGANWADI WORKERS TO MONITOR TREATMENT OF PATIENT

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Health minister Dr Prabhuram Chaudhary said that currently malaria infection has declined to below 1 case per 1000 population in Madhya Pradesh. There was a 96% decline in malaria cases from 2015

to 2021 in the state. World Malaria day was observed on April 25. Similarly, over 50% cases drop from 2020-2021 and in 2022 so far 106 cases have been identified in the state, Dr Chaudhary added. He was addressing award distribution and felicitation programme of malaria officials for their outstanding work for malaria elimination in the state.

The Minister also released Treatment Cards (Upchar-Card) on this occasion. He also launched an App for anganwadi workers and Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) to help them to have all details of malaria patients and their treatment. Poster was also released on the occasion.

Chaudhary said, "In 2015, Madhya Pradesh was in category-3 with 25 districts having malaria cases but then in 2021, Madhya Pradesh figured in Category-1 and was among top 10 states having low malaria cases." State government is working at grassroots level strengthening sub-centres through tele-medicines specially for treatment of non-communicable diseases. We have issued over 2.70 crore Ayushman cards for treatment upto Rs 5 lakh, health minister added. He said, "We have to raise awareness in public regarding our fight against malaria which is a dangerous disease. Government has multi-pronged strategies to curb malaria in the state.

## CM PAYS HOMAGE TO RAMANUJAN



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage to the famous mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan by garlanding his picture on his death anniversary. Chief Minister Chouhan also remembered the contribution of Late Ramanujan.

## Tiger cub found dead, 6th tiger to die in a month

► A SENIOR BANDHAVGARH TIGER RESERVE OFFICIAL SAID THE CUB WAS KILLED IN A TERRITORIAL FIGHT BY A TIGER, POSSIBLY THE ONE SPOTTED IN THE VICINITY TWO DAYS BEFORE THE CUB WAS FOUND DEAD ON SUNDAY EVENING

Team Absolute | Bhopal

An eight-month-old cub was recently killed in a territorial fight in

Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) in Umaria district, the sixth tiger to die in Madhya Pradesh in the past one month, forest officials said. The cub's carcass was found in Barbuspura area of Madhya Pradesh's BTR on Sunday evening. The skull had injury marks and there were canine marks all over the body. The pug marks of an adult tiger were also found near the carcass. Prima facie, investigation suggested that the cub was killed in a territorial fight, said BS Annagiri, field director, BTR.

The forest guards have seen a tigress, a tiger and two cubs in the area two days ago. The cub might have been killed by the tiger. Now, we

have increased patrolling in the area to track another cub and also tigress, he added. The field director said the territorial fight is a natural phenomenon in an area with a high density of tigers. Earlier, on April 12, a tiger was found dead at Pench Tiger Reserve in Seoni. The forest official suspects that the two-year-old tiger was also killed in a territorial fight. On April 3, a two-year-old tiger was found dead in Lalbarra area of Balaghat. On April 2 and 3, a tigress and its cub were killed in territorial fights in Satpura Tiger Reserve. A tiger was reported killed in Seoni on March 30 but this tiger's death was attributed to an accident involving a vehicle.

## CHIEF MINISTER CALLS UP SHIVAM, INQUIRES ABOUT HIS HEALTH



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan made a video call on Tuesday to know about the health of youth Shivam, who was injured in Khargone violence. Shivam is admitted for treatment in a hospital in Indore. Chouhan said to Shivam, "Shivam, don't worry, you will get well soon." He also boosted Shivam's self-confidence and courage and said that "I too had met with accident once, had suffered many fractures, you will be fine and everything will be back to normal with physiotherapy." Chouhan has also instructed the doctors for better treatment of Shivam.

## CONGRESS MLA'S RAPE ACCUSED SON HELD

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Karan Morwal, the rape-accused son of Congress MLA Murli Morwal from Badnagar, Madhya Pradesh, has once again been arrested by the state police from Indore after he violated bail conditions. He had earlier reportedly, forged documents to secure his bail. The victim accused him of raping her on the pretext of marriage last year.

Karan Morwal, the VVIP rape accused son of a Congress MLA from Madhya Pradesh was arrested once again by the police on Tuesday after he absconded violating bail conditions.

After getting bail on reportedly forged documents, which were meant to prove his alibi at the time of the alleged crime, another case was registered against Morwal in January. Morwal was arrested from Indore after several raids, said Madhya Pradesh police.

The police have registered an additional case under Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) that deals with crimes of cheating and dishonesty at MG Road Police Station in Indore. The son of

Murli Morwal, an MLA from Badnagar constituency, Karan Morwal (30) was accused by a woman of raping her on the pretext of marriage last year. The victim had lodged a case on Morwal under several sections of IPC, including Section 376, which deals with punishments for sexual assault. The police have now also registered offences under Section 420, 67, and 68 against the accused, which includes both Morwal and his associate Dr. Devendra Swamy. Swamy has been awarded an anticipatory bail while Morwal was arrested.

Times Now approached Madhya Pradesh Home Minister, Narottam Mishra, who denied comment on the matter. MLA Murli Morwal also denied comment on the arrest of his son.

## CHIEF MINISTER PLANTED NEEM AND KACHNAR SAPLINGS

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Neem and Kachnar saplings in Smart Garden on Tuesday. Along with the Chief Minister, senior journalist Alok Mehta, who is on a visit to Bhopal, and the residents association of Palace Orchard Colony, Kolar Road, Bhopal, also planted saplings.



Chouhan said that the resident unions should work for the protection and beauty of the environment. They should make their city clean and beautiful by giving impetus to the cleanliness campaign. Planting of saplings should also be done on the occasion of birthdays and marriage anniversaries. Kachnar is a beautiful flowering tree. Small and medium height trees are found all over India. It is full of medicinal properties. Rich in antibiotic elements, neem is known as the supreme medicine. Neem may be bitter in taste, but its benefits are like nectar. Neem is also very useful from environmental point of view.

## CM CALLED ON BY BRAHMIN SAMAJ DELEGATION

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was called on by a delegation of Brahmin Samaj, under the leadership of former Mayor Alok Sharma and senior journalist Ramesh Sharma, at the Chief



Minister's residence on Tuesday. Chief Minister Chouhan has been invited to the Pran-Pratishtha ceremony being held at the Gufa Mandir Lal Ghati on Lord Parshuram Jayanti on May 3. Many functionaries including Shri Ramesh Sharma "GuttuBhaiya" were present.

## Satellite town to be developed near Amarkantak: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan

► WILL GIVE PRIORITY TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF NARMADA RIVER

► START-UP POLICY TO BE LAUNCHED IN INDORE, PM MODI TO TAKE PART VIRTUALLY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that he had requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi that this time, the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas in which NRIs come from all over the world, should be celebrated in Indore on January 9, 2023. Indore is a suitable place for Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas. Air connectivity is also highest here. We have also got approval in this regard. Chouhan informed that Investors' Summit to be held in Indore on 4-5-6 November 2022 will now be held on January 7 and 8, 2023 and Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas will be held in Indore on January 9-10. The start-up policy prepared by Madhya Pradesh will be inaugurated in Indore itself, in which PM Modi will be present virtually.

Chouhan was discussing important and primary topics with the ministers before the meeting of the Cabinet on Tuesday. Chief Minister said that the works being done in different areas of the state and schemes for public welfare have been discussed in detail in the meeting with the Prime Minister during his stay in Delhi recently.

Chouhan informed that Modi has also been urged to visit Ujjain and inaugurate the Mahakal Corridor Expansion Scheme. All



work related to the corridor should be completed by the month of May. This occasion will be like a Jan Utsav in Ujjain. There will be Jai Ghosh from house to house. Local citizens will also participate in the programme. Chief Minister also directed the local minister and the in-charge minister to ensure timely completion of works in Ujjain.

Chief Minister S informed that a start-up policy has been prepared in Madhya Pradesh. Its formal launch is proposed in Indore. Prime Minister Shri Modi will connect to it virtually. The Chief Minister directed the concerned departments to connect

various start-ups working in Indore and organize the programme on a wide scale. Students of engineering colleges should also be inspired to participate. The date of this programme is being fixed in the month of May.

Chouhan informed about the important meeting held on April 24 with Union Ministers and environmentalist and thinker Suresh Soni regarding environmental protection near Amarkantak and Narmada origin site. Chouhan said that after the year 2018, the pace of works related to Narmada conservation had slowed down. Meanwhile,

due to Corona, the work of the mission was limited. Now it has been decided that no new construction work will be undertaken in Amarkantak. Arrangements should be made to ensure that Amarkantak does not become a cement-concrete forest. The entire area should be developed. It should be built only under Mount Maikal. There should be no construction activities in the hilly area. Hotels, restaurants etc. should also be under the mountain, where devotees and tourists can stay. Some tough decisions will be taken in this regard soon.

Chief Minister said that recently the work of converting forest villages into revenue villages has started in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah at Jamboori Maidan in Bhopal. Forest dwellers should be informed about the conversion of identified Van Grams into revenue village in particular districts in the coming month by organizing public programme of conversion of 5 to 7 Van Grams into revenue villages. There should be separate programmes for the villages. MLAs, MPs and other public representatives should also participate in this. Special Gram Sabhas should also be organized. Chouhan said that the forest dwellers should be informed about the decision to provide them timber and 20 percent dividend. Along with this, the eligible beneficiaries should also get the benefit of the increase in the remuneration given for Tendu leaf harvesting.

Chouhan said that on May 3, programs are being organized on Lord Parshuram Jayanti. A Pran-Pratishtha programme of the statue of Lord Parshuram will be organized in the Gufa Mandir complex at Lalghati in Bhopal, in which Swami Avdheshanand ji is also expected to take part.



EDITOR'S SPECS

## Discontent On PM Modi's J&K visit

Addressing the residents of Jammu for the first time since the removal of special status for Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid out a rosy picture of increased connectivity of the Union Territory with the nation's capital, promised more investments, and hailed the boom in tourism as a harbinger of progress. The UT, conflict-ridden for decades, had fared better on several development indicators compared to the rest of India, except in per capita net State GDP. Data from FY2017 showed that J&K ranked 21st among States then. The investment proposals and development projects inaugurated by the Prime Minister, in particular the connectivity projects between Jammu and Srinagar and Jammu and Delhi should help shore up the UT's economy. After a period of harsh lockdowns and communication restrictions, the UT went through a tough period, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic between 2019 and 2021. But significantly, the Kashmir Valley has seen a substantial increase in footfalls with a revival of the tourism industry during the recent winter despite security concerns, with its natural beauty proving a magnetic attraction for international travellers in particular, who had been affected by global travel bans. This has come as a balm to the residents of the Valley, with political forces cutting across mainstream and separatist sections calling for unhindered access for tourists in the region. Does this mean that there is an unequivocal acceptance of the status imposed on the erstwhile unified State of J&K (that included the present day UT of Ladakh), among the people in the Valley and beyond? That certainly does not seem to be the case in the Kashmir Valley, at least if recent events such as the district development council elections in late 2020 are any killing of two "fidayeen" militants barely 14 km from Pali village, where the Prime Minister made his address on National Panchayati Raj Day.

# INDO-UK TIES ON A NEW TRACK?

In Persian there is an old proverb: "Amad'an, nashist'am, ghuft'am, barkhas'tam", meaning "they came, they sat, they talked and then dispersed". It actually means to say that nothing substantial was achieved by the visit or the talks. The same could be said about UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's recent visit to India, after his two previous trips scheduled last year were cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic.

**Bojo in India**  
The diplomacy nowadays, thrives on optics. On this count the Bojo visit clicked all the boxes, but was also marred by angry reactions on the social media on photos howling him in the driver's seat at a JCB bulldozer. Perhaps his advisers were unable to connect the continuing controversy over bulldozers being used by the establishment against the minorities across India, or his close connections with the owner of the JCB, Anthony Bamford, an old Conservative Party donor and supporter, overweighed the local sensibilities.

The Gujarat leg of his visit, a carbon copy of his Home Secretary Priti Patel's 2015 trip to the state, was in essence aimed at garnering the support of the Gujarati electorate back home, keeping an eye on his uncertain political future.

In Gujarat he also met Gautam Adani at his company's head quarters. Bojo described the feeling of being in Ahmedabad similar to as those of Sachin Tendulkar and Amitabh Bachchan, two Indian icons used for boosting his own public image and trying to resonate or connect with the Indian audiences.

In New Delhi, he referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "khaas dost" and continuously as Narendra during his speech at Hyderabad House. But no more khaas treatment to the Indian demands of a relaxed visa regime and post study work for the Indian students, an indication towards which was given in Ahmedabad, but not granted finally.

**Bilateral Cooperation**  
His main focus remained the FTA between the two countries, as he expected to take back home something substantial in economic terms, particularly after his failed Brexit strategy. He urged the negotiators on both sides to hasten the pace of negotiations so as to have a final document ready for signing by Diwali in October. Certainly an over ambitious demand for an agreement, which has been under negotiations for more than last ten years.

Though the Indian side stated that it would demonstrate the same speed and urgency that it did in concluding recent FTAs with the UAE and Australia in recent months, yet nothing can't be said for sure about an Indo-UK FTA, as there are many thorny issues on both sides.



British trade with India, the world's second-most populous country with nearly 1.3 billion people, was worth 23 billion pounds (\$29.93 billion) in 2019, much lower than the UK's trade with some much smaller economies such as Ireland and India's trade with smaller countries like Belgium which stands at 18 billion pounds.

**Russian-Ukraine War**  
In addition, though not expressed overtly by the British side and neither by Bojo, the Russia-Ukraine war had an ominous shadow over the visit. Though his foreign secretary was very firmly told by New Delhi just 22 days before his visit that India is not going to change stand on its ties with Russia, Bojo thought he might be able to convince New Delhi to do so.

However, predicting the Indian response he had set the tone for this when even before meeting Modi he had said that he understands India's historic ties with Russia, but still chose to lecture New Delhi on its relationship with 'autocratic' states, though this time also New Delhi politely stood its ground.

The manner in which the visit was seen by

both sides, was remarkable by the manner in which the two prime ministers delivered their speeches at Hyderabad House. While Bojo avoided mentioning Russia Modi reaffirmed the ties with Russia.

**India-focussed issues**  
Though the British side is referring to a host of agreements signed in different sectors, and Bojo's statements on counter-terrorism task force being constituted and against the Indian economic fugitives currently at home in the UK, everyone is certain that they are just mere words, nothing substantial. His announcement of One billion pounds trade deals and creating 11,000 jobs is just peanuts for India.

Both sides also agreed to deepen bilateral defence and security cooperation. India welcomed Britain's Indo-Pacific tilt and joining the Indo-Pacific Economic Initiative; on its part Britain announced the decision to ease the transfer of defence equipment and technology for India and also for developing an advanced jet fighter. But overall, nothing concrete was inked down by both the sides and the technology transfer could be viewed as just

a gimmick to wean India away from Russia. Overall, the two sides showed commitment to joint research, development and production of advanced weapons and related technologies. The two Prime Ministers also issued a statement on strengthening partnership in cyber-security domain, and plans to boost cooperation on mitigating climate change and promoting clean energy. But these agreements should be seen as just part of a normal bureaucratic visit.

The visit seems to be a hastily stitched plan, with no long-term goals and no narrative setting, and was unable to achieve anything bilaterally. In the end Bojo was unable to get anything substantial from India and his political troubles back home persists. The coming days will show how he'll be able to deal with them and survive as even his closest Asian origin lieutenants like Rishi Sunak and Priti Patel, who were predicted to take over from him, are facing politically damaging controversies of their own.

## international

# TERROR ATTACK IN KARACHI LEAVES 3 CHINESE NATIONALS DEAD TOO

Karachi | Agencies

A terror attack in Pakistan's metropolitan city Karachi has claimed lives of Chinese and Pakistani nationals, in what is being seen a targeted attack on Chinese nationals in the country.

As per details, the blast occurred outside the Karachi university campus of IBA (Institute of Business Administration), in a vehicle parked outside the campus building with at least three Chinese nationals and a driver aboard.

The blast set ablaze the parked vehicle in flames, killing the three Chinese nationals -- one male and two females, and a driver in what is now being suspected as a targeted suicide bomb attack, carried out by a burqa-clad female bomber.

The killed Chinese nationals include Zhang Xiaoping, director of a Chinese language institute of IBA

called Confucius Institute. The other two female Chinese nationals were also part of the faculty of the same institute.

Police authorities, the rangers and the bomb disposal squad cordoned off the area and later confirmed that the explosion in the vehicle was a terror attack.

"Clear marks of ball bearings can be seen on the vehicle, which confirms that it was a terror attack. It can also be seen that one side of the van is more damaged, which also signifies that the attack may have been done by a suicide bomber who exploded after reaching close to the vehicle from one side," said an eye witness.

It can also be seen no crater emerged in the ground, which also clarifies that the attack was not done through an improvised explosive device.

Police authorities say that investi-

gation is being done and forensics will be taken along with the CCTV footage of the institute to ascertain the actual cause of the blast.

The attack has been claimed by Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), a banned terror group operating out of Balochistan province in Pakistan.

The attack was carried out by a Baloch female suicide bomber, who belonged to the Majeed Brigade.

"The mission was carried out by first female fidayee of the Brigade. Fidayee Shari Baloch alias Bramsh today added a new chapter in Baloch resistance history," read a press release issued by BLA.

"Majeed Brigade of Baloch Liberation Army accepts responsibility of today's self-sacrificing attack on Chinese in Karachi," the BLA press release added. After the explosion, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah contacted the police chief. The IGP informed the Chief Minister that the

blast took place inside a van near the Commerce Department of the university.

The chief minister also ordered the Karachi commissioner to submit a report on the bombing.

This is a first attack by a female suicide bomber from the BLA in Pakistan, adding massive concerns over the security situation in the country, which has seen a major surge in terror attacks by various terror organisations including the Baloch separatists and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

China's increasing influence, investments and presence in Pakistan has also been questioned and criticised by Western powers and has been targeted by various terror organisations in the past.

The latest attack targeting Chinese nationals raises serious security concerns and challenges for Pakistan's security forces.

# Israel to reopen main crossing point with Gaza

Tel Aviv | Agencies

Israel on Tuesday decided to reopen the Erez crossing point on the northern tip of the Gaza Strip after economic losses in the impoverished coastal enclave had piled up.

"After an assessment of the security situation, it was decided to resume the entry of workers and merchants from Gaza into Israel through the Erez crossing as of Tuesday," Major General Ghassan Alyan, coordinator of Government Activities in the Palestinian territories, said in a statement.

"The opening of the crossing to the movement of merchants and workers, and other civilian steps from the Gaza Strip into Israel is conditional on maintaining security and stability in the region."

Israel closed the crossing point on Sunday after unknown militants fired several rockets from the Gaza Strip at southern Israel, reports Xinhua news agency.

The incident took place against the backdrop of growing tension in East Jerusalem and the Israeli arrest campaigns in the West Bank during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Gaza economists said that keeping the



crossing open would have constituted a qualitative leap in breaking the current state of economic deterioration and stagnation that has continued for more than 15 years due to Israeli blockade.

They said that some 12,000 Palestinian workers and merchants cross from the Gaza Strip to Israel every day, bringing financial liquidity of 5 million Israeli Shekels (\$1.52 million) to the coastal enclave.

These revenues, which were supposed to enter Gaza through the workers, would greatly alleviate the economic, social, and living crisis suffered by the enclave's residents.

## IMF URGES SRI LANKA TO TIGHTEN MONETARY POLICY

**Colombo:** An official from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday urged Sri Lanka to tighten its monetary policy, raise taxes and adopt flexible exchange rates to overcome its ongoing debt crisis.

"We've had very good, fruitful, technical discussions on preparations for the negotiations with authorities over the past weekend and a couple of days before," Xinhua news agency quoted Anne-Marie Gulde-Wolf, acting director of the IMF's Asia and Pacific Department, as saying at an online event. Finance Minister Ali Sabry and Governor of the Sri Lankan Central Bank Nandalal Weerasinghe recently concluded a visit to the IMF to discuss financing help for the country. Earlier Sri Lanka suspended external debt payments. "The requirement for fund lending will be progress toward debt sustainability. Monetary policy has to be tightened to keep inflation in check. We see a need for flexible exchange rates," she said.

Gulde-Wolf did not comment on the value of any IMF package, or an estimated time needed to come into an agreement with Sri Lanka.

# EFFORTS NEEDED TO FIX BROKEN US IMMIGRATION SYSTEM: WHO

Washington | Agencies

The White House has acknowledged that the US immigration system is "broken" and has been "long overdue to be fixed".

"There needs to be more done to invest in smarter security, to have a more effective asylum processing system," Press Secretary Jen Psaki said during a briefing.

"We would welcome any efforts to -- for any elected officials to work with us on that."

The White House spokesperson was fielding questions about Title 42, an asylum-limiting policy introduced by the government after the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020, reports Xinhua news agency.

President Joe Biden's administration had announced an intention to lift the policy but a federal judge granted a temporary restraining order on Monday, blocking it from being rescinded. Psaki told reporters that "Title



42 is not an immigration policy" but "a health authority" determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"That is a discussion we'll have with members of Congress. We are continuing to prepare to implement the lifting of Title 42, a

decision that was made by the CDC," she noted.

The CDC previously said Title 42 will be terminated on May 23.

"After considering current public health conditions and an increased availability of tools to fight Covid-19," CDC Director Rochelle Walensky "has determined that an order suspending the right to introduce migrants into the United States is no longer necessary", according to a statement. Named after a 1940s public health law, Title 42 has allowed US border officials to rapidly expel migrants without allowing them to apply for asylum.

Most recently enacted by the previous administration, Title 42 has reportedly been used roughly 1.7 million times by the current federal authorities.

Crossings at the southwest border of the US have increased this year, with homeland security officials bracing for even higher numbers with the rescission of Title 42.

## BIDEN URGED TO CALL SHEHBAZ

**Washington:** A major US think tank urged President Joe Biden to call Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and reset Washington's ties with Islamabad.

Bruce Riedel, one of the writers of the Brookings report, was an adviser to the former Bill Clinton and Barack Obama administrations and is also close to the current Democratic set-up in Washington, says Dawn news. The other writer, Madiha Afzal, is a fellow at the Centre for Middle East Policy. "The end of American involvement in Afghanistan and the change in leadership in Pakistan presents the US with an opportunity to reset its long-troubled relationship with the world's fifth most populous country," the writers argued in the report.

"President Biden should initiate a high-level dialogue with new Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who will be in power for up to a year before the next election is held."

The authors noted that because US policy was focused on fighting wars in Afghanistan, "our primary partners in Pakistan were the intelligence service and the military. Less attention was devoted to the civilian government", Dawn reported. "Now Washington can engage with Islamabad without prioritising Afghanistan issues at the expense of our broader interests in regional stability with India and China, encouraging development in South Asia, and supporting the strengthening of the elected democratic forces in Pakistan," they argued. "America also has an interest in balancing somewhat the influence of China, Pakistan's closest ally, on decision-making in Islamabad."





MHA SEEKS MAHA GOVT'S REPORT ON MP NAVNEET RANA'S ALLEGATION OF ILLEGAL ARREST

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has sought a factual report from Maharashtra government regarding Independent MP Navneet Rana's allegations about her arrest and inhuman treatment at Khar Police station in Mumbai.

According to MHA officials, the Ministry's move came after the Lok Sabha Privilege & Ethics Committee earlier asked the union Home Ministry to seek a report from the state government.

On Monday, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla also sought details from the Maharashtra government within 24 hours on the arrest of MP Navneet Rana in Mumbai.

After her arrest by Mumbai police, Rana wrote a letter to the Lok Sabha speaker saying that she had been subjected to inhuman treatment by the police following her "illegal" arrest on Saturday. In her letter, the Independent lawmaker also accused the Mumbai Police of not even providing her drinking water in custody and misbehaving with her on the basis of her caste.

Rana and her husband Ravi Rana, who is also an independent MLA, were



arrested on Saturday from their Mumbai residence after they announced to recite 'Hanuman Chalisa' outside Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's home in Bandra. The announcement evoked huge controversy and the cadre of Shiv Sena protested against her outside her home in Mumbai. Chanting of 'Hanuman Chalisa' was apparently aimed at pres-

suring the Shiv Sena-led state government on the issue of loudspeakers being used at places of worship. The Rana couple were booked under various sections of IPC by Mumbai and were sent to 14 days judicial custody by the Khar Court on Sunday while her bail application and plea for quashing the FIR were rejected by the Bombay High Court on Monday.

PARTS OF MUMBAI, SUBURBS FACE OUTAGE AMID MAHARASHTRA POWER DEFICIT

Mumbai: Many pockets in financial capital Mumbai and its adjoining suburbs witnessed a power outage today morning.

Reasons for the outage, which comes at a time when Maharashtra is reeling under power deficit, which has led discoms to compulsorily cut power supply to some pockets, were not immediately known.

Some parts of central Mumbai, along with suburbs like Bhandup and Mulund within the municipal limits of Mumbai, and the adjoining cities of Thane and Dombivili faced a power outage from around 10 am, as per various reports. A comment from any official in the power distribution or generation companies is still awaited. The financial capital generally does not face any mandatory power cuts as part of load shedding, but has faced troubles in the past, including a disruption that lasted up to 18 hours in October 2020.

Rana couple's bail plea to be heard on Friday

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In another setback, the Mumbai City Civil and Sessions Court on Tuesday posted the hearing of independent MP Navneet Kaur-Rana and her MLA husband Ravi Rana's bail plea for Friday.

The couple's lawyer Rizwan Merchant had moved the bail plea but the court directed the prosecution to file its reply on Friday and would hear it further that day.

Arrested by the Khar Police on April 23, the Ranas were remanded to 14 days judicial custody by a Bandra holiday Magistrate, where they also filed a bail plea.

However on Monday, they withdrew the bail plea to move the Sessions Court which will take it up on



Friday. In the plea, Merchant has contended that their call to recite the Hanuman Chalisa outside the private home of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray was not a calculated move to promote feelings of hatred or enmity and hence the charges under IPC Sec. 153(A) was not

sustainable. On Monday, the Bombay High Court also dismissed their plea to quash the Mumbai Police's second FIR invoking charges under Bombay Police Act 353 pertaining to alleged assault of a public servant and obstructing him from discharging his official duties.

Tiger spotted in Radhanagari wildlife sanctuary, fourth time in a decade

FOR THE FOURTH TIME IN A DECADE AND THE FIRST TIME AFTER 2019, A TIGER WAS SPOTTED BY THE TRAP CAMERAS PLACED IN A FORESTED PATCH OF RADHANAGARI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY IN MAHARASHTRA'S KOLHAPUR DISTRICT, SAID FOREST OFFICIALS.

with the database. The department is looking to figure out if the tiger has migrated from Goa-Karnataka sanctuaries or is a resident tiger of the Radhanagari sanctuary. If the tiger is found to be a resident one, it will be seen as a success of the conservation efforts of the area and a further boost to them.

Notified as a 'wildlife sanctuary' in 1985, the protected area is home to 264 bird species (migratory and resident), 47 species of mammals, 59 species of reptiles, 20 species of amphibians and 66 species of butterflies. The sanctuary spread across 351.16 sq km is known to serve as a corridor for tigers and elephants moving between three states - Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

The linear and montane forest landscape along the northern Western Ghats connects the Sahyadri Tiger Reserve in western

Maharashtra to Kali Tiger Reserve in Karnataka. Recently, the state forest department found that eight tigers frequent the Sahyadri-Konkan corridor, a 4,500-km human-dominated forest landscape. However, no resident tiger has been documented in the region. The state forest department is trying to augment and develop a habitat for residential tigers. The Ratnagiri sanctuary is the only corridor which facilitates the movement of tigers from Karnataka and Goa to Sahyadri.

However, in between the two tiger reserves - Sahyadri and Kali - some areas are human-dominated. Some areas are narrower than one km, are covered with cash crop plantations, mining, other infrastructure and construction works and thus negatively impacting the movement of tigers, a year-long occupancy study in the Sahyadri-

Konkan corridor by Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT) had found.

Last year, six new conservation reserves were notified in the region to protect the corridor. A conservation reserve works as a buffer zone between a protected area and wildlife sanctuary and helps in the movement of animals between the areas. In October 2020, an area of 250.66 sq km extending from 200 meters to 6 km around the Radhanagari sanctuary was declared an eco-sensitive zone. Areas around the sanctuary located towards the southern hills of the Sahyadri range of Western Ghats were being eyed by the mining lobby. Activists from the area said that there are at least two bauxite ore mining projects underway in the area, while one is in the exploration stage.

PEAK POWER DEMAND OF MAHARASHTRA MET SUCCESSFULLY BY ELECTRICITY BOARD

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Meeting the peak power demand of the season Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL) said that it has successfully provided over 26,000 MV electricity to the State amid rising demand and further avoided load shedding.

An official release by the company stated, "On April 24, MSEDCL provided 26,468 MV without any load shedding in the state. The current demand of electricity in the state is around 24,200 MV. Also, on April 25, there was no load shedding in across the State of Maharashtra and continuous efforts are going to avoid it in future."

On April 5, RK Singh, Union Minister for Power and

New and Renewable Energy in a written reply in Rajya Sabha said that the primary responsibility of providing 24x7 power supply to all consumers lies with the concerned Power Distribution Companies (DISCOMs).

The Government of India, Ministry of Power had taken up a joint initiative during 2014 to 2017 with all States/UTs and prepared State/UT specific action plan documents for providing 24x7 power supply to all households, industrial and commercial consumers, and adequate supply of power to agricultural consumers as per State policy. This initiative was aimed at ensuring uninterrupted supply of quality power to existing consumers and providing access to electricity to all unconnected consumers by 2019 in a

phased manner, the government said.

The Central Government has been helping the States through its various schemes including Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS) to achieve the objective of providing uninterrupted power supply to all households. Under the recently launched Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), the State Power Distribution Utilities are financially supported to strengthen Distribution infrastructure and the fund releases under the scheme are linked to the initiation of reforms and achievement of results that also includes trajectories for improving electricity supply hours to urban and rural consumers.

"RULES NOT JUST FOR ONE GROUP:" MAHARASHTRA VS BJP IN LOUDSPEAKER ROW

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra BJP leaders skipped the all-party meeting called by the Shiv Sena-led state government amid the growing tensions between the two parties.

The meeting, which was chaired by Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, held discussions on the ongoing row over the recitation of Hanuman Chalisa and the use of loudspeakers at religious sites in the state.

After the meeting, Maharashtra minister Aadiya Thackeray said that it was decided that a delegation will meet the representatives of the central government and discuss the issue. Addressing a press conference along with Aadiya Thackeray, Patil urged the centre to come up with a law that will be applicable across the country.

"If the centre makes a national-level rule over loudspeakers, issues won't come up in the states," he said.

Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil said, "Do you think they have been arrested for reading the Hanuman Chalisa? They haven't been arrested for that. They have been arrested for their statements to create disturbance."

The Shiv Sena's Aditya Thackeray said it was not a mandir-masjid issue. "This is an issue of loudspeakers being used. If measurements are taken for all loudspeakers, then every religion and every festival will have issues. That's why we have told all the parties present that we should talk to the centre on this issue. And this is a Supreme Court order and therefore we believe it should apply to everyone without hurting anyone. And there should not be a law and order issue...it should apply to all states, not just one state."

Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnis alleged that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray was behind the arrest of Independent MP Navneet Rana and her MLA husband Ravi Rana in connection with their

announcement to recite Hanuman Chalisa outside his residence.

"If someone has taken the role of Hitler, we felt it's better to fight instead of communicating," he said.

Hitting out at Thackeray for skipping the meeting, Fadnis said what was the use of an all-party meet when the Chief Minister himself did not attend it. "Whatever is happening in Mumbai is happening at the behest of the Chief Minister. In such a situation, if the Chief Minister himself is not present in today's meeting, then what is the use of it?" he said.

"Maharashtra govt wants to crush & kill Opposition. Will Hanuman Chalisa be spoken in Pakistan, if not in Maharashtra? If sedition charges get imposed on Navneet & Ravi Rana, we will all chant Hanuman Chalisa. If the govt has the guts, try charging us with sedition," Fadnis added.

Besides the BJP, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) Chief Raj Thackeray also skipped the meeting.

MNS Chief Raj Thackeray had made a strong pitch for removing

loudspeakers from mosques earlier this month. Thackeray had said that if the state government did not remove the high-decibel loudspeakers from mosques before May 3, MNS workers will play the Hanuman Chalisa in front of mosques.

Over the last few days, political temperatures in the state have heated up sparked by Mr Thackeray's remarks.

On Sunday, the Maharashtra Home Minister alleged that efforts were on by some people to create an atmosphere conducive for the imposition of President's Rule in the state.

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut also had recently alleged that the BJP was behind the demands for removing loudspeakers from mosques and reciting Hanuman Chalisa.

He said that intelligence inputs suggest that a conspiracy is underway to create communal tension in Maharashtra and recommend President's Rule, dismissing the tripartite Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

Bad news for those who block redevelopment in Maharashtra; dissenters to pay for losses incurred

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Redevelopment of housing societies is set to be a smoother process as the high court, in a landmark judgment, directed that dissenting members of a society have to hand over flats to the developer and be held responsible for recovering the loss incurred due to their opposition. Real estate experts have welcomed the move as many such redevelopment projects are stalled due to this one hurdle.

CA Ramesh Prabhu, founder chairman of Maharashtra Societies Welfare Association, said, "When it comes to redevelopment of cooperative housing societies, many a times a few handful of members try to stop the process either by not giving the consent or by filing

frivolous complaints or irrelevant cases. This not only delays the process but also increases the cost of the project as the builder has to continue paying rent to members who vacated flats while the cost of construction also increases."

"In many of such cases the Bombay High Court and Supreme Court passed a number of judgments directing non-consenting members to handover the flat within a certain time, failing which the court receiver is appointed to take the possession with police protection. In the latest Bombay HC judgment dated April 13, 2022 in the Choice Developers v/s Pantnagar Pearl CHS Ltd, Justice G S Kulkarni has not only ordered the dissenting members to handover the flat to the developer but also has held that

such members should be made accountable and responsible for recovering the loss," said Prabhu. He added, "The court also held that once a flat owner becomes a member of the society, he shall be bound by the majority members' decision. Based on this, many societies have now decided to pass resolutions that the members who do not abide by the decision of the general body, shall bear the expenses and losses incurred." Advocate Shreeprasad Parab, expert director, Maharashtra State Co-operative Housing Federation Ltd, said, "There are more than 1,25,000 housing societies registered under the Maharashtra Co-operative Societies Act, 1960 and more than 30 per cent of the buildings are above 30 years old.

WITHOUT UTTERING A WORD, MUMBAI POLICE NAIL MP NAVNEET KAUR-RANA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid the ruckus created by the arrested Rana MP-MLA couple, with Navneet Kaur-Rana shooting off a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla of alleged police misbehaviour, the Mumbai Commissioner of Police Sanjay Pandey finally broke his silence on Tuesday.

Taking to Twitter, Pandey posted a video of the MP-MLA duo, enjoying the warm hospitality of the Khar Police, and raising questions on the authenticity of the Ranas' allegations, with his own terse poser: "Do we say anything more.."

In the revealing CCTV footage, the couple, picked up from their Khar home on the evening of April 23, are in a relaxed mood, indulging in a friendly 'chai pe charcha' style chat with the cops, quite oblivious to the brouhaha raging just outside the police station.

After they were remanded to judicial custody of 14 days, the Amravati (SC reserved seat) MP Navneet Kaur-Rana penned an angry letter to the Lok Sabha Speaker, alleging she was not given drinking water, not allowed to use the washroom and subjected to casteist slur.

Even as the Speaker sought a reply from the Maharashtra government within 24 hours, state Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil staunchly defended the Mumbai Police, confidently asserting that "the reality was very different from the allegations".

Shiv Sena MoS Kishore Tiwari lauded the Lok Sabha Speaker for taking serious cognisance of Navneet Kaur-



Rana's letter and asking for a report from the Maha Vikas Aghadi government within 24 hours.

"Wish he had shown the same concern for the Dadra & Nagar Haveli MP, (the late) Mohan Delkar, who complained

to him and finally he committed suicide," Tiwari said.

The reference was to Delkar's series of complaints to the BJP government at the Centre, in Parliament, the Speaker and other panels which failed to elicit response and he was

found dead in a Mumbai hotel on February 22.

Reacting to the Pandey's video post, Congress state General Secretary Sachin Sawant said the Ranas and the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) blatant 'lies' have been exposed before the people of the state.

"The entire aim is to discredit the MVA government and Mumbai Police but their allegations have been proved false and fallen flat on their face. The BJP is a truly irresponsible Opposition party in the state banking on lies and backing liars," Sawant said.

Nationalist Congress Party Chief Spokesperson Mahesh Tapase slammed the Ranas and BJP for their falsehoods intended to demoralise the Mumbai Police and discredit the MVA government.

"We want to know from the Speaker Om Birla what kind of action will be taken against his own MPs who try to subdue the police with fake statements by making herself a 'caste-victim' in this manner?" Tapase asked.

The Mumbai Police chief's unexpected 'silent' salvo spoke volumes and not only went viral but generated a huge favourable response for the police department with many saying "they already knew it" and reposed complete faith in the guardians of the law.

The Ranas, nabbed for planning to chant Hanuman Chalisa outside the private home of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in Bandra east, have suffered other setbacks in the past three days and are currently cooling their heels in jail, as their bail plea is posted for hearing on Friday.



# Super Mario Bros animated film release pushed to 2023



Los Angeles | Agencies

The upcoming adaptation of Nintendo's Super Mario Bros video game series, which was originally set to release on December 21, targeting a theatrical run through the holiday season, has been postponed to 2023, reports 'Variety'. As per 'Variety', Universal and Illumination Entertainment's film will now arrive in theatres on April 7, 2023 in North America followed by a

Japanese theatrical release on April 28. Super Mario Bros. series creator and Nintendo leader Shigeru Miyamoto announced the change in release date through Nintendo's social media on Monday evening. As quoted by 'Variety', Miyamoto wrote, "After consulting with Chris-san, (producer Chris Meledandri) my partner at Illumination on the Super Mario Bros film, we decided to move the global release to Spring 2023. My deepest apologies but I promise it will be well worth the wait." After years

of gestation, plans for a Super Mario Bros. animated movie began to materialise in 2018, with Nintendo and Universal announcing a partnership on the project. Illumination Entertainment, the animation studio behind 'Minions', 'Despicable Me' and 'Sing' was also on board. Nintendo revealed in September last year the voice cast for the 'Super Mario Bros' film, tapping Chris Pratt to voice the Italian plumbing protagonist wherein producer Meledandri revealed that Pratt would not voice Mario with a thick Italian accent. The voice ensemble also includes Anya Taylor-Joy as Princess Peach, Charlie Day as Luigi, Jack Black as Bowser, Keegan-Michael Key as Toad, Seth Rogen as Donkey Kong, Kevin Michael Richardson as Kamek, Fred Armisen as Cranky Kong and Sebastian Maniscalco as Spike. Original Mario voice actor Charles Martinet will have a cameo role in the film. The film is helmed by the directing pair of Aaron Horvath and Michael Jelenic, the two have previously collaborated on the animated series 'Teen Titans Go!' and the spin-off film 'Teen Titans Go! To the Movies'. The script is from Matthew Fogel, whose credits include 'The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part' and the upcoming Illumination title 'Minions: The Rise of Gru'.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Following the consecutive box office successes of 'Venom' and 'Venom: Let There Be Carnage', the third instalment in the Tom Hardy-starrer 'Venom' franchise has been greenlit by Sony Pictures, reports 'Variety'.

As per 'Variety', the studio has also announced its plans for another 'Ghostbusters' movie, which will serve as a follow-up to 2021's reboot 'Ghostbusters: Afterlife' which raked in \$200 million globally. The announcements were made during a presentation at CinemaCon, the annual trade show for theatre owners. Though the studio did not share any details about either movie, it revealed that new instalments were on the way.

The announcement came in the form of a mash-up reel, which included footage of the Whitney Houston biopic, 'I Wanna Dance With Somebody', 'Kraven the Hunter', 'The Equalizer 3', never-before-seen clips from Tom Hanks movie 'A Man Called Otto'.

'Variety' added in its report that Jason Reitman directed 'Ghostbusters: Afterlife' taking the reins from his father Ivan Reitman, who helmed the original 1984 film 'Ghostbusters'.

The first movie - featuring Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Ernie Hudson and Harold Ramis as ghost-catching parapsychologists - was critically and commercially successful, later spawning sequels, animated series, video games and an ill-fated 2016 reboot.

'Venom' and 'Ghostbusters: Afterlife' sequels to soon go on floors

## OTT RELEASE OF K-DRAMA 'SOUNDTRACK #1' ON APRIL 27

South Korean drama series, 'Soundtrack #1' is all set to bow down on OTT. The series, which centres around the lives of two best friends who put everything on the line when they move in together, stars popular Korean actress Han So-hee known for her work in 'The World of The Married' and K-pop star Park Hyungsik.

The story of 'Soundtrack #1' has been crafted by Ahn Saebom and sees celebrated director Kim Heewon (Vincenzo) at the helm of affairs and features an impressive soundtrack composed of some of Korea's most talented musical artists. The series, which will be streaming on OTT platform Disney+ Hotstar, marks the platform's second Korean drama in India after 'Snowdrop'. Set in modern-day Korea, the romantic series focuses on the lives of two best friends, Han Sunwoo (Park Hyungsik) and Lee Eunsoo (Han Sohee), who have known each other for over 20 years.

As they start living together for a two-week period, love blossoms between them, threatening to either elevate or end their friendship forever. 'Soundtrack #1' will be available to stream on Disney+ Hotstar from April 27 and will also be available with Hindi dubs.



Los Angeles | Agencies

The performances continued during the April 25 episode of American Idol! This week, the judges, Katy Perry, Lionel Richie and Luke Bryan, each chose a song for the top 11 contestants. Each artist then got to pick which of the three songs they would perform during the live show. At the end of the episode, the judge with the most songs chosen was named "the winner." Meanwhile, one contestant was also eliminated.

## 'American Idol' Recap: Katy & Luke Save 1 Lucky Artist After Winning The Song Contest

First up, Nicolina chose to perform "Since U Been Gone," despite it being a bit out of her comfort zone. Nicolina was shocked to find out Lionel chose the song. "I wanted fire from you," he explained. "Can you make the stage presence work? And we just saw - you lit up the room." Next, Mike Parker sang "Chasin' You" by Morgan Wallen, which was picked by Luke. "I love that you did your own thing with it," Luke said. "Especially your choices at the end. You nailed it just then."

'American Idol' Top 11 Performances Fritz Hager was up next. He chose to perform Luke's pick, which was "Wondervall" by Oasis. Luke gushed that it was a "great, great, great job," while Lionel said it was a "perfect" performance. Following Fritz was Christian Guardino. Christian sang Sam Smith's "I'm Not The Only One," which was revealed to be Katy's choice, finally putting her on the board. "That song has soul in it and gospel in it and you can just rev up into it, which you did," Katy explained.

Next to take the stage was Noah Thompson. Noah sang "Heartbreak Warfare" by John Mayer, despite not being familiar with it beforehand. The song was chosen by Luke, who praised Noah for learning the song so quickly. "To take a song and crash course it, it was done really well," Luke said. "The fact that you challenged yourself - that was a big move."

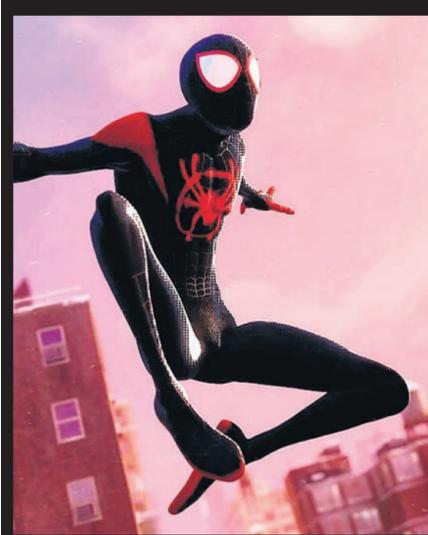
Lady K was up next, and she picked "Traitor" by Olivia Rodrigo to sing, since it was different than

everything else she's done on the show. Surprisingly, it was Lionel who chose the song. "I took you out of your wheelhouse and put you into something where it challenged you and it won the challenge," Lionel gushed.

Up next was HunterGirl, who sang "9 to 5" by Dolly Parton. The song was Luke's pick, and his excited, dancing reaction said it all. Katy added, "You showed me there's more and more sparkle - you embody Dolly." The next to take the stage was Leah Marlene with a performance of "To Make You Feel My Love," which was Katy's choice. "It was a big canvas for you to do your thing and hold the room in the palm of your hand like you do so well," Katy gushed. "You are so beautiful when you sing. It's angelic."

Tristen Gresset was next to take the stage, singing "You Can't Always Get What You Want." The song was Lionel's pick, and Tristen's high-energy performance got everyone going. "He gave me Mick Jagger on steroids, baby!" Lionel raved. Next, Emyrson Flora chose to sing Katy's pick, which was "Lovely" by Billie Eilish. "Never run from who you are, you are so great," Katy assured Emyrson.

The final performance of the night was from Jay Copeland, who sang "Lilac Wine" in an effort to show his softer side. The song, which was Katy's pick, earned Jay a standing ovation. "That was your best performance yet, in my opinion, of the whole show!" Katy declared.



## 'SPIDER-MAN: ACROSS THE SPIDER-VERSE' ADDS OVER 200 NEW CHARACTERS

Los Angeles | Agencies

The never-before-seen footage of 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse', which is a sequel to 'Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse', was unveiled to a packed audience at CinemaCon, the annual exhibition trade show, which is currently underway in Las Vegas, reports 'Variety'.

They're also upping the body count. While the first movie had 40 characters, the sequel has 240.

After turning 'Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse' into a critical and commercial smash, the filmmakers hyped up a crowd of movie theatre owners by showing an exclusive look at the first 15 minutes of the follow-up 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse'. As per 'Variety', producers Phil Lord and Christopher Miller also announced the next instalment, previously denoted as 'Part II' will be titled 'Spider-Man: Beyond the Spider-Verse'.

'Across the Spider-Verse' continues the story of Miles Morales (voiced by Shameik Moore). Lord and Miller also teased some details about the sequel before unveiling it to the audience. The new movie will take place in six universes.

Theatre owners were treated to footage so raw, the computer-generated graphics were not in their final form. Lord and Miller have plenty of time to touch up the animation. 'Across the Spider-Verse' is not set to release until June 2, 2023, and 'Beyond the Spider-Verse' is not opening until March 29, 2024.

## 'Harry Potter' Actors Who've Died In Real Life: Alan Rickman, John Hurt, & More

Los Angeles | Agencies

The first film of the Harry Potter series was released in 2001 and instantly became a box office hit, paving the way for an ever-growing franchise. Even years after the movies wrapped production in 2011, the stars - Emma Watson, Daniel Radcliffe, and Rupert Grint - cannot get away from questions about reunions and reboots. Speaking on that note in March 2022, Daniel, who played the titular character of Harry Potter, said he's not "really interested" in starring in an adaptation of the Harry Potter-themed Broadway hit Harry Potter and the Cursed Child.

Unfortunately for eager fans, a full-on Harry Potter reboot would be out of the question, as several of its stars have since passed. For instance, David Ryall, who played Elphias Doge, died in 2014, and Hazel Douglas, who brought Bathilda Bagshot to life, passed away two years later. And those are just a few of the Harry Potter players we've lost over the years. Here's a list of eight beloved actors who helped bring the world of Harry Potter to life who are no longer with us. Richard Harris played headmaster of Hogwarts Albus Dumbledore in the first two installments of Harry Potter. He succumbed to Hodgkin's disease in 2002 at the age of 72. Following his death, Michael Gambon took over the role of Dumbledore throughout the rest of the films. During the Harry Potter



20th anniversary reunion event presented by HBO Max that premiered on New Year's Day 2022, director Chris Columbus looked back on Richard with fond memories. He revealed that Richard apparently thought the phoenix bird that burst into ashes in order to be reborn during Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets was real. "Richard came in, and looked at the phoenix, and said, 'Wow, they train these animals marvelously these days,'" Chris divulged, per Insider. Apparently, no one had the heart to tell Richard it was an animatronic and he filmed the entire movie believing it was real. Richard Griffiths, who played Harry Potter's hateful uncle Vernon Dursley and housed him by graciously sticking

him in the cupboard under the stairs, died in 2013 at the age of 65. His death came shortly after he received heart surgery at University Hospital in Coventry, England.

And despite him being so cruel to Harry in the films, Daniel had the opposite experience with him off-set. "Richard was by my side during two of the most important moments of my career," he recalled, per BBC. "In August 2000, before official production had even begun on Potter, we filmed a shot outside the Dursleys, which was my first ever shot as Harry. I was nervous and he made me feel at ease." He continued on to say that Richard made any room "twice as funny."





## IPL 2022

# PARAG, KULDEEP SEN, ASHWIN STAR IN RAJASTHAN'S DEFENSE OF 144; DEFEAT BANGALORE BY 29 RUNS

Pune | Agencies

On the back of an unbeaten 56 by Riyan Parag and a clinical bowling performance led by young pacer Kuldeep Sen (4/20) and senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (3/17), Rajasthan Royals successfully defended 144 to beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by 29 runs at MCA Stadium on Tuesday.

For a side that relies heavily on Jos Buttler's contributions, being at 102/6 gave Rajasthan a mighty scare of being bowled out for a paltry total. But Parag took them out of trouble, holding one end firm and exploded in the end to give his bowlers something to bowl at.

After Parag was done with his job with the bat, the bowlers took over -- especially Sen and Ashwin, bowling at hard lengths and with the latter getting extra bounce off the pitch to make life difficult for Bangalore's batters.

The plan worked as the top order couldn't do much and the middle-order never looked like pulling off the chase. The pursuit of 145 began on a scratchy note as Virat Kohli, opening in place of Anuj Rawat, could have gone out thrice in the opening over against Trent Boult.

But he survived to strike back-to-back fours -- a flick through square leg followed by a thick edge going past the keeper. Kohli's luck ended at nine when he pulled a little early against a short ball from Prasad Krishna and a thin edge lobbed to



point.

Faf du Plessis got going with boundaries off Krishna, Boult and lofted well against Ashwin for a magnificent six. But Sen had other ideas, removing him and Glenn Maxwell in the seventh over to bring Rajasthan back in the match. While du Plessis slashed to a jumping cover, Maxwell drove away from the body and nicked to slip for a golden duck. Bangalore's troubles increased when Ashwin uprooted Rajat Patidar's off-stump for grabbing his 150th IPL wicket and followed it up with Suyash Prabhudessai holding out to long-on in his next over. Things went worse as Dinesh Karthik was run-out in a big mix-up. Yuzvendra Chahal fumbled while picking up the throw at the non-striker's end. With Karthik showing little urgency to come back quickly, Chahal managed to grab Ashwin came back to pick his

third wicket of the night as Shahbaz Ahmed's slog was grabbed by a diving long-on. Wanindu Hasaranga struck some fours but was bounced out in a comfortable caught and bowled dismissal to Sen. Krishna and Sen cleaned the tail to give Rajasthan their sixth win of the tournament. Earlier, Parag produced some eye-catching shots, like whipping Ahmed for a six over long-on, followed by a four in the 11th over, to hammering Josh Hazlewood flat over extra cover for six in the 19th over. He tore into Harshal Patel in the final over, heaving through deep square leg for four followed by a soaring six over extra cover to raise his second IPL fifty in 29 balls.

Parag finished off the innings by muscling a pull over deep mid-wicket to get his best-ever score in IPL. The 18-run final over was a rare blip in a flawless bowling performance

from Bangalore, with Hazlewood, Hasaranga and Mohammed Siraj picking two wickets each.

Rajasthan began by losing Devdutt Padikkal, trapped lbw by a full delivery from Siraj which he missed while attempting to flick and was hit plumb in front of the middle stump. Ashwin made the most out of his surprise promotion to three with back-to-back boundaries off Siraj and repeated the same manner in the fourth over.

Ashwin's joyride ended when he top-edged a pull back to Siraj. Jos Buttler had a rare off-day and was out, cramped for pull off Hazlewood and safely pounced by mid-on diving to his left. Sanju Samson led Rajasthan's recovery, punching Hasaranga through point for four followed by a six over cover.

Samson took a liking to Ahmed's left-arm spin in the eighth over, hitting successive sixes over long-off. He tried to reverse sweep off Hasaranga but failed and on the very next ball in the tenth over, Samson brought out the same shot, only to see his off-stump rattled.

### Brief scores:

Rajasthan Royals 144/8 in 20 overs (Riyan Parag 56 not out, Sanju Samson 27; Josh Hazlewood 2/19, Wanindu Hasaranga 2/23) beat Royal Challengers Bangalore 115 all out in 19.3 overs (Faf du Plessis 23, Wanindu Hasaranga 18; Kuldeep Sen 4/20, Ravichandran Ashwin 3/17) by 29 runs

# IWL 2022: Indian Arrows look to bounce back against Odisha Police



Bhubaneswar | Agencies

After their defeat in their last match against Sethu FC, AIFF's developmental side, Indian Arrows will look to bounce back when they take on Odisha Police in the Indian Women's League on Wednesday at the Capital Ground, here.

Odisha Police head coach Shradhanjali Samantary seemed cautious ahead of the clash. She said, "We have to maintain our defensive shape properly while facing Arrows." She further urged her team to build a winning mentality after having lost

their last match 1-3 against ARA FC in the dying minutes.

Odisha Police are currently ninth on the IWL table with one win and two losses in their last three matches. Asked about her take on the campaign so far, Shradhanjali said, "We are not fully satisfied because the way we started was not good. And now each and every game is vital for us."

Despite the loss in their last game against Sethu FC, Arrows' head coach Suren Chettri seemed quite positive. He said, "Though we lost our unbeaten momentum, looking at the compo-

sure of the team and the way the young players fought till the final whistle, I am very satisfied with the team."

"We are a developmental side, as the name suggests, we want our girls to play a style of football that will help them become better footballers in the future, and that means playing a more attacking and possession-based game," said Chettri.

Speaking on their opponents, Chettri opined, "Odisha Police are the home side and they have an advantage here. They have a huge match experience as compared to us. So we're not taking the next game lightly."

# 'I felt cheated': Harshal Patel reveals how he was betrayed by some IPL franchises

Mumbai | Agencies

Royal Challengers Bangalore pacer Harshal Patel has revealed how he was betrayed by three-four IPL franchises in the early days of his career.

The Purple Cap winner from the 2021 season of the Indian Premier League, Harshal said that before his breakthrough season, he got contacted by three-four people from different franchises who said that they would bid for him. However, they went back on their word on the day of the auctions.



"The ironic thing was that there were three-four people from different franchises who said we'd gonna bid for you but no one did. At that time, it felt like a betrayal. I felt like they had lied to me, I felt cheated," said Harshal in an interview with Gaurav Kapur on Breakfast with

Champions. The 31-year-old further added that it put him in a dark place and it took time to get out of it and accept the matter. "I was in a spiral of these dark thoughts. Stuff like 'Who are you? You have given so much to this game. You have worked so hard.' You keep telling yourself that you have done all this and you're not getting anything out of it."

Last year, the right-arm pacer was the highest wicket-taker of the season with 32 wickets under his belt from 15 matches. In the ongoing edition of the IPL, he has taken nine wickets so far from eight matches.

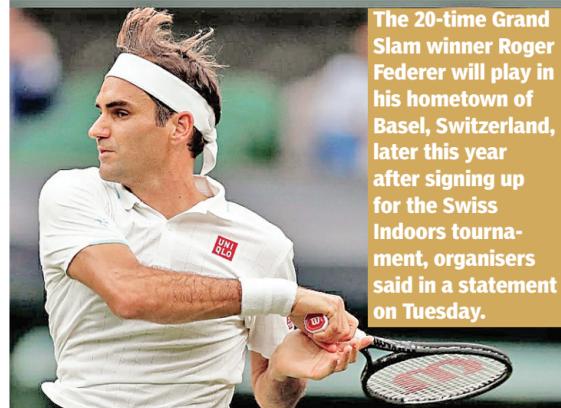
# ROGER FEDERER SIGNS UP TO PLAY SWISS INDOORS IN OCTOBER

Basel (Switzerland) | Agencies

The 40-year-old has been out of action since making the quarter-finals of Wimbledon last year and is currently recovering from knee surgery.

A statement on the Swiss Indoors website read, "Roger Federer has officially entered the tournament and will appear on the entry list with the protected ATP ranking No. 9 and will play his opening match on Tuesday, October 25, 2022."

"After getting through the first round, the next match will be on Thursday, October 27, 2022. The worldwide interest in the return of the hometown hero



The 20-time Grand Slam winner Roger Federer will play in his hometown of Basel, Switzerland, later this year after signing up for the Swiss Indoors tournament, organisers said in a statement on Tuesday.

and 20-time Grand Slam Champion to the ATP Tour is expected to be tremendous," it added.

Federer's coach Severin Luthi said earlier this year that he can't imagine the Swiss tennis great returning in time for Wimbledon, but the 40-year-old is signed up for the Laver Cup in September. He has now also been confirmed for his first ATP event of the year in his hometown of Basel.

The tournament will be played for the first time since 2019 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and starts on October 24. Federer is a 10-time champion in Basel and won the last of his 103 titles there in 2019.

# Madhya Pradesh, Republican Sports Club, SAIL Hockey Academy register contrasting wins

Mohammad Zaid Khan struck four goals while Shreyas Dhupe and Haider Ali scored a hat-trick each as Madhya Pradesh Hockey Academy thrashed R.V. Academy 16-0 in a pool match at the 2nd Hockey India Junior Men's Academy National Championship 2022, here on Tuesday.

Jamshedpur | Agencies

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Apart from Madhya Pradesh Hockey Academy, Republican Sports Club, SAIL Hockey Academy and Ghumanhera Riser's Academy also continued their winning run with comprehensive victories in their respective pool matches. In the opening match of the day, Madhya Pradesh Hockey Academy thrashed R.V. Academy of Hockey rode on the brilliant performance of Mohammad Zaid Khan (15', 28', 39', 60'), who started with four goals. Shreyas Dhupe (9', 11', 38') and Haider Ali

(19', 34', 42') slammed a hat tricks each while Shailendra Singh (13', 43'), Mohd Konain Dad (37', 58'), Ali Ahmed (47') and Talem Priyobarta (52') also got on the scoresheet to hand Madhya Pradesh Hockey Academy a convincing win. In the second match of the day, Raja Karan Hockey Academy and Smart Hockey Academy, Raipur played out a 1-1 draw in Pool B. Jaskaran Singh (12') gave Smart Hockey Academy the lead which was cancelled out by Raja Karan Hockey Academy through

Sandeep Singh's goal in the 59th minute.

In the second Pool B game, Republican Sports Club defeated Tamil Nadu Hockey Academy 4-1. Bhavik Chandane (14', 40') and Pawan Babulal Samantrai (35', 60') scored a brace each for the winning team, while Sundaram Chandru (18') scored a consolation goal for Tamil Nadu Hockey Academy. In the penultimate match of the day, SAIL Hockey Academy beat Namdhari XI 3-1 in Pool C. Captain Kerobin Lakra (33'), Mukesh Tete (39') and Sonu Nishad (58') scored for SAIL Hockey Academy, while Namdhari XI's lone goal came from the stick of Hanspal Singh (56').

In the final match of the day, Ghumanhera Riser's Academy outplayed Jai Bharat Hockey Academy 7-0 in Pool C. Rohit (19', 48', 54') and Aman Sharma (42', 57', 58') struck hat tricks each, while Lalit Kumar (60') scored the other goal for the winning side.

# It's a test among the best at the Khelo India University Games, says boxer Akshay

Bengaluru | Agencies

The land of Haryana has been a vast hunting ground for the brightest talents in Indian boxing since the turn of the 21st century, making household names of stars such as Vijender Singh, Vikas Krishan Yadav, Pooja Rani, Amit Panghal, and many more.

Another such star in the making at the Khelo India University Games 2021 is the young Akshay 'Kumar' Siwach from Bhiwani, Haryana. The 20-year-old boxer Akshay was named after the Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar. Sharing an anecdote about he got his name, Akshay said, "My family name is actually Siwach, but I am more commonly known as Akshay Kumar by my friends and family. When I was born, my mother named me Akshay, and my father added the name 'Kumar' because he was fond of the actor by the same name. That's how I got this name."

Akshay is competing in the 63.5kg weight category at the Khelo India University Games 2021, where he is representing OPJS University, Rajasthan. He has already breezed into the semifinals of the competition and is set to compete later on Tuesday. Speaking about the Khelo India platform, Akshay stated that the platform will help young athletes by offering them competition against the best athletes from



across the country. "The Khelo India University Games are like a test among the best young athletes in the country, because to qualify for this stage, the athletes have to already come through state and university level qualifying competitions beforehand," he said.

"Organising these Games is a good initiative by the Government of India. They understand the needs of young athletes and give them a chance to make progress in their respective discipline. I am happy with the diet that is being given to athletes who have come here. "We are being given the right diet in the right amounts. Other than their training, this is the most important aspect for athletes to improve. The accommodation facilities are also very good, so we can focus fully on our performance in the Games and not worry about where the resources will come from."

# India U-17 women's football team joins camp in Jamshedpur

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India U-17 women's football team has assembled in Jamshedpur for a coaching camp as part of its preparation for the FIFA U-17 World Cup that is set to be held in India later this year.

A total of 33 players have been called up to the camp that will see the young girls prepare for the upcoming challenge ahead under the coaching of Thomas Dennerby. The squad that has assembled in Jamshedpur features 12 players from the side that won the SAFF U-18 Women's Championship title earlier this year. List of 33 players called up for the camp:



Goalkeepers: Monalisa Devi, Anjali Munda, Hempriya Seram, Keisham Melody Chanu. Defenders: Salima Kumari, Sudha Ankita Tirkey, Astam Oraon, Purnima Kumari, Julia Devi Yanglem, Bhumika Bharat Mane, Kajal, Varshika, Kajol Dsouza, Ngashepam Pinku Devi, Hemam Shilky Devi. Midfielders: Payal, Kalpana, Shailja, Moirangthem Ambika Devi, R Madhumathi, Loktongbam Shelia Devi, Babina Devi, Gladys Zonunsangi, Shubhangi Singh, Nitu Linda. Forwards: Neha, Lavanya, Anita Kumari, Reshma, Vinothini, Dharshini, Laishram Rejija Devi, Lynda Kom Serto.

# I-League: Tursunov strikes as Churchill Brothers down Rajasthan United for fifth straight win

Naihati | Agencies

Churchill Brothers opened their Hero I-League Phase 2 account with a hard-fought win over Rajasthan United at the Naihati Stadium on Tuesday.

Towards the end of the game, Churchill were reduced to ten men but managed to cling on and walked away with all three points.

Rajasthan United started the game on the front foot. A solid start saw them retain possession and move the ball around very easily, pressing Churchill Brothers into their own half. Ten minutes in, midfielder Omar Ramos tested Shilton Paul from range. The keeper was on his toes to keep the ball away from goal. Ramos' attempt came right after Pedro Manzi's cross was cleared right in front of goal.

From the left flank, Abhishek Ambekar and Tarif Akhand were putting some decent crosses in but Suresh Meitei was always alert inside the Churchill box to intercept almost all the Rajasthan attacks.



It took them a while, but Churchill finally made their way forward with the ball. Momo Cisse played it forward to Kingslee Fernandes, who played it to Komron Tursunov. Tursunov put it clean through to Gnohere Krizo but the striker could not keep it on target. Churchill Brothers finally broke the deadlock against the run of play with a goal out of nowhere. After constant Rajasthan United pressure, Churchill swarmed forward on the counter.

The ball ultimately found itself at the feet of Tursunov at the edge of the box. The Tajikistani attacker curled the ball past Bhaskar Roy to give Churchill Brothers a surprise lead in a game that had been dominated by Rajasthan United.

A little over ten minutes later, Pedro Manzi headed the ball into the back of the net for Rajasthan United only to see the offside flag go up against him. Moments later, Manzi was desperately appealing for a handball in a crowded Churchill penalty area. The referee was not interested and asked him to play on.

Five minutes from half time, both coaches were warned and asked to calm down by the referee. Tensions were rising in the technical area and a few words were exchanged between the two Spaniards. Heading into the first half stoppage time, Churchill Brothers doubled their lead. Fernandes entered the box and crossed it towards Tursunov but Akhand got in the way and ended up deflecting the ball into his own net in the final few minutes of the first half.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

**W**ith Kartik Aaryan stepping into Akshay Kumar's shoes, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 is set to deliver a new dosage of horror and humour. Manjulika's spirit takes over Kiara Advani's body this time, instead of Vidya Balan's, and Kartik's Rooth Baba tries to deal with it.

The trailer, which was released on Tuesday, featured everything from Kartik and Kiara's love story in the film to Manjulika's reappearance after 15 years. While the supporting cast works to combat the spirit, not everyone, particularly Kartik, is prepared to confront the scenario. The teaser also showed Tabu in a mysterious role, Rajpal Yadav reprising his role as Chhote Pandit, a ghost wedding, black magic in progress, and some song and dance routines. While Priyadarshan directed the OG part starring Akshay Kumar, Vidya Balan, Shiney Ahuja, Paresh Rawal, and Ameesha Patel, just one actor, Rajpal Yadav, appears in both films as Chhote Pandit. Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 is a standalone sequel to the 2007 film directed by Anees Bazmee.

The new Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 poster debuted the extended

## KIARA ADVANI, THE NEW MANJULIKA IN THE HOUSE

celebrity cast just hours before the trailer was released. On the right side of the ad, Sanjay Mishra was pictured standing in a dhoti-kurta with long white hair. Tabu wore a green saree, while Kiara wore a lehenga choli. Kartik was seen wearing a black outfit with his signature pose. On the billboard, there is also a man dressed as a king in a sherwani and turban, with a long white beard.

In a suit and turban, another is seen leaping into the air.

Amar Upadhyay (Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi), Milind Gunaji, and Rajesh Kumar also play key roles in the film. The film will be released on May 20, produced by Bhushan Kumar, Murad Khetani, Anjum Khetani, and Krishan Kumar.

## SRK, Kajol, Farah Khan approached for 'Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**T**he makers of celebrity dance reality show 'Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa' are set to come back with the 10th season.

Moreover as per the sources, the panel of judges will have big names such as Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan, well-known choreographer Farah Khan and Kajol. Yet the channel has not given any confirmation.

The ninth season was aired in 2016. Karan Johar, Farah Khan, Jacqueline Fernandez and Ganesh Hegde took over as the judges of that season. Manish Paul hosted the show.

A source close to the show informs: "The show will have a grand comeback. Makers have approached Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol and Farah Khan to take over as judges. The casting of the show is in process and the show might go on floor by July."

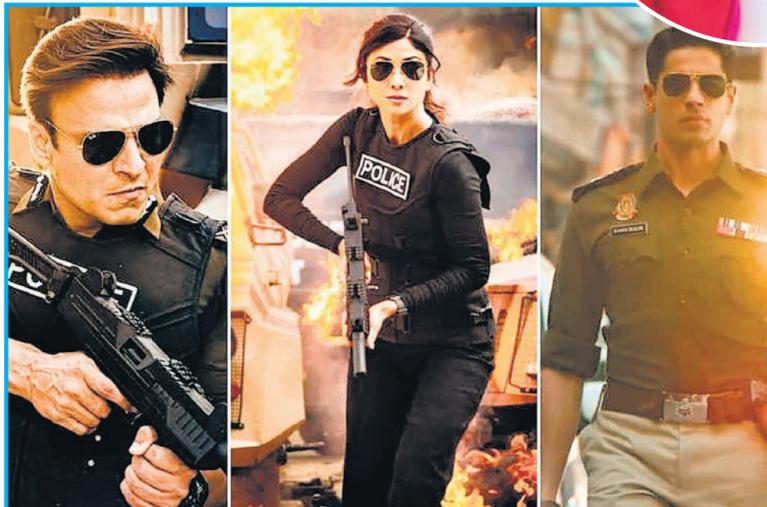


## Vivek Oberoi joins Sidharth Malhotra and Shilpa Shetty's action series 'Indian Police Force'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**fter Sidharth Malhotra and Shilpa Shetty, Vivek Oberoi will now be making his entry into Rohit Shetty's team in his mega digital series 'Indian Police Force'.

With such powerhouse actors coming together for this high octane action series, the excitement and anticipation amongst fans has increased multifold! Rohit Shetty and Prime Video's action series Indian Police Force is currently filming.



## Sadhguru Welcomes Will Smith

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**S**mith was spotted arriving in Mumbai, India, over the weekend. Smith smiled and waved to his fans 12-and-a-half time zones ahead of his home in Los Angeles. The trip marks the first time the actor has been

publicly spotted since slapping comedian Chris Rock in the face on stage during the 2022 Oscars ceremony. It remains unclear why Smith was in India, or if it was for any business reason. Some say, Smith traveled to India for spiritual purposes, specifically to practice yoga and meditation from Sadhguru, who has been an inspiration for the actor for quite sometime now.

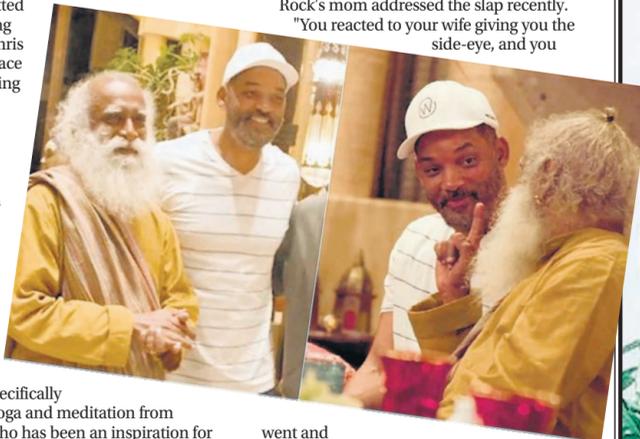
Smith was staying at the JW Marriott Hotel Juhu, a 5-star rated luxury resort by the beach that features both an infinity pool and a salt water pool. This is not his first time to India, Smith has been to India before, and recently recorded a video with spiritual leader Sadhguru.

Back in the U.S., The Slap's aftermath continues to ripple across Hollywood. Smith apologized to Rock after slapping him over a joke about Jada Smith's baldness. The actor has since then been banned from attending any Academy Award events for the next 10 years. Some of Smith's future projects appear to be on pause for now; Netflix reportedly canceled its sequel to Bright, though CNET noted the reasoning for the decision was unclear. There is also no shortage of rumors

concerning the status of Will and Jada's marriage.

Amidst all the tensions around these controversies Smith's trip to India points towards a lot of healing that is needed. Before Smith's trip, Pinkett Smith revealed the family is focusing on deep healing.

Rock's mom addressed the slap recently. "You reacted to your wife giving you the side-eye, and you



went and made her day because she was mullered over laughing when it happened". Rose was watching the Oscars at home and initially thought that the moment was staged. However, when Smith began to use "obscenities," she knew it was real. "When he slapped Chris, he slapped all of us. He really slapped me," Rose added.

She also hopes that Smith finds peace and heals as she addresses the Slap obscene and lashes out on Smith. Like her, many fans want Smith to heal faster and hope he meditates under Sadhguru's guidance.

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## RAM CHARAN, POOJA HEGDE'S EARTHY CHEMISTRY SHINES THROUGH IN 'NEELAMBAR' SONG

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

**I**nching towards its release, the movie 'Acharya' has been trending on every social media platform for a while now. The song 'Neelambari' highlights the sizzling chemistry between 'RRR' fame Ram Charan and 'Beast' lady Pooja Hegde.

The video song which was released as an ode to 'Neelambari', Pooja's role in 'Acharya', has stirred excitement about the significance of her role in the action drama.

Garnering millions of views, the video song shows the special moments of love between Ram and Pooja. Sung by Anurag Kulkarni and Ramya Behara, composed by Mani Sharma, 'Neelambari' is a musical celebration of the character that Hegde will be seen playing beside Ram Charan.

As Pooja Hegde and Ram Charan have reunited for 'Acharya' for the second time after 'Rangasthalam's' superhit special 'Jigela Rani', the buzz surrounding their pairing in the film grows.

Since the release of the Acharya trailer, fans have been eagerly awaiting the release of the Koratala Siva-directed film.



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Amala Paul